



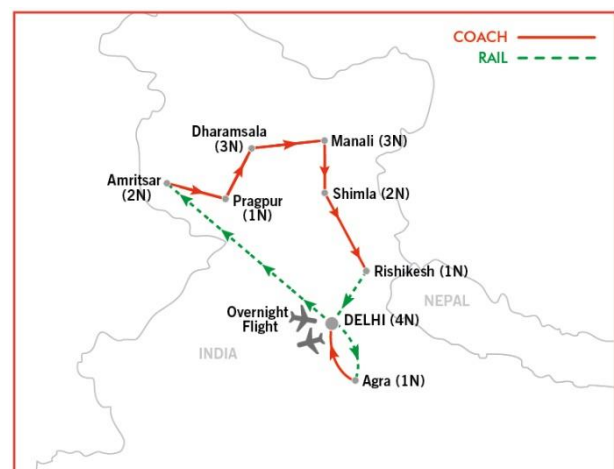
Himalayan Heritage Trail

Classic Tour | 19 Days | Moderate

Delhi – Agra – Amritsar – Pragpur – Dharamsala – Manali – Shimla –
Rishikesh

Traverse the foothills of the mighty Himalayas. Destinations en route are not only full of diverse culture but also boast spectacular views and abundant nature.

- Marvel at the impressive Taj Mahal
- Admire Amritsar's Golden Temple
- Learn to cook like a local in Dharamsala
- Soak up the mountain views
- Explore colonial Shimla
- See the Ganges at Rishikesh



Himalayan Heritage Trail tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- 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 thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping and early check in or late checkout. These are all payable locally.

Classic Tours:

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

Moderate Tours:

'Himalayan Heritage Trail' is a Moderate tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time including some light hiking up hill
- Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps, often without handrails
- Between some of the locations on this tour you will be travelling for the majority of the day by coach or train, note that driving times can vary depend on the traffic conditions and that many of the journeys are on narrow, hilly roads which can make for slow journeys
- You will be at a moderately high altitude in Manali and Shimla; it is recommended that you rest and drink lots of water to help acclimatize

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

Itinerary – Himalayan Heritage Trail

Days 1-2: Delhi

Fly to Delhi for an overnight 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 - Agra

This morning transfer to Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station to travel 1 and a half hours by express train to Agra. After checking into your hotel, tour the city of Agra, visiting the Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daulah and the impressive Agra Fort. Later, view the magnificent Taj Mahal in all its glory as the sun is setting. Board your group coach and drive through the streets of Agra. No polluting vehicles are allowed within a 500m radius of the Taj Mahal complex. At a designated point, the group will disembark the coach and board smaller electric carts to continue to the entrance gate. After clearing security and baggage checks you will be admitted to the complex. You will spend approximately two hours here; sightseeing is easy with almost no 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). Today includes approximately 3 to 4 hours of easy sightseeing on foot.



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.

Destination Information

Tomb of Itmad-Ud-Daulah - A Mughal mausoleum, often described as 'jewel box', and sometimes called 'Baby Taj' as it is regarded as a draft of the Taj Mahal.

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

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.

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

Day 4: Agra - Delhi

After breakfast, commence the 4 hour drive back to Delhi. In the afternoon, partake in some easy sightseeing in the city and visit Purana Qila and Gurdwara Bangla Sahiib. Touring this afternoon will include about 2 hours of sightseeing on foot.

Destination Information

Purana Qila - Constructed by the Afghan King, Sher Shah Suri, Purana Qila is one of the oldest forts in India.

Gurdwara Bangla Sahib - One of the most prominent Sikh gurdwara, or Sikh house of worship in Delhi, it was once owned by Raja Jai Singh Amber. The eighth Guru Sri Harkishan had stayed here for a few months as a guest of Raja Jai Singh. Since then it has become a place of pilgrimage for both Hindus and Sikhs.

