

Colours of Rajasthan

Country(ies): India

Tour type: Tailor-made

Transport: A/C minibus & train

Group size: Min: 1 | Max: 0

Days: 14 Days

Start location: Delhi, India

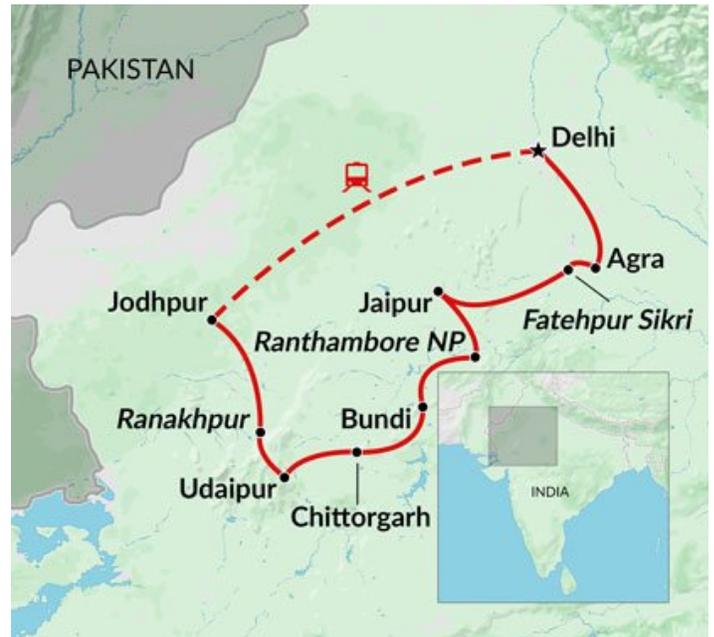
End location: Delhi, India

Departs On: Any day

Meals: Breakfasts - 13, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 2

Highlights: Old & New Delhi, Taj Mahal at sunrise, wildlife in Ranthambore National Park, the 'Pink City' of Jaipur, fort towns & palaces of Rajasthan, overnight on an Indian railway, fabulous heritage hotels, Indian culture, food & tradition

Places Visited: Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Ranthambore, Bundi, Udaipur, Ranakhpur & Jodhpur



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Delhi, possible introductory tour

We greet you at Delhi airport and provide a private transfer to your hotel or guesthouse. Our local manager will ensure you get settled in comfortably, introduce you to your driver and guide, and discuss the plans for the rest of your tour. Depending on your arrival time, we may include a short introductory sightseeing tour this afternoon.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour || Single Room Supplement (INTMCR)

Day 2: Tour of Old Delhi

Your tour of India's capital begins with a visit through the mediaeval streets around Old Delhi, taking in the world's second largest mosque, Jama Masjid, the Red Fort and the burial ghat of Mohatma Ghandi.

We can either drop you back at your accommodation after lunch, or you can remain in Old Delhi to explore some more in the afternoon. This tour will be adjusted based on what you may have visited on your arrival day.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Drive to Agra, tour Sikandra & the Red Fort

This morning you leave Delhi and drive to Agra, stopping at Akbar's Mausoleum at Sikandra on the edge of Agra before checking into your hotel. In the afternoon you visit the Red Fort, and enjoy your first sight of the Taj Mahal from its ramparts. You may visit the Taj Mahal at sunset this evening if you wish (entry not included).

OVERNIGHT: Agra hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Taj Mahal at sunrise, Jaipur via Fatehpur Sikri

Early this morning you head out to the majestic Taj Mahal and after a guided tour, you are free to explore Shah Jahan's monument to love at leisure, watching the light change as the sun rises.

After breakfast back at the hotel, you check out and drive to Jaipur, with a stop off at Fatehpur Sikri - the deserted but wonderfully preserved former capital city of Akbar's Moghul empire.

Your next two nights are spent in the wonderfully opulent and charaterful Samode Haveli. A wide range of other fascinating heritage hotels are also available to suit lower budgets.

OVERNIGHT: Jaipur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Jaipur city tour

During a full day tour in the state of Rajasthan's 'Pink city' today, you visit the beautiful Amber Palace, and also tour the City Palace, Wind Palace and world famous Jantar Mantar Observatory. We also recommend a visit to the well known lassi-wallah. Late in the afternoon, we climb on board some local elephants and take a very special and unique journey through nearby woods to a clearing for a candlelit evening dinner.

OVERNIGHT: Jaipur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Jaipur free time & drive to Ranthambore

You have most of this morning free to explore Jaipur's busy streets and markets further. Leaving around noon, you drive mainly on small rural roads for around 5 hours to reach Ranthambore National Park which will be your base for several safaris into the park over the next two days. These are early in the morning to try and view the wildlife in the Park before it gets too hot, and later in the afternoon as it cools down and the wildlife becomes more active again. As well as its famous tigers, the park is home to many species of deer, Marsh Crocodiles, Hyenas, Jungle Cats, Chital, Nilgai, Chinkara and Sloth Bears. There is also a sizeable bird population present throughout the year.

OVERNIGHT: Ranthambore lodge

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Ranthambore National Park, wildlife safaris

You enjoy two safaris into the park today, one of them by 'canter' and one by jeep.

The morning safari is by 'canter'. These are open backed trucks that can carry up to around 16 people. While they can't get as far into the park, and you are sharing with several other people, the extra height means you can see better into the long grass.

After returning to the hotel, in the afternoon, you do a jeep safari. There are only a restricted number of jeeps allowed into the park, so we need to book these well in advance for you. They do allow for a more flexible, and exploratory trip into the park and you have a more personal relationship with your guide.

If you have time available, then adding extra days and safaris here will give you a better chance to see both the tigers and other wildlife.

OVERNIGHT: Ranthambore lodge

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Drive to Bundi and tour the town

You leave Ranthambore this morning and drive again mainly on fairly small roads to the town of Bundi. There are several things worth visiting in and around Bundi, including the Taragarh Fort overlooking the town, and the Palace underneath it (full access to the palace may not be possible, but there are great sunset views from the fort). You can also visit the 84 Pillared Cenotaph, just out of town, and in Bundi itself are several interesting and step wells (Baoris), the deepest at 46m being the Raniji-ki-Baori which has some excellent carvings.

OVERNIGHT: Bundi heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Drive to Udaipur via Chittorgarh

The main feature breaking today's drive to Udaipur is the hilltop fort at Chittorgarh, which is a classic depiction of Rajput culture and values. Standing on a large site on an 180m high hill rising dramatically over the plains below, the fort was sacked three times and you'll learn fascinating stories of thousands of men marching out to certain death while the womenfolk inside the folk committed Jauhar (an act of self immolation by plunging in a large fire).

OVERNIGHT: Udaipur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 10: Udaipur, city tour

The whole day is set aside today to explore this beautiful city. Visits will include the City Palace and Museum, the Jagdish Temple, Pratap Memorial. Late in the afternoon if the water levels are high enough, you can enjoy a boat-ride on Lake Pichola and enjoy excellent views of the Lake Palace and City Palace, and in the evening you can take a walking tour to explore the back streets of the city to the washing ghats on the banks of the lake.

OVERNIGHT: Udaipur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 11: Drive to Jodhpur via Ranakhpur

You leave Udaipur this morning to drive deeper into Rajasthan, heading for Jodhpur. En-route you stop to visit the Jain temples at Ranakhpur, and reach Jodhpur late in the afternoon (approx. 7 hours driving). Jodhpur is a fascinating city, with its huge hilltop fort and blue painted houses in the old town.

OVERNIGHT: Jodhpur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 12: Jodhpur tour & sleeper train to Delhi

You have a full day's tour today of the city of Jodhpur, during which you can visit Jaswant Thada, Mehrangarh Fort, Umaid Bhawan Museum, Sadar Market, Handloom House and the Clock Tower. Again this is a flexible tour and you can discuss with your guide exactly what to visit and how long to make the tour.

After an early evening meal, you board the Mandore Express for an overnight sleeper train journey back to Delhi (approx. 19.30-06.25). Travelling on Indian railways is a fascinating experience, but an internal flight option is available instead if you prefer.

OVERNIGHT: Sleeper train

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 13: Arrive in Delhi & half day tour of New Delhi

After arriving in Delhi we take you for breakfast before dropping your luggage at your hotel. Your room may not be available yet, but you can either rest and relax until it is, or start a half-day tour of the city now. Whenever you choose to start, your tour today takes in the wide leafy avenues of New Delhi, making visits to Qutb Minar, India Gate and the Lotus Temple. This tour can be adjusted based on how much or how little you'd like to do today. The

rest of your day is free.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 14: Tour ends in Delhi, departure airport transfer

Your time is free today until we pick you up from your hotel and transfer you to the airport to catch your flight home.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

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

Included

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All transport as per the itinerary in AC Toyota Innova or similar with an English speaking driver
- Overnight sleeper train from Jodhpur to Delhi (1st class carriage)
- All transfers, including 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of specialist local guides at Agra, Jaipur, Bundi, Chittorgarh, Udaipur and Jodhpur
- Entrance Fees to the main sites listed in the itinerary
- All national park entrance and activity fees and naturalist guides
- 1 jeep safari and 1 'canter' safari in Ranthambore
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded

- International Flights
- Visa Fees
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees to sites not listed in the itinerary
- Camera tickets at monument sites if applied
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Notes

Restoration of the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal, one of India's most iconic structures, is getting a much need facelift. The almost-four-century-old Taj Mahal is finally showing signs of ageing. Air pollution is unfortunately turning its ivory-white complexion - yellow. Adding to the colouration problems, the Yamuna River, with which the Taj Mahal shares a river bank, is contaminated and the insects that breed in its waters are leaving patches of green residue on its marble. In order to restore the Taj Mahal's glistening white marble, mud-pack therapy is being used. If you're worried that it might affect your India tour, this handy [Taj restoration guide](#) will tell you everything you need to know.

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.

Single Room Supplement (INTMCR)

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$1595.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

Note: The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$70.00

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.

Extra day in Delhi - post-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$70.00

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.

Goa beach extension

Min numbers: 2 persons

Price: \$679.00

After one of our busy sightseeing tours in northern India, why not finish your holiday with some time relaxing on the beach in Goa. Made internationally famous by the hippies that used to throng its northern beaches, Goa today has a huge amount more to offer. You can stay in simple guest-houses, eco resorts or luxury hotels at beaches frequented by backpackers, new-age travellers or remnants of those hippy days. The beaches are gorgeous, and the interior is well worth exploring as well. Extensions to Goa of any length are available on all of our India tours - please contact us for more information and prices.

Day 1 - Travel to Goa

We pick you up from your hotel in Delhi and transfer you to the airport for an internal flight to Panjim, the state capital of Goa. We meet you on arrival and transfer you to your boutique hotel in Calangute.

Overnight at Casa de Goa boutique 3-star hotel (B)

Days 2-4 - Goa. Free time

Your next 3 days are free to spend in Goa as you wish. You can relax on busy or remote beaches, go exploring inland, visit Anjuna flea market, or try a wide range of watersports. Goa also has its famous nightlife to try if that's your thing.

Overnight at Casa de Goa or similar (B)

Days 5 & 6 - Return to Delhi

We pick you up from your hotel and transfer you to your flight back to Delhi. You then have one night in Delhi and free time before we transfer you to the airport for departure

Overnight at Delhi hotel (B)

Includes: Internal flight Delhi-Goa, 5 nights' accommodation with breakfast, Return transfers by an AC CAR

Note: Prices shown are for low-season (mid-April to September) and higher rates will apply for high season and peak periods. These are shown on our online reservation form and are available on request. Single room supplements apply. There is a minimum of 2 people required to run this option.

Tour Notes

1. Accommodation

We use a mix of good quality hotels, guest houses and wildlife lodges on this tour rated at the Indian 3-star and 4-star level on this tour and try to include some heritage properties where possible. These heritage hotels are often converted from former palaces or merchant houses and are full of historical character, though they may feel a little dated. They are often a highlight of your stay.

Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the hotels normally used on this tour. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation.

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. Some fun train journeys may also be included.

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).

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In India we provide a fully trained, local English-speaking tour leader/driver to accompany you through the tour. Specialist local guides are used for all of the sightseeing tours and national park activities.

At Encounters Travel we have a policy of only using local Indian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of

some of our most famous local guides.

6. Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. If you visit any sites not mentioned in the itinerary then you will need to cover the entrance fee costs.

7. Tipping and Haggling

Haggling is a traditional necessity, so it's wise not to pay too much regard to initial prices. Instead fix an item's 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 described above, it's up to your satisfaction with their service and your personal budget. You should not feel pressured to tip any particular amount.

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: Diphtheria, 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 vaccination 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 a [World Health Organisation map](#) of areas where the virus is present in monkeys and therefore a potential risk to humans. 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.

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 here... <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

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

Sockets are mainly two round pronged and 230 volts (Type C,D,M). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard 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. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that

you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are provided, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you. We can operate most of our India tours throughout the year, however you should take the monsoon months of May to September into consideration when choosing your travel date as it can get very hot and wet during this period.

13. 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.

14. 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 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.

15. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

16. 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).

17. 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')

18. 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.

19. Money

The logo for 'Travel Aware' features the word 'travel' in a large, dark blue, sans-serif font. A checkmark is superimposed over the 'l' in 'travel'. Below 'travel' is the word 'aware' in a smaller, dark blue, sans-serif font. The entire logo is set against a white background.

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.

gov.uk/travelaware

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.

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.
