



Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back

Joseph Bruchac , Jonathan London , Thomas Locker (Illustrator)

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"Unusual and intelligent...An exemplary introduction to Native American culture with its emphasis on the importance of nature." — *Publishers Weekly*

In Native American legend, the thirteen scales on Old Turtle's back hold the key to the thirteen cycles of the moon and the changing seasons. These lyrical poems and striking paintings celebrate the wonder of the seasons, from the Northern Cheyenne's Moon of the Popping Trees to the Big Moon of the Abenaki.

"This book instills a spiritual respect for our land and an appreciation for the people who were its first caring guardians." —*American Bookseller*

A Notable Children's Trade Book in the Language Arts

An IRA Teacher's Choice Book

A Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies

Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back Details

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ISBN : 9780698115842

Author : Joseph Bruchac , Jonathan London , Thomas Locker (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Thirteen Moons on Turtle's Back for online ebook

Thora Hrafnisdottir says

This is one of my daughter's childhood books. She's kept perhaps a half dozen of those - this is one.

CHRIS says

The reason I wanted to read this book was because it is a primary example of local literature. My copy of "Thirteen Moons on Turtles Back" was personally signed by Mr. Bruchac to me back in 2005. One of the first things I noticed about this book was how easy to read it was. It all flowed together in individual tales and was a pleasure to read. This book is as informative as it is easy to read. It demonstrated a lot of Native American culture and their concepts and beliefs of the year and its seasons. Also the book is constructed of many different tribes over the north east for they all have their own stories to tell.

The Native tribes have always depended on nature for their survival. And they have tales for every aspect of the beautiful world around them. A way of determining their changing world around them they told the time by counting the 13 moons in a year. They can relate to this by counting the 13 "moons" on turtles back. The book is introduced by a child watching his grandfather carve a turtle. The grandfather then begins to explain the stories behind the turtle. This shows the importance of story telling to the children in the Native American life. The first of the stories explains the beginning of the chilling winter. When Frost Giant strikes the children have to stay "where the fire is bright". They learn from this why they must stay indoors during the raging winters. The next story teaches the relationship between man and the animals around us. This seems to take place in winter as a young girl is saved from certain death by a mother bear and becomes part of the pack. The third story taught more than was written. It was a tale in the spring time of a tribe who decided to just lay beneath the maple tree and simply let the sap pour into their mouths. However the creator chastised them for their laziness and sent one of his helpers (a common theme) to correct them into making real maple syrup. The stories continued to teach valuable lessons and explain the world to the curious reader. One of my favorite stories was in the autumn when "The Creator" planted the first oak tree for the Pomo tribe to thrive off. Once a year the tree would fill with acorn nuts which fed the tribe as are their content took them. I think the author was clever by naming the time of year "when the sun shines the brightest". He uses imagery to better your understanding of the tale.

All in all, I found this book to be a wise and worth-while read. The tales of creatures and past generations the Natives documented orally is phenomenal. All of these teach valuable lessons but in no way feel like a law book. It makes you appreciate the values and morals of the tribes and their non-violent and calming way to live. I would undoubtedly suggest this book to a friend.

Brittany says

Beautifully illustrated with traditional indigenous stories for each moon of the year.

Kalley the Chipmunk says

I like the wolf moon. And the strawberry moon.

Logan Nott says

Overall I enjoyed this book due to it having a story in poem form of every moon. The illustrations also made me enjoy the book even more. I would recommend to someone looking for short and cool poetry.

Julia says

This is a wonderful introduction to the various Native American names of the moons that can be found within a lunar month. Due to its subject matter and its presentation the book itself may be a very versatile work to be used for those interested in moon lore and/or Native American lore.

Upon first glance of the book I was confused as to I just saw the name of the moon but not the actual order or the Native American tribe. Fortunately it was through another perusal that I did find both pieces of information in the bottom corner where it seemed to be hidden.

Another complaint that I have is the fact that this is such an interesting topic to me that I would have loved for a series to have been done so we could have explored in depth the culture surrounding the various tribes in their seasons instead of having it strewn between so many. It would have been interesting to see the different listings then compare the books.

Otherwise I did enjoy the presentation format in the naming of the moon and a description of why the moon received its name in that "month". The illustrations were gorgeously done that they truly complemented the pages with their details while conveying the readers into a world that is hard to visit anymore.

All in all it is a wonderful book that allows your children and maybe yourself to learn more whether it is history, lore or even better to take the time to observe the world around you. And from there to see if you can expand upon that knowledge....

Kerfe says

Bruchac and London relate myths from 13 different tribes relating to each of the 13 yearly full moons, using the 28 day moon cycle, not the months of the calendar. The grandfather telling the stories shows his grandson how this cycle is reproduced by the 13 divisions of the turtle's shell.

Turtle's back is where Earth was created and place by the Great Spirit according to many East Coast tribes. That's why North America is sometimes referred to as Turtle Island.

Thomas Locker's illustrations have the luminous quality he is known for, and are a perfect complement to the stories.

Each myth reinforces the Native American belief that humans are but a part of the natural world, not superior beings who should try to control they cycle of life. Always a worth while reminder.

Ms. B says

This is the classic story by Joseph Bruchac that represents several native people of North America. An important book that has stood the test of time.

Perfect for introducing a study on the moon or as part of Poetry month in April.

Dan DiB says

This was a good short poem book. I thing that Moon of Popping Trees was my favorite. Id recommend this to anyone who wants some good short poetry.

Nate H says

This poem book is about nature and a turtle. I wouldn't recommend reading this, very boring. An adult may like this but not a teen.

Katy Mccormac says

Beautifully written and illustrated poems about Native American legend and heritage. Explore the natural world and the thirteen moons of the year through Bruchac's poetic language of a masterful storytelling.

Zoey the Squirrel says

I liked the wolf moon. I am playing a wolf game right now

Sue says

This story explains the Native American “year of moons.” A grandfather tells the story of the thirteen moons to his grandson. Each moon story has been chosen from each of the thirteen Native American tribal nations in different regions of the continent. I really enjoy how each story is told because it gives the reader a wider sense of the many things Native American people have been taught to notice in the world around them. The accompanying pictures are beautifully painted and will surely keep the attention of the students.

Instructional uses for Thirteen Moons on Turtle’s Back:

1. This is a fun story to read-aloud to young children to teach them about the changes in the seasons and what name the Native American’s gave to each month’s moon.

2. Activity ideas: Outline a giant turtle shape on the back bulletin board and have the students draw or paint their own moon season pictures for the turtles back.
 3. Students can write their own moon season stories to go along with their pictures.
 4. Discuss the differences and the similarities of the calendar year (comparing our calendar year with the Native American's). Create a venn diagram showing the information.
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Whole And says

A beautiful telling of the a turtles back as a moon calendar. Tribes may differ in the number of moons as the author notes at the end but this book covers 13 from several of North American native people. Intimate connections created with the seasons, animals and natural world. Gorgeous illustrations and a taste of many indigenous tribes bring ancient wisdom to little people today. An excellent resource for native history and seasonal connections. A demonstration of deep reverence and love of the earth.

Jasmine Stocker says

In many Native American cultures, each of the thirteen moons of the year is said to hold its own story, and each is powered by the turtle who is believed to contain the mystery of the moon in the shell of its back. I love any book the retells a Native American story, each one is truly very interesting. In each Native American legend, the natural world is a place of great power where story lives and helps humans understand the mysteries of the earth. This book is filled with poems about the thirteen moons.
