

# Syllabus

## *India Heritage*

**Culture:** The **culture of India** refers to the religions, beliefs, customs, traditions, languages, ceremonies, arts, values and the way of life in **India** and its people. India's **languages, religions, dance, music, architecture, food**, and customs differ from place to place within the country. Its culture often labeled as an amalgamation of these diverse sub-cultures is spread all over the **Indian subcontinent** and traditions that are several millennia old.

Regarded by many historians as the "oldest living civilization of Earth", the Indian tradition dates back to 8000 BC, and has a continuous recorded history since the time of the Vedas, believed variously to be 3,000 to over 5,500 years ago. Several elements of India's diverse culture, such as **Indian religions, yoga**, and **Indian cuisine**, have had a profound impact across the world.



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## HISTORY

Archaeological excavations at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa (both in Pakistan) reveal the existence of a civilization in the Indus Valley as long ago as about 2500 BC . The remains show that an urban manner of living had developed in which the people had wells, bathrooms, drainage

systems, handsome jewelry, and well-made household utensils and copper weapons. The Rig Veda, composed in about 1400 BC, tells of the struggle between the Aryan invaders and the prior occupants of the land. By the 6th century BC at least 16 Aryan states had been established south of the Himalayas, and Brahmanism was flourishing.

In 326 BC the armies of Alexander the Great reached the Hydaspes River, the modern Jhelum. Soon after Alexander's death in Babylon in 323, Candragupta founded the Maurya Empire. His grandson Asoka adopted Buddhism, then a relatively small sect, and energetically promoted that faith. Under Asoka the Maurya Empire extended over all India except the extreme south, but it began to break up shortly after his death. Candra Gupta I, who reigned from AD 320 to 330, was the founder of the imperial dynasty of the Guptas, which flourished until the mid-6th century. The Gupta Dynasty marked the peak of classical Indian civilization.

A succession of invaders, notably the Kushans, Sakas, and Ephthalites, or White Huns, penetrated the subcontinent during these centuries. Mongol forces of Genghis Khan made raids into Punjab in the 1200s, and in 1399 Timur Lenk's hordes poured in. In 1526 Baber, a descendant of Genghis Khan and Timur Lenk, came through the northwest passes from Afghanistan and seized the throne of Delhi, establishing the great Mughal Empire. This remained almost continuously powerful until the early 1700s. The south of India was never completely conquered, but the empire of the north, under such rulers as Akbar and Shah Jahan, was among the most brilliant in the history of the Orient. During the reign of Aurangzeb, the last of the great Mughals, from 1618 to 1707, the Marathas of the Deccan undermined the Mughal Empire.

### **Arrival of the Europeans**

Meanwhile, the struggle between European powers for dominance in Indian affairs had begun. In 1498 Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese navigator, discovered the ocean route around the Cape of Good Hope, and by the early 17th century the Dutch, British, and French began to challenge the Portuguese for the Indian trade. In 1600 the British East India Company was chartered, and within a century it had trading posts at Madras, Bombay, and Calcutta (then called Fort William). The French organized local troops, and their role in the quarrels of Indian rulers brought much of the Deccan under French influence by 1751.

British presence in India was threatened with extinction, but the genius of Robert Clive turned the tables. His storming and subsequent defense of Arcot in 1751 and his victory at Plassey in 1757 overthrew the French power and laid the foundations of the rule of the British East India Company. Later, trading rights gradually grew into political rule. It was a strange conquest, in which a private trading company conquered an empire chiefly through the use of soldiers (Sepoys) raised in the land itself. Warren Hastings, who became governor-general for the East India Company in 1774, built upon the foundation Clive had laid. By 1849 the rule of the company had been extended over virtually the whole of the subcontinent by conquest or treaties.

Certain high-handed methods used by the British company, as well as the teachings of missionaries and the introduction of European customs, now stirred a great wave of unrest. In 1857 a rumor was circulated among the company's Indian soldiers that the cartridge papers they had to tear with their teeth were greased with the fat of cows and pigs. The cow is sacred to

Hindus, and the pig is abhorred by Muslims. This rumor started the great Sepoy Revolt, or Indian Mutiny, of 1857. The outbreak, though crushed, ended the powers of the East India Company. In 1858 the administration was transferred to the British Crown. In 1876 the British Parliament ruled that India should be designated an empire. The next year Queen Victoria was crowned empress of India.

### **The Indian Empire**

The viceroy of India, appointed by the crown, ruled directly only in the provinces of British India. Hindu and Muslim princes continued to govern almost 600 native, or princely, states. These were nominally autonomous, but they were forbidden to make war on one another, and the viceroy kept an agent at each court to advise the ruler.

British rule brought internal peace and some economic development. The British built roads and railways, canals, irrigation works, and mills and factories. They introduced Western law and police systems, modernized cities, and built schools. Most British civil service personnel were able, though their aloofness aroused resentment. Indian intellectuals, many of them educated in England, began to dream of a free India. In 1885 they founded the Indian National Congress to further the participation of Indians in their own government.

### **The Struggle for Independence**

During World War I Indian troops served the British loyally, but nationalist agitation increased afterward. The British Parliament passed a reform act in 1919, providing for provincial councils of Indians with some powers of supervision over agriculture, education, and public health. Far from satisfied, the extreme nationalists, led by Mohandas K. Gandhi, gained control of the Congress. Gandhi preached resistance to the British by "noncooperation". Hundreds of thousands joined his civil disobedience campaigns. The Congress party quickly gained a mass following.

