

# Trip Details

## Incredible India

Incredible India covers all the must-see sights of India in 13-days. India provides a unique combination of tradition and innovation, mixed with an abundance of landscapes and monuments. Take on the bustling capital, Delhi before discovering the famous Golden Triangle via Jaipur and Agra. Embark on an overnight train to Varanasi and soak in the local culture whilst dazzled by the famous Hindu ceremony Aarti. Explore the popular sites as well as hidden beauties off the beaten path. Witness the lifestyle of locals while engulfing in the cultural diversity.

<b>Duration</b>	13 Days	<b>Group Size</b>	Max. 12 People
<b>Destination</b>	India	<b>Age Req.</b>	18+
<b>Start/Ends in</b>	Delhi/Delhi	<b>Trip Theme</b>	Discovery, Overland
<b>Hotels</b>	3 & 4 Star	<b>Departs</b>	All Year Round

## Why You Will Love This Tour

- \* Cover all corners of the vast and colourful country on this ultimate 13-day trip through the heartland of the Golden Triangle and central India.
- \* Stay in carefully selected 4 & 3 star hotels with all breakfasts and airport transfers included.
- \* Travel in private, air-conditioned coaches with your local guide. This trip also includes three overnight train journeys to maximise on discovery time.
- \* Explore an extraordinary wealth of culture and history on offer as you travel with your local guide through India's Golden Triangle – from Delhi to Agra and Jaipur.
- \* Follow your local guide as you visit Old Delhi's Red Fort and Jama Masjid Mosque, rickshaw through chaotic city centres and tick off iconic Wonders of the World like the Taj Mahal!
- \* Take an included sunrise boat ride down the River Ganges in Varanasi to witness the spiritual and touching tradition of cremation and salvation at the Ghats of the Ganges riverbank.
- \* Visit the remains of 20 UNESCO-listed temples built between 950 and 1050 as you explore the ancient Hindu and Jain temples of Khajuraho.
- \* Finish your adventure with a night stay in the medieval city of Orcha, marvelling at the 16th and 17th century forts and roaming along the Betwa River banks before returning to Delhi and farewelling your new travel mates!

## Arrival Details

The group welcome meeting with you guide and other travellers is held around 18:30 at the hotel lobby on Day 1 of your tour, unless otherwise notified.

### Meeting and Finishing Point

#### **Mantra Amaltas Hotel- Delhi**

**Address:** 23, Friends Colony (West), Near Formula 1 Venue, New Delhi, Delhi 110065, India

**Phone** :+91 11 4966 4966    **Emergency Number:** +44 (0) 208 099 75 36

## Airport Transfers

Arrival airport transfer is included for the flights landing to Delhi on the first day of your tour from 5am to 11:30pm or if you have booked your Pre Accommodation with us. . You will be picked up by a Travel Talk representative holding a Travel Talk sign at the airport. Departure airport transfer is only available on the last day of the tour between 05:00 and 17:00

To arrange your airport transfer please email us the following information at least 2 weeks before your departure date. [info@traveltalktours.com](mailto:info@traveltalktours.com)

- Travel Date
- Flight Number
- Local Arrival Time
- Name/s of the Passengers

## Making Your Own Way to the Starting Point

The arrival hotel is 25 km away from the Delhi Airport (DEL). It takes about 25 min. - 30 min. by taxi depending on the traffic. You can take a taxi from the airport directly to the hotel, which is expected to cost around USD 10-15.

