Himalayan Foothills Spiritual Discovery Tour

Trip Code: HSD

Version:

CULTURE	GUIDED GROUP	2 LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Visit McLeod Ganj, home to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government in Exile
- Evening and morning visits to Amritsar's Golden Temple, centre of world Sikhism
- Ride the narrow-gauge 'toy train' of the Kangra Mountain Railway

- Watch the sun set over the Dhaula Dhar ranges from an eco-lodge on the Wah Tea Estate

AT A GLANCE

- 6 nights hotels
- 2 nights lodges
- 9 days touring and sightseeing
- Max altitude - 2000 metres
- Join at Delhi, depart Amritsar

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

This unique journey connects four historically important locations of Northern India and in doing so highlights something of the variety of the Indian Subcontinent with special reference to the three principal religions of Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism and Sikhism. Geographically, the contrast is marked as we journey from the cosmopolitan city of Delhi, old and new, to Dharamsala in the mountainous state of Himachel Pradesh, nestled beneath the snow-capped summits of the Dhaula Dhar, before crossing the open plains of the Punjab to Amritsar, close to the border with Pakistan. From the atmospheric aarti ceremony at the Sikh temple of Gurudwara Bangla Sahib on the first evening in Delhi, to the Buddhist temples and 5-colour prayer flags of McCleod Ganj, as well as both evening and morning visits to the astounding Golden Temple in Amritsar, this is a comprehensive itinerary. We take every opportunity to make this holiday as unforgettable as possible, with roadside temples, monasteries, forts and museums, a 'toy train' ride and even attending the crazy India-Pakistan border closing ceremony played out each evening at Wagah. On top of this we have chosen a good standard of accommodation with an Indian 'feel' and have included all meals with the brief of providing the option of authentic Indian cuisine wherever possible. India is one of the most vibrant and colourful of adventure travel destinations and this tour demonstrates that fact perfectly.

Is this holiday for you?

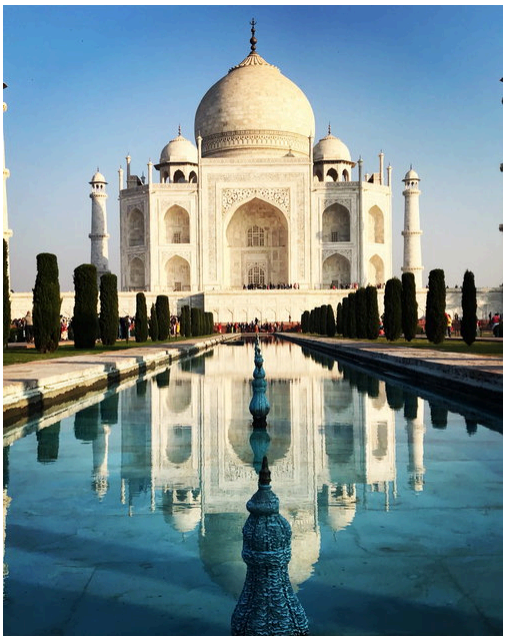
This touring and sightseeing adventure holiday is perfect for anyone wanting to experience the culture, religion and colour of this special part of North India. The internal flight from Delhi to Dharamsala limits the amount of road travel and for all other transfers, principally linking Dharamsala and Amritsar, we use a private, air-conditioned minibus. Whilst sightseeing, there will be a reasonable amount of walking on city streets and on good trails and there is one day when we have a slightly extended walk (3 hours) above McCleod Ganj on quiet roads and tracks.

Itinerary

Version:

Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



One day tour of Agra and the Taj Mahal

The Taj Mahal needs little introduction. Built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz, it is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. Nearby is the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts. Traveling from Delhi on the express train and returning by private vehicle, our one-day extension to Agra is perfect for those with limited time who wish to complete their India experience with exploring one of the most admired and loved buildings on the planet.

