

FOR RELEASE OCTOBER 11, 2023

Religion Among Asian Americans

A rising share say they have no religion, but many consider themselves close to one or more religious traditions for reasons such as family or culture

BY Besheer Mohamed and Michael Rotolo

FOR MEDIA OR OTHER INQUIRIES:

Besheer Mohamed, Senior Researcher

Michael Rotolo, Research Associate

Achsah Callahan, Communications Manager

Hannah Klein, Senior Communications Manager

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

RECOMMENDED CITATION

Pew Research Center, October 2023, "Religion Among Asian Americans"

About Pew Research Center

Pew Research Center is a nonpartisan, nonadvocacy fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes and trends shaping the world. It does not take policy positions. The Center conducts public opinion polling, demographic research, computational social science research and other data-driven research. It studies politics and policy; news habits and media; the internet and technology; religion; race and ethnicity; international affairs; social, demographic and economic trends; science; research methodology and data science; and immigration and migration. Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder.

Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. The Center's Asian American portfolio was funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with generous support from The Asian American Foundation; Chan Zuckerberg Initiative DAF, an advised fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation; the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the Henry Luce Foundation; the Doris Duke Foundation; The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation; The Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation; The Long Family Foundation; Lu-Hebert Fund; Gee Family Foundation; Joseph Cotchett; the Julian Abdey and Sabrina Moyle Charitable Fund; and Nanci Nishimura.

We would also like to thank the Leaders Forum for its thought leadership and valuable assistance in helping make this survey possible.

The qualitative research on Asian American Muslims, and the strategic communications campaign used to promote the research portfolio, were made possible with generous support from the Doris Duke Foundation.

© Pew Research Center 2023

Acknowledgments

Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. The Center's Asian American portfolio was funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with generous support from The Asian American Foundation; Chan Zuckerberg Initiative DAF, an advised fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation; the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the Henry Luce Foundation; the Doris Duke Foundation; The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation; The Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation; The Long Family Foundation; Lu-Hebert Fund; Gee Family Foundation; Joseph Cotchett; the Julian Abdey and Sabrina Moyle Charitable Fund; and Nanci Nishimura.

We would also like to thank the Leaders Forum for its thought leadership and valuable assistance in helping make this survey possible.

The qualitative research on Asian American Muslims, and the strategic communications campaign used to promote the research portfolio, were made possible with generous support from the Doris Duke Foundation.

This report is a collaborative effort based on the input and analysis of the following individuals. Find related reports online at www.pewresearch.org/AsianAmericans and www.pewresearch.org/religion.

Primary Researchers

Besheer Mohamed, *Senior Researcher*
Michael Rotolo, *Research Associate*

Research Team

Alan Cooperman, *Director, Religion Research*
Gregory A. Smith, *Associate Director, Religion Research*
Becka A. Alper, *Senior Researcher*
Patricia Tevington, *Research Associate*
Justin Nortey, *Research Analyst*
Asta Kallo, *Research Assistant*

Coders

Jonah Causin, Daniel Jacobi and Sophie Yap

Methods Team

Courtney Kennedy, *Vice President, Methods and Innovation*

Ashley Amaya, *Associate Director, Survey Methodology*

Andrew Mercer, *Senior Research Methodologist*

Scott Keeter, *Senior Survey Advisor*

Dorene Asare-Marfo, *Panel Manager*

Dana Mildred Popky, *Associate Panel Manager*

Arnold Lau, *Research Methodologist*

Editorial and Graphic Design

Jeff Diamant, *Senior Writer/Editor*

Rebecca Leppert, *Copy Editor*

Dalia Fahmy, *Senior Writer/Editor*

Bill Webster, *Senior Information Graphics Designer*

Communications and Web Publishing

Achsah Callahan, *Communications Manager*

Hannah Klein, *Senior Communications Manager*

Beshay Sakla, *Associate Digital Producer*

Reem Nadeem, *Digital Producer*

Anna Schiller, *Associate Director, Communications*

Stacy Rosenberg, *Director, Digital Strategy*

Others at the Center who contributed to this report include Mark Hugo Lopez, director of race and ethnicity research; Neil G. Ruiz, associate director of race and ethnicity research; Conrad Hackett, associate director of research/senior demographer; Caileigh Stirling, research assistant; Yunping Tong, research associate; Luis Noe-Bustamante, research associate; Abby Budiman, former research associate; Carlyne Im, research assistant; and Lauren Mora, former research assistant.

In addition, Pew Research Center is grateful to a panel of expert advisers who provided advice throughout this report's development: Eman Abdelhadi, assistant professor of comparative human development at the University of Chicago; Jerry Park, associate professor of sociology at Baylor University; Anna Sun, associate professor of religious studies and sociology at Duke University; Ajay Verghese, associate professor of political science at Middlebury College; and Duncan Ryuken Williams, professor of religion and East Asian languages and cultures at University of Southern California.

How we did this

Pew Research Center conducted this analysis to understand the religious identities, experiences and practices of people of Asian origin or ancestry living in the United States. The study is part of the Center’s multiyear research effort focused on the nation’s Asian population. Its centerpiece is a nationally representative survey of 7,006 Asian adults. The survey sampled U.S. adults who self-identify as Asian, either alone or in combination with other races or Hispanic ethnicity. It was offered in six languages: Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), English, Hindi, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese. Responses were collected from July 5, 2022, to Jan. 27, 2023, by Westat on behalf of Pew Research Center.

The survey includes a large enough sample to report on the views of the six biggest origin groups among Asian Americans: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese. Together, these six groups constitute 81% of all U.S. Asian adults, according to a Center analysis of the Census Bureau’s 2021 American Community Survey (ACS). These six groups are discussed throughout the report.

Findings for Asian origin groups other than the six largest are also included in the report – in the survey findings for U.S. Asian adults overall, and in findings about the “NET East Asian,” “NET South Asian” and “NET Southeast Asian” populations. Origin groups other than the six largest each comprise about 2% or less of the Asian population in the U.S., making it challenging to recruit nationally representative samples for any of them.

Survey respondents were drawn from a national sample of residential mailing addresses, which included addresses from all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Specialized surnames list frames maintained by the Marketing Systems Group were used to supplement the sample. Those eligible to complete the survey were offered the opportunity to do so online or by mail with a paper questionnaire. For more details, read the survey [Methodology](#). For questions used in this analysis, refer to the [Topline Questionnaire](#).

In addition to the survey results, the report draws on guided small group discussions (focus groups) and in-depth one-on-one interviews. Details on these can be found in the focus group [Methodology](#).

Pew Research Center is a subsidiary of The Pew Charitable Trusts, its primary funder. The Center’s Asian American portfolio was funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts, with generous support from The Asian American Foundation; Chan Zuckerberg Initiative DAF, an advised fund of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation; the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the Henry Luce

Foundation; the Doris Duke Foundation; The Wallace H. Coulter Foundation; The Dirk and Charlene Kabcenell Foundation; The Long Family Foundation; Lu-Hebert Fund; Gee Family Foundation; Joseph Cotchett; the Julian Abdey and Sabrina Moyle Charitable Fund; and Nanci Nishimura.

We would also like to thank the Leaders Forum for its thought leadership and valuable assistance in helping make this survey possible.

The qualitative research on Asian American Muslims, and the strategic communications campaign used to promote the research portfolio, were made possible with generous support from the Doris Duke Foundation.

Terminology

Asians living in the United States/U.S. Asian population/Asian Americans: Used interchangeably throughout this report to refer to U.S. adults who self-identify as Asian, either alone or in combination with other races or Hispanic identity.

Ethnicity/Ethnic origin labels: Used interchangeably in this report for findings for ethnic origin groups, such as Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean or Vietnamese. For this report, ethnicity is not nationality. For example, Chinese in this report are those self-identifying as of Chinese ethnicity, rather than necessarily being a current or former citizen of the People's Republic of China. Ethnic origin groups in this report include those who self-identify as one Asian ethnicity only, either alone or in combination with a non-Asian race or ethnicity.

Less populous Asian origin groups/Other Asian origin groups: In this report, those who self-identify with ethnic origin groups other than the six largest Asian origin groups (e.g., those who identify as Burmese, Hmong or Pakistani). The term includes those who identify with only one Asian ethnicity. These ethnic origin groups each represent about 2% or less of the overall Asian American population and are unreportable on their own due to small sample sizes. They are collectively reportable under this broader category.

Asian origins/Asian origin groups: Used interchangeably throughout this report to describe ethnic origin groups.

Immigrant: Someone who was not a U.S. citizen at birth – in other words, someone born outside the U.S., Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories to parents who are not U.S. citizens. Also referred to as “**foreign born**” in this report.

U.S. born: Those born in the 50 U.S. states or the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories.

Table of Contents

About Pew Research Center	2
Acknowledgments	3
How we did this	5
Terminology	7
Table of Contents	8
Overview	9
1. Christianity among Asian Americans	24
2. Buddhism among Asian Americans	31
3. Hinduism among Asian Americans	36
4. Islam among Asian Americans	41
5. Confucianism and Daoism among Asian Americans	45
6. Religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans	47
Methodology	51

Religion Among Asian Americans

A rising share say they have no religion, but many consider themselves close to one or more religious traditions for reasons such as family or culture

Like the [U.S. public as a whole](#), a growing percentage of Asian Americans are not affiliated with any religion, and the share who identify as Christian has declined, according to a new Pew Research Center survey exploring religion among Asian American adults.

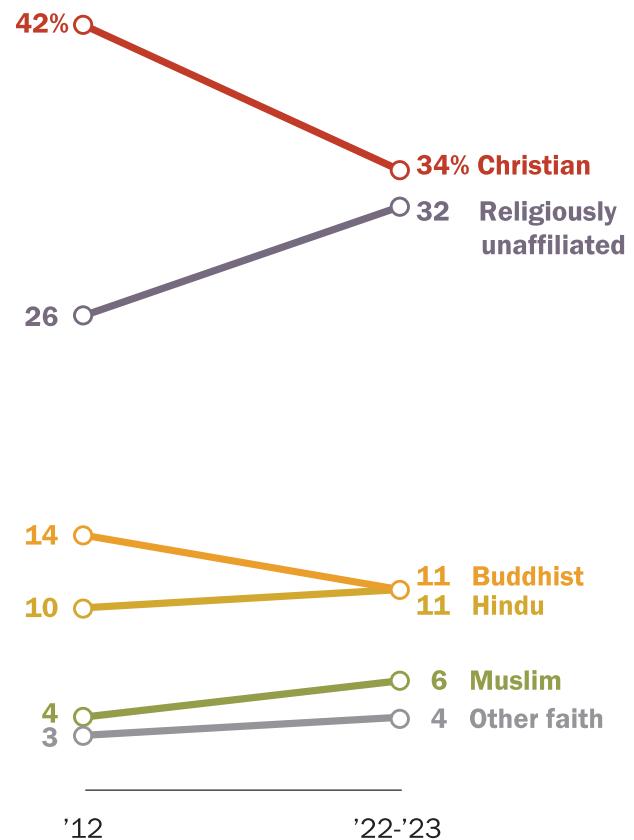
But the survey also shows that 40% of Asian Americans say they feel close to some religious tradition for reasons *aside from religion*. For example, just 11% of Asian American adults say their religion is Buddhism, but 21% feel close to Buddhism for other reasons, such as family background or culture.

Religious profile of Asian Americans

- Today, 32% of Asian Americans are religiously unaffiliated, up from 26% in 2012.
- Christianity is still the largest faith group among Asian Americans (34%).
- But Christianity has also seen the sharpest decline, down 8 percentage points since 2012.
- Asian American Christians are about evenly split between Catholics and Protestants (17% and 16% of all U.S. Asian adults, respectively). Born-again or evangelical Protestants make up 10% of Asian Americans.

Declining share of Asian Americans identify as Christian

% of Asian American adults who are ...



Note: Those who did not answer are not shown.

