

INDIA

with ENCOUNTER OVERLAND

NEPAL, THE GANGES & RAJASTHAN

KATHMANDU to BOMBAY (or vice versa)

28 DAYS 2,300 miles (3,700kms)

GOA & SOUTH INDIA

BOMBAY to MADRAS (or vice versa)

23 DAYS 1,600 miles (2,600kms)

ALL INDIA

KATHMANDU to MADRAS (or vice versa)

**7 WEEKS & 3 DAYS 3,900 miles
(6,300kms)**

including 40 miles (70kms) by camel

TAJ & TIGER

KATHMANDU to DELHI (or vice versa)

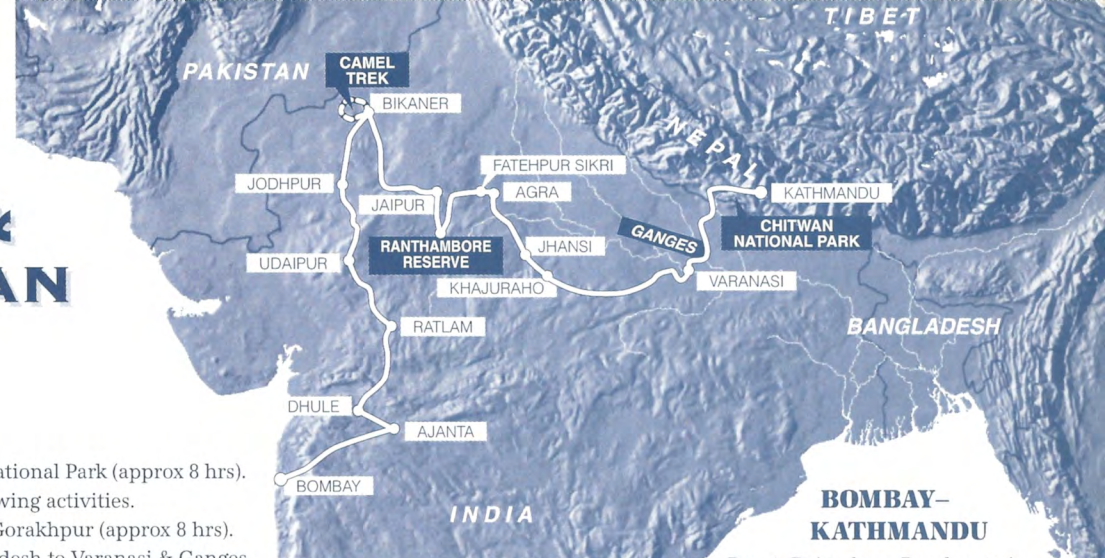
15 DAYS 1,300 miles (2,100kms)

NEPAL, THE GANGES & RAJASTHAN

ITINERARY GUIDELINE

KATHMANDU-BOMBAY

Day 1: Drive to lowlands & Chitwan National Park (approx 8 hrs).
Day 2: In Chitwan. Optional game viewing activities.
Day 3: West through Terai to India & Gorakhpur (approx 8 hrs).
Day 4: Rice fields & rivers of Uttar Pradesh to Varanasi & Ganges (approx 8 hrs).
Day 5: In Varanasi. Sunrise on river; old city, streets & shrines (local guide).
Day 6: Climb to Deccan plateau. Open countryside, small villages (approx 9 hrs).
Day 7: Drive (approx 2 hrs) to Panna hills wildlife reserve. In Panna hills & at Khajuraho Jain temple complex.
Days 8 & 9: Backroads of Madhya Pradesh to Jhansi and Agra (approx 250 miles/400 kms).
Day 10: Agra: Taj Mahal, Red Fort & markets (local guide).
Day 11: Fatehpur Sikri—abandoned 16th century Moghul city & bicycle into Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary (local guide).
Day 12: To Ranthambore (approx 5 hrs). In Tiger Reserve (jeeps & local guides).
Day 13: In Ranthambore, to Jaipur (approx 3 hrs)—pink sandstone city of Rajasthan.
Day 14: Jaipur: City Palace, Amber Fort & Market (local guide).
Day 15: To Rajasthan desert & Bikaner (approx 6 hrs). Bikaner Royal Palaces.
Day 16: Drive into Thar desert, start of camel safari (local guides).
Days 17 & 18: By camel through Thar desert. (Approx 10 hrs/day with long noon breaks).
Day 19: Rejoin EO truck & drive (approx 4 hrs) to Jodhpur.
Day 20: In Jodhpur: hilltop citadel, home of Maharajahs, India's most intriguing museum (local guide).
Day 21: South to Jain temple of Ranakpur & lake town of Udaipur (approx 10 hrs).
Day 22: In Udaipur: "City of Dreams"—lake palaces & islands.
Day 23: Rural Madhya Pradesh to Ratlam (approx 8 hrs).
Day 24: To Mandu (approx 4 hrs)—great ravines & hilltop town rich with Asia's past.
Day 25: Satpura Hills to Maharashtra State & Dhule (approx 8 hrs).
Day 26: To Ajanta (approx 3 hrs). 2,000 yr old Buddhist cave paintings & shrines along Waghore river cliffs.
Day 27: In Ajanta & to near Dolali (approx 5 hrs).
Day 28: Descend from Deccan to tropical west coast & Bombay (approx 6 hrs). Afternoon arrival. End arrangements.



BOMBAY-KATHMANDU

Day 1: Drive from Bombay to inland Deccan plateau near Dolali (approx 6 hrs).
Day 2: To Ajanta (approx 5 hrs). 2,000 yr old Buddhist cave paintings & shrines along Waghore river cliffs.
Day 3: In Ajanta, to Dhule (approx 3 hrs).
Day 4: Satpura Hills to Mandu (approx 8 hrs).
Day 5: Mandu ravines & hilltop town rich with Asia's past. To Ratlam (approx 4 hrs).
Day 6: Hills of Rajasthan to Udaipur (approx 8 hrs).
Day 7: In Udaipur: "City of Dreams"—lake palaces & islands.
Day 8: North to Jain temple of Ranakpur & to Jodhpur (approx 10 hrs).
Day 9: In Jodhpur: hilltop citadel, home of Maharajahs, Fort & museum (local guide).
Day 10: Drive into Thar desert (approx 4 hrs) & start of camel safari (local guides).
Days 11 & 12: By camel through Thar desert. (Approx 10 hrs/day with long noon breaks).
Day 13: Rejoin EO truck & drive into Bikaner—Royal Palaces.
Day 14: Bikaner & to Jaipur (approx 6 hrs)—pink sandstone city of Rajasthan.
Day 15: Jaipur: City Palace, Amber Fort & Market (local guide).
Day 16: To Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (approx 3 hrs). In Reserve (jeeps & local guides).
Day 17: In Ranthambore, to Bharatpur (approx 5 hrs).
Day 18: Bicycle into Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary (local guide). Fatehpur Sikri—abandoned 16th century Moghul city.
Day 19: In Agra: Taj Mahal, Red Fort & markets (local guide).
Days 20 & 21: Backroads of Madhya Pradesh to Jhansi and Khajuraho (approx 250 miles/400 kms).
Day 21: Khajuraho Jain temple complex & Panna Hills Wildlife Reserve.
Day 22: Deccan countryside & small villages (approx 8 hrs).
Day 23: Descend to Uttar Pradesh, the Ganges & Varanasi (approx 3 hrs).
Day 24: Varanasi—sunrise on river. Old city, streets & shrines (local guide).
Day 25: Northern rice fields & rivers to Gorakhpur (approx 8 hrs).
Day 26: To Nepal, east through Terai to Chitwan National Park (approx 8 hrs).
Day 27: In Chitwan. Optional game viewing activities.
Day 28: Into Himalayas to Kathmandu (approx 8 hrs). Evening arrival. End arrangements.

PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

HIGHLIGHTS & ROUTE

To the Royal Chitwan National Park in the low hills along the border with India, and our permanent tented camp at Sauraha. This wildlife reserve of tall shaded forests, hidden clearings, and high elephant grass sits astride the sandy & slow moving Rapti river. All the Terai lowlands were forest & jungles until the eradication of malaria in the 1950's. Tiger hunts of the aristocracy & the British Raj during the early part of the century frequently killed more of the animals in one day than the total now surviving in Nepal. With malaria gone, hill people moved in to cultivate the rich, flat soil—and wildlife came under further pressure. The 1,000 square kilometre Park & reserve was declared by the King in 1973 and the animal numbers are now growing strongly again. It is a beautiful haven for the great Asian rhinoceros, elephant, sloth bear, deer, gharial crocodile, langur monkeys, wild pig, several hundred bird species, and the elusive leopard & Bengal tiger. There are now estimated to be 80 tigers and some 400 rhino here. (Optional game-viewing through Park on elephant back, on foot with a local guide & in dug-out canoes along the banks of the Rapti river—approx. US\$30 total).

Varanasi on the sacred Ganges has been a place of pilgrimage & a centre of learning for more than 2,000 years and is considered to be the world's oldest continuously inhabited city. It is the holiest of Hindu cities, the pious come here to die, their bodies to be burned on the ghats and their ashes scattered over the waters of the goddess Ganges. A boat takes us onto the river at dawn. As the sun rises, the city slowly comes alive and thousands of pilgrims descend to bathe along the steps leading into the water. Back from the ghats the old city is a fascinating maze of narrow streets, of overhanging buildings, hidden temples and small shops. 10 kms away at Sarnath, Buddha preached his first sermon & message of enlightenment. Later, around 250 BC, the great emperor Ashok was converted to Buddhism and built stupas, monasteries & a great pillar of inscriptions and edicts here. Our road climbs a steep escarpment out of the river plains to the quiet valleys & hills of the central Deccan plateau. At Khajuraho the 10th century Chandella kings raised great stone temples to venerate their gods. Every wall, surface & vaulted ceiling is carved with intricate details, erotic sculptures and spectacular expression of medieval Indian art. Nearby in the Panna Hills the deserted Rajgarh palace decays with sad grace as the forest grows across its once formal grounds & pavilions. These densely forested hills of gorges & waterfalls make up the Panna National Park. Tiger are increasing here, but are very hard to see. More usually we find gazelle, spotted deer & even wolves.

Agra, capital of India under the Moghuls in the 16th & 17th centuries, stands on a broad curve of the Jumna river. Greatest of all its building is the Taj Mahal—the incomparable white marble monument built by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz. Around 20,000 people worked on its building—artists from across central Asia, the Middle East & from Europe. Semi precious stones by the ton, ground smooth and flat, are embedded in its walls in flowing lines & patterns. The whole structure is a perfection of beauty & symmetry.

