

Himalaya Backpacking - Adult Travel and Logistics

Welcome to NOLS! We look forward to meeting you at the start of your course and hope the following information will help you get here with a minimum of difficulty and expense. This document also shares some information on how to minimize the risk of illness while you travel.

Course Start

Day 1	On your course start date meet at 10 AM at Delhi International Airport and travel by bus to NOLS IN campus for 9 hours.
Meeting time	10:00 am on day one at Delhi Airport Arrival Lounge

Flight Destination

Airport	Fly into New Delhi, India (DEL)
Date	By 10:00 am on the first day of the course (or the night before)

Flight Return

Airport	Fly from New Delhi (DEL)
Date	The day after the course end date

Ground Transportation

From New Delhi airport to NOLS at the start of the course	NOLS will provide
From NOLS to New Delhi after the course	NOLS will provide

Accommodation

Before Course	You arrange
After Course	NOLS will provide for the last night of the course in Delhi

Questions?

After reviewing the following information, if you have questions regarding your trip preparations please contact us. Students often find their questions can be answered quickly and thoroughly by speaking with our staff who have experience in India.

Ravi Kumar: NOLS India Program Director

ravi_kumar@nols.edu

Cell: +91-9410159900 Office: +91-5966 221428

NOLS India Program Supervisor

india@nols.edu

Cell: +91 9411136657 Office: +91-5966 297657

Prepare to Travel to Your Course

(Further details following)

1. **Submit your health form on your [Dashboard](#) as soon as possible. Once NOLS clears it, you can start booking travel.**
2. Book your travel.
3. Complete and submit the Travel and Logistics form on your [Dashboard](#)
4. Consider Tuition Protection coverage (see [Dashboard](#), highly recommended)
5. Check that your medical insurance coverage will be adequate for your travels
6. For International Travel:
 - a. Check that your passport is valid for the appropriate dates
 - b. Arrange visa and/or parent letter if needed
 - c. Notify your bank/credit card company that you will be traveling internationally

- d. Get cash in local currency
 - e. Prepare for important cultural considerations
 - f. Get inoculations as required
7. Minimizing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 while traveling (follow CDC recommendations [here](#))
- a. Practice physical distancing (6 feet) when possible.
 - b. Wear a mask when indoors or in close contact while out of doors
 - c. Wipe down surfaces with disinfecting wipes before touching
 - d. Practice meticulous hygiene with frequent handwashing and hand sanitizer use
8. **Contact NOLS Admissions:** 800-710-6657 / admissions@nols.edu (Save our contact info so you have it while you travel!)

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The Quick Run-Down

- The course begins on day one at 10 AM at Delhi Airport arrival terminal, and ends in New Delhi, India.
- You are responsible for booking **2 flights**:
 - your individual flight to Delhi International Airport
 - Your individual return flight.
- Please note you can fly any airlines that put you in Delhi on or before 10 AM on the first day of your course.

NOLS will have a staff member meet the course at 10 AM on the first day of your course at the Delhi Airport Arrival Lounge in front of the COSTA COFFEE SHOP Airport Area. The staff member will escort you onwards to the NOLS India campus in Ranikhet by a chartered bus/van.
- The expedition concludes in New Delhi on the course end date.
- You must have a valid passport **and** an “**Indian TOURIST VISA.**”

Prior Preparation Checklist

- ☐ Valid passport for course duration + six months
- ☐ India tourist visa **valid for course duration + any extra days of your stay in India**
- ☐ Travel arrangements/flight ticket to reach Delhi Airport (DEL) on the first day of the course at 10 AM
- ☐ Your individual return flight ticket back home
- ☐ Medical insurance that will cover you while you are in India
- ☐ Recommended inoculations
- ☐ ATM card (Visa & MasterCard). You can withdraw money for expenses; we suggest you have a balance of at least \$300. Don't forget to inform your bank of your international travels
- ☐ Before leaving your home country, please register your travel plan in India with your home country's consulate in New Delhi to enable services in case of emergency. If your home country does not have a consulate in New Delhi, please

register your travel plan with your home country's consulate in India. US citizens can use this link to register: step.state.gov/step

Please do not book your flights until the NOLS Admission Office clears your Health Form.

