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Tour Notes

India – Rajasthan Encompassed

Tour Duration – 16 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●●○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●●○○ | Culture ●●●●○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●●○○

Tour Pace

Busy

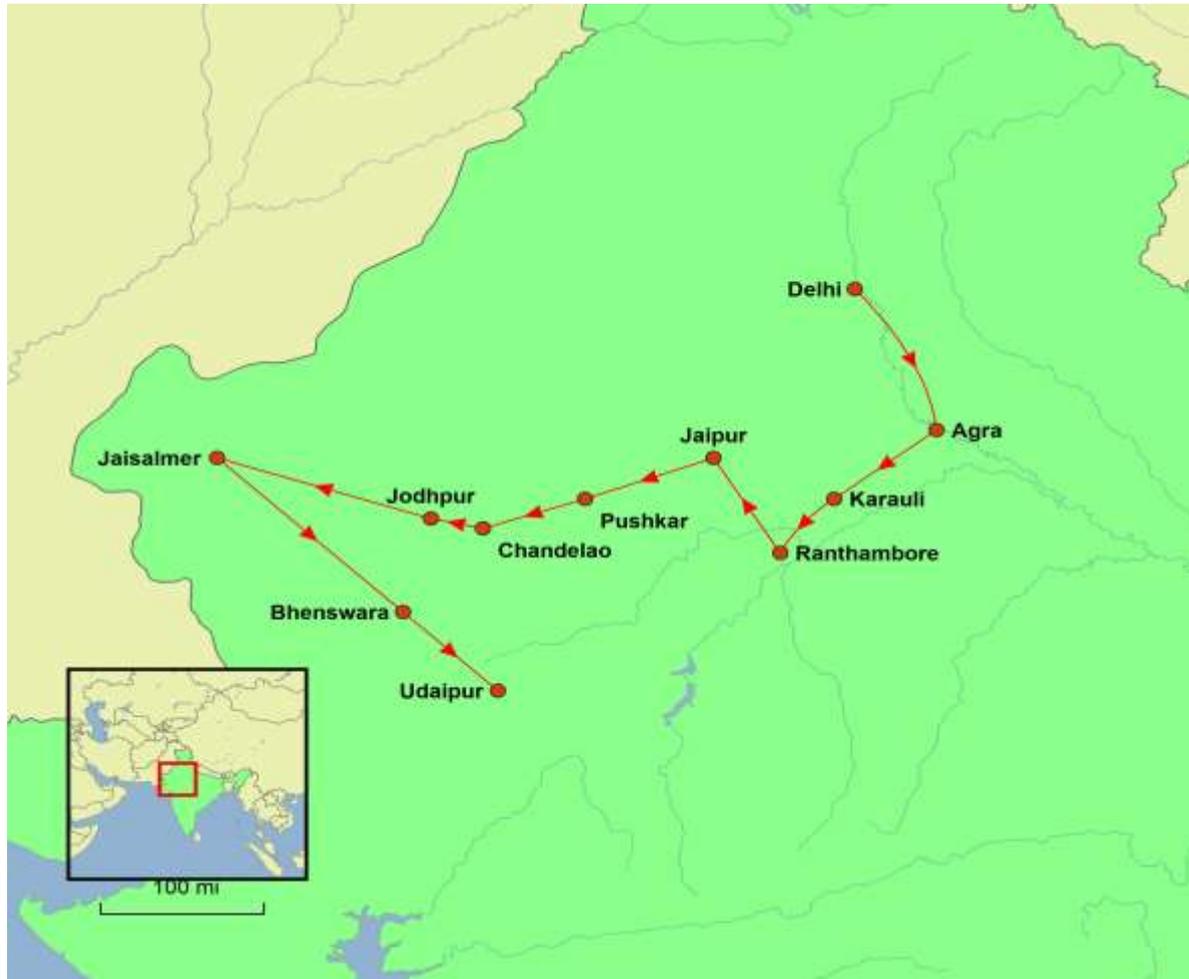
Tour Highlights

- ✓ Experience the diverse and enchanting cities of Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer
- ✓ Observe the pilgrims at the holy lake of Pushkar
- ✓ The incomparable magnificence of the Taj Mahal
- ✓ Explore the impressiven Meherangarh Fort in Jodhpur with its magnificent views from the ramparts
- ✓ Interact with the local community in their homes at rural Chandelao and observe age old village customs
- ✓ Enjoy a camel safari in the Thar Desert
- ✓ Search for tigers in atmospheric Ranthambore National Park in the shadow of the imposing fort
- ✓ A comprehensive journey through India's most colourful state



