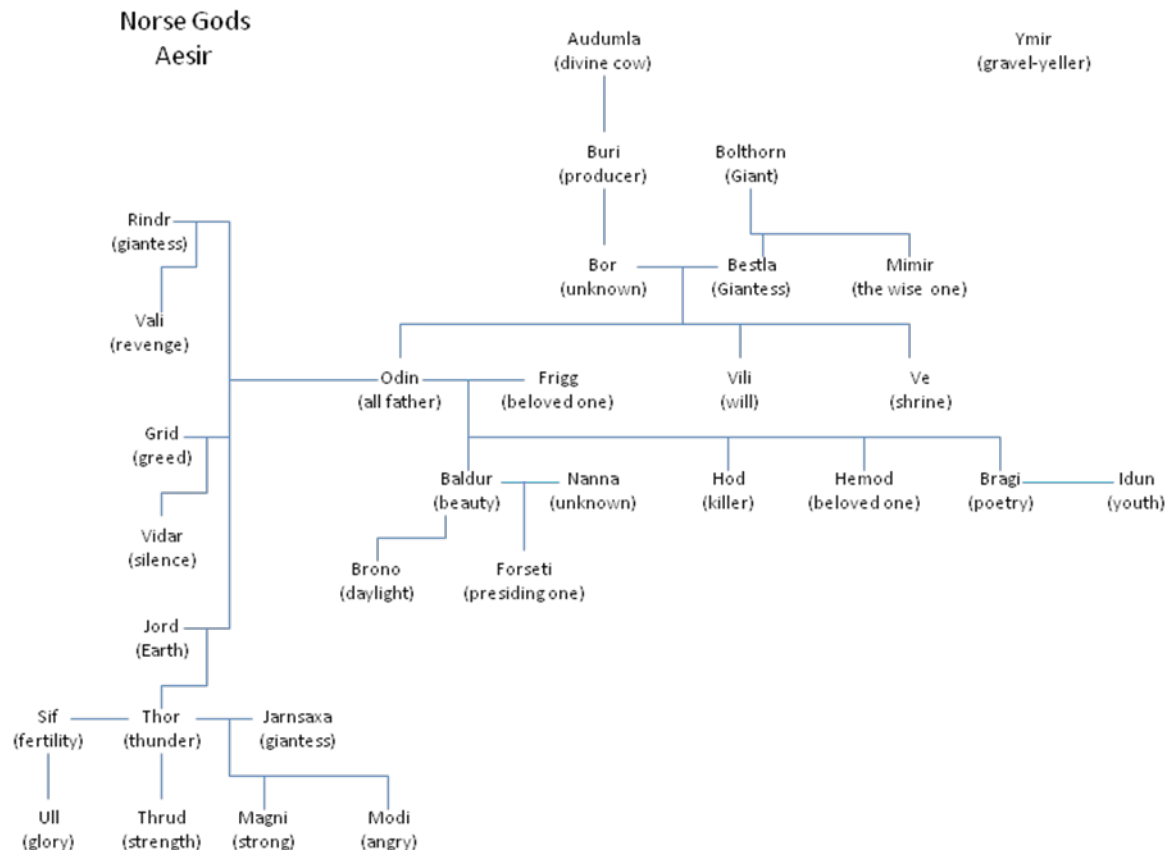
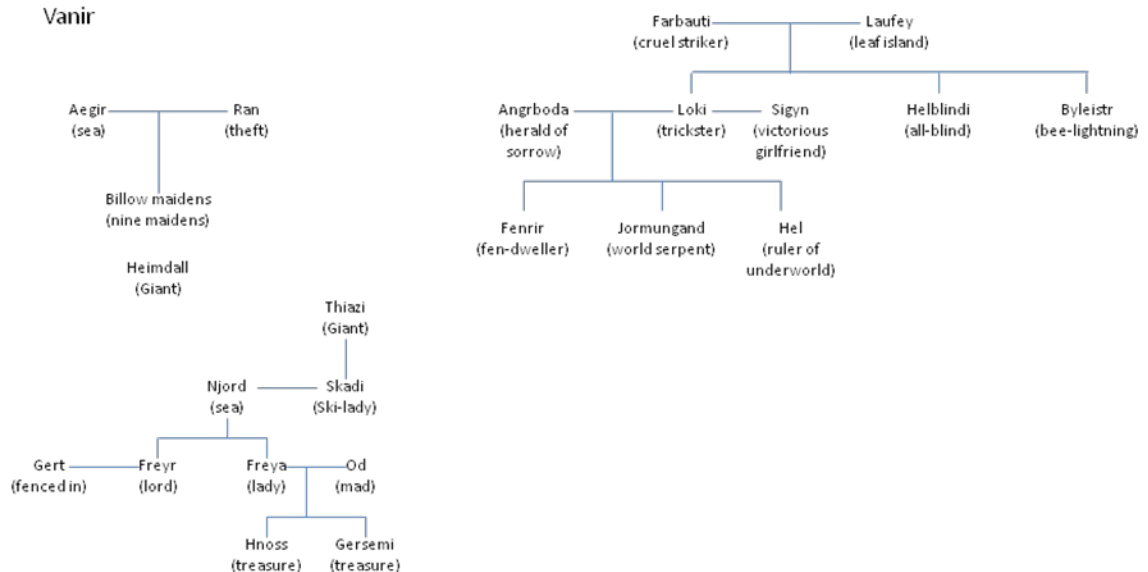


## Norse Mythology



## Norse Gods Vanir



## Norse Mythology

### Overview

### Cosmology

In Norse mythology there are '[nine worlds](#)' (nín heimar), these are:

- [Asgard](#), world of the [Æsir](#) (East Court).
- [Vanaheimr](#), world of the [Vanir](#).
- [Midgard](#), world of humans (Middle Court).
- [Muspellheim](#), world of the primordial element of fire (Black Smiths (Muorsh Eiron) Home).
- [Niflheim](#), world of the primordial element of ice
- [Svartálfaheim](#), world of the Svartálfar ([black elves](#)) (possibly Surt).
- [Álfheimr](#), world of the Álfar ([elves](#)).
- [Hel](#), underground world of the dead.
- [Jötunheimr](#), world of the [jötnar](#) (Giants).

