



## INDIA BY RAIL

### Classic Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 2

Delhi – Amritsar – Shimla – Delhi – Jaipur – Agra – Varanasi – Delhi

Set off on an extraordinary rail adventure through India onboard an iconic toy train and embrace the myriads of scenic landscapes, cultures, and traditions that unfold before you. Begin at Delhi, the vibrant metropolis where history meets modernity, before continuing through Amritsar, a city of historical and spiritual significance. Travel to Shimla, surrounded by lush landscapes and discover the beauty of the Taj Mahal before exploring the highlights of the 'Pink City' of Jaipur.

- Ride the toy train in Shimla
- Watch the flag lowering ceremony at the Wagah border
- Marvel at the Taj Mahal
- Explore the magnificent Amber Fort in Jaipur
- Experience a Pooja ceremony in Varanasi
- Cruise the banks of the river Ganges

## TOUR MAP



## INDIA BY RAIL TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation, train tickets and transfers
- English speaking National Escorts (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- India visa fees for New Zealand passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Safe and secure with IATA

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, customary tipping, meals not included, early check in or late check out and other items not specified on the itinerary.

## CLASSIC TOURS:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of "India by Rail", on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully inclusive basis, so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

## PHYSICAL LEVEL 2:

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All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights. 'India by Rail' is rated 2 on the physical level scale. A reasonable level of fitness is required but it's more about spending time on your feet rather than covering large distances. You'll be getting on and off coaches and trains, walking around the sights and climbing some steps.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing several steps, often without handrails
- You will be required to get on and off various trains throughout the tour
- Be prepared for busy train stations
- Expect early starts and some long days with multiple stops

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

If you require any more information about the pace of our tours, please contact our reservations team who will be happy to answer your questions.

## JOINING YOUR TOUR:

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The tour is 16 days in duration including return international flights or 14 days in duration based on 'Land Only'.

Travellers booked on 'Land Only', the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour, or when booking pre and post night accommodation with Wendy Wu Tours.

Join the tour on Day 1-2 in Delhi and end the tour on Day 15 in Delhi. An informal Welcome Dinner will be held on Day 1 of the itinerary. If you miss this due to your arrival time, all information will be provided to you at breakfast the following morning.

## ITINERARY CHANGES:

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It's our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate. In these circumstances we'll make the best possible arrangements maintaining the integrity of your trip.

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1-2: Fly to Delhi

Meals: D

On arrival in Delhi, you will be met and transferred with other group members who may be arriving at a similar time 45 minutes to your hotel. Depending on your arrival time, enjoy time at leisure before meeting your fellow travellers for dinner.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



#### Destination Information

**Delhi** - As the capital of India, Delhi is the third largest city with a population of approximately 18 million people. Its strategic location along the north-south, east-west route has given it a focal position in Indian history and many great empires have been ruled from here. The monuments and ruins of these are scattered throughout the city, often side by side with modern structures and high-rise towers.

### Day 3: Delhi to Amritsar

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast drop your luggage at the concierge. Drive by the iconic Red Fort, followed by a delightful rickshaw journey to the vibrant Khari Baoli Spice Market, before visiting the majestic Jama Masjid.

Touring today will last approximately 3.5 hours. Later, board the 1 hour 15-minute evening flight to Amritsar. On arrival in Amritsar, you will be transferred to the hotel.



#### Destination Information

**Red Fort** - The Red Fort, also known as "Lal Qila," is an iconic 17th-century Mughal monument. This stunning red sandstone structure, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, showcases intricate architecture blending Persian, Indian, and Islamic styles.

**Jama Masjid** – Jama Masjid is the largest mosque in India, with a courtyard capable of holding 25,000 devotees. Built between 1644 and 1658, the mosque was Shah Jahan's final architectural achievement.

**Amritsar** – Amritsar, in Punjab, was founded in 1577 and has a rich history tied to the struggle for Indian independence, notably the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. It is the centre of Sikhism and the main pilgrimage destination for thousands of Sikhs.

