

2009 Ancient India 17 days / 16 nights

Highlights

Delhi, Varanasi & the Ganges River, Khajuraho, Bandhavgarh National Park, Agra & the Taj Mahal, Jaipur & Amber Fort, Pushkar, Jodhpur, Jojawar, Udaipur

Ancient India

Rise at dawn and experience the humbling spectacle of thousands of devout Hindus bathing in the ghats of Mother Ganges in Varanasi, one of the world's oldest living cities. With traditions dating back thousands of years, India offers you rich and vibrant cultures like no other destination in Asia. Ancient India takes you from new and old Delhis on to central India, the inspired temples of Khajuraho and wild beauty of Bandhavgarh National Park. See the Taj Mahal in Agra, the "Pink City" of Jaipur, holy Pushkar, and the massive fort at Jodhpur. Finish in the romantic white-washed city of Udaipur, with its lake and hill palaces. Your accommodation is a particular highlight of this adventure, with overnight stays in a mix of comfortable modern hotels, a tented wildlife camp, and a restored royal residence.

All road travel is in comfortable minibuses or mid-sized coaches. Your journey is escorted by both a Western tour leader, based on a minimum of seven travellers, and a local English-speaking guide in each location. Groups are never more than 15 travellers in size.

Tour grading - MODERATE to ADVENTUROUS

Suitable for travellers with an average level of fitness, independent mobility, and a keen sense of adventure. The tour involves plenty of local walking, two nights at a comfortable tented camp and one overnight train journey in an air-conditioned carriage in soft sleeper bunks (approx 12 hours). There are also rides on jeeps, local boats and a local train. Accommodation is of a comfortable three to four star standard, but this is not 'sanitised' travel; by day you'll walk through markets and villages, meet local people, and sample local food. There are a few road journeys of four to seven hours.

What's Included

- 15 nights accommodation including two nights at a comfortable tented camp (without air-conditioning)
- One overnight train journey (air-conditioned sleeper class)
- Breakfast daily, four dinners and seven lunches
- All transfers and road transport in modern, air-conditioned vehicles
- Two domestic flights
- One day train journey
- Jeep safaris in Bandhavgarh National Park and Jojawar
- All sightseeing as specified (entrance fees not included; allow approx \$70 USD)
- Expert Western tour leader (group size seven minimum) and Indian local guides throughout
- One arrival and one departure transfer

Climate

Ancient India departs during India's dry season. India spans several climatic zones resulting in variations between the north and south. The most pleasant travel months are October to March, when days are typically warm and dry across the north. Nights are cool to cold, especially in December and January

when some areas drop to 0°C. In general, north India is hottest from late April to June, with temperatures averaging 35 to 40°C. The rainy season is July to September in the north.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Delhi

Upon arrival in Delhi you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Tonight meet your tour leader (or local guide) for welcome drinks and a tour briefing. Since many international flights into Delhi arrive late at night, this may take place tomorrow morning. **Two nights HOTEL VIKRAM**

Day 2 - Delhi

Discover the capital's most famous sites including Humayun's Tomb and explore Old Delhi on an exciting rickshaw ride.

Day 3 - Delhi to Varanasi

Fly to Varanasi and visit the birthplace of Buddhism, Sarnath. This evening experience an aarthi ceremony on the ancient banks of the Ganges. **One night CLARKS VARANASI**

Day 4 - Varanasi to Khajuraho

Rise early for a misty dawn boat ride on the holy Ganges, where thousands of Hindus bathe daily. Fly to Khajuraho and tour its famed intricately-sculpted temples. **One night USHA BANDELA**

Day 5 - Khajuraho to Bandhavgarh National Park

Drive through traditional central Indian farmlands and villages to Bandhavgarh National Park and our jungle camp. **Two nights CAMP MEWAR**

Day 6 - Bandhavgarh National Park

Enjoy dawn and evening game drives in the park and visit a fascinating village farming project.

Day 7 - Bandhavgarh National Park to Agra

After a final game drive into the national park, drive to Katni Station to board your overnight train to Agra. **OVERNIGHT TRAIN**

Day 8 - Agra

Arrive early in Agra. Later in the day visit Agra Fort and a marble inlay workshop. **One night MANSINGH PALACE**

Day 9 - Agra to Jaipur

An early rise to see the spectacular Taj Mahal at its best. After breakfast travel on to Jaipur, stopping to have lunch in Bharatpur and visiting the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri en route. **Two nights SHAHPURA HOUSE**

Day 10 - Jaipur

India's 'Pink City' is home to the riches of the Amber Fort, the City Palace and neighbouring Observatory, and the ornate

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Palace of the Winds, and a bazaar rich in Rajasthani handicrafts.

Day 11 - Jaipur to Pushkar

Drive to the holy desert town of Pushkar and take a fascinating afternoon walking tour. **One night PUSHKAR BAGH**

Day 12 - Pushkar to Jodhpur

Travel on by road to Jodhpur and in the afternoon visit one of Rajasthan's most colourful bazaars. **Two nights PARK PLAZA**

Day 13 - Jodhpur

This morning we tour the grand Meherangarh Fort with its fascinating museum and sweeping views of India's 'Blue City.'

Day 14 - Jodhpur to Jojawar

A scenic drive brings us to the traditional town of Jojawar, where our restored royal residence is a base for a local train safari. **One night RAWLA JOJAWAR**

Day 15 - Jojawar to Udaipur

Drive through picturesque southern Rajasthan to the romantic lake city of Udaipur, stopping en route at the magnificent Ranakpur temples of the Jain religion. **Two nights UDAI KOTHI**

Day 16 - Udaipur

Take a heritage walk in the historic laneways, tour the City Palace perched on the edge of Lake Pichola and a sunset cruise past the sublime Lake Palace.

Day 17 - Depart Udaipur

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your onward journey.

Hotel Brief

Hotel Vikram in Delhi

A comfortable hotel in lively Lajpat Nagar, offering modern and well-equipped rooms and a modern restaurant open 24 hours.

Clarks Varanasi in Varanasi

Spacious, comfortable rooms and large gardens with a swimming pool and various eating options in this well-equipped hotel.

Usha Bandhela in Khajuraho

A low-rise garden hotel with lovely pool area, small restaurant and good-sized rooms. Close to the famous temples.

Camp Mewar near Bandhavgarh National Park

Spacious tent style accommodation, fan cooled, with full Western style facilities in an atmospheric jungle environment. Many birds and other wildlife visit the grounds, and there is lovely country style thatch-roofed restaurant.

Overnight Train from Katni to Agra

Comfortable sleeper berths, air-conditioned and with clean linen provided. Private, curtained off compartments contain 4 berths with lower and upper bunks.

Mansingh Palace in Agra

A good standard hotel with spacious common areas and a pool located in the main tourist district of Agra.

Shahpura House in Jaipur

Ornately decorated in the local style, with all suite rooms, a courtyard swimming pool, and wonderful rooftop terrace.

Pushkar Bagh

A unique hotel located just outside town, with orchards on one side and dunes on the other, and a selection of bungalow and deluxe tent style accommodation in a garden setting.

Park Plaza in Jodhpur

A small international style hotel with modern and comfy rooms, a quiet garden and small pool, and excellent eating options.

Rawla Jojawar in Jojawar

The historic former private residence of a noble family with views over the surrounding town and hills from spacious, atmospheric rooms, lovely courtyards and a new swimming pool.

Udai Kothi in Udaipur

A lovely hotel in the lanes of Udaipur's old town. Cosy, charming rooms, a small garden, and rooftop restaurant and pool with great views of the town's beautiful lake and palaces.

Visa Requirements

All foreign tourists to India, except for nationals of some mostly neighbouring countries, must possess a valid visa. Visas are not issued on arrival. More detailed visa information is available in our pre-departure information. It is your responsibility to make sure that visa requirements are fulfilled.

Health Issues

Good medical advice usually recommends vaccinations/prophylactics in advance of travel to India. We suggest that you consult with your doctor to discuss health care needs specific to your holiday.

Insurance

You must be comprehensively insured as a condition of travelling with Travel Indochina. Insurance should include cover for personal accident and medical expenses, evacuation and repatriation, baggage loss, and cancellation or curtailment of your holiday. Your booking will not be confirmed if you cannot confirm possession of appropriate insurance, and our ground operations have the right to prevent you from travelling in the event that you cannot present your insurance details at the start of the tour. Your travel agent can organise travel insurance for you.

Recommended Reading

- India: A History - John Keay
- A Fine Balance - Rohinton Mistry
- The God of Small Things - Arundhati Roy
- A Suitable Boy - Vikram Seth
- Midnight's Children - Salman Rushdie
- Shantaram - Gregory David Roberts
- City of Djinn: A Year in Delhi - William Dalrymple

A Responsible Travel Indochina

Travel Indochina practices a thorough, realistic Responsible Travel Policy, full details of which can be found in our website. Our policy includes a 'Guide to Responsible Travel', full of useful pointers which will make you a more 'responsible' traveller in Asia.

Pre and post tour arrangements

If you would like to book pre or post tour hotel arrangements or are interested in doing additional quality touring before or after your Small Group journey, either contact Travel Indochina or your local travel agent.

What next

Once your booking has been confirmed and you have paid in full you will receive a detailed itinerary for this tour, detailing day by day arrangements, as well as a pre-departure guide containing valuable information designed to help you get the most out of your holiday.

About Travel Indochina

Travel Indochina has been operating small group journeys to Asia since 1993. Based in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, our idea is simple - escape the tourist traps to explore the essence of Asia's history, culture, natural beauty and most importantly, Asia's people. Another feature is the quality, character and location of our accommodation. Our travellers enjoy the combination of well thought out itineraries, tasteful accommodation, insightful western and local leaders, value for money, and our experience and base in the region.

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