

# Lunasa to Harvest: Celebration

by Judy Harrow

Each year at Lunasa, in the old ways, the tribe would ask and receive Mother Earth's consent to reap the fruits of the land. Then the people worked long, hard hours in the hot sun. The rewards of their labor were all around them to be seen, touched, smelled and tasted. Another year's food was now assured. The people's joy and gratitude is recorded for us in hundreds of folk songs and other festive harvest traditions - joy in what the tribe and the Earth had, once again, created together. This is the happy season of fruition.

Very few of us are farmers anymore. For town folk, this arc of the seasonal round actually developed in direct counterpoint to the agricultural rhythm. Schools were closed in summer because all possible hands, even the little ones, were needed in the fields. Then, urban skilled workers began to win those precious annual vacations. August, when their kids were out of school, was the time they took off, so the family could have some fun together, maybe even get to the mountains or the beach. For many of us, August is still getaway time.

So, get away. Even if you can't actually travel, take some sort of break from your usual routine. Make sure you include both rest and fun -- we all have heard jokes about people returning from an over strenuous vacation in immediate need of a week off to recover. Although the last thing any of us needs is a goal-driven vacation, there are some ways our modern vacation time can be connected to the ancient, land-based seasonal rhythm in which late Summer is the time of harvest.

**Think:** the Earth right now is at the peak of Her lushness, Her abundant, everflowing, nurturant Mother phase. Rest now in Her broad lap. Let Her nurture you.

- Slow down. Be lazy outdoors. Float in a lake. Lie on the ground under a tree and watch the leaves and branches move in the wind. Smell the flowers. Listen to the river.
- If you have the chance, try sleeping outdoors. Take your bedding up on the roof or out into the backyard. Or go camping, but sleep outside the tent. Let the Moon and the stars give you dreams.
- Participate in the harvest. This experience is not only for farmers and gardeners. In some areas, there are farms that let people actually pick ripe produce right out of the field, charging for whatever you gather by weight. Or you can gather wild berries, or clams at the seashore, or whatever (but always be careful that you're not gathering food from a polluted area). Remember to give thanks to the land. When you bring your produce back to the City, drop some of it off at a homeless shelter.
- Nobody really wants to work over a hot stove in August. Try eating light, simple meals - lots of fresh produce, raw if possible, dairy proteins. Be sure to drink plenty of liquids to replace your perspiration. These things will help your body handle the heat.
- Celebrate Earth's abundance with your family and friends. Have a picnic or beach party. If there are outdoor concerts or plays in your area, go. If you like sports, go to the ball game. Even better, play ball. Fly a kite.

- If you can afford it, consider indulging in an eco-tourism vacation. You'll learn more about Mother Earth. By supporting eco-tourism, you help local people make their living by showing off their environment instead of by destroying it.
- In this time of Earth's greatest creativity, nurture your own creativity. Sketch or photograph or write about whatever you see or do on vacation.
  - If this is your first year working with an expressive art form, books like:
    - *Freeing the Creative Spirit* by Adriana Diaz [from Harper SanFrancisco, 1992 (about painting)], or
    - *In-Versing your Life* by Cynthia B. Gustavson [from Families International, 1995 (about poetry)], or
    - *Right Brain/Left Brain Photography* by Kathryn Marx [from Amphoto, 1994 (about photography)] , or
    - *Writing the Natural Way* by Gabriele L. Rico [from Tarcher, 1983 (about writing)],

explain how expressive artwork can be used for self-exploration and spiritual development, and present a sequence of exercises for doing this. Find one you like that portrays your own chosen medium and work through the exercises during this season.

- In subsequent years, choose a Craft-related expressive project that will stretch your skills and take about a month. Do it. Share the results with the coven or community.

Between Lunasa and Harvest comes Labor Day, one of the major turning points of the secular year. It marks the end of summer. In September, there's a quickening of the pace, a nip in the air, and a sense of anticipation. All through our childhoods, September meant newness: clothing, books, friends, subjects to learn -- a fresh start. September has a very different feeling than August, a brisk sense of purpose. Those deeply rooted habits, with their palpable external trigger, are very strong within us.

We got away. We are back now, refreshed and eager.

What do you want for yourself right now? Go for it!

---

written by Judy Harrow

updated: January 19, 2000; Š 1998, 2000, by Judy Harrow

---