

15 Day

Grandeur of India and Nepal

USA –Delhi – Jaipur –Ranthambore Tiger Reserve – Agra (Taj Mahal)– Khajuraho – Sarnath – Varanasi (Ganges River) – Kathmandu – Bhaktapur – Patan – USA

*****Guaranteed departures with SMALL group of no more than 18 passengers***
Premium service with professional guides, deluxe hotels and sumptuous meals**

Experience India's most compelling sights, monuments, and game viewing at Tiger Reserve

A stirring, misty, early-morning look into the soul of India from a boat on the sacred Ganges

A stroll on the exquisite 10th-century Chandela Temples at Khajuraho

An excursion for tiger sighting and game viewing at incomparable Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

Then there is the inexpressible Taj Mahal – “ the gem of man's handiwork ” Lord Curzon called it,

“Without flaw or blemish, impossible to criticize, in capable of improvement, the most perfect structure in the world”

<p>Guaranteed Departures</p> <p>2010</p> <p>Jan 11, Apr 5, Feb 8, Oct 18, Mar 8, Nov 1, 22</p> <p>2011</p> <p>Jan 10, Mar 7, Feb 14, Apr 4,</p>	<p>FULL PACKAGE</p> <p>Includes int'l airfare from USA Please inquire for special rates for departures from other US cities</p>		<p>LAND ONLY</p> <p>Not include the int'l airfare Own arrangement for flights USA – Delhi, Katmandu – USA (Domestic flights within and between India and Nepal are included)</p>	<p>Single Supplement</p>
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	<p>4400</p>	<p>4200</p>		

***Choose your own departure dateand enjoy *VIP Private Journey* – accompanied by a private English speaking guide, a chauffeur and an air conditioned car exclusively (based on min. of 2 passengers)! Simply add **\$166** per person on our LANDONLY cost and enjoy premium service with maximum flexibility and personal attentions!**

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Operated by *Orient Odyssey*



B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner, F-In flight meals, SL / SD-Special local flavor meal or banquet

Day01 USA - Delhi

Depart from Los Angeles, or New York. Enjoy award winning in-flight meals and services. Move your watch one day ahead as you cross the international dateline. *Prices for departing from other major gateway cities are available upon request. **F**

Day02 Arrive in Delhi

After immigration and customs, a local representative will greet and accompany you to the boutique 5 star, deluxe, *Svelte Hotel and Personal Suites*. Enjoy a restful night to recover from jetlag. **F**

Day03 Delhi

Welcome to the pulsating capital of India, where no less than eight empires rose and fell over the span of five thousand years. Synonymous with

power and imperial sovereignty, Delhi intoxicated Hindu kings, Mughal emperors and the British Raj, all of whom established their empires here, despite warning that whoever founds a new city at Delhi will lose it. And indeed they did. But not before leaving their distinct legacies throughout the city. Remnants of Delhi's glorious past and its valiant struggle for independence and freedom are manifest in all we see. Our adventure begins in [Old Delhi](#), the Mughal capital established by Shah Jahan in 1638. We drive by the magnificent [Red Fort](#). Within its walls are marble palaces and a grand audience chamber, the Diwan-i-Khas, where the Peacock Throne once stood. We visit the white onion dome and minarets of [Jama Masjid](#), the largest mosque in India. We tour at [Qutab Minar](#), a stunning 240 feet brick minaret – the tallest in the world – surrounded by an elaborate complex built in the Indo-Islamic architectural tradition. Not to miss is the unique [Iron Pillar](#), never rusted since erected 700 years ago. We also visit [Raj Ghat](#), Mahatma Gandhi's serene and evocative cremation site. This afternoon we explore [New](#)



[Delhi](#), added by the British to the old capital as the dream of Edwin Lutyens. This Indo-Saracenic city was a perfect blend of eastern extravagance and western constraint. Enjoy a drive on the impressive [Rajpath](#), we stop at the [India Gate](#). See the [Presidential Palace](#), the [Rashtrapati Bhavan](#), the [parliament](#), and the [secretariat buildings](#). We also drive pass the [Embassy district](#) and the [Connaught Place](#), the main shopping district of the capital. B/D

Day04 Delhi - Jaipur

We depart Delhi in the morning and drive to Jaipur (about six hours) on the busy national highway, passing villages, towns and markets. *Orient Odyssey's* "[People to People Contact](#)" program calls for a [random stop](#) on route at a [village or market](#), where we can observe and interact with locals to gain insight into true rural Indian life. In time for dinner we reach Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan and home of the Rajputs, a group of warrior clans who ruled this part of India for a thousand years. Built in 1727 by the warrior-astronomer Maharaja Jai Singh II, Jaipur is laid out as described in the ancient Hindu treatise on architecture "Shilpa-Shastra". Battlement walls with seven gates encircled the old city; broad avenues divide it into neat

rectangles. We check-in at the 4.5 star, deluxe, [Four Point by Sheraton, Jaipur](#). B/D

Day05 Jaipur

With "*the tone of the autumn sunset*", almost the entire city of Jaipur was built by pink sandstone. We first look at the grand [Hawa Mahal \(Palace of Winds\)](#). This magnificent structure was built to allow the royal ladies of the palace to discretely watch the grand processions along the main street. We then enjoy an excursion to the [Amber Fort and Palace](#), a beautiful and very well preserved 16th century structure, built on four levels and surrounded by ruins. The fort and palace was the backdrop for the [Mira Nair](#) movie "*Kama Sutra – A Tale of Love*". Construction was begun in 1592 by



Maharaja Man Singh, the commander of Akbar's army, and was largely motivated by the highly defensible valley location. We will [ride on a colorful ceremonial elephant](#) to enter the main gate. Visit the [Temple of Kali](#), the [Hall of Victory](#), and the [Hall of Pleasure](#), among other interesting nooks and crannies. Enjoy a thrilling [downhill jeep ride](#) after the visit. In the afternoon we return to the city for a look at the majestic courtyards, pavilions, and gardens of the [City Palace](#), now housing fine Rajput and Moghul paintings, rare manuscripts and an impressive display of royal armory. Part of the compound is still occupied by the royal residences and is off limit to visitors. We also tour the impressive [Jantar Mantar](#), an astronomical observatory built in the early 1700s by Maharaja Jai Singh II, the great warrior-astronomer to which this city owes its name. If time permits, we can also enjoy the unparalleled shopping in one of Jaipur's many [bazaars](#). B/D



Day06 Jaipur – Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

After breakfast we drive to [Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and National Park](#). (about five hours). The reserve's romantic setting, with a 1,000 year



old abandoned fortress, turquoise lakes and especially its “friendly” tigers have made Ranthambore a popular destination for wildlife film makers. Tigers are readily observed during daylight, hunting or lazing about, oblivious of explorers and their cameras. Ranthambore was once the private hunting grounds of the Maharaja of Jaipur and its royal heritage manifests itself in the picturesque hunting lodges, chhatris and old fortifications that dot the park. Check-in at the superior, **Ranthambhore Regency** and get ready for tomorrow’s adventure! **B/L/D**

Day07 Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

Today we explore this wonderful park, combining wildlife viewing with a look at the area’s rich history. Two **game drives** are planned and you will enjoy early morning and evening **jungle safaris** in shared **open air canter** (open sided mini trucks). Each safari is for a duration of 3 hours. The park provides an opportunity to view many of India’s diverse and endangered animals, including the peacocks, langurs, wild boars, spotted deer, sambar, nilgai, Indian gazelle (chinkara), blackbuck, crocodile, and – of course – the Bengal tiger. **B/L/D**



Day08 Ranthambore – Bharatpur – Agra (Fathpur Sikri)

In the morning we board the train **Jan Shatabadi Express** for a smooth ride across the vast plains of Rajasthan. Reaching Bharatpur in the afternoon, we head to **Fatehpur Sikri**. Serving as the capital of the Mughal Empire between 1570 and 1586, Akbar built the city to celebrate the birth of an heir, the future Emperor Jahangir. After 14 years, there was not enough water to support the population, so the capital was moved back to Agra. The dryness that plagued Akbar and forced him to abandon his dream city is what has perfectly preserved this treasure of elegant palace structure carved from red sandstone. We

will stroll in the glorious courtyards and halls conjuring up dreams of the mysterious past. See **Buland Darwaza**,

the victory gate looms 134 feet high. Inspect the imperial **Jami Masjid**, the **Panch Mahal** and the **Hall of Public Audience**.



Not to miss is **Pachchisi**, paved with black and white marbles, where the Emperor played chess using live slave girls as figurines. In time for dinner we reach Agra and check-in at the 5 star., Luxurious, **Hotel Jaypee Palace Agra**. **B/D**

Day09 Agra

Today we enjoy the highlight of our journey, a visit to **Taj Mahal**, the most famous Mughal monument. Constructed by Shah Jahan in



memory of his wife, it is the most extravagant monument ever built for love. It took seventeen years, 20,000 workers and a king’s treasury to build this wonder. Made by white

semi translucent marble, the entire monument is inlaid with countless semi precious stones in beautiful patterns. The dom is surrounded by four identical facades in perfect symmetry. With our guide, we wander the **inner chambers** and the **marble paths**, as millions have done over the centuries, and marvel at the architectural brilliance and commitment that went into its construction. **Theo Cruz** once wrote about the Taj that, “*The only way I could escape the feeling of being in a dream was to close my eyes*”.

In the afternoon we visit **Agra Fort**. Previous incarnations of the fort date back to the Rajputs, but the citadel that stands today was the work of Akbar the Great, who built it over the course of eight years (1565-1573). The fort, a testament to the military might and architectural genius of the Mughals, was successively occupied by emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Shah Jahan died here, imprisoned by his son, left to gaze at the Taj Mahal he had



built. We will explore [Moti Masjid \(Pearl Mosque\)](#), [Jasmine Tower](#), [Dewan-e-Amn](#) (Throne Hall for Public Audiences), and [Dewan-e-Khas](#) where foreign dignitaries are received. Late afternoon we will drive over the [Yamuna River](#) to explore the forerunner of the Taj Mahal, the elaborate [Itmad ud Daula](#).



In memory of his father, this mausoleum was built by Queen Nur Jahan in 1622. It is a perfect representation of the fine inlaid stonework and translucent marble screens for which Agra is so famous, and many historians believe that this monument was Shah Jahan's inspiration for

building the Taj and is often described as the "petite Taj". Later we return to the hotel for dinner and an evening at leisure. **B/D**

Day10 Agra – Jhansi –Khajuraho

After breakfast, we board [Shitabdi Express](#) Train at 8:15 a.m.. Enjoy the smooth ride and passing views of villages, fields, bridges, and rivers, arriving in Jhansi at 10:30 a.m.. We then head for Khajuraho by coach (about four hours). In the afternoon we will arrive at the 4 star, deluxe, [Ramada Khajuraho](#). We trade our bus for [bicycle rickshaws](#), weaving through the bumpy country roads to nearby [villages](#). Through [Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact"](#) program, we visit a farmer's home, interact with family members and children, gaining an interesting insight into rural life in India. **B/D**

Day11 Khajuraho – Varanasi (Sarnath Excursion)

Khajuraho is a quiet little town that was once the religious capital of the Chandela Kings. The Chandelas were devout tantric Hindus and prolific patrons of religious architecture. They built numerous, elaborate temples to serve as emblems of their piety and strength. The temples are well known for their lavish use of erotic carvings, or mithuna, which Victorian Britishers described as "a little warmer than necessary".



