



The Golden Temple

INDIA - LAND OF TEMPLES

Welcome to our new India brochure for 2010/11 featuring the artistic and scenic wonders of this "land of temples" where thousands of richly decorated religious monuments adorn every corner of the sub-continent, showcasing 2,000 years of history.

Once again we are featuring our popular group tour "Taj, Temples & Tigers" which combines the majestic palaces, temples and forts of the Golden Triangle with a jungle safari in two of India's best national parks.

All the other itineraries in this brochure are designed for private touring. Pages 14 & 15 feature some gorgeous boutique hotels which offer an authentic and luxurious experience of rural India and can be included in any itinerary. Also new this year are the unbelievably elegant and beautiful Sri Lankan Secret Hideaways on pages 44 and 45.

Overall we have expanded our range of accommodation, offering you more choice, from grand palace hotels to the exclusivity of a private mansion. We have also added two new luxury rail journeys - the Royal Rajasthan on Wheels (p 28) and the Splendours of the South (p 29).

Happy travelling,

Stephen & Sara Cameron - Founders

CONTACT US OR ASK YOUR TRAVEL AGENT

Call our experienced consultants to discuss your travel plans, or contact your travel agent.

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Woman in Sari, Jodhpur



Weather Chart

India has a tropical climate. Winters are fairly cold in North India but during the day it is extremely pleasant. It rains heavily during the Monsoon period from July to mid-September. Summer temperatures can be very hot.

INDIA	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Agra	06 24	10 27	16 32	22 38	27 42	29 41	26 35	25 33	24 32	19 33	12 30	08 24
Bandhavgarh	08 24	10 28	15 34	22 40	27 42	28 40	26 38	25 35	23 33	20 33	12 30	10 25
Bangalore	15 28	16 31	19 33	21 32	21 33	20 30	01 28	19 29	19 28	19 28	17 27	15 27
Chennai	20 29	21 31	23 33	26 35	28 38	26 37	26 35	26 35	25 34	24 32	23 29	21 28
Kochi	23 31	24 31	26 31	26 31	26 31	24 29	24 28	24 28	24 28	24 29	24 30	23 30
Delhi	07 21	10 24	15 30	21 36	26 41	29 40	26 35	25 34	25 33	19 33	12 30	04 20
Goa	19 31	16 31	23 31	05 32	27 32	24 30	23 28	24 29	23 29	24 31	23 32	21 32
Jaipur	08 22	11 25	15 31	21 37	26 41	27 39	26 34	24 32	23 33	18 33	12 29	09 24
Kolkata	14 26	17 30	22 34	24 36	26 36	26 34	26 32	26 32	24 32	24 31	18 30	13 27
Leh	-14 -3	-12 01	-6 06	-1 12	03 17	07 21	10 25	10 24	05 21	-1 14	-7 08	-11 02
Mumbai	19 29	20 30	23 31	24 33	26 33	26 32	25 30	24 29	25 30	24 32	23 32	21 31
Varanasi	09 23	11 27	17 33	22 39	27 41	28 39	26 33	26 32	25 32	21 32	13 29	09 25
OTHER												
Colombo (Sri Lanka)	22 30	22 31	23 31	24 31	26 31	25 29	25 29	25 29	25 29	24 29	23 29	22 29
Kathmandu (Nepal)	10 19	12 22	17 28	20 33	26 35	28 37	26 36	25 33	25 31	19 28	12 23	08 20
Thimphu (Bhutan)	-3 12	01 14	04 16	07 20	13 23	15 25	13 19	16 25	15 23	10 22	05 18	-1 14

High or Best Time Shoulder or Low Season Off Season

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Bhutan

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City Stays & Day Tours

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Luxury Train Journeys

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Nepal

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Northern India & Himalayas

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Rajasthan, Taj Mahal & Other Highlights

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Secret Hideaways

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Southern India & Kerala

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Special Interest Tours

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Sri Lanka

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Wildlife Safaris

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CONSERVATION

As a specialist wholesaler with a focus on wildlife, Natural Focus Safaris is committed to helping preserve the places we visit. The national parks of the Indian subcontinent are unique and fragile environments that shelter an incredible number of animal, bird and plants species, many of which are endangered. Along with our ground operator in India, Eastbound, we've become the first Australian travel company to join Travel Operators for Tigers (TOFT), an organisation dedicated to protecting the highly endangered Bengal Tiger. See www.toftiger.org. We have also pledged ourselves to the protection of India's other great cat - the Asiatic Lion - with regular donations to the Biodiversity Conservation Trust of India (BCTI).

