

NATIONAL PROFILE



CONNECTING CULTURES

ICYEA - INDIA



**WELCOME TO INCREDIBLE INDIA
A LAND OF UNITY & RICH IN CULTURE**

Modern India: India adopted a democratic and secular system of governance after independence.

India is known for its diverse cultural traditions, including multiple religions, languages, and cuisines. Hinduism is the majority religion, but India is also home to significant populations of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, and others.

Indian culture is characterized by its art, music, dance, literature, and festivals. Traditional Indian art forms like classical music (Carnatic and Hindustani), dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi, and various folk art forms have a rich history.

In recent times, India has emerged as a global IT and business hub, contributing to technological advancements and economic growth. However, it still maintains strong ties to its ancient traditions and cultural heritage.

Indias Four Regions

India can be broadly divided into four regions based on geographical and cultural factors. These regions are:

North India: North India is known for its diverse landscapes, ranging from the fertile Gangetic plains to the majestic Himalayan mountain range. It includes states like Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and the capital territory of Delhi.



The region has a rich historical and cultural heritage, with significant landmarks such as the Taj Mahal in Agra, the Golden Temple in Amritsar, and ancient cities like Varanasi and Jaipur. North Indian cuisine is characterized by rich flavors, including popular dishes like biryani, butter chicken, and kebabs.



South India: South India is known for its lush green landscapes, coastal plains, and the Deccan Plateau. It includes states like Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and the union territories of Puducherry and Lakshadweep.

South Indian culture is renowned for its classical music (Carnatic music) and dance forms like Bharatanatyam. Temples with intricate architecture, such as the Meenakshi Temple in Madurai and the Brihadeeswarar Temple in Thanjavur, are major attractions. South Indian cuisine is popular for its rice-based dishes like dosa, idli, and sambar.

East India: East India is characterized by its fertile plains, extensive river systems, and the Bay of Bengal coastline. It includes states like West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, and the seven northeastern states (Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura).



The region is known for its rich literary and artistic traditions, with Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) being a center of intellectual and cultural activities. The Sundarbans, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the world's largest mangrove forest, is located in West Bengal. East Indian cuisine is famous for dishes like macher jhol (fish curry), rasgulla (a sweet delicacy), and momos (dumplings).



West India: West India is characterized by its coastal areas along the Arabian Sea, as well as the arid landscapes of Rajasthan. It includes states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, and the union territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Daman and Diu.

The region is known for its vibrant festivals like Navratri in Gujarat, Ganesh Chaturthi in Maharashtra, and the colorful folk traditions of Rajasthan. The UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Ajanta and Ellora Caves, Elephanta Caves, and the architectural marvels of Rajasthan, such as Jaipur's Hawa Mahal and Udaipur's Lake Palace, attract tourists. West Indian cuisine is famous for its spicy flavors and includes dishes like vada pav, dhokla, and Gujarati thali.

These regions encompass a diverse range of languages, customs, traditions, and culinary delights, making India a culturally vibrant and geographically varied country.

Indian languages

India is a linguistically diverse country with a multitude of languages spoken across its regions. According to the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, there are 22 officially recognized languages. Here are some of the major languages spoken in India:



1. Hindi: Hindi is the most widely spoken language in India and serves as the official language of the Indian government. It is primarily spoken in the northern and central parts of the country.
2. Bengali: Bengali is the official language of the state of West Bengal and is spoken by a significant population in the eastern region of India, particularly in West Bengal and the neighboring state of Tripura.
3. Telugu: Telugu is primarily spoken in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. It is one of the largest Dravidian languages and has a rich literary heritage.
4. Marathi: Marathi is the official language of Maharashtra and is spoken by the people in the western region of India, particularly in Maharashtra and Goa. It has a rich cultural and literary tradition.
5. Tamil: Tamil is the official language of Tamil Nadu and is spoken in the southernmost part of India. It has a rich history and is one of the classical languages of India.
6. Urdu: Urdu is spoken by a significant population in India, particularly in the northern states and major cities. It has Persian and Arabic influences and is associated with the Muslim community.
7. Gujarati: Gujarati is primarily spoken in the state of Gujarat and is also widely spoken by the Gujarati diaspora around the world. It is known for its rich literature and is written in a script similar to Devanagari.
8. Kannada: Kannada is the official language of the state of Karnataka and is spoken in the southern region of India. It has a rich tradition of literature and is one of the oldest Dravidian languages.
9. Malayalam: Malayalam is the official language of the state of Kerala and is primarily spoken in the southern part of India. It has a unique script and is known for its rich literary tradition.
10. Punjabi: Punjabi is spoken primarily in the state of Punjab and is associated with the Punjabi community. It has a vibrant culture and is known for its folk traditions and music.

Apart from these, there are several other languages spoken in different parts of the country, such as Assamese, Oriya, Maithili, Konkani, Manipuri, and many more. The linguistic diversity of India reflects its rich cultural heritage and adds to the country's vibrant multicultural identity.

Indian climate

India has a diverse climate due to its vast size and varied geographical features. The country experiences different climate types, ranging from tropical in the south to alpine in the Himalayan region. Here's an overview of the major climatic zones in India:

Tropical Monsoon Climate: The majority of India, including the coastal areas and the central region, experiences a tropical monsoon climate. It is characterized by high temperatures and abundant rainfall during the monsoon season (June to September). The summers (March to May) are hot and humid, while winters (December to February) are relatively mild.



Arid and Semi-Arid Climate: The northwestern part of India, including the states of Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat, has an arid and semi-arid climate. These regions receive very low rainfall, and temperatures can soar during summers, often exceeding 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit). Winters are relatively cooler, with temperature variations between day and night.

Subtropical Climate: The northern parts of India, including the Indo-Gangetic plains and parts of central India, have a subtropical climate. Summers are hot, with temperatures around 35-40 degrees Celsius (95-104 degrees Fahrenheit). Winters are cool to cold, with temperatures dropping below 10 degrees Celsius (50 degrees Fahrenheit) in some areas.



Mountain Climate: The Himalayan region in the northern part of India experiences a mountain climate. Higher altitudes have alpine or subalpine climate, with extremely cold winters and cool summers. The lower foothills have a milder climate with moderate temperatures.



Coastal Climate: India's extensive coastline, including the western coast along the Arabian Sea and the eastern coast along the Bay of Bengal, has a coastal climate. These regions experience moderate temperatures due to the influence of the sea. Summers are hot and humid, while winters are mild.

Highland Climate: Certain parts of India, such as the Western Ghats and parts of the northeastern states, have a highland climate. These areas receive abundant rainfall and have relatively cooler temperatures compared to the surrounding regions.



It's important to note that there can be variations within these climate zones, and regional factors such as altitude, proximity to water bodies, and geographical features can influence the local climate patterns. Additionally, India experiences seasonal variations, with distinct seasons like summer, monsoon, autumn, and winter.

Indian Wildlife

Our Incredible India has a rich fauna. There are many national parks, wildlife reserves, and sanctuaries all over India.



India has animals thriving in scorching hot summers and living the vicious winter season too. The widely different species of animals and plants who find their home in the country makes it an Incredible India.

1. Many animals like rhino, crocodile, bear, lion, leopard, elephants, etc are found in the natural habitat of the country.
2. Birds like peacocks, kingfisher, woodpecker, swans, geese, flamingos, etc have also been spotted.
3. Tiger is the national animal of the country and found in Bengal, Karnataka, Assam, Madhya Pradesh, etc.

There are about 50 tiger reserves in the country. Many other national parks preserve the endangered species of animals.

Religions in India

India is known for its rich religious diversity and is the birthplace of several major religions. The country is home to numerous religious communities, each with its own beliefs, practices, and traditions. Here are some of the prominent religions in India:



Hinduism: Hinduism is the majority religion in India, with the majority of the population identifying as Hindus. It is an ancient religion with a diverse set of beliefs and practices. Hinduism encompasses a wide range of gods and goddesses, rituals, philosophies, and scriptures. It is characterized by concepts such as karma, dharma, and moksha.



Islam: Islam is the second-largest religion in India, with a significant Muslim population. Islam in India has a long history, dating back to the 7th century. Muslims in India follow the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad as outlined in the Quran. Major Muslim festivals such as Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha are widely celebrated.

Christianity: Christianity has a substantial presence in India, particularly in the southern states of Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa. The religion was introduced by European colonizers, and today, there are different Christian denominations and communities in India. Christmas and Easter are among the major Christian festivals celebrated in the country.



Sikhism: Sikhism originated in Punjab in the 15th century and has a significant following in India. Sikhs follow the teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus, with the Guru Granth Sahib being the central religious scripture. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is the holiest site for Sikhs. Sikhism emphasizes equality, social justice, and community service.

