



INDIA



India is one of the most sought after destinations for travel, much due to the presence of several renowned world heritage sites, and an inherent spiritualistic force, which pulls enthusiastic travelers towards it.

Short Facts

Area: It is the seventh largest country by geographical area, the second most populous country, and the most populous democracy in the world. Bounded by the Indian Ocean on the south, the Arabian Sea on the west, and the Bay of Bengal on the east, India has a coastline of 7,517 kilometers. It borders Pakistan to the west; China, Nepal, and Bhutan to the north-east; and Bangladesh and Burma to the east. In the Indian Ocean, India is in the vicinity of Sri Lanka, Maldives, and Indonesia.

Religion: 80% of the population is Hindu. The second largest religion is Islam (13%). The other natively Indian religions, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism taken together account for less than 3%. About 2% of Indians adhere to Christianity.

Languages: 800 different languages and round 2000 dialects. Eighteen official languages, including Hindi and English.

Government: The President of India is the official head of state elected indirectly by an electoral college for a five-year term. The Prime Minister is, however, the *de facto* head of government and exercises most executive powers. India is a democratic Republic.

Population: 1,2 billion.

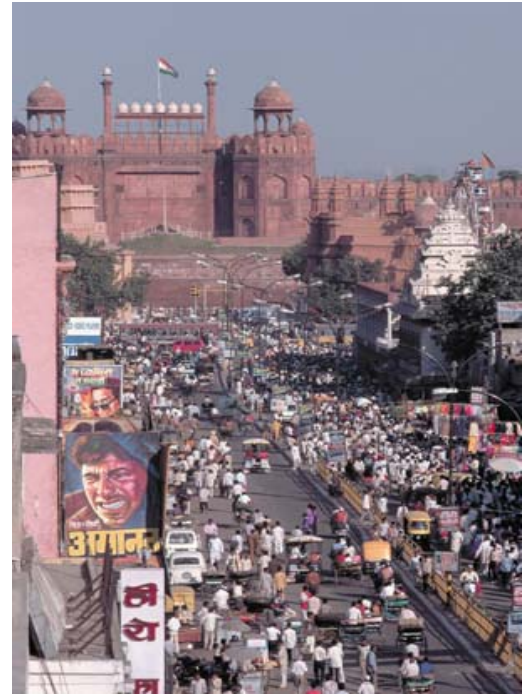
Climate: Generally, India's climate is defined by three seasons – the hot, the wet (monsoon) and the cool, each of which can vary in duration from north to south.





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History: The history of India begins with the Indus Valley Civilization which flourished from 3300 to 1700 BCE. This Bronze Age civilization was followed by the Iron Age Vedic period, which witnessed the rise of major kingdoms known as the Mahajanapadas. In two of these, in the 6th century BCE, Mahavira and Gautama Buddha were born. Islam arrived on the subcontinent early in the 8th century CE with the conquest of Baluchistan and Sindh by Muhammad bin Qasim. Islamic invasions from Central Asia between the 10th and 15th centuries brought most of northern India under the rule at first of the Delhi Sultanate and later of the Mughals. Mughal rule, which ushered in a remarkable flowering of art and architecture, came to cover most of the northern parts of the subcontinent. Beginning in the mid-18th century and over the next century, India was gradually annexed by the British East India Company. Dissatisfaction with Company rule led to the First War of Indian Independence, after which India was directly administered by the British Crown and witnessed a period of both rapid development of infrastructure and economic decline. During the first half of the 20th century, a nationwide struggle for independence was launched by the Indian National Congress, and later joined by the Muslim League. The subcontinent gained independence from Great Britain in 1947, after being partitioned into the dominions of India and Pakistan. Pakistan's eastern wing became the nation of Bangladesh in 1971.



Economy: India is the world's twelfth largest economy at market exchange rates and the third largest economy in purchasing power. Economic reforms have transformed it into the second fastest growing large economy; however, it still suffers from high levels of poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition and environmental issues.



Education: Education is divided into preprimary, primary, middle (or intermediate), secondary (or high school), and higher levels. Primary school includes children of ages six to eleven, organized into classes one through five. Middle school pupils aged eleven through fourteen are organized into classes six through eight, and high school students ages fourteen through seventeen are enrolled in classes nine through twelve. Higher education includes technical schools, colleges, and universities.





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Family life: In India, people learn the essential themes of cultural life within the bosom of a family. In most of the country, the basic units of society are the patrilineal family unit and wider kinship groupings. The most widely desired residential unit is the joint family, ideally consisting of three or four patrilineally related generations, all living under one roof, working, eating, worshipping, and cooperating together in mutually beneficial social and economic activities. Patrilineal joint families include men related through the male line, along with their wives and children. Most young women expect to live with their husband's relatives after marriage, but they retain important bonds with their natal families.



YFU in India: Mr. Raj Kumar, an Indian national, currently residing in Frankfurt, Germany, with business interests in three continents, founded YFU India in November 2003.

YFU Activities:

Trips:

- Mid-term orientation in the Himalayas
- Christmas in Delhi
- Visit to Gongotri, the source of the Ganga (Ganges), mid-March