Note the boundaries between Niflheim, Jötunheimr, Hel, Niðavellir, Svartálfaheimr, and several other significant places like [Útgarðar](#) (Outer (Far) Court) remain uncertain. Each world also had significant places within. [Valhalla](#) is Odin's hall located in Asgard. It was also home of the [Einherjar](#), who were the souls of the greatest warriors. These warriors were selected by the [Valkyries](#), Odin's mounted female messengers. The Einherjar would help defend the gods during [Ragnarok](#). [Niflhel](#) is a hellish place in Hel, where oathbreakers and other criminals suffer torments.

These worlds are connected by [Yggdrasil](#), the world tree, a giant tree with Asgard at its top. Chewing at its roots in Niflheim is [Nidhogg](#), a ferocious [serpent](#) or [dragon](#). Asgard can also be reached by [Bifrost](#), a rainbow bridge guarded by [Heimdall](#), a god who can see and hear a thousand miles.

### Supernatural inhabitants

There are several "clans" of [Vættir](#) or animistic nature spirits: the [Æsir](#) and [Vanir](#), understood as gods, plus the [Jötnar](#), the [Álfar](#) and [Dvergjar](#). To this list can be added the dead in the Underworld. The

distinction between Æsir and Vanir is relative, for the two are said to have made peace, exchanged hostages, intermarried and reigned together after the events of the [Æsir–Vanir War](#), and afterward the gods are generally referred to collectively as Æsir.

In addition, there are many other beings: [Fenrir](#) the gigantic [wolf](#), [Jörmungandr](#) the sea-serpent (or "worm") that is coiled around Midgard, and [Hel](#), ruler of [Helheim](#). These three monsters are described as the progeny of [Loki](#). Other creatures include [Huginn and Muninn](#) (thought and memory, respectively), the two ravens who keep Odin, the chief god, apprised of what is happening on earth, since he gave his eye to the [Well of Mimir](#) in his quest for wisdom, [Sleipnir](#), Loki's eight legged horse son belonging to Odin and [Ratatoskr](#), the squirrel which scampers in the branches of Yggdrasil.

### **The Norse Creation myth**

According to Norse myth, the beginning of life was fire and ice, with the existence of only two worlds: Muspelheim and Niflheim. When the warm air of Muspelheim hit the cold ice of Niflheim, the jötnunn [Ymir](#) and the icy cow [Audhumla](#) were created. Ymir's foot bred a son and a man and a woman emerged from his armpits, making Ymir the progenitor of the [Jötnar](#). Whilst Ymir slept, the intense heat from Muspelheim made him sweat, and he sweated out [Surtr](#)<sup>[[citation needed](#)]</sup>, a jötnunn of fire. Later Ymir woke and drank Audhumbla's milk. Whilst he drank, the cow Audhumbla licked on a salt stone. On the first day after this a man's hair appeared on the stone, on the second day a head and on the third day an entire man emerged from the stone. His name was [Búri](#) and with an unknown jötnunn female he fathered Bor, the father of the three gods [Odin](#), [Vili](#) and [Ve](#).

When the gods felt strong enough they killed Ymir. His [blood](#) flooded the world and drowned all of the jötnunn, except two. But jötnar grew again in numbers and soon there were as many as before Ymir's death. Then the gods created seven more worlds using Ymir's flesh for dirt, his blood for the Oceans, rivers and lakes, his bones for stone, his brain as the clouds, his skull for the heaven. Sparks from Muspelheim flew up and became stars.

One day when the gods were walking they found two tree trunks. They transformed them into the shape of humans. Odin gave them life, Vili gave them mind and Ve gave them the ability to hear, see, and speak. The gods named them [Ask and Embla](#) and built the kingdom of Middle-earth for them; and, to keep out the jötnar, the gods placed a gigantic fence made of Ymir's eyelashes around Middle-earth.

The end of the Norse myth cycle is Ragnarök which refers to a series of major events, including a great battle foretold to ultimately result in the death of a number of major figures (including the [gods](#) [Odin](#), [Thor](#), [Freyr](#), [Heimdall](#), and the [jötnunn Loki](#)), the occurrence of various natural disasters, and the subsequent submersion of the world in fire. Afterwards, the world resurfaces anew and fertile, the surviving gods meet, and the world is repopulated by two human survivors.

## The Easir Gods

**Ymir** (male) - In Norse mythology, *Ymir* is the primordial giant and the progenitor of the race of frost giants. He was created from the melting ice of [Niflheim](#), when it came in contact with the hot air from [Muspell](#). From *Ymir's* sleeping body the first giants sprang forth: one of his legs fathered a son on his other leg while from under his armpit a man and women grew out.

The frost kept melting and from the drops the divine cow *Audumla* was created. From her udder flowed four rivers of milk, on which *Ymir* fed. The cow itself got nourishment by licking hoar frost and salt from the ice. On the evening on the first day the hair of a man appeared, on the second day the whole head and on the third day it became a man, [Buri](#), the first god. His grandchildren are [Odin](#), [Ve](#) and [Vili](#).

*Odin* and his brothers had no liking for *Ymir*, nor for the growing number of giants, and killed him. In the huge amount of blood that flowed from *Ymir's* wounds all the giants, except two, drowned. From the slain body the brothers created heaven and earth. They used the flesh to fill the [Ginnungagap](#); his blood to create the lakes and the seas; from his unbroken bones they made the mountains; the giant's teeth and the fragments of his shattered bones became rocks and boulders and stones; trees were made from his hair, and the clouds from his brains. *Odin* and his brothers raised *Ymir's* skull and made the sky from it and beneath its four corners they placed a dwarf. Finally, from *Ymir's* eyebrow they shaped [Midgard](#), the realm of man. The maggots which swarmed in *Ymir's* flesh they gave wits and the shape of men, but they live under the hills and mountains. They are called dwarfs.

**Audumla** (female) – the Norse divine cow that uncovered the primeval Norse god *Buri*. the translation of the poem is:

Then asked Gangleri: "Wherewithal was the cow nourished?"

And Hárr made answer: "She licked the ice-blocks, which were salty; and the first day that she licked the blocks, there came forth from the blocks in the evening a man's hair; the second day, a man's head; the third day the whole man was there. He is named [Búri](#)."

**Buri** (male) - *Buri* is the primeval man in Norse mythology. He had neither father nor mother, but was created by a cow named [Audhumla](#). *Buri* had a son named [Bor](#). *Bor* had three sons who were gods: [Odin](#), [Vili](#), and [Ve](#).

