



Earthbound Expeditions

India and Nepal Tour

12 days, from US\$1,297 per person

Duration

12 days

Grade

Easy

Max altitude

2,175 m

Start and end

Delhi to Kathmandu

On foot

2 to 3 hours a day

Best season

Oct to Mar

Accommodation

Three-star hotels

Meals

Breakfast and most meals

Group size

Up to 8

Getting there

Private car

Contact us

Phone

+977 9851017772

WhatsApp

+9779851017772

Email

earthboundnpl@gmail.com

Website

enepaltrekking.com

Office

G.P.O. Box 5801, Thamel, Kathmandu, Nepal

India and Nepal Tour Overview

Delhi, the Taj Mahal, Jaipur, the temples of Khajuraho and the cremation ghats of Varanasi, then across the border to the temple cities of the Kathmandu Valley.

Tour overview

This is the classic north Indian circuit, followed by the Himalaya. Delhi, Jaipur and Agra form the Golden Triangle, which is what most first visits to India include. Orchha, Khajuraho and Varanasi are older and less visited, and many itineraries leave them out for lack of time. The trip then flies north to Kathmandu, which after eight days on the plains has a different climate, a slower pace and a different religious tradition with similar practices.

Why Varanasi comes before Kathmandu

The itinerary is planned around this order. Pashupatinath in Kathmandu is a Hindu riverside cremation ground, as are the cremation ghats at Varanasi, and they are the two most important such places in Hinduism. If you have seen Varanasi first, Pashupatinath on day 10 is much easier to understand. Reversing the trip would not reduce the cost and would lose this connection.

Who this trip is for

Travellers who want to see sights rather than walk long distances. There is no trekking on this itinerary and no significant altitude. It does require stamina of a different kind: eight days in Indian cities in December is tiring regardless of fitness, and the driving days are long. It is also the least expensive trip we offer by a wide margin, which makes it a good first visit to both countries.

The long driving day

Day 8, Khajuraho to Varanasi, is about nine hours by car. It is the longest transfer on any of our trips, and a forty-minute flight covers the same distance. The trip price includes the drive, and we will book the flight for anyone who asks, as most travellers do. Please decide at the time of booking rather than on the day.

Itinerary

Day	Route	Hours	Distance	Altitude
1	Arrive Delhi	–	–	220 m
2	Old and New Delhi	–	–	220 m
3	Drive to Jaipur, Amer Fort	5 hrs	270 km	430 m
4	Drive to Agra, the Red Fort	4–5 hrs	240 km	170 m
5	The Taj Mahal at sunrise	–	–	170 m
6	Drive to Orchha	5 hrs	250 km	230 m
7	Drive to Khajuraho, the temples	4 hrs	175 km	280 m
8	Khajuraho to Varanasi, the long one	9 hrs, or a 40 min flight	400 km	80 m
9	Dawn on the Ganges, fly to Kathmandu	1h 15m flying	–	1,400 m
10	Kathmandu valley sites, up to Nagarkot	–	–	2,175 m

11	Sunrise, Bhaktapur, back to Kathmandu	-	-	1,400 m
12	Fly home	-	-	-

Day 1

Arrive in Delhi

We meet you at Indira Gandhi International Airport with an Earthbound Expeditions sign and take you to your hotel. There are no activities today, so you can rest after your flight.

Altitude: 215 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Delhi Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Old and New Delhi sightseeing

Today you see two very different parts of Delhi. In the morning, Mughal Delhi: the Red Fort, the large courtyard of the Jama Masjid, and a walk or rickshaw ride through the crowded lanes of Chandni Chowk. In the afternoon, Lutyens' imperial capital, with its wide, quiet avenues: India Gate, Rashtrapati Bhavan, the Parliament building, and Raj Ghat, where Gandhi was cremated.

Altitude: 215 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Delhi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Drive to Jaipur

A drive of about five hours south-west into Rajasthan, where the land becomes drier and browner and the buildings more colourful. In Jaipur, you visit Amer Fort on its ridge above a lake, and the Hawa Mahal, the pink honeycomb facade built so that the women of the court could watch the street without being seen.

Altitude: 430 m On foot: None, 5 hr drive Night: Hotel, Jaipur Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Drive from Jaipur to Agra

A drive of about four hours east, with a stop at Fatehpur Sikri, the abandoned Mughal capital, if time allows. In Agra, you visit the Red Fort, a fortress and palace where Shah Jahan spent his last years imprisoned by his son, with a view down the river to the tomb he built for his wife.

Altitude: 170 m On foot: None, 4–5 hr drive Night: Hotel, Agra Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

The Taj Mahal at sunrise

We visit at sunrise, when the light on the marble changes every twenty minutes and before the crowds arrive. The Taj Mahal is a tomb rather than a palace, built by Shah Jahan for Mumtaz Mahal. Look closely at the inlay work: thousands of pieces of semi-precious stone set flush into the white marble.

Altitude: 170 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Agra Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Drive to Orchha

A drive of about five hours south to a small town on the Betwa river that many itineraries leave out. Orchha has palaces and cenotaphs of the Bundela kings standing above the water. After Delhi, Jaipur and Agra, it is the first place on this trip where the monuments are not crowded.

Altitude: 230 m On foot: None, 5 hr drive Night: Hotel, Orchha Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 7

Drive to Khajuraho

A drive of about four hours east to the temples built by the Chandela dynasty between about 950 and 1050 and abandoned when the capital moved. Around twenty of the original eighty-five temples survive. They are covered in some of the finest sculpture in India, a small and well-known part of which is erotic.

Altitude: 285 m On foot: None, 4 hr drive Night: Hotel, Khajuraho Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 8

Drive from Khajuraho to Varanasi

This is the most tiring day of the trip: about nine hours by road east to the Ganges. A forty-minute flight covers the same journey, and we will book it for you if you prefer. In the evening, you attend the Ganga Aarti at Dashashwamedh ghat, where priests perform a fire ceremony to the river at dusk.

Altitude: 80 m On foot: Drive, 9 hrs, or a 40 min flight Night: Hotel, Varanasi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9

Sunrise on the Ganges and fly to Kathmandu

Before sunrise, take a rowing boat along the river past the bathing ghats and the cremation ghats, where cremations take place continuously. Please treat this as a religious and personal occasion for the families present. Then fly north to Kathmandu, arriving in the Himalaya by evening.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10

Kathmandu Valley sightseeing and drive to Nagarkot

Visit Swayambhunath on its hill above the city, the riverside temples and cremation ghats at Pashupatinath, which are easier to understand after Varanasi two days earlier, and the great dome of Boudhanath. In the afternoon, drive up to Nagarkot on the valley rim for sunset over the mountains.

Altitude: 2,175 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Nagarkot Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 11

Sunrise at Nagarkot, Bhaktapur and farewell dinner

Rise early to see the Himalaya along the northern horizon; on a clear morning Everest is visible. Then drive down to Bhaktapur, the best preserved of the valley's three medieval cities, where you spend the afternoon. In the evening, a cultural show and farewell dinner in Kathmandu.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 12

Departure

We take you to Tribhuvan International Airport for your flight. If you are continuing on a trek, our trekking team meets you here.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Airport transfers and ground transport
- Licensed English-speaking guide
- Accommodation throughout the trip
- All permits and national park fees
- Meals as per the itinerary

Not included

- International flights
- Travel and rescue insurance
- Personal trekking gear
- Tips and personal expenses
- Nepal entry visa (on arrival)

Packing list

For temples and mosques

- Long trousers or a long skirt, and tops with sleeves. With shoulders and knees covered, you can enter every site on this itinerary
- A scarf or shawl, to cover your head at the Jama Masjid and to keep dust off in the car
- Slip-on shoes. You remove them at every temple and mosque, a dozen times or more
- Socks for walking on stone. Marble courtyards become very hot underfoot

For eight days in cities

- Comfortable shoes that are already worn in, for three hours a day on stone for two weeks
- A day bag that closes securely, worn on your front in Chandni Chowk and on the Varanasi ghats
- A hat and sunglasses. Even in December the middle of the day is bright
- Plenty of hand sanitiser

For the colder places

- A warm layer for Delhi in December and January, when it can be colder indoors than outside
- A fleece or light down jacket for Nagarkot, which is at 2,175 m and near freezing at dawn
- A light waterproof jacket, mainly for the shoulder months

Health

- Medicine for an upset stomach, and rehydration salts. You are likely to need them
- Your own prescription medicines in their original packaging, with a copy of the prescription
- Mosquito repellent, particularly for Varanasi and the Terai
- A refillable bottle, as the car carries bottled water and this avoids using forty single-use bottles

Papers and money

- A passport valid for six months with two blank pages, plus photocopies
- A printed copy of your India e-Visa approval. Airlines often ask to see it on paper
- Four passport photographs
- US dollars in clean notes for the Nepal visa on arrival
- A card for hotels and rupees for everything else. Indian ATM withdrawal limits are low
- A universal adaptor: India and Nepal both use types C and D, and India also uses type M

Optional extras

Fly on day 8 instead of driving

\$90 to \$140, saves 8 hours

Khajuraho to Varanasi in forty minutes rather than nine hours by road. Most travellers take this option.

Time the trip for Holi

+\$150 on the price, in the itinerary

The festival of colours falls on one date in March and is the best day to be in north India. Hotels are booked up months ahead and charge higher rates.

Ranthambore National Park for tigers

from \$340, +2 days

A national park between Jaipur and Agra with a good chance of seeing a tiger. The extension includes two safaris and one night and fits into the itinerary without other changes.

Bodhgaya and Sarnath

from \$260, +2 days

The places where the Buddha attained enlightenment and first taught, both near Varanasi. This extension suits travellers more interested in Buddhist sites than Mughal ones.

Chitwan after Kathmandu

from \$390, +3 days

Rhinos and Tharu villages in the lowland jungle, added after Kathmandu. It also gives you a break before the flight home.

Everest scenic flight

\$220, 1 morning

A one-hour flight along the range from Kathmandu with a guaranteed window seat. It fits on day 11 and is the closest this trip comes to the mountains.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: enepaltrekking.com/india-and-nepal-tour