

# Essential Hindi Words And Phrases For Travelers To India

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Essential Hindi Words And Phrases For Travelers To India By Shalu Sharma

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[Message from the author](#) Introduction to Hindi In its earliest version, Hindi was Hindustani, a language spoken freely in the Northern Plains, which grew out of the local language, Khari Boli. Deriving indirectly from Sanskrit, the root of many Indian languages, Hindi came to evolve over the years. It drew heavily on Urdu and very lightly on Persian, the courtly language of Mughal India. Hindi today uses the Devanagari script, the script used for writing Sanskrit. Thus we see the typical overline on all Hindi letters. Also, unlike English, Hindi has no capital letter. This is a phonetic language, which means the way the words are written, that is how they are spoken. Hindi and Urdu share nearly the same grammar and quite a lot of the vocabulary. This is because Urdu, a later language partly developed from Hindi and Persian but grew in a different direction. Spoken Hindi is quite similar to Urdu, but the scripts are different which makes the languages distinct from each other when they are written. Hindi is intricately tied with social customs and ways of address. For example, a customary polite greeting when a person meets another person; is 'Namaskaar' or more colloquially, 'Namastay'. This word is the functional equivalent of 'Hello' or a 'Good morning' or 'Goodbye'. Usually the speaker folds their hands and, joining them palm to palm, brings them up to the chest. This gesture of social courtesy is accompanied by the word 'Namaskar'/'Namaste'. A way to show respect to any man or woman is to say 'Jee' after either their first name or surname. For example, a lady named 'Shalu' may be addressed as 'Shalu jee'. If her surname, say Sharma is being added, it is customary to say 'Shalu Sharma Jee'. A common greeting when one meets a lady named for example Shalu Sharma can be 'Namastay, Shalu Jee'. Addressing people in Hindi using a second person pronoun denotes different social relations. 'Aap' is formal, indicating distance and respect. 'Tum' can be used with friends, family members and so on. 'Tu' has a much nuanced usage. It is either used in intimate relationships where one does not need to maintain a distance, or when addressing someone with contempt. As a way to show respect, whether one is meeting someone on a formal occasion, for the first time, or addressing someone senior in age, one cannot usually go wrong with the formal 'Aap'. Like many other languages derived from Sanskrit, words in Hindi can be arranged in different ways in a sentence without changing the basic meaning or deforming the sentence. When one meets a person, a customary greeting is 'Aap kaise hain?' which translates as 'How are you?'. With a slight nuanced difference, one can also say, 'Kaise hain aap?'. To say 'Thank you', or express gratitude for something significant, one can use either 'Shukriya' or 'Dhanyavaad'. The adjective 'Acchaa' covers a wide range of meanings freely, depending on how it is being said. Examples of a few common usages are 'Acchhaa?' (=Oh, really?) and 'Acchha' (=I get it/Okay/Yes/Good). Hindi grammar can be quite complicated for a non-native speaker with its different rules of gender. Suffice it to say that generally, when a verb ends with the 'aa' sound, it refers to the masculine gender. It can be changed into feminine gender by replacing the 'aa' sound with the 'ee' sound. Feminine plurals are often made by adding 'yaan' to a singular word. For example, 'churi' (=bangle) becomes 'churiyaan' (=bangles). Masculine plurals emphasize the 'o' sound with a nasal tinge. Thus 'mard' (=man) becomes 'mardon' (=men). I hope I have not complicated things for you. To be honest, there is really no need to learn everything there is to learn about Hindi. All you need to do is, take a copy of this book with you to India and use it accordingly. Some basic conversational Hindi has also been included so that you can communicate with Indians on a basic level. Places where Hindi is spoken in India and abroad Hindi is considered as a link language in the vast land of India. It is also the country's national language. While you get to hear Hindi in many parts of India and other places, it is not the only spoken language in India; people across the land speak different languages and dialects depending on where they live. Still, if we put together all the different versions of spoken Hindi, it is a language many people speak and use widely, across the subcontinent. About 43% people are estimated to have Hindi as their mother tongue. For many Indians, Hindi is either a second language or a language they understand, through day-to-day interaction. The primary cluster of native Hindi speakers are still where the language originated; the Northern and Central Plains. The Hindi Belt consists broadly of states where Hindi is commonly spoken by many people and Hindi is considered the official language. **These Hindi Belt states are:** Bihar – Chhattisgarh – Jharkhand - Uttar Pradesh – Uttarakhand – Haryana - Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh. Outside this belt, Arunachal Pradesh and Gujarat also have Hindi as their

official language. In many states, Hindi may be the official language but people may speak and understand other languages too. In Himachal Pradesh, both Hindi and Pahari are prevalent. In Haryana, both Harynavi and Hindi are common, and a large portion of people in [Bihar](#) speak Hindi along Bhojpuri and Maithili (Hindi dialects). The two major languages in Madhya Pradesh are Hindi, followed in importance by Marathi. Uttarakhand has Hindi, Kumaoni and Garhwali as its native languages. While Rajasthanis keep the Rajasthani language to talk among themselves, Hindi is mainly their language to communicate with outsiders. Since spoken Hindi varies across the different regions, it is often customary to speak of Hindi languages. People in the various Indian states speak different Hindi languages, varying in vocabulary, inflection and phonetics. The sound variation makes a major difference as Hindi is phonetic. When it comes to spoken Hindi, we find many different styles and speech registers, varying according to how the language is used, freely across the subcontinent. Standard written Hindi has a formal tinge and draws more on a Sanskrit vocabulary. All these differences give Hindi various layers and nuances, enriching its expressive value. Interestingly, Uttar Pradesh has the largest number of spoken Hindis - about seven. In Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, the spoken Hindis also include Khari Boli, from which Hindustani, which was Hindi's earliest version, originated. Certain neighboring countries of India such as Nepal, Bangladesh and parts of Pakistan have a minority of Hindi speakers. Besides, wherever Hindi speaking Indians went and settled, they have taken the language with them. The language often mixed with local languages to spawn interesting and fresh dialects. This history is bound up closely with that of colonial rule, as many Hindi speaking people migrated as laborers to different parts of the world during British rule. This is the historic reason why Mauritius has a large Hindi speaking population as does Trinidad. South Africa also has many Hindi speakers, and a rich tradition of Hindis based on the new dialects born in the country. In 2012, South Africa, organized its first World Hindi Conference where Hindi speakers from different parts of the world gathered. In Fiji, Hindi is known as Hindustani, and is official alongside English and Fijian. Other countries with a minority community of Hindi speakers are Australia, Singapore, UK, USA and Canada. In these countries; Hindi speakers settled for business and other reasons, creating thriving expatriate Hindi speaking communities. As far as a traveler or a visitor to India is concerned, you should be able to speak Hindi in most parts of India except the South particularly the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala and rural areas of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. How to use this book The book is written for those who are traveling to India and want to make sure that they are not caught out in situations. It will also be useful to those who are polishing up on their existing Hindi and someone who wants to learn Hindi words and phrases. The words and phrases in the book will allow you to communicate with people in various situations a tourist to India might be in. You do not need to familiarise yourself with the Hindi alphabets written in the Devanagiri script. Nonetheless here are some facts. The agreed system by the Government of India consists of 11 vowels (called vyanjan) and 35 consonants (called aksharmala). The Hindi vowels start with "a" and go on till "aw". When speaking out the consonants, the stress is laid on each letter. For instance, "ka" is going to be different from "kha" or "da" is again from "dha". These words and phrases have been written in such a way that you don't have to know or learn anything. All you need to do is just speak the translated version "as is". One thing to remember is that when there is a double "aa" in the Hindi translation, there is a stress on the "a". Those who write Hindi in Roman script (English) will know that, it's written differently as compared to what I have presented in the book. For instance, when writing "I am going" in English is written as "Main aa raha huin". However the pronunciation would be "Mai aa raha hu". Another example - "How are you" in English is written "Aap kaise hain". But I have made it as "Aap kaise hai", the way it should be pronounced. Hence what I have done is, translated it in the exactly the way it should be spoken, to make it easy for the casual Hindi speakers, or those who do not need to go deep into Hindi learning.

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This book contains both **Hindi words and phrases**; which will be a useful asset for trips to India. The book also contains **conversational Hindi**, a tourist might find useful for instance when they are shopping, booking a ticket, at the hotel, dealing with beggars, at the restaurant and so on.

So if you are **traveling to India**; then this is the book to take with you. Or perhaps you are a **student and planning a study trip to India**; then this book will be useful too. Perhaps you are **learning Hindi**; and you wish to add something extra to your existing resource - or just simply you want to polish up on your Hindi.

The book is for those who do not have previous or very little knowledge of Hindi. Don't be a stranger in India - learn some Hindi.

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