



Excerpt from *Entering Hekate's Cauldron*. © 2025 Cyndi Brannen and Red Wheel Weiser.

Chapter 5

Honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon

*I set out alone,
Walking barefoot along the path.
I think of Hekate,
And the earth beneath my feet.
Torch-bearing guardian,
Guide along the path,
And gatekeeper of the mysteries.
To her I make this monthly quest.
At the crossroads, I place my offerings.
She meets me there,
Always.*

Honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon is a beautiful way of connecting with her and is key to our crooked journey—whether done as a few whispered words said in a dark room or a courageous trek to leave offerings at a crossroads.

There is a distinction between the Dark Moon (the astronomical new moon) and what the ancients called *Noumenia*, which means “new moon.” Noumenia was the spiritual start of a new lunar month—the earliest waxing crescent phase of the moon when it first becomes visible again. To the ancients, the day began at sundown rather than sunrise, contrary to the system we’re used to. We are now able to calculate the precise timing of each astronomical new moon, even if the moon is not physically visible. If the astronomical new moon occurs after sundown, perform your rituals before the next sundown.





Ancient Origins of Honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon

In areas of the ancient Mediterranean, food was left at crossroads for Hekate on the Dark Moon to honor her and petition her for protection and guidance. This ritual dates back over 2,000 years and was called Hekate's Deipnon. The term *Deipnon* translates to "supper," but there was much more to this ritual than just making food offerings.

The ritual began with the purification of the home and its occupants, with a sacrificial animal (usually a black puppy) playing a central role in the process. Although animal sacrifice was common in ancient times, using black puppies was unique to Hekatean rites. As upsetting as this sounds today, it was culturally normative back then. Through this "scape puppy," the toxic energies of the home and its occupants, which they called *miasma*, were transferred to the dog and then released through the sacrifice. A kinder version of the sacrifice can be accomplished through cleansing with eggs (see page XX). Although it is unknown whether those engaging in ancient Hekate's suppers used this method, some scholars believe they may have.

When the purification was complete, the house was well cleaned and swept, and all residue from the sacrifice and the sweeping (known as *oxuthumia*) was removed and set aside for later disposal.

After the home was cleansed, an elaborate meal was prepared. It typically included eggs, fish, cheese, bread, garlic, vegetables, fruit, cakes, and probably nuts. If you are called to recreate an ancient Hekate's supper as accurately as possible, the eggs should be raw, the fish should be mullet and sprat, the cheese should be freshly made, and the cake should be a sort of cheesecake upon which, according to some references, a candle burns. The ancient Greeks didn't have wax candles, however, so they used pine resin. The bread component of the feast probably resembled





flatbreads or a type of savory pancakes, known as *tiganates*, that were common in ancient Greece. Fruits that were common 2,000 years ago include grapes and dates.

The completed meal and the ritual waste would then be taken to a crossroads. The whole point of the ritual was to gain Hekate's favor and to protect against unsavory spirits and negative energies. Given that it would have been known to those undertaking this ritual that the feast would likely be consumed by outcasts, we can be inspired to make offerings to the vulnerable in our own society through charitable acts and donations. Supporting at-risk dogs, the unhoused, children, women, and those rejected by the mainstream are all in keeping with the spirit of this ancient meal. While our cultural norms may be different, the theme of propitiating Hekate through both personal veneration and service to others is a tradition we can continue.

Preparing to Honor Hekate on the Dark Moon

Whether you are planning to create a Hekate's supper inspired by this ancient ritual or scheduling a few moments of quiet veneration, make honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon a priority. Your veneration can be as simple as making an offering to the goddess while petitioning her for guidance and protection. Use this invocation or create one yourself.

Great Hekate.

Mysterious Moon.

Stars above.

Earth surrounds.

Water below.

Guide me along my way.

Protect my journey,

And bless my path.

These offerings are reflections of my devotion.





Many witches, including myself, have “Hekate trees,” either on their own property or nearby, where they journey each month on the Dark Moon to honor the goddess. However you choose to honor Hekate at this time, I do recommend some preparation. Begin by creating a plan to guide you throughout your rite. Here are some items to consider as you plan:

- **Timing:** Plan your ritual for a time when you will have no distractions.
- **Location:** Whether you are embarking on a pilgrimage to a real crossroads or visiting a symbolic crossroads on your own property or honoring the goddess at a crossroads altar on the floor in your room, select a location that works best for you and make sure that it is a safe space. There are bears and wildcats where I live, as well as other troublesome night creatures, like the restless dead and porcupines. I make a lot of noise when I venture out during the Dark Moon, and I erect energetic shields around my location to protect myself from unwelcome intruders. A counterclockwise circular movement with my left arm, repeated in groups of three, while reciting “I am protected from all harm, and I do no harm,” is a habitual practice for when I am out in the wild. Salt sprinkled in a counterclockwise circle on the ground is good for this kind of protection.
- **Moon sign:** The astrological sign in which the new moon will occur can help you determine the type of energy to highlight during your ritual. Give special attention to the sign as it relates to your personal astrology.
- **Focus:** Consider whether there is a particular aspect of Hekate that you want to express.
- **Intention:** Write a short statement establishing your focus for the ritual.
- **Daily practice:** Use your practice to enhance your plans and to attune to the focus of your ritual.
- **Offerings:** These can be either personal or traditional, as long as they are meaningfully linked to your focus.
- **Altar:** Create an altar connected to your focus that includes crossroads energy, using physical symbols, botanicals, soil retrieved from an actual intersection, images, and any items that evoke the energy of crossroads for you—for instance, two crossed keys.





- **Cauldron:** Attune your cauldron to the focus of your ritual; perhaps even have a special one in which to place your offerings.
- **Sacred flame:** Have a candle, a backyard fire, or a fire in your fireplace—anything suitable to ignite as a sacred flame at the beginning of the ritual process.
- **Cleansing:** Refer to the “Khernips/Triformis Ritual” in chapter 1, perform the egg purification ritual below, and plan a good general cleaning of your home.
- **Animara:** This term, which derives from the word “soul,” refers to rituals, meditations, written words, and other practices that awaken us to the mysteries and take us beyond our physical selves.

Make sure to record any dreams, synchronicities, encounters, visions, and other messages you may receive while you are planning your ritual and also during and after it.

Lustral Egg Cleansing Ritual

The ancients used “lustral eggs” to cleanse themselves before rituals. The basic technique involves passing a raw egg (still in its shell) down the body, starting at the crown and sweeping downward, lightly touching the egg to the body. The ritual is best done naked, prior to bathing. It can be done as part of honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon or anytime your home or personal energy field needs cleansing. When toxins are present, they generally show up as distress and unsettled feelings within ourselves, our relations, or in the atmosphere of our homes.

Supplies

All you need to perform this ritual is a candle and a raw egg. Place the egg in your cauldron, perhaps on a bed of cleansing botanicals and stones to amplify the purifying power. Leave the egg there for at least a few hours if it was in the refrigerator so that it reaches room temperature.

Process

Light your candle and, with the egg in your left hand (the side of purification and banishing), proclaim your intention through a simple incantation—for example:

Through this egg, I am cleansed of all that blocks and binds, removing all toxins and miasma.





Beginning at your crown, sweep the egg slowly downward toward the floor while reciting the incantation, either aloud or in your head. Be sure to scan your entire body, focusing on any parts that react to the ritual—such as registering sensations of heat or cold, feelings of numbness, or awakening emotions. Envision the egg drawing out the toxins and being sent to the earth, where they will be recycled into beneficial energy. Pay attention to any visions or messages that surface during the process.

Keep the egg outside if you intend to include it in a Hekate's supper or else dispose of it. Adding it to a Hekate's supper is inspired by the ancient practice of including household and ritual waste with the ritual. To cleanse a person, use one egg. To cleanse an entire home, you can walk through with an egg while reciting an incantation adapted for the purpose. A separate egg should be used for each person. The egg will feel heavier when it is full of miasma. When this happens, switch to a fresh egg.

Offerings to Hekate: From Ancient to Contemporary

There will be times when you may want to merge traditional components of a Hekate's supper with personally meaningful elements, just as there may be months when honoring the goddess on the Dark Moon is difficult because life has other plans for you. Rest assured that Hekate understands your capacities and will never reject any sincere offerings, however humble they may be. Whether you are honoring her by offering your continued devotion through a spontaneous ritual or having a purely internal dialogue with her or going all out with your version of a Hekate's supper, trust that your veneration will be more than welcome.

For a lengthy devotional project, choose one aspect of ancient Hekate's suppers and explore it deeply each month. Connect to the meaning of the food item and make it yourself from scratch. In my coven, we often focus on one type of offering each month, creating a shared





devotional experience. Include words, art, and other items that reflect commitment and devotion to the goddess in your ritual. I recommend using a dedicated tray, plate, or even cauldron to hold your offerings, like something decorated with the symbol of Hekate's Wheel or an antique platter that feels just right to you. An alternative is to wrap food offerings in a natural material, like compostable paper or corn husks, so that they won't harm the environment, and you won't need to retrieve a container.

