



## Highlights of India & Nepal

### Classic Tour | 23 Days | Physical Level 2

Delhi – Agra – Khajuraho - Varanasi – Jaipur - Jodhpur – Udaipur – Bundi – Ranthambore – Delhi – Kathmandu – Dhulikhel - Kathmandu

From the desert forts of Rajasthan, past the magnificent Taj Mahal and on to holy Varanasi – this tour covers many of India’s incredible highlights. Continue your adventure into Nepal for a taste of this fascinating country.

- Cruise the river Ganges at dawn
- Marvel at the magnificent Taj Mahal
- Visit the imposing Mehrangarh Fort
- Soak up the romance of the city of Udaipur
- Explore the vibrant city of Kathmandu
- Wander the traditional town of Dhulikhel



### Highlights of India & Nepal tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

*The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary*

### Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of India and Nepal on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escort/Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

### Physical Level 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Highlights of India and Nepal' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boats and rickshaws throughout the tour
- You will be at a higher altitude in Nepal. All passengers should rest and stay well hydrated to acclimatise.

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

## Country Profile: India & Nepal

India evokes images of colourful religious festivals, deserts lined with historic forts, tented camps nestled in sand dunes, delicious food and royal palaces. Abundant wildlife such as the Asian Elephant and the Royal Bengal Tiger are found in the numerous national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. All of these images of India may be experienced on our tours, but the most lasting memories that you will take away with you is of the happy, smiling people.

Nepal is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of biodiversity and has an incredible variety of ecosystems. Here you will witness the greatest mountain range on Earth, which has eight of the world's 14 highest mountains, including Mt. Everest (8,848m). See thick tropical jungles teeming with a wealth of wildlife, thundering rivers and forested hills. Within this spectacular geography is a rich cultural landscape. The majority of the population is found in the Kathmandu Valley, located in the centre of Nepal and home to three major towns, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 23 days in duration including international flights. Due to airline schedules you may arrive/depart on day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only, the price includes visa fees and your arrival/ departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to reservations. Join the tour on Day 1 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 22 in Kathmandu. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Itinerary Changes

It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

- The domestic airlines in this region have frequent schedule changes. For this reason, we have indicated morning, afternoon or evening flights only in the following section. Your Local Guide or National Escort will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them
- The Taj Mahal is currently undergoing renovations to its exterior. The work is estimated to be completed by December 2018 and will be done in phases so that visitors to the Taj will still be able to experience the beauty of the architectural wonder

### 2019 changes:

- On Day 9 there has been an addition of a one-night stay in Bundi
- On Day 10 Bandvargarh National Park has been replaced with a 2-night stay in Ranthambore National Park.
- On Day 13 there is the removal of a one-night stay in Agra we have re-routed the itinerary in India and it will now travel in a counter clockwise direction. This is due to logistical reasons and passenger feedback. Your new route will be Delhi – Jaipur – Jodhpur – Udaipur – Bundi – Ranthambore National Park – Agra – Khajuraho – Varanasi – Dehli – Kathmandu – Dhulikhel – Kathmandu
- Due to Jet Airways ceasing operation, a flight will no longer be available between Khajuraho – Varanasi, to avoid a long 12 hour drive between these two destinations we have rerouted and changed the order of touring and cities visited.

## Itinerary – Highlights of India and Nepal

### Days 1: Arrive Delhi

Fly to Delhi for a two-night stay. Your National Escort or Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Delhi International Airport in the Arrivals Hall. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 45 minutes to your hotel and check-in.



#### Destination Information

**Delhi** - As the capital of India, Delhi is the third largest city with a population of approximately 18 million. Its strategic location along the north-south, east-west route has given it a focal position in Indian history and many great empires have been ruled from here. The monuments and ruins of these are scattered throughout the city, often side by side with modern structures and high-rise towers.

