



# Judaism For Dummies

By Rabbi Ted Falcon, David Blatner

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## Judaism For Dummies By Rabbi Ted Falcon, David Blatner

Judaism isn't a race or even a particular culture or ethnic group. There are about 13 or 14 million Jews spread around the world, including about 6 million in the United States and about 5 million in Israel – so Judaism clearly isn't "a nation." So what *does* it mean to be Jewish? Here are the basics:

- Being *Jewish* (being "a Jew") means you're a Member of the Tribe (an M-O-T). The tribe started with a couple named Abraham and Sarah about 4,000 years ago, it grew over time, and it's still here today. You can become part of the Jewish tribe in two ways: By being born to a Jewish mother or joining through a series of rituals (called *converting*).
- *Judaism* is a set of beliefs, practices, and ethics based on the Torah. You can practice Judaism and not be Jewish, and you can be a Jew and not practice Judaism.

Whether you're interested in the religion or the spirituality, the culture or the ethnic traditions, *Judaism For Dummies* explores the full spectrum of Judaism, dipping into the mystical, meditative, and spiritual depth of the faith and the practice. In this warm and welcoming book, you'll find coverage of

- Orthodox Jews and breakaway denominations
- Judaism as a daily practice
- The food and fabric of Judaism
- Jewish wedding ceremonies
- Celebrations and holy days
- 4,000 years of pain, sadness, triumph, and joy
- Great Jewish thinkers and historical celebrities

Jews have long spread out to the corners of the world, so there are significant Jewish communities on many continents. *Judaism For Dummies* offers a glimpse into the rituals, ideas, and terms that are woven into the history and everyday lives of Jewish people as near as our own neighborhoods and as far-reaching as across the world.

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## Judaism For Dummies By Rabbi Ted Falcon, David Blatner Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

Like the many other Dummies books, *Judaism for Dummies* organizes a wealth of material into an easy-reading format with a warm, accessible voice. Readers can expect to find translations of common Yiddish words, the difference between Orthodox and other denominations, the meaning and rituals of high holidays, the origins of the Jewish people, and a stirring passage about the Holocaust.

The authors make this book especially engaging by deftly tackling those "I've always wondered..." kinds of questions about Judaism. For instance, what are the guidelines for kosher food? What's the Jewish version of sin? Was Marilyn Monroe really Jewish? (Yes, she converted.) And what exactly do Jews believe about God? The authors answer this last question with characteristic reverence and humor: "Some Jews see God as an external force, a Being outside of the universe.... Some Jews say that God contains the Universe.... Other Jews say that God is the universe.... The one thing that Jews won't argue about, period, is that God--whatever you imagine God to be--is ultimately unknowable and therefore un-nameable." They also note that Jews argue with God in order to know God better. They're called "Children of Israel" because of the biblical story in which Jacob wrestles with an angel and gets his name changed to Israel, meaning "one who wrestles with God."

The authors' lively voices give this stylistically formatted book a unique personality. Sometimes they sound as though they're telling jokes at a dinner party: "Have you heard the one about the two rabbis arguing over the Torah?" and "Yom Kippur means always having to say you're sorry." Other times they sound like fireside elders sharing the old stories of an ancient faith. This is an excellent book for someone preparing to become a bar or bat mitzvah. It could also be helpful for gentiles marrying into Jewish families, or any adult who is planning on converting. --*Gail Hudson*

### Review

"A concise and upbeat primer on the Jewish faith, Judaic history, and what it means to be a Jew." -- *Senator Joseph Lieberman*

### From the Back Cover

"A concise and upbeat primer on the Jewish faith, Judaic history, and what it means to be a Jew." —Senator Joseph Lieberman

"*Judaism For Dummies* is a delightful and rich resource book for anyone interested in the Jewish tradition." ?Rabbi David A. Cooper, author of *God Is a Verb*

"Falcon and Blatner have written a warm, friendly, fair, and direct book to share the complex story of Jews and Judaism." ?Rabbi Dr. Zalman M. Schachter-Shalomi "If you are looking to make sense of the Jewish experience, read *Judaism For Dummies*." ?Rabbi Rami M. Shapiro, Simply Jewish Foundation

### Explore the Jewish faith from Chanukkah to the Kabbalah

A fascinating look at what being Jewish is all about If you want to reconnect with your Jewish heritage, or if you're just curious about the Jewish experience, then this friendly guide is for you. With a dose of warmth and humor, you'll discover key Jewish beliefs and traditions, understand the importance of Jewish history, and learn about Jewish holiday celebrations.

Discover how to:

- Recognize Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Judaism
- Celebrate Passover and other holidays
- Get a handle on Jewish history
- Explore the Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism
- Reconnect with the Jewish faith Get smart! [www.dummies.com](http://www.dummies.com) Register to win cool prizes Browse exclusive articles and excerpts Get a free Dummies Daily e-mail newsletter Chat with authors and preview other books Talk to us, ask questions, get answers

## **Users Review**

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**Candace Hernandez:**

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