Day 5: Delhi - Amritsar

Early this morning transfer to the railway station for your 6 hour train to Amritsar. Upon arrival, check in to your hotel for a two-night stay. Later in the afternoon, visit the splendid Golden Temple, one of the world's holiest sites – refer to the Appropriate Dress section below. Spend some time in the complex admiring the beauty of the temple. Touring at the Golden Temple will include 2 hours on foot. Due to the importance of the temple, there are some rules that must be followed during your visit:



- At every entrance to Sri Harimandir Sahib, there is a place to store shoes and any luggage, free of cost. Once you have passed over your belongings, you will receive a token that you will return in exchange for your belongings when exiting.
- Please switch-off your mobiles before entering into the Sanctum Sanctorum.
- Hands and feet are to be washed and heads are required to be covered before entering the holy complex.
- Cigarette, Tobacco or other intoxicants are strictly prohibited inside the holy premises.
- Photography is allowed only in the outer Parikarma.
- It is strictly prohibited to eat in the Parikarma.
- We suggest that you leave your valuables including jewellery and money at the hotel safe, otherwise they will need to be deposited at the counters provided in the Sri Darbar Sahib complex.

Please note: As the train is a day train, your seats will be in an AC Chair Car. More than likely you will not be able to purchase any food or drink on the train, so if you need snacks make sure to pre-purchase them before boarding. The train carriages are shared, so at all times please be aware of your belongings.

Destination Information

Amritsar - The centre of Sikhism, Amritsar was founded in 1577 by the fourth Sikh guru, Ram Das. Home to Sikhism's holiest shrine, the astonishing Golden Temple, Amritsar is an important part of Sikh history and culture. The city is also one of India's oldest and most fascinating cities divided into two parts; the old city, a swirl of narrow bazaars and historical buildings, and modern Amritsar, gleaming and bustling.

Golden Temple - The magnificent Golden Temple is the holiest Sikh shrine and a major pilgrimage destination for Sikhs all over the world. A small part of a large gurdwara complex, the Golden Temple sits on a rectangular platform, surrounded by a white marble corridor and encircled by pilgrims visiting the shrine. The water that surrounds the temple is a sacred pool known as the Amrit Sarovar, said to have healing powers and which the city is named after. The temple is a captivating blend of Hindu and Islamic architecture, crowned by a dome gilded with 750kg of gold.

Day 6: Amritsar

This morning, enjoy a 2 to 3 hour walking heritage tour of Amritsar, visiting sites such as Durgiana temple, a local market and Jallianwala Bagh. Late in the afternoon, drive 1 hour to the India-Pakistan border to witness the fascinating Flag Lowering Ceremony. Due to security regulations, the coach will drop the group at a designated area and you will need to walk approximately 20 minutes to the border where you will view the ceremony and 20 minutes back to the coach after it concludes.



Destination Information

Heritage Walking Tour of Amritsar - The walk takes you back in the time as you witness traditional trade and crafts being practiced in the same place and in the same manner as have been done for centuries.

Durgiana Temple - A partial replica of the Golden Temple, the Durgiana temple is located outside the Lohgarh Gate. It is dedicated to the Goddess Durga and visited by devout Hindus.

Jallianwala Bagh - A public garden that houses a memorial to the massacre that took place on 13 April 1919 against nonviolent protestors by the British occupying forces.

Flag Lowering Ceremony - A daily military practise held at the Wagah Border of India and Pakistan, which is sure to be a highlight of your trip! The ceremony first began in 1959 and involves the security forces of both countries. Beginning at sunset, this remarkable ceremony begins with patriotic songs and a parade on either side of the border gates and ends when the flags are lowered, neatly folded and carried back to their respective camps.

Day 7: Amritsar - Pragpur

Today embark on your exploration of the Himalayan hill stations of India. After breakfast, drive approximately 3 to 4 hours to Pragpur, India's first heritage village, stopping on the way to visit the temple Chintpurni (refer to the Appropriate Dress section below). In the afternoon commence a walking tour of the town, exploring the cobblestone streets and visit some local artisans. The duration of the walking tour will be approximately 2 to 3 hours.

Destination Information

Pragpur - The first heritage village of India lies in Kangra valley in Himachal Pradesh. The village has retained much of its traditional character and charm with its cobbled streets and mud plastered and slate roofed houses.

Chintpurni - A major pilgrimage centre, this Shakti Temple is famous for granting wishes.

