

# BEYOND THE GRAVE

**DEATH!** Like Benjamin Franklin said, it's the only sure thing in life — besides taxes. Since the beginning of time, death has been a constant source of fear and confusion for all of humanity, and with fear and confusion comes tradition which attempts to explain it away. Within each culture, religion and belief system is a nearly endless set of rituals and ideas to learn about, so read this page before you meet your eternal doom!

(Pssst... for a puzzle that puts the "fun" in "funeral," see page 10!)

## The Afterlife!

Each religion has its own perspective on what happens after we die. Although there are too many belief systems to list all of them, here are a few major ones:

**CHRISTIANITY:** Believes in eternal life or eternal damnation (Heaven or Hell) where the soul persists after death, as well as an ultimate Judgment Day. Some branches of Christianity also believe in Purgatory — a temporary intermediary purification stage for those who have lived imperfect, but not evil lives.

**ISLAM:** Emphasizes the "Day of Resurrection" in which society is killed before bodily resurrection occurs as everyone is brought before God to be judged if they will go to Heaven or Hell.

**JUDAISM:** Emphasizes afterlife less than some other religions and the thoughts surrounding it are divided. A few ideas include the soul going on a purifying journey, resurrection or a pleasant rest for the soul.

**BUDDHISM:** Believes in rebirth with karma, the balance of someone's good and bad deeds, dictating the fate of reincarnations. To achieve final spiritual awakening, people must improve wisdom, morality, and meditation.

**HINDUISM:** Also believes in reincarnation and karma, but believes the path to liberation includes living virtuously, as well as material and emotional fulfillment.

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# What do you want to happen to your BODY?

**"Freeze it!"**  
Jackson Keane (10)  
Cryonics is the freezing of a corpse in hopes of being resurrected years later. It's regarded as pseudo-scientific, but that hasn't stopped around 300 Americans from spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on it.

**"Buried [in a] Jewish cemetery."**  
Jonny Freedman (10)  
Burial, the preferred fate for about a third of Americans, is getting less and less common over the years, but continues to be a sacred, even mandatory practice in Judaism, Islam and numerous other religions.

**"I [want to] get turned into a diamond."**  
Catie Wu (9)  
Memorial diamonds, which are made from a person's ashes, have been sold since the 2000s. Memorial diamonds are a unique and growing phenomenon.

**"Scatter my ashes at the beach."**  
Madie van Lingen (10)  
Of those who get cremated, around a third scatter their ashes. A practice dating back to ancient history, people often choose to scatter their ashes in a place of significance to them or their religion.

**"I want to be planted and have a tree grow on me."**  
Jonathan Wong (12)  
In a tree pod burial, a body is put into a pod under a tree in order to nourish and metaphorically become one with it.

In Madagascar, the Malagasy people practice a ritual called "Famadihana" where bodies are dug up every few years and wrapped in new cloth. The name of the deceased is written on this cloth to ensure they will be remembered. After the body's been wrapped in cloth, it is carried and danced with as people celebrate its past life.

In the Russian Orthodox Church, at the end of the funeral, handkerchiefs are thrown away to encourage mourners to go on with their lives. After death, bereaved families put out bread and vodka nightly for the dead. Of course, this offering goes untouched, serving as a reminder that the deceased has moved on to the afterlife.

Tibetan Buddhists practice sky burials, which are when a dead body is put outside and left for animals to eat. The ritual symbolizes the circle of life, feeding animals while letting the soul of the body depart. Sky burials are seen as an act of generosity since they serve to sustain the lives of animals, which is a very important virtue in the Buddhist religion.

In China, sheets of paper meant to symbolize money called joss money or jin zhi are burnt as an offering to the dead. Joss money is burnt to ensure that the deceased is rich and well-provided for in the afterlife. Women in the family wear colored flowers or hairpins while men wear black armbands as an indicator of their relation to the dead.

