EXPLORE! Tour Notes

PRICE GUARANTEE 100% NO SURCHARGES

Cycling Rajasthan (CIR 2015)

CYCLING

TOURDURAT
16
DAYS

Tour Style: Classic
Tour Comfort: Standard
Tour Type: Small Groups
Cycling Grade: Moderate
tour Code: CIR

Tour 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

Tour Essentials

Accommodation:	15 nights Standard Hotel
Included Meals:	15 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners
Start Point:	Join tour: Delhi
End Point:	Tour ends: Delhi
Included Bike:	21 or 27 gear Trek 4300, 3900, 3700 Mountian bikes or Merida M-20 and Matt-40 bikes with lockable front suspension
Transport:	4WD, Bus, Bicycle
Countries:	India

Cycle Rajasthan

Leaving the chaotic streets of the capital this tour 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 tour

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 tour we cycle 581 km over eleven days (an average of 52 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.

Tour Comfort: 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.

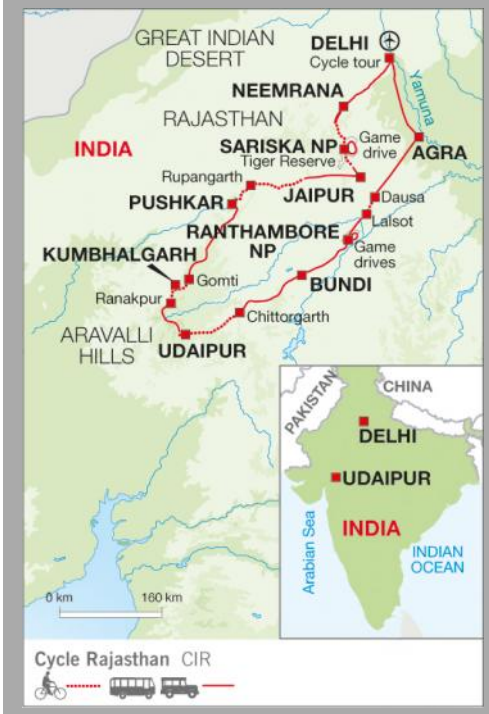
Your tour itinerary

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 Delhi

Beginning in Delhi we have the opportunity today to set up our bikes and go for a test ride through the city. Over the coming days we will be covering an average of some 65 kilometres a day on the bikes, spending up to six hours in the saddle. It is important therefore that we make sure we are comfortable with the bikes before we leave Delhi tomorrow.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: None

DAY 2 Drive and cycle to Sariska National Park through rural villages of Rajasthan

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. The journey takes us by way of the fort at Kesroli and the bustling, historic town of Alwar, whose massive fortress once protected the northern gateway into Rajasthan. 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 70 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3 Morning game drive. Free afternoon to cycle around the villages

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 take a ride 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. This afternoon we are then free to explore the surrounding area by bike, travelling into the villages to enjoy some time amongst the local people. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 24 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 4 Cycle the scenic Aravali Hills then drive to Jaipur

From Sariska 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, arriving in the state capital later this afternoon. 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 87 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 5 Visit Jaipur's Amber Fort and City Palace

With a full day to enjoy some of Jaipur's magnificent highlights we begin our day with a visit to the splendid City Palace, a dazzling fusion of Moghul and Rajasthani design. We also visit the stunning Amber Palace on the outskirts of the city, a superb marble and sandstone fortress. Back in Jaipur we take in the unique majesty of the Hawa Mahal, the famous ' Palace of the Winds' and pay a visit to the remarkable 18th century observatory of Jantar Mantar, before a free evening to enjoy the city at our own pace. No Cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6 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

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7 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. Upon completion of our sightseeing tour we leave Pushkar behind and drive for about 190 km to Gomti Circle from where we begin our day's ride to Kumbhalgarh Fort. 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 40 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8 To Udaipur via the Jain temples at Ranakpur

From Kumbhalgarh we start the day on our bikes with a ride for 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. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 65 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 9 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 20 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available **Swimming Pool Available**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 10 Countryside cycling and short drive to Chittorgarh

A short drive to the outskirts of the city avoids the worst of Udaipur's crowded streets this morning. Heading out into the countryside we then begin a bike ride of 60 kms to Satimagari Chauraha, from where we will drive for about one hour to the magnificent fortress of Chittorgarh, perched high above the plains of the Berach River. Upon arrival, we check-in to the hotel and the remainder of the day is left free until we start our evening sight-seeing tour of Chittorgarh. Once the capital of the Mewar kingdom, the fort is the largest in India; a stunning testament to a golden age of chivalry and sacrifice. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 11 Morning ride from Chittorgarh towards Bundi

After breakfast we start our day on the bikes with a morning ride out from Chittorgrarh for a distance of about 50 kms, before completing the rest of the journey (130 km) to the historic city of Bundi by bus. Bundi is a small sleepy town located in the southern part of the state of Rajasthan. Bundi 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 will visit Bundi Fort by bus or with an option of cycling as well. Later we return back to the hotel. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 50 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 12 Cycle quiet cross-country tracks to Rathambore 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, 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 72 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 13 Game drives in Rathambore 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. Rathambore 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 14 Rathambore to Agra via Lalsot and Dausa

Heading north this morning we drive from Rathambore up to the city of Lalsot (70 km), from where we begin our final bike ride on to Dausa. From Dausa we then complete the journey to Agra by bus, a distance of approximately 180 kilometres . 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 33 kilometres

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 15 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 im-posing fortress, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, before travelling back to Delhi to enjoy a final evening in the Indian capital. No cycling today.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**
Single Room Available

Included Meals: Breakfast

DAY 16 Tour ends Delhi

The tour ends in Delhi this morning after breakfast.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation and Meals

Accommodation Rating

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: 15 breakfasts, 0 lunches,0 dinners included in the price of this tour. 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 Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour 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 £: .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 - £9 per person including dinner
Elephant ride at Amber Palace, Jaipur - £7 per person
Boat ride, Udaipur - £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.

