

## **Answers to Frequently Asked Questions Awakening Women Yogini Winter Ashram, India**

This document will answer some of the most frequently asked questions about traveling to India. We are here to help you prepare for your trip in the most wonderfully relaxed way.

If you have more questions, don't hesitate to email us or post your question in the Yogini India Ashram Facebook group. You can also begin to connect and plan with your sisters on the Facebook group. Some of our team will also be there to answer questions.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/422258891155513/>

Also be sure to read the other documents: the *India Packing List* and *Helpful Tips for Traveling to India*.

### **How do I complete my registration?**

Go to [YoginiWinterAshram.com/payment](http://YoginiWinterAshram.com/payment) (password: yogini) to complete your registration by **January 1, 2021**. (if we do not receive your payment in full by then, you might lose your seat and reservation).

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### **What is the cancellation policy?**

Deposits are submitted only after your application has been reviewed and you receive an acceptance letter. Once you pay your deposit, it is binding and subject to the terms below:

*Payments are fully refundable minus a \$108 administrative fee through June 1, 2020. In case of cancellation between June 2 and August 31, 2020 we will keep 50% of your deposit as an administrative fee. In case of cancellation between September 1, 2020 and January 1, 2021 we will keep 100% of your deposit. Any remaining payments need to be received by January 1, 2021, at the latest, or you will lose your place and the deposit.*

We are not responsible for any changes in the exchange rates throughout the year.

After January 1, 2021 there will be no refunds.

**Awakening Women Institute (AWI) is financially responsible for the retreat so we ask you kindly to respect that we cannot make any exceptions to this agreement.**

If we need to cancel the retreat for any reason, we will refund you 100% of your payments you made to AWI. We are not responsible for the cost of travel and will not cover any of these costs. We recommend that you have insurance for your travel costs.

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### **Can I reserve a single room for the retreat?**

If you are interested in staying in a single room during the retreat, contact Karen and she will confirm whether or not there is space available. Once your single room is confirmed, you can add the following amount to your registration total for a single room and pay by following the instructions on [www.yoginiwinterashram.com/payment](http://www.yoginiwinterashram.com/payment)(password: yogini).

Into the Heart of Durga ~ add \$400

Yogini Initiation Retreat ~ add \$500

The Full 21 Day Ashram ~ add \$900

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### **What travel documents will I need to go to India?**

You will need a valid Passport and Visa to travel to India from the US and Europe.

TRIPLE CHECK your expiration dates.

Check the US State Department website for information about travel to India: <http://www.state.gov/travel/>

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### **How do I apply for an Indian visa?**

If you plan to travel to India for 30 days or less and are from a qualifying country, you may be eligible to obtain a tourist visa on arrival (VOA). Check the link below to know if you are eligible to apply.

You can apply electronically for a visa on arrival that is valid for 30 days from the date of arrival in India. Apply online 5-34 days before your trip here: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>.

If the Visa on Arrival policy does not apply to you, visit your country's Indian embassy website for instructions on how to obtain a visa. *\*\*Apply far in advance to avoid extra stress\*\**

- It's usually worth paying for an expedited visa and always worth getting the longer, 5 or 10-year tourist visa if it is available in your country
- The visa application will ask you why you are going to India. An example of what to state: "travel and tourism"
- Use the following information for your visa:

Name: Sattva Spa & Wellness Retreat

Address: Mohan Chatti (via Laxman Jhula), P.O. Jogiana, Rishikesh

District: Pauri Garwhal

State: Uttarakhand Pin: 249304

Country: India

Phone: +91-8191055551, +91-8191055553 (Manager Operations)

Email: [info@thesattva.com](mailto:info@thesattva.com)

You may wish to register your travel with the US State Department (or with your country's own embassy) in case of an emergency-

<https://step.state.gov/step/>

If your country's visa application process requires a hotel voucher/invitation letter, contact Karen ([support@yoginiwinterashrma.com](mailto:support@yoginiwinterashrma.com)) and she will arrange one for you.

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## **What are some tips to stay healthy while in India?**

In order to have the most pleasant trip and to avoid getting sick, it is helpful to do some preparation, and travel with care and awareness.

Here is a helpful resource for health tips while traveling in India:

<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/health>

Below are some general tips—we will also send you a packing list once you are registered with more information about recommended medicines.

### **Please contact a health practitioner for specific health advice.**

- Begin taking friendly bacteria (probiotics, such as acidophilus) supplements a month ahead of your trip.
- Begin taking immune strengthening supplements/foods.
- When in India, avoid: meat, uncooked/raw food, drinks that are not in a sealed bottle (boiled drinks are ok), deep fried food, and street food (food sold at street stands).
- Bring antiseptic gel/wipes in your purse, wash your hands often.
- Listen to your intuition and say no to foods/drinks that do not feel 100% safe. You will thank yourself for it later.
- Bring toilet paper with you when you are out.