1 day from
US$390 per person



Agra & the Taj Mahal two day tour

Our two-day extension is for those who wish to explore Agra and the surrounding area at a relaxed pace. We start by exploring the oft overlooked Agra Fort, itself an awe-inspiring and magnificent complex of palaces and ancient forts, before waking before the next day to see the sunrise break over the Taj Mahal. Needing little introduction, the Taj Mahal was built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz. It is widely considered to be the most beautiful building in the world. This tour also gives us an opportunity to explore the fascinating abandoned ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri.

2 days from
US$605 per person

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional English-speaking local leader
- Delhi and Amritsar group airport transfers on arrival and departure days
- The internal flight from Delhi to Dharamsala on Day 3
- All land transport involved in the itinerary
- Accommodation as described
- All meals
- Park and monument entrance fees
- Lunch with local family on Day 5
- Tea estate tour and tea tasting on Day 6
- 'Toy Train' ride on Day 7

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Airport transfers (other than the group transfers)
- Indian Visa
- Tips for local staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Delhi on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary.

A single group transfer is provided from Delhi Airport on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and a single transfer to Amritsar Airport is provided at the end of the holiday.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

All meals are included from lunch on Day 1 to dinner on Day 9.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Part of the experience of a visit to India is sampling the excellent local food. Indian cuisine offers a wide choice of dishes, much more variety than the 'curries' we are used to in Indian restaurants at home and the naan breads are like nothing you'll have experienced. Whether the food is presented as a dinner buffet or as a set menu, there will always be vegetarian options. In some places, there will also be familiar international dishes. Breakfasts include cereals, bread, possibly in the form of local 'rotis', eggs, hard-boiled or omelette, often one or two delicious, spicy Indian breakfast options, fruit, juice, hot water for tea or coffee. Lunches will usually be at a restaurant where you can choose what you want - the guide will help with this.

Accommodation

We will have 6 nights in neat and tidy, 3-star tourist-class hotels; 2 nights in Delhi, 3 in McCleod Ganj (Dharamsala) and in 1 in Amritsar. We will also have 2 nights at the Lodge at Wah, a pleasant eco-friendly establishment set in the grounds of a tea estate. Accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis in rooms with en-suite facilities. If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Depending upon availability it may be possible to arrange single rooms for the hotel nights. For hotel prices and single supplement costs please refer to the dates and prices page of the trip on our website.

Group Leader & Support Staff

There will be an experienced professional city guide with the group in Delhi and a different, similarly experienced, tour leader will meet the group on arrival at Kangra (Dharmsala) Airport on Day 3. There will also be a private, air-conditioned vehicle, and driver with the group from arrival at Kangra Airport to Amritsar.

Spending Money

Approximately £250 (or the equivalent in US dollars or euros) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including tips for your guides (allow approximately £80-£100) and for beer, soft drinks, snacks etc. There will be opportunities to buy souvenirs on this trip. It is not necessary to purchase local currency (Indian Rupees) before you travel. Sterling, US dollars and euros are readily exchanged in Delhi. Since you will be changing the majority of your spending money into local currency during the time you spend in Delhi, we recommend taking this in cash. Credit cards can be used to purchase many goods in the cities and are particularly useful for more expensive souvenirs. It is possible to withdraw cash (rupees only) from cash machines in certain banks in the cities using credit and debit cards.

Guidance on Tipping

Tipping is an accepted and expected part of Indian culture, although you should only tip for services which are well done. Your guide will help with sundry tipping; bell boys, other hotel staff, toilet attendants and lunchtime restaurant staff. This means you don't need to concern yourself with who to tip and who not to tip. Your guide may set up a tip 'kitty' for this and you will be asked to contribute £30 to £40 each for this at the start of the trip. You will also will need to tip your driver who will be with you throughout your time outside of the Indian capital - your guide will advise on an appropriate amount. And, separately, you will need to tip your guide. As a rough guide we suggest that you allow a total of £80 to £90 for tips - although the amount you give is entirely up to you.