But the future may not be promising. Airborne industrial pollution is thought to be already etching its way into the glaring white marble of the Taj. The massive Red Fort is a city within a city. Constructed as a military stronghold by the Emperor Akbar in 1570, it was changed by successive rulers into a luxurious palace complex of meeting halls, mosques & Moghul gardens. Agra's bazaars and cottage industries reflect her Moghul past in the best of India's handwoven rugs & carpets, precious stones, jewellery & inlaid marble. Nearby is Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's 'designer' capital and showpiece that was to have been the most magnificent seat of power and learning in the East. Built over 15 years from 1570, the city was suddenly and completely abandoned only 15 years later. It is thought that the water supply dried up and Fatehpur

Sikri stands today as an eerily empty, unused and perfectly preserved city from the height and splendour of the Moghul Empire.

Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary was the exclusive duck shooting preserve of the Maharajahs of Bharatpur—one of Rajasthan's many small princely states. A plaque inside the sanctuary details the thousands of brace of duck bagged on shoots by visiting royalty & heads of state. Then, in 1964 the Maharajah declared his tract of forest, lakes & wetlands a bird sanctuary. Today Bharatpur is home to over 300 local & migratory bird species, some from afar as Siberia & China. By bicycle through the sanctuary and boat onto the lake & marshes. In the dry deciduous forests of the Aravalli hills we drive by jeep along the trails and glades of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. The 400 sq km reserve is dotted with ancient pavilions and structures, slowly disappearing into the undergrowth. It is a perfect habitat for tigers, whose numbers have increased dramatically here since 1970 when they were teetering on extinction. Despite the efforts of Project Tiger, poaching and conflicting interests with an expanding human population are again placing the tigers' future in doubt. Chances of meeting tiger in Ranthambore are excellent, though by inclination and the nature of cats, they can never be guaranteed.

The craggy hills of Rajasthan ('Land of Kings') are home of the Rajputs—a proud race strong in chivalry, flashing colour and flamboyant lifestyle. Jaipur, the capital and brilliant heart of Rajasthan, is built in rose-pink sandstone. The walled city was founded by the warrior-astronomer Jai Singh in 1727. Its broad avenues and squares show a system of city planning far ahead of its time. The City Palace & hill top Amber Palace demonstrate the fabulous wealth of the Maharajahs from the 18th century until just a few decades ago. Royal apartments are crammed with carpets from Persia, paintings, gilded mirrors and fabulous furnishings from around the world.

To the desert cities of Rajasthan—Bikaner on the ancient camel caravan routes across Asia, the Moon & Glass Palaces of the Royal Bikaner household. Jodhpur where the cliff-top fortress is now an amazing museum of all the artistic & martial perfections & wild excesses of the Maharajah's heyday. From our road between Bikaner & Jodhpur we travel for two days and nights by camel into the Thar desert. At a majestic pace through desert scenery and oasis villages, with each person to a camel under the guiding hand of its master, we seem to ride back in time to attune to a different world and a slower flow that is the desert nomad's life. Rajasthani dishes are prepared by our camelers and nights are spent round flickering fires under a canopy of stars.

The beautiful Jain temple at Ranakpur in the remote Aravalli valley is one of the biggest in India. Built in 1459 it has 29 marble halls supported by 1,444 different and unlike pillars. Udaipur is a cool oasis in the dry hills of southern Rajasthan, a fabulous lake city of island palaces, gardens & fountains. The City Palace on the edge of Lake Pichola is the largest in Rajasthan. Every year the Maharani used to be weighed at the palace gate, and his weight in gold distributed to the people of the city. Beneath its cupolas, towers & balconies are peacock mosaics, ornamental tile work & sculpted gardens. Boats ply the shimmering lakes to gold & white island palaces and views across the 'city of dreams'.

Along the quiet backroads of Madhya Pradesh state, to the hills and huge ravines of Mandu—the 10th citadel coveted by a succession of history's invaders, Afghans & Mongols, Moghuls & Marathas. Today it seems a ghost city, dormant and sprawling across the top of an isolated rock outcrop high above the plains. The Royal enclave of the long & narrow Ship Palace reputedly hosted a harem of 15,000. Among the mango, tamarind & banyan trees are underground wells & baths, pavilions, palaces & tombs from the peak of Afghan architecture. The 15th century Jami Masjid was modelled on the great mosque of Damascus.

To Maharashtra state, the cliffs of the Waghore river and the great caves of Ajanta. Buddhist monks came to this remote area in the 2nd century BC and began carving a series of monolithic caves from the semi-circle of cliffs above a sharp bend in the river. Over the next 900 years they expanded their retreat into 4 sanctuaries & 25 cave monasteries. Interiors are carved in pillars, frescoes and statues of Buddha; walls are lined in brilliant spiritual paintings using local minerals & lapis lazuli from Afghanistan. Then, in the 7th century, the monks left (for a new site at Ellora). Their caves lay forgotten and unknown until 1819 when a lion

hunting party stumbled upon them. Finally to the warm shores of the Arabian Sea and Bombay, India's international city from where the British left, and the world's largest democracy looks to its future.

GROUP SIZE & STAFF

24 max including EO staff. Plus local guides in Varanasi, Agra, Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Jaipur, Jodhpur. Camel drivers in Thar desert.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easy project with no physical demands other than the camping life-style. Travel by camel (approx 2 days, 2 nights & 2 half days) can impose harsh & prolonged exposure to the sun.

INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

All transport, food (except very occasional lunches as noted under Meals, Cooking & Food below), camping equipment & supplies, camping fees, local guides; wildlife reserve, museum, site entrance fees & activities as noted from Day 1 until arrival in Bombay or Kathmandu on Day 28. There are no kitties or similar en route payments or funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

International flights to/from Kathmandu & Bombay, transfers to/from airports and airport taxes. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, malaria prophylaxis, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost). Optional activities in Chitwan National Park—elephant back, on foot with guide, & dugout canoe on Rapti river (allow approx US\$30 total). Accommodation & evening meal in Bombay or Kathmandu on Day 28.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard EO truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc. Permanent tented camp & camp kitchen in Chitwan, large communal tent on camel safari in Thar desert (no camp beds or washing facilities).

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack with removable or internal frame, a small daypack or airline type bag, water bottle. Strong footwear, waterproof jacket, personal clothing, medicines & toiletries. No specialised clothing or equipment is needed and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Most international flights in and out of India & Nepal have a 44lb/20kg luggage weight limit.

TRANSPORT

EO expedition truck, bicycles in Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, jeeps in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, camels in Thar desert (1 person per camel seated with camel driver; no saddles but reasonably padded position astride animal's back & shoulders).

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout. Permanent tented camp in Chitwan. Basic campground facilities in cities & main centres usually extending to simple washing/showering & toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping with no facilities other than standard EO truck equipment. Very basic equipment/facilities on camel safari in Thar desert (2 nights). Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc. Accommodation on night 28 in Bombay or Kathmandu is not included. Reservations at our Kathmandu hotel before Day 1 may be made through EO, with payment by you directly to hotel on arrival. (Reservations not necessary at our Versova Beach accommodation in Bombay).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches (Local fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, cereals, bread, cheese, preserves & spices; some canned & dried goods when fresh supplies insufficient for our

needs). Your assistance is needed in shopping, cooking & meal preparation. On camel safari in Thar desert an interesting mix of Rajasthani dishes are prepared by our camel drivers. In larger towns (such as Agra or Jaipur) where a day is spent away from the truck in individual sightseeing or activities, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the project, and which contains not less than 4 blank pages. All nationalities require visas for India & Nepal and their costs vary according to your nationality. An Indian visa must be obtained before you leave home. EO or your agent can advise you of up to date visa details & their costs applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining them.

INSURANCE & MEDICAL

Everyone must have individual personal travel insurance. Various policies are available, but they must include a minimum of £20,000 or US\$30,000 for medical, hospital and additional expenses including emergency repatriation.

No vaccinations are required for India & Nepal if you are arriving directly from Europe, Australasia or North America, but a few are strongly recommended. Their up to date details are given in our pre-departure information. You will also need to obtain a small supply of malaria tablets. The most effective types for this area, as recommended by the UK Tropical Disease authorities are also detailed in our pre-departure information.

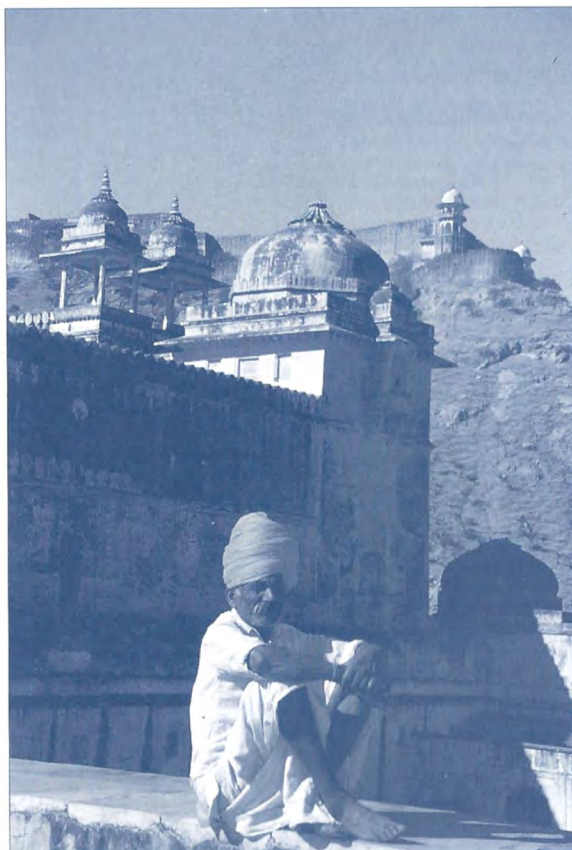
PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

To cover personal day to day expenditure—drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, individual museum entry fees & some souvenirs. You should budget an additional £25/\$40 per day that you spend in Kathmandu & Bombay before & after the project to cover hotels, meals & incidentals. Good buys can include Tibetan & Indian rugs & carpets, Indian kilims, Hindu & Buddhist bronzes & statues, thangka paintings & religious items, jewellery, gems, handbeaten copper & brass work, inlaid marble, textiles & silks. Small & interesting 'treasures' need not cost much at all. If you think you might be severely tempted, we suggest budgeting extra into your spending money even if you don't end up using it all. Credit cards are accepted only by well-established outlets in the major cities. Other than the above, EO has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

If you have time we suggest you arrive in Kathmandu or Bombay a couple of days before departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights.

From Kathmandu: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Kathmandu hotel at 6.00pm two days before Day 1. If you are arriving earlier, Kathmandu is a fascinating city with plenty to see & do: Bazaars,



palaces, museums & hill temples, interesting selection of restaurants & bars, ancient city of Bhaktapur (30 mins bus), nature reserve (45 mins bicycle), overnight at Nagarkot (45 mins bus)—spectacular sunrise/sunset Himalayan views. Simple bicycles may be hired at low cost from most Kathmandu hotels.

