

# Directory

## CONTENTS

Accommodation	209
Activities	211
Business Hours	212
Children	213
Climate Charts	213
Courses	214
Customs	214
Dangers & Annoyances	214
Disabled Travellers	216
Embassies & Consulates	216
Festivals & Events	217
Food	219
Gay & Lesbian Travellers	219
Holidays	219
Insurance	219
Internet Access	219
Legal Matters	220
Maps	220
Money	221
Photography	222
Post	222
Shopping	223
Solo Travellers	225
Telephone & Fax	225
Time	226
Tourist Information	226
Tours	226
Visas	227
Volunteer Work	228
Women Travellers	228

## ACCOMMODATION

Most hotel prices are based on high, middle and low seasons. The high season covers the period from mid-December to late January (with the exception of the peak period between 22 December and 5 January), the middle seasons are from October to mid-December and February to June, and the low season is from July to September. Unless otherwise stated, prices in this book are for the high season. Outside of this period, count on discounts of 25% in the middle season and up to 60% in the low season.

If you turn up at a popular beach during peak season you may end up homeless or

paying more than you want to; conversely, in low season not all of the options reviewed in this book will be open. If you arrive early in the season there should be a healthy range of available rooms, giving you scope to shop around and bargain. The rule of thumb is that the longer you stay the cheaper it gets. As peak season draws near, discuss the issue of pricing. Don't assume it will remain the same; some prices suddenly skyrocket over Christmas, even if you've booked ahead. Try not to feel too hard done by during this period; remember that not all hoteliers are greedy, and for many the money they make in this period is what their families must live off when there is not tourism at all.

Accommodation in this book is categorised as budget (Rs 100 to 500), midrange (Rs 500 to 1500) and top end (Rs 1500 or more), though the lines are sometimes blurred by places that offer the whole range or arbitrarily swing between categories. Prices vary according to demand, location (ie beachfront or out the back), duration of stay and the whims of management.

Bear in mind there's a luxury tax of 8% on rooms over Rs 500 and 12% for those over around Rs 800. For most of the budget places, the prices quoted include this tax, but at midrange and top-end hotels you can expect tax to be added to the bill. Some hotels add a further 10% 'service tax'. When you're negotiating prices, clarify whether tax is included or not.

Budget accommodation can be anything from a basic room with a shared cold-water bathroom to a bamboo hut right on the beach.

Midrange accommodation varies enormously. Basically you can expect a hotel with a fan, perhaps a TV and sometimes even a swimming pool.

Top-end hotels vary from modern boutique affairs to classic heritage hotels or generic beachside resorts replete with casinos, shopping arcades and swimming pools that rival the size of the Arabian Sea.

Accommodation is cheaper in towns like Panaji, Mapusa and Margao, which see fewer tourists. Unless stated otherwise, rooms reviewed have a bathroom.

## PRACTICALITIES

- The electric current in Goa is 230V to 240V AC, 50 cycles. Sockets are of a three round-pin variety, similar (but not identical) to European sockets. There are two sizes; one large, one small (the latter is more common). European round-pin plugs will go into the smaller sockets, but the fit can be loose. Universal adaptors are widely available at electrical shops in Goa for around Rs 20. Electricity in Goa can be unpredictable – save your work regularly if you're using a computer, and use a voltage regulator for sensitive electrical equipment.
- Although India is officially metricated, imperial weights and measures are still sometimes used. You may hear the term lakh (one lakh equals 100,000) and crore (one crore equals 10 million) referring to rupees, cars, apples or whatever.
- Goa has three English-language dailies: the *Herald*, the *Navhind Times* and the *Gomantak Times*. Also check out the interesting monthly magazine *Goa Today*. Many foreign newspapers and magazines are available in large hotels and some newsagencies, though they're expensive.
- The government TV broadcaster is Doordarshan. Satellite TV, which has BBC, CNN, Star Movies, MTV and HBO, is more widely watched.
- All India Radio (AIR) transmits local and international news. There are private broadcasters in addition to this government-controlled station.

One final warning must be issued with respect to checkout times. Checkout time can vary enormously throughout Goa; some can be as early as 8am and others can be as casual as whenever. Make sure you know what time you're expected to leave – some hotels will demand an extra 50% if you're late.

## Bamboo Huts

The quintessential Goan experience is the bamboo hut, known locally as cocohuts. These were originally constructed on stilts, using surrounding coconut trees as support, but nowadays bamboo huts have moved far beyond their primitive genesis. It's not hard to tell a budget hut from a more expensive one; the better it looks, the more it costs. Palolem is a good example of the range of huts available; the coast is still predominantly lined with flimsy huts on stilts, but between them are an increasing number of larger and more stylish versions; some huts are even double-storey affairs with spacious hot-water bathrooms. There are also more-linear but often roughly slapped together wooden huts constructed of plywood. The décor in these kit-home jobs often accounts for price variations – a coat of paint and a few decorative cushions on a makeshift balcony can mean a difference of a few hundred rupees. A real downside to the cocohut experience can be one's proximity to the neighbours, whose nocturnal noises are often no

more than a foot of air and flimsy sheet of bamboo away.

## Camping

Given the range of budget accommodation, few people travel with their own tent. An increasing phenomenon though (and a far cry from the triangular tents of yesteryear) is the organised camp of tepee-style tents, such as Bai Tereza Beach Camp (p120) at Coco Beach, where the guests gather around a bonfire at night. Places such as Yoga Magic (p142) in Anjuna also have Rajsthani-style tents that have a strong eco-friendly ethos, while other hotels, such as Palolem Beach Resort (p193), set up the occasional tent around their premises to squeeze a few more people in.

## Guesthouses

The most common form of budget accommodation is the guesthouse. These can be a dedicated building, a building out the back of a family home, or even rooms in the family home. The general rule is that the closer your sleeping quarters are to the host family, the cheaper the room. The diversity of choices and experiences is enormous. Staying in a family-run guesthouse can be a wonderful way to get an insight into Goa, and can sometimes be more comfortable and economical than staying in a cocohut.

## Hotels

There is a range of hotels in Goa; some are soulless buildings with a host of amenities but all the character of a shopping mall, while others dub themselves resorts in light of their proximity to the ocean and their pool. Either way, a hotel in Goa is much the same as a hotel anywhere else in the world: an organised establishment with a reception, room service, TVs, private bathrooms and sometimes minibars.

## Rental Accommodation

Renting houses by the month or longer is not an uncommon thing to do in Goa, particularly given the increasing number of Westerners who live in Goa for six or so months of every year. There are real-estate agents who can help, but it's easy enough to find your own home without them. Ask around, check out notice boards at foreigner hot spots, or simply select the area you would like to live and take note of phone numbers on the many 'For Rent' signs, some of which even specify 'Foreigners Only'. Obviously, the closer you are to the coast, the more you will pay. There are a couple of websites worth checking out:

**Goa Heritage Action Group** ([www.goaheritage.org](http://www.goaheritage.org)) As part of its work to protect Goa's heritage homes, the Goa Heritage Action group facilitates their sale and purchase. Click on the Heritage Mall link.

**Goa Holiday Homes** ([www.goaholidayhomes.com](http://www.goaholidayhomes.com)) A good general website to start looking for places in a range of prices.

## Resorts

There is no shortage of resorts in Goa. Some are more like miniresorts, with facilities are spread over a smaller area than the larger resorts. These are often oriented towards the domestic market, and can be good value; a day bed by the swimming pool by the ocean is indulgent even if you're paying rupees rather than US dollars. At the other end of the spectrum are the mass-scale resort complexes that have their own golf course and casino, and are too big to cover on foot.

## H IS FOR HOUSE

Throughout this book and Goa, the abbreviation 'H' is used to denote a house or small building in addresses.

## BOOK ACCOMMODATION ONLINE

For more accommodation reviews and recommendations by Lonely Planet authors, check out the online booking service at [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com). You'll find the true insider lowdown on the best places to stay. Reviews are thorough and independent. Best of all, you can book online.

## ACTIVITIES

The number of activities on offer in Goa has steadily increased over the years. Some of the busier beach towns are flooded with courses and treatments in everything from art appreciation and Ayurveda to shiatsu and sitar playing. Keep your eyes on cluttered notice boards to see what's going on.

## Ayurveda

Ayurveda is an ancient method of holistic healing deriving from Kerala. The most popular Ayurvedic treatment among tourists is the ubiquitous oil massage. See p129 for more about Ayurveda.

Your Ayurvedic experience in Goa can be a hit and miss affair. There are some extremely established operators giving very professional treatments, whereas other operators have set up shop with no more than a vague idea and a vat of oil.

Some of the options in Goa: **Ayurvedic Natural Health Centre** (ANHC; ☎ 0832-2409275, 0832-2409036; [www.healthandayurveda.com](http://www.healthandayurveda.com)) An accredited centre in Baga (p128) with lots of information. Some massages can be better than others here.

**Kailas Kerala Traditional Ayurveda Centre** (☎ 0832-2643472; [www.bhaktikutir.com](http://www.bhaktikutir.com); 296 Palolem, Patnem) Based in Bhakti Kutir at Patnem Beach (p192).

**Palolem Ayurvedic Centre** (☎ 0832-22640193; [palolemayurvedicentre@yahoo.co.in](mailto:palolemayurvedicentre@yahoo.co.in)) This Ayurvedic centre in Palolem (p192) is recommended.

**Pousada Tauma** (☎ 2279061; [www.pousada-tauma.com](http://www.pousada-tauma.com)) An upmarket option in Calangute (p128).

## Bird-Watching

It seems that the beach distracts people from the birds; it's a little known fact that Goa is actually a prime bird-watching area. One of the best places to do it is Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary (p100).

**Southern Birdwing** (☎ 0832-2402957; [www.southernbirdwing.com](http://www.southernbirdwing.com)) is a reputable organisation that organises bird-watching excursions.

## Diving

Although Goa is not internationally renowned as a diving destination, its waters are regarded as the third-best spot for diving in India (after the Andaman and Lakshadweep Islands). You can also make dive excursions to sites off the Karnataka coast.

The shallow waters off the coast are ideal for less experienced divers; typical dives are at depths of 10m to 12m, with abundant marine life to be seen. The only problem is that visibility is unpredictable; on some days it's 30m, on others it's closer to 2m. The dive season is from November to April.

Marine life you are likely to encounter include tropical fish such as angelfish, parrotfish, wrasses, lionfish, sharks (reef tip and shovel-nosed among others), stingrays, groupers, snapper, damselfish, barracuda, sea cucumbers and turtles. The highlights of diving in Goa are the wreck dives – there are literally hundreds of wrecks along Goa's coastline, including Portuguese and Spanish galleons and more recent wrecks of merchant and naval ships.

Popular dive sites include Grande Island and St George's Island. South of Goa, off the Karnataka coast, Devbagh Island (near Karwar) and Pigeon Island are popular.

The following dive schools are all affiliated with the Professional Association of Dive Instructors (PADI):

**Barracuda Diving** (☎ 0832-2437001; www.barracudadiving.com) This place is based in Panaji; see p89 for more information.

**Goa Dive Center** (☎ 9822157094; www.goadivecenter.com) Operates out of Siquerim and Baga, with its main office on Tito's Rd. See p128 for more information. **Goa Diving** (☎ 2555117; 2538204; www.goading.com; goadivin@sancharnet.in; House No 145P, Chapel Bhat, Chicalim 403711) This Bogmalo-based company runs trips and courses; see p179 for details.

## Motorcycling & Cycling

Most tourists hire a moped or motorcycle at some time during their stay in Goa, but few venture further than the next beach or the nearest town. There are some worthwhile longer rides:

- From Benaullim or Cavelossim, ride down the coast road via Betul, Cabo da Rama and Agonda to Palolem.
- From Calangute, Anjuna or Vagator, head up the coast via Morjim and Mandrem to Arambol.

- From Arambol, ride up to Terekhol Fort.
- From Panaji, ride out to Old Goa and across to Divar Island, or continue to Ponda to explore the Hindu temples and spice plantations.
- From Margao, explore Salcete taluka (district) around Chandor and Loutolim.

Shorter rides (such as Panaji to Old Goa or Palolem to Rajbag) can also be done by bicycle. For information about hiring motorcycles and bicycles, see p237 and p235 respectively.

## Paragliding & Kite-Surfing

Paragliding is common thing to do in season, when many instructors (mostly Europeans) set up in beach towns. Kite-surfing is also on the rise, and Goa is attracting more and more kite-surfing junkies. Often operators are working illegally and don't advertise; ask around or approach people who are engaged in the act – chances are they'll take you along for a fee.

The scene changes from season to season; at the time of research, there was a lively paragliding scene in Anjuna and Vagator Beaches in North Goa, and Arambol Beach was the place where the kite-surfers congregated.

## Rafting & Kayaking

Although not in Goa itself, Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary is only a couple of hours drive across the border in Karnataka, and here you can try white-water rafting, kayaking and caving. **Kali Rafting** (☎ 08284-234380; www.kalirafting.com) is a good place to start your Internet-based research. Also contact **Day Tripper Tours & Travel** (☎ 2276726; www.daytrippergoa.com; Calangute-Candolim Rd, Calangute) in Calangute. In south Goa, Pepper Valley (p197), in the Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary, arranges tours that include rafting.

## Yoga

For information about yoga courses, see p214.

## BUSINESS HOURS

Just about the only rule about business hours in Goa is that many Goan shops and offices knock off for a siesta anywhere between 12.30pm and 3pm. Apart from this,

government offices are open from 10am to 5pm Monday to Saturday, and are closed every second Saturday. Sunday is a day of rest, and the business districts of towns like Panaji and Margao are ghost towns.

Banks are generally open from 10am to 2pm Monday to Friday, and 10am to noon on Saturday. To compete with moneychangers, which keep normal (and sometimes extended) business hours, some banks now have extended hours and even open on Sunday. Tourist-oriented businesses such as travel agencies, Internet cafés and souvenir shops stay open on Sundays and well into the evening.

## CHILDREN

Goa is probably the most family-friendly state in India – almost everywhere you go you'll find enthusiastic baby-sitters and a whole community of travellers with children waiting to share their war stories. There are scores of young parents with young children who are keen on broadening their children's horizons from as early an age as possible, and you will find that your kids will benefit enormously from the range of activities and ideas on offer.

For more information on travelling with kids, get hold of a copy of Lonely Planet's *Travel with Children*.

## Practicalities

Things like disposable nappies are available, but come at a cost and with the additional dilemma of how to dispose of them. The enormous environmental damage caused by such waste leads many parents to do what the locals do: use washable nappies. Formula milk is available in Goa, but not as widely as it is at home; you may have to shop around in chemists in larger cities like Panaji, Mapusa and Margao.

Be wary of hygiene; get into a regular routine of sterilising bottles with boiled bottled water and be sure that all food is cleaned and cooked properly.

With regard to breast-feeding in public, the general rule is avoid it or, if you must breast-feed, do it with discretion. Given that Indian mothers often tend to young babies in the privacy of home, babies who are dining alfresco are an unusual sight.

Also be wary of the heat, which is taxing enough for grown-ups, let alone little ones.

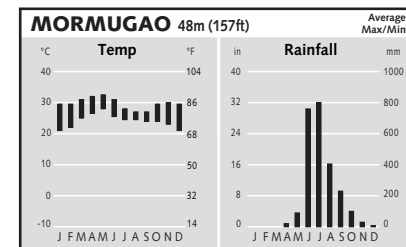
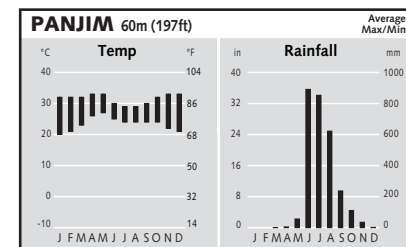
## Sights & Activities

Apart from the beach – which is enough to keep most kids happy for weeks on end – there are water sports, a science park in Miramar (p98) and hotels that are used to accommodating children and often go to extra effort to keep them entertained with play equipment and facilities. This is particularly true of top-end hotels (though some bat for the other team and have no-child policies), but also of some of the smaller, more soulful places. A good example of this is the home school offered by Bhakti Kutir (p193) in Patnem. Keep an eye out for child-oriented courses in some of the beach towns.

## CLIMATE CHARTS

The climate in Goa is not just an academic point; it affects the character, customs and culture. The main feature of the Goan climate is the monsoon between June and the end of September, which sees 250cm to 300cm of rain. During the two months preceding the onset of the monsoon, the humidity increases and the normally clear skies become hazy. High winds and lightning come just before the rain. Goans store enough firewood and food to last through the rains; fishing ceases almost entirely because of stormy conditions.

Surprisingly, the temperature throughout all of this drama remains fairly constant,



varying from a maximum of 28°C or 29°C in July to a maximum of 33°C in May, and minimums for the same months of 24°C and 26.5°C.

For more information, see p12.

## COURSES

### Cooking

For information about Goan cooking courses, see p57.

### Music & Dance

During season, there are many courses in traditional instruments such as tabla. To find these, check notice boards in popular foreigner hang-outs like Brown Bread in Palolem, the German Bakery in Anjuna and Double Dutch in Arambol.

For more dedicated musicians, the well-regarded Kala Academy (p95) in Panaji offers fully certified music and dance courses. The school of Indian music at the Kala Academy teaches classical singing, as well as the tabla, sitar and harmonium. The Kala Academy also has a school of Western music and a school of dance specialising in *kathak* and Bharat Natyam dance. The academy also hosts various performances and cultural festivals.

### Yoga

Yoga courses are as common as cows in Goa, and many world-class teachers flock here over season. You could take your chances with a random flyer, but it may be better to contact an established organisation that runs yoga courses and classes. Some places run courses in conjunction with accommodation.

Popular places for yoga in Goa:

**Ayurvedic Natural Health Centre** (ANHC; ☎ 0832-2409275, 2409036; www.healthandayurveda.com) In Baga (p128).

**Bhakti Kutir** (☎ 0832-2643472; www.bhaktikutir.com; 296 Palolem, Patnem) Yoga is part of this holistic accommodation experience on Patnem Beach (p193).

**Healing Here & Now** (☎ 0832-32273487; www.healinghereandnow.com; St Michael's Vaddo) In Anjuna (p141).

**Himalaya Iyengar Yoga Centre** (www.hiyogacentre.com; Arambol Beach) In Arambol (p153).

**Purple Valley Yoga Centre** (☎ 9370568639; www.yogagoa.com) In Anjuna (p140).

**Yoga Magic** (☎ 0832-5623796; www.yogamagic.net) Stay in Rajasthani tents at this memorable place near Anjuna (p142).

## CUSTOMS

The usual duty-free regulations for India apply in Goa: 1L of spirits and 200 cigarettes (or 50 cigars, or 250g of tobacco).

You're allowed to bring in all sorts of technological gadgets, but expensive items such as video cameras are likely to be entered on a Tourist Baggage Re-Export (TBRE) form to ensure you take them out when you leave. Failure to declare such items upon departure may mean a payable duty.

## DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Goa is essentially a safe destination for travellers, but this is India and the tourist industry carries with it a few inherent dangers that you should be aware of. Touts, pressure sales tactics and minor scams are annoying, but more serious are theft, harassment of women and the occasional mugging that occurs particularly over high season.

### Crime

From time to time there are drugging episodes, usually on major tourist routes. Use your brain and your instincts before accepting food or drinks from strangers or even new friends.

There have also been incidents of attacks on women (see p228). Goans are understandably concerned by these incidents and blame them on criminals from neighbouring states. Some measures have been introduced, such as limited street lighting and security patrols on some beaches, but it's still not a good idea for women to wander alone in dark areas around beach shacks at night.

It pays for everyone, not just women, to be wary. Busy resorts are safe enough when there are people around, but late at night anyone can be vulnerable. Quiet resorts with poor street lighting have proven risky for travellers wandering alone. People visiting in the low season should avoid staying in isolated accommodation.

