

# SUMMER SOLSTICE JUNE 20<sup>th</sup> 2016

*This info compiled by Amalya from the web*

*[with Amalya's thoughts added in brackets, and red type, here and there!]*

**2016 June Solstice in Escondido, California, USA is on  
Monday, June 20, 2016 at 3:34 PM PDT**

Sunrise in S. Calif is 5:42 am and Sunset is 8:08pm =14:25 of daylight

## I) ABOUT THE ASTROLOGICAL ASPECT of the SOLSTICE:

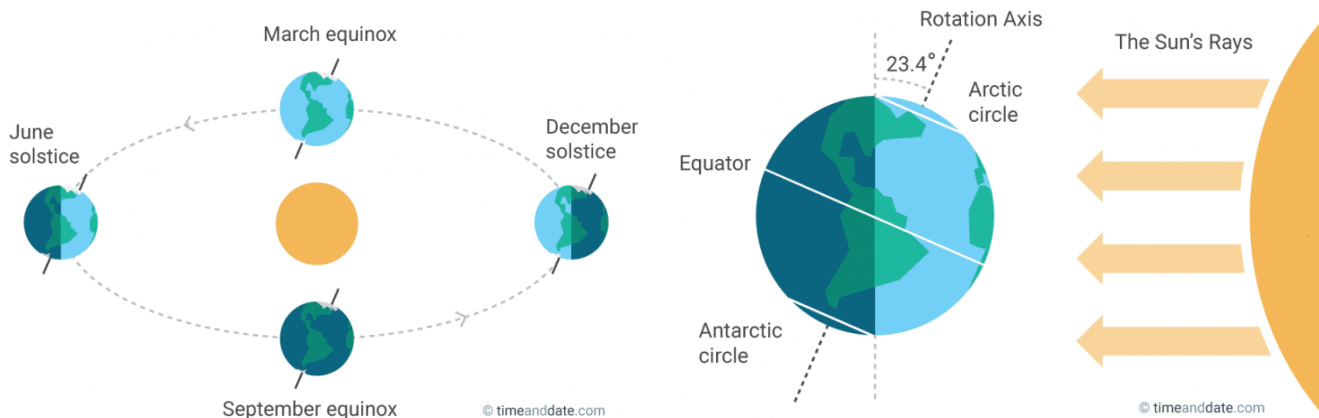
### Scientifically speaking:

(The following info from: <http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/june-solstice.html>)

The June solstice is the Summer Solstice in the Northern Hemisphere and the Winter Solstice the Southern Hemisphere. The date varies between June 20 and June 22, depending on the year, and which time zone you are in.

A solstice happens when the sun's zenith is at its furthest point from the equator. On the June solstice, it reaches its northernmost point and the Earth's North Pole tilts directly towards the sun, at about 23.4 degrees.

It's also known as the northern solstice because it occurs when the sun is directly over the Tropic of Cancer in the Northern Hemisphere.



It occurs at the same time...all over the world. Technically, the June Solstice is the exact instant of time when the Sun is directly overhead the Tropic of Cancer.

In 2016, this will happen on June 20 at 22:35 UTC. (**UTC =Coordinated Universal Time. UTC is the agreed upon time standard across the world.**) Because of time zones differences, the event will take place on June 21 at locations that are more than one and a half hours ahead of UTC. That includes all of Europe, Russia and Asia.

Earth does not move at a constant speed in its elliptical orbit. Therefore the seasons are not of equal length: the times taken for the sun to move from the March Equinox to the June Solstice, to the September equinox, to the December solstice, and back to the March equinox are roughly 92.8, 93.6, 89.8 and 89.0 days respectively.

The consolation in the Northern Hemisphere is that spring and summer last longer than autumn and winter.

