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Modern Witchcraft

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and grimoire

Explore histories of regional
witches around the world

Practice spellcasting and
setting intentions

Lorraine Monteagut, PhD

Modern Witchcraft

**for
dummies®**
A Wiley Brand



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by Lorraine Monteagut, PhD

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Modern Witchcraft For Dummies®

Published by: **John Wiley & Sons, Inc.**, 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774, www.wiley.com

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2025933220

ISBN 978-1-394-30363-2 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-394-30365-6 (ebk); 978-1-394-30366-3 (ebk)

Contents at a Glance

Introduction	1
Part 1: Opening to Modern Witchcraft	5
CHAPTER 1: Reclaiming Witchcraft	7
CHAPTER 2: Rooting in Folk Magic	21
CHAPTER 3: Making Modern Magic	37
CHAPTER 4: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility	53
Part 2: Dabbling in Witchy Mythologies	65
CHAPTER 5: Weaving the Witch	67
CHAPTER 6: Pulling Threads of Energy	85
CHAPTER 7: Spinning Magic Rituals	103
CHAPTER 8: Cloaking in Wisdom	119
Part 3: Practicing Your Craft	135
CHAPTER 9: Initiating Your Magic	137
CHAPTER 10: Setting Up Your Practice Space	153
CHAPTER 11: Casting Spells	165
CHAPTER 12: Ritualizing Your Life	183
Part 4: Exploring Paths of the Modern Witch	197
CHAPTER 13: The Divination Witch	199
CHAPTER 14: The Green Witch	217
CHAPTER 15: The Cosmic Witch	235
CHAPTER 16: The Energy Witch	251
Part 5: Expanding Beyond Personal Practice	267
CHAPTER 17: Joining a Coven	269
CHAPTER 18: Holding Space	283
CHAPTER 19: Aligning with Spiritual Activism	299
CHAPTER 20: Creating the Future	317
Part 6: The Part of Tens	329
CHAPTER 21: Ten Foundational Spells	331
CHAPTER 22: Ten Days of Ritual Observance	337
Appendix	341
Index	349

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	1
About This Book	1
Foolish Assumptions	3
Icons Used in This Book	3
Beyond the Book	4
PART 1: OPENING TO MODERN WITCHCRAFT	5
CHAPTER 1: Reclaiming Witchcraft	7
Before Wicca, Beyond Wicca	7
Coming to terms	9
“Re-“volutionizing the Craft	11
Getting Out of the Broom Closet	15
Defying persecution	17
Empowering witchcraft	19
CHAPTER 2: Rooting in Folk Magic	21
Finding Power in the Roots	21
Calling on the ancestors	23
Honoring indigenous ways of knowing	24
Conjuring Resistance	26
Preserving regional folk magic	28
Working the roots at home	30
Evolving Through Folklore	32
Telling old stories	33
Redefining monsters	35
CHAPTER 3: Making Modern Magic	37
A Witch at the Crossroads	37
Identifying your entry points	38
Embodying intersectionality	39
Becoming your own witch	41
Walking Your Path	43
Equipping your journey	44
Exploring common paths of practice	48
CHAPTER 4: With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility	53
Avoiding Shady Practices	53
Traveling to magical places	55
Appreciating or appropriating?	55
Spotting “conspirituality”	58

	To Hex or Not to Hex	60
	Moving toward a Spiritual Activism	63
	PART 2: DABBLING IN WITCHY MYTHOLOGIES	65
CHAPTER 5:	Weaving the Witch	67
	Around the World: Exploring the Divine Feminine in Folklore	68
	The triple goddess	69
	The Maiden: Tales of seduction and illusion	73
	The Mother: Tales of creation and destruction	77
	The crone: Tales of guidance and reckoning	78
	For Your Practice: Crafting an Image	81
	Spinning yarns	81
	Stitching together your story	82
	Weaving magic	83
CHAPTER 6:	Pulling Threads of Energy	85
	Around the World: Exploring the Maiden Archetype	86
	Becoming Persephone	86
	Connecting to nature	89
	Living in the margins	90
	Transforming energies	92
	For Your Practice: Crafting a Perception	94
	Identifying your abilities	95
	Attuning your skills	97
	Building relationships with nature	97
	Casting a glamour	98
CHAPTER 7:	Spinning Magic Rituals	103
	Around the World: Exploring the Mother Archetype	104
	Becoming Demeter	104
	Connecting to the land	107
	Defining motherhood	109
	Nurturing matriarchal societies	110
	For Your Practice: Crafting a Process	114
	Channeling the elements	114
	Starting traditions and habits	116
	Making a libation to the land	116
CHAPTER 8:	Cloaking in Wisdom	119
	Around the World: Exploring the Crone Archetype	120
	Becoming Hecate	121
	Walking the crooked path	124
	Making friends with darkness	127
	Protecting the craft	129