## Highlights

- \* **Agra:** Agra is the city of the Taj Mahal and has three UNESCO World Heritage sites; the Taj Mahal and the Agra Fort in the city and Fatehpur Sikri nearby.
- \* **Dausa:** Dausa is a small ancient town named after a Sanskrit word Dhau-sa meaning Beautiful like Heaven. Also referred as Deva Nagri, located around 55 km from Jaipur.
- \* **Delhi:** Delhi, city and national capital of India. The city of Delhi actually consists of two components, Old Delhi, in the north, the historic city; and New Delhi, in the south.
- \* **Jaipur:** The capital and largest city of the Indian state of Rajasthan. Located 260 km from New Delhi and forms a part of the Golden Triangle tourist circuit along with Agra .
- \* **Varanasi:** Varanasi is in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. This is one of the world's oldest continually inhabited cities, and one of the holiest in Hinduism.
- \* **Orchha:** The town was established by Rudra Pratap Singh 1501 as the seat of an eponymous former princely state of covering parts of central & north India.
- \* **Khajuraho:** The Khajuraho Group of Monuments is a group of Hindu temples and Jain temples in Chhatarpur, Madhya Pradesh, about 175 kilometres southeast of Jhansi.

## Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary may be subject to small changes depending on the conditions during the tour. Alternative accommodation of similar standards may be used depending on the group size and hotel availability.

### Day 1: Delhi

Welcome to India! At the airport terminal keep your eyes open for the Travel Talk sign, as we pick you up from the airport and take you to our Delhi hotel. Meet with your guide and group 6:30 pm at the lobby for brief information meeting about an amazing 13 days in India.

#### • Accommodation

Mantra Amaltas Hotel – 4 Star

- **Included Activities**

Welcome Meeting

- **Optional Activities**

Group Dinner

### Day 2: Delhi City Tour

We'll begin to explore Delhi after breakfast, a colorful and chaotic city. Our first stop will be Old Delhi which includes visiting the magnificent Red Fort, built on the banks of River Yamuna by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan. The Raj Ghat, memorial to Mahatma Gandhi and the Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque. Once finished we will visit the jam-packed lanes of Chandni Chowk in a Rickshaw. This is the busiest commercial area of the city and brings to life the atmosphere of an oriental bazaar. In the afternoon we will head to modern New Delhi where you'll be able to see many historic monuments such as the 12th century Qutab Minar which famous for the Ashokan iron pillar, Humayun's Tomb which is a forerunner of the Mughal style of architecture, and in contrast, visit the modern Lakshmi Narayan Temple. Lastly, we'll drive past India Gate, the city's World War I memorial, the President's residence, Parliament House and the Secretariat buildings, all designed by Lutyens.

- **Accommodation**

Mantra Amaltas Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Delhi

Sightseeing of Red Fort

Sightseeing of Qutab Minar

Sightseeing of Humayun's Tomb

- **Entrance Fees**

Humayun's Tomb – USD 8

Qutab Minar – USD 8

Red Fort – USD 8

### Day 3: Delhi, Jaipur

After breakfast we will hit the road and depart Delhi to head to Jaipur which will take about 6 hours. Jaipur is a city of history and tradition which dates back to its foundation in the 17th century by Sawai Jai Singh, from whom it derives its name. Jaipur is almost equidistant from Delhi and Agra and forms part of the famed Golden Triangle, which so many travellers to North India embark on. In the evening we will visit Birla temple for evening Aarti.

- **Accommodation**

Golden Tulip Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Visit of Birla Temple

#### Day 4: Jaipur

Right after the breakfast we'll explore Jaipur with a city tour. We'll visit Hawa Mahal or Palace of the Winds. Afterwards we drive out of town to visit Amber Fort where you'll be able to walk to the entrance of this traditional Rajasthani Fort and once inside the walls, you'll see precious stones and mirrors embellishing the plaster-work walls. In the afternoon will stop by City Palace, a huge sprawling complex which is still home to the former royal family who live in one section. The rest has been converted into a museum which holds an impressive collection of royal weapons and the Hawa Mahal. We also visit the Jantar Mantar, an astronomical observatory which is a UNESCO World Heritage site and features the world's largest stone

- **Accommodation**

Golden Tulip Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Jaipur  
Sightseeing of Amber Fort  
Sightseeing of City Palace  
Sightseeing of Hawa Mahal