**Day 4: Explore Amritsar**

Meals: B, L, D

In the morning begin by immersing yourself in the historical significance of Jallianwala Bagh. This solemn memorial stands as a testament to a pivotal moment in Indian history, a place where you can reflect on the sacrifices made during a tragic event. Next you visit the resplendent Golden Temple with its' intricate architecture and melodious hymns echoing through the halls. Venture towards the ornate Durgiana Temple, known for its intricate artwork and sacred aura. Here, you can explore the rich tapestry of Hindu culture and spirituality.



This afternoon, enjoy a Village Experience offering an authentic taste of Rural Punjab. Step into the heart of rural Punjab with an immersive village experience near Amritsar, designed to offer a genuine glimpse into local life, traditions, and warm Punjabi hospitality. On arrival, you would be greeted in true Punjabi style with a refreshing welcome drink (glass of traditional lassi), setting the tone for a relaxed and welcoming experience. This is followed by a turban-tying session, where you get to learn about the cultural significance of the turban and have the opportunity to try one on yourselves.

The experience continues with a leisurely tractor ride through the village, traditional homes, and everyday village scenes, offering an authentic perspective of rural life away from the city. Enjoy a short cooking demonstration, showcasing the preparation of classic fritters and freshly brewed tea. This informal session offers a chance to learn simple local recipes while engaging with the hosts in a warm, homely setting. Today's sightseeing will be approximately 5 hours.

*Due to security regulations, the coach will drop your group at a designated area where you will need to walk approximately 20 minutes to the border to view the ceremony. You will be required to walk back after the ceremony.*

**Destination Information**

**Jallianwala Bagh** – A memorial and museum that commemorates the lives lost in the massacre. The garden features a Martyrs' Well, which is said to be where many people jumped to escape the firing. A memorial plaque and a flame of liberty also honour those who lost their lives.

**Durgiana Temple** – This temple is also known as the Durgiana Mandir, a prominent Hindu temple, dedicated to the goddess Durga, who is revered as a symbol of divine power and feminine energy in Hinduism.

**Wagah Border** – This is a spirited military ritual that takes place daily at the India-Pakistan border near the village of Wagah. It marks the closing of the border gate between the two countries at sunset and is a symbol of the long-standing rivalry and tension between India and Pakistan.

**Day 5: Travel to Shimla**

Meals: B, L, D

Rise early this morning for the 4-hour 30-minute *Chandigarh Express (05h10)* train to Chandigarh, having breakfast (packed from hotel) onboard before arriving at 09:40.

From here drive 3.5 - 4 hours through lush landscapes to the hill station of Shimla.

Check into your hotel and proceed to lunch.



This afternoon, venture into Shimla's heart with a leisurely walking tour along the famous Mall Road. Stroll along The Ridge, where panoramic views of the surrounding mountains greet you.

Pause at the historic Christ Church, an architectural masterpiece that stands as a testament to the town's colonial heritage and conclude the day with a visit to the New Library, an intellectual haven where you can immerse yourself in literature and history.

You will spend approximately 1.5 hours sightseeing on foot today.

### **Destination Information**

**Shimla** – The capital city of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh, is a picturesque hill station nestled in the Himalayan foothills and known for its natural beauty and colonial architecture.

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#### **Day 6: Enjoy the Toy Train**

Meals: B, L, D

Embark on a charming adventure as you board the iconic *Himalayan Queen* toy train for a picturesque 1-hour journey from Shimla to Shoghi.



Return to Shimla on a 1-hour drive. In the afternoon, delve into the cultural heritage of this hill station, with a city tour.

Begin with a visit to the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies, a grand colonial-era structure nestled amidst tranquil gardens.

Continue your exploration at the Himachal State Museum, where you will discover a treasure trove of artifacts, art, and cultural insights into the region's rich heritage. You will spend approximately 1.5 hours sightseeing on foot today.

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#### **Day 7: Shimla to Delhi**

Meals: B, L, D

After an early breakfast (depart approx. 07h30), transfer approx. 3.5 – 4 hours to Chandigarh Railway station to board the *Shatabdi Express* train to Delhi.

This journey takes 3 hours 20 minutes and lunch will be served onboard.

On arrival in Delhi, check-in and relax before dinner.



