

Issue 1: Samhain 2012

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Samhain (October 31)

Also known as the End of Summer Festival, the Third Harvest, the Feast of the Dead, Samana, the Day of the Dead, Old Hallowmas, the Vigil of Saman, Shadowfest, Samhuinn, All Hallows' Eve (which is actually celebrated on November 7), and Halloween.

This is the second day of the year when the veil between worlds is lifted, the other being Beltane. Communicating with ancestors and the dead who have not yet been reborn is done with far greater ease. Many practitioners use this time to study the Dark Mysteries, those surrounding death and rebirth, and to honour the Dark Mother (the Crone) and Dark Father (Lord of the Underworld). This Sabbat marks the death of the Sun God, who takes His place as the Lord of the Underworld. It is a solemn Sabbat, out of respect for the mourning Goddess.

Originally, this Sabbat was celebrated in Celtic countries by households leaving food offerings on their altars and their doorsteps for consumption by the "wandering dead". Many modern practitioners continue this practice. Candles are often lit and left in a window to help guide the spirits of ancestors and loved ones home. Some practitioners celebrate with a Dumb Supper; instead of a usual feast, an extra place is set at the table for the dead, and the meal is eaten quietly. Apples are sometimes buried at roadsides and on paths to help provide for the dead who are lost or have no descendants to help them. Originally, turnips were hollowed out and carved to look like protective spirits, guarding the household from any

pranksters or chaotic/evil entities; in modern times, the turnips have been replaced by pumpkins.

The faery folk are very active on this night, reveling in the lowered veil. They are known for pulling pranks on unsuspecting people or animals. Traveling after dark was not advised in Druidic times, due to the highly increased spirit activity. But if travel was necessary, people would dress in ghosts, disguise themselves with straw, or dress as the opposite gender to confuse the faery folk and Nature Spirits. This tradition has given rise to the practice of "trick-or-treating" by children in modern times, with the children dressing in various costumes and asking neighbors for candy and other treats; if they are denied, they are seen as being entitled to pull a trick on the offending neighbor.

Ancient customs hold that animals were slaughtered at this time and preserved or frozen for the ensuing winter months. All crops were to be harvested prior to Samhain. Any crops that were still in the fields on Samhain were considered taboo, and were to be left for the Nature Spirits. Bonfires were also lit. The bones of any animals eaten during the Samhain feasts were tossed into the fire as offerings to the gods for plentiful livestock in the coming year. The ashes were then gathered the following morning and spread over the harvested fields to protect and bless the land.

Deities: all Dark gods and goddesses, Hecate, Persephone, Morrigan, Hades, Pluto, Herne

Symbols: carved gourds, black cats, Jack-O-Lanterns, besoms

Herbs/Flowers: mugwort (strength, enhance psychic powers, protection, prophetic dreams, healing, astral projection), allspice (money, luck, healing), broom (purification, protection, divination), catnip (cat magick, love, beauty, happiness), deadly nightshade (astral projection, induce visions), mandrake (protection, fertility, money, love, health), oak (the God, protection, health, money, fertility, luck), sage (longevity, wisdom, protection, wishes), straw (luck, attracting faery folk)

Foods: turnip, pumpkin, carrot, apples, gourds, nuts, mulled wines, beef, pork, poultry

Incense: heliotrope (prophetic dreams, healing, wealth), mint (money, lust, healing, protection, travel magick), nutmeg (luck, money, health, fidelity), cinnamon (spirituality, success, healing, enhances psychic powers, lust, protection, love)

Colors: black, orange, white, silver, gold

Crystals: jet (protection, anti-nightmare, luck, divination, health), obsidian (protection, grounding, divination, peace), smoky quartz (grounding, anti-depression, banish negativity), all black stones

Activities: Feast of the Dead, or Dumb Supper; divination of any type; carving pumpkins, turnips, or gourds; decorating the house or altar with fall flowers and leaves. Remembering your ancestors and departed loved ones, whether it is by telling stories about them, watching home videos, looking at photo albums, or making scrapbooks in their honour; bonfires; protection, prosperity and health magick; making new goals for yourself, and completing old tasks. Taking children

“trick-or-treating”, or handing out candy or treats to children who come to your door. Give thanks to the Nature Spirits for a successful harvest, leaving them offerings for the coming year.

