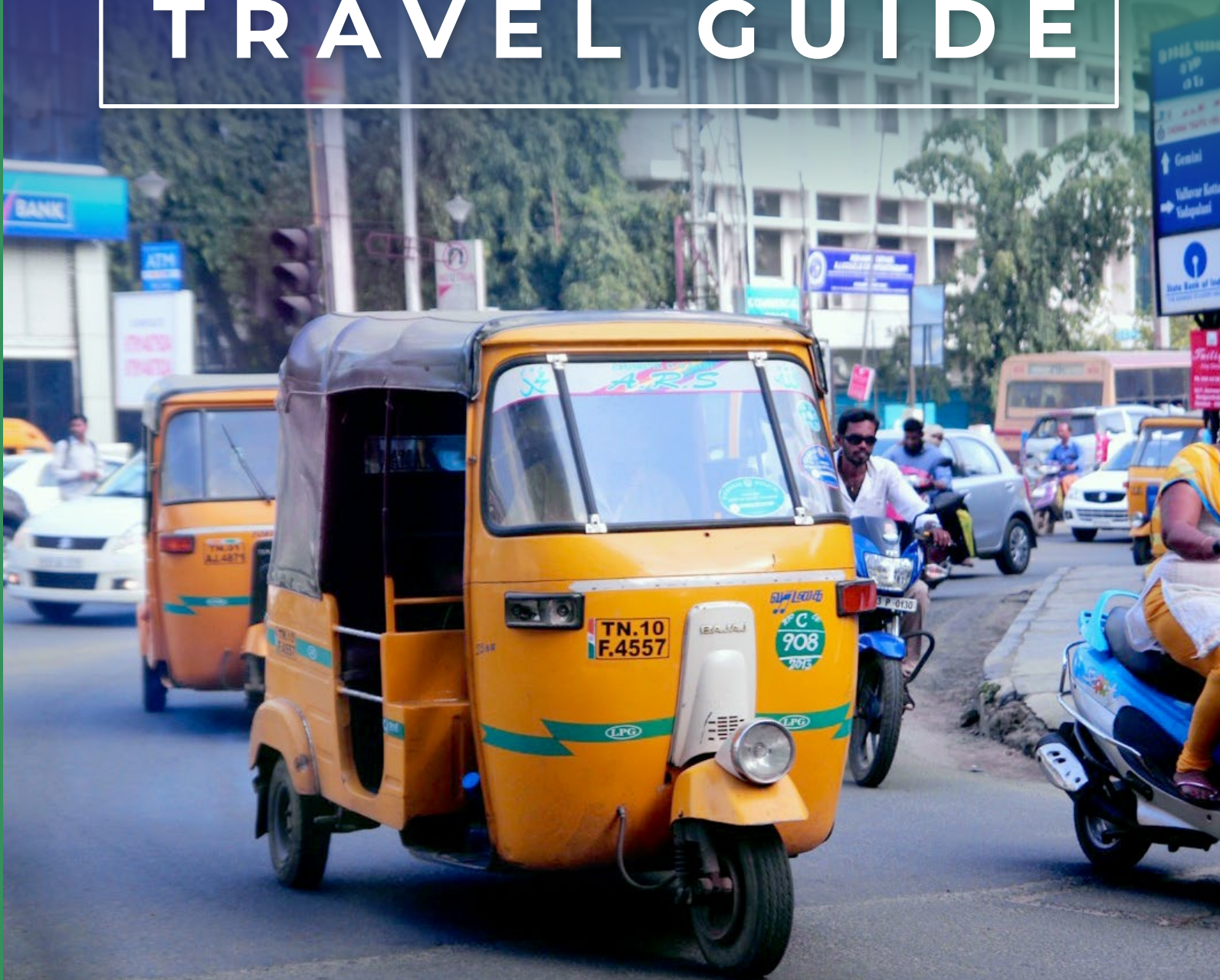


INDIA

TRAVEL GUIDE



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An Introduction

Whether you're new to travel or not, every country comes with a unique set of challenges for its visitors. India is one of the most unique challenges of all—take our word for it, we've been doing business there for over 20 years! In many ways, the cultural diversity in India exceeds the range found in the United States. Imagine the amount of diversity cultivated by 28 states with different climates, terrain, and religions—could you even comprehend learning all 22 of India's languages?

As you read this guide keep in mind that experiences are unique depending on where your adventure takes you. If you're headed to the south to visit our office, you should pack differently than if you were going to the north. All this to say, India can be a tricky puzzle to solve, and we want to help. Whether you're going to India for business or pleasure, keep reading for advice on getting your visa, flights, avoiding cultural faux pas, packing necessities and more!

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Regardless of where in India you might be headed, we want our guide to be helpful to you. But, we also want to make sure to include personalized advice based on our experiences. As you follow our trip planning timeline, look for the faces below for our unique travel tips. Print off the reference section at the end of the guide and take it with you as you travel. There you'll find info about currency exchange, time differences, cultural faux pas, and more!



Mike goes to India mostly for the food and the thrill of riding on the back of a motorcycle through the crazy streets of Chennai.



Laurel is no stranger to travel and has been to north and south India several times. She's got hints from her trips to Chennai, plus advice on traveling internationally.

Planning Ahead by 60 Days



Tip from Laurel: *"This timeline is safe, but I generally like to get my paperwork done as soon as possible once I know I'm making a trip. Unless your trip is very last minute, 60 days should be your minimum timeframe for getting your paperwork done."*

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 60 Days | Have your valid passport, Visa or eVisa, and flight booked. |
| 30 Days | Check the average seasonal weather to know what you might need to buy.
Get any immunizations you want taken care of. |
| 7 Days | Check the forecast and pack for it. Good thing we have two packing lists for you to consult! |
| 1 Day | Passport? Check.
Documents? Check.
Adventure pants on? Check! |
| 0 Days | Sit back and enjoy the flight, but arrivals and customs can be a tricky Business... |

60 Days

VISA AND FLIGHTS

GETTING YOUR VISA

A valid passport* and an Indian visa are required to enter and exit India. You get one of these by applying at an Indian embassy; you **cannot** apply for one once you reach the country. Indian visa regulations have been known to change out of the blue quite frequently, so make sure to look over all the information when you apply (tourist eVisas generally last for six months). You can get your visa either in person at the embassy (this can take 1-3 days) or process your visa by mail or email through a contractor that works directly with the Indian embassy to process your visa (this can take 1-2 weeks if there are no complications).

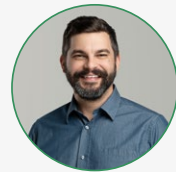
*US passports must be valid for 6 months after the trip you are planning to India. If you need a new passport the timeline is 6-8 weeks from application to receiving it

BOOKING YOUR FLIGHT

In case you didn't realize yet, this is going to be a long flight. Booking through travel sites to find the best rates works well, but also consider a travel agent. It's the travel agent's job to make sure that everything will go as smoothly as possible. If something bad does happen, the travel agent will work tirelessly on your behalf to correct the situation.



Tip from Laurel: I advise using the service [CIBTvisa](#). Follow the instructions exactly as given by the embassy, and keep copies of everything that's submitted.



Tip from Mike: I prefer flying Emirates through Dubai. The service is unbeatable—you might as well be comfortable if you're going to be on a flight for so long.

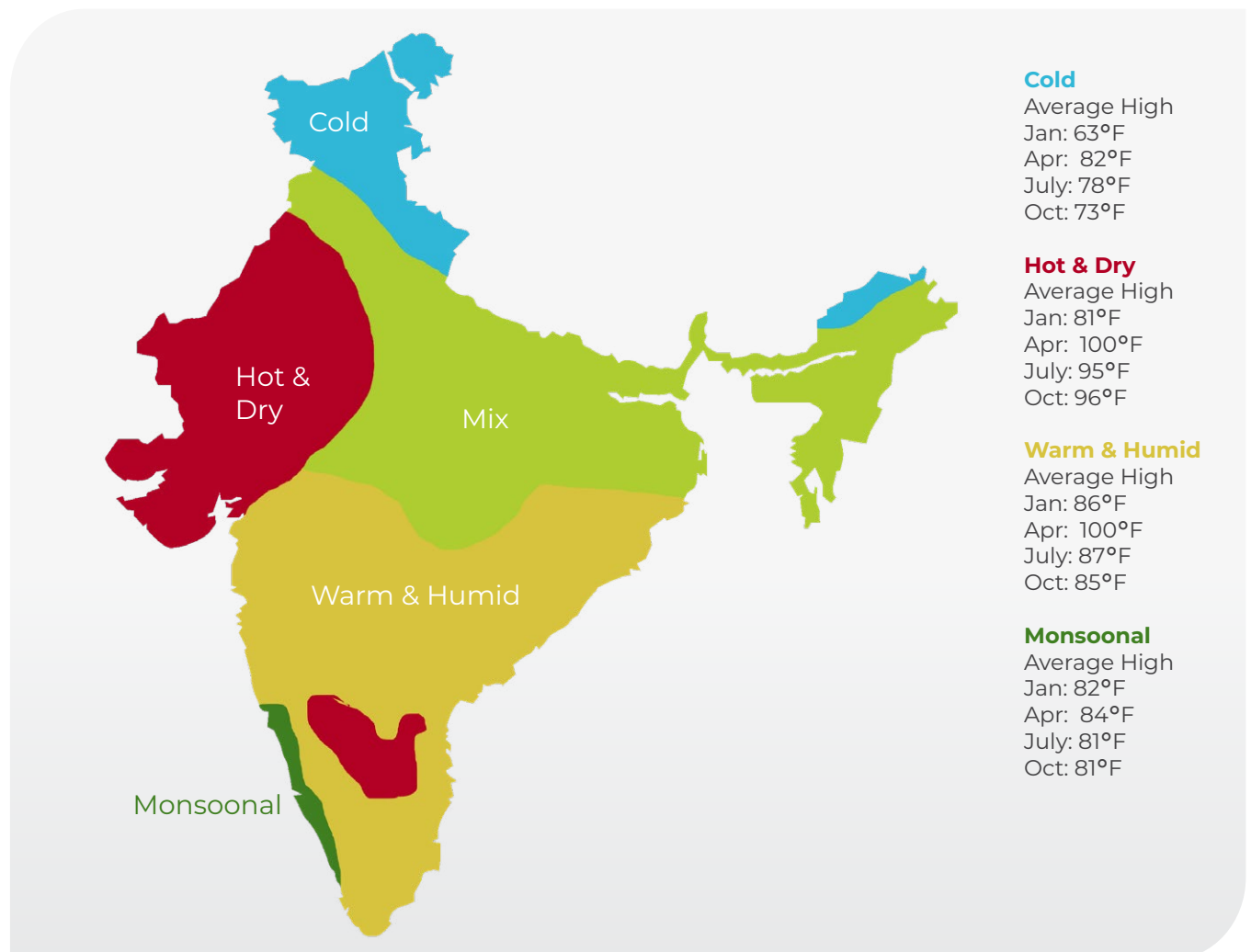


30 Days

WEATHER REPORT & IMMUNIZATIONS

WEATHER

Even though you won't know the predicted forecast until a few days before you take off, it can be helpful to know the seasonal averages further in advance. You might need to order something online that you don't have or hunt for some out-of-season clothing.



IMMUNIZATIONS

The Indian government doesn't require any immunizations to enter the country unless you come from somewhere with yellow fever. However, you might want to check with the U.S. Department of Health to see what they recommend for travelers. It's also recommended to take malaria medication and some antacids for those spicy foods!

7 Days PACKING

Packing for a climate and culture that is different from your own can be tricky (especially if you're going on business). Mike and Laurel's packing lists have been honed and polished over the past 15 years. (Keep in mind that their lists are for a warm and humid region, for business travel, and they do laundry via the hotel service.)

