

Eat Your Heart Out's Gujarat/Kutch/Rajasthan



India has so many incredible sights 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, a wonderland of fabulous wealth and poverty, of splendour and rags. India is a country of contrasts and paradoxes, of powerful flavours, of spectacular images and events, of 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.

Is this tour right for me?

Allow us to answer this question comprehensively by providing relevant information that will help you decide.

How strenuous is this tour?

If you can walk comfortably at a moderate pace for half-hour stretches, you can do this tour. There are some stairs involved, but they are not mandatory. We have private bus transfers on crowded urban roads. The longest transfer on this tour is 7 hrs with 3-4 breaks for lunch and toilets.

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. In all cases, they are best available. All accommodations have private bathrooms and western-style toilets. We go into an untrampled part of India in search of unique rural experiences, and 5* is not necessarily available or desirable.

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 crowded markets. Sometimes we invite you to traipse through fields to see how cotton grows or see fudge 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. You do not ever need to participate in activities that make you uncomfortable.

Do I need a visa for India?

Yes, please visit the website of the nearest Indian Consulate. For e-visas, apply here: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html> (If link does not work, copy and paste in your browser's search function)

An e-visa gives instant confirmation of 3-month single-entry visa. You will need a valid passport, along with other documentation listed on the website. Apply online minimum 4 days up to 120 days in advance of date of arrival. Example: For application date of 1st Sept arrival date can be from 5th Sept to 2nd Jan.

Past group members have experienced difficulty with the website. Photos are difficult to upload; sessions time-out; payments do not go through right away. But perseverance has unfailingly paid off.

If not going the e-visa route, visit the closest Indian consulate or mail your application in. Click on links below for processing centres:

- [Canada](#)
- [USA](#)
- [U.K.](#)

Visa processing can take 4 to 5 weeks. Please understand that it is your sole responsibility to possess a valid passport and visa prior to embarking on this tour.

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

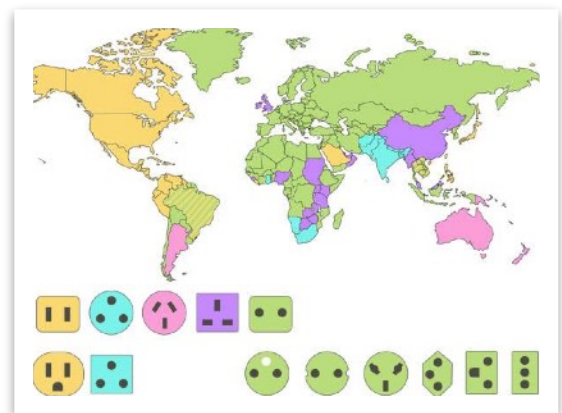
American spring. You will experience a range of temperatures. In Gujarat and Rajasthan, the temperature ranges from 13°C to 28°C. In Kutch (Bhuj), it may be 11° to 26°C, and can get considerably cooler at night.

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.

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.

How can I call home from India?

India uses LTE, 4G, 3G and GSM frequency bands 900/1800. If your phone is an unlocked GSM with multi band, it will usually 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 relatively 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 64 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?

Included are tips for hotel staff and porters. However, we run an additional \$100 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?

Flights within India observe a strictly-enforced rule of 15 kg of checked luggage and 7kg of carry-on. Excess baggage fees runs \$4-5 per kilo. Carry a collapsible bag for your extra shopping. We 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.

More questions? We have answers!

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