Walking Tour of Pragpur - Walk down cobblestone streets that have retained a medieval essence and admire sun-baked houses, standing in close harmony to the wooden facades of the colonial style buildings. Wander a market, where you will have the opportunity to purchase hand woven shawls and blankets from local weavers and visit local silversmiths who offer a variety of handcrafted trinkets.

Day 8: Pragpur - Dharamsala

After breakfast, depart Pragpur and drive to Dharamsala, stopping just outside of the city to visit Kangra Fort. In the afternoon visit the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and the Tibetan Medical Institute. Today's driving time will be 4 and half to 5 hours.

Destination Information

Dharamsala - Dharamsala is located in Kangra Valley and against the Dhauladhar mountain range; it is a hillstation of picturesque natural beauty featuring a unique combination of Tibetan, British and Himanchali cultures. Home to the exiled Dalai Lama and Tibetan government, Dharamsala is a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists.

Kangra Fort – Built by the Royal Rajput family of Kangra State, Kangra Fort is the largest fort in the Himalayas and one of the oldest forts in India.

Library of Tibetan Works and Archives - A fascinating cultural museum that houses sacred manuscripts, statues, Tibetan artefacts and books.

Tibetan Medical Institute - Also known as Men-Tsee-Khang, the medical Institute is also a university, clinic, museum and research centre. It was first established to preserve traditional Tibetan medicine and astrology.

Day 9: Dharamsala

Spend the day discovering the local area, this morning visit Bhagsunag Temple. Later today travel to McLeod Ganj, a Tibetan suburb of Dharamsala visiting the markets, the Dalai Lama Temple and the Tibetan Museum. Today includes 2 to 3 hours of easy sightseeing on foot.



Destination Information

Bhagsunag Temple - An ancient temple that dates back to the 16th century. The temple is dedicated to Bhagsunag, the snake god, and Lord Shiva.

McLeod Ganj - A Tibetan suburb of Dharamsala where in the holy Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government arrived to set up their base in the 1960s. It has since become the centre of Tibetan culture and Buddhism, with pilgrims from all over the world visiting year-round.

Dalai Lama Temple - This peaceful temple complex is an important spiritual place for Tibetans.

Day 10: Dharamsala

Early this morning, enjoy a yoga and meditation session, which will be led by a local yoga instructor. Continue exploring Dharamsala with visits to St Johns church in the wilderness and the Kangra State Museum. Later take part in a cooking class where you will learn a few local recipes and this afternoon visit the Norbulingka Institute, a major centre for Buddhist learning, it also works to preserve Tibet's cultural heritage. The rest of the day will be free to explore independently. This evening there is an optional discourse with a Buddhist monk, which you can arrange at your own expense with your National Escort locally.

Discourse with a Monk - The discourse can be arranged either at the hotel or at the Monastery at Dharamsala, depending on the convenience of the monks. During the discourse, you have the opportunity to engage in a discussion on various aspects of beliefs and spiritual practices based on teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha. The discourse is subject to availability of the monks, and a donation for the welfare of monastery is expected as payment for the discourse.

Destination Information

Kangra State Museum - Houses a fascinating collection of Kangra paintings.

Cooking Lesson - Visit a family home where you will participate in a cooking lesson and have lunch with the family. Learn some recipes and have the opportunity to see the local culture and traditions up close.

Norbulingka Institute - A major centre for Buddhist teaching, the institute is dedicated to the preservation of the Tibetan art forms.

Day 11: Dharamsala - Manali

Manali altitude – 2,050m

Say goodbye to Dharamsala today and travel approximately 7 to 8 hours to the scenic hillstation of Manali, stopping en route to visit the village of Kullu. Upon arrival in Manali check into your hotel for a three-night stay. This afternoon take a leisurely walk for approximately 45 minutes to explore Manali's nature and wildlife park.



Destination Information

Kullu - A small village located to Manali, Kullu is a charming and well known for its apple orchards and wooden temples.

Manali - Named after the sage Manu, who is thought to have meditated in the area. One of the most popular hillstations in India, Manali is located in the beautiful valley of the Beas River, with breathtakingly striking scenery. Admire the lush greenery and rolling mountains and relax in the cooler mountain climate, the perfect escape from the Indian summers.

