



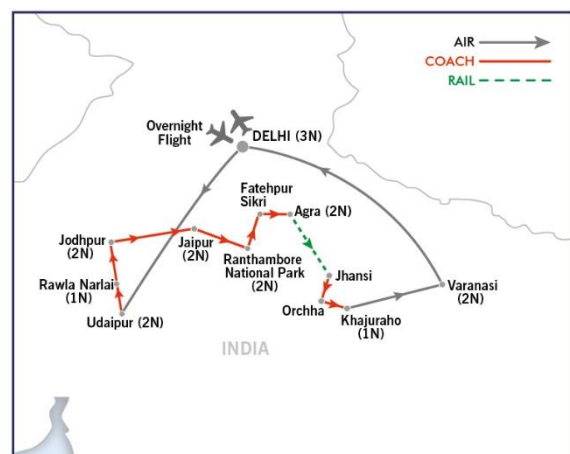
Essence of India

Exclusive Tour | 19 Days | Comfortable

Delhi – Udaipur – Rawla Narlai – Jodhpur – Jaipur – Ranthambore National Park – Agra - Khajuraho

Travel through history, discovering ancient sites and learning about royal traditions. Journey through Rajasthan, filled with magnificent forts and palaces. Discover the beauty of the unique temples and have a spiritual experience in Varanasi.

- Discover the vibrant city of Delhi
- Dine in the impressive Mehrangarh Fort
- Meet the locals for a cooking demonstration
- Marvel at the magnificent Taj Mahal
- Cruise on the River Ganges at sunrise



Essence of India tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- Deluxe accommodation throughout
- Meals as stated in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English-speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers)
- Visa fees for UK and EU passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, meals not stated in the itinerary, insurance of any kind, tipping and early check in or late checkout. These are all payable locally.

Exclusive Collection Tours:

These tours have been meticulously designed with the more discerning traveller in mind. Our deluxe journeys through Asia feature distinctive and exclusive experiences which bring the region to life. These tours include:

- Unique experiences
- Small group sizes
- Complimentary UK chauffeur transfers available for clients who live within 50 miles of the airport
- Porter service to and from your hotel rooms
- A mid tour laundry service
- Drinks provided during lunch and dinner service

Comfortable Tours:

'Essence of India' is a **comfortable** tour. Although this is the easiest grading of tour Wendy Wu Tours offers it still requires a reasonable level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Essence of India

Days 1-2: Arrive Delhi

Meals included: Dinner

Fly to Delhi for a two-night stay. Your National Escort or Local Guide from Wendy Wu Tours will meet you at the Delhi International Airport in the Arrivals Hall tonight. Together with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time, you will transfer 45 minutes to your hotel and check-in.



Destination Information

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

Day 3: Delhi

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning a tour introduction will either be held in the hotel or on the coach. Today is a full day of sightseeing around Old and New Delhi, involving approximately four hours on foot. Your exploration of Delhi begins with a drive past the Red Fort, before a walk through the fascinating Chandni Chowk Bazaar to Jama Masjid. Visit the Lakshmi Narayan Hindu Temple before stopping briefly for a photo opportunity at India Gate. Continue to Gandhi Smriti (closed on Mondays), drive by Rashtrapati Bhanvan and end the day at Qutab Minar. Dine at Olive & Kitchen restaurant, located in an ancient Mughal house.



Sightseeing includes visits to a mosque and Hindu temple – refer to the Appropriate Dress section below. Please note that women are only allowed to enter the mosque outside prayer session times.

Destination Information

Red Fort - Home of the Mughal emperor for many years, the fort is located in the centre of Delhi and houses a number of museums.

Chandni Chowk Bazaar - Built in the 17th century, Chandni Chowk is the oldest and most lively bazaar in Old Delhi. Built by the Mughal Emperor of India Shan Jahan and designed by his daughter, you can find stores selling everything from saris, Nehru suits, souvenirs to spices.

Lakshmi Narayan Hindu Temple - One of Delhi's major temples, the temple was built in 1939 and is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi.

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

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

Gandhi Smriti - A museum dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. It is the location where Mahatma Gandhi lived the last 144 days and was assassinated on January 30, 1948.

Rashtrapati Bhanvan - The official residence of the President of India.

Qutub Minar - Built in the 12th century, this tower of victory is gracefully hand-carved along its entire height of 73m. The Iron Pillar has withstood the ravages of time and has not rusted after 1,500 years.

Day 4: Delhi – Udaipur

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Transfer to the airport early this morning to board your onward hour and a half flight to Udaipur. Upon arrival check into your hotel and enjoy the remainder of day free at leisure.

