Asians

A great many countries, religions, and languages are included within the category “Asian.” Although much of the Middle East or Southwest Asia is usually considered part of the major world region of Asia, Americans do not usually think of people of Middle Eastern origin such as Iranians, Armenians, and Arabs as Asians. In this online publication we cover those ethnic groups as ancestry groups within the larger White population. (Scroll down to see three maps.) Following widespread practice within the U.S., Asian ethnic groups include those whose origins are in South Asia (India, Pakistan, and others), Southeast Asia (Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, and others), and East Asia (China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea). Because the ethnic label “Asian” does not include the mostly White populations of the Middle East, “Asian” is essentially a widely accepted race-based term like “White” and “Black”.

In greater Los Angeles the largest Asian ethnic groups in recent years have been Chinese and Filipinos. In this online publication we map people who identified as Taiwanese separately from those who reported themselves as Chinese. Next largest in numbers are Koreans, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Our mapping also includes Asian Indians, Pakistanis, Thais, and Cambodians. In addition we cover Samoans, who are considered Pacific Islanders.

Change. The Asian population in the five counties increased by 64 percent between 1990 and 2010, mostly the result of immigration. This growth is reflected in the preponderance of blue dots on this map. The pattern indicates both increasing concentrations in established Asian enclaves and dispersal into new areas that had traditionally been White. This has been made possible by the fairly high incomes of Asians and, in many cases, by increasing English-language skills and familiarity with the United States.

To illustrate, Asian numbers increased greatly in and around well-established Asian enclaves of Arcadia, Alhambra, Diamond Bar, Torrance, Cerritos, Irvine, and Garden Grove. At the same time, some Asians moved into what were once traditionally White areas. Such places include Santa Monica, Westwood, the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the San Fernando Valley, and Simi Valley. Farther out from the older settlements are cities and neighborhoods with many newer homes, often in gated communities. These places include Thousand Oaks (around state route 23 and U.S. Route 101) in Ventura County, Santa Clarita just north of the San Fernando Valley, and Chino Hills and Fontana in San Bernardino County.
Similarly, many Asians have found such attractive homes in Temecula and other Riverside County cities along Interstate 15.

However, in some cases Asians, like other groups, settled farther on the periphery where home prices are generally lower due to the long commuting distance that most residents must face. Such places include Victorville and Palmdale or the large area south and east of the city of Riverside.

The location of the red dots makes clear that Asians have tended to leave older and poorer areas such as South Los Angeles, Wilmington, Santa Ana in Orange County, the eastern San Fernando Valley, and the Echo Park and Silver Lake neighborhoods north of LA’s Chinatown. The map also reveals Asian losses in the Cambodian enclave in Long Beach. In Silver Lake and perhaps other areas, Asian out-movement could have been a response to increased housing costs due to gentrification. In general, however, the departure of Asian residents from these poorer areas was because they were able to afford the higher housing costs of more attractive areas.

We also suspect that Asian moves out of these areas were partly a response to the rapid growth of other ethnic groups and the feeling among Asians that the other groups were dominating the area too strongly. Areas containing more Asians, especially those of one’s own ethnic nationality, would be more attractive. In general, such Asian out-movement probably occurred where Hispanic growth was rapid, though in the case of south Glendale, the growing concentration of Armenians was probably a key factor.

**Percentage and income.** The map shows no new Asian concentration. All the Asian clusters represent earlier established enclaves of one or more Asian ethnic groups. For example, in Monterey Park and nearby cities like Arcadia are high percentages of Chinese and Taiwanese, while many Japanese and Koreans live in Hawthorne, Gardena, and Torrance. Just north of Downtown LA is Chinatown, but because there is not much housing in Chinatown the highest percent Asian tract is just across Interstate 110 in Echo Park. In Orange County’s Westminster is the center of the large Vietnamese enclave that first appeared in the late 1970s due to the resettlement of war refugees there.

The more expensive and often newer homes in Diamond Bar, Palos Verdes Estates, Fullerton, Cerritos, Redlands, and Irvine have attracted many Asians of a range of national origins, especially in upscale places where school districts have strong reputations. Sometimes these are locations near employment in high-tech industries, in which many Asian Indians and Chinese work.
Comparing the map of percentage Asian with the map of Asian household income will show, however, that these areas with large Asian enclaves are often not where Asians with the highest incomes are located. Asians with highest incomes tend to live in predominantly White places, such as in much of Ventura County, and Calabasas and Malibu in the Santa Monica Mountains. Other such places with a high-income but mostly White population include Pacific Palisades and Beverly Hills, Claremont, as well as Newport Beach and Mission Viejo in Orange County. Many Asians who can afford expensive housing like to live where Whites and Asians are both important in local racial composition. Large numbers of Asians help attract nearby Asian food stores and various services that provide a cultural comfort while White neighbors are valued because they may help preserve housing prices and neighborhood attractiveness.

Although the design of the income map calls attention to high-income areas because these have the strongest colors, there are many more tracts in which Asians have moderate household incomes. The length of bars in the legend shows this: Asian households in over 2,000 tracts average incomes between $30,626 and $109,000. Such places are widespread, but they also characterize the well known enclaves of Little Tokyo in LA’s Downtown and Koreatown, located a few miles to the west of Downtown. And just north of Downtown is Chinatown, where incomes of residents are even lower. Owners of stores and professional service providers in these enclaves typically commute in to their businesses from more attractive residential areas in the suburbs. Thus, they are not counted in the income averages in these areas where most residents have low or moderate incomes.

See maps below.
Five-county 2010 population of Asians is 2,199,186 and change in that population between 1990 and 2010 is an increase of 860,138. Census 2010 race data are from SF1. 1990 estimates of race population in 2010 tracts are based on the 1990 Fullcount table created by John R. Logan, Zengwang Xu, and Brian Stults. http://www.s4.brown.edu/us2010/Researcher/Bridging.htm
Asian Percent of Population 2010

 Five-county population of Asians of a single race only is 2,199,186. Bar length indicates proportion of all valid tracts included in a category. In most cases a category includes 2, 3, 5, 10, 30, 40, or 50 percent of the included tracts. The bar length of the excluded tracts is not related to its tract count.
Asian Median Household Income
2008 - 2012

Bar length indicates proportion of all valid tracts included in a category.
In most cases a category includes 2, 3, 5, 10, 30, 40, or 50 percent of the included tracts.
The bar length of the excluded tracts is not related to its tract count.