- **Entrance Fees**

Jantar Mantar – USD 3  
Amber Fort – USD 8  
City Palace – USD 8  
Hawa Mahal – USD 3

#### Day 5: Jaipur, Dausa

We drive to Dausa after breakfast and visiting Galta Temple (also know as Monkey Temple) and Abhaneri Stepwell. It's a 100ft well made in 9th Century and is an architectural marvel. In the afternoon we'll check-in to our hotel and you can enjoy kite flying or play a cricket match with hotel staff. Later visit their organic farm, dairy & poultry farm followed by cooking demonstration by hotel staff.

- **Accommodation**

Umaid Lake Palace – 3 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Visit to Organic Farm

#### Day 6: Dausa, Agra, Taj Mahal

After breakfast leave for Agra, en-route visit Fatehpur Sikri. The abandoned, ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri lies some 40 km from Agra. The city was built by the Emperor Akbar in 1569, in honour of Saint Sheikh Salim Chisti, who prophesied that Akbar would have three sons. For 14 years Fatehpur Sikri was Akbar's capital until a lack of water forced the city to be abandoned. The city is remarkably well-preserved, and visitors can see the Jama Masjid, the tomb of Salim Chisti, and several palaces. In the afternoon visit the Agra Fort and later during sunset visit the Taj Mahal. If there is one image that sums up India to the world, it is the Taj Mahal. This beautiful Monument in Agra is an absolute must for every visitor. Taj Mahal, the white marble tomb built in 22 years (1631 – 1653) by the Emperor Shah Jahan for his beloved Queen Mumtaz. Over 20,000 craftsman from Persia, Turkey, France and Italy laboured for 22 years to build this masterpiece. The

- **Accommodation**

Howard Plaza Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Fatehpur Sikri

Sightseeing of Taj Mahal

Sightseeing of Agra Fort

- **Entrance Fees**

Agra Fort – USD 8

Taj Mahal – USD 23

Sikandra – USD 3

### Day 7: Agra, Varanasi ( Overnight Train )

Today, you have free time to explore Agra on your own. In the evening transfer to railway station to board overnight train to Varanasi. (Depart at 07:45 pm / Arrive to Varanasi (next day) at 08:50 am )

- **Accommodation**

Overnight Train

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

### Day 8: Varanasi

Arrive to Varanasi Railway station and transfer to hotel for check in. In the afternoon, we join tour of Varanasi visiting the Bharat Mata Temple, which features a big relief map of Mother India engraved in marble and the 18th century Durga Temple, commonly known as the Monkey Temple due to the huge population of the monkeys. Proceed to the Tulsi Manas Temple, crafted from white marble which features the entire Ramayana inscribed on its walls. Visit the Bhu, considered as the biggest residential university in Asia. Witness AARTI ceremony at the Ghats in the evening.

- **Accommodation**

Hotel Amayaa – 4 Star

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Bharat Mata Temple

Sightseeing of Tulsi Manas Temple

### Day 9: Varanasi, Khajuraho ( Overnight Train )

Early morning we drive (before the sun rise) to Daswamedh Ghat and take a boat ride on the sacred river Ganges to see the cremation Ghats and witness the living traditions of one of the world's oldest and most important religions. Return for a walk through the cobblestone streets along the banks of "Ganga". As shops are opening, the place now becomes a beehive of activity as the faithful are coming and going. Visit the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and return to the hotel for breakfast. Discover Sarnath, the premier centre for Buddhism with a rich collection of ancient Buddhist relics and antiques. Late in the evening transfer to railway station for the overnight train to Khajuraho. (Depart from Varanasi at 05:45 pm / Arrive to

- **Accommodation**

Golden Tulip Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Kashi Vishwanath Temple

### Day 10: Khajuraho

In the morning, we arrive at Khajuraho railway station and transfer to hotel. Afternoon we visit the Khajuraho temples. The Khajuraho Group of Monuments is a group of Hindu temples and Jain temples and are one of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in India. The temples are famous for their nagara-style architectural symbolism and their erotic sculptures.

