



## Journey to Kathmandu Dossier

Immerse Yourself Tour | 22 Days | Physical Level 3

Delhi – Jaipur – Ranthambore – Agra – Delhi – Varanasi – Lumbini – Chitwan  
– Bandipur – Pokhara – Kathmandu

Showcasing the highlights of India and Nepal on an adventurous three-week itinerary exploring mountain villages, exciting jungle walks and a hike for spectacular sunrise views. Expect long journeys on this tour however the scenery will be worth every minute.

- Marvel at the Taj Mahal
- Experience the holy Ganga Aarti ceremony
- Spot tigers in Ranthambore
- Watch the sun rise over the Himalayas
- Explore the jungle in Chitwan National Park
- Learn the local crafts in Nepal



### Journey to Kathmandu 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
- Comprehensive travel guides

*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.*

### Immerse Yourself - Go Beyond Tours:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime.

### Physical Level 3:

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. 'Journey to Kathmandu' is rated 3 on the physical level scale. This is one of the more demanding trips Wendy Wu Tours offers. As a whole, this itinerary requires a high level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time on uneven ground
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails.
- You will be at a moderately high altitude throughout most of the tour; it is recommended that you rest and drink lots of water to help acclimatize

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 Go Beyond 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 22 days in duration including international flights. Depending on airline schedules, you may depart or arrive 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 21 in Kathmandu. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

### New Tour for 2019

Wendy Wu Tours is proud to present An Indian Experience as a new tour option for 2019. While we have carefully researched the itinerary, this is the first time this tour has operated and it should be remembered that unforeseen changes or surprises may occur. Although these are unexpected, occurrences may add to the enjoyment of the tour, if this is a concern for you we suggest waiting until a later 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

## Itinerary – Journey to Kathmandu

### 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.



#### 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 - Jaipur

Today drive to Jaipur. Upon arrival check into your hotel where the rest of your day is at leisure to relax or explore independently.

#### 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 Amer 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 your day with a morning yoga lesson. Next, sightseeing 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 Amer Fort, where you will ride jeeps to and from the bus park and palace entrance. Sightseeing this morning involves 2 to 3 hours on foot and there are a number of steps within the fort. Next 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.



This afternoon 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.

**Amer Fort** - Built from yellow and pink sandstone and white marble, Amer 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.

**Days 5-6: Jaipur – Ranthambore National Park**

Leave Jaipur 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 7: Ranthambore - Agra**

Today travel by coach to Agra, approximately 6-7 hours' drive including lunch en-route and a stop at the fascinating ghost city of Fatehpur Sikir. Explore the impressive Agra Fort this afternoon. Sightseeing here involves approximately 1 and a half hours on foot and climbing of stairs. This evening, enjoy a sound and light show over the fort.



**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 8: Agra - Delhi**

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 drive to Delhi, where the rest of the day is at leisure.



*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.*

**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.

**Day 9: Delhi - Varanasi**

This morning, transfer to the airport to board your onward 90-minute flight to Varanasi. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel, approximately 45 minutes' drive. 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. In Varanasi, it would be unwise to wander around without your National Escort or Local Guide at night as there have been several reports of pickpockets.

*Please note: 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 in 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.*

#### **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 10: 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. This afternoon travel to Sarnath to visit the Buddhist sacred sites and take part in a fascinating silk weaving experience.



#### **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 11: Varanasi - Lumbini**

Drive from Varanasi to India's border with Nepal. After completing the border formalities, drive to Lumbini, where the rest of the day is at leisure. This will be a long day involving travel of approximately around 11-12 hours as immigration, customs and border crossing is involved. We would therefore recommend pre-purchasing snacks for the journey.



### Day 12: Lumbini

Take a rickshaw tour of this Buddhist pilgrimage site, passing numerous stupas, monasteries and temples as you go. Visit Maya Devi Temple, the exact spot where Siddhartha Gautama, better known as Buddha, was born and enjoy the tranquillity of the Monastery of World Peace.

### Day 13: Lumbini – Chitwan National Park

Drive to Chitwan National Park. On arrival, check into your jungle lodge and spend the rest of the day taking part in park activities. Your accommodation while in the park will be simple. Rustic huts blend with the natural environment nonetheless the facilities are humble; they provide comfy beds and hot showers. After checking into your hotel, a naturalist guide will hold an induction meeting and provide information on all the options available to you during your time here. These include jungle walks, canoe rides and bird watching, all of which are included in your tour cost.

#### Destination Information

**Chitwan National Park** – One of Asia's richest and the most spectacular National Parks, Chitwan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover a lost world of towering trees and twisting vines, of pre-historic rhinos and lumbering elephants, of crocodiles, pythons and deer, of brilliantly coloured birds and if you are fortunate - the superb Royal Bengal Tiger.

### Day 14: Chitwan National Park

Today you will take part in jungle activities provided by the lodge, with lunch back at the lodge. Please note that the program in Chitwan is subject to change according to local conditions and will be confirmed upon arrival. The activities are adjusted according to the property you will stay at, the length of your stay, the season and present weather conditions. During the jungle safari, you will be accompanied by an expert naturalist who will advise on safety procedures, we request you to respect their judgment at all times. If you wish to stroll in the forest, a guide will have to accompany you for safety.



A typical day in Chitwan National would include rising early for tea and coffee before a nature walk. Return to the hotel for breakfast followed by an elephant briefing and a visit to the elephant stables. Enjoy lunch and some free time before the afternoon program begins. Take a traditional dug-out canoe down the Rapti River and in the evening, enjoy a Tharu Stick Dance followed by dinner around the campfire.

### Day 15: Chitwan National Park - Bandipur

Today you will transfer approximately 4 hours to Bandipur Hill Station. Check into your hotel on arrival, the rest of your day is free for you to relax or begin exploring.



#### Destination Information

**Bandipur** - Untouched by modernization, and laced with abundance of ancient houses, temples of great significance, and historical architecture, this medieval-era town boasts festivals all year around, besides the plethora of cultural offerings.

### Day 16: Bandipur - Pokhara

Early this morning, start your Thani Mai Hike to enjoy the beautiful views of the Himalayas at sunrise. Soak up the fantastic panoramic views of the snow-capped neighboring mountains before returning to your hotel for breakfast. Later this morning transfer approximately 2 and a half hours to Pokhara where the rest of your day will be at leisure.

#### Destination Information

**Pokhara** - The finishing point for the famous Annapurna Circuit trek and the starting point for various other treks through the Annapurna Range. Pokhara became a popular tourist destination in the 1970s, with its laid-back setting and idyllic scenery. It has rapidly developed since then into a modern mountain resort and offers a last chance stop for trekking supplies. Yet it retains much charm, with its calm lakes and surrounding snowy peaks offering serenity to those who visit.

### Day 17: Pokhara

Drive approximately 30 to 40 mins to Khade Khola where you will start your hike to Kalabang Village, you will be walking for around 2 hours. During your time here, you will visit the village school, coffee plantation and a local home. Continue your hike down the hill and return to Pokhara. The rest of your afternoon is at leisure. Altogether, the time spent hiking today will be around 4 hours.



#### Destination Information

**Kalabang Village** - Situated at the height of about 1500m above sea level the village offers magnificent views of the snowcapped mountain ranges, hills, green vegetation, the shimmering Phewa Lake and the Pokhara valley.

### Day 18: Pokhara - Kathmandu

Transfer to the airport and fly to Nepal's vibrant capital city, Kathmandu. On arrival, the rest of the day is free to spend as you wish.

### Day 19: Kathmandu

Begin your explorations with a sightseeing tour of Swayambhunath Stupa and Kathmandu City followed by an exciting rickshaw ride through Indra Chowk and Ason Tole to Thamel Markets. In the afternoon, visit Boudhanath and meet with a Lama and visit the Pashupatinath Temple. Keep a firm hold of your cameras today 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 the Nepalese Customs section below for further information. 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.

#### Destination Information

**Durbar Square** - At the heart of the Old City is the UNESCO World Heritage listed Durbar Square, where there is a cluster of ancient temples, palaces and courtyards that date back to 12th and 18th centuries. The square is located on the site of Hanuman Dhoka Palace, which was the Royal Nepalese residence until the 19th Century.

**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.

**Boudhanath 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 Boudhanath Stupa is thought to have been originally built in 600AD, after the famous Tibetan King, Songtsen Gampo, converted to Buddhism.

