

## Offered Title: The Moon by any Other Name

What's up with all the names for our Moon? Hunters, harvest, blue...and on and on. And what do they mean? Names for our Moon come from meaningful descriptions so let's dive into its names and meanings.

Let's start with Moon.

Moon is an English word derived from the Germanic *mǣnōn* and had its English start around 725 as *monā*, then *mone*, then *moone*, and finally Moon. Luna is the Latin and Selene is the Greek word for our Moon. OK, got it? Not so fast, apparently the Romans used the names Diana and Cynthia to describe the Moon as well. This is getting kind of complicated!

Many of the Moon's names derive from native American names – a full Moon, based on the season and/or month.

From the Farmers' Almanac. The common name is first, then other names used in parentheses.

**Wolf Moon** (old, snow) – January: Mid-winter wolf packs howled outside encampments

**Snow Moon** (hunger) – February: The heaviest snowfall of winter

**Worm Moon** (crow, crust, sap) – March: Earthworms emerging and the return of Robins

**Pink Moon** (Sprouting Grass, Egg, Fish Moon) – April: Emergence of the herb moss pink, wild grasses, birds nesting, and spawning shad.

**Flower Moon** (corn planting) – May: Flowers blooming, time for planting

**Strawberry Moon** (rose) – June: Time to gather strawberries

**Buck Moon** (thunder, hay) – July: Bucks are growing new antlers

**Sturgeon Moon** (red, green corn, grain) – August: Named after this big prehistoric looking creature, fished in August, maybe for caviar?

**Harvest Moon** (corn) – September: Native Americans named it corn Moon for the corn harvest. The harvest Moon is the full Moon occurring closest to autumnal equinox, usually in September but sometimes in October. FYI – the October 2017 full Moon is a Harvest Moon.

**Hunter's Moon** (Harvest, Blood, Sanguine) – October: Time to hunt fattened deer. Sanguine is a term referring to blood, whether it be relation, or bloodthirsty. This Moon is not the Blood Moon term used for a total lunar eclipse.

**Beaver Moon** (frosty) – November: Time to set beaver traps before swamps freeze over.

**Cold Moon** (long nights) – December: Cold, long nights of winter

**Blue Moon:** This is the name traditionally given to an "extra" full Moon occurring, resulting in 13 during the 12-month year, happening once every 2-3 years. The Maine Farmers' Almanac defined Blue Moon in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as the third full Moon occurring in a quarter that had four full Moons. Normally a quarter has three full Moons. Another definition, a little simpler but out of step with the Almanac, it a second full Moon in any given month. When's the next one? Depends. Using the Almanac, it is on 05/18/2019. Using the simpler definition, it will be on 01/31/2018. Either way, it means an occurrence happening infrequently.

## What's in the Sky?

Catch Saturn close to the waxing crescent Moon on September 26<sup>th</sup> at dusk, in the south-southeast.