From Bombay: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Bombay hotel (at Versova Beach 19 miles/30 kms north of the city) at 6.00pm on the evening before Day 1. This meeting is also your latest arrival time.

If you are arriving earlier, public transport runs between Versova Beach and the city centre. Bombay is a large, sprawling & modern Indian city, its sites include India Gate, Prince of Wales Museum & Jehangir Art Gallery, Hanging Gardens & Nehru Park, walk along Marine Drive; or relax at Versova beach.

LEAVING AT END OF THE PROJECT

In Bombay: Arrangements end on arrival at our Bombay hotel (Versova Beach) in the late afternoon/early evening of Day 28. The airport is between here and the city but only very late night flight connections could be made for this same day. Flight connections for the following day are preferable.

In Kathmandu: Arrangements end on arrival at our Kathmandu hotel on the evening of Day 28. You should not make onward flight arrangements for this same evening. International flights out of Kathmandu are often overbooked, and late or unconfirmed check-ins will be denied boarding with little prospect of another flight out for several days. Any flight connection on the following day could easily be made.

CLIMATE

September-October & March-May: Hot days/warm nights/occasional rain late Sept. **November-February:** Warm days/cool-cold nights/rainfall rare. Cooler in Kathmandu (4,400ft/1,340m), subtract 5°C/10°F from above temperatures.

NORTH INDIA

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	21	24	31	36	41	39	36	34	34	34	29	23
Daily Average	Low	7	9	14	20	26	28	27	26	24	18	11	8
FAHRENHEIT	High	70	75	87	97	105	102	96	93	93	93	84	73
Daily Average	Low	44	49	58	68	79	83	81	79	75	65	52	46
Relative Humidity		52%	45%	46%	56%	62%	75%	80%	82%	81%	72%	63%	55%
Rainfall in mm		23	18	13	8	13	74	180	173	117	10	3	10

MODULES, CONNECTING & CONCURRENT PROJECTS

Between Kathmandu & Jaipur "Nepal, the Ganges & Rajasthan" is combined with the "Taj & Tiger" project. (Maximum combined group size remains 24). "Nepal, the Ganges & Rajasthan" also connects in Bombay with "Goa & South India" (Bombay—Madras or v.v.) which travels to the beaches of Goa & Cochin, Mudumalai & Periyar wildlife sanctuaries, the hills of Mysore, Cape Comorin on the southern tip of India, to the old cities & shore temple complexes along the Indian Ocean to Madras. Put together these two projects form the "All India" project (Kathmandu—Madras or v.v). On Kathmandu departures you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels into southern India. On Bombay departures you may be joining some group members who have already been travelling for 23 days from Madras. Departures between October & February can combine well with EO's trekking & white water rafting programme in Nepal.

INTERESTING READING

A Princess Remembers (Gayatra Devi), Slowly Down the Ganges (Eric Newby), Saving the Tiger (G. Mountfort). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Return flights	
Visas	
Vaccinations	
Insurance	
Personal spending money	

TOTAL

GOA AND SOUTH INDIA

ITINERARY GUIDELINE

BOMBAY-MADRAS

Days 1 & 2: Drive south through tropical coastal forests of Maharashtra to Goa (approx 350 miles/570 kms). Camping.

Days 3 & 4: In Goa: old city (local guide) & beaches.

Day 5: Karnataka State, shores & estuaries along Arabian Sea to Mangalore (approx 10 hrs driving).

Day 6: Drive inland to Coorg Hills & India's central Deccan plateau, to Mysore (approx 8 hrs).

Days 7 & 8: In Mysore: Maharajahs palace, Somnathpur temple, markets—incense & intricate woodwork (local guide).

Day 9: Drive to Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (approx 2 hrs). In sanctuary—(spotted deer, elephant, Indian bison, crocodile), to Ootacamund (approx 1 hr).

Day 10: Through Nilgiri Hills to Palghat & the Malabar Coast at Cochin (approx 9 hrs).

Days 11 & 12: In Cochin—beaches, islands of old port & city.

Day 13: To Cardamom Hills & Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary (approx 4 hrs). By boat along lake & waterways—elephant, bison, (rare tiger).

Day 14: Return to coast at Quilon, to Trivandrum (approx 10 hrs).

Days 15 & 16: Trivandrum & Kovalam beach.

Day 17: Kovalam to Cape Comorin, southern tip of India (approx 3 hrs).

Day 18: Rural Tamil Nadu to Tiruchirupalli (approx 10 hrs).

Day 19: Tiruchirupalli—Rock Fort Temple, to Pondicherry & Indian Ocean (approx 7 hrs).

Days 20 & 21: To Kanchipuram & Mahabalipuram (approx 4 hrs)—Pallava shrines & shore temples (local guide).

Day 22: To Madras (approx 2 hrs). In Madras.

Day 23: End arrangements a.m.

(Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary: seasonal conditions can affect frequency of animal sightings. Therefore the itinerary may be occasionally adjusted to substitute a better wildlife reserve).

MADRAS-BOMBAY

Days 1 & 2: Leave Madras a.m. Day 1. Drive (approx 2 hrs driving) to Kanchipuram & Mahabalipuram—Pallava shrines & shore temples along the Indian Ocean (local guides). Camping.

Day 3: To Pondicherry (approx 4 hrs driving).

Day 4: Drive south through rural Tamil Nadu (approx 7 hrs) to Tiruchirupalli—Rock Fort Temple.

Day 5: Tiruchirupalli through Dindigul to Cape Comorin & southern tip of India (approx 10 hrs).

Day 6: To Kovalam beach on the Malabar Coast south of Trivandrum (approx 3 hrs).

Days 7 & 8: Trivandrum & Kovalam beach.

Day 9: Via Quilon to Cardamom Hills & Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary (approx 10 hrs).

Day 10: Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary: by boat along lake & waterways—elephant, bison, (occasional) tiger. To Cochin (approx 4 hrs).

Days 11 & 12: In Cochin—beaches, islands of old port & city.

Day 13: Cochin inland to Palghat, the central Deccan plateau & Nilgiri

Hills to Ootacamund (approx 9 hrs).

Day 14: Drive (approx 1 hr) to Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary. In sanctuary—spotted deer, elephant, Indian bison, crocodile—to Mysore (approx 2 hrs).

Days 15 & 16: In Mysore: Maharajahs palace, temple of Somnathpur, markets—incense & intricate woodwork (local guide).

Day 17: The Coorg Hills to coast & Mangalore (approx 8 hrs).

Day 18: Through Karnataka State, shores & estuaries along the Arabian Sea to Goa (approx 10 hrs).

Days 19 & 20: In Goa: old city (local guide) & beaches.

Days 21 & 22: North through tropical coastal forests of Maharashtra to Bombay. (approx 350 miles/570 kms).

Day 23: Bombay. End arrangements a.m.

(Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary: seasonal conditions can affect frequency of animal sightings. Therefore the itinerary may be occasionally adjusted to substitute a better wildlife reserve).

HIGHLIGHTS & ROUTE

South from Bombay through tropical forests lying between the coast & India's central Deccan plateau; rivers & towns of Maharashtra to Goa. The history of this port & fishing town goes back to the 3rd century BC, but it was the arrival of the Portuguese in 1510 that shaped its character today. Intending to take control the spice trade, they made it their capital in India then the seat of Catholicism in the East. Independence came in 1961 and Goa maintains its laid back atmosphere and easy going ways. Narrow streets, small cafes & bars, Cathedrals & red-tiled Portuguese houses of the old city—and Goa's 100 kms of beaches where coconut palms & sparkling sands meet the warm clear Arabian Sea. Follow the coast to Mangalore, 18th century shipbuilding port of Hyder Ali's Karnataka kingdom and now a centre for India's coffee exports.

Inland to the Coorg Hills (3,300ft/1,000m) & Mysore. Most of India's incense is produced here by small family enterprises, the aromas of sandalwood, jasmine, musk & rose linger in the air. The city was the seat of the Maharajahs of Mysore who earned a reputation for hospitality & spectacle, political stability and progress. The Amber Vilas walled palace is grandly flamboyant in its domes & turrets, in mirrors and stained glass of peacocks & flowers, avenues of carved pillars, huge carved and inlaid wooden doors, cool mosaic and marble floors. The city is also known for its beautifully crafted & inlaid teak, sandalwood & rosewood furniture & carvings.

The Hoysala Kings rose from hill marauders to rule Karnataka & the plains from 1006 to 1310. Extracting rich revenues from their conquests they developed artistic learning and new achievements in architecture. The most perfect of their temples, at Somnathpur, has been called one of the most beautiful and interesting buildings in the world. Set in a cloister courtyard the star shaped temple survives complete and finely proportioned. Built from grey soapstone that is soft when quarried but hardens with age, every surface is carved in beautiful statues. Horizontal friezes of guardian elephants, geese & winged monsters flank carvings that depict stories from the Hindu epics and lives of the Hoysala kings.

Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary lies in the thick deciduous forests of the Nilgiri foothills and is rich in Indian wildlife. Even close to the villages & park headquarters it is possible to see herds of chital spotted deer, elephant, wild pig & gaur (Indian bison). There are sloth and langur monkeys, crocodiles in the Moyar river and, if we're lucky, tiger, panther & leopard in the forests. (Option of elephant back into forest/jungle from Theppakadu village, approx US\$10). To Kerala State, the Malabar Coast and a cluster of islands & peninsulas, winding streets & buildings of 16th century Cochin. Kerala's Jews may have arrived here from Jerusalem when it fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Christian communities of the Syrian orthodox church came to Cochin around the 6th century BC. Vasco da Gama & the Portuguese arrived in 1500 and threw them out. The Dutch took over in 1663 and kicked out the Portuguese. The British followed and did likewise. All were hungry for spices & trade, all left their



mark on what is today one of India's most interesting cities.

Complex Chinese fishing net systems, introduced by emissaries & traders from the court of Kublai Khan, are strung along the channel at the tip of Fort Cochin. Murals in the Mattancherry palace depict legends of the Hindu Gods and are among the best in India. Unlikely houses & squares in old Cochin seem like transplanted village greens from around Europe. Merchants

traded in pepper, spices, ivory & coir coconut fibre (most of those 'Welcome' door mats still come from Cochin).

In the far south India's great central plateau narrows to become the Cardamom Hills. The 700 sq kms of Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary lie in the forested hilltops, centred round a vast artificial irrigation lake created in 1875. This is one of the largest and oldest sanctuaries in India and is known for its wild el-

ephant. Wild pig, dhole (wild dogs), gaur bison & tiger come down to the lake to drink. The banks are home to otter & freshwater tortoise, herons, kingfishers, egrets & fish owls. Early morning or evening are the best times to travel by boat along the lake shores and twisting waterways in search of the animals. (Note: Periyar is usually best visited between October & March but seasonal fluctuations & conditions can still affect the density of wildlife near the lake. We may sometimes adjust our itinerary to substitute a better wildlife reserve in the area of the Cardamom hills).

Trivandrum (Abode of the Serpent) is the capital of Kerala State, a pleasant city of winding streets, red-tiled roofs and tropical green hills. When not engrossed in the strikes and political rhetoric of its powerful communist party, Trivandrum revels in its own slow and easy-going pace. Nearby on the Malabar Coast are the beautiful beaches of Kovalam. Small palm-fringed bays of white sands & surf are separated by rock islands & promontories; village life, traditional fishing and cultivation are little affected by development & commerce. Cape Comorin is the southernmost tip of India where the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean & Bay of Bengal meet & mingle. Sunrise & sunset are spectacular, to bathe here is of special significance to Hindus and is to be fully cleansed since the goddess Parvati did penance here in order to marry Shiva. Low lying Tamil Nadu to the east is a green land of tea, rubber and pepper plantations. In the centre of Tiruchirupalli, on a massive rock outcrop and visible for miles around, is the Rock Fort Temple. There are magnificent views from the top which is reached by a tunnel of 437 steps.

Below on an island in the Cauvery river is the Sri Ranganam temple. Dedicated to Shiva it is the biggest & one of the most important temple complexes in India. Inside the seven concentric walls are 21 gopura with painted ceilings and remarkable carvings, of delicate

female figures, animals, rearing horses & tigers. North through rice padis and riverside villages to Kanchipuram, one of the seven sacred cities of India, and renowned for its fine hand woven silks. Broad streets are crowded & crammed with temples of the Pallava, Chola & Vijayanagar dynasties (5th-16th centuries) whose rulers believed in their divine right as direct descendants of Brahma, the first of the Hindu trinity. Their temples are full of life & colour, walls are topped by crowds of multi-limbed gods, interiors are covered in a confusion of leaping, writhing & dancing deities. Mahabalipuram on the Coromandel Coast was the great sea port of the Pallava kings. Already a port in the 1st century, it was known to Greek traders; today it is a small village sitting quietly among its fabulous rock-cut shore temples, lapped by eternal tides along the miles of empty beaches.



GROUP SIZE & STAFF

24 max including EO staff. Plus local guides in Goa, Mysore & Mahabalipuram.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easy project with no physical demands other than the camping lifestyle. Tropical heat and high temperatures can be expected at all times of year in southern India.

INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

All transport, food (except very occasional lunches as noted under Meals, Cooking & Food below), camping equipment & supplies, camping fees, local guides; wildlife reserve, museum, site entrance fees & activities as noted from Day 1 until arrival in Madras or Bombay on Day 23. There are no kitties or similar en route payments or funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

International flights to/from Bombay & Madras, transfers to/from airports and airport taxes. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, malaria prophylaxis, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost). (Optional forest excursion on elephant back in Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, approx US\$10). Accommodation & evening meal in Madras or Bombay on Day 23.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard EO truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A medium weight sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack with removable or internal frame, a small daypack or airline type bag, water bottle. Strong footwear, waterproof jacket, personal clothing, medicines & toiletries. No specialised clothing or equipment is needed and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Most international flights in and out of India have a 44lb/20kg luggage weight limit.

TRANSPORT

EO expedition truck.

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout. Basic campground facilities in cities and main centres usually extending to simple washing/showering and

toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping in rural areas with no facilities other than standard EO truck equipment. Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc. Accommodation on night 25 in Madras or Bombay is not included.

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches. Local fresh vegetables, fruit, fish, eggs, cereals, bread, cheese, preserves & spices; occasional canned & dried goods if fresh supplies insufficient for our needs. Fresh meat when available, but southern India is mainly vegetarian. Your assistance is needed in shopping, cooking & meal preparation. In larger towns (such as Cochin) where a day is spent away from the truck in individual sightseeing or activities, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the project, and which contains not less than 2 blank pages. All nationalities require a visa for India which must be obtained before you leave home. Visa costs vary according to your nationality. EO or your agent can advise you of the consular visa cost applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining a visa.

INSURANCE & MEDICAL

Everyone must have individual personal travel insurance. Various policies are available, but they must include a minimum of £20,000 or US\$30,000 for medical, hospital and additional expenses including emergency repatriation. Insurance should also cover 'cancellation and curtailment', and personal effects loss.

No vaccinations are required for India if you are arriving directly from Europe, Australasia or North America, but a few are strongly recommended. Their up to date details are given in our pre-departure information. You will also need to obtain a small supply of malaria tablets. The most effective types for this area, as recommended by the UK Tropical Disease authorities are also detailed in our pre-departure information.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

To cover personal day to day expenditure—drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, individual museum entry fees & some souvenirs. You should budget an additional £25/\$40 per day that you spend in Bombay & Madras before & after the project to cover hotel, meals & incidentals. Good buys can include Hindu & Buddhist bronzes, statues & religious items, inlaid woodwork & carvings, jewellery, textiles & silks. Many small & interesting 'treasures' need not cost much at all, but if you think you might be severely & frequently tempted, we suggest budgeting extra into your spending money even if you don't

CLIMATE

Hot days, warm to hot nights. The East Coast (Cape Comorin—Madras) differs from below with rain November/December (140-350mms per month). Otherwise usually dry throughout.

SOUTH INDIA		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	29	31	33	35	38	38	36	35	34	32	29	29
	Daily Average	Low	19	20	22	26	27	26	26	25	24	22	21
FAHRENHEIT	High	85	88	91	95	101	100	96	95	94	90	85	84
	Daily Average	Low	67	68	72	78	81	79	78	77	75	72	69
Relative Humidity		70%	71%	73%	75%	74%	79%	83%	83%	85%	81%	73%	70%
Rainfall in mm		3	3	3	0	18	485	617	340	264	64	13	3

end up using it all. Credit cards are occasionally accepted by well-established outlets in the major cities. Other than the above, EO has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

If you have time we suggest you arrive in Bombay or Madras a couple of days before departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights.

From Bombay: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Bombay hotel (at Versova Beach 19 miles/30 kms north of the city) at 6.00pm on the evening before Day 1. If you are arriving earlier, public transport runs between Versova Beach and the city centre. Bombay is a large, sprawling & modern Indian city, its sites include India Gate, Prince of Wales Museum & Jehangir Art Gallery, Hanging Gardens & Nehru Park, walk along Marine Drive; or relax at Versova beach.

From Madras: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Madras accommodation/campsite at 6.00pm on the evening before Day 1. If you are arriving earlier, Madras is a pleasant enough city for a day or two's rest though it lacks much of the beauty & fascination so often found in southern India. Worth seeing are Fort St George, Guindy Deer Park & Snake Park, Government Museum & Art Gallery, evening Bharata Natyam dance performances.

LEAVING AT END OF THE PROJECT

In Madras: Arrangements end at our Madras campsite after breakfast on Day 23. Any onward flight connections could be made for this day.

In Bombay: Arrangements at our Bombay campsite/hotel (Versova Beach) after breakfast on Day 23. The airport is between here and the city and any flight connections could be made this day.

MODULES, CONNECTING & CONCURRENT PROJECTS

"Goa & South India" connects in Bombay with the "Nepal, the Ganges & Rajasthan" project (Bombay—Kathmandu or v.v.) which travels to the desert fortress-cities & palaces of the Maharajahs in Rajasthan, by camel into the Thar desert, to the Taj Mahal, the tiger reserves & ancient sites of northern India, and across the Ganges to Nepal & the Himalayas. Put together these two projects form the "All India" project (Kathmandu—Madras or v.v.). On Madras departures you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels into northern India & Nepal. On Bombay departures you may be joining some group members who have already been travelling for 28 days from Kathmandu.

INTERESTING READING

Chasing the Monsoon (Alexander Frater), A Tiger for Malgudi (R.K. Narayan), On a Shoe-string to Coorg (Devla Murphy). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

ALL INDIA

ITINERARY GUIDELINE

KATHMANDU—MADRAS

Day 1: Kathmandu to Chitwan National Park (approx 8 hrs drive).

Day 2: In Chitwan.

Day 3: To India & Gorakhpur (approx 8 hrs drive).

Day 4: To Varanasi (approx 8 hrs).

Day 5: In Varanasi.

Day 6: To Deccan plateau, near Satna (approx 9 hrs).

Day 7: To Panna Hills Wildlife Reserve (approx 2 hrs) & Khajuraho.

Days 8 & 9: To Jhansi and Agra (approx 250 miles/ 400 kms).

Day 10: Agra: Taj Mahal, Red Fort, markets.

Day 11: Fatehpur Sikri; & bicycle Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary.

Day 12: To Ranthambore (approx 5 hrs). In Tiger Reserve.

Day 13: In Ranthambore, to Jaipur (approx 3 hrs).

Day 14: In Jaipur.

Day 15: To Bikaner (approx 6 hrs)—Royal Palaces.

Day 16: To desert & camel safari.

Days 17 & 18: Camel across Thar.

Day 19: Drive (approx 4 hrs) to Jodhpur.

Day 20: In Jodhpur.

Day 21: To Ranakpur & Udaipur (approx 10 hrs).

Day 22: In Udaipur.

Day 23: To Ratlam (approx 8 hrs).

Day 24: To Mandu (approx 4 hrs).

Day 25: To Dhule (approx 8 hrs).

Day 26: To Ajanta (approx 3 hrs).

Day 27: In Ajanta & to near Dolali (approx 5 hrs).

Day 28: To Bombay (approx 6 hrs).

Day 29: In Bombay.

Days 30 & 31: Bombay to Goa (approx 350 miles/570 kms).

Days 32 & 33: In Goa

Day 34: To Mangalore (approx 10 hrs).

Day 35: To Mysore (approx 8 hrs).

Days 36 & 37: In Mysore & Somnathpur

Day 38: To Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (approx 2 hrs).

Day 39: To Cochin (approx 9 hrs).

Days 40 & 41: Cochin & beaches.

Day 42: To (approx 4 hrs) & in Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Day 43: To Trivandrum (approx 10 hrs).

Days 44 & 45: Trivandrum & Kovalam beach.

Day 46: Cape Comorin (approx 3 hrs).

Day 47: To Tiruchirupalli (approx 10 hrs).

Day 48: To Pondicherry (approx 7 hrs).

Days 49 & 50: To Kanchipuram & Mahabalipuram (approx 4 hrs).

Day 51: To Madras (approx 2 hrs). In Madras.

Day 52: End arrangements a.m.

