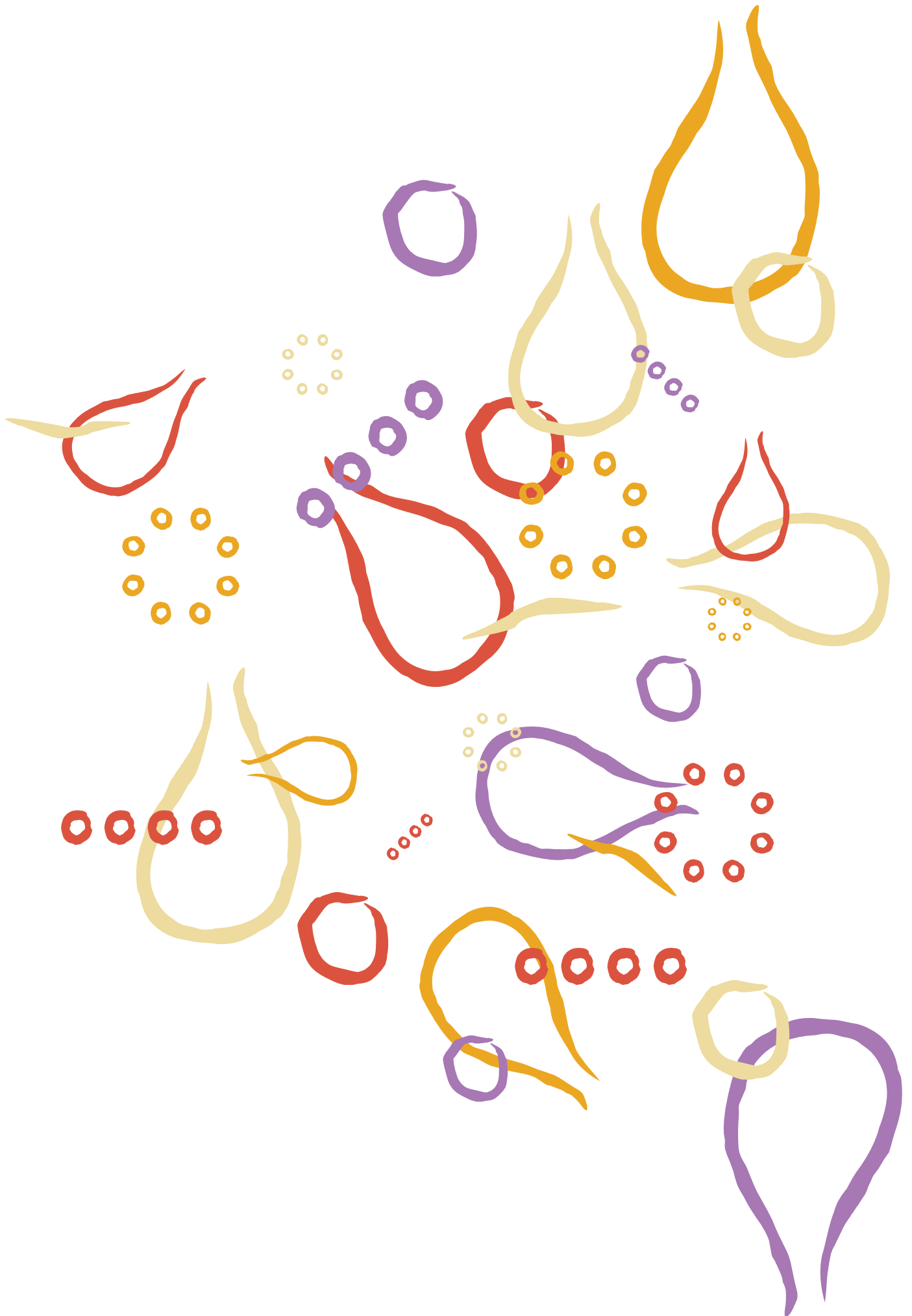




HARJI'S INDIA



Having personally created over 20,000 itineraries in the past three decades, Harji knows what makes travel to India truly special and his clients have included several celebrities and well-known public figures. He continues to design outstanding itineraries and operates them through his own long standing ground handling company in India, providing unforgettable holidays for his clients.

Born to an army officer in India, the family moved every few years, enabling Harji to assimilate the cultural nuances of different regions of this diverse country. He felt comfortable with his itinerant background to set up a travel company in London, soon after his MBA from the London Business School.

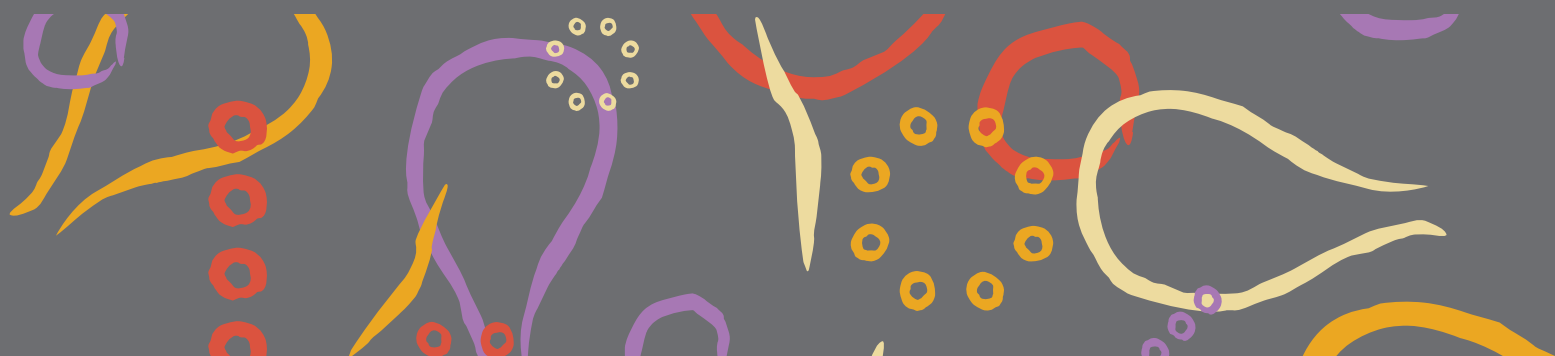
After running his highly successful company for over 20 years selling tours to all over Asia, Harji felt his roots calling and has set up this new venture with a large number of India lovers, aiming to make it the first global company promoting India and its heritage.

Welcome to Harji's India, offering a holistic experience of India, including its culture and sites, people and landscape, wildlife and mountains, art and crafts, textiles, cuisine, music, dances and above all its warm hospitality.



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india – the cradle of civilisation

When the lead singer of a famous band walked into my then office, to discuss his tour to India, he said in Hindi, to my surprise and delight, “mujhe chai chahiye”, meaning “I would like some tea please”. He had the milky sweet tea one gets from roadside vendors in India, clearly establishing his credentials as a seasoned traveller and an old India hand. Harji’s India is a venture set up by people who are seasoned India hands too, to show you the land the way it is, some good, some indifferent, some confusing, but utterly fascinating. Why people travel is a mystery, giving up their daily comfort and routine for the unknown in a strange place ... let us try to find out what it is that inspires the human spirit, in a place where spirituality itself is a way of life.

Harji Singh

Founder

Harji’s India Ltd

Financial Protection

All the flights and flight-inclusive holidays offered by us are financially protected by our bond under the ATOL scheme. Our Air Travel Organisers’ License number is 11728. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. You can ask for it, if not supplied, and check to ensure that everything you booked is listed on it. Please see our Booking Conditions for further details or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate.





why travel with us?

There is no reason why you should travel with us unless you are seeking a well designed holiday in a complex destination, delivered to high standards at a price you are comfortable with, a holiday you wish to remember as one of your best ever.

We have over twenty nine years of experience in designing and operating customised holidays for people from all walks of life, teachers, scientists, home makers, city-types, farmers, students, royalty, lawyers, accountants, artists, musicians, curators, bureaucrats, diplomats, soldiers, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, journalists, media-types, entrepreneurs and a few celebrities. This experience is used to understand you as a person, to design a holiday you are excited about, and to deliver the holiday in a manner and style that makes you smile.

Having our own ground handling set up in India helps in better coordination and ensures quality. It also helps in achieving lower costs that reflect in our very competitive prices.

This venture is more a labour of love than anything else. Our passion for what we do and for India makes this a unique non-business business.

If you wish to talk to any clients who have travelled with us, we will be happy to arrange that.

a typical holiday with us

A holiday with us ensures you have time to explore the country, while all arrangements are taken care of. From meticulous initial planning to detailed implementation we are with you every step of the way, offering a variety of tours, all thoroughly researched.

Typically we include the major sites with some lesser known attractions. There is time for some of the great cities, bringing out the soul that gives them their uniqueness, and villages that are the backbone of India. There may be a wildlife sanctuary, some time on a pristine beach or a relaxing mountain resort. The experience is enhanced by using a variety of accommodation and modes of transport; encouraging interaction with local people while caring for preservation of their culture and protection of the surrounds.

Our specialty is to tailor the holiday to your needs, bearing in mind the practicalities of operating it, yet delivering quality.

You may stay in one of the legendary grand palaces or royal hunting lodges, perhaps a boutique hotel, a merchant mansion in an ancient quarter or a colonial bungalow in a remote location; many retaining the feel of times gone by. We also inevitably feature modern hotels as well as home stays, ranging from modest to luxurious. The selection is based on facilities, comfort, service, atmosphere, location and importantly, our personal experience and feedback from clients over the years.

Our specialty is to tailor the holiday to your needs, bearing in mind the practicalities of operating it, yet delivering quality. We believe our clients should feel comfortable when travelling with us, in the firm assurance that they are in secure, capable hands, while getting value for money.

on offer – culture, wildlife, soft adventure, retreats, family holidays

Our tours highlight the diversity of India and are rich in culture with elements of nature and wildlife, soft adventure and relaxation included.

These are in the main tailor-made tours, designed personally for independent travellers, so it is you who decide the duration and content of your tour - we are here to assist with our expertise.

India's diversity is amply visible in stone, marble, sand, wood, and clay. We have a few small group tours and the occasional specialist group tour, either tailored for a private group, or led by an eminent person with an invitation to all to join.

- culture

With a vast history and varied culture, the country has an abundance of world heritage sites - temples, palaces, forts, mausoleums, monasteries, churches, ornate wells, decorated caves...India's diversity is amply visible in stone, marble, sand, wood, and clay.

Sites like the Qutub Minar and Taj Mahal reflect the Islamic influence; the forts of Rajasthan and ruins of Hampi exemplify the robust Hindu culture. The caves at Ajanta and Ellora and the Jain temples in Ranakpur reflect the strong influence of Buddhism and Jainism; the serene Golden Temple speaks of the emphasis on equality in Sikhism. Portuguese heritage is evident in the Basilica of Bom Jesus while Victoria Memorial and the grand architecture of New Delhi depict the British legacy. There is also French, Dutch, Jewish, Persian and Chinese heritage visible across this ancient land.

The different states, each with its own language or dialect, cuisine, attire, music, dance, arts and handicrafts, aspirations, social norms and festivals, add vibrancy to the mystery that is India.

- family travel

Our travellers come in all ages. With the Indian tradition of several generations under a single roof, this is a natural way to travel and see the land. Freshly cooked farm food, a bullock cart ride through a village, jungle safaris, a day with an elephant, camping in the desert, river rafting, cruises on the backwaters or a week on a luxury train where you are treated like a maharaja are ways in which you can build memories to treasure.



© Elisabeth Roussel





- soft adventure

We include adventure that is suitable for the average, reasonably healthy traveller and does not require strenuous prior preparation. Some typical examples are day treks in several locations, longer treks with camping in the mountains or foothills, jeep safaris in Rajasthan, rafting in Rishikesh, sailing in a country boat, village stays, elephant or camel safaris, horse riding across the countryside, cycling in rural or hilly terrains. An elephant safari in the wilderness ending with dinner around a campfire is a popular activity.



© Anuradha Marwah

- wildlife

Wildlife parks represent India's enduring legacy of nature worship. These are spread across the country with a concentration in central India - Corbett and Dudhwa in the foothills; Bharatpur and Ranthambore in Rajasthan; Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Satpura, Panna and Tadoba in central India; Nagarhole, Bandipur, Mudumalai and Periyar in the south; and Manas, Namdapha, Orang, Simlipal and Kaziranga in the east offer a natural experience of tigers, sloth bear, wild elephants, gaur, rhino and a variety of birds. Gir in Gujarat is home to the Asiatic lion.



- retreats

If you wish to get away to read a book or write one, we have places that can help you achieve that, from a comfortable cottage in the mountains to a tucked away villa on a beach. There are retreats and spas in exotic locations for you to feel one with nature and rediscover yourself.

where to go; when to go?

- where?

India is vast and first-time visitors often face the dilemma of what to see in a limited time. The key to a successful and enjoyable visit is not to try to cover too much ground in a short trip. The country draws you back; some of the sights missed out can be covered in the next trip.

Most first-time visitors like to visit the “Golden Triangle”, comprising Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, along with a longer tour of the desert state of Rajasthan, the temples of Khajuraho or the holy city of Varanasi. Tours can be extended with a relaxing stay at a wildlife sanctuary, a hill station or a beach. Kerala, rich in natural beauty, is another extremely popular destination, with longer tours taking in the temples and palaces of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

For the regular visitor the possibilities are endless. We can advise precisely on details for a tour to even offbeat destinations.

- when?

With clear sunny days and mild to cold nights, October to March is generally the best time to visit the sub-continent. Kashmir and mountainous Ladakh are at their best in the summer, from June to September with dry, sunny days. The monsoon rains break in coastal Kerala in May or June and travel inland to reach Delhi in July, lasting till early September. May and June are extremely hot except in the hills. The coastal and mountain areas, excluding Kashmir and Ladakh which are bypassed by the monsoon, get more rain than the central plains. Regional variations are outlined below.

north

Northern plains are at their most temperate, dry and sunny from October to March. Delhi and areas north can experience light to heavy fog from mid-December to mid-January but the areas south such as Rajasthan remain largely unaffected. In mid-winter night temperatures in the plains north of Delhi can touch freezing point. May and June are extremely hot with July and August being monsoon months. Many visitors travel in these months as the rain is not incessant and air-conditioning tempers the heat. The game reserves in the north are shut during monsoon and normally open from October to May (Corbett opens a month later, in November) with the hotter period from mid-March to mid-May better for animal sightings.

himalayan foothills and beyond

The hilly regions are at their best from March to November except in July and August when it rains. There is often snowfall from late December to early February in the hill stations such as Shimla, Mussoorie and Darjeeling. Ladakh and Kashmir lie beyond much of the monsoon rains; here the months of July and August, with their warm days and cool nights, are peak season.

east and west

Kolkata, Mumbai and the coastal areas of Orissa, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa remain hot and humid throughout with winter months being somewhat cooler, especially inland. The monsoon is from June to August. The Kaziranga National Park in Assam is open from November to April.

south

There is significant variation in weather among the southern states, with November to April being the best months. It remains hot throughout with only the hill stations requiring a light pullover in winter. For those keen on swimming in the sea we recommend the three-month period of December to February. The wildlife parks here remain open throughout. The monsoon is at its peak along the west coast from June to August – the east coast remains relatively dry with minimal rainfall in the central highlands. Rain falls on the east coast from October to December.



elements of your holiday

- international flights

The carriers operating direct flights to India from London Heathrow are British Airways, Air India and Virgin Atlantic. They all connect Delhi as well as Mumbai. British Airways also covers Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore direct. There are several indirect carriers.

Flying time to Delhi or Mumbai, from London, on a direct non-stop flight is about 8 hours. The direct flights to Chennai, Hyderabad or Bangalore take about 10 hours. The return flights take about an hour longer because of headwinds.

There are direct flights from Newark, JFK and Chicago to Delhi and Mumbai; with plenty of indirect options. Direct flights typically take 15 or 16 hours, indirect flights over 20 hours, depending upon the connections and waiting time.

Our tours exclude international flights and include a separate arrival and departure transfer for each set of clients. Should you need assistance with booking your flights, we are happy to assist.

- internal flights

Internal air travel is normally on a scheduled domestic airline. All internal flights used in our tours are in economy and are normally included in the price. Higher grade flights can be requested.

- road travel

We recommend travelling by road. You see the countryside, pass through villages and bazaars and can stop if you find something interesting. Our drivers are familiar with local conditions and are trained to drive safely.

Road travel is by coach or car. We use the Toyota Innova, a multi premium vehicle, ideal for Indian conditions, or a saloon car like the Tata Indigo. For larger parties a Tempo Traveller is used. For groups comfortable coaches are used. We try to keep some empty seats in a coach to allow mobility and give you a sense of space. The vintage Ambassador, an old time favourite of many, has been more or less phased out. We can arrange one for those who want to sample the romance of yore.

- train travel

This is a fascinating way of seeing the "real" India. The railway platforms are like mini bazaars, teeming with people, the appearances and attires change as you cross from one state to another. Fellow travellers invariably strike up a conversation, often in remarkably good English, and you may find yourself discussing cricket, which Indians are passionate about, or denouncing politicians, yours and theirs.

Train travel is one of the most popular means of travel and standards reflect the local expectations. We feel at least one journey is worth the experience. There are remote places where train may be the most convenient mode of connecting.

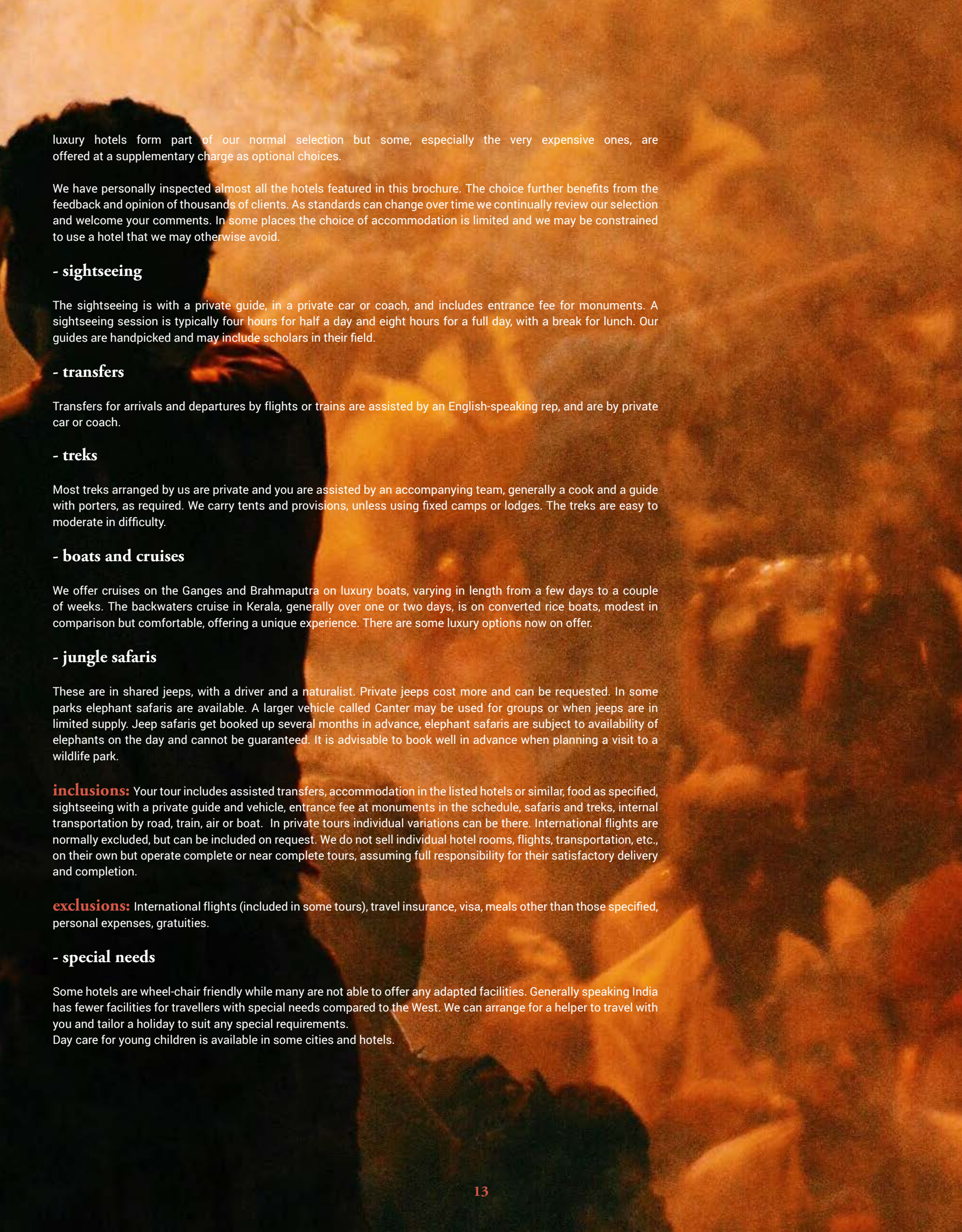
Trains usually have sleepers for overnight journeys and chair cars for day travel. The coaches are air-conditioned. Most trains have a kitchen car and serve food, soft drinks, tea and coffee. For long journeys it may be advisable, however, to carry packed food from your previous hotel.

The luxury trains are in a category of their own, normally exceeding the comfort and facilities found in better known counterparts in Europe.

- hotels

Hotels in India offer a wide range of accommodation. Some match the very best in the world, while some are quite modest.

We use comfortable hotels opting for character and ambience with personalised service, good management and housekeeping. They are selected to enhance your holiday experience as well as offer value for money. Typically we use 5 star and 4 star hotels in our tours with some character properties. Some



luxury hotels form part of our normal selection but some, especially the very expensive ones, are offered at a supplementary charge as optional choices.

We have personally inspected almost all the hotels featured in this brochure. The choice further benefits from the feedback and opinion of thousands of clients. As standards can change over time we continually review our selection and welcome your comments. In some places the choice of accommodation is limited and we may be constrained to use a hotel that we may otherwise avoid.

- sightseeing

The sightseeing is with a private guide, in a private car or coach, and includes entrance fee for monuments. A sightseeing session is typically four hours for half a day and eight hours for a full day, with a break for lunch. Our guides are handpicked and may include scholars in their field.

- transfers

Transfers for arrivals and departures by flights or trains are assisted by an English-speaking rep, and are by private car or coach.

- treks

Most treks arranged by us are private and you are assisted by an accompanying team, generally a cook and a guide with porters, as required. We carry tents and provisions, unless using fixed camps or lodges. The treks are easy to moderate in difficulty.

- boats and cruises

We offer cruises on the Ganges and Brahmaputra on luxury boats, varying in length from a few days to a couple of weeks. The backwaters cruise in Kerala, generally over one or two days, is on converted rice boats, modest in comparison but comfortable, offering a unique experience. There are some luxury options now on offer.

- jungle safaris

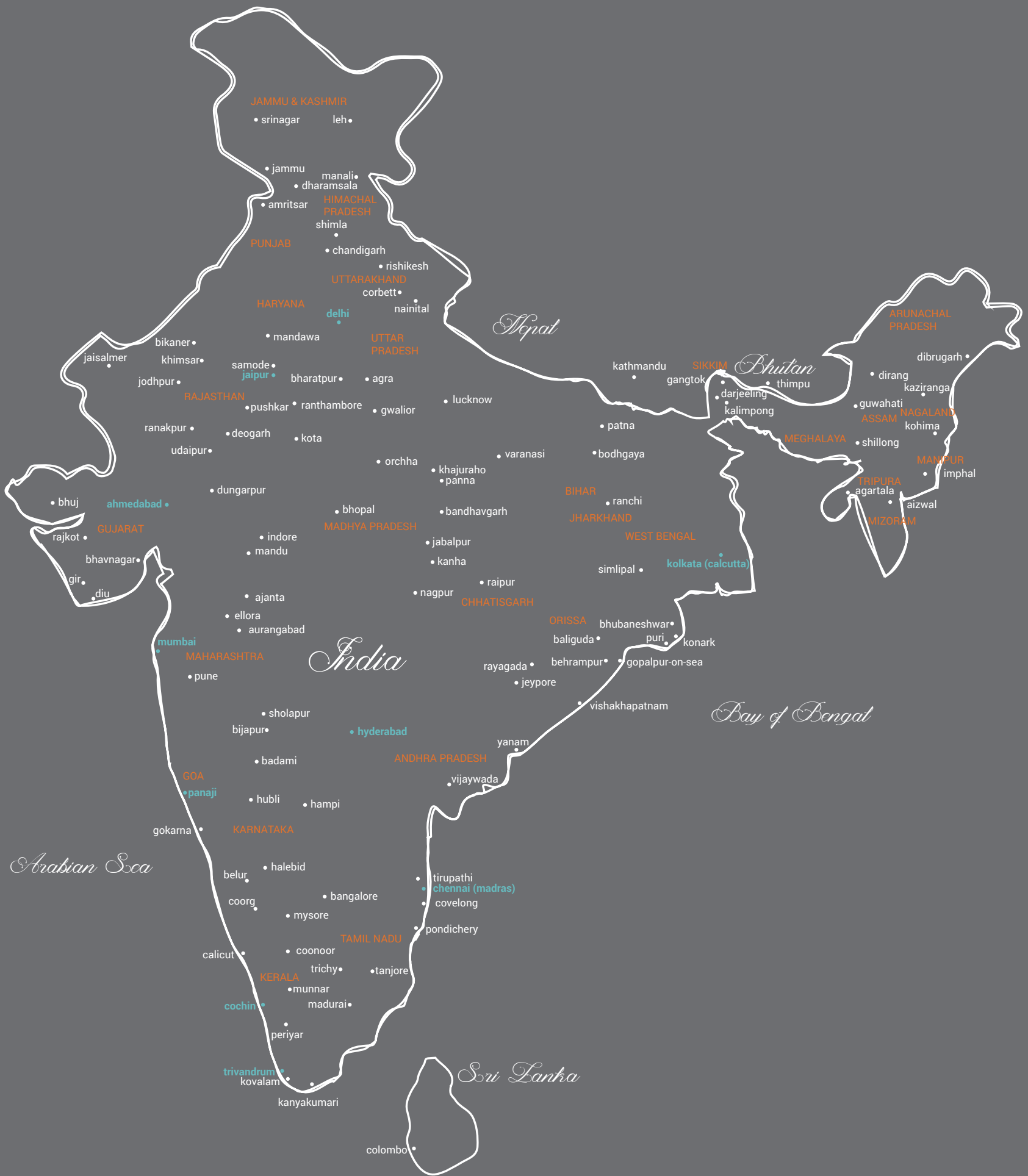
These are in shared jeeps, with a driver and a naturalist. Private jeeps cost more and can be requested. In some parks elephant safaris are available. A larger vehicle called Canter may be used for groups or when jeeps are in limited supply. Jeep safaris get booked up several months in advance, elephant safaris are subject to availability of elephants on the day and cannot be guaranteed. It is advisable to book well in advance when planning a visit to a wildlife park.

inclusions: Your tour includes assisted transfers, accommodation in the listed hotels or similar, food as specified, sightseeing with a private guide and vehicle, entrance fee at monuments in the schedule, safaris and treks, internal transportation by road, train, air or boat. In private tours individual variations can be there. International flights are normally excluded, but can be included on request. We do not sell individual hotel rooms, flights, transportation, etc., on their own but operate complete or near complete tours, assuming full responsibility for their satisfactory delivery and completion.

exclusions: International flights (included in some tours), travel insurance, visa, meals other than those specified, personal expenses, gratuities.

- special needs

Some hotels are wheel-chair friendly while many are not able to offer any adapted facilities. Generally speaking India has fewer facilities for travellers with special needs compared to the West. We can arrange for a helper to travel with you and tailor a holiday to suit any special requirements. Day care for young children is available in some cities and hotels.



This map is representational and not to scale.

the experience that is india

It's almost 250 years since Samuel Johnson came up with that famous line that when you tired of London you tired of life. Yet London is only a city, India is a whole country and there's no way I've got enough life left to become tired. It's more than 40 years since I first visited India and I've spent long spells working on assorted guidebooks including Lonely Planet's India guide, still the single book I am most proud of helping to write. Yet I can quickly count half a dozen India trips I still have to make. Why have I never been to Hampi? It's one of the world's great ancient cities and for some reason it's still on my 'must do' list. Suggesting discovering India by motorcycle in that first India guidebook probably helped popularise the 'India by Enfield' travel experience. So why have I never swung a leg across an Enfield and set off? Every time I fly between South-East Asia and Europe and our flight path crosses the Andaman and Nicobar Islands I look down and ponder 'why have I never been there?' I've taken the toy train up to Darjeeling (and travelled further east to Bhutan), but that corner of north-east India is still untouched territory for me, one day I'll go through to Myanmar by that route. Pondicherry, only a stone's throw south of Chennai, ridiculous that I've never set foot in that former French enclave? Two big ticks for Kashmir and Ladakh, but Zaskar, well that's still on my wish list. See, I've enough India left for another whole lifetime.

Tony Wheeler, Founder, Lonely Planet Guidebooks

*Tony Wheeler at the inauguration of Harji's Company
with Prof Singh from Brandeis University, who delivered the inaugural lecture.*



cuisine of india

India has rich and varied culinary traditions. These differ from region to region. Interestingly there is no 'Indian' food as such, nor is it always hot and there is no such dish as 'curry' which just means sauce or gravy.

Vedic literature informs us that around 1000 BC barley and wheat were the main articles of food and that animal flesh was ritually consumed by early Aryans.

As agrarian economy grew, cattle and other domesticated animals became more useful in agrarian activities and it became less economical to slaughter animals for meat. This was the beginning of vegetarianism. The practice grew with the rise of Buddhism and Jainism in 6th century B.C. The food consisted of various grains, fruits, vegetables and milk products. Due to the warm climate and cultivation of a large number of herbs and spices, the preparations became more and more elaborate. This is the food habit which has largely continued for over two thousand years with large sections of traditionally vegetarian Indian families – particularly in North India.

During this long period, Indian cuisine gained from foreign influences, making it a unique blend of various cuisines.

The Greek, Roman and Arab traders introduced many herbs and spices, in particular saffron. Arabs introduced coffee.

Zoroastrians brought with them Parsi cuisine. Some believe that it was they who first brought biryani to India, before the Mughals made it popular.

The Mughals revolutionized Indian food with their penchant for elegant dining and rich food with dry fruit and nuts, a style which eventually came to be known as Mughlai cuisine.

Tomato, chilli, and potato, which are staple components of today's Indian cuisine, were brought to India by the Portuguese.

The Hindu refugees from Afghanistan brought with them a style of oven, which led to an entirely new stream of dishes – tandoori.

The British infected India with their taste for tea. They also introduced knives and forks and in many city homes the dining table replaced the kitchen floor, though it is still customary in India to eat with your hands.

Herbs and spices play a vital role in Indian food. Each state has its own particular blend of masalas and each family is partial to their own blend.

Spices such as bay leaf, black cardamom, cinnamon, ginger, mace, nutmeg and cayenne pepper are considered warm and used liberally in cold weather. Ancient Ayurvedic texts prescribe spices for curative and therapeutic functions - cumin seeds for digestion, cardamom for the heart, cinnamon for controlling cholesterol, turmeric as a natural antiseptic, ginger against colds and flu...

The many culinary styles in India can generally be divided into four regional categories, the North, the South, the East and the West.

The northern cuisine, perhaps the most popular, is characterized by meats and vegetables cooked in the tandoor (coal fired barbecue), use of cream in dals and yogurt in marinades. Wheat is produced mostly in the north and the grain plays a strong role in its cuisine. Unleavened breads - naan, tandoori roti, chapaatis or paranthas are traditionally eaten with food here.

The best known is Mughlai, characterised by the use of yogurt, fried onions, nuts and saffron. There are tender kebabs, creamy kormas, rich pasandas and many other dishes.

Traditional Kashmiri cooking or Wazawan includes table settings for groups of four or more on the floor where dishes (mostly non-vegetarian) are served, each aromatic with herbs and the fresh produce of the region. The unique feature of Kashmiri cuisine is that the spices used are boiled rather than fried, giving it a distinctive flavour and aroma.

Punjabis have the reputation of being great producers of food and still greater consumers of it. Punjab has bequeathed the institution of dhaba, a wayside eating joint, especially on the highways. Punjabi cuisine is not subtle in its flavour and there are no intricate marinades or exotic sauces. Mah ki Dal, Sarson da Saag and Makki di Roti, meat curry like Roghan Josh and stuffed paranthas are some of the popular dishes in this cuisine.

The rich Awadhi cuisine of Lucknow region was made popular by the Nawab of Awadh who, to deal with food shortage, ordered his men to cook food in huge handis (vessels) to feed the hungry people. This eventually led to a



style of cooking called dum, i.e., the art of sealing ingredients in large handi and cooking over a slow fire.

In the south rice and dal are usually the staple diet. The typical food here is dishes cooked on the griddle such as dosas, thin broth like dals called sambar and an array of seafood. The region is also known for its heavy use of 'kari' leaves, tamarind and coconut.

Hyderabadi cuisine is greatly inspired by the Mughlai style. Some of the most traditional dishes here are Biryani, Chicken Korma and Sheer Khurma.

Karnataka has two main styles of cooking, the Brahmin cuisine that is strictly vegetarian and the cuisine of Coorg, noted for its pork dishes.

The Chettinad cuisine of Tamil Nadu is hot and pungent with fresh ground masalas. Tamil Nadu is also known for its vegetarian Brahmin cuisine which is very popular in entire India and overseas; it includes idli, dosa, vadai, uthapam....

Kerala has appam and stew, ulli theeyal, puttu and the ubiquitous banana chips. In Malabar Moppilah cuisine is popular. The Arab influence is predominant in many of its dishes like the Alisa, which is a hearty wheat and meat porridge. In central Kerala the art of Syrian Christian cooking remains the pride of many a homemaker. Their contribution to the Kerala cuisine includes the hoppers, duck roast, meen vevichathu (red fish curry) and isthew (stew).

