



# NORTHERN INDIA DISCOVERY

## Classic Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2

Delhi – Amritsar – Dharamsala – Shimla – Delhi  
– Agra – Jaipur - Delhi

This adventure takes you through the northern hill stations of the Himalayas, visiting Amritsar, before travelling south to India's iconic Golden Triangle – Agra, Jaipur, and Delhi. Prepare to be immersed in North Indian culture!

- Discover the delights of Delhi
- Marvel at the magnificent Taj Mahal
- Ride the famous Toy Train
- Embrace Tibetan culture in Dharamsala

## TOUR MAP

**NORTHERN INDIA DISCOVERY 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 Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) and Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

**CLASSIC TOURS:**

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

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

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All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'Northern India Discovery' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and boats, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- 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
- You will be required to get on and off various sizes of boats and rickshaws throughout the tour

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

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 16 days in duration including an overnight international flight in one direction as this is the most likely flight option from Australia.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours. Please email your international flight times to [info@wendywutours.com.au](mailto:info@wendywutours.com.au) so we can arrange your transfers accordingly.

Join the tour on Day 1 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 15 also in Delhi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

## ITINERARY CHANGES:

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

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### **Day 1: Arrive Delhi**

Meals: D

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. 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 18million people. 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 2: Delhi**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning the tour introduction will either be held in the hotel or on the coach.

After your breakfast we will embark on a full-day of sightseeing around Old and New Delhi, involving approximately 3.5 - 4 hours on foot.

Travel approximately 30 – 40 minutes to the aromatic Khari Baoli Spice Market and enjoy a rickshaw ride before visiting Jama Masjid.

Next, continue to Qutab Minar and drive past Rashtrapati Bhavan, the President's House and Parliament Houses. Make a brief photo stop at India Gate followed by a visit to Humayun's Tomb before returning to your hotel.

The remainder of the day will be at leisure.



### **Destination Information**

**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 dies in World War 1.

**Rashtrapati Bhavan** – The official residence of the President of India.

**Qutab Minar** – Built in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century, this tower of victory is gracefully hand-carved along its entire height of 73m.

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**Day 3: Delhi to Amritsar**

Meals: B, L, D

Early this morning, transfer to the railway station for your 6 hour train journey to Amritsar. Upon arrival, check-in to your hotel for your two-night stay.

This afternoon, drive approximately 1 hour to the India-Pakistan border to witness the fascinating Flag Lowering Ceremony. Due to security regulations, the coach will drop your group at a designated area and you will walk approximately 300 – 400 metres to the border and back again after the ceremony.



*Please note: Your seats on the day train to Amritsar will be in an AC Chair Car. You may 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 mindful of your personal 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.

**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.

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**Day 4: Amritsar**

Meals: B, L, D

Today you'll enjoy a 2 – 3 hour heritage walking tour of Amritsar, taking in local markets and temples including Jallianwalla Bagh.

This afternoon, spend about 2 hours on foot exploring the splendid Golden Temple, Harmandir Sahib – the spiritual heart of the Sikh faith. Then experience Palki Sahib, an atmospheric ceremony accompanied by drums and hymns, before returning to your hotel.



Please note: There below rules must be followed during your visit to the Golden Temple:

- At every entrance to Sri Harimandir Sahib, there is a place to store shoes and any luggage, free of charge. One you have passed over your belongings, you will receive a token that you will return in exchange for your belongings when exiting.
- You will need to switch-off your mobile phone before entering the Sanctum Sanctorum.
- Hands and feet are to be washed and heads are required to be covered before entering the holy complex.
- Cigarettes, 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) in your hotel safe, otherwise they will need to be deposited at the counters provided in the Sri Darbar Sahib complex.

### Destination Information

**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.

**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.

**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 5: Amritsar to Dharamsala**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, transfer approximately 4.5 hrs into the Himalayas to Dharamsala.

This afternoon, pay a visit to the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and the Tibetan Medical Institute.



### 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.

**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.

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**Day 6: Dharamasala**

Meals: B, L, D

Start the day at Bhagsunag, a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva before exploring McLeodganj, a town with a distinctly Tibetan feel. Explore the town, visiting Buddhist temples and local markets, and popping into the Dalai Lama Temple and the Tibetan Museum. Today includes 2 - 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 Dharamasala 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.

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**Day 7: Yoga Experience**

Meals: B, L, D

Early this morning, participate in a yoga and meditation session led by a local yoga instructor. Continue your explorations of Dharamasala with visits to St John's in the Wilderness church and the Kangra Art Museum.

