

The Taj & Wildlife

Visiting: India
Code: GITW

Tour for **8 days** - Land Only

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The Taj & Wildlife Trip Notes

At Imaginative Traveller we always aim to provide accurate information for our travellers. Unfortunately information such as the price of optional activities is occasionally subject to change, and this means that we are constantly revising our trip notes. In order to ensure that you have the most up to date information for your trip we suggest that you check the trip notes for your tour around one month before departure.

Trip code: GITW

Trip valid from: 01/01/2009

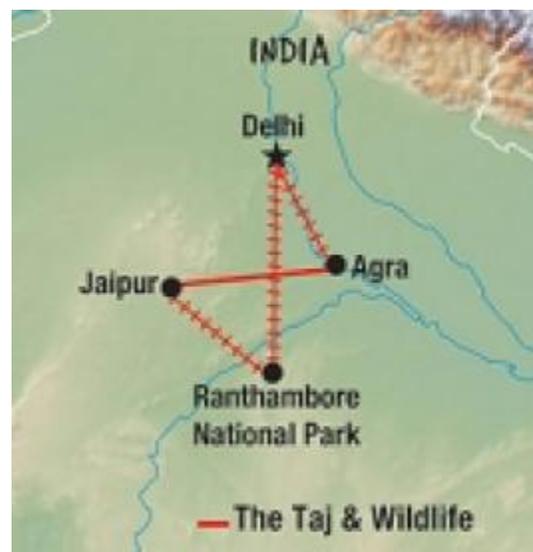
Trip valid until: 30/09/2011

Trip length: 8 days

Trip starts in: Delhi

Trip ends in: Delhi

Maximum group size: 15



Highlights

UNESCO World Heritage-listed Taj Mahal

Train Travel - A Quintessentially Indian Experience

Ranthambore's Tigers

Jaipur's Amber Fort

Delhi

This amazing adventure combines history, culture and wildlife as we pay homage to the icons of northern India. Starting in the bustling Indian capital, New Delhi, we visit Agra to experience the incomparable Taj Mahal before travelling to the beautiful 'pink city' of Jaipur, where we explore the magnificent Amber Fort and the Palace of the Winds. Next stop is Ranthambore National Park, where we search for the elusive and beautiful Bengal Tiger. We are escorted by our Indian tour leader for the duration of our journey, as we explore beneath the veneer of exotic land.

Itinerary

**Day
1**

Delhi

Today is an arrival day and no activities are planned, so you may arrive at any time. If you are arriving early, please check the noticeboard in the foyer of the hotel for suggestions of things to see and do in Delhi. A pre-departure meeting takes place this evening at the hotel. Please also check the noticeboard for details of this meeting and for any other messages from your tour leader. Please also bring your passport and travel insurance documents to the meeting. Afterwards we have the opportunity to go out for an optional group dinner.

**Day
2**

Agra

We catch the early morning express train to Agra, home to India's most famous icon - the majestic Taj Mahal. Here we include a visit to this amazing 17th century marble mausoleum, which Emperor Shah Jahan built as a monument to the memory of his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died whilst giving birth. The emperor himself was subsequently overthrown and imprisoned by his son and oversaw the construction of this magnificent monument whilst incarcerated in Agra Fort. Upon his death, Shah Jahan was also entombed in the Taj Mahal next to his beloved wife. Our tour leader will also give us the option of visiting Agra Fort (please see refer to 'Optional Excursion' section below for approximate cost).

**Day
3-4**

Jaipur

Our journey takes us to Jaipur, the vibrant and colourful capital of Rajasthan, where we meet our new city guide. There we see traditionally dressed Rajput men wearing colourful turbans and sporting magnificent moustaches making their way through crowded streets, packed with cars, camel carts, rickshaws, trucks and bicycles. We include a visit to the stunning medieval Amber Fort, located some 11 kilometres from Jaipur. This fortification was built in 1592 by Maharaja Man Singh and is a superb example of Rajput architecture. Several hours are needed to explore the huge area that it covers. Our tour leader will also

take us to the Old Bazaar and the Hawa Mahal, better known as the Palace of the Winds. This five-storey façade with pink, honeycombed sandstone windows is one of Jaipur's best-known landmarks.

Day 5-6 Ranthambore National Park

We leave the bustle of the cities and head to some of the last remnants of wilderness in India. We travel by train to Sawai Madhopur and transfer to the park. Ranthambore National Park is one of the most beautiful wildlife reserves in India. It was a former hunting ground for the maharajas and the park is still contains ruins of temples and mosques, as well as an impressive 10th-century fort that dominates the surroundings from the top of a large hill. The park is a favourite amongst bird watchers, but many people come here to spot some of India's exotic large animals. Antelopes such as nilgai and blackbuck can be commonly seen, as well as axis deer and sambar deer. There are large families of active monkeys known as langur, often seen playing around at the park entrance, but our main aim here is to try and spot the magnificent and elusive Royal Bengal tiger. It is not always easy to spot a tiger in the wild and doing so will certainly be an experience of a lifetime. One morning safari is included, but there may be a chance for you to book additional safaris in our afternoons here (depending on availability).

Day 7 Delhi

We travel to Sawai Madhopur and catch a morning train back to Delhi, arriving about 12.30pm. Upon arrival we are transferred to our hotel. It is our last evening and we have the opportunity to head out for a final dinner (optional) before saying our goodbyes to India.

Day 8 Delhi

Our trip ends today around breakfast time. If you wish to stay on in Delhi, please pre-book your post-tour accommodation before you commence your travels. Delhi has many interesting museums and monuments. If you are interested in historical and cultural matters, it is recommended that you to extend your stay and visit some of these places. Red Fort and the impressive Jama Masjid (Great Mosque) are two of the city's most notable landmarks, whilst Raj Ghat is a monument that marks the spot where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated. Humayun's Tomb and Safdarjang's Tomb are other great examples of Mughal architecture and design. Hauz Khas Village is a great place to escape the hustle and bustle of downtown - a chic artistic enclave set right next to the remnants of a historical site.

Itinerary Variation

While the information presented here details our planned itinerary, including routes taken, activities included, accommodation and meeting times, please accept that unforeseen changes may occur. We are constantly on the lookout to improve our program and further enhance your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date with any last minute amendments to your tour.

About The Imaginative Traveller

Our aim has always been to provide exceptional travel experiences. We believe that adventure travel should be stimulating, and that it should give you an authentic experience of a place. We want our travellers to relish the amazing diversity of countries and cultures the world has to offer. Our focus is on innovation, not imitation.

Obsessed with quality

One of our strengths has been our obsession with quality. We've always believed that our commitment to you doesn't end as soon as you've paid for your holiday. On the contrary, it is just beginning. Whilst most operators simply get a local company to handle the day to day operation of their tours, we do it all ourselves. We have managers for each of our **key destinations** around the world and all our small groups are escorted by our own leaders. Our local teams include guides, drivers, administration staff and contacts in the local community who help us ensure that our adventures are active and involving.

For comparability, all prices in this dossier are quoted in one currency. We use the US Dollar since that is familiar to most. However, once on tour you will need to pay for all goods and services in the local currency. See your Country Dossier for details of exchange rates.

Trip Grade

Culture

Whether you're taking in man's greatest works at places like Petra or Angkor Wat, experiencing grand set-pieces like the Trans-Mongolian Railway or trying your hand at regional specialities like tango in Buenos Aires, getting to grips with local cultures is what travel's all about. A few tips from a local guide and a sense of adventure are pretty much all you need. So what are you waiting for? It's time to get the lowdown on high Tibet among Lhasa's magisterial temples; follow up Delhi's eye-popping bustle with a fix of its fiery food; and mix manic markets and Incan masterpieces in Peru.

Wildlife

Take your pick: hunt for tigers in northern India, listen to monkey chatter and birdsong in the jungles of Costa Rica and Peru or gawp at the Galapagos' diversity. And of course, there's the big one: Africa. The names alone evoke images of wildlife: the Serengeti, Masai Mara, Kruger. And the reality's even better. Africa's got the lot, so go beyond the Big Five by hiking to close encounters with gorillas in Uganda's forests, walking with lions at Zimbabwe's Antelope Park, or canoeing past crocs on the Okavango Delta. From the Cape's loveable penguins to Egypt's loping camels, Africa's animals await.

Fitness

No particular level of fitness is required for this holiday. You need only to be in good health.

Included

Gecko's tour leader, all transportation and accommodation as indicated in the itinerary. The following sightseeing trips are included: Agra - one visit to Taj Mahal including transport, entrance and local guide fees; Jaipur - one visit to Amber Fort including transport, entrance and local guide fees; Ranthambore National Park - national park entry fee and one game drive.

Not included

International flights, arrival and departure transfers, airport/departure taxes, visas, pre or post tour accommodation, all meals, optional tours sightseeing or activities during free time, transfers outside of the tour program, travel insurance, tips and items of a personal nature, laundry and flights unless specified. Some places that we visit charge additional fees if you are entering with a camera or camcorder - your city guide will advise on these and they can be paid for locally.

Accommodation

2 nights Safari lodge, 5 nights Hotels/guesthouses

Single room supplement

Most of our travellers like the thought of travelling with a few like-minded souls. There are NO compulsory single supplements on most tours as we simply arrange twin shared accommodation for you and another tour member of the same sex. But don't worry if that doesn't appeal. We do understand there are times when you just want a bit of privacy and 'me' time so we are more than happy to arrange a private room upon request when you book.

Transport

Bus, Open 4WD vehicles, Taxi

Optional excursions

*prices below are guide only

Agra - Agra Fort entrance

- US\$8

Delhi - Full day tour of the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort (from Delhi)

- US\$170/entrance fees US\$18 & US\$8

Delhi - Half-day sightseeing tour of New Delhi including India Gate, Raj Ghat, President's Palace, Humayun's Tomb & Qutab Minar

- US\$50 per car / US\$20 entrance fee

Delhi - Red Fort Entrance

- US\$5

Delhi - Sound and Light Show

- US\$40 per car/entrance US\$5

Jaipur - Half-day sightseeing tour of city palace, Jantar Mantar, Albert Hall, gardens & temple

- US\$50 per car/entrances US\$15.

Jaipur - Tour of Nahargarh Fort

- US\$40 per car/entrance US\$3.

Other information

Please note that Ranthambore National Park is closed July-September inclusive. During this time, we visit the neighbouring Mansingh Sanctuary.

The itinerary and supplementary information has been compiled with care and provided in good faith. However it may be subject to change, and does not form part of a contract between the client and The Imaginative Traveller.

Responsible Travel - Travellers' Guidelines

At Imaginative Traveller we love helping our clients experience the beauty and cultures of the destinations we visit. However, hand in hand with this we have always been aware that we have a responsibility to minimise any negative impacts that tourism can bring.

Responsible Travel is twofold. It's about taking people to the places they want to go in a safe and responsible manner but also about respecting and maintaining the natural and often delicate balance of the destination. Economic gain from tourism is often fundamental to a country, but should never be at the expense of its culture or the environment.

Our Aims

It is our aim to provide journeys that have minimal negative and maximum positive impact on the places we visit.

We do not believe that, as visitors, we should impose our own cultures on others; rather that we should experience foreign cultures and appreciate them for what they are.

Whilst it is our aim to show destinations and cultures in a positive light, we do not believe in papering over the cracks or shielding visitors from the realities of life. This does not mean, however, that we condone or endorse certain situations or regimes that may be in place.

Our guidelines are meant not as rigid instructions but rather as suggestions to make our holidays more enjoyable – for everybody. As cultural and environmental sensitivities vary from country to country more specific guidelines can be found in our individual country and trip dossiers.

Travellers' Guidelines

✓ Before you depart try to spend some time familiarising yourself with the destination you will be travelling to – their culture and customs. The country dossiers on our website offer detailed information about all the regions we visit. They also include some useful phrases in the local language for you to use on your trip! A few words of the local language can open up many more opportunities for you to interact with the people you will meet.

✓ Although it is tempting to give out pens, sweets and money to people begging, and particularly tempting to give to children, we feel that this encourages a begging mentality and has a long-term negative impact on communities. If someone begging earns more than someone in the same community who works this can discourage local employment. If children regularly bring home money it may discourage their parents from sending them to school. It is of course your own personal choice but you could consider giving to registered charities or contributing to our Responsible Travel fund instead. Money donated through our fund to our worldwide projects is matched pound for pound by Imaginative Traveller and used to help local grassroots projects.

✓ Always ask permission to photograph local people and respect their decision if they would prefer not to have their picture taken.

✓ Respect local dress codes, especially at religious sites. Our tour leaders are always on hand to give you advice about this.



In many of the countries we visit you might see examples of animal cruelty (for example dancing bears, performing monkeys and snake charmers). Please do not take photographs of this or offer money as it encourages the activity.

- ✓ Respect the environment you are in. It sounds obvious but do not throw litter, take it with you or use rubbish bins! You may see locals throwing rubbish on the street but do not follow their example!
- ✓ When shopping in countries where haggling is the norm – enjoy it and only pay what you feel is a fair price for the goods you are purchasing. However, remember that the shopkeeper does have to make a living so do stop once you have reached a price you are happy with. Bargaining should be fun but always remember that a small amount can mean much more to the vendor than to you.
- ✓ Endeavor to take home souvenirs made locally; the money you spend can be very important to the local communities. However, do use your common sense and don't buy anything that you think might be made out of endangered animals or plants.
- ✓ To help keep as much money as possible in the host country - try to eat in locally owned restaurants and order local drinks and produce rather than international brands.
- ✓ In hotels do be conscious of how much water you are using. Many of the areas we visit regularly have shortages; try not to have hour long showers! Don't leave lights, air conditioners or fans on when you leave the room – you wouldn't at home!
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in, especially when in national parks or reserves. Pay attention to rules about keeping on paths, keeping a distance from animals and not removing any of the natural habitat.
- ✓ Relax and immerse yourself in the differences of the culture you are in – you'll be back home in the familiar soon enough (and wishing you were still on holiday!). These cultural differences are part of what makes your experience special.

If you would like to offset the carbon dioxide that will be produced on your flights you can do this on our website ([on our Responsible travel page](#)). We work with climatecare, who will reduce the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that you produce in another part of the World through their emission reduction projects. These projects are low carbon efficient technologies in developing countries and not only serve to reduce emissions but also help to spread the adoption of low carbon technologies and improve the quality of life for local communities. Details of climatecare's projects can be [found on their website](#).



If you would like to contribute to our Worldwide projects, helping communities all over the World, you can also do this on our website or with a sales consultant. Please refer to our [responsible travel page](#) on the website for details of our current projects. Any donation you make will be matched £ for £ by Imaginative Traveller (up to a maximum of £1000).

Have a great trip!

Please do let us know if you have any comments about responsible travel at rto@imtrav.net

The Imaginative Traveller & Gecko's Adventures This trip is operated by our partner company, Gecko's Adventures. Gecko's is an Australia based company with more than 10 years experience in adventure travel and they share our ethos for offering unique holiday adventures. As this is a code shared departure you can expect there to be both Imaginative Traveller and Gecko's travellers on your trip.
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