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Tour Map - India – Rajasthan Encompassed



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Mix of comfortable hotels, and comfortable tented accommodation in Sawai Madhopur
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Delhi
End Point: Udaipur
Transport: Minibus, air-conditioned train with chair car
Country Visited: India



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India – Rajasthan Encompassed

It's impossible to condense India into a single trip. All such attempts merge into a fragrant and colourful blur and ultimately fail. However, this tour concentrates on Rajasthan and combines well-known iconic sights with some lesser visited corners to emphasise the true diversity the state has to offer. From searching out Royal Bengal tigers in one of India's best national parks, to spotting colourful birdlife at a royal hunting lake, tracking leopards at night in remote countryside, exploring an ancient abandoned Mughal capital city, and staying in a maharajah's palace, there's a lot to see. However, without doubt these 16 days in Rajasthan deliver an incredible Indian experience.

Tour Itinerary Notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not merely passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies, it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK: we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. Where possible you will have the same guide throughout your trip, but on occasions it may be advantageous to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1 – Arrive Delhi

Arrive in Delhi, the capital of India, meet your driver and transfer to hotel accommodation. Overnight Taj Princess Hotel or similar. No meals.

Note – For those that arrive early or are having pre tour accommodation we can provide numerous sightseeing options in Delhi on request. A heritage walk around Old Delhi is particularly recommended.

Old Delhi

Old Delhi was the capital of Moghul India between the 12th and the 19th centuries. You will find here many mosques, monuments and forts of the Moghul period of India's history. The medieval atmosphere of the bazaars of Old Delhi contrasts sharply with the open, spacious streets of New Delhi, the imperial city created as the capital of India by the British.

Day 2 – Delhi – Agra and the Taj Mahal

Today take the early morning express train to Agra, home to one of the world's most celebrated and beautiful buildings the Taj Mahal, built in the 17th century by the emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Farther along the river Yamuna lies the impressive Red Fort built during the 16th and 17th century golden age of the Moghul Empire and from where there are more classic views of the Taj Mahal. Overnight Taj Resorts, or similar. (B)

Agra

Although Agra was a lesser fortified town for much of its history, it was besieged in 1080 and from then on was a centre of minor territorial scuffles. It was in 1506, however, that its heyday began: Sultan Sikander of Delhi moved his capital here and when it fell to the Mughal lords in 1526 it became the administrative centre of India's second largest ever Empire. The opulence and building programmes that followed had their



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flowering in the construction of the Taj Mahal: one of Shah Jahan's wives had died after childbirth – their fourteenth child, indicating just why she was so dear to him – and the mausoleum is a dazzling tribute to his favourite partner. Described by the Bengali poet Tagore as “a teardrop on the face of eternity”, the edifice was completed 22 years after her death and is constructed from Rajasthan marble and precious metals and jewels from the four corners of Asia.

Day 3 – Agra – Karauli (*Approximate driving time: four hours*)

This morning we drive to Karauli, midway between Agra and Ranthambore. The town's magnificent Old City Palace, built in 1635, is a treasure trove of architecture, stone carvings, intricate jali fretwork and classic paintings. Karauli also has a lively bazaar full of handicrafts and jewellery. Just outside town is the former residence of the maharaja, now a beautiful heritage hotel where we check-in for the night. Overnight Bhanwar Vilas Palace. (B)

Day 4 – Karauli – Ranthambore National Park (*Approximate driving time: two hours*)

Today we drive to Sawai Madhopur, a well-placed base for visiting Ranthambore National Park which offers one of the best opportunities in India to see Royal Bengal tigers in the wild. After lunch there's a wildlife safari by purpose-built vehicle into the park. Tigers may be at the forefront of most people's minds but Ranthambore's varied landscapes and habitats support a diverse flora and fauna, so there's always something to see even if tigers prove elusive. Overnight Ranthambore Bagh, or similar. (B)

Ranthambore and its tigers

The name Ranthambore is synonymous with tiger sighting, and for good reason: established as a national park in only 1980, it boasts an impressive total of around 60 which makes good reason for optimism when you step into a safari vehicle. The origins of the area as a park have a darker past: it was a popular tiger hunting area for the gentry of Rajasthan and this continued well into the 20th century. However, as the largely forested areas in northern India, perfect for the big cats' territories, were progressively felled and shooting of tigers for trophies continued, it became apparent that the Bengal tiger's very existence was in doubt. In response, the government first set up a reserve here in 1955 and, as poaching took its toll, widened the acreage of the reserve and poured funding into the area as a key sanctuary. As a result, since a low point of 26 tigers in 2005, the population has been rising. The reserve status has also benefited sundry other species of mammal: your chances of seeing some anything from leopards, hyenas or deer, to jackals, bucks or civets are good; equally, bird watchers flock to the park to glimpse many of the 313 recorded species, including hornbills, babblers, vultures, pheasants, parakeet and the beautiful dusky eagle owl.

Day 5 – Fatehpur Sikri – Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary – Abhaneri - Jaipur

(*Approximate driving time: three-and-a-half-hours*)

The drive to Jaipur is punctuated by several stops. At Fatehpur Sikri we explore the ruins of the abandoned former Mughal capital. Later there's a chance to observe an extraordinary array of colourful and rare birds at Bharatpur, the former maharaja's hunting lake, now Keoladeo National Park. And at the tiny village of Abhaneri we explore the colossal 5th-century stepwell of Chand Baori recently used as a location for Hollywood blockbuster, The Dark Knight Rises. Finally, we arrive in Jaipur, 'The Pink City', and capital of Rajasthan. Overnight at Madhuban Hotel, or similar. (B)

Jaipur

The city famously forms one point of the 'Golden Triangle' yet was founded in relatively recent times in 1727; it takes its name from its founding father, Jai Singh. The burgeoning metropolis is a fascinating insight into India's vibrancy and vitality, yet at its core it retains the exquisite and opulent grandeur of its foundations in the Pink City. This historic centre is resplendent with palaces, bazaars and places of worship; just outside its southern and western walls the trend continues and the city is renowned for its beautiful carpets, enamelled ornaments, precious and semi-precious stones, brass ornaments and many other arts and crafts. Prior to Jaipur's establishment, smaller kingdoms and strongholds dotted the region: predominant amongst these is



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the UNESCO world heritage site of Amber (or Amer) Fort which dates from the 11th century and sits spectacularly atop the natural defences of red sandstone cliffs and Maota Lake. Despite this, the citadel has fallen to invaders, notably on the occasion of the Diwali massacre of the Meena garrison.

Day 6 – Jaipur

Today, after breakfast, a guided tour of Jaipur takes in the famous City Palace, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Jantar Mantar observatory for its 19 18th century astronomical instruments, and the instantly recognisable many-windowed pink sandstone façade of the Hawa Mahal palace. After lunch the tour visits the Amber Fort's complex of palaces, halls, pavilions, gardens and temples. Overnight at Madhuban Hotel, or similar. (B)

Day 7 – Jaipur – Pushkar (*Approximate driving time: three hours*)

Upon arrival in Pushkar the rest of the day is free to independently explore the lakeside. This is the domain of holy men and pilgrims. Hundreds of small temples are built on the periphery of the lake with wide stone steps or 'ghats' leading down to the lake. A magical quality of light hovers over the lake, bouncing off the surrounding white-washed temples and bathing ghats. At sunset Pushkar can become the ability to become one of the most exotic places on earth. Overnight at Pushkar Palace, or similar. (B)

Pushkar

Legend has it that the sacred lakes of Pushkaraj Maharaj ('Pushkar, King of Kings') sprang up when Lord Brahma, the Hindu creator god, dropped three lotus petals into the desert. The largest lake is surrounded by over 500 temples, dedicated to much of the Hindu pantheon, with the Brahma, Apteshwar and the loftily situated Savitri temples being particularly stunning examples. The latter afford you a unique view of the site, and will take a lusty hour for you to summit! The religious edifices generally date from the 12th century onwards, with regular renovations following periods of Muslim conquest in the region. The town draws thousands of Hindu and Sikh pilgrims, especially during the October full-moon phase, who seek the healing properties of its waters.

Day 8 – Chandelao (*Approximate driving time: two-and-a-half-hours*)

At the small heritage hotel of Chandelao Garh we interact with the community and learn about the rich art, culture and heritage of Rajasthan. An afternoon village jeep tour calls in on craftsmen at work and later visits a Bishnoi tribal family in their home. It's a rare opportunity to gain an insight on traditional Indian village life. Overnight at Chandelao Garh, or similar. (B)

The Bishnoi Tribe

In 1485, whilst the English were knocking chunks out of one another at Bosworth field, guru Jambeshwar Bhagavan was making huge ecological leaps of faith and progress in this tiny corner of Rajasthan. Sensing that the local drought was owing to deforestation, he formulated a series of 29 maxims for living in harmony with nature, including making killing animals and felling live trees a taboo. This effectively makes the Bishnoi unique as a tribe united by dogma rather than ethnicity. Indeed in 1730 their faith was put to the test and 363 Bishnoi were slaughtered as they protected the local trees from felling to make way for the maharaja's palace. The result was that the protection of animals and forestry became enshrined in law in the region. The hotel in which you stay to experience this serenity is equally soothing: sit in leafy, red sandstone courtyards, imbibing the trickle of bird-song around you. The beautiful buildings date back to the 1740s and were the overlord's residence at the centre of a robust feudal system, only abolished in 1952.

Day 9 – Jodhpur (*Approximate driving time: one hour*)

As you will have gathered, Rajasthan is full of colour, so it makes complete sense we continue to 'The Blue City' of Jodhpur. Standing at the edge of the vast, arid Thar desert, Jodhpur is dominated by the immense Meherangarh Fort. The fort houses an excellent museum and affords memorable views over the Old City's blue Brahmin houses. In the Old City itself the clock tower is a popular landmark, from where narrow



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alleyways lead to bazaars for textiles, silver and handicrafts. It's a fascinating jumble of winding streets and a great place to get lost. Overnight at Pal Haveli Hotel, or similar. (B)

Jodhpur

Jodhpur and the territories it controlled have always retained a proud independence, striking deals with the two great Empires in its history – the Mughals and the British. The city began life in 1459 as the newly constructed capital of the kingdom of Marwar. Rao Jodha selected what he hoped was an impregnable site for the fortress of Meherangarh, and so it proved: the kingdom amassed great riches and even in modern times is a centre for trade, owing to its long-time stability. The golden sandstone of the fort sublimely compliments the pastel blue washes of the cascades of old city dwellings within the walls and makes Jodhpur a photographer's mecca. The city boasts a thriving cottage industry of items such as glass bangles, metalwork and carpets and its spice markets are a kaleidoscope of vibrancy. Food is also a proudly held prowess of the Marwaris: amongst the dishes to not miss out on are spicy Mirchi bada and the wonderful array of local dishes if you order Rajasthani Thali.

Day 10 – Jodhpur – Jaisalmer (*Approximate driving time: five hours*)

Today the kaleidoscope continues as we cross the desert to the 'Golden City' of Jaisalmer, looming magically up from the horizon. Within the fortress walls cobbled streets are populated by palaces, mansions, and Jain temples built between the 12th and 15th centuries. Overnight at Nachana Haveli Hotel, or similar. (B)

Jaisalmer

Since the twelfth century, Jaisalmer has occupied a position which has dominated the east-west trade routes across the Thar desert. The outline of the dramatic fortress and the cornucopia of rich merchants' ornate haveli ('houses') make this seem like a scene from *The Arabian Nights*. Much of the city's charm is owed to its inaccessibility and marginalisation after the establishment of the Indo-Pakistani border which effectively reduced it to a backwater, yet also protected its beauty from the population explosions that other Indian cities have experienced. Only the wars with Pakistan in the 1960s re-established it as of strategic importance and brought its diverse and beautiful sites back into the consciousness of travellers. The fortress and the walled city are a delight to explore, the former being unique as a 'living' fortress, bustling with traders, businesses, temples and museums. As you inhale the heady blend of vitality and antique, it's hard to imagine that the fortress itself three times witnessed acts of 'johar' – mass female suicide – as the city seemed destined to fall in the 1200s-1400s.

Day 11 – Thar Desert

The best way to experience the Thar Desert, which surrounds Jaisalmer, is on an overnight camel safari. Leaving Jaisalmer in the mid-afternoon, it's half-an-hour by jeep beyond the busier areas near Sam to meet our camels. The ride lasts for around two hours, traversing an unspoilt area of the desert, passing through a mix of scrub and sand dunes as the light turns from gold to dusky pink. The desert camp itself is pitched in a peaceful location close to sand dunes. The camp's attentive staff will serve dinner before an evening spent under a blanket of stars. The tents are simple, but all bedding is supplied, and hot water is provided for washing. Overnight Guru Kripa tented camp, or similar. (BD)

The Thar Desert

The Great Desert of India covers an area of 77,000 square miles and is a natural barrier between much of the country and Pakistan. The natural way into a desert is by camel and the height and languid pace afford you excellent views and the chance to glimpse much of its delights. Deserts are unique places in which to travel: be prepared for more warmth during the afternoon and then a steady decline in temperature until you will be relieved to have brought warm jackets and socks! Keep your eyes peeled to see the national bird of India, the peacock, traversing the scrub branches, lizards and grouse scuttling away from your camel and vultures and endangered Indian spotted eagles winging overhead. With the dusk come unbelievable sunsets and huge skies, totally unpolluted by urban light. As darkness rises, the nocturnal buzz of life there forms a gentle



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backdrop to the heavenly spectacle that unfolds: this is an astronomer's dream as the Milky Way unfolds like a meandering smudge across the star-spangled skies.

Day 12 – Jaisalmer

In the morning a second camel ride takes a different route lasting about an hour, before re-joining the jeep and driving back to Jaisalmer. In the afternoon there's a guided walking tour of the Old City where narrow cobbled lanes provide a wonderful opportunity to wander around. The city's fort is not simply a monument, but home to a community of several thousand people. Inside you can view attractive Jain temples, see fascinating architecture, and enjoy superb views over the city and the desert beyond from vantage points on its battlements. Elsewhere, hidden among alleyways leading from the main market street are several elaborate and opulent havelis (town houses). Overnight Nachana Haveli, or similar. (B)

Day 13 – Jaisalmer – Bhenswara (Approximate driving time: seven hours)

This morning we drive to Bhenswara, a rarely visited part of Rajasthan home to some of the more pastoral tribes of India. The region's rock-strewn landscape remains a natural habitat for leopards, and the community host at Bhenswara is a keen tracker. In the evening there's an option to join a thrilling safari attempting to gain a glimpse of these elusive big cats. Stay at Ravla Bhenswara Hotel or similar. (B)

Day 14 – Bhenswara – Udaipur (Approximate driving time: four hours)

It looks like we've finally run out of colours. The last stop on the itinerary is the beautiful 'White City' of Udaipur. Set around the vast Pichola Lake and dominated by dramatic palaces, Udaipur is surely Rajasthan's most picturesque city. High, whitewashed houses and narrow, winding alleys lend it an almost mediaeval charm. The huge City Palace, still the residence of the Maharana, is intricately carved from yellow sandstone and stands on the banks of Lake Pichola, from where you have fabulous views over the balmy waters and the famous Lake Palace Hotel. Overnight at Mewar Haveli, or similar. (B)

Udaipur

The current maharana is, almost unbelievably, the 76th in an unbroken line of Mewar rulers of Udaipur. The dynasty has long been regarded as the chief Rajput royal family and the city's history extends back to the mid 1500s. If any city in Rajasthan can claim to hold the crown of romantic backdrops, then this is it: the nearby Aravelli hills encircle it and the interconnecting lakes have earned it the title 'Venice of India'. At its heart, the City Palace is a complex of ornate gates and courtyards, palaces within palaces, temples, museums and even a former elephant fighting arena beside the triple 'Tripolia' gateway.

