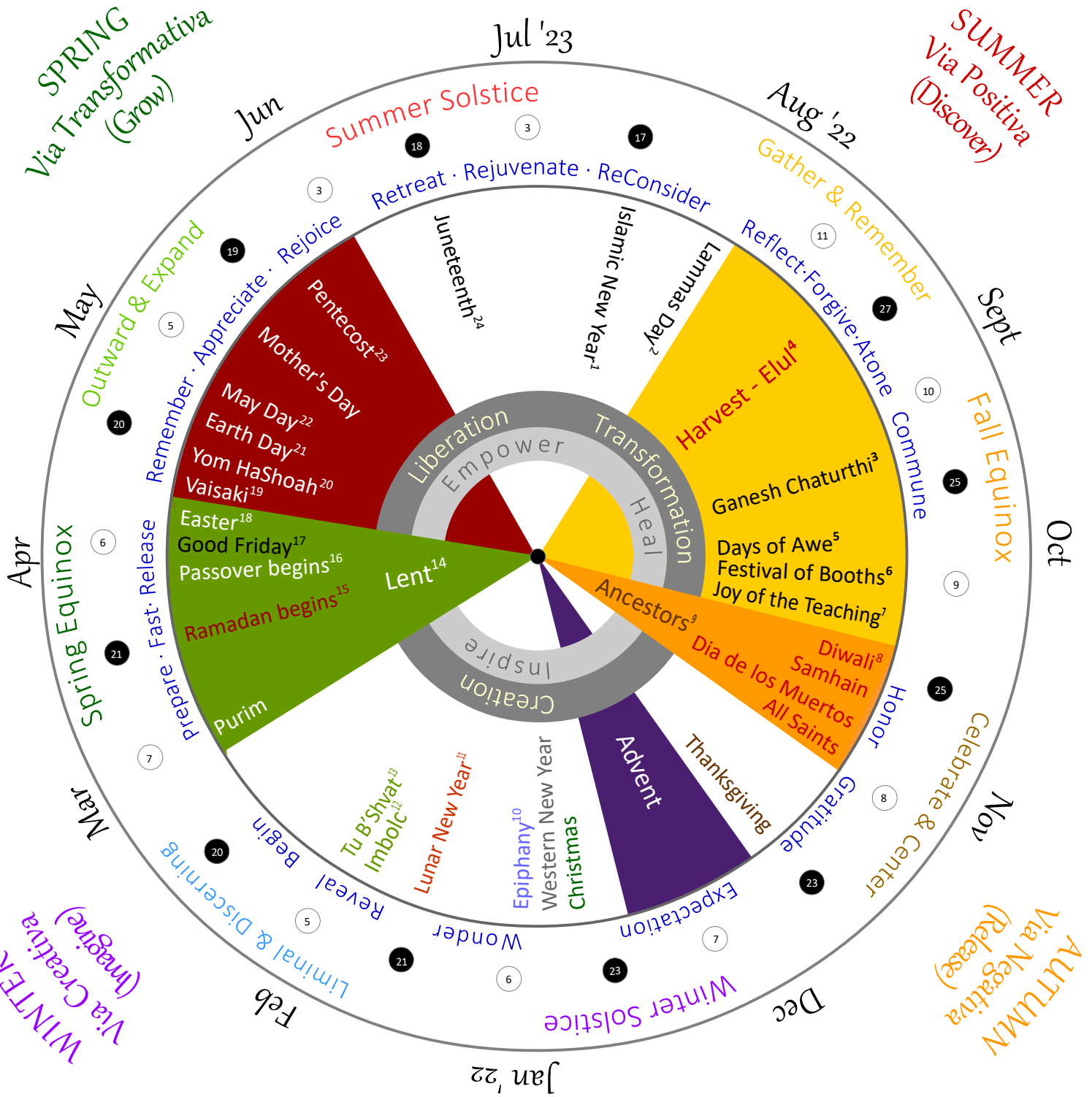
Wheel of the Year

A Story, Festival & Practice Calendar

Northern Seasons · August 2022 - July 2023



Note: Many festivals shift dates based on the lunar calendar and rules of their originating tradition.

● ○ Identifies the date of each new and full moon.

