

EXPLORE!

Book with confidence

Tribes and Temples of Orissa

INDIA - TRIP CODE TTO

BEYOND

Why book this trip?

Visiting Orissa is like taking a journeying back in time, from the 'first people' tribes, to the temples and monasteries of the Buddhist and Hindu eras, to the time of the Raj. As well as exploring incredibly spiritual temples in Bhubaneshwar and Puri we will meet the tribal people at the Adivasi Tribal Fair, and mix with them in colourful markets and remote villages.

- **Adivasi Mela** - Mix with members of the tribes of Orissa at the annual tribal fair where their cultures and traditions are celebrated
- **Local markets** - Wander around colourful remote markets where people from the Bonda and Dongria Kondh tribes come - their only regular interaction with the wider world
- **Joranda** - Witness the holy men of the Mahima Dharma religion as they perform their evening rites with

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INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 12
Lunch: 4
Dinner: 5



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



TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat
Flight
Train



ACCOMMODATION
12 nights
comfortable hotel
1 nights simple
overnight train



TRIP PACE:
Full on



GROUP SIZE:
8 - 14

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join trip in Kolkata (Calcutta); explore the Kalighat area.

Arrive in Kolkata (Calcutta) . Once the capital of British India, Kolkata has had a turbulent past. It was central to the struggle for Indian independence and thousands of Bengali refugees came here at the start of the 1900's. It is a city of striking contrasts and can be overwhelming initially, but the unusual sights, pungent smells and the chaotic sounds of the country's second largest city are an experience unique to India.

For those arriving on time today our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 2pm for the welcome meeting and to start to acquaint ourselves with the city, taking a short walk around the Kalighat area. One of the oldest parts of the city, it is densely populated and busy, with an interesting temple dedicated to the goddess Kali.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Kolkata Airport (CCU), which is approximately one hour from the hotel.

Please note that if you wish to join the walk around Kalighat today, you must arrive at the hotel by 2pm. If you are booking your own flights, we recommend giving yourself at least one and a half hours to clear the airport. From the airport to the hotel is around one hours' drive, so therefore the latest your flight can arrive is 11.30am. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.



ACCOMMODATION:

Lynq Cico Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Explore Kolkata's temples and historic buildings

Today we explore this fascinating city with a tour of some of its major sights. We will visit St John's Church and the many historic Raj buildings around Dalhousie Square, the Jain temples, Mother Theresa's home and the magnificent marble dome of the Victoria Memorial, where the sumptuous grandeur of European and Moghul influences come together in a blaze of white marble. We also visit the clay modellers' village of Kumartuli where the potters spend all year creating a wealth of images and idols for the annual festivals and, as the time approaches for the models to be prepared for the upcoming rituals, the streets are filled with an overwhelming display of brightly coloured and richly attired idols.



ACCOMMODATION:

Lynq Cico Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Fly and drive to Dhenkanal, visit the Mahima Holy Men of Joranda

We take the morning flight to Bhubaneshwar and then continue by road to the small town of Dhenkanal. The drive will take around five to six hours with stops at some interesting villages on the way: Nuapatna is a small village where the majority of the inhabitants make a living from the looms they operate in their home workshops, selling their textiles at local markets; Sedabarni village is famed for its Dhokra metal work, using a casting technique that has existed in India for more than 4000 years. The technique involves creating artefacts from wax which are then used to make a clay mould. The wax is melted away and replaced by molten metal before the clay is broken to reveal the final piece of art. Subjects often include animals and tribal people.

We'll reach Joranda, the centre of the Mahima Dharma religion, in time to see the late afternoon ceremony. Founded by Mahima Swami in the 1800's, the religion shunned the elitism of Hindu Brahmanism, opposed the caste system and embraced those from lower levels of society. Its followers worship a single, formless god and believe in universal kindness, non-violence and freedom from greed. An hour before sunset, the holy men of the religion, clad only in saffron loin cloths, practice rites involving fire, chanting and prostrating before the setting sun. Followers of the religion from nearby communities will join them and receive blessings from the holy men.

This evening we spend the night in the Maharajah of Dhenkanal's palace. With the atmosphere of an aristocratic homestay rather than a hotel, we'll be welcomed by the estate's staff and even the Maharajah and Maharani themselves if they are in residence! All the rooms are part of the original palace, and as such are all very different to each other, with the furnishings from years gone by giving us a wonderful sense of the past.



ACCOMMODATION:
Dhenkanal Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 4 - Drive to Bhubaneshwar visiting Udayagiri and Ratnagiri monasteries en route

A three hour drive will bring us to the Udayagiri and Ratnagiri Monasteries. Active between the 7th and 12th centuries, the site is composed of stupas, temples, statues, carvings and monasteries. We spend a couple of hours exploring before continuing for two to three hours to Bhubaneshwar, often referred to as 'temple city', and the capital of the state of Orissa.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hindustan International Bhubaneswar (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Explore the 'temple city' of Bhubaneshwar and visit the Tribal Fair

With over 500 temples, the city of Bhubaneshwar certainly earns its nickname of 'temple city' and is referred to in old Hindu scriptures as one of Lord Shiva's favourite places. Indeed, the name of the city is derived from Shiva's Sanskrit name, Tribhubaneswar which means 'lord of three worlds'. We'll take a leisurely walk through an area that has over 100 temples, including some of the most important of the region. We'll see the elaborate Lingaraja Temple, the largest in the city, which has intricate carvings of various Hindu deities, and a rare Brahma temple, located on the edge of the Bindusagar River. There are many legends to explain why there are very few temples dedicated to Brahma, even though he is one of the 3 main gods in Hinduism. Some suggest that as the creator of the universe he has done his job so there is simply no need to worship him, others point to darker reasons, such as Brahma being worshiped by demons or that he has been cursed never to be worshipped because of his unacceptable behaviour.

In the afternoon we'll start to learn about the ethnic minorities of the region with a visit to the excellent tribal museum before making our way to the Adivasi Mela. Adivasi translates as 'original people' and reflects the fact that the tribal people are the first inhabitants of the area, and of the Indian subcontinent. Each year their cultures are recognised at a 'mela' or fair, held in Bhubaneshwar, where people from most of the 62 tribes come to celebrate their unique cultural identities. There is a craft market, and a wide range of activities such as performing arts and cultural shows. The mela runs for two weeks each year from Jan 26th. The trip starting on February 3rd will visit towards the end of the festival and although the fair may not be as busy as earlier, it will still provide us with a rare opportunity to see many of the tribal people and experience something of their culture.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hindustan International Bhubaneswar (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Drive to Puri via Dhuli and the village of Pipli

Just outside of Bhubaneshwar, Dhuli Hill is a peaceful spot located on the banks of the River Daya, and the site of the infamous battle of Kalinga. Here, in 262 BC, the Emperor Ashoka's army, allied with the Mauryan Empire, won a very bloody confrontation with the state of Kalinga, with the loss of some quarter of a million lives. After seeing the horrors of war, the Emperor famously converted to Buddhism and renounced violence. He inscribed pillars, carvings and rock faces all around his kingdom with

messages of peace and tolerance, and teachings of Buddhist Dharma, or law. There are 33 of these inscriptions remaining today, with a particularly interesting one carved in to an elephant shaped rock at the site of this important battle.

On our way to Puri we stop at the village of Pipli. Established in the 10th century to accommodate the craftsmen who made the large Applique (patchwork embroidery) umbrellas and canopies for the Jagannath Temple in Puri, the village still carries out the same function today, as well as making more everyday items such as wall hangings and lanterns used at Diwali.

Puri is one of the four holiest cities in India, a pilgrimage site for Hindus, and home to the 12th century Jagannath Temple, named for Lord Jagannath, the 'Lord of the Universe' and a form of Vishnu. The English word juggernaut is derived from this deity and refers to the massive, unstoppable chariots that are used in the temple's processions which would reputedly crush devotees under their wheels in years gone by. Only Hindus are allowed inside the temple but we can walk around the outside and wonder at the architecture, carvings and buildings, including the one of the world's largest kitchens. Here, 56 varieties of vegetarian food are cooked daily as offerings to Lord Jagannath, and following strict rules prescribed in ancient Hindu texts. The food is then shared amongst the needy and some of it is sold in the temple's Ananda Bazaar which is next to the eastern gate and considered to be a very auspicious place to consume the temple food.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Holiday Resort (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

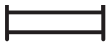
DAY 7 - Discover the Konark Sun Temple and Chandrabagha fishing village

This morning we'll take an hour's drive to nearby Konark Sun Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site built in 1250. The temple is in the shape of a giant chariot and the stone wheels are sundials that are said to be able to tell the time to an accuracy of a single minute. Legend has it that the temple emits an aura of great power, which local stories attribute to two very powerful magnets hidden in the structure that used to allow the king's throne to hover in front of impressed crowds.

Near to the temple we'll visit a fishing community at Chandrabagha beach and see how the fishermen use traditional boats and methods to make their living from the sea.

There'll be some free time during the afternoon. You may like to wander along Puri's long sandy beach, or return to the Jagannath Temple to explore more of the complex and the streets around it.





ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Holiday Resort (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Boat ride on Chilika Lake, drive to the tribal belt and Phulbani

Chilika Lake is the largest coastal lagoon in India and the second largest in the world. It is a haven for migratory birds, especially from October to March when the lake plays host to over 160 species including white bellied sea eagles, purple moorhen, flamingos, and storks. There are also around 150 Irrawaddy dolphins in the lake, although in such a vast area these can be difficult to spot. The shores of the lake are dotted with small communities that fish the lake from their traditional wooden boats. Just after dawn we spend an hour and a half exploring the lake before beginning our journey to Phulbani and the tribal heartland of Orissa. The drive is around six to seven hours including stops for lunch and comfort breaks.



ACCOMMODATION:

KP Salunki (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 9 - Walk through tribal villages and drive to Rayagada

A two hour drive this morning will take us to the starting point of a four kilometre walk through villages inhabited by the Kondh people. Like all the tribal groups of Orissa, they are indigenous to the subcontinent and pre-date the Dravidians and Aryans that the majority of the Indian population descend from. The Kondh are the most numerous tribe and are split in to various subsets. Today we'll meet the Kutia Kondh, who can be distinguished by their tattooed faces, a tradition that began with the arrival of European colonists to in an attempt to make the women of the tribe less attractive and prevent assaults.

This tradition has only recently ceased and the youngest person we are likely to see with a tattooed face will be in her early 20s. Most Kondh villages have a place to sacrifice animals to the gods of the hills before planting a new crop, or after harvesting a successful one. In the past they used to practice human sacrifice, known as Meriah, and it was considered honourable to be sacrificed on behalf of the community. Their ancient belief system is based on animism and the worship of nature and ancestors, although today many aspects of other religions have been adopted, and some tribal people have converted completely to Hinduism, Christianity or Islam.

We continue to drive deeper in to the tribal belt, heading for Rayagada. On the way we stop for a picnic lunch, and then wander around the colourful weekly market at Kotgarh where we will find more Kondh people as well as people from the nearby villages.

A note on visiting the tribes: The tribal people whose villages we visit today, and who we will meet at the markets, have limited interaction with the wider world. Your local Leader and local guide will work carefully to ensure that their sensitivities are considered and that we do not do anything to cause offence or to disrespect their way of life. You may find the tribes a little more reticent than the majority of Indian people, but by following the leader's and local guide's advice regarding interaction and photographs, you will get a rare and special glimpse into their fascinating cultures.



