

short stay: colonial shimla

# go guide

don't leave home without it



## short stay spotlight

### what you see

- Kalka - toy train to Shimla
- Shimla - hill station, The Mall, Christ Church, Gorton Castle, Viceroyal Lodge

### what you get

- 3 breakfasts
- 3 nights 3★ hotels
- Train - Delhi - Kalka - Delhi (air-conditioned chair car class)
- Himalayan Queen toy train, Kalka - Shimla (1st class, non air-conditioned)
- Airport arrival and departure transfer
- Chauffeur driven air-conditioned vehicle



## on location

Your guide to on the ground...

### visa requirements

Visas are required by all visitors to India. It is essential the visa is procured prior to travel. Visa forms are available from us and also supplied upon booking. Please ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of return from India. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change. Visa procurement is also the responsibility of the traveller and not of on the go.

### climate

India has a three-season year known as the hot, the wet and the cool. The coolest time to visit is late September through April. Temps during this time are ideal for sightseeing. The hot season runs from around April through July. Conditions are hot and dry, especially in Rajasthan. July signals the start of the monsoon or wet season that continues until around end September. Although the weather is humid, the days are punctuated by intermittent rainfall.

### time

India is 5 hours 30 mins ahead of GMT.

### money

USD\$1 = INR46 (subject to fluctuation). The Indian Rupee is exchangeable only in India. Exchange facilities are available at various bureau de changes and banks. A few ATM machines exist in major towns and cities.

### 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. We recommend vaccinations for Typhoid and Hepatitis A. You are also advised to take anti-Malarial medication. Information can change so please check with your local health care provider.

## how much?

- **TIPPING**  
INR400 (USD\$8.50) if the day includes local guide & sightseeing  
INR200 (USD\$4.50) if the day excludes local guide & sightseeing
- **CAMERA FEES**  
Please note that nearly all temples, museums, game parks and sights has a fee for camera use.
- Can of coke (330ml) INR40-50
- Mineral water (local, 500ml or 1L) INR30
- Meal for 2 (entree, main, local beer,) INR1200
- Beer (local brew Kingfisher - 650ml) INR150

## things to bring

- Insect repellent to guard against pesky mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries/film so you can go snap happy.
- 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.
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs.
- Keep a supply of small notes for local transactions.
- Keep a photocopy of your passport data pages.

## top experiences

- Take a look at Victoria Terminus, considered to be the most beautiful edifice in Mumbai
- Spot the Bollywood stars and see how the films are made
- Wander in wonder through the Elephanta caves
- Indulge in some traditional mendi henna decoration on your hands. Non permanent!
- Walk along Marine Drive, Mumbai's most popular promenade





# colonial shimla: itinerary

## day 1

Delhi - Shimla. Early morning Shatabdi Express train to Kalka and transfer on the Himalayan Queen toy train to Shimla. On arrival transfer to your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight - Shimla.

## days 2-3

Shimla - breakfast. Free time to explore the city on your own. The 'summer capital' of British India sprawls along a crescent-shaped ridge at an altitude of over 2100m in southern Himachal Pradesh. This was the most important hill station in India before Independence. The famous main street, The Mall, still runs along the crest of the ridge and is lined with stately English-looking houses. Christ Church, Gorton Castle and the fortress-like former Viceroyal Lodge reinforce the English flavour.

It's worth exploring the narrow streets, which fall steeply away from the ridge to colourful local bazaars. There's also an interesting walk to Jakhu Temple, dedicated to the monkey god Hanuman. It's located near the highest point of the ridge and offers fine views of the town, surrounding valley and snow-capped peaks. Other scenic spots nearby include the 67m high Chadwick Falls, the picnic spot of Prospect Hill, and Wildflower Hall - the site of the former mansion of Lord 'Your-Country-Needs-You' Kitchener.

## day 4

Shimla - Delhi - breakfast. Morning is at leisure and later drive to Kalka railway station to connect your train for Delhi. In Delhi you will be met & taken to the international airport in time to connect with your onwards flight.

## india since independence

European powers began vying for colonial control of India in the 1600s, with the British eventually gaining the upper hand, through a highly effective and organised system called the Raj. They ruled most of India until after World War II, when a movement led by Mohandas Gandhi and others finally won independence. As the British exited, the region was partitioned into predominantly Hindu India and Muslim Pakistan. The 1947 partition provoked the greatest exodus in human history as 10 million people changed sides - Muslims fleeing west toward Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs travelling east into India. Terrible mob violence resulting in the slaughter of between 250,000 and 500,000 occurred before partition was completed.

India's history since independence has been marked by disunity and intermittent periods of chaos. In

January 1948, a Hindu fanatic assassinated Gandhi. His right-hand man, Jawarhalal Nehru, became India's first Prime Minister. Nehru was a successful leader, steering the young nation through a period of peace that was contrasted by the rule of Lal Bahadur Shastri, who fought Pakistan after it invaded two regions of India. Shastri died in 1966 after only 20 months in power. Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi, succeeded him.

With the name Gandhi (though no relation to Mahatma), Indira was a powerful, unchallenged leader, and opposition remained negligible until she abused her power by trying to suppress the press. When the rising opposition began to threaten her power, she called a state of emergency and continued to reform the nation, actually making some positive economic and political changes despite her questionable tactics. Her most unpopular policy was forced sterilisation, and she was eventually defeated at the polls in 1977 by Morarji Desai of the Janata party. She won back power in '79, however, but was later assassinated in 1984 by a Sikh terrorist. Her son, Rajiv, was quickly swept into power with an overwhelming majority. Despite his previous disinterest in politics, he brought new and pragmatic policies to the country. He established a "technocratic" vision for India, eased import restrictions and encouraged foreign investment that jump-started the economy between 1986 and 1990. He was assassinated by Tamil Tigers in 1991, whilst on the campaign trail.

Although India's political climate remains divisive - India and Pakistan have fought three major wars, including one in 1971 that led to the creation of Bangladesh, the country has attained stability in recent years. Despite its turbulent and often-violent politics, India has remained a democracy. Continued economic development has been impressive. In the 1990s, the Rao Government continued on from where Rajiv Gandhi had abruptly left off. The government abandoned decades of economic isolation and welcomed foreign investors. As a result, advanced industries such as computer-software development have blossomed, though rising prices have proved unpopular. Today, India seems poised to realise its potential as a strong economic power on the international stage.

## 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.

The go guide & information contained herein has been compiled with care and in good faith. It is as accurate an illustration as can be given with regard to the proposed itinerary. Circumstances beyond our control such as inclement weather or local conditions could force us to amend the proposed itinerary. This document does not form part of a contract between the client and on the go and their affiliates. Any costs shown may be subject to change but are an accurate reflection of costs at the time of writing this go guide. Please also be advised that visa requirements are subject to change and remain the responsibility of the traveller and not that of on the go.



68 north end road, west kensington, london, W14 9EP • 020 7371 1113 • info@onthegotours.com  
3/690 brunswick street, new farm, brisbane, QLD, australia 4005 • 1300 855 684 • aus-info@onthegotours.com

updated June 2010