



ISAC Pre-Departure Handbook

This handbook consists of important information related to your India travel. Please go through this carefully.

Immunizations & Health Information

Please make sure that you are in good health before arriving in India. It is advisable to get a dental and medical examination done before you leave. Carry important health and accident insurance documents as well as copies of your passport and any important medical records. Bring an adequate supply of prescription drugs that you require and other medication. Remember to bring any necessary personal hygiene items, including a spare pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses if needed. Please be sure to let ISAC's staff know of any serious medical conditions that may affect you (diabetes, epilepsy, allergies, etc.) and mention this in the Medical Form.

Immunizations

For complete information on recommended immunizations for travel to India, please consult with your healthcare provider and lookup the Center for Disease Control (CDC) website for India at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/indianrg.htm>

Be sure that you are up-to-date on all your immunizations. There are no required immunizations or medications for India. However, we highly recommend getting the Hepatitis A Gamma or Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccines.

The following are recommendation from the CDC:

Hepatitis A: IM injection; A 2-dose series. The 2nd dose is given 6-12 months after the 1st dose. The recipient is protected 4 weeks after 1st immunization is given. For long-term protection, the 2nd (and last) dose in the series must be given.

Hepatitis B: Vaccination is advised for health care workers, persons anticipating direct contact with blood from or sexual contact with inhabitants, and persons planning to stay for longer than 6 months.

Typhoid: For persons staying longer than 3 weeks, adventurous eaters, and those who will venture off the usual tourist routes into small cities, village, and rural areas.

Japanese Encephalitis: Only if you plan to visit rural areas for 4 weeks or more, except under special circumstance, such as a know outbreak of the disease. Use protective measures such as long sleeves and pants, and DEET repellent, as it is transmitted through insect bites.

Varicella: Be sure you are immune to chicken pox. If you are unsure whether you have had chicken pox before, get a titer. This should be available at your school's health center.

Malaria: Malaria mosquitoes are common throughout the year, and heightened during the wet monsoon seasons. Malaria mosquitoes normally bite between the hour of dusk and dawn.

Protective Measures: Travelers visiting the risk areas should take chemoprophylaxis with mefloquine, doxycycline or Malarone. Personal protective measures (long-sleeved shirts, pants, socks, and the highly concentrated bug repellent DEET, or you could buy the very effective local brand – ODOMOS on arrival) are very important as well. If you are on antidepressants, anti-seizure meds, or beta-blockers you should avoid mefloquine; Malarone is a better choice (less side effect, same efficacy). For women, it is strongly recommended that you do not plan a pregnancy for more than 6 months after taking mefloquine. Consult your physician regarding additional protection and potential side effects. These medications are quite expensive and need to be taken before you leave home so you should plan ahead if you intend to take it, some can be quite toxic and have been reported to have various side effects such as nightmares and depression, therefore you should not plan to use it unless necessary.

Health, Medical Evacuation and Travel insurance:

Make sure that you have adequate insurance cover for medical, accident and emergency evacuation for the duration of your trip. In addition, it is also advisable to have comprehensive travel insurance to guard against loss of personal items and theft. You may already have some insurance cover through your existing provider so please check with them first.

Program Guide

India Study Abroad Center (ISAC) offers a variety of experiential learning programs. The programs are short and medium term in duration and aim to introduce India to international students. Programs are designed with particular student interests in mind allowing the participants to explore and learn about the country with special focus in their area of interest.

Program Location

URBAN- Mumbai

Mumbai is India's commercial capital. With a population of nearly 13 million, Mumbai's most affluent inhabitants live alongside the working classes and urban poor in soaring skyscrapers and sprawling slums. Mumbai is a melting pot of residents from diverse ethnic backgrounds that speak over a dozen languages.

Mumbai is an international city with many attractions. A wide selection of restaurants offering international and national menus, an active cultural scene that plays host to the best in Indian and western dance, drama and music and a positive approach to health and fitness with a spread of gyms, fitness centers and spas, as well as yoga and Tai Chi classes.

Mumbai also has a vibrant nightlife that ranges from simple pubs to hi-tech discos and glamorous elite nightclubs. Its location is convenient for short weekend trips to many beaches and resorts in India including Goa. In all, Mumbai is a safe place, especially for women.

