

Norse Mythology

The Two Groups of Norse Gods

Aesir: one of the two groups of gods. This group consisted of most of the gods. Their chief was Odin.

Vanir: a group of peaceful, fertility gods. Njord, Frey and Freya were some of the Vanir god/desses.

Creatures, Giants, Gods, Goddesses

1. **Angurboda:** A giantess, with whom Loki fathered his three monstrous children. Mother of Hel, Fenris, and the Midgard serpent
2. **Audhumla:** the ancient cow. She was the first form of life. She fed the giant Ymir and his brood with her milk, and she made the God Buri out of a block of ice by licking it into shape.
3. **Baldur:** Lord. God of light, peace, love and beauty. Best-loved of all the gods, most kind and gentle. Only thing that could harm him was mistletoe. Loki persuaded Baldur's brother Hod to throw a piece at him, which struck him in the heart and killed him. Son of Odin and Frigg. Brother to Bragi, Heimdall, Hermod, Hod and Thor. Nephew of Ve and Vili.
4. **Bragi:** God of poetry, eloquence and song. Son of Odin and a Jotun maiden. His songs recorded the deeds of warriors in battles. Husband of Idunna. Brother to Baldur, Heimdall, Hermod, Hod and Thor. Nephew of Ve and Vili.
5. **Buri:** First god, licked from the ice by the ancient snow cow. Father of Bor. Grandfather of Odin, Ve and Vili.
6. **Fenris:** Wolf so huge that all the gods were scared of it. From the swamp. Monstrous wolf, confined to an isolated island by the Aesir. They had the dwarves create a rope to bind it with. The god Tyr lost his right hand putting the rope on Fenris. Son of Angurboda and Loki. Brother of Hel and the Midgard serpent.
7. **Forseti:** God of justice. He who sits in the front seat. Chief judge of the Aesir. Plays an important role in Ragnarok, the end of the world.

8. **Frey:** God of sunshine, rain, peace, fertility and earth. Lord of the elves. "The foremost". On his golden boar he plowed the earth and made it green. Sends rain and sunshine to the earth. Son of [Njord](#) and [Skadi](#). Husband of the giantess [Gerd](#).
9. **Freya:** Lady, mistress. Goddess of love and magic. She loves music and spring, and is particularly fond of the elves. Fond of love ditties, and gives advice in love matters. Her home in [Asgard](#) was called the "field of men" and her necklace [Brisingamen](#) was said to be the Milky Way. Her husband [Od](#) vanished, but she had one daughter, [Noss](#). At one time married to her twin brother [Frey](#) until her marriage to [Odin](#).
10. **Frigg:** Lady, mistress. Goddess of childbirth and marriage. Highest in rank of the goddesses. Mother of the Gods. Looked after homes, and was thought of as always spinning yarn. Stars known as the belt of Orion were said to be her distaff. Wife of [Odin](#).
11. **Gerd:** Fence enclosing tilled land. She became the wife of [Frey](#) in the myth explaining spring flowing from winter. [Gerd](#) represents the frozen seed brought to life by [Frey's](#) gentle rain and warm sun.
12. **Grid:** Peace. A [Jotun](#) woman, mother of Vithar. Vithar is second in strength only to Thor, as he was fathered by [Odin](#).
13. **Heimdall:** Rainbow. Watchmen of the gods, placed at the borders of heaven to prevent intruders from crossing the rainbow bridge [Bifrost](#). He requires less sleep than a board, can see night and day for 100 miles around him. Hears grass growing and the hair on a sheep's back. Has horn Gjallarhorn, for sounding the alarm that Ragnarok has come which can be heard by the whole world. Son of [Odin](#) and [9 sisters](#). Brother to [Bragi](#), [Baldur](#), [Hermod](#), [Hod](#) and [Thor](#). Nephew of [Ve](#) and [Vili](#).
14. **Hel:** Goddess of the underworld, the Concealer. She rules the dead who do not die in battle. Her realm was also called [Hel](#), looks similar to [Valhalla](#), except for the gruesome decor. Daughter of [Loki](#) and [Angurboda](#). Sister to [Fenris](#) and the [Midgard serpent](#).
15. **Hermod:** Courage in battle. Son of [Odin](#). One of the war gods. Brother to [Bragi](#), [Heimdall](#), [Baldur](#), [Hod](#) and [Thor](#). Nephew of [Ve](#) and [Vili](#).
16. **Hod:** War. Son of [Odin](#), blind war god. Through [Loki](#) he accidentally killed his half-brother [Baldur](#) with mistletoe. Also, he was a rival for the hand of [Baldur's](#) wife [Nanna](#). Brother to [Bragi](#), [Heimdall](#), [Hermod](#) and [Thor](#). Nephew of [Ve](#) and [Vili](#).
17. **Idunna:** Rejuvenation. Goddess of youth. Keeps golden apples, which the Gods eat to retain their youth and immortality. Wife of [Bragi](#).
18. **Kvasir:** the wisest dwarf who could answer all questions. To make peace after a war between the gods, all the gods spat into a vase. Kvasir came out of this vase.

