



## **TIGERS & LIONS OF INDIA**

### **- TRIP NOTES -**



## TIGERS & LIONS OF INDIA (14 DAYS)

### Delhi - Kanha - Bandhavgarh - Satpura - Gir - Ahmedabad



### WELCOME

Thank you for booking your holiday with *Travel The Unknown*. We love travel and we are confident that you will go away with fantastic memories of our *Tigers & Lions of India* tour.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Spotting tigers, Asiatic lions & other endemic wildlife \*
- Game drives in all national parks
- Elephant-back safari in Bandhavgarh
- Walking safari in Satpura
- Staying in rustic jungle lodges
- Small group sizes (max. 12 per tour)

\* tiger and lion sightings can never be guaranteed

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Airport transfers
- Three internal flights
- Train tickets (1st class if available)
- Ground transport (air-conditioned)
- 13 nights accommodation (mixture of hotels, lodges)
- Entrance fees to sites & parks
- Activities as per itinerary (elephant & walking safaris)
- Most meals - Breakfasts (13), lunches (10), dinners (12)
- Drivers and local guides
- Climate Care contribution

### Itinerary

Please download the detailed itinerary for your tour from our website. We have made it simpler to navigate and there is now one-click access to each tour via the Trip Finder in the main menu, then click on the Itinerary tab to download your itinerary.

### Itinerary Disclaimer

Itineraries are correct at the time of printing. Our itineraries are sometimes updated during the year to incorporate suggestions from past travellers and sometimes our own research too. Please ensure that you print and review a final copy of these **Trip Notes** and itinerary a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that may affect you.

### Joining Point

You will receive an email at least 2 weeks before your departure with details of the joining point. All travellers will be greeted at Delhi airport by a *Travel The Unknown* representative and will be escorted to their accommodation.

### Finishing Point

All customers will be escorted to the flight departing from Ahmedabad airport when flights have been booked with *Travel The Unknown*. Transport to the airport can be arranged for all other travellers or you can come to the airport at the same time as the group that booked flights with *Travel The Unknown*.

### Time

India is 5½ hours ahead of GMT.

Note, the time difference will reduce to 4 ½ hours when clocks go forward for summer time.

## Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of Jet Airways (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

## UK Regional Flights

*Travel The Unknown* is committed to making joining our trips as easy as possible, wherever you may live in the UK. The Flight Inclusive price is based on a London departure, but we are happy to tailor this to your local or regional airport.

## Accommodation

*Travel The Unknown* will provide you with the best accommodation available, in keeping with the natural environments of our destinations. In Delhi, you will be staying in a very good hotel and in the national parks we will be staying at some of the best jungle lodges available. Either ourselves or our trusted ground handlers have personally vetted all accommodation.

Location	Accommodation
Delhi	Radisson Hotel or Shanti Home
Kanha National Park	Kanha Earth Lodge
Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve	King's Lodge
Satpura National Park	Reni Pani Jungle Lodge
Gir National Park	Lion Safari Camp

If any of our preferred first choice accommodation is not available, we will organise something of a similar standard.

## Style of Travel

This is very much a wildlife-focused trip. Although activities and game drives have been planned on most days, you can opt in or out of any activities as you please. These tours are for independent people and so we try to be flexible where we can, and give you time to explore on your own too.

## Meals

Breakfast is provided every day, and meals are on a full-board basis within the national parks. Refer to the itinerary for details of the daily meal plan. You should budget about £10 (\$16) per day for additional meals.

## Group Size

To minimise the footprint our tours leave - both on the environment and the local culture - we keep our group sizes limited to 12 people.

## Tour Guides

Having a knowledgeable and enthusiastic tour guide can make all the difference on a holiday. We have gone to great length in trying to secure the best guides available. The group will be designated a fixed driver throughout the tour, and at the national parks we will use local guides and wildlife experts. These are people who have spent a lot of time spotting animals in the wild and know their respective terrains inside-out. For any sightseeing aspects of the trip, we will use local guides. The use of local guides on this itinerary helps keep the overall tour costs down.

## Transport

We use well-maintained vehicles and good drivers wherever road travel is involved. There are some long days travelling, especially between some of the parks, but this is often down to the condition of the roads and traffic. The tour is not too demanding, but some days can be busy, where travelling is combined with sightseeing and there some early morning starts.

## **Physical Demands**

In terms of physical activity, this is not a demanding trip. A basic level of fitness and decent health is assumed. This trip does involve some long drives and the train ride is comfortable. Rail travel in India is a great way of interacting with the locals and soaking in the changing scenes unfolding outside your window.

## **Optional Activities**

From time to time other activities may be possible to arrange. Costs for such additional activities will not be covered in the standard tour package. Contact us in advance of your trip for more information.

## **Single Travellers**

As experienced solo travellers, there were many times when we wanted to join tour groups, as it is a great way of meeting like-minded travellers, as well as getting to see some places that were otherwise not on our itineraries.

We try to keep our single supplements as low as possible. However, due to limited high quality accommodation in national parks, there is very little price difference between single and double-occupancy. You will only have to pay a supplement if you want your own room. If you are open to sharing a room with another single same-sex traveller, then you pay no supplement.

## **Fellow Travellers**

Travelling in a group is very rewarding and is a great way to meet new people. There may be large variations in age and nationality. This is most often a good thing, but can occasionally cause some teething problems, so we ask you to be patient with your fellow passengers and realise that everyone likes to travel a little differently. Please consider your fellow passengers too, and try to respect meeting times, especially for game drives.

## **PRACTICALITIES**

### **Travel Insurance**

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. As a minimum we require that your insurance covers you for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We also strongly recommend you are covered for personal liability and loss of luggage and personal effects. You will be required to give details of your insurance prior to departure. Please go to [www.traveltheunknown.com/partners](http://www.traveltheunknown.com/partners) for links to excellent deals on travel insurance.

### **Visas**

**All foreign nationals, including children, require a visa to enter India. They are not available at port of entry AND must be obtained in advance.**

TravCour UK, our affiliate partner, can arrange your visa for you at very competitive rates. This would save you the time and hassle of going in person to the VFS office and/or avoiding long turnaround times if applying yourself by post (can take up to 4 weeks). Turnaround time through TravCour is typically 5 working days.

Download the form from our website and follow the instructions.  
[www.traveltheunknown.com/downloads/indiavisaform.pdf](http://www.traveltheunknown.com/downloads/indiavisaform.pdf)

**Note:** as per the latest visa regulations, if you are applying for a multi-entry tourist visa, you cannot re-enter India until 2 months after your exit from the country. There are some exceptions to this, with further details mentioned in the visa application form.

## Health

All *Travel The Unknown* travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. If, in the opinion of our ground handler, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, *Travel The Unknown* reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund. Please read the itinerary for this tour thoroughly and then realistically self-assess your physical ability to complete the trip as described. Please consult with your doctor if you have any doubts or give us a call with any queries you may have.

An excellent resource for up-to-date travel medicine requirements is: [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk). We recommend that you also consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information before departure. You should also carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that in some remoter areas you could be some distance from medical facilities. For legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drugs including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

**NOTE:** Do not leave it to the last minute to see you doctor as you may have to get immunised or start taking malaria tablets some time prior to departure. You should see your doctor or visit a travel clinic at least 45 days before your departure.

When organising your own meals, be selective where you eat. Choose places that seem quite clean and where many locals eat. A high turnover usually means food is not left lying around and has been made fresh. We recommend that you stick to drinking bottled water, even when brushing your teeth.

At the time of writing the following vaccinations were recommended for travel to India: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Rabies, Tetanus, Typhoid.

Malaria tablets are advisable, and you should check with your doctor for the most suitable tablets. In addition, you should still protect yourself against mosquito bites by wearing long-sleeved tops, long trousers and using a mosquito repellent with a high quantity of DEET. Mosquito nets will be provided where required.

## Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. For the UK, please visit: [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk).

We strongly recommend that you use a neck wallet or money belt while travelling to ensure the safety of your documents and other valuables. It is not advisable to bring valuable jewellery when travelling. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

During your trip we have built in some free time. Any optional activities you undertake are not part of your *Travel The Unknown* itinerary, and *Travel The Unknown* makes no guarantees about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment. *Travel The Unknown* cannot be held responsible for any injuries or losses that may occur for any such optional activity. Please also note that *Travel The Unknown* retains the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

## Dangers

India is generally a very safe place to travel. However, you are still subject to the same problems that you find the world over – e.g. pickpockets can operate in busy places. It is important to be more vigilant in busy areas. You are responsible for your own belongings.

Delhi and other Indian cities have experienced blasts in the recent past though the chances of being directly affected by such activities are still very small. We closely monitor the safety situation on a continuous basis, using both government sources and our own network of contacts on the ground. Please check [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) for the latest government advice on travel to the region. Please contact us at [info@traveltheunknown.com](mailto:info@traveltheunknown.com) if you have any further questions or concerns about safety issues.

In addition we recommended that you read the Health section for how to mitigate dangers to your health.

## **Electricity**

Electricity in India is 240 volts, alternating at 50 cycles per second. You will require a voltage converter if you are carrying a device that does not accept 240 volts at 50 hertz. To adjust your device according to the power and voltage in India, the following three types of voltage converters may be used:

### Resistor-network converters

This type of converter usually supports approximately 50 -1600 Watts. They are lightweight. You can easily use this converter for high-wattage electrical appliances like hair dryers and irons. But, you can use them for short periods only and they are not ideal for digital devices.

### Transformers

Transformers support low watt rating, around 50–100 watts. Generally, you can use them continuously. Also, they provide better electricity for low wattage appliances like battery chargers, radios, laptop computers, cameras, mp3 players and camcorders. Their drawback is the low wattage and heavy weight.

### Combination converters

Combination converters are a combination of a resistor network and a transformer in the same package. You can easily switch between the two modes. If you need both types of converters, then it is better to buy this combination converter.

Outlets in India generally accept the following types of plug:

- Two round pins (continental European plugs and adapters will suffice)
- Three round pins arranged in a triangle

If your appliance(s) plug has any other shape, you will need a plug adapter. If you plan to travel a lot in the future, it is better to get a combination voltage converter and a plug adapter.

Check out [www.traveltheunknown.com/estore](http://www.traveltheunknown.com/estore) for some adapters that will be suitable for India.

## **Communication**

Internet access is available in Delhi, but once you are in the national parks there will be limited access. Your mobile phone should work without problem throughout this tour, although it is definitely advised to leave these behind for the game drives and safaris!

**TIP:** If you think you will need to make or receive a lot of calls, then it would be worth investing in a prepaid SIM card on arrival at the airport. You have to make sure your handset is unlocked prior to leaving the UK.

## **Laundry**

Laundry facilities are available at our hotels/lodges for a charge. However, we advise you not to leave laundry to the last minute as sometimes drying times may be required and laundry will not be available at all stops.

## **MONEY**

### **Spending Money**

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some people spend a lot of money on drinks, whereas others may spend more on souvenir or present shopping. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping, participating in optional activities and tipping.

### **Tipping**

Tipping is a very difficult and often emotive subject. Although wholly at your discretion (and only if you are provided with good service) it is generally expected that tips are paid to your local guides, hotel staff, drivers, porters and mahouts. We would suggest you set aside approximately £5 to £6 per person per day for all your tipping needs. Some suggestions on tipping are below.

<b>Staff</b>	<b>Tip</b>
Bellboy/porters at hotels	INR 20 per bag
Local guides	INR 100 half day / INR 150 full day
Hotel staff	INR 50-75 per day
Driver (transfers)	INR 50 for arrival/departure INR 100 per day for long journeys

### **Departure Tax**

Unless otherwise specified departure tax will be included in the cost of your package when you booked your international flight with *Travel The Unknown*. Where you are arranging your own international flights please check with your travel agent or airline.

## **Emergency Funds**

Please also make sure you have access to an additional £200 (\$350), to be used when unforeseen incidents or circumstances outside our control (eg. a natural disaster, or political strife) necessitate a change to our intended itinerary. This is not a common occurrence but it's better to be prepared.

### **Money Exchange**

Currency exchange rates often fluctuate. For the most up to date rates please refer to the following website: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

There are many ATM machines throughout India, though they are usually limited to major cities. Nevertheless, we do recommend that you carry some money in the form of cash. Major credit cards are accepted in the larger shops and restaurants usually only in the bigger cities.

**TIP 1:** Slightly torn, faded or badly marked banknotes may be difficult to exchange. Coins are typically not exchangeable.

