# Visa policy of India

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Visitors to **India** must obtain a visa from one of the Indian diplomatic missions unless they come from one of the visa-exempt countries or countries whose citizens may obtain a visa online.<sup>[1]</sup>

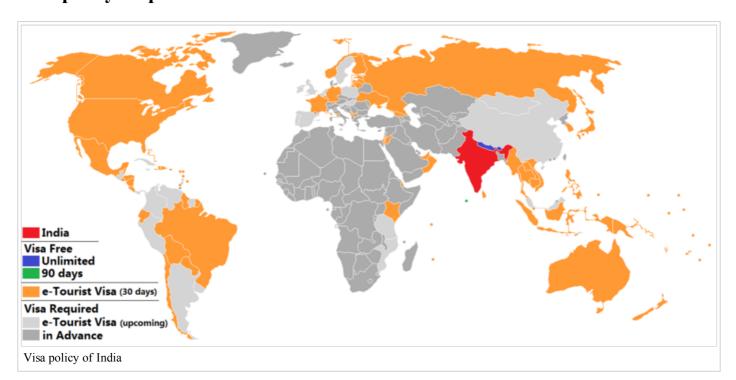
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Entry and exit passport stamps issued to a citizen of Germany at New Delhi airport.

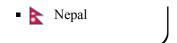
### Visa policy map



## Visa-free entry

Citizens of the following countries do not require visas to enter India (unless arriving from mainland China), and may remain in the country without any limit of stay (unless otherwise noted):<sup>[1]</sup>

- Bhutan
- Maldives (90 days)



Travelers possessing an Overseas Citizen of India document or a Persons of Indian Origin Card are also exempt from visa obligations. Citizens of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China (Mainland), Nepal, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka are generally not entitled to hold a PIO card or Overseas Citizenship.

In March 2015 Indian Government announced a 3-month visa exemption for the citizens of Seychelles.<sup>[2]</sup>

#### e-Tourist Visa

On 27 November 2014 the Electronic Travel Authorisation facility became operational for citizens of over 40 eligible countries, including those who are eligible for visa on arrival. ETA is issued for tourism, visiting friends and family, short duration medical treatment and business visits. The scheme was renamed to e-Tourist Visa (eTV) on 15 April 2015 to avoid confusion.<sup>[3]</sup>

The application for e-Tourist Visa must be made minimum 4 days in advance of the date of arrival. Visa is valid for 30 days from the date of arrival and can be obtained twice in a calendar year. eTV is issued for a non-refundable fee of USD 60 plus bank fees.<sup>[4]</sup>

e-Tourist Visa allows arrival at the following 9 airports:<sup>[5]</sup>

- Bengaluru
- Chennai
- Delhi
- Goa
- Kochi
- Kolkata
- Mumbai
- Hyderabad
- Thiruvananthapuram

Citizens of the following 76 countries and territories who hold ordinary passports are eligible to obtain the e-Tourist Visa (unless they are of Pakistani origin):<sup>[6]</sup>





#### **Upcoming Extension**

The facility was planned to be extended to citizens of the following 31 countries (unless they are of Pakistani origin) on 15 June 2015. [8][9] As of June 30, the announced changes have not yet been implemented. On June 30 the Government announced that the plan will be implemented "soon". [10]



China: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on May 15 2015 announced an upcoming extension of the e-Tourist Visa facility for tourists from China. [11]

The facility was also planned to be expanded to 7 new airports — Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Gaya, Jaipur, Lucknow, Tiruchi and Varanasi. [12] This also has not yet been implemented.

## Visa on arrival (phased out)

Until 26 January 2015 citizens of the following countries holding ordinary passports were granted visa on arrival (unless they are of Bangladeshi or Pakistani origin) without ETA for a single stay up to 30 days in India when travelling as tourist or visiting family or friends without obtaining an ETA:<sup>[1][13][14]</sup>



#### Reform

In October 2013, India decided to initiate the process of extending visa-on-arrival access to 40 more nations. <sup>[15]</sup> In January 2014, plans were confirmed by Planning Minister of India. <sup>[16]</sup> The sixteen different types of visa would also be reduced to three: work, business and tourism. <sup>[17]</sup> The proposal initially met resistance from intelligence agencies and the possible problem of queues emerged. In February 2014 it was announced that Indian intelligence agencies have given their approval to visa-on-arrival for up to 180 countries, largely due to the new possibilities provided by the Immigration, Visa and Foreigners' Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) system. The system would not be a typical visa on arrival in order to avoid clutter at the airports, but a system based on a prior online applications modelled after Australian Electronic Travel Authority system. <sup>[18]</sup>[19][20]

On 5 February 2014 it was decided to introduce visa-on-arrival to tourists from 180 countries. Technical implementation, such as setting up the website for applications, is expected to take about 6 months and the authorities hope to have it in place for the tourist season beginning in October 2014. Prospective visitors will have to pay a fee and the electronic version of the visa should be granted within three days. The program is expected to apply to all international airports. However, nationals of Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan are to be excluded from this program. [21]

In July 2014 it was announced that India hopes to implement the program for citizens of 40 countries in the first phase by December 2014 and later on for 109 additional countries if the first phase is implemented successfully.<sup>[22]</sup>

In August 2014 it was revealed that ministries of tourism, home affairs and external affairs cannot agree on the list of countries for the ETA. Ministry of tourism proposed to allow the new system for the citizens of the 15 countries with the most visitors to India, Ministry of external affairs proposed to create a balanced list with some Asian and African countries while the Ministry of home affairs proposed to exclude all countries with high security concerns.<sup>[23]</sup>

In September 2014 Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the United States would be added to the list of countries whose citizens may obtain a visa on arrival. [24] However in October 2014 the planned introduction of the new e-Visa system was pushed from 2 October 2014 to June 2015. [25] It was also revealed that the list of visa on arrival countries is unlikely to be expanded in 2014. [26]

In November 2014 it was announced that the e-visa system might be rolled out for about 25 countries including the 13 countries which are currently eligible for visa on arrival. [27] Later that month it was announced that 28 countries would become eligible for electronic visa on 27 November 2014 and that the list would include visa on arrival eligible countries as well as Brazil, Germany, Israel, Jordan, Mauritius, Norway, Palestine, Russia, Thailand, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United States. [28][29]

In November 2014, Indian Prime Minister announced visa on arrival facility for nationals of all Pacific countries and Australia. [30][31]

The manual processing of the visa on arrival was discontinued in January 2015. [32]

In February 2015, the Ministry of Tourism proposed extending the facility to citizens of China, United Kingdom, Spain, France, Italy and Malaysia. Subsequently the Minister of Finance announced that the facility will be extended, in stages, to citizens of 150 countries. In March 2015 it was announced that 53 nations were shortlisted for the second round of expansion of the system based on the number of tourist arrivals in the previous years.

After the Government was criticized for naming the new policy "Visa on arrival" it decided to rename it to "e-Tourist Visa (eTV)" in April 2015. [36][37]

The e-Tourist Visa facility was extended to 31 new countries on 1 May 2015. [38]

In May 2015, Indian Foreign Ministry announces that Chinese citizens will be able to apply for e-Tourist Visa facility in order to coordinate Prime Minister Narendra Modi visiting China between May 14 and 16. Disputes about Sino-Indian border and national security will be postponed.<sup>[39]</sup>

## Costs for visa applications

Visa applications can be submitted in person or sent by post to an Indian consulate. It can also be submitted to designated Visa service provider in certain countries.<sup>[40]</sup> Costs differ per consulate and region. Some visa-handling services charge a small fee on top of it to check that completed application form meets all requirements and submit the documents on the applicant's behalf.

Citizens of the following countries do not pay a visa fee — Afghanistan, Argentina, Bangladesh, DPR Korea, Jamaica, Maldives, Mauritius, Mongolia, Nepal, South Africa and Uruguay.<sup>[41]</sup>

#### **Restricted and Protected Area Permits**

A Protected Area Permit (PAP) is required to enter the states of Nagaland and Sikkim and some parts of the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. A Restricted Area Permit (RAP) is required to enter the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and parts of Sikkim. Some of these requirements are

occasionally lifted for a year at a time. Permits are not required for nationals of Bhutan travelling by air to/from Thimphu via Bagdogra and for nationals of Nepal travelling by air to/from Kathmandu (if travelling by land a pass issued by either the Foreigners Regional Registration Office, Superintendent of police or the diplomatic representation of India in Bhutan or Nepal is required).<sup>[1]</sup> Special permits are needed to enter Lakshadweep Islands. Maldivian citizens are allowed to visit Minicoy island for fifteen days if allowed by the High Commissioner of India to the Maldives.

## Pakistani Passport Holders and Persons of Pakistani Origin

As of March 21, 2013, Pakistani citizens over the age of 65 with the sole objective of meetings friends or family are granted at 45 day visa upon arrival at the Attari-Wagah Checkpoint, so long as the applicant provides sponsor letters from their contacts in India. [42] This scheme does not apply for those who wish to visit Punjab, Kerala, and Restricted Areas, nor does it apply to those who have ever been denied an Indian visa before. [43] Persons who ever held Pakistani citizenship, or who have a parent or spouse that held Pakistani citizenship are ineligible for India's new E-Visa scheme, and so must apply to their local Indian mission for visas. Applicants who once held Pakistani citizenship require lengthy processing times, while foreign spouses and those of Pakistani origin who never held Pakistani citizenship typically experience shorter processing times. [44] India also forbids Pakistani applicants with dual-nationality from applying on their non-Pakistani passport. [45]

## Diplomatic or official passports

Holders of diplomatic or official passports of the following countries do not require a visa for India — Argentina, Bangladesh, Belarus, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cambodia, Chile, Croatia, Ecuador, Denmark, Colombia, Cyprus, Egypt, El Salvador, Guyana, Honduras, Hungary, Indonesia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Namibia, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Russia, Serbia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uruguay, Venezuela and Vietnam and diplomatic passports only of the following countries — Armenia, France, Germany, Greece, Japan, Lithuania, Macedonia, Malta, Norway, Romania, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Ukraine.

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### See also

- Tourism in India
- Visa requirements for Indian citizens

#### **External links**

■ Indian Visa Online (https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/), Government of India

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