Source: Surveys of Asian American adults conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012, and July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

- Buddhists and Hindus each account for about one-in-ten Asian Americans, while Muslims make up 6%.
- Various other religious groups (including Daoists, Jains, Jews, Sikhs and others) together make up about 4% of all Asian American adults.

The survey also asked Asian Americans how important religion is in their lives (31% say it is very important), how often they attend religious services (29% report that they go at least monthly), and whether they have an altar, shrine or religious symbol that they use for home worship (36% say they do).

Of the major Asian American religious groups, Protestants and Muslims are the most likely to report that they [attend religious services at least once a month](#). By contrast, Buddhists and Hindus are especially likely to say they [worship at shrines or altars in their homes](#).

Jump to chapters on ...

- Asian American [Christians](#)
- Asian American [Buddhists](#)
- Asian American [Hindus](#)
- Asian American [Muslims](#)
- [Confucianism and Daoism](#) among Asian Americans
- Asian Americans who are [religiously unaffiliated](#)

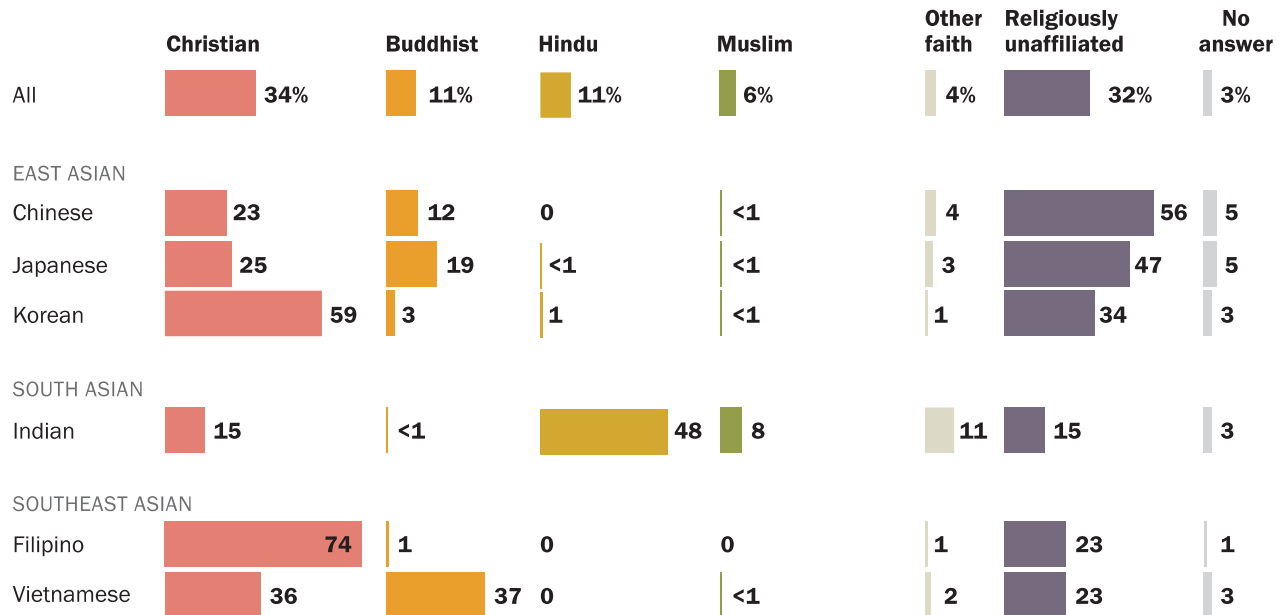
Differences in religious affiliation among Asian origin groups

There are large differences in religious affiliation among Asian Americans depending on their ethnic origin group. For example:

- 56% of **Chinese Americans** and 47% of **Japanese Americans** are not affiliated with any religion – the highest percentages of “nones” among the Asian origin groups that are large enough to be analyzed in the survey.
- Three-quarters of **Filipino Americans** are Christian, mostly Catholic.
- 59% of **Korean Americans** are Christian, mostly Protestant – including 34% who identify as born-again or evangelical Protestants.
- **Indian Americans** are far more likely than the other large Asian origin groups to be Hindu (48%), though a fair number of Indian Americans are Christian (15%), Muslim (8%) or Sikh (8%).
- **Vietnamese Americans** are the most likely of the large origin groups to identify as Buddhist (37%).

Most Filipino and Korean Americans are Christian; about half of Chinese Americans are religiously unaffiliated

% of Asian American adults, by origin group, who identify as ...



Note: Figures for Asian Americans who trace their origin to other countries not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

These six Asian origin groups – Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese Americans – account for 81% of [all Asian Americans](#).¹

The survey did not include enough interviews with respondents in other Asian origin groups to be able to report on them separately. However, the members of less populous Asian origin groups were included in the study, and it is possible to analyze them when they are grouped together by region. Doing this reveals some additional patterns. For example:

- 60% of South Asians in the United States *other than Indian Americans* (i.e., those who trace their origins to countries including Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan) are Muslim – higher than any of the six largest Asian origin groups.
- 38% of U.S. adults who trace their origin to Southeast Asian countries *other than the Philippines and Vietnam* are Buddhist.

About 1 in 5 Asian Americans with Southeast Asian origins are Buddhist

% of Asian American adults who identify as ...

	Buddhist %	Muslim %
NET East Asian	11	<1
Chinese	12	<1
Japanese	19	<1
Korean	3	<1
NET South Asian	2	20
Indian	<1	8
Other South Asians*	5	60
NET Southeast Asian	18	<1
Filipino	1	0
Vietnamese	37	<1
Other Southeast Asians*	38	1

* The survey included 164 interviews with those from “Other South Asian” origins, with an effective sample size of 87 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.5 percentage points. It also included 189 interviews with those from “Other Southeast Asian” origins, with an effective sample size of 80 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.9 percentage points. These margins of error conservatively assume a reported percentage of 50.

Note: Figures for East Asians in the U.S. who trace their origin to countries other than China, Japan or Korea not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

“Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

These are among the key findings of a nationally representative, multilingual survey of 7,006 Asian American adults conducted by Pew Research Center from July 5, 2022, to Jan. 27, 2023. The Center previously has published other findings from this survey.²

¹ A Pew Research Center analysis of data from the 2021 American Community Survey found that 22% of Asian Americans in the United States are Chinese, 20% are Indian, 17% are Filipino, 9% are Vietnamese, 8% are Korean, 6% are Japanese, and the remaining 19% trace their origin to another country or to two or more countries.

² [The Center's other work on Asian Americans](#) is available on our website.

Importance of religion

While nearly a third of Asian Americans say religion is very important in their lives, Asian American Muslims (60%) and Christians (54%) are much more likely than Asian American Hindus (33%) and Buddhists (31%) to feel that way.

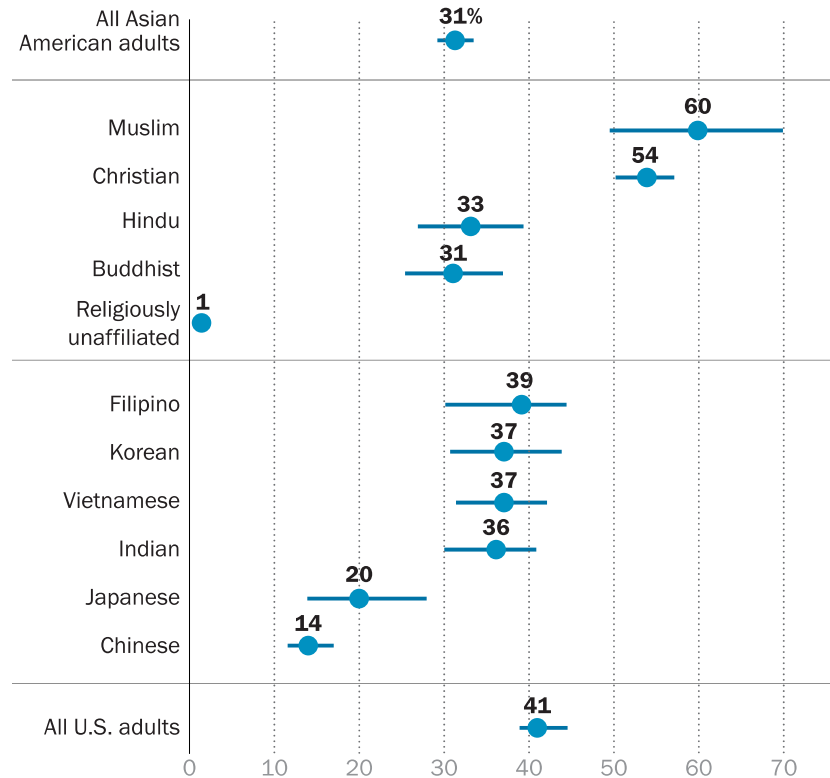
Looking at Asian Americans by their ethnic origin group, Japanese and Chinese Americans are notably less likely than members of other Asian origin groups to say religion is very important in their lives, reflecting the large number of “nones” (those who describe their religion as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular”) in these two groups.

As a whole, Asian Americans born in the U.S. are somewhat less likely than Asian Americans born elsewhere to

say religion is very important in their lives. And Asian Americans *overall* are somewhat less likely than the general U.S. population to say religion is very important in their lives (31% vs. 41%).

Japanese and Chinese Americans are least likely to consider religion very important

% who say religion is **very important** in their lives



Note: Horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence level margins of error.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

Comparison data for “All U.S. adults” comes from Pew Research Center’s National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS) conducted May 29, 2021-Aug. 25, 2021.

“Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Attending religious services

About three-in-ten Asian Americans (29%) say they attend religious services or go to a temple, shrine or other religious space at least once a month, including 21% who say they do so weekly or more often.

Asian American Christians and Muslims are more likely than Asian American Buddhists, Hindus or “nones” to say they attend religious services at least monthly.

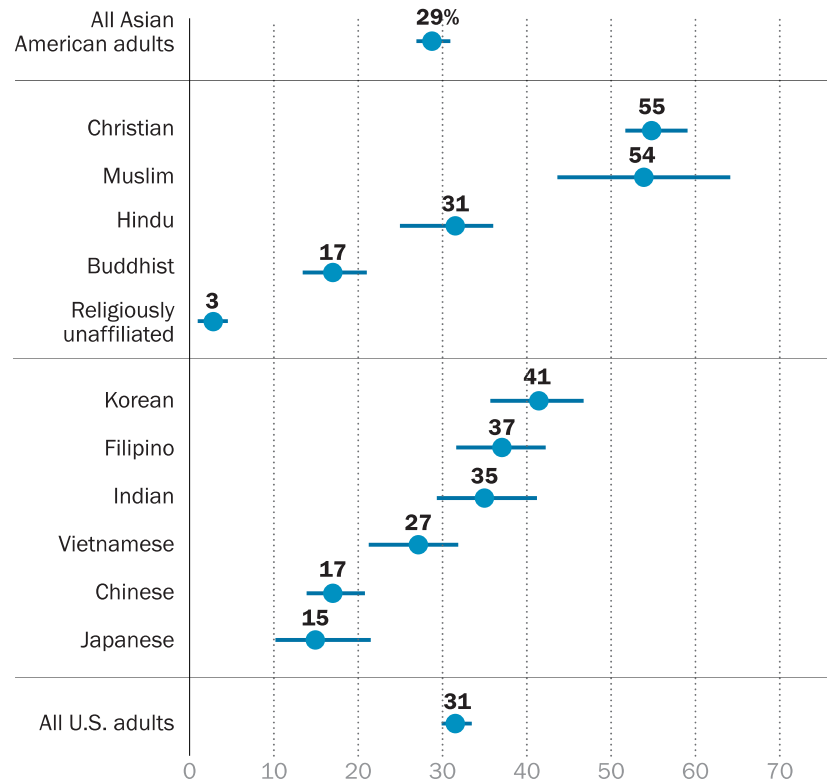
Regular religious attendance is more common among Korean and Filipino Americans than among Vietnamese, Japanese or Chinese Americans. (As previously noted, Korean and Filipino Americans are also more likely to be Christian.)

