

# North India & Nepal: Wildlife & Birding | 14 Days



India, it is often said, is not a country but a continent. From north to south and east to west, the people are different, the languages are different, the customs are different, the country is different. There are few countries on earth with the enormous variety that India offers. It's a place that somehow gets into your blood. This country has always been a favorite country for travelers. India enjoys the most extraordinary history and cultures where man and nature are so closely linked, co-existing in a way that seems impossible.

India & Nepal offer some of the finest birding in the world with unforgettable scenery. Not only is the local birdlife extremely rich and sheer in number but also you can easily approach birds that you encounter. This classic journey is enhanced still further by visiting one of the wonders of the world-the 'Taj Mahal' and some of the India's rich architectural heritage. This tour is also designed to make an exception for the One Horned Rhinoceros & Tiger, surely one of the most evocative creatures on Earth. To see Asian Rinos & Tiger there is no finer and more reliable reserve than Chitwan National Park in southern belt of Nepal, protects a vast tract of largely deciduous forest which still holds many Rhinos & Tigers.

In Nepal, this trip begins in the relatively high altitude forests of the Himalaya. Nepal has a wealth of birds and other wildlife. On a world scale the country is recognized as forming the major part of an area of especially high biological diversity known as the North & East Himalayan 'hotspot' together with Bhutan & Sikkim. Over 875 bird species have been recorded in Nepal so far and many more species are likely to occur. The region is species-rich partly because of its moist

climate and the wide altitudinal range in the country from 65m at the southern border to the Himalayan peaks in the north with an altitude of over 8,000m.

Though birding is the aim of the tour, we will take time throughout to tour some of the more outstanding Buddhist monasteries and monuments both in Nepal & India. The combination of two countries exotic cultures harmoniously integrated with the natural landscapes- unscarred by modernization make bird watching simply unbeatable.

This journey not only provides some of the wonderful birding and the opportunity to see some exciting mammals, but as well will show us something of the real India and an age-old way of Indian life.

## Trip Highlights

- Visit the best of nature and culture during journey to India and Nepal
- At Bharatpur, we go out birding in the fields looking for some owls, pipits and larks, lapwings etc.
- Visit Taj Mahal at Agra
- Birdwatching and wildlife habitats exploration at Chambhal
- Kathmandu sightseeing and bird watching at Phulchowki hill
- Immerse in the paradise of Pokhara
- Hike towards Sarangkot for great Himalayan Views and adventurous activities
- Abundance of wildlife activities at Chitwan National Park

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrive in Delhi | Drive to Bharatpur

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in Delhi a *travel-to-nature Asia* guide/representative will be at the airport to greet and take us to Keoladeo Ghana National Park at Bharatpur, which is approx. 185 kms which takes about 3.5 hours. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area. We will stay for next two nights. Afternoon, we will go out birding in the fields looking for some owls, pipits and larks, lapwings

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etc. and time permits we exploration local village and lifestyle. Overnight stay in Bharatpur.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Udai Vilas Palace

## Day 2: In Bharatpur

Keoladeo Ghana National Park, usually known simply a 'Bharatpur', needs little introduction, for it is undoubtedly one of the finest bird sanctuaries in the world. Formerly a shooting preserve of the Rajput Maharajas of Bharatpur. It is just 29 sq.km, but holds a remarkable diversity of habitats. The wetland-marshes and flooded 'Jheels'-are contained within acacia-lined 'bunds', or embankments, and irrigated by a system of canals and sluices. Around them lies semi-arid grass and scrubland and some excellent broad-leave Kandam woodland. Over 350 species of birds have been recorded in the park. Amongst these will be an unequalled array of wetland species, a great variety of Vultures, Eagles, Falcons and Owls, plus numerous small land birds. Pride of place goes to the rarest Siberian Crane. The interest for birdwatchers is enhanced still further by the large number of winter visitors from northern Asia, many are only rare vagrants in Europe. As well as birds, the park has excellent variety of wild animals. Nilgai (blue bull), Sambar and Spotted deers, Blackbuck, Jungle Cat, Wild Boar, Asiatic Jackal and Mongoose are all common, and this is one of the few places in India where the rare Fishing Cat may be seen. We have three days to enjoy this exceptional feast of wildlife, and the superb photographic opportunities that presents.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Udai Vilas Palace

**Meal:** Breakfast

## Day 3: Drive Bharatpur - Agra (58 km | 1.5 hrs)

After a final morning in Bharatpur we will drive to Agra which is approx. 65 km and takes about one and half hour. En route visit Fatehpur Sikri – the deserted city of Mughal Emperor "The Akbar" built in 16th century.

We will arrive Agra in mid-afternoon. Time permitting, we shall pay an evening visit to the famous Taj Mahal, viewing it in the soft pink light of a north Indian sunset-

perhaps the best light of all. The other best option to visit Taj Mahal is early in the morning for Sunrise.

**Accommodation:** Howard Plaza The Fern

**Meal:** Breakfast

**Note:** Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays.



## Day 4: Drive Agra - The Chambal Safari Lodge (70 km | 1.5 hrs)

After making our way to the incomparable Taj Mahal, a mausoleum of ethereal beauty built by the Mogul emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal, really does live up to its reputation and more. As we arrive there the magnificent Taj changes in every light. In the crisp air of early morning it is a different building; its compelling atmosphere is hard to leave, especially as its gardens, and the Yamuna River just beyond, offer so much ornithological excitement as well! Afternoon leave Agra and drive to Chambal Safari Lodge for Bird watching.

**Accommodation:** The Chambal Safari Lodge

**Meal:** Breakfast

## Day 5: In Chambal Safari

Today we will visit the National Chambal Sanctuary on the border between Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh states. We will take a boat ride in the

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Chambal River, the last unpolluted major river in northern India, flows between low erosion cliffs as it approaches its junction with the Ganges. The sanctuary, which also includes part of the state of Rajasthan further upstream, was set up to protect the healthy population of crocodiles that survives here, and also a population of the highly endangered Gangetic River Dolphin. We should be able to closely approach the crocodiles as they sun themselves on the sandbars, both the long-snouted Gharial and the more conventionally-shaped Mugger. We also have an excellent chance of seeing the blind Gangetic River Dolphin and we may even be lucky enough to watch them jumping exuberantly, although sometimes they show little more than their backs. The most notable bird species of the Chambal is the localized Indian Skimmer and we should be able to watch these bizarre creatures living up to their name as they flap across the river, intermittently dipping their 'broken' bills into the water, or gather on small islets. Other attractions include the beautiful Small Pratincole, the hulking Great Thick-knee, River Tern and the increasingly uncommon Black-bellied Tern. Many other water birds will be present, including the elegant Bar-headed Goose, Indian Spot-billed Duck, Northern Shoveler, Goosander (or Common Merganser), Kentish Plover, River Lapwing, Common and Spotted Redshanks, Common Greenshank, Marsh Sandpiper, Ruff, Little Stint and Pallas's (or Great Black-backed) Gull. Other species present in the area include Osprey, Black Kite (of the resident form *govinda*, perhaps a candidate for a split, or else lumping with *Black-eared*), Black-eared Kite, Long-legged Buzzard, Steppe Eagle, Rock Dove (here of the genuine wild population), Eurasian Collared Dove, Asian Koel, Brown Boobook (or Brown Hawk-Owl), Sand, Greater Short-toed and Crested Larks, Grey-throated Sand Martin (split from Brown-

throated), Masked and Himalayan Wagtail, Desert Wheatear, Plain Prinia, Lesser Whitethroat, Common and Large Grey Babblers, Bank Myna and House Crow.

We return to the lodge for Lunch and after lunch we drive to Agra railway station to catch evening train to Delhi. Overnight stay in Delhi.

**Accommodation:** The Jaypee Vasant Continental  
**Meal:** Breakfast

## Day 6: Fly Delhi - Kathmandu (1 hr 45 min)

Afternoon transfer to the airport for our flight to Kathmandu.

Welcome to Nepal! Upon arrival in Kathmandu a *travel-to-nature Asia* guide/representative will be at the airport to greet and take us to our hotel. Please look out for your name-card once you exit out of arrival area.

**Accommodation:** Godavari Village Resort  
**Meal:** Breakfast



## Day 7: Explore Godavari

A full day exploration of the upper section of Phulchowki Hill for bird watching. We bring box-lunches for today since we will be returning back to our hotel in the later afternoon only.

Dinner & overnight stay at Godawari Village Resort.



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Birds like Black Eagle, Babblers, Yuhinas, Bulbuls, Robins Thrushes and many other hill birds commonly seen. Also, the outskirts of Katmandu is dotted with rice fields & tiny villages and small forest patches. Therefore, we are likely see many birdlife such as Black Kite, Cattle Egret, White-Breasted Kingfisher, Spotter Dove, Red-rumped Swallows, Black, Ashy and Bronzed Drongos, Long-tailed Shrike, Common and jugle Mynas, Grey Treepie, Red-vented Bulbul, etc.

**Accommodation:** Godavari Village Resort

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 8: In Kathmandu

A full day sightseeing tour of the city and temples of Katmandu will last until late-afternoon. This will include Nepal's largest Hindu Temple at Pasupatinath, the Buddhist 'monkey temple' at Swyambhunath with its fine view over the city, and the temples and old Royal Palace in Kathmandu's Durbar square. Overnight stay in Kathmandu.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Manaslu

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Day 9: Fly Kathmandu - Pokhara (900 m)

In the morning we fly to Pokhara, centre of the Western Development Region and traditional trading centre in the shadow of the Annapurna Massif.

During our half an hour flight the view of the mighty Himalayan range, including the Annapurna, Ganesh, Mt. Nilgiri, Manaslu etc will be breathtaking. Upon arrival our local representative will transfer us to our hotel - Begnas Lake Resort & Villas - located 12 km east of bustling Pokhara town lies in this wondrous paradise. Surrounded by pristine nature, with gurgling mountain springs forming natural boundaries on either side and spans a whole hillside of unspoiled forestland. Just the ideal setting for our long-deserved escape to another world! Birding is equally rewarding here!! We will be spending two nights in Begnas lake Resort.

**Accommodation:** Begnas Lake Resort

**Meal:** Breakfast



### Day 10: In Pokhara

Birding | Recreation

For next couple days we will enjoy pure, unadulterated nature. In the surrounding hill forests, we look for mountain birds and waterfowls in the lake. In this healing and life-nourishing environment, we can also experience the Himalayan Nature Spa that offers a wide range of classical Ayurvedic activities such as Yoga, meditation, as well as soothing and rejuvenating massage conducted by an experienced team of Ayurveda experts. Swimming in the Begnas lake is something refreshing and great fun.

Alternatively, there are several interesting village trails criss-crossing the Begnas area offering possibilities of day hikes for us from 2-6 hours depending on one's interest. Overnight stay in Pokhara.

<u>Birds</u>	<u>Commonly</u>	<u>Seen</u>
Black-winged Cuckoo-shrike, Long-tailed & Scarlet minivets, White-checked, Red-vented and Black Bulbuls, Verditer and Gray-headed Canary Flycatchers, Common Tailor Bird, Grey-hooded Warbler, Oriental Magpie Robin, Grey Bushchat, Black-lored Tits, Oriental Whiteeye etc.		
Nevertheless, we have also fine opportunity to observe some of the rare and endangered vulture and Eagle species – Himalayan, Red-headed, White-rumped and Egyptian Vultures including Lammergeier. Booted eagle, Mountain Hawk Eagle, Crested Serpant Eagle, Steppe Eagle, Bonelli Eagle and Black Eagle are frequently occur during Autumn & winter months. Some other highlights are, Crested kingfisher, Snowy-browed Flycatchers, Slaty-headed Parakeet, Yellow-fronted, Grey-capped Pygmy, Fulvous-breasted, Lesser and Greater, Grey-		

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headed woodpecker, Himalayan and Black-rumped Flamebacks, Blue-bearded Beeeater and Common Green magpie, white capped Laughing Thrush. Etc.

**Accommodation:** Begnas Lake Resort

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

## Day 11: Drive Pokhara - Chitwan National Park (350 m)

It is a beautiful journey on the Pokhara -Katmandu highway, through Nepal's middle hill and Tarai, to the Royal Chitwan National Park. By making an early start we shall aim to reach the Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge for a late lunch.



