



INDIA BY RAIL

Classic Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2

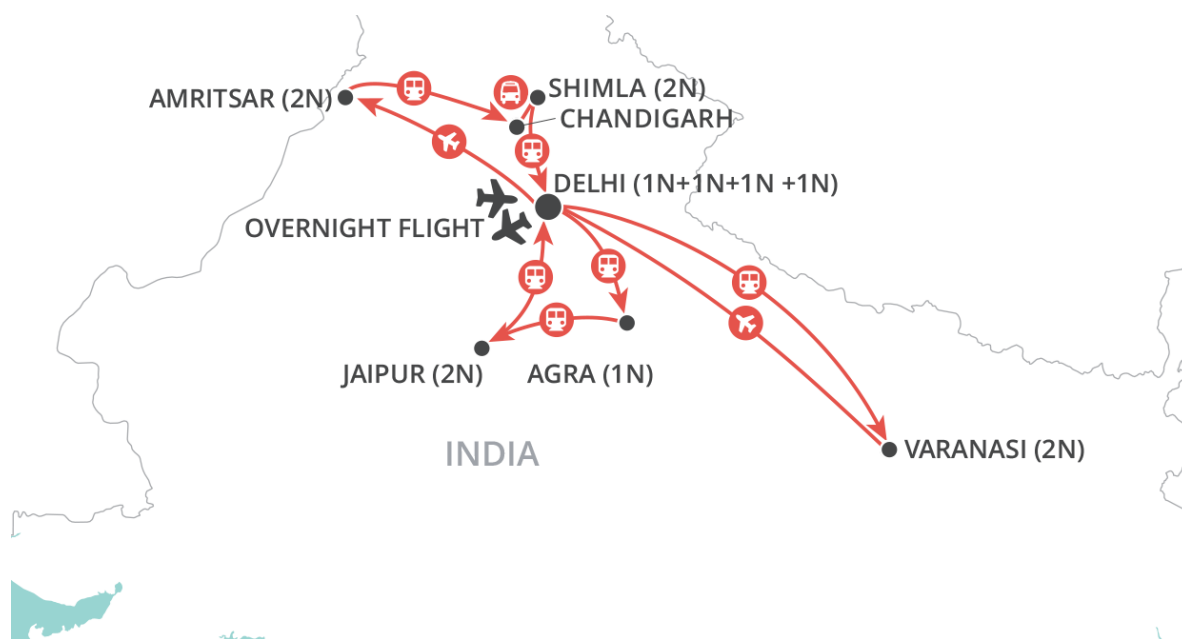
Delhi – Amritsar – Shimla – Delhi – Agra – Jaipur –
Delhi – Varanasi - Delhi

- Ride the toy train in Shimla
- Watch the flag lowering ceremony at the Wagah border
- Marvel at the Taj Mahal
- Explore the magnificent Amber Fort in Jaipur
- Experience a Pooja ceremony in Varanasi
- Cruise the banks of the river Ganges

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

TOUR MAP



INDIA BY RAIL CLASSIC TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as specified
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- India Visa for New Zealand Passport Holders (please see visa section below for further information)
- English speaking Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, meals not included, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of “India by Rail”, on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you’ll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'India by Rail' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and trains, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time.
- Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing several steps, often without handrails
- You will be required to get on and off various trains and rickshaws throughout the tour

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary. If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

JOINING YOUR TOUR

The tour is 16 days in duration including international flights. Please note, due to flight schedules passengers may depart/arrive on Day 2.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to Reservations.

Join the tour on Day 2 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 15 in Delhi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1-2: Arrive Delhi

Meals: D

Upon arrival to Delhi, where on arrival you will be met and transferred 45 minutes to your hotel. You have the rest of the day at leisure before meeting your fellow travellers for dinner.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



Destination Information

Delhi - As the capital of India, Delhi is the third largest city with a population of approximately 18million people. Its strategic location along the north-south, east-west route has given it a focal position in Indian history and many great empires have been ruled from here. The monuments and ruins of these are scattered throughout the city, often side by side with modern structures and high-rise towers.

Day 3: Delhi to Amritsar

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast check-out of your hotel, leaving your luggage at the concierge desk. Drive by the iconic Red Fort, followed by a delightful rickshaw journey to the vibrant Khari Baoli Spice Market, before visiting the majestic Jama Masjid. Touring today will last approximately 3.5 hours.

Later, board a 1 hour 15 minute evening flight to Amritsar. On arrival in Amritsar, you will be transferred to the hotel.



Destination Information

Red Fort - The Red Fort, also known as "Lal Qila," is an iconic 17th-century Mughal monument. This stunning red sandstone structure, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcases intricate architecture blending Persian, Indian, and Islamic styles.

Jama Masjid – Jama Masjid is the largest mosque in India, with a courtyard capable of holding 25,000 devotees. Built between 1644 and 1658, the mosque was Shah Jahan's final architectural achievement.

Amritsar – Amritsar, in Punjab, was founded in 1577 and has a rich history tied to the struggle for Indian independence, notably the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It is the centre of Sikhism and the main pilgrimage destination for thousands of Sikhs.

Day 4: Explore Amritsar

Meals: B, L, D

In the morning begin by immersing in the historical significance of Jallianwala Bagh. This solemn memorial stands as a testament to a pivotal moment in Indian history, a place where you can reflect on the sacrifices made during a tragic event.



Next visit the resplendent Golden Temple, with its' intricate architecture and melodious hymns echoing through the halls. Venture towards the ornate Durgiana Temple, known for its intricate artwork and sacred aura. Here, explore the rich tapestry of Hindu culture and spirituality. Embark on a 1-hour journey towards the Wagah border, a place where two nations come together in a display of patriotic fervor. Today's sightseeing will be approximately 5 hours.

Due to security regulations, the coach will drop your group at a designated area where you will need to walk approximately 20 minutes to the border, to view the ceremony. You will be required to walk back after the ceremony.

Destination Information

Jallianwala Bagh – A memorial and museum that commemorates the lives lost in the massacre. The garden features a Martyrs' Well, which is said to be where many people jumped to escape the firing. A memorial plaque and a flame of liberty also honour those who lost their lives.

Durgiana Temple – This temple is also known as the Durgiana Mandir, a prominent Hindu temple, dedicated to the goddess Durga, who is revered as a symbol of divine power and feminine energy in Hinduism.

Wagah Border – This is a spirited military ritual that takes place daily at the India-Pakistan border near the village of Wagah. It marks the closing of the border gate between the two countries at sunset and is a symbol of the long-standing rivalry and tension between India and Pakistan.

Day 5: Travel to Shimla

Meals: B, L, D

Take the early morning (05h10) *Chandigarh Express* train to Chandigarh, having breakfast onboard before arriving at 09h40. From here you have a 3.5 – 4-hour drive taking you through lush landscapes to the hill station of Shimla. Check into your hotel and proceed to lunch.



This afternoon, venture into Shimla's heart with a leisurely walking tour along the famous mall Road. Stroll along The Ridge, where panoramic views of the surrounding mountains greet you.

Pause at the historic Christ Church, an architectural masterpiece that stands as a testament to the town's colonial heritage and conclude the day with a visit to the New Library, an intellectual haven where you can immerse yourself in literature and history. You will spend approximately 1.5 hours sightseeing today.

Destination Information

Shimla – The capital city of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, is a picturesque hill station nestled in the Himalayan foothills and known for its natural beauty and colonial architecture.

Day 6: Enjoy the Toy Train

Meals: B, L, D

Embark on a charming adventure as you board the iconic *toy train (Himalayan Queen)* at 10h55, for a picturesque 2.5 hour journey from Shimla to Kandaghat. On arrival in Kandaghat, disembark and enjoy a delicious lunch. Return to Shimla on a 1-hour drive.



In the afternoon, delve into the cultural heritage of this hill station, with a city tour. Begin with a visit to the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, a grand colonial-era structure nestled amidst tranquil gardens.

Continue your exploration at the Himachal State Museum, where you will discover a treasure trove of artifacts, art, and cultural insights into the region's rich heritage. You will spend approximately 1.5 hours sightseeing today.

Destination Information

Kandaghat – A picturesque hill station near Shimla, surrounded by lush landscapes and 19th century colonial architecture.