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Yule (approx. December 21)

Yule occurs on the Winter Solstice, varying from year to year, but usually falling between December 20 and December 23. The Winter Solstice marks the longest night and shortest day of the year. It is on this Sabbat that the Goddess gives birth to the Sun God. Beginning on the next day, the amount of daylight grows every day, until it reaches its peak at Litha, the Summer Solstice, which marks the peak of the Sun God’s power.

Yule marks the first promise of spring, with the cold winter nights shrinking slightly in size everyday afterward. The Christian equivalent of Yule is Christmas Day, which is said to be the birthday of the Christian savior, Jesus Christ, and is celebrated on December 25. It should be noted, however, that Christians did not celebrate Christ’s birth on December 25 until the third century CE. Prior to the third century CE, it is usually cited that Christ’s birthday was celebrated in September. Most scholars believe this change in Christian doctrine was made to help convert pagan practitioners; by moving the Christian celebration of the birth of their savior to coincide with the pagan celebrations of the rebirth of their Sun God, it was thought to make the Christian faith more appealing and familiar to the pagans.

One tradition is the Yule log; this was usually an Ash log that was large enough to burn steadily for 12 days before being ceremoniously extinguished. It would be lit with a piece of the previous year's Yule log, which was saved for just that purpose. Modern hearths are rarely able to hold such a log, so modern practitioners will either burn a more practically sized Ash log, or they will find a smaller branch of oak, pine, or ash, flatten it on one side, then drill three holes in the topside of the branch to hold three candles. Depending on the practitioner, these can be red, green and white (celebrating the season), green, gold and black (in honour of the Sun God), or white, red and black (in honour of the Triple Goddess). These candle logs can also be decorated with greenery, red and gold ribbons, seasonal flowers, cloves, and even dusted with flour to simulate the winter snow.

Deities: all newborn gods, Sun Gods, Mother Goddesses, and Triple Goddesses, Dagda, Brigid, Isis, Demeter, Gaia, Diana, Apollo, Ra, Odin, Lugh, the Oak King, Cernunnos, the Green Man

Symbols: Yule log (traditional or the smaller modern version which holds three candles), evergreen boughs, evergreen wreathes, holly, mistletoe, poinsettias, Christmas cactus, Christmas trees

Herbs/Flowers: mulberry (protection, strength), blessed thistle (purification), all evergreens, frankincense (protection, spirituality), holly (protection, luck, dream magick), laurel (protection, enhance psychic powers, healing, purification, strength), mistletoe (protection, love, fertility, health), oak (protection, health, money, healing, fertility, luck, the God), sage (longevity, wisdom, protection, wishes), ash (protection, prosperity, health, the Sun God)

Foods: cookies, caraway cakes, apple cider, fruits, nuts, pork, turkey, eggnog, ginger tea, wassail, lamb's wool (ale with sugar, nutmeg, and roasted apples)

Incense: pine (healing, protection, fertility, money), cedar (healing, purification, money, protection), mulberry (protection, strength), cinnamon (spirituality, success, healing, enhances psychic powers, protection, love)

Colors: red, green, gold, white, silver, yellow, orange

Crystals: ruby (wealth, protection, joy, anti-nightmare), bloodstone (healing, victory, courage, legal matters, wealth, strength, power, business matters, agriculture), garnet (healing, protection, strength), emerald (love, money, enhances psychic powers, protection), diamond (spirituality, protection, courage, peace, reconciliation, healing, strength)

Activities: Caroling; Burning the Yule log; Bonfires, to celebrate the return of the Sun God; planning for the coming year; decorating the Yule/Christmas tree; exchanging presents; kissing under the mistletoe; any magick to increase peace, harmony, love and happiness.

It should be noted that the abundance of evergreen and other plant material found in homes at this time is done as an invitation for the local Nature Spirits to come inside and join in the celebration. After all, the Sun God is of great importance to all of Nature, not just mankind.

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[Moonwater Chalcedony Ashwood](#) is a High Priestess, Ordained Minister and co-founder of the [Sisters Beneath the Whispering Willows school](#). She lives surrounded by the beauty of Central Ontario, Canada with her husband. She has a BA in

Honors History. She is a Reiki Master, writer, and family historian. Originally initiated into Celtic Wicca, she now practices Eclectic Wicca, leaning strongly towards the Goddess in Her various aspects.

