



Buddhapath/Eleven Directions

TRAVEL FACTS

CURRENCY EXCHANGE, ACCEPTANCE OF CREDIT CARDS & TIPPING

As stated above, hotels, food, transportation in India and guide service are all covered by the tour fees. It is suggested that travelers carry cash for expenses like gifts or souvenirs. Travelers will also need money if they are planning to extend their stay in India before or after the pilgrimage. Credit cards such as VISA or American Express are accepted in some of the hotels and large shops in Delhi or Varanasi, but not in some of the other places we visit. There are ATM machines in many places where one can access cash, but their presence is not universal as it is in USA and some of them may be out of order. As of January 1, 2024 one US\$ approximates 83 Indian Rupees. We recommend that you convert some cash at the airport when you arrive in New Delhi. There is no need to exchange it in your country — it is best to do so in India. There are a couple of banks with a standard exchange rate at the airport both before and after you clear customs. ATM machines are also an easy method of exchanging currency into rupees. However, they are not easily available in the smaller places.

Travelers often have questions about **tipping**. In the last few years, we have developed a system where a kitty is collected at the beginning, and the tips are distributed from it (contributing is optional). Thus far, this has worked well. We estimate tips come to about US\$ 200 per person.

If you arrive before the start of the pilgrimage or stay after it concludes, the general rule is as follows: tipping someone who has carried your luggage is common and we would suggest Rs.100. In restaurants, one normally leaves a tip of 5% to 10% of the entire bill, unless a service charge has already been levied. If you have hired a car for the day and you are happy with the driver, a tip of Rs. 1000 is fine.

HOTELS/HOUSING

We choose accommodations in the vicinity of the sites based on shared twin-bedded rooms with a private bath or shower and toilet. The accommodations are clean and comfortable and some of the best available in the area — in some cases monastic-style, and in some cases rather luxurious. If you prefer a single room (where available), there is a price supplement.

ELECTRICITY

220 to 240 volts, 50 cycles AC. Plugs/sockets are usually an issue, so please make sure you travel with a universal plug adaptor. The plug sockets have round holes, so ensure your adaptor plug has round stems.

WEATHER & CLOTHING NEEDS

Given that there can be a high variation between the daytime and evening temperatures (the general range is from 20 degrees to 35 degrees Celsius, (68 to 95 degrees Fahrenheit), layering is a practical approach. It's important to be comfortable and modestly dressed. Cotton shirts, T-shirts and cotton trousers will work well. There is no need to bring formal clothing.

Generally, the weather is dry with a small possibility of light rain or fog in some places. It is handy to have an umbrella that can double as a sunshade if it gets too sunny or even be used as a walking stick. Please bring comfortable sneakers or sandals (which you can wear with socks if it gets cold). We do not go on treks, but one or two of the (optional) walks are long. We also visit a number of temples where you will need to remove your shoes,



Buddhapath/Eleven Directions

so it is helpful to bring a pair of socks (the airline slip-ons are very convenient). It is always useful to have a hat or cap to protect you from the sun. We are allowed 15 kilos (33 lbs.) check in baggage and 7kgs (15 lbs) as cabin baggage on Indian airplanes, so we recommend that you travel light. You can carry extra baggage, at an additional cost. Laundry facilities are available at all the places we stay, and laundry is returned within 24 hours.

Please do bring along your meditation cushion or a folding campstool (if you are not comfortable sitting on a cushion).

HEALTH CONCERNS

We stay in clean, safe places, and the food in the places we stay will be clean, fresh and prepared to suit a delicate digestive system. You will be provided bottled mineral water for drinking.

If you are coming from **Africa** or some parts of **Latin America**, a certificate of yellow fever inoculation is required by the Indian authorities. There is no other medical restriction upon your entry into India. We normally recommend a Hepatitis-A shot and a Tetanus shot. If you prefer to be more careful, then please speak to your physician. We do carry a first-aid kit with us, but many people prefer to bring their own supply of medicines. Presently there are no Covid restrictions.

We would recommend you get a bug spray and a mosquito repellent cream.

Also, stomach medicine for both diarrhea and constipation as one's stomach has its own way of adjusting to different foods.

SIM CARD, MOBILES ETC

It is quite easy and inexpensive to get a local SIM card for your mobile phone at Delhi airport. It is more difficult to get one outside of the airport. You need one photograph and a copy of your India visa and passport. If you have a 'locked' phone, you may need to 'unlock' it before you come to India. Mobile telephony in India is inexpensive.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL SERVICES (e.g. shuttle buses, taxis)

We provide airport transfers both ways and all the transport services during the pilgrimage, including having you met on arrival in New Delhi. There is no extra charge for meeting you at the airport. For those who want to make your own arrangements, the Delhi Airport has cabs lined up and you can register with them.