

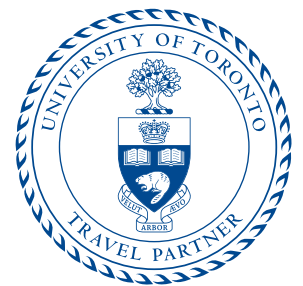
Exotic Landscapes & Monuments of India

November 1 – 14, 2019

This tour is a delightful and satisfying combination of South India's rich architectural history filled with ancient temples, colonial outposts, and vibrant cities and the colourful pageantry of Rajasthan.

Tamil Nadu is a gentle, relaxing introduction to the wonders of India. Visit the grand temple complexes that are both testaments to the great cultural opulence left behind by erstwhile dynasties and displays of current spirituality and community. Meet with the priests and merchants who keep the temples alive. Chill in the French colonial vibe of Pondicherry and stroll its ocean-front promenade. Explore the fabulously decorated courtyard mansions of little-travelled Chettinad and learn to prepare the finest cuisine in India.

The second part of the trip is a foray into India's Golden Triangle; vibrant and colourful, a land of bejeweled maharajahs, crenelated forts, and timeless villages. After a good look at the essentials of the capital Delhi, head to Agra to marvel at the incomparable Taj Mahal and to the 'Pink City' of Jaipur for a taste of Rajasthan's pageantry.



TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY:

WorldwideQuest
Alumni Expeditions

City Palace, Jaipur



TOUR LEADER

Manoj Abraham, a proud Keralan, heads up the logistics team in our Delhi office. Whether designing tours with a painstaking attention to detail or leading our travellers across India and Sri Lanka, Manny draws on his exceptional network of contacts to create intimate and enriching experiences.

Detailed Itinerary

Friday, Nov. 1: Arrive Chennai (Madras)

Arrive in Chennai where you are met by our local representative and accompanied to our hotel a short drive from the airport along the coast. Meet the group this evening over dinner.

Overnight: Radisson Blu, Mammallapuram

Meals: Dinner

Saturday, Nov. 2: The Bay of Bengal

Enjoy a leisurely morning; meet for brunch and then head out to visit the magnificent Shore Temple, the height of Pallava architecture. Dating from the 8th century, this is the earliest free-standing stone temple in Tamil Nadu – the perfect way to begin our consideration of these magnificent buildings. At sunset, the temples colours glow.

Overnight: Radisson Blu, Mammallapuram

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Sunday, Nov. 3: Along the Coromandel Coast to Pondicherry

The former French colony of Pondicherry has retained a French fusion vibe with quiet cobbled streets lined with mustard-yellow colonial houses. Enjoy a guided walk in the 'Ville Noir' to get a feel for the unique Franco-Tamil ambience and the restored heritage buildings. Visit the Hindu temple of Manakula Vinayagar, which has 40 different forms of Lord Ganesha and a temple elephant that blesses devotees.

Overnight: Palais de Mahe, Pondicherry

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Monday, Nov. 4: Explore the capital of French India

Visit the nearby community of Auroville, a fascinating 1960's vision of a universal town. This afternoon is free to explore on your own; 'Pondi' is easy to navigate and there is an attractive selection of galleries, museums, and shops to enjoy.

Overnight: Palais de Mahe, Pondicherry

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Tuesday, Nov. 5: Rural life at Chidambaram and Kumbakonam

Today we explore quiet, rural more site, first visiting Chidambaram, an important 12th century CE Chola temple with exquisite sculptures of dancing women. In the village, visit the legendary Vedic school that has produced scholars since 1542 to hear their meditative chanting and meet artisans weaving Pattu silk and painting Kalamkari fabrics.

Overnight: Mantra Koodam, Kumbakonam

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Traditional South Indian cuisine

Wednesday, Nov. 6: Tanjore's grand temple

Our drive today takes us inland to Tanjore, the 'rice bowl' of Southern India, to visit the World Heritage-listed 1000-year-old Brihadishwara Temple, where thousands of people worship in the vast, ochre-coloured complex. Later, enjoy the quiet little village of Kanadugathan, in the Chettinad district, the cultural home of the Chettiars who made vast fortunes abroad in the 19th and 20th centuries and outfitted magnificent mansions back home. We're staying in one of these splendidly restored mansions for two nights.

Overnight: Visalam Hotel, Chettinad

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Thursday, Nov. 7: Chettinad's fabulous mansions

The Indian adage has it that "one is lucky to eat like Chettiar". Food in Chettinad is one of the most distinctive in the country, using a distinctive set of spices including star anise, peppercorns, cinnamon, bay leaves, and nutmeg plus unusual local ingredients. Today, choose to join the cooks to prepare some traditional dishes, relax by the pool, or explore the lost grandeur of the nearby villages.

Overnight: Visalam Hotel, Chettinad

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Chettinad



November 11: Jaipur

Visit Amber Fort, a magnificently preserved complex of palaces, halls, pavilions, gardens and temples. In the city, we'll visit the Jantar Mantar, the largest of the five remarkable observatories representing the high points of medieval Indian astronomy and the City Palace, a former royal residence built in a blend of the Rajasthani and Mughal styles. Jaipur is retail heaven with treasures for all budgets. A stroll through some of the grand bazaars makes for a fun evening.

Overnight: Hotel Rajputana, Jaipur

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

November 12: Agra

Begin the day in the village of Sanganer to visit its handmade paper and block printing workshops. Travel to the village of Abhaneri to see the spectacular stepwell. This 'endangered species' of the architectural world was designed to be a cool place of rest and a pool for ritual pre-temple cleaning, as well as a water supply for dry weather. This evening snap the best photos of the Taj Mahal from the gardens across the river, the ultimate viewing point for the spectacular monument.

Overnight: Trident Hotel, Agra

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Wednesday, November 13: Agra

We'll get up early this morning for a special dawn look at the Taj Mahal, one of the few architectural icons that surpasses expectation. Our guide will take us past the perfect symmetry, the wonderful proportion and the sheer scale to inspect the exquisite detailing covering every inch of marble. Later, visit the palatial red sandstone Agra Fort, part fortress and part palace. See the lovely Itimad-ud-Daulah, an exquisite tomb built to commemorate the grandfather of Mumtaz Mahal and often considered a pre-cursor to the Taj Mahal. Celebrate our adventure over dinner this evening.

Overnight: Trident Hotel, Agra

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Friday, November 8: Fly to Delhi

This morning we transfer to the Madurai airport for the flight to Delhi, via Chennai. Upon arrival, we head into the capital, getting a first look at the vibrant modern city and its many layers of history. Stop in at the Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, a prominent Sikh temple dating from the 17th century.

Overnight: Lalit Hotel, Delhi

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Saturday, November 9: Delhi

Explore Old Delhi today. Begin with a rickshaw trip in the colourful streets of Old Delhi and visit India's largest mosque. See the 16th century Humayun's Tomb, precursor to the Taj Mahal and the buildings of the British Raj period; the Parliament, High Court, and India Gate monument. Visit Raj Ghat, the memorial dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi on the banks of the Yamuna River.

Overnight: Leela Hotel, Gurgaon

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Sunday, November 10: Jaipur

Visit the Qutub Minar, the victory tower and minaret dating from 1193 and standing nearly 73 meters high. Then head to Rajasthan; once out of Delhi, the road takes on a life of its own with colourful trucks, camels, and cows sharing the space. The "Pink City" is famed for the terracotta plaster that coats buildings in the old part of the city, for its profusion of palaces and forts, and its walled city. It's dirty, dusty, and noisy, but also magical beyond belief.

Overnight: Hotel Rajputana, Jaipur

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Thursday, November 14: Depart Delhi

Explore the UNESCO World Heritage site of Fatehpur Sikri, briefly the capital of the Mughal Empire, a marvelous complex of monuments and temples carved entirely from red sandstone. Transfer to Delhi Airport. Rooms have been reserved at an airport hotel to freshen up before your departure flight.

Meals: Breakfast

Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this tour brochure are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.



Stepwell in Abhaneri



Block printing



Humayun's Tomb



Palais de Mahe, Pondicherry

TOUR DETAILS

Tour Cost (per person): US\$5595

Single Supplement: US\$1500

We would be happy to try to match you with a suitable roommate.

If we are unable to, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.

Group Size: 16 – 22 participants

What's Included:

- Airport transfers for passengers arriving and departing as per the group itinerary
- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels listed or similar
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary: 14 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 8 dinners
- All transportation by air conditioned private coach
- Complimentary bottled water at hotels and on excursions
- Flight from Madurai to Delhi
- Sightseeing with qualified English-speaking guides
- All activities
- All entrance fees
- Taxes and gratuities for guides, drivers, hotels, restaurants
- Fully escorted by your Worldwide Quest Tour Director

Not Included:

- Airfare from your home to join the tour
- Visa fees (obtained prior to departure, US\$82 for India)
- Meals other than those mentioned above
- Beverages with meals
- Fuel surcharges, if applicable
- Travel insurance
- Excess baggage charges
- Items of a personal nature
- Additional arrangements required due to any emergency or other situation
- Any item not mentioned in "Tour Cost Includes"

Payment Details:

A deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve your space on this tour. A payment of US\$1000 is due six months prior to departure. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure.



Qutub Minar

What to Expect

Joining Instructions

This tour begins with your arrival in Chennai on November 1st. Please note that no activities are planned on November 1st. Our welcome briefing will be held in the morning of November 2nd. All travellers arriving on the start date of the tour will be met on arrival and transferred to the group hotel. This transfer is included in the cost of the tour. When you book the designated pre-trip accommodation with Worldwide Quest, your transfer from the airport to our group hotel on arrival is included. If you are making your own pre-trip arrangements, this transfer can be provided at additional cost. The tour concludes with a single complimentary transfer from Agra to Delhi airport on November 14th. Please contact us to verify timing of this transfer prior to making any flight arrangements.

Level of Activity: Moderate

A good level of fitness is required to enjoy this trip. You should be able to walk up to three hours at a time over uneven terrain both in rural areas and in crowded cities. In some places access to temples and forts is only on foot with some steep ascents. Shoes must be removed to enter some temples. Should you have any questions about your ability to take part in this tour, please give us a call.

Accommodation

We are staying in a mix of Western style hotels and restored heritage inns. We begin our trip at the luxury Temple Bay resort on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. In Pondicherry, Kubanakom, and Chettinad we are staying in particularly lovely heritage inns that beautifully reflect the character and charm of their locations. Accommodation in North India is selected for location and comfort.

Transportation

We will be travelling in a comfortable air-conditioned vehicle driven by a professional driver. While roads are mostly paved except on rural back roads, there are few divided highways, therefore, we cannot expect to cover distances as quickly as we might in North America. There are some long driving days but roadside scenery provides a quintessential Indian experience.

Weather

We expect sunny skies and lovely warm weather throughout your trip. Temperatures will likely range from highs of 30°C to overnight lows of 20°C.

Travel Documents

You will require a passport for this trip. Please ensure it is valid for at least 6 months beyond your scheduled return home. You will require a visa for India which must be obtained prior to arrival.

Additional Info

Extend your Stay

If you are interested in exploring more of this region, we would be happy to design a personalized extension for you either before or after this tour. Please let us suggest some options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946).

Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.



Worldwide Explorers Club

Travel twice with us and you become a member of the Worldwide Explorers Club. Earn 5% off all your subsequent, catalogue-advertized group tours. The bonus is non-transferable and cannot be used in conjunction with any other discount or credit. Note that some exceptions may apply. Members also get access to special offers and exploratory tours!



Masala chai

How to Book

Please contact the Worldwide Quest office for more information and to secure your booking.

1-800-387-1483 | 416-633-5666 | travel@worldwidequest.com



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