Overall, foreign-born Asian Americans are more likely than those born in the U.S. to attend religious services at least monthly (32% vs. 21%).

On this question, Asian Americans closely resemble U.S. adults as a whole, 31% of whom say they attend religious services at least once a month, including 25% who say they do so weekly or more often, according to an [August 2021 survey](#).

Among Asian Americans, 55% of Christians and 54% of Muslims say they attend religious services at least monthly

% who say they attend religious services or go to a temple, shrine or other religious space at least once a month



Note: Horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence level margins of error.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

Comparison data for “All U.S. adults” comes from Pew Research Center’s National Public Opinion Reference Survey (NPORS) conducted May 29, 2021-Aug. 25, 2021. The question about religious service attendance differs slightly between the two surveys. The Asian American survey asked, “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services or go to a temple, shrine or other religious space?” The NPORS survey asked, “Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?” “Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Home worship: Shrines, altars and religious symbols

In some Asian religious traditions, religious practice is centered in the home rather than in a communal setting. About one-third of Asian Americans (36%) say their home contains an altar, shrine or religious symbol that they use for worship.

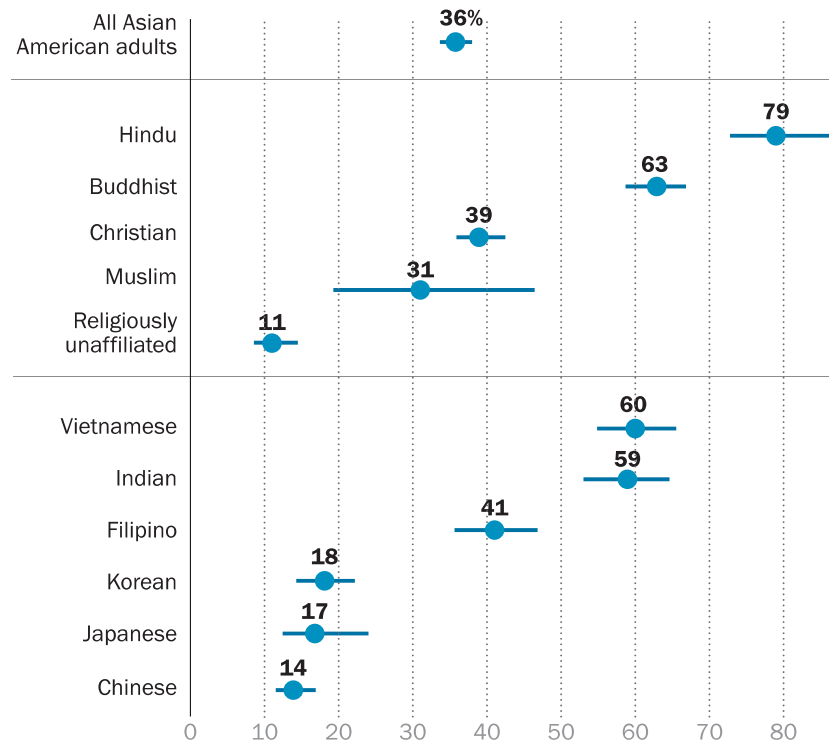
Using an altar, shrine or other religious symbol for worship in the home is most common among Vietnamese and Indian Americans, in part because this is a relatively common practice among Buddhists (who make up 37% of the Vietnamese American population) and Hindus (who make up 48% of the Indian American population).

Worshipping at home is also fairly common among Filipino Americans, owing to the large share of Catholics within the Filipino American population –

66% of Filipino Catholics in the U.S. say they have an altar, shrine or religious symbol used for worship in their home, compared with just 9% of other Filipino Americans.

Most Vietnamese and Indian Americans have shrine, altar or religious symbol for worship at home

% who say they have an altar, shrine or religious symbol used for worship at home



Note: Horizontal lines indicate the 95% confidence level margins of error.
Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.
"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While 36% of Asian Americans say they use a shrine, altar or religious symbol to worship at home, and 29% say they regularly attend religious services, only 15% say they *both* of these things. This pattern reflects the varying worship practices of different religious groups.

For example, about half of Asian American Protestants (53%) say they attend religious services monthly but don't worship at a home altar. About half of Buddhists (51%) and Hindus (52%) say the opposite: They do not attend religious services monthly, but they do worship at a home altar.

Sizable numbers of Asian

American Catholics (29%) and Hindus (27%) engage in *both* practices, attending religious services monthly and worshipping at a home altar or shrine.

Relatively few Asian Americans are both regular service attenders and have a shrine, altar or symbol for worship at home

% of Asian American adults who ...

	Attend services monthly or more; have home shrine for worship*	Attend services monthly or more; don't have home shrine*	Attend less than monthly; have home shrine*	Neither attend monthly nor have home shrine*
	%	%	%	%
All Asian American adults	15	15	21	47
Protestant	10	53	3	34
Catholic	29	8	26	26
Buddhist	11	5	51	32
Hindu	27	3	52	16
Muslim**	18	35	13	33
Religiously unaffiliated	1	2	11	86

* The question asked, "Do you have an altar, shrine, or religious symbol that you use for worship in your home?"

** The survey included 160 interviews with Muslim respondents, with an effective sample size of 92 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.2 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Feeling ‘close to’ a religion for reasons such as family background or culture

In the U.S., being Christian is often perceived as an exclusive religious identity with a clear set of associated beliefs (such as a creed) and normative practices (such as attending religious services). In many Asian countries, however, religion and religious identity are often understood differently.³

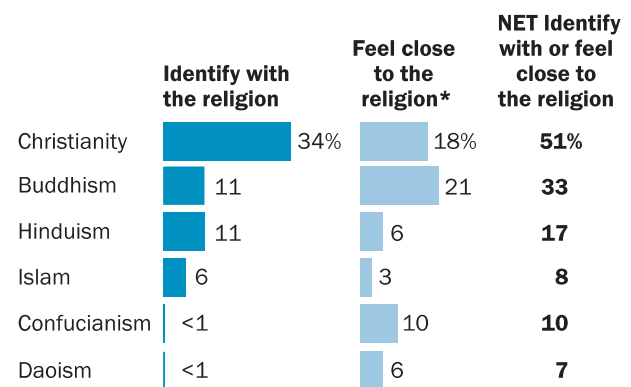
For example, the practices and beliefs associated with Buddhism, Hinduism, Daoism (or Taoism), Shintoism and Confucianism are often so infused in daily life in Asian countries that even people who do not identify with those religious groups may accept some of their beliefs and engage in some of their rituals.

The lines between members and nonmembers, as well as between the religious groups themselves, can be fuzzy. In China and Japan, for example, many individual temples and shrines are associated with multiple traditions. (Read the [sidebar about the words for “religion” in Asian languages](#).)

Asian Americans are at the intersection of these two ways of being religious. Many identify with a specific religion, such as Christianity or Islam. However, many who do not identify with a specific religion still say they consider themselves close to the religious or philosophical traditions that are common in their country of ancestry. In addition, some Asian Americans say they feel close to *multiple* faith traditions.

Asian Americans twice as likely to feel ‘close to’ Buddhism than to identify as Buddhist

% of Asian American adults who say they identify with or feel close to each religion



* Do not identify with the religion, but say they feel close to it for reasons aside from religion (such as family background or culture). Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. “Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

³ Sun, Anna. 2020. “To Be or Not to Be a Confucian,” In Cao, Nanlai, Guiseppe Giordan and Fenggang Yang, eds. “Annual Review of the Society of Religion: Chinese Religions Going Global.” Refer also to Michael Coogan. 2005. “Eastern Religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto.”

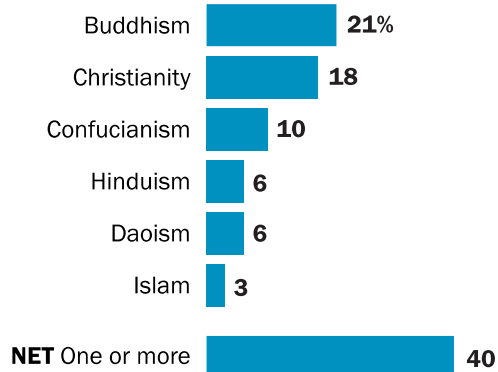
The survey measured these ways of being religious with two questions. The first asked: “What is your present religion, if any?”⁴ The second question asked: “Aside from religion, do you consider yourself close to any of the following traditions for other reasons (such as your family background or culture)?”⁵

In total, 40% of Asian American adults express a connection to one or more groups that they do not claim as a religious identity.

For example, 21% of Asian American adults do not identify religiously as Buddhist but say they feel close to Buddhism “aside from religion,” while 18% do not identify religiously as Christian, yet say they feel close to Christianity aside from religion. And 10% express a similar connection to Confucianism.

4 in 10 Asian Americans say they feel ‘close to’ at least one religion that they don’t personally identify with

% of Asian American adults who feel close to ____ for reasons aside from religion (such as family background or culture)



Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

“Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

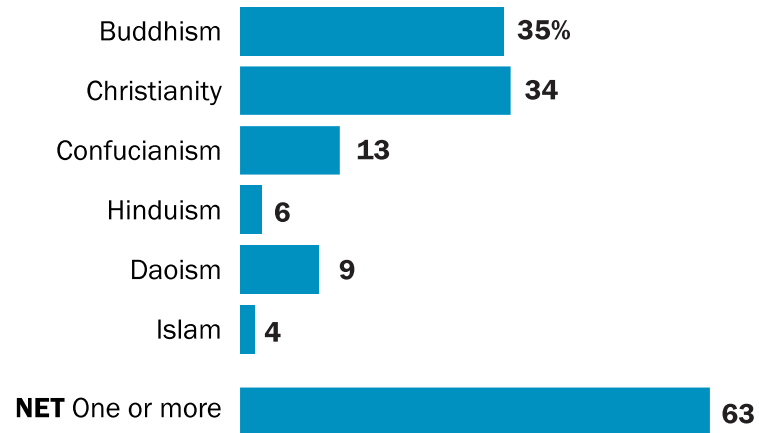
⁴ Respondents were presented with 11 common responses: Protestant (for example, Baptist, Methodist, Pentecostal, etc.), Roman Catholic, Muslim, Buddhist, Daoist or Taoist, Hindu, Sikh, Confucian, Atheist, Agnostic, and Nothing in particular. Respondents also could volunteer other responses.

⁵ Six traditions were listed: Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Daoism or Taoism, and Islam. Respondents were asked to say “yes” (they are close to) or “no” (they are not close to) each tradition, and they could say “yes” to more than one.

About two-thirds of religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans (63%) say they are close to at least one of these religious traditions. (Jump to the [chapter on religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans](#) for more on this.)

63% of religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans say they are close to at least one faith for reasons other than religion

*% of **religiously unaffiliated** Asian Americans who feel close to ____ for reasons aside from religion (such as family background or culture)*



Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.
"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The meaning of ‘religion’ in East Asia

In many East Asian languages, there is no single, literal equivalent of the English word “religion.” The modern Chinese, Japanese and Korean terms for religion – [zongjiao](#), [shūkyō](#) and [jonggyo](#) – were all created in the early 20th century by Asian scholars working with Western texts who wanted to translate “religion” from Western languages and needed to invent a word.

Their definitions of religion were influenced by Christian religious norms, rather than developing organically from Buddhist, Confucian, Shinto, Daoist or other religious traditions that are more common in those countries, as we noted in our 2023 report, [“Measuring Religion in China.”](#)

To this day, the words for “religion” in many East Asian countries and some parts of Southeast Asia refer primarily to *organized* forms of religion, particularly those with professional clergy and institutional oversight. The Chinese term zongjiao and its Japanese and Korean equivalents do *not* typically refer to some traditional religious beliefs and practices that are common in these countries.