Ritual to Welcome in the Morrigan

You will need:

1 Red candle to represent the Morrigan

1 White candle for Spirit

1 Candle to represent yourself in a color you like (if you are sending healing to a specific person afterward, you can use the color of your choice for them).

1 Black candle to represent power, protection, and letting go of negativity

Something to carve candles with

Oils for the candles, if there aren't specific ones; Virgin Olive Oil is always a good choice.

I bought candelabra that has 4 places and put candles to represent earth, air, fire, and water. But this is optional. I also sprayed the glass containers with candle mold releasent spray so it will be easy to get them out when they are burned down. PAM cooking spray will work just as well.

A statue, stones, pictures, totems, or anything to represent the Morrigan that you might like to put on your altar. I use my kitchen counter as my altar. If you want to put some ground beef or meat on a container that you plan to use later for your supper, that would be good. After all, it is definitely the color red. This is also optional, but if you want to prick your finger a tiny bit and put some blood on cotton square, this is also okay.

Welcoming in the Morrigan

Cast the Circle.

Dress your candles, if there is something you want to carve on them, go ahead before you use the oils.

On the red Morrigan candle, I carved Morrigan, Badb, and Macha. I used Hecate oil on that candle. On the white candle, I used ritual oil and carved Spirit. I used an orange candle for myself since I am a Leo, and carved my name on it plus the names of two people I was going to do a specific healing for after the ritual and used Goddess oil on it.

On the black candle, I carved Power, Protection, and Letting Go of Negativity on it, and used High John the Conqueror Oil on it. I used Sandalwood incense.

I read each of these poem/prayers that I wrote, three times. That helps build up the power and three is one of the sacred numbers. You can chant them if you wish.

A Call to Morrigan

Morrigan you Raven, you,

Loving and protective

But so fierce, too!

Morrigan and your aspects,

With our enemies

You'll 'clear the decks'!

Morrigan, come talk with me

Show me what I need

To know and 'see'.

Morrigan with your two spears,

Teach me the courage

To face my fears.

Morrigan with your tattoos,

Teach me all the Mysteries

That I can use.

Morrigan you Raven, you,

Loving and protective

But so fierce, too!

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Beth Clare Johnson

(Mystic Raven)

Mystic Amazon has studied Reiki with Diane Stein and has also done Shamanic training. She is a High Priestess of the [Order of the White Moon](#) and an Ordained Minister, currently co-teaching with HP Ka Wahine Ahi at [Sisters of the Rising Moon school](#). Divorced with two children, she now lives in Mississippi. Her hobbies include writing, folk art, folk magick, Reiki, and reading.

Mother's Gift

Approach, Daughter, and be not afraid. You know me by many names, Oya, Cybele, Kali, Isis, Aphrodite, Sophia, Hecate, Lilith, Inanna. I am the Void, the Dark Goddess, I was, before time and space existed, I am your Mother. This evening, we will journey into the heart of my realm, the Womb of Mother Night.

Close your eyes, relax, and breathe deeply, slowly, gently. Feel the world slipping away as you sink further into yourself. Relax and continue breathing deeply and gently as we enter the Darkness.

It is the dark of the longest night.

It is the dark of the primordial void.

It is the dark of the sea and rich earth.

It is the dark of my Womb.

This Darkness is a safe place, feel my embrace surround you; know you are protected within the Darkness, within my Womb.

Feel yourself floating freely within the void, gently flowing in the dark. Feel the swirling, nurturing energies of my Womb enfold you.

You sense a quickening, and suddenly, a spark of life, of light, emerges from the void. Focus on this light, watch it grow stronger, watch it glow brighter. As you continue looking at this light, allow it to fill you with warmth and love. And as you feel warmth and love grow within you, the light begins to fade, leaving in its place a Yuletide present, my gift to you.

As you approach this gift, what do you notice? What colour is the wrapping? Is there an inscription? What is its shape? Is it heavy or light?

When you are ready, open your gift.

Spend some time with your gift and experience it fully.

Accept your gift with joy and gratitude. Feel the warmth and love which this gift has given you. What will you do with this gift? Will you manifest it into the world or hold it close to your heart? This is my gift to you, to do with as you wish, a gift from Mother to Daughter.

It is time for you to leave the warmth of my Womb, but know you can return to the darkness whenever you need to feel nurturing and love.

Breathe deeply, begin to feel your body, solid around you, move your limbs, gently. When you are ready, open your eyes.

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Ajna DreamsAwake is an Adept of [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#). She is an eclectic Pagan, rediscovering Her Visionary Goddess Gifts.

Palmyra, Syria

Palmyra, Pearl of the Desert, is located 130 miles northeast of Damascus. A lush oasis, replete with natural springs, it is a rare gem in the midst of harsh, arid

deserts and unforgiving mountains. To the east, lies the Euphrates River, which allowed the flow of goods between Asia and the Roman Empire.

Palmyra, also known as Tadmor, was established in the third millennium BCE. By the 1st century it had become an important city along the Silk Road. It was an important source of water for the caravans traveling through, and its wealth grew as a result. The Temple of Al Lat was one of many structures erected during this time of affluence.

The ruins of the Temple of Al Lat rise in the western part of the city. A temple to Al Lat has stood at this site since at least the 1st century BCE, and it is likely this area has been sacred to Her for millennia. Destroyed by early Christians, the entire Temple complex now consists only of doors, lintels and some fluted columns, as well as statue of a lion, standing nearly 12 feet high, holding an Oryx (an antelope indigenous to the area). The lion is a symbol of Al Lat as a Warrior Goddess, protecting Her people. The statue has been restored and can now be found at the entrance to the Palmyra Museum.

Once the caravan routes moved to the north at the end of the 3rd century, Syria was no longer part of the Silk Road. Palmyra declined into a market town and was occupied for a time by a Roman garrison. The Temple of Al Lat remained in use for another century, until its destruction by zealous Christians. It was not enough to destroy Her Temple, they also knocked the head off Her statue, obliterated the facial features, hacked the statue to pieces, scattering them across the temple floor.

Warrior Queen

One of the greatest rulers to come out of Palmyra was Queen Zenobia, who reigned during the 3rd century. She has been described as being more beautiful than Cleopatra, with a dark complexion, pearly white teeth, and bright black eyes. She was fluent in Greek, Egyptian, Aramaic and Latin, and was famous for hosting literary salons and surrounding herself with philosophers and poets.

She is thought to be a descendant of Queen Dido of Carthage, as well as Cleopatra, and Zenobia herself referred to Alexandria as her ancestral city. She also comes from a long line of Syrian and Assyrian royalty, including the infamous Queen of Sheba.

Zenobia was the second wife to King Odaenathus, a supporter of the Roman Emperors. She often campaigned with her husband against the enemies of Rome. She has been described as carrying herself like a man, riding, hunting and drinking with her army.

With the assassination of her husband and his first-born son in 267 CE, power passed on to Zenobia, acting as regent for her own son. Some scholars suspect the ambitious queen may have had a hand in plotting the deaths.

By 269, Zenobia had expanded her empire, conquering Egypt, Anatolia, Syria, Palestine and Lebanon. Some surmise that her intention was to rule Rome itself. She controlled vital trade routes; cutting off grain supplies to Rome, issued her own coinage, and even took on the title Augusta.

These provocations led to the Roman Emperor Aurelian to declare war against her. In 274, she was captured by the banks of the Euphrates River and brought to Rome. She was paraded around the city in chains of gold. Her fate is uncertain after this, she may have died by suicide, illness or beheading. Another theory suggests she was freed by the Emperor and lived out her days in an elegant villa, becoming a prominent philosopher and socialite. Regardless of her fate, Zenobia almost certainly evokes images of Al Lat in Her role as Warrior Goddess.

Al-Lat, "the Mother of the Gods", is known by many names: "Greatest of All", "My Lady", or simply, "The Goddess". Al Lat has been associated with Goddesses of other cultures including Astarte, Aphrodite, Ishtar and Athena. She is the Earth Goddess who brings fertility and prosperity to the region, a Goddess of Mercy and Protection, of Oaths and Contracts. Her symbols include the crane, lions, the crescent moon, sheaves of wheat and frankincense.

