

Guide for Business Visitors to India



Airports of Entry

India is 5.30 hours ahead of GMT. Business travelers can enter India through any of the five major cities with regular [International Airports](http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) (http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm)- New Delhi, the capital, in the north; Mumbai (formerly Bombay), the commercial capital on the coast of the Arabian Sea in the west, Chennai (formerly Madras) on the southern coast of the Indian Ocean, Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), in the east, and Thiruvananthapuram in the South-West. In addition to the International Airports there are also several [Domestic Airports](http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) (http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) in India with limited international operations: - These have customs and immigration facilities for limited international operations by national carriers and for foreign tourist and cargo charter flights. These include Bangalore (CE), Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Calicut, Goa (CE), Varanasi, Patna, Agra (CE), Jaipur, Amritsar, Tiruchirapally, Coimbatore and Lucknow. India also has several [Customs Airports](http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) (http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) across the major centres of trade in the country. Visit the [Airports Authority of India](http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) (http://www.airportsindia.org.in/aai/airports-frame.htm) for obtaining more information on the various types of airports in India.

Airport Charges

Airport departure tax for international departures is Rupees 500 (Foreign Travel Tax) plus Rs.200 (passenger service fee), i.e Rs 700. For departures to India's neighboring countries, the charge is Rs 150 (Foreign Travel Tax) plus Rs 200 (passenger service fee). Although departure tax is usually included in the cost of ticket, it is advisable to recheck before departure with your ticketing/travel agent.

International Airlines in India



India is well connected by air on all international routes and served by all major international airlines. You may contact your travel agent or the airlines for flight schedules. The international airlines that operate services in to and out of India include

International Airlines operating in India

<u>Aeroflot</u> (www.aeroflotlax.com/flights.htm)	<u>Biman Bangladesh</u> (www.bimanair.com/schedule/schedule.htm)	<u>Firstair</u> (www.firstair.ca/schedule/index.htm)	<u>North West</u> (www.nwa.com)	<u>Swiss Air</u> (www.swissair.com/TTStart.nav)
<u>Air Canada</u> (www.aircanada.ca/home.html)	<u>Czech Airlines</u> (ww.csa.cz/en)	<u>Gulf Air</u> (ww.gulfairco.com)	<u>Necon</u> (ww.neconair.com/frame.php3)	<u>Singapore International Airlines</u> (ww.singaporeair.com/cgi-bin/sched.exe?)
<u>Air France</u> (www.airfrance.com)	<u>Cathay Pacific</u> (ww.cathaypacific.com)	<u>JAL</u> (ww.jal.co.jp/English/index_e.html)	<u>Royal air</u> (www.royalairlines.com/timetables.asp)	<u>South African Airways</u> (www.saa.co.za)
<u>Air India</u> www.airindia.com	<u>Cyper Turkish</u> (www.kthy.net/kthy/default.htm)	<u>Kenya</u> (www.kenya-airways.com)	<u>Royal Jordanian</u> (reservation.rja.com.jo/hfhtml/main.htm)	<u>Thai</u> (www.thaiair.com)
<u>Air Mauritius</u> (www.airmauritius.com)	<u>Druk Air</u> (www.drukair.com/fl_schdl.htm)	<u>KLM</u> (www.klm.com)	<u>Qantas Airlines</u> (www.qantas.com.au)	<u>United Airlines</u> (www.ual.com)
<u>Asiana Airlines</u> (www.flyasiana.com/service/service.htm)	<u>Egypt Air</u> (www.egyptair.com.eg/docs/Services/services2.htm)	<u>Kuwait Airways</u> (www.kuwait-airways.com/index2.html)	<u>SAS</u> (ibp.scandinavian.net/timetable/ts/timetable1.asp)	<u>Yemenia</u> (www.yemenia.com/ye/Timetable.htm)
<u>Austrian Airlines</u> (www.aua.com/booking/en/)	<u>Emirates</u> (www.schedules.emirates.com/plan/plsql/skednew.sfind)	<u>Lufthansa</u> (www.lufthansa-india.com/timetable_all_india1.htm)	<u>Pakistan International Airlines</u> (www.piac.com.pk/flight_planner/default1.asp)	<u>Qantas Airways</u> (www.qantas.com.au)

Domestic Airlines operating in India

Domestic Airlines			
<u>Air India</u> (www.airindia.com)	<u>Indian Airlines</u> (www.indian-airlines.nic.in)	<u>Jet Airways</u> (www.jetairways.com)	<u>Sahara Airlines</u> (www.air sahara.net)

Currency Declaration, Customs and Baggage Rules

Currency Declaration

The unit of the Indian currency is the Rupee.

Travelers can bring into India any amount of foreign exchange, subject to the condition that on arrival a declaration is made to the custom authorities in a Currency Declaration Form. It is necessary to fill out a declaration form if the foreign exchange exceeds US\$ 10,000 or its equivalent and /or the aggregate value of foreign currency notes is US\$ 5,000 or its equivalent.

Travelers Cheques in US Dollar and Pound sterling are easily exchangeable and ATMs are available in major Indian cities. Credit cards are accepted in hotels and large stores.

Customs and Baggage Rules

There are two channels for customs clearance :-

(i) Green Channel for passengers not having any dutiable goods.

(ii) Red Channel for passengers having dutiable goods.

Passengers walking through the Green Channel with dutiable / prohibited goods are liable to prosecution/penalty and confiscation of goods.

[Duty free allowances and the rates of duties applicable for goods imported as personal baggage are contained in the rules established by the Central Board of Excise and Customs, Government of India.](http://www.cbec.gov.in/cae/customs/info-trvlrs/bagge-rules.htm) (www.cbec.gov.in/cae/customs/info-trvlrs/bagge-rules.htm)

Travel Maps

Detailed and digitized maps helpful for traveling inside India are now available from the Internet. These also provide interactive facilities for obtaining more detailed information about specific locations by zooming inside the maps. You may visit [MAPTELL](http://www.maptell.com)(www.maptell.com) web site or [Maps of India](http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/india-political-map.htm)(www.mapsofindia.com/maps/india/india-political-map.htm) web site for viewing the maps. You could also buy these maps online.

Inter-State Travel

Most parts of the country are well connected by air, rail, and road transport infrastructure. Indian Airlines, the government-owned airline, and a number of other private airlines run scheduled flights to various destinations. Charter flights are offered by a few private companies. For more details on Indian Airlines services, please visit indian-airlines.nic.in, www.jetairways.com, www.airsahara.net, www.airindia.com

Railway reservations can be made from any of the 520 reservation centres in the country or at railway stations. For further details, please visit www.indianrail.gov.in

Travel Agents

India has a well established network of Travel Agents and tour operators. Most Travel Agents and Tour Operators are also Members of reputed National and International Associations. The Government also has a system of providing recognition to them. You may search for members of the Travel Agents Association of India from [TAAINET](http://www.taainet.com/search_members.php3)(www.taainet.com/search_members.php3).

Hotels

Hotels in India are classified into different groups such as deluxe, international chains, heritage and palace hotels, tourist bungalows, traveler lodges, rest houses. etc.

Liberalization and a spurt in travel have brought a large number of international hotel chains to India. While well-known chains such as Sheraton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, Inter-Continental, Meridien, Quality Inns, Best Western and Kempinski have been in the country for a while, the recent entrants are Country Hospitality with all its chains (Regent, Radisson, Country Inns, TGIF), Marriott, Hilton, Park Plaza, Four Seasons and SHPC.

Centralized reservations may be obtained through the travel agents. For further information, please visit the following websites:

www.hotels-india.com,

www.india-hotels.net

<http://www.fhrai.com/>

Food

Indian cuisine differs from region to region .There is Mughlai food, Tandoor (bar-be-que in clay Oven), South Indian food. For people in the north wheat is the staple, while it is rice in south India. Generally Indian food is spicy and hot. The waiters can be told to make it less spicy.

There are some Indians who are vegetarians. Hindus do not eat beef considering cow as sacred. Muslims do not eat pork. There are some vegetarians who do not eat egg, onions, garlic etc.

The trend towards dining out has increased and many restaurants serve Continental, Chinese, Thai, Spanish, French. Mexican, Italian, Lebanese, Mediterranean, and other cuisine. American fast food is very popular and outlets are present in most cities and towns.

Tipping is optional but a common practice in India. The usual option involves leaving a 10% tip for the services provided.

Infrastructure

Banking

The usual banking hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays and 10 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturdays. Besides the Indian banks, several international banks including Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation operate in major metros. Most have 24-hour ATMs. Money transfers through these banks are also easy.

Working Hours

Banks, Office and most shopping areas remains closed on Sunday. Sometimes within the same city different markets close on different weekdays, it may be wise to check from the Hotel before you set out. Shops usually remain open 9.30 am to 7.00 pm (small tourist shops may close much later) and offices from 9.30 am to 5.30 pm. Many offices observe Saturdays as holidays the Indian calendar is full of festivals and religious holidays. Should one happen to be in India on any such day it is advisable to participate in the festivities, possibly with the help of a guide.

