

India Travel Preparation Guide

By Rudrava Roy

For Hostelling International USA Minnesota Council

622 Selby Ave, Saint Paul, MN 55104 | www.himinnnesota.org



Getting There

▶ **Visa**

- In Person for same day or by mail for 1 week
- <http://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/homepage>
- Processing fee \$73

▶ **Flight**

- Layover in Europe
- Layover in SE Asia
- No Layover - 16 hr flight (gruelling!)
- Buy online for best prices

▶ **Preparing yourself**

- Take bug spray, ample toilet paper (throw away the tubes?)
- Keep a flashlight handy
- Go to a doctor and get vaccinated for India travel (1 month in advance?)
- Keep medicines for diarrhea, headache, minor cuts & bruises
- If you have a prescription, get the medicine names translated
- Pepper spray, if travelling alone

Getting Around

▶ **Train**

- Online booking possible but not as easy as Expedia/Travelocity
- <http://www.irctc.co.in/>
- Many travel agents near train stations - beware of surcharges
- Most common surcharge is Rs 20 (around 50 cents)
 - Buy Air Conditioned 3 Tier or upwards

▶ **Flight**

- Major airlines - Jet Airways, Kingfisher, Spice Jet
- Round trip not cheaper than one way
- New budget airline - Go Air. Prices comparable to train travel
- Airports are often difficult to reach - Bangalore airport to city transit can cost more than the flight itself

▶ **Buses**

- Not for the faint of heart
- Many private bus companies. Quality varies widely - go by your perception of what you see on the roads
- Booking is typically at travel agents (small shops near bus stations)

Regions

▶ ***Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab***

- Winter or Spring - summers are scorching hot
- Major Sites
 - Delhi, Agra, Mathura
 - Amritsar
 - Lucknow
 - Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur
 - Ranthambhore Natl Park

▶ ***Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat***

- Winter or Spring
- Major Sites
 - Khajuraho
 - Ajanta, Ellora Caves (Nashik/Aurangabad)
 - Mumbai, Goa, Pune
 - Saurashtra, Gir National Park, Ahmedabad

▶ ***Himachal, Uttarakhand, Kashmir***

- Any time of year (esp for Minnesotans!). Some places shut down for winter & people move to lower elevations (less snow)
- Major Sites
 - Shimla, Manali, Dharamshala
 - Jammu, Srinagar
 - Haridwar, Rishikesh
 - Leh/Ladakh

▶ ***West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Sikkim***

- Winter or Spring except Sikkim/Darjeeling which is better in summer, but much more crowded
- Major Sites
 - Calcutta, Sundarbans
 - Darjeeling, Sikkim
 - Puri, Bhubaneswar
 - Gaya, Varanasi

▶ **Assam & Northeast**

- Summers are cooler than rest of India, Winter is fine as well
- Major Sites
 - Guwahati, Tea Estates, Shillong
 - Kaziranga Natl Park
 - Agartala, Kohima, Itanagar

▶ **Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh**

- Definitely Winter!
- Major Sites
 - Chennai, Pondicherry, Kanyakumari
 - Madurai, Tanjavur, Trichy
 - Periyar Hills, Ooty, Kunnur, Mysore
 - Hampi, Halebid, Coorg, Belur
 - Hyderabad
 - Ernakulam, Kochi, Calicut, Trivandrum

▶ **Islands**

- Winter, Spring
- Andaman Islands
- Lakshadweep Islands

Reference Resources

▶ **Guide Books**

- Lonely Planet (The Bible)
- Fodor's
- Frommer's
- Rough Guide

▶ **Websites**

- Wikitravel
- www.indiatourism.com
- www.tourisminindia.com
- <http://www.india-travelpackages.com/>
- Thomas Cook India