



TRADITIONAL CALENDARS

Many First Nations have traditionally followed the seasons and other natural cycles, which is different from the Western 12-month calendar. Some examples follow. There may be other teachings in your community about the yearly or seasonal calendar. These can be replaced in activities that refer to the calendar year.

Ojibway / Anishnaabe

In Anishnaabe tradition, the annual cycle follows the 13 moons. In different Nations and regions, the moons have different names. The following example has been adapted from Arlene Barry, *Thirteen Grandmother Moon Teachings*¹⁵.

Thirteen Grandmother Moon Teachings

JANUARY - SPIRIT MOON

The first moon of Creation is Spirit Moon, manifested through the Northern Lights. It is a time to honour the silence and realise our place among all of Great Mystery's creatures.

FEBRUARY - BEAR MOON

The second moon of Creation is Bear Moon, when we honour the vision quest that began in the fall. During this time, we discover how to see beyond reality and to communicate through energy rather than sound.

MARCH - SUGAR MOON

The third moon of Creation is Sugar Moon. As the maple sap begins to run, we learn of one of the main medicines given to the Anishnaabe that balances our blood, and heals us. During this time, we are encouraged to balance our lives as we would our blood sugar levels, by using Divine Law.

¹⁵ Barry, Arlene. "Thirteen Grandmother Moon Teachings," from her series of compiled teachings, *Kinoomaadiewinan Anishinaabe Bimaadinzinwin. Book 2, pp. 17-18.*



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APRIL - SUCKER MOON

The fourth moon of Creation is Sucker Moon, when Sucker goes to the Spirit World in order to receive cleansing techniques for this world. When it returns to this realm, it purifies a path for the Spirits and cleanses all our water beings. During this time we can learn to become healed healers.

MAY - FLOWER MOON

The fifth moon of Creation is Flower Moon, when all plants display their Spirit sides for all the world to see. This life giving energy is one the most powerful healing medicines on Mother Earth. During this moon we are encouraged to explore our Spiritual essences.

JUNE - STRAWBERRY MOON

The sixth moon of Creation is Strawberry Moon. The medicine of the strawberry is reconciliation. It was during this moon cycle that communities usually held their annual feasts to welcome everyone home, regardless of their differences over the past year, letting go of judgment and / or self-righteousness.

JULY - RASPBERRY MOON

The seventh moon of Creation is Raspberry Moon, when great changes begin. By learning gentleness and kindness, we may pass through the thorns of its bush and harvest its fruit, knowledge that will help in raising our families.



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AUGUST - THIMBLEBERRY MOON

The eighth moon of Creation is the Thimbleberry Moon, when we honour the Thimbleberry that produces an abundance of fruit once every three years. It was one of the first plants put on Mother Earth, and its purpose is to protect the Sacred Circle of Life by allowing us to recognize and understand the teachings that come from the Spirit World.

SEPTEMBER - CORN MOON

The ninth moon of Creation is the Corn Moon, during which time we learn about the cycle of life. Each cob of corn has thirteen rows of multicoloured seeds, which represent all the spirits waiting to begin their Earth Walk. These will be the future generations for whom we must prepare.

OCTOBER - FALLING LEAVES MOON

The tenth moon of Creation is the Falling Leaves Moon, a time when Mother Earth is honoured with the grandest of colours. As all of Creation makes their offerings to her, we become aware of all the miracles of Creation before us and our spiritual energies are once again awakened.

NOVEMBER - FREEZING MOON

The eleventh moon of Creation is the Freezing Moon, a time when the Star Nation is closest to us. As every creature and being prepares for the coming fasting grounds, we are reminded to prepare ourselves for our spiritual path by learning the sacred teachings and songs that will sustain us.





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DECEMBER - LITTLE SPIRIT MOON

The twelfth moon of Creation is the Little Spirit Moon, a time of healing. By receiving both vision of the spirits and good health, we may walk the Red Road with purest intentions, and we can share this most positive energy with our families and friends for the good of all.

BLUE MOON - BIG SPIRIT MOON

The thirteenth moon of Creation is Big Spirit Moon. Its purpose is to purify us, and to heal all of Creation, a process which may require a three-month spiritual journey. During this time, we receive instructions on the healing powers of the universe and transform them into our own vision of the truth.

Cree

Here is some information about the annual cycle in Cree traditions referenced from the Ontario Native Literacy Coalition¹⁶

Opawahcikanasis the Frost Exploding Moon January

Trees crackle from cold temperatures and extreme cold starts.

Kisipisim the Great Moon February

Animals do not move around much and trappers have little chance of catching them.

Mikisiwipism Eagle Moon March

Month when the eagle returns.

Niskipsim Goose Moon April

Month when the geese return, an indication of the coming of spring.

Athikipisim Frog Moon May

Arrival of warm weather and open water. Frogs begin to become active in ponds and swamps.

16 Ontario Native Literacy Coalition. "Thirteen Moons Curriculum" Practitioner Guide. LBS Levels 2 and 3, pp. 18. <<http://onlc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/13-Moon-curriculum.pdf>>



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Opiniyawiwipisim Egg Laying Moon June

Month when water fowl and other birds begin to lay their eggs.

Opaskowipisim Feather Moulting Moon July

Month when young fowl are moulting.

Ohpahowipisim Flying Up Moon August

Month when young fowl are ready to fly.

Nimitahmowipisim Rutting Moon September

Month when bull moose scrape the velvet from their antlers as a sign that mating begins.

Pimahamowipisim Migrating Moon October

Month when birds begin their flight south.

Kaskatinowipisim Freeze Up Moon November

Month when lakes and rivers start to freeze.

Thithikopiwipisim Hoar Frost Moon December

Month when frost sticks to leaves and other surfaces outside.

Haudenosaunee

Traditionally, Haudenosaunee people followed a familiar cycle of ceremonies that are defined by the natural world, roughly corresponding to the Western calendar months. For example, this is the calendar of the Mohawk Nation of Kahnawa:ke¹⁷:

Sha'tekohshérhon = Midwinter

Ohkhí:we = Feast for the Dead

Wáhta = Maple syrup

Ratiwé:ras = Thunder Dance

Ká:nen & Onónhkwa = Medicine & Seeds

Ken'niiohontéshta = Strawberry

Skanekwentará:ne = Raspberry

Orhóntseri = Green Bean

Okahseró:ta = Green Corn

Kaienthókwen = Harvest

Atierakhonsera'kó:wa = End of Season

¹⁷ Kahnawake Branch of the Mohawk Nation, Six Nation Iroquois Confederacy:
<http://www.kahnawakelonghouse.com/index.php?mid=2>