



India Explorer

Flexible Tour | 12 Days | Physical Level 2

Delhi - Jaipur - Talabgaon - Ranthambore - Agra - Delhi

A classic journey through India's Golden Triangle with exciting opportunities to spot tigers, and a beautiful heritage stay. This tour gives you plenty of time to explore independently or join in with optional excursions such as a hot air balloon ride or a cooking class.

- ✓ Explore India's largest spice market
- ✓ See the Taj Mahal at sunrise
- ✓ Discover Agra by rickshaw
- ✓ Spot tigers in Ranthambore
- ✓ Wander the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri
- ✓ Admire the Amber Fort



To book call **1300 727 998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.com.au

India Explorer tour inclusions:

Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)

- All accommodation
- Most 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
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with AFTA, ATAS and CATO

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

Flexible Tours:

Ideal for those who want more choice in what they do. Flexible tours include all the main sights but allow some free time for your own exploration or relaxation. Optional excursions, often more active in nature, are available for those that want to discover more.

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. 'India Explorer' 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 will involve climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails
- There will be some uneven surfaces during the safari in Ranthambore which could make for a bumpy ride

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.

Itinerary – India Explorer

Day 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. (D)



Destination Information

Delhi - As the capital of India, Delhi is the largest city with a population of approximately 25 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 is a full day of sightseeing around Old and New Delhi, involving approximately four hours on foot. Your exploration of Delhi begins with a drive past the Red Fort, Take a rickshaw ride to Khari Baoli Spice Market, and visit Jama Masjid. Stop to visit Qutab Minar, Rashtrapati Bhawan, Parliament House before taking some photos of India Gate. (B,L,D)



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.

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.

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: Travel to Jaipur

This morning is at your leisure before driving approximately 5 hours to Jaipur. This afternoon, explore the atmospheric streets of the city with a delicious food tour. This evening there is the option to continue the foodie theme with a cooking demonstration of local delicacies and dinner on the rooftop. (B)



Destination Information

Jaipur - Some parts of the road are very rough so the journey takes most of the afternoon. 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.

Day 4: Jaipur

Start today with a morning yoga session followed by an action-packed day exploring more of the 'Pink City' and capital of Rajasthan state. 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 in your itinerary because of the concerns to the animals and the unreliability of this service. Also visit Jantar Mantar observatory and the magical Maharajah's city palace. Sightseeing this morning involves 2 to 3 hours on foot and there are a number of steps within the fort. Back in the city, we'll try our hands at traditional artistries at a craft centre, including block printing and carpet weaving, before experiencing the Amber Fort by night. (B,L,D)



Please note: Jaipur is a larger city where it would be unwise to wander around without your National Escort or Local Guide at night, as there have been reports of pickpockets.

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 the Hall of Victory houses the famed Sheesh Mahal.

Day 5: Talabgaon Castle

This morning there will be the option of joining a spectacular hot air balloon safari, with magnificent views over the Pink City's roofs from the skies of Jaipur. Later, drive through rural Rajasthan to Chand Baori stepwell, a fascinating and exquisitely carved water storage structure built over a thousand years ago, before continuing to the village of Talabgaon, and the beautiful 19th century Talabgaon castle, where you will be spending the night. This evening head into the village for a guided walk to mingle with the locals and experience typical life in a Rajasthani rural community. (B,L,D)



Destination Information

Abhaneri Village - Make a stop here to see the Chand Baori Stepwell and marvel at this ancient construction. Over 1,000 years old, the visually outstanding stepwell was originally dedicated to Harshat Mata, the 'Goddess of Joy and Happiness'

Day 6: Ranthambore National Park

Drive onwards through the Rajasthani countryside today away from the village and on to Ranthambore National Park. The journey will take 2-3 hours. Arriving around lunch time, the rest of the day is yours to relax. (B,L,D)



Day 7: Ranthambore National Park

This morning and afternoon you will have canter safaris in the park. The time in between these safaris will be at leisure. There are around 50 tigers living amongst the park's undulating landscapes, as well as leopards, nilgai, sloth bears, wild boar, hyena and over 300 species of bird. (B,L,D)

Please note: You will need your passport to gain entry to the national 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 8: Journey to Agra

This morning depart Ranthambore and head to the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri, a spectacular array of Mughal palaces and temples, before arriving in the historic city of Agra. The journey will take a total of approximately 7 hours total including sightseeing and lunch. Late this afternoon tour the magnificent Agra Fort. This mass of red sandstone sits on the bank of the Yamuna River (B,L,D)



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.