In the Philippines, the Tinguian people will dress the corpse up, sit it in a chair, and put a lit cigarette in its lips for weeks on end. Similarly, the native people of Benguet blindfold and tie corpses to chairs for nine days. On the eve of a Benguet funeral, elders chant a biography of the deceased. During burial, mourners hit bamboo together to send the deceased to heaven.

**"Cremation because that's what [my] religion [does]"**  
Imme Thanaphothipong (12)  
Cremation, the preference of 60% of Americans is important in many religions, like Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and many more.

**Dia de los Muertos** is a popular holiday in Mexico with many traditions. People build ofrendas, or home altars, leave offerings at graves and attend parades in costumes and skull make-up. Unlike many events around death, Dia de los Muertos is a time of joy as families remember and celebrate the lives of the departed.

In New Orleans, Louisiana, "jazz funerals" are funeral processions accompanied by a brass band. At first, the band plays heavy, somber music but gradually becomes more upbeat as mourners and passersby dance. Livelier than any conventional funeral, jazz funerals are a way for mourners to celebrate life and death with New Orleans' signature charm.

In Uruguay, bodies are often preserved above ground in mausoleums (buildings containing a tomb) or columbariums (buildings in which urns are stored) rather than being buried underground. After a period of three to five years, coffins are often exhumed and the remaining bones are placed in an urn and returned to the tomb.

In Greenland, the glacial climate has led to special burial tradition. In some particularly cold towns, the ground is too icy and hard to dig through. Because of this, instead of digging graves, bodies are simply put in coffins above ground. Often, these coffins are placed facing the water so that the departed can be look over the ocean for all of eternity.

In the Ivory Coast, the Senufo people bury deceased elders underneath the floors of their homes. In the Senufo people's culture, ancestors are believed to look over and protect their living descendants, so elders are buried under their homes to ensure that they are close by their families and can continue to guide them in the afterlife.



# DEATH around the WORLD

## DEATH ROW MEALS!

Being on death row leaves you without much free will. However, one sacred choice is given to these inmates — their last meal. Over the years, last meals have ranged from elaborate (like John Wayne Gacy's feast of a dozen deep-fried shrimp, a bucket of original recipe Kentucky Fried Chicken, french fries, a pound of strawberries and a bottle of Diet Coke) to modest (like German murderer, Karl Ludwig Sand, who simply requested "gruel") to straight-up bizarre (like one James Edward Smith, who asked for a lump of dirt). We asked students about their ideal last meals. Here's what they said!

**Ruhi Mudoi (12)**  
– Chipotle's white rice  
– Jerk Chicken  
– Sour Patch Kids

**Laya Saikumar (9)**  
– Dosa  
– Peanut Chutney  
– Garlic Naan  
– Paneer Tikka

**Chloe Yu (9)**  
– In-N-Out  
– Pumpkin Spice Frappuccino  
– Bubble Tea

**Sophia Goodwin (12)**  
– 6 pc. KFC tub  
– Mashed potatoes  
– Ice cream

**Joseph Addiego (12)**  
– Shirley Temple  
– Garden Salad  
– New York Style Cheesecake  
– Prime rib

## What's on your bucket list?

- Win a Nobel prize
- Ethan Chang (10)
- Get to smell Rihanna
- Azul Tepeu Illescas (10)
- Go to every continent
- Ananya Bhavanishankar (11)
- Overcome my fear of heights
- Gabriella Sablo (9)
- Go to a Taylor Swift concert
- Charlie Liu (9)
- Hike the Alps
- Marcus Finke (12)
- Become a cheerleader for a major sport team
- Cali McFadden (9)
- Skydiving, bungee jumping and shark cage
- Lia Alves (10)
- Make starting lineup on the tennis team
- Anjali Kalyanakrishnan (10)
- Visit all 50 states
- Catherine Tsao (10)
- Experience the drop of another Frank Ocean album
- Erin Finn (11)
- Ride a hot air balloon
- Keira McLintock (12)
- See all seven wonders of the world
- Zoeya Rahman (9)

