

## Traveller's Information for North India

### Weather and Clothing/ Supplies to bring

The time of year that we will be in the northern region of India is rumoured to be the best weatherwise for a number of reasons. The intense heat of the summer is broken by the monsoon rains in July-August, but a kiss of tropical heat still reigns by day as late as the first week of October, and the nights are breezy and perfect for layers. Respecting Indian cultural mores on dress means for men, wearing shirts while you practice Yoga at the ashram, and for women, keeping your shoulders covered with a scarf for light weather or shawl and not wearing any tight clothing that reveals cleavage or legs. I guarantee that you will have a more mellow time overall and the Indian people, who are delightfully worth your extra effort in respecting and getting to know, will regard you with much higher interest if you dress modestly. Otherwise, you will just be another force of worldly distraction in a pilgrimage town and you may not be comfortable with the way you will stand out to men and women alike! You can buy any kind of beautiful, beautiful clothing in India except Yoga pants (the stretchy kind), so don't forget to bring a few pairs of these! Take as few things as possible from home so you don't have to ship a ton back, you will want to buy some great things here, or have some clothing custom-made by one of India's many talented tailors...

Things that are quite valuable to your quality of life in a trip to India can include:

Your own Yoga mat (easy to strap onto the side of your carry-on or luggage)

A CD walkman, there are many great and rare music recordings you might want to take with you and enjoy for walks, train rides or times on your own...

A flashlight

GSE Grapefruit Seed Extract for prevention of viral infections/ daily supplement

Probiotics, probiotics, probiotics!

Number One for Wellness: **PROBIOTICS!** These are nutritional supplements that you can get at Whole Foods Market which contain microbial enzymes like acidophilus (which is found in yogurt) that build the "warrior bacteria" known as intestinal flora (I guess "flora" is supposed to beautify this concept for us).

I was extremely lucky and did not get sick with famous "Delhi Belly" even once, throughout various regions and months! For every person's constitution and diverse experience of the law of Karma, India has a different effect however. So I don't know if it was the fortification from the probiotics that kept me completely in the clear, but I surmised that it helped a lot overall!

You can get traveller's probiotics (that don't need refrigeration) from Jarrow brand, it's a yellow box of 90 supplements. These cost only around \$14. Start taking 2-4 a day at least 1 month before the retreat!

I would like to preface the remainder of my advice with the following statement: it is always important to see a travel doctor and find out for yourself what shots are needed. Tell your doctor that we will be in Uttar Pradesh and Uttaranchal Pradesh, both are neighboring states of Northwestern India. We will be in Delhi briefly, which is the most highly populated area in our journey, but mainly will spend our time in Rishikesh and Haridwar, which are at higher elevation and are less populated areas against the Himalayan foothills.

I consider myself a very purist organic-lifestyle kind of woman—but before I made my first trip to India, I did not hesitate to get inoculated and have updated shots against several types of illnesses (some fatal) known to be on the lam there:

You will need inoculations for (definitely):

Hepatitis A/B booster

Typhoid (oral capsules, not so bad but do not exercise or do a vigorous asana practice within 6 hours of taking them [I found this out the hard way]. For me, some minor side effects of flushed skin and dizziness along with a little nausea were present after the first pills, the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> doses were not so bad. Typhoid can be present in water in India! You need to be sure to drink only bottled water, NEVER drink the table water at restaurants in India and do not drink bottled water that isn't sealed properly

Meningitis

These shots can cost up to \$300 for Hep A/B if you don't have them up to date (3 shots), \$100 for Meningitis and \$75 for typhoid. These three diseases represent the most virulent and prevalent that can be found in the areas we will be traveling in. Shots have to be taken at least a month in advance to be effective, so plan ahead!

For comprehensive info on shots recommended for this area, please visit [www.arthurdovermd.com](http://www.arthurdovermd.com)

I recommend Dr. Arthur Dover of Watsonville for those of you who are in the Santa Cruz area for fantastic and compassionate care. His prices are the best I've found too! Shots are probably the most expensive part of your trip to India, outside of the cost of airfare--although you can pat yourself on the (soon-to-be-inoculated) shoulder here in security that your airfare is already included in the cost of this trip! ;)

Northern India is a highly populated region subject to extremes in weather. In the summer season, temperatures climb well past 110 with high humidity. India receives monsoon rains during the period of July to August, and this in conjunction with heat gives mosquitoes an ideal breeding ground. Thus it is good to consider getting

innoculated against Japanese encephalitis 'B', which is transmitted through mosquito bites. This is a 3-shot series that costs \$100 each or \$300 total.

When I went to Delhi last year, there was a sudden outbreak of encephalitis due to late monsoon rains and I had to get all three shots. The good news is, for most of these shots you won't have to get them again for a long time (or ever in some cases).

Renewing your passport/getting your Indian Visa:

Passport renewal can take some time so be sure to plot your course in advance to have you passport renewed if necessary. Expedited passport services are available for an extra charge which will ensure that your passport arrives within several weeks. Regular time to get your passport back with renewal is up to 60 days. You will want to have photocopies of your passport and visa with you in India as a precaution on the offchance that you lose your passport, for easier replacement if needed.

Visa necessary to enter India: This process can be done in one day in person by visiting the Indian Consulate and costs around \$75 for a 6 months visa. It may take longer, up to several weeks, to apply by mail. You need to bring or send two extra passport photos with you to get your India visa. Applying in person takes a day but is worth it since you will get your passport back the same day, and I recommend doing this since otherwise you have to send your passport in the mail to the Indian consulate nearest you. Please contact your local travel agency for info on where to find the office of the Indian Embassy closest to you to obtain your visa. Wherever there is a major international airport, you are likely to find an extension of the Indian Embassy that can help you.

May pragmatism in combination with an open heart and mind ensure a magically fulfilling and healthy journey to India!