#### Day 8: Delhi to Jaipur

Meals: B, L, D

Have breakfast onboard the *Shatabdi Express*, as you depart (approx. 05h00) on a 4-hour 35-minute train journey to Jaipur. Upon arrival, you will enjoy a delicious lunch before checking into your hotel.

This afternoon visits two of the city's top attractions. Explore the majestic Maharaja's City Palace, which still serves as the residence of the city's royal family. Afterwards, go on to marvel at the fascinating Jantar Mantar Observatory, an awe-inspiring collection of astronomical instruments from the 18th century. Please note, sightseeing at Maharaja's City Palace will take approximately 2 hours on foot and will involve navigating steps.



#### Destination Information

**Jaipur** – Known as the 'Pink City' for the colour of the buildings in the old town. Jaipur was founded in 1727 as Mughal power within India was declining. The then Maharaja Jai Singh moved his capital from Amber Fort down onto the plain below. The city is now the capital of Rajasthan State and commonly called the 'Pink City' because of the pink paint on all the buildings in the old city area. This was apparently done to imitate the magnificent, red sandstone buildings of the Mughals and to impress the Prince of Wales when he visited Jaipur in 1876.

**Maharaja's City Palace** – Located in the heart of the Pink City and built in the 18th century by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, the palace houses courtyards, gardens, and intricately decorated buildings, including the Chandra Mahal and Mubarak Mahal. The City Palace remains a symbol of Rajasthan's regal heritage, offering a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of Jaipur's former rulers.

**Jantar Mantar Observatory** - The largest stone and marble crafted observatory in the world is located just outside the City Palace. The observatory has 17 large instruments, many of them still in working condition.

**Day 9: Jaipur**

Meals: B, L, D

Today starts with a photo stop at the iconic Hawa Mahal, or the "Palace of Winds." You'll view this magnificent work of architecture from the bustling road opposite. Next, venture to the majestic Amber Fort, an imposing hilltop fortress that narrates tales of Rajput valor and grandeur.

Round off the day visiting a craft centre where you will witness the traditional arts of block printing and carpet weaving.



*Please note that the sightseeing inside the fort will take approximately 2 hours on foot and involves several steps.*

**Destination Information**

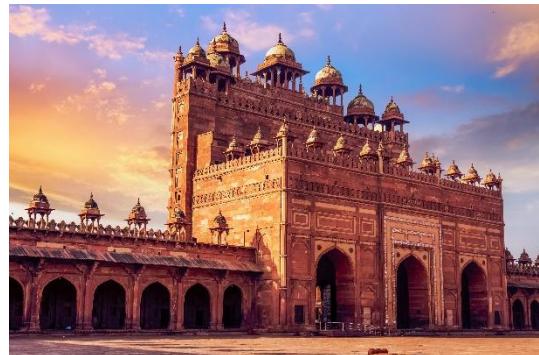
**Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds)** - A five-story palace erected in 1799 by the Sawai Pratap Singh so that the veiled ladies of his harem could observe, unnoticed, the lively street scenes below.

**Amber Fort** - Built from yellow and pink sandstone and white marble, Amber Fort was built in the 16th century by Raja Man Singh. Inside the fort the Hall of Victory houses the famed Sheesh Mahal.

**Day 10: Jaipur to Agra**

Meals: B, L, D

After breakfast drive approximately 6 hours and 30 minutes to Agra, stopping en route at Fatehpur Sikri, an ancient city frozen in time. This UNESCO World Heritage site boasts magnificent architecture, including the Buland Darwaza and the stunning Jama Masjid, with regal palaces and courtyards to explore.



Sightseeing today involves up to 1 hour and 30 minutes in foot. Continue your journey to Agra and check into your hotel before dinner tonight.

**Destination Information**

**Fatehpur Sikri** - Located 40km from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri was built by Emperor Akbar in 1569 after it was prophesied that the then childless Akbar would have sons if he moved his capital to the site. At great expense to the empire, the capital was moved here but sadly only occupied for 14 years before slowly being deserted after Akbar left the city due to a scarcity of water.

**Agra** – Home to the world-famous Taj Mahal, Agra rose to fame in the medieval period as the capital of the Mughal Empire and was beautified with gardens, waterfalls, bathhouses and canals.