Destination Information

Udaipur - The origins of Udaipur are based on a legend, which tells of a holy sage that Maharaja Udai Singh encountered while hunting in the foothills of the Aravalli Range in Mewar. The sage told the King to build a palace in that exact spot and it would be well protected and so with this advice, Maharaja Udai Singh built his residence there. At the time, Chittorgarh was the capital of Mewar state, however in 1568 Chittorgarh was attacked by the Mughal emperor Akbar, and so Maharaja Udai Singh moved the capital to Udaipur. Today, the City Palace of Udaipur is still home to Maharaja Udai Singh's descendents who remain rulers of this independent state. You can tell if the Maharaja is in residence by the flag hanging from the palace wall.

Day 5: Udaipur

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Begin the day with a drive around the Fateh Sagar Lake. Tour the city, visiting sites such as the Sahelion Ki Bari Gardens, the Folk Museum and Mewar Art Gallery. This morning will include easy sightseeing of approximately 1 to 2 hours. Later, explore the City Palace - which involves approximately 2 hours of sightseeing on foot. Some stairs at this location are without handrails, so please be cautious. Later, enjoy a cruise along Lake Pichola where you can view the Lake Palace. In the evening transfer to the Fateh Prakash Palace and dine at the Sunset Terrace.



Destination Information

Fateh Sagar Lake - An artificial lake built in 1678 embellished with three islands, one of which houses a garden café.

Sahelion Ki Bari Gardens - A delightful 18th-century garden retreat in the north of the city built for the Queen of Udaipur, whose dowry included 48 maids.

Folk Museum and Mewar Art Gallery - Houses a remarkable collection of Rajasthani folk art that is well worth a visit.

City Palace - The spectacular City Palace was built in 1725 by Maharana Udai Singh and overlooks Lake Pichola. The Palace comprises of 11 palaces including the Dilkhush Mahal, Sheesh Mahal, Moti Mahal and the Palace of Lord Krishna, all of which are ornately decorated. The City Palace also houses the world's largest private collections of crystals.

Day 6: Udaipur – Rawla Narlai

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This morning, depart Udaipur and commence the 3 to 4 hour drive to Rawla Narlai for an overnight stay. Later take a leisurely walk into the village with a member of the shepherd community, where you can catch a glimpse into the everyday life of the local people. In the evening, enjoy a unique experience, a stepwell diner.

Destination Information

Rawla Narlai - Located on the edge of a small Rajasthani village halfway between Jodhpur and Udaipur. Once a hunting lodge owned by the Jodhpur Royal Family dating back to the 17th century, Rawla Narlai which has been converted into a wonderful heritage hotel.

Day 7: Rawla Narlai – Jodhpur

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, begin the 4 hour journey to Jodhpur, the second largest city in Rajasthan. This afternoon visit Mehrangarh Fort for an extraordinary experience. Enjoy a champagne welcome drink on arrival before commencing a personalised tour of the fort with a curator. Dinner will be served in an exclusive venue in the fort not opened to the general public. Touring at the fort involves 1 hour on foot and some steps of varying difficulty.



Destination Information

Jodhpur - The second largest city in Rajasthan is located at the entrance to the Thar Desert in a region called Marwar. The old city, founded in 1459, is surrounded by a 10km-long wall and situated on a 125m-high hill. The massive Mehrangarh Fort overlooks the city and the red sandstone palaces within the fort form one of the most impressive complexes in Rajasthan.

Mehrangarh Fort - Raised 125m above the city's skyline, Mehrangarh Fort is one of the most magnificent and best-preserved forts in India. Within the fort are some magnificent palaces with meticulously carved panels, latticed windows known as Jarokhas.

Day 8: Jodhpur

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Begin your leisurely tour of the blue city this morning. The first stop is Jaswant Thada before strolling through the museum located in the Umaid Bhawan Palace. Later take an auto-rickshaw to a local restaurant for lunch before enjoying a walking tour through Subzi Mandi, the local vegetable and spice market. Dine this evening at Hanwant Mahal, a former royal residence.



Destination Information

Jaswant Thada - A 19th century royal cenotaph built in honor of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II, the 33rd ruler of Jodhpur.

Umaid Bhawan Palace - One of the last great palaces in India, Umaid Bhawan Palace now houses a remarkable museum.

Day 9: Jodhpur - Jaipur

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, drive approximately 7 hours to Jaipur, stopping to have lunch en route. Upon arrival check into your hotel and later enjoy some shopping inside the walled city, where villagers from around Jaipur come to sell and trade their produce. You will find everything here from saris, jewellery, clothing, shoes to spices. In the evening enjoy a cooking demonstration and dinner at Ikaki Niwas, a local Rajasthani home.



