



100 Questions and Answers about Indian Americans

Michigan State School of Journalism

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"One Hundred Questions and Answers About Indian Americans" is part of the Michigan State University School of Journalism series in cultural competence. This guide to Indians in America has sections on India history, population, religion, language, culture, food, gender, family, education, work and politics. It includes Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism. It explains why Indians come to America and the work and customs they bring with them. The guide is intended for people in business, schools, places of worship, government, medicine, law enforcement, human resources and journalism--anywhere it is important to know more about communities. We hope this guide works for individuals who just have questions about the people around them.

We began by asking Indian Americans about myths, misconceptions and biases that they run into and wish others knew more about. The questions covered many areas including the diversity of religions in India, the variety of Indian languages and the issues faced by Indian workers and Indian students in America.

Questions include:

- What makes Indians Asian?
- What are the other countries of South Asia?
- What race are Indians?
- Why are some Indians so dark and others aren't?
- How old is India?
- Why are there tensions between Pakistan and India?
- Who was Gandhi?
- How many Indians live in the United States?
- How long have Indians been in the United States?
- Where do Indians in the United States primarily live?
- What brings them to the United States?
- What are wages like in India?
- Why did Mumbai and Delhi change their names?
- We hear a lot about Bangalore. Why?
- What is the caste system?
- What religion do Indians practice?
- What is the role of religion in Indian society?
- What is the religious picture for Indians in the United States?
- What is Hinduism?
- Do Hindus believe in multiple gods?
- Do Hindus worship cows?
- What is the dot that some people wear on their foreheads?
- Do Muslims have much influence in India?
- Are Sikhs the same as Muslims?
- What is a guru?
- What do Jains believe?
- What are some major religious holidays that Indians celebrate in America?
- What is the Festival of Lights?

- And holidays for Muslim Indians?
- Is Hare Krishna an Indian religion?
- What language do people speak in India?
- With so many languages, how do people communicate?
- So, Hindi is the language and Hindu is the religion?
- What is Sanskrit?
- Are Indian languages written down?
- Where do most Indians learn English?
- What does Desi mean?
- What is an ABCD?
- What is a sari?
- Why do Indians wear turbans?
- Is Yoga Indian?
- Why do Indian people have such long names?
- Why is the name Patel so common?
- What is Bollywood?
- Did the movie "Slumdog Millionaire" portray India accurately?
- What is the snake-charmer stereotype?
- What are the East Indies and West Indies?
- The terms Bengali and Bangladeshi are confusing. Is there a difference?
- What is henna?
- Why is red popular in Indian culture?
- Are Indians non-athletic?
- Are Indians vegetarians?
- Is Indian food hot and spicy?
- What is curry?
- What is the connection between India and tea?
- Why do some Indians fast?
- Are Indian marriages arranged?
- Must Indians in America return to India to find or marry a spouse?
- Do Indians marry young?
- Do Indian generations live together?
- How are gender roles treated?
- Why are so many Indians in information technology, engineering and medicine?
- What other occupations do Indians have?
- Are Indians in America well paid?
- What is a "Patel motel?"
- Why do so many Indians go into business for themselves?
- Why do we import so many Indians in IT?
- Do Indians steal American jobs?
- Why are so many call center workers Indian?
- Have many American jobs have been outsourced to India?
- What is onshoring?
- Why are Indians in America so highly educated?
- How is U.S. education different from India's?
- Is education an important consideration in coming to the United States?
- Why are Indians good at math?
- Are Indians good with technology?

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