For Your Practice: Crafting a Legacy	130
Casting a cloak of protection	130
Offerings at personal crossroads	132
PART 3: PRACTICING YOUR CRAFT	135
CHAPTER 9: Initiating Your Magic	137
Laying the Foundation: Your Occult Studies	137
Tracing your ancestry	140
Learning about other traditions	142
Choosing your initiation	145
Assembling Your Tools: The Grimoire	148
CHAPTER 10: Setting Up Your Practice Space	153
Laying the Foundation: Sacred Sites	153
Clearing the energy	154
Putting down protections	156
Setting intentions	156
Assembling Your Tools: The Home Altar	157
Choosing an altar space	157
Homing in on a purpose	158
Sourcing your ritual objects	159
Working with your altar	162
CHAPTER 11: Casting Spells	165
Laying the Foundation: Spell Work Basics	165
Declaring your intentions	167
Pick a spell, any (well, not just any) spell	170
Gathering your ingredients and tools	171
Designing your incantations	172
Using symbols	174
Timing for specific energies	176
Casting your spells	177
Assembling Your Tools: Materia Magica	178
Cleansing your tools	180
Charging the connection	180
CHAPTER 12: Ritualizing Your Life	183
Laying the Foundation: A Magical Routine	183
Enchanting the mundane	184
Crafting magical objects and symbols	186
Performing ceremonies	191
Assembling Your Tools: Candle Magic	192
Knowing your colors	193

Choosing your form	193
Preparing and dressing candles	194
Waxing poetic.....	194
Bringing it together in ceremony	195
PART 4: EXPLORING PATHS OF THE MODERN WITCH.....	197
CHAPTER 13: The Divination Witch.....	199
Tapping into Your Power: Psychic Magic	199
Getting to the roots of divination	201
Which “mancy” do you fancy?	203
Expanding your consciousness	204
For Your Grimoire: Divination Methods.....	207
Cartomancy	207
Pendulum dowsing	210
Scrying.....	212
CHAPTER 14: The Green Witch	217
Tapping into Your Power: Nature Magic	217
Acknowledging the land	219
Making mundane magic.....	220
Wildcrafting and foraging.....	221
Reimagining your kitchen.....	224
Cultivating a witches garden	227
Connecting to animal spirits	229
For Your Grimoire: Home and Hearth Rituals.....	230
Herbal sachets for self-care	232
Florida water for cleansing.....	233
CHAPTER 15: The Cosmic Witch.....	235
Tapping into Your Power: Planetary Magic	235
Tracing astrological histories.....	236
Observing the lunar cycles.....	238
Studying the stars	241
Introducing planetary rituals	244
For Your Grimoire: The Natal Chart	245
Interpreting your birth chart	246
Aligning with the elements and qualities.....	248
Petitioning the planets	249
CHAPTER 16: The Energy Witch	251
Tapping into Your Power: Subtle Magic.....	251
Working with the subtle body	252
Healing modalities around the world.....	253
Entering different states of consciousness	258

For Your Grimoire: Energy Work	261
Visualizing your chakras	262
Cord-cutting ritual	264
PART 5: EXPANDING BEYOND PERSONAL PRACTICE	267
CHAPTER 17: Joining a Coven	269
Hedge Witches vs. Coven Witches	269
Practicing alone	270
Practicing as a collective	270
Finding Your Witches	274
Seeking green flags	275
Avoiding red flags	276
Growing within a Spiritual Group	276
Performing ceremonies	277
Continuing education	278
Supporting community	278
Gatekeeping Magic	279
Knowing what's open (and closed) to you	279
Protecting your power	280
CHAPTER 18: Holding Space	283
Creating Sacred Space	283
Assessing your motivations	284
Starting your own circle	286
Finding a container	288
Getting the word out	290
Consecrating the space	291
Taking Responsibility	292
Grounding your energy	292
Communicating clearly and compassionately	293
Protecting your community	295
Opening to feedback	296
Going into business	297
CHAPTER 19: Aligning with Spiritual Activism	299
Organizing around Magic	300
Aligning with core principles	302
Attending to collective action	309
Paths of the Witch Activist	311
Eco-spirituality	311
Gender equity and reproductive rights	312
Indigenous rights and decolonization	313
Anti-racism and intersectional justice	314
Queer magic and LGBTQ+ rights	314
Wellness and healing justice	315

