



11 Days

India

Tigers Trains and the Taj

India is a kaleidoscope of culture, heritage, adventure and religion - a destination so diverse and intricately woven in its customs and colours that even a lifetime is not long enough to explore this magical country in its entirety. In this short, but great adventure to this amazing country, we will gain an insight into the reality of rural India in its multitude of guises - from how the people farm, to what and how they cook and the huge role that the textile industry in India plays in clothing the world. We will be white water rafting on the sacred river Ganges and camping on its banks, as well as experiencing the thrill of a tiger safari in Jim Corbett reserve. Add in to the mix some of the country's holiest sites and India is bound to cast a spell of magic on you. Get ready!



Recommended tour itinerary

Day
1-2

Arrive Delhi

Depart UK on overnight flight. Upon arrival in Delhi, we will be met and transferred by coach to our hotel in the city. After a short rest, we will head out on a rickshaw ride to explore the old city. Sights include: Chandni Chowk the oldest spice bazaar in the city and Raj Ghat, the cremation place of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern India.

Day
3

Delhi and coach to Agra

Today after breakfast, we visit Gandhi Nagar, known to most as the Asia's biggest readymade garments/textile market. We will see a large number of shops and factories in its lanes and market places manufacturing and selling readymade garments at a frantic pace. Later we ride the metro and get a feel for Delhi's efficient and clean train services – that's despite millions travelling each day! Later, we will transfer to Agra and check in to our hotel.

Day
4

Agra to Delhi to Ramnagar (4hrs bus, overnight train)

We rise early this morning to visit the Taj Mahal at sunrise, one of the most glorious times to visit. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, Taj is his glowing tribute to his wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The most complete and perfect of the New Seven Wonders of the world, Taj was built in 1652, took 22 years and 20,000 skilled artisans to complete. After visiting Taj, we have breakfast at the hotel before visiting the Agra Fort (depending on availability of time) en-route back to Delhi. This fort lies across the river Yamuna. It was here that Aurangzeb, the third son of Shah Jahan, kept his father under house arrest. One can get a fantastic view of the Taj from the little octagonal tower at the fort. On arrival in Delhi we will have dinner in one of the restaurants close to Delhi station before boarding the overnight train to Ramnagar. The Ranikhet Express departs from Delhi at 20:05 hrs and arrives Ramnagar at 04:55 hrs next day.

Day
5

Corbett

After disembarking at Ramnagar, we drive approximately 30 minutes to our Lodge in Corbett National Park (CNP). An afternoon safari is on the cards today. CNP is the largest Tiger Populated Reserve in the World and the first national park in India, established in 1936. Although the tiger is obviously the biggest attraction in this park, and nothing beats the thrill of seeing a tiger in the wild (although we can't guarantee a sighting!) there are also leopards, elephant, bears, hogs, Sambar deer and foxes, and more than three hundred bird species.

Day
6

Corbett to Nainital to the Silent Valley Farm Project

After the early morning Safari, we have breakfast at the resort. Later we pack our luggage to be transported to the Silent Valley farm in the Himalayan region (<http://www.thesilentvalley.com>). A fabulous drive cutting across mountain cliffs on a zig zag highway, hair pin bends & culverts with overcast misty skies greeting us all the way. The coach will drop us 1 ½ km shy of the farm on the roadside; From here we'll walk downhill for about 30 minutes to reach the beautiful farm.





Day
7

Silent Valley Farm

Silent Valley is aptly named for its peace & beauty. Built on a stepped hillock overlooking the vast valley & the open blue skies, Silent Valley Farm is ensconced amidst the bountiful nature. It has a 100 year old heritage bungalow at its northern most point. At the Southernmost end flows the pretty river Kalsa, offering you an opportunity to swim in its deep pockets. It is a perfect hill retreat that offers panoramic views of mountains, trees, flower orchards & vegetable fields.

At the Farm, you'll learn the basics of farming, ploughing, irrigation, cultivation and harvesting. Being a well maintained farm with equipment and all the facilities required for agricultural practices, you will receive tips on traditional farming, organic farming, modern techniques and polytunnel farming. We also get to observe the sophisticated structure of bee civilization. From the guards at the hive entry, to the nurses tending the little ones, to the "energetic females" and "lazy males", to the glaring elusive queen, each bee has a place inside this complex community.

