

Winter Solstice Spell Jar



Winter Solstice is the day with the fewest daylight hours, and marks the turn of the year towards the return of the light. It's a natural ending/beginning day: a good time to let go of what no longer serves us, and turn towards what comes next. The Winter Solstice Spell Jar ritual is my favorite way to mark this day. It was created by [Shanalee Hampton](#) five or six years ago, and is recorded here with her permission. This practice is really fun to do as a seasonal celebration with other people; it's also powerful intention-setting to do on your own. Regardless of your style of practice, it's very grounding and very pretty!

You will need:

- Anything you want to burn at this close of the year:
old spells, mementos, slips of paper naming feelings you want to let go of, etc.
- Paper and pen
- A small glass jar (half pint size works well)
- A tealight or other small candle
- A length of string or twine
- A few tablespoons of potting soil
- Salt
- Crushed eggshells or nutshells
- Various dried herbs and spices
- Shells, crystals, feathers, pennies, or other small talismans that are meaningful to you

To begin, gather the things you want to let go of as the year draws to a close. If you can light a fire safely, burn them, imagining yourself being released from these feelings and situations. If you're not able to light a fire, you can use a candle to burn small slips of paper, or take the items outside of your home and discard them with intention. (Always have water on hand when you're burning something, and don't leave your fire unattended.)

Next, cleanse your space in whatever way is meaningful for you. That might be burning dried herbs, or using sound, meditation, dancing, or any other practice that grounds you and sets the space for working with intentions.

When you're feeling fully present, sit down with your paper, and write a letter to yourself. State your intentions for the year to come, keeping your language both positive and specific. Then fold your letter up small; you're going to add it to your spell jar.

Now let's make a spell! Add a layer of dirt to the bottom of your jar; this is your foundation, and earth is the starting point for growth. Next, add a layer of salt. Salt is a purifier, and also a boundary marker. On top of the salt, sprinkle your crushed eggshells/nutshells to represent the new life of the coming year. Add your letter to your spell jar wherever it feels good to you - on top of the eggshells, mixed in with the herbs, or tucked into the side of the jar once you're done adding to it. Choose a variety of herbs that represent your intentions for the new year. You can reference the list of herbs and their associated meanings below, or you can do this intuitively and choose things that you respond to as you're working with your intentions. Add your herbs and spices to your spell jar, naming your intentions as you add them (friendship, safety, sweetness, balance, prosperity, etc.). Then add your crystals and talismans at the top of the jar, and tucked in along the sides, again naming any intentions you associate with them. When your spell jar is complete, set your candle on the top, squishing it in a little if you need to make it steady. Last, take your length of string, and wrap it three times around the neck of the jar, holding your intentions deliberately, and picturing what you're building. Tie a knot to fasten the string around the jar. Then light your candle, and spend some time with your solstice spell. Journal if you want to, or meditate. This is also a good time to nourish yourself with a snack. You can let your candle burn all the way down (keep an eye on it, though, there's a lot of dry stuff in there!), or extinguish the flame with intention and relight it again any time you need to affirm your spell.

If you choose to do this spell again the following year, shake out the contents of the previous year's spell jar, and burn or dispose of them in the first step of this ritual. (You can burn your letter as well, if that feels right; I like to keep mine.)



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Herbs and Their Meanings

(gathered from a variety of sources)

Angelica: inspiration

Anise: protection

Basil: love

Bay Leaf: purification, success

Calendula: health

Chamomile: comfort, happiness, energy in
adversity

Chives: usefulness

Cloves: cultivating friendship

Dandelion: happiness

Dill: good spirits

Echinacea: capability

Elder: compassion

Fennel: worthy of praise

Ginger: money

Hawthorn: protection

Hops: mirth

Hyssop: cleansing, blessing

Lavender: devotion

Lemon balm: sympathy

Lovage: strength

Mint: virtue

Mugwort: tranquility

Oregano: joy

Parsley: gratitude

Pepper: protection

Rose: love, desire

Rosemary: remembrance

Sage: wisdom

Thyme: courage

Vervain: good fortune

Yarrow: healing