

Trip Notes

The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel New Year's Retreat

For the Elderly and Beautiful

29 Dec 2016 - 6 Jan 2017

9 Days, 8 Nights



Time: India is 4½ hours behind Australian EST and 5½ hours Eastern Summer Time.

Language - Hindi is the official national language of India, however, there are 22 official languages. English is also widely spoken and you will be escorted by a local guide who speaks Hindi and English.

Entry Requirements - Passports must be valid for six months beyond the length of stay. Visas are required for Australian travellers.

Visa Requirements - A 30 day visa on arrival is available for India.

Applicants may apply online at <http://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html> before arriving in India and pay the fee of US\$60. You will be required to produce your return air ticket from the country.

The online application should be submitted minimum 4 days in advance and maximum 30 days of proposed date of travel.

Vaccinations and Your Health

We recommend that you contact either your GP or consult your nearest Travel Doctor about Vaccinations. If you have a medical condition and are taking medication for this please let us know at the time of booking.

Insurance - Travel insurance is compulsory. We recommend that you take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international...

contact numbers) with you while on tour.

We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. The documents should be stored separately from the originals.

Climate

You will find a helpful climate chart in the 'Suggested Packing List' which will be provided with your pre departure documentation.

Seasonal weather patterns can be quite unpredictable. Up to the minute information on worldwide weather can be found at www.accuweather.com.

Suggested Packing List

A complete list will be provided with deposit documentation.

Before You Leave

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smarttraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available.

You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

Luggage

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each; a suitcase with a maximum weight of 15kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 7kg.

It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that...

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Indian authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage maybe confiscated.

Domestic airlines within India have recently reviewed their checked luggage limits, as such all airlines have now implemented a maximum checked luggage limit of 15kg. Please keep this in mind when packing for your upcoming trip. Any excess luggage charges incurred will be at the expense of the passenger.

Tipping

Tipping is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry. A nominated tipping amount is not included in all group tour pricing. We will collect approximately A\$30 to be paid directly to your Local Guide who will then distribute the tips among your main service providers – guides, drivers and attendants – on your behalf. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services. The final tipping amount will be outlined in your final documentation.

Exchanging Cash

ATM's are readily available throughout India which accept overseas debit/credit cards. If you have cash, it is highly recommended that when travelling to cities outside of Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, and other main cities that extra care and attention is paid when exchanging money. Australian, US Dollars Euros are easily exchanged throughout India however, other currencies can generally be exchanged in hotels and airports provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Your Local Guide will remind you to do this before departure.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of AUD\$250 per week should be sufficient; however for those that can't

resist a bargain, consider allocating a higher amount.

Your India tour does not include meals while on tour (only breakfast), providing you with freedom to explore the city and discover unique culinary delights. With this in mind, you will also need to allocate a certain amount of money for dinners, snacks and drinks while on tour. These meals are at your own arrangements so the amount allocated will be different for each tour participant.

Optional Tours

Optional tours may be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits. Each option will be arranged locally by your Local Guide.

Your Accommodation

All group tour hotels have private Western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty please speak to your Local Guide.

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a boutique family run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage type hotel. In remote areas accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all Western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local 4 star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and India. Rest assured that all hotels used by us are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Late Check-Out

Late check-out until 12pm is included in this group tour for passengers travelling on our package in the last hotel of stay. If you want to stay past the 12pm deadline please let us know on at the time of booking as extra charges will apply.

Development

Although India is developing quickly, it still lacks the

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international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your Local Guide.

Traffic in India

Main and inner city roads in India have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in India have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road – not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections below are approximations only.

Seatbelts

Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law in India and therefore the Indian people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason some vehicles may not be fitted with seatbelts or they may be hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available customers must use them and remain seated at all times while the vehicle is moving.

Rail Journeys

Your trip may or may not involve a train journey in India. Ekno Experience tries to book 1st or 2nd A/c depending on the availability. Getting on and off the trains in India can be quite disordered and confrontational as passengers will start boarding well before people have finished getting off! If your group is disembarking at a stop that is not the end of the line, the train will only stop for 10 minutes and you must have your luggage ready and by your side a few minutes before the train pulls into the station. Follow your Local Guide at all times.

Meals

Breakfasts and 5 Dinners will be included in the tour. We will take you to different restaurants everyday so that you can experience the local dishes, their individual flavours as well as the different ways they are prepared and cooked throughout India. The cost for each meal will be approximately around \$15 for both lunch and dinner – please allow this in your budgets.

Climbing Steps

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

Electricity

240V 50HzHz

Electric Plug Details

Indian-style plug with two circular metal pins above a large circular grounding pin



OR



European plug with two circular metal pins

Consider Cultural Differences

India has many religions, cultures and histories. Foreign tourists, particularly females, may be stared at as many Indian women don't often go out without their father

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or husband. Be considerate of this belief, dress with consideration and don't take it personally.

Safety & Security

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade states, 'Due to the risk of harassment and assault, women should take particular care in all parts of India and exercise caution even if they are travelling in a group.'

For full advice on travelling to India, visit <http://smartraveller.gov.au/zw-cgi/view/Advice/India>

Appropriate Dress

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in non-revealing clothes. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and pants or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women. Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques. When visiting Jain temples, you must not wear or take in any leather items such as belts, watches, camera straps, purses and shoes.

Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove them, you will have to remain outside.

Bring some shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

The itinerary below will indicate when you need to consider this.

Itinerary changes

1. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may

vary according to local conditions.

2. Many roads are uneven and or sections may be undergoing repair. Travelling by car is a slow process in India and usually cars travel on average 50kms per hour for distance travel (ie 500kms take 10 hours).

3. The domestic airlines in this region have frequent schedule changes. We will make alternative arrangements if flights are cancelled and your Local Guide will be informed of these.

Flight Delays or Changes to Arrival Times

Due to unforeseen circumstances, flights can be delayed, and therefore connecting flights may be missed. If you find yourself in this situation, please contact our India office on + 91 9418791001 (Local Guide) OR + 91 98166 85999 (24 hours) to urgently advise your arrival details have changed. Please ensure you have details (flight number and arrival time) handy to pass on to our local office in India. This will ensure your Local Guide can be informed of your most up to date information and ensure someone is at the airport to meet you on arrival. If we are not advised of late changes and missed connections, Ekno Experience/Travels cannot guarantee someone will be able to meet you upon arrival in India as our local office will have no way of knowing which flight you will be arriving on.

We will not be responsible for providing reimbursement of transportation costs from the airport to your hotel in the event that our local office was not advised of changes to arrival times.

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Itinerary

29 Dec 16 – Day 1:

Once you arrive in Delhi, collect your baggage and head to the arrivals hall. At the arrivals hall a driver will be waiting for you with a sign with your name on it, please look for this sign. If for some unlikely reason you cannot find your driver, please head to the Airtel counter and call one of these numbers.

Pankaj Kumar: +91 9582735047

Vikas Kumar: +91 9418 791001

Sharon Thrupp: +91 9816695999

Allow one hour to get from the airport to the hotel. If you need to come a day early the hotel is \$140 per night per room.

3 – 4 pm Introductions and tea at your hotel

4pm a quick tour of some of the sites of Delhi, India Gate, Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk.

7pm – Opening night dinner at a local South Indian Restaurant, Sarvan House in Connaught Place, prices \$5-\$10. Take a leisurely stroll along Janpath Market and Tourist area.

30 Dec 16 – Day 2:

Leaving the hotel at 9:30am. Transfer to the airport for flight to Udaipur (1.5 hours). On arrival, transfer to your hotel in the Old City, overlooking Lake Pichola. Udaipur is referred to as the “Venice of the East,” the “Most Romantic City of India” and the “Kashmir of Rajasthan” Tourists flock to this enchanting city in the heart of the Aravalli Hills, which has three interconnected lakes: Fateh Sagar Lake, Lake Pichhola and the smaller Swaroop Sagar Lake. With its forts, palaces, temples, gardens, mountains and narrow lanes lined with stalls in the medieval historic center, Udaipur is a living memory of a heroic past with valor and chivalry.

