

# India - Traditions

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<sup>1</sup> Many Indian traditions are beautiful, many are unusual, and some are very strange. To many outsiders who have visited India over the years, the traditions and ceremonies of Indians are the most colorful parts of their trip.

<sup>2</sup> India is a very religious country. Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, and Sikhism are the most common religions in India. All of them have many traditions, ceremonies, and rituals that are important to Indian daily life. Many, if not most of India's celebrations and ceremonies, are based on one religion or another.

<sup>3</sup> Most of India's population is Hindu. Hinduism is the main religion in India. It is also the oldest religion in the world. For India's Hindus, the happiest and most important festival of the year is Diwali--celebration of lights and fireworks. Diwali is celebrated to remember a number of Hindu gods. It is celebrated for five days in November. During this celebration candies and firecrackers are very common.

<sup>4</sup> One festival, called Ganesh Chaturthi, is dedicated to the elephant-headed god Ganesh. It is held in August and September and celebrated all across India. Indians celebrate this holiday with firecrackers and religious worship. During the celebrations Indians also try very hard not to look at the moon!

<sup>5</sup> There are many Muslims living in India. In fact, India's Muslim population is one of the largest Muslim populations in the world! Muslims in India celebrate the 10-day Muharram festival during April and May. They celebrate this festival with parades. Dedicated Muslims also whip themselves out of respect for the Muslim prophet Mohammed's grandson.

<sup>6</sup> Varanasi is considered to be India's religious capital and is home to several important traditions. It is situated along the Ganges River. This river is sacred to many of India's Hindus. According to Hindu tradition, anyone who dies in Varanasi goes straight to heaven, regardless of his or her religious beliefs.

<sup>7</sup> Varanasi is also home to many ghats--steps or paths that lead down to the Ganges River. Some ghats are used for ceremonial bathing. Others are used for cremation--the process of burning dead bodies. The most sacred "burning ghat" in all of India is located in Varanasi.

<sup>8</sup> Movies also play an important role in Indian culture. Indians love watching movies and love making movies. Indian movies are very colorful, dramatic, and have a lot of music and dancing. Centered in Bombay, Indian cinema is known and respected throughout the world.



<sup>9</sup> India is home to more than one billion people, many of whom live in the cities. Because of the country's population, many parts of Indian cities are crowded. But because of India's rich culture, Indians make their cities--and the rest of their country--something very special and beautiful.

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Name \_\_\_\_\_



Date \_\_\_\_\_

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<p>1. The Muharram festival is celebrated primarily by:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Muslims</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Hindus</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Christians</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Sikhs</p>	<p>2. The most somber Hindu holiday is Diwali.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>
<p>3. Ghats are:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A A kind of elephant</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Paths that lead down to a river used for ceremonies</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Indian trains</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Buildings used for worship</p>	<p>4. Indian cinema is centered in:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Calcutta</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B New Dehi</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Varanassi</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Bombay</p>
<p>5. During Ganesh Chaturthi, Indians try not to do what?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Eat for one week</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Look at the moon</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Look at other people</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Sleep</p>	<p>6. The Ganges River is unimportant to Hindus.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>
<p>7. "Burning ghats" are used for what purpose?</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A Cremations</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B Washing</p> <p><input type="radio"/> C Cooking food</p> <p><input type="radio"/> D Dancing</p>	<p>8. India is a very religious country.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> A False</p> <p><input type="radio"/> B True</p>