

India has received a good deal of press coverage this year with her dispute over Kashmir making headline news and visitors being told to return home. We are delighted to say that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice against travel was lifted on the 22nd July and India has opened her doors to visitors again. This amazingly diverse country presents the traveller with a wealth of experiences, here we present our top five itinerary ideas, be you a first time visitor or returning to delve a little deeper. All the itineraries are tailor-made and on a private basis.

The Golden Triangle and Goa

A week long visit to the cities of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur will give you a taste of this fascinating country. The cities of Old Delhi and New Delhi are worth exploring from the historic bazaar of Chandni Chowk to the British designed parliament building. A full day in Agra will allow plenty of time to explore the Taj Mahal, be sure to be there for the spectacular sunset. The Red Fort is another sight not to be missed with its fabulous views over the city. Jaipur has a fascinating array of sights including the Amber Palace and Observatory as well as being an excellent centre for Indian crafts. Head down to Goa in the south at the end of your tour to relax and maybe visit a few of the markets and Portuguese churches in the area. From basic comfort to the height of luxury, you can choose your own style of hotel.

Prices from £1,950 per person based on two people sharing a twin room.

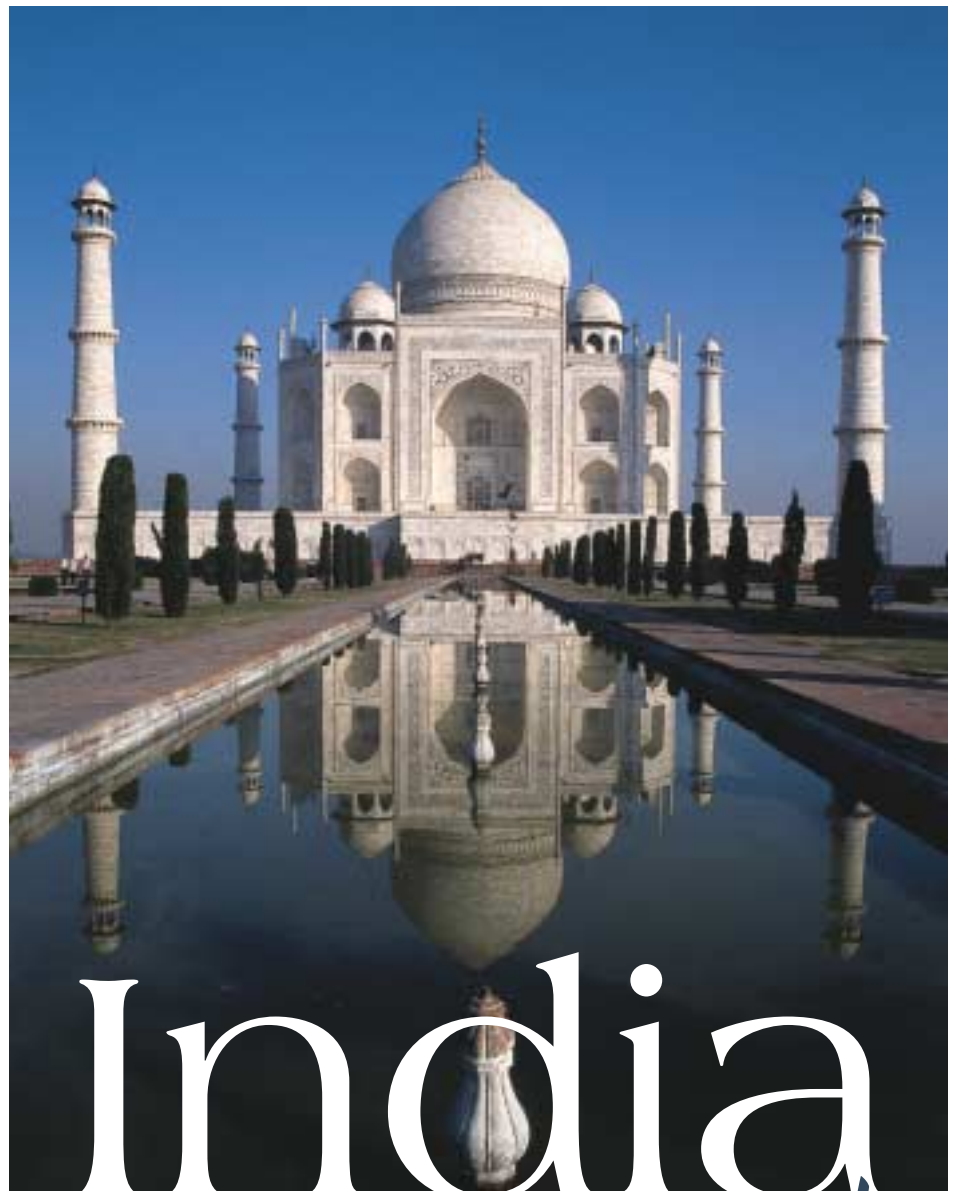
Classic North India

From Delhi via the sacred Ganges at Varanasi and the temples of Khajuraho to the inspiring Taj Mahal then on through the regal state of Rajasthan via Jaipur and Jodhpur until you reach Udaipur, a sixteen day tour will allow you to see the best of Northern India. Accommodation is of a very high standard ranging from modern hotels with all the facilities you would expect from world class hotels to converted merchant homes. An optional night spent camping in the desert is a unique experience.

Prices from £2,400 per person based on two people sharing a twin room.

Classic Kerala

Whether on a first or repeat visit to India, Kerala is a wonderful place to tour in. The historic port of Cochin, where Vasco da Gama landed in 1500, at the mouth of the backwater lake and canal network is a good starting point. Travelling a short distance into the backwaters by road or aboard a traditional rice boat is a truly relaxing experience. Take a drive through rubber and tea plantations and you soon reach the evocatively named Cardamom Hills, a major spice growing region, stroll through a spice plantation and see many spices besides cardamoms. Nearby Periyar National Park is home to a healthy tiger population, guides will help you track them down either on foot or by boat.



India reopened...

Even if you don't spot an elusive tiger, the sight of elephants at the lake shore is a captivating one. Start or finish your tour at one of the quiet beach hotels, many of which have been designed and decorated like traditional villages but with modern facilities. Alternatively, you can choose to stay in the house of a local family.

Prices from £1,590 per person based on two people sharing a twin room.

Magical Rajasthan

A state with an exciting blend of vibrant cities full of museums and markets, with wonderfully atmospheric hotels. On a fortnight tour commencing in Delhi, you will travel via Agra to Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur and Udaipur. Stops can be made along the way at small rural hotels, either in the Shekhavati region or the desert. It's also possible to include wildlife viewing at Ranthambhore, Bharatpur or Sariska. There is a huge selection of hotels to stay in from luxury converted palaces to charming family run hotels.

Prices from £1,950 per person based on two people sharing a twin room.

Classic Wildlife

Take a train from Delhi to Ranthambhore where you can spend a few nights viewing its large animal population including tiger, sloth bear, chital and sambar deer, and the crested serpent eagle, from the comfort of a jeep. Next stop is the bird sanctuary of Bharatpur, recognised as the best in India and home to spoonbill, sarus crane and greater spotted eagle. You can travel by boat or cycle rickshaw to view the birds. A short drive away is the Taj Mahal where you can spend a day. An overnight train to the foothills of the Himalayas will take you to Corbett National Park. Here, you will track tiger from the back of an elephant, a thrilling experience straight from the days of Kipling! The tour ends in Delhi before the flight home. Accommodation is provided in a variety of hotels and lodges, and excellent guides and naturalists will accompany you throughout.

Prices from £1,695 per person based on two people sharing a twin room.