✓ CLOTHING

Mike:

- Pants (2) — plus light travel pants
- Shorts (1) (only to be worn at hotel or westernized places)
- Belt (1)
- Shirts (4)—short sleeve
- T-shirts (2)
- Underwear
- Long sleeve pullover (1)
- Socks
- Shoes (1)
- Sandals (1)

Laurel:

- Long skirts (2-3)
- Business pants (2-3)
- Short sleeve shirts—must have sleeves for modesty. No sleeveless! (5)
- Light cardigan type sweaters (2)
- Jeans or casual pants for outings
- Sandals or shoes for office
- Casual shoes/sandals/flip-flops for hotel
- Exercise clothes for fitness room
- Sunglasses
- Scarves (2-3)
- Socks and underwear

Laurel tip: I purchase local clothing - it's fun and it is very comfortable for the climate (not to mention very affordable)

✓ PERSONAL CARE AND MEDICATIONS

- Granola bars
- Instant coffee (hotel provides 1-2 small per day)
- 3-4 purse-size Kleenex (for TP), take this everywhere!
- Medications—your usual prescriptions, malaria meds (opt), antacid, GasX, vitamins, etc.
- Hand sanitizer—take this everywhere!
- Toiletries
- Wrist watch
- Small flashlight

✓ DOCUMENTS

- Passport w/ India visa or Passport and approved eVisa paperwork
- Copy of Passport and visa to be kept in carry on luggage
- Paper copy of flight itinerary (needed to enter the Indian airport)
- Debit card—for ATM withdrawals (notify bank to obtain Rupees)
- Credit Card—notify bank
- List of key phone numbers (in event phone is lost or stolen)
- Business cards (tip add one to each of your bags)

✓ STUFF FOR DURING TRAVEL

- Carry on suitcase (18"-22")—keep essentials in here just in case your checked luggage gets lost.
- Small bag—for essentials within carry on bag
- Backpack
- Pens
- Small writing pad
- Neck Pillow
- Eyeshades
- Empty water bottle
- Granola bars
- Rechargeable power bank
- Noise-canceling earbuds
- iPad/kindle
- [Airplane footrest](#)

✓ TECHNOLOGY

- Indian SIM card (if no international phone plan, can be purchased there as well)
- iPad/kindle/laptop
- Mobile Phone
- Electrical outlet adapter/converter (power is 220v, check your chargers 110/220v)

✓ KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Better safe than sorry—check for events and closures you might run into on your trip.

0 Days

INDIA: YOU HAVE ARRIVED

LAST MINUTE CHECK LIST:

It doesn't hurt to double check. Also, you should probably go through your hand luggage to make sure you have everything you'll need for your trip. It's a long one.

- ✓ **Passport**
- ✓ **Printed trip Itinerary**
- ✓ **Hotel information**
- ✓ **Credit card**
- ✓ **\$20 cash**

Rule of thumb: As long as you have these 5 things, don't be paranoid about forgetting any other stuff. That's what the credit card is for.



Tip from Mike: Tag your luggage—baggage claim can be nuts. Sometimes they take the bags off the carousel so if you don't see your bag check around the end of the carousel.



IMMIGRATION AND CUSTOMS

Sometimes in life it seems like everyone else knows something you don't. This is how immigration and customs feel in Indian airports. Make sure you have the immigration forms - this is generally handed out during your flight.. At this point you're probably exhausted from your flights, but there's a high chance that the "line" for immigration will look more like a mob. You could get through in two minutes, or two hours. Life is unpredictable sometimes.

ARRIVAL CARD FOR PASSENGERS
Please write in CAPITALS only. One Character in one box as shown below. Do not write across the lines. Leave one box blank for space.

A	B	C	D	E	1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

1. Name (as in passport) Leave one box blank after every part of the name/initial

2. Sex (tick ✓ appropriate box)
Male Female

3. Nationality

4. Date of Birth (DD/MM/YY)

5. Country of Residence

6. NRI/PIO/OCI Status (tick ✓ appropriate box)
NRI PIO OCI None

7. PIO/OCI Card No., if any

8. Passport Number

9. Date of issue (DD/MM/YY)

Transportation and Lodging

Cities are crowded, and to say traffic is chaotic is an understatement. Cars, buses, trucks, motorcycles, scooters, bikes, carts, pedestrians, and livestock all compete for space on the road. Traffic laws seem to be known to natives only, so as you travel, stay on your toes.

