

Indian Explorer (10 days)

Departs anytime (2018 -19)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's particular aims, learning objectives and budget.

Please contact us detailing any changes you'd like to make.

Travellers in India learn quickly that their time here is an experience as much as a trip. Student Educational Adventures can arrange a number of insightful itineraries for young student groups to India. Our trips incorporate vibrant youth culture, Bollywood beats, exotic landscapes and charming people.

Our trips afford our student travellers an insight into life on the subcontinent, encouraging them to pause and compare. Built on the strength of partnerships and shared beliefs, we can present your students with a host of isolated and hidden experiences.

This 10-day trip takes us to Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Varanasi and Kolkata. Here, our journey highlights are uncovered across quaint villages, ancient ruins, and colourful ceremonies. Most importantly, they provide an understanding of modern society and the developmental issues India faces in the 21st Century. As we endeavour to contribute to our host country, we will also take part in an exciting school renovation project.

All programs and activities described in the itinerary are explicitly designed to foster Asian literacy. Most importantly, this trip is designed to be a highly enjoyable and memorable introduction to a country that will continue to be of great significance for decades to come.



Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive India (Delhi)



On arrival in Delhi, we will be greeted by our tour leader and transferred to our centrally located hotel. After a brief introductory meeting, we will set out to experience charming Old Delhi.

As we approach Old Delhi the Red Fort looms into view. A 16th century AD Mughal bastion; we explore its public and private spaces, gardens and waterways during the course of our time here. In addition, we will also be visiting the enchanting inner city of Pahargani and the area around New Delhi railway station. Our tour guide, a young man who was once living and working on these very streets, will be leading us today. It's a unique way of providing an insight into the lives of these children and an opportunity for

them to improve their communication and speaking skills.

Later in the day, we will explore Khari Baoli, Asia's largest wholesale spice market. Get ready for a feast of the senses! This street is home to hordes of tiny shops, laden with piles of dry red chillies, beads and baubles, wedding decorations and every imaginable trinket making this precinct once of the most vibrant to be found anywhere in India. (lunch, dinner) **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Delhi (city exploration)



We will set out early this morning for a leisurely cycling tour around parts of New Delhi, allowing us to witness the awakening of this ancient city. It's an early morning start at 6.30 am, from Nizamuddin with a focus on the 'street experience'. This is a grassroots activity designed to allow students to see the real Delhi as *Delhi-ites* experience their city daily. While at times intense and overwhelming, the experience is satisfying and rewarding in unexpected ways. This morning we will be part of the unique mix of colours, smells, sounds, tastes and unforgettable images that make Delhi what it is. During the afternoon we will stop by Dilli Haat – a unique crafts and food market. For the more adventurous student, it is a great place to sample a mixture of Indian cuisines from all across the country.

No tour to India would be complete without visiting the National Gandhi Museum. This afternoon we will learn about the former Prime Minister's life-long legacy, his struggle for basic human rights and independence. Time permitting, we will also visit Hauz Khas Village this evening, famous for its narrow lanes full of art stores, young designer boutiques, and cafes. This neighborhood also hosts a range of vintage Bollywood posters, textile labels, and other charming memorabilia. Dinner tonight will be at a regional restaurant in the village, or at one of the many other eateries on our list. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 3

Delhi Agra (Taj Mahal)



This morning we will travel by private coach to Agra, stopping on the way to visit Fatehpur Sikri. Fatehpur Sikri is a magnificently fortified city, once the capital of the Mughal Empire until it was abandoned in 1585.

Agra, situated on the banks of the Yamuna River, was the capital of India at the time of the Mughals in the 16th and 17th centuries. Here, we will witness the Mughal's passion for architecture, adorning the city with the loveliest buildings in the world.

In the late morning, we will arrive in Agra to visit the beautiful Taj Mahal - the world's ultimate testament to love, built by Emperor Shah Jahan in

1632 as a memorial to his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal. This elegant monument took 22 years to build by a total of 20,000 labourers. It is a blend of Hindu and Muslim architectural styles.

We will enjoy a tasty local lunch before continuing our way across the Yamuna River. Here, we pay visit to one of India's most significant architectural monuments, the Agra Fort. This world heritage site was built by Emperor Akbar in 1565 and stands like a crescent on the bank of Yamuna River. There will be ample time to explore the fort's massive walls and through a maze of buildings that form a city within a city. The fort today is a silent witness to the rise and fall of the imperial Mughal Empire and of the golden era of art, literature and architecture in India. We will spend the night in Agra at a local Indian guesthouse. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 4

Agra & surrounds (School renovation project)



After breakfast we will visit Korai, a hamlet nestled in Agra-Fatehpur Sikri highway and home to the Kalandhar tribe. This small village shares an intriguing history, as its inhabitants were once the keepers of bears. Their days comprised of staging various bear dances to visitors, a tradition that has since been banned. The village now struggles for survival and has converted their simple village into an attraction and source of livelihood.

