

## Destination: Gujarat/Kutch/Rajasthan



India has so many incredible experiences that it is no exaggeration to call it one of the world's richest cultural travel destinations. India is a land of dreams and romance, of fabulous wealth and poverty, of splendour and rags. India is a country of contrasts and paradoxes, of powerful flavours, of spectacular images, and extreme patterns of behaviour. That is what makes this journey so irresistible and powerful. In addition, Indian people are in general openhearted, friendly, and will welcome you to share their country.

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### Is this tour is right for you? It is, if you:

- love piecing together how ancient societies lived
- are curious about how their past has shaped the present
- like to see how material cultures shape societies
- enjoy exploring off-beaten track destinations

In fact, we bet you'll fall in love with this relatively undiscovered corner of India and plan to return before you head back home.

### This tour may not be the best fit if you:

- get overwhelmed by significantly different cultural norms than in the west
- insist on five-star luxury and comfort when you travel (\*please see below for accommodations and transportation)

### How strenuous is this tour?

**IMPORTANT** A good level of fitness is essential. Unless you enjoy unimpaired mobility, can cope with everyday walking and stair-climbing without difficulty, and are reliably sure-footed, this tour may not be for you.

You must be able to walk comfortably and without assistance at a moderate pace for one hour stretches. A moderate pace of walking is defined as 100 steps per minute. Visits to historical monuments and even some modern ones include stairs, as do some hotels. The ground may be uneven in older cities. There are some steep walks. Unruly traffic and the busy streets of larger cities require some vigilance. This tour involves private bus transfers on crowded urban roads. The longest transfer on this tour is 6 hrs with 2-3 breaks.

Most sites have some shade, but the sun can be strong, even in the cooler seasons.

Secondly, our tours are group events. The presence of even one person who is not fit enough to cope can spoil the experience for everyone else and causes stress for group leaders.

Please assess your fitness level as objectively as possible. Should you decide to join the tour and later develop immobility, please let us know immediately. The earlier we know, the better we can recoup \$ for you.

#### How and to/from where do I book flights?

Please see p7 for detailed information on booking flights and extra nights/airport transfers.

#### What is the comfort level of this tour?

**On a scale of 0-5, where 5 = decadent luxury and 0 = basic camping, this tour is rated a 3-4.**

We go into villages and markets. Sometimes we invite you off the bus to traipse through fields to see how cotton grows or how fudge

is made the old-fashioned way. Such activities invariably add to your overall experience and are designed with your comfort and safety in mind. At all times, the choice is yours.

#### Do I need a visa for India?

Unless you have OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) status, you will need a visa. If eligible, E-visas are dispensed, often within 24-48 hrs.

**All:** click [here](#) for e-visas

“Sticker” visas can take up to 3 weeks. Please consult the consular office closest to you.

For travellers seeking a 30-day e-visa, apply no less than 4 days before arrival and up to 30 days in advance of departure for India

Past group members report difficulty navigating and uploading photos; sessions time-out; payments do not go through right away. But perseverance does pay off.

**Please note it is your sole responsibility to possess a valid passport and visa prior to this tour.**

While applying for a visa including an e-visa, you will be asked to supply an address in India. You may use our office address in Delhi:

**Mr Subroto DasGupta  
E.Y.H.O. Tours/Country Tours  
ADDRESS: H- 1585, CHITTARANJAN PARK  
NEW DELHI-110019  
Tel.+91-11-40518398**

## Other FAQs

**I hear only 5\* hotels are good enough for travel in India. Correct?**

Incorrect. We select accommodations for cultural relevance, comfort, safety, and personal service. All accommodations have private bathrooms and western-style toilets. We will travel an untrampled part of India in search of unique rural experiences. 5\* is not necessarily available or desirable.

**What is the Time Zone in India?**

India is 10 1/2 hours ahead of the Eastern Standard Time.

**What is the weather like in January?**

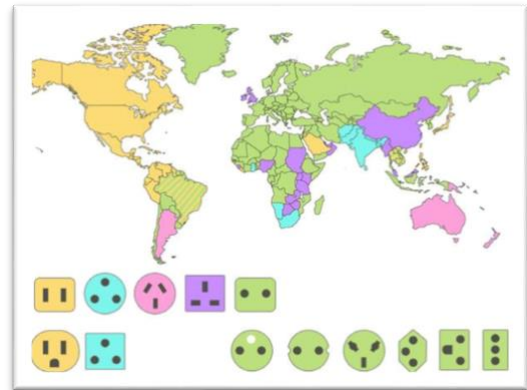
January and February are the most comfortable months to travel in Gujarat, Kutch, and Rajasthan. Expect average max daytime temps around 30°C (86°F) and min. temps. 19°C (66°F). Rural areas may be cooler depending on proximity to large bodies of water, and/or green cover. January-February are dry months with very little chance of rain. In a nutshell, clear skies, gentle breezes, warm days, and comfortable nights.

**What about clothes and valuables?**

A comprehensive packing list will be supplied. Consider layering clothes. Pack a light windbreaker, as well as warm socks in case of inclement weather. Comfortable closed-toed walking shoes are recommended. Dresses below the knees, and trousers and sleeveless dresses are acceptable. Remember, you will be in a relatively inexpensive shopper's paradise! We have never had a theft, but best leave all expensive jewelry and valuables at home.

**What is the voltage in India?**

The voltage in India is 220 AC with either 2- or 3-pin round plugs. See below. Some hotels carry adaptors.



