



Wendy Wu Tours

YOUR TRAVEL GUIDE

# INDIA & SRI LANKA





Goa

## CONTENTS

Your India Holiday with Wendy Wu Tours	4
Joining Your Tour	5
Whilst on Tour	6
Tipping	7
Optional Extras	8
Cameras and Recording Devices	8
Eating in India	9
Transport	11
Accommodation	14
Electricity	16
Luggage on Tour	16
Money	17
Shopping	19
Customs and Duty Free	20
Keeping in Touch	21
Time Difference	22
Insurance	22
Safety and Security	23
Travel Health	24
Responsible Travel	26
Reading List	28
Customer Health and Safety Information	29
Climate	34
Suggested Packing List	35
Climate Charts	36
Hindi Vocabulary	40

Updated April 2024

*Cover image: Hawa Mahal Palace, Jaipur, India*

## YOUR INDIA HOLIDAY WITH WENDY WU TOURS

India is home to amazing sights and wonders of the world. Experience the bustling cities of Delhi and Mumbai, journey to the golden beaches of Goa, discover the sleepy backwaters of Kerala and admire ancient temples. Wander through the colourful cities of the north, to the verdant valleys, snow-capped mountains and wind-whipped prayer flags of Sikkim and discover why India is truly incredible. Unearth Sri Lanka, Asia's Emerald Isle; visit breathtaking Nepal or explore spiritual Bhutan.

Your Wendy Wu Tours experience begins before you travel and we are there every step of the way until you return home. Our customers are our priority, and we will do all we can to ensure your holiday is one to remember.

This Travel Guide provides you with practical advice and cultural information to help you prepare for your holiday. We are aware that this can seem like a lot of reading material, but we ask that you take some time to familiarise yourself with this information prior to departure and refer to the contents within throughout your travels.

Your *Tour Dossier* (provided with your travel documents) provides a straightforward description of the physical activities involved in each day's sightseeing. If there are any particular challenges, from the length of time spent on your feet, the duration of drives and flights, to the standard of remote accommodation for our more adventurous tours; they will be explained there.

### **More about your holiday**

Almost everything will be different from what you may be used to. We have found that our passengers who embark on their journey with a sense of humour and adventure and who accept that things do not always go to plan, are those who find their experience most rewarding. Although India is developing quickly, please note that health and safety standards overseas can differ greatly from those we enjoy at home, often of a lower standard. However, all of our suppliers meet local and national safety standards as a minimum.

A typical day's sightseeing may include the bustle and noise of a city street, sights and smells of a local market and interacting with the locals. Travelling in India requires patience and potential delays are to be expected due to different standards of service. Although English is widely spoken throughout India, your National Escort/Local Guides will be indispensable during your trip.

At Wendy Wu Tours we are continually working with our suppliers to maintain and improve safety standards by seeking good practice in health and safety and we will do our best to ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble free. Part of the enjoyment of travelling abroad is experiencing a different way of life and culture, but it may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those we are used to at home. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow the advice from your National Escort/Local Guides.

Our tours are operated at a comfortable, moderate or active pace and this is shown on the tour page in our brochure, on our website, and in the tour dossier. For more information on the more active aspects of our tours, please refer to your tour dossier.

Our National Escort/Local Guides always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance, but they cannot be expected to cater for passengers who are not fit enough to complete the itinerary.

## **JOINING YOUR TOUR**

### **Check-in information**

Most airlines allow online check in 24 hours prior to departure. Make sure you have your passport and airline reference number handy. Your airline reference number can be found on your e-ticket receipt. You may be able to select your seats and you must print your boarding pass. At the airport, go to the Bag Drop Area of your airline to check your luggage in. Please note that some airlines will allow you to pre-book seats outside the 24 hours but may charge you a fee which needs to be paid to the airline directly by phone or via their website. Please note some airlines do not allow online check in. Please refer to your airline's website for further information. We recommend you arrive at the airport 3 hours prior to departure, even if you have checked in; this is due to the increased security measures now in place at all airports.

If you do not have access to the internet, we again recommend you arrive at the airport 3 hours prior to departure and you may either use one of the available check-in desks or use the self-service kiosks and take your luggage to the 'drop-off' area.

### **Baggage information**

We recommend that you do not exceed 15kgs of checked in baggage on your international flights as many of the domestic airlines within India have a luggage allowance of only 15kgs. As a guide, your main baggage should not exceed the following dimensions: 90cm x 75cm x 43cm (35.5ins x 29.5ins x 16ins), including the handle, pockets and wheels,

and your cabin baggage should not exceed 55cm x 40cm x 20cm (22ins x 16in x 8ins), maximum weight 5kgs. For further information please refer to your airline's website. You must be able to carry your own bag.

### **Terminal information**

This is shown on your e-ticket. On arrival in India, you will be met by your National Escort or Local Guide at the arrivals exit.

### **WHILST ON TOUR**

Every location on the itinerary will be visited with entrance fees to the main areas included, although the order may change depending on weather, traffic, last minute alterations or other conditions. If you wish to visit places that are not included in the itinerary, you may do so at your own cost, please check in advance with your National Escort. After a day's sightseeing, you may sometimes be taken directly to dinner rather than have the opportunity to go back to the hotel to shower and rest first. Whilst out sightseeing, western toilets are difficult to find in remote areas.

### **National Escort**

Should there be less than 10 people in total within the group, you will NOT have a National Escort; however, you will be met by the local guide on arrival and you will have one in each destination you visit on the tour. If you do have a National Escort they will meet you upon arrival and stay with you throughout your tour. Please refer to your Tour Itinerary.

Jain Temple, Ranakpur



## Public holidays and festivals

There are so many public holidays and religious festivals in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan that we cannot list them all. The majority are observed on a regional basis while the important national days (such as Independence Day on 15th August) and major festivals of each religion (such as the Diwali Hindu Festival, or the Ramadan Muslim Festival) are observed by several states or the entire nation.

The Holi Festival (Festival of colours) in India is celebrated on the full moon in the month of March and marks the arrival of spring. This is a very colourful festival and the people of India, particularly Northern India, take part in the celebrations with much enthusiasm! People rub and throw gulal and abeer (coloured powder and dyes) on each other and small gifts are also exchanged to show signs of love and wellbeing. Customers travelling on a group tour that coincides with Holi Festival are asked to please ensure they bring a dust mask if they suffer from allergies. Holi Festival Dates: 14 March 2025 and 4 March 2026.

If your tour coincides with a national or local holiday, you may find that transport and business open hours (e.g. shops or banks) are affected, you may encounter crowds and the availability of food or alcohol could be restricted.

## TIPPING

Tipping is a firm and expected element in the tourism industry today and India is no exception. We strive to establish trust with our guides who rely on and expect tips from passengers. If the guides are keen to work with our passengers regularly, they become familiar with our itineraries as well as the Wendy Wu Tours' philosophy and expectations we have of their work.

Many passengers are often uncertain of how much to tip so we have established a tipping system whereby every passenger gives a set amount (in US Dollars) to the National Escort who will distribute the amount appropriately. On multi-country trips, this amount will be paid in stages on arrival in each country. All group tour passengers are expected to contribute to the tipping kitty. (If there is no National Escort, please give the money directly to your Local Guides and tipping amounts for each city will be shown in your final itinerary.)

The amount for the kitty is calculated for each tour depending on the length, group size and services used during the trip. Your final documents and invoice will specify the exact tipping amount for your group. The tipping kitty will cover hotel porters, local guides and drivers in each city/province, local and/or site guides and your National Escort.

For independent passengers, or group passengers with pre/post tour arrangements, you should allow USD 7-10 per person per day in India and Sri Lanka.

Do not be surprised that you are constantly asked for tips or money, even if you know it has been paid. Your tips that you provide to the National Escort cover tips which should be paid on your behalf. Any others, such as tips for the toilet attendant or for someone who minds your shoes outside of a temple, are your responsibility but NOT necessary to be paid. Such tips are not included in our tipping kitty because these people are actually trying to sell this service to you as a way of making a living. Luggage portorage to your rooms is also at your discretion.

### **OPTIONAL EXTRAS**

A number of optional extra programmes/activities may be offered by your National Escort/Local Guide whilst on tour, time permitting. Please feel free to ask your National Escort/Local Guide about any optional touring they may be planning over the next few days and the approximate cost so you can ensure you have the appropriate funds. All the optional extras must be paid for in local currency. Our philosophy is that these optional extras are only offered when there is sufficient time available, and they should never compromise the standard sightseeing. It is for this reason that it is difficult to pre-plan the optional extras because they depend on the time available.

If you do not wish to take part in any optional extras, please make arrangements with your guides to enjoy some free time at leisure or to return to the hotel.

In addition, you will also need to consider additional discretionary tipping for any Local Guide/vendor/driver who is involved in such activities. Please be aware also, that it is likely that the expected tipping in these situations is a fee to undertake the optional activity plus a tip for the driver/vendor.

### **CAMERAS AND RECORDING DEVICES**

Many sites in India charge an additional fee for using a camera or video camera inside – these fees are not included in the tour cost. Please consider that these charges may pay for the accumulative, long-term damage of camera flashes, or are intended to deter tourists from using camera flashes and hence aim to prevent this damage. These fees can cost more than the original entrance fee; you can expect to pay up to US\$2 for cameras and US\$7 for video cameras at most sites.

At some sites, camera and/or mobile phones are not allowed and must



be left in the cloakroom. There are no camera fees at the Taj Mahal, however there are restrictions on the use of video cameras (they can only be used from the initial viewing platform, and cannot be taken closer to the building, however lockers are available for storage).

The Taj Mahal has strict regulations regarding what you are allowed to take into the site and your guide will explain these in more detail. They include restrictions on items used for smoking (lighters, matches etc), any tobacco items (cigarettes, cigars etc), mobile phone chargers and any electrical goods (excluding cameras). Lockers are available at the entrance of the monument at an additional cost or you can leave these items on the bus.

Bring a spare rechargeable battery, or supply of replaceable batteries for your camera/s as it is hard to find genuine and reliable brands in India. You should also bring a spare digital memory card/stick from home as those sold around tourist sites and markets in India are often fakes or damaged.

## **EATING IN INDIA**

On our Classic tours the cost of all meals excluding beverages is included in your group tour cost, on Go Beyond and Private Collection tours meal inclusions are listed on your itinerary.

Breakfast is served in the hotel and includes a combination of western and local dishes. As traditional in this region, lunch and dinner are served in a banquet style, so you can try the variety of speciality dishes. The amount of food served is more than ample for the whole group. We aim to cater to the tastes of the majority of people so dishes are not too spicy or unusual in their taste.

One of the great myths about India is that the food is of poor quality and always hot and spicy. This is definitely not the case! In fact, North Indian dishes whilst often very rich and indeed spicy don't contain as much chilli as South Indian dishes. Indian cuisine is predominately vegetarian; however more meat (chicken and lamb) dishes are available in the North.

On our group tours, we use a variety of local and hotel restaurants, which provide variety in both the dishes and methods of cooking. If you like Indian food from home, you will have no problems with the real Indian food as it is similar, only more flavoursome. You'll love it; though don't expect to lose weight on your holiday, Indians love to eat and eat big. In tourist centres, some restaurants and hotels may also serve western dishes to provide variety. You may also prefer to bring comforts like cereal, biscuits, muesli bars and tea/coffee from home.

Drinks will be at each tour member's own expense. Beer is widely available and cheap. Wine lovers should remember that western style wine is very expensive to import into India, so is not stocked except by upmarket restaurants. Bottled drinking water, soft drinks and fruit juices are also widely available – remember that you should only have ice, fruit juices or lassies (yoghurt based sweet or salty drinks) from a trusted restaurant; where they will use boiled or bottled water to prepare ice and drinks. Tea is very popular and Indians simply love visiting the many street stalls which brew chai (also known as masala), a sweet, spiced tea brewed with boiling milk. Hotels will usually serve tea and instant coffee at breakfast or other meals – you can usually request the chai or masala style tea as well.

### **Packed meals**

On some days, your National Escort/Local Guide may arrange for a simple, packed meal for your group. It may be a matter of schedule (on long driving days), hygiene (on train journeys), or your location (in remote areas) and we ask you to bear this in mind. Although this is not a full meal, most of our passengers seem to enjoy this change from the large portions and more elaborate banquets enjoyed most days.

### **Food allergies/dietary requests**

Any food allergies and dietary requests **MUST** be specified at the time of booking and should be reiterated to the National Escort/Guide when you meet them. They will do their utmost to cater for any special requests, such as vegetarian meals or food to be avoided in case of allergies.

*People on restricted diets should expect complications in India* and unfortunately we can give no guarantee that special requirements can be met. Vegetarians will have no problems.

Please be aware that on some days where a lot of sights are covered, dinner times may be early (around 5.30pm) and your tour group may head directly to the restaurant after sightseeing. Additionally, long driving distances or flight times, for example, may delay/alter your mealtime.

Whilst travelling away from major cities, it is highly recommended that those passengers with food intolerances take additional food items with them as not all dietary requests will be met due to the limited foods available.

## TRANSPORT

We use a variety of transportation including planes, coaches, trains, boat cruises and rickshaw rides to operate your itinerary at the best pace and to give you an authentic travel experience so you are not always 'removed' from the locals.

### Domestic flights

Wendy Wu Tours utilises a number of different domestic carriers within India. Planes are very similar to those you would travel on domestically at home, with allocated seats. Depending on flight duration meals may/may not be provided. Group members may not necessarily be seated together. The flight schedule of domestic airlines changes frequently, hence all domestic flights that appear in your itinerary are very subject to change. Please ensure that all valuables and any medications you may need for the rest of the day are taken onboard with you.

The luggage limit is 15kg per passenger, and bags must be locked. All seats are economy class. Airlines currently do not allow liquids (alcohol, spirits, wine, water, perfume etc) or sharp objects to be carried on-board the aircraft and these will be confiscated. Wendy Wu Tours issues all domestic flight tickets in India and Sri Lanka, and tickets will be handled by your National Escort/Local Guide and given to each passenger just prior to their flight.

### Coaches

Our coaches are comfortable, air-conditioned vehicles. Please note that seatbelts are not compulsory by law and therefore the local people largely choose not to wear them. For this reason local operators may or may not have seatbelts hidden underneath protective seat covers. It is recommended that where seatbelts are available, customers should use them and remain seated at all times whilst the vehicle is moving. Wendy Wu Tours cannot guarantee that vehicles will be fitted with operable seatbelts.

Tiger, Ranthamtoore National Park



## **Day trains**

All group train travel will be in AC2 meaning “air conditioned, second class”. Each passenger has an individual seat, which is similar in style to an airline seat, with plenty of space. Luggage is stored in overhead racks above your seats. Large bags are stored in separate carriages by porters.

Your National Escort/Local Guide will try to organise the whole group to be seated in the same carriage but in busy periods of travel, this may not be possible. Snacks and drinks can be purchased in the train’s restaurant carriage or from trolley carts. There is usually a western style toilet at one end and a squat toilet at the other end of the carriage. A passenger should remain with your belongings at all times. Keep a lock on your main luggage.

## **Narrow gauge ‘toy trains’**

The term ‘toy train’ refers to several trains originally built by the British to travel up to their hill station resorts. They had very narrow track gauges to ascend the steep hillsides; hence the engines were also smaller and sometimes required the engineer to sit on top of his engine. A few of the toy trains still operate today; the most famous, in Darjeeling, has a gauge of only two feet. The carriages have ample room for the average sized westerner, but are in original condition with wooden bench seats. Riding a toy train offers a rare insight to life in these colonial era resorts.

## **Overnight trains**

Usually we use first class ‘soft sleeper’ trains (AC 1st Class).

Occasionally due to lack of availability, air-conditioned second class sleepers may be booked (AC 2nd Class). Each compartment is shared by four or six people and is air-conditioned, with lockable doors and four beds which are fixed in place. There is room for passengers to sit on the lower berths and a folding table.

Your National Escort/Local Guides will try to organise the whole group to be sleeping in the same carriage but in busy periods of travel, this may not be possible. Each group will receive tickets with sequential berth numbers; these may be sharing with people from another tour group/company, or with some of the locals.

There is usually a western style toilet at one end and a squat toilet at the other end of the carriage. We recommend you bring a small overnight bag to carry whatever you need until the following morning as you will not have access to your main luggage which will be stored on a separate carriage of the train. Consider including a face towel, all toiletries,

medication you require until midday next day, a tracksuit or similar outfit to sleep in and toilet paper, as the train supply tends to run out. There is no dining car, so please carry snacks with you.

### **Keeping valuables safe on trains**

Carry all valuables with you at all times. A money belt is recommended. A passenger should remain with your belongings at all times. Keep a lock on your main luggage.

### **Boats**

Your tour could include taking a ride in a motor boat on Lake Pichola in Udaipur, a narrow wooden boat along the Ganges in Varanasi or an overnight stay on-board a kettuvallam houseboat in Kerala. To take part in any boat ride, you need to be of average mobility to be able to climb on and off all these boats unaided; able to disembark onto makeshift docks without handrails, or onto muddy riverbanks.

### **Canfers**

These are large, open van-like vehicles with wooden bench seats in the back and used on safaris in the national parks. Please note that if you are taking a private tour, you will be sharing a canter on safari with other passengers.

### **Bicycles/motorbikes/jeeps/rickshaws**

Occasionally your National Escort/Local Guide may organise an alternative mode of transport if your group coach is unable to negotiate the road (i.e. a mode of transport not mentioned in your itinerary) because of road damage after heavy rain, or to access remote areas. If you use these modes of transport in your free time, then passengers must bear full responsibility. Please also be aware that safety helmets are generally not provided or available for hire.

### **Road conditions and construction**

Road conditions are improving but still affected by monsoonal rains. Your National Escort/Local Guide will do their utmost to avoid possible delays but cannot guarantee against delays, changes or – in rare cases – cancellations of sections of your itinerary. Road construction in India, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan usually encompasses an enormous section of road, not a couple of kilometres like you may be used to. Please keep in mind that traffic is increasing in the cities and towns and may affect the timing of your tour and meal times. In remote areas, there are rough, unsealed roads covering a vast section of the rural and mountainous regions and existing road surfaces can be affected by heavy and constant monsoonal rains.

## ACCOMMODATION

We use a range of accommodation during your tour to enhance your experience in the Indian Subcontinent.

### Hotels

Group tour hotels are mainly local three to four star standard and located conveniently in the city, or near markets or shops; Deluxe Collection tours use five star properties. All rooms will have private western bathroom facilities, television, air-conditioning and a telephone. Some hotels may have hot water restrictions, operating for only a few hours at a time, usually in the mornings/evenings. It is not customary for hotels to have in-room fridges or tea/coffee making facilities. If an in-room safety deposit box is not provided, please use the security boxes at reception. Most hotel rooms do not have irons or boards, but most will offer a laundry service that can launder your clothes (typically in 24hrs) for a small fee. Usually check out time is 12 midday and check in time is 2pm. Please keep this in mind on the days when you are travelling between cities as it may result in a delay of access to your room, or a change of itinerary. Delays due to previous night's guests are out of our control. Hotels cannot guarantee late checkout.

*Double beds are not common, and as such please note that their availability cannot be guaranteed.*

### Hotel ratings

Countries throughout the world adopt various classification systems for hotels in accordance to their chain name and the type of hotel. No international classification system exists. Typically, a three-star Indian or Sri Lankan rated hotel cannot be compared to a three-star New Zealand rated hotel. Attempts at unifying the classification system have been made so that it becomes an internationally recognised and reliable standard. However, differences do exist in the quality of accommodation which plays an integral part in defining which hotel category the specific accommodation fits into. Your accommodation can range from a business hotel in a city to a family-run guesthouse in a smaller town. Please be advised that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our operators so that a good standard of quality and safety are maintained.

### Kettuvallam houseboats (Kerala)

Accommodation is simple but comfortable, in a twin berth cabin with private western toilet. Usually there is only cold water for showers or an Indian style bucket and pail, but most passengers don't mind this due to the hot weather all year round in the south. There is also a kitchen and an open deck with a shaded sitting and dining area. The boats

usually have two or three cabins, allowing up to 6 passengers. If you are travelling in a large group, you will have a small group of boats that will travel together.

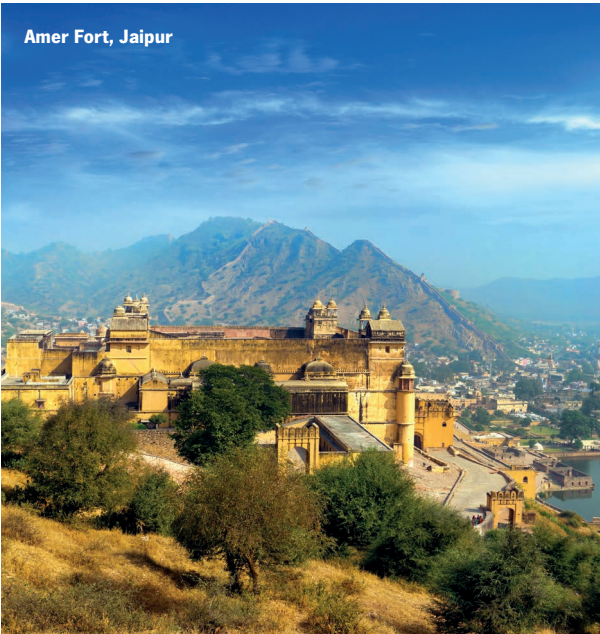
### **Manvar tented camp**

This is classed as a “deluxe tented camp” by the Indian Tourism Authority. There are 20 permanent tents with simple but very comfortable accommodation. Each has two single beds, a private bathroom with western toilet and shower (hot and cold water) and a veranda. There is no air-conditioning. Meals are served in the nearby dining tent. Tents will have generator supplied electricity, usually restricted to a few hours in the evening and morning.

### **National Park tents and huts**

India’s national parks and wildlife sanctuaries such as Ranthambore and Periyar, are popular places to visit and most have a cluster of small hotels located near the entrance gates or in a town close by. Accommodation in the more remote areas of India have basic facilities when compared to properties in the bigger cities, however they are clean and comfortable. Please keep in mind the choice of suitable accommodation in these areas is limited and English spoken by the hotel staff may be minimal. Should you encounter any issues with your room please notify your National Escort/Guide so they may rectify things as soon as possible.

**Amer Fort, Jaipur**



## Heritage properties and Havelis

During your travel, you may get the opportunity to stay in heritage properties which are restored palaces or forts. As these properties were not originally designed to be hotels, the room sizes will vary in the same accommodation category, as will the decor and layout. This uniqueness only adds to your experience in India.

## ELECTRICITY

There is an electricity supply of 240 volts throughout India and 230 volts throughout Sri Lanka so 240-volt appliances will work safely with this supply. There is no universal power point but they generally use the three-pin socket, so you can use the round two-pin (Europe) plug or the round three-pin (India) plug. You can buy adaptors, also known as conversion plugs, from hardware, department and duty free stores, prior to departure.



Europe plug

India plug

In remote areas of India, Sri Lanka and Nepal the electricity supply is uncertain. Many buildings will only have a few hours each day of electricity from either the town's supply or a diesel generator. Whenever there is limited electricity supply this will also mean limited hot water supply. Remote and village areas may experience power surges or outages, both of which can make re-charging electrical appliances very difficult. We advise you to bring a supply of batteries (bought at home) with you to allow for days when you cannot recharge.

## LUGGAGE ON TOUR

All passengers are limited to two items of luggage each:

- ✓ **One** suitcase or backpack, with a maximum weight of 15kg. Your main luggage must have a lock on it, and you must be able to carry your own bags.
- ✓ **One** piece of hand luggage, with a maximum weight of 5kg.