We also have the opportunity to get close to holy cows at the farm. You can learn how animals are looked after, how they are fed and milked. Being friendly animals this makes for a very engaging and inspiring experience.

Day
8

Project Site—Rishikesh (275Km's; 6-7 hours)

Today we leave the Farm Project for Rishikesh, where we check into our riverside camp on the banks of the Ganges. Relax and rest for the remainder of the evening.

Day
9

Rishikesh Sightseeing; White water rafting & Nature walk

This morning we undertake some easy white water rafting on the Ganges to Shivpuri or a little beyond depending on how comfortable and confident we are on the rapids (under expert guidance and following a safety briefing). In the afternoon we visit Brahmapuri Ashram, a community of sadhus (holy men) who live and meditate along the banks of the Ganges River. We will have the chance to interact with some of the sadhus and visit the cave temples they meditate in. From here we cross the Ganges via the pedestrian suspension bridge to the left bank. The scene is surreal, filled with scampering monkeys, multi-storey temples, and Hindu pilgrims. After tea and cakes and a chance to soak up the atmosphere, we'll go for an afternoon walk along the river, amidst orchards and herb gardens to the Swarg Ashram, to witness the spectacular sunset Aarti, a daily prayer ceremony on the river bank, where scores of yellow-clad pupils of the Ashram pray together. The chanting of mantras and the setting sun make for a moving experience. Priests then place leaf boats loaded with flowers and candles into the river.

Day
10

Rishikesh to Haridwar to Delhi (40 mins road; 4-5 hrs train)

We leave the holy town in the morning for Delhi. En route we will stop in Haridwar (another important Hindu religious place) to see the Ganges in its full might, with hundreds of devotees flocking to the Ghats either taking a holy dip or performing rituals. Later we will board out train and reach Delhi by night time.

Day
11

Return to UK

We transfer to the airport in time for our flight back to the UK.

Further information

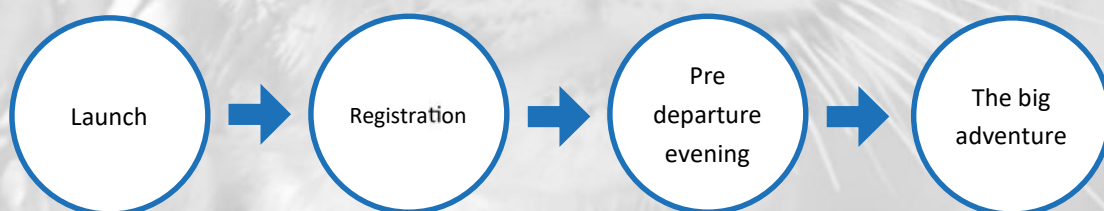
Look what's included!

- ✓ International flights
- ✓ All accommodation
- ✓ All food
- ✓ All transportation and activities
- ✓ Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local tour leader
- ✓ Parent and student trip launch evening
- ✓ Pre-departure preparation evening
- ✓ 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ✓ ATOL financial protection
- ✓ Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- ✓ Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- ✓ BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- ✓ Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- ✓ Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- ✓ Permanent operations team in your destination
- ✓ 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- ✓ Carbon offsetting of all flights
- ✓ Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

What's excluded?

- ✓ Transport to airport in UK
- ✓ Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- ✓ Visas or tourist cards if required
- ✓ Any required inoculations
- ✓ Personal spending money
- ✓ Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- ✓ Airport departure taxes paid locally
- ✓ Cancellation and personal effects insurance

Your educational journey timeline



Physical journey rating:



Moderate physical activities are included in Grade 3 trips. Good health and reasonable fitness are important to get the most out of the trip. Trips of this grading are likely to include some walking at moderate altitude (up to 2,500m) and occasional longer/harder days may be involved, with between five and seven hours of walking on certain days. The trip may contain other activities such as cycling or rafting which also require physical effort and a reasonable level of fitness. Some steady preparation and an increase if your underlying fitness levels would help you get the most from this grade trip.

Culture shock rating:



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your educational journey.

1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your educational travel itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

3 Arrange a trip launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with a comprehensive information evening and an opportunity for questions.



t: 01392 660056 | e: schools@thestc.co.uk | w: www.thestc.co.uk