

# India

## Living in India

India is a country whose population currently represents around one sixth of the world's total population. It is a bright and vibrant country with a mix of different cultures and people. However, despite the large numbers of people living in India, the country itself covers only 2% of the world's total surface area. This makes India a very crowded and busy place.

## School

The number of children who can read and write has increased since compulsory school attendance for all children up to the age of 14 was introduced. However, only about 50% of all school children actually go to school, since enrolment in schools is checked but not attendance.

Children attend pre-primary school at the age of five. Pre-primary school is followed by primary school. At the age of eleven, students go to middle school. After four years, at the age of fourteen, they take exams. At this point, their ten years of compulsory education is finished. 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 after college.

## Work

The farming sector is the largest employer in India's economy. Due to the large English-speaking population, India provides lots of global services, such as IT 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. Unemployment is also a serious issue 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 urban 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. Indian Railways has 115 000 km of track and 7 112 stations. In

2014/15, IR 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**

Cooking styles vary from region to region across the country and curry is the dish commonly associated with India. Wheat, basmati rice and pulses like chick peas are important parts of 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 such as tamarind, tomatoes, mint, coriander and other herbs, 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 array of bread served with meals, including naan (an oven-baked flatbread), poppadum (disc shaped, fried, crispy bread) and bhatoora (a fried, fluffy flatbread).

## **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 elaborate singing and dancing. Indian dance, music and theatre traditions span back more than 2 000 years.

## **Traditional Dress**

Indian clothing is closely identified with the colourful silk saris worn by many of the country's women. 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 has an important role 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 (26 January), Independence Day (15 August) and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday (2 October). Diwali is the largest and most important holiday for India. It is a five-day festival known as the festival of lights because of the lights 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.

## Tourism

Tourism in India is important for the economy and is growing rapidly. It supports around 39.5 million jobs. About 22.57 million tourists arrived in India in 2014, compared to 19.95 million in 2013. In 2014, The Taj Mahal, Thar Desert, Himalayan Mountains and many beaches are just some of the attractions which draw people to visit India.

# Questions

1. Large numbers of people live in India, but the country itself covers only 2% of the world's total surface area; what does this tell you about life in India?  

---

---
2. At what age does compulsory school attendance end in India?  

---
3. Why are many global support call centres based in India?  

---

---
4. How do you know that Indian Railways trains are very busy?  

---
5. Why are breads often served with an Indian meal?  

---
6. In which Indian city did the country's movie history begin?  

---
7. What traditional clothing is often worn by men in India?  

---

---
8. Why is the most common religion in India?  

---
9. Why is the Hindu festival of Diwali known as the festival of lights?  

---
10. What places do tourists visit in India?  

---

---