In modern times, the city of Agra houses a thriving carpet industry.

**Day 11: Agra**

Meals: B, L, D

Today begins with a visit to the iconic Taj Mahal, a marvel of white marble and eternal love.

*Please note, admission to the main mausoleum area requires all visitors to wear shoe covers (this may be provided on site, however, please be prepared to bring an additional pair of socks).*

*Please also note, there are 22 steps leading up to the entrance of the main Mausoleum and some smaller steps at the gate and pathways.*

Sightseeing here will take up to 2 hours.

Afterwards, go on to visit a marble inlay workshop to see skilled artisans demonstrate their craftsmanship, creating exquisite designs that adorn the Taj Mahal and other Mughal masterpieces. It's a chance to appreciate the dedication and precision that goes into every piece of art.

In the afternoon, explore the majestic Agra Fort, an imposing fortress, with red sandstone walls, concealing a wealth of Mughal history within its ramparts. Wander through the opulent palaces, admire the intricate design work, and stand where emperors once stood, gazing out at the breathtaking view of the Taj Mahal in the distance. Sightseeing at the fort involves approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes on foot with several steps.

This evening, enjoy a live musical drama, "Mohabbat the Taj", a show depicting the romantic love story of Emperor Shah Jahan and his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. This is a true Bollywood experience.



**Destination Information**

**Taj Mahal** - One of the most recognisable monuments in the world, The Taj Mahal is a white marble monument found on the southern bank of the Yamuna River. The Taj Mahal was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan between the years 1631 -1648 in memory of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in 1631.

**Agra Fort** - Situated on the west bank of the Yamuna River and built by Emperor Akbar between 1565 and 1573. Its imposing red sandstone ramparts form a crescent along the riverfront and encompass an enormous complex of courtly buildings, ranging in style from the early eclecticism of Akbar to the sublime elegance of Shah Jahan. The barracks to the north are British additions from the 19th century. A deep moat, once filled with water from the Yamuna River surrounds the fort.

**Mohabbat The Taj** – A mesmerising show, which depicts the immortal love of Shah Jahan for his beautiful wife, Mumtaz Mahal, whose death during childbirth inspired him to build the Taj Mahal.

## Day 12: Travel to Varanasi

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy your last train journey, departing in the early morning (approx. 05h00) on the *Vande Bhart Express* bound for Varanasi, having breakfast and lunch onboard.

This is a 7-hour journey and upon arrival, prepare for an enchanting evening as you step into the bustling streets for a rickshaw ride, taking you through the ancient lanes and alleys to the banks of the revered River Ganges. Here you will experience the mesmerizing and deeply spiritual Pooja ceremony of Ganga Aarti.



As you watch the priests perform intricate rituals with oil lamps, incense, and chants, you will witness a sacred connection between humanity and the divine.

You will spend approximately 2 hours sightseeing on foot today.

*Please note: The Ganga Aarti takes place most evenings, so please be prepared for many crowds through the streets, especially leading up to the ghats. Please remember to wear close shoes and to always be careful and mindful of your belongings. It is also important to watch where you step, as devotees, crowds of tourists, animals and rickshaws all head in the same direction as the ghats.*

### Destination Information

**Varanasi** - The religious capital of Hinduism, Varanasi is the oldest living city in India as well as one of the world's most ancient cities. Colourful and lively, Varanasi is a fascinating city to discover. Located along the western banks of the Ganges, devotees travel to the city to pray and wash away their sins in the holy river.

**Pooja Ceremony of Ganga Aarti** - An evening ceremony conducted on the banks of the river Ganges. Aarti means divine light, and this ceremony is filled with song, prayer and ritual.

## Day 13: Varanasi

Meals: B, L, D

Set sail on a cruise along the sacred Ganges River to view the ghats at sunrise, before visiting the Bharat Mata Mandir, a unique temple dedicated to Mother India.



Continue to Durga Temple, an ancient shrine dedicated to the fierce goddess Durga. The next leg of your tour takes you to the prestigious Banaras Hindu University, where within its sprawling campus, you'll find the renowned Vishwanath Temple, a sacred place of worship that attracts devotees from all corners of the country.

