

Sacred India Tour

January 9–23, 2010

Preparing For Your Trip

Guidelines

All participants are expected to abide by the basic teachings of Integral Yoga, such as no smoking, drinking of alcohol, etc.

In addition, respect for local customs and traditions are required of all members. (Information on customs and traditions will be given at the beginning of the program, or we can send written information on request.)

In order to maintain a peaceful environment, participants may be asked to leave the group if they do not abide by the guidelines.

International Airfare

The program cost does not include airfare to and from India.

We recommend that you select a flight arriving in Chennai (previously known as Madras) which is where the tour group will gather. A hotel room will be reserved for those arriving during the night on January 8, 2010 or very early on the morning of January 9, 2010.

Our tour will end in Cochin on the afternoon of January 23, 2010. If you plan to fly out of India from Chennai on the January 23, 2010, please do not book a flight before 11:00 pm on January 23, 2010.

If you wish to see a little more of India, you could also fly into the cities of Mumbai, Bangalore or New Delhi, but of course you will incur the expense of an additional domestic flight and hotel stay.

Immunizations and Medications

Check with your doctor or local health clinic about what they recommend for traveling to India. The least expensive way to get information and shots is to contact your local health department to see if they have a travelers clinic.

It is an individual choice as to how to prepare for such a trip. However we recommend that you get inoculated against hepatitis and typhoid.

Passport and Visa

Please make sure your passport is current and will not expire before July 2010.

A visa is required also. If you are coming just for the tour, a six-month Tourist visa is enough. If you live far from a Consulate you can apply for your visa through the mail but you must apply well in advance of your journey as it takes several weeks to process. You can get full information from the following website:

<https://indiavisa.travisaoutsourcing.com/homepage>

Security

Overall, India is a very safe country, but you should still take common sense precautions against theft.

Please carry valuables like your passport, airplane tickets, credit cards, and cash (except for some pocket money) in a money belt under your clothes, with the money in front.

Keep your camera strap around your neck.

When staying in hotels, it is best to leave your suitcase locked with valuables inside when you go out.

The tour will not be able to take responsibility for any lost or stolen items.

Carry a photocopy of your passport and air ticket information separate from your money belt.

Luggage

The optional amount of luggage is one medium-sized suitcase and one carry-on bag.

Suggested Packing List

Temperatures in January are typically 80 to 85 degrees in the day and 60 degrees at night.

Please avoid bringing items that require electricity as the plug points in India are different than those in the West, and the voltage is 220.

- 1 outfit of white or light coloured clothes.
- 2 Sets of hatha/meditation clothes
- Sun hat
- Swimsuit for beach wear -- no bikinis please
- Small fold up plastic rain coat
- Shawl for meditations (Pack it in your carry-on bag -- you may need it on the plane because of the AC.)
- Diary
- 1 Money belt
- 1 Travel alarm clock
- 1 pint-sized water bottle
- Sunglasses (Those who wear prescription glasses should bring one extra pair. For some travelers contact lenses are uncomfortable because of the dust in the air.)
- Ear plugs
- Eye mask
- 1 small flashlight with extra batteries
- Ipod if you have one
- Camera and an extra camera battery
- Several small & medium zip - lock plastic bags - many varied uses

Toiletries:

- Toothbrush and toothpaste (if your toothpaste tube is full-size, please pack it in your checked baggage)
- Soap box and soap
- Shampoo and cream rinse
- Whatever vitamins and supplements you are accustomed to using
- Comb, brush
- For ladies, feminine hygiene supplies
- Aids for constipation, diarrhoea, air sickness, and stomach upsets
- Nail clipper and/or small scissor (best in your checked bag, not the carry-on)
- Mosquito repellent - Very important! We prefer Buzz Away as it is not toxic
- Sunscreen
- Kleenex travel packets
- Hand sanitizer
- For shoes, **one pair of sandals** and **one pair of tennis shoes** is recommended. (On some days we will be constantly taking our shoes on and off.) Be sure to include shoes that are comfortable for long walks.
- Also pack any other personal items that you use on a regular basis to maintain your health and comfort.
- Any medications that you depend on should be packed in your carry-on, not checked baggage. Please remember that any liquids or gels allowed in your carry-on baggage must fit into one quart-size zip-lock bag.

