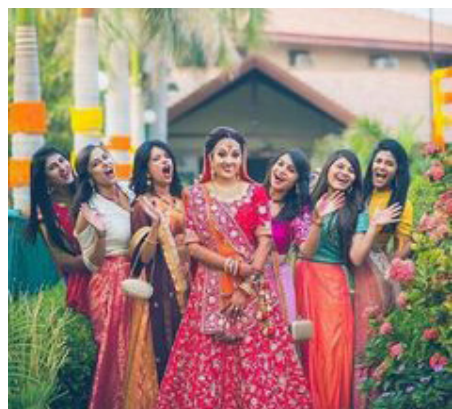


Weddings in India vary regionally, the religion and per personal preferences of the bride and groom. They are festive occasions in India, and in most cases celebrated with extensive decorations, colors, music, dance, costumes and rituals that depend on the religion of the bride and the groom, as well as their preferences. India celebrates



about 10 million weddings per year, of which about 80% are Hindu weddings. While there are many festival-related rituals in Hinduism, vivaah (wedding) is the most extensive personal ritual an adult Hindu undertakes in his or her life. Typical Hindu families spend significant effort and financial resources to prepare and celebrate weddings. The rituals and process of a Hindu wedding vary depending on region of India, local adaptations, resources

of the family and preferences of the bride and the groom. Nevertheless, there are a few key rituals common in Hindu weddings – Kanyadaan, Panigrahana, and Saptapadi; these are respectively, gifting away of daughter by the father, voluntarily holding hand near the fire to signify impending union, and taking seven steps before fire with each step including a set of mutual vows. After the seventh step and vows of Saptapadi, the couple is legally husband and wife. Jain and Buddhist weddings in India, share many themes, but are centered around their respective religious ideas and texts. Sikhs get married through a ceremony called Anand Karaj, a ritual started by the third leader of Sikhism, Guru Amar Das. The couple walk around the holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib four times. Before the wedding, an auspicious time (known as the muhurta) is fixed for the event. Using the bride and groom's dates of birth, astrologists calculate the position of planet and stars to reflect the celesti-

al union of the couple. During the ceremony, the gautra of both bride and groom (going back at least three generations) are announced. A gautra is the ancestral lineage or the ancestor's original clan (this is not related to caste or religion). In Hindu law, marriages should not take place within the same clan. Prior to the actual wedding, there's a pre-party called the sangeet where family comes together to sing, dance and revel in the joy of the upcoming union. Family members even give performances! The bride's family sings a traditional folk song to the groom's family to



B and aaja aaraat



The haldi ceremony

is the one in which a paste of haldi is applied on the bride and the groom's body before their wedding. This ceremony is held at both the bride and the groom's place, on the morning of the wedding day. In a few cultures



welcome them. The sangeet, which translates to „sung together,“ takes place a few days before the wedding itself. During the mehendi ceremony, which also takes place in Muslim weddings, henna is used to apply intricate designs to the bride's hands and feet. The mehendi ceremony usually

takes place one day before the marriage will be held, as the application can take hours. The sangeet, which translates to „sung together,“ takes place a few days before the wedding itself. During the mehendi ceremony, which also takes place in Muslim weddings, henna is used to apply intricate designs to the bride's hands and feet. The mehendi ceremony usually

In India, the wedding rituals and clothes make the wedding as much as that of the bride and her groom.

Both look their splendid best in gorgeous outfits. Not just the couple, but the guests attending the family and the relatives are often seen dressed to the teeth. The bride is usually dressed up in auspicious colors, whereas the bride-groom is dressed to exude a regal aura. The bridesmaids and best men are often dressed on a par with the couple, with the bridesmaids wearing red and gold, and the best men in white. Henna patterns are applied to the palms, hands, and feet of the bride and groom, and the bridesmaids. The sangeet is a pre-wedding party where family members come together to sing, dance, and revel in the joy of the upcoming union. Family members even give performances! The bride's family sings a traditional folk song to the groom's family to

