



# **GUJARATI**

## **A PROFILE**

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## **GUJARATI**

### **BACKGROUND**

**Gujarati** is one of the 22 official language and 14 regional languages spoken in India. It is a language native to the state of Gujarat in western India. There are about 46 million speakers of Gujarati worldwide, making it the 23rd most spoken language in the world. Of these, roughly 45.5 million reside in India, 150,000 in Uganda, 250,000 in Tanzania, 50,000 in Kenya and roughly 100,000 in Pakistan. Gujarati is the chief language of India's Gujarat state, as well as the adjacent union territories of Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. A considerable population of Gujarati speakers exists in North America and the United Kingdom as well. In the United Kingdom, Leicester (Midlands) and Wembley (North London) are two areas popular with Gujaratis.

### **DIALECTS**

As with most languages, there are regional dialects which differ, some have many Arabic and Persian terms, while others, such as the southern dialects, take more from Portuguese and English, while others take more from Hindi. It is not a single language, and was only created 4 to 5 centuries ago. It combines many languages.

Some of them are listed below along with subdivisions.

- Standard Gujarati
  - Saurashtra Standard
  - Nagari
  - Bombay Gujarati
  - Patnuli
  - Ahmedabad city

### **LANGUAGE VARIATION**

Of the key dialects listed above, four are traditionally recognized as comprising the major dialects of Gujarati: Standard Gujarati (as spoken in the area extending from Baroda to the Gujarat capital Ahmedabad), Surati, Kathiawari, and Patani. Very little descriptive work exists on the linguistic properties of these principal dialects and the degrees to which various other dialects are mutually intelligible. The primary dimension along which all dialects seem to vary is the vocabulary. The tendency seems to be that the northern Gujarati dialects tend to borrow heavily from Arabic and Persian, while the southern dialects borrow more from Hindi, English, and Portuguese. Nonetheless, all dialects make use of a fair number of loan words from each of these languages. Although dialects also vary along the phonological dimension, the degree to which dialects manifest syntactic or morphological differences is virtually non-existent.

### **LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION**

Gujarati is a Central Zone Indo-Aryan language of the Indo-European language family. It is most closely related to Punjabi and Hindi.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## VOWELS

When used independently	Post consonantal sign	Phonetic description	Corresponding English sound
A	has no overt sign	mid central	as in 'gun'.
Aa	Xa	mid lower	as in 'card'.
;	i X	front high	as in 'pit'.
:	XI	front high	as in 'beet'
w	Xu	back high	as in 'pull'
W	XU	back high	as in 'pool'.
Ae	Xe	front mid	as in 'bet'.
AE	XE	diphthong of a and i	There is no such vowel in English.
Ao	Xo	back mid	as in 'go'.
AO	XO	diphthong of a and u	There is no such vowel in English.
ϕ	X<	Gujarati does not have this sound in their speech. It is found only in writing.	There is no such vowel in English

## CONSONANTS

### Velar

k	stop voiceless	English 'K' sound as used in the final sound of words like, 'book', 'peak' etc.
ʔ	stop voiceless aspirated	English does not have this sound./ The nearest equivalent would be like the first sound in the word 'cat' which sounds like kh.
g	stop voiced	Same as English 'g' in 'gun'.
ɣ	stop voiced aspirated	English does not have this sound. The nearest substitute would be like the first sound of 'ghost'.

### Palatal

c	stop voiceless	Same as English 'ch' in 'church'.
tʃ	stop voiceless aspirated	English does not have this sound. English 'ch' in the initial position gets slightly aspirated and that can be the nearest substitution. e.g. in 'chat' 'ch' is aspirated.
j	stop voiced	Same as English 'j' in judge.
ɟ	stop voiced aspirated	There is no such sound in English. The speaker should attempt speaking 'j' with 'h' in a cluster from.

### Retroflex

4	stop voiceless	English 't' is not equivalent to this retroflexed Gujarati sound but being the alveolar sound it is the nearest substitution to it.
5	stop voiceless aspirated	English does not have this sound. The nearest equivalent would be like the first sound in the word 'Torn' which sounds like 'th'.
6	stop voiced	English 'd' is not equivalent to this Gujarati sound, which is retroflexed. It is in the adjacency range of retroflexed sounds. So it is the nearest substitution.
7	stop voiced aspirated	English has no such sound. The speaker has to try to speak English 'd' with 'h' and make it sound aspirated.
8	nasal	This is a retroflexed nasal. English does not have such a sound. Speaker should curve the tip of the tongue backwards and try to speak 'n'.

