Last Updated: May 29, 2014

Essential India - AHEH

15 days: Delhi to Delhi

What's Included

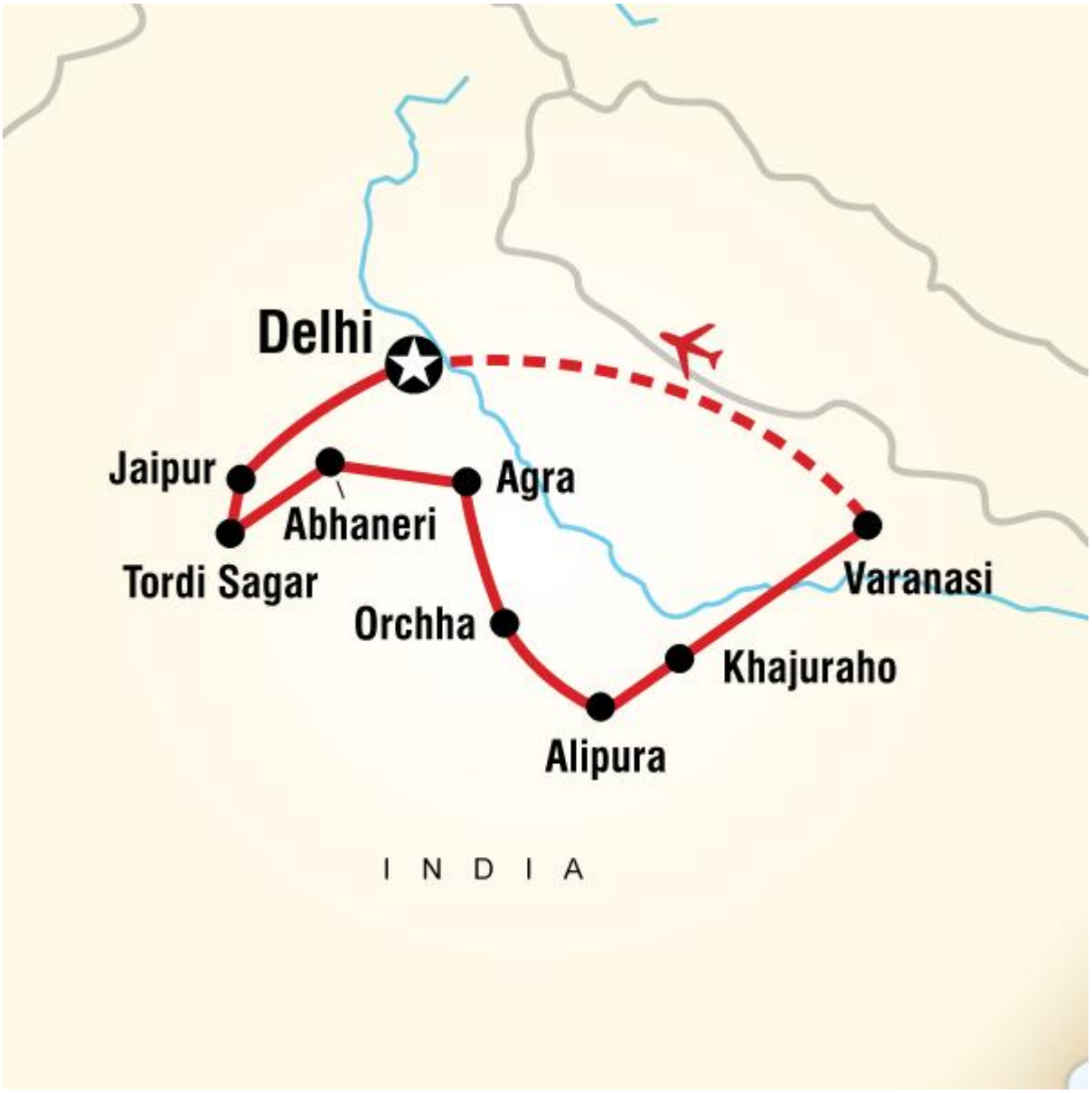
Walking tour with a guide from the Planeterra-supported New Delhi Streetkids Project. Old Delhi walk with stops at the Jama Masjid, Gurduwara, Chandni Chowk, spice markets and Connaught Place. Amber Fort and Hawa Mahal tour (Jaipur). Rajasthani rural village stay. Abhaneri stepwells visit. Fatehpur Sikri entrance and guide. Taj Mahal and I'timad-ud-Daulah (Baby Taj) entrance. Red Fort entrance and guided tour. Orchha Palace complex visit. Western Temple complex entrance and guided visit (Khajuraho). River Ganges boat trip at sunrise and sunset, including candle flower ceremony (Varanasi). Internal flight. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2014 - December 27th, 2015

Itinerary



Day 1 Arrive Delhi

Arrive in Delhi at any time. There are no planned activities, so check into to the hotel (check-in time is 12.00 midday) and enjoy the city. In the evening you will meet your fellow group members to go over the details of your trip. Check the notice board to see what time and where the group meeting will be held.

Day 2 Delhi

In the morning enjoy a city tour by local streetkids, a Planeterra-supported project. It is estimated that 400,000 children live and work on the streets of Delhi. In most cases, their families are too poor to provide for them, they have run away from abusive home environments or they are orphans. Planeterra's New Delhi Streetkids Project supports over 5,000 of these street children through strategically placed contact points, shelters and a health post set up by a local partner organization. These youth centers provide clothing, food, healthcare, education, counseling, recreational activities, job skills training and job placements. Through Planeterra's partnership with Salaam Baalak Trust, scholarships are made available to young people who once lived and worked on the streets of Delhi. By funding vocational training in trade schools and universities, and making job-placements based on each child's individual interest, we can help break the cycle of poverty and give these youth the opportunity to create a brighter future.
Many of these adolescents have been fully-trained as tour guides and lead exciting tours through the enchanting inner city streets of Paharganj, the New Delhi railway station, and The Old City. This tour is a unique way for travelers to engage in these children's lives and the guiding provides an opportunity for them to improve their communication and speaking skills.

Visit Delhi's famous Jama Masjid (Great Mosque) and climb the minaret for a bird's eye view of the old city. Walk through Chandni Chowk, one of India's oldest and busiest markets, and learn the history of the Sikh religion at the important Gurduwara, (Sikh place of worship) Gurdwara SisGanj. Stop for photos at the colourful spice market before finishing at the Victorian Connaught Place, one of the most prominent architectural remnants of British rule.

The Masjid-i-Jahan Numa, commonly known as the Jama or Jarna Masjid (Great Mosque) of Delhi is the principal mosque of Old

Delhi in India. Masjid-i-Jahan Numa means "mosque commanding a view of the world, " whereas the name Jama Masjid is a reference to the weekly congregation observed on Friday (the yaum al-jum`a) at the mosque. Commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and completed in the year 1656 AD, the Jarna Masjid is the best-known and largest mosque in India; its courtyard can hold up to twenty-five thousand worshippers. The mosque houses several relics in a niche in the north gate, including a priceless copy of the Qur'an written on deer skin.

The Sikh holy site of Gurdwara SisGanj stands at the site where the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, was beheaded in 1675 on the orders of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb for refusing to accept Islam. During a time when the emperor was waging a war against Hindus, Guru Tegh Bahadur argued for freedom of worship and was executed as a result. Before his body could be quartered and exposed to public view, it was stolen under cover of darkness by one of his disciples, Lakhi Shah Vanjara, who then burnt his house to cremate the Guru's body. The severed head (Sis) of Guru Tegh Bahadur was recovered by Bhai Jaita, another disciple of the Guru, and cremated by the Guru's son, Gobind Rai, later to become Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth and last Sikh Guru.

The giant circle of New Delhi’s Connaught Place, sitting at the centre of any map of Delhi, radiates with roads like spokes from a wheel. The circle’s obviously Victorian architecture was modeled after the Royal Crescent in Bath, England.

Day 3-4 Jaipur

Estimate Travel Time: 5 - 6 Hours

An early morning Bus journey to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan.

Founded in 1728, Jaipur, or “The Pink City” as it is often called, is unlike any other pre-modern Indian city, in that the entire town was planned according to the principles of Hindu architectural theory. The city is in fact built in the form of a nine-part mandala known as the Pithapada, which combined with wide streets makes for an unusually airy, orderly atmosphere. That the results of this urban planning have so endured to this day (present day population approximately 3 million) is nothing short of miraculous.

Enter the heart of the mandala (on foot or by cycle rickshaw) and you are in the central palace quarter, with its sprawling Hawa Mahal palace complex, formal gardens and a small lake. Built in 1799, the Hawa Mahal, "Palace of Winds", was part of the City Palace, an extension of the Zenana or chambers of the harem. Its original intention was to allow royal ladies to observe everyday life in the street below without being seen. Constructed of red and pink sandstone highlighted with white lime, the five-storied facade is peppered with 953 small windows. The breeze (hawa) that comes through the windows keeps it cool even in hot months, and gives the palace its name.

