

1. **Ifá** or **Fá** is a [geomantic](#) system originating from [Yorubaland](#) in [West Africa](#). It originates within the [traditional religion](#) of the [Yoruba people](#). It is also practiced by followers of [West African Vodun](#) and certain African diasporic religions such as Cuban [Santería](#).

According to Ifá teaching, the divinatory system is overseen by an [orisha](#) spirit, [Orunmila](#), who is believed to have given it to humanity. Traditionally, these are all-male, although women have been initiated in Cuba and Mexico. Its oracular literary body is made up of 256 volumes (signs) that are divided into two categories, the first called Ojú Odù or main Odù that consists of 16 chapters. The second category is composed of 240 chapters called Amúlù Odù (omoluos), these are composed through the combination of the main Odù. They use either the divining chain known as [Ọ̀pẹ̀lẹ̀](#), or the sacred palm ([Elaeis guineensis](#)) or [kola nuts](#) called *Ikin*, on the wooden divination tray called [Ọ̀pọ̀n Ifá](#) to mathematically calculate which Odu to use for what problem.

Ifá is first recorded among the Yoruba people of West Africa. The expansion of Yoruba influence over neighbouring peoples resulted in the spread of Ifá, for instance to [Fon people](#) practising [West African Vodun](#). As a result of the [Atlantic slave trade](#), enslaved initiates of Ifá were transported to the Americas. There, Ifá survived in Cuba, where it developed an overlap with Afro-Cuban religious traditions such as Santería and [Abakuá](#). Growing transnational links between Africa and the Americas during the 1970s also saw attempts by West African *babalawos* to train and initiate people in countries like Brazil and the United States.