



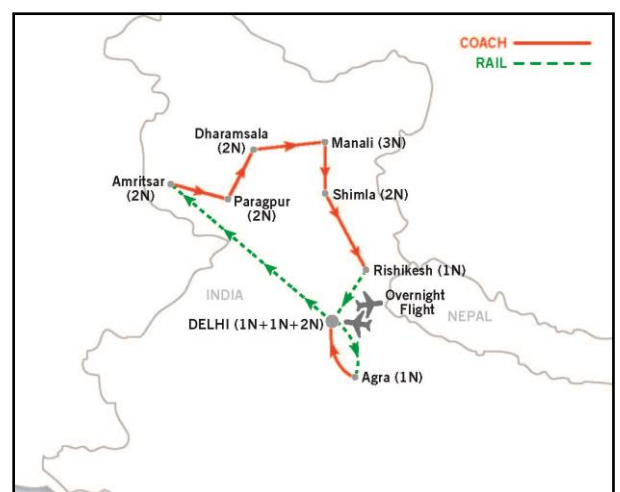
## Himalayan Heritage Trail Dossier

Classic Tour | 19 Days | Active

Traverse the foothills of the mighty Himalaya. Destinations en route are not only full of diverse culture but also boast spectacular views and abundant nature.

### Tour Highlights:

- **Delhi** - India's capital consisting of a lively mix of historical monuments, modern day skyscrapers and colourful local bazaars
- **Amritsar** - Gaze at the magnificent Golden Temple, one of the holiest of sites in the world
- **Agra** - Home to the Taj Mahal, the famous monument to love
- **Paragpur** - Explore India's first heritage village
- **Dharamsala** - A stunning hillstation home to the Dalai Lama and the exiled Tibetan government
- **Manali** - A paradise for nature lovers, admire the stunning mountain views
- **Shimla** - The capital of the state of Himachal Pradesh, nicknamed the 'Queen of the Hillstations'
- **Rishikesh** - A sacred city, nestled in the Himalayan foothills on the banks of the River Ganges



## Himalayan Heritage Trail 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

*Personal expenditures 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 are at your own expense.*

## Classic Tours

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of India 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 or Local Guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## Active

'Himalayan Heritage Trail' is an **active** tour. Active tours require a good level of fitness, as they are physically more demanding. They may involve hiking, and some travel to remote, high altitude areas where tourist facilities are less developed.

Our National Escort 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.

## Country Profile: India

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.

## Joining Your Tour

The tour is 19 days in duration including international flights. Travellers booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the starting point. Join the tour on Day 1 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 18 in Delhi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## Itinerary Changes

1. 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 whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.
2. The Taj Mahal is currently undergoing renovations to its exterior. The work is estimated to be completed by March 2018 and will be done in phases so that visitors to the Taj will still be able to experience the beauty of this architectural wonder.

## Important Information Regarding Flight Delays

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our India office on **+91 98 1899 0222/+91 98 1048 8398** (outside India) or **98 1899 0222/98 1048 8398** (within India) to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have your trip number, tour name (both included in your final documentation) and new arrival details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in India. This will ensure your National Escort/Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival. There is also a dedicated duty officer available 24 hours a day at the international airport, who can be contacted on **+91 81 3039 1236** if required upon arrival in Delhi.

If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in India as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on. Wendy Wu Tours will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival time

## Himalayan Heritage Trail Itinerary

### DAY 1: AUSTRALIA TO DELHI

Fly with Singapore Airlines to Delhi for an overnight stay. Your National Escort/Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Delhi International Airport in the Arrivals Hall tonight. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer (45 minute drive) to your hotel and check-in. *In the event of flight delays or changes to arrival times, please see the details above as to what to do in this circumstance.*

### **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 TO AGRA

This morning transfer to Hazarat Nizamuddin railway station to board the express train to Agra (duration approximately 1.5 hours). After checking into your hotel, tour the city of Agra, visiting the Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daulah and the impressive Agra Fort.

