ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Ladakh Explorer

Country(ies): India

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: Car, minivan or minibus

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 11 Days

Start location: Delhi, India

End location: Delhi, India

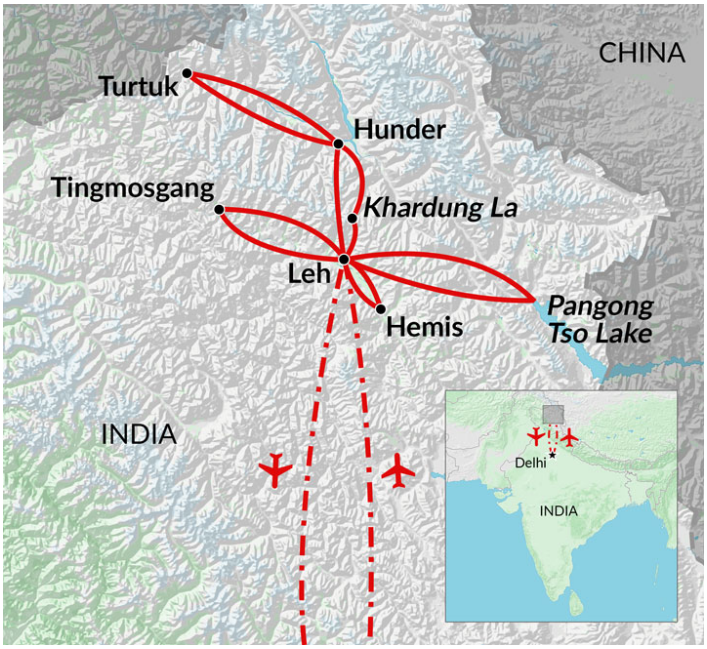
Departs On: Saturday

Meals: Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 0, Dinners - 0

Highlights:

Old & New Delhi tours, Leh, Magnetic Hill, Hemis Monastery, Shey Palace, Nubra Valley, Turtuk village, Pangong Tso Lake

Places Visited: Delhi, Leh, Thiksey, Hemis, Nubra Valley, Turtuk village & Pangong Tso Lake



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Delhi, airport to hotel transfer included

Once you arrive in Delhi, one of our staff members will be there to meet and greet you at the airport, before transferring you to your hotel for the day. We'll make sure you settle in OK, and confirm your pick up time for tomorrow morning.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel
MEALS: None
EXTRAS: Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour || Single room supplement (INSGLE)

Day 2: Exploring the Kathputli Colony and a haunted step well

Our morning starts with a tour of the Kathputli Colony, home for the last 50 years to thousands of India's street performers such as magicians, snake charmers, acrobats, singers, dancers, actors, traditional healers and musicians and puppeteers. During the tour, we learn about their lifestyle, heritage, and passion for their craft. We'll also see some performances during the tour, such as Chari Dance, Kachchi Ghodi Dance, Puppet Show, Ghoomar Dance, Fire Show, Dandiya Dance, Bhawai Dance.

This afternoon, we'll explore the towering India Gate Monument, which is inspired by the famous Arc de Triomphe in Paris. India Gate is dedicated to the 82,000 soldiers who participated in the undivided Indian Army.

We'll also drive past important government buildings including the Parliament, and see the Bangla Sahab Gurudwara Sikh Temple and Humayun's Tomb - a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We'll also stop at the 60-metre long and 15-metre wide Agrasen ki Baoli step well, which is believed to be haunted. The thousands of bats and pigeons that call this step well home only adds to its eeriness.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Fly to Leh, airport to hotel transfers included

Our day starts early as we'll be transported to the airport to board a flight to Leh, the capital city of the Himalayan kingdom of Ladakh. We'll transfer you to your hotel, before giving you time to settle in and adjust to your new surroundings.