SPECIALISTS IN CUSTOM-DESIGNED HOLIDAYS

Natural Focus Safaris specialises in small group tours and private tailor-made arrangements for the discerning traveller. Over the past 25 years, with parent company African Wildlife Safaris, we have built up an enviable reputation for our knowledge, expertise and professionalism.

Our staff are all passionate travellers with a wealth of knowledge. They are experts in creating the most complex itineraries and can put together an itinerary to suit your style and budget. The tours in this brochure have been constructed with much thought and careful research, however they are just an example of what you can do. You can also choose from our wonderful portfolio of accommodation, ranging from 5 star hotels to private homestays.

HOTEL CATEGORIES

To assist you in choosing your accommodation, we have classified our hotels as AA, A, B, C, Homestay or Houseboat. Each tour in the brochure lists the hotels included in each category. Hotels are subject to availability and may be substituted with a similar standard hotel.

- Category AA: Outstanding hotels. Highest standards of service & facilities. May include a Heritage Hotel.
- Category A: Premium 5 star or 5 star hotels and may include a Heritage property.
- Category B: Equivalent to a 4 star hotel.
- Category C: Equivalent to a 3 star hotel.
- Homestay: Traditional Indian homes/ Guesthouses.
- Houseboats: Traditional houseboats on Kerala waterways, rated A for the best available to C for more budget accommodation.

BEFORE YOU BOOK

The information contained in this brochure was correct at the time of publication. Since then, however, changes beyond our control could have occurred. Please refer to our Booking Conditions on page 47, in particular with respect to prices, itineraries, tour duration, standard of services, tour content, airfares and airline schedules. Before you book please check with your travel agent or Natural Focus Safaris to ascertain if there are any alterations to the tour you have selected.

ACCOMMODATION

PALACE AND HERITAGE HOTELS

Experience the living history of some of India's most wonderful palaces and enjoy the hospitality of former Maharajas. Each ancestral home is uniquely different, but all are united by their commitment to individual attention and personal service. Whilst many of the homes and palaces are rustic, all have been modernised to meet the needs of today's traveller.



Taj Lake Palace, Udaipur

HOTELS

These range from luxury hotels with the highest international standards of service and facilities to modest 4 and 3 star hotels which are clean and comfortable. All have bathrooms with Western style facilities. However, remember that this is India and there may sometimes be problems with electricity, plumbing and telephones.



The Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur

HOMESTAYS

Experience "living India" in a traditional Indian home. Private residences offer a welcoming, informal ambience, personal service and comfortable accommodation. Dine with the family, enjoying traditional local cuisine and fresh local produce. Each home must meet a required standard and all have modern bathroom facilities.



Homestay, Delhi

WILDLIFE LODGES

Accommodation in the Indian game areas varies from comfortable lodges to heritage hotels and even luxurious tented camps. Most lodges have a central dining/lounge area, and guests are accommodated in separate chalets in the grounds. Rooms and tents have ensuite facilities. Safaris are conducted by jeep and sometimes on elephant back.



Mahua Kothi, Bandhavgarh

RAIL JOURNEYS

Travel in the traditional style of a bygone era on one of our luxury rail journeys through India. The Palace on Wheels, Deccan Odyssey, Royal Rajasthan On Wheels and Golden Chariot (pages 28/29) capture the romance and excitement of train travel at its luxurious best offering glamorous accommodation, good food and guided excursions.



Deccan Odyssey

HOUSEBOATS

Explore the unique and beautiful waterways of the southern Indian state of Kerala by romantic kettuvallam (traditional houseboat). Houseboats offer simple but comfortable accommodation with two to four bedrooms with ensuite toilet, and air-conditioning available at night. They are the perfect way to explore Kerala's tranquil lagoons.



Houseboat, backwater cruise

STYLE OF TOURS

GROUP TOURS

Our feature group tour takes a maximum of 16 passengers, which is small enough to ensure a flexible, personalised experience. Travelling with a group of like-minded travellers can be good fun and long term friendships are often made. The group is accompanied by one of our local Indian guides and for 10 or more travellers the tour is escorted by one of our own tour leaders.



