



# The Illustrated Guide to World Religions

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## The Illustrated Guide to World Religions From Oxford University Press

Graced with rich illustrations and written by a team of eminent scholars, *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions* presents a wealth of information on faiths around the world.

Each chapter in this volume examines one of seven major world religions--from Judaism to Christianity and from Islam to Buddhism--and contains information about its holidays and festivities, key historical and mythological figures, architectural styles, calendars, language, and important texts. The book deals with such issues as the afterlife, the role of women, the importance of saints, and the quest for higher wisdom. We discover, for instance, that Pure Land Buddhism--found mainly in China, Japan, and Tibet--holds that meditation on a particular deity at the moment of death will help insure rebirth into that deity's celestial domain. In Judaism, on the other hand, the concept of an afterlife has never played a central role. Uniquely organized in a manner that encourages comparative analysis, the book's lavish full-color art, maps, and photographs all focus on faith in practice, in both elaborate ritual and everyday life.

Religion continues to be a monumental force in a rapidly changing world. Whether tracing the origins of your own faith or attempting to satisfy a curiosity about religious practices an ocean away, *The Illustrated Guide to World Religions* will be a fascinating and indispensable guide to the complexity of the world's living religions.

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## **Editorial Review**

### **Amazon.com Review**

Few topics are as complex as religion, and few educational references do as impressive a job of summing up in clear, precise, and easy-to-understand prose the precepts, history, and practices of the world's major faiths. Michael D. Coogan has all the background to tackle such a formidable task. Currently the director of publications for the Harvard Semitic Museum, he has taught at Harvard and Wellesley, excavated in Israel, Jordan, and Egypt, and edited both the *Oxford Companion to the Bible* and the *Oxford History of the Biblical World*. Beautifully illustrated with artwork, photography, maps, and graphs, this guide provides a lucid introduction to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism, as well as the religious traditions of China and Japan. Coogan explains each religion's origins and divine beliefs, sacred texts and individuals, the concepts of death and the afterlife, and how the religion is expressed in society, rites of passage, education, and gender roles. The reference shelves have been lacking a good, comprehensive yet accessible religion guide. It's a pleasure to see such a concise, readable, and attractive piece of erudition address that need. --  
*Stephanie Gold*

### **From Library Journal**

Books on world religions have a problem defining what a "world religion" is, and this one is no different. Coogan (religious studies, Stonehill Coll.) solicited contributions from scholars in seven major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Chinese and Japanese traditions. These choices were based on three criteria: number of followers, world geographic diffusion, and historical importance. Thus, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, and the sacred traditions of the Native Americans, Africa, and Oceania are not included, while traditions based in China and Japan, respectively, are lumped together owing to population merit. Whether or not the reader agrees with these criteria, they certainly limit the usefulness and comprehensiveness of a book with the phrase "world religions" in its title. That said, the information included, although merely introductory, is accurate and presented in lively prose, and the color photographs and maps greatly enhance reading pleasure. Recommended for public libraries. [For another work by edited Coogan, see *The Oxford History of the Biblical World*, reviewed below.]?Ed.]?Glenn Masuchika, Chaminade Univ. Lib., Honolulu.

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### **Review**

"This book reminds us that religion today is, as it has always been, a central force in human culture.... Anyone who reads it will likely be far better educated at the end than when he starts."--Wisconsin State Journal

"The information included... is accurate and presented in lively prose, and the color photographs and maps greatly enhance reading pleasure. Recommended for public libraries."--Library Journal

"Impressive job of summing up in clear, precise, and easy-to-understand prose the precepts, history, and practices of the world's major faiths...beautifully illustrated.... The reference shelves have been lacking a good, comprehensive yet accessible religion guide. It's a pleasure to see such a concise, readable, and attractive piece of erudition address that need."--Amazon.com

"...this beautifully packaged book will be particularly useful to those seeking background information on

major faith groups that is at the same time pertinent and fascinating." --Phil Anderson, The Capital-Journal

"This sumptuous guide to world religions is not only a delight to the eye but also serves a utilitarian purpose of giving us much needed information about seven major world religions.... Highly recommended!"--  
Christianity and the Arts

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Darren Marshall:**

Do you have favorite book? When you have, what is your favorite's book? Publication is very important thing for us to be aware of everything in the world. Each e-book has different aim or perhaps goal; it means that book has different type. Some people sense enjoy to spend their the perfect time to read a book. They are reading whatever they have because their hobby is definitely reading a book. Why not the person who don't like reading through a book? Sometime, person feel need book after they found difficult problem or perhaps exercise. Well, probably you will want this The Illustrated Guide to World Religions.

#### **Patrick Walker:**

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#### **Jose Rosales:**

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#### **Louise Denison:**

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