BUSES

Buses are the cheapest transportation option for getting around. Though many people prefer trains for longer trips, buses offer some flexibility that other commuting options do not. There is a government-sponsored bus system as a multiplicity of private busing companies. While private buses offer more competitive fares, government-sponsored buses tend to be safer.

CARS/AUTO RICKSHAWS

If you're new to the country, the learning curve for driving your own rented car in India can be quite overwhelming. Many visitors prefer to call a cab or hail an auto rickshaw. The price is usually surprisingly low, and this is a quick and convenient way for commuting needs around urban centers.

MOTORCYCLES

For touring purposes, motorcycle rental is hugely popular. Renting a motorcycle can be a fun, exciting way to give yourself an overview of India. There are several reputable motorcycle rental services which offer third party insurance as a feature of your rental. Be sure to avoid rental services that don't offer insurance.

TRAINS

Getting around India can present unexpected troubles, but its train network can certainly help mitigate any difficulties! Trains are a great option for traveling across the country, as well as through urban areas. Do some research into different booking options, be it a rail pass, booking through a website, or having your trip professionally arranged.

LODGING

Finding a hotel shouldn't be difficult, especially if you're in a popular tourist destination. Unless you're booking through a travel agency, then the best way to go is researching the area online on sites like Lonely Planet, Trip Advisor, or hotels.com. If you want to be adventurous and stay at a small-sized hotel, then make sure to be careful when it comes to food and water sanitation.



Tip from Mike:
Take an auto rickshaw! Don't think twice, just do it! Your experience is not complete without it.



REFERENCE

CULTURAL FAUX PAS

Left hands are considered dirty in India. Why you ask? For the same reason that a lot of public restrooms don't have toilet paper. So refrain from using your left hand for any type of greeting or dining. Indians eat with their right hands, and have amazing dexterity. But don't worry—if you're a foreigner, they'll give you some slack, and probably a fork.

Refrain from wearing shoes as you step into a religious establishment. It's also a good idea to be aware of your surroundings in Indian homes, as shoes may not be welcome there either. Though it likely won't be an issue in most major urban areas, wearing shorts (for men and definitely for women) is a bad practice.

Indians are traditionally conservative in their dress, so dressing immodestly in any sense poses a risk to offend some. Shorts also are seen as a “low-class” garment for men.

In India the word “chai” and “tea” mean the same thing, so spare yourself the embarrassment of repeating yourself when ordering in a coffee/tea shop.

TIME DIFFERENCE

Fun fact: India only has one time zone, and doesn't observe daylight savings time. One reliable way to keep track of the time in India is to keep track of UTC, and simply add 5 hours 30 minutes. (There is only one time zone in India) If you have access to the internet, it is more convenient to use a search engine like Google, or you can use a website such as Time and Date (ex. <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/india/new-delhi>)

MONEY


If you've traveled overseas before, you already know that you must declare any cash you're carrying that exceeds the amount of \$10,000. Bear this in mind as you plan out how much cash you plan to carry with you while you travel.

Once you arrive in India, you'll likely want to exchange your USD (assuming you're traveling from the U.S.) currency for INR; rupees. As to be expected, currency exchangers are commonly found in international Indian airports. However, the airport exchange rates are generally higher than what you might be able to find in other locations. If you can wait until then, you may want to consult a cab or auto-rickshaw driver on where to find the best and most reputable location to exchange your currency.















SAFE TRAVELS AND
WELCOME, VANNAKUM,
NAMASTE!

From the team at:



Area
2,973,193 km²

Republic of
INDIA

 INDIAN RUPEE					
 NEW DELHI	 1,210,193,422	 HINDI & ENGLISH			
 81.3 2.3 12	HINDU 81.3% MUSLIM 12% CHRISTIAN 2.3	 230V, 50Hz EUROPEAN PLUG			
 UTC+ 5.5	 SPRING	 RAINY	 SUMMER	 AUTUMN	 WINTER