

Major Religions based on Number of Adherents

Religion	# of Adherents	Year founded	Founder/ Influential thinkers	Major Text/Prophets/ Notable figures	Basic Beliefs
Christianity • West Eurasian	2.1 billion	6 BCE-30 AD	Founded by the followers of Jesus of Nazareth	• Bible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheistic • Arose out of Judaism • Jesus Christ is the Messiah • Believe in the Trinity • Nature of Christ is both divine and Human
Islam "Surrender to the will of Allah" • Principle religion of the Middle east, Asia, and northern half of America	1.3 billion	Between 610 & 632 in Arabia	Muhammad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qur'an is the major text • Abraham • Jesus • Mohammed- Final and most authoritative Prophet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheistic • Allah is the only God • Five pillars of duty (profession of faith, Prayer 5x a day, % money donated, fasting during Ramadan and pilgrimage to Mecca) • Chosen people are the children of Abraham (son of Ishmael)
Hinduism • Major religions of India (80% of population) & South Asia	900 Million	Oldest religion in the world. Dates back to prehistoric times	There is no founder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No single creed or doctrine • Ancient texts are called Vedas "Knowledge" • Brahman is the principle & source of the Universe • Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti are a few of the popular Hindu deities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheistic, polytheistic or atheistic • Complete freedom of belief • Synergetic religion • Reincarnation-all living things are caught in the circle of death • Karma- rebirth depends on moral behavior
Buddhism	376 Million	4 th or 5 th	Siddhartha ("he	Most important writings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enlightened beings "Buddhas"

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • East Asia 		century in Northern India	who as reached the goal”) Gautama. More commonly known as Buddah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tripitaka • Mahayana • Sutras • Tantra • Zen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 noble truths (all beings suffer, desires cause suffering, desire can be overcome, eightfold path leads away from desire) • Cyclical suffering because of desire
Sikhism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major religion of India 	23 Million	1469-1539	Guru Nanak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adi Granth or Guru Granth Sahib, the sacred scripture of Sikhism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheistic • Believe there is no Hindu & no Muslim • Moksha: circle of birth, death, and rebirth • Communion w/God can be achieved through repetition of divine name and signing of hymns
Juche (aka Juche Idea, Kimilsungism) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Means Self Reliance • Official state ideology of North Korea 	19 Million		Kim Il-sung		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The masses, not foreign power, should be subject to revolution • North Korea must rely on itself (Autarky) •
Spiritism	15 Million	1848 in America	Fox Sisters had a major influence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Andrew Jackson Davis • Daniel Home • Helena Blavatsky • Author Doyle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human personality exists after death • Communication can occur through a medium or a psychic • Aura • Ectoplasm
Judaism <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large population in Israel and the 	14 Million	20 th century? B.C.	Abraham was the founder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torah, Gods holy writings (aka: Hebrew scriptures) • Talmud, oral tradition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheistic • Existence of one God “Yahweh” • Covenant with God

U.S.					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chosen people, children of Abraham (son if Isaac)
Baha'i	7 Million	1863 in Iran	Husayn Ali (Bahauallah)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abraham • Moses • Jesus • Muhammead • Bab • Baha Allah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe in the unity of all religions • World peace, • Universal education • Equality of all races and sexes.
Jainism (aka Jain Darma) • India, East Africa have large communitites	4.2 Million	6 th Century B.C.	Succession of 24 tirthankaras, or saints, created this religion. Vardhamana also called Mahavari (great hero) was the last of these saints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary scripture is <i>Tattvartha Sutra (Book of Relaities)</i> written by Umaswami 18 centuries ago. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revolt against current Hinduism • Liberation of the soul through ascetism and non-violence toward living creatures. • Accumulate merit through charity, good works and monastic retreats • Cyclical cosmology
Shinto	4 Million	Established in the late Jomon period	Founder is unknown. It is suggested that they may be linked to the lost tribes of Isreal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No formal Dogma • No holy writ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polytheistic • Worship of the Kami (host of supernatural beings)
Cao Dia "Supreme place" or "Alter" • Vietnam	4 Million	1919	Ngo Van Chieu, civil servant who received the revelation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tay Ninh, holy temple • Joan of Arc & Sun Yat Sen are all part of an open ended pantheon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unites and completes Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Christianity • Worship 4x a day • Confucian and Buddhist form of ethics
Zoroastrianism	2.6 Million	600 B.C. in Iran	Zoroaster	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avesta is the Holy Book • Only the Gathas, Hymn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monotheistic • Ahura Mazda the supreme deity

				part of the book was written by the prophet • Yashts are smaller prayer books	• Cosmic struggle between spirits of good (Spenta Mainyu) and evil (Angra Mainyu)
Tenrikyo Religion of Holy Truth •Japan	2 Million	1798-1887	Nakayama Miki (a female Peasant) • Referred to as Oyasama (honored parent)	• Main shrine is located around Jiba • Shimbashira (senior religious leader)	• Tenr-Ō-no-Mikoto is the creator of the universe • Man was created on one plot of land, Jihab • Purpose is to attain the “Joyous life” • There are three levels: Kami, Tsukihi, and Oya
Neo-Paganism	1 Million	Resurgence of interest in neo-paganism were a feature of Volkisch movement in the 19 th century	• Alphose Constat • Gerard Encausse	Various different books and prophets.	• Polytheistic • Heterogeneous group of modern religions. • Practices are extremely diverse • Reverence for nature or ecology •stresses independence • Mediumship and Wicca are just a few
Unitarian-Universalism •United states	800 Thousand	1961	Formed by merger of the Unitarians (1825) and the UNiversalists (1793)		• Syncretic religion • Liberal religion • Respects all major religious traditions and services • Consider self humanists • Rejects doctrine of the Trinity
Rastafarianism	600 Thousand	1930's in Jamaica	Maracus Garvey (own interpretation of Biblical Prophecies)	• Ras Tafari	• Believe that Haile Selassie (aka: Ras Tafari) is the Messiah • Reject European Ideas • known for use of marijuana • Influence of Reggae music

Scientology	500 Thousand	1911-1986 First church in 1954, Los Angeles	Lafayette Ronald Hubbard	Dianetics: the Modern Science of Metal Health, is the book that explains the basis of this theory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Persons spirit can be cleared through a process called “Auditing” • Auditing frees the person from burdens that interfere with happiness and self-realization.
Other	794 Million	Various	Various	Various	Religions such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • African traditional & Diasporic • Chinese traditional Religion • Primal-Indigenous
Secular/nonreligious	1.1 billion	Prehistoric	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in no religion or god

1. Om Sakthi -<http://www.omsakthi.org/religions.html>
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Oxford University Press: New York
5. Wikipedia, [HTTP://en.wikipedia.org](http://en.wikipedia.org)