Later, view the magnificent Taj Mahal in all its glory as the sun is setting. Firstly, board your group coach and drive through the streets of Agra. No polluting vehicles are allowed within a 500m radius of the Taj Mahal complex. At a designated point, the group will disembark the coach and board smaller electric carts to continue to the entrance gate. After clearing security and baggage checks you will be

admitted to the complex. You will spend approximately two hours 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).

**Please note:** The Taj Mahal is currently undergoing renovations to its exterior. The work is estimated to be completed by March 2018 and will be done in phases so that visitors to the Taj will still be able to experience the beauty of this architectural wonder.

Today includes approximately 3-4 hours of easy sightseeing on foot.

### **Destination Information**

**Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daulah** - A Mughal mausoleum, often described as 'jewel box', and sometimes called 'Baby Taj' as it is regarded as a draft of the Taj Mahal.

**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.

**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 3: AGRA TO DELHI**

After breakfast, commence the 4 hour drive (206km) back to Delhi. In the afternoon, partake in some easy sightseeing in the city and visit Purana Qila and Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. Touring this afternoon will include about 2 hours of sightseeing on foot.

#### **Destination Information**

**Purana Qila** - Constructed by the Afghan King, Sher Shah Suri, Purana Qila is one of the oldest forts in India.

**Gurdwara Bangla Sahib** - One of the most prominent Sikh gurdwara, or Sikh house of worship in Delhi, it was once owned by Raja Jai Singh Amber. The eighth Guru Sri Harkishan had stayed here for a few months as a guest of Raja Jai Singh. Since then it has become a place of pilgrimage for both Hindus and Sikhs.

### **DAY 4: DELHI TO AMRITSAR**

Early this morning transfer to the railway station for your train to Amritsar (train duration approximately 6 hours). Upon arrival, proceed to your hotel for a two-night stay. Later in the afternoon, visit the splendid Golden Temple, one of the world's holiest sites – refer to the **Appropriate Dress** section below. Spend some time in the complex admiring the beauty of the temple. Touring at the Golden Temple will include 2 hours on foot.

Due to the importance of the temple, there are some rules that must be followed during your visit:

1. At every entrance to Sri Harimandir Sahib, there is a place to store shoes and any luggage, free of cost. Once you have passed over your belongings, you will receive a token that you will return in exchange for your belongings when exiting.
2. Please switch-off your mobiles before entering into the Sanctum Sanctorum.
3. Hands and feet are to be washed and heads are required to be covered before entering the holy complex.

4. Cigarette, Tobacco or other intoxicants are strictly prohibited inside the holy premises.
5. Photography is allowed only in the outer Parikarma.
6. It is strictly prohibited to eat in the Parikarma.
7. We suggest that you leave your valuables including jewellery and money at the hotel safe, otherwise they will need to be deposited at the counters provided in the Sri Darbar Sahib complex.

**[N.B: As our train is a day train, our 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 at all times please be aware of your belongings.]**

#### **Destination Information**

**Amritsar** - The centre of Sikhism, Amritsar was founded in 1577 by the fourth Sikh guru, Ram Das. Home to Sikhism's holiest shrine, the astonishing Golden Temple, Amritsar is an important part of Sikh history and culture. The city is also one of India's oldest and most fascinating cities divided into two parts; the old city, a swirl of narrow bazaars and historical buildings, and modern Amritsar, gleaming and bustling.

**Golden Temple** - The magnificent Golden Temple is the holiest Sikh shrine and a major pilgrimage destination for Sikhs all over the world. A small part of a large gurdwara complex, the Golden Temple sits on a rectangular platform, surrounded by a white marble corridor and encircled by pilgrims visiting the shrine. The water that surrounds the temple is a sacred pool known as the Amrit Sarovar, said to have healing powers and which the city is named after. The temple is a captivating blend of Hindu and Islamic architecture, crowned by a dome gilded with 750kg of gold.

### **DAY 5: AMRITSAR**

This morning enjoy a walking heritage tour of Amritsar (duration approximately 2-3 hours), visiting sites such as Durgiana temple, a local market and Jallianwala Bagh. Late in the afternoon, drive 1 hour (35km) to the India-Pakistan border to witness the fascinating Flag Lowering Ceremony. Due to security regulations, the coach will drop the group at a designated area and you will need to walk approximately 20 minutes to the boarder where you will view the ceremony and 20 minutes back to the coach after it concludes.

### Destination Information

**Heritage Walking Tour of Amritsar** - The walk takes you back in the time as you witness traditional trade and crafts being practiced in the same place and in the same manner as have been done for centuries. Be memorized by the famous intricately carved wooden facades and feel part of this beautiful and sacred city.

**Durgiana Temple** - A partial replica of the Golden Temple, the Durgiana temple is located outside the Lohgarh Gate. It is dedicated to the Goddess Durga and visited by devout Hindus.

**Jallianwala Bagh** - A public garden that houses a memorial to the massacre that took place on 13 April 1919 against nonviolent protestors by the British occupying forces.

**Flag Lowering Ceremony** - A daily military practise held at the Wagah Border of India and Pakistan, which is sure to be a highlight of your trip! The ceremony first began in 1959 and involves the security forces of both countries. Beginning at sunset, this remarkable ceremony begins with patriotic songs and a parade on either side of the border gates and ends when the flags are lowered, neatly folded and carried back to their respective camps.

### DAY 6: AMRITSAR TO PARAGPUR

Today embark on your exploration of the Himalayan hillstations of India! After breakfast, drive approximately 3-4 hours (120km) to Paragpur, India's first heritage village. In the afternoon commence a walking tour of the town, exploring the cobblestone streets and visit some local artisans. The duration of the walking tour will be approximately 2 to 3 hours.

### Destination Information

**Paragpur** - The first heritage village of India lies in Kangra valley in Himachal Pradesh. The village has retained much of its traditional character and charm with its cobbled streets and mud plastered and slate roofed houses.

**Walking Tour of Paragpur** - Walk down cobblestone streets that have retained a medieval essence and admire sun-baked houses, standing in close harmony to the wooden facades of the colonial style buildings. Wander a market, where you will have the opportunity to purchase hand woven shawls and blankets from local weavers and visit local silversmiths who offer a variety of handcrafted trinkets.

### DAY 7: PARAGPUR

Today explore the area surrounding Paragpur. Firstly, visit the temple Chintpurni (refer to the **Appropriate Dress** section below) before travelling to the nearby village of Dharamsala-Mahanta. Continue to Haripur to discover the fort and the tank located within. Lastly, tour the village of Guler. Driving between the sites today will take approximately 3 hours and touring will include 3-4 hours on foot.

### Destination Information

**Chintpurni** - A major pilgrimage centre, this Shakti Temple is famous for granting wishes.

**Dharamsala-Mahanta** - Explore the sleepy village where time has stood still. Visit the temple complex that features many fading Kangra wall paintings.

**Haripur** - Founded in 1664AD, Haripur is perched on a high ridge overlooking a deep valley. The town is best known for its historical fort. The fort is located idyllically situated and is surrounded on three sides by the Bangana River. View the carvings, sculptures and Kangra paintings located inside the fort.

**Guler** - Discover the charming village of Guler, the birthplace of Kangra painting in the early 18th century. Kangra paintings are well known for their lyrical content and is a branch of the Pahari style of painting.

### DAY 8: PARAGPUR TO DHARAMSALA

After breakfast this morning, depart Paragpur and drive approximately 1-2 hours (75km) to Dharamsala. Proceed to the hotel and check-in for a two-night stay. In the afternoon, partake in a cooking class where you will learn a few local recipes. In the afternoon, enjoy some time at leisure for independent exploration of the town. This evening there is an optional discourse with a Buddhist monk, which you can arrange at your own expense with your National Escort locally.

### Destination Information

**Dharamsala** - Dharamsala is located in Kangra Valley and against the Dhauladhar mountain range; it is a hillstation of picturesque natural beauty featuring a unique combination of Tibetan, British and Himachali cultures. Home to the exiled Dalai Lama and Tibetan government, Dharamsala is a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists.

**Cooking Lesson** - Visit a family home where you will participate in a cooking lesson and have lunch with the

family. Learn some recipes and have the opportunity to see the local culture and traditions up close.

**Discourse with a Monk** - The discourse can be arranged either at the hotel or at the Monastery at Dharamsala, depending on the convenience of the monks. During the discourse, you have the opportunity to engage in a discussion on various aspects of beliefs and spiritual practices based on teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha. The discourse is subject to availability of the monks, and a donation for the welfare of monastery is expected as payment for the discourse.

#### **DAY 9: DHARAMSALA**

This morning enjoy a yoga and meditation session, which will be led by local yoga instructor. After breakfast, travel to McLeod Ganj, a Tibetan suburb of Dharamsala. Spend the day discovering the area visiting some Buddhist temples and markets, Norbulingka Institute, Kangra State Museum, Dalai Lama Temple, Bhagsunag Temple, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Tibetan Medical Institute, the Tibetan Museum and St. John's Church. This morning includes 2-3 hours of easy sightseeing on foot.

In the afternoon drive to Dharamkot, a small village home to the local people of the Gaddi tribe. From here, you will partake in a short 1 hour and 15 minute (3km) trek to Naddi village. The trek travels moderate terrain and will include some uphill sections. In Naddi, admire the beautiful views of the Dhauladhar range before returning to Dharamsala.

#### **Destination Information**

**McLeod Ganj** - A Tibetan suburb of Dharamsala where in the holy Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government arrived to set up their base in the 1960s. It has since become the centre of Tibetan culture and Buddhism, with pilgrims from all over the world visiting year round.

**Norbulingka Institute** - A major centre for Buddhist teaching, the institute is dedicated to the preservation of the Tibetan art forms.

**Kangra State Museum** - Houses a fascinating collection of Kangra paintings.

**Dalai Lama Temple** - This peaceful temple complex is an important spiritual place for Tibetans.

**Bhagsunag Temple** - An ancient temple that dates back to the 16th century. The temple is dedicated to Bhagsunag, the snake god, and Lord Shiva.

**Library of Tibetan Works and Archives** - A fascinating cultural museum that houses sacred manuscripts, statues, Tibetan artefacts and books.

**Tibetan Medical Institute** - Also known as Men-Tsee-Khang, the medical Institute is also a university, clinic, museum and research centre. It was first established to preserve traditional Tibetan medicine and astrology.

**Tibetan Museum** - Using photos and videos, the museum depicts the story of Tibetan history, the Tibetan resistance and exile.

**St John's Church** - Laying in jungle outside McLeod Ganj, the neo-Gothic St Johns Church was built in 1852. Lord Elgin, a viceroy of India, was buried in the cemetery in 1863 and his wife, Lady Elgin, donated the Belgian stained glass windows.

#### **DAY 10: DHARAMSALA TO MANALI**

Say goodbye to Dharamsala today and travel approximately 7-8 hours (253km) to the scenic hillstation of Manali, stopping en route to visit the village of Kulla. Upon arrival in Manali check into your hotel for a three-night stay.

#### **Destination Information**

**Kullu** - A small village located next to Manali, Kulla is charming and well known for its apple orchards and wooden temples.

Manali altitude – 2,050m

**Manali** - Named after the sage Manu, who is thought to have meditated in the area. One of the most popular hillstations in India, Manali is located in the beautiful valley of the Beas River, with breathtakingly striking scenery. Admire the lush greenery and rolling mountains and relax in the cooler mountain climate, the perfect escape from the Indian summers.

#### **DAY 11: MANALI**

This morning discover the beauty of Parvati Valley, including the villages of Kasol and Manikaran. Later, explore the village of Naggar and visit the Roerich Art Gallery. Driving from site to site today includes approximately 7-8 hours driving, while sightseeing includes 2 hours on foot.