CHAPTER 20: Creating the Future	317
Preparing for (More) Modern Challenges	317
Raising energy through social unrest	318
Rebalancing energy between disasters	319
Clearing energy online	320
Creating New Traditions	322
Revolutionizing mind, body, and spirit	322
Becoming environmental stewards	324
Finding the spirit in the machine	324
Empowering the next generation	326
PART 6: THE PART OF TENS	329
CHAPTER 21: Ten Foundational Spells	331
Grounding: Earth Stones Spell	331
Cleansing: Egg “Limpia” Spell	332
Protecting: Psychic Warding Spell	333
Making a Boundary: The Circle	333
Enchanting: Magical Objects Spell	334
Attracting: Self-Love Bath Spell	334
Manifesting: The Knot Spell	335
Dreaming: Lucidity Spell	335
Healing: Laying Hands Spell	336
Binding: The Freezer Spell	336
CHAPTER 22: Ten Days of Ritual Observance	337
The Sabbats	337
Samhain	337
Yule	338
Imbolc	338
Ostara	338
Beltane	339
Litha	339
Lughnasadh	339
Mabon	340
The Esbats	340
New Moons	340
Full Moons	340
APPENDIX	341
Parts of the Tarot Deck	341
Magical Properties of Common Herbs	343
Planetary Rulerships and Domiciles	346
Energetic Associations of Crystals	347
INDEX	349

Introduction

Modern witches stand at the intersection of countless roads. Paths of magical practice have proliferated in recent decades, connecting diverse histories and traditions. Old paths fork into unknown territories and new footpaths are constantly treaded. Some roads are dead ends. Some lead to private drives with access codes. And some are downright dangerous. If you're just now stepping onto this crossroads, it's challenging to get your bearings. Where exactly have you come from, and where are you going?

Magical practice has no universal roadmap, so new witches are increasingly walking the crooked path, blending different influences and beliefs together as they go along. The crooked path is nothing new; witchcraft has always been for those who walk their own way. This book will guide you through the tangle of information about witchcraft and light your way as a modern witch when you're ready to plot your own course.

About This Book

This book is about *modern* witchcraft. It's not a history book. The concept of witchcraft has existed for as long as humans have, and you could fall into thousands of rabbit holes trying to find the universal witch. Although I always encourage research and nuance, I'll save you some time and let you know that nobody has ever agreed on the definition of the witch. The witch is constantly being defined.

In this book, you'll learn about modern witchcraft beyond Wicca and the neopagan traditions that arose in Europe. These traditions have dominated the witchcraft discourse for decades, and Wicca has erroneously been considered synonymous with witchcraft. Although these strong and well-documented traditions are important, they're just one territory in a larger world. This book widens the scope of witchcraft to encompass folk magic across the world, inspiring modern witches from all walks of life.

What you *will* find in this book is a guide that will help you orient yourself to what witchcraft means today. What inspires real contemporary witches? What are some common practices that you can start right now? What opportunities and challenges should you be aware of as you grow into your own practice?

To make it easy, I've organized the content of this book into seven parts:

Part 1: Opening to Modern Witchcraft. The first part of the book outlines common terms and introduces pagan pantheons and regional folk magic practices that inspire modern practice. I outline the first steps of dedicating yourself to “the Craft,” including setting up your space, selecting tools, casting spells, and choosing common paths of practice. I touch on ethical topics like cultural appropriation and hexing.

Part 2: Dabbling in Witchy Mythologies. What stories do you keep turning to? This part explores the witch folklore that has made it into the modern lexicon, revolving around the triple goddess: the maiden, the mother, and the crone. This mythological framework has expanded to encompass more diverse cultures that are destigmatizing the witch of the past. Throughout this part of the book, I offer spells and rituals to begin wielding energy like the witches you're learning about.

Part 3: Practicing Your Craft. What do witches do? This part gets really hands-on. You'll learn how to initiate into your practice and start your own grimoire (often referred to as a book of shadows). You'll learn how to clear and protect your space and how to set up a home altar. You'll learn spell work basics and how to choose and consecrate your tools and symbols. I present more complex spells and specific rituals, particularly candle magic.

Part 4: Exploring Paths of the Modern Witch. What type of witch are you? Each chapter in this part dives deeper into specific paths of witchcraft. I start with the divination chapter, which explores intuition, psychic magic, and different modalities like tarot reading and scrying. Next is the chapter on green witchcraft, which focuses on honoring the land and herbal magic. Then comes the chapter about cosmic witchcraft, astrology, and planetary magic. The last chapter deals with energy, focusing on the body's energy and different states of consciousness.

