

# CELEBRATING THE EQUINOX

Different countries, cultures and religions have celebrated the equinox, or the turning of the seasons for as long as we know. Some notable celebrations are listed on these story cards below. If you've made your globe, the places listed here are marked for your reference.

Cut the cards out, then read and discuss them as a family. It can be fun to learn about how different cultures celebrate. You can research and read more about any of these celebrations if they interest you.

Most equinox celebrations throughout the world centre around giving thanks for the previous season, and preparing for the season ahead. Gratitude tags have been included here so you can join in and give thanks as a family.



## requirements



scissors



printed pages



pens or pencil



## further reading...

If any of these celebrations sound spark your curiosity, there is so much more information online. Have a look around and check out the food, traditions and religious backgrounds behind these celebrations. There are many more countries that celebrate the equinox than those listed here.

# EQUINOX TRADITIONS

## Cambodia

Angkor Wat in Cambodia is one of the largest temples in the world. On the day of the equinox, when the sun rises due east, it rises directly over the top of the middle of the temple. Tourists come from all over the world to see this sight.



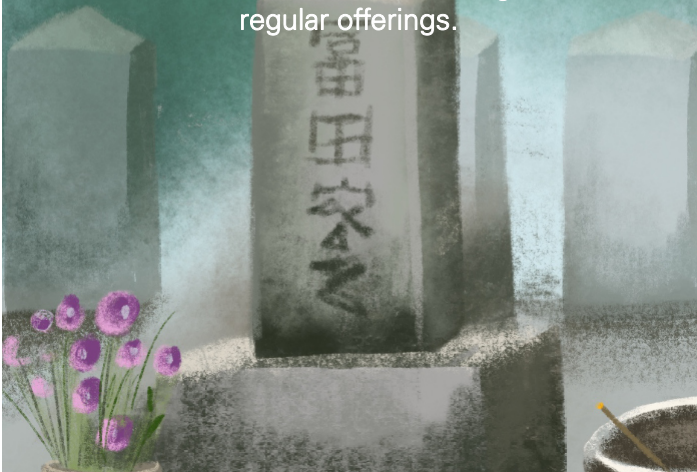
## China

The autumn equinox is a time for China to celebrate the Moon Festival, which is celebrated at the harvest moon (the full moon closest to the autumnal equinox). It is celebrated with fireworks, parades and lanterns. It is also a time to look at the moon and eat moon cakes, a traditional treat for this celebration.



## Japan

Japan marks the equinox with a time called Ohigan. Ohigan is a Japanese Buddhist tradition and is celebrated with a holiday around each equinox. Ohigan is a time to visit the graves of ancestors and reflect. Graves are maintained, and offerings are left. Flowers and traditional treats of botamochi and ohagi are regular offerings.



## The UK

People following Druid traditions in the UK gather at Stonehenge in England to watch the equinox sunrise. As with all traditional pagan groups, the equinox is a time to offer thanks for a bountiful harvest, share food, and prepare for the coming winter.



## Belarus



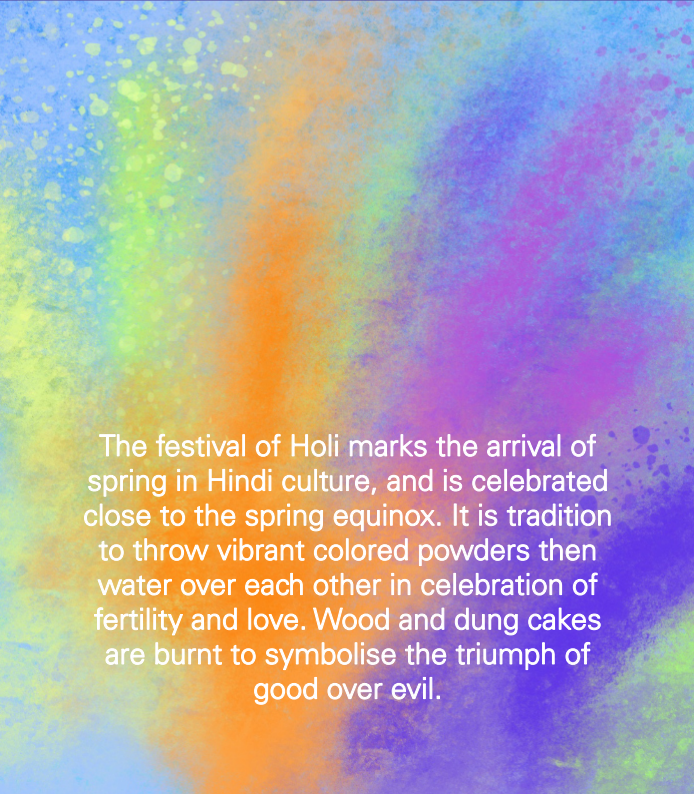
In Belarus the spring equinox means the return of native birds to their homeland after a winter migration. To welcome the birds back, the people here decorate trees with ribbons and paper birds. They bake bread formed in the shape of birds and then take them outside and throw them up into the air.

