

EXPLORE!

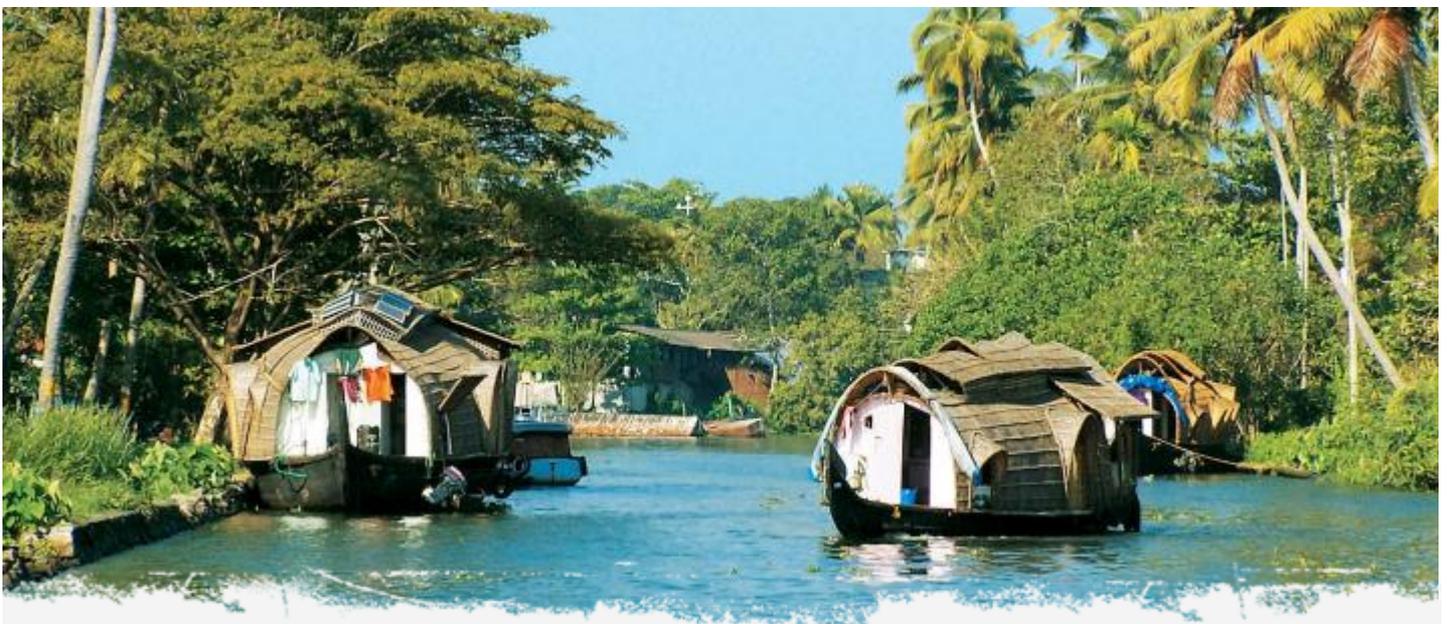
TRIP NOTES



Family Indian Discovery (FKB 2017)



TRIPDURATION
13
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Tour Pace: Moderate

Tour Type: Small Groups
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Trip Code: FKB

Trip Highlights - Family Indian Discovery

- ✓ Houseboat - Float through the backwaters and sleep on a traditional boat
- ✓ Backwater Home Stay - Learn about Indian family life at a home stay
- ✓ See the magnificent Taj Mahal and exotic palaces of Jaipur
- ✓ Periyar National Park - Look out for monkey, deer and porcupine on a walk through the park
- ✓ Kochi - Discover Fort Kochi, St Francis Church and Mattancherry Palace and watch a Kathakali show
- ✓ Beaches - Relax on the beaches at Mararikulam

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 9 nights Standard Hotel
2 nights Simple Homestay
1 night Simple Boat

Included Meals: 12 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Delhi
End Point: Trip ends: Mararikulam

Transport: Rickshaw, Bus, Boat, Flight

Countries: India
Minimum Age: From 5 years

Family Indian Discovery

Enjoy this fascinating introduction to India as we visit the magnificent Taj Mahal at sunset, explore a hilltop fortress and discover the world heritage monuments of Delhi in the north. In the south of the country, we enjoy jungle treks, curry lessons and cruising along the backwaters on a houseboat in tropical Kerala. After this active adventure, we travel to the coast to relax on sandy beaches.

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.

