

Vinyasa Yoga School's India Survival Guide

A Cheat Sheet for Yogis & Yoginis



Introduction

India has a reputation for being rough to its travelers, sometimes rightfully so. However, many curious and adventurous sojourners remark that it is one of the most beautiful places on earth. India has an astounding amount of culture, history, and richness, and we want to help you prepare as much as possible so that all you need to worry about is enjoying yourself to the fullest!

Here are some of the essential steps and tips to keep in mind as you prepare for your journey.

Overview

- 1) You will need a visa!
- 2) How do I get around India?
- 3) What to bring to India?
- 4) What languages are spoken?
- 5) How do I stay healthy in India?
- 6) Do I need any vaccinations?
- 7) Cultural Considerations
- 8) General Safety
- 9) What's the weather like?

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1) You will need a visa!

You will not be allowed entry into India without a visa. This MUST be arranged at least a week in advance of your trip.

Here are the most up-to-date policies on Indian visas:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visa_policy_of_India

The easiest route: e-Tourist Visa on Arrival

Validity: 60 days, from date of entry

Typical processing time: 4-7 days

If you are traveling in India for less than 60 days, you can apply for the e-Visa here. This visa is very easy to obtain, as visa approval is mostly automatic.

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/>

You can check whether you are eligible to apply for the 60 day e-Visa (you most likely are). This Wikipedia article is kept up to date and should accurately reflect the overall visa policy.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Visa_policy_of_India

On the application, you can state that you are traveling to India for a short term yoga course.

Once you apply, you can simply print out your application and/or confirmation, and present it to the Immigrations staff when you arrive.

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1) You will need a visa! (continued)

The slightly less easy route: Tourist Visa:

Validity: 3 months to 10 years

Typical processing time: 1-3 weeks

If you're in India for longer than 60 days, you will need a Tourist Visa. This involves mailing or bringing your passport to a consulate or certified organization.

You can follow the instructions on this page to apply for a visa. If you aren't near an official embassy or consulate, you might also consider searching for nearby contractors that can also process the visa for you.

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/>

The website is a bit confusing, so to find the regular visa application.

Click on "Regular Visa Application" on the left-hand side menu. Scroll all the way to the bottom, and click on "Apply Online". Complete the application form, and print it out to mail or bring to your nearest Indian consulate or visa processing center.

Make sure that the visa is valid through your stay in India. The standard tourist visas are typically valid from the date of ISSUE, not the date of ENTRY.

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2) How do I get to and around India?

In general, we recommend flying into the airport in New Delhi, as it is the closest international airport to Rishikesh.

Alternatively you can try seeing if Dehradun gives you a relatively cheap option (sometimes it's better to fly into/out of Dehradun because it's much closer to Rishikesh.) Or, you can get a completely separate flight to Dehradun once you land in Delhi, which can be fairly cheap and could save you a lot of time.

To find a flight, we recommend using:

www.kayak.com

www.google.com/flights

Hopper, analyzes the best time to buy flights

In terms of getting to Rishikesh from New Delhi, the two cities are roughly 250km apart, so there are several transportation options.

- There is a public train system that runs between Delhi and Haridwar (a neighboring city of Rishikesh). After Haridwar, you can take a bus or taxi into Rishikesh.

- Book your train ticket here:

- http://www.cleartrip.com/trains/results?from_city=New%20Delhi&to_station=HW&class=2A&date=30-1-2014&adults=1&children=0&male_seniors=0&female_seniors=0

- If you decide to take the train system, we recommend getting the AC 2 Tier.

- A great article on how to navigate the train system:

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2) How do I get to and around India? (cont'd)

<http://www.indiamike.com/india-articles/india-railways-and-the-indian-train>

- We can provide a private taxi from the Delhi airport to Rishikesh for roughly \$73 USD (4500 Rupees).
 - If you'd like to reserve one, please let us know what your flight airline, number, and time of arrival is :)
 - The drivers' rates are generally stable, but they occasionally cost more depending on festivals and seasons.
- You can also fly into Dehradun after landing in Delhi, and then take a taxi into Rishikesh (1300 Rupees).