Day 15 – Udaipur sightseeing

Today's guided tour encompasses elaborate palaces and temples together with a boat trip on Lake Pichola for an entirely different perspective on this elegant city. In the afternoon there's free time to seek out elusive bargains in the markets, or to relax in a cafe overlooking the lake, whilst enjoying Udaipur's renowned teas, coffees and spicy pakodas. Overnight at Mewar Haveli or similar. (B)

Day 16 – Departure

After breakfast the tour ends today with airport transfers for onward flights. (B)

Please note: We're happy to arrange extra nights time in Udaipur or Delhi, please contact us for prices.



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Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
Overland transport in private vehicle
Delhi – Agra by Shatabadi Express (AC chair car)
All accommodation on twin-share basis
All sightseeing and entrance fees as per the itinerary
Services of English speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)

Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visa (if applicable)
Services, Meals and Drinks other than those mentioned in the itinerary
Items of a personal nature
Extra charges for camera and video permits
Tips (see the notes section for information on the tipping kitty)

Important Information

Foreign Government Travel Warnings

We constantly monitor the advice posted by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). In particular we will always advise clients of any travel warnings. At present there are no warnings against travel to the areas of India that we visit. Please feel free to contact us should you have any specific concerns or would like to know in detail what measures are being taken to ensure visits remain trouble free and without incident. It should be noted that this information applies to British citizens. Other nationals are asked to check the current position of their respective government.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 12pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore, please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

It should also be noted that on many of our tours we have set-aside Day 1 of the itinerary as an 'arrival day'. For this reason and because tour participants are likely to be arriving at different times, and often from different countries, guided sightseeing or other activities are not included. If you are arriving early or before the start date of the tour and would like to organise some extra arrangements on a private basis please contact us.



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Accommodation Rating

On this tour we stay in mid-range comfortable accommodation consisting of small hotels and guesthouses. All accommodation has private bathrooms. We will also stay in some nice heritage hotels with lots of character.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

The daily meal basis is shown in the tour itinerary; breakfast (B), lunch (L) and dinner (D). Please note that lunch may be a picnic. Drinks are not included and will be payable locally in cash.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is very much part of the culture in India and is usually expected. Tipping can often be an awkward affair, especially when in an unfamiliar country where you are not sure when or how much to tip. As such, your guide will collect an amount of between £50 - £60 per person on arrival depending on the group size which will be used to tip hotel staff, local sightseeing guides, drivers and any other hotel staff throughout the tour. A tip for the main tour guide is left up to you and is not part of the kitty. A suggested amount is £2 – 3 per person per day.

Foreign Exchange

ATM Availability: India is well equipped with ATMs, although less so in smaller towns than in larger cities
Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are generally only accepted in the more expensive shops and restaurants

Local Currency: Rupee

Recommended Currency for Exchange: Pound Sterling or US Dollars

Where to Exchange: Your guide will advise you

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive an airport transfer, both on arrival and departure include in the tour price. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.



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Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.

Visa Information

Most nationalities need to get a visa before travelling to India.

Make sure you get the right visa for your travel and that it's valid for the purpose and duration of your stay. If you enter India on the wrong visa, you could be detained on arrival and you may be deported and blacklisted, meaning that you can't enter India again. Make sure you meet entry requirements.

From 1 April 2017, the length of stay on an e-visa has been increased from 30 days to 60 days with double entry on tourist and business e-visa and triple entry on medical e-visa. The 60 days start on the date of your first entry into India on your e-visa. When you arrive at the airport, your passport will be stamped and an expiry date for your e-visa will be handwritten by an Immigration Officer. Please be aware that 60 days is not automatically equal to 2 calendar months. Check the date that is written on your passport and make sure you leave the country before your visa expires.

Nationalities and people who meet the eligibility criteria can apply for a double entry e-Tourist Visa (e-TV) to enter India at certain designated airports. You can find more information about the eligibility criteria on the government of India's e-Tourist Visa website. Beware of fake websites offering the e-TV service.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to the UK.

Your passport must be machine readable, with 2 blank pages for your visa and valid for a minimum of 180 days at the time of your visa application.

The guidelines regarding passport validity on arrival in India are unclear. To avoid possible problems at immigration, make sure your passport is valid for a minimum of 180 days at the time of entry into India.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice

Vaccinations & Protection

As with travel to most parts of Asia, we strongly recommend that you contact your doctor's surgery or a specialist travel clinic for up-to-date information, advice and the necessary vaccinations.

For a visit of less than one month, almost certainly you will be advised to have immunisations against the following: Diphtheria and Tetanus, Hepatitis A, Typhoid, Meningitis. The use of a DEET-containing insect repellent is highly recommended.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.



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Preparing for your tour

Climate

The climate of much of the Subcontinent - which includes Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, Nepal & Pakistan - is dominated by heat, monsoons and the Himalayas. Northern India enjoys a predominantly dry, desert climate, with the months between October and March providing the best time to visit. October and March can still be very hot by day with temperatures into the high 30's Centigrade. If you prefer cooler conditions then November – February will be more comfortable. During this time nights can be quite cool. Misty conditions are common in early mornings during winter.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night, especially in the desert. A hat is also advised to be worn through the day to protect from the sun, along with at least one piece of waterproof clothing for any days that the weather may be wet or windy. Rain is quite rare in the dry winter season but cannot be entirely ruled out.

You should bear in mind that India tends to have a conservative attitude towards dress. Women, and also to a certain extent men, will find that the way they dress will often determine the degree of respect they receive from both men and women. In temples you will be asked to remove your shoes so please wear socks if you do not wish to be barefoot.

Road Conditions

Most roads on this tour are in a reasonable or good condition, but you will encounter some sections where works are in progress or rural sections where the roads are not in such good order. Safaris are carried out mostly in jeeps or canter vehicles, ideal for the terrain but please be advised that safaris are still bumpy.

Safari Expectations

On this tour you have the opportunity to see some amazing biodiversity. However these animals are wild. We cannot guarantee sightings. Your chance of seeing larger cats are increased from January – March when the land is parched. From October – December parks are often lush from the rains and wildlife is harder to see. The flip side of this is that the forests and parks are more beautiful. October and November is also a great time for birding and migratory species. So please kindly enjoy what nature has to offer and keep expectations realistic.

Heritage Hotels

During the tour we will stay at times in wonderfully atmospheric old heritage hotels. In many cases these hotels have been converted from old forts and/or palaces. Many of these kind of hotels will not have lifts although they are not high rise hotels so they usually only have a few floors and assistance can be provided with bags at all hotels. Also beware of clearance issues if you are tall getting into rooms and through corridors. Some areas may not be well lit so always carry a small torch.

Equipment

The first thing on your list should be a first aid kit. Whilst there is no undue cause for alarm, travellers are best advised to travel well-prepared: adequately immunized, with sufficient supplies of prescription drugs, along with a medical kit. Suncream/sunblock is a must. Insect repellent, including a bite spray will also be useful to have. Please also bring a torch/flashlight or a head-torch for any unexpected electricity outages or for dimly lit areas. As the wildlife and birdlife is excellent in India you may wish to take a pair of binoculars.



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Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended. Lighter sandals are fine for travelling.

Luggage on tour

Your luggage should not exceed 20kgs (44lbs). One large suitcase/rucksack, and one small hand luggage rucksack is acceptable.

Electric Supply & Plugs

230-240volts. Plugs are usually of the European two round pin variety.

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These notes were updated 22nd December 2018