This afternoon, shift your focus to the historical and spiritual richness of Sarnath, exploring the Buddhist sites that include the ancient Dhamek Stupa, the Mulagandhakuti Vihara, and the Sarnath Archaeological Museum before dinner. You will spend approximately 5 hours sightseeing today.

### Destination Information

**Ghats of Varanasi** - The ghats are the long stretch of steps leading down to the water on the western banks of the River Ganges. Most are used for bathing, but there are some 'burning ghats' where public cremations are held.

**Bharat Mata Mandir** - A unique temple dedicated to Bharat Mata (Mother India) which houses a relief map of India, carved out of marble.

**Durga Temple** - Also known as the monkey temple due to the large number of monkeys that have made the temple their home, the Durga Temple is one of the most important temples in Varanasi. Dedicated to the Goddess Durga, the temple was built in the 18th century and is stained red with ochre.

**Sarnath** - Sarnath is the fabled place where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon to his disciples expounding the principles of Buddhism. The ruins here date back as far as the 3rd century BC.

#### Day 14: Varanasi to Delhi

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy some free time in Varanasi before boarding your flight to Delhi.

Upon arrival, you will visit the impressive Qutab Minar complex before driving by the grand Rashtrapati Bhawan, the official residence of the President of India.

Nearby, the Secretariat Buildings and Parliament House stand as monumental symbols of India's democratic governance.

Next, pay a brief visit to India Gate, a war memorial honouring the sacrifices of Indian soldiers, before a farewell dinner tonight.

Sightseeing this afternoon involves approximately 2-3 hours on foot.



#### Days 15-16: Depart Delhi

Meals: B

Any time before your flight is at leisure. You will be transferred from your hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.



## INDIA BY RAIL - TRAVEL INFORMATION

### **VISAS:**

New Zealand passport holders currently do require a visa to enter India. Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. We will supply you with all paperwork if applicable and submit the visa application on your behalf. Your passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your intended return date to New Zealand.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate; Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa. Your travel consultant will inform you if any changes are applicable prior to your departure.

### **INSURANCE:**

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

#### **EATING IN INDIA:**

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Indian cuisine is one of the most influential, diverse and flavoursome culinary styles in the world. Indian dishes incorporate many spices and seasoning to create an explosion of flavours. Though Indian cuisine can vary greatly from the Indian food we get in New Zealand, it is important to keep an open mind and be adventurous. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our classic group tours, from dinner on the arrival day until breakfast on the day of departure. Please be aware that dishes selected for your meals reflect the cooking styles and signature dishes of the local area you are in.

Dishes served in restaurants on our group tours are varied. Some will be vegetable-based with meat mixed in, and a few will be meat-based. Our restaurants are aware of the western palate – there are plenty of non-spiced options. When eating meals on group tours, you will usually be seated around a large table with other tour members. Dishes will be served in the traditional ‘family style’; meaning that various dishes will be laid out in the centre of the table. These dishes are intended to be shared amongst the group – there is always more than enough to feed everybody.

We recommend that when it comes to Indian food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

**Please inform us of any allergies and/or special dietary requirements at time of booking**

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#### **DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:**

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Although India is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in New Zealand. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in New Zealand; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade.

All our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday, so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your guide.

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#### **ACCOMMODATION:**

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All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, TV, and a telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide or National Escort.

Your accommodation has been selected for convenience of location, comfort, or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town or a heritage-type

hotel. In remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard but do please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between New Zealand and India. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards are met.

Please be aware that there are heightened security measures being carried out at all hotels, on guests and vehicles entering the properties.

#### **SOUVENIRS:**

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We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions that demonstrates a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy.

We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places that hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

#### **TIPPING POLICY:**

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Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and India is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time.

To avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed amongst your main service providers (for example local guides and drivers) throughout your tour.

