

# Celebrate Asian Americans



photo by Dr. Partha Sarathi Sahana

**Mini Fact:**  
Holi is a Hindu festival celebrated in the spring in India. It's also called the festival of colors.

The United States is home for millions of people who have come here from other countries. Our family members, friends, neighbors, doctors, mail carriers and teachers might have immigrated to the U.S., or their parents or grandparents might have.

In May, we celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, when we honor those who can trace their backgrounds to more than 40 countries in Asia and the Pacific Islands — more than 24 million Americans.

This spring, several violent incidents have targeted Asian Americans. President Joe Biden called these tragic events “very troubling” and “un-American.”

But people from Asia and the Pacific Islands have been fighting against discrimination since the 1700s.



photo by Mikki Jourdan

## Keeping people out

Early immigration laws prevented Chinese, Japanese, Filipino and other people from becoming citizens of the U.S.

In the mid-1800s, large numbers of Chinese people came to California during the Gold Rush. They provided labor for farming and laying railroad tracks. They were paid much less than white workers.

As laws became more strict about allowing new immigrants from China, more people from Japan arrived. By the 1920s, U.S. laws

restricted most people from Asia, including India and the Philippines, and these rules stayed in place until 1965.

## Sent away

During World War II, the United States was at war with Japan. After the 1941 Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, some people were afraid that Japanese Americans might help the enemy.

In 1942, the federal government forced all Japanese Americans on the West Coast, including American citizens, to leave their homes and lives and go to **internment camps** in several western states. (To **intern** means to confine people, especially during a war.)



photo courtesy National Archives

A Japanese American family waits to be interned (confined in a camp).

In 1988, Congress apologized for the government's actions and passed a law giving those who had been forced to live in these camps \$20,000.

## Going forward

Today, people are becoming more aware and accepting of people from other countries. Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders and people from all over the world have made important contributions to the communities we live in and our culture — from traditions, to food, to medicine and health, to sports, government and education. Everyone is valuable!

## Asian achievers

• **Katherine Tai** is the U.S. Trade Representative. She was born in Connecticut; her parents were born in China and immigrated to the U.S. Tai taught English in Guangzhou, China, for two years.



White House photo

• **Jason Momoa** is an actor famous for his role in “Aquaman.” Momoa was born in Hawaii. He won a Nickelodeon Kids’ Choice Award for favorite superhero in 2019.



photo by Gage Skidmore

• **Yuta Watanabe** is a professional basketball player for the Toronto Raptors. He was born in Yokohama, Japan, and played college ball at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.



photo by Mogami Kariya

• **Varsha Bajaj** is an author of children's books, including “Count Me In.” Bajaj was born in Mumbai, India. She came to the United States after college, as a graduate student.



photo courtesy Varsha Bajaj/Twitter

## Resources



### On the Web:

- [aiisf.org/aiimkids](http://aiisf.org/aiimkids)

### At the library:

- “A Map Into the World” by Kao Kalia Yang
- “Fish for Jimmy: Inspired by One Family’s Experience in a Japanese American Internment Camp” by Katie Yamasaki

## Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of AAPI heritage are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



AMERICAN, ASIAN, CAMP, CHINA, CITIZEN, CONTRIBUTION, DISCRIMINATION, HAWAII, HERITAGE, IMMIGRATION, INDIA, INTERNMENT, ISLANDER, JAPAN, LAWS, MONTH, PACIFIC, PHILIPPINES, WAR.

I	A	N	I	H	C	R	E	G	A	T	I	R	E	H
N	A	P	A	J	W	Z	C	A	A	I	D	N	I	Q
T	R	C	X	P	I	S	L	A	N	D	E	R	M	M
E	A	I	S	E	N	I	P	P	I	L	I	H	P	O
R	W	F	C	O	N	T	R	I	B	U	T	I	O	N
N	O	I	T	A	N	I	M	I	R	C	S	I	D	T
M	S	C	D	R	M	A	M	E	R	I	C	A	N	H
E	W	A	C	Y	A	P	O	C	A	S	I	A	N	E
N	A	P	O	I	M	M	I	G	R	A	T	I	O	N
T	L	I	I	A	W	A	H	N	E	Z	I	T	I	C

## Mini Spy Classics

Mini Spy and her friends are enjoying a meal at a Chinese restaurant. See if you can find the hidden pictures. Then color the picture.



Mini Spy Classics appear in the first issue of each month.

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- |              |             |          |            |                 |
|--------------|-------------|----------|------------|-----------------|
| • mushroom   | • banana    | • fish   | • duck     | • dragon        |
| • candy cane | • letter E  | • teapot |            | • bell          |
| • number 8   | • leaf      | • cat    | • letter A | • diamond ring  |
| • muffin     | • butterfly | • olive  |            | • question mark |

## Mini Jokes



**Liang:** Where does a computer mouse live?  
**Lim:** In a mouse pad!

## Eco Note



Southeastern Australia's worst floods in 50 years have forced thousands of people from their homes and driven a frightening number of snakes and spiders into populated areas. The spiders invading people's homes have proven to be the most traumatic for many residents. But experts say not to kill them because the arachnids will eventually leave when the waters recede. Other wildlife are also scrambling for higher ground, including skinks, ants and crickets.

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## For later:

Look in your newspaper for items about Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

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