To get to Goa:

We recommend flying either:

- to Goa International Airport (also known as Dabolim or Vasco de Gama), which is 1-2 hours away from our school
- or, to Mumbai (a more popular international airport). From there, you can book a separate flight to Goa International Airport for \$30-50 USD.

After landing in Goa, we can provide a private taxi for you, which would be the easiest way to get to our school.

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3) What should I bring to India?

In general, you can buy most things that you might need here for cheaper than in western countries. But to start you off with a list:

- Enough clothes for a week (or two). Any regular pair of shoes for walking around, shoes/sandals for any water-related activities
- Standard toiletries, shower sandals, a towel
- Electronics (laptop, tablets, cameras) are fine - our hotel has a security camera system and a front desk, so your items are safe. Unless you want to unplug from electronics, we have free WiFi as well so you can stay up to date on social media and keep in touch with loved ones back home.
- A backpack (meant for backpacking and hiking). While it's not absolutely necessary if you want to save money, the ground in India isn't always paved, so it's not as friendly to luggage bags with wheels.
- Headlamp
- Any necessary medicine (such as diarrhea medicine in case you eat bad food or drink water from tap in any restaurants.)
- Sunscreen, bug repellent

As for electrical outlets, India is compatible with 2 prong European outlets. Be careful about bringing hair dryers and check voltage requirements

Here's an article from one of our alumni as well:

<http://yoganonymous.com/5-survival-tips-for-yoga-teacher-training-in-india>

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4) What languages are spoken?

India has 2 official languages, Hindi and English, which are spoken very widely.

However, there are also 21 other languages which are recognised by the Indian Constitution, and overall there are more than 1500 languages spoken across the country. Prominent languages include Telugu, Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, Urdu, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Odia, Punjabi and Assamese.

5) How do I stay healthy in India?

In general, we do not recommend drinking tap water in India. You should also be careful with uncooked, washed vegetables. Vinyasa Yoga School provides filtered + purified water for our students for free, but there are many stores that in the area where you can purchase bottled water,

If you have the budget and prefer to reduce waste, here are some water filters that we recommend:

Platypus 4L: <http://amzn.to/2Hc8L3Y>

BeFree 1L: <http://amzn.to/2GoSwHE>

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6) Do I need any vaccinations?

Here is an up-to-date list on the recommended vaccines to get before coming to India:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india>

We recommend the vaccines in the "Routine" and "Most Travelers" sections.

7) Cultural Considerations

Rishikesh is a holy city (as the Mother Ganga runs through it), which means you generally won't find any meat or alcohol here.

For women, clothing typically should not expose shoulders or knees (indoors or for yoga practice is fine).

8) Safety

Generally speaking, as long as you use your common sense and exercise your judgment, India is a safe place to travel to.

Scams can happen, but can be avoided by booking or working with reputable businesses. If you are one of the few unlucky victims of a scam, try not to let it ruin what was/is/could be an incredibly life-changing, one-in-a-lifetime trip :)

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9) What's the weather like?

In Rishikesh, the most favorable months in terms of weather are from September - March. In our opinion, Rishikesh is beautiful all year, and Rishikesh tends to be a popular destination every month.

In Goa, the most favorable months in terms of weather are early September - late May. The monsoon season is typically from June to early September, and many of the businesses in the area close down for the season.

Some notable times:

Late February, early March - The Holi Festival:

One of India's most celebrated and colorful holidays (literally, "festival of colors". It signifies the victory of good over evil, the arrival of spring, end of winter, and for many a festive day to meet others, play and laugh, forget and forgive, and repair broken relationships.

July - August:

Rainy season in Rishikesh, although it is still pleasant to be in Rishikesh. The rains tend to be intermittent, for 30 minutes to an hour at a time, so you can still venture out in Rishikesh.

We should also mention that you'll be in class indoors and shielded from rain for most of the day, so you won't be exposed to the rain unless you decide to explore outside :) Some other advantages: more pleasant temperatures, and smaller crowds of travelers. We still recommend bringing some waterproof or water resistant layers of clothing, and appropriate shoes as well.