

Ajanta & Ellora - 4 days

go guide

don't leave home without it



A World Of Discovery



See the remarkable, rock-hewn 2nd century B.C. caves of Ajanta adorned with exquisite paintings and sculptures of Buddha and view the impressive temples and monasteries of Ellora, home to the renowned Kailasa Temple.

WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET

Trip Highlights

- Aurangabad - Bibi-ka-Maqbara, Panchakub and Aurangabad Caves
- Ajanta - Caves
- Ellora - Caves and Daulatabad Fort

What's Included

- Return economy class flights from Mumbai to Aurangabad
- 3 nights 3-4 star accommodation at the President Park Hotel or similar
- Entrance fees applicable to excursions
- 3 breakfasts included
- Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad excursions
- Services of an English speaking local guide during scheduled sightseeing

What's Not Included

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

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Mumbai

Mumbai - Aurangabad. Early morning transfer to the airport for your included flight to Aurangabad. Onward transfer to hotel. In the afternoon, we undertake a city sightseeing tour of Aurangabad. The Pani Chakki is a late 17th century water mill that displays the engineering skills of Malik Ambar, the architect of Aurangabad City. It is surrounded by a picturesque garden-landscape

dotted with fish tanks. The Bibi-ka-maqbara was built by Aurangzeb's son as a tribute to his mother, Begum Rabia-ud-Durani. It is a replica of the Taj Mahal, and stands out as the only example of Mogul architecture on the Deccan Plateau. Also visit the Aurangabad Caves No. 7 & 8, caves from the Mahayana school of Buddhism. **Overnight - Aurangabad**

Day 2 : Ajanta Caves

Enjoy a full day excursion to Ajanta Caves. Nestling in an inner fold of the Sahyadri hills, 100 kms from the city of Aurangabad in the shape of a mammoth horseshoe are the 30 rock-hewn caves of Ajanta, dating from 2nd century B.C. Discovered in 1819, by a group of British Officers, these startling achievements took around 600 years to create. Carved with little more than a hammer and chisel, Ajanta, once the retreat of the Buddhist monastic orders features several 'Chaityas' and Viharas. The exquisite paintings and sculptures of Buddha's life belong to the Mahayana period. **Overnight - Aurangabad (B)**

Day 3 : Ellora Caves - Buddhist, Jain & Hindu Sculptures

Aurangabad. This morning we head out to Ellora Caves. Impressive in their own right are the rock-hewn temples and monasteries of Ellora that lie just 30 kms away from Aurangabad City and are the meeting point of the Buddhists, Jains and Hindus.

In all, there are 34 cave temples - 12 Mahayana Buddhist caves (550-750 A.D.) and 17 Hindu caves (600-875 A.D.) and five caves of the Jain faith (800- 1000 A.D.) 22 more caves, dedicated to Shiva, have been recently discovered. Cave 16, the renowned Kailasa Temple dedicated to Lord Shiva, is probably the largest monolith in the world and is said to have taken 150 years to be built by 7000 labourers, working in continuous shifts. Lavishly carved and sculptured from a single rock, it bears testimony to the excellence of Dravidian art. It includes a gateway, pavilion, courtyard, vestibule, sanctum, sanctorum and tower. Cave No. 32, which is the assembly hall of Indra (God of rain), belongs to the Jain group. A shrine within the assembly

hall contains the seated Mahavir, last of the 24 tirthankars and founder of Jainism. The lotus design details on the columns are the finest examples of craftsmanship in the Ellora complex.

This afternoon we enjoy an excursion to Daulatabad Fort, a labyrinthine structure that was once covered in Persian tiles. **Overnight - Aurangabad (B)**

Day 4 : Aurangabad - Mumbai by flight

Aurangabad - Mumbai. Transfer to the airport and fly to Mumbai. Upon arrival to Mumbai our arrangements end. If you are booking extra accommodation with us in Mumbai, you will be transferred to your hotel and the following day returned to the airport for your onward international flight.