Part 5: Expanding Beyond Personal Practice. This part of the book introduces the coven, offering a guide to practice with others and perform ceremonies. I cover buzz terms like *gatekeeping*, *holding space*, and *spiritual activism*. I offer some of the wisdom I've gathered from my own practice to help you avoid common pitfalls and align your work with your ethics.

Part 6: The Part of Tens. Here, you'll find ten foundational spells you can use immediately and ten days of observance in modern witchcraft.

The Appendix. The appendix provides common associations and correspondences for symbols and materials you'd use in specific paths of practice, including tarot meanings for divination, herbal properties for green witchcraft, astrology associations for cosmic witchcraft, and crystal properties to work with energy.

I've written this book to help you orient yourself to witchcraft and explore your individual path in a way that's as informed, safe, and fun as possible. This book isn't an encyclopedia or a complete compendium. Instead, it's a starting point for further exploration. I hope that it helps you understand what kind of witch you'd like to be and inspires you to learn more, serving as a handy reference to return to again and again.

Foolish Assumptions

I imagine that if you picked up this book, you're either curious about witchcraft, or you're a witch somewhere in the beginning or middle of your practice who is looking for an inclusive education about the new wave of witchcraft. You're not looking for a history book or a book about a particular religion or practice, though this book touches on many histories and religions.

I assume that you're coming to this book with no previous knowledge of witchcraft, but I also considered more advanced witches as I wrote. If you're anything like me, you'll always find value in the foundational topics. I intend for this book to appeal to those who forever retain a "beginner's mind" and would benefit from my perspective as a synthesist of worldwide practices and contemporary trends.

Icons Used in This Book

Throughout this book, icons in the margins highlight certain types of valuable information that call out for your attention. Following are the icons you'll encounter and a brief description of each.



TIP

Marks tips and shortcuts that you can use to make your magical practice easier.



REMEMBER

Highlights information that's especially important for you to know.



FUN FACT

Denotes bits of information that are simply interesting to know or that can deepen your understanding of a topic.



WARNING

Tells you to watch out! It marks important information that may save you headaches down the road.

Beyond the Book

In addition to the abundance of information and guidance related to modern witchcraft that I provide in this book, you can find even more help and information online at Dummies.com. Check out this book's online Cheat Sheet: Just go to www.dummies.com and search for "Modern Witchcraft For Dummies Cheat Sheet."

1

Opening to Modern Witchcraft

IN THIS PART . . .

Orient to common concepts and terms in modern witchcraft. Get acquainted with neopaganism and the traditions and pantheons that inform modern witches. Understand “reclaiming” movements and how you might fit into them.

Learn about ancestral and regional folk practices. Find information on indigenous wisdom and the ways it has inspired modern spiritualities. Incorporate folk magic and folklore into your practices.

Identify your personal entry points into witchcraft practice. Understand the difference between dedication and initiation. Learn the basics of starting your practice. Explore different paths of the modern witch.

Find information about cultural appropriation.
Develop your own ethics for your personal practice.
Discover ways to engage in spiritual activism.

- » Introducing concepts of modern witchcraft
- » Clarifying common terms, including neopaganism
- » Considering witchcraft outside of Wicca and European traditions

Chapter 1

Reclaiming Witchcraft

Witch is a bad word, historically speaking. It has carried negative connotations and been associated with evil practices. Modern witchcraft turns the witch into something new. *Reclaiming* movements have embraced the witch as a symbol of healing, empowerment, and resistance. Today's witch defies neat definitions and shakes off the stigma of the past, constantly shifting to reflect the ideologies and challenges of the times. To call yourself a witch is to call back the power that was taken from all those who were cast to the margins or branded as dangerous "others." Even now, identifying as a witch can be an act of courage. The shadow of the evil witch is still there.

This chapter serves as an introduction to modern witchcraft, in contrast to the historical record of oppression and persecution that witches and those accused of witchcraft have endured over the centuries. I cover key terms and introduce the myriad neopagan practices out there. The chapter ends with some context to consider if you're looking to come out of the broom closet yourself.

Before Wicca, Beyond Wicca

First things first. Yes, witches are real. I am one, and if you're reading this, you might be one too. Or maybe you've heard that people are walking around calling themselves witches, and you're interested in learning what that's all about. All are welcome here.

Take a moment to picture a witch.

Whatever you've imagined, it's probably not what most witches look like. Maybe you've pictured what you imagine a Wiccan to look like; Wicca and witchcraft are often confused. Or maybe you've conjured an image that resembles something like what's shown in Figure 1-1. While I do love a good broom, most witches don't look like the stereotype unless they're in costume.



