

A MINDFUL JOURNEY TO India

March 11 – 23, 2018

Come with us to "Incredible India!"

This will be our 4th journey to India. It is a place that never disappoints. Our journey will be filled with brilliant color, moments of chaos, quiet time for reflection, lovely food, beautiful natural vistas, wondrous ancient structures, comfortable places to stay, popular and sacred music, and beautiful people. We will explore the culture, food, and history as we try to understand what these things mean for us.

Ours is a simple pilgrimage. A pilgrimage is a different way of traveling, described by the Dalai Lama as becoming a spiritual tourist. It is visiting some of the most beautiful and interesting places in the world; ancient places, museums, natural beauty, small villages, while engaging with the people we meet. Evening reflections help us to experience these things in the light of our own perspective; feelings and learning. Being a tourist allows us to look more carefully at our surroundings, while being on pilgrimage allows us to deepen the way we see it.

We have so many memories from past trips to India, each unique and profound. Some of these were the simple things: traveling to the Himalayas and arriving in the evening to wake up to the magnificence of the mountains; a spontaneous dance at a rest stop on the highway with one of the cleaners who offered a

simple gift; meditating in sacred and beautiful places; and the ingenuity and resiliency of the Indian people.

On each day of our journey we will experience the history and culture of India. There will be "down time" to rest, sit and think or take advantage of wonderful places for shopping. During the day we will share short meditations and reflections in interesting settings while letting go of everyday "busyness".

Our Mindful Journeys look like any other journey on the surface, yet they ask more from us than simply being a tourist. They invite us to become more soulful, or simply more sensitive and mindful. This deepening perspective helps us learn more about the journey we are on, the people and places we see as well as the internal journey we each take in our lives.

— Wayne and Joan Walder

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY:


Worldwide Quest
EXPERIENTIAL TRAVEL SINCE 1970



A WORD ABOUT Mindful Journeys

What is a Mindful Journey?

"Mindful" simply means practicing "how" we perceive the beauty and depth of the world. We can become more mindful by using meditation to slow down an internal dialogue we often have with ourselves. When travelling, a simple meditation practice once a day for 30 minutes helps us change the way we perceive ourselves and the world around us. Many evenings we gather together for reflection – sharing our insights and experiences. These practices remind us that our technological connections are not a replacement for psychological depth. And we become more open to insight.

What's involved?

The only prerequisite is to pack an open mind.



TOUR LEADER

Rev. Wayne Walder is the minister of Neighbourhood Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Toronto. For more than 30 years Wayne has practiced meditation from a number of spiritual traditions. He has chanted Dzikr with Sufi Pir's (saints), sung spiritual songs with Hindu priests, and sat in meditation with Buddhist monks. Wayne brings mindful insights and meditations to enhance our experience.



Houses at Himalaya mountains in Dharamsala

Signature Moments

- ➲ Meditating at the mausoleum of the Sufi saint
- ➲ Hiking in the foothills of the Himalayas
- ➲ Meditating with the monks at the Gyuto Monastery
- ➲ Lunching in the dining room of Amritsar's Golden Temple
- ➲ Sharing reflections of the Taj Mahal from the riverside vantage point



Detailed Itinerary

Sunday, Mar. 11: Arrive Delhi

Our trip begins with your arrival in Delhi this evening. Flights from North America arrive in the late evening; you will be met at the airport and transferred to our hotel.

Overnight: The Palms, Delhi

Monday, Mar. 12: Exploring the New City

Delhi is one of the world's great cities, containing an astonishing array of forts, tombs, mosques, and government buildings constructed over the past 1,000 years. We'll get acquainted with the city today visiting the New Delhi of Edwin Lutyens with its sandstone President House, India Gate, and Raj Ghat, the memorial devoted to Mahatma Gandhi.

Overnight: The Palms, Delhi

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Tuesday, Mar. 13: Delhi's temples and mosques

This morning we'll visit Old Delhi, starting at the Masjid Jamal, Asia's largest mosque. Then explore the winding streets of Old Delhi by rickshaw; it's a kaleidoscope of colours and activity. Visit the Hazrat Nizammudin Dargah dedicated to the Sufi mystic who lived in the 13th century. This important pilgrimage destination also hosts the tombs of the 13th century Sufi poet Amir Khusro, and the 19th century Sufi musician Inayat Khan, founder of the Sufi order in the West. Admire the tall minarets of the Qutub Minar, a splendid example of Indo-Islamic architecture. Nearby see the Chhatarpur Temple dedicated to the worship of the goddess Durga.

Overnight: The Palms, Delhi

Meals: Breakfast, dinner

Wednesday, Mar. 14: Fly to Dharamsala

This morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Dharamsala. The word Dharamsala means 'sanctuary' in Sanskrit. Since seeking refuge here in 1959, over 90,000 Tibetans have built a vibrant, democratic community. Dedicated to the "culture of the heart", it is based on Buddhist principals of non-violence, tolerance, interdependence, compassion, and respect for all living things and the environment. We'll get to know the upper and lower city today, visiting some of Wayne and Joan's favourite sites.

