

Fast Facts and Mission Posts

Southern Asia Division

India

1. India is a secular state with no state religion. The Indian subcontinent is the birthplace of four of the world's major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. According to the most recent 2011 census, 79.8 percent of the population of India are Hindu, 14.2 percent Muslim, 2.3 percent Christian, and 1.7 percent Sikh.
2. Tradition teaches that the apostle Thomas preached the gospel to the people of India and established the Nestorian Christian church in the south. Historical evidence indicates that national Christians existed in India since the fourth century.
3. It is not known precisely when Seventh-day Adventist teachings were first introduced into India or when evangelism began. In 1890, S.N. Haskell and P.T. Magan crossed India from Calcutta to Bombay on their mission-survey journey around the world.
4. Traditionally the beginning of official work in India dates from 1893, when William Lenker and A.T. Stroup, two colporteurs from the United States, landed in Madras and began canvassing for Adventist subscription books among the English-speaking inhabitants of major Indian cities. However, Lenker subsequently reported a number of Adventists known to be working in various cities in India.
5. In July 1915, the South India Training School was opened in Coimbatore, in the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Over the next 27 years the school moved first to Bangalore and then to its present location in Pune. Its name has also changed several times: to Spicer College in 1937, in honor of pioneer William Spicer; to Spicer Missionary College in 1943; to Spicer Memorial College in 1955; and to Spicer Adventist University in 2014, nearly 100 years after its predecessor first opened.
6. India has the second-largest population in the world with more than 1.3 billion people, and it is the seventh-largest country by total area.
7. India is located on the continent of Asia and is bordered by the countries of Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma, China, Nepal, and Pakistan.
8. India, as a country, was administered by Britain from 1858 until it gained independence in 1947.
9. India has 122 major languages and 1,599 other languages. Although Hindi is the language spoken by the greatest number of people in India, it is not the official language. While India was ruled by Britain, English was the language used for administration and higher education. In 1947, when India gain independence, it had to choose a language for official communication and many Indians wanted to choose Hindi, because more than 40 percent spoke it, but the many non-Hindi speakers wanted to keep English as the official language. In the end, both languages were used.
10. India is the second-largest English-speaking country. Second only to the United States, about 10 percent of India's populace are fluent in English, with the percentage expected to quadruple within the next decade.
11. The name "India" is derived from the river Indus. People settled in the fertile Indus Valley around 3300 BC, part of which is in modern India, making India the world's oldest and largest continuous civilization
12. India is one of the largest democracies in the world.

13. India has the largest postal system in the world, with more than 150,000 post offices — three times the size of that of China. It also has a floating post office on Dal Lake in Srinagar. Located on a houseboat, it also includes a philately (postage stamp) museum.
14. India has more than 300,000 active mosques. This outnumbers any other country in the world, even the Muslim countries.
15. With the majority of the population of India following Hinduism, 30-40 percent of the people are vegetarians.
16. India's telecommunication industry is the world's fastest growing. In 2017, India surpassed the United States to become the second-largest smartphone market in the world after China.
17. Cinema is extremely popular in India, with as many as 1,600 films produced in various languages every year. Indian cinema produces more films watched by more people than any other country. The most internationally famous is Bollywood, the Hindi-language film industry, which accounts for 43 percent of box office revenue. The most popular genre in India is probably Masala. Typically, Masala films freely mix action, comedy, romance, and drama or melodrama and tend to be musicals that include songs, often filmed in picturesque locations.
18. Indian cuisine is popular around the world but varies greatly depending on region. This variation is often not reflected in the Indian restaurants outside India, where diners expect certain well-known dishes, such as dal, samosas, naan, and tandoori chicken.
19. There are about 1.9 million miles (3 million km) of roads in the country, making it the second-largest network of roads in the world after the U.S.
20. Living in his 100-room home in Baktawng village of Mizoram, a man named Ziona is the head of perhaps the world's biggest family. It consists of 181 members, including 39 wives, 94 children, 14 daughters-in-law and 33 grandchildren.
21. The Lifeline Express, or Jeevan Rekha Express, is a hospital train that has been run in India since 1991. It is an outreach program for inaccessible rural areas where medical services are not available, traveling via Indian Railways. The train has two operating theaters with five tables: attached is a six-bed recovery room. The train also has an ophthalmologic testing room, a dental unit, a laboratory, and an X-ray unit. There is a staff compartment with a kitchen and 12-bed dormitory. The medical staff carries out orthopedic and ophthalmological procedures as well as plastic surgical procedures for cleft pallet and burn scars. In addition, they carry out services such as epilepsy screening, immunizations, nutritional assessments, and promotion of health awareness among the deprived in rural areas.
22. More than 4,700 daily newspapers in more than 300 languages are produced in India.
23. Khari Baoli is a street in Delhi known as Asia's largest wholesale spice market, selling all kinds of spices, nuts, herbs, and food like rice and tea. Operating since the 17th century, the market is situated near the historic Delhi Red Fort.
24. The national symbol of India is the endangered Bengal tiger.
25. During World War II, the distinctive dome of the Taj Mahal was covered with a scaffold of bamboo to disguise it from enemy bombers.
26. Although cows are considered to be sacred and it is illegal to kill them, Indians still use cows for milk. Indians are the largest dairy producers in the world.
27. During weddings, Indians decorate the event with marigold flowers. These flowers represent happiness and good fortune.

Northwest India (Amritsar, Punjab state)

1. Punjab, an Indian state bordering Pakistan, is the heart of the Sikh community.
2. The word Punjab is a compound of two Persian words, panj (“five”) and āb (“water”), thus signifying the land of five waters, or rivers (the Beas, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, and Sutlej).
3. Amritsar is home to the Harmandir Sahib, the holiest Sikh place of worship and a major pilgrimage site. While the original temple was founded in the 1570s by Sikh Guru Ram Das, in 1830, Maharaja Ranjit Singh renovated Harimandir Sahib and plated its domes with 220 pounds (100 kilograms) of gold, after which it became popularly known as Swarn Mandir or the Golden Temple.
4. Amritsar is known for its industry manufacturing pashminas and wooden chessboards and chess pieces.

South-Central India (Bengaluru, Karnataka state)

1. Bengaluru (also called Bangalore) is the capital of India’s southern Karnataka state.
2. Bengaluru is home to more than 25 lakes, which provide water to the city, and also offer peace, quiet, and entertainment. They are home to a large ecosystem of flora and fauna, comprised of, among others, lilies, pheasant-tailed jacana, weaverbirds, kingfishers, and ferns.
3. Bengaluru was the first city to be electrified in India, back in 1905. This was completed with the help of a hydroelectric power plant at Shivanasamudra, on the banks of the river Kaveri.
4. Bengaluru is the Silicon Valley of India. A number of multinational companies have established their business hubs here, resulting in an influx of IT engineers and expats into the city.

Central India (Varanasi, Pradesh state)

1. Varanasi, also known as Benares, is a city on the banks of the river Ganga (Ganges) in Uttar Pradesh, India.
2. A major religious hub in India, it is the holiest of the seven sacred cities (Sapta Puri) in Hinduism and Jainism and played an important role in the development of Buddhism.
3. In 2018, local people in Varanasi, which was suffering a drought, organized a wedding of two plastic frogs to please the Hindu rain god, Indra. Hindu mythology states that if wild frogs are married, following human wedding rituals, it can bring rainfall.
4. Ravi Shankar, the world-famous musician, known particularly in the West for his introduction of the sitar to popular music, was born in Varanasi on April 7, 1920.

Northeastern India (Dimapur, Nagaland state)

1. Nagaland is India’s smallest state.
2. The economic and developmental activities of Nagaland are centered around Dimapur.
3. Christianity is the most popular religion in Dimapur, making up 45 percent of the city’s population, with Hinduism trailing slightly at 41 percent of the population. Islam is followed by 11 percent, and Jainism by 1.7 percent.

4. Nagaland is the falcon capital of the world. In November 2013, an international team of ornithologists counted over 1 million Amur falcons entering a night roost near Wokha in Nagaland.