This evening, you'll be given an Indian cooking lesson, as we attempt to make dumplings called momos, which is quite a popular Indian street food which is often filled with meat, pork or vegetables. We'll enjoy the fruits of our labour by having our momos for dinner tonight.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Exploring Leh and a visit to a local family in Tingmosgang Village

Today, we'll visit the Alchi Village in India, which is home to some of India's most beautiful temples which date back to the 11th century, Sangam and the interesting Magnetic Hill, which creates an illusion in which a slight downhill

slope appears to be an uphill slope, making it seem as if vehicles are able to drift upwards.

We'll also visit Likir, home to some of the oldest and best preserved monasteries in Ladakh, before stopping to visit the Sangam point, which sees the Indus and Zanskar Rivers converge to become one single water source.

Our busy day of travelling ends with a more relaxing activity, as we visit a local family in Tingmosgang Village to enjoy some butter tea - one of the most popular drinks of the people who reside in the Himalayan area of India.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Discovering Leh's monasteries

We'll start a little earlier today, as we make our way to the Tibetan Thiksey Monastery, to listen to the morning prayers of the monks which involves chanting and playing drums, a magical experience to start any day.

On the agenda today is a visit to the Hemis and Shey Monasteries, before we stop to play some archery. This afternoon, we'll make our way to the Stok Palace Museum, which was built in the 14th century by Lama Lhawang Lotus. We'll explore the ancient artifacts on show here, which includes royal crowns, copper coins, precious stones, jewellery, heirlooms, and prayer instruments.

We'll also explore the village of Stok, it's palace being the current residence of the former royal family of Ladakh.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Exploring Hunder

After breakfast, we'll make our way to Hunder, situated in India's Nubra Valley. Hunder is often referred to as the 'desert in the sky', made famous by its sand dunes and barren landscapes.

Once we've settled in at our accommodation for the day, we'll visit Deskit - a quaint little village with its main attraction being the Diskit Gompa - a monastery well-known for its artfully arranged mounds of stones, embellished with Buddhist prayers and mantras.

As an option, you can even go camel-riding on the sand dunes of Hunder, one of the most popular activities in the region, giving you an excellent opportunity to take in the scenic beauty of the Ladakhi valleys.

OVERNIGHT: Nubra Valley hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 7: A visit to the Turtuk Village

Today, we'll visit the remote Turtuk Village, which is home to just over 4,000 people. The drive here is long, but the views are so rewarding as we pass mountains and view the Nubra Valley and the Shyok River from above.

While we're here, we'll learn about the line of control, a military control line between the Indian and Pakistani controlled parts of the former state of Jammu and Kashmir, the Balti People - an ethnic group of Tibetan descent and the various fruits grown here, especially apricots, which are grown in four different varieties.

OVERNIGHT: Nubra Valley hotel

MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Nubra Valley to Leh, optional activities available

We'll make our way back to Leh via the Nubra Valley today. We'll explore the Deskit Monastery, the oldest and largest Buddhist monastery in Ladakh. Founded in the 14th century, It stands on a hill above the Shyok River. The monastery runs a school for the Tibetan children in the region. We'll also see the towering Maitreya statue, which sits atop of a hill below the monastery, facing down the Shyok River towards Pakistan.

You also have the option to cycle down to Khardung La mountain pass, which is at an altitude of 5,359 meters and is approximately 40km from Leh. Some believe that it may be the highest motorable road on the planet. The views here are spectacular. Hundreds of bikers traverse the pass on a daily basis, as it serves as an important gateway to the Shyok and Nubra Valleys.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Exploring the Pangong Tso Lake

We'll spend the entire day exploring the Pangong Tso Lake, which sits at an elevation of 4,350m. Pangong Tso is Tibetan for 'high grassland lake', however it's often referred to as the hollow lake.

Pangong Tso is one of Asia's largest brackish lakes, with its crystal clear waters spanning over the borders of India and China. Both the sky and the lake create an amazing shade of blue. A visit here will make you understand why it's the most sought after destination in Leh.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: None

Day 10: Return from Leh to Delhi

You'll say goodbye to Leh as you board a flight to Delhi. One of our staff members will be there to meet you before transferring you to your hotel. You then have the rest of the day free to yourself.

