

Contents

Introduction.....	5
The diary.....	9
Afterword.....	66
Glossary.....	68
Before reading activities.....	76
While reading activities.....	77
After reading activities.....	82

Introduction

India – it's one of the most exciting countries in the world! There's so much to discover, from the mountains in the far north, to the forests and beaches in the south. If you visit India, you'll find that life there is very different to your life at home. Music, films, food, fashion, religion – they're all vibrant and colourful, and unique. There's so much to see and learn in India – your attitude to the world will never be the same again!

In terms of geographical area, India is the seventh largest country in the world. It has an area of 2 973 193 square kilometres. (Spain's surface area is 498 980 square kilometres.) India has the second largest population in the world: over 1.2 BILLION people. This means that over 17% of the world's population lives there! About 50% of India's population is below the age of 25. That's a lot of young people!

Throughout India there are quiet, small villages. Almost 70% of the population lives in about 600 000 of these villages. But there are also ***huge, crowded** cities: the remaining 30% of the population lives in more than 7 000 towns and cities.

In recent years India has been one of the world's fastest growing economies. This is mainly due to growth in manufacturing and in service industries. This expansion

* Words that look like **this** appear in the glossary at the end of the book.

MAP OF INDIA



has created lots of new opportunities, but many Indians are still very poor. In 2013, the average **income** in India was still less than \$1 500 per year.

India's climate is full of contrasts, too. The wettest place on Earth is in Meghalaya State, in the **hilly** north-east of India. The annual rainfall there is 11 873 millimetres! (You'll read about the wettest ever DAY in India later in this book!) The highest temperature ever recorded in India was 50.6 °C! This was in Rajasthan state, in north-west India. In the far north of India, in the mountains of Ladakh, temperatures often fall below -20 °C. It's extremely dry there, too: annual rainfall in the region is only about 100 millimetres.

India has high mountains covered with snow. Kangchenjunga, in the Himalayas, is 8 598 metres high; it's the third highest mountain in the world. You can go on wildlife safaris, see tigers, and ride on camels and elephants. Would you like to see a desert? India has several. Would you like to visit a tea plantation or rice fields? India has plenty. You can relax on sunny beaches by blue seas – India has a coastline of 7 517 kilometres. You can shop for colourful fabrics, gold jewellery and leather bags. You can eat **spicy** food and tropical fruits, in smart city restaurants or under palm trees on a beach.

If you like history, you'll never be bored in India. You can see ancient **forts, holy** rivers, colourful temples and beautiful palaces. You can visit the ruins of a large city, Lothal (in Gujarat state), which was built in 2400 B.C.! There are buildings from Hindu and Muslim history, as well as lots of British Victorian architecture.

Europe has been **trading** with India for centuries. The Ancient Greeks, the Romans and the Egyptians all came to India looking for of **silk, spices,** gold, tigers, elephants and **peacocks.** In about 26 B.C., 120 ships **sailed** every year from Egypt to India! In the 12th century, Muslim armies invaded the north-west of India. By the 16th century, large parts of India were ruled by the Muslim Mughal Empire. In the south, a great Hindu ruler called Shivaji created the powerful Maratha Empire in the 17th century.

The British first came to India in 1600. By 1858, they **ruled** almost all of India. But after many years of conflict, India became an independent country in 1947, and has been a democracy since then. It is now one of the most important countries in the world for agriculture, and for **IT** – and for tourism, too.

You can learn a lot about a country by reading its literature. Many Indian novelists and writers are famous throughout the world. Have you heard of Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy? Their books have been translated into Spanish. But THIS book describes the life of an Indian teenager.

Anjali is 14 and she lives with her family in a flat in Pune, in Maharashtra state. Come and share Anjali's life for a few weeks. She wants to tell you about her family, friends and interests. She's going to share her hopes and her problems, too! She'll show you what it's like to be a teenager in India today. And you'll learn a lot about her country along the way.

25 April

The story of my life: ‘Parents always know best’. Every discussion or argument with my parents ends this way: ‘Anjali, we know best’. When is that going to change? I’m 14 years old: that’s almost an adult! Why can’t I make some decisions about my own life? Why can’t I write a blog? I know all about the Internet; and if I’m going to become a ***journalist**, why not practise now? (Well, IF I become a journalist...)

Dad is scared of the Internet. He works with computers, so he knows all about the DANGERS of the Internet. And Mum – well! She wants to know EVERYTHING about my life! She **allows** me ONE hour each day on the Internet!! And because I don’t have my own **laptop** or tablet, they can **check up** on me.

This diary is going to be my SECRET blog. When I have my own laptop, I’ll be ready to GO! (It will improve my English, too.) I must hide my diary in my school books, because Mum LOVES to discover everything I do!

My older brother, Ravi, has his own laptop. He needs it to STUDY, he says. Mum and Dad agreed, because he’s going to start university soon. He’s going to study computer science at Pune University. By the way, **PUNE** is the city where we live. It’s in the state of Maharashtra, in the west of India. The university is one of the best universities in India!

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And of course Mum and Dad don't check up on Ravi! He's a **BOY** and that means he's **SPOILT!** Especially by Mum: he's a total mummy's boy. She thinks he's perfect, and she gives him everything he wants. (Sometimes, Dad says 'no' – but after Mum talks to him, he **changes** his **mind**.)

My family all excel at science subjects. Mum's a nurse ('But I always wanted to be a doctor,' she often says.) Dad's a computer genius and works in a bank. And Ravi loves studying. He spends **HOURS** creating apps for mobile phones. One day, he's going to sell them and become a millionaire, he says.

I don't **fit in**. First of all, I'm taller than they are – I'm even taller than Ravi (about two centimetres)! I often feel **awkward** and **clumsy**. I love playing tennis, and reading novels. I don't want to be a doctor, or a computer expert either. My dreams are to be:

1. a **Bollywood** film star (fantasy?)
2. an international tennis player (crazy idea?)
3. a journalist (possibility?).

Ravi came home to Pune from **GOA** yesterday. Goa is to the south of Maharashtra, and it's India's smallest state! Ravi went on holiday there with his friends and he can't stop talking about what a **FANTASTIC** time he had. (Will I ever go on holiday with my friends??)

Mum said **prayers** and cooked special food. 'Anjali, come and help in the kitchen,' she said. (I hear that every day...) We cooked Ravi's favourite food: onion bhajis, vegetable curry and rice, with mango and lemon **pickle**.

And then a special dessert called *puran poli* (this is a type of **pancake**).

Puran Poli

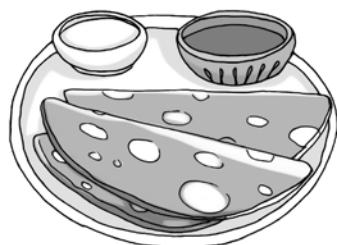
Ingredients:

For the stuffing:

- 1 cup **ground** chickpeas
- 1.5 cups muscovado sugar
- pinch of saffron
- half-teaspoon of cardamon
- pinch of nutmeg

For the **dough**:

- 1.5 cups flour
- a pinch of salt
- 3 tablespoons of ghee (Indian butter) and water.



Heat all the stuffing ingredients together, **stirring** all the time until dry.

Cool, and form into balls. Then mix all the dough ingredients together. Divide the dough into balls (about 20) and put some of the stuffing into each. Then form into pancakes and fry on both sides.



While I helped Mum in the HOT kitchen, Ravi told Dad about the train journey on the Goa Express (576 kilometres; more than 12 hours!). But soon they started talking about their favourite subject: CRICKET! Cricket is the most popular sport in India. EVERYONE loves cricket! (Except for me of course.)

Later, Ravi told me he met lots of people from Europe and the United States in Goa. They love its famous beaches. My brother is NOT handsome, but all the girls in the WHOLE of Goa were running after him, he **claims** – and some of them wanted to follow him home to Pune! (His mathematical brain has a FANTASY part to it!) Because the girls were so interested in India and our ancient culture, he's decided to write a blog. He thinks people all over the world will read it.

A blog was MY idea, and he's STOLEN it! And his English isn't as good as mine is, either. If he writes a single word about ME, I'll be so angry!

And what ON EARTH will he write about? He's not interested in culture. He didn't eat any of Goa's famous curries; he didn't visit any of the interesting churches and houses in Goa. I **bet** you didn't know that the Portuguese came to Goa in the 16th century, and they ruled Goa for more than 400 years. That's why there are lots of Christians in Goa, and there's lots of Portuguese

colonial architecture. And of course, my brother didn't notice any of it!