RURAL- Malwali & Karla

Malwali and Karla are two small villages on the banks of the river Indrayani, in Pune district, in the state of Maharashtra. The nearest town is Lonavala, a popular weekend destination for urban

Mumbai & Pune people. These villages are located approximately 60 kms from Pune city and approximately 100 kms from Mumbai. The ISAC guest house is located in Karla, near Lonavla and sits next to the beautiful Indrayani River and the world renowned Vedanta Academy. The place is conveniently connected to Pune and Mumbai by train. The nearest railhead is Malwali which is 15 mins walking distance away. The historic Karla and Bhaja caves are located nearby and the guesthouse offers a beautiful view of the surrounding hills.

Rural India is exceptionally diverse in terms of its traditions and culture, however, people in most Indian villages are still conservative and like to follow their traditional ways of life, to the extent that they can be almost primordial. ISAC Local co-ordinators will help you easily adapt to rural India by helping you navigate through all your local interventions.

For people who love outdoors, the area offers some amazing treks to the historic Karla and Bhaja caves and the ancient fort of Lohagad.

Student Responsibilities on the Program

It is necessary for all students to adhere to certain guidelines while enrolled in the program. These guidelines are designed keeping in mind the social and cultural context of India and the requirements of the placement organizations. This will ensure effective communication and productive engagement between students, ISAC coordinators and placement organizations.

- Students will need to follow appropriate norms of behavior during their interactions with the local coordinator and outside personnel. They will need to interact in a professional manner; signs of familiarity or other public display of affection are frowned upon.
- The dress code is semi-formal and conservative without any display of skin. It is important that the students dress appropriately for the placement sites to avoid discomfort to self and embarrassment to others. We encourage female students to wear traditional Indian dress like the 'Salwaar Kameez'. We have found that our students get an overwhelming response when they come dressed in local wear. It also makes far better and easier cultural adjustment. ISAC Coordinators can help you shop at the local market. The cost is in the range of \$15 – 20 per outfit. You could also buy fabric and get it tailored to your size at almost the same budget.
- Students will need to follow the instructions issued by the person/team to which they are assigned with respect and to the fullest. The Indian work culture follows a system of hierarchy which must be understood, respected and accepted.
- Students are expected to keep an open mind towards cultural, social and civic differences that they will encounter during their stay. Power and Tele-Communication outages are common in India, especially in the Rural areas. Although ISAC does their best in avoiding delays in transport and in ensuring that program partners adhere to committed timings and schedules, there might still be unforeseen delays and students are expected to understand and accept these conditions.
- Heated arguments, verbal exchange, abusive and foul language and racist comments are not acceptable.
- Alcohol / drugs are strictly forbidden and are grounds for immediate expulsion from the program and ISAC guesthouses.

- Causing disturbance or public nuisance in and around the ISAC guest houses or ISAC arranged accommodation facilities will also result in immediate expulsion from the program.
- If a student violates any of the above rules, his or her program may be terminated without prior notice and the course fee will not be refunded.

Orientation - Accommodation - Communication

Comprehensive orientation and full time coordinators:

You will be met on arrival at Mumbai International Airport by an ISAC representative to accompany you to your place of stay. If you are participating in our rural programs, your onward travel to Malwali would be organized on the same day or the following day. ISAC will arrange all accommodation, meals and provide orientation on issues around diet, safety, transport, currency conversion, communication, travel, norms and culture. Our coordinators will hold weekly meetings to monitor and evaluate the program and will provide 24 hour emergency support.

Accommodation (Shared basis):

Accommodation will be organized by ISAC in guesthouses / hotels depending on the program location. Accommodation would be on shared basis (3-4 students per room). The food provided in the program is traditional Indian vegetarian cuisine. Hot water is available in all our Guesthouses and our Local Co-ordinator would explain to you how to use the geysers. All ISAC Guesthouses or ISAC appointed accommodation would have free WI-FI facilities.

Communication:

You will be assigned a local SIM card on arrival for the duration of your stay. You will however need to carry an unlocked handset to use the same as ISAC will not provide you with a handset. Your SIM could get activated within 48 hrs of you receiving it from us. Please note that i-phones are not compatible to the local pre-paid SIM cards. All-important phone numbers will have been pre-programmed in the SIM card. To make calls you can purchase pre-paid phone top-ups/credits at various locations locally. You will be required to pay a refundable security deposit of USD 10 or INR 500 for the SIM card. In case you fail to return the SIM Card in an undamaged condition to ISAC, your security deposit would be forfeited.