Please note: Jaipur is a larger city where it would be unwise to wander around without your National Escort or Local Guide at night, as there have been reports of pickpockets. Always speak to your National Escort or Local Guide before making your own arrangements in Jaipur.

Destination Information

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

Ikaki Niwas - Ikaki Niwas is a beautiful local home, decorated in the Rajasthan style with motifs and wall frescos. Dr. Thakur G S Rathore, who was Chief Medical officer in Jaipur and is now retired, owns the house. His son Jaideo Rathore and his wife Mrs Devika organise family dinners and will demonstrate how to make Indian bread and dishes.

Day 10: Jaipur

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sightseeing today begins with a photo stop at Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) - Hawa Mahal is viewed from the street side opposite, as entrance is not granted to tour groups. Continue to the impressive Amber Fort, where you will ride jeeps to and from the bus park and palace entrance. We have not included the elephant ride up to the palace in your itinerary because of the concerns to the animals and the unreliability of this service. There are a number of steps within the fort and sightseeing overall this morning involves 2 to 3 hours on foot. Visit a nearby craft centre where you will have the opportunity to try your hand at the local handicraft before continuing to the Maharaja's City Palace and Jantar Mantar Observatory. In the evening, dine at 1135 AD, located in the highest ramparts of Fort Amber.

**Destination Information**

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

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

Maharaja's City Palace - A former Royal residence located in the heart of the Old City. Part of the building has been converted into a museum, while the royal family of Jaipur still uses the remaining sections of the palace as a private residence.

Jantar Mantar Observatory - The largest stone and marble crafted observatory in the world is located just outside the City Palace. The observatory has 17 large instruments, many of them still in working condition.

Days 11 - 12: Ranthambore National Park

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Leave Jaipur and head south for approximately 4 hours to Ranthambore National Park. This afternoon, enjoy a canter (jeep like vehicle) safari before returning to your hotel for the night.

The following day enjoy morning and afternoon canter safaris in the national park, involving 2 to 3 hours of driving through the park in canters, on uneven and unsealed tracks, returning to the hotel for lunch.



Please remember to bring your passport to allow entry into the national park each day and please keep in mind during the canter safari there are no bathrooms.

Destination Information

Ranthambore National Park - Is one of the prime examples of Project Tiger's conservation efforts in Rajasthan. The forest around Ranthambore was once the private hunting grounds of the Maharajas of Jaipur and is one of the largest national parks in Northern India. Ranthambore National Park is renowned for its tiger population, however you may also come across other wild animals such as leopard, nilgai, wild boar, sambar, hyena and sloth bear.

Day 13: Agra

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Transfer by road to Agra, stopping to explore the Ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri en route; today's driving time will be approximately 5 hours in total. Check into your Agra hotel and this evening, enjoy the 'Mohabbat the Taj Show at Kalakriti'.

Destination Information

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

Day 14: Agra

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early and begin the day by viewing the Taj Mahal in all its glory as the sun is rising. To reach the Taj Mahal, you will board your group coach and drive through the awakening streets of Agra (an early start means that we can avoid the heat and crowds at the Taj Mahal later in the day). Disembarking the coach, you will board smaller electric carts to continue to the entrance gate. After clearing security and baggage checks you will be admitted to the complex. Usually 2 hours is spent here; sightseeing is easy without many steps. For admission to the main mausoleum area, you are required to wear shoe covers (this may be provided on site – be prepared to bring an additional pair of socks).



Return to your hotel to freshen up before visiting a marble inlay workshop. In the afternoon, explore the impressive Agra Fort. Sightseeing here involves approximately an hour and a half on foot and climbing of stairs. Later enjoy an auto-rickshaw tour of the city. The tour will take you through old bazaars, places of worship and the spice and Ayurveda market.

Destination Information

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

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

Auto-Rickshaw Tour - Explore the old bazaars, traditional eating joints and places of worship of Agra on an auto-rickshaw tour. Agra is a melting point of three cultures – Hindu, Muslim, and Christian. The tour takes you to such sites as Hazuri Bhawan, the headquarters of the Radhasoami faith, the ancient Manka Meshwar temple, Jama Masjid, one of the largest Mosques in Agra and to the Spice & Ayurveda market.

Day 15: Agra - Kharjuraho

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early and transfer to the railway station to board the Shatababdi Express train to Jhansi for approximately 2 and a half hours. Continue by road a further 4 and a half hours to Khajuraho, visiting the medieval city of Orchha en route. Sightseeing in Orchha is easy with a few steps and may take up to an hour. Enjoy a cultural dance performance this evening.

Destination Information

Orchha - A medieval city famous for its palaces and temples built by the Bundela rulers in the 16th century.

Khajuraho - A small village well known for its UNESCO World Heritage listed sculptured temples dedicated to Shiva, Vishnu, and Jain religions.

