

## U.S. Ambassador to China Terry Branstad



On December 7, 2016, Governor Branstad announced that he had accepted the nomination from President-elect Donald Trump to serve as Ambassador of the United States to the People's Republic of China. He was confirmed by the Senate on May 22, 2017, and was sworn in on May 24, 2017.

Ambassador Terry Branstad was born, raised and educated in Iowa. A native of Leland, Branstad was elected to the Iowa House in 1972, '74 and '76, and elected as Iowa's lieutenant governor in 1978.

Branstad was Iowa's longest-serving governor, from 1983 to 1999. As the state's chief executive, he weathered some of Iowa's worst economic turmoil, during the farm crisis of the '80s, while helping lead the state's

resurgence to a booming economy in the '90s.

At the end of his tenure, Iowa enjoyed record employment, an unprecedented \$900 million budget surplus, and the enactment of historic government overhauls that led to greater efficiencies in state government. As a result of Governor Branstad's hands-on, round-the-clock approach to economic development, Iowa's unemployment rate went from 8.5 percent when he took office to a record low 2.5 percent by the time he left in 1999.

Following his four terms as governor, Branstad served as president of Des Moines University (DMU). During his 6-year tenure, he was able to grow the university into a world-class educational facility. Its graduates offer health care in all 50 states and in nearly every Iowa county. While there, he grew enrollment, increased the endowment and integrated new buildings, programs and initiatives.

In October of 2009, sensing a need for change in the way state government operates and wanting to “lead Iowa’s comeback,” Branstad retired from DMU and was elected governor in 2010.

During his second tenure as Iowa governor from 2010 to 2017, the Legislature passed, and Gov. Branstad signed, a two-year budget with a 5-year projection for the first time in decades. This budget provided Iowa businesses the predictability and stability they needed to grow. Gov. Branstad also signed historic investments in Iowa’s infrastructure into law, including Iowa’s roads and bridges, as well as the innovative Connect Every Acre Plan that expanded high-speed broadband internet to Iowa’s agriculture industry, schools, businesses and homes.

In April 2017, Iowa Workforce Development announced that the state of Iowa’s unemployment had fallen to 3.1%, well below the national average and 8th lowest in the country.

He and his wife Chris have three grown children: Eric, Allison and Marcus, and seven grandchildren, Mackenzie, Bridget, Sofia, Alexis, Estelle, Everett and Fitzgerald.

## U.S. Ambassador to India Kenneth I. Juster



Kenneth I. Juster was unanimously confirmed by the U.S. Senate on November 2, 2017 and appointed by the President on November 3, 2017 to be the 25<sup>th</sup> United States Ambassador to the Republic of India. He presented his credentials to the President of India on November 23, 2017. Mr. Juster has almost 40 years of experience as a senior business executive, senior law partner, and senior government official.

Mr. Juster previously served from January to June 2017 as the Deputy Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs and Deputy Director of the National Economic Council. He was a senior member of both the National Security Council staff and the National Economic Council staff. In this role, Mr. Juster coordinated the Administration's

international economic policy and integrated it with national security and foreign policy. He also served as the lead U.S. negotiator ("Sherpa") in the run-up to the G7 Summit in Taormina, Italy.

Prior to that, Mr. Juster was a Partner and Managing Director, from 2010-2017, at the global investment firm Warburg Pincus, where he focused on a broad range of issues, including geopolitical risk, global public policy, and regulatory matters relating to the Firm's investment activities and portfolio companies. From 2005-2010, Mr. Juster was Executive Vice President of Law, Policy, and Corporate Strategy at salesforce.com, a software company that pioneered cloud computing for business enterprises

Mr. Juster served as U.S. Under Secretary of Commerce from 2001-2005, in charge of the Bureau of Industry and Security. In that capacity, he oversaw issues at the intersection of business and national security, including strategic trade controls, imports and foreign investments that affect U.S. security, enforcement of anti-boycott laws, and

industry compliance with international arms control agreements. Mr. Juster co-founded and served as the U.S. Chair of the U.S.-India High Technology Cooperation Group, and was one of the key architects of the Next Steps in Strategic Partnership initiative between the United States and India. That initiative helped provide the foundation for the historic civil nuclear agreement between the two countries. Upon completion of his term at the Commerce Department, Mr. Juster received the William C. Redfield Award, the Department's highest honor.

From 1992-1993, Mr. Juster served as the Counselor (Acting) of the U.S. Department of State, and from 1989-1992 as the Deputy and Senior Adviser to Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger. Mr. Juster was one of the key officials involved in establishing and managing U.S. assistance programs to Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, including setting up the initial Enterprise Funds for the region. He also was part of the five-man team, led by Deputy Secretary Eagleburger, that traveled to Israel prior to and during the first Gulf War to coordinate with the Israelis regarding their posture during the war. Upon completion of his term at the State Department, Mr. Juster received the Distinguished Service Award, the Department's highest honor.

From 1981-1989 and 1993-2001, Mr. Juster practiced law at the firm Arnold & Porter, where he became a senior partner and his work involved international arbitration and litigation, corporate counseling, regulatory matters, and international trade and transactions. Among his noteworthy cases was the representation of the Government of Panama-in-exile against the Noriega regime. The President of Panama subsequently awarded him the Vasco Núñez de Balboa en el Grado de Gran Cruz Decoration and Medal.

Mr. Juster also has served as a Visiting Fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in 2010, a Member of the President's Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations from 2007- 2010, a Visiting Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in 1993, a law clerk in 1980-1981 to Judge James L. Oakes of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, and at the National Security Council in 1978. In addition, he has served as the Chairman of the Advisory Committee of Harvard's Weatherhead Center for International Affairs, the Chairman of Freedom House, and the Vice Chairman of the Asia Foundation. He is currently a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the American Academy of Diplomacy.

Mr. Juster holds a law degree from the Harvard Law School, a Master's degree in Public Policy from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government (Phi Beta Kappa) from Harvard College.

## Ambassador Scott Brown



**Scott Brown, U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand and the Independent State of Samoa. He was confirmed by the Senate as Ambassador to New Zealand on June 8, 2017, and arrived in New Zealand on June 25.**

Scott P. Brown is a prominent political leader, attorney, and National Guardsman with a long history of public service.

In 2010, Ambassador Brown won a special election and served in the U.S. Senate for three years. During his time in the U.S. Senate, Ambassador Brown was known as the most bipartisan Senator and was the ranking member on the Armed Services Committee, as well as the Committee on Homeland

Security and Governmental Affairs, and was a member of the Veteran's Committee and the Committee on Small Business. As an elected official, he worked extensively on sex offender, child trafficking and other law enforcement issues to keep children and families safe. He began his public service career as an Assessor and Selectman for the Town of Wrentham, Massachusetts. He served as Massachusetts State Representative for the 9th Norfolk District for seven years and as State Senator for the Norfolk, Bristol, and Middlesex District for five.

Ambassador Brown served in the enlisted and officer ranks of the Massachusetts and Maryland National Guard. He retired as a Colonel after 35 years of service, the last four of which he served as the Deputy to the Chief Counsel to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau at the Pentagon. While maintaining his law practice he was also a contracted contributor and analyst for Fox National News.

Ambassador Brown worked as an attorney for Nixon Peabody, LLP, Boston, MA. He served on the Board of Directors and as an Advisor to Kadant, Inc., Westford, MA and

as an advisor to 1st Alliance Lending, LLP, East Hartford, CT, an organization aimed at helping low income citizens keep their homes. He was an Advisor to SkyBridge Capital, New York, NY and to Ron Terwilliger Housing Foundation, Vienna, VA, and served as a board member for the USA Triathlon Foundation introducing youth to the sport of triathlon. He traveled extensively speaking before colleges, businesses, trade associations, and financial and government advocacy groups globally.

Ambassador Brown is married to Gail Brown. They have two daughters: Ayla, a singer/songwriter in Nashville, Tennessee and Arianna, a veterinary who studied at Cornell University in New York. Ambassador Brown earned a B.A. from Tufts University and a J.D. from Boston College Law School. He has Honorary Doctorates from Lasell College (Humanitarian Letters) and Nichols College (Public Administration).



## United States Department of State

### **U.S.-CHINA RELATIONS**

The United States seeks a constructive, results-oriented relationship with China. The United States works to achieve concrete progress on U.S. interests, including ensuring Chinese support for exerting maximum pressure on North Korea to end its nuclear program, reducing the U.S. trade deficit with China, and stopping the flow of illegal opioids from China to the United States. The United States also seeks progress on areas of disagreement such as China's territorial claims in the South China Sea and lack of respect for human rights and religious freedom. In addition to regular discussions between senior U.S. officials and their Chinese counterparts, the United States uses a range of exchanges, dialogues, and people-to-people ties to pursue its goals.

### **U.S. ASSISTANCE TO CHINA**

Congressionally-mandated U.S. assistance programs in China focus on six principal areas: supporting efforts to protect and preserve Tibetan culture, and promote sustainable livelihoods and market integration in Tibetan communities; building local capacity in targeted Tibetan communities to assess natural resource management issues and appropriately sustain natural resource-based livelihood options; advancing environmental standards and protections, and market-based reforms supporting the environment; advancing the rule of law and human rights; addressing the threat of pandemic diseases; and providing counternarcotics assistance and training to Chinese counterparts.

### **BILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS**

Two-way trade between China and the United States has grown from \$33 billion in 1992 to over \$772 billion in goods and services in 2017. China is currently the third-largest export market for U.S. goods (after Canada and Mexico), and the United States is China's largest export market. The U.S. trade deficit in goods with China grew to an unacceptable \$375 billion as of 2017. The United States seeks fair and reciprocal trade with China, and works to protect American workers and businesses from unfair Chinese economic actions, including market access restrictions, forced technology transfers, and weak protection of intellectual property rights.

### **CHINA'S MEMBERSHIP in INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

The People's Republic of China assumed the China seat at the United Nations in 1971, replacing Taiwan, and is a permanent member of the UN Security Council. Over the years, China has become increasingly active in multilateral organizations, particularly in the United Nations and in various regional fora.

### **Bilateral Representation**

The U.S. Ambassador to China is Terry Branstad; other principal embassy officials are listed in the Department's Key Officers List.





## United States Department of State

### **U.S.-INDIA RELATIONS**

Our relationship is rooted in common values, including the rule of law, respect for diversity, and democratic government. We have a shared interest in promoting global security, stability, and economic prosperity through trade, investment, and connectivity. The United States supports India's emergence as a leading global power and a key partner in our efforts to ensure that the Indo-Pacific is a region of peace, stability, and growing prosperity. On September 6, 2018, India will host Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Mattis for the inaugural 2+2 ministerial dialogue in New Delhi. This engagement will support increased diplomatic, security, and military cooperation to confront pressing global challenges, including the threat of terrorism. The strong people-to-people ties between our countries and our common values are a tremendous source of strength for our partnership.

### **Bilateral Economic Relations**

The United States seeks to expand trade in a relationship that is open and fair with a level playing field on both sides. Bilateral trade increased by \$12 billion in 2017, to \$126.1 billion, and two-way investment to \$45 billion. Since October 2018, Indian petroleum companies have placed orders for near 12 million barrels of crude oil from the United States with a value of approximately \$580 million. The total number of Indian students in the United States has more than doubled over the last decade, from 81,000 in 2008 to 186,000 in 2017. Last year Indian students in U.S. colleges and universities contributed \$6.54 billion to the U.S. economy.

### **India's Membership in International Organizations**

India and the United States share membership in a variety of international organizations, including the United Nations, G-20, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. The United States supports a reformed UN Security Council that includes India as a permanent member. India is an ASEAN dialogue partner, an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development partner under its Enhanced Engagement program, and an observer to the Organization of American States. India is also a member of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), of which the United States is a dialogue partner.

### **Bilateral Representation**

Principal U.S. embassy officials are listed on the embassy [website](#) and in the Department's Key Officers List.

India maintains an embassy in the United States at 2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-939-7000).



## United States Department of State

### U.S.-NEW ZEALAND RELATIONS

New Zealand is a strong partner and friend of the United States. The U.S. diplomatic presence in New Zealand dates back to the commissioning of the first U.S. Consul in 1838. Formal diplomatic relations were established in 1942, following the United Kingdom's recognition of New Zealand's domestic and external autonomy within the British Empire. During World War II, U.S. military personnel were stationed in New Zealand to prepare for battles such as Guadalcanal and Tarawa. The United States and New Zealand share common elements of history and culture and a commitment to democratic principles. New Zealand's relationship with the United States in the post-World War II period was closely associated with the 1951 Australia-New Zealand-United States (ANZUS) security treaty, under which signatories agreed to consult in case of an attack in the Pacific and to "act to meet the common danger." This changed in the 1980s, when New Zealand's implementation of a policy barring nuclear-armed and nuclear-powered warships from its ports effectively prevented practical alliance cooperation under ANZUS. In 1986, the United States suspended its ANZUS security obligations to New Zealand.

Bilateral ties have improved dramatically in the past several years. In 2010, the United States and New Zealand signed the Wellington Declaration, reaffirming close ties between the two countries and outlining future practical cooperation. This was enhanced in 2012 by the signing of the Washington Declaration, which strengthened the defense relationship by providing a framework and strategic guidance for security cooperation and defense dialogues. In November 2016, the destroyer USS Sampson visited New Zealand, the first bilateral ship visit in more than thirty years. The USS Sampson's visit took on additional

significance in the aftermath of the 7.8-magnitude Kaikoura earthquake. At the request of the New Zealand government, the USS Sampson diverted to the South Island and provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to affected communities.

The New Zealand government attaches significant importance to continued close political, economic, and social ties with the United States. New Zealand actively engages in peacekeeping and international security efforts around the world. The United States and New Zealand work together on a range of scientific areas, especially research in Antarctica. Christchurch is the staging area for joint logistical support operations serving U.S. permanent stations at McMurdo and the South Pole, as well as New Zealand's Scott Base. In late July 2018, the U.S. Congress passed the Knowledgeable Innovators and Worthy Investors (or KIWI) Act, which granted New Zealanders access to E1 and E2 entrepreneurship and investor visas. President Trump signed this act into law in early August 2018.

#### **U.S. Assistance to New Zealand**

The United States provides no development assistance to New Zealand.

#### **Bilateral Economic Relations**

Commercial ties between the United States and New Zealand are strong and growing. U.S. goods exports to New Zealand totaled \$3.92 billion in 2017, and the United States imported \$4.16 billion in goods from New Zealand. Bilateral trade in services stands at \$4.77 billion annually, yielding total annual bilateral trade of goods and services of approximately \$13 billion. U.S. exports to New Zealand include aircraft, machinery, agricultural products, vehicles, and optic and medical instruments. U.S. imports from New Zealand include frozen beef, caseins, milk protein concentrate, wine, and machinery. The United States and New Zealand have had a bilateral trade and investment agreement in place since 1992.

The United States is New Zealand's second most important investment partner, after Australia. The United States was the second largest source of foreign investment into New Zealand, accounting for almost \$5.5 billion in investment in 2017. The United States was the second most popular destination for New Zealand foreign investment, accounting for

15.4 percent of all investment in 2017 for a total of \$2.66 billion. U.S. direct investment in New Zealand is concentrated in the finance, insurance, and manufacturing sectors, but also includes the food/agriculture, mining, professional services, transportation, energy, and wholesale trade sectors. New Zealand foreign direct investment in the United States is led by the manufacturing and wholesale trade sectors. Over 300 U.S. companies have subsidiary branches in New Zealand. Many operate through local agents, and some are in association in joint ventures.

Approximately 330,000 U.S. travelers visited New Zealand in 2017 representing a 13.3 percent increase from the previous year, and more than 300,000 New Zealand visitors traveled to the United States – a doubling of visitors since 2008. New Zealand travelers spent nearly \$437 million while in the United States in 2017, representing a 16.5 percent increase in spending over the year prior.

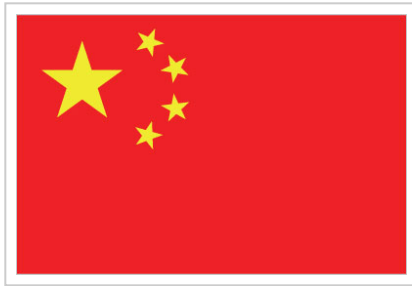
#### **New Zealand's Membership in International Organizations**

New Zealand and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, ASEAN Regional Forum, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization. New Zealand also belongs to the Pacific Islands Forum, of which the United States is a Dialogue Partner.

#### **Bilateral Representation**

Scott Brown is currently the U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand. Other principal embassy officials are listed in the Department's Key Officers List.

New Zealand maintains an **embassy** in the United States at 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington, DC 20008 (tel. 202-328-4800).




## EAST ASIA/SOUTHEAST ASIA :: CHINA

### Introduction :: CHINA

#### Background:

China's historical civilization dates from at least 1200 B.C.; from the 3rd century B.C. and for the next two millennia, China alternated between periods of unity and disunity under a succession of imperial dynasties. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, the country was beset by civil unrest, major famines, military defeats, and foreign occupation. After World War II, the Chinese Communist Party under MAO Zedong established an autocratic socialist system that, while ensuring China's sovereignty, imposed strict controls over everyday life and cost the lives of tens of millions of people. After 1978, MAO's successor DENG Xiaoping and other leaders focused on market-oriented economic development and by 2000 output had quadrupled. For much of the population, living standards have improved dramatically but political controls remain tight. Since the early 1990s, China has increased its global outreach and participation in international organizations.

Women's World Cup One-Pager : 

### Geography :: CHINA

#### Location:

Eastern Asia, bordering the East China Sea, Korea Bay, Yellow Sea, and South China Sea, between North Korea and Vietnam

#### Geographic coordinates:

35 00 N, 105 00 E

#### Map references:

Asia

#### Area:

**total:** 9,596,960 sq km

**land:** 9,326,410 sq km

**water:** 270,550 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 5

#### Area - comparative:

slightly smaller than the US

#### Area comparison map:



#### Land boundaries:

**total:** 22,457 km

**border countries (15):** Afghanistan 91 km, Bhutan 477 km, Burma 2129 km, India 2659 km, Kazakhstan 1765 km, North Korea 1352 km, Kyrgyzstan 1063 km, Laos 475 km, Mongolia 4630 km, Nepal 1389 km, Pakistan 438 km, Russia

(northeast) 4133 km, Russia (northwest) 46 km, Tajikistan 477 km, Vietnam 1297 km

**Coastline:**

14,500 km

**Maritime claims:**

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**exclusive economic zone:** 200 nm

**contiguous zone:** 24 nm

**continental shelf:** 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

**Climate:**

extremely diverse; tropical in south to subarctic in north

**Terrain:**

mostly mountains, high plateaus, deserts in west; plains, deltas, and hills in east

**Elevation:**

**mean elevation:** 1,840 m

**lowest point:** Turpan Pendi -154 m

**highest point:** Mount Everest (highest peak in Asia and highest point on earth above sea level) 8,848 m

**Natural resources:**

coal, iron ore, helium, petroleum, natural gas, arsenic, bismuth, cobalt, cadmium, ferrosilicon, gallium, germanium, hafnium, indium, lithium, mercury, tantalum, tellurium, tin, titanium, tungsten, antimony, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, selenium, strontium, vanadium, magnetite, aluminum, lead, zinc, rare earth elements, uranium, hydropower potential (world's largest), arable land

**Land use:**

**agricultural land:** 54.7% (2011 est.)

arable land: 11.3% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 1.6% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 41.8% (2011 est.)

**forest:** 22.3% (2011 est.)

**other:** 23% (2011 est.)

**Irrigated land:**

690,070 sq km (2012)

**Population distribution:**

overwhelming majority of the population is found in the eastern half of the country; the west, with its vast mountainous and desert areas, remains sparsely populated; though ranked first in the world in total population, overall density is less than that of many other countries in Asia and Europe; high population density is found along the Yangtze and Yellow River valleys, the Xi Jiang River delta, the Sichuan Basin (around Chengdu), in and around Beijing, and the industrial area around Shenyang

**Natural hazards:**

frequent typhoons (about five per year along southern and eastern coasts); damaging floods; tsunamis; earthquakes; droughts; land subsidence

**volcanism:** China contains some historically active volcanoes including Changbaishan (also known as Baitoushan, Baegdu, or P'aektu-san), Hainan Dao, and Kunlun although most have been relatively inactive in recent centuries

**Environment - current issues:**

air pollution (greenhouse gases, sulfur dioxide particulates) from reliance on coal produces acid rain; China is the world's largest single emitter of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels; water shortages, particularly in the north; water pollution from untreated wastes; coastal destruction due to land reclamation, industrial development, and aquaculture;

deforestation and habitat destruction; poor land management leads to soil erosion, landslides, floods, droughts, dust storms, and desertification; trade in endangered species

#### **Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling

**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

#### **Geography - note:**

**note 1:** world's fourth largest country (after Russia, Canada, and US) and largest country situated entirely in Asia; Mount Everest on the border with Nepal is the world's tallest peak above sea level

**note 2:** the largest cave chamber in the world is the Miao Room, in the Gebihe cave system at China's Ziyun Getu He Chuandong National Park, which encloses some 10.78 million cu m (380.7 million cu ft) of volume

#### **People and Society :: CHINA**

#### **Population:**

1,384,688,986 (July 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 1

#### **Nationality:**

**noun:** Chinese (singular and plural)

**adjective:** Chinese

#### **Ethnic groups:**

Han Chinese 91.6%, Zhuang 1.3%, other (includes Hui, Manchu, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Tujia, Tibetan, Mongol, Dong, Buyei, Yao, Bai, Korean, Hani, Li, Kazakh, Dai, and other nationalities) 7.1% (2010 est.)

**note:** the Chinese Government officially recognizes 56 ethnic groups

#### **Languages:**

Standard Chinese or Mandarin (official; Putonghua, based on the Beijing dialect), Yue (Cantonese), Wu (Shanghainese), Minbei (Fuzhou), Minnan (Hokkien-Taiwanese), Xiang, Gan, Hakka dialects, minority languages (see Ethnic groups entry)

**note:** Zhuang is official in Guangxi Zhuang, Yue is official in Guangdong, Mongolian is official in Nei Mongol, Uighur is official in Xinjiang Uygur, Kyrgyz is official in Xinjiang Uygur, and Tibetan is official in Xizang (Tibet)

#### **Religions:**

Buddhist 18.2%, Christian 5.1%, Muslim 1.8%, folk religion 21.9%, Hindu < 0.1%, Jewish < 0.1%, other 0.7% (includes Daoist (Taoist)), unaffiliated 52.2% (2010 est.)

**note:** officially atheist

#### **Age structure:**

**0-14 years:** 17.22% (male 128,270,371 /female 110,120,535)

**15-24 years:** 12.32% (male 91,443,139 /female 79,181,726)

**25-54 years:** 47.84% (male 338,189,015 /female 324,180,103)

**55-64 years:** 11.35% (male 79,340,391 /female 77,857,806)

**65 years and over:** 11.27% (male 74,277,631 /female 81,828,269) (2018 est.)

**population pyramid:** 

#### **Dependency ratios:**

**total dependency ratio:** 37.7 (2015 est.)



**youth dependency ratio:** 24.3 (2015 est.)

**elderly dependency ratio:** 13.3 (2015 est.)

**potential support ratio:** 7.5 (2015 est.)

data do not include Hong Kong, Macau, and Taiwan

**Median age:**

**total:** 37.7 years

**male:** 36.8 years

**female:** 38.8 years (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 64

**Population growth rate:**

0.37% (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 165

**Birth rate:**

12.1 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 161

**Death rate:**

8 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 89

**Net migration rate:**

-0.4 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 121

**Population distribution:**

overwhelming majority of the population is found in the eastern half of the country; the west, with its vast mountainous and desert areas, remains sparsely populated; though ranked first in the world in total population, overall density is less than that of many other countries in Asia and Europe; high population density is found along the Yangtze and Yellow River valleys, the Xi Jiang River delta, the Sichuan Basin (around Chengdu), in and around Beijing, and the industrial area around Shenyang

**Urbanization:**

**urban population:** 59.2% of total population (2018)

**rate of urbanization:** 2.42% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

**note:** data do not include Hong Kong and Macau

**Major urban areas - population:**

25.582 million Shanghai, 19.618 million BEIJING (capital), 14.838 million Chongqing, 12.683 million Guangdong, 13.215 million Tianjin, 11.908 million Shenzhen (2018)

**Sex ratio:**

**at birth:** 1.13 male(s)/female

**0-14 years:** 1.16 male(s)/female

**15-24 years:** 1.15 male(s)/female

**25-54 years:** 1.04 male(s)/female

**55-64 years:** 1.02 male(s)/female

**65 years and over:** 0.91 male(s)/female

**total population:** 1.06 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

**Maternal mortality rate:**

27 deaths/100,000 live births (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 118

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 11.8 deaths/1,000 live births

**male:** 12.2 deaths/1,000 live births

**female:** 11.4 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 118

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 75.8 years

**male:** 73.7 years

**female:** 78.1 years (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 100

**Total fertility rate:**

1.6 children born/woman (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 181

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

84.5% (2017)

**Health expenditures:**

5.5% of GDP (2014)

**country comparison to the world:** 125

**Physicians density:**

1.79 physicians/1,000 population (2015)

**Hospital bed density:**

4.2 beds/1,000 population (2012)

**Drinking water source:**

**improved:**

urban: 97.5% of population

rural: 93% of population

total: 95.5% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 2.5% of population

rural: 7% of population

total: 4.5% of population (2015 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:**

**improved:**

urban: 86.6% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 63.7% of population (2015 est.)

total: 76.5% of population (2015 est.)

**unimproved:**

urban: 13.4% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 36.3% of population (2015 est.)

total: 23.5% of population (2015 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

NA

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

NA

**Major infectious diseases:**

**degree of risk:** intermediate (2016)

**food or waterborne diseases:** bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A, and typhoid fever (2016)

**vectorborne diseases:** Japanese encephalitis (2016)

**soil contact diseases:** hantaviral hemorrhagic fever with renal syndrome (HFRS) (2016)

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

6.2% (2016)

**country comparison to the world:** 169

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

2.4% (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 108

**Education expenditures:**

NA

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write (2015 est.)

**total population:** 96.4%

**male:** 98.2%

**female:** 94.5% (2015 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 14 years

**male:** 14 years

**female:** 14 years (2015)

**People - note:**

in October 2015, the Chinese Government announced that it would change its rules to allow all couples to have two children, loosening a 1979 mandate that restricted many couples to one child; the new policy was implemented on 1 January 2016 to address China's rapidly aging population and economic needs

**Government :: CHINA**

**Country name:****conventional long form:** People's Republic of China**conventional short form:** China**local long form:** Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo**local short form:** Zhongguo**abbreviation:** PRC**etymology:** English name derives from the Qin (Chin) rulers of the 3rd century B.C., who comprised the first imperial dynasty of ancient China; the Chinese name Zhongguo translates as "Central Nation" or "Middle Kingdom"**Government type:**

communist party-led state

**Capital:****name:** Beijing**geographic coordinates:** 39 55 N, 116 23 E**time difference:** UTC+8 (13 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)**etymology:** the Chinese meaning is "Northern Capital"**note:** despite its size, all of China falls within one time zone**Administrative divisions:**

23 provinces (sheng, singular and plural), 5 autonomous regions (zizhiqu, singular and plural), and 4 municipalities (shi, singular and plural)

**provinces:** Anhui, Fujian, Gansu, Guangdong, Guizhou, Hainan, Hebei, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Qinghai, Shaanxi, Shandong, Shanxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Zhejiang; (see note on Taiwan);**autonomous regions:** Guangxi, Nei Mongol (Inner Mongolia), Ningxia, Xinjiang Uygur, Xizang (Tibet);**municipalities:** Beijing, Chongqing, Shanghai, Tianjin**note:** China considers Taiwan its 23rd province; see separate entries for the special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau**Independence:**

1 October 1949 (People's Republic of China established); notable earlier dates: 221 B.C. (unification under the Qin Dynasty); 1 January 1912 (Qing Dynasty replaced by the Republic of China)

**National holiday:**

National Day (anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China), 1 October (1949)

**Constitution:****history:** several previous; latest promulgated 4 December 1982**amendments:** proposed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress or supported by more than one-fifth of the National People's Congress membership; passage requires more than two-thirds majority vote of the Congress membership; amended several times, last in 2018 (2018)**Legal system:**

civil law influenced by Soviet and continental European civil law systems; legislature retains power to interpret statutes; note - in early 2017, the National People's Congress took the first step in adopting a new civil code by passing the General Provisions of the Civil Law

**International law organization participation:**

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCT

**Citizenship:**

**citizenship by birth:** no

**citizenship by descent only:** least one parent must be a citizen of China

**dual citizenship recognized:** no

**residency requirement for naturalization:** while naturalization is theoretically possible, in practical terms it is extremely difficult; residency is required but not specified

**Suffrage:**

18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** President XI Jinping (since 14 March 2013); Vice President WANG Qishan (since 17 March 2018)

**head of government:** Premier LI Keqiang (since 16 March 2013); Executive Vice Premiers HAN Zheng (since 19 March 2018), SUN Chunlan (since 19 March 2018), LIU He (since 19 March 2018), HU Chunhua (since 19 March 2018)

**cabinet:** State Council appointed by National People's Congress

**elections/appointments:** president and vice president indirectly elected by National People's Congress for a 5-year term (unlimited terms); election last held on 17 March 2018 (next to be held in March 2023); premier nominated by president, confirmed by National People's Congress

**election results:** XI Jinping reelected president; National People's Congress vote - 2,970 (unanimously); WANG Qishan elected vice president with 2,969 votes

**Legislative branch:**

**description:** unicameral National People's Congress or Quanguo Renmin Daibiao Dahui (maximum of 3,000 seats; members indirectly elected by municipal, regional, and provincial people's congresses, and the People's Liberation Army; members serve 5-year terms); note - in practice, only members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), its 8 allied independent parties, and CCP-approved independent candidates are elected

**elections:** last held in December 2017-February 2018 (next to be held in late 2022 to early 2023)

**election results:** percent of vote - NA; seats by party - NA; composition - men 2,238, women 742, percent of women 24.9%

**Judicial branch:**

**highest courts:** Supreme People's Court (consists of over 340 judges, including the chief justice and 13 grand justices organized into a civil committee and tribunals for civil, economic, administrative, complaint and appeal, and communication and transportation cases)

**judge selection and term of office:** chief justice appointed by the People's National Congress (NPC); limited to 2 consecutive 5-year-terms; other justices and judges nominated by the chief justice and appointed by the Standing Committee of the NPC; term of other justices and judges determined by the NPC

**subordinate courts:** Higher People's Courts; Intermediate People's Courts; District and County People's Courts; Autonomous Region People's Courts; International Commercial Courts; Special People's Courts for military, maritime, transportation, and forestry issues

note: in late 2014, China unveiled a multi-year judicial reform program; progress continued in 2018

**Political parties and leaders:**

Chinese Communist Party or CCP [XI Jinping]

**note:** China has 8 nominally independent small parties controlled by the CCP

**International organization participation:**

ADB, AfDB (nonregional member), APEC, Arctic Council (observer), ARF, ASEAN (dialogue partner), BIS, BRICS, CDB, CICA, EAS, FAO, FATF, G-20, G-24 (observer), G-5, G-77, IADB, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM (observer), IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, LAIA (observer), MIGA, MINURSO, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, NAM (observer), NSG, OAS (observer), OPCW, Pacific Alliance (observer),

PCA, PIF (partner), SAARC (observer), SCO, SICA (observer), UN, UNAMID, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNFICYP, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNMIL, UNMISS, UNOCI, UN Security Council (permanent), UNTSO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO, ZC

#### **Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador CUI Tiankai (since 3 April 2013)

**chancery:** 3505 International Place NW, Washington, DC 20008

**telephone:** [1] (202) 495-2266

**FAX:** [1] (202) 495-2138

**consulate(s) general:** Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco

#### **Diplomatic representation from the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Terry BRANSTAD (since 12 July 2017)

**embassy:** 55 An Jia Lou Lu, 100600 Beijing

**mailing address:** PO AP 96521

**telephone:** [86] (10) 8531-3000

**FAX:** [86] (10) 8531-3300

**consulate(s) general:** Chengdu, Guangzhou, Shanghai, Shenyang, Wuhan

#### **Flag description:**

red with a large yellow five-pointed star and four smaller yellow five-pointed stars (arranged in a vertical arc toward the middle of the flag) in the upper hoist-side corner; the color red represents revolution, while the stars symbolize the four social classes - the working class, the peasantry, the urban petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie (capitalists) - united under the Communist Party of China

#### **National symbol(s):**

dragon, giant panda; national colors: red, yellow

#### **National anthem:**

**name:** "Yiyongjun Jinxingqu" (The March of the Volunteers)

**lyrics/music:** TIAN Han/NIE Er

**note:** adopted 1949; the anthem, though banned during the Cultural Revolution, is more commonly known as "Zhongguo Guoge" (Chinese National Song); it was originally the theme song to the 1935 Chinese movie, "Sons and Daughters in a Time of Storm"

0:00 / 0:43

#### **Economy :: CHINA**

##### **Economy - overview:**

Since the late 1970s, China has moved from a closed, centrally planned system to a more market-oriented one that plays a major global role. China has implemented reforms in a gradualist fashion, resulting in efficiency gains that have contributed to a more than tenfold increase in GDP since 1978. Reforms began with the phaseout of collectivized agriculture, and expanded to include the gradual liberalization of prices, fiscal decentralization, increased autonomy for state enterprises, growth of the private sector, development of stock markets and a modern banking system, and opening to foreign trade and investment. China continues to pursue an industrial policy, state support of key sectors, and a restrictive investment regime. From 2013 to 2017, China had one of the fastest growing economies in the world, averaging slightly more than 7% real growth per year. Measured on a purchasing power parity (PPP) basis that adjusts for price differences, China in 2017 stood as the largest economy in the world, surpassing the US in 2014 for the first time in modern history. China became the world's largest exporter in 2010, and the largest trading nation in 2013. Still, China's per capita income is below the world average.

In July 2005 moved to an exchange rate system that references a basket of currencies. From mid-2005 to late 2008, the renminbi (RMB) appreciated more than 20% against the US dollar, but the exchange rate remained virtually pegged to the dollar from the onset of the global financial crisis until June 2010, when Beijing announced it would resume a gradual appreciation. From 2013 until early 2015, the renminbi held steady against the dollar, but it depreciated 13% from mid-2015 until end-2016 amid strong capital outflows; in 2017 the RMB resumed appreciating against the dollar – roughly 7% from end-of-2016 to end-of-2017. In 2015, the People's Bank of China announced it would continue to carefully push for full convertibility of the renminbi, after the currency was accepted as part of the IMF's special drawing rights basket. However, since late 2015 the Chinese Government has strengthened capital controls and oversight of overseas investments to better manage the exchange rate and maintain financial stability.

The Chinese Government faces numerous economic challenges including: (a) reducing its high domestic savings rate and correspondingly low domestic household consumption; (b) managing its high corporate debt burden to maintain financial stability; (c) controlling off-balance sheet local government debt used to finance infrastructure stimulus; (d) facilitating higher-wage job opportunities for the aspiring middle class, including rural migrants and college graduates, while maintaining competitiveness; (e) dampening speculative investment in the real estate sector without sharply slowing the economy; (f) reducing industrial overcapacity; and (g) raising productivity growth rates through the more efficient allocation of capital and state-support for innovation. Economic development has progressed further in coastal provinces than in the interior, and by 2016 more than 169.3 million migrant workers and their dependents had relocated to urban areas to find work. One consequence of China's population control policy known as the "one-child policy" - which was relaxed in 2016 to permit all families to have two children - is that China is now one of the most rapidly aging countries in the world. Deterioration in the environment - notably air pollution, soil erosion, and the steady fall of the water table, especially in the North - is another long-term problem. China continues to lose arable land because of erosion and urbanization. The Chinese Government is seeking to add energy production capacity from sources other than coal and oil, focusing on natural gas, nuclear, and clean energy development. In 2016, China ratified the Paris Agreement, a multilateral agreement to combat climate change, and committed to peak its carbon dioxide emissions between 2025 and 2030.

The government's 13th Five-Year Plan, unveiled in March 2016, emphasizes the need to increase innovation and boost domestic consumption to make the economy less dependent on government investment, exports, and heavy industry. However, China has made more progress on subsidizing innovation than rebalancing the economy. Beijing has committed to giving the market a more decisive role in allocating resources, but the Chinese Government's policies continue to favor state-owned enterprises and emphasize stability. Chinese leaders in 2010 pledged to double China's GDP by 2020, and the 13th Five Year Plan includes annual economic growth targets of at least 6.5% through 2020 to achieve that goal. In recent years, China has renewed its support for state-owned enterprises in sectors considered important to "economic security," explicitly looking to foster globally competitive industries. Chinese leaders also have undermined some market-oriented reforms by reaffirming the "dominant" role of the state in the economy, a stance that threatens to discourage private initiative and make the economy less efficient over time. The slight acceleration in economic growth in 2017—the first such uptick since 2010—gives Beijing more latitude to pursue its economic reforms, focusing on financial sector deleveraging and its Supply-Side Structural Reform agenda, first announced in late 2015.

#### **GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$23.21 trillion (2017 est.)

\$21.72 trillion (2016 est.)

\$20.35 trillion (2015 est.)

**note:** data are in 2017 dollars

#### **country comparison to the world: 1**

#### **GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$12.01 trillion (2017 est.)

**note:** because China's exchange rate is determined by fiat rather than by market forces, the official exchange rate measure of GDP is not an accurate measure of China's output; GDP at the official exchange rate substantially understates the actual level of China's output vis-a-vis the rest of the world; in China's situation, GDP at purchasing power parity provides the best measure for comparing output across countries

#### **GDP - real growth rate:**

6.9% (2017 est.)

6.7% (2016 est.)

6.9% (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 21**

**GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$16,700 (2017 est.)

\$15,700 (2016 est.)

\$14,800 (2015 est.)

**note:** data are in 2017 dollars

**country comparison to the world: 105**

**Gross national saving:**

45.8% of GDP (2017 est.)

45.9% of GDP (2016 est.)

47.5% of GDP (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 6**

**GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 39.1% (2017 est.)

**government consumption:** 14.5% (2017 est.)

**investment in fixed capital:** 42.7% (2017 est.)

**investment in inventories:** 1.7% (2017 est.)

**exports of goods and services:** 20.4% (2017 est.)

**imports of goods and services:** -18.4% (2017 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 7.9% (2017 est.)

**industry:** 40.5% (2017 est.)

**services:** 51.6% (2017 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

world leader in gross value of agricultural output; rice, wheat, potatoes, corn, tobacco, peanuts, tea, apples, cotton, pork, mutton, eggs; fish, shrimp

**Industries:**

world leader in gross value of industrial output; mining and ore processing, iron, steel, aluminum, and other metals, coal; machine building; armaments; textiles and apparel; petroleum; cement; chemicals; fertilizer; consumer products (including footwear, toys, and electronics); food processing; transportation equipment, including automobiles, railcars and locomotives, ships, aircraft; telecommunications equipment, commercial space launch vehicles, satellites

**Industrial production growth rate:**

6.1% (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 40**

**Labor force:**

806.7 million (2017 est.)

**note:** by the end of 2012, China's working age population (15-64 years) was 1.004 billion

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Labor force - by occupation:**



**agriculture:** 27.7%

**industry:** 28.8%

**services:** 43.5% (2016 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**

3.9% (2017 est.)

4% (2016 est.)

**note:** data are for registered urban unemployment, which excludes private enterprises and migrants

**country comparison to the world:** 48

**Population below poverty line:**

3.3% (2016 est.)

**note:** in 2011, China set a new poverty line at RMB 2300 (approximately US \$400)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** 2.1%

**highest 10%:** 31.4% (2012)

**note:** data are for urban households only

**Distribution of family income - Gini index:**

46.5 (2016 est.)

46.2 (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 31

**Budget:**

**revenues:** 2.553 trillion (2017 est.)

**expenditures:** 3.008 trillion (2017 est.)

**Taxes and other revenues:**

21.3% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 141

**Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

-3.8% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 152

**Public debt:**

47% of GDP (2017 est.)

44.2% of GDP (2016 est.)

**note:** official data; data cover both central and local government debt, including debt officially recognized by China's National Audit Office report in 2011; data exclude policy bank bonds, Ministry of Railway debt, and China Asset Management Company debt

**country comparison to the world:** 111

**Fiscal year:**

calendar year

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

1.6% (2017 est.)

2% (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 88**

**Central bank discount rate:**

2.25% (5 December 2017 est.)

2.25% (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 117**

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

4.35% (31 December 2017 est.)

4.35% (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 160**

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$8.351 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$7.001 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Stock of broad money:**

\$8.351 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$7.001 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$27.34 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$23.02 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$7.335 trillion (December 2016 est.)

\$8.234 trillion (December 2015 est.)

\$8.518 trillion (31 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Current account balance:**

\$164.9 billion (2017 est.)

\$202.2 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 3**

**Exports:**

\$2.216 trillion (2017 est.)

\$1.99 trillion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Exports - partners:**

US 19%, Hong Kong 12.4%, Japan 6%, South Korea 4.5% (2017)

**Exports - commodities:**

electrical and other machinery, including computers and telecommunications equipment, apparel, furniture, textiles

**Imports:**

\$1.74 trillion (2017 est.)

\$1.501 trillion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Imports - commodities:**

electrical and other machinery, including integrated circuits and other computer components, oil and mineral fuels; optical and medical equipment, metal ores, motor vehicles; soybeans

**Imports - partners:**

South Korea 9.7%, Japan 9.1%, US 8.5%, Germany 5.3%, Australia 5.1% (2017)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$3.236 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$3.098 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Debt - external:**

\$1.598 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.429 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 14**

**Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$1.523 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.391 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 7**

**Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$1.383 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.227 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 10**

**Exchange rates:**

Renminbi yuan (RMB) per US dollar -

7.76 (2017 est.)

6.6446 (2016 est.)

6.2275 (2015 est.)

6.1434 (2014 est.)

6.1958 (2013 est.)

**Energy :: CHINA****Electricity access:**

**population without electricity:** 1.2 million (2016)

**electrification - total population:** 99.9% (2016)

**electrification - urban areas:** 100% (2016)

**electrification - rural areas:** 99.8% (2016)

**Electricity - production:**

5.883 trillion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Electricity - consumption:**

5.564 trillion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Electricity - exports:**

18.91 billion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 10**

**Electricity - imports:**

6.185 billion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 33**

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

1.653 billion kW (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

62% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 124**

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

2% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 25**

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

18% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 93**

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

18% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 47**

**Crude oil - production:**

3.838 million bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 7**

**Crude oil - exports:**

57,310 bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 40**

**Crude oil - imports:**

6.71 million bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

25.63 billion bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 12**

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

11.51 million bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

12.47 million bbl/day (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

848,400 bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 9**

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

1.16 million bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 4**

**Natural gas - production:**

145.9 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 6**

**Natural gas - consumption:**

238.6 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 3**

**Natural gas - exports:**

3.37 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 35**

**Natural gas - imports:**

97.63 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 3**

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

5.44 trillion cu m (1 January 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 9**

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

11.67 billion Mt (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Communications :: CHINA**

**Telephones - fixed lines:**

**total subscriptions: 193.762 million (2017 est.)**

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 14 (2017 est.)**

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

**total subscriptions: 1,474,097,000 (2017 est.)**

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 107 (2017 est.)**

**country comparison to the world: 1**

**Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** China has become the largest Internet market in the world, with the majority of users accessing the Internet through mobile devices; moderate growth is predicted over the next five years in the fixed broadband segment; one of the biggest drivers of commercial growth is its increasing urbanisation rate as rural residents move to cities; 98.6% of China's Internet users access the Internet through mobile devices; China will be the world's largest 5G market

**domestic:** 14 per 100 fixed line and 107 per 100 mobile-cellular; a domestic satellite system with several earth stations is in place in 2018

**international:** country code - 86; a number of submarine cables provide connectivity to Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the US; satellite earth stations - 7 (5 Intelsat - 4 Pacific Ocean and 1 Indian Ocean; 1 Intersputnik - Indian Ocean region; and 1 Inmarsat - Pacific and Indian Ocean regions)

**Broadcast media:**

all broadcast media are owned by, or affiliated with, the Communist Party of China or a government agency; no privately owned TV or radio stations; state-run Chinese Central TV, provincial, and municipal stations offer more than 2,000 channels; the Central Propaganda Department sends directives to all domestic media outlets to guide its reporting with the government maintaining authority to approve all programming; foreign-made TV programs must be approved prior to broadcast; increasingly, Chinese turn to online and satellite television to access Chinese and international films and television shows

**Internet country code:**

.cn

**Internet users:**

**total:** 730,723,960 (July 2016 est.)

**percent of population:** 53.2% (July 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 1

**Broadband - fixed subscriptions:**

**total:** 378.54 million (2017 est.)

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants:** 27 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 1

**Transportation :: CHINA**

**National air transport system:**

**number of registered air carriers:** 56 (2015)

**inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers:** 2,890 (2015)

**annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers:** 436,183,969 (2015)

**annual freight traffic on registered air carriers:** 19.806 billion mt-km (2015)

**Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:**

B (2016)

**Airports:**

507 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 14

**Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 463 (2017)

**over 3,047 m:** 71 (2017)

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 158 (2017)

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 123 (2017)

**914 to 1,523 m:** 25 (2017)

**under 914 m:** 86 (2017)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:**

**total:** 44 (2013)

**over 3,047 m:** 4 (2013)

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 7 (2013)

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 6 (2013)

**914 to 1,523 m:** 9 (2013)

**under 914 m:** 18 (2013)

**Heliports:**

47 (2013)

**Pipelines:**

76000 km gas, 30400 km crude oil, 27700 km refined petroleum products, 797000 km water (2018)

**Railways:**

**total:** 131,000 km 1.435-m gauge (80,000 km electrified); 102,000 traditional, 29,000 high-speed (2018)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

**Roadways:**

**total:** 4,773,500 km (2017)

**paved:** 4,338,600 km (includes 136,500 km of expressways) (2017)

**unpaved:** 622,000 km (2017)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

**Waterways:**

110,000 km (navigable waterways) (2011)

**country comparison to the world:** 1

**Merchant marine:**

**total:** 4,610

**by type:** bulk carrier 1114, container ship 242, general cargo 741, oil tanker 503, other 2010 (2018)

**country comparison to the world:** 4

**Ports and terminals:**

**major seaport(s):** Dalian, Ningbo, Qingdao, Qinhuangdao, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Tianjin

**container port(s) (TEUs):** Dalian (9,707,000), Guangzhou (18,858,000), Ningbo (24,607,000), Qingdao (18,262,000), Shanghai (40,233,000), Shenzhen (25,208,000), Tianjin (15,040,000) (2017)

**LNG terminal(s) (import):** Fujian, Guangdong, Jiangsu, Shandong, Shanghai, Tangshan, Zhejiang

**river port(s):** Guangzhou (Pearl)

**Transportation - note:**

seven of the world's ten largest container ports are in China

**Military and Security :: CHINA**

**Military expenditures:**

2% of GDP (2017)

1.9% of GDP (2016)

1.95% of GDP (2015)

1.9% of GDP (2014)

1.85% of GDP (2013)

**country comparison to the world: 52**

#### **Military branches:**

People's Liberation Army (PLA): Army, Navy (PLAN, includes marines and naval aviation), Air Force (PLAAF, includes airborne forces), Rocket Force (strategic missile force), and Strategic Support Force (space and cyber forces); People's Armed Police (PAP, includes Coast Guard); PLA Reserve Force (2019)

#### **Military service age and obligation:**

18-22 years of age for selective compulsory military service, with a 2-year service obligation; no minimum age for voluntary service (all officers are volunteers); 18-19 years of age for women high school graduates who meet requirements for specific military jobs (2018)

#### **Transnational Issues :: CHINA**

#### **Disputes - international:**

continuing talks and confidence-building measures work toward reducing tensions over Kashmir that nonetheless remains militarized with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; China and India continue their security and foreign policy dialogue started in 2005 related to the dispute over most of their rugged, militarized boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, and other matters; China claims most of India's Arunachal Pradesh to the base of the Himalayas; lacking any treaty describing the boundary, Bhutan and China continue negotiations to establish a common boundary alignment to resolve territorial disputes arising from substantial cartographic discrepancies, the most contentious of which lie in Bhutan's west along China's Chumbi salient; Burmese forces attempting to dig in to the largely autonomous Shan State to rout local militias tied to the drug trade, prompts local residents to periodically flee into neighboring Yunnan Province in China; Chinese maps show an international boundary symbol off the coasts of the littoral states of the South China Seas, where China has interrupted Vietnamese hydrocarbon exploration; China asserts sovereignty over Scarborough Reef along with the Philippines and Taiwan, and over the Spratly Islands together with Malaysia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Brunei; the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea eased tensions in the Spratlys but is not the legally binding code of conduct sought by some parties; Vietnam and China continue to expand construction of facilities in the Spratlys and in March 2005, the national oil companies of China, the Philippines, and Vietnam signed a joint accord on marine seismic activities in the Spratly Islands; China occupies some of the Paracel Islands also claimed by Vietnam and Taiwan; the Japanese-administered Senkaku Islands are also claimed by China and Taiwan; certain islands in the Yalu and Tumen Rivers are in dispute with North Korea; North Korea and China seek to stem illegal migration to China by North Koreans, fleeing privations and oppression, by building a fence along portions of the border and imprisoning North Koreans deported by China; China and Russia have demarcated the once disputed islands at the Amur and Ussuri confluence and in the Argun River in accordance with their 2004 Agreement; China and Tajikistan have begun demarcating the revised boundary agreed to in the delimitation of 2002; the decade-long demarcation of the China-Vietnam land boundary was completed in 2009; citing environmental, cultural, and social concerns, China has reconsidered construction of 13 dams on the Salween River, but energy-starved Burma, with backing from Thailand, remains intent on building five hydro-electric dams downstream despite regional and international protests; Chinese and Hong Kong authorities met in March 2008 to resolve ownership and use of lands recovered in Shenzhen River channelization, including 96-hectare Lok Ma Chau Loop

#### **Refugees and internally displaced persons:**

**refugees (country of origin):** 321,502 (Vietnam), undetermined (North Korea) (2017)

**IDPs:** undetermined (2014)

#### **Trafficking in persons:**

**current situation:** China is a source, transit, and destination country for men, women, and children subjected to sex trafficking and forced labor; Chinese adults and children are forced into prostitution and various forms of forced labor, including begging and working in brick kilns, coal mines, and factories; women and children are recruited from rural areas and taken to urban centers for sexual exploitation, often lured by criminal syndicates or gangs with fraudulent job offers; state-sponsored forced labor, where detainees work for up to four years often with no remuneration, continues to be a

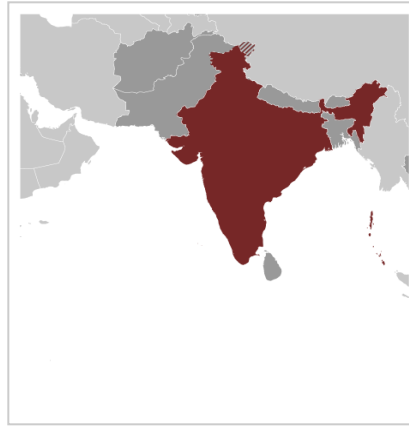
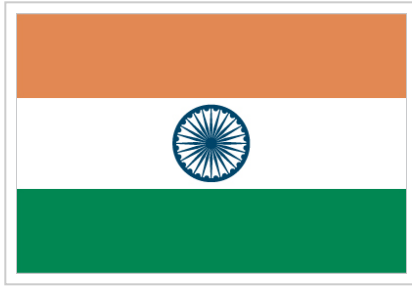


serious concern; Chinese men, women, and children also may be subjected to conditions of sex trafficking and forced labor worldwide, particularly in overseas Chinese communities; women and children are trafficked to China from neighboring countries, as well as Africa and the Americas, for forced labor and prostitution

**tier rating:** Tier 2 Watch List - China does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so; official data for 2014 states that 194 alleged traffickers were arrested and at least 35 were convicted, but the government's conflation of human trafficking with other crimes makes it difficult to assess law enforcement efforts to investigate and to prosecute trafficking offenses according to international law; despite reports of complicity, no government officials were investigated, prosecuted, or convicted for their roles in trafficking offenses; authorities did not adequately protect victims and did not provide the data needed to ascertain the number of victims identified or assisted or the services provided; the National People's Congress ratified a decision to abolish "reform through labor" in 2013, but some continued to operate as state-sponsored drug detention or "custody and education" centers that force inmates to perform manual labor; some North Korean refugees continued to be forcibly repatriated as illegal economic migrants, despite reports that some were trafficking victims (2015)

**Illicit drugs:**

major transshipment point for heroin produced in the Golden Triangle region of Southeast Asia; growing domestic consumption of synthetic drugs, and heroin from Southeast and Southwest Asia; source country for methamphetamine and heroin chemical precursors, despite new regulations on its large chemical industry; more people believed to be convicted and executed for drug offences than anywhere else in the world, according to NGOs



## SOUTH ASIA :: INDIA

### Introduction :: INDIA

#### Background:

The Indus Valley civilization, one of the world's oldest, flourished during the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C. and extended into northwestern India. Aryan tribes from the northwest infiltrated the Indian subcontinent about 1500 B.C.; their merger with the earlier Dravidian inhabitants created the classical Indian culture. The Maurya Empire of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. - which reached its zenith under ASHOKA - united much of South Asia. The Golden Age ushered in by the Gupta dynasty (4th to 6th centuries A.D.) saw a flowering of Indian science, art, and culture. Islam spread across the subcontinent over a period of 700 years. In the 10th and 11th centuries, Turks and Afghans invaded India and established the Delhi Sultanate. In the early 16th century, the Emperor BABUR established the Mughal Dynasty, which ruled India for more than three centuries. European explorers began establishing footholds in India during the 16th century.

By the 19th century, Great Britain had become the dominant political power on the subcontinent and India was seen as the "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire. The British Indian Army played a vital role in both World Wars. Years of nonviolent resistance to British rule, led by Mohandas GANDHI and Jawaharlal NEHRU, eventually resulted in Indian independence in 1947. Large-scale communal violence took place before and after the subcontinent partition into two separate states - India and Pakistan. The neighboring countries have fought three wars since independence, the last of which was in 1971 and resulted in East Pakistan becoming the separate nation of Bangladesh. India's nuclear weapons tests in 1998 emboldened Pakistan to conduct its own tests that same year. In November 2008, terrorists originating from Pakistan conducted a series of coordinated attacks in Mumbai, India's financial capital. India faces pressing problems such as environmental degradation, extensive poverty, and widespread corruption; however, economic growth following the launch of economic reforms in 1991, a massive youthful population, and a strategic geographic location are contributing to India's emergence as a regional and global power.

### Geography :: INDIA

#### Location:

Southern Asia, bordering the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal, between Burma and Pakistan

#### Geographic coordinates:

20 00 N, 77 00 E

#### Map references:

Asia

#### Area:

**total:** 3,287,263 sq km

**land:** 2,973,193 sq km

**water:** 314,070 sq km

**country comparison to the world:** 8

#### Area - comparative:

slightly more than one-third the size of the US

**Area comparison map:**



**Land boundaries:**

**total:** 13,888 km

**border countries (6):** Bangladesh 4142 km, Bhutan 659 km, Burma 1468 km, China 2659 km, Nepal 1770 km, Pakistan 3190 km

**Coastline:**

7,000 km

**Maritime claims:**

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**exclusive economic zone:** 200 nm

**contiguous zone:** 24 nm

**continental shelf:** 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

**Climate:**

varies from tropical monsoon in south to temperate in north

**Terrain:**

upland plain (Deccan Plateau) in south, flat to rolling plain along the Ganges, deserts in west, Himalayas in north

**Elevation:**

**mean elevation:** 160 m

**lowest point:** Indian Ocean 0 m

**highest point:** Kanchenjunga 8,586 m

**Natural resources:**

coal (fourth-largest reserves in the world), antimony, iron ore, lead, manganese, mica, bauxite, rare earth elements, titanium ore, chromite, natural gas, diamonds, petroleum, limestone, arable land

**Land use:**

**agricultural land:** 60.5% (2011 est.)

arable land: 52.8% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 4.2% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 3.5% (2011 est.)

**forest:** 23.1% (2011 est.)

**other:** 16.4% (2011 est.)

**Irrigated land:**

667,000 sq km (2012)

**Population distribution:**

with the notable exception of the deserts in the northwest, including the Thar Desert, and the mountain fringe in the north, a very high population density exists throughout most of the country; the core of the population is in the north along the banks of the Ganges, with other river valleys and southern coastal areas also having large population concentrations

**Natural hazards:**

droughts; flash floods, as well as widespread and destructive flooding from monsoonal rains; severe thunderstorms; earthquakes

**volcanism:** Barren Island (354 m) in the Andaman Sea has been active in recent years

## Environment - current issues:

deforestation; soil erosion; overgrazing; desertification; air pollution from industrial effluents and vehicle emissions; water pollution from raw sewage and runoff of agricultural pesticides; tap water is not potable throughout the country; huge and growing population is overstraining natural resources; preservation and quality of forests; biodiversity loss

## Environment - international agreements:

**party to:** Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling

**signed, but not ratified:** none of the selected agreements

## Geography - note:

dominates South Asian subcontinent; near important Indian Ocean trade routes; Kanchenjunga, third tallest mountain in the world, lies on the border with Nepal

## People and Society :: INDIA

### Population:

1,296,834,042 (July 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

### Nationality:

**noun:** Indian(s)

**adjective:** Indian

### Ethnic groups:

Indo-Aryan 72%, Dravidian 25%, Mongoloid and other 3% (2000)

### Languages:

Hindi 43.6%, Bengali 8%, Marathi 6.9%, Telugu 6.7%, Tamil 5.7%, Gujarati 4.6%, Urdu 4.2%, Kannada 3.6%, Odia 3.1%, Malayalam 2.9%, Punjabi 2.7%, Assamese 1.3%, Maithili 1.1%, other 5.6% (2011 est.)

**note:** English enjoys the status of subsidiary official language but is the most important language for national, political, and commercial communication; there are 22 other officially recognized languages: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Nepali, Odia, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu; Hindustani is a popular variant of Hindi/Urdu spoken widely throughout northern India but is not an official language

### Religions:

Hindu 79.8%, Muslim 14.2%, Christian 2.3%, Sikh 1.7%, other and unspecified 2% (2011 est.)

### Age structure:

**0-14 years:** 26.98% (male 185,736,879 /female 164,194,080)

**15-24 years:** 17.79% (male 122,573,662 /female 108,109,968)

**25-54 years:** 41.24% (male 276,283,581 /female 258,563,835)

**55-64 years:** 7.6% (male 49,334,703 /female 49,197,817)

**65 years and over:** 6.39% (male 39,184,523 /female 43,654,994) (2018 est.)

**population pyramid:** 

### Dependency ratios:

**total dependency ratio:** 52.2 (2015 est.)

**youth dependency ratio:** 43.6 (2015 est.)

**elderly dependency ratio:** 8.6 (2015 est.)

**potential support ratio:** 11.7 (2015 est.)

**Median age:**

**total:** 28.1 years

**male:** 27.5 years

**female:** 28.9 years (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 142

**Population growth rate:**

1.14% (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 94

**Birth rate:**

18.7 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 88

**Death rate:**

7.3 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 121

**Net migration rate:**

0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 86

**Population distribution:**

with the notable exception of the deserts in the northwest, including the Thar Desert, and the mountain fringe in the north, a very high population density exists throughout most of the country; the core of the population is in the north along the banks of the Ganges, with other river valleys and southern coastal areas also having large population concentrations

**Urbanization:**

**urban population:** 34% of total population (2018)

**rate of urbanization:** 2.37% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

**Major urban areas - population:**

28.514 million NEW DELHI (capital), 19.98 million Mumbai, 14.681 million Kolkata, 11.44 million Bangalore, 10.456 million Chennai, 9.482 million Hyderabad (2018)

**Sex ratio:**

**at birth:** 1.11 male(s)/female

**0-14 years:** 1.13 male(s)/female

**15-24 years:** 1.13 male(s)/female

**25-54 years:** 1.07 male(s)/female

**55-64 years:** 1 male(s)/female

**65 years and over:** 0.9 male(s)/female

**total population:** 1.08 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

**Maternal mortality rate:**

174 deaths/100,000 live births (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 56

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 37.8 deaths/1,000 live births

**male:** 36.7 deaths/1,000 live births

**female:** 39.1 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 46

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 69.1 years

**male:** 67.8 years

**female:** 70.5 years (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 163

**Total fertility rate:**

2.4 children born/woman (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 81

**Contraceptive prevalence rate:**

53.5% (2015/16)

**Health expenditures:**

4.7% of GDP (2014)

**country comparison to the world:** 149

**Physicians density:**

0.78 physicians/1,000 population (2017)

**Hospital bed density:**

0.7 beds/1,000 population (2011)

**Drinking water source:****improved:**

urban: 97.1% of population

rural: 92.6% of population

total: 94.1% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 2.9% of population

rural: 7.4% of population

total: 5.9% of population (2015 est.)

**Sanitation facility access:****improved:**

urban: 62.6% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 28.5% of population (2015 est.)

total: 39.6% of population (2015 est.)

**unimproved:**

urban: 37.4% of population (2015 est.)

rural: 71.5% of population (2015 est.)

total: 60.4% of population (2015 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

0.2% (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 94

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

2.1 million (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 3

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

69,000 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 4

**Major infectious diseases:**

**degree of risk:** very high (2016)

**food or waterborne diseases:** bacterial diarrhea, hepatitis A and E, and typhoid fever (2016)

**vectorborne diseases:** dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis, and malaria (2016)

**water contact diseases:** leptospirosis (2016)

**animal contact diseases:** rabies (2016)

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

3.9% (2016)

**country comparison to the world:** 189

**Children under the age of 5 years underweight:**

36.3% (2015)

**country comparison to the world:** 4

**Education expenditures:**

3.8% of GDP (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 118

**Literacy:**

**definition:** age 15 and over can read and write (2015 est.)

**total population:** 71.2%

**male:** 81.3%

**female:** 60.6% (2015 est.)

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 12 years

**male:** 12 years

**female:** 13 years (2016)

**Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:**

**total:** 10.1%

**male:** 9.5%

**female:** 12% (2012 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 129

**Government :: INDIA**

**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** Republic of India

**conventional short form:** India

**local long form:** Republic of India/Bharatiya Ganarajya

**local short form:** India/Bharat

**etymology:** the English name derives from the Indus River; the Indian name "Bharat" may derive from the "Bharatas" tribe mentioned in the Vedas of the second millennium B.C.; the name is also associated with Emperor Bharata, the legendary conqueror of all of India

**Government type:**

federal parliamentary republic

**Capital:**

**name:** New Delhi

**geographic coordinates:** 28 36 N, 77 12 E

**time difference:** UTC+5.5 (10.5 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

**Administrative divisions:**

29 states and 7 union territories\*; Andaman and Nicobar Islands\*, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chandigarh\*, Chhattisgarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli\*, Daman and Diu\*, Delhi\*, Goa, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep\*, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Puducherry\*, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal

**note:** although its status is that of a union territory, the official name of Delhi is National Capital Territory of Delhi

**Independence:**

15 August 1947 (from the UK)

**National holiday:**

Republic Day, 26 January (1950)

**Constitution:**

**history:** previous 1935 (preindependence); latest draft completed 4 November 1949, adopted 26 November 1949, effective 26 January 1950

**amendments:** proposed by either the Council of States or the House of the People; passage requires majority participation of the total membership in each house and at least two-thirds majority of voting members of each house, followed by assent of the president of India; proposed amendments to the constitutional amendment procedures also must be ratified by at least one-half of the India state legislatures before presidential assent; amended many times, last in 2019 (2019)

**Legal system:**

common law system based on the English model; separate personal law codes apply to Muslims, Christians, and Hindus; judicial review of legislative acts

**International law organization participation:**

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; non-party state to the ICCT

**Citizenship:**

**citizenship by birth:** no

**citizenship by descent only:** at least one parent must be a citizen of India



**dual citizenship recognized:** no

**residency requirement for naturalization:** 5 years

**Suffrage:**

18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** President Ram Nath KOVIND (since 25 July 2017); Vice President M. Venkaiah NAIDU (since 11 August 2017)

**head of government:** Prime Minister Narendra MODI (since 26 May 2014)

**cabinet:** Union Council of Ministers recommended by the prime minister, appointed by the president

**elections/appointments:** president indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of elected members of both houses of Parliament for a 5-year term (no term limits); election last held on 17 July 2017 (next to be held in July 2022); vice president indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of elected members of both houses of Parliament for a 5-year term (no term limits); election last held on 5 August 2017 (next to be held in August 2022); following legislative elections, the prime minister is elected by Lok Sabha members of the majority party

**election results:** Ram Nath KOVIND elected president; percent of electoral college vote - Ram Nath KOVIND (BJP) 65.7% Meira KUMAR (INC) 34.3%; M. Venkaiah NAIDU elected vice president; electoral college vote - M. Venkaiah NAIDU (BJP) 516, Gopalkrishna GANDHI (independent) 244

**Legislative branch:**

**description:** bicameral Parliament or Sansad consists of:

Council of States or Rajya Sabha (245 seats; 233 members indirectly elected by state and territorial assemblies by proportional representation vote and 12 members appointed by the president; members serve 6-year terms)

House of the People or Lok Sabha (545 seats; 543 members directly elected in single-seat constituencies by simple majority vote and 2 appointed by the president; members serve 5-year terms)

**elections:** Council of States - last held by state and territorial assemblies at various dates in 2018

House of the People - last held April-May 2014 in 9 phases; (next to be held in 7 phases 11 April to 19 May 2019)

**election results:** Council of States - percent of vote by party - NA; seats by party - NA; composition - men 218, women 27, percent of women 11%

House of the People - percent of vote by party - BJP 31%, INC 19.3%, AITC 3.8%, SP 3.4%, AIADMK 3.3%, CPI(M) 3.3%, TDP 2.6%, YSRC 2.5%, AAP 2.1%, SAD 1.8%, BJD 1.7%, SS 1.7%, NCP 1.6%, RJD 1.3%, TRS 1.3%, LJP 0.4%, other 15.9%, independent 3%; seats by party - BJP 282, INC 44, AIADMK 37, AITC 34, BJD 20, SS 18, TDP 16, TRS 11, CPI(M) 9, YSRC 9, LJP 6, NCP 6, SP 5, AAP 4, RJD 4, SAD 4, other 33, independent 3; composition - men 483, women 62, percent of women 11.4%; note - total Parliament percent of women 11.3%

**Judicial branch:**

**highest courts:** Supreme Court (consists of 28 judges, including the chief justice)

**judge selection and term of office:** justices appointed by the president to serve until age 65

**subordinate courts:** High Courts; District Courts; Labour Court

**note:** in mid-2011, India's Cabinet approved the "National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reform" to eliminate judicial corruption and reduce the backlog of cases

**Political parties and leaders:**

Aam Aadmi Party or AAP [Arvind KEJRIWAL]

All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam or AIADMK [Edappadi PALANISWAMY, Occhaathevar PANNEERSELVAM]

All India Trinamool Congress or AITC [Mamata BANERJEE]

Bahujan Samaj Party or BSP [MAYAWATI]

Bharatiya Janata Party or BJP [Amit SHAH]

Biju Janata Dal or BJD [Naveen PATNAIK]

Communist Party of India-Marxist or CPI(M) [Sitaram YECHURY]

Indian National Congress or INC [Rahul GANDHI]  
Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) [Ram Vilas PASWAN]  
Nationalist Congress Party or NCP [Sharad PAWAR]  
Rashtriya Janata Dal or RJD [Lalu Prasad YADAV]  
Samajwadi Party or SP [Akhilesh YADAV]  
Shiromani Akali Dal or SAD [Sukhbir Singh BADAL]  
Shiv Sena or SS [Uddhav THACKERAY]  
Telangana Rashtra Samithi or TRS [K. Chandrashekar RAO]  
Telugu Desam Party or TDP [Chandrababu NAIDU]  
YSR Congress or YSRC [Jagan Mohan REDDY]

**note:** India has dozens of national and regional political parties

#### **International organization participation:**

ADB, AfDB (nonregional member), Arctic Council (observer), ARF, ASEAN (dialogue partner), BIMSTEC, BIS, BRICS, C, CD, CERN (observer), CICA, CP, EAS, FAO, FATF, G-15, G-20, G-24, G-5, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICRM, IDA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), LAS (observer), MIGA, MINURSO, MONUSCO, NAM, OAS (observer), OECD, OPCW, Pacific Alliance (observer), PCA, PIF (partner), SAARC, SACEP, SCO (observer), UN, UNCTAD, UNDOF, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNIFIL, UNISFA, UNITAR, UNMISS, UNOCI, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

#### **Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Harsh Vardhan SHRINGLA (since 11 January 2019)

**chancery:** 2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; note - Consular Wing located at 2536 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008; telephone: [1](202) 939-7000

**telephone:** [1] (202) 939-7000

**FAX:** [1] (202) 265-4351

**consulate(s) general:** Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, New York, San Francisco

#### **Diplomatic representation from the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Kenneth I. JUSTER (since 23 November 2017)

**embassy:** Shantipath, Chanakypuri, New Delhi 110021

**mailing address:** use embassy street address

**telephone:** [91] (11) 2419-8000

**FAX:** [91] (11) 2419-0017

**consulate(s) general:** Chennai (Madras), Hyderabad, Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai (Bombay)

#### **Flag description:**

three equal horizontal bands of saffron (subdued orange) (top), white, and green, with a blue chakra (24-spoked wheel) centered in the white band; saffron represents courage, sacrifice, and the spirit of renunciation; white signifies purity and truth; green stands for faith and fertility; the blue chakra symbolizes the wheel of life in movement and death in stagnation

**note:** similar to the flag of Niger, which has a small orange disk centered in the white band

#### **National symbol(s):**

the Lion Capital of Ashoka, which depicts four Asiatic lions standing back to back mounted on a circular abacus, is the official emblem; Bengal tiger; lotus flower; national colors: saffron, white, green

#### **National anthem:**

**name:** "Jana-Gana-Mana" (Thou Art the Ruler of the Minds of All People)

**lyrics/music:** Rabindranath TAGORE

**note:** adopted 1950; Rabindranath TAGORE, a Nobel laureate, also wrote Bangladesh's national anthem

**Economy :: IN. IA****Economy - overview:**

India's diverse economy encompasses traditional village farming, modern agriculture, handicrafts, a wide range of modern industries, and a multitude of services. Slightly less than half of the workforce is in agriculture, but services are the major source of economic growth, accounting for nearly two-thirds of India's output but employing less than one-third of its labor force. India has capitalized on its large educated English-speaking population to become a major exporter of information technology services, business outsourcing services, and software workers. Nevertheless, per capita income remains below the world average. India is developing into an open-market economy, yet traces of its past autarkic policies remain. Economic liberalization measures, including industrial deregulation, privatization of state-owned enterprises, and reduced controls on foreign trade and investment, began in the early 1990s and served to accelerate the country's growth, which averaged nearly 7% per year from 1997 to 2017.