**Bor** (male) - *Bor* is a primordial Norse man, the son of [Buri](#). He married the giantess *Bestla*, who is a daughter of the frost giant *Bolthorn*. *Bor* and *Bestla* had three children who became the first gods: [Odin](#), [Vili](#), [Ve](#).

**Bestla** (female) - In [Norse mythology](#), *Bestla* was an ancient [Jotun](#), a daughter of [Bolthorn](#). With [Bor](#), she was the mother of [Odin](#), [Ve](#) and [Vili](#).

**Bolthorn** (male) - In [Norse mythology](#), *Bölthorn* (or *Bölthor*) was a [frost giant](#), the father of [Bestla](#) and maternal grandfather of [Odin](#). According to [Hávamál](#), he is also the father of a nameless giant who taught *Odin* nine magic charms or "songs" ([galdrar](#)). *Rydberg* considers this nameless giant to be [Mimir](#).

**Mimir** (male) - *Mimir* was the wisest god of the [Aesir](#) and one of the two gods sent as hostages to the [Vanir](#). After the Vanir discovered they had been tricked by the Aesir, they hacked off *Mimir's* head and send it back to the Aesir.

[Odin](#) took the head, smeared it with a mixture of herbs, so that it would never decay, and placed powerful spells on it. The forces *Odin* called upon were so great that not only the head was brought

back to life, but it was also able to speak to him. From that moment on he regularly consulted the head which revealed many occult secrets to him.

**Ve** (male) - Ve is one of ancient Scandinavian gods and, together with [Odin](#) and [Vili](#), the son of the primordial pair of giants [Bor](#) and [Bestla](#). The three brothers created heaven and earth from the slain body of the primeval being [Ymir](#) and built the twelve realms. They also created [Ask and Embla](#), the first pair of humans.

When the first humans were made, Ve gave countenance (appearance, facial expression), [speech](#), hearing, and sight.

**Vili** (male) - one of the primordial gods, brother of [Odin](#) and [Ve](#). The three of them were responsible for the creation of the cosmos, as well as the first humans. During the creation *vili* gave humans wit (intelligence) and sense of touch.

**Odin** (male) - The chief divinity of the Norse pantheon, the foremost of the [Aesir](#). *Odin* is a son of [Bor](#) and [Bestla](#). He is called Alfadir, Allfather, for he is indeed father of the gods. With [Frigg](#) he is the father of [Balder](#), [Hod](#), and [Hermod](#). He fathered [Thor](#) on the goddess [Jord](#); and the giantess [Grid](#) became the mother of [Vidar](#).

*Odin* is a god of war and death, but also the god of poetry and wisdom. He hung for nine days, pierced by his own spear, on the world tree. Here he learned nine powerful songs, and eighteen runes. *Odin* can make the dead speak to question the wisest amongst them. His hall in [Asgard](#) is Valaskjalf ("shelf of the slain") where his throne Hlidskjalf is located. From this throne he observes all that happens in the nine worlds. The tidings are brought to him by his two raven [Huginn and Muninn](#). He also resides in [Valhalla](#), where the slain warriors are taken.

*Odin's* attributes are the spear Gungnir, which never misses its target, the ring Draupnir, from which every ninth night eight new rings appear, and his eight-footed steed [Sleipnir](#). He is accompanied by the wolves Freki and Geri, to whom he gives his food for he himself consumes nothing but wine. *Odin* has only one eye, which blazes like the sun. His other eye he traded for a drink from the Well of Wisdom, and gained immense knowledge. On the day of the final battle, *Odin* will be killed by the wolf Fenrir.

**Grid** (female) - In [Norse mythology](#), *grid* (Old Norse "greed") is female [jötunn](#) who, aware of [Loki's](#) plans to have [Thor](#) killed at the hands of the giant [Geirröd](#), helped *Thor* by supplying him with a number of magical gifts which included , a pair of [iron gloves](#), and a [staff](#) known as Grídarvöl. These items saved *Thor's* life. She is also the mother of the god [vidar](#) by [Odin](#).

**Vidar** (male) - In Norse myth, *Vidar* is the son of [Odin](#) and the giantess *Grid* (Gridr). He is the god of silence and revenge, the second strongest of the gods. At the destruction of the world, *Odin* will be killed by the wolf [Fenrir](#), and *Vidar* will avenge his father by killing the wolf with his bare hands. His hall in [Asgard](#) is Vidi.

**Jord** (female) - In old-Scandinavian mythology, *Jord* is the personification of the primitive, unpopulated, and uncultivated Earth. She is one of the wives of the chief god [Odin](#) and the mother of the god [Thor](#).

**Thor** (male) - *Thor* is the Norse god of thunder. He is a son of [Odin](#) and [Jord](#), and one of the most powerful gods. He is married to [Sif](#), a fertility goddess. His mistress is the giantess *Jamsaxa* ("iron cutlass"), and their sons are [Magni and Modi](#) and his daughter is *Thrud*. *Thor* is helped by Thialfi, his servant and the messenger of the gods.

*Thor* was usually portrayed as a large, powerful man with a red beard and eyes of lightning. Despite his ferocious appearance, he was very popular as the protector of both gods and humans against the

forces of evil. He even surpassed his father *Odin* in popularity because, contrary to *Odin*, he did not require human sacrifices. In his temple at Uppsala he was shown standing with *Odin* at his right side. This temple was replaced by a Christian church in 1080.

The Norse believed that during a thunderstorm, *Thor* rode through the heavens on his chariot pulled by the goats Tanngrisni ("gap-tooth") and Tanngnost ("tooth grinder"). Lightning flashed whenever he threw his hammer Mjollnir. *Thor* wears the belt Megingjard which doubles his already considerable strength. His hall is Bilskirnir, which is located in the region Thrudheim ("place of might"). His greatest enemy is [Jormungand](#), the Midgard Serpent. At the day of [Ragnarok](#), *Thor* will kill this serpent but will die from its poison. His sons will inherit his hammer after his death.

**Sif** (female) - The golden-haired wife of the god [Thor](#). There is not much known about her, except that she could originally have been a fertility goddess. Neither does she appear often in the myths. She is considered to be the mother of Ull.

