



Current as of: April 16, 2019 - 14:29

Valid for departures: From January 1, 2017 to January 31, 2021



Southern India Coast to Coast Ride Trip Notes

Ways to Travel: Guided Group, Tailor Made Adventures
Destinations: India
Programmes: Cycling

Trip Code:
MIT



15 Days Flight Inclusive
14 Days Land only
Min age: 16

Trip Overview

The two southernmost states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala perfectly depict the contrasting nature of India. Seeing them on two wheels gives us an excellent opportunity to soak up the rich culture and appreciate the different landscapes as we cycle by. Tamil Nadu sees far fewer visitors than other Indian states, but this is part of the attraction as we follow quiet backroads from the fertile coastal plains in the east to the remarkable hills of the Western Ghats, which form the border with Kerala. Our ride takes us past some of the most impressive sites of southern India, including the former French colony of Pondicherry and the magnificent Sri Meenakshi Temple at Madurai. After cycling through the cooler highlands and tea estates of the Western Ghats, we reach the tranquil backwaters of Kerala, where a relaxing houseboat cruise offers the chance to unwind and reflect on a memorable journey.

At a Glance

- 10 nights hotels, 1 night houseboat and 2 nights mansions
- 10 days cycling with full vehicle support
- Group normally 4 to 14, plus local cycling leader and driver. Min age 16 yrs
- Countries visited: India

Trip Highlights

- Cycle through two distinctively different Indian states
- Sample regional dishes served on a banana leaf
- Cruise on a traditional Kerala houseboat

Is This Trip for You?

This trip is classified 'Road'
 Activity Level: 4 (Moderate/Challenging)
 Average daily distance: 65km (40 miles)
 No. of days cycling: 10
 Full vehicle support

Terrain and route: almost entirely surfaced roads including plenty of quiet backroads with low levels of traffic, but this does increase when approaching towns. Road surfaces mostly good. There is one sustained climb en route, and some undulating sections with short climbs, but the support vehicle is available if required. Longer days at the beginning of the trip are mostly flat, but always interesting. Most rides are door-to-door, allowing plenty of time in the saddle.

Indian roads can be rough in some places, with potholes. Please bear this in mind if you are bringing your own pedals and clip-in shoes.

Please note that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) are responsible for the conservation of many monuments in India and very occasionally this may mean that work is taking place at sites visited on this trip. The ASI's schedule is never published so it is not possible to forewarn our clients of when work will be taking place.

Following a review of all our trips we have categorised this trip as generally not suitable for persons of reduced mobility. However if you are a regular traveller on such trips, please contact customer services to discuss the trip and your personal condition.

Group

Our Indian team of leaders have proved very popular with their incredible knowledge, passion and hospitality adding greatly to the experience. There is no better way to experience Indian culture than letting an Indian guide show you around their country.

Adult min age: 16
Min group size: 4
Max group size: 14

Itinerary

Land Only

Start City: Chennai
End City: Cochin

Flight Inclusive

Start City: London
End City: London

Land Only Itinerary

Day 1**Start Chennai; transfer to Pondicherry via the shore temples of Mahabalipuram.**

Those who are on the group flights will land in Chennai early in the morning. Those not on the group flights will need to be at the airport when the group land if they would like to join the group transfer. Once everyone has arrived we will then depart on the 3.5 hour drive to Pondicherry with a break at Mahabalipuram which is famous for its shore temples and rock carvings. Carving in stone is still a living art here and we will see stonemasons chipping away along the roadside, practicing skills that have flourished for centuries. On arrival in Pondicherry we assemble the bikes and explore this former French colony, a short 6km ride, before an evening briefing about our cycling adventure.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 6 km / 4 miles

Day 2**Circular ride passing the spiritual commune of Auroville. After lunch in the old quarter the afternoon is free.**

Circular ride to Auroville, a new-age spiritual commune. Founded in 1968 by 'The Mother' and named after her Guru Sri Aurobindo, it offers a more balanced way of living. Revitalized by some earthly fruit juices, we ride the 15km back into town, seeing some fishing communities and cycling along the promenade, which still retains some of its Gallic charm. Depending on time, lunch may be at Auroville or back in Pondicherry, and the rest of the day is free to explore.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 32 km / 20 miles

Day 3**Pleasant ride along village roads to experience the rural life of Southern India. Our afternoon ride heads to Chidambaram, famed for its bronze deity casting.**

Starting from our hotel, we ride out of Pondicherry and soon leave the bustle of the city for quiet backroads, experiencing rural life where simple mud huts contrast with the brightly coloured saris worn by the local women. This is the real India and in true Indian style we stop at a roadside restaurant for a tea break. Back on our bikes we cycle another 66km to Chidambaram. Staying in the grand mansion of the village we sleep in the extended family villa - with its own temple it's almost like stepping back in time.

Standard Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 101 km / 63 miles

Day 4**Riverside ride to the 16th Century Nayak's capital of Thanjavur; afternoon free to visit the town and Royal Palace.**

Scenic morning ride following quiet roads and tracks along the banks of the Cauvery River to Thanjavur. Previously a capital between the 9th and 13th Centuries, it regained its status under the Nayaks in the 16th Century who rebuilt the Royal Palace, Durbar Hall and libraries. After lunch, we take a vehicle transfer to the Thanjavur Hotel. Late afternoon we visit the palace which houses one of the finest collections of bronze sculptures and stone carvings in southern India and the famous vegetable market at Tanjore followed by a visit to the huge Brihadishwara Temple, one of the largest in India and known locally as simply the 'Big Temple'.

Standard Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 68 km / 42 miles

Day 5**Long ride through the Tamil Nadu heartland to Chettinad, renowned for palatial mansions.**

Leaving the city by the old road, we head out into the Tamil Nadu heartland, visiting the oldest clay horse temple en route, to an area renowned for its impressive mansions built by wealthy traders known as Chettiars. Some of these palatial houses have been converted to boutique hotels, offering a glimpse of the past. The grand interiors of Burmese teak and elaborate plaster work retain much of the traditional architecture of a bygone age. But it's from the kitchens tucked away at the rear of the house that the real flavour of India comes to life: Chettinad cuisine is as traditional as its buildings, the piquant curries are slow cooked in copper pots over a wood stove and are as memorable as the ride to get here.

Standard Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 102 km / 63 miles

Day 6**Scenic ride to Madurai, a highlight of any trip to India.**

Today we have a scenic ride to Madurai. Another rocky outcrop is the sacred abode of Lord Murugan, the son of Shiva and also known as Skanda, the most revered god in Tamil Nadu. Staying at Madurai we avoid the worst of the busy traffic.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 99 km / 61 miles

Day 7**Free morning to visit this magnificent temple city. Transfer to lunch then ride past Indian vineyards before a final ascent into the Western Ghats and our night stop at Thekkady.**

Morning free to explore the old city and Sri Meenakshi Temple, one of the largest temple complexes in India and one of the highlights of Tamil Nadu. Thousands of huge stone pillars line the hallways, each adorned with different deities, are said to represent the 3,333,333 gods of the Hindu cosmos. A constant flow of worshipers, offering pujas, (rituals performed by the temple priests to the various deities) add to the heady atmosphere of incense and camphor smoke, and make this an unforgettable experience of Hindu culture. Blessed, we leave the heat of Madurai for the cool air of the Cardamom Hills. We transfer by vehicle to our lunch stop at Theni. After lunch we will be dropped off at Cambam, from where we ride to Kumily. Hidden behind the banana plantation are the vineyards of southern India's new venture into wine making. These give way to the forested slopes of the Western Ghats and a slow but beautiful ascent up through the rainforest to Thekkaday, a small town close to the entrance of Periyar National Park and our accommodation for the next two nights.

Standard Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 42 km / 26 miles

Day 8**Free day to relax and stroll around this hill station or visit the nearby Periyar N.P.**

Today is free to relax or go on one of the trekking and boat safaris to the nearby Periyar National Park. Centred around a man-made reservoir, it is possible to see wildlife all year round, although the best time is the dry season (March-May) when herds of elephant come to the lake to graze by the shore; if you are very lucky you may even see a leopard or tiger coming down to quench their thirst.

Standard Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast

Day 9**A hilly ride through the tea estates with a refreshing stop at a tea factory; after lunch ride one of the most scenic roads in Kerala to Vagamon.**

Riding from the hotel we cycle through cardamom and tea estates, stopping mid-morning for tea and to visit the local tea factory, learning more about the tea making process. Refreshed, we continue along hilly tea plantation roads with a lunch break at a small roadside restaurant en route to Vagamon, an area of outstanding natural beauty and one of the most scenic roads in Kerala. We end the ride with a superb winding descent on a quiet road and stay at an old plantation bungalow.

Basic Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 71 km / 44 miles

Day 10**Cycle through rubber and spice plantations to Kottayam, the Syrian Christian heartland of Kerala.**

Today we ride through rubber and spice plantations en route to Kottayam, known as the Syrian Christian heartland of Kerala. Here grand churches dot the landscape and we break at Palai to visit St Thomas Church, its white washed facade and distinct gilded ceiling predates its Portuguese renovation. All roads converge into Kottayam City, and we avoid the city by following country roads and stop for a lunch break at Erttumanoor Town. Then entering a world in which the author Arundhati Roy set in her book 'The God of Small Things', close to the shore of Vembanad Lake.

Standard Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 82 km / 51 miles

Day 11**Free morning to explore or relax by the lake before boarding a houseboat for a stunning backwater cruise.**

Free morning to relax and enjoy the lake view; or ride to the nearby Kumarakom bird sanctuary and then take a sightseeing ride along the shore of the lake. Midday we board our houseboats for a stunning backwater cruise. The houseboats, converted rice barges now come with a captain, cook and crew; we just sit back, sip long drinks and watch the world go by.

Houseboat

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Distance covered: 35 km / 22 miles

Day 12**Final ride along the coast road to Fort Cochin.**

In the middle of the morning we disembark at Muhamma. Riding along the backroad we cross over to the coastal road to the Arthingal Beach for our first view of the Arabian Sea, and finally know that we've cycled across India from coast to coast. We then ride on to Fort Cochin for lunch.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch

Distance covered: 57 km / 35 miles

Day 13**Free day in Fort Cochin with its Chinese fishing nets.**

A free day to explore the town of Cochin, its bazaars and old harbour area. Warehouses filled with the smell of tea and spices are limewashed bright green, yellow and blue; rickety old bikes and handpainted trucks piled high with goods, fill the narrow streets and food stalls stand on every corner. Further along the road we come to Mattancherry and the Dutch Palace. Next to the Palace is the synagogue, built in 1568 for the Jewish members of Cochin's trading communities, adorned with hand-painted tiles from China and elegant Belgian chandeliers, all donations from wealthy merchants. The area around the synagogue is excellent for shopping. For food, try the fish market near the Chinese fishing nets, where you can buy the day's catch and have it cooked to your own taste. There are also plenty of shopping opportunities here.

Comfortable Hotel

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 14**End Cochin.**

If you are on the group flight you will have an early morning transfer to the airport for the flight back to London. Those not flying with the group will leave us at the hotel in Cochin.

Meals included: Breakfast

Accommodation**Hotels, houseboat and mansions**

Most of the hotels are comfortable tourist-class and all have ensuite rooms. 2 nights will be spent in Indian grand homes; one of these is a palatial wedding mansion built by the Chettis and the other is a 19th Century plantation owner's family home. The night near Kottayam (Day 9) will usually be spent in a local homestay. The accommodation here is spread out so some of the group will stay in the main house and others in permanent Swiss Cottage tents. These each have a raised bed and mattress, an attached veranda and toilet.

Houseboats are comfortable, the majority of cabins on board are on a twin share basis, and all cabins have toilet facilities. The houseboats have a communal dining area and are air-conditioned at night between 8pm and 6am.

Customers should be aware that the gas water heaters used on all houseboats are open-flued systems, as used in many parts of India. While this complies with Indian law, it does not meet UK standards and therefore we must inform travellers that there is a risk (while minimal) of carbon monoxide emissions. We have asked our leaders to install a Carbon Monoxide alarm, and they have been asked to brief groups to keep their rooms ventilated (i.e. window open) at night to ensure sufficient air circulation.

Please note that the single supplement does not include the night at Vanilla County Plantation on Day 9 and cannot be guaranteed on the houseboat either due to limited rooms.

Where a single supplement is available, paying for a single only guarantees a room for single use. It does not always mean a twin or double room will be provided for sole occupancy.

Single supplement from \$1,219.75 AUD

Food & Transport

Eating & Drinking

All breakfasts, 11 lunches and 8 dinners included.

You should allow approx. £10 (approx. US\$16) per day for lunch and dinner when they are not included. £3-4 (approx. US\$4.80-6.40) for lunch, and £5-6 (approx. US\$8-9.60) for dinner without drinks. This amount may vary according to how much you drink. Generally you can eat out very cheaply in India. There is a good choice of restaurants and sometimes there is a choice between Indian and Western style food. If you are a vegetarian, South India is an ideal destination. Lunches on riding days are usually taken in local roadside cafes. Tea and soft drinks are very cheap. A (large!) bottle of beer is approx. £1-3 (approx. US\$5). Please note that service in Indian restaurants can be quite slow. Mineral water is carried in the support vehicle and you can refill your water bottle from these large containers.

Transportation

All your luggage and personal belongings will be carried by the support vehicle. Transfer sections are done in the support vehicle or a separate vehicle depending on the group size. The support vehicle will follow the riders most of the time, allowing you to cycle as much or as little as you like. The whole group can be accommodated at all times. On occasions it is not possible for the support vehicle to follow the group, but we will still meet the vehicle at regular intervals to replenish water supplies etc.

Weather & Seasonality

When to go

The most important feature of the Indian climate is the monsoon. The main monsoon strikes the coast of Kerala in late May and sweeps its way northward over the next month or so. The ideal time to visit is during the dry season from October to March, but monsoons have been known to be late and it can rain as late as November. Days will be hot and the nights warm: the average range of maximum daytime temperatures being between 21 and 30degC and from 6 to 20degC at night. However, in the hills temperatures can be considerably cooler and you can expect temperatures to drop to a few degrees above 0degC at night. We ask you to note that frequent rainstorms can be expected throughout the tour on November departures. However, the storms are usually of quite short duration and the sun normally comes out fairly quickly afterwards.

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Weather Charts

Chennai, India

Cochin, India

Joining Instructions

Travelling flight inclusive from London: 15 days

The group flight from London is an overnight flight departing the day before Day 1 of the itinerary.

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.

Travelling land only: 14 days starting in Chennai and ending in Cochin

Your trip normally starts at Chennai Airport on the morning of Day 1 of the itinerary listed above. PLEASE NOTE that if you are not travelling on the group flights you will need to be at the airport when the group land; the group will leave Chennai Airport on Day 1 of the itinerary and head straight to the start hotel in Pondicherry via Mahabalipuram. Group flights can be rescheduled, so you must check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense. Joining the group transfer is free of charge.

Regional Flights

The Flight Inclusive price is based on a London departure, but we are happy to tailor this to your local or regional airport. **Please ask about flights from local or regional airports. (/au/regionaldepartures)**

If booking regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check-in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum, but baggage handling is known to be subject to delays.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

Transfers Details

Airport transfers are included for those on the group flights. Please note that transfers are not included for clients arriving on any other flight, even if Exodus has booked it.

If you require airport transfers, you may (by prior arrangement only) be able to join the group transfer. Transfers are arranged to coincide with the arrival time of the group flight - please check the group flight details 2 weeks before departure. If you do not take this transfer, or miss it, you must make your own way to the joining point at your own expense.

If you would like us to organise a private transfer from Chennai to the start hotel, the cost is from £85 (approx. US\$135) per vehicle (1-2 people per vehicle) and is payable before departure. Please ensure that you provide us with all relevant information at least 2 weeks before departure.

Location start: Chennai

Location end: Cochin

What to Take

Essential Equipment

Cycling helmet (compulsory on this trip)

Loose overshorts

High factor sun-cream

Warmer layers for the evenings in the hills

Cotton trousers

Favourite energy snacks

A water bottle - this should be a standard size to fit into a normal water bottle cage on the bike

There will be plenty of opportunities to get laundry done locally at a very affordable price so fine to pack light.

Equipment Hire

Local Bike Details: Montra Blues 1.2 hybrid bikes with front suspension.

Discount for bringing your own bike: £150.

A quality local hire bike is now included in the overall price of our cycling holidays. At the time of booking we will take your height in order to reserve equipment. There may on occasions be insufficient bikes available in the correct size; we will endeavour to find suitable alternative equipment but this cannot be guaranteed. We will tell you before you book whether suitably sized bikes are available.

Conditions

1. The equipment remains the property of the supplier and you may not sell, hire out or part possession with the equipment.
2. You must not misuse the equipment and must return it in the same condition as when received (ordinary wear and tear excepted). The supplier is entitled to charge for any damage caused to the equipment during the period of hire.
3. You must ensure that the equipment is adequately secured when not in use. In the event of the equipment being lost or stolen, you may be liable for the replacement value of the equipment
4. You must not use the equipment whilst under the influence of drink or drugs and should immediately notify the Supplier in the event of breakdown or loss.

Bringing Your Own Bike

If you prefer the familiarity of your own bike, you may of course bring it along. Please advise us at the time of booking and you will receive a discount off the price of the holiday, as specified above. You will be responsible for any extra baggage charges, please speak to our Sales team for individual airline fees. Any clients bringing their own bike should ensure they have adequate cover for loss, damage or theft under their travel, home contents or a specialist insurance policy. If Exodus is confident that we have taken all reasonable care to ensure the safety of your bike, in the rare event of loss, damage or theft you will need to claim under your own insurance policy.

Extra Bike Bits

You may like to bring your own pedals and saddle (excluding the seat post) or gel saddle cover to fit to the hire bikes. We encourage this, if it is your preference. However, please note that you are responsible for your own equipment, and removing your saddle/pedals at the end of the trip. We cannot guarantee the return of any bike parts left behind.

Exodus Policy on Cycling Helmets

Wearing a helmet is mandatory for anyone taking part in any guided Exodus cycling holiday. Group members must bring their own helmets, as they are not available for hire, even if they are hiring a bike from Exodus.

For self-guided cycling holidays wearing a helmet is highly recommended. Customers who choose to ignore our advice do so entirely at their own risk and on the understanding that it may affect the validity of their travel insurance. It should also be noted that in some countries we travel to wearing a helmet is already a legal requirement.

Cycling of all kinds has its dangers and accidents can happen from time to time. Please ensure that you are properly prepared for the riding you are going to undertake.

Recommended Cycling Clothing

Padded cycling shorts (with loose 'over-shorts' where recommended), breathable clothing, and a lightweight waterproof/windproof top. Shoes with relatively stiff soles are better for biking, but are not essential unless you are cycling long distances. Most people want to carry certain items with them during the day while cycling, for this we recommend a large bum-bag or small close-fitting daysack.

Please be aware that you will be passing through some remote villages where the locals are unaccustomed to seeing people in tight lycra - we recommend you wear baggy shorts or loose 'over shorts' so as not to cause offence.

Practical Information

Passport

India

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

Visa

India

Visas are required if you are British and for most other nationalities. For UK residents full details of the visa process can be found [here](https://www.exodus.co.uk/sites/exod/files/visa_sheet_india_may_19.pdf).

(https://www.exodus.co.uk/sites/exod/files/visa_sheet_india_may_19.pdf)

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Other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies.

If your trip visits Ladakh, in the very north of India, or Sikkim in the northeast, do not mention this on your Indian visa application. This can sometimes slow down or even cause the embassy to reject your visa.

When you reach immigration, you are required to pick up an immigration form. If you have an e-visa, ensure you stand in the correct queue - please follow the signs to the e-visa booth (in Delhi this is at the back of the immigration hall). You will need to fill out an additional form at the booth - please make sure that you have the details of your start hotel ready (these details can be found on your Final Joining Instructions).

Visa regulations can change without notice: please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

Vaccination

India

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements. Recommended vaccinations are: Polio, Tetanus, Diphtheria, Typhoid, Hepatitis A. The risk of malaria is slight but you may wish to consult your GP or travel health clinic for further advice. Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for Dengue, therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. Some of our India trips spend time at altitude. In regions over approx. 2000m, there is low to no risk of mosquito-borne diseases. For trips going to altitudes of over 3000m there is a risk of being affected by Acute Mountain Sickness. Our itineraries are designed to enable everyone to acclimatise to these altitudes, but you should be aware that it is still possible for you to be affected. Please see the TRIP NOTES for further information.

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

The Travel Health Pro website recommends to have a rabies vaccination on this trip, as cycling is considered a higher risk activity.

The risk of malaria on this trip is slight, but you may wish to consult your GP or travel health clinic for further advice.

Dengue fever and/or Chikungunya are known risks in places visited on this trip. Both are tropical viral diseases spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available for either, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information. Please note: vaccinations that are routinely recommended to residents of the UK, North America or Australasia are not considered to form part of the travel health advice, and you should ensure these are kept up to date where necessary.

For additional information please visit: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>)

Insurance - are you adequately covered?

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). On arrival in destination for your trip, you will be asked to present details to your leader or local representative of your policy.

If you are resident in the UK we strongly recommend the **Exodus travel insurance policy (/au/insurance)**, this is specifically designed to cover all activities on your trip. If arranging your own policy please ensure that you are covered for all activities that are part of the trip, optional activities that you intend to take part in and/or on high altitude itineraries, that you are covered up to the maximum altitude of the trip.

Local Time

India's Timezone: Asia/Kolkata IST (GMT +05:30)

Electricity

India's Electricity: 230/240 volts AC, 50 Hz.

230/240 volts AC, 50 Hz. The electricity supply is not 100% reliable but it is usually only off for short periods of time.

Money

India's Currency

The national currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 85 to the UK£ and 65 to the US\$.

Exchange rates are correct at the time of publication.

It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very) dirty Indian banknotes from banks or in change as they will almost certainly not be accepted as legal tender in India. Please ask for low denomination notes of 100 and 500 Rupees as the new 2000 Rupee notes can be difficult to use out of Delhi. You can change money back from Rupees into Pounds or Dollars at Delhi airport (before going through security), but you must produce an exchange receipt showing that you changed money in India.

ATM Availability

ATM machines are now widely available in the course of the trip (Visa and MasterCard are best) but you should not rely on these 100% of the time, so please take some cash with you to change as well. Please inform your bank before departure that you are travelling to India and carry the relevant telephone number with you in case they put a block on your card. You can pay with credit cards in bigger shops and hotels all over India. Well-known brands of travellers cheques can be exchanged but this can take time and banks are not always open when you need them. You can bring Sterling, Euros or US Dollars.

Extra Expenses & Spending Money

It is illegal to import or export rupees. Do not accept torn or (very) dirty Indian banknotes from banks or in change as they will almost certainly not be accepted as legal tender in India. Please ask for low denomination notes as they are easier to use. You can change money back from Rupees to your chosen currency on departure from India, before you go through security and immigration, but you must produce an exchange receipt showing that you changed money in India.

You will need about £150-£200/\$240-320 for meals not included, which will allow you to eat well. Apart from the food, you should allow money to cover soft drinks (more if you like a beer) and souvenirs. Shopping opportunities throughout this tour are endless - even if you are generally not a keen shopper we have found that most people succumb to some of the wide variety of handicrafts on offer. Many sites now charge a small fee for camera use.

Tipping

Tipping is very much part of the culture in India and is usually expected. Tipping can often be an awkward affair, especially when in an unfamiliar country where you are not sure when or how much to tip. As such, your tour leader will offer to arrange and look after a group tipping kitty which will be used to provide water, cold drinks, tea breaks, snacks and to tip hotel staff (porters, bellboys and security), restaurant staff and local sightseeing guides. Your leader will suggest how much to contribute, depending on group size, but it is usually in the region of 5000 INR (approx. £50 US\$65) per person. At any time during the trip your leader will be happy to show you an account of how the kitty is being distributed. Tipping for the mechanic, bus driver and tour leader is not included in the kitty and is at your own discretion. Our local leaders are paid well and fairly for their work with Exodus, however, if you wish to show your appreciation a tip of around £2-£3 (US\$3-4.50) per person per day would be appreciated. By definition, gratuities are not something that can be included in the tour price.

Responsible Tourism

At Exodus we believe in the power of Responsible Travel.

Every time we travel, we are part of a global movement that creates jobs, builds more sustainable societies, encourages cultural understanding and safeguards common natural and cultural heritage. To learn more about what Responsible Travel means to Exodus [click here \(/au/responsible-travel\)](#)...

Exodus Community

Join the Exodus online community

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view the range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups which have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Community Travel Forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be entered automatically into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the **Community (/au/community)** you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy, so what are you waiting for?

Important Information

On all guided trips

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

Although rarely enforced, by booking this trip you agree to section 16 of our Booking Conditions which clearly states that our leaders have the authority to do this. In these circumstances we will ensure anyone sitting out is safely provided for and offered alternative options where possible. Refunds will not be provided for activities missed and customers may be liable for additional costs incurred.

On all trips

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call the Exodus office and ask to speak to one of the experts on this itinerary.

In an emergency, please contact our 24 hour out of hours service on +44 (0) 844 326 7041.

Every time that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the **essential information (/au/about-exodus/essential-information)** in the brochure.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure or website, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure and website. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary. Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

As fuel prices, airport taxes and exchange rates fluctuate, and airlines manage their rates to match demand, it is proving harder than ever to guarantee our Flight Inclusive prices. Although we endeavour to keep our website as accurate as possible, daily fluctuations mean that our Flight Inclusive price may be out of date. For accurate prices we recommend that you contact one of our Travel Experts, or your Travel Agent.

TRAVEL AWARE -STAY SAFE & HEALTHY ABROAD

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the NHS have up-to-date advice on staying safe and healthy abroad. For more on security, local laws, plus passport and visa information, see <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/> (<https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/>)

Keep informed of current travel health news by visiting <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/> (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>)

Advice can change so check regularly for updates.

For all latest travel information about your holiday, please visit our **Travel Safety Advice (/au/travel-safety-advice)** page.



How to Book

1. Check availability

Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.

2. Secure your place

You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.

3. Complete your booking and payment

When you're ready to book, go to www.exodus.co.uk ([/au/homepage](#)) for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque. Book with confidence: Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid from the "Current as" date on page one. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure; if there are any updates that significantly impact the inclusions or itinerary bookers will be written to separately. All customers will also receive a link to the most up-to-date version of the Trip Notes with their Final Joining Instructions pre-travel.

Version 1