



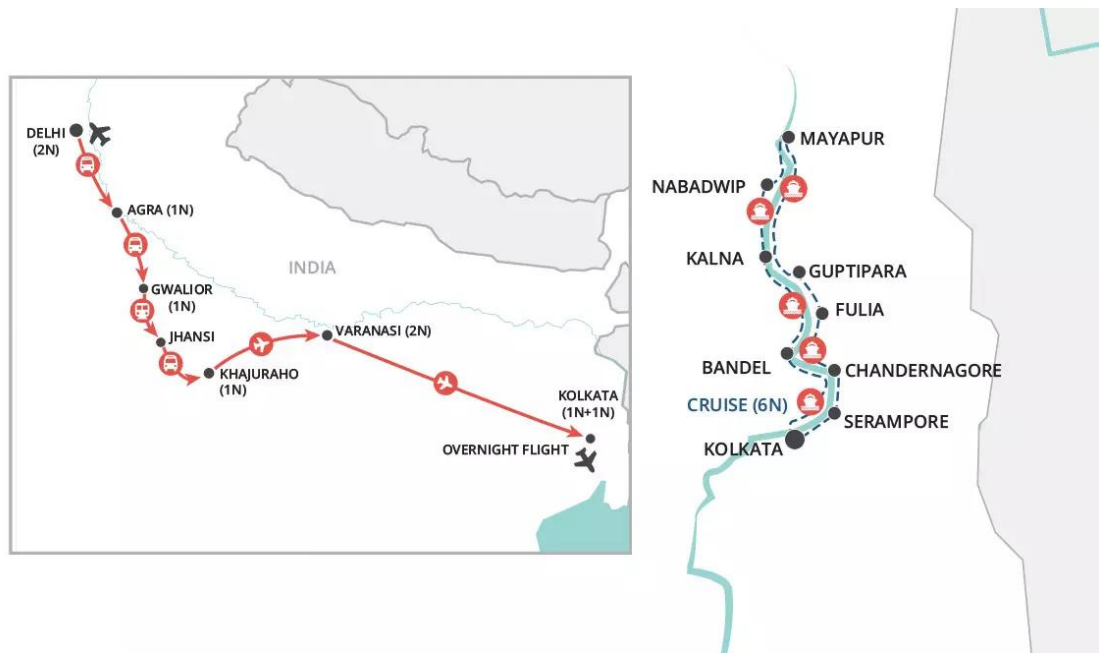
India & The Sacred Ganges

Classic Tour | 17 Days | Physical Level 1

Delhi – Agra – Gwalior – Khajuraho – Varanasi – Kolkata – 6N Ganges Cruise –
Kolkata

Discover the highlights of northern India before embarking on a river cruise in the Ganges Delta, following the waters of the Hooghly to explore the cultural heritage of Bengal that thrives on its shores.

- Tour the highlights of Delhi
- Witness a Taj Mahal sun rise
- See Varanasi's ghats at dawn
- Explore traditional local villages
- Visit French and Danish towns

TOUR MAP

INDIA & THE SACRED GANGES TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- 6 nights Antara Cruise on MV Ganges Voyager I
- All meals as stated on itinerary
- Drinks at lunch & dinner on board the cruise (house wine and local beer)
- All sightseeing, entrance fees and offshore excursions
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- India visa fees for New Zealand passport holders (please see visa section below for further information on visas)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

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, 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 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 1:

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 & the Sacred Ganges' is rated as a **physical level 1** tour. A reasonable level of fitness is required, and you should expect to be on your feet for much of the day. You will be getting on and off coaches and boats and walking around the sights, often including steps, plus occasional longer walks.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time, often on uneven surfaces.
- You will be required to get on and off small boats without assistance.

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 17 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on a 'Land Only' package, 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 our reservations team. Join the tour on Day 1 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 16 in Kolkata. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It's our intention 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'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY

Days 1: Fly to Delhi

Meals: D

On arrival into Delhi, India's rumbunctious capital city you will be transferred to your hotel approximately 45 minutes where the rest of the day is yours to refresh, relax or begin exploring your surroundings. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, transfer to your hotel and check into your room or store any luggage if your room is not ready yet. There is no sightseeing today.



