

# India 2011

## FAQs

The following pages contain information that you may find helpful in preparing for your trip to India. If you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact either one of us by phone or email. We look forward to meeting you in Delhi!

### Sarah and Barb



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## Yoga is for everyone!

Since you are thinking about taking a yoga vacation you might be wondering if you have to be an experienced yogi in order to attend. Yoga is available to anyone no matter what your age, level of fitness or flexibility. What is most important that you listen to your body and respect your limits while performing any sort of physical practice.

While in Rishikesh we will often be out on excursions and walking through the markets. This will require you to be able to walk distances of 500 m to 5 kms (and some hikes will be 10km or more). We offer hiking options of different lengths and on varying terrains, which you will be aware of in advance, and you will always have the option of choosing a gentle or more vigorous hike. In addition, all excursions are optional, so you can tailor this experience to meet your own needs.

## Passports and Visas:

You will need a valid passport to travel to India. The passport expiry date must not occur while you are away. Further, you will need a tourist visa from the Indian Embassy or High Commission nearest your home. You should apply for this 4-6 weeks prior to your departure as it is only valid for six months from the date of issue.

**You need a tourist visa and a passport**

**YOU NEED A TOURIST VISA** (visitor's visa). Indicate that you will be visiting Haridwar and Rishikesh for yoga and tourism.

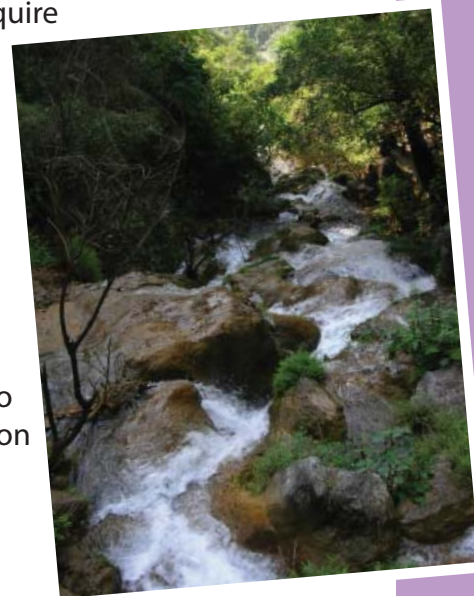
Before going to the Consulate, check out their website or call to enquire about what you need to bring as well as the cost of the visa. You will most likely need 2 passport sized photos, your passport, a completed application form and the fee in cash. Most Consulates will accept credit cards and debit as forms of payment but you should check in advance.


Also, in the slot for your address in India, you can write the address of the ashram, which is at the end of this document. It is best to arrive at the Consulate early in the morning when they open to avoid lines. The visa can take anywhere from one day to one week to arrive. Ask the Consulate about tracking the status of your application online, especially if you will not be returning to the office to pick up the visa in person. Having your documents mailed back to you by priority post is another option.

## Flying:

You are welcome to book your flight with any agency that you wish. In the fall we will provide flight recommendations for you based on cost and reputation. **We highly recommended that you purchase travel insurance for illness, flight delays, cancellations, lost luggage, etc.**

We recommend direct flights as much as possible, but this is really up to you. You may be joining





us as part of a longer excursion and perhaps you will already be in India. There are many low-cost airline options from within India.

**Please make sure your flight arrives on Saturday March 19th**

**Please make sure that your flight arrives on Saturday March 19th** in the afternoon or evening. This is especially important if you plan to travel with us by bus to Rishikesh on Sunday morning, March 20th. If your flight is arriving after

midnight in Delhi, it will be dated Sunday March 20th on the ticket (not Saturday).

If you plan to arrive earlier, please let us know and we can help you to book additional nights at the hotel in Delhi (at your expense).

You will not need much luggage. Please try to stick to one piece of checked luggage and one piece of cabin luggage (a small knapsack). No sharp objects, aerosol cans or liquids are permitted in the in-cabin luggage. Put all camping knives or nail scissors in the large bag to be checked. You can buy toiletries such as toothpaste, shampoo and cream and laundry soap easily from Ayurvedic stores in Rishikesh. You may want to bring a folded duffle bag in your luggage to bring back any items you buy in India!

Avoid alcohol when flying and drink lots of water on the plane.

We will arrange for your **transport back to Delhi** on Sunday morning, April 3rd. You can book your return flight for late Sunday evening on April 3rd or early in the morning on Monday April 4th. If you wish to depart on a different day, we will be pleased to assist you in making arrangements and your travel to Delhi will be at your expense.

