

Exploring India ...

Information and Guide to Cultural Artifacts



South Asia Institute

**The University of Texas at
Austin**

Quick Facts about India

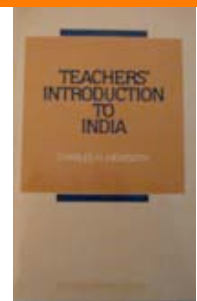
Official Name:	Republic of India
Capital City:	New Delhi
Population:	1,147,995,898 (July 2008 est.)
Geographic Size:	3,287,590 sq km
Official Language:	Hindi
Religions:	Hindu 80.5%, Muslim 13.4%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.9%, other 1.8%, unspecified 0.1% (2001 census)
Main Crops:	rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, potatoes
Money:	Indian rupee

CIA: The World Factbook. "India." Updated: 10 June 2008. 16 June 2008.

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html>

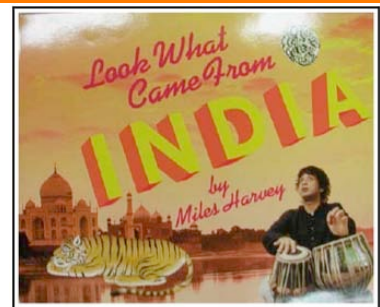
Teacher's Introduction to India

Professor Charles Heismath, Director of the Educational Resources Center wrote this book from 1971-1973. The Center for which he was director during this time was established with a mission to strengthen the study and teaching about India in American schools and colleges.



Look What Came From India

This short, thirty-one page book designed for ages 4-8, describes many familiar things that originally came from India. Such things include: inventions, food, religions, animals, musical instruments, medicine, games, words and fashion. This picture book is a great resource to capture the students' attention.





“Festive India: A Celebration for Every Season” Video Cassette

From the great cities to the remote villages in India, the sequence of festivals almost fills the year and brings people together in creative fervor and joyful abandon. For all Indians the festival is a time when the traditions and ageless customs of their civilizations are brought to life. Video produced by the India Tourist Office.

Geography

India dominates the South Asian subcontinent. The size of her geographic area is slightly more than one third the size of the US. India borders the countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Nepal, and Pakistan. The climate in India varies from tropical monsoon in the south to a more temperate climate in the north. India is home to Kanchenjunga, the third tallest mountain in the world, which lies on the border with Nepal.

CIA: The World Factbook. “India.” Updated: 10 June 2008. 16 June 2008.

<<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html>>

Relief Maps of India

These full-color relief maps are ideal for teaching younger students about the geography of the Asian subcontinent.



Language

Hindi, the national language of India, is in the Indo-European language family. An estimated 487 million people speak Hindi. Hindi is used as the language of administration, education, media, and literature throughout North India. In other regions of India, Hindi is often spoken as a second language.

Hindi is also spoken in many places outside of India. Some of these places include: Bangladesh, Belize, Botswana, Canada, Germany, Guyana, Kenya, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad, Uganda, UAE, UK, USA, Yemen, and Zambia.

Hindi is written in the style of a phonetic alphabet called Devanagari.



Hindi Alphabet Chart

This is an example of a Hindi chart used to teach young students how to read Devanagari. The pictures correspond with Hindi words that begin with the characters depicted there.

Hindi Alphabet

अ आ इ ई उ ऊ ए ऐ ओ औ अं अः अँ ऋ
a ā i ī u ū e ai o au aṅ aḥ āṁ ṛ
[ʌ] [a] [i] [i:] [u] [u:] [e] [æ:] [o] [o:] [aŋ] [aḥ] [ā:] [r]

प पा पि पी पु पू पे पै पो पौ पं पः पाँ पृ
pa pā pi pī pu pū pe pai po pau paṅ paḥ pām pr

क ka [kə] ख kha [kʰə] ग ga [gə] घ gha [gʰə] ङ ṅa [ŋə]
च ca [tʃə] छ cha [tʃʰə] ज ja [dʒə] झ jha [dʒʰə] ञ ṅa [ɲə]
ट ṭa [tʰə] ठ ṭha [tʰʰə] ड ḍa [dʰə] ढ ḍha [dʰʰə] ण ṇa [ɳə]
त ta [tə] थ tha [tʰə] द da [də] ध dha [dʰə] न na [nə]
प pa [pə] फ pha [pʰə] ब ba [bə] भ bha [bʰə] म ma [mə]
य ya [jə] र ra [rə] ल la [lə] व va [və]
श śa [ʃə] ष ṣa [ʃʰə] स sa [sə]
ह ha [ɦə]

Additional consonants (only used in loanwords)

क् qa ख kha ग ga ज za ङ ra ढ rha फ fa

Common conjunct consonants

क्ष kṣa ज्ञ jña त्क tka त्र tra द्व dva श्र śra द्य dya
द् dda त्त tta ढ् ḍḍha द्भ dbha द्म dma ह् hma ह्य hya

Special ra forms

रु ru रू rū र्प rpa प्र pra ट्र tra

Ager, Simon. "Urdu." Omniglot: Writing Systems and Languages of the World. Copyright 1998-2008. 16 June 2008. <<http://www.omniglot.com/writing/urdu.htm>>

Religion

“India” from –

"India." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2008. *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. 19 June 2008
<<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-46403>>.

Because religion forms a crucial aspect of identity for most Indians, much of India's history can be understood through the interplay among its diverse religious groups. One of the many religions born in India is Hinduism, a collection of diverse doctrines, sects, and ways of life followed by the great majority of the population.

In 1947, with the partition of the subcontinent and loss of Pakistan's largely Muslim population, India became even more predominantly Hindu. The concomitant emigration of perhaps 10 million Muslims to Pakistan and the immigration of nearly as many Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan further emphasized this change. Hindus now make up about three-fourths of India's population. Muslims, however, are still the largest single minority faith (more than one-ninth of the total population), with large concentrations in many areas of the country, including Jammu and Kashmir, western Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, and many cities. India's Muslim population is greater than that found in any country of the Middle East and is only exceeded by that of Indonesia and, slightly, by that of Pakistan or Bangladesh.