Al Lat is a Triple Goddess, along with Al Uzza ("Mighty One") and Manat ("Old Woman"). Al-Uzza is the Goddess of the Morning Star, and women climb to the roof tops to invoke Her name. Manat is the Goddess of Fate or Time, and of Death. She is often portrayed as an old woman with a cup. In Islam, the Imams are referred to as "Sons of the Old Woman".

Al Lat's main sanctuary is at Ta'if, East of Mecca. Oaths were sealed with the vow "By the salt, by the fire, and by Al-Lat, who is the greatest of all!" In pre-Islamic times, She was worshipped as a black stone nestled in a silver casing (which appears to be in the shape of a vulva). She was served by seven priestesses, and Her worshippers, in total nudity, would circle the sacred relic seven times, once for each of the seven planets. With the rise of Islam, the Goddesses become known as the Daughters of Allah.

The founder of Islam, the prophet Muhammad was born in the latter half of the 6th century. His people, the Quraysh, worshipped the Goddess and even Muhammad was reported to have made offerings to Al-Uzza. Muhammad faced great difficulties as he attempted to convert his people to the new, monotheistic religion, they would not give up their Goddesses so easily. Muhammad placated his followers by allowing them to venerate the Daughters of Allah as intercessors of the God. An original passage in the Koran states:

*Have ye seen Lat, and 'Uzza,
And another, the third, Manat?
These are the exalted cranes
Whose intercession is to be hoped for.*

Once Islam became firmly entrenched in the Middle East, Muhammad retracted this inclusion of the Goddess in the Koran, accusing Satan of having put the offending words in his mouth. The last two lines of the above passage were expunged, and came to be known as the "Satanic Verses".

Despite the attempts of patriarchal religions to obliterate Goddess in the Middle East, She continues to play an active role in the lives of Her people. Al Lat and Al Uzza appear on top of almost every mosque and on the flags of several Muslim countries, as the Crescent (Al Lat) and the Star (Al Uzza).

An inscription on the lion statue at the Palmyra Museum reads "Al Lat to bless the one who does not spill blood against the temple". I would add "Al Lat forgive those who do".

<http://www.thaliatook.com/AMGG/arabtriple.html>

<http://www.amazon.com/Chronicle-Zenobia-Rebel-Judith-Weingarten/dp/1843862190>

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/23>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palmyra>

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Order of the White Moon Happenings

The High Priestess Council continues to relish the progress of Priestess Aethyia Danann through the work of Level IV of our White Moon Teachings. Level IV is our Ordination Level, for our future High Priestesses and legally ordained ministers.

In addition, [Beneath Whispering Willows](#), [Rising Moon](#) and [Sacred Three](#) were all delighted to welcome newly enrolled students, this quarter!

To learn more about the Order, please begin here: <http://orderwhitemoon.org/>

To learn more about the branch schools offering White Moon teachings under the Order's umbrella, please go here: <http://orderwhitemoon.org/schools/index.html> .

We also invite you to enjoy our Weekly Tarot Zodiac readings, posted for our sisters and for the wider community! <http://orderwhitemoon.org/zodiac/index.html>

HP Kerritwyn Ceannaire is the elected President of the Board, and the Head of the Order. She teaches White Moon lessons to women in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#), and to mtf transgendered seekers in the [Rainbow Moon School](#).

Samhain Blessings

*There's a crispness to the air,
An urgent need to hurry
Along our way, get back
To where our path began
So that we may look
Back and see how
Far we've come.
On the horizon burns
A thousand shades of
Red, orange and yellow
Set against the sharp
Grey lines of bare limbs
Swaying in the Fall wind.
In the breeze is the echo
Of children's laughter,
Footsteps along long
Deserted walkways,
Emotions long since passed.
It's Samhain, the time*

*Of our ancestors,
The feast of apples,
The third harvest,
The Crone's time.
My favourite time.
Blessed Be!*

© Moonwater Chalcedony Ashwood, October 9 2010

Samhain's Calling

*Energies are rising,
The veil is falling.
Samhain's calling.
Can you hear it?
I can hear it!*

*The tide is shifting,
The temperature's falling.
Samhain's calling.*

Can you feel it?

I can feel it!

