

I'm not a bot

































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The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Like her Greek counterpart, Artemis, Diana was the goddess of the hunt. The daughter of the Roman god Jupiter and his mistress, Latona, Diana was born on the island of Delos with her twin brother, Apollo, the god of light. Although primarily associated with hunting, Diana was also revered as the goddess of the woods, children and childbirth, fertility, chastity, the moon, and wild animals. Her worshippers believed she had the power to talk to woodland animals and even control their movements and behavior. Like other Roman deities, Diana was born fully grown and was said to have been tall, beautiful, and youthful in appearance, often presenting herself as a young woman between the ages of 12 and 19. In artwork, she is frequently shown as wearing a quiver of arrows on her shoulder and holding a bow. Typically clad in a short tunic, Diana is sometimes depicted as going barefoot, or wearing simple buckskin foot coverings, as was the style of Roman huntresses. Often, she is accompanied by maidens, deer, and hounds. In most sculptures, she wore her hair swept up and out of the way, as would be expected of a woman engaged in hunting and tracking. As noted above, Diana was a goddess of chastity, and like her fellow goddesses Minerva and Vesta, she swore she would not marry. Interestingly, while Diana was a symbol of purity, she was also prayed to by women who wanted to conceive and by mothers who wanted an easy childbirth. Sometimes referred to as Lucina, Diana's reputation of protecting mothers and children earned her a place of honor among women. Further, Diana was praised for her intelligence. Diana was said to have displaced Luna as a moon goddess, and Diana is represented as directing the movements of the moon from her chariot and was frequently thought of as the goddess of light. Although considered smart, pure, and talented, as a moon goddess, Diana was said to have an unpredictable nature, and was, at times, vengeful. One myth tells the story that the hunter, Actaeon, stumbled upon Diana while she was bathing in a river. Upset that Actaeon had seen her undressed, she turned him into a stag and set his hounds after him. In another myth, it is said that Orion, the giant huntsman, won her heart. However, Diana's brother, Apollo, grew alarmed that a love affair might develop between his sister and this giant, and Apollo tricked Diana into a shooting contest; the far-off target turned out to be Orion's head. Grieving the fact she had killed Orion, she turned him into a constellation. She placed his beloved hunting dogs, Canis Major and Canis Minor, close by. During the twelve labors Diana appeared to Hercules and told him to free the Ceryneian Hind, a mythical deer-like creature. Because of Diana's strong connections to woodland creatures, hunting, and the moon, she is sometimes referred to as the Triple Goddess. Roman sculptors created statues depicting her with three heads, those of a dog, a boar, and a horse, and those statues were erected in places where roads met. Diana was also part of another trinity. She lived with the nymph Egeria and her servant and assistant midwife, Virbius. They lived in the Woods of Nemi near the town of Aricia just south of Rome in a sacred grove of oak trees. In Rome, Diana was considered a protector of the lower class (plebeians) and slaves, and many slaves received sanctuary in her temples. Thus, her temple in the ancient Greek city of Ephesus had to be presided over by a high priest who had once been a runaway slave. A slave would be elevated to the position of high priest only if he broke off a branch from one of her sacred oaks and then fought the current high priest to the death. Diana was worshiped at a festival called Nemoralia, or the Festival of Torches, beginning on August 13 each year. After washing their hair and dressing it with flowers, Diana's followers would proceed around the sacred Lake Nemi, also referred to as Diana's Mirror, bearing torches. The worshippers would allow their torchlight to join with the moonlight on the water's surface. This was a day of rest for women and slaves, and all hunting was forbidden on festival day. Since Diana was the goddess of the hunt and wild animals, hounds were dressed with flower blossoms and honored. Today, many Pagans still celebrate Diana on August 13, where she is asked to protect the harvest from autumn storms. Celebrants offer Diana baked goods and fruit, and some make requests written on ribbons and tie them to trees. The festivities often include songs and dances. In closing, Diana was a complex, many-sided goddess, embodying various characteristics, from protector to huntress. Today, Diana is often written about as the original mother goddess, a powerful icon who presided over a society with strong matriarchal lines. She continues to be referenced in art, literature, and film, making her an enduring mythical figure. Link/cite this page if you use any of the content on this page in your own work, please use the code below to cite this page as the source of the content.