



CHRISTMAS IN INDIA

Classic Tour | 15 Days | Physical Level 2

Delhi — Jaipur — Pushkar — Udaipur — Bundi —
Ranthambore — Agra - Delhi

Enjoy a festive season like no other. From the classic sites of India's Golden Triangle to discovering magical Udaipur and participating in Christmas Eve and Christmas Day festivities, this itinerary is packed with unforgettable moments.

- Discover the colourful bazaars of Delhi
- Enjoy a glass of champagne as the sun sets over the Taj Mahal
- Spot tigers in Ranthambore
- Discover the unique step wells of Bundi
- Enjoy a live musical drama – Mohabbat the Taj
- Soak up the romance of the city of Udaipur

TOUR MAP



CHRISTMAS OF INDIA 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 Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants

The only thing 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 check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

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

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

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

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boats and rickshaws throughout the tour
- There will be some uneven surfaces during the safari in Ranthambore which could make for a bumpy ride

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

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 15 days in duration including an overnight international flight in one direction as this is the most likely flight option from Australia.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to info@wendywutours.com.au so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 1 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 14 also in Delhi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Delhi

Meals: D

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.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



Destination Information

Delhi - As the capital of India, Delhi is the third largest city with a population of approximately 18 million people. 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

Meals: B, L, D

This morning the tour introduction will either be held in the hotel or on the coach.

After your breakfast we will embark on a full-day of sightseeing around Old and New Delhi, involving approximately 4 hours on foot.

Next, travel approximately 40 minutes to the aromatic Khari Baoli Spice Market and enjoy a rickshaw ride before visiting Jama Masjid. Continue to Lakshmi Narayan Hindu Temple, followed by a brief photo stop at India Gate. End your day with a visit to Humayun's Tomb and the Qutab Minar.



Destination Information

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.

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.

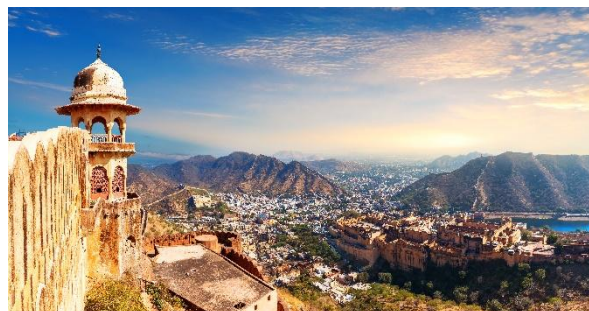
Qutab Minar – Built in the 12th Century, this tower of victory is gracefully hand-carved along its entire height of 73m.

Day 3: Delhi - Jaipur

Meals: B, L, D

Drive approximately 6 hours to Jaipur. On arrival visit the Turban Museum, enjoying a demonstration on Turban Tying and how to wear it. You will get to take these with you as a memento.

After lunch you will check in to your hotel, where you can relax until dinner.

**Destination Information**

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

Day 4: Jaipur

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, make a brief photo stop at the Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) from the outside. Tourists are unable to enter so you will view it from the busy road opposite. Next, take a jeep ride from the bus park to the entrance of Amber Fort. Please note that sightseeing here will be approximately 1.5 – 2 hours and there are a number of steps inside the fort.



This afternoon visit two of the city's top sights, the Maharaja's City Palace, still the home of the city's royal family today, and Jantar Mantar Observatory, a fascinating collection of wonderful instruments designed to measure the heavens.

Sightseeing at the Palace will be approximately 1.5 – 2 hours on foot and involves navigating some steps.

Later, pay a visit a nearby craft centre for the opportunity to try your hand at block printing and carpet weaving.

Destination Information

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

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

Maharaja's City Palace – the former Royal residence; part of the building has been converted into a museum, while the Royal family of Jaipur still uses the remaining sections of the palace.

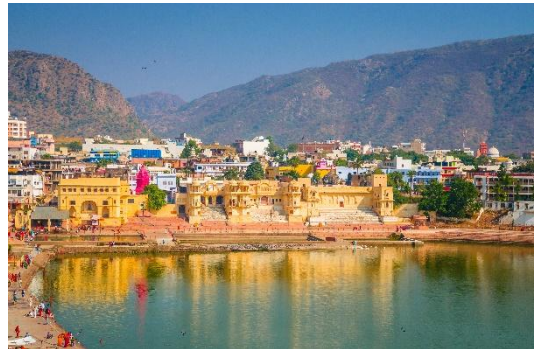
Jantar Mantar Observatory - The largest stone and marble crafted observatory in the world is located just outside the City Palace. The observatory has 17 large instruments, many of them still in working condition

Day 5: Jaipur to Pushkar

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, transfer approximately 3 hours to Pushkar. Upon arrival, take time to explore the local markets and admire the Brahma Temple before heading to your hotel for check-in.

Later today you will participate in a private religious ceremony on the Ghats of the Sarovar (lake). Pushkar Lake is considered one of the ten holiest sites in the world. You will also participate in the evening Aarti ceremony before returning to your hotel.



Sightseeing experience will take approximately 1.5 – 2 hours on foot and involves navigating some steps at the Temple & Lake.

