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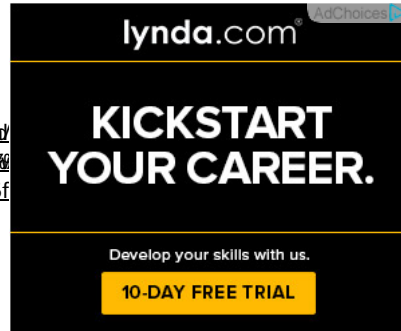
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A powerful animal in all senses of the word, the bull has held symbolic importance for thousands of years across many different cultures.

In simplest terms, the bull is an emblem of masculine power and virility, which can also extend to solar symbolism and the potential for creation. In this capacity, the bull is often associated with deities that embody those same attributes, including the Greek Zeus, the Egyptian Apis, Min and Ra, the Persian Mithras and the Indian Shiva. The bull has also been a premium choice as a sacrificial animal for many cultures, which in itself carries symbolic meaning. Not only have the bull's organs, like those of other sacrificial animals, been used for divinatory purposes, but their blood is believed to impart the animal's potency and power on whoever is touched by it. For example, when the Persian cult of Mithras became popular in the Roman Empire, one initiation ritual involved the initiate standing below a pierced grate in the floor while a bull was slaughtered directly above him, drenching him in the animal's blood. Taking that symbolism further, the flesh of the bull was thought to be an aphrodisiac, and consuming it was believed to increase male potency.



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