After breakfast on Day 4 we visit the ruined city of Amber, former capital of Jaipur state. Founded by the Meenas, Amber was a flourishing settlement as far back as 967 AD. Overlooking the artificial lake south of Amber town stands the Amber Fort/Palace complex, famous for its mixture of Hindu and Muslim architecture. At the bottom of a hill sits Amber Fort, initially a Palace Complex within the Fort of Amber on top of the hill (today known as Jaigarh fort). The two forts are connected through well-guarded passages.

During our time in Jaipur you may also wish to include a visit to the Jantar Mantar, or Royal Observatory. The term Jantar Mantar actually refers to a collection of architectural astronomical instruments built between 1727 and 1733 by Maharaja Jai Singh II at his then-new capital of Jaipur. It is modelled after the one that he had built for him at the then Mughal capital of Delhi. He had constructed a total of five such observatories at different locations, including the ones at Delhi and Jaipur; the Jaipur observatory is the largest of these.

Another great option is to see a Bollywood film in India it is much, much more than what we are accustomed to in the west. The atmosphere, energy and pure fun (not to mention volume!) has to be experienced to be believed. The Raj Mandir Movie Theatre is widely acclaimed as the largest cinema hall in Rajasthan, and one of the best in the country. The exterior is adorned with asymmetrical curves and shapes with stars, illuminated by hidden lights at night. The reception has a number of glittering chandeliers hanging in domes from the ceiling. The auditorium is spectacularly decorated with indirect lighting of changing colors hidden behind the plaster troughs of walls and ceilings. Even if you do not understand the language of the film screened, you will be entertained anyway by the emotions involved in the movie and of course the crowd..

Day 5 Tordi Sagar village

Estimate Travel Time: 2-3 Hours (80 kms)

This morning we travel to the rural village of Tordi Sagar. Walk with a native through the markets, potters, ironsmiths ,temples and farms and understand the complexity of rural India. Optionally, go on a camel cart ride to the dunes or take a Jeep safari in the surrounding region visiting hamlets around the village of local tribals, ancient stepwells and a stunning sunset on the reservoir. An early morning hike to the old fortress is also a great option.

Days 6-7 Abhaneri/Agra

Day 6, Estimate Travel Time: 6-7 Hours (160kms)

In the morning, visit Abhaneri, which is known for its beautiful baoris (step wells) and the famous Harshat Mata temple, Abhaneri is supposed to have been established by Raja Chand. Many believe that Raja Chand was in fact Raja Bhoja, a celebrated king who ruled over the Gurjar Kingdom in the 9th century. Abhaneri was earlier known as Abha Nagri or the city of brightness. Today, this ancient village is in ruins but yet attracts many tourists from all across the world.

The Harshat Mata Temple dates to the 9th century and today only portions of this ancient shrine remain, like the sanctuary walls, terrace and sections of the columned mandapa (fore chamber). The sanctum, shorn of its superstructure, is enclosed in an ambulatory and is pancharatha (with five offsets) in structure. The walls have carved nichés in which are images of other deities. These images indicate that the temple was originally dedicated to Vishnu, the Creator of the Hindu trinity of Creator-Preserver-Destroyer. The architectural details of the terrace basement is more or less complete, showing friezes of geometric ornament and miniature nichés with sculptures of seated deities and amorous couples. The columns and walls are adorned with scenes of dance, music, sport and love. Some of the better panels have been shifted to the Archaeological Museum, Amber and the Central Museum, Jaipur. The sanctum now enshrines an image of the four-armed deity Harasiddhi, locally called Harshat Mata. Many images of Hindu deities have been found around the place which are being preserved by the Archaeological Survey of India. A mela (fair) is held near the temple in the month of Chaitra (March-April) every year.

Also, visit Fatehpur Sikri, the now deserted former capital of the Mughals.

The political capital of India's Mughal Empire under the reign of Akbar the Great (1571-1585), Fatehpur Sikri was eventually abandoned due to lack of water. Considered the crowning architectural legacy of Akbar (who also built the Agra Fort) and still almost perfectly preserved, today the site is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site. The building material predominantly used is red sandstone, quarried from the same rocky outcrop on which it is situated. In its day, Fatehpur Sikri shared its imperial duties as a capital city with Agra, where a bulk of the arsenal, treasure hoards, and other reserves were kept at its Agra Fort for security. During a crisis, the court, harem, and treasury could be removed to Agra, only 26 miles away, less than a day's march.

Then onto the Muslim city of Agra a city that is best known as the site of India’s most famous landmark, the Taj Mahal. This afternoon we visit I’timad-ud-Daulah, also known as the ‘Baby Taj'. It was built before the Taj Mahal by Nur Jahan, Queen of Jehangir, for her parents. The first Mughal building to be faced with white marble and where ‘pietra dura’, (precious stones inlaid into marble) was first used.