### Day 2: Delhi

Today starts with a brief tour introduction. This is a full day of sightseeing around Old and New Delhi, involving approximately 4 hours on foot. Your exploration of Delhi begins with a drive past the Red Fort before enjoying a stroll through the fascinating Chandni Chowk Bazaar to Jama Masjid. Stop briefly for a photo opportunity at India Gate drive by Rashtrapati Bhavan and continue to Gandhi Smriti (closed on Mondays). End the day at Qutab Minar and also visit the Iron Pillar, which has withstood the ravages of time and has not rusted after 1,500 years.



#### Destination Information

**Red Fort** - Home of the Mughal emperor for many years, the fort is located in the center of Delhi and houses a number of museums.

**Chandni Chowk Bazaar** - Built in the 17th century, Chandni Chowk is the oldest and most lively bazaar in Old Delhi. Built by the Mughal Emperor of India Shah Jahan and designed by his daughter, you can find stores selling everything from saris, Nehru suits, souvenirs to spices.

**Jama Masjid** - Jama Masjid is the largest mosque in India, with a courtyard capable of holding 25,000 devotees. Built between 1644 and 1658, the mosque was Shah Jahan's final architectural achievement.

**India Gate** - Located at the end of the Rajpath, India Gate is a moving memorial to the 90,000 Indian servicemen who died in World War 1.

**Gandhi Smriti** - A museum dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. It is the location where Mahatma Gandhi lived the last 144 days and was assassinated on January 30, 1948.

**Rashtrapati Bhavan** - The official residence of the President of India.

**Qutab Minar** - Built in the 12th century, this tower of victory is gracefully hand-carved along its entire height of 73m.

### Day 3: Delhi - Agra

Today travel by coach to Agra, approximately 4 hours drive. Explore the impressive Agra Fort this afternoon. Sightseeing here involves approximately 1 and a half hours on foot and climbing of stairs.



#### Destination Information

**Agra** - Home to the world famous Taj Mahal. Agra rose to fame in the medieval period as the capital of the Mughal Empire and was beautified with gardens, waterfalls, bathhouses and canals. In modern times, the city of Agra houses a thriving carpet industry.

**Agra Fort** - Situated on the west bank of the Yamuna River and built by Emperor Akbar between 1565 and 1573. Its imposing red sandstone ramparts form a crescent along the riverfront and encompass an enormous complex of courtly buildings, ranging in style from the early eclecticism of Akbar to the sublime elegance of Shah Jahan. The barracks to the north are British additions from the 19th century. A deep moat, once filled with water from the Yamuna River, surrounds the fort.

### Day 4: Agra – Jhansi - Khajuraho

Rise early and begin the day by viewing the Taj Mahal in all its glory as the sun is rising. To reach the Taj Mahal, you will board your group coach and drive through the awakening streets of Agra (an early start means that we can avoid the heat and crowds at the Taj Mahal later in the day). Disembarking the coach you will board smaller electric carts to continue to the entrance gate. After clearing security and baggage checks you will be admitted to the complex. Usually 2 hours is spent here; sightseeing is easy with almost no steps. For admission to the main mausoleum area, you are required to wear shoe covers (this may be provided on site – be prepared to bring an additional pair of socks). Depart Agra and board the Shatabdi Express train 2 and a half hours to Jhansi station. From here, drive approximately 4 to 5 hours to Khajuraho, visiting the medieval city of Orchha en route. Sightseeing in Orchha is easy with a few steps and may take up to an hour. Enjoy a cultural dance performance this evening.



*Please note: The Taj Mahal is currently undergoing renovations to its exterior. The work is done in phases so that visitors to the Taj will still be able to experience the beauty of this architectural wonder. The dome, walls and*

minarets have already been restored to their earlier state of glory, but the work continues on other parts of the building throughout 2019.

Please note: As your train is a day train, your seats will be in an AC Chair Car. More than likely you will not be able to purchase any food or drink on the train, so if you need snacks make sure to pre-purchase them before boarding. The train carriages are shared, so please be aware of your belongings at all times.

#### **Destination Information**

**Taj Mahal** - One of the most recognisable monuments in the world, the Taj Mahal is a white marble monument found on the southern bank of the Yamuna River. The Taj Mahal was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan between the years 1631 -1648 in memory of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.

