

ONE WAY AMERICA

Your Guide to India

TELEPHONE: Country code (+91). India has different area codes for individual cities and regions. Mobile telephone numbers generally begin with 6, 7, 8 or 9.

STANDARD TIME: India Standard Time (IST) is GMT +5 hours 30 minutes throughout the country. India does not observe daylight saving time.

WEIGHTS & MEASURES: Metric.

ELECTRICITY: 230v AC, 50Hz. India generally uses Type C, D and M electrical sockets. U.S. appliances designed only for 110–120v will require a suitable voltage converter or transformer as well as a plug adapter. Many modern electronic devices are dual-voltage and should be checked before use.

INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS: There are no routine vaccination requirements for most travellers arriving from the United States, although vaccination recommendations vary according to destination, length of stay and individual circumstances. Travellers should ensure routine vaccinations are up to date and check current health advice before travelling.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS: India observes numerous national, religious and regional holidays. Major national holidays include Republic Day on 26 January, Independence Day on 15 August and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday on 2 October. Other widely observed holidays include Diwali, Dussehra, Holi, Eid, Christmas, Buddha Purnima, Guru Nanak's Birthday and various regional festivals. Holiday dates for religious festivals may vary each year, and individual states observe additional holidays. The 2026 central government holiday calendar includes Republic Day, Eid-ul-Fitr, Mahavir Jayanti, Good Friday, Buddha Purnima, Eid-ul-Zuha, Muharram, Independence Day, Milad-un-Nabi, Janmashtami, Gandhi Jayanti, Dussehra, Diwali, Guru Nanak's Birthday and Christmas Day. CGCA+1

OFFICE HOURS: Generally Monday to Friday, approximately 9.00am to 5.00pm, although working hours vary considerably between businesses, industries and regions. Many private-sector companies operate longer or more flexible hours.

BANK HOURS: Generally Monday to Friday, approximately 9.00am to 4.00pm or 5.00pm, although opening hours vary between banks and branches. Some branches open on Saturdays, while Sundays and public holidays are generally observed as bank holidays.

EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 112 – National emergency number. Police can also be contacted on 100, although 112 is increasingly used as the integrated emergency number. Fire: 101. Ambulance: 108 or 112, depending on location and service provider. U.S. citizens should contact the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate following an emergency and after contacting local authorities where appropriate. U.S. Travel Information

U.S. EMBASSY IN INDIA

U.S. Embassy New Delhi
Shantipath, Chanakyapuri
New Delhi 110021
India

Telephone: +91 11 2419 8000
Emergency after-hours: +91 11 2419 8000

The U.S. Embassy in New Delhi provides consular services and assistance to U.S. citizens living or travelling in India, including passports, emergencies and other citizen services.

The United States also maintains Consulates General in Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Mumbai.

For current U.S. government information and consular services, visit the [U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India](#). U.S. Travel Information

EMBASSY OF INDIA IN THE UNITED STATES

Embassy of India
2107 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008
USA

Telephone: +1 202 939 7000
Fax: +1 202 265 4351

The Embassy of India in Washington, D.C. provides diplomatic and consular services to Indian citizens and supports relations between India and the United States.

India also maintains Consulates General in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco and Seattle. Consulate General of India, Seattle+1

For current information, visit the [Embassy of India in Washington, D.C.](#).

Part 1 – Background Information on India

Background

India, officially the Republic of India, is one of the world's oldest civilisations and one of its most culturally and geographically diverse countries.

India became independent from British rule on 15 August 1947 and became a republic on 26 January 1950.

Today, India is a federal parliamentary constitutional republic consisting of 28 states and 8 Union territories.

India has developed into one of the world's major economies, with significant industries in information technology, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, financial services, telecommunications, agriculture, automotive production and business services.

The country combines rapidly developing modern cities with extensive rural communities and a rich cultural heritage.

Geography

India occupies much of the Indian subcontinent and covers approximately 3.28 million square kilometres.

It is bordered by Pakistan to the northwest, China, Nepal and Bhutan to the north, and Bangladesh and Myanmar to the east.

The country is bounded by the Arabian Sea to the west, the Bay of Bengal to the east and the Indian Ocean to the south.

India's landscape is extremely varied, ranging from the Himalayan mountain range in the north to tropical areas in the south.

Other major geographical features include the Thar Desert, the Gangetic Plain, the Deccan Plateau, extensive forests, beaches, rivers and numerous islands including the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep.

India is divided into 28 states and 8 Union territories. eoiriga.gov.in+1

Population

India has a population of approximately 1.47 billion people and is the world's most populous country.

Population is concentrated heavily in major urban and industrial centres, although a substantial proportion of the population continues to live in smaller towns and rural communities.

Major cities include:

- Delhi and New Delhi.
- Mumbai.
- Bengaluru.
- Hyderabad.
- Chennai.

- Kolkata.
- Pune.
- Ahmedabad.
- Jaipur.
- Kochi.

The size and diversity of India means that living conditions, infrastructure, climate and cultural practices can differ substantially from one region to another.

Climate

India has a wide variety of climatic conditions.

The north experiences colder winters, particularly around the Himalayan region, while southern India generally has a tropical climate.

Much of the country is influenced by the annual southwest monsoon, which normally brings significant rainfall between approximately June and September.

Temperatures can become extremely high during the summer months in many parts of northern and central India.

India can also experience flooding, cyclones, drought, landslides, earthquakes and other natural hazards.

Climate and weather conditions should therefore be considered carefully when selecting a location within India.

Economy

India has a large and diversified economy.

Major sectors include information technology, telecommunications, financial services, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, automotive production, construction, agriculture, retail, tourism and professional services.

India is also a major global centre for software development, business-process services and technology.

The country has a large domestic market and extensive international trade relationships, including strong economic links with the United States.

Agriculture remains an important part of the economy and India is a major producer of rice, wheat, milk, pulses, spices, fruit and vegetables.

India also has significant mineral, energy and manufacturing resources.

Language

India is linguistically diverse.

Hindi and English are widely used by the central government, while the Constitution recognises 22 scheduled languages.

English is widely used in business, higher education, law, government, professional services and international commerce.

The language spoken at home varies substantially between states and regions.

For U.S. citizens relocating to major cities, English is generally widely understood in professional and business environments.

Religion

India is constitutionally secular and is home to a wide range of religious communities.

Major religions include Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism, together with other faiths and traditional religious practices.

Religious festivals form an important part of cultural and social life.

Education

Education in India is provided through government and private institutions.

Schooling is generally divided into primary, secondary and higher secondary education, followed by universities and other higher education institutions.

India has a large number of universities, colleges, international schools and English-medium schools.

International schools offering American, British, International Baccalaureate and other international curricula are available in major expatriate centres including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and other cities.

Families relocating from the United States should investigate school availability, curriculum, admissions requirements, school transport and location before selecting accommodation.

Healthcare

India has both public and private healthcare systems.

Major cities have numerous private hospitals and medical centres offering internationally recognised medical services.

Healthcare standards vary considerably between urban and rural areas.

Private healthcare is widely used by expatriates, particularly for specialist treatment and hospital care.

U.S. citizens relocating to India should arrange suitable international or private medical insurance before or shortly after arrival and should confirm what facilities and treatments are covered.

Currency

The currency is the Indian rupee (INR), represented by the symbol ₹.

The rupee is divided into 100 paise, although paise are rarely used in everyday transactions.

Banknotes currently circulate in denominations including ₹10, ₹20, ₹50, ₹100, ₹200, ₹500 and ₹2,000 where applicable to the current currency series.

Coins are also in circulation.

Credit and debit cards are widely accepted in major cities, while digital payment systems such as UPI are extremely common.

Cash remains useful in smaller businesses, markets and some rural areas.

Utilities

India uses a 230v, 50Hz electricity supply.

This differs from the 120v supply normally used in the United States.

U.S. electrical appliances designed only for 110–120v should not be plugged directly into an Indian electrical socket.

Dual-voltage equipment marked 100–240v, 50/60Hz can normally be used with a suitable plug adapter.

Voltage fluctuations and power interruptions can occur in some areas, although conditions vary significantly between cities and properties.

Many homes and offices use voltage stabilisers, UPS systems or backup generators.

Television and Electronics

U.S. television equipment may not operate correctly with Indian broadcasting standards.

Modern laptops, mobile phones, tablets, cameras and chargers are frequently dual voltage, but the manufacturer's specifications should always be checked.

U.S. residents should also check whether electronic equipment supports the electrical frequency and voltage used in India before including it in a shipment.

Driving

India drives on the left-hand side of the road.

This differs from the United States and can take some adjustment for U.S. drivers.

Traffic conditions vary considerably between cities and regions and can be particularly congested in major metropolitan areas.

Distances and speed limits are measured in kilometres.

U.S. citizens intending to drive in India should ensure they have the appropriate driving documentation and insurance and should check the current requirements for an International Driving Permit and/or Indian driving licence.

Part 2 – India Import Customs Regulations

To the best of our knowledge, the following information applies to the importation of household goods and personal effects from the United States into India.

Indian Customs regulations are subject to change and individual shipments may be treated differently depending on the importer's nationality, immigration status, length of stay, type of goods and applicable customs notifications.

The current Indian Customs baggage framework includes specific provisions for people transferring their residence to India, including foreign nationals with appropriate visas. CBIC+1

Household Goods

Household and personal effects imported as part of a relocation may qualify for concessions under India's baggage rules where the importer meets the applicable conditions.

The 2026 framework specifically provides transfer-of-residence provisions for residents or persons of Indian origin returning to India and for foreign nationals holding a valid visa other than a tourist visa who are engaged in a profession in India or transferring their residence.

The concession covers specified personal and household articles subject to prescribed conditions and value limits. CBIC

Not all household goods are automatically duty free.

The eligibility of individual items should therefore be confirmed before shipment.

Documentation

The following documents may be required depending on the circumstances of the shipment:

- Passport.
- Valid Indian visa or other immigration documentation.
- Residence or employment documentation where applicable.
- Detailed packing inventory.
- Valued inventory where required.
- Bill of Lading or Air Waybill.
- Customs documentation.
- Employer relocation letter where applicable.
- Proof of ownership or purchase for certain goods.
- Import permits or licences where applicable.
- Supporting documentation for restricted goods.

A detailed inventory should clearly identify the contents of each carton or package.

Vague descriptions such as "miscellaneous", "electronics" or "personal items" should be avoided where a more precise description is possible.

Transfer of Residence

India's 2026 Customs framework provides specific transfer-of-residence concessions.

A resident or tourist of Indian origin who has been engaged in a profession abroad or transfers residence to India may qualify for specified personal and household articles in addition to the normal baggage allowance.

Foreign nationals with a valid visa other than a tourist visa who are engaged in a profession in India or transferring their residence may also qualify for specified concessions.

The rules contain conditions relating to the nature, value and period of use of the goods.

Where the required period of stay in India is not fulfilled, Customs may require applicable duty and interest to be paid. CBIC

New and Unused Goods

New and unused goods may not receive the same treatment as used household effects.

Receipts and invoices should be retained for recently purchased furniture, electronics, appliances and other goods.

Large quantities of identical new items may be considered commercial rather than personal goods and can result in additional customs requirements.

Personal Effects

Personal effects may include clothing, shoes, toiletries, books, personal electronics and other articles intended for the importer's personal use.

India's baggage rules contain specific provisions concerning personal effects and transfer of residence.

Travellers should declare any goods that exceed the applicable allowances or are subject to restrictions.

Food

Food products can be subject to Indian Customs, food safety, agricultural and other import controls.

It is recommended that food is not included in a household goods shipment unless the importer has confirmed that the particular products are permitted.

Particular care should be taken with:

- Meat and meat products.
- Dairy products.
- Seeds.
- Plants.
- Fresh fruit and vegetables.
- Animal products.
- Commercial quantities of food.
- Products requiring refrigeration.

Alcohol

Alcohol is subject to Indian Customs and state-level regulations.

Import duties can be substantial and rules concerning possession, importation and sale of alcohol vary between Indian states.

Alcohol should not be included in a household shipment without confirming the applicable customs and state requirements in advance.

Tobacco

Tobacco products are subject to Customs allowances, duties and other regulations.

Large quantities should not be included in household goods without first confirming the applicable requirements.

Plants and Seeds

Plants, seeds, soil and agricultural products may be subject to quarantine and phytosanitary controls.

Do not include plants, soil or seeds in household goods without confirming that they are permitted and obtaining any necessary documentation or permits.

Motor Vehicles

The importation of motor vehicles into India is subject to separate Customs, tax, safety, emissions and registration requirements.

A vehicle imported from the United States may require compliance with Indian technical and emissions standards.

Import duties and taxes can be substantial.

The importer should therefore obtain a complete assessment of eligibility and likely costs before shipping a vehicle.

Required documentation may include:

- Original vehicle title.
- Registration documents.
- Purchase invoice.
- Passport.
- Import documentation.
- Insurance documentation.
- Vehicle identification details.
- Customs documentation.

U.S.-specification vehicles should be assessed individually before shipment because meeting U.S. standards does not necessarily mean that a vehicle meets Indian requirements.

Firearms and Weapons

Firearms, ammunition and other weapons are highly regulated in India.

They should not be included in household goods without obtaining the necessary permissions and licences before shipment.

Knives, swords, antique weapons and other potentially restricted articles should also be checked before packing.

Prescription Medicines

Prescription medicines may be imported for personal use subject to Indian regulations.

Certain medicines, narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and controlled medications are subject to additional restrictions.

Medicines should remain in their original packaging and should be accompanied by a copy of the prescription and, where appropriate, a letter from the treating doctor.

Importers should check the status of any controlled or unusual medication before travelling or shipping it.

Pets

India permits the importation of certain pets subject to applicable animal-health and Customs requirements.

Dogs and cats entering India may require veterinary health documentation, vaccination records and other certificates.

Additional requirements may apply depending on the animal's country of origin, the purpose of importation and the travel arrangements.

Pet owners should begin preparations well in advance and should confirm the current requirements with the relevant Indian authorities before booking transportation.

Professional pet relocation assistance is recommended for international moves involving animals.

Endangered Species and CITES

India regulates the import and export of protected wildlife and wildlife products.

Items made from protected animals or plants may require CITES documentation or may be prohibited.

This can include:

- Ivory.
- Certain animal skins.
- Tortoiseshell.
- Coral.
- Certain feathers.
- Protected woods.
- Wildlife trophies.
- Other products derived from endangered species.

Old pianos, antiques and other items containing ivory should be checked before shipment.

Jewellery and Precious Metals

Jewellery and precious metals are subject to specific Indian Customs rules.

The 2026 baggage framework includes special duty-free jewellery allowances for certain residents or tourists of Indian origin returning to India after residing abroad for more than one year.

The current rules specify allowances by weight, including up to 40 grams for a female passenger and 20 grams for other eligible passengers. CBIC

Because jewellery rules are subject to detailed eligibility conditions, supporting documentation should be retained where appropriate.

Currency

India has regulations governing the import and export of Indian and foreign currency.

Travellers carrying amounts above the applicable declaration thresholds must make the appropriate Customs declaration.

The import and export of currency is governed by applicable foreign-exchange regulations. CBIC

Anyone relocating with substantial sums of cash should check the current limits and declaration requirements before travel.

Electronics and Communications Equipment

Certain communications and electronic equipment may be subject to import restrictions, licensing requirements or technical regulations.

This may include specialist radio equipment, satellite communication equipment and other telecommunications devices.

Personal laptops, tablets and mobile phones are generally treated differently from specialist communications equipment.

Do not include specialist radio or telecommunications equipment in a household shipment without checking the applicable Indian requirements.

Prohibited and Restricted Items

Items that may be prohibited, restricted or require additional documentation include:

- Firearms and ammunition.
- Narcotic and controlled drugs.
- Certain medicines.
- Protected wildlife and wildlife products.
- Certain plants and seeds.
- Soil and agricultural products.
- Certain food products.
- Commercial quantities of goods.
- Specialist communications equipment.
- Hazardous materials.
- Certain antiques and cultural property.
- Other goods requiring an import licence or government approval.

If there is any doubt about an item, it should be checked before packing.

Customs Inspection

Household goods can be inspected by Indian Customs.

A detailed and accurate inventory can help reduce delays during clearance.

Customs may request additional documentation, examine individual items or assess applicable duties and taxes.

Importers should therefore allow sufficient time for customs clearance.

India's Customs authorities also operate electronic systems for customs processing, including the Express Cargo Clearance System for eligible courier consignments. Courier CBIC+1

Disclaimer

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in this Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date, One Way America cannot accept liability for any inaccuracies, omissions or changes in

Indian, U.S. or international regulations.

Customs, immigration, taxation, health, vehicle, pet and import requirements can change without notice.

The information contained in this guide is intended as general relocation information only and should not be treated as legal, immigration, tax or customs advice.

Anyone relocating from the United States to India should confirm the current requirements with Indian Customs, the relevant Indian authorities, the nearest Indian diplomatic mission and the U.S. Embassy or Consulate before shipping household goods.

For current Indian Customs information, consult the [Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs \(CBIC\)](#).

For current U.S. citizen information and consular assistance, consult the [U.S. Embassy & Consulates in India](#).

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More info on our website: <https://onewayamerica.com>.