

General Information:

Lost Luggage

If you arrive at the carousel after it has started and cannot see your baggage on the belt - look around to see if there is a stack of luggage. Porters sometimes remove the unclaimed bags so you may find your luggage there. If your luggage does not arrive then you must report it to the ground staff immediately. Although it is a horrid feeling to think that you have lost your luggage - don't worry, in most cases it is found (at the originating or transit airport) and the airline will return it to you. We suggest you contact the local agent from the airport so they can then speak to the staff and establish what they need to do to collect the luggage and return it to you. It is important that you obtain documentation so that our local agent can claim his expenses from the airline or to provide written evidence to your travel insurance company if you need to make a claim.

Internal Flights

If you are making a journey(s) by air via one of the domestic airlines of India and we booked it for you then there is no need to re-confirm the seats as they are confirmed tickets and we will be notified if there is any schedule change. If you booked the flights elsewhere then we do recommend you contact the airline before departure to ensure that there has been no schedule change. The recommended check-in time for internal flights is 1.5 to 2 hours before departure as the check-in desk is closed 45 minutes before. If our agent is transferring you to the airport he will advise you of the collection time. We can arrange web check-in where guests can select their preferred seats but certain seats are chargeable [nominal charges] which we can inform guests before selecting seats. In case of groups it is slightly difficult to book seats as per individual preferences so we generally collect boarding passes at airport itself so that all can sit together. Please note that the baggage allowance on domestic flights is usually 15 kgs (considerably lower than on most international flights) plus 5 to 7 kgs for hand luggage. Excess baggage costs are approx. INR 600 per additional kilo which varies as per Airline Company. This may be paid at check-in and credit card payments are accepted. Some Air India flights allow 25 kgs (but only on certain aircraft).

Money

The currency of India is the Rupee shortened to INR or Rs and was recently given its own symbol. There are 100 Paise to a Rupee. With 80-90 INR to the UK Pound the Paise has virtually no value and you don't see them much. Most Indian money is in the form of notes - very few coins are used - and the notes can get extremely tatty. There always seems to be a shortage of change so it is a good idea to try and maintain a stock of small notes (10, 20, 50 & 100). The tax situation is

complicated in India as there are both federal and local (state) taxes - all of which can change at short notice. It is therefore common practice for shops, restaurants etc to list prices without taxes, which are added at the time of purchase. We are so used to all our prices being given with VAT (or the relevant tax) being included this can often catch people out.

All major foreign currencies (UK pounds, US dollars and Euros) are welcomed in India. If you have dollars or euros left over from a previous holiday then by all means take them - but generally it is not advisable to change pounds into dollars or euros before changing them into rupees as you will pay commission/lose on exchange rates twice. Ensure that the foreign currency you take is in good condition as torn or damaged notes will not be accepted. The Indian Rupee is virtually a closed currency, It is very difficult to obtain rupees outside India and if successful there are strict limits to what you can take in and you are not allowed to take any out of the country. This means visitors arrive without any local currency - but don't worry there are always exchange counters at arrival airports when flights are due Normal, sensible rules apply in India as with anywhere else in the world. Do not leave your money unattended, do not keep it all together and do not open a wallet full of money in front of strangers. It is a good idea to keep some small change in an accessible place but keep the bulk of your cash (along with credit cards and passport) hidden. A money belt is a good idea. We are often asked by customers "how much money should we take?" This is an impossible question for us to answer because it depends on so many things.

So below we provide some information which we hope will help you to decide on the appropriate amount for you. Cash (ideally in rupees) is required for paying tips. Your itinerary will tell you how many transfers are required for your tour so you can calculate the amount you need to allow for drivers' tips as well as the number of nights' accommodation for tipping hotel staff.

Additional purchases at your accommodation (eg meals, drinks, massages etc.) need to be paid for at check-out. This document tells you which of your accommodation options take credit cards and the itinerary tells you the meal basis. So with this information you can calculate how many meals you will need to pay for. Other expenses may include gifts for friends or items for yourself. Most high priced items are sold in shops that take credit cards - so it will probably be only small local purchases (eg spices) that you will buy using cash.

Below are some price guidelines:

Lunch or dinner - if eaten in a good quality restaurant (either independent or within a hotel) you can expect to pay INR 800 - 1100 per person for a vegetarian main meal or INR 800 - 2200 for a non-veg. Starters and deserts - INR 300 to 600. A bottle of local wine - INR 1750 to 3500. A 650 ml bottle of beer - INR 300. Note: imported alcohol attracts significantly higher tax and this often is not included in

the listed price. If you eat in small local restaurants you can eat for considerably less. The cost of a litre bottle of mineral water will be about INR 20-25 if you buy it from a shop, more (INR 150 - 200) if you buy from a hotel.

The above prices are guideline figures only. There is a rule of thumb that the more expensive the hotel the more expensive all meals and extras are. The exchange rate for the rupee may be obtained on the internet, from the bank etc. but remember the rates change and commission is charged. We would like to share that generally all hotels, guesthouses and homestays provide drinking water /packed bottled mineral water for all our guests in room [2 bottles per day]. At the time of meals in restaurants it is chargeable. Water supplied in washroom can be used for bathing, cleaning teeth but for drinking we would recommend to go for bottled water only. Always check the bottle given to you must be sealed.

Accommodation

We provide a brief description of all your accommodation and a contact telephone number for each. The country code for India is 0091 and when dialing from abroad the first number of the area code (0) is dropped. We list the facilities and services provided and do our best to keep this up-to-date - but we are often not informed of changes so please let us know if any of our information is inaccurate. Where a hotel has different room types and you are not booked into a 'standard room' we have given the room type reserved for you. The usual check-in time is around 12 noon or after. This means that if you arrive early (eg from flight) you may have to wait for your room to become available. We recommend that you plan accordingly (eg ensure you have anything you may need in hand luggage). Most hosts will do their best to give you early access (and we will have warned them of an early arrival) but to be guaranteed early access to your room it would be necessary to book it for the night before.

Visas

There are many visa application sites, most of them agents charging more for what you can do yourself, although application process is not user friendly. These are government sites. Recently introduced E visa. Tourist visa valid for one entry within 6 months. NB. visa is valid for 6 months from date of issue, not date of travel, so do not apply too early. Although it is all supposed to be electronic, if you use this system be sure to print a copy of your completed application for the airline check in. No proof of visa no travel. <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>.

Regular tourist visa. Valid for 12 months & multiple entry. Essential if you are visiting Bhutan, Nepal or some other nation state via Delhi. Again valid from date of issue <http://www.vfsglobal.com/India/UK/Tourist.html>

This visa is stuck in the passport. Some people struggle with the form and appointment process. It is the most user unfriendly site I know. But once you have

navigated the system they are quite efficient. Visa agent. They charge an additional fee for making the application for you. Sharon is very helpful & very good.

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