

Girl Scouts of the USA, New York
TRAVEL TIPS
INDIA AND SANGAM

www.sangamwaggs.org.uk/

There are some basic guidelines about traveling to India. Although Sangam may be the main destination, there are additional options, including International Youth Hostelling facilities and programs in India available through GSUSA's affiliation with Hostelling International, as well as recommended YMCA sites. However, it is very prudent to check U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories regarding specific areas in India, due to changing political and social unrest.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS FOR INDIA

American citizens require a passport and visa to enter and exit India for any purpose. Visitors must obtain visas at an Indian Embassy or Consulate abroad, prior to entering the country. For further information on entry requirements, please contact the Embassy of India at 2536 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20008, telephone (202) 939-9849 or 939-9806 or the Indian consulate in Chicago, New York, San Francisco, or Houston. The Internet address for the [Embassy of India](http://www.indianembassy.org/) is [<http://www.indianembassy.org/>](http://www.indianembassy.org/).

For the latest security information, Americans traveling abroad should regularly monitor the [Department's Internet Web site <http://travel.state.gov>](http://travel.state.gov) where the current Worldwide Caution Public Announcement, Travel Warnings and Public Announcements can be found. *

* U.S. Department of State

HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Girls and adults must bring a medical form, signed by a physician, signifying good health and containing a record of required immunizations and inoculations. The standard GSUSA Health Examination forms for international travel should be used. Check the health requirements for entry into and return from India carefully. The Sangam Committee requires **immunization against typhoid, tetanus, and cholera and recommends immunization against poliomyelitis. Anti-malarial prophylaxis is highly advisable.** All immunization requirements and recommendations are subject to change by government health authorities. Consult your personal physician and/or the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. **Be sure to check your passport, health records, and any other necessary travel documents well before departing for India.**

OTHER HEALTH INFORMATION

Information on vaccinations and other health precautions, such as safe food and water precautions and insect bite protection, may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Preventions international traveler's hotline at 1-877-FYI-TRIP (1-877-394-8747); via fax at 1-888-CDC-FAXX (1-888-232-3299) or via [CDC Web page <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

For information about outbreaks of infectious diseases abroad, consult the World Health Organization's Web site <<http://www.who.int/en>>. Further health information for travelers is available at <<http://www.who.int/ith>>.*People with respiratory ailments should consult their physicians prior to traveling, due to high pollution in many of the large cities.

INSURANCE

Additional international health and accident insurance is required and forms can be picked up at your Girl Scout council or through Mutual of Omaha's Web site <<http://www.mutualofomaha.com/gsusa/index.htm>> (International Plan 3PI). Ticket insurance is also advised.

LANGUAGE

The official language of India is Hindi, however, English is spoken in many places in India.

CURRENCY NOTICE

The standard currency in India is the rupee. Once in India, travelers checks or dollars should be changed into rupees only at banks. Be sure to keep the certificate of exchange from the bank to show the Indian officials, if requested, when departing the country. You can not bring in or take out rupees from India.

WEATHER

India is the seventh largest country in the world and the weather tends to vary considerably. Seasons are said to be "hot, wet, and warm." Weather is given in degrees of Celsius, not Fahrenheit, and altitude in meters—so brush up on your metric system.

HINTS FOR GIRL SCOUT TRAVELERS

Girl Scout uniform (dress or camp) is appropriate for travel and street wear, unless there are significant political issues affecting Americans. Pants are acceptable. Head-covering is appropriate for cathedrals. (See International Travel Alert for more on dress.) Although GSUSA does not require ownership of a uniform for membership, when participating in a Sangam event or session, Girl Scout visitors are expected to wear an official Girl Scout uniform. If a Girl Scout is not using a sash or vest, we suggest that she wear an official GSUSA uniform T-shirt or Polo shirt with tan pants or skirt, along with her Girl Scout pins.

SANGAM

Mailing Address:

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GENERAL INFORMATION:

Sangam is located in the state of Maharashtra, on the banks of the Mula River, about three miles from the center of Pune and 120 miles from Bombay. The word "Sangam" is a Sanskrit word, which literally means "coming together," an appropriate analogy to suggest a "meeting place for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts coming from all over the world." Flowering trees and beautiful flowerbeds attest to the perseverance of many who have helped develop the property into one of beauty and serenity. The weather is mild to warm all year round.

Sangam is exquisitely designed to accommodate 56 people. There are five dormitories of eight beds each, five double rooms, and six single rooms. All linens, including sheets, pillowcases, towels, blankets, and mosquito nets are provided.

