



Taste of India

Duration
8 days

Guaranteed
4 travellers

Group size
16 travellers

Price
From AUD \$ 2,883



WHAT TO EXPECT

Experience the vibrant streets of Old Delhi on a rickshaw tour, immersing yourself in the local way of life. Marvel at the timeless beauty of the Taj Mahal, a symbol of love crafted in gleaming white marble. Embark on an exhilarating game drive through the pristine forests of Ranthambore National Park, in search of the majestic Royal Bengal Tigers. Explore the Pink City of Jaipur on a captivating rickshaw tour, guided by women who come from the slums and low-income areas of Jaipur. Indulge in local traditions and flavours during a memorable dinner with a warm and welcoming local family in Jaipur. Experience the best of India's cultural heritage and natural wonders on this remarkable journey.

Day 1: Arrival in Delhi

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in Delhi, a transfer will take you to your hotel. In the evening, gather in the reception area of your hotel to meet your tour leader and the rest of your group for welcome drinks and a tour briefing. Please note that international flights often arrive in Delhi late at night, so your tour briefing may be scheduled for the following day.

Day 2: Explore Delhi

This fascinating city has many faces, from ancient alleyways and monuments of Old Delhi to regal New Delhi. Today, we begin our exploration of this historic city, of over 15 million people, with a drive to the Red Fort. View this monumental 400-year old landmark from outside – a great opportunity for a photo. Then embark on a bicycle rickshaw ride through colourful Chandni Chowk – one of the oldest and busiest markets in Old Delhi – and then to Delhi's famous spice market, Khari Baoli. Afterwards, take a fascinating walk through the food street of Parathey wali gali, perhaps stopping to sample some local food or masala chai. Walk to the great mosque of Delhi, the Jama Masjid, said to be the largest mosque in India, dating back to the mid seventeenth century before continuing to the stunning Gurudwara Bangla Sahib to get a glimpse of Sikh worship. After lunch we visit the 16th century tomb of the Mughal emperor Humayun, with graceful architecture and recently restored ornamental gardens. This World Heritage-listed site provides an introduction to Mughal architectural style which reached its peak in the magnificence of the Taj Mahal. Drive past Rajpath – home to India's government buildings and the President's residence, all featuring graceful Lutyen's architecture which characterises New Delhi, and India Gate, a memorial to Indian soldiers who gave their lives during World War One. Finally, end this memorable day with a look at Lodhi art district.

- Meals included: Breakfast

- Activities included: Guided city tour of Delhi, Bicycle rickshaw ride through Chandni Chowk and Khari Baoli, Taste - Walk along one of Delhi's most famous food streets

Day 3: Delhi to Agra

After breakfast, we drive to Agra, a journey of approximately 4 hours. Check-in and after lunch visit Agra's imposing fort. Built by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1565, it was also home to Emperor Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal and was later imprisoned here by his son. Enjoy your first tantalizing glimpses of the great domes of the Taj from the Fort's ramparts, on the banks of the holy Yamuna River. Also visit a marble-inlay workshop, to see the intricate work and unique skill which goes into each finely detailed piece of marble inlay, using a variety of beautiful semi-precious stones. Retire early tonight in preparation for your early start tomorrow.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Tour of Agra's fort, Arts & Craft - Visit a marble-inlay workshop in Agra

Day 4: Agra to Ranthambore National Park

Rise early to see the magnificent Taj Mahal at dawn. Commenced by Emperor Shah Jahan in 1631 and completed in 1653, it was dedicated to his beloved second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who tragically died in childbirth. Enter through the West gate with its arch framing and revealing the beauty of the Taj within. Take time to marvel at the Taj's unique and stunning symmetry, and the exquisite pearly marble, bathed in the pink light of dawn. Explore many perspectives from the platforms, pavilions and gardens around the main tomb, and the marble walls decorated with a myriad of semi-precious stones in the 'pietra dura' inlay work. Return to your hotel for a late breakfast, and afterwards check out and depart for Ranthambore National Park. En route we stop at Abhaneri village to enjoy a high tea and a visit to 1,300-year old Chand Baori Stepwell. The drive to Ranthambore will take you into Rajasthan and its distinctive rural environments. Don't be surprised to share some roads with camel carts, goat herds or tractors hidden under metres of hay! You will arrive in Sawai Madhopur late afternoon and check in to your hotel.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Unique - Visit of the Taj Mahal at sunrise, High tea in Abhaneri village, Visit of Chand Baori, a 1,300-year old stepwell