Why Book this trip

This holiday gives one of the few adventures that takes in both the north and south of the country - imagine one day discovering the Taj Mahal and Amber Palace in Jaipur and then flying to the Kerala region where we sleep on a houseboat, cook a curry and relax on beaches by the Indian Ocean. A true journey across the whole of India.

Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

Accommodation Grade: Standard

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.

Tour Style: Classic

Packed with adventure, these tours offer inspiring destinations and authentic travel experiences at a reasonable price. Using all kinds of transport and accommodation, we'll take you off the beaten track to discover the true heart of the people and places you visit.

Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

Your trip itinerary

Tour itinerary notes

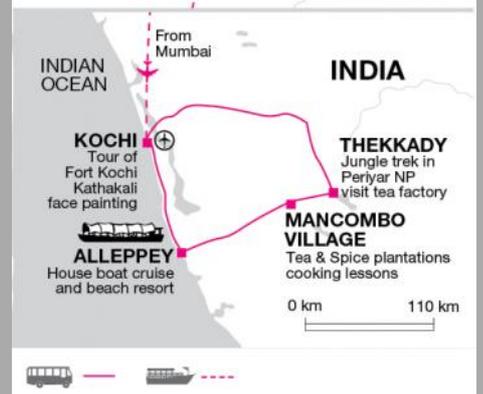
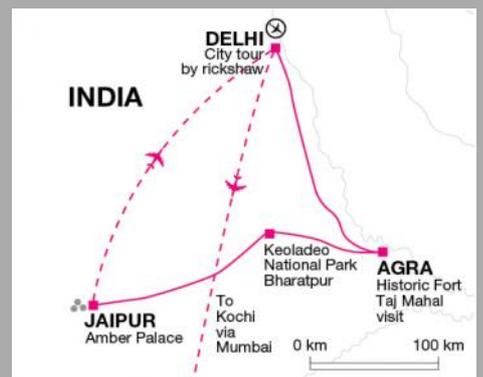
While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced Tour Leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your Tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

DAY 1 Arrive in Delhi with city tour of New Delhi

Arrive in Delhi and check in to our hotel. New Delhi was the creation of the British Raj of the 1930's and our afternoon tour includes; Qutab Minar, the tallest stone



tower in India and Humayun's Tomb, the first example of an architectural design of the Mughal Dynasty. We also drive past the imposing India Gate (War Memorial Arch), the Parliament buildings and the Rashtrapati Bhawan (the President's residence). India's capital is a bustling metropolis which successfully combines the ancient with the modern. Amidst the tall and modern skyscrapers, there are still the remnants of a bygone time with numerous monuments and temples.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Travel to Agra and visit its Fort plus sunset at the Taj Mahal

We drive to the Mughal city of Agra (around 4 hour's drive) known to the world as the city of the 'Taj Mahal'. Agra is still associated with the Mughals, who besides being the countries rulers were also great builders. Agra Fort, which is the seat and the stronghold of the Mughal Empire, is a vivid reminder of the opulence and makes Agra one of the most remarkable cities in India. Late this afternoon we proceed with a sunset visit of the world-renowned Taj Mahal - The legendary Taj Mahal is celebrated for its architectural magnificence and aesthetic beauty. Emperor Shah Jahan built this exquisite white marble mausoleum for his favourite queen, Mumtaz Mahal, commissioned in 1631, it took 20,000 artisans 22 years to complete. Watching the sun set over this great monument is a wonderful way of watching the fading light illuminating the contours of this 'dream in marble'. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, the Taj Mahal has always evoked varying emotions from wonder to poetic verse and over the centuries has become a symbol of love and flawless beauty.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Keoladeo Ghana National Park and onto Jaipur

This morning we drive to the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur. The National Park was originally called Ghana which means dense forest and is now named after the Keoladeo Shiva temple in the centre of the park. Initially a Maharaja's hunting estate built in 1956, it is now a bird sanctuary to some 375 species of birds including egrets, darters, cormorants, herons and painted storks with their colourful beaks and plumage. We are taken on a bird-watching tour by cycle rickshaw and hope to see some of these magnificent animals. Our journey continues on to Jaipur, the vibrant capital of Rajasthan which is renowned for its forts and palaces that have encapsulated an image of the 'Pink City' due to its pink-coloured buildings. An ideal base for touring the royal state, the city has the distinction of being the third jewel of India's 'Golden Triangle'. Its main claim to fame is that it is India's first 'planned' city built by the famous 18th century astronomer King Sawai Jai Singh II.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 Amber Palace and Fortress

