

10 Ways to Celebrate Samhain (or Halloween)



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Popularly celebrated as Halloween, October 31st is the pagan holiday of Samhain (pronounced SOW-un).

In addition to its role as a harvest festival, Samhain is a time when the veil between the worlds of form and spirit thin, and the wheel of the year transitions into its colder and darker half. At Samhain, we feel called to bravely gaze beyond this veil: into our shadows, our fears, and our darkest depths. We're also inspired to make contact with our ancestors and beloved dead.

Nourish your spirit by exploring the more profound aspects of Samhain with these spells, rituals, and celebration ideas.

IDEA #1: CREATE AN ALTAR TO YOUR ANCESTORS OR BELOVED DEAD

In cultures around the world, Samhain is a time to honor our family members who have come before as well as our beloved dead.

Place a candle near a small framed picture of anyone in the spirit realm whom you'd like to honor, as well as one or more offerings of something they enjoyed during life (a favorite flower, food, or drink for example).



IDEA #2: TURN OFF THE LIGHTS

It's simple but profound: take a night off from electric lighting and to light your home with nothing but candles and maybe firelight. There couldn't be a better night for it than Samhain, as we honor and embrace all things darkness-related.

You might also consider playing some music that fits the mood, such as Dead Can Dance or Dead Man's Bones (although listening to the sound of the wind, the rain, or a crackling fire are great ideas too).

IDEA #3: PULL OUT YOUR TAROT DECK

Samhain's thin veil lends itself to communication with the other side. So get out that tarot deck and start reading. Or, other forms of divination are also appropriate, such as oracle cards, a pendulum, spirit dice, or the I Ching.

Not sure how to work with cards? [Here's a free miniclass on Intuitive Card Reading.](#)

IDEA #4: GAZE

Do you have a crystal ball? Try gazing into it on Samhain night. If you've never done this before, ask a question, relax your body, and gaze. Let your eyes go out of focus, and then see what you see in your mind's eye, as well as with your physical eyes.

IDEA #5: SERVE A DUMB SUPPER

To host a dumb supper for Samhain, invite any deceased people you'd like, and then set the table for them. Imagining their presence at your table, cook and serve a meal precisely as you would for a living dinner party, but be sure not utter a single word.

Let all communication be silent.

IDEA #6: FACE YOUR FEARS

“Where there's fear, there's power.”

On Samhain, we are poised to tap into that power. In much the same way we want to dress up like scary creatures and watch horror films for fun, we can look at our fears with a sense of playfulness, which can in turn allow them to empower us rather than paralyze us.

So get out your journal and write 3-5 of your biggest fears. Take a little time with each one and let yourself visit the worst case scenario: what is it you're so terrified of? What if you could actually survive it? Or what if it's not actually so scary after all? Or what if it is scary, but it's so unlikely that it will ever occur that you can laugh at the fact that you even harbor this fear at all?

The more you can face your fears with courage and even humor, the better friends you become with them and the less likely they are to debilitate you and steal your power.

IDEA #7: LEAVE AN OFFERING FOR HECATE

The Greek goddess Hecate embodies deep magic and the crone archetype. A powerful deity who rules over the crossroads (a transition point from one realm to the next, much like Samhain), she can help us tap into our own vast wellspring of wisdom and power.

If you want to invoke Hecate's support by leaving her an offering, wine, honey, or honey cakes are all good choices and can all be left on the earth itself.

IDEA #8: COMMUNICATE WITH A CAT

Traditionally considered psychopomps (beings who help escort spirits to the realm of the dead), cats are experts at gazing beyond the veil of form and spirit.

Communing deeply with a feline friend can be a wonderful Samhain activity. Also consider presenting the cat with an offering, such as a new toy or special treat.

#9: BURN SWEETGRASS OR COPAL INCENSE

Sweetgrass braids or incense can be burned or smudged to open a doorway of light between this realm and the next, and to summon sweet spirits into your home. Copal incense can be used in a similar way. Both have the added benefit of cleansing away and banishing all forms of negative energy and creating a bubble of powerful spiritual protection: ideal magic for Samhain.

IDEA #10: DECORATE WITH MARIGOLDS

The magic of marigolds opens the door between the worlds and facilitates a sense of connection between the living and the dead. Marigold is associated with death and rebirth in both India and South America, and is frequently featured on altars to deceased loved ones in Dia de los Muertos celebrations.

Whatever celebration activities you choose, honor the magical energies at work and go deep into this most magical of magical holidays.

If you try one of these Samhain celebration ideas, I'd love to hear your thoughts and experiences. Feel free to email me or let me know in the [Witchful Ways Facebook group](#)!

Are you ready to ramp up your witchcraft and spiritual practices? No tools required!

If you're looking for a community of like minded people that are working towards Living a Magickal Life Daily, then I'd love for you to check out [The Circle Membership](#).

We're always all about You Do You Witchypoo!