FIGURE 1-1:
A pretty cool
illustration
of a witch.

Dugald Stewart Walker/The New York Public Library/Public domain



TIP

Anyone can be a witch, and they can look like anything. If you want to avoid being cursed (only half joking), I suggest accepting the way everyone likes to self-identify, as long as it's not harming anyone.

In fact, acceptance and individuality are core tenets of modern witchcraft. The modern witch, like its predecessors, resists classification. Most books on witchcraft grapple with definitions and histories in their first chapters. As a scholar of witchcraft, I consider this an important though sometimes frustrating task. Seeing how witches and authors of vastly different perspectives define the witch has helped me expand my views and refine my own identity as a modern witch.



TIP

Think of a few words that you associate with the term *witch*. This will reveal a lot about your underlying assumptions.

In the past, the label *witch* was hurled at those who didn't fit neatly in society. These individuals may not have even identified as witches, but simply lived life differently. It's no coincidence that most people who were called witches were female, elderly, disabled, or (gasp!) single hermits with penchants for gardening. Often, these "witches" challenged the status quo and were deemed a threat.



REMEMBER

Understanding modern witchcraft is a matter of perspective. Knowing where you stand is more important than perfect definitions and histories. Your own beliefs, backgrounds, and desires are valid and probably compatible with today's forms of witchcraft unless you follow a religion that explicitly forbids any kind of magic. There are even a good many Christian witches these days! Modern witchcraft is the confluence of many perspectives and beliefs.

The number of people worldwide who identify as witches isn't precisely documented; it varies depending on cultural, religious, and individual interpretations of witchcraft. Modern witchcraft and related practices related to paganism and folk magic have seen significant growth, particularly in the United States and Europe. Some surveys suggest that hundreds of thousands to a few million people in the world identify as Wiccan or other kinds of neopagans.



WARNING

Don't mistake witchcraft for Wicca — they're not the same thing. *Witchcraft* is a broad term that encompasses many different magical traditions and practices, whereas Wicca is a specific religion. In other words, all Wiccans are witches, but not all witches are Wiccans.

Coming to terms

When I was growing up, my understanding of witches was shaped greatly by Wicca because it was the main form of witchcraft portrayed on television, and the only witches I encountered in real life were Wiccans.



REMEMBER

Although Wicca comes in many forms, including Gardnerian, Dianic, and Alexandrian, it's generally a modern, nature-centered religion that celebrates the cycles of Earth, honors a dual divinity often represented as the goddess and the god, and incorporates rituals, magic, and seasonal festivals. Wicca is an eclectic religion that synthesizes elements from a variety of sources, including ancient pagan traditions, Western esotericism, and folklore. Find out more in *Wicca & Witchcraft For Dummies* by Diane Smith (Wiley).

As a child, I was especially drawn to Wiccan reimaginings of Greek mythology, a common gateway for many witch-curious folk! But I encountered the opposing

beliefs of some of my Latin American family members, who viewed witches as inherently bad. They associated witches with monsters lurking in folk stories or the elusive “devil worshippers.”



FUN FACT

Speak of the devil: Despite common misconceptions, many modern Satanists are nice, normal people. Most don’t even worship the devil. Members of the Church of Satan and the Satanic Temple typically reject the concept of a literal Satan, instead focusing on self-empowerment, individualism, and the rejection of oppressive systems.

Satanists who do worship the devil see their work as a reclamation of the horned gods of nature-based pagan traditions. Satanism is philosophically distinct from witchcraft, though the two are often conflated due to shared outsider status in mainstream culture.

These conflicting images fueled my curiosity and created a tension that I still wrestle with to this day. The cultural perceptions of witches are vast and often contradictory, ranging from empowered healers and wise figures to villains in folklore. These differing views reflect societal attitudes about power, gender, and spirituality.

To complicate things further, you might hear the term *witch* used interchangeably with other terms, though each carries its own unique context. These include the following:

- » **Sorcerer:** A practitioner of magic who often uses their power for personal gain, associated with manipulating energy to their will.
- » **Warlock:** Originally meaning “oath-breaker,” this term was historically used pejoratively to refer to diabolical practitioners. In modern contexts, some male witches have reclaimed the term, but others avoid it due to its negative connotations.
- » **Magician:** A broader term for someone who performs magical acts, ranging from ritualistic magic to stage illusions.
- » **Wizard:** Often linked to fantasy and literature, the wizard is typically depicted as a scholarly figure who studies and practices magic.

Pop culture further confuses the understandings of these terms. Fictional representations vary greatly and influence understandings of modern witchcraft.



REMEMBER

The word *witchcraft* is also wrought to the whims of the moment. It’s often associated with feminine power due to its association with healing, midwifery, and nature worship, which are roles that women often fulfill.

However, witchcraft today is a gender-inclusive practice. Men, nonbinary individuals, and those of diverse gender identities also claim the title of witch, reflecting the universal appeal of its principles. Additionally, modern witchcraft challenges traditional gender norms, embracing fluidity and inclusivity in its rituals and communities.

Just as the idea of a witch is fluid and ever-changing, so too is the concept of magic. It's the word people use when they don't fully understand something. In witchcraft, magic operates on the belief that the cosmos is interconnected, a unified whole where energy can be moved and directed with intention. You might come across *magic* used interchangeably with many other terms, including these:

- » **The Occult:** *Occult* means hidden. That's how I use it — magic as something subtle, concealed, and full of potential — but it's also tied to specific traditions of magical practice, including Thelema, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, and the Rosicrucians. (See Chapter 9, where I cover initiation into different kinds of occult traditions.)
- » **Animism:** *Animism* is the belief that all things — living and nonliving — possess a spirit or consciousness. This includes animals, plants, stones, rivers, mountains, and even human-made objects. For witches, working with animism means recognizing and interacting with the spiritual essence of the natural world and the objects within it.
- » **Esotericism:** *Esotericism* refers to a body of knowledge or practices that are meant to be understood by a select, initiated group, often focusing on hidden, symbolic, or spiritual truths beyond the ordinary. It encompasses traditions like alchemy and ceremonial magic that explore the deeper nature of reality.
- » **Mysticism:** *Mysticism* is the pursuit of direct, personal experience of the divine or ultimate reality, often through practices like meditation, prayer, or ecstatic states, aiming to transcend ordinary perception and achieve spiritual union or enlightenment.

Many of the terms used in modern witchcraft today come from European traditions and *Europaganism*, including many pre-Christian, polytheistic, and nature-centered spiritual traditions and practices that were historically prevalent across Europe. These include the religious systems of the Celts, Norse, Slavs, Greeks, Romans, and other ancient European cultures. They were characterized by polytheism, connection to nature, oral traditions, and rituals and festivals.

“Re-”volutionizing the Craft

The *Craft* is a term often used to refer to the practice of modern witchcraft, encompassing a wide range of magical, spiritual, and ritual practices. (Not to be

mistaken for the 1990s cult classic film that I reference many times in this book!) A lot of “re”s are at play in the Craft, including reviving, reconstructing, and reclaiming older traditions.



FUN FACT

I was called to my scholarly work in witchcraft because I noticed that most books centered only on European pagan histories, without mentioning histories and traditions across the Global South, including Africa, Latin America, and Asia. That realization inspired me to write my first book, *Brujas: The Magic and Power of Witches of Color* (Chicago Review Press), to trace the ways modern witches reclaim their ancestral traditions, particularly *brujería*, the Spanish word for witchcraft. Like witchcraft, *brujería* is an umbrella term that encompasses magical practices throughout the indigenous Americas and the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. A modern *bruja* is a witch who reclaims these practices.

Reclaiming literally means taking back. You might hear that word thrown around by modern witches because a consensus purports that witches are recovering practices that were once stigmatized or oppressed. Although this is true, that consensus sometimes carries a false expectation that what modern witches do must be rooted in ancient paganism, particularly from Europe.



FUN FACT

The word *pagan* originates from the Latin term *pāgānus*, which initially meant “villager,” “rustic,” or “country dweller.”

During the rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire, the term *pagan* came to be used pejoratively to describe those who continued practicing polytheistic or traditional local religions, often in rural areas, because Christianity was more quickly adopted in urban centers. Today *pagan* refers to practitioners of pre-Christian, polytheistic, or earth-centered spiritual traditions. Although paganism isn’t inherently synonymous with magic, many pagans integrate rituals and spiritual practices that naturally overlap with witchcraft and other magical systems.



REMEMBER

Neopaganism is a modern spiritual movement that seeks to revive, reinterpret, or draw inspiration from pre-Christian, polytheistic, or nature-based religions. It’s also characterized by a focus on earth-centered spirituality and reverence for the cycles of nature, and it usually involves the worship of multiple deities from various traditions across the world.

For instance, Wicca is a modern neopagan tradition, though its founders might have conceived of it as an ancient practice. Witches today still disagree about Wicca’s origins. Among religious studies scholars, it’s generally assumed that Wicca, along with other European neopagan traditions, blends elements of pagan religion and folklore with modern interpretations of magic — including Christian theology, as it was the dominant religion that neopaganism arose under.

