

Ásatrú (OWs-ah-true) means “true to the Æsir”, true in the sense of family loyalty. This defining personal loyalty is commonly found amongst Ásatrúars, as well as a deep respect for our Germanic religious, cultural and historical heritage. Open to worthy folks regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or sexual orientation, Ásatrú celebrates our religious and cultural heritage, rather than promoting political, racial, or social agendas. Although descended from the culture of the Norse, Germans, Anglo-Saxons, and others, Ásatrú today is no more “European” than Hinduism is “Indian,” Christianity is “Jewish,” or Islam is “Arabic.”

Ásatrúars are polytheistic, considering themselves the spiritual kin of the gods of the North, which consist of the tribe of the Æsir: Odin and Frigg, Thor and Sif, Tyr and Zisa, and others; and the Vanir: Freyja and Freyr, Njord and Nerthus, and others. Most also honor the spirits of the ancestors and of the land and home.

Ásatrú is a living, evolving religion reconstructed from the native religions of the Germanic peoples. It grew from the same Indo-European source as the Celts, the Greeks, and others. This ancient, shared ancestry has resulted in some superficial similarities. All were influenced by the religious traditions of their ancestors and are now independent traditions.

Ásatrú groups are known as Kindreds, Hearths, Garths, and by other names. Most Ásatrúar prefer to work in groups but many live too far away from others to do so while others choose to remain solitary.

Traditionally, a community leader or clan chieftain acted as gothi/goði (priest) or gythja/gyðja (priestess) at public feasts. They hosted feasts and lead rituals. In the home, heads of the household led rituals, everyone was his or her own priest or priestess. Today, the gothi or gythja is dedicated to the study of our ancient lore and strives for inspiration from the gods of the North, yet everyone is still their own priest or priestess. The gothi or gythja is the host who provides the place for the Kindred to gather and makes sure the feast is in order and that there will be mead and ale. They are known not only by their leadership but also by their generosity and hospitality.

The Nine Noble Virtues

A modern convention popular with modern Heathens.

Courage - Truth - Honor

Loyalty - Hospitality - Discipline

Industriousness - Self-reliance - Perseverance

Some Holidays

Disting - A holiday honoring the Disir, the female ancestors, celebrated about February 2.

Sigrblót - Feast beginning the summer half of the year, the Spring Equinox, for success in the coming season.

Ostara/Easter/Sumarmál - A celebration of the first day of summer which, in Icelandic law, always began on the Thursday between the 8th and 15th of April. Now often celebrated around the Spring Equinox.

May Eve/May Day - A common Germanic festival celebrated from April 30 through May 1.

Midsummer - A folk-holiday throughout the Germanic lands, especially Scandinavia, on the Summer Solstice.

Freyfaxi/Freysblot/Freysfest/Loaffest - A celebration of the season's harvest in honor of Freyr on July 31.

Winter Nights - Celebration of the harvest in honor of the disir, female ancestors and fertility spirits, often celebrated on the Saturday between October 11th and 17th.

Yuletide - Beginning at Mother Night, the eve of the Winter Solstice, a celebration honoring the ancestors and family, and continuing through “Twelfth Night,” a celebration where New Year's resolutions are sworn.

Blót

The two forms of ceremony are the Blót, a ritual blessing or feast held for specific religious observances and as needed; and the Sumbel, a formalized ritual toasting held whenever there is a need.

Gamlinginn's “Nine-Point Blót Plan”

1. The Gathering
The participants gather and arrange themselves.
2. The Hallowing/Warding
The area is made spiritually safe.
3. The Rede/Meaning
An explanation of the purpose of the ceremony.
4. The Signaling
A signal is sent to those the ceremony is to honor.
5. The Loading/Hallowing
The mead is made holy.
6. The Blessing
The altar and participants are sprinkled with mead.
7. The Sharing
Each drinks a small quantity of mead, then pours the rest into the blessing bowl.
8. The Giving/Earthing
The mead is poured onto the ground from the bowl.
9. The Closing
The ceremony is ended.

History of the Heathen Revival

1611 CE: Johannes Bureus of Sweden, advisor to King Gustavus Adolphus, begins drawing and interpreting Sweden's runestones. Many have been lost and are only known to us through his drawings.

1622 CE: Ole Worm of Denmark collects reports on runestones and other antique monuments of Denmark and the Northern countries. Bureus and Worm may be thought of as the founders of modern runic studies.

1642 CE: Bishop Brynjólfur gifts the “Codex Regius” to King Frederick III. Afterwards the Eddic poems began to be published and more widely known.

1790 CE: The Romantic movement inspired Germans and Scandinavians seeking their national identity in their own origins and resulted in much of the early literature being translated.

1818 CE: The Brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm, publish their collection of fairy tales.

1844 CE: Jacob Grimm publishes *Teutonic Mythology*, a study of medieval Norse literature's relation to Germanic folklore.

1874 CE: The King of Denmark grants the people of Iceland freedom of religion.

1875 CE: The cathedral of Reykjavik, Iceland is the site of the first public Ásatrú Blót since 1000 CE

1907 CE: German painter and writer Ludwig Fahrenkrog founds the Germanic Glaubens - Gemeinschaft (GGG), a German Heathen group.

1933-1945 CE: In the Nazi era, Heathens face persecution by both the Axis and Allies. Their groups are forbidden to meet and some leaders are jailed.

1954 CE: *The Lord of the Rings* by J.R.R. Tolkien, a Christian and scholar of Germanic philology, is published. Tolkien's Ring Saga was the beginning of the modern fantasy genre, which inspired interest in the magic, history, and the native religion of the North.

1957 CE: In Australia, A. Rud Mills publishes a series of books on the elder religion.

1972 CE: Sveinbjörn Beinteinsson founded the Ásatrúarfélagið of Iceland. In 1973, Ásatrú is accepted as one of the official religions of Iceland.

1973 CE: The Odinic Rite was also moving to gain acceptance in England.

1973 CE: Stephen McNallen founded the Ásatrú Free Assembly of America, establishing Ásatrú solidly as a re-created Heathen religion.

1976 CE: Garman Lord founds Theodism, which concentrates on Anglo-Saxon lore and beliefs.