Travel Arrangements

Additional Information

- If you will be outside the U.S. before the course begins and prefer to meet your course at the Delhi International Airport, please email india@nols.edu to make detailed arrangements. **All students should plan to reach Delhi International Airport by 10:00 AM on the first day of the course.**

Course Orientation

Your course begins with an orientation at **10:00 am on your arrival in New Delhi**. NOLS will cover all your meals once you arrive in India. If you would like to arrive the night before, you can book your hotel room for that night at [The Legend Inn](#) E4, East of Kailash, New Delhi.

We encourage you to stay abreast of current travel information via the U.S. State Department website.

travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country/india.html

If Delayed

If your arrival to Delhi is delayed and you are not able to make the meet-up at the Delhi Airport on the first day of the course at 10 AM.

1. Rebook for the next available flight.
2. Then, contact NOLS India to let us know of your new plans: india@nols.edu
Cell: +91 9410159900 (WhatsApp, Facetime)

Passport

You will need a valid passport for the duration of your stay in India PLUS six months. If you have a passport, check the expiration date. Passports are generally valid for a period of ten years from the issue date.

If you do not have a passport please apply for one now. For your first passport, you must complete Form DSP-11, Passport Application, available at passport agencies,

federal, state, and county courts, and some U.S. Post Offices. Ask where you will need to personally present your application. You will be required to provide two forms of positive identification of U.S. citizenship, including:

1. **Certified** copy of your birth certificate.
2. Current driver's license (with photo.)
3. Two (2) passport-size photographs

Regulation passport photographs are required at various stages of preparation for the course. These can be purchased inexpensively once at NOLS India. Please bring **three** photocopies of the information page of your passport and Indian Tourist Visa kept with your passport for later use.

If you haven't done so already, please submit your passport and visa information on your NOLS Dashboard. NOLS India will contact you prior to the course start to verify these details.

Your Trip Abroad, a publication compiled by the US Bureau of Consular Affairs, may be especially helpful. This publication may be available at a local travel agency. It is also available through the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. Request Department of State Publication 8872.

For current information, American citizens can reference the U.S. State Department's website at: travel.state.gov

Tourist Visa

As of this writing, **international travelers entering India are required to have a visa.**

Option 1: Apply on your own

Please use the following link to apply for One year or 5 years e tourist visa

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

***Please choose the 30-day visa option that will work for the NOLS course and once in India you cannot extend the visa.**

Option 2: Apply with a third-party service - The Indian consulate suggests VFS Global apply for an Indian Visa.

To obtain a tourist visa, log onto this website and follow the instructions:

<http://www.in.vsf.us/visa>. As of June 21, 2019, the Indian Embassy and Indian Consulate Generals within the U.S. have outsourced the visa collection and delivery process to VSF Global Services (VSF).

Option 3:

You may also choose to use a third-party service, such as TraVisa. This is a paid service that does not guarantee a faster-processed visa. Essentially, you pay an additional fee to have someone else communicate with VSF. This is convenient for individuals who may have limited time to handle this process. The visa requirements remain the same. Go to the TraVisa website for more information:

<https://india.travisa.com/>.

Filling Out the Visa Application

The visa application will ask for the type of visa requested and the duration; **state that you would like a 1 or 5-year TOURIST visa**. These tourist visas are valid for 1 or 5 years from the date of issue. Each visit will be valid for 90 days.

Indian Tourist Visa Requirements for U.S. Citizens (Always check the website for the most up-to-date list):

1. A signed passport that is **valid for 6 months beyond the intended stay in India**, with at least two empty pages available for the visa stamp.
2. Two copies of the Indian Visa application, signed by the above passport holder.
Note: Signatures are needed under your required photo as well as on the bottom of page two.
3. A passport-type photo is needed. Check the website for specifics.
4. Proof of Residential Address; this must match the address used on the Indian Visa application.
5. "India Particulars Form"

Very important: Please note that irrespective of the duration of your visa, foreigners are only allowed to stay a maximum of 6 months per visit. Ensure that your visa is valid through the last day of your course plus any extra days that you will be staying in India. ***It is not possible to extend a visa while in India.***

The visa application asks for "object of journey"; state that you will be traveling in the state of Uttarakhand, *not that you are a student*. NOLS differs from a traditional school and is not recognized by Indian travel authorities as a school.