### Dental

t	stop voiceless	English has no such sound. This is a dental sound and those familiar with French can speak this sound without difficulty. The tip of the tongue must touch the upper teeth.
9	stop voiceless aspirated	Neither English nor French has this sound. The speaker should try to touch the upper teeth with the tip of the tongue and bring some aspiration to 't' sound of French.
d	stop voiced	This is once again like French

		'd'. English speaker has to make an attempt to touch upper teeth with the tip of the tongue.
o	stop voiced aspirated	Here the speaker will have to aspirate the dental 'd'. English speaker will certainly find this difficult. It can be learnt by doing phonetic exercise.
n	nasal	This is similar to English nasal 'n' as in 'no'.

### Labial

p	stop voiceless	This is exactly like English 'P' in final position as in the word 'tap'.
f	stop voiceless aspirated	This sound is rather interesting as the speakers of different dialect vary the pronunciation: some speakers have 'ph' and some have 'f'. English speakers have the sound similar to ph when they aspirate their 'p' in initial position as in words like 'pin'. Even if they spoke 'f' as of English 'fan' it would be all right.
b	stop voiced	This sound is same as English 'b' in 'boy'.
-	stop voiced aspirated	Once again English speakers will find this sound difficult. The speaker will have to bring aspiration to 'b'.
m	nasal	English nasal 'm' as in 'man' is same as Gujarati 'm'.

### Sonorant

y	glide palatal	This sound is almost similar to English 'y'.
r	flap dental	This sound is like English 'r'.
l	lateral dental	The pronunciation is similar to that of English 'l' in the initial position as in the word 'lock'.
v	glide labial	The pronunciation of this sound is either like English 'w' or English 'v'.

### Fricatives

=	palatal	This sound is like English 'sh'.
q	palatal	English 'sh' would be the correct sound for this sound.
s	dental	English alveolar fricative is the nearest substitution to this dental fricative of Gujarati.

h	fricative glottal	This sound is same as English 'h'.
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X	lateral retroflex	There is no such sound in English. If the speaker tries to curve the tongue and utter 'l' then he or she may succeed.
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x		This is the conjunct of k and sh, pronounced as <i>ksa</i> .
ã		This is the conjunct of g and n pronounced

<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu>

The Gujarati phoneme inventory consists of eight vowels and twenty-four consonants, depending on the analysis. In addition, two diphthongs are attested. As in many Indic languages, a number of retroflex articulations are employed. As a result, Gujarati has fairly extensive stop and nasal series. Five stop consonants are attested and there are four varieties of nasal articulations. The syllable structure of the language is (C)(C)V(C)(C). Within a syllable, consonant clusters are tolerated, but typically occur in onset position (i.e. before the syllable's vowel). Within the word, consonant clusters in initial and medial positions occur freely. Word-final clusters in the language, however, are greatly restricted: only [h], [r], [k], and nasal/semivowel clusters are tolerated in this position. Sequences of two to three vowel sequences are attested, but usually occur across morpheme boundaries. Stress typically falls on the penultimate syllable of a word, however, if the penultimate vowel in a word with more than two syllables is schwa, stress falls on the preceding syllable.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## **VOCABULARY**

The Gujarati spoken today takes vocabulary and even structure in some cases from Persian due to the more than five centuries of the rule of Sultans, as well as from the many Persians who were welcomed and settled in Gujarat. Most people in the region have at least minor descentance from them.

The other elements of the language draw quite a lot on the native tribes of the specific region, as listed above under Dialects.

Also due to centuries of trade with European countries such as Portugal and England, many words in Gujarati are naturally the same as Portuguese and English.

## **GRAMMAR**

Morphologically, Gujarati is an agglutinative language. That is to say, grammatical information is encoded by way of affixation (largely suffixation), rather than via independent freestanding morphemes. Gujarati nouns inflect for number (singular, plural), gender (masculine, feminine, neuter), and declension class (absolute, oblique). The absolute form of a noun is its default or uninflected form. This form is used as the object of the verb, typically when inanimate, as well as in measure or temporal (point of time) constructions. There are seven oblique forms in Gujarati, corresponding more or less to the case forms: agentive/nominative, accusative-dative, instrumental, ablative, genitive, locative, and vocative. All cases except for the vocative are distinguished by means of postpositions. The vocative form takes no postposition, but may be preceded by a vocative particle or term of address. Gujarati verbs inflect for tense, aspect (perfective, imperfective), mood (indicative, imperative, subjunctive, conditional), voice (active, passive), person, number, and gender (the latter in aspectual forms only). In this way, Gujarati verbs agree with their subjects, as is the case with other Indic languages. Adjectives inflect for gender, number, and case, and thus agree with the nouns they modify. Adverbs do not inflect. With respect to morphology, Gujarati and Punjabi are nearly identical.

Syntactically, Gujarati is a head-final SOV language. Postpositions are attested, but prepositions are not. With respect to the structure of the noun phrase, adjectives, non-adjectival modifiers, and relative clauses precede the nouns they modify. Inside the verb phrase, indirect objects precede direct objects and negative, modal-auxiliary, and interrogative elements precede the main verb. Adverbs typically follow the subject and precede the object(s) of the verb. Embedded clauses follow their verbal complements.

## **ORTHOGRAPHY**

Gujarati is written in its own distinct abugida script (i.e. a system where each consonant has an inherent vowel). The Gujarati orthography is similar in many ways to the Devanagari script, but does not contain the line at the top of the letters that is characteristic of Devanagari. Similar to Devanagari, the Gujarati script is written from left to right and is phonetic. The letters of the alphabet are traditionally divided into three groups: vowels, stops, and other consonants. A total of 47 characters and several diacritics comprise the Gujarati script.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## **HOLY DAYS**

Hindu festivals are largely linked with the movements of the sun and moon and with seasonal changes, but they also incorporate the myths of the Ramayana, and Krishna's activities.

### **Diwali (Deepvali)**

A festival of lights which celebrates the New Year. It is celebrated between late October and mid-November.

### **Makar Sankrant**

Makar Sankrant is the first Hindu festival of the solar calendar year.

### **Mahashivratri**

Mahashivratri is a Hindu festival dedicated to Shiva, one of the deities of the Hindu Trinity.

### **Holi**

The spring festival associated with Krishna when people throw coloured powder and water at each other. Holi also celebrates creation and renewal.

### **Varsha Pratipada**

The Spring New Year festival.

### **Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)**

An April harvest or New Year's festival depending on area, Vaisakhi is also celebrated by [Sikhs](#).

### **Rama Navami**

Rama Navami celebrates the birth of Lord Rama, son of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya.

### **Hanuman Jayanti**

This festival marks the birth of Hanuman, the Monkey God.

### **Raksha Bandhan**

The Hindu festival that celebrates brotherhood and love.

### **Janamashtami (Krishna Jayanti)**

The festival marks the birth of Krishna, the most highly venerated God in the Hindu pantheon.

### **Ganesh Chaturthi**

This festival sees Hindus all over the world celebrating the birthday of Lord Ganesh.

### **Navaratri (Navratri) and Durga Puja**

Navaratri (nine nights) is one of the greatest Hindu festivals. It symbolises the triumph of good over evil.

### **Dasara (Dassehra)**

Ten days of celebration in honour of Durga or Kali. It is held between late September and mid-October and lasts nine days to celebrate the triumph of good over evil.

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## GUJARATI DIET

In a Gujarati home, alcohol and non-vegetarian food are taboo, pulses, vegetables, fruit and spices are the only food items consumed at any meal. Ice-cream is a great favourite amongst milk-products, although the exceedingly popular drink, *chass* or *lassi* (liquidized you hurt) accompanies every meal and replaces water. The Jain community adhere to very strict rules about food, avoiding, in addition, all vegetables grown underground, such as potatoes, onions, ginger, garlic, carrots, beets and so on.

The majority of Hindu Gujaratis are vegetarian. This is largely due to the influence of Jainism in the state of Gujarat. Gujarati cuisine follows the traditional Indian full meal structure of rice, curry, vegetables and bread. The bread is usually a *rotli*. The different types of roti (breads) that a Gujarati cooks are rotli, bhakhri, thepla, puri, maal puda and puran-poli. Ghari and Khakhra are also eaten as roti, but they are usually eaten as a snack. Khaman, Dhokla, dhokli, dal-dhokli, undhiyu, fafda, chevdo, papdi, bhusu and Sev mamra are Gujarati dishes savoured by many communities across the world. Use of Ghee in meals is very common. For example, pouring in rice or khichdi and applying on rotli. The meal is usually accompanied with a sweet and a salty snack (*farsaan*) like Vada. Gujarati cookbooks writers like Tarla Mehta are famous internationally. The vegetable cooking involves preparing basic sauce first by frying masala with tomatoes and onions. The vegetables are added later. Gujarati are more comfortable cooking with peanut oil (shing tel). However, while living abroad they adjust their cooking method with available Canola or Sunflower oil. The making of masala used to be done on grinding stone. The new generation depends on blender or grinder to make masala. Each person makes masala differently, hence the cooking taste different from household to household. People from north Gujarat use dry red chilli powder. Whereas people from south Gujarat prefer using green chilli and corriander in their cooking. Gujarati jains avoid using garlic and onions in their cooking. At the end of meal, a Gujarati loves to eat Mukhwas or a paan. Gujarati families celebrate Sharad Purnima by having dinner with doodh-pauva under moon light. Pakistani Muslim Gujaratis however are non-vegetarian.

