

# Welcome!

First, we are SO honored and excited to have you be a part of our wedding in India. Now, let's get to your burning question... WHAT SHOULD I WEAR???

Picking out and wearing Indian formalwear can be a very fun experience. We'd love it if you decide to wear it for the first time (or the 100th time) at one or more of the events at our wedding. It may feel overwhelming, but we've prepared this document to hopefully provide some guidance and inspiration.

A few things to keep in mind: We want everyone to both look fabulous AND feel comfortable. We also don't want you to spend a fortune on something you might only wear once! For this reason, we've tried to assemble a fairly comprehensive list of options for what, when, and where to get your outfits. We hope that everyone can find clothes that fit their personal style and budget.

This document is meant to be a starting point, but please feel free to reach out to us at any time if you need help. We can't wait to celebrate with you!

Love,  
Meg and Ajey

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*Wait, wait, I already have questions!*

1) Should I buy my outfits before the trip or after I get to India?

This is totally up to you! If you're the type of person who likes to have things planned well in advance, you may want to get your outfits ahead of time. However, if the idea of shopping in India sounds fun to you, it is absolutely possible to get all of your outfits in Bangalore (even in just a day or an afternoon!)

	Get in US	Get in India
Pros:	- Enables you to plan ahead	- Amazing selection - Tends to be less expensive
Cons:	- Tends to be less selection (in person) - Can be more expensive	- Last minute

We're happy to provide you with recommendations of where to shop as well as tailoring services.

2) How many outfits do I need?

- We have 4 events total, so plan to have 4 outfits.
  - Western Reception (12/19)
  - Haldi/Mehendi (12/21)
    - You can optionally change after haldi, before dinner
  - Wedding Ceremony (12/22)
  - Indian Reception (12/22)
- Check out our wardrobe planner here and on our website for more specific information on what to wear (colors, formality) for each event.

3) I'm overwhelmed, where do I start?

Here's what we recommend:

- 1) Look through this document to get a sense of the types of clothing and where you might want to buy/rent it.
- 2) Think about whether you want to get your clothes beforehand or after you arrive in Bangalore (see above).

- 3) Start browsing online and/or in stores (see the section [Where to Find Indian Formalwear](#)). Save links or screenshots of outfits that you like.
- 4) Take your [measurements](#).
- 5) If possible, try on at least a few outfits in person to figure out your size and what styles you like.
- 6) Buy or rent your outfits.

Please don't hesitate to call or text us with any other questions - we'd be happy to help out!

OK, let's get started :)

## Crash Course in Indian Formalwear

~This section adapted from a document generously shared by fellow Redditor, Cara Bloom - thank you! ~

### Formalwear Basics

- **Color:** Indian formalwear comes in all colors - go bright! Go bold! Some folks say to wear pastels during the day and saturated colors at night, but we say wear whatever color you want.
- **Fabric:** many of these formalwear options come in lots of different fabrics and the fabric determines (in part) the formality of the outfit. Cotton and linen are usually reserved for daytime wear; partywear/cocktail attire/formalwear may come in silk, satin, velvet, chiffon, or synthetics; and super formal outfits are usually heavy silk brocade. Any fabric may be embellished with sequins, embroidery, mirrorwork, beading, and other fun sparkles.
- **Bling:** The level of embellishment and sparkle increases the formality of the outfit. The outfit can be blingy, the jewelry can be blingy, or you can double the fun with outfit bling and jewelry bling. The more bling, the more formal. Go sparkly!

### Feminine Clothing

- **Rough formality ranking:** saree > lehenga > anarkali > sharara > salwar kameez > kurta (this is very rough - a silk sharara can definitely be more formal than a simple cotton saree but a silk saree is generally more formal than a silk sharara).
- **Cocktail Attire:** Any of the options listed here can be cocktail attire! Cocktail attire tends to have some fun sparkle and be made out of synthetics, silk chiffon, satin, etc. instead of cotton.
- **Formal Attire:** Any of the options can also be formal attire, but most common will be lehengas, gowns/anarkalis, and shararas (we don't expect you to wear a saree but if you

want to wear one that's great!). Formal attire tends to be silk, velvet, satin, synthetics, etc. with lots of fun sparkle.

- **Saree:** a long drape pleated and worn around the body. Ranges from casual day-time wear to the most formal occasions.
  - **Additional components:** blouse (crop-top), petticoat (underskirt), fall (fabric stitched onto the saree to make it "fall" correctly).
  - **How to wear a saree:** check out YouTube for tips and tutorials. **We will have a couple helpers before the events to help you tie your saree** if needed. Basically, you pleat the saree and tuck it into the front of the waistband of your petticoat, wrap it around your waist, and then pleat the pallu (part of the saree that goes over your shoulder) and pin the pallu in place on top of your left shoulder.
  - **Alternatively--and highly recommended for first-time saree wearers!-- you can order a "pre-draped" or "pre-stitched" saree** which is pleated for you and sewn in place. All you have to do is put it on and pin the pallu in place if needed. Easy peasy!
  - **Pro-tips if wearing a (non-pre-draped) saree:**
    - Bring lots of sturdy safety pins - you will need these to hold the pleats of your saree in place. We will also have lots of safety pins for you!
    - Pleat your saree in advance! You can do this days ahead of the event, pin the pleats in place, and then just wrap it around yourself day-of.
    - Make sure you're ordering a blouse that is pre-stitched - the default is to send just the unstitched fabric. Stitched blouses are usually made-to-measure and you'll probably need to take them to a tailor to get them fitted after they arrive anyways.
    - Don't forget your fall and petticoat! They probably won't come with your saree. Your local Indian tailor can procure fabric for them and stitch them for you or you can find instructions on YouTube or buy them online. These should be the same color as the bulk of your saree.
    - If your saree is opaque, you can get away with wearing an off-color skirt underneath instead of a petticoat, but only if it has a drawstring or firm waistband to tuck your pleats into.
  - **Formal examples:**





- **Lehenga choli:** a high-waisted a-line maxi skirt. Ranges from partywear and cocktail attire to the most formal occasions.
  - **Additional components:** choli/blouse (same as the saree blouse, see above), dupatta/chunni (optional drape), can-can (optional crinoline).
  - **How to wear a lehenga:** the tie/zipper goes on your left hip. If you have only a tie closure (no zipper) make sure you're wearing an underskirt.
  - **Pro-tips:**
    - There are lots and lots of ways to drape your dupatta - check out Pinterest and YouTube.

- Bring a couple sturdy safety pins to attach your dupatta to the shoulder of your blouse and keep any pleats in place.
- The can-can is entirely optional; it increases the drama of your look but it's heavy. Most lehengas come with a built-in can-can while for some you need to purchase the can-can separately. You can have a tailor remove the can-can if you don't like it.

- **Formal examples:**



- **Salwar Kameez:** a kameez is a long tunic or dress, usually ending below the knee which is worn over salwar/trousers. Often accompanied by a dupatta/chunni/drape.

- **Formal examples:**



- **Sharara Suit:** a sharara tunic usually ends above the knee and is worn over heavily “belled” pants. Often accompanied by a dupatta/chunni/drape.
  - **Formal examples:**



- **Anarkali:** an ankle or floor length gown, often worn over pajamas (pants) and accompanied by a dupatta/chunni/drape.
  - **Formal examples:**





- **Indowestern Fusion:** a type of outfit that draws from western fashion and Indian fashion traditions. It may consist of some combination of a blouse, pants (dhoti, sharara, etc.), skirt, jacket, cape, and drape, for example a dhoti saree (like a saree but with baggy pants underneath), jacket lehenga (like a lehenga but with a jacket instead of a drape), or fusion gown.

- **Formal examples:**



**\*A note on bindis:** these are stickers worn between the eyebrows by femme folks. They can be plain or sparkly and you can find them online or at your local Indian store. Feel free to wear them! They are different from a tikka (smudge of powder between the eyebrows with religious significance). You may also see married women wearing a sindoor, or red powder along the part of their hairline.

**\*A note on mehndi (henna):** this is a natural paste used to decorate the body. The bride usually wears much more intricate and large designs on the hands, forearms, and feet. We will have several mehendi artists at our haldi/mehndi party who will be doing mehendi for guests. While traditionally only women get mehendi done, anyone can get some! The paste flakes off after a couple hours and the designs last for days.

## Unisex Clothing

- **Kurta Suit:** a knee-length tunic worn over pants. With a mandarin style collar it presents as more masc, while with an open collar it presents as more femme. Traditional pant options include dhoti pants (baggy and draped), pajama pants (tight and bunched around the ankle), and western trousers.
- **Formal examples:**