### LIFE'S A BEACH

Try to be mindful of the fact that you're actually not invincible. Remember that foreigners die every year in Goa from road accidents, drowning and drug use. Don't let it ruin your holiday, but don't let your holiday ruin your life.

### TIPS FOR SAFE TRAVEL

While the majority of travellers in Goa will have no serious or life-threatening problems, tourists have occasionally been the target of theft or assault. There are some common-sense steps you can take to minimise the risk:

- Don't open the door to someone you don't know.
- Leave windows and doors locked when you're sleeping and when you're out; things have been stolen using hooks through windows.
- Avoid quiet, poorly lit streets or lanes – take the longer way if it's brighter and more populated, and walk with confidence and purpose.
- If you are being sexually harassed or assaulted on public transport, embarrass the culprit by loudly complaining, and report them to the conductor or driver.
- As tempting as it is to stare someone down, women should just ignore stares. Dark or reflective glasses can help.

### Scams

One scam involves groups of teenage pickpockets posing as students with sponsorship forms. One 'student' engages the victims in conversation while the others pick their pockets. The unfortunate part is that there are also a lot of genuine students who may stop you with a questionnaire or something similar; use your instincts.

Incredibly, the age-old export scam is still doing the rounds in India. Even more incredibly, people are still falling for it. The scam basically involves being befriended and eventually offered the opportunity to export products (jewellery, stones or carpets are common) to sell elsewhere at enormous profit. Or, after you've been plied with meals and entertainment, you'll be given a sob story about your new friend's inability to obtain an export licence. Don't be fooled; these guys are smooth operators and even worldly travellers have been successfully buttered up by the initial hospitality and generosity.

At airports, beware of scams to short-change you when you're exchanging money. Also (particularly if you're arriving on a charter flight) be prepared to be besieged by children and beggars asking for '£1 coins' or for some of your home-country currency for their 'coin collection'. Your contribution will likely be sold back to departing tourists.

### Theft

Weigh up whether your passport and other valuables are safer at your hotel or on your person. If you are staying in a reasonable

hotel or family home where there is a safe or similar facility, leave them there, not just in your room. If you're more comfortable taking valuables with you, they should always be in a money belt under your clothing. There have been incidents of violent robberies of tourists in Goa so exercise great caution wherever you are. If you're travelling with expensive equipment like laptops, cameras or iPods, don't casually wave them around. It's also a good idea to padlock backpacks and lock them onto luggage racks or chairs on trains. Beware also of fellow travellers; some are set on defiling the spirit of the travel community by helping themselves to other peoples' things.

If you have something stolen in Goa, you must report it to the police if you want to make an insurance claim at home. According to the accounts of several travellers this is likely to be frustrating; policemen often attempt to dissuade you from filing a report. Being friendly, patient and persistent should get you your paperwork in the end. Reporting a theft does not mean that you will have to stay in Goa, despite what you may be told. Some policemen are friendly and helpful, but if you continually have trouble try enlisting the assistance of the Goa Tourism Development Corporation (GTDC) in Panaji.

### Touts

When arriving by train or bus, visitors may be met by taxi drivers and autorickshaw drivers who want to take you to a 'nice' hotel – where nice usually means the one that pays



the best commission. The hotels that simply refuse to pay touts risk stories that they are 'full', 'closed for repairs', 'no good any more' or even 'flooded'. It's almost always a lie. Be persistent and check it out for yourself.

Touts do have a use, though – not all of their recommendations are bad ones, and finding a place can be difficult if you arrive during the high season. Hop in an autorickshaw, tell the driver what price you will pay for a hotel, and off you go.

## DISABLED TRAVELLERS

There are few provisions for disabled travellers in Goa outside of the most top-end hotels, and thus the mobility-impaired traveller will face a number of challenges. Few older buildings have wheelchair access; toilets have certainly not been designed to accommodate wheelchairs, and footpaths are generally riddled with potholes and crevices, littered with obstacles and packed with throngs of people. Nevertheless, the difficulties are far from insurmountable and if you want to visit Goa – do it! If your mobility is restricted you will need an able-bodied companion to accompany you, and you'd be well-advised to hire a private vehicle with a driver.

The **Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation** (RADAR; ☎ 020-72503222; www.radar.org.uk; 12 City Forum, 250 City Rd, London EC1V 8AF, UK) may be able to offer further information on the logistics of travelling in India. Also check out **Mobility International USA** (MIUSA; ☎ 541-3431284; www.miusa.org; PO Box 10767, Eugene, OR 97440, USA).

For specific information about disability issues in Goa, contact **Disability Goa** (www.disabilitygoa.com).

## EMBASSIES & CONSULATES

### Indian Embassies & Consulates

India's embassies, consulates and high commissions abroad:

**Australia** High Commission (☎ 02-6273 3999; www.hcindia-au.org; 3/5 Moonah Place, Yarralumla, ACT 2600); Consulate General (☎ 02-9223 9500; www.indianconsulate-sydney.org; 27th fl, 25 Bligh St, Sydney, NSW 2000); Honorary Consulate (☎ 03-9384 0141; www.indianconsulate.org; 7 Munro St, Coburg, Melbourne, Vic 3058)  
**Austria** Embassy (☎ 01-505 86 66-9; www.indianembassy.at; Kaerntnerring 2, 1010 Vienna)  
**Belgium & Luxembourg** Embassy (☎ 02 64 091 40; www.indembassy.be; 217 Chaussee de Vleurgart, 1050 Brussels)

**Brazil** Embassy (☎ 061-3248 4006; www.indianembassy.org.br; SHIS QL 08 Coj 08, Casa 01, Lago Sul, Brasilia-DF 71 620285)

**Canada** High Commission (☎ 613-744 3751; www.hciottawa.ca; 10 Springfield Rd, Ottawa, Ontario K1M 1C9); Consulate General (☎ 416-960 0751; cgindia@cgitoronto.ca; 1835 Yonge St, Toronto, Ontario M4S 1X8); Consulate General (☎ 604-662 8811; www.cgi.vancouver.com; 325 Howe St, 2F, Vancouver, BC V6C 1Z7)

**Denmark** Embassy (☎ 045-39 18 28 88; www.indian-embassy.dk; Vangehusvej 15, 2100 Copenhagen)

**France** Embassy (☎ 01 40 50 70 70; www.amb-inde.fr; 15 Rue Alfred Dehodencq, 75016 Paris)

**Germany** Embassy (☎ 030-257950; www.indianembassy.de; Tiergartenstrasse 17, Berlin 10185); Consulate (☎ 069-15300518; www.cgifrankfurt.de; Friedrich Ebert Anlange 26, Frankfurt 60325); Consulate (☎ 040-338036; Raboisen 6, 20095, Hamburg); Consulate (☎ 089-210 23 90; Widenmayer Strasse 15, Munich D-80538)

**Ireland** Embassy (☎ 01-497 0483; indembassy@eircom.net; 6 Leeson Park, Dublin 6)

**Israel** Embassy (☎ 03-510 1431; indembtel@indembassy.co.il; 4 Kaufman St, Shabat House, Tel Aviv 68012)

**Italy** Embassy (☎ 064 88 46 42; www.indianembassy.it; Via XX Settembre 5, 00187 Rome)

**Japan** Embassy (☎ 0332-622 391; www.embassy-av.enue.jp; 2-2-11 Kudan Minami, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102)

**Nepal** Embassy (☎ 0144 10 900; www.south-asia.com/Embassy-India; 336 Kapurdhara Marg, Kathmandu 410900)

**Netherlands** Embassy (☎ 0703-46 97 71; www.indianembassy.nl; Buitenrustweg 2, 2517 KD, Den Hague)

**New Zealand** High Commission (☎ 04-473 6390; www.hicomind.org.nz/index.htm; 180 Molesworth St, Wellington)

**Russia** Embassy (☎ 7095-783 7535; www.indianembassy.ru; 6-8 Vorontsovo Polya, Moscow)

**Sweden** Embassy (☎ 08-107008; www.indianembassy.se; Adolf Fredriks Kyrkogata 12, Stockholm 11183)

**UK** High Commission (☎ 020-7839 6242; www.hcilondon.net; India House, Aldwych, London WC2B 4NA); Consulate General (☎ 013-1229 2144; indian@consulate.fsnet.co.uk; 17 Rutland Square EH1 2BB Edinburgh)

**USA** Embassy (☎ 202-939 7000; www.indianembassy.org; 2107 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, DC 20008); Consulate General (☎ 312-595 0405; www.chicago.indianconsulate.com; NBC Tower, 455 North Cityfront Plaza Drive, Suite 850, Chicago, IL 60611); Consulate General (☎ 713-626 2148; www.cjihouston.org; 3 Post Oak, Central Suite No 600, 1900 Post Oak Blvd, Houston, TX 77056); Consulate General (☎ 212-774 0600; www.indiacngny.org; 3 East 64th St, Manhattan, New York, NY 10021-7097); Consulate General (☎ 415-668 0662; www.indianconsulate-sf.org; 540 Arguello Blvd, San Francisco, CA 94118)

## Embassies & Consulates in India

It's important to realise what your own embassy can and can't do to help you if you get into trouble. Generally it won't be much help if the trouble you're in is your own fault. Remember that you are bound by the laws of the country you are in; your embassy will not be sympathetic if you end up in jail after committing a crime locally, even if such actions are legal in your own country.

Most foreign diplomatic missions are in Delhi, but there are also a few consulates in the other major cities of Mumbai (Bombay), Kolkata (Calcutta) and Chennai (Madras). Austria, Germany, Italy, Portugal and the UK have honorary consuls in Goa.

The following is not an exhaustive list. If your country does not appear, it does not mean that it is not represented in India. Also, some of the listed countries have other consular offices; we've listed each country's embassy that is closest to Goa:

**Australia** Consulate General (Map pp62-3; ☎ 022-56692000; www.ausgovindia.com; 3rd fl, Makar Chambers VI, Jammalal Bajaj Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai)

**Austria** Consulate (Map p178; ☎ 0832-2513811; Salgaocar House, Dr F Luis Gomes Rd, Vasco da Gama)

**Brazil** Embassy (☎ 011-3017301; www.brazilembassyindia.com; 8 Aurangzeb Rd, New Delhi)

**Canada** Consulate (Map pp62-3; ☎ 022-22876027; 41/42 Makar Chambers VI, Nariman Point, Mumbai)

**Denmark** Embassy (☎ 011-23010900; www.ambnewdelhi.um.dk; 11 Aurangzeb Rd, Delhi) Consulate (☎ 044-28118140; 8 Cathedral Rd, Chennai)

**France** Consulate (Map p64; ☎ 022-5631400; 7th fl, Hoersch House, Vinayak K Shah Rd, Nariman Point, Mumbai)

**Germany** Consulate (Map p64; ☎ 022-22832422; www.germanconsulatemumbai.org; 10th fl, Hoersch House, Vinayak K Shah Rd, Nariman Point, Mumbai); Honorary Consulate (Map pp84-5; ☎ 0832-2235526; CMM House, Ourem Rd, Panaji)

**Ireland** (☎ 011-24626733; www.irelandindia.com; 230 Jor Bagh, New Delhi, 110003)

**Israel** Embassy (☎ 011-3045400; www.delhi.mfa.gov.il; 3 Aurangzeb Rd, New Delhi)

**Italy** Consulate (Map pp62-3; ☎ 022-23804071; 72 Peddar Rd, Breach Candy, Mumbai); Honorary Consulate (☎ 0832-2438944; D1 Sesa Ghor, Patto Plaza, Dr Alvaro Costa Rd, Panaji)

**Japan** Embassy (☎ 011-26876564, www.in-emb-japan.go.jp; 4 & 5, 50G Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi)

**Nepal** Embassy (☎ 011-23329969; Barakhamba Rd, New Delhi)

**Netherlands** Embassy (☎ 011-24197600; www.holland-in-india.org; 6/50F Shanti Path, Chanakyapuri, 110021, New Delhi)

**New Zealand** High Commission (☎ 011-26883170; 50N Nyaya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi)

**Portugal** Embassy (☎ 011-26142215; www.embportindia.com; 8 Olof Palme Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi) Honorary Consulate (Map pp84-5; ☎ 0832-438044; www.consuladoporatugalgoa.com; LIC Bldg, Patto, Panaji)

**Russia** (☎ 011-26873799; www.india.mid.ru; Shantipath, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi)

**South Africa** Embassy (☎ 011-26149411; www.sahc-india.com/g\_maite.html; B18 Vasant Marg, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi)

**Spain** Embassy (☎ 011-3792082; embespin@mail.mae.es; 12 Prithviraj Rd, New Delhi)

**Sweden** Embassy (☎ 011-2604961; embassy.newdelhi@sida.se; Nyaya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi)

**Switzerland** Embassy (☎ 011-26878372; www.ed.admin.ch/india\_dlh; Nyaya Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi) UK Consulate (Map pp62-3; ☎ 022-56502222;

2nd fl, Maker IV Bldg, Jammalal Bajaj Marg, Nariman Point, Mumbai); British High Commissioner Tourist Assistance Office (Map pp84-5; ☎ 0832-2438897; www.ukindia.com; ground fl, S13/14 Dempo Towers, Patto Plaza, Panaji)

**USA** Embassy (Map pp62-3; ☎ 022-23633611; http://mumbai.usconsulate.gov; Lincoln House, 78 Bhulabai Desai Marg, Breach Candy, Mumbai)

## FESTIVALS & EVENTS

Goa could easily be called India's festival state. At times it can seem as though there are as many holidays as working days. Along with Hindu festivals, Goans celebrate myriad Christian festivals – not only Christmas and Easter, but also many feast days specific to certain villages or parishes, as well as truly Goan events such as the Feast of St Francis Xavier. On top of this, more recent food and cultural festivals have been developed during the winter season to capitalise on Goa's tourist numbers. Whereas most Christian festivals occur on set dates, Hindu festivals follow the lunar calendar and change from year to year.

### January

**Feast of the Three Kings** On 6 January at the villages of Reis Magos, Cansaulim and Chandor, local boys re-enact the arrival of the three kings with gifts for Christ. A church service is followed by food and entertainment.

**Republic Day** The anniversary of India's establishment as a republic in 1950 is on 26 January; though Goa was not involved it is celebrated anyway (Goans don't miss a chance to rejoice!).

**Fontainhas Arts Festival** Homes in the Fontainhas district are turned into galleries for this exhibition of Goan and Indian art. Held some time between January and March.

### February/March

**Pop, Beat & Jazz Music Festival** Held over two days in February at the Kala Academy in Panaji.

**Shigmotsav (Shigmo)** Goa's version of Holi, this Hindu festival marks the end of winter. It normally takes place on the full-moon day of the month of Phalgun (February/March), and is widely celebrated by gangs of youths throwing coloured water and powder at one another. Don't wear your best clothes; tourists frequently become a target. Shigmo parades, with processions of colourful floats, are often held in Panaji, Margao, Mapusa and Vasco da Gama. **Carnival** Originally a celebration of the arrival of spring, and a Catholic festival on the three days before Lent began, Carnival is now just one big party and one of Goa's maddest events. In Panaji festivities centre on a procession of colourful floats, which takes place on Sabado Gordo (Fat Saturday). The event is opened by the arrival of King Momo, who makes a traditional decree ordering his subjects to forget their worries and have a good time.

### March/April

**Ramanavami** The birth of Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu, is celebrated at the temple in Partagal.

**Procession of All Saints** Held in Goa Velha on the fifth Monday in Lent, this is the only procession of its sort outside Rome. Thirty statues of the saints are paraded around neighbouring villages. The main road through Goa Velha becomes blocked with the traffic as people from all over Goa are drawn to the fair that takes place.

**Good Friday & Easter** Huge church services are held throughout Goa; the big congregations often overflow onto the street, or services are held outside to accommodate everyone. Christians mark the event with large family gatherings.

**Feast of Jesus of Nazareth** Held at Sindao on the first Sunday after Easter.

**Feast of Our Lady of Miracles** Held in Mapusa, 16 days after Easter; famous for its celebration by both Hindus and Christians.

**Beach Bonanza** On Sundays from mid-April onwards, this tourist-oriented festival of music, dancing and food stalls was originally held on the beach at Colva but has now been moved back to the football ground in the village.

**Youth Fete** Much the same as the Beach Bonanza, but on Calangute beach.

### May/June

**Igitun Chalne** One of the most distinctive festivals in Goa, this is specific to the temple in Sirigao (near Corjorem Fort in Bicholim taluka), and is held in May. *Igitun chalne* literally means 'fire-walking', and the high point of the

festival comes when devotees of the goddess Lairaya walk across a pit of burning coals to prove their devotion.

**Feast of St Anthony** St Anthony is Portugal's national saint, and the festival, held on 13 June, has taken on a particular significance in Goa. It is said that if the monsoon has not arrived by the time of the feast day, a statue of the saint should be lowered into the family well to hasten the arrival of the rain.

**Feast of St John the Baptist (Sao Joao)** Held on 24 June, this is a thanksgiving for the arrival of the monsoon. To mark the event the young men of the community jump into the water. Traditionally, each well owner must supply *feni* (alcoholic drink) to the swimmers.

**Feast of St Peter & St Paul** The fishing community, particularly in Bardez taluka, celebrates the monsoon on 29 June. Boats are tied together to form rafts, which serve as makeshift stages. After a morning church service and a large feast, the *sangodd* (bonding festival) is held, and *tiatrs* (local Konkani dramas), folk dances and music are performed before an audience that watches from the banks of the river.

### August/September

**Independence Day** Anniversary of India's independence from the UK in 1947, held on 15 August.

**Feast of St Lawrence** Celebration of the end of the monsoon and the reopening of the Mandovi to river traffic.

**Gokul Ashtami** The celebration of Krishna's birthday; in some Krishna temples the deity is symbolically placed in a cradle.

**Bonderam** Celebrated on Divar Island on the fourth Saturday of August. Processions and mock battles commemorate the disputes that took place over property on the island.

**Navidades** An offering of the first sheaves of rice is made to the head of state on 24 August.

**Ganesh Chaturthi** An important Hindu festival celebrated throughout the state to commemorate the birth of Ganesh. The festival can last for 2½ days. Clay models of Ganesh are taken in procession around the areas of the temples, before being immersed in water. A period of fasting is observed.

### September/October

**Fama de Menino Jesus** Celebrates the 'miraculous' favours granted by the 'Menino Jesus', which resides within the Church of Our Lady of Mercy; the festival occurs in Colva on the second Monday of October.

### October/November

**Diwali** Hindu festival, also known as the Festival of Lights. Second in importance only to Ganesh Chaturthi, this marks the victory of good over evil. Symbolically, lamps are lit morning and evening within the homes of worshippers.

**Govardhana Puja** This Hindu festival is dedicated to the holiest of animals, the cow.

### November/December

**Liberation Day** Held on 17 December, this day commemorates the end of Portuguese colonial rule.

**Marathi Drama Festival** Held from November to December at the Kala Academy in Panaji.

**Food & Cultural Festival** Five-day festival held on Miramar beach in November or December to highlight Goan cuisine and entertainment.

**Konkani Drama Festival** Held at Kala Academy in November and December.

**Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary** A feast held on the third Wednesday of November at Navelim, 5km south of Margao.

**Tiatr Festival** Held at the Kala Academy in November.

**Goa Heritage Festival** A two-day event of Goan food, folk music and dancing held in Panaji's Campal district in late November.

**Feast of St Francis Xavier** Celebrated in Old Goa with processions and services on 3 December.

**Feast of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception** On or around 8 December in Panaji and Margao, the feast is accompanied by a large fair.

**Christmas Day** On 24 December, Goa's Catholics flock to midnight mass services, traditionally called *Missa de Galo* or *Cock Crow* because they used to go on well into the early hours of the morning. Christmas Day is marked on 25 December with large family gatherings and feasting.

### FOOD

Unless otherwise stated, eating establishments where mains are under Rs 50 are budget, between Rs 50 and 300 midrange, and Rs 300 or more top-end.

For more information about food in Goa, see p51.

### GAY & LESBIAN TRAVELLERS

While overt displays of affection between members of the opposite sex, such as cuddling and hand holding, are frowned upon in India, it is not unusual to see Indian men holding hands with each other or engaged in other close affectionate behaviour. This does not mean they are gay.

Homosexual relations between men are illegal in India, although there is no legislation forbidding lesbian relations. The gay movement is confined almost exclusively to larger cities, and Mumbai is really the only place where there's a gay 'scene'. Since marriage is seen as important, being gay has a particular stigma – most stay in the closet or risk being disowned by their families.

However, Goa's liberal reputation draws a lot of gay men, and there's a discreet scene,

mainly around the Calangute-Baga area. A couple of the beach shacks are also becoming a bit braver with respect to gay events; on Palolem beach, Cuba (p194) hosts a gay night on Wednesday. As with relations between heterosexual Western couples travelling in India, gay and lesbian travellers should exercise discretion and refrain from displaying affection in public.

### HOLIDAYS

The three official public holidays in India are Republic Day (January 26), Independence Day (August 15), and Mahatma Gandhi's Birthday (2 October). In addition to these, holidays are called during major festivals such as Diwali, Dussehra and Holi, Nanak Jayanti, Buddha Jayanti, and Easter and Christmas.

### INSURANCE

A travel insurance policy to cover theft, loss and medical problems is a wise idea, if only because of the cosmic law that if you have it you won't need it. There is a wide variety of policies and your travel agent will have recommendations. Some policies specifically exclude 'dangerous activities', which can mean diving, motorcycling and even trekking. This is especially relevant in Goa, where most people hire a scooter or motorcycle at some time. Other increasingly popular activities in Goa are scuba diving and water sports such as water-skiing and paragliding, all of which may require special stipulations when you take out your travel insurance. For more information about health insurance see p241.

If your goods are stolen, you will also be required to file a police report (p214) to claim insurance.

Worldwide cover to travellers from over 44 countries is available online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

### INTERNET ACCESS

Internet and email services in Goa are plentiful, reliable and relatively cheap. In all major towns, beach resorts and even some small villages, you'll easily find somewhere to check email. The most common places offering Internet access are travel agencies and STD/ISD phone offices, but you'll also find many dedicated Internet cafés. Many hotels and guesthouses also offer Internet

access for guests. Average charges are around Rs 40 per hour (though some places charge up to Rs 60), usually with a minimum of 15 minutes (Rs 10 to 15), but there are places in Margao, Vasco and Mapusa charging as little as Rs 20 per hour.

If you're travelling with a laptop remember that you'll need a universal adaptor. These are readily available in Goa, though finding a surge protector is more difficult. If you want to ensure that your computer's innards stay intact through power surges, it's worth investing in one at home.

In recent years, wireless Internet has begun to sprout up in various places, though it still isn't common.

See p15 for some Internet resources.

## LEGAL MATTERS

### Drugs

For a long time Goa was a place where you could indulge in all sorts of illicit drugs with relative ease – they were cheap, good quality, readily available and the risks were minimal. Ecstasy and LSD (acid) are still the drug of choice for many ravers, and hashish (charas) is widely available – often brought down from Manali and the Kullu Valley in Himachal Pradesh, and peddled around the beach resorts.

Would-be users should not be lulled into a false sense of security in Goa; think extremely carefully about the risks before partaking. In addition to the fact that overdoses happen even in paradisa Goa, the drug laws in India are among the toughest in the world; possession of even a relatively small amount of hash (say 10g) can lead to 10 years in jail and a Rs 100,000 fine. Aguada Jail houses a number of prisoners, including Westerners, who are serving drug-related sentences.

### Police

There was a period when police often conducted 'raids' of foreigners in Goa. These would take place at roadblocks or even at private homes or hotel rooms. Usually searches yielded nothing, but there were occasions where hapless searchees were planted with drugs and ended up in prison. Incidents of raids have decreased in recent years, perhaps in part due to increased efforts of the government to crack down on corruption in the public service. However, the fact remains that both drugs and cor-

ruption are still a problem in Goa, with rampant drug use giving poorly paid policemen opportunities for extortion.

Probably the best way to deal with police extortion should it happen to you is through polite (and though it might pain you), respectful persuasion. If that fails, attempt to bargain down the 'fine' before paying up, and try to establish the identity (or at least a good mental image) of the policeman.

In practical terms, the most contact the average traveller is likely to have with the law will be on the street; you may be unlucky enough to be flagged down for not wearing a helmet on certain parts of the NH17, or checked for papers by an opportunistic police officer who is hoping to extract a 'fine'. If this happens, keep your cool and you may be able to negotiate the fine down to Rs 0. For more information about such encounters, see p239.

The Directorate of Vigilance has been established by the government of Goa in a bid to stamp out corruption of public servants. You can file an anonymous complaint about police through <http://vigilance.goa.gov.in>.

### Smoking & Spitting

On 1 January 2000 a law came into force in Goa banning smoking, spitting and the chewing of tobacco in all public places. It's a welcome move, but clearly impossible to enforce except in government buildings and places like train stations where transgressors face a Rs 1000 fine. Smoking is banned in many enclosed restaurants, especially if there is air-con, while other restaurants have nonsmoking areas. Both laws are implemented in Goa in a typically *susegad* (relaxed or laid-back) style; ashtrays are often provided in restaurants that bear 'no smoking signs' and a casual observer could assume that spitting is actually mandatory.

### MAPS

There are plenty of maps available, but none are accurate enough to guide you around the back roads without having to stop and ask for directions.

A good map is *Goa and its Beaches*, published by Roger Lascelles in the UK. The TTK Discover India series has a Goa map for Rs 65. You can buy other maps in Goa for around Rs 20, but you often get more

advertisements than street directions. A free map is also available from the GTDC, which is decent for general orientation. A good source of information on maps is [www.indiamapstore.com](http://www.indiamapstore.com).

## MONEY

The rupee (Rs) is divided into 100 paise (p). There are coins of 5, 10, 20, 25 and 50 paise, and Rs 1, 2 and 5, as well as notes of Rs 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and even 1000, which feel all the more valuable because they're so hard to come by.

ATMs are so commonly available now that you can rely on them as your primary source of cash, though hard currency (or travellers cheques) is recommended as backup. You need to show your passport when you are changing money or cashing travellers cheques.

See the inside front cover for exchange rates at the time of writing, and p13 for typical costs.

### ATMs

Several banks have introduced 24-hour ATMs into Goa, and more are constantly opening. These take international cards using the Cirrus, Maestro, MasterCard and Visa networks. The main banks with ATMs are ICICI, Centurion, HDFC and UTI. Often ATMs are not actually attached to a bank branch but are instead installed in shopping areas purely as cash-dispensing machines. They are usually in an air-conditioned cubicle (which you may need your card to access) and are guarded by 24-hour armed security. You can currently find ATMs in Panaji, Margao, Mapusa, Calangute, Candolim, Vasco da Gama, Ponda and Colva. Plan ahead when you're heading to the beaches away from these.

### Cash

It pays to have some US dollars, pounds sterling or euros for times when you can't change travellers cheques or use a credit card. You won't have any problem changing money in the tourist areas. The best rates are usually at Thomas Cook and the State Bank of India. Next best are private moneychangers. Hotels offer the least attractive rates. When changing money, don't accept notes that are damaged because you might be hard-pressed to pass them on.

## Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted in most major tourist centres, but don't expect to be able to use a card in budget hotels or restaurants. Upmarket hotels accept them, as do most travel agencies and practically all department stores. MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted cards. Cash advances on credit cards can be made at branches of Thomas Cook and Bank of Baroda, as well as at most moneychangers (which are often travel agencies) at the beach resorts.

## Encashment Certificates

All money is meant to be changed at official banks or moneychangers, and you are supposed to be given an encashment certificate for each transaction. These can be useful if you want to re-exchange excess rupees for hard currency, buy a tourist-quota train ticket, or if you need to show a tax clearance certificate. ATM receipts serve the same purpose.

## International Transfers

International money transfers can be arranged through Thomas Cook or Western Union; both have branches in Panaji and some of the larger towns in Goa. Charges for this service are high – if you have a credit card it's cheaper to get someone to deposit money in your home account and draw a cash advance.

## Moneychangers

Private moneychangers are everywhere in towns and beach resorts. They keep longer hours than banks, and are quick and efficient. Many travel agencies double as exchange offices and give cash advances on credit cards. Check rates at the banks first.

## Tippling & Baksheesh

Although tipping is not necessary, particularly if you're hanging out on one of the more remote beaches, most people tip staff in their hotel and at restaurants. A waiter or a room boy gets paid about Rs 1000 to 2000 a month (US\$25 to US\$50), so they rely heavily on the tips they pick up in the tourist season.

There's no need to go overboard; Rs 10 to 20 is about right for members of the hotel staff who help you out, and the normal 10% figure is adequate in restaurants.



Some hotels and restaurants prefer that you contribute to a general tips box so money can be distributed evenly among staff. It's not necessary to tip taxi drivers for short trips, but it's normal to tip the driver if you've hired a car for a day.

The term 'baksheesh' encompasses tipping and a lot more besides. In some situations it is an opportunity to respectfully give charity, in others it is a necessity to get things done. See p33 for more about baksheesh.

### Travellers Cheques

All major brands of travellers cheques are accepted in India, with American Express (Amex) and Thomas Cook being the most widely traded. Pounds sterling, euros and US dollars are the safest bet. Charges for changing travellers cheques vary but hot competition among private moneychangers means you can usually change cheques without commission.

All travellers cheques are replaceable, but this does little good if you have to go home and apply for them at your bank. Keep an emergency stash of cash in a separate place from your cheques, along with a record of cheque serial numbers, proof of purchase slips and your passport number.

American Express and Thomas Cook travellers cheques are easiest to replace in Goa, provided you have the right documentation. If your travellers cheques are lost or stolen, contact the following offices in Panaji immediately:

**American Express** (☎ 0832-2432960; Menezes Air Travel, Ourem Rd)

**Thomas Cook** (☎ 0832-2221312; www.thomascook.co.in; 8 Alcon Chambers, Dayanand Bandodkar Marg; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat year round, 10am-5pm Sun Oct-Mar)

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Goans are generally quite mellow about having their photograph taken, regarding it as the price one has to pay for encouraging the tourist industry. Do ask, however, before you poke your camera into someone's face – particularly before snapping women or older people. If anyone objects to having their photo taken, respect their wishes.

An easy way to make friends is to take their address and offer to send a copy of the photo when you get home (as long as you do

it, of course). It can also be tempting to take photos of some of the colourful scenes at the Anjuna flea market and the other big markets, but some of the vendors (both Western and Indian) strongly object to being photographed. Again, it is only polite to ask.

Do not take photos inside temples, and ask before you use a camera and flash in a church.

### POST

The Indian postal and poste restante services are generally good. Letters almost always reach you, and letters you send almost invariably reach their destination, although they can take up to three weeks.

It costs Rs 8 to send a small postcard or aerogramme anywhere in the world from India, and Rs 15 for a large postcard or a standard letter (up to 20g).

### Receiving Mail

Have letters addressed to you with your surname in capitals and underlined, followed by poste restante, GPO and the city or town in question. Many 'lost' letters are simply misfiled under given (Christian) names, so always check under both your given and last names. Letters sent via poste restante are generally held for one month only, after which they might be returned to the sender or just left in a box under the counter until they disintegrate.

### Sending Mail

Sending parcels from Goa requires a little more than fronting up at the post office with your package, though it may take you a couple of trips before your parcel is on its merry way. First, take the parcel to a wrapping service (there's usually one very close to the post office – look for signs reading 'parcel post'), and get it stitched up. It can be quite an experience to watch your package get transformed with boxes, linen, calico and newspaper. You may even find that your possessions are sewn up with a needle and thread, and the stitching sealed with wax.

Book packages (up to 5kg) can be sent without a customs form and for considerably less money. They will need to be wrapped so that the contents of your parcel can be inspected on the way.

At the post office you'll get the necessary customs declaration forms, which will be

attached to the parcel. To avoid excise duty at the delivery end, specify that the contents are a 'gift' with a value less than Rs 1000.

Express Mail Service (EMS) Speedpost is available at major post offices (such as Panaji and Margao), and charges to various destinations are as follows:

**Australia** Rs 700 for the first kilogram, plus Rs 300 for each additional kilogram.

**Europe** (including the UK) Rs 950 for the first kilogram, plus Rs 300 for each additional kilogram.

**USA** Rs 775 for the first kilogram, plus Rs 400 for each additional kilogram.

This is more expensive than ordinary post (which will cost Rs 570/645/500 for 1kg respectively), but is faster and much more reliable.

Sending parcels in the other direction (to India) is akin to gambling. Don't count on anything bigger than a letter getting to you. And don't count on a letter getting to you if there's anything of value inside it.

### SHOPPING

Although Goa is not renowned for its handicrafts, a vibrant market culture lures traders from all over India. While this sadly means that you are unlikely to take home much that is genuinely Goan (apart from the odd decorative bottle of *feni*), it also means that you can find almost anything from Kashmiri carpets to fabrics from Rajasthan, carvings from Karnataka and paintings from Nepal.

The state's biggest market – and one of the state's key tourist attractions – is the Anjuna flea market held every Wednesday in season. Ingo's Saturday Nite Bazaar in

Arpora and Mackie's Saturday Nite Bazaar in Baga are both tourist-oriented affairs, and make for a great night out. The range of products on offer at these places is exceptional, but locals prefer to shop at local markets where things can cost less; Mapusa's Friday market is a popular one. Panaji and Margao also have busy municipal markets, though you may not find anything you're particularly interested in buying.

In Panaji the main shopping street is 18th June Rd, a long thoroughfare lined with craft and clothing shops, emporiums and shops selling cashews and spices; MG Rd has a collection of modern Western department stores, including Nike, Benetton and Levi's. Perhaps the greatest concentration of department stores, boutiques, jewellery and craft shops is in Calangute, on both the road that leads down to the main beach, and the Calangute-Candolim road. Prices are high here but so is the quality of the merchandise.

Be careful when buying items that include delivery to your home country. You may well be assured that the price includes home delivery and all customs and handling charges, but you may later find that you have to collect the item yourself from your country's main port or airport, and pay customs and handling charges.

### Bargaining

While stores in the larger towns often have fixed prices, you are generally expected to bargain at markets, though some Western traders operate on a more efficient system of reasonable first quotes. But, mostly, bargaining is the name of the game. The trick with

#### THE ART OF HAGGLING

The friendly art of haggling is an absolute must in most parts of Goa, unless you don't mind paying above market value. Traders in towns and markets are accustomed to tourists who have lots of money and little time to spend it. This means that a shopkeeper's 'very good price' will be more often than not a very bad price.

If you have absolutely no idea what something should really cost, start by slashing the price by at least half. The vendor will probably look aghast and tell you that this is impossible, as it's the very price they had to pay for the item themselves. This is the usual story. This is when the battle for a bargain begins and it's up to you and the salesperson to negotiate a price. You'll find that many shopkeepers lower their so-called final price if you proceed to head out of the shop and tell them that you'll think about it.

Don't lose your sense of humour and sense of fairness while haggling – it's not a battle to squeeze every last rupee out of a poor trader, and not all vendors are out to rip you off. In truth, this can be a fun exchange.



bargaining is that you should have some idea of what you should be paying for any given article. You can find out by checking prices at fixed-price stores, asking other travellers what they paid and shopping around before settling on a vendor. If all else fails, a general rule of thumb is to offer half the original asking price and work up from there.

At the tourist markets, traders usually start very high with their prices.

## What to Buy

### ANTIQUES

Articles more than 100 years old are not allowed to be exported from India without an export clearance certificate. If you have doubts about any item and think it could be defined as an antique, check with the **Archaeological Survey of India** (<http://asi.nic.in/>) at the Archaeological Museum in Old Goa.

### BRONZE FIGURES & WOODCARVING

Delightful small images of gods are made by the age-old lost-wax process. In this process, a wax figure is made, a mould is formed around it, then wax is melted and poured out. Molten metal is poured in and once it's solidified the mould is broken open. Figures of Ganesh, and of Shiva in his incarnation as dancing Nataraja, are among the most popular.

In South India, images of the gods are also carved out of sandalwood. Rosewood is used to carve animals, elephants in particular. Carved wooden furniture and other household items, either in natural finish or lacquered, are also made in various locations.

### CARPETS

It may not surprise you that India produces and exports more handcrafted carpets than Iran, but it probably is more of a surprise that some of them are of virtually equal quality. India's best carpets come from Kashmir, and these can be found in traders' shops in Goa.

Carpets are either made of pure wool, wool with a small percentage of silk to give it a sheen (known as 'silk touch'), or pure silk. The latter are more for decoration than hard wear. Expect to pay from Rs 7000 for a good quality 1.2m by 1.8m carpet, but don't be surprised if the price is more than twice as high.

### CLOTHING

Western-brand clothing stores are all the rage in Panaji and Calangute these days. Big names like Benetton, Levi's, Nike and Lacoste now make much of their produce in India, and these shops, which cater almost exclusively to tourists, sell their brand-name gear at prices lower than you'd find at home. Don't expect the cheap knock offs you might pick up in Bangkok – here, Levi jeans go for around Rs 2000 and Lacoste polo shirts retail at Rs 1000.

### JEWELLERY

The heavy folk-art jewellery of Rajasthan has particular appeal for Western tastes. Tibetan jewellery is even chunkier and more folklike than the Rajasthani variety. If you're looking for fine jewellery, as opposed to folk jewellery, you may well find that much of what is produced in India is way over the top.

### LEATHERWORK

Indian leatherwork is not made from cowhide but from buffalo, camel, goat or some other form of animal. *Chappals*, the basic sandals found all over India, are the most popular buy.

### MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Indian musical instruments are an interesting buy in India, and you'll see new and second-hand guitars, sitars and tablas at the Anjuna flea market. There are also instrument shops in Panaji and Margao. Easier to carry and even easier to play are CDs and tapes. You can find Bollywood soundtracks, Goa trance and mainstream Western music at shops and stalls all over Goa for between Rs 100 and 600.

### PAPIER-MÂCHÉ

This is probably the most characteristic Kashmiri craft. The basic papier-mâché article is made in a mould, then painted and polished in successive layers until the final intricate design is produced. Prices depend upon the complexity and quality of the painted design and the amount of gold leaf used. Items include bowls, cups, containers, jewellery boxes, letter holders, tables, lamps, coasters, trays and so on. A cheap bowl might cost only Rs 50, while a large, well-made item might approach Rs 1000.

### SILKS & SARIS

Silk is cheap and the quality is often excellent. If you are buying a silk sari, it helps to know a bit about the silk and the sari. Saris are 5.5m long, unless they have fabric for a choli (sari blouse) attached, in which case they are 6m. Sari silk is graded and sold by weight (grams per metre).

### TEXTILES

This is still India's major industry and 40% of the total production is at the village level, where it is known as *khadi* (homespun cloth). Bedspreads, tablecloths, cushion covers or fabric for clothing are popular *khadi* purchases. There is an amazing variety of cloth styles, types and techniques around the country. In Gujarat and Rajasthan heavy material is embroidered with tiny mirrors and beads to produce everything from dresses to stuffed toys to wall hangings. Tie-dye work is also popular in Rajasthan and Kerala. In Kashmir embroidered materials are made into shirts and dresses. Batik is a relatively recent introduction from Indonesia that has become widespread; *kalamkari* (textile art that is hand painted or block printed) cloth from Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat is a similar but older craft.