**Orchha** - A medieval city famous for its palaces and temples built by the Bundela rulers in the 16th century. Jehangir Mahal, a tiered palace, is crowned by graceful cenotaphs, and commands a spectacular view of soaring temple spires.

**Khajuraho** - A small village well known for its UNESCO World Heritage listed sculptured temples dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, and Jain religions.

**Western Group of Temples** - The Khajuraho temples were built by the Chandella rulers between AD 900 and 1300 and are scattered over 23km sq. Originally a group of 85, they are the largest group of Hindu and Jain temples in the world, although only about 25 of them remain today. Tour the Western Groups of temples, the most important is the Kandariya Mahadevo Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva.

**Eastern Group of Temples** - The Eastern group represent some of the finest Jain temples including Parsvanatha which is known for its carvings of celestial beauties (sura-sundaris), along with the Adinath and Ghantai temples. We also see the Hindu temples including the Vamana Temple, dedicated to Lord Vamana, the dwarf incarnation of Lord Vishnu, as well as the Javari Temple.

#### **Day 5: Khajuraho - Varanasi**

This morning drive 15 minutes to the Khajuraho temples and spend approximately 2 to 3 hours exploring the Western and Eastern groups of temples. You will see the Vamana Temple, dedicated to the 'Vamana' or dwarf incarnation of Lord Vishnu as well as the Javari Temple. Sightseeing here involves walking with little shade, so make sure you bring sun protection.

Later, fly to Varanasi. Upon arrival, proceed to the hotel and check-in. This evening take a rickshaw ride through the streets of Varanasi to the ghats of the River Ganges, where you will witness

the Puja Ceremony of Ganga Aarti. The Ganga Aarti takes place most evenings, so please be prepared for many crowds through the streets, especially leading up to the ghats. Please remember to wear closed toe shoes and to always be careful and mindful of your belongings. It is also important to watch where you step, as devotees, crowds of tourists, animals and rickshaws all head in the same direction of the ghats.



*Please note: It would be unwise to wander around Varanasi without your National Escort or Local Guide at night as there have been several reports of pickpockets. Always speak to your National Escort or Local Guide before making your own arrangements in Varanasi.*

#### **Destination Information**

**Varanasi** - The religious capital of Hinduism, Varanasi is the oldest living city in India as well as one of the world's most ancient cities. Colourful and chaotic, Varanasi is a fascinating city to discover. Located along the western banks of the Ganges, devotees travel to the city to pray and wash away their sins in the holy river.

**Puja Ceremony of Ganga Aarti** - An evening ceremony conducted on the banks of the river Ganges. Aarti means divine light, and this ceremony is filled with song, prayer and ritual.

### Day 6: Varanasi

Rise early this morning to commence a 1 to 2 hour cruise on the River Ganges to view the ghats at sunrise, where you will have a vantage spot to watch the devotees perform their ablutions. Return to the hotel for breakfast. The rest of the day's sightseeing is leisurely, involving approximately 1 hour of walking. Enjoy a brief tour of Varanasi, visiting such sites as the Bharat Mata Mandir and Durga Temple. Drive through the largest residential university in Asiam Banaras Hindu University. This afternoon travel to Sarnath to visit the Buddhist sacred sites.

#### **Destination Information**

**Ghats of Varanasi** - The ghats are the long stretch of steps leading down to the water on the western banks of the River Ganges. Most are used for bathing, but there are some 'burning ghats' where public cremations are held. Please note that it is inappropriate to take photos of any burning ghats, as this is a funeral ceremony.

**Bharat Mata Mandir** - A unique temple dedicated to Bharat Mata (Mother India) which houses a relief map of India, carved out of marble.

**Durga Temple** - Also known as the monkey temple due to the large number of monkeys that have made the temple their home, the Durga Temple is one of the most important temples in Varanasi. Dedicated to the Goddess Durga, the temple was built in the 18th century and is stained red with ochre.

**Sarnath** - Sarnath is the fabled place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon to his disciples expounding the principles of Buddhism. The ruins here date back as far as the 3rd century BC.