ITINERARY GUIDELINE MADRAS— KATHMANDU

Days 1 & 2: Kanchipuram & Mahabalipuram (approx 2 hrs drive).

Day 3: To Pondicherry (approx 4 hrs drive).

Day 4: To Tiruchirupalli (approx 7 hrs).

Day 5: Cape Comorin (approx 10 hrs).

Day 6: To Kovalam beach.

Days 7 & 8: Kovalam beach & Trivandrum.

Day 9: To Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary (approx 10 hrs).

Day 10: In Periyar & to Cochin (approx 4 hrs).

Days 11 & 12: Cochin & beaches.

Day 13: To Ootacamund (approx 9 hrs).

Day 14: Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary & Mysore (approx 3 hrs).

Days 15 & 16: Mysore & Somnathpur.

Day 17: To Managalore (approx 8 hrs).

Day 18: To Goa (approx 10 hrs).

Days 19 & 20: In Goa.

Days 21 & 22: Goa to Bombay (approx 350 miles/570 kms).

Day 23: In Bombay.

Day 24: To near Dolali (approx 6 hrs).

Day 25: To Ajanta (approx 5 hrs).

Day 26: Ajanta, Dhule (approx 3 hrs).

Day 27: To Mandu (approx 8 hrs).

Day 28: Mandu, Ratlam (approx 4 hrs).

Day 29: To Udaipur (approx 8 hrs).

Day 30: In Udaipur.

Day 31: To Ranakpur & Jodhpur (approx 10 hrs).

Day 32: In Jodhpur.

Day 33: To desert & camel safari.

Days 34 & 35: Camel across Thar.

Day 36: Into Bikaner—Royal Palaces.

Day 37: To Jaipur (approx 6 hrs).

Day 38: In Jaipur.

Day 39: To Ranthambore (approx 3 hrs). In Tiger Reserve.

Day 40: In Ranthambore, to Bharatpur (approx 5 hrs).

Day 41: Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary & Fatehpur Sikri.

Day 42: Agra: Taj Mahal, Red Fort & markets.

Days 43 & 44: To Jhansi & Khajuraho (approx 250 miles/ 400 kms).

Day 45: Khajuraho Jain temples & Panna Hills Wildlife Reserve.

Day 46: Deccan countryside, near Satna (approx 8 hrs).

Day 47: To Varanasi (approx 3 hrs).

Day 48: In Varanasi.

Day 49: To Gorakhpur (approx 8 hrs).

Day 50: To Nepal & Chitwan National Park (approx 8 hrs).

Day 51: In Chitwan.

Day 52: To Kathmandu (approx 8 hrs). Evening arrival, end arrangements.



PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings. For example: In Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary seasonal conditions can affect the frequency of animal sightings and our itinerary may be occasionally adjusted to substitute a better wildlife reserve in this area.

HIGHLIGHTS & ROUTE

To the Royal Chitwan National Park in the low hills along the border with India, and our permanent tented camp at Sauraha. This wildlife reserve of tall shaded forests, hidden clearings, and high elephant grass sits astride the sandy & slow moving Rapti river. All the Terai lowlands were forest & jungles until the eradication of malaria in the 1950's. Tiger hunts of the aristocracy & the British Raj during the early part of the century frequently killed more of the animals in one day than the total now surviving in Nepal. With malaria gone, hill people moved in to cultivate the rich, flat soil—and wildlife came under further pressure. The 1,000 square kilometre Park & reserve was declared by the King in 1973 and the animal numbers are now growing strongly again. It is a beautiful haven for the great Asian rhinoceros, elephant, sloth bear, deer, gharial crocodile, langur monkeys, wild pig, several hundred bird species, and the elusive leopard & Bengal tiger. There are now estimated to be 80 tigers and some 400 rhino here. (Optional game-viewing through Park on elephant back, on foot with a local guide & in dug-out canoes along the banks of the Rapti river—approx. US\$30 total).

Varanasi on the sacred Ganges has been a place of pilgrimage & a centre of learning for more than 2,000 years and is considered to be the world's oldest continuously inhabited city. It is the holiest of Hindu cities, the pious come here to die, their bodies to be burned on the ghats and their ashes scattered over the waters of the goddess Ganges. A boat takes us onto the river at dawn. As the sun rises, the city slowly comes alive and thousands of pilgrims descend to bathe along the steps leading into the water. Back from the ghats the old city is a fascinating maze of narrow

streets, of overhanging buildings, hidden temples and small shops. 10 kms away at Sarnath, Buddha preached his first sermon & message of enlightenment. Later, around 250 BC, the great emperor Ashok was converted to Buddhism and built stupas, monasteries & a great pillar of inscriptions and edicts here.

Our road climbs a steep escarpment out of the river plains to the quiet valleys & hills of the central Deccan plateau. At Khajuraho the 10th century Chandella kings raised great stone temples to venerate their gods. Every wall, surface & vaulted ceiling is carved with intricate details, erotic sculptures and spectacular expression of medieval Indian art. Nearby in the Panna Hills the deserted Rajgarh palace decays with sad grace as the forest grows across its once formal grounds & pavilions. These densely forested hills of gorges & waterfalls make up the Panna National Park. Tiger are increasing here, but are very hard to see. More usually we find gazelle, spotted deer & even wolves.

Agra, capital of India under the Moghuls in the 16th & 17th centuries, stands on a broad curve of the Jumna river. Greatest of all its buildings is the Taj Mahal—the incomparable white marble monument built by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz. Around 20,000 people worked on its building—artisans from across central Asia, the Middle East & from Europe. Semi precious stones by the ton, ground smooth and flat, are embedded in its walls in flowing lines & patterns. The whole structure is a perfection of beauty & symmetry. But the future may not be promising. Airborne industrial pollution is thought to be already etching its way into the glaring white marble of the Taj. The massive Red Fort is a city within a city. Constructed as a military stronghold by the Emperor Akbar in 1570, it was changed by successive rulers into a luxurious palace complex of meeting halls, mosques & Moghul gardens. Agra's bazaars and cottage industries reflect her Moghul past in the best of India's handwoven rugs & carpets, precious stones, jewellery & inlaid marble.

Nearby is Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's 'designer' capital and showpiece that was to have been the most magnificent seat of power and learning in the East. Built over 15 years from 1570, the city was suddenly and completely abandoned only 15 years later. It is thought that the water supply dried up, and Fatehpur Sikri stands today as an eerily empty, unused and perfectly preserved city from the height and splendour of the Moghul Empire. Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary was the exclusive duck shooting preserve of the Maharajahs of Bharatpur—one of Rajasthan's many small princely states. A plaque inside the sanctuary details the thousands of brace of duck bagged on shoots by visiting royalty & heads of state. Then, in 1964 the Maharajah declared his tract of forest, lakes & wetlands a bird sanctuary. Today Bharatpur is home to over 300 local & migratory bird species, some from afar as Siberia & China. By bicycle through the sanctuary and boat onto the lake & marshes.

In the dry deciduous forests of the Aravalli hills we drive by jeep along the trails and glades of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. The 400 sq km reserve is dotted with ancient pavilions and structures, slowly disappearing into the undergrowth. It is a perfect habitat for tigers, whose numbers have increased dramatically here since 1970 when they were teetering on extinction. But, despite the efforts of Project Tiger, poaching and conflicting interests with an expanding human population are again placing the tigers' future in doubt. Chances of meeting tiger in Ranthambore are excellent, though by inclination and the nature of cats, they can never be guaranteed. The craggy hills of Rajasthan ('Land of Kings') are home of the Rajputs—a proud race strong in chivalry, flashing colour and flamboyant lifestyle. Jaipur, the capital and brilliant heart of Rajasthan, is built in rose-pink sandstone. The walled city was founded by the warrior-astronomer Jai Singh in 1727. Its broad avenues and squares show a system of city planning far ahead of its time. The City Palace & hill top Amber Palace demonstrate the fabulous wealth of the Maharajahs from the 18th century until just a few decades ago. Royal apartments are crammed with carpets from Persia, paintings, gilded mirrors and fabulous furnishings from around the world.

To the desert cities of Rajasthan—Bikaner on the ancient camel caravan routes across Asia, the Moon & Glass Palaces of the Royal Bikaner house-

hold. And Jodhpur where the cliff-top fortress is now an amazing museum of all the artistic & martial perfections & wild excesses of the Maharajah's heyday. From our road between Bikaner & Jodhpur we travel for two days and nights by camel into the Thar desert. At a majestic pace through desert scenery and oasis villages, with each person to a camel under the guiding hand of its master, we seem to ride back in time, attuned to a different world and a slower flow that is the desert nomad's life. Rajasthani dishes are prepared by our cameleers and nights are spent round flickering fires under a canopy of stars. The beautiful Jain temple at Ranakpur in the remote Aravalli valley is one of the biggest in India. Built in 1439 it has 29 marble halls supported by 1,444 different and unlike pillars. Udaipur is a cool oasis in the dry hills of southern Rajasthan, a fabulous lake city of island palaces, gardens & fountains. The City Pal-



ace on the edge of Lake Pichola is the largest in Rajasthan. Every year the Maharani used to be weighed at the palace gate, and his weight in gold distributed to the people of the city. Beneath its cupolas, towers & balconies are peacock mosaics, ornamental tile work & sculpted gardens. Boats ply the shimmering lakes to gold & white island palaces and views across the 'city of dreams'.

Along the quiet backroads of Madhya Pradesh state, to the hills and huge ravines of Mandu—the 10th citadel coveted by a succession of history's invaders, Afghans & Mongols, Moghuls & Marathas. Today it seems a ghost city, dormant and sprawling across the top of an isolated rock outcrop high above the plains. The Royal Enclave of the long & narrow Ship Palace reputedly hosted a harem of 15,000. Among the mango, tamarind & banyan trees are underground wells & baths, pavilions, palaces & tombs from the peak of Afghan architecture. The 15th century Jami Masjid was modelled on the great mosque of Damascus. To Maharashtra state, the cliffs of the Waghore river and the great caves of Ajanta. Buddhist monks came to this remote area in the 2nd century BC and began carving a series of monolithic caves from the semi-circle of cliffs above a sharp bend in the river. Over the next 900 years they expanded their retreat into 4 sanctuaries & 25 cave monasteries. Interiors are carved in pillars,

frescoes and statues of Buddha; walls are lined in brilliant spiritual paintings using local minerals & lapis lazuli from Afghanistan. Then, in the 7th century, the monks left (for a new site at Ellora). Their caves lay forgotten and unknown until 1819 when a lion hunting party stumbled upon them.

To the warm shores of the Arabian Sea and Bombay, India's international city from where the British left, and the world's largest democracy looks to its future. South through tropical forests lying between the coast & India's central Deccan plateau; rivers & towns of Maharashtra to Goa. The history of this port & fishing town goes back to the 3rd century BC, but it was the arrival of the Portuguese in 1510 that shaped its character today. Intending to take control the spice trade, they made it their capital in India then the seat of Catholicism in the East. Independence came in

1961 and Goa maintains its laid back atmosphere and easy going ways. Narrow streets, small cafes & bars, Cathedrals & red-tiled Portuguese houses of the old city—and Goa's 100 kms of beaches where coconut palms & sparkling sands meet the warm clear Arabian Sea.

Follow the coast to Mangalore, 18th century shipbuilding port of Hyder Ali's Karnataka kingdom and now a centre for India's coffee exports. Inland to the Coorg Hills (3,300ft/1,000m) & Mysore. Most of India's incense is produced here by small family enterprises, the aromas of sandalwood, jasmine, musk & rose linger in the air. The city was the seat of the Maharajahs of Mysore who earned a reputation for hospitality & spectacle, political stability and progress. The Amber Vilas walled palace is grandly flamboyant in its domes & turrets, in mirrors and stained glass of peacocks & flowers, avenues of carved pillars, huge carved and inlaid wooden doors, cool mosaic and marble floors. The city is also known for its beautifully crafted & inlaid teak, sandalwood & rosewood furniture & carvings. The Hoysala Kings rose from hill marauders to rule Karnataka & the plains from 1006 to 1310. Extracting rich

revenues from their conquests they developed artistic learning and new achievements in architecture. The most perfect of their temples, at Somnathpur, has been called one of the most beautiful and interesting buildings in the world. Set in a cloister courtyard the star shaped temple survives complete and finely proportioned. Built from grey soapstone that is soft when quarried but hardens with age, every surface is carved in beautiful statues. Horizontal friezes of guardian elephants, geese & winged monsters flank carvings that depict stories from the Hindu epics and lives of the Hoysala kings.

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To Kerala State, the Malabar Coast and a cluster of islands & peninsulas, winding streets & buildings of 16th century Cochin. Kerala's Jews may have arrived here from Jerusalem when it fell to Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC. Christian communities of the Syrian orthodox church came to Cochin

around the 6th century BC. Vasco da Gama & the Portuguese arrived in 1500 and threw them out. The Dutch took over in 1663 and kicked out the Portuguese. The British followed and did likewise. All were hungry for spices & trade, all left their mark on what is today one of India's most interesting cities.

Complex Chinese fishing net systems, introduced by emissaries & traders from the court of Kublai Khan, are strung along the channel at the tip of Fort Cochin. Murals in the Mattancherry palace depict legends of the Hindu Gods and are among the best in India. Unlikely houses & squares in old Cochin seem like transplanted village greens from around Europe. Merchants traded in pepper, spices, ivory & coir coconut fibre (most of those 'Welcome' door mats still come from Cochin).

In the far south India's great central plateau narrows to become the Cardamom Hills. The 700 sq kms of Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary lie in the forested hilltops, centred round a vast artificial irrigation lake created in 1875. This is one of the largest and oldest sanctuaries in India and is known for its wild elephant. Wild pig, dhole (wild dogs), gaur bison & tiger come down to the lake to drink. The banks are home to otter & freshwater tortoise, herons, kingfishers, egrets & fish owls. Early morning or evening are the best times to travel by boat along the lake shores and twisting waterways in search of the animals (Note: Periyar is usually best visited between October & March but seasonal fluctuations & conditions can still affect the density of wildlife near the lake. We may sometimes adjust our itinerary to substitute a better wildlife reserve in the area of the Cardamom hills).

Trivandrum (Abode of the Serpent) is the capital of Kerala State, a pleasant city of winding streets, red-tiled roofs and tropical green hills. When not engrossed in the strikes and political rhetoric of its powerful communist party, Trivandrum revels in its own slow and easy-going pace. Nearby on the Malabar Coast are the beautiful beaches of Kovalam. Small palm-fringed bays of white sands & surf are separated by rock islands & promontories; village life, traditional fishing and cultivation are little affected by development & commerce. Cape Comorin is the southernmost tip of India where the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean & Bay of Bengal meet & mingle. Sunrise & sunset are spectacular, to bathe here is of special significance to Hindus and is to be fully cleansed since the goddess Parvati did penance here in order to marry Shiva. Low lying Tamil Nadu to the east is a green land of tea, rubber and pepper plantations.

In the centre of Tiruchirappalli, on a massive rock outcrop and visible for miles around, is the Rock Fort Temple. There are magnificent views from the top which is reached by a tunnel of 437 steps. Below on an island in the Cauvery river is the Sri Rangam temple. Dedicated to Shiva it is the biggest and one of the most important temple complexes in India. Inside the seven concentric walls are 21 gopura with painted ceilings and remarkable carvings, of delicate female figures, animals, rearing horses & tigers. North through rice padis and riverside villages to Kanchipuram, one of the seven sacred cities of India and renowned for its fine hand woven silks. Broad streets are crowded & crammed with temples of the Pallava, Chola & Vijayanagar dynasties (5th-16th centuries) whose rulers believed in their divine right as direct descendants of Brahma, the first of the Hindu trinity. Their temples are full of life & colour, walls are topped by crowds of multi-limbed gods, interiors are covered in a confusion of leaping, writhing & dancing deities. Mahabalipuram on the Coromandel Coast was the great sea port of the Pallava kings. Already a port in the 1st century, it was known to Greek traders; today it is a small village sitting quietly among its fabulous rock-cut shore temples, lapped by eternal tides along the miles of empty beaches.

GROUP SIZE & STAFF

24 max including EO staff. Plus local guides in Varanasi, Agra, Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Jaipur, Jodhpur, camel drivers in Thar desert, Goa, Mysore & Mahabalipuram.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easy project with no physical demands other than the camping/nomadic lifestyle. Travel by camel (approx 2 days, 2 nights & 2 half days)

can impose exposure to the sun; tropical heat & high temperatures can be expected at all times in southern India.

INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

All transport, food (except very occasional lunches as noted under Meals, Cooking & Food below), camping equipment & supplies, camping fees, local guides; wildlife reserve, museum, site entrance fees & activities as noted from Day 1 until arrival in Madras or Kathmandu. There are no kitties or similar en route payments or funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

International flights to/from Kathmandu & Madras, transfers to/from



airports and airport taxes. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, malaria prophylaxis, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost). Optional activities in Chitwan National Park—elephant back, on foot with guide, & dugout canoe on Rapti river. Forest excursion on elephant back in Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (allow approx US\$40 total for all). Accommodation & evening meal in Madras or Kathmandu on Day 52.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard EO truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc. Permanent tented camp & camp kitchen in Chitwan, large communal tent on camel safari in Thar desert (no camp beds or washing facilities).

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack with removable or internal frame, a small daypack or airline type bag, water bottle. Strong footwear, waterproof jacket, personal clothing, medicines & toiletries. No specialised clothing or equipment is needed and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Most international flights in and out of India & Nepal have a 44lb/20kg luggage weight limit.

TRANSPORT

EO expedition truck, bicycles in Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, jeeps in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, camels in Thar desert (1 person per camel seated with camel driver; no saddles but reasonably padded position astride animal's back & shoulders).

ACCOMMODATION

Camping throughout. Permanent tented camp in Chitwan. Basic campground facilities in cities & main centres usually extending to simple washing/showering & toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping in rural areas with no facilities other than standard EO truck equipment. Very basic equipment/facilities on camel safari in Thar desert (2 nights). Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc. Accommodation on night 52 in Madras or Kathmandu is not included. Reservations at our Kathmandu hotel before Day 1 may be made through EO, with payment by you directly to hotel on arrival. (Reservations cannot be made at our Madras campsite/accommodation before departure).

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches, local fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, fish, eggs, cereals, bread, cheese, preserves & spices; occasional canned & dried goods if fresh supplies insufficient for our needs. Fresh meat is rarely available in vegetarian southern India. Your assistance is needed in shopping, cooking & meal preparation. On camel safari in Thar desert an interesting mix of Rajasthani dishes are prepared by our camel drivers. In larger towns (such as Agra or Cochin) where a day is spent away from the truck in individual sightseeing or activities, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

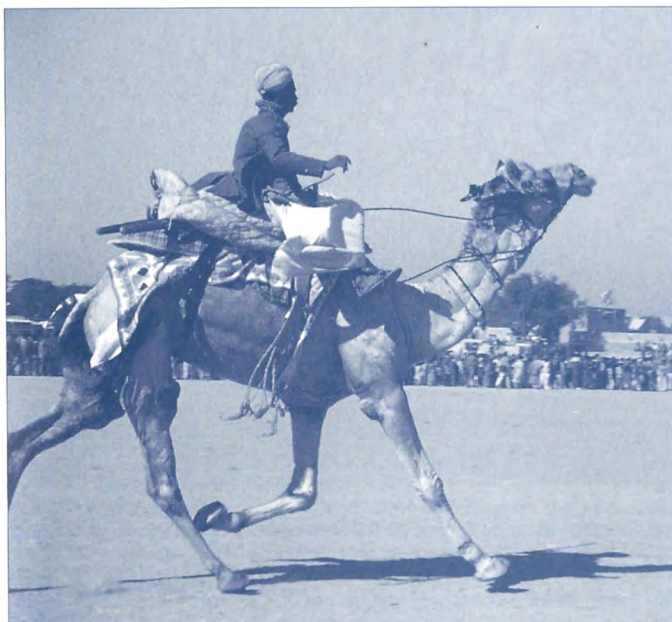
PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the project, and which contains not less than 4 blank pages. All nationalities require visas for India & Nepal and their costs vary according to your nationality. An Indian visa must be obtained before you leave home. EO or your agent can advise you of up to date visa details & their costs applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining them.

INSURANCE & MEDICAL

Everyone must have individual personal travel insurance. Various policies are available, but they must include a minimum of £20,000 or US\$30,000 for medical, hospital and additional expenses including emergency repatriation.

No vaccinations are required for India & Nepal if you are arriving directly from Europe, Australasia or North America, but a few are strongly recommended. Their up to date details are given in our pre-departure information. You will also need to obtain a small supply of malaria tablets. The most effective types for this area, as recommended by the UK Tropical Disease authorities are also detailed in our pre-departure information.



PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

To cover personal day to day expenditure—drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, individual museum entry fees & some souvenirs. (The optional activities in Chitwan & Mudumalai do not need to be arranged in advance, so no need to decide on them until we get there). You should budget an additional £25/\$40 per day that you spend in Madras & Kathmandu before & after the project to cover hotel, meals & incidentals. Good buys can include Tibetan & Indian rugs & carpets, Indian kilims, Hindu & Buddhist bronzes & statues, thanhka paintings & religious items, jewellery, gems, handbeaten copper & brass work, inlaid woodwork & carvings, textiles & silks. Small & interesting 'treasures' need not cost much at all. Credit cards are accepted only by the most well-established merchants in the major cities. Other than the above, EO has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

If you have time we suggest you arrive in Kathmandu or Madras a couple of days before departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights.

From Kathmandu: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Kathmandu hotel at 6.00pm two days before Day 1. If you are arriving earlier, Kathmandu is a fascinating city with plenty to see & do: bazaars, palaces, museums & hill temples, interesting selection of restaurants & bars, ancient city of Bhaktapur (30 mins bus), nature reserve (45 mins bicycle), overnight at Nagarkot (45 mins bus)—spectacular sunrise/sunset Himalayan views. Simple bicycles may be hired at low cost from most Kathmandu hotels.

From Madras: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Madras accommodation/campsite at 6.00pm on the evening before Day 1. If you are arriving earlier, Madras is a pleasant enough city for a day or two's rest though it lacks much of the beauty & fascination so often found in southern India. Worth seeing are Fort St George, Guindy Deer Park & Snake Park, Government Museum & Art Gallery, evening Bharata Natyam dance performances.

LEAVING AT END OF THE PROJECT

In Kathmandu: Arrangements end on arrival at our Kathmandu hotel on the evening of Day 52. You should not make onward flight arrangements for this same evening. International flights out of Kathmandu are often overbooked, and late or un-reconfirmed check-ins will be denied boarding with little prospect of another flight out for several days. Any flight connection on the following day could easily be made.

In Madras: Arrangements end at our Madras campsite after breakfast on Day 52. Any onward flight connections could be made for this day.

MODULES, CONNECTING & CONCURRENT PROJECTS

"All India" is a combination of the "Nepal, the Ganges & Rajasthan" (Kathmandu-Bombay or v.v.) & the "Goa & South India" (Bombay-Madras or v.v.) projects. You may therefore be travelling with some group members who are leaving or joining the project in Bombay. Departures between November & December can combine well with EO's trekking & white water rafting programme in Nepal.

INTERESTING READING

A Princess Remembers (Gayatra Devi), Slowly Down the Ganges (Eric Newby), A Tiger for Malgudi (R.K. Narayan). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Return flights	
Visas	
Vaccinations	
Insurance	
Personal spending money	

TOTAL

CLIMATE: NORTH & SOUTH INDIA

September-October & March-May: Hot days/warm nights/occasional rain late September. **November-February:** Warm days/cool-cold nights/Rainfall rare.

NORTH INDIA

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	21	24	31	36	41	39	36	34	34	34	29	23
Daily Average	Low	7	9	14	20	26	28	27	26	24	18	11	8
FAHRENHEIT	High	70	75	87	97	105	102	96	93	93	93	84	73
Daily Average	Low	44	49	58	68	79	83	81	79	75	65	52	46
Relative Humidity		52%	45%	46%	56%	62%	75%	80%	82%	81%	72%	63%	55%
Rainfall in mm		23	18	13	8	13	74	180	173	117	10	3	10

Hot days, warm to hot nights. The East Coast (Cape Comorin—Madras) differs from below with rain November/December (140-350mms per month). Otherwise usually dry throughout.

SOUTH INDIA

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	29	31	33	35	38	38	36	35	34	32	29	29
Daily Average	Low	19	20	22	26	28	27	26	26	25	24	22	21
FAHRENHEIT	High	85	88	91	95	101	100	96	95	94	90	85	84
Daily Average	Low	67	68	72	78	82	81	79	78	77	75	72	69
Relative Humidity		70%	71%	73%	75%	74%	79%	83%	83%	85%	81%	73%	70%
Rainfall in mm		3	3	3	0	18	485	617	340	264	64	13	3

TAJ & TIGER

ITINERARY GUIDELINE

KATHMANDU–DELHI

Day 1: Early a.m. departure, drive from Kathmandu along Trisuli river to lowlands & Chitwan National Park (approx 8 hrs drive). Permanent tented camp at Chitwan.

Day 2: In Chitwan. Optional game viewing activities. Permanent tented camp.

Day 3: Drive from Chitwan west through Terai to Indian frontier & Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh (approx 8 hrs driving).

Day 4: Rice fields & flatlands of the northern basin, across the Ghaghara river to Varanasi & the Ganges. (approx 8 hrs).

Day 5: In Varanasi. Sunrise on river; old city, streets & shrines (local guide).

Day 6: Drive up escarpment to Deccan plateau. Less populated open countryside, small villages, to near Satna (approx 9 hrs).

Day 7: Drive (approx 2 hrs) to Panna hills & wildlife reserve. In Panna hills and at Khajuraho Jain temple complex.

Days 8 & 9: The backroads of Madhya Pradesh to Jhansi and Agra (approx 250 miles/400 kms).

Day 10: Agra: Taj Mahal, Red Fort & markets (local guide).

Day 11: Fatehpur Sikri- abandoned 16th century Moghul city; & Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary—by bicycle into sanctuary (local guide).

Day 12: Drive to Sawai Madhopur & Ranthambore (approx 5 hrs). In Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (jeeps & local guides).

Day 13: In Ranthambore, drive to Jaipur—pink sandstone city of Rajasthan (approx 3 hrs).

Day 14: Jaipur: City Palace, Amber Fort & Central Market (local guide). Evening—the “Pink City Express” train Jaipur to Delhi (approx 5 hrs). Hotel.

Day 15: In Delhi: tour of old & new cities and sights (chartered minibus & local guide). End arrangements evening, in time to catch intercontinental flights.

ITINERARY GUIDELINE

DELHI–KATHMANDU

Day 1: In Delhi: tour of old & new cities and sights (chartered minibus & local guide). Hotel.

Day 2: Early morning departure on “Pink City Express” train Delhi to Jaipur (approx 5 hrs). Meet EO truck. In Jaipur: City Palace, Amber Fort & Central market (local guide). Camping.

Day 3: Drive to Sawai Madhopur & Ranthambore (approx 3 hrs drive). In Ranthambore Tiger Reserve (jeeps & local guides).

Day 4: In Ranthambore, drive to Agra (approx 5 hrs drive).

Days 5 & 6: In Agra: Taj Mahal, Red Fort & markets (local guide). Fatehpur Sikri- abandoned 16th century Moghul city & Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary—by bicycle into sanctuary (local guide).

Days 7 & 8: Drive to Jhansi & the backroads of Madhya Pradesh to Khajuraho (approx 250 miles/400 kms).

Day 9: Khajuraho Jain temple complex, Panna Hills & wildlife reserve. Drive (approx 2 hrs) to Satna.

Day 10: Open countryside & small villages to the escarpment; descent from Deccan plateau to populated northern river plains & Varanasi (approx 9 hrs).



Day 11: In Varanasi. Sunrise on river; old city, streets & shrines. (local guide).

Day 12: North through the flatlands & rice fields of the Ganges basin, across the Ghaghara river to Gorakhpur (approx 8 hrs).

Day 13: To Nepal, and east through the forested Terai lowlands to Chitwan National Park (approx 8 hrs). Permanent tented camp at Chitwan.

Day 14: In Chitwan. Optional game viewing activities. Permanent tented camp.

Day 15: Drive into mountains along Trisuli river, and the steep pass to Kathmandu (approx 8 hrs). Evening arrival. End arrangements.

PLEASE NOTE

The above is intended as a guide only and to indicate a typical itinerary and its highlights. While our intention is to adhere to this, it should be understood that group interests and wishes together with the constraints of weather, road conditions and local restrictions can alter our exact route, its activities and timings.

HIGHLIGHTS & ROUTE

To the Royal Chitwan National Park in the low hills along the border with India, and our permanent tented camp at Sauraha. This wildlife reserve of tall shaded forests, hidden clearings, and high elephant grass sits astride the sandy & slow moving Rapti river. All the Terai lowlands were forest & jungles until the eradication of malaria in the 1950's. Tiger hunts of the aristocracy & the British Raj during the early part of the century frequently killed more of the animals in one day than the total now surviving in Nepal. With malaria gone, hill people moved in to cultivate the rich, flat soil—and wildlife came under further pressure. The 1,000 square kilometre Park & reserve was declared by the King in 1973 and the animal numbers are now growing strongly again. It is a beautiful haven for the great Asian rhinoceros, elephant, sloth bear, deer, gharial crocodile, langur monkeys, wild pig, several hundred bird species, and the elusive leopard & Bengal tiger. There are now estimated to be 80 tigers and some 400 rhino here. (Optional game-viewing through Park on elephant back, on foot with a local guide & in dug-out canoes along the banks of the Rapti river—approx. US\$30 total).

Varanasi on the sacred Ganges has been a place of pilgrimage & a centre of learning for more than 2,000 years and is considered to be the world's oldest continuously inhabited city. It is the holiest of Hindu cities, the pious come here to die, their bodies to be burned on the ghats and their ashes scattered over the waters of the goddess Ganges. A boat takes us onto the river at dawn. As the sun rises, the city slowly comes alive and thousands of pilgrims descend to bathe along the steps leading into the water. Back from the ghats the old city is a fascinating maze of narrow streets, of overhanging buildings, hidden temples and small shops. 10 kms away at Sarnath, Buddha preached his first sermon & message of

enlightenment. Later, around 250 BC, the great emperor Ashok was converted to Buddhism and built stupas, monasteries & a great pillar of inscriptions and edicts here.

Our road climbs a steep escarpment out of the river plains to the quiet valleys & hills of the central Deccan plateau. At Khajuraho the 10th century Chandella kings raised great stone temples to venerate their gods. Every wall, surface & vaulted ceiling is carved with intricate details, erotic sculptures and spectacular expression of medieval Indian art. Nearby in the Panna Hills the deserted Rajgarh palace decays with sad grace as the forest grows across its once formal grounds & pavilions. These densely forested hills of gorges & waterfalls make up the Panna National Park. Tiger are increasing here, but are very hard to see. More usually we find gazelle, spotted deer & even wolves.

Agra, capital of India under the Moghuls in the 16th & 17th centuries, stands on a broad curve of the Jumna river. Greatest of all its buildings is the Taj Mahal—the incomparable white marble monument built by the emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz. Around 20,000 people worked on its building—artisans from across central Asia, the Middle East & from Europe. Semi precious stones by the ton, ground smooth and flat, are embedded in its walls in flowing lines & patterns. The whole structure is a perfection of beauty & symmetry. But the future may not be promising. Airborne industrial pollution is thought to be already etching its way into the glaring white marble of the Taj. The massive Red Fort is a city within a city. Constructed as a military stronghold by the Emperor Akbar in 1570, it was changed by successive rulers into a luxurious palace complex of meeting halls, mosques & Moghul gardens. Agra's bazaars and cottage industries reflect her Moghul past in the best of India's handwoven rugs & carpets, precious stones, jewellery & inlaid marble.