Our visit here will be eye-opening as we get an opportunity to see for ourselves the lives of rural Indians. We will dine at the homes of local people and enjoy a meal

with our hosts. In this land of festivals, we may be fortunate enough to catch the village during a celebration or festival, or preparing a hearty feast for the entire village.

After lunch, we embark on a half-day school renovation project to help benefit a rural school on the outskirts of the city. Jobs may include repairing walls and floors, painting, nailing, establishing self-sufficient gardening or setting up a library. It is also here that we will learn about the Indian education system. There will be a small thank you ceremony and speeches held at the completion of the project. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 5

Agra 🚗 Jaipur



This morning we will begin our half day journey deeper into India's western provinces of Rajasthan. This region of India is particularly famous for its magnificent sand dunes, sublime sunset, and exquisite arts and crafts that typify a village bazaar.

In the afternoon we will arrive in Jaipur city, where the traffic dodges ambling camels and leisurely cycle-rickshaws compete with swarms of motorbikes. We set out to visit the Jantar Mantar observatory, an astronomical observation site built in the early 18th century. This is the most significant, most comprehensive, and the

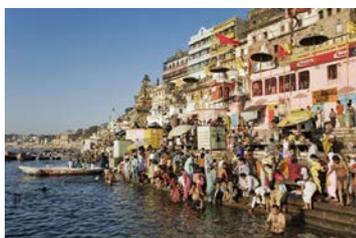
best preserved of India's historic observatories.

If time permits, we will escape to the Chulgiri Hills (southeast of the city centre) and partake in some light trekking through forests and the surrounding ranges. This important geographical plateau is a barrier against the hot sands of the Thar desert with some rivers originating from its source.

For dinner, we will enjoy an authentic local food experience when we visit an iconic LMB eatery followed by a Heritage walk through the bylanes of the old city of Jaipur. Here, we will be observing local artisans, jewellery makers and silversmiths at the fascinating Johari bazaar. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 6

Jaipur



Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that your students might like to add to their overseas experience. These activities can be included based on students' knowledge of the country or their particular interests or passions for any aspect of a country's culture.

The activities we can include are many and varied. These may include; an introduction to a country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to local schools, great race activities, youth culture venues, architectural marvels or a plethora of cultural programs. Please contact us for further ideas.

OPTION 1:

Bicycle ride: There are numerous biking tracks on the outskirts of Jaipur that we can take to explore the rural countryside or uphill to the site of Nahargarh Fort. This gives students a great opportunity to visit local villages and gain an understanding and appreciation of everyday life. The bike ride affords us the ability to travel to some of the most traditional villages whose way of life has changed little in decades. (breakfast, dinner)

OPTION 2:



Cricket: Indians are crazy about all things cricket. Playing a game of 20/20 cricket is a great way to interact with students from a local school spending the morning or afternoon there. Teams can be combined or in an *us versus them* scenario. Of course, the outcome of the game is not important. What is important is that we play with contemporaries and enjoy our time here. This game makes for a great opportunity to break boundaries and make friends.

OPTION 3:

Culture & Arts: Chokhi Dhani ethnic village is the place to go to see Rajasthani traditional culture. There are various arts and craft centres here that include puppet shows, folklore performances, acrobatics, camel rides, and even boating. The place is packed with open-air restaurants. We will see wall decorations and mural paintings showcasing the culture of this province as we mix in with the locals and gain a real feeling for all things Rajasthani. (breakfast, dinner)

Later in the day, we will venture out to visit the Amber Fort. For those interested this most iconic of Indian animals, there will be time to visit Elephantiasic for some fun and love with these gentle giants. We will have the opportunity to wash, feed and water them. There may also be time for a painting class to learn about elephant-decorations as we learn about elephant medicines and treatments. Time permitting, we make our way to Raj Mandir Cinema to watch a blockbuster Bollywood movie and take in all the dance and glamour of the most recently released films. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 7

Jaipur ✈️ Varanasi



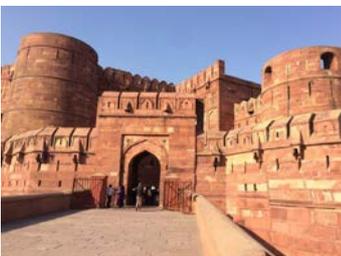
After a pleasant morning exploring the back streets of Jaipur, we will depart Rajasthan for our flight to Varanasi in India's Uttar Pradesh State. Nestled between sacred temples and holy ponds, Varanasi is an essential stop for us to learn about the origins of this complex country. Varanasi is not for the faint-hearted. With rituals of life and death, smells, sounds and hawkers can be intense.

After checking into our hotel, we will visit the Kashi Vishwanath temple. This temple is said to hold the first of the jyotirlingas, the sacred shafts of light that self-emanated from the earth. We will have a unique experience navigating ourselves through the quaint old bazaar's crowded alleyways.