Destination Information

Pushkar - The village of Pushkar lies 11km from Ajmer on the edge of the Thar Desert. At its heart is one of India's most sacred lakes, Pushkar Lake. There are 52 ghats around the lake and numerous temples. Apart from its religious significance, Pushkar is known for its 'Cattle and Camel' fair held every year in the festival month of Kartik (from October to November). It is one of the world's largest camel fairs, and apart from the buying and selling of livestock, it has become an important tourist attraction.

Brahma Temple - An important pilgrimage centre for Hindu. The temple is constructed of marble and houses a statue of Lord Brahma in the seated position.

Day 6: Pushkar to Udaipur

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, drive approximately 6 - 6.5 hours to Udaipur and check-in. Later this afternoon you will visit the Vintage and Classic Car Museum, showing a collection of some of the rarest classic and vintage cars. This museum is owned by the Royal Family of Udaipur and located in the premises of the Garden Hotel, outside the City Palace complex. It is in these gardens that you will sit down to a delightful High Tea before returning to your hotel.

**Destination Information**

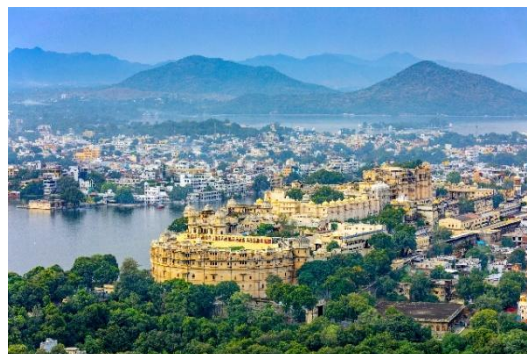
Udaipur - The origins of Udaipur are based on a legend which tells of a holy sage that Maharaja Udai Singh encountered while hunting in the foothills of the Aravalli Range in Mewar. The sage told the King to build a palace in that exact spot and it would be well-protected and so with this advice, Maharaja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

Day 7: Udaipur

Meals: B, L, D

Discover more of Udaipur today, starting with a drive around Fateh Sagar Lake. Next, visit the Folk Museum, Mewar Art Gallery, and the City Palace, before enjoying a cruise on Lake Pichola.

Sightseeing today involves approximately 2/5 – 3 hours on foot and there are a number of steps within the Palace complex.

**Destination Information**

Sahelion Ki Bari – A major garden in the northern part of the city, built for a group of 48 young women attendants who accompanied a princess to Udaipur as part of her dowry.

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

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

Day 8: Udaipur to Bundi**Meals: B, L, D**

Travel to Bundi, enroute visiting Chittor Fort and Vijay Stambh. One of the largest forts in India, Chittor sprawls across a hilltop overlooking the town of Chittorgarh.

Sightseeing today involves approximately 1 – 1.5 hours on foot and there are a number of steps within the Palace complex.

**Destination Information**

Chittor Fort - A world heritage site, whose origin has many theories and legends surrounding it.

Bundi - A town that is dominated by its immense fort. Within the fort walls is a beautiful palace, Badal Mahal, famous for its painted murals.

Day 9: Bundi to Ranthambore National Park**Meals: B, L, D**

After breakfast, spend the morning exploring the town of Bundi and discovering its unique step wells, as well as Taragarh Fort.

Afterwards, drive approximately 3 hours to Ranthambore and check-in to your hotel.

Please carry your passport with you for entrance into the park.

**Destination Information**

Ranthambore National Park - 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 10: Ranthambore National Park

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy morning and afternoon canter safaris in the national park for the chance to spot the local wildlife.

Each safari involves 2-3 hours on uneven and unsealed tracks.

Please bear in mind that there will be no bathroom breaks during the canter safaris. You will need to bring your passport each day to gain access to the park.

**Day 11: Ranthambore to Agra**

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer approximately 7 – 7.5 hours to Agra, making a stop enroute at Fatehpur Sikri, visiting Tomb of Chisti and Panchal Mahal Palace. Upon arrival in Agra, check-in to your hotel for a two-night stay.

Enjoy the festivities of Christmas Eve at your hotel, which take place between 7pm – 11pm. Festivities include a lavish Christmas buffet spread with live music and traditional Christmas goodies.



Tonight, you have the option to attend Christmas Midnight Mass at St. Mary's Church.

Destination Information

Fatehpur Sikri - Located 34km from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri was built by Emperor Akbar in 1569 after it was prophesised that the then childless Akbar would have sons if he moved his capital to the site. At great expense to the empire, the capital was moved here but sadly only occupied for 14 years before slowly being deserted and ruined after Akbar left the city due to a scarcity of water.

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

Day 12: Agra

Meals: B, L, D

Wake on Christmas Day with much excitement, as you head to the Taj Mahal. Here you will board small electric carts to take you to the entrance. You will have approximately 1.5 – 2 hours here to explore. For admission to the main mausoleum area, you are required to wear shoe covers (these may be provided on site, but please be prepared to bring an additional pair of socks). Next, visit Agra Fort, a majestic red sandstone fortress built by Emperor Akbar in the 16th century and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.



