



Delhi

☎ 011 / pop 2.5 million

Delhi is the capital of India and its major international transport hub. During summer (when most visitors pass through en route to the Himalaya) the city is uncomfortably hot, with temperatures regularly above 40°C. Most people only spend one or two days here before heading to the hills. That said, Delhi is an endlessly fascinating city. To spend more time in Delhi and other states of northern India, plan to visit in autumn. This is one of the best times to trek, and after you return from your trek the temperatures will be starting to fall throughout the rest of India. It is also an ideal time to head onto Nepal if you decide to trek in both countries.

ORIENTATION

Delhi consists of two parts. Old Delhi is a warren of bazaars and backstreets that contains most of the city's Muslim and Moghul monuments. New Delhi is, by contrast, a planned and spacious city, created as a colonial capital by the British. Its hub is a huge circle known as Connaught Place, where you find most airline offices, banks, travel agents, tourist offices and midrange hotels. It's divided up like slices of a pie and these blocks are named alphabetically.

Janpath, running south of Connaught Place, is one of the most important streets and has tourist offices and handicraft stalls. South are the government buildings, museums, residential districts and Chanakyapuri, the diplomatic enclave.

In between Old and New Delhi is the area known as Paharganj. This is the main budget travellers' area with many small hotels and restaurants. At the eastern end of Paharganj is New Delhi train station.

INFORMATION

Bookshops

There are plenty of bookshops to stock up on Himalayan titles including **Oxford Bookstore**

(☎ 2376 6080; www.oxfordbookstore.com; in Connaught Place) and **Full Circle Bookshop** (☎ 2465 5641; in Khan Market).

Internet Access

Internet centres charge between Rs 30 and Rs 40 an hour and include **DSIDC Cyber Cafe** (N-Block Connaught Place); **Cyber Station** (Main Bazaar, Paharganj) and **Cyber Graphics** (Khan Market).

Medical Services

The **East West Medical Centre** (☎ 2462 3738; B-28 Greater Kailash Part 1) opposite N-Block Market, and the **Apollo Hospital** (☎ 2692 5858; Mathura Rd, Sarita Vihar) are recommended, while the **Apollo Pharmacy** (☎ 3260 4579; G8 Connaught Place) is open 24 hours.

Money

There is no shortage of ATMs in the main shopping areas including Connaught Place, Paharganj and Khan Market as well as numerous foreign-exchange outlets including the State Bank of India and Thomas Cook that both have branches inside the International Airport. International transfer can be made at **Thomas Cook** (☎ 2334 2171; Hotel Janpath, Janpath) and at **Western Union Head Office** (☎ 2335 5061; Sita World Travels, 12 F-Block, Connaught Place) or at one of their many branches.

Photography

For photographic services (including digital) and passport photos these are some dependable options: **Delhi Photo Company** (☎ 2332 0577; 78 Janpath, Connaught Place); **Kinsey Bros** (☎ 2332 4446; 2 A-Block, Connaught Place) and **Rama Color** (☎ 2462 8890; Khan Market). All are open from 10am to 7pm, and closed Sunday.



Post & Telephone

Delhi has lots of phone kiosks where you can make local, interstate and international calls for a fraction of the cost of a call made from a hotel. **DHL** (☎ 2373 7587; Vandana Bldg, 11 Tolstoy Marg) is open every day for international air freight. There is a post office in (6 A-Block) Connaught Place. The **main post office** (Bara Kharak Singh Marg) handles poste restante; ensure mail is addressed to GPO, New Delhi -110001.

Tourist Information

Indian Tourism Delhi (☎ 2332 0008; www.incredibleindia.org; 88 Janpath) gives tourist-related advice as well as a free Delhi map and various brochures. For the Himalayan state offices see p215.

EATING & SLEEPING

Paharganj

Hotel Namaskar (☎ 2358 3456; Chandiwalan, Main Bazaar) and **Major's Den** (☎ 2358 9010 Lakshmi Narayan St) have been recommended. Both charge Rs 350 to Rs 450. **Hotel Rak International** (☎ 2356 2478; Tooti Chowk, Main Bazaar) and **Hotel Downtown** (☎ 4154 1529; 4583 Main Bazaar) also have rooms starting from Rs 350.

Hotel Grand Godwin (☎ 2354 6891; www.godwinhotels.com; 41 Arakashan Rd) is one of the most comfortable midrange hotels with rooms from Rs 1200. Also consider the **Pearl Plaza** (☎ 2358 5544; Rjguru Rd) and **Hotel Relax** (☎ 2356 2811; Nehru Bazaar) which both have rooms in the same price range.

Most hotels in Paharganj have good rooftop restaurants including the highly recommended Metropolis Tourist Home restaurant.

Connaught Place

If you stay in Connaught Place you are essentially paying for the central location, not the room quality or service.

Central Court Hotel (☎ 2331 5013; N-Block; r from Rs 1200 has some character, as has the **Hotel Bright** (☎ 4151 7766; www.hotelbrightdelhi.com; 1st fl, 85 M Block; r from Rs 1800. **YMCA International Guest House** (☎ 2336 1561; www.ymcaindia.org; 10 Sansad Marg) and the **YMCA Tourist Hotel** (☎ 2336 1915; Jai Singh Rd) are clean and, although somewhat institutional, are a

safe haven for trekkers on their first visit to India. Rooms vary from Rs 1000 to Rs 1800 that includes breakfast, while the YMCA Tourist Hotel also includes dinner.

There are no shortage of top-end hotels including the **Shangri-La Hotel** (☎ 4119 1919; www.shangri-la.com; Ashoka Rd) and the **Taj Mahal Hotel** (☎ 2302 6162; www.tajhotels.com; Man Singh Rd) that charge upwards of US\$350 per room. For that you might as well go the renowned **Hotel Imperial** (☎ 2334 1234; www.theimperialindia.com; Janpath) with a range of rates on its website.

Restaurants in Connaught Place offering a selection of European and Indian meals include **The Host** (8F-Block) **United Coffee House** (15E-Block) and **Kwality** (Regal Bldg, Sansad Marg) while the **Saravana Bhavan** (46 Janpath), **Sagar Ratna** (15 K-Block) and **Banana Leaf** (12 N-Block) offer authentic Indian dishes including koftas, dosas and vegetable curries from Rs 100.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

The domestic terminals (Terminal 1) of the Indira Gandhi International Airport are around 15km southwest of Connaught Place, and the **International Airport** is a further 8km away. There are frequent (free) shuttle buses between the two terminals. For flight enquiries, call the International Airport (☎ 2565 2011; www.delhiahairport.com) or the **Domestic Airport** (☎ 2567 5126).

DOMESTIC

Check-in at the airport for domestic flights is one hour before departure.

Airlines

GOAir (☎ 9223 222 111; Paper Box Rd, Andheri, Mumbai)

Indian Airlines (☎ 24631337; F-Block Malhotra Bldg, Connaught Place)

Jet Airways (☎ 3984 1111; 40 N-Block, Connaught Place)

Kingfisher Airlines (☎ 2373 0238; 42 N-Block, Connaught Place)

MDLR (☎ 4367 0000; MDLR House, Old Judicial Complex, Gurgaon)

Spicejet Air (☎ 987180 3333; 319 Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon)