



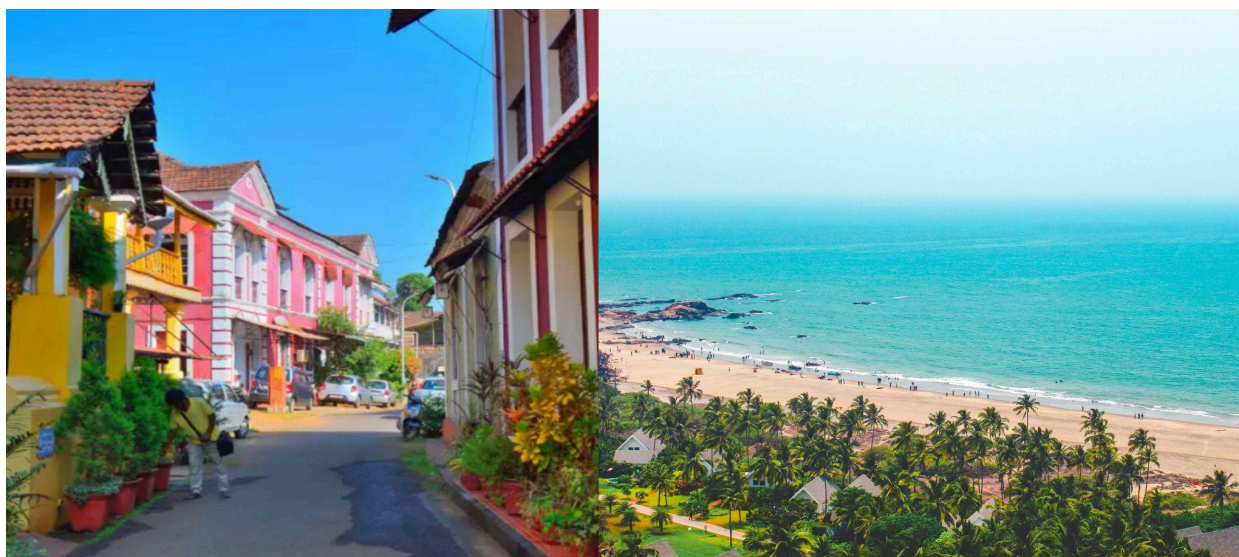
# GOA, INDIA

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## ORIENTATION PACKET



## INTRODUCTION TO GOA

Goa, situated on the southwestern coast of India, is a small state celebrated for its enchanting beaches, lively nightlife, and rich cultural legacy. Having been a Portuguese colony for over 450 years, it became a part of India in 1961. The architectural style, churches, and festivals of Goa distinctly reflect the enduring influence of Portuguese culture. The main cities are Panaji, Margao, and Mormugao (where the main port is located). Renowned globally for its diverse festivals like Carnival, Shigmo, and the Feast of St. Francis Xavier, as well as its stunning beaches like Baga, Anjuna, and Palolem, Goa captivates visitors with its distinctive amalgamation of history, culture, and natural splendor. This unique blend makes it a favored destination for those seeking a beach holiday infused with both Indian and Portuguese flavors.

The ideal period for a week-long stay in Goa is from November to March. Temperatures tend to increase in late spring, with the monsoon season lasting from June to September.





## SAMPLE ITINERARY

This is an example to give a rough idea of what your week will be like. Please note that these activities are subject to change and depend on how many volunteers are there during the week, project availability, weather, previous progress, etc.

Days	Activities	Meals	Details
<b>Day 1 Sun</b>	Arrival in Goa, transport to hotel or hotel	D	Relax and recover from jetlag. You'll have orientation and some time to explore your area.
<b>Day 2 Mon</b>	A guided tour of North and South Goa.	B, L, D	Enjoy historical sites, which can include churches, Portuguese forts, and beautiful beaches.
<b>Day 3 Tues</b>	Introduction to the project site and begin volunteer work. You can choose to work on Friday as well or keep it as a free exploration day.	B, L, D	Lunch will be provided in a packed tiffin for work days.
<b>Day 4 Wed</b>		B, L, D	
<b>Day 5 Thurs</b>		B, L, D	
<b>Day 6 Fri</b>		B	A free day of exploration can include an optional activity on this day. Lunch and Dinner are not covered on this day.
<b>Day 7 Sat</b>	Transfer back to the airport.	B	Your Coordinator can assist you in getting to your next destination if you are staying longer.