In *Entering Hekate's Garden*, I share numerous recipes inspired by ancient Hekate's suppers, including the almost-a-ritual-in-itself "Dark Goddess Cheesecake," simple "Goat Cheese Crescents," and "Bread of the Goddess." Here are some other food items that are appropriate as offerings.

- **Cakes and breads:** Especially cheesecakes and flatbreads. *Savillum*, favored by ancient Romans, is made from simple ingredients and is in the spirit of the traditional cheesecakes included in Hekate's suppers.
- **Libations:** From a good red wine to pomegranate juice—use anything special to you.
- **Eggs:** Usually raw, although I've offered a piece of frittata, which combines the "cheesecake" with the egg
- **Fish:** While the traditional mullet may not be readily available, similar local species make excellent substitutions. I live where scallops and lobster are the most prized local seafood, so I use those.
- **Cheese:** Especially fresh cheeses like fresh mozzarella. Or you can make your own, which is easier than you may think (see the recipe below).
- **Fruits, nuts, and vegetables:** Figs, almonds, garlic, and olives (including olive oil)
- **Botanicals:** Flowers but especially roses, bay laurel, and even resins. These can be placed on the offering tray and burned as sacred smoke.





- ***Intuitive offerings:*** Use objects that just seem to “appear” and emanate their desire to become involved, like natural items found when walking (leaves, rocks, seashells, etc.).
- ***Corporeal evidence of devotion:*** Including jewelry and bodily “waste” such as hair, nail clippings, and even blood. Whenever I cut myself, I try to add the blood to my offerings.
- ***Personal evidence of devotion:*** Whatever you are personally working on is appropriate, such as releasing the past or giving up something that blocks and binds, such as a “bad” habit.
- ***Animal spirits:*** Items that represent a living animal; anything from pet hair to bones work well.
- ***Service in Hekate’s name:*** Working in a coven or other group dedicated to her, sharing posts on social media, making charitable donations, and volunteering, particularly with organizations supporting vulnerable people and dogs, make good offerings to the goddess.

Making Cheese for Hekate

Some of the most transcendent experiences I’ve ever had are when I’m creating a Hekate supper inspired by ancient recipes. When I’m preparing these dishes, I connect to spiritual ancestors, channeling their wisdom and generally going far beyond the physical task of cooking. Here is a recipe from my own collection that is in keeping with the type of cheese that was likely included in ancient Hekate’s suppers. It is inspired by Columella’s recipe for making fresh cheese in his *De Re Rustica*. Preparing this cheese opened me up to Hekate in such a profound way that I cannot find the right words to describe it.

Supplies

2-gallon (8-liter) stock pot with lid
rubber or wooden spatula for stirring
food-grade cheesecloth
colander
large bowl (big enough for the colander to fit inside)





kitchen twine or string

parchment paper

weight for pressing (a stone, a heavy mortar, or a weighty can)

Ingredients

1 gallon (4 liters) of whole (4% fat) goat's or cow's milk (*not* ultra-pasteurized)

rennet of choice—fig, thistle, vegetable, lemon juice, or vinegar (Refer to the rennet's instructions for the amount needed based on the volume of milk. Rennet can be purchased online or in specialty stores.)

Instructions

Pour all the milk into the stock pot. Bring the milk to a boil over medium-high heat, while stirring constantly so that it doesn't stick or burn. This will take between 15 and 20 minutes.

When the milk starts to boil, keep stirring, stopping occasionally to test the height of the froth.

Once the froth is about double the height of the milk, remove the pot from the heat.

Let the milk cool for about 15 minutes, then add the rennet. For vegetable rennet tablets, use ½ of one for soft chevre or 1 whole one for a mozzarella-type cheese. Let the milk separate into curds and whey for about 30 minutes.

While the rennet is rendering, line the colander with cheesecloth. Place the colander in the large bowl and set it in the sink. Once the curds and whey have formed, pour the contents of the pot into the colander.

Cover the curds with the cheesecloth as the whey drains, gently pressing down to help the process.

Once most of the whey has drained, invert the colander so that the curds are in the cloth and twist the cloth to push out any remaining liquid. Put the bundle back in the colander and add the weight on top, placing a piece of parchment in between the weight and the cloth. Let the curds drain for an additional 30 minutes.





Let rest in the fridge for several hours or overnight. Refrigerated and wrapped in paper or plastic, this cheese will keep for several days.

Congratulations! You've made cheese like that used in traditional Hekate's suppers. Offer all or part of it to Hekate. You can enjoy it as a snack with fruits, nuts, and crackers or add it to eggs, pasta, or pizza. If you like, you can garnish it with a traditional botanical, such as basil or pomegranates. Drizzle it with honey or sprinkle it with bee pollen. Make a Dark Moon by forming the cheese into a sphere and coating it with poppy seeds. Dust it with garlic powder or rest it on a bed of bay leaves and rose petals. Experiment and do what you feel drawn to do.