### Day 7: Varanasi - Jaipur

Fly to Jaipur, check into your hotel and later enjoy a visit the Maharaja's City Palace, still home of the city's royal family today; and Jantar Mantar, the UNESCO World Heritage listed ancient observatory, a fascinating collection of wonderful instruments designed to measure the heavens. Sightseeing here involves approximately 2 hours on foot. Later, enjoy dinner at a local restaurant and enjoy live music and traditional entertainment.

### Destination Information

**Jaipur** - Known as the 'Pink City' for the colour of the buildings in the old town. Jaipur was founded in 1727 as Mughal power within India was declining. The then Maharaja Jai Singh moved his capital from Amber Fort down onto the plain below. The city is now the capital of Rajasthan State and commonly called the 'Pink City' because of the pink paint on all the buildings in the old city area. This was apparently done to imitate the magnificent, red sandstone buildings of the Mughals and in an attempt to impress the Prince of Wales when he visited Jaipur in 1876.

**Maharaja's City Palace** - A former Royal residence located in the heart of the Old City. Part of the building has been converted into a museum, while the royal family of Jaipur still uses the remaining sections of the palace as a private residence.

**Jantar Mantar Observatory** - The largest stone and marble crafted observatory in the world is located just outside the City Palace. The observatory has 17 large instruments, many of them still in working condition.

### Day 8: Jaipur

Sightseeing today begins with a photo stop at the Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) in downtown Jaipur. Tourists are unable to enter, so you will view it from the busy road opposite. Tour members are asked to be careful when crossing the road for a closer photo. Continue to the impressive Amber Fort, where you will ride jeeps to and from the bus park and palace entrance. Elephant rides up to the palace have not been included your itinerary because of the concerns to the animals and the unreliability of this service. Sightseeing this morning involves 2 to 3 hours on foot and there are a number of steps within the fort. Next you have the opportunity to try your hand at the local handicraft of block printing and carpet weaving at a nearby craft centre. Later enjoy some shopping inside the walled city, where villagers from around Jaipur come to sell and trade their produce. You will find everything here from saris, jewellery, clothing, shoes to spices.



### Destination Information

**Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds)** - A five-story palace erected in 1799 by the Sawai Pratap Singh so that the veiled ladies of his harem could observe, unnoticed, the lively street scenes below.

**Amber Fort** - Built from yellow and pink sandstone and white marble, Amber Fort was built in the 16th century by Raja Man Singh. Inside the fort we visit the Hall of Victory, which houses the famed Sheesh Mahal.

**Maharaja's City Palace** - A former Royal residence located in the heart of the Old City. Part of the building has been converted into a museum, while the royal family of Jaipur still uses the remaining sections of the palace as a private residence.

**Jantar Mantar Observatory** - The largest stone and marble crafted observatory in the world is located just outside the City Palace. The observatory has 17 large instruments, many of them still in working condition.



## Day 9: Jaipur to Jodhpur

This morning, depart Jaipur and commence the drive to Jodhpur, the second largest city in Rajasthan. Drive approximately 7 hours to Jodhpur. Upon arrival transfer to your hotel for a two night stay and check in. In the evening enjoy a leisurely walking tour exploring the local vegetable and spice market, Subzi Mandi.



### Destination Information

**Jodhpur** - The second largest city in Rajasthan is located at the entrance to the Thar Desert in a region called Marwar. The old city, founded in 1459, is surrounded by a 10km-long wall and situated on a 125m-high hill. The massive Mehrangarh Fort overlooks the city and the red sandstone palaces within the fort form one of the most impressive complexes in Rajasthan.

## Day 10: Jodhpur

The first stop this morning is the imposing Mehrangarh Fort which involves approximately 2 hours on foot and some steps of varying difficulty. The group bus will drop off and collect passengers at the same place, so anyone unable to complete this activity may return and wait for the group. Continue to Jaswant Thada, a cluster of royal cenotaphs, before strolling through the museum located in the Umaid Bhawan Palace (now a luxury hotel). Sightseeing here involves approximately 1 hour of easy walking around the palace and museum. Later take an auto-rickshaw to a local restaurant for lunch before enjoying the rest of the afternoon at leisure.