On Day 7 we visit the great icon of Mughal architecture the Taj Mahal either in the early morning or late afternoon for the best light. Be sure to have plenty memory in your camera! We also ride one of the cycle-rickshaws to visit the Agra Fort.

Constructed between 1631 and 1654 by a workforce of 22 000, the Taj Mahal was built by the Muslim Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his favourite wife, Arjumand Bano Begum, better known as Mumt?z Mahal. Mumt?z had already borne the emperor fourteen children when she died in childbirth, and it is the romantic origin of the Taj as much as its architectural splendour that has led to its fame worldwide. Actually an integrated complex of many structures, the Taj Mahal is considered the finest example of Mughal architecture, itself a combination of Islamic, Hindu, Persian and Turkish elements.

The walled city of Agra Fort was first taken over by the Moghuls, at that time led by Akbar the Great, in the late 16th century. Akbar liked to build from red sandstone, often inlaid with white marble and intricate decorations, and it was during his reign that the fort began changing into more of a royal estate.

However, it was only during the reign of Akbar's grandson, Shah Jahan (who would eventually build the Taj Mahal) that the site finally took on its current state. Unlike his grandfather, Shah Jahan preferred buildings made from white marble, often inlaid with gold or semi-precious gems, and he destroyed some earlier buildings inside the fort in order to build others in his own style. At the end of his life Shah Jahan was imprisoned in the fort by his son, Aurangzeb. It is said that Shah Jahan died in Muasamman Burj, a tower with a marble balcony with an excellent view of the Taj Mahal.

The fort was also a site of one of the most important battles of the Indian rebellion of 1857, which caused the end of the British East India Company's rule in India, leading to a century of direct rule of India by Britain

Day 8 Orcha

Day 8, Estimate Travel Time: 4 hours

Today we travel by train from Agra to Jhansi before jumping in a tempo, a large type of auto rickshaw to the picturesque town of Orchha. We spend our time here enjoying the peaceful rural charm of this riverside town. Sitting on the banks of the Betwa River, Orchha is the perfect antidote to the chaos of India's cities. Experience a piece of the 'real' India, one that will likely change your image of this diverse country. While here, opt to visit a local family for a cooking class and lunch.

A typical, small Indian town, Orchha owes its popularity to an architectural heritage bequeathed it, by its history as the oldest and highest in rank of all the Bundela states. Orchha dates back to the 16th century when it was founded by the Bundela chief Rudra Pratap. In the early 17th century, Raja Jujhar Singh rebelled against the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, whose armies devastated the state and occupied Orchha from 1635 to 1641. Orchha was the only Bundela state not subjugated by the Marathas in the 18th century. Hamir Singh, who ruled from 1848 to 1874, was elevated to Maharaja in 1865. Maharaja Pratap Singh (born 1854, died 1930), who succeeded to the throne in 1874, devoted himself entirely to the development of his state, himself designing most of the engineering and irrigation works executed during his reign.

In 1901, the state had an area of over 2000 sq. mi, and population of over 300 000, warranted a 15-gun salute, and its Maharajas bore the hereditary title of First of the Princes of Bundelkhand, all hard to believe as you wander the sleepy town as it appears today. Eventually, Vir Singh, Pratap Singh's successor, merged his state with the Union of India on January 1, 1950.

With our local guide, we explore some of the many temples and palaces spread along the river and surrounding countryside, including the town's imposing 17th century fort, Chaturbhuj temple built on a vast platform of stone, and the numerous cenotaphs that dot the landscape. Remember to make time for the evening puja ceremony between 7pm and 8pm - at the Ram Raja Temple.

We also visit Tarragram, a unique paper making plant, set up to assist tribal women from the area. All the paper is made from recycled clothing and wood pulp.

Days 9-11 Alipura/Khajuraho

Day 9, Estimate Travel Time: 2.5 Hours (96kms)
Day 10, Estimate Travel Time: 3 Hours (184kms)
Day 11, Estimate Travel Time: 2 Hours

Leaving early we travel today from Orcha along typically rough Indian roads to Alipura a friendly village which will be our base for two days, here you will stay in a heritage property and have time to wander the town and interact with locals. On Day 10 we have a day trip to Khajuraho, one of the most popular tourist destinations in India, Khajuraho is home to India's largest group of medieval Hindu temples, famous for their erotic sculptures depicting scenes from the Kama Sutra. Only discovered in the 20th century after being reclaimed by jungle, the Khajuraho group of monuments is today protected as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Khajuraho was once the religious capital of the Chandela Rajputs, a Hindu dynasty that ruled this part of India from the 10th to the 12th centuries. The Khajuraho temples were built over a span of a hundred years, from 950 to 1050, with the whole area enclosed by a wall with eight gates, each flanked by two golden palm trees. There were originally over 80 Hindu temples, of which only 22 now stand in a reasonable state of preservation, scattered over an area of about 21 km² (8 square miles).

Learn the history of these world-famous temples on a guided tour and enjoy a taste of a little erotica from the Middle Ages. Optional activities include a nearby seasonal waterfall, evening dance performances and a sound and light show within the temple complex itself.

On day 11 we have free time until our drive to the train station where we board our overnight train to Varanasi.

Days 12-13 Varanasi

Day 11 and 12, Overnight train, Estimate Travel Time: 12 Hours

This morning we arrive in legendary Varanasi, the quintessential Indian holy city where millions of Hindu travel to for pilgrimage, to worship, to mourn or to die. Walk the narrow twisting alleys, poke around some of the literally thousands of temples and shrines, and experience the energy of the dawn rituals of bathing and burial as you float past the famous ghats of the Ganges.

Sitting on the banks of the River Ganges, you can contemplate what it means to be in Varanasi, the oldest continually inhabited city in the world, dating back thousands of years. The culture of Varanasi is deeply associated with the river Ganges and its religious importance; the city has been a cultural and religious centre in northern India for thousands of years. Or wander through the Old City with its maze of narrow alleyways full of small shops and stalls. Perhaps you could visit the monasteries and ruins of nearby Sarnath, the site of Buddha's first sermon.

We take boats out onto the sacred Ganges River, both for sunrise and sunset. For the evening boat journey we enjoy a candle flower ceremony.

During our stay in Varanasi you will have time to shop, wander and absorb the atmosphere of this unique city, while optional activities include the monasteries and ruins of nearby Sarnath, site of the Buddha's first sermon.

Day 14 Varanasi/Delhi

Free morning in Varanasi to wander the ghats and do some last minute shopping before returning to the colour, noise and excitement of Delhi on an afternoon flight.

Day 15 Depart Delhi

You may depart at any time today.

What's Included

Walking tour with a guide from the Planeterra-supported New Delhi Streetkids Project. Old Delhi walk with stops at the Jama Masjid, Gurduwara, Chandni Chowk, spice markets and Connaught Place. Amber Fort and Hawa Mahal tour (Jaipur). Rajasthani rural village stay. Abhaneri stepwells visit. Fatehpur Sikri entrance and guide. Taj Mahal and I'timad-ud-Daulah (Baby Taj) entrance. Red Fort entrance and guided tour. Orchha Palace complex visit. Western Temple complex entrance and guided visit (Khajuraho). River Ganges boat trip at sunrise and sunset, including candle flower ceremony (Varanasi). Internal flight. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

Highlights

Explore India's vibrant cities, discover ancient forts and temples, revel in the beauty of Agra's Taj Mahal, witness the erotic sculptures of Khajuraho and Orchha, sail the Ganges in venerable Varanasi

Dossier Disclaimer

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Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

Important Notes

1. India is a country which is very different to anything you will have experienced before. Although this means it is not the easiest place to travel, this is also what makes it so special. Pollution, poverty and the crowds can result in initial culture shock but should be seen as an exciting new challenge. During our time here we have come to love this large and wonderfully different country but we know that we should always expect to encounter some difficulties along the way.

2. In India there are very different attitudes to time keeping, public cleanliness, privacy and service. Trains will sometimes be late, plumbing can sometimes be temperamental and power will often just vanish. Optimistic menus turn out to have only one dish available and everyone, just everyone, will want to know your name. If you are able to travel with a lot of patience and a healthy sense

of humour, then we know that you - like all of us - will be captivated by what India has to offer.

3. Please note that this tour combines with other G Adventures tours. As such, the staff and some travel companions on your tour may have previously been traveling together with G Adventures, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, some staff and travel companions may be continuing together on another G Adventures tour, after your trip concludes.

4. Depending on the lunar cycle, Ramadan will fall between June 28 and July 27, 2014. Please note that Ramadan is a month of fasting observed by Muslims throughout the world, during which time the followers of Islam should not eat or drink between sunrise and sunset. Only about 20% of Indians are Muslim, but it is important to note that there may be some limitations to services and disruptions to schedules during Ramadan. Generally our tours still operate effectively during this period and food is available to non-muslims throughout the day. It is important to display increased cultural sensitivity during Ramadan in predominately Muslim areas of India. Please wear loose fitting clothes, that cover knees and shoulders, and try to avoid eating, drinking or smoking in public out of respect for those who can't at that time.

5. Please Note: Only 1 piece of luggage that weighs up to 15kgs will be permitted on our internal flights in India. For any extra weight the airline may charge an additional fee at the time of check-in.

Group Leader Description

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

Group Size Notes

Max 15, avg 12

Meals

Eating is a big part of travelling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Vegetarians will be able to find a huge range of different foods - India is vegetarian heaven. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

Meal Budget

Allow USD250-300 for meals not included.

Transport

Train, local bus, charter bus, auto-ricksaw, small riverboat, plane.

About our Transportation

TRAIN
Traveling in India by train is an experience. Distances in India are long and Indian trains aren't the worlds best, but traveling in these adds a fascinating new dimension to a visitor's experience in the country. There is virtually no better way to get to make friends with the people and see the spectacular views of the diverse Indian countryside. The chaos on the Indian Railway stations is a replica of the life in India.

G Adventures uses a combination of AC 2 tier, AC 3 tier and sleeper class (for overnight journeys) and AC Chair car or second class seats for day journeys.

There are no restaurant or buffet cars on Indian Railways, but on long distance trains an attendant will appear in your coach and ask you if you would like to order food. Regular stops are made at stations where food is also available and on some trains many vendors board the train selling chai, cold drinks and crisps and biscuits.

Don't expect pristine western standards anywhere in India, but you'll find AC2, AC3 and AC Chair class fairly clean by Indian standards, with both western-style and squat toilets usually in a reasonably sanitary condition. Sleeper Class and 2nd class toilets may be a different matter! Bring your own toilet paper and hand wash soap or liquid.

Indian trains are quite safe to travel on, even for families or women traveling alone, and you are unlikely to have any problems. Having said that, theft of luggage, although rare is not unheard of, so just for peace of mind you might like to take along a chain and padlock to secure your bags (readily available at all Indian stations).

Generally, Indian Railways are very efficient, but Indian trains do run late, and sometimes it's hours rather than minutes. Make sure you have something to occupy your time – a good book, magazine or photos of your home country and family to show the Indian travelers also waiting for the train.

ROAD
Traveling by road is certainly not what people are use to in Western countries. Rules are not always followed, drivers appear to speed, do not stay in their lanes, overtake in seemingly dangerous situations, rarely use their mirrors or driving lights at night time. The horn however is used very frequently and can range from the latest Bollywood tune to Britney Spears! Although the government is investing large sums of money improving the road infrastructure, there is a lot more to be done. As a result some of the roads are poorly maintained, pot holed and uneven. This gets even more pronounced particularly during and after the monsoon. Travel time is very long in comparison to Western countries and short distances can take a lot longer than at home.

Local Flights

All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

Please Note: Only 1 piece of luggage that weighs up to 15kgs will be permitted on our internal flights in India. For any extra weight the airline may charge an additional fee at the time of check-in.

Solo Travellers

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Accommodation

Hotels (13 nts), sleeper train (1 nt).

My Own Room Exceptions

Night 11, Sleeper train

About Accommodation

A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used in India. These can vary in terms of service, efficiency and cleanliness. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home. Power cuts can and are a regular occurrence in many places, especially throughout North and Central India. Although a number of hotels have generators there may be times when these won’t work. It is also recommended when you are in your room to lock the door, as staff will sometime enter without reason.

Joining Hotel

La Vista Hotel
938/3, Naiwalan (Illahi bux road)
Karol Bagh
Delhi
India
011 – 28753184/2875755

Joining Instructions

When arriving at the airport in New Delhi taking a cab is the most convenient way to get to your hotel. Because taxi drivers are famous for tampering with their meters and overcharging, use the prepaid taxi service offered at the airport - you can make the arrangements at designated counters outside the baggage-claim area of the domestic terminals and international terminal. Unfortunately scammers have set up similar services, so make sure the counter is operated by the Delhi Traffic Police. Your destination, the time of your arrival and the amount of luggage determine the rate, which you pay in advance at the counter, but should be between INR300-400. Take the receipt and locate your assigned taxi. Taxis are black with yellow tops and have yellow number plates. Once you get into the taxi, don't give the driver the payment slip until you reach your destination. If the driver demands more rupees, politely refuse, although if they have driven safely you may like to tip INR10-20.

Be aware too, that touts at the airports, even at hotel-reservation counters, may try to trick you into booking a hotel room by claiming that your prior reservation is invalid. Ignore them.

If this is your first trip to India an arrival transfer is recommended. If you have paid for an arrival transfer when you booked your trip our driver/local operator will be waiting for you with a G Adventures sign with your name on it. Please check carefully once you exit the baggage hall as there seem to be hundreds of people waiting outside in the arrival area. Please call our Transfer representative in Delhi Mr. Maninder on +919958690755 or Mr. Manish +919958690753. The office number is (+91-11) 45464546 Ext 230 during office hours.

Arrival Complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER
If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

If your call is specifically concerning Airport Transfer complications please call our local G Adventures Transfer providers directly at:
New Delhi Airport:

Dipesh
From outside India: +91 9958 690755
From within Delhi: 9958 690755
From outside Delhi: 09958 690755

Manish Singh
From outside India: +91 9958 690753
From within Delhi: 9958 690753
From outside Delhi: 09958 690753

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS
G Adventures Local Office (Delhi)
G Adventures South Asia Manager, Rishab (Delhi, India)
Emergency number:

From outside of India: +91 99 7179 5447
From within Delhi: 99 7179 5447
From within India, but outside Delhi: 099 7179 5447

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand
During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time): +66-02-3815574

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100
Calls from UK: 0844 272 0000
Calls from Germany: 01805 70 90 30 00
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618
Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307
Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

What to Take

What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen and the countries or regions you are planning to visit. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as your are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 mintues with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures trips! Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when travelling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones. If your trip involves overnights in homestays, villages or camping then you usually have the opportunity to rent sleeping bags if need be instead of bringing them with you.

Checklist

Passport (with photocopies)
Travel insurance (with photocopies)
Airline tickets (with photocopies)
USD cash
Credit or debit card (see personal spending money)
G Adventures vouchers, pre-departure information and dossier
Any entry visas or vaccination certificates required
Day pack for daily personal items
Lock for all bags
Wet wipes / Moist towelettes
Alarm clock
Flashlight
Sun hat, Sun block, Sunglasses
Insect Repellent
Water bottle and Plastic mug for train journeys
Ear plugs for train journeys or light sleepers
Small towel and swim wear
Toiletries (biodegradable)
Sturdy walking shoes/Sport sandals
Money belt
Shorts
Long trousers
Hiking pants/track pants
Shirts/T-shirts
Warm clothes for November-February: fleece, jacket, hat and gloves, warm layers
Umbrella or waterproof jacket.
Cover for backpack or plastic bags to keep clothes dry.
Camera and film
Reading/writing material
Binoculars

Pocketknife
First-aid kit (should contain lip salve, Aspirin, Band Aids, anti-histamine, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, re-hydration powder, extra prescription drugs you may be taking).

Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

Visas

Please note that visas for India are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. For the most up to date information please check your governments foreign ministry website or with you travel agent as rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself. For most travellers there will probably have an embassy and consulate in the country that you live in.

Standard Indian tourist visas are good for 6 months with multiple entry and exits. VISA IS NOT AVAILABLE AT PORT OF ENTRY AND must be obtained in advance.

Please note that the Indian government has recently made some changes to visa regulation due to misuse of the Tourist visa. We encourage all passengers to contact the Indian consulate or embassy in their home country to get up to date information on entry requirements. This is especially important for those that are planning on entering India multiple times in a two month period. Foreigners holding a Tourist Visas, who after initial entry into India plan to visit neighboring Nepal, Bhutan or Sri Lanka and then re-enter into India within 2 months need to get special authorization.

a) If you are already in India you must register with FRRO (Foreign Regional Registration office).

b) If you are still outside of India you must advise consulate or embassy at time of visa application of your plans. You will need to provide supporting documents which includes airline tickets.

If you are departing India to visit a non-neighboring country (all countries other than Nepal, Bhutan or Sri Lanka) and plan to return to India within a 2 month period you may not be able to re-enter.

Detailed Trip Notes

In India English is widely spoken and transportation and infrastructure is good, but please remember that this is India- expect the unexpected! If you are able to bring with you a lot of patience, a great sense of humour and a willingness to try and interact with the local people, your travel experience wil be greatly enhanced.

Spending Money

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

Money Exchange

As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: www.xe.com As of Feb 2012 the exchange rate for INDIA was 1 USD = 49.00 INR (Indian Rupees). There are many ATM machines that accept both Visa and Mastercard but these are limited to major cities. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops but they may charge a 2-4% transaction fee.

Emergency Fund

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD $200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Departure Tax

All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from USD1-2 per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline USD20-30 per person, per week can be used.

Optional Activities

We suggest you bring along USD50 for additional sightseeing including

Delhi - Red Fort - INR250
Delhi - Qutab Minar - INR250
Delhi - Humayuns Tomb - INR250
Jaipur - Raj Mandir Cinema - INR70-150
Jaipur - Jantar Mantar/Royal Observatory - INR100
Agra - Akbar's Mausoleum - INR100
Agra - Nature Park – INR50
Agra - Mehtab Bagh - INR100
Khajuraho - Eastern Temple Complex - INR10
Orchha - Village Safari - INR150
Orchha - Cooking class with a local family lunch - INR500
Varanasi - Sarnarth Deer Park - INR100
Varanasi - Ram Nagar Fort - INR10

All prices are per person (unless stated otherwise), and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

Health

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

Safety and Security

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

-
www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

Trip Specific Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Medical Form

Our small group adventures bring together people of all ages. It is very important you are aware that, as a minimum, an average level of fitness and mobility' is required to undertake our easiest programs. Travellers must be able to walk without the aid of another person, climb 3-4 flights of stairs, step on and off small boats, and carry their own luggage at a minimum. Travellers with a pre-existing medical condition are required to complete a short medical questionnaire, which must be signed by their physician. This is to ensure that travellers have the necessary fitness and mobility to comfortably complete their chosen trip. While our CEOs work hard to ensure that all our travellers are catered for equally, it is not their responsibility to help individuals who cannot complete the day's activities unaided. Please refer to the physical ratings in this Trip Details document for more information.

The medical questionnaire can be found online at:

www.gadventures.com/medical-form.

A Couple of Rules

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

Planeterra-The G Adventures Foundation

Through our commitment to responsible tourism we have developed the Planeterra Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of people and communities around the world through support of international charities, local organizations and community projects in the places that we visit on our tours. G Adventures matches all individual donations and pays

all administration costs, which means that 100% of each donation is doubled and goes directly to support our projects. For more information about Planeterra and the projects we support, or to make a donation, please visit www.planeterra.org

Planeterra Dollar-A-Day Program
Our Dollar-A-Day Program provides travellers with the opportunity to help us give back to the people and places visited on our tours by donating one dollar per day for the duration of their tour. 100% of these proceeds will go directly to support our Planeterra projects.

To participate in this program please indicate at the time of booking that you would like to participate in G Adventures' Dollar-A-Day program, either by clicking the check box online, or by advising your G Adventures specialist or travel agent. (Note: Donation will be charged in the currency of your booking)

Associated Planeterra Project

It is estimated that 400,000 children live and work on the streets of Delhi. In most cases, their families are too poor to provide for them, they have run away from abusive home environments or they are orphans. Planeterra's New Delhi Streetkids Project supports over 5,000 of these street children through strategically placed contact points, shelters and a health post set up by a local partner organization. These youth centers provide clothing, food, healthcare, education, counseling, recreational activities, job skills training and job placements. Through Planeterra's partnership with Salaam Baalak Trust, scholarships are made available to young people who once lived and worked on the streets of Delhi. By funding vocational training in trade schools and universities, and making job-placements based on each child's individual interest, we can help break the cycle of poverty and give these youth the opportunity to create a brighter future.
Many of these adolescents have been fully-trained as tour guides and lead exciting tours through the enchanting inner city streets of Paharganj, the New Delhi railway station, and The Old City. This tour is a unique way for travelers to engage in these children's lives and the guiding provides an opportunity for them to improve their communication and speaking skills.

Local Dress

In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting small rural communities or visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites as this may restrict your entry.

India is very conservative and you should dress accordingly. As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered at all times. The wearing of shorts is not allowed as it will restrict your entry into buildings of a religious nature and family homes. A light water and windproof jacket is useful and a hat essential.
NB: WE STRESS THAT IT CAN BE VERY COLD IN THE HILLS DURING THE MONTHS FROM DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY.

NB: During our trip there will be many opportunities for you to meet and "talk" with locals. One way to start any conversation is with pictures. We recommend that you bring some photos/postcards of your family, home, city or country where you live, animals peculiar to your country etc.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that you'll receive a special discount code for free online prints and we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at customerservice@gadventures.com and we will send it on to you.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for Planeterra's monthly news to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

Travel Forum - The Watering Hole

Be sure to stop by The Watering Hole, our adventure travel forum. If you're interested in meeting others booked on your upcoming trip, check out the Departure Lounge section of our forum and introduce yourself. Otherwise, just drop in at anytime to share some travel tips, ask questions, meet other travellers and quench your thirst for travel. Our forum is located at wateringhole.gadventures.com.

Why travel with G Adventures

Sustainable travel

Help make our world a little bit better,
one adventure at a time.

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