

Arts & Culture

CULTURAL HERITAGE

Uttar Pradesh is one of the most ancient cradles of Indian culture. While it is true that no Harappa and Mohan-Jodaro have been discovered in the State, the antiquities found in Banda (Bundelkhand), Mirzapur and Meerut link its History to early Stone Age and Harappan era. Chalk drawings or dark red drawings by primitive men are extensively found in the Vindhyan ranges of Mirzapur districts. Utensils of that age have also been discovered in Atranji-Khera, Kaushambi, Rajghat and Sonkh. Copper articles have been found in Kanpur, Unnao, Mirzapur, Mathura and advent of the Aryans in this State. It is most probable that snapped links between the Indus Valley and Vedic civilizations lie buried under the ruins of ancient sites found in this State.

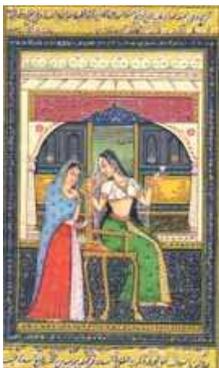
The population mostly comprises of an Indo-Dravidian ethnic group. Only a small population, in the Himalayan region, displays Asiatic origins. Hindus constitute more than 80 percent of the population, Muslims more than 15 percent, and other religious communities include Sikhs, Christians, Jains, and Buddhists.

The handicrafts of Uttar Pradesh have earned a reputation for themselves over the centuries. The traditional handicrafts are of a vast variety such as textiles, metal ware, woodwork, ceramics, stonework, dolls, leather products, ivory articles, papier-mâché, articles made of horns, bone, cane and bamboo, perfume, and musical instrument. These cottage crafts are spread all over the state but the more important centers are located at Varanasi, Aamgarh, Maunath Bhanjan, Ghazipur, Meerut, Muradabad, and Agra.

Carpets from Bhadohi and Mirzapur are prized worldwide. Silks and brocades of Varanasi, ornamental brassware from Muradabad, chikan (a type of embroidery) work from Lucknow, ebony work from Nagina, glassware from Firozabad, and carved woodwork from Saharanpur also are important. The traditional pottery centers are located at Khurja, Chunar, Lucknow, Rampur, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, and Azamgarh. Khurja's dishes, pitchers, and flower bowls in glazed ceramic in blue, green, brown and orange colors are the most attractive.

Muradabad produces exquisite brass utility articles. Besides, minakari on silver, gold, and diamond-cut silver ornaments have made Varanasi and Lucknow world famous.

Architecture, Art and Craft



Several styles of architecture can be seen in Uttar Pradesh. There are buildings built in the Hindu Buddhist styles and Royal memorials and monuments of Indo-Islamic architecture. Buildings constructed in Avadh and Sharqi styles of architecture are also remarkable. In the Jatakas and other ancient works, we find description of several such cities, palaces and forts, which were at sometime situated within the

confines of Uttar Pradesh and of which there is not trace now. Almost the similar fate met the Stupas, etc., which were built by Shakya, Malla and other rulers in this State in 6th century B.C. The famous Jain stupa whose ruins have been found in Kankali Tila in Mathura was also built during this period.

The Art of Mathura

The Mathura Schools of Art reached its pinnacle during the Kushan Period. The Most important work of this period is the anthropomorphic image of the Buddha who was hitherto represented by certain symbols. The artists of Mathura and Gandha were pioneers who carved out images of the Buddha. Images of Jain Tirthankars and Hindu deities were also made in Mathura. Generally, all these initial images were huge in size. Their excellent specimens are still preserved in the museums at Lucknow, Varanasi, Allahabad and Mathura. Colossal images, in seated or standing postures, of Kushan emperors Vim Kadphises and Kanishk and Saka ruler Chashtan have also been found at Math in Mathura district.



They are stated to have been installed in dev-kul (probably a place for worship of ancestors). There is not doubt that Mathura was the center of manufacturing of stone images (sculpture) during the Kushan Period. These images had a great demand in other parts of the country. Scenes depicted on Stone pillars found in Bhuteshwar and other places in Mathura district present glimpses of contemporary life including dresses, ornaments, means of entertainment, arms, household furniture, etc.

Stone carvings of intoxicated groups of people that have been found, speak about foreign (Hellenistic) influence on this school of art. Considerable construction activities have come to notice in Sarnath also in Kushan Period, ruins of several monasteries, temples and Stupas of that period lie scattered there even today.

