

## The History of New Year's Resolutions

Today, resolving to change and improve yourself and your life is an almost unavoidable part of the transition to a new year. Though it's a pretty well documented fact that most New Year's resolutions fail, we keep making them—and we're not alone. The custom of making New Year's resolutions is most common in the West, but it happens all over the world. Take a look back at when and why the New Year's resolution tradition got started, and how it's changed over the course of history.

The ancient Babylonians are said to have been the first people to make New Year's resolutions, some 4,000 years ago. They were also the first to hold recorded celebrations in honor of the new year—though for them the year began not in January but in mid-March, when the crops were planted. During a massive 12-day religious festival known as Akitu, the Babylonians crowned a new king or reaffirmed their loyalty to the reigning king. They also made promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any objects they had borrowed. These promises could be considered the forerun-

ners of our New Year's resolutions. If the Babylonians kept to their word, their (pagan) gods would bestow favor on them for the coming year. If not, they would fall out of the gods' favor—a place no one wanted to be.

A similar practice occurred in ancient Rome, after the reform-minded emperor Julius Caesar tinkered with the calendar and established January 1 as the beginning of the new year circa 46 B.C. Named for Janus, the two-faced god whose spirit inhabited doorways and arches, January had special significance for the Romans. Believing that Janus symbolically looked backwards into the previous year and ahead into the future, the Romans offered sacrifices to the deity and made promises of good conduct for the coming year.

For early Christians, the first day of the new year became the traditional occasion for thinking about one's past mistakes and resolving to do and be better in the future. In 1740, the English clergyman John Wesley, founder of Methodism, created the Covenant Renewal Service, most commonly held on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day.

Also known as known as watch night services, they included readings from Scriptures and hymn singing, and served as a spiritual alternative to the raucous celebrations normally held to celebrate the coming of the new year. Now popular within evangelical Protestant churches, especially African-American denominations and congregations, watch night services held on New Year's Eve are often spent praying and making resolutions for the coming year.

Despite the tradition's religious roots, New Year's resolutions today are a mostly secular practice. Instead of making promises to the gods, most people make resolutions only to themselves, and focus purely on self-improvement (which may explain why such resolutions seem so hard to follow through on). According to recent research, while as many as 45 percent of Americans say they usually make New Year's resolutions, only 8 percent are successful in achieving their goals. But that dismal record probably won't stop people from making resolutions anytime soon—after all, we've had about 4,000 years of practice.

### Classes and Events

#### January

13th Spells, Ethics and How to Write Them –w/ Brigita

Pt 1 7:30p

20th Spells, Ethics and How to Write Them.– w/ Brigita

Pt 2 7:30p

29th Imbolc Ritual

6:30p Free

#### February

9th Getting to Know Your Guides w/ Ashley

7:30p \$10

11th Psychic Fair 11a-7p

24th WTR ~ Runes I w/ Josh 7:30p \$10

Classes are approximately 1 1/2 hours to 2 hours long.

Rituals are family friendly and free to attend.

Please check our website [abithas.us](http://abithas.us) for more upcoming classes, events and readers information.

## Happy Home Spell

Our home is our castle, right? That place where we can put all of the stresses of the day behind us and just relax, secure in the knowledge that we are safe, surrounded by family and friends who love us.

As idyllic as that sounds, the reality is sometimes far more harsh; disagreements even among loving family members can turn ugly... issues among roommates can escalate into arguments or worse. Where do you turn when your safety zone is not so safe?

This has been a problem since about that time in which people began cohabitating. I'm sure that there were many disagreements in the caves that sheltered early humans which necessitated some form of domestic problem solving (or at least a club to the head).

In modern and polite society we frown on angry bludgeoning to solve our problems, making the magical alternative somewhat more attractive (or at least legal). To this end, enter the Happy Home Spell!

For this spell you will need the following items:

- A Blue candle
- Some "Happy Home" oil (Alternatively you may create a mixture with olive oil and herbs such as basil, cornflowers, rosemary, and lavender)
- Some dried "Happy Home" herbs, such as those listed above.
- A small bowl
- Several ice cubes
- An incense burner and charcoal (or self-lighting "Happy Home" incense; alternatively you may use white sage)

By Chas Bogan

Choose a time in which you will be undisturbed. Gather your ingredients and set up a working space in the center of your home. Light your incense or sage and smoke the area while you pray for peace in your home; and end to fighting, and end to pain, and end to anger... focus on the desired result: a happy, peaceful place where all who live there can come together in mutual support and solidarity; a refuge from the chaos of the outside world. Cultivate within your heart a sense of peace, of happiness, and relaxation. Imagine this sense of peace permeating the smoke and everything in your living space.

Take the blue candle and carve into it the names of everyone in your household then dress it with some "Happy Home" oil. Next, roll the oil dressed candle toward you through some of the "Happy Home" herbs. Melt the bottom of the candle so that you can stick it upright in the center of the bowl.

