

Travel Tips

SPLENDOURS OF INDIA

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

****Please check your own country's international travel advice as well as the airline requirements before travel.****

UK guests please see the FCDO advice regarding entry requirements and the prevailing entry rules in response to coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/india>

US guests please see: <https://in.usembassy.gov> or <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/India.html> for current advice.

Passports:

Your passport should be valid for at least 6 months beyond the period of stay. It is advised to have 1 blank page in your passport. Please be sure to fill out the "Emergency Next of Kin" section in your passport

Visas:

A visa is required for entry to India. India offers many types of visa, and regulations change frequently, so please check the current information on the following website: <https://boi.gov.in/>

Entry to India on the wrong visa type may result in you being denied entry and possibly blacklisted preventing return to India in the future.

Nationals of USA, Canada, United Kingdom are now able to apply for an e-Visa for tourism visits of up to 60 days. Further details and links to apply for your e-Visa online can be found by following the link here - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

****Please be careful as there are several other websites out there purporting to offer the e-Visa. Visas must be arranged in good time prior to travel – the minimum requirement is 4 working days but can vary depending the diplomatic mission and nationality of the applicant. Do not apply for the eTourist Visa more than 120 days prior to arrival in India.**

All other nationalities must check the visa entry requirements before your departure. You need sufficient funds and a return airline ticket. Once received, please send through your e-Visa confirmation numbers to info@thebigjourneycompany.com

Please note - Indian visa regulations change frequently, often with little notice, and changes may be poorly advertised and inconsistently enforced. Travelers are urged to check with the Indian Bureau of Immigration prior to any travel to India to review the most up to date information.

Hotel details for Visa applications

The hotel details will be supplied to you in good time to make your visa applications.

N.B. Please note, visa and entry requirements, regulations and restrictions can vary on a regular basis. Please ensure you check in good time prior to travel the current requirements applicable to you.

Travel Insurance

All passengers must have valid travel insurance before traveling, including health and cancellation insurance. Please ensure you have a copy of your insurer's 24-hour emergency telephone number and your policy number.

Medical Conditions and Personal Medication

Please advise us prior to travel if you have any medical conditions requiring special attention during your trip. If you have a specific medical condition, it is wise to carry the relevant doctor's prescription with you.

Important:

Pack a sufficient supply of any medications you are taking, copies of the prescriptions and the telephone/fax numbers of your

doctor.

Please note, some countries require that prescription drugs be carried in their original container, with the label clearly visible. In the event of you losing your medication, a qualified pharmacist should be able to source a replacement.

Travelling with CPAP or other Medical Machines

- Please inform The Big Journey Company that you are travelling with such a device as early as possible, and well before you travel. This is especially important in places where there may be issues with power supply, such as on safari or smaller cruise ships. Also,
- Check that you have the correct electrical and voltage adapters for the country and accommodation you are visiting;
- Check with your airline that they allow your device to be carried as additional hand luggage and ensure that your device is easily accessible and properly labelled as medical machinery;
- Always carry a letter from your medical practitioner prescribing its use for you;
- Ensure you have details of your machine separately in case of the need to secure repairs/replacements whilst you are travelling;
- Check with your medical practitioner about the use of tap or bottled water in the event that distilled water cannot be sourced in the country you are travelling to.

Please note, if you require distilled or ionised water, you must inform The Big Journey Company of this at least two weeks ahead of travel, so we are able to make preparations with our ground agents. There will be an additional charge for this.

LUGGAGE

What to Pack and Wear

Pack lightweight, breathable, wrinkle-resistant clothing in light colors, along with enough underwear and socks to reduce laundry needs. For sightseeing, wear conservative outfits like pants, shorts, skirts, and short-sleeved shirts. Casual yet slightly smarter clothing is suitable for dining out, but formal attire is unnecessary.

For religious sites, cover your arms, legs, and shoulders. Bring a scarf or shawl, especially for women, and carry socks, as shoes are often removed in sacred spaces. Evenings are cooler, so pack layers, a sweater or jacket, a lightweight rain jacket, and an umbrella. Don't forget a swimsuit, comfortable walking shoes, and sandals. Respect local customs by covering arms and legs in modest areas. Also, if you see shoes outside a shop, it's a sign to remove your own.

Luggage Allowances

International airlines are often strict about the size and weight of checked in baggage and carry-on luggage. Prior to your departure, please contact your airline or visit their website for specific luggage requirements, as size and weight limitations may vary according to the airline and destination.

Internal flights – A number of our India tours include an internal flight in India. Please check with The Big Journey Company regarding specific luggage allowances for this flight.