Dark Moon Crossroads Pilgrimage

I wholeheartedly recommend making a pilgrimage to your chosen crossroads a monthly event on each Dark Moon. If this isn't possible, work with the energy of the crossroads on your altar. Here are some tips to consider as you venture forth on this sacred pilgrimage.

Immediately Prior to Your Journey

Prepare your offerings and bring along a cauldron for burning sacred smoke and a candle to represent the Sacred Flame. If you are at all concerned for safety, let someone know you are setting out or take someone with you. My sons are well accustomed to me vanishing and know the spots in the wildwood and along the shore that I frequent. I recommend wearing a headlamp so that you can keep your hands free.

Wildlife Considerations

When leaving offerings in a locale where animals are present, consider their safety when choosing the items. I once left poppets that contained mugwort, mayapple, and pennyroyal as an offering. They had vanished by the next morning.

Incantations and Recitations

While walking, connect with Hekate through words. I like to review the previous month, highlighting what I've done to honor her and reciting an incantation or even a simple chant.





Placing the Offerings

When you arrive at the crossroads, arrange your offerings, light the candle, and burn the sacred smoke; then pledge your offerings to Hekate. You can use the pledge in the section on honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon, although I always recommend choosing your own words. In keeping with ancient custom, once the ritual at the crossroads is complete, pack up and walk away without looking back.

Consuming Offerings

Whether or not you eat your offerings is up to you. Do what feels right to you. If an offering is something special that you feel is just for Hekate, then don't eat it. But if you feel as if you have connected with her by just creating the offering, then eating it can be a deeply transcendent experience. For me, cooking for Hekate is a profoundly sacred.

If, however, you have left your offerings at the crossroads and need to retrieve them after a few days, you can just put the remains in your compost bin. One of the coven's favorite aspects of Hekate is *Borborophorba*, which translates as "filth-eating goddess."

Dark Moon Meditative Journey

This journey can be done in conjunction with a pilgrimage or on its own. Adapt the text so that it aligns with your focus.

Light a candle and burn sacred smoke. When you are comfortable, journey to your inner crossroads, where the cauldron will reveal a special gift for you. Soften your gaze and take a deep breath, releasing all tension. If you created a physical offering, allow it to come into focus in your consciousness.

Focus on yourself and feel that place deep within your core relax. Feel roots extending down from your body and grounding you, tethering you to the earth. Release anything that needs to be returned to the earth and draw up nourishment through these roots. Feel the energy of Hekate Chthonia and the awakening of intuition, feelings, and witchcraft.





Turn your attention to your heart center—the intersection of your inner self and the external world. Connect to Hekate Enodia, goddess of the crossroads, who is very much about guiding us through everyday life.

Draw your breath into your throat, then allow it to float upward, clearing away mental clutter. This is the realm of Hekate Kleidoukhos, keeper of keys to the mysteries, the greater wisdom, the infinite. This is your third eye.

Through this soul vision, see a beautiful gate. As you exhale, step through the gate into Hekate's deeper world and enter her beautiful garden. There is no moon, but the torches are lit and the pathway is clear. Ahead, you see a beautiful altar in the center of which a great flame burns, surrounded by water.

Approach the altar and let it appear to you however it wishes. Place your offering on the altar and let the experience wash over you. You may encounter Hekate. You may see one of her allies or her animals. You may even receive a token, a symbol, or a key. Peer into the cauldron and see the truth revealed through symbols and objects. Reach in and retrieve yours.

As you expand your gaze out from the altar, you realize it stands at a three-way crossroads. One path goes down to Hekate's Cave; one goes up to her temple; one leads straight ahead, deeper into her garden. Does one path call to you more than another? Can you feel the liminal space of the crossroads?

When you are ready, journey back along the pathway to your regular consciousness. Step through the gate and come all the way back into your physical self, bringing with you any impressions you have. What did you see in the garden? What was your experience of the crossroads? Bring that experience into your consciousness so you can engage with it. What does it all mean for you? How does it show up in the coming days? In dreams? In visions? In meditation?

You can do a reading for guidance like the one in chapter 3, or you can stay in the presence of Hekate and dialogue with her. Draw a picture; make a collage—whatever comes through. Just enjoy the experience of honoring Hekate on the Dark Moon in a deeply personal and intimate





way. You can make this meditative journey very simple or very elaborate. The Dark Moon is a sacred special time, and I hope that you find great nourishment and connection there.

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first three chapters for free and
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