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10 simple and beautiful ways to celebrate Winter Solstice

Winter solstice marks the darkest depths of winter and the beginning of the return of the sun. It is a time to honour the ever turning wheel of the year, let go of things that no longer serve you and to give thanks for the passing of another season. One of the things I've notice in abundance this year is the call to slow down after Samhain. To really rest and turn to inward reflection. We are after all, cyclical beings that are part of nature and we can't be a energetic as we are in high summer, in these depths of winter.

If you saw my recent blog post about why I'm not celebrating Christmas anymore, you'll know why this is my first year of truly celebrating Winter Solstice. And as I've woven in rituals and ways to celebrate the return of the sun, it struck me how many of these have morphed into Christmas celebrations, but their origins can be traced back to Pagan and Celt traditions. It feels so much more aligned to be weaving in some traditions that I've always enjoyed each year, but also understanding the nature aligned purpose of why they're so beautiful to honour.

For the last couple of years, we've not had a tree. Instead I've bought off cuts of fir branches and decorated our fireplace and this year our conservatory. Fire has always been a big part of winter for us, especially through lockdown. We would go into the garden on cold clear nights, get the fire on to stargaze and marvel at the enormity of the universe.

Light always leads for me. We have simple stars in our windows, inspired by our travels in Norway, where the glow would guide seafarers back to shore and travellers home on the snowy winter nights and to welcome in light and warmth at the darkest depths of winter.

I am looking forward to getting up to watch sunrise out of the sea, immersing in nature from first light soaking in all the goodness. I am really feeling the call to get into woodland. So I am going to answer that call and spend the afternoon preparing a feast and ease into the evening reflecting on what Winter Solstice means to me. I've been working on re-decorating our conservatory, painting the walls and floor tiles, to create a space where we can do yoga and immerse in rituals in a beautiful nature connected space and I'm so excited to spend time there tomorrow. It brings me so much joy to share…..

Here's 10 simple and beautiful ways to celebrate Winter Solstice

1. Light candles or a fire:

Create a warm and cosy atmosphere by lighting candles or a fire. This can be a beautiful way to honour the return of the light and the darkness of the winter solstice. The warmth and light of the fire can symbolise the return of the sun and most of all it creates a super atmosphere. It's a simple yet powerful ritual that connects us to ancient traditions, when our ancestors would gather around fires to celebrate survival through the darkest days of the year. Beyond its symbolism, lighting a fire or candles creates a calming, reflective space where you can pause, breathe, and connect with the stillness of the season. Whether you sit alone in quiet contemplation or share the moment with loved ones, this ritual invites a sense of peace and togetherness, anchoring you in the magick of Winter Solstice.

2. Clear the space:

Using sage or palo santo, clear the space you're going to honour Winter Solstice in. popular way to clear negative energy and invite in positivity, but it's essential to do so mindfully. If you choose these, ensure they are ethically sourced, or consider alternatives that resonate with your own connection to the land. This act of clearing is a ritual in itself—a moment to pause, breathe deeply, and set the intention for the energy you want to invite into your space. As you clear your space, consider visualising the act as inviting the returning light of the sun into your home and your heart.

3. Reflect on the past year:

Take some time to reflect on the past year and all that has happened. This can be a great opportunity to let go of anything that no longer serves you and to set intentions for the coming year. Reflecting allows you to honour your journey, recognising how far you've come and the lessons learned along the way. Pause to acknowledge the moments that brought joy, growth, and connection, as well as the challenges that shaped you. Whether it's old habits, limiting beliefs, or emotional baggage that weighs you down. Letting go creates space for renewal, making room for new possibilities to emerge. As you reflect, consider journaling your thoughts, meditating on your experiences, or simply sitting in stillness to gain clarity. With this deeper awareness, you can begin to set meaningful intentions for the coming year, aligning with what truly matters to you and the energy you wish to cultivate. This process transforms reflection into a sacred act of release and renewal, empowering you to step into the next chapter with purpose and intention.

4. Practice gratitude:

Winter solstice encourages us to sink into our darkest depths. To see the shadows in ourselves, think about the light in ourselves and practice gratitude for this. Take some time to write down a list of things that you are grateful for and spend some time reflecting on them. Practicing gratitude at this time can be a transformative act, bringing a sense of peace and grounding amidst the stillness of the season. These could be moments of joy, personal growth, relationships, or even the challenges that have shaped you. Spend time reflecting on these blessings, allowing yourself to fully feel the warmth and connection they bring. Gratitude is a quiet yet profound act of honouring what sustains us, even in the darkest times and it reminds us of the light we carry forward into the returning year.

5. Follow self-care rituals:

Winter solstice is a time to take care of yourself and nurture your body, mind, and spirit. There are some beautiful meditations on youtube and Spotify. If you're able to, move your body in a way that is comfortable and nourishing, whether it's a gentle yoga flow, a walk in nature or simply stretching to release tension we don't even realise we're carrying. One of my favourite rituals during this time is experiencing a sound bath. The gentle vibrations and frequencies wash over me, allowing me to float away into a meditative state, completely immersed in the moment. Sound baths are a beautiful way to realign with the energy of the Solstice, as their frequencies can feel deeply healing and balancing.

Music can also be a powerful tool for self-care. One of my go to tracks for a short meditation through the season is this beauty 'Sit around the fire' by Ram Dass, Jon Hopkins and East Forest. Engaging in these small yet meaningful acts of self-care allows you to honour the Solstice's invitation to pause, replenish your energy, and realign with the rhythms of nature.

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6. Connect with nature:

Spend some time outside, even if it's just for a few minutes. Take in the beauty of the winter landscape and appreciate the natural world around you. In these darkest days, seeking sunlight on your face becomes even more important. A brief moment in the sun can lift your mood, boost your energy, and remind you of the light slowly returning with each passing day. If you're near water and feel called to it, cold water swimming can be an invigorating way to connect with nature and your body. Immersing yourself in cold water sharpens your senses, grounds you in the present moment, and leaves you feeling refreshed and alive. Whether it's standing under the sun, walking through frosty fields, or dipping into icy waters, connecting with nature during the Winter Solstice invites us to align with the Earth's rhythms and find peace in its beauty.

7. Bring nature indoors:

Branches with berries, pine cones, and holly. These elements can help to bring a sense of the outdoors inside and keep that connection to nature. I've filled my space with off cuts of pine tree, the scent is totally sublime, instantly creating a grounding, fresh atmosphere. You can also use evergreen branches to make simple arrangements, wreaths, or table decorations, infusing your space with their timeless beauty. Bringing nature indoors is one of the most simple ways to help you stay aligned with the Earth's rhythms during this reflective time of year.

8. Spend time with loved ones:

Winter solstice is a great time to connect with loved ones and to celebrate the light and warmth that they bring to your life. One way to celebrate winter solstice is to have a feast, hearty winter vibes with roasted meats and veggies. This act of sharing food mirrors ancient traditions, where communities would gather to celebrate the turning of the season and the promise of brighter days ahead. Whether it's a cosy evening with candles, storytelling or laughter over a meal, spending time with loved ones reminds us that even in the darkest moments, connection and warmth can light the way forward.

9. Practice the art of saying no:

Winter Solstice invites us to slow down, rest, and reflect—a call from nature that is often at odds with the demands of the outside world. The season is filled with distractions: parties, functions, Christmas concerts and services and the pressure for endless shopping…..you know the score! All of the expectation on us around these social obligations can leave us feeling drained and disconnected. This tension between what nature asks of us and what society demands can be overwhelming.

It's important to honour your needs and recognise that it's completely okay to say no. Stepping away from things that feel like they're overloading you is not selfish, it's an act of self-preservation and alignment with the season's quiet wisdom. By choosing to prioritise rest and reflection, you honour the natural rhythms of winter, allowing yourself to recharge and embrace the stillness.

Saying no creates space for what truly matters—moments of peace, connection, and presence—and helps you realign with the restorative energy that this time of year offers. Listen to the call of nature, trust your instincts, and give yourself permission to slow down. And if you're feeling bold like me, you can totally reject celebrating Christmas and align your mid winter traditions to the simplicity of Winter Solstice. Find our more here: Reclaiming Winter Solstice: Letting go of Christmas chaos and reconnecting with ancient wisdom

10. Fill your space with herbs & incense:

Think cosy scents of cinnamon, pine, nutmeg, cloves and mistletoe all bring in seasonal warmth. Transform your home into a sanctuary of seasonal warmth by filling it with the cosy scents of herbs and incense. These aromas evoke a sense of comfort, grounding, and connection to the season's natural rhythms.

Burning incense or simmering herbs on the stove can create a calming atmosphere, inviting stillness and reflection. Pine and cinnamon offer a sense of clarity and renewal, while nutmeg and cloves bring warmth and depth, perfectly mirroring the season's essence. Mistletoe, steeped in ancient traditions, symbolises protection and connection, adding a touch of magick to your space. These small sensory rituals can elevate the energy of your home, aligning it with the spirit of the Winter Solstice and creating a nurturing environment for rest and renewal.

How are you planning on celebrating Winter Solstice? I'd love to hear your ideas and rituals in the comments.

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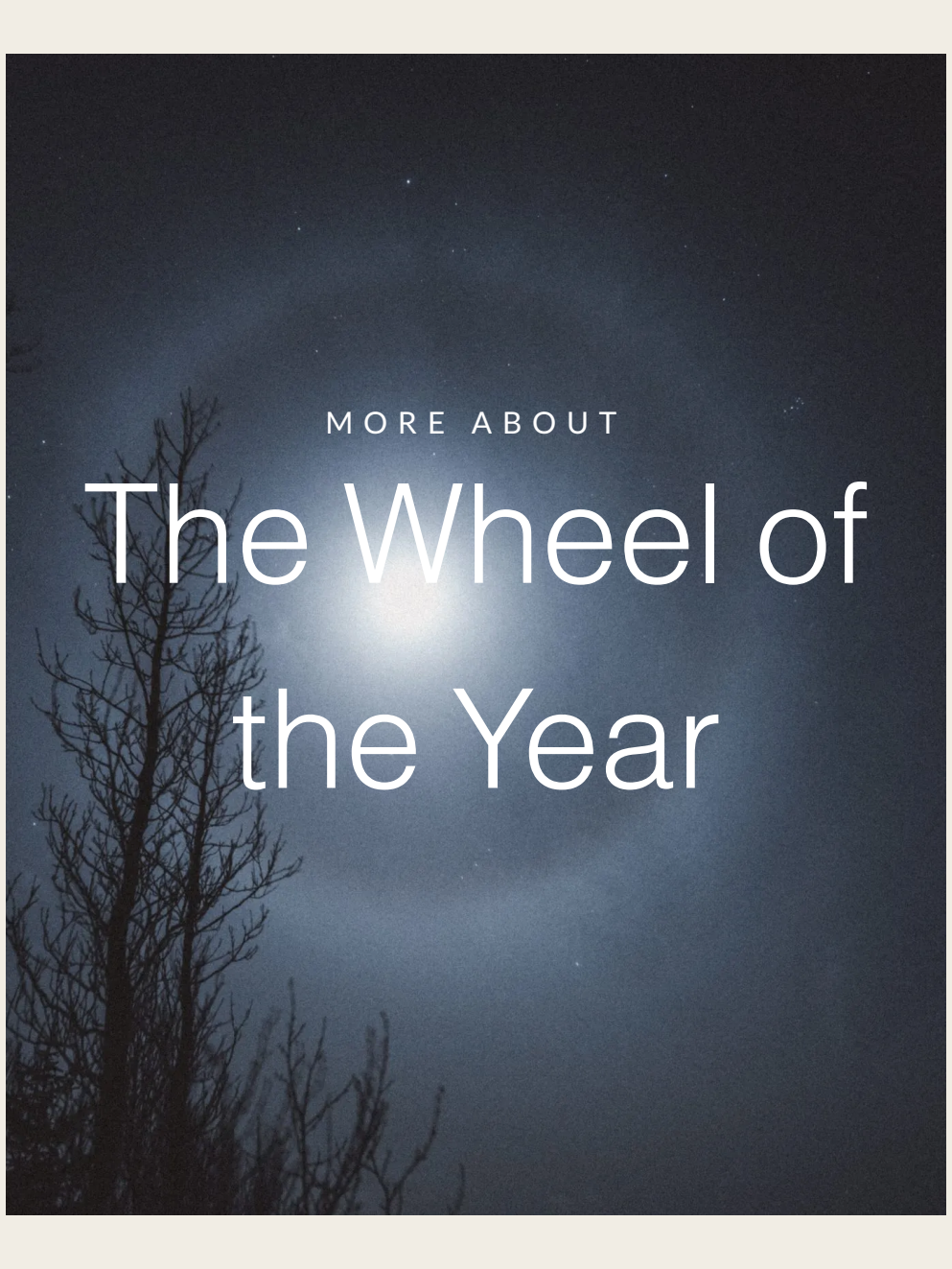

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About me

Hey my love, I'm Rebecca, a visual storyteller, unleashing the power of photo and video to rewilding our connection to nature.

By illuminating the liminal space where myth, magick and intellect meet, we ignite collective curiosity, enchantment and awe to empower the healing of people and planet.

My work as a photographer and ocean storyteller has taken me from the wild coasts of Scotland to the wild edges of Iceland.

It was with immense gratitude and a sense of deepening purpose that a story I captured gain 2nd Place in the Conservation (Impact) category for Ocean Photographer of the Year 2024.

As President of the Board of Trustees for Whale Wise and a Marine Mammal Medic with BDMLR, I advocate for our blue planet through powerful visuals and purpose-driven narratives.

Together, let's embrace the wild edges where of people, place, and planet meet.

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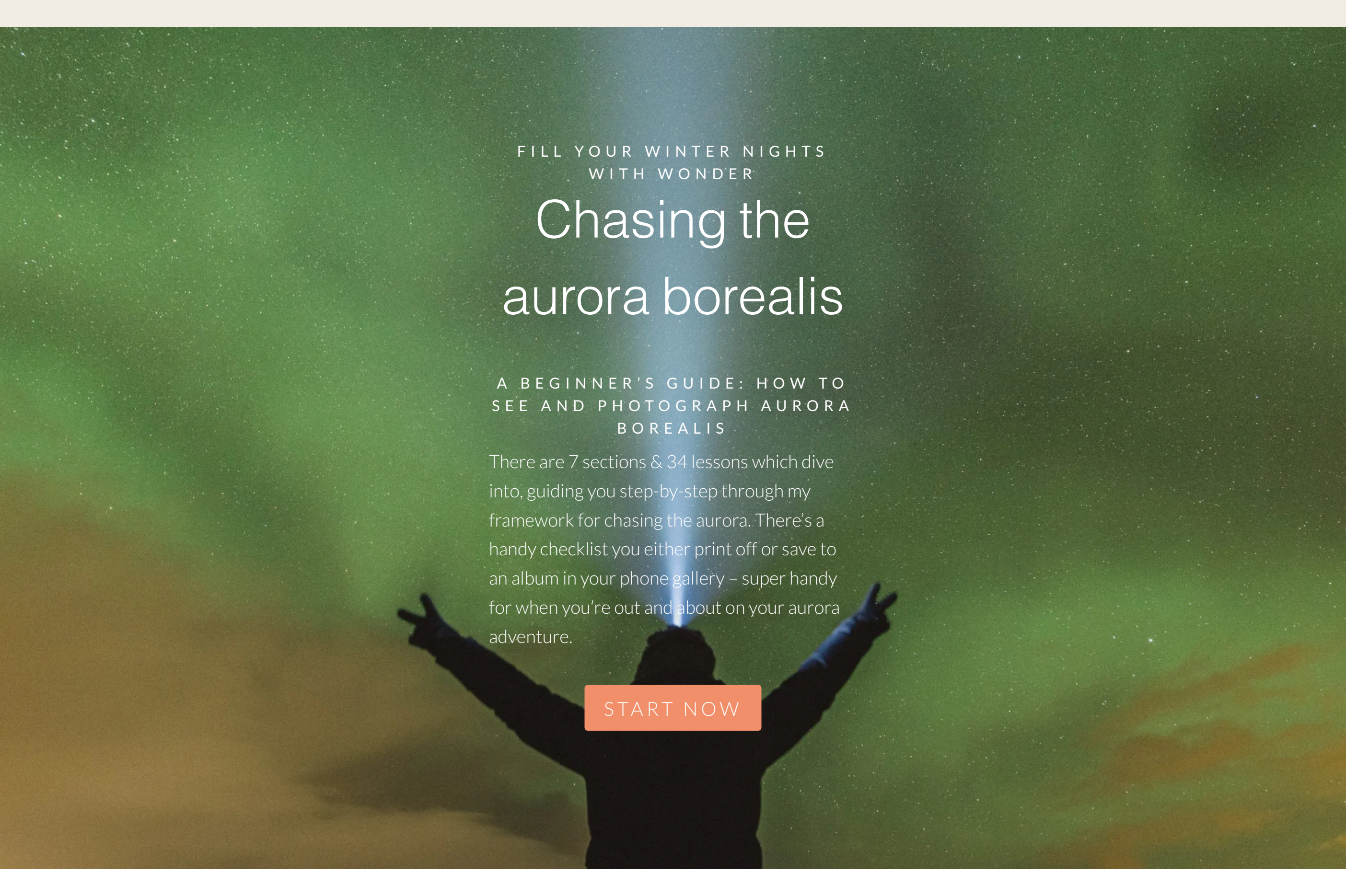

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