

# Mahina, the Hawaiian Moon Calendar, and Shamanic Astrology

By Liz Dacus

In August of 2009, a Shamanic Astrology group gathered for a week long event on the Big Island. The main purpose of the gathering was to learn more about the night sky and the Hawaiian Moon Calendar. It is exciting to see how the Hawaiian Moon Calendar can be integrated into the Shamanic Astrology Mystery School's current understanding of the Moon cycles.

I think it is worthwhile to begin with the Hawaiian story of how the Moon came to be, in the words of noted artist and post contact historian Herbert Kane.<sup>(1)</sup>

"In the beginning there was only Po, the Darkness, an infinite, formless night without beginning, without end. But within that emptiness there emerged a Thought, an intelligence that brooded through an immensity of time and space, Hina.

And in that darkness was created a womb, the Earth Mother, Papa (pa-PAH). Then light was created, the light of the Sky Father, Wakea. In their embrace, male light penetrated female darkness, and from this union of opposites was created a universe of opposites---male and female, light and dark, heat and cold, rough and smooth, wet and dry, storm and stillness-a universe where all things are defined by their opposites.

Thus the Universe was given form and life; for only in the marriage of light and darkness can forms be revealed. Only in sunlight can there be growth of living things, all fathered by light and mothered in the darkness of the womb, the egg, or the soil.

The great spirits of Polynesia were born; the male spirits were known in Hawai'i as Ku, Kane (Kah-ney) the creator, Lono the lifegiver, and Kanaloa, ruler of the dark sea. In the South Pacific they were Tu, Tane, Rongo and Tangaroa. Their sister was the goddess Hina. (Mahina)

Hina was the major ancestral female force of reproductive and creative power, the mother of the lesser gods, and the patron of woman's arts, crafts, and activities. Her name appears in her many manifestations. As Hina'opuhakoko'a she was the mother of all sea life along the reefs, as Hinapukui'a she was a patron of women who gathered seafood on the reefs and cultivated sweet potatoes (men did all the other work in fishing, agriculture, and cooking). As Haumea she was the mother of the fire goddess Pele and many other lesser spirits.

Insulted by her brother gods, she sadly took flight to her retreat in the Moon, where she makes the Polynesian barkcloth Kapa (Tapa). As she beats the white bark on her wooden anvil it drifts away and becomes clouds in the night sky. Mahina is the name for the Moon. It also means "month," recognizing the female monthly cycle. Gardens, (mahina'ai) were planted in the appropriate month according to the lunar calendar.

Hina is crowned with a lei of sweet potato leaves. While weeding sweet potato vines, women might reach below the surface, caressing the tubers, gauging their growth in the dark womb of the soil, and softly murmuring to them. About her neck she wears a lei of the star-like blossoms of the rare, endemic and endangered pua'ala. As she escaped to Moon, so the delicate pua'ala find safety out of the reach of men by clinging to the edges of high cliffs."

Understanding the Hawaiian Moon calendar begins with where Hina resides (the Moon), and from our observation of the Moon from night to night. This is literally an experience of "As Above, So Below" as it relates to the movement of the Moon through each of its 29 and sometimes 30 phases. The Hawaiian Moon calendar considers the most important factor to be the direct observation of each based on what the Moon looks like in the night sky.<sup>(2)</sup> These 29 and sometimes 30 phases of the Moon are placed in three groups of ten. The three phases are called **Anahulu**, and they are:

**Ho'onui** (or Mua): Increasing Waxing Phase



**PoePoe**: Full or Rounded Phase



**Emi** (or Hope): Decreasing Waning Phase





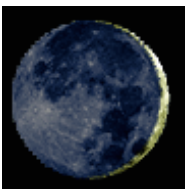
The Above Chart Shows the Moon Phases and their associated elements.

### The Ho'onui Series or Increasing Waxing Phases of the Moon



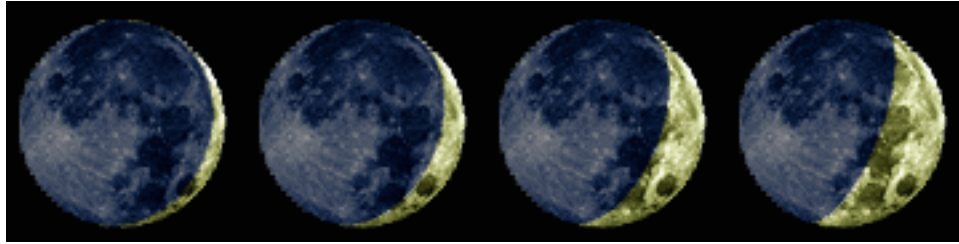
The Ho'onui series always begins with the first observable tiny crescent Moon called the **Hilo Moon**. **The Hilo Moon** is considered to be the New Moon and is one of the significant differences between this system and the Sun Moon conjunction that is currently used by most astrologers. The Sun Moon conjunction is not visible and since the Moon must be observable, the Hawaiians look for the first light of the New Moon to determine the beginning of a New Moon cycle. Hilo means *a small streak of light* as well as *navigator*, therefore this Moon phase is the navigator for the Moon phases that follow.

The Ho'onui series is ruled by the western direction where Hawaiian ceremony begins. This is also considered a masculine energy.



The night after the Hilo Moon comes the **Hoaka Moon**, when the first real sense of a crescent Moon is visible. The name Hoaka is a contraction of the word Ho'o Aka meaning to make shadow. This phase of the Moon suggested that "Fish may be frightened away by the spirit of this Moon." <sup>(2)</sup>

## The Four Ku Phases

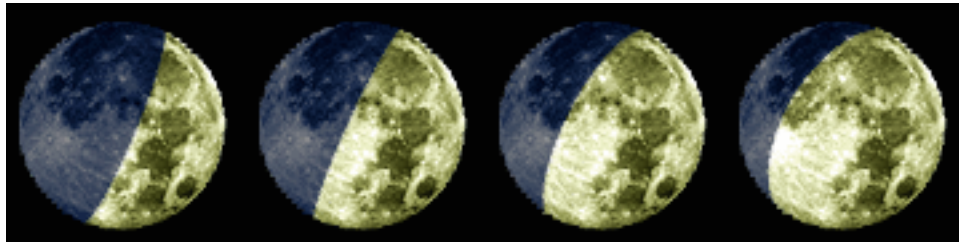


The four Ku phases are next. This begins the first in two series of four nights of the same lunar energy. These four Ku Moons are ruled by the Northern direction. These phases are named in order. So, it is helpful to know that the words for one, two and three are Kahi, Lua and Kolu. The fourth night in the series is Pau, or finished.

The Ku Moons are: **Ku Kahi, Ku Lua, Ku Kolu, and Ku Pau**. Ku is related to the element of air and all things ruled by the birth of spirit in this part of the Moon cycle.

The night of the **Ku Kahi** Moon is a kapu period. Kapu is the word for forbidden and this is a time that is dedicated to worship and prayer. Another of the meanings of Ku is strong and erect, to grow upright. Hawaiians observed that plants grow in strong and erect when planted during the Ku phases. It could be said that the Ku shows us to stand tall and strong with spirit and the masculine. The shape of the Ku Moon resembles “the horns of a cow.” (Ainaaloha Ioane, Big Island Weekly<sup>3</sup>)

## The Four Ole Moons



Four Ole Moons follow the four Ku Moons:

‘Ole Ku Kahi, ‘Ole Ku Lua, ‘Ole Ku Kolu, and ‘Ole Pau. (One, two, three and “finished”.)

‘Ole means nothing, or unproductive. Fishing is poor due to high tides and rough seas. ‘Ole Pau marks the end of the rough weather. Someone born under the ‘Ole Moons could possibly have a priest or priestess lineage, as these are the days for introspection and rest.

M. Kalani Souza, a modern day Hawaiian cultural practitioner and priest, has said these are days to reverse course and for patience. (For more information on Kalani, please see this link: [www.mkalani.com](http://www.mkalani.com))

The ‘Ole's Moons mark the First Quarter Moon occurring exactly sometime between the 'Ole Ku Kahi and 'Ole Ku Lua phases.

## PoePoe Series or Rounded Phases of the Moon (includes the Full Moon)

On the eleventh day of the Moon cycle the next Anahulu (or phase) begins with the rounded Moons, or Poepoe. These phases are ruled by the Eastern direction. Their element is water, specifically fresh water. It is ruled by the feminine, and has a life giving birthing energy.



**The Huna Moon** meaning hidden or horned is the first of these Moon phases. The shape of this Moon is said to have “hidden horns.” The “sharp edges of the Moon are now hidden” (reference: Ainaaloha Ioane, Big Island Weekly<sup>4</sup>)

It is a good time to plant the crops that “hide” such as root crops. I also think this could be another of the Moons representing the priest/priestess lineage as our cultural practitioners are called Kahu, or *Kahuna*, the ones who know the hidden knowledge.

## Mohalu Moon



The next night is the Mohalu, “a sacred night to the God Kane, the creator.” It is also the night when eating fish and fruits were forbidden. This is another Kapu time (similar to the Ku Kahi phase) focused on prayer and worship.

## The Four Full Moon phases

The next four Moons are the Full Moon phases. This is the time for the woman’s kapu (prayer and worship), dedicated to Mahina, the goddess.



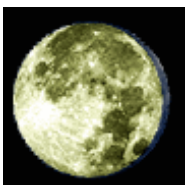
The first Full Moon phase is the **Hua Moon**, or the egg shaped Moon. This is the night the Moon most resembles an egg and is also a night sacred to Lono, the lifegiver, and ruler of the rains. The Bishop Museum’s calendar says that this is “a night known to be fertile for many things.” A procreative energy abounds.



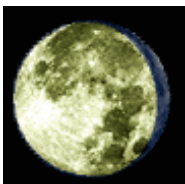
The second Full Hawaiian Moon night is the **Akua Moon**, and is almost completely full round shape. The spirit of Akua, of God, is present with this Moon. Offerings were made to the God’s on this night. It is a meditative day of reflection of the soul, of the “self,” and a day for prayers.



The **Hoku Moon** is the fullest of all the phases. The great round Moon brings blessings to the farmer. “Seeds become animated by the full moon.” <sup>(4)</sup>

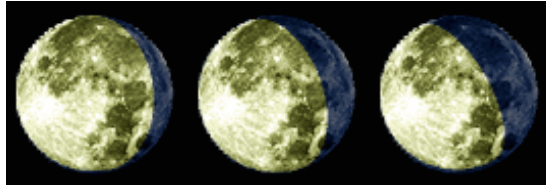


The **Mahealani Moon** is next and is known as the Spirit Walkers Moon, “the movement of souls upon this night.” There is the slightest touch of shadow on the edge of the Mahealani Moon and it rises just after sunset. These Moon phases up to the Kulu Moon are all dedicated to spirit and the death or rebirth energy representing a time for closure, endings and even funerals.



The **Kulu Moon** stands alone. Kulu means to fall. It is the first Moon following the four Full Moons and is a time to give offerings from the harvests to the Gods and Goddesses. This Moon is another introspective night.

## The La'au Moons



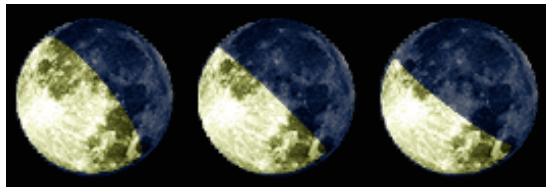
The La'au Moons are a set of three Moons marking the onset of the visible waning phases and are associated with all types of vegetation and plants. These Moon Phases are the time for gathering healing herbs and shrubs to make medicines as these are the harvest Moons that are ruled by the element of Earth and the feminine.

The three phases are: **La'au Ku Kahi (One)**, **La'au Ku Lua (Two)**, and **La'au Pau (Finished)**.

## The Emi (Hope) Phases: Decreasing Waning Phase

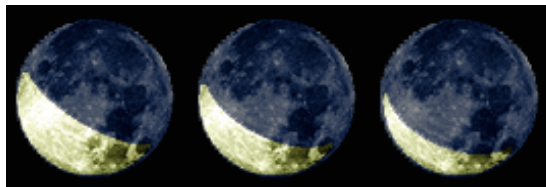
The last Anahulu or Emi begins with the waning set of **Ole Moons** moving toward the Last Quarter Moon. In this Ole phase there are only three Ole Moons.

**The Three Ole Moons are: 'Ole Ku Kahi (one), 'Ole Ku Lua (two, also the last quarter Moon), and 'Ole Pau (finished).**



The waning 'Ole Moons are linked with the Southern direction and are unproductive days for fishing or farming. However, they are great days for weeding and for introspection and doing inner work. 'Ole Pau is dedicated to the sea God Ka'loa, otherwise known as Kanaloa.

## The Three Ka'loa Moons

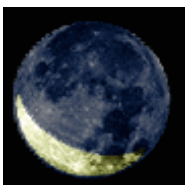


Three Ka'loa Moons are the last set of the cycle as the last three or phases stand alone. The three phases are: **Ka'loa Ku Kahi (one)**, **Ka'loa Kulua (two)**, and **Ka'loa Ku Pau (finished)**.

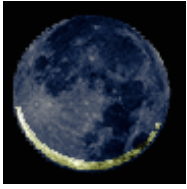
The element is water, specifically salt water associated with the life giving energy that comes from the sea God. Not surprisingly, fishing is encouraged during the Ka'loa Moons. The association with Pisces and Neptune seems indicated.

## The Last Three OR Four Moon Phases

The last three and sometimes four Moon phases stand alone. They are ruled by the element of Fire, and again are associated with death and rebirth.



The **Kane Moon** phase, begins a two day Kapu of sacred worship, first to the God Kane, and then to Lono.



The **Lono Moon** phase is also the next day's Moon phase after Kane. Lono is the life giver and the ruler of rains. This is a day dedicated to thanking the god Lono for the month (moonth).



The **Maui Moon** phase is the one that does not occur every month. The only way to tell if there is a Maui Moon is when it is upon us. This Moon rises with the daylight and has a very tiny crescent.



The **Muku Moon** is the final phase of the Moon on day twenty nine if Maui doesn't occur and on the 30<sup>th</sup> day if Maui does occur. Again this is determined by what is visually seen or not seen.

**Muku** finds the Moon rising with the Sun behind it, so it is invisible from the Earth. This gives us an understanding of the name Muku as it means "cut-off" or vanished. This is the end of the Moon cycle and preparing for the Hilo Moon or New Moon. The Moon is so close to the Sun no Moon is visible.

### Location, Location, Location

There is an interesting phenomenon about using the Hawaiian Moon Calendar here in Hawaii, and it seems there is disagreement about which Moon phase it is on any given day. Various sources will list different phases that will vary as much as three different Moons. The Shamanic Astrology students have also found this to be true based on their various locations on the mainland.

It is well known and also documented that to the eye the Moon appears to be in a different from one island to another. Thus, we can conclude that there are sure to be even greater variations in different latitudes and longitudes around the planet. As one of our very observant class members has noted, the shadow of the Moon also varies throughout the night as it rises and sets. The beauty of the system is it requires that we experience the Moon in either the night or morning sky as often as possible.

The land based indigenous culture of Hawaii determines the Moon Phase by looking at what "is" in the sky rather than imposing a system of degrees from the Sun as the way to determine the what current Lunar Phase actually is.

### The Difference Between the Synodic and Sidereal Lunar Cycles

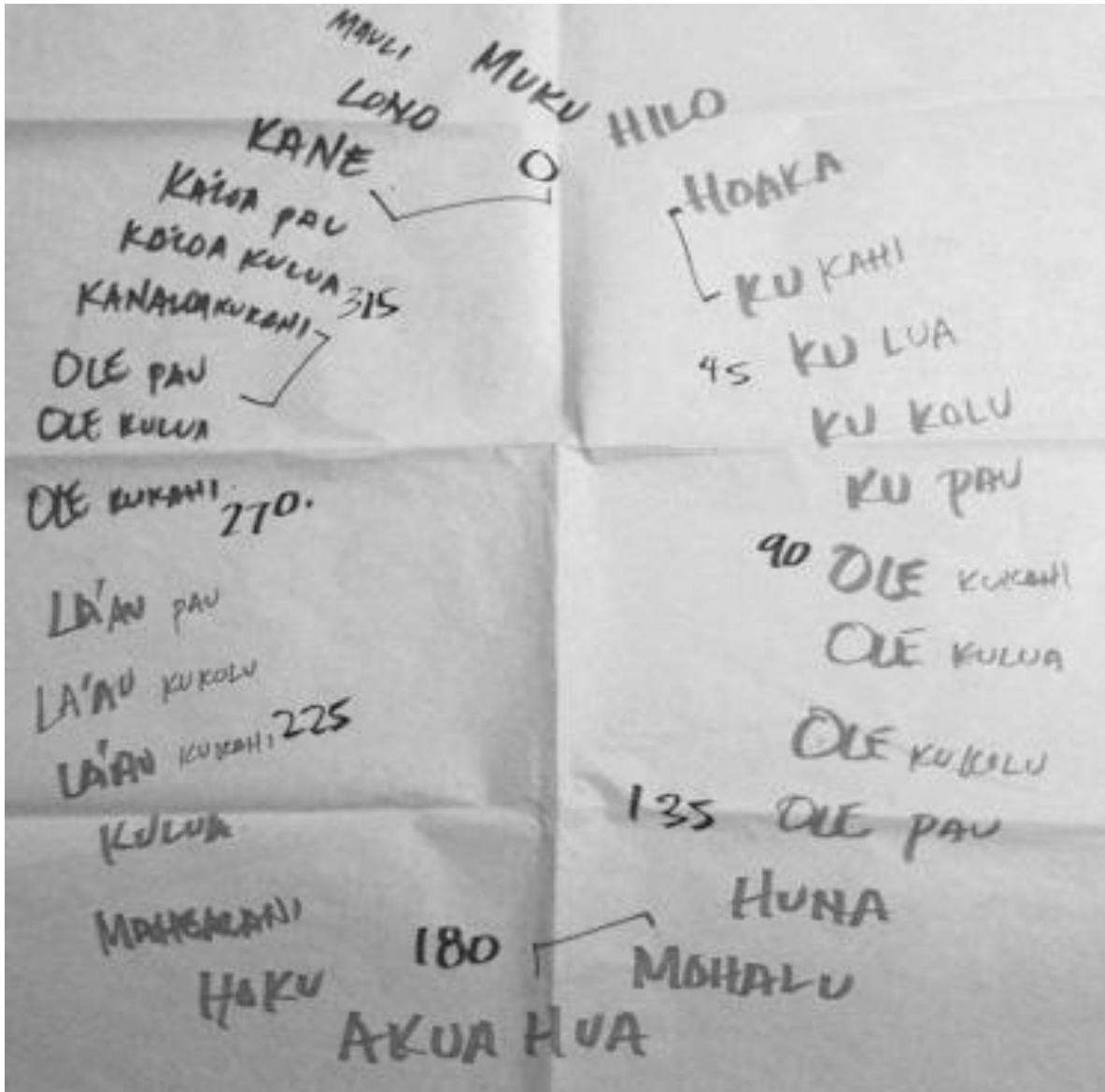
The twenty nine (and sometimes thirty) day lunar cycle corresponds to a synodic lunar return. This is different than a sidereal lunar return. For example, in the sidereal cycle the Moon returns to any given star in 27.3 days but it will NOT be in the same phase as it was the previous month. In the Synodic Cycle the Moon returns to any given phase every 29.5 days.

Dane Rudhyar and most current day astrologers divide the Moon's synodic return into eight cycles that are based on the degrees between the Sun and the Moon. For example, a New Moon occurs when the Sun and Moon are at the exact same sign and degree or are conjunct. A First Quarter Moon occurs when the Moon reaches a 90 degree separation from the Sun, or a square, and a Full Moon occurs when the Moon reaches a 180 degree separation from the Sun, or an opposition. These phases are determined by the degrees and are not visually based.

In the Hawaiian Moon Calendar the New Moon is not celebrated until the first tiny crescent Moon is visible. This usually means the Moon has moved about 10 degrees or more from the Sun and since the Moon moves about one degree every two hours the first crescent is not usually visible until the night after the exact New Moon. Sidereal astrology developed from a visually based system and includes a variety of lunar mansion developed by the Vedic, Babylonian, and Egyptian systems.

The emphasis in these systems is on the portion of the sky the Moon comes in contact with as it returns to any given constellation group or star, and not the shape (or phase) of the Moon. In the Vedic system, one of the earliest forms of astrology, the Lunar Mansions were based on 27 or 28 star groups, or areas of the sky, each with their own names known as Nakshatras. The Moon takes about one day to move through each Nakshatra and will return to that Nakshatra about 27.3 days later.

Shamanic Astrology is working with integrating a visually land based system relative to the 29.5 day synodic cycle. The Hawaiian Moon Calendar is a system that already fits these parameters with the three groups of ten phases in each group that visually correspond to the waxing, full and waning cycles. The tiny crescent Hilo Moon representing the "New Moon" assists in revising the New Moon concept as something we "see" in the night sky.



### Sun Moon Angles

One of the most dynamic ways to use the Hawaiian Moon Calendar personally is to locate the Sun/Moon angle at our birth. This becomes a personal power point for us to use in ceremony each month as this Moon phase is linked with our most basic natal signature.

The way to calculate your personal Sun Moon angle is by looking at the natal placement of the Sun at birth and then counting the degrees to your natal placement of the Moon. It helps to know that the Moon moves approximately 13 degrees each day. After locating the degree of the Sun/Moon angle, overlay the degrees onto the wheel (see above chart) to find your approximate natal Hawaiian Moon placement. For example, my Sun is at 14 degrees of Leo, and my Moon is at

28 degrees Aquarius. This gives me a 194 degree angle between the Sun and the Moon. This is located near the Mahealani Moon.

It is exciting to think about how this system could add another piece to Shamanic Astrology's use of the lineage as it relates to the archetypes of the natal placement of the Moon. As for my own Mahealani placement (when the spirits are crossing into other realms), it seems to resonate with my own natal signature that includes an opposition with Pluto adding a Plutonian element to my lineage.

Finding your precise day in the Moon cycle may require some fine tuning and intuition to locate the Hawaiian Moon phase that most resonates with you, especially when considering there are 29 and sometimes 30 Moon phases that are changing from day to day and that change or shift can be very subtle. However, the possibility of this understanding creates another powerful and interesting way of honoring our Sun Moon Angle Return each month.

The printed Hawaiian Moon Wall Calendar for each year that I prefer is from Kamehameha publishing. They also have a free application for looking up the Moon phases. Here is a link.

<http://www.kamehamehapublishing.org/multimedia/apps/mooncalendar/>

Also another great resource is M. Kalani Souza, a cultural practitioner and Kahu, who presented at the 2009 Hawaii workshop and has been an invaluable resource for much of this knowledge.

Keep in mind this system was developed in Hawaii, so it would not be the same for other places when viewed from other parts of the world, for example, the Mountains, Desert or Plains. Many of these other places would not have references to the ocean and the tides, for example. Traditions of each area of the world would also need to be taken into account, for example prayers to the sea might be made to the rain instead in areas where there is no ocean. Using this calendar as a template and understanding the ways it has been used in the past helps us to figure out and integrate how it can be used in different locations in the present. The visual aspect of seeing 29 and sometimes 30 phases of the Moon occurs everywhere.

It is important to remember, this is only a starting point to investigate this material. There is so much more that deserves greater observation and understanding. For example, another interesting and valuable investigation around the impact of the Moon cycle would be for someone to investigate the sidereal system and the visually based Lunar Mansions used by the Babylonians and Vedic civilizations. These are exciting explorations furthering the ways that Shamanic Astrology honors the great mysteries from all traditions reminding us that there is much to be learned, and recreated in a new inclusive way.

Footnotes:

- 1) With the arrival of the Tahitians, and other Polynesians around 1300 AD, the ways of the old culture changed to a class system, which is termed as "post contact."
- 2) From the website [www.instanthawaii.com](http://www.instanthawaii.com)
- 3) M. Kalani Souza, Kahu and Cultural Practitioner, shared much of this information with our class last August. His two hand drawn wheels are included in this article.
- 4) The ancient Hawaiian Moon Calendar related to fishing and farming from the Prince Kuhio Civic Club.
- 5) Ainaaloha Ioane writes a cultural column for the newspaper Big Island Weekly. She featured a series on the Hawaiian Moon Calendar. There is a website for the paper at [www.bigislandweekly.com](http://www.bigislandweekly.com) and it is possible to search her name for her latest contribution.

The next page was created by Cayelin Castell with a list of the 30 Moon Phases designed to help you calculate your personal Hawaiian Moon Phase.



# Hawaiian Moon Calendar Days

calculated by [Cayelin K Castell](#)

The key to remember is there are 29 and sometimes 30 days or Hawaiian Moon Phases. These are the approximate Moon Degrees for the Hawaiian Moon phase based on 12 degrees and 30 Moon Phases. 12 divides into 360 exactly 30 times or 30 days. 12.4 divides into 360 twenty-nine times. You can use this chart to locate your approximate Hawaiian Lunar Phase as the Moon does NOT move exactly 12 degrees a day. That is why physical observation of the Moon is required to know exactly what phase it is in any given location at a specific time. Also, if you were born in a 29 day Moon cycle then these numbers would shift at least .42 degrees for each phase. This table will help you to locate your Hawaiian Moon Phase within a couple of possibilities.