Rioting broke out when Parliament placed no Indians on the Simon Commission, appointed in 1927 to investigate the government of India. The British imprisoned Gandhi and his associates. In 1929 Jawaharlal Nehru was elected president of the Congress. Like Gandhi, Nehru was passionately devoted to the cause of freedom. He had absorbed Western ideas at Harrow and Cambridge, however, and, unlike Gandhi, wanted to bring modern technology and industrialization to India.

After three "round-table" conferences in London had considered the commission's report, Parliament passed a new Government of India Act in 1935. It provided for elected legislatures in the provinces, but property and educational requirements restricted the number of voters to about 14 percent of the population. To protect the interests of minorities, voting was by communal groups. Upper-caste Hindus, Untouchables, Muslims, Sikhs, and others voted for their own candidates. The system perpetuated religious strife. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, leader of the Muslim League, charged that Congress ministries mistreated their Muslim minorities. He agitated for the separation of the Muslim provinces from India and the creation of a state called Pakistan, which means "country of the pure."

When World War II broke out, the Congress demanded complete and immediate freedom for India as the price for India's active participation. In 1942 Sir Stafford Cripps went to India with a plan for granting dominion status after the war, but Indian leaders could not agree on the terms. The Congress insisted on a unified India. The Muslim League demanded a separate Pakistan. The princes were determined to preserve their states.

The Japanese invaded northeast India from Burma with a small force in the spring of 1944. It was quickly driven out. In spite of opposition to British rule, India raised a volunteer army of nearly 2.5 million. Its industries expanded greatly to supply arms and other goods for the war effort.

### **Birth of the New Nations**

In February 1947 the British government announced that it would leave India not later than June 1948. Muslim threats of civil war then forced the Hindu leaders to agree to the establishment of the separate state of Pakistan. The British Parliament rushed through the Indian Independence Act in July. On Aug. 15, 1947, the Indian Empire came to an end.

The two new dominions--India and Pakistan--had complete self-rule. Though they remained in the Commonwealth, they were free to withdraw. India took over the Indian Empire's membership in the United Nations. Jinnah became the first governor-general of Pakistan. Nehru, a moderate socialist, took office as India's first prime minister.

The boundaries between India and Pakistan were drawn so as to separate Muslims from Hindus and Sikhs. The Punjab, Bengal, and Assam were split in two. Yet some 38 million Muslims remained in India and about 19 million Hindus and more than 1.5 million Sikhs were left in Pakistan. Rioting broke out. Millions poured across the borders to the country of their own faith. Hundreds of thousands were massacred or died of other causes while migrating. Hundreds of villages were burned in communal strife.

On Jan. 30, 1948, Gandhi was assassinated by a fanatical member of a militant Hindu group that disapproved of his efforts toward reconciliation. Hindus and Muslims alike mourned his death. The Indian government immediately acted against the extremist group, and violence subsided. In 1950 the two nations agreed to protect their religious minorities. By 1951 about 7.2 million Hindus and Sikhs had fled from Pakistan into India and 7.4 million Indian Muslims had entered Pakistan. Additional millions crossed later. Religious strife and violence persisted for decades, however, in spite of these migrations.

## Fairs and Festivals

India is a country of subcontinental dimensions. It is an ancient civilisation and an inheritor to a rich and diverse cultural tradition. The Fairs and Festivals celebrated across the length and breadth of the land present a fascinating pageant and showcase the resplendence of its arts and crafts tradition. Some festivals are of religious nature, others are linked with the lives of the people, change of seasons and harvesting. There are fairs which in past played an important role in the commercial life of the people and continue to be celebrated with great gusto.



With India's cultural diversity, the country has more festivals than there are days in a year. With little lamps and lot of care, [Karthigai](#) festival celebrates the bond between sisters and brothers in south India. In other parts of India, [Bhaiya-Dhuj](#) and [Raakhi](#) is celebrated. Sisters wish their brothers happiness and feed them sweets, while brothers give gifts and promise to protect their sisters.



[Radha](#) and [gopikas](#) celebrating [Holi](#), known as the "festival of colors".



A [tug of war](#), at Pushkar Fair in [Rajasthan](#).

Main article: [Festivals in India](#)

India, being a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, celebrates holidays and festivals of various religions. The four [national holidays in India](#), the [Independence Day](#), the [Republic Day](#), the [Gandhi Jayanti](#), and [May Day](#) are celebrated with zeal and enthusiasm across India. In addition, many [Indian states](#) and regions have local festivals depending on prevalent religious and linguistic demographics. Popular religious festivals include the Hindu festivals of [Navratri](#), [Diwali](#), [Ganesh Chaturthi](#), [Durga puja](#), [Holi](#), [Rakshabandhan](#), and [Dussehra](#). Several [harvest festivals](#) such as [Sankranti](#), [Pongal](#), [Raja sankranti swinging festival](#), and [Onam](#), "[Nuakhai](#)" are also fairly popular.

Certain festivals in India are celebrated by multiple religions. Notable examples include Diwali, which is celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs and Jains, and [Buddh Purnima](#), celebrated by Buddhists. Sikh Festivals, such as [Guru Nanak Jayanti](#), [Baisakhi](#) are celebrated with full fanfare by Sikhs and Hindu. Adding colors to the culture of India, the [Dree Festival](#) is one of the tribal festivals of India celebrated by the Apatanis of the Ziro valley of [Arunachal Pradesh](#), which is the easternmost state of India.