It is advisable that your hand luggage consist of a 'daypack' – a small bag which you can access during the day and carry items like your camera, bottled water, toilet paper, hat etc.



## MONEY

In India, the local currency is known as the 'rupee' and is written as INR or Rs. It is divided into coins called paise, where Rs1 = 100 paise. Rupee notes are available in denominations from Rs5 to Rs1000 but the Rs500 note is the highest note commonly available. In Sri Lanka, the local currency is known as the 'rupee' and is written as LKR. Coins come in denominations of 5, 10, 25 and 50 cents and Rs. 1, 2, 5 and 10. The higher value denominations are found as notes, namely Rs.10, 20, 50, 100, 200, 500 and 1000.

Here is a reference table of approximate exchange rates, correct at time of printing (February 2018). For up to date exchange rates, please check before you travel.

1 unit of currency	Indian Rupee (INR)	Sri Lankan Rupee (LKR)
NZ \$1	50	180
US \$1	83	298

*We recommend that you have access to more than one source of money – bringing a combination of cash and a credit/debit card will give the most security and flexibility while travelling.*

### Exchanging money

While it is possible to obtain Indian rupees in New Zealand; it is technically illegal to import and export the currency to and from India. We recommend that you exchange your money on arrival in the airport or at a reputable bank (your guide can help you to do this). If you wish to take rupees into and out of India, you do so at your own risk.

### Plan ahead

Be prepared with enough cash in hand for the next few days. Once you have started your tour, you will quickly get a sense of how often or how much you need to exchange money. Try not to leave this to the last minute: exchange desks can close, ATMs can run out of cash and your group could be scheduled to leave your hotel at 7am tomorrow morning!

### Spending money

We recommend you take some local currency, where possible, for the country you are visiting as well as US Dollars. We also recommend taking a debit and/or credit card. Please ensure you have sufficient funds to pay for personal expenses such as drinks, snacks, souvenirs, additional tipping and optional extras. On an average two week tour, we would recommend approximately \$500-1,000 per person spending money, depending on your needs.

*Please ensure that you organise your spending money before you leave a major town and take enough cash in local currency or USD to exchange or spend during your stay.*

### **Keep some of your exchange receipts**

You can convert any unused notes at the international airport exchange desks when you depart. You will need to present your passport, airline ticket and some receipts of the money exchanged/withdrawn in India and Sri Lanka.

### **Counterfeit cash**

This is a problem in India and Sri Lanka so shop owners and clerks at banks or exchange desks are very cautious and can refuse to accept notes in bad condition. It is a good idea to stand at the desk to count and check the condition of each note. Do not accept any notes which are torn, very faded, a different shade, have ink stamps or any writing on them. If you accept the notes and sign the exchange receipt, then notice a problem, you will not be able to exchange them.

### **Credit/debit card**

Taking one credit/debit card is recommended in case of emergency and may be used for large purchases in most of your hotels, department stores and souvenir stores. The most widely accepted credit cards include Visa, MasterCard and American Express. However, please do not rely on a credit/debit card as your only source of spending money and keep a photocopy of your card(s).

### **Travellers cheques**

We do not recommend taking any travellers cheques to India or Sri Lanka.

### **ATMs**

ATMs are available, but can be difficult to find in some areas. We do not recommend you rely on this service because ATMs can be unreliable, and overseas withdrawal fees for credit and debit accounts can be very high (we recommend checking your bank's fees before departure).

### **Remote areas**

Banking facilities are very basic and you will need to plan ahead with more care. ATMs in remote areas or rural regions are unreliable and should not be used as a source of money. Few hotels, restaurants or shops are able to take credit/debit cards and New Zealand currency is not well recognised.

## SHOPPING

Shopping can be a fun and entertaining component to any travel adventure, and India has a vast array of shopping opportunities for those who love to seek out a bargain. From colourful spices to ornate jewellery or delicately woven saris – the variety and choice can seem endless.

In keeping with most people's interests whilst on holiday, your tour will include a reasonable number of opportunities to shop for local goods and souvenirs. We have included visits to establishments that not only provide an opportunity to purchase a locally produced, great-value souvenir; but you'll witness first-hand how these local products are made, their history and how they support the local economy. We are aware that people like to take home souvenirs, so we endeavour to ensure the shops you visit have a reputation for quality, honesty and authenticity – we do our best to ensure that you don't get ripped off. Most establishments will also feature a place where you can buy refreshments and take a break.

Wendy Wu Tours, our staff, National Escorts and Local Guides are not qualified nor permitted to guarantee the quality or value of any goods purchased during your holiday. All passengers who make purchases during their holiday must accept responsibility for their decision regarding the item's value and authenticity, as well as the risk and process of credit card purchase and/or shipping.

It is recommended that you double check any items purchased before leaving the store (the item and any credit card receipts) and if you are having a large item shipped, make sure you take a photo of your purchase and the contact details of the store.

We encourage all passengers to enjoy their local shopping expeditions but to take care and buy wisely.

We cannot assist in returning or refunding goods in any circumstances, including purchases made at shops or factories which you may visit as part of your tour with us.

### **Regional markets**

Each region has its own specialty; a traditional handicraft perfected by the locals over centuries, a climate that encourages rich spices to grow, or a type of wood, stone or precious jewel in abundance nearby. Textiles are a popular souvenir, including silk brocades from Varanasi in the north or Kanchipuram in the south, tie-dyed cottons from all over Rajasthan, saris, hand woven Tibetan carpets from Darjeeling or Dharamshala, or the woollen shawls pashminas of Kashmir and Ladakh.

There is also the heavy and elaborate silverwork of Rajasthan, “spring picked” tea from the hill stations, and the spices, wooden carvings or face masks of Kerala.

If you prefer set prices, head to the government-run shops, usually called “cottage industries” or “emporium” which sell quality but reasonably priced goods. The more up market tourist shops will also have fixed prices.

Markets, street stalls and local shops can be noisy, crowded and confronting, but this remains one of the most rewarding experiences of travelling in India. If your itinerary includes some free time and you would like to go shopping, ask either your National Escort/Guide or the hotel staff for advice on how to best get there. They should be able to tell you if you need a taxi or a rickshaw, how much you should pay for the journey and provide you verbal or written directions to give to the driver. Remember to take a hotel business card with you to find your way back!

### **Haggling or bargaining**

In local shops, markets and street stalls haggling is the accepted way to agree on a selling price. It can be a great way to save money, as well as a wonderful way to interact with the locals. Follow a simple rule: offer half the first price quoted, then bargain to somewhere in between. Always be polite – a smile and some phrases in the local language will get you further than anything else!

When deciding how much to tip for a service or how hard to haggle for a souvenir, please consider that any profit will be sincerely appreciated. Some foreign visitors find it too confronting and prefer to shop in more upmarket tourist shops or department stores, where prices are set.

### **CUSTOMS AND DUTY FREE**

Each person can bring two bottles of alcohol and a carton of cigarettes into India, Sri Lanka and Nepal. If you carry over US\$5,000 in cash (or equivalent in another currency) you need to declare it on entry and/or exit. Cultural relics, handicrafts, gold and silver ornaments and any jewellery purchased in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal must be declared at exit. All luggage is x-rayed and if any of the above is not declared, customs agents may seize them. You must also declare all food items on exit if carrying them in your luggage.

It is recommended that passengers consult the [www.customs.govt.nz](http://www.customs.govt.nz) website before departure for up-to-date information on the quantity of alcohol/cigarettes that can be imported when you arrive home, as well as the amount of cash that may be carried without declaration.

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

### Phone calls

International and domestic calls can be made from your hotel room. International calls are expensive (from Rs200 per min) and usually incur an additional service charge. There are also telephone booths in most towns and cities displaying the letters 'ISD', which can place calls for cheaper rates and have meters so you can keep track of the call rate's progress.

**New Zealand:** to call New Zealand, the international access code is 00, followed by the country code 64, then the local area code (omitting the first 0), then the number.

