

# READING THE WEST

read-ing [from ME *reden*, to explain, hence to read] – vt. 1 to get the meaning of; 2 to understand the nature, significance, or thinking of; 3 to interpret or understand; 4 to apply oneself to; study.

## INDIAN IMMIGRANTS IN THE U.S.

*The Migration Policy Institute reported that, as of 2019, about 2.7 million Indian immigrants reside in the U.S.. Indian immigrants account for approximately 6% of the U.S. foreign-born population, making them the second largest immigrant group in the country.*

Educational exchange programs, new temporary visas, and expanded employment-based immigration channels opened pathways for highly skilled and educated Indian immigrants, many of whom brought family. From 1980 to 2019, the Indian immigrant population in the United States increased 13-fold . . .

The United States is the second most popular destination for Indians living abroad, after the United Arab Emirates (3.4 million). Other top destinations include Saudi Arabia (2.4 million), Pakistan (1.6 million), Oman (1.3 million), and Kuwait (1.1 million), according to mid-2019 United Nations Population Division estimates . . .

In the 2014-18 period, immigrants from India were highly concentrated in California (20 percent), followed by Texas and New Jersey (each with 10 percent) . . .

As of 2014-18, the U.S. cities with the largest number of Indians were the greater New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and San Jose metropolitan areas. These four metro areas accounted for about 30 percent of Indians in the United States.

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Hanna, Mary and Jeanne Batalova. "Indian Immigrants in the United States." *Migration Policy Institute*, 16 Oct. 2020, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/indian-immigrants-united-states-2019>. Accessed 12 Nov. 2021.

## SOCIAL REALITIES OF INDIAN AMERICANS

*In 2021, The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published a paper on "The Social Realities of Indian Americans: Results from the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey."*

Indian Americans are the second-largest immigrant group in the United States. As the number of Indian-origin residents in the United States has swelled north of 4 million, the community's diversity too has grown.

Today, Indian Americans are a mosaic of recent arrivals and long-term residents. While the majority are immigrants, a rising share is born and raised in the United States. Many Indian immigrants might have brought with them identities rooted in their ancestral homeland, while others have eschewed them in favor of a nonhyphenated "American" identity. And despite the overall professional, educational, and financial success many Indian Americans enjoy, this has not inoculated them from the forces of discrimination, polarization, and contestation over questions of belonging and identity. . . .

For Indian Americans, the past is not just a distant country. On the contrary, India continues to exist in the present as it influences the lives of the diaspora – even as its members chart a new path in their adopted home.

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Source: Badrinathan, Sumitra, Devesh Kapur, Jonathan Kay, and Milan Vaishnav. "Social Realities of Indian Americans: Results From the 2020 Indian American Attitudes Survey." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 9 Jun. 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/06/09/social-realities-of-indian-americans-results-from-2020-indian-american-attitudes-survey-pub-84667>. Accessed 12 Nov. 2021.

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## HINDUS IN THE AMERICAN WEST

*The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) is an educational and advocacy organization established in Washington, D.C., in 2003. It focuses on educating the public about Hindus and Hinduism. HAF reports that New Jersey is the state with the largest Hindu population by percentage (3%). However, in Delaware and Arizona, Hindu Americans constitute the largest non-Christian faith. A Global Kerala Hindu Convention was held in December, 2021, in Phoenix, AZ.*

Kerala Hindus of North America (KHNA) was formed in 2001 from the far-sighted vision and motivation of Late Swamiji Sathyananda Saraswathi to unite all Hindus with the goal of preserving Sanatana Dharma . . . .

Their global conventions, held once every two years, are expected to have over 2,000 attendees and cater to a variety of audiences including, but not limited to: families of all ages, students, budding entrepreneurs, businesses, professionals, dignitaries, celebrities, and visitors from India, USA, Canada, Mexico, and Europe.

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Source: Kerala Hindus of North America. <https://namaha.org/>. Accessed 12 Nov. 2021.

## DIWALI IN CALIFORNIA

*In September, 2021, California Assemblyman Ash Kalra introduced a resolution to commemorate the significance of the Hindu Holiday Diwali, the five-day Festival of Lights:*

WHEREAS, Diwali, a festival of great significance to Indian Americans and South Asian Americans, is celebrated annually by Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, and Jains throughout the United States, and across the globe; and . . .

WHEREAS, There are approximately 3,230,000 Hindus in the United States, nearly 2,000,000 of which are of Indian and South Asian origin; and . . .

WHEREAS, Diwali, one of the world's oldest religious holidays, brings together families, friends, and communities here in California, the United States, and around the globe in goodwill, peace, and a shared sense of renewal; and . . .

WHEREAS, Hindu celebrants of Diwali believe that the rows of lamps symbolize the light of knowledge and truth within the individual that signifies the destruction of all negative qualities – violence, anger, jealousy, ignorance, greed, fear, or suffering; in other words, Diwali celebrates the victory of good over evil; and . . .

WHEREAS, For Sikhs, Diwali is feted as the day that the sixth founding Sikh Guru, or revered teacher, Guru Hargobind, was released from captivity by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir; and . . .

WHEREAS, For Jains, Diwali marks the anniversary of the attainment of moksha, or liberation, by Mahavira, the last of the Tirthankaras (the great teachers of Jain dharma), at the end of his life in 527 B.C.; and . . .

WHEREAS, For Buddhists, especially Newar Buddhists, Diwali is commemorated as Ashok Vijayadashami, the day the great Emperor Ashoka embraced Buddhism as his faith; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, That the Assembly recognizes this year's Diwali festival on Thursday, November 4, 2021, and encourages Californians to take part in this joyous day of celebration; and be it further

Resolved, That the Assembly recognizes the religious and historical significance of the festival of Diwali and in observance of Diwali, the festival of lights, expresses its deepest respect for Indian Americans and the Indian diaspora throughout the world on this significant occasion. . . .

Source: United States Congress, California Legislature, assembly. *Relative to Dewali*. [https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill\\_id=202120220HR67](https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220HR67), Introduced 08 Aug. 2021.

## HINDU TEMPLES IN THE WEST

*The website Vedicfeed recently published an article titled "10 Popular Hindu Temples in America You Should Visit." Two of those are in the West:*

The Malibu Hindu Temple is located in the city of Calabasas, California. It is dedicated to Lord Venkateswara. Built in 1981, it is owned and operated by the Hindu Temple Society of Southern California. The traditional South Indian style inspired the construction of the shrine.

The Shiva Vishnu Temple is located in Livermore, California. People from all across the country travel to be mesmerized by the big size and captivating beauty of the huge red and white temple. All the known and celebrated deities are housed in the temple for the worship of Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Hindu Community and Cultural Centre organize classes for conveying religious and cultural education to the future generation at the venue.

Source: AAyush, "10 Popular Hindu Temples in America You Should Visit." *Vedicfeed*, 14 Oct. 2021, <https://vedicfeed.com/most-popular-hindu-temples-in-usa/>. Accessed 12 Nov. 2021.

*The website Wirally recently published an article titled "8 Hindu Temples In The US & Their Stunning Architectures That Will Amaze You." Two of those are in Texas, and one is in Utah.*

The Sree Meenakshi Temple in Pearland, Texas, was developed in 5 acres. The east Rajagopuram, three gopurams, and four prakara temples were constructed in July 1995.

The Radha Madhav Dham in Austin, Texas, is one of the largest Hindu Temple and Ashram in the U.S. and is widely known for welcoming hundreds of visitors every day, regardless of their backgrounds, to its religious services, family festivals, and devotional retreats.

The Radha Krishna Temple in Spanish Fork, Utah, was constructed and is managed by ISKCON Trust. It is a religious place which brings awareness of Lord Krishna and Indian culture to the wider world. They conduct religious preachings, meetings, and photography, color festivals, and others at this place.

Source: Bharath, Kalyan. "8 Hindu Temples In The US & Their Stunning Architectures That Will Amaze You." *Wirally*, 21 May 2021, <https://wirally.com/temples-in-the-us-and-stunning-architectures/>. 12 Nov. 2021.

### EDITORIAL MATTER

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