



Trip Name: Medical Electives in India **Trip Code:** INID **Duration:**

Key Facts

Our Medical Elective placements are carefully designed by a fantastic team of fully qualified doctors who know exactly what is required from an elective placement. During your placement you can work in world-class hospitals with state-of-the-art technology, provide on-the-ground support to the poorest demographics, or combine the two.



Our exceptional network of contacts throughout the medical world, and particularly in India, mean we can offer exceptional international experiences that would otherwise be incredibly hard, or even impossible, to arrange as an individual.

- Choose from complete range of specialties
- World-class mega hospitals with the latest technology
- On-the-ground aid for the poorest demographics
- Leaving metropolises, beautiful beaches and rural outskirts
- All logistics taken care of, including visas and accommodation
- Range of added extras ensure once-in-a-lifetime experience

Overview

Experience/ Qualifications required: Participants must be studying Medicine at University.

Nationalities: This programme is open to all nationalities (subject to visa requirements.)

Typical Hours: Monday-Friday; 8 hours a day, typically from 8am to 5pm but may vary; Occasional work at weekends but usually free for personal time and travel.

Remuneration: Unpaid position

Destination Info

Itinerary



Our medical electives are designed and managed by doctors for trainee doctors from around the world. We have strong partnerships with hospitals throughout India and each placement is created to ensure that your elective gives you the experience required whilst giving you the right level of exposure for your level of training.

Here are some of the options available with Real Gap.

Accident and Emergency- Bangalore

This exciting medical elective is based in the accident and emergency department of a busy Bangalore hospital. It allows you the opportunity to see a wide range of clinical presentations, including adults and paediatric patients. During your time you will learn about the management of sick patients and deciding which conditions can be treated at home and which require admission.

Cardiology- Bangalore

Our cardiology placements in Bangalore give you exposure to all aspects relating to cardiology, including paediatric cardiology and cardiac surgery. The placements provide you with hand-on experience seeing inpatient and outpatient cardiology, as well as cardiac emergencies. There is the possibility to combine your placement with exposure to cardiac surgery or any other medical speciality of interest to you.

Cardiology- Goa

This is a truly amazing elective in cardiology at this leading hospital in Goa. It includes exposure to adult and paediatric cardiology, with interventional cardiac services including angiography and ablation in the state of the art cardiac catheterisation laboratory. The service is supported by onsite cardiac surgery, including paediatric cardiac surgery, which students will be given the opportunity to explore. This placement provides the complete cardiac experience, laying fantastic foundations to build upon and providing an all round rewarding experience.

Cardiology- Mumbai

This medical elective provides a complete insight into cardiology, from paediatric to adult patients. Our hospitals have state of the art catheterisation laboratories, and dedicated cardiac surgery theatres with a team of cardiothoracic surgeons. You will have the opportunity to spend time in adult and paediatric cardiology, cardiac electrophysiology, interventional cardiology and cardiothoracic surgery. In addition, the hospitals have many other medical and surgical specialities, and it will be possible to spend time in other areas of interest to you.

Cardiac Surgery- Mumbai

This is a fantastic medical elective at one of the world's leading cardiac units. Students will get to experience state of the art technology including new technology not yet available in the UK. The hospital, India's highest accredited hospital, has treated over 1,000,000 patients in the last 8 years including over 20,000 cardiac angiographs with one of the lowest global mortality rates. The hospital focuses on cardiology, emergency cardiology with a new cath lab, paediatric cardiology, cardiac surgery including robotic assisted cardiac surgery and cardiac rehabilitation. During your elective you will primarily be based in the cardiac surgery department, which includes exposure to robotic assisted cardiac surgery but will have the opportunity to spend sessions observing cardiology clinics.

Gastroenterology- Mumbai

This medical elective combines experience in gastroenterology with general medicine at this busy 750 bed hospital. The gastroenterology department has 3 endoscopy suites and a hepatology unit and provides services including OGD, colonoscopy, push enteroscopy, ERCP, endosonography and PEG insertions. You will form part of the gastroenterology team but will also have the opportunity to study general medicine and attend other outpatient and inpatient activities at the hospital.

General Medicine- Bangalore

We have placements at several hospitals in Bangalore, allowing you to gain exposure to both inpatient and outpatient medicine, covering cardiology, respiratory, gastroenterology, neurology, endocrinology, diabetes and infectious diseases. Students will gain invaluable exposure to all aspects of internal medicine during this placement and encounter signs and conditions you are unlikely to come across in the UK.

General Medicine- Mumbai

This is a medical elective in general medicine at this busy 750 bed Mumbai hospital. The hospital has specialities including cardiology, oncology, paediatrics, gastroenterology, endocrinology, diabetes, dermatology, interventional radiology, pain medicine, palliative medicine and ophthalmology. The state of the art facilities and opportunity to experience such a large range of specialities and well as partaking in the busy medical 'take' provides an excellent opportunity to learn about a wide range of medical conditions, including many not commonly encountered in the UK.

General Medicine- Goa

This medical elective offers the opportunity to study and experience medicine at this super speciality hospital in

Goa, providing state of the art treatment. The hospital contains 180 beds, dialysis centre and cardiac catheterisation lab, as well as being serviced by a dedicated cardiac ambulance. The general medical elective includes exposure to nephrology, cardiology and rheumatology through a mixture of inpatient and outpatient work. Students will gain exposure to conditions not commonly encountered in the UK as well as witness pioneering state of the art techniques.

General Medicine- Red Cross retreat in Panchgani

The Red Cross Retreat experience is unlike any medical elective you could imagine. The hospital is spread out over a 44 acre site, consisting of a multitude of buildings, trees and gardens and initially appears more like a village than a hospital. It is however a large hospital, with 250 beds, a 24 hour accident and emergency department, intensive care unit and acts as a regional referral centre for HIV and TB. You will live onsite in the 'hospital village' with the dedicated team of doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals.

General Surgery- Red Cross retreat

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Infectious diseases

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You will gain exposure to all aspect of general medicine, with a particular focus on infectious diseases and respiratory medicine. The placement includes inpatient and outpatient work and the possibility to spend time in the accident and emergency department as well as intensive care. The package provides a fantastic hands on experience of rural Indian healthcare and exposure to those patients most in need.

Intensive care- Bangalore

The placement is ideal for students wishing to gain exposure in intensive care medicine and the management of critically unwell patients. The 15 bed intensive care unit contains state of the art equipment for monitoring and treating patients, as well as a smaller 4 bed neonatal intensive care unit (NICU). The large unit will allow students to experience both unwell medical and surgical patients, as well as post operative management of planned elective surgical cases following major surgery.

Intensive care- Goa

If you are interested in intensive care, then this is the perfect elective for you. Set in this super speciality hospital in Goa, you will be placed in the intensive care department containing 43 beds receiving both planned elective as well as emergency admissions. The intensive care unit provides support to the medical and surgical specialities, allowing students experience in managing sick surgical, neurosurgical, trauma and medical patients. It is possible to combine the intensive care placement with other medical and surgical placements in the hospital.

Neurology- Goa

This medical elective is perfect for those interested in neuroscience, combining neurology and neurosurgery at one of India's leading hospitals. The neurology services include general neurology and specialist clinics in neuromuscular disorders, demyelination, stroke, dementia and headaches. The services are supported by a state of the art neuro intensive care facility and CT/MRI imaging facilities. The neurosurgical theatres have semi-robotic microscopes and computerised navigation systems to aid in their provision of: microsurgery, endoscopic brain surgery, skull base surgery, neuro-endovascular surgery and craniofacial surgery in addition to general neurosurgery.

Neurology- Mumbai

This is a unique medical elective in neurology at this large Mumbai hospital, allowing students to gain experience in a wide range of common and rare neurological disorders, many not commonly seen in the UK. In addition to general neurology, the unit focuses on stroke, epilepsy and movement disorders, having specialist Wilsons and Parkinsons disease clinics. As well as observing neurology and neurophysiology, students also have the opportunity to shadow neurosurgery to gain a complete experience in neurological disorders.

Obstetrics & Gynae- Mumbai

This elective combines obstetrics and gynaecology at a leading state of the art 750 bed hospital in Mumbai. The advanced foetal care centre provides leading services in foetal medicine whilst the gynaecology department specialises in gynaecological oncology and minimally invasive surgery. Students also have the opportunity to attend specialist fertility clinics in the reproductive endocrinology department. The breadth of experience offered at this placement allows students to gain invaluable experience in both gynaecology and obstetrics as well as associated endocrinology.

Paediatrics- Bangalore

This medical elective provides students with a fantastic opportunity to explore paediatrics and neonatology, encountering many conditions unlikely to be seen in the UK. The hospital provides a 24 hour paediatric service, including emergency as well as outpatient work. There is a four bed neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) in addition to a special care baby unit through which students can gain exposure. In addition to medical work, there is also a paediatric surgery service onsite, allowing complete exposure to all aspects of paediatrics.

Vascular Surgery- Mumbai

This surgical elective is based at a busy Mumbai hospital in the vascular surgery department. The department carries out operations including aneurysm repair, AV fistula repair, DVT surgery, open and endovascular arterial surgery and carotid surgery. Students will form part of the vascular team, shadowing inpatient, outpatient and

theatre work. This elective provides exceptional experience for students keen on pursuing a surgical career.



Bangalore

Bustling Bangalore is a symbol of the new India. East meets West and nature nestles around man-made glitz in this temperate gem of a city.

It is simultaneously known as 'The Silicon Valley', 'Garden Paradise' and 'Pub Capital' of India. So which one is correct? Well, all of them.

Home to international companies like Microsoft and Google, Bangalore carries all the benefits associated with being a home of the blue-chip elite. Sleek shopping centres, like the swish UB City, and world-class (but affordable) cuisine are staples of the city.

Cool bars abound, where locals, young professionals and international business people alike unwind with a cold glass of Kingfisher at the end of the day.

And yet the number of beautiful parks and gardens is amazing. They offer the perfect escape route inside and outside the city. Move a little further beyond the outskirts and you will also find the spectacular Shivasamudram Falls.

Healthcare in Bangalore, as throughout India, is a boom industry. First-class hospitals are dotted all over the city, while NGOs offer an earthier, aid-inspired option in the rural surrounds.

Goa

White sand, turquoise water and palm trees swaying in the light sea breeze. It sounds like a clichéd description of paradise. But we can't think of a more accurate way to describe Goa.

The smallest of India's seven states, it is the jewel in the country's geographical crown. Tinged with relaxed, Portuguese influence, it is one of the world's premier beach locations.

It is also the country's richest locale, and as such boasts excellent hospitals. We were determined to secure placements in these institutions to offer our students a perfect placement in paradise. We hope you enjoy it.

If that wasn't enough, Goa is also home to two world heritage sites: the Bom Jesus Basilica and churches and convents of Old Goa.

Mumbai

Do you enjoy the quiet life? A bit of peace and solitude? Then allow us to be candid: Mumbai, formerly Bombay and the setting of *Slumdog Millionaire*, is not the city for you. If, however, you are an urban creature who thrives on the hustle-and-bustle of the city, then you can't miss it. For sheer energy, movement and frenetic human activity, Mumbai is unmatched. It is a people-watchers paradise – there are over 20 million of them, after all.

Here, more than anywhere else, the diversity that is imprinted in India's DNA comes to the fore. The famous Gateway of India and old-fashioned bazaars resolutely represent the past, while Bollywood stars eating in exotic restaurants and partying the night away in ultra-modern bars make their case for the present.

Mumbai's infinite variety extends to the economic circumstances of its inhabitants. The wealth gap is something that needs to be addressed if India is to become the nation it aspires to be.

Presently, it is reflected in a healthcare system that encompasses everything from high-tech super hospitals, to on-the-ground aid delivered in the heart of the slums. For an aspiring doctor, the chance to straddle both sides of the fence is invaluable.

So what is our advice on Mumbai? Take a deep breath, jump on a rickshaw and embrace the madness.

Panchgani

Jump in a Cool (air conditioned) Cab in the heart of mad Mumbai and a few hours later you could be breathing the famously fresh air of Panchgani, watching one of the best sunsets on Earth.

Literally meaning 'Five Hills', Panchgani's spectacular views and pleasant weather made it a favourite summer retreat for the British Raj in the 19th century. And it retains many of the elements that made it such a desirable destination.

It is also home to the Red Cross Hospital that hosts out International Taster Weeks and a handful of Electives. Treating all illnesses, with a focus on Tuberculosis and AIDS, the 'sanatorium' resembles an idyllic resort as much as a medical institution.

Whether you want to recover from the chaos of Mumbai, find peace in the beautiful hillside setting, or understand the true value of the Red Cross, don't be surprised if you fall in love with this charming - and remarkable - place.



Step 1: Application

To apply for this elective programme we ask you to either call us or apply online using the link below. When you apply we will request information on your emergency contact details, passport number and your health background and other important information. At this stage a deposit payment of £199 is requested, this deposit is

non-refundable, unless your application is declined.

Once your application has been received we will request the following details from you.

- A current CV /resume detailing your work and study history
- One medical reference

Please note: If your internship is part of your university course, and requires accreditation we also request a letter from your tutor supporting your application for an internship.

Step 2: Acceptance of your placement

Once our team have reviewed your application, and accepted you onto the programme for your preferred dates we will contact you to confirm your application has been successful. We recommend you purchase insurance as soon as you secure your placement.

Step 3: Online account details

Once your placement has been secured, we will set up and send you details of your online account login which will take you to your personal Real Gap secure website. Here you can view details of your internship, along with info specific to your time in India. This includes; what to expect during your time in India, what to take with you, country and visa information and details such as insurance and where to get necessary vaccinations. Once you have your login details you can go ahead and book flights, to do this please contact your travel advisor who will give you a quote.

In the run up to your placement, our expert team will be here to answer any questions you may have and to fully prepare you for your time in India.



As with any adventure in life, we believe that your Elective will not be dictated simply by what you do, but by the people you share it with. As well as offering special deals for those of you who want to travel with friends from home, we arrange a number of opportunities for you to meet new people throughout your placement:

On arrival in India, you will attend an orientation event, where you will receive an introduction to the local area and culture, along with the chance to meet other students starting their experience in the same place.

At this orientation, you will be given a free Indian sim card so you can swap numbers and keep in touch with the people you meet.

We do our best to make sure that you travel and stay with, or near, other people on our programmes, so you immediately have a social network with whom you can explore and enjoy your new surroundings.

We organise group meals and nights out throughout the course of the programme, attended by students at the start, middle and end of their placements.

Medical Electives in India

We have tapped into our local networks to organise great discounts at some of the top bars and restaurants in all our locations, giving you the perfect platform to hit the best spots in town with your new friends
We host UK-based alumni events that give you a chance to catch up with familiar faces from past programmes.

On your first day we will meet you at your accommodation and take you to our offices for a detailed introduction session. During this meeting you will get to know our staff, and others on the internship programme, who will run through the following with you to ensure you get off to the best possible start;

- A session welcoming you to India
- An introduction to local customs and etiquette
- An overview of important words and expressions
- A list of key contacts and important numbers
- Maps and advice on things to see and do

An important part of the programme is the social activities so that you get to know others on the programme. Before you leave for India you will have the opportunity to join our dedicated Facebook group for students undertaking placements at similar times. We also often arrange a meet and greet drinks evening prior to you travelling. Through our local contacts and partners in India, we are able to provide a range of social and cultural and extras. These might include:

- Group meals and nights out throughout your placement
- Group cultural excursions
- Team building and networking activities
- Discounts at bars and restaurants
- Use of gyms and exclusive clubs
- Yoga classes
- Indian cooking classes

In addition, we are able to help you find other experiences you might enjoy, and book them at the best rates.

These might include:

- Safaris
- Tickets to sporting events
- Visits to some of the top tourist destinations in Mumbai or Bangalore

After your programme you will have the continued contact, support and social events in India should you decide to stay on.

Accommodation

Accommodation for the duration of your placement is included in the cost of the programme. We try to ensure that students on our programmes stay with or near each other to enhance their social experience. Our standard accommodation is based on two students sharing a large twin room. All accommodation is of high quality with en suite bathrooms and Western amenities. Most include wifi, television, telephone and regular cleaning. Some locations also benefit from an on-site swimming pool, gym and restaurant. It is possible to upgrade to a single room for the duration of your stay, contact our staff for costs.

Meals

What's Included

- Medical Elective with a top hospital in India
- Airport transfer on arrival
- All accommodation
- Detailed orientation
- Welcome meal and introduction
- Full support throughout your placement
- Social activities
- Visas (UK applicants only)



What's Not Included

- Flights
- Travel insurance (we can help with this)
- Transport to your workplace
- Vaccinations



FAQs

1. What is a medical elective?

A medical elective is a period of study undertaken as part of your undergraduate medical degree where students get the opportunity to undertake a placement in a speciality and location of their choice. The majority of students decide to go abroad, and often incorporate a holiday at the end of their placement.

2. What is your 'complete package'?

When booking through Real Gap we remove the stress of booking your medical elective. We have an online database of placements currently available for you to search, with detailed information about each placement. All packages include: ground transfers, placement, accommodation, travel insurance, visa applications, 24 hour helpline, starter pack (customised for each city) and discounted flights (see below). Depending on the location, some packages include items such as gym memberships, free night club entrance and there is also a range of optional extras such as accommodation upgrades and courses.

3. How long are your medical electives?

Our medical electives are tailor made and can be adapted to your needs. Most electives are 6 weeks long, but extensions are available on request. As our electives are negotiated with leading institutions, there is often a minimum period of 4 weeks requested by individual hospitals and consultants.

4. What kind of hospitals do you supply medical electives at?

We supply medical electives at a range of hospitals, from central world renowned institutions to rural Red Cross hospitals. All hospitals are vetted to ensure they have the capacity and facility to provide a wide learning experience, as well as meeting safety standards. Our specialist hospitals include the world's busiest cardiac unit as well as a national burns centre for plastic surgery.

5. What types of accommodation are included in the packages?

All our accommodation is vetted in person by our on site staff to ensure they meet high standards in quality and location. Your accommodation will be located conveniently for your placement, and is usually either a serviced apartment or hospital doctor's accommodation. Our basic accommodation would meet the standards expected of a 4 star hotel.

6. How do I know my elective placement will be good?

We meet with all hospitals and consultants in person to design a medical elective that will offer a breadth of experience in your chosen field. We only partner with leading institutions with a proven track record that are able to provide maximum experience. All placements are continuously audited to ensure they meet our high standards.

7. Do I need insurance before I go on my medical elective?

Yes. Before you can undertake your medical elective you need to have insurance against any medical claim of negligence (this is included in your free MPS or MDU membership) and full travel insurance.

8. What is the proof required to show I am a medical student?

We require a letter from your university to state that you are a current medical student at that university. This can be supplied by the administration department usually within a day, and is the same letter required in the UK for council tax exemption.

9. Why do I need an academic reference for medical electives?

By booking a medical elective with us we have arranged placements at leading medical institutions across the world in highly specialist areas. Many of the consultants who will be supervising you will want to have a CV and academic reference to ensure that we fulfil our commitment to them to provide keen medical students with a genuine interest to learn.

10. Who can provide my academic reference?

The academic reference can be written by any university faculty member or consultant for whom you have worked.

11. How do I get signed off at the end of my medical elective placement?

You will have an allocated consultant during your placement whose team you will be shadowing and who will be meeting with you to monitor your progress. They will sign you off at the end of your placement. You will also get a certificate of completion once you have successfully completed your placement.

Police Check

This trip requires a Police Check to be carried out - please contact us for further information on how to do this.

Support & Advice

Your safety is paramount which is why all our programs have been visited and assessments have been conducted to ensure any major risks have been minimized.

In addition, you will have access to a 24 hour emergency contact number so you can contact one of our staff at any time should you need to. In addition our overseas partners and coordinators are on hand in-country to assist you.

Financial Security

We know that the last thing you want to worry about when you're planning your trip of a lifetime is whether your money is in safe hands. As a leading global gap year provider it's our job to make sure your finances are secure, so when you book with us you can be confident that we do just that.

Real Gap Experience is part of TUI Travel Plc, one of the largest travel organisations in the world, and these days in the travel industry, large means secure.

Insurance

Whether you're traveling for two weeks or two years, trekking the Amazon in Ecuador or on safari in Africa, insurance is an essential part of your adventure and will help you enjoy your travels, secure in the knowledge that you have the protection you need. In fact, everyone traveling with us must have adequate cover before their trip begins.

Of course you are free to buy insurance from any provider, however at Real Gap Experience, we have partnered with World Nomads to offer policies that have been specifically designed to meet the needs of global travel. If you think you're already covered by an existing policy, such as those offered by credit card providers, check the policy wording very carefully to ensure it covers you for your Real Gap Experience.

For more information on travel insurance please contact us to speak to one of our travel advisors.

Money Matters

Also denoted as 'Rs' the Indian rupee is the official currency of India. The rupee is divided into 100 subunits called paise (p) but single paise coins are rarely used or found in circulation. Coins are available in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 25 and 50 paise and 1, 2 and 5 rupee coins are also available. Rupee notes come in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1000 but note that the larger notes are difficult to change outside banks. The rupee is tied to a number of currencies.

ATMs can be found in most major cities and towns but carrying cash and traveller's cheques is recommended as power cuts can leave ATMs unavailable. All major travellers cheques are widely accepted but US dollar and Pounds sterling are the most popular.

Please note that passports will always be needed when changing currency or travellers cheques.

You'll find your money goes a pretty long way if you purchase local foods and drinks.

Meal, Inexpensive Restaurant 2.25 \$

Domestic Beer (0.5 litre draught) 1.65 \$

Coke/Pepsi (0.33 litre bottle) 0.42 \$

Water (0.33 litre bottle) 0.27 \$

(Prices quoted in US Dollars)

Passports and Visas

All UK passport holders must apply for a visa before travelling to India. All other nationalities should consult their relevant embassy.

Once you have booked your trip you will be provided with further instructions and any necessary supporting documents to obtain the correct visa. Passports and visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. As a general rule most countries expect that you will have at least 6 months' validity on your passport beyond your intended stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary.

Cultural Considerations

Greetings

The traditional Indian greeting is to make pranaam, which involves folding your hands together in a prayer gesture in front of your chest, but without bowing. The standard Indian greeting "namaste" or "namaskar" can accompany this gesture and this combination can be used to say hello and goodbye. Female volunteers are encouraged to make pranaam to both women and men, as occasionally some Indian men use the Western tradition of handshaking as a way of making inappropriate physical contact with women. Refusing a man's outstretched hand while making the pranaam gesture is not only appropriate but in some cases it will gain you considerable respect. Male volunteers, however, should feel comfortable in shaking hands with Indian men.

Clothing

Indians dress far more conservatively than we do here in the West. Dressing in accordance with Indian custom is one of the most effective ways to show respect to the local culture and help to eradicate certain stereotypes about Westerners that previous holidaymakers have introduced. In India clothing is not about expressing individuality but expressing group identity, such as status and religious traditions. Female Indian clothing helps to reflect and define the idea of Indian femininity. Therefore, it is best to dress in light clothes that cover your shoulders and your knees; it will prevent any unwanted attention and will protect you from the Indian sun.

Smoking, Alcohol

Smoking and drinking is acceptable in India and readily available. However, please respect other people. Smoking is not permissible in volunteer apartments or the host families' homes. Drinking is only permissible in moderation and must not impact upon any volunteer work you undertake. While we want you to have fun in your free time, antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated.

Bathroom Facilities

You will experience a range of different shower and toilet facilities. Unless you are staying in a hotel you will rarely have hot water. The cool water takes a little getting used to but I'm sure you'll find it refreshing after a hot and humid day. Toilets will be a combination of western and Asian. Remember to put all toilet tissue in the bin provided

and not in the toilet.

Whilst on excursions you will notice that many places do not have a western toilet and will have a typical Asian toilet; again this is all part of the Asian culture. Also, many places do not have soap in the bathrooms. It is a good idea to take a small bottle of soap gel and keep it in your day bag. This is an antibacterial gel that you don't need to rinse off. These are available in chemists in the travel section.