In the bowl, surround the candle with ice (good for cooling down tempers) and then sprinkle more of the dried herbs on top. Light the candle saying,

*"With this light I conjure forth  
A soothing peace into this space  
From east and west, from south and north  
All strife and anger now erase!"*

As the candle burns, take up the sage or incense and walk it through your home, imagining its peaceful influence permeating your home. When finished, return to the candle and say any heart-felt prayer for you home to be a peaceful one, and allow the candle to burn all the way down. When it is finished and the ice has all melted, take the herb filled water and sprinkle it all around outside your home. If there is any left you may wish to add it to a bath. The candle remains should be buried in your back yard or in a potted plant. It is done.



Be ready to face a radical change when the Sun conjoins Pluto in Capricorn on January 6. The Full Moon on January 12 shines with love and romance. Feel secure in your private life and see if someone new has what it takes to be special. Your heart may be looking for something or someone fresh or different. Get a fresh perspective on a financial matter around the New Moon on January 27. A charitable attitude could now create a source of income that hadn't occurred to you before. Think big and you may have the chance to act and receive big.

You may feel mired in the details and minor chores of daily life during the January 12 Full Moon. You don't need to feel suppressed by this. It's also a chance to make some little changes that please you deeply in a very personal way. The Sun enters Aquarius on January 19. It feels good to participate, contribute, and maybe take a lead in a work larger than yourself. The New Moon on January 27 is all yours. Take a fresh look at how you feel and present yourself. Redefine yourself and maybe create a whole new look and attitude toward life.



**Imbolc**

**Imbloc (Candlemass, Imblog, Imbole) - February 2nd**

**Pronounced:** EE-Molc

**Incense:** Rosemary, Frankincense, Myrrh, Cinnamon

**Decorations:** Corn Dolly, Besom, Spring Flowers

**Colours:** White, Orange, Red

This holiday is also known as Candlemas, or Brigid's (pronounced BREED) Day. One of the 4 Celtic "Fire Festivals. Commemorates the changing of the Goddess from the Crone to the Maiden. Celebrates the first signs of Spring. Also called "Imbolc" (the old Celtic name).

This is the seasonal change where the first signs of spring and the return of the sun are noted, i.e. the first sprouting of leaves, the sprouting of the Crocus flowers etc. In other words, it is the festival commemorating the successful passing of winter and the beginning of the agricultural year. This Festival also marks the transition point of the threefold Goddess energies from those of Crone to Maiden. It is the day that we celebrate the passing of Winter and make way for Spring. It is the day we honour the rebirth of the Sun and we may visualize the baby sun nursing from the Goddess's breast. It is also a day of celebrating the Celtic Goddess Brigid. Brigid is the Goddess of Poetry, Healing, Smithcraft, and Midwifery. If you can make it with your hands, Brigid rules it. She is a triple Goddess, so we honour her in all her aspects. This is a time for communing with her, and tending the lighting of her sacred flame. At this time of year, Wiccans will light multiple candles, white for Brigid, for the god usually yellow or red, to remind us of the passing of winter and the entrance into spring, the time of the Sun. This is a good time for initiations, be they into covens or self-initiations.

Imbolc (February 2) marks the recovery of the Goddess after giving birth to the God. The lengthening periods of light awaken Her. The God is a young, lusty boy, but His power is felt in the longer days. The warmth fertilizes the Earth (the Goddess), and causes seeds to germinate and sprout. And so the earliest beginnings of Spring occur.

This is a Sabbat of purification after the shut-in life of Winter, through the renewing power of the Sun. It is also a festival of light and of fertility, once marked in Europe with huge blazes, torches and fire in every form. Fire here represents our own illumination and inspiration as much as light and warmth. Imbolc is also known as Feast of Torches, Oimelc, Lupercalia, Feast of Pan, Snowdrop Festival, Feast of the Waxing Light, Brigid's Day, and probably by many other names. Some female Witches follow the old Scandinavian custom of wearing crowns of lit candles, but many more carry tapers during their invocations.

**Ritual for Imbolc/Candlemas**

Supplies: Symbol of the season, such as a white flower, snow in a crystal container, also needed, an orange candle anointed with cinnamon, frankincense or rosemary oil (unlit), red candle to represent the elements, and your ritual supplies.

Arrange the altar, light the candles and censer, and cast the Circle.

Invoke the Goddess and God.

Say such words as the following:

"This is the time of the feast of torches,

When every lamp blazes and shines

To welcome the rebirth of the God.

I/we celebrate the Goddess,

I/we celebrate the God;

All the Earth celebrates

Beneath its mantle of sleep."

Light the orange taper from the red candle on the altar. Slowly walk the circle clockwise, bearing the candle before you. Say these or similar words:

"All the land is wrapped in winter.

The air is chilled and

Frost envelopes the Earth.

But Lord of the Sun,

Horned One of animals and wild places,

Unseen you have been reborn

Of the gracious Mother Goddess,

Lady of all fertility.

Hail Great God!

Hail and welcome!"

Stop before the altar, holding aloft the candle. Gaze at its flame. Visualize your life blossoming with creativity, with renewed energy and strength.

If you need to look into the future or past, now is an ideal time.

Works of magic, if necessary, may follow.

Celebrate the Simple Feast.

Thank the Goddess and God.

Release the Circle.

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Tuesday—Saturday 11a–7p

First Quarter  
Jan 5 12:47

Full Moon  
Jan 12 04:34

Last Quarter  
Jan 19 15:14

New Moon  
Jan 27 17:07

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