

EXPLORE!

TRIP NOTES



Cycling Rajasthan (CIR 2017)



TRIPDURATION
15
DAYS



Tour Style: Classic
Accommodation
Grade: Standard

Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate

Trip Code: CIR

Trip Highlights - Cycling Rajasthan

- ✓ Village India by Bike - Cycle through the back-roads and villages of rural Rajasthan
- ✓ Wild India - Game drives in Sariska and Rathambore National Parks to seek Tigers
- ✓ Taj Mahal, Jaipur and Udaipur - Explore the majesty of the Mughals and the Rajput princes
- ✓ Temples and Fortresses - Visit the remarkable Jain temples at Ranakpur and the hilltop forts of Kumbhalgarh and Chittorgarh

Trip Essentials

Accommodation: 14 nights Standard Hotel

Included Meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

Start Point: Join trip: Delhi

End Point: Trip ends: Delhi

Included Bike: 21 or 27 gear Trek 4300, 3900, 3700 Mountain bikes or Merida M-20 and Matt-40 bikes with lockable front suspension

Transport: 4WD, Bus, Bicycle India

Countries: India

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Cycle Rajasthan

Leaving the chaotic streets of the capital this trip takes us through the Pink City of Jaipur and on to the beautiful lakeside city of Udaipur. Along the way we take time to look for the elusive Bengal tiger in Sariska and Ranthambore National Parks. We cycle through remote villages to gain a glimpse of daily life in this traditional region, stopping along the way to see Rajasthan's incredible moghul architecture and dramatic forts.

Why Book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

Cycling Information

On this trip we cycle 529 km over ten days (an average of 53 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.

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.

Cycling Grade: Moderate

Medium length rides are suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. You'll be cycling mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

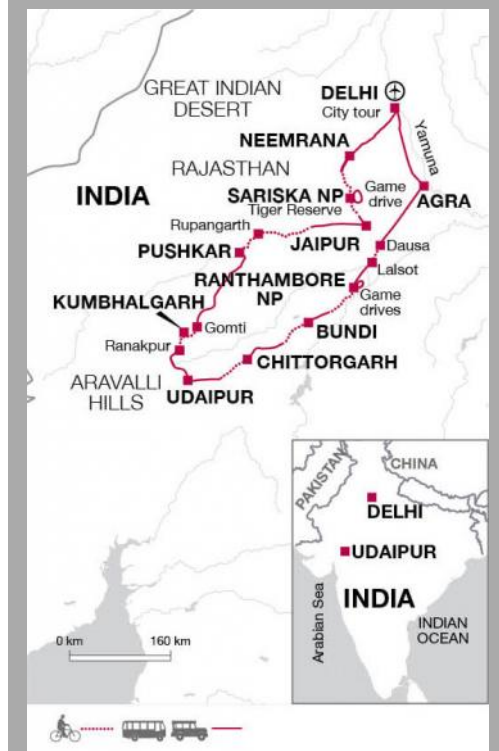
Your trip itinerary

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 Join tour in Delhi. Afternoon optional sightseeing tour

We meet in Delhi at lunchtime and have an afternoon 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. We drive through India Gate and see the government buildings, before arriving at our accommodation tonight. We will begin our cycle journey tomorrow and over the coming days we will be covering on average some 54 kilometres a day, spending up to six hours in the saddle.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** None

DAY 2 Drive and cycle to Sariska National Park via Neemrana

This morning we leave Delhi behind and drive for about two hours along the Delhi-Jaipur highway to Neemrana, an historic old town that was once the capital of the Chaunan dynasty. From here we start cycling for about 45 km towards Harsoli through the villages of rural Rajasthan, to enjoy a little something of the colour and spectacle of a way of life that has remained relatively unchanged for generations. We get back in the vehicle after lunch as we drive to Chikni Mod, from where we will start our second cycling section (25km) today towards Bagad Ka Tiraha. We end the day driving on to our hotel in Sariska National Park, set amongst the lush vistas of the Aravali Hills. Upon arrival, check-in to the hotel. We cover some 285 kilometres today, around 70 km of which will be by bike, meandering our way through sleepy villages and past fields of yellow mustard as we travel across a rural landscape still steeped in the traditions of the past. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 64 kilometres (total ascent 384 metres and descent 375 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 3 Morning game drive. Cycle the scenic Aravali Hills then drive to Jaipur

A former hunting ground of the maharajah's, Sariska National Park is home to a rich abundance of wildlife, as well as a number of interesting medieval ruins. This morning we leave early from our hotel and bring a packed breakfast with us, taking a drive through the park in jeeps. A haven for sambhar, chital and wild boar, the park also plays host to small numbers of leopards and tigers, as well as India's largest population of peafowl. After our packed breakfast near Sariska park, we start the day on our bikes, cycling through the scenic beauty of the Aravali Hills and enjoying some exhilarating ascents and descents as we make our way towards Jamwa Ramgarh. We then complete the rest of our journey to Rajasthan's fabled 'Pink City' by vehicle. Rich in the history of the Rajput princes, Jaipur is considered by many to be one of the finest planned cities anywhere in India, the usual urban chaos being somewhat tempered by wide streets and formal gardens. We have two nights here to make the most of this famous city. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 68 kilometres (total ascent 667 metres and descent 651 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 4 Visit Jaipur's Amber Fort and City Palace

With a full day today to enjoy some of Jaipur's magnificent highlights, we begin with a visit to the Amber Palace, a superb marble and sandstone fortress on the outskirts of the city. Back in Jaipur we visit the splendored City Palace, a dazzling fusion of Moghul and Rajasthani design, before taking in the unique majesty of the Hawa Mahal which is famous as the 'Palace of the Winds'. Afterwards we visit the remarkable 18th Century observatory of Jantar Mantar. 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. No Cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 5 Cycle to Pushkar via Rupangarh

After first travelling about 95 km by vehicle to the Naraina railway crossing this morning we continue on two wheels to the ancient city of Pushkar by way of the famous marble town of Rupangarh. One of the oldest cities in India and revered as one of the five sacred dhams (holy shrines) of the Hindus, Pushkar lies beside the shores of Lake Pushkar, to the north-west of Ajmer. Our journey today takes us along interesting back roads, with some gradual ascents and descents as we make our way through rural villages towards the holy city. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 85 kilometres (total ascent 521 metres and descent 433 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 6 Explore Pushkar; Drive and cycle to Kumbhalgarh via Ajmer

After breakfast, we start our sight-seeing tour of Pushkar. We will visit the famous Brahma Temple, which is the only temple dedicated to Lord Brahma in the country and one of the few in the world. Lord Brahma is known as the creator of the world as per Hindu mythology. We will also visit the sacred lake with its Ghats and if time allows we can climb to the nearby Savatri Hilltop temple by steps for magnificent views over pushkar. Upon completion of our sightseeing tour we leave Pushkar behind and drive for about 190 km to Gombi Circle from where we begin our day's ride to Kumbhalgarh. Leaving the national highway behind we head away from the desert, towards the green landscapes of the Aravallis and the remote hilltop fortress of Kumbhalgarh, one of the finest defensive fortifications anywhere in Rajasthan. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (total ascent 505 metres and descent 326 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 7 To Udaipur via the Jain temples at Ranakpur

This morning we visit Kumbhalgarh Fort before starting out on our bikes for a ride of about 32 km to a Shiva Temple. We then drive a short distance to Ranakpur to visit the famous Jain's Temple. The road takes us through the countryside by way of Saira village, before depositing us amidst the stunning complex of Jain temples at Ranakpur. Built around the middle of the 15th century, this incredible collection of white marble domes, turrets and cupolas represent some of the most exquisite temple architecture in India. The main temple is supported by no fewer than 1,444 intricately carved marble pillars, of which no two are alike. After the visit, we drive back to the Shiva Temple from where we begin the second leg of today's cycling for about 33 km towards the highway. Finally we drive for about one hour to the beautiful lake city of Udaipur and upon arrival, check-in to the hotel and relax for rest of the day. During the day we will have an opportunity to get close to rural life in Rajasthan and witness farming practices. We will also find the traditional water-lifting technique using bulls still being practised in some parts of Rajasthan. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 68 kilometres (total ascent 1084 metres and descent 1271 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 8 Explore Udaipur by bike

Considered by many to be one of Rajasthan's most elegant and sublime settings, Udaipur is a city of temples, palaces and gardens, encompassing some of the finest examples of Rajput architecture anywhere in India. This morning we head out on our bikes to explore the city, visiting the Jagdish Temple and the City Palace, whose opulence and grandeur provide a fascinating insight into what is believed to be the oldest dynasty on earth. Time allowing we may also have a chance to visit the gardens of Gulab Bag, or take a sunset cruise on Lake Pichola. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 21 kilometres (total ascent 320 metres and descent 321 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 9 Morning cycle ride; afternoon visit to Chittorgarh Fort

We start by driving the short distance to the outskirts of the city (45 mins) to avoid the crowds. After collecting our bikes we head out into the countryside for a ride to Satimagari Chauraha, passing through villages and witnessing rural life. We finish cycling here and drive (1 hour) to the magnificent fortress of Chittorgarh, set on a viewpoint high above the Berach river plains. After checking into our accommodation we explore Chittorgarh on foot. This World Heritage site was once the capital of the Mewar kingdom, dating back to the 7th century and is one of the largest forts in India, a stunning testament to a once golden age of chivalry and sacrifice. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (total ascent 171 metres and descent 171 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

DAY 10 Drive and cycle to Bundi; visit Fort

After breakfast we transfer by bus (2.5 hours) part of the distance towards Bundi and the start point of our cycle ride. After collecting our bikes and leaving the national highway behind we head out into the beautiful vindhyachal countryside for a 50 kilometre ride

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to Bundi. We pass by granite quarries and travel through rural villages, seeing stone carving factories and shops or perhaps people working in the fields as we go. Bundi is a small, sleepy town located in the southern part of the state of Rajasthan and is known for its palaces, intricately designed step wells and water tanks. The history of Bundi dates back to 1193 AD when Sultan Mohammed Ghauri defeated Prithviraj Chauhan, which compelled the Chauhan nobles to seek shelter in the neighboring state of Mewar. In the afternoon we spend time visiting Bundi fort either by bus or with the option to cycle. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 55 kilometres (total ascent 232 metres and descent 472 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Cycle quiet cross-country tracks to Ranthambore National Park

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 74 kilometres (total ascent 574 metres and descent 564 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Game drives in Ranthambore National Park

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 morning and evening game drives 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.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Ranthambore to Agra via Bharatpur and Fatehpur Sikri

Heading north this morning we drive from Ranthambore to Bharatpur (250km), from here we begin our final bike ride on to Fatehpur Sikri on backroads and off road tracks passing through villages and agricultural fields until we finish the ride near Fatehpur Sikri. From Fatehpur Sikri we then complete the journey to Agra by bus, taking approximately one hour and passing through some villages famous for their work with sandstone. Once the capital of the Mughal Empire, Agra (along with Delhi and Jaipur) makes up the third part of India's historic 'Golden Triangle' and remains a rich repository for some of the country's most iconic monuments including the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 34 kilometres (total ascent 217 metres and descent 189 metres).

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 14 Watch the sun rise over the Taj Mahal, visit Agra Fort. Return to Delhi

This morning we rise early to watch the sunrise 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, and was once described by Rudyard Kipling as '...the embodiment of all things pure'. Later we have an opportunity to visit the city's imposing fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, before travelling back to Delhi to enjoy a final evening in the Indian capital. Please note that the Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays and in this case we would plan our visit one day earlier). No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Single Room Available

Swimming Pool Available



Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 Tour ends Delhi

The tour ends in Delhi this morning after breakfast.

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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.

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Notes

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.

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.

Food & Drink

Included meals: 14 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 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

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

Cooking demonstration, Sariska - GBP 9 per person including dinner

Boat ride, Udaipur - GBP 9 per person

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 for £45.

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 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.

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.

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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

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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**.



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

DAILY DISTANCES

Day 2		70km
Day 3		65km
Day 4		
Day 5		85km
Day 6		40km
Day 7		65km
Day 8		20km
Day 9		40km
Day 10		45km
Day 11		72km
Day 12		
Day 13		33km

Bike Details

Your included bike is either a 24 or 27 gear Trek 3700 mountain bike with front suspension or 3 Merida matts-20D and 40D 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.

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 (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.

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.

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: 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.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

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, Muslim 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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