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### **What vaccinations will I need to take for my trip?**

Deciding what, if any, vaccinations to get is a personal choice and decision. Please consult your medical provider and the US Center for Disease Control and Prevention travel site:

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/india.htm>

Some choose to get all, some, or none of the vaccinations listed.

The malaria risk factor is known to be low if you are only traveling to Delhi and Rishikesh.

Still, it is your responsibility to be aware of any health and safety alerts for the regions you are traveling.

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### **How do I travel from New Delhi to the retreat center?**

From New Delhi, there are several ways you can travel to Sattva Retreat:

- You can fly from New Delhi to Dehradun and take a taxi to Sattva. **This is by far the easiest route and most recommended.**
- If you have traveled in India before and feel comfortable with it, you can take a train from New Delhi to Haridwar or Rishikesh and a taxi from there to Sattva.

- It is also possible to take a taxi from New Delhi directly to Sattva, but this route is arduous and not at all recommended, especially if you have never been to India before.

To reserve flight or train tickets, we recommend [www.makemytrip.com](http://www.makemytrip.com).

Round-trip flights from New Delhi to Dehradun cost about **100 dollars/euro**.

Train tickets from New Delhi to Dehradun cost about **3-30** dollars/euro depending on which class you take. We recommend an AC (air-conditioned) class for more comfort.

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### What flights do you recommend to India?

For those in the US, American Airlines offers flights to New Delhi from Chicago, NY, San Francisco and LA. And United Airlines also services New Delhi.

FinnAir has a good route from Scandinavia.

For more options, do a web search—[kayak.com](http://kayak.com) is a good travel search engine.

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### What are the towns nearest to Sattva Retreat where I can stay if I extend my trip?

Our retreat at the Sattva Centre is in Mohan Chatti—this is the exact name of the village we will be in (it is a rural farmer's village, so not a place to stay other than during our retreat). **Sattva is approximately 30 minutes by taxi from Laxman Jhula, the nearest town.**

If you arrive some days before the retreat, you may want to stay in **Laxman Jhula, a small town just near the larger town of Rishikesh**. This is where most of the yoginis will be, and where ShantiMayi has satsang.

Walking distance from Laxman Jhula is Ram Jhula, where there are more ashrams, Indian shops, and evening Aarti—but Laxman Jhula tends to be the main traveler's town where foreigners stay.

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## **How can I be sure I am taking a safe taxi from the New Delhi airport to my hotel?**

If you will stay in New Delhi, prepaid taxis are easy and safe to arrange from the airport. There is a booth at the curb once you exit the airport where you can arrange a taxi to your destination.

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## **How do I change terminals at the New Delhi Airport to catch my connecting flight to Dehradun?**

There are two terminals at the New Delhi Airport. For those of you flying directly to Dehradun, please take note of your domestic airline, as you may need to change terminals from your international to domestic flight, depending on the domestic airline.

### **If you fly with Air India:**

When you arrive, go through customs, but do not leave the airport building. Just turn right and you will see a sign for domestic transfer. You will leave from the second floor.

### **If you fly with SpiceJet or IndiGo:**

You will have to take a shuttle to another terminal: 1D.

Go outside the building look for column number 10 to the right, and there you see some people sitting at a counter. They will ask to see your ticket, and then they will give you a free ticket to the shuttle bus, and you will go to the other terminal. This whole process takes around 30 minutes. When you arrive at the terminal 1D you will find the entrance to the left.

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## **Can I stay at the Sattva Centre before and after the retreat?**

No, you may only stay at Sattva Centre for the retreat. We ask that if you arrive in Rishikesh earlier that you stay in Laxman Jhula before that. This way, we have time to prepare for your arrival, as the atmosphere of the center will be different from the ashram setting we create together once the retreat begins. There are other guests staying at the Sattva at that time and the team will be occupied with preparations for the retreat. Before and after our retreat, the price of lodging at Sattva is significantly higher, as we have a special agreement with them for lodging during the duration of the retreat.

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## Where can I stay before and after the retreat?

We recommend that yoginis stay in one of these two hotels in Laxman Jhula, both because they have been reliable, safe and clean, and also because the chance for yoginis to stay together and create a yogini house is precious.

**Divine Ganga Cottages.** Close to Ramana's Garden where you can get wonderful safe organic food. Safe and friendly place to stay, though a twisty narrow walk there that is probably best not to walk to alone at night (with other yoginis you will be fine). (This is the nicer, more expensive place to stay of the two options.)

