Namaste!

Welcome to our India. From the jungles of the south to the Himalayas of the north and the deserts of the west, India has it all, and so do we.

We have put together a range of tours, extensions and bespoke experiences that combine popular must dos like the Taj Mahal and Jaipur with more exotic and remote locations like Ladakh, the Spiti Valley and Northeast India.

Our small groups cater for up to ten people, but if you would like to go at your own pace then we can put together an itinerary to suit your style and budget. Whether you want a luxury hotel, a Rajasthani haveli or a more modest homestay, we have it covered.

Our expert guides and staff will be on hand to ensure your safety and comfort from the moment you land in India until the time you leave. With over seventeen years’ experience, offices in Australia and India and a dedicated 24/7 hotline, we will be with you every step of the way.

All tours/independent travel options are quoted in Australian Dollars. We can provide quotes in USD, Euros or other currencies upon request.

Vikas, Sharon and Shiv
Classic & Festival Tours
Pages 4 to 23

Adventures & Trekking Tours
Pages 24 to 30

Buddhist Pilgrimages
Pages 31 to 37

Extensions & Bespoke Experiences
*bespoke experiences are optional extras
Pages 38 to 44
**GOLDEN TRIANGLE**

Escorted/Independent

**Delhi, Agra & Jaipur**

6 days, 5 nights


**Cost:** A$2150 per person twin share

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**INCLUDES**

- Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
- Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
- Local guides in Delhi, Agra and Jaipur
- 5 nights' accommodation with breakfast
- All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
- Entrance fees as per the itinerary
- Sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal
- Welcome dinner

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Sightseeing tour of Old and New Delhi
- Sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal in Agra
- Agra Fort, a wonder of Mughal architecture
- Amber Fort, City Palace and Hawa Mahal in Jaipur
- Colourful local bazaars of Jaipur

**BESPOKE EXPERIENCES**

- Walk through the old Mughal city in Agra
- Taj Mahal heritage tour
- Live theatre show on the story of the Taj Mahal
- Cooking class with a local family in Jaipur
- Elephant village rescue centre in Mathura

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**ITINERARY**

**DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI**

Welcome to incredible India! Upon your arrival at the airport in Delhi, our representative will greet you and escort you to your hotel. After checking in, spend the rest of your day at your leisure exploring the local area or relaxing in the hotel. Our friendly guide and hotel staff will be on hand should you need restaurant recommendations or general provisions.

**Overnight:** Hotel, Delhi

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**DAY 2: DELHI**

After breakfast, we’ll head to the iconic and bustling area of Old Delhi. We’ll take a rickshaw tour through the ancient alleyways of Chandni Chowk bazaar before arriving at India’s largest mosque, the Jama Masjid. We will then visit the Red Fort, constructed in 1638, as well as Raj Ghat, the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi. As we continue to weave our way to New Delhi, we’ll pass British era landmarks such as India Gate, Rajpath, the President’s House, Parliament House and the Government Secretariat Buildings. We’ll spend the afternoon shopping at one of Delhi’s many bustling outdoor bazaars.

Tonight, enjoy a welcome dinner at a restaurant specialising in Indian cuisine.

**Overnight:** Hotel, Delhi

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**DAY 3: DELHI TO AGRA**

After breakfast we’ll drive from Delhi to Agra, home of the majestic Taj Mahal. Upon arrival in Agra, we’ll visit the impressive Agra Fort before touring the Taj Mahal. Built by Emperor Shah Jahan in fond memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz, the Taj Mahal has been described as the most extravagant monument to love ever built and remains one of India’s most enduring symbols.

**Overnight:** Hotel, Agra

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**DAY 4: AGRA TO JAIPUR**

Rise early to beat the crowds and watch the sun rise over the magnificent World Heritage site of the Taj Mahal.
The Taj Mahal is India’s most-photographed monument, and today we’ll see why. After the Taj, we’ll return to our hotel for breakfast and then travel onwards by car to Jaipur, the ‘Pink City’ of India. We will reach the capital of Rajasthan in the afternoon, and you’ll have the rest of the day free to spend at your leisure, getting to know and explore the many colourful bazaars and restaurants of this bustling city.

**Overnight:** Hotel, Jaipur

### DAY 5: JAIPUR

Today, visit the magnificent Amber Fort. Amber fort was built in 1592; and it has seen renovations and improvements for over two centuries! Its name is said to derive from the many jewels that are used for decoration inside – come and see for yourself! You can choose to walk, take a jeep, or ride an elephant to the fort’s entrance. The ascent to the fort, no matter your mode of transportation, is full of unbeatable views. After visiting the fort, head back to Jaipur for a tour of the city’s iconic landmarks and visit the gorgeous Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) and the City Palace Museum. The museum is filled with rich collections of Rajasthani costumes and medieval armoury.

**Overnight:** Hotel, Jaipur

### DAY 6: DEPART JAIPUR

Your tour concludes after breakfast. Bid phir milenge (until we meet again) or continue onwards to another exotic destination in India. We will transfer you to the airport in Jaipur for your onward international or domestic flight.

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**EXTEND YOUR STAY**

- **UDAIPUR & EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL** *(Page 41)*
  5 days, 4 nights

- **JODHPUR** *(Page 42)*
  4 days, 3 nights

- **ANCIENT VARANASI** *(Page 39)*
  4 days, 3 nights

- **MUMBAI** *(Page 41)*
  4 days, 3 nights

- **SACRED RISHIKESH** *(Page 42)*
  5 days, 4 nights
INSIDE RAJASTHAN

Escorted/Independent
Delhi, Agra, Jaipur & Udaipur
9 days, 8 nights


Cost: A$3200 per person twin share

INCLUDES
• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and Udaipur
• 9 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Train (2nd class AC or AC chair class) from Jaipur to Udaipur
• Domestic flight from Udaipur to Delhi
• Entrance fees as per the itinerary
• Sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal
• Dance performance in Udaipur
• Boat ride in Udaipur
• Welcome and farewell dinners

HIGHLIGHTS
• Sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal
• Agra Fort, a wonder of Mughal architecture
• Amber Fort, City Palace and Hawa Mahal in Jaipur
• Colourful local bazaars of Jaipur
• Udaipur, the Venice of the East

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI
Welcome to incredible India! Upon your arrival at the airport in Delhi, our representative will greet you and escort you to our hotel. After checking in, spend the rest of your day at your leisure exploring the local bazaars or relaxing in the hotel. In the evening we will meet for a welcome dinner at one of Delhi’s Indian restaurants.
Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI TO AGRA
After breakfast at the hotel, we’ll drive onwards to Agra, home of the majestic Taj Mahal. After checking in to our hotel, we’ll take a tour of the old Mughal city, where the direct descendants of the 20,000 artisans who built the Taj Mahal still live. We will also visit Agra Fort, where Shah Jahan was imprisoned by his son after the Taj Mahal was built.
Overnight: Hotel, Agra

DAY 3: AGRA TO JAIPUR
In the morning we’ll visit the Taj Mahal for a spectacular sunset. Built between 1632 and 1653 in memory of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan’s third wife, the Taj Mahal is world-renowned and widely admired. After the Taj, we’ll return to our hotel for breakfast and then travel onwards by car to Jaipur, the capital city of Rajasthan. After checking into our hotel, we’ll visit the Hawa Mahal (palace of the winds).
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur

DAY 4: JAIPUR
On our second day in Jaipur, we’ll visit the magnificent Amber Fort. The Amber Fort was built in 1592; and it has seen renovations and improvements for over two centuries. Its name is said to derive from the many jewels that are used for decoration inside…come and see for yourself! After visiting the fort, we’ll head back to Jaipur to visit City Palace Museum. The museum is filled with rich collections of Rajasthani costumes and medieval armoury.
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur
DAY 5: JAIPUR
In the morning we’ll visit the local Vishnu and Hanuman temples, where you’ll be able to experience the city waking up and coming to life. Observe the locals worshipping their gods before visiting the wholesale flower, vegetable and milk markets. We’ll head back to the hotel for a late breakfast and some time to relax. Spend the afternoon exploring the sights and colours of the Jaipur markets including the famous Johari Bazaar (jeweller’s market). In the evening we’ll visit Jaipur’s iconic cinema, Raj Mandir, for a taste of Bollywood’s magical brand of entertainment.
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur

DAY 6: JAIPUR TO UDAIPUR
After an early breakfast, we’ll travel to Udaipur by train (approx. 6 hours). As we pass through the Thar Desert, you’ll see villagers dressed in colourful clothes herding animals against a backdrop of spectacular scenery. We’ll arrive by mid-afternoon and check into our hotel by Lake Pichola. Udaipur, also known as the City of Lakes, is one of India’s most picturesque cities. Palaces surround the city, the most famous being The Lake Palace, which covers an entire island and was featured in the James Bond film Octopussy. There’s no doubt you’ll enjoy this relaxing, seductive city. Relax in the evening with some traditional Rajasthani cuisine.
Overnight: Hotel, Udaipur

DAY 7: UDAIPUR
In the early morning we’ll take a heritage walk or bicycle ride around Fateh Sagar Lake to see the sun rise over the Aravalli Hills. We’ll return to the hotel for a late breakfast, followed by a visit to the massive treasure-filled City Palace and a boat ride on Lake Pichola. In the afternoon we’ll visit Bagore Ki Haveli, a beautiful mansion housing an art gallery with traditional and contemporary dance performances. Dinner tonight is at a roof top restaurant overlooking Lake Pichola and the City Palace, sit back and enjoy the sweeping views.
Overnight: Hotel, Udaipur
DAY 8: UDAIPUR TO DELHI

After breakfast we’ll leave for our flight to Delhi. Upon arrival in Delhi we’ll transfer to our hotel. The rest of the day is yours to shop for souvenirs, or visit famous sites such as India Gate, Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk, Rajpath and Raj Ghat (the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi). For dinner we will share a special farewell dinner. Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 9: DEPART DELHI

After breakfast, the tour will come to an end. We will transfer you to the airport for your onward international or domestic flight.
HIDDEN GEMS OF THE HIMALAYAS

Escorted/Independent Delhi, Shimla, Palampur, Pragpur, Dharamsala & Amritsar 11 days, 10 nights


Cost: A$2950 per person twin share

INCLUDES
• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Delhi, Shimla and Amritsar
• 11 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Train (2nd class AC or AC chair class) from Delhi to Shimla
• Domestic flight from Amritsar to Delhi
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary
• Himalayan tea tour and tea tasting in Palampur
• Welcome and farewell dinners

HIGHLIGHTS
• Sights and wonders of Delhi
• Travel to the hill station of Shimla on the world famous ‘toy train’
• Tour and stay at a family-owned tea estate in Palampur
• Heritage village of Pragpur, stay in a palatial country manor
• Dharamsala, home of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile
• Visit the Golden Temple, Sikhism’s holiest shrine, in Amritsar

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI

Welcome to incredible India and to the start of your holiday! Our representative will meet you at the airport and escort you to your hotel. After checking into the hotel, spend the rest of the day at your leisure exploring the local area and soaking up the vibrant atmosphere. Our guide will be on hand at the hotel if you need any assistance or recommendations.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI TO SHIMLA

Rise and shine early and prepare yourself for a quintessential Indian experience – travelling on the world famous Indian Railways. Your driver will collect you from your hotel in Delhi (at approximately 4am) and you will set off with our guide for a day of eye opening travel.

You will take a train from North Delhi to Kalka before transferring to the narrow gauge Kalka – Shimla Railway, known affectionately as the ‘toy train’. This route travels along a mountainous track known for its dramatic views of the hills and surrounding villages. This railway was built in 1898 to connect Shimla, the summer capital of India during the British Raj, with the rest of the Indian rail system. At the time of construction 107 tunnels and 864 bridges were built throughout the course of the track. Sit back and enjoy the views and listen as our guide shares his knowledge of this beautiful part of the world. We will arrive in Shimla in the early evening in time for us to check into our hotel and go out for dinner.

Overnight: Hotel, Shimla

DAY 3: SHIMLA

This morning our guide will take you on a heritage walk, taking in some of the many sights of Shimla. Wander along the Ridge Maidan and Mall Road, pick up some crafts at Lakkar Bazaar, visit the Gaiety Theatre and marvel at the impressive neo-Gothic Christ Church.

Shimla is one of the most popular hill stations in India – and with its stunning views, wide boulevards and mist covered mountains it’s not hard to see why. The town is situated at an altitude of 2276 metres and was initially chosen as a sanatorium for invalid European officers, but soon developed into a big hill town and became the summer capital of the country during the British Raj.
In the evening enjoy the jovial atmosphere of the town in one of the many Indian or international restaurants.
Overnight: Hotel, Shimla

**DAY 4: SHIMLA TO PALAMPUR**

After breakfast we will leave Shimla and travel by car Palampur (approximately 7 hours). Sit back and enjoy the beautiful views as we wind our way through the valleys and foothills of the mighty Himalayas. In the afternoon arrive at our unique eco accommodation in a local tea estate. After settling in you can relax at the lodge or take a walk through the estate, which has been run by the same family since the 1950s.
Overnight: Tea Estate, Palampur

**DAY 5: PALAMPUR TO PRAGPUR**

This morning take a bespoke tour of the tea estate, which was established in 1857 by the British. You’ll learn about the journey from shrub to teacup, try your hand at tea plucking and learn to taste like a tea sommelier.
In the afternoon we will travel by car to the heritage village of Pragpur (approximately 2 and half hours). Upon arrival we’ll check into the palatial Judges Court Hotel. Wander the grounds and soak up the atmosphere of this country manor.
Overnight: The Judges Court, Pragpur

**DAY 6: PRAGPUR TO DHARAMSALA**

Spend the morning relaxing and exploring the heritage village of Pragpur, nestled in the shadows of the Dhauladhar mountains. In the afternoon we will travel by car to Dharamsala, known the world over as home to the Dalai Lama. This scenic drive will take you through the vibrant lower hills of Himachal Pradesh before reaching this fascinating North Indian hill station.
 Spend the afternoon exploring – starting with a visit to the temple of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, the Namgyel Monastery. Our guide will then lead the group to the Tibet Museum and the Tibetan Houses of Parliament. In the evening you will once again find plenty of lovely roof top restaurants to choose from; including Japanese, Indian and Tibetan.
Overnight: Norbulingka, Dharamsala

**DAY 7: DHARAMSALA**

After breakfast our guide will take the group to visit a local village, Naddi – a beautiful local village with magnificent views of the spectacular Himalayas. You will then travel to the Tibetan Children’s Village which is a thriving educational community for Tibetan children living in exile. Lunch will be enjoyed at the tranquil Norbulingka Institute which is located in the lush valley below McLeod Ganj. In the afternoon you will have the opportunity to visit the arts centre which preserves the work of Tibetan artisans.
Overnight: Norbulingka, Dharamsala

**DAY 8: DHARAMSALA**

The day is free for you to choose from any of our bespoke experiences (optional extras).
Overnight: Norbulingka, Dharamsala

**DAY 9: DHARAMSALA TO AMRITSAR**

You will leave our hotel early this morning for the picturesque drive down to the plains of the Punjab. Arrive in time to visit to the Wagah border to witness the closing ceremony of the border between India and Pakistan.
This ceremony takes place every evening and involves a display of pomp and ceremony by the Indian and Pakistani border guards. After the closing ceremony, head back to Amritsar where the rest of the evening at leisure. Enjoy a tasty dinner in one of the many Punjabi restaurants or take an evening stroll around the holy Sikh Golden Temple, which is open 24 hours a day.

Overnight: Hotel, Amritsar

**DAY 10: AMRITSAR TO DELHI**

This morning we will visit the Golden Temple to enjoy a quiet stroll through the inner corridors as the priests chant from the Sikh holy book. We will visit the langar hall, a massive free community dining room run entirely by volunteers. The Golden Temple langar can serve hot meals to up to 100,000 people a day.

In the early afternoon we will fly back to Delhi. The rest of the afternoon in Delhi is at your leisure to relax or shop for last minute souvenirs.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

**DAY 11: DEPART DELHI**

Our tour concludes after breakfast. We will transfer you to the airport for your onward international or domestic flight.
BEST OF LADAKH
Escorted/Independent
Delhi, Leh, Lamayuru & Alchi
8 days, 7 nights

*June dates include Hemis Festival

Cost: A$2950 per person twin share

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INCLUDES
• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Leh
• 7 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Return domestic flights from Delhi to Leh
• Entrance fees as per the itinerary

HIGHLIGHTS
• Spectacular flight over the Himalayas
• Ancient bazaars of Leh
• Stunning views of the Himalayas from Leh Palace
• Masked Lama dance at the Hemis Festival (June dates only)
• Stok, Shey Palace and Thiksey Monastery
• High pass villages of Lamayuru and Alchi
• Alchi Gompa

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI

Welcome to India! Upon your arrival at the airport in Delhi, our representative will meet you and escort you to the hotel. After checking into your hotel, spend the rest of your day at your leisure exploring the local area and relaxing in the hotel. Our friendly guide and hotel staff will be on hand should you need restaurant recommendations or general provisions.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI TO LEH

Take an early morning flight to Leh, the spectacular capital of Ladakh. Your flight will pass over multiple Himalayan ranges and serves as a fantastic photo opportunity. Leh is framed on all sides by the towering Himalayas, with the mighty Indus River roaring in the valley below. After landing take a walking tour of Leh Bazaar, which has been an important stop on trade routes dating as far back as the third century. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to rest and acclimatise.

Overnight: Hotel, Leh

DAY 3: LEH

After breakfast, visit Gompa Soma, a Buddhist temple constructed in 1840 at the base of the towering Leh palace. Afterwards, head to Moti Market, Leh’s old bazaar, for an exploration of its ancient lanes with a history that can be traced back to the Asian spice trade. You will eat lunch together followed by free time to rest, explore, or sip traditional Tibetan butter tea at your leisure.

Overnight: Hotel, Leh

DAY 4: HEMIS FESTIVAL

Today, you will witness the celebrations of the Hemis Festival, which commemorates the birth of Guru Padamasambhava. After an early breakfast travel to the Hemis Monastery, the largest and richest monastery in all of Ladakh. At 9am the birthday celebrations of Guru Padamasambhava begin in the courtyard, which quickly fills up with local Ladakhis and Buddhist pilgrims. A raised platform with a richly cushioned seat and a finely painted small Tibetan table is placed with the other ceremonial items – cups full of holy water, uncooked rice, tormas made of dough and butter and...
incense sticks. A number of musicians play traditional music with four pairs of cymbals, large-pan drums, small trumpets and large sized wind instruments. The festival highlight is the gathering of the lamas around the central flagpole to perform the mystic mask dances (Chams) and sacred plays. Dressed in colourful bright brocades with vibrantly decorated and richly adorned paper-mache masks the dancers enact an elaborate combat between good spirits and evil demons to the clatter of drums, cymbals and long horns.

For other tour dates not including the Hemis Festival – Spend the day around Leh for a guided tour of the city, including a visit to the Royal Palace. Constructed in the 17th century, this imposing nine story stone palace is one of the most captivating architectural ruins in the region. Situated in the foothills of the barren landscape, the palace was built as a residence for the King and to mark the reunification of Upper and Lower Ladakh. Above the Royal Palace, on Namgyal Tsemo (Victory Peak), are the ruins of Leh’s earliest royal residence, a fortress type structure built by King Tashi Namgyal in the 16th century.

Overnight: Hotel, Leh

DAY 5: LEH

After breakfast, take a sightseeing tour of Stok Palace, Shey Palace and Thiksey monastery.

Stock Palace is the home of the present day royal family. The palace and accompanying museum were built in the year 1825, by King Tespal Tondup Namgyal. At present the place has a collection of elaborate royal dresses and crowns which are open for travellers to explore.

Shey Palace was built by Deldan Namgyal at the beginning of the 17th century AD. The main image in the monastery is a three story statue of Buddha Shakamuni, made of copper gilt which was made by Deldan Namgyal in the memory of his father Singay Namgyal. The statue is the only one of its kind in the region.

Thiksey Gompa belongs to the Gelukspa order of Buddhism and is considered to be the most beautiful of all the monasteries in Ladakh. After our day of sightseeing we will return to Leh in the evening to rest and eat dinner.

Overnight: Hotel, Leh

DAY 6: LAMAYURU / ALCHI

After breakfast, travel to the town of Lamayuru, a spectacular 3 hour drive outside of Leh. Your journey weaves through remote mountain passes and deep river valleys.
that embed themselves eternally in your heart and mind. You will visit the local monastery and gompa and climb to the high point overlooking the town for unrivalled views across this spectacular region. The afternoon is at your leisure to enjoy the lunar-like white stone surroundings.
Overnight: Guesthouse, Lamayuru/Alchi

**DAY 7: LAMAYURU/ALCHI TO LEH**

You begin your return journey to Leh by way of Alchi, an ancient Buddhist village tucked into the Indus River valley. The Alchi Gompa is considered one of the most ancient Buddhist sites in the region, dating back to 10th Century. You will have time to observe the comings and goings of the monastery as well as to browse for handicrafts. Your drive back to Leh offers a spectacular setting for thought and reflection on our week’s journey and discoveries.
Overnight: Hotel, Leh

**DAY 8: LEH TO DELHI**

After breakfast we will return to Delhi by plane. Arrive in Delhi and continue to your final destination.

**EXTEND YOUR STAY**

- **SPITI VALLEY** (Page 15)
  13 days, 12 nights
- **GOLDEN TRIANGLE** (Page 4)
  6 days, 5 nights
- **ANCIENT VARANASI** (Page 39)
  4 days, 3 nights
- **AGRA & TAJ MAHAL** (Page 38)
  2 days, 1 night
- **MCLEOD GANJ** (Page 40)
  5 days, 4 nights
- **SACRED RISHIKESH** (Page 42)
  5 days, 4 nights
ROYAL RAJASTHAN DIWALI

Escorted/Independent Delhi-Agra-Jaipur-Jodhpur-Udaipur-Delhi
10 days, 9 nights
Dates: 7-16 November 2023, 27 October-5 November 2024
Cost: A$3400 per person twin share

INCLUDES
• Explore the colourful bazaars of Delhi
• Marvel at the wonders of the Taj Mahal at sunrise
• Discover the sights of Jaipur, including the majestic Amber Fort
• Enjoy a heritage walk through Mehrangarh Fort, one of the largest in India
• Experience the Diwali festivities in Jodhpur and celebrate with a Diwali feast
• Travel to Udaipur, the ‘Venice of East’, home to stunning lake palaces

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI
You’ll be met by one of our representatives at the airport and transferred to the hotel. The rest of the day is at your leisure to relax or soak up the sights of this bustling city. In the evening we’ll share a welcome dinner at an Indian restaurant.
Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI TO AGRA
In the morning we’ll drive to Agra, arriving with plenty of free time to explore this Mughal city. We’ll visit the impressive Agra Fort before touring the Taj Mahal. Built by Emperor Shah Jahan in fond memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz, the Taj Mahal has been described as the most extravagant monument to love ever built and remains one of India’s most enduring symbols. However, not all love stories have happy endings, and Shah Jahan was imprisoned in Agra Fort by his son during his final years.
Overnight: Hotel, Agra

DAY 3: AGRA TO JAIPUR
Rise early and pay a sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal is India’s most-photographed monuments, and today you’ll see why. After the Taj, we’ll return to our hotel for breakfast and then travel onwards by car to Jaipur, the ‘Pink City’ of India. We will reach the capital of Rajasthan in the afternoon, and you’ll have the rest of the day free to spend at your leisure. You may wish to explore the sights and colours of the Jaipur markets including the famous Johari Bazaar (jeweller’s market), or pay a visit to Jaipur’s iconic cinema, Raj Mandir, for a taste of Bollywood’s magical brand of entertainment.
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur

DAY 4: JAIPUR
On our second day in Jaipur, we’ll visit the magnificent Amber Fort. The Amber Fort was built in 1592, and has seen renovations and improvements for over two centuries. The name is said to derive from the many jewels that are used for decoration inside...come and see for yourself! After visiting the fort, we’ll head back to Jaipur to visit Hawa Mahal and the City Palace Museum. The museum is filled with rich collections of Rajasthani costumes and medieval armoury.
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur

HIGHLIGHTS
• Explore the colourful bazaars of Delhi
• Marvel at the wonders of the Taj Mahal
• Discover the sights of Jaipur, including the majestic Amber Fort
• Diwali festivities in Jodhpur
• Travel to Udaipur, the ‘Venice of East’, home to stunning lake palaces

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DAY 5: JAIPUR TO JODHPUR
After breakfast we’ll travel to Jodhpur by car, arriving in the early afternoon (approx. 5 hours). Jodhpur is known as the ‘Blue City’ as many of the houses are painted in shades of blue. With the towering backdrop of Mehrangarh Fort, one of the largest forts in India, the city is quintessential Rajasthan. In the afternoon we’ll head to Sardar Bazaar, one of the oldest markets in India, for handicrafts and antiques. The diversity of what’s on offer is impressive.
Overnight: Hotel, Jodhpur

DAY 6: DIWALI CELEBRATION IN JODHPUR
Start the day off right with a delicious omelette and a famous Makhaniya lassi, one of many Indian delicacies that originated in Jodhpur. We’ll then head up to Mehrangarh Fort and take in the sweeping view of the city. You can either have the late afternoon free or attend a Rajasthani cooking class at a local family’s house. In the evening we’ll join locals as they celebrate Diwali before making our way to the city for a special Diwali feast. During Diwali, temples, houses and gardens surrounding the city are lit up with colourful lights and decorated in flower garlands, and locals flock to give offerings to deities. It is a truly magical time to be in India.
Overnight: Hotel, Jodhpur

DAY 7: JODHPUR TO UDAIPUR
After breakfast, we will travel to Udaipur by private vehicle. Udaipur, also known as the ‘Venice of the East’, is one of India’s most picturesque cities. The city was founded in 1559 and was the capital of the Mewar kingdom. Palaces surround the city, the most famous being The Lake Palace, which covers an entire island and was featured in the James Bond film Octopussy. There’s no doubt you’ll enjoy this beautiful and seductive city. In the afternoon we’ll take an orientation walk through the narrow streets so that you can get your bearings. The rest of the day is at your leisure to relax and explore the city.
Overnight: Hotel, Udaipur

DAY 8: UDAIPUR
After breakfast, we’ll visit the massive City Palace before enjoying a boat ride on Lake Pichola. In the afternoon we’ll visit Bagore Ki Haveli, a beautiful mansion housing an art gallery of contemporary and folk art. The rest of the afternoon is free for you to relax or to enjoy one of our bespoke experiences. We’ll meet in the evening for dinner at the Udaigarh Hotel, which overlooks Lake Pichola and the City Palace.
Overnight: Hotel, Udaipur

DAY 9: UDAIPUR TO DELHI
After breakfast at the hotel, we’ll fly back to Delhi. After checking into our hotel, the rest of the day is free to either shop or visit the sights of Delhi. We’ll meet in the evening for our farewell dinner.
Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 10: DEPART DELHI
After breakfast, the tour will come to an end. We will transfer you to the airport for your onward international or domestic flight.

BESPOKE EXPERIENCES
- Heritage walk through Old & New Delhi
- Sultanate Delhi tour
- Walk through the old Mughal city in Agra
- Taj Mahal heritage tour
- Live theatre show on the story of the Taj Mahal
- Cooking class with a local family in Jaipur or Udaipur
- Morning heritage walk in Jaipur
- Visit the ‘Best Exotic Marigold Hotel’
- Early morning heritage walk and bicycle ride in Udaipur

EXTEND YOUR STAY
JODHPUR (Page 42)
4 days, 3 nights
ANCIENT VARANASI (Page 39)
4 days, 3 nights
MUMBAI (Page 41)
4 days, 3 nights
SACRED RISHIKESH (Page 42)
5 days, 4 nights
ENCHANTING KERALA

Escorted/Independent
10 days, 9 nights
Kochi - Munnar - Thekkady
- Alleppey backwaters & Chennamkary


Cost: A$3,190 per person twin share

www.eknotravels.com.au | tour@eknotravels.com.au

INCLUDES

• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Kochi & Thekkady
• 7 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• 1 night on a luxury houseboat with lunch, dinner and breakfast
• 1 night homestay accommodation with lunch, dinner and breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Entrance fees as per the itinerary
• Kathakali dance performance in Kochi
• Tea plantation trek in Munnar
• Welcome and farewell dinners

HIGHLIGHTS

• Explore the heritage city of Kochi
• Experience a Kathakali dance performance in Kochi
• Enjoy a tea plantation trek in Munnar
• Discover the spice gardens and markets in Thekkady
• Spot wildlife on a cruise in Periyar National Park
• Cruise the backwaters of Alleppey with an overnight stay on a traditional Kettuvalam boat
• Experience village life with a homestay on a car free backwater island
• Indulge in delicious South Indian delicacies

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE KOCHI

Welcome to India! On arrival at Kochi airport, you will be met by our guide and transferred to your hotel in Fort Cochin. Spend the afternoon exploring this historical area, famed for its colonial era architecture and iconic Chinese fishing nets. There are also galleries, cafes and boutiques in addition to beautiful old churches. In the evening you can wander down to the fishing nets where the local fishermen will let you have a go for a small tip. For a truly local experience you can buy fresh sea food from one of the nearby fishmongers, take it to a nearby shack to be cooked and then enjoy it as you watch the sun going down.

Overnight: Hotel, Kochi

DAY 2: EXPLORE KOCHI

After breakfast take a bespoke heritage walk around the local area. Fort Cochin is a maze of older style southern Indian houses and colonial era buildings which makes for an interesting walk. Along the way visit some of the most important landmarks which include Fort Immanuel, the Dutch Cemetery, Santa Cruz Basilica and Saint Francis Church, believed to be the oldest European church in India. You will then visit Mattancherry, the old bazaar district and home to the famous spice warehouses, along with Mattancherry Dutch Palace, built by the Portuguese in 1555. You will then explore Jew Town, home to an interesting synagogue as well as antique and curio shops. The area is also home to many heritage restaurants and cafés with excellent street views when it is time for a break.

In the afternoon relax and enjoy an Ayurvedic massage (optional). Ayurveda is a holistic form of medicine established over 3000 years ago in India and is the perfect way to unwind after a busy day of exploring. In the evening don’t miss the opportunity to catch a traditional Kathakali dance performance.

Overnight: Hotel, Kochi

DAY 3: KOCHI - MUNNAR

After a leisurely breakfast you will depart for Munnar (1600m above sea level), a scenic 4 hour drive up into the Western Ghats Mountain range. Check into the accommodation and enjoy the fresh air of South India’s largest tea growing region.
In the afternoon, take a drive up to the Top Station (1880m) for picturesque views of the Western Ghats and out across to the neighbouring state of Tamil Nadu. There is a good chance we might see wild elephants wandering through the lush hills and jungles on our way.
Overnight: Hotel, Munnar

**DAY 4: EXPLORE MUNNAR**

Today, take a trek through the beautiful tea plantations around Munnar, the best way to enjoy the beauty of the rolling verdant hills. The mountain scenery is breathtaking, and you'll often be above the clouds or amongst the veils of mist. Be amazed at the variety of fresh local produce as we stop to admire the many tea and spice plantations.
Overnight: Hotel, Munnar

**DAY 5: MUNNAR - THEKKADY**

After breakfast, take a spectacular 3-hour drive through the Cardamom Hills to Thekkady, along a route lined with plantations of tea, cocoa, tapioca, bamboo, coconut, banana, and of course cardamom. Thekkady is the gateway to Periyar National Park, which is home to tigers, elephants, primates and deer.
The afternoon is at your leisure to relax or wander the village and explore the local markets. You may also wish to enjoy an optional extra such as a guided hike or safari in the national park, a therapeutic Ayurvedic treatment or a traditional South Indian cooking class.
Overnight: Hotel, Thekkady

**DAY 6: PERIYAR NATIONAL PARK**

Take a scenic walk through the spice gardens before visiting the fragrant and colourful spice markets, which is a great opportunity to purchase spices.
In the afternoon, you will take a wildlife cruise on Periyar Lake. This is a great opportunity for wildlife spotting, especially for deer, boar, otters and the many varieties of birdlife.
Overnight: Hotel, Thekkady

**DAY 7: HOUSEBOAT ALLEPPEY BACKWATERS**

After an early breakfast, depart for Alleppey (4 hours) where you will board our houseboat for a trip along the backwaters. Local houseboats have been made in the traditional rice barge or Kettuvalam style and luxuriously fitted out with bedrooms, a dining room, open lounge and deck. A captain and cook are on hand to look after your every need. Spend the afternoon cruising around the backwaters, drifting along coconut lined canals and past the small villages that line the banks. Enjoy the delicious South Indian food and the peace of sleeping on board a boat. For many people this is a highlight of their time in India.
Overnight: Houseboat, Alleppey Backwaters

**DAY 8: ALLEPPEY HOMESTAY**

After a delicious breakfast, you will be dropped at your homestay on a backwater island. Your homestay is with a local family in a picturesque village surrounded by lush rice paddies. The homestay is situated on a car-free island and the only way to get around is on foot, bicycle or by boat. Do all three or just chill in a hammock watching life pass by at a snail’s pace. You can also take the optional extra of trying out a South Indian cooking class.
Overnight: Homestay, Chennamkary (Alleppey Backwaters)

**DAY 9: ALLEPPEY - KOCHI**

After a relaxed breakfast we will depart Alleppey for the drive back to Kochi (2 hours).
Spend the rest of the day at your leisure or exploring Fort Cochin. Princess Street is one of the oldest streets in the city and is an excellent place to go for people-watching. It is also home to countless cafes, restaurants, bookstores, tea shops, art galleries and boutiques, making it a perfect place to enjoy good South Indian coffee or to do any last minute souvenir shopping.
Overnight: Hotel, Kochi

### DAY 10: DEPARTURE

After breakfast transfer to either Kochi or Trivandrum airport for your onward flight.

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**BESPOKE EXPERIENCES**

- Ayurvedic massage in Kochi
- Guided hike or safari in Periyar National Park
- Therapeutic Ayurvedic treatment in Thekkady
- Traditional South Indian cooking class in Kochi or Chennamkary
- Day trip to Vypeen Island

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**EXTEND YOUR STAY**

- **KOCHI** (Page 43)
  - 3 days, 2 nights
- **GOAN HOMESTAY** (Itinerary on application)
  - 5 days, 4 nights
- **MUMBAI** (Page 41)
  - 4 days, 3 nights

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**ENCHANTING KERALA - TOUR MAP**

- **Car**
  - Kochi-Munnar-Thekkady
  - Alleppey-Kochi
ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE KOLKATA

Welcome to incredible India! On arrival you will be met by one of our representatives at transferred to the hotel. The rest of the day is free to relax or explore the local surrounds. Kolkata is a fascinating city – full of life, vibrancy and culture. Although no activities are planned, your guide will be on hand to offer help and recommendations. Overnight: Hotel, Kolkata

DAY 2: KOLKATA SIGHTSEEING

Kolkata is an intoxicating city to explore, and today you will discover why. As one of India’s largest cities and the former capital of British India, the city is regarded as the artistic and cultural capital of the country.

After breakfast at the hotel we will head to Kumartuli, the potters or sculptors district. This atmospheric area is made up of maze-like alley ways that house over 550 different workshops that create religious idols all year-round. The idols are primarily created for the Durga Puja Festival, and wandering the narrow streets offers a rare glimpse into the ritual and skill involved in creating these idols from clay and bamboo. Watching the idols come to life is also a photographer’s dream.

After exploring you will take a ferry to the Mullick Ghat Flower Market, the largest in Asia. Crossing the mighty Hooghly River by boat is a chance to view this heaving metropolis from the water as you pass under the iconic Howrah Bridge. You will also visit the grand marble Raj era Victoria Memorial.

Return to our hotel late afternoon where the rest of the day is free to spend at your leisure.
Overnight: Hotel, Kolkata

DAY 3: KOLKATA TO MAJULI ISLAND

After breakfast at the hotel you will fly to Jorhat where you will be picked up at the airport and continue your journey to Majuli Island. Along the way, stop at the 115-year-old Haroocharai Tea Estate for lunch.

After lunch continue to Neemati Ghat, from where you will board a ferry Majuli Island. Majuli is the world’s largest river island but it is slowing disappearing as the land is eroded away by the mighty Brahmaputra River to monsoonal floods.
Majuli is renowned in Assamese culture as home to the medieval Xatras (monasteries) where monks practice Assam’s distinctive form of Vishnu worship. There will be time visit the Xatras, an eye-opening glimpse into the lives of the monks who still lead an austere life mastering religious scripts, art, music, dance and handicraft. The afternoon is yours to relax at our beautiful resort and enjoy the change of pace after bustling Kolkata.

Overnight: Hotel, Majuli Island

**DAY 4: MAJULI ISLAND**

After breakfast, set off to visit some of the significant Xatras on Majuli. We will visit Dakshinpaat Xatra, where monks lead a celibate life; followed by Natun Samaguri Xatra where the monks are allowed to marry. Natun Samaguri Xatra is known for its 400-year-old tradition of religious mask making started by Srimanta Shankardev for religious plays.

The afternoon is free for you to soak up the atmosphere of the beautiful island. Take a walk through the rice fields or enjoy some bird watching at the water meadows.

Overnight: Hotel, Majuli Island

**DAY 5: MAJULI ISLAND**

After breakfast, pick up some local bikes and cycle around some of the nearby villages. The bike hire scheme has been set up to promote sustainable tourism in the area and is also one of the best ways to slowly explore the villages and beautiful surrounds. Alternative transport will be provided for those who don’t wish to cycle.

You will pay a visit to Mishing Village, home to the Mishing tribe, who make up almost half of the population of Majuli. As you explore the village will notice their distinct houses which are traditionally built on raised platforms.

After our bike ride return to your accommodation and the rest of the afternoon is yours to relax or explore. Don’t forget to watch the sun set over the Brahmaputra, as people head home by boat.

*Optional Extra:* In the evening, enjoy a traditional tribal feast. The food you will try is very distinctive, and there will be plenty of unusual fish, meat and vegetarian delicacies on offer. Finish off the meal by trying the local rice beer, known as Apong (optional).

Overnight: Hotel, Majuli Island

**DAY 6: KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK**

After breakfast you will say goodbye to Majuli Island and start the journey to Kaziranga National Park, home to elephants, tigers, primates and India’s famed one-horned rhino.

After travelling by ferry and private vehicle, reach your accommodation and check in. The park consists of several ranges, and over the next two days you’ll visit the Central Range (home to Tigers), the Bagori Range (home to rhinos, elephants and water buffaloes) and the Burapahar Range (home to India’s only ape, the Hollock Gibbon, as well as Capped Langurs).

The afternoon is yours to relax in our luxurious riverside accommodation, from where you might even be able to spot rhinos grazing in the neighbouring grasslands.

Overnight: Resort, Kaziranga National Park

**DAY 7: KAZIRANGA NATIONAL PARK**

Today, take morning and afternoon jeep safaris. Your safari guide will choose which range of the park to cover and will make sure that you pay a visit to all three over the next two days.

In between the safaris you can relax at the resort and enjoy some of their delicious food.

Overnight: Resort, Kaziranga National Park
This morning enjoy your final jeep safari in Kaziranga National Park.
In the afternoon, drive to Jorhat where you will spend the night before your next adventure - the tribal north-eastern state of Nagaland.
Overnight: Hotel, Jorhat

Rise and shine early so that you can catch the Shatabdi Express to Dimapur. Drive to Mariani station where you will board one of India’s famed trains. Your train journey will take two hours and is a perfect time to sit back and enjoy the passing scenery.
Arrive in Dimapur in time for a late breakfast before continuing by private vehicle to Kohima, the capital city of Nagaland. Kohima is scattered across a series of forested ridges with some picturesque views of the valley below.
After checking into your hotel, visit the War Cemetery, which stands at a battle site of the 64-day Battle of Kohima where the Allied Forces won a decisive battle over the Japanese. The cemetery is one of the most historically significant reminders of the war that was fought in this part of the world. Visit the Central Market, where tribal people gather to buy and sell local delicacies.
Overnight: Hotel, Kohima

After breakfast, attend the colorful opening ceremony of the Hornbill Festival at the Kisama Heritage Village festival grounds. At the festival you will experience traditional Nagaland dances, songs, games, food, religious ceremonies and tribal lore. Attending the festival and witnessing the Naga tribes in their full warrior dress is truly a once in a life time experience.
The Hornbill Festival is organised annually to preserve the culture of the diverse local tribes. Although each tribe has their own festivals, the Hornbill Festival is an important social and cultural event for all the tribes to meet. The festival is named after the Hornbill Bird, common to the folklore of all the tribes.
Spend the day at the festival site and enjoy the local delicacies on offer as well as the famous Naga hospitality.
After leaving the festival site, visit Kigwema Village. The village is home to the Angami people, one of the major Naga ethnic groups. Several households in the village welcome tourists, giving you a rare peek into the lives of the tribes people away from the festival site.
Overnight: Hotel, Kohima

BESPOKE EXPERIENCES
KOLKATA
Heritage walk of the old city

EXTEND YOUR STAY
KOLKATA (Itinerary on application)
3 days, 2 nights
GANGTOK & DARJEELING (Itinerary on application)
7 days, 6 nights
ANCIENT VARANASI (Page 39)
4 days, 3 nights
DAY 11: HORNBILL FESTIVAL

After breakfast head to Kisama Heritage Village to enjoy the festivities for another day. Today you will be able to watch jaw-dropping performances and enactments of the traditional way of life for the various tribes as well as eat delicious Naga food till you can take no more.
In the evening, visit the iconic Kohima Cathedral to enjoy the panoramic views of the city.
Overnight: Hotel, Kohima

DAY 12: KOHIMA TO KOLKATA

Today we will say goodbye to Nagaland. We will have breakfast at the hotel before taking a scenic drive to Dimapur, where we will board a flight to Kolkata. We will arrive in Kolkata by mid-afternoon and transfer to our accommodation.
The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure. You might wish to explore the local area or do some last-minute souvenir shopping.
Overnight: Hotel, Kolkata

DAY 13: DEPART KOLKATA

We will transfer you to the airport in time for your return flight home.
SPITI VALLEY

Escorted/Independent Delhi, Shimla, Kalpa, Nako, Tabo, Kaza, Manali & Chandigarh

13 days, 12 nights

Dates: 4-16 August 2023, 5-17 August 2024

Cost: A$3450 per person twin share

INCLUDES

• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Delhi and Shimla
• 12 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Train (2nd class AC or AC chair class) from Delhi to Shimla
• Domestic flight from Chandigarh to Delhi
• Entrance fees as per the itinerary

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI

Welcome to India! Upon your arrival at the airport in Delhi, our representative will greet you and escort you to the hotel. After checking into your hotel, spend the rest of your day at your leisure exploring the local area and relaxing in the hotel. Our friendly guide and hotel staff will be on hand should you need restaurant recommendations or general provisions.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI

Head to the iconic and bustling area of Old Delhi after breakfast. We’ll admire the magnificent Jama Masjid (India’s largest mosque) and enjoy a rickshaw tour through the ancient alleyways of Chandni Chowk bazaar. Before heading back to New Delhi we’ll pass by the fantastic Red Fort, constructed in 1638; as well as Raj Ghat, the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi. As we continue to weave our way to New Delhi, we will pass majestic British era landmarks such as the India Gate, the President’s House, Parliament House & the Government Secretariat Buildings. Our final stop of the day is the Laxmi Narayan Hindu Temple.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 3: DELHI TO SHIMLA

Today you will leave our hotel in the early hours of the morning and set off for a day of exciting rail travel on the world famous Indian Railways. You will take a train from North Delhi to Kalka before transferring onto the narrow gauge ‘toy train’ Kalka-Shimla Railway. This route travels along a mountainous track known for its dramatic views of the hills and surrounding villages. This railway was built in 1898 to connect Shimla, the summer capital of India during the British Raj, with the rest of the Indian rail system. At the time of construction 107 tunnels and 864 bridges were built throughout the course of the track.

You will arrive in Shimla in the early evening in time for a dinner.

Overnight: Hotel, Shimla

DAY 4: SHIMLA

After breakfast, set off on a sightseeing tour of Shimla.
Visit Kufri, Ridge Maiden, Mall Road and the impressive Christ Church. Shimla is one of the most popular hill stations in India, and with its stunning views, wide boulevards and mist covered mountains it’s not hard to see why. The town is situated at an altitude of 2276 metres and was initially chosen as a sanatorium for invalid European officers, but soon developed into a big hill town and became the summer capital of the country during the British Raj.

Overnight: Hotel, Shimla

**DAY 5: SHIMLA TO KALPA**

This morning you will leave Shimla and make your way to Kalpa as you head into the beautiful Kinnaur Valley. From Kalpa, see the spectacular Kinner Kailash, one of the highest mountains in the Indian Himalayas at 6055 metres.

The Kinnaur Valley is known as the gateway to the remote Spiti Valley. Kinnaur is famous for its apple orchards as just about all of India’s apples are produced in this area. The cultural tapestry is rich as modernity has only touched it in the past couple of years. You will be able to observe as people go about their everyday life in their stunning traditional dress. Kalpa is surrounded by snowy peaks for most of the year, which makes for a beautiful sunset backdrop.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Kalpa

**DAY 6: KALPA TO NAKO**

The morning is at your leisure to explore Kalpa, before we head towards Rekong Peo. You will stop for lunch and get your permit for the Spiti Valley and head towards Nako, which is located just 60kms from the Tibetan border.

Nako is a very picturesque village high in the Himalayas (altitude 3625 metres) which has an ancient monastery dating back to 1025 AD, as well as several Buddhist chortens dotted throughout the town. The villagers are extremely proud of their heritage and the town is well maintained by the local community. A pretty lake also surrounds the town and is a lovely spot for an afternoon stroll.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Nako

**DAY 7: NAKO TO TABO**

Today, you will take a morning drive to Tabo. Tabo is famous for its monastery, which dates back to 966AD and is a World Heritage Site. The Dalai Lama maintains that the Tabo Monastery is one of the holiest sites in the world. Due to its height at 3280 metres, Tabo has short summers and very cold winters.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Tabo

**DAY 8: TABO TO KAZA**

Leave after breakfast for the drive to Kaza, stopping off on the way at Dhankar Monastery. Dhankar Monastery was built on a 300-metre high spur overlooking the Spiti and Pin Rivers. It truly is one of the world’s most spectacular settings for a monastery and has many holy stories attached to it.

