

Kerala Nature Trail with Wellness | 15 Days



Kerala – “God’s Own Country” is characterised by lush vegetation between the Arabian Sea and the forested mountains of the Western Ghats. It stretches for about 550 km along India’s southwest coast and measures only 120 km at its widest point. Its name means “land of coconut trees”, which indeed grow everywhere here and provide pleasant shade.

The unique geographical features of Kerala make it one of the most beautiful destinations in India and recognised as one of the ten paradises in the world. Temperate climate – a long stretch of coastline with serene beaches – a tranquil network of smarad green backwaters – verdant hill stations and exotic nature parks – breathtakingly beautiful waterfalls – Ayurvedic spas – delightful art forms – magical festivals – historical and cultural monuments – exotic cuisine.

This 14night/15day tour lets you experience the ‘God’s Own Country’, adorned with a composed climate, beaches, backwaters, hill stations and exotic wildlife, voted by the National Geographic Traveller as one of the 50 destinations of a lifetime and one of the thirteen paradises in the world.

Experience Kerala Nature Trail with the urban hinge of Kochi with extravagant multifaceted town exploring followed by strolling at the mesmerizing hills of Munnar with a hot cup of tea. Wander around the serene Alleppey beach, and the unique boat rides at the backwaters. Confine yourself with ecstatic pleasure in our selection Health Resort, with prolific Ayurveda packages rejuvenating your mind, body and soul!

Trip Highlights

- Stunning picturesque view
- Tropical beach and wildlife
- Houseboat stay on famous Kerala backwaters
- Hill station in the tropics (Munnar)
- Exclusive spices and tea
- Rich Heritage and Culture
- Rejuvenating Ayurvedic course

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive in Cochin

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in India 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.

Day to relax after long flight. Evening visit a traditional Kathakali Theatre to watch a live performance. Overnight stay in Cochin.

Cochin the queen of the Arabian Sea is one of the most interesting cities of India and has one of the finest natural harbors in the world. A root-conscious people of Kerala have preserved their past not only in the form of history books but also in the form of monuments and palaces. Places, palaces and institutions of historic value are being preserved conscientiously.

Accommodation: The Neemrana Tower House

Day 2: Day Excursion to Poothotta (1 hr.)

Morning, after breakfast, proceed for a village backwater Cruise with lunch. Afternoon back to Cochin for sightseeing. This tour will be a combination of a Tuk-tuk ride and a short walking tour.

Village backwater Cruise

A journey in a country boat into the pristine purity of a typical village backwater of Kerala goes through the zigzagging narrow canals and paddy fields fringed with coconut palm watching rare birds, witnessing coir making, toddy tapping all the while enjoying the rustic nature of Kerala. We will have an exclusive experience

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in our Farm House for lunch - a delicious traditional Kerala dish under a tree. While strolling through this amazing village, we will watch the common life of the villagers for their livelihood. We will see them fishing in the river, the women do the coir making, a toddy tapper who does his job as a routine, men climbing the coconut trees to pluck the coconuts and later peeling to prepare dry and make oil extraction possible. It's all about a life experience which we will remember throughout your life.

Cochin Sightseeing

St Francis Church, built in 1510 by friars brought to India by Vasco da Gama, is the first European church built in India and is the site where Vasco da Gama was buried. The Jewish Synagogue was built in 1568, Chinese hand-painted tiles are one of the attractions. This, the only Synagogue in India has a nostalgic past of a Jewish Diaspora. The "Dutch Palace" was built in the 1550s; the palace contains excellent mythological murals and a rare example of traditional Keralite flooring - a subtle mix of burnt coconut shells, lime, plant juices and egg whites - which gives the effect of polished marble.

Fort Cochin & Mattancherry are twin cities carry a flavor of the colonial era. Jewish, Arabs, Portuguese British all came to Cochin for trading and Mattancherry was the spice trade headquarters due to the proximity of Cochin Port. While Fort Cochin became the administrative headquarters, Mattancherry maintained its trading status. The colonial stature and buildings still make Fort Cochin a favorite destination for tourists. It's getting an upgrade once its declared as the first heritage city in India. Fort Cochin was also a part of Muziris route. It will be interesting to know that around 13 religious communities are harmoniously living in Fort Cochin and Mattancherry. Christians, Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Jains, Sikhs etc are few among them.

