

India e-Visa vs Visa on Arrival vs Regular Visa

How India's three visa routes actually differ, and which one applies to you.

THE THREE ROUTES

- e-Visa — applied for entirely online before travel, no embassy visit, the route most eligible travelers use
- Visa on arrival — issued at the airport itself, but now limited to a small set of nationalities rather than being broadly available
- Regular (paper) visa — applied for in person or by mail through an Indian embassy or consulate, the route for travelers not covered by the e-Visa

VISA ON ARRIVAL: WHO IT'S ACTUALLY FOR

- Eligibility has narrowed significantly over time and currently covers only a small handful of nationalities
- Where offered, it's available only at specific designated international airports, not every port of entry
- Most travelers who assume they can get a visa on arrival in India are not actually eligible — don't plan around it without confirming first

Visa-on-arrival eligibility and the airports where it's offered are set by the government and have changed over time. Confirm current eligibility for your nationality directly on indianvisaonline.gov.in before relying on this route.

WHEN YOU NEED A REGULAR VISA INSTEAD

- Your nationality isn't on the e-Visa eligible list
- Your travel purpose isn't covered by an e-Visa category, such as long-term work, study, or journalism
- You fall under a nationality, parentage, or birthplace exclusion
- You hold a diplomatic or official passport

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