



Once capital of India under the Mughals, a lasting legacy of this time are the superb monuments which date from this era. Perhaps the most famous example is Emperor Shah Jahan's Taj Mahal, built in loving memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz.

WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Agra - Taj mahal, Agra Fort
- Sikandra - tomb of Akbar
- Fatehpur Sikri - ancient deserted Mughal city

What's Included

- Return transfers by chauffeur driven air-conditioned car from Delhi to Agra
- 2 nights 3-4 star accommodation including 2 breakfasts
- Entrance fees applicable to excursions
- Services of an English speaking local guide during included sightseeing
- Return transfers by chauffeur driven air-conditioned vehicle from Delhi to Agra
- Guided sightseeing in Agra, Sikandra and Fatehpur Sikri

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : New Delhi

Delhi - Agra. This morning drive to Agra (approximately 4-5 hours) and enjoy a sightseeing tour of the city in the afternoon, stopping en route to visit Sikandra. Agra was once India's Mughal capital. Agra was established in 1475 by Badal Singh and came into its own when Sikander Lodhi

of the Lodhi dynasty chose it for his capital because of its proximity to the Yamuna. Babur defeated the Lodhis to capture not only Agra but also to lay the foundation of the Mughal Empire. We head to Agra Fort for a short visit.

Behind its colossal walls are some of the finest Mughal buildings in India. Construction of the fort commenced during the reign of Emperor Akbar and additions continued to be made until the rule of his grandson Shah Jahan. During Akbar's time, it was primarily a military fort though later the focus shifted and it partially became a palace. After our touring, you'll have time to relax back at the hotel. **Overnight - Agra**

Day 2 : Legendary Taj Mahal

Agra - breakfast. Enjoy a memorable sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal Sunrise. Described as the most extravagant monument ever built for love, this fine example of Mughal architecture was built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved second wife-Mumtaz Mahal, who died tragically during childbirth. Built entirely of white marble, construction began in 1631, the year in which Mumtaz died, and was not completed until 1653. A staggering total of 20,000 workers contributed their skills, in the construction of this unique mausoleum.

After exploring the legendary Taj Mahal, we drive to the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. The deserted Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri was built by Emperor Akbar in 1569 and abandoned after fifteen years due to scarcity of water. The attractions in Fatehpur Sikri are Jama Masjid – a beautiful building containing elements of Persian and Hindu Design. The main entrance is through a 54-metre high Buland Darwaza, the Gate of Victory, constructed to commemorate Akbar's victory in Gujarat.

The Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds) is a projecting room with walls made entirely of stone latticework. Birbal Bhavan, built either by or for Raja Birbal, Akbar's favourite courtier, this small palace is extremely elegant in its design and execution. Hiran Minar (Deer Minaret) is said to have been erected over the grave of Akbar's favourite elephant. Panch Mahal – This amusing little five-storied palace was probably once used

by the ladies of the Court and originally had stone screens on the sides.

The lower floor has 56 columns, no two of which are exactly alike. Outside the Jama Masjid are the remains of the small stone – cutters' mosque. Chishti's cave was supposedly at this site and the mosque predates Akbar's imperial city. **Overnight - Agra (B)**

Day 3 : Agra to Delhi

Agra - Delhi. Hotel check out, drive to Delhi and transfer to the international airport in time to board your onward flight.(B)

Tipping

Tipping is much a part of Indian Culture. For a job well done we would suggest that you reserve the following amount per person per day to cover tips along the way.

- INR400 (USD\$8.50) if the day includes local guide & sightseeing
- INR200 (USD\$4.50) if the day excludes local guide & sightseeing

Fabulous food!

India's vast range of climates, cultures and peoples has produced a very diverse culinary repertoire. Curry is the word that springs to mind when people think of India food. Believe it or not, there is no such thing as 'curry' in India. It's an English invention, an all-purpose term to cover the whole gamut of Indian spicing. Although all Indian food is certainly not curry, this is the basis of Indian cuisine. Curry doesn't have to be that hot it'll blow your head, although it can be made that way, if you ask! Rather, for the most part Indian food is very, very aromatic, since the spices used by Indian chefs and cooks in India don't arrive in the cooking pot via a pre-packed tub of spice.

Indian chefs and cooks have about 25 spices on their regular list and it is from these that they produce the curry flavour.

Normally spices are freshly ground with a pestle and mortar, and blended in certain combinations to produce varying flavours and heat. It is the



freshness of the spices that transform the dish. Curries can be vegetable, meat-lamb, mutton or chicken in content, though never beef. The cow is sacred to the Hindu people and India in general, so it is extremely rare to see beef on any menu across the country. Lamb also substitutes beef at McDonalds in India. Ask for a Maharajah Mac!

Thalis

Thalis are an all-purpose Indian dish offering a variety of curried vegetable dishes, relishes, poppadams, puris or chapatis and a mountain of rice. Often served on a metal tray with a number of small bowls known as katoris holding each dish or just small indentations moulded into the metal tray, Thalis are consistently tasty and cheap.

Festival India

India is a country of colourful festivals and special events. Two of the biggest festivals in the Hindu calendar are Diwali (Deepavali) and Holi. Meanwhile, the Pushkar Camel festival in Rajasthan brings together one of the most colourful spectacles on earth.