RECLAIMING THE WITCH

When Gerald Gardner introduced Wicca to the public in the mid-20th century, he claimed it was the survival of an ancient, pre-Christian witchcraft tradition. Gardner based much of his assertion on the work of Margaret Murray, whose witch-cult hypothesis suggested that a hidden, pagan fertility cult had persisted throughout European history under the guise of witchcraft. However, Murray's theory, presented in *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* (1921), has been largely discredited by historians due to a lack of reliable evidence and overinterpretation of trial records.

Gardner's Wicca, while deeply influenced by Murray's ideas, was more accurately a synthesis of older folk practices, ceremonial magic, and esotericism, combined with Gardner's own innovations. Despite this, Gardner insisted on its ancient lineage, giving Wicca an air of historical authenticity that helped it gain credibility and attract followers during the mid-century pagan revival. Doreen Valiente, known as the "Mother of Modern Witchcraft," played a pivotal role in extending Gerald Gardner's legacy. As Gardner's High Priestess in the early 1950s, Valiente revised and expanded the foundational rituals and texts of Wicca, including the *Book of Shadows*, bringing poetic elegance and coherence to its structure.

Valiente's understanding of folklore and her vision of Wicca as a nature-based, inclusive spiritual path helped establish it as a structured and appealing modern religion. Her influence ensured that Wicca moved beyond Gardner's initial framework, becoming a tradition with broader spiritual and cultural resonance. While Gardner is credited as the founder of Wicca, Valiente's work ensured its survival and growth into the widespread spiritual movement it is today.

Alexandrian Wicca emerged in the 1960s as an offshoot of Gardnerian Wicca, founded by Alex and Maxine Sanders in the United Kingdom. While it drew heavily on Gerald Gardner's teachings and the framework of Gardnerian Wicca, Alexandrian Wicca incorporated additional elements and practices, distinguishing it as a separate tradition. Generally more open to adaptation and experimentation, it reflects Alex Sanders' theatrical personality and innovative approach.

Though the idea of Wicca as an unbroken ancient tradition has been debunked, this does not diminish its cultural or spiritual significance. Wicca and other modern pagan traditions have embraced their creative roots, reclaiming and reimagining rituals to suit contemporary needs. One specific movement, called Reclaiming, emerged in the late 1970s through the work of feminist activist and author Starhawk. The Reclaiming tradition blends modern paganism with feminist ideals, eco-consciousness, and social justice activism, emphasizing collective rituals and empowerment.

This reclamation of tradition highlights the evolving nature of witchcraft and paganism — not as static relics of the past, but as living, breathing practices that adapt and grow with the people who embrace them. Rather than being bound by the need for historical continuity, these traditions celebrate their dynamic essence.



REMEMBER

Traditional witchcraft is distinct from Wicca and includes a much broader range of practices tied to specific regions and cultures. For example, British traditional witchcraft draws deeply from the folk magic and cultural heritage of the British Isles, but you'll also find rich traditions in the Americas, Africa, and beyond.

Reclaiming in the context of neopaganism is more of a creative act than an act of pure historical accuracy. This is referred to as *pagan reconstruction*. Most neopagan traditions arose in the 200 years between the Enlightenment and the early 21st century. There's no neat, unbroken history of witchcraft or paganism; witches invent and adapt these practices for modern times. That doesn't mean the original traditions lack value. In fact, many threads of pagan reconstructionism remain deeply faithful to their roots.

But the idea that something must be ancient to be meaningful or valid? That's outdated.

On a deeper level, reclaiming is about redefining who gets to say what it means to be a witch. It's no longer up to the religious authorities, or even the historians, to define witchcraft. That power belongs to the witches.

Besides pagan traditions, current trends offer major inspirations for witchcraft that can't be discounted, including these:

- » **Pop culture:** Contemporary portrayals of witches, such as in *Wicked* or *Agatha All Along*, reflect modern attitudes and perspectives that reframe the witch as a complex, empowered figure. Literary retellings of mythologies exploded following Madeline Miller's *Circe*. You'd be hard-pressed to find a modern book on witchcraft that doesn't include 1996's *The Craft*, a masterclass in modern witch aesthetics. I'm partial to *Practical Magic* and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*.
- » **Tarot and astrology:** The demand for "witchy" services like tarot readings and astrological consultations has skyrocketed, with these tools serving as gateways for self-reflection and spiritual exploration.
- » **Science:** Magic often acts as a placeholder for the mysteries that haven't been explained scientifically. The recognition that unseen forces — like energy or connection — can exist and be influenced might be "magical thinking," but it's a tool that's often used in thought experiments in experimental sciences such as quantum physics.
- » **Psychology trends:** Concepts like "holding space" have gained popularity (especially following the viral holding space moment on the recent *Wicked* movie press tour). Therapeutic language and methods are increasingly mixed

with spiritual practices. These terms often take on new dimensions in cultural phenomena, and there's a risk that they can be misconstrued. When in doubt, consult a licensed therapist.