Day 7: Shimla to Delhi

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and transfer approx. 3.5 – 4 hours to Chandigarh Railway station to board the *Shatabdi Express* train to Delhi. This journey takes 3 hours 20 minutes, and lunch will be served onboard.



On arrival in Delhi, check-in and relax before dinner.

Day 8: Delhi to Agra

Meals: B, L, D

Have breakfast onboard the 08h10 *Gaatimaan Express*, as you depart on a 1 hour 40-minute train journey to Agra, a city steeped in history and timeless elegance. Upon arrival in Agra, set out on an exciting excursion to Fatehpur Sikri, an ancient city frozen in time. This UNESCO World Heritage site boasts magnificent architecture, including the Buland Darwaza and the stunning Jama Masjid, with regal palaces and courtyards to explore.



Later, continue to the majestic Agra Fort, an imposing fortress, with red sandstone walls, concealing a wealth of Mughal history within its ramparts. Wander through the opulent palaces, admire the intricate design work, and stand where emperors once stood, gazing out at the breathtaking view of the Taj Mahal in the distance. You will spend approximately 1.5 hours sightseeing today.

Destination Information

Agra – Home to the world-famous Taj Mahal. Agra rose to fame in the medieval period as the capital of the Mughal Empire and was beautified with gardens, waterfalls, bathhouses and canals. In modern times, the city of Agra houses a thriving carpet industry.

Fatehpur Sikri - Located 40km from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri was built by Emperor Akbar in 1569 after it was prophesied that the then childless Akbar would have sons if he moved his capital to the site. At great expense to the empire, the capital was moved here but sadly only occupied for 14 years before slowly being deserted and ruined after Akbar left the city due to a scarcity of water.

Agra Fort - Situated on the west bank of the Yamuna River and built by Emperor Akbar between 1565 and 1573. Its imposing red sandstone ramparts form a crescent along the riverfront and encompass an enormous complex of courtly buildings, ranging in style from the early eclecticism of Akbar to the sublime elegance of Shah Jahan. The barracks to the north are British additions from the 19th century. A deep moat, once filled with water from the Yamuna River surrounds the fort.

Day 9: Taj Mahal

Meals: B, L, D

Awaken to the enchanting beauty of a sunrise visit to the iconic Taj Mahal, a marvel of white marble and eternal love. The serene ambiance at this hour allows for a deeper connection with the monument's rich history and architectural brilliance.

Enjoy a visit to a marble inlay workshop to see skilled artisans demonstrate their craftsmanship, creating exquisite designs that adorn the Taj Mahal and other Mughal masterpieces. It's a chance to appreciate the dedication and precision that goes into every piece of art.



This afternoon, board the *Ajmer Express* train at 14h50 to Jaipur, the vibrant Pink City. This journey is 4 hours. On arrival check into your hotel before dinner. Your sightseeing today will last approximately 1.5 hours.

Please be aware that the timing of your visit to the Taj Mahal may not necessarily coincide with sunrise, as it depends on weather conditions such as fog. Rest assured; we will make every effort to ensure that your visit occurs at the optimal time to fully appreciate this splendid marvel.

Destination Information

Taj Mahal - One of the most recognisable monuments in the world, The Taj Mahal is a white marble monument found on the southern bank of the Yamuna River. The Taj Mahal was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan between the years 1631 -1648 in memory of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.

Day 10: Jaipur

Meals: B, L, D

Prepare for a day of regal exploration in Jaipur, beginning with a brief photo stop at the iconic Hawa Mahal, or the "Palace of Winds."



Next, venture to the majestic Amber Fort, an imposing hilltop fortress that narrates tales of Rajput valor and grandeur. Your journey continues with a visit to the Maharaja's City Palace, a sprawling complex that offers a glimpse into the lives of Rajasthan's royalty. Visit the Jantar Mantar observatory, an awe-inspiring collection of astronomical instruments from the 18th century and round off the day visiting a craft centre where you witness the traditional arts of block printing and carpet weaving.

Enjoy a sumptuous dinner accompanied by a mesmerizing cultural dance performance, showcasing the vibrant traditions and rhythms of Rajasthan. Sightseeing this morning and afternoon involves 2 to 3 hours on foot and *there are several steps* within the fort.

Destination Information

Jaipur – Known as the 'Pink City' for the colour of the buildings in the old town. Jaipur was founded in 1727 as Mughal power within India was declining. The then Maharaja Jai Singh moved his capital from Amber Fort down onto the plain below. The city is now the capital of Rajasthan State and commonly called the 'Pink City' because of the pink paint on all the buildings in the old city area. This was apparently done to imitate the magnificent, red sandstone buildings of the Mughals and to impress the Prince of Wales when he visited Jaipur in 1876.

Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) - A five-story palace erected in 1799 by the Sawai Pratap Singh so that the veiled ladies of his harem could observe, unnoticed, the lively street scenes below.

Amber Fort - Built from yellow and pink sandstone and white marble, Amber Fort was built in the 16th century by Raja Man Singh. Inside the fort the Hall of Victory houses the famed Sheesh Mahal.

Day 11: Return to Delhi

Meals: B, L, D

Return to bustling Delhi on the 07h55 *Vande Bharat Express*, having breakfast onboard during this 3 hour 40 minute journey. Check in at your hotel after lunch. Prepare for an enriching afternoon of sightseeing. Visit the impressive Qutab Minar complex before proceeding to the grand Rashtrapati Bhawan, the official residence of the President of India. Nearby, the Secretariat Buildings and Parliament House stand as monumental symbols of India's democratic governance.



Next, pay your respects at the solemn India Gate, a war memorial honouring the sacrifices of Indian soldiers, before finishing with dinner. Sightseeing this afternoon involves approximately 2 to 3 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Quatab Minar – Built in the 12th Century, this tower of victory is gracefully hand-carved along its entire height of 73m.

Rashtrapati Bhavan – The official residence of the President of India.

India Gate - Located at the end of the Rajpath, India Gate is a moving memorial to the 90,000 Indian servicemen who dies in World War 1.

Day 12: Travel to Varanasi

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy your last train journey, departing at 06h00 on the *Vande Bharat Express* bound for Varanasi, having breakfast and lunch onboard. This is an 8 hour journey and upon arrival, prepare for an enchanting evening as you step into the bustling streets for a rickshaw ride, taking you through the ancient lanes and alleys to the banks of the revered River Ganges. Here you will experience the mesmerizing and deeply spiritual Pooja ceremony of Ganga Aarti. As you watch the priests perform intricate rituals with oil lamps, incense, and chants, you will witness a sacred connection between humanity and the divine.



You will spend approximately 2 hours sightseeing today.

Please note: The Ganga Aarti takes place most evenings, so please be prepared for many crowds through the streets, especially leading up to the ghats.

Please remember to wear closed shoes and to always be careful and mindful of your belongings. It is also important to watch where you step, as devotees, crowds of tourists, animals and rickshaws all head in the same direction of the ghats.

Destination Information

Varanasi - The religious capital of Hinduism, Varanasi is the oldest living city in India as well as one of the world's most ancient cities. Colourful and chaotic, Varanasi is a fascinating city to discover. Located along the western banks of the Ganges, devotees travel to the city to pray and wash away their sins in the holy river.

Pooja Ceremony of Ganga Aarti - An evening ceremony conducted on the banks of the river Ganges. Aarti means divine light, and this ceremony is filled with song, prayer and ritual.

Day 13: Varanasi

Meals: B, L, D

Set sail on a cruise along the sacred Ganges River to view the ghats at sunrise, before visiting the Bharat Mata Mandir, a unique temple dedicated to Mother India. Continue to Durga Temple, an ancient shrine dedicated to the fierce goddess Durga.



The next leg of your tour takes you to the prestigious Banaras Hindu University, where within its sprawling campus, you'll find the renowned Vishwanath Temple, a sacred place of worship that attracts devotees from all corners of the country.

This afternoon, shift your focus to the historical and spiritual richness of Sarnath, exploring the Buddhist sites that include the ancient Dhamek Stupa, the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, and the Sarnath Archaeological Museum, before dinner. You will spend approximately 5 hours sightseeing today.

Destination Information

Ghats of Varanasi - The ghats are the long stretch of steps leading down to the water on the western banks of the River Ganges. Most are used for bathing, but there are some 'burning ghats' where public cremations are held.

Bharat Mata Mandir - A unique temple dedicated to Bharat Mata (Mother India) which houses a relief map of India, carved out of marble.

Durga Temple - Also known as the monkey temple due to the large number of monkeys that have made the temple their home, the Durga Temple is one of the most important temples in Varanasi. Dedicated to the Goddess Durga, the temple was built in the 18th century and is stained red with ochre.

Sarnath - Sarnath is the fabled place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon to his disciples expounding the principles of Buddhism. The ruins here date back as far as the 3rd century BC.

Day 14: Varanasi to Delhi

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy some free time in Varanasi before boarding your flight to Delhi. You have the afternoon free to do any last-minute shopping or exploring before your farewell dinner.

**Day 15-16: Depart Delhi**

Meals: B

After breakfast transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights' before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



INDIA BY RAIL TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

New Zealand passport holders currently do require a visa to enter India. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork if applicable and submit the visa application on your behalf. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original

EATING IN INDIA:

Indian cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse, and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Indian cuisine can vary greatly from the Indian food we get in the New Zealand, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our classic group tours, from dinner on the arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will usually be seated around a large table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in India. We recommend that when it comes to Indian food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

Please inform us of any Allergies and/or Special Dietary Requirements at time of booking

To book call **0800 936 3998** or visit your local travel agent

Visit wendywutours.co.nz

DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:

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

ACCOMMODATION:

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

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort, or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and India. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

Please be aware that there are heightened security measures being carried out at all hotels, on guests and vehicles entering the properties.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and India is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. To avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort. Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20 kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner-city roads in India have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in India have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

Trains: All of the trains included on our "India by Rail" are day-time journeys in air-conditioned chair carriages, with the exception of the 2.5 hour toy train between Shimla and Kandaghat where air-conditioning is not available. Meals will be service onboard most journeys except for the Shimla and Kandaghat toy train and the Amjer Express between Agra and Jaipur. Your guide will arrange time prior to board to purchase snacks for the journey.

Please note:

- The train carriages are shared, so always be mindful of your personal belongings.
- Each train coach has toilet facilities, located at either end of the coach. One is western style, while the other is Indian style.
- We recommend you carry tissues/toilet paper and hand sanitisers.

Baggage on board trains: The maximum baggage measurement per passenger is 48 inches (123cm). **(H x 55 cm, W x 45 cm, D x 22.5 cm)** If a piece of baggage exceeds any one of the dimensions, it must be booked and carried in the brake van rather than in the passengers' compartment. Luggage handling porters will be arranged while embarking and disembarking from the trains.

As this is a fully Escorted tour, the accompanying National Escort along with the local office staff would assist the group members while embarking and disembarking from the trains.

Facilities onboard the trains:

	VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS TRAINS	SHATABDI EXPRESS / GATimaan EXPRESS TRAINS	EXPRESS TRAINS (AMRITSAR - CHANDIGARH // AGRA FORT - JAIPUR)
Economy Class	✓	✓	✓
Airline style seating (3:2 alignment or airline style rotatable seats)	✓	✓	✓
Catering facilities	✓	✓	✗
Observation facilities (e.g. large windows)	✓	✓	✓
Electrical outlets	✓	✓	✓
Baggage facilities	✓	✓	✓
Bio-vacuum toilets	✓	✓	✓

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

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

Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims, or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance.

Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside. We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your day pack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside.

The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

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

EXCHANGING CASH:

US Dollars can be easily exchanged in India, provided notes are new and undamaged. We suggest exchanging your money before travelling to remote areas and smaller towns, as exchange facilities can be limited. Try and keep some small notes and coins on you, as on street stalls and in small shops they may not have the change to break up a high denomination note. If you decide to use US dollars, make sure they are in a good state (not ripped, etc.) or they will not be accepted. ATMs are common across India, and we recommend using an ATM inside a bank where possible. Most major credit cards are widely accepted across the continent, though please bear in mind the charges of your provider. Debit cards are also widely accepted but may have a limit to the amount of cash you can withdraw – consult your bank about this before travelling.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful

www.safetravel.govt.nz

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.safetravel.govt.nz as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements.

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

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: November 2024