Several half-day tour options are available for this afternoon which you can either pre-book or arrange while in India (a few days notice is required) or you can go shopping or do some more sightseeing on your own.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel
MEALS: Breakfast
EXTRAS: New Delhi half day by car || Old Delhi half-day walking tour || Salam Balak Trust walk

Day 11: Bon Voyage! Transfer to airport included

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end and your time is free until we transfer you back to the airport to board your flight back home. Further options are available in Delhi this morning, subject to your flight departure time. You can also add extra days to your tour, or extensions including visits the holy city of Varanasi or the beaches in Goa.

OVERNIGHT: N/A
MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Goa beach extension || Extra day in Delhi - post-tour || Spinmonkey cycling tour

Included

- Accommodation in mid-range hotels and a comfortable guesthouse/camp
- All transport and transfers
- Return domestic flights between Delhi and Leh
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- Services of local tour leaders and specialist local guides
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (10 breakfasts & 2 dinners)

Excluded

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (compulsory, available on request)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for driver and/or tour guide
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1
This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing. Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.
Price: Starting from - $45

Extra day in Delhi - post-tour

Min numbers: 1
This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing. Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.
Price: Starting from - $45

Single room supplement

Min numbers: 1
This group tour is based on twin-share accommodation. If you are a single traveller and would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, please add this option onto your booking. If you are happy to share a room, please let us know and we will see if we can pair you up with another single traveller of the same sex. If a room share is not available when you pay your balance, then 50% of the single room supplement fee will be payable. If a room share becomes possible after you have paid your balance then your payment rowards the supplement will be refunded. Room shares are arranged in order of booking. Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.
Price: Starting from - $395

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Indian 3-level on this tour in Delhi and Leh, and a guesthouse or camp style hotel in the Nubra Valley which will be comfortable but more basic. Local star ratings may vary slightly from international standards but we ensure we use some of the best hotels available at the level stated.
The specific hotels listed on our website are our preferred hotels for our small-group tours. However, these may be changed from time to time based on current availability and other logistics. In this event alternative hotels of a similar standard will be used. If you would like to guarantee any particular hotels for your trip, please contact us to request a tailor-made tour.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. Due to the somewhat chaotic nature of Indian roads, we only use private vehicles for all road journeys on this tour.

All vehicles used in Delhi have air-conditioning for use in the summer, though in Ladakh this is not guaranteed (or usually at all necessary!). Subject to the group size, minibuses may be used in Delhi, but in Ladakh 7-seat cars/MPVs will be used, with a maximum of 3 or 4 travellers per vehicle to ensure everyone is comfortable and has a window seat.

Delays are possible to some of the long journeys in Ladakh due to poor weather and snowy roads, especially at either end of the season (April/May, early September)

The tour also includes return domestic flights between Delhi and Leh.

3. Transfers

The tour price includes a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in New Delhi airport, your arrival and departure airport-hotel transfers and all other transfers.

4. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don’t include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we’ll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour. Most of our Indian tours start and finish at Delhi airport (DEL).

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.
Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2)

emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our India small-group departures to have a maximum of 12 travellers. The minimum group size is 2.

In India we provide a fully trained, local English-speaking tour leader/driver to accompany our groups. On this tour you will have one driver in Delhi and another in Ladakh. Additional specialist local guides may be used for some of the sightseeing tours and activities included in the tour.

At Encounters Travel we have a policy of aiming to use only local Indian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

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6. Entrance Fees

The tour price does not include entrance fees to the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. This allows for fluctuations in the prices set by the local authorities, which do change from time to time.

You should currently allow approx. US$15 per person to cover these entrance fees. You will also need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit that are not listed in the main tour itinerary. Your guide will offer to collect the entrance fee cost from everyone at the start of the tour and pay on your behalf, or you can arrange them yourself as you go along.