**What the deal with bathrooms in India?**

We stay in the best available heritage/boutique hotels that would equate to a North American 4-5\*. Some locations require community-run accommodations built in local living styles. All have western style bathrooms. However, on road transfers, toilet paper may not be available, and toilets may be basic squat style.

**How can I call home from India?**

India uses LTE, 4G, 3G and GSM frequency bands 900/1800. Your phone will work with a local SIM card (check the frequency band your phone uses for compatibility in India). Local pay-as-you-go data and voice packages are inexpensive. Or ask your service provider to allow International roaming. Note: it can take up to 3 business days to activate a local SIM card.

**My big fear is getting sick in India**

Two main reasons why travelers get sick in India are pre-departure stress and eating unwisely. Before you fly, be sure to get plenty

of rest and be extra vigilant about contracting colds/flu viruses. The food in India is delicious and generally well prepared. But because local Indian fare can include a plethora of well-spiced—but not necessarily “hot” dishes—it’s advisable to ease western digestive tracts into the cuisine. If in doubt, eat rice and packaged yoghurt until your stomach acclimatizes. **\*\*Only eat foods that have been cooked, and are piping hot upon serving, and eat fruit that can be peeled\*\***

Safe bottled water is readily available all over India. Decline ice cubes in drinks.

### Will drinking water be provided while travelling?

We provide unlimited bottled drinking water while on the road. In interests of reducing plastic waste, please consider bringing your own refillable water bottle. In hotels, normally 2 bottles per room per day are supplied free of charge.

### What about the currency?

The “Rupee” is the unit of currency, as in 100 cents = 1 dollar; 100 paise = 1 rupee. The current exchange rate is about 86 rupees = 1 U.S. Dollar. The rupee is a closed currency meaning you cannot bring in above a certain amount (currently Rs 10,000 per person). USD are freely exchangeable. Taking Indian rupees out of India is a punishable offence.

Travelers’ checks are not recommended. ATMs are readily available in major urban areas. Carry smaller denomination bills to use at trip-end so you don’t have to change more than you need. Upon arrival, change equivalent of \$100 to rupees for when you may not access an ATM during the first couple of days. Credit cards are widely accepted in urban areas.

### How much cash should I carry? In what currency?

You should be able to use a credit card except in markets and with smaller artisans. How much cash to carry depends on your individual needs/shopping capacity. Most meals are included; the ones not included will cost roughly \$10-15 without alcohol. As a general rule, incidentals might cost you \$200-300. All major currencies can be exchanged; the easiest is USD and GBP.

### What about tipping?

We run a \$180 pp tipping kitty for drivers and guides in Gujarat, and \$80 pp in Rajasthan. Supplement as you wish. Any unused amounts at the end will be democratically disposed of.

### And shopping . . . ?

India, and particularly Gujarat and Kutch, are a shopper’s paradise. From clothes to jewelry in gold and silver; artifacts, carpets, rugs, embroidery . . . the list goes on. Quality and the price vary widely. Be sure to check the quality of what you buy. Bargaining is expected unless shopping at nonprofit co-ops or directly from artisans.

### What are the luggage requirements?

Most flights within India observe a strictly-enforced rule of 15 kg of checked luggage and 7kg of carry-on. Excess baggage fees run \$5-6 per kilo. Or you can pay beforehand for excess luggage at a slightly lower cost. You may wish to carry a collapsible bag for extra shopping. We will try to provide shipping-home options at Ahmedabad and Jaipur.

### Do I need any vaccinations?

No vaccinations are mandatory in order to enter India. At all times, follow recommendations of your travel health clinic.

In addition, we recommend shots for hepatitis A/B, typhoid and Tetanus, Diphtheria, and Polio. You may want to bring Tylenol, Immodium and/or Pepto Bismol, in addition to prescription medications. Keep a list of your medications with their pharmaceutical names and dosage, as most medicines are available in India under other names.

### What about malaria?

We are travelling during post-monsoon in a dry part of India. As such, malaria is not a threat. The best prevention from mosquito bites is to wear protective clothing and insect repellent. A travel health practitioner is the best judge of your individual requirements.

### Stepwells are fascinating! Where can I find out more?

- <https://www.britannica.com/technology/stepwell>
- <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/review-vanishing-stepwells-india-180962637/>
- <https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/see/story/68975/a-tale-of-the-forgotten-and-soon-to-disappear-stepwells-of-india>
- <https://www.archdaily.com/395363/india-s-forgotten-stepwells>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyAlgjDI9Y> – E.Y.H.O Hosted lecture by Victoria Lautman

### Covid and this tour

The situation and government guidelines are subject to change, so we cannot predict what may happen in January.

### What we will do to deliver as safe a tour as possible

- We recommend travel medical insurance. Travel repatriation insurance is optional but recommended. We do not endorse any insurance companies. However, we can offer the following advice culled from past travellers' experience: [Last page of T&C](#)
- If you or someone else on our trip has symptoms of being unwell while travelling with us, we will assist in testing and medical care if needed.
- We will act quickly to place distance between the unwell traveller and others and follow any government guidelines that are in action at the time. This may include self-isolation or quarantine depending on the risk to others in the group.
- We will provide access to health facilities such as clinics or hospitals if required.
- All our guides have emergency and contact numbers for the traveller to get the best treatment.

**Please note that E.Y.H.O. Tours is not responsible for arranging or covering the cost of any curtailment, missed transport arrangements, additional accommodation, expenses for testing and treatment, or any other costs incurred by the traveller/s. Travellers MUST arrange travel insurance that covers these costs.**

**Further, E.Y.H.O. Tours is not responsible for dealing with your insurance company. We may provide insurance statements as a goodwill gesture. An admin charge may apply.**

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