Music & Dance

The state is known for pioneering the development of musical instruments, which find mention in ancient Sanskrit literature. Music is also known to have flourished in the Gupta Period (c. 320-540), and much of the musical tradition in Uttar Pradesh was developed during the period.

The musicians Tansen and Baiju Bawra, two of the Navaratnas (Nine Jewels) of the court of the Mughal emperor Akbar, are still immortal for their contribution in the field of music.

The sitar (a stringed instrument of the lute family) and the tabla (consisting of two small drums), the two most popular instruments of Indian music, were developed in the region during this period.



The Kathak style of classical dance, which originated in Uttar Pradesh in the 18th century as a devotional dance in the temples of Vrindavan and Mathura, is the most popular form of classical dance in northern India.

There are also local songs and dances of the countryside, and the most popular of the folksongs are seasonal. The songs and dances of the countryside are significant features of local culture. They include the kajari of Mirzapur and Varanasi; the Alha Udal, a folk epic; and various village dances.

Festivals of Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh has a long list of fairs and festivals. More than 2,230 festivals are held annually. Some are organized at several places simultaneously while others have only local importance.

Festivals and feasts are linked with the golden harvest - the sensuous spring, the reverence for mythology, religion or in honor of the past great men. These are zestfully celebrated with song, dance, and merriment; others with solemnity, fervor, fast, or feast. These fairs and festivals help the people keep the culture vibrant and promote artistic activities.

Religious practices are as much an integral part of everyday life, and a very public affair, as they are in the rest of India. Therefore, not surprisingly, many festivals are religious in origin, although several of them are celebrated irrespective of caste and creed.



Among the most important Hindu festivals are Diwali, Holi and Dashehra, which are also observed with equal fervour by Jains. Ten days of Ramlila takes place during the period of navratri and on the 10th day, epithet of Raavan is burnt with great fervour. Durga puja is also observed in

many parts of the state during navratri. Bārah Wafāṭ, Eid, Bakreed and Birthdate of Imam Ali ibn Abitalib are recognised official Muslim religious festivals. Moharram, though the day of Ashura is official holiday but Shiites consider it as a day of mourning and not a festival as some people believe. Mahavir Jayanti is celebrated by Jains, Buddha Jayanti by Buddhists, Guru Nanak Jayanti by Sikhs and Christmas by the Christians. Other festivals include Ram navami, Chhath puja, Krishna-janmashtami, Mahashivratri, etc.

Capital : Lucknow

Languages: Hindi, Urdu, English

75 Districts of Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh is made up of 75 administrative districts, which are grouped into 18 divisions.

Agra Division - Agra, Aligarh, Etah, Firozabad, Mainpuri, Mathura

Aligarh Division- Aligarh, Hathras, Kashiram Nagar.

Allahabad Division - Allahabad, Kaushambi, Fatehpur, Pratapgarh.

Azamgarh Division - Azamgarh, Ballia, Mau.

Bareilly Division - Bareilly, Badaun, Pilibhit, Shahjahanpur.

Basti Division - Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Siddharthnagar.

Chitrakoot Dham Division - Banda, Chitrakoot, Hamirpur, Mahoba.

Devipatan Division - Gonda, Bahraich, Balrampur, Shravasti .

Faizabad Division - Faizabad, Ambedkar Nagar, Barabanki, Sultanpur, CSJM Nagar.

Gorakhpur Division – Gorakhpur, Devaria, Maharajganj, Kushinagar (Padrauna)

Jhansi Division - Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur.

Kanpur Division - Kanpur Nagar, Ramabai Nagar(Kanpur Dehat), Etawah, Auraiya, Farrukhabad, Kannauj

Lucknow Division - Lucknow, Hardoi, Lakhimpur Kheri, Raebareli, Sitapur, Unnao.

Meerut Division - Meerut, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bagpat, Bulandshahar, Ghaziabad, Panchsheel Nagar.

Mirzapur Division - Mirzapur, Sant Ravidas Nagar (Bhadohi), Sonbhadra

Moradabad Division - Moradabad, Jyotiba Phule Nagar, Rampur, Bijnor, Bhim Nagar

Saharanpur Division - Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Prabudha Nagar.

Varanasi Division - Varanasi, Chandauli, Jaunpur, Ghazipur.

Rivers of Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh has more than 31 large and small rivers; of them, the Ganga, Yamuna, Alaknanda, Ramganga, Bhagirathi, Sarayu and Ghaghara are larger and of religious importance in Hinduism.