Other important religious minorities in India include Christians, most heavily concentrated in the northeast, Mumbai (Bombay), and the far south; Sikhs, mostly in Punjab and some adjacent areas; Buddhists, especially in Maharashtra, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir; and Jains, most prominent in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Rajasthan. Those practicing the Baha'i faith, formerly too few to be treated by the census, have dramatically increased in number as a result of active proselytization. Zoroastrians (the Parsis), largely concentrated in Mumbai and in coastal Gujarat, wield influence out of all proportion to their small numbers because of their prominence during the colonial period. Several tiny but sociologically interesting communities of Jews are located along the western coast. India's tribal peoples live mostly in the northeast; they practice various forms of animism, which is perhaps the country's oldest religious tradition.

Hindus are in the majority in every Indian state except Jammu and Kashmir (where Muslims form roughly two-thirds of the population); Punjab (roughly three-fifths Sikh); Meghalaya, Mizoram, and Nagaland (mainly Christian); and Arunachal Pradesh (predominantly animist). Hindus also form the majority in every union territory except Lakshadweep (more than nine-tenths Muslim). Almost everywhere, however, significant local minorities are present. Only in the states of Orissa and Himachal Pradesh do Hindus constitute virtually the entire population.

Reliable statistics on the sectarian affiliations among India's leading faiths are not available. Within Hinduism, such affiliations tend to be rather loose, nonexclusive, and nebulous. Vaishnavas, who worship in temples dedicated to the god Vishnu or one of his avatars (e.g., Rama and Krishna) or who follow one of the many associated cults, tend to be more concentrated in northern and central India, while Shaivas, or devotees of Shiva, are concentrated in Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, western Maharashtra, and much of the Himalayan region. Cults associated with Shaktism, the worship of various forms of Shakti (the mother goddess, consort of

Shiva), are particularly widespread in West Bengal (along with Vaishnavism), Assam, and Himalayan Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. Hinduism also encompasses scores of smaller sects advocating religious revival and reform, promoting the uplift of disadvantaged groups, or focusing on the teachings of charismatic religious leaders. Some of the latter have attracted an international following.

In Islam, Sunni Muslims are the majority sect almost everywhere. There are, however, influential Shi'ite minorities in Gujarat, especially among such Muslim trading communities as the Khojas and Bohras, and in large cities, such as Lucknow and Hyderabad, that were former capitals of pre-independence Muslim states in which much of the gentry was of Persian origin.

Roman Catholics form the largest single Christian group, especially on the western coast and in southern India. The many divisions among Protestants have been substantially reduced since independence as a result of mergers creating the Church of North India and the Church of South India. Many small fundamentalist sects, however, have maintained their independence. Converts to Christianity, especially since the mid-19th century, have come largely from the lower castes and tribal groups.

Buddhists living near the Chinese (Tibetan) border generally follow Tibetan Buddhism, sometimes designated as Vajrayana (Sanskrit: "Vehicle of the Thunderbolt"), while those living near the border with Myanmar adhere to the Theravada (Pali: "Way of the Elders"). Neo-Buddhists in Maharashtra do not have a clear sectarian affiliation.

Hinduism

"Hinduism" from:

"Hinduism." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2008. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 19 June 2008
<<http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-261628>>.

Practical Hinduism is both a quest to achieve well-being and a set of strategies for locating sources of affliction and removing or appeasing them. Characterized in this way, it has much in common with the popular beliefs and practices of many other religions. For example, Roman Catholicism as practiced in many parts of Europe or Mahayana Buddhism in Korea and Taiwan involve, as does Hinduism, petitions and offerings to enshrined divine powers in order to engage their help with all manner of problems and desires. Thus, religions which could hardly differ more vastly in their understanding of the nature of divinity, reality, and causality may nonetheless converge at the level of popular piety.

The presumption that assigns "practical" Hinduism to peasants, labourers, or tribal peoples—while assuming that the high-born, wealthy, and educated would be concerned with spiritual enlightenment and Hinduism's ultimate aim of liberation (*moksha*)—is false. Hindu farmers care about their souls at least as much as do Hindu business or professional men and women (if less single-mindedly than world renouncers, who come from all ranks of life). Farmers' uncertain livelihoods, however, may influence them to dedicate more time and energy to rituals designed to obtain prosperity or to remove troubles, to bring rain to parched fields or to prevent damaging hail, to advance their children's education and careers, or to protect their families from ill health.

Although rural Hindus may have little time for meditative practices, they are fully aware of ultimate truths transcending the everyday. By the same token, the pious urban elite, if more likely to pursue spiritual disciplines, frequently sponsor worship in temples or homes to ensure worldly success. At all levels of the social hierarchy, Hinduism lives through artistic performances: dance and dance-drama, representational arts, poetry, music, and song serve not only to please deities but to transmit the religion's meaningful narratives and vital truths.

Both adherents of the faith and those who study it describe Hinduism as a way of life. Thus, they implicitly contrast Hinduism to religions that appear to be primarily located in spaces and times set apart from the everyday—such as “church on Sunday.” Although Hindus have magnificent sacred architecture and a vital tradition of calendrical festivals, the “way of life” description means that religious attitudes and acts permeate ordinary places, times, and activities. For example, bathing, dressing, cooking, eating, disposing of leftovers, and washing the dishes may all be subject to ritual prescriptions in Hindu households. Motivations for such ritualized actions are ascribed to considerations of purity—an interest that is often linked to maintaining status in a hierarchical social system.

When Hindus interact with deities, considerations of purity may or may not be important. In some Vaishnava traditions, for example, one must remain in a relatively pure state in order to be fit to worship. A Brahman priest of a Krishna temple in the Vallabha sect might refuse food and water from the hands of non-Brahmans, not to show he is better than they are but because his work in the temple demands that he maintain such boundaries. Should he inadvertently lower his own ritual purity, he might displease or offend the deity with whom he is in regular contact, which could threaten human well-being in general.

Vaishnava traditions, however, include an alternative perspective that is conveyed in a well-known tale about Rama. This tale, frequently portrayed in poetry and art, tells of an outcaste tribal woman named Shabari who meets Rama in the forest. Her simple-hearted love for him is so great that she offers him wild berries, which are all she has. She bites each one first to test its sweetness before giving it to her lord, and in so doing she contaminates the berries with saliva, a major source of pollution. Although the berries are highly unacceptable according to the standards of ritual purity, Rama accepts them and eats them blissfully. The message is that the polluted offerings of a lowborn person given to God with a heart full of love are far more pleasing than any ritually pure gift from a less-devout being. Purity of heart, therefore, is more important than bodily purity.

The capacity to see both sides of most matters—cognitive flexibility rather than dogmatic fixity—is one of the most important characteristics of practical Hinduism, which lacks dogma altogether. In this regard, persistent continuities with Hinduism's ancient roots in Vedic traditions can be discerned. The elaborate sacrificial rituals of Vedic religion have often been described as being focused on obtaining the goods of life—neatly summarized as prosperity, health, and progeny—from divine powers through exacting ritual behaviours. However, in the Upanishads, the last of the Vedic texts, voices emerge that care for neither the rituals nor their promised fruits but are concerned above all with learning the nature of ultimate reality and how the human soul may recognize that indescribable essence in itself. One quest never supplants the other. In Hinduism today there remains a vital creative tension between, on the one hand, faith in the efficacy of ritual and desire for its worldly fruits and, on the other, disregard for all external

practices and material results. Farmers consistently deride the notion that sins are washed away in the waters of sacred rivers, yet they spend small fortunes to travel to and bathe in them.

Devotion (bhakti) effectively spans and reconciles the seemingly disparate aims of obtaining aid in solving worldly problems and locating one's soul in relation to divinity. It is the prime religious attitude in much of Hindu life. The term bhakti is derived from a root that literally means “having a share”; devotion unites without totally merging the identities of worshipers and deities. While some traditions of bhakti radically speak out against ritual, devotion in ordinary life is usually embedded in worship, vows, and pilgrimages—three major elements within practical Hinduism.

Theistic devotion presents itself as an easy path, obliterating the need for expensive sacrificial rituals, difficult ascetic practices, and scriptural knowledge. All of these are understood as restricted to high-caste males, and in practice specifically to the rich, the spiritually gifted, or the learned. But bhakti is for all human beings, regardless of their rank, gender, or talent. Any person's chosen deity may help him obtain life's rewards or avoid its disasters. At the same time, such a chosen deity may be the subject of pure, unmotivated devotional love, recollected in a few moments of morning meditation, in prayers uttered before a shrine, or in the lighting of incense.

As one Hindu author Sitansu Chakravarti helpfully explains in *Hinduism: A Way of Life* (1991), Hinduism is a monotheistic religion which believes that God manifests Himself or Herself in several forms. One is supposed to worship the form that is most appealing to the individual without being disrespectful to other forms of worship.

Although the specific details of ritual action and the names and appearances of deities vary vastly across the subcontinent, commonalities in ritual structure and attitude override the great diversity of ritual practices and associated mythic tales. Whether offering soaked raw chickpeas to Shiva's agent Bhairuji in Rajasthan or a buffalo to Draupadi in Tamil Nadu or water to Krishna's devoted basil plant in Bengal, Hindus approach deities through similarly structured actions. These are just as pan-Hindu as the eternal Vedas or the three important deities—Shiva, Vishnu, and the Devi, whose forms and names vary widely but are nonetheless recognizable to Hindus throughout the world.

Ethnographies of rural Hindu practices reveal a wide variety of human relationships with multiple divine beings. These relationships are based not only on family and community affiliations but also on individual life experiences, so that individuals and families often develop idiosyncratic religiosities while remaining well within the range of normative patterns. A household of Gujars (a community associated with herding, dairy production, and agriculture) in a Rajasthani village presents one representative example. This family is particularly devoted to two deities from whom they believe they have received special blessings: Dev Narayan, a regional hero considered to be an avatar or incarnation of Vishnu, and Sundar Mata (“Beautiful Mother”), a local goddess, or village mother.

Dev Narayan is worshipped at multiple sites throughout Rajasthan. However, each of his shrines—in Puvali, in Banjari, and so forth—has its own identity. This particular family lives a short walk from Puvali's Dev Narayan, but they believe that the more remote Banjari's Dev

Narayan—located near their ancestral home—has blessed two generations with long-awaited sons. They go weekly for darshan (divine vision of a deity's image) to Puvali's Dev Narayan, as it is convenient. But when the time comes to hold a major feast of thanksgiving to the deity who granted their prayers, they go to a great deal of extra trouble and added expense to hold this feast at the more remote place of Banjari. If questioned, the adults in this family would state conclusively that there is no difference between the two places and moreover that God is ultimately singular and to be found nowhere on the face of the earth but rather in one's own body and heart. An everyday Hinduism embedded in materiality motivates the distinction between Banjari and Puvali, while a Hinduism that dissolves differences and seeks transcendent unity denies it. Most persons live their lives holding and moving between both these orientations. Sundar Mata has only one place, on the edge of the Gujar family's home village. She has helped them with various problems over the years. In times of trouble, devotees sometimes make inner vows to Sundar Mata (or any deity), no matter where they are. But to fulfill that vow, thankful persons must present themselves and their offerings in her particular place. Sundar Mata's shrine, like most Hindu places of worship, accumulates gifts dedicated by grateful worshipers. For example, the largest iron trident at Sundar Mata's shrine was offered by a migrant labourer who lost his suitcase on the train back from Delhi. He vowed to give his village goddess a huge trident if he got the bag back, which he miraculously did.

Although a local deity, Sundar Mata is related to pan-Hindu goddesses such as Lakshmi, Parvati, or Durga. They are all thought to be manifestations of a single goddess; name and form are ultimately not significant. Yet again it should be noted that human worshipers attach themselves to certain images and localities, and, for those devoted to Sundar Mata, not any goddess will do.

This family that honours Dev Narayan and Sundar Mata also worships lineage deities at home. Ritual attention to the spirits of deceased uncles and infants ensures their household's well-being, and each domestic group takes similar care of loved ones who have died. Several members of the Gujar family portrayed here have taken a once-in-a-lifetime pilgrimage as far as Haridwar in Uttar Pradesh, Gaya in south-central Bihar, and Puri in eastern Orissa. Mementos of these journeys—such as framed images of the sacred Ganges River's descent to earth or the central icons from the temple of Puri in Orissa—are placed in their home shrine. Home shrines in general accumulate sacred objects and images eclectically. Images are treasured and are believed to manifest miraculous powers, but images are also understood to be lifeless and dispensable—another reflection of the Hindu genius for seeing both sides.



Shiva/Hanuman Lunchbox

Shiva is one of the major Hindu deities. He is associated with destruction. Hanuman, who appears on the opposite side of the lunchbox is the monkey-god of Hindu mythology, and is a central figure in the Ramayana. He is worshiped for his strength and faithfulness to Rama. A brief description of each deity is given on the sides of the lunchbox.



Hindu Deity Finger Puppets

Brahma - Supreme god, creator of all, has four heads for each of the four directions (he sees all). Brahma is not commonly worshiped today but his image is often found on the north side of temples as an attendant deity. Some people say his four heads represent the four yugas (ages, or cycles of time) and the four Vedas.

Ganesha – Elephant-headed god who is the child of the god Shiva and goddess Parvati. He is known as the god of overcoming obstacles. Many students worship

Ganesha as the god of wisdom. He rides a rat and is known as the paragon of loyalty. He is very popular all over India.

Garuda – Serves as the mount for Vishnu. He is often depicted as having a human body with an eagle head and wings. He acts as a messenger between the gods and men. He is also popular in Indonesia. There, the Airline "Garuda Air," honors his name.

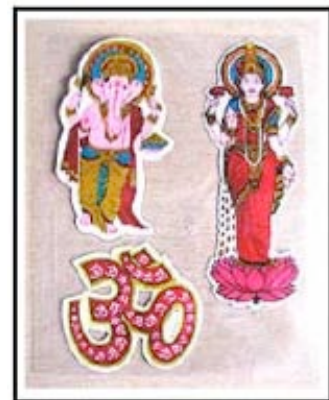
Kali – Demon slayer goddess. She is known for destroying ignorance, and helping those who strive for the knowledge of God. She is called upon when other gods cannot kill ferocious demons. She wears a necklace of skulls and a skirt of the limbs of her enemies. These stories illustrate her dedication to defending the world from evil. She is very popular in Bengal.

Deity Laminates

Ganesha (top left) - god of wisdom, intelligence and education.

Lakshmi (right) - goddess of wealth and fortune; additionally associated with luck, beauty and fertility.

Aum (bottom) - the Sanskrit syllable “aum,” is known as the primordial sound and is thought to be the foundation for creation. Most Hindu mantras begin with this sound.





Hindu Deity Ornaments Goddess Kali

Kali is the demon-slayer goddess. She is known for destroying ignorance, and helping those who strive for the knowledge of God. She is called upon when other gods cannot kill ferocious demons. She wears a necklace of skulls and a skirt of the limbs of her enemies. These stories illustrate her dedication to defending the world from evil.

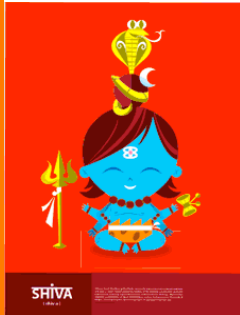
Hindu Deity Ornaments Goddess Saraswati

Saraswati is the goddess of knowledge, wisdom, science, speech, and all arts – music, painting, dance and literature.



Posters of Hindu Gods by GheeHappy

<http://www.gheehappy.com>

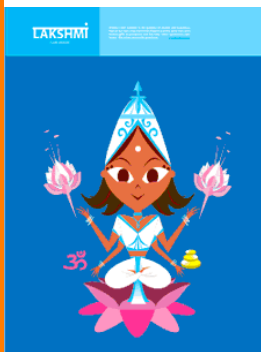


Shiva

Shiva is one of the oldest gods of India. Among his many roles, he is a devout meditator and yogi, a cosmic dancer setting the rhythms of the universe, a benevolent protector and husband, and lastly a god of destruction symbolized by his third eye. Shiva is often depicted in meditation on top of the Himalayas, a place of pilgrimage for thousands of Hindus.

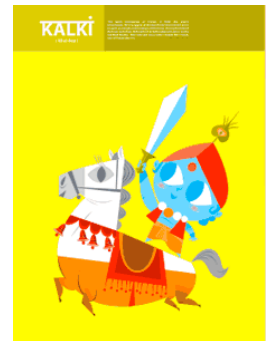
Kalki

The tenth incarnation of Vishnu is Kalki the avatar of the future. He is to appear at the end of time where he will arrive to earth as a bright comet riding a white horse. During this time of darkness and chaos, Kalki will act as both judge and savior, saving mankind forever.



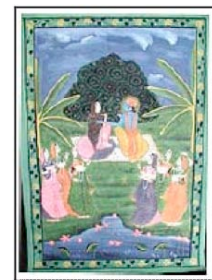
Lakshmi

Visnu's wife Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth and happiness. Two of her four arms hold lotus flowers and other two arms bestow gifts of prosperity and the holy "ohm" symbol for well-being. She is best known for good luck.



Krishna and Radha Devotional Cloth

Krishna, in blue, is an avatar of Vishnu and preserver of the universe. He represents mercy and goodness while sitting with his divine partner Radha. They are surrounded by female admirers of Krishna, known as "gopis."



Clothing

Girl's Salwaar Kameez



The *salwaar kameez* is a typical style of dress for Indian women. The outfit consists of at least two pieces, the *salwaar* (pants) and the *kameez* (shirt), and typically also includes a *dupatta* (shawl).

The *salwaar* is a pair of loose, trouser-like pajama style pants. The *salwaar* are typically wider at the waist and hips and tapered to the ankles. They are typically pleated at the waist and fastened by a cord or elastic band. They also come in several different styles varying in degree of how loosely or tightly they fit the legs.

The *kameez* is a long tunic whose seams, after closing along the waistline, are left open to allow for a greater degree of movement for the legs. These may also be decorative and come in various styles.