Across East Asia, there are many beliefs (such as in spirits) and practices (such as visiting shrines and making offerings to ancestors) that might be considered religious, broadly speaking. But there is little emphasis in these countries on membership in congregations or denominations, except among Christians and Muslims.

These differences might lead Americans of East Asian origin to say they do not identify with any religion or that religion is not very important in their lives, because they do not consider their traditional spiritual practices – or cultural customs that have a spiritual underpinning – to be “religious” in nature. In a [series of small group conversations](#), some focus group participants made this point. And the survey data supports it: More Asian Americans say they are [close to Buddhism for reasons such as ancestry or culture](#) than say Buddhism is their religion.

A similar dynamic exists in Asian countries. In China, for example, the share of adults who consider Buddhism to be their formal religion (zongjiao) is 4%, according to the 2018 Chinese General Social Survey data. But the share who believe in Buddha and/or [bodhisattvas](#) is 33%, according to the 2018 China Family Panel Studies survey.

Findings from our focus groups

After conducting the survey, the Center arranged small group conversations (focus groups) and one-on-one interviews with a total of more than 100 Asian Americans to gain an understanding of what religion means to them in their own words.⁶ In the conversations, participants were asked to discuss the nature of their connections to religions they may not claim as their own.⁷

These are some of the most common themes that emerged on this topic:

Many people we talked to, including those who are religiously unaffiliated, expressed a cultural connection to the dominant religious tradition in their country of origin. This sentiment was also apparent in the survey results, which show, for example, that Indian Americans who are religiously unaffiliated say they feel close to Hinduism *aside from religion* at much higher rates than do religious “nones” of other Asian origin groups.

For some non-Christians we talked to in these conversations, feeling close to Christianity is an unavoidable result of living in the United States. One Indian American focus group participant who grew up in the U.S. and is not Christian, but who said she considers herself close to Christianity, explained: “My whole life I was exposed to Christmas and all this stuff. Even though I don’t believe in it, we had to give gifts ... so it was always part of our culture, even though we don’t believe in it.” In the survey, 34% of *religiously unaffiliated* U.S. Asian adults (representing 18% of Asian Americans overall) said they feel close to Christianity even though they do not identify as Christians.

Some participants in these conversations said there is a natural affinity or closeness between certain pairs of religions that have shared beliefs, values or practices. For example, a Hindu participant expressed a personal connection to Buddhism “because some of the practices of Buddhists, they are very much similar to [Hindu practices].” And a Muslim participant drew parallels between Islam and Christianity, saying “in Islam and in Christianity there’s a lot common.”

Finally, some people we talked to questioned whether Confucianism or Daoism should be seen as religions. In the words of one Vietnamese Buddhist, “Confucianism and Daoism is part of my culture. However, for me, it’s a school of philosophy. I do not identify myself as being a Daoist or Confucian.” Another participant said of Confucianism, “There’s no deity there.

⁶ These participants were not part of the main survey, but they were asked some of the survey questions in the discussions. [These discussions are explored in more detail in a data essay.](#)

⁷ Refer to the [Methodology](#) for details on the timing and structure of the focus groups and in-depth interviews.

So it's only ... a philosophy." This view aligns with the survey's findings on Asian Americans' views on Confucianism and Daoism. (Jump to the [chapter on Confucianism and Daoism](#).)

Other key findings

In addition to the overall religious profiles of Asian American ethnic groups, other key findings from the survey include:

- 12% of Asian Americans neither identify with, nor feel close to, *any* of the religions or philosophical traditions measured in the survey.
- 30% of Asian Americans say all or most of their friends have the same religion they do. This share is slightly lower among Buddhists (21%) than among Asian Americans in other religious groups analyzed.
- 77% of Asian Americans say they would be comfortable if a family member married outside of their faith. This is slightly lower than the share saying they would be comfortable if a family member married someone who is not Asian (86%) or married someone who is Asian but has a different ethnicity (87%). Korean Americans are less likely than other Asian Americans to say they would be comfortable with a family member marrying outside of their faith.

The remainder of this report details the survey's findings about Asian American adults who identify with – or feel close to – six religions or philosophical traditions. Click the links below to jump to each chapter.

[Christianity](#) | [Buddhism](#) | [Hinduism](#) | [Islam](#) | [Confucianism and Daoism](#) | [Religiously unaffiliated](#)

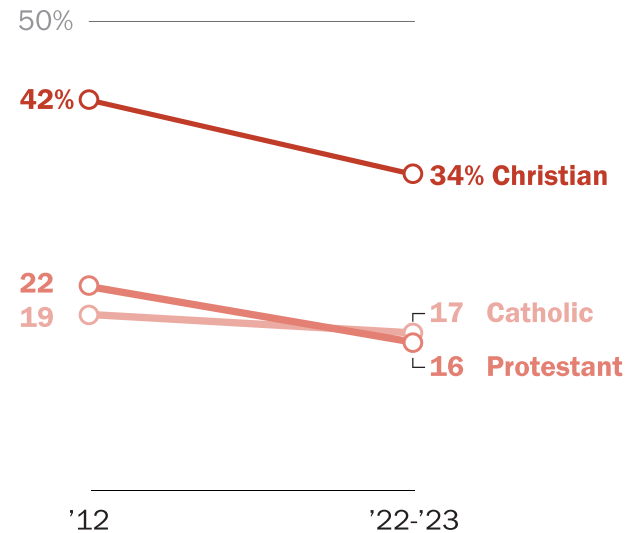
1. Christianity among Asian Americans

Despite recent declines, Christianity is still the most common religion among Asian Americans. About a third of Asian American adults (34%) say their present religion is Christianity, down from 42% when Pew Research Center last conducted an [in-depth survey of Asian Americans, in 2012](#).

Looking at the largest subgroups within Christianity, Protestants now make up 16% of the Asian American population, down from 22% in 2012. (This includes 10% of Asian American adults who identify as born-again or evangelical Protestants, compared with 13% in 2012.) The Catholic share is more stable: 17% of Asian American adults are Catholic today, about the same as in 2012 (19%).

Declining share of Asian Americans are Christian

% of Asian American adults who identify as Christian



Source: Surveys of Asian American adults conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012, and July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Another 18% of Asian Americans, while not identifying as Christians, say they feel “close to” Christianity “aside from religion” for reasons such as family background or culture. Combining this group with the share who say they are Christian, about half (51%) of Asian adults in the United States express a connection to Christianity. (Read more on the [difference between religious identity and connections aside from religion](#) in the Overview.)

Filipino (74%) and Korean (59%) Americans are especially likely to say their religion is Christianity. When combined with those who say they feel close to Christianity aside from religion, 90% of Filipino Americans express some connection to Christianity, as do 81% of Korean Americans.

Most Filipino Americans are Catholic (57%). Korean Americans, meanwhile, are more likely to be Protestant: 34% are evangelical Protestants and 12% are nonevangelicals.

About half of Asian Americans are either Christian or consider themselves close to Christianity

% of Asian American adults who are connected to Christianity

	NET Connection to Christianity %	Christian by religion %	Identify with another religion and feel close to Christianity* %	Religiously unaffiliated and close to Christianity %
All Asian American adults	51	34	7	11
Chinese	42	23	4	15
Filipino	90	74	2	15
Indian	31	15	12	4
Japanese	56	25	10	22
Korean	81	59	3	19
Vietnamese	47	36	7	4

* Includes respondents of religions other than Christianity, as well as those who did not answer the question about their religion.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

“Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Most Filipino Americans are Catholic

% of Asian American adults who are ...

	NET Christian by religion %	Catholic %	Evangelical Protestant %	Nonevangelical Protestant %
All Asian American adults	34	17	10	6
Chinese	23	5	13	6
Filipino	74	57	9	7
Indian	15	7	4	4
Japanese	25	3	11	10
Korean	59	11	34	12
Vietnamese	36	29	4	3

Note: “NET Christian” includes smaller Christian groups, which are not shown due to insufficient sample size.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

“Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

In each of the other large Asian origin groups, well under half identify as Christian by religion. Indian Americans are among the least likely of the large Asian origin groups to identify as Christian: Just 15% say Christianity is their religion.

However, all the large Asian origin groups include substantial shares who have at least some connection to Christianity. For example, 56% of Japanese American adults express some connection to Christianity, including 25% who say Christianity is their religion, 10% who follow some other religion but feel close to Christianity aside from religion and 22% who are religiously unaffiliated but feel close to Christianity.

For [more on each Asian origin group](#), read the report's Overview.

Importance of religion among Christians

Asian Americans who say their religion is Christianity are more likely than Asian Americans overall to say that religion is very important in their lives (54% vs. 31%).

Much of the difference is due to the views of evangelical Protestants, who are more likely than other Asian American Christians to say religion is very important to them. About three-quarters of Asian American evangelicals (73%) say this, compared with half of Asian American Catholics and roughly one-third of Asian American Protestants who are not evangelicals (32%). Thus, nonevangelical Protestants are no more likely than the general Asian American population to say religion is very important in their lives.

Similar patterns are seen in attendance at religious services. Just over half of Asian American Christians say they go to church at least monthly (55%), which is significantly higher than the share of the overall Asian American population that reports going to religious services as often (29%). Evangelical Protestants are most likely to attend monthly or more (74%). Smaller shares of

Nearly three-quarters of Asian American evangelicals say religion is very important to them, and that they attend religious services at least monthly

% of Asian American adults who say ...

	All Asian American adults	NET Christian by religion	Evangelical Protestant	Nonevangelical Protestant	Catholic	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to Christianity
	%	%	%	%	%	%
<i>Religion is ____</i>						
Very important	31	54	73	32	50	2
Somewhat important	25	29	20	44	30	17
Not too/not at all important	43	17	6	24	20	81
<i>They attend religious services ____</i>						
Monthly or more often	29	55	74	45	48	6
A few times a year	20	18	9	17	23	15
Seldom	28	21	13	28	23	41
Never	21	6	4	9	5	38
They have home shrine for worship*	36	39	11	14	65	12

* The question asked, "Do you have an altar, shrine, or religious symbol that you use for worship in your home?"

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

nonevangelical Protestants and Catholics say they attend this frequently (45% and 48%, respectively), though both report going to services more often than do Asian Americans overall.

About four-in-ten Asian American Christians (39%) say they have an altar, shrine or religious symbol that they use for worship in their home, which is on par with Asian Americans as a whole (36%). However, there are differences among Christian subgroups on this measure. Roughly two-thirds of Asian American Catholics (65%) say they have a home shrine for worship, compared with 11% of evangelical Protestants, 14% of nonevangelical Protestants and 12% of religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans who express a Christian affinity (i.e., who say they feel close to Christianity, though they do not call it their religion).

Social and demographic profile of Asian American Christians

Asian American Christians are more likely than the general Asian American population to say all or most of their friends have the same religion they do (38% vs. 30%). Evangelicals (45%) are among the most likely of all religious groups analyzed to say this.

Asian American Christians are slightly older than the Asian American population as a whole. Asian American evangelical Protestants have a median age of 51, among the highest of any Asian American religious group measured in the survey.

More than half of Asian American evangelicals identify as or lean Republican

% of Asian American adults who ...

	All Asian American adults	NET Christian by religion	Evangelical Protestant	Nonevangelical Protestant	Catholic	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to Christianity
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Say all/most of their friends have the same religion they do	30	38	45	33	35	21
Ages 18-29	22	15	10	15	18	23
30-49	41	38	36	49	36	50
50-64	21	28	34	18	27	17
65+	16	19	20	18	19	10
Foreign born	68	71	72	54	77	51
U.S. born	32	28	27	46	23	47
Republican/lean Rep.	33	43	56	42	35	27
Democrat/lean Dem.	62	52	39	53	60	69
Would be comfortable if a family member married outside their religion	77	72	53	79	81	93
College graduate	51	48	53	44	46	48
<i>Household income</i>						
<\$50,000	21	19	20	28	16	20
\$50,000-\$99,999	24	27	26	25	28	21
\$100,000-\$149,999	19	20	21	18	20	24
\$150,000+	32	30	29	26	32	33

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. Age, college graduate, and foreign-born share among all Asian adults based on Pew Research Center analysis of 2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

While most Asian Americans identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party (62%), about half of Asian American Christians are Democrats or Democratic leaners (52%). Evangelical Protestants, in particular, stand out as the only Asian American religious group analyzed in which fewer than half (39%) identify with or lean toward the Democratic Party.