Day 12: Manali

This morning, discover the city of Manali. Begin with a visit to the Hadimba Temple, one of the most important temples in the area, before continuing to the Vashisht Hot Water Springs. These springs are divided into two sections, one for males and one for females, and are popular amongst the locals. If you would like to take the opportunity to soak in the springs, it is suggested to wear conservative clothing (for example a t-shirt and shorts over your swimwear). End the tour at Old Manali Village where you will explore the area by auto-rickshaw. This afternoon is free at leisure to further explore the town. Sightseeing today includes approximately 2 and a half hours on foot.



Destination Information

Hadimba Temple - Built in 1553, the Hadimba Temple is dedicated to the goddess Halima. The four storey wooden temple is 24m high and features intricate carvings on the doorframes and wooden façade.

Vashisht Hot Water Springs - Located in the small town of Vashisht, the hot springs are said to cure skin and joint ailments.

Old Manali Village - Step back in time as you enter Old Manali, which has the timeless feel of an Indian mountain village with houses of wood and stone.

Day 13: Manali

This morning, discover the beauty of Parvati Valley, including the villages of Kasol and Manikaran. Later, explore the village of Naggar and visit the Roerich Art Gallery. Sightseeing today will include approximately 2 hours on foot.

Destination Information

Parvati Valley - A beautiful valley located in the Kullu district, the valley features spectacular natural beauty.

Kasol - A haven of scenic beauty and untouched mountains, Kasol is a small hillstation located in the Parvati Valley.

Manikaran - Sacred to Sikhs and Hindus, the beautiful pilgrim town of Manikaran is home to several temples and gurdwaras. Many people travel to the town to pay obeisance and to bath in the hot springs.

Naggar - One of the most charming villages in Kullu Valley, Naggar was once the ancient capital of the Kullu kingdom. The town is home to Naggar Castle, built in 1460 and converted into a hotel in 1978, and some stone temples. Admire the superb views over the Beas Valley.

Day 14: Manali - Shimla

Shimla altitude – 2,196m

Today is a long driving day as you depart Manali and begin the 8 to 9 hour drive to another famous hillstation, Shimla. On arrival head to your hotel and check-in for a two-night stay.

Destination Information

Shimla - The picturesque capital of Himachal Pradesh was once the summer capital of British India. Spread 12kms along a ridge that overlooks terraced hillsides and cultivations, Shimla is magnificently covered in dense forests of oak, pine, fir and rhododendron.

Day 15: Shimla

Today you will explore Shimla, nicknamed the 'Queen of the Hillstations'. Begin your day with a light trek to Jakhoo Temple. The trek will take approximately 1 hour and will travel over moderate terrain that is mostly uphill. Explore the fascinating Himachal State Museum and the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies. In the late afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of Mall Road. Visit the Gaiety Theatre and the Ridge amongst other landmarks.



Destination Information

Jakhoo Temple - An ancient temple in Shimla that is dedicated to Hindu deity, Hanuman. It is located on Jakhoo Hill at a height of 2,455 m above sea level.

Himachal State Museum - An interesting museum that houses a large collection of paintings, sculptures, handicrafts and photos collected from all over the Himachal state.

Indian Institute of Advanced Studies - Originally built in 1888 as the summer residence of the British viceroys. The viceroys ruled the Indian subcontinent from Shimla for half of the year every year from 1888 until World War II. After the India's independence in 1947, the building became part of the estate of the President of India until 1965 when it was established as a residential centre for research in humanities and social studies.

Mall Road - The main shopping street in Shimla, the Mall Road is lined with restaurants and shops and is located in the heart of Shimla.

Gaiety Theatre - The magnificent Gaiety Theatre opened in 1887, the first performance coincided with Queen Victoria's coronation. The Victorian theatre has been beautifully restored to its past splendour and now hosts visiting theatre companies as well as local drama societies.

The Ridge - The centre of all culture activities in Shimla, the Ridge is an open space situated along Mall Road. Referred to as the Ridge as it extends the ridge between two hills. Admire the traditional colonial architecture and the stunning views.

Day 16: Shimla - Rishikesh

This morning say goodbye to Shimla as you make the 8 hour journey to the spiritual city of Rishikesh. Continue to your hotel and check-in for an overnight stay. Later in the evening witness the Aarti on the banks of the of the river Ganges and take a walk across the Laxman Jhula to Parmarth Niketan ashram before returning back to your hotel.



