

WASSAIL

A wassail is a festive event that involves singing, dancing, and drinking to bless apple trees and encourage a good harvest. Wassailing is an ancient English tradition that takes place in the winter.

What happens at a wassail?

- **Gather:** People gather in a procession to the orchard.
- **Sing:** People sing traditional songs and hymns to bless the trees.
- **Dance:** People may perform Morris dancing.
- **Make noise:** People may clatter pots and pans to scare away evil spirits.
- **Drink:** People drink wassail, a spiced ale or cider.
- **Offerings:** People may place toast in the branches of the tree to entice robins, or pour cider around the roots.
- **Protect:** People may rub salt into a V-shaped bough of the tree to protect it from pests.
- **Hang an offering:** People may soak bread in cider and hang it on the tree as an offering to robins.

SOMERSET WASSAIL

1. Wassail and wassail all over the town
The cup it is white and the ale it is brown
The cup it is made of the good ashen tree
And so is the malt of the best barley

**For it's your wassail and it's our wassail
And it's joy be to you and a jolly wassail**

2. Oh master and missus, are you all within?
Pray open the door and let us come in
O master and missus a-sitting by the fire
Pray think on us poor travellers, a traveling in the mire
3. Oh where is the maid with the silver-headed pin
To open the door and let us come in?
Oh master and missus, it is our desire
A good loaf and cheese and a toast by the fire
4. There was an old man and he had an old cow
And how for to keep her he didn't know how
He built up a barn for to keep his cow warm
And a drop or two of cider will do us no harm
5. The girt dog of Langport he burnt his long tail
And this is the night we go singing wassail
O master and missus now we must be gone
God bless all in this house until we do come again

TREE BLESSING

May your roots grow strong and low,
To drink from waters deep below,
And as your branches reach up high,
May you drink from the light of sunlit sky.

Come forth now from Winter's slumber,
To bring forth leaves in countless number,
And upon your branches blossom unfurl,
To bring forth fruit from every bough.

Laden with fruit, and always green,
Now and forever fruitful be,
Accept our offerings, that in thanks we give,
May you grow in joy; long may you live!
Wassail!! (with the response "Drink Hael!!")

JACOBSTOWE WASSAIL

1. Wassail, wassail,
Good master and mistress, sitting down by the fire,
While we poor wassailers be dabbling in the mire,
With a jolly wassail.
Oh, little Robin Redbreast he has a fine wing,
Give us of your cider and we'll begin to sing,
With a jolly wassail.
2. Wassail, wassail,
Good master and mistress, our wassail begin,
Please open your door and let us come in,
With a jolly wassail.
Oh, little Robin Redbreast he has a fine song,
Give us of your cider, we won't keep you long,
With a jolly wassail.
3. Wassail, wassail,
Your ale cup is white and your ale it is brown,
Your beer is the best that e'er can be found,
With a jolly wassail.
Oh, little Robin Redbreast he has a fine leg,
Give us of your cider, and we'll begin to beg,
With a jolly wassail.
4. Wassail, wassail,
Your gin it is brew'd from the juniper tree,
Your gin is the best that ever can be,
With a jolly wassail.
Oh, little Robin Redbreast he has a fine toe,
Give us of your cider, and we'll begin to go,
With a jolly wassail.

Wassail, wassail,
With a jolly wassail.