India's economic growth slowed in 2011 because of a decline in investment caused by high interest rates, rising inflation, and investor pessimism about the government's commitment to further economic reforms and about slow world growth. Investors' perceptions of India improved in early 2014, due to a reduction of the current account deficit and expectations of post-election economic reform, resulting in a surge of inbound capital flows and stabilization of the rupee. Growth rebounded in 2014 through 2016. Despite a high growth rate compared to the rest of the world, India's government-owned banks faced mounting bad debt, resulting in low credit growth. Rising macroeconomic imbalances in India and improving economic conditions in Western countries led investors to shift capital away from India, prompting a sharp depreciation of the rupee through 2016.

The economy slowed again in 2017, due to shocks of "demonetization" in 2016 and introduction of GST in 2017. Since the election, the government has passed an important goods and services tax bill and raised foreign direct investment caps in some sectors, but most economic reforms have focused on administrative and governance changes, largely because the ruling party remains a minority in India's upper house of Parliament, which must approve most bills.

India has a young population and corresponding low dependency ratio, healthy savings and investment rates, and is increasing integration into the global economy. However, long-term challenges remain significant, including: India's discrimination against women and girls, an inefficient power generation and distribution system, ineffective enforcement of intellectual property rights, decades-long civil litigation dockets, inadequate transport and agricultural infrastructure, limited non-agricultural employment opportunities, high spending and poorly targeted subsidies, inadequate availability of quality basic and higher education, and accommodating rural-to-urban migration.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$9.474 trillion (2017 est.)

\$8.88 trillion (2016 est.)

\$8.291 trillion (2015 est.)

**note:** data are in 2017 dollars

**country comparison to the world: 3****GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$2.602 trillion (2017 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:**

6.7% (2017 est.)

7.1% (2016 est.)

8.2% (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 27****GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$7,200 (2017 est.)

\$6,800 (2016 est.)

\$6,500 (2015 est.)

**note:** data are in 2017 dollars

**country comparison to the world:** 156

**Gross national saving:**

28.8% of GDP (2017 est.)

29.7% of GDP (2016 est.)

30.7% of GDP (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 36

**GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 59.1% (2017 est.)

**government consumption:** 11.5% (2017 est.)

**investment in fixed capital:** 28.5% (2017 est.)

**investment in inventories:** 3.9% (2017 est.)

**exports of goods and services:** 19.1% (2017 est.)

**imports of goods and services:** -22% (2017 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 15.4% (2016 est.)

**industry:** 23% (2016 est.)

**services:** 61.5% (2016 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, sugarcane, lentils, onions, potatoes; dairy products, sheep, goats, poultry; fish

**Industries:**

textiles, chemicals, food processing, steel, transportation equipment, cement, mining, petroleum, machinery, software, pharmaceuticals

**Industrial production growth rate:**

5.5% (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 49

**Labor force:**

521.9 million (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

**Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** 47%

**industry:** 22%

**services:** 31% (FY 2014 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**

8.5% (2017 est.)

8.5% (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 122

**Population below poverty line:**

21.9% (2011 est.)

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** 3.6%

**highest 10%:** 29.8% (2011)

**Distribution of family income - Gini index:**

35.2 (2011)

37.8 (1997)

**country comparison to the world:** 96

**Budget:**

**revenues:** 238.2 billion (2017 est.)

**expenditures:** 329 billion (2017 est.)

**Taxes and other revenues:**

9.2% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 215

**Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

-3.5% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 146

**Public debt:**

71.2% of GDP (2017 est.)

69.5% of GDP (2016 est.)

**note:** data cover central government debt, and exclude debt instruments issued (or owned) by government entities other than the treasury; the data include treasury debt held by foreign entities; the data exclude debt issued by subnational entities, as well as intragovernmental debt; intragovernmental debt consists of treasury borrowings from surpluses in the social funds, such as for retirement, medical care, and unemployment; debt instruments for the social funds are not sold at public auctions

**country comparison to the world:** 47

**Fiscal year:**

1 April - 31 March

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

3.6% (2017 est.)

4.5% (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 143

**Central bank discount rate:**

6% (31 December 2017)

6.25% (31 December 2016)

**note:** this is the Indian central bank's policy rate - the repurchase rate

**country comparison to the world:** 69

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

9.51% (31 December 2017 est.)

9.67% (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 88**

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$451.5 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$293.5 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 12**

**Stock of broad money:**

\$451.5 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$293.5 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 12**

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$1.927 trillion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$1.684 trillion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 13**

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$1.516 trillion (31 December 2015 est.)

\$1.558 trillion (31 December 2014 est.)

\$1.139 trillion (31 December 2013 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 10**

**Current account balance:**

-\$48.66 billion (2017 est.)

-\$14.35 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 203**

**Exports:**

\$304.1 billion (2017 est.)

\$268.6 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 19**

**Exports - partners:**

US 15.6%, UAE 10.2%, Hong Kong 4.9%, China 4.3% (2017)

**Exports - commodities:**

petroleum products, precious stones, vehicles, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, cereals, apparel

**Imports:**

\$452.2 billion (2017 est.)

\$376.1 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 11**

**Imports - commodities:**

crude oil, precious stones, machinery, chemicals, fertilizer, plastics, iron and steel

**Imports - partners:**

China 16.3%, US 5.5%, UAE 5.2%, Saudi Arabia 4.8%, Switzerland 4.7% (2017)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$409.8 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$359.7 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 8**

**Debt - external:**

\$501.6 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$456.4 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 24**

**Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$377.5 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$318.5 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 20**

**Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$155.2 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$144.1 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 30**

**Exchange rates:**

Indian rupees (INR) per US dollar -

65.17 (2017 est.)

67.195 (2016 est.)

67.195 (2015 est.)

64.152 (2014 est.)

61.03 (2013 est.)

**Energy :: INDIA**

**Electricity access:**

**population without electricity:** 237.4 million (2013)

**electrification - total population:** 79% (2013)

**electrification - urban areas:** 98% (2013)

**electrification - rural areas:** 70% (2013)

**Electricity - production:**

1.386 trillion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 3**

**Electricity - consumption:**

1.137 trillion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 3**

**Electricity - exports:**

5.15 billion kWh (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 36

**Electricity - imports:**

5.617 billion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 35

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

367.8 million kW (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 3

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

71% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 104

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

2% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 26

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

12% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 111

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

16% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 53

**Crude oil - production:**

733,900 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 25

**Crude oil - exports:**

0 bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 140

**Crude oil - imports:**

4.057 million bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 3

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

4.495 billion bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 23

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

4.897 million bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 4

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

4.521 million bbl/day (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 3

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

1.305 million bbl/day (2015 est.)



**country comparison to the world: 7**

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

653,300 bbl/day (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 11**

**Natural gas - production:**

31.54 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 25**

**Natural gas - consumption:**

55.43 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 14**

**Natural gas - exports:**

76.45 million cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 50**

**Natural gas - imports:**

23.96 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 14**

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

1.29 trillion cu m (1 January 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 22**

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

2.383 billion Mt (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 3**

**Communications :: INDIA**

**Telephones - fixed lines:**

**total subscriptions: 23,234,687 (2017 est.)**

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 2 (2017 est.)**

**country comparison to the world: 11**

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

**total subscriptions: 1,168,902,277 (2017 est.)**

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants: 91 (2017 est.)**

**country comparison to the world: 2**

**Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** supported by deregulation and liberalization of telecommunications laws and policies, India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing telecom markets in the world; implementation of 4G/LTE services shift to data services across the country; steps taken towards 5G services; fixed broadband penetration is expected to grow at a moderate rate over the next five years to 2023 (2017)

**domestic:** fixed-line subscriptions stands at 2 per 100 and mobile-cellular at 91 per 100; mobile cellular service introduced in 1994 and organized nationwide into four metropolitan areas and 19 telecom circles, each with multiple private service providers and one or more state-owned service providers; in recent years significant trunk capacity added in the form of fiber-optic cable and one of the world's largest domestic satellite systems, the Indian National Satellite system (INSAT), with 6 satellites supporting 33,000 very small aperture terminals (VSAT) (2017)

**international:** country code - 91; a number of major international submarine cable systems, including SEA-ME-WE-3 with landing sites at Cochin and Mumbai (Bombay), SEA-ME-WE-4 with a landing site at Chennai, Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe (FLAG) with a landing site at Mumbai (Bombay), South Africa - Far East (SAFE) with a landing site at Cochin, the i2i cable network linking to Singapore with landing sites at Mumbai (Bombay) and Chennai (Madras), and Tata Indicom linking Singapore and Chennai (Madras), provide a significant increase in the bandwidth available for both voice and data traffic; satellite earth stations - 8 Intelsat (Indian Ocean) and 1 Inmarsat (Indian Ocean region); 9 gateway exchanges operating from Mumbai (Bombay), New Delhi, Kolkata (Calcutta), Chennai (Madras), Jalandhar, Kanpur, Gandhinagar, Hyderabad, and Ernakulam (2017)

**Broadcast media:**

Doordarshan, India's public TV network, has a monopoly on terrestrial broadcasting and operates about 20 national, regional, and local services; a large and increasing number of privately owned TV stations are distributed by cable and satellite service providers; in 2015, more than 230 million homes had access to cable and satellite TV offering more than 700 TV channels; government controls AM radio with All India Radio operating domestic and external networks; news broadcasts via radio are limited to the All India Radio Network; since 2000, privately owned FM stations have been permitted and their numbers have increased rapidly (2015)

**Internet country code:**

.in

**Internet users:**

**total:** 374,328,160 (July 2016 est.)

**percent of population:** 29.5% (July 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 2

**Broadband - fixed subscriptions:**

**total:** 17,856,024 (2017 est.)

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants:** 1 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 10

Transportation :: INDIA

**National air transport system:**

**number of registered air carriers:** 20 (2015)

**inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers:** 485 (2015)

**annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers:** 98,927,860 (2015)

**annual freight traffic on registered air carriers:** 1,833,847,614 mt-km (2015)

**Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:**

VT (2016)

**Airports:**

346 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 21

**Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 253 (2017)

**over 3,047 m:** 22 (2017)

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 59 (2017)

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 76 (2017)

**914 to 1,523 m:** 82 (2017)

**under 914 m:** 14 (2017)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:**

**total:** 93 (2013)

**over 3,047 m:** 1 (2013)

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 3 (2013)

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 6 (2013)

**914 to 1,523 m:** 38 (2013)

**under 914 m:** 45 (2013)

**Heliports:**

45 (2013)

**Pipelines:**

9 km condensate/gas, 13581 km gas, 2054 km liquid petroleum gas, 8943 km oil, 20 km oil/gas/water, 11069 km refined products (2013)

**Railways:**

**total:** 68,525 km (2014)

**narrow gauge:** 9,499 km 1.000-m gauge (2014)

**broad gauge:** 58,404 km 1.676-m gauge (23,654 electrified) (2014)

622 0.762-m gauge

**country comparison to the world:** 5

**Roadways:**

**total:** 4,699,024 km (2015)

**note:** includes 96,214 km of national highways and expressways, 147,800 km of state highways, and 4,455,010 km of other roads

**country comparison to the world:** 3

**Waterways:**

14,500 km (5,200 km on major rivers and 485 km on canals suitable for mechanized vessels) (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 9

**Merchant marine:**

**total:** 1,719

**by type:** bulk carrier 75, container ship 22, general cargo 582, oil tanker 133, other 907 (2018)

**country comparison to the world:** 14

**Ports and terminals:**

**major seaport(s):** Chennai, Jawaharal Nehru Port, Kandla, Kolkata (Calcutta), Mumbai (Bombay), Sikka, Vishakhapatnam

**container port(s) (TEUs):** Chennai (1,549,457), Jawaharal Nehru Port (4,833,397), Mundra (4,240,260) (2017)

**LNG terminal(s) (import):** Dabhol, Dahej, Hazira

**Military and Security :: INDIA**

**Military expenditures:**

2.47% of GDP (2016)

2.41% of GDP (2015)

2.5% of GDP (2014)

2.47% of GDP (2013)

2.54% of GDP (2012)

**country comparison to the world:** 40

**Military branches:**

Army, Navy (includes naval air arm), Air Force, Coast Guard (2011)

**Military service age and obligation:**

16-18 years of age for voluntary military service (Army 17 1/2, Air Force 17, Navy 16 1/2); no conscription; women may join as officers, currently serve in combat roles as pilots, and will soon be allowed in all combat roles (2016)

**Terrorism :: INDIA**

**Terrorist groups - home based:**

**Hizbul Mujahideen (HM):**

**aim(s):** annex the state of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan

**area(s) of operation:** HM is an indigenous Kashmiri militant group that operates in Jammu and Kashmir (April 2018)

**Indian Mujahedeen (IM):**

**aim(s):** establish Islamic rule in India and, ultimately, convert all non-Muslims to Islam; stated goal is to carry out terrorist attacks against Indians for perceived atrocities against Indian Muslims

**area(s) of operation:** formerly based in the western state of Maharashtra, India's third-largest and second-most populous state, and now probably operates mostly outside India (April 2018)

**Terrorist groups - foreign based:**

**al-Qa'ida (AQ):**

**aim(s):** overthrow the Indian Government and, ultimately, establish a pan-Islamic caliphate under a strict Salafi Muslim interpretation of sharia

**area(s) of operation:** maintains an operational presence as al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (April 2018)

**al-Qa'ida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS):**

**aim(s):** establish an Islamic caliphate in the Indian subcontinent

**area(s) of operation:** targets primarily military and security personnel, especially in the states of Assam, Gujarat, and Jammu and Kashmir; present in large cities, including Delhi (April 2018)

**Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami (HUJI):**

**aim(s):** enhance its networks and operational capabilities in India

**area(s) of operation:** maintains an operational presence, especially in the south, including in Bangalore and Hubli (April 2018)

**Harakat ul-Jihad-i-Islami/Bangladesh (HUJI-B):**

**aim(s):** enhance its networks in India and, ultimately, install an Islamic state in Bangladesh

**area(s) of operation:** maintains a low-profile presence (April 2018)

**Harakat ul-Mujahidin (HUM):**

**aim(s):** enhance its networks and paramilitary training in India and, ultimately, annex Kashmir into Pakistan and establish an Islamic state in Kashmir

**area(s) of operation:** conducts attacks against Indian troops and civilians in Kashmir (April 2018)

**Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham-Khorasan (ISIS-K):**

**aim(s):** spread the ISIS caliphate by eliminating the Indian Government and, ultimately, unite Kashmir with Pakistan

**area(s) of operation:** maintains a recruitment presence in major cities

**Jaish-e-Mohammed (JEM):**

**aim(s):** annex Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan

**area(s) of operation:** operates primarily in Jammu and Kashmir State (April 2018)

**Lashkar-e Tayyiba (LT):**

**aim(s):** annex Jammu and Kashmir State to Pakistan and, ultimately, install Islamic rule throughout South Asia

**area(s) of operation:** operational throughout India, especially in the north in Jammu and Kashmir State, since at least 1993

**note:** continues to be one of the largest and most deadly of the anti-India-focused armed groups (April 2018)

**Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE):**

**aim(s):** enhance its networks in India and, ultimately, revive the movement to establish a Tamil homeland

**area(s) of operation:** maintains safe havens, transit routes, human trafficking, and an operational presence in an effort to revive the movement and conduct attacks (April 2018)

**Transnational Issues :: INDIA****Disputes - international:**

since China and India launched a security and foreign policy dialogue in 2005, consolidated discussions related to the dispute over most of their rugged, militarized boundary, regional nuclear proliferation, Indian claims that China transferred missiles to Pakistan, and other matters continue; Kashmir remains the site of the world's largest and most militarized territorial dispute with portions under the de facto administration of China (Aksai Chin), India (Jammu and Kashmir), and Pakistan (Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas); India and Pakistan resumed bilateral dialogue in February 2011 after a two-year hiatus, have maintained the 2003 cease-fire in Kashmir, and continue to have disputes over water sharing of the Indus River and its tributaries; UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan has maintained a small group of peacekeepers since 1949; India does not recognize Pakistan's ceding historic Kashmir lands to China in 1964; to defuse tensions and prepare for discussions on a maritime boundary, India and Pakistan seek technical resolution of the disputed boundary in Sir Creek estuary at the mouth of the Rann of Kutch in the Arabian Sea; Pakistani maps continue to show its Junagadh claim in Indian Gujarat State; Prime Minister Singh's September 2011 visit to Bangladesh resulted in the signing of a Protocol to the 1974 Land Boundary Agreement between India and Bangladesh, which had called for the settlement of longstanding boundary disputes over undemarcated areas and the exchange of territorial enclaves, but which had never been implemented; Bangladesh referred its maritime boundary claims with Burma and India to the International Tribunal on the Law of the Sea; Joint Border Committee with Nepal continues to examine contested boundary sections, including the 400 sq km dispute over the source of the Kalapani River; India maintains a strict border regime to keep out Maoist insurgents and control illegal cross-border activities from Nepal

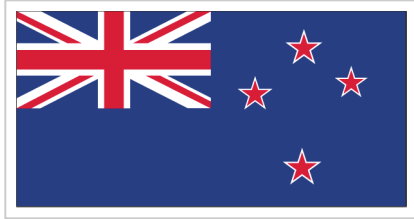
**Refugees and internally displaced persons:**

**refugees (country of origin):** 108,008 (Tibet/China), 61,842 (Sri Lanka), 18,089 (Burma), 7,758 (Afghanistan) (2017)

**IDPs:** 479,000 (armed conflict and intercommunal violence) (2018)

**Illicit drugs:**

world's largest producer of licit opium for the pharmaceutical trade, but an undetermined quantity of opium is diverted to illicit international drug markets; transit point for illicit narcotics produced in neighboring countries and throughout Southwest Asia; illicit producer of methaqualone; vulnerable to narcotics money laundering through the hawala system; licit ketamine and precursor production



## AUSTRALIA - OCEANIA :: NEW ZEALAND

### Introduction :: NEW ZEALAND

#### Background:

The Polynesian Maori reached New Zealand sometime between A.D. 1250 and 1300. In 1840, their chieftains entered into a compact with Great Britain, the Treaty of Waitangi, in which they ceded sovereignty to Queen Victoria while retaining territorial rights. That same year, the British began the first organized colonial settlement. A series of land wars between 1843 and 1872 ended with the defeat of the native peoples. The British colony of New Zealand became an independent dominion in 1907 and supported the UK militarily in both world wars. New Zealand's full participation in a number of defense alliances lapsed by the 1980s. In recent years, the government has sought to address longstanding Maori grievances.

#### Women's World Cup One-Pager:

### Geography :: NEW ZEALAND

#### Location:

Oceania, islands in the South Pacific Ocean, southeast of Australia

#### Geographic coordinates:

41 00 S, 174 00 E

#### Map references:

Oceania

#### Area:

**total:** 268,838 sq km

**land:** 264,537 sq km

**water:** 4,301 sq km

**note:** includes Antipodes Islands, Auckland Islands, Bounty Islands, Campbell Island, Chatham Islands, and Kermadec Islands

**country comparison to the world:** 77

#### Area - comparative:

almost twice the size of North Carolina; about the size of Colorado

**Area comparison map:** 

#### Land boundaries:

0 km

#### Coastline:

15,134 km

**Maritime claims:**

**territorial sea:** 12 nm

**exclusive economic zone:** 200 nm

**contiguous zone:** 24 nm

**continental shelf:** 200 nm or to the edge of the continental margin

**Climate:**

temperate with sharp regional contrasts

**Terrain:**

predominately mountainous with large coastal plains

**Elevation:**

**mean elevation:** 388 m

**lowest point:** Pacific Ocean 0 m

**highest point:** Aoraki/Mount Cook 3,724 m; note - the mountain's height was 3,764 m until 14 December 1991 when it lost about 10 m in an avalanche of rock and ice; erosion of the ice cap since then has brought the height down another 30 m

**Natural resources:**

natural gas, iron ore, sand, coal, timber, hydropower, gold, limestone

**Land use:**

**agricultural land:** 43.2% (2011 est.)

arable land: 1.8% (2011 est.) / permanent crops: 0.3% (2011 est.) / permanent pasture: 41.1% (2011 est.)

**forest:** 31.4% (2011 est.)

**other:** 25.4% (2011 est.)

**Irrigated land:**

7,210 sq km (2012)

**Population distribution:**

over three-quarters of New Zealanders, including the indigenous Maori, live on the North Island, primarily in urban areas

**Natural hazards:**

earthquakes are common, though usually not severe; volcanic activity

**volcanism:** significant volcanism on North Island; Ruapehu (2,797 m), which last erupted in 2007, has a history of large eruptions in the past century; Taranaki has the potential to produce dangerous avalanches and lahars; other historically active volcanoes include Okataina, Raoul Island, Tongariro, and White Island; see note 2 under "Geography - note"

**Environment - current issues:**

water quality and availability; rapid urbanisation; deforestation; soil erosion and degradation; native flora and fauna hard-hit by invasive species; negative effects of climate change

**Environment - international agreements:**

**party to:** Antarctic-Environmental Protocol, Antarctic-Marine Living Resources, Antarctic Treaty, Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Environmental Modification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Marine Dumping, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution, Tropical Timber 83, Tropical Timber 94, Wetlands, Whaling

**signed, but not ratified:** Antarctic Seals, Marine Life Conservation

## Geography - note:

**note 1:** consists of two main islands and a number of smaller islands; South Island, the larger main island, is the 12th largest island in the world and is divided along its length by the Southern Alps; North Island is the 14th largest island in the world and is not as mountainous, but it is marked by volcanism

**note 2:** New Zealand lies along the Ring of Fire, a belt of active volcanoes and earthquake epicenters bordering the Pacific Ocean; up to 90% of the world's earthquakes and some 75% of the world's volcanoes occur within the Ring of Fire

**note 3:** almost 90% of the population lives in cities and over three-quarters on North Island; Wellington is the southernmost national capital in the world

## People and Society :: NEW ZEALAND

### Population:

4,545,627 (July 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 127

### Nationality:

**noun:** New Zealander(s)

**adjective:** New Zealand

### Ethnic groups:

European 71.2%, Maori 14.1%, Asian 11.3%, Pacific peoples 7.6%, Middle Eastern, Latin American, African 1.1%, other 1.6%, not stated or unidentified 5.4% (2013 est.)

**note:** based on the 2013 census of the usually resident population; percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents were able to identify more than one ethnic group

### Languages:

English (de facto official) 89.8%, Maori (de jure official) 3.5%, Samoan 2%, Hindi 1.6%, French 1.2%, Northern Chinese 1.2%, Yue 1%, other or not stated 20.5%, New Zealand Sign Language (de jure official) (2013 est.)

**note:** shares sum to 120.8% due to multiple responses on census

### Religions:

Christian 44.3% (Catholic 11.6%, Anglican 10.8%, Presbyterian and Congregational 7.8%, Methodist, 2.4%, Pentecostal 1.8%, other 9.9%), Hindu 2.1%, Buddhist 1.4%, Maori Christian 1.3%, Muslim 1.1%, other religion 1.4% (includes Judaism, Spiritualism and New Age religions, Baha'i, Asian religions other than Buddhism), no religion 38.5%, not stated or unidentified 8.2%, objected to answering 4.1% (2013 est.)

**note:** based on the 2013 census of the usually resident population; percentages add up to more than 100% because respondents were able to identify more than one religion

### Age structure:

**0-14 years:** 19.62% (male 457,071 /female 434,789)

**15-24 years:** 13.16% (male 307,574 /female 290,771)

**25-54 years:** 39.58% (male 902,909 /female 896,398)

**55-64 years:** 12.06% (male 266,855 /female 281,507)

**65 years and over:** 15.57% (male 327,052 /female 380,701) (2018 est.)

**population pyramid:** 

### Dependency ratios:

**total dependency ratio:** 52.9 (2015 est.)

**youth dependency ratio:** 30.5 (2015 est.)

**elderly dependency ratio:** 22.4 (2015 est.)



**potential support ratio:** 4.5 (2015 est.)

**Median age:**

**total:** 38.1 years

**male:** 37.2 years

**female:** 39 years (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 62

**Population growth rate:**

0.77% (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 133

**Birth rate:**

13.1 births/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 145

**Death rate:**

7.6 deaths/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 106

**Net migration rate:**

2.2 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 47

**Population distribution:**

over three-quarters of New Zealanders, including the indigenous Maori, live on the North Island, primarily in urban areas

**Urbanization:**

**urban population:** 86.5% of total population (2018)

**rate of urbanization:** 1.01% annual rate of change (2015-20 est.)

**Major urban areas - population:**

1.557 million Auckland, 411,000 WELLINGTON (capital) (2018)

**Sex ratio:**

**at birth:** 1.05 male(s)/female

**0-14 years:** 1.05 male(s)/female

**15-24 years:** 1.06 male(s)/female

**25-54 years:** 1.01 male(s)/female

**55-64 years:** 0.95 male(s)/female

**65 years and over:** 0.86 male(s)/female

**total population:** 0.99 male(s)/female (2018 est.)

**Mother's mean age at first birth:**

27.8 years (2009 est.)

**note:** median age at first birth

**Maternal mortality rate:**

11 deaths/100,000 live births (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 146

**Infant mortality rate:**

**total:** 4.4 deaths/1,000 live births

**male:** 4.9 deaths/1,000 live births

**female:** 3.8 deaths/1,000 live births (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 183

**Life expectancy at birth:**

**total population:** 81.4 years

**male:** 79.2 years

**female:** 83.6 years (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 30

**Total fertility rate:**

2.01 children born/woman (2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 116

**Health expenditures:**

11% of GDP (2014)

**country comparison to the world:** 14

**Physicians density:**

3.03 physicians/1,000 population (2016)

**Hospital bed density:**

2.8 beds/1,000 population (2013)

**Drinking water source:**

**improved:**

urban: 100% of population

rural: 100% of population

total: 100% of population

**unimproved:**

urban: 0% of population

rural: 0% of population

total: 0% of population (2015 est.)

**HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:**

0.1% (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 114

**HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:**

3,700 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 119

**HIV/AIDS - deaths:**

<100 (2017 est.)

**Obesity - adult prevalence rate:**

30.8% (2016)

**country comparison to the world:** 22

**Education expenditures:**

6.3% of GDP (2016)

**country comparison to the world:** 29

**School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):**

**total:** 19 years

**male:** 18 years

**female:** 20 years (2016)

**Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:**

**total:** 12.7%

**male:** 12.4%

**female:** 13% (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 110

**Government ::** NEW ZEALAND

**Country name:**

**conventional long form:** none

**conventional short form:** New Zealand

**abbreviation:** NZ

**etymology:** Dutch explorer Abel TASMAN was the first European to reach New Zealand in 1642; he named it Staten Landt, but Dutch cartographers renamed it Nova Zeelandia in 1645 after the Dutch province of Zeeland; British explorer Captain James COOK subsequently anglicized the name to New Zealand when he mapped the islands in 1769

**Government type:**

parliamentary democracy (New Zealand Parliament) under a constitutional monarchy; a Commonwealth realm

**Capital:**

**name:** Wellington

**geographic coordinates:** 41 18 S, 174 47 E

**time difference:** UTC+12 (17 hours ahead of Washington, DC, during Standard Time)

**daylight saving time:** +1hr, begins last Sunday in September; ends first Sunday in April

**note:** New Zealand has two time zones: New Zealand standard time (UTC+12) and Chatham Islands time (45 minutes in advance of New Zealand standard time; UTC+12:45)

**Administrative divisions:**

16 regions and 1 territory\*; Auckland, Bay of Plenty, Canterbury, Chatham Islands\*, Gisborne, Hawke's Bay, Manawatu-Wanganui, Marlborough, Nelson, Northland, Otago, Southland, Taranaki, Tasman, Waikato, Wellington, West Coast

**Dependent areas:**

Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau

**Independence:**

26 September 1907 (from the UK)

**National holiday:**

Waitangi Day (Treaty of Waitangi established British sovereignty over New Zealand), 6 February (1840) Anzac Day (commemorated as the anniversary of the landing of troops of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps during World War I at Gallipoli, Turkey), 25 April (1915)

**Constitution:**

**history:** New Zealand has no single constitution document; the Constitution Act 1986, effective 1 January 1987, includes only part of the uncodified constitution; others include a collection of statutes or "acts of Parliament," the Treaty of Waitangi, Orders in Council, letters patent, court decisions, and unwritten conventions

**amendments:** proposed as bills by Parliament or by referenda called either by the government or by citizens; passage of a bill as an act normally requires two separate readings with committee reviews in between to make changes and corrections, a third reading approved by the House of Representatives membership or by the majority of votes in a referendum, and assent to by the governor-general; passage of amendments to reserved constitutional provisions affecting the term of Parliament, electoral districts, and voting restrictions requires approval by 75 percent of the House membership or the majority of votes in a referendum; amended many times, last in 2014 (2018)

**Legal system:**

common law system, based on English model, with special legislation and land courts for the Maori

**International law organization participation:**

accepts compulsory ICJ jurisdiction with reservations; accepts ICtJ jurisdiction

**Citizenship:**

**citizenship by birth:** no

**citizenship by descent only:** at least one parent must be a citizen of New Zealand

**dual citizenship recognized:** yes

**residency requirement for naturalization:** 3 years

**Suffrage:**

18 years of age; universal

**Executive branch:**

**chief of state:** Queen ELIZABETH II (since 6 February 1952); represented by Governor-General Dame Patricia Lee REDDY (since 28 September 2016)

**head of government:** Prime Minister Jacinda ARDERN (since 26 October 2017); Deputy Prime Minister Winston PETERS (since 26 October 2017)

**cabinet:** Executive Council appointed by the governor-general on the recommendation of the prime minister

**elections/appointments:** the monarchy is hereditary; governor-general appointed by the monarch on the advice of the prime minister; following legislative elections, the leader of the majority party or majority coalition usually appointed prime minister by the governor-general; deputy prime minister appointed by the governor-general; note - Prime Minister ARDERN heads up a minority coalition government consisting of the Labor and New Zealand First parties with confidence and supply support from the Green Party

**Legislative branch:**

**description:** unicameral House of Representatives - commonly called Parliament (usually 120 seats; 71 members directly elected in single-seat constituencies, including 7 Maori constituencies, by simple majority vote and 49 directly elected by proportional representation vote; members serve 3-year terms)

**elections:** last held on 23 September 2017 (next to be held by November 2020)

**election results:** percent of vote by party - National Party 44.5%, Labor Party 36.9%, NZ First 7.2%, Green Party 6.3%, ACT Party 0.5%; seats by party - National Party 56, Labor Party 46, NZ First 9, Green Party 8, ACT Party 1; composition - men 74, women 46, percent of women 38.3%

**Judicial branch:**

**highest courts:** Supreme Court (consists of 5 justices, including the chief justice); note - the Supreme Court in 2004 replaced the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (in London) as the final appeals court

**judge selection and term of office:** justices appointed by the governor-general upon the recommendation of the attorney-general; justices appointed until compulsory retirement at age 70

**subordinate courts:** Court of Appeal; High Court; tribunals and authorities; district courts; specialized courts for issues related to employment, environment, family, Maori lands, youth, military; tribunals

**Political parties and leaders:**

ACT New Zealand [David SEYMOUR]  
Green Party [James SHAW]  
Mana Movement [Hone HARAWIRA] (formerly Mana Party)  
Maori Party [Che WILSON and Kaapua SMITH]  
New Zealand First Party or NZ First [Winston PETERS]  
New Zealand Labor Party [Jacinda ARDERN]  
New Zealand National Party [Simon BRIDGES]  
United Future New Zealand [Damian LIGHT]

**International organization participation:**

ADB, ANZUS, APEC, ARF, ASEAN (dialogue partner), Australia Group, BIS, C, CD, CP, EAS, EBRD, FAO, FATF, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (national committees), ICt, ICRM, IDA, IEA, IFAD, IFC, IFRCS, IHO, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NSG, OECD, OPCW, Pacific Alliance (observer), Paris Club (associate), PCA, PIF, SICA (observer), Sparteca, SPC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNIDO, UNMISS, UNTSO, UPU, WCO, WFTU (NGOs), WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

**Diplomatic representation in the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Timothy John GROSER (since 28 January 2016)

**chancery:** 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington, DC 20008

**telephone:** [1] (202) 328-4800

**FAX:** [1] (202) 667-5227

**consulate(s) general:** Honolulu (HI), Los Angeles, New York

**Diplomatic representation from the US:**

**chief of mission:** Ambassador Scott P. BROWN (since 27 June 2017) note - also accredited to Samoa

**embassy:** 29 Fitzherbert Terrace, Thorndon, Wellington

**mailing address:** P. O. Box 1190, Wellington; PSC 467, Box 1, APO AP 96531-1034

**telephone:** [64] (4) 462-6000

**FAX:** [64] (4) 499-0490

**consulate(s) general:** Auckland

**Flag description:**

blue with the flag of the UK in the upper hoist-side quadrant with four red five-pointed stars edged in white centered in the outer half of the flag; the stars represent the Southern Cross constellation

**National symbol(s):**

Southern Cross constellation (four, five-pointed stars), kiwi (bird), silver fern; national colors: black, white, red (ochre)

**National anthem:**

**name:** God Defend New Zealand

**lyrics/music:** Thomas BRACKEN [English], Thomas Henry SMITH [Maori]/John Joseph WOODS

**note:** adopted 1940 as national song, adopted 1977 as co-national anthem; New Zealand has two national anthems with equal status; as a commonwealth realm, in addition to "God Defend New Zealand," "God Save the Queen" serves as a national anthem (see United Kingdom); "God Save the Queen" normally played only when a member of the royal family or the governor-general is present; in all other cases, "God Defend New Zealand" is played

**Economy :: NEW ZEALAND****Economy - overview:**

Over the past 40 years, the government has transformed New Zealand from an agrarian economy, dependent on concessionary British market access, to a more industrialized, free market economy that can compete globally. This dynamic growth has boosted real incomes, but left behind some at the bottom of the ladder and broadened and deepened the technological capabilities of the industrial sector.

Per capita income rose for 10 consecutive years until 2007 in purchasing power parity terms, but fell in 2008-09. Debt-driven consumer spending drove robust growth in the first half of the decade, fueling a large balance of payments deficit that posed a challenge for policymakers. Inflationary pressures caused the central bank to raise its key rate steadily from January 2004 until it was among the highest in the OECD in 2007 and 2008. The higher rate attracted international capital inflows, which strengthened the currency and housing market while aggravating the current account deficit. Rising house prices, especially in Auckland, have become a political issue in recent years, as well as a policy challenge in 2016 and 2017, as the ability to afford housing has declined for many.

Expanding New Zealand's network of free trade agreements remains a top foreign policy priority. New Zealand was an early promoter of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and was the second country to ratify the agreement in May 2017. Following the United States' withdrawal from the TPP in January 2017, on 10 November 2017 the remaining 11 countries agreed on the core elements of a modified agreement, which they renamed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). In November 2016, New Zealand opened negotiations to upgrade its FTA with China; China is one of New Zealand's most important trading partners.

**GDP (purchasing power parity):**

\$189 billion (2017 est.)

\$183.4 billion (2016 est.)

\$176.1 billion (2015 est.)

**note:** data are in 2017 dollars

**country comparison to the world:** 68

**GDP (official exchange rate):**

\$201.4 billion (2017 est.)