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Sai International (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 10 - Visit the Chatikona market where the Dongria Kondh come to buy and sell their goods

Dongria means 'hills' and refers to the fact that the Dongria Kondh live at the higher altitudes and worship the mountain God 'Niyam Raja'. Once a week they descend to trade at the local market at Chatikona. The girls and boys of the tribe leave their families once they reach adolescence, living in separate dormitories until they get married. The groom has to pay a 'bride price' for the honour of marrying and this may include a period of time when he has to work for the bride's family for free. The ladies have quite distinctive dress with combs in their hair, three nose rings and colourful necklaces.

The location of the Chatikona market is next to a train line and we plan to take a local passenger train most of the way to our next destination, Similiguda, with a packed lunch from the hotel - a journey of around three hours. There is no possibility to reserve seats and it is likely that we will have to stand for the first few stops but we will be rewarded with a truly local experience. The train trundles through beautiful countryside, stopping at many small rural stations while people board and alight with their loads from the market. The service can be unreliable so we will have the option to drive if we need to.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Lemon Castle (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 11 - Visit Onukudelli market and see the Bonda tribe and the nearby Duduma Waterfalls

The Bonda tribe live high up in the hills and their only regular interaction with the outside world is at the Onukudelli market where they come to buy provisions and sell the liquor they produce, walking many miles through the hills to get there. It is thought that their culture has changed little in the last 1000 years. The society is matriarchal and boys generally marry at around 10 to 12 years old, their brides usually six to 10 years older. As with the Kondh, the groom has to pay a bride price, which the bride might have to repay if they divorce. The dress of the women is quite distinctive with thick silver bands around their necks and long strings of colourful beads that cover most of their torsos. Their heads are shaved and covered with a cloth and another piece of cloth, called a 'ringa', goes around the waist. The men wear less interesting attire, but carry their bows and arrows with them, even to the market. These are used mainly for hunting but also for self-defence.

After a couple of hours in and around the market we visit the nearby Duduma Waterfall. We'll be near the top of the falls, able to look down as the waters crash to the green valley below - a great spot to enjoy our picnic lunch in delightful natural surroundings before driving back to the hotel.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Lemon Castle (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 12 - Drive to Visakhapatnam and take the overnight train to Kolkata

We have a long drive of around six to seven hours today, passing through beautiful countryside and small villages before arriving in to the port city of Visakhapatnam, the largest city of Andhra Pradesh. There'll be time for a quick look around and dinner on the beach before boarding the Coromandal Express overnight train. Travelling along almost the entire coast of Orissa, the train arrives mid-morning in to Kolkata's Howrah Junction railway station, the biggest and busiest railway station in India.



ACCOMMODATION:
Overnight Train from Vizag to Kolkata



Grade: Simple Overnight Train



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Free afternoon in Kolkata

We arrive in to Kolkata late morning, and after checking in to the hotel the rest of the day is free for you to relax before your journey home or explore more of the city. You may like to take a cruise on the Hooghly River, enjoy a walk of the old colonial areas or visit the impressive Dakshineswar Kali temple.



ACCOMMODATION:
Lynq Cico Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 14 - Trip ends in Kolkata (Calcutta)

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Kolkata.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Kolkata at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive

a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Kolkata Airport (CCU), which is around one hour from the hotel.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and 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.

Kolkata - Dakshineswar Temple, Hooghly Cruise, City Walk

Clothing

Bear in mind that the area is tropical with high humidity. Light weight clothing is needed all year round

with some warmer clothes for cooler evenings, particularly in winter (November-March) in the Nilgiri Hills. Due to the high chance of rain between October and December, it is advisable to take a rain jacket or umbrella during this time. Casual clothes are the most practical: tight fitting garments, brief shorts and skirts should be avoided, since they attract unwelcome attention. Shoes must be taken off for temple visits and you must always cover up arms and legs when going inside. You may want to take an old pair of socks to the temples as the floor can get very hot and difficult to walk on.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember hotel porters are not always available, so don't overload yourself. Soft bags are preferable.

Equipment

A torch is useful in case of powercuts/ emergencies. We advise you bring a water bottle for day to day use.

Tipping

Explore leader

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. However, you might want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline

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, your leader may organise a group's tips kitty for included activities and meals and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow GBP55, approx. 4'700 Indian Rupees for group tipping.

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

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	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£10	£3	£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Indian Rupee Recently new 500 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, Boat, Flight, Train

Accommodation notes

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.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety 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 citizens, check the latest Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice.

Please refer to our COVID-19 entry requirements page for any country-specific conditions of entry. Whilst we strive to update this on a regular basis we recommend you also check the FCDO website for the latest advice on entry requirements in this fast-evolving situation. Information can change at any time.

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: Visas are required for citizens of the UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada and can be obtained in the form of an e-visa. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

The e-visa can be applied for through the official Indian government visa website only - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/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 28 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. Visa applications will take approximately 4 days to process.

There are different validity visas and the costs are as follows:

30-day validity (travelling between April and June) - \$10

30-day validity (travelling between July and March) - \$25

1-year validity - \$40

5-year validity- \$80

Those applying for a 30 day electronic visa can only apply within 30 days of arrival for your visa to be valid. Furthermore double entry is permitted and you can only obtain two 30-day visas in a calendar year.

Please note these costs are subject to frequent change so you should check on the official Indian

government visa website mentioned above. Biometric data will be collected on arrival in India.

If you are not eligible for the e-Tourist Visa, please refer to VFS Global to apply for your Indian visa - https://www.vfsglobal.com/india/uk/how_to_apply.html

Whilst the online form offers a relatively quick way to apply for a visa, some applicants have reported difficulty in completing the form. If you do require assistance, then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. They can complete the online visa on your behalf for a fee of £30 + the visa cost. 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 be able to apply 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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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.

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.

Transport Information



Travelling on an Indian train is a fantastic experience, with millions using the rail network every day it is the perfect opportunity to meet local families.

For all the train journeys on our trips, we will reserve your seats/berths in advance in 2nd class with air conditioning. Whilst we'll try to ensure the group is all together, due to overwhelming demand and the system for booking train tickets in India, it may not always be possible to have everyone in the same carriage and some reservations may be in 3rd class. In such cases our Tour Leaders will help everyone to find their seats and ensure you get the most out of your journey. For overnight trains, each berth is separated by curtains and has 4/6 bunk beds. Bedding (sheet, blanket and pillow) is provided but you may wish to bring your own sleeping liner for added comfort. Train travel in India is safe and civilised but for added security whilst you sleep it may be a good idea to bring a bike lock for your bags. If you do not wish to carry one with you, your tour leader can help you to purchase one locally before your train journey.

Please note that in January train journeys can sometimes be affected by fog. This may result in some last minute changes to the itinerary. In this eventuality we will endeavour to stick to the itinerary as closely as possible and will cover any extra costs incurred.

In order to make reservations on Indian trains and guarantee the smooth operation of your trip, we require your full passport details. It is important that we receive these details as soon as possible so we are ready to make the arrangements as soon as train tickets are available to buy.

Why book this trip

On the east coast of India, Orissa, also known as Odisha, stands out as a particularly fascinating place to visit. The tribes of the region have been around for many thousands of years and are as culturally distant from the modern world as you can imagine. We'll join them at the annual tribal fair where they meet to celebrate their individual cultures, and visit them in villages and at local markets. Orissa also has some of India's most important spiritual and religious sites including the centre of the Mahima religion and the holy city of Puri, which helps to make a visit to the area an exciting and varied experience sure to appeal to anyone that has a love of the subcontinent.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS