

2016-2017

INDIA

SPECIAL INTERST TOURS



Photography Tour

India Photography Tour

20 days: from NZD 8950 per person on Twin share

Auckland – Singapore – Kolkata – Varanasi – Khajuraho – Bandhavgarh – Kashmir – Agra – Delhi – Singapore – Auckland

Photograph India: the crowds and vitality of incredible Kolkata, the sacred city of Varanasi during the fun-filled Holi festival, tigers, leopards and more at Bandhavgarh National Park. We see the big landscapes and soaring peaks of Himalayan Kashmir, the pearly beauty of Taj Mahal and the bazaars of Delhi.

Departing on 12th March 2017, small group (max 10 people), luxurious and hosted from New Zealand by Liz Light, an award winning travel photographer.

The Group is escorted from New Zealand by qualified, highly motivated and friendly host Liz Light

Liz is an award winning writer and photographer who has been in love with India since she saw a picture of a group of women wearing saris when she was nine years old. She has visited this magnificently diverse country many times and loves the warm welcome and humour that is special to India, the vegetarian food and, of course, the colour and the myriad of photo-opportunities that make this incredible country a delight for photographers. www/lizlight.co.nz and www.colourindia.co.nz

Tue, 07 Mar : Auckland – Bangkok – Kolkata

Arrive this morning at 11:45am at Auckland Airport to check-in for your Thai Airways flight to Bangkok (1450/2050 hrs) with onward flight to Kolkata (2155/2300 hrs). Stay in Hotel Peerless (or similar) for 4 nights

Wed, 08 Mar : Kolkata (B)

Calcutta (now called Kolkata), was established by the British in 1690 and was the capital of India until 1911. Kolkata, a treasure trove of 200 years of British architecture, has over 800 listed heritage buildings and many of them are in a state of appealing photographic dishevelment. Take a morning tour to explore Kolkata. Drop off at the spice market, walk to the nearby flower market. We might see Indian wrestling practice on the rivers' edge. Then we walk to over the Hooghly River Bridge to Howrah Station. Take a local ferry back across the river to Kumartuli, the potter's village, from which our bus will pick us up. Afternoon, cover Lindsay Street for street-eats and crazy bazaars. A guided walk around New Market (it was new in 1903) and the bazaar area of central Kolkata.

Thu, 09 Mar : Kolkata (B)

Return to the river banks to photograph the fishermen, Ghats activity, old English godowns in a states of photogenic decay and Kolkata's famous Howrah bridge and new bridge, the Laughing Club, open air oil massage. In the afternoon we have a bus tour of the Park Street & Kaligath, the temple of the goddess Maa Kali. Visit the heritage Park Street cemetery for some quietness in amongst Kolkata's buzz, and the Mother House, the home and mission of Mother Teresa.

Fri, 10 Mar : Kolkata (B)

Visit the white marble Victoria Memorial designed in Italian Renaissance-Mughal style now a museum housing Imperial memorabilia. Check out St Paul's cathedral, a fine example of rural Sussex in central Kolkata. Also visit the taxi-washing depot (think of hundreds of bright yellow 1950's Austin Cambridge cars and their drivers) and will go to the rickshaw builders area. Afternoon is free to explore on your own. Liz and your India guide will have lots of ideas.

Sat, 11 Mar : Kolkata – Varanasi (B)

Take a flight to Varanasi (0825/0950 hrs). From airport, drive to the ancient Buddhist learning centre of Sarnath, where Buddha preached his first sermon. Visit the Sarnath Museum housing some of the greatest treasures of Buddhist art and the beautiful sculpture of Teaching Buddha. Varanasi is India's most sacred city and is in many way the most exotic and beautiful. Afternoon is free to explore the 5 kms of Varanasi's famous ghats, stone steps down to the sacred Ganges River, where all of life plays out on the water's edge. This evening, we will take a boat to witness the amazing Arti ceremony of music, fire and prayer, to pay homage to the sacred river, Mother Ganga. Stay in Varanasi is for 3 nights in Hotel Jukaso Ganges (or similar)

Sun, 12 Mar : Varanasi (B)

At sunrise, take a boat cruise on Ganges, to witness the everyday life in the holiest of cities, as people arrive at the ghats to take a ritual dip, perform yoga asanas, wash clothes and offer flowers and incense to the holy river. At stone steps on the river's edge, join hosts in a feeling of pilgrimage. This is a superlative cultural experience. Continue on walking tour of the medieval lanes of Varanasi. Afternoon is free. This evening, again witness Arti on the river's edge but, this time, get in amongst it instead of viewing the ceremony by boat.

Mon, 13 Mar : Varanasi (B)

This morning, witness the festival of colours Holi, one of the most important festivals in India and is the reason why this tour departs in March. Holi is played by throwing coloured water over people and also flurries of bright dye powder. The celebrations are accompanied by music, dancing and joyful foolery. It's an immensely colourful festival and photography is amazing, especially on the ghats. We will take a boat and photograph the hijinks from the water. In the afternoon there will be the opportunity to get right in amongst it. As our hotel is on the river's edge we can escape to its tranquillity when the crowds and carry-on get too much.

Tue, 14 Mar : Varanasi – Khajuraho (B)

Take a flight to Khajuraho, famous for its erotic sculptured temples. Although quiet today, in 10th century Khajuraho was the centre of thriving civilization and its magnificent group of temples was built between the 09th and 10th centuries. This afternoon, visit the east and west temple complexes. The erotic stone carvings here have come to symbolize the important role of love and prana energy in Hindu thought. Stay in Khajuraho for one night in Hotel Ramada (or similar)

Wed, 15 Mar : Khajuraho – Bandhavgarh (B/L/D)

Road transfer to Bandhavgarh NP, stopping at little villages and other photographic points of interest along the way. Bandhavgarh NP boasts of highest concentration of Bengal tigers. Apart from the tigers, Bandhavgarh's star attraction is leopards and the park contains 40 species of mammals including deer, wild boar, Indian bison, sambar, barking deer and langur, some 250 species of birds and several reptiles. One can't walk freely in the park so photography will be from a jeep. Stay in Bandhavgarh for three nights in Infinity Wilderness Resort (or similar)

Thu, 16 Mar : Bandhavgarh (B/L/D)

Morning and evening jungle safaris in the Park. Our lodge is in extensive grounds just outside the park and has lake side pavilions. There are also excellent photographic opportunities in and around the lodge.

Fri, 17 Mar : Bandhavgarh (B/L/D)

Morning and evening jungle safaris in the Park. If you didn't get the ultimate shot of a tiger or a leopard, we will have more opportunities to do so today.

Sat, 18 Mar : Bandhavgarh – Jabalpur – Delhi (B)

Transfer to Jabalpur Airport for your flight to Delhi (1600/1750 hrs). The drive is 190 kms but we will stop frequently for photography. Stay in Delhi for one night in Hotel Ibis Aerocity (or similar)

Sun, 19 Mar : Delhi – Srinagar (B/D)

Take a flight to Srinagar (1010/1140 hrs), in Kashmir Valley surrounded by the Himalayan mountains. The photography on Lake Dal is sublime and, in early spring, there is still snow low on the mountains and the flowers the valley are beginning to show through. There are photographic opportunities from the veranda of our quirky, snug houseboat and in all the exciting activities beyond it. This afternoon, take a shikara ride on Dal Lake to visit the floating vegetable gardens. Stay in Srinagar for 4 nights in Heritage Houseboats (or similar)

Mon, 20 Mar : Srinagar (B/D)

This morning, take heritage walk of the old city. Walk through history at Zaina Kadal, to Jama Masjid and Shah-e-Hamdaan. Meander through old bazaars bedecked with dry fruits, silks, spices and much more. In the afternoon, visit famous Shalimar Gardens, Dargah Sharif mosque and a small park where hundreds of freshly dyed pashmina shawls dry in the sun.

Tue, 21 Mar : Srinagar (B/D)

Drive through the Kashmir valley to Yusmarg in Sang Safed Valley, which has unique spring flowers and is surrounded by some of the highest peaks in Pir Panjal range. River Doodh Ganga makes its way through the valley adding to the ambience.

Wed, 22 Mar : Srinagar (B/D)

Day free to follow your own interests. If it is a perfect morning you may wish to photograph from a shikara, or you may want to leave the camera alone and go shopping. Liz and your Indian guide will be handy for any suggestions.

Thu, 23 Mar : Srinagar – Delhi – Agra (B)

Take a flight to Delhi (0935/1045 hrs) and transferred by bus to Agra, immortalized in stone and marble, showcasing legacy of finest examples of Mughal architecture in India. Today, Agra is most synonymous with Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders. This afternoon, visit Taj Mahal, built with perfect symmetry, wonderful proportions and exquisite details. The Taj Mahal is one of the great architectural wonders. Stay in Agra for one night in Hotel Utkarsh Vilas (or similar)

Fri, 24 Mar : Agra – Delhi (B)

Visit sprawling Agra Fort which was the seat of power for four generations of Mughal emperors. Agra Fort's architecture is an almost perfect fusion between military might and lavish beauty. Later, drive back to Delhi. Stay in Delhi for 2 nights in Hotel Royal Plaza (or similar)

Sat, 25 Mar : Delhi (B)

This morning visit New Delhi, built in a typically British colonial style, in unique Indo-Victorian architecture; Parliament House, the Secretariat buildings and the Vice Regal Palace, the residence of the President of India, and India Gate, the War Memorial Arch. Visit Connaught Place, the city centre with wonderful shops, excellent restaurants, lots of fun and up-town bustle. Afternoon is free to explore. Liz recommends shopping as Delhi has fabulous markets with extraordinary products from all over India and Liz knows where they are.

Sun, 26 Mar : Delhi – Bangkok – Auckland (B)

Take a Thai Airlines flight to Bangkok (1110/1640 hrs) with an onward connection to Auckland (1845/1205+1)

Mon, 27 March : Auckland

Arrive in Auckland

Note: We may have to alter the above itinerary to adjust with unforeseen flights schedule changes.

Inclusions: Economy class international and domestic flights as indicated in the program, accommodation on twin sharing basis including breakfast, other meals as specified (either in Hotels or local restaurants), aircon transport, NZ Tour Host, local guides, monument entrance fees, baggage handling at Hotels.

Excluded: Domestic flights in NZ, India Visa, Travel Insurance, excess baggage penalties, meals not indicated in the program, beverages during pre-arranged meals, gratuities and other personal expenses