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7. Tipping and Haggling

Haggling is a traditional necessity, so its wise not to pay too much regard to initial prices. Instead fix an items value in your mind then negotiate towards it unhurriedly and don't be afraid to simply walk away if the price isn't right. Once you have offered a price though, you should be prepared to pay it as you may cause offence if you then back out.

While an accepted part of the culture and customs in India, tipping is always optional, and the amounts paid should reflect excellent service. We are often asked for advice on common amounts, and for assistance with tipping. Some suggested guidelines are given below.

Restaurants and taxis: Local markets and basic restaurants - leave the loose change. More up-market restaurants we suggest 5% to 10% of your bill.

Local guides: Throughout your trip you may at times have a local guide in addition to your tour guide. We suggest USD 5-10 per person per day for local guides.

Drivers: You may have a range of private drivers on your trip. Some may be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for several days. We would suggest a higher tip for those more involved with the group, for

example if you don't have an extra accompanying guide. However USD 3-6 per person per day is generally appropriate.

Tour Guides: To answer your next question. . . as a guideline for tour guides who accompany you on the entire tour, we suggest you allow around USD 5-10 per person per day, but ultimately, as with all the tipping descrbed above, its up to your satisfaction with their service and your personal budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount.

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8. Health and Vaccinations - India

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

India: Additional vaccinations: Diptheria, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. Malaria map. Yellow Fever certificate: Yellow fever rules for India are quite complicated and lengthy. Please read the WHO guidance.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting. In general the north eastern regions of India including Assam and Orissa are considered high risk,while the rest of India is generally considered low enough risk that anti-malarial tablets are not necessary for most travellers doing relatively short tours.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vacinnation may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

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9. Passports and Visas - India

Your passport expiry date must be at least 6 months after your time in India finishes. Do not bring a full or almost expired passport. You must also have a machine-readable passport or you may be denied entry. If you have an old-style manually issued passport you will need to replace this with a new machine-readable passport before you travel.

Most nationalities (including UK, USA, European, Australian, Canadian) will need to arrange their Indian tourist visa in advance. A new online e-visa system is available which makes the process more straightforward than before. You can make your application online at indiavisaonline.

Visa requirements for India can and do change regularly and we suggest that you arrange your Indian visa early and re-check your specific visa requirements prior to travel for any changes.

10. Time

The time in India and Sri Lanka is GMT plus 5 1/2 hours.

The time in Nepal is GMT plus 5 3/4 hours.

The time in Bhutan is GMT plus 6 hours.

The time in Tibet is GMT plus 8 hours.

Daylight saving adjustments are not applied.

11. Voltage

In Nepal, India and Sri Lanka, sockets are mainly two round pronged and 230 volts (Type C,D,M). In Bhutan a range of different sockets can be found, including two and three round pronged and three flat pronged (Type D,F,G).

Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard UK-European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are sometimes available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already but cannot be guaranteed.
If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

12. Money

Rupee (INR; symbol Rs) = 100 paise. Notes are in denominations of Rs 2,000, 1000, 500, 200, 50, 20, 10 and 1 Coins are in denominations of Rs 10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50 paise (Rs 0.5). Note: The import and export of local currency is prohibited. Sometimes smaller vendors will not take bills larger than Rs 500. It is best to carry a range of rupee notes if you are shopping at bazaars and local markets.

Note: You must present your passport whenever you change currency or travellers cheques. Commission for foreign exchange is becoming increasingly rare; if it is charged, the fee is nominal.

Credit cards: In major cities, the full cadre of banks cards are generally accepted including debit cards, American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa. However, in smaller towns and villages, choice is generally narrowed to cash or MasterCard and Visa.

ATM: 24 hour ATM machines can be found in all the major cities and most large towns. Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, Maestro and Plus are amongst the most commonly accepted cards.

Travellers cheques: These are gradually getting less accepted but may still be changed at larger banks and some larger hotels. The most widely accepted currencies include US Dollars and Pounds Sterling. Some banks may refuse to change certain brands of traveller's cheques whilst others may exchange quite happily.

