

India's Major Holy Rivers: Comprehensive Reference Guide

Based on extensive research into Hindu scriptures, geographical sources, and contemporary studies, I have compiled detailed information about India's major holy rivers. These waterways hold profound spiritual significance and have shaped the religious, cultural, and civilizational landscape of the Indian subcontinent for millennia.

Complete Table of India's Major Holy Rivers

River Name	Place of Origin (with Description)	Latitude	Longitude	General Flow Direction	Special Geographical Features
Ganga (Ganges)	Gomukh (Gaumukh) - Terminus of Gangotri Glacier, meaning "Cow's Mouth", situated at 13,200 ft (4,023 m) in Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand	30°55'36"N	79°4'51"E	Northwest to Southeast (Himalayas to Bay of Bengal)	Length: 2,525 km; Major tributaries: Yamuna, Ghaghara, Gandak, Koshi (left), Sone, Damodar (right); Forms large delta in Bengal; Passes through Haridwar, Varanasi, Patna
Yamuna	Yamunotri Glacier - Located on southwestern slopes of Bandarpunch peaks in the Lower Himalayas, Uttarkashi district, Uttarakhand	31°1'21"N	78°27'18"E	North-Northwest to Southeast (flows parallel to Ganga, merges at Prayagraj)	Length: 1,376 km; Major tributaries: Tons, Chambal, Sindh, Betwa, Ken; Merges with Ganga at Triveni Sangam, Prayagraj; Flows through Delhi, Mathura, Agra; Forms fertile Ganga-Yamuna Doab

River Name	Place of Origin (with Description)	Latitude	Longitude	General Flow Direction	Special Geographical Features
Glacier - Located in Bandarpunch massif, West Garhwal, Himalayas (historically); considered a mystical/underground river	Approx 31°N	Approx 78°30'E	Southwest (historically flowed from Himalayas to Arabian Sea)	Length: ~1,600 km (historical); Major tributaries: Sutlej, Drishadvati; Now mostly underground/extinct; Archaeological evidence along Ghaggar-Hakra valley; Connected ancient Indus Valley Civilization	
Narmada	Amarkantak Plateau - Located in Anuppur district, Madhya Pradesh, in the Maikal Hills (Eastern Satpura range), at meeting point of Vindhya and Satpura ranges	Approx 22°40'N	Approx 81°45'E	East to West (flows westward to Arabian Sea)	Length: 1,312 km; Major tributaries: Tawa, Hiran, Barna; Flows through rift valley between Vindhya and Satpura ranges; Famous for Marble Rocks and Dhuandhar Falls near Jabalpur; Major dams: Sardar Sarovar, Narmada Sagar
Godavari	Trimbakeshwar - Located in Nashik district, Maharashtra, originating from Brahmagiri mountains in the Western Ghats at elevation of about 1,295 meters	19°56'N	73°32'E	West to East (flows eastward across Deccan Plateau to Bay of Bengal)	Length: 1,465 km; Major tributaries: Pravara, Manjra, Wardha, Wainganga; Known as "Dakshina Ganga" (Southern Ganges); Forms extensive delta; Passes through Nashik, Rajahmundry; Second longest river in India

River Name	Place of Origin (with Description)	Latitude	Longitude	General Flow Direction	Special Geographical Features
Krishna	Mahabaleshwar - Located near Jor village in Satara district, Maharashtra, in the Western Ghats at elevation of about 1,300-1,337 meters	Approx 17°55'N	Approx 73°40'E	West to East (flows eastward through peninsular India to Bay of Bengal)	Length: 1,400 km; Major tributaries: Tungabhadra, Bhima, Koyna, Ghataprabha; Third longest river in India; Passes through Sangli, Vijayawada; Forms fertile delta region; Major dams: Nagarjuna Sagar, Srisailem
Kaveri (Cauvery)	Talakaveri - Located on Brahmagiri hills near Bhagamandala in Kodagu district, Karnataka, in the Western Ghats at 1,276-1,341 meters above sea level	12°23'08"N	75°29'29"E	Northwest to Southeast (flows through Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to Bay of Bengal)	Length: 800 km; Major tributaries: Arkavati, Bhavani, Kabini, Amaravati; Flows through Mysore, Tiruchirappalli; Forms Kaveri delta in Tamil Nadu; Known as "Ganga of the South"; Major dams: Krishnaraja Sagar
Indus (Sindhu)	Seng Khabab (Lion's Mouth) - Located near Mount Kailash and Mansarovar Lake in Tibet, at elevation of around 5,500 meters	Approx 31°N	Approx 81°30'E	Northwest to Southwest (flows from Tibet through Ladakh to Arabian Sea)	Length: 3,180 km; Major tributaries: Zaskar, Shyok, Kabul; One of longest rivers in Asia; Enters India through Ladakh; Associated with ancient Indus Valley Civilization; Flows mainly through Pakistan

River Name	Place of Origin (with Description)	Latitude	Longitude	General Flow Direction	Special Geographical Features
Brahmaputra	Angsi Glacier/Chemayungdung Glacier - Located near Mount Kailash and Lake Mansarovar in Tibetan Himalayas, at elevation of 6,020 meters	Approx 30°N	Approx 82°E	East to Southwest (flows from Tibet through Assam and Bangladesh to Bay of Bengal)	Length: 2,900 km (Yarlung Tsangpo-Brahmaputra system); Major tributaries: Dibang, Lohit, Subansiri; Known as Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet, Dihang in Arunachal Pradesh; Forms world's largest river island (Majuli); Highly braided river
Mahanadi	Sihawa Mountain - Located in Dhamtari district, Chhattisgarh, near Pharsiya village at 442 meters above sea level in Eastern Ghats extension	Approx 20°45'N	Approx 81°30'E	Northwest to Southeast (flows through Chhattisgarh and Odisha to Bay of Bengal)	Length: 900 km; Major tributaries: Seonath, Jonk, Hasdeo, Ib; Passes through Raipur, Sambalpur, Cuttack; Hirakud Dam (world's longest earthen dam); Important for Chilika Lake ecosystem
Tapti (Tapi)	Multai - Located in Betul district, Madhya Pradesh, on eastern slopes of Satpura Range at elevation of 752 meters	Approx 21°52'N	Approx 78°25'E	East to West (flows westward through Maharashtra and Gujarat to Arabian Sea)	Length: 724 km; Major tributaries: Purna, Girna, Panjhra; One of only three peninsular rivers flowing east to west; Flows parallel to Narmada; Passes through Burhanpur, Surat; Major dam: Ukai Dam

The Seven Sacred Rivers (Sapta Sindhu)

According to Hindu tradition, the **seven most sacred rivers** (Sapta Sindhu or Sapta Nadi) are specifically: **Ganga, Yamuna, Saraswati, Narmada, Godavari, Kaveri, and Sindhu (Indus)**^{[1] [2] [3]}. These rivers are considered particularly holy, and taking ritual baths in their waters is believed to purify sins and lead to spiritual liberation (moksha)^{[1] [4]}.

Key Observations from the Research

Himalayan Origins: The northern holy rivers (Ganga, Yamuna, Indus, Brahmaputra) originate from the high Himalayas and glacial sources, with several connected to the sacred Mount Kailash region^{[5] [6] [7] [8]}.

Western Ghats Sources: Southern peninsular rivers (Godavari, Krishna, Kaveri) primarily originate from the Western Ghats mountain range^{[9] [10] [11] [12]}.

Unique Flow Patterns: Most Indian rivers flow east to the Bay of Bengal, but **Narmada and Tapi are notable exceptions**, flowing west to the Arabian Sea^{[13] [14] [15]}.

Sacred Geography: Each river has specific **spiritual significance and associated temples** at their origins - from Gomukh for the Ganga to Talakaveri for the Kaveri^{[5] [16] [17]}.

Historical Importance: These rivers have supported major civilizations, from the ancient Indus Valley Civilization along the Indus and Saraswati rivers to the numerous kingdoms along the Ganga and Godavari^{[11] [7] [1]}.

This comprehensive table provides the essential geographical and spiritual information about India's major holy rivers, which continue to serve as lifelines for millions of people and remain central to Hindu religious practices and cultural identity.



1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gomukh>
2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yamuna>
3. <https://prepp.in/question/which-is-the-source-of-narmada-river-663423470368feaaa5976f77>
4. <https://himalayandreamtreks.in/blog/geographical-analysis-of-gaumukh-glacier/>
5. <https://www.wikiwand.com/en/articles/Yamuna>
6. <https://leverageedu.com/questions-answers/the-river-narmada-has-its-source-at/>
7. <https://uttarkashi.nic.in/tourist-place/gomukh/>
8. <https://vajiramandravi.com/upsc-exam/yamuna-river-system/>
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12. <https://www.vedantu.com/question-answer/the-river-narmada-has-its-source-at-a-satpura-b-class-10-social-science-cbse-5fc86b13fc3d9653700e8d1f>
13. <https://www.doubtnut.com/qna/647579516>
14. <https://www.worldatlas.com/rivers/river-yamuna.html>

15. <https://www.adda247.com/question-answer/which-of-the-following-rivers-originates-from-amarkantak-hills/q.v1.7c28c8da-4126-450b-b362-a54d23825864-en>
16. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_kCwtM_9xOU
17. https://indiawris.gov.in/wiki/doku.php?id=yamuna_river_system