



## **5 Starter Facts About Santería**

1. Santería (Way of Saints), also known as *La Regla Lucumi* or *the Rule of Osha*, is an Afro-Caribbean religion from Yoruba traditions mixed with Roman Catholicism. It started in Cuba as a result of Spanish missions trying to force conversion of the enslaved Africans, who instead combined rituals and practices of both. Today, variations in practice depend on national origin.
2. Santería focuses on building relationships between humans and powerful spirits, called Orishas. An Orisha is a manifestation of Olodumare, their supreme deity. The Roman Catholic influence is most poignant in the association of Orishas with Catholic Saints. Catholic symbols are also sometimes used in Santería rituals.
3. Santería has no scriptures and is passed through oral tradition. There are few buildings devoted to worship. Rituals often happen in rented halls or private homes. During ritual, the Orishas meet believers at these sacred spaces.
4. One major ritual is *bembé*. The Orisha join the community in drumming, singing, and dancing. The Orisha may possess believers, causing them to perform dances and pass on messages from the Orisha to the community.
5. Animal sacrifice is essential to Santería practice. The meat is consumed, as though sharing a meal with the Orisha. In 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously upheld the right of adherents to practice animal sacrifice in *Church of the Lukumi Babalu Aye v. Hialeah*.

Learn more at:

<http://www.aboutsanteria.com/>

*These five points are not meant to be comprehensive or authoritative. We hope they encourage you to explore this spirituality more deeply and seek out members of this community to learn about their beliefs in action. In understanding our differences we will better understand our common humanity.*

June 2018