- ❖ **For a great descriptive animation of Earth's orbit and the wobble effect**, check out this YouTube video: "*The Axis of Rotation*" <https://youtu.be/9n04SEzuvXo>
- ❖ **Excellent animation** "*Earth's motion around the Sun, not as simple as I thought*" great visuals and technical description of earth's orbit: <https://youtu.be/82p-DYgGFjI>
- ❖ **Short and simple animation of Earth rotating around sun** from a perspective looking down on top of the north pole and describes the "orbital plane" and the "ecliptic" well. "What Causes the Seasons": [https://youtu.be/q4\\_-R1vnJyw](https://youtu.be/q4_-R1vnJyw)
- ❖ **Simple and easy animation of Earths seasons:** "Mechanism of the Seasons" by Kurdistan Planetarium <https://youtu.be/WLRA87TKXLM>
- ❖ Another animation similar to the one above, add's some add'l visuals but then repeats the Kurdistan video in poorer quality. <https://youtu.be/rcquRMaVSKU>

(Info below is continued from: <http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/june-solstice.html>)

## Meaning of Solstice

'Solstice' (Latin: 'solstitium') means 'sun-stopping' [or literally 'sun stands still' because seen from the earth it looks like the sun stops its progression northward, and starts to move back south.] The point on the horizon where the sun appears to rise and set, stops and reverses direction after this day. On the solstice, the sun does not rise precisely in the east, but rises to the north of east and sets to the north of west, meaning it's visible in the sky for a longer period of time. [...giving us in Southern California about 14 hours and 25 min of daylight or 4 hours and 33 min more daytime than on the December Solstice.]

Although the June solstice marks the first day of astronomical summer, it's more common to use meteorological definitions of seasons, making the solstice midsummer or midwinter.

## Solstices in Culture

Over the centuries, the June solstice has inspired countless festivals, midsummer celebrations and religious holidays.

STONEHENGE: One of the world's oldest evidence of the Summer Solstice's importance in culture is Stonehenge in England, a megalithic structure which clearly marks the moment of the June Solstice.

Below From: [http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/lithathesummersolstice/p/Litha\\_History.htm](http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/lithathesummersolstice/p/Litha_History.htm)

**The Romans named the month of June after a Goddess:** The Romans, who had a festival for anything and everything, celebrated this time as sacred to Juno, the wife of Jupiter and goddess of women and childbirth. She is also called *Juno Luna* and blesses women with the privilege of menstruation. The month of June was named for her, and because Juno was the patroness of marriage, her month remains an ever-popular time for weddings. This time of year was also sacred to Vesta, goddess of the hearth. The matrons of Rome entered her temple on Midsummer and made offerings of salted meal for eight days, in hopes that she would confer her blessings upon their homes.

## Midsummer for Modern Pagans

Litha has often been a source of contention among modern Pagan and Wiccan groups, because there's always been a question about whether or not Midsummer was truly celebrated by the ancients. While there's scholarly evidence to indicate that it was indeed observed, there were suggestions made by [Gerald Gardner](#), the founder of modern Wicca, that the solar festivals (the solstices and equinoxes) were actually added later and imported from the Middle East. Regardless of the origins, many modern Wiccans and other Pagans do choose to celebrate Litha every year in June.

In some traditions, Litha is a time at which there is a battle between light and dark. The [Oak King](#) is seen as the ruler of the year between winter solstice and summer solstice, and the Holly King from summer to winter. At each solstice they battle for power, and while the Oak King may be in charge of things at the beginning of June, by the end of Midsummer he is defeated by the Holly King.

This is a time of year of brightness and warmth. Crops are growing in their fields with the heat of the sun, but may require water to keep them alive. The power of the sun at Midsummer is at its most potent, and the earth is fertile with the bounty of growing life.

## II) NAMES: also called MIDSUMMER or LITHA or St. John's Day

**MIDSUMMER:** Midsummer is a seasonal designation used more by Meteorologists, laypersons, pagans and poets. Midsummer marks the ancient middle of Summer, or astronomical beginning of Summer (Summer Solstice), or for Christians, the nativity of St. John the Baptist.