### Destination Information

**Mehrangarh Fort** - Raised 120m above the city's skyline, Mehrangarh Fort is one of the most magnificent and best preserved forts in India. Within the fort are some magnificent palaces with meticulously carved panels, latticed windows known as Jarokhas. The chambers of Moti Mahal, Phool Mahal, Sheesh Mahal, the Sileh Khana and the Daulat Khana are noteworthy for the splendour and glamour of a bygone era.

**Jaswant Thada** - A 19th century royal cenotaph built in honor of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II, the 33rd ruler of Jodhpur.

**Umaid Bhawan Palace** - One of the last great palaces in India, Umaid Bhawan Palace now houses a remarkable museum.

### Day 11: Jodhpur - Udaipur

Depart Jodhpur and begin the drive to Udaipur, stopping to explore Chittor Fort. One of the largest forts in India, Chittor sprawls across a hilltop overlooking the town of Chittorgarh. Continue to Udaipur, a city of lakes, palaces and temples. Relax on a cruise along Lake Pichola, admiring the city's palaces from the water. Upon arrival, proceed to your hotel for a two-night stay.



### Day 12: Udaipur

Begin the day with a drive around the Fateh Sagar Lake. Tour the city, visiting sites such as the Sahelion Ki Bari Gardens, the Folk Museum and Mewar Art Gallery. Later, explore the City Palace, which involves approximately 2 hours of sightseeing on foot. Some stairs at this location are without handrails, so please be cautious. Before sunset, drive 30 minutes to Lake Pichola for a cruise and view the Lake Palace. Please note that the Lake Palace (now an exclusive hotel) does not allow visitors.



#### Destination Information

**Udaipur** - The origins of Udaipur are based on a legend, which tells of a holy sage that Maharaja Udai Singh encountered while hunting in the foothills of the Aravalli Range in Mewar. The sage told the King to build a palace in that exact spot and it would be well protected and so with this advice, Maharaja Udai Singh built his residence there. At the time, Chittorgarh was the capital of Mewar state, however in 1568 Chittorgarh was attacked by the Mughal emperor Akbar, and so Maharaja Udai Singh moved the capital to Udaipur. Today, the City Palace of Udaipur is still home to Maharaja Udai Singh's descendants who remain rulers of this independent state.

**Fateh Sagar Lake** - An artificial lake built in 1678 embellished with 3 islands, one which houses a garden café.

**Sahelion Ki Bari Gardens** - A delightful 18th-century garden retreat in the north of the city built for the Queen of Udaipur, whose dowry included 48 maids.

**Folk Museum and Mewar Art Gallery** - Houses a remarkable collection of Rajasthani folk art that's well worth a visit.

**City Palace** - The spectacular City Palace was built in 1725 by Maharana Udai Singh and overlooks Lake Pichola. The Palace comprises of 11 palaces including the Dilkhush Mahal, Sheesh Mahal, Moti Mahal and the Palace of Lord Krishna, all of which are ornately decorated. The City Palace also houses the world's largest private collections of crystals.

**Lake Pichola and Lake Palace** - The 4km long Lake Pichola is fringed with hills, palaces, havelis, ghats and temples. The Lake Palace, formally known as Jag Niwas, was built between 1734 and 1751. It was once a royal summer retreat and is now one of the world's greatest hotels. It is also a popular location for film shoots, including James Bond's Octopussy.

### Day 13: Udaipur - Bundi

Today drive to Bundi and take a stroll through the town, discovering the unique stepwells.

### Days 14-15: Ranthambore National Park

Leave Bundi and drive for 3 hours to Ranthambore National Park. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure. The following day you will enjoy morning and afternoon canter (jeep-like vehicle) safaris for the chance to spot the local wildlife. The safari involves 2 to 3 hours driving on uneven and unsealed tracks. During the canter safari there are no bathrooms, please keep this in mind.

*Please note: You will need to bring your passport each day to allow entry into the park.*



#### Destination Information

**Ranthambore National Park** - Is one of the prime examples of Project Tiger's conservation efforts in Rajasthan. The forest around Ranthambore was once the private hunting grounds of the Maharajas of Jaipur and is one of the largest national parks in Northern India. Ranthambore National Park is renowned for its tiger population, however you may also come across other wild animals such as leopard, nilgai, wild boar, sambar, hyena and sloth bear.

### Day 16: Ranthambore - Delhi

Today you will catch the early morning train to Delhi, with the journey taking approximately 5 and a half hours. Upon arrival you will be transferred to the hotel and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

### Day 17: Delhi - Kathmandu

Kathmandu altitude 1,337m

This morning, complete the immigration and customs formalities and bid India goodbye as you board your connecting flight to Kathmandu, Nepal. Flight time is approximately 1 hour 40 minutes. Upon arrival in Kathmandu, you will be met in the Arrivals Hall by your National Escort or Local Guide and transfer around half an hour to your hotel and check-in for a two-night stay. The rest of the day is at leisure to acclimatise to the higher altitude. Our visit to Nepal concentrates on the Kathmandu Valley, which encapsulates the history of Nepal within the ancient capitals of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur.



#### Destination Information

**Nepal** - The small Kingdom of Nepal sits atop the Himalayas wedged between India, Tibet and China. It is renowned for its incredible landscapes and is home to 10 of the world's 14 tallest mountains. The mountaineering race of the early 20th century brought this tiny nation to the attention of the whole world. Even today, from the low lands of the Terai (the plain in the southwest), through the ancient and noble towns of the Kathmandu Valley, to the unrivalled heights of Mt. Everest, the country retains a mediaeval atmosphere. Markets thrive in town squares, alleys wind between temples, homes and water wells, and statues of Ganesh are covered in rice, tiny flowers and coloured powder.

This morning, visit the Dakshinkali Temple. In the afternoon travel to Patan, the second largest city in Nepal. Spend approximately 2 hours on foot here. Visit Durbur Square, including the UNESCO World Heritage listed Royal Palace. Return to Kathmandu in the afternoon.

#### Destination Information

**Dakshinkali Temple** - The Dakshinkali Temple is dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali. This temple is 22km away from the city centre on the southern rim of the valley and is one of the most popular places for worshippers. On Tuesdays and Saturdays, the ritual of animal sacrifice is performed before the deity. Please note that many foreigners find the temple confronting as they still make live animal sacrifices here (usually early morning) and can be crowded with pushing.

**Patan** - The second largest city in Nepal and located 5km from Kathmandu, on the southern bank of the Bagmati River. Until 1768, when King Prithvi Narayan Shah (a Gorka) unified the Kingdoms of Nepal into a single nation, the Kathmandu Valley supported three separate Kings - one in Kathmandu, one in Patan and another in Bhaktapur.

**Durbar Square** - Situated in the heart of the city, Durbar Square is the centre of Patan's religious and social life. The stunning display of Newari architecture houses three main courtyards, an array of temples, shrines, houses and the Royal Palace.

**Royal Palace** - Though parts of the richly decorated Royal palace dates back to the 14th century, the majority of the construction was completed in the 17th century. The Royal Palace forms the eastern side of the Durbar Square and contains a series of courtyards, temples and a museum for the royal collection.

#### Day 19: Kathmandu

Sightseeing today begins at Durbar Square and the Kumari Temple where you will have approximately 2 hours of light sightseeing. Continue to two of the most important significant sites in Nepal, Swayambhunath Stupa and Bodhnath Stupa. Later, travel to Pashupatinath Temple and end the day with a stroll through Thamel Markets. There is very little sun protection, so bring hats and sunscreen. Keep a firm hold of cameras as monkeys have been known to steal them! Please note that here you may see the practice of animal sacrifice or cremation at Pashupatinath Temple. – Please refer to Nepalese Customs section for further information on touring.



#### Destination Information

**Kumari Temple** - Situated close to the palace is the Kumari Temple, the temple of the Living Goddess. The Living Goddess is a Weng girl who lives within the temple, acknowledging visitor's greetings from the central window.

**Swayambhunath Stupa** - Often called 'the monkey temple' because of the hundreds of monkeys that scamper about the place. Its location, atop a hill west of Kathmandu, makes the stupa visible for miles and is thought to have been a Buddhist pilgrimage site since the 5th century.

**Bodhnath Stupa** - The largest stupa in Nepal and the capital city's religious centre for ethnic Tibetans who form a significant proportion of Nepal's population. The Bodhnath Stupa is thought to have been originally built in 600AD, after the famous Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo was converted to Buddhism.

**Pashupatinath Temple** - A Hindu temple of Lord Shiva situated 5km east of Kathmandu on the banks of the sacred Bagmati River. Pashupatinath Temple has a two-tiered golden roof and is famous for its superb architecture. It is a centre of annual pilgrimage on the day of Maha Shivaratri. Here one may also witness the cremations of the dead bodies of Hindus. Devotees from all over the world come here to pay their homage to Lord Shiva. **Please note:** Entrance to Pashupatinath is permitted to the Hindus only, however visitors can clearly see the temple and the activities performed inside the temple from the eastern bank of the Bagmati.

**Thamel Market** - a local tourist area filled with mountaineering shops, cafés and restaurants.

#### Day 20: Kathmandu – Dhulikhel

Dhulikhel altitude 1,600m

Today you will drive to Dhulikhel, visiting Changu Narayan Temple en route. Spend approximately 1 to 2 hours at this site, there are some uneven steps here. You will also stop at the small village of Thimi, known for its local pottery and manufacturing of masks. After lunch, drive to Dhulikhel, enjoying the spectacular views of the Himalayas.

#### Destination Information

**Changu Narayan Temple** - A UNESCO World Heritage listed site situated on a ridge overlooking the valley, this temple is dedicated to the Hindu God Vishnu and is one of the finest examples of pagoda architecture.

**Thimi** - A small village known for its local pottery and the manufacture of masks.

**Dhulikhel** - Dhulikhel is located 30km east of Kathmandu and offers spectacular views of the Himalayas. A well-preserved Newari town, Dhulikel offers an insight into traditional life in Nepal.

## Day 21: Dhulikhel – Kathmandu

Rise early this morning to view the sunrise. After breakfast, return to Kathmandu visiting Bhaktapur, the third of the ancient royal capitals, en route. At the original town gates, your group coach will drop you off and you will receive a ticket that allows you entry into several important sites within Bhaktapur. At Durbar Square you will visit the Golden Gate at the Palace of 55 Windows as we weave our way through to the Taumadhi Tole Square. You will have a few hours to explore the alleys that link these squares. Depending on the time available to you, as well as the walking pace of your group, you may visit the wonderful Potter's Square located nearby before you return to Kathmandu. At dinner this evening, you will enjoy a performance of traditional Nepalese dancing.

### Destination Information

**Bhaktapur** - Traffic is prohibited in Bhaktapur, making it a wonderful place to explore on foot. The absence of traffic makes this a treasure trove of antiquated sites. In markets and alleys, corn husks and handmade noodles are all laid out on a sheet to dry in the sun, baskets of chillies, temples and shrines covered with offerings of food, brightly coloured powder or flowers.

**Durbar Square** - Founded in the 12th century and located in the heart of the city, Bhaktapur's charming Durbar Square is filled with monuments, palaces and temples with elaborately carved roofs.

**Golden Gate** - The splendid Golden Gate is entrance to the Palace of 55 Window. Completed in 1754, the gate is one of the finest examples of Nepal's repoussé metalwork.

**Palace of 55 Windows** - Built in the 17th century, the palace features a balcony of 55 intricate wooden windows, a masterpiece of wood craving.

## Day 22-23: Depart Kathmandu

Today any time before your flight will be at leisure. You will then be transferred to the airport according to the departure time of your flight to Australia, arriving home the same or following day.

