

Shine the summer sunlight on all aspects of your life



Holistic therapist, **Karen Ward**, recommends ways to nourish mind, body and soul.

Here in Ireland, our summer comes from the South, when the sun climbs highest in the sky in this northern part of our beautiful Earth.

Our ancestors celebrated two major seasonal festivals at this time; Bealtaine in early May and the Summer Solstice around June 21. Perhaps you have heard of them and wondered what they were all about? Do these festivals have any relevance to our modern lives and is anyone actually taking part in a modern version of them nowadays?

The first of these community festival gatherings is Bealtaine, which heralds early

summer the first weekend in May. The word 'beal' means mouth and 'tine' means fire in Gaelic. So, for those who lived on these shores many moons ago, summer meant coming into the 'mouth of fire'. It was a time of youthful love and attraction, fun, playfulness and a sense of 'coming into your own/growing up'.

I can see modern versions of this ancient festival in the First Holy Communions and Confirmations celebrating Catholic Rites of Passage for children, the English Morris dancers with their maypole and exam time for junior, leaving cert and college students. This is a time to begin to shed the heavier clothes worn

in springtime, enjoying the feel of increasing warmth on arms and legs. People also shed their inhibitions with those bulkier clothes, becoming aware of their bodies and indeed of others as the passion of summer began to build!

The days grow longer and the nights shorter in the lead up to the second festival, Summer Solstice, when the longest day and the shortest night of the year occurs. To our ancestors, this peak time of the year was a celebration of the light, not just from the sun but from their understanding of the Divine. To them, Lúgh the Sun God lovingly mated with Danú the Earth Goddess in the sacred union of Heaven and Earth and the fruit of their union was life in the form of food, growth and happiness.

I feel a sensuous blooming within as nature mirrors this all around me. James Joyce surely remembered this too as he wrote of Leopold Blooms perambulations around summery Dublin. I become very aware of everyone living life as much as possible outdoors. The summer music festivals many of us love to go to are to me a modern celebration of what our ancestors did. The venues tend to be beautiful nature places, which focus not just on music, dancing and drinking but now increasing storytelling, poetry, artistry and holistic therapies including yoga. 🍀

Holistic summer tips

BODY

- Notice that you may have naturally switched the types of food you eat from hot, filling foods suitable for the colder months to lighter salads, vegetables and juices, instinctively knowing that, like the budding flowers, we too crave the sun energy wrapped in these life enhancing foods.
- Are you more outdoors now, enjoying the feel of the grass under your feet? Don't you feel so much healthier when actually

facing a vibrant sun shining down on your face and body?

MIND

- A sunny disposition is oh so very attractive to be around. Perhaps begin to notice those around you who naturally have a sense of a sunny disposition in their daily dealings with others.
- Consider turning your thoughts to creative pursuits now that you may have more time, especially in the bright evenings.

It might be doodling or drawing, writing or even planning a picnic for friends and family.

SOUL

- How do you nurture the different types of loving relationships in your life? These may be with a partner, child, siblings, friends, pets or life itself.
- Shine the light of summer loving into all your relationships. What does unconditional love mean to you and does it feature in these relationships?



About Karen

KAREN WARD, Holistic Therapist Presenter from RTE's *Health Squad* and Energy Therapist on BBC's *Last Resort* is a Shamanic teacher and co-facilitator in Sli an Chroí Shamanism, based in Dublin city (www.slianchroí.ie). She regularly appears for Holistic Talks at Kelly's Resort Hotel, in Rosslare, Wexford (www.kellys.ie).