



Traditionally in all cultures women would gather every new moon to rest, eat, share stories & support each other to fulfil their potential.

What is the Red Tent?

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The Red Tent or *Moon Lodge* is simply a gathering of women that occurs at the new moon when girls & women are most in need of support, rest & reflection. A timeless tradition observed by ancient cultures it serves as a regular forum for empowering one's feminine sense of selfhood.

Welcome to your Womanhood

Traditionally, girls would start attending the Red Tent when their bodies started to cycle with the moon. It was here they would learn about their fertility cycles & every facet of being a woman known as Women's Lore, Women's Mysteries or Secret Women's Business...(the info not covered by school sex education, teen mags or the Girl Guide association!) In a nutshell, it gifts girls a mystical understanding of their womanhood. Including the effect of the lunar & seasonal cycles on women's emotions, energy levels & psychological well being, as well as how to balance those cycles for greater harmony. This secret knowledge then engendered empowerment as women learnt the value of their bodies as physical temples & learnt to set personal boundaries accordingly.

This custom also acknowledged that when a girl begins to cycle it is natural that she will feel the need to individuate from her mother by doing exactly the opposite of everything her mother says in order to find her own feminine identity. Initiating teenage girls into a circle of trusted women who they can turn to when they feel unable to share with their mother, ensures they are guided & protected by a circle of wise & loving mentors rather than being blindly led by their peers or seeking guidance from magazines sponsored by a corporate agenda. This provides an authentic foundation of practical support so they can make the necessary errors in judgement that are universal on the road to wisdom...even if that means calling one of the women from their Red Tent circle at 2am if they find themselves outside a club unable to find a lift home in their early twenties!

And by actually welcoming girls to their womanhood we collectively affirm that being a woman is worth celebrating & that it is safe for us to gather & speak our truth. Marking this rite of passage also helps both mother & daughter to acknowledge that the childhood phase has passed so new responsibilities must be accepted if new freedoms are to be granted.

What Is the Red Tent? (CONT.)

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The Getting of Wisdom

In addition, the Red Tent was where women learnt the sacred arts of healing, channelling, dream analysis & divination as our mystical feminine gifts such as clairvoyance (clear seeing), clairsentience (clear sensing), clairaudience (clear hearing) & intuition (inner guidance) are amplified during our moontime (menstruation). By honing these innate tendencies girls can further protect themselves by heeding their sixth sense & learning to read the signs.

It was also in this sanctuary that secrets were shared, wisdom imparted often through the oral tradition of folklore & myth, recipes exchanged & parenting advice discussed. It was in this safe environment that young girls learnt about the responsibility of sexuality, through the teaching of the love arts & through access to many mentors, they would come to understand the importance of their role as women in society.

'Being publicly sexual has become the only acceptable way for girls to demonstrate maturity.'

'Pornified' by Pamela Paul

Why is the Red Tent held at the New Moon?

New moon is the time of the month, 2 weeks after full moon when we tend to feel tired, inward & vulnerable. It's when our insecurities & old wounds surface... our shadow self that we often try to hide from others. But if we don't learn to accept & heal our shadow (like Peter Pan) we never grow up & so we end up with a society so afraid of aging we think it normal to carve ourselves up rather than be publicly seen as an elder. It is for this reason women of all indigenous societies for thousands of years gathered together at this time to reflect upon their lives, offering emotional support & healing to one another rather than expect their partner to intuit & fulfill all their emotional needs.

The new moon is also the time when most women experience their 'moontime' or 'heavenly water' as it was known in traditional Chinese medicine. So this custom offered a time out to working women & mothers, enabling them to turn inwards & rest & replenish when their lunar tide was out each month & their life force at its lowest ebb.

Another reason for this time honoured practice was that during one's moontime (the most common time for women to menstruate) & generally at new moon, women are at their most psychically open. When they were considered to be, 'closest to God' as it's the most inward time of the cycle, making it the ideal time to meditate on behalf of themselves, each other & for the greater good - channelling intuitive insights & guidance.

Gathering in Circle

Creates a designated time & space to stop & regularly take stock so we can reflect upon & integrate the changes in our hectic lives.



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The Cultural Cost of the Omission of The Red Tent

The Red Tent also helped to sustain healthy partnerships & marriages. Because just as our bodies are ruled by the moon, so too are our emotions. And just like the moon women are changeable & emotional beings. So when we experience the dark time of our emotional lunar cycle, it is best for the longevity of our relationships that we take sacred space from our partners & children so they don't experience our destructive side when we are in the little death phase of our monthly mandala.

If we take this time to focus on our inner needs at this time we can return to our loved ones full of self love & nurturing so we have it to give to them the rest of the month without burning out. Without this cyclic acceptance of our need to give back to the self we end up with a Western epidemic of breast cancer in the 'civilised world' where women are culturally expected to nurture 24/7 without asking for anything in return. Just as we need to breathe in before breathing out, so too women need to take time & sustenance for themselves if



we are to continue giving to others from a centered & full sense of self.

Similarly, by taking responsibility for our emotional well being through a monthly practice we lessen our need for emotional comfort through overeating, as the sacral energy center which resides in the abdomen is governed by the moon. When women don't honour their emotional needs the result is gluttony, the vice of the sacral chakra. So with the omission of Red Tents giving women a regular time to process their emotions we see eating disorders as common place, particularly amongst teenage girls. Other feminine health complaints such as menstrual disorders & depression are also often alleviated through this simple, cyclic practice.

What You Can Do

Whilst we have had the angry political movements of the suffragettes & the feminists, what we are now needing is the third wave of the Women's Movement, the healing of the feminine through the reclamation of our traditional customs.

1. Spread the Word! Email this on to as many women as possible & post the link on your Facebook,

'In native Amercian culture if you wanted to destroy a village you simply destroyed the moonlodge, the place of wisdom. So it stands to reason that the fastest way to rebuild our global village is to reclaim our wisdom by reinstating the tradition of the moonlodge.'

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For women raised in a Western (masculinized or yang) culture that had no understanding of ancient women's traditions so dismissed them as old wives' tales or feared them as the work of the devil, we can now see the physical cost of women who aren't in touch with their feminine essence as infertility is now at an all time high in the West. New moon circles offer the most fundamental & practical way to attune women's natural hormone cycles to the moon, regulating their endocrine system without the invasion of synthetic hormones.

My Space, Twitter, website or blog. Put it in your newsletters, noticeboards & discuss it at your mother's groups & schools.

Add your comments & encourage others to do the same.

2. Find Out How to Start Your Own Red Tent circle by visiting www.starofishtar.com

3. Start your Red Tent circle at the next new moon!



Knowledge is Power. When women unveil all facets of their womanhood they are not susceptible to marketing that preys upon their insecurities.