



retreat | recreate

South India Textiles & Handcrafts Tour

9 - 23 February 2026

Useful Information

As at 1 January 2025

Please make a point of re-reading the Trip Notes prior to departure for details of currency, weather, general health, vaccination, safety, mobile phone and WIFI communication (eSIMs/SIMs/roaming/data etc), etc

GENERAL OVERVIEW

- The Republic of India is bordered by Afghanistan, China, Nepal and Bhutan to the north, Bangladesh and Myanmar (Burma) to the east and Pakistan to the west.
- The capital city of India is **Delhi**.
- India is the seventh largest country in the world, covering more than three million square kilometres, and is second only to China in terms of population, at more than **1.25 billion**.
- India is one of the most diverse countries in the world. It is a sophisticated, modern, industrial leader that is home to many ancient tribes. Religion and language distinguish different groups.
- Hindus comprise 80% of the population, Muslims 14%, with the remaining 6% is mainly comprised of Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains.
- **Twenty-three official languages** are spoken, along with more than a thousand minor languages and dialects. Hindi is the language of more than forty percent of the population; English is also widely spoken.
- **In South India**, English is widely spoken with Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Kannada also used.
- South India is known for its rich cultural heritage, diverse cuisine (including the widespread use of spices, rice and coconut), lush landscapes and numerous ancient temples.
- The caste system is pervasive and, although integral to Hindu belief, it also encompasses non-Hindus. It holds special sway in rural areas and may dictate where a person lives and what their occupation is.

- 81% of males over 15 are **literate**, compared to 61% of females: 71% of the total adult population are literate.
- **Indian Railways** is India's largest employer, with around 1.4 million workers.
- Producing 1900 movies each year and turning over US\$4 billion, India's **film industry** is the largest in the world, in terms of ticket numbers if not box office receipts.
- **Time Zone:** India Standard Time (ITC) is UTC+5:30

USEFUL CONTACTS (please add to your phone contacts)

- The **retreat|recreate host** on this trip is Susan Keeble. The WhatsApp number for Susan is +61 407 835 922.
- Our **tour leader in India** will be Mr Vinit Nair. Mr Vinit will be added to our WhatsApp group on day 1.
- Our **tour operator's 24/7 contact & emergency number:** +91 77288 58457 (Omit +91 within India)
Tour coordinator: +91 90015 54422
Email: experience@vedic walks.com

EMERGENCY CONTACTS

- **Ambulance: 102**
- **Fire: 101**
- **Police: 100**
- **International world-wide Emergency number: 112**
(does not require credit or a local SIM)

HEALTH & SAFETY

Please also refer to the Trip Notes

- Consult your travel doctor regarding recommended **vaccinations** (eg typhoid, Hep A, Hep B etc). See also: www.traveldoctor.com.au/destination/india
- Take sensible precautions with foods you are unused to, to avoid travellers' diarrhoea.
- If you suffer from motion sickness, consider bringing ginger tablets/Travelcalm/Kwell.
- Do not drink tap water or use it to brush your teeth. Please bring and carry a reusable water bottle or filter bottle and refill it as we travel.
- **Stay hydrated!**
- Carry and wear insect repellent, particularly in the evenings.
- Carry and wear sunscreen, sunhat and sunglasses.
- Carry your own full medical kit at all times (refer to the Suggested Packing List for this trip).

ETIQUETTE

Meeting and Greeting

- In South India, locals may greet you with 'Vanakkam' which means hello or greetings.
- Greeting with '**namaste**' (na-mas-tay) and placing both hands together in prayer position, with a slight bow is appreciated and is a respectful custom. The full translation of 'namaste' is: 'the god in me recognises the god in you and bows before you'.
- Men shake hands with men when meeting or leaving. **Men generally do not touch women** when meeting or greeting. Traditional Indian women may shake hands with foreign women but not usually with men.

- **Indian English** can be very formal and even ceremonious. Indian people may well address you as "sir" or "madam", even "good lady" or "kind sir". At the same time, you should be aware that your English may seem rude to them. In particular, swearing is taken rather seriously.
- **Intrusive questions** - As a traveller, you will frequently run into locals who want to strike up a conversation. You will be peppered with questions that may seem odd or intrusive to an English speaker - don't take offence. In India, subjects like family, occupation, and income are considered polite conversation, even between strangers. Consider such queries as icebreakers, and feel free to ask the same questions back
- Westerners have an ambiguous status in Indian eyes. In one way, you represent the rich sahib, whose culture dominates the world. On the other hand, as a non-Hindu, you are an outcaste, your presence (in theory) polluting to an orthodox or high-caste Hindu, while to members of all religions, your morals and your standards of spiritual and physical cleanliness are suspect.

Body Language and behaviour

- **Public displays of affection** between genders are not appropriate in India. Kissing and embracing are considered a sexual act.
- Indians generally allow an arm's length space between themselves and others - personal space is valued.
- When an Indian smiles and jerks his/her head backward, a gesture that looks somewhat like a Western 'no', this means 'yes'.

- Head wobble can mean 'yes', 'no' or 'I have no idea'.
- When an Indian answers, 'I will try,' they generally mean 'no.' This is considered a polite 'no.'
- The Western side-to-side hand wave for 'hello' is frequently interpreted by Indians as 'no' or 'go away.'
- Only use your **right hand** to pass money or pick up merchandise. See the 'right hand rule' below.
- Do not touch anyone's **head**.
- **Feet** are considered unclean. Feet are sacred for holy men and women. Pointing feet or footwear towards people or deities, or touching anyone with your feet is considered an insult. Apologize immediately if your feet or shoes touch another person.
- Many Indians do not wear shoes inside a home. Follow your host's example. Bare feet are acceptable. If you are wearing socks, make sure your socks are clean and without holes.
- Indians are very sensitive to being beckoned rudely. A hand and arm waved up and down (Western 'good-bye') means '**come here.**' To beckon, extend your arm, palm down and make a scratching motion with fingers kept together.
- Standing with **hands on hips** is considered aggressive.
- **Whistling** in public is considered rude.
- Never point with a single finger or two fingers (used only with inferiors). **Point** with your whole hand, thumb or chin. The chin is not used to point at superiors.
- Ask permission before **smoking**. It is considered rude to smoke in the presence of elders.
- Avoid showing **anger**.

The right hand rule

- Note that with the improvement of sanitation standards, the rules of eating with your right hand or avoiding touching foods or items with your left hand are less hard and fast.
- Traditionally, the left hand was used for wiping yourself after using the bathroom, cleaning your feet, taking off your shoes and other unsavoury functions, while the right hand is for eating, shaking hands and so on.
- In general, it's best to avoid passing anything to anyone with your left hand, or pointing at anyone with your left hand. In general, it's best to accept things given to you with your right hand, although using both hands is a sign of respect.

Dining

- Allow hosts to serve you. Never refuse food, but don't feel obligated to empty your plate. Hindu hosts are never supposed to let their guests' plates be empty.
- Take food from communal dish with a spoon; never your fingers. Use chappati or poori (bread) torn into small pieces to scoop up food.
- Your lips shouldn't touch other people's food. When drinking out of a cup or bottle to be shared with others, don't let it touch your lips, but rather pour it directly into your mouth. *Jhutha*, or sullied food, is strictly taboo. This custom also protects you from diseases like hepatitis.
- It is customary to wash your hands before and after eating.

Clothing

- Indian people are generally very conservative about dress. Women are expected to dress modestly with legs (to below knees as a minimum, preferably to mid-calf) and shoulders covered. Loose fitting trousers are acceptable. Plunging necklines, shorts and short skirts are not appropriate.
- In summary: aim to cover your chest, upper arms, legs and backside.
- The rules of dress are particularly important when visiting a temple or mosque. Keep your legs and head covered, and take off your shoes.
- Always have a lightweight cotton shawl/scarf handy

Temples and Religion

- Religion is taken very seriously in India; it's important to show due respect to religious buildings, shrines, images, and people at prayer. When entering a **temple or mosque**, remove your shoes and leave them at the door (socks are acceptable). Keep your legs, shoulders and head covered too.
- Some temples – Jain ones in particular – do not allow you to enter wearing or carrying leather articles, and forbid entry to menstruating women.
- In a **mosque**, non-Muslims would not normally be allowed in at prayer time and women are sometimes not permitted entry at all. In a **Hindu temple**, you are often not allowed into the inner sanctum; and at a **Buddhist stupa** or monument, you should always walk clockwise around a stupa (ie, with the *stupa* on your right).
- **Funeral processions** are private affairs, and should be left in peace. In Hindu funerals, the body is normally carried to the cremation site within

hours of death by white-shrouded relatives (white is the colour of mourning). The eldest son is expected to shave his head and wear white following the death of a parent. At Varanasi and other places, you may see cremations in progress. Such occasions should be treated with respect.

Photography

- On all retreat|recreate tours we aim to be responsible travellers and as culturally sensitive as possible. The question of 'if and when' it is appropriate to take a photo is high on our list of considerations and one that we routinely raise during our pre-tour briefing.
- Please always ask permission before taking a photo of another person and if the answer is 'no', fully respect this. If you wish to photograph children, you should always seek permission from the parent/guardian.
- If you do take photos of children, please don't post on social media so they don't end up on the 'wrong' sites. Consider whether you would like someone else to post photos of your children/grandchildren on social media.
- Hindus are very superstitious about taking photographs of images of deities and inside temples; if in doubt, desist.
- Never take photos of funerals or cremations.
- Photography in some locations is not permitted or is culturally inappropriate. Our local guide will be able to provide advice and guidance during the tour. If in doubt, it is better to forfeit the photograph and capture the moment in memory.

USEFUL PHRASES There are 23 languages (including English) recognised in India’s constitution and more than 1600 minor spoken languages. While English is widely spoken, we encourage you to learn at least a few basic words of local language, out of both respect for the local culture and as a courtesy to the people we will meet. **In South India**, English is widely spoken with Tamil, Telugu, Urdu and Kannada also used

TAMIL

Hello	Vanakkam
Thank you	Nandri]
Yes	Aama
No	Illai
Sorry/Excuse me	Mannikkavum
How are you?	Eppadi irukkeenga?
I’m fine	Nallaa irukean
What is your name?	Ungal Peru Enna?
Food	Saappadu
Water	Thanni
1, 2, 3	Onnu, Rendu, Moonu
4, 5,	Naalu, Anju

URDU

Hello/Greeting	Salaam
Thank you	Shukriya

HINDI

Hello/Goodbye	Na-ma-ste
Thank you (formal)	Dhan-ya-vad
Please	kri-pa-yaa
Yes	Ha
Please/thanks	Han ji
No	na-hee
OK	aa-cha
How are you?	Guesse ho?
I am fine	Main theek hoon
Very good	bahod aa-cha
Beautiful	sundar
Very beautiful	Bahod sunderahai
Delicious	swadiṣṭ
Water	paa-nee
Excuse me	su-ni-ye
How much is it?	ne kaa hay
1, 2, 3, 4,	ek, dar, teen, cha
5, 6, 7	paanch, chhah, saat
8, 9, 10	aath, nay, das

Sightseeing, Shopping and Dining

Suggestions for exploration in your own time

Please note: The following information is the result of many hours of research and is made available to our tour participants as an additional resource. Please respect our request that you **refrain from sharing it**.

Note: Those marked with an * are included in our tour itinerary.

CHENNAI - Textile venues and shopping

- **Anokhi:** 106 Pasumpon Muthuramalinga Thevar Rd, RA Puram, Austin Nagar, Alwarpet, Chennai. Open daily 10.30am – 7.30pm. The Anokhi brand is distinguished by its prints, designs and product quality. The company is well known as an alternative role model for good business practices, and the ongoing revival of traditional textile skills. Has outlets all over India. <https://www.anokhi.com/anokhi/our-shops.html>
- **Fab India:** There are multiple stores in Chennai. Check the store locator link below. Fab India links over 55,000 craft-based rural producers to modern urban markets, thereby creating a base for skilled, sustainable, rural employment while also preserving India's traditional handcrafts. It has stores all over India. www.fabindia.com/store-locator
- **Gurubaran Tanjore Art Gallery:** 7, Ramakrishna Mutt Rd, New N.G.O Colony, Venkatesa Agraharam, Mylapore, Chennai. Open daily 10am-9pm. Specialising in Tanjore painting, glass paintings and antique paintings.
- **Pondy Bazaar** (located near T Nagar shopping street in Georgetown neighbourhood) & **Cathedral Road Boutiques** - A mix of ready-to-wear clothing, sarees, accessories, and gift items in an easy-to-navigate shopping area.

- **T. Mangharam:** 49, Rattan Bazaar Rd, Parry's Corner, Park Town, Chennai. Huge fabric store established in 1966. www.tmangharam.com
- **Rattan Bazaar (Cotton Alley)** – Here you'll find well established fabric stores and streets specializing in Madras checks, cottons, and dress materials - excellent for lengths of fabric.

CHENNAI – Dining

- **Avartana:** ITC Grand Chola, Little Mount, Guindy, Chennai. Open Mon-Fri 7-11pm, Sat & Sun 12-2.30pm. A contemporary, progressive South Indian restaurant offering a tasting-menu format that reimagines traditional flavours through modern techniques.
- **Dakshin:** New at 552, Old at 135 TTK Road, Chennai. Open daily 12.30-3.30pm and 7-11pm. A refined, award-winning fine-dining South Indian restaurant offering a tasting-style experience of Tamil, Kerala, Andhra, and Chettinad cuisines.
- **Kappa Chakka Kandhari:** 10 Haddows Rd, Nugambakkam, Chennai. Open daily 12-3.30pm and 7-10.30pm. A contemporary restaurant serving authentic Kerala-style dishes and seafood. Casual yet flavourful and offering a strong sense of regional cuisine. <https://kappachakkakandhari.com/>

CHENNAI – Dining continued

Reliable, clean vegetarian eateries well known for idlis, dosas, and traditional South Indian breakfasts. A popular introduction to local food.

- **Murugan Idli Shop:** 9 Ramanathan St, Chennai
- **Saravana Bhavan:** refer to website below for multiple locations in Chennai and other cities <https://saravanabhavan.com/>
- **Southern Spice:** Taj Coromandel, Uthamar Gandhi Rd, Anna Salai, Nungambakkam, Chennai. Open daily 12.30-3pm and 7-11pm. An iconic fine-dining restaurant showcasing classic Tamil Nadu cuisine and known for its thali-style presentations and refined interpretations of regional dishes.

KANCHIPURAM - Shopping & Textiles

Kanchipuram is renowned for its pure silk sarees. These trusted showrooms offer authentic handwoven pieces with guidance on quality and pricing. Visit established silk showrooms such as:

- **Prakash Silks:** 87 Ghandi Rd, opposite GRT Regency Hotel, Kanchipuram. Open daily 8.45am – 8.00pm.
- **Sree Madheswaran Silks:** 7 Seshadri Palayam Mettu St, Little Kanchipuram. Open daily 9am – 10pm.
- **Sajan Sai Textiles:** 4 Government School, Tirumalpaur Main Road, opposite Pallur, Pallur. (A 20 minute drive from central Kanchipuram). Open Mon-Sat 9am-8pm, closed Sunday.

KANCHIPURAM - Dining

- **Hotel GRT Regency In-house Restaurant:** 487 Ghandi Rd, Ennaikaran, Kanchipuram. One of the most comfortable dining options in Kanchipuram, serving well-prepared South Indian meals with a focus on local flavours.

Local restaurants and hotel dining offering simple, authentic South Indian meals and biryani options:

- **Mannar Military Hotel:** RPV2+5QX, Sengaluneer Odai St, Periya, Kanchipuram. Open Wed & Sun 7.30am-10pm, all other days 10.15am-10pm.
- **Arrabat Hotel:** 22 Kamarajar St, opposite bus stand, Bavaji Nagar, Ennaikaran, Kanchipuram. Open daily 11am-10.30pm.

PUDUCHERRY – Shopping & textiles

- **Via Pondicherry:** 22 Romain Rolland St, near Bussy St, White Town, Puducherry. Open daily 9am-8pm. A beautifully curated boutique by Vasanty Manet featuring scarves, shawls, and garments with an Indo-French aesthetic. Highly regarded by international visitors.
- **Boutiques in the Aurobindo Ashram area:** There are many small handicraft stores and boutiques selling handmade goods, textiles, and spiritual souvenirs.

PUDUCHERRY - Dining

French-influenced cafés and bistros offering light meals, baked goods, and relaxed dining.

- **Villa Shanti Hotel Restaurant:** 14 Suffren St, White Town, Puducherry. Open daily 11am – 10.45pm.
- **Café des Arts:** 4 Suffren St, White Town, Puducherry. Open daily 8am-10pm.
- **Baker Street (1):** 32 Goubert Ave, White Town, Puducherry. Open daily 7am-9.30pm
- **Baker Street (2):** 123 Bussy St, near Clock Tower, MG road area, Puducherry. Open daily 7.30am – 9.30pm.

Restaurants set in heritage buildings in White Town, offering fusion menus and comfortable, atmospheric settings.

- **The Bay of Buddha:** The Promenade Hotel, 23 Goubert Ave, White Town, Puducherry. Open daily 6.30pm-10.30pm. Understated, roof-top restaurant specialising in pan-Asian cuisine.
- **Le Dupleix Hotel, Courtyard Restaurant:** 5 Caserne St, White Town, Puducherry. Open daily 7-10am, 12-3pm & 7-10.30pm. A refined dining experience in a restored colonial mansion, offering French-Indian cuisine with regional influences.

THANJAVUR - Shopping & Textiles

Local weaver stores & regional craft shops, some selling Thanjavur bronzes. Seek out reputable workshops for authentic, high-quality pieces.

- **S.R. Vejai Ganesh:** No. 3, Krishnan Kovil 4th St, Maharonbu Chavadi, Thanjavur. Open daily 10am-1.30pm & 2-7pm. Owned by an eighth generation family of weavers who belong to the Saurashtrian community that settled in Thanjavur more than 400 years ago. They have been working to revive the ancient and labour intensive korvai weaving technique which requires two weavers to handle the shuttles at the loom.
- **Handicraft Cooperatives (Bronze & Brass)** Excellent for purchasing traditional sculptures and artisanal objects with clear provenance.

THANJAVUR - Dining

- **Ideal River View Resort/Great Trails River view in-house restaurant - Venar Bank, Palliagrahara Tanjore, Thanjavur (3km from city centre).** One of the better premium dining options in the region, offering South Indian specialties and Chettinad-style preparations in a comfortable riverside setting.
- **Svatma Resort in-house restaurant** 4/1116, Blake Hr Sec School Road, M. Chavadi, Thanjavur
- **Aaharam in-house dining:**4/1116, Blake Hr Sec School Road, M. Chavadi, Thanjavur. A culturally immersive luxury pure vegetarian dining experience focused on traditional Thanjavur and Tamil Brahmin cuisine, presented with storytelling and authenticity in a heritage-style property.