To the ancient devotee, they symbolized the joy of life and the joy of spiritual liberation through Tantric ritual. Today we visit and photograph

the [intricately carved temples](#) for which Khajuraho is so well known. The temples are adorned with exquisitely sculptured figures, a galaxy of gods and goddesses, beasts and serpents, and a multitude of erotic couples, all representing a paean to life, to love and to joy. And while it is noted for its erotic carvings, the architecture is much more than that, for it sums up all the trends of earlier North Indian temple forms. The most important temples are the [Kandariya Mahadev](#) (1025 A.D.), the [Vishvanath temple](#) (1002 A.D.) and the [Lakshmana temple](#) (930 A.D.). Around noon we head to the airport and check-in for [Jet Airway](#) flight 9W724, leaving at 1:25 p.m., arriving in Varanasi at 2:10 p.m.. Upon arrival, a short drive takes us to [Sarnath](#). It was here at the [Deer Park](#) that Sakyamuni Buddha, having achieved enlightenment at Bokh Gaya, delivered his first message of the middle path to final nirvana. Also of interest are excavated pillars from the time of the Mauryan Empire (321-184 B.C.), and stupas from as late as the 12 century. Tonight we check-in at the 5 star, luxurious, [Radisson Hotel Varanasi](#). The evening is free to relax. **B/D**

Day12 Varanasi – Kathmandu

Welcome to Varanasi. Situated on the banks of the sacred Ganga River, Varanasi has been a center of learning and civilization for over 2,000 years. Also known as [Benares](#), it is a



holy city dedicated to Lord Shiva. Like Jerusalem, Rome, and Athens, Varanasi is one of the world's ancient living cities. A nineteenth century missionary, [M.A. Sherring](#), was overwhelmed by the antiquity of the city when he wrote: "Twenty-five centuries ago, at least, it was famous. When Babylon was struggling with Nineveh for supremacy, when Tyre was planting her colonies, when Athens was growing in strength, before Rome had become known or Greece had contended with Persia, or Cyrus had added luster to the Persian Monarchy, or Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Judea had been carried into captivity, she had already risen to greatness, if not to glory". For Hindus, to die in Kash (Varanasi) insures release, or moksa, from the endless karmic cycle of rebirth and suffering. It is India in microcosm, both the beautiful and the

repellant. This morning we rise early and take a [boat-ride on the Ganga](#) to observe the [sunrise](#) and the famous ghats. Here, tens of thousands of pilgrims gather on the steps that lead down to the river to bathe in the sacred water as the city begins to come alive in the magical misty light of dawn. For thousands of years, bathing ghats have cleansed themselves of their sins in the sacred River Ganges and sought release from the cycle of rebirth. The antiquity, like its spirituality, is shrouded in immortal time. We then [walk](#) through the warren of crooked, congested alleys of this city to [observe the daily about](#). **Mark Twain** once joked: “Benares is



older than history, older than tradition, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of them put together!” After a

short rest at our hotel, we drive through the campus of the famed [Hindu University](#), the greatest seat of oriental learning in the country. We will stop at [Bharat Mata \(the Mother of India\) Temple](#), and [Durga \(Goddess of Power\) Temple](#), also popularly known as the [Monkey Temple](#). The guide will accompany us to the airport and assist us for check-in for flight IT751 leaving at 12:10 p.m., reaching Kathmandu, Nepal at 1:20 p.m.. After immigration and customs, we will go to the 4 star, deluxe, [Grand Hotel Kathmandu](#). Kathmandu has long been regarded as one of the far corners of the world. The British writer, **Rudyard Kipling**, captured its mystique when he wrote “*the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Kathmandu*”. For centuries Kathmandu was forbidden to outsiders.

But since opening its doors to the world in the early 1950s, it has become one of the traveler’s most desired destinations. These days Kathmandu is a large, bustling, madly colorful city, a fascinating juxtaposition of medieval and modern. Remaining of the day is free for us to rest, or to explore the winding lanes and ancient courtyards of the enchanting capital, at our own pace. **B/F/D**



Day13 Kathmandu and Surrounding Area (Swayambhunath, Pashupatinath and Boudhnath)

