

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.

First, the important stuff . . .

Please review the following document carefully if you are interested in this tour.

This tour is right for you if you:

1. love piecing together how ancient societies lived
2. are curious about how their past has shaped the present
3. like to see how material cultures shape societies
4. enjoy exploring off-beaten track destinations
5. zig when the crowds zag

This tour may not be the best fit if you:

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

We'd be happy to customize a private tour to your exact liking. Please write us!

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

What Covid related precautions are in place on this tour?

1. Private transportation, on which adequate distancing is possible
2. Daily sanitized transportation and accommodations
3. All participants are required to carry proof of full vaccination
4. Same applies to all drivers and guides
5. Masks are required indoors
6. Travel medical and cancellation insurance is mandatory for all participants
7. For complete terms and conditions applicable during WHO declared Covid pandemic, visit terms and conditions.

What are Covid-related entry requirements to India?

As of Dec 1, 2021, rules differ depending on your country of origin. Refer to latest info here.

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesforInternationalarrivalsdated30thNovember2021.pdf>

How strenuous is this tour?

If you can walk on level ground for 30 minutes, you'll be fine. Navigating some stepwells requires climbing down flights of stairs – but you needn't go all the way down. Often stepwells are best appreciated from ground level, looking down. On the other hand, a fitness-minded traveller will relish the daily exercise. Whatever your choice,

you are never under duress to participate. At all times you will be accompanied to ensure your safety and well-being.

How and to/from where do I book flights?

International flights can be booked into/out of Delhi (DEL) or Mumbai (BOM). These are the most accessible international airports near Gujarat and Rajasthan. The Gujarat tour will begin in Rajkot (RAJ), and end in Ahmedabad (AMD). The Rajasthan portion will end in Jaipur (JAI).

Internal flights may thus be required to get you between your international port of arrival/departure and the start and end points of the tours.

Internal flights can be booked independently or can be arranged by us (\$). We can also arrange transfers and additional overnight stays (\$), as requested. For any questions about best flights, routes, timings, don't hesitate to contact us!

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. Activities such as these 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.

Canada and UK: Currently i.e., Dec 2021, e-

visas/TVOA (Tourist Visa on Arrival) for Canadian or UK nationals are not available. Only “sticker” visas are available. You will need a valid passport, along with other documentation. Info:
<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/index.html>

Once the application is filled out in the Indian govt. website, you need to make an appointment at an approved visa processing facility consulate OR courier your application in. Processing centers: Canada and UK

Visa processing can take up to 3 weeks

US and European Nationals: E-visas available. Apply and get an e-visa online. Info:
<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

Past group members report difficulty

navigating and uploading photos; sessions time-out; payments do not go through right away. But perseverance has does pay off.

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

NOTE: 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

******* Keep scrolling for more FAQs*******

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?

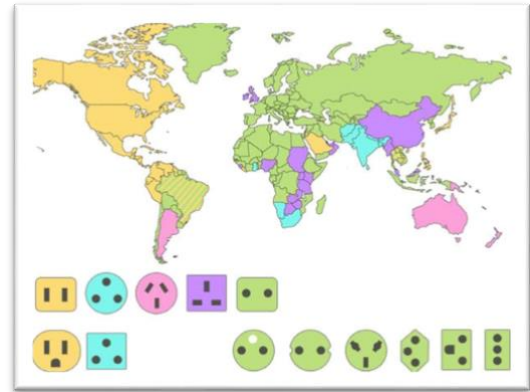
January in a desert/semi desert environment is the best time for travel to Gujarat/Kutch/Rajasthan, with weather similar to a North American spring. You will experience a range of temperatures. In Gujarat and Rajasthan, the temperature ranges from 13°C to 28°C. In Kutch (Bhuj), it may be 11° to 26°C, and can get considerably cooler at night.

What about clothes and valuables?

A comprehensive packing list will be supplied. Consider layering clothes. Pack a light windbreaker and fleece hoodie, as well as warm socks, toque, and mitts in case of inclement weather. A hot water bottle comes in handy for warm toes at bedtime. 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! Leave all expensive jewelry and valuables at home. Note: Mumbai will be warmer and humid. Delhi may be colder.

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.



I'm flying two long haul flights. What do I carry with me on the plane?

Carry all valuables with you: your passport (keep the photocopy in another bag), travelers' checks, cash, camera and memory cards, phone, and prescription medication. In case of baggage delay, a change of clothes along with chargers, shaving supplies, deodorant, toothbrush and toothpaste, medicines and tissues. All amenities, including toilet paper, are readily available in major urban areas of Mumbai, Jaipur and Ahmedabad.

Did you mention toilet paper? 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 70 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 widely except in markets and with smaller artisans. Most meals are included; the ones not included will cost roughly \$10 each without alcohol. Besides that, incidentals might cost you \$100. All major currencies can be exchanged; the easiest is USD and GBP.

What about tipping?

We run a \$200 pp tipping kitty for drivers and guides. Supplement if 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 runs \$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 but often under other names.

What about malaria?

We are travelling during the dry season 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. Where can I find out more about them?

1. <https://www.britannica.com/technology/stepwell>
2. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/review-vanishing-stepwells-india-180962637/>
3. <https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/see/story/68975/a-tale-of-the-forgotten-and-soon-to-disappear-stepwells-of-india>
4. <https://www.archdaily.com/395363/india-s-forgotten-stepwells>
5. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pyAlgjnDI9Y> – E.Y.H.O Hosted lecture by Victoria Lautman

Questions? We have answers!

shila@eyhotours.com