Day 9: Agra

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 join your Local Guide 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 without many 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). Return to your hotel to freshen up and have breakfast. Enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure, or take part in optional activities such as an auto rickshaw tour through the bustling streets, or learning about fascinating local crafts at a marble inlay workshop. (B)



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 walls and minarets have already been restored to their earlier state of glory, but the work continues on other parts of the building throughout 2020.

Destination Information

Taj Mahal - One of the most recognizable 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 favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.

Day 10: Delhi

Depart Agra and travel approximately 4 hours to Delhi for an overnight stay. On arrival, the rest of the day is free to spend as you wish, with an optional visit to the Dilli Haat craft markets to pick up some souvenirs. This evening sit down together for the last time at a farewell dinner.

(B,L,D)



Destination Information

Delhi - Delhi has been continuously inhabited since the 6th century BCE. Through most of its history, Delhi has served as a capital of various kingdoms and empires. It has been captured, ransacked and rebuilt several times, particularly during the medieval period, and modern Delhi is a cluster of a number of cities spread across the metropolitan region with a population of 25 million.

Days 11-12: Depart Delhi / Fly to Australia

After breakfast, depending on your flight time, transfer to the airport for your return flight to Australia where you will land the following day. (B)



India Explorer Travel Information

Visas

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

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. 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.

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.

Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in India

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 Australia, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our private 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.

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 usually be seated around a large 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. 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. We recommend that when it comes to Indian food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

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 please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and India. 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. Please note double bed requests can be made at time of booking but can't be guaranteed.

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.

Manvar Desert Camp: The Indian Tourism Authority classes this as a 'deluxe-tented camp'. There are 30 permanent tents with simple but very comfortable accommodation. Each has two single beds or a double bed, a private bathroom with western toilet and shower (hot and cold water) and a veranda. There is no air-conditioning. Meals are served in the nearby dining tent. Tents will have generator supplied electricity, usually restricted to a few hours in the evening and morning. Please note: The camp is open from October to mid-April. You will stay in the nearby Manvar Resort if you are visiting at other times of the year.

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. Due to Indian Government regulations the use of curtains, tinted glass windows are prohibited across India. Main and inner-city roads in India 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 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.

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

Although India is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; 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 Local Guides.

Public Holidays in India

If you are travelling within the below Indian Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed, and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. India Republic Day is on 26th January, the Holi Festival – 10th March 2020 (The Hindu 'Festival of Colours') can include locals smearing coloured powder on one another. Every effort will be made to minimise the effect on passengers whilst touring). Diwali Festival is on 14th November 2020.

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.

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 although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups

Group Size

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.

Cultural Difference

India has many religions, cultures and histories. Foreign tourists, particularly female travelers, may be stared at as Indian women in some areas generally do not go out without their father or husband. Please be considerate of this, the local beliefs and customs and dress with consideration and modesty.

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. When visiting Jain temples, 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 – 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.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Safari Bookings in 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 a deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot confirm your safari arrangements without this information.

Packing list and 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

Luggage

All travelers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 15kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please

note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

Exchanging Cash

It is highly recommended that when travelling to cities outside of Delhi and other main cities that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money. US Dollars are easily exchanged throughout India however, other currencies such as Australian Dollars can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your National Escort/Local Guide will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses & Optional Tours

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AU\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

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

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.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 a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 3 weeks prior to departure.

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