## CASTE SYSTEM

The Aryans also introduced the varna system (varna = estates or classes) to India, which may have contributed to the caste system we see today.

Some think that it developed from a simpler two-tier structure consisting of nobles at the top, and everyone else below.

Others say that it was established and practised by the priests who divided society into three parts:

- The priests (or Brahmins).
- The warriors (the Kshatriyas).
- The ordinary people.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## DRESS

A **sari** (also spelled **saree**) is a garment worn by many women in the Indian subcontinent. It consists of a long strip of cloth which can be wrapped in various styles. The most common style is wrapped around the waist, then one end is draped over the shoulder. It is usually five to six yards of unstitched cloth worn over a midriff-baring blouse (known as a choli), and a petticoat. Some sari styles require nine yards of cloth.

Gujarati – The sari is draped over the right shoulder rather than the left. For modern non-Gujarati women, this style represents a fashionable alternative to wear to social occasions.

[www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)

## **HINDUISM**

Hinduism is the world's third most popular religion, with around 900 million followers.

Those who follow this faith are known as Hindus.

About 80% of the population of India regard themselves as Hindus.

Hinduism is the third most popular religion in Britain with over 500,000 followers.

### **Bare Essentials of Hinduism**

- Hinduism is over 3000 years old, although elements of the faith are much older.
- No founder, single teacher, nor prophets.
- Not a single unified religion.
- Originated near the river Indus.
- Hindus believe in a universal soul or God called Brahman.
- There are many other deities such as Krishna, Shiva, Rama and Durga.
- Hindus believe that existence is a cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, governed by Karma.

Hinduism is not a term which identifies a single set of beliefs or ways of worship. Indeed the word itself doesn't appear in English until 1829.

Hinduism is the practices of a variety of different religious groups which come out of India.

### **Origins**

Hinduism developed from the religious practices of those who lived near the River Indus in modern day Pakistan.

However Hinduism has been, and continues to be, influenced by the traditions, stories and practices of people from other parts of India and beyond.

### **The Nature of God**

Hindus believe in the universal soul (Brahman), as the sole reality who is present in all things.

- Brahman has no form, and is eternal.
- Brahman is creator, preserver and transformer of everything.
- Brahman appears in the human spirit as atman, or the soul.

### **What about all those Hindu gods?**

It is often believed that Hindus worship many gods, but in fact, many Hindus would claim to believe in one eternal god (Brahman) which is indefinable, whilst revering other deities.

They recognise the other gods as different aspects of the Brahman.

### **Karma**

Karma is central to the Hindu faith.

Hindus believe that the soul passes through a cycle of successive lives and its next incarnation is always dependent on how the previous life was lived.

So if you behave badly in this life, your next incarnation is likely to be more unpleasant than your current one—you reap what you sow.

### **The Three Religious Paths**

The Hindu religion recognises many religious paths, three of which are:

- The path of knowledge (jnana).
- The path of work and religious performances (karma).
- The path of devotion (bhakti).

### **God or gods?**

Contrary to popular understanding, Hindus recognise one God, Brahman, the eternal origin who is the cause and foundation of all existence.

The gods of the Hindu faith represent different expressions of Brahman.

Different Hindu communities may have their own divinities whom they worship, but these are simply different ways of approaching the Ultimate.

Hindus recognise three principal gods:

**Brahma**, who creates the universe

**Vishnu**, who preserves the universe

**Shiva** (right), who destroys the universe.

#### **Brahma**

Brahma is the Creator. However, Brahma is not worshipped in the same way as other gods because it is believed that his work — that of creation — has been done.



Hindus worship other expressions of Brahman (not Brahma), which take a variety of forms.

Hindus are often classified into three groups according to which form of Brahman they worship:

- Those who worship Vishnu (the preserver) and Vishnu's important incarnations Rama, Krishna and Narasimha;
- Those who worship Shiva (the destroyer)
- Those who worship the Mother Goddess, Shakti, also called Parvati, Mahalakshmi, Durga or Kali.