Spend the morning exploring the laneways of Udaipur and shopping.

For lunch treat yourself to some local cuisine before heading back to your room for a nap. Meet at 4.30pm for Gin and Tonics and an early dinner on the rooftop of the Jagat Niwas, witness a beautiful sunset over the lake.

6.30pm depart for Bagore-ki-Haveli, near Gangaur Ghat

in the heart of the old city to see a one hour local dance performance.

“Evelyn Greenslade: Nothing here has worked out quite as I expected. Muriel Donnelly: Most things don’t. But sometimes what happens instead is the good stuff.”

31 Dec 16 - Day 3:

Start the last day of 2016 with a morning meditation on our hotel rooftop overlooking Lake Pichola.

Then after indulging in a leisurely breakfast we leave for our next destination – The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel! The hotel is located in a small town called Khempur, where the film was shot. Check in and spend the morning having massages and henna tattoos. The afternoon we will participate in a 2 hour workshop designed to reflect on the year that has been. Then it’s time to party and enjoy our New Year’s Eve celebrations!!

1 Jan 17 – Day 4:

Sleep in and have a rest day. Today we will quietly potter around the local village and hotel. There will be workshops through the day to get you in touch with your hearts desires. Again massages will be available for anyone who missed out yesterday.

Great photo opportunities await, your friends will not believe you actually stayed at The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel! Optional horse or camel riding.

2 Jan 17 – Day 5:

After an early breakfast leave for Jaipur approximately 6-7 hours away. Driving through the Thar Desert you will witness desert life of villagers dressed in colourful clothes herding animals and of desert scenery as you drive through the desertpur. Arrive mid-afternoon and check into your hotel.

This afternoon you will have the option of attending a yoga class at the hotel. Relax in the evening and enjoy some traditional Rajasthani cuisine.

“Douglas Ainslie: Would you like some of this? I believe it’s called aloo ka paratha. Muriel Donnelly: No, if I can’t pronounce it, I don’t want to eat it.”

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3 Jan 17 – Day 6:

Early morning take an elephant up to the magnificent Amber Fort as a group. Located high on a hill, Amber fort was built in 1592 and its' name is said to derive from the many jewels that are used for decoration inside.

After visiting the fort, you'll have the rest of the afternoon to continue to explore Jaipur, visit the Hawa Mahal, City Palace, do some shopping at its famous Jahori Bazaar or check out a Bollywood film at the famous Raj Mandir cinema.

4 Jan 17 – Day 7:

After breakfast leave for Agra, during the day you'll have plenty more free time to explore Agra including the Red Fort. Though Agra is obviously best known for the Taj Mahal, it's also home to an impressive, 94-acre fort that's often overshadowed but definitely worth a visit.

Have lunch at the Viceroy Club so well known on the movie now the "Second Best Marigold Hotel" (locally known as the Narain Niwas Palace)

In the afternoon treat yourself to a traditional massage at the hotel or join in the optional yoga class.

5 Jan 17 – Day 8:

Sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal is India's most-photographed monument, and today you'll see why. Built between 1632 and 1653 in memory of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan's third wife, the Taj Mahal is world-renowned and widely admired and drive back to Delhi.

Afternoon at leisure for last minute shopping.

Last night out and farewell dinner Delhi!

Includes

- Airport transfers
- All transport by private vehicles (pickup and drop off at Delhi, Udaipur airports).
- Domestic Flight – Delhi to Udaipur
- 8 nights' accommodation
- All Breakfast & 5 Dinners
- All tours and Entrance fees to sights
- Dance Performance Jaipur
- New Year's Eve Celebration Exotic Marigold Hotel
- Services of an English speaking guide throughout the Tour and local guides

Excludes

- Airfares to and from India
- Indian visas
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Lunches and 3 dinners
- Occasional optional items not identified in itinerary description
- Tipping and personal expenses
- Bottled water and other beverages not included with meals

“Everything will be all right in the end and if it's not all right, then it's not yet the end.” - Sonny Kapoor

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