Buddhism: Buddhism, founded by Gautama Buddha in the 6th century BCE, originated in India and later spread to other parts of Asia. Although the majority of Buddhists are now found outside India, important Buddhist sites such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, and Ajanta and Ellora Caves are located in India. Buddhism emphasizes the pursuit of enlightenment and the Four Noble Truths.





Jainism: Jainism is an ancient religion in India that promotes non-violence, truth, and asceticism. Jains follow the teachings of Tirthankaras, spiritual leaders who have achieved enlightenment. Key principles of Jainism include ahimsa (non-violence) and the belief in karma and reincarnation. Major Jain pilgrimage sites include Shikharji and Palitana.

Apart from these, there are several other languages spoken in different parts of the country, such as Assamese, Oriya, Maithili, Konkani, Nepali, Manipuri, and many more. The linguistic diversity of India reflects its rich cultural heritage and adds to the country's vibrant multicultural identity.

Indian Railways

The Indian Railways is the national railway system of India and is one of the largest railway networks in the world. It plays a vital role in India's transportation infrastructure, connecting various parts of the country and facilitating the movement of people and goods. Here are some key points about the Indian Railways:



- 1. History and Development:** The Indian Railways has a rich history dating back to 1853 when the first passenger train ran from Mumbai (then Bombay) to Thane. The railways played a significant role in unifying India during the colonial period and have continued to expand since independence.
- 2. Network and Infrastructure:** The Indian Railways operates on a broad gauge network, covering over 68,000 kilometers (42,000 miles) of track. It connects thousands of towns, cities, and villages across the country, reaching even remote areas. The network is divided into several zones, each with its own headquarters.
- 3. Passenger Services:** The Indian Railways provides a wide range of passenger services, including various classes of travel, from general seating to air-conditioned coaches. It operates a vast number of trains, including long-distance express trains, local commuter trains, and suburban trains in major cities. The railways also offer special trains during peak travel seasons and holidays.

4. **Ticketing and Reservations:** Passengers can book train tickets through various channels, including railway reservation counters, online portals, and mobile applications. The Indian Railways introduced computerized reservation systems to streamline the ticketing process. Passengers can book reserved seats or opt for unreserved tickets for short-distance travel.
5. **Freight Transportation:** The Indian Railways is a major freight carrier, transporting a significant amount of goods across the country. It plays a crucial role in the movement of essential commodities, industrial raw materials, and finished goods. Freight services include dedicated freight trains, parcel services, and container transportation.
6. **Technological Advancements:** The Indian Railways has embraced technology to enhance its services. It introduced online ticket booking systems, e-ticketing, and mobile applications for ticketing and train-related information. The railways have also worked on improving passenger amenities, safety measures, and train punctuality.
7. **Iconic Trains and Landmarks:** The Indian Railways is renowned for iconic trains like the Palace on Wheels, the Deccan Odyssey, and the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, which is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Landmarks like the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in Mumbai and the Howrah Bridge in Kolkata are prominent railway structures.

The Indian Railways holds a significant place in India's collective consciousness and is an essential mode of transportation for millions of people every day. It contributes to the socio-economic development of the country, facilitates tourism, and serves as a lifeline for many communities.

Indian National Anthem

The Indian national anthem is called "Jana Gana Mana," which was written by Rabindranath Tagore. Here is the English translation of the anthem:

Jana Gana Mana Adhinayaka Jaya He Bharata Bhagya
 Vidhata Panjaba Sindhu Gujarata Maratha Dravida Utkala
 Vanga Vindhya Himachala Yamuna Ganga Uchchala
 Jaladhi Taranga Tava Subha Name Jage Tava Subha
 Ashisha Mage Gahe Tava Jaya Gatha Jana Gana Mangala
 Dayaka Jaya He Bharata Bhagya Vidhata Jaya He Jaya He
 Jaya He Jaya Jaya Jaya Jaya He!



Translation: Thou art the ruler of the minds of all people, Dispenser of India's destiny. Thy name rouses the hearts of Punjab, Sindhu, Gujarat, and Maratha, Of the Dravida, Utkala and Bengal; It echoes in the hills of the Vindhyas and Himalayas, Mingles in the music of the Yamuna and Ganga, And is chanted by the waves of the Indian Sea. They pray for thy blessings and sing thy praise. The saving of all people waits in thy hand, Thou dispenser of India's destiny. Victory, victory, victory to thee.

