



## **Ayurveda Health & Healing Retreat in India with Jaisri M. Lambert**

**Panchakarma (PK) Healing Program for Your Optimum Physical & Spiritual Health**

**[www.ayurveda-seminars.com](http://www.ayurveda-seminars.com) [www.sacredearthjourneys.com](http://www.sacredearthjourneys.com)**

**December 1, 2017 – January 17 2018 – 41-day program option**

**(treatment days: Dec. 4, 2017 – Jan. 13, 2018)**

**December 1, 2017 – January 5, 2018 – 29-day program option (Group 1)**

**(treatment days: Dec. 4, 2017 – Jan. 1, 2018)**

**December 14, 2017 – January 18, 2018 – 29-day program option (Group 2)**

**(treatment days: Dec. 17, 2017 – Jan. 14, 2018)**

***This program has been confirmed for a third year to travel to India for authentic panchakarma treatments, following our last two years' groups' phenomenally successful health results, for much less than the cost of treatments outside India. Please note the three program options. Your spot awaits you. Spots are likely to fill quickly this year!***

*“Ultimately, India is going to be exactly what you make of it. It's a journey that's impossible to define because it's so different for everyone. But there's one thing for sure – no matter where you go or what you do, it's a place you will never forget.” – Lonely Planet*

India is steeped in antiquity. Some traditions existing today arose from ways of life that existed before recorded history. India has absorbed diverse cultures and influences from the people who have occupied it over the centuries and made them their own. These are the contrasts that India embraces. India is patient and timeless and you can see it in the eyes of every Indian. India has evolved over thousands of years and her roots are very deep. Today's youthful India is exuberant, hopeful and committed to its valued heritage.

Modern India bears witness to a fortitude and deep spirituality that pervades every part of life. It can also be a place of great challenge, especially for westerners. The sheer population and apparent generalized chaos alone can be challenging. No doubt, India is modernizing currently,

though ancient ways prevail in the cities and villages alike. Be prepared for varying degrees of sanitation, noise levels and honesty. Open your senses and mind to an encounter that must be experienced to be appreciated.

### **General Information**

Please keep in mind you are traveling to a foreign place, and expect things to be different. Travel with curiosity and imagination. Travel relaxed. Above all, travel respectfully, as you are an honoured guest. Keep flexible and adapt to new situations. Bring your sense of humour, inclusion skills and patience.

### **Documentation**

Your passport must be valid for at least 3 months from the date of your return from India. Keep at least one photocopy of your passport for your own records at home and one with you in your suitcase while traveling. You will require a Tourist Visa for India, which can be obtained from your nearest Indian Consulate office. Visas are usually valid for 6 months from the date of issue, so make sure that your intended stay is not beyond the expiry date on your Visa. See this website for details on consular offices in B.C. and Alberta - <http://www.cgivancouver.org/index.php>

Those traveling from other countries will need to check with their local Indian Embassy or Consulate for details on obtaining a Tourist Visa. Upon arrival in India, proceed to the Immigration and Customs area. At Immigration you will need to show your Indian tourist visa attached in your passport.

### **Airport security**

Airport security is very important and thorough when travelling on international flights. Officers are serious and do not want to joke around. You may be asked questions about the packing of your luggage and the purpose of your trip to visit India. Your bags must be in your control at all times and no stranger can give you anything to take along.

### **Tickets**

It's advised to book the most direct travel from your home to Vaidyagrama, and especially for your return journey. Please consult Jaisri regarding your flight and travel arrangements before booking. Please check your ticketing (or eTicket) as soon as you receive it from your travel agent. Make sure your international ticket has your name spelled exactly as it appears on your passport. You can call the airline for your seat assignments, as well as for any special meals or other requests that you may have. Please make these requests at least 48 hours in advance of departure.

### **Luggage**

1. Before you pack, check the condition of your luggage. Airlines can refuse to accept fragile or damaged pieces. If you have to purchase new bags, choose luggage that is lightweight, roomy and easy to carry, yet durable enough to withstand rough treatment. Choose material that will not snag or rip as it moves along the conveyor belt. We do not suggest locking your bag unless it is a TSA approved lock. Keep the keys on your person or in your hand luggage. A suitcase with four wheels will also help make trips through the airport easier. We suggest you pack lightly so you have room for gifts and purchases for your return. Check airline baggage weight restrictions within India in advance.

