



## aaRna journeys travel information document

### Getting ready for your trip

- Passports & visas
  - A valid passport is required for international travel. **A proper VISA to enter and stay in India is a must.** Practically, every foreign national requires VISA to enter.
  - Passengers requiring visas, whether obtained in advance or locally upon arrival, should ensure that their passport has 2 blank pages.
  - **Review e-Visa process and requirements on the website before starting the application.**
  - Official site to apply: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>
  - Sample Visa application form: (See separate email attachment)
  - Keep extra 2 copies of your passport for any emergencies during the travel
- Cell phone & calling cards
  - You may wish to carry a cell phone while traveling. Check with your cell phone provider if your phone will work in the destination(s) you are visiting. If you can access the Internet as you travel, you can take advantage of email or a Skype Internet telephone (VOIP) account for the best value. Additionally, if your phone can connect to WiFi you may be able to make voice and video calls free of charge. Please contact your cell phone provider for further details. Making an international call from the hotel room is the most expensive alternative. **Please note that we are unable to provide compensation for phone calls regardless of reason.**
  - Consider adding international plan for the duration of your travel dates.
  - Alternatively, unlock your phone and purchase a SIM card for India prior to your travel.
- Making a phone call from other country
  - Depending on the place to which you are calling, you might have to prefix a country code or area code when you dial from your cell phone.
  - For international calls dial country code + area code + phone number
  - Call to local fixed phone in India 'City/area code' followed by the number. For example, for dialing a phone with the number 25247291 in Delhi, dial '011'25247291
  - Call to local mobile Dial the 10-digit mobile number without prefixing '0'

- Call to mobile in other state/service circle Dial '0' followed by the 10-digit mobile number
- **Country Code for India is '+91'**
- **City codes:**
- Mumbai- 022
- Ahmedabad- 079
- Jaipur – 141
- Jaisalmer – 657
- Agra - 562
- Delhi – 011
- WiFi access
  - WiFi access has improved. Free or inexpensive WiFi internet is accessible at coffee shops, airports, restaurants, libraries and on some trains and buses. WiFi access in hotels often involves a fee, determined by that property. Signal strength is subject to local conditions and not guaranteed. Please note that WiFi can be extremely slow, unreliable and sometimes nonexistent in developing countries or, on moving conveyances such as buses and cruise ships.
- Climate & Clothing
  - Bring comfortable walking shoes, a sweater, clothes you can layer. Some religious sites may require modest dress to enter (no shorts, short skirts, or sleeveless tops). A scarf or Pashmina for women is recommended. Bring a hat and sunscreen may be an umbrella for sun protection.
- India weather
  - October to December Daytime temp Low 90s- Overnight 70s

## Preparing for your trip:

### Flights

- International Flights
  - We recommend that you check your airline's website 24 hours prior to your flight to ensure that your flights remain on schedule and that flight times are unchanged.
- E Tickets & advance check-in
  - **Print and carry a copy of the itinerary with airline "Record Locator" and e-ticket numbers.** Advance online check-in is available on most airlines. If available, you may enter your name and 6-digit Record Locator or Flight Ticket Number at the airline's website and print the boarding pass on your home printer within twenty-four hours of departure. You may check-in online, even if you plan to check luggage at the airport. Airlines without advance online check-in require you to present your identification and e-ticket numbers at the airport self-service kiosk or check-in counter.

- Flight Delays and schedule change.
  - In the event, that you miss your flight which departs as scheduled, for any reason, your airline will consider you a "no-show" and may resell your seat(s) to other customers. This will also result in the cancellation of any later flights in your itinerary. Similarly, if you voluntarily decide not to use any of the flights on your itinerary, the airline will consider you a "no show" and cancel remaining flights on your itinerary. In this case, please contact your airline immediately for assistance in getting you to your destination. Missed flights are typically fully non-refundable and you may be required to purchase new flights from the airline at your own expense. Once your alternative arrangements have been confirmed, please inform aaRna journeys with your new flight details.
- Missed connections
  - If you are connecting from a domestic flight which is delayed for any reason, causing you to miss your international flight, ask the airline for assistance in getting you to your destination. Since all airline tickets are issued on special fares which carry restrictions and penalties if changed, it's the airline's responsibility to make alternate arrangements on your behalf as aaRna journeys has no authority or control over airline activities and policies. **Do not leave the airline check-in desk until an alternative itinerary has been confirmed.**
- Jetlag
  - In order to, minimize fatigue and general restlessness caused by jet lag, there are a few steps you may take including switching to your destination time zone when you board the plane, by sleeping and eating according to the new schedule, avoiding heavy eating, caffeine or alcoholic beverages before or during your flight, and by drinking plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying. Try to sleep on overnight flights and then, upon arrival, avoid the temptation to nap until nighttime.

### **Luggage & Packing**

- Check the Transportation and Safety Administration (TSA) website [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) to find out the current list of acceptable items you may bring on a plane before packing. We recommend that you use brightly colored luggage tags, straps or other identifiers to help you locate your luggage upon arrival or to describe it in the event that it is lost.
- Review checked bags limitations for your international airline. They are typically limited to a total dimension of 62 inches by adding length + width + height (example: 26"+26"+10" = 62"), and a maximum weight of 50 lbs (23kg). **However, keep domestic baggage allowance in mind (as below) for the internal flight segments of your trip.**

- Luggage Allowance for domestic flights.
  - One checked in bag 15 Kg (33 lbs)
  - One carry on - 7 Kg (15 LBS)
  - Excess baggage charge – Rs. 250 per Kg (\$2.70 per Kg) for Jet Airways
  - Excess baggage charge – Rs. 400 per Kg (\$6.00 per Kg) for other airlines
  
- Lost Luggage
  - If your luggage is lost or damaged by the airline, **a baggage claim form must be filled out with the carrier before leaving the airport.** Any cost to retrieve luggage will be your responsibility. Retain receipts and other documents to submit to the insurance provider. Airline may ask you to return to the airport to pick up your luggage.

### **Arrival & Departure:**

- Customs & Immigration
  - Arrival procedures  
Upon arrival, please complete immigration formalities if necessary and claim your luggage. If your program includes airport arrival transfers, you will be met after collecting your luggage or passing through Customs by the local representative who will be holding Hotel sign and/or a sign with your name on it. If for any reason you do not connect with the transfer personnel, go to the Tourist Information Desk and ask them to call the number provided prior to departure.
  - Departure procedures
  - Tour driver/ guide will drop you to the departure terminal of the airport. Follow signs and procedures as indicated.
  - TCS recommends you arrive at the airport 3 hours prior to the time of departure.
  - Keep your printed itinerary handy for all domestic & International departures within and from India. It is checked prior to entering the airport and going to the airline ticket counter
  
- Transfers
  - **Due to local traffic and other extenuating circumstances, we ask that you allow 30 minutes from your scheduled transfer time for our representative to arrive.** This includes hotel and airport. Such possible delays are taken into consideration in scheduling transfers. For transfers from a hotel, let the hotel reception desk or concierge know that you are waiting for a transfer. In the case of a missed transfer, reimbursement for your out-of-pocket expenses will be considered provided 30 minutes waiting time can be verified with the hotel front desk and a receipt for your transportation with time and date is presented

## During the Trip:

- Hotels
  - o All hotels are 4 and 5 Star. They are carefully selected based on overall quality, location, price, food, service, and cleanliness
  - o Although available at most 4 and 5 Star hotels, the use of air-conditioning abroad differs greatly from the United States.
  - o Some accommodation in remote regions may not have all of the amenities, such as hairdryer, alarm clock and room service.
  - o Hotel Check in- 2 -3 PM. Check out- 10- 11 AM
- Gratuities

Tipping is always a matter of personal discretion. For your convenience, please use the summary below as a guideline for recommended gratuity amounts. Gratuities should be paid in local currency. Please be aware that tipping is considered by many locals to be a part of their normal remuneration and some may approach you for additional "compensation." There is no need to be intimidated by the request, nor should you feel pressured to pay more than recommended.

  - o Hotel- Hotel porters and wait staff at departure.
  - o Guides- Local Guide (Offers in-depth information at specific locations. There may be one or many guides along a tour program): US \$3 per person per day of sightseeing, US \$2 per half day
  - o Drivers- Driver (Provides chauffeur services and limited assistance with luggage) : US \$3 per person per day, US \$2 per half day
  - o Restaurants- 5% - 7% tip is customary in India.
- Electricity
  - o **India voltage is 220**
  - o Please note: The U.S. uses 120 volts and you can purchase a converter, transformer and plug points at most hardware stores



- Food and Meals
  - o Daily lunch and dinner is of your own unless otherwise specified in the itinerary. Restaurant recommendations can be provided in each city. Hotel concierge can assist with the same

- nearby restaurant recommendation. Transportation to and from the restaurant is not included in the package.
- Guide will assist with convenient continental lunch places as per the day's itinerary.
- We suggest you carry granola bars, nuts etc. of your choice for your convenience during the flights and long travel days.

### Shopping and Sightseeing

#### - Currency

- We suggest getting a small amount of currency before you depart. It is a good idea to carry a chart with you to help you convert dollars to the local currency. We recommend carrying Rs 5000 to 6000 per day for small transactions. It is also a good idea not to carry too much money.
- Many countries have ATM machines that accept most ATM cards or Debit card but be sure you know your ATM password in numbers-the keypads on foreign ATMs don't always have letters. **ATM machines will only dispense cash in local currency.**
- Check with respective consulates to learn current currency allowances and requirements. Use your credit card whenever possible. Should you decide to carry cash, please note that exchange at banks is typically more favorable than at hotels or exchange bureaus. However, bank hours are limited for transactions sometimes only morning hours. Please note that many banks and most vendors will not accept or exchange \$\$ bills.