**GDP - real growth rate:**

3% (2017 est.)

4.1% (2016 est.)

4.2% (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 114

**GDP - per capita (PPP):**

\$39,000 (2017 est.)

\$38,600 (2016 est.)

\$37,900 (2015 est.)

**note:** data are in 2017 dollars

**country comparison to the world:** 48

**Gross national saving:**

21% of GDP (2017 est.)

21.5% of GDP (2016 est.)

20.2% of GDP (2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 89

**GDP - composition, by end use:**

**household consumption:** 57.2% (2017 est.)

**government consumption:** 18.2% (2017 est.)

**investment in fixed capital:** 23.4% (2017 est.)

**investment in inventories:** 0.3% (2017 est.)

**exports of goods and services:** 27% (2017 est.)

**imports of goods and services:** -26.1% (2017 est.)

**GDP - composition, by sector of origin:**

**agriculture:** 5.7% (2017 est.)

**industry:** 21.5% (2017 est.)

**services:** 72.8% (2017 est.)

**Agriculture - products:**

dairy products, sheep, beef, poultry, fruit, vegetables, wine, seafood, wheat and barley

**Industries:**

agriculture, forestry, fishing, logs and wood articles, manufacturing, mining, construction, financial services, real estate services, tourism

**Industrial production growth rate:**

1.8% (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 137

**Labor force:**

2.655 million (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 113

**Labor force - by occupation:**

**agriculture:** 6.6%

**industry:** 20.7%

**services:** 72.7% (2017 est.)

**Unemployment rate:**

4.7% (2017 est.)

5.1% (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 68

**Population below poverty line:**

NA

**Household income or consumption by percentage share:**

**lowest 10%:** NA

**highest 10%:** NA

**Distribution of family income - Gini index:**

36.2 (1997)

**country comparison to the world:** 89

**Budget:**

**revenues:** 74.11 billion (2017 est.)

**expenditures:** 70.97 billion (2017 est.)

**Taxes and other revenues:**

36.8% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 56

**Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):**

1.6% (of GDP) (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 21

**Public debt:**

31.7% of GDP (2017 est.)

33.5% of GDP (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 162

**Fiscal year:**

1 April - 31 March

**note:** this is the fiscal year for tax purposes

**Inflation rate (consumer prices):**

1.9% (2017 est.)

0.6% (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 98

**Central bank discount rate:**

1.75% (31 December 2017)

1.75% (31 December 2016)

**country comparison to the world:** 124

**Commercial bank prime lending rate:**

5.1% (31 December 2017 est.)

5.02% (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 149

**Stock of narrow money:**

\$46.52 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$42.01 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 55

**Stock of broad money:**

\$46.52 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$42.01 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 55

**Stock of domestic credit:**

\$304.2 billion (31 December 2017 est.)



\$284.7 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 36**

**Market value of publicly traded shares:**

\$80.05 billion (31 December 2015 est.)

\$74.35 billion (31 December 2015 est.)

\$74.42 billion (31 December 2014 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 46**

**Current account balance:**

-\$5.471 billion (2017 est.)

-\$4.171 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 186**

**Exports:**

\$37.35 billion (2017 est.)

\$33.61 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 57**

**Exports - partners:**

China 22.4%, Australia 16.4%, US 9.9%, Japan 6.1% (2017)

**Exports - commodities:**

dairy products, meat and edible offal, logs and wood articles, fruit, crude oil, wine

**Imports:**

\$39.74 billion (2017 est.)

\$35.53 billion (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 59**

**Imports - commodities:**

petroleum and products, mechanical machinery, vehicles and parts, electrical machinery, textiles

**Imports - partners:**

China 19%, Australia 12.1%, US 10.5%, Japan 7.3%, Germany 5.3%, Thailand 4.6% (2017)

**Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:**

\$20.68 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$17.81 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 58**

**Debt - external:**

\$91.62 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$84.03 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 51**

**Stock of direct foreign investment - at home:**

\$84.19 billion (31 December 2017 est.)

\$70.4 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 48**

**Stock of direct foreign investment - abroad:**

\$16.74 billion (31 December 2016 est.)

\$18.03 billion (31 December 2015 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 58**

**Exchange rates:**

New Zealand dollars (NZD) per US dollar -

1.416 (2017 est.)

1.4341 (2016 est.)

1.4341 (2015 est.)

1.4279 (2014 est.)

1.2039 (2013 est.)

**Energy :: NEW ZEALAND****Electricity access:**

**electrification - total population: 100% (2016)**

**Electricity - production:**

42.53 billion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 56**

**Electricity - consumption:**

39.5 billion kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 55**

**Electricity - exports:**

0 kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 176**

**Electricity - imports:**

0 kWh (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 179**

**Electricity - installed generating capacity:**

9.301 million kW (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 63**

**Electricity - from fossil fuels:**

23% of total installed capacity (2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 193**

**Electricity - from nuclear fuels:**

0% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 154**

**Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:**

58% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 29**

**Electricity - from other renewable sources:**

20% of total installed capacity (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 40**

**Crude oil - production:**

31,480 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 61**

**Crude oil - exports:**

26,440 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 48**

**Crude oil - imports:**

108,900 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 43**

**Crude oil - proved reserves:**

51.8 million bbl (1 January 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 76**

**Refined petroleum products - production:**

115,100 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 65**

**Refined petroleum products - consumption:**

169,100 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 61**

**Refined petroleum products - exports:**

1,782 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 106**

**Refined petroleum products - imports:**

56,000 bbl/day (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 76**

**Natural gas - production:**

5.097 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 51**

**Natural gas - consumption:**

5.182 billion cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 57**

**Natural gas - exports:**

0 cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 161**

**Natural gas - imports:**

0 cu m (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world: 166**

**Natural gas - proved reserves:**

33.7 billion cu m (1 January 2018 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 67

**Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:**

37.75 million Mt (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 68

**Communications :: NEW ZEALAND**

**Telephones - fixed lines:**

**total subscriptions:** 1.368 million (2017 est.)

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants:** 30 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 66

**Telephones - mobile cellular:**

**total subscriptions:** 6.4 million (2017 est.)

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants:** 142 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 110

**Telephone system:**

**general assessment:** excellent domestic and international systems; mobile and P2P services soar; LTE rates some of the fastest in the world; investment and development of infrastructure enable network capabilities to propel the digital economy, digital media sector along with e-government, e-commerce across the country

**domestic:** fixed-line 30 per 100 and mobile-cellular telephone subscribership 142 per 100 persons

**international:** country code - 64; the Southern Cross submarine cable system provides links to Australia, Fiji, and the US; satellite earth stations - 8 (1 Inmarsat - Pacific Ocean, 7 other)

**Broadcast media:**

state-owned Television New Zealand operates multiple TV networks and state-owned Radio New Zealand operates 3 radio networks and an external shortwave radio service to the South Pacific region; a small number of national commercial TV and radio stations and many regional commercial television and radio stations are available; cable and satellite TV systems are available, as are a range of streaming services

**Internet country code:**

.nz

**Internet users:**

**total:** 3,958,642 (July 2016 est.)

**percent of population:** 88.5% (July 2016 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 87

**Broadband - fixed subscriptions:**

**total:** 1.582 million (2017 est.)

**subscriptions per 100 inhabitants:** 35 (2017 est.)

**country comparison to the world:** 59

**Transportation :: NEW ZEALAND**

**National air transport system:**

**number of registered air carriers:** 6 (2015)

**inventory of registered aircraft operated by air carriers:** 123 (2015)

**annual passenger traffic on registered air carriers:** 15,304,409 (2015)

**annual freight traffic on registered air carriers:** 999,384,961 mt-km (2015)

**Civil aircraft registration country code prefix:**

ZK (2016)

**Airports:**

123 (2013)

**country comparison to the world:** 48

**Airports - with paved runways:**

**total:** 39 (2017)

**over 3,047 m:** 2 (2017)

**2,438 to 3,047 m:** 1 (2017)

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 12 (2017)

**914 to 1,523 m:** 23 (2017)

**under 914 m:** 1 (2017)

**Airports - with unpaved runways:**

**total:** 84 (2013)

**1,524 to 2,437 m:** 3 (2013)

**914 to 1,523 m:** 33 (2013)

**under 914 m:** 48 (2013)

**Pipelines:**

331 km condensate, 2500 km gas, 172 km liquid petroleum gas, 288 km oil, 198 km refined products (2018)

**Railways:**

**total:** 4,128 km (2018)

**narrow gauge:** 4,128 km 1.067-m gauge (506 km electrified) (2018)

**country comparison to the world:** 46

**Roadways:**

**total:** 94,000 km (2017)

**paved:** 61,600 km (includes 199 km of expressways) (2017)

**unpaved:** 32,400 km (2017)

**country comparison to the world:** 43

**Merchant marine:**

**total:** 111

**by type:** general cargo 15, oil tanker 6, other 90 (2018)

**country comparison to the world:** 81

**Ports and terminals:**

**major seaport(s):** Auckland, Lyttelton, Manukau Harbor, Marsden Point, Tauranga, Wellington

**Military and Security :: NEW ZEALAND**

**Military expenditures:**

1.1% of GDP (2017)

1.13% of GDP (2016)

1.11% of GDP (2015)

1.13% of GDP (2014)

1.12% of GDP (2013)

**country comparison to the world: 108**

**Military branches:**

New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF): New Zealand Army, Royal New Zealand Navy, Royal New Zealand Air Force (2019)

**Military service age and obligation:**

17 years of age for voluntary military service; soldiers cannot be deployed until the age of 18; no conscription; 3 years of secondary education required; must be a citizen of NZ, the UK, Australia, Canada, or the US, and resident of NZ for the previous 5 years (2018)

**Transnational Issues :: NEW ZEALAND**

**Disputes - international:**

asserts a territorial claim in Antarctica (Ross Dependency)

**Illicit drugs:**

significant consumer of amphetamines

# China country profile



**China is the world's most populous country. It has a continuous culture stretching back nearly 4,000 years and originated many of the foundations of the modern world.**

The People's Republic of China was founded in 1949 after the Communist Party defeated the nationalist Kuomintang, who retreated to Taiwan, creating two rival Chinese states - the People's Republic on the mainland and the Republic of China based on Taiwan.

After stagnating for decades under the rigid totalitarian socialism of founder Mao Zedong, China reformed its economy along partly capitalist lines to make it one of the world's fastest-growing, as well its leading exporter. China is now a major overseas investor, and is pursuing an increasingly assertive foreign and defence policy.

But economic change has not been matched by political reform, and the Communist Party retains a tight grip on political life and much of wider society.

- See **more country profiles** - Profiles compiled by **BBC Monitoring**

## FACTS

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People's Republic of China

Capital: Beijing

- **Population** 1.4 billion
- **Area** 9.6 million sq km (3.7 million sq miles)
- **Major language** Mandarin Chinese
- **Major religions** Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism
- **Life expectancy** 75 years (men), 78 years (women)
- **Currency** Renminbi (yuan)

UN, World Bank

Getty Images

## LEADERS

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**President: Xi Jinping**



Xi Jinping came to power in 2012-3 as the hand-picked heir of predecessor Hu Jintao, and is expected to lead China for the next decade.

Since taking over, he has concentrated power in his hands, in a move seen as a turning away from the traditional system of collective leadership, and has sought to present a modern face to China and the world.

His position as the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong was cemented in 2017 when his name and political philosophy was written into the Communist Party constitution by the National Congress.

In early 2018 the party also moved to allow him to remain in office indefinitely by abolishing the conventional two-term presidential limit.

The main themes of his leadership have been economic reform to boost market forces, as well as an anti-corruption campaign.

Mr Xi rejects Western ideas of constitutional democracy and human rights as models for China, and his government moved to silence voices critical of one-party rule, especially on social media.



## MEDIA



China has the world's biggest internet audience, but content is tightly controlled

China is the largest media market in the world.

Outlets operate under tight Communist Party control. The opening-up of the industry has extended to distribution and advertising, but not necessarily to editorial content.

Beijing tries to limit access to foreign news by restricting rebroadcasting and the reach of satellite TV, and by blocking websites using an extensive filtering system known as the "Great Firewall".

With 772 million users, China has the world's largest online population. Three powerful companies - Baidu, Alibaba and Tencent - dominate the market.

Tencent's WeChat messenger has more than 900 million users worldwide.

- Read **full media profile**

## TIMELINE



The Great Wall of China was built in the 14th century as a barrier against the nomadic peoples of the north

**ca 1700-1046 BC** - Shang Dynasty rules northern China - the first Chinese state for which clear written records remain.

**221-206 BC** - The Chinese heartland is united for the first time under the first emperor, Qin Shihuangdi.

**1644** - A Manchu invasion from the north establishes the Qing Dynasty.

**1911-12** - Military revolts lead to the proclamation of Republic of China under Sun Yat-sen and the abdication of the last Manchu emperor, but much of the country is taken over by unruly warlords.

**1931-45** - Japan invades and establishes a brutal regime of occupation across large parts of China.

**1949 1 October** - Communist leader Mao Zedong proclaims the founding of the People's Republic of China after defeat of the nationalist Kuomintang in a civil war.

**1950** - China sends People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops into Tibet, enforcing a longstanding claim.

**1958-60** - Mao's "Great Leap Forward" disrupts agriculture, producing an economic breakdown, and is quickly abandoned after the loss of millions of lives.

**1966-76** - Mao's "Cultural Revolution" produces massive social, economic and political upheaval.

**1976** - Mao dies. From 1977 pragmatist Deng Xiaoping emerges as the dominant figure and undertakes far-reaching economic reforms.

**1989** - Troops open fire on pro-democracy protesters in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, killing hundreds of people.

**2010** - China becomes the world's second-largest economy after the United States, when Japan's economy shrank in the final months of the year.

- Read **full timeline**



Bright lights: Booming Shanghai is China's largest city

# India country profile



**India is the world's largest democracy and, according to UN estimates, its population is expected to overtake China's in 2028 to become the world's most populous nation.**

As a rising economic powerhouse and nuclear-armed state, India has emerged as an important regional power.

But it is also tackling huge, social, economic and environmental problems.

Home to some of the world's most ancient surviving civilisations, the Indian subcontinent - from the mountainous Afghan frontier to the jungles of Burma and the coral reefs of the Indian Ocean - is both vast and varied in terms of people, language and cultural traditions.

- See **India in pictures**
- See **more country profiles** - Profiles compiled by **BBC Monitoring**

## FACTS

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Republic of India

Capital: New Delhi

- **Population** 1.3 billion
- **Area** 3.1 million sq km (1.2 million sq miles), excluding Kashmir
- **Major languages** Hindi, English and more than 20 other official languages
- **Major religions** Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism
- **Life expectancy** 67 years (men), 70 years (women)
- **Currency** Rupee  
UN, World Bank



Getty Images

## LEADERS

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**President: Ram Nath Kovind**



Ram Nath Kovind, a Dalit - one of India's lowest castes - was picked by an electoral college to become president in July 2017.

He is a Supreme Court lawyer and has earned widespread respect as the governor of the northern state of Bihar.

India's presidency is largely ceremonial, but can play a significant role if, for example, no party wins an outright majority in national elections.

**Prime Minister: Narendra Modi**



Hindu nationalist Narendra Modi stormed to power on a surge of popular expectation and anger at corruption and weak growth.

Despite Mr Modi's polarising image, his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) scored an unprecedented landslide victory in the May 2014 parliamentary elections.

It was the first time in 30 years that a single party had won a clear parliamentary majority.

Mr Modi fought on his record as chief minister of the economically successful state of Gujarat, promising to revitalise India's flagging economy.

But his time in Gujarat was overshadowed by accusations that he did too little to stop the religious riots in 2001, which saw more than 1,000 people - mainly Muslims - killed.

- **[Read full biography](#)**

## MEDIA



India has a burgeoning media industry, with broadcast, print and digital media experiencing tremendous growth.

There are around 197 million TV households, many of them using satellite or cable. FM radio stations are plentiful but only public All India Radio can produce news.

The press scene is lively with thousands of titles. India has the second largest number of internet users in the world, after China.

- **Read full media profile**

## TIMELINE



Indian nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi with Viceroy of India Lord Mountbatten and his wife in 1947

### **Some key dates in India's history:**

**2500 BC** - India is home to several ancient civilisations and empires.

**1600s** - The British arrive and establish trading posts under The British East India Company - by the 1850s they control most of the subcontinent.

**1858** - India comes under direct British rule.

**1920** - Nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi heads a campaign of non-violent protest against British rule which eventually leads to independence.

**1947** - India is split into two nations at independence - Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan.

**1971** - India and Pakistan go to war over East Pakistan, leading to the creation of Bangladesh.

**1974** - India conducts its first underground nuclear test.

**1990s** - Government initiates a programme of economic liberalisation and reform, opening up the economy to global trade and investment.

**2000** - India's population tops one billion.

**2014** - Hindu nationalist BJP party scores biggest election victory by any party in 30 years.



# New Zealand country profile



**New Zealand is a wealthy Pacific nation dominated by two cultural groups - New Zealanders of European descent, and the Maori, who are descendants of Polynesian settlers.**

It is made up of two main islands and numerous smaller ones. Around three-quarters of the population lives on the North Island, which is also home to the capital, Wellington.

Agriculture is the economic mainstay, but manufacturing and tourism are important. Visitors are drawn to the glacier-carved mountains, lakes, beaches and thermal springs. Because of the islands' geographical isolation, much of the flora and fauna is unique to the country.

New Zealand plays an active role in Pacific affairs, and has special constitutional ties with the Pacific territories of Niue, the Cook Islands and Tokelau.

- Read more **country profiles** - Profiles by **BBC Monitoring**

## FACTS

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New Zealand

Capital: Wellington

- **Population** 4.7 million
- **Area** 270,534 sq km (104,454 sq miles)
- **Major languages** English, Maori
- **Major religion** Christianity
- **Life expectancy** 80 years (men), 83 years (women)
- **Currency** New Zealand dollar  
UN, World Bank

Getty Images

## LEADERS

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**Head of state: Queen Elizabeth II, represented by a governor-general**  
**Prime minister: Jacinda Ardern**



Jacinda Ardern was sworn in as prime minister in October 2017, pledging to lead a government for all despite her Labour Party falling well short of a majority in the previous month's general election.

She stitched together a three-way coalition. Her centre-left party trailed the previously ruling conservative National Party on election night, and required the combined support of the populist New Zealand First party and the Greens to confirm a majority government.

Ms Ardern campaigned on social issues including housing affordability and improved healthcare, and also listed raising the minimum wage, environmental issues, and tackling homelessness and child poverty among her priorities.

In 2018 Ms Ardern gave birth to her first child, making her only the second elected leader in modern history to give birth while in office. Benazir Bhutto gave birth to a daughter while serving as Pakistan's prime minister in 1990.

## MEDIA



Broadcasters enjoy one of the world's most liberal media arenas.

The broadcasting sector was deregulated in 1988, when the government allowed competition to the state-owned Television New Zealand (TVNZ). Privately-owned TV3 is TVNZ's main competitor.

Satellite platform SKY TV is the leading pay TV provider. Freeview carries free-to-air digital terrestrial and satellite TV.

The New Zealand Herald newspaper has the biggest circulation.

- **[Read full media profile](#)**

## TIMELINE



Waitangi Day is a national holiday

Some key dates in New Zealand's history.

**c. 1200-1300 AD** - Ancestors of the Maori arrive by canoe from other parts of Polynesia. Their name for the country is Aotearoa (land of the long white cloud).

**1642** - Dutch explorer Abel Tasman sights the south island and charts some of the country's west coast. It subsequently appears on Dutch maps as Nieuw Zeeland, named after the Dutch province of Zeeland.

**1769** - British captain James Cook explores coastline, also in 1773 and 1777.

**1840** - Treaty of Waitangi between British and several Maori tribes pledges protection of Maori land and establishes British law in New Zealand.

**1947** - New Zealand gains full independence from Britain.

# China profile - Timeline

A chronology of key events:



The philosopher Confucius has had a major influence on Chinese culture

**ca 1700-1046 BC** - Shang Dynasty - the first Chinese state for which clear written records remain - unites much of north central China.

**1045-ca 770 BC** - Zhou dynasty replaces Shang as dominant force across northern China,

**ca 770 BC** - Zhou state collapses into loose association of warring states, known as the Eastern Zhou.

## **Imperial China**

**221-206 BC** - King Ying Zheng of Qin for the first time unites much of the Chinese heartland, becomes the first ruler to use the title "emperor" as Qin Shihuangdi ("First Qin Emperor") and builds first Great Wall of China, but his empire quickly collapses after his death. After a brief period of instability, Liu Bang founds the Han dynasty.

**206 BC - 220 AD** - Han Dynasty: first durable state governing the entire Chinese heartland, ushers in first Chinese cultural "golden age", growth in money economy, and the promotion of Confucianism as the state philosophy. Buddhism makes its first inroads into China.

**220 - 589** - Collapse of Han state results in nearly four centuries of division between competing dynasties before China is reunited by the short-lived Sui dynasty. Start of the development of southern China.

**618-907** - Tang Dynasty unites China for nearly three centuries, in what is seen as the second high point of Chinese civilisation after the Han; imperial sphere of influence reaches Central Asia for the first time.





Started in the 3rd century, the landmark Great Wall was designed as a barrier between China and the nomadic peoples to the north

### **Great Wall of China 'even longer'**

#### **China profile**

#### **China protects its greatest asset**

**960-1279** - Song Dynasty: While weaker than the Tang empire militarily and politically, Song rule marks a high point of Chinese classical culture, with a flowering of literature, scientific innovation and the adoption of Neo-Confucianism as the official state ideology.

#### **Mongol rule**

**1271-1368** - Mongols conquer China and establish their own Yuan Dynasty, founded by Kublai Khan. Marco Polo and other Westerners visit. Beijing becomes the capital of a united China.

**1368** - Ming Dynasty overthrows Mongols and establishes sophisticated agricultural economy, underpinning strong centralised bureaucracy and military. Great Wall of China completed in the form seen today.

**1644** - Manchu Qing Dynasty drives out Ming. Chinese empire reaches its zenith, with the annexation of Tibet, Mongolia and present-day Xinjiang (Turkestan).

**19th Century** - Qing Dynasty begins a long decline. Western powers impose "unequal treaties" that create foreign concessions in China's ports. Regional warlords rise as central government atrophies.

**1899-1901** - "Boxer Rebellion" in Northern China seeks to stifle reforms in the Qing administration, drive out foreigners and re-establish traditional rule. Defeated by foreign intervention, with Western powers, Russia and Japan extracting further concessions from weakened Qing government.

### **The Republic**

**1911-12** - Military revolts by reform-minded officers lead to proclamation of Republic of China under Sun Yat-sen and abdication of last Qing emperor. Republic struggles to consolidate its rule amid regional warlordism and the rise of the Communist Party.



Image copyrightAFP

Mao Zedong: founding leader of the People's Republic of China

**Mao: Powerful symbol, abandoned ideals**

**BBC - History - Mao Zedong**

**1925** - The death of Sun Yat-sen brings Chiang Kai-shek to the fore. He breaks with the Communists and confirms the governing Kuomintang as a nationalist party.

**1931-45** - Japan invades and gradually occupies more and more of China.

1934-35 - Mao Zedong emerges as Communist leader during the party's "Long March" to its new base in Shaanxi Province.

1937 - Kuomintang and Communists nominally unite against Japanese. Civil war resumes after Japan's defeat in Second World War.

## Communist victory

**1949** - 1 October - Mao Zedong, having led the Communists to victory against the Nationalists after more than 20 years of civil war, proclaims the founding of the People's Republic of China. The Nationalists retreat to the island of Taiwan and set up a government there.

**1950** October - China sends People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops into Tibet enforcing a longstanding claim.

**1958** - Mao launches the "Great Leap Forward", a five-year economic plan. Farming is collectivised and labour-intensive industry is introduced. The drive produces economic breakdown and is abandoned after two years. Disruption to agriculture is blamed for the deaths by starvation of millions of people following poor harvests.

**1959** - Chinese forces suppress large-scale revolt in Tibet.



Image copyrightAFP

Deng Xiaoping's rule kickstarted the economic reform that transformed China into a global power

**Tiananmen figures: Deng Xiaoping**

**1962** - Brief conflict with India over disputed Himalayan border.

**1966-76** - "Cultural Revolution", Mao's 10-year political and ideological campaign aimed at reviving revolutionary spirit, produces massive social, economic and political upheaval.

**1972** - US President Richard Nixon visits. Both countries declare a desire to normalise relations.

**1976** - Mao dies. "Gang of Four", including Mao's widow, jockey for power but are arrested and convicted of crimes against the state. From 1977 Deng Xiaoping emerges as the dominant figure among pragmatists in the leadership. Under him, China undertakes far-reaching economic reforms.

**1979** - Diplomatic relations established with the US.

Government imposes one-child policy in effort to curb population growth.

**1986-90** - China's "Open-door policy" opens the country to foreign investment and encourages development of a market economy and private sector.

**1989** - Troops open fire on demonstrators who have camped for weeks in Tiananmen Square initially to demand the posthumous rehabilitation of former CCP General Secretary Hu Yaobang, who was forced to resign in 1987. The official death toll is 200. International outrage leads to sanctions.



Hard-line party leaders sent in troops to crush pro-democracy protests in Tiananmen Square in 1989

**John Simpson: Remembering Tiananmen**

**20 years on: Memories of Tiananmen**

**Timeline: The Tiananmen protests**

**1989** - Jiang Zemin takes over as Chinese Communist Party general secretary from Zhao Ziyang, who refused to support martial law during the Tiananmen demonstrations.

Stockmarkets open in Shanghai and Shenzhen.

**1992** - Russia and China sign declaration restoring friendly ties.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) ranks China's economy as third largest in the world after the US and Japan.

**Three Gorges project**

**1993** - Jiang Zemin officially replaces Yang Shangkun as president.

Preliminary construction work on the Three Gorges dam begins. It will create a lake almost 600 kilometres (375 miles) long and submerge dozens of cultural heritage sites by the time it is completed in 2009.

**1994** - China abolishes the official renminbi (RMB) currency exchange rate and fixes its first floating rate since 1949.

**1995** - China tests missiles and holds military exercises in the Taiwan Strait, apparently to intimidate Taiwan during its presidential elections.

**1996** - China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - dubbed the Shanghai Five - meet in Shanghai and agree to cooperate to combat ethnic and religious tensions in each others' countries.





The former British colony of Hong Kong was allowed to keep its own economic and political system

### **Regions and territories: Hong Kong**

#### **China's delicate balance with HK**

**1997** - Deng Xiaoping dies, aged 92. Rioting erupts in Yining, Xinjiang and on day of Deng's funeral Xinjiang separatists plant three bombs on buses in Urumqi, Xinjiang, killing nine and injuring 74.

Hong Kong reverts to Chinese control.

**1998** - Zhu Rongji succeeds Li Peng as premier, announces reforms in the wake of the Asian financial crisis and continued deceleration of the economy. Thousands of state-owned enterprises are to be restructured through amalgamations, share flotations and bankruptcies. About four million civil service jobs to be axed.

Large-scale flooding of the Yangtse, Songhua and Nenjiang rivers.

### **50th anniversary**

**1999** - Nato bombs the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, souring Sino-US relations.

Falun Gong, a quasi-religious sect, outlawed as a threat to stability.

Fiftieth anniversary of People's Republic of China on 1st October.

Macao reverts to Chinese rule.

**2000** - Crackdown on official corruption intensifies, with the execution for bribe taking of a former deputy chairman of the National People's Congress.



The controversial Three Gorges Dam was completed in 2006

### **China acknowledges dam 'problems'**

#### **Three Gorges dam's social impact**

Bomb explosion kills up to 60 in Urumqi, Xinjiang.

**2001 April** - Diplomatic stand-off over the detention of an American spy plane and crew after a mid-air collision with a Chinese fighter jet.

**2001 June** - Leaders of China, Russia and four Central Asian states launch the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and sign an agreement to fight ethnic and religious militancy while promoting trade and investment. The group emerges when the Shanghai Five - China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan - are joined by Uzbekistan.

**2001 June** - China carries out military exercises simulating an invasion of Taiwan, at the same time as the island's armed forces test their capability to defend Taiwan against a missile attack from China.

**2001 November** - China joins the World Trade Organisation.

**2002 February** - US President George W Bush visits, on the 30th anniversary of President Nixon's visit to China - the first by a US president.

**2002 July** - The US says China is modernising its military to make possible a forcible reunification with Taiwan. Beijing says its policy remains defensive.



Many rural Chinese have not shared in the economic boom

### **Millions 'left behind' in rural China**

#### **Why do Chinese farmers riot?**

**2002 November** - Vice-President Hu Jintao is named head of the ruling Communist Party, replacing Jiang Zemin, the outgoing president. Jiang is re-elected head of the influential Central Military Commission, which oversees the armed forces.

**2003 March** - National People's Congress elects Hu Jintao as president. He replaces Jiang Zemin, who steps down after 10 years in the post.

### **Sars virus outbreak**

**2003 March-April** - China and Hong Kong are hit by the pneumonia-like Sars virus, thought to have originated in Guangdong province in November 2002. Strict quarantine measures are enforced to stop the disease spreading.

**2003 June** - Sluice gates on Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydropower scheme, are closed to allow the reservoir to fill up.

**2003 June** - Hong Kong is declared free of Sars. Days later the World Health Organization lifts its Sars-related travel warning for Beijing.

**2003 June** - China, India reach de facto agreement over status of Tibet and Sikkim in landmark cross-border trade agreement.

**2003 July-August** - Some 500,000 people march in Hong Kong against Article 23, a controversial anti-subversion bill. Two key Hong Kong government officials resign. The government shelves the bill.

## China in space

**2003** October - Launch of China's first manned spacecraft: Astronaut Yang Liwei is sent into space by a Long March 2F rocket.



The one-child policy has had a profound impact on Chinese society

### **China's one-child policy - success or failure?**

#### **China faces growing sex imbalance**

#### **China to loosen one-child policy**

**2004** September - Former president Jiang Zemin stands down as army chief, three years ahead of schedule.

**2004** November - China signs a landmark trade agreement with 10 south-east Asian countries; the accord could eventually unite 25% of the world's population in a free-trade zone.

**2005** January - Former reformist leader Zhao Ziyang dies. He opposed violent measures to end 1989's student protests and spent his last years under virtual house arrest.

Aircraft chartered for the Lunar New Year holiday make the first direct flights between China and Taiwan since 1949.

**2005** March - Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa resigns. He is succeeded in June by Donald Tsang.

New law on Taiwan calls for use of force should Taipei declare independence from mainland China.

## Tensions with Japan

**2005** April - Relations with Japan deteriorate amid sometimes-violent anti-Japanese protests in Chinese cities, sparked by a Japanese textbook which China says glosses over Japan's World War II record.

Taiwan's National Party leader Lien Chan visits China for the first meeting between Nationalist and Communist Party leaders since 1949.

**2005** August - China and Russia hold their first joint military exercises.



Rapid industrialisation has left much of China choking on severe environmental pollution

## **China's pollution, a toxic issue**

### **China pollution 'to harm growth'**

**2005** October - China conducts its second manned space flight, with two astronauts circling Earth in the Shenzhou VI capsule.

**2005** November - Explosion at a chemical plant poisons the Songhua river, cutting off water supplies to millions of people.

**2006** May - Work on the structure of the Three Gorges Dam, the world's largest hydropower project, is completed.

**2006** July - New China-Tibet railway line, the world's highest train route, begins operating.

**2006** August - Official news agency says 18 million people are affected by what it describes as the country's worst drought in 50 years.

**2006** November - African heads of state gather for a China-Africa summit in Beijing. Business deals worth nearly \$2bn are signed and China promises billions of dollars in loans and credits.

Government says pollution has degraded China's environment to a critical level, threatening health and social stability.

## **Missile test**

**2007** January - Reports say China has carried out a missile test in space, shooting down an old weather satellite. The US, Japan and others express concern at China's military build-up.

**2007** February - President Hu Jintao tours eight African countries to boost trade and investment. Western rights groups criticise China for dealing with corrupt or abusive regimes.

**2007** April - During a landmark visit, Wen Jiabao becomes the first Chinese prime minister to address Japan's parliament. Both sides agree to try to iron out differences over their shared history.



The 2008 Beijing Olympics - a lavish display of China's new global stature and self-confidence

### **China delighted with Olympics**

#### **China's push for the perfect Games**

**2007** June - New labour law introduced after hundreds of men and boys were found working as slaves in brick factories.

**2007** July - China's food and drug agency chief is executed for taking bribes. Food and drug scandals have sparked international fears about the safety of Chinese exports.

**2007** September - A new Roman Catholic bishop of Beijing is consecrated - the first for over 50 years to have the tacit approval of the Pope.

**2007** October - China launches its first moon orbiter.

**2008** January - The worst snowstorms in decades are reported to have affected up to 100 million people.

### Tibet unrest

**2008** March - Anti-China protests escalate into the worst violence Tibet has seen in 20 years, five months before Beijing hosts the Olympic Games.

Pro-Tibet activists in several countries focus world attention on the region by disrupting progress of the Olympic torch relay.

**2008** May - A massive earthquake hits Sichuan province, killing tens of thousands.

**2008** June - China and Taiwan agree to set up offices in each other's territory at the first formal bilateral talks since 1999.

Japan and China reach a deal for the joint development of a gas field in the East China Sea, resolving a four-year-old dispute.



Ethnic tensions have erupted into violence in Tibet and mainly Muslim Xinjiang

### Xinjiang profile

### Tibet profile

### China's ethnic tinderbox

**2008** July - China and Russia sign a treaty ending 40-year-old border dispute which led to armed clashes during the Cold War.

**2008** August - Beijing hosts Olympic Games.

Hua Guofeng, who succeeded Mao Zedong for a short period in 1976, dies in Beijing aged 87

**2008** September - Astronaut Zhai Zhigang completes China's first spacewalk during the country's third manned space mission, Shenzhou VII.

Nearly 53,000 Chinese children fall ill after drinking tainted milk, leading Premier Wen Jiabao to apologise for the scandal.

### Global financial crisis

**2008** November - The government announces a \$586bn (£370bn) stimulus package to avoid the economy slowing. Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao says the effect of the global financial crisis on China is worse than expected.

**2009** February - Russia and China sign \$25bn deal to supply China with oil for next 20 years in exchange for loans.





China has become the world's manufacturing hub, but discontent over working conditions is on the rise

**Can China keep its workers happy?**

**China's economy overtakes Japan**

Hillary Clinton calls for deeper US-China partnership on first overseas tour as secretary of state.

**2009 July** - Scores of people are killed and hundreds injured in the worst ethnic violence in decades as a protest in the restive Xinjiang region turns violent.

First sign of relaxation of strictly enforced one-child policy, as officials in Shanghai urge parents to have a second child in effort to counter effects of ageing population.

Leaders of China and Taiwan exchange direct messages for the first time in more than 60 years.

**2009 October** - China stages mass celebrations to mark 60 years since the Communist Party came to power.

Six men are sentenced to death for involvement in ethnic violence in Xinjiang.

**2009 December** - China executes Briton Akmal Shaikh for drug dealing, despite pleas for clemency from the British government.

**Tensions with US, Japan**

**2010 January** - China posts a 17.7% rise in exports in December, suggesting it has overtaken Germany as the world's biggest exporter.



China's rulers tolerate little overt political criticism

**China's voices of dissent**

**How much freedom do Chinese people have?**

The US calls on Beijing to investigate the cyber attacks, saying China has tightened censorship. China condemns US criticism of its internet controls.

