



PREPARING TO GO TO INDIA

INDIA LOCAL TIME

The standard time for India is calculated from Allahabad and is common to all cities. Indian Standard Time (IST) is 5 hours and 30 minutes ahead of GMT.

ELECTRICITY

220 volts & 50Hz. A variety of power outlets are used in India, but most plugs have two or three round pins.

LANGUAGE

Although English is generally used for official and business purposes, Hindi is the official language and is spoken by about 30 percent of the population. There are in all 22 officially recognized languages.

PASSPORT & VISA

A passport valid for at least 180 days and with **at least two blank pages** is required by all nationals

Citizens of all countries need to have a valid passport and an entry, transit or tourist visa obtained from the Indian Visa Service in their country **prior to departure**. Regulations and costs change frequently and differ according to nationality. For the latest information on your specific visa requirements, please contact your local Indian Embassy or Consulate.

US & Canadian citizens can now arrange an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) online through the following link: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html> Please note this visa service only allows you to apply for your visa a maximum of 120 days prior to the departure of your trip to India and a minimum of 4 days in advance of your departure.

The e-Visa is valid for entry through 24 designated Airports (i.e. Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Bagdogra, Bengaluru, Calicut, Chennai, Chandigarh, Cochin, Coimbatore, Delhi, Gaya, Goa, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mangalore, Mumbai, Nagpur, Pune, Tiruchirapalli, Trivandrum & Varanasi) and 3 designated seaports (i.e. Cochin, Goa, Mangalore). However, the one can take exit from any of the authorized Immigration Check Posts (ICPs) in India.

The validity of the e-Visa will be 60 days from the date of arrival in India. A double entry is permitted on an e-Tourist Visa

For Multiple Entry Visas, you will have to apply at your local Indian Embassy or Consulate

The following countries are all able to apply for this ETV:

Albania, Andorra, Angola, Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Aruba, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon Union Republic, Canada, Cape Verde, Cayman Island, Chile, China, China- SAR Hongkong, China- SAR Macau, Colombia, Comoros, Cook Islands, Costa Rica, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, East Timor, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kiribati, Laos, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Montserrat, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger Republic, Niue Island, Norway, Oman, Palau, Palestine, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Rwanda, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent & the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Senegal, Serbia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks & Caicos Island, Tuvalu, UAE, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Uruguay, USA, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Vatican City-Holy See, Venezuela, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe

All Passengers are responsible for securing proper documentation prior to joining the tour. Passports are required; in addition travelers are advised to check with local consulates for full details regarding Visa requirements. Please note securing a valid visa for entry is sole responsibility of the traveler.



LOCAL CURRENCY

The monetary unit in India is the India Rupee (INR). Rupee (INR; symbol Rs) = 100 paise. Notes are in denominations of Rs1000, 500, 100, 50, 20 and 10. Coins are in denominations of Rs5, 2 and 1, and 50, 25, 20, 10 and 5 paise.

Note: The import and export of local currency is prohibited.

Keep in mind that sometimes smaller vendors will not take bills larger than Rs 500. It is best to carry a range of rupee notes if you are shopping at bazaars and local markets.

On November 8, 2016, the government of India announced that existing 500 and 1,000 rupee bank notes are being withdrawn immediately from circulation and will be replaced with new 500 and 2,000 rupee notes. Airports, railway stations and hospitals will accept 500 and 1,000 rupee notes until November 11, 2016.

****Do not accept bank notes that have been taken out of circulation****

MONEY EXCHANGE, CREDIT CARD & ATM

Banks & ATM can be found in most cities and sizable towns where it is possible to exchange cash and travelers cheques. Many hotels also offer currency exchange and may offer a faster service at similar rates. Credit cards are usually only accepted in larger shops and more expensive hotels and restaurants.

Credit cards:

In major cities, the full cadre of banks cards are generally accepted including debit cards, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. However, in smaller towns and villages, choice is generally narrowed to cash or MasterCard and Visa.

ATM:

24 hour ATM machines can be found in all the major cities and most large towns. Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, Maestro and Plus are amongst the most commonly accepted cards.

CLOTHING

As a general guideline, clothing should be lightweight and loose fitting. In India's hot summer months, cotton clothing is much more comfortable than materials like nylon. In the winter months (Dec-Feb) North India can get very cold so warm clothing is recommended.

COMMUNICATION & EMAILS

Internet cafes can now be found in most cities and sizable towns. Connection times are often painfully slow although this does vary from city to city. The average cost for an hour is approx. US\$1. Most hotels offer wifi service and rates can vary from hotel to hotel.

