

## **Tiwari Travel - Essential Trip Information – India & Sri Lanka**

**Arrival Airports** – When being picked up by your tour operator i.e Tiwari Travel never accept transport or taxi from any other people whom you don't know at airports. If you have not arranged a taxi transfer in advance the next best option is to buy a ticket from a Govt run "Pre-paid" taxi counter.

**Hotels/Guest House...** All booked by Tiwari Travel with attached bathrooms, AC and daily breakfast. Generally hotels are 12noon check-in/check-out. Please notify us email at any time for any issues with your hotels. Guests are provided hotel vouchers 7 – 14 days prior to departure to provide at reception when you check in.

**Currency Exchange/Money/Budget...** Allow approx. \$1000 AUD minimum for miscellaneous expenses and any emergency expenses for 1 – 2 week tours. It's fine to take AUD cash and or USD. Do not change money at airports if you can avoid it. Wait till you get to your hotel. ATM's are also available in main cities as are banks and foreign money exchange places. Tiwari Travel provides commission free currency exchange to all our customers on arrival in India. Check with your bank for international transaction fees on your credit cards.

**Transport...** Private vehicles as per your tour itinerary, include driver and driver expenses, road tolls, parking, insurance and all fuel. If you use any other form of transport, e.g. cycle & auto 3 wheeler rickshaws, and or other local taxis, this is at customer's own expense.

**Domestic Flights** – Most airlines in India allow 15kg checked luggage with 7kg hand luggage, if you intend to travel with more weight, you can pay excess baggage fees in advance at time of booking ticket through Tiwari Travel or alternatively at check in counters.

**Indian Airports** – All airports have strict security checks. For example it is not possible to carry duty free bottled alcohol as hand luggage on India domestic flights.

**Driving Safety** – All our vehicles have seat belts and our drivers have an 80kms maximum speed limit rule. Our drivers are professional and wear a uniform. Our vehicles are new, well maintained and serviced regularly. Tiwari drivers are highly experienced on the Indian roads and accustomed to Australian passengers culturally. Try not to talk or distract the drivers. Asking questions is ok but do not engage in long personal conversations with drivers. Drivers do not share or eat meals with customers.

### **Physical Fitness and Cultural Shock...**

You will require basic fitness, enough for the tolerance of daily walking, variable hot & cold weather and some long hours of travel. You need to let go of your western ways and let things happen as they do in India! Occasionally you may experience power cuts, no hot water and flat tyres! These types of things are part of parcel of any travel in India or Asia generally. Please advise us in advance if you have any health issues or are taking any form of medication. All is confidential.

**Senior Travellers** – If you require any special assistance with mobility or have an pre-existing medical conditions please inform us in advance. For passengers over 75 years of age, we require a medical clearance certificate from your doctor.

**Meals...** Continental breakfasts and/or buffet breakfasts are included in your hotel tour package. Other meals, drinking water (mineral water) soft drinks, alcohol, deserts/sweets, extra tea/coffee etc may not be included unless stated in your itinerary. Indian food is spicy and high in fat i.e Ghee (clarified butter) is used in most dishes. We recommend you eat lightly, to adjust to the change in diet. Yogurt Lassi drinks in India can help as a pro-biotic.

**Vegetarian Food...**We recommend where possible sticking to vegetarian food, which is plentiful, tasty and fresh. We do not recommend eating chicken, or meat. Eggs are ok as long as they are well cooked. We also recommend avoiding street food due to risk of getting ill. Try to avoid salads and fruits (unless unpeeled like bananas)

**Water** – We recommend that all travellers use only bottled water and not drink any local water in India. This includes using bottled water for brushing teeth. Avoid water in mouth in showers.

**Alcohol** .....is not readily available throughout India, in fact some towns and states ban the consumption of alcohol all together. Rajasthan is fine and many good hotels offer beer, wine and spirits. We recommend only drinking in your hotel that provides alcohol and not outside publicly for cultural reasons.

### **Health & Wellbeing**

Speak to your GP or travel doctor before departure about vaccinations and other medicines. The medicines & anti-biotics available in India are generally not of the same standard as Australia. Travellers diarrhea or gastro can be a common complaint. Hygiene is important, meaning constant hand washing before and after meals.

**Keep in Mind.....**Tiwari Travel groups and passengers travel in a way that fully appreciates cultures and lifestyles very different to our own. While striving to provide the very best holiday possible, we don't shield you from the cultural differences, inefficiencies and frustrations that are a part of traveling in India. Indeed the emphasis is on getting out there amongst the chaos, vibrancy that is India and experiencing all the country has to offer, warts and all! Please be patient and advise Tiwari Travel of any issues or changes in your itinerary along the way.

**Indian Hindu Culture..**Is conservative and friendly. Generally speaking most North Indians, do not eat meat or drink alcohol. They also dress conservative. We recommend to be friendly and polite, but do not take up offers to visit locals homes or places of business without consulting your driver, guide or Tiwari staff beforehand. Generally is also not acceptable to be wandering around late at night. South India has a larger Christian population and more relaxed on dressing and alcohol, especially in places like Kerala and Goa, where shorts are more acceptable.

**Tipping...**Its is customary to tip on all services in India, including hotels, restaurants, transport, porters, room service etc. Travelers should contribute generously. Tipping is not included in price of tour. Drivers should be tipped at the end of your tour.

**Weather.....**North India generally is hot all year round. However the 3 seasons are, summer monsoon and winter. Summer is March to October, monsoon July & August and winter Nov to Feb. Most of the year is dry with the exception of the monsoon period around July and August. The south has an extra monsoon in November. Monsoon season, can create flash flooding in many areas. Winter can be very foggy in Delhi, Agra & Varanasi. Causing delays on trains and roads.

### **What to bring...**

Please travel as light as possible, everything you will need is available in India... Bring warm & cool (day is warm night is cool) loose and comfortable clothing. Hat/cap, thongs, good walking shoes, without laces is easier due to shoes needed to be taken on/off, shawl, fleece, jacket, mossy repellent, and a torch for night and earplugs.