Afterwards enjoy a cooking lesson from a local chef, where you will lunch afterwards. Finally, head to the Norbulingka Institute before spending the remainder of the day at leisure.

**Destination Information**

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

**Cooking Lesson** - Watch a cooking demonstration and have lunch with the family afterwards. 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 8: Dharamsala to Shimla**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, transfer approximately 8 Hours to Shimla, making a stop for lunch enroute at a local restaurant. Upon arrival, check-in to your hotel for your 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. In Shimla the altitude is 2,196m.

**Day 9: Shimla**

Meals: B, L, D

All aboard the famous Toy Train, a World Heritage railway built in 1903. This is one of India's most scenic train journeys, where you can admire spectacular views as you wind your way down from the mountains. The Toy train to Kandaghat is a 2 hour journey.

Upon arrival, you will transfer to Jakhoo Temple. Afterwards, enjoy a walking tour of Mall Road visiting the Ridge, Christ Church and New library. Return to your hotel in Shimla by road.

**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.

**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.

**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 10: Shimla to Delhi**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, visit the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies and the Himachal State Museum before transferring to Kalka, where you will board the train to Delhi.

Your train journey will take approximately 4 hours. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel for an overnight stay.



*Please note: Your seats on the train to Delhi will be in an AC Chair Car. You may 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 mindful of your personal belongings.*

**Destination Information**

**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.

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

**Day 11: Delhi to Agra**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, commence the 4 hours drive to Agra. Upon arrival, check-in to your hotel for an overnight stay followed by an afternoon visit to the impressive Agra Fort. Sightseeing here involves approximately 1.5 hrs on foot with some steps.

**Destination Information**

**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.

**Day 12: Agra to Jaipur**

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early to share an unforgettable experience, sunrise at the Taj Mahal. At dawn, when the crowds are at their thinnest, often swathed in mist and tinged pink by the rising sun, the building looks magical.

To reach the Taj Mahal, you will board small electric carts, taking you to the entrance. You will have approximately 90 – 120 minutes here to explore. 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).



Afterwards, transfer approximately 6 hrs to Jaipur, making a stop en-route at Abhaneri village to admire the Chand Baori Stepwell. Upon arrival in the 'Pink City' and visit the City Palace and the fascination Jantar Mantar observatory.

**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 favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.

**Jaipur** - 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.

**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.

**Day 13: Jaipur**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, make a brief photo stop at the Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) from the outside. Tourists are unable to enter so you will view it from the busy road opposite.

Next, take a jeep ride from the bus park to the entrance of Amber Fort. Please note that sightseeing here will be approximately 2 hours and there are a number of steps inside the fort.

This afternoon, you will pay a visit to a nearby craft centre for the opportunity to try your hand at block printing and carpet weaving.

This evening participate in a cooking lesson of delicious local dishes, followed by dinner.

**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.

**Day 14: Jaipur to Delhi**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast, transfer approximately 6 hrs back to Delhi and check-in to your hotel upon arrival.

This evening, sit down to a final group dinner and a Kathak Dance performance, indigenous to Northern India, taking influences from both Hindu and Muslim cultures.

**Days 15-16: Depart Delhi**

Meals: B

This morning transfer to the airport for your overnight flight home.

Late check-out is not included in our India & Bhutan group tours. If you wish to book a late check-out for your final day in India, please contact our reservations department who can confirm additional pricing and make this arrangement for you, subject to availability at the hotel.

## **INDIA TRAVEL INFORMATION**

### **VISAS:**

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Entry visas are required by all visitors to India and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

Please note, the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

### **INSURANCE:**

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We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

### **GROUP SIZE:**

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The group size on our Classic Tours is on average 21 passengers, with a maximum group size of 28. You may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling. On our group tours we operate a seat-and-a-half policy, allowing you to travel in greater comfort.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). A national escort will accompany each group of 10 or more. 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.

## EATING IN INDIA:

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Indian cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Indian cuisine can vary greatly from the Indian food we get in Australia, 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:

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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 Australia 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:

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner city roads in India have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner. Roads in India have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather

conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

**Trains:** This trip involves a train 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.

### PORTERAGE:

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

### LUGGAGE:

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of five kilograms. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

### SOUVENIRS:

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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.

### TIPPING POLICY:

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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

### **DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:**

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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 Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday, so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your guide.

### **APPROPRIATE DRESS:**

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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.

### **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:**

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

### CLIMBING STEPS:

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Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

### VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

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We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au)

### BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au) as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

### AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

Updated: November 2024