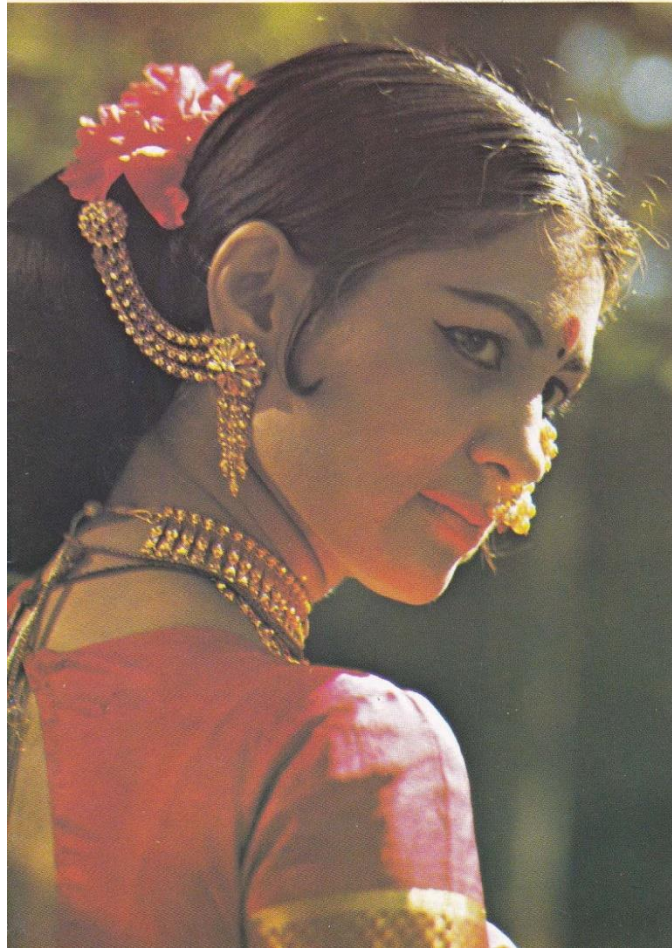


Delhi
Calcutta
SAS City Portrait



Introduction 3

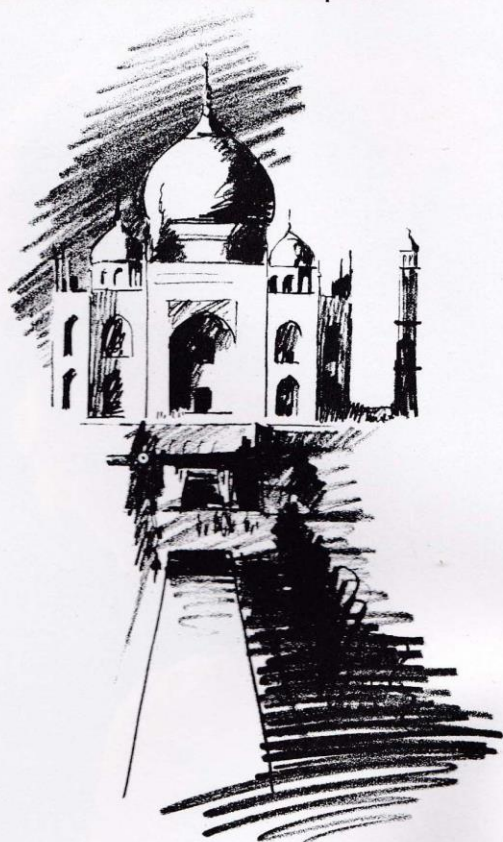
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This is the 10th edition of Delhi/Calcutta City Portrait printed in 40,000 copies – with information based on facts available in January 1980. Main changes from 9th edition: Delhi – new telephone numbers SAS/THAI office (34 36 08/34 36 38/34 36 68) and for most of the hotels; Calcutta – three more restaurants now have bars. Increase in all prices.



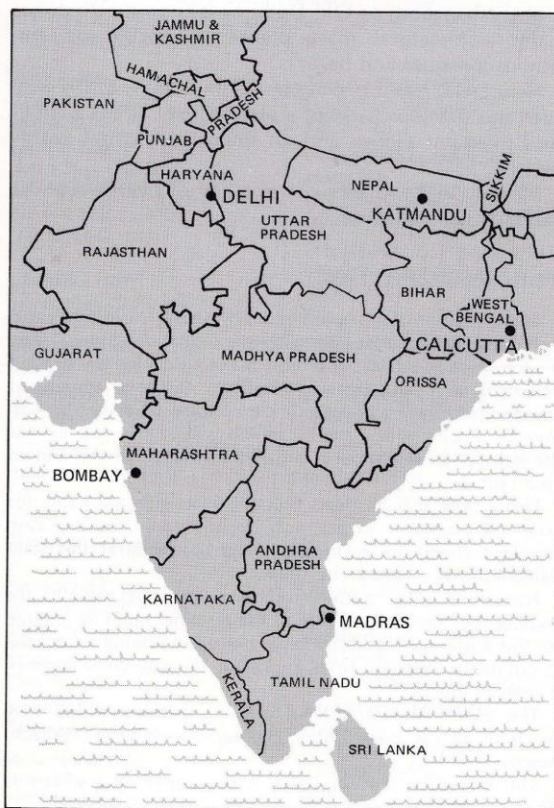
Front cover: South Indian girl in traditional dress.

