

A Delhi User's Guide

1 Arriving in Delhi and getting around

- On arrival at IGIA Delhi, we recommend that you take a radio taxi (look out for taxi companies such as *Meru*, *Mega*, *Easycab*) to your hotel. The cabs can be hired just outside the terminal building by following the signs. Present the address of the hotel at the cab booth. Please be aware that rates vary by time of day and there may be a late-night surcharge applicable; for the above-mentioned companies, the surcharge will be reflected in the meter rate. Pay according to the meter on arrival at your hotel. Tipping cabbies is not customary.

Alternatively, you can arrange a pick-up if your hotel provides the service or you can opt for a pick-up during the AMES 2012 registration process. In the latter case, our conference managers will arrange for you to be met at the airport.

- If you stay at a partner hotel (see <http://econdse.org/ames-2012-hotels/>) you can avail of a bus pick-up in the morning to bring you to the conference site and an evening drop-off back to the hotel. The buses will also be available for the conference dinner.
- Local transportation options are as follows.

You can book a **radio-cab** (companies such as *Meru*, *Mega*, *Easycab*) in advance for a specific time and destination. These cabs can be in a variety of colors and will display the signage of the relevant company. Their pricing is strictly by the meter and they will provide a receipt. Their cars and equipment are, typically, better than the regular taxis. Ask the hotel to book this kind of cab.

You can get **regular taxis**, which are painted black and yellow, from a local taxi-stand or from the street. They have meters and are supposed to charge according to the meter. However, please confirm that they will charge by the meter before entering the cab. In practice, they often plead that their meter does not work. In this case, negotiating a price prior to boarding is advisable. Ask the hotel to procure this kind of taxi and help negotiate the price, if necessary. These taxis may be marginally cheaper than the radio-cabs.

Another type of cab is the **3-wheeler taxi** (called “auto” or “scooter” in Delhi, or “tuk-tuk” in parts of South-east Asia). These can be hired from the street. All the above comments about regular taxis apply equally, indeed even more so, to these taxis.

You may also use the **Metro** (see <http://www.delhimetrorail.com/>). It tends to be very congested at morning and evening peak times. At off-peak times, we highly recommend it. It is generally clean, reliable, safe and well-organized. To ride the Metro, you can buy a point-to-point token or smart-card at the ticket window.

Delhi has thousands of public buses and an ever-increasing number of cycle-rickshaws. The former tend to be very crowded and are not particularly user-friendly for the visitor or occasional user. Cycle-rickshaws are only for local transportation over short distances. In both cases, navigation will be difficult/impossible without knowing Hindi. Therefore, neither is recommended.

2 Currency and payments

The Indian Rupee is notionally divided into 100 paise. Inflation has made the smaller unit of currency irrelevant.

Hotels, most shops and most restaurants, other than the cheapest, will accept credit/debit cards; Visa and Mastercard are the usually supported platforms. Small shops selling daily necessities and all forms of public transportation will require cash.

3 Weather and clothes

Rain is rare in mid-December in Delhi. Early morning and late night fog or mist are common. Daytime temperatures are usually 20-22° C. At night, the temperature is usually 7-10° C. For more details, visit

<http://in.weather.com/>

Please pack some light warm clothes as the conference buildings are not heated. So, it can feel cold indoors!

4 Electricity

The voltage is 220-230 volts. The standard plug-socket is as described here

http://users.telenet.be/worldstandards/electricity.htm#plugs_d

Hotels should generally have sockets or adaptors that will accept US and European plugs.

5 Things to do in Delhi

5.1 Culture and entertainment

Delhi offers the usual complement of cultural events and entertainments: music of all sorts, dance, movies and theatre (mostly English and Hindi, but occasionally other languages too), art galleries, museum exhibitions, etc. As these change frequently, please consult a current source such as the daily newspapers, their weekend supplements, or websites such as

<http://in.bookmyshow.com/>

<http://timescity.com/>

5.2 Dining options

Delhi's dining options range from the very opulent to the humble street-food hawker and covers most cuisines. Naturally, Indian food of myriad varieties dominates the offerings. Please heed the following *caveats*.

- While tempting and great value, we strongly urge you to shun street food.
- Also, please avoid any **uncooked** food, e.g., salad and fruit, except in a fine restaurant or unless you have washed it to your satisfaction yourself.
- Please do not consume water from the faucet. Only drink bottled water.