**LITHA:** [Use of the word Litha for Summer Solstice/Midsummer appears to be a more modern adoption. I couldn't find any accurate reference to when Litha first came to be a synonym for Midsummer. I also looked up Gerald Gardner's original book on "Witchcraft Today" which inspired the WICCA movement, published in England in 1954, and the word Litha was not used, only Midsummer. But I did find some clues below which merit further research!...]

PER WIKIPEDIA: Midsummer is also sometimes referred to by some [Neopagans](#) as Litha,<sup>[3]</sup> stemming from [Bede's](#) *De temporum ratione* which provides Anglo-Saxon names for the months roughly corresponding to June and July as *se Ærra Līpa* and *se Æfterra Līpa* (the "early Litha month" and the "later Litha month")  
[Bede was a monk of North England who wrote "The Reckoning of Time" in Latin in 725 in which he describes a variety of ancient calendars including the Anglo-Saxon calendar and the Julian calendar and tries to calculate the date of Easter, based on the Hebrew Bible.]

ALSO PER WIKIPEDIA (under "Wheel of the Year"): **Midsummer (Litha)**

Main articles: [Midsummer](#) and [Summer solstice](#)

Some Wiccan traditions call the festival *Litha*, a name occurring in [Bede's](#) *Reckoning of Time (De Temporum Ratione, 7th century)*, which preserves a list of the (then-obsolete) Anglo-Saxon names for the twelve months. *Ærra Liða* (*first or preceding Liða*) roughly corresponds to June in the Gregorian calendar, and *Æfterra Liða* (*following Liða*) to July. Bede writes that "Litha means *gentle* or *navigable*, because in both these months the calm breezes are gentle and they were wont to sail upon the smooth sea".<sup>[18]</sup>

So Bede may have used the word Litha in reference to June/July, but it is uncertain when Litha came to be adopted as a name for Midsummer...maybe not until the 1960s or 70's. Although Suzan of Goddess Gift, makes a reference to Wikipedia saying that the pagan author, Aidan A. Kelly, made it popular in the 1970's. (See reference below.) (NOTE TO SELF: Do further research into his book "Inventing Witchcraft, c.2008)

I also found a description for the use of the word Litha given by Raven Grimassi in his book "Encyclopedia of Wicca and Witchcraft" c. 2003, pg. 398. Mr. Grimassi indicates that J.R.R. Tolkien used the word *Lithe* to denote Midsummer's Day; and he credits the modern usage of the word to writers of the late 70's like Starhawk in her book "Spiral Dance".

**ST. JOHN'S DAY:** [Christianity appropriated the ancient widely celebrated Midsummer festivals as St. John's (the Baptist) feast day--because once again Patriarchy could not accept time honored earth's seasonal celebration traditions of joyful, sensual, and symbolic expression. Midsummer celebrations were already in wide practice much to the annoyance of the Christian fathers at that time...]

For example, (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Midsummer>): In the 7th century, [Saint Eligius](#) (died 659/60) [big on practicing self mortification] warned the recently converted inhabitants of Flanders (Belgium) against the age-old pagan solstice celebrations. According to the *Vita* by his companion [Ouen](#) (Audion or Saint Ouen or Dado, bishop of Rouen, France), he'd say: "No Christian on the feast of Saint John or the solemnity of any other saint performs *solestitia* [summer solstice rites] or dancing or leaping or diabolical chants."

And another example,

On June 20, 1653 the Nuremberg town council issued the following order: "Where experience herefore have shown, that after the old heathen use, on John's day in every year, in the country, as well in towns as villages, money and wood have been gathered by young folk, and there upon the so-called *sonnenwendtor zimmet fire* kindled, and thereat winebibbing, dancing about the said fire, leaping over the same, with burning of sundry herbs and flowers, and setting of brands from the said fire in the fields, and in many other ways all manner of superstitious work carried on — Therefore the Hon. Council of Nürnberg town neither can nor ought to forbear to do away with all such unbecoming superstition, paganism, and peril of fire on this coming day of St. John."<sup>[18]</sup>

[But ancient practices tied to the earth's seasons are not easily eliminated] and Bonfires are still a custom in many areas of Germany [and other countries]. People gather to watch the bonfire and celebrate solstice.