Late check-out is not included in our India/Nepal group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in India, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

## Highlights of India & Nepal Travel Information

### Visas

Entry visas are required by all visitors to India and Nepal and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

**For India:** Please be advised that all E-Visa Applications for India will be completed by Wendy Wu Tours. The information is available from <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/before-you-go/passports-visas-travel-health/> - Wendy Wu Tours requires the information sheet, a clear colour photo in JPEG format and clear colour passport copy emailed through to [documentation@wendywutours.com.au](mailto:documentation@wendywutours.com.au). Visas are valid for 120 days from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 60 days. Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 75 days prior to departure. Applications will not be accepted within 30 days of departure. E-Visas will be included with your final documentation approximately three to four weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your E-Visa organised earlier, please contact us.

**For Nepal:** Please be advised that for all visa applications to Nepal, Wendy Wu Tours will provide passengers with forms to be completed by hand. Once the form is completed, the application and passport will need to be sent to Wendy Wu Tours. Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this date; urgent visa processing fees will apply.

### Insurance

We strongly encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the originals. their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance

### Eating in India & Nepal

Indian cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Indian cuisine can vary greatly from the Indian food we get in the AU, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our classic group tours, from dinner on the arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in. Nepalese cuisine is based around the ingredients grown locally in the mountainous areas.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style'; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in India and Nepal. We recommend that when it comes to Indian and Nepalese food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

### Safari Ranthambore National Park

To ensure your safari booking at Ranthambore National Park we will require a scanned copy or photocopy of the bio page in your passport along with your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot confirm your safari arrangements without this information.

### Accommodation

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the Australia and India and Nepal. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort or Local Guide.

Throughout Rajasthan state you will get the opportunity to stay in heritage properties which are restored palaces or forts. As these properties were not originally designed to be hotels, the room sizes will vary in the same accommodation category, as will the décor and layout. This uniqueness only adds to your experience in India.

### Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner city roads in India and Nepal have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in India and Nepal have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

**Planes:** Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

**Trains:** This trip involves a train journey in AC class cars. Getting on and off the trains in India can be quite disordered as passengers will start boarding well before people have finished getting off! If your group is disembarking at a stop that is not the end of the line, the train will only stop for 10 minutes and you must have your luggage ready and by your side a few minutes before the train pulls into the station.



## Development in India & Nepal

Although India and Nepal are developing quickly, they still lack the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

## Nepalese Customs

Nepal has many special customs and rituals that tie into daily life, some of these may be surprising or unsettling for some passengers. While the guide will make every effort to forewarn passengers when visiting sites that may participate in the practise of animal sacrifice or cremation, there may be special local festivals within villages where such rituals are unavoidable. When visiting the Pashupatinath Temple in Kathmandu, please be aware that you may witness cremations taking place across the canal. If you would prefer not to participate in this touring, please let your National Escort or Local Guide know upon arrival in Nepal.

## Souvenirs

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions, which demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest; for example, in Agra you will be able to see local artists creating stunning marble pieces, similar to what is used on the Taj Mahal. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

## Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group in India, and 22 in Nepal, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides.

## Tipping Policy

Local tipping is customary in Asia. However, this can often lead to awkwardness in knowing when it is appropriate to tip and how much, as well as ensuring you have a suitable amount of change available at the time. For your convenience, with years of experiences in providing the best customer service, Wendy Wu Tours operates a kitty system on our Group Tours so your National Escort will look after this aspect of your trip for you. It also ensures that the amounts paid are reasonable for you but still fair for the local people. The amount is stated on each Group Tour page will be advised again on your final documentation. Tipping is in US Dollars and will be collected by your National Escort on arrival and distributed throughout the tour on your behalf. Any

additional tipping on any of our tours is welcomed at your discretion. Further guidance for tipping contributions will be outlined in your final documentation.

### Appropriate Dress

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and trousers or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques. If visiting Jain temples independently (these are not included in this itinerary), you must not wear or take in any leather items such as belts, watches, camera straps, purses and shoes.

Religious sites and homes throughout India and Nepal – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

### Climate

You will find a complete packing list and a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List', which will be included in the pre-departure information link sent within your deposit documentation. Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found on [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

### Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smarttraveller.gov.au](http://www.smarttraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive an email with your confirmation invoice, along with a link to our website where you can find your visa information (if applicable) and other important information. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 -3 weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated: 16<sup>th</sup> May 2019**