

# The Mysterious Indus Valley Civilization

3000 BCE–1500 BCE  
Ancient India and Pakistan



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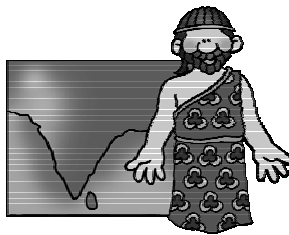
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## 5000 Years Ago



For one thing, no one knows where they came from, but they arrived in the Indus Valley about 5000 years ago.

They built planned cities with straight streets, and brick homes with private baths. Kids played with toys, and women wore lipstick.

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## Harappa

In 1922, archaeologists found the remains of an ancient city they called Harappa.

They looked for other cities in the same area and found one about 400 miles southwest of Harappa.

They called this second ancient city Mohenjo- Daro.



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## Harappa

Many ancient cities have since been found—all from the same period, in the same part of the world, with streets and buildings arranged in the same way.



Collectively, these ancient cities are referred to as the Indus Valley civilization.

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## An Old Riverbed

The more they looked, the more they found. While searching for more cities, archaeologists found a dried, buried riverbed that runs parallel to the Indus River.



As they followed this forgotten riverbed, they found more towns and cities all built in the same way. You can imagine how excited archaeologists were with these discoveries!

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## An Old Riverbed

Since the initial discovery of Harappa, over 1400 ancient towns have been discovered in the Indus Valley.

Some were found along the Indus River. Even more were found along the banks of the dried and forgotten riverbed.



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## Indus Valley Empire

Archaeologists believe there are **more** towns yet to be discovered, buried under layers of dirt and sand—some perhaps buried under modern cities.

From the number of towns they have already found, this civilization was large enough to be called an empire!



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## Indus Valley Empire



This empire existed from about 3000 BCE to about 1500 BCE, around the same time as the ancient Sumerian and Egyptian civilizations.

Over 4000 years ago, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were two busy cities, with populations of about 35,000 people each.

In the cities and towns of the ancient Indus Valley, life was flourishing!

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## 5000 Years Ago

The Indus River flows through modern-day Pakistan and India. Long ago, a group of people lived along the Indus River, in ancient Pakistan and ancient India.

We know very little about this early civilization, but what we *do* know is fascinating!



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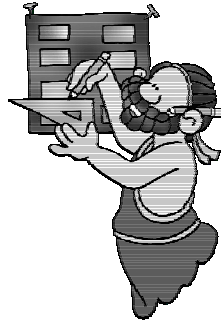
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## Planned Cities

The cities and towns in the ancient Indus Valley were all designed in much the same way.

Archaeologists believe there was most likely a common system of weights and measures, indicating an advanced form of engineering.



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## Homes

Except for slight variations, all the homes were very similar. Houses varied in size somewhat: some had two bedrooms, some had three. But there were no palaces. This alone was unusual in ancient times.

Homes were constructed of baked bricks and had flat roofs. Outside walls had no windows. Inside the house, rooms opened into a central, open-air courtyard.



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## Homes

Each home had its own private drinking well and its own bathroom.



During construction, clay pipes were built inside the house, under the floor. These pipes led to sewers under the streets. These sewers drained into nearby rivers and streams.

This was a very advanced civilization!

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## Clothing & Art

Men and women dressed in colorful robes. Women wore jewelry of gold and precious stones, and even wore lipstick!

Among the treasures found was a statue of a woman wearing a bracelet. Bracelets with similar designs are worn today in India.

Archaeologists found a small bronze statue of a dancer, which tells us these ancient people enjoyed dance and had great skill in working with metals.



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## Art



They were also skilled in pottery, weaving, and metalworking.

The pottery that has been found is of a very high quality and display beautiful designs. Artifacts include small animal figures, bowls made of bronze and silver, many beads and ornaments, and small statues of what seem to be female gods. Archaeologists have found no large statues so far.

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## Central Pools



Scientists have found the remains of large central pools in many of the towns. Each pool had steps leading down at both ends. These could have been public swimming pools or used for religious ceremonies.

Around this large central pool were smaller rooms that might have been dressing rooms, as well as smaller pools that might have been private baths.

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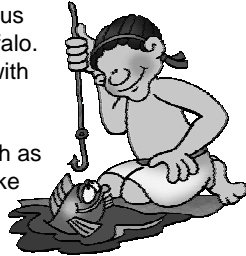
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## Food & Toys

People grew barley, peas, melons, and dates. They raised wheat to make warm tasty bread. Farmers grew cotton and kept herds of sheep, pigs, zebus (a kind of cow), and water buffalo. Fish were caught in the river with fishhooks!

Archaeologists found toys such as small carts, whistles shaped like birds, and toy monkeys which could slide down a string!



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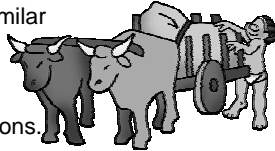
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## Transportation

To travel by land, people used camels, oxen, and elephants to pull carts with wooden wheels. They sailed around the Arabian Sea in ships with one mast.

Seals with a pictographic script (which have not as yet been deciphered) have been found at some Indus Valley sites. Similar seals have been found in Mesopotamia, which indicates possible trade between these two civilizations.



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## Himalayan Mountains



The Himalayan Mountains acted as a natural barrier, offering protection from other peoples of the ancient world.

Water running down from the Himalayas fed the Indus River, keeping it full of clean, fresh water.

The Himalayas provided timber and important minerals such as gold, silver, tin, and semi-precious metals.

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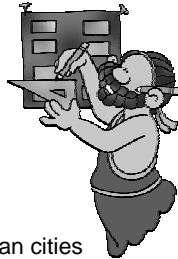
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## Riddle of the Indus

What does it take to build a city with straight streets and well-designed sewers? It takes smart engineers and a lot of planning! These cities suggest a well-organized government and probably a well-developed society.



What is amazing is that the Harappan cities appear to have developed quickly, suggesting that whoever built these cities learned to do so in another place.

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## Riddle of the Indus

As the Indus flooded, cities were rebuilt on top of each other. In some sites, archaeologists have discovered several different cities, one on top of another, each built a little less skillfully than the one before.



It appears that builders became less able over time, or grew less interested in perfection.

Still, each city is a marvel, with each greatly advanced for its time.

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## Common Language

Archaeologists have found no wall carvings or tomb paintings to tell us about Indus Valley life. We do know they had a written language, but only a few sentences have been found, on pottery and amulets.

Although scientists cannot yet read it, they believe these people had a common language! Artifacts have been found at different sites (towns) with the same or similar pictures of various animals.



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## Mysteries of the Indus

One mystery is why the people who lived in these marvelous cities disappeared around 1500 BCE. Perhaps they ran out of wood to hold back flooding, or perhaps their soil gave out and would no longer grow crops. Where did these people come from, and where did they go?

It will be interesting to see what archaeologists "dig up" next.



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## Indus Questions

1. Why do people build along rivers?
2. Name two reasons the Himalayan Mountains were important to these early people.
3. How did these people travel?
4. Did they have a written language?
5. What do straight streets tell us about the city builders?



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