**Book your flight from Delhi for late in the evening of Sunday April 3rd or early in the morning Monday April 4th.**

### **At the Airport:**

Let us know your flight arrangements as soon as possible. We will confirm that we have received them and arrange to meet you at the Delhi Airport (Indira Gandhi International Airport). We will carry a sign with the words: "**Anand Prakash Ashram.**" You will then be taken to a hotel for the night. For those already in Delhi, please meet us at the hotel. We will leave the next morning, Sunday March 20th, by coach bus for the ashram. Breakfast will be served at the hotel before we leave.

### **Weather:**

The average temperature in Rishikesh in March varies from 22 to 35 degrees Celcius in the afternoon. Because it is located at the foothills of the Himalayas there are often cool breezes in the morning and evening with temperatures dropping to 10C during the night.



## Clothes:

Keep it simple! You will want to be comfortable and have a few items for layering—especially while hiking in the mountains. Don't worry about packing for all scenarios as the markets near the ashram have many options such as t-shirts, sweaters, skirts, pants and shawls, if you forget something.

**Keep it simple**

We suggest that you bring the following:

- One or two comfortable outfits to practice yoga in. In India and around the ashram, appropriate colours are lighter (not black). T-shirts should have a short sleeve (not tank tops or tops with plunging V-necks).
- A warm sweatshirt or fleece
- Meditation shawl
- Fall jacket or shell/rain jacket (not a winter jacket as it will be too bulky)
- Sturdy thick soled sandals with a back, and/or flip flops
- Hiking boots or comfortable running shoes
- Sun hat
- Warm socks
- Several t-shirts and one or two long-sleeved tops
- Pyjamas and under garments
- One set of clothes for touring, such as khaki pants or a long skirt.

## Equipment:

- Bring a smaller day pack that can be carry-on luggage in the plane
- Yoga mat
- Small flashlight, combination padlock, alarm clock
- Travel money belt (available at luggage stores)
- Grapefruit Seed Extract (GSE - available at health food stores if you want extra water safety)
- Water bottle
- Mosquito net (if you will be traveling later into April)
- Repellant (non-aerosol due to air travel restrictions, such as Muskol)
- One bath towel (not too thick, i.e. quick-drying)
- A journal and several pens
- A camera and film or charger and converter
- Clothes pegs. There is a laundry service at the ashram, however, you may want to wash your undergarments by hand and hang them on the washing lines to dry. Each room has a balcony with space to dry clothes.
- The following items are suggested homeopathic remedies or herbal supplements: (Please consult your doctor or a pharmacist before taking any of these items in case you are taking other prescribed medications where there could be an interaction).
  - Bach Rescue Remedy or Jet Lag tabs
  - Acidophilus
  - Activated Charcoal
  - Para-Free (by Organika), and PARAzyme (by Renew Life).
  - Most of these items should be available at health food stores.

## Water:

We will have filtered water and/or bottled water available at all times. However, it is important while in India to avoid uncooked food and juices, especially those from markets. You will be eating specially prepared food at the ashram, but on the tour days (or if you arrive early or stay after the tour), if you have a snack outside of the scheduled meals, make sure the plate or glass that it is served on/in is dry and not just washed and still wet.

The highest risk foods in India for non-locals are juices. This is because they are commonly mixed with ice or water. A vendor may rinse his mango press, and then peel and press your mango, adding a bit of water to help it move through the press. Remember, even a drop of unfiltered water could make you sick. In order to enjoy the Indian fruits and flavours, you can buy fruits with a peel, and wash them with bottled water at the ashram and/or peel them (bananas, tangerines, apples, papaya).

Grapefruit Seed extract can be added to your filtered or bottled water (10 drops or so per litre) in order to help ensure that it is clean to drink. This would be important for you if you are traveling before or after your stay with us. If you suspect that you have eaten or drank something that doesn't agree with you, put 20 drops of GSE in a glass of water and drink it. This will help to kill the bacteria in the stomach if done immediately. Taking charcoal pills right away also helps.

Remember to brush your teeth with your bottled water. When you shower, be aware of keeping your lips closed.

Do not worry too much about water or getting ill. Have a positive and proactive attitude, knowing that you are doing everything possible to keep yourself well.

## Medical Preparations:

Consult your doctor or local travel clinic before the trip to find out their recommendations. You will have to use your own judgment regarding your health.

Currently there are no required vaccinations for Northern India. Doctors may recommend Hepatitis A and B, and Encephalitis. March is not the major mosquito season, so malaria is less of a concern.