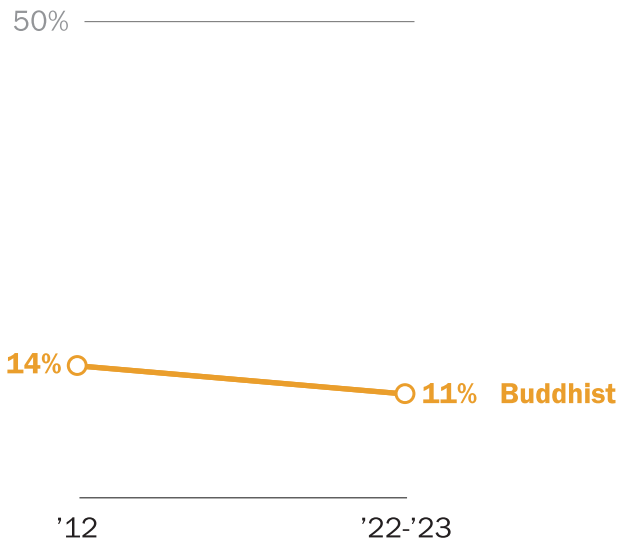
2. Buddhism among Asian Americans

About one-in-ten Asian American adults (11%) say their religion is Buddhism, a slight decline from 14% in 2012. A much larger share (21%) currently say that, aside from religion, they feel close to Buddhism for reasons such as ancestry or culture. In total, one-third of Asian Americans express at least some connection to Buddhism.⁸

Asian Americans of Southeast Asian origin are the most likely to actually identify as Buddhist. This includes 37% of Vietnamese Americans and 38% of Asian Americans who were born in or trace their ethnic origin to Southeast Asian countries other than Vietnam and the Philippines.

Slight decline in share of Buddhists among Asian Americans

% of Asian American adults who identify as Buddhist



Source: Surveys of Asian American adults conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012, and July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.
"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁸ For more on the [difference between religious identity and religious affinity](#), refer to the Overview.

Among East Asian origin groups (Chinese, Japanese and Korean Americans), most respondents who have a connection to Buddhism do *not* identify as Buddhist but rather say they feel “close to” Buddhism aside from religion. The same is *not* true among Southeast Asians.

For example, while Vietnamese Americans and Japanese Americans are equally likely (62% each) to express some connection to Buddhism, only 19% of Japanese Americans identify as Buddhist. More Japanese Americans do not identify with any religion but say they feel close to Buddhism aside from religion (30%). Another 12% identify with a religion other than Buddhism but feel close to Buddhism aside from religion.

About 6 in 10 Vietnamese, Japanese Americans say they are Buddhist or feel close to Buddhism

% of Asian American adults who are connected to Buddhism

	NET Connection to Buddhism %	Buddhist by religion %	Identify with another religion and feel close to Buddhism* %	Religiously unaffiliated and close to Buddhism %
All Asian American adults	33	11	10	11
NET East Asian	40	11	10	19
Chinese	38	12	7	19
Japanese	62	19	12	30
Korean	28	3	15	10
NET South Asian	20	2	15	3
Indian	21	<1	17	4
Other South Asian**	15	5	9	1
NET Southeast Asian	35	18	7	9
Filipino	8	1	4	4
Vietnamese	62	37	11	14
Other Southeast Asian**	63	38	11	14

* Includes respondents of religions other than Buddhism, as well as those who did not answer the question about their religion.

** The survey included 164 interviews with those from “Other South Asian” origins, with an effective sample size of 87 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.5 percentage points. It also included 189 interviews with those from “Other Southeast Asian” origins, with an effective sample size of 80 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.9 percentage points. These margins of error conservatively assume a reported percentage of 50.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. “Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Importance of religion among Buddhists

About one-third (31%) of Asian Americans who identify their religion as Buddhism say religion is very important in their lives, while another 40% say it is somewhat important.

Buddhists are less likely to say they attend religious services at least monthly than to say they use an altar, shrine or religious symbol for worship in their home (17% vs. 63%).

Few Asian American Buddhists attend religious services regularly, but most worship at a home altar or shrine

% of Asian American adults who say ...

	All Asian American adults %	Buddhist by religion %	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to Buddhism %
<i>Religion is ____</i>			
Very important	31	31	1
Somewhat important	25	40	11
Not too/not at all important	43	28	88
<i>They attend religious services ____</i>			
Monthly or more often	29	17	3
A few times a year	20	36	16
Seldom	28	35	44
Never	21	12	37
They have home shrine for worship*	36	63	17

* The question asked, "Do you have an altar, shrine, or religious symbol that you use for worship in your home?"

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The gap between attendance at religious services and praying at a home altar is even larger among Buddhists who consider religion to have a very important place in their lives. About a third (32%) of this group report that they attend religious services at least monthly, while more than eight-in-ten say they use a shrine, altar or religious symbol for worship in their home (86%).

Yet, among *all* Asian Americans who say religion is very important in their lives, there is a much smaller gap between the shares who attend religious services at least monthly (65%) and those who use an altar, shrine or religious symbol for worship at home (55%).

Among Asian American Buddhists who say religion is very important, 32% attend services monthly or more

*Among Asian Americans who say religion is **very important** in their lives, % who ...*

	All %	Buddhist by religion %
Attend services monthly or more	65	32
Worship at home altar/shrine	55	86

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Social and demographic profile of Asian American Buddhists

Asian American Buddhists are less likely than Asian Americans overall to say that all or most of their friends share their religion (21% vs. 30%). They are also the oldest of the major religious groups, with half ages 50 or older.

One-fifth of Asian American Buddhists were born in the United States, slightly smaller than the share among the general Asian American population (20% vs. 32%).

Asian American Buddhists tend to be older than Asian Americans as a whole

% of Asian American adults who ...

	All Asian American adults %	Buddhist by religion %	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to Buddhism %
Say all/most of their friends have the same religion they do	30	21	18
Ages 18-29	22	12	28
30-49	41	38	44
50-64	21	28	17
65+	16	22	11
Foreign born	68	79	62
U.S. born	32	20	38
Republican/lean Rep.	33	39	28
Democrat/lean Dem.	62	54	69
Would be comfortable if a family member married outside their religion	77	77	92
College graduate	51	34	49
<i>Household income</i>			
<\$50,000	21	29	24
\$50,000-\$99,999	24	25	25
\$100,000-\$149,999	19	15	21
\$150,000+	32	26	27

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. Age, college graduate, and foreign-born share among all Asian adults based on Pew Research Center analysis of 2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Religion Among Asian Americans"

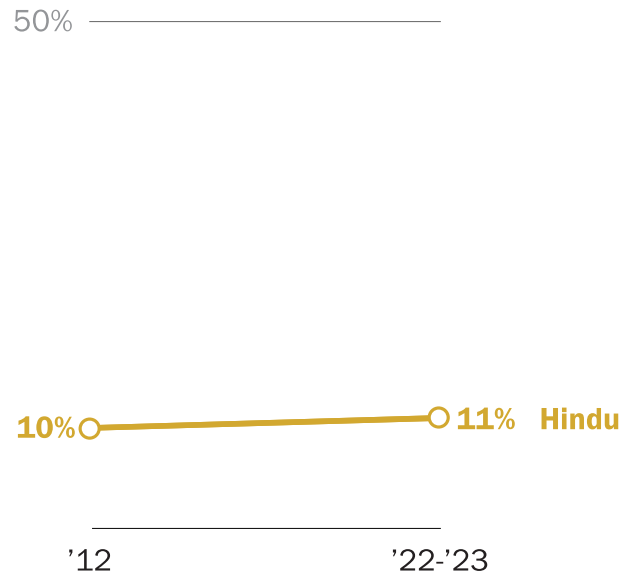
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

3. Hinduism among Asian Americans

About one-in-ten Asian Americans now identify Hinduism as their religion (11%), essentially the same as in 2012 (10%). An additional 6% of all Asian Americans say they feel close to Hinduism aside from religion, for reasons such as ancestry or culture.⁹

Hindu share among Asian Americans fairly stable since 2012

% of Asian American adults who identify as Hindu



Source: Surveys of Asian American adults conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012, and July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

⁹ For more on the [difference between religious identity and religious affinity](#), read the Overview.

Among Asian American adults who identify as Indian, about half say their present religion is Hinduism (48%), roughly the same share as in 2012 (51%). In total, two-thirds of Indian Americans say either that they are Hindu or that they consider themselves close to Hinduism.

Roughly two-thirds of Indian Americans have at least some connection to Hinduism

% of Asian American adults who are connected to Hinduism

	NET Connection to Hinduism %	Hindu by religion %	Identify with another religion and feel close to Hinduism* %	Religiously unaffiliated and close to Hinduism %
All Asian American adults	17	11	4	2
Chinese	1	0	1	<1
Filipino	2	0	2	<1
Indian	67	48	11	8
Japanese	1	<1	<1	<1
Korean	2	1	<1	<1
Vietnamese	2	0	2	<1

* Includes respondents of religions other than Hinduism, as well as those who did not answer the question about their religion.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.
"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Importance of religion among Hindus

One-third of Asian American Hindus say religion is very important in their lives, while another 38% say it is somewhat important. And 31% say they attend religious services monthly or more often.

Of all the Asian American religious groups large enough to be analyzed in the survey, Hindus are by far the most likely to say they use an altar, shrine or religious symbol for worship in their home: 79% say they do this. That share increases to 89% among Hindus who say religion is very important in their lives.

Vast majority of Asian American Hindus use altar, shrine or religious symbol for worship in home

% of Asian American adults who say ...

	All Asian American adults	Hindu by religion	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to Hinduism*
	%	%	%
<i>Religion is ____</i>			
Very important	31	33	3
Somewhat important	25	38	5
Not too/not at all important	43	28	91
<i>They attend religious services ____</i>			
Monthly or more often	29	31	<1
A few times a year	20	42	19
Seldom	28	19	45
Never	21	7	35
They have home shrine for worship**	36	79	19

* The survey included 126 interviews with religiously unaffiliated respondents who feel close to Hinduism, with an effective sample size of 58 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 12.9 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50.

** The question asked, "Do you have an altar, shrine, or religious symbol that you use for worship in your home?"

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Social and demographic profile of Asian American Hindus

Four-in-ten Asian American Hindus say all or most of their friends have the same religion they do, which is significantly higher than the share of the overall Asian American population that reports such uniformity in their friendship circle (40% vs. 30%).

Demographically, Asian American Hindus stand out in a variety of other ways. About three-quarters (77%) are under age 50, making them one of the youngest Asian American religious groups, with a median age of 40.

Roughly nine-in-ten Asian American Hindu adults (92%) were born in a country other than the United States, the highest share of any Asian American religious group that was born abroad. At the same time, religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans who consider themselves close to Hinduism are more likely than those who religiously identify as Hindu to be U.S. born (35% vs. 8%).

In terms of socioeconomic status, Asian American Hindus also rank exceptionally high. About six-in-ten have a postgraduate degree (61%), compared with 22% of all Asian American adults. And 44% of Asian American Hindus have a family income of \$150,000 or greater, compared with 32% of Asian Americans overall. On average, Hindu Americans have higher levels of education than any of the other Asian American religious groups large enough to be analyzed separately.

About 6 in 10 Asian American Hindus have a postgraduate degree

% of Asian American adults who ...