Postal and Courier Services

The Indian Postal Service provides high quality services for delivery of mail, parcels, and related services. India has the largest postal network in the world. It also caters to specific mailing needs through Speed Post, Express Post, Satellite Mail, Gift Services etc. Delivery of mail takes between two to five days, depending on the final destination.

For more details, log on to: <http://www.indiapost.org/>

Telephones



Local and long-distance telephone services are available throughout the country. Mobile cellular service is also provided in the major cities. To make an international call, first dial the international code (00), then the country code followed by the area code (if applicable) and finally the actual number.

For instance, to make a call to Hong Kong from India, dial 00, then 852 (Hong Kong Code) followed by the actual phone number.

Different parts of India are also well connected through fax and Internet with the rest of the world. ([STD Codes](http://www.tourismofindia.com/us/stdcodes.htm)) (www.tourismofindia.com/us/stdcodes.htm)

Taxis



The best way to travel around towns is by taxi. Yellow top taxis are generally easily available at stands, near commercial and residential areas and can be stopped on the roads. Visitors are advised to ensure that the meter is flagged down before starting the trip. A maximum of five passengers is generally permitted. Payment should be made according to the meter. Where meters are old, payments should be made in accordance with the revised tariff chart for the corresponding meter reading.

Sometimes taxi drivers do not show these charts in order to charge higher amounts. Visitors are advised to insist that the revised tariff chart is shown.

In some cities, scooter rickshaws are also available and are more economical, at roughly half of taxi rates. These too are metered and should carry a revised tariff chart where applicable. A maximum of three passengers is generally permitted.

Night charges of 25% over and above the normal fare are payable for taxis and scooter rickshaws engaged between 23.00 and 05.00.

Private taxis, non-metered are available in most cities. They can be hired on a journey basis, or for the day. Hotels, for their guests, can also arrange taxis for the day depending on your requirements.

Pre-paid services are generally available at airports. All passengers can make use of these services by contacting the Pre-paid Taxi booth.

Car hire

Cars may be hired with or without a chauffeur. Renting a car with a chauffeur in India is relatively inexpensive. Visitors coming from the UK intending to drive need to hold an International Driving License. However, the facility of renting a car at one place and leaving it at another is not common in India. Hertz, Budget and Europa cars operate in India through

their associates. Most of the chauffeurs and car rental agencies can communicate in English. Hotels also provide car rental services for their customers. Driving in India is hazardous for the visitor and is not recommended.

Newspapers and Magazines



There are several English language dailies in circulation in Metros and major cities. There are regional newspapers as well that cover local news in greater detail. The newspapers average 20 pages and contain various sections such as politics, economics, classified advertisements, entertainment, and sports. Some newspapers are specific to industry and business clientele. Most newspapers are on sale at newsstands and news clippings are available on their web sites.

National as well as well-known international magazines such as the Business Week, Far Eastern Economic Review, Newsweek, Time, and others are available in all the Metros.

Useful weblinks are

The Hindu

www.hinduonline.com/today/index.html

The Economic Times

www.economicstimes.com

The Statesman

www.thestatesman.net

Deccan Herald

www.deccanherald.com

Frontline

www.the-hindu.com/fline

Business Standard

www.business-standard.com

The Hindustan Times

www.hindustantimes.com

The Telegraph

www.telegraphindia.com

The Tribune

www.tribuneindia.com

The Week

www.the-week.com

Business Today

www.india-today.com/btoday

The Times of India

www.timesofindia.com

The Pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com/index.htm

The Financial Express

www.financialexpress.com/fe/daily/19990721/front.html

Deccan Chronicle

www.deccan.com

Outlook

www.outlookindia.com

Business World

www.businessworldindia.com

The Indian Express

www.expressindia.com

Press Information Bureau

pib.nic.in

Asian Age

www.asianageonline.com

India Today

www.india-today.com

Business Line

www.hindubusinessline.com

Electricity

220 volts AC (50 Cycles) and socket sizes vary widely. Universal adaptor is recommended.

Will your mobile work in India?

India uses the GSM standard for mobile communications; hence we suggest that you check out the compatibility of your instrument with GSM, in case you wish to use it in India.

You can hire cell phones at the domestic airports in most major cities and tourist destinations in India. Typical cell phone rentals in India vary between Rupees 200 and 300 per day.