Leisure Time and Recreation

You are free to do what you want with other participants in the program or alone on nights and weekends. Speak to your ISAC coordinators on arrival regarding ideas and activities. These, however, are not part of your regular program or included in the program fees.

Weekends

You will have the opportunity to visit many popular historic sites and tourist attractions. On arrival you would be provided with details on various weekend destinations /options. Please note that the weekend officially ends Sunday midnight 12.00 am and you should be back by that time at your place of stay to continue with the placement from the following Monday. **ISAC does not make arrangements for weekends but can assist you with information for the same.**

Local Transport

Your program fee does not include any travel while on the program. You will have to take care of the costs involved in traveling to and from your placement sites every day. On arrival, the local coordinator will provide you with detailed orientation on using local public transport systems. Depending on the modes of transport preferred, you can budget for the transport costs.

URBAN

In Mumbai, for long distance travel, Trains are the most preferred mode. For the longest distance from the nearest train station from your accommodation, the one way fare is Rs 10/-

Auto rickshaws and Taxis run on meters and have a tariff card for fares. A travel down town in a taxi from the guesthouse should cost you between Rs 500 – 600 one way. A full day private taxi irrespective of distance travelled could cost you between Rs 2500/- to 3000/- per day.

RURAL

In rural areas, like Malwali, you will depend more on public transport –buses and trains (wherever there are networks). Auto rickshaws and taxis are more expensive than urban locations. However using local transport will also mean spending lot of time travelling and long wait times. If you wish to save time, you have the option of hiring taxis / cabs. This is convenient and hassle-free but would definitely cost more. Sometimes the only option available for your travel to a placement site could be an Auto rickshaw and you could spend upto \$20 a week.

MONEY EXCHANGE

Try to bring money in a variety of forms including: -

- ☐ ☐ Internationally accepted credit cards
- ☐ ☐ Travelers checks (these are difficult to encash in rural areas)
- ☐ ☐ ATM Card

☐ ☐ Some cash in US/Australian Dollars or Pounds that you can exchange into local currency. Most preferable are credit cards and ATM cards as they provide you with maximum flexibility. ATM machines are located everywhere and you can draw money from your account or get cash advances on your credit cards. Please bring all your relevant pin numbers with you. ATMs accept a 4 digit pin.

If you are attending an ISAC Rural Program, please change enough money at the airport to cover your Local Transport costs as Money Exchange options in Rural India are limited. Please insist on smaller bills of hundreds and some fifties as these will save you the hassle of looking for small change in a rural location.

WHAT TO BRING?

Clothes:

- **Undergarments:** Bring 6 pairs of undergarments and 3-4 bras. Make sure they are easy drying, light cotton material for extra comfort.

- **Socks:** Again 6 pairs will be good. Make sure they too dry fast for the rainy season (June to September) and are light cotton. Also try and bring darker colors as they will be less likely to look dirty. India is dusty and things can begin to look grimy pretty fast especially when you are traveling.
- **Shoes:** Comfortable walking shoes for the city and villages. Also some kind of sandals with straps that are water proof will be good during the rains. Please note that while visiting people's homes during field visits, you might need to take your shoes off, so bring something that is easy to wear and remove.
- **Shirts:** You can bring cotton shirts and t-shirts. There is no need to wear a tie or formal clothes. Bring some long sleeved shirts that will protect your arms from mosquitoes and bugs in the evenings.
- **Trousers/Pants:** Khakis are best. Bring 2-3 pairs. Jeans 1-2 pairs should be enough.
- Also please do not wear wide leg pants that will drag on the ground. They will get extremely dirty on Indian terrain!
- **Warm Clothing:** Bring one sweatshirt or pullover. If you take weekend trips to the mountains it may get cool in the evening. But one should be enough as rest of the time it is hot.
- **Dresses:** Long skirts are ok. Do not bring any tight fitting, short or see-through dresses. No spaghetti straps and no shorts allowed at the program site.
- **Rainwear:** Raincoat or plastic poncho for the rainy season.

Other Essential Items:

- Bring a cheap pair of sunglasses to protect your eyes that you won't mind if you lose.
- Cheap watch.
- Don't bring any expensive jewelry items that may attract undue attention.
- Sleeping sheets: You bring these or make one by stitching a double bed sheet in the shape of a sleeping bag. It may be too hot to use a sleeping bag. But having a sleeping sheet is great as when you travel on weekends you can sleep in your own clean sheet. Comes in very handy when you stay at cheap budget hotels!
- Bring your toiletries that you may need and all prescription things that you tend to use.
- India only has one brand of tampons, O.B and none with applicators.
- You can buy sanitary towels and pads at any chemist.
- Bring a flashlight and/or a headlamp. Electricity does go out a lot in the rural areas and so this comes in handy. Prepare to be without electricity for at least 2-3 hours a day outside of Mumbai. In Mumbai there are no power cuts.
- Bring sunscreen, lip balm with SPF and insect repellent. Deet is good but the local variants are more effective. However some repellent in India tend to be really sticky on the skin.
- Bring small locks for all your bags.
- A hand and bath towel.
- A travel guide like the "Lonely Planet" or "Rough Guide to India".
- A small travel clock with alarm is also useful.
- You can buy hand sanitizer like Purell at Indian chemist shops so there is no need to bring it. But it is good to have that with you at all times when you may not have access to water/soap to clean your hands.
- Bring a money belt or something to keep your money/passport etc hidden and secure.
- Bring a small journal to write in and a couple of books to read.

Important Tips from Past Students

Please read the following advice from past volunteers.

What to wear

- When you are teaching you will need to wear neat casual clothes that are loose fitting such as a long skirt or pants, t-shirt or polo shirt and Birkenstocks, sandals or comfortable closed shoes. It is a good idea to get yourself some local dresses.
- Thongs, tight clothes, or anything that shows your mid-rift, cleavage or shoulders may not be appropriate for either the work place or on your weekends.
- Thongs/Flip-Flops are considered to be shower shoes. Birkenstocks or sandals are more appropriate for street wear. Also bring something you can run around in for sport afternoons or walking around town.
- Skirts and light cotton pants are comfortable and very respectful.
- You will need a wet weather jacket.
- Wear a t-shirt and shorts if you go swimming.
- Always wear shoes.

What to bring

- A sarong is good for covering up and using as a sheet and taking with you when you travel.
- You should have access to Aquim (antiseptic hand gel), for hygiene purposes.
- Girls - You will need to bring enough pads and tampons for the entire placement, as they are possibly unavailable.
- Stickers, stamps, balloons and bubbles for any kids in the clinics/orphanages/schools.
- Sparklers and party poppers, bouncy balls and toy cars are a must as the kids just love them.
- Books that you can share and swap with other volunteers.
- Photos from back home of supermarkets, school classrooms etc. People will be very interested to see how you live.
- A pocket knife
- Bring your ipod if you're comfortable or a Discman.
- Sudoku book or cross word book
- A head torch is invaluable.
- A journal.
- Mobile phone. You will need to unlock this in your country and buy a local sim card.
- Remember to take a small bottle of sunscreen and Aquim to keep in your bag as well as the larger bottle. You won't need more than 500ml of each and you can share with other volunteers.
- If you have a laptop and are comfortable bringing it, then it could come in handy. (NB If you do decide to bring your laptop please keep in mind that it is your responsibility and you must look after it at all times).
- The travel first-aid kit is very useful.

What not to bring

- Don't bring white underwear- the water, soap and a rough hand wash never does any justice!
 - Too much stuff! You only have a 20kg bag limit on the plane and you'll buy souvenirs when you are there as well.
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See Below: ISAC Contact Information Sheet

CONTACT INFORMATION SHEET *(please print and carry)*

URBAN PROGRAMS

Mumbai Guest House Address:

B wing 201, Abrol Vastu Park
Evershine Nagar, Malad West
Mumbai -64

Mumbai Contacts:

1. Mr. Arunabha Pal (Aaron), COO

Cell: +91 9922425450

Email: arunabha@indiastudyabroad.org

2. Ms. Mariam Varghese, Sr Program Manager

Cell: +91 9869365682

Email: mariam@indiastudyabroad.org

RURAL PROGRAMS

Malwali Guest House Address

Indrayani, Siemen's workers union guesthouse

Vill: Malwali, Post Karla

Taluka: Maval, Dist: Pune- 410405

Malwali Contact:

1. Ms. Gurpreet Kaur

Cell: +91 9769632366

Email: gurpreet@indiastudyabroad.org

PRE-DEPARTURE THINGS TO CARRY CHECKLIST

- Valid passport and 3 photocopies*
- Valid Visa for India and 3 photocopies*
- 2 Passport sized photographs*
- Airline ticket
- Immunization records: If you have traveled to a Yellow Fever zone in the last year (like South America or Africa), bring your yellow fever vaccination card with you. This is something the Indian immigration authorities may ask to see on arrival.
- Travel and Medical Insurance
- Cash / Credit cards (s) PINs / Travelers Checks
- Prescription medication if needed
- ISAC contact information sheet in your wallet/handbag

