

India Travel Readiness

Passport and Visa Information

US and Canadian citizens planning to travel to India must ensure that their passport is valid for at least six months beyond the date of visa application to obtain a visa. Additionally, they must have at least two blank pages in their passport. A tourist visa is required for entry into India. Travelers can obtain either a paper visa, valid for 10 years for U.S. citizens, or an e-tourist visa.

For more details regarding entry requirements for US citizens traveling to India, visit: [Travel State Government Website for India](#).

Weather

India boasts a varied climate, ranging from the hot, humid summers in the north to the cold, dry winters in regions like Ladakh. Delhi experiences a temperate climate with warm, humid summers (April-June) and cool, dry winters (December-February). The average temperature in Delhi ranges from 12°C (54°F) in December to 25°C (77°F) in June.

Please note that these are average weather conditions, and actual weather may vary depending on the specific location and time of year. For instance, the weather in mountainous areas like the Himalayas can be significantly colder than lowland regions.

Currency Exchange

The official currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR). It's essential to note that the Indian Rupee shares the same symbol (₹) as several other countries. Prices denoted with the ₹ symbol are in Indian Rupees unless stated otherwise. Major hotels and many larger shops and establishments accept card payments, but smaller businesses may only accept cash.

While the official exchange rate is determined by the Reserve Bank of India, there exists a parallel market with potentially higher rates. This alternative exchange rate is often utilized by tourists and locals seeking favorable rates.

TIP: Avoid exchanging your local currency (USD, EUR, etc.) for Indian Rupees before arriving in India. Instead, carry USD cash and exchange it for Indian Rupees locally, preferably seeking out the best exchange rates. You can withdraw a small amount from ATMs at the airport for transportation expenses into the city.

Changing money

Obtaining local currency in Delhi is straightforward, with currency exchange bureaus available at various locations, including most banks. Keep in mind that identification may be required when exchanging currency.

Some specific names of currency exchange bureaus in India include:

1. Thomas Cook
2. UAE Exchange India
3. Currencykart
4. Coinex Forex
5. Atlas Exchange

- Cash can be obtained from ATMs throughout the city, which operate around the clock and accept major international cards.
- While it's common to encounter individuals offering money exchange services in central financial districts like Connaught Place, it's advisable to exchange money only at legal, regulated institutions for safety reasons.

Important: Exchange only small amounts of money at a time and retain your transaction receipt, as it may be necessary for currency conversion back to your original currency at the end of your trip. Note that there's a limit of up to \$100 in cash equivalent when exchanging leftover Indian Rupees at the trip's conclusion.

Other recommendations

- **Tax-free shopping:** Foreign tourists are eligible for GST refunds on purchases of domestically manufactured goods exceeding INR 5000. Participating outlets facilitate this process. Retain your receipts and complete the requisite forms at customs during departure to claim the refund. Details on refund locations can be found [here](#).
- **Keep small change accessible:** Shops occasionally experience shortages of small change, so carrying exact amounts when paying in cash is appreciated.
- **Utilizing leftover Indian Rupees:** At the trip's end, if you have excess Indian Rupees, you can convert up to \$100 equivalent at authorized currency exchange bureaus. While most bureaus stock US dollars, euros, and British pounds, availability of other currencies may vary. You might need to present the original sale receipt to purchase back dollars. For smaller amounts, consider indulging in souvenirs or local treats.

Vaccinations

There are no vaccine requirements for entry into India. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all travelers to India be up to date on their routine vaccinations, including measles, mumps, rubella (MMR), polio, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (TDaP), and influenza. We recommend you discuss vaccinations with your physician as each individual's needs are different.

Electricity

India operates on a standard voltage of 230 V with a frequency of 50 Hz. Travelers bringing electrical appliances from regions with different voltages will require a voltage converter. The plug types commonly used in India are type C, D, and M.

Telecommunications

India's telecommunications services are primarily provided by major companies such as Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. Public phones and phone centers, known as PCOs (Public Call Offices), are available throughout the country.

Calling cards: Prepaid calling cards enable both local and international calls from public phones. These cards can be purchased from kiosks and supermarkets, specifying their use for international calls. Compare per-minute rates for various destinations before purchasing. Major telecommunications companies also offer prepaid calling cards.

Cell phones: Visitors can use their cell phones in India, with the primary networks being Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio. Both networks offer 4G coverage in most urban areas. However, be cautious of roaming charges when using your phone outside these networks.

Internet: Internet access is widespread in major cities, with high-speed data ports and WiFi available in upscale hotels. Lower-budget accommodations and numerous establishments offer free WiFi. Additionally, public WiFi extends coverage to various public spaces.