#### **Destination Information**

**Parvati Valley** - A beautiful valley located in the Kullu district, the valley features spectacular natural beauty.

**Kasol** - A haven of scenic beauty and untouched mountains, Kasol is a small hillstation located in the Parvati Valley.

**Manikaran** - Sacred to Sikhs and Hindus, the beautiful pilgrim town of Manikaran is home to several temples and gurdwaras. Many people travel to the town to pay obeisance and to bath in the hot springs.

**Naggur** - One of the most charming villages in Kullu Valley, Naggur was once the ancient capital of the Kullu kingdom. The town is home to Naggur Castle, built in 1460 and converted into a hotel in 1978, and some stone temples. Admire the superb views over the Beas Valley.

**Roerich Art Gallery** - The Russian painter, writer and explorer Nicholas Roerich settled in Naggur in 1928 with his family and stayed until his death in 1947. Their former home has been converted into a gallery; the lower rooms display some of his landscape paintings, many featuring the surrounding Himalayas. The upper rooms are preserved private rooms.

#### **DAY 12: MANALI**

This morning discover the city of Manali. Begin with a visit to the Hadimba Temple, one of the most important temples in the area, before continuing to the Vashisht Hot Water Springs. There springs are divided into two sections, one for males and one for females, and are popular amongst the locals. If you would like to take the opportunity to soak in the springs, it is suggested to wear conservative clothing ie t-shirt and shorts/pants over your swimwear.

End the tour at Old Manali Village where you will explore the area by auto-rickshaw. This afternoon is free at leisure to further explore the town. Sightseeing today includes approximately 2.5 hours on foot.

#### **Destination Information**

**Hadimba Temple** - Built in 1553, the Hadimba Temple is dedicated to the goddess Halima. The four storey wooden temple is 24m high and features intricate carvings on the doorframes and wooden façade.

**Vashisht Hot Water Springs** - Located in the small town of Vashisht, the hot springs are said to cure skin and joint ailments.

**Old Manali Village** - Step back in time as you enter Old Manali, which has the timeless feel of an Indian mountain village with houses of wood and stone.

#### **DAY 13: MANALI TO SHIMLA**

Today is a long driving day as you depart Manali and begin the 8-9 hour drive (260km) to another famous hillstation, Shimla. On arrival head to your hotel and check-in for a two-night stay.

#### **Destination Information**

Shimla altitude – 2,196m

**Shimla** - The picturesque capital of Himachal Pradesh was once the summer capital of British India. Spread 12kms along a ridge that overlooks terraced hillsides and cultivations, Shimla is magnificently covered in dense forests of oak, pine, fir and rhododendron.

#### **DAY 14: SHIMLA**

Today you will explore Shimla, nicknamed the 'Queen of the Hillstations'. Begin your day with a light trek to Jakhoo Temple. The trek will take approximately 1 hour and will travel over moderate terrain that is mostly uphill.

Explore the fascinating Himachal State Museum and the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies. In the late afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of Mall Road. Visit the Gaiety Theatre and the Ridge amongst other landmarks.

#### **Destination Information**

**Jakhoo Temple** - An ancient temple in Shimla that is dedicated to Hindu deity, Hanuman. It is located on Jakhoo Hill at a height of 2,455 m above sea level.

**Himachal State Museum** - An interesting museum that houses a large collection of paintings, sculptures, handicrafts and photos collected from all over the Himachal state.

**Indian Institute of Advanced Studies** - Originally built in 1888 as the summer residence of the British viceroys. The viceroys ruled the Indian subcontinent from Shimla for half of the year every year from 1888 until World War II. After the India's independence in 1947, the building became part of the estate of the President of India until 1965 when it was established as a residential centre for research in humanities and social studies.

**Mall Road** - The main shopping street in Shimla, the Mall Road is lined with restaurants and shops and is located in the heart of Shimla.

**Gaiety Theatre** - The magnificent Gaiety Theatre opened in 1887, the first performance coincided with Queen Victoria's coronation. The Victorian theatre has been beautifully

restored to its past splendour and now hosts visiting theatre companies as well as local drama societies.