**Ull** (male) - In old Scandinavian myth, *Ull* ("glory") is the god of justice and dueling, as well as the patron god of agriculture. He excels in archery and in skiing and lives in his hall Ydalir ("yew dales"). He is regarded as the son of [Sif](#) and the stepson of [Thor](#). When the giantess [Skadi](#) divorced [Njord](#) she married *Ull*.

**Járnsaxa** (female) - In [Norse mythology](#), *Járnsaxa* (Old Norse "iron-sax") is a [giantess](#). According to [Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda](#), she was [Thor's](#) lover.

**Magni** (male) - *Magni* was considered the god of might, or strength, and was believed to be the only being in the Norse universe stronger than his father. His worshippers praised great strength and feats thereof. *Magni* was supposedly the only one besides *Thor* able to lift [Mjollnir](#).

**Modi** (male) - *Modi* was the god of battle wrath. His worshippers were the archetypal [berserks](#), some relying on drugs of various kinds to enhance their wrath and stifle fear. It is believed that some of his followers also worshipped [Sif](#) for her skill in battle.

**Thrud** (female) - Daughter of the mighty god [Thor](#). Some of the gods had promised to marry her to the dwarf [Alvis](#), if he would forge weapons for them. *Thor*, however, did not like this arrangement and felt that a dwarf made an inappropriate son-in-law. He therefore devised a test of knowledge to prevent this marriage. *Alvis* had to prove that his great wisdom made up for his small stature. *Thor* prolonged the test until sunrise and *Alvis*, still caught up in the test, was touched by the rays of the sun and was turned to stone.

**Frigg** (female) - As the wife of [Odin](#), *Frigg* is one of the foremost goddesses of Norse mythology. She is the patron of marriage and motherhood, and the goddess of love and fertility. In that aspect she shows many similarities with [Freya](#), of whom she possibly is a different form.

She has a reputation of knowing every person's destiny, but never unveils it. As the mother of [Balder](#), she tried to prevent his death by extracting oaths from every object in nature, but forgot the mistletoe. And by a fig made from mistletoe *Balder* died. Her hall in [Asgard](#) is Fensalir ("water halls"). *Frigg's* messenger is Gna, who rides through the sky on the horse Hofvarpnir. In some myths she was rumoured to have had love affairs with *Odin's* brothers [Ve](#) and [Vili](#).

**Balder** (male) - The god of light, joy, purity, beauty, innocence, and reconciliation. Son of [Odin](#) and [Frigg](#), he was loved by both gods and men and was considered to be the best of the gods. He had a good character, was friendly, wise and eloquent, although he had little power. His wife was *Nanna* daughter of *Nep*, and their son was [Forseti](#), the god of justice. *Balder's* hall was Breidablik ("broad splendor").

Most of the stories about *Balder* concern his death. He had been dreaming about his death, so *Frigg* extracted an oath from every creature, object and force in nature (snakes, metals, diseases, poisons, fire, etc.) that they would never harm *Balder*. All agreed that none of their kind would ever hurt or

assist in hurting *Balder*. Thinking him invincible, the gods enjoyed themselves thereafter by using *Balder* as a target for knife-throwing and archery.

The malicious trickster, *Loki*, was jealous of *Balder*. He changed his appearance and asked *Frigg* if there was absolutely nothing that could harm the god of light. *Frigg*, suspecting nothing, answered that there was just one thing: a small tree in the west that was called mistletoe. She had thought it was too small to ask for an oath. *Loki* immediately left for the west and returned with the mistletoe. He tricked *Balder's* blind twin brother *Hod* into throwing a mistletoe fig (dart) at *Balder*. Not knowing what he did, *Hod* threw the fig, guided by *Loki's* aim. Pierced through the heart, *Balder* fell dead. While the gods were lamenting *Balder's* death, Odin sent his other son *Hermod* to *Hel*, the goddess of death, to plead for *Balder's* return. *Hel* agreed to send *Balder* back to the land of the living on one condition: everything in the world, dead or alive, must weep for him. And everything wept, except for *Loki*, who had disguised himself as the witch *Thokk*. And so *Balder* had to remain in the underworld. The others took the dead god, dressed him in crimson cloth, and placed him on a funeral pyre aboard his ship Ringhorn, which passed for the largest in the world. Beside him they lay the body of his wife *Nanna*, who had died of a broken heart. *Balder's* horse and his treasures were also placed on the ship. The pyre was set on fire and the ship was sent to sea by the giantess Hyrrokin.

*Loki* did not escape punishment for his crime and *Hod* was put to death by *Vali*, son of *Odin* and *Rind*. *Vali* had been born for just that purpose. After the final conflict (*Ragnarok*), when a new world arises from its ashes, both *Balder* and *Hod* will be reborn.

**Nanna** (female) - In *Norse mythology*, *Nanna Nepsdóttir* or simply *Nanna* is a goddess associated with the god *Baldr*. Accounts of *Nanna* vary greatly by source. In the *Prose Edda*, written in the 13th century by *Snorri Sturluson*, *Nanna* is the wife of *Baldr* and the couple produced a son, the god *Forseti*. After *Baldr's* death, *Nanna* dies of grief.

**Brono** (male) - The son of *Balder*, whose name means 'daylight'.

**Forseti** (male) - In *Norse mythology*, *Forseti* is the god of justice. He is the son of the god *Balder* and his mother is *Nanna*. *Forseti* rules in the beautiful palace Glitnir, which serves as a court of justice and where all legal disputes are settled. Glitnir has a roof of silver that is supported by pillars of red gold.

**Hod** (male) – *Hod's* name is thought to mean killer, being somewhat similar to the Old Norse for battle. The blind god of darkness and winter, the son of *Odin* and *Frigg*. When the gods enjoyed themselves by using his brother *Balder* as a target, *Hod* unintentionally killed him by throwing a fig made of mistletoe, the only object that could harm *Balder*. *Hod* was put to death for this deed by *Vali*, *Odin's* youngest son who was born for revenge. However, after the destruction of the cosmos when a new world is built, *Hod* will be reborn.

**Hermod** (male) - The son of *Odin* and *Frigg* and the messenger of the gods. After the death of *Balder*, *Frigg* sought for one brave enough to face *Hel*, the ruler of the underworld and plead for his *Balder's* return. The great hero *Hermod* the Nimble volunteered to make this dangerous journey. He mounted *Odin's* steed *Sleipnir* and traveled to the underworld.

