



Encyclopedia of Gods: Over 2,500 Deities of the World

Michael Jordan

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Since the beginning of time, the same mysteries have puzzled people on every continent; the same fears have beset them. They have attempted to explain the mysteries and allay the fears in the same way - through the worship of gods. Deities have been identified with the human psyche for at least 60,000 years. Encyclopedia of Gods offers concise information on more than 2,500 of these deities, from the most ancient gods of polytheistic societies - Hittite, Sumerian, Mesopotamian - to the most contemporary gods of the major monotheistic religions - Allah, God, Yahweh. Among the cultures included are African peoples, Albanian, Pre-Islamic Arabian, Aztec, Babylonian, Buddhist, Canaanite, Celtic, Egyptian, Native American, Etruscan, Germanic, Greek, Roman, Hindu, Persian, Polynesian, and Shinto. The Encyclopedia includes not only the most significant gods of each culture but minor deities as well. Here you will find information not only on Zeus, Thor and Astarte but also on Tozi, the Aztec goddess of healing, Annamurti, the Hindu patron deity of the kitchen, and Nyakaya, the Shilluk crocodile goddess. Each entry provides details on what culture worshiped the god, the role of the god, and the characteristics and symbols used in identification. In the case of the more important personalities, references in art and literature and known dates of worship are also provided. Indexes by civilization and role of the god enable the researcher to compare gods across cultures or to find information on specific topics of interest. Encyclopedia of Gods will be indispensable to students and researchers in religions, anthropology, history and archaeology. It will also provide endless information for the reader interested in mythology and legend.

Encyclopedia of Gods: Over 2,500 Deities of the World Details

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Sagan says

I got this from the library to see if it was worth buying. It is. You'd need to find some dedicated books for full details, but entries are long enough to get the idea and short enough for further explanation of mythology and folklore to a child when you encounter gods and goddesses as characters in read-aloud time. Or Marvel movies.

Terence says

While none of the entries are terribly extensive, this is an interesting little reference book showing just how many ways humans have attempted to come to terms with their universe.

Patricia Della-Piana says

This is a go-to book of information not findable anyplace else. He did his homework, and now I can do mine.

Aryanne says

Many interesting little facts. More a reference book than anything else.

Serena says

My Rating System:

* couldn't finish, ** wouldn't recommend, *** would recommend, **** would read again, ***** have read again.

Mark says

I suppose it is hard to catalog all the gods, and author Michael Jordan (not that Michael Jordan) does a decent job gathering up over a couple thousand gods, which I am sure was no easy task.

However, the book isn't really that thorough in its scope nor in its descriptions of the gods. Some quick checks showed missing gods right away. Ask any fan of Mayan mythology about the Popol Vuh and the hero twins, and they will tell you about Hunapu and Xbalanque and their adventures in the underworld. There is a listing for Hunapu and oddly, Jordan mentions Ix Balan Ku (his spelling of the Mayan twin of Hunapu) in

Hunapu's listing, but yet, fails to list Xbalanque even under his own spelling of that god. Why mention one of the hero twins and not the other?

Another god listed is Hotei who is listed as the Japanese god of fortune, but no mention whatsoever is made that he was considered to be a Buddha and is thought of by more Westerners as Buddha (aka the laughing Buddha) than the actual Buddha (Siddhartha Guatama).

The gods are listed in alphabetical order, and the index in the back also lists by subject, like gods of agriculture, gods of fertility, etc. and lists the gods by civilization, such as Incan gods, Egyptian gods, Greek gods, Norse gods etc. However, Norse gods are actually listed under Icelandic, so it takes a bit to find them.

No pictures are included in the book, so it may be difficult to picture many of the gods or recognize them from other sources.

However, I still find the book useful as a quick reference guide to gods I've never heard of. It can be used for a quick way to find names for various video games (If you've played any online game, you know how hard it is to find a unique name) or to learn some basics about a number of gods. Since spellings vary, sometimes it is hard to find a particular god as most in the book are only listed under one spelling with alternate spellings or names under that listing.

If you are really interested in the gods this is okay as a quick reference guide, but for a more thorough look, you may want to buy a book focused on the particular culture that you are interested in. Myself, for example, I have books on the Egyptian gods, Greek Gods, Norse gods, Incan gods and Mayan gods that go much more in depth than this book, but on the other hand, you would have to get a number of books to get the quick overview provided here.

J. says

Invaluable reference

Aaron Meyer says

A useful dictionary of gods from throughout the world. Not a complete listing but good enough for a reference.

Steig says

as reference, used often, especially when Lara names her doggesses.

Nicollette says

This book is helpful, especially for people who are trying to understand more than one religion. I use this book as a compass on finding out all I can about the gods and goddesses.

Terra Bosart says

This is an excellent resource for the obscure references I encounter during research projects. When I read a document that expects me to be familiar with deities I have never heard of, the Encyclopedia of Gods has come through for me more often than not.

Darlene says

I have skipped through this book as a reference book. A lot of good stuff. Will be using it through the year so I'm declaring it read.