The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

Any other tipping, such as tips for bathroom attendants or hotel porters that are taking luggage to your room, is at your discretion based on satisfaction of services received, as are gratuities for additional requested special services. We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy, but we do recognise that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour, we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

#### **GROUP SIZE:**

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Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by both a National Escort and local guides. There will be no more than 18 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu our groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a

smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

#### **LUGGAGE:**

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All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

#### **PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:**

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Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed, and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. India Republic Day is on 26th January, the Holi Festival on the 14th of March 2025 & 4th March 2026 (The Hindu 'Festival of Colours' can include locals smearing coloured powder on one another. Every effort will be made to minimise the effect on passengers whilst touring). Diwali Festival (festival of light) is on October 20th, 2025 & November 8th, 2026.

#### **TRANSPORT:**

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**Coaches:** Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Main and inner-city roads in India have a reputation for being very congested. For this reason, it may not always be possible to return to your hotel after sightseeing to freshen up before going to the restaurant for dinner.

Roads in India have generally been improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the sections above are approximations only.

**Trains:** All the trains included on our "India by Rail" are day-time journeys in air-conditioned chair carriages, except for the 1-hour toy train between Shimla and Shoghi where air-conditioning is not available. Meals will be service onboard most journeys except for the Shimla and Shoghi toy train and the Amjer Express between Agra and Jaipur. Your guide will arrange time prior to board to purchase snacks for the journey.

*Please take note:*

- The train carriages are shared, so always be mindful of your personal belongings.
- Each train coach has toilet facilities, located at either end of the coach. One is western style, while the other is Indian style.
- We recommend you carry tissues/toilet paper and hand sanitisers.

**Baggage on board trains:** The maximum baggage measurement per passenger is 48 inches (123cm). If a piece of baggage exceeds any one of the dimensions, it must be booked and carried in the brake van rather than in the passengers' compartment. Luggage handling porters will be arranged while embarking and disembarking from the trains.

**Facilities onboard the trains:**

	VANDE BHARAT EXPRESS TRAINS	SHATABDI EXPRESS / GATIMAAN EXPRESS TRAIN	EXPRESS TRAINS (AMRITSAR - CHANDIGARH // AORA FORT - JAIPUR
Economy Class	✓	✓	✓
Airline style seating (3:2 alignment or airline style rotatable seats)	✓	✓	✓
Catering facilities	✓	✓	✗
Observation facilities (e.g. large windows)	✓	✓	✓
Electrical outlets	✓	✓	✓
Baggage facilities	✓	✓	✓
Bio-vacuum toilets	✓	✓	✓

**APPROPRIATE DRESS:**

When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in conservative, non-revealing clothing. Full-length trousers with a shirt or t-shirt for men; and trousers or skirts well below the knee with a top that covers the shoulders and upper arms for women.

Women might also consider carrying a 'modesty shawl' in their daypack – this could be a sarong or light scarf – which they can wear over their shoulders and heads to feel more comfortable while sightseeing at mosques. When visiting Jain temples, you must not wear or take in any leather items such as belts, watches, camera straps, purses and shoes.

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. Even if you then need to walk outdoors, over hot or rough ground, you will not be allowed to wear shoes.

You will often find shoe storage rooms near the entrance of a site where it is customary to leave your shoes near the entrance. Occasionally there are 'shoe minders' who will offer to keep your shoes safe for a 'tip' – this is not compulsory so each customer can choose to tip for this service or not. If you do not want to remove your shoes, you will have to remain outside.

We recommend shoes that easily slip on and off, and carry a pair of thick, old socks in your daypack, which you can wear to protect your feet from any rough or hot surfaces.

#### **CLIMBING STEPS:**

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Sightseeing at nearly all the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a few steps. These palaces were built to provide defence against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside.

The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

#### **VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:**

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We recommend that you contact either your doctor or Health centre for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Safetravel has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

#### **BEFORE YOU LEAVE:**

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We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz) as in the event of an emergency, New Zealand Consular assistance will be more readily available.

Up until the day you travel, it is vital you keep up to date and familiarised with the entry requirements as these can change at short notice. You are personally responsible for completing any entry forms, conducting any covid tests (if necessary), etc and adhering to countries' specific entry requirements. You can also access the New Zealand Government's travel advisory service for up-to-date information about your destination on the same website.

#### **AFTER YOUR BOOKING:**

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Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

#### **ITINERARY CHANGES:**

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It is our intention to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

Updated: June 2025