Day 16: Kharjuraho - Varanasi

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning, explore the Western group of temples. Usually 2 hours is spent here; sightseeing involves walking with little shade, so make sure you bring sun protection. Later transfer to the airport for the onward 50 minute flight to Varanasi, where upon arrival you will be met and transferred to the hotel. This evening take a rickshaw ride through the streets of Varanasi to the ghats of the River Ganges, where you will witness the Puja Ceremony of Ganga Aarti. The Ganga Aarti takes place most evenings, so please be prepared for many crowds through the streets, especially leading up to the ghats. Please remember to wear closed toe shoes and to always be careful and mindful of your belongings. It is also important to watch where you step, as devotees, crowds of tourists, animals and rickshaws all head in the same direction of the ghats.



Please note: It would be unwise to wander around Varanasi without your National Escort or Local Guide at night as there have been several reports of pickpockets. Always speak to your National Escort or Local Guide before making your own arrangements in Varanasi.

Destination Information

Khajuraho Temples - The Khajuraho temples were built by the Chandella rulers between AD 900 and 1300 and are scattered over 23km sq. Originally a group of 85, they are the largest group of Hindu and Jain temples in the world, although only about 25 of them remain today. Tour the Western Groups of temples, the most important is the Kandariya Mahadeo Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva. We also see the Vamana Temple, dedicated to the 'Vamana' or dwarf incarnation of Lord Vishnu as well as the Javari Temple.

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

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

Day 17: Varanasi – Sarnath

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Rise early this morning to commence a 1 to 2 hour cruise on the River Ganges to view the ghats at sunrise, where you will have a vantage spot to watch the devotees perform their ablutions. Please note that it is inappropriate to take photos of any burning ghats, as this is a funeral ceremony. Return to the hotel for breakfast before commencing a brief tour of Varanasi, visiting such sites as the Bharat Mata Mandir and Durga Temple. Drive through the largest residential university in Asia, Banaras Hindu University. This afternoon travel to Sarnath to visit the Buddhist sites. This afternoon's sightseeing is leisurely, involving approximately 1 hour of walking.

Destination Information

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

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

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

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

Day 18: Varanasi - Delhi

Meals included: Breakfast

Enjoy this morning free at leisure. After checking out of the hotel, you will be transferred approximately 45 minutes to the airport for the onward flight to Delhi. Upon arrival in Delhi you will be met by a local guide and transferred to your hotel for an overnight stay. The remainder of the day is free at your leisure.

Day 19: Delhi

Meals included: Breakfast

Any time before your flight today is at leisure. Transfer to the airport according to your international flight time to travel home.

Essence of India Travel Information

Visas

A visa is required for entry into India. A standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. You will need to complete the visa application form following the instructions on the visa help sheet. Once completed you will need to email or post the appropriate documents to our office in order for us to process your visa with the embassy. Once your visa has been approved we will send you a copy of the completed visa by email for you to print out and take with you when you travel to India. Any passports and visa applications that require an express service will incur an extra fee. Your passport must be valid for 6 months from your date of return from India, and should have at least 2 blank pages for your Indian visa.

In rare cases, you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the Indian embassy and/or be required to attend an interview at the embassy. If this is the case, we will notify you as soon as we have been advised.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in India

Indian cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavors. Indian cuisine can vary greatly from the Indian food we get in the UK, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. When eating meals on group tours, you will be seated around a circular table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional 'family style'; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table top. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

For the included meals we have arranged for you to dine in not only high-end restaurants, but those that allow customers to experience and taste the real flavours of the local area. For those meals which are not included, this gives you the opportunity to select your own dining experience, allowing you to immerse in the local culture or take advantage of your hotels' many restaurant options.

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

Safari Ranthambore National Park

To ensure your safari booking at Ranthambore National Park we will require a scanned copy or photocopy of the bio page in your passport along with your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot confirm your safari arrangements without this information.

Accommodation

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may have less western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local five-star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and India. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

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

Transport

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

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Trains: This trip involves a day journey in AC class cars. Getting on and off the trains in India can be quite disordered as passengers will start boarding well before people have finished getting off! If your group is disembarking at a stop that is not the end of the line, the train will only stop for 10 minutes and you must have your luggage ready and by your side a few minutes before the train pulls into the station.

Development in India

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

Souvenirs

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

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a National Escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with Local Guides.

Tipping Policy

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

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

Appropriate Dress

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

Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes. You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

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

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

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

Itinerary changes

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

Please note: The Taj Mahal is currently undergoing renovations to its exterior. The work is estimated to be completed by March 2018 and will be done in phases so that visitors to the Taj will still be able to experience the beauty of this architectural wonder.

Last updated: August 2017