

North India Highlights



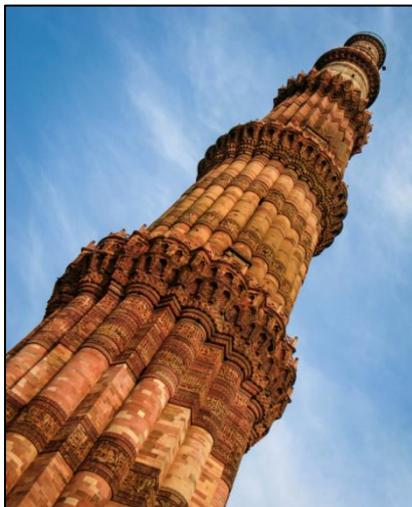
Day 1: Arrive Delhi

You will be met on arrival in Delhi and transferred to the Hans Plaza Hotel for two nights in an executive room (B&B basis).

Hotel Hans Plaza

The Hans Plaza Hotel is set in the central business district of New Delhi; a clean, modern space amid the bustle of the city centre.

The Hans Plaza has two roof terrace gardens with a view of the Delhi skyline, a stylish bar, and a fine-dining Italian restaurant. The 77 rooms are air-conditioned and en-suite.



Day 2: Delhi

After breakfast at your hotel, embark on a full-day sightseeing tour of Old & New Delhi with a knowledgeable local guide.

Old and New Delhi present striking contrasts. The ancient city was built by Emperor Shah Jahan, who also commissioned the famous Taj Mahal, while the new garden city began development in 1911.

Drive through the old city and visit the Red Fort, Delhi's most prominent Mughal-era monument; Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque; and Qutub Minar, the tallest free-standing minaret of stone in the world. Then, continue to Humayun's tomb, the first Mughal construction in India, dating back to 1565.

After lunch, continue your tour with a visit to some of new Delhi's most prominent monuments, including the India Gate, built in the first half of the 20th-century, the Gandhi memorial at Raj Ghat, and the architecture of Edwin Lutyens in Delhi's former diplomatic quarter.

Conclude the day with a walking tour of Old Delhi to really get a feel for this bustling city.

Day 3: Delhi – Varanasi

After an early breakfast, transfer to the airport to catch the morning flight to Varanasi (10:30 / 11:45), where you will be met on arrival and transferred to the Hotel Ganges View for two nights in a river facing room (B&B basis).



Hotel Ganges View

Formerly a private home, the Hotel Ganges View was revamped into a Heritage Hotel in 1999. Since then the hotel has promoted the art and culture of Varanasi by organising cultural events, as well as accommodating guests to the city. Don't be surprised if you bump into some of the local poets and writers who have been known to frequent the hotel!

The Hotel Ganges View is immaculately kept. Relax in the homely sitting area or take in the view of the River Ganges from the open verandah and balconies.

In the evening, as the sun sets, enjoy a boat ride along the Ganges to witness the flower and aarti ceremony.

Day 4: Varanasi

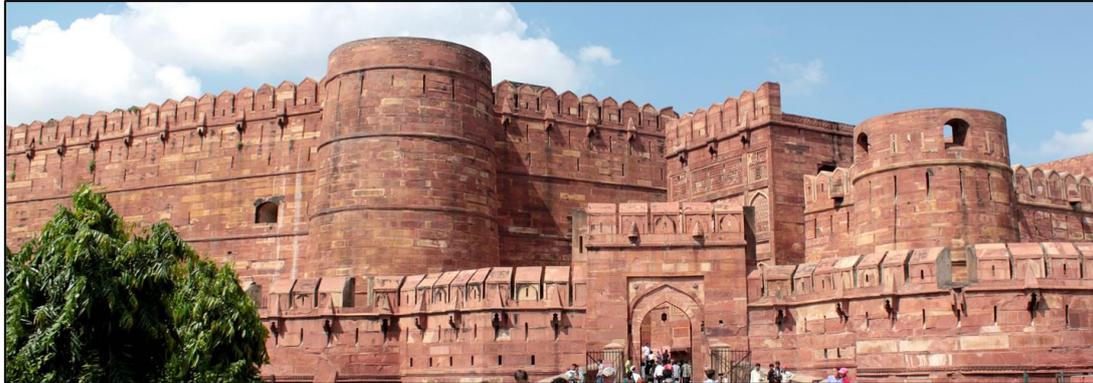
Awake early for a sunrise boat ride on the Ganges, before returning to your hotel for breakfast.

Later this morning, enjoy a half-day sightseeing tour of the holy city of Varanasi, accompanied by a local guide. During the tour, you'll visit the temples of Kashi Viswanath, Durga and Tulsi Manas Mandir, as well as the grounds of Banaras Hindu University.



Also known by the names of Kashi or Benares, Varanasi is among the most important points of pilgrimage for devout Hindus, and is considered one of the seven holy cities of India. It is believed

that those who are cremated here are instantly liberated from the cycle of birth and re-birth, and the city has sometimes been described as a giant mausoleum on account of the number of pilgrims who come here to scatter the ashes of their relatives. But don't let this description put you off—Varanasi is a lively, bustling city and a pleasure to explore!



Day 5: Varanasi – Agra

After breakfast, depart Varanasi for Sarnath, an ancient city said to be the site of the deer park where Gautama Buddha first taught the Dharma to his followers on achieving enlightenment. Take the time to explore Sarnath's fabulous museum, before embarking on a walking tour of the Buddhist temples and stupas. Return to Varanasi for lunch.

Late this afternoon, you will be collected from your hotel and transferred to Varanasi railway station, where you board the overnight train to Agra (18:15/06:10; first-class carriage). You will be supplied with a packed dinner for the journey.

Day 6: Agra

You will be met on arrival in Agra and transferred to the Grand Imperial for one night in a deluxe room (B&B basis). Due to your early arrival, you may have to wait a short while before check-in.

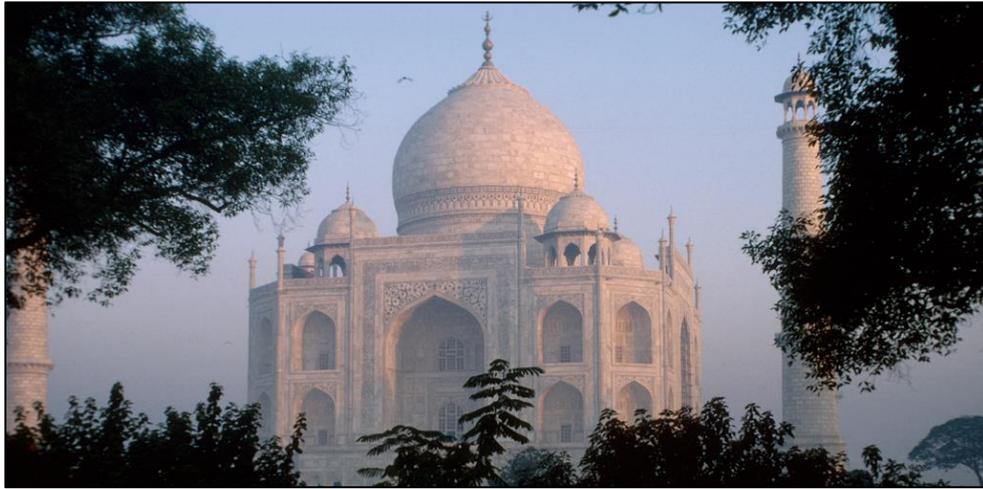


Grand Imperial

The Grand Imperial occupies an enviable location in central Agra, within easy driving distance of Agra Fort. Over a century old, the hotel was constructed using the same style of Lahori brick that was used in the construction of the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort.

The Grand Imperial provides 30 well-appointed en-suite guestrooms and suites with four-poster beds, terracotta-coloured walls and lavish bedding. Amenities include air-conditioning, 24 hour room service and tea/coffee maker. The hotel restaurant serves Indian, Chinese and Continental cuisine.

After you have checked-in at your hotel, embark on a full-day sightseeing tour of Agra, beginning with Agra Fort, where you can explore the main public halls and the viewing points that look out onto the Taj Mahal. Afterwards, visit the Taj itself, perhaps the world's most famous mausoleum. During the course of your tour you will also find time to explore the Tomb of I'timād-ud-Daulah. Often referred to as the Jewel Box, this mausoleum is much smaller than the Taj Mahal but stands out for its elaborate Mughal-era frescoes and landscaped grounds.