- **Accommodation**

Golden Tulip Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Khajuraho Temples

### Day 11: Khajuraho, Jhansi, Orchha

After breakfast we transfer to railway station to board train to Jhansi from where you will be transfer to your hotel in Orchha. (Transfer by car in case train is not available) Orcha is a medieval city founded by Bundela rulers with palaces and temples dating back to the 16th and 17th century. Tour of the city to explore the sites within the Fort Complex. Roam around the town and visit the temples on the bank of Betwa river. Overnight stay in Orchha.

- **Accommodation**

Orchha Palace Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

- **Included Activities**

Sightseeing of Fort Complex

### Day 12: Orchha, Delhi

After breakfast, we transfer to Jhansi railway station to board train for Delhi. On arrival in Delhi transfer to hotel for overnight stay.

- **Accommodation**

Mantra Amaltas Hotel – 4 Star

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

### Day 13: Delhi

Our trip will end today after we say goodbye to our new friends over breakfast, bid you safe travels, and check-out of the hotel at 11:00am. There is a departure airport transfer available, please book your transfer with your guide.

- **Meals Included**

Breakfast

## Inclusions & Exclusions

<b>Accommodation:</b>	4 & 3 star hotels
<b>Airport Transfer:</b>	Arrival and Departure transfers on first and last day of the trip
<b>Meals:</b>	12 Breakfasts, drinking water supply in vehicle
<b>Transportation:</b>	A/C coach or mini-bus
<b>Guide:</b>	Services of experienced Travel Talk local guides licenced by the Ministry of Tourism
<b>Sightseeing:</b>	Red Fort, Qutab Minar, Humayun's Tomb, Amber Fort, City Palace, Hawa Mahal Galta Temple, Fatehpur Sikri, Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Bharat Mata Temple, Tulsi Manas Temple, Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Khajuraho Temples, Fort Complex, Sarnath

### What is NOT included in the tour price?

- Any flights not mentioned above
- Travel insurance
- Meals not stated above
- Items of a personal nature
- Tips & gestures
- Entrance fees to the sights and museums
- Optional activities
- Other services not stated in the itinerary

## Hotels & Accommodation

Please find below the 4 Star hotels used on our India trips. All accommodation is carefully hand-selected to satisfy our standards in terms of quality, authenticity and location for you to enjoy a comfortable and unforgettable holiday.

### MANTRA AMALTAS- DELHI- 4 STAR

Mantra Amaltas is an exclusive boutique hotel. With air-conditioned rooms at hotel and tea and coffee making facilities is included. Airport is only 22 km away.

### HOWARD PLAZA HOTEL-AGRA- 4 STAR

Howard Plaza is 4-star hotel. The Taj Mahal is 700 m away from hotel and 10 minute drive from hotel to Delhi Gate and Ramnagar.

### GOLDEN TULIP- JAIPUR- 4 STAR

Hotel Golden Tulip is a great choice for travellers looking for a 5 star hotel in Khajuraho. It is located in Sevagram. the hotel are Khajuraho Airport (3.2 kms)

### UMAID LAKE PALACE- DAUSA-3 STAR

Umaid Lake Palace is an experiential resort near Dausa spread over 20 acres of land. Umaid Lake Palace offers an outdoor pool and free Wi-Fi.

### THE AMAYA- VARANASI- 4 STAR

This boutique hotel offers an outdoor swimming pool and air-conditioned rooms. The Amayaa is situated 1.5 km from Varanasi City Railway Station.

### ORCHHA PALACE- ORCHHA- 5 STAR

Orchha Palace is 5-star hotel and offers a free Wi-Fi and outdoor swimming pool. The hotel is located 16 km from Jhansi Railway Station.