Included here is a brief description of each Moon Phase. Further research is needed for location specific areas as the understanding of these phases are based on Hawaii's fishing and planting times. These phases are also determined by what is seen in the sky each night and that varies from Island to Island, telling us it would vary even more depending on your planetary location. Also, location affects the experience of seasons as well as type of crops and ceremonials.

So again, this is just a way to begin tuning into the 29 and sometimes 30 phases of the Moon based on what is still being practiced in Hawaii and what these phases might mean to us depending on where we are located on the planet. Some of the Hawaiian ways of perceiving these phases will also fit with our experience. For example, the Hilo Moon, or first light of the Moon, or Muku the vanished or hidden Moon is a common experience we can all see no matter where you are on the planet. It is important to keep in mind that some places on the planet will see a Hilo Moon as much as a day before other places and the Maui Moon can also occur in some locations and not in others due to the time differences. This is a reminder of the importance of location when tuning into the 29 and sometimes 30 day Moon phases.

1. **12 to 23 Hilo** beginning or first light of the Moon, Streak of Light, Navigator
2. **24 to 35 Hoaka** casting a Shadow, Spirit or Ghost,
3. **36 to 47 KuKahi** good planting and fishing Kapu – dedicated to worship and prayer
4. **48 to 59 KuLua** plant sweet potato, taro, and banana, as they will grow upright (ku), good fishing
5. **60 to 71 KuKolu** a day of low tide, time to fish from the shore
6. **72 to 83 KuPau** good planting, fishing though ocean currents are changing growing stronger
7. **84 to 95 OleKukahi** unproductive, sea is rough, fishing is poor, priest~ess lineage, introspection and rest
8. **96 to 107 OleKukolu** same as Ole Kukahi also a time for patience and to reverse course all three days
9. **108 to 119 OleKulua** same as Ole Kukahi also a time for patience and to reverse course all three days
10. **120 to 131 OlePau** a productive day, for cultivators. - ends the time of non-productivity
11. **132 to 143 Huna** plant crops that "hide" or root crops. Ka(huna)s are ones who know the hidden knowledge.
12. **144 to 155 Mohalu** sacred night to God Kane, the creator - forbidden eat fish and fruits. Prayer and worship - Kapu
13. **156 to 167 Hua** egg moon, sacred to Lono, the lifegiver, ruler of the rains - fertility
14. **168 to 179 Akua** offerings to spirit of Akua, of God - meditation and prayer on reflection of the soul, of the "self,"
15. **180 to 191 Hoku** seeds are animated by the full moon
16. **192 to 203 Mahealani** dedicated to spirit - death or rebirth energy. It is a time for closure, endings and even funerals.
17. **204 to 215 Kulua** stands alone, a time of introspection
18. **216 to 227 La'auKukahi** gathering healing herbs and shrubs to make medicines - a harvest Moon
19. **228 to 239 La'auKukolu** gathering healing herbs and shrubs to make medicines - a harvest Moon
20. **240 to 251 La'auPau** completes days of gathering healing herbs and shrubs to make medicines - a harvest Moon
21. **252 to 263 Ole Kukahi** unproductive days for fishing or farming, good days to weed, introspective, doing inner work
22. **264 to 275 Ole Kulua** unproductive days for fishing or farming, good days to weed, introspective, doing inner work
23. **276 to 287 Ole Pau** finishes unproductive days and is dedicated to sea God Ka'loa (a.k.a) Kanaloa
24. **288 to 299 KanaloaKukahi** Kapu or prayers of gratitude to God Kanaloa of the sea for its life giving energy
25. **300 to 311 Ko'loaKulua** Kapu or prayers of gratitude to God Kanaloa of the sea for its life giving energy
26. **312 to 323 Ko'loaPau** Kapu or prayers of gratitude to God Kanaloa of the sea for its life giving energy
27. **324 to 335 Kane** Kapu prayers to the god Kane... night marchers, or ancestral spirits, walk on this night
28. **336 to 347 Lono** Kapu prayers to god Lono giver of life and rain
29. **348 to 359 Maui** ghost or spirit Moon, considered a good day for marriages
30. **000 to 011 Muku** vanished or invisible Moon, low tide good for gathering seaweed, diving for sea-urchins, catching squid