Alternatively, you are able to book a hotel day use room with us. Where by a car, driver and room will be made available to you for use until the time of your international flight, later in the day.

Please Note: Ajanta Caves are closed on Monday, Ellora Caves are closed on Tuesday.(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,

Ajanta & Ellora - 4 days

updated on 28-08-2011

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

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



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.

Secular India

India, despite being a secular state, harbours arguably the world's richest heritage of spirituality and religious experience. India's major religion, Hinduism is practised by more than 80% of the population. In numbers, that translates to in excess of 700 million people.

No definition of Hinduism truly justifies the true meaning and significance of Hinduism. Hinduism has many layers. Hinduism is not just a religion but a complex body of social, cultural, religious beliefs and practises evolved in and largely confined to the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is marked by a caste system, an outlook tending to view all forms and theories as aspects of one eternal being and truth, and the practice of the way of works, the way of knowledge, or the way of devotion as a means of release from the round of rebirths. It is not based upon a single scripture or the teachings of one prophet. It has no founder, central authority or hierarchy. You can't be converted; to be a Hindu you must be born one. The strictly orthodox maintain only a person born in India of Hindu parents can truly claim to be Hindu.

Hinduism has the largest number of adherents of any religion in Asia. Along with Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism, it is one of the oldest extant religions with roots extending back to 1000BC. Buddhism and Jainism arose around the same time as one another in the 6th century BC at a time of social and religious discontent. Both were reactions against the strictures of Brahminical Hinduism. Although more recent, Sikhism too has its roots in a protest movement in the late 15th century, the bhakti (devotional tradition) that started in southern India as a reaction against the caste system and Brahmin domination of ritual. It was conceived at a

time of great social upheaval and was an attempt to fuse the best of Islam and Hinduism.

Today, there are some 16 million Sikhs in India, mostly from Punjab. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is the holiest shrine of Sikhism. Islam was introduced to the north by invading armies (in the 16th century the Mughal empire controlled much of India) and to the south by Arab traders.

Today, Islam is the largest minority religion in the country with in excess of 100 million adherents. Christianity arrived in southern India not with the first Europeans but with Syrian immigrants in the 4th century. A sect of the Syrian Orthodox church was established and still survives today, along with other eastern Orthodox sects. Catholicism arrived with the Portuguese and Protestantism with the English and Dutch. Today, India has around 18 million Christians, of who around 75% are South Indian.

Our Environmental

Preserving the natural state and beauty of the areas we pass through is essential. In helping to preserve the historical and religious legacy of India; it's coastlines and waterways, local cultures, flora and fauna, please read on and see how you can do your bit. Please respect the following;

- Take no relic from historical sites with you, be it a small chunk of fluted marble, stonework or carving.
- Dress appropriately if entering a place of worship such as a Hindu temple. Show respect for the sacred beliefs of others.
- Stick to designated paths. Erosion is a problem on hill and mountainsides, especially at high altitudes.
- Avoid removing or disturbing any plant life that keeps topsoils in place.
- Do not engage in hunting or the purchase of trophies of endangered species. It's illegal in India's parks and sanctuaries, and to import the

hide of an endangered species is also illegal.

- Take all personal litter with you.
- Toilet Paper and tissue should be disposed of in a bin, to avoid blocking sometimes temperamental plumbing systems.
 - If needing to perform your ablutions beyond the confines of a WC, be sure to bury any waste.

on the go promotes the recruitment, training and employment of local people in tourism. As well as benefiting the local people, on the go believes this fosters national pride in India's illustrious history. Understanding today ensures the preservation of India for tomorrow.

If looking to offer donations or gifts to local people – in particular children, please do so discreetly and without show. Despite generous acts of goodwill, people still like to retain their dignity. Useful gifts to consider include educational items such as English language books (English is taught in many schools), chalks, pens, paper, balls and small items reflecting where you are from.

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 in 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 tittle, 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.

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.

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).

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.

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.

Ajanta & Ellora - 4 days

updated on 28-08-2011