**2010** March - The web giant Google ends its compliance with Chinese internet censorship and starts re-directing web searches to a Hong Kong, in response to cyber attacks on e-mail accounts of human rights activists.

**2010** September - Diplomatic row erupts over Japan's arrest of Chinese trawler crew in disputed waters in East China Sea. Japan later frees the crew but rejects Chinese demands for an apology.

**2010** October - Jailed Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo is awarded Nobel Peace Prize, prompting official protests from Beijing.

Vice-President Xi Jinping named vice-chairman of powerful Central Military Commission, in a move widely seen as a step towards succeeding President Hu Jintao.

## No.2 world economy

**2011** February - China formally overtakes Japan to become the world's second-largest economy after Tokyo published figures showing a Japanese GDP rise of only four per cent in 2010.

**2011** April - Arrest of Chinese artist and activist Ai Weiwei for "economic crimes" sparks international campaign for his release. He is freed after more than two months' detention.

**2011** July-August - Police kill seven Uighurs suspected of being behind separate attacks in the towns of Horan and Kashgar blamed on separatists.



Rapid urbanisation has boosted the number of Chinese megacities

### **Megacities: China's urban challenge**

#### **China profile**

**2011** November - Authorities present outspoken artist Ai Weiwei with \$2.3m tax demand, which is paid by donations from his supporters.

**2011** December - Southern fishing village of Wukan comes to international attention after violent protests by locals against land seizures by officials. Authorities respond by sacking two local officials and agreeing to villagers' key demands.

China issues new rules requiring users of microblogs to register personal details.

**2012** January - Official figures suggest city dwellers outnumber China's rural population for the first time. Both imports and exports dip, raising concern that the global economic slowdown could be acting as a drag on growth.

## Bo Xilai scandal

**2012** March - Chongqing Communist Party chief and potential leadership hopeful Bo Xilai is dismissed on the eve of the party's 10-yearly leadership change, in the country's biggest political scandal for years. His wife, Gu Kailai, is placed under investigations over the death of British businessman Neil Heywood in the city in November.

**2012** April - China ups the limit within which the yuan currency can fluctuate to 1% in trading against the US dollar, from 0.5%. The US welcomes the move, as it has been pressing China to let the yuan appreciate.

## Bo Xilai



The scandalous downfall of a rising star exposed leadership corruption

### **Profile: Bo Xilai**

#### **Victim of political dispute?**

**2012** May - Philippines and Chinese naval vessels confront one another off the Scarborough Shoal reef in the South China Sea. Both countries claim the reef, which may have significant reserves of oil and gas.

**2012** June - China completes its first ever manual docking of a spacecraft with another space module, when Shenzhou-9 docked with the Tiangong-1 lab module without relying on an automated system. China's first female astronaut, Liu Yang, took part.

**2012** August - Gu Kailai, the wife of disgraced politician Bo Xilai, is given a suspended death sentence after admitting to murdering British businessman Neil Heywood. State media for the first time link Bo himself to the scandal.

**2012** September - China cancels ceremonies to mark the 40th anniversary of restored diplomatic ties with Japan because of a public flare-up over disputed islands in the East China Sea. Talks between China and Japan on security matters nonetheless go ahead.

China launches its first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning - a converted former Soviet vessel.

## Next generation?

**2012** November - Communist Party holds congress expected to start a once-in-a-decade transfer of power to a new generation of leaders. Vice-President and heir-apparent Xi Jinping takes over as party chief and assumes the presidency in March 2013.



## Maritime borders

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Territorial disputes have fanned tensions in the East and South China seas

### **Q&A: China-Japan islands row**

### **Q&A: South China Sea dispute**

**2013 January** - A Tibetan monk receives a suspended death sentence for inciting eight people to burn themselves to death. Nearly 100 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009, many fatally, in apparent protest against Chinese rule.

**2013 February** - China denies allegations by Japan that its navy ships twice put radar locks on Japanese military vessels, amid mounting tension over the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands in the East China Sea.

**2013 March** - Xi Jinping takes over as president, completing the once-in-a-decade transfer of power to a new generation of leaders. He launches an efficiency and anti-corruption drive.

**2013 August** - Two ethnic Uighur men are sentenced to death over clashes in Xinjiang in April that left 21 people dead, according to Beijing.

**2013 September** - Former senior leader Bo Xilai is sentenced to life in prison for bribery, embezzlement and abuse of power in the most politically charged trial in China in decades.

### **Lunar mission**

**2013 November** - Communist Party leadership announces plans to relax one-child policy, in force since 1979. Other reforms include the abolition of "re-education through labour" camps.



The Jade Rabbit lunar rover was seen as a major step for China's space programme

China says it has established a new Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ) over an area of the East China Sea, covering disputed islands controlled by Japan and a disputed South Korean-controlled rock. Japan and South Korea both protest against the move, and the US voices concern.

**2013** December - China successfully lands the Yutu ("Jade Rabbit") robotic rover on the surface of the moon, the first soft landing there for 37 years.

**2014** January - China allows foreign companies majority ownership of some telecom and internet services in the Shanghai free trade zone.

The planned three-month mission on the moon of China's Yutu robotic rover is cut short by mechanical problems.

**2014** February - China's trade surplus jumps to \$31.9bn (£19.4bn) - up 14 per cent from a year earlier - easing concerns the world's second-largest economy may be stuck in a slowdown.

**2014** May - The US charges five Chinese army officers with industrial cyber-espionage, in the first case of its kind.

A row with Vietnam over disputed islands escalates, as ships from the two countries collide in the waters of the South China Sea. Chinese workers flee Vietnam after the row sparks anti-China riots.

China signs a 30-year deal worth an estimated \$400bn for gas supplies from Russia's Gazprom.

## Hong Kong protests

**2014** September-October - Protests against Beijing's plans to vet candidates for elections in 2017 grip Hong Kong.



China's construction of artificial in disputed waters of the South China Sea has prompted regional concern

**2014** December - Ex-security chief Zhou Yongkang, the most senior Chinese official to be investigated for corruption, is arrested and expelled from the Communist Party.

**2015** January - China's economic growth falls to its lowest level for more than 20 years - 7.4% percent in 2014. Government revises growth targets down.

**2015** September - President Xi pays official visit to the United States to seek investment in China; agrees to abjure from economic cyber-espionage.

**2015** October - China expresses anger at US naval ship sailing by artificial reefs Beijing is building among disputed Spratly Islands in South China Sea.

The Communist Party announces it has decided to end the decades-old one-child policy.

**2015** November - China's President Xi Jinping and Taiwan's President Ma Ying-jeou hold historic talks in Singapore, the first such meeting since the Chinese Civil War finished and the nations split in 1949.

**2016** January - Economic growth in 2015 falls to lowest rate in 25 years (6.9%, down from 7.3% in 2014), and International Monetary Fund predicts further deceleration over next two years.



The growth of China's economy has slowed in recent years

**2017 January** - The country's slow economic growth continues, with the 2016 marking its slowest growth (6.7%) since 1990.

**US trade tension**

**2017 April** - President Xi urges trade cooperation with the US at his first official meeting with US President Donald Trump in Florida.

**2017 June** - The government passes a new cyber security law, giving it more control over the data of foreign and domestic firms.

**2017 July-August** - Row with India over disputed area of Himalayas, where China says Indian troops were trespassing.

**2017 October** - Communist Party votes at its congress to enshrine Xi Jinping's name and ideology in its constitution, elevating him to the level as founder Mao Zedong.

**2018 March** - National People's Congress annual legislative meeting votes to remove a two-term limit on the presidency from the constitution, allowing Xi Jinping to remain in office for longer than the conventional decade for recent Chinese leaders.

**2018 April** - China announces it will impose 25% trade tariffs on a list of 106 US goods, including soybeans, cars, and orange juice, in retaliation for similar US tariffs on about 1,300 Chinese products.

# India profile - Timeline

A chronology of key events:

India has been home to several ancient civilisations and empires, some dating back to more than 2,000 BC. Culture and religions have flourished over the millennia, and foreign influence has ebbed and flowed.

**1858** - India comes under direct rule of the British crown after failed Indian uprising.

**1885** - Indian National Congress founded as forum for emerging nationalist feeling.



Mahatma Gandhi steered India to independence

## **Mahatma Gandhi's fading dream**

**BBC - History - Historic Figures Mohandas Gandhi (1869 - 1948)**

**1920-22** - Nationalist leader Mahatma Gandhi launches anti-British civil disobedience campaign.

## Independence

**1947** - End of British rule and partition of sub-continent into mainly Hindu India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. Hundreds of thousands die in communal bloodshed.

**1948** - War with Pakistan over disputed territory of Kashmir.

**1951-52** - Congress wins first general elections under leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru.

## Regional tensions

**1962** - India loses brief border war with China.





The rail network covers the length and breadth of India

**1965** - Second war with Pakistan over Kashmir.

**1966** - Mr Nehru's daughter Indira Gandhi becomes prime minister.

**1971** - Third war with Pakistan over creation of Bangladesh, formerly East Pakistan.

**1974** - India explodes first nuclear device in underground test.

### Democratic strains

**1975** - Indira Gandhi declares state of emergency after being found guilty of electoral malpractice.

**1975-1977** - Nearly 1,000 political opponents imprisoned and programme of compulsory birth control introduced.

**1977** - Indira Gandhi's Congress Party loses general elections.

**1980** - Indira Gandhi returns to power heading Congress party splinter group, Congress (Indira).

**1984** - Troops storm Golden Temple - Sikhs' most holy shrine - to flush out militants pressing for self-rule.



Indira Gandhi served four terms as prime minister

**1984** October - Indira Gandhi assassinated by Sikh bodyguards. Her son Rajiv takes over as prime minister.

**1984** December - Gas leak at Union Carbide pesticides plant in Bhopal. Thousands are killed immediately, many more subsequently die or are left disabled.

**1987** - India deploys troops for three years peacekeeping operation in Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

**1990** - Muslim separatist groups begin campaign of violence in Kashmir.

**1991** - Rajiv Gandhi assassinated by suicide bomber sympathetic to Sri Lanka's Tamil Tigers.

**1991** - Economic reform programme begun by Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao.

**1992** - Hindu extremists demolish mosque in Ayodhya, triggering widespread Hindu-Muslim violence.

### Rise of the BJP

**1996** - Congress suffers worst ever electoral defeat as Hindu nationalist BJP emerges as largest single party.

**1998** - BJP forms coalition government under Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.



Tensions over Kashmir have brought India and Pakistan to war

**1998** - India carries out nuclear tests, leading to widespread international condemnation.

**1999** February - Mr Vajpayee makes historic bus trip to Pakistan to meet Premier Nawaz Sharif and signs bilateral Lahore peace declaration.

**1999** May - Tension in Kashmir leads to brief war with Pakistan-backed forces in the icy heights around Kargil in Indian-held Kashmir.

### Population reaches a billion

**2000** May - India marks the birth of its billionth citizen.

**2001** - A high-powered rocket is launched, propelling India into the club of countries able to fire big satellites deep into space.



Disputed Siachen, dubbed the world's highest battlefield

**2002** January - India successfully test-fires a nuclear-capable ballistic missile - the Agni - off its eastern coast.

**2002** February - Inter-religious bloodshed breaks out after 59 Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya are killed in a train fire in Godhra, Gujarat. More than 1,000 people, mainly Muslims, die in subsequent violence.

### Congress returns

**2004** May - Surprise victory for Congress Party in general elections. Manmohan Singh is sworn in as prime minister.

**2005** 7 April - Bus services, the first in 60 years, operate between Srinagar in Indian-administered Kashmir and Muzaffarabad in Pakistani-administered Kashmir.



The Golden Temple at Amritsar is a place of pilgrimage for Sikh devotees

**2006** February - India's largest-ever rural jobs scheme is launched, aimed at lifting around 60 million families out of poverty.

### Nuclear deal

**2006** March - US and India sign a nuclear agreement during a visit by US President George W Bush. The US gives India access to civilian nuclear technology while India agrees to greater scrutiny for its nuclear programme.



Millions of Indians depend on the farming sector

**2007** April - India's first commercial space rocket is launched, carrying an Italian satellite.

**2007** July - Pratibha Patil becomes first woman to be elected president of India.

**2008** July - Congress-led coalition survives vote of confidence brought after left-wing parties withdraw their support over controversial nuclear cooperation deal with US.

**2008** October - India successfully launches its first mission to the moon, the unmanned lunar probe Chandrayaan-1.

### Mumbai attacks

**2008** November - Nearly 200 people are killed in a series of co-ordinated attacks by the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e Taiba jihadist group on the main tourist and business area of India's financial capital Mumbai.





The 2008 Mumbai attacks were carried out by Pakistan-based gunmen

**2009 July** - Pakistan and India pledge to work together to fight terror, irrespective of progress on improving broader ties.

### Ayodhya ruling

**2010 September** - Allahabad High Court rules that the disputed holy site of Ayodhya should be divided between Hindus and Muslims; the destruction of a mosque on the site by Hindu extremists in 1992 led to rioting in which about 2,000 people died.



India tested its long-range Agni V missile in 2012

**2013 September** - A court sentences four men to death for the gang rape and murder of a student in Delhi the previous December - a case that led to violent protests across India and new laws against rape.

**2014 May** - The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party and its candidate for prime minister, Narendra Modi, win parliamentary elections by a landslide.

**2014 September** - Visiting Chinese President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi unveil landmark economic deals. China says it plans to build two industrial parks in India, as part of overall investment of twenty billion dollars in the next five years.



India and Bangladesh signed a landmark border deal in 2015

**2015** September - India launches its first space laboratory Astrosat in its biggest project since its Mars orbiter mission in 2014.

**2016** November - In a surprise announcement, the government withdraws high denomination notes from circulation causing chaotic scenes at banks across the country as customers try to exchange old notes.

**2018** September - Supreme Court strikes down a colonial-era law to decriminalise gay sex.

**2019** January - Leaked government reports says unemployment rate rises to 6.1% - the highest since 1972-73, the earliest year for which comparable data is available.

**2019** February - Clashes with Pakistan follow an attack by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e Mohammad jihadist group on security forces' convoy in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

# New Zealand profile - Timeline

## A chronology of key events:

**c. 1200-1300 AD** - Ancestors of the Maori arrive by canoe from other parts of Polynesia. Their name for the country is Aotearoa (land of the long white cloud).

First settlers

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Maori people arrived in New Zealand from eastern Polynesia

**1642** - Dutch explorer Abel Tasman sights the south island and charts some of the country's west coast. It subsequently appears on Dutch maps as Nieuw Zeeland, named after the Dutch province of Zeeland.

**1769** - British captain James Cook explores coastline, also in 1773 and 1777.

**1815** - First British missionaries arrive.

## British rule

**1840** - Treaty of Waitangi between British and several Maori tribes pledges protection of Maori land and establishes British law in New Zealand.

**1845-72** - The New Zealand Wars, also referred to as the Land Wars. Maori put up resistance to British colonial rule.

**1893** - New Zealand becomes world's first country to give women the vote.

**1898** - Government introduces old-age pensions.

## Dominion status

**1907** - New Zealand becomes dominion within British Empire.

**1914** - Outbreak of World War I. New Zealand commits thousands of troops to the British war effort. They suffer heavy casualties in the Gallipoli campaign in Turkey in 1915.

## World War I

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New Zealand and Australian soldiers mark the anniversary of 1915 Gallipoli campaign that claimed thousands of lives

**1939-45** - Troops from New Zealand see action in Europe, North Africa and the Pacific during World War II.

## Independence

**1947** - New Zealand gains full independence from Britain.

**1950** - Troops from New Zealand serve with UN forces in the 1950-53 Korean War.

**1951** - Anzus Pacific security treaty signed between New Zealand, Australia and USA.

**1960s** - New Zealand sends a small combat force to support US troops in Vietnam.

**1984** - Labour government elected, Prime Minister David Lange begins radical free-market economic reforms.

## Rainbow Warrior

**1985** - New Zealand refuses to allow US nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed ships to enter its ports.

French secret service agents blow up Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in Auckland Harbour. One person killed.

**1986** - US suspends its Anzus obligations towards New Zealand.

**1990** - Opposition National Party wins election, James Bolger becomes prime minister.

**1996** - Under new proportional representation electoral system, number of Maori MPs rises from six to 15.

**1997** - James Bolger resigns after leadership challenge, and Jenny Shipley becomes New Zealand's first woman prime minister.

## Edmund Hillary 1919-2008

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New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary (L) and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay (R) were the first to climb Everest

### **Everest hero dies**

#### **Obituary: Sir Edmund Hillary**

**1998** - Waitangi Tribunal orders government to return confiscated land in Turangi Township to its Maori owners.

**1999** - New Zealand troops join a UN peacekeeping force in East Timor.

### Labour Party victory

**1999** - Labour Party wins election. Helen Clark becomes prime minister.

### Maori protests



Plans to nationalise coastline sparked outrage

#### **2004: In pictures - Maori protest march**

#### **2004: NZ launches first Maori TV station**

**2004** May - Intense debate over proposed bill to nationalise sea bed. Maori protesters say bill would infringe ancestral rights. Government survives no-confidence vote.

**2007** October - Police arrest 17 people in anti-terror raids. Prosecutors accuse Maori activists of planning a violent campaign against the country's white majority.

**2008** November - John Key leads the centre-right National Party to victory in a general election.

**2009** June - New Zealand's economy shrinks for the fifth consecutive quarter, making it officially the longest recession in the country's history.

**2009** August - New Zealand sends about 70 elite SAS troops to Afghanistan for the third time at the request of the United States.



**2010** October - Labour laws amended to help ensure that two big-budget films of the novel The Hobbit are made in New Zealand.



## Earthquakes

**2011** February - Scores of people are killed in a major earthquake in Christchurch, New Zealand's second-largest city, on South Island.

**2013** April - New Zealand becomes the first country in the Asia-Pacific region to legalise same-sex marriage.

**2013** - Two powerful earthquakes rock central New Zealand including the capital, Wellington, but without causing major damage.

**2014** - A 6.3 magnitude earthquake rattles New Zealand's North Island, but without causing major damage or serious injury.



The 2010 Christchurch earthquake caused extensive damage

**2016** December - Bill English becomes prime minister after John Key quits unexpectedly.

**2017** March - A river revered by the Maori people becomes the first in the world to be recognised as a living entity with the same legal rights as a person, after parliament passes a bill granting the Whanganui River special status.

**2017** May - A New Zealand-American company, Rocket Lab, launches its first test rocket into space, ushering New Zealand into the select group of countries which have carried out a space launch.

## Coalition government

**2017** October - Inconclusive parliamentary elections. Labour's Jacinda Ardern forms coalition government.

**2019** March - Fifty people are killed when a far-right gunman attacks worshippers in two mosques in Christchurch. Government pledges to tighten gun laws.



## BACKGROUND

### Land and Climate

As the fourth largest country in the world, China is just smaller than the United States. Because mountains or deserts cover much of western China, the majority of the population lives in the east, where rivers and plains allow for productive agriculture. China's geographic features range from the Himalaya Mountains to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau ("the roof of the world") to subtropical islands. Stretching east to west, the Great Wall of China is about 13,170 miles (21,196 kilometers) long. Some of the world's longest rivers are in China; the Yangtze River runs 3,900 miles (6,300 kilometers).

China's diverse plant life includes more than 2,800 species of trees, such as metasequoia, bamboo, palm, oak, China fir, evergreen, and China cypress. Deforestation is an increasing problem, especially in the east, as housing developments and industries replace natural forests. As a result of urbanization and a rapid increase in industrial activity, water and air pollution have become major problems.

China's climate ranges from sub-arctic in the north to sub-tropical in the south. During the summer wet season, monsoons cause frequent summer floods that are both deadly and destructive. Sandstorms in the north are increasingly common due to desertification.

### History

#### *Ancient Dynasties*

The Chinese have one of the world's oldest continuous

civilizations, spanning thousands of years. China has long been ruled by dynasties. In more than four thousand years, China experienced at least 28 dynasties with more than five hundred emperors. The first Chinese dynasty was the Xia Dynasty, established around 2000 BC. The first imperial dynasty to unify all of China was the Qin Dynasty (221–206 BC). Qin Shi Huang, known as the first emperor of China, built the Great Wall to guard against invading nomadic groups and was the emperor for whom the famous Terra-Cotta Army was fashioned.

The Han Dynasty (206 BC to AD 220) was the second unified imperial dynasty and is considered the first Golden Age of China. The Silk Road, or the trade route between western Asia and Europe, flourished during this time. The Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907) is also considered one of the most prosperous periods in China's history. The Tang emperors, one of whom (Wu Ze Tian) was a woman, appointed foreign scholars as senior officials in the royal court. Literature, the arts, science, technology, and trade all thrived during the Tang Dynasty. China's capital during this time, Chang'an (now Xi'an), was the most populous city in the world and hosted many foreign students and merchants.

Some of the Chinese dynasties were formed by native Han (such as the Ming Dynasty, 1368–1644), and others were established after nomadic tribes from the north conquered China proper (as did the Qing Dynasty, 1644–1911). Nomadic tribes were eventually absorbed into Chinese culture.

#### *Revolution and Communism*

A revolution inspired by Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Qing Dynasty in 1911. In 1912, with the country fragmented by

opposing warlords, Sun Yat-sen established the Kuomintang (KMT) party in an effort to unify China.

After Sun's death in 1925, Chiang Kai-shek took control (1927) and ousted the once-allied Communist Party. The Communists, led by Mao Zedong, struggled with the KMT for control of China while both groups fought Japan in World War II. After the Japanese were defeated (1945), the civil war ended with Mao's forces in control and Chiang's army fleeing to Taiwan to regroup. They never returned, and Mao ruled from 1949 to 1976. China still considers Taiwan its 23rd province. In 2009, leaders of China and Taiwan exchanged their first direct messages in more than 60 years.

While the Chinese initially welcomed communism, the Great Leap Forward (1958–61) and the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) had disastrous effects on the country. More than 40 million people starved or were killed during Mao's rule.

#### **Moderate Changes**

After Mao died in 1976, Deng Xiaoping came to power and gradually moved away from Maoism. His more moderate policies led to foreign tourism, a more liberal economy, private enterprise, growth, trade, and educational exchanges with other nations. The Tiananmen Square massacre in June 1989 and a subsequent government crackdown derailed these measures for a time. By 1992, China was again focusing on economic reform, and it quickly cultivated one of the world's fastest-growing economies. However, Deng did not favor political liberalization.

Since Deng's death in 1997, his successors have reiterated his policy of a socialist market economy with a strong central government. Hong Kong (a British colony) reverted to Chinese control in 1997, and China was admitted to the World Trade Organization in 2001. The nation also hosted the summer Olympic Games in 2008.

However, China faces several domestic challenges. Ethnic violence occasionally flares in the Xinjiang and Tibet regions. Several food safety scares have come up in recent years. China's population is rapidly aging. Pollution is becoming a major health hazard in major cities. Political corruption is also a pervasive problem in China. Despite these challenges, China continues to rank among the world's leaders in gross domestic product, exports, and receipt of foreign investment.

#### **South China Sea Disputes**

Many nations bordering the South China Sea have conflicting claims over the region's waters, motivated in part by fishing rights, access to shipping lanes, and potential oil resources. China's aggressive territory claims violate international law and are the source of disputes with neighbors such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Brunei, and Malaysia.

In 2015, China began building artificial islands on coral reefs in the South China Sea. Some of China's neighbors and the United States criticized the construction of these islands, asserting that they unlawfully expand China's sovereignty in the South China Sea. Later that same year, China promised to stop building new islands, but it continued to place artillery and other military resources on the existing islands. In 2016, a Hague tribunal ruled that China's historic claim to most of the South China Sea was illegal and that Beijing had violated the Philippines' sovereign rights by building artificial islands, a ruling that China rejected.

#### **Recent Events and Trends**

- **Corruption trial:** In July 2016, a high-ranking military officer was stripped of his title as general and sentenced to life in prison after being found guilty of accepting bribes. Since 2012, hundreds of thousands of corrupt officials have been investigated and prosecuted as part of President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign. Some believe that the investigations have targeted military officers who have not pledged allegiance to President Xi.
- **Oil tanker disaster:** In January 2018, an Iranian oil tanker sank off the coast of Shanghai after colliding with a Chinese freighter, killing all 32 of the tanker's crew members. The collision is the world's worst tanker spill in the last three decades. The ship was carrying 136,000 tons (about 1 million barrels) of light oil. China coordinated clean-up efforts to reduce the resulting amount of pollution in the East China Sea.
- **Uighur detention camps:** As of August 2018, up to one million ethnic Uighurs and other Turkic-speaking Muslims were being held in camps in the Xinjiang region of China, according to a United Nations report. Many credible reports have said that detainees are forced to renounce their culture and faith and are subjected to political indoctrination. Despite growing international pressure, China maintains the claim that these camps are "training centers" that provide education and vocational skills.

## **THE PEOPLE**

### **Population**

China's population is the world's largest. To reduce growth, the government began sponsoring family-planning programs in the 1970s and offered incentives to families with only one child; penalties were imposed on those with more children, though the policy, which applied mainly to the Han Chinese (92 percent of the population), varied according to region. As a result, China's population growth rate dropped significantly. However, the government relaxed the policy in recent years and in 2015 announced that married couples would be allowed to have two children. China is hoping that the new policy will stimulate economic growth and help support the country's aging population.

Of China's 55 minority groups, 18 include more than one million people. These are the Zhuang, Mongolian, Hui, Tibetan, Uighur, Miao, Yi, Buyi, Korean, Manchu, Dong, Yao, Bai, Tujia, Hani, Kazak, Dai, and Li ethnic groups. More than half of all Chinese live in urban areas. Millions of rural migrant laborers move in and out of cities in search of work. Shanghai (23.7 million) and Beijing (20.4 million) are some of the largest cities.

### **Language**

Standard Chinese (*Putonghua*), or Mandarin, is based on the Beijing dialect and is the national language. It is taught in schools, so most Chinese can read, write, and speak Mandarin. Many people also use the dialects or languages of their geographical region. Some of the main dialects spoken are Wu, Min, Yue (Cantonese), Jinyu, and Kejia. Language



variations are found more in the central and southern areas of China.

Written Chinese uses characters to express words, thoughts, or principles. A Romanized alphabet (*pinyin*) is used to help teach Chinese in school and for international communication. While as many as 50,000 characters exist, only about 8,000 are currently in use. Chinese requires a knowledge of between 1,500 to 3,500 characters for basic literacy. While people in different regions might not understand each other's verbal language, they use the same basic set of characters and can communicate in writing.

Chinese is a tonal language, which means a single word may have multiple meanings depending on how it is pronounced. For example, the word *ma* can mean "mother," "linen," "horse," or "scold" depending on the tone used by the speaker.

### Religion

China's constitution guarantees freedom of religion, but in practice many religious activities are restricted. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is officially atheist and bans its members from holding religious beliefs. Many Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims, and Christians practice their faith in China. Temples, mosques, and churches are open to the public, but public worship is frowned upon. Unauthorized or underground religious activities have led to imprisonment and other restrictions.

Taoism is the only Chinese-born religion. It is generally believed that Lao Zi (571–471 BC) was the founder of Taoism. The principles of Taoism stress peace, calm, nature, and harmony between human and universe; its symbols are *yin* and *yang* and eight trigrams (*ba gua*). Unique local religions can flourish in small towns, especially in the east; they may focus on one god or form of worship, and they often include elements of Taoism, Buddhism, and ancestor veneration.

### General Attitudes

The Chinese are generally noted for hospitality and reserve. Confucianism, the ancient philosophy of social order, influences attitudes and encourages a group consciousness—especially in rural areas. Most Chinese are very proud of their nation's long history and of past Chinese achievements. They do not appreciate external criticism. The attitudes of people in larger eastern cities tend to be more cosmopolitan than those in the more traditional rural areas.

The central government emphasizes respect for and obedience to authority. Over time, people have lost respect for some local and national leaders. The change is slowly forcing local officials to be more accountable.

The principle of *guanxi* commits friends and associates to do what they can for each other when called upon. To violate *guanxi* is to lose reputation or honor. Children are expected to uphold the family's social standing. This has had different meanings in different eras. For today's urban children, it means being well educated and well dressed, earning money, and practicing traditional values such as loyalty and kindness. For rural Chinese, it means putting the needs of the group (family, community) above oneself. An admired person is one

who brings the greatest honor to the family while being the most humble about personal accomplishments.

As more urban Chinese are becoming wealthy in an expanding economy, the gap between rich and poor is growing. Some areas are experiencing unrest because people are losing their jobs and the traditional cradle-to-grave benefits of the *danwei* (work group) system. For the average person, having food, shelter, and clothing is more desirable and understandable than the relatively abstract concept of political freedom.

### Personal Appearance

Chinese generally value a neat, clean-cut, and simple personal appearance. Today, many Chinese have adopted Western fashion trends and wear brand-name clothing, especially in urban areas. Rural styles are not always so modern, and some rural elderly Chinese continue to wear the Mao-era pantsuit. Ethnic minorities wear clothing reflective of their cultural past and the climate in which they live.

Most Chinese like to dress up for special occasions or social outings. For some formal occasions and traditional festivals, Chinese people wear traditional attire. The traditional dress for women is the *cheongsam* (a slim, one-piece dress). The traditional dress for men is the *chang-pao* (a long dress with four slits on the lower sides) and mandarin jacket.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The Chinese nod politely or bow slightly when greeting. A handshake is also acceptable, especially in formal situations or to show respect. Greetings vary, as they are given in the local dialect. *Ni hao ma?* (How do you do?) is somewhat formal. Informally, people might greet with *Zao* (Morning), *Wan'an* (Evening), or *Zenmoyang?* (How's it going?). Two acquaintances who have not seen each other for some time might say *Hao jiu bu jian le* (Long time no see) or *Zui jin mang ma?* (Have you been busy lately?). Shopkeepers might greet passersby with *Huan ying* (Welcome). Many people start a conversation with a considerate *Ni chi fan le ma?* (Have you eaten yet?), to which it is proper to respond affirmatively, even if the respondent has not eaten.

The Chinese prefer formal introductions; they use full titles for their guests but are less precise in identifying themselves. Chinese names usually consist of a one-character family name, followed by a one- or two-character given name. A person is addressed either by full name or by title and family name. In lieu of professional titles, the Chinese equivalents of "Mr.," "Ms.," and "Mrs." are used. Thus, Wang Jian-Jun can also be called *Mr. Wang*, but never simply *Wang* and rarely ever *Jian-Jun*. To show special respect, friends might use the terms *Lao* (old) and *Xiao* (young) with or instead of titles.

### Gestures

Chinese do not like to be touched by people they do not know. However, close friends of the same gender may sit or

stand close or walk arm in arm. Respectful distance is best when dealing with older people or those in important positions. Chinese do not punctuate conversations with gestures nearly as much as Westerners do. Out of respect, Chinese usually receive items with both hands from their seniors. To beckon, they wave all fingers with the palm of the hand facing down. Chinese point with an open hand rather than one finger. In some regions of rural China, it is common for people to spit in public after clearing their throat, an action that continues despite government fines.

### Visiting

Invitations usually are extended for formal events; otherwise people often drop by unannounced. When invited, Chinese are generally prompt; being more than a few minutes late is impolite. Guests conduct themselves with restraint and refrain from loud, boisterous speech and actions. Invited friends often bring gifts such as tea, cigarettes, fruit, chocolates, cakes, or wine when they visit to show their *xin yi* (good intentions or blessings) toward the host. One also might take a small gift when visiting an older person. Hosts rarely open wrapped gifts before visitors leave. They usually offer such refreshments as fruit, nuts, or seeds. If guests decline the offer, hosts probably will insist several times before accepting the refusal.

### Eating

Among family, friends, and business associates, eating is an important way of socializing and building relationships in China. The Chinese use chopsticks for all meals. Food is placed at the center of the table and may include more than one type of main dish to be eaten with rice. A small tray is offered for every diner, and diners can put food in their rice bowls or on these trays. When finished, a person places the chopsticks neatly on the table, not in the rice bowl. Spoons are used for soup, which may be eaten at the beginning or end of a meal, depending on preference. In some areas, slurping is not considered impolite; in informal situations, it is a compliment to the host.

At restaurants, diners may choose from several dishes on a revolving tray at the center of the table. Hosts may give a short welcome speech, and guests respond with complimentary toasts. At formal banquets, cold dishes are offered first as appetizers. Rice or noodles are served next to accompany the main, hot dishes. Fruit is served last. Hosts, not guests, turn the revolving tray, and people leave soon after the meal ends. In general, waiters or waitresses serve tea or wine to everyone. On occasion, the host will serve the guests tea. It is also common for guests to serve the host in a gesture of respect and gratitude. Tipping in restaurants traditionally has been an insult—something a superior does for an inferior—but with economic change, it is now popular in Guangdong and Fujian provinces and is spreading to other parts of the country.

## LIFESTYLE

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### Family

### Structure

In China's group-oriented society, the family is considered more important than the individual. Family ties survived the upheavals of the Cultural Revolution, and loyalty to family is still a hallmark of society.

The elderly are highly respected in Chinese society. In most regions of China, the entire family is expected to listen to the family elders and consult them about big decisions.

Though in 2013 China began softening its one-child policy and then ended it altogether in 2015, most families still only have one child, reflecting the restriction on multiple children that had been in place since the 1970s. Consequently, Chinese children typically receive considerable attention from parents and grandparents.

### Parents and Children

Children may start to help with household chores at age six, but in some wealthy families, the kids are called “little emperors” and are not expected to work around the house. Boys are prized as heirs to the family name. Having children is considered a duty to the family; parents are completely responsible for their children, and children are expected to care for aging parents. Sending elderly parents away from home to receive care is considered shameful.

### Gender Roles

Chinese society is traditionally patriarchal. Men are considered the heads of the family, often acting as the main decision makers and breadwinners. Traditionally, a woman stayed at home as a full-time housewife. It was her duty to raise the children, take care of the parents or parents-in-law, and do the housework. Today, women are still responsible for these traditional roles, but an increasing number of women obtain college degrees and also work, especially in urban areas. A growing number of women serve as government leaders or in managerial positions. During Mao's rule, women gained greater rights in marriage, divorce, and property ownership. Despite laws guaranteeing gender equality, many women face discrimination in work and education.

### Housing

#### Urban

Urban housing was once supplied by a person's work unit. Now, the government encourages people to buy their own homes or apartments. City dwellers typically live in apartment buildings of six or seven storeys. Most apartments are small, some as small as 480 square feet (45 square meters). To save space, the kitchen is often located on an enclosed balcony. New high-rise apartment buildings (sometimes 20 to 30 storeys high) are replacing more traditional neighborhoods in many cities, offering more spacious and luxurious apartments for those who can afford them.

A new trend in urban housing is community facilities. Companies build several apartment buildings close to each other and provide green spaces, security services, medical facilities, supermarkets, and schools. These buildings are colorful on the outside, and their apartments are relatively big. However, only the well-off can afford them.

#### Rural

Rural homes are often larger than urban apartments, though

they may lack running water and other amenities. Central heating is typically available only in cold climates (north of the Yangtze River); in the south, people more often rely on electric heaters and coal stoves. Farmers lease their land from the government for fifty or one hundred years.

## Dating and Marriage

### *Dating and Courtship*

Young people like to go to parks, dances, or parties at friends' houses. Intimate relations and public displays of affection are discouraged throughout the country but are increasingly common in cities. Online dating and matchmaking is becoming more common. Dating indicates a serious commitment between two people and is uncommon before one of the partners is over age 20 or has graduated from college.

### *Marriage in Society*

Most Chinese expect to get married, because family is considered the most important thing in a person's life. Marriage is often considered a step toward reaching adulthood. The minimum sanctioned age for marriage is 22 for men and 20 for women. Those who marry before that age are not eligible for certain benefits. Until recently, college students were forbidden to marry until after graduation. Most urban people do not marry until their late twenties. Same-sex marriage is not legally recognized in China. Many young people practice cohabitation but usually hide it from their more traditional parents. Socioeconomic status is still considered important when choosing a spouse. Divorce is becoming increasingly common, but it is sometimes difficult for women with children to marry again.

### *Weddings*

After deciding to wed, a couple must apply for permission from the local government, and a legal contract is signed and recorded. The bride retains her maiden name, but the couple's children will take on their father's surname. A couple is considered truly married after they celebrate their union with family and friends.

In rural areas, wedding festivities last for two days. Brides wear red, which represents happiness and good luck. In some weddings, the bride may wear red in the morning when the groom arrives to pick her up and change into a white dress for the main banquet.

Urban wedding dinner parties combine traditional customs with Western customs. Wedding rings are becoming more common. If the couple is religious, the wedding ceremony may be held in a church. In urban areas, wedding banquets are held in hotels, while rural celebrations may take place at the groom's ancestral home in the village. If couples are from different cities and budgets allow for it, the bride's family often holds another wedding in their hometown so that more friends and family from the bride's side can celebrate.

Traditionally, the groom's family pays for the wedding and may give some money to the bride's family as a gift during the engagement. The bride's family usually buys household appliances for the couple, and the mother of the bride makes quilts for them.

## Life Cycle

### *Birth*

The mother and mother-in-law of an expecting mother usually come to stay with her before the baby is born. Ultrasounds to determine the gender of a baby are illegal because discrimination against female children has often caused parents to abort or abandon them. Many taboos surround the birth of a child. For example, expecting mothers are not allowed to eat rabbit meat because it is believed that this may cause the baby to have a harelip. Pregnant women are also encouraged to stay away from construction and are discouraged from touching things like nails or scissors for fear that these items may injure the child. Chinese women generally do not receive epidurals while in labor because of fears for the health of the baby's brain.

Chinese celebrate the arrival of a newborn one month after its birth at a *Man Yue Jiu* (30 days) dinner party. Family and friends attend, bringing red envelopes of money for the baby. The parents will also hold a party when the baby is 100 days old; relatives and friends are invited to a meal to celebrate. Children are named according to family history or a trend at the time. For example, people who were born in the 1950s or '60s usually have the Chinese character *Guo* (country) in their name, reflecting the nationalistic attitude of that time period. Though the child's name may not always be decided on at birth, infants are always given nicknames.

### *Death*

When a person dies, family members wear black bands around their upper arms for a month or two. At the funeral, an enlarged picture (usually drawn) of the deceased is displayed. Black and white are the colors for the dead, and people wear white clothes to a funeral and bring presents of white and black cloth or of money. Family members burn incense and yellow paper. The yellow paper is considered money for the dead. Family members burn yellow paper on every anniversary of the person's death.

Funerals differ in different regions; the Han usually cremate deceased bodies, and celestial burial (in which deceased bodies are ritually dissected and left to decompose or for birds of prey to consume) is practiced in Tibet. Buddhism's influence has brought belief in reincarnation into Chinese culture.

### *Diet*

Except in larger cities, a wide variety of food is unavailable to the average person. What people eat largely depends on what is produced in the region where they live. Dishes with rice, potatoes, cornmeal, tofu, and various grains are staples. Noodles are very common. Dishes made with pork, beef, chicken, or fish (a symbol of abundance) are popular but expensive. Specialties vary from region to region, from duck in Beijing to spicy dishes in the Sichuan province. Fruits and vegetables are eaten in season; few dairy products are available. Sauces are mixed with vegetables and meats and eaten with rice or noodles. *Man tou* (steamed bread) is a staple in northern China. Chinese dumplings (*jiaozi*) are popular in many parts of the country. Seeds (sunflower, pumpkin, winter melon, etc.) and nuts are favorite snacks, and fruit is a preferred dessert. People may eat frequently at local restaurants.

## Recreation

### Sports

Most cities have sports facilities. The country's favorite sports include soccer, table tennis, swimming, and badminton. Basketball, dancing, jogging, and walking are also popular. Those who are wealthy often play tennis or golf.

Parks and courtyards are often filled in the morning by those practicing *taijiquan*, a traditional form of shadowboxing that provides exercise and therapy. Tai chi, a slow-moving martial art, is popular in Shanghai.

### Leisure

Favorite pastimes include eating out, singing karaoke, and watching imported movies. However, going to the cinemas is becoming more expensive, so many people watch movies online at home instead.

People enjoy gathering for conversation or card and table games, which the Chinese play in homes and parks. *Majiang* is the most popular table game; most Chinese know how to play it. The rules for *majiang* are slightly different from place to place. *Wei qi* is a strategy game played in more educated circles. Chinese chess is another favorite. Playing pool is popular among boys. Many children play video games at internet cafés, especially if their parents will not allow video games at home; these games are more popular with boys than with girls.

### Vacation

As incomes have increased in recent years, traveling to other parts of China to see places like the Great Wall, the terra-cotta warriors, and other scenic sites has become popular. Traveling takes place during holidays like May Day, National Day, and Chinese New Year, and many join tour groups for their travels. It is becoming more common for people to have private cars, which enables them to travel easily. Many middle-aged people take their elderly parents to visit places in China or overseas. Shopping overseas is popular because brand-name items are less expensive in other countries than in China.

## The Arts

Traditional Chinese arts include poetry, calligraphy, paper cutting, shadow puppetry, painting, pottery, and jade carving. Calligraphy is thought to enrich a person's life by teaching self-mastery. Like calligraphers, painters strive for beautiful lines. Many contemporary painters incorporate this tradition with other styles.

Chinese music is distinct in tone and rhythm and is based on a five-tone scale. Traditional instruments include percussion instruments like cymbals, drums, and gongs; stringed instruments like the *guzheng*; and wind instruments like the Chinese flute. Chinese opera is popular and depicts folktales or significant events. Theaters, ballets, and films are well attended in urban areas. Traveling cultural groups perform operas in rural areas. In some regions, families will invite opera troupes to perform at big events.

## Holidays

Official public holidays are New Year's Day (1 January), Labor Day (1 May), and National Day (1–7 October). Other

public holidays, set according to the lunar calendar, include Tomb-Sweeping Day, the Dragon Boat Festival, the Mid-autumn Festival (also called Moon Festival), and Chinese New Year (also called Spring Festival). Students have extended vacations at these times.

### Spring Festival (Chinese New Year)

As the most important holiday of the year, the Spring Festival is marked by banquets, family gatherings, carnivals, dragon dances, and fireworks. It begins on the first day of the first lunar month and usually occurs about one month after the Gregorian calendar's New Year. It lasts for fifteen days; the first five days are the most important, and the Lantern Festival, which is the last of the fifteen days, is also important. On the day of the Lantern Festival, parks are filled with games, performances, beautiful lanterns, and firework displays. Families gather and eat sweet rice dumplings. On Chinese New Year's Eve, families have a big dinner and children receive money in a red envelope. Those who were born in a year with the same animal as that year receive red presents to bring them good luck.

### Tomb-Sweeping Day

Tomb-Sweeping Day is also known as the *Qing Ming* (Pure Brightness) Festival and is held each year in early April. People come to the cemeteries to sweep tombs and offer sacrifices of food and flowers to the dead. They burn incense and paper money and bow before the tombstones. Those who cannot visit cemeteries where their families are buried usually burn some paper money at night on city streets.

### Dragon Boat Festival

The Dragon Boat Festival is held on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. This festival is said to have been started to commemorate the death of Qu Yuan (340–278 BC), a minister of the State of Chu and one of China's earliest poets. People eat *zong zi* (pyramid-shaped, sticky rice dumplings wrapped in reed or bamboo leaves) and drink *xionghuang jiu* (a kind of liquor believed to prevent illness). Dragon boat races are held mainly in the southern part of the country. As the gun is fired, racers in dragon-shaped canoes row to the rapid beat of drums.

### Other Festivals

Other festivals are held throughout the year but are not public holidays. The Double Seventh Festival, for example, is held on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month and is called the Chinese Valentine's Day. It honors a legend of two star-crossed lovers who were separated by the Milky Way. They could only cross the sky on a bridge of magpies (a type of bird) to meet once a year on this date.

## SOCIETY

### Government

#### Structure

The president of China is head of state and is formally elected by the 2,987 members of the National People's Congress, the country's legislature. In the People's Republic of China, the office of president is mostly symbolic, with the president's real power deriving from also holding the positions of General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party (usually

considered the government's most powerful position), Chairman of the Central Military Commission, and first member of the Politburo Standing Committee. The president serves for a five-year term, and there are no term limits. The premier is head of government and is nominated by the president and confirmed by Congress. Members of Congress are indirectly elected at local levels or through the military to serve five-year terms. In about half of all villages, local leaders are elected rather than appointed.

#### ***Political Landscape***

National policy is determined by a 25-member Politburo of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and, more importantly, its 7-member Standing Committee, which is believed to make decisions based on consensus. Many party members hold powerful positions in the public and private sector. The CCP also controls eight other smaller parties. No significant opposition group exists in China. There have been conflicts recently within the CCP regarding the direction the country needs to be taken. There is also reportedly some conflict between younger members of the CCP, who do not have strong memories of life before China's economic success, and older members of the party, who do.

#### ***Government and the People***

The Chinese government is generally thought to be repressive, and freedoms of speech, assembly, religion, and press are not well respected. China is considered by many to have a poor record respecting human rights. Reports of widespread corruption are also common. Despite these concerns, some hope for at least some political reform. For government posts that are filled through elections, the voting age is 18. Only members of the CCP or candidates that the CCP approves are elected.

### **Economy**

China's large economy is offset by its population, meaning the real gross domestic product (GDP) per capita is at the level of a developing country. While overall income is rising, wealth is not equally distributed. In a state accustomed to equal wages for all, this has been a source of contention among average people. Still, successful and honest entrepreneurs are well respected, even in rural areas. The government applauds the vibrant and growing private sector, even as it struggles to control it. Leaders contend that communism is not synonymous with poverty. Urban areas have a growing middle class. For villagers, the growing economy means better diets, but it also draws labor away from the fields and into the cities.

About 28 percent of the population is employed in agriculture. Future agricultural production may require greater mechanization and better seed and fertilizer. China is a world leader in producing rice, wheat, corn, barley, and peanuts. Tea, eggs, pork, fish, and potatoes are also important products. China produces manufactured goods, oil, minerals, coal, and steel.

The economy grew rapidly in the 1990s. The 2008 global economic crisis led to a sharp decline in world demand for China's exports, a contributing factor to the economy's recession. With past growth, the government has invested heavily in public infrastructure. Pollution, corruption, crime,

and rising unemployment are serious problems. A large deficit threatens the social security network and other institutions. The currency is the *renminbi*; the standard unit is the *yuan* (CNY).

### **Transportation and Communications**

Individuals travel by foot, bicycle, motorcycle, train, bus, pedicab (or rickshaw), or private minibus. But a growing number of people now have their own cars. Domestic air travel is expensive. In some areas, people travel by river barge or ferry. The government has undertaken a massive road construction project to create a north-south and an east-west freeway to link with intercity highways. In 2012, China opened the world's longest high-speed rail route between Beijing and Guangzhou. Public transportation, including buses and subways, is becoming more common.

China's government television station (CCTV) has 24 channels. All local channels and radio stations are under the control of the government or the Communist Party, and all programming must be approved. There is no independent press, and the government censors the internet. Most people have televisions. The telephone system is expanding, and the internet reaches into most cities and a growing number of rural areas. Cellular phone use is common and growing.

### **Education**

#### ***Structure***

Education is very important to the Chinese, and parents do everything they can to help their children finish school and obtain a good education. China seeks to provide an elementary education to every citizen, and nine years of education are compulsory. Nearly 100 percent of first-grade-age children are enrolled, and most finish elementary school. Rural girls are least likely to be enrolled because they are needed at home.

#### ***Access***

Most primary schools are public and free. The selection exam for going to high school is very difficult, and it is hard to get into the most prestigious high schools, which guarantee the best education and give better chances for getting into good universities.

High schools and universities require tuition, which is paid for by the students' parents. University students may also sign a contract with a state company that will sponsor them in return for a few years of work after graduation.

China's literacy rate (the percentage of people over age fifteen who can read and write) is above 95 percent. To increase adult literacy, universities offer instruction over radio and television.

#### ***School Life***

Students attend school five or six days a week for several hours, depending on the region. Chinese, English, and math are usually the most emphasized subjects in primary schools. Learning is done largely by memorization, although discussions are becoming more common in class. Computer-aided teaching is also increasingly common. Students spend a large amount of time on homework outside of class: roughly two hours for primary students, four hours for middle school students, and four to five hours for high

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school students. The better the school is, the more time students spend on homework. Rural schools are not as good as urban schools. Cheating is forbidden and is considered shameful.

### Higher Education

When students finish their courses in high school, they take the college entrance exam to universities. High scores will allow students to go to the most prestigious universities. Students who do poorly will usually go to vocational training schools. There are over 1,500 universities in China.

### Health

China has an insurance-based public healthcare system where patients are required to pay for part of their care. Even with insurance, health care can be expensive. Unlike many developing countries, Chinese health care concentrates on prevention. An extensive network of programs emphasizes immunizations, prenatal care, pediatrics, and sanitation, though access in rural areas is sometimes limited. Facilities are simple, but the system has greatly improved basic health—especially in urban areas. Still, water is usually not potable and open sewers are common. Increased pollution in recent years is becoming a major public health problem in most urban areas. Urban Chinese tend to have better access to quality medical care than rural residents. Traditional Chinese medicine (use of medicinal herbs and acupuncture, among other things) is combined with Western medical techniques in treating illness and injury.

## AT A GLANCE

### Contact Information

Embassy of China, 3505 International Place NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 495-2266; web site [www.china-embassy.org/eng](http://www.china-embassy.org/eng). China National Tourist Office, phone (212) 760-8218; web site <http://www.cnto.org>.

### Country and Development Data

Capital	Beijing
Population	1,384,688,986 (rank=1)
Area (sq. mi.)	3,705,405 (rank=4)
Area (sq. km.)	9,596,960
Human Development Index	86 of 188 countries
Gender Inequality Index	37 of 188 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$16,700
Adult Literacy	98% (male); 95% (female)
Infant Mortality	12 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	75 (male); 78 (female)
Currency	Renminbiyuan

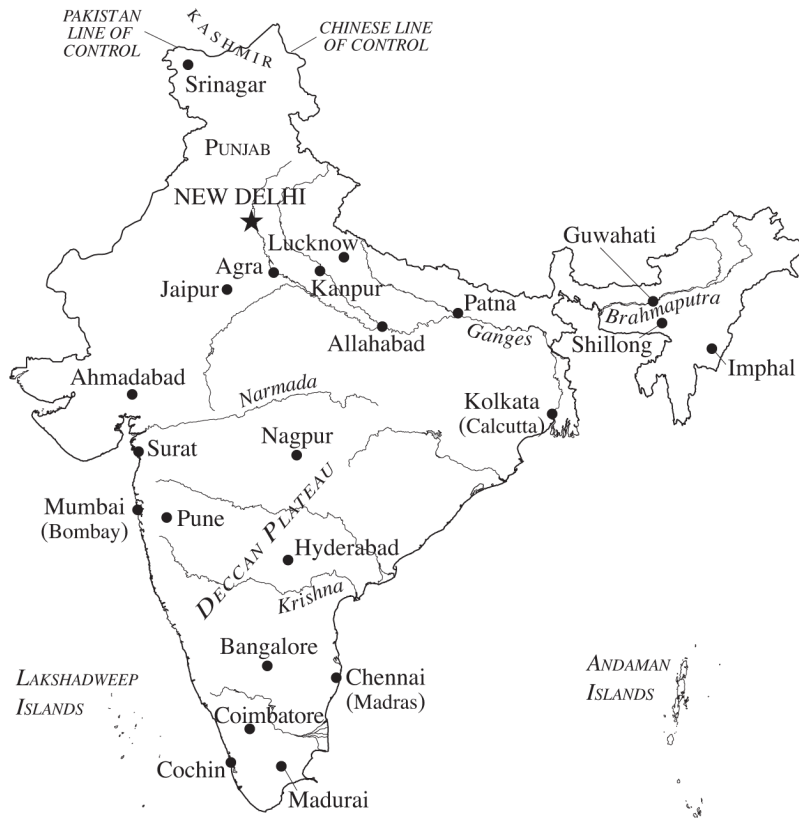
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## BACKGROUND

### Land and Climate

India is roughly one-third the size of the United States. The Himalayas, the tallest mountain system in the world, are located on India's northern border. South of the Himalayas, the fertile Ganges Plain is India's most densely populated region. The Great Indian (Thar) Desert extends westward from the plain into Pakistan. The Deccan Plateau, in the south, lies between the Western Ghats and Eastern Ghats, hill regions along the coasts of peninsular India. About half of the country is under cultivation, and less than one-fourth is forested.

Most of the country experiences three basic seasons: hot (March–May), rainy (June–October), and cool (November–February). Temperatures rarely go below 40°F (4°C) in January or reach above 100°F (40°C) during the summer. Variations exist according to region and elevation. Droughts and earthquakes are common, as are floods (especially during the monsoon season).

### History

#### Foreign Empires

The Indus Valley civilization dates back more than five thousand years. Around 1500 BC, Aryans arrived from central Asia and gradually pushed the native Dravidians

southward. Buddhism flourished during King Asoka's reign in the third century BC but declined afterward. The northern Gupta Kingdom, from the fourth to sixth centuries AD, was a golden age of science, literature, and the arts. Southern India also experienced several great empires. Arab, Turk, and Afghan Muslims ruled successively from the eighth to eighteenth centuries, providing some basis for the historical animosity between Hindus and Muslims. Following Portuguese and Dutch traders, the English eventually assumed political control of the area.

#### Independence and Partition

After World War I, Mahatma Gandhi led a continuing nationalist movement, advocating civil disobedience and passive resistance in a campaign to gain autonomy from Great Britain. Gandhi's goal was realized in 1947, when India was granted independence. Religious rivalry and violence led to the partition of British India into the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Union of India. India became a republic within the British Commonwealth, with Jawaharlal Nehru as the first prime minister. Gandhi was assassinated in 1948.

In 1950, after the adoption of the Constitution of India, India officially became a democracy. Nehru won his second term as prime minister in the 1952 elections. Nehru's daughter (Indira Gandhi) was elected prime minister twice (1966–77, 1980–84). In 1984, she was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards after Indian troops stormed the Sikhs' Golden

Temple in a violent clash with separatists. Recurring violence related to a Sikh movement for independence in Punjab Province subsided by the late 1990s.

Since the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, tensions have been strained between Pakistan and India. In 1965, both countries went to war over Kashmir, the disputed territory north of the Punjab. In 1972, Pakistan and India agreed to a cease-fire line now called the Line of Control (LOC), which divides Kashmir. One-third is under Pakistan's control; two-thirds is part of India as Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **Political Transitions**

After Indira Gandhi's death, the powerful Indian National Congress, or Congress Party, gradually weakened in the face of economic troubles, a rise in Hindu fundamentalism, massive corruption, crime, and religious violence. No party won more than one-third of the seats in the 1996 parliamentary elections. The coalition fell apart in 1997; new elections were held in 1998. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won, though not with a majority of seats, and formed a coalition government under the direction of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The BJP, once seen as extremist for its Hindu nationalist ideology, moderated some of its policies and worked to address India's most pressing economic and social concerns. India's nuclear test explosions in 1998 resulted in international condemnation and sanctions. India has since promised not to use nuclear weapons in a first strike. The Congress Party returned to power in May 2004 elections, and Manmohan Singh was appointed prime minister. Singh won a second term in 2009. In May 2014, India's BJP won a majority of seats in the *Lok Sabha* (House of the People) during parliamentary elections. The BJP's leader, Narendra Modi, was appointed as prime minister. Modi has focused largely on growing the economy, improving health and sanitation standards, and strengthening foreign relations (with an emphasis on improving relations with neighboring countries and those within East and Southeast Asia).

#### **Recent Events and Trends**

- **Presidential election:** In July 2017, Ram Nath Kovind was sworn in as president of India, a largely ceremonial role. Kovind, who was nominated by the ruling BJP party, won over 65 percent of the vote by Indian parliament and state assembly members. The president belongs to the Dalit community, one of the most oppressed groups in India.
- **Temple ban defied:** In January 2019, two women prayed at the Sabarimala Temple, in Kerala, defying a centuries-old ban on women under the age of 50 worshipping at the Hindu complex. In 2018, India's Supreme Court ruled that women of all ages should be allowed to visit the temple, a decision many of the temple's devotees, men and women alike, have protested. Many say the court ruling infringes on their freedom of religion, as they believe that the Hindu god Lord Ayyappa is celibate and cannot be in the presence of menstruating women.
- **India-Pakistan tensions:** In February 2019, India accused Pakistan of orchestrating a suicide bombing in the Indian-controlled area of Kashmir. The attack, which was claimed by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad militant group, killed around 40 Indian paramilitary police. Pakistan

denied involvement and urged India not to retaliate, but India launched airstrikes against Pakistan. Tensions escalated even further when Pakistan later shot down two Indian planes. The Muslim-majority area of Kashmir has been in dispute since the partition of India in 1947.

## **THE PEOPLE**

### **Population**

India has the world's second-largest population, behind China. India is one of the most ethnically diverse countries in the world, with hundreds of linguistic nationalities and hundreds of different castes (tribes) residing in each state. The Indo-Aryan castes comprise 72 percent of the population. Dravidians account for 25 percent. The remaining 3 percent is comprised of a number of other groups.

Nationally, castes are assigned to one of four general classes by the government. These include forward classes (FC), backward classes (BC), scheduled castes (SC), and scheduled tribes (ST). Classifications are based on social, historical, and economic criteria. Individuals in each classification might be rich or poor, as class does not necessarily define wealth in today's India, but BCs, SCs, and STs can access affirmative action programs that reserve jobs, scholarships, and other benefits for castes that historically were persecuted or disadvantaged. People in the SC and ST groups have come to be collectively known as *Dalits* (downtrodden).

A person's caste is a matter of lineage and cannot change, but Parliament technically has power to reassign a caste to another class. For example, if a government leader belongs to a *Dalit* class, his or her offspring can still access affirmative action unless Parliament upgrades the caste to the forward class. Caste still plays an important role in certain social interactions. Castes maintain their distinct culture and identity, and they rarely intermarry (though this is changing over time, especially in cities).

Castes are often confused with the Brahmin classification philosophy, *Chaturvarna Vyavasta* (four-class system), perhaps because the three historically dominant Aryan castes bear the same name as the three highest classes in this system. The ancient Sanskrit scholars believed any society is composed of four classes: *Brahmin* (intellectuals and priests), *Kshatriya* (rulers and warriors), *Vaishya* (merchants and artisans), and *Shudra* (workers). As they dispersed on the Indian subcontinent, the Aryans grouped most non-Aryan castes into the *Shudra* class. The Brahmin philosophy became widespread by AD 1000 because of Aryan dominance in many states, but it does not determine a person's caste.

Indian society is divided along four main lines: rural-urban, male-female, wealthy-poor, and the various castes. Differences are usually manifested in terms of social freedoms and access to educational and economic opportunities. Generally, urban dwellers, males, the wealthy, and those from the higher castes hold more respected positions in society and have more access to opportunities. While improvement has been made in many areas and



government efforts seek to mitigate the discrepancies between groups, these divisions remain in place and pervade most aspects of Indian society.

### Language

India is home to several hundred languages, of which dozens have 100,000 or more speakers. Twenty-two languages have official status: Assamese, Bengali, Bodo, Dogri, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Maithili, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Santhali, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu. Languages spoken vary by region (e.g., Telugu is the language of the state of Andhra Pradesh). Indian law defines English as a “subsidiary official language.” It is used in government, business, education, and national communication. About 41 percent of the population speaks Hindi, the country's most widely spoken language.

People who do not share a common first language generally communicate in either Hindi or English. Linguistic tensions sometimes arise because speakers of India's other languages often feel marginalized by the dominance of Hindi.

### Religion

Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism were born in India. The country is also an adopted home for Zoroastrianism (called Parsiism in India). A variety of religions exist side by side in India, and it is not uncommon to find Christian churches, Muslim mosques, and Hindu temples all on a single block. About 80 percent of Indians are Hindu. Officially, Hinduism is considered not a religion but a way of life. Shared beliefs of various indigenous religions merged over thousands of years, so people often include images of gods from other religions in their family temples.

Differences between religions usually are minor due to the historical Brahmin influence on most castes. Brahmin spread throughout India over time, adopting and adapting local religions and then writing their philosophies in Sanskrit and the local languages. Hence, Brahmanism helped shape many religious traditions. Buddhism even stems, in part, from Brahmin philosophy. Hindu concepts include reincarnation and veneration for trees and animals, which can be symbols of a certain god. Among the most prominent Hindu gods in various states are Narayana, Rama, Krishna, Shiva, Durga, Jagannath, Ganesh, Murugan, and Vishnu.

About 14 percent of Indians are Muslims, who follow the teachings found in the *Qur'an* (Muslim holy book) and regard Muhammad as the last messenger of God (*Allah*). The Sikh religion (2 percent, mostly in Punjab) emerged around the 16th century, drawing on principles from both Hinduism and Islam. Sikhism stresses simple teachings, tolerance, and devotion. Beginning in India, Buddhism flourished for a time but did not maintain a following there. Less than 1 percent of the population is Buddhist. Jains, though economically and politically powerful in India, also comprise less than 1 percent. Jains practice a reverence for life (*ahimsa*; literally, “nonviolence”), self-denial (especially monks), and vegetarianism. About 2 percent of the population is Christian.

### General Attitudes

Indians tend to be religious, family oriented, and

philosophical. Indians traditionally value simple material comforts, physical purity, and spiritual refinement. Even in hardship, one is expected to accept one's course in life as the will of God or fate. Abundant expressions of gratitude are generally reserved for real favors rather than routine courtesies. Many Indians are highly superstitious, often turning to holy men, believed to mediate between heaven and earth, for guidance and blessings.

Most Indians deeply respect the nation's founder, Mahatma Gandhi, and his ideals, which included humility, nonviolence, self-denial, and religious harmony. Yet many Indians sadly acknowledge that Gandhi's principles are hard to find in practice in today's India. Many are equally troubled by the fact that the government has not adequately addressed basic needs: sanitation, health care, education, and housing. Tensions between Hindus and Muslims, social classes, rural and urban populations, and traditional and modern values make it difficult for India's people to seek common ground amid their diversity. Nevertheless, as citizens of the world's most populous democracy, Indians are pressing forward to find balance amid continual social change.

### Personal Appearance

Clothing styles vary by region and religion. Western-style clothing is commonly worn by men and women in urban areas. Rural men are more likely to wear western fashions than rural women. The younger generation follows Western fashion trends and may often mix Western and traditional Indian styles together. For example, young men might wear a *kurta* (long, loose shirt) over a pair of jeans.

In southern India, married women generally wear a *saree* (a long length of fabric draped in variations that can represent socio-economic status and religious affiliation) daily. For most Indian women, *sarees* are reserved for special occasions such as weddings. The *salwar kameez*, a colorful pantsuit with a knee-length shirt, is popular among women in northern India.

Many women also wear considerable jewelry. Hindu women may have a *bindi*, or red dot, on their foreheads. Traditionally a sign of femininity, gracefulness, and marital status, the *bindi* has become for many an optional beauty aid, and its color frequently matches the wearer's outfit. After marriage, the *bindi*, accompanied by red powder on her upper forehead (or vermilion powder in the part of her hair), signifies the woman's husband is alive; widows do not wear a *bindi*. Women may decorate their hands and feet with henna, a plant dye, during special occasions.

Hindu and Muslim men may also wear a *salwar kameez* (a long shirt worn over pants), sometimes accompanied by a jacket or a vest. Sikhs typically wear the “five k's”: *kesh* (uncut hair), *kanga* (a wooden comb worn in the hair), *kaach* (undershorts), *kara* (an iron bracelet), and *kirpan* (a ceremonial sword). Sikh men generally wear turbans. A colorful *lungi* (a long piece of cloth, knotted at the waist) is desired attire for men in the south, but it is not popular in northern parts of India. In the north, men traditionally wear a *kurta pajama*, which consists of two garments: a long, loose shirt and a lightweight drawstring trouser. Though mostly worn on formal occasions, the *kurta pajama* may also be

worn casually. For special occasions, men may wear Western-style suits or more traditional clothing, such as a white *dhoti* (large piece of cloth wrapped around the waist).

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

The *Namaste* is India's traditional greeting. One presses the palms together (fingers up) below the chin and says *Namaste* (in the south, *Namaskaram*). When greeting superiors or to show respect, a slight bow is added. Younger people may greet an elder by touching the person's feet as a sign of respect and to seek blessings.

Out of respect, men usually do not shake hands with or touch women in public. However, Indian men will shake hands with Westerners, and educated Indian women may shake hands as a courtesy. People generally do not greet strangers. Doing so would be considered suspicious. However, foreigners are often greeted warmly. "Hello" and "Hi" are acceptable greetings among equals, but people address superiors with more formal terms such as "Good morning" or its equivalent. Indians usually ask permission before taking leave of others.

Men are often addressed as *Sar* (a title stemming from the English "Sir") and women as *Madam*. It is polite to use titles such as *Professor*, *Doctor*, *Mr.*, *Shri* (for men), or the suffix *-ji* with a last name to show respect.

### Gestures

Excessive hand gestures or verbal articulation is considered impolite. Indians beckon with the palm turned down; they often point with the chin. To say "yes" or "okay," people may bob their head side to side. Particularly in the north, the right hand is used for passing objects, eating, and shaking hands, as the left is traditionally reserved for personal hygiene. Grasping one's own ears expresses repentance or sincerity. Whistling is very impolite. Women do not wink or whistle; such behavior is commonly considered unladylike. Public displays of affection are inappropriate. One's feet or shoes should not touch another person, and if they do, an immediate apology is necessary. Footwear is removed before entering a temple, mosque, or Sikh shrine. When entering a Sikh shrine, all people cover their heads. Women also cover their heads in temples.

### Visiting

Visits in the home between friends or family are often unannounced. Such visits are sometimes seen as a chance for the hosts to prove that they are able to entertain well even on short notice. The need for prior arrangements is increasing in large cities. It is impolite to say "no" to an invitation; if one cannot attend, one more likely says, "I'll try." Among traditional Indian families, women may not be involved in social functions. At certain gatherings, guests adorned with a garland of flowers remove and carry them as an expression of humility. Guests repay hosts' hospitality by giving gifts, such as flowers, specialty foods (such as fruits or sweets) from other areas of the country, or something for their children.

Many Indians do not wear shoes inside the home. Most guests at least remove shoes before entering the living room. Hosts offer their guests water, tea or coffee, and fruits or sweets. It is polite for a guest initially to refuse these refreshments but eventually to accept them. Visitors often indicate they are ready to leave by saying *Namaste*. In some areas in northern India, people may say *Hare Krishna* before leaving.

In temples, saffron powder, holy water from the Ganges, and sometimes food are offered to visitors as *prasad*, or blessings from the gods; refusing these gifts is discourteous.

### Eating

In most parts of India, lunch and dinner are considered the most important meals of the day. A midday meal, called *tiffin*, may refer to a light afternoon tea with snacks or to a full lunch. In southern India, breakfast is the main meal. Rural residents also eat a large, hearty breakfast to prepare for a day's labor; dinners are much lighter. In northern and central India, most people start the day with a light breakfast, followed by a large lunch eaten at home, the office, or school, then a light afternoon tea when family members return home, and a dinner in the evening. Meal times vary by income, location, and schedule of family members.

Indians eat most of their meals in the home, as eating in restaurants is expensive and reserved for special occasions. Working people usually pack their own lunches or purchase home-style cooked food from caterers. India is famous for its efficient lunch delivery service that transports homemade or takeout foods in metal *tiffin* lunch boxes to workplaces.

Eating habits vary sharply between traditional and modern settings. Less traditional (most often urban) families eat meals together and follow many Western customs. Traditional families may eat their food with the right hand or with banana leaves instead of utensils. It is not considered rude to ask for a utensil if desired. At special celebrations, such as weddings, people may eat using banana leaves. People wash their hands before and after eating, and napkins are generally not provided at the table. Women may eat after other members of the family and any guests. When people drink from a communal cup, their lips must never touch it. A gesture of *Namaste* can indicate one has had enough to eat. In rural areas, some Hindus object to having their food handled by members of different castes.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family Structure

The family is the basic social unit in India and generally takes precedence over the individual. Urban families are generally small, usually with an average of two children. Rural families are usually somewhat larger. An urban household typically consists of a married couple, their children, and the husband's parents and unmarried siblings. A growing number of urban households include only a nuclear family. Rural households are usually made up of several family units—parents, their sons, and the sons' wives and children. As each male in the

family marries, he and his family are given a bedroom.

Extended families often live together or near each other, and bonds between members of the extended family are strong. The extended family serves as a social safety net, and individuals can expect support in times of need. In recent years, these extended family networks have been weakened as people move to urban areas in search of economic and educational opportunities. In these situations, the nuclear family becomes the focus.

#### **Parents and Children**

Middle- or upper-class parents expect to provide financially for their children until they finish their education and take a job—regardless of how long it takes. Some parents may continue to support their children even after they marry. In poor families, economic circumstances may force children to start working early to help support the family, often at the expense of attending school. Sons do not generally move out of the family home, as their wives move in with them after marriage. Daughters rarely move out until marriage. The exception is children who leave home to attend a university or to seek better employment opportunities.

The elderly are respected and cared for by their families. The advice of older family members is generally sought out and usually heeded by the younger generations.

#### **Gender Roles**

The father or oldest male in the home is head of the household. His decisions are heeded and respected by the rest of the family. The oldest female is generally in charge of managing the household and the kitchen. Daughters-in-law are expected to do most of the cooking. In urban homes, maids may perform most household chores.

A growing number of women seek higher education and work outside the home. This trend is particularly strong in urban areas but is also felt to a lesser degree in rural areas. Despite these changes in the status of many women, women in general lag behind men in terms of access to education and economic opportunities. Women are also more likely to be malnourished and to be victims of violence. Instances of rape and sexual assault against women in India are common; these social problems have gained increased attention and criticism in recent years, which has prompted some legislative changes. While traditionally women did not work outside the home, instead caring for children and the household, women today often have full-time jobs while still maintaining responsibility for the children and household. A growing number of couples share household chores.

## **Housing**

### **Urban**

Building materials and styles of housing vary according to climate, economic standing, and cultural and religious affiliations. In major cities such as Mumbai and New Delhi, there are not enough homes for the millions of residents, some of whom have migrated from rural areas to find work or further their education. Urban slums often stand in the shadow of high-rise apartment buildings. People living in slums live in shelters constructed from whatever materials can be found, often sheets of plastic or aluminum siding. Conditions are crowded, dangerous, and insecure, as these

communities may face demolition at any time. Residents lack access to adequate sanitation facilities and clean drinking water.

A growing trend is enclosed communities in which building maintenance, landscaping, and cleaning are the responsibility of a centralized unit. In these communities, the homeowners contribute monthly fees for these services. In cities and suburbs, apartments are the norm. The roofs of homes and apartment buildings are often flat, providing an open space for water tanks, gardens, and clotheslines. Urban children may use this open space to fly kites and play. Most urban homes have fences for security reasons. Most homes are cooled by air-conditioning units or fans. Central air conditioning is rare. India's warm climate makes central heating unnecessary in most areas.

