

MOONTIME AND GRANDMOTHER MOON

Native people know that everything in Creation has spirit. The plants, the trees, the water, the wind, the rocks and the mountains have spirit. The sky world, including the moon and the other planets, have spirit. All of these are part of our First Family, the natural world.

The Moon is called Grandmother Moon and great respect is paid her.

RECOGNITION OF THE MOON IN THE CALENDAR

The cycles of the moon determine our yearly calendar. The changes that come with each passing moon indicate the times for planting, harvesting, hunting and gathering. In the Anishnawbe calendar the names of each month include the word 'moon' and reflect the close connection between the cycles of the moon and the plant and animal life on Turtle Island.

- C Spirit Moon
Mnidoo-Giizis (January)
- C Bear Moon
Mkwa-Giizis (February)
- C Sugar Moon
Ziisbaakdoke-Giizis (March)
- C Sucker Moon
Namebine-Giizis (April)
- C Flower Moon
Waawaaskone-Giizis (May)
- C Strawberry Moon
Ode'mini-Giizis (June)
- C Raspberry Moon
Mskomini-Giizis (July)
- C Thimbleberry Moon
Datkaagmini-Giizis (August)

- C Corn Moon
Mdaamini-Giizis (September)
- C Falling Leaves Moon
Binaakwe-Giizis (October)
- C Freezing Moon
Bashkakodini-Giizis (November)
- C Little Spirit Moon
Mnidoo-Giisoons (December)

GRANDMOTHER MOON: THE FEMALE ENERGY

It is said that Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth. We see this in her regulating of the tides.

Grandmother Moon controls all female life. Much of the water life spawn according to the cycles of the moon.

It is said that Grandmother Moon is especially close to women because she governs the woman's cleansing cycle, the natural cycle of menstruation known as the moon time.

Just as Grandmother Moon watches over the waters of the Earth, it is said that women watch over the waters of the people. Water always comes before new life.

MOONTIME

It is said that the moon cycle is a gift to women. It is a time to cleanse herself mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The moon time is considered a time of power, second only to the ability of the Great Spirit to give life. That is how strong that power is.

Women can ask Grandmother Moon for direction in life, for wisdom, and for help for her children and others. Grandmother Moon can give her healing and balancing energy to women.

Some teachings say that when women are on their moon time, the Creator comes closer to them.

When women are on their moon time, their power is at its strongest and this is acknowledged in that they do not prepare foods or medicines, take part in ceremonies or use the pipes and other sacred items. The moon time is a ceremony of life for women and a time for renewal. The moon time is the time for women to relax and take it easy. All the chores are done by other family members. It is a time for women to think about themselves, their families, their relatives or anyone they think needs help. It is a time of reflection.

TEACHINGS ON THE MOONTIME

In the past, when a young woman had her first moon time her aunts or grandmothers would take her to a small lodge where she would be close to the natural world. The young woman is sacred at that time. She is now able to give life. She would be given the teachings about her new life from her mother, grandmothers or aunts. She would be taught about her role as a woman in the community.

HONOURING GRANDMOTHER MOON

Some teachings say that when the moon is full, women can ask Grandmother Moon to give them new energy.

Around the full moon, women on their moon time become very intuitive. It is an opportunity for women to take time for themselves to help foster their intuition and to have strong dreams.

When the moon is full, a woman can do a ceremony to honour and seek guidance from Grandmother Moon. The ceremony can be simple. A woman can sit on the ground and ask Grandmother Moon to replenish her body with new energy. She takes water with her which she asks the Moon to bless. That water then becomes her medicine.

Full moon ceremonies are held in many communities. The ceremony may differ from place to place. It is held either on the Full Moon or two days before or after the Full Moon, depending on the teachings given to the women in a particular community. Women gather in a circle, from the youngest to the oldest, representing the life journey from infancy to old age. They drum and sing. Tobacco is placed in the fire and the women ask for the cleansing of the earth, as the water, the lakes, rivers and oceans, constitute womens' responsibility.

In some communities, at the Full Moon ceremony, each woman brings a container of water. They pour this water into one bowl and this water is offered to Grandmother Moon and to the Earth. At the end of the ceremony, the water, now called moon water, can be used as a medicine during the month.

As our awareness and knowledge of our traditions and culture increases, so does our honour and respect for these ways. This has not always been the case in our communities. There are always those who present themselves as Healers, Elders or Medicine People who have not earned that title and may use the teachings and medicines in the wrong way. It is important for everyone, especially young people, to be aware of this and to exercise caution when they seek healing, teachings or advice. It is advisable to consult with people whom you trust to get referrals to respected and recognized Traditional Elders, Healers or Medicine People.

Other pamphlets in this series include:

- C Approaching Healers, Elders and Medicine People
- C Fasting
- C Clans
- C Your Name and Colours
- C Feasts and Give Aways
- C Sweat Lodge
- C Traditional Healing
- C Four Sacred Medicines
- C Sacred Items and Bundles

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“Native Teachings are about a Way of Life”

The information in this pamphlet is only a small portion of the many and extensive Native Teachings that exist. Teachings vary from First Nation to First Nation and even from one geographic region to another. For more information, please consult with a Traditional Elder, Healer or Medicine Person.

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