

Gitxsan Moons

As in many First Peoples cultures, the Gitxsan calendar was created by the events of the seasons.

▶ The stories and feasting moon – **January**

Rainbow ring around the moon. The ring represents the circle of stories. The stories are told and retold and customs and traditions are perfected during this quiet time of winter.

▶ The cracking cottonwood trees' and opening water trails' moon – **February**

When the cottonwood trees snap because of the bitter cold. When the false thaw comes and ice melts and canoes can be used on the rivers.

▶ The black bear's waking moon – **March**

The bears sit in front of their den in the early Spring, trying to wake up and get accustomed to the daylight and fresh air. They are safe from the hunters because they are thin after their long winter's sleep.

▶ The Spring Salmon's returning home moon – **April**

Spring salmon return to the rivers of their birth.

▶ The budding trees' and blooming flowers' moon – **May**

Trees wake up and start to come into bud, flowers are blooming. Nature is reborn.

▶ The gathering and preparing the berries moon – **June**

The season begins for berry picking and preserving for the long winter months ahead.

▶ The fisherman's moon – **July**

Season of moving to the fish camps to preserve salmon for the winter months.

▶ The grizzly bear's moon – **August**

The grizzly bears are fishing and eating spawning salmon, fattening up for the long winter months ahead.

▶ The groundhog hunting moon – **September**

Gitxsan go to the mountains for the groundhogs. The groundhogs are easy to hunt. They are slow moving and fat from eating all summer.

▶ The catching lots of trout moon – **October**

The Gitksan are finished with all the preparations for winter and take time to go trout fishing. Trout fishing signifies the completion and celebration of the summer work. The trout are plentiful, hungry and easy to catch.

▶ The getting used to cold moon – **November**

A time of cold, but some warm days too.

▶ The severe snowstorms and sharp cold moon – **December**

A time of extreme cold. Winter has no compassion.

▶ The Shaman's moon

The blue moon, or the 13th moon. The most powerful moon, not named. The Shaman uses this moon to cleanse and practice good luck. Fasting, praying, sleeping alone in the four directions around the fire and gathering at the sweat lodge daily. A powerful moon for the dreamtime.