## EXPECTATIONS

Globe Aware volunteers in India are placed in a meaningful work setting in Goa. Your volunteer experience occurs in a context of cultural learning, exchange, and experience consistent with Globe Aware's mission of promoting sustainable development AND cultural awareness. Thus, while direct volunteer work is the most important factor, you must have access to an extensive orientation on Indian culture and history, excursions to local points of interest, workshops on local customs and traditions, and the expertise of our local supervisors who provide translation services and guidance in matters of local custom.

Once you've reached the project site, you will be assigned specific project placements according to the guidelines of the organization we are working with. Ultimately, the need of the community is the most important factor that decides what project you'll be engaging in. To keep the development initiatives relevant, some specific details of the projects may change given the evolving needs of the community.

Please remember that concepts of scheduling and organization are not universal. It is best to keep an open mind and not be judgmental when visiting a foreign country. Remember that your way of doing things may not be the best here – the locals usually also have a very good reason for completing a task in a certain way, and their priorities may be different than ours.

We understand your desire to know as much as possible about the project you will be working on. It is important to understand that projects are often not set in place until about two weeks prior, as

available, how many volunteers are in your group, the changing priorities of the community, and can even change upon arrival, for example, based on the fitness level of the specific volunteer group and changing weather. Therefore, it's best to approach the experience with an open attitude, knowing you'll be working approximately 4-5 hours a day during the weekdays.

Communicate with your coordinator. If you find the work level needs to be higher, or less, he or she will do as much as possible to work with you. You will undergo an orientation upon your arrival in Goa, which will contain details on possible excursions and your activities for the week, and further help you to form your expectations. Keep in mind that India is a rapidly developing economy, and problems like pollution and discrimination remain a widespread challenge going forward. Your work, and your compassion, are valuable to the people and organizations you will be assisting. But you will not solve these problems in a matter of weeks or months. This knowledge in the face of poverty and lack of opportunity that you will see can be at times a gut-wrenching experience for many volunteers. Yet one of the most valuable things that you can do is see and experience this for yourselves in a way that the vast majority of tourists never do.



## PROJECTS

Although there is a considerable journey ahead to attain complete equality for those with disabilities in India, different Indian organizations have made strides to improve access to education, employment opportunities, and other essential resources, empowering the community to initiate a transformative path toward overcoming poverty.

Get ready to create a significant difference by volunteering at a social initiative committed to empowering visually and hearing-impaired students in the Porvorim region. During your three days there, you'll get the opportunity to interact with children and/or adults, support educational activities, and play a role in fostering their holistic development. There are various activities you may be asked to engage in such as games, sports, art projects, sign language, and participation in environmental initiatives, etc.

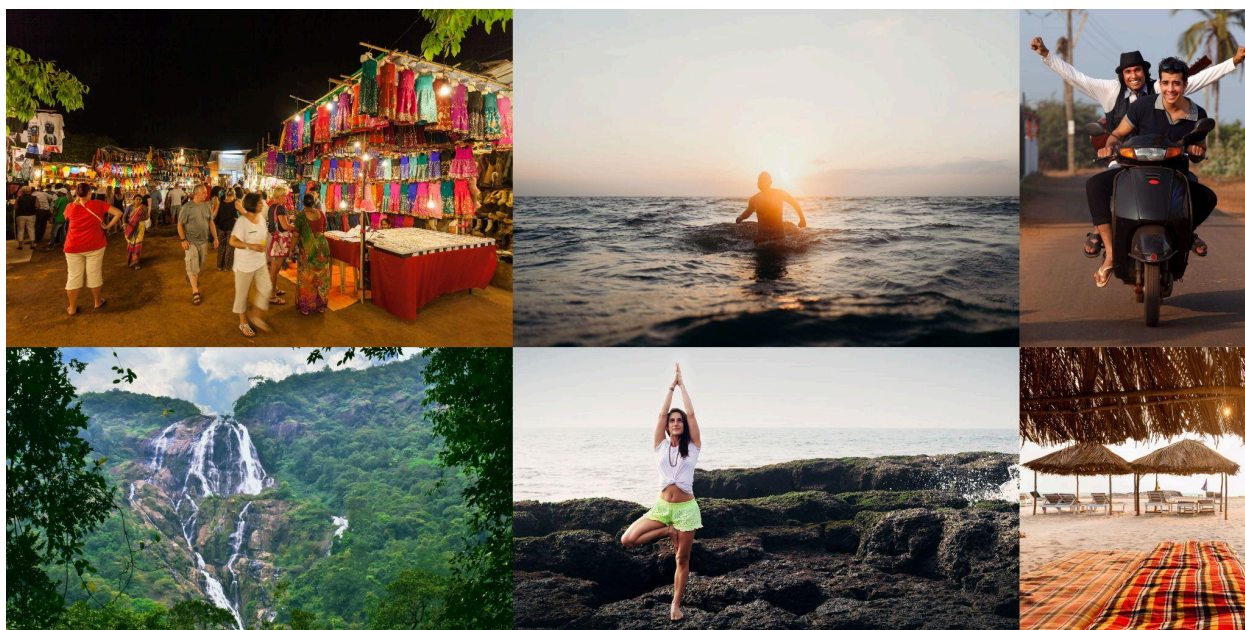
Experience firsthand the resilience and determination of these exceptional individuals as you collaborate to bring about positive change.



At times, you may not perceive that you are making a significant impact in just a few days. However, the chance to engage with individuals from other countries provides our beneficiaries with a feeling of inclusion, acceptance, and joy. We aim to broaden their horizons, ensuring they feel acknowledged and, in turn, fostering their self-esteem.

We always appreciate donations. If you are considering bringing any items, such as books, balls, etc., kindly notify us in advance so that we can provide a list of what is currently in high demand.

Occasionally you may be presented with the opportunity to assist with a beach clean-up, or small-scale renovations and beautifications for a learning facility.



## LEISURE ACTIVITIES

There's plenty of time to appreciate stunning architecture, chill beaches, fun shopping trips, and experience the authentic Goan way of life. Your itinerary includes visits to iconic landmarks in the North and South of Goa, such as the Basilica of Bom Jesus, Fort Aguada, and the vibrant markets of Mapusa and Margao. Cultural activities may also include:

- Coconut plucking or/and Fishing
- Cooking Class or/and Hindi Class
- Lounging at the beach ( there may be additional costs if you want to use another hotel's lounge facilities/restaurants).
- Water activities such as kayaking and snorkeling ( some activities may come with additional costs).

## Optional Activities

Additional activities incurring extra charges, including transportation, are available as options. Please notify us in advance if you wish to partake in any of these activities, enabling our coordinator to check for availability and feasibility within your schedule. Should you extend your stay in Goa beyond a week, your coordinator will gladly guide you toward services and resources for your assistance.

- Explore Spice Plantations: Take a guided tour of spice plantations in the countryside. Immerse yourself in the aromas of cardamom, cinnamon, and vanilla while learning about the region's rich agricultural practices.
- Dudhsagar Waterfall Trek: Embark on a trek to Dudhsagar Waterfall, one of India's tallest waterfalls. The journey through lush forests offers breathtaking views, and you can take a refreshing dip in the natural pool below.
- River Cruise on Mandovi River: Experience the vibrant culture of Goa with a scenic river cruise on the Mandovi River. Enjoy traditional Goan music, dance, and a delightful dinner aboard.

## PACKING INFORMATION

Make sure to pack enough clothes to be comfortable, since you will be in a tropical climate. Cotton and linen are recommended fabrics. You should not need to do laundry on a week-long trip. It is okay to wear clothes more than once. Although Goa is more relaxed when it comes to clothing, especially at the beaches, remember that modesty is essential at our project site. Thus, all of our volunteers must keep in mind the following general guidelines for the work site: avoid short shorts, mini skirts, see-through clothes, tight clothing, and skimpy tank tops. All tops should cover the waistband of your pants. Unless it's a sari, do not show off the mid-riff.

For visitors' modesty, caution, and adherence to traditional standards are generally a good way to avoid undue attention and blend into the culture you want to experience. Carry a shawl or long, loose pants with you in case you are to enter a temple or church grounds. You may be expected to cover your shoulders and/or legs before entry.

### Essential Items:

- Bug Repellent with at least 20% Deet (sometimes hard to find in India)
- Cash
- Copies of your passport and visa
- Cable and Combination Lock (useful for locking your luggage)
- Sunscreen, sunglasses, and a hat
- Flashlight
- Water bottle with filter
- Towels, swimsuits, cover-ups, and beach sandals
- Hand Sanitizer and masks
- Comfortable toe covered shoes/sneakers
- Extra sanitary wipes, toilet paper, wet wipes, anti-bacterial wipes.
- Adapter
- Extra flip flops (bathrooms tend to be wet rooms, so it is advisable to have slippers on)•
- Your phone, with the "Google Translate" app downloaded in advance
- Also download the offline language pack for your destination's language — this allows voice-to-voice and camera translation even without internet or cell signal.

**While you'll have a bilingual coordinator throughout your trip, many past volunteers have told us this app helped them connect with locals during free time, meals, and casual conversations.**



Please note that the packing list is meant as a guideline. You may also enjoy bringing games or books for free time. There is no single item that you can't live without for one week. As a result, pack what you think you will need to be comfortable, but do not get preoccupied about items that you didn't bring, weren't on the list, etc. Everyone has different opinions about essential items!

## ACCOMMODATIONS



Volunteers will be accommodated in a modest hotel. All have running hot water, flushing western-style toilets, and electricity. Though the accommodations cannot be labeled luxurious, you will find that they are more than sufficient. Each hotel room can accommodate two individuals unless you decide to pay a supplement of \$60 per night for a private room. Hotels may not be beachfront or in immediate proximity to the beach, but still close by. Although your hotel should have Wi-Fi available, be prepared for weak Wi-Fi signals and occasional power outages.

Transportation will be provided to your work site from the hotel.

**Please Note About Transportation:** Taxis are not always readily available in Goa, and at times require advance booking. If you plan to go somewhere without your Coordinator during volunteer vacation week, your hotel can usually assist you with booking a roundtrip taxi ( at your own personal expense). Please make sure to inform your Coordinator as to where you will be as a safety precaution. If you intend to rent a motorcycle or scooter, you must possess an international license, and any associated risks and expenses will be your responsibility.

## ELECTRICITY

Electronic items run on 220 Volts in India – make sure yours do the same or else run on batteries. It's a good idea to bring adapters for non-European-style plugs. European plugs have two circular metal pins. American/Japanese style plugs with 2 parallel flat blades. It may be a good idea to bring a prong adapter with you.

## FOOD

Indian food is internationally famous. Whether chili-hot or comparatively bland, harmony is the guiding principle behind each dish. There are many families of Indian cuisine, all characterized by many different dishes and cooking techniques that vary by geography and ethnicity throughout India.

Goan cuisine includes rice, fresh seafood, coconut, vegetables, meat, bread, pork, and indigenous spices. Notably, kokum and vinegar add a distinctive touch to the culinary repertoire. Being a coastal region, seafood is a significant part of Goan cuisine. Dishes like fish curry rice, prawn balchão, and fisherman's wharf are popular. **Breakfast will be provided at the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner will be at local restaurants. Lunch will be a packed tiffin on volunteering days.**

You are free to explore and find your food options on the last full day of your volunteer vacation week.

## ALCOHOL

Although alcohol is available for consumption in Goa, and there is a big party culture, many hotels and businesses are strict about drinking. Please make sure to be aware and follow the rules. Please do not consume alcohol at project site premises and any locations such as temples and church grounds.

## WEATHER

Goa experiences a tropical climate with consistently high temperatures throughout the year. The extensive sunny season spans from mid-October to mid-May, while the rainy season, influenced by the southwest monsoon, typically occurs from late May to early or mid-October. During this period, the weather becomes humid, with frequent and occasionally heavy rains, accompanied by cloud cover on most days.

For a more general overview, the World Meteorological Organization provides the following chart (also available in Celsius here) <https://worldweather.wmo.int/en/city.html?cityId=528>

## MONEY

Unless you plan on buying a lot of souvenirs or extending your trip, you should not need an enormous amount of extra cash. Items such as sim cards, souvenirs, independent excursions, and alcohol are not covered by your program fee. ATMS may not be as readily available and there will most likely be international transaction fees attached. Around \$700 should be ample to cover expenses during one program week. You can convert your currency at one of the major Indian entry airports, or at Dabolim airport. However, the Goa airport is smaller and does not always have an accessible currency exchange counter or working ATM.

The currency of India is the Rupee, its symbol being ₹.

## PHONE AND INTERNET

Make sure you research the options you have with your phone plan when it comes to roaming services. To purchase an Indian SIM card, your phone must be unlocked. You can visit an Airtel, Jio, or Vodaphone kiosk, either at the airport or a local store. Your coordinator can assist you in getting a SIM card very



easily. Many times, the plans offered to tourists are limited but useful to have. You will also most likely have to provide a visa-sized photo and copies of your passport. After purchase, it can take a few hours for the card to start working.

## HEALTH

While there is no need to be overly concerned, this does not mean you should not prepare carefully and remain mindful and aware of your health in India. Westerners' immune systems are often unprepared for many garden-variety Indian viruses and ailments, but if proper preventative measures are taken, most conditions can be avoided before any question of treatment arises. For those who do get sick, India's major urban centers have sophisticated, in some cases world-class health facilities that attract large numbers of "health tourists" who fly to India for cheaper versions of certain procedures. You are also covered by travel medical insurance.

Dos and "Don'ts" for healthy living in India will be reviewed during orientation upon your arrival. In terms of preparing to come, consultation with your doctor is recommended if at all possible. As for stocking up on medicines, be assured that you do not need to carry an entire pharmacy with you when you come. Bandages and medicines like Ibuprofen, as well as any number of antibiotics, can be found in India. If your drug needs are very specific, bringing a supply along is of course a good idea.

### **Also, please note the following:**

**Malaria:** Please consult your physician and insurance provider before deciding on which drugs you choose to take. As the best way to prevent sickness is to avoid mosquito bites, also think about bringing bug spray.

**Dengue:** Those who become infected with the virus a second time are at a significantly greater risk of developing severe disease. Symptoms are high fever, rash, and muscle and joint pain. In severe cases, there is serious bleeding and shock, which can be life-threatening. Treatment includes fluids and pain relievers. Severe cases require hospital care.

**Asthma:** Be sure to bring an adequate supply of inhalers with you if you have any propensity to suffer from asthma.

**Allergies:** Popular drugs like Claritin (loratadine) and other anti-histamines used to treat allergies are not widely available, especially in non-drowsy forms. If you are at all prone to dust, pollen, and pollution-related allergies, bring an adequate supply of your preferred allergy medication.

**Sinus problems:** Sinus medication (e.g., Sinutab) is not widely available; bring a supply if you are likely to experience sinus problems due to dust and pollution.

**Safe drinking water:** While safe drinking water will be readily available during your stay, some people like to bring filtered water bottles, which can be helpful in certain unexpected situations where potable water is not available.

**Protection from the sun:** Quality UV-protection sunglasses, a favorite hat, and sunscreen products of at least 50 SPF.

**Hygiene:** Other toiletries, such as hair conditioner, are available, but bring your own if you

are attached to a particular brand.

**Covid:** Covid testing can be arranged at your hotel or homestay before your departure flight or at any time upon request. Pricing can vary from \$5 to \$20, and results are usually provided within 12 hours. If you are COVID-19 positive, we will assist you in finding the appropriate accommodations while you rest and heal.

## ARRIVAL AND TRANSPORTATION

**Please note that it is essential to communicate your flight arrangements to the Globe Aware office as soon as possible!!**

When booking flights, your arrival and departure airport should be at **Dabolim airport**. If your flight takes you to the other new Goa airport, the Manohar International Airport, please inform us so we can arrange your transportation.

Before arrival:

- Make sure you've read all pre-departure info and have it with you.
- Make sure your visa, passport, shots, and vaccinations are in order.
- Make sure you carry hard copies of all documents.

Two of the most common routes will have you landing in Delhi, at the Indira Gandhi International Airport or Mumbai/Bombay's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, then transferring to a domestic Goa flight. It might be a good idea, if you have enough time, to convert currency at either of these airports.

**Are health screening procedures in place at airports and other ports of entry?** Yes, there may be random screenings for international arrivals.

If you are chosen at random to take a Covid test at any airport, this should take no longer than 15-30 minutes, and you should then be allowed on your way. In case you are asked for a phone number, you can provide this one: **+91 99505 25405**.

For any other questions or concerns in regards to Covid, please visit:

<https://in.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/>

### **Post arrival at Goa airport:**

After clearing customs, immediately change some money into Indian rupees. Preferably this should be done at the first port of entry in India. You will be picked up at the airport. Your coordinator will be waiting for you at the arrival gate right outside the airport, displaying a placard with your name or "Globe Aware" written on it. Upon being received you will be taken to your accommodations. Let your coordinator know if you'd like to get a sim card, he or she can assist you.

In case of the very unlikely event that you do not find anyone to pick you up at the airport, please contact us. To call, locate a phone booth in the airport, or visit your airline's assistance booth. **Contact +91 99505 25405.**



## LOST LUGGAGE

You can direct your luggage to the hotel you will be staying at. The name and address will be provided before your departure. Ask your Coordinator for assistance if needed.

## LOCAL CONTACT INFORMATION

If we do not see you at the meet-up point, the coordinator's first step is to check with the airline to see if your flight was delayed. If it is not, our next call is to your emergency contact. Therefore, if you have any sort of change in your arrival, please make sure to inform your emergency contact, as this is the first person we will be contacting.

We will do our best to contact you, however, if we cannot contact you in about an hour the coordinator will leave the meeting point without you. Once you have contacted your emergency contact or our headquarters, we will try and work out arrangements to get you to the location, but it may be at your extra expense, as this cost is not estimated in the program budget.

If you feel there is a problem with these arrangements, or you cannot meet the schedule, please contact us before your departure if possible, and we will try to resolve this the best we can. Because of certain limitations, and strains on other volunteers, such requests should be made within a fair amount of time (at least one and a half weeks before the program date) and will be remedied at our discretion.

The phone number you have provided as your emergency contact will be used in case of an emergency. This may be if something happens to you while participating in the program, or if you are not at the meet-up location on time. Please let your emergency contact know this. If you are lost before meeting with the coordinator, or your plane has arrived late, please attempt to contact us at the number below or your emergency contact. Feel free to call the US office.

### U.S. Globe Aware Emergency Number

**+1 214-824-4562**

### Goa Office Contact Number:

We highly recommend downloading WhatsApp, the main messaging app used in India. With the number listed, you can message for assistance or call: **+91 9950525405**

As a very last resort, if you are unable to find a Globe Aware representative to pick you up and are unable to make contact with our representative by phone, it is possible to take a pre-paid taxi to your hotel location. Pre-paid Taxis are also available right outside the Arrival Hall of the airport. Please note that taxi drivers in Goa may offer you "better hotel options," which should be firmly refused.

There are taxi apps such as Ola (which requires you to download the app and have an Indian phone #) or Uber, however, Goa is very limited in its access to these modes of transportation.

## VISA APPLICATION

U.S. citizens seeking to enter India solely for tourist purposes for stays of less than 60 days may apply for an eVisa at least four days prior to their arrival. **Globe Aware highly recommends you apply at least two weeks in advance.** Please visit the [Indian government's website for electronic travel authorization](#) for additional information and to submit your application.

A great resource when preparing your VISA will be the website of India's embassy:

<https://www.indianembassyusa.gov.in/extra?id=87>

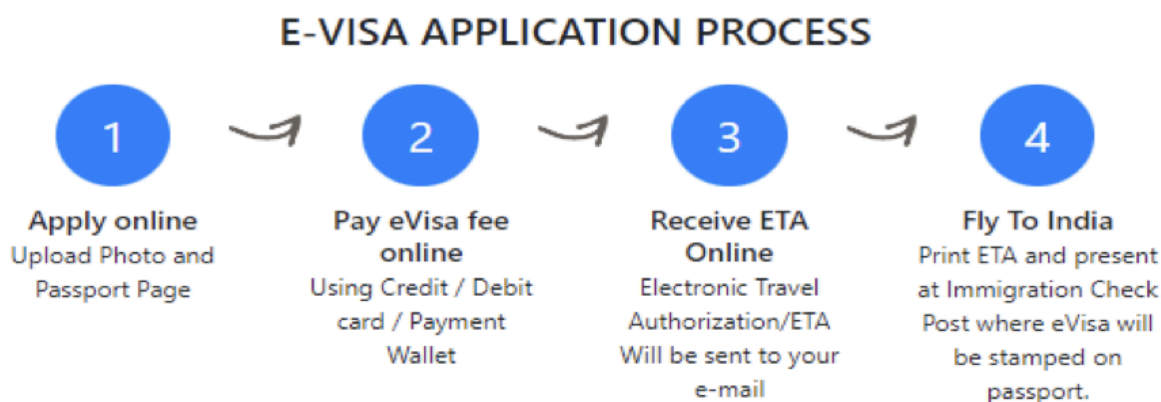
These guidelines for international arrivals in India continue to be formulated taking a risk-based approach. Rules and regulations are subject to change.