**The Ridge** - The centre of all culture activities in Shimla, the Ridge is an open space situated along Mall Road. Referred to as the Ridge as it extends the ridge between two hills. Admire the traditional colonial architecture and the stunning views.

#### **DAY 15: SHIMLA TO RISHIKESH**

This morning say goodbye to Shimla as you make the 8 hour (290km) journey to the spiritual city of Rishikesh. Continue to your hotel and check-in for an overnight stay. Later in the evening, stroll 15 minutes to the Parmath Ashram, located on the banks of the Ganges River, where you will witness the Puja ceremony of Ganga Aarti this evening.

**Please note:** The Ganga Aarti takes place in the evenings, so please be prepared for 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.

#### **Destination Information**

**Rishikesh** - Located on the banks of the Ganges River at the foot of the Himalayas, the holy city of Rishikesh is considered the birthplace of yoga. A major pilgrimage spot for Hindus, Rishikesh is home to a large number of ashrams (places of spiritual learning and meditation) and all kinds of yoga and meditation classes. The city was made famous in the late 1960s, when the Beatles visited an ashram to learn to how to meditate.

**Parmath Ashram** - This ashram is ideally positioned on the holy banks of the Ganges, nestled in the towering Himalayas. The ashram also runs schools, hospitals, ecological programmes and disaster relief projects and played a major role during the Tsunami in the south of India.

**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 16: RISHIKESH TO DELHI**

Today you will explore the city of Rishikesh, visiting the Laxman Jhula, Omkaranand Ashram and Sivanand Ashram. Touring this morning includes 1.5 hours on foot. Late in the afternoon you will be transferred 1 hour to Haridwar railway station to board the train for Delhi (train duration 4-5 hours (18:15 to 22:45) approximately). Dinner will be

served on the train, but if you need additional snacks please purchase these the day before. Upon arrival in Delhi, you will be transferred to your hotel for a two-night stay.

**[N.B: As our train is a day train, our 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 at all times please be aware of your belongings.]**

#### **Destination Information**

**Laxman Jhula** - A well-known hanging bridge located across the Ganges. Legend says that Lakshman, the younger brother of Lord Rama, crossed the river at the same site where the bridge now stands. At that time, there was only a suspension bridge made of jute. The bridge became known as 'Lakshman Jhula'. With time, the jute bridge eroded and a new iron bridge was built along the same path in 1939.

**Omkaranand Ashram** - A major ashram in Rishikesh established in 1967 that specialises in Iyengar yoga. The ashram also offers classes and is involved in many charities and organisations in the area.

**Sivanand Ashram** - Founded in 1936 by Swami Sivananda, Sivananda Ashram is also known as Divine Life Society, which has more than 300 branches across the world. The ashram offers yoga and meditation classes as well as a hospital and bookshop.

**Delhi** - Delhi is split into two main sections; Old Delhi and New Delhi. Old Delhi is the area defined by the old city wall and is a maze of small alleyways and side streets. Old Delhi's bazaars are legendary; today the great wholesale bazaars of Chandni Chowk still retain a souk-like quality. Their narrow streets are lined with shops, whose goods spill out onto the pavements. New Delhi grew under British colonial rule and is characterised by the grandeur of 19th-century buildings and wide, tree-lined boulevards.

#### **DAY 17: DELHI**

Today 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. Continue to Raj Ghat, Qutab Minar, Humayun's Tomb and stop briefly for a photo opportunity at India Gate. In addition, drive pass the President's House, Parliament House and end the day at Connaught Place Markets.



Sightseeing includes visits to a mosque and Hindu temple – refer to the **Appropriate Dress** section below. Please note that women are only allowed to enter the mosque outside prayer session times.

#### Destination Information

**Red Fort** - Home of the Mughal emperor for many years, the fort is located in the centre of Delhi and houses a number of museums. View the fort as you drive past.