Introduction

The Republic of India extends from the tropics in the south to the Himalayas in the north, a huge country with an area of 1,265,000 sq. miles (3,276,140 sq.km) with a population of some 500 millions – representing one-seventh of the human race!

India has many different faces. There are four main racial groups and at least 14 major languages spoken in the country – but for the visitor, India is an extraordinary mixture of ancient and modern. Bullock carts and the latest model limousines. Wooden ploughs and up-to-date steel-making plants. Ancient carved temples and mighty hydro-electric schemes.

India is a country of contrasts – from the deserts of Rajasthan to the tea gardens of Assam, from the cities' crowded alleys to the solitude of the Taj Mahal.



Delhi

Delhi claims to offer more than a millennium of history in stone! Hindu, Moslem and Moghul dynasties ruled the country from here. The British established the seat of government in Delhi in 1911 moving it to New Delhi in 1931 – and after independence in 1947 it remained the capital of the Republic of India, a garden city of parks and tree-shaded boulevards.

All the Delhis of the past form a fitting historical background for the new city – the Red Fort town of Anang Pal, built by Prithviraj, the capital of Kutub-ud-din-suri, the city of Ala-ud-din-Tughlakabad founded by the House of Tughlak (1320–1414 AD), and Ferozabad, the creation of Ferozshah, together with Shahjahanabad, city of Shah Jahan.

Shahjahanabad, or Old Delhi as it is now called, has many architectural masterpieces of marble palaces, famous mosques and bazaars.

New Delhi has the symmetrical buildings, broad avenues and spacious parks of a planned city. It has a circular Parliament House and an imposing Central Secretariat.

All the Delhis together form a city of over five and a half million inhabitants.

Your arrival in Delhi

At Delhi Airport, you will be met by SAS/THAI International staff. Landing formalities are relatively simple depending upon the length of your stay. You must make a detailed declaration of articles in your baggage and also of the total amount of currency you have with you to the customs officials. You will then be issued with a permit which will entitle you to take the balance of this money out of the country at the end of your visit.

Please note that all items brought in as gifts are liable for duty – if you have to pay duty on any items you can cash traveler's checks or exchange foreign currency at the State Bank of India counter at the airport.

Formalities over, porters will carry your baggage to the waiting taxis on the land side of the terminal building (charge for this portage is one rupee per piece but tipping, of course, is optional). Taxi fare from airport to the city costs approximately 20 rupees.

The SAS/THAI International office is located within easy reach of all the main hotels and taxis are always available nearby.

The monetary unit in India is the rupee (Rs) which is divided into 100 paise.

If you are flying on from Delhi by SAS/THAI International, one of the first things to do upon arrival, is to reconfirm your reservation by contacting the SAS/THAI International office at the airport, or in the city (tel. 34 36 08/34 36 38/34 36 68).

There is an airport tax of Rs.100 on departure.

Hotels

Delhi has a number of good hotels, most of which are air-conditioned and have rooms with private bath. It is advisable to make your hotel reservation prior to arrival by contacting your travel agent or nearest SAS office. Either can offer you, through the SAS Travel Planning Service, information on accommodation of all classes, with confirmation of rooms in some instances. Should you arrive without confirmed hotel bookings, please contact the SAS/THAI International office in Delhi (tel. 34 36 08/34 36 38/34 36 68) who will do their utmost to try to obtain suitable accommodation for you.

Listed below for your guidance is a selection of some of the best-known hotels:

Akbar Hotel (D10)

Chanakyapuri.
Tel. 37 02 51.

Ambassador Hotel (H9)

Sujan Singh Park.
Tel. 69 03 91.

Ashoka Hotel (D10)

50B Chanakayapuri.
Tel. 37 01 01.

Claridges Hotel (F9)

12 Aurangzeb Road.
Tel. 37 02 11.

Imperial Hotel (G5)

Janpath. Tel. 31 15 11.

Janpath Hotel (G6)

Janpath. Tel. 35 00 70.

Maurya Hotel (A10)

Diplomatic Enclave.
Tel. 37 02 71

Oberoi Intercontinental Hotel (I9)

Dr. Zakir Hussain Marg.
Tel. 69 95 71.

Oberoi Maidens (beyond H1)

Alipur Road, Civil Lines.
Tel. 22-1591.

Qutab Hotel

(off Aurobindo Marg).
Tel. 66 95 40/66 00 60.

YMCA Tourist Hostel (F5)

Jai Singh Road. Tel. 31 19 15.

The rates of the hotels vary from US\$9 to US\$30 for a single room and US\$15 to US\$40 for a double room.

Restaurants

Embassy (F5)

6D Connaught Place.

Gaylords (F5)

14 Regal Building.
Music and dancing.

Kwality (F5)

74 Regal Building.

Moti Mahal (I3)

Darya Ganj.
Indian food only –
Tandoor specialities.

Qutab Restaurant

Qutab Minar.

Standard (F5)

Regal Building.

United Coffee House (F5)

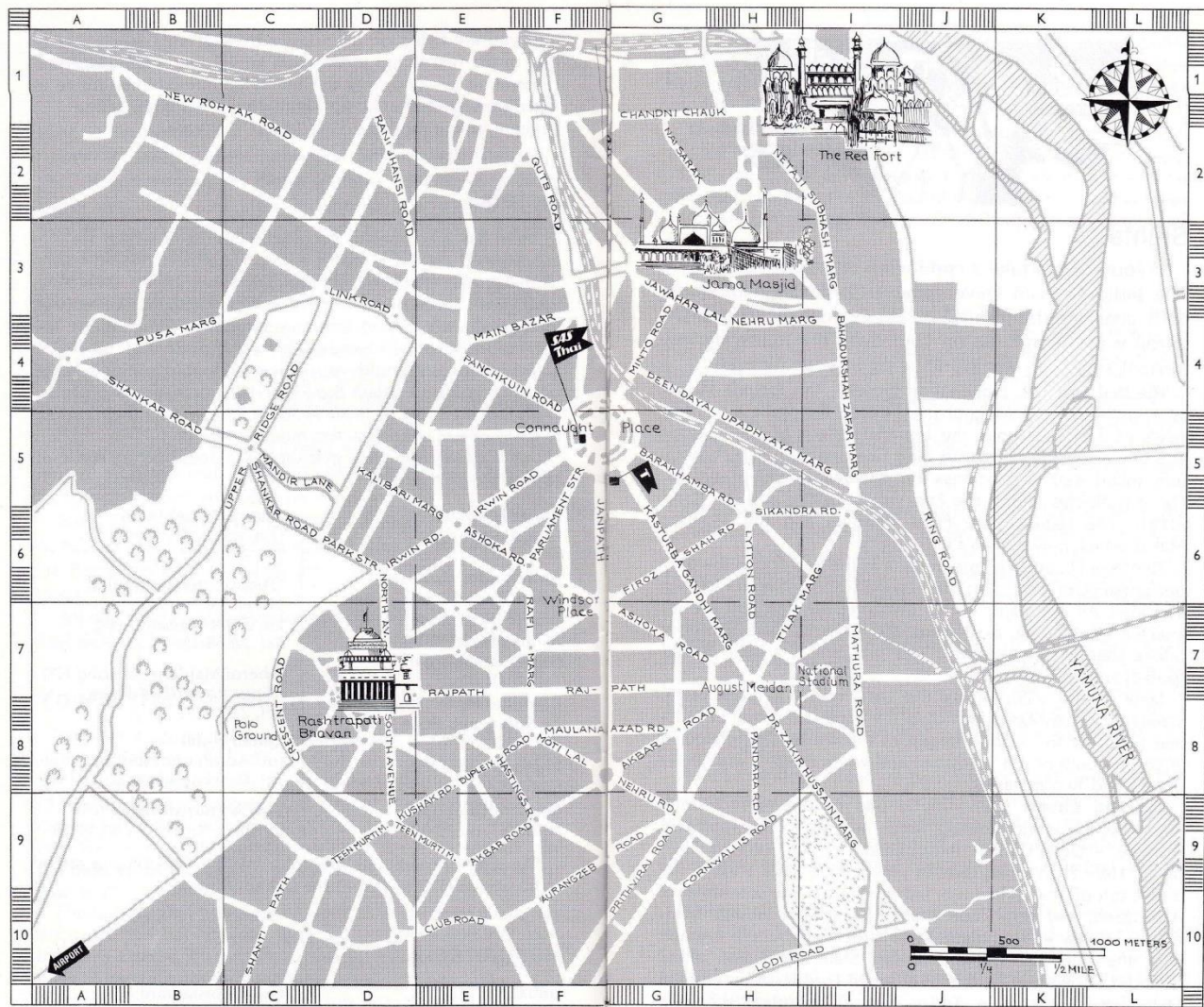
15E Connaught Place.