[PS: Great word to reclaim!.... "Solestita" for "Summer solstice rites"]

### III) FIRE FESTIVALS

[from; <http://hubpages.com/holidays/The-Magic-of-Midsummer-A-Fire-Festival-of-the-Old-Religion-Pagan-Summer-Sabbat>]

Many traditions were practiced on the longest day of the year (Midsummer); one of the major traditions being that of the lighting and enjoying a luminous bonfire. Fire is the element of the Sun, obviously signifying the season of Summer...a season of warmth and growth. So it is only necessary to welcome the Sun's triumphant full reign of the sky with a large bonfire. Other ancient ways in which to use the element of fire in celebrating the arrival of Summer and the Sun King was to send a wheel lit on fire down a hill in order to demonstrate the great dance of the Sun. [Note the ancient symbol of SUNWHEELS, the swastika, was in use for eons in many cultures around the world before Hitler denigrated it.]

By Amalya~ All around the world bonfires are an old tradition for Summer solstice. Reasons for a bonfire:

- 1) may be **symbolic**... to have hilltop bonfires that bridged earth to heaven, to honor the height and strength of the sun and celebrate the power of sun over darkness, and chase away evil (word "bonfire" maybe from "banefire" as in "to remove banes, curses or woes", or "Bonfire" as in the burning of animal bones to ward off evil spirits)...
- 2) or **superstitious (aka magical)** to purify the land or animals with the smoke, ashes and herbs which were thought to be most potent at midsummer...
- 3) or **practical** to burn things no longer needed.
- 4) and simply because it is powerful, magical and FUN!

### IV) MORE: For further inspirations see these articles on the web

- ❖ <http://www.patheos.com/blogs/panmankey/2014/06/the-ancient-nature-of-midsummer/>
- ❖ "Preparing for Litha" from Greenhaven: A Pagan Tradition: <http://greenhaventradition.weebly.com/litha.html>
- ❖ "Litha Legends and Lore" by Patti Wigington <http://paganwiccan.about.com/od/lithathesummersolstice/a/LithaFolklore.htm>
- ❖ **History and Meaning of The Wheel of the Year**  
(below copied from [Goddess-Gift website](#) and she references Wikipedia but doesn't give a direct link.)

The Wheel of the Year is a Wiccan and Neopagan term for the annual cycle of the Earth's seasons. It consists of eight festivals, spaced at approximately even intervals

throughout the year [an average of about 45 days apart]. These festivals are referred to by Wiccans as Sabbats.

While the term Sabbat originated from Abrahamic faiths such as Judaism and Christianity and is of Hebrew origin, the festivals themselves have historical origins in Celtic and Germanic pre-Christian feasts, and the Wheel of the Year, as has developed in modern Neopaganism and Modern Wicca, is really a combination of the two cultures' solstice and equinox celebrations.

When melded together, two somewhat unrelated European Festival Cycles merge to form eight festivals in modern renderings. Together, these festivals are understood by some to be the Bronze Age religious festivals of Europe.

As with all cultures' use of festivals and traditions, these festivals have been utilized by European cultures in both the pre and post Christian eras as traditional times for the community to celebrate the planting and harvest seasons.

The Wheel of the Year has been important to many people both ancient and modern, from various religious as well as cultural and secular viewpoints.

In many forms of Neopaganism, natural processes are seen as following a continuous cycle. The passing of time is also seen as cyclical, and is represented by a circle or wheel.

The progression of birth, life, decline and death, as experienced in human lives, is echoed in the progression of the seasons. Wiccans also see this cycle as echoing the life, death and rebirth of the Horned God and the fertility of the Goddess.

