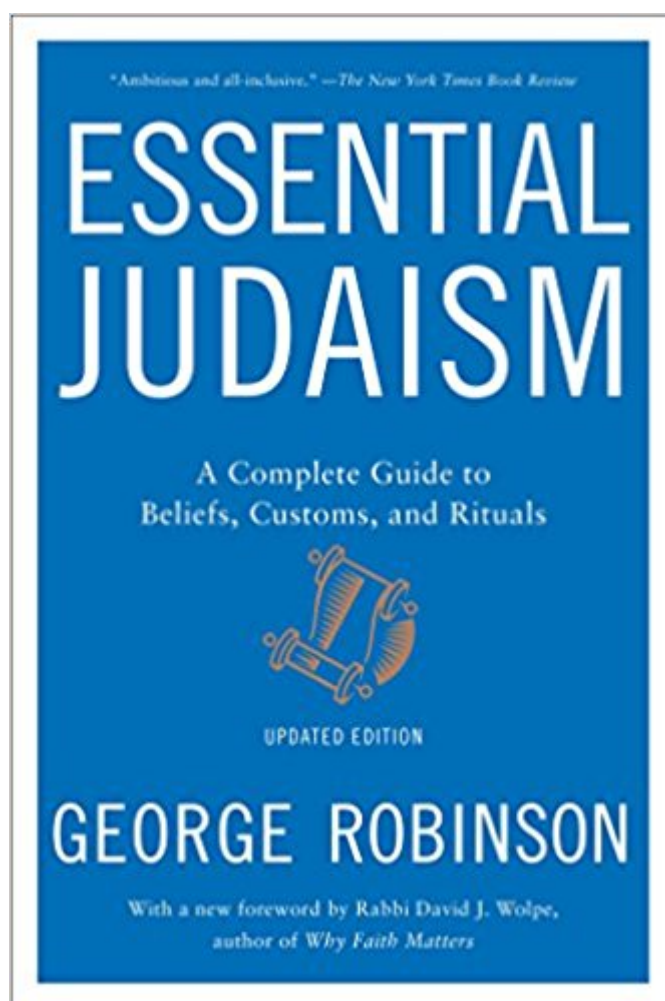


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Essential Judaism: Updated Edition: A Complete Guide To Beliefs, Customs & Rituals



Synopsis

You'll find everything you need to know about being Jewish in this indispensable, revised and updated guide to the religious traditions, everyday practices, philosophical beliefs, and historical foundations of Judaism. What happens at a synagogue service? What are the rules for keeping kosher? How do I light the Hanukah candles? What is in the Hebrew Bible? What do the Jewish holidays signify? What should I be teaching my children about being Jewish? With the first edition of *Essential Judaism*, George Robinson offered the world the accessible compendium that he sought when he rediscovered his Jewish identity as an adult. In his "ambitious and all-inclusive" (New York Times Book Review) guide, Robinson illuminates the Jewish life cycle at every stage and lays out many fascinating aspects of the religion—the Kabbalah and Jewish mysticism, the evolution of Hasidism, and much more—while keeping a firm focus on the different paths to living a good Jewish life in today's world. Now, a decade and a half later, Robinson has updated this valuable introductory text with information on topics including denominational shifts, same-sex marriage, the intermarriage debate, transgender Jews, the growth of anti-Semitism, and the changing role of women in worship, along with many other hotly debated topics in the contemporary Jewish world and beyond. The perfect gift for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah or anyone thinking about conversion—this is the ultimate companion for anyone interested in learning more about Judaism, the kind of book its readers will revisit over and over for years to come.

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Customer Reviews

Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs and Rituals is a brief but comprehensive layman's handbook to Jewish prayer, worship, festivals, customs, history, language, philosophy, and ideology. Its author, George Robinson, returned to synagogue after a 20-year absence and found himself utterly confused about the basics of his religion, despite having attended Hebrew school. He looked far and wide for a reference work that would help him get his bearings but did not find one; so he wrote one himself. Robinson's background as a journalist proved to be an asset in this project, which shows evidence of much detective work, the results of which are plainly described and clearly organized. Robinson is sensitive to the many perspectives of contemporary Judaism without being mealy-mouthed. His work is a triumph of diplomacy and clear thinking; his overview of Hebrew Scripture, and his excellent Kosher primer, would be worth the price of this book in themselves. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Ten years ago, Robinson entered a Reform synagogue for the first time since adolescence. He became an active congregant, but he discovered in his reincorporation of certain rituals and practices that he "was often baffled" by what occurred in the synagogue. This expansive tome attempts to provide the essentials of Judaism for novices, outsiders and those who, like Robinson, rediscovered their heritage as adults. It's an excellent introductory resource, vast but accessibly organized. Robinson first covers the most ritually significant Jewish prayers and walks the reader through a typical Shabbat service. He presents the basic facts about holidays and the Jewish calendar, then explores Jewish life-cycle rituals from bris to burial and includes a catch-all chapter on other practices such as Kashrut. By beginning with Jewish practice, rather than history or law, Robinson centers the core of Judaism in everyday life. The book's second half is a whirlwind tour of Torah and Talmud, Kabbalah and Jewish philosophers, with a key explanatory chapter on historical developments such as Hasidism and Zionism. Notably absent is the history of the Holocaust and the founding of Israel; Robinson notes that the Judaica sections of most bookstores already overflow with such historical information, and he explores instead the scope of Jews' reactions to those events. This is a valuable, sensitive one-volume guide to Jewish practice. (Mar.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

And I've seen a bunch!! Whether you are just beginning or you already know about this subject, this book is just perfect. Written in an interesting, light way, but really full of information. The book is huge. Easy to study. I just love it, don't even know what else to say!! converted to Judaism and

married a Rabbi. He's really impressed with my knowledge about the religion, and I did study A LOT but a lot of what I know it comes from this book. If you have to choose only one, this is it.

Exceptionally complete and very well organized. All you could possibly want to know about Jewish practices and much of the essential history and summary of the sacred writings, like the complete list of the 613 Mitzvot and the 13 principles of Judaism from Maimonides. A must for all interested in this very old faith and what it all means and what are its practices which can be very confusing without the "Essential Guide". Very well written.

I bought this book as part of the reading list for my conversion class. It's such a great tool I have long stopped following the weekly reading text and find myself reading chapters ahead. It's full of post-it flags on things I want to remember and go back to. I also have Intro to Judaism: A source Book although informative it's very dry. Essential Judaism is just such a good read and is clear. This will definitely be a keeper and an addition to my home library that will grow with me during my conversion.

I love this book. It's written in a way that is engaging and offers great explanations.

I read this as an introduction to learn about my heritage. I learned as an adult that my Grandmother had been Jewish but chose to assimilate into American life for an unspecified reason. This has been a beautiful and very educational introduction to the journey and religious practices of some of my ancestors, as well as some of my friends! I walk away from this book inspired by this beautiful and hardy spiritual tradition as well as its people.

Nice synopsis of different topics. Useful reference.

The best book for Jewish customs, lifecycle events etc.

It is interesting and gives a lot of facts on Judaistic customs and beliefs, due to the length of the book I did lose interest but will go back and read the rest later. Not a book that holds your attention from the beginning to the end but if you are looking for fact-like book and specific reading material this is definitely it.

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