

India

Living in India

India's population is around one sixth of the world's total population. India has a mix of different cultures and people. India is a very crowded and busy place.

School

The number of children who can read and write has grown since compulsory school attendance for all children up to the age of 14 was introduced.

Children attend pre-primary school at the age of five and then primary school. At the age eleven, students in India go to middle school. After four years, at the age of fourteen, they take exams. Students who want to continue their education go to a higher secondary school which prepares them for college. Students can also enrol in a university programme after college.

Work

Farming is the largest employer in India's economy. Due to the large English-speaking population, India provides lots of services for other countries around the world, such as support call centres. The IT industry is one of the largest employers in India. The Indian auto mobile industry is one of the largest in the world with an annual production of 21.48 million vehicles. It also employs many people in India.

Transport

India's public transport systems are among the most heavily used in the world. Public transport is the main mode of transport for most of the population. Buses, cycle-rickshaws, auto-rickshaw taxis, boats and trains provide transport around India's cities. The number of cars in India is low compared to other countries, with only 10.3 million cars on the nation's roads.

India's rail network is the fourth longest and the most heavily used system in the world. In 2014/15, Indian Railways carried more than 23 million passengers a day!

Sport

Across India many different sports are played. Cricket is the most popular sport, while football is also popular. The country has won eight Olympic gold medals in field hockey, another game enjoyed in India.

India has hosted and co-hosted several international sporting events, including

the Asian Games, the Cricket World Cup, the Hockey World Cup and the Commonwealth Games. From 2011 to 2013, India hosted the Indian Grand Prix Formula 1 race. The National Games of India has been held in the country since 1924.

Food

When people think of Indian food, they think of curry! Wheat, basmati rice and pulses like chick peas are important in the Indian diet. Indian food is rich with spices, including ginger, coriander, cardamom, turmeric, dried hot peppers and cinnamon. Chutneys made from fruits and vegetables are used in Indian cooking. Many dishes are for vegetarians, but lamb and chicken are common in main dishes for non-vegetarians. Much of Indian food is eaten with your fingers or with bread to scoop it up. There is a wide range of bread served with meals, including naan (an oven-baked flatbread) or poppadum (disc shaped, fried, crispy bread).

Bollywood

India is well known for its film industry, which is often referred to as Bollywood. The country's movie history began in 1896 in Mumbai. Today, the films are known for their amazing singing and dancing. Indian dance, music and theatre traditions go back more than 2 000 years.

Traditional Dress

Indian women often wear colourful silk saris. The traditional clothing for men is the dhoti, a piece of cloth that is tied around the waist and legs. Men also wear a kurta; a knee-length loose shirt.

Religion

Religion is very important in the life of many people in India. The most common religion is Hindu (approximately 80%), followed by Muslim (12%), Christian (2%) and other religions such as Sikh, Buddhist and Jain.

Festivals

The country celebrates Republic Day (26th January), Independence Day (15th August) and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday (2nd October). Diwali is the largest and most important holiday for India. It is a five-day festival known as the festival of lights. Lights or candles are lit during the celebration to symbolize the inner light that protects people from spiritual darkness. Holi, the festival of colours, is celebrated in the spring.

Questions

1. What fraction of the world's total population is India's population?

2. What school do children in India go to after primary school?

3. Which three industries provide a lot of employment in India?

4. How do most people travel in India?

5. What might it be like to travel on an Indian Railways train?

6. What sports are popular in India?

7. What spices can you find in Indian food?

8. What traditional clothes do Indian women sometimes wear?

9. What percentage of the population of India are Hindu?

10. What happens during the Hindu festival of Diwali?