2. It's suggested to limit your luggage to one suitcase and a carry-on bag. For domestic flights within India, generally 25 kilos of checked baggage & 7 kilos of hand baggage is allowed. Hand baggage (carry-on) dimensions should not exceed the following: Length – 55 cm, Width – 35 cm, Height - 25 cm. Please check for updated information from your airline as international luggage allowances are subject to change.

3. If your luggage has arrived damaged, or if misplaced, please contact the airline immediately in the baggage claim area for assistance to file a claim. Keep a copy of this claim for your follow-up, and also give a copy to your tour host.

4. Keep your luggage claim tickets in a safe place. You will need them when going through customs.

5. Remove old claim tags to avoid confusing baggage handlers about your destination. Identify your luggage both inside and outside with your name, business address and telephone number. Make sure the outside tag is securely fastened to your luggage. This will help if your luggage is lost or stolen and will save time when you are picking up your bags at the claim area. This will also facilitate getting the luggage to your room at hotels and Vaidyagrama. Please make sure the name tag on your bag is very large, clear and visible on the outside.

6. Include a copy of your itinerary with your home address and destination in your luggage, in the event you and your bags get temporarily separated. This information will help minimize any delay in retrieving lost luggage.

7. Always carry your travel documents, jewellery, ATM/credit cards, money, keys and other valuables in your carry-on luggage or on your person. Items such as these should not be packed in luggage that you plan to check.

8. Items for your carry-on luggage: Please see the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) website for current regulations on carry-on luggage and this link for prohibited items:

<http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/make-your-trip-better-using-3-1-1>

<http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/prohibited-items>

9. A small backpack is a great idea to tote your water, snacks and camera. Security in any foreign land should be a priority at all times. Be prudent and careful with your money, passport, and other valuables. Always use good judgment when leaving your things about. Leaving or misplacing something is far more common than having it stolen, so please be sure that everything is marked with your destination, hotels, address and phone contacts. Each piece of your baggage should be marked with your name ID.

### **Clothing, supplements and other essentials**

1. Pack light and comfortable. Loose fitting clothing that you can wear in layers is best. You may need more clothes at night or in the early morning. Light-weight, modest clothing such as loose pants, cotton kurtas and light cotton or linen shirts are best. A shawl may be needed as a head covering at times.

2. Sandals that can be easily taken off are a good idea to wear at ashrams and temples - you could be taking them off and putting them on several times a day. Note that shoes are taken off to enter any home. Avoid expensive footwear and favor very comfortable fitting sandals, with good support.
3. Good sunglasses, a hat or visor and supportive, comfortable walking shoes are suggested. Several changes of clothing is adequate. Most hotels have inexpensive laundry facilities, as does Vaidyagrama.
4. You may want to bring natural insect repellent such as tea tree oil, and perhaps a small spray bottle of water to spritz yourself.
5. Pack any vitamins, herbs and supplements in the containers in which they came. Keep them, and at least a day's worth of clothing and toiletries (in keeping with the new airline restrictions) in your carry-on baggage.
6. Do not take valuables or jewelry with you. A drawer with lock is provided in each room at Vaidyagrama for your computer, passport, cash, etc. Keep your key safe and secure.
7. An electrical converter or transformer for 220 volts is important for your electrical appliances, such as phone. These are available at most department, electronic and discount stores. They are more expensive in airports and cheapest in India, though quality and timeliness may not match your needs.

## **Health**

1. From your arrival in India, you are advised to drink only well-sealed bottled or well-boiled water from known sources. All food served in restaurants that you will be directed to can be considered safe, but you must use good judgment. Don't eat any salads unless you ask if the vegetables have been washed with purified water. Eat only things that have been cooked well; and, if it doesn't look or taste right, simply don't eat it. Hydrogen peroxide can be packed from home or purchased in India. A few drops can help purify a glass of water for drinking, and can be used for teeth brushing. Water at Vaidyagrama is generally considered reliable.
2. Take along a few packets of crackers, nuts or dates for travel snacks, considering your personalized diet. Avoid mixing fruits and other foods, taking them at least an hour apart.
3. Vaccinations are optional. Check with your federal advisories or local Travel Health Clinic. Golden Seal and Acidophilus (pro-biotics) can be helpful to have on hand for travel, to use as needed. Should you start to feel at all sick, please immediately inform your tour host. Here is the link to Vaidyagrama's comments about vaccinations: <http://www.vaidyagrama.com/immunisation-vaccination.php>. Usually there is no malaria prevalent at Vaidyagrama.
4. If you are a sensitive sleeper, we suggest that you bring earplugs, sleeping mask and/or earphones.

5. We recommend that you take out insurance, not only for medical and baggage insurance, but also to cover you if you have to cancel or interrupt your trip as payments are non-refundable. This is offered to you when you submit your Registration Form for Canadian and American participants, and we are re-emphasizing it again here! For other countries, please contact your travel agent or insurance provider.

6. As with travel in any developing nation, there will always be situations that will test your patience and even the best plans are sometimes interrupted by the unexpected, as part of the overall experience of visiting a foreign land. You always have the choice to be happy, pleasant, and understanding. When traveling with others, please be on time or early, and stay together with your party.

7. Take care to not touch or pet any dogs or cats, because roaming animals can have rabies, fleas, etc.

### **Money**

1. The national currency of India is the rupee. The exchange rate can fluctuate. We suggest you take about \$50 US with you in cash for your arrival, so that you'll have some money to easily exchange into rupees when you get to India. Exchange offices may not be open at night. You can easily exchange more of your money later. Exchange only at airports, major banks or hotels, or with a money changer referred by a reliable guide. Don't change money on the street. Remember to retain the currency exchange receipts after each transaction, as you'll need them for re-exchange on departure.

2. We recommend that you use a money belt (waist or neck), as it is much safer for your cash, debit cards or credit cards. You can also leave valuables in your hotel safe at the reception desk. Some hotels have safes in the rooms.

3. Some shopkeepers expect you to bargain with them, so the first price they tell you is perhaps not the price they expect you to pay. A rule of thumb is to start at 1/3 the asking price and hope to settle on a price around 2/3s. If you see something that you want, determine how much you are willing to pay for it and use that as your basis to bargain. Expect to pay cash with most local vendors. Some may claim not to have correct change available, so be sure to enquire about this in advance.

4. We hear that traveller's checks are a real nuisance these days. Nobody wants to cash them and people are often charged a premium if they use them. ATM (debit) cards are a good way to get rupees in major cities. The ATM exchange rate may be better than at banks, except that they charge a withdraw fee of about \$5 or more per \$200. U.S. dollar cash is also recommended, especially for your return. You should bring credit cards as well. Make sure your credit card has the right number of pin digits for India (4), and notify your credit card company that you will be travelling in India so that your card does not get cancelled. American Express, Mastercard and Visa credit cards are generally accepted by large establishments including Vaidyagrama, hotels, shops and airlines.

### **Tipping**

Tipping and gratuities are not included in your tour package. To cover tips and gratuities for airport transfer personnel, baggage handling at the airports. There is no tip expected for the tour host. Tipping is not as common in India as in the west. You may find someone who does something special just for you and may feel that a tip is in order. We suggest you take along some small tip money. Vaidyagrama accepts donations at the temple on your departure. Gifts to staff individuals is generally not customary.

### **Cameras/Video Cameras & Photography**

Bring plenty of film/memory cards with you and extra batteries. While these are available in India, the prices can be variable. Keep your camera with you at all times. **Never** set it down anywhere and walk away - even for a moment. If you want to take a photo of any locals, please ask first. They are usually very willing.

### **Personal Security**

Theft is unfortunately not uncommon while traveling. It is essential to take care of personal valuables when you when you leave home. You cannot regard any place outside Vaidyagrama as completely safe. Keep your passport, cash and credit cards with you at all times. Handbags should be made of material that is not easily cut. External pockets on bags or clothing should not be used for carrying either money or documents. Have a photocopy of your passport and tickets in your luggage. There is no way to control who is in a crowd. Arrange to be with at least one person while traveling. Vaidyagrama is generally very safe, secure and trustworthy, but common sense must prevail.

### **Beggars**

This can be very shocking and distressing. There are beggars everywhere, some of whom may be physically handicapped. They can be very aggressive. It is up to you whether you give or not, but be aware that a coin given to one child or to a seemingly destitute woman on the street may make you the focus of swarming from a vast number of beggars before long. It may be best to give donations to an organization such as [www.punarnava.org](http://www.punarnava.org), rather than to individuals.

### **Time**

India is 12.5 hrs. ahead of Pacific Time, or 5.5 hrs. ahead of Greenwich Mean Time (GMT).

### **Do's and Don'ts**

The local people are friendly and hospitable by nature and tourists in general are welcomed. At the same time, one may be confused by some customs, traditions and manners as would anybody coming into any unfamiliar society. It is most important that you respect the different degrees of life.