Destination Information

Rishikesh - Located on the banks of the Ganges River at the foot of the Himalayas, the holy city of Rishikesh is considered the birthplace of yoga. A major pilgrimage spot for Hindus, Rishikesh is home to a large number of ashrams (places of spiritual learning and meditation) and all kinds of yoga and meditation classes. The city was made famous in the late 1960s, when the Beatles visited an ashram to learn to how to mediate.

Laxman Jhula - A well-known hanging bridge located across the Ganges. Legend says that Lakshman, the younger brother of Lord Rama, crossed the river at the same site where the bridge now stands. At that time, there was only a suspension bridge made of jute. The bridge became known as 'Lakshman Jhula'. With time, the jute bridge eroded and a new iron bridge was built along the same path in 1939.

Parmath Ashram - This ashram is ideally positioned on the holy banks of the Ganges, nestled in the towering Himalayas. The ashram also runs schools, hospitals, ecological programmes and disaster relief projects and played a major role during the Tsunami in the south of India.

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: Rishikesh - Delhi

Today you will explore the city of Rishikesh visiting Omkaranand Ashram and Sivanand Ashram. Touring this morning includes 1 and a half hours on foot. Late in the afternoon you will be transferred 1 hour to Haridwar railway station to board the 4 to 5 hour train for Delhi. Dinner will be served on the train; upon arrival in Delhi you will be transferred to your hotel for a two-night stay.

Please note: As our train is a day train, our seats will be in an AC Chair Car. More than likely, you will not be able to purchase any food or drink on the train, so if you need snacks make sure to pre-purchase them before boarding. The train carriages are shared, so at all times please be aware of your belongings.

Destination Information

Omkaranand Ashram - A major ashram in Rishikesh established in 1967 that specialises in Iyengar yoga. The ashram also offers classes and is involved in many charities and organisations in the area.

Sivanand Ashram - Founded in 1936 by Swami Sivananda, Sivananda Ashram is also known as Divine Life Society, which has more than 300 branches across the world. The ashram offers yoga and meditation classes as well a hospital and bookshop.

Day 18: Delhi

Today is a full day of sightseeing around Old and New Delhi, involving approximately 4 hours on foot. Your exploration of Delhi begins with a drive past the Red Fort before enjoying a stroll through the fascinating Chandni Chowk Bazaar to Jama Masjid. Continue to Raj Ghat, Qutab Minar, Humayun's Tomb and stop briefly for a photo opportunity at India Gate. In addition, drive past the President's House, Parliament House and end the day at Connaught Place Markets.

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

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 Shah Jahan and designed by his daughter, you can find stores selling everything from saris, Nehru suits, souvenirs to spices.

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.

Raj Ghat - Located in a beautiful park, Raj Ghat is a memorial that marks the spot where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated following his assassination in 1948.

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

Humayun's Tomb - A landmark of Mughal architecture, the tomb was built in 1570 for the Mughal Emperor Humayun. Commissioned by his wife, it was the first garden tomb in India.

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.

Connaught Place Markets - Connaught Market is where tourist shops sell traditional home wares, jewellery, books, clothing, saris and beads.

Day 19: Depart Delhi

You will be transferred to the airport according to the departure time of your flight today. Any time before your flight will be at leisure.



Himalayan Heritage Trail 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 flavorsome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavors. Though 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. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our classic group tours, from dinner on the arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in.

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

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!

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 not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between 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.

Throughout Rajasthan state you will get the opportunity to stay in heritage properties which are restored palaces or forts. As these properties were not originally designed to be hotels, the room sizes will vary in the same accommodation category, as will the décor and layout. This uniqueness only adds to your experience in India.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used during touring in Delhi and Agra.

Transport in the Himalayas – Smaller, non-air conditioned vehicles (which would hold either 4 to 8 passengers plus driver and or guide) will be used from Amritsar to Rishikesh, due to the narrow road conditions in the Himalayas.

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

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

Trains: This trip involves 2 train journeys in AC class cars. Getting on and off the trains in India can be quite disordered and amusing 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/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 29 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 is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

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