The visa application will require the name and address of one reference in India. Please use either the name of our transportation service company manager or our NOLS India Program Director:

Ravi Kumar

NOLS India

Vania Heritage Cottage, Mall Road

Ranikhet 263645

District: Almora

Uttarakhand, India

Telephone: 91-5966-297428 (+91 is the country code, 5966 is the city code)

Indian Embassy and Indian Consulates Located in the U.S.

There is a [VSF](#) Application Center in every city that currently has an Indian Embassy or India Consulate General.

Embassy of India/Consular Wing

2536 Mass. Ave NW

Washington DC 20008

(202) 939-9806 / Fax (202) 387-6946

indianembassy.org

Jurisdiction: DE, KY, MD, NC, VA, WV, DC, Bermuda

Consulate General of India, New York

3 East 64th St

New York NY 10065

(212) 774-0600 / Fax (212) 861-3788

www.indiainnewyork.gov.in

Jurisdiction: CT, ME, MA, NH, NJ, NY, OH, PA, RI, VT

Consulate General of India, San Francisco

540 Arguello Blvd

San Francisco CA 94118

(415) 668-0662, (415) 688-0683 / Fax (415) 668-9764, (415) 688-2073

www.cgisf.org

Jurisdiction: AK, AZ, CA, HI, ID, MT, NV, OR, UT, WA, WY, Guam

Consulate General of India, Chicago

455 N. Cityfront Plaza Dr

NBC Tower Bldg, Suite #850

Chicago IL 60611

(312) 595-0405, (312) 595- 0409

www.cgichicago.gov.in

Jurisdiction: IL, IN, IA, MI, MN, MO, ND, SD, WI

Consulate General of India, Houston

4300 Scotland Street

Houston TX 77007

(713) 626-2148, (713) 626-2149

cgihouston.gov.in

Jurisdiction: AR, FL, GA, KS, LA, NM, CO, OK, TX, NE

Consulate General of India, Atlanta

5549 Glenridge Dr NE

Atlanta, GA 30342

(404) 963-5902

www.indianconsulateatlanta.org

Jurisdiction: AL, FL, GA, MS, SC, TN, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands

Meeting Time and Location

Your course begins with an orientation at **10 AM on the first day of the course Delhi Airport Area**.

Note: If traveling from outside of North America, a direct flight to New Delhi is encouraged.

The First Few Days

Your course will begin at Delhi airport on your first day. Once you arrive at the New Delhi Airport on Day 1, you will transfer to a chartered bus and drive 9 hours to the NOLS India campus in Ranikhet. Two days will be spent here acclimatizing, organizing the gear you'll need, packing rations for the course, learning some basic Hindi, and making a visit to the local market.

At the NOLS India campus, you will have access to an international long-distance telephone service. Unfortunately, due to the remote location, Internet access cannot be guaranteed. Please plan on being "unplugged" for the duration of your course.

End of Course

You will return to the NOLS India campus in the town of Ranikhet for the last nights of your course. Your first evening will be busy with cleaning and storing equipment. The next day will be spent de-issuing personal gear and packing personal bags. The same afternoon, you will travel to the railhead town of Kathgodam, 3 hours by Jeep, and a train ride of 5 hours (in air-conditioned sitting coaches) to New Delhi.

This is the last day of the course. NOLS India will provide you with hotel accommodation for this night. If you plan to fly out early the next morning, NOLS India will provide you with transportation to the airport.

Note on booking end-of-course travel: International flights typically leave New Delhi around midnight. You will get to New Delhi only by 10:00 pm on the last day of your course. Please make sure to book your flight at least a few hours past midnight. Better still, planning an additional day after the course will help you in case the train coming into New Delhi gets delayed. Please note that you must be at the airport three hours before your international flight departure time.

Travel After the Course

Previous students have enjoyed staying a few extra days in India to travel to Agra and see the Taj Mahal. You may want to consider this when making travel arrangements. Many enjoy traveling with the friends they have made during their NOLS expedition, creating travel plans, and using their new knowledge of India and Hindi to get around. It is very easy to put together travel plans once in India, so we do not recommend making these arrangements while in the U.S. Please note that students are on their own after the hotel check-in in New Delhi or, for those departing that night, after NOLS India drops students off at the airport for their flight back to the U.S. NOLS does not provide supervision on any activity after the course ends.

Frequently, students have arranged for post-course travel with Mr. Pawan Sharma, who provides all bus transportation services for NOLS India courses. Visit his website to see some of the packages offered by his company Vandana Air Travels and his contact information below:

Pawan Sharma

Vandana Air Travels Pvt Ltd

204, Thapar House, Commercial Complex,

Gulmohar Enclave, New Delhi 110049

Phone: 011-49054905, Mobile: +919818223290

Email – tour1@vandanaairtravels.com

These arrangements are best done after your course, by which time you will have figured out your travel plans. Students are under no obligation to take the trip with Mr. Singh. If one were to shop around in downtown New Delhi, it is certainly possible to find cheaper travel agents. Traveling by train is a cheaper option as well.

Luggage

While in India, for the duration of the course, you may store your personal belongings at the NOLS India campus in Ranikhet.

Airport Customs

You will be traveling through customs. Each student may be required by customs officials to declare the contents and value of their personal luggage. You may subsequently be asked to show the resulting document at customs control points in India. No duties are charged on clothing, personal effects, cameras, binoculars and other items that a tourist normally carries.

Appearance

As an expedition to a foreign country, we should recognize the social customs present and act accordingly as respectful guests. A neat, clean-cut appearance is suggested throughout your stay in India. Be thoughtful about what you bring into the country.

- Avoid the “rugged youth” look, such as old, worn-out clothing
- Avoid form-fitting clothing.
- Choose upper body layers that avoid skin shown – it will help you with sun protection while also being culturally sensitive to the people around you. T-shirts are OK but avoid tank tops.
- Culturally, shorts are not well regarded and should be avoided. Alternatively, choose to bring along a sarong, capris, or skirts that are either mid or full length for both field and in-town use.
- Do not bring army surplus clothing that resembles military fashion.
- T-shirts with political or sexual commentary are not appropriate.

Consider carrying an extra set of clothes (pair of pants/long skirts, a shirt, and a pair of sandals) for airline travel, your time in New Delhi, and your time at the campus. It will be hot in New Delhi, so consider light-colored clothing.

Travel, Health and Medical Information

International travel poses special health considerations. NOLS strongly advises that all students traveling to international courses carefully consider what vaccinations or inoculations are required, recommended or suggested for their specific travel itinerary:

- Consider what countries you are traveling through both to and from your course.
- Read the NOLS course description for information on where your group will be traveling within the country. Most NOLS courses do not follow the usual tourist itineraries.

- **Consult with a physician, travel medicine specialist or other health care professional.**

To guard against infection while traveling in a foreign country **routine immunizations should be current**. These include tetanus and diphtheria, measles, mumps and rubella, and polio. A series of inoculations can take months; we suggest you begin early.

Regulations and recommendations can change. NOLS suggests some specific inoculations based on information from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, through consultation with health officials in the specific region of the countries where courses are conducted and through our experience in the specific country. The final decision about which inoculations you receive is your responsibility. There are many sources of information and some of the information is contradictory.

In addition to consulting with your healthcare provider the following organizations provide useful information:

- U.S. Centers for Disease Control either via the CDC International Travelers Hotline (404-332-4559) or their website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/index.htm>.
- International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IMAT) 417 Center St., Lewiston, NY 14092, 716-754-4883.
- Shorelands Travel Health Online <http://www.tripprep.com>

The inoculations you receive should be recorded in the official document, International Certificate of Vaccination, available from the U.S. Public Health Service or from your doctor. This is also a good place to record your prescriptions, eyeglass needs, medical problems such as allergies, and any other information of a medical nature. Please record your blood type on the front page of this booklet.

Inoculations for India

At this time, there are no inoculations required by the United States or India for entry or re-entry. The CDC recommends the following vaccines (as appropriate for age):

- Hepatitis A or immune globulin (IG.)
- Hepatitis B if you might be exposed to blood (for example, health-care workers), have sexual contact with the local population, stay longer than 6 months, or be exposed through medical treatment.
- Japanese encephalitis, if you plan to visit rural areas during the rainy season or stay longer than 4 weeks. (NOLS course area is not affected by Japanese encephalitis; if you are planning to travel after the course, only then suggest getting this vaccine.)