Overnight: Udechee Huts, Mcleod Ganj

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Thursday, Mar. 15: Dharamsala

Start the day at the Tsuglagkhang Temple in the upper town of Mcleod Ganj. The temple is the equivalent to Lhasa's Jokhang Temple with a central gilded statue of Sakyamuni Buddha. At the Norbulingka Institute we'll meet with Tibetan artisans who are maintaining and passing on the artistic knowledge achieved at the pinnacle of Tibetan Buddhist civilization. From here we'll walk (about 2km) to the Gyuto Monastery, one of the two main centres for Trantric studies in the Gelukpa tradition; it's a beautiful place to relax and meditate and we hope to hear the monks chanting.

Overnight: Udechee Huts, Mcleod Ganj

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Friday, Mar. 16: Dharamsala

This morning trek to Dal Lake, a beautifully scenic site surrounded by a pine forest and visit the Kali Temple near the banks of the lake. The afternoon is yours to explore on your own with suggestions from Wayne and Joan. You won't want to miss the McLeod Ganj Market, a global gathering of hippies, travellers, monks, and artists. Visit with artisans and craftsmen working to maintain the tradition of Tibetan art. This evening we'll visit the Mani Lhakhang Stupa, known as the prayer wheel monastery, constructed in 2001 on instructions from the Dalai Lama, to hear hymns sung by the monks.

Overnight: Udechee Huts, Mcleod Ganj

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Saturday, Mar. 17: Rakkh

Rakkh is perched on a hilltop in the foothills of the mighty Dhauladhar Mountain Range. From here there are spectacular views of the snowcapped Himalayas and the sleepy villages in the valleys below. We'll drive to this lovely mountain resort this morning and spend the day mountain biking, hiking, or simply enjoying the surrounding villages and tea estates and the isolated monasteries and temples. This will be a peaceful moment after our full days in Dharamsala.

Overnight: Rakkh Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Sunday, Mar. 18: Drive to Amritsar

Enjoy a morning yoga session on the roof terrace with 360 degree panoramic views of the surrounding mountains and valleys. Then set off on the drive (about six hours) to Amritsar, travelling down through the foothills of the Himalayas and into the vast, fertile plains of the Punjab. We arrive in Amritsar in the late afternoon in time to observe Palki Sahib, the night ceremony during which the Sikh Holy Book is carried from the main shrine of the Golden Temple to the sanctum for the evening rest.

Overnight: Radisson Blue Hotel, Amritsar

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Monday, Mar. 19: Amritsar

The Golden Temple is a place of great beauty and sublime peacefulness. Originally a small lake in the midst of a quiet forest, the site has been a meditation retreat for wandering mendicants and sages since antiquity. The Buddha is known to have spent time at this place in contemplation. Two thousand years after Buddha's time, Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, came to live and meditate by the peaceful lake. We'll spend time exploring the site and learning about the significance of the place. Lunch is at the Guru-Ka-Langar, the enormous dining room where an estimated 100,000 people come to eat each day – voluntary help with the washing up is always appreciated!

Overnight: Radisson Blue Hotel, Amritsar

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Tuesday, Mar. 20: Amritsar

Continue exploring the city of Amritsar, visiting the Ram Bagh Gardens and the Summer Palace of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. We'll also visit some of the other religious sites in the area including the Durgiana Temple dating from the 16th century and the Gurudwara Baba Atal. This evening we will observe the Beating Retreat Ceremony at the Wagah Border, a colourful display of military tradition. This carefully choreographed ceremony of lowering the Indian and Pakistanis flags has become a spectacular attraction.

Overnight: Radisson Blue Hotel, Amritsar

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Wednesday, Mar. 21: Fly to Delhi and drive to Agra

This morning fly to Delhi and from the airport set off to Agra and the marvel of the Taj Mahal. We'll first visit the Fort; today the towering red-sandstone ramparts house a variety of palace apartments, representing the different building styles of Akbar and his grandson Shah Jahan. The mirrored Sheesh Mahal and the Mina Masjid (the Gem Mosque) will capture your heart. This evening we'll view the Taj Mahal from the Mehtab bagh on the river bank facing the Taj Mahal.

Overnight: Radisson Blue Hotel, Agra

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Thursday, Mar. 22: Agra

Early this morning, we'll visit the magnificent Taj Mahal. It may be a visual cliché, but it is also the one of the few architectural icons that surpasses expectation. Our guide will take us past the perfect symmetry, the wonderful proportion, and the sheer scale to inspect the exquisite detailing covering every inch of marble. Visit the tomb of Itimad-ud-Daulah surrounded by beautiful gardens; with its perfect view across the river to the Taj it's a beautiful place to relax and contemplate what we've seen today.