Accommodation: The Tower House - 17th Century
Meal: Breakfast

Day 3: Drive Cochin – Munnar (4 hrs)

Morning, after breakfast, proceed to Munnar, known as nature lover's paradise. We will drive through Midland crops like Rubber, arecnut, pineapple etc. On arrival in Munnar, check in your Resort. Overnight stay in Munnar.

Munnar

Breathtakingly beautiful - a haven of peace and tranquility - an idyllic tourist destination in God's own country with unending expanses of tea plantations, pristine valleys and mountains, exotic species of flora and fauna in its wild sanctuaries and forests, aroma of spice scented cool air - Munnar has all these and more....! It's the place we would love to visit and would wish never to leave. Set at an altitude of 6,000 ft in Idukki district, situated at the confluence of three mountain streams, Munnar was the favored summer resort of the erstwhile British rulers in the colonial days. Sprawling tea plantations, picturesque towns, winding lanes, trekking and holiday facilities makes Munnar a holiday resort. Among the exotic flora found in the forests and grasslands here is the Neelakurinji a flower, which bathes the hills in blue once every twelve years. Munnar also has the highest peak in South India - Anamudi - which towers over 2695 m and is an ideal spot for campers who like trekking.

Accommodation: Chandy's Windy Woods

Meal: Breakfast



Day 4: Explore Marayoor (1.5 Hour Drive One way)

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Full day guided tour of Munnar to enjoy the nature (8 am till 5 pm)

After an early breakfast, by 8 AM we will be taken to Marayoor Village for guided walks through the nice lively village, Sandalwood Forest, tribal areas etc. We will watch sugarcane making units, farm lands, walk to the Mount of the Dead, a world-famous Megalithic site with dolmens, dolmenoid and dolmenoid cists. etc. Afternoon, drive back to Munnar to visit a tea factory to see the tea making process. Overnight stay in Munnar.

Marayoor valley

Visit to a rock cut temple, ancient inscriptions etc. Walk to the Mount of the Dead, a world-famous Megalithic site with dolmens, dolmenoid and dolmenoid cists. Visit to a traditional sugarcane farm and Jaggery (black sugar) manufacturing. Marayoor is famous for its Sandalwood Forest which is protected by the Forest Department.

Accommodation: Chandy's Windy Woods

Meal: Breakfast

Day 5: Drive Munnar - Thekkady/Periyar (3.5 hrs.)

After breakfast, drive to Periyar Sanctuary. On arrival, check into your hotel. Afternoon visit a Spice farm with a guide. Evening we may go for shopping fresh spices. Overnight stay in Periyar.

Periyar

Conjures up images of elephants, chains of hill and spice scented plantations. Here, in the crisp, cool air of the Western Ghats you will see a lot of wildlife and observe the way of life of simple mountain people. Periyar Tiger Reserve is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India, and spread across the entire district are picturesque plantations and hill towns that hold great opportunities for treks and mountain walks.

Accommodation: The Elephant Court

Meal: Breakfast

Day 6: In Periyar

Full day trekking in the Sanctuary

It will be a guided program by the forest Department and there are chances of closure of the Sanctuary between April and June due to the fear of wild fire/heavy rains. At 07:30 am we have to report at the bus boarding point. Once we reach the starting point, we will finish the registration formalities and collect leech socks, packed light breakfast and a proper hot lunch etc. The program has around 12 km of soft hike and 3 km of bamboo rafting. This will be a nice program to watch possible wildlife in the sanctuary. Only physically fit travelers can do this full activity. Children below 13 years are not allowed to participate in the program. Packed breakfast and lunch are provided. Evening return to the base to return to your hotel. Overnight at hotel.

Note: It will be a guided program by the forest Department and there are chances of closure of the Sanctuary between April and June due to wild fire and/or heavy rains.

This is one of Kerala's first Responsible Tourism Programs as a part of rehabilitating the tribal people who lived inside the Sanctuary and sometimes Poachers and hunters. With the help of an Eco Development Society (EDS), these people are now the guards of the forest for the best conservation and the best guides for tourists because they know the forest very well including the movement of wild animals. The revenue from these programs helps the Government to give back to the Community to enable them to have decent living.