In the east fish and rice are at the heart of Bengali cuisine. Mustard oil is used extensively and so is panch phoron (5 whole spices) which sets this cuisine apart from all others.

Oriya cuisine is subtle and delicately spiced; fish and other seafood such as crab and shrimp are popular. Pancha-phutana, a mix of cumin, mustard, fennel, fenugreek and kalonji (nigella) is widely used.

The food of India's north eastern states such as Sikkim, Manipur, Meghalaya, varies quite dramatically. These areas have been influenced by Tibetan, Chinese, and even Western Cuisine in recent times and one finds steaks, pork or chicken dumplings, filling noodle soups featuring strongly in their menu.

In western India, Rajasthani and Gujarati cuisine offer a delectable variety of dals and achara (pickles and preserves) which substitute for the relative lack of fresh vegetables here.

Rajasthani cuisine is quite diverse. The love for shikaar among the erstwhile royalty creates a culinary art form that is unique. There is also the special all vegetarian food of Marwar or Jodhpur with popular dishes such as choorma laddoo and daal baati. Gujarati cuisine is strictly vegetarian. The popular dishes in here are oondhia, patra, khaandavi and thhepla. The typical Gujarati thali is a carnival of savoury vegetables prepared with aromatic spices, accompanied by fried snacks.

For Parsis the main dish is Dhansakh (caramelized onions and brown rice served with a mix of dals, vegetables and meat). In Goan cuisine the gravies are chilly-hot, spices are ground with vinegar and coconut. Some known dishes include Balcao, Xacuti, Vindaloo, Sorpotel and Moehlos.

Malvani or Konkani cuisine is the standard cuisine of Hindus in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, Goa and northern parts of West Karnataka. Malvani food is mostly non-vegetarian, but with many vegetarian delicacies, using coconut liberally and usually very spicy; however, the 'Konkanastha Brahmin' style of food of the region is vegetarian and quite bland.



textiles of india

Textiles in India are varied, with close to two thousand years to unfold and develop their intrinsic identities, while being influenced by several migrations, presenting an interesting matrix.

- north india

The beautiful valley of Kashmir is known for its shawls - pashmina and shahtoosh (the latter now banned). Pashmina weaving began some 400 years ago and was earlier considered the choice fabric of royalty. The pashmina wool comes from changthangi or pashmina goat which is indigenous to the high Himalayas. These shawls are hand spun, woven and embroidered in Kashmir.

Jammu, in the foothills, has a textile tradition much in common with that of neighbouring Punjab and Haryana. The most notable textile of Jammu is the block-printed calicoes of Samba.

Weaving of durries (floor spreads) in myriad motifs and designs especially by young girls in the villages has been a long-standing tradition in Punjab.

The holy Ganges dominates the state of Uttar Pradesh and so does its tradition of silk. Varanasi region is the traditional weaving centre of Banarasi Brocades. It is an interweaving of coloured silk and gold threads to form the most attractive floral designs. The brocades are without doubt India's most fascinating silken fabrics. While Madanpura village is known for its highly sophisticated designs, shades of colours and effective use of gold and silver zari, the silk of Alaipura village is considered coarser and is mainly used for furnishing.

- west and central india

The prosperous state of Gujarat and the princely land of Rajasthan have long been famous for the cultivation of cotton and for the early use of dyes. The textiles in the region have a fascinating range of dyed and block printed fabrics.

Block printing comprises pasting of carved wooden blocks soaked in different colours (also vegetable dyes) on the fabric. In this hand block printing, the design is first drawn on wood using a sharp needle and then the desired design is carved using the chisel, hammer, file and nails. The printing involves laying the fabric, which is to be printed, on flat tables and impressions are made using the carved blocks. The most important centres for block printing are Sanganer, Jaipur, Bagru and Barmer in Rajasthan, and Anjar, Deesa, Ahmedabad, Jetpur, Rajkot, Porbandar and Bhavnagar in Gujarat.

Tie-and-dye work, in which cloth is tied, either with string or rubber bands into some sort of pattern, is also well-known here. This involves the use of resist or barriers to protect certain portions of the fabric from the dye, thereby enabling several colours to be used on the same fabric. Some of the well-known styles of tie-and-dye works are bandhani, lehria, mashru and patan patola.

The other important weaving centres are Paithan and Aurangabad in Maharashtra and Maheshwar and Chanderi in Madhya Pradesh.

Gujarat is also known for its ikkat weaving prevalent in the Sayla and Patan areas.

The durrie, a simple rug that was once used as an underlay, has now become one of Rajasthan's weaving traditions. Weavers sit on looms in villages, creating an interesting blend of patterns in an exciting combination of colours. Made from cotton yarn in areas such as Bikaner, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, woollen durries made from camel hair are also available.

- east india

Silks of Bengal are acclaimed the world over. The best-known Bengal silk, which carries its legendary name, is the Baluchari sari - a product of exquisite design, and fabulous weaving technique.

Bihar is the largest producer of tassar silk in India, Bhagalpur being the home of tassar weaving.

Assam is home to several types of handloom silks, the most prominent and prestigious being muga, the golden silk exclusive only to this state and the finest of India's wild silks. The loom is a prized possession in every Assamese home and weaving has forever been a way of life in the region.

Unlike other parts of India, where much of the spinning and weaving is done by men, in Nagaland it is the exclusive monopoly of women. Weaving specimens from Nagaland comprise a wide range of wrappers and shawls, waistcloths and bodice, girdles, scarves and skirts resplendent with skilful colour combinations.

The state of Manipur is known for its cotton and silk weaving while Orissa is known for its ikkat textile.

- south india

South India was relatively untouched by the invasions that affected the cultural fabric of the North and hence has over the centuries retained its many ancient traditions of textile. South Indian silk, mainly made into saris, is one of the finest; the designs are traditionally Indian with special stress on borders and pallu (end piece). The silk produced here is said to have the capacity to endure strenuous washing on a granite stone! The towns of Kanchipuram, Kumbakonam and Tanjore are major centres of silk weaving. The natural silk mainly comes from the Bangalore area (which has ideal conditions for rearing mulberry silk worms) and the zari (gold or silver wrapped thread) from Surat in Gujarat.

Cotton weaving is widespread in Kanchipuram, Coimbatore, Salem, Pudukkottai, Madurai and Karur. The artists in Andhra Pradesh produce the beautiful kalamkari textile which derives its name from kalam meaning pen, and kari meaning work. In the 18th century there was kalamkari trade between Europe and India; the designs were known as cheeti, a word from which the European chintz was derived. Andhra Pradesh is also known for the Pochampalli silk saris with geometrical designs.

'Bleeding Madras' shirts of Chennai, made of hand-spun yarn woven in India became popular in the West in the 1960s. Dyes that were not colourfast were used, resulting in bleeding and fading colours that gave the fabric a new, personalized look each time it was laundered.

- traditional indian embroidery

Embroidery which is essentially meant to strengthen and decorate the fabric has always been an integral part of the household tradition in various parts of India.

The Kutch and Saurashtra region, which has a large population of pastoralists, is the richest source of folk embroidery in the world. Dress materials, wall hangings, quilts and animal trappings are embroidered, appliqued, decorated with beadwork and embellished with mirrors, sequins, buttons and shells. Each tribe passes on unchanged from generation to generation its own distinct designs, colours and range of stitches.

Phulkari, meaning flower work, is a spectacular style of embroidery peculiar to Punjab. Phulkari has its origins in the early 19th century when the women's head cloth was highlighted with embroidered flowers. Over the years this embroidery became heavy and complex and the heavily embroidered head cloth came to be known as bagh (literally garden). In this style the embroidery covered every inch of the fabric making it completely invisible. In Punjab almost every ceremony is given a touch of additional colour and richness by the use of Phulkari on account of it being considered auspicious.

Lucknow's chikankari is delicate, fine embroidery done in white cotton threads on plain muslin cloth. This embroidery was introduced from the state of Bengal into Lucknow, which is still the chief centre of its production. Lucknow's zardozi and kamdani hand embroideries with gold and silver thread are also appreciated far and wide.

Kantha is the most popular form of embroidery practised by rural women in West Bengal. Kantha originated from the way in which Bengali housewives mended old clothes by taking out a strand of thread from the colourful border of their saris and making simple designs with them.

Appliqué is a decoration or trimming made of one material attached by sewing or gluing to another. This art is widely prevalent in the Eastern coast of Orissa. Applique work of Orissa comprises special canopies, fans, umbrellas and other decorative items.

The kasuti embroidery of Karnataka is a stylized form with stitches based on the texture of the fabric.

The Toda tribal women living in the Nilgiri Mountains wear a toga like garment which is embroidered with exquisite patterns.

indian paintings

Like most of the ancient world's paintings in India too first started on the rocks of caves, moving to walls of buildings and finally to hand-held surfaces.

The rock shelters of Bhimbetka, near Bhopal, are some of the earliest examples of Indian cave painting. The majority are dated 5500 BC, with the oldest ones dating back to the Upper Palaeolithic Age and considered 12,000 years old.

The most notable of frescos, murals and cliff paintings during the historic period are those of the Ajanta Caves. There are 30 caves chiselled out of rock, dating from 2nd century BC to the 7th century AD. These paintings are almost exclusively Buddhist.

The paintings from Bagh caves in Madhya Pradesh are contemporaneous with later Ajanta caves with figures stronger in outline and more earthly.

The earliest Brahmanical paintings are those found in Badami, circa 6 AD. While the technique follows that of Ajanta and Bagh, the modelling is more sensitive in texture and expression and the outline soft and elastic.

The next series of wall-paintings to survive is at Ellora, a site of great importance and sanctity. A number of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples were constructed here between the 8th and 10th centuries AD. The most impressive of these, the Kailashnath Temple, is a free standing monolithic structure.

Then there are the 11th century fresco paintings at Alchi in Ladakh, a style which is believed to have spread to the entire Central Asia. The style does not exist anymore, but the murals of Alchi are still intact, due to the dry and cold climate.

The most notable wall paintings in the south are in Tanjore, the dancing figures from Rajarajeswara and Brihadeeshwara temples from the early 11th century are beautiful examples of medieval paintings. The wide open eyes of all the figures are a clear negation of Ajanta tradition of half closed drooping eyes.

The last series of wall paintings are from the Lepakshi Temple (near Bangalore) from the 16th century AD. The paintings are pressed within broad friezes and illustrate Saivaite and secular themes.

Thereafter a decline of Indian wall paintings began. Some paintings of this period are found in Travancore, Rajasthan and in the Rangmahal of Chamba. Original Rangmahal paintings can be seen in the National Museum in Delhi.

Whilst the tradition of wall paintings declined a new method of expression in painting known as miniature on palm leaves and paper had begun, around 11th century AD. The Pala period (750 AD to mid 12th century) witnessed the last great phase of Buddhist art in India. The monasteries of Nalanda, Odantapuri, Vikramsila and Somarupa were great centres of learning and art. A large number of manuscripts on palm-leaf were written and illustrated with the images of Buddhist deities at these centres which also had workshops for the casting of bronze images. Visiting students and pilgrims from all over South-East Asia took back examples of Pala Buddhist art, in the form of bronzes and manuscripts which helped to carry the Pala style to Nepal, Tibet, Burma, Sri Lanka and Java.

The Western Indian style of painting prevailed in the region comprising Gujarat, Rajasthan and Malwa. The driving force here was Jainism, patronised by Chalukyan kings. A large number of Jain manuscripts were commissioned from 12th to 16th centuries and are available in the Jain libraries (bhandaras) at many places in Western India.

The Mughal School of painting originated during the reign of Akbar in 1560 AD. An atelier of painting was established under the supervision of two Persian masters, Mir Sayyid Ali and Abdul Samad Khan. The Mughal style thus evolved as a happy synthesis of the indigenous style of painting and the Safavid school of Persian painting. This was further influenced by European paintings and absorbed some of the Western techniques like shading and perspective.

Under Jahangir, painting acquired greater refinement, with portraiture of birds, animals and flowers. The portrait of Jahangir is a typical example of miniatures executed during the period and is in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi.

Under Shah Jahan the Mughal painting maintained its fine quality but became over-ripe with portraiture given considerable attention. After his death all art forms began to decline in the Mughal court. Aurangzeb was a puritan and did not encourage art; as a result a large number of court painters migrated to the provincial courts.

Early centres of painting in the Deccan, during the 16th and 17th centuries were Ahmednagar, Bijapur and Golconda where painting continued to develop independently of the Mughal style in the beginning. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was increasingly influenced by the Mughal style imbibed from migrating painters from the north.

Unlike Mughal painting which is primarily secular, the art of painting in Central India, Rajasthan and the Pahari region is rooted in Indian traditions, taking inspiration from Indian epics and religious texts. The cults of Vaishnavism,

Saivism and Sakti exercised tremendous influence on the pictorial art of these places, with the cult of Krishna being the most popular.

The popular Mughal style which migrating painters carried to various places influenced the already existing styles of paintings there, and a number of new schools of painting originated in Rajasthan and Central India in the 17th and 18th centuries. Among these the important ones were Malwa, Mewar, Bundi-Kotah, Amber-Jaipur, Bikaner, Marwar and Kishengarh.

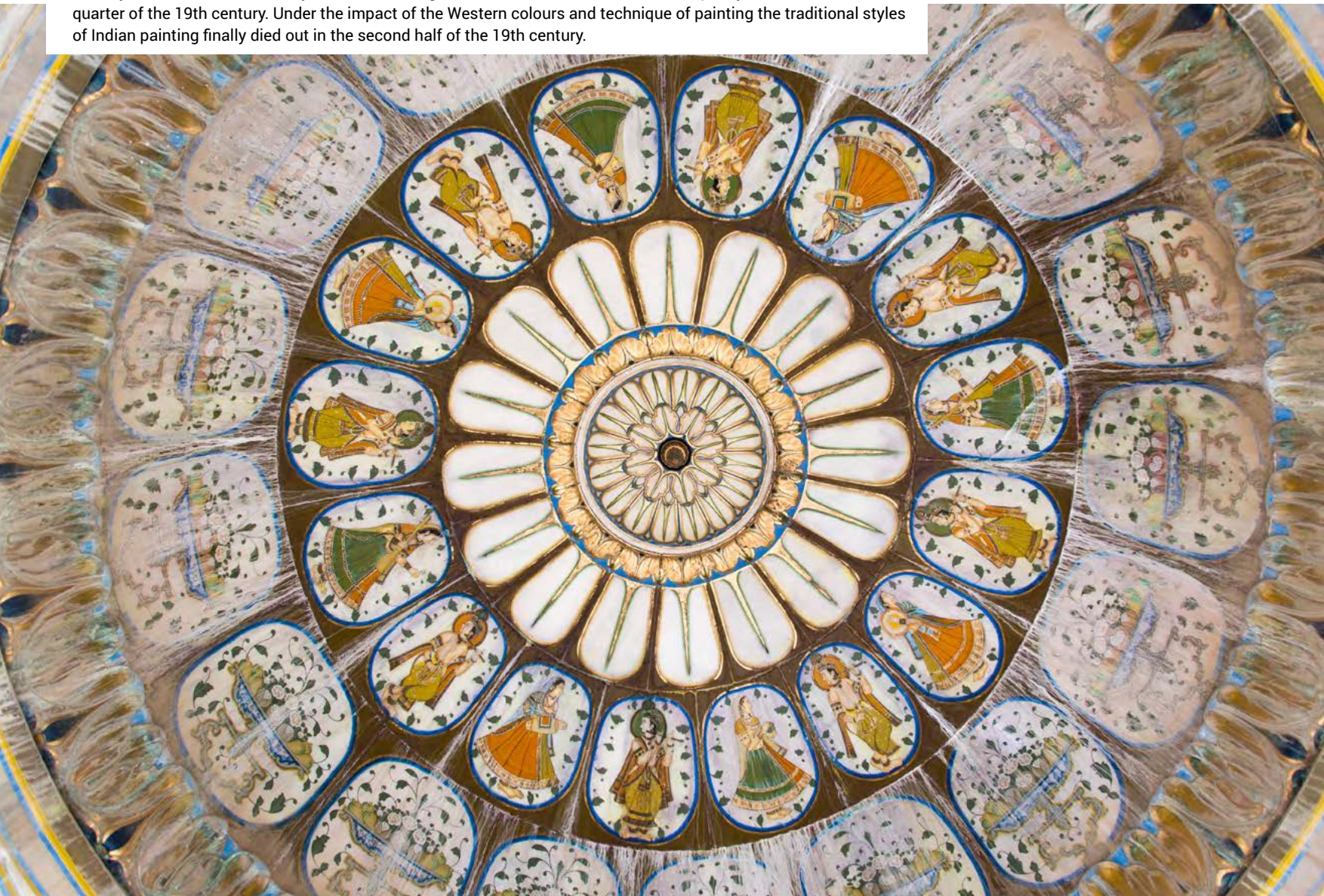
The earliest centre of painting in the Pahari region was Basohli where under the patronage of Raja Kripal Pal, an artist named Devidasa executed miniatures in 1694 AD. The last phase of the Basohli style was closely followed by the Jammu group of paintings mainly consisting of portraits of Raja Balwant Singh of Jasrota by Nainsukh, an artist who originally belonged to Guler. These paintings are in a new naturalistic and delicate style marking a change from the earlier traditions of the Basohli art and are known as the Guler style.

The Guler style was followed by the "Kangra style", the name derived from the fact that they are identical in style to the portraits of Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra. The Kangra style continued to flourish at various places namely Kangra, Guler, Basohli, Chamba, Jammu, Nurpur and Garhwal. These paintings are attributed mainly to the Nainsukh family.

Some of the Pahari painters also found patronage under Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the Sikh nobility.

The earliest surviving examples of miniature paintings in Orissa appear to belong to the 17th century A.D. Some good examples of the paintings of this period are a court scene and four illustrated leaves of a manuscript of the Gita Govinda in the Asutosh Museum, Kolkata, and an illustrated palm leaf manuscript of the Ramayana in the National Museum at New Delhi.

The traditional Indian painting started deteriorating after the first half of the 18th century and by the end of the century it lost most of its vitality. In the Pahari region, however, the art maintained its quality till the end of the first quarter of the 19th century. Under the impact of the Western colours and technique of painting the traditional styles of Indian painting finally died out in the second half of the 19th century.



music of india

As per Hindu mythology, the first ever sound emanating in the universe is the Om mantra; it is the purest and most melodious sound to hear even today.

Like most things Indian its music today is characterised by diversity and fusion of thousands of years old traditions with modern trends; three main genres can be identified: classical, popular and folk.

The classical music of India comprises two main schools – Hindustani or North Indian, and Carnatic or South Indian. They freely borrow from each other. The differences in style are, however, clear and anyone with a little familiarity can readily identify a piece as belonging to one or the other school after hearing just a few notes.

The classical music of India is based on an elaborate theory of music spelled out in a comprehensive reference called 'Natya Shastra' ascribed to the sage Bharata in the fourth century. This is believed to be a compilation of ideas that were already developed, rather than a new creation.

Music in India gives prominence to melody rather than harmony. Classical performances use very few instruments – normally a percussion instrument to keep the beat, and a string instrument as a background drone to accompany the voice. Unlike western classical music notation in the Indian classical music is rudimentary. Performers do not use written music at all and their renditions have a high element of improvisation. The basic concept underlying classical music is 'raga' which is best described as an outline for improvisation. A raga lays down a sequence of notes, which can be different in ascent and descent, and certain key movements that help in building the mood of the raga. Each raga is associated with a time of the day and a mood. Some popular ragas are Yaman, Malkauns, Bageshri, Bihag, Darbari, Bhairavi from the North and Kalyani, Hindolam, Hamsadhwani, Shankarabharanam, Kalawati from the South. Some prominent names in classical music are Ravi Shankar (sitar), Bhimsen Joshi (vocal), Jasraj (vocal), Balamurali Krishna (vocal), Kishori Amonkar(vocal), Amjad Ali Khan (sarod) and Lalgudi Jayaraman (violin).

There is a rich tradition of gharanas (house of music) in Hindustani Classical Music. The gharana concept gained popularity in the 19th century when the royal patronage enjoyed by musicians weakened. Performers were compelled to move to urban centres and to retain their respective identities they fell back on the names of the regions they hailed from. Thus even today the names of many gharanas refer to places. A gharana also indicates a comprehensive musicological ideology; the gift of music is passed down from one generation to another or from the guru or teacher to the shishya or student. Some well-known gharanas of Hindustani classical music are Agra, Gwalior, Kirana, Jaipur, Rampur, Patiala, Delhi, Benaras and Mewati.

The most popular music in India is from film soundtracks. Unlike Hollywood, where very few films are musicals, almost all Indian films have half a dozen or more songs. These songs often become more popular than the films themselves. Film music draws freely on classical, folk and also western classical and popular music. Major singers and composers have a place in popular imagination that borders on the divine. The queen of Indian film music is undoubtedly Lata Mangeshkar who has been honoured with 'Bharat Ratna', the highest civilian award in India. Film music is followed in popularity by devotional music and light classical music. Some of the devotional music is traditional, but much of it is new and often inspired by popular numbers from films. The devotional music of the South retains more of its traditional purity.

The most popular form of light classical music is based on poetry in Urdu – a very elegant and refined language formed by the fusion of Persian and Hindi, the common language of North India. The commonest form of Urdu poetry rendered in light classical music is called 'ghazal' and it is equally popular in India and Pakistan. Many Pakistani singers enjoy popularity in India.

With the influence of the West fast paced rhythmic music suitable for dancing has also emerged as a popular form. The soundtrack of the film 'Come September' was wildly popular in India when the film first came out. Of late, however, 'Punjabi Pop' - a combination of western style instruments and beats with words and certain musical elements in Punjabi: the language of Punjab known for its verve and zest for life – seems to be taking over the dance floor.

The folk music of India reflects the tremendous diversity of India. Each region has its own special style. Some folk melodies have been elevated to classical status: we have raga Pahadi from the hills, Mand from the deserts and Pilu from the Ganges valley. Folk music is an indispensable part of special occasions such as childbirth, wedding, festivals, social functions, and even agricultural activities like planting and harvesting. People give vent to their happiness, joy, fears and aspirations through these songs.

Then there is tribal music, it is usually accompanied by drum-beats with no presence of specific melody. Like folk musicians, tribal musicians make their own instruments using materials like coconut shells, animal skin and strings. Two other musical genres deserve special mention. Rabindra Sangeet, a collection of songs written and set to music by the Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, which is today an integral part of the cultural identity of Bengal. At the other end of the country we have the Natya Sangeet of Maharashtra – songs based on classical and folk music in Marathi language plays.



The earliest physical evidence of dance in India is the 2nd century BC bronze figurine of the 'dancing girl' found in the ruins of Indus Valley. Elaborate dancing sequences can be seen depicted in numerous structures of subsequent eras, the most extraordinary being the ancient carvings at Sanchi, the murals at Ajanta and Ellora, the sculptures of Khajuraho and on the walls of Hoysala temples.

India's historical texts define dance as "the embodiment of sound and rhythm which create poetry of spiritual expression", both that is apparent and obscure. Mythology and folklore often show Lord Shiva in his cosmic dance, Tandava, which is believed to be the source of the cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. His graceful dancing pose, Nataraja, is one of the most recognizable symbols of the theological essence of Hinduism.

The other popular facet one is likely to come across while in India is that of Lord Krishna dancing with his Gopis, depicted in the miniature paintings of mediaeval times found in Rajasthan and Himachal.

It is against this backdrop that dance traditions in India developed. Dance was largely used in India as a vehicle of worship and spiritual expression of emotions. The earliest surviving work on dance is the Natya Shashtra written by Sage Bharata in the 4th century AD which encompasses classical Natya (dance) and also music, poetry, drama, theatre and aesthetics.

- classical dance

It appears from texts that one unified school of dance held sway all over ancient India. In the course of time, however, each cultural area developed a local idiom of its own. Consequently, India offers a number of dance forms, each of which represent the culture and ethos of a particular region along with a set pattern of rules, costumes and make-up.

Classical dance consists of three genres overlapping each other; Nritya, a pure and simple dance with movements of body and limbs, Nritya which is linked with facial expressions, hand gestures and symbolic body poses and Natya that also has elements of drama. The use of mudras or hand gestures is used to depict different feelings and symbols and the entire body is used to communicate.

Bharatanatyam, from the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, is one of the most popular of Indian classical dance forms. It was performed in the temples by devadasis or temple dancers and was part of the religious rituals at the temple. As recent as the early 19th century, the dance was brought out of the temples for private and stage performances. This dance form involves movements conceived in space mostly either along straight lines or triangles and continues to be of spiritual nature.

Kathakali, a story play or a dance drama, originated in the coastal state of Kerala and is traditionally only performed by men. The dancers use a specific, symbolic makeup to portray distinct characters. The movements of the eyebrows, the eyeballs, the cheeks, the nose and the chin are minutely worked out to express "Bhava" or emotion. The Mahabharata and the Ramayana as well as the Puranas constitute popular themes of the Kathakali dance drama, where inevitably the good prevails over the evil.

Mohiniattam of Kerala is performed by women dressed in a typical white saree with gold border. Though it is believed to resemble Bharatanatyam it is quite distinct in its lyrical execution of movements, usage of hand gestures and its simpler costume.

Kuchipudi, like Kathakali is also a dance-drama and derives its name from Kuchipudi village in the Southern State of Andhra Pradesh. Performed to classical Carnatic music, it reflects the desire of a devotee to merge with God.

Odissi, from the Eastern state of Odisha, is considered as the oldest classical Indian dance form and probably the most difficult. Its striking feature is its intimate relationship with temple sculpture. It has a vast range of body movements which gives one the illusion of the sculptures coming to life.

Manipuri, from the North-Eastern state of Manipur is intensely devotional in nature. Like most Indian classical dance forms, it is also a temple dance and continues to be a part of the daily life of the Manipuri people. Dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his avatar Lord Krishna, it is presented as a group dance with gorgeous, colourful costumes.

Kathak, practiced in Northern parts of India, was initially a temple ritual but very soon moved to the royal courts for entertainment. Patronised by Mughals, Kathak literally means a story teller and involves a dancer who tells and interprets stories from mythology through body movements and facial expressions.

What sets the classical dance forms apart from the folk and the tribal are their set rules, elaborate techniques and high degree of refinement, followed strictly over the years. Renowned Gurus, however, innovated leading to different schools within a particular dance form. Over the years these dance forms have also begun to present modern themes such as environment and health apart from the primary mythological themes. Exposure to western dance forms and theatre has resulted in various contemporary fusion styles that are rather unique.

- folk dance

There is a large body of unrelated non-classical dance forms in India which is referred to as folk dance. The two things common among these dance forms is their rural origin and cultural nature.

Several forms of folk dance exist in India; each mirrors the culture, custom and tradition of the region it represents. These simpler folk dances of the common people still survive in their virile state all over India to celebrate special occasions such as harvesting, planting, marriages, festivals and sometimes religious ceremonies.

Some of the important folk dances in India include the Bihu of Assam, which is a very brisk dance performed by both men and women during the harvest season. While Bhangra of Punjab is a lively, powerful dance performed by men, Gair of Rajasthan slowly builds its tempo as men move in and out of a circle. Garba of Gujarat is traditionally performed at marriages and Navaratri festival by both men and women. Likewise Ghoomar of Rajasthan is also a community dance performed on auspicious occasions. Giddha in Punjab is performed by women where quick wit and repartee are the hallmark of a verbal dual that goes on during the dance. Similarly, Lavani of Maharashtra is a combination of satire, wit and current issues, performed by women wearing nine-yard saris. Chhau, native to the eastern parts of India, probably originated as a martial art is slow and lyrical. Chiraw on the other hand is a highly colourful dance from Mizoram, employing a grid of bamboo poles and rhythmic hopping over them.

- tribal dances

The tribal dances are as diverse as the aboriginal population of India, inimitable examples of communities in inaccessible existence still upholding their customs and traditions. Each of these aboriginal tribes possesses its own distinguishable dance traditions and invariably all of them are interwoven with the daily life of the people who dance it.

In most instances, dancing is extremely simple, heartfelt and comprises little more than mixing of the feet or waving of the hands. At other times, it is just swaying of the body to the clapping of hands or beating of primitive drums. Special indigenous musical instruments are also utilised at times but the drum is almost a requisite feature. The spectacular things are their bright colourful costumes, elaborate hair-styles and genuine smiles.



If you have ever stopped to ask someone for directions in India and received an answer about the flow of the wind, and the general political tenor of the country, then you know that Indians are natural storytellers. But do not blame this entirely on our predilection for chatter. We have narrative built into our histories, our lives, our religions, and our cultures, which are both oral and written. The earliest literary culture of India can be conclusively traced to the writings in the Vedas, the Tamil Sangam writings, and Pali literature in and around the first millennia BCE. However, these three canons themselves are a collection of oral literature, hymns, and more. The later Vedic Age in India was marked by the epic poems, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana; these too were written collections of stories that many people knew in the oral form and many regional versions of the great epics followed. I tell you this not just to compile a historical background, but to say that in India every story is told for the first time and that it has been told many times before. It is this beautiful contradictory coexistence that marks India.

*...in India every story is told for the first time
and...it has been told many times before*

The Mahabharata and the Ramayana exist in India's very being, irrespective of region, religion, or culture. Whether or not, one follows Hinduism, everyone has heard of the multiple stories of war, love, familial betrayal, justice, and duty that are contained in these epics. Thus, they become in some sense a kind of literary backbone that has held together the many different traditions of literature. Written in poetic form, in shlokas, derived from the Sanskrit word for grief, shoka, it is traditionally believed that it was the involuntary utterance of the sage Valmiki in sadness that gave rise to poetry. Scholars continue to debate whether these poems are myths, histories, religions, or divine revelations—most of us are content that they are stories that continue to beguile generation after generation.

New forms of writing and language made their way to India in first century CE, as Persian and Arabic amalgamated with the then spoken forms of Hindi and gave rise to Urdu. The medieval period in India flourished in literature. While the regional kingdoms had their own varied literary outputs in different languages (Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Marathi, Bengali, Punjabi and more), the area under the Mughal empire had Persian and Arabic alongside the many indigenous linguistic traditions. Royal patronage of the arts played a significant role, and scriptural, philosophical and romantic literature in India, in the medieval period, marked a highpoint in cultural and literary output. All this, of course, was then added to by the colonial encounter. A standardized Hindi and Urdu across North India accelerated literary production in the languages, and novels, poetry and plays written in Hindi and Urdu came on to the national stage in an unanticipated way. Writing both of what had happened, itihasa, and of their contemporary social realities—colonialism, caste, women's position in society, religion—Hindi and Urdu writers were recognized in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century as the voice of the nation.

Though the Portuguese and the French also held colonies in India, the greatest influence on Indian literature came through the British Raj. The ambitions of the East India Company, and after 1857 the British Crown, were both territorial and cultural; the administrative needs of the colonists had to be met with both British and Indian employees. While the Englishmen were asked to study native languages, Indians were schooled in English. This encounter, while uneven in every degree, gave rise to a renewed interest in the research, scholarship, and preservation of Indian literature while at the same time preparing an entire class of Indians to read, speak, and write in English. Neither the colonists, nor the Indians, could have imagined how prolifically the country would take to the language, or how English, once wielded by the Indians, would never be the same again.

Indian writing in English, from the nineteenth century onwards, reflected a consciousness that was cognizant both of writing in the colonizer's language and of wresting away from the Raj a cherished marker of its civilization. And yet, in the frenzy of the publishing world in English these days, we sometimes forget that India's only Nobel Laureate in Literature, Rabindranath Tagore, was awarded the prize for writing in Bengali. Social reform, nationalism, and a fervent Gandhian ethos dominated the literary world until 1947, when India's independence and its partition gave way to a new era.

While Indian authors like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Kamala Markandaya, and others symbolized a sedate, linear narrative style that told India's stories, the onslaught of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* marked a turn in Indian literatures. While writers before Rushdie, were just as prolific and erudite, they had remained content to write in a form that strove for correctness rather than innovation. I am fashioning a wide ambit here to include the Indian origin, Trinidadian, and later British citizen author V.S. Naipaul who won the Booker in 1971 for *In a Free State*. Awarded the Booker in 1981, Rushdie heralded a new kind of Indian writing in English that strove for the local, Indianized version of the language. *Midnight's Children* told the story of India and of Indians and told it in a language that could be recognized as the spoken English of the country. Of course, the Booker would never be the same again. Arundhati Roy won the award in 1997 for *The God of Small Things*, followed by Kiran Desai in 2006 for *The Inheritance of Loss*, and Aravind Adiga in 2008 for *White Tiger*. And so, British colonization gave English to India, along with many other countries, but the publishing world of today shows us how language or ideas can never be owned.

It would be amiss to not mention that this attention to Indian writing in English, and its accompanying economics, have come at the cost of the vernacular in India. New, innovative, politically informed, ideologically committed, and greatly imagined writing is available in many Indian languages and yet not much attention is paid to them outside of the few national awards. Recent work in translation has ensured that a wider public has come to read Urdu, Hindi,

Punjabi, Malayalam, Tamil and other writers and perhaps that will spur an interest in writing in Indian languages.

Perhaps, then, the next time you ask someone for directions in India, and they give you the history of the road, and then go on to comment on the meaningless of your quest to find salvation, or ask that you give them a lift since they are going the same way, you will hold your surprise in check and remember that our conversations are distillations of the many stories that define us. Literature in India is not just an extension of our reading selves; it symbolizes our deep, abiding interest in the playful, imaginative, and collective enterprise of the storyteller.

Write-up courtesy Prof Harleen Singh, Brandeis University



indian architecture

Referring to the architectural heritage of undivided India, Lord Curzon once commented that it was 'the greatest galaxy of monuments in the world'.

From rudimentary constructions in pre-historic times the construction form developed into a full-fledged architecture towards the beginning of Christian Era and reached its zenith during the early medieval times with temple architecture. Then came the Muslim influence and the two great styles were attempted to be merged, this fusion was fully realised during the reign of the Mughals. The British followed and have left their own mark on the already rich scene of Indian architecture.

- pre-historic and proto-historic architecture

The earliest remains of construction in India are found in Baluchistan and Sind (now in Pakistan), Bhimbetaka (Madhya Pradesh), Kashmir and other parts of the subcontinent. These were of rudimentary nature as cave dwellings with paintings on the cave walls and decorations on tools and implements.

A major change happened with the urbanization of the plains of the Indus and its tributary rivers. The Indus Valley Civilization or Harappan Culture had its mature phase between 2500 and 2000 BC. While there is evidence of town planning and advanced knowledge of construction techniques, there are no large structures, barring The Great Bath at Mohenjodaro, a few store houses and some palatial buildings. The buildings were essentially of utilitarian nature and of little aesthetic merit unlike their contemporary civilizations. The Harappan sites are mainly found in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. The sites of Gujarat include Dholavira, Gola Dhoro, Lothal, Surkotada, Bhagatrav, Rangpur; in Haryana we have Rakhigarhi and Banawali; Rajasthan has the important site of Kalibangan. The Eastern fringe of Harappan civilization included Alamgirpur, Bargaon and Hulas in Uttar Pradesh. The northernmost site in India was at Ropar in Punjab.

...Lord Curzon once commented that it was 'the greatest galaxy of monuments in the world'.

A lull set in after the Harappans and continued till the dawn of the so-called 'second urbanization' around 600 BC after which one can trace the history of Indian architecture in an almost unbroken sequence. Still very few buildings

were made of stone as the main building materials were wood and bricks in the Gangetic plains, the centre of the civilization at the time. Ashoka, the great Mauryan king, was however already leaving large stone columns with finely carved capitals for all times to come. The transition from wood and bricks to stone was round the corner...

- from early india to medieval times

The Mauryans extended their empire outside the Gangetic plains to as far as the Tamil country in peninsular India. The new fervour in architecture manifested itself in religious structures like stupas and cave temples; later free standing temples came to be 'the norm' for artistic expression; secular structures were few and far between.

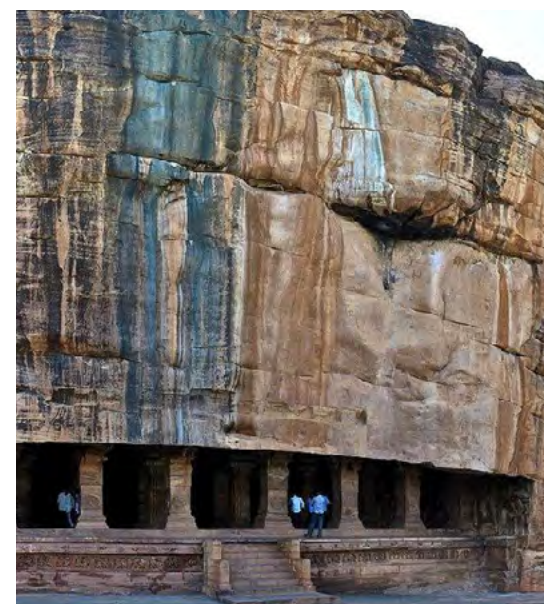
stupas: The stupa began as a hemispherical earthen burial mound built over the remains of a religious teacher or holy man. Ashoka Maurya raised a large number of stupas over the relics of the Buddha all over India. During the period between the Mauryas and the Guptas as Buddhism grew and won patronage of powerful kings, the older mud mounds were greatly enlarged and sheathed with stone. The original wooden fencing was replaced with elaborate stone railings and ornate gateways or torans. Noteworthy among these were the stupas at Bharhut and Sanchi in Madhya Pradesh and Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh. Of the later stupas the ones at Sarnath and Nalanda are the most famous.

cave temples (chaityas & viharas): In the pre-Gupta period we also find remains of artificial caves. These were excavated for preaching monks to rest during the monsoon period but were later occupied throughout the year. These caves had two main parts: chaityas or prayer halls, and attached with them were caves for lodging, called viharas or monasteries. The earliest of these cave temples are found in Barabar Hill in Bihar, dedicated to Ajivikas by Ashoka Maurya. Gradually the cave temple form spread to many parts of India and flourished in the Deccan.

Though the oldest of Deccan cave is at Bhaja near Pune, the cave temple form matured with the great chaitya hall at Karle, excavated around the beginning of the Christian era. This is cut 124 feet deep into the rock and is more developed in size and splendour than Bhaja. The columns are no longer plain and austere but are heavy and ornate. The simple facades of the earlier caves were developed into elaborately carved verandahs.

The most famous of the cave groups, however, are those of Ajanta (2nd century BC to 7th century AD) and Ellora (5th to 8th century AD). Besides, there are a number of caves found at Kondane, Pitalkhora, Bedsa, Nasik, and Kanheri. The latest of these of importance are those at Elephanta near Mumbai. After these no important caves were excavated... but the great period of medieval temple building had begun.

free standing temples: Perhaps the highest achievement of Indian architecture is manifested in the free



Bhimbetka
Sanchi Stupa
Cave Temple at Badami

standing temples. There is literary evidence that deva-grahas (houses of gods) existed as early as 2nd century BC, built of perishable materials. It was from the Gupta period that the practice of building with lasting materials began. The Gupta temples were small with flat roofs and the masonry was held together without mortar. The finest Gupta temple, at Deogarh near Jhansi, probably of the 6th century, marks a great advance. Here iron dowels were used to hold the masonry together, and a small tower rose above the sanctum. The Gupta temple style had a tremendous bearing upon later development of free standing temples.

With the breakdown of the Gupta Empire, the smaller kingdoms learnt the basics of temple construction and made their own additions with variations. Thus developed the great Indian temple architecture and new temples sprang up everywhere and kings and chiefs vied with each other for more beautiful temples. The architecture is remarkably uniform but scholars distinguish two chief styles, Northern or Nagara style and Southern or Dravidian style.

The Nagara style is best illustrated by three schools, Orissa, Bundelkhand and Rajasthan-Gujarat.

Orissa or Odisha temple building flourished from the 8th to the 13th centuries, the finest being Lingaraja in Bhubaneswar. It is built as a series of four halls, a hall of offerings, a dancing hall, an assembly hall and a sanctuary. The sanctuary is crowned by the great tower. Also important are the Temple of Jagannath in Puri and the Temple of Black Pagoda in Konark. Interestingly architects in Orissa were lavish with their exterior decoration but the interiors of their temples were left unadorned.

Under the Chandela kings of Bundelkhand a great school of architecture flourished in the 10th and 11th centuries, the chief work of which is a beautiful group of temples at Khajuraho. The standard temple here contains a shrine-room, an assembly hall and an entrance portico. Unlike in Orissa the temples at Khajuraho are adorned with sculpture both outside and inside.

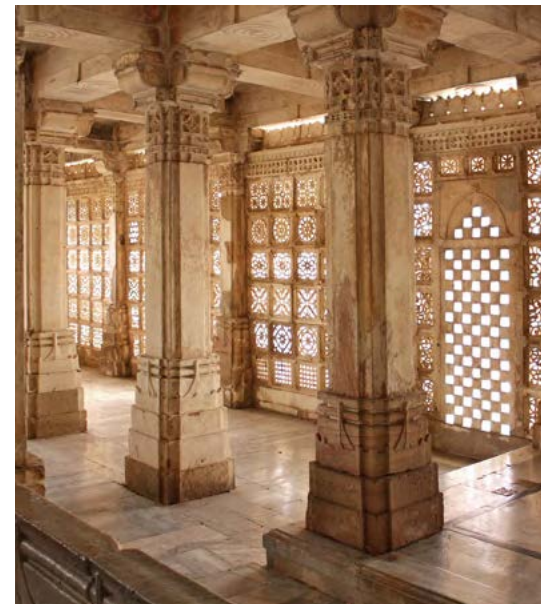
The Western school of Gujarat and Rajasthan reached its zenith under the patronage of the Solanki rulers of Gujarat (11th to 13th centuries). The most famous buildings of this school are the Jain shrines of Dilwara at Mount Abu. These were built on high platforms and usually consisted of a shrine and hall only, without an entrance portico. The shikhara, over the shrine, like those of Khajuraho, was adorned with a large number of miniature towers, and the ceilings were in the form of corbelled domes, perhaps to give the impression of a true dome which was gradually being introduced by the Muslims in India. Another noteworthy example is the Sun temple at Modhera.

In South India, temple building had the patronage of the Pallava and Chalukya kings from the 6th to 8th centuries. Pallava temples are to be found at Mamallapuram and Kanchipuram, while the Chalukyas left temple remains at their capital Badami and at the nearby site of Aihole. The Pallava style was developed further under the Chola dynasty (10-12th centuries); their finest products being the temples at Tanjore and Gangaikondacholapuram. The former was probably the largest temple built in India up to that time; the comparatively modest tower of the Pallava style was replaced by a great pyramid, rising from a tall upright base and crowned with a domed filial. This set the style of the Dravidian sikhara, which has continued with some variation down to the present day. Both these temples contain elaborate pillared halls and beautiful decorations.

In the next phase of Dravidian architecture the emphasis shifted from the tower above the chief shrine to the entrance gateway of the surrounding wall – perhaps it was done in imitation of the palaces of kings, with which the temples had much in common. From the 12th century onwards it became usual to fortify the temple with gates on the four sides. The gates were surmounted by watch towers, and these developed into soaring towers or gopurams, generally much taller than the modest shikhara over the central shrine. The new style is often called Pandyan, after the name of the dynasty which supplanted the Cholas in the Tamil country. The culmination of this Pandyan style is to be seen in the mighty temples of Madurai, Srirangam and other places.

While these developments were taking place in the Tamil country, other styles developed in the Deccan, under the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas and Hoyasalas. The earliest Chalukyan temples closely resemble the Gupta. The later Chalukyas and Hoyasalas (11-14th centuries) developed a more elaborate style. Their temples were no longer constructed on a rectangular plan, but were polygonal, built on tall solid platforms of the same shape as the buildings. The largest and most famous temples of this style are at Belur and Halebid. A more complete example is the outstanding Kesava Temple at Somnathpur near Mysore.

The school which flourished under the Vijayanagara Empire and reached its peak in the 16th century shows both Pandyan and Hoyasala features. The florid carving of the Hoyasalas was developed with even greater exuberance, and new elements appeared in the temple complex. As well as the main shrine, in every important temple in South India the amman, the god's main consort, was provided with a shrine which was nearly as large as the main shrine itself, and a marriage hall (kalyanamandapam), wherein the icons of god and goddess were ceremonially united on festive days. Another feature of the Vijayanagar style is the profusion of carvings which adorns the pillared halls. The finest product of the Vijayanagara style is the Vitthala Temple of Hampi.



*Konark Temple
Jain Temple
Airavatesvara Temple, Thanjavur*

- the sultanate and mughal period

A rich variety of buildings and monuments came to be constructed in India through the patronage of Turkish, Mughal and other Muslim rulers between the 12th and 18th century. These cannot strictly be described as Muslim architecture as they are as much the work of India's hereditary craftsmen as of the foreign artisans who came with the invaders. It will, therefore, be appropriate to regard this phase of building as a development of Indian architecture under Muslim influence.

The Turko-Afghan rulers and generals began their campaigns into India towards the end of the 12th century and had set up the Sultanate by the beginning of the 13th. These kings who followed one another in quick succession erected splendid victory towers, impregnable forts, luxurious palaces, mosques and mausoleums, both in Delhi and in the provincial capitals.

While still in the process of consolidating their power, from 1200 to 1246 AD, they simply converted the existing religious structures into improvised mosques by removing the existing structures in the middle and erecting a new wall on the west, adorned with mihrabs pointing the way to Mecca. The Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque in Delhi and the Arhai-din-ka-Jhonpra at Ajmer were built mainly out of the old Jain and Hindu temples. The next monument in this hierarchy is the Qutab Minar, a giant minaret of over 73 metres. The tomb of Iltutmish is a fine example of Indian work under Islamic patronage. In the same vicinity Alauddin Khilji had a structure built which shows that by this time Indian craftsmen had mastered the alien styles of decoration. The 'true arch' form was also introduced here.

The rugged simplicity of the Turks reasserted itself later in the Tughlaqabad Fort, built by Ghiyasuddin Tughlaq in 1321. There was great building activity under Firuz Tughlaq; but in the Firuz Shah Kotla and the mausoleum at Hauz Khas there is simplicity more due to a none too rich treasury than a desire to be humble. The Lodi tombs are barer. The kingdom was quite unstable from 1414 to 1526 and money was scarce. Sher Shah's tomb is the last in the series of Turkish burial places. It is more elaborate than the Tughlaq or Lodi memorials but still devoid of grandeur.

The starkness of the Turko-Afghan architecture was mellowed in the provincial kingdoms through more intimate contact with local traditions. The earliest mosque at Jaunpur is distinguished by a number of carved pillars, which were evidently taken from a temple. The Lal Darwaza mosque and the Atala Masjid owe more to the local styles. In Gujarat Sultan Ahmad adorned Ahmedabad with most splendid buildings which in style and detail are counterparts of the temples of nearby regions. In the city of Mandu a great mosque was built by Hoshang. The techniques of Hindu, Jain and Muslim styles are fused in the structure, superimposed on the whole by a reflection of the power of the Sultans. Similarly, in the architecture of Gaur, the old Muslim capital of Bengal, the main cue came from local styles.

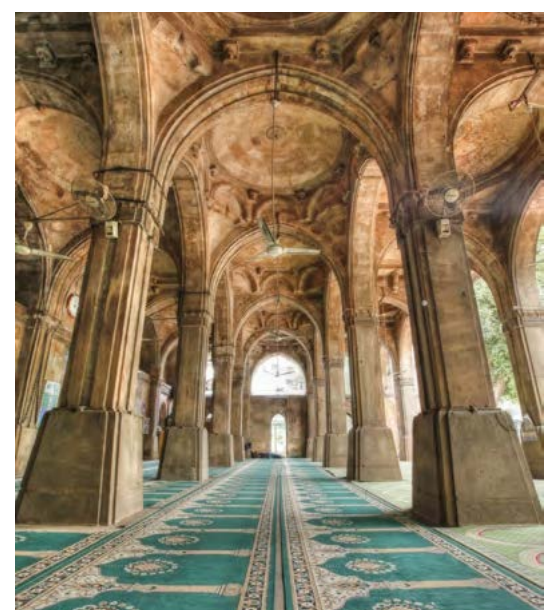
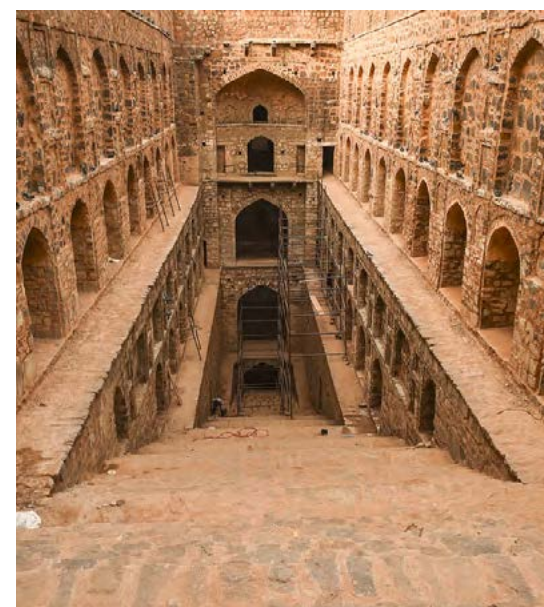
In the Southern Muslim kingdoms too, a large number of monuments were built. The large mosque of Gulbarga, erected in the 14th century, is a unique piece of architecture. This is the only mosque in India which is wholly covered over, sunlight being admitted through the side walls which are pierced with great arches. During the reign of the Adil Shahi Sultans of Bijapur building activity received a major boost.

Notable among the constructions in Bijapur is the Jami Masjid, created out of the remains of Hindu structures, but never completed. Ibrahim Adil Shah took care that his tomb was finished in his lifetime; the entire Quran was engraved on its walls and the skill of South Indian craftsmen was ably used in its construction and ornamentation.

There is very little difference between the styles which matured under the Turko-Afghan kings and the Sultans who ruled in various parts of India and the later styles perfected in Mughal times, except that the Mughal architecture is more elaborate and the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim elements in it is complete. The tomb of Humayun, for instance, is almost a final development of the style which had begun with the Qutab group of buildings and passed through the rough Lodi monuments and Sher Shah mausoleum. Persian artisans, brought to India by Humayun, contributed frescoes of their own, bringing in finesse in construction. The material also became finer between 1540 and 1685.

If Humayun's tomb is still slightly eclectic, the genius of Akbar, the Great Mughal, combined the foreign and indigenous elements completely. This is evident in Fatehpur Sikri's buildings and Akbar's own mausoleum at Sikandara. Akbar's son Jehangir carried on his father's tradition, building two mosques in Lahore apart from his own mausoleum. The most glorious building of his reign is the tomb of Itamud-ud-Daulah at Agra. Built entirely of white marble and covered throughout with mosaic, it marks the beginning of what has been called the Indo-Islamic 'baroque' style.

Shah Jehan, as governor of Gujarat, probably acquired his love of fine buildings from the architecture created by Sultan Ahmad. Those early impressions mingled with his own delicate and sensuous imagination. He brought the same delicacy and love of marble to the Taj Mahal which was built in the memory of his consort, Mumtaz Mahal. The Moti Masjid at Agra is another elegant construction typifying Shah Jahan's concept. The Jami Masjid in Delhi outshines all other buildings of its kind. The Red Fort at Delhi, a replica of the fort at Agra, is further testimony to



*Qutub Minar
Agrasen ki Baoli, Delhi
Sidi Saiyed Mosque, Ahmedabad*

Shah Jehan's sensibility. After Shah Jehan the creations of Mughals lost their magnificence and the Indo-Muslim architectural traditions declined.

- modern times (the contribution of the british)

Though by the beginning of the 19th century the British had occupied a great part of the country, their architectural contribution began after the rebellion of 1857, when their political power was firmly established. It took the form of country houses, dak bungalows, churches and office buildings which are still spread all over the country. The architectural styles of these include the Greco-Roman, Scottish, and Gothic combined with Indian styles.

In December 1911 King George V proclaimed the transfer of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. In 1912 Lord Harding deputed Sir Edwin Lutyens to select a site for the central buildings. The team recommended the Raisina Hill, a slight elevation south of Delhi, as the ideal site. In 1913 Sir Herbert Baker joined Lutyens as a collaborator and was made responsible for the Legislative Council building and the Secretariat while Lutyens concentrated on the Viceroy's House.

The founding of New Delhi was a measure of the imperial policy of establishing a monumental architectural expression of British imperial might. There was much extravagance and some sacrifice of comfort for visible grandeur, with borrowings of Islamic pavilions, Buddhist railings, and imitations of Hindu ornaments and brackets.

The Central Secretariat complex, extending from the Viceregal Lodge, now Rashtrapati Bhawan, is even today a fine example of large scale urban design for boldness of conception as well as execution. The architectural integrity of the entire complex, besides its harmony in scale and composition, is a tribute to its architect, Edwin Lutyens. The Viceregal Lodge represents, perhaps for the last time, the "spirit of aristocracy in the language of a dwelling".

The outstanding examples of late baroque style churches in Goa deserve a special mention besides the cathedral in Shimla, the old churches in Madras and St Paul's Cathedral in Calcutta, the last mentioned built by Bishop Wilson at his own expense. The magnificent Victoria Memorial, a landmark of the city, is built of white Jodhpur marble.

Then there is a sprinkling of the Dutch influence in Fort Cochin, the Danish in Trankebar and the French in Pondicherry.

Central Secretariat, New Delhi



The Indian traditions of arts and crafts are some of the oldest and diverse in the world. They represent a unique ethos and aesthetic sensibility that has assimilated artists and techniques from the world over and yet retained the core essence of India. A cascade of colour, motifs, and materials that changes with each region also reflects the history, geography and economic conditions of the country. The techniques and skills are often passed down through families, fathers to sons, mothers to daughters or within communities and schools. Traditional guilds, and at times one's caste, decided the livelihood of the artisans.

The earliest specimens of Indian arts and crafts go back 4500 years to the Indus Valley Civilization, also known as Harappa, and include jewellery, seals, pottery, toys, games, terracotta, bead making and bronze figures. The finer crafts of India flourished over the centuries due to royal patronage and for trade. Jewellery, embroidery, silk, brocades, ivory and bone carving, carpets and silver were in great demand in the country and elsewhere. However, the colonial era, industrialisation and independence saw a decline and many craftsmen gave up their professions.

In Northern India, Kashmir is the centre of carpet weaving that was imported into the region from Persia. However, Kashmir is also famous for embroidery and the region is known worldwide for Pashmina shawls, and for decorated papier-mache bowls, boxes and trays and for fine carving in walnut wood. There are many Tibetan refugees in the state of Himachal Pradesh, who have brought with them their craft of making colourful Tibetan rugs and jewellery and added to Himachal's existing tradition of Kullu shawl-making and miniature pahari painting.

A cascade of colour, motifs, and materials that changes with each region also reflects the history, geography and economic conditions of the country.

In Uttar Pradesh, while the city of Varanasi produces world famous silks and brocades, Lucknow is famous for delicate embroidery work 'chikankari' done on light fabrics. As befits the home of the Taj Mahal, Agra is famed for its marble-inlay, often incorporating precious stones. In the heartland of India lies Madhya Pradesh, where handicrafts

lend a touch of mystique. A deftly woven silk or a cotton blended saree, block-printed fabrics, folk paintings, bamboo, cane or jute work, woodcraft, zari work (gold thread embroidery), ornaments, dolls...each hand-crafted product of Madhya Pradesh is charming enough to sweep you off your feet.

In South India, the state of Karnataka is noted for its fine silks and handicrafts. A range of finely carved sandalwood and rosewood figures, wooden inlay, toys, brassware, gold and silver jewellery are other well known handicrafts of the region. In Tamil Nadu you can buy splendid handloom silk and cotton fabrics, especially the silk sarees from Kanchipuram in vibrant colours. A range of finely crafted bronzes, brass lamps, and Thanjavur paintings are other options in Tamil Nadu. In Ooty chunky silver jewellery and hand embroidered fabrics are major attractions. Popular souvenirs from Kerala include Kathakali models in wood or papier-mache, miniature snake-boats, restrained rosewood carvings, as well as the sea-shell confections. Also in Kerala, and to a lesser extent in Tamil Nadu, you will find beautiful and incredibly vibrant miniature paintings on leaf skeletons.

Andhra Pradesh has a rich tradition with craftsmanship handed down from generation to generation. Bidri, the most famous handicraft of this state, is a metal craft that derives its name from Bidar, the hometown of this exquisite craft. Kalamkari hand painting with vegetable dyes is another speciality of the state. Hyderabad today, is the largest pearl centre of India where you can buy exquisite pearl jewellery and also silk and cotton sarees from Pochampalli, Venktagiri, Nayudupet, Gadwal, Narayanpet and Dharmavaram.

The arts and crafts of the east are epitomized by terracotta and pottery handicrafts, folk bronzes and kantha needlework from Bengal. The state of Orissa reflects its temple traditions with soapstone carvings of extraordinary intricacy, and appliqué work from the village of Pipli, originally home to the workshops that produced the enormous covers of the deities of the Jagannath temple in Puri.

Arunachal Pradesh offers a variety of wood carvings, carpets and shawls. In Shillong, in the state of Meghalaya, one can have an interesting experience of seeing people of different tribes in colourful traditional attire. Here, one can get good bargains for hand-woven shawls, handicrafts, orange flower honey and cane work.

Manipur specializes in handloom which is a cottage industry in the state and almost every household owns a loom, with women, busy in the creation of typically unique native designs. Mizoram offers a variety of traditional Mizo handicrafts and especially the bamboo hat that is made of waterproof wild Hnahtial leaves. Tripura is known for its exceptional hand-woven cotton fabrics with tribal motifs, wood carvings, decorative articles made from bamboo roots, bamboo and cane furniture and other exquisite handicrafts.

Rajasthan excels in enamelling, lacquer and filigree work and block-printed silks and muslin. Mirror work is another art native to this area. For Western tastes, the heavy folk-art jewellery of Rajasthan has special appeal. Jaipur is famous for its 'blue pottery' and semi precious stones, Jodhpur for antique styled furniture, and Udaipur is particularly well known for the reproduction of old miniature paintings.

Gujarat is renowned for its exquisite handicrafts and offers the best of furnishings, furniture, textiles and jewellery, which would appeal to even the most discerning buyer. The famous Sankheda wooden furniture is a Gujarat specialty. Also famous are storage boxes, metal jewellery, copper bells, baked clay items and a host of other delightful crafts. Gujarat also produces beautiful, hand-woven tie-dyed textiles, popular chakla patchwork and glass wall hangings. Intricate embroidered garments include skirts, blouses, kurtas and jackets. The Rann of Kutch is renowned for its mirror work.

Although Mumbai is a gigantic emporium attracting goods from all over India, two of the most well-known handicrafts of Maharashtra are Kolhapuri chappals and the Paithani sari in silk, bordered with opulent zari. Handloom silks are Aurangabad's chief delights, as are the delicate muslin and silks of Khambat (better known as Cambay). The traditional crafts of Goa include pottery and terracotta items like flower garden pots, bowls with floral designs, figures of saints, Gods and Goddesses and animals, ashtrays and pen holders. Goa is also famous for brass metal casting, a craft passed on from one generation to another.





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india invitation

A week-long tour of India's most popular tourist circuit, covering historic Delhi, the Taj Mahal in Agra and the majestic forts and palaces of Jaipur; we sprinkle the tour with features that make your holiday special.

Days 1 to 3 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, transfer in our specially done-up Ambassador Car to the colonial Maidens Hotel in the Old City or the Scarlet Hotel, a charming maison d'hotes in South Delhi, close to the happening Hauz Khas Village. You have the choice of staying at The Imperial, the capital's landmark hotel. Visit the World Heritage sites of Delhi; enjoy a rickshaw ride through Chandni Chowk; see the National Gallery of Modern Art; walk through Lodhi Gardens; visit Hauz Khas Village or Delhi Haat to pick up an artefact; try out one of our recommended restaurants, maybe enjoy a Food Walk with a culinary expert.

Day 4 Agra

Drive in a private chauffeur-driven car to Agra; stay in an elegant family home or the modern Trident or Mughal Hotel. Visit the Taj at sunrise or sunset; see Agra Fort and the tomb of Itamud-ud-daula. You can see Mohabet e Taj, a musical play at Kalakriti.

Days 5 to 7 Jaipur

Proceed to Jaipur with the option of seeing Fatehpur Sikri and the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary; stay at a royal residence like Dera Mandawa or the Royal Heritage Haveli; the opulent Ram Bagh Palace is a choice. Visit the city sights, climbing Amber Fort on elephant back.

You can enjoy a kite flying session on the terrace of a local home, before joining the family for a meal. We can arrange for you an early morning climb to the Jaigarh Fort or a later walk around Amber with "high" tea in the Aravallis. An excursion to a nearby village, known for its batik prints, can be arranged where you can create your own batik print. If you have the time we would recommend an elephant safari in the wilderness, ending with dinner in the open around a campfire.

Day 8 Delhi

Return to Delhi for a short stay at an airport hotel.

Day 9 Flight

Take the flight home.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June, mid-Dec to mid-Jan.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

romance of rajasthan

This is Rajasthan, where cities with splendid palaces and royal mansions evoke their princely past, where forts dominate the barren surrounds, where Jain temples with exquisite carvings appear unexpectedly, where folk music emanating from the single-stringed lute of a wandering bard haunts the darkening evenings... this is Rajasthan, the Land of Kings.

Days 1 & 2 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, transfer to the Colonel's Retreat (or Maidens/Imperial); optional sightseeing.

Days 3 & 4 Jaisalmer

Fly to Jodhpur, drive on to Jaisalmer, stay at Hotel Fifu or Killa Bhawan (or Suryagarh); visit the fort and havelis, ride a camel on the sand dunes, option of sleeping in the desert with dinner around a campfire.

Days 5 & 6 Jodhpur

Drive to Jodhpur for two nights' stay at the Pal Haveli (or Raas); see the Meherangarh Fort and its Museum; option of a jeep safari of neighbouring Bishnoi villages (You can choose to stay at Umaid Bhawan, one of the grandest palace hotels in the world).

Day 7 Sardargarh

Drive to Sardargarh visiting Ranakpur Jain Temple, with a lunch halt at a mango orchard. Stay the night inside the imposing fort, overlooking a vast lake.

Days 8 & 9 Udaipur

Option of a train ride through the Aravalis; drive to Udaipur; stay two nights at Jagat Niwas or Fatehgarh (or upgrade to the Lake Palace); visit the City Palace Complex, ride a boat on Lake Pichola;

Day 10 Bundi

Visit the impressive Chittaurgarh Fort and drive on to Bundi, stay at Dev Vilas (or Haveli Braj Bhushanjee); visit Taragarh Fort and Raniji ki Baoli.

Days 11 & 12 Jaipur

Drive to Jaipur for two nights at the Dera Mandawa or Royal Heritage Haveli (or the Ram Bagh Palace); visit Amber Fort and the City sights; a cooking demo of Rajasthani cuisine is on offer.

Days 13 & 14 Agra

A drive to Agra via the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary; enjoy a home stay (or stay at the Mughal/Trident/Jaypee Palace); see the Taj Mahal at sunrise and sunset, visit the Agra Fort and Itamud-ud-daula, enjoy a cultural show about the story of the Taj.

Day 15 Delhi

Return to Delhi for a short stay at an airport hotel.

Day 16

Fly back home.

Best months:

Oct to Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June

Recommended extensions:

Varanasi, Shimla, Ranthambore

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



We cover the major sights of Northern India in this tour with key sites in Rajasthan. Starting in the culturally rich cauldron of Delhi, we move to Lucknow, site of the famous siege of 1857, and then on to the Ganges in Varanasi, or Benares, one of the oldest living cities in the world, contemporary with Nineveh and Thebes; Khajuraho offers 10th century temples with erotic sculpture while the beauty of the Taj awaits us in Agra; finally to Rajasthan, taking in the colourful cities of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur.

Days 1 to 2 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, transfer to the colonial Maidens Hotel (or upgrade to The Imperial). Visit the sights of Old and New Delhi; see the National Museum; a morning walk through the sites of the 1857 rebellion is on offer. A dargah can be visited for some mesmerising religious singing.

Days 3 & 4 Lucknow

Fly to Lucknow, stay at Vivanta by Taj near the Gomti. Visit the Imambaras, La Martinere, Dilkusha and the Residency; try out Avadhi cuisine and its delicate kebabs in Hazrat Gunj; buy some chikan work from Chowk; you can visit Chinhat for some exquisite pottery. For those interested visits to music and dance schools can be arranged.

Days 5 & 6 Varanasi

Take a day train to Varanasi, stay at Suryaoday Haveli (or upgrade to the Nadesar Palace). See the evening aarti at the ghats; take a boatride to Manikarnika Ghat; visit the Buddhist site of Sarnath; walk through the old town and see silk-weaving, try the kachoris at Madhur Milan or the cream-laden lassi at Assighat.

Days 7 & 8 Khajuraho

A short flight to Khajuraho, transfer to The Serai in Toria on the Ken River. Visit the celebrated Chandela temples, take a jeep safari in Panna, walk in the village, ride a boat to see riverine birds.

Days 9 & 10 Agra

Drive to Jhansi; stop at Orchha to see the Bundela ruins; take the train to Agra; stay at the modern Trident or Mughal Hotel. Visit the Taj at sunrise, see the tomb of Itamud-ud-daula, Noorjehan's father, and walk through the Fort, on the other side of the Yamuna.

Days 11 & 12 Jaipur

Drive to Jaipur, visiting Fatehpur Sikri or the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary. Stay at the Royal Heritage Haveli (or choose the grandeur of Rambagh Palace). Visit the colourful bazaars including the gems market, see the Amber Fort, City Palace and Jantar Mantar; optional visit to Dera Amer for an elephant ride in the wilderness and a special dinner in the open around a campfire.

Days 13 & 14 Jodhpur

Drive to Jodhpur for two nights' stay at Ratan Vilas (or Raas/Umaid Bhavan). Visit the Meherangarh Fort in Jodhpur, explore the bazaars; enjoy a jeep safari through tribal villages.

Days 15 & 16 Udaipur

Take the road, through forested hills, to the lake-city of Udaipur, stopping at Ranakpur. Stay two nights at The Trident or Fatehgarh (or take an upgrade to the Lake Palace). Visit the City Palace, take a boat-ride on Lake Pichola; optional cooking session with a local family.

Day 17 Delhi/Mumbai

Fly back to Delhi or Mumbai and take a connecting flight home.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June, mid-Dec to mid-Jan.

Recommended extensions:

Goa, Kerala, Ranthambore, Bandhavgarh, Amritsar

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com





golden temple and the himalayas

Guarded by towering lance-bearing men with flowing beards and located in the middle of a man-made lake, the shimmering Golden Temple is the most important pilgrimage centre for Sikhs. The daily "retreat" at the border with Pakistan, with competing parade by uniformed men from both sides, is a spectacle worth watching. We experience rural Panjab before moving on to McLeodgunj, the residence of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama; the Kangra Valley housing some delightful heritage properties; Shimla, the summer capital of the "Raj" and finally to Haridwar, on the banks of the Holy Ganges, staying in the charming "haveli" of the royal family of Pilibhit.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, transfer to the Lalit for the night; at leisure with optional sightseeing.

Days 2 & 3 Amritsar

Take a day train to Amritsar; transfer to the Holiday Inn or Hyatt for two nights; visit the Golden Temple and Jalianwala Bagh; travel to the border at Wagah for the spectacular "retreat" ceremony in the evening.

Day 4 Gurdaspur

Travel to the rural belt and stay the night at a village resort; explore village life in the afternoon.

Days 5 & 6 Dharamsala

Drive up the hills to Dharamsala, stay two nights at the Norbu House, with stunning views. Visit McLeodganj and the Norbulingka Institute, free time (You can add 4 days to do the Dhauladhar Trek, with spectacular views of the range.)

Days 7 & 8 Pragpur

Drive down to Pragpur with the option of a ride on the Kangra Railway; spend two nights at the colonial Judge's Court. Pragpur is a medieval "heritage" village with cobblestone streets and slate-roofed houses; free time to explore.

Day 9 & 10 Shimla

A long drive through picturesque countryside ending with the climb up the Shivalik Hills to Shimla (7000'); stay at The Cecil for 2 nights; free time to explore with the option of a train ride on the mountain railway to Kandaghat.

Day 11 Dehradun

Drive through hill country to the outskirts of Dehradun; stay at the remote Vishranti Resort, in the midst of wilderness.

Days 12 & 13 Haridwar

Drive to the holy city of Haridwar for two nights at the charming Haveli Hari Ganga, overlooking the Ganges; visit nearby Rishikesh for the serene "Ganga Aarti" and to see the Beatles' Ashram, recently opened to visitors; optional safari at Rajaji National Park.

Day 14 Delhi

An afternoon flight to Delhi, transfer to an airport hotel for the night.

Day 15 Return

Transfer to the airport for the flight home.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June, July, August, mid-Dec to mid-Jan.

Recommended extensions:

Corbett National Park; Ananda in the Himalayas

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



corbett and a walk in kumaon

Kumaon is home to some of the finest soldiers in the Indian army. It is also home to snow covered peaks and stunning mountain scenery. We spend some days walking in the hills, staying in local villages in specially converted village homes, provided with modern comforts, eating wholesome food cooked the local way. The foothills of Kumaon were made famous by the legendary hunter, Jim Corbett, in his classic, "Man-eaters of Kumaon". The Corbett Park is known for its tigers and elephants in the wild, apart from varied species of birds. We pass through Rishikesh, where Ganga breaks free from the Himalaya, visiting the ashram where Beatles spent some time discovering their inner self.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, stay at the Colonels Retreat or Maidens for a night (or longer if this is your first visit).

Day 2 Unchagaon

A short drive to the village of Unchagaon; stay the night at the manor house, Fort Unchagaon. Explore the village on foot; take an early morning jeep ride to the banks of the nearby Ganges to see the sunrise and the rich bird life.

Days 3 & 4 Haridwar

Drive to Haridwar and stay two nights at the merchant house of Haveli Hari Ganga, overlooking the Ganges; explore Haridwar on foot, witness the ceremonial aarti on the banks of the river in Rishikesh; enjoy a safari in the nearby Rajaji National Park; visit the Beatles' Ashram.

Days 5, 6, & 7 Corbett

Carry on to the Corbett National Park for three nights at the Jim's Corbett Lodge or Corbett Hideaway; enjoy jungle safaris and a possible elephant safari. The park is a haven for tiger, leopard, and Himalayan black bear. Most of it is covered by dense deciduous forest with a predominance of Sal trees interspersed with stretches of savannah-type grasslands where elephants, chital, hog deer and sambar graze.

Days 8 to 13 Almora

Drive to Almora visiting the tiger museum en route;

stay at a tucked away mountain resort with stunning views, for six nights. Of these 3 to 4 are spent on a trek, staying in village houses. The nearby attractions include Chitai Temple, the Binsar Sanctuary, and the Jageshwar Temple.

Day 14 Delhi

Transfer to Kathgudam for an afternoon train back to Delhi; stay the night at an airport hotel.

Day 15 Return

Transfer to the airport for the flight home.

Best months:

Nov, Feb, Mar, Apr, Oct (Corbett is closed in Oct though)

Avoidable period:

July to Sep

Notes: The safaris are in shared jeeps; exclusive jeeps can be requested on extra payment. Safaris are booked up to 90 days in advance and early booking of this tour is advisable.

Extension:

Agra and the Taj Mahal are an easy addition.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



ladakh - across the mountain passes

Ladakh is home to ancient monasteries perched in improbable locations and remained unexplored till a few decades ago. A highlight of the tour is a spectacular jeep drive through some of the highest mountain passes in the world, including Taglang La, at over 17,000'. Views in the arid high altitude landscape change dramatically at every turn, with the blue waters of the Indus River flowing ever through. There is the chance of sighting rare wildlife including the snow leopard. The varied accommodation is mid-range or basic, with a first class hotel in Delhi. The tour requires physical fitness.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi and transfer to an airport hotel for the night; at leisure.

Days 2 & 3 Dharamsala

A morning flight to Dharamsala; transfer to the Chonor House or Norbu House for two nights; visit McLeodganj and Norbulingka - centre for Buddhist learning.

Days 4 & 5 Manali

Drive to Manali via Palampur Tea Estate, stay at Casa Bella Vista for two nights; visit Old Manali and Hadimba Temple.

Day 6 Keylong

Commence the Trans-Himalayan safari with a drive to Keylong, crossing Rohtang pass at 13,000', visit the Khardung Gumpa en route; stay at Tashi Deleg.

Day 7 Sarchu

Drive to Sarchu, crossing the Baralacha La (16,000'); stay in a tented camp.

Days 8, 9, 10 Leh

Drive along Rupshu plains with a chance to see rare wildlife including the wild ass (kiang) and ibex. Cross Taglang La (17,500'), stay in Leh at Spic N Span or Nimmu House for three nights; visit Leh Bazaar, Sankar Gumpa, Shanti Stupa; enjoy a full day tour of the Indus Valley including Hemis Monastery, the headquarter of the Drukpa sect; Thiksey Gumpa of Gelugpa order (Yellow sect), and Shey Monastery, a former Royal Palace.

Day 11 Alchi

Drive to Alchi visiting Likir Monastery en route; visit the well-known Alchi Gumpa; overnight at Alchi Resort.

Day 12 Leh

Return to Leh in the afternoon for a night's stay at Spic N Span or Nimmu House.

Day 13 Delhi

Fly back to Delhi; stay the night at an airport hotel.

Day 14 Return

Transfer to the airport for your return flight.

Best months:

July to Sep

Avoidable period:

November to May

Recommended extensions:

Nubra Valley; Agra for the Taj Mahal

Health precaution: Ladakh is at high altitude, above 12,000' and anyone with breathing or lung related problems should seek medical advice before travelling.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



sangla valley

Home to ancient monasteries perched at dizzying heights; this is a journey through barren deserts, dense forests and turbulent rivers. Lahaul, Spiti and Kinnaur, valleys tucked away unknown for centuries, reveal their unexplored secrets to the outside world for a few months every year, when the weather gods are kinder. Emerging from thick snow, the frozen glaciers, rivers, valleys, high mountains and lakes create a mesmerizing scene for the spirited explorer. We also visit the peaceful hill town of Dharamsala, the Dalai Lama's home in exile. The accommodation in the remote regions is mid-range or basic and we reach heights where healthy lungs are a must.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, transfer to an airport hotel for the night (or stay in the city if staying longer).

Days 2 & 3 Dharamsala

Fly to the foothills at Gaggal; drive up the hills to Dharamsala, stay two nights at the Norbu House, with stunning views, or the more central Chonor House. Visit McLeodganj and the Norbulingka Institute, free time.

Days 4 & 5 Manali

A long drive to Manali via Palampur, stay two nights at the Banon Resorts; visit Old Manali and Hadimba Temple.

Days 6 & 7 Kaza

An early drive to Kaza, crossing Rohtang and Kunzum La. Stay at the Banjara Retreat; visit Ki Monastery, and the villages of Gete and Kibber – highest permanently inhabited villages in the world, at 14000 feet.

Day 8 Tabo

Drive to Tabo, visiting Dhankar and Lalung monasteries, stay at the Dewachen Retreat; visit Tabo Monastery, the oldest functioning Buddhist monastery in India.

Day 9 Kalpa

Another long drive to Kalpa, stay at Hotel Kinner Villa; with views of the Kinner Kailash.

Days 10 & 11 Sangla

Drive to Sangla via Karcham, stay at the Sangla Valley Camp & Retreat for two nights; at leisure in the

beautiful valley with the Baspa River running through it. A trek in the vicinity, around Chitkul, can be arranged.

Day 12 Sarahan

To Sarahan, stay at Hotel Srihand; visit the Bhimakali Temple.

Days 13 & 14 Shimla

Drive along the Sutlej and then climb up to Shimla, stay at the Clarks or Cecil Hotel for 2 nights; you can visit the mock Tudor Library, Christ Church, Gaiety Theatre, and the Viceregal Lodge; there is the option of a train ride on the mountain railway to Kandaghat.

Day 15 Delhi

Drive to Chandigarh for an afternoon flight to Delhi, transfer to an airport hotel for the night.

Day 16 Return

Transfer to the airport for the flight home.

Best months:

Mid-Jun to mid-Sep

Avoidable period:

Oct to May

Note: Given the short season and the limited accommodation, early booking is advisable.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

idyllic kashmir

Kashmir has serene lakes, well manicured gardens, rolling hills, beautiful flower laden valleys and romantic "shikaras"—truly a 'Paradise on Earth', as Kashmir is often referred to. The valley of Gulmarg has golf, horse-riding, and skiing; Pahalgam offers the prized rainbow trout and scenic walks. Staying in comfortable mid-range hotels and the famous houseboats, this is an ideal way to experience Kashmir.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi; transfer to an airport hotel for the night.

Days 2, 3 & 4 Srinagar

Fly from Delhi to Srinagar. Transfer to your houseboat for 3 nights. Enjoy a shikara ride to the floating gardens; visit the Mughal gardens and the temple of Shankaracharya. Also visit Old Srinagar, its mosques and bazaars.

Days 5 & 6 Gulmarg

Drive to Gulmarg for 2 nights at the Khyber Himalayan Resort, Highlands Park or Nedou's Hotel. At leisure in the beautiful valley with the chance to play golf or take long walks.

Days 7 & 8 Pahalgam

Drive to Pahalgam, see the famous saffron growing fields en route; stay at the Pahalgam Hotel for 2 nights; at leisure to explore the natural beauty of the area, the Pahalgam River runs along the town.

Day 9 Srinagar

Return to Srinagar for a night at The Lalit, formerly a royal palace, at leisure.

Day 10 Delhi

Drive to Srinagar airport and fly back to Delhi; transfer to an airport hotel or a city hotel

Day 11 Return

Transfer to the airport for the return flight.

Best months:

Apr to Sep

Avoidable period:

mid-Nov to Feb (it snows).

Recommended extensions:

A Short Hike in Aru, Agra for the Taj Mahal, Amritsar and Jammu, Leh

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

tigers in kipling country

An early start to the day on a wintry morning, braving the chill in an open jeep, crawling on a mud road, with the only sound the chirping of birds ... suddenly a spotted deer raises an alarm call and the jungle comes alive; black-faced langurs from treetops join in and loud cries of the peacock herald the presence of the big cat. A journey through some of India's finest national parks with rocky hills, dense forests and swamp, vast open meadows, grass lands, lakes and rivulets; the chances of sighting a tiger are excellent with the rich flora and fauna offering plenty else including some rare birds.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, stay at the Maidens.

Days 2 & 3 Ranthambhore

Take a day train to Sawai Madhopur, transfer to the Khem Vilas or Ranthambore Kothi. Ranthambore is home to sloth bear, chinkara, porcupines, jungle cat, leopards, marsh crocodile, nilgai, monitor lizards, tigers... and over 300 species of birds. Enjoy jeep safaris for two days, with the option to visit the fort looming over the park.

Day 4 Overnight Train

After a day of safaris take an overnight train to Bandhavgarh.

Days 5 & 6 Bandhavgarh

Arrive in the morning and transfer to the King's Lodge. The park is situated in the Vindhya hills with an undulating terrain and is home to spotted deer, sambar, blackbucks, wild oxen, sloth bear, nilgai, barking deer, leopard and tiger. The rich and varied birdlife includes golden orioles, parakeets, hornbills and partridges. Enjoy jeep safaris in Tala, Magdhi and Khitauli zones. Visit the local village school, where some of the work is funded by jungle lodges.

Days 7 & 8 Kanha

Drive to Kanha, stay at the Earth Lodge or Kipling Camp. Kanha is one of the largest parks in the country, with some 22 species of mammals. Most commonly sighted are the spotted deer, swamp deer, blackbuck, langur, and jackal. Less commonly seen are the tiger, Indian hare, dhole or wild dog and bison or gaur. Rarely sighted are the fox, sloth bear, striped hyena, panther, mouse deer, etc. Over 200 species of birds are found in the mixed forest and its bamboo breaks. Enjoy jeep safaris and a village visit.

Day 9 & 10 Pench

Drive to Pench for two nights at the Jungle Camp, Jamtara Wilderness Camp or Baghvan; enjoy jeep safaris. With the Pench River meandering through the park, this is an excellent spot to break your journey to Satpura, while giving yourself another opportunity to sight the tiger.

Days 11, 12 & 13 Satpura

Drive on to Satpura, stay at the Reni Pani Lodge, Forsyth Lodge or Denwa Water Escape. Satpura has a rugged terrain with sandstone peaks, narrow ravines and dense forests. An excellent park for jungle walk, jeep safari and boat ride. Sightings of leopard and bear are good and with some luck, the tiger; rich in birdlife.

Day 14 Bhopal-Delhi

Drive to Bhopal to board a flight for Delhi, stay at an airport hotel

Day 15 return flight

Fly back home.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar, Apr

Avoidable period:

July to Sep (the parks are closed)

Note:

On Wednesday afternoons there are no safaris; the safaris are in shared jeeps; exclusive jeeps can be requested on extra payment. Safaris are booked up to 90 days in advance and early booking of this tour is advisable.

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kolkata and darjeeling tea

A visit to the past, evoking fond memories of the Raj, Darjeeling summons you with its hill songs and tea estates. We include Sikkim, home to rich cardamom as well as the world's third highest mountain peak, cradling a Tibetan-Buddhist culture. The hotels are comfortable but simple, with a well-known period hotel in Darjeeling and one in Kolkata. A ride on the World Heritage Railway in Darjeeling, seeing arguably the spectacular sunrise from the Tiger Hill, savouring an authentic Bengali meal in Kolkata and visiting the majestic Victoria Memorial, dominating the sprawling "maidan", make this a special experience.

Days 1 to 3 Kolkata

Arrive into Kolkata, stay at the Fairlawn or Grand Hotel (or stay at the heritage Rajbari Bawali on the outskirts); visit the sights including Daniels' collection of Indian paintings at the Victoria Memorial, Kumartully or the Potter's Lane where durga idols are made, enjoy a coffee at the Coffee House on College Street; visit Tagore's home at Jorasanko; enjoy traditional food in a thali, take a boat on the Hooghly from Belur Math to Dakshineswar, join a local family for a cooking session, visit Trincas for some golden oldies.

Day 4 Kalimpong

A short flight to Bagdogra, drive to Kalimpong; stay at the Silveroaks Hotel. Visit the orchid nurseries, the Tharpa Choling Monastery, the Arts and Crafts Centre.

Days 5 & 6 Gangtok

Drive to Gangtok; stay at Denzong Regency or Norkhill for two nights; visit the Enchey Monastery, the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology and Lal Bazaar; option to visit the beautiful Chomgo Lake, at 12000 ft, an hour's drive away.

Day 7 Yuksum

Visit the Rumtek Monastery in the morning, and drive on to Yuksum, stay at Tashi Gang Hotel; at leisure.

Day 8 Pelling

Visit the Dubdi Monastery early in the morning, perched on a hill. Later visit Tashiding, where the first Chogyal of Sikkim was crowned; also visit the Khechupelri Lake and the famous Pemayangtse Monastery; there is the option of walking another hour to the Rabdentse Palace ruins; stay the night at Mt Pandim or at Chumbi

Mountain Retreat in Pelling. There is a fair amount of walking involved today; you have the option of skipping some sights and walking less.

Days 9 to 11 Darjeeling

Drive to Darjeeling for three nights at the colonial Windamere Hotel. Witness the spectacular sunrise from Tiger Hill, visit Ghoom Monastery and the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute; take the toy train to Ghoom or Kurseong; sip your Darjeeling tea at Glenary's, a short walk from your hotel. There is the option to visit a tea factory and learn the difference between first and second flush.

Day 12 Kolkata

Fly back from Bagdogra to Kolkata for a night.

Day 13 Return

Transfer to the airport for your return flight. Arrive into Delhi, stay at the Maidens.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

June to Aug, mid-Dec to mid-Jan.

Recommended extensions:

Glenburn Tea Estate stay; Kaziranga National Park for rhinos; Konarak Sun Temple

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nagaland and brahmaputra cruise

Manipur sits pretty amid rolling hills along India's border with Myanmar, home to graceful classical dance traditions, intricate art forms and WW2 battlefield sites. The uncontested 'wild east' of India, Nagaland is home to many tribes, each with its own traditions, language and attire. Assam is best known for its eponymous tea, primeval forests and wildlife, with the mighty Brahmaputra flowing through it. The tour ends with a river cruise through Assam on the ABN Charaidew with 12 air-conditioned cabins, a dining room, bar and saloon area and a sun deck. The grand old lady makes up in character what she lacks in 21st century glitz.

Days 1, 2 Kolkata

Arrival at Kolkata and transfer to The Grand; visit Victoria Memorial, St Paul's Cathedral, Indian Museum, Kumaratully and Tagore's house in Jorasanko.

Days 3, 4, 5 Imphal

An hour's flight to Imphal, the capital of Manipur; stay at Hotel Classic. Visit the WWII Cemetery, INA Memorial, State Museum, Khwairamband Bazar, Loktak Lake, Red Hill, Kangla Fort, Andro cultural village and battle sites. Feast on local cuisine while you enjoy celebrated Manipuri dance.

Days 6, 7 Kohima

Drive to Kohima today, the capital of Nagaland, visiting the War Museum at Kisama. Stay at Hotel Vivor or similar; visit Khonoma Village and the WWII Cemetery.

Days 8, 9 Jorhat

A morning drive to Jorhat for two nights at the Banyan Grove or Thengal Manor. Enjoy a day visit to the largest river island in the world, Majuli. A drive and a short ferry ride take you to Majuli where you learn about the island's neo-Vaishnavite philosophy at one of the 22 ancient satras (Hindu Vaishnavite monasteries and centres for art).

Days 10, 11 Kaziranga

A short drive takes you to the Kaziranga National Park, stay at Diphlu River Lodge; enjoy jeep safaris in the afternoon and a safari on an elephant in the early mornings.

Days 12, 13, 14, 15 Brahmaputra Cruise

Commence a relaxing four nights' cruise on the Brahmaputra, on board the RV Charaidew. There are daily shore excursions planned including cultural events with sumptuous Assamese and Continental delicacies served from the kitchen.

Day 16 Kolkata

Disembark the river ship to board your flight to Kolkata, stay the night at The Grand; at leisure for the remainder of the day.

Day 17 Return

Board your return flight.

Best months:

Nov to April

Avoidable period:

June to Oct

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



tawang monastery and arunachal

Arunachal is where dawn first greets the easternmost state of India. Inhabited by tribal groups of Burmese and Tibetan descent, living in timeless settlements between the mighty Brahmaputra and the Eastern Himalaya, Tawang has a monastery which is half a millennium old. It holds a significant collection of scriptures, images and "thankas". We also visit tribal villages and stay in Nameri National Park, home to numerous bird species. The accommodation remains basic to mid-range except in Kolkata where you may choose to upgrade for a little luxury.

Day 1 Kolkata

Arrive into Kolkata; transfer to the Fairlawn (or The Grand/Taj Bengal/Lalit Great Eastern – suppl.), at leisure; the New Market is a short walk away, as is the Park Street.

Day 2 Tejpur

Morning flight to Guwahati; drive on to Tejpur for a night at Fern Residency; visit the remains of the 6th century Da Parbatia Temple and the Cole Park with its collection of medieval stone carving.

Day 3 Bomdila

Drive to Bomdila visiting Tipi Orchidarium, stay at Tsepal Yangjom; visit the monastery and tribal villages.

Days 4, 5 & 6 Tawang

Carry on to Tawang, crossing the 13715 ft high Sela Pass; stay at the Dolma Guesthouse for three nights, within an easy walk of the monastery. Visit the famous Tawang Monastery, with over 500 lamas; also visit the Seru village to see the lifestyle of the Monpa Tribe and the Gorsam Chorten in Zemithang, similar to Boudnath in Kathmandu.

Days 7 & 8 Dirang

Drive to Dirang for two nights at Pemaling Hotel; visit the Thembang village, whose inhabitants claim direct ancestry from the royal family of Tibet. Also visit Sangti Valley - Sangti River runs through the broad open valley, a tract of land with paddy fields and slender pines, stone houses built by the Monpas lend a special charm to the place. The valley is rich in birdlife; during winter black necked cranes and black tailed crane can be seen here.

Days 9 & 10 Nameri

To Nameri National Park for two nights at the Eco Camp; situated at the foothills of Eastern Himalayas on the banks of the River Bhoirelli, the park is home to rare birds like the great Indian hornbill and the white winged wood duck; bird watching is all on foot, there being no motorable roads, or on rafts. Ruddy shell duck, cormorant are common while one can spot rare

species like the white winged wood duck, ibis bill, pied kingfisher, wreathed hornbill, blue-eared kingfisher and king vulture.

Day 11 Guwahati

Drive back to Guwahati for a night at a family guest house; visit the sights including Kamakhya Temple.

Days 12 & 13 Kolkata

Fly to Kolkata, stay two nights at your hotel of choice; visit the Victoria Memorial, St Paul's, Kumaratully, College Street, the Indian Museum and Tagore's home at Jorasanko; a morning visit to the Flower Market and a boat ride on the Hooghly can be arranged.

Day 14 Return

Transfer to the airport for the return flight.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

June to Aug, mid-Dec to mid-Jan.

Entry formalities:

All foreign nationals need a Protected Area Permit to visit Arunachal Pradesh. The Government stipulates the number of tourists to minimum 2 in a group to apply for RAP. It costs USD 50 per person for a 30 days' permit.

Recommended extensions:

Bhutan: Fly from Guwahati to Paro for three nights at the Village Lodge or similar; visit the Ta Dzong, Rinpung Dzong and the famous Taktsang Monastery; also enjoy a full day excursion to the capital Thimphu. Fly back to Kolkata for two nights, returning home on Day 17.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

odisha and the sun temple

Orissa (now Odisha) is rich in temples built in the high Kalinga style; they include the Sun Temple at Konark, a World Heritage Site. We find here the Buddhist sites of Ratnagiri and Udaigiri, written about by Hiuen T'sang, and myriad birds in Bhitarkanika and Chilika Lake for the nature lovers. Odisha also has many tribes, who still largely follow their traditional ways of living. During weekly markets, dressed in their traditional costumes, they come to sell their produce, and the tour is designed to visit them on those days. This trip involves some long but interesting drives and mid-range to basic accommodation in the tribal regions. We start with the absorbing character and historical monuments of Calcutta, now Kolkata.

Days 1 & 2 Kolkata (Friday)

Arrive Kolkata on a Friday; transfer to The Fairlawn Hotel (or Grand); visit the sights, see Tagore's home, maybe take a cooking lesson with a local family or have a drink at the famous Tolly Club.

Day 3 Dhenkanal

Early morning train from Howrah to Cuttack; transfer to Dhenkanal, stay at the Dhekanal Palace; drive to Joranda Ashram where the Sadhus of the Mahima Alekh Cult perform their rituals.

Days 4 & 5 Bhitarkanika

Drive to Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary visiting Ratnagiri & Udaigiri, Buddhist sites written about by Hiuen T'sang. Stay at Village Retreat; explore the sanctuary by boat to spot the giant salt water crocodiles basking on the bank.

Days 6 & 7 Bhubaneswar

Drive to Bhubaneswar visiting Lalitgiri en route; stay at the Swosti (or Trident). Bhubaneswar still has some 500 temples from the 5th to 11th century AD, including the famous Lingaraj; visit the temples and the Khandagiri & Udaigiri Jain Caves, dating back from 3rd to 1st century BC.

Day 8 Konark

Drive to Konark via Heerapur Chaushathi Yogini Temple, the 3rd Century BC Dhauli Rock Edicts and Pipli applique village; stay at Lotus Eco Village Resort.

Day 9 Puri

Visit of Sun Temple at Konark, then drive to Puri visiting heritage artisans' village of Dandasahi at Chandanpur. Also visit Raghurajpur, a heritage village. In Puri stay at the Mayfair or Hans Coco Palms for the night; you can watch the sand art demonstrations on the beach.

Day 10 Gopalpur on Sea

Visit the Jagannath Temple from outside, as entry is restricted; drive to Satpada on Chilika Lake to cross the lake by ferry to Gopalpur with a chance to spot dolphins; stay at OTDC Panth Niwas.

Days 11 & 12 Rayagada

Drive to Rayagada (this should be a Monday) visiting the weekly market of Langia Saura at Puttasingh. Langia Saura live on hill slopes and do shifting cultivation. They are known for their peculiar cloth with long tail at the back; the women use big wooden plates in their ear lobes. Stay at Sai International; visit the villages of the tattoo faced Kutia Kondh, in Kotgarh & Tumudibandh.

Days 13 & 14 Similiguda

Visit Dongariya Kondh weekly market in the morning; drive on to Similiguda through remote villages of the Niyamagiri Hills, home to the Dongariya Kondh, traditional practitioners of human sacrifice (since outlawed); stay at Lemon Castle, visit the weekly market of Bonda, Gadhaba and Didayee tribes.

Day 15 Vishakhapatanam

Visit Paraja villages and their weekly market, drive on to Vishakhapatanam and take a flight to Chennai, stay the night near the airport.

Day 16 Return flight

Transfer to the airport for the return flight.

Best months:

Nov to Mar

Avoidable period:

May to Sept

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

gujarat - tribes and textiles

With Ahmedabad on the verge of becoming the first Indian city to be given a World Heritage City title, a status already enjoyed by neighbouring Bhaktapur in Nepal and Galle in Sri Lanka, Gujarat is poised to leap in popularity among India's visitors. Apart from the walled city with its 35 protected structures, the state is rich in archeological sites - the World Heritage Site of Champaner, the Sun Temple at Modhera, the Jain temples at Palitana and Girnar are among them. Already known for textiles with traditions of double-ikkat weaving and bandhini tie & dye; for wildlife preservation of the Asiatic Lion in Gir and the Wild Ass in the Rann; and for its rich tribal life - Rabaris, Ahirs and Meghwals, Gujarat is a complete destination in itself which we present in this itinerary, using in the remote parts comfortable though in places simple accommodation including heritage and palace hotels.

Days 1 & 2 Ahmedabad

Arrive into Ahmedabad, transfer to the Mani Mansion or the elegant House of MG. Visit the sights including the Calico Museum, Gandhi Ashram, Jami Masjid, Sidi Sayid Mosque, Adalaj step-well; relish a traditional thali meal seated on the floor; visit the museum of utensils. There is the option of a conducted heritage walk of the old city.

Day 3 Bhavnagar

A morning visit to Narsarovar Bird Sanctuary; drive on to Bhavnagar, via the 4000 years old Harappan ruins at Lothal and the Velavadar Blackbuck Sanctuary; stay at Nilambagh Palace.

Days 4 & 5 Gir

Visit the impressive hilltop temple complex at Palitana, reached by a steep flight of stairs (palanquins on offer). Drive on to Sasangir, stay at the Lion Safari Camp; enjoy jeep drives to see the Asiatic lion.

Day 6 Gondal

Drive to Junagarh, visit the 250 BC Ashokan Edicts and the Junagadh Fort housing Buddhist Caves, rock-cut step wells and mosques; option of another steep climb to the beautiful Jain Temples on Girnar Hill; stay at the elegant Riverside Palace in Gondal with the royal collection of antique cars.

Days 7 & 8 Bhuj

A long drive to Bhuj in the desert region of Kutch; stay at the Bhujwala House; explore the tribal villages in the vicinity, famous for traditional handicrafts and tie & dye.

Day 9 Mandvi

Visit the nearby palace on Mandvi Beach and stay on to relax in a comfortable tented camp.

Day 10 Muli

Drive on to Muli for a night at the Ambika Niwas Palace; explore the village.

Day 11 Dasada

Drive to Dasada for a night at the Runn Riders' Jungle Lodge; enjoy a game drive to see the wild ass in the Little Rann of Kutch.

Days 12 & 13 Mount Abu

Drive to Modhera to see the Sun Temple; carry on to the city of Patan to see the complex skill of double-ikkat weaving and to visit the famous step well, Rani-ki-wav. Drive on to Mount Abu, stay at the heritage Bikaner House for 2 nights; visit the famous Dilwara temple; time to relax.

Day 14 Poshina

Drive to the village of Poshina, stay at Darbargadh, local royal residence; visit the charming village, in the company of your hosts, seeing the Garasia Tribal way of life in the foothills of the Aravallis.

Day 15 Balasinor

Drive to Balasinor for overnight stay at the beautiful Garden Palace, built in 1883. You can visit the Fossil Park, where remains of 13 species of dinosaurs have been found, to see the fossils and eggs in their natural form.

Day 16 Champaner

Drive to Champaner, explore the medieval ruins of the abandoned city, an interesting example of Islamic, pre-Moghul architecture; stay at the Champaner Heritage or Jambughoda Palace; you can visit the local tribal villages of Rathwas and Nayaks.

Day 17 Ahmedabad

Return to Ahmedabad for a night, visiting the grand palace of the Gaekwads in Baroda en route.

Day 18 Flight

Take the flight back.

Best months:

Oct to March

Avoidable period:

May to August

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



mandu and the ajanta caves

The hilltop ruins of Mandu typify India's architectural wealth and its sheer abundance; not many people have heard of it, even fewer numbers have visited the place, yet it stands tall among sites waiting to be declared a World Heritage Site. This tour takes in Mandu and many World Heritage Sites including the Sanchi Stupa and the ancient caves at Ajanta and Ellora. It includes the less explored tiger park at Satpura, nestling in the foothills of the Vindhya. An ideal tour if you wish to go off the beaten track but still experience stunning views, striking architecture, pristine nature and the faded grandeur of palace hotels, arguably one of the finest tours of the country.

Day 1 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi and stay the night at the charming Scarlett Hotel, a small boutique hotel in French style, within easy walking distance of the busy market of Hauz Khas; at leisure. If more convenient we will use an airport hotel.

Days 2 & 3 Chambal

Leave Delhi by a private car for Jarar near Agra; stay at the Chambal Safari Lodge; enjoy a boat ride on the Chambal to spot gharials, dolphins and a variety of riverine birds; a possible visit to the Bateswar temples.

Day 4 Gwalior

Drive to Gwalior for a night at Deo Bagh or the Usha Kiran Palace. See the Fort and the Scindia Museum.

Day 5 Orchha

Drive to Orchha, visiting Datia and the historic Fort at Jhansi. Stay at the Orchha Palace; explore the Bundela ruins of Orchha, scattered along the banks of the Betwa River.

Days 6 & 7 Bhopal

Take a train from Jhansi to Bhopal; stay at the Jehan Numa Palace (or the idyllic Retreat); see Bhopal and take an excursion to Sanchi.

Days 8 & 9 Satpura

Drive to Satpura National Park. See the Paleolithic era Bhimbetka Caves and Bhojpur Temple en route. Stay at Reni Pani Jungle Lodge for 2 nights. Visit the park by jeep, enjoy a nature walk.

Day 10 Dhar

To Dhar after a morning safari; stay the night at Jhira Bagh Palace.

Days 11 & 12 Maheshwar

Visit Mandu and drive on to Maheshwar; stay at the Ahilya Fort; walk along the serene ghats, enjoy a boat ride on the Narmada; see Maheshwar silk being woven.

Day 13 Burhanpur

Free morning; in the afternoon transfer to Tapti Retreat in Burhanpur.

Days 14 & 15 Aurangabad

Drive to Aurangabad for two nights at Vivanta by Taj, stopping along the way to visit the Ajanta Caves; spend the next day visiting Ellora, Daulatabad Fort and Bibi-ka-Makbara.

Day 16 Mumbai/Delhi

Fly in the afternoon to Mumbai or Delhi for a short stay near the airport

Day 17 Return flight

Board the return flight home.

Best months:

Oct, Nov, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June, Jul, Aug

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



deccan and the ruins of hampi

Visitors to Hampi never cease to get amazed - located in a barren landscape with giant boulders, the famed ruins include the Vittala Temple, a World Heritage Site. We cover the Chalukyan capital of Badami, dotted with a profusion of outstanding temples; Bijapur with the spectacular dome of Gol Gumbaz; the intricately carved Hoysala temples at Belur and Halebid. The colourful bazaars of Mysore are a fitting finale to a trip so rich in offerings. The hotels in the remote areas are modest but the experience rewarding. On offer in this very tour is the opulent palace of the Nizams of Hyderabad, the Falaknuma Palace, now a hotel and a destination unto itself.

Days 1, 2, 3 Hyderabad

Arrive into Hyderabad and transfer to the Radisson Blu (or the opulent Falaknuma Palace); visit the Charminar, Lad Bazaar, Salar Jung Museum, Chowmahalla Palace, Qutab Shahi Tombs and the Golconda Fort; visit the Ramoji Film City; try the famous biriyani in one of our recommended restaurants or with a local family.

Day 4 Gulbarga

Drive to Bidar to see the ruins of the Bahmani Kingdom; continue to Gulbarga for a night at the simple Hotel Aditya.

Day 5 Bijapur

Explore the fort and the tombs of Bahmani kings; drive on to Bijapur, stay at Sabala Heritage Home.

Days 6 & 7 Badami

Visit Gol Gumbaz and the magnificent tomb of Mohammed Adil Shah. Drive on to Badami, stay at the Heritage Resort or Badami Court; visit Aihole including the Lad Khan temple, dating back to 450 AD, where the earliest form of temple design can be seen, and Pattadakal, which has temples of the northern Nagara and southern Dravida schools. Later visit Badami including cave temples from the 6th & 7th century AD and the famous Malegitti Shivalaya temple.

Days 8 & 9 Hospet (Hampi)

Drive on to Hospet, stay at the Heritage Resort or Malligi Tourist Home (or Hampi's Boulders/Orange County); visit Hampi, the city razed by the five Deccan sultans in 1565, including the Vittala and Virupaksha temples.

Days 10 Hassan

Continue to Hassan; stay at Hoysala Village (or The Serai in Chikmagalur); visit the intricately carved Hoysala temples at Belur and Halebid.

Days 11, 12 & 13 Mysore

Drive to Mysore visiting the imposing statue of Gomateshvara at Shravanabelagola and Tipu's Summer Palace at Srirangapattanam; stay at a Guest House (or Radisson Blu/Metropole); visit the sights

including the Mysore Palace, Chamundi Hill, Nandi Bull and the colourful Devraja Market; excursion to Somnathpur; maybe a game drive in Bandipur to look for tuskers.

Day 14 Bengaluru

Drive to the Garden City of Bangalore (Bengaluru) or take a train; stay at Lemon Tree, with views of the lakes in Ulsoor; take an orientation tour; walk in Cubbon Park; pick some shopping; try out a local pub; have an indulgent meal at the Taj West End...

Day 15 Return

Transfer to the airport for your return flight.

Best months:

Nov to Feb

Avoidable period:

May to Aug

Recommended extensions:

Coorg: The beautiful coffee plantations of Coorg are a short drive from Mysore; you can relax for a few days at one of the luxury resorts like Tamara Coorg or Orange County Resort, before driving to Bangalore for the return flight.

Nagarhole: Arguably one of the finest natural parks in South India, Nagarhole is again a couple of hours drive from Mysore; enjoy game drives and coracle rides to see elephants in the wild, bison and, with some luck, wild dogs, leopards and tigers; you can stay at Kabini River Lodge, The Serai or Orange County; return via Bangalore.

Beach: You can drive to Bekal in Kerala or take a train to Chennai to reach Covelong; there is a choice of resorts in both places.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

Ooty and the Nilgiris train

A nature lover's delight and a joy for birdwatchers, this tour visits some fine natural habitats along the fabled coast of Malabar, including Mudumalai and Nagarhole, home to wild tuskers as well as the elusive tiger. The magnificent temples of Mamallapuram and the tea and coffee laden hills of Wayanad and Coorg form part of the journey which ends at a relaxing beach resort in the remote parts of north Kerala, in Nilesishwar. A trip on the "toy train" to Coonoor adds to the rich experience. The accommodation used here is in the higher range.

Day 1 Chennai-Mamallapuram

Arrive Chennai in the morning; transfer to the Radisson Temple Bay Beach Resort (or Fisherman's Cove) in Mamallapuram; at leisure.

Day 2 Train to Mettupalayam

Visit the 8th century Shore Temple and rock carvings of the great Pallava kings; transfer to Chennai Central to board the Nilgiris Express, travel overnight in an air-conditioned sleeper carriage.

Days 3 & 4 Coonoor

Early arrival in Mettupalayam, change to the "toy train" for Coonoor, transfer to Wallwood Garden or a private cottage for two nights; at leisure - you can visit the Sims Park or hike on the mountain trails. The famous township of Ooty is a half-hour drive away. You will have a car at disposal from today.

Days 5 & 6 Mudumalai

Drive to Mudumalai and check in at the Jungle Hut. Mudumalai, a dense deciduous thorn forest, is home to the elephant, gaur, sloth bear, tiger, flying squirrel and leopard; enjoy jeep safaris and nature walks.

Days 7 & 8 Wayanad

Drive to Narikund in the hill country of Wayanad; stay at Amaryilis, an elegant guest house with magnificent views of the hills; explore the bird life, see the local tribal village, visit Edakkal Caves or take a day hike to the neighbouring Chembra Peak.

Days 9 & 10 Nagarhole

Drive on to Nagarhole for 2 nights at the well run Kabini River Lodge (or The Serai/Orange County).

Enjoy jungle activities for two days including game drives and coracle rides. Nagarhole is good for sighting elephants in the wild, as well as gaur, deer and wild boar. It also shelters dhole or wild dog, sloth bear, leopard and tiger.

Day 11 & 12 Coorg

Drive to the coffee country of Coorg; stay at Orange County or Tamara Coorg; at leisure to explore the beautiful hill country and to see the unique lifestyle of the Kodavas, who have produced some of the finest generals in the Indian Army.

Days 13 & 14 Nilesishwar

Drive to Nilesishwar for some relaxation at the elegantly designed Nilesishwar Hermitage; at leisure in the beach resort, with a very fine spa.

Day 15 Chennai/Mumbai

At leisure in the morning; transfer to Mangalore airport in the afternoon for a flight to Chennai or Mumbai where you stay at an airport hotel.

Day 16 Return

Transfer to the airport for the return flight home.

Best months:

Mid-Nov to April

Avoidable period:

June to August

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



southern explorer

We explore some off the beaten track places here, while retaining the mainstream ones so you don't miss out on them. The tour has temples and ancient architecture, abundant natural beauty, markets, villages and countryside, a colonial flavour, and ends at a beach dotted with monuments of outstanding beauty. We savour some fine cuisines including the world famous Chettinad food in Chettinad itself, staying in a mix of hotels, many of them boutique or heritage properties – truly the holiday of a lifetime.

Day 1 Bengaluru (Bangalore)

Arrive at Bengaluru Airport; stay at an airport or city hotel, depending on when your flight arrives; at leisure, you can drive around Bengaluru to get a feel of the "Garden City". You could visit the sprawling Cubbon Park, the imposing granite building of Vidhan Souda in neo-Dravidian style or the Modern Art Gallery with paintings from Jamini Roy, Rabindranath Tagore and Raja Ravi Varma.

Days 2 & 3 Hassan

Drive to Hassan; stopping to see the Mahabali statue at Sravanabelagola, the tallest monolithic statue in the world; stay at the Hoysala Village for two nights; the next day see the intricately carved Hoysala temples at Belur and Halebid.

Days 3 & 4 Mysore

Drive to Mysore via the Tibetan settlement at Bylakuppe; stay two nights at a guest house or the Radisson Blu; visit Srirangapattana, Mysore Palace, Chamundi Hill, Nandi Bull and the colourful Devaraja Market.

Day 5 Coonoor

Drive to Ooty through the Bandipur and Mudumalai sanctuaries. After a possible lunch break at the Savoy in Ooty board the Nilgiris 'toy train' for a short ride to Coonoor; stay at the Wallwood Garden or in a private cottage; at leisure to enjoy the tea country.

Days 6 & 7 Rajakkad

Drive to the Palani Hills for a two-night halt at the delightful Pallam Palace; at leisure to explore the coffee estates with your hosts.

Day 8 Karaikudi

To Madurai to visit the famous Meenakshi Temple, a grand spectacle of Dravidian architecture; drive on to Karaikudi for overnight halt at The Bangla. Explore the Chettinadu country, famous for its cuisine and the grand merchant houses.

Day 9 Thanjavur (Tanjore)

Drive to Thanjavur; stay at the Ideal River Retreat (or the luxury Svatma) for the night; visit the Brihadeeshwara Temple.

Day 10 Tranquebar

Drive to Tranquebar, visiting the brass making units at Kumbakonam en route; stay the night at Bungalow on the Beach or Gate House; spend time discovering the Dansborg Fort and enjoy a guided tour of the historical town. There is the option of an evening boat ride with the fishermen into the sea.

Day 11 Pondicherry

Drive to Pondicherry today visiting Chidambaram en route; stay the night at Palais de Mahe or Hotel De L'Orient; visit the Aurobindo Ashram and walk through the French quarters.

Days 12 & 13 Mamallapuram (Mahabalipuram)

Drive to Mamallapuram; stay at the luxury Radisson Temple Bay Beach Resort (or the Fisherman's Cove) for two nights. Visit the 7th century Chola dynasty World Heritage Site including the Shore Temple and Arjuna's Penance.

Day 14 Chennai (Madras)

Drive to Chennai for an orientation tour; visit Fort St George built in 1653 by the East India Company, the Portuguese church of San Thome Cathedral and St Mary's Church, India's oldest surviving British church; stay at the colonial Connemara Hotel for the night.

Day 15 London

Transfer to Chennai airport for the return flight.

Best months:

Jan, Feb, Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June, July, Oct

Recommended extensions:

Beach: Stay on another few nights at your luxury beach resort, sampling their rejuvenation packages at Spa Ayush or just taking in the fresh sea breeze from the infinity pool.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@barjisindia.com

kerala invitation

An introductory tour of Kerala, covering its well-known attractions, with features added to make it rich in experience; the accommodation used is heritage or mid-range, with optional upgrades and the travel is in a private car with chauffeur.

Days 1 & 2 Cochin

Arrive Cochin in the morning and transfer to the Spice Fort or Tower House (or Malabar House/Brunton Boatyard) in the Dutch quarters of Fort Cochin; enjoy a sunset cruise on the backwaters to see the Chinese fishing nets; visit the sights including the Dutch Palace, with its murals from the Ramayana, the Jewish Synagogue in Mattancherry and St Francis' Church; enjoy a tuk-tuk ride through the spice markets; enjoy a Kathakali performance, a traditional dance form.

Day 3 Munnar

A three-hour drive up the hill to the tea country of Munnar, stay at Ambady Lodge (or Windermere Estate); visit the Eravikulam Sanctuary, home to the rare Nilgiri Tahr; see the Tata Tea Museum.

Day 4 Periyar

Drive on the hill road to Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary and stay overnight at the Tree House or Cardamom County (or Shalimar Spice Garden/Spice Village); enjoy a boat cruise on Lake Periyar, ideal for spotting herds of elephants and other wild animals.

Day 5 Kumarakom/Riceboat

A four-hour drive through pepper, rubber, banana and coconut plantations takes you to

Kumarakom where you board your private riceboat for the night. Cruise along the Vembanad Lake in the afternoon to admire the bird life on the lake and village life along the banks.

Days 6 & 7 Kovalam

Disembark after breakfast for the drive to the inviting beach at Kovalam. The next two days are at leisure to soak in the sunshine at the Travancore Heritage Beach Resort (or upgrade to Leela or the ethnic Surya Samudra). There is the option of a day trip to Trivandrum, the capital of Kerala, or to the elegant wooden palace at Padmanabhapuram.

Day 8 Return

Transfer to Trivandrum airport for the return flight.

Best months:

Mid-Nov to Mid-Mar

Avoidable period:

June, July, Oct

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com



the lesser known kerala

In spite of its popularity there is much in Kerala that remains unexplored. We take you to some hitherto unexplored parts of the region while retaining many of the better known sights. The trip has natural parks, waterfalls, birdlife, backwaters and delicious cuisine; staying in some delightful family homes and estate bungalows.

Days 1 & 2 Alleppey

Arrive into Kochi and transfer to the family home of an old, established local family in Alleppey, situated near the backwaters. Explore rural life with your hosts.

Day 3 Rice Boat

Cruise along the backwaters in your private rice boat, enjoying freshly cooked food made from local produce. Stay on the boat for the night.

Days 4 & 5 Munnar

Disembark and drive up the Western Ghats to Munnar, through plantations on the hillside growing rubber, pineapple, pepper, nutmegs and cardamom. Stay at a family run cardamom estate; visit Eravikulam Park to see the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, and the Tea Museum. A day trek can be arranged to Top Station or a jeep ride to Kolukkumalai to see the highest tea plantation in the world.

Days 6 & 7 Parambikulam

Drive through forested roads to Sethumada, stay in a tucked away farm house in a coconut grove. Enjoy game rides through the Parambikulam Park to spot wild elephants, gaur or the Indian bison, lion-tailed macaque, leopards and a variety of birds; also see the gigantic Kannimara, the oldest living teak tree.

Days 8 & 9 Wayanad

To Wayanad in the hills for another homestay; the place has natural beauty, birds in abundance, lakes, and some interesting trails for day walks. Some remote temples are worth a visit as are the pre historic cave paintings at Edakkal. A meal with a descendant of the Zamorins (royal family) of Calicut is a possibility.

Day 10 Thalassery (Tellicherry)

Drive to Thalassery, stay at Ayisa Mansil, overlooking the Arabian Sea. Your hostess is known for her culinary skills, and will indulge you with Mopilah specialities

while your host will take you to local homes to show you the influence of Arab traders that shaped the local culture. There is the option of a visit to the Parassinikadavu Temple and the chance to see some theyyam dancing.

Days 11 & 12 Palakkad

Drive to Palakkad for a homestay in a traditional Kerala tharavad, set amongst paddy fields; explore the village with your host, maybe learn the art of toddy tapping.

Days 13 to 14 Kochi (Cochin)

Visit the Kalamandalam School in Cheruthuruthy, teaching local dance forms of Mohiniyattam and Kathakali, as well as the temple music of Panchawadyam. Drive on to Kochi (or try a train journey); stay at Poovath Heritage, overlooking the Arabian Sea. Visit the sights, take an auto-rickshaw tour of the spice markets, see a Kathakali performance, see sunset on the harbour from a boat as you cruise along to see Chinese Fishing nets.

Day 15

Transfer to the airport for your return flight.

Best months:

Mid-Nov to Apr

Avoidable period:

June, July, Oct

Recommended extensions:

Beach: Drive an hour out of Kochi to one of several beach resorts in Marari; relax and rejuvenate for a few days before heading back home.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com

the hooghly cruise

One week on a luxury cruise on board the ABN Rajmahal, with air-conditioned cabins, en suite facilities with a hot shower, sumptuous cuisine, a well stocked bar, spa facilities and top class service. The itinerary uncovers hidden Bengal with its rich green landscape and cultural, historical and spiritual legacy. We visit the remains of the medieval capital of Gaur and the quiet town of Murshidabad, 18th century capital of the Nawabs of Bengal, with imposing palaces, mosques and temples. We take in Bishnupur, famous for its distinctive terracotta temples, the best example of classical Bengal architecture, and much more.

Days 1 & 2 Kolkata

Arrive into Kolkata, stay at the Grand Hotel or Lalit Great Eastern for two nights – you could also stay on the outskirts at the colonial Rajbari Bawali; visit the sights including Daniels' collection of Indian paintings at the Victoria Memorial, Kumartully or the Potter's Lane where durga idols are made, visit Tagore's home at Jorasanko; take a boat on the Hooghly from Belur Math to Dakhineswar.

Day 3 Farakka – Cruise Ship

Transfer to the Howrah Station, crossing the iconic bridge; travel to Farakka on the afternoon Shatabdi Express, transfer to the ABN Rajmahal where a sumptuous meal awaits you.

Day 4 Cruise

This morning's cruise is along a canal section to Jangipur, where the afternoon is free to explore this small country town on foot. Alternatively, enjoy a full day excursion by road to Gaur, near the town of Malda, or English Bazaar. This quiet, deserted place was once one of India's great cities, first under the Hindus in 12th century, then as the Muslim capital of Eastern India from the 14th to the 16th century. There are plentiful remains of mosques, palaces and gateways and you visit a number of the most interesting historical sites before rejoining the ship in the evening near Jangipur.

Day 5 Cruise

Set sail down the Hooghly proper, with banks lined with mustard fields and mango orchard. Moor at Baranagar with three gorgeous miniature terracotta temples to which you walk through the fields. Continue to Murshidabad where the Nawab's great Hazarduari Palace, built by an English architect in 1837, dominates the waterfront. Inside are an extensive collection of pictures, china, weapons and other objects. Visit also the great Katra Mosque and drive out to two amazing buildings of the late 18th century, the Nashipara Palace and the Katgola Palace. Both were built in classical Georgian style by rich local merchants and represent the other side of the coin of the "White Moghul" period when English and Indian cultures came close to fusion.

Day 6 Cruise

Sail downstream a short distance then walk to the Khushbagh, a peaceful Moghul-style garden enclosing the tombs of Siraj-ud-Daulah and his family. Continue downstream past the old British cantonment of Berhampur to the battlefield of Plassey where in 1757 Clive's defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah changed the course of

Indian history - you can walk through the fields to the commemorative obelisk. Cruise on to a mooring near Katwa, a market town with narrow bustling bazaars.

Day 7 Cruise

Visit the brassworking village of Matiari; carry on to Mayapur, its skyline dominated by the vast new ISKCON temple.

Day 8 Cruise

Continue on down to the country town of Kalna. Here we take cycle rickshaws to see a group of some of Bengal's most attractive terracotta temples, as well as the unique Shiva temple with concentric rings made up of 108 shrinelets. Sail on, leaving fields behind and arrive at the outskirts of Calcutta; land near Bandel to visit the imposing Imambara.

Day 9 Cruise

Sailing on downstream past fine waterfront buildings and the old Dutch settlement at Chinsura you land at Chandernagore, a French possession until 1950, and visit the 18th century church and Dupleix's House containing a small museum. Continue down to Barrackpore, land and take a walk through the cantonment past the Semaphore Tower, Government House, the Temple of Fame, and Flagstaff House, its garden housing many of the British statues removed from central Calcutta. Sail on up to Bali Bridge.

Day 10 Kolkata

Early morning cruise under the Howrah Bridge to central Calcutta to disembark. Transfer to your hotel for the night.

Day 11 Flight

Take the flight home.

Best months:

Oct to Mar

Note: The cruise may have different routings covering Kolkata, Farakka, Patna and Varanasi; we have featured one route here.

Recommended extensions:

Darjeeling-Sikkim for the mountains; Kaziranga National Park for rhinos; Odisha for the temples; Andamans for the beaches

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com





in buddha's footsteps

Prince Siddhartha was born at Lumbini, became Buddha, the Enlightened One, at Bodhgaya, gave his first sermon at Sarnath, lived the greater part of his monastic life in Sravasti, and attained Nirvana at Kushinagar. Buddhism is a way of life in large parts of the world, its message of peace and tolerance speaks to us all. We take you on a journey to places associated with important events in Buddha's life interspersed with some interesting places along the way. The accommodation is comfortable but simple in the remote places with more choice in the bigger cities.

Days 1 to 2 Delhi

Arrive into Delhi, transfer to the World Buddhist Centre for two nights; visit the sights of Old and New Delhi including the Tibet House and National Museum.

Days 3 & 4 Lucknow

Fly to Lucknow or take a train, experience a homestay in Lucknow or stay at Vivanta by Taj; visit the Imambaras, La Martinere, Dilkusha and the Residency.

Day 5 Sravasti

Drive to Sravasti via Sahet-Mahet for overnight stay at the Lotus Nikko or Residency; visit Ananthapindika's Stupa, Anandabodhi tree and Gandhakuti or Buddha's hut.

Days 6 Lumbini

Drive to the birth place of Lord Buddha at Lumbini (in Nepal) visiting Kapilvastu en route; stay at the Maya Garden or Nirvana Hotel; visit the Maya Devi Temple, dedicate to Buddha's mother.

Day 7 Kushinagar

Drive to Kushinagar, stay at the Lotus Nikko or Residency; visit the Mahaparinirvana Temple.

Day 8 Patna

Drive to Patna for overnight stay at the Chankya Hotel; visit Vaishali en route, the birth place of Bhagwan Mahaveera, and the site of Buddha's last sermon.

Days 9 & 10 Bodhgaya

Drive to Bodhgaya via the historic sites of Rajgir and Nalanda on the way; stay at the Bodhgaya Residency

or Sujata Hotel for two nights; visit the World Heritage Mahabodhi Temple.

Days 11 & 12 Varanasi

Drive onto Varanasi; stay two nights at the Ganges View or Jukaso Inn; witness the evening ceremonial worship or "aarti", enjoy an early morning boat-ride on the Ganges to see devotees at prayer along the "ghats", visit Sarnath, the site of Buddha's first sermon.

Day 13 Agra

Fly to Agra or take a day train. Stay the night at a family home or the Jaypee Palace.

Day 14 Delhi

Visit the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort; drive to Delhi or take the evening train; stay at an airport hotel for the night.

Day 15 Return

Transfer for your return flight home.

Best months:

Oct to Mar

Avoidable period:

May, June, mid-Dec to mid-Jan.

Recommended extension: You can extend your stay by three days to visit the famous Sanchi Stupa near Bhopal, a World Heritage Site.

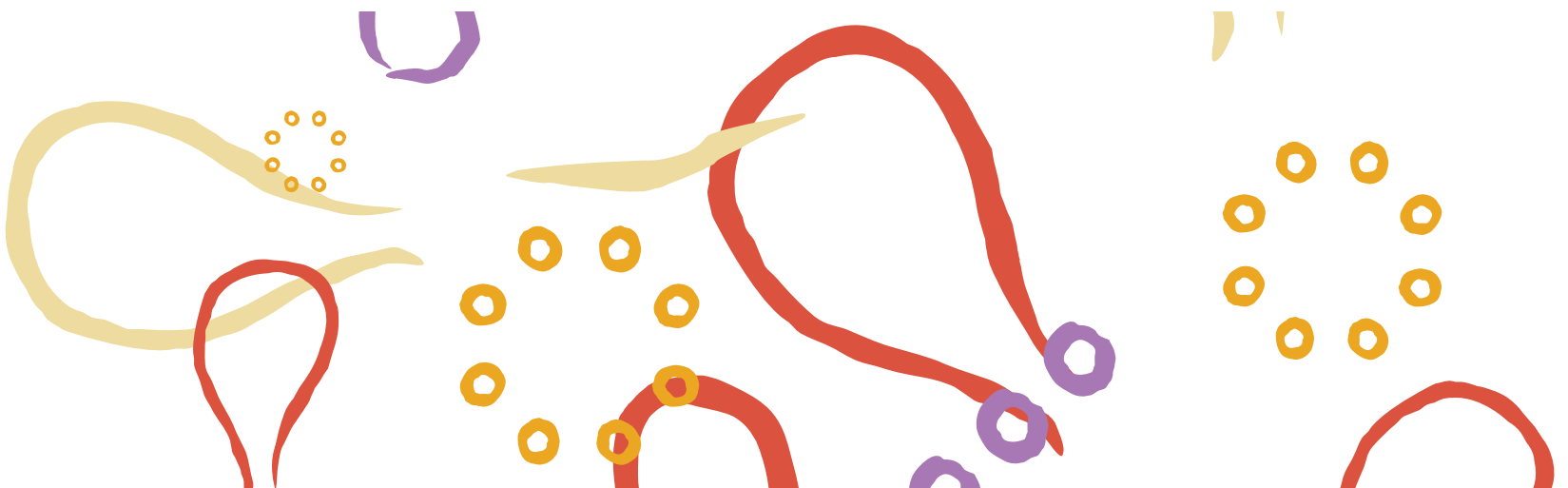
To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@barjisindia.com

india's neighbours

We have featured three of India's immediate neighbours here, with a suggested tour for each that can form a basis for a personalised tailor-made trip for you.

Bhutan
Nepal
Sri Lanka

We are happy to take enquiries for Burma, Bangladesh and Maldives as well, even though they are not featured in the brochure.





bhutan

Capital: Thimpu

Area: 47,000 sq km (a fifth of UK's area).

Population: 670,000 (2005 official census) although other estimates put it at around 2 million (or one-third of UK's)

Religion: Lamaistic Buddhist 75%, Indian- and Nepalese-influenced Hinduism 25%

Languages: Dzongkha, Tibetan and Nepalese dialects

Time: GMT + 6hrs

A Himalayan country, till recently a monarchy, Bhutan is bordered on the north and east by Tibet and on the south and west by India. The landscape is rugged mountains and deep valleys. The highest peaks cross 7000 metres. To help preserve its culture, Bhutan limits the number of visitors to the country, adding to its mystique.

Bhutan's rich fauna includes red panda, black-necked crane, snow leopard, musk deer, Himalayan brown bear, tiger, hornbill, mountain goat, blue sheep and takin. It is a popular destination for bird watchers and trekkers.

The land is dotted with monasteries and dzongs or fortresses – those at Punakha, Wangdephodrong and Trongsa being particularly impressive. The capital Thimpu is also home to the erstwhile royal family, still very popular. The Paro Valley has the Taktsang Monastery ('Tiger's Nest'), which is among Bhutan's most revered monasteries.

The landscape is rugged mountains and deep valleys.

The Phobjika Valley is one of the last wintering grounds of the endangered black-necked cranes that fly in from Siberia between November and March.

The valley of Bumthang is a popular base for treks and has several temples and monasteries.

- how to get there

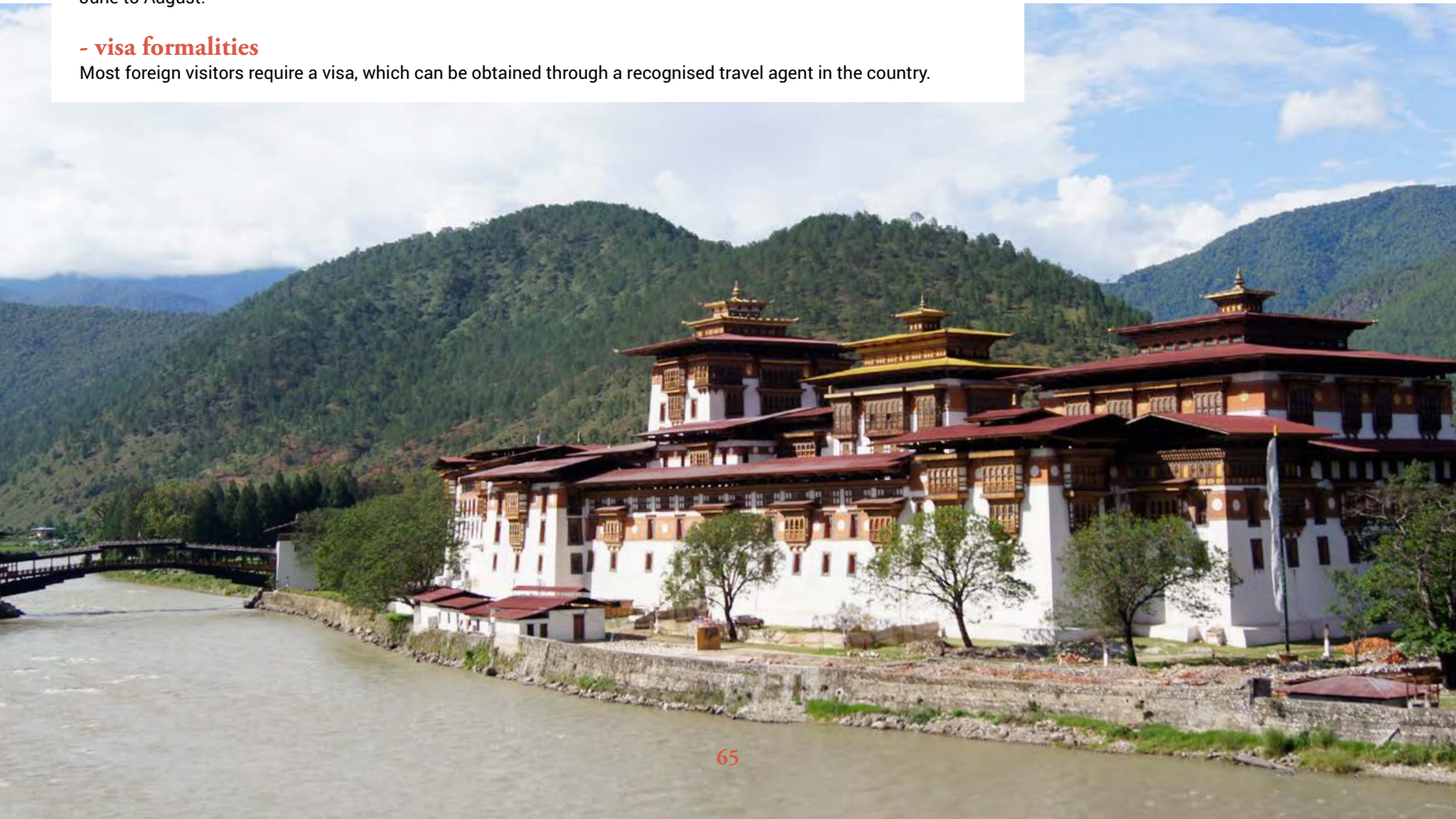
There are flights from Kathmandu, Delhi, Kolkata, Guwahati and Bangkok to Paro in Bhutan. Phuntsholing near Siliguri in Bengal is a common entry point for those driving in and works well with a visit to Sikkim or Darjeeling. One can also enter by road from Guwahati.

- when to go

The autumn - late September through November- is usually mild and the sky is at its clearest affording magnificent views of the mountains. Spring time is for flowers. It snows in mid winter (December to February) and rains from June to August.

- visa formalities

Most foreign visitors require a visa, which can be obtained through a recognised travel agent in the country.



bhutan journey

Bhutan, the last bastion of Mahayana Buddhism in the Himalaya, still retains its age-old traditions and unspoilt culture. Giant fortresses, called dzongs, dominate the landscape and there are monasteries tucked away in remote corners. This tour covers most of the easily accessible parts of the country; the accommodation available is comfortable but shorn of trappings of luxury, though there are some expensive choices in many of the places.

Day 1 Kolkata

Arrive into Kolkata and transfer to The Grand or Lalit Great Eastern; at leisure.

Days 2 & 3 Thimpu

Fly to Paro and transfer to Thimphu; stay at the Phuentso Pelri or Kisa for two nights (or the Taj Thimpu). Visit the sights including the King's Memorial Chorten, the National Library and the Painting School where students undergo a 6-year training course in Bhutan's traditional arts and crafts.

Day 4 Trongsa

Drive up to Dochu-la pass (3,088 meters), where on a clear day one can see Gangkar Puensum, the highest peak in Bhutan (7,497meters), and carry on to Wangduephodrang to see the magnificent Dzong.

Continue to Trongsa across Pele-la pass (3,300 meters), the boundary between east and west; stay at the Yankhil Resort for the night.

Day 5, 6 & 7 Bumthang

Visit the Trongsa Dzong, a massive structure with many levels, before carrying on to Bumthang, over the Yutong-la pass (3,400 meters) leading to the wide, open, cultivated Chumey valley; stay at the Wangdichholing Hotel for 3 nights.

Visit Kurje Lhakhang, Jambey Lhakhang, Tamshing Lhakhang and Jakar Dzong; take an excursion to the Ura village which has clustered houses which is unusual in Bhutan.

Day 8 Gangtey

Drive in the morning to Gangtey in Phobjika Valley; stay at Dewachen Resort or the Farm House - the valley is winter habitat for Black Necked Cranes that migrate from Central Asiatic plateau - free time to walk around in the village.

Day 9 & 10 Punakha

Drive to Punakha for 2 nights at the Zangtho Pelri Hotel; visit the Punakha Dzong - built at the confluence of two rivers - and enjoy an excursion to Chimi Lhakhang, a monastery built by Lama Drukpa Kuenly or the 'Divine Madman'.

Days 11 & 12 Paro

Drive back to Paro; stay at the Olathang or Village Lodge for 2 nights (or Uma Paro/Aman); visit Ta Dzong, now housing the National Museum and the Rinpung Dzong. If up to it you can do the arduous climb to the famous Taktsang Monastery or "Tiger's Nest", precariously resting on a hillside.

Day 13 Kolkata

Fly back to Kolkata today for a night; optional sightseeing.

Day 14 Return

Transfer to the airport for your return flight.

Best months:

Mid-Sep to End-Nov, Mar, Apr

Avoidable period:

June, July, Aug

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com







This map is representational and not to scale.

nepal

Capital: Kathmandu

Area: 147,181 sq km (around 60% of UK)

Population: 27 million (less than half of UK)

Religion: 86% Hindu, 8% Buddhist, 4% Muslim, 2% Others

Languages: Nepali, English

Time: GMT + 5 hours 45 min

The abode of some of the highest mountain peaks in the world Nepal is ideal for walks and treks, wildlife safaris, bird watching, white water rafting or just relaxing and admiring the natural beauty. It has medieval towns and villages, ancient temples and monasteries, and a friendly and welcoming population.

Kathmandu, the capital, shares a valley with the royal cities of Patan and Bhaktapur, each centring round its own Durbar (Palace) Square, with magnificent temples and palaces.

The abode of some of the highest mountain peaks in the world...

The beautiful valley of Pokhara lies northwest of Kathmandu, dominated by Annapurna and Machhapuchhare (Fishtail) mountains. Located around the Phewa Tal (Lake), Pokhara is an ideal base for treks.

Situated in the terai region in the foothills, the Royal Chitwan National Park is home to the tiger, one-horned rhinoceros, leopard, gaur, wild bear, sloth bear, sambar, mongoose, otter and a variety of birds. Safaris in the park can be done on elephant back, on foot and, in some resorts, by jeep. Further to the east lies the Bardia National Park, along the banks of the Karnali, with a rich population of animals and birds.

- how to get there

There are indirect flights via Doha, Bahrain, Dubai, Bangkok, Mumbai or Delhi to Kathmandu. One can also fly from Kolkata, Varanasi, Paro and Lhasa or drive in from India or Tibet.

- when to go

October and November are good months to visit, when the air is crisp and clear, and the country is lush and green following the monsoon. February to April is also a good time, when the weather is warming and many flowers are in bloom. Some haze does set in by April obscuring the mountain views. The weather is clear but chilly in December and January. May and early June are the warmest months, and the monsoon is prevalent from the middle of June to September.

At 4000 feet the Kathmandu Valley is relatively temperate. Chitwan in the terai region is warm and can get quite hot by April.

- visa formalities

All foreign nationals other than Indians require a visa to enter Nepal. This can be applied for online.



the himalayan abode - nepal

This tour covers all the major sights, including the Valley of Kathmandu, home to the ancient capitals of Nepal and some stunning temples, the national park of Chitwan with its one-horned rhino, the tranquil valley of Pokhara with breathtaking views of the Machupichure. In addition we get to see some lesser visited areas of this beautiful country. These include Buddha's birthplace of Lumbini, and the charming villages of Tansen and Bandipur, giving plenty of opportunity for walks in the hills and observing village life at close quarters. The accommodation in the remote parts is relatively simple but comfortable.