Please note - 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 – Delhi, India's capital, is a lively city blending rich history with modern life and is the third largest city with a population of approximately 18 million. 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. It showcases Mughal architecture and historical sites. As a cultural and political hub, Delhi houses India's central government and international embassies. It's famous for vibrant street food, diverse cuisine, and serves as a major centre for trade, technology, and the arts.

Day 2: Discover Delhi

Meals: B, L, D

Embark on a city tour, starting in atmospheric Old Delhi with a rickshaw ride through the bustling streets. You'll dive straight into the narrow, fragrant lands of Khari Baoli Spice Market to marvel at the array of colourful herbs and spices before visiting the immense Jama Masjid, a Mughal masterpiece of a mosque. Then, cross over into New Delhi to pass through the colonial grandeur of the Rajpath, seeing India Gate and President House. Finally, find peace among the bustle at Humayun's Tomb and admire the UNESCO-listed Qutab Minar, a towering 12th-century minaret.

**Destination Information**

Khari Baoli Spice Market – Asia's largest spice market, is a sensory delight in Old Delhi, offering an array of spices, herbs, nuts, and dried fruits. Established in the 17th century, it brims with vibrant colours and aromas.

Jama Masjid - One of India's largest mosques, showcasing Mughal architecture with grand minarets, red sandstone, and white marble. Built by Emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century, it's a peaceful retreat amidst the city's bustle, offering stunning views and a serene spiritual atmosphere.

Rajpath – A grand ceremonial boulevard in New Delhi, stretching from India Gate to Rashtrapati Bhavan (Presidential Residence). Lined with lush lawns and fountains, it hosts India's Republic Day Parade, showcasing national pride. Known for its striking symmetry and grandeur, Rajpath is a symbol of India's rich history and modern identity.

Humayun's Tomb – Humayun's Tomb, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Delhi, is a stunning example of Mughal architecture and the first garden tomb in India. Built in the 16th century by Empress Bega Begum, it inspired the Taj Mahal's design.

Qutab Minar – A UNESCO World Heritage site in Delhi, is a 73-meter-high minaret built in the 12th century by Qutb-ud-din Aibak. This red sandstone tower, adorned with intricate carvings and inscriptions, represents the start of Islamic rule in India.

Day 3: Travel to Agra

Meals: B, L, D

Journey to Agra by road taking approximately 3 hours and 30 minutes. On arrival, tour the magnificent Agra Fort, a mass of red sandstone sat on the bank of the Yamuna River. Wander its hallways and gardens, climbing to the ramparts from where you may catch a first glimpse of the magical Taj Mahal, just two kilometres downstream.

**Destination Information**

Agra Fort – A UNESCO World Heritage site, is a stunning Mughal fortress located in Agra, India. Built in the 16th century, it features impressive red sandstone walls and intricate architecture. Once the residence of emperors, the fort offers panoramic views of the Taj Mahal and reflects the grandeur of Mughal history.

Yamuna River - One of India's most significant rivers, flows through northern India, including Delhi and Agra. Sacred in Hinduism, it is crucial for agriculture and industry.

Day 4: Taj Mahal Sunrise

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early for an unforgettable experience, sun rise at one of the world's most beautiful buildings. As the sun creeps over the horizon, the Taj's white marble facade shifts through shades of pinks and reds as it emerges from the dawn mist, in an ethereal display of beauty. After breakfast back at the hotel, visit a marble inlay workshop to see skilled artisans crafting intricate designs. Depart Agra for the city of Gwalior taking approximately 4 hours. Take a tour of the city, learning about its fascinating history with visits to its magnificent fortress, the Gujari Mahal Archaeological Museum, Tansen's Tomb, and the Jai Vilas Palace, which house the Scindia Museum. Please note the Taj Mahal is closed every Friday.

**Destination Information**

Taj Mahal – a UNESCO World Heritage site in Agra, India, is a stunning marble mausoleum built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Renowned for its exquisite architecture and symmetrical gardens, it symbolizes eternal love.

Gwalior Fort – One of India's oldest fortifications, dates back to the 8th century and has witnessed numerous dynasties, including the Tomars and Mughals. Its impressive structures, like the Man Singh Palace and Sas Bahu Temple, showcase intricate craftsmanship. The fort played a crucial role in India's military and cultural history.

Gujari Mahal Archaeological Museum – Located within Gwalior Fort, was originally a palace built for the queen of Tomar king Man Singh II in the 15th century. The museum features artifacts from various periods, including sculptures, pottery, and coins, reflecting Gwalior's rich history and heritage, and providing insights into ancient Indian culture.