Varanasi is situated along the banks of the holy Ganges River and considered to be India's spiritual home; millions of local pilgrims descend here every year. This evening we will board a boat to observe the evening 'Ganga Aarti' at the ghats (a series of steps leading down to holy water). Rituals include ringing of brass bells, chanting, aromas of flowers and incense for blessings. Indians who come here connect with the river and feel the energy of this ancient city, making it an important place of pilgrimage for people from across the country. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 8

Varanasi



An early start this morning begins at sunrise for us where we will see pilgrims standing waist deep in the river doing their morning prayers. We will witness the rituals of life and death as people pray and bathe. Our local guide will take us to a local village to learn of India's caste system. It is a form of social stratification with pre-modern origins, and one that serves as the basis of reservation today.

After lunch, we will enjoy a 'Courtyards & Courtesans' walk into the alleys of the Ansari weavers – sari makers whose beautiful detailed work is still done by hand in homes and courtyards by traditional Banaras artisans. The finest saris in India are produced here for weddings and special occasions, taking up to 6 months to produce. En route we will observe handcrafting images of gods and goddesses and stretching silk strings woven in the park. Later we will take a rickshaw journey through the inner lanes around Dal ki Mandi, a vibrant Muslim bazaar. Tonight, we take part in a hands-on cooking class to learn the secrets of Varanasi's most famous dishes. We will blend spices, bake bread, and cook two or three curries while learning how to present these dishes. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 9

Varanasi ✈️ Kolkata



Varanasi is one of the world's oldest continually inhabited cities, and one of the holiest in Hinduism. This morning, we will explore Bengali Tola, or the street of the Bengalis. It is an immersive experience in this busy and bustling street, riddled with distinctive cultural emblems from central India. To students with the more discerning eye, what makes Varanasi different from a city like Delhi?

After our morning exploration, we will depart on a short flight to Kolkata. Kolkata (formerly known as Calcutta) was originally a British settlement, built in the 17th century during their trading and colonising expansion along the coast of Bengal. A former capital to British India and now to the west Bengal state, Kolkata is the

urban business center and home to hundreds of cultural backgrounds today.

This afternoon, we will take a walk exploring the confluence of various cultures in Kolkata. We will learn why Chinese still rules Tiretta Bazar, what contributes to a declining Parisian population, and how the Armenians gave the city its oldest surviving Christian church.

Kolkata has a thriving arts scene including the Bengali theatre, dance, art, music and film production. This afternoon, we will also engage in a fun and contemporary dance class at one of the local schools.

(breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 10

Depart Kolkata ✈️



Kolkata is simultaneously noble, struggling and in decay and futuristic. No visit to Kolkata would be complete without a rustic tram journey. It is the oldest and only tram network that still exists in India today. The line provides us an opportunity to visit and engage through parts of the city. The ever-vital hub of traditional Bengali culture that we will travel through contains a fascinatingly cosmopolitan blend of architectural forms, from Islamic to Baroque, or Victorian to Bengali.

For our final afternoon in India, we will explore Science City, the largest science centre in the country. The centre is made up of various topics of science with endless interactive hands-on exhibits. The centre consists of the space planetarium, a time machine concept simulator, and human evolution technology galleries. There is also a natural sciences section looking at plant life and how flora and fauna can survive with the recent onset of climate change.

This afternoon we will depart to Kolkata airport for our journey home. Our tour leader will take care of all our onwards arrangements and wave us farewell. (breakfast) **Flight details to be advised**

Summary

Grading

Moderate; Students will be required to be in good health to get the most out of this trip while any one of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day. You will also be expected to be able to ride a bike and take part in hiking for a few hours. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

Modern air-conditioned bus.

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members travelling *free of charge*.

▲ [Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application](#)

Your Tour Leader

Your tour leader is probably the person who most influences the success of your trip. Thus, Student Educational Adventures employs our own team of meticulously trained student dedicated, local tour leaders - not foreigners, imported at your students' expense with no language skills or insight into your host culture.

These nationals are not only the best folk to show you their country. They are your teachers, translators and an enthusiastic purveyor of authentic experiences. They are there to facilitate your immersion into new cultures and are the bridge between you and the world of education and new experiences.

Your tour leader is with your students at all times throughout your trip and is thoroughly versed in safety protocols and duty of care responsibilities. This ranges from assisting in the most basic of health and safety measures to ensuring that teachers & students are safe at all times during our trips. All have been chosen because of their ability to deal with the needs and unique issues associated with escorting young people through this wonderful and at times, most foreign of regions.

Service Learning Program

All service-learning programs initiated by Student Educational Adventures are conducted after careful consultation with the local community and also with the local People's Committees.

These projects are initiated based on a model of mutual learning and designed as an immersion experience. An understanding of the importance of an integrated approach to community development is useful to frame what students and teachers might see, learn or experience during a student immersion.

Indian Explorer -10 days

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as described in the itinerary
- Student Educational Adventures tour leader throughout the trip & additional specialist guides as required
- **2 additional internal flight Jaipur – Varanasi, Varanasi - Kolkata**
- Community project costs
- Pre-departure support, briefing and planning meetings for students & parents
- Meals (along with drinking water) as listed in the daily itinerary
- 24/7 in-country support

Exclusions

- International flight to/from India
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- India Visa (if required)