- Rabies, if you might be exposed to wild or domestic animals through your work or recreation. You will come across dogs while passing through villages; most dogs are not vaccinated. We have had one dog bite in 30 years of our operations, so make an informed decision.
- Typhoid, particularly if you plan to visit rural areas or stay longer than 6 weeks. (Suggest getting this vaccine if you are planning to travel after the course.)
- As needed, booster doses for tetanus-diphtheria and measles, and a one-time dose of polio for adults. Hepatitis B vaccine is now recommended for all infants and for children ages 11–12 years who did not receive the series as infants.

Malaria

As in equatorial regions around the world, malaria exists in India. Malaria is caused by a parasite that is transmitted by infected mosquitoes, found in areas below 6,500 ft. (2,000 meters). While the NOLS India course areas are not malaria-prone, it would be safer to carry a week's duration of Malaria medication for the transitions through and back to New Delhi. You and your physician should choose a drug regimen for malaria prophylaxis. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) also has a Malaria Hotline (404) 332-4555.

Traveler's Diarrhea

Diarrhea is by far the most frequent health problem of travelers to India. Diarrhea is caused by a variety of infectious agents; the spectrum of clinical illness varies considerably. This illness is usually not severe, and complete recovery often occurs in the absence of treatment.

On NOLS courses, we treat our drinking water and we are careful of what we eat and your instructors will provide guidance on staying healthy. If a significant problem with diarrhea does occur during the course, the instructors carry additional medication to treat the condition in the field or, if needed, the student may be evacuated so the school's Indian physician can provide treatment and monitor the individual carefully.

You should carry personal medicines only if you intend to travel after the course ends. Your instructors will be carrying a comprehensive drug kit that includes prescription medicines for most illnesses that you may encounter in the field. **Unless your NOLS Health Form states that you are taking a prescription medication, you will not be permitted to carry personal medicines on the course.**

Communication

While you are at the NOLS India campus you can be reached at +91 5966 297428 for emergency contact only. Since there is little free time on issue day, any personal

business should be attended to before the course meeting time. You will have access to an international long-distance telephone service at the NOLS India campus.

If you wish to receive mail on the last day of the course, have it sent airmail at least 14 days in advance to:

Mail by USPS and FedEx
Your Name & Course Code
NOLS INDIA
Vaniya Cottage, Mall Road,
Ranikhet – 263645
INDIA

You will not be able to receive mail at any time during the expedition. Be forewarned that packages sent internationally will incur customs duty. We will make every effort to get mail to students, but there is no guarantee.

Once the expedition begins, do not plan to make or receive any phone calls until back in Ranikhet at the end of your course. If someone needs to contact you with a true emergency message, they should contact our world headquarters in Lander, Wyoming at 800-710-NOLS. There is no guarantee that they will be able to contact the expedition once the course begins.

Money and Personal Expenses

Students are responsible for personal clothing and equipment, medical services, meals and lodging while en route to India. Once the course starts, NOLS will cover the cost of food on the expedition, transportation within India, and equipment as indicated on the group equipment list.

We recommend that you bring an ATM Card that has a minimum balance of \$300.

Visa and MasterCard are accepted throughout India in many hotels, restaurants and souvenir shops. It is highly advised to inform your local bank of your intended international travel. The currency in India is the rupee. During the last few years, ATMs have been getting popular and can be found at the airport and in most big cities and many small towns. Please note that there is no facility to change money near the NOLS India campus. The only opportunity for this is within the New Delhi airport.

Although thievery is no more prevalent in India than North America, you should consider how you carry your valuables. A lost or stolen passport would create a major hassle. We recommend you purchase a small “traveler’s pouch” with an adjustable cord that allows

it to be worn around your neck and under your clothing for security. These pouches are available at outfitting stores and are a great way to store your passport, money, and documents.

Illegal Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Illegal drugs, alcohol and tobacco are prohibited on NOLS courses. Failure to adhere to this could result in expulsion from your course. While in India or in transit to and from India, you are subject to laws of the land/Indian law. Be aware, their drug regulations are very strict; penalties of 10 years imprisonment are not uncommon. Neither NOLS nor your country's embassy will be responsible for anyone caught with illegal substances.