## SOLO TRAVELLERS

The general consensus is that travelling in Goa is markedly easier than travelling in the rest of the country, and many solo travellers wander down this way for some relaxation and respite from the challenge of travelling in the rest of India. It's a sociable place, so you only have to be as solo as you want to be. While most visitors to the Calangute-Baga beach resort areas travel in couples or groups, there are many solo travellers further north in the Anjuna-Vagator area and further south around Palolem. Meeting them at beach shacks, bars and parties is not difficult.

The downside to being a solo female is that often people will think that you obviously want company. Keep a book on hand to give off the appearance of busy contentedness so that unwanted company can be deterred. On the whole though, travelling as a solo female couldn't be easier. Attitudes to women are more liberal and accepting than in many other parts of India, and you can largely be yourself without running the

risk of misinterpretation and mistreatment. Like anywhere though, there are serious risks to be aware of (see p228).

## TELEPHONE & FAX

Even in the smallest town in Goa you'll find private STD/ISD call booths that have direct local, interstate and international dialling. Usually found in shops or other businesses, they are easy to spot because of the large STD/ISD/PCO signs advertising the service. Travel agencies and Internet places also generally offer a telephone service. Phone calls are digitally metered so you can keep an eye on the cost while you're talking and there are no nasty surprises at the end. Some booths offer a call-back service for a small per minute charge, but there's no such thing as a free reverse-charge call.

Direct international calls from these phones cost Rs 25 to 40 per minute, depending on the country you are calling. Internet cafés are starting to set up Internet phone facilities, by far the cheapest way of making an international call.

### Fax

Many telephone offices have fax machine but are not cheap or consistent. Sending a fax internationally can cost between Rs 40 and 100 per page, plus line time. Faxes sent within India should only cost around Rs 10 per page. You can receive faxes for around Rs 10 per page. Private Internet cafés and telephone offices often offer this service, and many hotels have fax facilities.

## Mobile Phones

These have been embraced with a passion in India, and if you intend to spend some time in Goa it may be worth getting hooked up to the local network. Call costs – even international calls – are relatively cheap in India.

You can bring your own handset and instantly get connected to a prepaid account on one of the local networks. The most popular companies are **Idea** ([www.ideacellular.com](http://www.ideacellular.com)), formerly AT&T, **Airtel** ([www.airtelworld.com](http://www.airtelworld.com)) and **BPL** ([www.bplmobile.com](http://www.bplmobile.com)). Your phone will only work in Goa and parts of Maharashtra, although most operators have a 'roaming' facility that allows you to receive calls and send SMS messages outside Goa. A SIM card

(from a PCO/STD/ISD booth, private office or Internet café) costs around Rs 100, plus an initial amount of call time. You may need a photograph of yourself and a copy of your passport when signing onto a network.

Top-up cards come in various denominations; the more credit on your phone, the cheaper the call rate. Call rates within India are around Rs 1 per minute and you can call internationally for less than Rs 30 per minute. SMS messaging is even cheaper at around Rs 5 per text message. Note that calls to your mobile phone are also charged to your account – check the network coverage and call costs for the specific places you'll be contacting before you commit to a service.

**CellTone** (☎ 2422888; 7 Kamat Nagar Apt) in Panaji (opposite Hotel Marva, off MG Rd), is a reliable place to get hooked up to the local mobile phone network.

### Phone Codes

The area code for all places within the state of Goa is ☎ 0832, which you only need to dial when calling from outside the state or from a mobile phone.

To make an international call, you need to dial ☎ 00 (international access code from India), plus the country code (of the country you are calling), the area code and local number.

To make a call to Goa from outside the country, dial the international access code of the country you are in plus ☎ 91 (international country code for India), then ☎ 832 (Goa's area code omitting the initial 0) and then the local number.

### TIME

India is 5½ hours ahead of GMT/UTC, 4½ hours behind Australia (EST) and 10½ hours ahead of America (EST). It is officially known as IST – Indian Standard Time, although many Indians prefer to think it stands for Indian Stretchable Time! When it's noon in London, it's 5.30pm in Goa.

## TOURIST INFORMATION

### Local Tourist Offices

Within Goa there are representatives of the national **Ministry of Tourism** ([www.incredibleindia.org](http://www.incredibleindia.org)), and the state government's tourist efforts: **Goa Tourism** ([www.goatourism.org](http://www.goatourism.org)) and **Goa Tourism Development Corporation** (GTDC; [www.goa-tourism.com](http://www.goa-tourism.com)). From the tourist's perspective,

the latter are one and the same. The Government of India tourist office is next to the Municipal Gardens in Panaji, and there are GTDC tourist information counters in Panaji, Margao, Mapusa, Vasco da Gama and at Dabolim Airport.

### Tourist Offices Abroad

The Government of India Ministry of Tourism maintains a string of tourist offices in other countries where you can get brochures, leaflets and some information about India.

**Australia** (☎ 02-9264 4855; [indtour@ozemail.com.au](mailto:indtour@ozemail.com.au); 2nd fl, Piccadilly, 210 Pitt St, Sydney NSW 2000)

**Canada** (☎ 416-962 3787; [indiatourism@bellnet.ca](mailto:indiatourism@bellnet.ca); 60 Bloor St West, Ste No 1003, Toronto, Ontario M4W 3B8)

**France** (☎ 01 45 23 30 45; [indtourparis@aol.com](mailto:indtourparis@aol.com); 1-13 Bis Blvd Hausmann, 75008 Paris)

**Germany** (☎ 069-242 94 90; [info@india-tourism.com](mailto:info@india-tourism.com); Baseler Strasse 46, 60329 Frankfurt-am-Main 1)

**Italy** (☎ 028 05 35 06; [info@indiatourismmilan.com](mailto:info@indiatourismmilan.com); Via Albricci 9, 20122 Milan)

**Japan** (☎ 0357-15 062; [indtour@smile.ocn.ne.jp](mailto:indtour@smile.ocn.ne.jp); Pearl Bldg, 7-9-18 Ginza Chou-Ku, Tokyo 104)

**Netherlands** (☎ 0206-20 89 91; [info.nl@india-tourism.com](mailto:info.nl@india-tourism.com); Rokin 9-15, 1012 KK Amsterdam)

**Singapore** (☎ 6235 8677; [indtour.sing@pacific.net.sg](mailto:indtour.sing@pacific.net.sg); 20 Kramat Lane, #01-01A United House, 228773 Singapore)

**South Africa** (☎ 011-325 0880; [goitto@global.co.za](mailto:goitto@global.co.za); PO Box 412452, Craig Hall 2020, Johannesburg-2000)

**Sweden** (☎ 08-215081; [info.se@india-tourism.com](mailto:info.se@india-tourism.com); Sveavagen 9-11, S-III 57, Stockholm 11157)

**UK** (☎ 020-7437 3677; [info@indiatouristoffice.org](mailto:info@indiatouristoffice.org); 7 Cork St, London W1X 2LN)

**United Arab Emirates** (☎ 04-227 4848; [goirto@emirates.net.ae](mailto:goirto@emirates.net.ae); Post Box 12856; NASA Bldg, Al Maktoum Rd, Dubai)

**USA** New York (☎ 212-586 4901; Suite 1808, 1270 Ave of the Americas, New York, NY 10020); Los Angeles (☎ 213-380 8855; [indiatourismla@aol.com](mailto:indiatourismla@aol.com); Suite 204, 3550 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90010)

### TOURS

Tours of Goa are offered by private companies as well as by the GTDC. Book tours at the head office of the **GTDC** (☎ 0832-2224132, 0832-2226728, 0832-2226515, 0832-243 6666; [www.goa-tourism.com](http://www.goa-tourism.com); Alvaro Costas Rd, Panaji), or at any of the GTDC hotels in Panaji, Margao, Calangute, Colva, Mapusa, Vasco da Gama, Mayem, Old Goa and Ponda.

GTDC's one-day tours are comprehensive and good value, though not ideal

given the slapdash approach. If you're in a hurry and don't mind spending lots of time looking out a bus window, give them a go. Tours are dependent on numbers, and so don't necessary run when they're scheduled to.

The following is a summary of GTDC's tours from Panaji:

**Backwater Thrills** Cruise on the Mandovi River past Old Goa, Choroa and Divar Island to Savoai Plantation. It costs Rs 600, and runs from 9.30am to 4pm.

**Dudhsagar Falls** Dudhsagar, Tambdi Surla Mahadeva Temple. It costs Rs 600/700 for a normal/air-con bus, and runs from 9am to 6pm.

**Goa by Night** Dona Paula bay and sites around Panaji, and ends with a river cruise. It costs Rs 150, and runs from 6.30pm to 9.30pm.

**North Goa** Saptakoteswara Temple, Mayem Lake, Mapusa, Vagator, Anjuna.

**South Goa** Covers Old Goa sites, ancestral Goa at Loutolim, Margao, Colva, Dona Paula and Miramar. It costs Rs 130/200 for a normal/air-con bus, and runs from 9.30am to 6pm.

One of the best of the private tour operators is **Day Tripper Tours & Travel** (☎ 2276726; [www.daytrippergoa.com](http://www.daytrippergoa.com)), based in Calangute. Within Goa it offers a range of overnights tours and day trips, including tours to Palolem (£5.50) and Dudhsagar Falls (£15), as well as longer interstate trips to places such as the Taj Mahal (£317/379/445 for economy/midrange/top-end accommodation).

**Southern Birdwing** (☎ 2402957; [www.southernbirdwing.com](http://www.southernbirdwing.com)) in Nerul runs wildlife tours and ecotours including crocodile-spotting on the Cumbrous Canal and bird-watching trips to Bondla and the Carambolim wetlands.

**Ola Jeep Tours** (☎ 2271249; [www.olatoursgoa.com](http://www.olatoursgoa.com)) has recommended trips in a 10-seater jeep to Dudhsagar Falls (Rs 1000) and Ponda's temples and spice plantations (Rs 900), as well as overnight cocohut stays at Morjim Beach and Palolem (both Rs 1300).

**Peter & Friends Classic Bike Adventure** (☎ 2254467; [www.classic-bike-india.de](http://www.classic-bike-india.de); Casa Tres Amigos, Socol Vado No 425, Assagao) run good motorcycle tours (p240). There's also the cycling tour option; **British-run Cycle Goa** (☎ 0832-2871369; [www.cyclegoa.com](http://www.cyclegoa.com); Shop 7, Mobar Beach Resort, Cavellissim, Salcette) has been recommended. Its two-week tours cost £995.

For information on river cruises in Goa, see p91.

## VISAS

Everyone except for Bhutanese and Nepalese needs to obtain a visa before entering India.

Six-month multiple-entry visas (valid from the date of issue) are issued to most nationalities regardless of whether you intend staying that long or are re-entering the country. Visa applications can be made at your nearest embassy or consulate in person or by post. You need to provide a completed visa application form, passport photographs, the visa fee and, in some cases, an itinerary and proof of onward travel (such as a flight ticket out of India). Check with your local Indian embassy (p216) for specific requirements. Many embassies have a website where you can download and print a visa application forms and get all the information you need. Visa fees vary from country to country: the cost is A\$90 for Australians, UK£30 for Britons, and US\$60 for US passport holders.

### Tax Clearance Certificates

If you stay in India for more than 120 days, you officially need a 'tax clearance certificate' to leave the country, but we've never heard from anyone who has actually been asked for this document on departure. In Panaji, go to the foreign section of the **Income Tax Office** (Shanta Bldg, Emidio Gracia Rd) with your passport and a handful of bank exchange or ATM receipts (to show you have been changing foreign currency into rupees officially).

### Visa Extensions

You can only get another six-month visa by leaving the country and coming back in on a new visa. Officially, visa extensions are only possible for certain types of visas, which does not include tourist and transit visas. The power to extend visas is vested with the Ministry of Home Affairs, but in certain situations Foreigners' Regional Registration Offices (FRRO) may be able to help you. They can either grant a short temporary extension and/or forward your passport and supporting documentation (extension form and photographs) on to the **Ministry of Home Affairs** (☎ 011-230932011; <http://mha.nic.in/welcome.html>; North Block, Central Secretariat, New Delhi) to be properly processed. But don't expect too much; general practice is to visit the ministry

in person and hope for the best. Officially, visa extensions are only obtainable in Delhi and, even then, only in extenuating circumstances. In Panaji, visa extensions are not granted as a matter of course. If you're unsuccessful here, Mumbai and Bangalore are the nearest alternatives.

People travelling on tourist visas are not required to register with the FRRO; the form that you fill out each time you check into a hotel takes the place of this. Only foreigners with visas valid for longer than 180 days are required to register, as are nationals of Pakistan and Afghanistan. FRRO can be located in the following cities:

**Mumbai** (☎ 022-22621169, 022-22620721; 3rd fl, Special Branch Bldg, Badruddin Tayabji Lane) Behind St Xavier's College.

**Panaji** (Police Headquarters; ☎ 2224488; Malaca Rd; ☎ 9.30am-1pm Mon-Fri) On the west side of Azad Maidan.

## VOLUNTEER WORK

Numerous charities and international aid and development agencies have branches in India, where there are a few work opportunities for foreigners. Though it may be possible to find temporary volunteer work when you are in India, you'll probably be of more use to the charity concerned if you write in advance and, if they need you, stay long enough to be of help. A week on a hospital ward may go a little way towards salving your own conscience, but you actually may not do much more than get in the way of the people who work there long term. Many volunteer organisations arrange long-term placements (one to two years) for volunteers in India.

The following organisations may be able to help or offer advice and further contacts:

**Action Without Borders** (☎ 212-843 3973; www.idealists.org; Suite 1510, 360 West 31st St, New York, NY, USA)

**Australian Volunteers International** (☎ 03-9279 1788; www.ozvol.org.au; 71 Argyle St, PO Box 350, Fitzroy, Vic 3065, Australia)

**Coordinating Committee for International Voluntary Service** (☎ 01 45 68 49 36; www.unesco.org/cciv; Unesco House, 31 Rue Francois Bonvin, 7532 Paris Cedex 15, France)

**Global Volunteers** (☎ 800-487 1074; www.globalvolunteers.org; 375 East Little Canada Rd, St Paul, MN 55117-1628, USA)

**Voluntary Service Overseas** (VSO; ☎ 020-8780 7200; www.vso.org.uk; 317 Putney Bridge Rd, Putney, London SW15 2PN, UK)

**Working Abroad** (☎ in France 04 68 26 41 79; www.workingabroad.com; PO Box 454, Flat 1, Brighton, BN1 3Z5, East Sussex, UK)

One of the best places for foreigners to get involved in Goa is **El Shaddai** (☎ 0832-2266520; www.childrescue.net; El Shaddai House, Duler, Mapusa), which makes no bones about the fact that its work depends on the generosity of tourists. El Shaddai works hard to get children off the streets and into schools. For more information on the work of El Shaddai, see p138.

Other organisations that may be interested in your time and commitment:

**Goa Foundation** (☎ 0832-2256479; www.goa.com/goafoundation; G/8 St Britto's Apt, Feira Alta, Mapusa, 403 508) A research-based environment and conservation organisation.

**International Animal Rescue** (Animal Tracks; ☎ 0832-2268328; www.iar.org.uk; Madungo Vaddo, Assagao, Bardez) Their animal sterilisation and vaccination programmes are making a noticeable impact on the street. Visitors are welcome to the centre; guided tours run at 11am and 3.30pm. For more information see p48.

## WOMEN TRAVELLERS

Foreign women travelling in India have widely been viewed by Indian men as free and easy, based largely on what they see in cheap Western soaps. Fanning this flame is the fact that a sexual revolution has hit India, and marriage before or outside of marriage is less taboo than it once was. This new-found emancipation, combined with misconceptions about Western culture, mean that some men are wielding their sexuality like pubescent boys.

This issue in Goa is far from black and white. On one hand, Goa has a (sometimes justified) reputation of being a place where women let it all hang out at the beach and are sexually available. Thus for some Indian men, a perfect weekend away with their (male) friends is a trip to Goa, where booze and women are cheap. Generally it doesn't get beyond being extremely annoying – groups of men wander down the beach and either try to chat women up or just stare at them. It's not uncommon for hapless women to be surrounded by groups of Indian men wearing matching

'It's better in Goa' singlets and forcefully requesting a photo, which will later be shown at home as proof that it is, in fact, better in Goa.

On the other hand, Goa is considered to be one of the most liberal states in the country. Women feel safe here and don't need to be as guarded over their behaviour as they do in many other parts of the country. Many years of many foreigners visiting this tiny state means that the local understanding of Western culture is nuanced enough that misinterpretations of women's behaviour are rarer here than in other parts of India.

But the sad fact remains – people have been raped in Goa. Foreign women have been attacked on secluded beaches at every hour of the day. Rapes have been reported even at busier beach towns during the day. Over Christmas, in particular, there are

sometimes signs warning women to not wander off alone – even to go and relieve themselves in a nearby sand dune.

Though the biggest issue you're likely to face is the occasional lewd comment and being ogled at the beach by groups of Indian youths, the risks are real and mean that you should use your judgement. Check for peepholes in hotel rooms and protect your right to public space. Modest standards of dress will go some way towards minimising problems: topless bathing is illegal, and wearing bikinis and short skirts away from the beach is downright disrespectful. See p41 for more on this. It also pays to keep your wits about you and avoid situations that make you more vulnerable; diminished mental alertness through use of drugs and alcohol will make you far more of a target and far less able to defend yourself.

# Transport

## CONTENTS

<b>Getting There &amp; Away</b>	<b>230</b>
Entering the Country	230
Getting to India	230
Getting to Goa	233
<b>Getting Around</b>	<b>235</b>
Bicycle	235
Boat	236
Bus	236
Car	236
Hitching	237
Local Transport	237
Motorcycle	237
Train	240

### THINGS CHANGE...

The information in this chapter is particularly vulnerable to change. Check directly with the airline or travel agent to make sure you understand how a fare (and the ticket you may buy) works for international travel. Shop carefully. The details given in this chapter should be regarded as pointers and not a substitute for your own careful, up-to-date research.

Flights, tours and rail tickets can be booked online at [www.lonelyplanet.com/travel\\_services](http://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel_services).

## GETTING THERE & AWAY

### ENTERING THE COUNTRY

Entering India is not particularly complicated; the standard immigration and customs procedures apply. For customs information, see p214.

### Passports

You must have a valid passport, visa and onward/return ticket to enter India. Always carry copies of your visa or keep them in an online travel vault.

## GETTING TO INDIA

### Airports

On your way to Goa, you will most likely be flying into Mumbai or Chennai airports.

**Chennai** (MAA; Anna International Airport;

☎ 044-22560551; [www.chennaiairport.com](http://www.chennaiairport.com))

**Mumbai** (BOM; Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport;

☎ 022-26829000; [www.mumbaiairport.com](http://www.mumbaiairport.com))

### Airlines

**Aeroflot** (SU; [www.aeroflot.org](http://www.aeroflot.org)) Sheremetyevo International Airport, Moscow (MUMBAI).

**Air France** (AF; [www.airfrance.com](http://www.airfrance.com)) Charles de Gaulle, Paris.

**Air India** (AI; [www.airindia.com](http://www.airindia.com)) Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi.

**Alitalia** (AZ; [www.alitalia.com](http://www.alitalia.com)) Fiumicino International Airport, Rome.

**British Airways** (BA; [www.british-airways.com](http://www.british-airways.com)) Heathrow Airport, London.

**Cathay Pacific Airways** (CX; [www.cathaypacific.com](http://www.cathaypacific.com)) Hong Kong International Airport.

**Emirates** (EK; [www.emirates.com](http://www.emirates.com)) Dubai International Airport.

**Gulf Air** (GF; [www.gulfairco.com](http://www.gulfairco.com)) Bahrain International Airport.

**KLM – Royal Dutch Airlines** (KL; [www.klm.com](http://www.klm.com)) Schiphol Airport, Amsterdam.

**Kuwait Airways** (KU; [www.kuwait-airways.com](http://www.kuwait-airways.com)) Kuwait International Airport.

**Lufthansa Airlines** (LH; [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com)) Frankfurt International Airport.

**Malaysian Airlines** (MH; [www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com)) Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

**Qantas Airways** (QF; [www.qantas.com.au](http://www.qantas.com.au)) Kingsford Smith Airport, Sydney.

**Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation** (RA; [www.royalnepal.com](http://www.royalnepal.com)) Kathmandu Airport.