19. **Loki:** Fire. Son of [Laufey](#) (mortal) and [Farbauti](#) (a giant). God of mischief and of all fraud. Personification of the 2 aspects of fire, the destructive part and the helpful warming flame. By representing fire he could either help the gods, or harm them. He is of the giant race, but forced himself into the company of the gods by becoming blood brothers with [Odin](#). Enjoys tricking the gods. Is associated with anything evil, deceitful, etc. He was responsible for [Baldur's](#) death. Father of [Hel](#), [Fenris](#), and the [Midgard serpent](#).
20. **Midgard Serpent:** A tremendous serpent, offspring of [Loki](#) and [Angurboda](#). Lies at the bottom of the ocean encircling the earth.
21. **Nidhogg:** A serpent that gnaws the roots of the world-tree [Yggdrasil](#).
22. **Nine Sisters:** Daughters of [Aesir](#) and [Ran](#). Mothered [Heimdall](#) with [Odin](#).
23. **Njord:** God of winds and sea. Chief of the [Vanir](#).
24. **Norns:** Dwelt by the well of fate near the [Yggdrasil](#), which they watered each day. The three of them determine each person's fate.
25. **Odin:** Spirit, ecstasy. God of battle, death, inspiration and wisdom, and hanged men. Chief (all father) of the [Aesir](#) family of Gods, lord of the sky and father of the gods. [Aesir](#) made up the majority of the population of the gods (as opposed to the [Vanir](#).) On his shoulders perched 2 ravens [Hugin](#) (thought) and [Munin](#) (memory). They could fly to the ends of creation to get him knowledge. The god of battle, magic, knowledge and death. He was married to [Frigg](#). He gave one of his eyes in exchange for a drink from the well of knowledge.
26. **Sif:** Kinship. Wife of [Thor](#). Goddess of household and family ties. Her golden hair represented fields of grain. Goddesses of crops. Her hair was once cut off by [Loki](#), and was replaced by hair of pure gold.
27. **Thor:** God of thunder, law and order. Strongest of the [Aesir](#), symbolized the union of heaven and earth. His hammer, Mjolnir, kept all evil at bay, and blessed weddings. When thrown, the hammer returns back to the hand of the thrower. He wears a belt of strength, when he puts it on his strength doubles. Iron gloves he puts on when he would use his hammer most efficiently. Thursdays = Thor's day, was popular day for weddings, since Thor was known to bless weddings with his hammer.
28. **Tyr:** Shining. God of the sword and of dueling. Lost his right hand when he broke his sacred word to [Fenris](#) the wolf. [Fenris](#) had given the gods a lot of trouble before they chained him. He could break the strongest chains, so the gods sent a messenger to the mountain spirits who made them Gleipnir. It is made from viz - the noise made by the footfalls of a cat, the beard of a young woman, roots of stones, breath of fish, the nerves of bears and the spittle of birds. It was smooth and soft as silken string, but when the gods asked [Fenris](#) to be bound with it, he suspected their

design. He consented only if one of the gods put his hand in his mouth as a pledge the band would be removed.

29. **Ve:** Gave sense, expressive features, and speech to the first humans. Odin gave them life and soul. Odin and his brothers created the universe.
30. **Vili:** Gave reason and motion to the first humans.
31. **Ymir:** giant which was the first living creature. A god and goddess came to life from his armpit sweat, and dwarves sprang from his feet. The first gods killed him, and from his blood came the sea. His skull made the sky, his brains the clouds, his hair the trees, his bones the hills, and his flesh the earth.

Important Places

32. **Asgard:** home of the gods.
33. **Bifrost Bridge:** bridge that led to Asgard, home of the Norse Gods. It was a rainbow that only god/desses could cross.

Jotunheim: home of the giants.

32. **Valhalla:** Odin's great hall where those who fell in battle went. Fought all day, were healed then fed on a goat that reappeared as it was eaten.

Important Objects

33. **Apples of Youth:** magic apples that kept the god/desses perpetually young. Idunna was the keeper of the apples, which grew in a golden box.

Brisingamen: Freya's beautiful golden necklace. One of the greatest Norse treasures.

33. **Mjolnir:** Thor's hammer.
34. **Yggdrasil:** "world-tree" which is a link between the separate worlds. This ash tree is the source of life with several roots. One root leads to Asgard and one to Niflheim. The serpent Nidhogg gnaws at the roots, and an eagle sits on the top of the tree. The Norns care for the tree to keep it healthy.

The Creation

In the beginning, there were two worlds. The one in the north was made of ice and frost, the one to the

south was a world of fire. The space separating the two was Chaos.

In this Chaos lived an ancient, age-old cow named [Audhumla](#). As time went by, ice in the northern region began to melt. And from this melted snow came the giant Ymir. His first children were twins, a giant and a giantess, who grew from the sweat in his left armpit. A nine-headed troll grew from his feet. The giant and giantess rapidly began reproducing, so that a large colony of giants formed. All lived off of [Audhumla](#).

But during this time, [Audhumla](#) had been busy. To feed herself, she licked at the ice from the north. As she licked the ice, with her tongue she started to form the head of a god. She continued licking until the ice formed a body. Then, this god came to life. He was [Buri](#). He married one of the giantesses, and their grandchildren became [Odin](#), [Vili](#) and [Ve](#). The gods decided to rid themselves of the evil [Ymir](#), and when they did so, all the giants and giantesses drowned in his blood except for one giant and one giantess.

The gods took the body of [Ymir](#). His blood became the seas and oceans. They made his skull into the sky and his brains became clouds. His body became the earth, his bones became hills and mountains, and his hair was made into trees.

The End

Ragnarok: the day on which the world and the gods will meet their end. The forces of evil will gather, sail to [Asgard](#), where they will battle with the gods. [Odin](#) will be swallowed by [Fenris](#), [Thor](#) will die as he kills the [Midgard serpent](#), [Heimdall](#) and [Loki](#) will kill each other. Vidar will kill [Fenris](#). The only gods left will be [Modi](#), [Magni](#), [Hod](#) and [Baldr](#). A new sun will be born, and [Lif](#) and [Lithrasir](#) will repopulate the world with humans.