



# Royals Rajasthan Tours

## INFORMATION ON INDIA

### 1. Passport Requirements:

Visas are required by all visitors except those from Bhutan and Nepal. Visas are available for the following durations: -

- Transit Visa
- Tourist Visa – Most of the Countries have now open Tourist Visa on arrival.
- 03 Months Visa
- 06 Months Visa
- 01 Year Visa
- 05 Years Visa

1. Each passport should be accompanied by the completed application form and three passport photographs with white background and should shown 80% Face in it.
2. There should be at least three clear pages on the passport before the visa is issued.
3. When applying for the visa at the Indian Embassy/High Commission, payment should be made in cash or postal order (cheques are normally not accepted) and a stamped self addressed envelope should be included. One month should be allowed for postal applications
4. Certain parts of India (mainly in the North East) are "restricted areas" and require special permits.
5. Personal applications may be made to the Indian Embassy/High Commission.

### 2. Health requirements

- Yellow Fever - Vaccination Certificate is required if arriving from an infected area.  
Cholera/Typhoid - Inoculation recommended.  
Malaria - No certificate required, but advisable to have a course of pills.

Medical treatment in India is comparatively inexpensive, though India has a pool of some of the best doctors in the world. Most hotels have a doctor on call.

Strong sunshine, heat, digestive upsets and insect bites can spoil one's trip, so it is a good idea to take a few basic precautions:

**Avoid** eating ice creams sold by roadside vendors, undercooked meat, unpeelable fruit or vegetable, drinking tap water or having un-bottled drinks or even ice in drinks outside the hotel.

**Carry** a kit containing sunscreens and other lotions for protection from the sun, insect repellants and sting relief creams, water sterilizing tablets and medicines for possible stomach upsets or indigestion.

**Be careful** about mosquitoes when outside in the evenings - use an insect repellant, socks and a long sleeves shirt are good deterrents.

### 3. Currency

- Rupee (Re.) Rs. 1 = 100 Paisa  
Coins are in denominations of 1, 2, 5 and 10 rupees.  
Notes are in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 500 & 2000 rupees.  
Exchange Rate: US \$ 1 = Rs. 65.00 approx (flexible)

There are no restrictions on the importation of foreign currency by tourists, provided a Declaration Form is completed on arrival. The import and export of the Rupee is, however, prohibited and may not be spent in Duty Free Shops or on board aircrafts. Receipts of all currency must be kept, as it may be reconverted on departure. It is advisable to carry money in the form of travellers' cheques preferably in US Dollars as it is widely recognized and accepted. Change money through unauthorized persons is illegal as well as risky in respect of receiving counterfeit money

### 4. Credit Cards

Most hotels, restaurants and some shops accept major credit cards such as (1) American Express, (2) Diners Club (3) Visa and (4) MasterCard.

### 5. Time

GMT + 5 hours and 30 minutes.

### 6. Business Hours

- |                          |   |                 |                 |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------|-----------------|
| Government Offices/Shops | : | Monday - Friday | 1000 - 1700 hrs |
| Commercial Offices       | : | Monday - Friday | 0930 - 1730 hrs |



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Shops (most large stores)	:	Saturday	0930 - 1300 hrs
Banks	:	Monday – Saturday	0930 - 1800 hrs
		Monday - Saturday	1000 - 1600 hrs
		2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Saturdays Banks are Closed.	

Some government and commercial offices are open on alternate Saturdays.

## 7. Electricity

The majority of India works on 220 volts AC 50 Hz. However, it is possible that certain areas have DC supplies and it may be a good idea to check before using electrical appliances. Socket sizes vary, so it is well to take along a set of plug adaptors.

## 8. Tips

It is usual to tip waiters, porters, guides and drivers. An approximate guideline would be as follows:

Restaurants	- 10% of the bill.
Porters	- Rs.50/- per piece of luggage
Drivers/Guides	- Rs.350 per half day
Guides	- Rs.750 per full day

**Tips are not included in the bill and are solely based on each person's discretion.**

## 9. Language

English is widely spoken, though the accents may vary considerably, making it a bit difficult to understand at first. The official language is Hindi but there are totally 15 major languages 544 dialects spoken in India in addition to English.

## 10. Telephone/Communication

Telephone calls to most countries are now direct, with quality service comparable to international standards. Direct dialing is possible also between most cities/towns within India. Where a direct dialing facility is not available a call may have to be made through an operator.

Fax and Telex facilities are now ubiquitously available. It may even be possible to send e-mail messages from certain five star hotels and cyber cafes at a certain cost.

Postal services in India are good and stamps can be bought at hotels.

## 11. Climate

Hot and tropical with variations according to the region. Coolest months from mid-November to mid-March are also the best to visit India. The monsoons, in the majority of India, occur between the months of June and September. The summer which is the really hot weather is usually between the months of May and June.

## 12. Clothing

**Winter** - Light to medium clothing with jerseys/jackets may be required in the evenings, early morning excursions or on overcast days. In North India light woollens may even be required during the days.

**Summer** - Tropical clothing with a sun hat and sunglasses are recommended. For those traveling in the hills or mountainous areas light woollens may be needed.

**Monsoon** - Light clothing with either a raincoat or an umbrella or both (especially in places like Bombay, Cochin, Madras, Calcutta). Light sweater may be required for some even during this period.