**Singapore Airlines** (SQ; [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com)) Changi Airport, Singapore.

**Sri Lankan Airlines** (UL; [www.srilankan.aero](http://www.srilankan.aero)) Bandaranaike International Airport, Colombo.

### DEPARTURE TAX

Departure tax to most countries is Rs 500, but in the vast majority of cases this is included in the cost of your ticket and is not payable at the airport – check with your travel agent.

### CLIMATE CHANGE & TRAVEL

Climate change is a serious threat to the ecosystems that humans rely upon, and air travel is the fastest-growing contributor to the problem. Lonely Planet regards travel, overall, as a global benefit, but believes we all have a responsibility to limit our personal impact on global warming.

### Flying & Climate Change

Pretty much every form of motorised travel generates CO<sub>2</sub> (the main cause of human-induced climate change) but planes are far and away the worst offenders, not just because of the sheer distances they allow us to travel, but because they release greenhouse gases high into the atmosphere. The statistics are frightening: two people taking a return flight between Europe and the US will contribute as much to climate change as an average household's gas and electricity consumption over a whole year.

### Carbon Offset Schemes

Climatecare.org uses a 'carbon calculator' that allows travellers to offset the level of greenhouse gases they are responsible for with financial contributions to sustainable travel schemes that reduce global warming – including projects in India, Honduras, Kazakhstan and Uganda.

Lonely Planet, together with Rough Guides and other concerned partners in the travel industry, support the carbon offset scheme run by climatecare.org. Lonely Planet offsets all of its staff and author travel.

For more information check out our website: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com).

**Swiss International Airlines** (LX; [www.swiss.com](http://www.swiss.com)) Zurich International Airport.

### CHARTER FLIGHTS

The number of charter flights headed to Goa is increasing every year. The vast majority come from the UK, and Russians are heading over in steadily increasing numbers. There is talk of establishing such arrangements out of Israel and the US.

You can fly direct to Goa from the UK on a seat-only charter flight or on a package trip that includes accommodation. The latter can be great value but cuts back your flexibility to relocate to a different beach or hotel.

Be aware that it is illegal to enter on a scheduled flight and out on a charter flight, and vice versa: if you enter on a charter flight, you must also leave on one.

Reliable charter flight booking services: **Charter Flight Centre** (☎ 08450-450153; [www.charterflights.co.uk](http://www.charterflights.co.uk))

**Flight Searchers** (☎ 08000-935434; [www.flightsearchers.co.uk](http://www.flightsearchers.co.uk))

### Tickets

Stiff competition has resulted in widespread discounting. If you're buying your ticket online (which is smart given the excellent fares available), do it early; seats are usually

sold in blocks with the cheapest economy fares going first.

Reputable international ticket sites:

**Expedia** ([www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com))

**Flight Centre International** ([www.flightcentre.com](http://www.flightcentre.com))

**Flights.com** ([www.flights.com](http://www.flights.com))

**STA Travel** ([www.statravel.com](http://www.statravel.com))

**Travelocity** ([www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com))

### Africa

Both **Rennies Travel** ([www.renniestravel.com](http://www.renniestravel.com)) and **STA Travel** ([www.statravel.co.za](http://www.statravel.co.za)) have offices throughout Southern Africa.

### Asia

**STA Travel** (Bangkok ☎ 0 2236 0262; [www.statravel.co.th](http://www.statravel.co.th); Hong Kong ☎ 852-27361618; [www.statravel.com.hk](http://www.statravel.com.hk); Japan ☎ 0353-912 922; [www.statravel.com.jp](http://www.statravel.com.jp); Singapore ☎ 6737 7188; [www.statravel.com.sg](http://www.statravel.com.sg)) is found throughout Asia. Another resource in Japan is **No 1 Travel** (☎ 0332-056 073; [www.no1-travel.com](http://www.no1-travel.com)).

### MALAYSIA

**Malaysia Airlines** ([www.malaysiaairlines.com](http://www.malaysiaairlines.com)) flies to various cities in India.

### NEPAL

Indian Airlines and Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation (RNAC) share routes between India and Kathmandu.



**SINGAPORE**

Return fares from Singapore to Mumbai or Chennai are available for about US\$700 with Air India; you'll pay more with Singapore Airlines or Thai Airways International.

Flights direct to India can be purchased at [www.singaporeair.com](http://www.singaporeair.com). **STA Travel** (☎ 6737 7188; [www.statravel.com.sg/sta](http://www.statravel.com.sg/sta)) has a strong presence in Singapore.

**SRI LANKA**

Tickets to Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi and Bangalore can be purchased at [www.srilankan.aero](http://www.srilankan.aero).

**THAILAND**

Bangkok is the most popular departure point from Southeast Asia into India. **STA Travel** (☎ 0662-2360262; [www.statravel.co.th](http://www.statravel.co.th)) has an office in Bangkok. Tickets to India from Thailand can be purchased at [www.thaiair.com](http://www.thaiair.com). Flight details and other information is available from within Thailand (☎ 02-15660).

**Australia**

Both **STA Travel** (☎ 1300 733 035; [www.statravel.com.au](http://www.statravel.com.au)) and **Flight Centre** (☎ 133133; [www.flightcentre.com.au](http://www.flightcentre.com.au)) have offices throughout Australia. For online bookings, visit **travel.com.au** ([www3.travel.com.au](http://www3.travel.com.au)).

Qantas is the only airline with direct, non-stop flights, flying to Mumbai from Sydney or Melbourne. Other airlines stop in a Southeast Asian city.

**Canada**

Fares from Canada are similar to fares from the US. **Travel Cuts** (☎ 1 866 246 9762; [www.travelcuts.com](http://www.travelcuts.com)) is Canada's national student travel agency. For online bookings try **Expedia.ca** ([www.expedia.ca](http://www.expedia.ca)) and **Travelocity.ca** ([www.travelocity.ca](http://www.travelocity.ca)).

Most flights to India are via Europe, but there are options for travel via the US or Asia.

**Continental Europe**

For fares from Europe to Indian hubs, try the following agents.

**FRANCE**

**Anyway** (☎ 0892 893 892; [www.anyway.fr](http://www.anyway.fr) in French)  
**Lastminute** (☎ 0892 705 000; [www.lastminute.fr](http://www.lastminute.fr))  
**Nouvelles Frontières** (☎ 0825 000 747; [www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr](http://www.nouvelles-frontieres.fr) in French)

**OTU Voyages** ([www.otu.fr](http://www.otu.fr))

**Voyageurs du Monde** (☎ 01 40 15 11 15; [www.vdm.com](http://www.vdm.com) in French)

**GERMANY**

**Just Travel** (☎ 089 7473330; [www.justtravel.de](http://www.justtravel.de))  
**Lastminute** (☎ 01805 284366; [www.lastminute.de](http://www.lastminute.de))  
**STA Travel** (☎ 069 74303292; [www.statravel.de](http://www.statravel.de))  
**Usit Campus** (☎ 030 2800 2800; [www.usitcampus.de](http://www.usitcampus.de))

**THE NETHERLANDS**

**Airfair** (☎ 0900 7 717 717; [www.airfair.nl](http://www.airfair.nl))  
**NBBS Reizen** (☎ 0900 10 20 300; [www.nbbs.nl](http://www.nbbs.nl))

**SPAIN**

**Barcelo Viajes** (☎ 902 116 226; [www.barceloviajes.com](http://www.barceloviajes.com)) is recommended.

**New Zealand**

Both **Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 243 544; [www.flightcentre.co.nz](http://www.flightcentre.co.nz)) and **STA Travel** (☎ 0508 782 872; [www.statravel.co.nz](http://www.statravel.co.nz)) have branches throughout the country.

There are no direct flights between India and New Zealand; airlines offer stopovers in Asia.

**UK**

Discount air travel is big business in London. Advertisements for many travel agencies appear in the travel pages of weekend broadsheet newspapers, *Time Out*, the *Evening Standard* and *TNT* magazine.

Good places to start hunting:

**Flight Centre** (☎ 0800 587 0078; [flightcentre.co.uk](http://flightcentre.co.uk))  
**Flightbookers** (☎ 0800 082 3000; [www.ebookers.com](http://www.ebookers.com))  
**North-South Travel** (☎ 01245 608 291; [www.northsouthtravel.co.uk](http://www.northsouthtravel.co.uk)) Donates part of its profits to projects in the developing world.  
**Quest Travel** (☎ 0870 442 3542; [www.questtravel.com](http://www.questtravel.com))  
**STA Travel** (☎ 0870 163 0026; [www.statravel.co.uk](http://www.statravel.co.uk))  
**Traillfinders** (☎ 0845 058 5858; [www.trailfinders.co.uk](http://www.trailfinders.co.uk))  
**Travel Bag** (☎ 0800 082 5000; [www.travelbag.co.uk](http://www.travelbag.co.uk))

**USA**

Discount travel agents in the US are known as consolidators. San Francisco is the consolidator capital of America, although some good deals can be found in other big cities.

For online bookings:

**American Express Travel** (☎ 1866 400 6736; [www.aitn.net](http://www.aitn.net))  
**CheapTickets** ([www.cheaptickets.com](http://www.cheaptickets.com))  
**Expedia** (☎ 1800 397 3342; [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com))

**Lowestfare.com** ([www.lowestfare.com](http://www.lowestfare.com))

**Orbitz** (☎ 1888 656 4546; [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com))  
**STA Travel** (☎ 800 781 4040; [www.sta.com](http://www.sta.com))  
**Travelocity** (☎ 888 872 8356; [www.travelocity.com](http://www.travelocity.com))

**GETTING TO GOA****Air**

**Dabolim Airport** (GOI; ☎ 540806; [apdgoa\\_aai@satyam.net.in](mailto:apdgoa_aai@satyam.net.in), [apdgoa\\_aai@sify.net.in](mailto:apdgoa_aai@sify.net.in)), Goa's only domestic and international airport, is in Dabolim, just outside Vasco da Gama. It's also known as Goa Airport.

Recent years have seen an increase in the number of new domestic airlines (such as Kingfisher Airlines and SpiceJet), which has upped competition. Online booking is relatively simple and reliable, but flights to/from Goa fill up fast between December and February. The hour-long trip from Mumbai costs around Rs 2000. Keep your eye out for changes, but for the moment, the following airlines offer domestic services to Goa from various destinations.

**Air Deccan** (☎ 39 00 88 88; [www.airdeccan.net](http://www.airdeccan.net))  
**Air India** (☎ 1800 22 7722; [www.airindia.com](http://www.airindia.com))  
**Air Sahara** (☎ 1600 223 020; [www.airsahara.net](http://www.airsahara.net))  
**Go Air** (☎ 1600 222 111; [www.goair.in](http://www.goair.in))  
**Indian Airlines** (☎ 1600 180 1407; [www.indianairlines.in](http://www.indianairlines.in))  
**Jet Airways** (☎ 1600 22 55 22; [www.jetairways.com](http://www.jetairways.com))  
**Kingfisher Airlines** (☎ 1600 180 101; [www.flykingfisher.com](http://www.flykingfisher.com))  
**Sahara Airlines** (☎ 1600 22 3020; [www.airsahara.net](http://www.airsahara.net))  
**SpiceJet** (☎ 1600 180 3333; [www.spicejet.com](http://www.spicejet.com))

For addresses of airlines in Goa, see p96. Some only accept bookings online or online via agents, some only have counters at the airport.

**Car & Motorcycle**

Renting a self-drive car in any of the main cities in India and driving to Goa is possible, but given the danger and expense is not recommended.

**Hertz** ([www.hertz.com](http://www.hertz.com)) will charge around Rs 1700 per day for a basic car. You'll be required to leave an insurance deposit of around Rs 20,000 and hold an international driving permit. There are also some private operators that can hire cars for less than Rs 1000 per day.

The other option is to make your way to the nearest taxi rank and start bargaining. The 600km trip from Mumbai to Goa takes about 14 hours; many drivers will happily

do this in one stretch. You'll have to pay for the taxi's return trip, so the cost will be at least Rs 7000 – it's cheaper to fly.

Motorcycles, on the other hand, are a particularly popular way to get around India. The **Royal Enfield** ([www.royalenfield.com](http://www.royalenfield.com)) is synonymous with motorcycle travel in India. Protective clothing and gear is best brought from home. For more information on motorcycle travel, see p237.

**Bus**

India has a comprehensive and extensive public bus system, but most state-run vehicles are decrepit and overcrowded. From neighbouring states you'll find frequent bus services into Goa – it's just a matter of turning up at the bus station and checking timetables or jumping on the next available bus.

There are also plenty of private bus companies running into Goa from Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore, Mangalore and other interstate cities. These are more expensive, but faster and more comfortable, with reclining seats and options of air-con or even 'sleeper' class.

**KARNATAKA & CHENNAI**

There are regular services into Goa from the neighbouring state of Karnataka, including Bangalore (Rs 360, 14 hours), Mysore (Rs 225, 17 hours), Hampi (Rs 350, 10 hours) and Mangalore (Rs 180, 11 hours). Private buses also have regular services on these routes – see p97 and p165 for more information.

Taking the bus to/from Chennai is not really a viable option. There's one private bus a week from Goa to Chennai (Rs 700, 22 hours). The easiest option is to take the train or bus from Chennai to Bangalore and then a bus from here. Private bus companies in Chennai, with offices opposite Egmore station, run super-deluxe video buses daily to Bangalore (Rs 146, eight hours).

**MUMBAI**

Though the Konkan Railway is more comfortable and efficient than buses from Mumbai, sleeper buses are popular. Erratic driving means you might not sleep too well, but for a long overnight trip it beats sitting up all the way.

Private long-distance buses leave several times daily for Goa from Dr Anadrao Nair

Rd, near Mumbai Central train station. Fares to Goa on non-air-con seater buses start at around Rs 350, and go up to Rs 750 for sleeper class. The Christmas–New Year period adds significantly to the fare. To check departure times and current prices, try **Paulo Travels** ([www.paulotravels.com](http://www.paulotravels.com)).

If you're staying in south Mumbai, a more convenient departure point for private buses to Goa is MG Rd, just north of Bombay Hospital (near Fashion St). It's best to purchase tickets directly from bus agents with pavement stalls clustered in either of these areas.

### Train

Two railway systems cross the state. The South Central Railway has its terminus in Mormugao (past Vasco da Gama) and runs due east through Margao (Madgaon) and into Karnataka. The Konkan Railway, opened in 1998, runs from Mumbai to Mangalore through Goa, with some trains continuing south to Ernakulam and Trivandrum. The main stations in Goa include Pernem, for Arambol (Harmal); Thivim (Mapusa Rd) station, for Anjuna, Baga and Calangute; Karmali (Old Goa) station, for Old Goa and Panaji (Panjim); Margao, for Colva and Benaullim; and Canacona, for Palolem.

If coming from Mumbai or Mangalore you can book your ticket to these intermediate stations, but even if you book through to Margao you can get off at any station en route.

If you intend to do any serious train travel outside Goa, get hold of *Trains at a Glance* from book stalls in major train stations. It lists every major train service in India and includes distances.

Online sources:

**Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation** (IRCTC; [www.irctc.co.in](http://www.irctc.co.in)) Tickets can be booked online here.

**Indian Railways** ([www.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.indianrail.gov.in)) The official Indian Railways website.

**Train Travel in India** ([www.seat61.com/India.htm](http://www.seat61.com/India.htm)) An invaluable resource for train travel information in India.

### TRAIN TYPES & CLASS

There are seven classes on mail and express trains, but not all trains have all classes. The most basic is 2nd-class seating, which has hard seats; five or six people will cram onto a bench made for three. Then comes

2nd-class sleeper (or sleeper class) which has open carriages where seats are padded and fold down to form three tiers of beds. Air-con sleepers are more comfortable and secure as each carriage has compartments. Bedding (sheets, blanket, pillow) is provided on some classes. The most common are three-tier (six beds in a compartment) and two-tier (four beds). Two-tier air-con is about twice the price of three-tier air-con and 1st class (two beds) is about double that again. Sleeping berths are only available between 9pm and 6am.

Finally there's chair car, which is individual reclining seats on certain air-con trains (such as the *Shatabdi Express*), and 1st class, a more comfortable version of chair car.

With a couple of exceptions, fares are calculated by distance and are fixed regardless of which train you are on and where you are going.

Sample fares for a journey of 100km in the various classes:

Seat Type	Fare
2nd-class seat	Rs 57
2nd-class sleeper	Rs 91
Chair car	Rs 199
3-tier AC	Rs 256
2-tier AC	Rs 430
1st-class AC	Rs 794

### RESERVATIONS & CANCELLATIONS

There are reservation charges for sleeper class (Rs 40) and anything above that, such as air-con multi-tiered or 1st class (Rs 60). The easiest way to reserve a ticket is to stay well away from the station and do it over the Internet through **IRCTC** (☎ 011-23345500; [www.irctc.co.in](http://www.irctc.co.in)). You first need to register on the site.

Tickets are refundable but cancellation fees apply: if you present the ticket more than one day in advance, a fee of Rs 20 to 50 applies, depending on the class; up to four hours before departure you lose 25% of the ticket value; and within four hours before and up to three to 12 hours after departure you lose 50%.

At most major stations there's a separate section in the booking hall dealing with the tourist quota. Only foreigners and nonresident Indians are allowed to use this facility. You must pay in foreign currency (cash or

travellers cheques in US dollars or pounds sterling) or with rupees backed up by exchange certificates or ATM receipts. Only a limited number of seats are allocated to tourists, so if you can't get on it's worth trying for a normal reservation. When booking any ticket at a train station, you must fill out a reservation form *before* queuing.

If the train you want is fully booked, it's often possible to get a Reservation Against Cancellation (RAC) ticket. This entitles you to board the train and have seating. Once the train is moving, the Travelling Ticket Examiner (TTE) will find you a berth. This is different from a wait-listed ticket, which does not entitle you to board the train.

### FROM CHENNAI

A direct Chennai–Vasco da Gama train, the 7311 *Chennai-Vasco Express*, runs on Friday, departing Chennai at 2pm and arriving in Vasco at 12.45pm the following day. Fares for sleeper/1st-class air-con are around Rs 350/960.

An alternative from Chennai is to catch the 7pm *Chennai-Mangalore Mail* to Mangalore (18 hours), then the 2.50pm *Matasyaghanda Express* (16 hours) to Margao.

In Chennai you can make train reservations on the 1st floor of the **Train Reservation Complex** (☎ 8am–2pm & 2.15–8pm Mon–Sat, 8am–2pm Sun), next to Central Station.

### FROM MUMBAI

The journey to Goa (Margao) from Mumbai, takes 12 hours. From Mumbai's Victoria Terminus (Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus; CST), there's an overnight 0111 *Konkan Kanya Express*. It leaves Mumbai at 11pm and arrives in Margao at 10.45am the following morning. Alternatively, the 0103 *Mandovi Express* leaves daily at 6.55am, reaching Margao at 6.40pm on the same day. Fares on both range from Rs 150 to 2345. Going to Mumbai, these trains leave at 6pm and 10.10am respectively.