En route, we will make few stops to look for Wallcreeper and Braun Dipper in Trisuli River and its rocky walls. This evening we shall paddle down the Rapti River in search of water-birds. The most notable bird species are Small Pratincole (winter visitor), Great Thick-knee, River Tern, Stork-billed Kingfisher, Black Stork, Wolly-necked Sork, Asian Open-billed Stork, Lesser Adjutant Stork, Great Cormorant and many other water-birds will be present, including Ruddy Shelduck, Gadwall, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers, Riber & Red-wattled Lapwing. Other species present in this area includes Ospray & Brown Fishowl. The Park comprises 1,000 sq. km of sal and riverine jungle and magnificent environment with a great variety of wildlife than any other area of Nepal. Over 480 species of birds have been recorded here and we can expect to see nearly one third of these, as well as many mammals and reptiles. These are likely to include the endangered Great One Horned Rhinoceros, wild boar, sambar, muntjc, spotted and hog deers, rhesus and hanuman monkeys, and possibly marsh muggar and fish eating

gharial crocodiles. Tiger, leopard, sloth bears, and gaur (wild bison) are all common and regularly seen by the lucky ones! For the first two nights in Chitwan we shall be staying in comfortable lodge.

**Accommodation:** Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## Day 12: In Chitwan National Park

A full day based at the wildlife lodge. We shall explore the rivers by dug-out canoe, search the grasslands – for tigers, rhinos and other animals – on elephant back, and go bird-watching in the forest on foot. The dry Sal forest, Grassland dominate the Park and that hold a wide variety of species including, Red-thighed or Colored Falconet, Oriental Honey Buzzard, Crested Serpent Eagle, Shikra, White-eyed Buzzard, Crested Hawk-Eagle, Red Junglefowl, Indian Peafowl, Oriental Turtle & spotted Doves, Yellow -footed Green Pigion, Alexandrine, Rose.ringed, and Plum-headed Parakeet, the delightful Indian Scops Owl, Jungle Owlet, Crested treeswift, Green Bee-eater, Indian Roller, Grey, Pied and Gaint Hornbills. A good variety of of woodpeckers accurs here and we should find Grey-capped Pigmy, Rufous, Grey-headed, Greater Yelownapes, and Great Flameback. As usual, mixed -specis feeding flocks form such Flycatchers, Thrushes, Bablers, Drongos etc.This should be an outstanding day.

**Accommodation:** Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



## Day 13: Fly Bharatpur - Kathmandu

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Before leaving Chitwan National park we go for a quick early morning walk and return back to the lodge, where the vehicle is waiting to take us to Bharatpur Airport for our short flight to Katmandu. Upon arrival in Katmandu our representative from travel-to-nature will meet and transfer us to our hotel.

We will enjoy our last day in Magical Katmandu with plenty of time for shopping in Thamel the main tourist area of Kathmandu. Thamel is a myriad of banners, signs, music shops, bakeries, internet cafes, restaurants, bars, hotels, shops of all imaginable varieties and eccentrically clad backpackers. In the evening will head out for dinner on one of Kathmandu's excellent restaurants and farewell.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Manaslu

**Meals:** Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 14: Depart Delhi

Transfer to airport for your homeward-bound flight.

**Meal:** Breakfast

### Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private air-condition vehicle
- Train fare Agra-Delhi for travel in A/C Chair Car
- Twin-Sharing accommodation in all Hotel/Resort/Lodge as mentioned
- Daily breakfast throughout the trip, other meals as mentioned in the itinerary
- All sightseeing and long-distance transportation in private air-condition vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-bus etc. depending on group size). This includes all state taxes, toll taxes, parking, allowance for driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver.
- Services of a local English-speaking Guide throughout the tour
- Entry tickets at monuments/ Forts/ Palaces/National Park/during the sightseeing tours included in the program.

- 3 Visits to Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary + All activities at Chambhal Lodge including river safari as per program above.
- Jeep Safari, boating and all jungle activities in Nepal
- Twin sharing accommodation in Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge on full-board (breakfast, lunch, dinner) in Chitwan National Park
- Porterage of Baggage at all the hotels, train stations, airports.
- Assistance of our representatives at all main cities in India
- All applicable government taxes

### Excludes

- International flight tickets
- Visa fee
- Travel insurance
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Personal clothing and equipment
- Tips for trip leader/guide, driver, hotel staff and porters
- Items of personal nature such as alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, laundry, and other unforeseen expenses
- Items/services not listed in "included"
- Extra expenses/payment for 'Optional' activities/programs if participated



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## Accommodation

### Hotel Udai Vilas Palace, Bharatpur

Walk to the welcoming and spacious lobby. Savor traditional Rajasthani and international flavors dining at the multi-cuisine Ghosla, the restaurant room service. To complete the experience, partake of local color through cultural events with Rajasthani music and folk dances, theme evenings and bar-be-ques under the brilliant starlit sky on the extensive rooftop or lawns.



### Howard Plaza The Fern, Agra

Howard Plaza - The Fern, Agra's unique location are complemented by Agra's glittering monument to love, the Taj Mahal. This tranquil retreat is the best spot for a business or leisure stay, offering a magnificent view of The Taj Mahal from beautiful Glassy Restaurant & Bar and a mellow dramatic view of the bustling city through front tea patio.

### Chambal Safari Lodge, Mela Kothi

A mere hour's drive from the Taj Mahal, in the heart of the Chambal Valley, lies an oasis of tranquility nestling in sprawling acres of reclaimed woodland. Mela Kothi – The Chambal Safari Lodge. A warm and welcoming haven for the eager explorer and weary traveller alike. Come prepared. This land will mesmerize you.

### Jaypee Vasant Continental, New Delhi

A tribute to the cosmopolitan culture of New Delhi - Jaypee Vasant Continental is an exquisite blend of pleasure and business, it is the perfect place to confer, relax or pamper your senses. It is one of the finest

boutique hotels in New Delhi. The abundant sweep of greenery sprawled across the entire hotel makes it extravagantly noticeable.



### Hotel Manaslu, Kathmandu

Hotel Manaslu located in the immaculate area of Lazimpat, Kathmandu is a heritage hotel established in 1972. We have kept the proud heritage of Nepal alive throughout its operation by offering unparalleled service and warm hospitality, that defines the values and culture of Nepal. The architecture of our hotel includes many ancient pieces that have been carefully restored and incorporated.

### Mount Kailash Resort, Pokhara

Whether you are in Pokhara for business or pleasure, this modern social venue attracts not only hotel guests but also local shoppers, business people, and clubbers. With 51 beautiful rooms meeting with all the modern amenities, two dining spaces along with terrace dining experience, a beautiful garden, and spa. Our bar is a great place to chill out.

## Accommodation – Hotel, Resort

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a fine heritage hotel in another or a family-run guesthouse or lodges in a smaller town. Accommodation in remote areas tend to be basic and may not have western

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amenities.

### Single Accommodation

Single (room) supplement is provided on request (single supplement charge applies) and are subject to availability.

### Food & Transport

All breakfast, 2 lunches & 3 dinners are included.

Generally, you can eat out very cheaply in India & Nepal. Where food is not included, you should allow at least 1,800 rupees (approximately Euro 20 & US\$22) per day for lunch and dinner. However, if you choose to dine in fine/expensive restaurants please allocate more than our suggested amount.

Please note, service in restaurants can be quite slow.

For airport, sightseeing transfers, and for long drives we use a private air-con car, jeep, van depending upon group size. Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

### Weather

**INDIA:** Generally, the best time to visit India is from December to February, when it is warm during daytime and cool at night in most areas of India. December marks the beginning of the peak travel season with higher-priced accommodation and flights.

It starts to get hot from March and the temperature reaches its average high point of 45°C (113°F) in May. If you can bear the heat, traveling India from April to May, you can expect the benefits of smaller crowds as well as big promotions from hotels and airlines (usually 50% off).

India's rainy season starts from June and lasts until September. North India is less affected by downpours than central and southern parts. You could still enjoy a good experience if you visit north Indian destinations like Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and other Rajasthan areas. Many national parks are closed

because of floods and landslides. Goa becomes a "ghost city", with few travelers and many beach resorts closed. Ladakh, located in the far north is cool, and little affected by the rainy season, and it starts to welcome its high travel time from June to August.

Rain starts to ease from the middle of September. In October, most areas of India have dry weather. Though it is still hot, it feels much more comfortable than in May. Traveling in October and November, you'll not be drenched, while enjoying better deals than in December-February.

**NEPAL:** The main travel season in Nepal is from mid-September to end-May. During rainy season we do not operate this trip due to obvious reason. Daytime average temperatures will vary from 15°C to 33°C in the Kathmandu Valley to around 20°C to 35°C in plains of Nepal.

Post Monsoon/autumn: Mid-September to November. This is the most popular travel season in Nepal. Day temperatures in Kathmandu are generally above 20°C.

Winter: December to end February. Despite the colder conditions, this is also an ideal time to travel in Nepal. Skies are usually very clear, especially in December and the mountain views are at their best. Nights will be very cold with temperatures down to minus 20°C but days are often pleasant and sunny. In Kathmandu, maximum daytime temperatures are 19°C.

Pre-monsoon/spring: March to May. Both day and night temperatures will be warmer in general but haze will often build up in the afternoons. It is very hot in the lowlands and temperatures rise to 30°C in Kathmandu. Flowers bloom in this season and this is one of the reasons people chose to trek in spring.

### Baggage Allowance

At time of writing the standard weight limit is one checked baggage on Qatar Airways is 25kg (55lb) and hand baggage 7kg (15lbs). We recommend packing only one piece of checked baggage. Luggage allowances for both hand and checked luggage are subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's



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website for the latest information prior to your departure.

## ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

### Passport & Visas

**INDIA:** All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for EU passport holders, and other nationalities should check with the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Visas are required if you are German and for most other nationalities. Visa information changes regularly for India; for the latest information on applying for a visa please follow these links for more information.

<https://indianembassyberlin.gov.in/pages?id=Mg,,&su bid=MTQ>,

**NEPAL:** All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for European passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

Most nationalities require a visa for Nepal, which can be obtained in advance or on arrival. If you wish to apply visa before departure, please visit this link: <https://nepaliport.immigration.gov.np/> The current cost of a visa on arrival is US\$30 for 15 days, US\$50

for 30 days and \$125 for 90 days. All are multiple entry. The visa on arrival fee can be paid in cash in US Dollars or Euros. Application forms are available in the immigration hall (or for electronic passports, there are visa registration machines which, after inserting your passport, automatically fill out a form for you. If you use the machine, you will not need a passport photo). You must first join the queue to pay the visa fee and then go to the relevant immigration desk to obtain your 15, 30 or 90-day visa stamp. If you use the paper form to obtain a visa on arrival then you will also need one passport photo (a photo is not required if you use the electronic registration machines but we recommend you bring one with you anyway just in case, for any reason, the machines cannot read your passport). There might be long queues for visas on arrival.

**Please note:** Visa regulations can change without notice, therefore please check the current regulations or contact us.

### Vaccination & Health

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements for this trip. Recommended vaccinations for this trip are: Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Hepatitis A. The risk of malaria on this trip is slight, but you may wish to consult your GP/Family Doctor or travel health clinic for further advice. Dengue fever and/or Chikungunya are known risks in places visited on this trip. Both are tropical viral diseases spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for either, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic prior to departure for up-to date information.

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### Local Time

**INDIA:** GMT/UTC + 5 hours & 30 minutes  
**NEPAL:** GMT/UTC + 5 hours & 45 minutes

### Electricity

**INDIA/NEPAL:** 230/240 volts AC, 50 Hz. There are recharging facilities at most of the hotels, the electricity supply is not 100% reliable but it is usually only off for short periods of time.

### Money

**INDIA:** The national currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 89 to the Euro and 82 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very) dirty Indian banknotes from banks or in change as they will almost certainly not be accepted as legal tender in India. Please ask for low denomination notes of 100, 200 or 500 Rupees as 2000 Rupee notes can sometimes be difficult to use out of Delhi. You can change money back from Rupees into Euro or Dollars at Delhi airport (before going through security), but you must produce an exchange receipt showing that you changed money in India. You are advised to bring most of your money in cash as you may have difficulty changing travellers cheques outside Delhi. It makes no difference whether you bring Euro or US Dollars. You should change your money on arrival at Delhi either at the hotel or airport (please note that the hotel often gives a better rate than the airport). It is possible to change cash in Ladakh. You will need approximately €200-€250 for extra meals and tipping for the whole trip.