We travel to the ancient capital of Amer to see the fabulous Amber Fort situated on a ridge just outside Jaipur city. The fort is surrounded by fortified battlements with ruins that are spread over the surrounding Aravalli hills. Our visit incorporates the chambers and hallways of the palace, famous for its design and decoration as well as Ganesh Pol, an imposing gateway painted with images of the elephant-headed god, Ganesh. We also stop at the Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) - a five-storied wonder with a spectacular pyramidal facade with overhanging windows with latticed screens, domes and spires. In the afternoon, we visit the City Palace Museum which has a superb collection of Rajasthani costumes, armoury including swords with chiselled handles, an art gallery with an excellent collection of miniature paintings and rare astronomical works. We also see the awe-inspiring Jantar Mantar Observatory, a stone astrological and astronomical observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh in the 18th century.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 Morning at leisure with flight to Kochi

The morning is free for leisure activities before catching an afternoon flight to Kochi via Mumbai, the commercial capital of Kerala and the most cosmopolitan of the state's cities. Cochin or Kochi has long been praised as the 'Queen of the Arabian Sea'. Strategically located on the east-west sea route, Kochi is Kerala's major port and boasts one of the finest natural harbours in the world.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Drive to Fort Kochi and watch the famous Kathakali Dancers

We take an auto-rickshaw (3-wheeler automated 'scooter') to Fort Kochi. Fort Kochi is the oldest European settlement in India (built in 1500), and has a mixture of English, Dutch and Portuguese influence. There is time to wander and take in some of the sites including

the Chinese fishing nets or wander around the fish market as well as visit the Jewish quarter. Kochi is also a good place to see the famous Kathakali dancers, with its origins coming from the traditional temple rituals and an art form known as Koodiyattam. The performers use face makeup which can take up to three hours to paint on and makes this dance so unique within the country. Their features are heavily emphasised with their facial expressions and coordinated eye movements being important within the dance - during our visit, we can see the process of applying the make-up.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 Palace visit and drive to Thekkady

We visit the Mattancherry Palace which was built by the Portuguese in the 16th century and is popularly known as the Dutch Palace. The Palace features Kerala murals, depicting Hindu temple art, portraits and exhibits of the Rajas of Kochi. A blend of colonial and Kerala architecture, it was a gift to the local ruler by the Portuguese in exchange for trading rights. The palace was later renovated by the Dutch and so gained the other name. We then drive to Thekkady via the meandering roads through the high ranges and past rubber and tea plantations. We should arrive mid to late afternoon.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Nature trek in Periyar National Park, visit a Tea factory and drive to Chennmkary Village

After breakfast, we drive to Thekkady which is the closest settlement to the Periyar National Park. A stunning setting on the shores of Lake Periyar, it is home to a myriad of wildlife such as elephant, wild pigs, monkey and the flying squirrel. The park also boasts some 260 species of birds including darters, ospreys and kingfishers. We take a guided nature walk in the hope of spotting some of these wild creatures although sightings cannot be guaranteed. The park itself is made up of a variety of habitats including open grasslands and semi-evergreen forests with an abundant number of ferns, orchids and air-plants all making up a beautiful ecosystem with the trail often passing through evergreen forests interspersed with marshy grasslands. We then drive to Chennmkary Village via a visit to a tea factory at Vandeperiyar. The site houses photographs and machines depicting the flourishing tea industry that the region is famous for with an explanation of each stage of the tea making process. When we reach Chennmkary we meet our hosts for the next two days and explore the village. We will also walk among the seemingly numerous fruit and medicinal plants that surround the village, as well as strolling through banana and coconut plantations. There is also the option to travel by canoe and visit the famous temples of Karumadikuttan, dedicated to Lord Shiva. Accommodation at Chennmkary is spread over several village houses that is simply styled with traditional Kerala furniture. Due to space constraints, families may need to share a room together. The houses are close together, approx. 5-10 minutes walk between them and all have bedding and towels provided. The locals will cook the meals for the group and we all dine together giving the opportunity to understand how they live. The villagers grow their own rice, vegetables, coconuts and spices which are all used in the meals.

Overnight: **Simple Homestay**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 Free-time to explore Mancombo Village

Today is left free to explore the area with the opportunity to take a stroll through the serene Kerala hamlets and experience the tropical forests filled with the fragrance of medicinal flowers. To cover more expanses you can sail through the interior villages and backwaters in a non-mechanized open canoe to get a chance of experiencing traditional Kerala hamlets.

