



# Matariki

**Matariki ki runga!**

Celebrating Matariki

Te Wānanga  
o Aotearoa





Ururangi



Tupuārangi



Tupuānuku



Waipuna-a-rangi



Hiwaiterangi



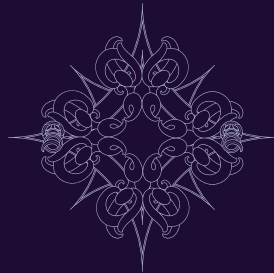
Waiti



Waitā



Pōhutukawa



Matariki

# Celebrating Matariki

**Mānawa maiea te putanga o Matariki  
Mānawa maiea te ariki o te rangi  
Mānawa maiea te mātahi o te tau**

Hail the rise of Matariki  
Hail the lord of the sky  
Hail the New Year

The appearance of Matariki in the morning sky in mid-winter marks the Māori New Year, or Te Mātahi o te Tau. Matariki is the star cluster that is known in other cultures as Pleiades or M45.

The arrival of Matariki is a sign for people to gather to honour the dead, celebrate the present, and plan for the future, hence the phrase ‘Matariki hunga nui,’ meaning the many people of Matariki.

For our tūpuna\*, our Māori ancestors, astronomy was interwoven into all facets of life. Meticulous observations of the movements of the stars and planets, the changing position of the sun, the phases of the moon, and the appearance of anomalies such as comets and meteors were recorded and handed down from generation to generation as part of Māori oral tradition. This knowledge was connected to seasonal activities such as planting and harvesting, the flowering of plants, the spawning of fish, and the natural cycles of the environment. This astronomical knowledge sits at the heart of our many regional ecological calendar systems that guide Māori from season to season.

**How do I say the equivalent of Happy New Year during Matariki?**

**Mānawatia a Matariki!**

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\* Some iwi use tipuna / tīpuna instead of tupuna / tūpuna.



## Te Ritenga - Matariki ceremony

The rising of Matariki in the morning sky is observed in the lunar month of Pipiri (around June and July). Māori wait until the lunar phase of Tangaroa, the last quarter phase of the moon, to celebrate its rising with a ceremony called **Whāngai i te Hautapu**, or **hautapu** more commonly. This ceremony has three parts.

### 1: Te Tirohanga - The viewing

The appearance of Matariki is carefully observed by tohunga (cultural and spiritual leaders), and the brightness of the different stars in the cluster, along with their movement and clarity, indicates the bounty of the impending season.

### 2: Te Whakamahara i ngā mate - Remembering those who have passed

The names of those who had died since the last rising of Matariki are called out in the presence of the star cluster. Māori believe Matariki cares for those that die throughout the year and when it rises again the spirits of those passed become stars in the sky. Māori mourn at this moment, and their tears and wailing send their loved ones into the heavens to become stars.

### 3: Te Whāngai i ngā whetū - Feeding the stars

Because many of the different stars in Matariki are associated with food, and because its role is to care for our dead and bring forth the bounty of the year, Māori give thanks to Matariki by offering food. Before the rising of Matariki, special food is taken from the gardens, forests, rivers, and ocean and is cooked in an earth oven. This oven is uncovered and the steam of the food rises into the sky to feed Matariki.

**Whāngai i te Hautapu** is guided by tohunga who conduct karakia (incantations) throughout. Once the ceremony is complete, a period of celebration, song, dance, and feasting follows.

People come together to enjoy the company of friends and family. Māori believe that when Matariki gathers in the sky, it calls people to gather on earth.