[Islam in India](#) is the second largest religion with over 135 million Muslims-(followers of Islam), The Islamic festivals which are observed and are declared public holiday in India are; [Eid ul Fitr](#), [Eid ul Adha](#)-(Bakr Eid), [Milad un Nabi](#), [Muharram](#) and [Shab-e-Barat](#).<sup>[35]</sup> Some of the Indian states have declared regional holiday's for the particular regional popular festivals; such as [Arba'een](#), [Jumu'ah-tul-Wida](#) and [Shab-e-](#)

## Qadar.

Christianity is India's third largest religion. With over 23 million Christians, of which 17 million are Roman Catholics, India is home to many Christian festivals. The country celebrates Christmas and Good Friday as public holidays.<sup>[35]</sup>

Regional fairs are also common and festive in India. For example, Pushkar fair is one of the world's largest camel markets and Sonepur mela is the largest livestock fair in Asia.

## **Ganesh Chaturthi**

Ganesh Chaturthi is the celebration of the birth of Lord Ganesha, one of the most important Gods of the Hindu Mythology. The festival is usually celebrated on the 4th day of Bhadarva Shukla-paksh of Hindu calendar in (August and September). According to the Hindu belief Ganeshji is worshipped first on all auspicious occasions, whether it is a marriage or a religious function. Ganeshji is the foremost god of the Hindu Pantheon. He is regarded as the destroyer of all problems and obstacles. That's the reason in Hindu family whenever they start a new venture they perform his puja he is regarded as an extremely benevolent god, fulfilling the wishes of those who pray to him sincerely. Ganesh is remembered on chauth or chaturthi, the 4th day of every month of the Hindu calendar, but most of all on Ganesh Chaturthi, which is celebrated as his birthday. On the day of the festival Hindus perform pujas at temples and even in homes. Fasting, feasting and distribution of sweets mainly ladoos are offered to him. These are some of the important aspects of Ganesh Chaturthi rituals in India. After the festival is over they immerse the idols in the nearby water body, which are sacred.

The festival of Ganesh Chaturthi symbolizes Good omen. It also inspires the devotees to have trust and faith in God all mighty and obey the commands of God. The celebration begins much before the festival as people start preparing by cleaning the house and whitewashing. During the festival people purchase small images from shops and brought into home. Larger clay made images are made by the professional craftsmen and set up in pandals and pavilions throughout the country. It is a festival, which is observed through out the

country. Especially in Maharashtra side this festival has a special significance and it is celebrated with great enthusiasm and joy. The festival is also symbolic of the advent of all festivals dedicated to other Indian Gods.

Maha Shivratri is a [Hindu](#) festival celebrated every year in reverence of Lord [Shiva](#). From the very early morning, Shiva temples are flocked by devotees, young and old, who come to perform the traditional Shivalinga worship (puja) and hence hope for favours from the god. Devotees bathe at sunrise, preferably in the Ganga, or any other holy water source (like the Shiva Sagartank at Khajurao). This is a purificatory rite, an important part of all Hindu festivals. Wearing a clean piece of clothing after the holy bath, worshippers carry pots of water to the temple to bathe the Shivalinga. They offer prayers to the sun, Vishnu and Shiva. Women pray for the well-being of their husbands and sons. The temple reverberates with the sound of bells and shouts of "Shankerji ki Jai" meaning 'Hail Shiva'. Devotees circumambulate the linga, three or seven times, and then pour water over it. Some also pour milk.

Holi : Every year, thousands of Hindus participate in the festival Holi. The festival has many purposes. First and foremost, it celebrates the beginning of the new season, spring. Originally, it was a festival that commemorated good harvests and the fertile land. Hindus believe it is a time of enjoying spring's abundant colors and saying farewell to winter. It also has a religious purpose, commemorating events present in Hindu mythology. Although it is the least religious holiday, it is probably one of the most exhilarating ones in existence. During this event, participants hold a bonfire, throw colored powder at each other, and celebrate wildly.

Diwali popularly known as the "festival of lights," is a [festival](#) celebrated between mid-October and mid-December for different reasons. For [Hindus](#), Diwali is one of the most important festivals of the year and is celebrated in families by performing traditional activities together in their homes. [Hindus](#) have several significant events associated with Deepawali:

- The return of Rama after 14 years of Vanvas (banishment). To welcome his return, *diyas* (ghee lamps) were lit in rows of 20.
- The killing of Narakasura: Celebrated as Naraka Chaturdashi, one day before Diwali, it commemorates the killing of the evil demon Narakasura, who wreaked havoc. Krishna's wife Satyabhama killed Narakasura during the Dwapara yuga. In another version of the belief, the demon was killed by Krishna or Krishna provoked his wife Satyabhama to kill Narshna, defeating Indra.
- Dussehra It is also called *Navaratri* (*Nava-ratri* = nine-nights) and is a 10-day festival with the last day being Vijayadashami, the most auspicious day of Dasara. Dasara usually falls in the month of September or October. According to a legend, Vijayadashami denotes the victory of truth over evil and was the day when the Hindu Goddess Chamundeshwari killed the demon Mahishasura.
- Onam is a Hindu festival and the state festival of Kerala celebrated by the people of Kerala, India.<sup>[1]</sup> The festival commemorates the Vamana avatar of Vishnu and the subsequent homecoming of the legendary Emperor Mahabali. It falls during the month of Chingam (August–September) and lasts for ten days. The festival is marked by various festivities, including intricate flower carpets, elaborate banquet lunches, snake boat races, Onappottan, Kaazhchakkula in Guruvayoor, Puli Kali, Kaikottikkali etc. These festivities make Onam a unique festival on the earth which is embellished by most number of cultural elements and it can be undoubtedly said that these elements constitute the colorfulness, diversity and richness that no other festival can claim.

**Sankranthi ( Pongal):** Makar Sankranti is a major harvest festival celebrated in various parts of India. According to the lunar calendar, when the sun moves from the Tropic of Cancer to the Tropic of Capricorn or from Dakshinayana to Uttarayana, in the month of Poush in mid-January, it

commemorates the beginning of the harvest season and cessation of the northeast monsoon in South India. The movement of the earth from one zodiac sign into another is called Sankranti and as the Sun moves into the Capricorn zodiac known as Makar in Hindi, this occasion is named as Makar Sankranti in the Indian context. It is one of the few Hindu Indian festivals which are celebrated on a fixed date i.e. 14th January every year.

Makar Sankranti, apart from a harvest festival is also regarded as the beginning of an auspicious phase in Indian culture. It is said as the 'holy phase of transition'. It marks the end of an inauspicious phase which according to the Hindu calendar begins around mid-December. It is believed that any auspicious and sacred ritual can be sanctified in any Hindu family, this day onwards. Scientifically, this day marks the beginning of warmer and longer days compared to the nights. In other words, Sankranti marks the termination of winter season and beginning of a new harvest or spring season.

All over the country, Makar Sankranti is observed with great fanfare. However, it is celebrated with distinct names and rituals in different parts of the country. In the states of northern and western India, the festival is celebrated as the Sankranti day with special zeal and fervor. The importance of this day has been signified in the ancient epics like Mahabharata also. So, apart from socio-geographical importance, this day also holds a historical and religious significance. As, it is the festival of Sun God and he is regarded as the symbol divinity and wisdom, the festival also holds an eternal meaning to it.

**Ugadi** or Yugadi is one of the most important Hindu festivals which have derived its name from two Sanskrit words: Yug and Adi, meaning Age and New Beginning respectively, which on putting together means "The Beginning of New Age". The day on which it is celebrated is the start of the New Year as per the Hindu lunisolar calendar. It is believed that it was on this day that Lord Brahma gave shape to the entire universe, including earth and the life which sustains within. That's why Ugadi is the official New Year for people of Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. However, its celebrations are not just limited to these two states but extend to other states as well: Maharashtra, Punjab, Bengal, Assam, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and the Sindh province of Pakistan, though it goes by different names.

In India, **Republic Day** commemorates the date on which the [Constitution of India](#) came into force replacing the [Government of India Act 1935](#) as the governing document of India on 26 January 1950.

The date of 26 January was chosen to honour the [declaration of independence](#) of 1930. It is one of the three [national holidays in India](#). While the main parade takes place in the national capital, New Delhi, at the [Rajpath](#) before the president, the anniversary is also celebrated with varying degrees of formality in state capitals and other centres.

The patriotic fervor of the people on this day brings the whole country together even in her essential diversity. Republic Day is celebrated with more pomp and fervour than [Independence Day](#).

The [Independence Day of India](#) is celebrated on 15 August to commemorate its independence from [British rule](#) and its birth as a [sovereign](#) nation on 15 August 1947. The Independence Day is a [national holiday in India](#). All over the country, flag-hoisting ceremonies are conducted by government as well as private organisations. The flagship event takes place in [Delhi](#) where the [Prime Minister](#) hoists the [national flag](#) at the [Red Fort](#). The Prime Minister then delivers a nationally broadcast speech from its [ramparts](#).

**Eid** is a [Muslim holiday](#) that marks the end of [Ramadan](#), the [Islamic](#) holy month of [fasting](#), (*sawm*) or [Roza](#). *Eid* is an Arabic word meaning "festivity", while *Fitṛ* means "breaking the fast". The holiday celebrates the conclusion of the 29 or 30 days of dawn-to-sunset fasting during the entire [month of Ramadan](#). The first day of Eid, therefore, falls on the first day of the month [Shawwal](#). This is a day where Muslims around the world try to show a common goal of unity. It is a day of recognition of God.



## Clothing



Illustration of different styles of [Sari](#) & clothing worn by women in India.

Traditional [clothing in India](#) greatly varies across different parts of the country and is influenced by local culture, geography, climate and rural/urban settings. Popular styles of dress include draped garments such as [sari](#) for women and [dhoti](#) or [lungi](#) for men. Stitched clothes are also popular such as [churidar](#) or *salwar-kameez* for women, with *dupatta* (long scarf) thrown over shoulder completing the outfit. Salwar is often loose fitting, while churidar is a tighter cut. For men, stitched versions include [kurta-pyjama](#) and European-style trousers and shirts for men. In urban centers, people can often be seen in jeans, trousers, shirts, suits, kurta and variety of other fashions.

In public and religious places, Indian dress etiquette discourages exposure of skin and wearing transparent or tight clothes. Most Indian clothes are made from [cotton](#) which is ideal for the region's hot weather. Since India's weather is mostly hot and rainy, majority of Indians wear [sandals](#).

Indian women perfect their sense of charm and fashion with make up and ornaments. Bindi, mehendi, earrings, bangles and other jewelry are common. On special occasions, such as marriage ceremonies and festivals, women may wear cheerful colors with various ornaments made with gold, silver or other regional stones and gems.

Bindi is often an essential part of a Hindu woman's make up. Worn on their forehead, some consider the *bindi* as an auspicious mark. Traditionally, the red bindi was worn only by married Hindu women, and colored bindi was worn by single women, but now all colors and glitter has become a part of women's fashion. Some women wear sindoor - a traditional red or orange-red colored powder (vermilion) in the parting of their hair (locally called as *mang*). Sindoor is the traditional mark of a married woman for Hindus. Single Hindu women do not wear *sindoor*; neither do over 100 million Indian women from religions other than Hindu and agnostics/atheists who may be married.

India's clothing styles have continuously evolved over the course of the country's history. Ancient Vedic texts mention clothes made from barks and leaves (known as *phataka*).<sup>[[citation needed](#)]</sup> The 11th century BC Rig-veda mentions dyed and embroidered garments (known as *paridhan* and *pesas* respectively) and thus highlights the development of sophisticated garment manufacturing techniques during the Vedic age. In 5th century BC, Greek historian Herodotus describes the richness of the quality of Indian cotton clothes. By 2nd century AD, muslins manufactured in southern India were imported by the Roman Empire and silk cloth was one of the major exports of ancient India along with Indian spices. Stitched clothing in India was developed before 10th century AD and was further popularized in 15th century by Muslim empires in India. Draped clothing styles remained popular with India's Hindu population while the Muslims increasingly adopted tailored garments.

During the British Raj, India's large clothing and handicrafts industry was left paralyzed so as to make place for British industrial cloth. Consequently, Indian independence movement leader Mahatma Gandhi successfully advocated for what he termed as *khadi clothing* — light colored hand-woven clothes — so as to decrease reliance of the Indian people on British industrial goods. The 1980s was marked by a widespread modification to Indian clothing fashions which was

characterized by a large-scale growth of fashion schools in India, increasing involvement of women in the fashion industry and changing Indian attitudes towards multiculturalism. These developments played a pivotal role in the fusion of Indian and Western clothing styles.

## **Creative Arts: Painting**

*Main article: [Indian painting](#)*



☞ The earliest Indian paintings were the rock paintings of [pre-historic](#) times, the [petroglyphs](#) it was common for households to paint their doorways or indoor rooms where guests resided.

Cave paintings from [Ajanta](#), [Bagh](#), [Ellora](#) and [Sittanavasal](#) and temple paintings testify to a love of naturalism. Most early and medieval art in India is Hindu, Buddhist or Jain. A freshly made coloured flour design ([Rangoli](#)) is still a common sight outside the doorstep of many (mostly South Indian) Indian homes. [Raja Ravi Varma](#) is one the classical painters from medieval India.

[Madhubani painting](#), [Mysore painting](#), [Rajput painting](#), [Tanjore painting](#), [Mughal painting](#) are some notable Genres of Indian Art; while [Nandalal Bose](#), [M. F. Husain](#), [S. H. Raza](#), [Geeta Vadhera](#), [Jamini Roy](#) and B.Venkatappa are some modern painters. Among the present day artists, Atul Dodiya, Bose Krishnamachari, [Devajyoti Ray](#) and Shibu Natesan represent a new era of Indian art where global art shows direct amalgamation with Indian classical styles. These recent artists have acquired international recognition. [Jehangir Art Gallery](#), [Mumbai](#), [Mysore Palace](#) has on display a few good Indian paintings.

## Sculpture



The 5th century Buddhist *vishvakarma* cave at [Ellora](#), Maharashtra.



Marble Sculpture of female, ca 1450, Rajasthan

*Main article:* [Sculpture in India](#)

The first [sculptures](#) in India date back to the [Indus Valley civilization](#), where stone and bronze figures have been discovered. Later, as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism developed further, India produced some extremely intricate [bronzes](#) as well as temple carvings. Some huge shrines, such as the one at [Ellora](#) were not constructed by using blocks but carved out of solid rock.

Sculptures produced in the northwest, in [stucco](#), [schist](#), or [clay](#), display a very strong blend of Indian and Classical [Hellenistic](#) or possibly even [Greco-Roman](#) influence. The pink [sandstone](#) sculptures of [Mathura](#) evolved almost simultaneously. During the [Gupta period](#) (4th to 6th century) sculpture reached a very high standard in execution and delicacy in modeling. These styles and others elsewhere in India evolved leading to classical Indian art that contributed to Buddhist and Hindu sculpture throughout Southeast Central and East Asia.

## Architecture

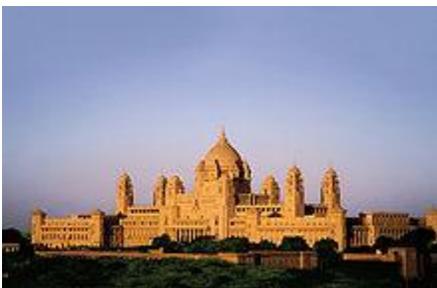
Main article: [Architecture of India](#)



Considered to be an "unrivaled architectural wonder" the [Taj Mahal](#) in [Agra](#) is a prime example of [Indo-Islamic architecture](#). One of the world's [seven wonders](#).

Indian architecture encompasses a multitude of expressions over space and time, constantly absorbing new ideas. The result is an evolving range of architectural production that nonetheless retains a certain amount of continuity across history. Some of its earliest production are found in the [Indus Valley Civilization](#) (2600–1900 BC) which is characterised by well planned cities and houses. [Religion](#) and kingship do not seem to have played an important role in the planning and layout of these towns.

During the period of the [Mauryan](#) and [Gupta](#) empires and their successors, several Buddhist architectural complexes, such as the caves of [Ajanta](#) and [Ellora](#) and the monumental [Sanchi Stupa](#) were built. Later on, South India produced several Hindu temples like [Chennakesava Temple](#) at [Belur](#), the [Hoysaleswara Temple](#) at [Halebidu](#), and the [Kesava Temple](#) at [Somanathapura](#), [Brihadeeswara Temple](#), [Thanjavur](#), the [Sun Temple](#), [Konark](#), [Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple](#) at [Srirangam](#), and the [Buddha stupa](#) (Chinna Lanja dibba and Vikramarka kota dibba) at [Bhattiprolu](#). [Angkor Wat](#), Borobudur and other [Buddhist](#) and [Hindu](#) temples indicate strong Indian influence on South East Asian architecture, as they are built in styles almost identical to traditional Indian religious buildings.





The [Umaid Bhawan Palace](#) in [Rajasthan](#), one of the largest private residences in the world

With the advent of Islamic influence from the west, Indian architecture was adapted to allow the traditions of the new religion. [Fatehpur Sikri](#), [Taj Mahal](#), [Gol Gumbaz](#), [Qutub Minar](#), [Red Fort of Delhi](#) are creations of this era, and are often used as the stereotypical symbols of India. The colonial rule of the British Empire saw the development of [Indo-Saracenic](#) style, and mixing of several other styles, such as European Gothic. The [Victoria Memorial](#) or the [Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus](#) are notable examples.

Indian architecture has influenced eastern and southeastern Asia, due to the spread of Buddhism. A number of Indian architectural features such as the temple mound or [stupa](#), temple spire or [sikhara](#), temple tower or [pagoda](#) and temple gate or [torana](#), have become famous symbols of Asian culture, used extensively in [East Asia](#) and [South East Asia](#). The central spire is also sometimes called a [vimanam](#). The southern temple gate, or [gopuram](#) is noted for its intricacy and majesty.

Contemporary [Indian architecture](#) is more cosmopolitan. Cities are extremely compact and densely populated. Mumbai's [Nariman Point](#) is famous for its [Art Deco](#) buildings. Recent creations such as the [Lotus Temple](#), and the various modern urban developments of India like [Chandigarh](#), are notable.

**Religion:** India is the birthplace of [Hinduism](#), [Buddhism](#), [Jainism](#) and [Sikhism](#), collectively known as Indian religions.<sup>[5]</sup> Indian religions, also known as Dharmic religions are a major form of world religions along with [Abrahamic](#) ones. Today, Hinduism and Buddhism are the world's third and fourth-largest religions respectively, with over 2 billion followers altogether,<sup>[6][7][8]</sup> and possibly as many as 2.5 or 2.6 billion followers.<sup>[6][9]</sup>

[India](#) is one of the most religiously diverse nations in the world, with some of the most deeply religious societies and cultures. Religion still plays a central and definitive role in the life of many of its people.

[Hinduism](#) Hinduism is formed of diverse traditions and has no single founder.<sup>[8]</sup> Among its direct roots is the [historical Vedic religion](#) of [Iron Age India](#) and, as such, Hinduism is often called the "[oldest living religion](#)"<sup>[9]</sup> or the "oldest living major religion" in the world.<sup>[1]</sup>

#### [Christianity](#)

[Sikhism](#) : Sikhism originated in fifteenth century [Northern India](#) with the teachings of [Nanak](#) and nine successive [gurus](#). The principal belief in Sikhism is faith in [Vāhigurū](#)— represented by the sacred symbol of [ēk ōaṅkār](#) [meaning one god]. Sikhism's traditions and teachings are distinctly associated with the history, society and culture of the [Punjab](#). Adherents of Sikhism are known as Sikhs (*students* or *disciples*) and number over 23 million across the world.

**Islam** is the second-most practiced religion in the [Republic of India](#) after [Hinduism](#), with more than 13.4% of the country's population (over 138 million as per 2001 census)

Islam came to India with the Arab merchants and traders on the [Malabar Coast](#) in the 7th century. Islam arrived in north India in the 12th century and has since become a part of India's [religious and cultural heritage](#). Over the years, there has been significant integration of Hindu and Muslim cultures across India and the Muslims have played a prominent role in [India's economic rise](#) and cultural influence.

[Jainism](#) is an [Indian religion](#) that prescribes a path of [non-violence](#) towards all [living beings](#). Its philosophy and practice emphasize the necessity of self-effort to move the [soul](#) towards divine consciousness and [liberation](#).

