

Useful Information about Chennai / India

Health

You will find many well-stocked pharmacies in Chennai, some of them are even open 24 hrs. There are also very good hospitals in Chennai (please check the chapter "Important Addresses")

You may contact your embassy in Chennai to get a list of recommended doctors. Please also make sure, that you take out a Travel Health Insurance before you come to India!

Food

There are some rules that should be followed:

- o Do *only* drink mineral water!!!
- o Avoid road side stands as you might not used to this kind of food
- o Eat vegetables only if they are peeled and/or cooked
- o Milk has to be boiled before you use it

Vaccination

This depends on what vaccinations you already have and what country you are coming from. In any case, please contact your local doctor for the recommended vaccinations. Usually, you should have the following vaccinations: Hepatitis A&B, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhus, Polio, maybe Meningitis.

NOTE: Some vaccinations are required injections as much as two months before arrival to India!

Money

The currency of India is Rupee (Rs). One Rupee is divided into 100 paise. You could visit www.Oanda.com to check the current exchange rate.

There's no problem to change money in Chennai. Also Traveller Cheques are accepted in India.

We recommend to with draw money from your savings at a cash machine. EC-Cards with Maestro signs or Credit Cards (Visa, MasterCard) are accepted by most important banks of India.

Language

South India has eight major languages. In Chennai, mainly Tamil and English are spoken.

Telephone

Chennai has plenty of PCO/STD/ISD call booths with direct local, interstate and international dialing. A digital meter always lets you keep an eye on what the call costs and gives you a printout at the end.

To call a number in Chennai from outside the country, dial 0091 for India + 44 for Chennai + local number.

Mobile Phones

If you have a GSM tri-band Mobile you can also use it in India as long as SIM is unlocked. A prepaid card starts from 250 Rs.

There are lots of outlets for Mobiles in Chennai. Prepaid Mobile Phones start at 3500 Rs.

Internet Access

Internet Cafes are on almost every corner. They are reasonably priced from 20 to 30 Rs for half an hour.

Bookshops

If you are interested in English literature, the Landmark Bookshop opposite of Apex Plaza, MG Road will be your first address. There you will also find more books about India.

Electricity

The electric current is 230 – 240 V AC, 50 Hz. The sockets are similar to European sockets.

Time

India is 5 ½ hours ahead of GMT/UTC, 4 ½ hours behind Australian and 10 ½ hours ahead of American Eastern Standard Time.

Equipment

Clothes: Light summer clothes, female Volunteers might feel a bit more comfortable in long blouses and trousers as Chennai people are traditional, Sweater during winter. Mosquito net, towels, bed sheets

Note: You could also buy clothes for reasonable prices in Chennai.