Overnight: **Simple Homestay**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Drive to Alleppey and board a houseboat to the Kerala Backwaters

This morning we drive to the lively backwater centre of Alleppey where we board our houseboats and begin our relaxing cruise into the network of the Kerala backwaters. Converted from old rice-barges, with walls and roofs of coir, these simple vessels have a number of en-suite rooms and an area to relax and watch riverside life as we go by. On the more open canals, you can see boats with large sails - the bow often carved in the shape of a dragon. These vessels are a lifeline for the villages with a number acting as taxis, mail delivery carriages and goods transport. You may see great pyramids of coconuts or even the odd buffalo being carried along in this time honoured fashion. We plan to stop off at several points of interest en-route including the Chambakulam Saint Foreine Church and Chambakulam Chundan - the famous snake boats. Traditional Kerala cuisine is served on board.

Overnight: **Simple Boat**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 Drive to the beach resort of Mararikulam

Disembarking the houseboat, we drive the short journey to the resort in Mararikulam with the rest of the day free to enjoy the relaxing atmosphere and beach activities. Mararikulam is a typical fishing village which is located on the southwest coast of Central Kerala and offers an unblemished and pristine shoreline, swaying coconut palms, thatched huts and a view point to watch the striking sunsets.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Day at the resort of Mararikulam

Free day at resort.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Swimming Pool Available 



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Tour ends Mararikulam

Our tours ends this morning after breakfast.



Included Meals: Breakfast

Ability to swim required

An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

Accommodation and Meals

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.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 5 dinners included in the price of this trip. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

Budgeting for your Trip

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the trip price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

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.

India

Lunch £: 6.00

Dinner £: 8.00

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.



India

Bottle of Beer £: 1.40

Water £: 0.50

International Departure Taxes

Airport departure tax: as from 01 March 2011, a new departure tax will be applicable for all flights departing from Trivandrum International Airport. A tax of INR575 will now need to be paid at the airport before you join your onward flight.

Other Sightseeing & 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.

Optional Excursions

Kochi - Harbour Cruise £18.00 per boat (for one hour).

Kanyakumari - (tip of India) £8.00.

Tipping - Tour Leader

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

Tipping - Local Crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow £35 per person.

Foreign Exchange

India

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.

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

Recommended Currency for Exchange: GBP/US\$ are the best currency to change into local currency.

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

Joining your Trip

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 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 on our website at www.explore.co.uk, in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

Joining Tour Abroad

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

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

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

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

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.

Important Information

Travel Insurance

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

EXPLORE!
The Adventure Travel Experts

CAMPBELL IRVINE
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducing Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Travel Aware

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 follow the link at www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety

We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting cr@explore.co.uk or 01252 379438.

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.

Visa Information

India: Holders of passports endorsed 'British citizen' may be eligible for the e-Tourist Visa to enter India.

The visa can be applied for through the official Indian government visa website only - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>. Please check all eligibility criteria that can be found on the website but important points are listed below -

You must be arriving into one of 24 selected entry points which can be found via the official Indian Government website link above. However, you can exit from any of the authorised immigration check posts in India.

Passports must have at least 6 months validity from the date of arrival in India and at least two blank pages for stamping. The visa application will take approximately 4 days to process.

It is valid for 60 days from the date of arrival in to India, and double entry is permitted on the e-Tourist visa. You can only obtain 2 e-visas for India in a calendar year.

The visa costs \$75. Biometric data will be collected on arrival in India.

Whilst the online form offers a relatively quick way to apply for a visa, a number of applicants have reported difficulty in completing the form. Travcour will complete the on-line visa on your behalf for a fee of £25 + the visa cost. Please contact them directly if you

wish to take up this service.

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

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Lone Parents

India

Single parents or other adults travelling alone with children should be aware that some countries require documentation confirming that the individual has authority to travel with the minor. It is crucial that you contact the Indian embassy for further information on exactly what may be required.

Vaccinations & Protection

India

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

Preparing for your Trip

Climate

India

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.

Clothing

Bear in mind that the area is tropical with high humidity. Lightweights are needed all year round with some warmer clothes (i.e. fleece and long trousers) for the cooler winter evenings (November to March) in Vanilla County. Bring a swimming costume for the beaches. 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.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, insect repellent and water bottle.

Footwear

Walking shoes or trainers and sandals.

Luggage: On Tour

Please bring one main piece of baggage and a daysac. Remember - hotel porters are not always available, so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on trip: 15Kg

General Information

Country details

India

Population: 1,210,193,422

Size of Country: 3,287,263 sq km

Major Language: Hindi and English.

Religion: Catholicism, Hindu, Islam and Sikhism

Time Difference to GMT: +5

Electric Supply & Plugs

India

3 Pin Round

Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years' experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures, self-guided, private journeys & tailor-made holidays.
- Award-winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

Earth Matters

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

Booking Your Holiday

Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2016 and 31st December 2017.

Trip Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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