

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

The Golden Triangle

7 days

India - Trip code GTI



The Golden Triangle

Travel with us through the cultural heart of vibrant northern India. We explore the region's Golden Triangle: from the narrow lanes of Old Delhi to the city of Agra and Jaipur in the Rajasthan Desert. We watch sunset at the Taj Mahal, visit the abandoned red sandstone settlement of Fatehpur Sikri and discover the Amber Fort and City Palace of Jaipur, the Pink City.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Delhi** - A chance to explore Old Delhi by rickshaw and metro
- ★ **Agra** - Visit the incredible Taj Mahal at sunset
- ★ **Fatehpur Sikri** - Stroll through Akbar the Great's famous deserted city
- ★ **Jaipur** - Explore the sprawling Amber Fort, the incredibly accurate Observatory and the beautiful Palace of the Winds

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

TRIP PACE:

Full on

Full on paced trips are for travellers who like their holidays packed with activities and experiences, moving on quickly from place to place with lots of early starts and long, busy days. Some may find them tiring, but others get a buzz from packing their precious holiday-time as chock-a-block full of new experiences as possible!

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour in Delhi. Visit the Qutub Minar and Humayun's Tomb

Our journey begins in the Indian capital today, where later this afternoon there will be a briefing outlining the plans and itinerary for the coming days ahead. This afternoon we include a city tour of the sights of New Delhi. The Indian capital has long been a phoenix rising again and again out of its own ruins. New Delhi was the creation of the British Raj of the 30's and includes the Lok Sabha (Parliament) and India Gate which we will view on our way to explore the Qutub Minar and Humayun's Tomb.



Accommodation: Royal Plaza Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore Old Delhi's winding streets by cycle rickshaw

Compared to New Delhi, the Old City is much closer to the image conjured up by Rudyard Kipling. This morning, a local guide will show us around Old Delhi by metro and on foot, culminating with a jamboree of deafening barter at Chandni Chowk Bazaar. A short cycle rickshaw ride then takes us to the Jama Masjid mosque. There will be an opportunity for some free time in Old Delhi in the afternoon.




Accommodation: Royal Plaza Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 3 - Drive to Agra and visit the Taj Mahal at sunset


We leave the capital this morning and drive to the nearby city of Agra. On arrival we visit to one of the most universally recognised buildings on earth. The Taj Mahal was built by the emperor Shah Jahan to honour the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz, and was once described by Rudyard Kipling as '...the embodiment of all things pure'. Built of marble and decorated with the most exquisite inlay work, it required the labours of 20,000 men and is estimated to have cost something in the region of 3 million rupees (at today's prices around \$70 million). We'll watch the sun set over this iconic masterpiece, before checking in to our hotel.



Accommodation: Hotel Clarks Shiraz (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast


DAY 4 - Discover Agra's dramatic fort and the Baby Taj Mahal


This morning there is the option to return to the Taj Mahal to watch the sun rise over this incredible building. Later in the morning we begin our sightseeing tour of Agra. Once the capital of the mighty Moghul Empire, the city is littered with some of the country's most opulent and spectacular buildings and one particularly fine example is its imposing fort, whose grandeur and importance has seen it inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Built by Emperor Akbar and then embellished by his grandson, Shah Jahan, this was once a great city, with palaces, mosques and halls all lying behind the protective embrace of 20m high walls. We will also visit is the exquisite Itimad-ud-Daulah on the east bank of the river, a 17th century tomb built for the Emperor Jehangir's chief minister, also known as the Baby Taj.



Accommodation: Hotel Clarks Shiraz (or similar)

 Premium Hotel

 Swimming pool available

 Single room available

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Visit Akbar's city of Fatehpur Sikri enroute to Jaipur

Today we head west to the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri, lying close to the western boundaries of Agra. Founded in 1569 and, for a brief time the capital of the Moghuls under Akbar the Great, the city was deserted just 16 years later following the political unrest. Today it remains a ghostly testament to the power of 16th century Moghul India and is a perfectly preserved example of an imperial court. Amongst the many treasures left in the city are the 5- storey Panch Mahal, believed to have been a pleasure pavilion for the ladies of the harem, and the stunning lotus shaped carved central pillar of the Diwan-i- Khas (Hall of Private Audience), a magnificent column that supports the vaulted roof of Akbar's old debating room. The city also features a central courtyard that contains a pachisi board, where the emperor played an Indian equivalent of chess, using real slave girls as pieces. After exploring we continue our drive and make our way to Jaipur where the afternoon is free to relax. There is the option to spend some time strolling

through the markets, Jaipur is known for jewellery and there are many bargains to be had.