To search for appropriate restaurants, visit

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

Since a lot of unfamiliar choices can be bewildering, you might want to use this website to check out the following few eateries recommended by local faculty. They

have been chosen to be in the neighborhood of the two main shopping destinations mentioned below, namely Connaught Place and Khan Market. Both these areas are on the Metro network.

In the Connaught Place area, check out *Saravana Bhavan* (South Indian vegetarian) and *Kwality* (Punjabi, North Indian). If you are looking for fancier options, many of the restaurants in the bigger hotels in the area are worth trying. For instance, *San Gimignano* (Italian) and *Spice Route* (South and East Asian) in the Imperial Hotel and *Fire* (North Indian) in the Park Hotel.

In the Khan Market area, check out *The Big Chill Cafe* (diner/cafe), *Amici* (Italian style pizza and pasta). At small distances away from the market, there are *Baci* (Italian restaurant), *The Garden Restaurant* (Mediterranean restaurant), and a number of essentially interchangeable eateries in the area called Pandara Road (Punjabi, North Indian).

Local faculty will be happy to offer other personal recommendations if asked.

5.3 Shopping

Delhi offers a cornucopia of shopping delights. Please consult a suitable travel and shopping guide for systematic information. The following is an idiosyncratic guide that points you in the direction of markets that are accessible, and shops and products that might be of interest to a visitor. If you have special shopping interests, local faculty will be happy to suggest or recommend places.

Delhi has the usual shopping malls, but most of them contain the usual mix of international, national and local brands. Two areas that are good for shopping and browsing are Connaught Place (also known in Delhi as “CP” or “Rajiv Chowk”) and Khan Market. They are central and connected by the Metro.

Some items of interest for gifts might be: textiles and garments; tea, spices; jewelry; rugs; crafts such as leather goods, metalwork, stone carvings, ceramics; footwear; organic cosmetics.

The following is a (far from comprehensive) short list of shops and clusters of shops where these items may be bought. In Connaught Place and Khan Market, there will be many other shops that also sell such items. Wherever possible, the relevant websites are given.

Note that, except where explicitly noted, these shops have fixed prices and will not bargain. A general rule-of-thumb, with many exceptions, for shopping in Delhi

is: if the item does not have a price sticker on it, then bargaining or haggling is acceptable, indeed encouraged as in Monty Python's *Life of Brian*!

- A variety of handicrafts
 - *Central Cottage Industries Emporium* (CCIE) is in Connaught Place. It is a large government-run shop with good quality, wide selection and reliable prices.
<http://www.cottageemporium.in/>
 - *State Emporia* on Baba Kharak Singh Marg are adjacent to Connaught Place. These are similar to CCIE but stock items from specific Indian states. Again, they offer reasonable quality, selection and reliable prices.
 - *Delhi Haat* is an open air market where a variety of crafts-people directly sell their products. Do bargain!
<http://www.dillahaat.net.in/>
- Cotton garments, accessories and soft household furnishings
 - *Fabindia* and *Anokhi* in Khan Market and Greater Kailash I, N Block market
<http://www.fabindia.com/>
<http://www.anokhi.com/>
 - *Santushti* is a collection of similar boutiques in Chanakyapuri.
- Shoes, high quality leather goods
 - *Atelier* in Khan Market sells fancy shoes.
 - *Hidesign* and *Da Milano* in Connaught Place and Khan Market
<http://hidesign.com/>
<http://www.damilano.com/>
- Rugs, shawls, pashmina products, etc.
 - *Carpet Cellar* in Anand Lok, Khel Gaon Marg. It's a rug shop! You must bargain!
<http://www.carpetcellar.com/>

- Natural cosmetics and fine body-care products
 - *Forest Essentials* and *Kama Ayurveda* in Khan Market
<http://www.forestessentialsindia.com/>
<http://www.kamaayurveda.com/>
- Fine home furnishings and accessories
 - *Good Earth* and *The Neemrana Shop* in Khan Market
<http://goodearth.in/>
<http://neemranahotels.com/neemrana-shop>
- Interesting jewelry and fine silver items for personal and household use
 - *Cooke and Kelvey* in Connaught Place
 - *Silverline* in Khan Market
- Fine loose-leaf teas
 - *Aap ki Pasand* in Darya Ganj
<http://www.aapkipasandtea.com/>
- Books, especially those related to India and Delhi
 - *Bahrison's* in Khan Market
<http://www.booksatbahri.com/>