

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Mughal Highlights
9 days

India - Trip code MG



Mughal Highlights

On this cultural trip around India's Golden Triangle, we experience the bustle of Delhi, marvel at the beauty of Agra's infamous Taj Mahal and explore the regal architecture of Jaipur. Along the way, we enjoy a rickshaw ride through the famous ornithologist's paradise of Keoladeo National Park, witness Rajasthani village life in rural Karauli and search for Bengal tigers in Ranthambore National Park.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Delhi** - Ride a rickshaw through the winding streets of Old Delhi
- ★ **Agra** - Watch the sun rise over the beautiful Taj Mahal
- ★ **Karauli** - Visit the imposing royal palace; Sleep like a Maharajah in heritage accommodation
- ★ **Ranthambore** - Search for the elusive tiger on two included game drives
- ★ **Jaipur** - Explore the famous 'Pink City', with its rich architecture and bustling bazaar

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

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:

12 - 18

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. Explore New Delhi's wide boulevards

After checking in to our hotel and meeting the rest of the group, a local guide will accompany us on a tour 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 1930s. On our tour, we will view the Lok Sabha (Parliament), India Gate, and the Rajpath buildings. We will also explore the Qutub Minar and Humayun's Tomb, set in peaceful gardens away from the often chaotic Delhi traffic.



Accommodation: Treebo Royce Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Explore Old Delhi's narrow lanes. Drive to Agra

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 before our afternoon drive to Agra, which will take about four hours. Our conveniently-located hotel in Agra will be our base for the next two nights.



Accommodation: Utkarsh Vilas (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Watch the sun rise over the magnificent Taj Mahal

This morning's early start is rewarded with the spectacular sight of the sun rising over the Taj Mahal during our visit. Over 300 years have elapsed since the construction of what is arguably the world's most perfect and poetic building, yet its beauty and symmetry seem unscarred by age. Created by Shah Jahan as a funerary monument to his favourite wife, Mumtaz, it took 22 years to build and cost a fortune. The Great Moghul lies beside his beloved under the white marble dome. After our visit, we will continue to Agra Fort. Built by Akbar the Great, it contains the incomparable Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque). The rest of the day has been left free to explore Agra at your own pace. You may choose to visit the Baby Taj on the east bank of the river or re-visit the Taj Mahal.



Accommodation: Utkarsh Vilas (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 4 - Spot birds in Keoladeo National Park. Drive to Karauli

This morning, we continue our journey west and soon reach the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. Founded in 1569 and abandoned scarcely 16 years later, it is a perfectly intact example of Akbar's imperial court. Among the many noteworthy buildings is the five-storied Panch Mahal, probably a pleasure pavilion for the ladies of the harem. In the centre of the courtyard is the Pachisi Board, where the emperor played a game like chess, with dancing slave girls as pieces. Perhaps the finest structure of all though is the lotus-shaped carved central pillar of the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience). Later in the morning we reach the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur. Formerly a royal duck-shooting reserve and now a World Heritage Site and ornithologist's paradise, the park is best visited at dawn or dusk. We will explore its 12 square miles of lakes and marshlands by cycle rickshaw. Offering a safe habitat for large numbers of breeding waterbirds and migrants, over 300 species have been sighted. We hope to see herons, storks, geese and maybe even the huge and rare Siberian crane. After leaving the park we continue to Karauli, via Mahuwa and Hindaun. Our drive will take approximately four hours, but is broken up with plenty of stops in local villages en route.



Accommodation: Hotel Bhanwar Vilas Palace (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 5 - Join the daily arti ceremony at Karauli's Royal Palace

Founded in 1348, Karauli is a holy town which has been strongly fortified by its rulers throughout history and is famous for the pale red sandstone wall which surrounds it. Legend has it that the ruling family were descendants of Lord Krishna, one of the most loved gods of Hindu mythology. Our family-run heritage hotel is an accommodation highlight here, encouraging us to feel like we have stepped back in time to the days of the Raj. We hope to be able to ride on camel-drawn carts from our hotel to the 600-year-old palace which forms the imposing highlight of this town. Used as a residence by the royal family until 1950, the palace has now been abandoned by them. These days it is mostly occupied by monkeys and geese. It is said that geese have been here since the days when they were used as a warning system against any intruders. After visiting the palace, we may also be able to explore other points of interest in the town, such as the Madan Mohanji Temple.



Accommodation: Hotel Bhanwar Vilas Palace (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 6 - Take a game drive in Ranthambore National Park

After a relaxing start this morning, our drive to Ranthambore will take about two hours. On arrival, we check in to our accommodation before setting off for an afternoon game drive, where we have an opportunity to view tigers in the wild. Ranthambore National Park was declared a wildlife sanctuary in 1957, although it was still used as a hunting reserve until the early 1970s. It became part of the Project Tiger scheme in 1974 and, today, is home to over 40 of the remarkable beasts. We hope to see tigers roaming among the woodlands and cooling off in the lakes. We may even be lucky enough to see them hunt. Aside from its more famous residents, the park is also home to sloth bear, langur, striped hyenas, marsh crocodiles, pythons and Ganga soft-shelled turtles. There is also the chance to spot a myriad of bird species, including crested hawk eagle, crested serpent eagle, jacana, parakeet and white-breasted kingfishers. Aside from its rich wildlife, the park's beauty is also noteworthy. Once part of the magnificent jungles of Central India, it comprises of rivers, lakes and forests that nestle among a surrounding girdle of steep cliffs and rocky outcrops.



Accommodation: Raj Palace Resort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 7 - Search for tigers at dawn before driving to Jaipur

This morning, an early start affords us more chances to spot tigers on our second game drive in Ranthambore. The tigers are usually most active early in the morning, before the heat of the day forces them to take shelter. Later this morning, we make our way to beautiful Jaipur. Our drive will take about three to four hours, broken up with stops in local villages. Sometimes called the Pink City, Jaipur was first painted terracotta pink by Maharajah Sawai Ram Singh to celebrate the visit of Prince Albert in 1853. On arrival, we'll take a sightseeing tour to include a visit to 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. We will also explore the Old City, with its fine gates set into the pink walls.



Accommodation: Traditional Haveli (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Visit Jaipur's Palace of the Wind's and Amber Fort

Today we will visit the Palace of the Winds, a five-storied facade built around 1760, which features on many an India postcard.

Afterwards, we will drive to the Amber Fort. This impressive hilltop fortress possesses what must be the world's finest Chamber of Mirrors and affords glorious views of the surrounding plains. This afternoon has been left free to explore more of Jaipur in your own time. You may choose to visit one of the famous bazaars which are bursting with delights, from marble statues to antique textiles; traditional print blocks to local musical instruments.



Accommodation: Traditional Haveli (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



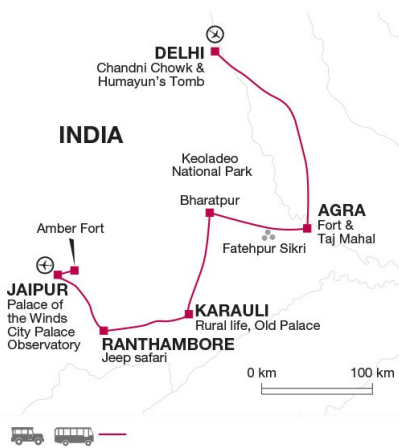
Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Tour ends in Jaipur

Our tour ends this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 8
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 3



Transport

Bus
4WD
Rickshaw



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Driver(s)



Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel

Trip information

Country information

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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

Hindi and English.

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Some free time has been allowed for you to explore on your own or with your travelling companions.

Clothing

From March through to November the weather will be warm and lightweight clothing is recommended. Conditions in December through to February will be cooler, and will require warm clothing mainly for early morning and evenings although please note that midwinter does see occasionally very cold spells and hotels rarely have heating arrangements compatible with UK standards so a

thick fleece is necessary. Local people may be offended by western styles of dress. Brief shorts, tight fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women. Neutral coloured clothing is best for the game drives in Ranthambore.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own baggage - so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

A torch is useful in case of powercuts/emergencies. Binoculars are useful for game/bird viewing.

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

In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow for £30.

Country Information

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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 brought 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, 4WD, Rickshaw

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Accommodation in India is as varied as the country itself. On our tours we stay in a mix of hotels, heritage properties, camp sites and homestays. Standards do not equate to standards in the UK and it's best to approach each type of accommodation with an open mind. Service can be slow in places especially when travelling with a group. For the most part hotels do not have heating so in the winter months it can be chilly and if you feel the cold you may wish to ask for extra blankets. Hot water is not always available 24 hours a day in some of the smaller properties, and with a group staying you might find if you are showering last you may miss out on the hottest water. On this tour we stay in the Maharajah's mansion in Karauli where the rooms are furnished with antiques and are all different. The atmosphere of faded grandeur takes one back to the days of the Raj. In Jaipur we stay in a simply furnished converted merchant's house known as a haveli. We stay in a family run hotel in Bharatpur, whilst in Delhi and Agra we use larger, conventional style hotels.

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.

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.

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.

Included activities

Tiger Safari permit requirements Ranthambore National Park is closely managed by the Indian Authorities. The number of vehicles permitted to enter the park at any one time is restricted and all game drives must now be booked and paid for well in advance. We recommend you book as early as possible in order to have the best chance of securing a space on a game drive. In order to secure a booking we must provide your passport copy and full payment for the safari at the time of booking. Once a game drive has been booked no changes are permitted and the payment is non-refundable. In order to proceed with bookings we require the following:

A scanned copy of your passport - you must carry your passport during the game drive and if you renew your passport before travelling then you will need to take both passports with you. We book all of our game drives in shared jeeps, with a maximum of 6 passengers per jeep with a driver and naturalist guide. On occasion we will be sharing jeeps with non-Explore passengers. We will purchase seats for all passengers as soon as permits become available, usually 4 months prior, after this point it is not always possible to secure additional spaces. We cannot guarantee the operation of any game drives until the necessary permits have been purchased. We aim to purchase the permits as soon as they are put on sale, whilst this is usually at 120 days before the date of the game drive on going changes to the booking system means that we cannot guarantee this.

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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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider.