Accommodation: Shahpura House (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Explore the hilltop Amber Fort and test sundials at Jaipur's observatory

The capital of the state of Rajasthan, Jaipur was India's first planned city and is considered by many to be one of the finest planned cities anywhere, the usual Indian urban chaos being replaced by wide streets and formal gardens. This morning we will visit the once mighty Rajput capital of Amber (traditionally known as Amber) and its magnificent fortress. Lying at the mouth of a rocky mountain gorge, overlooking Maota Lake, the fort is a stunning creation of white marble and red sandstone that contains a dazzling mix of Hindu and Muslim ornamentation, including the breathtaking mirrored halls of the Sheesh Mahal. It was from these towering walls that the Kachchawahas ruled over their kingdom for some 7 centuries, until its importance was eclipsed by nearby Jaipur. We will also take in the unique Hawa Mahal, the famous Palace of the Winds, whose extraordinary façade of red and pink sandstone towers some 5 storeys above the city streets. Built at the end of the 18th century its 935 windows were designed to allow the women of the harem to gaze out on the city scene below without themselves being seen, the openings also creating a refreshing breeze (hawa), which kept the palace cool even in the hot summer months. We will spend some time exploring the lavish and well-preserved City Palace. Here, we will find a fine collection of textiles, costumes and armoury. Later this afternoon, we will visit the extraordinary Jantar Mantar - a star-gazing observatory built by Jai Singh, the great Maharajah-astronomer.



Accommodation: Shahpura House (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Tour ends in Jaipur

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



Why book this trip

This classic trip around north India's cultural triangle is ideal for those who want to experience some of India's incredible sights in a short period of time. As well as exploring dramatic forts and palaces from the Moghul period there is time to experience the organised chaos of India, sample delicious curries and wander through exotic spice markets.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 6



Transport

Bus
Rickshaw



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

2 nights standard hotel
4 nights premium hotel

Trip information

Country information

India Holidays & Tours

Climate

There is considerable variation between the different regions of India but, in general, the climate is tropical. Summer temperatures on the plains are very hot, but cooled by the South-West Monsoon, which lasts from June- September. During these months it can be very wet and therefore very humid. At altitude, temperatures can become quite cool at night even in the summer and may drop below freezing between December and February so warm clothing is necessary. In the winter, northern and mid India can be very cool, with cold evenings, so warm clothing, including plenty of layers, are essential. The south of India remains warm and sunny during the winter months.

Time difference to GMT

+5

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Catholicism, Hindu, Islam and Sikhism

Language

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

In general only lightweight clothing is needed during the day, but bring a warm sweater for early mornings and during winter evenings Nov/mid March (esp. Dec/Jan, when a windproof jacket, warm layers, gloves and hat are also recommended). Hotel heating arrangements are not on a par with UK standards and from December to February thermals are also recommended. Casual clothes are the most practical: tight fitting garments, brief shorts and skirts should be avoided, since they attract unwelcome attention. Waterproofs and or an umbrella may be useful for early season.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes or trainers and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. We recommend a holdall or rucksack for ease of getting on and off buses and please remember, you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

A torch, good quality sunglasses, insect repellent and high factor sunscreen are all useful to have with you during this trip.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly you should allow approx. £15 for gratuities for local staff.

Country Information

India Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price

£6

Dinner price

£8

Beer price

£1.4

Water price

£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Indian Rupee Recently new 500, 1000 and 2000 rupee notes have been bought in to circulation and as the old notes are no longer accepted there have been some cash flow issues. You don't need to worry about being given old notes as it's very easy to tell the difference, the new notes are pristine in comparison with most Indian money which is fairly tatty.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP/US\$ are the best currency to change into local currency.

Where To Exchange

The Indian rupee is a restricted currency and it is best not to obtain in the UK as rates are very poor. You can either change money at the airport on arrival or in major towns during the tour. Your Tour Leader will advise you on the best places in each town. Both GBP and USD cash are easy to exchange at the airport and at hotels however you will be restricted to changing £60 cash at a time and it's not possible to change money at these locations using a credit or debit card.

ATM Availability

ATMs are available in most large cities in India but they are very limited elsewhere so please do not rely on this.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very rarely, only in the larger outlets.

Travellers Cheques

Opportunities to exchange are limited.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Rickshaw

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

India: Holders of passports endorsed 'British citizen' may be eligible for the e-Tourist Visa to enter India. The visa can be applied for through the official Indian government visa website only - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>. Please check all eligibility criteria that can be found on the website but important points are listed below - You must be arriving into one of 24 selected entry points which can be found via the official Indian Government website link above. However, you can exit from any of the authorised immigration check posts in India. Passports must have at least 6 months validity from the date of arrival in India and at least two blank pages for stamping. The visa application will take approximately 4 days to process. It is valid for 60 days from the date of arrival in to India, and double entry is permitted on the e-Tourist visa. You can only obtain 2 e-visas for India in a calendar year. The visa costs \$75. Biometric data will be collected on arrival in India. Whilst the online form offers a relatively quick way to apply for a visa, a number of applicants have reported difficulty in completing the form. Travcour will complete the on-line visa on your behalf for a fee of £25 + the visa cost. Please contact them directly if you wish to take up this service. If you are not eligible for the e-Tourist Visa, please refer to VFS Global to apply for your Indian visa - http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/how_to_apply.html. If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of

how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

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Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

India Holidays & Tours

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth> and from your local healthcare provider.