*Photo Credit: Erica Sinclair*



## What can you do to celebrate Matariki?

Every year there are many events that take place throughout the country honouring Matariki, including lectures, dinners, balls, and more. Today there are many ways you can acknowledge the Māori New Year and observe the rising of Matariki. Here are some suggestions:

- > Get up early in the morning and head outside to view Matariki before sunrise.
- > Take time to remember loved ones who are no longer with us. Some call out the names of the dead to honour them. You might like to sit around a fire sharing memories of the people who are no longer here.
- > Learn a karakia that relates to Matariki.
- > Give thanks for the year that has passed.
- > Share your thoughts, words, and karakia to the stars.
- > Learn about the maramataka (Māori Calendar) and the phases of the moon.
- > Take some time in solitude to contemplate the world.
- > Try to read the stars and predict the bounty of the new season.
- > Celebrate and have a Matariki feast - you could even try having your own Hautapu Ceremony.
- > Plan and create some goals for the year ahead.
- > Plan and plant a garden.
- > Spend time with whānau and friends.
- > Celebrate in a way that feels right for you.

Matariki is a time to remember those who have passed away, celebrate the present, and plan for the future. It is a time to come together, acknowledge the significance of the event, and embrace the spirit of Matariki in whatever way feels appropriate for you and your whānau.

## The Hautapu Ceremony

### **Te Umu Kohukohu Whetū me te Hautapu**

#### The ceremonial oven and offerings for Matariki

You may want to have your own Hautapu Ceremony at home with your whānau. It can be as elaborate or simple as you want.

You and your whānau can prepare an umu kohukohu whetū or hāngī, or alternatively you can cook the kai in a pot outside on a gas burner, or even in the oven in an oven tray with tinfoil. Regardless of what method you use to cook your hautapu, it is important you have the right kai.

Here is each whetū (star) and the kai for that whetū, which will go into your umu:

- > Tupuānuku - something from the earth. Traditionally we would use a kūmara, but a rīwai (potato) is fine.
- > Tupuārangi - traditionally this would be a kererū. However, a heihei (chicken) or duck will suffice.
- > Waitī - something from fresh water such as tuna (eel), trout, kēwai (freshwater crayfish), or a bit of salmon from the supermarket.
- > Waitā - any fish from the ocean such as a tāmure (snapper), tarakihi, or whatever is available at the time.

Cook all these foods in your hāngī, pot, or oven tray. Time your hautapu so it is cooked and ready by the time Matariki is visible in the morning sky.





To commence your ceremony, have everyone gather and open with the first verse of this karakia:

**Whanake mai ngā mata o te ariki**  
**Whanake mai te tohu o te tau**  
**Whanake mai Matariki hunga nui**

*Arise the eyes of the god*  
*Arise the signs of the year*  
*Arise Matariki who gathers the masses!*

This verse acknowledges Matariki and the commencement of your ceremony to Matariki. It brings about a degree of tapu (sanctity). The next verse of the karakia acknowledges Pōhutukawa, one of the whetū of Matariki, and those of your whānau who have passed away since the previous Matariki.

**E tū Pōhutukawa**  
**Te kaikawe i ngā mate o te tau**  
**Haere rā koutou ki te uma o Ranginui**  
**Hei whetū i te kete nui a Tāne**  
**Koia rā! Kua whetūrangitia koutou kei**  
**aku rau kahu rangi!**

*Behold Pōhutukawa*  
*Who carries the dead of the year*  
*Onward the departed to the chest of the sky*  
*To become a star in the Milky Way*  
*It is that! You have become stars, amongst*  
*myriads of celestial garments!*

This is an opportunity to pause and take a moment to think of your loved ones that have now become whetū (stars) in the bosom of Ranginui.

After you've had time to remember the hunga mate (departed), start the next part of the karakia, which acknowledges each of the other whetū within Matariki.

You might like to share the karakia between some of the whānau so that each person has an opportunity to say one verse. This karakia is wātea (free of restrictions) for all to use: men, women, and children.