**NEPAL:** The national currency of Nepal is the Nepalese Rupee (NPR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 140 to the Euro and 130 to the US\$. It is illegal to import or export rupees, but foreign currency is not limited, provided it is declared on arrival. Keep your change receipts, as you will need them if you want to change rupees back into hard currency at Kathmandu airport.

### ATM | Credit Cards

**INDIA:** There are ATMs in Delhi and other major cities. We recommend you change most of the money you need for the trip before leaving Delhi. Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as often they are broken or run out of cash. Credit cards are accepted in larger shops in Delhi and other major cities.

**NEPAL:** There are ATM machines in Kathmandu and Pokhara only. You can exchange cash in Pokhara as well. Please do not rely wholly on ATM machines as many are broken or have run out of money and all have a per day withdrawal limit of approximately €150-175 or US\$ 175-190.

We recommend you bring most of your money for the trek in cash and change it at the airport on arrival. Credit cards are accepted in many of the larger shops and restaurants in Kathmandu.

### Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need to bring some extra money to cover drinks, laundry, souvenirs and any other personal expense, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Though it totally depends on individual but generally an approximate amount of US\$250 per person, per week should be sufficient (more if you enjoy a few beers); however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount. Or if you are the one frugal with money probably allocating less would also suffice.

India has very good opportunities for shopping, especially for locally made goods, and in Delhi local guides may well offer to take you to emporiums as well as workshops where these goods are made. Many people find this a great opportunity to buy local handicrafts, silk, jewelry, carpets etc. Guides will often assume that visitors will want to go shopping, it is very much part of the culture, however if you do not wish to go, please make this clear to your local guide at the time.

Optional Tours may be offered in some city you visit during your tour. These are not included in the

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standard itinerary and will only be available if time permits and if seats are available. Please ensure you have additional funds available if you feel you may wish to participate in any extra activities. Each optional tour/activity will be arranged locally by our local partner/guide, participation and tipping for optional excursions is completely at your discretion.

### Tipping

Tipping is of course entirely at your discretion, but it is customary in India & Nepal. Tipping can be an awkward affair especially when you are not familiar with the country. Your leader will help with tipping and will provide a list of suggested tips. This will include tips for drivers, hotel porters and other hotel staff, local sightseeing guides, and if trekking will include camp staff such as guide, assistants, cooks and pony men. Sometimes your leader will collect a kitty during the trip and sometimes they will collect the tips towards the end of the trip (occasionally for very small groups the leader may need to collect a little more than the suggested amount). We suggest you allow Rs 6,000 (approx. €60 -70 / \$65-75) for this trip. Please try to tip in local currency.

Tipping of the local leader is not included in the above and is at your discretion. However, we suggest around Rs1000-2000 (approx.€11-25 /US \$12-25) per person for the leader depend upon the group size.

### Itinerary Change

In case of some unusual events/incidents the order of programs (sightseeing, excursions etc.) might have to change in order to accommodate the local situations. In these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements while maintaining the overall integrity of your trip.

The domestic airlines may change their schedule frequently and, in such cases, our local partner/guide will inform you about the changes.

### Travel Insurance

We highly recommend to choose/get an insurance plan/policy that covers your needs. And please make

sure to keep/carry a hard-copy of your travel insurance documents on your person while on tour. It's prudent to check thoroughly the inclusions and procedure to file claims prior to purchasing insurance coverage. *travel-to-nature Asia* will not be responsible for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to purchase appropriate travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Public Holidays

During major Indian public holidays such as India's Republic Day 26<sup>th</sup> Jan, the Holi (Colors) Festival (generally falls around March), Diwali (sometime in Oct-Nov) etc. some business will be closed and air and ground transportation may be affected. Tourist attractions sites may get overly crowded. But it's a good trade off as you will get to experience India more intimately.

### Dress Code

Though modern-day Indian have become more liberal to dresses they wear, however, as a tourist we advise you to follow dress codes specially while visiting temples or mosques. Just dressing modestly and wearing non-revealing cloths should be fine. Women might also consider carrying a shawl in their daypack (this could be a sarong or light scarf) which you can wear over your shoulders and heads as a courtesy or just show respects. Religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few – require all visitors to remove their shoes to enter.

### Important Information

On all guided trips although our leaders/guides are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorize them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.