[Buddhism](#) is a [religion](#) indigenous to the [Indian subcontinent](#) that encompasses a variety of traditions, beliefs, and practices largely based on teachings attributed to [Siddhartha Gautama](#), who is commonly known as the [Buddha](#) (meaning "the awakened one" in [Sanskrit](#) and [Pāli](#)). The Buddha lived and taught in the eastern part of [Indian subcontinent](#) some time between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE.<sup>[1]</sup> He is recognized by Buddhists as an [awakened](#) or enlightened teacher who shared his insights to help [sentient beings](#) end suffering ([dukkha](#)) through eliminating ignorance ([avidyā](#)), craving ([tanhā](#)), and hatred, by way of understanding and seeing dependent origination ([pratītyasamutpāda](#)) and non-self ([anātman](#)), and thus attain the highest happiness, [nirvāṇa](#) ([nirvana](#)).

[Zoroastrianism](#) also called **Mazdaism** and **Magianism**, is a [religion](#) and philosophy based on the teachings of prophet [Zoroaster](#) (also known as Zarathustra, in [Avestan](#)) and was formerly among the world's largest religions-It was probably founded some time before the 6th century BCE in the eastern part of ancient [Greater Iran](#). It is also the first major monotheistic religion.

1) **Performing Arts:** Dance, Music Classical dance, music forms ( Carnatic & Hindusthani )

The **music of India** includes multiple varieties of [folk](#), [popular](#), [pop](#), [classical music](#) and [India's](#) classical [music](#) tradition, including [Carnatic](#) and [Hindustani music](#).

Carnatic music is [melodic](#), with improvised variations. It consists of a composition with improvised embellishments added to the piece in the forms of [Raga Alapana](#), [Kalpanaswaram](#), [Neraval](#), and, in the case of more advanced students, [Ragam Tanam Pallavi](#). The main emphasis is on the vocals as most compositions are written to be sung, and even when played on instruments, they are meant to be performed in a singing style (known as *gāyaki*). There are about 7.2 million ragas (or scales) in Carnatic Music, with around 300 still in use today.

[Hindustani](#) or [North Indian](#) style of [Indian classical music](#) found throughout the northern [Indian subcontinent](#). The style is sometimes called **North Indian classical music** or **Shāstriya Sangeet**. It is a tradition that originated in [Vedic](#) ritual chants and has been evolving since the 12th century CE, primarily in what is now North India. The two fundamental elements of Hindustani classical music are raag and taal.

**A Bhajan** is any type of Indian devotional song. It has no fixed form: it may be as simple as a mantra or kirtan or as sophisticated as the dhrupad or kriti with music based on classical ragas and talas. It is normally lyrical, expressing love for the Divine.

## Eight Styles Of Indian Classical Dance

Posted by Deepak Shetty on March 17, 2009

India has a very rich tradition of classical dance. Each form has its own specialty & grace, along with a set pattern of costumes & make-up. Today the acknowledged classical styles are:



**Bharatanatyam** is a classic dance form originating in Tamil Nadu, a state in South India and is known as the Indian National Dance. This dance form is a 20th century reconstruction of Kathir, the art of temple dancers. Kathir in turn, is derived from ancient dance forms. Bharatanatyam is usually accompanied by the classical Carnatic music. Bharatanatyam is considered to be a fire-dance — the mystic manifestation of the metaphysical element of fire in the human body. The movements of an authentic Bharatanatyam dancer resemble the movements of a dancing flame



**Kathak**, originated from northern India. This dance form traces its origins to the nomadic bards of ancient northern India, known as Kathaks, or story tellers. These bards, performing in village squares and temple courtyards, mostly specialized in recounting mythological and moral tales from the scriptures, and embellished their recitals with hand gestures and facial expressions. It was quintessential theatre, using instrumental and vocal music along with stylized gestures, to enliven the stories.



**Kathakali** is a highly stylized classical Indian dance-drama noted for its attractive make-up of characters, their elaborate costumes, detailed gestures and well-defined

body movements presented in tune with the anchor playback music and complementary percussion. It originated in the country's southern state of Kerala during the 16th century AD, approximately between 1555 and 1605, and has been updated over the years with improved looks, refined gestures and added themes besides more ornate singing and precise drumming.



**Kuchipudi** (pronounced as ‘Koochipoodi’) is a Classical Indian dance form from Andhra Pradesh, a state of South India. The movements in Kuchipudi are quicksilver and scintillating, rounded and fleet-footed. Specifically there is the Tarangam of Kuchipudi which is unique in that the dancer must dance upon a brass plate, placing the feet upon the raised edges. The dancer moves the plate with much balance as the individual is traditionally dancing on the plate with two diyas (small oil-burning candles) in his or her hands while balancing a “kundi” (small vessel) containing water on their head. At the end of the dance, typically, the dancer extinguishes the candles and washes his or her hands with the water from the vessel.



**Manipuri** dance is one of the major Indian classical dance forms. It originates from Manipur, a state in north-eastern India on the border with Myanmar (also known as Burma). The traditional Manipuri dance style embodies delicate, lyrical and graceful movements. The feet move is viewed as part of a composite movement of the whole body. The dancer's feet are neither put down nor lifted up at the precise rhythmic points of the music but rather slightly earlier or later to express the same rhythmic points most effectively



**Mohiniyattam** is a traditional South Indian dance form Kerala, India. It is a very graceful dance meant to be performed as a solo recital by women. The term Mohiniyattam comes from the words “Mohini” meaning a woman who enchants onlookers and “aattam” meaning graceful and sensuous body movements. The word “Mohiniyattam” literally means “dance of the enchantress”.