General Characteristic of Indian people

Indian people, like any diverse population, exhibit a wide range of characteristics and traits. It's important to remember that these general characteristics can vary among individuals and should not be applied universally. Nevertheless, here are some general characteristics often associated with Indian people:

Diversity and Cultural Richness: India is a highly diverse country with a rich tapestry of cultures, languages, religions, and traditions. Indian people take pride in their cultural heritage, which manifests in various art forms, music, dance, literature, and festivals.

Hospitality and Warmth: Indian people are often known for their warm hospitality and welcoming nature. Guests are traditionally treated with respect and offered generous hospitality, which includes serving food and making them feel comfortable.

Family Values: Family plays a central role in Indian society, and strong family ties are highly valued. Indians tend to have close-knit relationships with extended family members, and respect for elders and family traditions is commonly observed.



Spirituality and Religiosity: India is a land of diverse religious beliefs, and spirituality holds a significant place in the lives of many Indians. People often adhere to religious practices and rituals, seeking spiritual fulfillment and guidance.



Strong Work Ethic: Indians are known for their strong work ethic and dedication to their professions. Education is highly valued, and there is a strong emphasis on hard work, perseverance, and achieving success through merit.

Festive and Celebratory Nature:

India is renowned for its vibrant festivals and celebrations. Indian people enthusiastically participate in religious, cultural, and regional festivals, creating a festive and joyous atmosphere.



Adaptability and Resilience: Indians often exhibit adaptability and resilience in the face of challenges. Given the country's diverse and dynamic environment, people learn to adjust to various situations and find innovative solutions.

Food and Culinary Traditions:

Indian cuisine is diverse and known for its flavors and spices. Food holds cultural significance, and Indian people often take pride in their regional culinary traditions, which vary greatly across different states and communities.



Value for Education and Knowledge: Education is highly valued in Indian society, and there is a strong emphasis on acquiring knowledge and academic achievements. Indians often prioritize education as a means to improve their lives and career prospects.

It's important to recognize that these characteristics are broad generalizations and may not apply to every individual. India is a vast and diverse country, and there is considerable variation in attitudes, behaviors, and cultural practices across different regions and communities.

Indian Families

Indian families are known for their strong emphasis on family values, traditions, and close-knit relationships. Family is considered to be the core unit of Indian society, and the concept of family extends beyond the immediate parents and children to include grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.



Here are some key aspects of Indian families:

Joint Family System: Traditional Indian families often follow the joint family system, where several generations live together under one roof. This system promotes unity, mutual support, and collective decision-making.



Respect for Elders: Respect for elders is deeply ingrained in Indian culture. Elders are considered the pillars of wisdom and their opinions and advice are highly valued. Children are taught to show reverence and obedience to their parents and grandparents.

Filial Piety: Indian families emphasize the importance of filial piety, which is the duty of children to care for and support their parents in their old age. It is considered a moral obligation to take care of one's parents and ensure their well-being.

Arranged Marriages: While the practice of arranged marriages is becoming less common in urban areas, it is still prevalent in many Indian families. Arranged marriages involve the families of the prospective bride and groom finding suitable matches based on factors such as caste, religion, socio-economic status, and family background.

Strong Family Bonds: Indian families place a high value on maintaining strong bonds and support systems. Family members often rely on each other for emotional, financial, and practical assistance. Celebrations, festivals, and religious ceremonies are occasions for the entire family to come together.

Gender Roles: Traditional Indian families often adhere to distinct gender roles, where men are expected to be the breadwinners and women are responsible for household chores and raising children. However, these roles are evolving, especially in urban areas, with more women pursuing careers and men taking on household responsibilities.

Education and Career Focus: Education is highly valued in Indian families, and parents typically prioritize their children's academic success. Many Indian families encourage their children to pursue professional careers in fields such as medicine, engineering, law, or business.

Indian Food

Indian food is different from rest of the world not only in taste but also in cooking methods. It reflects a perfect blend of various cultures and ages. Just like Indian culture, food in India has also been influenced by various civilizations, which have contributed their share in its overall development and the present form.



India has a rich culinary heritage. Indian cuisine has a 5000-year-old history. Mythological beliefs and traditions have played an important role in its evolution and development. The main Indian food was based on Hinduism but the Islamic influence during the Mughal era, the Persian exchanges with the Middle East and the British colonial system have all contributed immensely towards laying the foundation of the Indian cuisine.

India is a big country with many states and regions. Each region offers a unique assortment of dishes and cooking techniques. Each regional cuisine uses its own locally grown herbs, spices, fruits and vegetables. These regional cuisines collectively combined together form the very delightful Indian Cuisine.