When *Hermod* came upon the gates of Hell, he jumped right over them and entered the great hall of the dead. There he saw *Balder* and he begged *Hel* to release him because *Balder* was loved by all so no-one could miss him. *Hel* was sceptical and agreed to release *Balder* on the condition that everything, dead or alive, should weep for *Balder*. If only one thing should not cry, then she would keep *Balder* in the realm of the dead. *Hermod* returned to the land of the living and told the gods what *Hel's* terms were. But not everyone wept and therefore *Balder* had to remain in the underworld until the end of the world.

*Hermod* carries a magical staff called Gimbantein.



**Bragi** (male) - The god of eloquence and poetry, and the patron of skalds (poets) in Norse mythology. He is regarded as a son of [Odin](#) and [Frigg](#). Runes were carved on his tongue and he inspired poetry in humans by letting them drink from the mead of poetry. *Bragi* is married to [Idun](#), the goddess of eternal youth. Oaths were sworn over the Bragarfull ("Cup of *Bragi*"), and drinks were taken from it in honour of a dead king. Before a king ascended the throne, he drank from such a cup.

**Idun** (female) - The goddess of eternal youth, married to [Bragi](#), the god of poetry. *Idun* is the custodian of the golden apples of youth. When the gods feel old age approaching, they only have to eat of the apples to become young again. As a goddess of fertility, youth and death, it is possible that she was originally one of the [Vanir](#).

*Idun* was once abducted by the storm giant [Thiazi](#) and in this interval the gods began to age rapidly. She was eventually rescued by [Loki](#) who changed her into a nut and brought her back to her hall. The gods were restored to youth soon after.

**Rindr** (female) - *Rindr* (Old Norse) or Rinda (Latin) (sometimes Anglicized Rind) is a female character in Old Norse mythology, alternatively described as a [giantess](#), a goddess or a human princess from the east (somewhere in present-day Russia). She was impregnated by [Odin](#) and gave birth to [Váli](#).

**Vali** (male) - Little is known about *Vali*, except that he is a son of [Odin](#) and his giant mistress *Rindr*. When [Balder](#) was killed unintentionally by his twin brother [Hod](#), *Vali* was born to avenge his death.



## The Vanir Gods

**Farbauti** (male) - In [Norse mythology](#), *Farbauti* ("cruel-striker") was the father of [Loki](#), [Byleist](#) and [Helblindi](#) with his wife [Laufey](#) (also known as [Nal](#)).

**Laufey** (female) - the mother of [Loki](#), [Helblindi](#) and [Byleistr](#). She is otherwise unknown. Her name means "leaf island" and is a [kenning](#) for a tree.

**Byleistr** (male) - ('bee-lightning' sometimes anglicized Byleist) is the brother of [Loki](#) in [Norse Mythology](#). Nothing is known about him, apart from this kinship.

**Helblindi** (male) - In Norse Mythology, *Helblindi* ("Hel-blinder" or "All-blind") is a [jötnn](#), brother of [Loki](#) and [Byleistr](#) and son of [Fárbauti](#) ("cruel-striker") and his wife [Laufey](#). *Helblindi* is also a [kenning](#) used to describe [Odin](#).

**Loki** (male) - *Loki* is one of the major deities in the Norse pantheon. He is a son of the giant *Farbauti* ("cruel striker") and the giantess *Laufey*. He is regarded as one of [Aesir](#), but is on occasion their enemy. He is connected with fire and magic, and can assume many different shapes (horse, falcon, fly). He is crafty and malicious, but is also heroic: in that aspect he can be compared with the trickster from North American myths. The ambivalent god grows progressively more unpleasant, and is directly responsible for the death of [Balder](#), the god of light.

*Loki's* mistress is the giantess [Angrboda](#), and with her he is the father of three monsters. His wife is *Sigyn*, who stayed loyal to him, even when the gods punished him for the death of *Balder*. He was chained to three large boulders; one under his shoulders, one under his loins and one under his knees. A poisonous snake was placed above his head. The dripping venom that lands on him is caught by *Sigyn* in a bowl. But every now and then, when the bowl is filled to the brim, she has to leave him to empty it. Then the poison that falls on *Loki's* face makes him twist in pain, causing earthquakes.

On the day of [Ragnarok](#), *Loki's* chains will break and he will lead the giants into battle against the gods. *Loki* is often called the Sly One, the Trickster, the Shape Changer, and the Sky Traveller.

**Sigyn** (female) - ([Old Norse](#) "victorious girl-friend") is a [goddess](#) and wife of [Loki](#) in [Norse mythology](#). Otherwise not a lot is known about her.

**Angrboda** (female) - A giantess and the mate or mistress of the trickster [Loki](#). *Angrboda* ("herald of sorrow") spawned three monsters: the gigantic wolf [Fenrir](#), the Midgard Serpent [Jormungand](#), and the goddess of death [Hel](#). The gods abducted the children from her hall when they learned just how dangerous they were.

**Fenrir** (unknown) - *Fenrir* (or *Fenris*) is a gigantic and terrible monster in the shape of a wolf. He is the eldest child of [Loki](#) and the giantess [Angrboda](#). The gods learned of a prophecy which stated that the wolf and his family would one day be responsible for the destruction of the world. They caught the wolf and locked him in a cage. Only the god of war, [Tyr](#), dared to feed and take care of the wolf. When he was still a pup they had nothing to fear, but when the gods saw one day how he had grown, they decided to render him harmless. However, none of the gods had enough courage to face the gigantic wolf. Instead, they tried to trick him. They said the wolf was weak and could never break free

when he was chained. *Fenrir* accepted the challenge and let the gods chain him. Unfortunately, he was so immensely strong that he managed to break the strongest fetters as if they were cobwebs. After that, the gods saw only one alternative left: a magic chain. They ordered the dwarves to make something so strong that it could hold the wolf. The result was a soft, thin ribbon: Gleipnir. It was incredibly strong, despite what its size and appearance might suggest. The ribbon was fashioned of six strange elements: the footstep of a cat; the roots of a mountain; a woman's beard; the breath of fishes; the sinews of a bear; and a bird's spittle.