### Mobile phones

Mobile phones are very popular in India and Sri Lanka and you will find high quality coverage. India and Sri Lanka have active roaming agreements with most international phone carriers; however SMS and call rates can be expensive. We recommend that you contact your mobile supplier if you intend to use international roaming during your holiday and ensure you investigate all associated costs before you depart on your tour.



## **Postage**

We recommend that you use the post offices, rather than your hotel to post items. From large cities or major towns, airmail letters and postcards take 5-10 working days to arrive and from smaller towns, they will take over a month. We advise you to use a courier service from post offices to send anything valuable or important.

## **Internet and email**

There are internet cafes in cities and small towns alike, where you can access your email or place an internet phone call. Most hotel Business Centres have internet access at slightly higher rates. This is often the easiest and cheapest way to keep in touch.

## **Remote areas**

You will rarely be able to access phone or internet facilities and mobile phones may not have reception. We advise that you let friends and family at home know that you will be out of phone contact during these sections of your itinerary. If you are travelling to Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet, Nepal or on the houseboats in Kerala, this applies to you.

## **TIME DIFFERENCE**

India and Sri Lanka are 6½ hours behind New Zealand (7½ hours during Daylight Saving).

## **INSURANCE**

It is a condition of booking a holiday with us that all travellers take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure you have the appropriate cover for your holiday as overseas medical costs are expensive. Please inform our office of your relevant policy number and keep details of the policy in your travel documents including policy number, 24 hour emergency number and next of kin details.

If you are taking out travel insurance with your credit card company, you need to investigate the policy's inclusions and conditions fully. You should receive a policy number, an international access phone number to contact them in an emergency and a copy of full conditions.

All travel insurance providers require you to contact them ASAP in the unlikely event that you need medical treatment, hospitalisation or change travel plans, to inform them of your situation. They will then decide the best course of action in regards to further treatment and/or repatriation and make appropriate booking arrangements. Our staff in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal will be able to assist you in contacting your travel insurance company.

*It is essential you inform your insurance company of all pre-existing conditions. Any undeclared conditions could invalidate your policy.*

## **SAFETY AND SECURITY**

All travellers should maintain a high level of personal security. Although India, Sri Lanka and Nepal are considered safe for travellers, please keep in mind that cash or wallets in pockets, obvious jewellery, swinging handbags etc may attract unwanted attention. Keep your belongings with you at all times and beware of pickpockets in market areas and at train stations.

Make sure your valuables and cash are secure and inconspicuous. Do not leave any valuables unattended in your hotel room or on your coach. Lock away cash you do not need during the day/evening, credit cards, airline tickets, passports, jewellery etc either in your room's safe or at reception; as not all hotels will have an in-room safe deposit box.

Wearing a money belt under your clothing is strongly recommended. We advise you not to bring valuable jewellery with you to India and Sri Lanka and keep a photocopy of your passport and debit/credit card(s).

We also recommend you take taxis rather than walk at night. Taxis are inexpensive, but you may have to haggle for the fee. Make sure the driver is clear on your destination – carry a hotel card so your taxi driver knows where to take you.



## TRAVEL HEALTH

A health certificate is not required for entry into India and Sri Lanka.

### Visit a doctor before travelling

We strongly recommend that you see a doctor for the latest health advice at least six weeks before your holiday to allow time for any necessary vaccinations etc. Remember to take your itinerary with you to the appointment. As a minimum, you should ensure that all your routine immunisations are up-to-date (such as tetanus, measles, and polio vaccinations). All travellers should seriously consider having an influenza vaccine.

For detailed travel health advice, please check [www.safetravel.govt.nz/staying-healthy-while-travelling](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz/staying-healthy-while-travelling) before departure.

### Altitude

Some of our tours reach areas of high altitude. Your Tour Dossier will list altitudes reached each day (where applicable i.e. over 3,000 metres). Please refer to this information to satisfy yourself that you are physically able to undertake your chosen itinerary.

AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) occurs in some people of varying ages and fitness levels when they travel to altitudes over 3,000m. Symptoms include dizziness, fatigue, nausea or loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache. These usually develop over the first 36 hours at altitude and not immediately on arrival. Usually the symptoms will subside after a day, however; if symptoms worsen you should seek medical advice and descend in altitude immediately. It is recommended to drink more water, non-alcoholic and non-caffeinated drinks and avoid exertion after arriving over 3,000m. Our itineraries ensure you will stay overnight at least 100m below the maximum altitude reached during that day, another effective method for combatting AMS.

### Toilets

Toilet facilities are very basic throughout Asia and it is rare that you will find a 'western' style toilet (except in hotels). 'Squat' toilets are very common in public places and toilet paper is never supplied. We suggest that you carry toilet paper in your day backpack as well as not turn down the opportunity to use a 'nice' toilet when you see one!

### Drinking water

We recommend avoiding drinking tap water and exercising caution taking ice in drinks. There will usually be a kettle or flasks of boiled water in your hotel room and on-board trains. Boiled water is suitable for drinking



and cleaning teeth. Safe, bottled drinking water is readily available for sale everywhere – from small shops, supermarkets, restaurants and hotels. It is not customary for hotels to provide complimentary bottled drinking water. Always ensure that the seal is unbroken.

### **Travel advice**

Before departure, we recommend that you check [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz) for up-to-date governmental travel information and advice.

### **Personal medical kit**

Take all pharmaceutical products that you may require on your tour; do not rely on being able to purchase these during your holiday. You will see pharmacies all over India, Sri Lanka and Nepal, but they stock local traditional medicine and many unregulated brands of western medicine. You are also unlikely to find anyone who can speak English, nor any products with English writing. Consider taking a personal medical kit containing any medication or medical equipment you may need during your time in India and Sri Lanka:

- ✓ All prescribed medication (with a cover note from your doctor for prescribed medication and/or equipment you will carry)
- ✓ Headache tablets
- ✓ Anti-diarrhoea tablets
- ✓ Cold and flu tablets
- ✓ Travel sickness tablets
- ✓ Lozenges
- ✓ Insect repellent and sunscreen
- ✓ Antibacterial hand wipes and/or hand wash
- ✓ Small first-aid kit

If you need to purchase any pharmaceuticals or medical equipment while in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal – you may ask your National Escort/ Local Guide or hotel staff to help you locate a pharmacy, identify medication or to translate from the local language to English. If you need medical attention they will be able to arrange a call from a doctor, usually one who speaks English. However, the decision to purchase or take any non-prescribed (either western or traditional local medicine) is entirely your own.

*The staff at Wendy Wu Tours (in New Zealand, India, Sri Lanka & Nepal) are not medically qualified. Therefore they are neither able, nor allowed to give any medical advice, recommendations or administer medications.*

## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Wendy Wu Tours takes Responsible Tourism seriously. We are aware that tourism can impact the natural, economic and social environment and are committed to addressing these wherever possible without compromising our customers' experience.

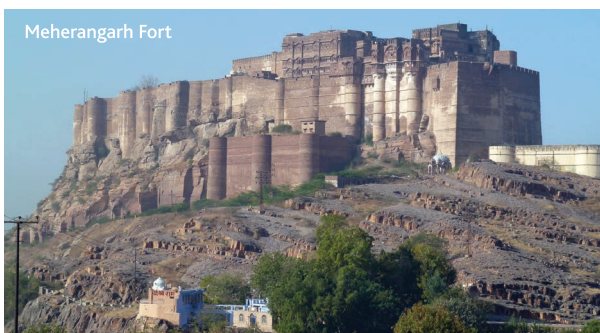
### Taking photos

"Tourists stick their cameras in our faces and promise they'll send photos back, but they never do." We encourage you to think about how you would like to be treated by camera-wielding tourists – always check that it is ok before taking a photograph of a local person. Simply indicate to your camera to ask and never take the photograph if someone gestures or says that they do not want you to. Most of our tours of India visit sites where it is not recommended to take photographs. In some cases this may be for security reasons, or it can cause offence for example, burning gnats. Your guide will advise you where it is not appropriate to take photographs and please adhere to this advice.

