



BHUTAN & BEYOND

## INDIA: IMPORTANT INFORMATION – updated MAR23

Prepared for Bhutan & Beyond by our India partner operator Target Tours.

### PASSPORT

Please ensure that your passport is in order, with a minimum validity of six months from the date of departure from India and must have at least two blank pages.

### VISAS

Visas are required for travel to India. As an Australian passport holder, you have the option to apply for a Double Entry 60 Days E-Tourist Visa or a 1 Year multiple entry tourist visa for India. Please be aware of unauthorized online Indian visa websites.

We request all our clients to apply for an e-TV (e-Tourist Visa) only through the official website:

E Visa: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

Website for Stamped Visa: [http://www.vfsglobal.com/india/australia/visa\\_services/tourist.html](http://www.vfsglobal.com/india/australia/visa_services/tourist.html)

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT YOU HOLD THE CORRECT AND VALID TRAVEL DOCUMENTS INCLUDING VISAS FOR ALL COUNTRIES TO BE VISITED. TARGET TOURS CAN ACCEPT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAVELLERS WHO HAVE INCORRECT OR INSUFFICIENT DOCUMENTATION.

### SHOPPING

India is a shopper's paradise with the promise of some excellent buys. However, as a measure of precaution, always check on the levels of import duty levied for items that you wish to purchase. Many local shopkeepers may claim that there is no duty levied, but this could be incorrect information. Please try and carry back all the goods that you purchase with you to avoid storage charges. If you are planning major shopping, please seek information and advice from customs authorities before departing on your tour. Do not forget that any item that is more than 100 years old is banned from export out of the country, as is ivory, crocodile skin and other wildlife products.

When shopping for expensive items such as precious stones, carpets etc, the shopkeepers may guarantee the authenticity of the item, however expert knowledge is essential to ascertain their true value.

Please note that Target Tours India Pvt Ltd cannot be held responsible for any purchase that you make and nor can we take up correspondence on your behalf if you are not satisfied with the item purchased or if goods are not delivered in time. We pride ourselves on the quality of our sightseeing guides, however if at any time you feel pressurized by the guide to purchase any goods, we would be grateful if you could bring it to the attention of the local representative. Please note that bargaining is common in India at most of the establishments except at the Government run shops and emporiums where the prices are fixed, and any discount is advertised.

### HEALTH

COVID vaccination is no longer required for India, however air travellers may be subject to a random COVID-19 PCR test on arrival. There are no compulsory vaccinations for travel to India, although it is strongly recommended that you are protected against the following: Polio, Tetanus, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Malaria, (only in certain areas) which is taken in a tablet form. We advise that you contact your doctor or local Travel Clinic, allowing at least 8 weeks before the date of travel, for all medical advice. Some areas may be of high altitude, please check with our staff before confirming your itinerary and then check with your doctor that it is safe for you to travel. An inoculation against Yellow Fever is required only if you have visited any infected area within 5 days prior to arrival.



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### TRAVEL INSURANCE

Target Tours strongly recommend that you have insurance cover for your holiday. Such insurance would ensure that you are fully covered against unexpected cancellation charges, medical expenses arising abroad, repatriation costs in cases of injury/illness/death, loss of luggage or money and personal liability claims. Target Tours cannot be held responsible if you do not purchase travel insurance or if you purchase inadequate insurance cover for your holiday.

### CURRENCY

There are no restrictions on the amount of foreign currency or traveller's cheques you may bring into India, provided a declaration is made in the currency declaration form given to arriving passengers. However, cash, bank notes and traveller's cheques up to US \$10,000 or equivalent need not be declared at the time of entry. It is advisable to change your money through authorised banks and hotels. Hotels are probably the most convenient option, as their rates are usually only a little poorer than the banks. Always keep your receipts, as you will need them at the end of your trip if you wish to convert your rupees back to your own currency. The units of Indian currency are the rupee and the paise. There are 100 paise in the rupee.

Paper money comes in the denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 2000 rupees and coins are available in 50 paise and in rupee coins of 1, 2, 5 and 10. All major credit cards are accepted in most hotels and restaurants and government shops, as are traveller's cheques in US Dollars or AU Dollars. There are ATM machines at all major airports, as well as in all major cities.

### FOOD

It is best to stick with cooked foods and remember to peel fruit before eating it. The best drinks are bottled mineral water, other bottled drinks, coffee, and tea. Indian beer is excellent, so is the Indian Gin and Vodka, all without ice. The whisky needs an acquired taste, and the imported Scotch whisky is very expensive, as is the wine. However, there are some very good Indian wines now available. Finally avoid drinking tap water at all costs! Most major hotels offer Continental, Indian and Chinese cuisine. In remote and outlying areas food is mainly Indian. It is suggested that in these areas you order vegetarian food as it tends to reduce the risks of stomach upset.

### TRANSPORTATION

#### TRAVELLING BY ROAD

The roads in India can be very unpredictable and are frequently narrow, bumpy and potholed. At times you will also see livestock wandering along the roads. Journey times can vary due to the change in road conditions which can be brought on by the monsoons. This is beyond the control of Target Tours. All our drivers are trained and experienced. We generally use air-conditioned cars. The coaches we will use are also constructed locally. We will use deluxe air-conditioned coaches, but these cannot in any way be compared to that of western coaches.

#### TRAVELLING BY TRAIN

Train travel in India is very interesting and a better way to measure the rhythm of the country. However, trains in India are basic but comfortable. Where possible we always try to reserve first class or air-conditioned carriages, but these cannot always be reserved and do not exist on all routes. Our tour consultants will be glad to discuss the facilities available on the route you are taking.

#### TRAVELLING BY DELUXE TRAIN

There are several options when wishing to travel by a Deluxe, overnight train. The Palace on Wheels, Maharaja's Express, Deccan Odyssey, to name a few. These trains will allow you to see different parts of India, by travelling while you sleep at night.



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### TRAVELLING BY AIR

Our itineraries may include some internal air travel. Travel is in economy class with some flights providing optional business and/or premium economy classes. Meals are provided in all classes, although when flying on a discount airline, you will have to pay for the food. Unfortunately, some airlines have a reputation for flight delays, cancellations and occasionally, strikes. These aspects can be trying at times and patience and a good sense of humour will help a great deal. Target Tours can take no responsibility if such problems arise. We will offer a suitable alternative with the minimum change to the itinerary as possible at no extra cost to you. Should you find this unsuitable our agents will endeavour to make arrangements as per your instructions however, any extra costs will be borne by the traveller.

Please note all domestic flights in India have a baggage restriction of 15kgs per person in economy class. Except 25kgs on Air India.

### CLIMATE

The temperatures in India vary greatly, depending on the time of year and the area. Generally, the best time to visit India is during the months October through to April. The monsoon seasons starts the end of June and runs through to the end of August. However, this will depend on the part of India you are travelling to. Most of the game sanctuaries are closed during the monsoon period. During the summer months of May and June the lower plains of the South, and the desert areas of the North are very hot and either dry in the North or humid in the South, while the hills and mountain regions provide a cool sanctuary.

### WHAT TO WEAR

If you want to keep your cool in the Indian sun, a good supply of cotton clothing is essential along with a comfortable pair of sandals. An effective pair of sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat will protect you against the strong rays. In the cooler months you will require some warm clothes for the evenings. If your tour takes you to the mountain regions, you will require warm clothing.

For visiting game sanctuaries, we recommend wearing khaki, brown or olive green to blend in with the environment. Light sweaters and a windbreaker will be useful for early morning viewing in the summer and heavier sweaters during November to February as it can be very cold.

When visiting places of worship and mausoleums there are certain religious customs to be observed. As a token of respect, it is customary to remove your footwear before entering all temples (a pair of socks is useful if you prefer not to go barefoot), and dress should be conservative. ie. shorts are not acceptable. In Jain and Hindu temples leather goods such as belts, shoes and bags will not be permitted either.

### POVERTY AND BEGGARS

India is a developing country and second most populace in the world, next to China. Great strides have been made in the economic development and social upliftment during the last decades. However, in keeping with the size of the country and its population, poverty and beggars are an inescapable fact. Certain sights may be shocking from a western viewpoint. At tourist attractions and temples, you may see large numbers of beggars, though the majority are usually professionals. We strongly recommend that you do not give any money or gifts to the beggars. Should you wish to donate for a cause, we, or our ground staff, can suggest worthwhile charities.



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### GRATUITIES AND TIPPING

If service is not included in the bill, 10% is usually the accepted amount. Hotel and railway porters will expect about 100 rupees for one piece of luggage and about 200 rupees for a trolley full. At the end of your stay, if you wish to tip your sightseeing guide and driver, an acceptable amount for the guide would be approximately between 800 - 1000 rupees per day. For the driver, it would be approximately between 600 - 700 rupees per day, although this is very much at your own discretion. For the Oberoi Vilas properties, they discourage daily tipping to their staff members. You can however put money in an envelope at the end of your stay, when you check out, which can be divided amongst the staff, or you could specify the names of any staff that gave exceptional service.

### ELECTRICITY

The electric current in India is 230-240V and electricity is widely available in the main towns, cities, and tourist destinations. Sockets are the three round-pinned variety, similar (but not identical) to European sockets. European round pin plugs will go into the sockets, but as the pins on Indian plugs are somewhat thicker, the fit is loose, and a connection not always guaranteed.

### TIME DIFFERENCE

Indian standard time is 4.5 hours behind Australia EST. India has only one time zone.

### ADVANCED DEPOSIT AND CANCEL TERMS

Due to advanced deposit conditions imposed by some hotels, airlines, wildlife resorts and services, we may require a higher non-refundable deposit on certain itineraries.

Special cancellation terms and fees may also apply. Our staff will inform you at the time of booking.

We cannot make reservations without arranging transfers and the services of one of our representatives.

### NO ALLOWANCE OR REFUND

No allowance or refund can be given for meals, rooms, excursions, or other parts of the tour that are not utilized by you when these are included in the price of the tour and no allowance or refund can be given due to lost, misplaced, or destroyed travel tickets or vouchers.

### DISCLAIMER

You, and each party traveling in your tour and named in the Booking Form, expressly acknowledge that you are cognizant of all risks of travel and arrangements for trips of this nature and fully disclaim, waive and discharge Target Tour India Pvt Ltd (including its officers, members, directors, employees, agents and representatives) from any and all liability, claims, damages, loss, or responsibilities (including damage to or loss of your property or your injury or death) with regard to the proposed tour and arrangements made with respect thereto, even if caused by the negligence of any airlines, transportation companies, hotels or any other party rendering any of the services or accommodations included in the tour. Target Tours India Pvt Ltd shall not be liable for any losses or claims arising from (i) flight or other delays, cancellations or missed connections, (ii) delays of baggage or other properties, (iii) inconvenience, loss of enjoyment, upset and disappointment, distress or frustration, whether physical or mental, (iv) personal injury or property damage, or (v) any failure by any person or company to render any transportation, accommodation or travel service which is part of the tour.

### FORCE MAJEURE

Target Tours India Pvt Ltd shall not be in breach of these Booking Conditions if there is any total or partial failure of performance of its duties and obligations occasioned by any act of God, fire, act of government or state, war, insurrection, embargo, terrorist act, or any other reason beyond its reasonable control.



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