The gods tried to trick the wolf again, only this time *Fenrir* was less eager to show his strength. He saw how thin the chain was, and said that was no pride in breaking such a weak chain. Eventually, though, he agreed, thinking that otherwise his strength and courage would be doubted. Suspecting treachery however, he in turn asked the gods for a token of good will: one of them had to put a hand between his jaws. The gods were not overly eager to do this, knowing what they could expect. Finally, only *Tyr* agreed, and the gods chained the wolf with Gleipnir. No matter how hard *Fenrir* struggled, he could not break free from this thin ribbon. In revenge, he bit off *Tyr's* hand.

Being very pleased with themselves, the gods carried *Fenrir* off and chained him to a rock (called Gioll) a mile down into the earth. They put a sword between his jaws to prevent him from biting. On the day of [Ragnarok](#), *Fenrir* will break his chains and join the giants in their battle against the gods. He will seek out [Odin](#) and devour him. [Vidar](#), Odin's son, will avenge his father by killing the wolf.

*Fenrir* is also the father of at least two other wolves, *Skoll* and [Hati Hróðvitnisson](#). *Skoll* chased the sun and *Hati* chased the moon.

**Jormungand** (unknown) - In Norse mythology, *Jormungand* is one of the three children of the god [Loki](#) and his mistress, the giantess [Angrboda](#). The gods were well aware that this monster was growing fast and that it would one day bring much evil upon gods and men. So [Odin](#) deemed it advisable to render it harmless. He threw the serpent in the ocean that surrounds the earth, but the monster had grown to such an enormous size that it easily spans the entire world, hence the name Midgard Serpent. It lies deep in the ocean where it bites itself in its tail, and all mankind is caught within his coils. At the destruction of the universe, *Jormungand* and [Thor](#) will kill each other.

**Hel** (female) - In Norse mythology, *Hel* is the ruler of [Helheim](#), the realm of the dead. She is the youngest child of the evil god [Loki](#) and the giantess [Angrboda](#). She is usually described as a horrible hag, half alive and half dead, with a gloomy and grim expression. Her face and body are those of a living woman, but her thighs and legs are those of a corpse, mottled and moldering.

The gods had abducted *Hel* and her brothers from *Angrboda's* hall. They cast her in the underworld, into which she distributes those who are sent to her; the wicked and those who died of sickness or old age. Her hall in Helheim is called Eljudnir, home of the dead. Her manservant is Ganglati and her maidservant is Ganglot (which both can be translated as "tardy").

**Aegir** (male) - *Aegir* is the god of the sea in Norse mythology. He was both worshipped and feared by sailors, for they believed that *Aegir* would occasionally appear on the surface to take ships, men and cargo alike, with him to his hall at the bottom of the ocean. Sacrifices were made to appease him, particularly prisoners before setting sail.

His wife is the sea goddess [Ran](#) with whom he has nine daughters (the billow maidens), who wore white robes and veils. His two faithful servants are Eldir and Fimafeng. The latter was killed by the treacherous god [Loki](#) during a banquet the gods held at *Aegir's* undersea hall near the island of Hler (or Hlesey). *Aegir* was known for the lavish entertainment he gave to the other gods.

**Ran** (female) - *Ran* (Old Norse theft, robbery) is the goddess of storms, and the wife of the sea god [Aegir](#). She rules over the realm of the dead which is situated on the bottom of the ocean. She sinks ships and collects drowned sailors in her nets and takes them to her hall where she tenderly ministers them (drowned persons neither go to [Valhalla](#) nor to [Helheim](#)). With *Aegir* she is the mother of nine daughters (the billows), who wore white robes and veils.

The following are the known names of the nine billow maidens:

**Himinglæva** - That through which one can see the heavens (a reference to the transparency of water).

**Dúfa** - The Pitching One.

**Blóðughadda** - Bloody-Hair (a reference to red sea foam).

**Hefring** - Riser.

**Uðr** (or Unn) - Frothing Wave.

**Hrönn** - Welling Wave.

**Bylgja** - Billow.

**Dröfn** - Foam-Fleck (or "Comber" according to Faulkes).

**Kólga** - Cool Wave.

**Heimdall** (male) - *Heimdall* is the god of light, the son of nine mothers (variously given as the daughters of Geirrendour the Giant or of [Aegir](#)). He was born at the end of the world and raised by the force of the earth, seawater and the blood of a boar. Because of his shining, golden teeth he is also called Gullintani ("gold tooth"). His hall is Himinbjorg, The Cliffs of Heaven, and his horse is Gulltop. Heimdall carries the horn [Gjallar](#).

He is the watchman of the gods and guards [Bifrost](#), the only entrance to [Asgard](#), the realm of the gods. It is *Heimdall's* duty to prevent the giants from forcing their way into Asgard. He requires less sleep than a bird and can see a hundred miles around him, by night as well as by day. His hearing is so accurate that no sound escapes him: he can even hear the grass grow or the wool on a sheep's back. At the final conflict of [Ragnarok](#) he will kill his age-old enemy, the evil god [Loki](#), but will die himself from his wounds.

**Njord** (male) - The Norse god of winds, sea and fire. He brings good fortune at sea and in the hunt. He is married to the giantess [Skadi](#). His children are [Freyja](#) and [Freyr](#), whom he fathered on his own sister.

Originally, *Njord* was one of the [Vanir](#) but when they made peace with the [Aesir](#), he and his children were given to them as hostages. The Aesir appointed both *Njord* and *Freyr* as high priests to preside over sacrifices. *Freyja* was consecrated as sacrificial priestess. She taught the Aesir witchcraft, an art that was common knowledge among the Vanir. .

**Skadi** (female) - A giantess, called the 'snow-shoe goddess', and the embodiment of winter. She is the wife of the god [Njord](#). When her father [Thiazi](#) was slain by the gods, *Skadi* wanted to take revenge. The gods thought it wiser to reconcile and offered her a marriage with one of them. She was free to marry any god, but while she made her choice she was only allowed to see the feet of the potential candidates. She noticed a very elegant pair and, convinced that their owner was the fair god [Balder](#), she choose them. Unfortunately for her, those feet belonged to the older god *Njord*.

The marriage between *Njord* and *Skadi* was not a happy one. She wanted to live where her father had lived, in Thrymheim in the mountains, and *Njord* wanted to live in Noatun, his palace by the sea. So they agreed to spend the first nine days in the mountains and the following nine days by the sea. This

arrangement did not work out very well, and they separated. Eventually, *Skadi* left *Njord* for the god [Ull](#).

**Thiazi** (male) - *Thiazi*, was a [giant](#) and the father of [Skadi](#). His most notable misdeed was the kidnapping of the [goddess Idun](#) which is related in both the [Prose Edda](#) and the [skaldic poem Haustlöng](#).

**Freyr** (male) - *Freyr* is the god of sun and rain, and the patron of bountiful harvests. He is both a god of peace and a brave warrior. He is also the ruler of the elves. *Freyr* is the most prominent and most beautiful of the male members of the [Vanir](#), and is called 'God of the World'. After the merging of the [Aesir](#) and the Vanir, *Freyr* was called 'Lord of the Aesir'. *Freyr* was also called upon to grant a fertile marriage.

He is married to the beautiful giantess [Gerd](#), and is the son of [Njord](#). His sister is *Freya*. He rides a chariot pulled by the golden boar Gullinbursti which was made for him by the dwarves Brokk and Eitri. He owns the ship Skidbladnir ("wooden-bladed"), which always sails directly towards its target, and which can become so small that it can fit in *Freyr's* pocket. He also possesses a sword that would by itself emerge from its sheath and spread a field with carnage whenever the owner desired it.

*Freyr's* shield bearer and servant is Skirnir, to whom he gave his sword, which Skirnir demanded as a reward for making *Gerd* his wife. On the day of [Ragnarok](#) he will battle without weapons (for he gave his sword away to Skirnir), and will be the first to be killed by the fire giant [Surt](#). The center of his cult was the city Uppsala in Sweden. In southern Sweden he was called Fricco.

**Gert** (female) - In [Norse mythology](#), *Gert* ([Old Norse](#) "fenced-in") is a [jötunn](#), [goddess](#), and the wife of the god [Freyr](#).

**Freya** (female) - *Freya* is a goddess of love and fertility, and the most beautiful and propitious of the goddesses. She is the patron goddess of crops and birth, the symbol of sensuality and was called upon in matters of love. She loves music, spring and flowers, and is particularly fond of the elves (fairies). *Freya* is one of the foremost goddesses of the [Vanir](#).

She is the daughter of the god [Njord](#), and the sister of [Freyr](#). Later she married the mysterious god *Od* (probably another form of [Odin](#)), who disappeared. When she mourned for her lost husband, her tears changed into gold.

Her attributes are the precious necklace of the Brisings, which she obtained by sleeping with four dwarfs, a cloak (or skin) of bird feathers, which allows its wearer to change into a falcon, and a chariot pulled by two cats. She owns Hildesvini ("battle boar") which is actually her human lover Ottar in disguise. Her chambermaid is Fulla. *Freya* lives in the beautiful palace Folkvang ("field of folk"), a place where love songs are always played, and her hall is Sessrumnir. She divides the slain warriors with *Odin*: one half goes to her palace, while the other half goes to [Valhalla](#). Women also go to her hall.

**Od** (male) - ([Old Norse](#) for "[mad](#), frantic, furious, vehement, eager", as a noun "mind, feeling" and also "song, poetry"). With *freya* they produced two daughters [Gersemi](#) and [Hnoss](#)

**Hnoss & Gersemi** (female) – daughters of *freya* and *od*, both named after beauty.

## Gods which don't appear in either Group

**Alfredull** (female) - *Alfredull* is the sun in Norse mythology. "Glory of elves" is the meaning of the name. Other names were also used. A chariot driven by a girl was thought to be the sun. Two horses pulled the chariot; their names were Arvak and Alsvid. Because she was being perused by the wolf, *Skoll*, she drove very fast. Before the world ends, she will have a daughter. Then *Skoll* will eat her, and her daughter will take her place. The sun does not give off light but gives heat. The horse's mane gave off light.

**Astrild** (female) - In Norse mythology, *Astrild* is the goddess of love.

**Beyla**, Servant of [Freyr](#) (female) - , wife of *Byggvir*. Her name is thought to be related to a word for "cow", and she the protectress of dairy work; the alternate suggestion is that "*Beyla*" is related to "bee", so that *Beyla* and *Byggvir* might be the givers of mead and ale

**Byggvir**, Servant of [Freyr](#) (male) – husband of *beyla*. His name is thought to come from the Old Norse word for corn.

**Borghild** (female) - She is the personification of the evening mist, or perhaps the moon, who kills the light of day. She is the wife of [Sigmund](#). Her myth became part of the dynastic struggles of the Germanic classic, the Volsung Saga.

**Dagur** (male) - In Norse myth, *Dagur* is the personification of the day. He is the son of *Delling*, the personification of twilight, and [Nott](#). The gods gave *Dagur* a chariot and put him in the sky. His chariot is pulled by the horse is Skinfaxi, whose shining mane illuminates the earth and the sky.

**Eir**, attendant of *frigg* (female) - *Eir* ("mercy") is a minor Norse goddess of healing. She knew the secret powers of herbs, with which she could even resurrect the dead. She taught the art of healing only to women, who, in ancient Scandinavia, were the only physicians. She is the patroness of health-care workers, called on against sickness or injury. She is one of the goddesses on the mountain called Lyfia ("to heal through magic"), and gives both physical and psychic means of healing; shamanic healing, especially, falls into her realm.

**Elli** (female) - Personified Norse goddess of old age, who ever overcame the mighty [Thor](#) in a wrestling match.

**Glen** (male) - In Norse mythology, the husband of [Sol](#).

**Glum**, attendant of *frigg* (female) - A minor Norse goddess.

**Holler** (male) - In Norse myth, *Holler* is the god of death and destruction and the one who brings diseases and disasters. He drags people to his dungeon where he tortures them to death.

**Honir** (male) - The long-legged god of the [Aesir](#), known for his indecisiveness. He and the wise god [Mimir](#) were sent by the Aesir to the [Vanir](#) to seal their truce. The Vanir gladly accepted them and made *Honir* one of their leaders. *Honir*, however, was not as smart as the Aesir had claimed and relied heavily on Mimir. He gave noncommittal answers whenever Mimir was not around. *Honir* is one of the gods that will survive [Ragnarok](#). This god is put here because there is no record of his genealogy.

