

About one-quarter of the United States' foreign-born population is from Asia.

In 1997, 6.8 million of the nation's foreign-born residents were born in Asia, up from 5.0 million in 1990. The increase represented a continuation of this population's rapid growth since 1970, when it numbered about 800,000. The total tripled in the 1970s, then doubled in the 1980s.

Asian-born residents comprised 27 percent of the country's foreign-born population in 1997, not significantly different from 1990 when they comprised 26 percent. Their share doubled from 9 percent in 1970 to 19 percent in 1980.

Several Asian nations contribute sizable number of migrants.

In 1997, the five largest contributors to the nation's Asian-born population were China, India, Korea, the Philippines and Vietnam.¹ For all but Korea, the number of people hailing from each nation rose significantly from 1990 to 1997. (See Figure 1.)

¹Owing to sample size, it is not possible to rank these countries exactly by contribution. See footnote 4 on p. 13 in P23-195.

Asian-born population is concentrated in a handful of metropolitan areas.

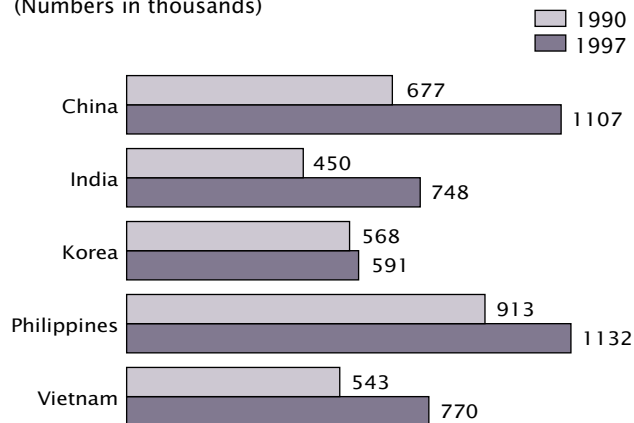
Close to half (about 45 percent) of the nation's Asian-born population lived in 1 of 3 metro areas: Los Angeles, New York or San Francisco. Within the San Francisco area, Asians made up more than half the foreign-born population. (See Figure 2.)

Asian-born population among highest citizenship rates of foreign-born groups.

In 1997, 44 percent of the population from Asia were naturalized U.S. citizens. Only those born in Europe had a higher rate.

Figure 1.
Top Countries of Birth of the Foreign Born From Asia: 1990 and 1997

(Numbers in thousands)



Note: China includes Hong Kong.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, PPL-115, Table 3-2.

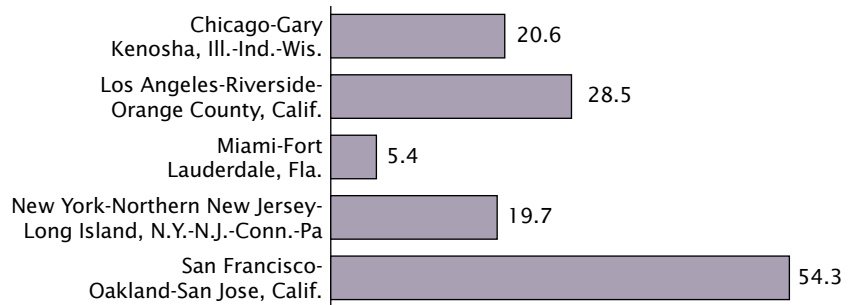
Asian born compare favorably with other foreign born and natives.

Unless otherwise stated, the following indicators are for 1997:

- **Household income:** Households with a householder from Asia had a median income of \$42,900 in 1996 — the highest income of any foreign-born group and higher than the income for native households (\$36,100). (The median for all foreign-born households was \$30,000.) The high income levels for the Asian born appear to reflect at least two factors: a relatively high proportion of workers in managerial and professional specialty jobs and a relatively low proportion of householders aged 65 or older.
- **Poverty:** Fifteen percent of Asian-born residents were poor in 1996, similar to the 13 percent rate for natives. The rate for all foreign-born people was 21 percent.
- **Program participation:** Eighteen percent of Asian-born residents participated in 1996 in one or more means-tested noncash assistance programs such as Medicaid, similar to the rate for natives (17 percent) but less than the 24 percent for all foreign-born residents.
- **Occupation:** Thirty-six percent of Asian-born workers were employed in a managerial or professional specialty job, higher than the proportion for either native (30 percent) or all foreign-born workers (24 percent).
- **Health insurance:** Fifty-two percent of Asian-born workers had employment-based health insurance coverage, similar to the rate for natives (54 percent). For foreign-born workers as a whole, the proportion was 44 percent.

Figure 2.

Percent of the Foreign-Born Population Born in Asia for Selected Metropolitan Areas: 1997



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, PPL-115, Table 5-2D.

- **Education:** The proportion of people 25 years old or older who were born in Asia and had a high school education or higher — 84 percent — did not differ from the proportion for natives. It was considerably higher, however, than the percentage for the foreign-born population as a whole (65 percent).
- **Household size:** Households with an Asian-born householder consisted of an average of 3.26 people, not different from the average for all households with a foreign-born householder. Both household types were larger than those with a native householder, whose average size was 2.56 persons.
- **Homeownership:** Fifty percent of Asian-born householders owned the home they lived in, not different from the rate for all foreign-born householders (47 percent) but lower than that for natives (68 percent).

More Information:

The information in this Census Brief is based on findings from *Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in the United States: 1997*, Current Population Reports, Special Studies P23-195. The report may be found

on the Internet at <<http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/foreign.html>>. Paper copies also may be ordered from the Census Bureau (301-457-2422; e-mail: <pop@census.gov>). Funding for the report was provided by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, U.S. Department of Justice.

Contacts:

Foreign-Born Population:

Dianne Schmidley or
Joseph Costanzo
301-457-2403
pop@census.gov

Asian Population:

Claudette Bennett
301-457-2402
pop@census.gov

Census Briefs:

Robert Bernstein
301-457-3030
pio@census.gov

The data in the report are from the March 1997 Current Population Survey. Data from 1990 and earlier censuses are included for comparison. Statistics from sample surveys are subject to sampling and nonsampling error. The Census Bureau's Population Estimates Program uses different methods to estimate population by nativity and may show slightly different estimates of foreign-born and native populations from those presented here.