

Rauhnächte

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What are they?

The Rauhnächte describe a time in between the years. We find the roots of the Rauhnächte in the difference between the moon calendar and the Gregorian calendar. Obviously, they didn't match, so the resulting difference between the moon year and the Gregorian year, which are 11 days or 12 nights, we call the Rauhnächte.

When are they?

The tradition of the Rauhnächte can be traced back to the times of the Celts and the Germanic people and they are mostly celebrated in southern Germany and Austria. Some begin them with the winter solstice December 21st others begin December 25th with the Christmas day and they last until January 6th.

How are they celebrated?

There are a lot of different traditions and possibilities when it comes to what to do during the Rauhnächte. First, you can smoke all the rooms in your house to cleanse it (hence the name Rauhnächte: "Rauch" means "smoke"). It also is a time where people since ancient times like to try to figure out their future and engage in different traditions of predicting the new year. Also, the traditional fire work on New Years Eve is meant to banish demons with their bright lights and loud explosions.

But you also must be cautious because it's the time of the Wild Hunt and the Perchten. There you mustn't leave any work undone or laundry hanging around as it brings bad luck.

(Austria – HLW Lipizzanerheimat, Voitsberg)