Homeopathic anti-malarial drops are recommended if you feel the need. With all of our precautions, we hope you will stay well. It is not unusual, however, for travelers to experience a bit of stomach upset, or what is sometimes referred to as 'Delhi-belly!' This may pass after a few days with Ayurvedic remedies, or some of the recommendations given in the Equipment section of this letter. It is your responsibility to purchase travel health insurance – this is highly recommended.

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## Money:

As your accommodations, food and travel will already be paid, we expect you will not need much money during the trip unless you plan to continue your travels. We recommend that everyone bring a few hundred dollars of American or Canadian cash, or cash of your country's money. There is a place to exchange money at the airport in Delhi and you can change your major currencies in Rishikesh.

We recommend that you have small denominations on hand. Keep your money in a money belt inside your pants when traveling, and keep some rupees in your pocket. That way if you want to buy something small like a souvenir or some water, you will not have to bring out your money belt in the middle of the market.



If you are staying longer or know that you will buy a lot of high-price items, bring the amount you want to spend in travelers' cheques, and/or bring a credit card or debit card to draw on at a bank or to use in some select shops. Banking is sometimes slow in India, but you do not want to carry more than a few hundred dollars in cash.

As an aside, most things in India are up for bargain, except foods in restaurants. Some stores will have a sign that indicates 'fixed price', which shop owners are often happy to point out if you start to bargain!

## Payment and Cancellation Policy

Space is limited. A deposit of \$500 is required to register and secure your spot. Advertised prices are in Canadian dollars. The cancellation policy refers to the land portion of the retreat. Payment or cancellation of airfare is separate and your responsibility. Final payment for retreat is due January 31, 2011. If you cancel before January 31st, you will be reimbursed all costs less \$250 of the deposit. If you cancel after January 31st, you will be reimbursed all costs less the \$500 deposit.

## Telecommunications:

Close to the ashram you will find long-distance call booths and internet facilities, if you wish to call or send a message home to let loved ones know that you have arrived safely at the ashram. We recommend, however, that you let people know that you are embarking on a contemplative stay at the ashram, and will only be checking email or calling about once a week. This way you will have created sacred space and time to focus on the transformative experience of living at an ashram.



## Culture:

India is often described as a place of harmonious contradictions. As with any culture, it appears at first exotic and exhilarating, and then later perplexing. These are the first two stages of culture shock. To help you move more easily into the third stage—understanding—we recommend taking a yogic approach. This is to observe as if from a third position and try to see the country and culture for its strengths and weaknesses and enjoy your time on that basis.

Indian women pride themselves on their grace, elegance and modesty, and are respected often as Ma (Divine Mother), auntie or sister (regardless of one's actual relationship or non-blood relation). In Asia men and women take great pride in humbleness, loyalty, and the grace of their social interactions, dress and behaviour. Please note that bathing suits or bikinis are not worn when going for a dip in the Ganges; quick dry shorts or palazzo pants and shirts are more suitable.




Therefore, we recommend that you dress and behave with more modesty than usual.

The old adage, 'when in Rome do as the Romans do' suits here, as we are the tourists who have opted to learn about Indian culture. The onus is not on the Indian hosts to understand us (although they will if we meet them half way). All travel is a learning experience—observe, adapt and enjoy!

## The Anand Prakash Ashram/Accommodations

Your first night of accommodation will be at a safe and clean hotel near the airport in Delhi where you will share a room with one other person. We will take you there directly from the airport and you will have breakfast there before we depart for Rishikesh on Sunday the 20th of March.

The remaining time will be based out of the Anand Prakash Ashram in Tapovan—located in a beautiful mountain village along the Ganges river in northern India. The ashram, built in 2007 for international yoga students and tourists, is a three storey building with a large yoga hall that can hold 75 to 100 students, a meditation hall and approximately 20 double occupancy rooms with private shower and bathroom facilities. The ashram also houses its own kitchen/dining room in which you will be served three vegetarian meals each day, an outdoor 'puja' (for daily fire ceremonies) and extensive gardens for sitting peacefully, practicing yoga outdoors or simply for contemplating.



While staying in the ashram it is not appropriate to visit the room of a student of the opposite gender with closed doors or talk loudly in the halls or at night. Mauna, or silence, is observed from 9 pm until after breakfast. It is best to come on this yoga experience in India with the concept that we are immersing ourselves in a yogic ashram in order to explore yogic aspects of our nature and to be fully engaged in posture, meditation, contemplation, mantra, and self-study. We want to balance this with having plenty of fun and laughs during our workshops and excursions.

## **Contact Information**

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Village Tapovan  
Sivananda Nagar (Rishikesh)  
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Tehri Garwal (U.K.)  
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