## GOLDEN TULIP- KHAJURAHO - 4 STAR

Hotel Golden Tulip is a great choice for travellers looking for a 4 star hotel in Khajuraho. It is located in Sevagram. the hotel is Khajuraho Airport (3.2 kms)

## Distances

Please find below the distances between the sites visited in India and the approximate driving times. We will always strive to take a short break every few hours to enable passengers to stretch their legs, purchase snacks and use wash facilities during long drives.

- Delhi to Jaipur: 280 km - 4 hr 45 min
- Dausa to Agra: 180 km - 3 hr 10 min
- Agra to Varanasi: Overnight train ~ 11 hr
- Varansi to Khajuraho: Overnight train ~ 10 hr
- Khajuraho to Orchha: 195 km - 4 hr 40 min
- Orccha to Delhi: Day train ~ 12 hr

## Budgeting

Please note that entrance fees to sights and optional activities are not included in the tour price.

### Entrance Fees

• Humayun's Tomb	USD 8
• Qutab Minar	USD 8
• Red Fort	USD 8
• Jantar Mantar	USD 3
• Amber Fort	USD 8
• City Palace	USD 8
• Hawa Mahal	USD 3
• Agra Fort	USD 8
• Taj Mahal	USD 23
• Sikandra	USD 3

### Personal Spending

Here you will find the average cost for a meal or drink and advice for best practice in tipping.

Meals		Drinks	
Lunch at restaurant	US\$ 4-7	Bottle of water	US\$ 0.5
Dinner at restaurant	US\$ 8-10	Coffee	US\$ 1-2
Tali	US\$ 1-2	Bottle of beer	US\$ 2-3

### Tipping

Tips are a common reward for service staff in India. Your tour guide and crew will be especially appreciative and honored with this kind of traditional gratitude at the end of your tour.

### Shopping

India is a shopper's haven with fantastic quality products that come with a small price tag meaning that you'll score plenty of bargains. You'll find anything from jewellery to ceramics, clothes to tea and metal work to linen. The country has plenty of shops that come in the forms of markets, boutiques, bazaars and modern malls where you're bound to find the perfect souvenirs.



# Essential Information: India

## Passport & Visas

Most travellers require a tourist visa for entry into India, which must be obtained online at least 4 days prior to arrival in India. Passport holders of Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, America and Canada can benefit from India's e-visa online service. This service enables visitors to pay for their visa prior to arrival. For information about the e-Tourist Visa and to apply, <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/>.

Passport validity entry requirements: Travellers entering India must also carry a passport or travel document valid for at least 6 months from your arrival date. The passport must also have two blank pages for stamping by immigration officers.

This information is provided only as a guidance, we strongly advise that you check with the consulate or embassy as this information can change at any time and with little notice. It is your responsibility to make sure that all the required travel documents are ready when travelling.

## Travel Advice

We are closely monitoring the latest travel updates to India and follow the advice of the UK Foreign Office (FCDO).

For the latest travel advice from the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, please visit <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/india>

We recommend all travellers to check their Government National Travel Advisory prior to their departure:

Australia	-	<a href="https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/">https://www.smartraveller.gov.au/</a>
Canada	-	<a href="https://travel.gc.ca/">https://travel.gc.ca/</a>
New Zealand	-	<a href="https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/">https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/</a>
USA	-	<a href="https://travel.state.gov/">https://travel.state.gov/</a>

## Travel Insurance

All passengers travelling with Travel Talk are required to have personal travel insurance before participating in any of our tours. Your guide will collect your travel insurance details on the first day of your trip. It is your responsibility to make sure you have an adequate and suitable travel insurance for you in place, you may read more at <https://www.traveltalktours.com/travel-insurance>

## Health & Safety

The health and safety of our passengers, staff and communities visited is of utmost priority. As we monitor and comply with the official advice from the UK Foreign Office, as well as World Health Organization and government authorities regularly, we have implemented several policies and precautions on our tours for your wellbeing. You may find our Safe Travels Protocols at <https://www.traveltalktours.com/safe-travels>



Travel Talk Adventures has received the Safe Travels stamp by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTTC), which allows travellers to recognise companies around the world that have adopted health and hygiene global standardised protocols – so consumers can experience 'Safe Travels'.

Please make sure to regularly check your Government’s travel advice before travelling and be well-informed of any requirements. Your tour guide will also notify you of the regulations and protocols to follow throughout your trip with us.

Please note that if any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary or possess a potential risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, we reserve the right to remove them from all or part of a trip.

Please consult with your doctor for the latest medical travel information and any vaccinations you may need. We recommend that you bring any personal medical requirements and medications with you as these may be difficult to obtain while on tour.

## Weather

India’s climate is generally defined by three seasons; the hot, the wet (monsoon) and the cool. However, the climatic conditions in the far North of India have little relation to those in the South. The most pleasant time to visit India is between October and March, when the weather is most likely to be warm, dry and sunny. The weather in India varies depending on the region. The far north of India is most accessible between June and September, when the rest of the country experiences monsoon season. While the best time to visit India’s southern states is from November onward, once the monsoon season has ended. By November and December, the rains begin to ease and temperatures are cool enough for sightseeing, but warm enough for relaxing on the beach. December marks the beginning of peak season, when the crowds begin to arrive, so November may be a good bet for a more relaxed holiday.

Months	Agra		Delhi		Jaipur	
	High C <sup>o</sup>	Low C <sup>o</sup>	High C <sup>o</sup>	Low C <sup>o</sup>	High C <sup>o</sup>	Low C <sup>o</sup>
January	22	8	21	8	23	8
February	25	10	24	10	26	11
March	32	16	29	15	32	16
April	39	22	36	22	37	22
May	42	26	39	26	40	26
June	41	29	39	28	39	28
July	35	27	35	27	34	26
August	34	26	34	26	32	25
September	34	24	34	25	34	23
October	34	20	33	20	34	19
November	30	14	28	13	29	14
December	24	9	23	9	25	9

## Money Matters

The official currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR or ₹). The currency can be divided into 100paise (p). Banknotes are available in the denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 500 and 1,000 and Rupee coins come in 1, 2, 5, 100 and 1,000. Major credit and debit cards can be used in large-scale hotels, shopping malls or higher-end establishments. However, the most convenient and cheapest method is cash, which can be obtained via ATMs located in most major towns. Please note that foreign currency notes that are old, torn or faded can be difficult to exchange. If looking to exchange foreign currency, Travel Talk recommends you do not exchange bulk sums of money at the airport, as the exchange rates are usually more favourable in the major cities. Your tour leader will be happy to help if you need any assistance.

Please remember that everyone has different spending habits, some prefer to spend more on souvenirs, some on experiences and others on a night out! Make sure to budget your trip to your spending habits for shopping, drinking, and tipping.

While tipping in India isn't necessarily a cultural tradition, it can be expected at touristic sites and is an appropriate way to recognise great service while travelling. Rounding up your bill or leaving a small tip is a small gesture that is greatly appreciated across the country. In restaurants, a 10% service charge is often included in the bill, so it's best to check whether or not it's been added. For street food, no tipping is required. For local taxi or TukTuk, we recommend rounding your bill to the nearest ₹10 or ₹20. Your local guide and driver would also appreciate tipping as a sign of your gratuity for their service.

## Eating & Drinking

Indian food has a richly deserved reputation as one of the world's great cuisines. Many of the spices we now take for granted - pepper, cardamom and turmeric - hail from India's plains and jungles. Rice is the foundation of Indian cooking with many kinds of bread from flat chapattis to roasted naan. Travellers visiting India have become familiar with the term 'Delhi Belly', used to describe an upset stomach while travelling India. If you are not a big spice eater, Travel Talk recommends going easy on spices for the first few days as you become accustomed to the effects they can have on your body. For this reason, we also recommend avoiding road stalls, unless ordering from a renowned 'Dhabas' (a small, generally roadside shop) or other vendors recommended by your local guide. Eating out in India is not very expensive however searching for unique and authentic dishes can often be overwhelming if you're not a local, so here's a few must-try dishes to get you started in India.