**Pashupatinath Temple** - A Hindu temple of Lord Shiva situated 5 km 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.

**Thamel Market** - A popular tourist area filled with mountaineering shops, cafés and restaurants.

### Day 20: Kathmandu

Today you will have a sightseeing tour of Bhaktapur city, where you will visit a local Newari family. Learn from a master potter at a pottery workshop and take home your very own creation as a souvenir. In the evening, enjoy a Nepali farewell dinner and a traditional cultural show at a local restaurant.



#### Destination Information

**Bhaktapur** – Close to Kathmandu, Bhaktapur is full of vibrant cultures, colourful festivals, generations old craftsmanship and preserved old houses.

### Days 21-22: Depart Kathmandu

Any time before your flight will be at leisure. You will be transferred to the airport according to the departure time of your flight today arriving home the same or following day.

Late check-out is not included in our India 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.

## Journey to Kathmandu 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. 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.

Passports will be returned with your Final Documentation two to three weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15AUD courier fee 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. 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 & Nepal

Indian and Nealese 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 this 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!

### 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 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. 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.

### 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 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. Pre-flight allocation is not available on international and internal flight sectors.

**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 and 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 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 National Escort or 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 26<sup>th</sup> January, the Holi Festival 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (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 27<sup>th</sup> of October 2019.

If you are travelling within the below Nepali 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. The Holi Festival 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019 (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). Nepali New Year is celebrated on the 14<sup>th</sup> April and Dashain Festival on 19<sup>th</sup> October.

### 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 18 travellers in each group 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.

### Cultural Difference

India has many religions, cultures and histories. Foreign tourists, particularly female travellers, 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 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.

### 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.

### 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](http://www.weather.com)

### Luggage

All travellers 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 \$350AUD 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. In your Final Documentation an Optional Excursion Sheet will be included outlining the activities available in each city and local cost associated. 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.

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.

### 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.smartraveller.gov.au](http://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 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

**Last updated 29/03/19**

### Travelling on an Active Paced Tour

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

Visit [wendywutours.com.au](http://wendywutours.com.au)



We hope you are looking forward to what we are sure will be a trip of a lifetime. Before you embark on this adventure, we ask you to consider the points listed below that relate to our active paced tours. This will ensure you understand what is involved with an active paced tour and therefore help you decide if your chosen tour is right for you.

This is to ensure that your tour runs as smoothly as possible for you and your fellow tour members.

Please consider the following aspects of active paced tours prior to confirming your arrangements;

- ☐ While we believe that age is no barrier, please give special consideration to the fact that medical assistance and public infrastructure can be limited in these areas.
- ☐ There will be long periods of physical activity, including walking, climbing of stairs, in/out of boats. Tour participants who will travel with a cane/walking stick may come across difficulties. It is our experience that using a cane/walking stick in these areas where there are rough and uneven surfaces, stairs to climb and high altitudes, becomes difficult.
- ☐ Only limited meal options will be available. People with special dietary requirements should expect difficulties on these tours. Please understand that depending on the trip you are taking, you may be given very little or no meat.
- ☐ Your tour may include basic accommodation facilities including home stays, guest houses, truck stops and tented accommodation. This may mean, no or limited hot water, and no private bathroom facilities.
- ☐ There will be long periods of driving on often unsealed, rural and bumpy roads in vehicles ranging from tour coaches to local jeeps and canter vehicles.
- ☐ Altitude affects people in many different ways and a certain level of fitness is required in order to limit the effects. Please discuss how to manage altitude sickness with a health care professional.
- ☐ Overnight trains only have basic bedding in four berth compartments with limited or no ladder facilities to climb to the top bunk. You may be sharing with other tour members or locals.
- ☐ Some tours may have sightseeing en route to the next destination. Therefore participation is required or you will need to remain with the coach until the rest of the group has finished touring.

National Escorts/ Local Guides will endeavor to provide rest stops in your itinerary where possible. Please be advised that some days may have a more physical programme than others.

If you are comfortable with the above mentioned aspects of travelling on an active paced tour, we look forward to welcoming you on what is sure to be a unique and memorable experience.

However, if you have any hesitations please contact your valued travel agent or our reservations department to discuss the tour further or explore alternative options.