Women also typically also wear a “*dupatta*” with their *salwar kameez*. The *dupatta* is a long cloth or shawl made of a light fabric. Women wear these across their shoulders (draping in the front) or over their heads.

R, Waseem "Indian And Pakistani Clothing And Wedding Dresses." [Indian And Pakistani Clothing And Wedding Dresses](http://ezinearticles.com/?Indian-And-Pakistani-Clothing-And-Wedding-Dresses&id=484436). 11 Mar. 2007. *EzineArticles.com*. 11 June 2008 <<http://ezinearticles.com/?Indian-And-Pakistani-Clothing-And-Wedding-Dresses&id=484436>>.

“Lehenga” from-

[Indian Clothing](http://www.iloveindia.com). “Lehenga.” *iloveindia.com*. 16 June 2008.

<<http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-clothing/lehenga.html>>



Though traditionally worn by the women folk in the rural belts of Indian states like Gujarat and Rajasthan, the *lehenga choli* is also popular as bridal attire in the urban parts of India. It is also known as “*ghagra choli*.” The typical Indian bridal *lehenga* is red and heavily embroidered with golden thread or “*zari*.” It is paired with a short or waist-length blouse, known as the *choli*, and a scarf, or “*dupatta*.”

Though one can get many ready-made ethnic *lehengas* in the market, many brides-to-be prefer to get them personally made. Ask any Indian, preferably a woman and she will tattle off a number of names of famous tailors who specialize in making

bridal *ghagra choli*. Nowadays, many variations have seeped into the *lehenga* designs. The bridal *lehenga* is not limited to the color red. People are also opting for multi-colored or pastel-shade *lehengas* now. Similarly, the skirt can be double layered and stylishly embellished with *zari* and precious stones.

As a wedding dress, the *lehenga* is kept and handled very carefully before and after the wedding by women. Since a bride has to stand out from rest of the decked up guests, her dress is the most heavily embellished. It is normal for it to weigh 10 kilograms or more.

Though the *lehenga* is primarily worn as a bridal dress, many women wear it during normal parties and festivities. In this case, the design of the *lehenga* varies and it is typically not so heavily embellished. The *lehenga* is also worn by women of all age-groups. When donned by young girls, the skirt may be teamed with a halter-neck blouse or a backless *choli*. Women vary the design, color and embroidery of the *ghagra* to make it suitable for different occasions.

This is an example of a *lehenga* for a young girl. It is not ornately decorated.

Boy's Kurta Pajama

A style of traditional Indian clothing for men is the “*kurta-pajama*,” which consists of two garments, the *kurta* (shirt), and the *pajama* (pants).

The *kurta* is a type of long, loose shirt almost reaching the knees. The *pajama* (or *pyjama*), is a lightweight drawstring trouser.



Indian men are very fond of wearing Western style clothing, and therefore in many areas, *kurta pajamas* are mostly worn on formal occasions. *Kurta pajamas* can also be worn casually. In fact, there are many Indian men who wear this type of dress as their sleepwear.

The term '*pyjama*' crept into the English language from Hindustani, a language from which Urdu and Hindi originated. The word originally comes from the Persian word '*Payjama*, ' which means 'leg garment'.

Only soft fabrics are used for making *kurta pajamas* since they are designed to be a comfortable loose-fitting style of dress. Though good quality cotton is the most common material used for making *kurta pajama*, other fabrics like silk and satin are also used. Adults tend to prefer wearing the *kurta pajama* in neutral shades, for a dignified look. Children, on the other hand, wear this dress in varied hues and patterns.

[Indian Clothing](http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-clothing/kurta-pajama.html). “Kurta Pajama.” [iloveindia.com](http://www.iloveindia.com). 16 June 2008.

<<http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-clothing/kurta-pajama.html>>

Sari Cloth

This sheer cloth is the material of the traditional dress of many Indian women, called the “sari.” The sari is worn with a long petticoat and a short blouse underneath. This cloth may be used in the classroom by tying over clothing. Instructions for tying the sari are given in the Cultural Enrichment Package binder.



Art



Carved Wooden Stamps

These are hand-crafted from a solid piece of porous wood by craftsmen in India. They are used for printing on fabrics and paper.



Packets of Dyed Fabrics from India

These fabrics are good examples of typical Indian designs.



Decorative Brass Plate

This red enameled brass plate is imprinted with the image of a peacock bordered by flowered vines. The peacock is the national bird of India and the craftsmanship displayed here is well-known in the region of Bihar in Southern India, as well as in the region of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India.



Standard Indian Calendar in Hindi

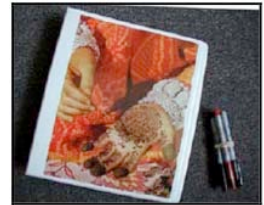
Calendars often display religious imagery.

Standard Indian Calendar in Tamil



Henna (Mehndi) Kit

This kit describes the ancient tradition of Mehndi used across various cultures in South Asia and the Middle East. Many pictures are included. Although far from the real thing, red and black markers are included so that students can create beautiful designs on the skin that will wash off within the week.



Henna Powder

Henna is a dye made from the dried leaf and petiole of the Lawsonia alba Lam plant. Henna in its common form is a greenish-brown powder, which is mixed with water to form a mud-like paste prior to application. Lemon juice and essential oils are often added to extract the dye from the leaves.



Henna Pattern Templates

These patterns may be traced or painted over onto the skin with a marker, face paint, or henna mixture to create beautiful designs on hands, arms or feet!



Music

Indian Music

This book gives a brief introduction to Indian culture and provides information about several types of Indian music from different regions of the country. The author also describes several different Indian instruments and provides a brief history of Indian music. Questions and project ideas are also provided to engage classroom participation.



Damaru Drum

A two-handed drum from India played by rotating the drum rapidly in alternate directions causing the two knotted strings to tap the drum. The Damaru drum concept represents the aural accompaniment to wisdom in ancient Indian culture.

Currency



Indian Rupee

The official currency of India is the rupee. The English translation of “rupee” is “silver.” Previously, the rupee was in fact a silver coin. The rupee declined sharply in value during the nineteenth century when the strongest nations relied on the gold standard. India intermittently, depending on its stability, followed an exchange rate regime with the pound sterling from 1950-1975. After this period, India instituted a float exchange rate.



GoCurrency.com. “What is the Indian Rupee (INR)?” Copyright 2005. 14 Aug 2008.

<http://www.gocurrency.com/countries/india.htm>

Games

Pachisi Set

Pachisi (Parcheesi in the West) is the national game of India. Evidence points to this game's existence in the Indian region from at least the 4th century AD. Indian Emperor Akbar I of the 16th century Mogul Empire is said to have played Pachisi on great courts constructed of inlaid marble. Game rules, pieces and extra dice are included with the game.



Spider-Man India - Limited Collectors Edition

In this groundbreaking new series Marvel Comics and Gotham Entertainment Group have reinvented the classic legend of one of the world's greatest superheroes, interweaving his origin, powers, and even his very costume, with the local customs, culture, and mystery of modern day India. When a mystical yogi bestows upon young Pavitr Prabhakar the power of the legendary spider, he becomes Spider-Man... a force of virtue and righteousness and Bombay's first web-swinging superhero. Interwoven with the beautiful landscape and architecture of India, experience the new sights of Spider-Man bouncing off rickshaws in Indian streets, while swinging from national monuments such as the Gateway of India and the Taj Mahal.



Puppets

From:

Kamat, Dr. K. L. "Puppeteers of India." Puppet Theater in India. 18 Jun 2008. 14 Aug 2008.
<<http://www.kamat.com/kalranga/puppets/article.htm>>.



For centuries, the puppetry in one form or other flourished in India, particularly in the villages. Since ages, it has been an important part of folk culture. The major types of puppetry that are practiced in different Indian states are: rod, string, shadow and glove puppetry is practiced by the tribals from Malabar in Kerala and Tamilnadu. The puppetry is very popular in Orissa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Sometimes the puppets are made with leather and the movements controlled by stick and many times, they are made with wood or cloth, with the movements controlled by strings. The string puppetry is prevalent in Karnataka and Rajasthan. The puppets employed are very small in dimensions. They have a large head with prominent eyes which gives them personality and charm. The body, including the hands, is made of cloth stuffed with rags. Most of them have no legs, but have long, trailing skirts or robes. Only special puppets such as a stunt horse rider has legs. The string attached to the puppet's head goes over the operator's hands and fingers and then into back of the puppet below the waist. Each hand is also controlled through separate strings. The color and features of the faces depend upon the character of the puppets. Goggle-eyed, dark colored puppet represents a wicked person. A royal person has a lighter color and has mustaches. Brocaded cloth decorations and borders add to their beauty. The male wear turbans and females have combed and braided hair. The female figures hold their skirts or sarees in their hands while dancing and put up a lively show, moving quickly and gesturing. The male excel in fighting; they dash against each other strike, chase, grapple and fall dead. These puppets represents, the good versus the bad, victor against vanquished, the hero and the coward, the generous and miserly.

A puppeteer family manages its own show. It has a little, mobile convertible state, which consists of a cloth backdrop and a curtain gaily decorated in cut and patch work or hand-printed cloth. The puppets are carved from a variety of local woods. If the quality of wood used is not up to the mark, then white cloth is pasted on it and then are applied natural colors. The lighting comes from two oil lamps, one each at side of the stage. Though this is very insufficient light, it helps the performance by creating eerie atmosphere and hiding the strings. The themes presented are based on the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. The manipulations are carried over by the male members of the troupe. The music, singing, dialogue and narrations are provided by the female members of the family. The youngsters provide music by the way of continuous squeaking, playing mrudangum and cymbal. When cleverly employed these instruments provide puppet like pitches. Situations are created so that different characters may engage in lively, dramatic feats. A court scene is usually the opportunity to bring these stock characters to the stage. The court dancer the stunt horse rider, the drummer and the snake charmers invoke greater interest. The puppetry requires exaggeration and distortion in order to achieve maximum impact. But the limitation of the puppets, the mask which can caricature only a certain number of emotions, emphasizes the satire. In creative manipulation and imitative interplay of the puppets, according

to the free range of fantasy, there is room for refined humor. Thus success of any puppet show mainly depends on the genius of the puppeteer. The puppetry in one form or other flourished as an intimate part of ancient Indian life, particularly in the villages, where the puppeteer would have been an important part of folk culture. However due to the influence of electronic entertainment media, an ancient art has had to suffer from lack of patronage and face extinction.

Toy Auto-Rickshaw

The auto-rickshaw is a small, three-wheeled, motorized version of a rickshaw. It is a popular mode of for-hire transportation throughout Asia.



Bride and Groom Dolls



Groom Attire

The North Indian grooms' and the Pakistani grooms' traditional wedding dress includes traditional *sherwani* with a *churidar pyjama*, a *bandha gala* suit. *Sherwani* is a long coat-like garment worn over the *kurta* (a loose shirt falling either just above or somewhere below the knees) by Punjabi, Hindu, and Muslim grooms. *Churidar pyjamas* are a tight-fitting variant of *salwar pyjamas*, which are loose trousers that are wider at the waist and thighs, and tapered to the ankles. Silk is the most preferred material for wedding attire.

Indian and Pakistani Muslim grooms wear Mohammedan caps on their heads. Some Hindus wear caps and some wear turbans, and Punjabi grooms in particular wear turbans. The North Indian grooms go to their weddings adorned with a *sehera*, which is a veil of flowers tied to the turban used to screen their faces from the evil eye.

Under the influence of the west, many Indian and Pakistani grooms have started wearing western style suits as their wedding attire.



Bride Attire

The *sari* is the most popular type of bridal dress worn by Indian Hindu brides. The *sari* consists of several yards of light fabric that is draped around the body. Silk *saris* or other richly embroidered types of cloth are preferred as bridal dresses. Maroon, magenta, pink, and red are popular traditional colors for *sari* bridal dresses.)

The *ghagra choli* (known as the *lehenga choli* in Punjab and Haryana) is also a popular bridal dress worn in some parts of the North India. The *ghagra choli* consists of a long skirt and blouse with a long scarf known as a *dupatta*.