The Thekkady sanctuary is one of the best in the country for watching and photographing unique flora & fauna. A cruise through the waters of Periyar Lake around which the wildlife sanctuary is situated, offers lots of photo opportunities. This is the only sanctuary in India where you can have the unique experience of viewing wildlife at close quarters from the safety of a boat on the lake. The greatest attraction of Periyar remains the large herds of wild elephants that come down to the lake's edge. Tigers are sighted when the forest water holes dry up and these animals come and drink water from the river.

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Evergreen and semi-evergreen forests constitute the major part of the Periyar Tiger Reserve. The rest of the area is a combination of moist deciduous forests and grasslands. Of the 27 tiger reserves in India, the Periyar Tiger Reserve is the oldest in the country and the largest in the State. The abundant wildlife here attracts a lot of visitors. Apart from being a recognized breeding ground for tigers, the reserve has also been identified as the best place for researching elephantine life. The tiger population in the area is estimated to be about 40. Though it is difficult to sight them, visitors often spot pugmarks and scats around the reserve. Thirty-five species of mammals have been identified here. They include rare and endangered species. A boat ride on the lake is a great way to spot the wild elephants, the Gaur, the Sambar and so on. While the Gaur is the largest of the bovines here, the Sambar, the largest deer in India, is the main prey of the tiger and the wild dog

Apart from these, there are wild pigs, Malabar Giant Squirrels, Small Travancore Flying Squirrels, jungle cats, sloth bears etc. The endangered species in the area include Nilgiri Langurs and the Lion-tailed Macaque, that is usually seen only in the evergreen interiors. Nilgiri Tahrs are also found in the reserve, especially in the higher rocky areas. Salim Ali's fruit bat, one of the rarest bats, is also reported to have been found in the area. The stripe-necked mongoose, usually found in the semi-evergreen and evergreen forests, the extremely rare Nilgiri Marten - the only species of marten found in southern India- and endemic mustelids are also seen here.

There are about 265 species of birds in the Periyar reserve including migrant birds. The birds include raptors, water birds, galliform birds, pigeons, wood peckers, darters, kingfishers, golden orioles, Brahmini kites, cormorants and passerines, as well as a large flock of the Great Pied Hornbill and the Ceylon Frogmouth. The endemic species include the Malabar Grey Hornbill, the Nilgiri Wood Pigeon, the Blue-winged Parakeet, the Nilgiri Flycatcher, the small Sunbird and the White-bellied Blue Flycatcher. Other birds found in the area are the Black Baza, Forest Eagle Owl, Nilgiri Thrush, Little Spider Hunter, Rufous

bellied hawk eagle etc. An interesting sight is that of water fowl perched on the dead trees protruding out onto the lake. Other aquatic birds include the Indian Darter and the Black-Necked Stork. Woodland birds, owls etc. can also be seen in the forest.

There are 1966 varieties of flowering plants, including angiosperms. Both dicots and monocots have been included in this count. There are about 171 grass species and 140 species of orchids in the region. The richness of the flower wealth is so outstanding that it constitutes more than 50 percent of the entire flower wealth of Kerala, which is about 3800 species. Teak, Rosewood, Terminalia, Eucalyptus, Sandalwood, Jacaranda, Mango, Jamun, Tamarind, Banyan, Pipal, Plumeria, Gulmohar and bamboo are some of the trees found here. The three main endemic plants are *Mucuna pruriens thekkadiensis*, *Habenaria periyarensis* and *Syzygium periyarensis*. Rare plants like the *Podocarpus wallichianus*, the only South Indian conifer, are also found in the reserve. More than 350 medicinal plants, including trees, shrubs and herbs, have been identified at the Periyar Tiger Reserve, mainly in the evergreen and moist deciduous forests. Plants belonging to the family of Fabaceae and Euphorbiaceae are the major ones among them. Glory Lily (*Gloriosa superba*) and Kino Tree (*Pterocarpus marsupium*) are two plants with medicinal value found here.