<http://www.divinegangacottage.com/>

**Vedic Yoga Centre Guest House.** Nice, simple quiet rooms for around 1200 rupees/night (less if you share a double room). Close to the Laxman Jhula bridge and Ganges River, but still quiet. There is a kitchen and yoga room available for use. (This is the simpler, less expensive place to stay of the two options.)

Please note that Vedic Yoga is not very reliable with confirming reservations and takes time to respond. So we recommend this center for those already familiar with India. If you want to go with this option, be both patient and persistent with your reservation.

[www.vedicyogacentre.org](http://www.vedicyogacentre.org), Phone: +91-87551-96191 OR +91 97609-32106

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## Where can I stay in New Delhi?

For a comprehensive list of hotels in New Delhi, go here:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/delhi/hotels>

**Radisson Blu** – Close to the airport in New Delhi:

<http://www.radissonblu.com/hotel-newdelhi>

**Classic Diplomat Hotel** – 15 minutes from the airport, offers a shuttle service: <http://www.classichotelsindia.com/diplomat-mahipalpur-new-delhi/>

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## Do you recommend any travel agencies for my travel questions?

**La Vida Travels** – Dominique’s friend Srishati (pronounced “shreeshtee”) owns a travel agency based in Delhi that can help you arrange hotels, train or airline tickets, and trips around India. Tell them you are a friend of Dominique’s and ask to talk to Srishati—she is a sweetheart.

<http://lavidatravels.com/>

**Vijay Sharma – shivgangapriya@yahoo.com** There is a small travel agency run by Vijay Sharma close to ShantiMayi’s ashram. He is also connected to ShantiMayi and can offer any help needed in finding a room or booking a taxi.

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### **How much money should I bring to India and in what form?**

Bring your credit/debit card, cash in US dollars or EUR, NOT TRAVELERS CHECKS.

Credit cards are accepted at many shops in Rishikesh and there are ATM machines also accessible. Just be sure to alert your banks and credit card companies that you will be traveling to India.

A good rule of thumb is to bring approx. \$100/week—unless you are planning on buying souvenirs and staying in more western standard/higher end hotels.

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### **Where can I exchange money in India?**

There are ATMs and money exchange offices all over India, and several in Laxman Jhula, the town nearest the retreat center. You can exchange money at the airport but the exchange rate is poorest there, so it is best to only exchange what you need for your immediate needs (taxi ride plus hotel and food). You can exchange most of your money once you are in Delhi or Rishikesh/Laxman Jhula; the exchange rates are much better there.

Check the exchange rate at <http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

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### **What do I need to know about bringing electronics to India?**

If you are traveling with any type of electronic that will need to be charged (i.e. iPod, iPad, camera, phone), you will need a travel converter for your

chargers (DO NOT BRING hair dryers or curling/flat irons). Electronic stores or any travel store should have the converter needed.

If you absolutely must travel with your phone, check with your wireless provider regarding international charges. To use wi-fi and avoid roaming charges, set the phone to "airplane mode" on the flight to India and keep in that mode until you land home.

Wireless internet is available in some spots in Rishikesh (including at the hotel) and there are many internet cafes.

Indian phones can also be purchased pretty inexpensively to make phone calls to other Indian phone numbers and to the US and other international phone numbers at a decent rate.

Keep necessary and emergency phone numbers with you and give family and loved ones the hotel contact information noted above.

**During the retreat there will be at least several days of silent retreat; this also includes no internet or phone use.**

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### **Will there be laundry service at the Sattva Centre?**

There will likely be no laundry service available at Sattva, so be prepared to hand wash and line dry your own clothing. A bucket will be available, and bring your own laundry soap and clothing line/clothes pins (you can easily purchase these in Laxman Jhula). Note that if there is a storm, there may be some days where you will be unable to do laundry and/or laundry service will be delayed (this is a great practice for patience and flexibility), so it is wise to have a few extra outfits with you and be sure that you arrive at Sattva with your clothes already clean.

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### **What shops are available in the area?**

In Laxman Jhula, you will find plenty of shops where you can purchase cushions, shawls, clothing, tea, snacks and other supplies for the retreat or souvenirs.

There are also a couple organic grocery stores in the Tapovan area where you will be able to find plenty of healthy snacks, natural toiletries and laundry soap for washing clothes.

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### **Are there vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free or dairy-free meal options available at Sattva Centre?**

Sattva Centre will serve simple, sattvic, all-vegetarian meals during our retreat. Sometimes we are able to request gluten-free and dairy-free options, but if you have food restrictions other than vegetarianism, please be sure to bring plenty of snacks and food supplements with you to the retreat center.

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### **I do not have a regular yoga practice. Will I be able to do all the yoga sessions?**

This is not primarily a yoga retreat, although we do have yoga asana sessions. These sessions are suitable for students of all levels.