

A GUIDE FOR YOUR MOVE TO INDIA

Staying *Connected*

Land with working internet, then get the Indian mobile number that unlocks everything, payments, deliveries, OTPs. Two simple options, and exactly how to set up each.

~5 min eSIM to land connected

₹200-400 local plan / month

Where expertise meets empathy.

Prepared for assignees relocating to India.

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In India, your phone is your wallet, your taxi, your maps and your front-door key. The plan is simple: **land already connected** with a travel eSIM, then get a **local Indian number** in your first days, because that number is what unlocks UPI payments, food & grocery delivery, ride-hailing and every OTP. Here's how to do both, step by step.

~5 min ESIM, SET UP BEFORE YOU FLY	₹200-400 LOCAL PLAN / MONTH (LOTS OF DATA)	3 NETWORKS: JIO · AIRTEL · VI	KYC PASSPORT + VISA + PHOTO FOR A SIM
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DO THIS BEFORE YOU FLY

Buy and install an **India travel eSIM** (Airalo, Holafly, Nomad, Saily, or your carrier's international eSIM). It takes ~5 minutes and means the moment you land you have maps, ride-hailing and a line to call home, no hunting for airport Wi-Fi. Then sort your local SIM in the first day or two.

OPTION A · BEFORE YOU FLY

A travel eSIM, to land connected

An eSIM is a digital SIM, no plastic, installed from a QR code. It's the easiest way to be online the instant you land. It's usually **data-only** (no Indian number), so it's the bridge, not the destination.

- 1 Buy an India eSIM before departure**
From [Airalo](#), [Holafly](#), [Nomad](#), [Saily](#), or your home carrier's international eSIM plan.
- 2 Install it from the QR / app**
Add it as a second line and label it "India". Do this on home Wi-Fi before you fly.
- 3 On landing, switch it on**
Enable the India line and turn on data for it. You're online immediately, maps, Uber/Ola, WhatsApp.
- 4 Keep it running**
Leave the eSIM active until your local SIM is fully working, so you're never offline.



Buy it before you land. Airalo and Holafly were **removed from the Indian app stores (Jan 2024)** and their websites are blocked locally, so you generally **can't download or top up a travel eSIM once you're in the country, set them up before you land.** Otherwise, get a **physical Indian SIM (Jio / Airtel / Vi)** on arrival with your passport, visa and a local address (below).

A local SIM, for your Indian number

A local prepaid SIM gives you an **Indian mobile number**, essential for UPI, deliveries, bank OTPs and day-to-day life. The three networks are **Jio, Airtel and Vi**; Jio and Airtel have the widest coverage. Always buy from an **official store**, never a street vendor.

- 1 **Go to an official store**
A Jio/Airtel/Vi store at the airport or in the city. Avoid kiosks and resellers, they cause activation problems.
- 2 **Bring your KYC documents**
Passport, visa, one passport photo
, and a local address (your hotel or new home works).
- 3 **Complete KYC**
Staff verify your documents and register the SIM to you, this is a legal requirement for every SIM in India.
- 4 **Wait for activation**
Often a few hours; occasionally up to 24 to 48h. Your eSIM keeps you online meanwhile. Then top up with a prepaid plan.

i Your Indian number is the key to everything. Set it up early, UPI payments, Swiggy/Zomato & Blinkit deliveries, Uber/Ola, and bank/app OTPs all verify against an Indian mobile number. (See the Money & Banking guide for UPI.)

i Want an Indian number before you even land? Services like [Matrix](#) deliver an Indian prepaid SIM to your home address before you fly, no airport queue. A standard **tourist / visitor SIM** at the airport kiosk runs ~₹900 to 1,000 (vs ~₹300 to 500 from a city store) and is fine for your first weeks. Once you can complete KYC, **Jio and Airtel also offer their own Indian eSIM**, a local number with no plastic SIM.

AT A GLANCE

Which, and what it costs

OPTION	BEST FOR	TYPICAL COST
Travel eSIM	Day-one connectivity, short trips	\$5-30 / trip
Local prepaid SIM	Your Indian number & daily life	₹200-400 / mo

Local prepaid plans bundle generous high-speed data, calls and texts, mobile data in India is among the cheapest in the world.

GOOD TO KNOW

A few practical notes



Check eSIM support

Most recent iPhones & flagship Androids support eSIM. If yours doesn't, go straight to a local physical SIM.



Wi-Fi calling

Enable it to call home cheaply over Wi-Fi while you settle in.



Keep documents handy

Have digital + paper copies of your passport & visa for the SIM KYC.



Porting later

You can keep your number for years; prepaid recharges are instant via any app.

WHERE TO BUY

Airalo / Holafly

India travel eSIMs, before you fly

Jio

Widest coverage, official stores & airport

Airtel / Vi

Strong urban networks

Matrix

Indian SIM delivered before you fly

YOUR PHONE, YOUR EVERYTHING

The apps that run daily life

India runs on a handful of apps. Set up **UPI first**, it powers payments everywhere, then add the rest as you need them. You only need **one** payment app; they all do the same thing.



Pay · UPI

Google Pay · PhonePe · Paytm. Scan any QR or pay to a number. Set one up first and link your Indian bank + SIM.



Get around

Uber · Ola · Rapido, cars, autos and bikes at fair, fixed prices. Keep two installed.

Food & dining

Swiggy · Zomato to order in or discover places;
EazyDiner / Dineout to book a table; Licious for fresh meat.

Groceries in minutes

Blinkit · Zepto · Swiggy Instamart · BigBasket for 10 to 20 min delivery; Country Delight for daily milk & dairy.

Health & pharmacy

Tata 1mg · Apollo 24/7 for medicines & tests; Practo to book a doctor or video consult.

Shop & travel

Amazon.in · Flipkart for everything; MakeMyTrip · Cleartrip and IRCTC Rail Connect for flights & trains.

Out & about

BookMyShow for films & events; Nykaa for beauty; Urban Company for home services, cleaning, repairs, salon-at-home.

Keep handy

WhatsApp (how India messages) · Google Maps · Google Translate · DigiLocker & Su-Swagatam for government & travel.

 **Pro tip:** set up a **UPI payment app first**. Once your Indian number and bank are linked, everything else, food, rides, groceries, just works.

YOUR SUPPORT

How IKAN helps

- ✓ We advise the **right eSIM and network** for your phone and city
- ✓ We help you get an **official local SIM** with KYC done correctly the first time
- ✓ We connect your number to **UPI & the daily-life apps** you'll actually use
- ✓ We're on hand if activation is slow, so you're **never left offline**

Connectivity · quick checklist

- ☐ Install an **India eSIM** before you fly
- ☐ Switch it on when you land, **online immediately**
- ☐ Get an **official local SIM** (passport + visa + photo) in your first days
- ☐ Use your **Indian number** to set up UPI & delivery apps
- ☐ Keep the eSIM until your local SIM is **fully active**

Get this right and everything else in India gets easier, payments, taxis, deliveries all flow from your phone. We'll make sure you're connected from the moment you land. Questions any time.

Your IKAN Relocations team

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Where expertise meets empathy, supporting your move to India, every step of the way. Reflects 2026 networks, eSIM availability and SIM-KYC practice; pricing and coverage vary by city and change over time, your consultant will confirm current specifics.