WHEEL OF THE YEAR – A Story, Festival & Practice Practice Tool

This Wheel of the Year is a calendar and tool, not an answer. The Wheel is a starting place designed to locate you within the story, festival, and practice of your unique understandings – which some people call a faith. It reflects only some of the historic seasonal-spiritual-religious traditions in and around our community and world. It is intended, in a Pluralist and Rabbinic way, to be a tool to deepen your chosen faith, not an alternative or call to appropriate the faith of others. This particular Wheel begins with a Pluralist-Christian orientation oriented to the seasons, solar, luner. Secular & religious. The Vias are a reference to the creation spirituality of Matthew Fox, offering an alternative Judaeo-Christian seasonal and theological orientation. (www.matthewfox.org/what-is-creation-spirituality) In order to be truly useful, the Wheel also requires your very personal/local input. Practicing the Wheel begins by adding/removing dates, seasons, and traditions as they are meaningful and valuable to you and your household. Please consider providing the following into the Wheel:

Add/Remove dates/seasons to make your Wheel fit your household: This Wheel is built with a pluralist intention, rooted in Judaeo-Christian tradition. The Wheel expands beyond this base to include many other Holidays and seasons that are relevant to the local, national and global context of its particular community. If you practice festivals or Holidays not included in this Wheel, please add them! If you don't find a Holiday or Festival included in the Wheel relevant to your practice, remove it! **Mark the date or season where your Household's year *really* begins:** The answer to this question will determine where in the Wheel of the Year you will sense the most significant ending and beginning of your household's Year together. Paying attention to this date will be important so that you can create the time and space for this important transition to occur in your home. **Add your household's meaningful and valuable dates:** Birthdays, memorials, every-year events, pilgrimages, and other "we always honor this" elements like summer vacation, picking apples or spring harvests. If you can't imagine the year without it, put it on the Wheel.

Below is a very basic and limited glossary to some of the seasons/festivals/days on this unique Wheel:

[1]**Islamic New Year – 07/18-19** This Lunar New Year is celebrated quite differently by the various sects within Islam. The Year begins on the first day of the month of Muharram.

[2]**Lammas Day: 08/01** A preChristian Celtic festival, (Lughnasadh) The first of three ancient Harvest festivals focused on grain and berry. Celtic Christians later assimilated this tradition to become Loaf Mass.

[3]**Ganesh Chaturthi 09/19** A 10 day Hindu festival celebrating the arrival Ganesh(a), the God of New Beginnings, remover (and placer) of obstacles, wisdom and intelligence.

[4]**Harvest-Elul 8/26--10/18** A transformative season that begins with the Jewish lunar month of Elul, a time to name important relationships, practice forgiveness, welcome the stranger and celebrate learning. In Aramaic, the native tongue of Jesus, "Elul" is similar to the verb "to search." Harvest includes the High Holy Days (Days of Awe), and extends through The Festival of Booths (Sukkot) and Simchat Torah (The Joy of The Teaching) which celebrates the teaching present in Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew/Christian bible.

[5]**Days of Awe (Judaism) – 9/25-10/5:** Also as the High Holy Days. The 10 Days of Awe begin with Rosh HaShanah (New Year) and end with Yom Kippur, the Day of At-one-ment, the Jewish year's most Holy day.

[6]**Festival of Booths (Judaism) – 10/9-16** Also known as Sukkot, is a week-long festival that calls people to build a shanty outside, exposed to the elements (vulnerable), so that one can take up residence in the 'wilderness.' The tradition is to welcome the foreigner and the stranger who pass by one's 'sukkah' (shanty) and invite them to conversation and food. The entire festival is a response to the Day of Atonement, remembering Israel's time wandering in the wilderness.

[7]**The Joy of the Teaching (Judaism): 10/17-18** Also known as Simchat Torah – is a celebration of the teaching and learning that is present for one in sacred writings such as the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew/Christian Bible. In the Synagogue, this special day involves dancing with the scrolls of the Torah and honoring one's learning.

[8]Diwali (Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain)- 10/24: The Hindu "festival of lights" is observed by many religions throughout Southern Asia. Diwali extends over five days, and celebrates the victory of 'good' over 'evil.' Diwali is a reaffirmation of hope, a renewed commitment to friendship and goodwill, and a religiously sanctioned celebration of the simple." Fireworks, oil lamps, and sweets are common, making this a favorite holiday for children. The lamps are lit to help the goddess Lakshmi find her way into people's homes.

