



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

India - Nagaland Hornbill Festival

Tour Duration – 13 Days



Tour Rating

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

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Experience the tribal culture of the Naga people at the Hornbill Festival
- ✓ Travel to the beautiful setting of Majuli Island with its traditional Assamese architecture
- ✓ Take the ferry on the fabled Brahmaputra River
- ✓ Track rare wildlife in Kaziranga National Park



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Tour Map - India - Nagaland Hornbill Festival



Tour Essentials

Accommodation: Mix of Comfortable hotels throughout. Basic accomodation at Majuli Island
Included Meals: Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
Group Size: Maximum 12
Start Point: Kolkata
End Point: Kolkata
Transport: Private cars or buses, domestic flight
Countries: India



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The Last Frontiers of India - Nagaland Hornbill Festival

Far away from the hustle and bustle of Delhi, the deserts and palaces of Rajasthan, or the tropical shores of Kerala, lies an India that few people know exists. India's north east region could not be more different than commonly held preconceptions about the world's largest democracy. We visit tribal cultures that are only now just beginning to move into the 21st century as we meet and interact with the Naga people, once feared headhunters. We are privileged to spend time in their villages and learn more about their very distinct customs, still maintained in the face of the onslaught of Hinduism. We travel to the jaw-droppingly beautiful region of Assam perched on the edge of the Himalayas, and search for rhino and tiger in the remote Kaziranga National Park. The highlight of this trip is the opportunity to learn more about the kaleidoscope of diverse cultures that make up India's north east and experience the Hornbill Festival. This is a region more akin to South East Asia than to the subcontinent – and we spend as much time as possible exploring villages and meeting local people. See a different side of the country – this truly is undiscovered India.

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 just 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 as 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 necessary to change the guide at one or more points during the tour.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Kolkata

Arrive in Kolkata, India's second largest city. Kolkata encapsulates modern India – a hectic and vibrant city teeming with life. Overnight at Lytton Hotel or similar.

Kolkata

Kolkata (also spelled Calcutta) burst into life with the arrival of the British East India Company, who bought land containing the small village of Kalikata in the late 17th century. Kolkata grew in importance over the years of the British Raj, and was its seat of government until 1911. This legacy has left a wealth of colonial architecture remaining in the city today, although many buildings are now starting to suffer from lack of upkeep and general wear and tear. Kolkata over the years has had a rather bad reputation, fuelled by its slums and the story of the infamous 'Black Hole of Calcutta', where during the siege of the city in 1756, 64 British residents were imprisoned in a guard room, with only 24 surviving the experience. However, it has always thrived as a centre for arts and culture, and its inhabitants are rightly proud of the many artistic and literary achievements that have come forth from the city. Kolkata has of course moved on from the days of the Raj, but the overwhelming impression is still of a colonial city, with bowling and golf clubs, the marble memorial to Queen Victoria and green parks reminiscent more of England than India.

Day 2 – Kolkata - Kohima

Transfer to the airport for a flight to Dimapur (*15kg checked bag allowance and 7kg hand baggage*).
. On arrival transfer to Kohima, approx. 2hrs drive. Overnight at Greenwood Villa or similar (B)





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Kohima

This British-built town lies in the valley between higher hills, alongside the immaculately kept war cemetery, and is the state capital of Nagaland. Kohima attracted world attention during the Second World War because it was here that the Japanese advance was halted by the British and Indian forces.

Day 3 – Kohima –Hornbill Festival

Today visit the Hornbill Festival, which takes place at Kisama Heritage Village. This open-air museum has a representative selection of traditional Naga houses and morungs (bachelor dormitories) with full-sized log drums. Performances begin at 9am. The festival is attended by all of Nagaland's major tribes. It features traditional arts, dances, folk songs and games. All this takes place amidst immaculate replicas of tribal hutments complete with wood carvings and hollow log drums, which are beaten in haunting symphony at the end of the day. There is plenty of handicraft and food stalls as well as heady rice beer to indulge in. After sundown, the main attraction is the Hornbill National Rock Concert, where bands from all over the country come to compete. This is followed by a night market in town. Overnight at Greenwood villa or similar (B)

Day 4 - Kohima

This morning, visit the Kohima World War 2 cemetery, a tribute to the soldiers who lost their lives during the Japanese invasion of the Second World War. After the visit, attend day 3 of the Hornbill festival. Overnight at Greenwood Villa or similar (B)

Day 5 – Kohima

Today visit Khonoma Village, a picturesque village outside of Kohima and home to the Angami tribe. After visiting Khonoma village, attend day 4 of the festival. Overnight at Greenwood Villa or similar (B)

Day 6 – Kohima – Jorhat

Today we travel to Jorhat (approx. 6hr drive), a major tea centre conveniently located for visiting the nearby Majuli Island. Overnight at Thengal Manor or similar (B)

Day 7- Kaziranga – Majuli

Take the local ferry on the mighty Brahmaputra River to Majuli Island, noted for its beautiful rural setting and the traditional Assamese architecture. It is also famous for its monastic retreats where the worship of Lord Vishnu is through dance, music and poetry. Overnight at Happy House or similar (B)

Majuli Island

Majuli Island is the largest riverine island in the world and has been a key pilgrimage site for Vaishnavites (followers of Vishnu) for centuries. The island has several monasteries, for the Vaishnavite community, some of which contain ancient artefacts, handicrafts and jewellery – the island has been the traditional centre of Assamese culture for many centuries.

Day 8 – Majuli Island

Today we take a walk around the village and visit one of Majuli's unique monasteries, established in the 15th Century, where you will witness a special dance performance by some young monks. Overnight at Happy House or similar (B)

Day 9 – Majuli – Kaziranga National Park

Take the ferry back to Brahmaputra and drive to Kaziranga, which was declared a game reserve in 1926 to save the Indian one-horned rhino from extinction. Overnight at Wild Grass Resort or similar (BLD)





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Day 10 – Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga National Park is a World Heritage Site offering great opportunities to spot the iconic Indian Horned Rhinoceros – more than 75% of the world's population reside within its boundaries. Other wildlife is also plentiful and includes water buffalo, elephants, tigers, swamp deer, barking deer and hog deer as well as 400 species of birds. We explore the park and hope for good game sightings. Overnight at Wild Grass Resort or similar (BLD)

Kaziranga National Park

Kaziranga National Park is one of only two places where the Indian One Horned Rhinoceros can now be found. Although they once roamed freely across India, Kaziranga and Manas National Park, also in Assam, represent their total habitat today. The park covers a wide diversity of habitats, from grassland to swamps and forest and this ensures a good mix of flora and fauna. In particular, the birdlife here is excellent, with numerous birds of prey circling the skies.

Day 11 – Kaziranga – Shillong

Drive from Kaziranga to Shillong (approx. 7 hours), the capital of Meghalaya state. This evening you may want to stroll around the Police Bazaar, the 'hip and happening' area with fancy shops and restaurants, where local bands offer the latest in rock and rap. Overnight at Tripura Castle or similar (B)

Shillong

Shillong is the capital city of Meghalaya, one of north-east India's most attractive states. It has a wealth of green, thickly forested hills with an amazing ecological diversity, and is populated by tribal groups who follow a matrilineal system of inheritance. With no significant monuments, the attractions here lie in the scenic beauty, parks, waterfalls and panoramic views.

Day 12 – Shillong

This morning we take a city tour of Shillong and the best way to enjoy its sights is on foot. With no significant monuments, the attractions here lie in the scenic beauty, parks, waterfalls and panoramic views. Places worth visiting include the decorative Ward Lake in the heart of Shillong and the Bara Bazaar where you can see local and hill-people, mostly women, trading their wares including interesting jewellery and handicrafts. The afternoon is at leisure. Overnight at Tripura Castle or similar (B)

Day 13 – Shillong – Kolkata – Departure

Transfer to the airport for a short flight to Kolkata (15kg checked bag allowance and 7kg hand baggage).to connect with your onward flight (to be booked departing after 1930 hours) or further accommodation can be arranged in Kolkata (B)

Tour Inclusions/Exclusions

Inclusions:

Arrival and departure transfers
Overland transport in private vehicle
Domestic flights Kolkata – Dimpur / Gwahati – Kolkata (15kg checked bag allowance and 7kg hand baggage)
All accommodation
Services of English speaking guide / tour leader
Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
Entrance fees for sites listed as part of the itinerary
Local ferry



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Excluded:

International flights
Any airport taxes
Travel Insurance
Visas
Drinks

Important Information

Foreign Office 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 2pm. 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.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you will be staying in predominantly comfortable mid-range accommodation. The accommodation at Majuli Island is slightly more basic. Most accommodation will be en-suite, with private bathroom and in some cases air-conditioning will be provided. In general you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

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 & Drinks

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.



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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 common practise in India. If your local guide has been helpful then you could think about tipping. This amount can obviously be left to you. When tipping a driver, a guide or hotel staff a few dollars will always be gratefully received.

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 Your 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.

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.



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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.

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 including Assam enjoys a predominantly dry, desert climate, with the months between October and March providing the best time to visit. Kashmir experiences a continental climate with cold winters and warm summers which like Ladakh, is best visited between April and October.

Clothing

When it comes to clothing it is usually recommended that lighter clothes are worn through the day, and warmer ones at night. Some areas of the Nagaland tour are situated at around 1500m altitude so it can be



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quite cool at night so some warmer clothes will be necessary. 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.

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.

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.

Footwear

Footwear is a main priority on this tour. Comfortable walking shoes/boots are recommended.

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

230-240 volts. 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 on 09/02/2018