

# Our Food, Our World

## Supplementary information for teachers

### Country information: India

India is the largest country in south Asia, stretching from the world's highest mountains, the Himalayas, in the north to the tropical coconut groves of Kerala in the south. It has jungles, great rivers and a coastline of over 7,000km. There is abundant wildlife including elephants and tigers. Apart from the mountains, most of India has a warm climate with a rainy season from June to September.

Civilisation in India dates back nearly ten thousand years. A number of great empires rose and fell, leaving palaces and temples of great beauty, before the country came under British influence in the 18th, and direct rule in the 19th century. A mass campaign of civil disobedience against the colonial rulers, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, ended with India gaining independence in 1947, at which time Pakistan and present-day Bangladesh became separate countries.

The peoples of modern India are very diverse. There are 18 official languages and over 700 minor ones; English is still widely spoken. The country is the birthplace of several religions – Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism – though a tenth of the present population is Muslim. Religion is still an important part in most people's daily lives, and there are many colourful religious festivals.

India has the world's second-biggest population after China (a sixth of the global population), It is the world's biggest democracy and a major economic power. The country is rapidly becoming a world leader in Information Technology and has its own space programme. Its huge cinema industry is second only to the USA's, producing hundreds of films every year. However, extremes of wealth and poverty coexist in its cities, a situation made worse by the migration of many impoverished rural people to the urban slums and shanty-towns. Social mobility is limited by the centuries-old caste system, in which status (and even occupation) is fixed by ancestry.

Since independence, India has fought several wars against Pakistan and relations between the two countries remain strained. Within India, stability is threatened by violence between the majority Hindu population and the Muslim and Sikh minorities. There has also been unrest as a result of rural opposition to GM crops and to massive dam projects, which have displaced hundreds of thousands of people from their land.

Indian food varies widely from region to region, but is generally delicious and healthy. India is reputed to have up to 70 per cent of the world's vegetarians – a quarter of the population. Indians excel at a number of sports, including hockey and cricket, and chess probably originated there.

Yamini's home city of Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) is India's fourth-largest city. Built by the British, it was once the capital of British India.

### Facts about India

<b>Capital</b>	New Delhi
<b>Population</b>	1.17 billion (CIA, July 2010)
<b>Area</b>	3.29 million sq km
<b>Major language</b>	Hindi
<b>GNI per capita</b>	PPP \$3,250 (World Bank, 2009)
<b>Life expectancy</b>	65 years (men), 68 years (women)
<b>People per doctor</b>	2200
<b>Literacy</b>	73% male, 48% female (CIA, 2001)
<b>Access to safe water</b>	83% of population
<b>Urban population</b>	29% (CIA, 2008)

## Country information: Mexico

Mexico lies at the southern end of North America, south of the United States, and stretches into Central America. The landscape encompasses high mountain ranges, rocky deserts, swampy coastal plains and tropical rainforest, and the climate is correspondingly varied. The rainforest is particularly rich in wildlife, with jaguars, monkeys, anteaters and parrots.

From the second millennium BC, Mexico was the site of several major indigenous civilisations, notably the Maya and Aztecs. The latter were conquered in 1521 by Spanish colonists, who over the next 170 years defeated the other peoples, including the Maya. The modern population consists mainly of indigenous peoples, people of Spanish descent, and those of mixed race.

Since it gained independence from Spanish colonial rule in 1821, Mexico's history has been a troubled one, with defeat by the USA in the 1846–48 war, civil war in the early 20th century and brutal repression of peasants, workers and students during the 1960s–80s. Most recently a largely non-violent rebellion in the state of Chiapas, ongoing since 1994, has highlighted discrimination against the indigenous Maya people, stimulating some reforms.

Mexico is a major oil producer, but the wealth this brings has yet to reach the wider population. Millions live in slums such as those that ring Mexico City. Over a million Mexicans a year are arrested as they try to cross the border into the USA in search of a better life – though Mexico also receives many immigrants from poorer Latin American countries.