*The trees are crimson,
Nature's party has begun.*

Samhain's calling.

Can you see it?

I can see it!

*Fires smolder in hearths,
Beckoning travelers home.*

Samhain's calling.

Can you smell it?

I can smell it!

*Hearty soups to warm
The soul in the cauldron boil.*

Samhain's calling.

Can you taste it?

I can taste it!

Soon the jack-o'-lanterns

*Will glow in windows,
Porches and doorways,
Beckoning our ancestors home.*

Samhain's calling.

Do you love it?

I'll always love it!

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[Moonwater Chalcedony Ashwood](#) is a High Priestess, Ordained Minister and co-founder of the [Sisters Beneath the Whispering Willows school](#). She lives surrounded by the beauty of Central Ontario, Canada with her husband. She has a BA in Honors History. She is a Reiki Master, writer, and family historian. Originally initiated into Celtic Wicca, she now practices Eclectic Wicca, leaning strongly towards the Goddess in Her various aspects.

Darkness Falls

*Darkness falls on the Mother
Just on one side of her though.
Sunshine shines on the Mother
Just on one side of her though.*

*Don't worry little children
Mother is warm and cozy.*

*Don't worry little children
Mother creates the best in the dark.*

*Mother has fire within her
Mother has water upon her
Mother has Air around her
Mother has her daughters about her.*

*Don't worry my daughters
The fire is your power
The water is your cleansing
The air is for your sweet spells.*

*Darkness falls on the Mother
Just on one side of her though.
Sunshine shines on the Mother
Just on one side of her though.*

In honor of the changing of the seasons, Blessed Be.

© Diana Spirit Whisperer

Diana Spirit Whisperer is a Level 1 student of HP Etain Feohwynn with the [Sisters In Feohwynn's Grove school](#). She has studied with various teachers of the Goddess spirituality for 15 years, and recently graduated with her doctorate in Naturopathy from Clayton College of Natural Health Studies.

Samhain House

*This night it rises and draws breath,
Its heartbeat growing stronger.
The veil thins and spirits fly
Back home to join loved ones.
The wheel turns and the New Year begins
With joy and celebration.
The fire place glows with flames of red
And shadows dance in circles.
Tonight we honor ancestors
And those who've gone before.
Samhain, Samhain, Blessed Be Samhain.
The celebration quiets,
The spirits fly,
As the fire dies and the shadows fade,
The heartbeat weakens, the breath is shallow
As the house once more is still.
A lone ember glows for the year anew,
Samhain, Samhain, Blessed Be Samhain.*

© Bella

Bella is a Student in [The Sacred Three Goddess School](#). Her interests include different Wiccan and Pagan Traditions. She loves Family and Friends, Books, Movies and Music.

Remembrance Cookies

These cookies can be made on Hallows' Eve. They can be shaped like people and the herb rosemary is added to the dough as a symbol of remembrance. Some of the cookies are eaten while telling stories or attributes of special ancestors, reminding us that we still have access to their strengths--or perhaps a predisposition to their weaknesses. The rest of the cookies are left outside by a bonfire as an offering. This can be a solemn ritual, but it need not be.

Ingredients:

- 1 1/2 c. powdered sugar
- 1 c. butter or margarine (softened)
- 1 egg
- 2 t. vanilla
- 1 t. almond extract
- 2 1/2 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 t. baking soda
- 1 t. cream of tartar
- 1 1/2 T. chopped rosemary

Heat oven 375 degrees. In a large bowl, beat sugar, butter, egg, vanilla, almond extract, and rosemary until creamy. In a separate bowl, sift flour, baking soda, and cream of tartar. Fold flour mixture into sugar mixture. Beat until dough forms and refrigerate for three hours. Divide dough into halves. Roll out one portion to 3/16 of an inch on a floured surface. Cut out with gingerbread women or men cutters and place on an ungreased cookie sheet. Repeat rolling and cutting with second portion. Bake for 5-7 minutes.

Many Blessings,

With Love,

Phenix

Phenix is a Level I student with the [Sisters of the Rising Moon school](#). After awakening to herself and her path at the age of 15, she began exploring the facets of her spiritual journey. The daughter of a long line of witches, she draws inspiration from her ancestors while striving to learn more about her gifts and personal path.