## Malta



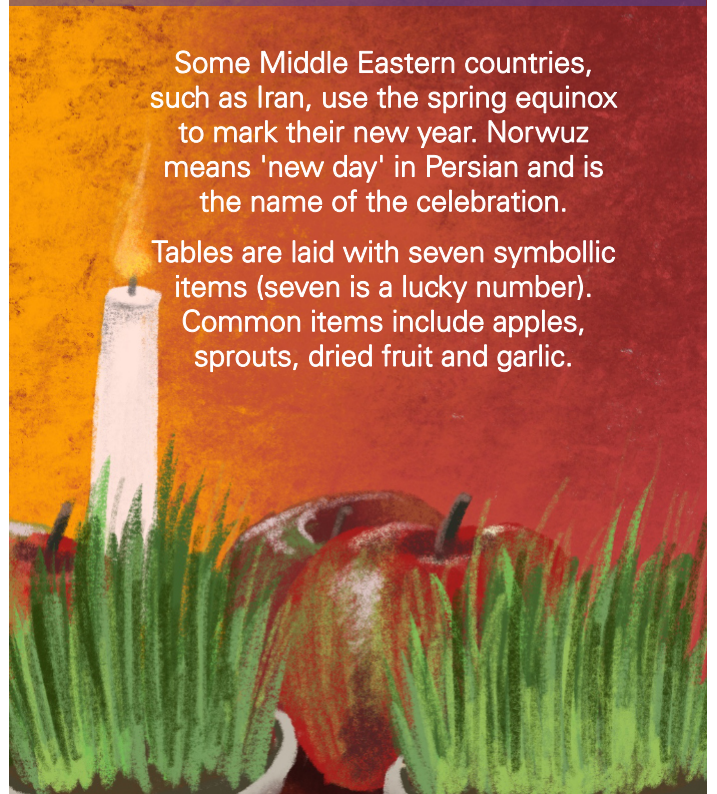
The Mnajdra Temples in Malta are very old. They are estimated to date back to 3600 BC. A doorway to one of these structures marks the exact position of the sun at the time of the equinoxes. People come from all over the world to witness this precise alignment.

## India



The festival of Holi marks the arrival of spring in Hindi culture, and is celebrated close to the spring equinox. It is tradition to throw vibrant colored powders then water over each other in celebration of fertility and love. Wood and dung cakes are burnt to symbolise the triumph of good over evil.

## Iran



Some Middle Eastern countries, such as Iran, use the spring equinox to mark their new year. Norwuz means 'new day' in Persian and is the name of the celebration.

Tables are laid with seven symbolic items (seven is a lucky number). Common items include apples, sprouts, dried fruit and garlic.

What does your family or community do to celebrate the changing of the seasons?

# GIVING THANKS

Most equinox celebrations throughout the world centre around giving thanks for the previous season, and preparing for the season ahead.

As a family, discuss what you are grateful for this season, and what your hopes are for the next season.

Hang the completed tags on a branch or around the house as part of your seasonal celebrations.

## requirements



scissors



printed pages



pens or pencil

Scissors icon

I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_

I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_

I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_

I am grateful for \_\_\_\_\_

I hope for \_\_\_\_\_

I hope for \_\_\_\_\_

I hope for \_\_\_\_\_

I hope for \_\_\_\_\_