	All Asian American adults %	Hindu by religion %	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to Hinduism* %
Say all/most of their friends have the same religion they do	30	40	14
Ages 18-29	22	12	21
30-49	41	64	63
50-64	21	15	12
65+	16	8	4
Foreign born	68	92	65
U.S. born	32	8	35
Republican/lean Rep.	33	18	21
Democrat/lean Dem.	62	75	77
Would be comfortable if a family member married outside their religion	77	81	96
College graduate	51	86	73
Postgraduate degree	22	61	53
<i>Household income</i>			
<\$50,000	21	12	25
\$50,000-\$99,999	24	20	11
\$100,000-\$149,999	19	19	16
\$150,000+	32	44	46

* The survey included 126 interviews with religiously unaffiliated respondents who feel close to Hinduism, with an effective sample size of 58 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 12.9 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. Age, education, and foreign-born share among all Asian adults based on Pew Research Center analysis of 2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Politically, three-quarters of Asian American Hindus identify as Democrats or Democratic leaners, compared with 62% of Asian Americans overall.

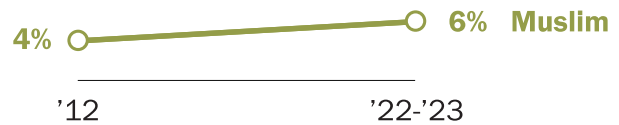
4. Islam among Asian Americans

About 6% of Asian Americans now say their religion is Islam. An additional 3% say they feel close to Islam for reasons such as family background or culture, rather than religion.¹⁰

6% of Asian Americans are Muslim

% of Asian American adults who identify as Muslim

50% 



Source: Surveys of Asian American adults conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012, and July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.
"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

¹⁰ For more on the [difference between religious identity and religious affinity](#), read the Overview.

Some 13% of Indian Americans express a connection to Islam, including 8% who identify as Muslims, 3% who follow another religion but say they feel close to Islam, and 2% who don't identify with any religion but express a feeling of closeness to Islam.

About a quarter of Asian Americans who trace their ethnic origin to South Asia have some connection to Islam (26%). And seven-in-ten Asian Americans who trace their ethnic origin to South Asian countries other than India have some connection to Islam, including 60% who say Islam is their religion. This is driven largely by Americans of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin.

Only about 2% of Asian Americans who trace their ethnic origin to countries in Southeast Asia say they are

Muslims or feel close to Islam, despite the inclusion of Muslim-majority Malaysia and Indonesia in this estimate.

Muslims make up only tiny shares of all Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese Americans.

Compared with other religious traditions, relatively few Asian Americans (3%) consider themselves close to Islam aside from religion. (The sample falling into this category is too small for

8% of Asian Americans are Muslim or feel connected to Islam

% of Asian American adults who are connected to Islam

	NET Connection to Islam %	Muslim by religion %	Identify with another religion and feel close to Islam* %	Religiously unaffiliated and close to Islam %
All Asian Americans	8	6	2	1
NET East Asians	2	<1	1	1
Chinese	1	<1	1	<1
Japanese	1	<1	1	0
Korean	1	<1	<1	<1
NET South Asian	26	20	3	3
Indian	13	8	3	2
Other South Asian**	70	60	1	9
NET Southeast Asian	2	<1	2	<1
Filipino	2	0	2	<1
Vietnamese	1	<1	1	<1
Other Southeast Asian**	6	1	4	1

* Includes respondents of religions other than Islam, as well as those who did not answer the question about their religion.

** The survey included 164 interviews with those from "Other South Asian" origins, with an effective sample size of 87 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.5 percentage points. It also included 189 interviews with those from "Other Southeast Asian" origins, with an effective sample size of 80 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.9 percentage points. These margins of error conservatively assume a reported percentage of 50.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

further analysis; only respondents who identify as Muslim by religious identity can be analyzed in this survey.)

Importance of religion among Asian American Muslims

Six-in-ten Asian American Muslims say religion is very important in their lives, which is among the highest levels seen within any religious group large enough to be analyzed in the survey. About half (54%) say they attend religious services at least monthly, which is significantly higher than the attendance rate reported by Asian American adults as a whole.

Asian American Muslims, like Asian American Christians, are much more likely than members of other faiths to say religion is very important to them and to report that they attend religious services at least monthly.

6 in 10 Asian American Muslims say religion is very important in their lives

% of Asian American adults who say ...

	All Asian American adults %	Muslim by religion* %
<i>Religion is ____</i>		
Very important	31	60
Somewhat important	25	31
Not too/not at all important	43	9
<i>They attend religious services ____</i>		
Monthly or more often	29	54
A few times a year	20	20
Seldom	28	18
Never	21	8
They have home shrine for worship**	36	31

* The survey included 160 interviews with religiously Muslim respondents, with an effective sample size of 92 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.2 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50. Figures for religiously unaffiliated respondents who feel close to Islam not shown due to insufficient sample size.

** The question asked, "Do you have an altar, shrine, or religious symbol that you use for worship in your home?"

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Social and demographic profile of Muslims

About three-in-ten Muslim American adults are under 30, compared with 22% of all Asian American adults.

Muslims are also less likely than other Asian Americans to identify with or lean toward the Republican Party. About a quarter of Asian American Muslims identify with or lean toward the GOP (23%), compared with a third of Asian Americans overall.

Muslims are also the least likely of all the large Asian American religious groups to say they would feel comfortable if a close family member married someone of a different religion. Just 40% of Muslims say this, compared with 77% of all Asian American adults.

4 in 10 Asian American Muslims say they would be comfortable if a family member married a non-Muslim

% of Asian American adults who ...

	All Asian American adults %	Muslim by religion* %
Say all/most of their friends have the same religion they do	30	39
Ages 18-29	22	31
30-49	41	37
50-64	21	23
65+	16	9
Foreign born	68	79
U.S. born	32	21
Republican/lean Rep.	33	23
Democrat/lean Dem.	62	77
Would feel comfortable if a family member married outside their religion	77	40
College graduate	51	58
<i>Household income</i>		
<\$50,000	21	27
\$50,000-\$99,999	24	22
\$100,000-\$149,999	19	14
\$150,000+	32	34

* The survey included 160 interviews with religiously Muslim respondents, with an effective sample size of 92 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.2 percentage points. This margin of error conservatively assumes a reported percentage of 50. Figures for religiously unaffiliated respondents who feel close to Islam not shown due to insufficient sample size. Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. Age, college graduate and foreign-born share among all Asian adults based on Pew Research Center analysis of 2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS). "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

5. Confucianism and Daoism among Asian Americans

Christian, Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim are the only religious identities that are each claimed by at least 5% of Asian American adults. Fewer than 1% of Asian Americans say that their present religion is Daoism or Confucianism. However, 10% of all Asian Americans say they feel close to Confucianism for reasons of culture or ancestry, rather than religion, and 6% say the same about Daoism.

Connections to Confucianism

One-in-ten Asian Americans say they have some tie to Confucianism; this is almost always expressed as a connection aside from religion. In focus groups, several respondents said they considered Confucianism to be more a philosophy than a religion.

1 in 10 Asian Americans consider themselves close to Confucianism, but fewer than 1% identify with it as a religion

% of Asian American adults who are connected to Confucianism

	NET Connection to Confucianism %	Confucian by religion %	Identify with another religion and feel close to Confucianism* %	Religiously unaffiliated and close to Confucianism %
All Asian American adults	10	<1	6	4
NET East Asians	20	1	10	10
Chinese	24	1	10	13
Japanese	4	0	2	2
Korean	22	<1	15	7
NET South Asian	1	0	1	<1
Indian	1	0	1	<1
Other South Asian**	<1	0	<1	0
NET Southeast Asians	6	<1	4	2
Filipino	2	0	1	<1
Vietnamese	13	<1	10	3
Other Southeast Asian**	7	0	5	3

* Includes respondents of religions other than Confucianism, as well as those who did not answer the question about their religion.

** The survey included 164 interviews with those from "Other South Asian" origins, with an effective sample size of 87 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.5 percentage points. It also included 189 interviews with those from "Other Southeast Asian" origins, with an effective sample size of 80 and a 95% confidence level margin of error of plus or minus 10.9 percentage points. These margins of error conservatively assume a reported percentage of 50.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. "Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

(Jump to the [section on focus group conversation](#).)

Most Asian Americans who describe themselves as feeling close to Confucianism also identify with a different religion (generally either Christianity or Buddhism) rather than being religiously unaffiliated.

Chinese Americans are significantly more likely than adults in any of the other large Asian origin groups to be religiously unaffiliated and, at the same time, to express a feeling of closeness to Confucianism. Some 13% of Chinese Americans say both of these things. In total, 24% of Chinese Americans express a connection to Confucianism, including 1% who identify Confucianism as their religion. Considerable shares of Korean (22%) and Vietnamese (13%) Americans also have a connection to Confucianism, though in nearly all cases as an affinity, not as their religion.

Connections to Daoism

About 7% of Asian Americans express some connection to Daoism. As with Confucianism, this connection is almost always described as a matter of culture or family background, rather than of religion. Fewer than 1% of Asian American adults say Daoism is their present religion.

Both Daoism and Confucianism originated in China, and they have overlapping histories and tenets, including an emphasis on filial piety, or respecting one's elders and honoring one's ancestors. But unlike Confucianism, Daoism has a pantheon of gods or deities along with dedicated clergy.

Roughly two-thirds (69%) of Asian Americans who say they consider themselves close to Daoism also express a similar affinity for Confucianism. About half also identify with a religion, mostly Christianity or Buddhism.

Roughly one-fifth (17%) of Chinese Americans say they have some connection with Daoism.

17% of Chinese Americans either identify with or consider themselves close to Daoism

% of Asian American adults who are connected to Daoism

	NET Connection to Daoism	Daoist by religion	Identify with another religion and feel close to Daoism*	Religiously unaffiliated and close to Daoism
	%	%	%	%
All Asian American adults	7	<1	3	3
Chinese	17	1	7	9
Filipino	1	0	1	1
Indian	2	<1	1	<1
Japanese	4	0	1	2
Korean	3	<1	1	1
Vietnamese	7	<1	5	2

* Includes respondents of religions other than Daoism, as well as those who did not answer the question about their religion.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

6. Religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans

About one-third (32%) of Asian Americans have no religious affiliation, meaning that they answer a survey question about their present religion by saying they are atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular.” As with Americans overall, this share has been growing; it was 26% in the Center’s last major survey of Asian Americans, in 2012.

As in 2012, more religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans describe their religion as “nothing in particular” than identify as atheist or agnostic.

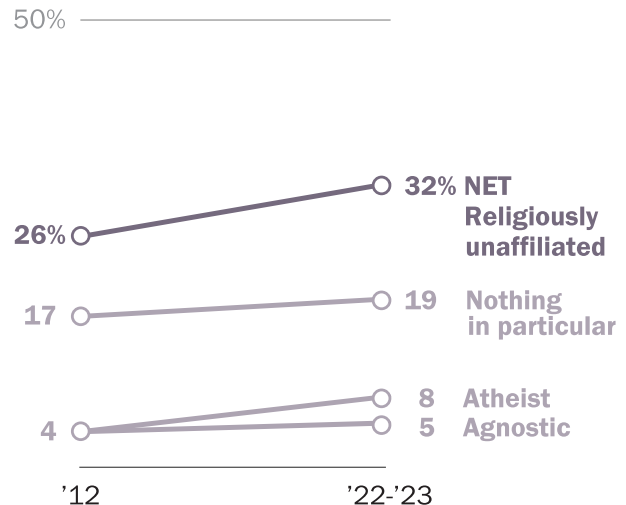
In addition, most religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans say they feel close to one or more traditions for reasons other than religion, such as ancestry or culture. Overall, just 12% of Asian Americans say they have no connection to any of the religions or philosophical traditions measured in the survey.

Chinese and Japanese Americans are more likely than other Asian Americans to be religiously unaffiliated. About half of all Japanese American adults (47%) describe themselves as atheist, agnostic, or having no particular religion, as do 56% of Chinese American adults.

