



## Motorcycle Safari Checklist – Himalaya

**Congratulations!** You've chosen to join one of our Enfield Motorcycle Safari adventures into the Indian subcontinent. Thanks for your booking. In addition to the itinerary you have already received, you should take careful note of the following information for your maximum comfort and enjoyment.

Please retain this checklist, as you will probably need to refer to it several times before we depart.

The first thing you should do now is **Book your Airfares** ! Please don't leave this until 'a little bit later' or you may be very disappointed. In the aftermath of terrorist attacks, subsequent company collapses and corporate rationalisations, the airline industry is in a state of disarray. Schedule changes are frequent, overbookings are commonplace and it is critical that you book as far ahead as possible – and this will also secure you the lowest possible price. So, please get onto your agent as soon as you finish reading this! Or feel free to use our local agent, Press & James Travel Associates, Ph 02 9979 5235 or email [Natasha\\_Dann@travel-associates.com.au](mailto:Natasha_Dann@travel-associates.com.au)

Visit your doctor or **Travellers Medical Centre** and ask their advice on which immunisations are currently recommended for India. Typically these are typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A & B, meningitis and polio. Some people choose to take anti-malarial drugs as well, although some medication can cause side effects and we prefer to take our chances with a **mosquito repellent** rather than have to take a heap of pills with us and remember to take one every Tuesday. Malaria is not identified as a high risk in any of the areas we visit.

Australian clients will receive an **insurance** application booklet from us. We'll need the completed form sent back to Ferris Wheels at least eight weeks prior to departure; the official Certificate will then be processed and sent back to you. International clients, we regret, you'll have to arrange your own travel insurance, and please note that this is mandatory. We cannot accept any uninsured participants on tours such as this.

You obviously will need to have a valid **passport** and you'll need to apply for a six-month **Indian visa** about six weeks prior to departure. In Australia, the easiest way to do this is visit [www.vfs-in-au.net](http://www.vfs-in-au.net). which will introduce you to the sometimes mind-numbing bureaucracy the Indians are so fond of. Overseas participants, it's best to look up your nearest Indian Embassy or Consulate and seek their advice. Give yourself plenty of time; do this about 6 or 8 weeks before departure – don't do it too early, as the visa validity begins immediately from the date it is granted, not the date you enter India. You then need to please **advise us** of your Indian Visa number, Date of Issue and Date of Expiry.

Before departure, please take **photocopies** of your insurance certificate, passport title page and visa page, to take with you as a security in the case of loss whilst overseas – and Yes, it does happen. Carry these photocopies separately from the originals. Also take a spare **passport photo** or two *just in case* we need to apply for a special permit or something bureaucratic.

For your spending money, traveller's cheques are no longer popular, as auto-teller machines (ATM's) are now widely available at airports and pretty much everywhere else. ATM's are connected worldwide via the Maestro or Cirrus networks; they dispense local currency and the converted equivalent is simply debited to your bank account back home. If you do not have an ATM card you'll need to take US\$ cash or TC's and find a change bureau, which can be a bit of a hassle. Best to get an ATM card! Unless you're a big souvenir hunter, you'll probably spend less than \$500 for the whole trip -- remember all your meals are included.

Anywhere in the Indian subcontinent, at any time of year, it can get quite hot. Make sure you have a **hat** or **cap** of some sort for when you're not wearing a helmet, as well as **sunglasses**, **sunscreen** and a couple of light long-sleeved shirts. But equally so, the Himalaya can get bitterly cold; bring **thermal underwear** if you're susceptible to the cold. Two pairs of **bike gloves** are a good idea and a thin scarf or **bandanna** is good for keeping diesel and dust off your face. If you're wearing shorts make them a decent length; those high-cut thigh-revealing sports varieties will attract disapproval from devout Hindus and Buddhists. At least one of our hotels has a pool, so bring a **swimsuit**, also with similar regard for local modesty. We will be dining in comfortable, pleasant restaurants most nights so bring some smart **evening wear**, a welcome change after all day in boots, jeans, jacket and helmet. Your hair dryer of course, is optional....



T-shirts, in fact all clothes, are best in *earthy* colours – whites don't stay white for very long. Bring **plenty of socks**; there's nothing worse than trying to put on yesterday's wet, dirty socks to start a new day. But having said that, each rest day on our itinerary gives us an opportunity to have some laundry done so don't go overboard with *too* many clothes. A week's worth should be fine. If you belong to a motorcycling club, take your **club T-shirt** or cap for a posed-photo you can show everyone (and publish in your magazine . . . ☺ ) when you get back.

Bring a protective **jacket**, gloves, boots and sturdy jeans. **Wet weather gear** is always advisable. Bring an **old helmet** rather than a brand new one, as it will probably get knocked around a bit. An open-face versus a full-face is purely personal choice, and some of us may even choose to do some riding without it up in the remote hills where it's not strictly required by law. There's only one night of camping but it's at 4,200 metres so you might want to bring a **beanie** to keep your scalp warm.

Bring your **camera** of course and plenty of **film** or **memory cards**. Remember your **camera charger**, or fresh **batteries** before leaving home will see you through the trip. Also bring a few pictures of yourself, your family, your dog, your bike, etc. because Indians are very friendly and curious people but rarely get a chance to see photos of life in other countries. You will win friends by showing them a little bit about yourself. Don't mention cricket if you're in a hurry to get anywhere, and if you give your business card to anyone you can be assured of receiving a letter.

India is **noisy** and the frenzied activity does not always die down with the sun, so bring some **earplugs** if you are a light sleeper. Your roommate is almost guaranteed to snore. A small **torch** (flashlight) is always a useful thing to have, as is a small **travelling towel** and an **alarm clock**.

Electricity in India is 240volt, and the power plugs have either two or three round pins. A **power plug adapter** is necessary for using small appliances such as razors, hairdryers and phone/battery chargers. These are readily available at travel shops and airports. The cellphone network coverage is quite good in all but the most remote regions, so get International Roaming authorised and bring your phone with you.

Bring a couple of pens and a **diary** if you are so inclined. Bring all your friends' address details; the unofficial record for postcard writing on a three-week trip so far stands at 134.

Your luggage may cop some rough treatment, so **don't** bring an expensive, hardcover suitcase. A hiking backpack is OK but the harness and straps can be a nuisance. The best luggage to take is a tough, carry-all **canvas** suitcase with wheels at one end and a handle at the other. Bring a small **daypack** for holding your camera, sunscreen, etc. while you're riding. The Enfield of course has a metal tank, so if you have one of those magnetic-grab **tankbags**, bring it along. Some people like to wear a **moneybelt** or **bumbag** or you can use buttoned or zipped pockets as a safety measure. A couple of **plastic bags** are useful for dirty laundry or keeping your soiled boots off your clothes.

Word of warning: carry any cameras, videocam, ipod, notebook pc and other electronic goods in your carry-on luggage, not in your checked-in baggage. These items show up quite clearly on baggage X-ray scanning devices and baggage handlers have been known to observe and subsequently pilfer such things. Any loss is of course claimable under travel insurance, but this is little consolation if you've lost your 800 photos of the trip.

Plastic bottles of mineral water are readily available everywhere, but they're not easy to carry or re-seal for your daypack, so you could take a **Camelbak** or a 1 litre sports-style **water bottle** to decant into. If you have one, bring it along otherwise don't worry; the support bus can always carry the bought bottles for us.

We will have emergency medical supplies with us for use in the case of an accident or severe illness, but you should bring your own simple **medicines** for headache, nausea, etc. and of course any regular medications you might be taking.

The 'occy' **straps** available in India tend to deteriorate quickly, so bring one of those from home to tie your jacket on the back. Even better are those new velcro 'Andy Strapz' or even a cargo net. And, just before you zip up your bag, throw in a couple of **mothballs** to protect all your gear from the voracious silverfish found in them thar hills (yep, seriously).



Quite a lot to remember, isn't it? So, here's a checklist for you to begin with:

Passport, Indian visa	Wet weather gear	Soft shoes, shorts	Alarm clock
Insurance certificate	Jacket, helmet	Underwear, socks	Address book
Photocopies thereof	Boots, gloves x 2	T-shirts, thermals	Writing materials
Passport photos	Jeans, shirts	Smart casual gear	Diary or notepad
Family photos, etc	Cap, sunnies, beanie	Swimsuit	Power adapter
Travellers cheques	Bandanna, sunscreen	Tank bag	Plastic bags
Some US\$ cash	Camera, card, charger	Bike straps / Net	Your itinerary &
ATM/credit card	Flashlight, batteries	Guidebook	this checklist
Immunisations	Toiletries, small towel	Insect repellent	Feed the cat &
Daypack, bumbag	Medicines, earplugs	Water bottle	lock the door.

No doubt you'll think of a few other things also, but remember your 20kg flight luggage limit. And you have to leave room for that scale-model replica Taj Mahal you'll want to bring home with you!

If you're on our suggested flight into Delhi we'll meet you at the airport. If you've arranged a different arrival flight you'll have to make your own way to our hotel (you'll have been given the name and address by then) and the easiest way is to take a taxi. Before leaving the airport building you'll find a booth marked 'Pre-Paid Taxi', where you mention the name of the hotel, pay something like 400 Rupees (about US\$10) and you're given a docket with a taxi's licence plate number on it. When you walk outside, the cabbie will find you immediately and take you straight to the hotel with no hassles. No rip-off, no promises of 'cheaper, better hotel my brother owns' or any nonsense. Too easy.

Finally, some words of advice. **Do some research** on the region you're about to visit. India is a country less than half the size of Australia or the U.S. but with a population of 1,000 *million* people. It can be very confronting and alienating if you're not at least a little prepared; the gob-smack factor is extremely high. Some first-timers to India are so overwhelmed at what they see, hear, smell and experience, that they are quite fazed for the first week and forget to enjoy the riding and the exquisite scenery. At Delhi airport we once met four young Uni students who were wimping out after only five days in India, having initially gone there intending to 'spend a couple of months wandering around'. It was their first trip away from home (their affluent parents had paid!) and they were completely shell-shocked. They mumbled inane comments like; 'I had no idea this place was so crowded', 'The slums are so f---ing putrid' and 'You can't even get a decent hamburger anywhere . . .'. we had to stop ourselves from laughing, but it really was quite sad that they had experienced such a bad time through sheer ignorance.

Lonely Planet's webpage has this to say: 'No matter how willing you are to step outside logic-based Western thinking and give up the joys of using toilet paper, India will still manage to sideswipe you with its size, clamour and diversity. Nothing in the country is ever quite the way you expect it to be, and the only thing to expect is that the unexpected comes in many forms and it will always want to sit next to you. India is a litmus test for many travellers and some visitors are only too happy to get on an aircraft and fly away, but if you enjoy delving into convoluted cosmologies, thrive on sensual overload, and have a firm grasp of the absurd, then India is one of the most intricate and rewarding dramas unfolding on earth.' Phew!

As we've mentioned already, irregular power supplies will mean that a hot shower may not always be available. The standard of accommodation varies greatly on this trip by necessity; some hotels will be quite comfortable, but when we venture to remote areas we have to take what we can get and it is sometimes pretty basic. If there's no toilet paper/towel/soap in your room, you'll have to ask for it; don't take these little luxuries for granted! Likewise in these more remote areas, lunch will sometimes be where and when we can find it and don't expect *cordon bleu* cuisine.

So, grab a guidebook and read it from cover to cover, read anything on India and Nepal you can get your hands on, watch some ethnic television documentaries, go to your local curry house and try some dishes you've never heard of. If you possess the essential attributes of an adventurous spirit, a degree of tolerance and a good sense of humour, you will be more than amply rewarded on this trip.

Here endeth our sermon for today. We'll be in touch in due course with your exquisite **Ferris Wheels** shirt.

*Mike and Denise*