- » **Other spiritualities:** Witchcraft frequently draws from diverse traditions, including energy healing, meditation, and indigenous spiritual practices. This often rides the line of cultural appropriation (see Chapter 4).
- » **Folk tales:** Stories and symbols from folklore express collective unconscious ideas and continue to inspire magical practices by connecting to cultural and psychological themes.

Modern witches embrace creativity and new inspirations as part of their magical practices. As a modern witch, you aren't just connecting to the past. You're building traditions for the future.



TIP

If you want to begin identifying as a witch and need a little boost of confidence, I offer this template: I'm _____, a modern witch with interests in _____ and roots in _____. Example: I'm Lorraine, a modern witch with interests in tarot and astrology and roots in brujería.

In the next chapter, I explore folk magic and folklore that might provide further entry points and inspirations into the Craft.

Getting Out of the Broom Closet

Neopaganism isn't a single, unified belief system but an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of practices and traditions that brought occult practices into the mainstream. Many neopagan traditions are eclectic, blending diverse influences into meaningful, personalized, or community-based spiritual practices. An example is the *Feri* tradition (sometimes spelled "Faery" or "Fairy"), which is an initiatory, ecstatic, and nature-based spiritual path that focuses on personal empowerment, connection to divine forces, and working with energy.

In contrast to eclectic traditions, *reconstruction* in neopaganism refers to the process of reviving and practicing ancient, pre-Christian spiritual traditions in a modern context. Reconstructionists aim to authentically reconnect with the beliefs, rituals, and cultural practices of specific historical pagan religions by relying on historical, archaeological, and literary sources. Most reconstructionist approaches strive for fidelity to the original practices while adapting them to contemporary life.

Neopagan traditions largely emerged in the 19th and 20th centuries, founded on specific sects of ancient *pantheons*, or groups of deities, including Celtic, Greco-Roman, Egyptian, Slavic, and Norse mythologies:

- » **Druidry:** Rooted in ancient Celtic practices, modern Druidry honors nature, sacred groves, and the interconnectedness of life. Key deities often include Brigid (goddess of poetry, healing, and smithcraft) and Cernunnos (the horned god of the forest and fertility).
- » **Hellenistic polytheism:** Inspired by ancient Greek religion, Hellenistic polytheism involves the worship of gods like Zeus (king of the gods), Athena (goddess of wisdom and war), and Apollo (god of the sun, music, and healing). It also includes participation in festivals such as the Panathenaea and Dionysia, which celebrate these deities and ancient traditions.
- » **Kemetism:** A revival of ancient Egyptian religious practices, Kemetism focuses on maintaining *ma'at* (cosmic balance) through the veneration of deities such as Ra (the sun god), Isis (goddess of magic and motherhood), Osiris (god of the afterlife), and Anubis (god of mummification and protector of the dead).
- » **Rodnovery:** A Slavic neopagan revival that celebrates pre-Christian Slavic traditions, Rodnovery venerates gods like Perun (god of thunder and war), Mokosh (goddess of fertility and the earth), and Veles (god of cattle, commerce, and the underworld). Seasonal rituals, such as Kupala Night and Maslenitsa, are central to the practice.
- » **Heathenry:** Inspired by ancient Norse traditions, Heathenry centers on the worship of gods such as Odin (god of wisdom, magic, and war), Thor (protector and god of thunder), and Freyja (goddess of love, fertility, and battle). Practices often include ancestor veneration and rituals like *blót* (sacrificial offerings). A notable subset, *Ásatrú*, is particularly concentrated in Iceland and emphasizes the Norse pantheon.

Just as neopaganism faithfully borrows from pagan traditions, modern witches are beginning to reconstruct and reclaim other traditions, particularly practices from the Afro-Caribbean diaspora, the indigenous Americas, Asia, and Oceania, which have largely been left out of the neopagan chat until now. Similarly, although the literature about traditional witchcraft has been mostly based in Europaganism, modern witchcraft is diversifying its sources.



WARNING

Despite how exciting this diversification is, it creates new sets of challenges as the scope of neopaganism continues to widen. For one thing, many original practitioners of indigenous and pagan traditions would never consider themselves witches because many of their traditions were formed against witchcraft. And then there's the problem of *cultural appropriation*, the adoption of elements from one culture by