Traditionally, Indian and Pakistani Brides are required to keep their faces hidden by a veil. In most of the liberal societies in India, covering the bride's head with *dupatta* or the end of a *sari* is sufficient.

R, Waseem "Indian And Pakistani Clothing And Wedding Dresses." [Indian And Pakistani Clothing And Wedding Dresses](http://ezinearticles.com/?Indian-And-Pakistani-Clothing-And-Wedding-Dresses&id=484436). 11 Mar. 2007. *EzineArticles.com*. 25 August 2008 <<http://ezinearticles.com/?Indian-And-Pakistani-Clothing-And-Wedding-Dresses&id=484436>>.

Cuisine

“Food Tour of India: Diversity of Indian Cuisine” from:

Srikanth, Anjana. “Food Tour of India: Diversity of Indian Cuisine.” [Food-India.com: Complete Guide to Indian Food](http://www.food-india.com/indianCuisine/1001_1050/1003_food_tour_india.htm). 19 Jun 2008.
<http://www.food-india.com/indianCuisine/1001_1050/1003_food_tour_india.htm>

Most Indian cuisines are related by their similar use of spices and their use of a greater variety of vegetables than many other cuisines. Religious and caste restrictions, weather, geography and the impact of foreigners have all influenced the various eating habits of Indians.

For example, Brahmins (one of the highest orders of caste) are strict vegetarians usually, but in the coastal states of West Bengal and Kerala, they consume a lot of fish. Southern Indians generally speaking, have been orthodox in their tastes, probably because eating meat when it is hot all year round can be difficult. In the North, the weather varies from a scorching heat to a nail-biting cold, with a sprinkling of showers in between. So the food here is quite rich and heavy. Also, the Mughal influence has resulted in meat-eating habits among many North Indians. A variety of flours are used to make different types of breads in different areas. Examples of various types of breads are: chapathis, rotis, phulkas, puris and naan.

In the arid areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat, a great variety of dals (lentil dishes) and acharas (preserves) are used to substitute the lack of fresh vegetables and fruits. Tamil food uses a lot of tamarind to impart sourness to a dish, whereas Andhra food can be really chili-hot. It is believed that a hot and spicy curry may be one of the best ways to combat the flu virus! From ancient times, Indian food has been on principle, divided into the Satwik and Rajasik kinds. The former was the food of the higher castes like the Brahmins and was supposed to be more inclined towards spirituality and health. It included vegetables and fruits but lacked onions, garlic, root vegetables and mushrooms. The more liberal Rajasik food allowed eating just about anything under the sun, with the exception of beef. The warrior-kings like the Rajputs whose main requirements were strength and power ate this food.

Just as Japanese sushi relies on the freshness of the meat and Chinese food relies on the various sauces to impart the right flavor and taste, Indian food relies on the spices in which it is cooked. Spices have always been considered to be India’s prime commodity. It is interesting to see an Indian cook at work, with a palette of spices, gratuitously sprinkling these powders in exact pinches into the dish in front of him/her. A foreigner can discover the many differences in the foods of various regions only after landing in India, as most of the Indian food available abroad, is the North Indian and Pakistani type. The variation in Indian food from region to region can be quite staggering.

Many Indian dishes require an entire day’s preparation of cutting vegetables, pounding spices on a stone or just sitting patiently by the fire for hours on end. On the other hand, there are simple dishes that are ideal for everyday eating.

Eating from a ‘thali’(a metal plate or banana leaf) is quite common in most parts of India. Both the North Indian and South Indian thali contain small bowls arranged inside the rim of the plate

(or leaf), each filled with a different sort of spiced vegetarian food, curd and sweet. At the center of the thali you would find a heap of rice, some puris (wheat bread rolled into small circular shapes and deep-fried in hot oil) or chapathis (wheat bread rolled out into large circular shapes and shallow-fried over a hot “tava”). Indians wash their hands immediately after and before eating a meal, as it is believed that food tastes better when eaten with one’s hands.

‘Paan’ is served as a digestive after some meals. The dark-green leaf of the betel-pepper plant is smeared with a little bit of lime and wrapped around a combination of spices like crushed betelnuts, cardamom, aniseed, sugar and grated coconut. It is an astringent and is believed to help in clearing the system. Mumbai is known to be a good place for connoisseurs of paan.

An everyday meal of a Punjabi farmer would be centered around bread, corn bread, greens and buttermilk (lassi). Buttermilk is whipped yogurt, and can be had sweetened or with salt and is usually very thick. Wheat is the staple food here. Shredded vegetables mixed with spices and stuffed into the dough, which is then rolled and roasted to make the delicious stuffed parathas. Some Punjabis also eat meat dishes, an Indian cottage cheese called paneer, pilau garnished with fried onions and roasted nuts like cashew and topped with silver leaf and rose petals. Another specialty from this region is ‘khoya’ a kind of thick cream, mainly used in the preparation of sweets. ‘Tandoori’ food, a favorite with many foreigners is a gift from the Punjab. Various meats are marinated with spices, ginger and garlic pastes and curd and roasted over a primitive clay-pot (tandoor) with a wood-fire burning underneath. The special wheat bread cooked over the tandoor is called ‘Naan’.

In the beautiful and rich valley of Kashmir, all dishes are built around the main course of rice. A thick-leafed green leafy vegetable called ‘hak’ grows in abundance here and is used to make the delicious ‘saag’. The boat-dwelling people use the lotus roots as a substitute for meat. Morel mushrooms called ‘gahchi’ are harvested and consumed around summer time. The tea drunk in Kashmir is not orange pekoe or Twinning, but a spice-scented green tea called ‘kahava’, which is poured from a large metal kettle, called ‘samovar’. Fresh fish found in the many lakes and streams here are also consumed with relish. Lamb and poultry are cooked in the Mughlai style. The Kashmiri equivalent of the thali is a 36-course meal called the ‘waazwaan’.

Bengalis eat a lot of fish and one of the delicacies called the ‘hilsa’ is spiced and wrapped in pumpkin leaf and cooked. Another unusual ingredient used in Bengali cooking is the bamboo shoot. Milk sweets from this region like the Roshgolla, Sandesh, Cham-cham are world famous. In the south of India, rice is eaten for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Raw rice, parboiled rice, Basmathi rice are some of the different types of rice eaten here. Parboiled rice is raw rice treated through a process wherein the ingredients and aroma of the husk are forced into the rice. Steamed rice dumplings or idlis, roasted rice pancakes or dosais are eaten along with coconut chutneys for breakfast. A dosai stuffed with spiced potatoes, vegetables or even minced lamb constitutes the famous ‘masala dosai’. Coconut, either in a shredded, grated or blended form is a must in most dishes here. Tender coconut water is drunk for its cooling effect(now available in most supermarkets in cartons) on the system. The Chettinad dishes from Tamil Nadu consist of a lot of meat and poultry cooked in tamarind and roasted spices.

Most Andhra food tends to be quite hot and spicy. Eating a banana or yogurt after such a meal can quench the fires raging within the system. Hyderabad, the capital city, is the home of the

Muslim Nawabs (rulers) and is famous for its superb biriyani, simply delicious grilled kababs, kurmas and rich desserts (made with apricots).

In Bombay, the food is a happy combination of north and south. Both rice and wheat are included in their diets. A lot of fish is available along the long coastline and the Bombay Prawn and Pomfret preparations are delicious. Further down south along the coast, in Goa, a Portuguese influence is evident in dishes like the sweet and sour Vindaloo, duck bafad, sorpotel and egg molie.

In Kerala, lamb stew and appams, Malabar fried prawns and idlis, fish molie and dosai, rice puttu and sweetened coconut milk are the many combinations eaten at breakfast. Puttu is glutinous rice powder steamed like a pudding in a bamboo shoot.

Sweets are very popular all over India and are usually cooked in a lot of fat. 'Jalebis', luscious pretzel shaped loops fried to a golden crisp and soaked in saffron syrup can be had from any street vendor in North India. 'Kheer' or 'payasam' are equivalents of the rice pudding and 'Kulfi' is an Indian ice cream made in conical moulds and frozen.

Tea is drunk as a beverage in India. Tea from the hills of Darjeeling and Kalimpong are boiled in milk and water and served with a liberal dose of sugar. Filtered coffee is a favorite among South Indians and is a very sweet, milky version of coffee.

Most of the spices used in Indian food have been used for their medicinal properties in addition to the flavor and taste they impart. Ginger is believed to have originated in India and was introduced to China over 3000 years ago. In India, a knob of fresh ginger added to tea is believed to relieve sore throats and head colds. Turmeric is splendid against skin diseases and neem leaves are used to guard against small pox.

It is these complexities of regional food in India that make it a so very fascinating try!



Indian Spice Sampler

Includes a few grams of each of the following:

Tumeric, commonly used to flavor curries.

Amchur, dried mango.

Black Cumin, or fennel.

Garam Masala, a fine blend of several spices (hot!).

Green Cardamom, another ingredient in curries.

Fenugreek, flavors several varieties of Asian dishes.

Panch Phoron, also known as Bengali Five Spice and is used on many seafood, vegetable and lentil dishes.



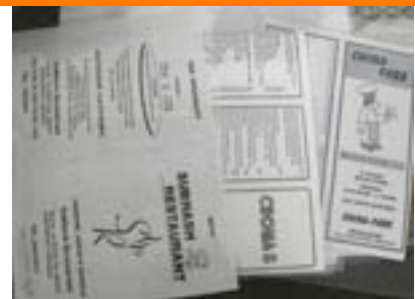
Shudh Shakahari or "Pure Vegetarian" McDonald's Menu

This placemat is from an advertising campaign developed by McDonald's Corporation to assure vegetarians in India that only vegetable ingredients are used in the food items depicted here.



Menus from Local Restaurants in New Delhi

Chona's, Subash, and the Rampur Kitchen are examples of restaurants in India serving traditional Indian food. Chinese food is also very popular in metropolitan India. Menus are provided as an example from China Fare Restaurant.



Laminated Images of Popular Indian Foods

Dosa

The dosa is a traditional South Indian breakfast, though it is eaten often all over India at various times of day. The dosa is made from a batter of rice and black lentils. The batter is fried and filled with various types of vegetables.



Samosa

The samosa is a popular snack in India. It is made of fried dough filled with chickpeas, potatoes, and various spices. Samosas are often served with various types of chutney such as mint, coriander, or tamarind.

Gulab Jaman

Gulab Jaman is a popular Indian dessert. It is made from milk solids and flour, which are fried in a sugary syrup with cardamom, rosewater, or saffron.



Roti

Roti is a traditional Indian bread made from wheat flour and cooked on a flat iron griddle called a tawa. Roti is normally eaten with curries or cooked vegetable dishes.

Major Grey's Mango Chutney

A sweet and sour relish-like condiment made of mango, vinegar, salt, sugar, and chili. Chutney's vary in spiciness, flavor, and consistency. They are often used with curries, breads, and rice. Sometimes, they are also used as dipping sauces.

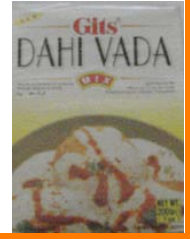


Madras Rasam Powder Seasoning Mix (Curry Powder)

A blend of red chili powder, ground coriander, ground tumeric, ground pepper, and ground cumin used in many Indian dishes.

Dahi Vada Mix

A powdered mixture made of ground lentils, wheat flour, salt, and cumin. This mixture is used to make crispy lentil-dough balls that are combined with yogurt and spices as a side dish in India.



Tandoori Chicken Masala Spice Powder

Tandoori Chicken is named for the traditional Indian Tandoor oven in which the dish is cooked. A tandoor is a tall, cylindrical brick or clay oven used to cook foods over smoky, intense heat, usually at temperatures over 500 degrees Fahrenheit. The color of this popular dish comes from the tandoori paste or coloring used on the chicken before cooking.

Limca Bottle

Limca is a popular fruit soda sold throughout India. This soda has a light citrus flavor.