Accommodation: The Elephant Court

Meal: Breakfast



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Day 7: Alleppey Houseboat

After an early breakfast, drive to Alleppey to board our exclusive Houseboat at 12:30 pm for a cruise through the backwater villages followed by overnight stay on board. Our meals are cooked and served on board. Explore the amazing backwater life of Kerala!

What is truly magical about a houseboat is the breathtaking view of the untouched and otherwise inaccessible rural Kerala that it offers. The houseboats have all the creature comforts of a good hotel including furnished bedrooms, modern toilets, cozy living rooms, a kitchen where are cooked on board and supplemented with fresh fish from the backwaters. Today, the tradition is still continued and the food from the local cuisine is served by the Kuttanad locals, on board.

The name Backwaters brings the very thought of Houseboats. Food and leisurely times spent on-board with the feeling and privacy of house as well as enjoying the natural beauty. A Cruise amidst marvelous mangrove forests, captivating coconut canopies, swaying palms, mangrove forests, pulsating paddy fields sprinkled with enchanting waterways and canals decked with white lilies, can be quite a rejuvenating experience for the weary traveler. Enjoying a cruise in these backwaters is not to be missed, as it leaves you feeling fully rejuvenated. The banks of these backwaters in Kerala are the most enchanting picnic spots. You get to experience the native way of living. The experience on the Houseboat is not the one to be explained by words. It's to be lived and evolved by yourself.

Accommodation: Houseboat

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 8: Drive Alleppey – Marari Beach (1 hr)

After breakfast on board, checkout and drive to Marari, a relatively quiet beach paradise of Kerala. On arrival check in at the resort on the beach.

There are quite a few Ayurveda rejuvenation programs (optional) are offered and we may have consultation with a doctor in order to determine which treatment methods suits best. Rest of the day at leisure on the beach. Overnight at the Resort.

Marari originates from "Mararikulam", one of the local fishing villages, where life still goes on much as it did a hundred years ago, with the men going out to sea each day to earn a living bringing in the daily catch.

Marari offers endless miles of superb sand beaches backed by swaying palms, virgin territory where you can experience the local charm/and traditional Keralan Hospitality at it's best. Marari Beach is an endless vista of sand and surf, but it is more. An authentic experience of the world of Kerala's traditional fishing villages, and a recreation of an ancient, harmonious way of life. The village of Mararikulam lies on a forgotten shore, midway up the Malabar coast, where the Indian Ocean finally decides that it has now become the Arabian Sea.

Accommodation: Turtle Beach Resort

Meal: Breakfast

Day 9-14: Marari Beach

The resort offers several optional programs on Ayurveda rejuvenation, daily Yoga etc along with

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myriad of therapeutic and curative programs. Please let us know in advance if you wish to join any of these program/s (optional).

Ayurveda Detoxification and Rejuvenation Program (Panchakarma and Rasayana)

Aimed at purifying and de-toxifying 7 elements that constitute the human body. A perfect balance of tridoshas and pancha mahabhuta is achieved with this program. Includes snehapana, swedana and Sodhana/Panchakarma treatments.

Benefits: Consistent BMR, enhanced immunity, healthier nervous and muscular co-ordination, improved body nourishment, memory and intelligence, prolonged life span and physical endurance.

Body Slimming Program (Sthoulya Nirharana)

Ayurveda recommends loss of weight through holistic treatments, controlled diet and exercises that depletes the excess fat and improves body metabolism. Includes deep tissue and powder massages, lymphatic drainage, marma/vital points massage, medicated baths etc.

Benefits: Rewards stable and distinct physique, body lightness, balanced BMI and reduces systemic/lifestyle disorders.

Stress & Burn out Relief Program (Mana Svaasthya)

The loss of balance between mind and body is reflected as stress/burn out in individuals. Ayurveda adopts definite procedures to regain this balance through purification and restoring treatments, yoga / meditation and internal medicines.

Benefits: Regained tranquillity of mind, body and soul. Improves hypertension and other systemic disorders.

Spine Care & Neck Care Program (Prishta Raksha)

Includes special treatments like abhyanga, elakkizhi, podikkizhi, kati/prishta vasti, pizhichil, nasyam,

ushmasweda, spinal baths, navarakkizhi, sneha vasti, kashaya vasti and internal medications for neck pain and low back pain arising from various conditions like muscular, neural and position.