Sangam offers a program that includes sightseeing, arts and crafts of India, and Girl Guide/Girl Scout activities, such as service projects, flag ceremonies, and campfires. Recreational activities are provided for the children. Training, conferences, and seminars on particular themes are held from time to time.

The patrol system is used at Sangam, with each patrol responsible for a share of the household duties.

Groups attending sessions may include girls ages 15 and older, provided an adult accompanies them. When a session is not scheduled, the minimum guest age is 14 years, provided an adult accompanies the group or individual. For those traveling on their own, the minimum age is 18. Special sessions may be arranged for groups of 10 or more. Temporary membership can be obtained for non-members of GSUSA at the center for a small fee.

SANGAM SYMBOL



The Sangam Symbol is universal in origin and appears in ornaments and artifacts of nearly all cultures from prehistoric times to the present. The symbol suggests a junction, a place of meeting and of mingling and flowing together. The design illustrates a continuum, symbolizing the lasting friendships made at Sangam between Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from many lands.

REGISTRATION FEES (non-refundable):

The booking fee and registration fees (payable in rupees, British pounds sterling or U.S. dollars) per person are to be sent via registered airmail at the time of application. This amount is non-refundable. The fee and charge should be remitted by personal check, travelers check, or credit card.

RESERVATIONS

See Sangam's Web site <<http://www.sangamwaggs.org.uk>> for upcoming program sessions, current rates, and reservations. However, if you do not have access to the Internet please contact your council or Membership, Program and Diversity Services, GSUSA 420 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10018-2798, by completing "Intent to Travel Form A," included in this packet and also available in *Safety-Wise*. **Upon receipt of confirmation of reservations, send registration fees as directed.**

TRAVEL TO SANGAM

Air tickets should be booked to Mumbai (Bombay) or Pune. You can be met at the Pune airport, if Sangam staff knows your arrival plans in advance. If arriving at Mumbai, onward travel by bus or taxi can be arranged through Sangam.

Visitors planning to spend time in Bombay before or after visiting Sangam are advised that good and reasonable accommodations are available at the YWCA International Guest House, 18 Madame Cama Road, Bombay 1, India (Tel: 21-5135), or hotel accommodations may be arranged through Sangam.

Travelers to Bombay have found it is helpful to be met on arrival and escorted to their hotel, although there is a charge for this service. The Sangam Center Manager can usually arrange for the escort service at an additional charge.

WHAT TO BRING

Although GSUSA does not require ownership of a uniform for membership, when participating in a Sangam event or session, Girl Scout visitors are expected to wear an official Girl Scout uniform. If a Girl Scout is not using a sash or vest, we suggest that she wear an official GSUSA uniform T-shirt or Polo shirt with tan pants or skirt, along with her Girl Scout pins. The official Girl Scout shorts which may be worn by girls and adults within the Sangam compound, are not appropriate anywhere else in India. Washing and ironing facilities are available as well as a laundry service. Sangam recommends you bring the following clothing and other items:

- Girl Guide/Girl Scout cotton or lightweight dress uniform
- Raincoat and umbrella, if visiting during rainy season (June through September)
- Country costume, songs, games to teach others (for an international evening)
- Two pair of flat or low-heeled shoes (rubber soles are recommended)
- Official camp uniform
- Casual or sportswear clothes for inside Sangam
- Sweater or jacket
- Lightweight bathrobe and slippers
- Bathing suit and cap (required in pool)
- Underwear
- Toilet articles and sunscreen
- Flashlight/notebook and pencils
- Swaps or small souvenirs to exchange
- Camera and film
- Insect-repellent

TRAVEL OUTSIDE SANGAM

If you visit India in the summer, the weather will probably be hot and humid. Take cool clothes. Polyester fabrics or tight-fitting clothes will be too hot and uncomfortable. Dress in India is modest, however, and shorts and halter-tops are not appropriate.

Experienced travelers to India have suggested bringing the following: Cold-water soap; canteen or water bottle; moist towelettes; dried fruits and hard candies (for tours); salt tablets (to restore body salts lost through dehydration); rubber thongs (for showers); pocketknife (**in checked luggage**) for peeling fruit; and toilet paper or wet-wipes.

Customs you will find helpful to know:

- When eating with your fingers (a common practice) use only your right hand.
- When giving or accepting anything, use your right hand.
- The left hand is considered unclean.
- Most women do not smoke in public.

Read the latest travel guides on India to learn more before you visit.

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