Clothing Guidelines

Clothing is very cheap in India so you should budget yourself for some additions to your wardrobe and not bring a lot of clothes. Please note that travel in India is very hard on clothing so it's better to not bring your favorite or costly garments. At the same time, be aware that the Indians tend to dress beautifully and prefer a formal look to a casual look.

For women, please note that in South India women are very modest in their dress. Other than saris the usual garb is a salwar chemise which is a loose dress worn over pants with a light shawl. You can buy a simple salwar outfit for ten dollars and up. Sleeveless, form-fitting, or transparent clothing is not appropriate for women.

For men, please bring shorts that are knee-length, and do not plan to wear tank tops except during our beach stay.

Communicating with the West

You will be able to communicate through long distance phone calls and email. Remember India is 10.5 hours ahead of the Eastern Standard Time USA. The internet centers are sometimes very slow, so prepare your friends and family for irregular communication.

Suspend judgment and give the benefit of the doubt

India presents to us a wide spectrum of experiences. Some things are worse than you would expect, and others better than you could have dreamed. When visiting India it is essential to suspend judgment, stay open, and let India reveal her many layers to you. Keep your "Triple-A Card" handy: Adapt, Adjust, and Accommodate!

Health guidelines

Adjusting to a new environment and a new diet plus traveling is stressful on the body. The principles of health, however, are the same in India as in the West. Please avoid excessive tea and coffee, excessive sweets, eating late at night, etc. With regular hatha and mindful eating, everyone should be fine. Nowadays we can usually find foods that are suitable for Westerners - not too spicy.

For those who come a few days early to India, please only drink water that is:

- From a sealed bottle
- Boiled water
- Is from a water purifier like Aquaguard

Fresh fruit and vegetable juices from a stand often are not hygienic. Don't take ice. Hot drinks and bottled sodas are usually safe.

South India is close to the equatorial line. If your skin is sensitive you will need to use suntan lotion daily and wear a hat.

Make sure that you are in good physical health; take care of any dental or eye problems before you start out on this trip.

Road Travel

We will rent a comfortable AC van for the road travel during the tour. However, some of the tour road trips are over 4 hours long, so your walkman or iPod could be very helpful during this time.

Fees – Sacred India Tour

The fee for the *Sacred India Tour* is \$1,850 per person double occupancy or \$2,128 for single occupancy. This includes lodging (see below), travel by private AC bus, entry tickets for excursions, and most meals. It **does not include** international airfare, charges for passport, visas, inoculations, etc.

Registration for the tour is due by December 1, 2009, along with a deposit of \$500. The final payment is required by December 20, 2009, and we will be unable to provide refunds after that date.

The cost of personal services such as laundry, phone calls, tips for baggage, etc, are the responsibility of the tour member. The tour will end in Cochin, Kerala, and if you have to return to Chennai for your departing flight, you will also be responsible for the airfare from Cochin to Chennai, which should be under \$100. You will also be responsible for your transportation from the airport to the hotel when you arrive in Chennai.

Lodging

The hotels we have chosen throughout the tour are clean, safe and equipped with Western-style toilets. With one exception, you will have the option of air-conditioning.

The tour fees are based on two persons occupying a twin-bedded room. If you would like a private room, you must reserve in advance and pay the single room supplement of \$278.

Don't hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have about the above.

You may contact Swami Divyananda directly via email at: divyanandama@gmail.com or you may call the Ashram Reservations Center toll free at (800) 858-9642 M-F, 9:00am to 5:00pm.

We will be supplying more information regarding the Indian culture and travel guidelines upon your arrival.