While most of these names derive from historical Celtic and Germanic festivals, the non-traditional names Litha and Mabon, which have become popular in North American Wicca, were introduced by Aidan Kelly in the 1970s.

The word "sabbat" itself comes from the witches' sabbath or sabbat attested to in Early Modern witch trials.

Source: Wikipedia

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- ❖ Also a good resource book: "Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft" by Raven Grimassi. Llewellyn Publications 2003.

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## MYTHICAL ASPECTS & SYMBOLISM of Midsummer ~ Why we celebrate it ~ Amalya's summary...

[Below written by Amalya (Amy Peck M.A.) 6-17-16.  
AmalyaGoddess@aol.com [www.Goddess-Studio.com](http://www.Goddess-Studio.com)]

1. We celebrate midsummer to acknowledge the longest day of the year and the point in the year at which the days start to become shorter again—and to affirm the height of the sun's power. This was considered a magical time in which to harvest medicinal herbs and plants that were ripe with the sun's power. And the sun at it's height of heat and strength was at its most powerful to banish darkness and illness.

2. In Pagan mythology, we can celebrate the Goddess as fully pregnant just as the earth is pregnant with the coming harvest's abundance. Also the month of June was named after the Roman Goddess, Juno, wife of Jupiter and goddess of women and childbirth and patroness of marriage. (And thus June was a sacred time for handfastings and weddings!) And we can honor the Sun God too...with the Sun at it's peak, the Sun God is at his peak of life, and we celebrate his approaching fatherhood as well.

3. In ancient times, we celebrated midsummer to mark the shifting of the seasons for the purpose of agricultural planning. And today, as well, we can still celebrate midsummer as a marker in the cycle of the annual seasonal changes and let it be a catalyst for introspection of our inner seasonal passages too...

4. Now is a great time to assess our creative aspects and ask ourselves what needs further illumination in my life and how can I fuel the fires of my creativity...what am I feeling heavily pregnant with and how can I nurture and love myself during this final time of gestation? What fruits do I want my labors to bear forth? Or what aspects of my self/life need the heat of purifying flames or the light of healing and how do I want to receive this illumination?

What things or aspects do I want to Enlighten or Empower in my life? Or what BRILLIANCE do I want to REFLECT out to the world? What aspects of illumination do I want to "catch" and "radiate"?

### SYMBOLISM and INTENT of crafting SUN CATCHERS

REMEMBER in the context of these Sabbat Celebrations, making a craft is not about the end product... it is not about making a particular "thing". And there is no "Right or Wrong" to what you create. It is about the INTENTION of your process and what the process of creating reveals to you about yourself. Crafting together is also about enjoying and strengthening a shared community of sacred female creativity. In this way we empower ourselves, each other and the ideal of the Sacred Feminine.

So, with that in mind, I encourage you to find a deeper meaning in your crafting by holding a clear intent with your process and focusing on the symbolism you imbue into the making of the item. This is the MAGIC!



Today, we are crafting SUN CATCHERS! With the sun at its peak, a "sun catcher" is a symbolic item that can serve as a focal point to guide you to think about what "rays" of life do you want to "catch" and what "rays" do you want to reflect back out? Or in other words, what are some moments of brilliance or memories of bright times in your life that you'd like to have dance around you in a mobile? The gems, stones and crystals can be the tokens of the "gems of your life" you may want to recall in the "darker" times when you need a boost of hope; and the mirrors can be the wisdom rays you have captured that can be reflected out to others to give them hope!

Think about all the ways in which a Sun catcher mobile can be symbolic of the Solstice/midsummer and what nuances of meaning and intent you can put into it, and thereby you shall create a very special and magical talisman.

Pick out some gems, stones or bobbles and mirrors that speak to you, and lay them out in front of you and then perhaps you may like to write down on a slip of paper what each stone and mirror represents. When you have finished your mobile, give your sun catcher a title or short description of what the sun catcher is to you. And we will share this in our circle after which will help to seal the empowerment of the crafting intent.

~\*~\**Blessed BE!*