

MERRYGO TRAVELS Pvt. Ltd.

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IMPORTANT TIPS ON PRE TRAVEL PREPARATIONS & HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

Well getting prepared to travel to India? Good. Here we would like to share some important tips before you prepare yourself to travel to India. It's always said that it's good to travel light. True. But don't forget the essentials following this tip. It's good to travel light but pack wisely depending on the region of travel, weather etc.

The very first tip is to choose your route wisely. As appropriately stated by Lonely Planet - If you have specific interests then –

Shopping - Delhi
Beaches - Goa
Trekking – Joginder Nagar/ Leh/ Himachal Pradesh
Yoga - Rishikesh
Food – Everywhere!
Tigers – Ranthambore/ Madhya Pradesh/ West Bengal
Thrill-seekers – Manali/ Jogindernagar
Religious fervor - Varanasi
Just chilling - Kerala

So the basic step is to realize the place of interest keeping in mind your interests.

Please make sure about the **visa requirements**. Nationals of most of the countries need a visa to travel to India and it is not available on arrival. Please refer to the Government of India tourism site of your country for any clarifications on visas.

While packing your bags make sure you keep the necessary and important stuff like a hand torch, some extra batteries, small sewing kit, pocket knife, a pair of small scissors, pre moistened tissues, a lock and key for all your bags, your medications (as prescribed by your doctor or the ones you take regularly as the name of the salts and medicines are not same), a first aid & your shaving kit.

Keep the **copies of your passport and visa** in all your bags. Keep some extra copies while you travel as most places you don't need original passport.

Always have handy the addresses of the Missions, Embassies & Consulates of your country in case of any emergency.

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Some paper strip soaps which are always ready at disposal when you need along with some paper napkins both dry and pre moistened.

For Indian summers - cotton or synthetic blended (easily breathable) clothes are recommended along with the wide brimmed hat/cap and sunglasses. A sunscreen lotion is a good choice too. Don't carry delicate fabric clothes which need extra care as it might be difficult to find a proper laundry everywhere.

For Indian winters – Your jacket, sweater, moisturizer, lip guard/ balm, warm socks and thermal inners are must.

A neck pillow with eye cover patches for your long travels by road, train in India.

A nice camera with some spare batteries or charger is a great idea. Don't forget to load it with a high capacity memory stick as you will need it to capture the uniqueness of the country.

In winters come prepared for the delays of the internal flights especially in North India and the months from mid-November till January because of fog. The Indian airports generally are not equipped with fog enabled flying techniques and equipment.

Keep yourself well informed about the political and regional situations of the places of visit. Some places have political unrest most of the time like Kashmir (Parts bordering with Pakistan) and some Eastern parts of India.

To carry a guide book (like Lonely Planet or any other internationally acclaimed book available in your market and language) with you is a good idea. These guide books give you a basic idea of the things and prices. You will not feel a complete stranger. But the prices stated in the guide books are sometimes not updated and you can end up in an argument or feeling all left alone if you stick to these prices. For example the auto rickshaw (a common trike public transport vehicle) fares are never found to be appropriate or updated in some guide books.

Language is not a big problem in India. Even though there are hundreds of languages and dialects, English is widely spoken and understood. You will find people speaking (not very accurate but communicable) English all over except in small villages. If it's a tourist place, yes English will be spoken and understood. For specialized services there are different world language speaking guides (Like Spanish, German, French etc.) to hire. These guides are generally available on pre booking only.

Money- The currency used in India is Rupees. One rupee is divided in 100 paisa. But Rupee is not available outside the country. Hence you can change your currency (USD, Euros, CHF, GBP etc.) in India to rupee. You will find banks and money changers all over the places. But be prepared to bargain and try few money changers for good rates. In banks the bargaining is not possible and all the banks generally have fixed and same rates. Don't forget to carry some rupees back for your next trip.

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It's always advisable to have your booking confirmed for the airport pickup and at least 1st night of hotel in India. This is avoid yourself from the clutches of the touts, commission agents and the hassles of India (Details about this will follow in my next blog).

Well as a **first timer** (even for travelers who have visited before) it's always advisable to have all your travel pre planned and well organized to avoid any hassles. This also assures you to travel in peace and you see more places without losing much time & money. In pre-paid packages it seems that you pay more but actually when you are in India, you tend to pay more but you don't feel as you pay in installments. Believe me – getting a pre-paid and pre-planned package saves you a lot of time & money.

Always choose your travel agent carefully. It should be approved by Ministry of Tourism & Government of India. Other valuable and international credentials are like IATA, international branches, international partnering etc.

If you have booked an airport pickup through a travel agent, then make sure that you keep the agent's contact, driver's contact numbers handy. Also make sure to ask you agent that at what gate the driver will be standing and what type of paging board he will be carrying at the airport. Please ask your travel agent to send you a copy of the paging board which the driver will be carrying at the airport.

For **health issues** please consult your doctor before travelling. There is no need for any shots/ injections before travel to India but it's always advisable to consult your doctor and let him check & decide if you are fit to travel. The doctor might advise you common shots like malaria, cholera, flu etc. If you believe in precautions, then take the vaccinations your doctor suggests. Always carry mosquito repellants, nets and sprays to be on a safer side. Normally an international health certificate is not asked by immigration officer from the visitors of USA, Canada, U.K., Europe, Australia, Japan, Singapore, New Zealand etc. but it's advisable to check with the Indian government site.

Please carry adhesive bandages, antiseptic creams, antibiotics, thermometer etc. in your first aid kit. If you fall ill, don't worry and keep your calm, see a doctor and you will be fine.