

Travel Requirements for U.S. Citizens

In light of recent changes in India's entry and exit requirements, we would like to bring some important travel information to your attention. We hope this information is helpful to you as you plan your next trip to India. The U.S. State Department reports that in the last few years there have been changes to India's immigration policies that have not been advertised well or consistently enforced. It is wise to check with your regional consulate and the Indian Government Ministry of Home Affairs website before your departure for the most up-to-date travel requirements.

Can I have dual citizenship with the United States and India?

No. *India does not recognize dual citizenship.* In 2006, however, India launched the Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) program, which extends to qualifying individuals limited travel and residency privileges. It is one of many types of travel visas offered by the Indian Government.

I still have my old Indian passport. Should I bring it with me when I travel to India?

No. If you previously held Indian citizenship and have since become a U.S. citizen, your Indian passport is no longer valid and will not be accepted by customs agents. **If Indian immigration authorities find persons of Indian origin entering India in possession of non-cancelled Indian passports, they will seize such passports.**

What travel documents do I need to present when traveling to India?

All foreign nationals must present a valid passport and a visa when traveling to India, even if they hold an Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) card.

Can I apply for any visa I might need after I arrive in India?

No. It is important to obtain the appropriate travel visa *prior* to arriving in India, as U.S. citizens cannot obtain one after arrival. To be safe, carry photocopies of the bio-data page of your U.S. passport as well as the pages containing the Indian visa and immigration stamps in the event that your passport is lost or stolen.

What type of visa do I need to have for my next trip to India?

For up-to-date information on the type of visa you will need for your next trip, please contact your regional consulate and visit the Indian Government Ministry of Home Affairs website at www.mht.nic.in. To begin the visa application process or to follow up on an existing visa application, contact Trivisa Visa Outsourcing at <https://indiavisa.trivisaoutsourcing.com>.

I have an OCI card. What travel documents do I need to present when traveling to India?

Participants in the OCI program are issued an OCI card. **The OCI card is *not* a passport or a travel visa. OCI cardholders must present *both* the OCI card as well as a U.S. passport and visa when traveling to India.** When your OCI application was approved, your OCI card was issued to you in booklet form, resembling a passport booklet, and a multiple entry, multi-purpose, life-long “U” visa sticker was pasted in your U.S. passport. If your U.S. passport containing the visa expires, remember to apply to have the visa placed in your new passport.

What is the function of an OCI card?

OCI cardholders are entitled to some travel and residency privileges, but are not considered full citizens of India and still need to present a visa when entering the country. The OCI card functions similarly to a U.S. “green card,” making the holder eligible to obtain, among other things, a multiple entry, multi-purpose life-long visa for visiting India, as well as exemption from registration with the local police authorities for any length of stay. Unlike full-fledged citizens of India, OCI cardholders are not entitled to vote, and in most cases, cannot hold employment in the government.

Does an OCI card take the place of a passport?

No. The OCI card is ***not*** a passport or travel visa. OCI cardholders must present ***both*** the OCI card as well as a U.S. passport and visa when traveling to India.

How do I apply for an OCI card?

For complete information on applying for an OCI card, visit the Indian Government Ministry of Home Affairs website at www.mha.nic.in ***and*** contact your regional consulate. **Each consulate has different filing requirements and processing times**, so contact your regional consulate to make sure you have the proper documentation.

How much does it cost to apply for an OCI card?

For the average applicant, the OCI application fee is \$275. For adult applicants who currently hold a Person of Indian Origin (PIO) card, the application fee is \$25; the fee for minors holding a PIO card is \$145.

How long does it take to get an OCI card?

It depends on the consulate processing your application, but it may take as long as 6 months. If you have already booked a trip to India, wait to file your OCI application until your return. For more information on OCI benefits and how to apply for an OCI card, visit the Indian Government Ministry of Home Affairs website at www.mha.nic.in.

I have already booked a trip to India. Should I submit my OCI application before I depart?

No. **An OCI application may take as long as 6 months to process**, so allow plenty of time to obtain your OCI card before booking your next trip. There is no emergency service for OCI applications; therefore, if

you have already submitted an application, do not make travel plans until you have your OCI card in hand.

I have become a U.S. citizen. Do I need to formally renounce my Indian citizenship?

Indian citizens acquiring foreign citizenship are required to renounce their Indian citizenship and surrender their Indian passports to their regional consulate for cancelation. The consulate will either place a “canceled” stamp in the Indian passport or keep the passport and issue a *Certificate of Renunciation*. Travelers are not required to present a Certificate of Renunciation upon arrival in India; however, if Indian immigration authorities find persons of Indian origin entering India in possession of non-cancelled Indian passports, they will seize such passports.

I have a “CANCELED” stamp in my old Indian passport. Do I need to apply for a Certificate of Renunciation?

Some consulates may require you to submit a Certificate of Renunciation with your OCI application – even if there is a “canceled” stamp in your Indian passport. In most cases, if you do not already have a Certificate of Renunciation, your consulate may permit you to file your OCI application and Certificate of Renunciation application concurrently.

Am I required to submit a Certificate of Renunciation of Indian Citizenship with my OCI application?

Some consulates require a Certificate of Renunciation. Of those that do, some permit OCI applications and Certificate of Renunciation applications to be submitted concurrently. It is important to contact your regional consulate before submitting your application or making travel plans.

How much does it cost to apply for a Certificate of Renunciation?

If you became of a citizen of another country before May 31, 2010, the application fee to obtain a Certificate of Renunciation is \$20; however, if you became a citizen of another country after June 1, 2010, the application fee is \$175. **Because fees and requirements differ from consulate to consulate, be sure to contact your regional consulate before filing an OCI application or making travel plans to India.**

How do I contact my regional consulate?

OCI applications are reviewed by the regional consulate that has jurisdiction over your state of residency in the United States.

If you live in *Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virgin Islands*, contact:

Consulate General of India – New York

3 East 64th Street
(Between 5th and Madison Avenues)
New York, NY 10065
Tel. (212) 774-0600

If you live in *Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming*, contact:

Consulate General of India – San Francisco

540 Arguello Boulevard
San Francisco, CA 94118
Tel. (415) 668-0662

If you live in *Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin*, contact:

Consulate General of India – Chicago

455 North City Front Plaza Drive
NBC Tower Building, Suite 850
Chicago, IL 60611
Tel. (312) 595-0405

If you live *Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas*, contact:

Consulate General of India – Houston

1990 Post Oak Boulevard
Houston, TX 77056
Tel. (713) 626-2148

Because fees and requirements differ from consulate to consulate, and because travel requirements may change at any time, be sure to contact your regional consulate before traveling.