The Indian phone system is fairly good. Look out for shops/booths labeled with a yellow "PCO-STD-ISD" sign which can be found almost everywhere. A 3 minute call (to the Canada) will cost approx. US\$10 from a hotel and approx. US\$3 from a shop/booth.

INTERNAL FLIGHTS

Please note that when flying within India, the airline baggage allowance is **15KG (33LBS)**. Airlines are becoming quite strict with the weight restrictions and will charge a fee if you are over your weight allowance.

MEALS

Approximate costs for meals and snacks not included are shown below:

- Simple snack - US\$ 5-8
- Light meal - US\$ 10-15
- Fancy restaurant - US\$ 25-35

DRINKS

Approximate costs for drinks bought in a shop in the street are shown below. Note: Prices in restaurants and hotels can be as much as double as those specified.

- 1l of water - US\$ 1.00
- 30cl bottle of soft drink - US\$ 1.00



- 65cl bottle of beer - US\$ 3.00

FOOD

Indian food is world-renowned for its tantalizing flavours, spiciness and enormous variety. Curries are created from the subtle and delicate blending of spices such as cumin, turmeric, cardamom, ginger, coriander, nutmeg and poppy seed although these vary from region to region and every spice has medicinal properties and use.

Vegetable dishes are more common than in Europe, particularly in the fruity, coconut dishes of southern India, while northern India has an entirely different but equally satisfying cuisine to sample. Breads like paranthas, chapatis, naans and rotis are also part of the main diet in several states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Achars (pickles), relishes and chutneys again vary by region and add more resonance to amazing meals.

Sweets or mithai too have regional specialties. They tend to be milk based and some are syrupy and fried. Well-known northern sweets are gulab jamun, jalebi (it's worth watching how these syrup-based confections are made in the street), kulfi, kheer, halwa and laddu. From the east are rasgulla and rasmalai. The south has several burfi and halwa-type desserts like coconut burfi and badam halwa made from almonds.

While care should be taken in where one eats, exceptional food can be had in the humblest surroundings such as food at ashrams as can be found in 5-star restaurants. Non-vegetarians will find fabulously spiced mutton dishes according to regional specialties including fish dishes typical to coastal areas.

Specialties:

- Dhal (curried lentils).
- Kulfi (firm Indian-style ice cream).
- Gulab Jamuns (deep-fried dough balls in sweet syrup).
- Jalebi (circular-shaped deep-fried batter in sweet syrup).
- Dosa (fermented crepe stuffed with vegetables, meat and sauces, originally from the south).

Things to know:

Bottled water is recommended for visitors but make sure the bottles are properly sealed. Alcohol is mainly served at mid- and upper-range restaurants in the larger towns and cities known as "resto-bars"; in budget eateries, it's usually only found at non-vegetarian restaurants which have a liquor license. Bars on the lower end of the scale are generally male and seedy.

Regional drinks:

- Chai (tea) is India's favourite drink. It will often come ready-brewed with milk, sugar and other spices usually at minimum cardamom and ginger unless 'tray tea' or 'separate tea' is specified.
- Coffee has long been popular in the south. South Indian coffee made and poured in a particular fashion is a specialty. Nowadays most large cities and towns have cafés serving cappuccinos, lattes, espressos and more.
- Nimbu Pani (lemon water) served sweet or sweet and salted.
- Lassi (iced yogurt/buttermilk beverage) also flavoured with fruits like mango or banana or sweet and salty.
- Indian beer (in many varieties, with Kingfisher the most popular brand).

Shopping:

Each region has its own specialties, each town its own local craftspeople and its own particular skills, often passed down from generation to generation. For fabrics, silverware, carpets, leatherwork, gems and antiques, India is a shopper's paradise. Bazaars can be found in cities and many regional hotspots – Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bangalore.

Shopping is as varied as India's topography. There are specialized wholesale markets for specific items like spices, coffee and tea in Old Delhi's Chandni Chowk or in Jaipur where there are single streets allotted to one item like clothing, chappals and jewelry. Prices are not usually visible and bargaining is the norm at most local bazaars. Be aware, there is a tourist premium affixed to many items. If you are uncomfortable with bargaining, many tourist spots across India will have state-run emporia where reasonable prices can be found such as Delhi's Baba Kharak Singh Marg or Aparant network of outlets in Goa. Cash is the usual form of payment. It sometimes helps to have a local with you when shopping who can help you discern quality and good prices.

India has one of the world's largest carpet industries and exquisite Persian rugs can be found nationally. If you prefer to shop direct head to Jammu & Kashmir and Leh to pick up hand woven carpets and pashmina shawls. Shahtoosh shawls may be on



sale but it is illegal to buy or sell them so avoid this. Other goods include pickles, spices, Indian tea, perfumes, soap, handmade paper, incense, puppets and musical instruments.

The best time to shop is around festival time at Diwali, which generally runs from late October to early November. This is high season and many retailers from around the country will converge at the large melas in major cities to sell their goods.

Shopping can also have charitable benefits if you buy directly from the producers at the bazaars. Alternatively, there are a few non-governmental organizations (NGOs) supported through items they make and sell in their own shops.

There is a veto on the export of antiques, art objects over 100 years old, livestock, animal skins, products made from animal skins, live plants, human skeletons, illicit drugs, weapons, ivory, products made from ivory, animal horns, endangered shells, antiques, gold and silver bullion.

SUGGESTED TIPPING SCALE:

Tipping is a way of showing your appreciation and will be welcomed by the recipient, although if you decide not to tip in a particular circumstance, this doesn't mean you'll receive a lower level of service. Ultimately, tipping is discretionary and should be done at a level that feels comfortable.

Here are some guidelines that you may find helpful:

Services	Tipping amount Per Person/Day	
	Individuals (Min. 02 pax)	Groups (10 & above)
Drivers	US \$ 05	US \$ 05
Assistant Driver	-	US \$ 02
Guides	US \$ 8 - 10	US \$ 8 - 10
Houseboat Staff	US \$ 05	US \$ 03
Bellman at hotels/check-in or check-out	US \$ 02	US \$ 01
Meals	10% of the total amount	10% of the total amount

WEATHER & CLIMATE

It is hard to generalize in a country that stretches from the Himalayas to the beaches of the Indian Ocean but broadly speaking October to March tend to be the most pleasant months in India, when it relatively dry and cool.

Cool – North India's cool season is from October to April and South India's cool season is from November to March, however cool does not necessarily mean cold. Daytime temperatures are still quite high - the sky is clear but it is not blisteringly hot. Evenings are cool and comfortable. This is the most pleasant time to travel in sub-Himalayan India.

Hot – From April to June the whole country experiences a hot and humid climate by day and night.

Wet – The monsoon falls on North India from July to September and in the South from July to October. During this time the climate is humid and wet by day and night.

Delhi: (approx)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MAX TEMP (CEL/FAH)	21/70	24/76	30/86	36/97	41/106	40/104	35/95	34/94	34/94	33/92	30/86	23/74
MIN TEMP (CEL/FAH)	7/45	10/50	15/59	21/70	27/81	29/85	27/81	26/79	25/77	19/67	12/54	8/47
RAINFALL (cm)	8	4	4	1	3	5	14	14	7	3	1	2

Chennai: (approx)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MAX TEMP (CEL/FAH)	24/76	28/83	33/92	38/101	42/108	41/106	38/101	36/97	36/97	36/97	31/89	26/79
MIN TEMP (CEL/FAH)	8/47	11/52	17/63	21/70	26/79	27/81	26/79	24/76	23/74	18/65	12/54	9/49
RAINFALL (cm)	2	1	3	1	5	7	89	86	14	1	5	2



Mumbai: (approx)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MAX TEMP (CEL/FAH)	29/85	30/86	33/92	32/90	33/92	32/90	30/86	30/86	30/86	32/90	32/90	31/89
MIN TEMP (CEL/FAH)	19/67	20/68	23/74	25/77	27/81	26/79	25/77	25/77	25/77	25/77	23/74	21/70
RAINFALL (cm)	0	1	0	1	5	20	28	27	21	6	3	1

Jaisalmer: (approx)

	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC
MAX TEMP (CEL/FAH)	29/85	31/89	33/92	35/95	38/101	38/101	36/97	35/95	34/94	32/90	29/85	29/85
MIN TEMP (CEL/FAH)	19/67	20/68	22/72	26/79	28/83	27/81	26/79	26/79	25/77	24/76	22/72	21/70
RAINFALL (cm)	2	1	0	1	1	4	7	8	7	11	11	5

HEALTH & MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS & GUIDELINES

As a general recommendation, it is advisable to check with your family doctor or travel clinic for latest health information.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is highly recommended that you purchase travel insurance. Health plans only provide limited coverage while traveling outside of the country. Indus Travels can offer you a complete travel insurance package. Some credit cards do offer travel insurance, however they do not always provide adequate coverage. Review and understand the terms of your credit card insurance policy. Extra travel insurance can be purchased.