Tansen's Tomb – Honours the legendary musician Tansen, a key figure in the Mughal court during the 16th century. Built by Emperor Akbar, the tomb showcases stunning Mughal architecture with intricate carvings. It remains a site of cultural significance, celebrating Tansen's contributions to Indian classical music and tradition.

Jai Vilas Palace – Built in the 19th century for Maharaja Jayajirao Scindia, the palace showcases a blend of European and Indian architectural styles. The palace features opulent interiors, including the world's largest chandelier. Once a royal residence, it now serves as a museum, reflecting the grandeur of the Scindia dynasty.

Day 5: Travel to Khajuraho

Meals: B, L, D

Board a train to Jhansi (approximately 1 hour 20 minutes) then drive to Khajuraho (approx. 3 hours), stopping en-route at Orchha to visit its beautiful temples. There are even more temples to explore in Khajuraho, a city famous for its group of 10th-century Hindu and Jain structures. A fascinating balance of architecture and sculpture the temples, which are a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are decorated with intricate erotic carvings and are considered one of the great masterpieces of Indian art. Today you'll view the eastern and western groups of temples.

**Destination Information**

Orchha Temples - Built by the Bundela rulers in the 16th and 17th centuries, feature exquisite architecture and intricate carvings. Key sites include the Raja Ram Temple and Chaturbhuj Temple, reflecting a blend of Hindu and Mughal styles. These temples highlight Orchha's rich cultural heritage and historical significance.

Khajuraho - in Madhya Pradesh, India, is renowned for its UNESCO-listed temples adorned with intricate carvings depicting Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist themes. Built by the Chandela dynasty (950-1050 CE), these temples are celebrated for their exquisite erotic and artistic sculptures, reflecting spirituality, daily life, and cosmic harmony in ancient Indian culture.

Day 6: Travel to Varanasi

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the airport (15 minutes) and fly to Varanasi (55 minutes). This afternoon is at leisure before you embark on a rickshaw ride through the city's life-filled streets. Later, witness the mesmerising Ganga Aarti ceremony, with its rhythmic chants, flickering oil lamps and prayers dedicated to the river.

**Destination Information**

Varanasi – India's spiritual capital, lies along the sacred Ganges River. One of the world's oldest cities, it's a hub for Hindu rituals, pilgrimage, and ancient traditions. Known for its ghats, vibrant culture, and Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Varanasi embodies life, death, and rebirth.

Ganga Aarti Ceremony - Performed at ghats, is a spiritual ritual honouring the Ganges River, revered as a goddess in Hinduism. Priests chant hymns, light oil lamps, and offer prayers, creating a mesmerizing display of devotion, fire, and music, symbolizing purification and divine gratitude.

Day 7: Discover Varanasi

Meals: B, L, D

Sacred Varanasi, one of the world's oldest living cities, sits on the banks of the River Ganges. This morning, arise at dawn for an atmospheric boat ride, taking in the famous ghats as the spiritual come down to the river to bathe in its holy waters. Then, explore the city farther venturing down atmospheric alleyways to temples filled with pilgrims and the faithful. This afternoon, venture to Sarnath to explore ancient Buddhist sites.

**Destination Information**

Ghats – Ghats are series of steps leading to rivers. They serve as sites for rituals, bathing, cremation, and spiritual practices. These sacred spaces blend daily life with devotion, symbolizing purification, the cycle of life, and humanity's connection with water.

Sarnath - A revered Buddhist pilgrimage site where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon after enlightenment. Home to the Dhamek Stupa, Ashoka Pillar, and ancient monasteries, Sarnath symbolizes the inception of Buddhism.

Day 8: Fly to Kolkata

Meals: B, L, D

Travel to the airport (approximately 45 minutes) and board a flight over to India's eastern reaches, to the city of Kolkata (flight time 1 hour 5 minutes). Transfer to your hotel which will approximately take 45 minutes and enjoy your evening at leisure

**Destination Information**

Kolkata – Formerly known as Calcutta, is the capital of West Bengal and a cultural hub of India. Established as a trading post by the British in the 17th century, it flourished as a centre of education, arts, and politics. The city boasts colonial architecture, vibrant festivals, and diverse culinary traditions.

