

Best of Northern India

Trip Code: BON

Version:



CULTURE



GUIDED GROUP

MODERATE



HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the majestic forts, palaces, temples of Rajasthan
- Experience an unforgettable sunrise over the beautiful Taj Mahal at Agra
- Take a boat on the Ganges to experience dawn break over Varanasi
- Observe an abundance of wildlife at Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

AT A GLANCE

- 8 days touring and sightseeing including 2 game drives
- Join at Delhi

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Offering a blend of magical experiences, this short holiday manages to capture the very essence of northern India. We start out in the 'Pink City' of Jaipur, famed for its skilled gem-stone cutters and fabled jewellery shops. One of the most attractive cities of the princely state of Rajasthan; with its splendid Palace of the Breeze, the Jantar Mantar Observatory and the imposing Amber Fort, Jaipur was awarded UNESCO World Heritage status in 2019. We then drive through rural India to the 'Project Tiger' reserve of Ranthambore, where we have included evening and morning game drives to give us the best chance of spotting a tiger, in addition to a huge diversity of other wildlife. Continuing our journey eastwards, we visit the Emperor Akbar's abandoned ghost palace of Fatehpur Sikri, once seat of the Mughal Empire. We arrive at Agra and prepare ourselves for what will undoubtedly be the highlight for many: experiencing sunrise over the Taj Mahal, built by Shah Jahan as a mausoleum and tribute to his beloved wife. Agra Fort takes many by surprise, overshadowed as it is by the Taj Mahal. The sheer scale and workmanship of this red sandstone and white marble palace is incredible and is surely worthy of the trip to Agra alone. We then take a night train to Varanasi, known as the City of Light, a nod to the candle-lit evening prayer ceremonies that take place on the ghats of the River Ganges. We take to the river at dawn by boat to observe the countless Hindu pilgrims coming to bathe in the holy waters and to pray and give offerings. We round off this incredible voyage with a sightseeing tour of Delhi, to explore the temples and bazaars the city is famed for. A holiday for those seeking complete sensory immersion into the fascinating cultural experience that is northern India.

View our full range of [walking and trekking holidays in India](#).

Is this holiday for you?

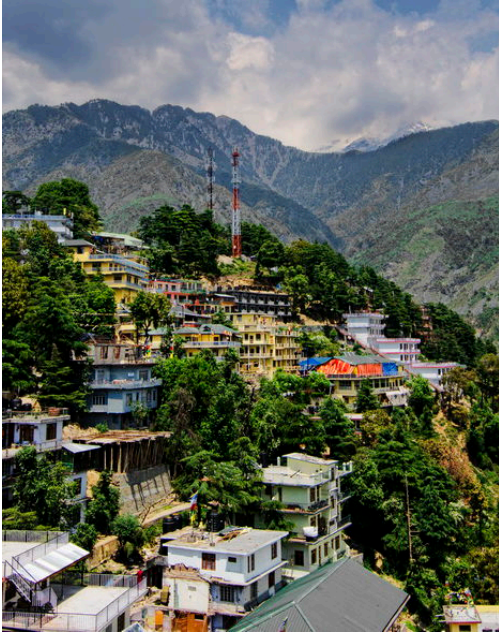
This touring and sightseeing adventure holiday incorporates many of the highlights of northern India into little more than a week and is perfect for anyone wanting to experience the wildlife, culture and architecture to be found in this corner of North India. There is a fair amount of travelling, as we journey between Delhi, Jaipur, Agra and Varanasi. However, using private, air-conditioned minibuses and also air-conditioned sleeper trains, the effect of this is kept to a minimum. Our game drives in the Ranthambore National Park are in 'canters' which are large, open trucks fitted with seats and offering a good field of view. Whilst sightseeing, there will be some leisurely walking on city streets and on good trails.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



Dharamsala and the Dalai Lama

Dharamsala is a former British Raj hill-station in the Dhauladhar mountain range and currently home to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in exile. On this four day extension, you will be able to sample a flavour of life in Tibet and enjoy visits to the Dalai Lama's temple complex; the Norbulingka Institute; the Tibetan children's village and visit a local Gaddi Tribal village to experience the life of the people who traditionally inhabit the lower reaches of the Dhauladhar.

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional English-speaking local leader
- Delhi Airport transfers on the group departure day
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- Wildlife guides during 2 Ranthambore game drives
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Park and monument entrance fees
- Guided sightseeing tours in Jaipur Agra Varanasi and Delhi

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Delhi Airport transfers (other than group transfer) on arrival
- Indian Visa
- Tips for local staff
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport in the late morning of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary.

A single timed transfer from the group's Delhi hotel back to Delhi Airport is provided on the final day of the itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All breakfasts and all dinners are included in the holiday price from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 9. Since it makes sense on a tour of this nature to occasionally skip lunch and to take snacks at any time during the day, we have not included the cost of lunches in the overall price. Any snacks or lunches will be paid for directly and we estimate that you should budget a total of £50 - £75 for this.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Part of the experience of a visit to India is sampling the excellent local food. Indian cuisine offers a wide choice of dishes, much more variety than the 'curries' we are used to in Indian restaurants at home and the nan breads are like nothing you'll have experienced. Whether the food is presented as a dinner buffet or as a set menu, there will always be vegetarian options. In some place, there will also be familiar international dishes. Breakfasts include cereals, bread, possibly in the form of local 'rotis', eggs, hard-boiled or omelette, often one or two delicious, spicy Indian breakfast options, fruit, juice, hot water for tea or coffee. Lunches will usually be at a restaurant where you can choose what you want - the guide will help with this.

Accommodation

The group will have a total of 6 nights in comfortable tourist standard hotels in Jaipur, Ranthambore, Agra, Varanasi and Delhi. On 2 nights, the accommodation will be in air-conditioned sleeper carriages on overnight trains. All accommodation except the sleeper train is allocated on a twin-sharing basis. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Depending upon availability it may be possible to arrange single rooms for the hotel nights. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be accompanied throughout by an experienced English-speaking tour leader and during the game drives in Ranthambore, by a wildlife expert. During the tours of Jaipur, Agra, Varanasi and Delhi, there will also be a local city guide.

Spending Money

Approximately £200 (or equivalent in Euros, US dollars etc.) changed into local currency (Indian rupees), should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, including snacks or lunches, tips for your guides, beer and soft drinks, etc. There is also the optional excursion to the Ganges in Varanasi on Day 6 to account for, which is payable directly to your guide at a cost of around 1500 rupees (£15). There are several opportunities to buy souvenirs on this trip. It is not necessary to purchase local currency (Indian Rupees) before you travel. Sterling, US dollars and Euros are readily exchanged in Delhi. Since you will be changing the majority of your spending money into local currency on the day of arrival, we recommend taking this in cash. You can change an initial amount on arrival at Delhi Airport, where the rate is likely to be a few rupees down on what you can expect to get on the high street. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in Delhi and Agra and are particularly useful for more expensive souvenirs. It is possible to withdraw cash (rupees only) from cash machines in Delhi, Jaipur, Agra and Varanasi using credit and debit cards.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is an accepted and expected part of Indian culture, although you should only tip for services which are well done. We recommend that tips to your guides and driver be made from the group as a whole and that the group decides together on an appropriate amount. Your guide will help with sundry tipping; bell boys, other hotel staff, toilet attendants, lunchtime restaurant staff, Ranthambore staff and railway porters. This means you don't need to concern yourself with who to tip and who not to tip. Your guide will set up a tip 'kitty' for this and you will probably be asked to contribute 4000 rupees (£40) each for this. Separately from this, you will need to tip the driver who is with you for the whole trip. And you will need to tip your guide. As a rough guide we suggest that £80 (depending on group size) will allow you to pay reasonable tips.

Additional Information

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are responsible for the conservation of many monuments in India (including the Taj Mahal). This organisation will occasionally undertake work to restore the various monuments, but often without notice, so it is difficult to forewarn our customers of this work. It is possible that, at any time, monuments on this holiday could be having work done on them.

Baggage Allowance

You should restrict your luggage to one main travel bag plus a small daypack to carry cameras, binoculars, water etc. We recognise that for some of our holidays and for some of our travellers, the KE Trek Bag may not provide the best solution when packing for your trip. A bag with fitted wheels and with more than one compartment and more than one access zip is probably more appropriate for this kind of trip.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday. Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

Visa India

Most nationalities, including travellers from the UK, the USA and many European countries can apply for their Indian Visa online through the **E-Visa Application** process. You must make your application at least four days prior to departure. Please download the detailed information document for details of how to apply for your visa: [Visa India PDF](#)

Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>

Vaccinations

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you require any specific vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella, along with hepatitis A and typhoid.

Malarial prophylaxis is not usually required for trips in the mountains, however if you are visiting rural and remote low lying areas then they might be necessary.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

Currency

The currency of India is the Indian Rupee.

Preparing for your Holiday

Although there is no strenuous walking on this holiday, there are several sights which are best explored on foot and it makes a lot of sense to get some additional exercise before coming on any active holiday. Some of the days it will get quite hot and you should be prepared for this. Before departure, we suggest that you do some reading about the country, its people and the wildlife you are likely to see.

Climate

Outside of the Indian Monsoon (June to September) you should experience little if any rainfall. By mid August the monsoon has lost most of its force although short lived cloud bursts particularly in the afternoon, are reasonably common except in Rajasthan which tends to be very dry at this time. The coolest temperatures are encountered during November and December when the maximum daytime temperatures will generally be in the mid to high twenties of Celsius. From February temperatures start to rise reaching mid thirties during trips in March and April. The arrival of the monsoon cools everything down again and temperatures in August and September can often be the same or even less than April. Evening temperatures from late October to February can be quite chilly (requiring a jacket).

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- India - Lonely Planet
- Guide India - The Rough Guide
- Indian Wildlife Insight Guide
- Field Guide to the Mammals of the Indian Subcontinent. K. K. Gurung and Raj Singh
- Birds of India. Richard Grimmett, Carol and Tim Inskipp
- The Jungle Book. Rudyard Kipling

Maps

TTK State Road Maps

Locally produced maps showing road and rail network with intermediate driving distances. No information on topography is given but each map comes with a booklet providing further information on places of interest. Three sheets are required to cover the whole tour (Madhya Pradesh Rajasthan and Varanasi)

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

You must bring the following items:

- Strong shoes or trainers
- Socks
- Underwear
- Lightweight trousers
- Shirts (at least one long-sleeved with collar) and T-shirts
- Jacket
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Small padlock (to lock your KE trek bag)
- Small daypack 20 to 25 litres
- Torch
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Water purification tablets
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters (band-aids), insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

◆The following items are optional:

- Pocket-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Repair kit - (eg. needle, thread, duct tape)
- Camera
- Travel clothes
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport in the morning of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. A single timed transfer from the group's Delhi hotel back to Delhi Airport is provided on the final day of the itinerary.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Delhi. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Delhi on the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

We have carefully put together this trip for those wanting to see the outstanding highlights of northern India in one perfect package. More than the typical Golden Triangle tour this area is rightly renowned for, we also include a trip to Varanasi, one of the holiest cities in India on the banks of the Ganges. With visits to the architectural wonders of Rajasthan and Agra, safari drives and all breakfasts and dinners included; this holiday represents outstanding value for money.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 21/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change