Packing

Dress codes in India lean towards cultural sensitivity and comfort, especially in professional settings. For meetings, gentlemen are advised to wear traditional attire like kurta pajama or formal shirts and trousers, while ladies are recommended to opt for traditional attire like sarees or salwar kameez.

Name Badges

Your name badges will be distributed at the first meeting of the delegation by your Delegation Leader or Delegation Manager. Please wear your name badge throughout the program, so you are easily identified as a member of the delegation.

Rooming List

The Rooming list will be posted on the website at approximately 30 days prior to your delegation convene date. *Take a few moments to make sure you are assigned as per your request.* Please advise me immediately of necessary changes.

Gratuities

Most of the tips associated with this program for bus drivers, porters, restaurant staff and hotel luggage service have been included in your program cost. Their tips will be paid from the program office.

Tips for your Delegation Manager HAVE NOT been included, as the Delegation Manager is critical to the success of the program and will be the individual with whom you interact the most. Your Delegation leader will coordinate the tip for the national guide, collecting

from each of you to make up this gratuity. We suggest \$8-12 dollars a day, per person.

If any of the others, including bus drivers and hotel staff have impressed you, providing additional gratuities to specific individuals whom you would like to recognize their excellent service additional gratuity is always appreciated.

Health and Safety

- **Water and food safety:** It is advisable to drink bottled or properly treated water and consume only cooked foods served hot. Avoid raw or undercooked meats, seafood, and tap water.
- **Sun safety:** Shield yourself from the intense Indian sun by using sunscreen, wearing hats, and sunglasses.
- Use insect repellent to protect yourself from mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria.
- **General health tips:** Ensure you get adequate rest before departure and carry necessary medications. Pack remedies for common ailments like colds, motion sickness, and digestive issues. Consider bringing broad-spectrum antibiotics and extra eyewear. Maintain hydration and be cautious with spicy foods and areas prone to insects.

General Health Tips

- Get plenty of rest before departure.
- If you are prone to upper respiratory infections, carry cough, cold, and sore throat remedies, and aspirin. To avoid delays at customs, always use the original containers for over the counter and prescription drugs.
- Common travelers' ills can be treated with antacids, aspirin, and preparations such as Imodium or Pepto Bismol or Imodium. If you suffer from motion sickness, take along a preventive remedy.
- Ask your doctor for a broad-spectrum antibiotic that you can take with you, just in case.
- If you wear glasses or contact lenses, bring an extra pair.
- Drink only bottled or boiled water or carbonated drinks in cans or bottles. Avoid tap water, fountain drinks, and ice cubes.
- Watch out for spicy dishes, especially at the outset of your program. Avoid eating food from roadside stalls as well as unpeeled fruits and fresh salads in small hotels. If you absolutely must eat food at a doubtful location, make sure it is served hot.
- Always use an insect repellent if you find yourself in a mosquito-prone area.
- If traveling in scorching heat, remember to drink enough water and to use hats, sunglasses, and sunscreen. Avoid venturing out in the midday sun.

It is recommended that all passengers traveling have personal insurance to assist with any medical and other costs. Please do not forget to take a copy of your insurance policy with you.

Personal Safety

Your personal safety is usually a matter of common-sense awareness of your surroundings.



Keep wallets in an inconspicuous location; don't leave expensive jewelry or other valuables unattended in your hotel room. The surest way to protect these items from loss or theft is to leave them at home. Take advantage of hotel safes when available; and always lock your door when in your hotel room.

When traveling in markets and public areas, take care of your belongings and leave valuables back at the hotel. It is wise not to accept gifts of food or drink from any strangers. Do not go with anyone soliciting business or services away from the delegation or public spaces. Take care with your passport, credit cards and money – a money belt to fit beneath your clothes is highly recommended. Avoid walking alone after dark in isolated places.

Prescriptions

Please take the following precautions to avoid complications while traveling:

- Leave all medication in its original packaging with all prescription details.
- The prescription must be in your name.
- Bring extra medication in case of loss or damage.
- Discuss the issue of time zone changes with your physician to ensure that you are receiving the proper dosage at the proper time of day. You should also discuss alternatives for medications that require refrigeration, as this is not possible while traveling.
- You will need an original, signed letter from your doctor to bring certain medical devices such as syringes, pumps, or EpiPens® on the airplane.

Medical Services

Please understand that your local guides and Delegation Manager do not necessarily possess first aid training. People with serious medical concerns must take this into account while choosing any destination. We recommend that you bring an ample supply of personal medications with you in your carry-on luggage.