



## Packing List and Useful Tips for India Study Tour

Below are some helpful hints to guide your packing for our Study Tour to India. When in doubt, leave it at home—in this case, “less is more.” If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

### VISA INFORMATION:

**India:** All U.S. citizens need a valid passport and valid Indian visa to enter and exit India for any purpose. U.S. citizens seeking to enter India solely for tourist purposes, and who plan to stay no longer than 30 days, may **apply for an electronic travel authorization as early as 120 days prior to their arrival** in lieu of applying for a tourist visa at an Indian embassy or consulate.

We recommend starting the process no later than 30-60 days in advance of departure. Please visit the Indian government's website for electronic travel authorization (<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>) for additional information regarding the eligibilities and requirements for this type of visa.

**Please make sure your passport is valid for six months from date of entry to India and contains at least two blank pages.**

**Important Weather Information:** In mid-February, temperatures in Southern India average in the high 80s/low 90s during the day and mid to high 60s at night. Throughout this period, there is a very slight chance of rain. Please be sure to bring the following items to prepare you for hot, humid and potentially wet weather:

- During the day, plan on wearing comfortable, modest clothing. It is not culturally appropriate for men or women to wear shorts or tank tops to community visits. Skirts should be knee-length or longer. Bring a scarf, light jacket or light sweater to wear in air-conditioned restaurants and at the hotel.
- One pair of sandals and one pair of comfortable, closed-toe shoes you won't mind getting dirty. It is customary to remove shoes before entering homes, religious sites and some offices.
- Sunglasses and hat for sun protection
- Sunscreen and lip protector (SPF of at least #15, UVA and UVB protection)
- Insect repellent containing 20% to 35% of the active ingredient “DEET.” Avoid cologne, scented after-shave lotion, deodorant and perfume, as they attract insects.
- Any prescription medications you take, including those you only use on an as-needed basis.
- Antiseptic, aspirin/Tylenol, bandages, antibacterial wipes/hand sanitizer, vitamins, motion-sickness medication, skin lotion (for sunburn), and medication for stomach upsets or diarrhea, like Pepto-Bismol or Kaopectate.
- An umbrella, poncho or other light rain gear
- Bathing suit (optional)

- Notebook/writing journal and pens
- Flashlight and batteries (put the batteries in backwards so if it turns on in your suitcase, the batteries will not drain)
- Camera and charger
- Leave all valuables at home. Please do not wear flashy jewelry.

Note: When visiting places of worship, off-the-shoulder or revealing tops are discouraged and people wearing anything considered inappropriate may be denied entry. Our guide can offer advice on proper attire, but keep in mind that it is always respectful to be neatly dressed when touring places of worship. Women especially will find that clothing in the U.S. is far too fitted and immodest by Indian cultural norms. Shorts and tank tops (for men and women) are not appropriate, even in very hot climates.

#### Other Important Reminders:

- **Time Zone**

India is five hours and 30 minutes ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, and 10 hours and 30 minutes ahead of Eastern Standard Time. Check <http://www.timeanddate.com> for exact international times.

- **Currency and Exchange**

The rupee, the national currency of India, fluctuates. The current exchange rate can be found on the web at <http://www.xe.com>.

Credit cards are taken at most restaurants and shops, and ATMs will be available. Remember, your accommodations, meals and ground transportation will all be taken care of, so the only items you should need cash for are souvenirs, alcoholic beverages and gratuities.

We also strongly recommend leaving copies of your credit cards and their emergency contact numbers at home in case any of your cards are lost while abroad.

- **Tipping and gratuities**

Tipping has become common practice and is very much appreciated for a job well done. We recommend budgeting for an average of US \$10 per day per person for your guide and about half that amount for your driver. At the end of the Study Tour, AJWS staff will collect tips from the group and present them to the guide and driver on your behalf. (Please note: You may have several guides and drivers during the course of the Study Tour).

If you would like to tip your hotel housekeeping staff, we recommend leaving between US \$1 and US \$2 per guest per day on your pillow, but it is totally at your discretion.

- **Language**

There are 22 official languages spoken in India, with Hindi and English being the most common.

- **Important documents**

Before you leave, make two photocopies of all your important documents (passport, credit card, plane tickets, medical insurance card or list of medications, and driver's license). Keep one copy with you (separate from the documents) and leave the other with someone in the U.S. who you can contact easily.

- **Cell phones**

If you want to use your own phone, tablet, etc., make sure international service has been activated.

- **Internet access**

There is WiFi internet available at the hotels.