Benefits: Heals spondylosis, spondylitis, disc herniation, sciatica etc

Therapeutic and Curative Program (Niramaya)

- Diabetes & Hypertension sequel
- Allergy/Skin diseases
- Arthritis
- Psoriasis
- Post Pregnancy & Post-Menopausal sequel
- Eye and E.N.T
- Lymph oedema
- Neurological and muscular disorders (Paralysis, Multiple Sclerosis, SLE etc)
- Tendon/Ligament injuries
- Gastro intestinal and Respiratory diseases

Accommodation: Turtle Beach Resort

Meal: Breakfast

Day 14: Depart Cochin

After a delicious breakfast transfer to airport for your homeward-bound flight.

Meal: Breakfast

Includes

- Airport (pick up/drop off) transfers by private A/C vehicle
- Twin sharing room accommodation at all hotel/resort as mentioned
- Daily breakfast in all hotels, all meals in houseboat
- Trekking in the Periyar national park with Bamboo raft crossing
- Backwater excursion with country Boats in or around Cochin
- Entrance fee as per itinerary
- All sightseeing and long-distance transportation in a private air-conditioned vehicle (cars/SUVs or mini/micro-van etc.

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depending on group size). This includes toll taxes, parking, allowance for the driver, outstation overnight charges for the driver

- 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 opted in

Accommodation

The Tower House-17th Century, Cochin

The Tower House, marking the spot of a 17th-century lighthouse, is one of the few Kochi Hotels that sits facing the Chinese fishing nets. The scallop-walled twin-house looks rather like a ship, The Tower House is one of the best heritage hotels in Kochi, especially if you are looking for something unique, luxurious and experiential.

Chandy's Windy Woods, Munnar

Terraced on the hill slopes, and blanketed by the mist is a structure that houses premium rooms for your sojourn. Here, we don't just provide you with food and accommodation, we let you experience the destination at it's best. Our luxury rooms are windowed to the hills for you to get greeted by the clouds

The Elephant Court, Thekkady

Presenting the royal best in nature's nest, the Elephant Court is a five-star resort in Thekkady which nestles unparalleled luxury in the lush expanse of over

four acres of verdure land. Hidden inside a locale blessed with green orchards, spice plantations and lofty peaks, is a sybaritic tale of leisure written with the opulent crafts of utmost comfort and gracious hospitality.

Alleppey Houseboat

Houseboats in Kerala were traditionally cargo boats that carried rice, spices and other commodities, which now are transformed into luxury boats complete with bedrooms, kitchen, living area, bathrooms and other amenities. Today, these allow travellers to enjoy the breath-taking beauty of Alappuzha while gliding along and exploring the tranquil backwaters - an experience of a life time.



Abad Turtle Beach Resort, Marari

Abad Turtle Beach Resort in Mararikulam, is a beautiful beachfront resort that overlooks the white sandy beach and has a rivulet flowing on one side. The resort, located very close to the coastal village of Mararikulam, is spread across an area of 13 acres of land with 30 premium cottages. This is a premium resort with a private beach in Marari.

Group/Individual

On this trip you will be traveling privately with your family & friends. Our representative/tour partner will look after your transfers to and from the airport and will be around to answer other questions you may have about your trip.

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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 amenities.

Single Accommodation

Unless you specifically request a single room (with supplement), we offer double room accommodation throughout the trip.

Food & Transport

Daily breakfast is provided throughout the trip and besides, two lunches and one dinner are also included.

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

The ideal time to visit tropical South India is during the winter season. The peak months of this season are from December to February when the weather is at its most pleasant. The hottest months of South India are from March to May when the average temperature hovers around 32 Degrees Celsius. June to September is the monsoon season that brings the highest humidity and heat with rainfalls.

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

website for the latest information prior to your departure.

ESSENTIAL/PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Passport & Visas

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>,

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

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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.

Local Time

GMT + 5 hours and 30 minutes

Electricity

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

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.

ATM | Credit Cards

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.

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 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. Tipping can be an awkward affair especially when you are not familiar with the country. Your leader will help with tipping and will

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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 keep a 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 26th 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.