Day 5: Ranthambore National Park

One of India's most famous national parks and an early Project Tiger reserve, Ranthambore covers an area of more than 1,300 square kilometres and is home to a host of wildlife such as Sambar, Chital and Barking Deer, Jackal, Hyaena, Sloth Bear, Leopard, and of course its much-celebrated Tigers, estimated to be over 35 in number. The park's picturesque lakes are home to huge Marsh Mugger crocodiles and a host of colourful water birds, especially in winter months when Ducks, Storks, Waders and Eagles migrate from as far as Siberia and Mongolia. Rise early for a dawn game drive, as this is one of the best times to see wildlife. Seeing a Tiger is to some extent a matter of luck, with peak sightings from February to April, but in recent years our groups have enjoyed a high sighting rate. In addition to wildlife, the park's terrain is ruggedly beautiful, with Ranthambore's fortress on the plateau above recently receiving World Heritage status, and lakes fringed with ruined Rajput pavilions. The game drive will take around 4 hours after which you will return to your hotel for a late breakfast. There will also be an opportunity to stop at a unique local women's cooperative where you can see beautiful local handicrafts and have a cup of chai with the women. Depart again for a late afternoon game drive of around 3 hours in duration.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Unique - Game drive at dawn in Ranthambore National Park (4 hours), Social - Stop at a local women's cooperative, Late afternoon game drive in Ranthambore National Park (3 hours)

Day 6: Ranthambore National Park to Jaipur

Depart by road for Jaipur, a journey which lasts around 4-5 hours. Jaipur is Rajasthan's capital and one of Rajasthan's most iconic and colourful cities. Jaipur's façades were painted a pinkish-ochre, a colour traditionally associated with

hospitality, to celebrate the arrival of England's Prince of Wales in 1876. The colourful tradition has been maintained ever since and gives Jaipur a unique style of its own. After lunch, enjoy a visit to Jantar before taking a pink rickshaw ride to your hotel to check-in. Finish the day with some free time to explore – a chance to shop for Rajasthani handicrafts in Jaipur's popular bazaar streets, where jewellery, fabrics, lamps, bangles, bags and shoes sit alongside spices, oils and everyday items. This evening you might like to have a henna tattoo or palm reading (at your own expense) or join your tour leader for the experience of seeing a Bollywood movie in one of India's finest art deco cinema halls.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Pink rickshaw ride, Visit to Jantar, Arts & Craft - Bollywood movie in one of India's finest art deco cinema halls

Day 7: Explore Jaipur

Begin today with a visit to a local milk market. Witness it coming to life, with turbaned farmers cycling their fresh milk in and haggling over prices in ways little changed over the past century or more. After this insight of a farmer's daily life, continue on to admire the striking façade of the Hawa Mahal, the Palace of the Winds, designed for the royal ladies to watch the processions and daily life of the city without being seen themselves – a result of the strict "purdah" which was observed until the 20th century. The impressive Amber Fort, around 20 minutes' drive outside Jaipur itself, is our main site for the morning. This imposing fort is situated atop a mountain in the midst of stark and dramatic landscape and dates back to 1592. You will drive up to the fort by jeep and explore the various buildings. Marvel at the beautifully painted traditional Mughal doorways and the remarkable Sheesh Mahal with its thousands of mirrored tiles. Walk down from the fort and return to downtown Jaipur. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to continue your exploration of Jaipur. In the evening venture into the old walled city and enjoy dinner with a local family in their historic haveli home. Learn about local life in Jaipur and also see how some typical Rajasthani dishes are prepared.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Unique - Immersion in a local milk market, Visit of Amber Fort, Taste - Dinner with a local family in their historic haveli home

Day 8: Departure from Jaipur

It's time to say goodbye, but just think of all the wonderful stories you will take home. A transfer will take you to the airport for your onward travel.

- Meals included: Breakfast

Inclusions

Insider Experiences

- Arts & Craft - Visit a marble-inlay workshop in Agra
- Arts & Craft - Bollywood movie in one of India's finest art deco cinema halls
- Social - Stop at a local women's cooperative
- Taste - Walk along one of Delhi's most famous food streets
- Taste - Dinner with a local family in their historic haveli home
- Unique - Visit of the Taj Mahal at sunrise
- Unique - Game drive at dawn in Ranthambore National Park (4 hours)
- Unique - Immersion in a local milk market in Jaipur



Accommodation

7 nights in 3-4 star hotels



Transport

Airport transfer on arrival and departure
Air-conditioned vehicle



Meals

Daily breakfast
3 local dinners



Touring

English speaking tour guide
All entrance fees
All tipping



Contact your local travel agent