

EXPLORE!

BIG 15 SALE

Family Taj and Palaces
9 days

India - Trip code FMG



Family Taj and Palaces

India is truly a captivating country to visit, there is possibly no other country on earth that challenges the senses and is so totally addictive; creating memories that truly stand the test of time. Enjoy this fascinating introduction to northern India as we explore the bustling streets of Delhi, search for Bengal Tiger in their natural habitat and visit the magnificent Taj Mahal at sunrise. We also visit a hilltop fortress, stay in villages on the desert plains of Rajasthan.

SUMMER ITINERARY - During the summer months Ranthambore National Park is closed so there is no option to take a jeep safari in search of tigers. Instead we spend time in Karauli, staying in an old Maharajah's house and taking a camel cart ride to explore the former Royal Palace.

TRIPLE ROOMS

This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Agra** - Visit the incredible Taj Mahal at sunrise
- ★ **Bharatpur National Park** - Spot birdlife from a cycle rickshaw
- ★ **Pachewar** - Discovering a typical rural village and stay in a heritage fort
- ★ **Jaipur** - Explore the Amber Fort and use the Observatory's giant sun dial to check the time
- ★ **Pushkar** - Ride camels and climb up to Savitri Temple for sunset
- ★ **Delhi** - Explore the wide streets of New Delhi and the winding market lanes of Old Delhi

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:

14 - 20

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; city tour of New Delhi

Arrive in Delhi and check in to our hotel. 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 our tour includes a look at the Lok Sabha building (Parliament), India Gate, the Rajpath and Qutb Minar. We plan for a quick turnaround after arriving at the hotel to get out and explore the city however if you wish to relax after the flight it is possible to opt out of today's sightseeing and relax at the hotel.



Accommodation: Hotel Jivitesh (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Old Delhi sightseeing; visit Agra Fort

Compared to New Delhi the Old City is much closer to the image conjured up by Rudyard Kipling. We travel by cycle rickshaw to its hub at Chandni Chowk Bazaar, a jamboree of deafening barter and a wonderful introduction to the 'real' India. The major sights nearby are the Jami Masjid Mosque and we pass by the Red Fort on our way out of the city. We drive to Agra which takes approximately three hours. In the afternoon we plan to visit Agra Fort, built by Akbar the Great, which contains the incomparable Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque). Before returning to the hotel we will get our first sight of the Taj Mahal in the evening light.



Accommodation: Hotel Amar (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Taj Mahal tour, onto Keoladeo Ghana National Park and Karauli

This morning we aim to visit the Taj Mahal, the world's most perfect and poetic building, at sunrise. Over 300 years have elapsed since its construction, yet it stands today unscarred by age; its beauty and symmetry seemingly beyond man, time and space. Created by Shah Jahan as a funerary monument to his favourite wife, Mumtaz, it took 22 years to build (1630-52). The Great Moghul lies beside his beloved under the white marble dome. Inlaid with precious gems, the building cost a fortune. Later Shah Jahan moved his capital to Delhi before being overthrown by his son, Aurangzeb. After breakfast we will drive to the entrance of Keoladeo Ghana National Park. Formerly a royal duck-shooting reserve and now an ornithologist's paradise, the sanctuary is best visited either at dusk or dawn. Covering 12 square miles, some 7000 acres are under water: the lakes and marshlands offer a safe habitat for large numbers of breeding waterbirds and migrants. More than 300 species have been sighted, among them herons, storks, geese and the huge and rare Siberian crane. We will be taken on a birdwatching tour by cycle rickshaw and we hope to see some of these magnificent birds. This afternoon we will head 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



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 4 - In Karauli. Walk through town with afternoon camel cart ride to Karauli Fort

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

DAY 5 - Drive to Pachewar with afternoon visit to local villages for cooking demonstration

This morning there is chance for an optional game drive before we drive to Pachewar (approximately 4 hours drive). A small village, Pachewar is famous for cenotaphs, blue pottery kilns, metal toy makers and interesting surroundings. It is a lively place that was once ruled by Khangarot Rajputs. The caretaker of Khandar, Thakur Anoop Singh Khangarot, had captured the fort of Ranthambor from the captivity of Marathas and annexed the fort to the state of Jaipur. Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh I of Jaipur bestowed upon him the fief of Pachewar. After that, the nobles from the Khangarot clan of Rajputs ruled Pachewar. We will be staying in a family run heritage hotel, Pachewar Garh. This fort with its huge ramparts, turrets and gates, was built about 300 years ago and bears testimony to its rich heritage. After checking in, we will spend the afternoon exploring the village by foot visiting the local temple and a village home where we have a cooking demonstration which gives a great opportunity to meet local families and sample first hand traditional rural life.



Accommodation: Pachewar Garh Fort (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Drive to Pushkar with opportunity to climb up to Savitri temple

From Pachewar we drive to Pushkar (approximately 3 hours). This popular lakeside town has a wonderful atmosphere and gives us a real insight into rural India. This evening it will be possible to climb up to Savitri temple to watch the beautiful sunset views.



Accommodation: Hotel Master Paradise (or similar)



Simple Hotel



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Camel trek; drive to Jaipur

This morning we leave the bus behind and take a camel trek to the Brahma Temple. This traditional method of transport has been used for centuries and is a great way to meet some of the locals. This afternoon we will then drive to Jaipur. The drive will take about 5 hours although there is always something new or different to see along the roadside in rural India. There is an optional puppet show at the hotel this evening or you may wish to see a Bollywood movie at the local cinema.



Accommodation: Mandawa Haveli (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Dinner

DAY 8 - Full day in Jaipur. Visit the Amber Palace and Fortress.

Today, we drive the short distance to the foot of Amber Palace and drive up to the gateway. This impressive hilltop fortress possesses what must be the world's finest Chamber of Mirrors and also affords glorious views of the surrounding plains. We will visit the palace after which we will return to Jaipur. Sometimes called the Pink City, Jaipur's palaces and fortified walls were first painted terracotta pink by Maharajah Swai Ram Singh to celebrate the visit of Prince Albert in 1853.

This afternoon we will take a city tour with our Explore tour leader. We will visit the lavish and well preserved City Palace with its fine collection of textiles, costumes and armoury and the Palace of the Winds, a 5-storied façade (built about 1760) which has been the subject of countless Indian posters. Jai Singh, the great Maharaja astronomer, built his extraordinary (and very accurate) stargazing Observatory (Jantra) here. The Old City has several fine gates let into the pink walls, and there are many opportunities for photos and shopping.



Accommodation: Mandawa Haveli (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Train to Delhi

We have a very early start this morning as we take the train back to Delhi. On arrival we are free for last minute sightseeing or picking up some souvenirs at the Chadni Chowk bazaar.



Accommodation: Hotel Jivitesh (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Tour ends Delhi

Our tour ends in Delhi this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Family information



Taj Mahal



Amber Fort, Jaipur

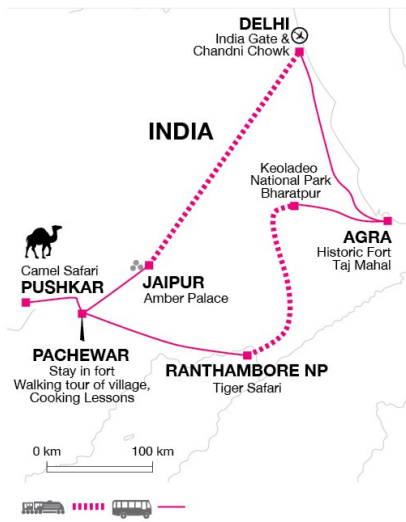
Indian Odyssey: Arriving in India, whether for the first or tenth time, is a real adventure. Tuk tuks, taxis and rickshaws jumble for space on the roads in what, at first, appears chaotic but on closer inspection works like a carefully choreographed dance. You'll never forget the look on your children's faces, eyes out on stalks at the sights, sounds and smells and sheer awe of this truly beautiful country. Discover the desert landscapes of Rajasthan and the trio of cities that make up The Golden Triangle. India is a country your children will remember forever.

Triple rooms: This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on all night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Average Age: As a guide we have identified the actual average age of the children who have travelled on this trip over the last 5 years, to help you decide whether it's the right one for your family. The average age on this trip is 11 years old, this trip is suitable for children of all ages.

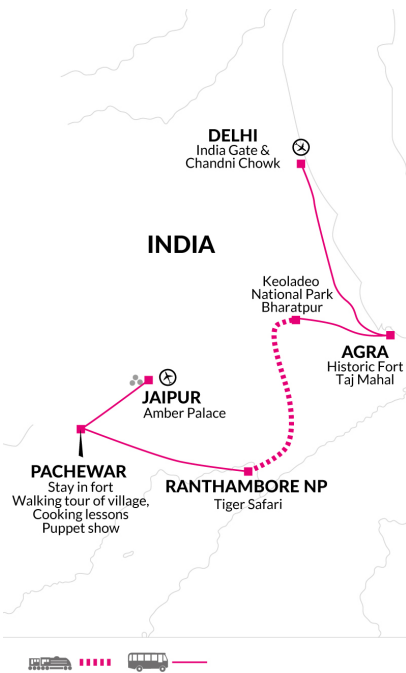
Minimum age

11



Why book this trip

India is an amazing place and this adventure combines the historic Taj Mahal and Amber Fort. This holiday is for families who enjoy discovering new cultures and regions of the world and want to immerse themselves into its cuisine, people and traditions.



2019 version is 9 days and finishes in Jaipur.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 9
Lunch: 1
Dinner: 3



Transport

Bus
4WD
Rickshaw
Train



Trip staff

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



Accommodation

8 nights standard hotel
1 nights simple hotel

Trip information

Country information

India

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

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

A selection of optional activities are listed below to help you budget for your Family adventure. Whilst the basic tour price you pay before you travel includes a great selection of highlights, we have also built in free time to allow you the flexibility to choose from a carefully selected range of additional excursions and activities or take time to relax, the choice is yours. At certain destinations along the way there may be several options to choose from and it may not be possible to fit all the activities in; your Explore Leader will be able to give advice on which are the most suitable for your family.

Day 1: Delhi

Craft museum - Entrance fee is INR 200 per person plus transport to and from the museum (transport at additional cost)

National rail museum - Weekday entrance fee is INR 50 per person, a reduce rate of INR 10 applies for children aged under 13. Entrance fees are double over weekends and government holidays. Transport to and from the museum will be at additional cost. Akshardham Temple - free entry. The temple is closed on Mondays and on national holidays. Transport costs to and from the temple will cost extra.

Day 7 or 8: Jaipur

Discover the old city with Pink City Rickshaw Tour:

Embark on a journey to discover the city of Jaipur like never before. Today, vroom around the city on a pop pink coloured e-scooter with a woman driver at the helm. The Pink City Rickshaw Company identifies women from underprivileged backgrounds and trains them how to ride e-rickshaws and conduct tours of the Old City. Aged between 18 and 45, these women hail from diverse socio-economic scenarios and are fighting stereotypes to hit the road. Explore the city's iconic structures like Hawa Mahal and navigate your way through the famous bazaars - Johari Bazaar, Maniharon ka rasta as you browse through the block-printed accessories and handcrafted souvenirs. Approximate cost INR 1000 per person, transport to and from the old city will be at additional cost.

During the winter months a puppet show is provided by the Mandawa Haveli hotel in Jaipur lasting approx 45 minutes. There is no charge however a tip at your discretion is appreciated.

Bollywood movie between INR 350 and INR 450 per person plus transport costs.

Clothing

In general only lightweight clothing is needed during the day. Local people may be offended by western styles of dress and brief shorts, tight fitting clothing etc, should be avoided by both men and women.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes for walking, and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

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

Equipment

Binoculars are useful for bird viewing. Also a 2 litre water bottle, a torch, insect repellent, sunhat and high factor suncream.

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 region, tipping is a recognised part of life across the service industry. Local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided.

To assist with this your Explore Leader may organise a group tips kitty for included activities and meals, they will then account for kitty use throughout the tour.

For this we suggest £30 per family member.

For all non-included services and meals on your trip please tip independently at your discretion.

Country Information

India

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, 4WD, Rickshaw, Train

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.

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.

Family swimming

All the hotels have swimming pools

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.

Price Guarantee

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 and Passport 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 £30 + 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.

Please note that for this trip we require a photocopy of your passport a minimum of 120 days before departure. These are required to apply for the safari permits, which are needed to take part in the tiger safaris in your itinerary. It is essential we have your passport copy before this time, as without this we may not be able to secure the permits before you depart.

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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

Non refundable permits

India

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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.
