

India

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India

India is one country many people long to see, and having seen it once, wish to return again and again. It is impossible not to be astonished by India. Nowhere on Earth does humanity present itself in such creative bursts of cultures, religions, races and tongues. Every aspect of the country presents itself in a massive, exaggerated scale, worthy in comparison to the superlative mountains that overshadow it

The conventional name for India is the Republic of India. The name India is derived from the River Indus, the valleys around which were the home of the early settlers. It is bounded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the southwest and the Bay of Bengal on the southeast. India shares land borders with Pakistan to the west, Bhutan, the People's Republic of China and Nepal to the northeast and Bangladesh and Burma to the east. India is the second most populous country with over 1.2 billion people.

History Of India:

The people of India have had a continuous civilization since 2500 B.C., when the inhabitants of the Indus River valley developed an urban culture based on commerce and sustained by agriculture trade. The civilization declined around 1500 B.C., probably due to ecological changes.

The first British outpost in South Asia was established in 1619 at Surat on the northwestern coast. Later in the century, the East India Company opened permanent trading stations at Mardra (now known as Chennai), Bombay, and Calcutta, each under the protection of native rulers. The British expanded their influence from these footholes and by the 1850's they controlled most of present-day India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

In the later 1800's, the first steps were taken toward self-government in British India with the appointment of Indian councilors to advise the British viceroy and the establishment of provincial councils with Indian members. Beginning in 1920, Indian leader Mohandas K. Gandhi transformed the Indian national Congress political party into a mass movement to campaign against British colonial rule. The party used both parliamentary and nonviolent resistance and non-cooperation to achieve independence.

On August 15th, 1947, India became a dominion within the Commonwealth. Enmity between Hindus and Muslims led the British to partition British India, creating East and West Pakistan, where the Muslim majorities. India became a republic within the Commonwealth after declaring its constitution on January 26th, 1950.

Geography and Climate:

India consists of 26 states and holds virtually every kind of landscape imaginable. The total land area in India is 2.9 million square kilometers. The total area including territorial seas claimed is 3.2 million square kilometers. An abundance of mountain ranges and national parks provide ample opportunity for eco-tourism and trekking, and it's sheer size

promises something for everyone.

Climate varies significantly from Himalayas in north to tropical south. The four seasons consist of relatively dry, cool winter December to February. Dry hot summer March to May. Southwest monsoon June to September when predominating southwest maritime winds bring rains to most of the country and retreating monsoon during October and November

Population and Culture:

India with its 1.2 billion people has over 15% of the world's population living in only 2 % of the world's space. This makes India a very densely populated country. Although India has many large cities, less than 30% of the population live in cities.

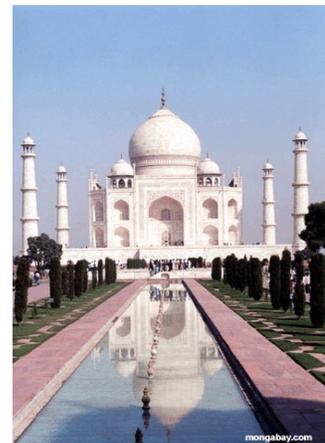
The caste system still controls India's society. A person's social level is determined by birth, such as rulers, merchants, artisans and servants. There are also many people who fall outside the caste system. These outcasts have no social or economic role. Despite India's growing economy, its large population keeps most people below poverty levels.

Over 80% of the Indian population are Hindu. Muslims represent about 10%, with the other religions such as Buddhism and Christianity making up the rest.

Sights to See:

Taj Mahal - Agra, India

The Taj Mahal is regarded as one of the eight wonders of the world. It is widely considered as one of the most beautiful building in the world. The Taj Mahal was built by the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, in memorial of his third wife who died as a result of giving birth to their 14th child. The construction began in 1632 and was completed in 1653. It is built entirely of white marble.



Khajuraho Temples - Madhya Pradesh

India's unique gift of love to the world in the state of Madhya Pradesh, were built between 950 and 1050 AD. Khajuraho Temples are famous for their candid eroticism and delicate sensuality. The architectural work is based on a theme (women) unlike other temples. The intricacy achieved in ornament, hairstyles, clothes reiterate the incredible skill of the artisans. There are three groups of temples at Khajuraho - Western, Eastern and Southern.



Red Fort - Delhi

The Red Fort is the principle landmark of Delhi. It was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan between 1638 and 1648. A red sand stone monument, Red Fort extends over an area of about 2km and surrounded by a massive wall varying in height from 18 millitones to 33 millitones. Sound and light show is a modern attraction of Red Fort that is organized in the evening and recreates the history of India.



Indian Cuisine:

Indian cuisine is characterized by the extensive use of various spices, herbs and other vegetables and sometimes fruits grown in India. Indian cuisine is as diverse as the Indian people and it has a large (and extremely rich) selection of appetizers, hors d'oeuvres and snacks. The majority of Indian appetizers and snacks are based on potatoes, combined with different spices.

Popular Indian Dishes

~Butter Chicken ~Tandoori Chicken ~Chicken Tikka Masala
~Chloe (Chickpea curry) ~Kaali Daal (black lentils)

Indians do not use cutlery for eating most foods. Traditional Indian cutlery does not recognize the use of forks and knives while eating. Spoons may be used for soupy foods such as daals.

Cardinal rule of dining is to always use the right hand when eating or receiving food. The left hand is not used for eating so that it can be used for serving food from the serving dish onto your plate using serving spoons. However if you are left handed it is vice-versa.

Indian Clothing:

Indian clothing is very colorful. Each state has its own special costumes, but there are several styles common throughout the country. Women traditionally wear saris, ghaghra cholis or salwar khameez. But women today, especially in cities, may also wear western styles such as skirts or dresses, blouses, and pants. Men have their traditional costumes as well, but most now wear a light shirt and pants just as in western countries.

The *sari* is one of the most common and oldest forms of dress for women in India. Many regional costumes are variations of this basic style. The fabric is either silk or cotton. Saris can be solid color or patterned; some are embroidered or hand dyed. Others are converted in tiny mirrors or metallic decoration.

The *ghaghra cholis* are another type of dress for women. A long pleated skirt (the ghaghra) is worn with a long or short stitched and fitted blouse (the choli). They are most often worn in western states, but can be seen all over the country. Both the ghaghra and the choli are beaded or covered with tiny mirrors. Sometimes they are dyed in detailed patterns.

The *salwar khameez* is an outfit made of a long tunic called a khameez and loose pants called salwar. Salwar khameez originated in northern India, but soon spread across the country. Like other forms of clothing in India, the salwar khameez can be richly decorated or simple for everyday use. They are made of silk or cotton, and usually worn with a scarf called an odhni.

Sari



Ghaghra Choli



Salwar Khameez



India Fast Facts:

- Capital of India is New Delhi.
- Largest cities are Mumbai (formerly Bombay), Delhi, and Kolkata (formerly Calcutta).
- India is the seventh largest country in the world.
- Mainly an agriculture country, though it also has a large iron and steel industry and produces every type of manufactured goods.
- 17 major languages and 844 dialects.
- India's flag was adopted on July 22, 1947 after India became independent from Great Britain. Saffron (orange) stands for courage and sacrifice. White represents peace, unity and truth and green stands for faith and fertility. The blue symbolizes the sky and the ocean. Dharma Chakra - in the center of the white band is a blue circle with 24 spokes. This is the Dharma Chakra (or Wheel of Law). The Chakra represents the continuing progress of the nation and the importance of justice in life. The center symbol or the Chakra is a Buddhist symbol dating back to 200th century BC.
- National emblem is a replica of the Sarnath Lion. It depicts four lions standing back to back. The emblem symbolizes power, courage and confidence.
- National animal is the tiger. The tiger is respected for its strength and grace as well as its power.
- National bird is the peacock. Peacocks symbolize grace, pride and beauty.
- National flower is the lotus. The lotus represents long life, honour and good fortune.
- National tree is the Banyan tree (the Fig tree)
- National fruit is the mango.



Information gathered from: <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/india/general.htm>,
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/India>,
<http://voyagetoindia.blogspot.com/2008/01/top-10-attractions-of-india.html>,
<http://www.kidport.com/reflib/worldgeography/india/india.htm>,
http://indianfood.about.com/od/thebasics/tp/popular_dishes.htm,
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etiquette_of_Indian_dining.

India Quiz

1) India consists of 23 states?

True or False

2) India is the second most populous country with over 1.2 billion people?

True or False

3) Beginning in 1920 Indian leader Mohands K Ghandi transformed the political party into a mass movement to campaign against British rule?

True or False

4)Khajurah Temples are considered one of the eight wonders of the world?

True or False

5) Over 80% of the Indian population are Hindu?

True or False

6) The majority of Indian appetizers and snacks are based on potatoes combined with different spices?

True or False

7) India is the ninth largest country in the world?

True or False

8) The capital of India is Mumbai?

True or False

9) Each state has their own special costumes to be worn?

True or False

10) India has four different seasons?

True or False

Answers to Quiz

1) False - there are 26 states

2) True

3) True

4) False - Taj Mahal is considered one of the eight wonders of the world.

5) True

6) True

7) False - it is the 7th largest country

8) False - New Delhi is the capital

9) True

10) True