



## INDIA WILDLIFE SPECTACULAR: A PRIVATE JOURNEY

Departures available October through April

### OVERVIEW

India's nature reserves are among the most interesting wild spaces. Our tour visits three of India's best reserves, allowing a fantastic immersion experience with the possibility of observing the Bengal Tiger at close range and much more! After meeting in Delhi, we will begin in earnest with an incursion into the heart tiger country of Madhya Pradesh ("middle province"). In the dramatic Bandhavgarh, we'll discover a hilly mosaic of forest and savannah hosting an abundance of Chital, India's signature deer. We'll be attuned to the sounds of various creatures alerting us to tigers, which can be elusive due to the dense vegetation. One could appear at a moment's notice. In Kanha, gentle hillsides and plains cloaked in towering Sal trees evoke Kipling's *The Jungle Book* with their mystical air as the eerie calls of the Blue Peafowl resonate. The interspersed rich grassy meadows are home to herds of the very local Southern Swamp Deer in addition to the Chital. We should see the impressive Gaur, the world's largest bovine, and we'll watch for Sloth Bear, Striped Hyena, Wild Boar, Sambar, Four-horned Antelope, Barking Deer, Golden Jackal, Dhole (Indian Wild Dog), Leopard, and a number of lesser mammals in both of these reserves.

The most enthralling moments may take place at Kaziranga near the banks of the mythical Brahmaputra River in India's great northeast. This is a noted refuge for the Indian One-horned Rhinoceros and Asian Elephant, both of which we expect to observe. We may hear the resonant cries of the Western Hoolock Gibbon – India's only ape – amidst a host of other sounds. Tigers may hide in the dense stands of tall grasses but we will keep close watch as we set forth.

India's bird life is nothing short of phenomenal, and we could conceivably spot more than 200 species during this tour. Although we cannot step down from our jeeps just anywhere inside reserves, we will be able to see many birds from our vehicles and will have opportunity for focused birding around our lodges, which should offer some great sightings! We'll also have great opportunities to become familiar with India's fine native flora and we'll watch for anything else of interest as there will be so much. There should be fantastic photographic opportunities all around.

### This tour is a **Private Journey**

You may be surprised to know that about half our business is the creation of customized travel for couples, families and groups of friends. Almost all of our small group trips can be transformed into private departures. Or you can choose from one of our recent inspirational Private Journey itineraries like this one; it might fit perfectly or it might be the basis of a completely customized trip for you.



## SIGNATURE MOMENTS

Spot a  
Bengal Tiger  
resting in the  
undergrowth

Survey the  
sweeping  
landscapes below  
the Bandhavgarh  
fort

View the abundant  
wildlife of Kipling's  
*Jungle Book*  
at Kanha

Experience the  
mysterious sounds  
of Indian forest  
habitats

Photograph  
wild rhinos and  
elephants at  
Kaziranga

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### DAILY ITINERARY

#### Day 1: Arrive Delhi

We will arrive at Indira Gandhi International Airport in the late evening and, after going through customs and collecting our baggage, we will be transferred to our hotel.

*Overnight: The Grand Hotel or similar, Delhi*

#### Day 2: Welcome and Delhi City Tour

After breakfast, we'll have an orientation meeting, and then set out to tour Delhi and become acclimated to this very different country. Many experts believe that Delhi (the "heart") was settled as early as 1400 B.C.E. We'll take a good look at Old Delhi. Travelling by rickshaw we'll tour the crooked alleys of the busy Chandni Chowk bazaar where traditional workmanship still thrives. Nearby, in the parkland of Raj Ghat we'll have time to visit the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi and to look at some of the local bird life. We should find Eurasian Hoopoe, Common Mynah, House Crow and Rose-ringed Parakeet as well as egrets and other waders in ponds. We'll



Read on ►

also see Humayun's Tomb, a massive octagonal edifice, built in honour of the second Mughal Emperor. The approach to the tomb is through a succession of formal gardens, which are in the process of being restored in the classic Persian style. One sure highlight will be the Lodhi Gardens, an idyllic 90-acre site containing fantastic 15<sup>th</sup> Century buildings set in lushly landscaped gardens with many birds about.

*Overnight: The Grand Hotel or similar, Delhi*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Day 3: Fly to Jabalpur, drive to Bandhavgarh NP**

After an early breakfast, we'll take a short flight to Jabalpur, in order to make our way to Bandhavgarh National Park. This relatively new park, established in 1968, is set in the Vindhya hills of Madhya Pradesh and has an interesting variety of habitats. We should have some time to explore the lodge grounds as we get settled in.

*Overnight: Bandav Vilas or similar, Bandhavgarh*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Days 4 - 5: Bandhavgarh National Park**

As we have two full days in this magnificent park, we will have time for several game drives, providing opportunities to view many of India's diverse and endangered animals. We will travel in open jeeps in the morning and late afternoon. Chital and Sambar (the two most conspicuous deer species), Wild Boar, Blue Peafowl and Hanuman Langurs are everywhere. As we drive the many dirt roads, we'll listen for the barking alarm calls of the deer, indicating a tiger is on the prowl. We will also watch for tiger paw prints in the dust.