Overnight: Radisson Blue Hotel, Agra

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Friday, Mar. 23: Depart Delhi

Head back to Delhi today, first visiting the UNESCO World Heritage site of Fatehpur Sikri, briefly capital of the Mughal Empire, with one of the largest mosques in India set in a marvelous complex of monuments and temples. We arrive back in Delhi this afternoon; enjoy day rooms to freshen up and dine before transfer to the airport for late night homeward bound flights.

Day room: The Palms, Delhi

Meals: Breakfast

Optional Extension: The holy city of Varanasi

Extension Cost: US\$1295 pp

Includes: Domestic flights (Delhi/Varanasi/Delhi), accommodation based on double occupancy, breakfast and either lunch or dinner daily, full program of sightseeing.

Not Included: Gratuities, beverages with meals.



Friday, Mar. 23: Fly Delhi to Varanasi

The main part of the tour ends with our arrival in Delhi in the mid-afternoon. You will be transferred to the airport for the flight to Varanasi. The land of Varanasi (Kashi) has been the ultimate pilgrimage spot for Hindus for ages. Formerly known as Benares, Varanasi is the oldest living city in the world. This evening we experience a special Aarti ceremony on the banks of the Ganges where young Brahmin priests perform age-old prayer rituals with conch shells and burning braziers accompanied by drummers.

Overnight: Taj Gateway Hotel, Varanasi

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Saturday, Mar. 24: Varanasi

Early this morning, board a launch for a cruise on the Ganges to the two-kilometre stretch of bathing ghats, or steps, that lead into the river. The ghats of the Ganges are perhaps the holiest spots of Varanasi, and are full of pilgrims who flock to the place to take a dip in the holy river. They believe this absolves them from all sins and cleanses them physically, mentally and spiritually. Later, we'll explore the winding alleys of the town of Varanasi where small shops sell all the accoutrements of the holy ceremonies. This afternoon we visit the buried city of Sarnath, where Buddha delivered his first sermon. The celebrated mantra, Buddham Sharanam Gachhami, originated here.

Overnight: Taj Gateway Hotel, Varanasi

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

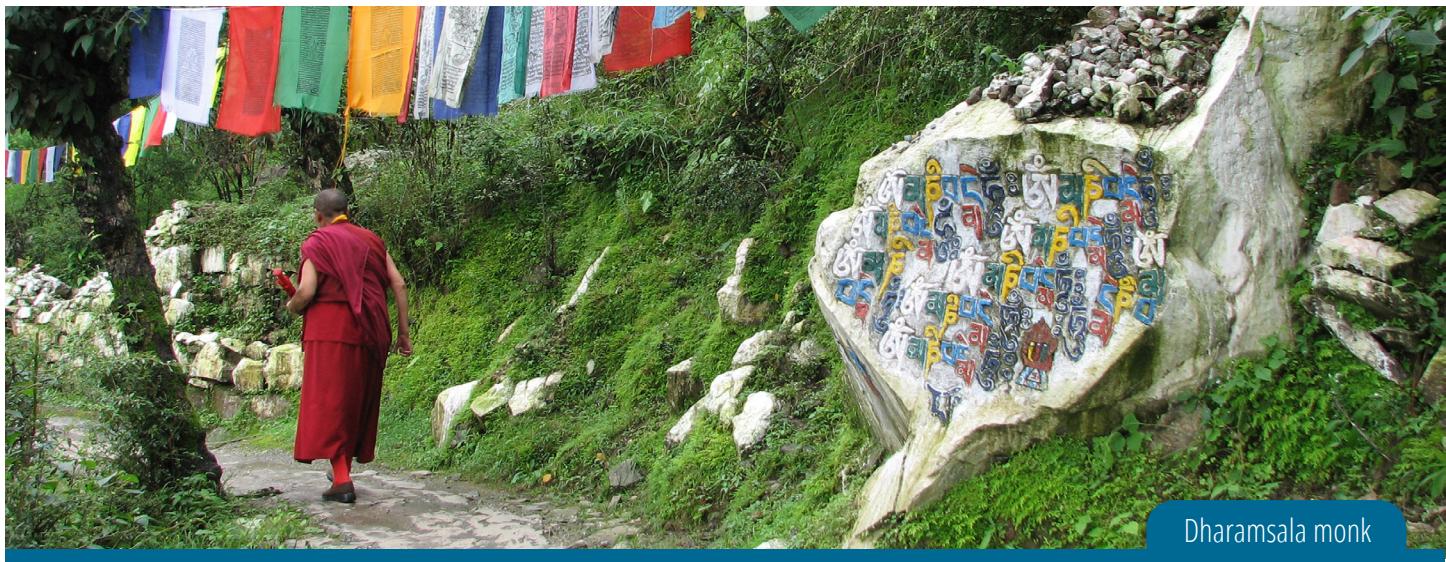
Sunday, Mar. 25: Depart Delhi

The morning is at leisure to revisit the heart of the city and stroll the grounds of Benares University. In the afternoon we fly to Delhi. On arrival day rooms have been reserved to freshen up prior to a late evening transfer to the airport for your flight home.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Note: The itinerary and accommodation described in this itinerary are subject to change due to logistical arrangements and to take advantage of local events.





Dharamsala monk

TOUR DETAILS

Tour Cost (per person): US\$4795

Taxes and Gratuities (per person): US\$325

Single Supplement: TBA

We would be happy to try to match you with a suitable roommate.

If we are unable to, the single supplement will apply. This will be collected at 90 days prior to departure.

Group Size:

12 – 16 participants

What's Included:

- Airport transfers for passengers arriving and departing as per the group itinerary
- Domestic flights (Delhi to Dharamsala and Amritsar to Delhi)
- Accommodation in double occupancy, based on hotels listed or similar
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Transportation by air conditioned coach
- All activities and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary
- Services of specialized English speaking guides
- Gratuities for escort, local guides, drivers, hotel and group meals (as indicated above)
- Taxes (as indicated above)
- Tour accompanied by Wayne and Joan Walder

Not Included:

- Roundtrip international airfare from your home to Delhi
- Airport transfers if arriving or departing separately from group itinerary (see joining instructions below)
- Meals and beverages not included in the itinerary
- Items of a personal nature, ie laundry, drinks, phone calls, etc.
- Travel insurance
- Additional transport due to any emergency situation

Payment Details:

A deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve your space on this tour. A payment of US\$1000 is due six months prior to departure. The balance is due 90 days prior to departure.

Call Kerry at Worldwide Quest for more information and to book your spot.

416-633-5666 | 1-800-387-1483
travel@worldwidequest.com

WHAT TO EXPECT

Joining Instructions

This tour begins with your arrival in Delhi in the evening of March 11. We will meet for our briefing over breakfast on March 12. Please ensure that you arrive in Delhi on March 11 to join the group. All travellers arriving on the start date of the tour will be met on arrival and transferred to the group hotel. This transfer is included in the cost of the tour. When you book the designated pre-trip accommodation with Worldwide Quest, your transfer from the airport to our group hotel on arrival is included. If you are making your own pre-trip arrangements, this transfer can be provided at additional cost. The tour concludes with a single complimentary transfer from the hotel to the airport on March 23. Please contact us to verify timing of this transfer prior to making any flight arrangements.

Level of Activity: Moderate to Active

A good level of fitness is important for this trip. You must be comfortable walking on uneven terrain and irregular paving and climbing stairs for a minimum of two hours at a stretch. In some places access to sites is only on foot. Please note that Dharamsala is at 1457 metres (4780 feet) elevation.

Accommodation

We are staying in centrally located comfortable Western style hotels in Delhi, Amritsar, and Agra. In Dharamsala we are staying in a boutique family run hotel with great views over the mountains. The Rakkh resort is a lovely resort surrounded by terraced hillsides.

Transportation

We will be travelling overland by private coach. Please note that there is one long drive day from Rakkh to Amritsar.

Weather

In Delhi, Amritsar, and Agra, we expect temperatures in the high 20's during the day. In the higher elevations of Dharamsala and Rakkh we expect highs of about 20°C with overnight lows of 10°C. We may experience some light precipitation.

Travel Documents

You will require a passport for your trip to India. Please make sure that it is valid for six months after the date of your return home. You will require a visa for India which must be obtained prior to arrival.

ADDITIONAL INFO

Extend your Stay

If you are interested in exploring more of this region, we would be happy to design a personalized extension for you either before or after this tour. Please let us suggest some options, based on your time available, budget and interests.

Terms and Conditions

For additional information about our terms and conditions, please refer to your booking form, the current brochure or our website. All participants booking with Worldwide Quest are covered by the terms of the Ontario Travel Industry Act (Worldwide Quest International, Ontario - License # 2667946).

Cancellation Policy

All payments are non-refundable, however you may transfer your initial deposit for any land tour to another tour 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. Initial deposits for cruises are non-refundable and non-transferable. Your second payment and your final payment are non-refundable and non-transferable. If you cancel within 90 days prior to trip departure, all associated trip costs are non-refundable. The tour price is quoted as a package. No partial refunds or credits will be given for services not used. In the event of a cancellation, you must notify Worldwide Quest immediately and in writing.

Travel Insurance

We urge you to ensure that you have adequate cancellation and medical insurance in place, should an unexpected event cause you to cancel or interrupt your trip or should the tour not be operable per our terms and conditions. We will offer you Manulife insurance coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS BY:

