

ancient religion

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Would you like more details on any specific one?

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celtic

The **Celtic religion** was practiced by the Celtic peoples of Europe, including the Gauls (France), Britons (Britain), Gaels (Ireland, Scotland), and other tribes across Central and Western Europe before the spread of Christianity. The Celts left no written religious texts, so much of what we know comes from archaeology, Roman accounts, and later Irish and Welsh medieval manuscripts.

Key Features of Celtic Religion

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The Celts worshipped a wide array of gods and goddesses, often associated with nature, war, fertility, and craftsmanship. Some key deities include:

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- **Brigid** (Irish: *Brigit*) – Goddess of healing, poetry, and smithcraft; later Christianized as St. Brigid.
- **Dagda** – The "Good God," a father-figure associated with fertility, magic, and the cauldron of plenty.
- **Morrigan** – A shapeshifting goddess of war, fate, and sovereignty, often appearing as a crow.
- **Cernunnos** – The "Horned God," associated with animals, forests, and fertility (depicted with antlers).
- **Taranis** – Thunder god, similar to Thor or Jupiter.

Regional Variations:

- **Gaulish Celts** worshipped gods like **Esus, Teutates, and Belenus**.
 - **Britons** had deities like **Nodens** (linked to healing).
 - **Irish & Welsh mythology** (written down later) includes figures like **Manannán mac Lir** (sea god) and **Arawn** (Welsh underworld ruler).
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- **Roles:**
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 - **Practices:**
 - **Oak & Mistletoe:** Pliny the Elder described a ritual where Druids cut mistletoe from oak trees (seen as sacred).
 - **Human Sacrifice?** Roman sources claim Druids performed human sacrifices (e.g., wicker man), but evidence is debated.
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**3. Sacred Sites & Nature Worship

- **Groves & Forests:** The Celts held rituals in natural spaces, especially oak groves (*nemeton*).

- **Water Cults:** Rivers, lakes, and springs were sacred (e.g., **Sulis** at Bath, England).
 - **Stone Circles & Burial Mounds:**
 - **Newgrange (Ireland)** – A Neolithic tomb linked to Celtic myth.
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- **The Otherworld (*Tír na nÓg* in Irish myth):** A paradise-like realm of eternal youth.
 - **Reincarnation:** Some texts suggest belief in rebirth (e.g., Welsh *Mabinogion*).
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Decline & Legacy

- **Roman Conquest:** Many Celtic gods were merged with Roman deities (e.g., **Sulis-Minerva**).
 - **Christianization:** By the 5th–6th centuries CE, most Celtic regions converted, but folklore survived (e.g., fairies = *Tuatha Dé Danann*).
 - **Modern Revival:**
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Merged Segment (.review/organized/A/Ancient Religion.md)

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