Day 7: Agra – Jaipur

Depart Agra after breakfast and travel by road to Jaipur (230kms; approx. 5 hours). En-route, you'll have the opportunity to stop at the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, former Mughal capital, for a tour of the old city palace, mosque and administrative lay out.

On arrival in Jaipur, check-in at Shahpura House for two nights in a suite (B&B basis).

Shahpura House

Established as a hotel in 1956, Shahpura House was once the residence of the Shekhawat clan of Rajputs. Like many historical houses, Shahpura is a curious mixture of the old and new. Indeed, part of it is still a family home.

The rooms vary in their layouts, but are all beautifully furnished, while also offering the expected modern amenities. Each room opens out onto a private verandah.



Day 8: Jaipur

After breakfast, enjoy a full day sightseeing tour of the pink city of Jaipur with a local guide. Your tour will include visits to the Amber Fort, City Palace, Jantar Mantar and Hawa Mahal.

Start with the Palace of the Winds, or Hawa Mahal, a beautiful five-story palace constructed of red and pink sandstone (pictured).

From Hawa Mahal, continue to Jantar Mantar, an elaborate observatory built in 1727 for Sawai Maharaja Jai Singh II, a Rajput king famous in India for his contributions to astrology and music. He commissioned five observatories throughout India – in Jaipur, Ujjain, Varanasi, Mathura and Delhi – but only Jantar Mantar is still functional today.



End the morning's tour with a visit to the City Palace of the Maharaja of Jaipur, with its fabulous collection of robes and saris in cotton and silk with gold lattice work. The City Palace also houses a collection of paintings.

After a lunch stop, your tour continues with a visit to the Amber Fort, a unique combination of Mughal and Rajput architectural styles. Housed within the fort is the Sheesh Mahal, or the Hall of Mirrors, which was constructed in the early 17th-century and which blends Hindu and Islamic art to beautiful effect. Finally, explore the Hall of Public Audiences and Maharaja Man Singh's Palace, before returning to your hotel.

Day 9: Jaipur - Ranthambore

Meet with your driver after breakfast and depart Jaipur for Ranthambore National Park – a drive of approx. 4 hours. On arrival at the National Park, check in at Ranthambhore Kothi for two nights (full-board basis).

Ranthambhore Kothi

Ranthambhore Kothi is a comfortable garden lodge situated on the edge of Ranthambore National Park. It accommodates its guests in 28 spacious and attractively-furnished rooms, centred on a courtyard with swimming pool. Each room is furnished to modern standards and features a generously-sized bathroom with open shower.

The staff at Ranthambhore Kothi are pleasant and attentive and the on-site restaurant, Daavat, features a rich and varied menu of Indian cuisine.

This afternoon, embark on a shared game drive in Ranthambore.

Ranthambore National Park is India's most famous tiger park and offers perhaps the best tiger-viewing opportunities of any wildlife park in the country.

Your safari into Ranthambore will follow the tiger trails through deciduous jungle terrain, and will be led by an experienced guide.

Of course, there's more to Ranthambore than its tigers. Other mammals, including sloth bear, leopard, nilgai and spotted deer, are also found in the park, though sightings of many of these creatures are very rare. During the safari, you'll also have the chance to stop at Ranthambore Fort, with its impressive views of the park and lakes.



Day 10: Ranthambore

Embark on an early morning game drive in Ranthambore National Park, before returning to the hotel for breakfast. The rest of the morning is at leisure to enjoy the hotel facilities and pool.

In the afternoon, head out on another game drive into the Ranthambore jungle.

Day 11: Ranthambore - Delhi

There will be time this morning for a final early morning game drive in Ranthambore National Park, before returning to the hotel for breakfast.

Afterwards, you will be collected from your hotel and transferred to Sawai Madhopur Railway Station to board your train to Delhi, the Golden Temple mail train (second AC sleeper class; 12:30-16:45), with a packed lunch.

On arrival in Delhi, you will be met and transferred to Delhi airport for your international flight home/onward connection.

Price Guide:

*The cost of this itinerary is from **£2,750 per person**, based on twin share and subject to availability at the time of booking. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).*

Includes:

- Accommodation and meals as described
- Transfers, domestic flights and rail fares
- English-speaking guides
- All activities as outlined
- Entrance fees
- All currently applicable taxes

Excludes:

- International flights
- Meals not specified
- Camera fee wherever levied
- Personal expenses
- Tips and gratuities
- Travel Insurance