Breathtaking backdrop for a group shot

PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Most of our itineraries are not group tours but designed to be undertaken independently. Costings are based on two or more passengers in a private vehicle with your own driver, and local guides provided in each city. Your itinerary will be private, personalised and flexible. Our experienced staff can completely custom-design an itinerary for you.

PRIVATE GUIDES

Whilst our journeys include local guides in each city, if you prefer to be accompanied by a specialist guide we can arrange this at an additional cost.

Tirath Singh

With an arts degree from Rajasthan, Tirath is a keen naturalist, photographer and excellent guide to have along on any Indian itinerary.

Eager to share his exceptional knowledge of India's wildlife and culture, he is one of Natural Focus Safaris' preferred guides for groups and individual bookings.



TRANSPORTATION

Our tour costs are based on standard transportation in an air-conditioned Tata Indigo. It is possible to upgrade to a higher vehicle standard, such as a Toyota Innova (for 2 to 3 passengers) or the 10 seater Tempo Traveller which provides spacious transportation for up to 7 passengers.



Toyota Innova superior transport

OUR INDIA SPECIALISTS

We have a team of experienced consultants who have travelled widely in India, Bhutan, Nepal & Sri Lanka. They have the expertise and knowledge to help you design the perfect holiday to suit your style and budget.



Stephen Cameron

Company founder and CEO, Steve Cameron, has travelled to India numerous times, leading our wildlife trips and touring Nepal, Sikkim and remote Bhutan. A wildlife enthusiast and photographer, he encountered his first tiger by elephant back in the beautiful Bandhavgarh National Park and has explored the Gir Forest in search of the rare Asiatic lion.



Praful Albuquerque

Growing up in Mumbai, Praful's dream was to see the world, and 30 years on he's notched up an impressive resume: the game parks of East Africa, where he lived and worked for many years, Australia, Sri Lanka, South America, Nepal and of course, most of his own country. Medieval Jaisalmer is still his favourite city in India. Praful is also our National Sales & Marketing Manager.



Anne-Marie Zambelli

After 25 years in the industry, our General Manager's passion for travel continues undimmed. Annie has been to Africa countless times, cruised Antarctica and tasted South America. She fell in love with India on her first visit in 2002, and returns each year to experience somewhere new! Her travel diary recounts sipping tea in Darjeeling, searching for endangered rhinos in Kaziranga and tracking tigers in Ranthambore, Corbett, Bandhavgarh & Kanha.



Jean Maxwell

Jean's love for travel and the exotic led her to India many years ago. A 'people person' and keen photographer she feels that "The Taj is divine, but it's the people who leave you with those everlasting memories". Jean has also led tours to Kashmir, Ladakh, Rajasthan, Nepal and Sri Lanka.



Jenn Boyd

An avid globetrotter who has toured India, Nepal, Africa, South America, and even visited Antarctica, Jenn cites the colours, cities and people of Rajasthan as one of her most memorable experiences. She has trekked Nepal many times and walked through fields of wildflowers in Shimla.



Sarah Kidd

Sarah's travels have taken her to the remotest corners of India for months at a time. She has practiced yoga on the rooftops of Varanasi, cruised the sleepy backwaters of Kerala and counts Lake Dal in Kashmir as amongst her top ten destinations. One of our senior consultants, Sarah is also our resident expert on all things Indian from how to drape a sari to cooking a curry from scratch.



Sue Cleveland

A seasoned world traveller Sue loves visiting India. Two of her favourite places are the Taj Mahal and the inspiring memorial to Mahatma Gandhi at Raj Ghat. In past years she travelled to beautiful Lake Dal in Kashmir, and Kathmandu in Nepal.



Genevieve Thurgood

Gen loves to immerse herself in the real India - bartering in markets, chatting with the locals and absorbing the local colour. She has charmed a snake at Jaipur's City Palace, fallen in love with the Taj Mahal and stepped back into history at the ancient city of Fatehpur Sikri.



Kayla Budge

Kayla has travelled to Delhi, Agra and through Rajasthan. She enjoys touring the grand monuments like the Taj Mahal, Akbar's Mausoleum and the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri, but also loves exploring the colourful markets and vibrant towns.