Mexico is a largely Catholic country, although some traditions mingle Catholic and pre-conquest beliefs – such as the festival of the Day of the Dead, when departed ancestors are supposed to join the family for a feast.

Mexican food is widely loved for its spicy flavours, with much use of chilli and maize (sweetcorn), both of which were first cultivated in the region. Mexico's greatest culinary gift to the world, though, is surely chocolate, prized by the Maya and Aztecs and adopted from them by the Spanish, who introduced it to Europe. Music and dancing play a large part in Mexican life, and football is a national passion.

Luis' home of Mexico City was founded by the Spanish in 1521 on the site of the Aztec capital Tenochtitlán: It is among the biggest cities in the world, just as its predecessor was in the 16th century; its vast population of nearly 20 million, many living in shanty-towns, is at the root of pressing environmental and social problems. The city has hosted the football World Cup and the Olympics.

## Facts about Mexico

<b>Capital</b>	Mexico City
<b>Population</b>	107 million (World Bank, 2009)
<b>Area</b>	1.96 million sq km (758,449 sq miles)
<b>Major language</b>	Spanish
<b>GNI per capita</b>	PPP \$14,100 (World Bank, 2009)
<b>Life expectancy</b>	72 years (men), 77 years (women) (UN)
<b>People per doctor</b>	796
<b>Literacy</b>	93% male, 89% female
<b>Access to safe water</b>	88% of population
<b>Urban population</b>	76%

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## Recipes

Here are Luis and Yamini's recipes for you and your students to try:

### Luis' Tomato Salsa

You could try this delicious tomato relish with chips or fish fingers, or with burgers and sausages at a barbecue. It would be especially good as a dip with tortilla crisps or pitta bread.

4 or 6 medium-sized ripe tomatoes  
2 red onions  
a bunch of fresh coriander  
2 green chilli peppers  
1 teaspoon sugar  
a pinch or two of salt  
a lemon

### Directions

Finely chop the tomatoes and onions and mix together in a bowl. Roughly chop the coriander leaves and add. Cut open the two chillis and scrape out the seeds – wash your hands straight after doing this, as they can sting, and take care not to rub your eyes. Finely slice the deseeded chillis and mix with the other ingredients, along with the sugar, salt and a sprinkle or lemon juice. Leave your salsa to stand for a while before eating so that the flavours have time to combine.

You don't need to stick to exact quantities for this recipe. You might find you prefer more or less salt or lemon juice – it's up to you. A little sugar helps to bring out the taste of tomatoes. And if you don't like chilli, just leave it out!

*This recipe is reproduced from Let's Eat! Five Children and their Food Around the World published by Frances Lincoln in association with Oxfam (2003)*

# Our Food, Our World

## Yamini's mango milk shake

This drink is called mango lassi in India. It's very popular there because it's really cooling in hot weather. Try drinking it on a hot summer's day to see why Yamini likes it so much.

*700ml of plain yoghurt*  
*230ml of milk*  
*230ml of water*  
*1 ripe mango*  
*110ml of sugar*  
*ice cubes (optional)*  
*30g of pistachio nuts, ground (optional)*

### Directions

Cut down the centre of the mango, and separate the flesh from the stone. Use a spoon to scoop out the flesh and put it into a bowl. Mash it with a fork. Alternatively you can make the flesh into a smooth pulp by using a blender. Never eat the skin of a mango! Measure the mango pulp in a measuring jug so that you have 230ml.

Combine the yoghurt, milk, water, mango pulp and sugar in a jug. Whisk the mixture briskly until all the ingredients are mixed and it looks smooth. Place the jug in a fridge to chill it.

After about 20 minutes the mixture should be cold. Put some ice cubes into some drinking glasses and pour the lassi over the ice. If you like pistachio nuts, grind some up in a pestle and mortar, and sprinkle them on the top of your glass. One jug should be enough for 4 to 6 people.