## 13. Food & Drink

Indian food is as varied as the country itself, with every region having its own mouth-watering specialties. It therefore, does not always have to be "hot" nor can any one dish be labeled a "curry". Most dishes with a gravy are normally called curries but are prepared with a different 'masala' or combination of spices containing among other things coriander, cumin, garlic, onions ginger, turmeric. Additional seasoning which adds to the flavour and richness of meat dishes is called "garam masala" and is made from different combinations of a variety of spices like cardamom, nutmeg, black pepper, cloves cinnamon, bay leaves, saffron, mace and nutmeg. The very aromas and flavours that drew the West to the Indian shores.

A traditional meal all over India is usually served in large metal plate called a 'Thali' with a number of small bowls used to hold the gravy dishes. The meal is normally accompanied with indian bread (which varies from region to region) and rice.



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**North Indian** food has been strongly influenced by Mughal cuisine and is broadly non-vegetarian characterized by the use of yoghurt fired onions, nuts and saffron. Outstanding dishes worth trying would be biryani, gushtaba, tandoori dishes and kababs.

**East Indian** specialties include freshwater fish (especially hilsa) cooked in a variety of sauces, sweetmeats made from sweetened cream and cheese are also a speciality around West Bengal. The areas further east are influenced by by Tibetan cuisine, with 'momos' (delicious chicken or pork dumplings) being a popular dish.

**Western India** is a very diverse area in terms of cuisine. Gujarat with its strong Jain traditions, is almost entirely vegetarian with a sweetish touch to all its dishes. Goa is famed for its delicious meat and seafood dishes of Portuguese origin such as Sorpotel, Vindaloo and Xacuti.

**Southern India** is renowned for its spicy curries, rasam (millagu tannir or literally pepper water, before it was anglicized to mulligatawny), masala dosai or crisp potato pancakes and a variety of rice pancakes. The hot food has to be tempered with pappadums, yoghurt and buttermilk. Coconut is extensively used in the preparation of south indian dishes which are predominantly vegetarian, with the exception of Chettinad (from the area around Madurai) and cuisine from Kerala.

All good hotels in India provide continental meals as a matter of course, for those who are looking for a respite from spicy Indian cuisine. Many hotels and restaurants, atleast in the major cities, specialize in specific international cuisine like Italian, Chinese, Indonesian, Mexican, Thai, Japanese etc.

For an Indian, a **drink** with a meal usually means water! Imported wines and liquors are now available reasonably easily though not in great variety. The quality of Indian wines is improving steadily and is almost of international standards. Indian beer and rum are considered excellent, while gins and vodkas are good, the Indian whisky is an acquired taste.

Gujarat & Bihar are the **dry states** in India at present. However, foreigners visiting India can obtain liquor permits either from embassies/missions/tourist offices abroad or at a Government of India Tourist office at Bombay,

Delhi, Madras or Calcutta. Tourists can bring in either one regular size bottle of wine and one quarter litre of spirits or one quart of spirits free from Customs Duty at the time of arrival into India.

**Drinking water** could be a problem in India, and apart from the flasks of water in the hotel rooms, tea/coffee, mineral water and bottled aerated drinks, one should use purifying tablets. If one is out sightseeing or on an excursion it may be a good idea to carry a bottle of mineral water or to consume aerated soft drinks through a straw.

## 14. Shopping

Extraordinary patience, talent and imagination goes into the making of Indian products, whether dazzling silks, hand knotted carpets, bronze statues of Hindu gods, jewellery, shoes/sandals, handbags, men's and women's clothing, musical instruments or perfumes. The list is inexhaustible and the prices reasonable. Each region of the sub-continent has its own specialties. The bazaars are the places to find the best bargains, but one must be prepared to haggle. *It would be prudent to remember that if the shop/emporium undertake to export purchased goods, it invariably takes a much longer time to for them to reach than indicated at the time of purchase.*

It is forbidden to export recognized antiques over 100 years old. It is advisable to keep the sales receipts to convince the customs officers. Exports of wildlife and products made from them are either banned. Insist on getting a proper certificate for the legitimate sale of a particular animal product to avoid inconvenience at departure.

## 15. Indian Customs Procedures

International airports operate the conventional green and red channels, with officials liable to carry out sudden spot check on passengers passing through the green channel.

If carrying certain items of high value such as Video cameras, lap top computers, cameras one may be asked to fill in a Tourist Baggage Re-export Form (TBRE) while entering the country, which allows one to bring items into India free of duty, provided it is re-exported while leaving.

## 16. Security

If carrying pen knives, batteries or electronic items it may be prudent to pack them in the checked in baggage as they may be confiscated, only to be returned on arrival at ones destination. This applies to all domestic flights on the sub-continent.





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## **23. Reference Reading**

India  
Freedom at Midnight  
A Princess Remembers  
A Suitable Boy  
God of small things  
Midnight's children  
Maharajas of India  
City of Djinns  
India A Million Mutinies Today  
Indira

Stanley Wolpert  
Lapierre and Collins  
Gayatri Devi  
Vikram Seth  
Arundhati Roy  
Salman Rushdie  
Ann Morrow  
Oliver Dalrymple  
V.S. Naipaul  
Katherine Frank

***Note: - The above particulars are correct at the time of printing, but may be subject to change. This is purely for the information only.***

**\*\*\* Namaste \*\*\***