In the afternoon, bid farewell to Dhankar and head towards Kaza where you will spend the next two nights.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Kaza

**DAY 9: KAZA**

You will spend the day around Kaza, exploring the local Sakya monastery and the world famous Ky Monastery. This Tibetan Buddhist monastery is located on top of a hill at an altitude of 4166 metres above sea level and is 11kms from Kaza. The monastery has the distinction of being the oldest and the biggest in the Lahaul and Spiti district as well as being a religious training centre for monks. It is home to around 300 novice monks who receive their religious education here.

Drive to the remote town of Kibber at 4270 metres for lunch and to soak in the remoteness and beauty of the Spiti Valley.
With sweeping views of the mountains on one side and the Spiti Valley on the other, it is a great place to relax and enjoy the view. The Kibber area is also home to the elusive Blue Sheep, and if you keep your eyes peeled on the horizon you may see one of these shy creatures in the distance. In the late afternoon we drive back to Kaza.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Kaza

**DAY 10: KAZA TO MANALI**

You will leave Kaza very early in the morning for the drive to Manali and follow the valley floor before gradually rising and crossing the spectacular Rothang Pass (3980m) which offers some of the most spectacular mountain views in the world. You will stop at the pass to admire the stunning view, before continuing on to Manali and arriving by early afternoon.

Manali is nestled amongst the Himalayas on the banks of the Beas River and offers an exotic charm unlike any other place in India. Old Manali has maintained its old world charm despite modern conveniences such as the many restaurants offering a variety of local and international cuisines. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to explore this picturesque town or to take a well deserved rest.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Manali

**DAY 11: MANALI TO CHANDIGARH**

After breakfast, leave Manali and begin your descent to the Indian plains, and to the modern metropolis of Chandigarh. The drive will take 7 hours by car. You follow the Beas River from Manali to Mandi, passing through one of the most beautiful gorges that Himachal Pradesh has to offer. Sit back and admire the stunning views as we travel in comfort through what is known as ‘the valley of the gods’.

Overnight: Hotel, Chandigarh

**DAY 12: CHANDIGARH TO DELHI**

After breakfast we will take a morning flight to Delhi. The rest of the day is at your leisure to relax in our modern hotel or to shop for any last minute souvenirs in the bustling bazaars of Delhi.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

**DAY 13: DEPART DELHI**

Transfer to the Indira Gandhi International Airport for your return flight home. We look forward to seeing you on another Ekno experience soon.
**KARERI LAKE TREK**

Escorted/Independent
McLeod Ganj - Kareri Village - Lioti - Kareri Lake - Bagga - Guna - Triund

9 days, 8 nights

**Dates:** May to November

**Cost:** A$1250 per person twin share

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**INCLUDES**

- Met on arrival by an Ekno representative
- Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
- 2 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
- 6 nights’ trekking accommodation in a tent, including all meals and a porter for 7 days
- Transfers on arrival and departure
- Entrance fees as per the itinerary

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Temple of His Holiness The Dalai Lama in McLeod Ganj
- Visit local villages for cultural experiences
- Trek through stunning natural landscape
- Camp at beautiful Kareri Lake

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**ITINERARY**

**DAY 1: ARRIVE McLEOD GANJ**

Welcome to McLeod Ganj! You will be met by our representative and escorted to your guesthouse, before heading out on a tour of this fascinating North Indian hill station. We’ll visit the temple of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, the Namgyel Monastery; as well as the Tibet Museum. Spend the afternoon with your guide and porters learning about the route and making final preparations for the trek.

Overnight: Guesthouse, McLeod Ganj

**DAY 2: McLEOD GANJ TO KARERI VILLAGE**

We’ll depart from McLeod Ganj (at an altitude of 1780m) by early morning and begin our trek. We’ll walk for 11 km, approximately 5 hours, ending at Kareri Village Forest Rest House, at an altitude of 2175 m. Along the way we will pass through thick pine forests and traditional villages before enjoying the spectacular sunset views of the valley below.

Overnight: Camping, Kareri Village Forest Rest House.

**DAY 3: KARERI VILLAGE TO LIOTI**

Trek from Kareri Village to Lioti at 2915 metres (approximately 6 hours). The trail passes through luscious forests of oak, rhododendron and pine and follows flowing river streams. Lioti is a stunning alpine grassland with beautiful sweeping views and we will make our camp here tonight.

Overnight: Camping, Lioti

**DAY 4: LIOTI TO KARERI LAKE**

Trek from Lioti to Kareri Lake at 3200 metres, which will take approximately 4 hours. Kareri Lake is a common grazing spot for Gaddi shepherds as they head for the high passes overhead. The trail follows a deep river gorge, with densely forested and soaring mountains rising to the other side. Enjoy camping in the beautiful meadow next to Kareri Lake and soak in the pristine mountain air.

Overnight: Camping, Kareri Lake
DAY 5: KARERI LAKE TO BAGGA
Rise in time for the sunrise, it’s worth it. You will be able to witness the sun light up the high mountain peaks of the Baleni Pass as well as the valley below. Today we’ll trek for approximately 4 hours as we take the steep descent from Kareri Lake to Bagga, located at 2500 meters.
Overnight: Camping, Bagga

DAY 6: BAGGA TO GUNA
Today we trek from Bagga to Guna at 2600 meters. Approximately 6 hours of trekking through thick pine forests with a steep descent.
Overnight: Camping, Guna

DAY 7: GUNA TO TRIUND
Trek from Guna to Triund at 3350 meters. Triund is a popular location with stunning views of the valley and McLeod Ganj below it. In Triund you may wish to eat in one of the small restaurants or drink a hot chai (tea) from one of the many roadside tea stalls. Approximately five hours of trekking today.
Overnight: Camping or guesthouse, Triund

DAY 8: TRIUND TO MCLEOD GANJ
Today weaves us back to where we started, McLeod Ganj. Enjoy an easy four hour trek back and arrive by mid-afternoon. Freshen up and treat yourself at one of the many fantastic restaurants the town has to offer – from Korean or Indian to traditional Tibetan, McLeod Ganj has food for all palates.
Overnight: Guesthouse, McLeod Ganj

DAY 9: DEPART MCLEOD GANJ
Our tour ends after breakfast. We hope to see you again for your next Ekno Travels experience.

BESPOKE EXPERIENCES
DHARAMSALA
Tibetan Buddhist circuit in McLeod Ganj
Himalayan forest trek
Tea plantation trek in the Kangra Valley
Tibetan homestay

EXTEND YOUR STAY
GOLDEN TRIANGLE (Page 4)
6 days, 5 nights
ANCIENT VARANASI (Page 39)
4 days, 3 nights
SACRED RISHIKESH (Page 42)
5 days, 4 nights
AGRA & TAJ MAHAL (Page 38)
2 days, 1 night
AMRITSAR (Page 38)
3 days, 2 nights

KARERI LAKE TREK - TOUR MAP
GREAT HIMALAYAN TREK

Escorted/Independent
Delhi - Mandi - Tirthan Valley - Great Himalayan National Park - Rampur - Shimla

9 days, 8 nights

Dates: May to November

Cost: A$ 2650 per person twin share

www.eknotravels.com.au | tour@eknotravels.com.au

INCLUDES

• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Mandi, Rampur, Shimla
• 6 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• 2 nights’ homestay accommodation with all meals
• 1 day trek in the Great Himalayan National Park
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Return domestic flights from Delhi to Chandigarh
• Train (2nd class AC or AC chair class) from Shimla to Kalka
• Entrance fees as per the itinerary

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI

Welcome to incredible India! Our representative will meet you and escort you to your hotel upon your arrival at the airport in Delhi. After checking into the hotel, spend the rest of the day at your leisure exploring the local area and soaking up the vibrant atmosphere. Our friendly guide will be on hand should you need any assistance.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI TO MANDI

After breakfast, take an early morning flight to Chandigarh. Upon arrival in Chandigarh you will be met by a driver and driven to Mandi. Arrive in Mandi in the afternoon and settle into your hotel. In the early evening take a walking tour of Mandi bazaar and explore some of the ancient temples and ghats along the Beas River.

Mandi, formerly known as Mandav Nagar, is a major town in Mandi District in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Famed for its many temples dotted along the banks of the Beas River, it’s also known as ‘little Kashi’ after the holy Indian city of Varanasi.

Overnight: Hotel, Mandi

DAY 3: MANDI TO TIRTHAN VALLEY

After breakfast you will be driven to the picturesque Tirthan Valley. This unspoilt valley is home to traditional Himalayan villages, charming homestays, great walks and spectacular valley and mountain scenery. Your accommodation for the next two days is an inviting Himalayan homestay right in the lap of nature. Spend the rest of the day in the village experiencing and observing the traditional way of life.

Overnight: Homestay, Tirthan Valley

DAY 4: GREAT HIMALAYAN NATIONAL PARK

Today you will take an easy trek that explores the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP). The trek will follow the river along a steep sided and thickly forested trail. Walk to the scenic waterfalls and enjoy a picnic lunch before heading back to your homestay.

In the afternoon you can try your hand at trout fishing in the Tirthan River or head to the local market at Banjar village, known for traditional handmade woolens.

Overnight: Homestay, Tirthan Valley

HIGHLIGHTS

• Explore the riverside temples and ghats in Mandi
• Enjoy a unique home stay in the picturesque Tirthan Valley
• Discover the beauty of the Great Himalayan National Park with a day hike
• Experience Himalayan village life
• Take in the sights of the stunning Kinnaur region, including the Jalori Pass
• Visit the historical hill station of Shimla
• Marvel at the scenery as you travel on the world-famous ‘toy train’
DAY 5: TIRTHAN VALLEY TO RAMPUR

After breakfast you will be driven to Rampur, a bustling bazaar town and former winter capital of the Kinnaur district. This is a scenic drive that crosses the Jalori Pass and winds through Himalayan cider pine and conifer forests. At the high pass you will be able to stop and rest as you take in the wonderful views of the Himalayan mountain ranges. If the weather is good you will also be able to watch the Himalayan griffon vultures, the largest birds in the Indian Himalaya. After checking into your hotel in the afternoon you will be able to visit the famous Bhimakali temple, dedicated to the goddess of Himalaya and built in the distinctive Kinnauri style. The rest of the evening is at your leisure.

Overnight: Government Tourist Bungalow, Rampur

DAY 6: RAMPUR TO SHIMLA

After breakfast you will be driven to Shimla. The drive starts off following the Sutluj River, one of the major rivers in Himachal Pradesh. Along the way you will stop for lunch in Narkanda, the main apple growing region of the Himalayas. After lunch take a drive through the scenic apple orchids before continuing to Shimla. Arrive in Shimla by late afternoon and check into your hotel.

Shimla is one of the most popular hill stations in India – and with its stunning views, wide boulevards and mist covered mountains it’s not hard to see why. The town is situated at an altitude of 2276 meters and was initially chosen as a sanatorium for invalid European officers, but soon developed into a big hill town and became the summer capital of the country during the British Raj. In the evening take a stroll along the Mall, a 7km traffic free stretch and the beating heart of the hill station. Enjoy the atmosphere and choose from the many restaurants along this strip for dinner or a nightcap.

Overnight: Hotel, Shimla

DAY 7: SHIMLA

This morning you will be taken on a heritage walk that explores some of the many sights of Shimla. Wander along the Ridge Maidan and the Mall, pick up some crafts at Lakkar Bazaar, visit the historical Gaiety Theatre and marvel at the impressive neo-Gothic Christ Church.

The afternoon is free for you to explore the local area. You can take the steep hike up the Jakhu temple, thronging with monkeys; visit the bazaars for souvenir shopping or take it easy strolling along the Mall.

Overnight: Hotel, Shimla

DAY 8: SHIMLA TO DELHI

After breakfast you will take a trip on the World Heritage listed Kalka-Shimla Railway. Known as the ‘toy train’, this route travels along a mountainous track known for its dramatic views of the hills and surrounding villages. This railway was built in 1898 to connect Shimla with the rest of the Indian rail system. At the time of construction 107 tunnels and 864 bridges were built throughout the course of the track. Sit back and enjoy the journey from Shimla to Kalka which will take around 5 hours.

When you reach Kalka you will be transferred to Chandigarh for your ongoing flight to Delhi. Upon arrival in Delhi transfer to your hotel and spend the rest of the evening at your leisure.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 9: DEPART DELHI

After breakfast the tour ends. You will be transferred to the airport for your ongoing flight. We look forward to seeing you on another India experience soon.
The image contains a brochure for a tour of Buddha's Sacred Sites. The brochure includes details about the destinations, dates, cost, and inclusions of the tour. The itinerary outlines the activities for each day of the trip, starting from Delhi and including Varanasi, Sarnath, Sravasti, Kushinagar, Vaishali, Rajgir, and Bodhgaya. The brochure also highlights various attractions and services offered during the tour. The tour costs A$2650 per person twin share and is available from October to March. The brochure can be accessed at www.eknotravels.com.au or via email tour@eknotravels.com.au.
On arrival in Sarnath, visit the Deer Park where the Buddha taught The Four Noble Truths (his first teachings) after attaining enlightenment. Afterwards you will visit Dhamekh Stupa and other important Buddhist ruins including Chaukhandi Stupa and Mulganda Kuti Vihar. The Dhamekh Stupa is said to mark the exact spot of the Buddha’s first teaching of the Four Noble Truths. In the late afternoon you will return to Varanasi. The evening is free to explore or rest at your leisure.

Overnight: Hotel, Varanasi.

**DAY 5: VARANASI TO SRAVASTI**

After a very early breakfast, you will be driven to Sravasti (approximately 8 hours), stopping for breaks along the way. Sravasti is where the Buddha spent the greater part of his monastic life, as well as many rainy seasons teaching to his disciples.

Overnight: Hotel, Sravasti.

**DAY 6: SRAVASTI**

Today you will spend the day exploring the ruins of Sravasti, the capital of an ancient kingdom. You will be able to see age old stupas, majestic viharas, and several temples, the remains of which have been used to established Buddha’s association with the town.

Overnight: Hotel, Sravasti.

**DAY 7: SRAVASTI TO KUSHINAGAR**

This morning you will leave for Kushinagar (approximately 6 hours drive). Kushinagar is an important pilgrimage site where the Buddha attained paranirvana after his death and is where the statue of the reclining Buddha is housed. You will also have the opportunity to visit the site of the Maitreya Statue Project.

Overnight: Hotel, Kushinagar

**DAY 8: KUSHINAGAR**

The first stop after breakfast is the Mahaparinirvana Temple – the site of the reclining Buddha, unearthed during excavations in 1876. Carved from sandstone, the statue represents the dying Buddha reclining on his right side.

You will then visit the Rambhar Stupa, which marks Lord Buddha’s cremation ground.

Overnight: Hotel, Kushinagar

**DAY 9: KUSHINAGAR TO VAISHALI**

After breakfast you will leave for Vaishali, an important pilgrimage location known as the place where 500 women were ordained by the Buddha. On the way you will visit Kesariya Stupa, the venue where the Buddha delivered his Kalama Sutta. The Stupa has 5 large terraces which vary in shape and house a life like statue of Lord Buddha.

Overnight: Hotel, Vaishali.

**DAY 10: VAISHALI TO RAJGIR**

After breakfast you will depart for Nalanda Monastery (4 hours drive). Nalanda was the most renowned university in ancient India and was home to the great Buddhist scholars of the time. Established in the 5th century BC, it remained the center of learning up until the 12th century AD. In the afternoon you will leave Rajgir, which during the Buddha’s lifetime was the capital of the powerful Magadhan kingdom, ruled by the virtuous King Bimbisara.

Overnight: Hotel, Rajgir.

**BESPOKE EXPERIENCES**

Heritage walking tour in Old Delhi
Sultanate tour of Delhi
Visit the community kitchen at Bangla Sahib in Delhi
Evening boat ride on the Ganges River
Heritage walking tour of Varanasi
Sunset boat ride with musicians on the Ganges River
Musical concert at an ashram in Varanasi
Walking tour to the classical music street in Varanasi and visit the home of a local musician

**EXTEND YOUR STAY**

**GOLDEN TRIANGLE** (Page 4)
6 days, 5 nights

**ANCIENT VARANASI** (Page 39)
4 days, 3 nights

**SACRED RISHIKESH** (Page 42)
5 days, 4 nights

**AGRA & TAJ MAHAL** (Page 38)
2 days, 1 night

**AMRITSAR** (Page 38)
3 days, 2 nights
DAY 11: RAJGIR TO BODHGAYA

After breakfast you can take the chairlift to visit Vultures Peak and the Japanese Stupa. Vulture Peak Mountain is one of several sites that were frequented by the Buddha and his community of disciples for both training and retreat. It is also the location where the Buddha gave sermons including the renowned Heart Sutra. During the late afternoon you will be driven to Bodhgaya. In the centre of Bodhgaya is the ancient Mahabodhi Temple, the holiest Buddhist temple in the world. The temple marks the location where the Buddha is said to have attained enlightenment. Overnight: Hotel, Bodhgaya.

DAY 12: DEPART BODHGAYA

After breakfast you will make your final pilgrimage to the Mahabodhi Stupa. We will transfer you to the airport in time for your ongoing flight. We look forward to seeing you on another India experience soon. If you wish this pilgrimage package can be combined with one of our other tours or extensions.
PILGRIMAGE TO LADAKH
HEMIS FESTIVAL, SPITI VALLEY
TSO-PEMA & DHARAMSALA
Escorted
Delhi, Leh-Keylong-Kaza-Manali-Tso-Pema-Dharamsala
16 days, 15 nights
Dates: 13-28 June 2024
Cost: A$3990 per person twin share

INCLUDES
• Met on arrival at the airport by an Ekno representative
• Services of an English-speaking guide for the duration of the tour
• Local guides in Leh and Dharamsala
• 15 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Domestic flights from Delhi to Leh and Dharamsala to Delhi
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary
• Welcome and farewell dinners

HIGHLIGHTS
• Visit the colourful city of Leh, home to significant Buddhist sites
• Experience the mesmerising Lama dancing at the Hemis Festival
• Journey to remote Buddhist monasteries
• Marvel at the lunar-like landscape and cross high mountain passes
• Explore the beautiful Spiti Valley
• Make a pilgrimage to Tso-Pema Lake
• Travel to Dharamsala, home of Dalai Lama

ITINERARY

DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI
Welcome to India! Upon your arrival at the airport in Delhi, our representative will greet you and escort you to the hotel. After checking into your hotel, spend the rest of the day at your leisure exploring the local area or relaxing in the hotel. Your tour leader and hotel staff will be on hand should you need restaurant recommendations or general provisions.
Overnight: Hotel, Delhi.

DAY 2: DELHI TO LEH
We will take an early morning flight to Leh, the spectacular capital of Ladakh. Our flight will pass over multiple Himalayan ranges, and serves as a fantastic photo opportunity. Leh is framed on all sides by the towering Himalayas, with the mighty Indus River roaring in the valley below. After we land, we will take a walking tour of Leh Bazaar, an important stop on trade routes dating as far back as the third century. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to rest and acclimatise.
In the evening we will enjoy a welcome dinner at an Indian restaurant.
Overnight: Hotel, Leh

DAY 3: LEH
After breakfast, we will visit Gompa Soma, a Buddhist temple constructed in 1840 at the base of the towering Leh palace. Afterwards, we head to Moti Market, for an exploration of Leh’s old bazaar, which has a rich history that can be traced back to the Asian spice trade. We will eat lunch together followed by free time to rest, explore, or sip traditional Tibetan butter tea at your leisure.
Overnight: Hotel, Leh

DAY 4: HEMIS FESTIVAL
Today we will witness the celebrations of the Hemis Festival, which commemorates the birth of Guru Padmasambhava. After an early breakfast we will travel to the Hemis Monastery, the largest and richest monastery in Ladakh. At 9am the birthday celebrations of Guru Padmasambhava begin in the courtyard, which quickly fills up with local Ladakhi’s and Buddhist pilgrims. Watch as a raised platform with a richly cushioned seat and a finely painted small Tibetan table is placed with the other ceremonial items – cups of holy water, uncooked rice, incense sticks and tormas made of dough and butter – as musicians play traditional music using cymbals, drums, trumpets and wind instruments.
The festival highlight is the gathering of the lamas around the central flagpole to perform the mystic mask dances (Chams) and sacred plays. Dressed in colourful bright brocades with vibrantly decorated and richly adorned paper mache masks, the dancers enact an elaborate combat between good spirits and evil demons to the clatter of drums, cymbals and long horns.

In the afternoon, we will return to Leh for a guided tour of the city, including a visit to the Royal Palace. Constructed in the 17th century, this imposing nine story stone palace is one of the most captivating architectural ruins in the region. Situated in the foothills of the barren landscape, the palace was built as a residence for the King and to mark the reunification of Upper and Lower Ladakh. Above the Royal Palace, on Namgyal Tsemo (Victory Peak), you’ll be able to see the ruins of Leh’s earliest royal residence, a fortress type structure built by King Tashi Namgyal in the 16th century.

Overnight: Hotel, Leh

**DAY 5: STOK PALACE, SHEY PALACE & THIKSEY**

After breakfast we will set off to explore Stok Palace, the home of the present-day royal family. The palace and accompanying museum were built in the year 1825, by King Tespal Tondup Namgyal. At present the place has a collection of elaborate royal dresses and crowns, which is open for travellers to explore.

Shey Palace was built by Deldan Namgyal at the beginning of the 17th century AD. The main image in the monastery is a three-story statue of Buddha Shakamuni, made of copper gilt which was made by Deldan Namgyal in the memory of his father Singay Namgyal. The statue is the only one of its kind in the region.

Thiksey Gompa belongs to the Gelukspa order of Buddhism and is considered to be the most beautiful of all the monasteries in Ladakh. After our day of sightseeing, we will return to Leh in the evening to rest and eat dinner.

Overnight: Hotel, Leh

**DAY 6: LEH TO KEYLONG**

*(380 km, approximately 9-10 hours’ drive)*

This morning we will leave Leh by private car and travel across the high plateau. We will pass through the border town of Sarchu and into the picturesque Lahaul Valley before reaching Keylong, where we will spend the night. This is a once in a lifetime journey through an amazing lunar-like landscape often referred to ‘Little Tibet’.

Overnight: Hotel, Keylong

**DAY 7: KEYLONG TO KAZA**

*(190 km, approximately 9-10 hours’ drive)*

After breakfast we will leave Keylong and travel to Kaza. We will drive to Chhatru and enter the Spiti Valley through the spectacular Kunzum Pass (4550 metres elevation). You might be able to spot yaks as they graze peacefully along the banks of the Spiti River. We will follow the valley floor until we reach Kaza, the largest town of the region, and our overnight stop.

Overnight: Hotel, Kaza

**DAY 8: KAZA**

We will spend the day in Kaza arranging our permits to travel though the Spiti Valley and acclimatising and visiting the local town. In the afternoon we will travel by car to Ky Monastery. The monastery is located on top of a hill at an altitude of 4166 metres, and is the oldest and the biggest monastery in the Lahaul and Spiti district. It is also a religious training centre for monks, and is home to around 300 novice monks.