Day 9: Board your cruise

Meals: B, L, D

Check out of your hotel and transfer to your Antara cruises, Ganges Voyager I cruise for the next 6 nights. Embarkation is at 11am. After embarkation, and once settled into your spacious cabin as the boat casts off to sail upstream on the Hooghly River, a distributary of the Ganges. Head to the sun deck as you pass under the Howrah Bridge, one of Kolkata's most iconic sights before mooring near Bally Bridge on the outskirts of the city.

**Destination Information**

Ganges River – Sacred in Hinduism, flows through northern India, spanning over 2,500 kilometres. Revered as a goddess, it supports millions with water for agriculture and daily life. Historically, it facilitated trade and cultural exchange. The river symbolizes purity, and its ghats are sites for rituals and pilgrimages.

Hooghly River – A distributary of the Ganges, flows through West Bengal and Kolkata. It was a key route during British colonial rule.

Howrah Bridge – An iconic symbol of Kolkata, spans the Hooghly River and connects Howrah to the city. Opened in 1943, it is one of the longest cantilever bridges in the world.

Day 10: Cruise to Bandel

Meals: B, L, D

Sit back and enjoy the river landscapes drift by as you cruise upstream. Stop to visit the Hooghly Imambara, a mosque and congregation hall built in 1841 on the bank of the river. As well as being a beautiful and attractively crumbling, storied structure in the Indo-Saracenic style, the Imambara is famous for its giant mechanical clock.

**Destination Information**

Hooghly Imambara – One of the famous Shiya pilgrimage centres in West Bengal, built in 1841 by Haji Mohammad Mahasin. The two-story building and surrounding rooms provide housing for pilgrims as well as classrooms, or Madrasa that teach the Koran. The structure contains a Victorian-era clock with a winding key weighing 20kg. Large Persian chandeliers and lamps light the Imambara's stunning hallways and passages.

Day 11: Rajbari Temple Complex

Meals: B, L, D

Continue upstream to Kalna, where a shore excursion will include a ride in electric rickshaws, which will whisk you off to the Rajbari temples. Here you can explore a range of different architectural styles and carvings depicting Hindu epics. Returning to the ship, pass through a local market to see the produce on sale.

**Destination Information**

Kalna – A historic town in West Bengal, India, is known for its remarkable terracotta temples and intricate architecture from the 18th century, built by the Bardhaman Raj. Key sites include the 108 Shiva Temples and Rajbari Temple Complex.

Rajbari Temples - A historic site featuring stunning 18th-century terracotta temples built by the Bardhaman kings. Known for the unique 108 Shiva Temples arranged in concentric circles, the complex showcases intricate carvings and reflects Bengal's religious devotion and architectural heritage.

Day 12: Local Village Walk

Meals: B, L, D

This morning as you sail towards Nabadwip, enjoy the facilities onboard your boat or relax and enjoy watching the world go by. Later, walk through a riverside village for a glimpse at rural life and pay a visit to the artisans who handloom cotton fabric for saris and scarves. Cross to the other side of the river to Mayapur and the headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Stroll through the pilgrim's bazaar and meet Krishna followers and visit the temple itself.

**Destination Information**

Nabadwip – Literally meaning New (Nab) Island (Dwip), it is the birthplace and abode of Saint Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, the founder of the Hindu Vaishnav religion and a great social reformer.

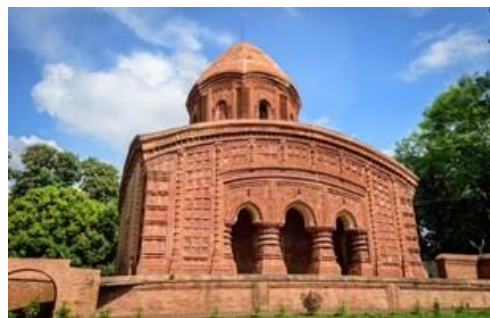
Mayapur – Located in West Bengal, is a prominent spiritual centre and the headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). Founded in the 1970s, it's considered the birthplace of Saint Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, a key figure in the Bhakti movement.

ISKCON Temple - The new temple built to commemorate the Jubilee year of ISKCON in 2016 and largely funded by Alfred B. Ford, the great grandson of car-maker Henry Ford, can be compared to the Vatican. It also contains a 75- foot domed planetarium.

Day 13: Visit artisans

Meals: B, L, D

Sail to Guptipara and venture out of the town to see rice paddies and plantations where mangos are being harvested. Then see the town's Vaishnav temples to admire the terracotta works before visiting the home of potter to see artisans at work with clay. Cross the river to the weaving village of Fulia to meet more artisans who specialise in the production of jacquard and jamdani sarees.

**Destination Information**

Guptipara – a historic town in West Bengal, is renowned for its terracotta temples built in the 18th century by local artisans. Known for India's first organized community Durga Puja, Guptipara is rich in cultural heritage.

Vaishnav temples – Dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his avatars, are significant in Hinduism, particularly within the Vaishnavism tradition. Known for intricate architecture and spiritual ambiance, these temples often feature ornate sculptures and depict Vishnu's incarnations.

Fulia - After the partition of India and the division of Bengal into West Bengal (in India) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), many skilled weavers from Bangladesh, came and settled here and the region become a renowned centre for hand-woven fabrics.

Jacquard and Jambani sarees - Jacquard sarees use a specialized loom to create intricate, embossed patterns, often in silk, ideal for formal occasions. Jamdani sarees, a Bengali tradition, are handwoven in fine cotton with delicate motifs, known for their elegance and recognized as a UNESCO heritage craft.

Day 14: Chandernagore

Meals: B, L, D

Turn downstream and cruise to Chandernagore, a former French colony. Here you'll stroll along the promenade and admire the French colonial architecture and pay a visit to the grand French governor's residence, now a museum, and the Sacred Heart church. Continue the journey downstream to Kolkata, pausing at Serampore, a town that was part of Danish India from 1755 to 1845. Enjoy a walk through the old quarters and see the Danish tavern and St Olav's Church. Sit down to a farewell meal back onboard your ship.



Please note: the French Governor's residence is closed on Thursdays and Saturdays. If touring falls on either of these days alternative touring will be arranged.

Destination Information

Chandernagore – was established as a French colony in 1673. The French obtained permission from Ibrahim Khan, the Nawab of Bengal to establish a trading post on the riverbanks of this city, which became a permanent French settlement.

Sacred Heart Church – designed by French Architect Jacques Duchatz. The church was inaugurated in 1884 and stands for over two centuries to mark the beauty of the architecture during the French period.

St Olav's Church - locally known as the Danish Church, that was constructed by the Danish Management between 1755 and 1845. The church is not particularly Scandinavian, but reflects the designs of contemporary churches in British India.

Day 15: Back in Kolkata

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast disembark your river cruise vessel at 9am this morning. Transfer to your hotel which takes approximately 45 minutes and check in to your hotel. The rest of the day is free to spend as you wish.



Day 16-17: Fly to New Zealand

Meals: B

Transfer to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (approximately 45 minutes) and fly to New Zealand, arriving home the same or following day.

Please note: Only breakfast is provided on the group's day of departure; no refund will be given for meals missed.

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



INDIA - 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 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 well 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. Sikkimese cuisine depends greatly on the seasonal produce. Most meals will include grains (rice or barley), potatoes, vegetables and some meat.

Bottled Water will be provided on board the cruise

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

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality may exist between New Zealand and India. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities and air conditioning where needed. 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 National Escort.

Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

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. In order 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 recognise 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.

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.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines. The utmost care will be taken to ensure that your final documents will have the latest information, however your local guide will confirm this in destination. Boarding passes can be collected directly at the airport. The flights booked as part of your itinerary will always reflect the best timings to suit the touring itinerary, with direct flights wherever possible, however due to limited schedules some flights may require an early departure or late arrival.

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 5 kg. 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.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in India. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

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 New Zealand. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in 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 National Escort or Local guide.

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

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.

PERSONAL EXPENSES AND OPTIONAL TOURINGS:

Personal Expense - You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you.

Optional Tours - May be offered in each city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available.

Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each option will be arranged locally by your National Escort/Local Guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

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.

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will be no more than 20 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 10 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only. Please note that a National Escort will not accompany you on board the cruise – there will be guides, pursers, ship managers and other staff to help and guide during the 6 night cruise.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed, and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. India Republic Day is on 26th January, the Holi Festival on the 14th of March 2025 & 4th March 2026 (The Hindu 'Festival of Colours' can include locals smearing coloured powder on one another. Every effort will be made to minimise the effect on passengers whilst touring). Diwali Festival (festival of light) is on October 20th, 2025 & November 8th 2026.

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.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

It is our intention 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.

Updated: Jan 2025