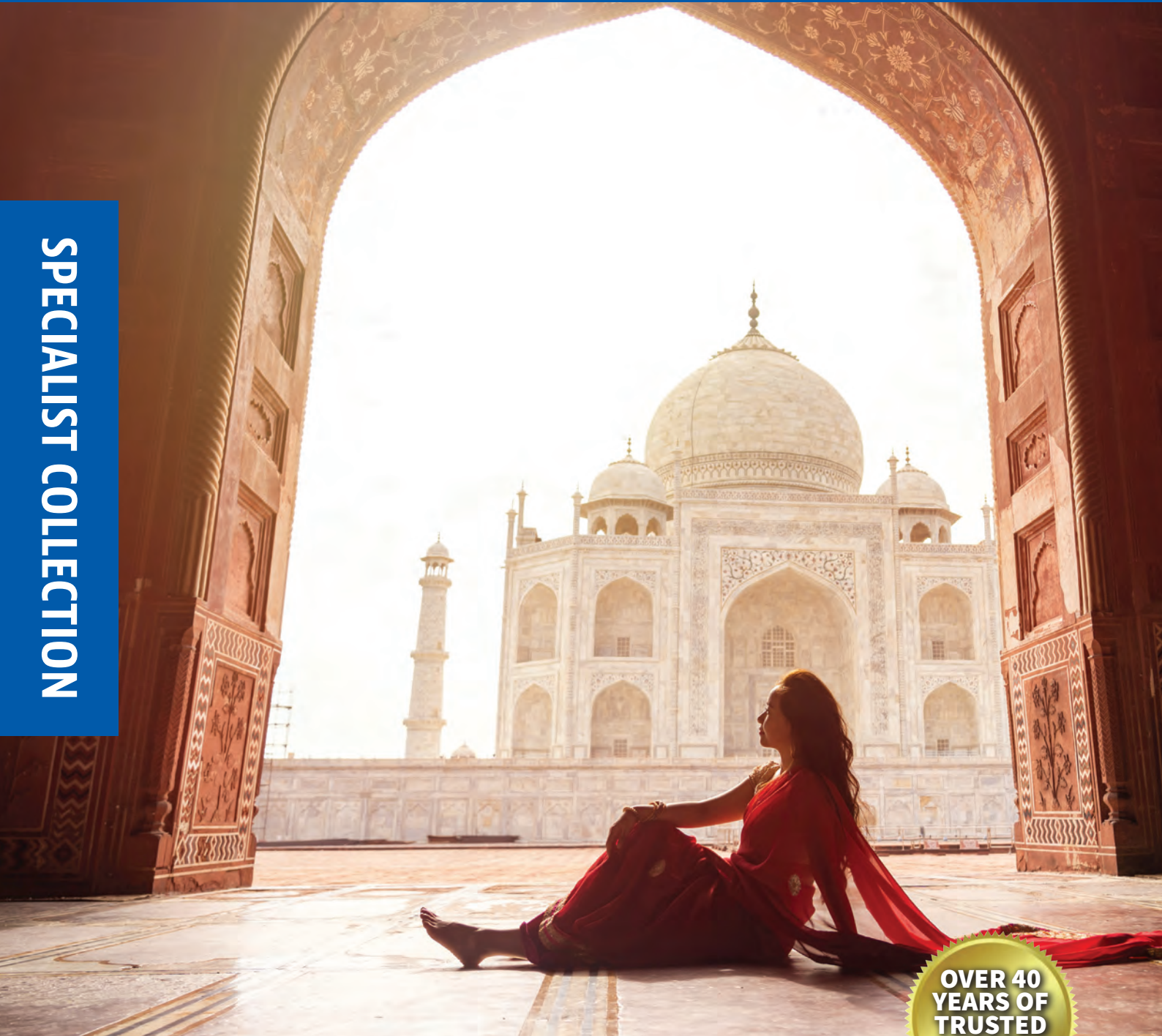


INDIA

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of Delights

EXPLORE
UNESCO World
Heritage Sites

DISCOVER
Palatial Hotels
& Ancient Ruins



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There are more than 1,500 languages spoken in India.
The 6 major languages are Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Marathi, Tamil and Urdu, each spoken by more than 50 million people



INDIA

One of the largest, most diverse and exotic holiday destinations in the world, India is an absolute delight to explore. It's also one of the world's most colourful countries, a tapestry of gaily decorated elephants, vibrant Hindu temples, rural life that has remained unchanged for centuries and sights, sounds and sensations that are both bewildering and fascinating. As it's so vast (one-sixth of the world's population lives here), it's home to numerous different cultures and traditions, yet the people live together harmoniously. This is not a country you only visit once – there's far too much to do and see – but a first trip should include the country's famous Golden Triangle, which includes bustling Delhi, the legendary Taj Mahal in Agra, and Jaipur, the Pink City, capital of Rajasthan. Tiger safaris, yoga retreats, Buddhist temples, beautiful beaches, sacred sites, Bollywood, tea plantations, hotels and dining experiences fit for Royalty... India has it all. And it's begging to be discovered.

WHY INDIA & SRI LANKA WITH THOMPSONS?

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As the largest South African tour operator, our unsurpassed buying power ensures the best holiday deals, unrivalled value for money and unexpected bonus offers.

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Our care line is there in an emergency.

TIPPING

Service charge is included in most restaurant bills. If it's not included, it's recommended to add 10% to the bill or at your discretion. The suggested tipping amount for drivers & guides per day is between USD 3-5.



SPORTING EVENTS

India is hosting a number of important sporting events in 2020. If you're planning a trip to India, keep these dates in mind...

Indian Premier League (Cricket):
April – May 2020

International Cricket:
Sri Lanka tour to India – Jan 2020
Australia tour to India – Jan 2020
South Africa tour to India – March 2020
England tour to India – September & October 2020

GREAT SIGHTSEEING



AGRA – FULL DAY

Departs from Delhi. Visit the Taj Mahal, one of the world's wonders, which took 22 years and 20,000 men to build. Its white marble was quarried 200 miles away and was transported to the site by a fleet of 1,000 elephants. It was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as an expression of his love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal, in the mid 17th century (Note: Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays). Then visit Agra Fort, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture and the seat of Mughal rule, to see its Hall of Public Audience and Royal Pavilions. On to the deserted red stone city of Fatehpur Sikri, built in the late 16th century. It was abandoned soon after it was built when the wells went dry and it remains in much the same condition as it was more than 300 years ago. Complete with palaces and mosques, it used to be larger than London when it was originally built. Now it's an extraordinary place to explore.

CHENNAI CITY TOUR – HALF DAY

Visit Kapaleeswarar Temple to find out about the ancient Hindu culture and get an understanding of India in ancient times. Then it's on to St Mary's Church, the Oldest Anglican Church In Asia. It's the first English church in Chennai and the oldest surviving British church in India. Then head for the National Art Gallery and Government Museum; the building originally belonged to a group of eminent British citizens known as the Pantheon Committee. The main building has an excellent archaeological section and houses a good ethnology collection as well as the Chola Bronze.

CITY TOUR OLD & NEW DELHI – HALF-DAY

Visit Raj Ghat, a simple memorial to Mahatma Gandhi; drive past the Red Fort and on to the Jama Masjid, one of Asia's largest mosques. See the magnificent Red Fort overlooking the river Jamuna, built between 1638 and 1948 when the Mughal Empire was at its peak. Tour continues to Jama Masjid, one of Asia's largest mosques, which is viewed from the outside. People stream in and out of the mosque continuously and the presence of a nearby bazaar means that the area is rarely quiet.