We will then head to the remote town of Kibber (4270 metres elevation). With sweeping views of the mountains on one side, and the Spiti Valley on the other, Kibber offers sensational views. The area is also home to the elusive blue sheep, and if you keep your eyes peeled on the horizon you may see one of these shy creatures in the distance. In the late afternoon we will drive back to Kaza.

Overnight: Hotel, Kaza

**DAY 9: KAZA**

Today we will visit Dhankar Monastery, perched high above the valley floor and with a rich and ancient history. The monastery was built on a 300-metre-high spur overlooking the Spiti and Pin Rivers. It truly is one of the world’s most spectacular settings for a monastery and has many holy stories attached to it.
DAY 10: KAZA TO MANALI

We will leave Kaza very early in the morning for the drive to Manali. We will drive along the valley floor before gradually rising and crossing the spectacular Rothang Pass (3980m elevation), which offers some of the most spectacular mountain views in the world. We will stop at the pass to admire the stunning view, before continuing to Manali and arriving by early afternoon. The rest of the evening is at your leisure to explore this picturesque town or to take a well-deserved rest.

Overnight: Hotel, Manali

DAY 11: MANALI TO TSO PEMÁ

We will leave early and drive along the Beas River on our way to Tso Pema (approximately 4 hours). Tso Pema, also known as Rewalsar Lake, is a place of pilgrimage that is holy for Buddhists, Hindus and Sikhs. For Buddhists it is known as the place where Guru Rinpoche performed the miracle of transforming his own funeral pyre into a lake. We will visit Guru Rinpoche’s cave in the hills above the lake, as well as a large statue dedicated to him closer to the town. We will also have the opportunity to circumambulate the lake.

Overnight: Guesthouse, Tso Pema

DAY 12: TSO PEMÁ TO DHARAMSALA

After breakfast, we will drive to Dharamsala. On arrival we will check into our hotel before exploring the town of McLeod Ganj. This fascinating and multicultural hill station is known for being the home of the 14th Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile, and as a result the town resembles a Tibetan village.

In the afternoon, we will visit the temple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Namgyal Monastery, where you can turn the giant prayer wheels and observe the monks going about their daily activities. Spend the evening in one of the many international restaurants that dot the town as you admire the beauty of the spectacular Dhauladhar mountain range in the background.

Overnight: Hotel, Dharamsala

DAY 13: DHARAMSALA

This morning you might like to enjoy one of the many cafes in the town and have that long awaited espresso coffee, you have earned it! After breakfast we will visit the picturesque village of Naddi. This peaceful village offers spectacular views of both the Dhauladhar mountain range and the lush Kangra valley. Wandering around Naddi and soaking up the scenery is a perfect way to reflect on the journey we have taken and the Buddha’s teachings.

On our way back to McLeod Ganj we will visit the Tibetan Children’s village (opening hours permitting), which provides care and education for Tibetan children living in exile. We will return to McLeod Ganj to spend some more time at the temple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Museum, absorbing Tibetan culture as we explore.

Overnight: Hotel, Dharamsala

DAY 14: DHARAMSALA

Today we will visit the Norbulingka Institute, which works to preserve traditional Tibetan culture and art forms.
The visit will include a guided tour of the workshops, where you can meet the artisans as they work. Before heading back to McLeod Ganj, we will be able to visit the Gyoto Monastery, a secluded and peaceful haven specialising in the study of Tantric meditation, Tantric ritual arts and Buddhist philosophy. In the evening we will enjoy a farewell dinner in one of McLeod Ganj’s many Indian or Tibetan restaurants. Overnight: Hotel, Dharamsala

**DAY 15: DHARAMSALA TO DELHI**

Today we will fly back to Delhi. Enjoy your last day sightseeing or shopping in Delhi. As an optional extra you can visit the National Museum which houses the Sacred Relics of Buddha (5th-4th century BC) which were discovered in Uttar Pradesh. The relics are outstanding specimens of Buddhist Art and are illustrated through exhibits in a variety of materials and forms from the three principal Buddhist traditions – Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

**DAY 16: DEPART DELHI**

We will transfer you to the airport in time for your flight home or further travel in India. We hope you enjoyed your pilgrimage, and we hope to see you again soon.

**Flight**
Delhi to Leh
Dharamsala to Delhi

**Land Transport**
Leh-Keylong-Manali-Kaza-Dharamsala

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**EXTEND YOUR STAY**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>SACRED RISHIKESH</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5 days, 4 nights</td>
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**PILGRIMAGE TO LADAKH - TOUR MAP**
Extensions

* No fixed departure – price for twin share is based on minimum 2 people

After sunset, head back to the Golden Temple for an evening stroll and to enjoy its night time serenity. You will be amazed by not only the stunning beauty of this temple but also by the openness of the Sikh people who will be happy to explain any questions that you may have.

Overnight: Hotel, Amritsar

DAY 3: AMRITSAR TO DELHI

Depart Amritsar by flight late morning. Your tour arrangement ends upon arrival in Delhi.

DAY 1: DELHI TO AMRITSAR

Your train leaves New Delhi Station at approximately 7am and will take you on a vivid journey from the urban sprawl of Delhi through to the fertile plains of Haryana and the Punjab. Travelling by train is also one of the many highlights of India as it is a fantastic way to witness everyday Indian life and meet the locals. Your train arrives at Amritsar Station in the early afternoon where you will be met by your local guide to transfer to your hotel.

After a short rest you will be collected by your guide and taxi at 4pm for a trip to the Wagah border to witness the ‘Closing of the Border’. This ceremony takes place every evening and involves a display of pomp and ceremony by the Indian and Pakistani border guards. After the closing ceremony, head back to Amritsar where the rest of the evening is at your leisure. Enjoy a tasty dinner in one of the many Punjabi restaurants or take an evening stroll around the Golden Temple, which is open 24 hours a day.

Overnight: Hotel, Amritsar

DAY 2: AMRITSAR

Enjoy a full day of sightseeing in Amritsar. Take an early morning walk to the Golden Temple to stroll around the serene environment of the inner corridors as the priests chant from the Sikh holy book. Go to the langar hall, a massive free community dining room run entirely by volunteers. The Golden Temple langar can serve hot meals to up to 100,000 people a day.

After the Golden Temple, visit Jallianwala Bagh, the memorial gardens for the 1919 British massacre. Today, it is a peaceful garden open to all for strolling and relaxing. Finally, visit the Katra Jaimal Singh Bazaar, famous for its textiles and saris.

Overnight: Hotel, Amritsar

DAY 2: AGRA TO DELHI

Rise and shine early to witness a once in a lifetime event, a spectacular sunrise visit to the magnificent Taj Mahal. You will be picked up from your hotel by your local guide. 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 as a wonderful photo opportunity.

After visiting the Taj, return to the hotel for breakfast and after a short rest return to Delhi early afternoon.
DAY 1:

Arrive in Delhi and transfer to your hotel for check in. The rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore the local markets. Depending on your arrival time, you may wish to venture out to Connaught Place – the entertainment, shopping and dining hub of New Delhi. You will find a vast array of upmarket shops and street stalls as well as restaurants serving cuisine from all over the world.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2:

Full day of sightseeing in Varanasi. You will rise early in the morning, getting ready to experience one of the most memorable moments of your life, as you will be taken on a sunrise boat ride on the Ganges. It is on the Ganga ghats of Varanasi where you will witness both life and death together. Walk along the many and varied ghats, where you will get a glimpse of the sacred life which is at the heart of ‘Mother Ganga’. Following this you will go to Godaulia, the old city, to visit the ancient riverside temples including the Durga temple, Vishwanath temple, Sankat Mochan temple, Tusi Manas temple and the Bharat Mata temple. During the evening you will visit the main ghat to watch the spectacular daily puja (offerings) made to the Ganges.

Overnight: Hotel, Varanasi

DAY 3:

Your driver and private car will collect you after breakfast and take you to nearby Sarnath where you will visit Dhamekh Stupa, the ancient Buddhist ruins, Chaukhandi Stupa and Mulganda Kuti Vihar, followed by a visit to the Deer Park and Archaeological Museum. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to wander the thriving ancient alleyways of Varanasi or to relax in one of the many riverside cafes.

Overnight: Hotel, Varanasi

DAY 4:

Transfer to airport for your flight to Delhi. Your arrangement with us ends at Delhi Airport.

INCLUDES

• Services of a local English-speaking guide for 3 days
• 3 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Return domestic flights from Delhi to Varanasi
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary
• Day trip to Sarnath
• Sunrise boat ride on the Ganges

VARANASI

4 days, 3 nights
Cost: A$1290 per person twin share

DELHI

3 days, 2 nights
Cost: A$650 per person twin share

INCLUDES

• Services of a local English-speaking guide for 1 day
• 2 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• Transfer from Delhi international or domestic airport to the hotel
• Private car and driver for sightseeing as per the itinerary
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary
• Rickshaw tour in Old Delhi

DAY 1: DELHI

Arrive in Delhi and transfer to your hotel for check in. The rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore the local markets. Depending on your arrival time, you may wish to venture out to Connaught Place – the entertainment, shopping and dining hub of New Delhi. You will find a vast array of upmarket shops and street stalls as well as restaurants serving cuisine from all over the world.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 2: DELHI

Spend the day touring old and new Delhi by private car. Head to the iconic and bustling area of Old Delhi after breakfast. Admire the magnificent Jama Masjid (India’s largest mosque) and enjoy a rickshaw tour through the ancient alleys of Chandni Chowk bazaar. Pass by the Red Fort, constructed in 1638 and visit Raj Ghat, the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi.

On the way back to New Delhi, pass British era landmarks such as India Gate, Rajpath, the President’s House, Parliament House and the Government Secretariat Buildings. Pay a visit to the Lakshmi Narayan Hindu temple and serene Humayun’s Tomb.

Spend the afternoon shopping at one of Delhi’s many bustling outdoor bazaars.

Overnight: Hotel, Delhi

DAY 3: DEPART DELHI

The tour ends upon check out at your hotel. We hope you enjoyed your stay.

39
**MCLEOD GANJ**

5 days, 4 nights  
Cost: A$800 per person twin share

**INCLUDES**
- Services of a local English-speaking guide for 4 days  
- 4 nights’ accommodation with breakfast  
- All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary  
- Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary  
- Walking tour to Bhagsu, Dharamkot and Naddi

**DAY 1: ARRIVE MCLEOD GANJ**

Upon arrival, check into your hotel. After freshening up, take a walk to the temple of His Holiness the Dalai Lama followed by a visit to Namgyel Monastery and the Tibet Museum. After your walking tour of McLeod Ganj, settle down into one of McLeod Ganj’s many cafes for a coffee or a hot ginger lemon tea. The rest of the day is at your leisure.  
Overnight: Hotel, McLeod Ganj

**DAY 2: MCLEOD GANJ**

You’ll spend the day exploring McLeod Ganj including a walk to local villages such as Bhagsu, Dharamkot, and Naddi. The afternoon is free for shopping or relaxing at a café of your choice.  
Overnight: Hotel, McLeod Ganj

**DAY 3: DHARAMSALA**

Head down the mountain to visit Dharamsala and the surrounding villages. Pay a visit to Thosamling Nunnery, Norbulingka (an institute for the preservation of Tibetan arts and culture) and the Nishtha Community Centre (a village health and resource centre). The rest of the afternoon is free to explore Dharamsala bazaar, including the many Indian sweet shops.  
Overnight: Hotel, McLeod Ganj

**DAY 4: PALAMPUR AND BIR**

After breakfast, you will set off on a lovely hour and a half drive through tea plantations to visit Tashi Jong and Dongyu Gatsal Ling nunnery in Palampur. From Palampur, you head to Bir, a Tibetan settlement with several monasteries, including Sherab Ling Monastery. In the evening, return to McLeod Ganj.  
Overnight: Hotel, McLeod Ganj

**DAY 5: DEPART MCLEOD GANJ**

The tour ends upon check out at your hotel. We hope you enjoyed your stay.

**JAIPUR**

3 days, 2 nights  
Cost: A$750 per person twin share

**INCLUDES**
- Services of a local English-speaking guide for 2 days  
- 2 nights’ accommodation with breakfast  
- All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary  
- Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary

**DAY 1: ARRIVE JAIPUR**

Welcome to the Pink City! Transfer from the station/airport to your hotel. In the afternoon visit one of Jaipur’s famous gem or fabric markets. Jaipur’s bazaars are a sight to be seen carrying a vast array of products from everyday necessities to fine silks and gems.  
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur

**DAY 2: JAIPUR**

After breakfast, start your day with a tour of the Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) and spend some time exploring the local markets. From there, drive a short distance outside of Jaipur to the Amber palace, an impressive medieval fortress towering above the village of Ajmer. You can choose to walk, or ride an elephant, to the fort’s entrance. Both options offer beautiful views of the surrounding scenery. After the tour, head back to Jaipur to visit the City Palace Museum and the Jantar Mantar, a royal medieval observatory. Time permitting, finish your souvenir shopping in Jaipur’s old city bazaars.  
Overnight: Hotel, Jaipur

**DAY 3: DEPART JAIPUR**

After breakfast, depart from Jaipur for your return journey.
DAY 1: ARRIVE MUMBAI
Arrive in Mumbai and transfer to your hotel for check in. The rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore the local surrounds. Depending on your arrival time, you may wish to venture out for a stroll around Colaba, where you will find a vast array of street stalls and restaurants serving cuisine from all over the world. It is a fascinating area to explore and you might even enjoy a visit to the world famous Leopold Cafe and Bar, which has stood on the corner of Colaba Causeway since 1871.
Overnight: Hotel, Mumbai

DAY 2: MUMBAI
After breakfast set off for a full day of sightseeing around Mumbai. Start by visiting the colourful Crawford Market, the ornate Flora Fountain and then stop to admire the Gothic architecture of CST train station (formerly known as Victoria Terminus). You will then travel up to Malabar Hill and Kamala Nehru Park to admire the views of the city sprawling below.
You will then head to Chowpatty Beach – famous for having some of the best street food in Mumbai. On your way back to your hotel you can take a promenade down Marine Drive, a popular walking spot also known as the ‘queen’s necklace’ due to its twinkling night lights resembling a string of pearls. You will return to Colaba to soak up the nightlife and enjoy eating at one of the many fantastic restaurants.
Overnight: Hotel, Mumbai

DAY 3: MUMBAI
Today you will visit some of the surrounding areas of Mumbai. You will start by admiring the splendour of the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, before taking a boat from the Gateway of India out to the rock-cut temples on Elephanta Island.
When you return to the mainland you will visit Mani Bhavan, the house where Mahatma Gandhi stayed. You will then visit Mumba Devi Mandir – an old Hindu temple and the origin of the city’s name; followed by a visit to the Haji Ali mosque and shrine. This shrine is 600 years old and can only be reached at low tide as it is located on an islet reached by a causeway.
In the afternoon you can visit Juhu, an upmarket area known for its sprawling beach.

INCLUDES
• Services of a local English-speaking guide for 2 days
• 3 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• Pickup from Mumbai airport
• All transfers and sightseeing by local train, taxi and ferry
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary

DAY 4: DEPART MUMBAI
The tour arrangement ends upon check out at your hotel.

UDAIPUR & Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
4 days, 3 nights
Cost: A$1490 per person twin share

INCLUDES
• Local English-speaking guide in Udaipur
• 3 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary
• Boat ride in Udaipur

DAY 1: UDAIPUR TO KHEMPUR
After an early breakfast leave Udaipur/Jaipur for Khempur. As you drive through the Thar Desert you will pass by desert scenery filled with villagers dressed in colourful clothes herding animals. Arrive mid-afternoon and check into your hotel, where “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” was filmed. Relax in the hotel and enjoy traditional Rajasthani food for dinner.
Overnight: Hotel, Khempur

DAY 2: KHEMPUR
Today is for relaxation – reflect on your adventure and enjoy the beautiful old building. The hotel, Ravla Khempur, exudes historical ambience, and has a passionate history that dates back to 1628 AD. The lofty terraces, open courtyards, sprawling gardens, canopied balconies, stables and horses will transport you back in time. Take time to stroll through the surrounding small village and sample local life as you reflect on your favourite scenes from the movie.
Overnight: Hotel, Khempur.

DAY 3: KHEMPUR TO UDAIPUR
After breakfast at the hotel, drive to Udaipur (approximately 90 minutes). Arrive in Udaipur and check in at your hotel on
DAY 1: ARRIVE JODHPUR

Arrive in Jodhpur and settle into your hotel. Jodhpur is known as the ‘blue city’ owing to the many blue houses set against the backdrop of the Mehrangarh Fort. You will be staying close to one of the liveliest attractions in Jodhpur, the Sadar Bazaar. Sadar is one of the oldest markets in India, known for handicrafts and antiques. The diversity of what’s on offer is impressive and there is something for everyone. Take a stroll and soak in the ambience.

Overnight: Hotel, Jodhpur

DAY 2: DELHI TO RISHIKESH

Take a scenic drive to Rishikesh (approximately 6 hours), arriving in the afternoon. Check into your accommodation at Tapovan, right near the Luxman Jhula bridge. After settling in, take a walk to Tapovan market and Laxman Jhula, soaking in the sights and sounds of this very spiritual town. In the evening you can enjoy dinner at one of the restaurants overlooking the River Ganges.

Overnight: Hotel, Rishikesh

DAY 3: RISHIKESH

Enjoy the morning relaxing. You might enjoy some of our bespoke extras, which include yoga classes, holistic Ayurveda treatments, sound healing and palmistry sessions.

After lunch you will have the afternoon to explore some of the many temples and ashrams around Rishikesh, including the ashram where the Beatles stayed. In the evening, sit, enjoy and witness the Ganga Aarti (evening fire prayer), which is performed every night on the banks of the Ganges. The ceremony attracts large numbers of devotees and is accompanied by bhajans (holy songs), drums and bells. You might like to join the worshippers by lighting an oil lamp and setting it afloat on the holy waters of the Ganges.

Overnight: Hotel, Rishikesh

DAY 4: RISHIKESH TO DELHI

After breakfast check out of your hotel and drive to Haridwar (1 hour). Take a walk to the Haridwar street markets, enjoying the exciting buzz of the Hindu devotees as they head to the Ganges. Visit some of the many significant temples including Pareshwar Mahadev Temple, Daksha Mahadev Temple and Mansa Devi Temple. As you head down to the ghats you can visit Har-ki-Pauri (the footsteps of God) – one of the most sacred ghats in India. In the late afternoon you will take a train to Delhi, where your tour concludes.

INCLUDES
• Services of a local English-speaking guide for 2 days
• 3 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Train from Haridwar to Delhi
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary

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Day 4: Depart Udaipur

Your tour ends after breakfast when you check out of your hotel.

SACRED RISHIKESH
4 days, 3 nights
Cost: A$1700 per person twin share

JODHPUR
4 days, 3 nights
Cost: A$850 per person twin share

Day 1: Arrive Jodhpur

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DAY 1: ARRIVE KOCHI

This morning join the locals and catch the ferry to Vypeen Island. The island is quiet with beautiful long beaches and a chilled-out atmosphere. Relax on Cherai Beach, explore the quiet backwaters and visit the 16th century Pallipuram Fort.

In the afternoon return to Fort Cochin by ferry. The afternoon is yours to try out a unique local experience (optional extra). Choose from a Kathakali dance lesson, a cooking class at a local’s home, an Ayurvedic spa treatment, a guided bike tour or a sunset boat cruise.

Overnight: Hotel, Kochi

Kochi
3 days, 2 nights
Cost: A$650 per person twin share

INCLUDES

• Services of a local English-speaking guide for 2 days
• 2 nights’ accommodation with breakfast
• All transfers and sightseeing by private AC vehicle as per the itinerary
• Return ferry to Vypeen Island
• Entrance fees to all sites and monuments as per the itinerary

DAY 2: EXPLORE KOCHI

Today, head to the mainland area of Ernakulam where you will visit the Kerala Folklore Museum. This privately-owned museum offers a unique way to learn about the culture of Kerala with over 4000 artifacts and magnificent architecture, including the main entrance which is made from the remnants of a temple.

Whilst you are in Ernakulam, visit the bustling Broadway Bazaar markets, where it is possible to find just about anything you could ever want. Enjoy a walk along Marine Drive promenade before catching a ferry back to Fort Cochin.

Enjoy your last night in Kochi by taking a final promenade from Mahatma Gandhi Beach to the fish markets.

Overnight: Hotel, Kochi

DAY 3: BISHNOI VILLAGE

After breakfast, leave the hotel and take a short drive to your next destination, a Bishnoi village homestay. The Bishnoi people are famous for their harmonious and eco-friendly lives lived with animals and nature. You will have the opportunity to learn about Bishnoi culture and rural village life as you meet and visit families.

Visit craftspeople including weavers, potters and block printers and have the chance to buy their work.

Overnight: Homestay, Bishnoi village

DAY 4: DEPART JODHPUR

After breakfast you will be transferred to the airport or train station for your departure.

Day 2: Jodhpur

Take an early morning heritage walk through the old city to the base of Mehrangarh Fort. Experience the city waking up with a local chai along the way. Return to the hotel for a late breakfast before heading up explore the Mehrangarh Fort, one of the largest in India, where you can take in the sweeping view of the city.

Overnight: Hotel, Jodhpur

Day 2: Explore Kochi

Traditional houseboat on the backwaters of Kerala
Agra
• Taj Mahal heritage tour
• Heritage walking tour through the old Mughal city
• Live theatre show on the story of the Taj Mahal

Amritsar
• Heritage walking tour
• Community kitchen at the Golden Temple

Delhi
• Heritage walking tour in Old Delhi
• Sultanate Delhi tour
• Community kitchen at Bangla Sahib

Dharamsala / McLeod Ganj
• Tibetan Buddhist circuit
• Himalayan forest trek
• Tea plantation trek in the Kangra Valley
• Tibetan Homestay
• Palampur & Andretta day trips

Jaipur
• Early morning heritage walking tour
• Cooking class with a local family
• Elephant village

Jodhpur
• Sunset heritage walking tour
• Cooking class with local family
• Spice lesson with a local family
• Sunrise nature walking tour
• Bishnoi village homestay

Kolkata
• Heritage walking tour through the old city

Kochi
• Ayurvedic massage or Ayurveda day treatment
• Traditional South Indian cooking class
• Day trip to Vypeen Island
• Island homestay with a local family
• Houseboat on the backwaters

Leh
• Homestay with a Ladakhi family

Mathura
• Elephant village rescue centre
• Bear rescue centre

Shimla
• Mall Road heritage walking tour
• Hatu Peak day trek
• Shimla to Kalka ‘Toy Train’ ride

Spiti Valley
• Kaza Homestay

Udaipur
• Overnight stay at The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel
• Heritage walking tour through the old city
• Early morning walk or bicycle ride around Fateh Sagar Lake
• Cooking class with a local family

Varanasi
• Heritage walking tour
• Sunset boat ride with musicians
• Musical concert at an ashram
• Walking tour to the classical music street
• Visit the home of a local musician
Get in Touch

If you have a story to share or a question that has not been answered in our eBrochure/website, please get in touch with us via our contact details listed below.

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