Baggage Allowance

You should restrict your luggage to one main travel bag plus a small daypack to carry cameras, binoculars, water etc. A robust holdall or a piece of luggage fitted with wheels is appropriate for this kind of trip. Please note that the baggage allowance on the internal flight on this holiday is 15 kgs check-in and 5 kgs hand luggage.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the ‘Dates and Prices’ table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Visa India

Most nationalities, including travellers from the UK, the USA and many European countries can apply for their Indian Visa online through the **E-Visa Application** process. You must make your application at least four days prior to departure. Please download the detailed information document for details of how to apply for your visa: Visa India PDF

NB. The application process can be temperamental and we suggest you try a different browser (Firefox is known to work) if your application does not at first go through.

e-Arrival Card - Important

Separately and additionally, foreign nationals must now complete an e-arrival card to present at immigration on arrival in India along with their e-Visa. The digital e-Arrival form is found here https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/earrival/ It should be completed **within the 72 hours prior to your arrival in India.**

Ebola Self-Declaration Form (SDF) - Important

All passengers travelling to India must now also complete the Ebola Self-Declaration Form (SDF) to present at immigration on arrival in India. The form is found here https://airsuvidha.civilaviation.gov.in It should be completed **within the 72 hours prior to your arrival in India.**

Sikkim

If you are joining one of our Sikkim Beneath Kangchenjunga (SIK) groups, we will ask you to complete a Sikkim Permit form approximately 20 days before you travel. You will need your Indian Visa details for this form. A 30-day E-Tourist Visa can be applied for within 30 days of travel and will usually be processed within a couple of days. As an alternative you can apply for a 1-Year E-Tourist Visa within 180 days of travel. DO NOT MENTION SIKKIM in 'Places to be visited' when you make your application.

Nagaland

If you are joining the Kaziranga, Nagaland and the Hornbill Festival (HBF) group we need to apply for a PAP (Protected Area Permit) for Nagaland once the tour is confirmed. Approximately 20 days before you travel, we will need from you a copy of your passport and of your Indian E-Tourist Visa, along with a colour passport photo and a copy of your international flight e-tickets.

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The currency of India is the Indian Rupee.

Preparing for your Holiday

Although there is no strenuous walking on this holiday, there are a couple of short, optional walks and several locations best explored on foot. On account of this, it makes a lot of sense to get some additional exercise before you travel. It is likely to be quite hot at times and you should be prepared for this. Before departure, we suggest that you do some reading about the country, its people and cultures and the places you will visit.

Climate

At 1500 metres above sea-level, Dharamsala has a temperate climate with hot (and wet) summers and cooler and dry winters. The best times to visit are pre and post monsoon (March-April and October-November), when the daily maximum temperatures are between around 20 and 25 degrees centigrade, dropping to around 15 degrees centigrade at night. At these seasons the maximum temperature in Delhi could be as high as 30 degrees centigrade.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- India – Lonely Planet
- Guide India - The Rough Guide

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

The following checklist should help you with your packing. As a general rule, you should always try to keep the weight of your equipment to a minimum.

Please bring the following items:

- Comfortable walking shoes or trainers
- Lightweight walking trousers
- Light, long-sleeved shirt with collar)
- Waterproof jacket
- Fleece jumper or jacket
- Casual clothing for evenings
- Travel clothes
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Small daypack 20 to 25 litres
- Water bottles 1 litre (x2)
- Water purification tablets or Water-To-Go bottle
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Basic First Aid Kit including: antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium), painkillers, plasters (band-aids), insect repellent, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).
- Camera
- Swimwear (optional)

- Pocket knife and repair kit (optional)

Satellite Communications:

India does not currently allow the carrying of satellite communication devices such as satellite phones and Garmin ‘inReach’.

If you use such devices, please do not bring these with you to India.

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Delhi. A group transfer is provided from Delhi Airport for clients arriving in the morning on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary. A group transfer to Amritsar Airport late on Day 9 of the Land Only itinerary is also provided.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Delhi and returning from Amritsar. Outbound flights will usually depart from the UK in the evening, arriving in the morning on the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart Amritsar in the early hours of Day 10 of the Land Only itinerary, arriving in the UK later the same day.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

We have more than 35 years’ experience of operating a wide range adventure holidays in India, from Ladakh in the far north to the tropical, southern state of Kerala.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 21/11/2026 and the trip is subject to change