The staple Indian foods are Rice, Wheat and Lentils. And no Indian dish is complete without spices. Indian food is a combination of all six tastes like sweet, sour, salty, bitter, spicy and astringent. In India different dishes are prepared for different festivals. India is the only country in the world where there is Unity in Diversity not only its culture & religion but also its cuisine.

Foods of India are better known for its spiciness. Throughout India, be it North India or South India, spices are used generously in food. But one must not forget that every single spice used in Indian dishes carries some or the other nutritional as well as medicinal properties.

Golden Rules for Foreigner's to stay in India

If you are a foreigner planning to stay in India, here are some general guidelines that can help you have a positive and respectful experience:

1. **Respect the Culture:** India has a rich cultural heritage, and it's important to respect and appreciate the customs, traditions, and values of the local people. Learn about Indian etiquette, greetings, and social norms to avoid unintentionally causing offense.
2. **Dress Appropriately:** India is a conservative country in terms of clothing norms, especially in religious and rural areas. Dress modestly, particularly when visiting religious sites or conservative regions, to show respect for the local culture and avoid unwanted attention.
3. **Learn Basic Phrases:** While English is widely spoken in urban areas, learning a few basic phrases in Hindi or the local language of the region you are visiting can go a long way in building rapport and showing respect to the locals.
4. **Practice Patience and Flexibility:** India can be chaotic and overwhelming at times. Embrace the slower pace, be patient in dealing with bureaucracy or delays, and remain flexible in your plans as things may not always go as expected.
5. **Stay Aware of Safety:** Like any travel destination, it's essential to stay aware of your surroundings and take necessary precautions to ensure your safety. Avoid isolated areas at night, be cautious with your belongings, and follow the advice of locals or trusted authorities.
6. **Be Mindful of Religious Sensitivities:** India is a diverse country with numerous religious beliefs. Show respect when visiting religious sites, observe any dress code or rituals, and avoid any behavior that may be disrespectful or offensive to the local religious sentiments.
7. **Be Cautious with Food and Water:** While Indian cuisine is delicious, it's advisable to be cautious with street food and drink bottled or filtered water to prevent stomach issues. Gradually acclimatize yourself to spicy food if you are not accustomed to it.
8. **Seek Local Advice:** Indians are generally friendly and helpful. If you have any questions or need assistance, don't hesitate to seek guidance from locals or fellow travelers. They can provide valuable insights and recommendations for a more authentic experience.
9. **Follow Legal and Visa Requirements:** Ensure that you have the appropriate visa and adhere to the legal requirements during your stay in India. Familiarize yourself with the rules and regulations to avoid any legal complications.
10. **Embrace the Experience:** India offers a unique and diverse experience for foreigners. Embrace the vibrant culture, explore different regions, try local cuisines, and engage with the local community to make the most of your stay in India.

Some prices you should know before coming to india

Bread (450 gms.)	Rs. 25.00
Coffee/ tea per cup	Rs. 15.00
Soup	Rs. 100.00
Local Bus fare	Rs. 22.00
Auto Rikshaw fare	Rs. 25.00
Inland Mail(Min)	Rs. 5.00
Aerogramme	Rs. 15.00
Airmail Envelope	Rs. 18.00
Local call	Rs. 2.00
Cigarettes (10's)	Rs. 400.00
Beer (750 ml)	Rs. 140.00
Tooth paste (100 gms)	Rs. 40.00
Sanitary napkins	Rs. 80.00
Movie ticket	Rs. 250.00 onwards
Salwaar kameez dress	Rs. 800.00 onwards
Slippers	Rs. 150.00 onwards
Doctor's consultation	Rs. 200.00 onwards
Tooth Cleaning	Rs. 750.00 onwards
Tooth Extraction	Rs. 5000.00 onwards
Internet browsing	Rs. 30.00 to 60.00 (per hour)
Monthly bus pass	Rs. 1050.00
A decent meal at a Indian fast food restaurant	Rs. 80.00 onwards

About your host organization

ICYEA–India programs are initiatives that bring together young people from different countries and cultural backgrounds to promote cultural understanding, cooperation, and personal development. Through our programs we provide opportunities for participants to engage in a range of activities, such as workshops, discussions, community service, and cultural immersion experiences. The primary goals of intercultural youth exchange programs include fostering mutual respect and tolerance, developing intercultural communication and leadership skills, promoting global citizenship, and building lasting friendships among participants.

**WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO MEET YOU IN
INCREDIBLE INDIA**



THANK YOU