## Masculine Clothing

- **Formality Ranking:** Sherwani/Achkan/Bandhgala > Nehru Jacket > Kurta (this more of a strict hierarchy - a sherwani is always more formal than a kurta but an embellished kurta can be more formal than a simple Nehru jacket).
- **Cocktail Attire:** Kurtas with or without Nehru jackets are most appropriate. These can be embellished with sequins and other sparkles and can be made out of silk, silk blends, linen, or synthetics. Cotton kurtas without a jacket or some embellishment are day wear; cotton kurtas with a jacket or some embellishment are cocktail attire.
- **Formal Attire:** Kurtas, Nehru jackets and sherwanis/achkans/bandhgalas can all be formal attire (we don't expect you to wear a sherwani!). These tend to be more embellished than cocktail attire and can be made out of silk, silk blends, synthetics, etc.. Nehru jacket sets will be most common.
- **Nehru Jacket:** a mandarin collar vest, usually worn over a matching or contrasting kurta/tunic and pants. These range in formality from daytime wear to cocktail/formal attire.
  - **Formal examples:**





- **Sherwani/Achkan/Bandhgala:** types of mandarin collar jackets, usually worn over a kurta/tunic and pants. These range in formality from cocktail attire to the most formal occasions. The kurta should be the same length as the jacket and the kurta/pants usually either match the jacket in color or are a basic white/off-white.
  - **Differences:**
    - **Sherwani:** knee-length and worn with trousers or pajamas (tight pants that bunch around the ankle).
    - **Achkan:** knee-length and worn over pajamas or dhoti pants (baggy, draped pants).
    - **Bandhgala:** waist length and worn over trousers.

- **Formal examples:**



## Shoes

- **Juuti:** traditional leather flats worn by all genders. More femme juuti have sequins and embellishments while more masculine juuti tend to be leather or silk brocade. These can be quite uncomfortable and we don't expect you to wear them unless you want to!
  - **Pro-tip:** bring bandaids or try to break your juuti in before partying in them - they can give you blisters.
- **Western Shoes:** most folks opt for western shoes with their Indian formal wear such as flats, heels, nice sandals, and dress shoes.

- [Needledust](#) has gorgeous Indian sandals and juttis for all genders if you need inspiration!

\* **A note on shoes:** In India, it's customary to remove your shoes when entering someone's home or a temple.

## Accessories

If you wish to accessorize your outfits, many of the stores listed below also have jewelry, purses, etc. There are also tons of stores in Mumbai!

- [Tarinika](#) has a nice collection of reasonably priced jewelry

## Where to Find Indian Formalwear

Now you're probably wondering: where am I going to get my outfits? Luckily, there is no shortage of options to choose from!

### In-person

There are lots of Indian boutiques in Artesia (near Los Angeles), San Jose, NYC, New Jersey, Chicago, and most major U.S. cities. Feel free to reach out to us for recommendations.

### Online

Search terms: wedding guest, party wear, haldi, mehendi, sangeet, wedding guest, lehenga choli, predraped saree, readymade lehenga, readymade saree, fusion, indowestern, sharara set, cape set, salwar kameez, kurta, sherwani (see clothing types above)

- [Aza Fashions](#)
- [India's Popup](#)
- [KALKI Fashion](#)
- [Lashkaraa](#)
- [KYNAH](#) (Los Angeles) (most lehengas \$300-500; great place to try some things on in person but tends to be more expensive)
- [Nyraa](#) (NYC)
- [Palkhi Fashion](#) (Houston)
- [One Minute Saree](#) (sarees \$77 and up)
- [Koskii](#) (lehengas \$149 and up, sarees \$119 and up)
- [Etsy](#)
- [Nordstrom](#) (\$240 and up; small selection, could be good just for trying on)
- [Cbazaar](#)
- [Mrs. G](#)

- [Pernia's Popup Shop](#)
- [Shobitam](#)
- [Mohi Fashion](#)

## Rent

- [AllBorrow](#)
- [Glamourental](#)
- [Aayka](#) (NYC, buy/rent)
- [Marigold](#) (rental period is only for 7 days, but may be useful to look at)

## Pre-owned

Poshmark and Facebook Marketplace often have good deals on Indian wear and there are FB groups (e.g., Chutney's Buy Sell) where you can purchase items secondhand. [PurvX](#) is an online platform for buying pre-owned South Asian outfits.

## Borrow

If you're interested in borrowing something, please reach out to us and we'll see what we can find for you!

## Final Considerations

Woohoo, you made it to the end of the document! Hopefully this has given you a helpful starting place when planning your wardrobe. Two last things to keep in mind:

### Measuring

Make sure to take your measurements before ordering any outfits. This can be done at home or at most Indian clothing shops. See this guide: [How to Measure](#).

### Tailoring

You will most likely want to get your outfits tailored to ensure a perfect fit. Tailoring services are inexpensive, quick, and easy to find in Bangalore.

We can't wait to celebrate with you!

*This document was borrowed and edited from our friends Theresa and Abhishek, who are getting married in Mumbai this year. We are incredibly grateful for their willingness to share this incredibly informative document with us! But any mistakes or inconsistencies are ours.*