

The cow is considered sacred. Hindus therefore avoid eating beef. Some Hindus are vegetarian and do not eat meat, fish, eggs or products made from these foods. Vegetarian and non-vegetarian foods cannot be cooked together. Fasting is commonly practised on new moon days and during certain religious festivals. Yoga is practised by many. The aim is to detach from the conscious world and become like a living soul.

Visiting a Hindu Temple

Please remove your footwear.

Wear modest clothes and be clean

Do not wear leather clothing or bring leather bags

Do not speak loudly

Turn off your mobile phone

Do not enter the inner sanctum

Hinduism



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U&Spirituality



About Hinduism

Hinduism originated and developed in India over the last 3,000-3,500 years. It is the majority religion in India and has spread through-out the world. Hindus believe in one Supreme God, Brahman, who is revealed in three aspects, Brahma the creator God, Vishnu the preserver God and Shiva, the destroyer God. God manifests him/herself in many different forms of Gods and Goddess. Some of these include Krishna, Durga, Ganesh, Sakti (Devi), Vishnu, Surya, Siva and Skanda (Murugan).

Hinduism has no defined structures or any set creed. The most important thing is how you live your life. You must live Dharma that is what is right and correct for you. If you do good you will receive good, if you do bad things, bad things will happen to you. This is known as Karma.

The sacred texts of the Hindus is called the Vedas (scriptures). It has four parts, Vedas which is a Sanskrit word meaning *knowledge and wisdom*. There are four Vedas:

1. Rig-Veda (Veda of Hymns)
2. Sama-Veda (Veda of Chants)
3. Yajur-Veda (Veda of Sacrifice)
4. Atharava-Veda (Veda of Atharvan)

The Bhagavad Gita is perhaps the most well known sacred text. They also believe in re-incarnation. This constant rebirth enables Hindus to become more perfect if they live good lives.

Place and Style of Worship

The Hindu place of worship is the temple and Hindus worship in small groups or as individuals. Larger gathering take place on Festivals. Most

temples make up to five daily offerings of food to the gods. Hindus also maintain one or more shrines in their homes as the focus of worship. Worship can take place daily, at any time.

Puja, which means worship usually begins with the words 'Om, Let us think about God who made the world, may he guide our minds.' Priests make the offerings of flowers and fruit in the Temples. These must be offered in love.

Hindu Festivals and Religious dates

The most important feast is Diwali/Deepavali, the festival of lights. This festival symbolising both the lifting of spiritual darkness and the renewal of life. It is celebrated by the lighting of oil lamps called *diyas* in houses, shops and public spaces. It is also a time for wearing new clothes and feasting with family and friends. This festival also marks the beginning of a new year.

Makar Sankrant is celebrated on the 14th of January and it celebrates the sun's journey in to the Northern Hemisphere when darkness and light are equal.

The Kumbh Mela, a festival which happens every twelve years. During this time millions of Hindus gather to ritually bath at the meeting of the Ganges and Jumna rivers in India. This is a time of purification and transformation of life.

Hindu Practices

Traditional Hindu women wear the sari. Traditional male Hindus wear the white cotton dhoti. Women in particular may wear a dot (*tilak*) of turmeric powder or other coloured substance on their foreheads as a symbol of their religion.