**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.

**Raj Ghat** - Located in a beautiful park, Raj Ghat is a memorial that marks the spot where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated following his assassination in 1948.

**Qutab Minar** - Built in the 12th century, this tower of victory is gracefully hand-carved along its entire height of 73m. We also visit the Iron Pillar, which has withstood the ravages of time and has not rusted after 1,500 years.

**Humayun's Tomb** - A landmark of Mughal architecture, the tomb was built in 1570 for the Mughal Emperor Humayun. Commissioned by his wife, it was the first garden tomb in India.

**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.

**Connaught Place Markets** - As coach is not allowed to enter this area, the group will be dropped off on Janpath, one of the main roads in Delhi. From here, it will be a 10-15 minute walk to the main section of Connaught Market where tourist shops sell traditional home wares, jewellery, books, clothing, saris and beads

#### DAY 18: DEPART DELHI

This morning is free at leisure. In the afternoon, you will be met and transferred to Delhi Haat for some last minute souvenir shopping. From Delhi Haat you will be met and transferred to the airport for your overnight flight home.

#### DAY 19: ARRIVE HOME

Arrive home today.

### HIMALAYAN HERITAGE TRAIL 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 a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least 6 months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Please be advised that all Visa Applications for India MUST be completed on-line at the VFS website: [www.vfsglobal.com/india/australia](http://www.vfsglobal.com/india/australia). Wendy Wu Tours will assist you with instructions. Once the form is completed, the application and passport must be sent to Wendy Wu Tours. Visas are valid for 6 months from the date of issue and allow you to stay in the country for up to 6 months. Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 70 days prior to departure. Applications will not be accepted within 50 days of departure. Passports will be returned with your final documentation 2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure. If you require your passport to be returned earlier, a \$15 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.

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

Call 1300 727 998 to speak to a Reservations Consultant

## 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 flavors. 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 fully inclusive Himalayan Heritage Trail group tour, from the groups' arrival until the groups' 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 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. We recommend that when it comes to Indian food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

## Accommodation

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/Local Guide.

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. 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 cannot be guaranteed.

## Transport

**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used during touring in Delhi and Agra.

**Transport in the Himalayas** – Smaller, non-air conditioned vehicles (which would hold either 4 to 8 passengers plus driver and or guide) will be used from Amritsar to Rishikesh, due to the narrow road conditions in the Himalayas.

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 below are approximations only.

Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in India and therefore people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving. If you have any concerns, please notify your National Escort/Local Guides.

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

**Trains:** This trip involves 2 day journeys in AC class cars – refer to your Travel Guide’s TRANSPORT section for more information. Getting on and off the trains in India can be quite disordered and amusing 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 National Escort/Local Guides.

## 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 29 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 only.

## Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry and India is no exception. To remove the uncertainty and stress of not knowing how much is appropriate to tip or to whom, Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy for our group tours where a nominated tipping amount is paid upon commencement of the programme by each tour member. This amount is stated in all group pricing, however it is not collected in your final payment received by Wendy Wu Tours.

This nominated tipping amount is to be given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour, who will then distribute it amongst your main service providers – guides, drivers and coach attendants – on your behalf during the tour. Any other tipping, such as tips for camera and video fees, bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion as are gratuities for additional requested special services. We encourage passengers to have a supply of small denominations of local currency to distribute for personal tipping.

The tipping amount is determined based on the total number of passengers travelling in the group. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the National Escort. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation, which is distributed 2 weeks prior to your tours departure.

## 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 15kgs and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 7kgs. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that Indian authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

During the tour from Amritsar to Rishikesh, luggage will be stored in the rooftop carrier on the top of your vehicle, which is water and dust proof.

## 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

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 week should be sufficient; however for those that cannot resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Optional tours may be offered in each city you visit during your tour at an additional cost. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide.

## 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.

## Cultural Differences

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 pants 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. The following itinerary will indicate when you need to consider this.

## 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 by deposit documentation via email. This includes important information and links to access the visa application form and instructions sheet online (if applicable). Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

**Updated: 17 March 2017**