Chinese (47%) and Japanese Americans (58%) are also more likely than other Asian Americans to feel close to a faith tradition for reasons aside from religion (regardless of whether they identify with a religion or are unaffiliated).

Share of religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans has risen

% of Asian American adults who are religiously unaffiliated



Source: Surveys of Asian American adults conducted Jan. 3-March 27, 2012, and July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. “Religion Among Asian Americans”

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A quarter of Chinese Americans say they have neither a religious affiliation nor feel close to any religious or philosophical tradition for other reasons, such as ancestry or culture. This is the highest share among the large Asian origin groups to reject any kind of connection to religion, and about twice the share of the overall Asian American population that does so (12%).

A recent Pew Research Center report on religion in China showed that formal identification with religion is also low there: Chinese surveys indicate that only about one-in-ten Chinese adults say they have a religion, though much larger shares say they engage in spiritual practices such as lighting incense or making offerings to Buddha.

On the other hand, Indian (5%), Filipino (7%) and Vietnamese (7%) Americans are significantly less likely than the overall Asian American population to say both that they are religiously unaffiliated *and* that they have no feeling of closeness to any of the religious or philosophical traditions measured in the survey. Put another way, upward of 90% of adults in those three origin groups express some connection to a religious tradition.

31% of Chinese Americans are religiously unaffiliated but consider themselves close to a religion

% of Asian American adults who are ...

	NET Religiously unaffiliated %	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to one or more religions %	Religiously unaffiliated and NOT close to any religions %	NET Affiliated with a religion %
All Asian American adults	32	20	12	65
Chinese	56	31	25	39
Filipino	23	16	7	76
Indian	15	10	5	83
Korean	34	24	10	63
Vietnamese	23	17	7	74
Japanese	47	36	11	48

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Importance of religion among the unaffiliated

Perhaps not surprisingly, most religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans attribute little importance to religion in their lives. However, there are notable differences between those who express some closeness to a religious or philosophical tradition and those who do not.

Religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans who are close to at least one religious tradition are more likely than those who are not to say that religion has at least some importance in their lives (15% vs. 3%).

Similarly, while religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans are less likely than Asian American adults as a whole to say they *never* attend religious

services, there are differences between unaffiliated people who say they feel close to a religion or philosophical tradition and those who express no such closeness. About six-in-ten (62%) of those with no affiliation and no affinity to a religion say they never attend religious services, compared with four-in-ten of those who are religiously unaffiliated but say they are close to at least one tradition.

Religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans who feel close to at least one tradition (aside from religion) are also more likely than those who are not close to any religion to say they have an altar, shrine or religious symbol for worship in their home (15% vs. 6%).

11% of religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans worship at a home altar, shrine or religious symbol

% of Asian American adults who say ...

	All Asian American adults %	NET Religiously unaffiliated %	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to any religion %	Religiously unaffiliated and NOT close to any religion %
<i>Religion is ____</i>				
Very important	31	1	2	<1
Somewhat important	25	9	13	2
Not too important	23	35	38	28
Not at all important	21	55	47	68
<i>They attend religious services ____</i>				
Monthly or more often	29	3	3	2
A few times a year	20	11	14	5
Seldom	28	38	42	31
Never	21	48	40	62
They have home shrine for worship*	36	11	15	6

* The question asked, "Do you have an altar, shrine, or religious symbol that you use for worship in your home?"

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Social and demographic profile of the unaffiliated

Religiously unaffiliated Asian American adults are more likely than the overall Asian American population to be younger than age 50 (73% vs. 62%), born in the United States (38% vs. 32%), and Democrats or Democratic leaners (71% vs. 62%). There are no major differences in education or income levels between Asian Americans who are religiously unaffiliated and those who identify with a religion.

Nearly three-quarters of religiously unaffiliated Asian Americans are younger than 50

% of Asian American adults who ...

	All Asian American adults %	NET Religiously unaffiliated %	Religiously unaffiliated and feel close to any religion %	Religiously unaffiliated and NOT close to any religion %
Say all/most of their friends have the same religion they do	30	20	19	22
Ages 18-49	62	73	73	71
50+	38	27	27	29
Foreign born	68	61	60	63
U.S. born	32	38	39	37
Republican/lean Rep.	33	25	24	27
Democrat/lean Dem.	62	71	72	68
Would be comfortable if a family member married outside their religion	77	91	92	88
College graduate	51	51	53	46
<i>Household income</i>				
<\$50,000	21	22	20	25
\$50,000-\$99,999	24	21	22	20
\$100,000-\$149,999	19	20	22	16
\$150,000+	32	34	33	35

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023. Age, college graduate and foreign-born share among all Asian adults based on Pew Research Center analysis of 2021 American Community Survey (IPUMS).

"Religion Among Asian Americans"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Methodology

The data in this Pew Research Center report is drawn from a national cross-sectional survey conducted by Westat. The sampling design of the survey was an address-based sampling (ABS) approach, supplemented by list samples, to reach a nationally representative group of respondents. The survey was fielded July 5, 2022, through Jan. 27, 2023.

Self-administered screening interviews were conducted with a total of 36,469 U.S. adults either online or by mail, resulting in 7,006 interviews with Asian American adults. These 7,006 Asian Americans are the focus of this report. After accounting for the complex sample design and loss of precision due to weighting, the margin of sampling error for these respondents is plus or minus 2.1 percentage points at the 95% level of confidence.

The survey was administered in two stages. In the first stage, a short screening survey was administered to a national sample of U.S. adults to collect basic demographics and determine a respondent's eligibility for the extended survey of Asian Americans. Screener respondents were considered eligible for the extended survey if they self-identified as Asian (alone or in combination with any other race or ethnicity). Note that all individuals who self-identified as Asian were asked to complete the extended survey.

To maintain consistency with the U.S. Census Bureau's definition of "Asian," individuals responding as Asian but who self-identified with origins that did not meet the bureau's official standards prior to the 2020 decennial census were considered ineligible and were not asked to complete the extended survey or were removed from the final sample. Those excluded were people solely of Southwest Asian descent (e.g., Lebanese or Saudi), those with Central Asian origins (e.g., Afghan or Uzbek) as well as various other non-Asian origins. The impact of excluding these groups

Margins of sampling error for survey of Asian American adults

Group	Unweighted sample size	95% margin of error
All Asian adults	7,006	2.1 percentage points
Chinese	1,777	3.6 percentage points
Filipino	1,051	5.6 percentage points
Indian	897	5.3 percentage points
Japanese	294	8.6 percentage points
Korean	1,146	5.1 percentage points
Vietnamese	935	5.1 percentage points
Christian	2,827	3.6 percentage points
Protestant	1,468	4.7 percentage points
<i>Evangelical</i>	979	5.7 percentage points
<i>Nonevangelical</i>	487	8.2 percentage points
Catholic	1,331	5.5 percentage points
Buddhist	839	6.2 percentage points
Hindu	559	6.3 percentage points
Muslim	160	10.2 percentage points
Religiously unaffiliated	2,178	3.8 percentage points

Note: Unweighted sample sizes do not account for the survey's sample design or weighting and do not describe a group's contribution to weighted estimates. For details, read the "Sample design" and "Weighting and variance estimation" sections. Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

is small, as together they represent about 1% to 2% of the national U.S. Asian population, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of the 2021 American Community Survey.

Eligible survey respondents were asked in the extended survey how they identified ethnically (e.g., Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese or some other ethnicity with a write-in option). Note that survey respondents were asked about their ethnicity rather than nationality. For example, those classified as Chinese in the survey are those self-identifying as of Chinese ethnicity, rather than necessarily being a citizen or former citizen of the People’s Republic of China. Since this is an ethnicity, classification of survey respondents as Chinese also includes those who are Taiwanese.

The research plan for this project was submitted to Westat’s institutional review board (IRB), which is an independent committee of experts that specializes in helping to protect the rights of research participants. Due to the minimal risks associated with this questionnaire content and the population of interest, this research underwent an expedited review and received approval (approval # FWA 00005551).

Throughout this methodology statement, the terms “extended survey” and “extended questionnaire” refer to the extended survey of Asian Americans that is the focus of this report, and “eligible adults” and “eligible respondents” refer to those individuals who met its eligibility criteria, unless otherwise noted.

Sample design

The survey had a complex sample design constructed to maximize efficiency in reaching Asian American adults while also supporting reliable, national estimates for the population as a whole and for the five largest ethnic groups (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean and Vietnamese). Asian American adults include those who self-identify as Asian, either alone or in combination with other races or Hispanic identity.

The main sample frame of the 2022-2023 Asian American Survey is an address-based sample (ABS). The ABS frame of addresses was derived from the USPS Computerized Delivery Sequence file. It is maintained by Marketing Systems Group (MSG) and is updated monthly. MSG geocodes their entire ABS frame, so block, block group, and census tract characteristics from the decennial census and the American Community Survey (ACS) could be appended to addresses and used for sampling and data collection.

All addresses on the ABS frame were geocoded to a census tract. Census tracts were then grouped into three strata based on the density of Asian American adults, defined as the proportion of Asian American adults among all adults in the tract. The three strata were defined as:

- **High density:** Tracts with an Asian American adult density of 10% or higher
- **Medium density:** Tracts with a density of 3% to less than 10%
- **Low density:** Tracts with a density less than 3%

Mailing addresses in census tracts from the lowest density stratum, stratum 3, were excluded from the sampling frame. As a result, the frame excluded 54.1% of the 2020 census tracts, or 49.1% of the U.S. adult population, including 9.1% of adults who self-identified as Asian alone or in combination with other races or Hispanic ethnicity. For the largest five Asian ethnic subgroups, Filipinos had the largest percentage of excluded adults with 6.8%, while Indians had the lowest with 4.2% of the adults. Addresses were then sampled from the two remaining strata. This stratification and the assignment of differential sampling rates to the strata were critical design components because of the rareness of the Asian American adult population.

Despite oversampling of the high- and medium-density Asian American strata in the ABS sample, the ABS sample was not expected to efficiently yield the required number of completed interviews for some ethnic subgroups. Therefore, the ABS sample was supplemented with samples from the specialized surnames list frames maintained by the MSG. These list frames identify households using commercial databases linked to addresses and telephone numbers. The individuals' surnames in these lists could be classified by likely ethnic origin. Westat requested MSG to produce five list frames: Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean and Vietnamese. The lists were subset to include only cases with a mailing address. Addresses sampled from the lists, unlike those sampled from the ABS frame, were not limited to high- and medium-density census tracts.

Once an address was sampled from either the ABS frame or the surname lists, an invitation was mailed to the address. The invitation requested that the adult in the household with the next birthday complete the survey.

Data collection

To maximize response, the survey used a sequential mixed-mode protocol in which sampled households were first directed to respond online and later mailed a paper version of the questionnaire if they did not respond online.

Sample allocation and Asian American incidence by sampling frame

Sampling frame	Addresses sampled	Completed screeners	Number of screened adults eligible for extended interview	Number of eligible adults who completed extended interview
Combined	268,929	37,137	9,466	7,369
Address-based sample	218,992	29,872	4,569	3,610
High-density stratum	172,692	23,460	4,284	3,372
Medium-density stratum	46,300	6,412	285	238
Chinese surname list sample	2,643	468	334	283
Filipino surname list sample	15,491	1,991	1,168	841
Indian surname list sample	5,241	668	469	363
Broad surname definition	3,999	479	329	257
Narrow surname definition	1,242	189	140	106
Korean surname list sample	9,998	1,801	1,227	974
Vietnamese surname list sample	11,323	1,669	1,230	935

Note: The survey utilized two sampling frames to maximize efficiency in reaching Asian American adults while also supporting reliable, national estimates for the Asian adult population and the five largest ethnic groups (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean and Vietnamese). The first sampling frame was an address-based sample (ABS). The ABS was not expected to efficiently yield the required number of completed interviews for some ethnic subgroups. Therefore, the ABS was supplemented with samples from specialized surname list frames. Combined totals do not sum to the sample size of 7,006 since 363 respondents completed the survey but were removed from the final sample as they did not meet eligibility requirements.