Days 1, 2, 3 Kathmandu

Arrive into Kathmandu; transfer to the Kantipur Guest House (or Dwarika's); visit the city including Swayambhunath, Kastha Mandap and Kumari Devi; see the ancient capital of Patan and the Tibetan Handicrafts Centre; visit Pashupatinath, Boudhnath and the World Heritage City of Bhaktapur.

Days 4, 5 Chitwan

Drive to Chitwan National Park, spend two nights at a resort outside the park like Tharu Village or Temple Tiger Village Resort; enjoy wildlife activities in the park.

Day 6 Lumbini

Drive to Lumbini, the birth place of the Buddha; stay at Hotel Nirvana or Maya Garden; visit the Maya Devi Temple.

Days 7, 8 Tansen

Drive into the hills and spend two nights at the remote and less frequently visited town of Tansen, staying at Hotel Srinagar; day walks and bike rides can be arranged into the nearby villages.

Days 9, 10, 11 Pokhara

Drive on to Pokhara and spend three nights relaxing at the Begnas Lake Resort or the Tiger Tops Mountain Lodge; at leisure.

Day 12, 13 Bandipur

Drive to Bandipur, staying at the Bandipur Mountain Lodge for two nights; enjoy walks in this heritage village and the surrounding hills

Day 14 Kathmandu

Return to the capital for a night

Day 15 Return flight

Transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Best months:

October to March

Avoidable period:

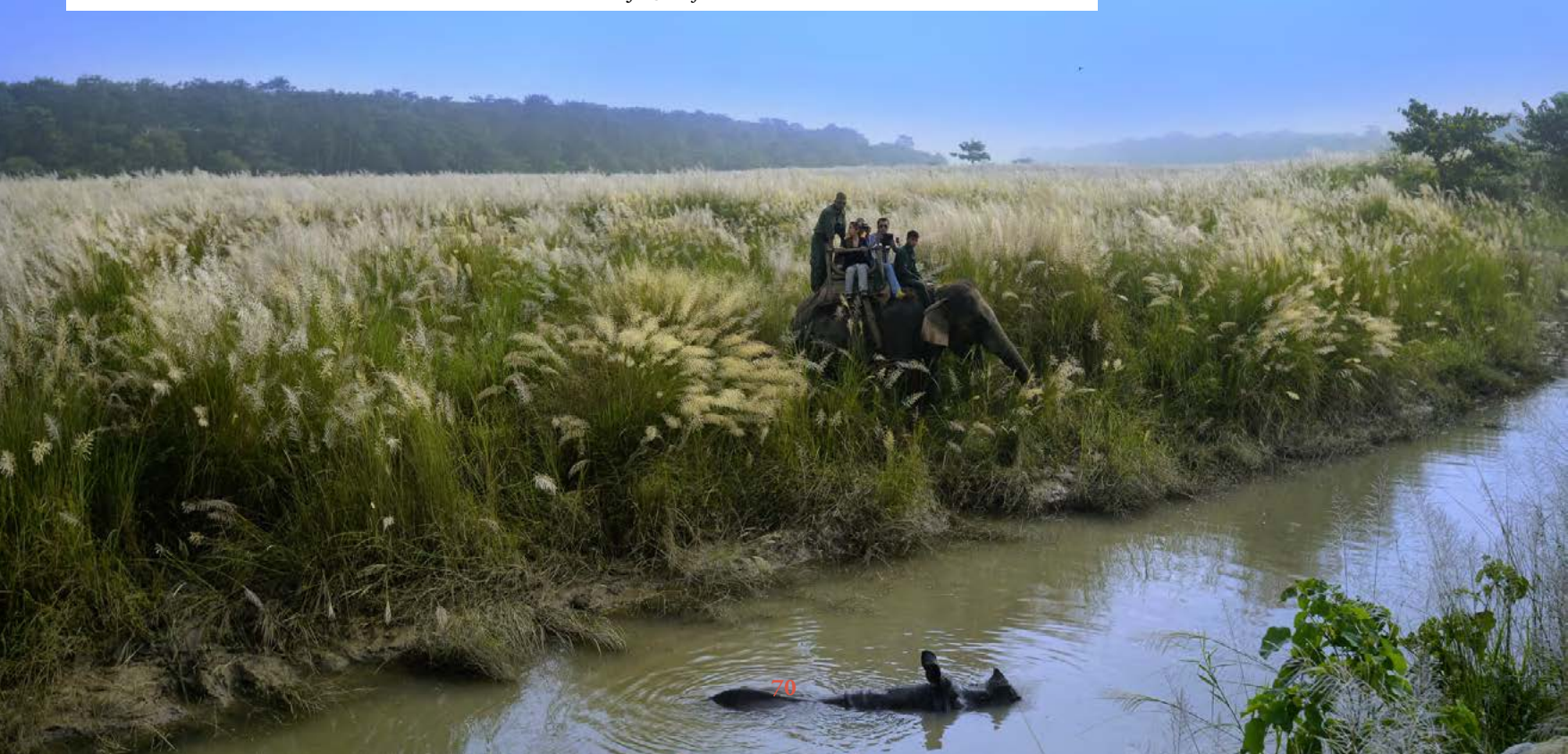
May to August

Recommended extensions:

Treks: Easy to moderate treks can be arranged from Pokhara in the Gurkha villages surrounding Pokhara, varying in duration, typically 3 to 6 days. You can stay in tea houses or in tents.

Bardia: Spend a couple of days at the rich and unspoilt Barida National Park; there are flights from Kathmandu to Nepalgunj and then a road transfer to the park. The Tiger Tops Karnali Lodge is a good choice for accommodation and safaris.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com







This map is representational and not to scale.

sri lanka

Capital: Colombo

Area: 66,000 sq kms (a quarter of UK)

Population: 19 million (a third of UK)

Religion: 69% Buddhist, 15% Hindu, 8% Muslim, 8% Christian

Language: Sinhalese, Tamil, English

Time: GMT + 6 hours

Sri Lanka or Ceylon is a tropical island in the Indian Ocean in close proximity to the southern tip of India and Tamil Nadu. It has distinctive Buddhist stupas or dagobas, sandy beaches, exotic wildlife, rolling hills, tea plantations, and towns with a colonial past. The island has a long history of contact with foreign merchants and powers and Buddhist, Tamil, Roman, Arab, Portuguese, Dutch and British influences can all be seen here.

The island's 'cultural triangle', comprises the ancient cities of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa and Kandy, and has a rich heritage offering for the visitor including the cave temple at Dambulla, the rock fortress at Sigiriya, the seated Buddha at Gal Vihara and the sacred Temple of the Tooth Relic.

The island has a long history of contact with foreign merchants...

Kandy is a picturesque hill town with a famous botanical garden, and Nuwara Eliya is tea country, offering scenic walks and golf. Galle and Trincomalee are historic ports; for the nature lover there are the rainforests at Sinharaja and Kanneliya.

There are several national parks like Yala and Uda Walawe that are host to a variety of exotic animals and plants. Sri Lanka is known for its white, sandy beaches like Bentota, Hikkaduwa, Negombo and Nilaveli.

- how to get there

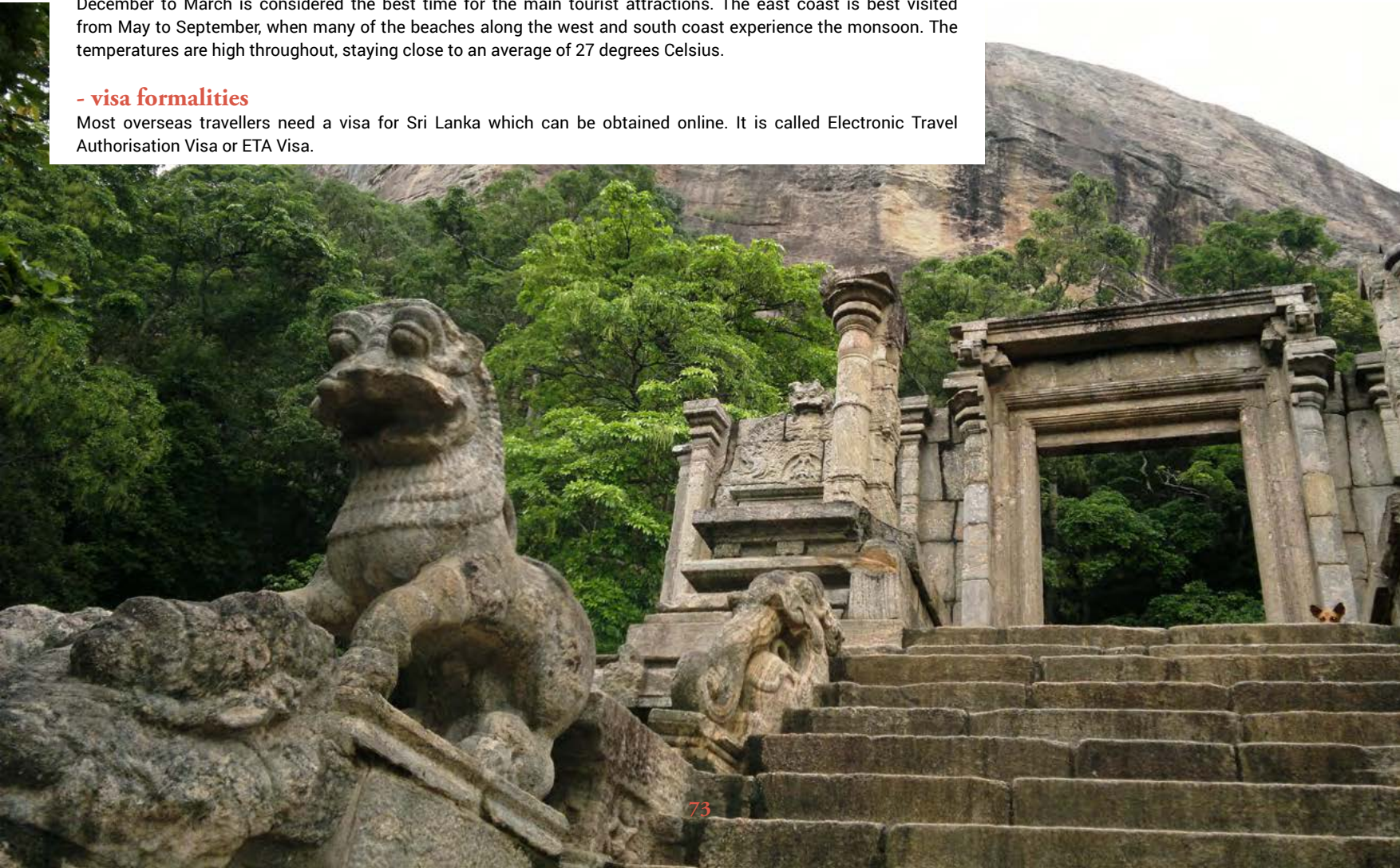
Many international flights arrive into the Katunayake airport near Colombo. These include Sri Lankan, Emirates, Qatar Airways and Singapore Airlines. Several flights to Colombo are available from India including from Kochi, Trivandrum, Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi or Mumbai.

- when to go

December to March is considered the best time for the main tourist attractions. The east coast is best visited from May to September, when many of the beaches along the west and south coast experience the monsoon. The temperatures are high throughout, staying close to an average of 27 degrees Celsius.

- visa formalities

Most overseas travellers need a visa for Sri Lanka which can be obtained online. It is called Electronic Travel Authorisation Visa or ETA Visa.



sri lanka - the emerald isle

This tour starts with the 'Cultural Triangle'. Anuradhapura, where Buddhism first came to Sri Lanka, was the country's capital for 1300 years. The medieval capital, Polonnaruwa has a number of historic ruins. After Kandy, the last capital of the kings and famous for Buddha's tooth relic, we travel to Nuwara Eliya, the tea country, followed by the open parklands and dense jungles of the Yala National Park. We pass through the port city of Galle, before spending a leisurely couple of days on the sandy beaches of Bentota. The accommodation choice is from mid-range to top of the range, including some boutique hotels.

Day 1 Negombo

Arrive into Katunayake Airport and transfer to the Jetwing Hotel in Negombo; at leisure on the beach.

Days 2 & 3 Anuradhapura

Morning drive Anuradhapura for two nights at Lakeside or Ulagalla Resort. Visit the island's ancient capital, founded around the 4th century BC. The sightseeing includes the dagobas (pagodas), and the sacred Bo tree, "Jayasri Maha Bodhi", scion of the original tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment. It is considered to be the oldest human-planted living tree on record.

Days 4 & 5 Sigiriya /Dambulla

We move to Sigiriya today for two nights at Elephas Resort or Vil Uyana. When Anuradhapura was abandoned in 1073, the capital was transferred to Polonnaruwa. We visit the ruins of this city along with the Gal Vihara rock sculptures. We also visit the Rock Fortress of Sigiriya - the 600 feet high rock is a steep climb.

Days 6 & 7 Kandy

Drive to Kandy, Sri Lanka's second largest city, visiting the Dambulla Cave Temple and Matale Spice Garden en route. We stay at the Suisee Hotel or Kandy House. The focus of the city is the "Dalada Maligawa" or

Temple of the Tooth Relic, which we visit this evening. We later enjoy a Kandyan dance performance. Next day at the elephant orphanage at Pinnawela, home to hundreds of abandoned or injured elephants, we have the chance of seeing baby elephants being bottle-fed and also of elephants being taken down to the river for their daily bath. Later, we visit the famous botanical gardens at Peradeniya, home to a fascinating variety of plants.

Days 8 & 9 Nuwara Eliya

Today we take the scenic drive to the tea country of Nuwara Eliya, visiting a tea factory en route. Stay for 2 nights at the colonial Hill Club, beside the golf course, or St Andrews Hotel. This afternoon we have the option of visiting the Hakgala Botanical Gardens, established in 1860 as an experimental cinchona plantation. Next morning leave by 4-wheel drive vehicle for Horton Plains, located on a high windswept saddle at 7000 feet, for a hike to the Bakers Falls and World's End, a sheer 1,000-foot vertical drop. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore this charming town, or perhaps enjoy a round of golf.

Days 10 & 11 Yala

Drive to Yala for 2 nights at the Safari Hotel or Cinnamon Wild. Enjoy early morning and afternoon



jeep safaris. In addition to the elusive leopard, which is Sri Lanka's top predator, Yala is home to elephant, deer, wild buffalo, crocodile, wild boar and many types of birds. Because of its location, along the island's southeast coast, this is a particularly scenic national park.

Days 12 & 13 Bentota

A long drive to Bentota, visiting Galle en route; the Dutch Museum, Grootte Kerk (Great Church) and National Maritime Museum are some of the highlights of this World Heritage city. Enjoy lunch at a hotel in Galle, before driving on to the Surf Hotel or Avani Bentota; at leisure on the beach.

Day 14 Colombo

Transfer to Colombo for a night at Lake Lodge or Galle Face Hotel. Drive through the city for an orientation tour.

Day 15

Transfer to the airport to board our return flight.

Best months:

December to March

Avoidable period:

May, October

Recommended extensions:

Staying on: Stay on at the beach resort in Bentota for 3 more nights or longer if you wish.

Sinharaja Rainforest: After lunch in Galle on day 12, drive to the Sinharaja rainforest, another World Heritage Site. Stay for 3 nights at the Boulder Garden, an eco luxury resort nestled amidst huge boulders in the forest. Enjoy a full day guided walk in the rainforest on day 13. The next day is at leisure with the option of mountain biking, kayaking or a cave tour. Drive to Bentota on day 15 for 2 nights. Fly back day 18.

Maldives: Fly from Colombo to Malé. Transfer to the resort of your choice (several resorts are on offer) for 4 nights (the duration can be varied). Fly back on day 19.

South India: There are regular flights from Colombo to Chennai, Cochin, Bangalore, Trivandrum and Trichy. We will be happy to design a tailor-made extension to South India.

To tailor the tour to your personal needs and for an indication of prices please email info@harjisindia.com





hotels and resorts

We use comfortable hotels opting for character and ambience with personalised service, good management and housekeeping. They are picked to enhance your holiday experience as well as offer value for money. Typically we use 5 star and 4 star hotels in our tours with character properties. Some luxury hotels form part of our normal selection but some, especially the very expensive ones, are offered as optional choices.

We have personally inspected most hotels that we use. The choice further benefits from the feedback and opinion of thousands of clients. We do respect the ratings given by web based accommodation providers, but have greater faith in the feedback from our own clients and our personal experience over the years. As standards can change over time we continually review our selection and welcome your comments. In some places the choice is limited and we may be constrained to use a hotel that we may otherwise prefer to avoid.

- classification

The terms we normally use to classify a hotel broadly describe five categories of accommodation: Deluxe, First Class, Standard, Tourist & Basic.

Deluxe or Luxury: These usually offer centrally air-conditioned rooms, a choice of restaurants, leisure facilities and swimming pools, shopping arcades, business centres, well kept gardens and trained staff proficient in English. Big cities normally have a choice of modern hotels in this grade. Some palace hotels also fall in this category but with less emphasis on business facilities.

First Class: These tend to have facilities similar to deluxe hotels, but with less choice; they also have less grand facades and lobbies. They usually have air-conditioned rooms, one or more restaurants with a choice of cuisine, some leisure facilities and often a swimming pool.

Standard or mid-range: These have air-conditioning or air-cooled rooms, and at least one restaurant. These include many heritage and period hotels that are particularly enjoyable for their unique character and ambience. While heritage hotels are used extensively for all travellers, modern ones are recommended if grade of accommodation is not a priority or where there is no choice.

Tourist Class: These are one or two-star hotels or unrated properties. These are used for transit halts, day use or for those on a low budget. The rooms are either air-conditioned or air-cooled and mostly do have en suite facilities. These often do not have a restaurant but a limited menu may be available through room service. Some remote places may have only this grade

of accommodation available. Some heritage properties, guest houses and home-stays are in this grade but may still be recommended because of their unique experience, often in preference to higher grade hotels.

Basic: These are normally camping sites with very elementary facilities. They may not have running water and may not have en suite facilities. Hot water is provided, if at all, in buckets in limited quantity and food cooked on the site. Such accommodation is generally used for trekking or visiting remote regions.

- some useful tips

*Many hotels tend to use a nomenclature of rooms that could be misleading, more often than not calling their most basic room "deluxe". Unless we specify the use of a higher grade room it should be presumed to be the base category room.

*A higher grade does not necessarily mean a 'better' hotel, or vice versa. The grading is essentially based on the facilities available. Features such as quality of service, management and character are also considered when making a choice.

* Again a higher grade does not necessarily mean a higher tariff. Many lower grade heritage properties, lodges, farmhouses or guesthouses may have tariffs higher than their grading might suggest.

*In mid-winter the northern plains and the hilly regions get very cold. While this is not a problem in centrally air-conditioned hotels, others may have an electric heater or log fire, which may not be warm enough. We would advise adequate woollens, bathroom slippers and snug sleeping clothes, especially if visiting remote places, a game reserve or staying in heritage properties from December to February.

*Many heritage properties, some of them converted forts, have steep steps and low doors. If that is a problem for you, due to your height or weak knees or a general distaste of such things, do let us know.

*Delhi-belly is rarer than it used to be, and the vast majority of our clients go through their holiday without facing this problem. The hygiene standards of hotels that we use regularly are excellent as most of them are used to handling overseas visitors on a regular basis.

*Spicy food, if you like it, is there for you to relish. If you are less fond of spices or prefer Continental food, the hotels do cater for your requirements.

(* An asterix indicates a heritage property.

hotels

- agra

mughal sheraton (deluxe)

Spread over 27 acres of gardens this modern, 285-room hotel offers a choice of four restaurants and ample leisure facilities including tennis, a mini golf course, health club and a pool. It is 1.5 kms from the Taj.

the trident (first class)

A well-managed hotel with a pleasant ambience, offers easy access to the swimming pool and gardens from all the 140 rooms. Has a restaurant and bar. Run by the Oberoi Group, it is 4 kms from the Taj.

- ahmedabad

***house of mangaldas-girdhardas (first class)**

This centrally located 1920's residential mansion of a leading merchant family has been converted into a small boutique hotel with all modern conveniences, including a pool, yet retaining its old-world charm. The hotel's restaurant, Agashiye, offers one of the finest dining experiences in Ahmedabad.

- alleppey

***olavipe homestay (tourist)**

This stately heritage mansion in rural Kerala has eight large and airy rooms with attached bathrooms. The nearby waterfront and paddy fields provide plenty of opportunity to observe village life. Activities include fishing, canoe-rides, walking and cycling.

***purity (first class)**

An elegant, tastefully decorated, boutique property on the shores of Vembanad Lake. Bicycles are available for exploring the rural scene; they have their own houseboat too.

- amritsar

***ranjit swaasa (tourist)**

A family home converted to a small hotel with central air-conditioning, a restaurant, bar and a pool, located near the Mall Road.

holiday inn (first class)

Ideally located in Amritsar's commercial district on Ranjit Avenue with the famous Golden Temple and Jallianwala Bagh located only a short distance away; popular in-house Italian restaurant.

- aurangabad

vivanta by taj (first class)

A well-run 40-room modern hotel with central air-conditioning, it has a restaurant and bar, a pool, fitness centre and tennis court. Rooms have private balconies with swings.

- bangalore

atria (standard)

This centrally air-conditioned modern hotel has 167 rooms, three restaurants and a well-stocked bar. It is located close to the city centre, 3 kms from the railway station.

***villa pottipati (tourist)**

This 120-year old ancestral home of an Andhra family has been lovingly restored and converted into an 8-room hotel, located in a residential area. The bungalow with its trellised-verandah, high ceilings and granite pillared lounge stands in a lush green lawn with a variety of trees. All rooms have air-conditioning and internet facilities.

- bhopal

***jehan numa palace (first class)**

A comfortable palace hotel on a hilltop, with 60 centrally air-conditioned rooms and a large pool, a restaurant and bar, tennis, golf and horse riding, 5 kms from the city; run by the royal family members.

- bhubaneshwar

the trident (first class)

Inspired by the exquisite temple architecture of the famous Lingaraja temple it has 64 air-conditioned rooms, a restaurant and bar, and facilities for tennis, jogging and swimming. Located on the outskirts, 5 kms from city centre.

hotel swosti (standard)

A 57-room centrally air-conditioned property with 2 restaurants and a bar. Located in the heart of the city, good for local flavour.

- bikaner

***laxmi niwas palace (standard)**

Set in landscaped gardens this former palace with 20 air-conditioned rooms is tastefully designed by Sir Swinton Jacob. Has a restaurant and bar.

***bhanwar niwas palace (tourist)**

This elegant 16-room former palace is centrally located and has some rooms with air-conditioning, some with fans. The cuisine is vegetarian only.

- chandigarh

***sukh vilas (deluxe)**

A new and unique luxury resort near Chandigarh by the Oberoi group, surrounded by over 8,000 acres of protected, forest. The resort, said to be the largest of its kind in the region, comprises 60 rooms, villas and tents with private pools.

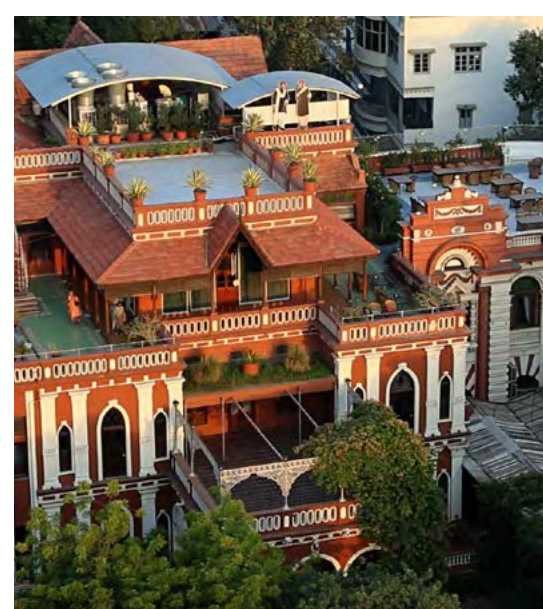
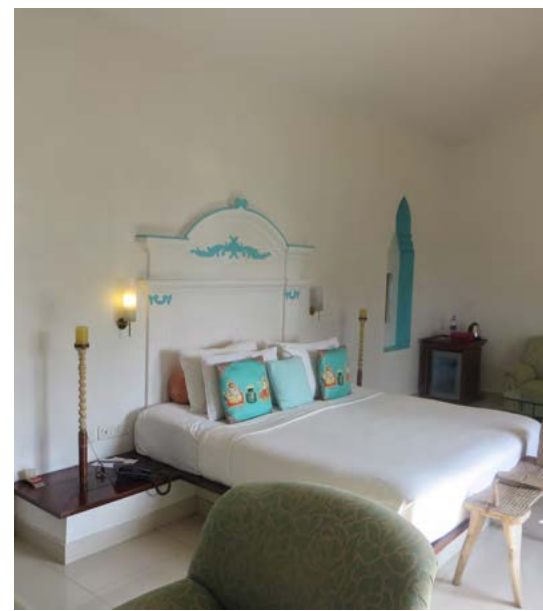
***marriott (deluxe)**

A modern hotel in the centre of the city's vibrant business district, offering convenient accessibility to an array of historic attractions and sites. It has 164 rooms, a full fitness centre, a gorgeous rooftop pool area, and six restaurants and bars

- chennai (madras)

***taj connemara (first class)**

Once the palace of the Nawabs of Wallajah, today an island of green in the heart of Chennai, the Connemara is a blend of the traditional with the modern with 148 rooms,



*Purity
House of Mangaldas-Girdhardas
Jehan Numa Palace*

a pool, fitness centre, beauty parlour, 2 restaurants and an inviting bar.

the trident (first class)

A modern hotel set in beautiful gardens, convenient for the airport. It has 166 rooms, three restaurants and a large pool.

- chettinadu

*** chettinadu mansion (standard)**

This grand mansion, located close to the Chettinadu Palace, belongs to a family of local Chettiar merchants. It offers comfortable accommodation and authentic Chettinadu cuisine from the family's kitchen.

***visalam (standard)**

The house was built by a leading Chettiar businessman in the region. He constructed it to be given as a wedding gift to his beautiful daughter Vishala. It has 15 rooms, a pool and three restaurants.

***the bangala (standard)**

Located in Karaikudi, in the heart of Chettinad, the Bangala is a family-run hotel that combines traditional Chettiar hospitality with modern amenities. It has an outdoor swimming pool, gym, and a massage center.

- chikmagalur

***taj gateway (first class)**

An elegant property with 29 air-conditioned rooms, 22 kms from the famous Belur Temple, it has a swimming pool, a restaurant and bar, located in beautiful coffee country.

- cochin (now called kochi)

***brunton boatyard (first class)**

An elegant 26-room character hotel built in Dutch style, overlooking the harbour, with 2 restaurants, a bar and a beautiful pool adjacent to the backwaters; located within walking distance of St Francis' Church and the Chinese fishing nets.

***malabar house (standard)**

A small boutique hotel in a beautiful colonial villa, the 17 rooms and suites are tastefully furnished with a mix of contemporary crafted and select antique furniture. The hotel has two excellent restaurants and a small pool. Located near open grounds in close proximity to St Francis' Church in Fort Cochin.

***spice fort (standard)**

This former residence of the famous Jewish Koder family offers 27 contemporary rooms named after the most commonly used spices, an air conditioned restaurant serving organic Indian and international cuisine, a seafood grill by the pool serving fresh catch of the day and a lounge offering organic coffee from their farm at Elephant Valley.

- coonoor

***taj gateway (standard)**

A well-run garden property with 33 elegant rooms and period charm, it has a restaurant & bar.

- darjeeling

***elgin hotel (standard)**

A heritage property, situated in the heart of Darjeeling, with 25 rooms, a well stocked library, games room and a bar

***windamere (standard)**

A heritage hotel famous for its unique ambience and charm, originally established as a cosy boarding house for bachelor English tea planters, the 46-room hotel overlooks the town's main promenade and offers a bar, sun decks and a library.

- delhi

***hotel imperial (deluxe)**

This colonial hotel, with 263 rooms, is located in the heart of the city in the midst of beautiful landscaped gardens and has been refurbished to upgrade it to one of the top hotels in the capital with 3 restaurants, 2 bars and a large swimming pool.

the taj mahal (deluxe)

This 300-room hotel is well located; about five minutes drive from the main shopping, entertainment and commercial centres. It offers a large pool and health club, 3 lively restaurants and one of the most popular bars in the city.

the grand (deluxe)

This deluxe hotel has 390 well-furnished and luxurious rooms. There are five restaurants serving Indian, European and Japanese cuisine, a bar, swimming pool, as well as a modern fitness centre and extensive spa facilities.

***maidens hotel (first class)**

A period four-star hotel in Old Delhi with 54 air-conditioned rooms, it is housed in a colonial building in the midst of well-kept gardens. It has a swimming pool, tennis courts, restaurant, bar and a coffee shop.

colonel's retreat (tourist)

A well run guest house run by a family with army traditions, in the residential area of Defence Colony, within walking distance of the Defcol market with its choice of cafes and restaurants.

- deogarh

***the mahal (standard)**

The 17th century fort of Deogarh has been converted into a charming heritage hotel. All the 50 rooms and suites have air-conditioning or air-cooling. There is a bar, a restaurant and a swimming pool.

dev shree (standard)

An elegant new property on the lake rich in birdlife, run with passion by the royal owners; the rooms are spacious and designed to high standards, one of our favourites.

- dharamsala

***chonor house (tourist)**

This Tibetan style hotel owned by the Norbulingka Institute has 11 themed rooms painted by local artists. Rooms are simple but brightly painted with modern bathrooms and excellent views from balconies.



*Malabar House
The Imperial
Dev Shree*

norbu house (tourist)

Hotel Norbu House is situated on a quiet path on the ridge facing the Dalai Lama's temple with stunning views which stretch for over 80 kilometres down the valley. It has a terrace restaurant with breathtaking views.

- dungarpur

***udai bilas palace (standard)**

Flanked by the Gaibsagar Lake on one side and a forest on the other, this 19th Century heritage hotel is a royal residence with 20 rooms, two dining areas and a swimming pool.

- gangtok

denzong regency (standard)

It has 24 rooms and suites with comfortable heating system and individual private balconies each facing Kanchenjunga, two dining areas and an inviting bar.

***norkhill (standard)**

Located above Paljor Stadium, close to town centre, this period property has 25 rooms, a restaurant and a bar

- gondal

***orchard palace (tourist)**

A former palace retaining its original character with 11 well appointed, spacious, air-cooled rooms in the midst of sprawling gardens.

- gwalior

***usha kiran palace (first class)**

A heritage hotel, this former palace has 28 air-conditioned rooms in the midst of sprawling lawns. Within walking distance of the Jai Vilas Palace Museum, it has a restaurant and bar. Recently refurbished to high standards.

***deo bagh (tourist)**

This elegant heritage property has 15 rooms spread across 5 wings, facing a Nau Bagh, a garden chequered into nine parts.

- haridwar

***haveli hari ganga (tourist)**

A tastefully converted merchant house on the Ganges, with the finest vegetarian food in town; reached by cycle rickshaws in the heart of Haridwar, a short walk from Har-ki-Pauri.

- hassan

hoysala village (standard)

Situated about 5 kms outside the town of Hassan and designed on the lines of the local villages, this hotel has 33 cottages and suites set amidst gardens and lawns. The rooms are spacious and there is a swimming pool and restaurant.

- hospet

malligi tourist home (tourist)

A modern hotel with 116 rooms, most with air-conditioning, it has a restaurant and a bar.

hampi's boulders (standard)

Situated at Narayanapet, 7 kms from Hampi's ruins. The resort has 16 rooms and is an ideal place for nature lovers.

orange county (first class)

With stunning rugged forests and boulders forming its backdrop, Orange County, Hampi is located just 4 km from this UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- hyderabad

***falak numa (deluxe)**

The former residence of the Nizams of Hyderabad, Falaknuma Palace has been leased by the Royal Family to the Taj Group with the family members having personally supervised part of the refurbishment. It has 60 rooms and suites with all modern amenities.

- jaipur

***ram bagh & jai mahal palace (deluxe & first class)**

set amid sprawling lush green lawns, both these hotels, each with just over a hundred rooms, are former palaces of Rajput kings and are part of the Taj Group of Hotels. They offer all modern amenities as well as horse riding and tennis. Ram Bagh Palace has an indoor pool and Jai Mahal an outdoor one. There is a choice of restaurants. Both are reasonably central with Jai Mahal being closer to the city centre.

the trident (first class)

This modern hotel with 138 rooms on 4 floors overlooks the Mansagar Lake and is built in rose-coloured stone, characteristic of Jaipur. It has a restaurant, a bar, swimming pool as well as a fitness centre.

***royal heritage haveli (standard)**

Built in the 18th century by His Highness, Madho Singh ji of Jaipur. Just 12 suites are in service as the hotel is dedicated to providing a quiet and tranquil haven of space and luxury to the discerning few. It has a pool and spa.

***samode haveli (standard)**

This century and a half old royal mansion is now a charming heritage hotel with 21 air-conditioned rooms with frescoed walls and ceilings complemented by period furniture, and a personalized service.

***dera mandawa (tourist)**

A calm retreat away from the chaos of Jaipur, this 100-year-old haveli is grand and charming yet small enough to feel homely and provide old-school Rajasthani hospitality. It has 9 suites and has a close proximity to the main sites fo Jaipur.

khas bagh (standard)

Located on the outskirts of Jaipur, close to Amber this farm retreat is tucked away in the Aravali hills. It has eighteen luxuriously appointed rooms with antique furniture, a pool and a polo lounge.



*Royal Heritage Haveli
Dera Mandawa
Khas Bagh*

- jaisalmer

gulaal (tourist)

The hotel is built of Jaisalmer Golden sandstone adorned with traditional furniture and local textiles. The roof top restaurant offers a fascinating view of Fort. It has 12 rooms.

suryagarh (first class)

Suryagarh occupies a bluff atop a low hill. Right from the entrance with its large doorways, water bodies and arches, the property transports you to the age of royalty. It has 62 rooms and suites. It is 16 kms from Jaisalmer town.

- jodhpur

***umaid bhavan palace (deluxe)**

One of the grandest residences in the world and still the home of the Jodhpur Maharaja, it is perched on a hill with stunning views, well kept gardens and an indoor swimming pool.

***ratan vilas (standard)**

A heritage hotel with 38 air-cooled cottages, each with a different decor, and a few modern air-conditioned rooms; it has a swimming pool, and an open air restaurant.

***pal haveli (tourist)**

Today home to three generations of the Pal family, this grand, rambling townhouse was built in 18th century. Surrounded by high walls, the Haveli lies in the heart of Jodhpur's ancient walled city, under the gaze of magnificent Meherangarh Fort.

- jorhat

***thangal manor house (tourist)**

This 72-year old colonial style house is located in the village of Jalukonibari just outside Jorhat. The house has 5 rooms with period furniture and décor, some with air-conditioning.

- kalimpong

***silver oaks (tourist)**

A colonial style, small, period hotel with modern comforts; it is close to the town centre.

- kanam

***serenity at kanam estate (standard)**

This 1920s Malabar bungalow, surrounded by a rubber estate, sits on a small hilltop with views of the surrounding hills. It has 5 spacious rooms with colonial style hardwood furniture and a swimming pool.

- kawardha

***palace kawardha (first class)**

Built in 1939 using marble and stone from Italy, the Palace Kawardha is the stately residence of the local royal family. It has 6 suites with en-suite facilities and large verandahs. Meals are served in the State Dining Hall, where the royal family often join guests.

- khajuraho

radisson hotel (first class)

A modern centrally air-conditioned hotel, set in landscaped gardens, less than a mile from the Khajuraho temples, with all modern facilities, it has 94 rooms, a restaurant and bar and a pool in the midst of the gardens.

lalit grand temple view (first class)

The Lalit Temple View overlooks the temples famed for their erotic sculptures. It has 47 well appointed rooms and suites, a multi cuisine restaurant, a swimming pool, gymnasium and bar.

- khimsar

***khimsar fort (standard)**

A 16th century fort with battle scarred walls and turrets, it has been converted into a 50-room hotel with spacious rooms, a pool, a restaurant, bar and gymnasium. The facilities include tennis, horse riding and jeep safaris.

- kolkata (calcutta)

***the grand (deluxe)**

Characterised by Victorian architecture, this landmark hotel is centrally located in the fashionable quarters of the Chowringhee, in the very heart of the city. It has 213 elegantly furnished rooms, 3 restaurants, 2 bars, a pool, health club.

***lalit great eastern (deluxe)**

Built in 1841 as Auckland Hotel, it has been referred to as the 'Jewel of the East' and the 'Best Hotel East of the Suez', Restored and renovated over a period of seven years, this luxury hotel holds the distinction of being the longest continuously operating hotel for 165 years. It has 195 rooms and suites

***fairlawn (tourist)**

The quirky, colonial place is located right in the heart of Kolkata. All the major tourist attractions are within easy reach.

***rajbari bawali (standard)**

Located on the outskirts in a rural setting it has meticulously appointed rooms with an eye for detail. The distressed look of the furniture and fixtures blends well with the original remains of the restored structure.

- kumarakom

***coconut lagoon (first class)**

Built in traditional style with 42 tastefully decorated rooms, including some cottages with plunge pools, it overlooks the Vembanad Lake. It has an Ayurveda centre, an inviting pool, and is close to the Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary.

***kumarakom lake resort (first class)**

Another resort done up tastefully in ethnic style, it has extensive Ayurveda facilities. It has 22 cottages with individual verandahs, some facing the lakeside. Close to the sanctuary.

- kumbhalgarh

aodhi fort (tourist)

A modern hotel built like a fortress on the hillside, with



*The Grand
Ratan Vilas
Serenity at Kanam Estate*

21 air-conditioned rooms and a pool; within walking distance from the imposing fort.

- leh

shamba-la (tourist)

Modern hotel with 26 simple, comfortable rooms and en suite facilities, 2 kms from the bazaar. Heating available for rooms. Has a restaurant. Only limited credit cards accepted.

*stok palace (standard)

Built entirely by the Ladakhi craftsmen in 1820, the Stok Palace still continues to be a snug abode for the Namgyal dynasty. It has only 4 cottages. The garden is not manicured intentionally and is of untouched serene beauty.

- lucknow

vivanta by taj (first class)

Situated on the banks of the Gomti in the midst of 25 acres of landscaped gardens, this elegant hotel has 110 rooms, designed in local style, 2 restaurants and a bar, tennis court, a pool and health club.

- manali

*casa bella vista (tourist)

It is a beautiful property which has an indoor fire place and is well known for its restaurant and special wood oven pizzas.

- madurai

*taj gateway (first class)

A magnificent period hotel on a hillock, 5 kms from the city centre, with panoramic views, set in a huge area of very impressive gardens, with 50 large elegant rooms. The tennis court, health club and pool are reached through a steep flight of stairs, cut on the hillside.

*heritage hotel (standard)

Originally designed by Geoffrey Bawa, in his tropical modernism-style, which blends the inside with the outside, this tranquil, low-rise resort has 72 rooms including 35 villas. Guests can dine under a 200 year old banyan tree.

- mandawa

*castle mandawa (standard)

A heritage hotel with character, the 70 rooms have fans or air-conditioning with modern facilities. It has a restaurant and bar and is centrally located.

*dera mandawa farm (tourist)

A sprawling 95 acre piece of land, this was constructed as a horse ranch and farm house. A thriving farm even today, with farm forestry and mixed cropping it is also home to a herd of indigenous Tharparkar cows and camels. Beautifully appointed rooms that are rustic and comfortable in equal measure await you at the farm.

- mountabu

*connaught house (standard)

A small 14-room heritage hotel in colonial style with its own restaurant and private facilities with running hot & cold water, it is close to the town centre.

*bikaner house (standard)

Bikaner House was the summer residence of the Royal Family of Bikaner built by Maharaja Ganga Singhji of Bikaner in 1893. The Palace Hotel as it is now called was converted into a hotel in 1962. There are 33 rooms in total.

- mumbai (bombay)

* the taj mahal palace and towers (deluxe)

Located in the heart of the city, overlooking the Gateway of India and the harbour, quite simply one of the best-known five star hotels in the world, with 582 rooms. The old wing has an elegant turn of the century atmosphere, but offers the very best modern service. The new Tower Wing has good views of the harbour. Facilities include a pool & health club, beauty parlour, discotheque, 5 restaurants & 3 bars.

trident nariman point (first class)

It is located in the business district of South Mumbai with a spectacular view of the ocean. It has 555 guest rooms and two restaurants, a bar and gym.

the leela kempinski (deluxe)

A modern hotel with 423 rooms, it has all amenities including 5 restaurants, a bar and an inviting pool, located near the international airport, in the midst of beautiful, landscaped gardens

*the abode (tourist)

In the heart of Colaba, historical epicentre of the city, sits Abode; a tranquil haven of beautiful design and luxurious accommodation. 20 elegantly appointed rooms feature carefully restored vintage furniture and original artworks.

*gordon house (standard)

This charming and stylish boutique hotel located in Colaba, close to the Gateway of India, has 28 rooms on three themed floors – Mediterranean, Country and Scandinavian. There are two restaurants serving seafood and oriental cuisine.

- munnar

*windermere (standard)

A cozy guesthouse with a dozen elegant rooms, all with attached facilities and hot and cold water, it is located on the outskirts in a cardamom estate.

- mussoorie

*dunsvirk court (standard)

A period property, with 42 rooms, centrally located near the Library Point, it has a health club, 2 restaurants and a billiards table.



Vivanta by Taj
The Oberoi, Mumbai
Windermere

- mysore

radisson (first class)

Centrally located in the heart of the city, the hotel has 108 tastefully furnished spacious rooms. The facilities include a health club, a shopping arcade, 24-hour room service, 2 restaurants, a bar and a swimming pool.

*the green (standard)

With 4 charming rooms in the main building, a carefully restored palace building, and around 20 simple rooms in the new wing, this small, environment friendly, hotel is about 2 kms from the town centre and has an excellent restaurant.

*royal orchid metropole (first class)

A period hotel with spacious rooms now reopened with a change of looks as well as management.

- nainital

*naini retreat (standard)

A former residence of the Maharaja of Pilbhit, this old colonial building is refurbished as a comfortable resort offering all modern amenities. It has three restaurants, and a spa and wellness centre.

- nimaj

chhatra sagar resort (standard)

Eleven well-appointed luxury tents overlooking the Chhatra Sagar Lake, it is an ideal get away for nature lovers. The tents have attached modern facilities with running hot and cold water, and a private sit out. Food is cooked with farm fresh vegetables in the family kitchen.

- ooty

*savoy (standard)

This elegant period hotel has 40 spacious rooms and a colonial style bar. All rooms have a fireplace and well appointed bathrooms.

- osian

*camel camp osian (standard)

Comfortable tents with a modern en suite bathroom, running hot and cold water, common sitting areas and white-gloved service, with a bar in the middle of the sand dunes, the camp is ideal for camel safaris, located 60 kms from Jodhpur.

- palghat (now called palakkad)

*tharavad (tourist)

Located in the middle of the village, this traditional Kerala house with simple furnishings is a good way to sample rural life.

- pelling

norbugang (tourist)

Located on a ridge with excellent views, this simple but comfortable hotel, with en suite facilities, serves local cuisine; located 2 kms from the monastery.

- pemayangtse

mt pandim (tourist)

A simple, modern hotel with en suite facilities and excellent views, serves local cuisine; located near the monastery.

- pondicherry

*hotel de l'orient (standard)

A small 10-room heritage property located inside the town, it has been tastefully restored to recreate the colonial influence of the French era. The rooms are air-conditioned and there is a restaurant offering French and local cuisine.

palais de mahe (standard)

A property with a period touch; the rooms have a classic conceptual décor, airy high ceilings, traditional roof beams, arched doorways and modern amenities.

*maison perumal (standard)

A 10 rooms hotels, serves a choice of local and international dishes with an emphasis on local produce. French architectural influences are marked by the tall arched windows and doors along with high ceilings.

- pragpur

*the judge's court (standard)

An ideal base for exploring village life, the hotel was built as a gift for Justice Sir Jai Lal and is in the midst of fruit orchards with 10 simple, elegant rooms. Located in the heritage village of Pragpur in Kangra Valley.

- pushkar

*pushkar palace (standard)

A heritage hotel with 28 rooms and 25 suites, located on the banks of the lake, it has a multi-cuisine restaurant.

- rishikesh

*glass house on the ganges (standard)

This secluded property located 23 kms from Rishikesh en route to Badrinath is set in a mango and lychee orchard. A former royal residence, it has 6 cottages overlooking the Ganges and the mountains beyond.

- rohetgarh

*rohetgarh (standard)

Home of the royal family of Rohet it has 25 comfortable rooms with modern facilities, horse and jeep safaris to nearby tribal villages and a swimming pool.

- samode

*samode palace & bagh (standard)

Run by the Samode royal family this beautiful 19th century palace has frescoed walls and ceilings and is a delightful place for a journey into the past to sample the lifestyle of Rajput kings. The original staff of the royal family looks after the place. The nearby Samode Bagh has luxury tents in the midst of acres of well-kept gardens, with a pool. There are 30 rooms in the Palace, some with air-conditioning, and 50 tents in the Bagh.



Chhatrasagar
Judge's Court
Rohetgarh

- sethumada

*banyan tree (standard)

A four-bedroom property in the middle of a sprawling 4500-acre multi-crop agricultural farm, with home-cooked food and comfortable air-conditioned rooms and modern plumbing, it is an excellent base for exploring the countryside and the nearby wildlife sanctuaries.

- shillong

*tripura castle (standard)

Spread over 9 acres of forest, the heritage hotel has 10 rooms with warm wood interiors, brass fireplace and art deco furniture. The rooms have attached facilities with hot & cold water and cable TV. The facilities include a multi-cuisine dining room, a tea lounge, mezzanine bar and a billiards room.

- simla (now called shimla)

*clarkes (standard)

A colonial style hotel close to the Mall, with period decor and Old World charm, with 39 heated rooms, a bar & restaurant - managed by the Oberois.

*the cecil (deluxe)

Located at one end of the Mall, near the Viceregal Lodge, this 79-room luxury hotel was the very first hotel of the world-famous Oberoi Group, and has recently been renovated to the highest standards. It has central air-conditioning, a swimming pool, health club and a billiards room.

- sultan's battery, wyanad

*coffee county (tourist)

A small family home, with warm hospitality and fresh food; the large simple rooms are tastefully furnished; the property has a small pool.

amaryliss (standard)

This beautiful family home overlooks the backwaters of the Karapuzha Reservoir, with the Western Ghats in the background. They have a large pool and serve excellent multi-cuisine with a touch of the past.

- tanjore

ideal river view (standard)

This resort is situated outside the town on a riverbank, with 20 air-conditioned cottage-style apartments with en suite facilities, landscaped lawns and a swimming pool.

*svatma (first class)

"A feel of rich fullness and wholesomeness is what you experience in all the comforts provided under one roof. The SVATMA is all about self-surrender to the abundant charms of ancient Tamil Nadu - its arts, architecture, culinary heritage and culture." It has 38 rooms, 3 restaurants, spa, gym & yoga centre.

- taragarh

*taragarh palace (standard)

A royal residence in the Kangra Valley, an hour by road

from Dharamshala, it has 15 simple, elegant rooms and a restaurant. It has a pool and tennis court.

- tellicherry

*ayisa mansil (standard)

An old colonial building with spacious rooms and high ceilings, overlooking the Arabian Sea, it has been tastefully restored by the owners, who are known for their culinary skills; it has a small pool.

- udaipur

*shiv niwas palace (first class)

Residence of the Maharana of Udaipur, part of it is now converted into a heritage hotel. Offering 17 stunning suites with views of Lake Pichola, this authentic regal experience is highly recommended for those who want to savour the rich lifestyle of the maharajas.

*leela palace (deluxe)

With a majestic location on the Lake Pichola and spectacular view of the Aravalli Mountains, this hotel evokes grandeur and opulence of the land of the Mewar. It has 80 rooms and suites, lake facing pool, spa and array of restaurants and lounges.

*lake palace (deluxe)

Rising from the tranquil waters of the Lake Pichola the 84-room hotel offers a swimming pool, bar, shopping arcade, and the opportunity to stay in one of the most romantic palaces in the world. Managed by the Taj group.

udai vilas (deluxe)

Located on the banks of the Lake Pichola in former royal hunting grounds, this palatial hotel with gold-leaf domes, and hand-carved colonnades is reminiscent of a Mewari moated palace. The hotel has 87 sumptuous rooms; two large heated swimming pools, two restaurants, a bar and excellent fitness and spa facilities.

the trident (first class)

A modern hotel located on the banks of Lake Pichola, 10 minutes drive from the city centre, this 143-room Oberoi property is set in landscaped gardens and has 2 restaurants and a bar, a heated swimming pool and a health club.

*jagat niwas (standard)

A 17th century 'Haveli' Jagat Niwas Palace is a family-run property on the lake. The rooms are divided into categories: Suite, Heritage, Haveli and Standard. The Suite and the Heritage categories offer lake views while the Haveli and most of the Standard rooms face the courtyard.

akshay niwas (standard)

Akshay Niwas has 10 individually designed and well appointed suites with attached large modern baths. All the rooms are tastefully designed and equipped with modern amenities. There is a pool.



The Cecil
Ayisa Mansil
Lake Palace

***shikarbadi (tourist)**

This former royal hunting lodge is now a hotel with a unique character. Besides a small swimming pool and a bar, the hotel has a deer park, stables, lake-boat rowing and air rifle shooting. The 25 rooms are done in a simple style but have modern facilities including air-conditioning. Located on the outskirts of the city, 5 kms from City Palace. The atmosphere is relaxing.

**- varanasi (or benares)
taj gateway (first class)**

A modern 130-room hotel close to a thick mango grove with central air-conditioning, swimming pool, tennis court and 24-hr room service, it is centrally located.

radisson (first class)

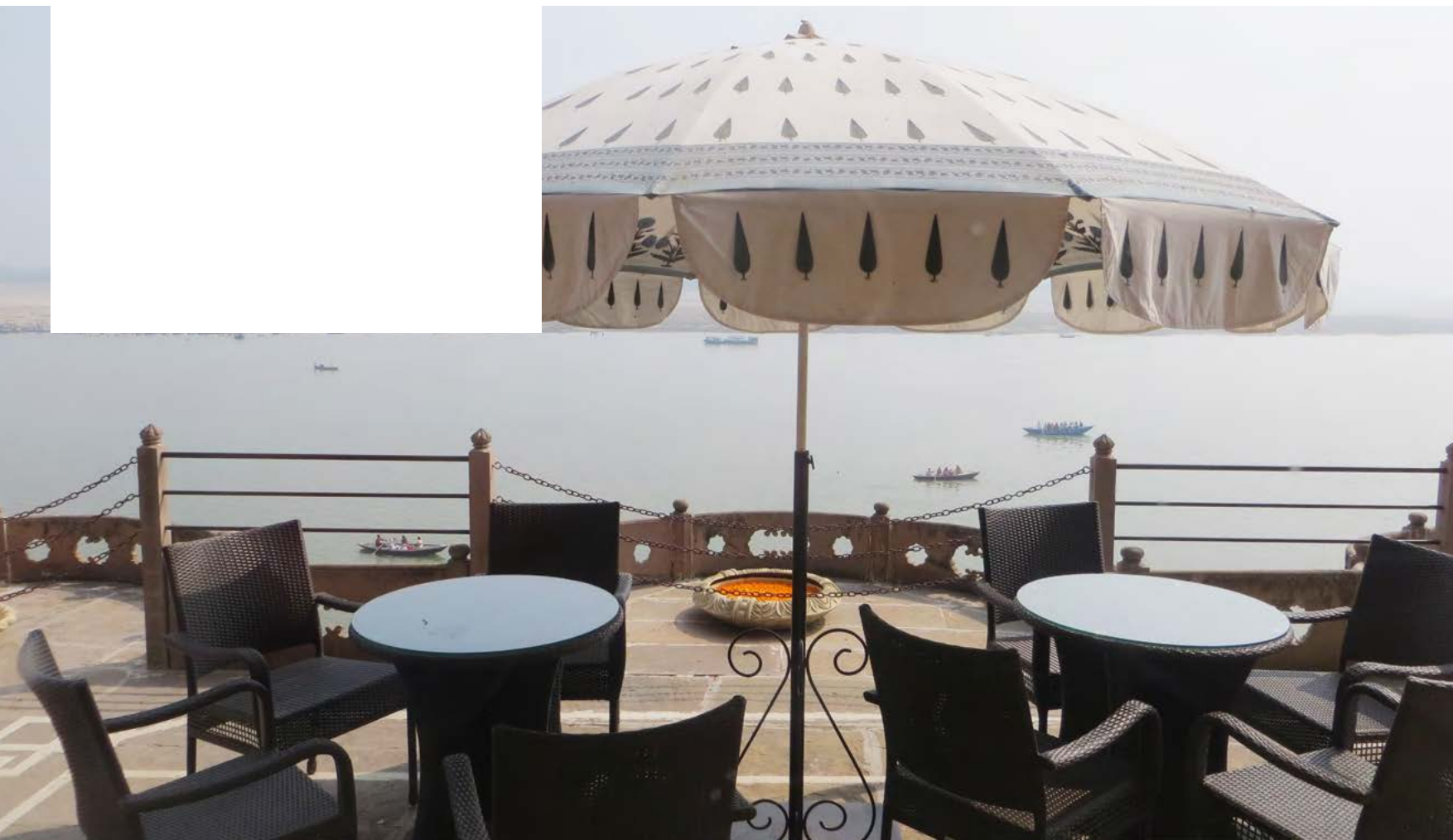
A modern hotel located on the Mall in the cantonment area, with 117 air-conditioned rooms, a restaurant, coffee shop and a swimming pool.

***brijrama palace (first class)**

Built in 18th century by the Royal house of Nagpur it is one of the oldest structures in Varanasi. The palace hotel is constructed out of solid sandstone and has beautifully crafted interiors, featuring artistic verandahs and pillars.



*Akshay Niwas
Brijrama Palace*





wildlife lodges

Wildlife parks have tents or lodges with simple and comfortable rooms and modern en suite facilities. Some have fans or air-conditioning in summer, some may have swimming pools. Winters are cold, especially in the North, and blankets and hot water bottles are the norm. We would advise adequate woollens including warm, snug sleeping clothes and a pair of slippers. The food is fresh and healthy, usually in local style only.

The gradation used here indicates the overall wildlife experience and not just the facilities. It varies from

√ Basic facilities to √√√√√ Luxury accommodation or top quality wildlife resort

- bandhavgarh kings lodge (√√√√)

Located in 14 hectares of forested estate it has 10 cottages and 8 still cottage rooms. It has an experienced team of naturalists and offers great service and hospitality; there is a pool. It is ten minutes by road from the Tala entrance.

- bharatpur *the bagh (√√√√)

Set in a two hundred year old garden, this heritage hotel has 14 tastefully decorated, spacious rooms, a vegetarian restaurant, bar and a fitness centre with facilities for ayurvedic massages.

- bhitarkanika *village resort (√√√)

Estuarine Village Resort is located at Nalitapatia village, close to the main entrance to the Park, renowned world over for its rich biodiversity. The Resort offers 5 cottages & 7 tents.

- corbett claridges corbett hideaway (√√√√)

The resort has 40 large air-conditioned cottages in verdant environs, and has a tennis court, swimming pool, billiards, a lecture hall and library.

infinity resorts (√√√√)

This resort has 24 spacious twin-bedded rooms with private balconies arranged around a swimming pool, and offers excellent views of the Kosi River and the Kumaon Hills.

- dasada rann riders (√√√)

An ethnically designed eco-resort, it offers jeep, horse and camel safaris in the Little Rann, habitat of Asiatic Wild Ass and a host of birds. Its 28 cottages resemble the kooba houses of the Bajania community and the bhunga houses of the Rabaris.

- dudhwa *tree of life jaagir lodge (√√√√)

A private home used by the British Governors as a hunting lodge, it is surrounded by sugar cane plantations, walking trails in the forest, a 'leechibagh' and much more. They have well crafted 3 luxury rooms, 3 luxury suites and 2 luxury villas.

- gir gir lion safari camp (√√√)

Located in a private mango orchard overlooking the Hiran River, this eco-friendly camp has 21 AC Luxury Tents each with large well furnished bedrooms and attached bathrooms.

- jawai jawai leopard camp (√√√√√)

Jawai is located in an open bowl, surrounded by craggy rock formations in the Aravalli Hills. It has 9 double tented suites. Being in the heart of 'leopard country', leopards are Jawai's main attraction, apart from a host of birds.

*castle bera (√√√)

A heritage family home, Castle Bera is in a small hamlet situated in the Aravali range, surrounded by lakes & dams. It has five simple rooms with en suite facilities. The royal family are experienced naturalists.

- kanha earth lodge (√√√√)

Kanha Earth Lodge lies in 16 acres of natural forest. It offers 12 open-fronted, luxury bungalows with en suite bathrooms and large verandahs.

shergarh resort (√√√√)

Shergarh is a peaceful jungle abode nestled around a spring-fed lake on the edge of the reserve, with just six cozy tents, delicious home-cooked food, excellent naturalists and a fabulous local team.

banjaar tola (√√√√√)

Banjaar Tola is situated along the banks of the Banjaar River, directly overlooking the heart of Kanha National Park. The luxurious, yet lightweight, en suite tents have been designed in a contemporary style. It offers 18 tented suites.

- kaziranga wild grass resort (√√√)

Built in rural style, this comfortable resort has 18 rooms in two blocks set in a large area with more than two hundred varieties of shrubs and forty species of trees.

diphlu river lodge (√√√√)

Located on the banks of the Diphlu River and overlooking the Kaziranga National Park, there are 8 individual cottages and 4 semi-detached cottages. The raised



Jawai Leopard Camp
Earth Lodge
Banjaar Tola

cottages are made of natural materials like bamboo and wood, topped with thatched roofs to blend in with the forest surroundings.

- mudumalai jungle hut (✓✓✓)

A well established family run resort, now with the next generation, the resort has simple cottages and a pool, with great hospitality and fresh food; a visit the elephant camp is possible; the safaris are in shared jeeps.

- nagarhole kabini river lodge (✓✓✓✓)

This picturesque resort on the banks of the Kabini River it is situated just outside the Nagarhole National Park and offers accommodation in 14 colonial style rooms, 6 cottages and 5 tents. There is a communal dining area beside the lake.

the serai (✓✓✓)

This is located on the banks of the Kabini River, a good spot for viewing. The view of the backwaters against a clear blue sky is an ideal setting to observe the rich Jungle.

orange county (✓✓✓✓✓)

Inspired in design by the Hadis or tribal villages, this picturesque resort of sweeping panoramic vistas, is bordered on two sides by the Kabini River. Jacuzzi & Pool huts offer you well appointed living spaces and comfortable bedrooms.

- pench jamtara (✓✓✓✓✓)

Jamtara Wilderness Camp is a 10 luxury tented property in the heart of rural Pench. Surrounded by tall Arjuna Trees and an ancient Banyan rooted on a dry riverbed, each tented room overlooks the forest.

pench jungle camp (✓✓✓)

The resort has 13 air conditioned tents, 3 cottages and 4 Premier Air-Conditioned Rooms. The common areas have a lounge, a pool and a spa.

- periyar spice village (✓✓✓✓)

Charming cottages in the middle of spice plantations; this resort is ideal for relaxation. On the outskirts of the sanctuary, this has a swimming pool, an Ayurveda centre, a well-run restaurant and an atmospheric bar. The 52 rooms are air-cooled.

shalimar spice garden (✓✓✓)

Located on a tranquil hillside, this property has 12 rooms of mixed Kerala and European influenced décor and design, set in a spice garden, and is accessed by a suspension bridge. The property also has a swimming pool.

cardamom county (✓✓✓)

It has comfortable cottages built on various levels along the hillside; the spacious rooms have verandahs and a

view of the green surrounds; it has a pool and a spa.

- ranthambore khem villas (✓✓✓✓)

A cosy jungle camp, it has 25 rooms divided into 8 cottages, 4 standard rooms and 13 tents. This camp is designed to provide a peaceful nature feel in tranquil surroundings, with a touch of luxury and personal care.

*sawai madhopur lodge (✓✓✓✓)

This former hunting lodge of the Jaipur Maharajas has 29 well-appointed rooms, including two suites in the original building, spread across the property. It is also possible to stay in tented accommodation in the winter months.

ranthambore kothi (✓✓✓)

The Ranthambore Kothi offers 28 well appointed and aesthetically designed Regal and Deluxe rooms, with lush courtyard and private balcony to enjoy the fascinating sight of open gardens, swimming pool and the tiger sanctuary.

tiger den (✓✓✓)

A 20-room resort featuring air-conditioned, well furnished cottages, large lawns and gardens, as well as a swimming pool.

- satpura reni pani jungle lodge (✓✓✓✓)

It features 12 luxury cottages encompassing 3 distinct structural designs, a cosy central meeting place called the Gol Ghar & a jungle pool located along its seasonal nullah. It is spread over 30 acres of striking forest cover typical of the Satpuras'.

denwa backwater escape satpura (✓✓✓✓)

Overlooking the backwaters of a dam built on Denwa River, located in Madhai, the resort is built on 10 acres of forested land along the river. It has 8 deluxe river view cottages and 2 river view Tree Houses.

- sunderbans sundarbans tiger camp (✓)

Built in lush green surroundings, this camp offers four types of accommodation, totalling 21 rooms. The interiors of the cottages are hand painted to experience rustic charm.

- tadoba svasara jungle lodge (✓✓✓✓)

Svasara is 300 metres from Kolara Gate at Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve. It is an upscale jungle lodge with twelve elegantly appointed suite-rooms featuring all modern conveniences and luxury amenities.

tiger trails jungle lodge tadoba (✓✓✓)

Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge is situated in the Chichghat Valley of the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve and is adjacent to the entry point of the park. It is surrounded by dry deciduous forest, grasslands and perennial waterholes. It has 10 cottages.



Diphlu River Lodge
Ranthambore Kothi
Reni Pani Jungle Lodge

beach resorts

- andamans

barefoot resort (standard)

The Barefoot at Havelock resort consists of 31 elegantly designed thatch tents, cottages and villas complete with spacious interiors, modern amenities and en suite bathrooms. Constructed using environmentally sensitive indigenous materials, this is the first ecologically friendly resort in the Andaman Islands.

- covelong

fisherman's cove (deluxe)

This well known 5 star resort, set in landscaped gardens, is run by the Taj Group and is located on the quiet Covelong beach, under an hour's drive from Chennai. The facilities include 88 air-conditioned rooms and cottages, including some sea-view cottages near the beach, a swimming pool, bar and seafood restaurant. One can take a catamaran ride, cycle to the nearby crocodile farm or walk around in the local fishing village. The world famous rock carvings and shore temples of Mamallapuram are a short drive away.

- goa

the leela palace (deluxe)

This luxury resort, set in 75 acres of lush gardens and lagoons, it is one of the southernmost in Goa and is tucked away on one of the whitest beaches at Mobar. Facilities include a swimming pool, health spa, various restaurants, tennis and squash courts, a ten-hole golf course and water sports. Most of the 137 rooms and suites have an individual terrace or balcony.

fort aguada beach resort (deluxe)

One of the oldest luxury resorts on the Sinquerim Beach in north Goa, it has a main hotel (Hotel Fort Aguada), a village with Goan-style cottages (Taj Holiday Village) and some exclusive villas on a hillside (The Aguada Hermitage). They are close to each other and are conveniently located for the inviting beach. Facilities include swimming pools, health club, water sports and a range of restaurants. It has easy access to local markets.

coconut creek (standard)

Located a short walk from the Bogmalo Beach in South Goa, this property has 20 cottage style rooms amidst swaying coconut palms.

alila diwa (first class)

Alila Diwa is on the Gonsua Beach in Majorda, 20 minutes from the airport. Set amidst lush rice plantations the architecture is inspired by traditional Goan design – steeply pitched roofs, ceiling high columns, cool verandas and tranquil courtyards; the resort has 153 rooms and suites.

- kerala

marari beach resort, mararikulam (first class)

An hour's drive from Kochi, this excellently run resort in ethnic style, set in 25 acres of coconut palm groves, has 52 air-conditioned cottages with private verandahs and an open-air en suite bathroom. An inviting pool, extensive Ayurveda facilities, excellent seafood and a long stretch

of sandy beach make the stay here worthwhile. Some cottages have private plunge pools.

abad turtle (standard)

Abad Turtle Beach Resort is spread across an area of 13 acres of land in Mararikulam, a fishing village about 50 km from Kochi. Stretching across the expansive area are 29 beach cottages and villas. The rooms are spacious, air-conditioned with en-suite facilities and individual patios, equipped with TV, Telephone, Fridge, Tea/coffee maker and safe deposit locker.

leela beach resort & spa, kovalam (deluxe)

One of the best-located beach hotels in the country, perched on a hillock with beautiful views of the beach, the famous architect Charles Correa won a prestigious award for its unique design. The 106-room hotel has an inviting pool, two restaurants and a bar. The beach is approached by a steep flight of stairs but there is also a longer more gradual route.

travancore heritage, kovalam (standard)

An elegant resort on a hillside overlooking the sea, it has 43 heritage villas with air-conditioning built in the ethnic style. There are facilities for Ayurveda as well as Yoga with an inviting pool. There is a lift to get down to the beach and the new modern block with 20 rooms is located at sea level.

***nirmaya surya samudra beach resort, kovalam (deluxe)**

An exclusive boutique resort south of Kovalam; it has 21 ethnic style cottages with open-air en suite facilities. Built on a cliff it overlooks a fine stretch of beach and the constant sea breeze obviates the need for air-conditioning. It has a pool in natural settings, facilities for Ayurveda, and a highly recommended chef.

nileshwar hermitage (deluxe)

The luxurious resort is in the north of Kerala, close to Mangalore airport; it has ayurveda and spa treatments and a huge infinity pool. Surrounded by lush gardens of hibiscus and frangipani, light and airy palm-roofed cottages blend traditional Kerala architecture with contemporary design. It has 18 rooms & suites each with their own verandah.

-mahabalipuram

radisson temple bay beach resort (deluxe)

This five star resort has 72 cottages and rooms equipped with all modern amenities like air-conditioning, hot & cold water, refrigerator, cable television and telephone. The property boasts a large swimming pool, a multi-cuisine restaurant and a trendy sea front bar called High Tide.

ideal beach resort (standard)

Situated close to the 7th century Shore Temple and rock carvings this intimate beach resort offers spacious air-conditioned cottages and a restaurant serving excellent seafood. It has a pool and a bar.



*Marari Beach Resort
The Leela, Kovalam
Niramaya Surya Samudra Beach Resort*



These are places where you can get away to relax, rejuvenate, rediscover yourself, explore nature, walk around, leaving the world behind. We have not given a gradation here, as we felt it was not appropriate

*mary budden, kumaon

This 19th century heritage home is tucked away at 8000' in the Binsar Sanctuary in Kumaon, four hours' by road from Kathgodam. The estate, named after its last known British inhabitant, harvests rain water, is fully powered by solar energy and its gardens abound with organic produce. One can walk in the hills, see wildlife, enjoy the views, and visit the nearby village of Dalar. It can accommodate up to six, and accepts only one set of clients at a time, so you have total privacy.

