

Ladakh Explorer

Country(ies): India

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: Car, minivan or minibus, domestic flight

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 11 days

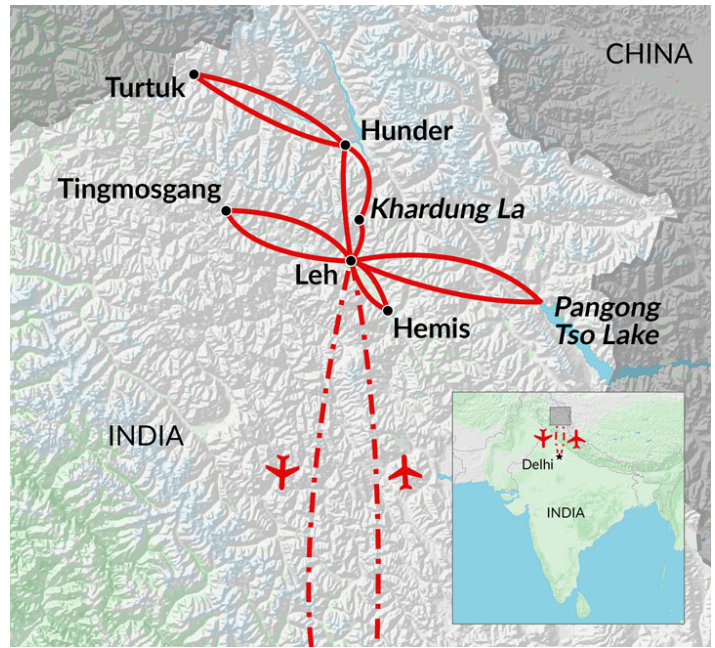
Start Location: Delhi, India

End Location: Delhi, India

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



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 Delhi, Rickshaw Ride & Street Food Tasting

Your day starts with a morning tour of India's capital, New Delhi. Built on the banks of the Yamuna river, New Delhi is a beautiful blend of a historical past and a vibrant present.

We start at India Gate in the centre of New Delhi, a 42-metre high "Arc-de-Triomphe" like archway, a war memorial built to commemorate the 82,000 soldiers who partook in the undivided Indian Army. We'll drive past various government buildings such as the President's Palace and the Parliament of India, before passing Humayun's Tomb - a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and the Bangla Sahab Gurudwara Sikh Temple.

We'll stop at Connaught Place Station and join the locals on the metro to Old Delhi where we'll walk through one of the oldest and busiest markets in Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk, before exploring the narrow streets of Chawri Bazar which specialises in selling brass, copper and paper products. Throughout the afternoon our guide will also introduce you to the wide range of street food snacks and delicacies so you can get your first authentic taste of the delicious and varied Indian cuisine. Our walking tour will also take in a rickshaw ride and the Jama Masjid mosque, one of the largest in India.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Fly to Leh and transfer to hotel. Afternoon visits to Leh Palace and Shanti Stupa

Our day begins with an early transfer to the airport for your flight to Leh, the capital of Ladakh. Upon arrival, we will take you to your hotel, allowing you time to settle in and begin acclimatising to the high altitude of 3,500 metres.

After a welcome drink, you will have a complete rest to help with acclimatisation. In the late afternoon, we will take a short drive to the city for an orientation walk through the markets. This will be followed by a visit to Shanti Stupa and Leh Palace. You will spend the night at the hotel.

Perched on a hilltop in Chanspa, Shanti Stupa is a white-domed Buddhist monument built in 1991 by Japanese Buddhist Bhikshu Gyomyo Nakamura. It holds relics of the Buddha at its base, which were enshrined by the 14th Dalai Lama. The stupa offers a beautiful panoramic view of the surrounding landscape, making it a popular tourist attraction for both its spiritual significance and scenic beauty.

Also known as 'Lhachen Palkhar,' Leh Palace is a former royal palace from the 17th century. Built by King Sengge Namgyal, this nine-storey, dun-coloured building once housed the royal family. Today, it features a museum and a prayer room, with its main highlight being the sweeping view of Leh and the surrounding Zaskar mountain range from the rooftop.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 4: Head to the Sham Valley via Gurudwara Patthar Sahib, Magnetic Hill, Sangam, Likir and Ridzong Monasteries

After breakfast, you will drive downstream along the River Indus on the Leh–Kargil Highway. Our first stop will be the Gurudwara Patthar Sahib, a highly revered sacred site. Devoted to Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of the Sikh religion, this beautiful monument commemorates his visit to Ladakh. Dating back to 1517, the gurudwara houses a boulder with imprints of Guru Nanak Dev's head, shoulders, and backside.

From there, we will continue for another 4 km to the Magnetic Hill, a truly intriguing spot perched at an altitude of 14,000 ft. It is said to defy gravity, appearing to pull vehicles uphill. The scientific theory suggests this is caused by a strong magnetic force emanating from the hill, while local superstition believes it to be a stairway to heaven.

Next, we will drive through the picturesque landscape to the Confluence of the Indus and Zaskar Rivers. The shiny blue waters of the Zaskar meet the slightly green Indus, which originates from the great Himalayan ranges. This creates a stunning visual contrast that visitors find fascinating.

Just before the village of Saspul, a road to the right will take us to Likir Monastery, one of the most active monasteries in the region. As you drive up, you will be greeted by the colossal gilded image of the Maitreya Buddha, one of the most impressive sights in Ladakh.

We will then continue our drive to Tingmosgang, stopping en route to visit the Ridzong Monastery. Hidden at the end of a steep valley, the first view of the monastery is dramatic. Those who wish to can walk up to the monastery.

After a day of sightseeing, we will drive to our hotel in Tingmosgang for an overnight stay.

OVERNIGHT: Tingmosgang hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 5: Return to Leh via Lamayuru

After breakfast, you will begin your drive to the Lamayuru Monastery, a stunning 11th-century Buddhist monastery. The journey itself is an experience, as you will pass through the mesmerising Moon Landscapes. Here, you will see a unique terrain with barren, eroded hills that look strikingly similar to the surface of the moon.

The monastery is spectacularly located along the valley plain, surrounded by jagged mountains. After exploring this historic and spiritual site, you will begin the drive back to Leh for an overnight stay at your hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 6: Cross the Khardung La Pass and head to the Nubra Valley

After breakfast, you will begin your scenic drive to the Nubra Valley. The road journey is an adventure in itself, taking you over the Khardung La, which, at 5,602 metres, is one of the highest motorable roads in the world. This high-altitude pass is roughly 39 km from Leh and offers breathtaking panoramic views. From the summit, you can see the seemingly endless peaks and ridges of the Zaskar range to the south and the majestic Saser massif to the north.

Nubra Valley, also known as 'the valley of flowers' (Ldumra), is a beautiful region situated between the Karakoram and Ladakh mountain ranges. The average altitude of the valley is 10,000 ft. Upon arrival in the village of Hunder, you will check into your camp. In the evening, you will have the opportunity to take a walk through the small villages and observe the daily life of the local people in this remote part of the world.

OVERNIGHT: Nubra Valley camp

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 7: A visit to Turtuk Village. Possible views of K2

After an early breakfast, you will take an excursion to Turtuk, a fascinating village located very close to the Pakistan border. This village holds historical significance as it was part of Pakistan until it was captured by the Indian Army during the 1971 war.

In Turtuk, you will have the opportunity to visit a 16th-century mosque that showcases a unique blend of Turkish and Iranian cultural influences. You can also explore the ancient ruins of the Dhard's fort and a local monastery. The area also offers a magnificent view of Mount K2, the second-highest peak in the world after Mount Everest.

Following your tour of the village and its surrounding sites, you will drive back to your camp in the Nubra Valley.

OVERNIGHT: Nubra Valley camp

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Head to the beautiful Pangong Tso Lake

After an early breakfast, you will check out from your camp. Our first stop will be the Hunder Sand Dunes, where you'll have the opportunity to see Bactrian camels (double-humped) in the high altitude desert landscape, with snow-capped mountains on the horizon, this is a truly unique experience.

Next, we will stop at Diskit, the main town in Nubra Valley. Here, you can take some time to wander through the local bazaar, observing the shops and the daily lives of the local people.

From Diskit, we will begin our drive towards Pangong Tso, travelling through the beautiful and scenic Shyok Valley. While some sections of the road can be quite challenging, the spectacular views make the journey

worthwhile.

After navigating this adventurous part of the route, we will continue through the small villages of the Changthang region, passing through Durbuk and Tangtse. Suddenly, you'll be greeted with your first view of the stunning Pangong Lake, situated at an altitude of 4,267 metres.

Upon arrival, we will check you into your camp or cabin near the lake for an overnight stay (please note that accommodations in this part of India are limited, therefore this night may be spent in a cabin or tented camp).

OVERNIGHT: Pangong Tso Cabin or Camp

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Free time at Pangong Tso. Return to Leh via the Changla Pass, Hemis Gompa and Thiksey Monastery

We'll spend the morning 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.

Later, we will drive back to Leh. Our route takes us over the Changla Pass, which stands at an elevation of 5,486 metres.

On our way, we will stop at Hemis Gompa, the largest monastic foundation of the Drukpa Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism. We will then visit Thiksey Monastery, an impressive complex that rises in tiers on a hill overlooking the village.

A further 5 km drive will take us to Shey Palace, the ancient capital of Ladakh, also known as the '3 Idiots Rancho School'. We will end the day with a visit to the Stok Palace Museum.

OVERNIGHT: Leh hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

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 comfortable guesthouses/camps
- 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

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
- Entrance Fees (budget approx. \$35 p/p)
- 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.

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.

Single room supplement (INSGLE)

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 towards the supplement will be refunded. Room shares are arranged in order of booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

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 and at Pangong Tso Lake 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) and it should be noted that this tour does include a significant amount of driving due to the distances between these remote locations.

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. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Health and Vaccinations

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 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.

8. 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 head)

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.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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).

13. 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

<https://x.com/encounterstravel> (yes, without the 'e')

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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? [World Nomads Travel Insurance](#) offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or 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.

15. 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.



16. Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can't fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon's efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

17. Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please [contact us](#).

18. 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.

19. Tipping - India

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.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

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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.