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

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.

Joining your Tour

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.

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.

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

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 joining any of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable. You will also need to ensure your travel policy covers you for all activities you intend to do whilst on tour.

We are delighted to include FREE travel insurance **for all qualifying customers** who book an Explore trip from 01 January 2015.

For more information about Travel insurance and to check whether you are eligible to receive free cover, please visit www.explore.co.uk/insurance. Explore Worldwide Ltd are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited. who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority. The registration number can be checked by visiting the the FCA's website www.fca.gov.uk or by contacting them on 0800 111 6768.

Visa Information

India: A single entry visa is required by British travellers to India and must be obtained prior to departure. Please note, from the 14th March 2015, all British Indian-visa applicants must be present at an Indian Visa & Consular Service Centre on the day of application to provide biometric information (fingerprint data and facial imagery).

It is not possible to obtain an Indian visa directly from the Embassy. Therefore, Indian visas should be applied for through VFS global and further details of the new visa process and location of the application centres can be found here http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/visa_types.html . Our recommended visa service; Visaswift, can also offer assistance and advice at http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx . Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Tiger Safari permit requirements
Ranthambore National Park is closely managed by the Indian Authorities and recently significant changes have been made to the process of booking game drives in the park. The number of vehicles permitted to enter the park at any one time has been severely reduced and all game drives must now be booked and paid for well in advance. In order to secure a booking we must provide full passport details and full payment for the safari at the time of booking. Game drives are non-refundable. Once a game drive has been booked no changes are permitted. In order to proceed with bookings we require the following:
Full passport details - if you are currently renewing your passport then you will need to take both passports with you on all game drives.

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 90 days before the date of the game drive on going changes to the booking system means that we cannot guarantee this.

We aim to book all of our game drives in shared jeeps, with a maximum of 6 passengers per jeep with a driver and naturalist guide. Park regulations are in place to keep the number of vehicles in the park at any time to a minimum and as a result of this on occasion we will be sharing jeeps with non-Explore passengers.

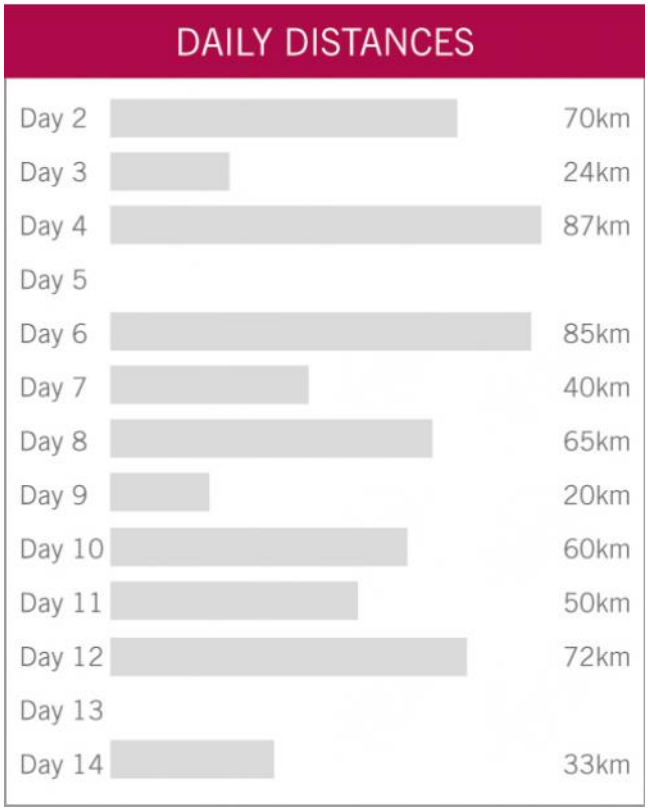
We recommend you book as early as possible in order to have the best chance of securing a space on a game drive. We will purchase seats for all passengers as soon as permits become available, usually 3 months prior, after this point it is not always possible to secure additional spaces.

Vaccinations & Protection

India

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria (eg. Paludrine, Chloroquine, Mefloquine etc.). 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 Tour



Bike Details

Your included bike is either a 21 or 24 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

Take a cycle helmet, a torch, sunglasses, sunhat, sunscreen, insect repellent and binoculars for wildlife viewing. Please consider carrying all or some of your cycling equipment, e.g. helmet, as part of your hand luggage.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes for walking in the towns, trainers for cycling and sandals for other sightseeing.

Luggage: On Tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Total allowance: 44lb/20kg. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 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 & tailormade holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one 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, elephant, 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.

Our commitment to the environment

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 and traditional, 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), Dekamer (a turtle rescue centre in Turkey) and Kids Saving the Rainforest (a wildlife rescue centre in Costa Rica supported through the LATA foundation). We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation and Friends of Conservation.

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

- The Travel Foundation

  Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk
- Tourism Concern

  Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group www.tourismconcern.org.uk
- For further information on responsible travel go to http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/

Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety andÂ security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. ForÂ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link atÂ http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety

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 LicenceÂ granted by the Civil Aviation Authority.Â 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 2014 and 31st December 2015.

Tour 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: 2015 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2015. 2016/17 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2016.

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