## VERY IMPORTANT STEPS AND PROTOCOLS

Make sure your passport does not expire within 6 months.

Applications for fresh e-tourist visas for eligible nationalities can be made at the Indian eVisa Portal:

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>



Currently, you should **NOT** have to fill out the additional online “**Air Suvidha**” form at <https://www.newdelhiairport.in/airsuvidha/apho-registration> for entry into India. However, make sure to check if it is required as sometimes regulations change.

Please carry photocopies of the bio-data page of your U.S. passport and the pages containing the Indian visa and Indian immigration stamps. If your passport is lost or stolen, copies will help you apply for a replacement passport and an exit visa from the Indian government. Replacing a lost visa, which is required to exit the country, may take three to four business days.

## COVID-19 UPDATES

There are currently no COVID-19 travel restrictions in place for travelers to India from the US. However, passengers may be subject to medical screening on arrival and quarantined if positive. The COVID-19 regulations may change at short notice and can be checked at <https://in.usembassy.gov/covid-19-information/#:~:text=Yes..arriving%20from%20outside%20their%20borders>.

## Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

The Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a free service provided by the U.S. government to U.S. citizens who are traveling to a foreign country. STEP allows you to enter information about your upcoming trip abroad so that the Department of State can better assist you in an emergency, keep you up to date



with important safety and security announcements, and help your friends and family get in touch with you in case of an emergency.

The link to STEP is <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>

## Global Entry

Global Entry is a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows expedited clearance for pre-approved, low-risk travelers upon arrival in the United States. Due to sequestration, long lines have been reported at customs and immigration when coming back into the United States. Global Entry-approved travelers can use the automated kiosks at immigration to reduce wait times considerably.

For more information, visit <http://www.globalentry.gov/>

## SAFETY AND SECURITY

While Goa is generally considered safe, it is advisable to avoid venturing into less-traveled or poorly lit areas. The influx of partygoers in certain parts of Goa has led to the emergence of some folks being under the influence of substances, which is illegal. Please make sure to keep your belongings close. Exercise caution, don't flash expensive items around, and practice common sense.

While India captivates the senses and volunteers may be enthusiastic about capturing it in photos, be mindful that Goans prefer you seek permission before taking any of their pictures.

Do note that you may encounter youth claiming that Westerners are unwilling to engage with the Indian people. They might say "Why don't tourists want to talk to me", or "I am a student, I want to learn about your culture/practice English". This occasionally segues into a scam. Please review the United States Department of State travel website for more information about safety and security while traveling in India.

India has multiple embassies for different regions. Your closest embassy is the U.S. Consulate General Mumbai is located in Bandra Kurla Complex, Mumbai.

Address: 3V9C+G4M, G Block BKC, Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400051, India

Phone: +91 40 6932 8000

## Our Program Manager



If you've been acquainted with our Jaipur or Nepal programs, you'll surely recognize this enthusiastic coordinator. Rahul and his team are eagerly looking forward to showcasing the enchanting beauty of Goa to you. Rahul was born in India and is active in coordinating volunteer projects and encouraging social development around India and Nepal. He loves traveling, enjoys acting in the theater, watching movies, and spending time with family and friends.

## Social Media

We love sharing YOUR Globe Aware experiences on our social media platforms! Click on the links below, follow or subscribe, and tag us **@GlobeAware**, **#GlobeAware**! We'll follow you back!

[Facebook](#)

[Instagram](#)

[YouTube](#)

[Twitter](#)

LinkedIn Globe Aware

TikTok (@Globe\_Aware)

Your photos & videos also have a chance to be featured in our monthly newsletter, or even win a prize from one of our yearly contests!

Your posts help future volunteers decide which program is perfect for them, and what to expect.

Now's also the perfect time to subscribe to our YouTube channel, and find all sorts of helpful tips such as how to fill out your Cuba visa form, what to expect from a public restroom abroad, packing and hacks, and more!

**Have a blog or channel?** You can e-mail us your website or channel, and we'll share your Globe Aware experiences!

**\*Have large files and are unsure of how to send them?** We suggest WeTransfer.com (a free filesharing website). Another option is inviting us to your Dropbox folder or sharing your Google Photo Album.

If you have questions, links, or content, e-mail our Social Media Manager, [sikha@globeaware.com](mailto:sikha@globeaware.com).