Today we set out to explore the treasures of Kathmandu. Nepal’s capital is a delight to the senses and the imagination. In the morning we visit Kathmandu’s old and current heart, [Durbar Square](#) and [Hanuman Dhoka](#), a beguiling complex of buildings, temples and courtyards, thronged with street merchants, wandering holy men, pilgrims, wide-eyed rustics from the hills, and businessmen worshipping at any of a score of little shrines. Not to miss is the [Temple of Living Goddess](#) who frequently acknowledges the greetings of the devotees from the balcony of her temple residence. We continue our sightseeing with a visit to the Buddhist stupa of [Swayambhunath](#), begun over 2,000 years ago and regarded as the mythical origin of Kathmandu. The stupa is dedicated to the Adi Buddha or the Buddha of the cosmic axis and is an active center of pilgrimage. The main structure is composed of a solid brick and earth. It supports a lofty conical spire capped by a



pinnacle of copper gilt. There are seeing eyes of Lord Buddha painted on all four sides of the base. We will then proceed to the [east bank of sacred River Bagmati](#) to view [Pashupatinath](#), a pagoda style structure with gilded roof and richly carved silver doors. It is the center of annual pilgrimage on the day of shivaratri which falls in February and March. Next stop is [Boudhnath](#), one of the biggest stupa in the world of its kind. Four pair of eyes are painted facing four cardinal directions, keeping watch for righteous behavior and human prosperity. The octagonal base is surrounded by prayer wheels and flags. **B/D**

Day14 Excursion to Bhaktapur and Patan

This morning we pay a visit to Bhaktapur, also called Bhadgaon, meaning “City of Devotees”. Said to have been designed in the ninth century to resemble the form of God Vishnu’s conch shell, Bhaktapur is Kathmandu Valley’s most medieval city. Today it still retained much of its old character and identity. Its preserved state is probably why it was chosen as the location for much of the film, *The Little Buddha*. Here we will visit ancient temples and palaces adorned with intricately carved windows and latticework. The structures showcase some of the best of Newar craftsmanship. Its Durbar Square and array of temples are overlooked by the impressive palace of 55 windows, built by King Bupatindra Malla. The famous Nyatapola Temple is guarded by striking figures – two



famous strong men, two elephants, two lions, two griffins and two goddesses, all standing on each of its five terraces. This afternoon we will visit Patan, the

city of fine arts, which is sometimes called “*the town with a thousand golden roofs*”. Located just south of Kathmandu, Patan is one of the three ancient Malla Kingdoms, and remains a center for craftsmen and artists anxious to preserve their traditions. We will tour the beautiful Hiranya Varna Mabavihar and Mahadouddha Temple, and enjoy a leisurely stroll on the bustling Durbar Square. B/D

Day15 Kathmandu – USA

After breakfast, savor the memory of the magnificent **India and Nepal Odyssey**. We board our homebound flight, arriving in USA on the same day (or the next day based on the flight schedule). B/F

***Optional Extension**

Our programs are flexible! You can extend your stay in Kathmandu, or go to South India to explore unspoiled backwater countries. You can also connect this package with an exploration of the majestic mountain kingdom of Bhutan.....Please contact us for more information.

***International Flights**

Orient Odyssey features *Continental Airlines, United Airlines, Air India, Etihad Airways, United Emirates Airlines, , and / or Northwest Airlines / Delta Airlines* as the international carrier for this package. Based on your departure cities and tour logistics, Orient Odyssey reserves the right to secure other major international carrier for your journey. Flight arrangements will be finalized at least 60 days before departure.

Sample international flight schedules are as follows. Schedules are subject to change.

From Los Angeles (LAX):

CO16	Los Angeles – Newark	1020 / 1840
CO82	Newark – New Delhi	2045 / 2120
9W261	Kathmandu – New Delhi	1545 / 1715
CO83	New Delhi – Newark	2235 / 0430
CO91	Newark – Los Angeles	0640 / 0955

From New York (EWR):

CO82	Newark – New Delhi	2045 / 2120
9W261	Kathmandu – New Delhi	1545 / 1715
CO83	New Delhi – Newark	2235 / 0430

***Note**

Fuel surcharges and taxes are subject to change. Updated and accurate amount will be advised before the ticketing deadline. Tour cost is quoted based on current foreign exchange rate as of November 1, 2009. Price is guaranteed once full payment is received.

Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions

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