### **Rural**

Rural homes are usually made from bamboo, mud brick, stone, concrete, or red brick. Roofs may be thatched or made from the same materials as the rest of the home. The kitchen is usually separate from the rest of the house, as smoke from a cooking fire is believed to pollute the home. As the availability of gas and kerosene increases, many in rural areas are choosing these methods over cooking on open fires. Kitchens that use gas or kerosene are often located inside the home. People may also cook on outdoor earthenware stoves powered by firewood or kerosene.

Some rural areas do not have access to running water; instead, people rely on wells. Women in these areas are generally responsible for traveling to and from the well to provide water for the household. Air-conditioning is not common in rural areas, so when the weather is warm, people prefer to spend most of their time outside. When the weather is hot, people in rural areas sometimes sleep on their roofs to take advantage of the cool breeze. Rural families also usually have a garden where they grow produce for their meals. Properties are generally not fenced, and it is considered important to maintain a good relationship with one's neighbors.

### **Interiors**

Indians generally enjoy spending time in their homes and working to improve them. Home decoration varies, but most families prefer traditional paintings and artwork. A statue of the god Ganesh is often placed near the entry of Hindu homes in the belief that doing so will bring prosperity to those living in the home. Hindus may also keep potted basil plants (which are considered sacred and are believed to have medicinal properties) and a small altar in their homes. Wall-to-wall carpeting is unusual. Instead, floors are covered with rugs. While most homes have access to electricity and plumbing, power outages are frequent and droughts are common.

### **Ownership**

Home ownership is an important goal for most people. Special Hindu housewarming rituals (*griha pravesh*) are associated with moving to a new home. Mango leaves are strung across the entrance, and a priest performs a *puja* (religious ritual) in order to ensure that no evil befalls the new residents. Astrological charts are consulted in order to choose the best day on which to move to a new home.

## Dating and Marriage

### Dating and Courtship

Western-style dating is not common in India but is gaining popularity in larger cities. Despite the rarity of dating, Indian youth generally find the idea fascinating, and media portrayals of dating and romance are popular. Most couples are introduced by their parents or meet at work, school, or social gatherings. Muslim men and women do not form romantic relationships before marriage.

### Marriage Arrangements

When a young couple wishes to marry, they approach their parents, who arrange the marriage. Most Indian marriages are arranged by the couple's parents, usually through friends, acquaintances, ads in newspapers, or matchmaking websites. Caste and ancient lineage (called *gotra*) are important considerations when arranging a marriage. In some cases, parents may check the potential couple's horoscopes in order to determine a favorable match. Young people generally provide some input when it comes to arranged marriages and have the right to accept or reject a partner.

### Engagement

Hindu engagement traditions differ throughout the country. In northern India, engagements are finalized in the *roka* ceremony. The families meet, and the couple publicly agrees to marry. The occasion is celebrated with food, music, dancing, and exchanging of gifts. After this ceremony, a wedding date is chosen, and the couple is free to court and get to know one another. In western India, at an engagement ceremony (*sagaai*), the bride's family arrives with a *matli* (a steel container full of sweets and gifts) to be given to the groom and his family. In southern Indian families, the bride and groom are not required to attend the engagement function. The commitment is made between their families. The most important ritual in finalizing these engagements consists of each family giving the other a *tattu* (a plate of coconut, flowers, turmeric, betel nuts, and betel leaves).

It is common for the bride's parents to give a dowry (such as money, land, or gifts) to the groom, even though the practice is illegal in India. Today, the dowry may be less of a financial burden than in the past and is often only ceremonial. The bride's family often gives gifts to the groom's family, such as clothes for the wedding and household items for the bride to use after marriage.

### Marriage in Society

Marriage is viewed as a union of both two individuals and of two families. Marriage is sacred to most Indians and is believed to endure beyond death. Chastity is considered extremely important for women. While traditionally people married young, often in the late teens, couples today usually marry later. The average urban Indian marries between the ages of 25 and 30. The age can be considerably younger in rural areas.

Islam permits a man to marry up to four wives, but the practice of polygamy is rare today, especially among the younger generation. Homosexuality is taboo in Indian society, although tolerance for LGBT individuals in urban areas has increased somewhat in recent years. Same-sex marriage is illegal.

### Weddings

Weddings are cause for great celebration, expense, and feasting. Dates and times for Hindu weddings are carefully chosen based on auspicious astrological timing. Most wedding ceremonies are religious in nature. Ceremonies are often elaborate and vary widely from state to state and from caste to caste. In many, the bride and groom exchange garlands and/or words before they circle around a fire three to seven times to solemnize the marriage. Bright clothing, jewelry, and flowers are part of nearly every type of ceremony. After the wedding, many families hold a reception, usually at an outdoor area of a hotel. Guests celebrate with food and dancing and present the couple with gifts needed to establish a home. After the ceremony or the party, the bride bids good-bye to her family in the *vidai* ritual.

Muslim weddings are finalized with a *akad nikah* ceremony, in which the groom or a representative proposes to the bride in front of at least two witnesses, stating the details of the *mahr* (a formal statement specifying the amount the groom is to pay the bride). Although the couple is already engaged, the symbolic second proposal is part of the ceremony. The bride and groom repeat the Arabic word *Qabul* (I accept) three times. The couple and two male witnesses then sign the marriage contract, making the marriage legal according to civil and religious law.

After the wedding, the bride moves into her husband's family's home. It is extremely rare for newlyweds to move into their own apartment, unless the couple does not live in the same city as the husband's parents. In Hindu families, mango leaves are draped over the entrance, and the bride enters the home stepping first with the right foot, which is considered lucky. Once inside the home, she is welcomed by her mother-in-law, who performs the *ghar nu Lakshmi* ceremony, which includes an *aarti* (a Hindu rite meant to invoke divine blessings). An *aarti* may include reciting mantras in praise of various deities, praying, and rotating clockwise a *thali* (plate) that holds a *diya* (a small bowl of oil in which a wick burns). In Gujarati families, the couple plays a game called *aeki beki* soon after the bride is welcomed. A ring and several coins are placed in a container filled with a mixture of water, vermillion, and milk. Whoever finds the ring four out of seven times is said to rule the household.

### Divorce

Divorce is relatively rare, most likely due to the cultural and religious importance of marriage. But in recent years, divorce rates have increased among the urban middle class. In the case of divorce, Indian law stipulates that a man must continue to provide financial support to his ex-wife and any children they have. Divorced men generally find it easier to remarry than divorced women do.

## Life Cycle

### Birth

For Hindus, life is seen as a spiritual journey, and each step is celebrated with a ceremony or ritual, called a *samskara*. Before a child is born, special ceremonies are often performed in order to ensure the health of the mother and child. Female friends and relatives give gifts to the pregnant woman at a *godh bhara*i (similar to a baby shower). Elderly women may bestow blessings on the pregnant woman.

In some cases, soon after the child is born, the father touches the baby's lips with a spoon dipped in honey, curd, and *ghee* (clarified butter). The sweet mixture is intended to welcome the newborn with the sweetness of the world. Hindu families hold a *namakaran* (naming ceremony) 28 days after a birth; the father or another close relative whispers the baby's name into the right ear. A priest chants mantras praying for a long and healthy life for the newborn and then determines the most auspicious letters to start the baby's name, based on the position of the planets (*nakshatra*) when the child was born. As part of the naming ceremony, the family seeks blessings for the newborn by holding a feast, distributing alms to the poor, and giving gifts to the priest who performs the rituals. Before a girl turns one, the family chooses an auspicious date on which to pierce her ears and nose.

In Hindu families, a baby's first haircut (*mundun*) is a sacred event that occurs in the baby's first or third year. According to Hindu beliefs, the hair present at birth represents unwanted traits from a person's past lives. In order to ensure a new beginning and to encourage the hair to grow back thicker, the head is shaved. The *mundun* is marked by feasting, family gatherings, and religious offerings. An infant's first visit to a Hindu temple is an important milestone.

Muslims celebrate a male baby's circumcision, which takes place soon after birth, with a party for friends and relatives. Christian babies are baptized and christened within the first few months of life. Baptism may include immersing the child or sprinkling water over the head. At a christening, a priest anoints the child with oil and the parents state the given name.

#### **Milestones**

Between the ages of six and twelve, most upper-caste Hindu males take part in the *Upanayana* ceremony, an initiation ceremony that marks the transition from childhood to adulthood and brings with it adult religious responsibilities. This ritual is seen as a new birth. At the ceremony, a Hindu priest gives the boy a sacred thread to be worn over the left shoulder at all times. For members of lower castes, a similar ritual takes place before marriage.

Sometime between the ages of six and twelve, Buddhist boys become temporary monks, usually for between two weeks and three months. They stay at the temple and learn about Buddhism from the older monks. To mark their change in status, they shave their heads and wear saffron-colored robes.

In southern India, a young woman's first menstruation is cause for celebration. Some Hindu families hold a party, printing invitations and decorating the home. Guests come to celebrate with the family, bringing gifts for the young woman. Married women in the community may gather to celebrate with the young woman, giving her gifts and distributing *kumkum* (vermilion powder) and *haldi* (saffron powder), both believed to bring good luck and prosperity. This event is considered a way of announcing to the community that the girl is ready for marriage, although in most cases a girl does not marry for a few more years.

In their mid-teens, Muslims of both genders take on religious responsibilities. Prayers, fasting, and other principles are required, and girls begin wearing the *hijab*

(head covering).

At the age of 60, Hindus may offer special prayers, called *shanthi*, meaning "peace." These prayers are seen as a way of giving thanks for all the graces granted throughout one's life and as a way of ensuring a smooth transition to the afterlife.

#### **Death**

When an Indian Hindu dies, a procession of mourners accompanies the body as it is taken to be burned on a funeral pyre. Cremation is thought to be the quickest way of releasing a spirit. A close relative of the deceased (usually the oldest son) performs the last rites and lights the funeral pyre. Infants are usually buried rather than being cremated. The body's ashes are typically collected, put in a pot, and then scattered over one of Hinduism's holy rivers. A death is followed by a period of mourning, when the eldest son may shave his head and the immediate family observes dietary and other restrictions. After the funeral, mourners take purifying baths. A few days later, close family members gather for a meal and often give gifts to the poor or donate money to charities in remembrance of the deceased. In honor of the deceased, an altar is constructed where the family makes offerings of food, displays photos of the deceased, and burns incense.

Indian Muslims bury their dead as soon as possible after death. The body is washed and taken to a nearby mosque, where prayers for the deceased are performed. The burial is attended by males only. Buddhists may hold ceremonies at the family home for several days prior to the funeral.

#### **Diet**

Diet depends on culture and region. For example, wheat bread (*roti*) is a staple in the north, while rice is the staple food in the rest of the country. In the south, rice shows up in common foods such as *idly* (a steamed mixture of ground rice and lentils), *dosai* (similar to a crepe, made from ground rice and lentils), *uthapam* (flatbread made from ground rice and lentils), *idiyapam* (rice noodles), and *pongal* (rice porridge).

Indian meals are usually very spicy. Onions are used in most dishes. Coconut is a common flavoring, particularly in southern India. Different types of curry (vegetables, eggs, fish, and meat in a spicy sauce) are popular. Betel leaves and nuts commonly are chewed after meals to aid digestion. Vegetarianism is widely practiced, often for religious reasons. All castes have different food laws and customs, as does each religion. Hindus consider cows to be sacred and will not eat beef. Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.

#### **Recreation**

##### **Sports**

India's most popular sports are cricket, soccer, and field hockey. Professional cricket teams and players have large followings, and fans gather to watch important games. Sports are generally played more by men, but many women enjoy badminton, tennis, ping-pong, and field hockey. In rural areas, people more often play traditional sports. These sports usually do not require expensive equipment, which can be hard to obtain or afford. People enjoy *kabaddi* (a team sport that combines elements of rugby and wrestling) and *gilli danda* (similar to cricket but played with a stick). Bullock-cart racing is also popular in rural areas.

### Leisure

The growth of India's middle class has brought with it an increased demand for entertainment, and cinemas are well attended. Most people also enjoy watching television, and all but the poorest Indians own a television. While Western media is available and influences Indian media, most people prefer Indian-made movies and television.

Indians do not wait for a holiday in order to celebrate. They celebrate a variety of life events, from major events like the birth of a child to more everyday occasions like purchasing a new car. People often get together on the weekends for movies, picnics, and family gatherings. The most common recreation activities for women include shopping, watching movies, socializing with friends, and gathering for potluck-style dinners. Children enjoy activities like swimming, playing musical instruments, and dancing.

### Vacation

Most people take a family vacation once a year, often to the beach or a rural area. It is also common to visit family. The wealthy may vacation in different parts of the country or abroad.

### The Arts

India is well known for its architectural treasure the Taj Mahal and its world famous Hindi-language film industry, popularly known as *Bollywood*. Indians appreciate a variety of dance and music styles, which vary by region. Common instruments in Indian classical music include the *sitar* (a stringed instrument), *tabla* (hand drums), and *sarod* (a type of lute). A popular dance form is the *kathakali*, a mimed dance that traditionally lasts all night. Makeup and costumes are elaborate. The dances enact myths and stories through movement, hand gestures, and expression. The epic Sanskrit poems the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* greatly influence national and regional literature. These poems' characters and stories are also incorporated into music, dance, and theater. Traditional Indian handicrafts include jewelry, textiles, pottery, and painting.

### Holidays

Many of India's most important holidays are religious. While there is much religious diversity in India, religious holidays can be unifying events, as people of different religions commonly celebrate one another's holidays. The Hindu holidays of *Diwali* and *Holi* are celebrated by most people, irrespective of religion. Similarly, Hindus participate in the Muslim *Eid al-Fitr* (the three-day feast celebrated at the end of the holy month of fasting, *Ramadan*) celebrations and Christian Christmas traditions. People often organize Christmas parties and celebrate the season with friends and family. India's national holidays include International New Year's Day (1 January), Republic Day (26 January), May Day (1 May), Independence Day (15 August), and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday (2 October).

Holiday dates are determined by a number of different calendars. The Indian National Calendar's 365 days correspond with days on the Gregorian calendar (which most of the Western world uses), but the years begin on 22 March. Civil holidays are set according to the national calendar,

while Hindu holidays are determined by the Hindu calendar. Each year, a *panchang* (a Hindu astrological calendar) is published, which people use to determine the most auspicious dates on which to schedule important events.

### New Year's

The New Year is celebrated on a variety of dates, depending upon the calendar being used. In northern India, the New Year is called *Baisakhi* and marks the beginning of the Punjab region's harvest season. On this day, Hindus visit temples and Sikhs visit *gurdwaras* (places of worship) to express gratitude for the harvest and to pray for prosperity in the future. Colorful fairs are held, where people enjoy folk dancing, singing, acrobatic performances, and concerts with folk instruments. In southern India, the New Year is called *Ugadi*. People clean their houses and decorate with mango leaves in preparation for the holiday. People put a lot of care into choosing gifts for friends and relatives. On *Ugadi*, people visit nearby temples to offer prayers and chant mantras. International New Year (1 January) is celebrated with parties.

### Patriotic Holidays

Republic Day is an important patriotic holiday honoring those who have given their lives for the country. It commemorates the day in 1950 when India became a republic. Celebrations begin with the president awarding medals to members of the armed forces. Citizens attend patriotic parades and performances. Independence Day celebrates India's independence from Britain, achieved in 1947. Indian flags are flown on this day, and children often fly kites in the colors of the Indian flag. The prime minister also gives a televised speech.

### Gandhi Jayanti

Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday, also called *Gandhi Jayanti*, is celebrated to honor the leader of the independence movement, who many consider the father of modern India. Tributes are held throughout the country, especially at Raj Ghat (a memorial devoted to Gandhi), and statues of Gandhi are decorated with garlands. Reverent celebrations include prayer services and scripture readings associated with a variety of religions to commemorate Gandhi's respect for different beliefs and groups. An important part of most celebrations is the singing of one of Gandhi's favorite songs, "Raghupati Raghava Raja Ram."

### Hindu Festivals

Numerous spring and harvest festivals are common between January and March and are celebrated with dancing, feasting, and many colorful events. One of the most important of these festivals is *Holi*, or the Festival of Colors, which marks the end of the cold season. To celebrate, people toss colored water and powder on each other. Bonfires are also lit, and people gather to reenact the story from Hindu mythology of King Prahlad's triumph over his evil aunt Holika. In some parts of India, effigies of Holika are burned on the fire. Ashes from *Holi* bonfires are thought to bring good luck.

The Hindu festival *Diwali* (Festival of Lights) celebrates the triumph of light over darkness. Thousands of lights decorate stores and homes during this time of goodwill. Special emphasis is placed on the Hindu goddess Lakshmi, associated with happiness and prosperity. Preparations begin weeks in advance, with people cleaning their homes and

decorating with lights.

The four-day harvest festival *Pongal* is celebrated in southern India to give thanks for the year's harvest. In northern India, *Lohri* celebrates the harvesting of crops and the end of winter. At both holidays, people often go sightseeing, take shopping trips, and visit temples to seek blessings for a good and prosperous future.

Snakes are venerated during the summer festival of *Naag Panchami* because of their association with Hindu gods. The Hindu Lord Krishna's birth is celebrated in August or September during *Jan Mashtami*.

Held under different names, *Dussehra* celebrates the triumph of good over evil in the mythological story of Hindu Lord Rama's victory over the demon king Ravana. Customs vary by region, but the 10-day celebration generally includes activities such as worshipping the goddesses Durga, lighting fireworks, burning effigies, singing, and dancing.

## SOCIETY

### Government

#### Structure

India is a constitutional democracy and is divided into 29 states and 7 union territories. Because of the country's large population, it has earned the distinction of being the world's largest democracy.

The president is head of state and is elected by an electoral college consisting of members of Parliament and state legislatures. The prime minister is head of government and is chosen by the majority party or coalition in the *Lok Sabha* (House of the People), Parliament's lower house. Parliament's upper house is the *Rajya Sabha* (Council of States).

The *Rajya Sabha* has 245 members; 233 are elected by state and territorial legislatures, while up to 12 are appointed by the president. Members serve six-year terms. Of the 545 members of the *Lok Sabha*, 543 are directly elected by the people through a majoritarian system, and two Anglo-Indian members may be appointed by the president if they are not adequately represented in the house body. Members serve five-year terms.

The constitution mandates that at least one-third of the seats in local government bodies that are filled through direct elections must go to women; some states have raised that requirement to 50 percent.

#### Political Landscape

Two major coalitions dominate India's political landscape: the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The center-right NDA is led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is seen as pro-Hindu and opposes the socialist economic programs that have been a part of India's economic policy. The center-left UPA is led by the Indian National Congress (INC), which prioritizes battling poverty and increasing development. The INC has been in power since independence, but this changed in the 2014 parliamentary elections when the BJP won the majority of seats in the *Lok Sabha*. Dozens of other parties also hold seats in Parliament.

Issues related to improving India's economy tend to

dominate the country's political agenda. Societal divisions (based on religion, caste, region, race, language, and community) are a major characteristic of Indian politics and contribute to political instability. Many political parties are built around the interests of particular groups in society.

#### Government and the People

Though there are some limits on journalistic freedom and freedoms of assembly, personal rights and civil liberties are generally respected by the government. The government struggles to improve access to basic amenities for poor and rural citizens and to strengthen the economy in general. The government also struggles to eradicate corruption, which is a significant problem in multiple levels of government. A lack of resources contributes in part to police corruption and abuse.

Despite corruption in other areas of government, elections in India are generally free and fair. The voting age is 18. Since independence, voter turnout has generally been between 55 and 65 percent in national elections.

### Economy

While India is primarily an agricultural nation, its economy is changing quickly. Almost half of the labor force is engaged in agricultural work, but the majority of economic growth is concentrated in services. India is a leading producer of rice, wheat, oilseed, cotton, jute, tea, and sugarcane. Other important products include dairy products, poultry, and fish. Top export earnings come from petroleum products, precious stones, vehicles, machinery, iron ore, and steel. Textiles are a principal domestic product and also a profitable export. India is rich in natural resources, including coal, iron ore, natural gas, diamonds, crude oil, limestone, and important minerals. High-technology industries lead the way for industrial growth. Tourism is also increasingly vital.

Serious gaps exist between the urban wealthy and the poor. Obstacles to economic growth include outdated or nonexistent infrastructure, lack of educational opportunities, and insufficient economic opportunities for the population. Approximately 22 percent of the population lives below the poverty line. The currency is the *rupee* (INR).

### Transportation and Communications

Roads in urban areas are generally well developed, but those in rural regions may be unpaved and impassable in heavy rains. Buses, often crowded, serve as the main source of public transportation in cities. A growing number of people are able to afford cars, and the influx of cars on the road has resulted in increased pollution and traffic. People also travel by motor scooter, tricycle-driven rickshaw, and *tanga* (a covered horse-drawn cart). Taxis are plentiful, but rates are not standardized. In rural areas, bull-drawn carts are a common mode of transportation. Traffic travels on the left side of the road. Trains connect major cities.

Televisions and radios are common throughout the country. Newspapers are plentiful. Domestic telephone service is expanding. Indians without phones in their homes use public calling offices (PCOs) throughout India. Cellular phones are common and are now found in even the most remote villages. Internet use is growing quickly.

**Education**

**Structure**

Education is a primary concern in India, and the country has one of the largest education systems in the world. Public schooling is free and compulsory from ages 6 to 14, although facilities are often inadequate. Private schools are available, but the cost is too high for most families. Primary school ends at age 14 or 15. Secondary school is divided into two levels (secondary and upper secondary), each lasting two years.

**Access**

Most Indians see education as an investment in the future and the key to improving their lives. Families place a strong emphasis on education starting at a young age. Students must pay tuition to attend secondary school. Parents often support their children to help them complete their higher education. It is not uncommon for extended family members to assist with the cost of education in the form of a gift or a low-interest loan.

Literacy rates and access to education are split along social divisions. Levels of education and literacy are higher in urban areas than rural, higher in males than in females, higher among the wealthy than among the poor, and vary between castes. Government programs are trying to meet the increasing need for education and improve all branches of the education system. About 90 percent of children are enrolled in primary school. This rate drops significantly by secondary school, as many children drop out or fail out of school. High levels of poverty force many children to start working early, at the expense of attending school. In rural areas, the lack of nearby schools and the cost of school supplies such as uniforms often make it difficult for families to send their children to school.

**School Life**

Parents are often very involved in their children's education, helping with homework and receiving frequent progress reports. For these reasons, competition is high at all levels of education. A number of "reserved seats" in education are set aside for members of historically disadvantaged castes. These reservations have increased competition for the remaining seats.

Subjects such as math, science, English, a national or regional language, and physical education are commonly taught in primary schools. In secondary school, students choose an area in which to specialize, such as mathematics, biology, arts, or business. Parents prefer their children to specialize in science, mathematics, or business. Humanities are generally not favored for boys. In order to proceed to each level of education, students must pass qualifying exams, which may be both written and oral. For students pursuing higher education, they must take the Higher Secondary Examination. Cheating on exams is quite common.

**Higher Education**

There are hundreds of universities and thousands of colleges. Public universities are supported by the government, while private schools are funded by different organizations and groups. Most students opt to study at public universities, as private schools tend to be more expensive. Some of India's top universities include the University of Delhi, Jawaharlal

*India*

Nehru University, and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay.

**Health**

India faces health challenges stemming from poverty, natural disasters, malnutrition, and poor sanitation. Diseases such as cholera, malaria, typhoid, and hepatitis endanger many, especially rural inhabitants who lack access to preventive medical care. The lack of safe drinking water in many areas also contributes to the prevalence of communicable diseases. Healthcare workers are trying to teach people better hygiene, nutrition, and family planning. Similar programs aim to prevent the number of cases of HIV from increasing. Due to the success of widespread immunization campaigns, India was declared polio-free in 2014. The wealthy have private insurance and access to private clinics. Those who cannot afford private care rely on government-run hospitals, which are often short on staff, drugs, and equipment.

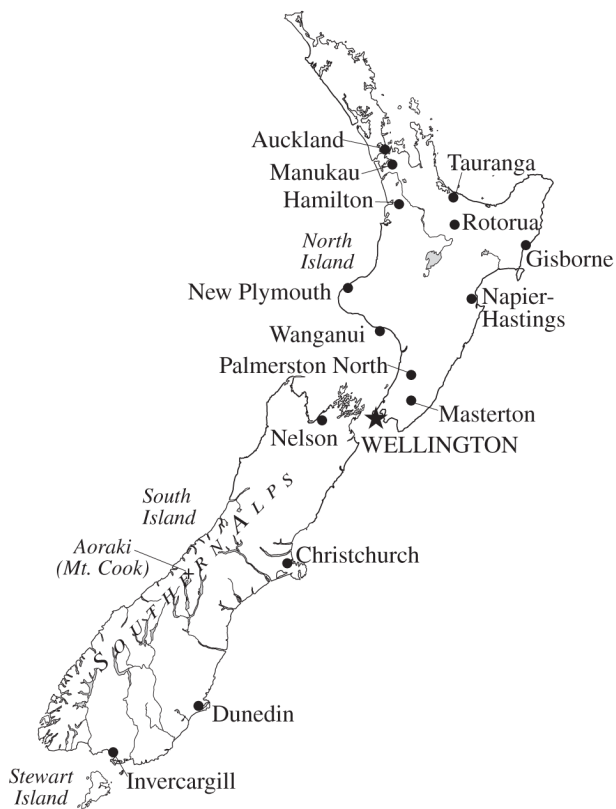
**AT A GLANCE**

**Contact Information**

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Country and Development Data	
Capital	New Delhi
Population	1,296,834,042 (rank=2)
Area (sq. mi.)	1,269,219 (rank=7)
Area (sq. km.)	3,287,253
Human Development Index	129 of 188 countries
Gender Inequality Index	125 of 188 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$7,200
Adult Literacy	81% (male); 61% (female)
Infant Mortality	41 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	67 (male); 70 (female)
Currency	Indian rupee





Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

## BACKGROUND

### Land and Climate

New Zealand is slightly smaller than Italy, or about the same size as the U.S. state of Colorado. The country's indigenous name is Aotearoa (“Land of the Long White Cloud”). This mountainous island nation lies in the South Pacific about 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) southeast of Australia. Its two principal landforms are the North Island and the South Island.

The more populous North Island has fertile agricultural land and a few isolated snowcapped volcanoes. It also boasts hot springs and geysers in the thermal region of the Central Plateau. On the South Island, the Southern Alps provide magnificent scenery and opportunities for sports such as skiing. There are many glaciers, lakes, and rivers. Southwest coastal fjords characterize an area called Fiordland. Coastal lowlands are used for agriculture. Other islands include Stewart Island, south of South Island, and the Chatham Islands, about 500 miles (805 kilometers) to the east. Numerous other small islands are mostly uninhabited. About one-third of New Zealand's land is protected land used for national parks and reserves. Earthquakes are a continual threat.

The climate is temperate, with plenty of sunshine, adequate rainfall, and few extremes in weather. However, in winter (June–September), particularly in the south, high

humidity makes it seem colder, even though average winter temperatures rarely go below 40°F (4°C). Highs in summer (December–March) average about 73°F (23°C). Hot winds bring higher summer temperatures to the east coast.

### History

#### Early Settlers

The first discovery of the islands is attributed to Kupe, a legendary Polynesian explorer. Maori migrations from Polynesian islands probably began before AD 900. These early Maori were warlike, highly organized, and skilled in many crafts. In 1642, Dutch explorer Abel Tasman sighted the islands and named them Staten Landt. After a skirmish with Maori off the coast of the South Island, Tasman chose not to go ashore, and the islands remained largely uncolonized until the early 1800s.

Dutch geographers changed the islands' name to Nieuw Zeeland—after the Dutch province of Zeeland—but the Dutch were not directly involved in colonizing the islands. Instead, Britain's Captain James Cook, who first visited the Maori in 1769, opened the door to European (chiefly British) settlement. Western contact led to a decline in the Maori population due to the introduction of diseases and of modern weapons in tribal warfare.

#### Treaty of Waitangi and British Colonization

In 1840, the Maori and British signed the Treaty of Waitangi,

which allowed *kawanatanga* (governance) by the British monarch but granted the Maori legal protection and rights to perpetual ownership of their lands and resources. Only the Crown was entitled to buy land from the Maori, but the law was not always observed, and improper purchases and illegal leases were made. Colonization and Western settlement proceeded rapidly after 1840. In 1852, Britain granted New Zealand internal self-government, and by 1907 the nation became an independent dominion within the British Empire (later, the Commonwealth). In the 20th century, the Maori population rebounded, and Maori people integrated with residents of European descent. However, Maori maintain many distinct aspects of their cultural heritage.

#### **World Wars and Pacific Ties**

New Zealand contributed heavily in terms of soldiers to both world wars. After World War II, New Zealand turned its focus from European ties to Pacific ties, developing trade links with growing Asian economies. Conversely, by the 1990s, Britain was focusing on European integration. This divergence has raised the question of whether New Zealand's status as a democratic monarchy, with the British queen as nominal head of state, reflects the country's independent outlook. Some New Zealanders favor a future (though not necessarily immediate) transition to a local head of state.

#### **Recent Politics**

For decades, New Zealand politics has been dominated by two major political parties: the center-left Labour Party and the center-right New Zealand National Party. In 1999, the Labour Party won elections and remained in power for the next nine years. During its rule, the Labour Party increased the minimum wage by 5 percent annually and strengthened social programs. When the economy entered a deep recession in 2008, New Zealanders voted for the New Zealand National Party, which campaigned on tax cuts and reduced spending on social programs. The New Zealand National Party also won elections in 2011 and 2014. Even though the economy has been growing since 2009, economic inequality and unaffordable housing prices have become some of the biggest challenges facing New Zealand today.

#### **Recent Events and Trends**

- **Free-trade agreement:** In June 2017, New Zealand, along with Australia and several Pacific island countries, signed the Pacific Agreement on Closer Economic Relations Plus (PACER Plus), an updated free-trade and economic-development agreement. PACER Plus aims to promote trade and economic development among member nations by reducing trade barriers, lowering tariffs, and encouraging worker mobility. New Zealand's once agrarian-dependent economy has diversified in recent decades and become an industrialized, free-market economy that competes globally.
- **New prime minister:** In October 2017, Jacinda Ardern, the leader of the Labour Party, became prime minister after forming a governing coalition in New Zealand's 120-seat parliament with the centrist New Zealand First party and the left-wing Green Party. The coalition ends nine years of rule by the center-right New Zealand National Party, which received the most votes in New Zealand's September 2017 general election but failed to capture a majority of seats in

parliament. During the campaign, Ardern and the Labour Party pledged to end child poverty, make higher education free, reduce immigration, and strengthen environmental protections.

- **Housing affordability:** In August 2018, New Zealand banned most foreigners without residency status from purchasing homes in the country, a move aimed at curbing the nation's rapidly rising housing prices, which have soared 60 percent in the last decade. New Zealand's overheated housing market has been fueled in part by low interest rates and a severe housing shortage. Housing has become unaffordable for many New Zealanders, forcing some into homelessness.

## **THE PEOPLE**

### **Population**

Most of New Zealand's population lives in urban areas. The principal metropolitan areas include Auckland, Christchurch, and Wellington (the capital). Auckland and its suburbs hold about one-third of the nation's people and constitute New Zealand's commercial and industrial center. Throughout the world, New Zealanders are commonly called "kiwis," a nickname derived from the country's indigenous national bird.

Over two-thirds of the population is of European descent, and 14 percent is Maori. Asians and Pacific Islanders from neighboring islands make up another 19 percent of the population. Intermarriage between groups is common, and the question of ethnic identity is largely a matter of self-identification. Some people indicate in census data that they identify with more than one ethnic group, and some identify themselves with designations that have no reference to ethnicity, such as "New Zealander." The term *Pakeha* generally refers to people of European descent.

Maori are Polynesians and the country's indigenous inhabitants. They live mainly on the North Island. Pacific Islanders (Tongans, Samoans, Cook Islanders, Fijians, and others) began migrating to New Zealand after 1946 and today comprise a significant minority. Immigration from China, India, and other Asian countries has increased in recent decades. Many Pacific Islanders and Asians live in Auckland, the nation's most multicultural city.

### **Language**

English, Maori, and New Zealand Sign Language are official languages. English is the most common everyday language, while Maori is used in educational and cultural settings. Many Maori words are used in English conversations. Examples include the words *eg kiaora* (greetings), *tamariki* (children), *morena* (good morning), *kai* (food), and *ka kite ano* (see you later). Maori people also speak English, and some Pakeha speak a little Maori, which they may learn in school. Many New Zealand English words or phrases reflect British English. For example, a car's trunk is a *boot* and the hood is a *bonnet*. Others include *come around* (come over), *over the road* (across the street), and *go to the loo* (go to the bathroom). A *bathroom* is a place to take a bath or shower, a *lift* is an elevator, and *petrol* is gasoline.

## Religion

About 44 percent of New Zealanders identify themselves as Christians, of which Roman Catholics, Anglicans, and Presbyterians are the largest denominations. The Ratana and Ringatu Christian churches have significant numbers of Maori adherents. Only a small minority of New Zealanders attend church on a regular basis; attendance is higher on religious holidays. The largest non-Christian religions are Hinduism (2.1 percent) and Buddhism (1.4 percent). About 39 percent of New Zealanders indicate in census data that they have no religious affiliation.

## General Attitudes

New Zealanders tend to be open, friendly, and hospitable. Compared to that of U.S. Americans, their lifestyle is normally more relaxed and informal. For example, while a U.S. American might discuss occupations, incomes, and career objectives with colleagues, a New Zealander is more apt to discuss leisure activities and family interests.

New Zealanders are, on the whole, self-reliant, practical people. Many people enjoy working around their homes and gardens; they often prefer to make small repairs and complete projects themselves, rather than hiring someone to do work for them. People tend to believe their society should be caring and should help people through public programs. They are generally curious about the world around them: many people read a newspaper daily, and many travel overseas. Home ownership and a good education are valued by most. Maori heritage emphasizes the extended family (*whanau*), hospitality, friendship, and a strong sense of community.

In many parts of the country, especially the North Island, there is a multicultural society in which Pakeha, Maori, and others share many values and customs. Despite the general harmony between Pakeha and Maori, relations have been strained in recent years in disputes over land and resource rights. In a major settlement signed in 1997, the government apologized for past abuses, paid reparations, and returned large portions of land to a South Island Maori *iwi* (tribe). Many landmark names were changed, including New Zealand's highest peak, Mount Cook, which is now Aoraki. Other disputes are still being considered as the nation strives to achieve greater social justice.

## Personal Appearance

Western-style clothing is standard. People typically wear casual clothing in public, although it is usually neat and clean. Business attire has become more casual, though some corporate settings continue to require business suits or a jacket and tie. At many companies, employees dress down on Fridays, wearing clothing like jeans. Employees of companies such as banks wear uniforms. European fashions are popular, but New Zealand also has its own fashion industry. Globally recognized designers such as Karen Walker are known for their informal but stylish looks. Because many New Zealanders love spending time outside, there is a thriving outdoor clothing industry in the country. The weather can change quickly, so layered clothing is a popular option. It is common for New Zealanders to wear shorts (weather

permitting) when playing sports, going shopping, and visiting friends.