We should also see many of the park's species of birds: the Blue-tailed Bee-eater, White-bellied Drongos, Tickell's Flycatcher, and assorted kingfishers. The sublimely beautiful Yellow-footed Green Pigeons and Plum-headed Parakeets can be found on many of the fruiting trees in the park.

We will have an opportunity to visit the "fortress" of Bandhavgarh – the remains of temples and the abandoned fort complex that sit high atop a bluff. There are also caves used by people since from the first century B.C. From these heights, we may spot Long-billed Vultures that survey the forest below for tiger kills upon which they can scavenge. With luck, we may spot the Shaheen Falcon, which is the resident Indian subspecies of the Peregrine Falcon, as it too surveys the valleys below.

*Overnight: Bandav Vilas or similar, Bandhavgarh*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Day 6: Drive to Kanha National Park**

This morning we'll drive to Kanha National Park, a park that has sometimes been called the Ngorongoro of India. Covering an area of 940 km<sup>2</sup>, this park was long the private hunting preserves of the British Viceroy and was declared a national park in 1955. It was the inspiration for Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book* and boasts one of India's largest and most stable tiger populations. Together with a buffer zone of 1,067 km<sup>2</sup>, it forms the greater Kanha Tiger Reserve and is the largest such reserves in Central India.

*Overnight: Chitvan Jungle Lodge or similar, Kanha*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Days 7 - 8: Kanha National Park**

We'll spend two full days exploring the park with the Bengal Tiger in mind, while watching for numerous other animals, including the hulky and imposing Gaur, the curious Nilgai, and the Barasingha (Southern Swamp Deer), a formerly imperiled mammal for which the park is well-known as a sanctuary. We'll also keep a keen eye out for the Sloth Bear, which is India's answer to the anteater. In all, some 22 species of large mammals are regularly found within the park and the bird life is equally impressive. Red Jungle Fowl are common in the mixed bamboo deciduous forests. Other birds that we hope to see among the beautiful Flame of the Forest trees are Black-naped Monarch, Racket-tailed Drongo, Alexandrine Parakeet, and Malabar Pied Hornbill.

*Overnight: Chitvan Jungle Lodge or similar, Kanha*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Day 9: Drive to Nagpur, fly to Kolkata**

Shortly after breakfast, we'll make our way to Nagpur, in order to fly to Kolkata. Along the way, we'll keep an eye out for local wildlife. In Kolkata, we'll get a good night's rest before continuing on to Guwahati and Kaziranga National Park.

*Overnight: Pride Hotel or similar, Kolkata*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### **Day 10: Fly to Guwahati, drive to Kaziranga**

After a short flight to Guwahati, we will make our way to Kaziranga National Park, a vast expanse of tall elephant grass, marshland, and dense tropical moist broadleaf forests teeming with wildlife. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Kaziranga hosts two-thirds of the world's Indian One-horned Rhinoceroses. Most wildlife reserves in India require a few days to have a reasonable chance of seeing wildlife at close quarters. In Kaziranga, however, one has a reasonable chance of seeing most of the mammals for which it is known, each day.

*Overnight: Wild Grass Lodge or similar, Kaziranga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*



### Days 11 - 13: Kaziranga National Park

We'll spend the next three days here at the park, keeping a lookout for not only rhinos, but also the Asian Elephant, Bengal Tiger, Eastern Swamp Deer, and Wild Buffalo. Other mammals include such rarities as Chinese Pangolin and Western Hoolock Gibbon (the only ape found in India). The diversity of the habitat here ensures that we'll see a wide variety of birds, as well. Crested Serpent Eagles are a common sight, while the rare and threatened Bengal Florican may be more of a challenge to spot but nevertheless possible. Alexandrine Parakeets are sometimes seen feeding on the fruits of the Ber Trees, while the shrill call of the Swamp Partridge will greet the dawn. Kaziranga is fertile and opulent and promises us much of interest!

*Overnight: Wild Grass Lodge or similar, Kaziranga*

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

### Day 14: Fly to Kolkata, Depart

Today we'll transfer to Jorhat for our flight to Kolkata whence we can take our international flights home. For those of us that are participating in the Gujarat extension, we will stay the night in Kolkata.

*Meals: Breakfast*

*\*The itinerary and accommodation described in these notes are provided as suggestions. Your Private Journey may be modified to reflect your interests, budget and time available. The approximate price is a guideline only.*





Red-Headed-Vulture at Bandhavgarh © Raghunathan Ganesh

## TOUR DETAILS

### Tour Cost:

Approx. US\$4495 per person, based on double occupancy  
Plus Internal Flights: approx. US\$500 per person

### Included Features:

- Accommodations as indicated or similar, in double occupancy
- All meals as indicated
- All arrival and departure transfers
- Entrance fee to reserves
- Daily safaris in each reserve (2 safaris on each full reserve day)
- Services of local naturalist guides
- Gratuities for included meals
- Porterage of one bag

### Not Included:

- Roundtrip airfare from your home
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance
- Items of a personal nature: laundry, drinks, telephone calls, etc.
- Gratuities
- Meals and services not listed
- Airport and departure taxes
- Fuel surcharges, if any
- Additional arrangements required due to emergency or other situation

### Payment Details

A deposit of US\$500 per person is required to reserve your Private Journey. A second non-refundable deposit of US\$1000 per person is required at six months prior to departure. Final payment is due 90 days prior to departure.

### Single Supplement

The single supplement for this tour is approx. US\$1595.

# WHAT TO EXPECT

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## **Level of Activity: Moderate**

Please be aware that India is not North America and some conditions and food may be different from what we are accustomed to. There are long bus drives, jolting jeeps and unfamiliar conditions. You should be able to capably handle stairs without handrails. Morning game drives may require an early wake-up call and a delayed breakfast time. A snack will be provided before we head off.

## **Accommodation**

We will be staying at comfortable lodges with private facilities.

## **Transportation**

We will be travelling in a comfortable air-conditioned vehicle driven by a professional driver, by train and we have two internal flights. While roads are mostly paved except in the parks and on rural back roads, there are few divided highways. The traffic is can be much slower with camel carts and heavily laden vehicles as part of the mix. Therefore, we cannot expect to cover distances as quickly as we might in North America. During transfers, we will take breaks as needed along the way. While in the national parks, we will be travelling in open, four-wheel drive vehicles.

## **Travel Documents**

You will require a passport for your trip to India. Please make sure it is valid for six months after the date of your return home. Canadian and USA passport holders will need a visa for entry to India. We will provide full details of visa procedures at 90 days prior to departure.

# ADDITIONAL INFO

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## **Cancellation Policy**

All deposits are non-refundable, however you may transfer your deposit to another trip 90 days or more prior to your scheduled departure date. 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**

Please note that all payments are non-refundable. 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. Should you decline this coverage, you must sign a waiver and provide details of your own medical coverage. Medical insurance including emergency medical evacuation coverage is mandatory on all our tours.

## **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).

## **Worldwide Quest Explorers Club**

We'd like to make sure that you know about our Worldwide Explorers Club. Travel twice with us and we'll say a special thank you with a 5% discount on your third trip. The discount applies to our brochure trips only and you'll find many there to choose from.



TICO#: 2667946





## The Quest Nature Tours Experience

We aim to contribute to nature conservation by providing our travellers with the chance to experience wild spaces and learn about wildlife in natural habitats. We're delighted to welcome back our many repeat travellers who enjoy our unique programs, our expert leaders and our style of travel. We're equally delighted to introduce our programs to a growing number of Quest first-timers who enjoy learning about the wildlife and natural environments we share. Our tours are all about exceptional and educational nature experiences, camaraderie and fun. We're small and we plan to keep it that way. We focus on the elements we call the Quest Essentials:

**Small Groups.** Our groups are typically in the size range of 8 - 16 participants. On our daily excursions we may divide into even smaller groups, so that you can be with fewer than eight others as you explore. Our small group size allows us to be attentive and quiet, giving us greater opportunity to observe wildlife. Our logistics are flexible. We use smaller vehicles and vessels to limit our environmental impact. All our activities, such as talks, meals and gatherings are enjoyable and focused.

**Expert Leaders.** Every Quest tour is led by one of our team of expert Canadian naturalists. They are knowledgeable, congenial and extraordinarily capable. Their objective is to ensure that our Quest travellers get the most out of the nature experience. A local naturalist also accompanies all tours outside North America. Each is a highly trained expert with exceptional knowledge of the flora and fauna of his or her local region. Local guides help us to find and identify wildlife and share their knowledge of the habits of the creatures we encounter as well as the dynamics of the environment as a whole.

**More time exploring.** Our tours are carefully conceived and executed to maximize your time in the field. Our daily itineraries are full, but not exhausting, and we build in ample opportunities for rest. There is nothing routine about our days. While we travel with a goal and destination in mind, we always give priority to field observations by choosing routes that allow us to maximize wildlife viewing along the way and modifying our itinerary as necessary and possible.

**All taken care of.** From the moment you call our office, we'll take care of all the details from pre-departure information to post-tour species compilations. Virtually everything is included in the tour cost: accommodations, meals, transportation, activities and gratuities. We travel off the beaten path without sacrificing comfort. Our meals can be simple but are always of good quality. And we place the focus on where it should be: discovering our natural world.

**We invite you to call us, email us or visit us in our Toronto office and let your travels begin...**