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Cycle India - The Golden Triangle

INDIA - TRIP CODE CIR

CYCLING

Why book this trip?

Explore the cultural heart of vibrant northern India on this cycling holiday. Discover Rajasthan's impressive Moghul architecture, visit the incredible Taj Mahal and look out for tigers in Ranthambore National Park.

- **Indian villages by Bike** - Cycle through the back-roads and villages of rural Rajasthan
- **Wild India** - Game drive in Ranthambore National Park to seek Tigers
- **Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Jaipur** - Explore the majesty of the Moghuls and the Rajput princes
- **Diwali Festival of Light** - 24th of October 2022 while the group is cycling to Karauli



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 9



TRIP STAFF
Explore Tour Leader / Cycle guide
Assistant Cycle Guide
Bike Mechanic
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



TRANSPORT
Bus
4WD
Bicycle



ACCOMMODATION
9 nights
comfortable hotel



CYCLING GRADE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
10 - 16

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join tour in Delhi. Optional afternoon sightseeing tour

Arrive Delhi and check-in at the hotel. Delhi is a fascinating mixture of old and new. Steeped in history and at the same time buzzing with the comings and goings of modern life.

For those arriving on time today our Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 12pm for the welcome meeting. After the welcome meeting there is an optional sightseeing tour of Old Delhi, visiting Jama Masjid mosque which is one of the largest and most well known in India and Chandni Chowk market place, built by Shah Jahan who also created the Taj Mahal. Drive through India Gate and see the government buildings, before returning to the hotel.

If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL), which is a one hour drive from the city centre.

Please note that if you wish to join the optional Delhi sightseeing tour today, you must arrive at the hotel by 12pm. 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 30 minutes' drive, so therefore the latest your flight can arrive is 10am. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information as soon as you catch up.

We will begin our cycle journey tomorrow and over the coming days we will be covering on average some 56 kilometres a day, spending up to six hours in the saddle.



ACCOMMODATION:

Ashok Country Resort (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Drive to Agra. Visit Agra Fort, sunset at the Taj Mahal

This morning we leave Delhi behind and drive for about four hours heading south to Agra. Once the capital of the mighty Moghul Empire, the city is littered with some of the country's most opulent and spectacular buildings and one particularly fine example is its imposing fort, whose grandeur and importance has seen it inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Built by Emperor Akbar and then embellished by his grandson, Shah Jahan, this was once a great city, with palaces, mosques and halls all lying behind the protective embrace of 20m high walls. After visiting Agra Fort we will watch the sunset over the Taj Mahal, surely one of India's most beautiful and most revered monuments. Certainly one of the most universally recognised buildings on earth, the Taj Mahal was built by the emperor Shah Jahan to honour the memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Pushp Villa (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



DAY 3 - Visit the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri. Cycle backroads through rural India to Bharatpur

Today starts with a drive of about two hours to the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri, lying close to the western boundaries of Agra. Today it remains a ghostly testament to the power of 16th century Moghul India and is a perfectly preserved example of an imperial court. After our visit we jump on our bikes for the first time and begin our cycling adventure. Today's almost flat ride will be on back roads passing through picturesque rural India, with its fascinating villages, waving children, and colourful traffic. On reaching Bharatpur we will check in at the hotel depending on your energy levels you may wish to take a walk round the city centre and refuel on a Rajasthani Thali filled with tasty and colorful dishes like Chicken Tikka and Paneer Tikka. Bharatpur is also famous for a few sweet dishes including mango soufflé.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 34 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:

Udai Vilas Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Pedal through scenic villages, agricultural land and past red-sandstone quarries to Karauli

Today starts with a short drive of 30 minutes then get on our bikes and ride along small tarmac roads through scenic villages and through agricultural land. The landscape we ride through becomes more agriculture, and we pass more small villages and people tending crops including mangos, fennel, onion and sweet potato on the cultivated land. This area is also known for its red sandstone used for the construction of the magnificent Red Fort and the majestic Rashtrapati Bhavan. We will cycle past some of these red quarries on our way to Karauli.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 70 kilometres





ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Bhanwar Vilas Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - Cycle to Ranthambore National Park home to tigers, leopards and marsh crocodiles

Ranthambore National Park on the eastern borders of Rajasthan, is one of India's best 'Project Tiger' conservation projects. Cycling there today we follow a series of good roads and quiet cross-country tracks, with quite a few ascents and descents, as we make our way towards what was once the private preserve of the Maharajahs of Jaipur. The last part of the journey (around 70 kilometres) will again be undertaken by bus.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 40 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:
Om Rudrapriya Resort (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Game drive in Ranthambore National Park. Search for big cats in the former royal hunting ground

Ranthambore encompasses nearly 400 square kilometres of lush jungle, turquoise lakes and ancient temples, providing a rich haven for crocodiles, leopards and some 300 species of birds. It is also one of the best parks in the country for spotting tigers. Today we enjoy a game drive in the park, with an option for those that wish to also pay a visit to some of the local villages by bike. Ranthambore is also home to one of the oldest forts in the country, from whose ramparts there are some fabulous views towards the Aravali and Vindhya Hills.

No cycling today.