MADURAI - Shopping & Textiles

- **Puthu Mandapam & Simmakkal Markets:** Bustling local markets offering textiles, temple-threaded fabrics, sarees, and everyday goods —an authentic local shopping experience.
- **Local Tailors:** Madurai has many skilled tailors capable of quick custom work. Quality and timelines can be confirmed on-site with assistance from our local tour leader.

MADURAI - Dining

- **Heritage Madurai in-house restaurant:** 11 Melakkal Main Rd, Kochadi, Madurai. Set within a property inspired by Geoffrey Bawa's architectural style, offering a refined dining atmosphere for guests who appreciate heritage hotels.
- **Sree Sabarees:** West, Town Hall Rd, Madurai Main, Madurai. Open daily 6am-11.30pm. Also at 1 Kamarajar Salai, Pankajam Colony, Madurai. Trusted vegetarian restaurants, popular with locals for dosas, breakfasts, and traditional meals.
- **Vilakkuthoon Area – Jigarthanda Stalls**
Try Madurai's iconic semi-frozen, rich, delicious and cooling dessert. Well-known shops in this area are popular and safe for visitors. Jigarthanda translates to 'cool heart' as the drink is designed to be a refreshing antidote to the summer heat. Although we'll be travelling in the cool season, we still recommend that you try it!

MUNNAR - Shopping & Textiles

- **Srishti Trust:** Nullathani Estate Road, Munnar. Dedicated to the rehabilitation, empowerment and generation of sustainable livelihoods for differently-abled children and young adults of the rural plantation community of Munnar. Outlet sells beautiful naturally dyed textiles and wood-free handmade paper products with ethical and meaningful provenance. www.srishtitrust.org/
- **Local Spice Shops & Tea Factories.** Popular stops for spices, tea, and small regional souvenirs to take home.

MUNNAR - Dining

- **Rapsy Restaurant:** Main Bazaar, SH17, Munnar. Open daily 8am-10.30pm. One of Munnar's more upscale dining options, offering Kerala specialties, grilled dishes, and continental cuisine with consistent quality.

Comfortable cafés and vegetarian restaurants offering South Indian dishes, snacks, and good coffee or tea.

- **Tea Tales Café:** 1st floor, Kalnivas complex, Munnar Open Mon-Fri 9.30am-8.30pm, Sat/Sun 9am-8pm
- **Saravana Bhavan:** at several locations in Munnar including: Market, MG Road and 33Q8+29M Road. Open daily until 9.30pm.
www.saravanabhavan.com/find-us

In-house restaurants at these resorts offer curated Kerala meals using local ingredients, providing a refined yet regionally rooted dining experience.

- **Tea Country Resort:** Chithirapuram, Munnar
- **Windermere Estate:** Pothamedu, Munnar.

KOCHI – Shopping & Textiles

- **Anokhi** - /297 Parade Road, Lilly Street, Kochi, Kerala. Open daily 10am – 7pm. The Anokhi brand is distinguished by its prints, designs and product quality. There are Anokhi outlets all over India. <https://www.anokhi.com/anokhi/our-shops.html>
- **Fab India:** Shop 1, 279 Napier Street, near Parade Ground, Fort Kochi, (about a 2 minute walk from our hotel). Open daily 10.30am – 8.30pm. Fab India links over 55,000 craft-based rural producers to modern urban markets, thereby creating a base for skilled, sustainable, rural employment while also preserving India's traditional handcrafts. It has stores all over India. www.fabindia.com/store-locator
- **One Zero Eight by Save the Loom:** Door No CC 1/1161 Njaliparambu Junction, Kunnumpuram Rd, Fort Kochi, Kerala. This enchanting shop is a treasure trove of exquisite textiles and designs that showcase the beauty of natural dyes. Each piece is thoughtfully curated, blending traditional weaving techniques with modern design elements, resulting in truly unique garments. Housed in a beautifully restored historic property, the store exudes charm and creativity. One Zero Eight features an impressive lineup of local fashion designers, including several from Kerala itself.
- **Jew Town & Mattancherry Area** Famous for antiques, crafts, hand-printed textiles, spices, and souvenirs
- **Broadway Market/Ernakulam** - a 100 year old shopping area. Narrow lanes are filled with shops selling spices, textiles, shoes, and small souvenirs.
- **Lulu Mall** – an international shopping mall offering brand names.

KOCHI – Dining

- **Rice Boat:** Taj Malabar Resort & Spa, Indira Gandhi Rd, Willingdon Island, Kochi. Open 12.30-3pm and 7.30-11pm. A highly regarded seafood restaurant overlooking the harbour and specializing in Kerala cuisine.
- **Dhe Puttu:** 1st Floor, East Service Rd, NH 66, Edappally, Ernakulam. Open 11.30am-10.45pm. A celebrated casual dining restaurant focusing on Kerala's iconic puttu-based dishes (puttu are steamed rice cylinders), elevated with regional ingredients and modern presentation.
- **Cassava – Kerala Specialty Restaurant at Kochi Marriott hotel:** Lulu International Shopping Mall, 34/1111, N.H. 47, Edappally, Kochin, Ernakulam. Open daily 12.30-3pm and 7.30-11pm. A sophisticated restaurant dedicated to Kerala cuisine, emphasizing traditional recipes, local produce, and elegant presentation in a luxury setting.

