

Ajanta & Ellora

4 days | Starts/Ends: Mumbai



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.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Aurangabad - Bibi-ka-Maqbara (Taj Mahal replica), Panchakkib (water mill) and Aurangabad Caves
- Ajanta - Caves in the shape of a mammoth horseshoe
- Ellora - Caves and Daulatabad Fort

What's Included

- Breakfast daily
- 3 nights STANDARD hotels. SUPERIOR and DELUXE hotel options are also available upon request. Accommodation rating – See Trip Notes for details
- Touring - Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad
- Services of English-speaking Indian guides for all scheduled sightseeing
- Entrance fees for all included sightseeing
- Return economy class flights Mumbai to Aurangabad

- All relevant transfer and transportation in private modern Chauffeur driven air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - An entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Mumbai to Aurangabad

Mumbai - Aurangabad. Early morning transfer to the airport for your included flight to Aurangabad and onward transfer to your hotel on arrival.

This 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. Lastly today we visit the Aurangabad Caves No. 7 and 8, caves from the Mahayana school of Buddhism.

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

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. and 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 30kms away from Aurangabad City and are the meeting point for Buddhists, Jains and Hindus.

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In all, there are 34 cave temples - 12 Mahayana Buddhist caves (550-750 A.D.), 17 Hindu caves (600-875 A.D.), five caves of the Jain faith (800-1000 A.D.) and 22 more caves, dedicated to Shiva, which 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.

Leaving Ellora Caves, 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.

(B)

HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.

President Park

The President Park is a stylish hotel, with airy, elegant rooms. Guests can enjoy a range of facilities during their stay and can while away the hours, when they are not out exploring Aurangabad, taking a dip in the beautiful pool or working up a sweat in the fitness centre. A range of different cuisines are served up in the Spice Avenue, the hotel's own restaurant, and drinks can be found in the bar and lounge area. The hotel is 4 km from the airport and 8 km from the railway station.



Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD\$4-7 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

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, its 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

in National Parks. 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 or dispose appropriately
- Toilet paper and tissue should be disposed of in a bin, to avoid blocking 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.

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category, this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.

SUPERIOR - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and

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usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.

DELUXE - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.

LUXURY - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

India Country Guide

Welcome to India - Arrival transfer

If your holiday includes a complimentary airport arrival transfer (as indicated in the 'Inclusions' section of these Trip Notes on page 1) 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 start hotel.

If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative (after waiting 20 minutes in the arrival hall) or your flight is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your Tour Voucher. Please do not leave the airport or go to the hotel on your own. Call our emergency contact number and follow the advice given by our local team.

If travelling on our other India holidays that don't arrive into Delhi Airport (with arrival via Kochi, Cochin, Goa, Mumbai, Chennai, Trivandrum, Kolkata and Dimapur Airport), the

procedure for meeting you at the airport is the same as those detailed above.

Pre and post tour accommodation can be arranged upon request, please contact us for rates. If you are arriving early and book pre tour accommodation with us then you will still qualify for our complimentary airport arrival transfer.

If arriving prior to 9am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) consider purchasing a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until hotel check in time, which is generally 2pm.

Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from India.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/India/Visas

Health requirements

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

Water

As tap water is not safe to drink in India, only drink bottled mineral water which is readily available in hotels, shops and restaurants. You should also avoid salads which may be washed in unhygienic water.

Essential packing

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com

- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Tour Voucher and a copy of your travel insurance policy, spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport

- Universal travel adaptor
- Insect repellent to guard against mosquitos
- Spare camera batteries and memory cards
- Consider packing some pencils, pens or modest educational supplies that can be given to village schools or street children
- Buy some Indian Rupees at the airport on arrival and keep a supply of small notes for local transactions

Domestic flights - Baggage allowance

If your holiday includes a domestic flight or you have independently booked domestic flights separate to that of your international flights, please be mindful that that free baggage allowance for **Economy class travel on flights within India is near always 15kg, with 5-7kg allowance for hand luggage.** Additional weight is charged per kilo and is payable by you directly to the airline at check-in. If travelling with more than 15kg on a flight included within your holiday, please contact us so we can confirm the exact luggage allowance for your flight and give you the current per kilo cost for additional weight.

What to expect

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/India/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

Train travel in India

Travelling by train in India is an unforgettable local experience where you will get to meet Indian people and experience daily life as they do. The Indian Railway system is the world's second largest, with over 108,706 km of track, connecting more than 7000 stations. Every day, more than 7000 trains run, carrying some 14 million passengers, including us. Several our holidays include train journeys, some by day and others overnight. If your holiday does include train travel, we have noted within the itinerary the coach/class of travel that will be booked. Below is some further information that may assist you in planning for your journey.

AC CHAIR CAR

If travelling on a daytime journey, you will travel in an air-conditioned seated carriage

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(called AC chair car), similar to that of a standard city trains in most western countries. When travelling to loftier destinations where the weather is cooler, air-conditioning may not be provided.

2nd AC COACH/SLEEPER

If travelling overnight, we accommodate passengers in the 2nd class sleeper air-conditioned category (unless otherwise indicated at a higher level). 2nd class sleeper air-conditioned cabins consist of 2 upper and 2 lower bunks, plus a double-decker set of bunk beds on the opposite side of the cabin shared by you and other Indian travellers. You can sit up on your bench seat during the day and simply lie down once you are ready to go to sleep.

All cabins are mixed sex. Your cabin is not self-contained as such. 'Cabins' are separated from the carriage corridor by curtains, serving as an artificial barrier that can be drawn at night. Luggage, including hand luggage should be locked (as you would do when travelling on any overnight train anywhere in the world) and can be stored underneath the lower bunks or on the floor. The carriage is manned by an attendant who will distribute linen, free of charge. Dependent upon the service, a variety of snacks and drinks or full dinner service can be ordered at an additional cost (except for the Shatabdi Express and Rajdhani Express where meals are included within your fare). Food aboard the Shatabdi Express train is most often exceptionally good, though on many other train services it is probably best to buy snacks, fresh fruit that can be peeled or meals prior to the start of your journey. In addition, there are WC facilities (European and 'squat-style') at each end of the carriage. Cleanliness varies, so be prepared and take your own anti-bacterial hand wipes and toilet paper.

1st AC COACH/ SLEEPER

All Indian trains offer 2nd and 3rd AC coaches, but only a handful of trains offer 1st AC coaches, which can accommodate a tiny total of 18 people. 1st AC coach/ sleepers only have berths on one side of the train hence making the cabin more spacious. The cabin may have 2 berths or 4 which seat/sleep 2 or 4 persons. You can sit up a on bench seat during the

day, which is folded into bunk beds at night. The 1st AC coach also has a door making it fully closed and lockable for 2 or 4 persons. Beds are a tad wider and mattresses more cushioned. Each cabin has a 'bell' switch, which when pressed summons the attendant of the coach.

3rd AC COACH/ SLEEPER

We do not include 3rd AC coach travel within any of our tours, though if you were considering it for personal arrangements a description can be given as follows. 3rd AC coach is very similar to 2nd AC coach with the only difference being that there is a middle berth ie not just a 2 bunk bed but a triple bunk bed, hence making it possible for 6 people to be accommodated within the space. Like the 2nd AC coach there is also another set of bunk beds on the opposite side - running parallel with the length of the train. Like 2nd AC, there's no door just curtains and again you sit up on your bunk bed during the day and lie down to sleep.

Travel Operators for Tigers

Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFT), is a UK based campaign, set up to encourage sustainable wildlife tourism in tiger reserves and national parks. Funds generated through TOFT will be used to fund tiger conservation initiatives and local community development, through their two partner conservation organisations - Global Tiger Patrol and the Environmental Investigation Agency. On The Go Tours are members of TOFT and we happily pledge a USD\$20 contribution to TOFT for each of our clients that choose to travel on a wildlife tour to India with us.

Not like home... & begging

Travelling to far-flung corners of the earth often involves encountering lifestyles and conditions that are very different from what you are used to back home. As such it is important to come prepared for unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned, as things can and do change in foreign countries.

The people, customs, creed, food and languages of India are different from one region to the next. It is as vast as it is crowded, and as opulent as it is squalid. India is exciting, intense and diverse - an all-embracing experience, a veritable assault on the senses. Sometimes the poverty will get you down, Indian bureaucracy can test your patience and facing another traffic jam will seem almost too much to bear. Yet, it's all worthwhile! While India is far from the easiest country in the world to travel around, On The Go will try their upmost to make your holiday as seamless as possible. Our holidays combine comfortable transportation, comprehensive sightseeing and good hotels, allowing you to concentrate on getting the most out of your stay.

India is a country of unparalleled contrasts, a destination where you'll be afforded plenty of unique encounters, and if you can travel with an open mind you will have a wonderful time here. In return, please remember to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for local customs.

Begging

With more than 350 million people in India living on less than USD\$2 per day, inevitably you will come across many people begging for money. Begging has a legitimate place in Indian society. Even poor people give to beggars or charities to earn religious merit. The Indian government, however, would like to regulate begging more stringently. Though begging is common, you are not under obligation to give money. If you choose to give money to beggars, we advise you to do this from the vehicle and not on the street. Alternatively, consider donating pencils, pens or modest educational supplies to village schools.

Shopping

India is a virtual Aladdin's Cave. At the many bazaars known as 'chowks', the cardinal rule is to bargain hard. State run craft emporiums that stock the best of what a state has to offer can give you a reasonable idea of what is acceptable in terms of price and quality. You'll find carpets of quality equal to those of Persian origin, Rajasthani

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pottery and metalwork, embellished slippers known as jootis, jewellery in breathtaking designs. Likewise, leatherwork, silks and saris in spectacularly colourful designs, paintings and clothing make excellent souvenirs.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase goods. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

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