The **reservation centre** (☎ 8am–8pm Mon–Sat, 8am–2pm Sun) is at the back of Victoria Terminus where the taxis gather. Tourist-quota tickets are available at **Counter 52** (1st fl; ☎ 8am–3pm Mon–Sat, 8am–2pm Sun) but can only be bought 24 hours before the date of travel. You can buy tickets (but not tourist-quota tickets) with a Visa or MasterCard up to 60 days in advance.

Another three day trains depart from Lokmanya Tilak station, 16km south of Mumbai's Victoria Terminus. The best option is the 2051 *Jan Shatabdi Express*, which departs Mumbai at 5.30am and gets in to Margao at 1.40pm. The 6345 *Netravati Express* departs at 11.40am and arrives at 10.30pm, and the 2619 *Matsyagandha Express* departs at 2.05pm, arriving at 12.10am.

## GETTING AROUND

### BICYCLE

Goa offers plenty of variety for cycling, with relatively smooth-surfaced highways, rocky dirt tracks, coastal routes through coconut palms and winding country roads through spice plantations, rural villages and ancient temples. A bicycle can also simply be a convenient way of getting around beach towns.

If you want a quality machine for serious touring, it's worth bringing your own. The downside is that your bike is likely to be a curiosity and more vulnerable to theft. Bring spare tyres, tubes, patch kits, chassis, cables, freewheels, a pump with the necessary connection and spokes, tools and a repair manual.

### Hire

Hiring a bicycle is not difficult in Goa, but hiring a *good* bicycle is not so easy. Every beach in Goa has a multitude of people who are prepared to rent out bicycles – just ask around and someone will rent you *their* bicycle, more often than not an Indian-made single-gear rattler. Away from the main tourist areas, you won't find bicycle hire places.

Expect to pay around Rs 5 an hour or Rs 50 per day (less for rentals of a week or more). If you just want to hire a bike for a day in the high season, you may have to pay up to Rs 80.

### Purchase

For a long stay of three months or more in Goa, it's worth considering buying a bicycle locally. Every town has at least a couple of shops selling various brands of basic Indian bikes including Hero, Atlas, BSA and Raleigh, almost always painted jet black. You should be able to pick up a second-hand bike for Rs 1000 to 1500.

## BOAT

One of the joys of travelling around Goa is joining locals on flat-bottomed passenger-vehicle ferries that cross the state's many rivers. Ferries have been commuting people across waters for decades, but services are gradually being put out of business by massive bridge-building projects, the most recent being the ominous Aldona–Corjeum bridge.

Most of the remaining ferries operate a half-hourly service from early morning until late evening. Foot passengers ride for free, motorcycles sometimes cost Rs 4 and cars Rs 10. The main ferries of interest to travellers are: Panaji–Betim for the back road to Candolim and Calangute; Querim–Terekhol for Terekhol Fort; Old Goa–Divar Island; Ribandar–Chorao Island for Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary and Chorao Island; and Cavelossim–Assolna for the coastal ride from Benaulim to Palolem.

## BUS

The Kadamba Transport Corporation (KTC) is the state government bus service. It's overworked and underfunded, but it manages to provide cheap, regular services to most parts of the state. There are also a number of private operators that run parallel services.

Bus travel in Goa is cheap and enjoyable. Unless you're in a hurry or have a lot of luggage, the bus costs a fraction of a taxi fare, and you will probably meet a few friendly people along the way. If you're travelling between major centres, take an express

(direct) service; for a few extra rupees, the express buses go directly to their final destination without stopping to pick up more commuters along the way.

For travel between the northern beaches and southern beaches you'll generally have to change buses at one or more of the major centres – for instance, if you're going from Anjuna to Palolem, you'll have to catch a bus to Mapusa or Panaji, another to Margao and a third to Palolem.

At bus stands in Panaji, Margao, Mapusa and Vasco da Gama, all destinations are written in English, so there's little problem finding the bus you need. Bus-wallahs also shout destinations out in a bid to lure more people aboard.

## CAR

Few visitors to Goa bother to rent a self-drive car. Given the crazy driving conditions, and the fact that you're likely to spend a large amount of time on the beach anyway, it's easier to hire a car and driver when required. And it's cheaper.

Finding a car and driver is not a problem in the main towns – they will find you. If you'd prefer to rent through a business, head to any travel agency or ask your hotel. The typical cost for a day of sightseeing in a chauffeur-driven car, depending on distance and what sort of car it is, ranges from Rs 600 to 1000.

If you do decide to choose the self-drive option, private agents generally charge

around Rs 900 (for 24 hours) or around Rs 6300 per week for a basic car without air-con. The same car with a driver will cost around Rs 750 for an eight-hour day. See p238 for information about driving licences, road rules and hazards.

Another easy option is to approach a taxi driver; most will gladly set off anywhere in Goa.

## HITCHING

Hitching is never entirely safe in any country in the world, and we don't recommend it. On the other hand, many travellers argue that it offers an interesting insight into a country. Ultimately it's up to you, but be mindful of the fact that people travelling in pairs will be safer than those going it alone. Solo women in particular are unwise to hitchhike.

The Goan caveat to the standard 'don't do it' is that sometimes (particularly at night when options are scarce) it may be practical to hail down a passing motorcycle. Assuming the person can drive, you're probably safer on the back of a stranger's motorcycle than you are in a car.

## LOCAL TRANSPORT

### Autorickshaw

An autorickshaw is a yellow-and-black three-wheeled contraption powered by a noisy two-stroke motorcycle engine. It has a canopy, a driver up front and seats for two (or sometimes more) passengers behind. This typically Indian mode of transport is cheaper than a taxi and generally a better option for short trips – count on Rs 30 to 40 for a trip across Panaji. Even for a trip such as Anjuna flea market to Panaji (costing around Rs 100) it's a viable ride. Because of their size and manoeuvrability, they're quicker taxis for trips around town, though sometimes more hair-raising. At the time of research, fares had just been officially increased to Rs 10 for the first kilometre, and Rs 9 for subsequent kilometres, plus Rs 10 for each hour of waiting time. The practical affect of this will be negligible; pre trip negotiations will continue regardless of the official fares.

### Motorcycle Taxi

Goa is the only state in India where motorcycles are a licensed form of taxi. You can

tell the motorcycle taxis (or pilots as they are sometimes called) by the yellow front mudguard. They gather, along with taxis and autorickshaws, at strategic points in towns and beach resorts. They're fun and they're fast – no other form of transportation can so quickly and efficiently navigate through traffic. The downside is that there's an increased element of danger – motorcycle pilots may be experienced riders but that doesn't stop them coming off or colliding with other vehicles and you've got little or no protection in the event of a crash. The official rate is Rs 10 for the first kilometre and Rs 3 per kilometre thereafter. In practice, the minimum charge is around Rs 10 and a 10-minute journey will be about Rs 50.

## Taxi

Though taxis are supposed to charge metered rates, the fact is that these days 'taxis' range from iconic yellow-and-black cabs, through to modern cars whose drivers are more fittingly described as chauffeurs and vans labelled 'tourist vehicle' regardless of who they're transporting. Other than the traditional taxi, none of these have meters. To avoid an argument at the other end, be clear on what you're agreeing to: does the final price include all passengers, luggage and waiting time?

A good rule of thumb is that a standard taxi should cost around Rs 10 per kilometre, a tourist van around Rs 12 and anything slightly more luxurious around Rs 20. Most taxi drivers in Goa are about as interested in fighting over rupees as you are, so finding a reasonable fare should be a fairly collaborative effort. If not, find another driver.

## MOTORCYCLE

Getting around Goa by motorcycle is almost de rigeur, especially around the northern beaches; you only need to look at the sea of motorcycles parked at the Anjuna flea market or outside Vagator's Nine Bar to realise that it borders on a cliché. If you plan to spend most of your time lying on the beach, you may have little use for a motorcycle, but if you want to move around a bit, follow the parties, check out the scene and restaurants at different beaches or head inland for the day, you'll soon find it's a hassle without your own transport. The freedom that a motorcycle affords is hard to beat.

## ROAD DISTANCE CHART (km)

Bicholim	---																		
Calangute	35	---																	
Hampi	390	396	---																
Mapusa	25	10	392	---															
Margao	53	50	370	46	---														
Molem	70	76	320	72	50	---													
Old Goa	23	26	370	22	37	50	---												
Palolem	93	90	403	86	40	83	75	---											
Panaji	19	16	380	12	34	60	10	74	---										
Pernem	43	28	410	18	64	90	40	104	30	---									
Ponda	38	43	350	39	25	30	19	53	29	47	---								
Vasco da Gama	49	46	390	42	30	70	35	70	30	60	34	---							
	Bicholim	Calangute	Hampi	Mapusa	Margao	Molem	Old Goa	Palolem	Panaji	Pernem	Ponda	Vasco da Gama							

## Driving Licence

An international driving permit is not technically mandatory, but it's wise to bring one. The first thing a policeman will want to see if he stops you is your licence, and an international permit is incontrovertible. Permits are available from your home automobile association.

## Fuel & Spare Parts

Petrol is expensive compared to the cost of living in India. At the time of research it cost Rs 50 per litre (Rs 45 on lucky days). However, distances are short and the small bikes (such as the Honda Kinetic or Activa) are very economical, so you won't spend a lot of money on fuel and certainly less than you'd spend if you were catching a taxi around. There are petrol stations in all the main towns such as Panaji, Margao, Mapusa, Ponda and Vasco da Gama, including a 24-hour service station in Margao and another on the highway near Cuncoim. There's also a very busy pump in Vagator. Where there are no petrol pumps, general stores sell petrol by the litre; they don't advertise the fact, so you'll have to ask around. Sometimes petrol in plastic bottles has been diluted, so it may be wise to buy it from the same people you hired the bike from – someone who cares about its condition. A litre of petrol from a plastic bottle costs around Rs 55.

While it's usually possible to find someone selling petrol, if you're heading for a day ride inland or even along the coast, make sure you have adequate fuel to begin with; many rental motorcycles have broken gauges.

A Honda Kinetic holds 7L of fuel, and should go 40km on 1L. A 100cc Yamaha takes 10L to 11L and also does 40km per litre. Enfields hold about 18L; new models will do about 35km per litre, while older ones do considerably less.

## Hire

Hiring a motorcycle in Goa is easier than you might think. Hirers will probably find you, and are more often than not decent guys who are just looking to make a bit of cash on the side. Private bike owners are not technically allowed to rent out a machine. This means that if you are stopped by the police for any reason, your hirer would prefer that you say you have borrowed it

from a 'friend'. Laws on this sort of thing are almost universally ignored in north Goa where anything goes, but police can be more opportunistic in the south. It's a good idea to keep registration papers in the bike – it gives the police one less argument against you, and if you don't have a valid licence, or you're not wearing a helmet on National Hwy (NH) 17, you'll need all the help you can get.

If you leave the state, you may need to produce original documents for the vehicle you are driving or riding. If you want to go further afield from Goa, you need to rent from a licensed agency to stay within the law.

## WHICH BIKE?

At the bottom end of the scale are the most popular rental bikes – gearless scooters such as the 100cc Honda Kinetics or Bajaj scooters. They have *no* street cred whatsoever, but are extremely practical and easy to ride, which makes them the obvious choice if you don't have a lot of motorcycle-riding experience. You only need a car driving licence to ride these bikes.

Next up the scale are the 100cc and 135cc bikes – Yamaha being the most common. Fuel economy is good, they go faster than a Kinetic, and they tend to be a bit more comfortable over a long distance. Although they're easy to ride, you'll need to have had some experience on a motorcycle.

Finally, at the top of the pile are the real bikes – classic Enfield Bullets. Made in India since the 1950s, this old British-designed machine is real currency for image and status; the thumping sound of the engine reverberates around the hills of Anjuna and Vagator in the high season. They are far less fuel-friendly, require more maintenance than the others, and take a little getting used to. Most of the Enfields available for hire are 350cc, but there are also some 500cc models around.

## COSTS & WHERE TO HIRE

Off season you can get a scooter for as little as Rs 100 per day. During high season (December to February) the standard rate is Rs 250 to 300. If you can get an old kinetic down to Rs 130 or so, you're doing very well. Expect to pay Rs 400 for a 100cc bike and up to Rs 600 for an Enfield. Obviously,

the longer you hire a bike (and the older it is), the cheaper it becomes.

Make absolutely sure that you agree with the owner about the price; clarify whether one day is 24 hours, and that you won't be asked to pay extra for keeping it overnight.

Queen Paulo Travels has been authorised by the government to hire motorbikes (an Activa or Kinetic costs Rs 250 and an Enfield Rs 400) and has offices in Panaji. However, simply renting a bike off the street at beach towns or through your hotel or a tout that approaches you is just as simple.

In Panaji, head to the cluster of bikes that hang around the post office. In Margao, you should have luck anywhere around the Municipal Gardens. In Colva, Arambol or Palolem and Calangute, head for the main entrance to the beach. In Anjuna, you'll find some decent guys hanging around the Starco Junction.

You'll probably be asked to pay cash upfront (which is fair enough too given that they're handing over their motorbike!), but get a written receipt and never leave your passport, licence or plane ticket as security. Try to get a phone number so you can call the owner if something goes wrong with the bike.

## WHAT TO LOOK FOR

It makes sense to check the bike over before you hire it and make a note of any damage or broken parts, so that you're not blamed for it later. Make sure brakes, lights and the all-essential horn are working. You can manage without a petrol gauge but it's nice when it works. Mirrors are useful, but many older rental bikes are missing them. Take a look at the condition of the tyres to make sure that there's at least a skerrick of tread on them.

## On the Road

### GETTING STOPPED BY THE POLICE

The travellers' grapevine is littered with tales of tourists being stopped by the police; 'no licence', 'no helmet' or 'dangerous driving' can all be reason enough for the police to demand on-the-spot payment of a 'fine' – baksheesh by any other name. The simplest answer is to keep away from areas where you are likely to bump into the police – avoid the national highways and the Zuari and Mandovi Bridges where there are often police checkpoints. Many people get away

without any hassle, however, so there's no point in worrying too much about it. In recent years Goan police have been pulled into line and extortion of foreigners is on the decline.

## THE HELMET ISSUE

Whether or not helmets should be obligatory for two-wheeler riders has been an issue for decades. On 29 July 2004 the government unanimously decided (...drum-roll please) to establish a committee to study the issue. Finally, it was decided that helmets should indeed become mandatory as of 15 August 2004. And yet the issue rages on. The Motorcycle Action Group (MAG) strongly opposes the law. Their argument (in addition to the fact that carrying a helmet is inconvenient, women's hair may become dishevelled and helmets may cause dandruff) is that casualties would be decreased through less reckless, negligent and drunk driving, rather than more helmets. Never mind that of the 235 people who were killed in road accidents in Goa in 2003, 128 of them were drivers or pillion passengers, more than 100 of whom died of head injuries.

In practical terms, the decision is yours. Use your head and protect it or not as you wish.

## ROAD CONDITIONS

Because of the extreme congestion in towns and the narrow, bumpy roads in the country, driving is often a slow, stop-start process. The only genuine highways are the NH17, running north-south and passing through Margao, Panaji and Mapusa, and the NH4A, which heads east from Panaji into Karnataka, bypassing close to Ponda.

The country roads away from these highways are much more pleasant for motoring, as there's very little heavy traffic and the countryside is scenic. Most main roads are in reasonable condition but are generally not well signposted – it's very easy to get lost if you don't continually ask directions.

## ROAD SAFETY

Road safety is an important issue when you're out on a motorcycle. India has the worst record for road accidents in the world, and almost one person a day dies in a road accident in Goa alone. Inexperienced, helmetless foreigners on motorcycles



are extremely vulnerable. Each season more than a few tourists travel home in a box via the state mortuary in Panaji.

Watch out for 'speed breakers'. Speed humps are stand alone back breakers or come in triplets. The extra nasty ones are lined up in groups of fives, and none of them are particularly well signed. Sometimes you only get a couple of metres warning. Also look out for pot holes, sand, wandering livestock and other inexperienced, overenthusiastic drivers.

### ROAD RULES

Road rules in India are applied mainly in theory. Driving is on the left, vehicles give way to the right, and road signs are universal pictorial signs. At busy intersections, traffic police are often on hand to reduce the chaos. Otherwise, make good use of your horn.

Never forget that the highway code in India can be reduced to one essential truth – 'Might is Right'. On a motorcycle you're pretty low in the rights hierarchy. On a scooter, you're roadkill waiting to happen. Goan drivers often try unexpected moves, and Goan pigs have an unnerving habit of dashing onto the road without warning. Avoid riding at night – road surfaces in some places are very bad and many roads are unlit.

### Organised Tours

**Peter & Friends Classic Bike Adventure** (☎ 2254467; www.classic-bike-india.de; Casa Tres Amigos, Socol Vado No 425, Assagao) is an established German company that organises motorbike tours on Enfields through the Himalayas, Nepal, South India and Goa. The two-week Goa and South India tour costs €1190, including accommodation and meals, with full insurance and support. Peter and his friends also organise other trips around the area and have their own divine accommodation at Casa Tres Amigos. Check out their website.

### Purchase

Buying (and later selling) a motorcycle during a stay in Goa is not as practical or economical as it is in other parts of the country.

If you do plan to buy a bike, there are plenty of second-hand machines around – check advertisements in the daily papers or head to the Anjuna flea market on Wednesday. Enfield has a presence at Ingo's Saturday Nite Bazaar, where it promotes shiny new models.

### TRAIN

Goa has two railways. The South Central Railway has its terminus in Mormugao (past Vasco da Gama) and runs due east, through Margao and into Karnataka. This line is often used by tourists day-tripping to Dudhsagar Falls in the east of the state, and travellers heading towards Hampi in Karnataka (the nearest station is at Hospet).

The Konkan Railway runs from Mumbai (Bombay) to Mangalore (in Karnataka) through Goa. It's unlikely that you'll use the train much for travel within Goa given the ease and economy of bus travel. However, trains may be useful if you're planning to travel from one end of the state to the other, ie Arambol to Palolem, which would otherwise require at least three changes by bus. In the north the stations of Pernem and Thivim (Mapusa Rd) are not particularly convenient for the beaches, but in the south, Canacona station is only 3km from Palolem beach.

Konkan Railway stations in Goa, from north to south, are: Pernem (for Arambol), Thivim (for Mapusa), Karmali (for Old Goa and Panaji), Verna, Margao (for Colva and Benaulim), Bali, Barcem and Canacona (for Palolem).

For more information on the train system see p234.

There are reliable travel agents all over Goa that can book train tickets for you, or you can go directly to the reservation centres themselves:

**Margao** (☎ 0832-2712790; 1st fl, Madgaon railway station; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun)

**Panaji** (☎ 0832-2438254; 1st fl, Kadamba bus stand, Pattoo; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat)

**Thivim** (☎ 0832-2298682; Thivim railway station; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun)

**Vasco da Gama** (☎ 0832-2512569; Vasco railway station; 🕒 8am-8pm Mon-Sat, 8am-2pm Sun)

# Health

## CONTENTS

<b>Before You Go</b>	<b>241</b>
Insurance	241
Vaccinations	241
Medical Checklist	242
Internet Resources	242
Further Reading	242
<b>In Transit</b>	<b>243</b>
Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)	243
Jet Lag & Motion Sickness	243
<b>In Goa</b>	<b>243</b>
Availability & Cost of Health Care	243
Infectious Diseases	243
Environmental Hazards	245
Travelling with Children	247
Women's Health	247
Traditional Medicine	247

The potential dangers of going anywhere can seem frightening, but in reality, few travellers to Goa will experience anything more than upset stomachs.

## BEFORE YOU GO

Pack medications in their original containers. Also bring a letter from your physician describing your medical conditions and any medications or syringes you may need to carry. If you have a heart condition, bring a copy of your ECG. Bring extra medication in case of loss or theft; it can be difficult to find some newer drugs, particularly the latest antidepressants, blood-pressure medications and contraceptive pills.

### INSURANCE

Don't travel without health insurance – accidents happen, especially, it seems, when you don't have insurance. Declare any existing medical conditions you have – you won't be covered for pre-existing problems that are undeclared.

Find out in advance if your insurance plan will make payments directly to providers or if it will reimburse you later for overseas health expenditures. (In many

countries doctors expect payment in cash.) You may prefer a policy that pays doctors or hospitals directly. If you do have to claim later, make sure you keep all the relevant documentation.

Some policies ask that you telephone (reverse charges) to a centre in your home country, where an immediate assessment of your problem will be made.

### VACCINATIONS

Specialised travel-medicine clinics are your best source of information; they stock all available vaccines and will be able to give specific recommendations for you and your trip.

Most vaccines don't give immunity until at least two weeks after they're taken, so visit a doctor four to eight weeks before departure. Ask your doctor for an International Certificate of Vaccination (otherwise known as the 'yellow booklet'), which will list all the vaccinations you've received.

### Recommended Vaccinations

The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends these vaccinations for travellers to India (as well as being up to date with measles, mumps and rubella vaccinations):

**Adult diphtheria and tetanus** Single booster recommended if none in the previous 10 years. Side effects include sore arm and fever.

**Hepatitis A** Provides almost 100% protection for up to a year; a booster after 12 months provides another 20 years' protection. Mild side effects such as headache and sore arm occur in 5% to 10% of people.

**Hepatitis B** Considered routine for most travellers. Given as three shots over six months. A rapid schedule is also available, as is a combined vaccination with hepatitis A. In 95% of people lifetime protection results. Side effects are mild, usually headache and sore arm.

**Polio** Polio is still present in India. Only one booster is required as an adult for lifetime protection. Inactivated polio vaccine is safe during pregnancy.

**Typhoid** Recommended for all travellers to India, even if you only visit urban areas. The vaccine offers around 70% protection, lasts for two to three years and comes as a single shot. Tablets are also available but the injection has fewer side effects. Sore arm and fever may occur.

**Varicella** If you haven't had chickenpox, discuss this vaccination with your doctor.

These immunisations are recommended for long-term travellers (more than one month) or those at special risk:

**Japanese B Encephalitis** Three injections in all. Booster recommended after two years. Sore arm and headache are the most common side effects. Rarely, an allergic reaction of hives and swelling can occur up to 10 days after the doses.

**Meningitis** Single injection. There are two types of vaccination: quadrivalent vaccine gives two to three years' protection; meningitis group C vaccine gives around 10 years' protection. Recommended for long-term backpackers aged under 25.

**Rabies** Three injections in all. A booster after one year will then provide 10 years' protection. Side effects are rare – occasionally headache and sore arm.

**Tuberculosis (TB)** This is a complex issue. Adult long-term travellers are usually recommended to have a TB skin test before and after travel, rather than vaccination. Only one vaccine given in a lifetime.

### Required Vaccinations

Proof of yellow fever vaccination is only required if you have visited a country in the yellow-fever zone within six days prior to entering India. If you are travelling to India from Africa or South America, check to see if you require proof of vaccination.

### MEDICAL CHECKLIST

Recommended items for a personal medical kit:

- Antifungal cream, eg Clotrimazole
- Antibacterial cream, eg Muciprocin
- Antibiotic for skin infections, eg Amoxicillin/Clavulanate or Cephalexin
- Antihistamine – there are many options, eg Cetrizine for daytime and Promethazine for night
- Antiseptic, eg Betadine
- Antispasmodic for stomach cramps, eg Buscopam
- Contraception
- Decongestant, eg Pseudoephedrine
- DEET-based insect repellent
- Diarrhoea medication – consider an oral rehydration solution (eg Gastrolyte), diarrhoea 'stopper' (eg Loperamide) and anti-nausea medication (eg Prochlorperazine)
- Antibiotics for diarrhoea include Norfloxacin or Ciprofloxacin; for bacterial diarrhoea Azithromycin; for Giardia or amoebic dysentery Tinidazole
- First-aid items such as scissors, Elastoplast, bandages, gauze, thermometer

(but not mercury), sterile needles and syringes, safety pins and tweezers

- Ibuprofen or another anti-inflammatory
- Indigestion tablets, eg Quick-Eze
- Iodine tablets (unless you are pregnant or have a thyroid problem) to purify water
- Laxative, eg Coloxyl
- Paracetamol
- Pyrethrin to impregnate clothing and mosquito nets
- Steroid cream for allergic/itchy rashes, eg 1% to 2% hydrocortisone
- Sunscreen and hat
- Thrush (vaginal yeast infection) treatment, eg Clotrimazole pessaries or Diflucan tablet
- Ural or equivalent if prone to urine infections

### INTERNET RESOURCES

There is a wealth of travel health advice on the Internet. **Lonely Planet** ([www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)) is a good place to start. Some other suggestions:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** (CDC; [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)) Good general information.

**MD Travel Health** ([www.mdtravelhealth.com](http://www.mdtravelhealth.com)) Complete travel health recommendations for every country, updated daily.

**World Health Organization** (WHO; [www.who.int/ith/](http://www.who.int/ith/)) Superb, annually revised book *International Travel & Health* is available online.

### FURTHER READING

Lonely Planet's pocket sized *Healthy Travel – Asia & India* is packed with information including pretrip planning, first aid, immunization, diseases and what to do if you get sick on the road. Other recommended references include *Travellers' Health* by Dr Richard Dawood and *Travelling Well* by Dr Deborah Mills – check out the website **Travelling Well** ([www.travellingwell.com.au](http://www.travellingwell.com.au)).

## IN TRANSIT

### DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)

Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) occurs when blood clots form in the legs, chiefly because of prolonged immobility. The longer the flight, the greater the risk. The chief symptom is swelling or pain of the foot, ankle, or calf. If a blood clot travels to the lungs, it may cause chest pain and difficulty in

### HEALTH ADVISORIES

It's usually a good idea to consult your government's travel-health website before departure, if one is available:

**Australia** ([www.dfat.gov.au/travel/](http://www.dfat.gov.au/travel/))

**Canada** ([www.travelhealth.gc.ca](http://www.travelhealth.gc.ca))

**New Zealand** ([www.mfat.govt.nz/travel](http://www.mfat.govt.nz/travel))

**South Africa** ([www.dfa.gov.za/travelling](http://www.dfa.gov.za/travelling))

**UK** ([www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/](http://www.doh.gov.uk/traveladvice/))

**USA** ([www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/))

breathing. Travellers with these symptoms should seek medical attention.

To prevent DVT on long flights, walk about the cabin, contract leg muscles while sitting, drink plenty of fluids, and avoid alcohol and tobacco.

### JET LAG & MOTION SICKNESS

Jet lag is common when crossing more than five time zones; it results in insomnia, fatigue, malaise or nausea. To avoid jet lag drink plenty of nonalcoholic fluids and eat light meals. Upon arrival, seek exposure to natural sunlight and readjust your schedule (for meals, sleep etc) as soon as possible.

Antihistamines such as dimenhydrinate (Dramamine), promethazine (Phenergan) and meclizine (Antivert, Bonine) are the first choice for motion sickness. Their main side effect is drowsiness. Ginger works like a charm for some people.

## IN GOA

### AVAILABILITY & COST OF HEALTH CARE

Although there are reasonable facilities in Panaji (Panjim), Margao (Madgaon) and Vasco da Gama, Goa does not have the quality of medical care available in the West. The best facilities in Goa are at the **Goa Medical College Hospital** (☎ 0832-2458725, 2458700) at Bambolim, 9km south of Panaji on the National Highway (NH) 17. In the event of a serious accident this is the best place to go; it has a brain scanner and most other facilities.

In north Goa you'll also find **Mapusa Clinic** (☎ 0832-2263343, 2263346; Mapusa Clinic Rd, Mapusa), and in Margao, the **main hospital** (☎ 0832-2705664; Padre Miranda Rd).

Goa's **ambulance service** (☎ 102) can be unreliable; it may be quicker to get a taxi.

There are well-stocked pharmacies in all Goan towns selling drugs manufactured under licence to Western companies; you can buy more over the counter here than you can in the West. The small size of Goa means you're never too far from a major town with a decent hospital. Upmarket hotels often have a reliable doctor on call.

## INFECTIOUS DISEASES

### Dengue Fever

This mosquito-borne disease is becoming increasingly problematic. As there is no vaccine available, it can only be prevented by avoiding mosquito bites. The mosquito that carries dengue bites day and night.

Symptoms include high fever, severe headache and body ache (dengue was previously known as 'breakbone fever'). Some people develop a rash and experience diarrhoea. There is no specific treatment – just rest and paracetamol. Don't take aspirin; it increases the likelihood of haemorrhaging.

See a doctor so you can be diagnosed and monitored.

### Hepatitis A

This food- and water-borne virus infects the liver, causing jaundice (yellow skin and eyes), nausea and lethargy. There is no specific treatment for hepatitis A, other than time for the liver to heal. All travellers to India should be vaccinated.

### Hepatitis B

The only sexually transmitted disease that can be prevented by vaccination, hepatitis B is spread by body fluids. Long-term consequences can include liver cancer.

### Hepatitis E

Transmitted through contaminated food and water, hepatitis E has similar symptoms to hepatitis A, but is less common. It is a severe problem in pregnant women and can result in the death of both mother and baby. There is no vaccine; prevention is by following safe eating and drinking guidelines.

### HIV

India has one of the highest growth rates of HIV in the world. HIV is spread via contaminated body fluids. Avoid unsafe sex,

unsterile needles (including in medical facilities) and procedures such as tattoos.

There is a **helpline** (☎ 0832-2431827) in Goa for people with HIV. Contact the **Goa State Aids Control Society** (☎ 0832-2422519) for more information about HIV in Goa.

### Japanese B Encephalitis

This mosquito-transmitted viral disease is rare in travellers. Vaccination is recommended for travellers spending more than one month in rural areas. There is no treatment; one third of infected people die while another third suffer brain damage.

### Malaria

Malaria is caused by a parasite transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. The most important symptom of malaria is fever, but general symptoms such as headache, diarrhoea, cough or chills may also occur. Blood samples are used to diagnose.

Antimalaria medications should be combined with the following mosquito bite prevention steps:

- Use an insect repellent containing DEET. Natural repellents such as citronella must be applied more frequently.
- Sleep under a mosquito net impregnated with pyrethrin.
- Choose accommodation with screens and fans (if not air-conditioned).
- Impregnate clothing with pyrethrin in high-risk areas.
- Wear long sleeves and light-coloured trousers.
- Use mosquito coils.
- Spray your room with insect repellent before going out for your evening meal.

Many medications must be taken for four weeks after leaving the risk area. There are various options on the market.

- Combination of Chloroquine and Paludrine – limited effectiveness in parts of South Asia. Common side effects include nausea (40% of people) and mouth ulcers.
- Doxycycline – broad-spectrum antibiotic taken daily. Potential side effects include photosensitivity (a tendency to sunburn), thrush (in women), indigestion, heartburn, nausea and interference with the contraceptive pill. More serious side effects include ulceration of the oesophagus.

Must be taken for four weeks after leaving the risk area.

- Lariam (Mefloquine) – weekly tablet. Rare but serious side effects include depression, anxiety, psychosis and fits. Should not be taken by those with a history of depression, anxiety, other psychological disorder, or epilepsy.
- Malarone (Combination of Atovaquone and Proguanil) – side effects are mild and uncommon, and usually nausea and headache. Best choice for scuba divers and those on short trips to high-risk areas. Must be taken for one week after leaving the risk area.

### Rabies

Around 30,000 people die annually in India from rabies. This fatal disease is spread by the bite or lick of an infected animal – most commonly a dog or monkey. Seek medical advice immediately after any animal bite and commence post-exposure treatment. Pretravel vaccination means postbite treatment is greatly simplified.

If you are bitten, gently wash the wound with soap and water, and apply iodine-based antiseptic. If you are not vaccinated you need to receive rabies immunoglobulin as soon as possible, and this is almost impossible to obtain in much of India.

### STDs

Sexually transmitted diseases most common in India include herpes, warts, syphilis, gonorrhoea and chlamydia. People carrying these often have no signs of infection.

Condoms prevent gonorrhoea and chlamydia but not warts or herpes. If after a sexual encounter you develop any rash, lumps, discharge or pain when passing urine, seek immediate medical attention.

If you have been sexually active during your travels, have an STD check on your return home.

### Tuberculosis

While TB is rare in travellers, those who have significant contact with the local population (such as medical and aid workers and long-term travellers) should take precautions.

Vaccination is usually only given to children under five, but adults at risk are recommended pre- and post-travel TB testing.

The main symptoms are fever, cough, weight loss, night sweats and tiredness.

### Typhoid

Spread via food and water, this bacterial infection gives a high and slowly progressive fever, headache and maybe a dry cough and stomach pain. It is treated with antibiotics. Vaccination is recommended for travellers spending more than a week in India. Vaccination is not 100% effective; still be careful with what you eat and drink.

### TRAVELLER'S DIARRHOEA

Traveller's diarrhoea is defined as the passage of more than three watery bowel actions within 24 hours, plus at least one other symptom such as fever, cramps, nausea, vomiting or feeling generally unwell.

This is by far the most common problem affecting travellers – between 30% and 70% of people suffer from it within two weeks of starting their trip. In over 80% of cases it is caused by bacteria, and therefore responds promptly to antibiotics.

Treatment consists of staying well hydrated; rehydration solutions like Gastrolyte are best. Antibiotics such as Norfloxacin, Ciprofloxacin or Azithromycin kill the bacteria quickly.

Loperamide is a 'stopper' and doesn't address the problem. It can be helpful for long bus rides, though. Don't take Loperamide if you have a fever or blood in your stools.

Seek medical attention if you do not respond to antibiotics.

### Amoebic Dysentery

Amoebic dysentery is rare in travellers but is often misdiagnosed. Symptoms are similar to bacterial diarrhoea: fever, bloody diarrhoea and generally feeling unwell. Always seek reliable medical care if you have blood in your diarrhoea.

Treatment involves Tinidazole or Metronidazole to kill the parasite and a second drug to kill the cysts. If left untreated, complications such as liver or gut abscesses can result.

### Giardiasis

Giardia is a relatively common parasite in travellers. Symptoms include nausea, bloating, excess gas, fatigue and intermittent diarrhoea. The parasite eventually goes

away if left untreated, but can take months. The treatment of choice is Tinidazole with Metronidazole.

### ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS Diving & Surfing

Divers and surfers should seek specialised advice before they travel to ensure their medical kit contains treatment for coral cuts and tropical ear infections. Divers should also get specialised dive insurance through an organisation such as **Divers Alert Network** (DAN; www.danseap.org) and have a dive medical before they travel.

### Heat

For most people it takes at least two weeks to adapt to the hot climate. Swelling of feet and ankles is common, as are muscle cramps caused by excessive sweating. Prevent these by keeping hydrated, and taking it easy when you first arrive. Rehydration solution and salty food helps. Treat cramps with rest and rehydration with double-strength rehydration solution.

Dehydration is the main contributor to heat exhaustion. Symptoms include weakness, headache, irritability, nausea, sweaty skin, a fast, weak pulse and a normal or slightly elevated body temperature.

Treatment involves getting out of the heat, fanning the sufferer and applying cool wet cloths to the skin, laying the sufferer flat with their legs raised and rehydrating them with water and salt (¼ teaspoon per litre).

Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency. Symptoms come on suddenly and include weakness, nausea, a hot dry body with a body temperature of over 41°C, dizziness, confusion, loss of coordination, fits and eventually collapse and loss of consciousness. Seek medical help and get the person out of the heat, removing their clothes, fanning them and applying cool wet cloths or ice to their body, especially the groin and armpits.

Prickly heat is a common rash in the tropical regions, caused by sweat trapped under the skin. The result is an itchy rash of tiny lumps. Treat prickly heat by moving out of the heat and into an air-conditioned area for a few hours. Cool showers also help in treating the rash. Creams and ointments clog the skin and should be avoided.



## LIFE'S A BEACH

Outside of the monsoon season, the warm Arabian Sea off the coast of Goa is one of the safest waters in the world. That said, there are a few dangers to be aware of.

### Swimming

Every year there are drowning deaths along the coastline. Undertows and currents can be strong, even close to the beach, especially early and late in the season. Don't swim immediately after eating, and definitely don't go in the water if you have been drinking alcohol. The underwater slope is not always even – the beach may suddenly drop leaving you in deep water. Despite the romantic temptation, it's not wise to take a midnight dip, especially if you've been out partying.

In the monsoon, swimming in the sea is out of the question. Also be careful in October and November; sand bars are still in a state of transition. During the monsoon large volumes of sand get swept inshore and are gradually eroded as the sea normalises. There are only a few channels through the sandbanks, which generates strong rips.

### Jellyfish

Although they generally stay in deeper water, it's not unheard of for jellyfish to drift into shallower water, particularly during the early and late months of the season (October to November and March to April). A jellyfish sting won't kill you, but it will hurt like hell.

If you are stung, calm down and wash off the tendrils with sea water. Then use an acid solution to soak the sting – if you're near a beach shack ask for vinegar or lime juice. Then subject the sting to heat treatment. Protein toxins of the venom break down in temperatures between 43°C and 45°C. If you can't find a heat pack (ask divers), fill a basin with hot water and immerse the affected area, gradually adding more hot water until the temperature is as high as possible. Do *not* use an ice pack – it makes symptoms worse.

### Other Sea Creatures

Although you may see the occasional dead sea snake (called *kusada* in Goa) on the sand, you are extremely unlikely (or unlucky) to spot a live one; they're extremely timid and try to avoid swimmers.

Scorpion fish (sometimes known as stonefish) and lionfish inhabit areas of the Goan coastline. They prefer the shelter of rocks and stones so you're unlikely to find them on the sandy bottom of the main swimming beaches. They are found in shallow waters around one or two of the small islands off the coast of Goa. Both types of fish have poisonous dorsal fins, and if stepped on, understandably inject venom into the offending foot. As with jellyfish stings, heat treatment breaks down the toxins. Medical treatment should be sought as soon as possible.

Locally purchased prickly heat powder can be helpful.

Tropical fatigue is common in long-term expatriates based in the tropics. It's rarely due to disease and is caused by climate, excessive alcohol intake and the daily demands of a different culture.

### Insect Bites & Stings

Bedbugs don't carry disease but their bites are itchy. You can treat the itch with an antihistamine. Lice inhabit various parts of your body but most commonly your head and pubic area. Transmission is via close contact with an infected person. They can

be difficult to treat and you may need numerous applications of an antilice shampoo with pyrethrin. Pubic lice are usually contracted from sexual contact.

Ticks are contracted after walking in rural areas. Ticks are commonly found behind the ears, on the belly and in armpits. See a doctor if you get a rash at the site of the bite or elsewhere, fever or muscle aches. The antibiotic Doxycycline prevents tick-borne diseases.

Bee and wasp stings mainly cause problems for people who are allergic to them; adrenalin injections (eg EpiPen) should be carried for emergencies.

## Skin Problems

There are two common fungal rashes that affect travellers in humid climates. The first occurs in moist areas such as the groin, armpits and between toes. It starts as a red patch that slowly spreads and is usually itchy. Treatment involves keeping the skin dry, avoiding chafing and using antifungal cream such as Clotrimazole or Lamisil. Tinea versicolour is also common – this fungus causes small, light-coloured patches, mostly on the back, chest and shoulders. Consult a doctor.

Cuts and scratches become easily infected in humid climates. Wash wounds in clean water and apply antiseptic. Be particularly careful with coral cuts, which become easily infected. If you develop signs of infection (increasing pain and redness) see a doctor.

## Sunburn

Even on a cloudy day sunburn can occur rapidly. Use strong sunscreen (at least factor 30), making sure to reapply after swimming, and wear a wide-brimmed hat and sunglasses. Avoid lying in the sun during the hottest part of the day (10am to 2pm). If you become sunburnt, apply cool compresses and take painkillers. One percent hydrocortisone cream applied twice daily is also helpful.

## DRINKING WATER

- Never drink tap water
- Bottled water is generally safe – check that the seal is intact
- Avoid ice
- Boiling water is the most efficient method of purifying water
- The best chemical purifier is iodine. It should not be used by pregnant women or people with thyroid problems
- Water filters should also filter out viruses; ensure your filter has a chemical barrier such as iodine and a small pore size, ie less than four microns

## TRAVELLING WITH CHILDREN

See p213 for more information on travelling with children.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH

In most places in Goa, sanitary products (pads, rarely tampons) are readily available. Birth control options may be limited, so bring adequate supplies of your own form of contraception.

Heat, humidity and antibiotics can contribute to thrush. Treatment is with antifungal creams and pessaries such as Clotrimazole. A practical alternative is a single tablet of Fluconazole (Diflucan). Urinary tract infections can be precipitated by dehydration or long bus journeys without toilet stops; bring suitable antibiotics.

## Pregnant Women

Pregnant women should receive specialised advice before travelling. The ideal time to travel is in the second trimester (between 16 and 28 weeks), when the risk of pregnancy-related problems is at its lowest.

Ensure that your travel insurance policy covers all pregnancy-related possibilities, including premature labour.

Malaria is a high-risk disease for pregnant women, and WHO recommends they do *not* travel to areas with Chloroquine-resistant malaria. None of the more effective antimalaria drugs are completely safe in pregnancy. Traveller's diarrhoea can quickly lead to dehydration and result in inadequate blood flow to the placenta. Many drugs used to treat various diarrhoea bugs are not recommended in pregnancy. Azithromycin is considered safe.

## TRADITIONAL MEDICINE

You've come to the right place if you're interested in traditional medicine. There is a strong culture of holistic healing in Goa, from Ayurveda to reflexology to reiki. As with all medicine, some practitioners are better than others. Ask around and do your research before you commit to anything – be wary of people who offer treatments but have no experience or qualifications whatsoever.

# Language

As a legacy of its unusual colonial history, Goa has inherited a mixture of languages. Portuguese is still spoken as a second language by a few Goans, although it is gradually dying out. The official language of India is Hindi, which children in Goa are obliged to learn in school. Konkani (which has five different scripts) is now accepted as the official language of the state, and Marathi is also taught as a standard subject.

Ironically the primary language used in many schools is actually English. Arguments about continuing or abandoning this policy of placing such importance on English rage on. How can Indians get away from their colonial past, many ask, if they are still forced to use the language of the colonisers? Others feel that continuing use of English is a distinct advantage to their children, who will need it if they are to find good jobs in the future. Meanwhile, children in Goa are taught three or four languages as a standard part of the school syllabus.

You'll find that English is widely spoken in Goa's tourist areas. For a comprehensive guide to Hindi, get a copy of Lonely Planet's *Hindi, Urdu & Bengali Phrasebook*.

## HINDI & KONKANI Useful Words & Phrases

There are many different ways of writing Konkani in the Roman alphabet, and the Konkani words included in this chapter are only approximate transliterations.

Beware of the Hindi *achaa*, an all-purpose word for 'OK'. It can also mean 'OK, I understand what you're saying, but I'm not necessarily agreeing' (such as when negotiating a price with a taxi driver).

	Hindi	Konkani
<b>Hello.</b>	<i>namaste</i>	<i>paypadta</i>
<b>Goodbye.</b>	<i>namaste</i>	<i>mioshay</i>
<b>Excuse me.</b>	<i>kshamaa keejijye</i>	<i>upkar korchhi</i>
<b>Please.</b>	<i>meharbani seh</i>	<i>upkar kor</i>
<b>Yes.</b>	<i>jee haang</i>	<i>oi</i>
<b>No.</b>	<i>jee naheeng</i>	<i>naah</i>
<b>Thank you.</b>	<i>danyavaad</i>	<i>dev borem korum</i>

### How are you?

*aap (kaise/kaise) haing?* (m/f) (H)

*(kossa/kos-hem) assa?* (m/f) (K)

### Very well, thank you.

*bahut achaa, shukriaya* (H)

*bhore jaung* (K)

### What's your name?

*aapka shubh naam kya hai?* (H)

*tuje naav kide?* (K)

### Do you speak English?

*kya aap angrezi samajhte hain?* (H)

*to English hulonk jhana?* (K)

### I don't understand.

*meri samajh men nahin aaya* (H)

*mhaka kay samzona* (K)

### Where is a hotel?

*hotal kahan hai?* (H)

*hotel khoy aasa?* (K)

### How far is ...?

*... kitni duur hai?* (H)

*anig kitya phoode ...?* (K)

### How do I get to ...?

*... kaiseh jaateh hai?* (H)

*maka kashe ... meltole?* (K)

### How much?

*kitneh paiseh? kitneh hai?* (H)

*kitke poishe laqthele?* (K)

### This is expensive.

*yeh bahut mehnga hai* (H)

*chod marog* (K)

### What is the time?

*kitneh bajeh hain?* (H)

*vorra kitki jali?* (K)

	Hindi	Konkani
<b>big</b>	<i>bhada</i>	<i>hodlo</i>
<b>small</b>	<i>chhota</i>	<i>dhakto</i>
<b>today</b>	<i>aaj</i>	<i>aaj</i>
<b>day</b>	<i>din</i>	<i>dees</i>
<b>night</b>	<i>raat</i>	<i>racho</i>
<b>week</b>	<i>haftah</i>	<i>athovda</i>
<b>month</b>	<i>mahina</i>	<i>mohino</i>
<b>year</b>	<i>saal</i>	<i>voros</i>
<b>medicine</b>	<i>dava-ee</i>	<i>vakot</i>

### Numbers

Where we count in tens, hundreds, thousands, millions and billions, the Indian

numbering system goes tens, hundreds, thousands, hundred thousands, ten millions. A hundred thousand is a lakh, and 10 million is a crore. These two words will almost always be used in place of their English equivalent. Thus you'll see 10 lakh rather than one million and one crore rather than 10 million. Furthermore, the numerals are generally written that way too – thus three hundred thousand appears as 3,00,000 not 300,000, and ten million, five hundred thousand would appear numerically as 1,05,00,000 (one crore, five lakh) not 10,500,000. If you say something costs five crore or is worth 10 lakh, it always means 'of rupees'.

When counting from 10 to 100 in Hindi, there's no standard formula for compiling numbers – they are all different. Here we've just given you enough to go on with!

To complicate matters further, there are two different counting systems in Konkani. Hindu Goans use the system shown in the list below, but for Catholic Goans there are differences: – *vis-ani-ek* rather than *ekvis* for 21, for example.

	Hindi	Konkani
1	<i>ek</i>	<i>ek</i>
2	<i>do</i>	<i>don</i>
3	<i>tin</i>	<i>tin</i>
4	<i>char</i>	<i>char</i>
5	<i>panch</i>	<i>panch</i>
6	<i>chhe</i>	<i>sou</i>
7	<i>saat</i>	<i>saat</i>
8	<i>aath</i>	<i>aat</i>
9	<i>nau</i>	<i>nov</i>
10	<i>das</i>	<i>dha</i>
		<i>gyaranh</i>
		<i>ikra</i>
		<i>baranh</i>
		<i>bara</i>
		<i>teranh</i>
		<i>tera</i>
		<i>chodanh</i>
		<i>chouda</i>
		<i>pandranh</i>
		<i>pandra</i>
		<i>solanh</i>
		<i>sollah</i>
		<i>staranh</i>
		<i>sottra</i>
		<i>aatharanh</i>
		<i>ottra</i>
		<i>unnis</i>
		<i>ekonis</i>
		<i>bis</i>
		<i>vis</i>
		<i>ikkis</i>
		<i>ekvis</i>
		<i>bais</i>
		<i>bavis</i>
		<i>teis</i>
		<i>tevis</i>
		<i>chobis</i>
		<i>chouvvis</i>
		<i>pachis</i>
		<i>ponchis</i>
		<i>chhabis</i>
		<i>sovis</i>
		<i>sattais</i>
		<i>satavis</i>
		<i>athais</i>
		<i>attavis</i>
		<i>unnattis</i>
		<i>ekontis</i>
		<i>tis</i>
		<i>paintis</i>
		<i>posstis</i>
		<i>chalis</i>
		<i>chalis</i>
		<i>paintalis</i>
		<i>ponchechalis</i>
		<i>panchas</i>
		<i>ponnas</i>
		<i>pachpan</i>
		<i>ponchavan</i>
		<i>saath</i>
		<i>saatt</i>
		<i>painsath</i>
		<i>pansatt</i>
		<i>sattar</i>
		<i>sottor</i>
		<i>pachhattar</i>
		<i>ponchator</i>
		<i>assi</i>
		<i>oichim</i>
		<i>pachaasi</i>
		<i>ponchalsh</i>
		<i>nabbe</i>
		<i>novodh</i>
		<i>pachaanabbe</i>
		<i>ponchanov</i>
		<i>so</i>
		<i>chembor</i>
		<i>donshe</i>
		<i>do so</i>
		<i>ek hazaar</i>
		<i>ek hazaar</i>
		<i>do hazaar</i>
		<i>don hazaar</i>
		<i>lakh</i>
		<i>lakh</i>



Also available from Lonely Planet:  
*Hindi, Urdu & Bengali Phrasebook*

# Glossary

The following are terms you may come across during your Goan travels. For definitions of Goan and Indian food and drink, see p58.

**Adivasi** – tribal person

**amrita** – immortality

**autorickshaw** – small, noisy, three-wheeled, motorised contraption used for transporting passengers short distances

**avatar** – incarnation of a deity, usually *Vishnu*

**Ayurveda** – ancient study of healing arts and herbal medicine

**babu** – lower-level clerical worker (derogatory term)

**baksheesh** – tip, bribe or donation

**balcao** – shady porch at front of traditional Goan house, usually with benches built into the walls

**bandh** – general strike

**betel** – nut of the areca palm; the nut is mildly intoxicating and is chewed with *paan* as a stimulant and digestive

**Bhagavad Gita** – Hindu song of the Divine One; *Krishna's* lessons to Arjuna, emphasising the philosophy of bhakti (faith); part of the *Mahabharata*

**Bhairava** – the Terrible; refers to the eight incarnations of *Shiva* in his demonic form

**bhang** – dried leaves and flowering shoots of the cannabis plant

**Brahma** – source of all existence and also worshipped as the creator in the Hindu *Trimurti*; depicted as having four heads (a fifth was burnt by *Shiva's* 'central eye' when Brahma spoke disrespectfully)

**Brahmanism** – early form of Hinduism that evolved from Vedism (see *Vedas*); named after the *Brahmin* priests and the god *Brahma*

**Brahmin** – member of the priest caste, the highest Hindu *caste*

**bund** – embankment or dyke, used in Goa to protect *khazans*

**caste** – four classes into which Hindu society is divided; one's hereditary station in life

**Chandra** – moon, or the moon as a god, worshipped particularly in Goa at the Chandreshwar Bhutnath Temple, on Chandranath Hill

**charas** – resin of the cannabis plant; also referred to as hashish

**chillum** – pipe of a hookah; used to describe the small clay pipes for smoking *ganja*

**comunidades** – traditional system of land management in Goa

**crore** – 10 million

**Dalit** – preferred term for India's casteless class; see *Untouchable*

**deaknni** – traditional Goan dance

**deepastambha** – lamp tower, a prominent and distinctive feature of many temples

**devadasi** – temple dancer

**Devi** – *Shiva's* wife

**Dhangars** – tribe of Goa's indigenous people

**dharma** – Hindu and Buddhist moral code of behaviour; natural law

**dhobi ghat** – place where clothes are washed

**Dravidian** – member of one of the indigenous races of India pushed south by the Indo-Europeans and now mixed with them; languages include Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada

**dulpod** – traditional Goan dance

**darbar** – royal court; also used to describe a government

**Durga** – the Inaccessible; a form of *Shiva's* wife *Devi*; a beautiful but fierce woman riding a tiger; major goddess of the Sakti cult

**fado** – type of song popular in Portuguese colonial era, delivered in operatic style

**Ganesh** – Hindu god of good fortune; elephant-headed son of *Shiva* and *Parvati*; also known as Ganpati

**Ganga** – Ganges River; also the Hindu goddess representing the sacred Ganges River

**ganja** – dried flowering tips of cannabis plant; highly potent form of marijuana

**gaon** – village

**garbhagriha** – inner sanctum of a Hindu temple

**ghat** – steps or landing on a river; range of hills, or road up hills; Western Ghats are the range of mountains that run along India's west coast, effectively forming the eastern border of Goa

**GTDC** – Goa Tourism Development Corporation

**Hanuman** – Hindu monkey god and follower of Rama; prominent in the *Ramayana*

**Harijan** – name given by Gandhi to India's *Untouchables*; the term is no longer considered acceptable (see *Dalit* and *Untouchable*)

**Indra** – most important and prestigious of the Vedic (see *Vedas*) gods of India; god of rain, thunder, lightning and war

**Jainism** – religion and philosophy founded by Mahavira in the 6th century BC in India; its fundamental tenet is nonviolence

**ji** – honorific that can be added to the end of almost anything; thus babaji, Gandhiji

**Kali** – the Black; terrible form of *Shiva's* wife *Devi*; depicted with black skin, dripping with blood, surrounded by snakes and wearing a necklace of skulls

**Kama** – Hindu god of love

**karma** – principle of retributive justice for past deeds

**kell tiatr** – form of *tiatr*

**khadi** – homespun cloth

**khazans** – low-lying areas alongside Goa's rivers, reclaimed by building *bunds*; the flow of salt and fresh water is regulated to allow the land to be used for a variety of purposes

**Krishna** – *Vishnu's* eighth incarnation, often coloured blue; he revealed the *Bhagavad Gita* to Anjuna

**Kshatriya** – Hindu *caste* of warriors and administrators

**KTC** – Kadamba Transport Corporation; Goa's state bus company

**Kunbis** – Descendants of Goa's first inhabitants, and among the state's poorest groups; sometimes called 'Goa's aborigines'

**kusada** – sea snake

**lakh** – 100,000

**Lakshmana** – half-brother and aide of Rama in the *Ramayana*

**lathi** – bamboo stick often used by police

**lingam** – phallic symbol of *Shiva*

**Mahabharata** – Great Vedic (see *Vedas*) epic poem of the Bharata dynasty

**Mahadeva** – Great God; *Shiva*

**Mahadevi** – Great Goddess; *Devi*

**mahatma** – literally 'great soul'

**Maheshwara** – Great Lord; *Shiva*

**maidan** – open grassed area in a city

**mandala** – circle; symbol used in Hindu and Buddhist art to symbolise the universe

**mandapa** – pillared pavilion of a temple

**mando** – sacred song and dance form, introduced originally by the Goan Catholic community

**Manguesh** – an incarnation of *Shiva*, worshipped particularly in Goa

**mantra** – sacred word or syllable used by Buddhists and Hindus to aid concentration; metrical psalms of praise found in the *Vedas*

**Manueline** – style of architecture typical of that built by the Portuguese during the reign of Manuel I (1495–1521)

**Maratha** – warlike central Indian people who controlled much of India at various times; fought the *Mughals*

**marg** – major road

**masjid** – mosque

**Moghul** – see *Mughal*

**moksha** – liberation from the cycle of rebirth

**monsoon** – rainy season between June and October

**Mughal** – Muslim dynasty of Indian emperors from Babur to Aurangzeb (1526–1707)

**Nanda** – cowherd who raised *Krishna*

**Nandi** – bull, vehicle of *Shiva*; his images are usually found at *Shiva* temples

**Nataraja** – *Shiva* in his incarnation as the cosmic dancer

**niwas** – house, building

**paan** – mixture of betel nut and various spices, chewed for its mildly intoxicating effect, and as a digestive after meals

**panchayat** – local government; a panchayat area typically consists of two to three villages, from which volunteers are elected to represent the interests of the local people (the elected representative is called the *panch*; the elected leader is the *sarpanch*)

**Parasurama** – sixth incarnation of *Vishnu*, and the 'founder' of Goa

**Parvati** – the Mountaineer; a form of *Devi*

**pousada** – Portuguese for hostel

**prasad** – food offering

**puja** – literally 'respect'; offering or prayers

**Puranas** – set of 18 encyclopaedic Sanskrit stories, written in verse, relating to the *Trimurti*; dates from the period of the Guptas (5th century AD)

**raj** – rule or sovereignty

**raja, rana** – king

**Ramayana** – story of Rama and *Sita*; one of India's most well-known legends, retold in various forms throughout almost all of Southeast Asia

**ramponkar** – traditional Goan fisherman; fishes the coastal waters from a wooden boat, using a hand-hauled net (rampon)

**ratha** – temple chariot or car used in religious festivals

**reredos** – ornamented screen behind altar in Goan churches

**sagar** – lake, reservoir

**saquão** – central courtyard in traditional Goan houses

**Sati** – wife of *Shiva*; became a *sati* (honourable woman) by immolating herself (although banned more than a century ago, the act of *sati* is occasionally performed, though not in Goa)

**satyagraha** – literally 'insistence on truth'; nonviolent protest involving a fast, popularised by Gandhi; protesters are *satyagrahis*

**Scheduled Castes** – official term for *Dalits* or *Untouchables*

**Shiva** – also spelt *Siva*; the Destroyer; also the Creator, in which form he is worshipped as a *lingam*

**shri** – also spelt *sri*, *sree*, *shree*; honorific; these days the Indian equivalent of Mr or Mrs

**Sita** – in the *Vedas* the goddess of agriculture; commonly associated with the *Ramayana*, in which she is abducted by Ravana and carted off to Lanka

**sitar** – Indian stringed instrument

**Sudra** – caste of labourers

**susegad** – Goan expression meaning relaxed or laid-back

**sutra** – string; a list of rules expressed in verse, the most famous being the *Kamasutra*

**swami** – title given to Hindu monks meaning ‘lord of the self’; a title of respect

**tabla** – pair of drums

**taluka** – administrative district or region

**tank** – reservoir

**tiatr** – locally written and produced drama in the Konkani language

**tikka** – mark devout Hindus put on their foreheads with *tikka* powder

**toddy tapper** – one who extracts toddy from palm trees

**torana** – architrave over a temple entrance

**Trimurti** – Triple Form; the Hindu triad *Brahma*, *Shiva* and *Vishnu*

**Untouchable** – lowest *caste* or ‘casteless’ for whom the most menial tasks are reserved; name derives from the belief that higher castes risk defilement if they touch one (formerly known as *Harijan*, now *Dalit* or *Scheduled Castes*)

**Upanishads** – esoteric doctrine; ancient texts forming part of the *Vedas* (although of a later date)

**vaddo** – also spelt as waddo; section or ward of a village

**varna** – concept of *caste*

**Varuna** – supreme Vedic god

**Vedas** – Hindu sacred books; a collection of hymns composed in preclassical Sanskrit during the second millennium BC and divided into four books: *Rig-Veda*, *Yajur-Veda*, *Sama-Veda* and *Atharva-Veda*

**Velips** – traditional forest-dwelling people

**vimana** – principal part of a Hindu temple

**Vishnu** – part of the *Trimurti* with *Brahma* and *Shiva*; the Preserver and Restorer

**wallah** – man or person; can be added onto almost anything, thus dhobi-wallah, taxi-wallah, chai-wallah

© Lonely Planet Publications. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'