Vaccinations & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad. The risks to your health whilst travelling will vary depending on your general health and the type of activities you are going to be partaking in and the length of your stay.

Since we are not medically qualified, it is recommended that you consult with your Doctor or a recognised Travel Medical Advisory Service who will assess your particular health risks before recommending vaccines and/or anti-malarial tablets and advising you on what precautions you should take.

Safety

India is not a particularly dangerous place for foreigners, but as in any strange setting, safety requires a certain degree of attention and thoughtfulness. Because Westerners are known to carry money and valuables, pickpockets and petty thieves often target them. Especially when riding trains and buses or walking in public areas, be sure to keep a close eye on your possessions. When in transit, money, documents and other small important items should be kept on you, preferably in a pouch or money belt, as opposed to in bags or purses. Valuable technology like cameras should be carried in small bags that can be kept close at hand at all times. Remember to photocopy all your documents (insurance, passport, traveller's checks etc), and keep them in a different place than the originals. If you have credit cards, be sure to keep a copy of the information and the customer service number in case they are lost or stolen.

Various scamsters and low-level con men also target travellers in India. If you are ever in doubt about the trustworthiness of someone that is offering you assistance or services, it is best to walk away. Travellers generally stay away from the truly dangerous and violent places in India, so you need not be worried that refusing assistance or attention will result in a dangerous or unpleasant reaction. When refusing potentially shady offers, be polite but firm.

Certain areas of India are popular with Indian tourists and Indian men will often go on holiday together to escape the confines of their home lives. These men are often interested in watching Western women who behave and dress very differently to the women they are familiar with. Female volunteers occasionally experience unwanted attention.

We advise that you check your government's advice before travelling abroad. For UK, American and Australian customers please see the relevant links below;

UK: www.fco.gov.uk

USA: www.travel.state.gov

Australia: www.smartraveller.gov.au

The FCO have updated their information to recommend the following for female travellers visiting India;

“Women travellers should exercise caution when travelling in India even if they are travelling in a group. Women should use caution when travelling in India. Reported cases of sexual assault against women and young girls are increasing; recent sexual attacks against female visitors in tourist areas and cities show that foreign women are also at risk. British women have been the victims of sexual assault in Goa, Delhi, Bangalore and Rajasthan and women travellers often receive unwanted attention in the form of verbal and physical harassment by individuals or groups of men. If you are a woman travelling in India you should respect local dress codes and customs and avoid isolated areas, including beaches, when alone at any time of day. Avoid travelling alone on public transport, or in taxis or auto-rickshaws, especially at night. If you have to use a taxi, get them from hotel taxi ranks and use pre-paid taxis at airports.”

ATM Theft

It is very likely that you will need to withdraw cash at some point during your travels. Please be cautious when withdrawing money from an ATM and ensure that you are vigilant of other people near the ATM, especially those that offer unsolicited assistance if your card is detained. It has been recognised that individuals are operating unlawful withdrawals by placing ‘traps’ in ATMs whereby personal bank cards are being detained, causing the victim to believe their card transaction has not been completed, and leaving their bank card in the ATM which is then later retrieved by the thief.

If your card is confiscated or you are concerned that your card has been tampered with, please report immediately to the bank or cancel your card.

Language Guide

Here are some useful phrases in Hindi to remember when you get to India. We also suggest you obtain a Lonely Planet or language guide for the destination(s) you are travelling to.

Hello/Goodbye - *Namaste*

Thank you very much - *Bahut bahut shukriya*

Thank You - *Dhanyavad*

Yes - *Haan (ha)*

No - *Nahi*

So you speak English? - *Kya aap angrezi samajhte hain?*

What is your name? - *Aapka naam kya hai?*

My name is... - *Mera naam ... hai*

How are you? - *Aap kaise hain?*

Fine, and you? - *Bas ap sunaiye?*

Nice to meet you - *Aapse milkar khushii huyii*

Do you understand? - *Kya ap samjhi*

I don't understand - *Main samjha nahi*

Food & Drink

Indian food is incredibly popular in western Europe, but tasting Indian food is a bit different than the stuff produced in the Indian down the road. In this respect the food may take a little getting used to. There are also a few cultural

differences that you may need to observe. People in India tend to eat without cutlery, using either their hands or pieces of chapatti. If you are dining with strict Hindus, certain behaviours are considered inappropriate, for example sharing already eaten food and eating directly from the communal bowl.