Recipes - India

Vegetarian Tikka Masala

(Soy yogurt can be used to make this recipe vegan)

Ingredients

14 oz (400g) firm or extra-firm tofu (well pressed)

Marinade:

4 oz (120ml) plain yogurt

1 tbsp (15ml) oil

1 tbsp (15ml) lemon juice

1/2 tsp (2.5ml) turmeric

1/2 tsp (2.5ml) garam masala

1/2 tsp (2.5ml) powder

1/2 tsp (2.5ml) salt

Tikka Sauce:

1 tbsp (15ml) oil

1 14-oz (or 400ml) can crushed tomatoes (do not drain)

1/2 tsp (2.5ml) cumin

1/2 tsp (2.5ml) paprika

4 oz (120ml) plain yogurt

Garnish (optional): Fresh chopped cilantro

Instructions:

Make the Marinade

In a small bowl, whisk together the ingredients for the marinade until well blended. Set aside.

Prepare the Tofu

Cut the pressed tofu into bite-size cubes and arrange them in a wide shallow pan in a single layer, and cover with the marinade. Allow the tofu to marinate for at least one hour in the refrigerator.

Bake tofu at 175 C (350 F) for about 30 minutes, turning once or twice.

Make the Tikka Sauce

Heat 15ml (1 tbsp) oil in a large frying pan. Add tomatoes, cumin, paprika, and the remaining yogurt. If you have any extra marinade from the tofu, you also can add it to the sauce mixture now. Heat until the sauce is well combined and slightly thickened, about 8 minutes.

Add tofu, stirring just until heated through and tofu is well coated in tikka masala sauce. Serve immediately with steamed white rice or basmati rice.

This recipe is adapted from The Spruce Eats and can be found at bit.ly/SpruceTikka.

Games: India

Snakes and Ladders

Making the Game Board

What You Will Need

A large piece of paper or cardboard

A ruler

A pencil

Colored pens/pencils (optional)

Eraser (optional)

6-sided dice

Colored counters

Instructions

First, decide how many squares there will be on the board. The easiest way is to make 10×10 or 5×5 square grids. Measure your paper, and divide by the number of squares you want in each direction to discover what size they need to be. Then mark where the lines will be along the top and one side of your paper. Use the ruler to draw the grid lines with a pencil.

Number the squares: make the numbers small, but readable. Call the first square at the bottom left “Start,” and number the squares back and forth across and up the grid, finishing at the top left, “Home.”

Now you need to draw on your snakes and ladders. Try to distribute them fairly evenly around the board and make them different lengths. Make sure the heads of the snakes are pointing upward and the tails point downward.

If you have colored pens or pencils, you can go over the pencil lines to make them darker and then color the squares and snakes as colorfully as you like. But even a simple, uncolored board can be fun!

If you want to, you can then erase the original pencil lines.

How to Play

1. Each player puts their counter on “Start.”
2. Take it in turns to roll the dice. Move your counter forward the number of spaces shown on the dice.
3. If your counter lands at the bottom of a ladder, you can move up to the top of the ladder.
4. If your counter lands on the head of a snake, you must slide down to the bottom of the snake.
5. The first player to get to the last space, “Home,” is the winner.

An old, hand-drawn Indian Snakes and Ladders board can be found online here: bit.ly/India-2020-game.

Songs

Hindi

Frère Jacques

Pronunciation tips: Barely pronounce the "n" in parentheses. Gently trill the letter "r" at the end of a syllable. "Th" is always vocalized as in "the" rather than "think," and sometimes sounds as though it were a soft "d." The diphthong "ai" is pronounced like the "i" in "high."

English

Are you sleeping?
Are you sleeping?
Brother John?
Brother John?
Morning's bell rang,
Morning's bell rang.
Ding, dang, dong.
Ding, dang, dong!

Hindi

क्या तुम सोए हो
क्या तुम सोए हो?
भाय्या जॉन,
भाय्या जॉन.
सुबहा की घंटी बाज रही,
सुबहा की घंटी बाज रही,
डिंग डांग डोंग,
डिंग डांग डोंग.

Pronunciation

Kya tum soye ho
Kya tum soye ho,
Bhayya John
Bhayya John,
Subha ki ghanti baj rahi,
Subha ki ghanti baj rahi,
Ding dang dong,
Ding dang dong.