**Laga** (female) - In Norse mythology, *Laga* is the goddess of wells and springs. She is a friend of [Odin](#).

**Lofn** (female) - In Norse myth, *Lofn* is the goddess of forbidden love. She smiles upon illicit unions.

**Mani** (male) - In Norse myth, *Mani* is the personification of the moon, son of [Mundilfari](#) and brother of [Sol](#), the sun. At night he rides a chariot pulled by horses through the sky, and determines its waxing and waning. *Mani* is chased by the wolf Hati ("hate"). Whenever the wolf managed to catch the moon, a lunar eclipse would take place. This caused great consternation, and by making a lot of noise people tried to scare the wolf away.

A man named Vidfinn had two children named Hjúki and Bil. He sent them to the well Byrgir to fetch a cask of water. When Mani saw the two children he took them away with him to the moon. The two children, together with their cask and pole, can be seen on the face of the moon (the moon spots).

**Miming** (male) - *Miming* is a minor Norse forest-god.

**Mundilfari** (male) - In Norse myth, there was once a giant named *Mundilfari* who was married to *Glaur*. Their children were so beautiful that he named his son [Mani](#) (moon) and his daughter [Sol](#) (sun). The gods were angered at such daring. They took both children and placed them in the sky to guide the chariots of the sun and the moon - the celestial bodies created by the gods from the sparks from [Muspell](#).

**Nott** (female) - In Norse myth, *Nott* is the personification of night, and the daughter of *Narvi*. *Nott* was married three times and with each husband she had one child. Her first husband was *Naglfari*, and their son was *Aud*. Her second husband was *Annar*, father of Earth. Her third husband was *Delling*, the personification of twilight, father of [Dagur](#) (Day). She and her son were given horse-drawn chariots by the gods and were placed in the sky to round the world every two half-days. *Notts* chariot is pulled by the horse Hrimfaxi ("frost-maned") which covers the earth with dew early in the morning.

**Saga** (female) – literally named "seeress". In Norse mythology, *Saga* is the goddess of poetry, poetic arts and history.

**Sjöfn** (female) - In Norse myth, *Sjöfn* is the goddess who inspired human passion, she was also a goddess concerned with causing men and women to think of love. It was her duty to stop fights between married couples.

**Snotra** (female) – A wise and gentle goddess. *Guerber* calls her the goddess of virtue and master of all knowledge. She knew the value of self-discipline.

**Sol** (female) - In Norse mythology, *Sol* is the sun goddess, daughter of [Mundilfari](#). She is married to *Glen*. *Sol* rides through the sky in a chariot pulled by the horses Alsvið ("all swift") and Arvak ("early riser"). Below their shoulder-blades the gods inserted iron-cold bellows to keep them cool. She is chased during the daytime by the wolf Skoll who tries to devour her, just like her brother [Mani](#) is chased by the wolf Hati at night. It was believed that during solar eclipses the sun was in danger of being eaten by Skoll. Both wolves are the offspring of the giantess *Hrodvitnir* who lives in the Iron Wood. Eventually, the wolf will catch her. The goddess *Svalin* stands in front of the sun and shields the earth from the full intensity of its heat.

**Syn**, attendant of *frigg* (female) - *Syn* was a Norse goddess invoked by defendants on trial. She was an attendant of [Frigg](#) and guarded the door of her palace.

**Tyr** (male) - The original Germanic god of war and the patron god of justice, the precursor of [Odin](#). At the time of the Vikings, *Tyr* had to make way for *Odin*, who became the god of war himself. *Tyr* was by then regarded as *Odin's* son (or possibly of the giant *Hymir*). He is the boldest of the gods, who inspires courage and heroism in battle. *Tyr* is represented as a man with one hand, because his right

hand was bitten off by the gigantic wolf [Fenrir](#) (in old-Norse, the wrist was called 'wolf-joint'). His attribute is a spear; the symbol of justice, as well as a weapon.

At the day of [Ragnarok](#), *Tyr* will kill the hound [Garm](#), the guardian of the hell, but will die from the wounds inflicted by the animal. In later mythology, "*Tyr*" became to mean "god". He is also known as *Tîwaz*, *Tiw* and *Ziu*.

**Var** (female) - In Norse mythology, *Var* is the goddess of contracts and marriage agreements, one of the principal goddesses. She listens to the vows and compacts made by men and woman with each other (those agreements were called *varar*). She takes vengeance on those who break their vows. She was the goddess of faithfulness between man and woman.



## Supernatural Entities

**Valkyries** (female) - The *Valkyries* ("Choosers of the Slain") are beautiful young women, mounted upon winged horses and armed with helmets and spears. [Odin](#) needs many brave warriors for the oncoming battle of [Ragnarok](#), and the *Valkyries* scout the battlefields to choose the bravest of those who have been slain. They escort these heroes, called the [Einherjar](#) to [Valhalla](#), *Odin's* hall. The *Valkyries* are also *Odin's* messengers and when they ride forth on their errands, their armour causes the strange flickering light that is called "Aurora Borealis" (Northern Lights). Some of the *Valkyries* are Brynhildr, Göll, Göndul, Gudr, Gunn, Herfjoturr, Hildr, Hladgunnr, Hlokk, Hrist, Sigdrifa, Sigrún, and Svafa.

**Garm** (unknown) - The monstrous hound *Garm* guards the entrance to [Helheim](#), the Norse realm of the dead. It has four eyes and a chest drenched with blood, and lives in Gnipa-cave. Anyone who had given bread to the poor could appease him with Hel cake. On the day of [Ragnarok](#), *Garm* will join the giants in their fight against the gods. The god of war [Tyr](#) will kill it in this cataclysmic battle but will die from the wounds inflicted by the hound.

*Garm* is often equated with the wolf [Fenrir](#). It can also be compared with [Cerberus](#), the Greek guardian of the underworld.

**Norns** (female) - In Norse mythology, the *Norns* are the demi-goddesses of destiny. They control the destinies of both gods and men, as well as the unchanging laws of the cosmos. They are represented as three sisters: *Urd* ("fate"), *Verdandi* ("necessity") and *Skuld* ("being"). They live at the base of the World Tree [Yggdrasil](#) in the realm of [Asgard](#).

Nothing lasts forever, and even the mighty Yggdrasil is subject to decay. The *Norns* try to stop this process, or at least slow it down, by pouring mud and water from the Well of Fate over its branches. This magical liquid stops the rotting process for the time being. In other myths, the *Norns* were thought to give assistance at birth, and that each person has his own personal Norn.

**Landvaettir** (unknown) - Norse guardian spirits of a place or country.