13. Dates & Prices

We run small-group departures on this tour through the main summer season in Ladakh, which runs from mid-April until mid-September. The ideal months for travel are July, August and early September. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website (please check the website for up-to-date prices and special offers).

Private and tailor-made tours are available on any dates and may be adjusted to fit your personal requirements, available time and budget.

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14. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please contact us if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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15. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). More information...

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete travel insurance application form.
Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, ior if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

Covid-19
Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given on our website.

16. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.
We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

17. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.
The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

18. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.
www.facebook.com/encounterstravel
www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

19. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current official government travel advice for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

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20. What to take

Luggage: Suitcases are fine, though you may find rucksacks or large bags are more practical. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always porters to assist.

Luggage allowances: Most international airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 23kg per person of luggage to go in the hold of the plane. Domestic flights often have smaller allowances around 15kg. As airline rules vary we recommend that you take no more than 20kg of luggage if your tour just includes international flights, and no more than 15kg if there are any domestic flights included in your itinerary. Please ask us for details if you are unsure about luggage allowances on your tour. Any excess baggage fees will be your responsibility to cover. Most airlines allow between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage so we suggest that you take no more than 5kg unless you have confirmed that your airline(s) will allow more than this.

Clothing: The weather is mainly hot most of the year with significant variations from region to region. The coolest weather lasts from around the end of November to the beginning of March, with fresh mornings and evenings, and mostly sunny days. The really hot weather, when it is dry, dusty and unpleasant, is between March and June.

Monsoon rains occur in most regions in summer anywhere between June and early October.

NOTE: India is very traditional and some heads will turn if you dress provocatively in public. Short tops, short skirts / shorts, tight or body revealing clothes etc should be avoided. You might invite unwanted attention from certain men who stare and pass comments at women to amuse themselves. More detailed climate information is available on the India Country Guide page on our website.

Suggested List: This is a guide only - there's no problem if you bring more or less with you. Cheap comfortable clothing is also readily available in India and laundry is inexpensive. It is also worth having some smarter clothes for going out. Towels are provided and laundry services are available in all the hotels we use.

Men: Lightweight trousers, shorts, light shirts & t-shirts, Swimwear

Women: Light cotton skirts/dressers, loose-fitting trousers, light shirts or t-shirts, loose shorts, Swimwear

Men & Women: Jumper/sweatshirt/fleece, Long sleeved shirt(s) (for cool nights, protection from the sun & mosquitoes, and visits to religious sites etc), Handkerchiefs, socks & underwear, Comfortable trainers/sandals for daily wear, Other shoes/sandals for evening wear, Sunhat or headscarf (headscarfs come in handy for some sights which require women to cover their heard)

First Aid: Although First Aid and medication is readily available in India, it may be very different to what you are used to so individuals should consider bringing along their own personal kit. Your personal kit might include: Sunscreen, sunblock & aftersun, Insect repellent/relief, Antiseptic cream/spray, Plasters and a bandage, Lomotil or Imodium against diarrhea, Pills against nausea, Aspirin for heat-stroke (or hangovers) Your kit should also include your brief medical history, including allergies, blood group, drug vaccinations etc. We suggest bringing copies of prescriptions if you will be carrying medicines on board your flight.

Toiletries: Razor, soap & box, shampoo, Toothpaste, toothbrush & container, Sanitary items
Note: If you wear contact lenses, you should consider taking or wearing glasses instead, as lenses can be uncomfortable and/or cause infections in hot and humid climates.

Other useful items: Sunglasses, Small Torch, Money belt, Camera and equipment, Toilet paper (this is not always provided in public toilets so it is a good idea to carry some spare tissues in your bag. It should be placed in the basket beside the toilet, not flushed away, for you might block the pipes).

IMPORTANT: As it can get extremely hot in India, and the sun can burn very quickly, it is very important to ensure you are protected from the sun with sun-cream & sun-hats, and do not get dehydrated.

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Note: Please download an up-to-date copy of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.