**TIP 2:** We recommend you take out the majority of the spending money you require when you arrive in Delhi and distribute it and keep it in secure places throughout the rest of the trip.

## **RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL AND THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **Responsible Travel**

As regular travellers, one thing that never ceases to amaze and inspire us while travelling is the kindness and generosity of people, who often have very little to their name. We firmly believe that the people who make these places special should also benefit from them. Therefore as first preference we use local guides and locally-owned lodges, shops and eateries. We do our best to ensure that the benefits of our tours reach as widely as possible into the communities where they operate and also invest a significant amount of our profits in development projects within those communities.

### **Environment**

The biggest environmental impact of your holiday with *Travel The Unknown* is the CO<sub>2</sub> generated by your flights and land travel. As a responsible tour operator, we have included in our tour prices the costs of offsetting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from all international and domestic flights as well as land travel forming part of the tour.

We have partnered with *Climate Care* for this purpose. If you are making independent flight arrangements, we urge you to take responsibility for your CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by offsetting through *Climate Care*, or another reputable offsetting scheme.

We also ask you to be vigilant about disposing of your waste. Dispose of all rubbish correctly and do not leave litter or cigarette butts in natural environments.

Our brochures and stationery are printed on FSC-accredited or recycled paper. To minimise waste, all of our brochures and trip notes are available for download online.

Visit [www.traveltheunknown.com/responsible](http://www.traveltheunknown.com/responsible) for further information.

## **Culture Shock**

India is a country which may be very different to anything you may have experienced before. It is not always the easiest place to travel. Pollution, poverty and the swirling crowds can result in initial culture shock, but take a deep breath and go for it, and you will understand what makes this land so enchanting.

When packing, be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout India. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Indian climate. Clothing should cover shoulders and be on or below the knee. Women especially should always dress conservatively to avoid unwanted attention and not to cause offence. Vests, tight-fitting trousers, short skirts and shorts are not recommended.

### **Climate**

Most of India lies in the tropical belt. But, given the vast size of India, the climate differs in each region. Hence, there is always some part of the country which enjoys good weather no matter what time of the year.

The best time to visit India to view its incredible wildlife is between the months of November and April. The climate is warm in the daytime and cool in the mornings between these months and more importantly the weather is generally dry.

Sightings can be higher in the hotter months of March and April as the water holes dry up and animals congregate at the few that remain. However, the temperature reaches 40°C or more in the middle of the day and some tented accommodation will be closed. Most national parks are closed from July through to September.

## **WHAT TO BRING**

The list below is not exhaustive:

- Malaria tablets, any other required medication & basic first aid kit.
- Insect repellent, sunscreen (min. factor 15) & sunhat.
- Photocopy of passport data pages.
- Clothing for hot (day) & cool (night) conditions: long-sleeved tops, waterproof jacket, long trousers, cushioned socks.
- Warm sweater/fleece (for nights).
- Sandals and walking shoes.
- Binoculars, torch, sunglasses, small towel, and electricity adapter.
- Water bottle.
- Waterproof bag for documents and electronics.
- Watch (strict time-keeping is required at times).
- Camera, charger, batteries and memory cards (if digital camera)
- Money for meals, souvenirs, contingencies.

## **Tour Photos**

We only use photos taken on our tours on our website so we actively encourage you to send us your photos. Happy snapping!

## **Our Newsletter**

If you would like to find out about new tours and all that is happening with *Travel The Unknown* then sign up to our newsletter on our website.

## **Feedback**

We have spent much time and effort to make your trip a memorable experience for all the right reasons. However, we are constantly looking to improve our tours and any feedback you can give us or suggestions you may have would be very much appreciated.

## **Hindi Cheat Sheet**

shukria  
namastay  
bina mirch  
tora mirch  
cheeni  
tel  
makan  
gosht  
kitnay baje hey?  
dhyan say  
dhiray dhiray  
haa  
nahi  
mujhey... chyeeay  
mujhey gosht chy eeay  
cheeni aleg say (dayna)  
mirch aleg say (dayna)  
mera naam David hey

thank you  
hello  
without chilli  
little chilli  
sugar  
oil  
butter  
meat  
what time is it?  
carefully  
slowly  
yes  
no  
I would like...  
I would like some meat  
(please give) sugar on the side  
(please give) chilli on the side  
my name is David