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

The first mailing was a letter introducing the survey and providing the information necessary (URL and unique PIN) for online response. A pre-incentive of \$2 was included in the mailing. This and remaining screener recruitment letters focused on the screener survey, without mentioning the possibility of eligibility for a longer survey and associated promised incentive, since most people would only be asked to complete the short screening survey. It was important for all households to complete the screening survey, not just those who identify as Asian American. As such, the invitation did not mention that the extended survey would focus on topics surrounding

the Asian American experience. The invitation was generic to minimize the risk of nonresponse bias due to topic salience bias.

After one week, Westat sent a postcard reminder to all sampled individuals, followed three weeks later by a reminder letter to nonrespondents. Approximately 8.5 weeks after the initial mailing, Westat sent nonrespondents a paper version screening survey, which was a four-page booklet (one folded 11×17 paper) and a postage-paid return envelope in addition to the cover letter. If no response was obtained from those four mailings, no further contact was made.

Eligible adults who completed the screening interview on the web were immediately asked to continue with the extended questionnaire. If an eligible adult completed the screener online but did not complete the extended interview, Westat sent them a reminder letter. This was performed on a rolling basis when it had been at least one week since the web break off. Names were not collected until the end of the web survey, so these letters were addressed to “Recent Participant.”

If an eligible respondent completed a paper screener, Westat mailed them the extended survey and a postage-paid return envelope. This was sent weekly as completed paper screeners arrived. Westat followed these paper mailings with a reminder postcard. Later, Westat sent a final paper version via FedEx to eligible adults who had not completed the extended interview online or by paper.

Incentives

A pre-incentive of \$2 (in the form of two \$1 bills) was sent to all sampled addresses with the first letter, which provided information about how to complete the survey online. This and subsequent screener invitations only referred to the pre-incentive without reference to the possibility of later promised incentives.

Respondents who completed the screening survey and were found eligible were offered a promised incentive of \$10 to go on and complete the extended survey. All participants who completed the extended web survey were offered their choice of a \$10 Amazon.com gift code instantly or \$10 cash mailed. All participants who completed the survey via paper were mailed a \$10 cash incentive.

In December 2022 a mailing was added for eligible respondents who had completed a screener questionnaire, either by web or paper but who had not yet completed the extended survey. It was sent to those who had received their last mailing in the standard sequence at least four weeks earlier. It included a cover letter, a paper copy of the extended survey and a business reply

envelope, and was assembled in a 9x12 envelope with a \$1 bill made visible through the envelope window.

In the last month of data collection, an additional mailing was added to boost the number of Vietnamese respondents. A random sample of 4,000 addresses from the Vietnamese surname list and 2,000 addresses from the ABS frame who were flagged as likely Vietnamese were sent another copy of the first invitation letter, which contained web login credentials but no paper copy of the screener. This was sent in a No. 10 envelope with a wide window and was assembled with a \$1 bill visible through the envelope window.

Languages

The mail and web screening and extended surveys were developed in English and translated into Chinese (Simplified and Traditional), Hindi, Korean, Tagalog and Vietnamese. For web, the landing page was displayed in English initially but included banners at the top and bottom of the page that allowed respondents to change the displayed language. Once in the survey, a dropdown button at the top of each page was available to respondents to toggle between languages.

The paper surveys were also formatted into all six languages. Recipients thought to be more likely to use a specific language option, based on supplemental information in the sampling frame or their address location, were sent a paper screener in that language in addition to an English screener questionnaire. Those receiving a paper extended instrument were sent the extended survey in the language in which the screener was completed. For web, respondents continued in their selected language from the screener.

Weighting and variance estimation

Household-level weighting

The first step in weighting was creating a base weight for each sampled mailing address to account for its probability of selection into the sample. The base weight for mailing address k is called BW_k and is defined as the inverse of its probability of selection. The ABS sample addresses had a probability of selection based on the stratum from which they were sampled. The supplemental samples (i.e., Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean and Vietnamese surname lists) also had a probability of selection from the list frames. Because all of the addresses in the list frames are also included in the ABS frame, these addresses had multiple opportunities for these addresses to be selected, and the base weights include an adjustment to account for their higher probability of selection.

Each sampled mailing address was assigned to one of four categories according to its final screener disposition. The categories were 1) household with a completed screener interview, 2) household with an incomplete screener interview, 3) ineligible (i.e., not a household, which were primarily postmaster returns), and 4) addresses for which status was unknown (i.e., addresses that were not identified as undeliverable by the USPS but from which no survey response was received).

The second step in the weighting process was adjusting the base weight to account for occupied households among those with unknown eligibility (category 4). Previous ABS studies have found that about 13% of all addresses in the ABS frame were either vacant or not home to anyone in the civilian, noninstitutionalized adult population. For this survey, it was assumed that 87% of all sampled addresses from the ABS frame were eligible households. However, this value was not appropriate for the addresses sampled from the list frames, which were expected to have a higher proportion of households as these were maintained lists. For the list samples, the occupied household rate was computed as the proportion of list cases in category 3 compared to all resolved list cases (i.e., the sum of categories 1 through 3). The base weights for the share of category 4 addresses (unknown eligibility) assumed to be eligible were then allocated to cases in categories 1 and 2 (known households) so that the sum of the combined category 1 and 2 base weights equaled the number of addresses assumed to be eligible in each frame. The category 3 ineligible addresses were given a weight of zero.

The next step was adjusting for nonresponse for households without a completed screener interview to create a final household weight. This adjustment allocated the weights of nonrespondents (category 2) to those of respondents (category 1) within classes defined by the cross-classification of sampling strata, census region and sample type (e.g., ABS and list supplemental samples). Those classes with fewer than 50 sampled addresses or large adjustment factors were collapsed with nearby cells within the sample type. Given the large variance in the household weights among the medium density ABS stratum, final household weights for addresses within this stratum were capped at 300.

Weighting of extended survey respondents

The extended interview nonresponse adjustment began by assigning each case that completed the screener interview to one of three dispositions: 1) eligible adult completed the extended interview; 2) eligible adult did not complete the extended interview; and 3) not eligible for the extended interview.

An initial adult base weight was calculated for the cases with a completed extended interview as the product of the truncated number of adults in the household (max value of 3) and the household weight. This adjustment accounted for selecting one adult in each household.

The final step in the adult weighting was calibrating the adult weights for those who completed the extended interview so that the calibrated weights (i.e., the estimated number of adults) aligned with benchmarks for noninstitutionalized Asian adults from the 2016-2020 American Community Surveys Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS). Specifically, raking was used to calibrate the weights on the following dimensions:

1. Ethnic group (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, other single Asian ethnicities, and multiple Asian ethnicities)
2. Collapsed ethnic group (Chinese, Filipino, Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, all other single and multiple Asian ethnicities) by age group
3. Collapsed ethnic group by sex
4. Collapsed ethnic group by census region
5. Collapsed ethnic group by education
6. Collapsed ethnic group by housing tenure
7. Collapsed ethnic group by nativity
8. Income group by number of persons in the household

The control totals used in raking were based on the entire population of Asian American adults (including those who live in the excluded stratum) to correct for both extended interview nonresponse and undercoverage from excluding the low-density stratum in the ABS frame.

Variance estimation

Because the modeled estimates used in the weighting are themselves subject to sampling error, variance estimation and tests of statistical significance were performed using the grouped jackknife estimator (*JK2*). One hundred sets of replicates were created by deleting a group of cases within each stratum from each replicate and doubling the weights for a corresponding set of cases

in the same stratum. The entire weighting and modeling process was performed on the full sample and then separately repeated for each replicate. The result is a total of 101 separate weights for each respondent that have incorporated the variability from the complex sample design.¹¹

Response rates

Westat assigned all sampled cases a result code for their participation in the screener, and then they assigned a result for the extended questionnaire for those who were eligible for the survey of Asian Americans. Two of the dispositions warrant some discussion. One is the category “4.313 No such address.” This category is for addresses that were returned by the U.S. Postal Service as not being deliverable. This status indicates the address, which was on the USPS Delivery Sequence File at the time of sampling, currently is not occupied or no longer exists.

The second category is “4.90 Other.” This category contains 588 addresses that were never mailed because they had a drop count of greater than four. Drop points are addresses with multiple households that share the same address. The information available in the ABS frame on drop points is limited to the number of drop points at the address, without information on the type of households at the drop point, or how they should be labeled for mailing purposes. In this survey, all drop points were eligible for sampling, but only those with drop point counts of four or fewer were mailed. Westat treated drop point counts of five or more as out of scope, and no mailing was done for those addresses.

Westat used the disposition results to compute response rates consistent with AAPOR definitions. The response rates are weighted by the base weight to account for the differential sampling in this survey. The AAPOR RR3 response rate to the screening interview was 17.0%.¹² The RR1 response rate to the extended Asian American interview (77.9%) is the number of eligible adults completing the questionnaire over the total sampled for that extended questionnaire. The overall response rate is the product of the screener response rate and the conditional response rate for the extended questionnaire. The overall response rate for the Asian American sample in the Pew Research Center survey was 13.3% (17.0% x 77.9%).

¹¹ For additional details on jackknife replication, refer to Rust, K.F., and J.N.K. Rao. 1996. [“Variance estimation for complex surveys using replication techniques.”](#) Statistical Methods in Medical Research.

¹² The weighted share of unscreened households assumed to be eligible for the screener interview (occupied “e”) was 87%.

AAPOR disposition codes

Dispositions for the screening interview stage

AAPOR code	Description of cases	Count
1.1 – Complete	Completed the last screener question on the web survey or returned a paper screener with at least one response.	36,469
2.1 – Refusal & break off	Began the web survey but did not complete the screening portion.	1,057
2.11 – Refusal	Contacted by phone or email to refuse or wrote a refusal message on returned mail.	1,389
2.113 – Blank questionnaire mailed back, “implicit refusal”	Sent a blank paper screening survey back in the reply envelope.	93
2.27 – Completed questionnaire, but not returned during field period	Returned the paper screener questionnaire after the end of the data collection period.	51
2.31 – Death (including USPS category: Deceased)	USPS returned undelivered due to deceased person at address.	17
3.19 – Nothing ever returned	Respondent did not log in to website and did not return a paper screener. Additionally, USPS did not return anything as undeliverable.	203,611
4.313 – No such address	Mail was returned as undeliverable.	20,413
4.90 – Other	Cases with greater than four drop points were not sent any mailings.	588

Dispositions for the extended interview stage

AAPOR code	Description of cases	Count
1.1 – Complete	Completed the last question on the web survey or returned a paper survey and had less than 65% item nonresponse.	7,006
2.10 – Refusal & break off	Did not complete the web survey or did not return the paper survey.	1,790
2.11 – Refusal	Contacted by phone or email to refuse or wrote a refusal message on returned mail.	11
2.113 – Blank questionnaire mailed back, “implicit refusal”	Sent a blank paper survey back in the reply envelope.	40
2.20 – Non-contact	Attempt to re-contact for the survey were returned undeliverable.	69
2.27 – Completed questionnaire, but not returned during field period	Returned the paper survey after the end of the data collection period.	80
2.31 – Death (including USPS category: Deceased)	USPS returned undelivered due to deceased person at address.	1
4.90 – Other	Post-data collection cleaning found ineligible cases.	69

Source: Survey of Asian American adults conducted July 5, 2022-Jan. 27, 2023.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Identifying ‘distinctive’ language in open-ended responses to hiding heritage from others

As part of the survey, respondents were asked if they have ever hidden a part of their heritage from people who are not Asian. Those who answered yes were asked in a follow-up open-ended question why they do so. [Pointwise mutual information](#) was used to identify the 100 most distinctive terms that distinguish responses from U.S.-born and foreign-born respondents. The terms identified through this method represent the language that characterizes how respondents from either group answered the open-ended question.