Diwali – the Festival of Light is the happiest festival of the Hindu calendar. At night, countless oil lamps are lit to show Rama the way home from his period of exile. In all the festival lasts 5 days. On day 3, time is spent worshipping Lakshmi – the goddess of fortune. Traditionally, this is the beginning of the new financial year for companies. Diwali has also become the Festival of Sweets. Giving sweets has become as much of a part of the tradition as lighting oil lamps and firecrackers. It is also celebrated by the Jains as their New Years Day. For Diwali dates this year and next, please visit our website.

Holi – the Festival of Colour is one of most exuberant Hindu festivals, with people marking the end of winter by throwing coloured water and powder (gulal) at one another. It gets quite mad! Don't wear good clothes on this day, and prepare to duck! On the night before Holi, bonfires are built to symbolise destruction of the evil demon Holika. It is mainly a northern festival; there is no real winter to end in the south, so it isn't as widespread there. Please visit our website for Holi dates this year and next.

If you are interested in visiting India whilst one of the above or many other festivals are on, head to the India - Unique Adventures section of our website.

Taj Mahal Closure

Please Note: The Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Climate

India has a three-season year known as the hot, the wet and the cool. The best time to visit is between late September and April when temperatures are cooler and therefore ideal for sightseeing. In the summer months of May to July it is less crowded and conditions are perfect for sightseeing and photography, although parts of India are extremely hot. July signals the start of the monsoon or wet

season that continues until early or mid September. Although the weather is humid, the days are punctuated by intermittent rainfall and the monsoon is India is actually quite spectacular and quite refreshing.

Health Requirements

It is recommended that you be vaccinated for Tetanus and Polio, if you haven't had a booster in the last ten years. Food and waterborne diseases are more common, so we recommend vaccinations for Typhoid(valid 3 years) and Hepatitis A (validity varies). You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication.

Currency

The Indian Rupees (INR) is non-exportable and only available in India. Pounds Sterling, US Dollars and Euros are easily exchanged upon arrival at any major bank or your hotel. ATM's are also available in all major towns and cities.

If planning on using your ATM card whilst in India, please let your bank know of your travel plans prior to departure to avoid your bank assuming that the transaction is fraudulent and blocking your card. Exchange rates are subject to fluctuation.

USD 1 = INR 45
GBP 1 = INR 75
EURO 1 = INR 65
AUD 1 = INR 47

Time

India is 5 hours 30 mins ahead of GMT.

Essential Packing

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- A photocopy of your passport data pages.
- The voltage in India is 230-240V. Most outlets in India accept round 3 pin plugs (not a UK, European or USA plugs). You should pack a Universal Adaptor and check that it is suitable for India.
- Insect repellent to guard against pesky mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries/memory card so you can go snap happy.
- Consider packing some pencils, pens or modest educational supplies that can be given to village schools or street children.
- If you fancy a tippie, take advantage of Duty Free buys.
- Buy some Indian Rupees at the airport on arrival.
- Buy a phrasebook and practice your holiday Hindi.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.

Holiday Money

Funds collected in India for entrance fees and tip kitty (if applicable to your holiday) or optional excursion that you may wish to participate in are payable in local currency (INR).

Pre-Tour Accommodation

If arriving on day 1 of a holiday, that includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What you Get' section of this Go Guide) we will be at the airport, ready to transfer you to your hotel. Further if you are booking pre-tour accommodation with us an airport arrival transfer will also be provided. If arriving prior to 9am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) you will need to purchase a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until standard hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm.

Arrival Transfers

If your tour or short stay includes an airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'What you Get' section of this Go Guide) from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, our arrival procedure is as follows:

Arrive to Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, where after you have attended to customs and immigration formalities, please proceed to the arrival hall. Please have your tour voucher handy and make it available to our representative who will be waiting for you in the arrivals hall, holding a prominent on the go tours logo signboard, ready to escort you to our awaiting transportation and onward to your tour start hotel

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight to India is delayed please call the emergency contact number as stated on your tour voucher and our local office who will then advise on the best course of action.

If travelling on our Captivating Kerala tour (with arrival via Kochi Airport) or one of our 'Short Stays' where an airport arrival transfer is included in your holiday, the procedure for meeting you at the airport is the same as those detailed above.

Visas

All foreign nationals must obtain a visa for a visit to India and it is essential the visa be procured prior to travel. A 6 month single entry visa (valid from the date of issue) is issued for most nationals planning to visit India. If you are planning to visit a neighbouring country such as Nepal, Bhutan or Sri Lanka and return to India you will require a multiple entry visa which must be procured in advance of travel. In order to obtain this, you will need to provide the embassy with a detailed itinerary and full flight information, showing the dates and ports of exit and re-entry to India.

If you are a resident in the UK we offer a visa service to save you the inconvenience of having to queue at the embassy, please visit our website or contact us for further information.

Visa requirements are subject to change and that visa procurement prior to departure is solely the responsibility of the traveller and not of on the go. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from India.

Agra - 3 days

www.onthetours.com
uk 020 7371 1113 info@onthetours.com
aus 1300 855 684 aus-info@onthetours.com
nz 0800 44 77 69 can 1 866 890 7038
usa 1 866 377 6147 sa 0800 982 686

updated on 28-08-2011

This Go Guide has been compiled with care and good faith. It gives an accurate illustration of the proposed arrangements for this holiday. Circumstances beyond our control such as changes in local conditions, inclement weather or other reasons could force us to make changes to this itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the traveller and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown are subject to change though are an accurate reflection of costs at time of writing. Please also note that visa requirements are subject to change and are the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go