Volga (F5)

18B Connaught Place.
Music and dancing.

York's

Connaught Circus.



Code numbers in the Delhi section of this booklet refer to the above map. Thus

(G7) is located where lines drawn from "G" and "7" cross each other.

Interesting sights in Delhi

- | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| (I1) Red Fort. | (Beyond F10) | Qutab Minar. |
| (G3) Jama Masjid. | (Off map) | Iron Pillar. |
| (G1) Chandni Chowk. | (Off map) | Ashoka Pillar. |
| (J9) Purana Quila (Old Fort). | (D7) | Rashtrapati Bhavan. |
| (J10) Humayun's Tomb. | (C5) | Laxmi Narayan Temple. |
| (I9) The Lodi Park and Tomb. | (F5) | Jantar Mantar (Observatory). |
| (F10) Safdar Jang's Tomb. | (J3) | Rajghat Samadhi. |

Useful addresses

- SAS/THAI** International Ticket Office:
 18G Park Street, Calcutta 70-0016. Tel. 24-9696/9.
 Office hours: 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. weekdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturdays. Closed on Sundays.
- T** Government of India Tourist Office:
 4 Shakespeare Sarani (Theatre Road) (G7), Calcutta 70-0016.
 Tel. 44-0933.

Distance from city center to airport: 10 miles (16 km).



Sights

If you wish to take a conducted city sightseeing tour, The India Tourism Development Corporation operates daily coach tours from 'L' Block, Connaught Circus. Or if you want to sightsee on your own, the following important sights are worth including in your itinerary:

The Red Fort (I1). Dominating the city, this fortress stands as a symbol of the Moghul past. Inside the walls are many relics of what was once the Imperial Palace of Shah Jahan. The two Audience Halls with their fine marble pillars, beautifully inlaid walls and ceilings are remarkably well-preserved. Other buildings within the Fort worth visiting are the Rang Mahal, The Hamam, the Pearl Mosque, and the Mumtaz Mahal, which now houses a museum.

The "Son Et Lumiere" programme at the Red Fort is the only performance of its kind in Asia, taking place between October and May. All the major events involving the Red Fort are re-enacted telescoping, as it were, 300 years of Delhi's history into a span of fifty minutes. This program is a must for all tourists visiting Delhi.

Jama Masjid (G3). Facing the Fort, across a green lawn, stands the Jama Masjid, which is the biggest mosque in India and probably the second largest in the world. Completed in 1658, it is built of red sandstone and white marble, with three domes and two minarets.

Chandni Chowk (G1). This is one of the most historic streets in the world running from the Fort to the Fatehpuri Mosque – Delhi's main thoroughfare in the days of Shah Jahan. Here Shah Jahan rode in pomp; here Dara Shikoh, the eldest son of Shah Jahan was led prisoner at the command of Aurangzeb; and here Nadir Shah, Ahmed Shah Abdali, Madhoro Scindia and Ghulam Kadir proclaimed their triumph over the rulers of Delhi. The last State procession along Chandni Chowk was held in 1912 when Lord Hastings entered Delhi for the first time. Today it is an important shopping center.

Purana Quila (Old Fort) (J7). This ruined fort stands on the site of the ancient city of Indraprastha, the Capital of the Pandavas. It was begun by Emperor Humayun in 1530 and was completed by Sher Shah Suri, the Afghan, in 1540. Inside the fort, there is an octagonal building known as the Sher Mandal which was Humayun's Library.

Humayun's Tomb (J10). This is the tomb on which the Taj Mahal at Agra is reported to have been modelled. Built by

Humayun's widow in 1565, it is a beautifully proportioned structure of red sandstone, inlaid with marble and surmounted by a dome of white marble. The mausoleum stands in a large garden which is laid out in the Moghul style.

The Lodi Park and Tombs (I9). The group of tombs situated in Lodi Park are those of the last Pathan Kings of Delhi (1450–1526). They form an architectural style of their own and are distinguished from the Moghul tombs by their octagonal shape and low, half domes. At the end of the Lodi Park is the Golf Course.

Safdar Jang's Tomb (F10). This is the last of the Moghul tombs and was built in 1753.

Qutab Minar (off F10). Built in the 12th century, 238 ft. high, it is the highest single stone tower in the world. It rises in five stories, broken by projecting galleries and decorated with bands of inscription in Arabic. The first balcony is 95 ft. (28½ m) above the ground; the diameter at the base is 47 ft. (14 m) and that at the top about 9 ft. (2½ m). The first three stories are of red sandstone and are ribbed. A magnificent view of the surrounding buildings is obtained from the top which can be reached by 379 steps.

Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque (off F10). Situated near the Qutab Minar. According to a Persian inscription on the archway, it was built by Qutab-ud-Din Aibak in 1193 A.D. He utilised some of the stone pillars of Hindu temples to build this mosque, and this accounts for some of the interior's richly ornamented pillars.

Iron Pillar (off F10). In the courtyard of the mosque stands the famous rustless iron pillar of Chandravarman, King of Pushkarna (Udaipur State). It is a solid shaft of wrought iron, about 16" (40 cm) in diameter and 23' 8" (approx. 7 m) high. It has a Gupta inscription which relates the glories and victories of this king.

Ashoka's Pillars. There are two Ashoka pillars in Delhi. The one situated on the Ridge (C4) was removed from Meerut. It was so badly damaged in the process that the original letters are not visible. The second, found in Feroz Shah Kotla (I4) was brought by Feroz Shah from Topra in Ambala District or from Mathura.

Rashtrapati Bhavan (D7). This palatial building was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens for the Viceroys of India when the seat of the Government of India shifted from Old Delhi to New Delhi in 1931, and is now the official residence of the President of the Republic of India.

Laxmi Narayan Temple (Birla Temple) (C5) is another interesting structure. It caters to the various religious sects with Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs participating in the daily prayers and kirtan.

Jantar Mantar (Observatory) (F5), Parliament Street. It was erected – like the one in Ujjain and Jaipur – by the astronomer King Jai Singh II of Jaipur. The observatory contains huge masonry instruments which were devised to measure latitude and longitude and the movements of celestial bodies.

Rajghat Samadhi (J3). Between Old Delhi and New Delhi, Rajghat is the spot where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated on January 31, 1948. A garden has been laid out around the simple "samadhi" where prayers are held every Friday evening.

Excursions

There are good connections from Delhi for one-day excursions by air, car or train to world famous places like **Agra** and the **Taj Mahal**; **Jaipur**, the pink city of Rajputs; **Udaipur**, the Lake City and to the Temples of **Khajurao** with their erotic carvings.

The **Valley of Kashmir** is reached by plane from Delhi in a few hours. You need at least two clear days at your disposal if planning a trip to Kashmir.

Entertainment and night life

The Oberoi Intercontinental Hotel, The Ashoka Hotel, The Akbar Hotel and The Claridges Hotel all with bars, feature regular floor shows with Western as well as classical Indian dancing.

There are also a number of cinemas showing Indian, English and American films. Normally screened every day at 3.30 p.m., 6.30 p.m., and 9.30 p.m.

Shopping

You will find the most important shopping area around Connaught Place and Janpath, both near the SAS/THAI International office. For the best collections of cottage industry and handicraft products on display in the country, visit the Central Cottage Industries Emporium (G5), at Janpath. Business hours are from 10 a.m. to 7.30 p.m. Shops are closed on Sundays and National holidays.

Climate and clothing

Delhi has three major seasons: winter, summer and the monsoon (rainy). The winter months (November–March) are pleasant throughout India.

In Delhi, however, the minimum temperature sometimes drops to near-freezing point. The temperature at this time of the year ranges between 50°F (16°C) to 84°F (29°C). Winter clothing is advisable, though overcoats for men are not necessary.

The summer and rainy seasons (April–October) are warmer and temperatures vary from 77°F (25°C) to 104°F (40°C). The rains normally fall during July to September with a considerable cooling of temperatures. Light summer clothing is recommended.

For more details about cuisine, shopping hints, tipping, transportation, public holidays, see the respective chapters in the Calcutta section of this city portrait.

The former capital of India until 1911 when New Delhi became the seat of government, Calcutta is still the largest city in the Republic with a population of approx. eight million.

On the eastern banks of the Hooghly River in the Ganges delta, the city extends along both sides of the river for many miles and is linked by the huge Howrah Bridge, a cantilever structure some 2,150 feet (655 m) long, opened in 1943.

The capital of West Bengal, it is a great commercial and industrial center, a busy port and an important hub of road, rail and air routes.

This is a far cry from the three small villages on the Hooghly, Satanuti, Govindapur and Kalikata, which English merchant Job Charnock formed into a trading post in the 17th century. It is said Calcutta acquired its name from Kalikata though some people maintain the name originates from the lime kilns (Kal Kat in Bengali) which were prevalent in this region.

Your arrival in Calcutta

At Calcutta Airport, with its new modern terminal building, the staff of SAS handling agent, Air India, and THAI International will greet you and assist you with landing formalities which are relatively simple, but which vary according to the length of your stay.