Traditional Indian cuisine involves the intricate blending of multiple herbs and spices such as ginger, garlic, saffron and cloves. Popular ingredients vary from location to location, from lamb and yoghurt in the Northern regions to seafood in the coastal regions. In the South, more vegetables are used for cooking, along with coconut and curry leaves. In fact, most of the best dishes are vegetarian, especially when you take into account the dominant religious views of India - Hindus do not eat beef and Muslims do not eat pork. In most cases, even if you do order a meat dish, you will not find that much meat actually in it.

What is classed as a curry by western culture encompasses a huge amount of dishes in India, each with its own unique beautifully blended ingredients. You are bound to find something you like. Here are a few tips regarding food and drink:

- Raw food is subject to contamination; avoid salads, uncooked vegetables, and un-pasteurised milk products such as cheese. Fruit should be self-peeled
- Undercooked and raw meat, fish and shellfish may carry intestinal pathogens
- Cooked food that has been allowed to stand for several hours at ambient temperatures should be thoroughly reheated before serving
- Yogurt and curd are naturally safe if kept in hygienic conditions, but be careful that they contain no water, as yogurt is often diluted with water in India
- The safest food is either well cooked and hot or personally peeled fruit
- As you will generally be eating without silverware, washing your hands thoroughly before all meals is absolutely imperative.

Choosing the proper beverages is as important as choosing the proper food. In a climate like India's, regular hydration is essential, however, many beverages can be dangerous to your health. The following suggestions will help you safely quench your thirst:

- Tap water is only safe if boiled; filters and purification tablets are not 100% effective. In all cases bottled water is by far the best option. Fruit juice and ice made with un-boiled water should also be considered unsafe
- When buying bottled water, stick whenever possible to known brands and make sure the bottle has an unbroken seal. Bottled water should cost no more than 30 Rupees.
- Hot beverages like coffee and tea should be boiled fully before consumption
- Though bad for hydration, carbonated beverages (incl. beer) are generally safe
- Try to remain conscious of casual water: dishes and utensils should be thoroughly clean and dry before use; teeth should be brushed with bottled or purified water

Remember to let us know of any dietary requirements before you depart.

Public Holidays

When planning your trip, you should be aware of the major national holidays celebrated throughout the country. However, although businesses and government offices are closed on public holidays, tourist attractions and shops are almost never closed. The main impact on the tourist of these holidays is the increased competition for travel and accommodation from Indians who use long weekends to get away from the big city.

To view a list of the public holidays for India, please see the link below:

www.timeanddate.com/holidays/india/

Weather

India's climate generally has three seasons, which may vary from region to region. The hot season roughly beginning in February in the North and peaking in June can reach up to and above 45 Celsius in some areas, mostly in the centre of the country. You can expect Delhi to have temperatures at the high end of the 30's.

Monsoon season means steady rain for the whole country from the beginning of July. It stays pretty hot, and though it doesn't rain all day, it does generally rain every day. The Monsoon causes muddy conditions at best but serious flooding is also a threat. The cool season is the optimum time to travel in India, as it is not too hot and not too cool. In the winter it does get surprisingly cold in the Northern regions, whereas in the south the temperatures are beautiful.

Time

India is 5.5 hours ahead of GMT.

Electricity

Electricity in India uses 240 volts, 50Hz. If your device does not run on these rates, you'll need a voltage converter.

Outlets across India generally accept the following plug types;



Two round pins

or



Three round pins arranged in a triangle

Trip Note Disclaimer

The information contained in this trip note has been compiled with great care and is provided in good faith. Any itinerary featured is correct at time of release. However, our itineraries may change as we make improvements that result from travellers' comments, our own research or from time to time as a result of recommended travel advice.



Medical Electives in India

You can rest assured that it is always our goal to provide you with the most rewarding trip and experience ever!

Our Details

If you have any questions about this trip please do not hesitate to contact us and we'll be happy to answer them.

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