Relaxed cafés combining art, history, and casual dining.
- **Kashi Art Café:** Burger St, near Police Station, Fort Nagar, Fort Kochi. Open 8.30am-10pm.
- **Chez Teapot:** 1/876 Peter Celli St, Fort Nagar, Fort Kochi. Open 8.30am-10pm.
- **The Tea House Cafe:** AB Salem Rd, Jew Town, Mattancherry Tea house, near Jewish Cemetery, Kochi. Open 9.30am-5.30pm
- **Brunton Boatyard – History & Terrace Grill Restaurant:** 1/498 Calvathy Rd, Fort Kochi, Kochi. Open 7.30am-10.30pm. A classic heritage dining experience with sea views and traditional flavours.

Indian Textiles – some basic terms

Aari embroidery: fine embroidery created using a hooked needle or awl, known as an aari.

Abhala bharat: mirrors or flat metal discs are couched onto the surface of a cloth. The practice is centred around Kutch, Gujarat

Ajrakh: double-sided, resist, block-printed and dyed, kala cotton cloth from the village of Ajrakhpur, Gujarat (see below) featuring Islamic geometric designs in blue, red, white and black.



Alpana: Bengali folk art style painting

Appliqué: decorative needlework technique where cloth is sewn with pieces of cloth or ribbons

Ashavali: luxury brocade traditionally made of heavy silk and metallic thread, thought to date from around the 11th century. Named after its place of origin, Ashaval, Gujarat (now known as Ahmedabad)

Bandhani: is the art of binding. Bandha means 'to bind'. Otherwise referred to as 'tie and dye'. Fabric is tightly bound to create a dye-resist.

Batik: resist dyeing technique using hot wax

Bela: type of block printing usually specific to production of a style made in Kutch, Gujarat

Block printing: the use of carved wooden blocks to transfer dye or mordant to cloth, creating repeated patterns

Brocade: a supplementary weft weaving technique used to create sometimes elaborate motifs and patterns. Decorative threads are added while weaving in addition to those structurally integral to the cloth

Butta/Buta/Boteh: motifs, usually based on flowers, trees or mangoes with a curling tip, frequently found on Indian textiles; the latter also known as paisley after the Scottish mill town Paisley, in Renfrewshire, which created mass-market imitations of Indian cloth from the late 18th century onwards

Catechu: brown dye extracted from Acacia trees

Chaklas: square wall hangings, often embroidered, beaded or appliqued

Chamba rumal: embroidered handkerchief traditionally involved in marriage ceremonies, usually a fine cotton muslin with silk threads. Associated with the historic Chamba State, which is now part of Himachal Pradesh, northern India

Chanderi: a fine cloth woven with gold threads and silk associated with the town of the same name in Madhya Pradesh

Charkha: portable spinning wheel associated with the Indian independence movement led by Gandhi

Chikankari/Chikan: fine white embroidery and pulled thread work on white cotton. Associated with the city of Nawabs in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

Chinai: silk embroidery on silk using Chinese techniques and motifs

Chintz: generic term applied to Indian printed and painted cottons usually with floral or geometric designs. Often associated with those created for export

Couching: embroidery technique in which threads or other materials are attached to the surface of a cloth by building up multiple stitches. Often used with mirrors or other hard materials that cannot be pierced with a sewing needle

Cut Dana: embroidery technique involving the attachment of cut stones in patterns using couching stitches in combination with other stitches and decorative threads

Dabu: block printing using mud resist. The dabu printed fabric is then dipped into indigo or other dye and sundried before the mud is removed.

Damask: method of weaving often intricate patterns into cloth using continuous weft, and often with the same-coloured warp and weft threads

Darshan-dwar phulkari: embroidery which honours the divine, usually created for use in shrines and temples. Darshan-dwar literally means 'doorway to the divine' and phulkari is a type of embroidery done in Punjab

Dhoti: length of cloth (approx 4 yards), tied to form loose trousers for Hindu men.

Dupatta: shawl traditionally worn by women to cover the head and shoulders

Ek taar: untwisted single silk yarns used for embroidery, sometimes known as floss

Gaghra: skirt

Gota patti: technique involving the sewing of metallic ribbons onto the surface of a cloth which originated in Rajasthan

Gultarashi: cutting or shaving of rug pile at different lengths to create contours, often used to accentuate designs or to create patterns

Himroo: hand-loomed fabric with a cotton base and silk weaving, with Persian heritage

Ikot: woven fabric in which the pattern is resist dyed before weaving. Bunches of threads are tie dyed, often several times, before they are woven, requiring great skill and calculation. Single ikat refers to a

cloth where the threads of either the warp or the weft are dyed before weaving; double ikat refers to cloth where both the warp and the weft are resist dyed before weaving. See also Patola

Indigo: one of the world's oldest dyes, resulting in a range of shades of blue, extracted from the leaves of certain plants from the *Indigofera* genus. The most commonly used is the species *Indigofera tinctoria*, which has a unique ability to permanently dye both protein and cellulose fibres without the use of mordants.

Jaal: in the context of Indian textiles, it is a delicate lattice or net-like pattern

Jali: perforated pattern in chikan embroidery work. Also applies to stonework lattice

Jacquard loom: invented in France in the early 19th century, it was the first automated loom that could produce complex woven patterns in direct competition with hand-made Indian examples. The patterns were made using punch cards that were fed through the loom, causing particular warp threads to be lifted before the weft threads were passed through

Jamdahni/Jamdani: weaving technique, traditionally used in Bengal, where different parts of the warp threads are manipulated independently in a supplementary weft technique, creating repeating patterns. The resulting cloth is usually very fine, translucent cotton muslin with ethereal delicate floral and geometric motifs.

Jhutti/Juti/Jhutti/Jooti (Urdu): slip-on leather footwear, from very plain for daily wear to embroidered and embellished for special occasions.

Jullaha: weaver

Kaarigar: artisan or skilled maker

Kachha Kasab: embroidery, specifically involving couching of metallic threads onto the surface, usually in floral or geometric patterns

Kadhua/Kadwa: a supplementary weft weaving technique where each motif is woven separately, particular to Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Kala cotton: translates as black cotton. A pest and drought resistant indigenous species of cotton from Kutch, Gujarat.

Kalam: pen-like instrument with felt-like reservoir used for drawing designs or applying wax resists for **kalamkari / kalam qaari** cloths

Kalamkari: hand-painted and hand-drawn cotton cloths created with natural dyes, associated with Andhra Pradesh. Kalam means '*pen*'; kari translates to '*work*' or '*the art of*'

Kamangiri: wall or fresco painting from Kutch, Gujarat

Kameez: shirt like tunic usually worn over baggy pants which are known as **salwar**. The full outfit is known as salwar kameez.

Kamdani/Mukaish/Badla: uses flat strips of silver inserted into the surface of the cloth, generally in combination with fine Chikankari embroidery to accent its patterns

Kani: type of very fine Kashmir shawl; also the name of the wooden spools used to create the intricate weave associated with the ancient and protected technique similar to tapestry weaving or flatweave carpets

Kanthalas: embroidered and decorated quilt covers

Kasavu mundu veshti: two-piece sari set (the sari, and an undergarment worn on the torso). Kasavu also refers to the gold or silver thread weaving technique of Kerala

Katab: Gujarati term for applique

Khadi/Khaddar: hand spun, hand woven cloth from indigenous hand-spun cotton.

This cloth became synonymous with the struggle for Indian independence. Khadi was promoted by Gandhi as a means of self-sufficiency and its production was an act of defiance against the colonial rule of the British

Khatri: caste of professional dyers

Kinkhab: a heavy woven brocade cloth of silk and precious metal thread

Kora: raw, unprocessed cotton

Kota Doria cloth: a combination of cotton and silk, woven on pit looms in a square check pattern. From the village of Kota, Rajasthan.

Kotpad: a weaving and natural dyeing technique using dyes extracted from manjistha (madder root); synonymous with the village of the same name in Odisha

Lac: resin excreted by lac beetles used as a dyestuff to create pinks and light red colours

Maheshwari: type of cloth synonymous with the village of Mashewar, Madhya Pradesh. Usually silk or a combination of silk and cotton, and often woven with metallic threads

Leheria - a resist dyeing technique resulting in multi-stripped or chequered multi-coloured patterning.

Malir - cotton cloth woven on narrow looms, block printed in ajrakh style but mainly red rather than indigo.

Meghwal/Meghwar - caste of leather workers

Misru/Mashru - literally means 'mixed'. A woven fabric with silk warp and cotton weft.

Mojar - leather slip on footwear. Also called 'Nagra' or jooti in various regions.

Mordant - metallic salt which combines chemically with a dye to fix the dye permanently.

Manjistha: Indian madder (*Rubia cordifolia*), used in natural dyeing to create rich reds and browns; used in conjunction with mordants to dye cotton reds and blacks

Marodi: embroidery using highly twisted gold thread, native to Gujarat

Mashru: heavy cloth, usually with a satin silk face and cotton base, created by using a cotton warp and silk weft. The weft threads are passed over more of the weft threads resulting in a face, or surface, that is predominantly made of the weft (silk), which means the reverse of the cloth is predominantly made of the warp threads (cotton)

Mata ni Pachedi: literally '*behind the mother goddess*' in Gujarati language, a temple cloth depicting religious stories. It is created with kalamkari (hand-painting) using natural dyes in a tradition that dates back thousands of years

Meenakari: weaving technique in Varanasi where colours are added to the motifs, resembling encrusted jewels on fabric

Mochi: embroidery of Kutch and Saurashtra, famed for chain-stitch silk embroidery created using notched hooks or awls

Mordant: metallic oxide used to bind dyes to fibres

Muga: type of silk endemic to Assam, golden in colour and traditionally linked with royalty

Mulmul: muslin fabric of finely woven cotton plain traditionally associated with Bengal

Naba Kothi: textile depicts nine houses with nine auspicious motifs, woven in Odisha using tie and dye technique

Nakshi kantha: type of embroidered cover from Bengal created by quilting together several layers of repurposed soft, fine cotton saris in an early form of recycling

Odhni: shawl

Pachchikar: marble inlay work

Roghan/Rogan work: a design skillfully printed onto fabric with a mixture of thickened oil and pigment

Paithani: variety of weave named after the town of Paithan, Maharashtra, which involves tapestry-style weaving using vibrant silk yarns and golden thread

Parsi Gara: embroidered saris predominantly worn by women in the Parsi community for weddings and on special occasions. The saris are characterised by heavily embroidered motifs and traditionally with Chinese design influence

Patolu/Patola: double ikat (traditionally made in Patan, Gujarat but now also made in Orissa and Andhra Pradesh). In single ikat cloth, the threads of either the warp or weft are resist-dyed before they are woven. In double ikat, both the warp and weft are resist-dyed. The traditional format of Patola features side and end borders, and a central field usually consisting of repeating motifs.

Patwa work: silk tassel-making technique that originated in Rajasthan

Phulia khadi: hand-spun and hand-woven cotton from Phulia, West Bengal, known for its soft, fine weave.

Phulkari: embroidery from Punjab, an area that straddles northwest India and eastern Pakistan. Characterised by fine darning embroidery covering most of the surface of a cloth

Pichwai: genre of hand-painted temple or sacred cloths devoted to the god Krishna, associated with the temple town of Nathdwara, Rajasthan

Rabari: ethnic minority people who originated in central Asia and settled in parts of Pakistan, Rajasthan and Gujarat in the 12th century, known for complex surface embellishment combining mirror work, chain stitch and running stitch, among others

Rangkaat: translates to '*cutting colour*', a complex weaving technique of interlocking different hues of weft in a mosaic pattern using silk, and metallic threads. Associated with Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Resham: fine silk thread

Resist dyeing: range of techniques where areas of the surface of textiles, or threads used to create them, are treated or tied to prevent dye from reaching those areas, and thus creating designs

Saadi/saree: an unstitched, draped garment worn by women in India. Often 6m in length.

Sainchi phulkari: type of phulkari that depicts human and animal figures in narrative scenes of everyday life in rural Punjab; sainchi means '*authentic*' in Punjabi

Sambalpuri bandha: a sari created using the double ikat technique, originating in the city of Sambalpur, Odisha

Shamilami: type of embroidery using animal motifs, associated with Manipur, eastern India

Shisha - mirrored glass used in embroidery work

Toran: doorway hanging (Gujarati)

Tanchoi: translates to '*touching the body*', it is a supplementary weft weave that renders a soft satin-like finish on the back of the fabric - generally saris woven in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

Tangaliya weaving: a Gujarati weaving technique made on pit looms, where knots are made at certain intervals in weft threads, to create small dots on the surface of the cloth. Associated with the Surendranagar district in the Saurashtra region of Gujarat

Telia Rumal: a headcloth or loincloth created with double ikat, originally from Andhra Pradesh, where traditionally the threads are treated with oil to soften them before dyeing and weaving

Thikri: small, hand-blown mirrors used to embellish the surface of Gujarati embroidery (Abhala bhara)

Tie dye: resist dyeing technique where threads are tightly bound around either other threads or a finished cloth to prevent the dyestuff from reaching those areas when it is submerged in a dyebath. Sometimes extends to the use of clamps and other devices to restrict the areas of cloth subject to the dye

Tussar silk: sometimes referred to as '*wild silk*' as the silk cocoons are traditionally collected from trees growing in forests; prized for its golden colour

Vastra: general word for garment or clothing

Warp: threads strung tightly on a loom for weft threads to pass under and over

Weft: threads woven between warp threads to create the structure of cloth. Discontinuous or supplementary weft are additional threads that are not part of the structure of the cloth that are woven in to create patterns

Zardozi: heavy, ornate embroidery usually reserved for luxurious fabrics like silk or velvet, using metallic threads and sometimes precious stones, pearls and other ornaments

Zari: fine metallic threads used in embroidery or weaving