### Dress appropriately

Local people in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal dress conservatively. Full length cotton trousers or shorts that cover the knees are acceptable for men, and for women, skirts or trousers that reach below the knee are ideal, worn with tops that cover the shoulders. When visiting temples or mosques, both men and women should dress in non-revealing clothes. 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.

In religious sites and homes throughout India – for Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Muslims or Buddhists to name a few - all visitors are required 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 them, you will have to remain outside. Bring some 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. When visiting cathedrals and churches in Goa, it is advisable to dress respectfully. The Basilica of Bom Jesus has made it mandatory for tourists to avoid wearing shorts, mini-skirts or baring midriffs. The authorities at the Jama Masjid of Delhi have made it mandatory for all non-Muslim women entering the mosque to cover themselves with a long dress gown (caftano) provided by the mosque authorities.

### **Observe local rules**

In most cases, your National Escort/Local Guide will brief you on etiquette. In India, roughly 80% of the population is Hindu, 12% Muslim and the remainder a mix of Buddhist, Christians, Sikhs and Jains. In Sri Lanka, 70% of the population is Theravada Buddhist, 15% are Hindus, 7.5% are Muslims and another 7.5% are Christians. With this in mind, the laws, regulations and behaviour are affected by this colourful mix and we ask you to respect them by following some simple rules:

- Greet people with the 'namaste' traditional greeting rather than trying to shake hands – clasp hands together in front of you, bow your head forward and say 'namaste' for both hello and goodbye. Indian women, in particular prefer not to shake hands.
- Remove your shoes when entering any religious sites and houses (especially kitchen areas)
- Public displays of affection between men and women are not acceptable – Indian men commonly hold hands as a sign of friendship
- Move around chortens, other shrines, alters and all religious objects or buildings in a clockwise direction
- Do not wear any leather articles (shoes, belts, camera straps) at any Jain temples
- Try not to point the soles of your feet towards people or towards religious objects
- Cameras are not allowed in some sightseeing spots, particularly temples and pagodas
- Never offer or accept anything with the left hand, use the right hand or both hands
- Do not raise your voice as this can be very offensive
- Women should never touch a monk, or their robes

## Animals in India

Animals in India are not kept the same way as they are in western countries. Stray dogs, cats and cows can be found out and about in the smaller cities but there is no danger to tourists. In most cases stray dogs and cats are harmless, but please refrain from touching, feeding or patting them. Monkeys can be seen in many cities as well. They are harmless if you stay clear; because they are used to living in large cities they are not wary of people. Refrain from feeding stray animals at all times. Cows are sacred in the Hindu faith. They are allowed to roam unharmed, and they are familiar with the traffic and the rhythm of the city. Again, sometimes staying out of the way is the best thing to do.

## READING LIST

- The Age of Kali – William Dalrymple
- A Suitable Boy – Vikram Seth
- The Inheritance of Loss – Kiran Desai
- Are You Experienced? – William Sutcliffe
- Kim – Rudyard Kipling
- Holy Cow – Sarah MacDonald
- City of Djinns: A Year in Delhi - William Dalrymple
- The God of Small Things – Arundhati Roy
- A Passage to India – E.M. Forster
- The Life of Mahatma Gandhi – Louis Fischer
- City of Joy – Dominique Lapierre
- Curry (A Tale of Cooks and Conquerors) – Lizzie Collingham
- A Fine Balance – Rohinton Mistry



Udawalawe National Park, Sri Lanka

- India (Insight Guides, 2004 ed)
- South India (Insight Guides, 2005 ed)
- In Spite of the Gods – Edward Luce
- No Full Stops in India – Mark Tully
- India's Unending Journey – Mark Tully
- Midnights Children – Salman Rushdie
- Eat Smart in India: How to Decipher the Menu, Know the Market Foods & Embark on a Tasting Adventure – J. Peterson & I. Menon
- Maharanis: The Lives and Times of Three Generations of Indian Princesses – Lucy Moore
- The Honourable Company: The History of the English East India Company – John Keay
- Liquid Jade: The Story of Tea from East to West – Beatrice Hohenegger
- India: A History – John Keay
- Inhaling the Mahatma – Christopher Kremmer
- Last Mughal – William Dalrymple
- Vanishing Act Of Esme Lennox – Maggie O'Farrell
- Namesake – Jhumpa Lahiri
- Space Between Us – Thrity Umrigar
- Travellers History of India – Stephen G Haw
- Shadow of the Great Game – Narendra Singh Sarila
- Freedom at Midnight – Dominique Lapierre
- Buddha and the Sahibs – Charles Allen
- Shantaram – Gregory David Roberts

## CUSTOMER HEALTH AND SAFETY INFORMATION

### We care

At Wendy Wu Tours we are continually working with our suppliers to maintain and improve safety standards by seeking good practice in health and safety and we will do our best to ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble free. Part of the enjoyment of travelling abroad is experiencing a different way of life and culture, but it may also mean experiencing different safety and hygiene standards than those you are used to at home. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense as well as refer to notices and follow the advice from your National Escort and/or Local Guide.

We are continually working with our accommodation and transport providers to endeavour to raise safety standards as much as possible and we will do our best to ensure that your holiday is safe and trouble free, but we do ask that you take that little bit of extra care whilst you are away.

### **Flight safety**

- Do not place flammable liquids, lighters, matches, gasses or aerosols in your suitcase
- Always carry medication in your hand luggage
- Keep your passport safe and have a photocopy with you just in case
- Pay attention and follow any in flight safety information
- To avoid DVT, drink plenty of water and follow simple exercises or occasionally move around the cabin

### **Transport safety**

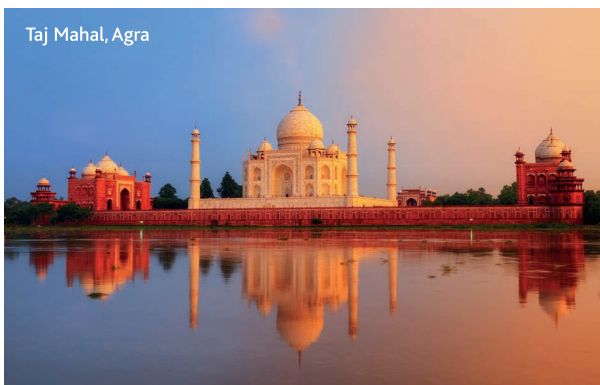
- In vehicles always wear a seat belt if one is provided – though it is not compulsory in India, Sri Lanka or Nepal to do so. We cannot guarantee that vehicles will be fitted with seat belts
- In minibuses never place luggage in the aisles or footwells
- Ensure you know where your nearest emergency exit is.
- Check the location of the fire extinguisher, first aid kit and break glass hammer
- Follow any safety instructions provided by your driver/guide

### **Road safety**

- Car hire is not recommended in most areas
- In many countries vehicles do not automatically stop at crossings
- Often paving can be uneven and loose with kerbs higher than you are used to. Please take more care walking around cities and resort areas
- Crash helmets are often not provided with mopeds and motorbikes – we do not recommend you hire these vehicles

### **Fire safety**

- Ensure you know the location of your nearest fire exit
- Check the location of the nearest fire extinguisher
- Study the fire instructions in your room
- Identify how to raise the alarm if a fire occurs



- Do not smoke in bed
- If a fire occurs, leave immediately, do not stop to collect your belongings
- Proceed to an assembly point well away from the building

### **Glass safety**

- Glass doors and windows may not be toughened glass
- Take care in bright sunlight, it may not be obvious doors/windows are closed
- Check to see if anti-collision stickers are in place at adult and child height

### **Balcony safety**

- Never lean over, sit or climb on the balcony
- Families with small children should request ground floor rooms whenever possible
- Do not climb or stand on balcony furniture
- Keep all balcony furniture away from the wall/railings

### **Pool safety**

- Familiarise yourself with the pool and its layout, deep and shallow end
- Make note of the depth markings and any hazards
- Most pools do not have life guards, so please take care
- Shower before entering the pool
- Do not swim, if suffering from an upset stomach
- Observe pool rules and information signs at all times
- Do not swim at night, even if it is lit
- Do not swim immediately after a meal or when drinking alcohol
- Pool surrounds can be slippery, don't run around them
- Observe No Diving signs at all times
- Never jump or dive from raised pool features
- In the event of an emergency ensure you know how to raise help

### **Food safety**

In order to avoid the possibility of stomach upsets:

- Make sure your food has been thoroughly cooked
- Hot food should be hot, cold food should be cold
- Avoid any uncooked food, except fruit and vegetables, (notably those you can peel or shell yourself)
- Always drink bottled water and ensure the seal is intact when purchasing
- Use boiled or bottled water for brushing your teeth
- Avoid ice in drinks as this is generally made from unsafe tap water
- Avoid purchasing food from street vendors, we cannot vouch for the health and safety of the food and drinks they provide



### **Personal safety**

- Avoid walking in poorly lit areas
- Be aware, stay away from situations where you do not feel comfortable
- Avoid carrying too much money and/or valuables
- Use of a money belt is encouraged at all times
- Ensure your room is left secure when you go out
- Place all valuables in a safety deposit box, where available or with reception (use of these are often a condition of your insurance policy)
- Never leave windows or balcony doors open
- Ensure your main luggage can be locked when left unattended in rooms, carriages, luggage rooms etc.
- Do not take any valuable jewellery on holiday with you

### **Sun care**

- Ensure you have adequate protection for your type of skin, high factor sunscreens should be utilised initially
- Re-apply sunscreen frequently
- Stay out of the sun during the hottest time of the day
- Drink plenty of water to avoid dehydration
- At the first sign of burning, cover up and get out of the sun
- Beware, you can still burn, dehydrate and get sunstroke in the shade or in the water.
- Take a sunhat, sunglasses and lip salve

### **Insurance**

- Ensure you have appropriate insurance for your holiday and that it covers any activity you intend to undertake
- If participating in any high risk activity, appraise yourself of the safety standards being operated by the supplier



- Avoid purchasing activities or excursions from anyone not connected to Wendy Wu Tours they often lack public liability insurance and have unchecked safety standards
- Any accident or injury should be reported immediately to the National Escort or Tour Guide and a report obtained

### **Altitude sickness**

- High altitudes on some tours can affect customers. Please see your Tour Dossier, which will indicate if altitude is relevant to your tour
- AMS (Acute Mountain Sickness) can affect people at altitudes above 3000m
- Symptoms include, dizziness, fatigue, nausea, loss of appetite, breathlessness or headache
- They usually develop in the first 36hrs and not immediately on arrival
- The symptoms can affect people of all ages and level of fitness
- Symptoms will usually subside on their own after 24/48hrs, if they persist you should consult a doctor
- Drink lots of water and/or non-alcoholic, non-caffeinated drinks
- Avoid any exertion over 3000m
- Our overnight accommodation is generally 100m below the highest level reached in the day, another effective method for combating AMS

For the latest Health & Safety information for travellers visit [www.safetravel.govt.nz](http://www.safetravel.govt.nz)

Golden Temple, Amritsar



## CLIMATE

### India

The best times to visit India are at the beginning and end of the year in the beginning and end of the cool season. Daytime temperatures are still quite high, but evenings are dryer and cooler. If your tour visits mountains or hill stations, temperatures and humidity levels will be significantly lower so you will need to take warmer clothes with you.

**Visiting Ladakh, Little Tibet:** The best months to visit are June, July, September, October and November. These times of year experience the most favourable weather in Ladakh, when there is minimal rainfall and the best road conditions possible. These months are also the start and end of the hot season in Delhi and Amritsar so temperatures and humidity levels are higher (see climate chart for Delhi, Amritsar, Dharamsala, Leh and Manali).

**Visiting the Himalayan Kingdoms:** North-eastern India and southern Bhutan have a sub-tropical climate. During the months of March, April and May it is their equivalent to spring before the monsoon season and during the months of September, October and November it is their equivalent to autumn after the monsoon season – during these months it is the coolest and driest time of year. The lower altitude coastal plains experience warm and humid weather with cooler evenings. The higher altitude hill stations of Sikkim and mountainous areas of Bhutan are also at their most pleasant, although temperatures are significantly lower and there are occasional heavy rains.

*Remember that at higher altitude, no matter the time of year sudden and unpredictable drops in temperature, snow or storms can hit on the mountain passes. The sun is also much stronger so you can be sunburnt more quickly (see climate chart for Kolkata, Darjeeling, Gangtok, Thimpu and Wangduephodrang).*

### Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka has a tropical climate with two distinct seasons, wet and dry, with two monsoon seasons; the “Yala season” from mid- May to October and the “Maha season” from Dec to Mar. The “Yala” season brings heavy rain from the Indian Ocean to the south and west coasts and the Central Highlands, with the northern and eastern parts of the country a little drier. The “Maha” season brings rain from the Bay of Bengal and causes heavy rain in the northeast of the country. The average temperature throughout the country varies from 26-28°C, with 14-16°C in the Central Highlands. Nov to Jan are the cooler months, with Feb to May being the hottest.

## SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

We recommend that you check the weather forecast prior to your departure so that you can pack accordingly. Generally, casual clothes are recommended. Loose fitting, lightweight cotton materials are the most comfortable for humid weather, while layers of warmer clothes are advised for cooler evenings. A waterproof jacket will be required for the wetter conditions in April. The dress code throughout the tour is casual; however, it is important that all passengers dress conservatively. Smart casual clothes are highly recommended for evening banquets and shows.

- ✓ Main luggage & luggage padlocks
- ✓ 'Day bag' - a smaller bag to carry with you during the day
- ✓ Money belt to carry passport, cash, credit cards, airline tickets, etc
- ✓ Trousers (or long skirts for women)
- ✓ Shirts or long-sleeved tops of light cotton material
- ✓ Walking shoes and socks – it is important to have sturdy and comfortable shoes for sightseeing every day.
- ✓ Sun protection – hat, sunscreen and lip balm
- ✓ Personal medical kit including insect repellent
- ✓ Antibacterial wipes and/or hand sanitiser to clean hands before eating
- ✓ Tracksuit/similar outfit of soft material is recommended for the overnight train journeys
- ✓ A water/windproof jacket
- ✓ Light jumpers/thermals are great for layering, including gloves and scarf
- ✓ A 'modesty shawl' or sarong to wear in Muslim or conservative areas (for women)
- ✓ Torch, conversion plug and spare batteries – batteries available to buy in India tend to be unreliable
- ✓ Scarf or bandana – useful to protect your face against dusty winds at high altitude
- ✓ Spare glasses – it is difficult to get any prescription lenses repaired or replaced in India
- ✓ Small bath towel is useful for overnight train journeys
- ✓ Toilet paper – not all public toilets will provide this
- ✓ Snacks – tea bags/coffee, milk powder or sachets, instant soups or noodles, or anything else you can't live without!
- ✓ Camera and memory card
- ✓ If travelling to Ladakh - 'Sleep sheet' or sleeping bag – in remote areas linen is provided but possibly not up to the standard you are used to. If you already have a compact and lightweight sleeping bag you could also bring that.

## CLIMATE CHARTS

	Ave. Temp °C min / max	Ave. Humidity	Ave. Rain mm
<b>January-February</b>			
DELHI	10 / 24	LOW	22
AGRA	10 / 26	LOW	9
JODPHUR	11 / 27	LOW	6
KHAJURAHO	10 / 28	MED	5
VARANASI	11 / 27	MED	8
MUMBAI	17 / 32	LOW	1
KOCHI	24 / 31	MED	34
KOVALAM	23 / 32	HIGH	20
OOTY	7 / 20	MED	13
CHENNAI	21 / 31	HIGH	7
KATHMANDU	4 / 20	LOW	17
<b>March</b>			
DELHI	15 / 30	MED	17
AGRA	16 / 32	MED	11
JODPHUR	16 / 32	MED	3
KHAJURAHO	15 / 35	MED	3
VARANASI	17 / 33	HIGH	14
MUMBAI	20 / 33	HIGH	0
KOCHI	26 / 31	HIGH	50
KOVALAM	24 / 33	HIGH	43
OOTY	9 / 21	HIGH	33
CHENNAI	23 / 33	VERY HIGH	15
KATHMANDU	7 / 24	LOW	31
KOLKATA	20 / 34	HIGH	30
DARJEELING	8 / 15	MED	52
GANGTOK	9 / 19	LOW	142
THIMPU	4 / 16	LOW	18
<b>April</b>			
DELHI	21 / 36	MED	7
AGRA	22 / 38	HIGH	5
JODPHUR	23 / 37	HIGH	3
KHAJURAHO	22 / 40	MED	7
VARANASI	22 / 39	HIGH	1
MUMBAI	24 / 33	HIGH	0
KOCHI	26 / 31	HIGH	139
KOVALAM	25 / 32	HIGH	122
OOTY	11 / 22	HIGH	77
CHENNAI	26 / 35	VERY HIGH	25
KATHMANDU	11 / 27	MED	54
KOLKATA	24 / 36	HIGH	50
DARJEELING	11 / 18	MED	109
GANGTOK	12 / 22	LOW	222
THIMPU	7 / 20	LOW	22

	Ave. Temp °C min /max	Ave. Humidity	Ave. Rain mm
<b>May</b>			
DELHI	15 / 30	MED	17
AGRA	16 / 32	MED	11
JODPHUR	16 / 32	MED	3
KHAJURAHO	15 / 35	MED	3
VARANASI	17 / 33	HIGH	14
MUMBAI	20 / 33	HIGH	0
KOCHI	26 / 31	HIGH	50
KOVALAM	24 / 33	HIGH	43
OOTY	9 / 21	HIGH	33
CHENNAI	23 / 33	VERY HIGH	15
KATHMANDU	7 / 24	LOW	31
KOLKATA	26 / 36	HIGH	135
DARJEELING	13 / 19	HIGH	187
GANGTOK	14 / 22	MED	493
THIMPU	13 / 23	LOW	45
<b>June</b>			
DELHI	29 / 40	VERY HIGH	65
AMRITSAR	25 / 40	LOW	32
DHARAMSALA	21 / 34	MED	350
LEH	7 / 20	LOW	4
MANALI	16 / 24	LOW	150
<b>July-August</b>			
DELHI	27 / 35	VERY HIGH	211
AMRITSAR	26 / 36	HIGH	169
DHARAMSALA	22 / 34	HIGH	810
LEH	10 / 25	LOW	16
MANALI	11 / 16	LOW	400
<b>September</b>			
DELHI	25 / 34	HIGH	150
AGRA	25 / 33	HIGH	151
JODPHUR	24 / 35	HIGH	61
KHAJURAHO	24 / 33	MED	116
VARANASI	25 / 32	HIGH	261
MUMBAI	24 / 30	HIGH	309
KOCHI	24 / 28	HIGH	235
KOVALAM	23 / 30	VERY HIGH	123
OOTY	11 / 18	MED	150
CHENNAI	25 / 34	VERY HIGH	118
KATHMANDU	18 / 27	HIGH	183
AMRITSAR	23 / 34	HIGH	106
DHARAMSALA	20 / 30	MED	400
LEH	5 / 21	LOW	12
MANALI	14 / 19	LOW	200

	Ave. Temp °C min /max	Ave. Humidity	Ave. Rain mm
KOLKATA	26 / 32	VERY HIGH	253
DARJEELING	15 / 20	HIGH	419
GANGTOK	16 / 23	HIGH	476
THIMPU	15 / 23	HIGH	86
<b>October</b>			
DELHI	19 / 35	MED	31
AGRA	19 / 35	MED	23
JODPHUR	19 / 36	MED	8
KHAJURAHO	20 / 33	MED	107
VARANASI	21/32	MED	38
MUMBAI	23/32	MED	117
KOCHI	24/29	MED	333
KOVALAM	23/30	HIGH	271
OOTY	10/18	MED	200
CHENNAI	24/32	HIGH	267
KATHMANDU	13/26	HIGH	59
AMRITSAR	17/32	MED	54
DHARAMSALA	13/22	LOW	80
LEH	-1/14	LOW	7
MANALI	10/18	LOW	40
KOLKATA	24/31	HIGH	134
DARJEELING	11/19	HIGH	116
GANGTOK	12/22	LOW	152
THIMPU	10/22	MED	20
<b>November-December</b>			
DELHI	12/29	LOW	1
AGRA	12/29	MED	2
JODPHUR	15/31	MED	3
KHAJURAHO	12/29	MED	1
VARANASI	13/29	MED	15
MUMBAI	20/33	MED	7
KOCHI	24/30	MED	184
KOVALAM	23/30	HIGH	207
OOTY	9/11	MED	160
CHENNAI	23/29	HIGH	309
KATHMANDU	8/23	MED	8
AMRITSAR	9/27	MED	10
DHARAMSALA	8/14	LOW	SNOW
LEH	-6/7	LOW	SNOW
MANALI	5/12	LOW	20
KOLKATA	18/29	HIGH	29
DARJEELING	7/15	MED	14
GANGTOK	9/19	LOW	35
THIMPU	5/18	LOW	5

Taj Mahal, Agra



# HINDI VOCABULARY

India has the world's second highest number of languages, with 23 official languages and many more unofficial languages and dialects. Hindi is spoken widely across many regions and so we've included some basic vocabulary and phrases here for you to practice before you go. We have added space at the end for you to write down any other words you may need; ask your National Escort or Local Guide for a word and then write it down and you are set to go.

For each word or phrase we have given the English followed by the phonetic version in Hindi that should make it easier for you to pronounce.

## PRONUNCIATION

a	as in cut
aa	as in father
i	as in sit
ee	as in tree
u	as in put
e	as in hen
ai	as in cap
o	as in foe
oo	as in food
au	as in hot

## VOCABULARY

English	Phonetic-Hindi
Hello / Goodbye	Na-ma-stay
Good morning	Su-pra-bhaat
Pleased to meet you	Aap se mil-kar khushi hui
How are you?	Aap kaisey hay?
I'm fine, thanks! And you?	Mein theek hoon, shukriya! Aur aap?
Yes	Haan
No	Naa or Nuhi
Okay	Theek hay
Please	Kri-pa-yaa
Thank you	Dhanyavaad



What's your name?	Aap kaa naam kyaa hay?
My name is...	Mee-ra-naam...hay
I am Australian	Mai Australia se hun
I am from New Zealand	Mai New Zealand se hun
I would like...	Muu-je...chaa-hi-ye
Boiled water	Ub-laa-hu-aa-paa-nee
Drinking water	Paa-nee peena
Tea	Cha
Coffee	Ko-fi
Knife / fork	Chaa-koo / Kaan-taa
Telephone	Te-lee-fon
I am vegetarian	Main shaa-kaa-haa-ree hun
Change (money)	Pay-se
Where are the toilets?	Taa-i-let ka-haan hay?
What is the price?	Is ka kya daam hay?
How much?	Kit-na?
Excuse me	Su-ni-ye
Sorry	Maafkee-ji-ye
Help!	Ma-dad kee-ji-ye!
Where's the police station?	Police taa-naa ka-haanh hay?
Where's the nearest doctor?	Sab se ka-reeb...daak-tar ka-haanh hay?
What?	Kya?
Where?	Kahan?
How?	Kaise?
Who?	Kaun?
Why?	Kyon?
Right	Dahine
Left	Bayen
One	Ek
Two	Do
Three	Teen
Four	Char
Five	Paanch
Six	Cheh
Seven	Saat
Eight	Aath
Nine	Naun
Ten	Das





# WENDY WU TOURS NEW ZEALAND OFFICE

Suite 8 (Top Floor), Building D, 59 Apollo Dr, Albany, Auckland 0632

Reservations & Operations Tel: (0064) 99758117

Emergency 24hr Tel (after office hours):

(0044) 1888 288 288

Email: [info@wendywutours.co.nz](mailto:info@wendywutours.co.nz)



Wendy Wu Tours