*ananda in the himalayas, rishikesh

This luxury spa hotel is a place for rejuvenation with a large swimming pool, 2 gyms, tennis courts and a range of treatments including Ayurveda. Located on a hilltop at 3000', on the outskirts of Rishikesh, it has excellent views.

*the ramgarh bungalows, kumaon

These 19th century colonial bungalows are located in the Kumaon Hills. Ramgarh has 6 tastefully done up cottages, with a total of 15 rooms between them. Kathgodam Station is a 2-hour drive away. The bungalows are blessed with their own fruit orchards that consist of a variety of peach, apricot, plum, pear, and apple trees. Their marmalade and jams are quite famous; they are organic and made in-house.

*itmenaan, kumaon

This 10-acre resort includes virgin pine, oak and rhododendron trees; terraced fields laden with seasonal fruits and vegetables; and a small private perennial natural spring. This resort near Binsar in Kumaon offers panoramic views of the Himalayas including the majestic Nanda Devi. The house offers 3 tastefully designed bedrooms, all offering attached bathrooms and a day bed by the window. They arrange treks through nearby villages of several days' duration

*kalari kovilakom, palakkat

At Kalari Kovilakom experience the combination of royal living and ayurveda. Treatments here are individually developed for you by the doctors, often combined with yoga and other methods to provide deep-seated, lasting change from within. The resort offers a total of 18 heritage suites. It is located in Kollengode near Palakkat, some three hours' drive from Kochi.

swasara, gokarna

Located on the fabled Om Beach in Karnataka, south of Goa, the resort is set amidst 26 acres of green lawns, gardens and rolling hills surrounded by pristine beaches. With Yoga at its core SwaSwara is for those who seek not just a mere vacation but a true holiday of the human spirit. It offers a total of 24 Konkani Villas.

kalari rasayana, kollam

You will retreat into 8 acres of expansive, green lakeside dotted with coconut groves. Kalari Rasayana

is a place where the mind, body and spirit are treated together by expert physicians with a combination of personal attention and the purest tenets of ayurveda. At Kalari Rasayana, the food is prepared on saatvic principles thousands of years old. Your diet is individually prescribed, based on your constitution and your treatments. This is in Kollam, a short drive from Trivandrum.

anantya, nagercoil

Anantya's design is inspired by Laurie Baker and Geoffrey Bawa's ideals of minimalism, eco friendliness and trueness of materials. All of Anantya's 21 Villas face the lake and seamlessly blend the outdoors and the indoors. Rustic local finishes of mudwalls, exposed brickwork, handmade tiles on sloping roofs and rubble masonry mesh with carefully selected furniture to create a refined space to retreat and relax.

*tijara fort palace, tijara

One stay at this 19th century Fort-Palace will get you started on the discovery of the most unique heritage hotels in Alwar. There are 21 suites and rooms, named after India's leading lady painters and honours them by evoking their work. Seven terraced gardens command a magnificent view above the tall ramparts that have now been lovingly completed and restored. This magnificent fort on a hill is a two hours' drive from Delhi Airport.

the retreat, bhopal

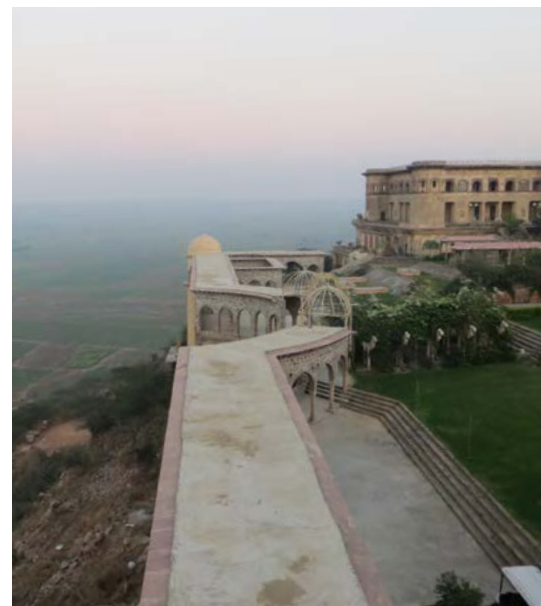
The Retreat is gateway to or the last post on a nature trail through Madhya Pradesh. 28 rooms in 6 residential cottage clusters, these charmingly styled huts could easily have been transplanted here from a local village deep in the heart of the country – were it not for the fine luxury within. Located within Bhopal town, this has a large pool and well run spa.

the sarai at toria, panna

Located amidst agricultural land in unspoilt countryside, the Sarai at Toria spreads over nine acres of undulating land. With the river on one side and a small forest patch at the back, they can provide many lovely corners for hideaway reading and relaxation and for private alfresco meals. Grasslands and jungle near the resort attract fantastically coloured dragonflies, contain varied birdlife and are also a home for mammals such as langur, nilgai, jackal, mongoose and jungle cats.

*wildflower hall, mashobra

Once the home of the British Commander-in-Chief Lord Kitchener, this magnificent hotel is a short 45-minute drive from Shimla. Each of the 85 rooms and suites has splendid views of mountains, snow-capped peaks and cedar forests. The resort has a pool and an extensive spa.



Tijara
Itmenaan
Wildflower Hall

amaryliss, wayanad

This resort is set amidst the serenity and timeless beauty of Wayanad's famed mist shrouded mountains. They have a total of five rooms and two luxury Tree Villas. The garden is home to a large variety of plants that they have collected for many years. In fact each room gets its name from an exotic flower from the garden. One has the benefit of a large pool, and excellent hospitality of the live-in hosts. This is some three hours from Calicut Airport.

poovar island resort, puzhiyoor

Enveloped in serene Kerala backwaters, flanked by the Arabian Sea on the East and the majestic towering Ghats to the West, opening out to the ocean and a dream golden beach, Poovar Island Resort is a tropical paradise. It has 86 cottages offering a range of accommodation options. The bathrooms come equipped with Jacuzzis, bathtubs or rain showers. 48 rooms come with a hammock in the balcony. This is located a two-hour drive south of Trivandrum and is reached by boat.

ecotones, munnar

This is place where you can transition into the wild and unwind in the lap of nature. Guests can indulge in nature-oriented exploratory activities such as bird watching and nature trails or can just sit back and enjoy the scenic view. With activities such as cycling and guided nature walks, guests are one step closer to nature. They have a total inventory of 9 rooms.

rainforest, athirapally

This is a boutique hotel set in 7 acres of virtually virgin rainforest with 10 well appointed air conditioned rooms and a tree house. It overlooks Asia's largest waterfall, Athirapally, and is a convenient drive from Kochi.

the dune, pondicherry

The Dune Eco Village & Spa, Puducherry is an eco-friendly beach hotel located on 35 acres of untouched nature by the beach. They offer fifty five uniquely designed bungalows fusing traditional and modern architecture to give guests a unique and unforgettable holiday experience. The 2 restaurants serve healthy gourmet fusion food, prepared using organically farmed vegetables.

***glenburn estate, darjeeling**

In the midst of a 1600-acre tea estate with beautiful mountain views, the bungalow has four tastefully furnished spacious suites and is an ideal base for exploring Darjeeling and Sikkim or for finishing that delightful book you have not managed to so far. This is three hours away from Bagdogra Airport.

orange county resort, coorg

Built in the midst of a coffee plantation the resort has cottages with elegant spacious rooms and modern amenities including air-conditioning, television, a well-run restaurant and an inviting swimming pool. Ideal for walks and angling on the Cauvery River, it is an hour's drive from Mercara, the main town of Coorg, and 3 hours from Mysore.

tamara coorg

Located 34 kms from Madikeri. the Tamara Coorg is a luxury 56-key resort and presides over an estate of 170 acres producing coffee, cardamom, pepper and honey. It is currently one of the few places in the world that is built inside a functional coffee plantation.

***devigarh fort palace, delwara**

Located 28 kms from Udaipur, this boutique hotel consists of 23 suites, each more than 700 sq ft in size. The individually styled rooms have air-conditioning and heating, personal CD player, cable television, marble bath tub and a separate standing shower. A heated marble swimming pool, an Ayurvedic spa, fitness center, restaurant and bar add to the pleasure of staying in this delightful property. The activities include horse riding, trekking, bicycle trips, yoga and meditation.

***ramathra fort, karauli**

This dreamy little hotel lies in a beautifully unspoilt and pretty area of Eastern Rajasthan, southeast of Jaipur. The 350 year old Ramathra Fort was originally the 17th century stronghold of the Jadoan Rajputs. It lies between two of India's great wildlife reserves, Keoladeo Ghana Bird Sanctuary in Bharatpur and Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve in Sawai Madhopur. The accommodation comprises 6 rooms and 6 garden tents.

***ahilya fort, maheshwar**

This 18th century fort situated high on the banks of the river Narmada was once the capital of Ahilya Bai Holkar. It has now been converted into a hotel with 9 air-cooled rooms with en-suite facilities. Some rooms have excellent views of the river, and it is also possible to stay in comfortable tents. Your hosts are the descendants of the Holkar Family. You are three hours from Indore Airport here.

***mancotta chang bungalow, dibrugarh**

This 157-year old bungalow built by British tea planters in Assam is located in the middle of a working tea estate. Built on stilts, it has 6 elegantly furnished rooms. They offer horse rides along the river, village walks, and a host of other activities.

***gajner palace, gajner**

Gajner Palace is a lakeside palace-complex adjoining a sanctuary, in the middle of Thar Desert. It was built by HH Maharaja Sir Ganga Singh of Bikaner on the edge of a lake. The property was converted into a heritage hotel in 1976. There inventory of 45 rooms is a combination of deluxe rooms & historic suites. It is a short drive from Bikaner.

***rajakkad estate, dindigul**

A small garden hotel with 7 unique bedrooms; it is within an 18th century wooden structure that perfectly expresses its rich architectural heritage. It is a world to be found in the lush forests, the coffee estates and the grandeur of the Palani Hills, a two-hour drive from Madurai.



*The Tamara
The Dune
Amaryliss*

citrus county, hoshiarpur

Citrus County offers 3 guest suites within the house and 9 luxury tents that ensure the privacy and comfort of home. Each spacious room within the house features views of either the pool or the lush garden. Each of the fully air-conditioned rooms is equipped with a TV, wireless broadband internet and oil heaters. They offer village and farm experience here.

kairali resort, palakkad

This is a dedicated Ayurvedic health resort with 30 air-conditioned cottages with tasteful furnishings. It is built in the midst of sprawling gardens, away from the hustle bustle of city life in a village outside Palakkad. It has a large swimming pool, serves vegetarian food tailored to your medical needs, and does not allow alcohol or smoking. A resident doctor prescribes and oversees the Ayurvedic treatment.

mihir garh, jodhpur

Situated on a sand mound in the middle of the desert, about half an hour's drive from Rohet Garh and close to the Wilderness Camp, "Mihir Garh" literally means the Sun Fortress. The idea is to give people a genuine 'desert experience' whilst being opulent and different. The accommodation comprises 9 suites; then there are stables for the horses.



*Mihir Garh
Abilya Fort*



booking conditions

Harji's India Ltd

(Registered in England No. 12159329)

Time now for the small print; it helps to have the terms laid out, to avoid misunderstandings; it is also a legal requirement that we spell out the conditions under which we operate our holidays.

We recommend that you read these terms carefully. When you place your order, it is deemed that you accept our booking conditions.

Your contract is with Harji's India Ltd, trading as Harji's India or Harji's Asia. When you book a holiday with us you will receive an Acceptance Letter confirming your holiday contract with us along with an ATOL certificate that protects your holiday.

When booking through an agent for arrangements that include but are not limited to Harji's India arrangements, your contract will be with the agent and not with Harji's India who will simply be a supplier to your agent. Similarly if booking only one component of a holiday, e.g., a hotel or a flight, Harji's India will be a mere agent for the supplier and accepts no liability for the provision of the service.

1. How to Book: After deciding on your holiday, tailor-made or otherwise, please complete a Booking Form (this can be downloaded from our website or requested from us) and send it to us with the non-refundable deposit by cheque. You can also pay the deposit by bank transfer and send the Booking Form by post or email.

If booking through a travel agent he holds all monies paid on our behalf and a contract is deemed to exist with us immediately the payment is accepted by him. Harji's India will send you an Acceptance Letter normally within 7 days of receiving the booking. When booking through an agent, if the agent fails to adequately convey to us all your requirements, we will not be responsible for the resultant consequences. Similarly if your agent does not convey to you fully our advice or gives you advice not originating from us, we will not be responsible for such lack of information or incorrect advice.

2. Deposit: The deposit payable with your order is 20% of your holiday price. A higher deposit may be payable in some cases, such as for booking a luxury train or cruise or some specific hotels. We will advise you of these while accepting your booking or soon after, as and when our suppliers advise us. If an airfare is quoted separately it is normally against full immediate payment. The deposit amount is non-refundable, except in instances when we cancel the holiday or express our inability to operate it. In the latter case some charges may apply if the booking is within 8 weeks of departure.

3. Insurance: It is important that you have adequate travel insurance. Your failure to obtain it and any resultant consequences will not be our responsibility.

4. Confirmation and Final Payment: On receipt of the booking form and deposit if the holiday requested is available, if joining a group tour, or is a private journey already agreed with us, we will send you an Acceptance Letter, normally within 7 days. The balance amount due must be paid no later than 8 weeks before departure otherwise we reserve the right to treat your booking as cancelled and retain the deposit. If the booking is made within 8 weeks of departure, then the full tariff of the holiday is payable at the time of booking.

For private journeys the arrangements, are made after the acceptance of your booking and are as such subject to availability. Even for group tours flights, if included, may be subject to availability.

We can normally confirm all the arrangements within a few days but in some cases changes may be required or some confirmations may have to wait till much later. If we need to make a significant change such as a change of hotel or mode of transport or omission of a place, it is done with your concurrence. It is thus important that we have your contact numbers, both daytime and evenings, so that changes, if any, can be discussed.

For minor variations in the itinerary we do not make supplementary charges nor do we offer reductions. However if the cost variation exceeds 2% of the total holiday price you may be required to pay the difference, if the costs go up, or become entitled to a refund, if the costs come down.

If the availability of a certain portion of the holiday, or a specific hotel, is critical for you it must be specified in writing at the time of booking. Non-availability of this critical element will entitle you to a full refund of all monies paid, including the deposit. If, after notification of the non-availability of critical element(s) of your holiday, you decide to still proceed with the holiday, you cannot subsequently cancel it using this condition. We expect you to be reasonable when specifying critical elements, if any, or else we may have to refuse your booking.

In instances where you have not specified any critical elements, if the very nature of the holiday changes due to non-availability of significant portion(s) of the tour, we will ourselves offer you the option of a later departure or cancellation with full refund. An exception to this condition may be made for bookings within 8 weeks of departure. In such instances we may have to pay non-refundable deposits for confirming certain portions of the itinerary. If such last minute bookings are cancelled due to non-availability of some portion(s) of the holiday, we would expect you to pay for the costs incurred by us.

5. Travel Documents: Travel documents are normally sent to you approximately 2 weeks before departure, by email or post. These include

your international flight tickets (if purchased through us), a final updated itinerary, local contacts at your destination, some useful tips and suggestions including on tipping, etc. Vouchers for hotels and internal travel, etc., are delivered on arrival at the destination.

6. Price Guarantee: The price of your holiday is fully guaranteed and is not subject to any surcharges. This guarantee is applicable once we have accepted your booking through an Acceptance Letter and is subject to all payments being received by the due dates. The guarantee applies to complete holidays bought from us and does not cover the purchase of individual items such as airline tickets or hotel rooms. Thus if a flight is quoted separately, it is not protected against future cost increases prior to ticketing. Also supplements such as for club class in flights or higher grade rooms in hotels are not covered by this guarantee.

N.B. Price variations due to changes in itinerary are not surcharges and are not governed by this guarantee. Surcharge, as defined, is only attributable to variation in costs of existing elements of the itinerary.

7. Alteration or Cancellation by you: If you wish to make a change after the booking has been accepted and arrangements confirmed, an amendment fee of £50 per set of alterations per person will be charged, in addition to any cost difference. Changing the date of departure will entail a higher amendment fee of £100 per person. If the alteration or date change is requested after the balance amount has become payable, higher charges may apply, especially if the change has a knock-on effect on the remaining arrangements or if advances have already been paid to our suppliers.

If you seek any alterations once the tour has already begun, we will treat your request sympathetically but cannot guarantee their implementation. Any costs incurred in making such alterations will be passed on to you and the unutilised portion of the holiday will attract 100% cancellation charges.

Should you wish to cancel your tour, you must notify us in writing stating the reasons for cancellation as you may be covered by your insurance policy. Such cancellation will deem to take place only on the date of receipt of your written request or email and will attract the following cancellation charges:

Date of receipt of cancellation notification	Cancellation charges
More than 56 days before departure	the deposit amount
29 to 56 days before departure	40% of tour price
15 to 28 days before departure	60% of tour price
8 to 14 days before departure	75% of tour price
4 to 7 days before departure	90% of tour price
3 days before to date of departure or after	100% of tour price

These charges cover a complete tour and not elements bought separately. Thus a non refundable ticket, bought as a separate item with your knowledge, will attract 100% cancellation.

8. Cancellation of a Tour by us before departure: We reserve the right to cancel a holiday on offer by us, including tailor-made holidays, without assigning reasons at any time over 8 weeks before departure date. In such a case, we will offer you a comparable alternative or at your option refund all monies paid by you.

If a holiday cancellation takes place within 8 weeks of departure it will be for one of the following reasons:

- Due to non-payment or late payment of the balance amount due. In such cases an alternative holiday or refund will not be available and cancellation charges will apply.
- Due to circumstances beyond our control such as cancellation of international or domestic scheduled service, technical problems with transportation, civil disorder or the threat of such, riots, strikes, natural disasters, accident or pollution, terrorist activity or the threat of such, war or the threat of war, etc. In deciding whether it is safe to visit a certain destination or not, we depend on the advice of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office. In such instances we may offer comparable alternative arrangements or at your option make a full refund of all monies paid.
- Due to non-availability of significant portions of a private itinerary. In such instances we may offer comparable alternative arrangements or at your option make a full refund of all monies paid except in cases where the booking is made within 8 weeks of departure.

In the unlikely event of us cancelling a holiday within 8 weeks of departure for reasons other than those listed above, we will offer you a compensation of £50 per person and if such cancellation is within 14 days of departure then a higher amount of £100 per person.

9. Alterations to your Tour Programme by us: We will make all reasonable efforts to provide you with the booked tour arrangements but cannot rule out occasional changes. If the changes are significant we will inform you of these before departure, if possible, and offer you comparable alternative arrangements or at your option make a full refund of all monies paid. A significant change is one that involves a change of airport for international flights to and from your holiday destination, the outward or return journey being rescheduled by more than twelve hours or the omission of a featured overnight stop in the itinerary. The conditions mentioned are applicable only to arrangements booked through us. Where such changes take place for reasons within our control we will offer you a compensation of £50 per person if you had paid the full holiday price by the prescribed date. Where the change is due to circumstances beyond our control amounting to force majeure, we will offer comparable alternative arrangements or at your option refund fully the monies paid by you. This is only for holidays yet to commence.

If any of the circumstances amounting to force majeure occurs during a tour we reserve the right to alter the tour programme, as required depending upon the circumstance, without offering any compensation. Any extra costs incurred will be payable by you. We may consider a refund for the unutilised portion of the tour if we are able to obtain any.

We reserve the right to cancel your holiday anytime during its operation if you are found to be behaving in a socially unacceptable manner or indulging in an illegal activity. In such cases no refund will be offered for the unutilized portion of the holiday and Harji's India will further claim from you the costs of your return to the parent country.

10. Your responsibility: You are responsible for your passports, visas, insurance, vaccinations, etc., and we do not accept any liability for non-communication of relevant details to you. If any service offered by us is not clear, you should get written or email confirmation from us about its inclusion in the price.

11. Our responsibility: We accept responsibility for ensuring that the holiday which you book with us is supplied as described in our documentation, or any other literature printed by us, and the services offered reach a reasonable standard. In the unlikely event that any part is not provided as promised, for reasons within our control, we will pay you appropriate compensation if this has affected the enjoyment of your holiday. We accept responsibility for the acts and/or omissions of our employees, agents and suppliers except where they lead to death, injury or illness and except where the supplier is a government or quasi-government institution. Our liability in all cases where the responsibility lies with us, as detailed above, shall be limited to a maximum of three times the cost of the portion of holiday adversely affected.

We accept responsibility for death, injury or illness caused by the negligent acts and/or omissions of our employees or agents together with our suppliers and sub-contractors, servants and/or agents of the same whilst acting within the scope of, or in the course of their employment in the provision of your holiday. We will accordingly pay to our clients such damages as might have been awarded in such circumstances under English Law.

In respect of carriage by scheduled air, sea, other water bodies like rivers and lakes, and rail transports the provision of accommodation and services in these are the responsibility of the providers of these transports and we merely act as agents for these providers. Our liability in all such cases will be limited in the manner provided by the relevant international convention. Thus if a scheduled flight or train or ship has delays or changes in schedule or cancellation of service we are not obliged to offer alternative arrangements, it is the providers of these services who are responsible. We will, however, try our best to assist in the provision of alternative services, if required, on receipt of appropriate payment for these.

If any client suffers death, illness or injury whilst overseas arising out of an activity which does not form part of the foreign inclusive holiday arrangement or excursion arranged through us, we shall, at our discretion, offer advice, guidance and assistance but are not liable for the consequences of such independent act.

If you avail of a service during the course of your holiday which is not part of your contract with us, we are not liable for the provision of that service or its quality even if you purchase it through our agents or representatives. Similarly if we recommend a restaurant or a shop or any reading material or any other establishment it is to assist you, and often at your request, and we do not accept any responsibility for the quality or content of the service received from these.

12. Inclusions and exclusions in the Tour Price: The inclusions and exclusions in the tour price are clearly spelt out with the holiday itinerary provided with your booking acceptance.

13. Arbitration: If you have cause for complaint during the holiday please bring it to the notice of our Local Representative/Agent and/or the hotel who will try their best to solve the problem. It is not advisable not to do anything when a problem occurs but to later write to us seeking recompense. If we feel you avoided action to redress a problem when it occurred, no compensation will be offered if it is brought to our attention later. If the problem remains unresolved in spite of your pointing it out locally to our agents when it occurred please write to us within 28 days of the completion of the holiday. We shall investigate the complaint and send you a reply as soon as possible.

In the unlikely event of us not being able to reach an amicable settlement you may refer the dispute to an arbitrator appointed by the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators under a special scheme devised for the travel industry. The scheme provides for a simple and inexpensive method of arbitration based on documentation alone with restricted liability of the client in respect of costs. The scheme does not apply to claims greater than £5000 per person or £25000 per booking form or to claims, which are solely, or mainly in respect of physical injury or illness. The application for arbitration must be made within nine months of the date of return from the holiday but in special circumstances it may still be offered outside this period.

14. Data Protection Statement: Please be assured that we have measures in place to protect the personal booking information held by us. This information will be passed on to the relevant suppliers of your travel arrangements. The information may also be provided to public authorities such as customs or immigration if required by them, or as required by law. Certain information may also be passed on to security or credit checking companies. If you travel outside the European Economic Area, controls on data protection may not be as strong as the legal requirements in Europe. In making this booking, you consent to this information being passed on to the relevant persons. If we need to give your details to anyone other than those listed above we will do so only with your consent.

15. Jurisdiction: Your holiday contract with us is made on the terms of these Booking Conditions which are governed by English Law and both parties shall submit to the jurisdiction of English Courts at all times.

useful information

time:

GMT plus 5 hrs 30 minutes (India has a single time zone)

driving:

Right hand drive

system of measurement:

Distance in kilometers; weight in kilograms, temperature in centigrade

when to travel:

With clear sunny days and mild to cold nights, October to March is generally the best time to visit the sub-continent. For Kashmir and Ladakh the best months are from June to September with dry, sunny days. The monsoon rains break in coastal Kerala in May or June and travel inland to reach Delhi in July, lasting till early September. May and June are extremely hot except in the hills. The coastal and mountain areas, excluding Kashmir and Ladakh, get more rain than the central plains.

health:

In general cover against polio, cholera, typhoid, tetanus, malaria, hepatitis A, and meningitis is recommended (though not mandatory).

flying time:

On a non-stop flight it takes about 8 hours to reach India from the UK, and about 9 hours to fly back. There are several day flights, as well as overnight flights. It is about an hour less each way from Europe, and several hours more from the Americas. It takes over 12 hours to fly in from Australia.

languages:

English is widely understood, and spoken by many, and one can get by with the language in almost the entire country. The main local language is Hindi in the North, and is understood and spoken by most of North, West and Eastern India, even though the regional languages are different. In the South Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu and Kannada are the main languages, and Hindi is less in use compared to the rest of the country. Public signs are likely to be in English also, in addition to one or two local languages.

voltage:

The electric voltage in India is 220 volts and round three pin plugs are in use. To use an English, American, European or Australian electrical appliance in India you will need to bring a converter with you.

hygiene:

Hygiene standards are constantly improving and there is a Clean India campaign launched by the Prime Minister which is gaining popularity and acceptance. Delhi-belly is no more a matter of concern if one stays in reputed hotels catering regularly to foreign arrivals.

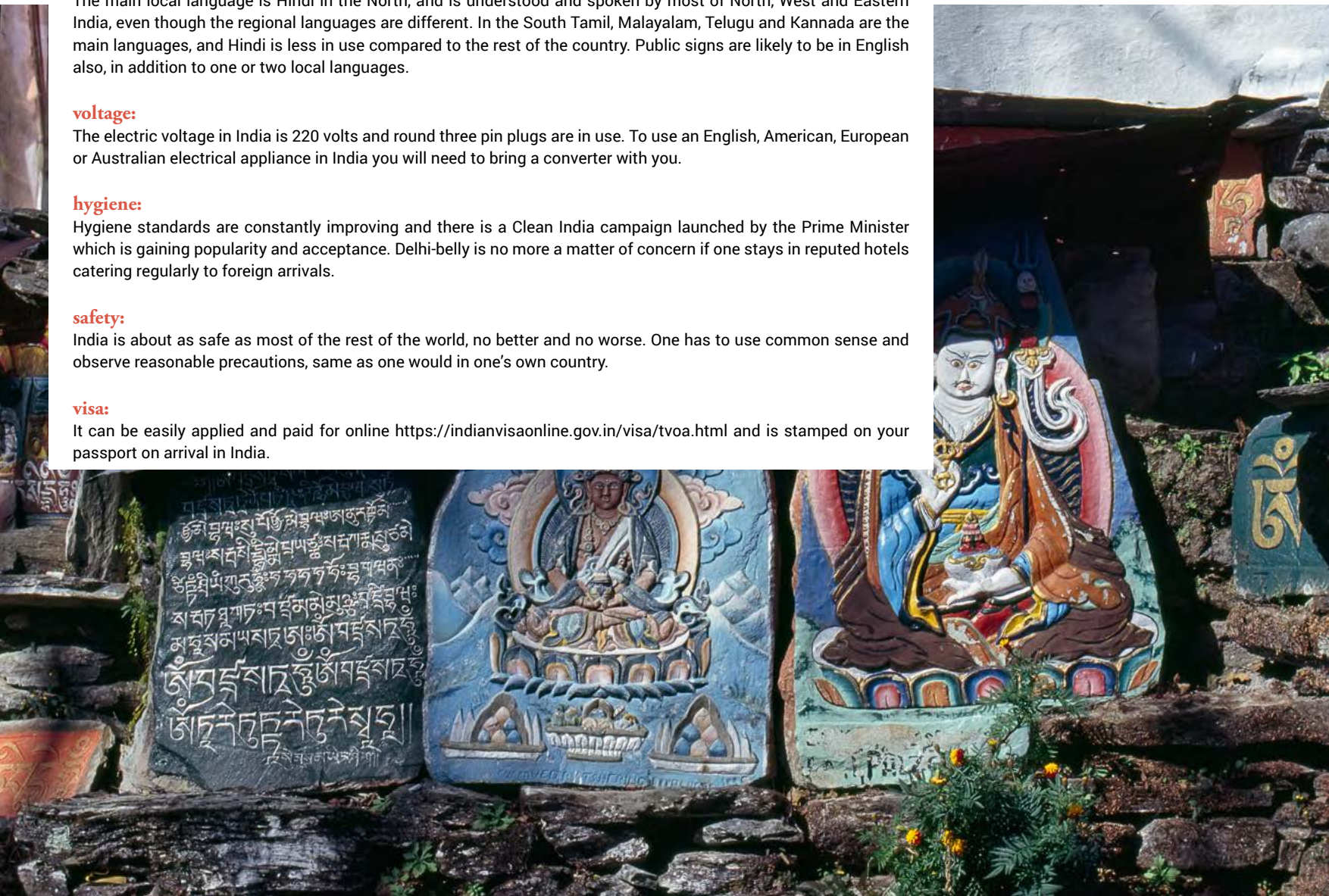
safety:

India is about as safe as most of the rest of the world, no better and no worse. One has to use common sense and observe reasonable precautions, same as one would in one's own country.

visa:

It can be easily applied and paid for online <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html> and is stamped on your passport on arrival in India.

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some of our promoters

C Balagopal

Balagopal founded Peninsula Polymers in Kerala when blood storage bags in India were imported almost exclusively from the USA. After an uphill struggle the company became the largest manufacturer of blood bags in India, and today has the largest blood bag manufacturing plant in the world, in Trivandrum, employing over 1000 workers. The business has been bought over by Terumo from Japan and is now called Terumo Penpol. Bala is also the author of a book on Manipur, "On a clear day you can see India", apart from two other books. He runs several charities under the name Anaha. With his extensive contacts in Japan, he is keen to bring Japanese travellers to India.



Vikas Tandon

Vikas founded Indigo Consulting, one of the leading digital marketing companies in India, employing over 200 staff in Mumbai, managing websites of well-known names like HSBC. The company has now been bought over by Leo Burnett. Vikas started his career with Harji in travel in London, hired as a fresh graduate from IIM Ahmedabad, before becoming an outstanding entrepreneur. Member of a rock band, he is a keen guitarist.



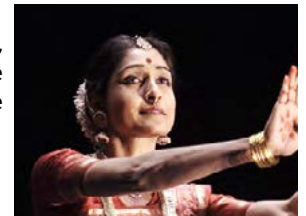
Lopamudra

Lopamudra (Lupin) trained in Hindustani classical music under the tutelage of Pt. Usha Ranjan Mukherjee (a prominent disciple of Ustad Amir Khan of Indore Gharana). She is an electrical engineer but after a few years in the industry she decided to focus on teaching Hindustani classical music to children and spread the practice of vocal music to the younger generation in the US. She has been actively involved in the Indian community in Southern California and has organized many cultural events and music concerts by hosting renowned visiting artists from India. She supports myriad art and cultural organizations in California with India connections.



Anuradha

Anuradha is the founder and artistic director of the Kalanidhi Dance School and Company. An award-winning Kuchipudi dancer, teacher, and choreographer, Anuradha has taught dance for over twenty-five years in the United States and many of her students have become outstanding young classical dancers in their own right and are now dancing professionally. In 2016, Anuradha received the Montgomery County Executive's Outstanding Artist Award for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities.



Vinita

After post graduate studies at Oxford in Sociology, as a Rhodes Scholar, Vinita set up and ran a successful placement company at Bengaluru catering to the then nascent IT sector. She then turned to running an NGO focused on gender issues called VOICES and ran it for several years. She now lives in Kochi and spends her time between running the ANAHA Trust that invests in social entrepreneurship projects, community work, reading, and travel, besides looking after our interests in the South.



Nicole

A post-graduate in Tourism from the University of Westminster, Nicole has more than eighteen years of experience in the travel trade, including as a Director a London based well established tour operator. She is passionate about India and over the years has travelled extensively there covering Rajasthan, Kerala, Amritsar and Himachal. Born and brought up in Berlin, Nicole is an unabashed perfectionist; her speciality lies in ensuring all arrangements for her clients are seamless and without fault. She has lived briefly in South East Asia and speaks French, German and Russian, apart from English.



Vikram Nehru

An M Phil in Economics from Oxford University, Vikram had a long and distinguished career with the World Bank where he last served as the Chief Economist and Director for Poverty Reduction. He specialises in East Asia, South Asia including India as well as Sub Saharan Africa. He was also Chair in Southeast Asian Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is currently the Distinguished Practitioner-in-Residence at Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies and lives in Maryland.



Alok Chatterjee

Alok Chatterjee is a mission manager at the prestigious Jet Propulsion Lab of NASA in Pasadena. He was Harji's classmate for engineering at IIT Kharagpur as well as his fellow scientist at the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Kerala. His name came to prominence for the discovery of water molecules on the surface of the Moon near the poles by the NASA team collaborating with India on the Chandrayaan-1 mission in 2008. He is the recipient of the NASA Exceptional Achievement Medal and is the driving force behind the collaboration since 2004 between NASA and ISRO.



our clients

*Clockwise from top left: NASA Scientist Jakob van Zyl and wife Kattie
Charles Elachi, Director JPL Pasadena, with his wife Valerie and Harji's colleagues
Distinguished guests at the inauguration of Harji's company
Stephen and Pamela Clarke on the 31st and last day of their first ever India holiday
Brandeis University Alumni
1857 Revisited , Guest Lecturer Tour*



“A really wonderful holiday, which was as stress-free as you could get; a huge thank you to you for organising the holiday to such a high standard... We have sung your praises to all our family and friends.” - Joanna Sinkins and Jim Whelan, Hove, Sussex ; “I’m slowly but surely getting back into the routine here after a marvellous journey through Rajasthan. I thank you for creating a magical trip and it was a pleasure meeting all the various people including your qualified and pleasant team.” - Manny Sawhney, London ; “By now I hope you have met our friends and heard first-hand what a great trip you arranged for us. It was truly memorable and Tom and I are already talking about where to go next in India.” - Diane Evans and Thomas Farr, Los Angeles CA



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