After enjoying a Christmas feast filled with lots of entertainment and celebrations, you will be taken to a rooftop restaurant to sip on champagne, while watching the sun set over the Taj Mahal.

To end off this magical Christmas Day, enjoy a live musical drama - Mohabbat the Taj - a show depicting the romantic love story of Emperor Shahjahan and his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. This is a true Bollywood experience.

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 favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.

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.

Mohabbat The Taj – A mesmerising show, which depicts the immortal love of Shah Jahan for his beautiful wife, Mumtaz Mahal, whose death during childbirth inspired him to build the Taj Mahal.

Day 13: Drive to Delhi

Meals: B, L, D

Drive 4 hours to Delhi where you will check in to your hotel. You have the day at leisure to explore or do last minute shopping before your farewell dinner tonight.

**Days 14-15: Depart Delhi**

Meals: B

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your overnight flight home, arriving the 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.



CHRISTMAS IN INDIA 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 six months validity left on it when you arrive back to Australia.

All guests travelling to India must complete a mandatory digital e-Arrival card 72 hours prior to their arrival. The form can be completed and submitted online at indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival/. Once completed, Travellers will receive a QR code to display upon arrival.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

Please note, the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

INSURANCE:

It is a condition of your booking that you are insured for the duration of your trip. We recommend comprehensive travel insurance to cover cancellation, medical requirements, luggage, repatriations and additional expenses. At a minimum, the policy is required to cover medical requirements including medical evacuations / repatriations. The choice of insurer is yours.

We strongly suggest you purchase insurance at the time you pay your deposit. This is because cancellation fees and charges are payable from that time. We may request you to provide evidence that you have taken out and paid for a policy to comply with this condition. If you fail to provide a certificate of currency of insurance within a reasonable time after our request, then this will be deemed a cancellation by you and standard cancellation fees will apply.

EATING IN INDIA:

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

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are well aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will usually be seated around a large table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional

‘family style’; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

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

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 you National Escort or Local Guides.

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. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, 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.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that 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 that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and India is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your National Escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. 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. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

TRANSPORT:

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

GROUP SIZE:

The group size on our Classic Tours is on average 21 passengers, with a maximum group size of 28. You may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. On our group tours we operate a seat-and-a-half policy, allowing you to travel in greater comfort.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A National Escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. 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.

RANTHAMBORE NATIONAL PARK SAFARI:

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

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5 kg. 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.

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

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

Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes. 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 defence 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.

CHRISTMAS IN INDIA:

Although Christians make up less than 5 percent of India's population, Christmas is a significant occasion in India. It has become quite commercialized, with people of all religions joining the festivities. You'll be able to find traditional Christmas cheer in many parts of the country.

Christians across India celebrate their faith and hope on December 25 with Christmas - the festival that marks the birth of Jesus Christ. Houses are cleaned from top to bottom in preparation for Christmas and decorations are brought out. The finest cutlery, crockery, and table linen are readied, brass and silverware are polished, and wreaths of holly, ivy, and mistletoe are put up.

Traditionally decorated Christmas trees wear strings of sparkling lights, glass baubles, tinsel, and a star right on top; Giant Stars, Fairy Lights, Red, Gold and Green Streamers, Golden Trumpets and Bells, Pinecones Painted in Gold and Silver, Santa figures, snowmen, and Angels, and Paper Lanterns adorn homes and streets, welcoming all at Christmas time. Red, white, and pink Poinsettias – the Christmas flower – provide brilliant splashes of colour in gardens and on front porches and verandas. Special care is given to setting up beautifully decorated Christmas cribs that hold nativity statues of the Holy Family and other characters from the Bible. Hanging up the Star of Bethlehem outside one's front door is of the utmost importance. As is the ritual lighting of candles.

A typically well-laden Christmas table will have traditional Christmas fare - Christmas cake and plum pudding; delectable confections such as doughnuts, mince pies, tarts, toffees, chocolate fudge, jujubes, guava cheese and banana cheese, rosa cookies. All these 'labours of love' are made weeks in advance, stored away safely, and served on Christmas Day.

Wining and dining are very much a part of Christmas celebrations - ginger wine, rum punch, grape wines etc. are still prepared at home by many people. Visitors arrive with gifts and are served all the celebratory fare along with a glass of wine - mulled wine is a Christmas evening favourite.

Church services play a big role in the celebration. Preparations typically start on Advent Sunday. Churches start planning their celebrations and mass, and families start preparing weeks in advance. Carol-singing competitions are organized in churches, community centres, and various other venues. Choir recitals, choral fests, and door-to-door carol singing, plays, game, parties, and other fun-filled activities are organized by cathedrals and churches. Christian clubs hold special Christmas dinner dances and parties with live bands in attendance.

But the most enduring and memorable tradition of Christmas Eve is the Midnight Mass. Churches start their services with carol singing, after which the Mass is held. After the service everyone socializes, feasting together, and wishing each other a Merry Christmas. On Christmas morning, churches hold mass; Families and friends enjoy Christmas lunches and dinners; giving thanks for all their blessings at the end of another wonderful year.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smarttraveller.gov.au 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 including 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.

Updated: October 2025