Nearby is Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's 'designer' capital and showpiece that was to have been the most magnificent seat of power and learning in the East. Built over 15 years from 1570, the city was suddenly and completely abandoned only 15 years later. It is thought that the water supply dried up, and Fatehpur Sikri stands today as an eerily empty, unused and perfectly preserved city from the height and splendour of the Moghul Empire. Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary was the exclusive duck shooting preserve of the Maharajahs of Bharatpur—one of Rajasthan's many small princely states. A plaque inside the sanctuary details the thousands of brace of duck bagged on shoots by visiting royalty & heads of state. Then, in 1964 the Maharajah declared his tract of forest, lakes & wetlands a bird sanctuary. Today Bharatpur is home to over 300 local & migratory bird species, some from afar as Siberia & China.

By bicycle through the sanctuary and boat onto the lake & marshes. In the dry deciduous forests of the Aravalli hills we drive by jeep along the trails and glades of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve. The 400 sq km reserve is dotted with ancient pavilions and structures, slowly disappearing into the undergrowth. It is a perfect habitat for tigers, whose numbers have increased dramatically here since 1970 when they were teetering on extinction. Despite the efforts of Project Tiger, poaching and conflicting interests with an expanding human population are again placing the tigers' future in doubt. Chances of meeting tiger in Ranthambore are excellent, though by inclination and the nature of cats, they can never be guaranteed.

The craggy hills of Rajasthan ('Land of Kings') are home of the Rajputs—a proud race strong in chivalry, flashing colour and flamboyant lifestyle. Jaipur, the capital and brilliant heart of Rajasthan, is built in rose-pink sandstone. The walled city was founded by the warrior-astronomer Jai Singh in 1727. Its broad avenues and squares show a system of city planning far ahead of its time. The City Palace & hill top Amber Palace demonstrate the fabulous wealth of the Maharajahs from the 18th century until just a few decades ago. Royal apartments are crammed with carpets from Persia, paintings, gilded mirrors and fabulous furnishings from around the world. By train to Delhi. New Delhi was designed & built between 1911 & 1931, a new, more central capital to take the place of Calcutta. Its whole concept was either the most self-serving stroke of pomposity by a soon to dwindle empire, or the best designed & planned city of the 20th century. Wide tree-lined boulevards connect official, residential & commercial districts. There are parks, squares & open spaces with room to expand, imposing & grandiose government buildings, and quiet secluded bungalows. India Gate & Rastrapati Bhavan, Parliament House & the hub of Connaught Circus. Old Delhi (Shahjahanabad), built in the 17th century by the Moghul ruler, is still the throbbing heart of Delhi. A cacaphony of commerce & cottage industry in the bazaars & alleys of Chandni Chowk; the Red Fort and Jami Masjid mosque, largest in India and last building of the great Shah Jahan.

GROUP SIZE & STAFF

24 max including EO staff. Plus local guides in Varanasi, Agra, Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Jaipur & Delhi.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

An easy project with no physical demands other than the camping lifestyle.

INCLUDED IN PROJECT COST

All transport, food (except very occasional lunches as noted under Meals, Cooking & Food below), camping equipment & supplies, camping fees, local guides; wildlife reserve, museum, site entrance fees & activities as noted from Day 1 until afternoon/evening of Day 15 in Delhi or Kathmandu. There are no kitties or similar en route payments or funds.

PROJECT COST DOES NOT COVER

International flights to/from Kathmandu & Delhi, transfers to/from airports and airport taxes. Vaccinations, visas, personal insurance, malaria prophylaxis, laundry, snacks, drinks, personal clothing/equipment & items of a personal nature. Some individual entry fees to museums/sights (minimal cost). Optional activities in Chitwan National Park—elephant back, on foot with guide, & dugout canoe on Rapti river (allow approx US\$30 total). Accommodation & evening meal in Delhi or Kathmandu on the evening of Day 15.

EQUIPMENT SUPPLIED

Standard EO truck equipment including 2 person tents, campbeds, kitchen/dining tent, tables & stools, light, cooking equipment & utensils, mosquito nets, first aid kit etc. Permanent tented camp & camp kitchen in Chitwan.

WHAT YOU NEED TO BRING

A warm sleeping bag, a medium sized bag or backpack with removable or internal frame, a small daypack or airline type bag, water bottle. Strong

footwear, waterproof jacket, personal clothing, medicines & toiletries. No specialised clothing or equipment is needed and you probably already have most of what is needed. A complete suggested clothing list is included in our pre-departure information. Most international flights in and out of India & Nepal have a 44lb/20kg luggage weight limit.

TRANSPORT

EO expedition truck, bicycles in Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary, jeeps in Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, train between Jaipur & Delhi, chartered small bus in Delhi.



ACCOMMODATION

Hotel in Delhi (1 night), otherwise camping throughout. Permanent tented camp in Chitwan. Basic campground facilities in cities & main centres usually extending to simple washing/showering & toilet arrangements only. Otherwise open 'bush' camping in rural areas with no facilities other than standard EO truck equipment.

Your involvement is needed in camp set-up, domestic & day to day routines etc. Accommodation on night 15 in Delhi or Kathmandu is not included. Reservations at our Kathmandu or Delhi hotels before Day 1 may be made through EO, with payment by you directly to hotel on arrival.

MEALS, COOKING & FOOD

Restaurant meals in Delhi, camp cooked breakfasts & evening meals, picnic lunches (Local fresh vegetables, fruit, meat, eggs, cereals, bread, cheese, preserves & spices; occasional canned & dried goods when fresh supplies insufficient for our needs).

Your assistance is needed in shopping, cooking & meal preparation. In larger towns (such as Agra or Jaipur) where a day is spent away from the truck in individual sightseeing or activities, lunch will sometimes be at your own expense. The cost of these occasional lunches is minimal.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

You will need a passport that is valid for not less than 6 months after the end of the project, and which contains not less than 4 blank pages. All nationalities require visas for India & Nepal and their costs vary according to your nationality. An Indian visa must be obtained before you leave home. EO or your agent can advise you of up to date visa details & their costs applicable to you. We can also help you in obtaining them.

INSURANCE & MEDICAL

Everyone must have individual personal travel insurance. Various policies are available, but they must include a minimum of £20,000 or US\$30,000 for medical, hospital and additional expenses including emergency repatriation. No vaccinations are required for India & Nepal if you are arriving directly from Europe, Australasia or North America, but a few are strongly recommended. Their up to date details are given in our pre-departure information. You will also need to obtain a small supply of malaria tablets. The most effective types for this area, as recommended by the UK Tropical Disease authorities are also detailed in our pre-departure information.

PERSONAL SPENDING MONEY

To cover personal day to day expenditure—drinks, snacks, occasional lunches in major centres, optional activities, individual museum entry fees & some souvenirs. (The optional activities in Chitwan do not need to be arranged in advance, so no need to decide on them until we get there). You should budget an additional £25/\$40 per

day that you spend in Kathmandu & Delhi before & after the project to cover hotel, meals & incidentals. Good buys can include Tibetan & Indian rugs & carpets, Indian kilims, Hindu & Buddhist bronzes & statues, thanka paintings & religious items, jewellery, gems, handbeaten copper & brass work, inlaid marble, textiles & silks. Small & interesting 'treasures' need not cost much at all. Credit cards are accepted only by well-established outlets in the major cities. Other than the above, EO has no hidden expenses, funds or kitties to surprise your spending money.

ARRIVING AT START OF THE PROJECT

If you have time we suggest you arrive in Kathmandu or Delhi a couple of days before departure date to allow yourself time to acclimatise and get over intercontinental flights.

From Kathmandu: There will be a pre-departure meeting at our Kathmandu hotel at 6.00pm two days before Day 1. If you are arriving earlier, Kathmandu is a fascinating city with plenty to see & do: bazaars, palaces, museums & hill temples, interesting selection of restaurants & bars, ancient city of Bhaktapur (30 mins bus), nature reserve (45 mins bicycle), overnight at Nagarkot (45 mins bus)—spectacular sunrise/sunset Himalayan views. Simple bicycles may be hired at low cost from most Kathmandu hotels.

From Delhi: At 8.00am on Day 1 there is a brief meeting with our local operators in Delhi, followed by a tour of Old & New Delhi. (You meet the



EO truck & leader in Jaipur on Day 2). If you are arriving earlier: National, Nehru & Railway Museums in New Delhi; evening Son et Lumiere at Red Fort; Connaught Circus restaurants, bookshops, coffee houses, cinemas & regional handicraft emporiums.

LEAVING AT END OF THE PROJECT

In Delhi: Arrangements end back at our Delhi hotel on the afternoon/early evening of Day 15 in time to catch this same evening's intercontinental flights home.

In Kathmandu: Arrangements end on arrival at our Kathmandu hotel on the evening of Day 15. You should not make onward flight arrangements for this same evening. International flights out of Kathmandu are often overbooked, and late or un-reconfirmed check-ins will be denied boarding with little prospect of another flight out for several days. Any flight connection on the following day could easily be made.

MODULES, CONNECTING & CONCURRENT PROJECTS:

Between Kathmandu & Jaipur "Taj & Tiger" also forms part of the "Nepal, the Ganges & Rajasthan" and the "All India" projects. On departures from Kathmandu you may therefore be travelling with some group members who are continuing their travels in India. And on Delhi departures you may be joining some group members who have already been travelling for several weeks in southern & central India. (Maximum combined group size remains 24). Departures between October & February can combine well with EO's trekking & white water rafting programme in Nepal.

INTERESTING READING

Plain Tales from the Raj (Charles Allen), Slowly Down the Ganges (Eric Newby), Saving the Tiger (G. Mountfort). A full list of recommended reading in history, guidebooks and fiction is given in our pre-departure information.

CLIMATE

September-October & March-May: Hot days/warm nights/occasional rain late Sept. **November-February:** Warm days/cool-cold nights/rainfall rare. Cooler in Kathmandu (4,400ft/1,340m), subtract 5°C/10°F from temperatures below.

NORTH INDIA

		JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
CELSIUS	High	21	24	31	36	41	39	36	34	34	34	29	23
Daily Average	Low	7	9	14	20	26	28	27	26	24	18	11	8
FAHRENHEIT	High	70	75	87	97	105	102	96	93	93	93	84	73
Daily Average	Low	44	49	58	68	79	83	81	79	75	65	52	46
Relative Humidity		52%	45%	46%	56%	62%	75%	80%	82%	81%	72%	63%	55%
Rainfall in mm		23	18	13	8	13	74	180	173	117	10	3	10

AGENT'S STAMP

OTHER COSTS/EXPENSES

Return flights

Visas

Vaccinations

Insurance

Personal spending money

TOTAL