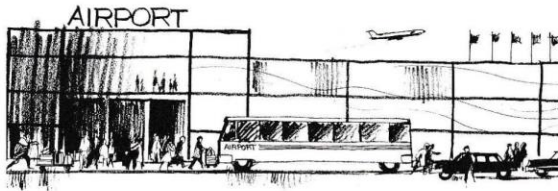
You will be expected to make a detailed declaration of articles in your baggage to the customs officials.

They will issue a permit enabling you to exchange your foreign currency while in India, or to take it along with you when you leave the country. If you have to pay duty for any of the items you bring in with you, you may cash traveler's checks or exchange foreign currency at the official exchange desk in the airport.

Special luggage storage facilities are now available at the airport for all international passengers for a nominal charge.

Formalities over, airport porters will take your baggage to the taxi or coach. Coach service is available from the airport to the city and the rate is Rs.8.00 per adult and Rs.4.00 per child.

A taxi from the airport to the city will cost about Rs.25.00. The SAS/THAI International Office is located at 18G Park Street (tel. 24-9696/9), within easy reach of leading hotels and taxis are always available.



The monetary unit in India is the rupee (Rs.), which is divided into 100 paise.

If you are flying on from Calcutta by SAS/THAI International one of the first things to do upon arrival is to reconfirm your reservation. You can do this by contacting the SAS/THAI International office at the airport – or in the city.

Hotels

Calcutta has a number of fine hotels, the majority of which are air-conditioned and have rooms with private bath. It is wise to make your hotel reservations in advance. This is most easily accomplished by contacting your travel agent or the nearest SAS office. Either can offer you – through the SAS Travel Planning Service – advice on accommodation in all classes, with confirmation of rooms in some instances. Should you arrive unaccommodated, however, then contact the SAS/THAI International office in Calcutta (tel. 24-9696/9) who will try to help you.

Listed below for your guidance is a selection of some of the best-known hotels:

Grand Hotel (G6)
Chowringhee Road.
Tel. 23-0181.

Great Eastern Hotel (G5)
Old Court House Street.
Tel. 23-2331.

Hindustan International (G9)
Lower Circular Road.
Tel. 44-2396/9.

Park Hotel (G7)
17 Park Street.
Tel. 24-8301.

Ritz Continental (G5)
12 Chowringhee Road.
Tel. 23-2391.

The rates at the hotels vary from US\$25 to US\$45 for a single room and US\$40 to US\$75 for a double room.

Voltage for electrical appliances is 220 AC (check before using your razor).

Restaurants and cuisine

You can eat well at the restaurants of the leading hotels. They serve an international menu, but you may, of course, also like to order Indian dishes.

We list below a selection of restaurants:

Amber Restaurant (G5)
Waterloo Street.
Bar.

Blue Fox (G7)
Park Street.
Music, dancing & bar.

Flury's Tea Room (G7)
Park Street.

Golden Peacock Room (G9)
Hindustan International,
Lower Circular Road.
Music, dancing, floor show & bar.

Kwality (G7)
Park Street.
Bar.

MAGS (G7)
Park Street.
Music and bar.

Mocambo (G7)
Park Street.
Music, dancing & bar.

Moulin Rouge (G7)
Music, dancing & bar.

Olympia (G7)
Park Street.
Bar.

Prince's (G5)
Grand Hotel,
Chowringhee Road.
Music, dancing, floor show & bar.

Shenaz (G7)
Middleton Row.

Skyroom (G7)
Park Street.

Trinca's (G7)
Park Street.
Music, dancing, bar and
occasionally a cabaret.

There are several **Chinese restaurants** including:

Bar-B-Q (G7)
Park Street.
Bar.

Great Eastern Hotel (G5)
Old Court House Street.
Bar.

Nanking (G4)
C.I.T. Road.
Bar.

The Chung Wah (H5)
Chittaranjan Avenue.
Bar.

Many Calcutta clubs have first class restaurants, and visitors are welcome when introduced by a member. Most restaurants are open from 11 a.m. to midnight, although a few remain open until 1 a.m.

Popular national dishes include *Tandoori chicken*, *Sheekh Kabab* and *Korma curry*. If you like rice dishes we recommend *Biryani* (with meat) or *Pillau* (with meat or vegetables). *Bhekti* and *Hilsa*, are tasty Indian fish dishes, generally served fried or with curry.

Imported liquor is available though rather expensive. But India produces all types of alcoholic beverages, including whisky, gin and beer. Indian gin, rum and beer are considered equal to some of the best brands produced abroad.






Code numbers in the Calcutta section of this booklet refer to the above map. Thus


(F5) is located where lines drawn from "F" and "5" cross each other.

Interesting sights in Calcutta

- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| (K1) Jain Temple. | (E7) Fort William. |
| (G2) Marble Palace. | (G6) Ochterlony Monument. |
| (G3) Nakhoda Mosque. | (G6) Indian Museum. |
| (F2) Howrah Bridge. You cross the bridge when you go from central Calcutta to the Botanical Gardens with the Great Banyan Tree. | (F8) Victoria Memorial. |
| (E5) Eden Gardens. | (D8) Race Course. |
| | (D9) Zoological Gardens. |
| | (F10) Temple of Kali. |

Useful addresses

 **SAS/THAI International Ticket Office and Air Terminal:**
12A Connaught Place (F5), tel. 44001.
Office hours: 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. on weekdays (Saturdays 1 p.m.) and Sundays closed.

 **Government of India Tourist Office:**
88 Janpath (G5), New Delhi, tel. 47057.
Office hours: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on weekdays (Saturdays 1 p.m.) and Sundays closed.

Distance from city center to airport: 8 miles (14 km).

Sights

If you have only a limited time in Calcutta, contact one of the local travel agencies; most arrange one-day sight-seeing tours at about Rs.60 per person, or make arrangements directly with an official guide, approved by the Government of India Tourist Office. Such a guide would cost you Rs.25 for a half-day, or Rs.50 for the entire day. (Telephone: 44-0933. For address: see map spread.)

On the other hand, if you would like to tour the city on your own, we list below some of the more important sights with map references in brackets.

Jain Temple (K1). Built in 1867, this temple has a fabulous altar, decorated with diamonds and other precious stones.

Marble Palace (G2). An outstanding picture gallery in a picturesque garden.

Nakhoda Mosque (G3). This is the most important Moslem place of worship in Calcutta. Its prayer hall can accommodate 10,000 people. The mosque is a fine specimen of Indo-Saracenic architecture, with a majestic dome and two minarets, each 151 feet (46 m) high, and 25 smaller minarets. The building is located in an area of the city characterized by narrow streets with shops of all kinds, very similar to the bazaars of the Middle East.

Howrah Bridge (F2). This is the only link over the river Hooghly. Its main span measures 1,500 feet (457 m)

Botanical Gardens (A7), situated 2½ miles from Howrah. The main attraction is the Great Banyan Tree, which is more than 88 feet (27 m) in circumference and 1,000 feet (305 m) high. Botanists from all parts of the world come to see the Herbarium in which some 30,000 species are represented.

Eden Gardens (E5). This lovely park in the Maidan district is the cricketers' paradise, and should you come during the season, you'll have plenty of opportunities to see many exciting matches.

Saheed Minar (G6). This is an unusual but happy mixture of Egyptian (base), Syrian (column) and Turkish (cupola) architecture. It was erected to the memory of Sir David Ochterlony who was instrumental in ending the Nepalese War (1812-14). An enchanting view of the city from the top.

Indian Museum (G6). Among the multitude of exhibits are relics of ancient Indian civilization relating to every period of Indian history. During the cool season there are regular exhibitions on the top floor.

Victoria Memorial (F8) is considered to be the most beautiful structure in Bengal. The vast marble building, set in the midst of beautiful gardens and lakes, and opened in 1921 by the Prince of Wales (the late Duke of Windsor) is a unique representation of India's history, especially of the Victorian era, and

British rule. The Royal Gallery has a fine collection of paintings depicting the life of Queen Victoria and a statue of the Queen at the time when she ascended the throne stands in the Queen's Hall under the dome. Perhaps the finest hall in the palace is the Darbar Hall with interesting paintings and engravings of Indian scenery. The Memorial is open daily, except Mondays, from 10 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. in the period April to October. November to March the admission hours are from 10 a.m. to 3.30 p.m. Admission charge. The selling of tickets ceases ½ hour before closing time.

The Race Course (D8) is situated west of the Victoria Memorial and is one of the finest of its kind in this part of the world. Horse races are held every weekend, October to March and July to September.

Zoo (D9). Calcutta's extensive zoological gardens are well worth a visit and in the Horticultural Gardens nearby the botanist will find some very rare specimens of tropical flora.

Temple of Kali (F10). Dedicated to Kali, the patron goddess of Calcutta Hindus, this temple stands on land where the holy river Ganges once flowed.

The Dhakuria Lakes are situated on the southern outskirts of Calcutta, the home for a number of rowing clubs. The shores are lined with tall palm trees forming a park and popular recreation area, especially during summer evenings.

Birla Planetarium. For those interested in astronomy and the stars, a visit to the Birla Planetarium – the only one of its kind in India – will be a rewarding experience. It is situated on the western side of the Victoria Memorial and close to major hotels.

Fort William (D6) is a small town in itself with its own places of worship, swimming pool, golf course, cinemas, bazaar, etc. The Fort may be visited provided permission is first obtained from the Commanding Officer

Excursions

Not only is Calcutta an intriguing spot to explore, but it is also an excellent departure point for excursions to other interesting places. In so vast a country as India the best way of traveling for the visitor is by air – contact your SAS/THAI International office when you plan your excursions.

Nepal. THAI International offers you a unique opportunity of flying from Calcutta to Katmandu, the Gurkha capital on the "Roof of the World". Here is spell-binding scenery with the mighty Everest and other gigantic peaks providing the world's most spectacular skyline. Fascinating folklore – see the Devil dancers – photogenic five-storeyed pagoda-style temples and souvenirs unobtainable anywhere else. Plus first class hotels. Contact your SAS/THAI International office for more details.

Entertainment and night life

In addition to the Bengali theater, dancing and musical performances, you will find a large number of cinemas showing Indian, English and American films. There are three shows every day, the last of which starts at 9 p.m. and ends around 11 p.m. Principal nightclubs are: the Grand Hotel's Prince (G6), the Great Eastern Hotel's Maxim's (G5), Hindustan International Hotel's Golden Peacock Room and Ritz Continental's Crystal Room, all with bars, floor shows, music and dancing until midnight (three times a week until 1 a.m.).

Tipping

Hotels add a service charge of 12½% on their bills. In restaurants the maximum tip is 10%, porters are tipped Rs.1 per suitcase and hairdressers expect at least Rs.1 or 10–25% depending on the total bill. Taxi drivers and cinema ushers are not usually tipped.

Shopping

Souvenir hunting is easy in Calcutta for you will find a wide range of both expensive and inexpensive Indian handicrafts for sale at the various Government Emporiums (including Cottage Industries Emporium) and numerous curio shops in the New Market area.

A word of advice – for expensive items buy your souvenirs from a reputable shop, one of the Government Emporiums or Cottage Industries Emporiums.

What to buy? Take a look at the Benaras brocade stoles and saris, pure silk saris and scarves, embroidered velvet evening bags, etc. The brassware will also catch your eye. Examine, too, the fine wood carvings in walnut, sandalwood and rosewood.

Transportation

Trams and buses are not normally used by tourists, who generally favor taxis. There are plenty of these and the charges are reasonable – Rs.2.25 per kilometer at flag down. For a different experience you can also try one of the rickshaws, though they are not allowed to ply on the main streets.

Climate and clothing

In winter, from October to March, the weather is pleasant and cool with an average temperature range of 55°F (13°C) to 80°F (27°C). Light clothing is comfortable in all but the northern areas. Summer is warmer – from 75°F (24°C) to 97°F (36°C) and thin or tropical clothing is a must.

The months of the monsoon are July to September. During this period most parts of India have considerable rain, and in addition to very light clothing, a raincoat or umbrella is necessary.

Public holidays

There are a number of national and – especially – religious holidays in India, and while it is difficult to give exact information, the following may prove useful:

National holidays: January 26, Republic Day – the commemoration of the Republic's foundation is greeted with celebrations, military parades and mass meetings, principally held in New Delhi. August 15 is Independence Day. October 2 is *Gandhi Jayanti*; on this day the people of India celebrate the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi, father of the nation.

Religious holidays. *Holi* is a Hindu festival celebrating the advent of Spring. During this festival it is customary to spray colored water on one another. It usually takes place in March. *Id-ul-Fitr* is the Muslim festival to celebrate the end of Ramzan, the month of fasting. *Id-uz-Zuha* is another Muslim festival when the Moslems celebrate the sacrifice of Abraham. *Muharrum* is also a Muslim holiday in memory of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain at Kerbala. (The dates for the Muslim festivals vary from year to year and can be ascertained from the local SAS/THAI International office.)

Durga Puja or *Dussahra* is the most important Hindu festival of the year, celebrating the triumph of good over evil, as exemplified in King Rama's victory over the Demon King Ravana. The celebrations are held either in late September or early October. *Diwali* (also known as *Deepawali*) is the festival of lights and marks the victorious return of King Rama. This holiday, 21 days after *Durga Puja* or *Dussahra* is also the beginning of the fiscal year for many Hindu businesses especially those from the North and West India.

The Christian festivals are *Easter* and *Christmas* and these (Good Friday and Christmas Day) are national holidays in almost all parts of India, celebrated by some 20 million Christians of India.

In addition to the holidays, another picturesque event is the Car Festival at Puri (about 12 hours' journey from Calcutta), the most famous religious procession in all India. The center of the procession is a huge wooden chariot, 45 feet (14 m) high, which is drawn by pilgrims and carries the image of Lord Jagannath, the Hindu deity. The Car Festival is held during June or July.

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