

# About Hinduism

## Is Hinduism a religion?

Hinduism is too varied and complex to describe as a singular religion. Due to that complexity, we will not try to provide a complete understanding of it in this guide. However, it is worth noting that, within Hinduism, there is no central orthodoxy, creed or set of beliefs that can be used to determine who is a Hindu. Hindus adhere to many different religions, traditions, teachings, or belief systems and any Hindu person might have their own separate set of creeds, beliefs, and rituals. In some ways, it might be better to speak of many Hinduisms rather than one Hinduism.

## Who is a Hindu?

It is useful to recognise that the word “Hinduism” and the identifier “Hindu” is commonly and comfortably used by Hindus themselves to describe a broad set of ideas, cultural practices and collective identity that is based more on birth community than belief system.

About 15 percent of the world’s population identifies as Hindu. Being Hindu is primarily based on being born into a Hindu family, not on any set of beliefs, worship of any specific god, or act of conversion.

## What are the origins of Hinduism?

An incredibly wide variety of saints, gurus, authors and personalities have made their own contribution to the foundations of Hinduism. That being said, there is no single founding person or event which is given credit for the creation of Hinduism. However, while most Hindus agree that there are some sacred Hindu texts which are considered almost universally valuable, there is no one set of holy scriptures which is held to be fully and equally authoritative over life by all Hindus.

Hindu traditions largely found their birth in South Asia, before recorded history. The Hindu community’s assessment of its own identity has changed and evolved over a very long span of time and many different forces continue to drive the development of this identity and to significantly influence it even today.