### **Scriptures**

#### **The Vedas**

These are the most ancient religious texts which define truth for Hindus.

They got their present form between 1200-200 BCE and were introduced to India by the Aryans.

Hindus believe that the texts were received by scholars direct from God and passed on to the next generations by word of mouth.

Vedic texts are sometimes called **shruti**, which means hearing and for hundreds, maybe even thousands of years, the texts were passed on orally.

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

### **Contents of the Vedas**

The Vedas are made up of four compositions, and each veda in turn has four parts which are arranged chronologically.

- **The Samhitas** are the most ancient part of the Vedas, consisting of hymns of praise to God.
- **The Brahmanas** are rituals and prayers to guide the priests in their duties.
- **The Aranyakas** concern worship and meditation.
- **The Upanishads** consist of the mystical and philosophical teachings of Hinduism.

### **The Samhitas**

- **Rig-Veda Samhita** (c. 1200 BCE) is the oldest of the four vedas and consists of 1028 hymns praising the ancient gods.
- **Yajur-Veda Samhita** is used as a handbook by priests performing the vedic sacrifices.
- **Sama-Veda Samhita** consists of chants and tunes for singing at the sacrifices.
- **Atharva-Veda Samhita** (c. 900 BCE) preserves many traditions which pre-date the Aryan influence and consists of spells, charms and magical formulae.

### **The Upanishads**

The Upanishads were so called because they were taught to those who sat down beside their teachers. (upa=near, ni=down, shad=sit).

These texts developed from the Vedic tradition, but largely reshaped Hinduism by providing believers with philosophical knowledge.

The major Upanishads were largely composed between 800-200 BCE and are partly prose, partly verse.

Later Upanishads continued to be composed right down to the 16th century. Originally they were in oral form.

The early Upanishads are concerned with understanding the sacrificial rites

Central to the Upanishads is the concept of brahman; the sacred power which informs reality.

Whilst the priests (brahmins) had previously been the ones who, through ritual and sacrifice, had restricted access to the divine, now the knowledge of the universe was open to those of the high and middle castes willing to learn from a teacher

### **Bhagavad Gita**

The Bhagavad Gita, or "Song of the Lord" is part of the sixth book of the Mahabharata, the world's longest poem.

Composed between 500 BCE and 100 CE, the Mahabharata is an account of the wars of the house of Bharata.



It is one of the most popular Hindu texts and is known as a smriti text (the remembered tradition). This is considered by some to be of less importance than shruti (the heard text, such as the Vedas). It has, nevertheless, an important place within the Hindu tradition.

The Bhagavad Gita takes the form of a dialogue between prince Arjuna and Krishna, his charioteer, an incarnation of the supreme God, Vishnu.

Arjuna is a warrior, about to join his brothers in a war between two branches of a royal family which would involve killing many of his friends and relatives.

He wants to withdraw from the battle but Krishna teaches him that he, Arjuna, must do his duty in accordance with his class and he argues that death does not destroy the soul.

Krishna points out that knowledge, work and devotion are all paths to salvation and that the central value in life is that of loyalty to God.

### **The Ramayana**

Composed in the same period, the Ramayana is one of India's best known tales.

It tells the story of Prince Rama who was sent into exile in the forest with his wife, Sita, and his brother, Lakshmana.

Sita was abducted by the evil demon Ravana but ultimately rescued by Prince Rama with the help of the Monkey God, Hanuman.

The story is written in 24,000 couplets.

The symbolism of the story has been widely interpreted but basically is the story of good overcoming evil. Many people have said that it is a story about dharma or duty.

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)

## USEFUL EXPRESSIONS/VOCABULARY

English	Gujarati	Pronuciation
Goodbye	આવજા	aavjo
Hello	નમસ્ત	namaste
How are you	કેમ છો	kem chho
Thankyou	શુકરી આ	shuukria
Welcome	પધારો	puthero
Black	કાળા	kaalo
Blue	ભૂરો	bhooro
Golden	સોનેરી	soneree
Green	લીલા	leelo
Orange	નારંગી	naarungee
1	એક	ek
2	બે	be
3	ત્રણ	traan
4	ચાર	chaar
5	પાંચ	paanch
Butterfly	તિલલી	titlee
Cat	બિલાડી	bilaari
Cow	ગાય	gaaya
Crocodile	મગર	magar
Deer	હરણ	hararn

## REFERENCES

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<http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu>

[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)