

CELTIC OMEN DAYS

What are Celtic Omen Days*? These days predate the more modern “12 Days of Christmas” that are celebrated beginning with December 26th and going until January 6th (or 12th night/Epiphany). Many modern Celts have adjusted these days to start from December 22nd to January 2nd, which not only works with the modern Wheel of the Year but also the Julien calendar, which would put January 2nd the day after New Year’s Day the 12th night.

Historically, Midwinter festivals were debaucherous affairs** and the early Christian church heavily dissuaded people from celebrating them. “Even though Christmas honours the birth of Jesus, early Christians did not celebrate the holiday until the fourth century when pagan traditions—like Rome’s Saturnalia and, eventually, Yule, a Germanic midwinter festival—began to blend with Christian beliefs to create a joyous period of revelry” (National Geographic)

It should also be noted that in some parts of Ireland, January 6th is also considered “Women’s Little Christmas” (or just “Little Christmas”) - Nollaig na mBan. On this day the women typically got the day off after the Christmas season and the men took over the household chores. Women typically either host parties for other women or in places like Cork and Kerry, it’s still common to see them in restaurants and bars en masse.

What happens on Celtic Omen Days? These 12 days were considered to be particularly auspicious. Each day of the 12 days were thought to represent the corresponding month and people looked for signs – or omens – for the upcoming year during this time. The Celts considered animals particularly good signs and so paying particular attention to nature and wildlife for divination purposes was often used.

December 26: January	January 1: July
December: 27: February	January 2: August
December: 28: March	January 3: September
December 29: April	January 4: October
December 30: May	January 5: November
December 31: June	January 6: December

Celtic Omen Day craft:

Using the water colours and yarn provided, create a Celtic Omen bookmark to bring with you into the new year to remind you of this Winter Solstice.

I encourage everyone to get out into nature and read the signs outdoors we are also going to cheat a bit by pulling 12 tarot cards to represent every month of the year. I have set out a selection of decks so pick which one speaks to you, personally.

I have provided a tarot meanings chart for you, a book for those who want to go a bit deeper, and The Book of Correspondences to get some inspiration for what art, themes, and ideas you can add to your bookmark. I have provided an example but feel free to design your bookmark anyway that you’d like!



* German/Austrian/Bavarian tradition, called Rauhnachte, which roughly translates as the ‘rough’ nights or ‘magic’ nights.

**See the Lord of Misrule and The Feast of Fools