***IMPORTANT: Required by ISAC immediately on arrival. You would not have access to a photocopier or a photo studio as you arrive, so please carry with you in a separate folder. Without these documents your registration formalities with ISAC will be incomplete and you will not be able to check into your guesthouse.**



TERMS and CONDITIONS

(to be signed by participants on arrival and handed over to the ISAC Orientation staff)

1. The program duration means the duration between the start date and end date (both days inclusive). ISAC does not encourage overstays, however, due to unavoidable circumstances where overstay becomes necessary, it needs to be mutually agreed with ISAC before the program commences. The participant would be liable to bear all costs associated with any overstay as per ISAC guidelines.
2. The ISAC Guesthouse at Malwali, which is an independent facility with multiple common use areas, could be given out for conferences/meetings to ISAC partners while you are staying there. You would still enjoy the privacy of your own room, however, may have to share common areas like the dining hall or the grounds with other conference participants.
3. During weekends, if you decide to travel out of town and wish to carry only some items of your luggage with you, you will need to pack the rest of your luggage and leave it in a cloak-room identified for safe keeping of your personal belongings while you are away. ISAC will in no way be held responsible for any loss of your personal belongings.
4. Should the participant become ill or incapacitated, the participant agrees to allow ISAC to take all actions necessary regarding medical services including, if the need so arise, transportation to their home or hospitalization at their own expense.
5. The participant agrees to conduct himself / herself responsibly during the program and to cooperate with the ISAC staff, members of partner organisations & institutions, faculties and their fellow participants. Misconduct on the part of the participant can result in expulsion from the program without any refund of fees.
6. If the participant decides to leave the program early, on their own accord, he/she will receive no refunds from ISAC.
7. The participant agrees not to invite anyone to stay at ISAC guest houses or ISAC arranged accommodation. Any deviation from this could make the participant liable to action from ISAC, even upto expulsion from the programme.
8. Consumption of Alcohol, and any form of substance abuse is strictly prohibited at ISAC guest houses and placement sites and can be serious grounds for expulsion from the program.
9. ISAC, its staff and agents would not be held responsible for circumstances beyond their control (including, but not limited to, acts of God, sickness, war, strikes, government regulation) or for actions on the part of persons not controlled by ISAC, such as but not limited to educational institutions, medical personnel and clinical staff, host families, travel agencies, hotels, civic servants and the general public). Participants agree to exempt ISAC and its staff from all claims arising out of such actions.
10. ISAC is not directly responsible for airline arrangements or transportation. As such, ISAC is not responsible for any expenses incurred while traveling and assumes no liability for any injury, damage, loss, or accident in any vehicle or for the actions of any persons engaged in your transit. To and fro transportation from the ISAC guesthouses to placement sites while on program is not included in the program fees and will need to be taken care of by the participant.
11. ISAC may modify the program (including program dates, scheduled activities, and placement sites and other assignments) if necessary. Participants agree that such changes are not grounds for withdrawal from the program, or for any refund.
12. The participant indemnifies ISAC and its agents for any financial obligation that the participant might incur personally, as well as for any damage or injury that may be caused to property or to other persons during the participant's stay in the country.

13. All student films, weekly reports, photographs submitted, feedback, study/research material produced while participating in the program, or such other products that is produced as a part of the program will be considered to be intellectual property of ISAC. ISAC has full rights to use the same for such purposes as it deems proper.
14. The Participant understands and acknowledges that it is the participant's obligation to provide for self, and provide to ISAC proof of coverage by, comprehensive health insurance during the full term of participation in the ISAC program.
15. You are required to pay ISAC a sum of USD 50 or INR 500/- as a refundable security deposit towards acquiring a local SIM card. If you fail to return the sim card to ISAC in good working condition you are liable to forfeit this deposit to ISAC. In the event of any local telecom policy change or technical issues with the service provider, your SIM card service might be affected or barred. ISAC will not be held responsible for any such disruption.
16. In case of any dispute, all matters would be tried under the legal jurisdiction of Mumbai.

I have read, understood and agree to all the Terms and Conditions mentioned in this document.

Name of Participant

Date (dd/mm/yy)

Program Name

Signature of Participant