#### **Indian currency- Indian Rupees**

#### - Credit Card

- While credit cards are accepted in most big cities in India. it is advisable to carry local currency. Inform your credit card company that you are traveling to avoid your card being blocked for security reasons. Most US-issued credit cards have the embedded microprocessor chip. Most cash registers are equipped to handle American cards but if you encounter difficulties, offer an alternative credit card or politely insist that the cashier keep trying to swipe the credit card. ATMs typically recognize and accept US issued debit cards.

#### - Shopping

- Most people enjoy bringing home at least one souvenir from the countries they visit. However, some find any amount of shopping to be too much while others never find enough opportunities.
- We have built into our itineraries a few shopping stops at recommended spots. These stops are designed to enhance your experience by providing an opportunity to see first-hand quality locally crafted merchandise which you may not be able to find on your own. Shops are checked to ensure the quality and authenticity of the products they offer, and we limit guides from visiting other

locations. In some cases, we plan these stops to provide an opportunity to use clean bathrooms and to stretch your legs.

- **Merchandise return and exchanges is NOT a normal practice in India.**
- While shopping independently, we advise you to exercise care and common sense when making any purchase. Always get a formal receipt. And remember that, just like in this country, if a deal seems too good to be true, it probably is!

#### - **Safety**

Prior to your trip, if you are traveling overseas, we strongly recommend that you visit the website of the U.S. Department of State at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov), specifically the section which addresses International Travel. You should read the tips for foreign travel and travel warnings for the country or countries that you plan to visit.

Here are several tips which, if followed, will save much potential hardship:

- Be aware of potentially dangerous places and situations as you would be at home. Avoid wearing expensive jewelry and carry your valuables concealed in inside pockets or hidden pouches. Your objective is to avoid drawing attention and to blend in with the crowd
- Don't put all your valuables (money, credit cards, passports, etc.) in the same place (in case one wallet is stolen, you should have other valuables and identification in another safe place)
- Do not leave valuables laying loose in your room or on the bus as aaRna journeys is not responsible for any loss. Use the hotel safe. Keep copies of your passports, credit card numbers and travelers checks numbers in the hotel safe
- Credit cards are generally accepted everywhere and are safer than traveling with large amounts of cash
- Do not pack valuables (cameras, computers, jewelry, etc.) in your checked luggage. Keep hard to replace valuables with you in your carry-on bag.
- Keep wallets safely tucked into front trouser pockets and/or wear a money pouch inside your clothing.
- Carry handbags close to your body, shoulder bags the cross-body method with the bag in front of your body.
- Keep hotel cards with address and phone number with you in each city. If you are separated from the group, you can take a cab to reach to the hotel

#### - **Tourist Street Scams:**

- Pickpocketing and petty theft is very common in India. Pickpockets and thieves can destroy an otherwise wonderful holiday. Be mindful of these precautions to help avoid being scammed or robbed:
- Remain alert and cautious. Be wary of any unusual contact or commotion in crowded public places, including train stations, markets, subways and tourist sites;

- Be especially careful when traveling independently or leaving your tour group to explore on your own. Try not to travel alone, especially at night. Avoid narrow alleys and poorly lit streets;
  - Use only official taxis and check the change you receive from all taxi drivers and vendors;
  - Beware of pickpockets often working with an accomplice who will distract you by spilling something on you, dropping a wallet or other seemingly valuable object, or tripping and falling down in front of you;
  - Beware of aggressive street vendors who may approach you offering a demonstration which may end with you being pressured to purchase an item or act as a distraction for another pickpocket;
  - Don't tip beggars;
  - Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest;
  - ATM machines can be a convenient way to carry less currency. However, those machines too can be used for robbery. Be wary of anyone who can look over your shoulder when inputting PINs. Another scam involves rigging the machine with a plastic insert which makes your card retrieval difficult; the thief then removes your card after you walk away;
  - If you are confronted, do not fight back - give up your valuables. If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police and keep a copy of the official report for insurance claims.
- Staying Healthy while traveling
- Watch what you eat. Try new foods in modest quantities, you may want to avoid street foods, salad bars, raw vegetables and fruits, unless they have thick peels like bananas or grapefruit.
  - All 4 and 5 Star hotels have filtered water which is safe to drink. Juices, salads, fruits and ice might be ok to eat.
  - Stay hydrated. Drink bottled water and **avoid consuming ice cubes made with tap water.**
  - If you have allergies to foods, medications or insect bites, or have any other unique medical issues, consider a medical alert bracelet and/or a physician's note detailing required treatment should you become ill.
  - Wash your hands regularly and carry hand sanitizer.
  - Where appropriate, pack sunscreen and insect repellent (for both active and warm destinations).
  - You may also want to bring a small first-aid kit with band-aids, antibiotic cream, pain killers, bug bite cream, digestive aids like antidiarrheal or anti-bloat medications, antacids, and cold medicine. This is in addition to any prescription medications which should be adequate for the entire trip.