**Odissi** is one of the classical dance forms of India. It originates from the state of Orissa, in eastern India. The classic treatise of Indian dance, Natya Shastra, refers to it as Odra-Magadhi. It is particularly distinguished from other classical Indian dance forms by the importance it places upon the tribhangi (literally: three parts break), the independent movement of head, chest and pelvis, and upon the basic square stance known as chauka.



**Sattriya** the core of Sattriya Nritya has usually been mythological stories. This was an artistic way of presenting mythological teachings to the people in an accessible, immediate, and enjoyable manner. Traditionally, Sattriya was performed only by bhokots (male monks) in monasteries as a part of their daily rituals or to mark special festivals. Today, in addition to this practice, Sattriya is also performed on stage by men and women who are not members of the sattras, on themes not merely mythological.

**Cuisine:** Food is integral part of every human culture. Chang notes that the importance of food in understanding human culture lies in its infinite variability - a variability that is not essential for species survival. For survival needs, people everywhere could eat the same and some simple food.<sup>[45]</sup> But human cultures, over the ages, experiment, innovate and develop sophisticated cuisines. Cuisines become more than a source of nutrients, they reflect human knowledge, culture, art and expression of love.

Indian food is as diverse as India. Indian cuisines use numerous ingredients, deploy a wide range of food preparation styles, cooking techniques and culinary presentation. From salads to sauces, from vegetarian to meat, from spices to sensuous, from breads to desserts, Indian cuisine is invariably complex. Harold McGee, a favorite of many Michelin starred chefs, writes "for sheer inventiveness with milk itself as the primary ingredient, no country on earth can match India."



India is known for its love for food and spices. Indian cuisine varies from region to region, reflecting the local produce, cultural diversity, and varied demographics of the country. Generally, Indian cuisine can be split into five categories - northern, southern, eastern, western, and north-eastern. The diversity of Indian cuisine is characterized by differing use of many spices and herbs, a wide assortment of recipes and cooking techniques. Though a significant portion of Indian food is vegetarian, many traditional Indian dishes also include chicken, goat, lamb, fish, and other meats. Fish-based cuisines are common in eastern states of India, particularly West Bengal.

Despite this diversity, some unifying threads emerge. Varied uses of spices are an integral part of certain food preparations, and are used to enhance the flavor of a dish and create unique flavors and aromas. Cuisine across India has also been influenced by various cultural groups that entered India throughout history, such as the Persians, Mughals, and European colonists.

Indian cuisine is one of the most popular cuisines across the globe. Regional Indian cuisine continues to evolve. A fusion of East Asian and Western cooking methods with traditional cuisines, along with regional adaptations of fast food are prominent in major Indian cities.

**Science:** From Aryabhata ,..... etc.

**Aryabhata** (476–550 CE) was the first in the line of great mathematician-astronomers from the classical age of Indian mathematics and Indian astronomy. His most famous works are the Āryabhatīya (499 CE, when he was 23 years old–Aryabhata is the author of several treatises on mathematics and astronomy, some of which are lost. His major work, *Aryabhatiya*, a compendium of mathematics and astronomy, was extensively referred to in the Indian mathematical literature and has survived to modern times. The mathematical part of the *Aryabhatiya* covers arithmetic, algebra, plane trigonometry, and spherical trigonometry. It also contains continued fractions, quadratic equations, sums-of-power series, and a table of sines.

**.Ramanujan** : 22 December 1887 – 26 April 1920) was an Indian mathematician and autodidact who, with almost no formal training in pure mathematics, made extraordinary

contributions to mathematical analysis, number theory, infinite series, and continued fractions. Living in India with no access to the larger mathematical community, which was centered in Europe at the time, Ramanujan developed his own mathematical research in isolation

**Unity in Diversity** India being the largest democracy in the world with a civilization more than five thousand years old boasts of multiple cultural origins. The cultural origins of the Indian subcontinent can be traced back to the Indus Valley Civilizations, the remains of which are cherished even today. Since the late 16th century India was under the influence of the British Empire until 15th August 1947 the day when India gained independence. India is a land of diverse cultures, religions and communities. There is great diversity in our traditions, manners, habits, tastes and customs. Each and every region of the country portrays different customs and traditions. But though we speak different languages yet we are all Indians. 'Unity in Diversity' has been the distinctive feature of our culture. To live peacefully has been our motto and this motto has helped us to achieve independence. As history tells us that there has been active participation from people of different caste and religion. In our struggle for freedom people from different communities participated keeping one thing in mind that they all are Indians first. But unfortunately this peace and understanding among different communities has been endangered lately. India at present is facing many problems. The biggest of these is the problem of communalism. In their personal fight they are destroying their life only. In fact, it is the biggest threat to humanity and to the unity and integrity of the country.

People from different background and culture participated in India's struggle for freedom. The national leaders, particularly Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, Azad and Bose had coined the slogan unity in diversity There are numerous others who were also involved. Be it Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Jain and Sikhs everybody had a single identity of being an Indian. It should be understood that all of us have multiple identities religious, linguistic, cultural, regional and caste identities. No one can claim single identity. One who demands single identity i.e. national identity does not recognize the reality but during India's struggle for freedom no one thought in that manner they just thought of India's independence. Modern India presents a picture of unity in diversity where people of different faiths and beliefs live together in peace and harmony. Still today also India remains one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world.