[9]Ancestors (Wicca, Druid, Secular, Christian): 10/31-11/4: A series of individual celebration days that include Halloween(10/31), Samhain(10/31), Dia de los Muertos (Nov 1), All Saints (Nov 1), and All Souls Day (Nov 2. All of these holidays remember ancestors, honoring and communing with those who have passed on.

[10]Epiphany (Christian) 1/6: A celebration of revelation or revealing. For Christians, this revelation is God revealed in human form baby Jesus. This holiday remembers the story of three 'wise ones' (literally magicians) who traveled following a star to Beth-lehem (the house of bread) seeking a new King of the Jews who was believed to be the harbinger of peace on earth.

[11]Lunar New Year (Confucian, Taoist, Buddhist) 1/22: A variety of lunar New Year festivals celebrating family and abundance across Asian traditions. Chinese New Year begins with the new moon that appears between January 21 and February 20 and continues until the Lantern Festival, held on the 15th day of the lunar year.

[12]Imbolc (Gaelic) 2/1-2: One of the four Gaelic seasonal festivals—along with Beltane, Lammas, and Samhain. In ancient times, the festival was marked by the coming of milk into the ewe heard. The holiday was later Christianized and is still celebrated, especially in Ireland, where it is known as the feast day of Saint Brigid.

[13]Tu B'Shvat (Jewish) 2/5-6: New Year of the Fruit Trees. A mystic Jewish Holiday rooted in the Hebrew bible's tradition of First Fruits offerings to the Temple. Today it is a minor festival celebration of the environment, particularly trees, nuts, and fruits. A time to honor the interdependence of the earth and humanity.

[14]Lent (Christian) 2/22 - 4/6: A 40 day (not counting Sundays) festival preceding Easter. Traditionally Lent is a season of penance during which Christians are encouraged to honor the sacrifices Jesus made culminating in his "passion" and crucifixion by the Romans. Lent ends at 'Good' Friday, a confusing title from Old English etymology meaning 'Holy Friday.' Ancient celebrations were not penitential, but rather a time of discernment culminating with baptism on Easter Sunday.

[15]Ramadan (Islam) 3/22-4/21: A 30 day festival focused on faith through the practice of fasting. Although the tradition practices fasting with food, fasting, as a spiritual art, is accessible through many modalities. In the ancient world, the growing, collection and preparation of food was the single largest consumer of time. Thus, fasting with food has become ubiquitous.

[16]Passover (Jewish) 4/5 - 4/13: A festival recalling Israel's journey to freedom from slavery under Pharaoh. Jews celebrate with a Seder, a ritual meal and storytelling held in the home, often featuring unique narratives known as a Hagadah (the text/order).

[17]Good Friday (Christian) 4/7: Good' Friday, a confusing title from Old English etymology meaning 'Holy Friday.' This is the end of Lent at which Christian commemorate the crucifixion (murder) of Jesus by the Romans three 'days' before Easter.

[18]Easter (Christian) 4/9: Often falling near the Passover, Christians celebrate the Resurrection (not a resuscitation) of Jesus as a sign and symbol of Life overcoming the powers of empire and death. This is Christianity's highest Holy Day.

[19]Vaisakhi (Sikh, Hindu) 4/14 A New Year festival and celebration the birth of the Khalsa Panth of the Sikh. For many Hindus, the festival is the solar New Year, a harvest festival, and an occasion to bathe in sacred rivers such as Ganges.

[20]HaShoah (Jewish) 4/17-18: Holocaust remembrance day – featuring practices designed to encourage the world "never to forget" the murder of more than 6 million Jews by the Nazis during the 1930's.

[21]Earth Day (secular) 4/22: an annual day of recognition to demonstrate support for the environment. First held on April 22, 1970, it now includes a wide range of events coordinated globally by EarthDay.org.

[22]May Day (Unknown) 5/1: Historically observed throughout Ireland and Scotland, May Day, also known as Beltane, celebrates the halfway point between the spring equinox and the summer solstice. It also coincides with International Workers' Day.

[23]Pentecost (Jewish, Christian) 5/25-27 and 28: Known as Shavuot in Judaism (5/25-27), this Holiday celebrates the wheat harvest & the receiving of Torah (teaching). Christians celebrate Pentecost as the receiving of the Holy Spirit after Easter (5/28).

[22]Juneteenth (American) 6/19: also known as Freedom Day, Jubilee Day, Liberation Day, and Emancipation Day – is a holiday celebrating the emancipation of those who had been enslaved in the United States.