

Bangalore, India – Frequently Asked Questions

This is the fifth largest city in India and growing fast because of its reputation as the “Silicon Valley of India.” Because of its rapid growth, Bangalore, or Bengaluru as it has been known officially since 2006, is also a city struggling to build adequate infrastructure to keep up with this growth. The traffic can be chaotic and the teeming masses can be overwhelming at first for visitors, but if you keep an open mind, Bangalore can soon charm you with a benevolent climate, green spaces, and as the lonelyplanet.com website puts it, “... *youthful energy and imagination (not to mention disposable income) of the ITocracy (that) fuels a progressive dining, drinking and shopping scene – one of the best in India, in fact.*”

Read more: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/bengaluru-bangalore#ixzz2mWBekXe4>

The local arrangements

The program is going to be hosted by SAEIndia with planning support from NAL. We are soliciting sponsorships from local aerospace companies to defray some of the costs. In the most optimistic scenario, we will be able to cover all the local costs, i.e., lodging, food, and local transportation, with the participants only responsible for air passage to Bangalore. If specific participants have issues with this, please let us know, and we will ensure that your stay is not subsidized. More details about the sponsorship will be available by the end of August.

We are negotiating a reduced rate package at Matthan (Sterlings-Mac) Hotel for the conference. We will be organizing the TC meetings and the workshop at this 5-star facility which is close to NAL and the center of town (<http://www.matthan.in/default-en.html>). More details will be available after SAEIndia completes the negotiations; again by the end of August.

The plan is to organize an IVHM workshop on Friday, October 17, at the end of the TC meetings, where all the visitors will participate in panel and plenary sessions. This will allow local engineers, mainly in the aerospace IVHM and EHM area, to participate and interact with world experts in this field.

Visas?

Yes, most of you will need a visa to enter India. It generally only takes a week to obtain the visa, but because the pre-paperwork can take time, we have already started the process. To get an invitation letter please contact Mr. Shriram (ddg@saeindia.org) at SAEIndia.

Is Bangalore safe?

Yes, as long as you don't go out of your way to attract or invite trouble. We will be providing transportation for all business activities. Going out late at night by yourself is not advisable, but that is true of most cities in the world. Going out in groups is fine. Bangalore is far more cosmopolitan than most cities in the world, with a large population of foreign visitors and residents. So if you behave as you would in any large city around the world, you should be ok.

What is the local cuisine and is it safe?

The local cuisine can be characterized as South Indian, but in cosmopolitan Bangalore you will find food from every part of India and the world. Because we are looking after most of the arrangements for food, we will make sure that it is catered from reputable establishments. We suspect that the flavor of the catered food would be predominantly Indian, but other arrangements can be easily made. Just let us know in advance and we can talk to the hotel.

Do not drink water from the faucet. Filtered water (most times filtered with reverse osmosis) is perfectly safe and readily available in restaurants and hotels. However, to be even safer, drink water from sealed water bottles that are available for purchase everywhere. Even safer is to stick to alcohol.

Any special medical precautions?

While the CDC recommends shots, many colleagues from Europe and the US who travel to India do not take any special precautions. As long as you do not take undue risks with food and water, you should be ok. Malaria is not very prevalent in Bangalore. But this is a personal issue, so we will let you decide.

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/india>

Will there be any communication issues?

No. Everybody with whom you will be interacting will be completely comfortable in English: hotel staff, retail establishments, chauffeurs, etc. Since we will be arranging most of your transportation, you will not need to interact too much with the chauffeurs anyway.

What is the weather like in mid-October?

Bangalore has a mild climate year-round because of its elevation (~1 km above sea level), and abundance of greenery. October will be quite pleasant with maximums around 80° F (27° C) and minimums around 60° F (16° C). Not much rain is expected at this time.

How do we get around?

For the most part, your transportation needs will be looked after. If you need to do anything on your own, just talk to the concierge at the hotel and they will take care of you.

What else can we do during our stay in Bangalore?

Bangalore is not a tourist destination as are other places in India so you should not have much distraction from the meetings! However, there are many places nearby that have historical significance. Chief amongst them is Mysore, the ancient capital of the state of Karnataka. Bangalore is the current capital, and by far its largest city. We are trying to arrange an organized tour of Mysore and Srirangapattana (an ancient city of significance in India's colonial past) for the Saturday after the workshop. Even if we are not able to do so, you can arrange this quite easily with the hotel concierge. The conference hotel will have very good concierge service for advice on shopping, local tourist

attractions, cuisine, etc., for any spouses who accompany the attendees. If enough spouses come, we will work with the hotel or other local organizations to arrange special events.

If we have time, what other places should we visit in India?

Goa is probably the best place to visit. It has wonderful beaches, hotels, and markets catering to the global jet set. Some resources to consult:

The official India Tourist website: <http://www.incredibleindia.org/>

Lonely planet: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/india>

Are there any special issues we need to worry about?

Not really. You can contact the following people in case you have any issues:

Ravi Rajamani (+1-860-614-1927 (mob) / +91-90-0819-9778 (mob))

Upendra Vanam (+91-80-2508-6977 (off) / +91-95-3546-3344 (mob))