

# Paganism

The prehistoric site of [Stonehenge](#) was used for [rituals](#) that would now be considered pagan

**Paganism** is a term that covers a great number of [spiritual](#) and [religious](#) beliefs, and someone who follows one of these beliefs is known as a Pagan. Some of those in ancient times, who are called *Pagans* today, believed there was not just one [god](#) but a number of gods and goddesses. The stories from [Greek mythology](#) are famous examples from a pagan religion. Pagans usually focus on [spirituality](#) and [nature](#), rather than on [doctrines](#) and [dogma](#). Not all pagans are [polytheists](#) (belief in more than one god). Some of them are [monotheists](#) (belief in only one god).

The word *pagan* (without a capital **P**) is often used to describe anyone who holds religious beliefs that differ from the main world religions. A similar term is *heathen*. Today Pagan, with a capital **P**, often refers to people who follow Neo-Pagan religions that honour the Earth. The best known Neo-Pagan religion is [Wicca](#). Another well-known neo-pagan faith is [Druidism](#), but there are many other Neo-Pagan religions with different beliefs.

## Some pagan and neo-pagan religions

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- [Ancient Meitei paganism](#)
- [Asatru](#)
- [Baltic paganism](#)
- [Greek religion](#)
  - [Dodekatheism \(Hellenism\)](#)
- [Celtic reconstructionist paganism](#)
- [Druidism](#)
- [Finnish paganism](#)
- [Germanic paganism](#)
- [Kemetism](#)
- [Slavic paganism](#)
- [Tengrism](#)
- [Tenrikyo](#)
- [Wicca](#)

## Surviving religions of earlier cultures

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Enough has survived of the ancient religions of cultures from pre-modern [Africa](#), [South America](#), [New Guinea](#) and [Japan](#) to give us quite a clear picture. Since African slaves were taken to both South America and the [United States](#), it is no surprise that their beliefs and practices still survive.

Not, of course, as the main religion, but they do survive.<sup>[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]</sup>

In a similar way, but much less well documented, are the ancient religions of other groups such as the [Ainu](#) in Japan, the tribes in [New Guinea](#), the many tribes in [Amazonia](#), and the fractured remnants of traditional religions in African countries.<sup>[11]</sup>

All these groups have one thing in common: they are not part of [farming](#) revolution which happened in the [Middle East](#), and which spread quickly to [Eurasia](#). The religions which started there are called the *religions of the book* because their original beliefs were written down. Of course, [writing](#) was one of the original inventions of a settled people, one able to invest time and energy into activities which would be far more difficult for more traditional peoples.

## References

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1. <sup>↑</sup> Murphy, Joseph M. 1988. *Santería: an African religion in America*. Boston: Beacon Press. [ISBN 0-394-72369-4](#)
2. <sup>↑</sup> Thomson, Robert Farris 1983. *Flash of the spirit: African & Afro-American art & philosophy*. New York: Random House/Vintage. [ISBN 0-394-72369-4](#)
3. <sup>↑</sup> Mason, Michael Atwood 2002. *Living santería: rituals and experiences in a Afro-Cuban religion..* Washington: Smithsonian Institution. [ISBN 1-58834-077-5](#)
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5. <sup>↑</sup> González-Whippler, Migene 1982. *The santería experience*. NY: Original Publications. [ISBN 0-942272-15-3](#)
6. <sup>↑</sup> Gleeson, Judith 1992. *Oya: in praise of an African goddess*. New York: HarperCollins. [ISBN 0-06-250461-4](#)
7. <sup>↑</sup> Cabrera, Lydia 1954. *El Monte*. Havana, Cuba. [ISBN 959-705409-4](#) (Source book, in [Spanish](#): various reprints exist)
8. <sup>↑</sup> Cabrera, Lydia 1959. *La sociedad secreta Abakua: narrada por viejos adeptos*. (Source book, in Spanish: various reprints exist).
9. <sup>↑</sup> Feraudy Espino, Heriberto 1993. *Yoruba: un acercamiento a nuestras raíces*. 1993. La Habana: Editora Política. [ISBN 959-01-0040-6](#)
10. <sup>↑</sup> Métraux, Alfred 1959. *Voodoo in Haiti*. New York: Schocken.
11. <sup>↑</sup> Huet, Michael 1994. *Africa dances*. Text by Claude Savary. London: Thames & Hudson. [ISBN 0-500-54195-7](#)

## Other websites

[\[change\]](#) | [change source](#)

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Wikimedia Commons has media related to ***Paganism***.

- [Usenet newsgroup for Pagans](#)
- [The Witches Voice, a networking and education site](#)

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