

Buddhism & Himalaya Tour – 10 Days

Day 1 Departure

Enjoy full-meal service on your scheduled flight to Delhi.

Day 2 Delhi

You will be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

After time to settle in we will spend the afternoon on a leisurely introductory sightseeing tour of Delhi, India's capital city, which is divided into two parts: New and Old Delhi. With a thousand years of history, Delhi is a city of contrasts that combines a unique ambience of the ancient and the modern. An orderly plan of wide roads lined with sturdy colonial buildings was established soon after the imperial capital of British India moved here from Calcutta in 1911. This afternoon we will visit **Old Delhi** and drive past Chandni Chowk, the crowded bazaar and see the dramatic Red Fort. Built in 1648, this sprawling fort of red sand stones along the river Yamuna is surrounded by a wall of about 2.4 km in circumference. The **Jama Masjid Mosque** is the largest and one of the most magnificent mosques in India, built in 1658 with a capacity to hold over 20,000 people. We will step inside for a mesmerizing look around. We will also have a chance to view Raj Ghat memorial of Mahatma Gandhi (Father of the Nation) before returning to our hotel.

Day 3 Delhi, Train To Amritsar

We will spend this morning sightseeing in **New Delhi**. Some of the famous sights included in the sightseeing tour will include **Qutab Minar**, at 234 feet the highest individual tower in the world. We will have a chance to view Parliament House as we drive past, and stop at India Gate for an introduction and photo. Time permitting, we can visit Birla Mandir (Hindu Temple), the Sikh Temple or Lotus Temple.

This afternoon we depart Delhi for Amritsar. On arrival at the train station we will transfer to our hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 4 Amritsar

We will start our sightseeing with an early morning visit to the **Golden Temple**. This is the holiest shrine for the Sikhs, so called because the entire upper half was inlaid with copper covered over by gold plate. The architecture of the Golden Temple, is a blend of Hindu and Muslim styles. Amritsar was built around the Golden Temple and the Amrit Sarovar Lake, from which it derives its name. The temple complex is surrounded by a fortified wall with eighteen gates.

Then we will visit **Jallianwala Bagh**. Here, on 13th April, 1919 British troops led by General Dyer fired upon a group of assembled people, including women and children. The grounds are surrounded by high building walls on all sides, except a narrow access lane. A memorial plaque at the entrance recounts the history of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Inside, a martyrs' memorial stands on the eastern end, while the well and bullet-ridden walls remain testimonials to the bloody massacre.

Later in the afternoon we visit the **Wagh Border**. The final frontier, this is the only border crossing between India and Pakistan. It is an interesting experience especially at sunset when the 'Retreat' ceremony takes place with the BSF on the Indian Side of the Border. The changing of the guards and the ceremonial lowering of the flags ceremony is carried out with great pomp.

Day 5 Amritsar – Dharamshala

This morning we depart Amritsar for Dharamshala, arriving there in the afternoon. **Dharamshala** is set in the backdrop of snow clad peaks of Dahuladhar mountains amidst magnificent deodar and pine forests, tea gardens and beautiful hills. It is also known as 'The Lhasa of India'. Dharamshala is one of the principle towns of Kangra valley. Today Dharamshala has become the synonymous to the Tibetan government in exile. Dharamshala overlooks the plains and is surrounded by dense pine trees and Deodar forests. A nearby snowline with numerous streams and cool healthy atmosphere makes the surroundings very attractive. Dharamshala can be divided in two parts the lower Dharamshala and the upper Dharamshala. Upon arrival we will transfer to our hotel.

After time to settle in we will spend the remainder of the afternoon sightseeing in upper Dharamshala town with a visit to **McLeod Ganj**, where the residence of His Holiness Dalai Lama is located. The Tibetan Government-in-exile has been here for over three decades.

Day 6 Dharamshala

Today we will again visit McLeod Ganj and see all the **Tibetan sights**: the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Tibetan Medical Center, Tibetan library at Khangchen Kyishong, Dip Tse Chokling Monastery and the SOS village school. We can also take a short hike to local villages in the Himalayas.

Day 7 Dharamshala - Chandigarh

This morning we will leave for Chandigarh. This afternoon we will arrive in Chandigarh and we will make an interesting visit to the **Rock Gardens**, an epitome of creativity and innovation. It is a unique garden that consists of various art objects. But the best part about the rock garden is that each of its artwork has been made by using industrial & urban waste. The garden houses sculptures made by using a variety of different discarded waste materials like frames, mudguards, forks, handle bars, metal wires, play marbles, porcelain, auto parts, etc.

Day 8 Chandigarh - Delhi - Agra

This morning we will transfer to the Railway Station to board our train to Delhi. Upon our arrival in Delhi we will continue to **Agra** by coach. After checking into our hotel, there will be free to spend at your leisure. Agra was well established before being conquered by the Mughal. The Mughal love of architecture translated into beautiful monuments such as Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. The glory of Agra was at its peak during the reign of Akbar, who made it the centre of art, culture, commerce and learning. In fact, it is said that it was Akbar who laid the foundation of the modern city that we see now in 1558 and was known as Akbarabad. Most of the buildings belong to the period between mid-16th century and 17th century and were of high quality. These monuments were built in the contemporary Mughal style. Mughali cuisine and the skilled craftsmen can still be seen in the narrow lanes of the city as a reminiscent of the lost times.

Day 9 Agra - Delhi

A highlight of the tour will be the world-famous **Taj Mahal**, surely the greatest monument to love, and one of the wonders of the modern world. Completed in 1652, skilled craftsmen from Persia, Turkey, France and Italy, and some 20,000 labourers, worked for 17 years to build this edifice, constructed by emperor Shah Jehan as a mausoleum for his beloved Queen, Mumtaz Mahal.

Later we will visit the red sandstone **Agra Fort**, which stands like a crescent on the banks of the Jamuna River, enclosed by forbidding 20-meter high walls, with a 12- metre moat between them. Three successive Mughal emperors, Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan, helped create this massive structure, which contains Hindu and Muslim architecture.

After our visit at the fort we will proceed to Delhi for a farewell dinner.

Day 10 Delhi To London

We transfer to the airport for the flight back to London, which arrives the same evening.