**E tū Tupuānuku\***  
**E tū Tupuārangi\***  
**Ka matomato ki raro**  
**Ka pōkai tara ki runga**

*Behold Tupuānuku*  
*Behold Tupuārangi*  
*Let the earth be lush*  
*Let the sky be full of birds*

**E tū Waitī**  
**E tū Waitā**  
**Te tini a Tangaroa**  
**Te mano a Hinemoana**

*Behold Waitī*  
*Behold Waitā*  
*The abundance of the ocean*  
*The plenty of the waterways*

**E tū Waipunarangi**  
**E tū Ururangi**  
**He ua kōpatapata**  
**He hau miri i te whenua**

*Behold Waipunarangi*  
*Behold Ururangi*  
*Give us rain*  
*Give us wind*

**E tū Hiwaiterangi**  
**Te kauwaka o te manako nui**  
**Anei ngā tōmina o te ngākau**  
**Hei whakatinanatanga mau**

*Behold Hiwaiterangi*  
*The medium of my desires*  
*You know what I yearn for*  
*Make my dreams come true*

**Matariki atua ka eke ki runga**  
**Nau mai ngā hua**  
**Nau mai ngā taonga**  
**Nau mai te Mātahi o te tau.**

*Matariki has risen*  
*Welcome the fruits of the year*  
*Welcome the many treasures*  
*Welcome the New Year*

**Tūturu whakamaua kia tīna!**  
**Tīna!**  
**Haumi e.**  
**Hui e**  
**Taiki e**

*Hold fast and bind it tightly!*  
*Tightly!*  
*Join together!*  
*Affirm!*  
*Unite!*

After the closing of the karakia with ‘taiki e!’ the umu is uncovered or the pot lid is removed. This releases the hautapu within the steam to rise and feed Matariki and to provide sustenance for the following year.

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\* Some iwi say Tipuānuku, and Tipuārangi.

If you like, this is now an appropriate time to perform this well-known haka which acknowledges the hautapu. Everybody should join in together, the tapu of the ritenga has now come down in scale, the tapu has been lifted.

***E te kōkōmako e te kōkōmako  
Ko te hautapu e rite ki te kai nā  
Matariki pakia!  
Tapa reireia koia tapa! Tapa konunua  
koiana tukua  
Hī auē hī!***

*O Komako O Komako,  
The fledgling that is like food for Matariki  
to snap up!  
Push it down, hold it down! Push it until it  
surrenders and gives up.  
Alas, alas!*

We wish you well in your preparations to celebrate Te Iwa o Matariki, and all the best for Te Mātahi o te Tau Hou - Happy New Year!

**For a more indepth understanding of Matariki and our practices, we recommend these books, by Dr Rangi Matamua;**

- ***Matariki Te Whetū Tapu o te Tau (this edition is completely in te reo)***
- ***Matariki The Star of the Year (English)***

**Also, check out our other resources at; [matariki.twoa.ac.nz](http://matariki.twoa.ac.nz)**

*A special thanks to Dr Rangi Matamua and Paraone Gloyne for their guidance and contributions to this Matariki Handbook.*



*Photo Credit: Erica Sinclair*

## Matariki and Puanga

Across different regions, iwi may acknowledge different stars to signify the Māori New Year. For some regions Matariki marks the new year. For others, Puanga is that star.

While Puanga and Matariki are both associated with the Māori New Year, they are not the same. Matariki is a star cluster also known as the Pleiades that appears in the New Zealand sky in late May or early June. Puanga, also known as Rigel, is a bright star in the Orion constellation that is visible in the pre-dawn sky during the winter months.

**It's important to understand that accepting one cluster to mark the new year doesn't disregard the other, as both Matariki and Puanga are important.**

Many iwi from the west – including those around Whanganui, Taranaki, and parts of Te Tai Tokerau and the South Island – look to Puanga to mark their new year, mostly due to geography. As the stars rise, Puanga, which is situated higher in the sky, can be seen around the same time in the west as Matariki can be seen in the east.

Next time you are looking at the night sky, try to locate both Matariki and Puanga. Understanding their positions will also help you understand how several regions maintained the same timing for the changing of the Māori year.

***Ka ara mai a Matariki ka ara mai a Puanga, ka mānawatia a Puanga,  
ka mānawatia a Matariki.***

*Matariki rises, Puanga rises, celebrate Puanga, celebrate Matariki.*



Kōpu

Matariki

Te Kokotā

Tautoru

Puanga

Hinetakurua

▲  
NE

▲  
E