When I write my blog, I'll write about all these things. And about all the other wonderful regions of India, which I'll visit one day.

I must stop now, and help Mum in the kitchen. AGAIN. (We had a **maid** who helped us in the kitchen; but she went home to her village because her mother was ill. We haven't found another maid yet.)

QUESTION: When will I escape from the POWER of my parents??

Holiday in Goa (fantasy blog)



I went with some friends to a beach in Goa. We stayed in a beach house, among the palm trees. We visited one of the largest Christian churches in Asia, the Sé Cathedral of Santa Catarina. The Portuguese built it in the 16th century. We watched the sun **set** over the sea, listened to music and watched the stars appear. Romantic! The next day, we went on a trip to the Dudhsagar **waterfalls**. Impressive! Then I rushed back to Mumbai, in order to work on my new Bollywood film.

Glossary

allow: permit

announcement: communication of important information

arrange: organise

ash: powder that remains after something has been burnt

avoid: move away from someone or something

awful: very bad, terrible

awkward: not elegant or skilful

bang: make a loud noise, or close something violently and noisily

batsman: person who has to hit the ball in cricket

be boiling: be very hot (colloquial)

be sick: vomit

bet: be sure about something

better off: wealthier than before

bless: ask for a god's favour

boil: heat a liquid until it begins to turn into a gas

Bollywood: the Indian film industry based in Mumbai

bow: incline the head and upper body as a sign of respect

bracelet: piece of jewellery worn on the arm or wrist

break down: stop working (usually in the case of a car)

bride: woman who is getting married

burst into tears: start crying suddenly

caste: Indian social class inherited by birth and traditionally based on a particular occupation or profession

centenary: 100th anniversary

change (one's) mind: change one's opinion

chat: informal conversation

chatter: talk rapidly, often about unimportant things

check up (on somebody): control; spy on

chickpea: type of pea widely used in Southern Europe, Africa and Asia

chilli: small pepper with a strong taste

chop: cut

chore: job done in the home, such as cooking or cleaning

claim: say something which may or may not be true

clumsy: not elegant; tends to have accidents and break things

coach: person who trains an athlete or teaches a sport

crop: plant that is cultivated for food

crowded: containing many people

dairy: related to milk, butter or cheese

degree: academic title received on completion of a university education

dough: raw mixture used to make bread or cake

download (n): computer file obtained from the Internet

dowry: money or property given by a woman's family to her husband when they get married

drop: cause something to fall from the hands

drought: long period of time without rain

Before reading activities

1. Match the words to the correct descriptions.

Monsoon

India's capital city

Cricket

Most popular sport in India

Mumbai

India's major religion

Hinduism

Traditional dress worn by Indian women

Sari

Head covering worn by Sikh men

New Delhi

India's largest city and home to the country's film industry

Turban

Season characterised by intense and sudden rainfall

2. Do you think these sentences are true or false? Correct the false sentences.

a) India is the country with the largest population in the world.

b) India has more cities with a population of over 1 million people than the United States does.

c) It never gets cold in India.

d) India is a constitutional monarchy. It used to be a French colony.

e) Three of the world's major religions originated in India.

While reading activities

Read the introduction. Find the mistake in each sentence and correct it.

- a) India is the 17th largest country in the world.
- b) More than half of India's population lives in large cities.
- c) The wettest place on earth is in the mountains of the region of Ladakh.
- d) The second highest mountain in the world is in India.
- e) India's economic growth has been mainly due to agriculture.
- f) The Ancient Greeks, the Romans and the Egyptians all came to India looking for oil.
- g) The British ruled almost all of of India by 1600.
- h) Vikram Seth and Arundhati Roy are famous Indian actors.

1. Read the entries for 25 April and 26 April. Decide if these sentences are true or false, and correct the false sentences.

- a) Pune is in Maharashtra state, which is in the west of India.
- b) Puran poli is a type of ice cream.
- c) Ravi travelled to Goa by car.
- d) The Portuguese ruled Goa for more than 400 years.
- e) About 80% of people in Asia are Hindus.
- f) Buddhism has existed for longer than Christianity.
- g) The Sikh population in India is larger than the Muslim population.
- h) Anjali is better at science than she is at literature and languages.
- i) At least 1 million people speak each one of India's official languages.