

# Himalayan Sojourn

## Delhi-Amritsar-Pragpur-Dharamshala-Shimla-Delhi-Agra-Jaipur

### DAY 1 ARRIVE DELHI

Arrive Delhi. Upon arrival you will be received and taken to the hotel.

The city consists of two parts -Old & New Delhi. Old Delhi was the capital of Muslim India between 17th and 19th century and has many mosques, monuments and forts. New Delhi, the imperial city was created by the British as the capital of India. In 1911, Edwin Lutyens', the most renowned English architect of the day, was chosen to design New Delhi. Lutyens' architectural conceptions were totally different from the Hindu or Mughal architecture. The city centre has wide, straight avenues in a strict layout,



plenty of parks and low colonial buildings with spacious gardens.

Meals included: None

Overnight:

## DAY 2 DELHI

This morning visit Old Delhi, it pulses with the energy and colour, the hustle and bustle of thronged bazaars and is laced by a maze of narrow lanes which twist and turn between tall, leaning houses full of the sights, sounds and aromas of the Indian sub-continent. You will see the famous Red Fort surrounded by shops, and bazaars, the Jama Masjid with its tapering minarets and wonderful marble domes and the Chandni Chowk. In Old Delhi you will also have an opportunity to enjoy rickshaw ride.

In the afternoon you will be taken on a tour of New Delhi. It is a city of wide boulevards which offers ever changing perspectives of Lutyen's landscaped city. It is a city known for its formal parks, magnificent Parliament Building, the Rashtrapati Bhawan (the official residence of the President of India designed by Sir Edwin Lutyen) and India Gate. In New Delhi you will also visit Qutab Minar, the 72.5 m high tower dating back to 13th century and Humanyun's Tomb (built in the 16th century and architecturally the fore runner of the Taj Mahal).

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 3 DELHI - AMRITSAR

This morning you will be collected from your hotel and taken to the rail station to board your train to Amritsar (Shatabdi Express; departing Delhi at 0720hrs; arriving Amritsar at 1325hrs this train does not operate on Thursdays when there is an evening train to Amritsar). Upon arrival you will be received and taken to the hotel. Rest of the day will be at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 4 AMRITSAR



This morning you will be taken for a tour of Amritsar city.

Amritsar has many claims to fame. It is the holy city of the Sikhs, very intimately connected with the colourful history of the proud, martial race. It is also a showpiece of the prosperity and wealth of the state of Punjab. Life in Amritsar is deeply

influenced by the holy shrines of the Golden Temple and the tour of Amritsar essentially involves visit to the magnificent Golden Temple -lavishly decorated holiest shrine of the Sikhs. The origin of the temple dates back to 1574 though the temple was completed 1601. The other important site of the city is The Jallianwala Bagh which is within a few minutes walk from the temple and commemorates the 2,000 Indians who were killed or wounded at this site, shot indiscriminately by the Colonial British police in 1919.



Later in the afternoon you will be taken to visit the Wagah Border, between India and Pakistan, where you can view the ceremonial changing of the guard at dusk. Boundless tracts of fields swollen for harvest roll far into the horizon beyond the barbed wire while the colourfully crested turbans of the Indian guards and the flowing salwar kurtas of the Pakistani guards act as a delightful foil to each other. As the bugle is sounded, the Indian crowd responds in jubilation, trying to out-shout the Pakistani visitors across the gate -the crowds are almost 10,000 strong on Sundays and Fridays. After visiting the ceremony you will be driven back to your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 5 AMRITSAR - PRAGPUR

This morning you will be driven to Pragpur (5 hours) – a quaint little hill village recently declared a ‘heritage village’, an honour that this village more than justifies. Here one notices elegant havelis, mansions and Italianate buildings that are interspersed amongst the charming mud plastered and slate roofed houses that lie in blissful harmony alongside streets paved with dressed cobblestone.



Later in the afternoon you will explore the heritage village of Pragpur and its Village Crafts Museum, the building of which is about 300 years old and has been restored by Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH). You may continue walking into the small village bazaar exploring the displayed goods with locals. In the quaint market there are several silversmiths who

will quickly modify trinkets to satisfy individual taste, the village weavers will make shawls and blankets to order and tailors will make up dresses overnight.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 6 PRAGPUR- DHARAMSALA

This morning you will be driven to Dharamshala (2 ½ hours) – en route you will visit the historic Kangra Fort. The Fort, also known as the Nagarkot or Kot Kangra, is built on the top of a hill. The earliest extant remains inside the Fort are the Jaina and Brahmanical temples which could be dated to around the ninth -tenth century AD. The Fort, occupying a long strip of land, is enclosed with high rampart; and, the walls cover a circuit of about four kilometres. The most valuable monuments in the Kangra Fort are the temples of Laxminarayan and Sitala. You will arrive in Dharamshala around noon and would be at leisure for the rest of the day or you may explore the little town walking.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 7 DHARAMSHALA

Perched atop the idyllic Kangra valley, Dharamshala is a cool serene hill station. The township is surrounded by mountains on three sides and faces the snow. The valley and the surrounding hills of Dharamshala are thickly wooded with oak. The snow line is perhaps more easily accessible at Dharamshala than at any other hill resort and is quite possible to trek up to it. Today a large number of Tibetans have made in this salubrious place their temples, educational institutions, hospitals and art centres; everyone and everything lending a distinct Tibetan flavour and lifestyle. The town varies in height from 1250 metres at the bazaar to 1768 metres at McLeodganj – in fact, the town is divided between Lower and Upper Dharamshala. Upper Dharamshala or McLeodganj is the headquarters of His Holiness The Dalai Lama, who settled here after his flight across the Himalayas following the Chinese invasion of Tibet in October 1959.