LANGUAGE

In India, the official language is Hindi. Each state, however, has its own official regional language as well: 14 in all. English is widely spoken all over the country. Officially an “assistant” language after Hindi, English is the most widely spoken tongue in India and probably the most widely written and read.

WEATHER

India is a massive country and its geography ranges from the mountainous north, through its central plains down to the beaches of the south. Due to its location, it is generally hot and humid, but there are significant differences across the regions. November – March sees the coolest months, with low temperatures in the mornings and evenings, but sunny days. March to June sees the hottest months, with dry, dusty days and high temperatures. From June to October is the wet season, with the monsoon rains coming in most regions. As the tours to India cover varying locations, it is best to check on the weather reports for the areas you will be visiting close to travel.

ELECTRICITY

In India, the standard voltage is 220V and the frequency is 50Hz. India uses three types of plugs – Type C (European style 2 round prongs), Type D (mainly used in Indian countries and some African countries, with three round prongs) and Type M (like

Type D but with larger prongs). Blackouts ('load shedding') and power surges may occur in rural areas, so bring a voltage guard with spike suppressor (automatic cut-off switch) for your laptop.

MOBILES & INTERNET COMMUNICATION

Mobile coverage is widely available across India, be sure to check with your mobile provider for coverage and rates, as data roaming can be extremely expensive.

MONEY

• **Currency**

India's currency is the rupee (₹), which cannot be imported or exported. While credit cards are accepted at mid-to-high-end establishments, cash is necessary for street vendors and smaller shops. US dollars are also accepted in some places, but they should be in good condition and issued after 2009. Only exchange what you'll use, as reconversion can be difficult.

ATMs are common in cities, but less so in villages. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted, but Diners Club and American Express may not be. Inform your bank before traveling to avoid card issues. Traveler's cheques are accepted at currency exchanges, but rates and commissions may vary.

• **Gratuities**

After feedback from previous guests, we offer a group tipping package for this tour, more information on this will be shared in the 'Pre-Tour Emails'.

WATER

Do not drink the tap water in India, stick to bottled water instead or water that has been filtered or purified. Furthermore, check that the seal on bottled water is intact at purchase. It is advised to avoid ice in drinks and food unless you know it has been made with tap water and watch out with juices served at street stalls as they are often watered down with tap water or may be served in glasses that have been rinsed in tap water. Fruit are often rinsed in tap water, so make sure you peel them yourself, having first rinsed them in mineral water. Bottled water can be bought at supermarkets, kiosks and many shops.

SAFETY & SECURITY

As visitors, tourists may be more vulnerable to petty crimes like pickpocketing and scams, so we recommend staying aware and taking simple precautions.

RELIGION

India has a mix of religions and is characterised by a diversity of religious beliefs and practices. The Indian subcontinent is the birthplace of some of the world's major religions; namely Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. India is predominantly a Hindu country with almost 80% of the population of the faith. Islam is followed by approximately 14% and Christianity 2.5%, mainly in the Kerala province.

PHOTOGRAPHY

India offers photo opportunities one after another. You will return with many photos that can never be repeated. Remember to pack your camera, along with the charger, spare batteries and a spare memory card! Pack a dust-proof case (or sealable plastic bag) and an air brush to protect camera equipment from dust. Etiquette requires that you ask permission before photographing local people, unless you are shooting a crowded public scene. This applies especially to small children. Please be considerate of a desire not to be photographed. Photography is not permitted at some designated locations, usually clearly marked. In general, avoid taking photographs of airports, government buildings and installations, bridges and military or police personnel. If in doubt, please ask.

ARRIVAL IN INDIA

India requires all visitors to complete a Disembarkation Card, which will require general name and nationality information, plus your flight and visa numbers. Please have the address of the first hotel to hand. You should then exit through the "Green Channel," unless you are in possession of a video camera, telescope, tape recorder or multiple cameras. In this latter case you should stop to obtain a Tourist Baggage Re-Export Form. When collected at the end of your trip, this form will allow you to leave the country without paying export duty on declared items.

Please note, standard hotel check-in is around 3pm, so should you arrive earlier than this, your room may not be available upon arrival. For those arriving early morning, we will do everything we can to work with the hotel to get you an earlier check-in

subject to availability.

If you have any other questions that we have not covered here; then please send us an e-mail to:
info@thebigjourneycompany.com

Disclaimer: The above information is provided as a guideline only. The Big Journey Company assumes no liability for any errors or omissions in this document.

Updated November 2024