

What books will explain about Witchcraft?

Wicca: The Old Religion in the New Millennium by Vivianne Crowley (Thorsons Publishers)

Witch Crafting: A Spiritual Guide to Making Magic by Phyllis Currott

There's A Witch in The Boardroom by Stacey Demarco

Practising the Witch's Craft Edited by Douglas Ezzy (Allen and Unwin)

Progressive Witchcraft: Spirituality, Mysteries, and Training in Modern Wicca by Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone (New Page)

The Encyclopedia of Witches and Witchcraft by Rosemary Ellen Guiley (Checkmark Books)

Witchcraft and Paganism in Australia by Lynne Hume (Melbourne University Press)

The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft by Ronald Hutton (Oxford University Press)

Which Witch Is Which? A Concise Guide To Wiccan And Neo-pagan Paths And Traditions Compiled and Edited by Patricia Telesco (New Page Books)

Drawing Down the Moon by Margot Adler (Penguin)

This is by no means a comprehensive list.

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Wicca & Witchcraft: Which is Which?

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An educational pamphlet provided

*Pagan Awareness Network Inc
Australia*

Witchcraft is a spiritual practice; the use of folk magics, charms, herbs, incantations, and rituals to attain an outcome, like healing or blessing. Witchcraft is found in every culture and throughout history, but it is neither a distinct nor universal religion.

Wicca, in contrast, is a distinct Pagan religion.

A practitioner of Wicca, either male or female, is a Wiccan. A practitioner of Witchcraft, either male or female, is a Witch.

The words, Wicca and Witch, are incorrectly used interchangeably but represent distinctly different things.

While many potentially refer to themselves as “Witches”, there are some things to remember:

- Not all Pagans are Wiccan
- Not all Pagans are Witches
- All Wiccans are Pagan
- Not all Wiccans practice witchcraft
- Not all Witches are Wiccan
- Not all Witches are Pagan

Any negative taint on the word Witch is a relic from history and is nothing to do with modern approaches to Witchcraft.

Modern Pagan Witchcraft

Modern Pagan Witchcraft is a broad term, covering many different types of beliefs and practices. Despite the varieties, it is a positive and life-affirming path for the individual.

The arts of “Witchcraft” can refer to many things, most commonly the practice of divination, spellwork, healing, soothsaying, herbal knowledge, midwifery, and ritual. Often there is an overlap with many shamanic practices.

In modern Paganism, Witchcraft practices could be used to honour a particular season, for good health, for agricultural or domestic blessings, in honour of a Deity or ancestors, to be guided and protected by deities, or for insight when making decisions.

Most Pagan Witches today adopted Witchcraft in adulthood. However in future, it will be more and more common to find people who are raised as Witches or Wiccans from birth by their parents, families and communities.

Since witchcraft is a practice, one is considered a Witch simply because one practices Witchcraft. As part of this, a Witch might perform a rite of self-dedication; a simple ceremony to dedicate themselves to their one or more chosen Deities or to their path. This ‘rite of passage’ symbolically marks their commitment.

Wicca

Wicca is a distinct religion; it has theologies, rituals and customs of its own. This differentiates it from other Pagan and non-Pagan belief systems. Wicca draws its name from an older word for ‘witch’, hence the common confusion between Wicca and Witchcraft.

Wicca can be traced back to the early- to mid-twentieth century and is usually accepted as being founded by Gerald Gardner, who was inspired by the theories of Margaret Murray, notions of reviving pre-Christian traditions, Ceremonial Magic, and Freemasonry, amongst other things.

Wicca is described as a modern day initiatory Mystery religion. Many traditions may require a would-be Wiccan to be initiated via a coven, however many Wiccans also recognise and accept self-initiation as valid entry into the path.

Some traditional teachings of Wicca state that it takes a year-and-a-day before initiation into Wicca can

happen, so the student will be expected to study as hard and as seriously as they would in conversion to any other religion.

Wicca is the most visible of the different Pagan paths as it has had the most exposure to the general public through media reports, movies and popular TV shows. Any representation in the media or by the entertainment industry does not necessarily reflect everyday Wiccans.

Despite the range and difference in Wiccan traditions, Wicca can be summarised to include some of the following (though this is not conclusive):

- the law of Threefold Return
- the Wiccan Rede
- a God and a Goddess
- 8 holidays of the Wheel of the Year (Sabbats)
- celebrate Full Moons (Esbats)
- create sacred space though casting a Circle

It must be remembered that not all Wiccans utilise Magick and not all Wiccans consider themselves ‘Witches’. However all Wiccans are Pagan.

In Australia, Wiccans usually cast their circles anti-clockwise (sunwise) and celebrate the Sabbats according to the southern seasons, but there are some who might prefer to keep to the traditional Northern Hemisphere directions.

Traditional Wicca

Usually refers to Gardnerian or Alexandrian Wicca. The practitioners practice Wicca as laid out by Gerald Gardner or Alex Saunders with little deviation.

Eclectic Wicca

Wiccans who incorporate practices or techniques from non-Wiccan and sometimes non-Pagan sources.