Today you will explore the town of Dharamshala.... You will visit The Namgyal Monastery, known as Little Lhasa and a major attraction in McLeodganj. This cathedral opposite the Dalai Lama's residence resembles the one in Lhasa and is a 5-minute walk from the main bazaar. It contains large gilded bronzes of Buddha, Avalokitesvara and Padmasambhava. Dalai Lama often leads the prayers when he is in the residence and if you sign up at the security office, an audience with him is possible during his public discourses. The Nechung Monastery in Gangchen Kyishon has a Tibetan library with a wide range of books, magazines and a museum. The central

Tibetan Administration Offices are located here and you can also attend lectures and classes on Tibetan culture and Buddhism. From McLeodganj, there are a number of interesting walks. The shrine of Bhagasunath is a 2-km stroll. The shrine is famous for

its ancient temple and also has spring which is considered sacred by the Hindus. You may undertake this walk in the afternoon returning early evening.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 8 DHARAMSHALA - SHIMLA

This morning you will be driven to your next destination, Shimla (9 hour drive). You will arrive in Shimla in the evening and would be at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 9 SHIMLA

Explore Shimla today. The summer capital of British India sprawls along a crescent-shaped ridge at an altitude of over 2100m in southern Himachal Pradesh. This was the most important hill station in India before Independence. The famous main street, The Mall, runs along the crest of the ridge and is lined with stately colonial houses. Christ Church, Gorton Castle and the fortress-like former Viceroy Lodge reinforce the English flavour. It is worth exploring the narrow streets which fall steeply away from the ridge to colourful local bazaars.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 10 SHIMLA

Full-day at leisure or explore the hill town on your own.

Meals: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 11 SHIMLA - KALKA-DELHI

After a leisurely forenoon, you will be collected from your hotel and driven to Kalka rail station (3 hours drive) to board your train for Delhi (Shatabdi Express; departing Kalka at 1745hrs, arriving Delhi at 2150hrs). Upon arrival in Delhi you will be received and driven to your hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 12 DELHI-AGRA

ou will be driven to your next destination Agra (4 hours), where you will arrive around noon.

In the afternoon you will be taken on a tour of Agra city – visiting Agra Fort and the incomparable Taj Mahal (Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays) where you will stay until after sunset. You will arrive at the Taj Mahal on tonga (horse drawn carriage).



Shah Jehan's son imprisoned him in the magnificent fort at Agra. Here you'll see the art and crafting of the white marble that has made the area so famous, the Pearl Mosque and the Halls of Public and Private Audience. The Taj Mahal truly is one of the wonders of the world. It is a

monument of love built by the Mughal Emperor Shahjehan in 1630 for his Queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains. For twenty-two years 20,000 men laboured day and night to build this masterpiece that has held the world awe struck ever since.

Meals included:

Breakfast Overnight:

## DAY 13 AGRA- SAMODE

Early this morning you will have another opportunity of visiting Taj Mahal – this time around at sunrise. After breakfast, you will be driven to Samode (6 hours) – en route visiting the deserted Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri. You will arrive at Samode/Jaipur in the afternoon and would be at leisure for the rest of the day.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 14 SAMODE - JAIPUR - SAMODE

Today you will do a full tour of Jaipur. In the morning you will be taken to Amber Fort where you arrive atop an elephant.

Amber, the ancient capital of the region, still recalls its heydays in the majestic ramparts rising steeply along the contoured hillsides. Here, elephants still carry visitors in stately splendour to the main Palace, through unusually high gateways, obviously designed to accommodate this archaic mode of transport. It is an extremely well preserved building and very delightful to explore. Visit the Jagmandir or the Hall of Victory glittering with mirrors, Jai Mahal and Temple of Kali.

After visiting the fort, in the afternoon, you will be taken on the city tour. Jaipur is blessed with a wealth of wonders. Here you will see the Jantar Mantar (Astronomical Observatory) and the Maharaja's City Palace. Jaipur is a city of pink, and the light playing upon the buildings, creating shadows and highlighting every nuance of the architecture will enchant you.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

## DAY 15 SAMODE - DELHI - ONWARD DESTINATION

After a leisurely day (check out 12 noon) you will be driven back to Delhi airport (4 ½ hours) in time to board your onward flight back home

\*\*\*\*\*End of the arrangements\*\*\*\*\*