**Masala Dosa:** A crispy crepe stuffed with spiced potato mash potatoes, this dish is generally served with coconut chutney and sambar (a form of lentil).

**Bhelpuri:** Made with puffed rice, tomatoes, peanuts, green chillies and a tangy tamarind sauce, this savoury dish is a classic street food sold everywhere across India. It can be eaten directly or served in flatbreads.

**Butter Chicken:** Originally from Delhi, this dish is iconic to Indian cuisine. The curry sauce is made of tomatoes, butter and cream while the chicken is marinated overnight with yogurt, ginger, garlic paste and red chilli powder. The name comes from the chunk of butter that goes into the sauce, making for a mouth-watering explosion of flavour.

**Tandoori Chicken:** Marinated in a spicy yogurt marinade, the chicken in this famous Indian dish is roasted in a cylindrical clay oven. The sauce is seasoned with spices and other aromatic inclusions such as bay leaves, cloves and cinnamon.

**Dal Tadka:** A very popular dish that was originally made with burnt charcoal to give it a smoky flavour. Dal Tadka consists of cooked lentils which are tempered with oil, fried spices and herbs.

**Rogan Josh:** An aromatic lamb curry made with an array of spices, tomatoes, ginger and garlic.

**Samosa:** Popular snack in India served at tea time or at street food vendors. Samosas are fried or baked triangular pastry packages made from potato stuffing containing onions and peas. The snack is frequently served with mint or tomato chutney.

**Chaats:** This savoury snack is a mainstay of Indian street food, originating from North India. The original Chaat is a mixture of potato pieces, crisp fried bread, chickpea and tangy-salty spices.

**Kulfi:** A traditional Indian ice cream made from slowly simmered whole milk to create a delicious nutty, caramelized flavour. Kulfi is usually flavoured with traditional Indian ingredients such as rose water, saffron or pistachio.

There are wide selections of popular drinks in India that are both unique and refreshing. According to Indian ethnic culture, there are only a few alcoholic, traditional drinks that are prepared with locally available ingredients. Indian beverages are often referred to as sherbets and are non-alcoholic, prepared to combat the heat of the sultry Indian summer. Some of these drinks include Aam Panna, Jal Jeera, Thandai, Lassi, Chhanch and Nimbu Paani. In the winter, warmer drinks like tea and filtered coffee are more standard. Tea and Chai tea is exceptionally popular and the most common form of drink in India, especially in the northern

## Essentials to Bring

- \* Face mask/cover and hand sanitiser enough for your personal use throughout the trip – See more at <https://www.traveltalktours.com/safe-travels>
- \* Travel Documents: Passport, Visa (if required), flight or transport ticket (and photocopies)
- \* Travel Talk Tour Voucher (printed or digital)
- \* Travel Insurance Policy (and photocopy)
- \* Personal medical kit and medicine
- \* Money (cash, credit card, travellers' cheques)
- \* Reusable water bottle
- \* Ear plugs and eye mask
- \* Sun protection – hat, sunglasses, sunscreen
- \* Comfortable, closed walking shoes
- \* Wind/water proof jacket
- \* Warm clothes, hat, and gloves for cold weather
- \* Sandals, swimwear, shorts for warm weather

## Internet Access

Internet access is good across India and many cafes, hotels and restaurants in cities of India provide free Wi-Fi, but the connection may be spotty or slow. India has a relatively widespread communication infrastructure and internet usage in major cities. WiFi coverage may be limited in remote areas. If you wish to use your own 3G/4G Data, be sure to enable data roaming on your mobile. Purchasing a Indian SIM card for the duration of your tour may be a cost-effective alternative. Make sure that your phone is unlocked before you leave home so a local SIM will be compatible. Your local guide will be able to provide advice on where to purchase data SIMs in India.

## Culture and Traditions

With over 1.3 billion people speaking over 122 languages across 28 states and seven territories, it's difficult to describe one unified culture or tradition for India. Put simply, the culture and traditions of the nation can vary quite substantially from city to city. However, India's culture is among the world's oldest with civilization beginning about 4,500 years ago. Today, India is a very diverse country and sees a large number of festivals and cultural traditions across the calendar year, mainly because of the prevalence of diverse religions and groups. Some of the nation's largest festivals include Holi (Festival of Colour), Diwali (Festival of Lights) and Gujarat Kite Festival. The concept of arranged marriage in India traces its origin to as early as the Vedic times, and still remains an integral part of 'Indian Traditions'. In many parts of India, it is common to find three or four generations living together. The concept of family extends beyond the typical nuclear unit to encompass the wider family circle. These multigenerational families are sometimes essential to providing economic security to an individual, through work opportunities for example. However, the growth of urbanisation and migration has seen younger generations challenging these perceptions and traditions, with family networks spreading further across regions and occupations.

## Religion, Etiquette and How to Dress

While travelling to other nations as a foreigner, it is important to understand the traditions, cultures and religious beliefs of the populations and regions you visit. India is known for its vast diversity of religious beliefs in practices throughout the country, and is the home to four of the world's major religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. While the majority of the population is Hindu, a considerable minority follows Islam. While your guide will be able to provide further knowledge about these throughout your tour, here are a few important notes to remember.

It is common to remove your shoes as a sign of respect before entering a temple and indeed before entering into someone's home. Temperatures can soar past 35 degrees celsius in India, but it's not appropriate to walk around in skimpy clothing. Travel Talk strongly recommends all visitors dress respectfully while in India with shorts or skirts that cover past the knee and shirts or blouses which cover the shoulders and chest region. Try to appear friendly and be open to have authentic interactions with the locals, though it's always smart to keep your valuables safe and covered while travelling.

## Solo Travellers

We have many solo travellers joining our tours. Solo travellers will be roomed with another traveller of the same gender. If you would like a private solo room, subject to availability and a single supplement, please contact us.

## Rules to Follow

We are committed to ensuring a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone. We do not tolerate any form of violence (physical or verbal), bullying or harassment involving customers, partners, Travel Talk staff or locals. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a passenger are forbidden.

We will not tolerate any illegal activity, including but not limited to: use and possession of illegal drugs, trespassing, and disrupting public order. If you consume alcohol, please ensure that you drink responsibly and follow the local laws and regulations.

If someone is acting inappropriately regarding these matters, please notify your tour leader immediately or contact us on the emergency contact number provided below.

You must follow the advice of your tour leader and local officials regarding health and safety measures. We operate all tours under our Safe Travels protocols for the wellbeing of our passengers, staff and communities visited. Please ensure that you have read the Safe Travels protocols (<https://www.traveltalktours.com/safe-travels-with-traveltalk/>) and are fully prepared for your trip.

Your tour leader has the right to remove from the group anyone not abiding by these rules, with no right of compensation or refund. See more at <https://www.traveltalktours.com/booking-terms/>

Please remember that our travellers come from different parts of the world and will have various needs and preferences. Be understanding and patient with your fellow travellers, and always strive to be on time.

## Responsible Travel

We believe that travel is a force for good and show our support through various initiatives and charity organizations, as well as keeping the principals of responsible and sustainable travel at the core of our ethos. These values are engrained in our business culture and the design of our trips just the same. Together with you, we strive to make a positive impact on local people and economies, respecting the local culture, environment, social fabric and customs; encouraging respectful and meaningful cross-cultural exchange.

Read more at <https://www.traveltalktours.com/responsible-travel/>