ACCOMMODATION:

Om Rudrapriya Resort (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Cycle through villages. Sleep in a Maharaja's Palace

We start with a drive of about 50 km to Lalsot. From here we start our ride; we follow small roads and tracks through villages and agriculture land, passing Hindu settlements, temples and shrines. Our accommodation tonight is in a Maharaja's Palace. Built in 1938 it is the family home of Maharaja Krishna Chandra Pal, who is the 181st in an illustrious line tracing itself back to Lord Krishna. The Maharaja and his family still live here, and the palace has been converted into a hotel. The façade stands out against the ancient town of Karauli, which dates from 1348. The interior is decorated with an eclectic melding of Oriental and Art Deco forms and you can walk around the grounds and explore the gardens and orchard.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 65 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel Bhadrawati Palace (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Ride on a quiet country roads with views of hill-top forts silhouetted against the sky to Jaipur

Today we start cycling from our hotel and pass by bike small villages and farm land heading towards Jaipur. We cycle through the country side on a quiet road surrounded by beautiful green -brown hills dotted with small trees and scrubs with hill-top forts silhouetted against the sky. We drive the last hour to Jaipur where we spend our final two nights. The evening is free for us to enjoy the city at our own pace and for those interested the leader can organise a cookery demonstration with active participation.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 75 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:
Fort Chandragupt (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Visit Jaipur's Amber Fort and City Palace

Early morning we will leave for a short ride (optional) to enjoy being on our bikes away from the crowds in the villages that skirt Jaipur. We return hotel for the breakfast and to freshen up before leaving by bus for a full day exploring Jaipur's magnificent highlights. We will see the iconic monuments of Jaipur, including the old Maharaja's residence, the City Palace which now contains an excellent museum, where

we can see fine paintings, old clothing dating from the time of the Maharajas and collection of antique weapons. We also see the Hawa Mahal, or Palace of the Winds, the observatory of Jai Singh and the Amber Fort.

After sightseeing we start the 6 hour drive back to Delhi, we will stop for dinner on the way and expect to arrive to our hotel around 10pm.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:
Ashok Country Resort (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Trip ends Delhi

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Delhi.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Delhi 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 need to depart from Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL), which is a one-hour drive from the city centre or 30 minutes from our 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	Plugs	Religion
+5	3 Pin Round	Catholicism, Hindu, Islam and Sikhism

Language

Hindi and English.

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Bear in mind that the area is tropical with high humidity. Lightweights are needed all year round with some warmer clothes (ie fleece and long trousers) for the cooler winter evenings (November to March). Bring cycling gear such as gloves and padded shorts. Whilst cycling in shorts is acceptable and expected, please note that for visits to temples and city sightseeing, tight fitting sleeveless t-shirts, brief or tight shorts and miniskirts should be avoided, since they attract unwelcome attention.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling.

Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

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 GBP45, approx. 3'800 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, 4WD, Bicycle

Accommodation notes

Comfortable - Our 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.

Accommodation in India is as varied as the country itself. On our tours we stay in a mix of hotels, heritage properties 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 Foreign, Commonwealth & Development 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: 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.

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.

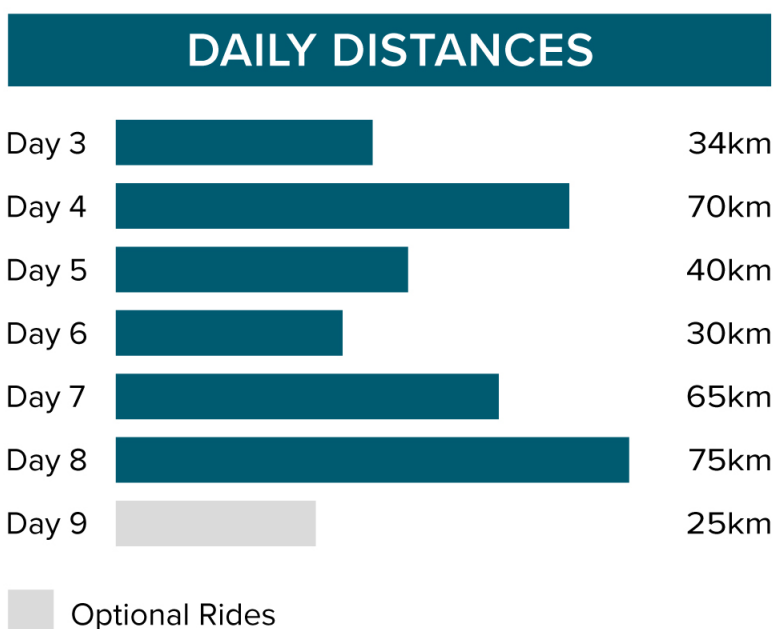
We cannot guarantee the operation of any game drives until the necessary permits have been purchased. We aim to purchase the permits as soon as they are put on sale, whilst this is usually at 120 days before the date of the game drive on going changes to the booking system means that we cannot guarantee this.

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.

Cycling information



General cycling information

On this trip we cycle 339 km over six days (an average of 56 km per day) following backroads and some larger main roads. The terrain is mostly flat however the heat of the day can make the days a little more tiring. A support vehicle is available throughout the tour. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

24 gear Medirda D20 and D40 Mountain bikes, 27 year Trek-3700 Mountain bikes or 29 gear Rudley Trail Fire 4 Mountain bikes.

Bike information

Your included bike is either a 24 gear Medirda D20 and D40 Mountain bike, 27 year Trek-3700 Mountain bike or 29 gear Rudley Trail Fire 4 Mountain bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. A 2.5 litre handlebar bag and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Moderate

Additional Information



Why book this trip

Diwali Festival of Light

Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is one of the most important festivals in India, celebrated by families to commemorate the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance. The festival's name is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Deepavali' meaning 'row of lamps' after the small clay lamps, known as diyas, fuelled with mustard oil specially made for the festival. The light from the lamps is said to help guide the goddess of wealth Lakshmi into people's homes, which are decorated with Rangoli, intricate patterns generally in a lotus design in honour of the goddess. Businesses also choose Diwali as the beginning of the financial year while worshippers wear new clothes for the duration of the festival. It is a time of giving and camaraderie, with people visiting friends and family with small gifts, a time for renewal and hope for the future.

In 2022 Diwali festival commences on the 24th of October while the group is cycling to Karauli.

Reviews



AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS