

Classic Journeys *A passion for travel*

T: 07858 410677 E: journeys@classicjourneys.co.uk Web: www.classicjourneys.co.uk



INDIA'S IMPERIAL WAY - FROM AMRITSAR TO CALCUTTA PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

The idea for this fascinating Indian journey was inspired by world famous photographer

Steve McCurry and travel writer Paul Theroux's book *The Imperial Way*, first published in 1985.

Coincidentally the year Classic Journeys was born!

In the book McCurry and Theroux travel by rail from Peshawar near the Khyber Pass in Pakistan, into India to Amritsar, home of the superb Golden Temple and Shimla, the Himalayan foothill town of Kipling's stories. Their journey continued through New Delhi to Agra and the Taj Mahal, on to Varanasi, the holiest city in the world for Hindus before arriving in Calcutta and into Bangladesh to finish at Chittagong.

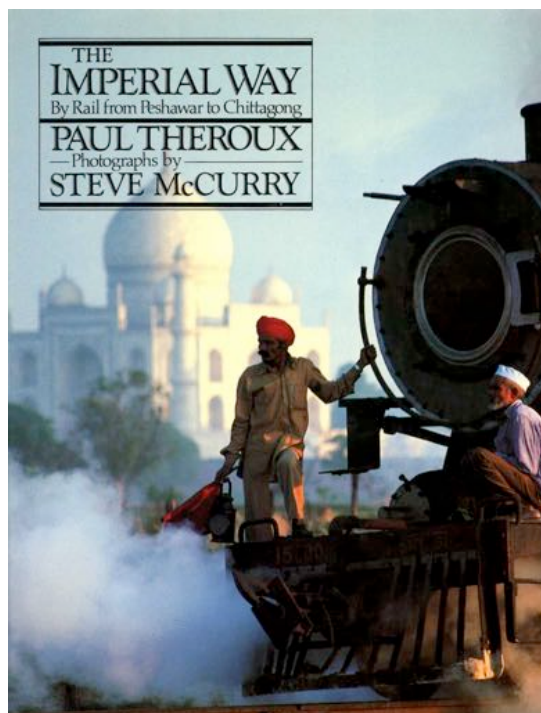
Our incredible Indian journey will follow much of McCurry and Theroux's journey through India. Travelling mostly by train we will mix with local families and travellers and really get under the skin of this beautiful country. For the traveller and photographer this will be a journey full of adventure and incredible experiences. At times we will be tired, dusty and challenged. At other times we will be enlightened, informed and our spirits uplifted in a way that only real travel and photography can.

Our journey will start in India's capital city Delhi, before travelling to Kalka and then the narrow gauge toy train to Shimla, the once cool summer retreat of the British. We will stop in Chandigarh, the best planned city in India before moving on to Amritsar, Sikhism's holiest city in the heart of the Punjab, famed for its dazzling Golden Temple. We will also visit Wagah, the border with Pakistan to witness and photograph the spectacularly bizarre evening border closing ceremony.

Other iconic stops include Agra, home of the Taj Mahal and then Varanasi, the spiritual capital of India. Varanasi attracts large numbers of pilgrims who bathe in the River Ganges' sacred waters. Lucknow is a beautiful city that still retains its old world charm and is often described as the 'City of Nawabs'. Liberally sprinkled with British Raj-era buildings, including the famous Residency and boasting two superb mausoleums, Lucknow plays a somewhat unwarranted third fiddle to Agra and Varanasi, but is as fascinating.

Our final destination is Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), the capital of India's West Bengal state. Kolkata is one of the most "under-rated" and "under-visited" cities in India. Here we will begin to discover the hidden treasures and unique history it has to offer. This is a fabulous city to end our amazing Indian journey.

"It is good to have an end to journey toward; but it is the journey that matters, in the end."
Ernest Hemmingway



Outline Itinerary

Day 1 – Departure

Depart your home country.

Day 2 – Delhi

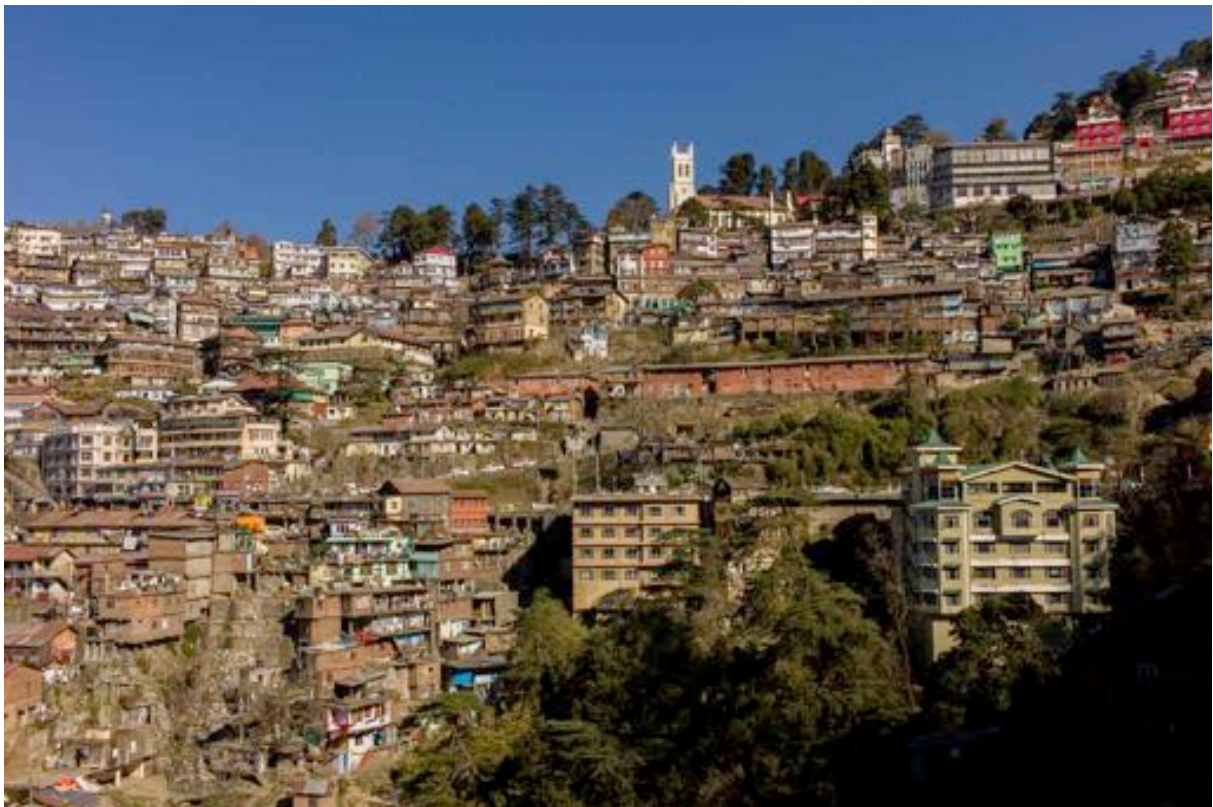
Arrive Delhi. Here we are met and transferred to our hotel. We have time to relax and recover from the international flight and enjoy dinner together. Overnight hotel. (D)

Day 3 – Delhi

After breakfast we begin our guided tour of New and Old Delhi. Delhi is a city that has moved forward with the rest of the world while having its roots firmly planted deep into the past. As the capital of India, Delhi is the fusion of eight former capitals under different rulers of India. The historic architectures of Delhi include the majestic Red Fort, the towering Qutub Minar, the unique Jama Masjid and the Rashtrapati Bhavan. However, it is along the wayside, within bazaars and at almost every curve in Delhi that there are fascinating ruins of tombs, palaces and mosques, unnamed and unmarked waiting to be explored. Today is a great way to start our tour sightseeing and photographing the monuments and people in Old & New Delhi. Overnight hotel. (BD)

Day 4 – Train to Kalka, Toy Train to Shimla

After an early breakfast we will transfer to the railway station to board the train to Kalka departing at 07:40. We arrive Kalka at 12:00 and board the toy train to Shimla, departing at 12:10 and arriving at 17:20. Arriving by toy train on the old narrow gauge railway is a great introduction to the town. The train winds its way up the hillside in a series of steep switchbacks, through small country stations and through more than 100 tunnels.



At over 2,100 metres above sea level, the state capital of Himachal Pradesh was once the cool summer retreat for the British colonial government escaping from the heat of the plains. Today, crumbling remnants of the Raj such as the mock Tudor bungalows, church, library, club and theatre are just a small part of a now much larger hill station.

Shimla is named after its patron goddess, Shamla Devi, a manifestation of Kali. From the town there are superb panoramic views of the valley, and the lofty peaks of the great Himalayan range on both sides. The colourful local bazaars of Shimla are sprawled over the southern slopes of the ridge.

The main attractions in Shimla include the Rashtrapati Niwas, formerly the residence of the British Viceroy, The State Museum which has a modest collection of stone statues from different parts of Himachal Pradesh and the Jakhu Temple dedicated to Lord Hanuman.

On the pedestrian Mall above the busy bazaar you will find school children wearing traditional English school uniforms rushing to and from school, groups of men and women chatting and enjoying the warmth of the sunshine and happy honeymoon couples strolling hand in hand. The Mall is a great place to sit for a while and observe everyday life in Shimla.

Overnight Hotel Woodville Palace Hotel (BD)

Day 5 – Shimla

After breakfast we will have a full day of sightseeing and photography.

Shimla is set amidst cool pine-clad hills, this charming hill station was discovered by the British in 1819. It was used as their summer capital. We will visit the Jakhu Temple, dedicated to Hanuman, the monkey god, the State Museum and Library, the Viceregal Lodge, built in 1888 for Lord Dufferin in the Elizabethan style and Christ Church built in 1844 on the open area of the ridge. End the day with a stroll around the colourful Mall.

Overnight Hotel Woodville Palace Hotel (BD)

Day 6 – Shimla to Chandigarh (approx. 110 kms/03 hrs. drive)

Early morning free to further explore Shimla. Late morning we drive to Chandigarh, descending a series of steep switchbacks criss-crossing the tracks of the narrow gauge railway.

Chandigarh is said to be the best-planned city in India, with architecture which is world-renowned and a quality of life which is unparalleled. As the capital of the states of Punjab and Haryana, and the Union Territory of Chandigarh it is recognised as a prestigious city. The face of modern India, Chandigarh, is the manifestation of a dream that prime minister Jawahar Lal Nehru envisaged and Le Corbusier executed. India's first planned city is a rich and prosperous green city.

During the afternoon we visit the Rock Garden which consists of art objects fashioned from industrial and urban waste. It nestles amidst 20 acres of woods in the form of an open air exhibition hall, theatre and a miniature maze all rolled into one vast fantasy land of art and landscape.

Overnight Hotel (BD)

Day 7 – Drive to Amritsar (approx. 230 kms/5-6 hrs.)

Today we drive to Amritsar in the heart of the Punjab, stopping along the way for any photo opportunities. Amritsar is Sikhism's holiest city. Its name means 'Pool of the Nectar of Immortality' and is justly famed for its dazzling Harmandir Sahib or Golden Temple, a sacred shrine gilded with 100 kilograms of gold.

Prepare to be humbled by the most tangibly spiritual place in the country, one that in its status as a living monument even has the edge on the Taj Mahal. The most sacred part of the complex is Hari Mandir Sahib (Divine Temple) or Darbar Sahib (Court of the Lord), which you'll instantly recognise as the marble and gold sanctuary at the centre of a large body of water within the temple complex. The name "Golden Temple" comes from this gold-plated building which features copper cupolas and white marble walls encrusted with precious stones arranged in decorative floral patterns that show strong Islamic influence. Four *chattris* flank the structure, which is decorated inside and out with verses from the *Granth Sahib* (the Sikh Holy Book). Construction of the temple began in 1574, with ongoing restoration and embellishment over the years including the addition in the 19th century of 100 kilograms (220 lb.) of gold to cover the inverted lotus-shaped dome.

In the evening we make our first visit to the Golden Temple to witness the Palki Sahib or 'Going to Bed' ceremony. This is an amazing sight when the Holy Book is paraded before jostling crowds in a palanquin before being taken to its nightly resting place.

Overnight Hotel Ranjit Svasa (BD)



Day 8 – Amritsar

It is well worth returning to the Golden Temple for the early morning ceremony (approx. 4am) to see the Holy Book being paraded in a palanquin to its resting place for the day. Then return to the hotel for rest and breakfast. Late morning we take a heritage walking tour of Amritsar which showcases some of the richest architectural and traditional heritage from Amritsar's layered past. The walk takes you back in time as you witness traditional trades and crafts being practised in the same place and the same manner as they have been done for centuries.

In the late afternoon we will visit the Wagah border, 20 miles from Amritsar. This is the border between India and Pakistan. The early evening border closing ceremony has grown into one of the most spectacularly bizarre attractions in all of India. A thrillingly pompous display of military bravado, it attracts countless Indian tourists every day and includes some of the most delightfully fun, modern-day events you'll ever witness in India.

Overnight Hotel Ranjit Svasa (BD)

Day 9 – Morning Amritsar. PM Overnight Train to Agra

Return to the Golden Temple for more photography. An unmissable part of a visit here is the Guru-ka-Langar, a community kitchen where each day around 35,000 people are fed by temple volunteers. In an act that symbolises the Sikh belief in equality of all people, irrespective of caste or creed, everyone is welcomed and invited to join the communal breaking of bread - a simple and unlimited meal of chapatis (wheat bread) and *dal* (lentils) is served. Simply raise your hands palm-up in order to receive more chapati; the servers will continue dishing *dal* until you've had your fill.

Before or after you join in for a meal, have a look behind the scenes to witness the extraordinary activities in the various industrial-size temple kitchens that prepare the food. There are three distinct sections. In one kitchen, *chapattis* are prepared by automated machines on a conveyor belt system that's as fascinating to observe as the unit where they're made by hand. You're even welcome to join in. Somewhat more medieval is where gigantic cauldrons of *dal* (lentils) are cooked over burners and stirred with paddle-size ladles.

Late afternoon we board the overnight train to Agra which departs Amritsar at 16:10.

Overnight sleeper train. (BD)

Day 10 – Agra

Arrive Agra at 08:15 and are transferred to our hotel.

Late afternoon we will visit the Taj Mahal for sunset. Built as a monument of eternal love by Shah Jahan to his bride Mumtaz Mahal, the Taj Mahal looks amazingly graceful from almost any angle. It was built over a period of 20 years by 20,000 labourers and craftsmen and displays superb craftsmanship. The close up detail of the Taj Mahal is as exquisite as the overall architectural design with semi-precious stones and beautiful patterns covering the marble surface. We will have time to explore the grounds and photograph the ever changing light on the Taj.

Overnight Hotel Grand Imperial. (BD)

**Day 11 – Agra. PM Overnight train to Varanasi**

The morning free to relax or make an optional return visit to the Taj Mahal. During the afternoon we visit Fatehpur Sikri, a masterpiece of Muslim architecture built by Emperor Akbar in 1568 as his capital. The town's palaces, courts and other monuments are a perfect example of the fusion of Hindu and Mughal architectural styles. According to one account, the red sandstone city was abandoned 14 years later due to water scarcity. Salim Chishti's Dargah or tomb in the Royal Mosque is another major draw. It continues to attract pilgrims in large numbers who come here to have their wishes fulfilled.

We return to Agra for dinner before boarding our overnight train to Varanasi, departing Agra at 21:35. Overnight sleeper train. (BD)

Day 12 – Varanasi

Arrive Varanasi at 08:30. Transfer to our hotel.

Formally called Banaras, Varanasi is the holiest city in the world for Hindus. We explore the city by rickshaws, boat and on foot and will have innumerable photo opportunities. There are hundreds of temples dedicated to Shiva. In the evening we will visit the Ghats on the Ganges river to witness the evening Arti ceremony. This is a ceremony of worship that takes place in front of statues of the Gods. The priest or worshippers has a tray with a diya (lamp), offerings of food, water, flowers, incense and a small bell. The four elements are represented in Aarthi: fire, earth, water and air. Various rituals are carried out with the lamp. The ceremony ends with everyone sharing the food which has been offered to the Gods.

Overnight Ganges View hotel. (BD)

Day 13 – Varanasi

Before dawn we board our private boat on the Ganges to witness and photograph the famous Ghats which are very wide steps leading down to the river's edge, where thousands of Hindus pray and bathe in the sacred waters. Return to our hotel for breakfast. Later we will explore the narrow streets, alleys and temples which makes Varanasi such a fascinating destination for travellers and photographers.

In the evening we will attend the aarthi ceremony at the banks of river Ganges.

Overnight Ganges View hotel. (BD)

**Day 14 – Lucknow**

Early morning we are transferred to the train station for our train to Lucknow which departs at 05:35 and arrives at 14:30. On arrival transferred to our hotel.

Lucknow the Capital city of Uttar Pradesh and often described as the 'City of Nawabs', is one of the most pristine and multicultural tourist destinations of India. The city primarily flourished during the 18th and the 19th centuries as an artistic and cultural centre of India under the reign of the Nawabs of Awadh.

Liberally sprinkled with British Raj-era buildings – including the famous Residency – and boasting two superb mausoleums, Lucknow plays a somewhat unwarranted third fiddle to Agra and Varanasi, but is equally as fascinating. Lucknow's modern side boasts grandiose monuments and overstated parks and gardens, many with marble sidewalks and pink sandstone.

The city rose to prominence as the home of the Nawabs of Avadh (Oudh) who were great patrons of the culinary and other arts, particularly dance and music. Lucknow's reputation as a city of culture, gracious living and rich cuisine has continued to this day. Lucknow is a beautiful city that still retains its old world charm.

Overnight Clarks Avadh hotel. (BD)

Day 15 – Lucknow

This is a day for sightseeing and photography including visits to Bara Imambara and the British Residency.

The Bara Imambara shrine, one of the largest buildings in Lucknow was built by the Nawab Asaf-ud-daula in 1784. The complex includes the Asfi mosque and the Bhulbhulaiya or the Labyrinth. The Asfi mosque contains the tomb of Asaf-ud-daula and the labyrinth is the only maze in India. It supports the massive structure of the whole complex from underground.

The British Residency is regarded as a National Monument and is one of the major sites of the Revolt of 1857 and the historic battle known as the Siege of Lucknow. The site was the residence of the British Resident General which was stormed during the battle. The structure though in ruins after the battle has still been preserved with the bullet grazed walls and is surrounded by gardens.

Overnight Clarks Avadh hotel. (BD)

Day 16 – Fly to Kolkata (Calcutta)

Morning flight to Calcutta (departs Lucknow at 08:45 and arrives Kolkata at 10:35).

On arrival transfer to our hotel.

Kolkata is one of the most "under-rated" and "under-visited" cities in India, but for anyone who visits this city they are left marveling at the hidden treasures and unique history it has to offer.

The former capital of the Raj, Kolkata still retains much of its colonial character. Its legacy lives on in the imperious Victoria Memorial in the heart of the city, today home to an impressive art collection, and the churches of St John and St Andrew.

We will begin our explorations with an afternoon boat cruise up the River Hoogly. In a private river boat, we will be able to discover a previously unseen side of Kolkata, with a ring-side view of the myriad happenings on the river's 'Ghats'. This was the view that greeted many a 19th century adventurer as he stepped up to the Prince's Ghat. We will sail past Belur Math, headquarters of The Ramakrishna Mission, as the city's two huge and famous bridges, Howrah and Vidyasagar Setu pass overhead. It is a wonderfully relaxing end to the day with a sumptuous tea menu comprising of popular Indian snacks and refreshing Darjeeling Tea.

Overnight The Lalit Hotel. (BD)

Day 17 – Kolkata (Calcutta)

We start early in the morning simply to beat the heat and the traffic. There is no better time to walk through this vibrant and bustling city. As the city wakes up, we will witness the passage of humanity from the streets where her people live and work, to the great River Hoogly where they perform their early morning rituals to cleanse and purify themselves. Where better to witness this than in the colourful riverside flower market where all the city's religious flowers originate.

In our mind, it is important to start our journey here as this is really where it all began. On the banks of this grand River Hoogly the battles of Europe were fought in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries.

Alongside Armenian and Portuguese churches and Jewish synagogues, we embark upon a journey that started the British Raj in India in and around Dalhousie Square, dating back to the time of the Black Hole, from where it transformed itself into a City of Palaces. The famous Writers' Building, the former HQ of the infamous East India Company, the magnificent Governor's House and the almost forgotten Charnock Mausoleum. Here lay the administrative, judicial and political heart of an Empire that stretched from Aden to Burma.

We break for a cup of tea and a snack at St John's Church, the first Cathedral of the city.

Next we visit the Park Street Cemetery and Victoria Memorial, two great institutions left behind by the British. The almost forgotten cemetery dates back a few centuries with poignant images of its early society. The Victoria Memorial houses a permanent collection of Art and a well laid out Calcutta Gallery telling the history of the city.

We will have lunch at a local Bengali restaurant before visiting a textile factory. Rangeen is the weaving, dyeing and printing unit for Weavers Studio in Kolkata, famous for their high quality cotton and silk garments. We will have a chance to watch the artisans at work weaving at their looms, dyeing using diverse techniques such as tie and dye, batik, Japanese Shibori and African Adire, block printing and stenciling on fabric, as well as hand painting and mud and screen printing. The Resource Centre also has a textile library and museum with a collection of antique fabric from around the world. The history of the world's most popular natural dye - Indigo - weaves its story into the visit as well. Indigo has a huge connection with the history of Bengal, and is thought to have played a major role in the start of the struggle for a free India.

After the factory, we will visit **Weavers Studio**, where you can have a look at the finished products, as well as **Weavers Studio for the Arts** that the dynamic Darshan Shah set up to encourage young and upcoming talent by showcasing local culture and art ranging from ceramics, photography, sculpture, handicrafts, textiles and the performing arts.

Overnight The Lalit Hotel. (BD)

Day 18 – Kolkata (Calcutta)

This morning we travel to North Calcutta, "The Black Town", where a parallel culture heavily influenced by the Europeans flourished among the pioneering families of Bengal. The Jain Temple Complex of 4 ornate temples is unique with its shimmering mirrors, ceramic tiles and chandeliers brought over to India by rich merchants from lands as far away as Persia, Japan and Europe.

The Marble Palace is perhaps the most bizarre of the Bengali mansions of this area. Built in 1835 by Raja Rajendra Mullick, a wealthy Bengali merchant with a passion for collecting works of art, it houses an amusing collection of paintings, marble sculptures and Belgian glass.

From the extravagance of the Marble Palace we proceed to the calm, intellectual heart of the Bengali Quarter, the bastion of Bengali culture and home of the multi-talented poet, novelist, musician, painter and playwright, the famous Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore. His grandfather Dwarkanath Tagore built this grand mansion in the 18th century and the museum showcases the life of the family in 19th century Bengal, and their involvement in the Bengali Renaissance, the Brahma Samaj movement and finally the Freedom Struggle of India.

We will lunch at a lovely little Bengali Restaurant situated in the historic Star Theatre, where Bengali theatre has its roots, along with much of the drama that initiated the freedom movement in Bengal, and later the rest of India. The food is simple and fresh, with local specialties like Daab Chingri (prawn curry in tender coconut gravy), Bhukti Paturi (a local river fish cooked in mustard and wrapped in a banana leaf), a vegetable made from the flowers of the banana tree and an ice cream dessert made with fresh jaggery from the date palm tree.

In the afternoon we will visit Kumartuli or the Potters' Market, where giant life-like religious idols are created for the city's numerous festivals out of river clay, bamboo and straw and then adorned with elaborate jewellery and clothes, with beautifully painted features.

On the way back into town we can visit the Motherhouse, Mother Theresa's home and the center of her Missionaries of Charity. Her modest tomb and the Spartan room where she lived and died, embodies her life's work, with its simplicity and dedication to only helping the poor and needy

Overnight The Lalit Hotel. (BD)

Day 19 – Depart Kalcota (Calcutta)

Transfer to the international airport for your flight departure. (B)

The day-to-day schedule should be taken only as a general guide. A variety of factors, including adverse weather conditions, difficulty with transportation and politics can lead to enforced changes. Because of this it is not possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the planned itinerary. The trip leader will make any changes which are necessary.

Meal key: B = breakfast, D = dinner

INCLUDED IN THE COST

- Accommodation on a twin share basis (unless single occupancy has been requested) for the nights listed in the itinerary.
- Meals as specified.
- Airport – Hotel – Airport Transfers.
- All internal transport as the itinerary.
- Domestic flight tickets (Lucknow-Calcutta)
- English speaking Indian guide
- Entrance fees to the monuments
- Tour leader – Simon Watkinson who will provide photographic tuition and tutoring throughout the trip

NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST

- International flights
- Airport taxes
- Visa fees
- Travel Insurance
- Medical examination (if required) & vaccination costs
- Personal expenditure, bar bills, laundry, telephone calls, etc
- Porters, guides & other tips
- Meals not specified (lunch)
- Personal clothing & equipment
- Optional trips
- Charges incurred as a result of delays beyond Classic Journeys control
- Anything not specified in the Cost Includes section

GROUP SIZE

Minimum 4, Maximum 10

This holiday will operate once the minimum group size has been reached.

GUIDE / TOUR LEADERS

On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Professional photographer, Simon Watkinson (ABIPP) will escort you on this trip along with Ann Brooks from Classic Journeys. Simon will provide photography tuition and help you improve your photography.

TOUR GRADE

EASY CULTURAL TOURING: Most of this tour involves overland travel in comfortable vehicles. Some of the roads in India are poorly maintained and sections will have potholes. Early starts are normal. Some of the sightseeing involves easy walking.

HEALTH & FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

The pace is considered easy and should enable anyone in good health to participate. While there are no specific physical requirements, it is important that travellers are in good health, have a positive attitude, a sense of humour and a spirit of adventure. Tours can consist of early starts, some long days or climbing into vehicles. The transport provided is the best available for the area and type of terrain being visited but be prepared for some lengthy journeys, bumpy dirt roads or the occasional delay. The amount of walking involved in this trip varies.

Most of the sightseeing and exploring the cities will be on foot in order to take photographs. We carry a basic first aid kit but recommend that each person carry their own personal first aid kit including any prescription medication they require. A suggested contents list will be provided on booking in the country information dossier. We also provide details of the recommended vaccinations needed.

ACCOMMODATION

Comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels throughout with private facilities.
Overnight sleeper trains (Amritsar to Agra and Agra to Varanasi)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS

If you are a single person booking this holiday you do not have to pay single supplements if you are happy to share. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single client of the same gender. However your booking is accepted only on the understanding that if no roommate is available then you accept a single supplement will be levied. Single supplements are payable if you specifically request to have a room to yourself. If you have requested single accommodation we will do our best to secure this although this may not always be possible.

FOOD

Breakfast and dinner.

Most hotel restaurants usually provide both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, continental, Indian and traditional cuisine. Please ask the staff if you have any specific request, especially regarding flavours and spices, as they will do their best to adjust menus accordingly and cater for your tastes.

WEATHER

Mostly hot, dry and sunny. From April to June is the hottest season, with temperatures ranging from 32°C to 45°C. From July to September the temperature drops slightly but humidity increases making it very uncomfortable, 90% of the rains occur in this period. In October through to December, after the rains, the average maximum temperature is 33°C to 38°C with the minimum between 18°C and 20°C. Winter or the cold season is from January to March (10°C to 27°C). Early morning and evenings can be cold in November through to February.

SUGGESTED PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT

You will need a DSLR, Digital SLR with lenses offering a focal length from wide (24mm or wider) to telephoto (70 - 200mm or longer). A laptop computer loaded with Adobe Lightroom would be useful if you want to process images while on tour. Additionally we strongly recommend a back-up device such as an external hard drive.

Simon advises all group members to take the following photography equipment. If you would like to discuss equipment or have any photography related queries, please do not hesitate to contact Simon by email: (office@world-infocus.co.uk) or telephone during office hours (9am to 5pm): 07526 018081 or 07511 075739. You can also contact Ann at Classic Journeys by email (journeys@classicjourneys.co.uk) or telephone: 07858 410677.

- **Suggested Camera Body:** A 35mm SLR camera system with interchangeable lens will allow you to get the best shots in most conditions.
- **Suggested Lenses:** A wide angle (16 – 35 mm or 24 – 105 mm or similar) and a telephoto (70 – 200mm or similar) are very useful. Skylight / UV filters protect your lens.
- **Filters:** A polarising filter is useful for landscapes. Optional ND filters x 4 and x 8.
- **Batteries, Memory & Storage:** Bring spare batteries (2 or 3), battery charger, travel adapter, sufficient memory cards and digital storage device.
- **Camera bag:** Preferably a backpack type.
- **Lightweight tripod:** of a professional quality.
- **Miscellaneous:** A brush for cleaning your lens and air blower are important and your camera and lens need to be in protective cases. A shutter release cable.
- **Laptop Computer** preferably loaded with Adobe Lightroom if you wish to process images on tour.

CLOTHING

Casual clothing is the order of the day. Hard wearing, easy to wash travel clothes are ideal. You may wish to pack one set of slightly smarter clothes to wear at the hotels. Laundry service will be available at all the places we stay. During the day you will need a wide brimmed sun hat and sunglasses. Lightweight, comfortable walking shoes are advised for throughout the holiday and for sightseeing.

PASSPORT & VISA REQUIREMENTS

Entry Requirements:

All visitors to India require a valid passport (at least 6 months from the date of entry into India) and an entry visa. It is your responsibility to get your own visa.

INDIAN VISA APPLICATION

From August 15th 2015, Britons are one of 113 nationalities who will be able to apply for India's "e-Tourist visa", making the process of obtaining correct entry documents cheaper and quicker.

UK passport holders are able to apply and pay for an online visa using the Indian government's tourist visa website.

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in>

Follow this link for the **official Indian e-visa home page**.

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

Please read the instructions carefully as the procedure must be followed exactly, especially details regarding the size and background of photographs.

VISA AGENCY

If you prefer to have the help of a visa agency in obtaining your India visa, [Travcour UK](#) have proved to be very helpful and efficient:

<http://www.travcour.com/page/visa-applications/india.php>

INSURANCE

Insurance is essential and is a condition of booking that you have adequate travel insurance cover. It is very important that you obtain insurance cover against the usual risks associated with travel, from the time of booking your holiday until the time you return home. Please ensure that your insurance provides adequate protection against the two major concerns: medical/repatriation expenses while abroad and cancellation/curtailment charges in the event that you, a travelling companion or a close relative fall ill either before or during the tour. For trekking holidays your travel insurance must contain evidence of satisfactory cover for repatriation and helicopter rescue.

Classic Journeys do not provide any advice on travel insurance. Classic Journeys is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd. who are Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Campbell Irvine is a specialist travel insurance broker. The comprehensive policy they issue provides 24-hour medical emergency assistance and covers altitude and all adventurous activities undertaken on our holidays. For single-trip policies, the insurance provides cover for both UK and worldwide residents at very competitive rates. In addition an annual policy is available to United Kingdom residents.

To obtain insurance cover visit the [Campbell Irvine Ltd. website](#).
(http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/classicjourneys_home.htm)

We require confirmation of your insurance, the policy number and 24-hour emergency telephone number who ever you take insurance with.



SUGGESTED READING

The Imperial Way: Paul Theroux and Steve McCurry

India A Portrait: Patrick French – tells the story of how India emerged from a turbulent struggle for independence to become a vibrant democracy with one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

In Spite of the Gods: Edward Luce – assesses the forces that are forging the new nation. Cutting through the miasma that still clouds thinking about India, this extraordinarily accomplished book takes the measure of a society that is struggling to come to grips with modernity.

Nine Lives: In Search of Sacred and Modern India: William Dalrymple – A series of snapshots exploring how traditional religion merges with modern life in India told through personal stories.

No Full Stops in India: Mark Tully - A superb series of 'stories' which explore Calcutta, from the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad (probably the biggest religious festival in the world) to the televising of a Hindu epic.

The Story of India: Michael Wood – Book and also DVD from the BBC Series

Guidebooks

India, A Travel Survival Kit: Lonely Planet

India: Insight Guides, APA Productions

India: Berlitz Pocket Guide

BOOKS & MAPS AVAILABLE FROM:

Stanfords (www.stanfords.co.uk)

Amazon (www.amazon.co.uk)

If you have any questions or would like to know more about any aspect of this tour, please do not hesitate to contact the Classic Journeys office.

All World In Focus clients will be required to complete a Classic Journeys Booking Form and booking will be subject to acceptance of the Classic Journeys Booking Conditions, which will be provided, and supersedes any information presented on the World In Focus web site or other World In Focus promotional literature. In addition, in the unlikely event that Simon Watkinson is unable to escort the tour, Classic Journeys reserve the right to send a suitable replacement if available. In such circumstances, the tour will not be cancelled and no compensation will be paid.

©Classic Journeys and World In Focus. All rights reserved. No portion of the text or images on these pages can be reproduced without the express written consent of Classic Journeys or World In Focus.