| **✓ or x** | **ITEM** |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Essential**  Plane ticket Passport with at least 6 months before expiry Visa (stamped into your passport) Travel insurance documents. **Travel insurance is compulsory** |
| **MONEY** | |
|  | It’s a good idea to change your currency into Indian rupees (INR) at the airport when you arrive in India. Sydney airport has limited INR available. |
|  | There are ATMs near the entrance to Sripuram (Golden Temple) where you can withdraw rupees. Many ATMS in India have a 10,000 rupee limit per withdrawal, though you can withdraw multiple lots of 10,000 INRs. |
|  | Exchange of AU/US/UK/CA etc. currency into INRs can be arranged through reception at the Kamala Nivas Guest house. A minimum of $100 must be exchanged. |
|  | Credit cards: change to PIN facilities before you go, you cannot use a credit card if its sign only. |
| **ESSENTIAL PERSONAL ITEMS** | |
|  | Towel: please bring your own bath towels. A bath mat is also worth bringing, then I just leave it there. Please note towels are not supplied at the ashram. This is essential packing item |
|  | Torch: blackouts are common in India |
|  | Power adapter for India: the one with 3 round pins works at Sripuram. Some Indian plugs have 1 round & 2 flat these cannot be used at this ashram. |
|  | A powerboard is a good idea |
|  | Toiletries: shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, moisturizing creams, deodorant and so on. A nailbrush to scrub your feet. You will be barefoot a lot of the time, bring good foot care items like heel balm and a pumice stone or similar**.** |
|  | Extra toothbrushes: at least 1 extra, it’s a habit to rinse under tap, if that happens you will need to throw the toothbrush out as tap water is contaminated. Always have a bottle of drinking water at the bathroom sink for rinsing your mouth & teeth brushing. |
|  | **First Aid requirements**  Good quality waterproof bandaids; lomotil, Imodium, whatever you use for treating diarrhoea, nausea etc, cold & flu tablets. Ask your Doctor what is recommended, (it may be a good idea to have a flu shot if you are going in winter), your favourite headache/pain medication, **electrolytes** are an important precaution.  There is an excellent Hospital next door to the ashram which provides western and Ayurvedic medicines. If you require medical attention Shakti Durga recommends you ask the reception at Kamala Nivas to arrange an appointment in the hospital.  Ganga’s hot tip: I never go to India without my Vicks, vapour rub, it’s also good for on the plane helps ears |
|  | **Probiotics: we highly** recommend that you bring probiotics that do not need refrigeration, also, it’s good to have SB in them **eg Lactoferrin plus SB** |
|  | Your doctor ‘s prescriptions etc. |
|  | Antibacterial hand gel / wipes.  The gel is preferable as wipes create waste and everything is recycled at the ashram. Please note that the **toilet system** is not 1st world and toilet paper cannot be flushed down the toilet as it will cause blockages. After toileting people can wash as needed with the rinse hose and simply use the toilet paper to dry the skin. Any used toilet paper **must** be put into the bathroom waste paper bin and not into the toilet. |
|  | Roll-on insect repellent and room mossie spray. There may be mosquitos in the room or bathroom. You can bring aerosol flyspray in your checked-in luggage only. |
| For information on what is safe to put in your hand luggage or checked in luggage refer to the CASA site for Australia <http://www.casa.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?WCMS:STANDARD::pc=PC_100580> , or the relevant US or UK air travel regulator. Also see the information provided at the end of this document. Matches and lighter fluid are **forbidden** in any luggage. | |
|  | Spiritual journal & pen, and a general exercise book or notepad is useful for general notes and lists. |
|  | **Tissues for use in temple:** bring your own as we are limited to what we can carry, best bring them from home India tissues are rough & yuk from past experiences. |
|  | **Tea light candles**: if everyone could please bring at least 6 it should cover us for the retreat, this will assist in reducing luggage weight for staff these are heavy when in bulk but nothing when spread over many. Thank you. |
|  | Drink bottle: safe drinking water is always available at the ashram dining room and in B Block corridors. Bottled water can be bought from the Divine Café and local shops.  **Only drink bottled water, you cannot even rinse your toothbrush under the tap, the ashram has filtered drinking water available to fill up your drink bottle.** |
|  | Travel cup. Only metal cups are available in the ashram accommodation so if you prefer a hot drink from a cup or mug, bring it with you. |
| **SUGGESTED PERSONAL ITEMS** | |
|  | Mala beads: there will be mantra chanting! |
|  | Neck pillow for plane. Ear plugs and eye mask |
|  | Little hand fan could be useful, it will be hot (even in winter). |
|  | Washing detergent and portable clothes line for washing underwear.  One laundry bag per room is supplied. A 24 hour-turn-around laundry service is available at the accommodation block and it is preferred that only outerwear is cleaned. Please note that whites aren’t necessarily washed separately to colours so you may wish to wash whites yourself. |
|  | Sunglasses, sunscreen and hat. Umbrella or wet weather coat, check the weather forecast. |
|  | You may wish to bring your own bottle of rubbing alcohol. There will be regular healing clinics. Note that it must be packed securely in your checked-in luggage. |
|  | Needle and thread for running repairs. Safety pins (essential for sari wear). |
|  | Ipod, earphones &/or travel dock. |
|  | Camera. Spare batteries |
|  | Calculator (small one handy to carry for currency conversions) |
|  | Mobile Phone with Roam facility (arrange with your provider before you leave) be aware of overseas rates and check with your service provider. Internet access is available in the Kamal Nivas building only. It can be purchased on an hourly, weekly or monthly basis from reception. |
|  | Book to read (spiritual or personal development theme preferably) |
|  | Blue tac is handy if you want to hang posters or photos in your room. Bring a laminated A4 blank page and texta if you wish: You can then attach it to your door to leave msgs. |
|  | Bring photos of your loved ones or other special items for blessing by Amma and/or Shakti Durga. |
| **FOOD** | We recommend you **do not** eat any food from street vendors. |
|  | Remember it’s a purification retreat, healthy, low sugar snacks are recommended, e.g. muesli bars, nuts, sultanas, etc., bring airtight plastic bags or containers to protect food from ants etc. |
|  | Tea bags, herbal teas. NOTE: it’s difficult to get soy milk in India.  Bring a travel knife if you want to butter your toast. Spoons, forks, plates and cereal bowls are provided. |
|  | The food provided by the Ashram and the Divine Café is delicious; however it is strictly vegetarian and doesn’t include eggs, and not much cheese. If you wish to boost your protein intake bring protein powder or other portable protein products.  If you don’t like curry at breakfast, a western breakfast of cereal (corn flakes, oats, honey loops, cocoa-pops), milk, toast and jam is usually available as well as a typical Indian breakfast. You may wish to bring your favourite breakfast cereal. |
|  | **If you have special dietary requirements please bring what you require e.g. gluten free bread/cereal especially for breakfast, vital greens, protein powder, your favourite muesli.** |
| **CLOTHES** | |
|  | Sandals, thongs/flip flops (its hot). Walking shoes if you wish, no need for dress shoes. |
|  | Shoes are not worn in the ashram or inside the accommodation buildings; you may wear socks in the temples and on the Star Path if you wish. |
|  | Appropriate temple clothes for ashram:  **Women** need long loose tops that go to mid-thigh or knees, and sleeves must cover all of the shoulder and extend down the arm, **no sleeveless tops at all**. Pants must be ankle length; punjabi suits or saris are the best things to wear. It is respectful for women to always wear a scarf or shawl in the temples, and to have long hair tied up, or in a plait. No singlet tops should be worn at all.  **It is best for women to have their arms covered in street as well, it is a temple town. It’s also preferable that women walk everywhere with a companion.**  **Men** also need to dress modestly, long pants and a shirt or tee shirt with sleeves. Men may wear the ashram doti and a white shirt or tee shirt. NB there are some temple circumstances where the men must take off their shirt and be bare chested, e.g. New moon and Full moon fire pujas, and the Laxmi water abishekham on the Star Path that you do for 108 INR donation.  Suitable clothes for women and men are available from the Sripuram clothes shop, and you are supporting Amma’s projects! |
|  | Comfortable clothes including T-shirts, track pants are OK in the accommodation **only** - no sleeveless tops for ladies at all in the ashram, in your room is ok. |
|  | White clothing or Punjabi suits for morning meditation is not mandatory |
|  | A soft temple bag is useful. You may wish to bring a couple of pillowslips to use as temple mats or to wrap your temple pillow in (things get dusty). |

**General Information**

We strongly advise you see your doctor for medical travel advice. If you are susceptible to chest infections etc. you may need to bring antibiotics as a precaution.

**Temperature**: it will be hot, ashram rooms are air-conditioned little window style, and all rooms have ceiling fans, and you may want to bring a personal fan.

**Temple**: all of the temples have floor seating only, you may bring a cushion or blow-up pillow, or a rug, or a portable, low, event or camping chair to sit on.   
In the Narayani temple there are a few chairs around the walls for those who cannot sit on the floor but these are usually occupied by the elderly. There is a box of yoga pillows in the Narayani Temple that the group bought last visit, these are used by everyone so there’s no guarantee you will get one. It’s also a good idea to also bring a small mat or towel to place under your feet when sitting in the temples.

**Tipping:** The housekeeping staff and the Divine Café staff are all employed by Amma’s ashram and it is preferred that you do **not** give them a tip. Tipping sets up inequities amongst the staff: for example, why should someone working in the guest accommodation or café receive tips for doing their job when those working in the recycling plant or hospital have no opportunity for a tip.

**Accommodation:**

Please read the information leaflet provided in the ashram.

**Purification** pre-retreat is important, please keep it up.  
Namaste

Rules about carrying aerosols and sprays in your luggage:

|  |
| --- |
| <http://www.casa.gov.au/scripts/nc.dll?WCMS:STANDARD::pc=PC_100580> |
| If the aerosol is flammable, or contains a propellant that is a flammable gas (the container will have either a red diamond or alternatively a pictogram with the word "flammable"), then passengers may only take those that would fall into the category of "**medicinal or toiletry article**". Examples are hair sprays, colognes, deodorants, shaving foam, personal disinfectant etc. These aerosols may be carried in carry-on or checked baggage, although there are limitations for International flights for Liquids, Aerosols and Gels. |
| If the aerosol is not flammable (it will have a green diamond on the back of the container), then passengers may take aerosols that would fall into the category of "sporting or home use". Examples are air fresheners, fly sprays, furniture cleaners, disinfectants *(e.g. Isocol)* etc. Aerosols in this category may **only be taken in checked-in baggage**. |
| Non-flammable aerosols in the "medicinal or toiletry article" category may be carried in the cabin. |
| The total net quantity of medicinal and toiletry articles and aerosols for sporting or home use must not exceed 2 Kg or 2 Litres and the net quantity of each single article must not exceed 0.5 Kg or 0.5 Litre. Release valves on aerosols must be protected by a cap or other means to prevent inadvertent release of the contents. |
| The following links have more information on what goods are banned from airline luggage.  <http://www.travelsecure.infrastructure.gov.au/>  <http://www.casa.gov.au/wcmswr/_assets/main/dg/luggage/brochure.pdf> |