Maori wear traditional clothing for ceremonies and cultural events. For men and women, this means a *piupiu* (woven flax skirt) over black shorts or a black skirt. Women pair this with a colorful woven top featuring a geometric pattern, usually in red, black, and white. A *korowai* (ornate cloak) is worn over the *piupiu*. It is made of flax and decorated with dog fur or feathers from native birds. A headband and feathers are worn in the hair. Carved jade pendants (*tiki*) are common accessories for women. Full-faced tattoos (*moko*) for men and chin tattoos for women were once common. In Maori culture, tattoos symbolized higher social rank. Today, similar designs are usually drawn on for performances and special events.

## CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

### Greetings

New Zealanders generally greet with a handshake or, if they know each other well, a hug. In formal situations, men often wait for women to offer their hand before shaking. Pakeha greet formally with *Hello, how are you?* More informal greetings include *Hello* or *Hi*. Also common are *Gidday* (Good day); *Yeah, gidday*; or *Gidday, how's it going?* After an initial introduction, most people switch from addressing each other by title and surname to using first names.

Maori may greet with a hug or a traditional *hongi* (pressing noses together with eyes closed). The *hongi* is used with non-Maori on a *marae*, a sacred courtyard used for meetings that is located in front of a Maori *wharenuui* (great house, and a place where guests stay). Maori greeting phrases include the ceremonial *Nau mai* (Welcome). *Tena koe*, *Tena korua*, and *Tena koutou* are polite ways to say "Hello" to one, two, or many people, respectively. *Kia ora* (Be well) is a more common and less formal hello in predominantly English-speaking environments; it can also mean "Thank you." Upon parting, Maori may say *Haere ra* (Farewell) and reply *E noho ra* (Stay well). An increasingly common and less formal good-bye is *Ka kite ano* (See you later).

### Gestures

New Zealanders often supplement their conversation with hand gestures. If conversation is not possible or polite, a nod, wave, or raise of the eyebrows serves as a sign of recognition. Traditional social courtesy is valued but not necessarily practiced by all segments of the population. Most younger women do not expect traditional courtesies from men (and some may find them patronizing). However, it is still considered polite to give up bus seats or to open doors for the elderly. It is also considered polite to avoid chewing gum or using a toothpick in public and to cover yawns with the hand. Personal space usually is important during conversation; standing too close is uncomfortable for many people.

### Visiting

New Zealanders entertain often in the home, no matter their social class. They like to have friends over for dinner. Garden

barbecues are especially popular on weekends. Guests are expected to feel at home. They might remove their shoes unless told otherwise by the hosts. Dinner guests almost always take a gift, usually a small contribution to the meal, chocolates, or good wine if the hosts enjoy it. Houseguests always leave a gift with their host family. When welcomed on a *marae* (a sacred open space used for religious and social gatherings), one leaves a *koha* (gift of money). The *koha* is a donation toward the cost of hospitality; the larger the gift, the more important the giver.

Dropping by a friend's home unannounced is quite common, although such visits after 8 p.m. are not usually appropriate. Guests may be invited to a formal dinner at which the host provides all of the food. Also common is a potluck dinner, to which guests are asked to bring food for everyone to share. Rather than prepare a meal, friends may simply enjoy chatting over cake and coffee or plan to meet at a café or coffee shop.

Even when not invited for a meal, guests are nearly always offered refreshments. It is considered rude not to at least offer a drink. Even a repairman who is staying only briefly would be offered a drink. Common refreshments include coffee, tea, soft drinks, finger sandwiches, cakes, and *biscuits* (cookies).

## Eating

Most New Zealanders eat a light breakfast before work or school, typically by 8 a.m. Lunch is in the early afternoon, and dinner is around 6 or 7 p.m. The family generally eats dinner, the main meal, together. Dessert is often included, and coffee is nearly always served at the end, especially in restaurants. People eat in the continental style; the fork is in the left hand and the knife remains in the right. Hands and elbows are kept above the table. To indicate one is finished with a meal, one places the utensils parallel on the plate.

When people eat out, dinner is closer to 8 p.m. In a fine restaurant, staff members consider it their job to let diners take their time. They do not hurry with the check unless requested. At restaurants, people generally are quiet and do not speak too loudly. New Zealanders do not always practice tipping because wages are considered the duty of the employer, not the customers. However, tip jars are often found next to cash registers.

## LIFESTYLE

### Family

#### Structure

The average New Zealand family has two children. Single-parent households are fairly common due to divorce and out-of-wedlock births. The number of unmarried parents has risen, as cohabitation is now widespread and socially acceptable.

Among Polynesians, extended family connections are important. In some cases, several generations live together in one house. Polynesian women traditionally play strong roles in their communities. For Maori, the *marae* (a sacred open space used for religious and social gatherings) is important in binding families together. Important meetings (*hui*),

ceremonies, and recreational activities take place on the *marae* and in the *wharenui* (great house, and a place where guests stay).

#### Parents and Children

Around age seven or eight, children begin helping with chores such as setting and clearing the table, folding laundry, cleaning their rooms, and making their lunches for school. Most children receive a small allowance called “pocket money” in return for carrying out these tasks.

Family ties are looser than they once were, but people still believe in supporting one another. Parents often give financial help to their adult children until they finish their education (although it is becoming increasingly common for students to finance their own education through part-time work and interest-free government loans). It is fairly common for young people to move out of the parental home upon graduation from secondary school; university students commonly live on their own. Aging parents do not usually live with adult children; instead, most prefer to stay at home as long as possible and move into rest homes when necessary. They also receive support from New Zealand's comprehensive social welfare system.

#### Gender Roles

In the past, women carried out most household chores, while men were responsible for lawn, car, and house maintenance. Today, couples tend to divide such tasks more equitably, though women continue to do more cooking and cleaning than men. Affluent couples who work full-time may hire a part-time housekeeper.

Women account for a large part of the work force. Whereas women used to take an extended break from their careers in order to stay home with young children, today many employed mothers return to work immediately following their maternity leave, taking advantage of affordable daycare centers and government childcare subsidies. Since the 1990s, the number of women holding managerial and leadership positions in business and government has increased significantly. New Zealand has had several female prime ministers, and just under a third of parliament members are women.

### Housing

#### Urban and Rural

As city life becomes more popular, semi-detached and apartment-style homes have become more common. Many city lots with old homes have been subdivided to accommodate an extra dwelling, and sometimes a single home is removed to make way for two or three new townhouses. All urban homes have access to plumbing and electricity, as do most rural houses. Many rural homes are equipped with septic tanks and get their water from an external storage tank that is filled with water from the roof.

#### Exteriors and Interiors

The typical family home is a detached single-storey home on a quarter-acre lot, with a yard in front and back of the house. Yards often contain vegetable and flower gardens. Most homes are either wooden or brick. A separate dining area and a living room are typical, though modern homes may offer an open-plan combination kitchen, dining, and living area. Many

New Zealanders like to restore colonial-era villas, which have large verandas and ornate lattice work.

#### **Ownership**

A majority of families own their own homes rather than rent. In recent years, however, New Zealand has been grappling with a severe housing shortage, especially in urban areas like Auckland. This crisis has raised housing prices and rental rates to unaffordable levels for many people. As a result, New Zealand has one of the highest rates of homelessness among the world's developed nations.

### **Dating and Marriage**

#### **Dating and Courtship**

Although most New Zealand parents restrict exclusive dating until their children are 15 or 16, group social activities usually begin around age 12. Youth enjoy going to movies, dancing, and having parties. Older teens may go with a group of friends to the local club for dancing and drinking. People generally date only one person at a time.

#### **Marriage in Society**

Couples often live together for a few years prior to marriage. On average, women and men marry around age 30. Many couples live together instead of marrying; doing so is considered a socially acceptable arrangement except to older generations and the religiously conservative. The Civil Union Act of 2004 guarantees the rights and obligations of marriage to couples who have lived together for at least two years and legalized civil unions for same-sex couples. In 2013, New Zealand legalized same-sex marriage.

Divorce is common and does not usually carry with it a social stigma. Divorced individuals often get remarried, so many families are composed of step-parents and half-siblings.

#### **Weddings**

Weddings can be lavish. Tradition held that the bride's parents paid for weddings in the past, but today—since people generally marry at an older age—most couples take responsibility for the majority of costs themselves. Both sets of parents do, however, usually contribute to a portion of the expenses as a wedding gift. The details of a ceremony, the decorations, and the catering tend to reflect the individual tastes of each couple. Most ceremonies are held in the afternoon. Some couples get married in churches, but locations such as homes, gardens, wineries, beaches, and other outdoor locations are becoming increasingly common. Wedding parties generally consist of the bride and groom, their parents, bridesmaids, groomsmen, a flower girl, and a page boy.

A large celebration follows the wedding and may include speeches, a sit-down meal, and a dance. Since many couples already have established homes by the time they marry, some request gifts of cash rather than the household items traditionally given at weddings. Most couples take a 7- to 10-day honeymoon after their wedding. Popular destinations include nearby Pacific locations such as Fiji, New Caledonia, or the Cook Islands.

In Maori culture, the bride and groom receive a traditional welcome (*powhiri*) as soon as they enter the *marae* (a sacred courtyard). The *powhiri* consists of several steps, including songs, speeches, *koha* (gift of money), *hongiri* (pressing noses

together with eyes closed), and feasting. During the wedding ceremony, *pikorua* (pieces of jade or whale bone shaped like twisted infinity loops) are placed around the necks of the couple to symbolize eternal love. Jade or bone wedding rings may be exchanged in place of gold ones.

### **Life Cycle**

#### **Birth**

Pregnant women have access to a range of healthcare providers, from midwives to general practitioners. The majority of maternity costs are covered by the government for New Zealand citizens and permanent residents. Many expectant parents take prenatal classes together. Family members and friends typically throw a pregnant woman a baby shower, where guests play games and give her useful items for the baby. Traditionally, babies born to Christian families were baptized soon after birth, but baptism is becoming less common. Many infants are named after a relative, such as a grandparent, uncle, or aunt.

#### **Milestones**

Several milestones occur during the teenage years of a young adult's life. New Zealanders may begin driving at age 16 and can buy alcohol and cigarettes and vote in elections at age 18. High school graduation at age 17 or 18 is another important event.

The age of 21 is considered the beginning of adulthood. A twenty-first birthday celebration is significant. It typically includes a large party attended by relatives and friends held in the family home or at an event center. The party usually involves large amounts of alcohol, and partygoers may give speeches about the young person, often trying to embarrass him or her in front of the guests with anecdotes from the past. The host may be given birthday cards featuring images of keys, which represent the key to the door of adulthood.

#### **Death**

Pakeha funerals follow Western traditions, with a wake, memorial service, and burial in a cemetery or cremation. At a wake, friends and family share memories of the deceased and consume light refreshments.

Maori funerals (*tangis*) are held at a *marae* (a sacred open space used for religious and social gatherings) and often last several days, with guests staying for the duration, usually at the *wharenui* (great house near the *marae*). Maori believe that the spirit of the deceased remains nearby until burial, so they hold a vigil until then.

#### **Diet**

The New Zealand diet has become lighter and more diverse in recent years, with influences from the country's many ethnic groups. *Kaimoana* (seafood) and fresh vegetables play a greater role than in the past. Red meat is eaten less often and portions are smaller. Beef, pork, and roast lamb are still common, as is fish, but poultry is gaining popularity. Meat pies and *sausage rolls* (sausage wrapped in pastry) were popular, but now more people prefer hamburgers, pizza, fish and chips, and international cuisine. *Vegemite* (yeast extract), peanut butter, honey, and jam are used as bread spreads. Fruits are abundant and include apples, kiwis, bananas, apricots, peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries, strawberries,

and tomatoes. New Zealanders regard their cheeses and ice cream as among the best in the world.

European and Asian foods are popular, especially in larger cities. A *hangi* is a traditional Maori meal, prepared by placing meat, seafood, potatoes, *kumara* (sweet potatoes), and vegetables together in wire racks lined with cabbage leaves. The wire racks are then steamed for hours in an *umu*, or underground oven.

## Recreation

### Sports

Many New Zealanders love sports. Rugby is the national sport. The national rugby union team, the All Blacks (so named because of their uniform color), has achieved success in world competition. Soccer is popular in winter, while cricket is the favorite for summer. Field hockey and softball are popular with both men and women. Girls and women often play netball, a game similar to basketball. Tennis, *bowls* (lawn bowling), and *athletics* (track-and-field) are also enjoyed in the summer.

Nearly a quarter of the population are members of sporting clubs. These clubs offer coaching and competitions in a variety of sports, from rugby to *bowls*. On Saturdays, club teams often compete with each other and afterward enjoy a *barbie* (barbecue). Members range in age from senior citizens to primary school students. Some children also belong to dance groups. Most secondary schools close early one day a week to allow students to take part in inter-school sport competitions.

Since no area is far from the mountains, sea, or rivers, there are many opportunities for mountaineering, *tramping* (hiking), fishing (both deep-sea and freshwater), hunting (on a limited basis), swimming, walking, jogging, and sailing. Adventure sports are also popular, including bungee jumping—which was invented in New Zealand—whitewater rafting, caving, and rappelling. Various endurance events attract global competitors to the country; one example is the Coast to Coast, which features running, cycling, and kayaking across New Zealand's South Island.

### Recreation

New Zealanders spend considerable time outdoors. In addition to playing sports, they garden and fix up their homes. Gardening is one of the most common leisure activities, and people take pride in growing produce to share at weekend *barbies*, which are typically potlucks.

Another popular pastime is cooking, with an emphasis on fresh, healthy food made from scratch using local produce. Throughout the year, people attend various wine and food festivals that showcase local products. Spending time at cafés and restaurants is a favorite way to relax. Many adults enjoy taking continuing education classes at local community centers or high schools. These classes teach a variety of subjects, such as foreign languages, yoga, woodworking, and art appreciation.

### Vacation

Traveling is common. After graduating from high school or college, many young people go on an Overseas Experience (OE), during which they work abroad for a year or two; London is a popular destination. Many New Zealanders make

a visit abroad each year, often to places such as Australia and the Pacific Islands.

## The Arts

Maori performing arts, or *kapa haka*, include songs, chants, and dances. These art forms may convey legends, love poems, tributes to ancestors, oral histories, and political statements. Performers often use face paint as an alternative to traditional *moko* (facial tattoos), which feature elaborate designs. A popular form of the *haka* (traditional dance) is a war dance performed by men, who make powerful moves, shout fierce chants, and display aggressive facial gestures, such as widening the eyes and sticking out the tongue. This type of *haka* has become an internationally-recognized symbol of New Zealand, due in part to the All Blacks's tradition of performing the dance prior to competition. A common dance performed by women includes the swinging of *poi* (percussive balls on the end of a string).

Maori folk arts include wood and bone carvings, which record traditional beliefs and tribal affiliation, and *taaniko* weaving (plaiting flax to produce clothing with colorful geometric patterns).

Classical orchestras and theater and dance companies all enjoy success, and contemporary painters and sculptors exhibit in galleries throughout the country. New Zealand's domestic film industry has enjoyed significant growth in recent years, and New Zealand's pristine natural environment and topographical variation have made the nation a favorite location for filmmakers from around the globe.

## Holidays

Public holidays include New Year's (1–2 January), Waitangi Day (6 February), Easter (including Good Friday and Easter Monday), Anzac Day (25 April), Queen Elizabeth II's Birthday (first Monday in June), Labour Day (fourth Monday in October), Christmas (25 December), and Boxing Day (26 December). Each province celebrates an Anniversary Day, which marks the day colonists first landed in the area.

### Anzac Day

Anzac Day commemorates the service and sacrifice of the armed forces of New Zealand and Australia (ANZAC stands for Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). It began by marking the day that these forces landed at Gallipoli during World War I. Today, Anzac Day honors all members of the armed forces, and the holiday has become increasingly popular. Dawn services are held at war memorials throughout the country. Former and current members of the armed forces march in organized parades to these memorials, while members of the public line the streets to show their support. Wreaths are placed at the base of the memorial by service members, local dignitaries, and school children. Speeches, hymns, a minute of silence, and a trumpet rendition of the Last Post follow.

On this day, New Zealanders traditionally wear poppies purchased from the Returned Services' Association (RSA), with the profits going to returned service personnel. After the morning service, people visit their local RSA club to enjoy complimentary hot drinks and snacks. People also commonly eat Anzac *biscuits* (cookies) on this day. These long-lasting

*biscuits* were made by relatives to send to the armed forces during World War I. Eggs, which were scarce at the time, are not included in the recipe.

#### **Waitangi Day**

Waitangi Day marks the anniversary of the 1840 signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between Maori and the British. Differences in interpretation over English and Maori versions of the treaty led to years of misunderstanding and conflict between the groups. As a result, this holiday has been controversial since its inception in 1974, at times leading to demonstrations, some of which are violent, carried out by Maori over contested claims to land. As past wrongs have been admitted to by the government and land claims settled, Waitangi Day has become more peaceful. Most people spend the day relaxing outside or have barbecues.

#### **Christmas Day**

Christmas Day is one of New Zealand's most popular holidays. Families gather in the morning to exchange gifts and then enjoy a special meal for lunch and dinner. Traditional foods include ham, turkey, and lamb, along with vegetables and *Christmas pudding* (steamed fruitcake drizzled with caramel or brandy sauce).

Today, Christmas meals are often adapted to better fit the summer weather and feature cold meats, salad, and a dessert of fresh berries, fruit salad, and *pavlova* (a meringue-like cake topped with cream and fresh fruit and served cold). In the afternoon, families usually play board games and go for a walk. Barbecues and vacations during Christmas are also popular. Boxing Day comes from a British tradition of giving small boxed gifts to service workers or the poor. It is now a day to visit and relax.

## **SOCIETY**

### **Government**

#### **Structure**

New Zealand, a member of the Commonwealth of Nations, recognizes Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. She is represented in the country by a governor-general. The head of government is the prime minister, who is appointed by the governor-general and is the leader of the majority party or coalition in the nation's unicameral parliament, the House of Representatives. Parliament has a minimum of 120 seats, and its members are elected to three-year terms; 71 constituencies elect one representative each through a majoritarian system (7 of these seats are reserved for Maoris) and 49 through proportional representation. Parties must earn at least 5 percent of the vote or win one constituency seat to be eligible to earn seats through proportional representation.

New Zealand is divided into 16 regions and one territory. The powers that the regional and local governments have in relation to the national government are relatively weak when compared with similar situations in many other developed countries.

#### **Political Landscape**

Because some seats in the House of Representatives are filled through proportional representation, several parties in New Zealand are able to gain representation in the legislature. This

also has resulted in frequent coalition governments. Major political parties include the center-right New Zealand National Party and the center-left Labour Party. Other influential political parties include the centrist New Zealand First party and the left-wing Green Party. Immigration and economic policies are some of the major political issues in New Zealand.

#### **Government and the People**

Freedoms of speech, religion, press, and assembly are protected by law and respected by the government. Levels of corruption are among the lowest in the world. Elections are not only transparent but also free and fair. Voter turnout for national elections regularly exceeds 75 percent of registered voters. Voter registration is mandatory, but citizens are not required to actually vote. The voting age is 18.

### **Economy**

New Zealand has a modern industrialized economy. While only 7 percent of the population is employed in agriculture, New Zealand's international trade depends heavily on the sector. The most important exports include dairy products, meat, timber products, and fruit. New Zealand is one of the world's largest exporters of wool. In addition to agriculture, other important industries include fishing, manufacturing, mining, and construction.

Tourism is another vital economic sector; the nation's diverse landscapes attract foreign visitors with interests in hiking, river rafting, skiing, wildlife watching, and other outdoor activities. Real gross domestic product per capita has expanded significantly in the last generation—a reflection of growing prosperity and a strong middle class. Unemployment is relatively low but higher among Maori and Pacific Islanders. The currency is the New Zealand dollar (NZD).

### **Transportation and Communications**

Private cars are the preferred mode of transportation, although many urban residents ride a bus to work. All major cities have good bus systems. Trains and domestic airlines also operate between cities and industrial centers. Many New Zealanders use bicycles for short-distance transportation. Ferries regularly carry passengers and cars between the two main islands.

An excellent communications system provides efficient domestic and international service. Numerous radio and television stations and other media operate throughout New Zealand. Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin, and Wellington have daily newspapers. Internet usage is common.

### **Education**

#### **Structure and Access**

Education is highly valued in New Zealand. Most children enter school at age five, but preschools are also available. Secondary education begins at age thirteen. Some high schools are segregated by sex. The majority of schools are public.

Education is free and compulsory between ages six and sixteen. Public and *state-integrated schools* (schools that teach religion in addition to the state curriculum) are government funded, while private schools receive some



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funding from the state. Though public education is free, most schools request an annual voluntary donation. Parents must also pay for costs related to school trips, supplies, and uniforms. These costs may be waived in cases of financial hardship.

Maori and Pacific Island students sometimes struggle in English-language schools, and literacy rates among these groups tend to be lower than among Pakeha. The government has addressed this problem by establishing (mostly secondary) schools in which some or all subjects are taught in Maori or Samoan, the language of the largest Pacific Islander group in the country.

### School Life

Uniforms are obligatory at the majority of schools. Most primary school children are required to wear a sunhat while playing outside.

Teaching styles emphasize discussion, questions, and debate; both individual and group work is common. Materials include textbooks, photocopies, and audiovisual equipment. Nearly all schools have high-speed internet access, and many are equipped with laptops, interactive whiteboards, and other technological tools. Teachers are involved in coaching sports, directing music and art activities, and mentoring students outside of the classroom. Most high school students study for an hour or two daily. Cheating and plagiarism are not tolerated.

Parents are heavily involved in their children's educations. They often attend weekly meetings, called *whanau* (family) time, during which information related to school events is announced and students perform songs and skits. Many parents also volunteer as classroom aids and in the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Schools have strict attendance policies, and truancy officers make home visits to discuss unexcused student absences with parents. Under the Education Act, parents may be fined for a student's truancy.

### Higher Education

Most students stay in high school (also called *college*) until at least their 17th birthday. A rigorous state exam given in the fifth year of secondary school is required for university admission. New Zealand women have higher qualification rates than men and have a larger enrollment in higher education. The government administers eight universities. Government loans are available to students to cover tuition costs, and stipends are paid to those with low incomes. Continuing, technical, and vocational education are available to those who do not pursue a university degree.

### Health

A comprehensive social security program provides healthcare coverage for the aged, disabled, sick, and unemployed. The public healthcare system is maintained by taxes, although some elements of care are being privatized or simply left to an emerging private sector. While all New Zealanders are entitled to use the public system, many workers choose to carry private insurance to expand their healthcare options. Private hospitals receive some government subsidies. Medical facilities are generally good and readily available.

## AT A GLANCE

## New Zealand

### Contact Information

Embassy of New Zealand, 37 Observatory Circle NW, Washington, DC 20008; phone (202) 328-4800; web site [www.mfat.govt.nz](http://www.mfat.govt.nz); Tourism New Zealand, phone (310) 395-7480; web site [www.newzealand.com](http://www.newzealand.com).

### Country and Development Data

Capital	Wellington
Population	4,545,627 (rank=124)
Area (sq. mi.)	103,363 (rank=75)
Area (sq. km.)	267,710
Human Development Index	16 of 188 countries
Gender Inequality Index	34 of 188 countries
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$39,000
Adult Literacy	99%
Infant Mortality	5 per 1,000 births
Life Expectancy	80 (male); 83 (female)
Currency	New Zealand dollar

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# Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

Admiral Philip S. Davidson, U.S. Navy

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## Photos



Admiral Philip S. Davidson (Photo by File Photo)

Adm. Phil Davidson is the 25th Commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), America's oldest and largest military combatant command, based in Hawai'i.

USINDOPACOM includes 380,000 Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airmen, Coast Guardsmen and Department of Defense civilians and is responsible for all U.S. military activities in the Indo-Pacific, covering 36 nations, 14 time zones, and more than 50 percent of the world's population.

Prior to becoming CDRUSINDOPACOM on May 30, 2018, he served as the commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command/Naval Forces U.S. Northern Command. He previously served as the commander, U.S. 6th Fleet, and the commander, Naval Striking and Support Forces NATO, while simultaneously serving as the deputy commander, U.S. Naval Forces Europe and U.S. Naval Forces Africa.

A native of St. Louis, Missouri, Davidson is a 1982 graduate of the United States Naval Academy. He is a surface warfare officer who has deployed across the globe in frigates, destroyers, cruisers, and aircraft carriers.

His earlier sea commands included Carrier Strike Group 8/Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group, USS Gettysburg (CG 64), and USS Taylor (FFG 50).

Ashore, Davidson has served in fleet, interagency, and joint tours as a flag officer; he was previously the director, Maritime Operations, U. S. Fleet Forces Command, the senior military advisor to the Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan (SRAP) at the State Department, and the deputy director for Strategy and Policy in the Joint Staff/J-5.

He served earlier in his career in policy, strategy, and operations billets on multiple tours with the U.S. Pacific Fleet staff, the Navy staff and the Joint Staff, and as the Navy's military aide to the vice president of the United States.

He is a distinguished graduate of the U.S. Naval War College. He has a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies, and a Bachelor of Science in Physics.

His decorations include the Distinguished Service Medal, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Combat "V," a Superior Honor Award from the U.S. Department of State, and other personal, service, unit, and campaign awards.



# USPACOM HISTORY



## History of United States Pacific Command

The U.S. Pacific Command was established as a unified command on January 1, 1947, and it is the oldest and largest of the United States' unified commands.

The present U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) includes areas originally assigned to two other unified commanders. The Far East Command, which had been established on January 1, 1947, was disestablished on July 1, 1957, and all its responsibilities were assumed by the Pacific Command. That same day the command assumed some of the responsibilities of the Alaskan Command and individual Army and Air Force component commands for the Pacific also were established in Hawaii.

In October 1957, the then Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (CINCPAC) headquarters moved from Makalapa to Camp H.M. Smith, which is also the headquarters of Commander, Marine Forces Pacific. CINCPAC also served concurrently as Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet until January 1958, when the U.S. Pacific Fleet became a separate component with its own commander.

Added responsibilities were assigned to CINCPAC on January 1, 1972, for military forces and elements in the Indian Ocean, Southern Asia, and the Arctic. Alaskan Command, one of the original unified commands established on January 1, 1947, was disestablished in 1975 and its responsibilities were transferred to the Pacific Command. The Pacific Command's area of responsibility was further expanded on May 1, 1976, to the east coast of Africa. This enlarged the Pacific Command to more than 50 percent of the earth's surface, an area of over 100 million square miles.

Another enlargement of the USPACOM area took place in October 1983, when CINCPAC was assigned responsibility for the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Mongolia, and the Republic of Madagascar. CINCPAC was also redesignated Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (USCINCPAC).

In 1986, the Goldwater-Nichols Reorganization Act expanded, as well as codified, the authority of the commanders of the unified commands to carry out their assigned missions and to employ combatant forces provided by the individual Services.

A new Alaskan Command (ALCOM) was established on July 7, 1989, at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, as a subordinate unified command responsible to USCINCPAC. (There is no relationship to the original ALCOM, a unified command disestablished in 1975.) This placed the defense of Alaska and its surrounding waters under the leadership of one commander, providing a unity of command absent from the state since the early 1970s.

From 1989 through 2000, three Unified Command Plans slightly reduced USPACOM's area of responsibility. With the focus of attention shifting to the Middle East, the August 16, 1989, plan assigned responsibility for the Gulf of Oman and Gulf of Aden to Commander, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM). The January 1, 1996 plan transferred the Seychelles and adjacent waters to USCENTCOM. On October 1, 2000, responsibility for Indian Ocean waters off Tanzania, Mozambique, and South Africa was transferred from USPACOM to U.S. European Command (USEUCOM).

The Unified Command Plan changed as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing war on terrorism, as well as the new defense strategy articulated in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review. For the first time the entire surface of the earth was divided among the various unified commands. A new Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) was created for homeland security and other changes in the various commands' responsibilities resulted in significant changes for USPACOM. The West Coast of North America was reassigned from USPACOM to USNORTHCOM. While Alaska was included in the reassignment to USNORTHCOM, Alaskan Command forces remained assigned to USPACOM in the "Forces for Unified Commands Memorandum." Antarctica was also added to USPACOM's area of responsibility. Approved in April 2002, the new Unified Command Plan became effective October 1, 2002.

Effective October 24, 2002, by direction of the Secretary of Defense, the title "Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command" (USCINCPAC) was changed to "Commander, U.S. Pacific Command" (CDRUSPACOM). As stated by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, there is only one Commander in Chief and that is the President of the United States.

The 2008 Unified Command Plan, signed on December 17, 2008, documented the transfer of all areas of the Indian Ocean previously assigned to USPACOM west of 68 degrees east to the newly established U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM). As a result, four island countries off the east coast of Africa that were formerly assigned to PACOM were reassigned to AFRICOM: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Reunion.

USPACOM is the recipient of six Joint Meritorious Unit Awards.





# U.S. INDO-PACIFIC COMMAND

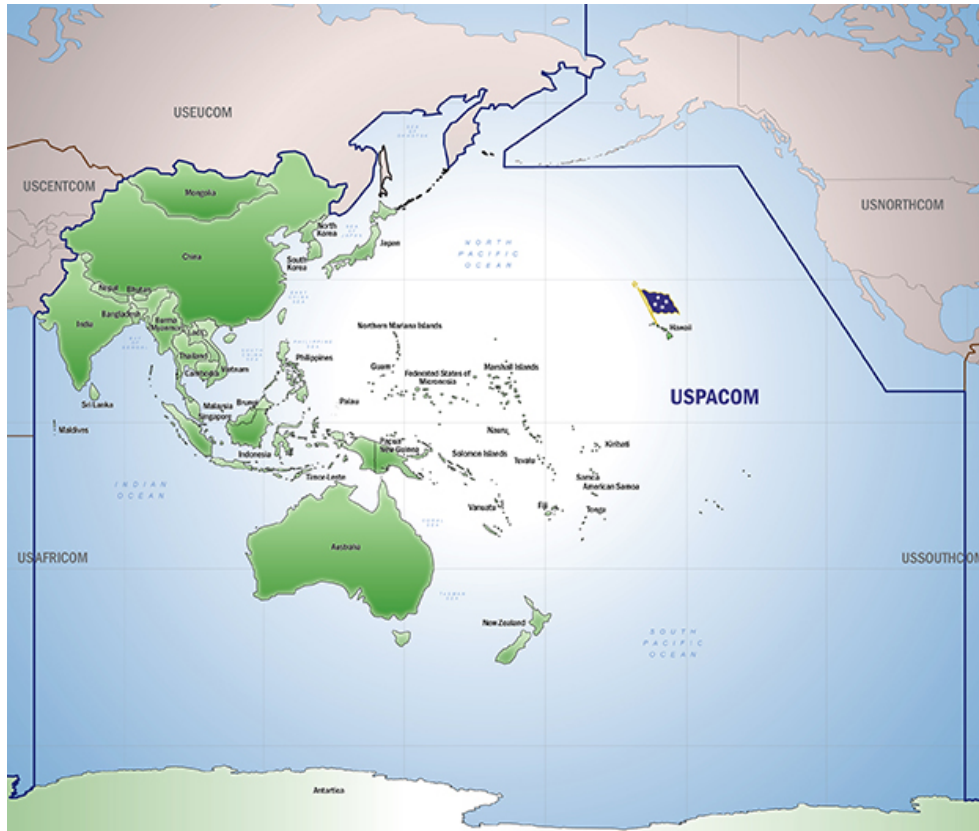
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## USPACOM AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY



\*\* [Click here to download the large Image \(/Portals/55/Images/PACOM-MAP-Mar\\_2016.jpg\)](/Portals/55/Images/PACOM-MAP-Mar_2016.jpg) \*\*

United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) is one of six geographic combatant commands defined by the Department of Defense's Unified Command Plan (UCP). As a geographic combatant command, USPACOM is in charge of using and integrating United States Army, Navy, Air Force and Marine Corps forces within the USPACOM area of responsibility (AOR) to achieve U.S. national security objectives while protecting national interests. The USPACOM AOR covers more of the globe of any of the other geographic combatant commands and shares borders with all of the other five geographic combatant commands. The commander of US Pacific Command reports to the President of the United States through the Secretary of Defense and is supported by multiple component and sub-unified commands including: U.S. Forces Korea, US Forces Japan, U.S. Special Operations Command Pacific, U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Air Forces and U.S. Army Pacific.

There are few regions as culturally, socially, economically, and geopolitically diverse as the Asia-Pacific. The 36 nations comprising the Asia-Pacific region are home to more than 50% of the world's population, 3,000 different languages, several of the world's largest militaries, and five nations allied with the U.S. through mutual defense treaties. Two of the three largest economies are located in the Asia-Pacific, along with ten of the fourteen smallest. The AOR includes the most populous nation in the world, the largest democracy, and the largest Muslim-majority nation. More than one third of Asia-Pacific nations are smaller, island nations, including the smallest republic in the world and the smallest nation in Asia.

The region is a vital driver of the global economy and includes the world's busiest international sea lanes and nine of the ten largest ports. The Asia-Pacific is also a heavily militarized region, with seven of the world's ten largest standing militaries and five of the world's declared nuclear nations. Given these conditions, the strategic complexity facing the region is unique.

[Skip to main content \(Press Enter\).](#)

In concert with other U.S. government agencies, USPACOM protects and defends the territory of the United States, its people, and its interests. With allies and partners, USPACOM is committed to enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win. This approach is based on partnership, presence, and military readiness.

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# Headquarters, United States Pacific Command

## Fact Sheet

### **ABOUT THE U.S. PACIFIC COMMAND**

- U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM) is one of nine Unified Combatant Commands (unified military services) responsible for overall stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. Headquartered at Camp H.M. Smith in Hawaii, USPACOM is the oldest and largest geographic combatant command, and consists of about 360,000 military and civilian personnel working in the region.

- USPACOM is supported by the service-specific component commands in the region: U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Marine Forces Pacific, U.S. Pacific Air Forces and U.S. Army Pacific, also headquartered in Hawaii. Additionally, USPACOM has three subordinate unified commands: U.S. Forces Japan, U.S. Forces Korea and Special Operations Command Pacific, three direct reporting units: Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Joint Intelligence Operations Center, and a Center for Excellence in Disaster Management, and one standing task force: Joint Inter-agency Task Force-West.

### **USPACOM STRATEGY**

"This Strategy defines United States Pacific Command's approach to the Asia-Pacific and reflects our contribution to U.S. efforts to rebalance to the region. In accordance with national guidance, our desired end state is that the Asia-Pacific is secure and prosperous, underpinned by U.S. leadership and a rules-based international order. To this end, we will strengthen alliances and partnerships, maintain an assured presence in the region, and effectively communicate our intent and resolve to safeguard U.S. national interests.

As we work closely with partners across the U.S. government and in the region to address shared challenges and prevent conflict, we will ensure we are ready to respond rapidly and effectively across the full range of military operations. United States Pacific Command is committed to be agile, flexible, and ready to meet the challenges of an uncertain and dynamic security environment."

— *Commander, U.S. Pacific Command, Admiral Samuel J. Locklear III*

### **AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY**

The USPACOM AOR is in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. This AOR stretches from the west coast of the U.S. to the west coast of India, up to the Arctic Sea and down to Antarctica. In total, the region encompasses more than 52% of the earth's surface, 36 countries, with more than 16 time zones.

- ❑ Other U.S. territories in the AOR include Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. We have protectorate obligations with the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau.
- ❑ The region also contains the world's most populous nation (China), the largest democracy (India), the largest Muslim-majority (Indonesia), and the smallest republic (Nauru).
- ❑ Seven of the ten largest standing militaries and five nuclear nations
- ❑ Five of seven U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty alliances (Philippines, ANZUS, Republic of Korea, Japan, Southeast Asia)