MUMBAI CITY TOUR – HALF DAY

Explore Mani Bhavan, the house where Mahatma Gandhi used to stay during his visits to Bombay; it's now a museum displaying his photographs, letters and personal items. Visit the Prince of Wales Museum and the Jain Temple. Drive past the 'Towers of Silence', Kamla Nehru Park and Hanging Gardens, located on the slope of Malabar Hill with a panoramic view of Marine Drive and Chowpatty Beach. Drive through Crawford market, along Marine Drive and commemorate the visit of King George V.



NORTHERN INDIA

The Northern part of India is home to diverse topography, from the mountains of the Himalayas to the deserts of Rajasthan. It boasts some of the largest glaciers, sub-tropical forests, wildlife reserves and archaeological treasures in the country and is also home to one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, Varanasi, not to mention India's vibrant capital, Delhi.



DELHI

Delhi, India's capital, is basically two cities – the old and the new parts make up a huge metropolis. Old Delhi is great fun to explore, with its bazaars found in the maze of winding streets, ancient mosques and forts including the 15th century Red Fort and the sprawling Jama Masjid Mosque, with a courtyard that accommodates 25,000 people. New Delhi is another city entirely, much smaller than its older counterpart, with wide avenues, modern shops and buildings.

Reason to go: Old Delhi



JAIPUR

The capital of Rajasthan, the enthralling city of Jaipur offers the perfect mix of old and new, with many forts, palaces and religious temples just waiting to be explored. Known as the Pink City because of the pink colour of the buildings, it offers many highlights such as the Amber Fort, a 16th century palace on top of a cliff, and the monkeys at The Galta Temple. Other sites worth visiting include a magnificent fort and some fascinating mausoleums and tombs.

Reason to go: Amber Fort



AGRA

A popular tourist attraction because it's home to the magnificent Taj Mahal, Agra is located in India's Uttar Pradesh state. The iconic Taj Mahal was built in honour of Mughal ruler Shah Jahan's wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died in childbirth in 1631. The main building boasts a massive dome and is made of intricately carved white marble that is inlaid with precious stones. The Taj Mahal is located behind a reflecting pool inside a courtyard defined by four minarets.

Reason to go: Taj Mahal

SOUTHERN INDIA

In complete contrast to the mountains and hills up north, the South of India offers lush landscapes, tea plantations, spice gardens, wild forests that are home to herds of elephants and tigers, and vibrant cities. Let's not forget the beaches in Goa, which are some of the most beautiful in the country and a plethora of temples and forts, modern restaurants and shops in the bustling cities.



CHENNAI

Chennai (Madras) was the first British trading post in the area. Here, the legacy of the Raj lives on in the museum that displays the city's roots. There's plenty of modernity, too, with luxurious hotels and boutiques, chic restaurants, bars and clubs. Religious sites worth visiting include the Kapaleeshwaraar Temple, which is decorated with carved and painted gods, and the 17th century Anglican church of St Mary's. Chennai is also known for popular Marina Beach.

Reason to go: Shopping in the district of T. Nagar



BANGALORE

Bangalore is the capital of the southern Karnataka state and is the third largest city in India. The weather is moderate and the city is a combination of striking Victorian architecture dating back to the Raj era and a fast developing modern tech city. The city is the Silicon Valley of India and has a thriving dining culture with superb craft beers and a vibrant nightlife worth exploring. Interesting sights include Bangalore Palace, the Lalbagh Botanical Gardens, one of the largest Hare Krishna temples, the famous Cubbon Park where families and couples relax on warm evenings, and aerospace and folk art museums. The old market is a swirling mass of colourful stalls with a wide variety of food, spices and copperware.

Reason to go: Shopping and nightlife



ALLEPPEY

Located in Kerala, Alleppey is an extremely relaxing place that features a network of tranquil canals and lagoons, and more than 1,000 houseboats that reside in these fascinating waterways. The further you venture in Alleppey, the more magical your experience will be, with numerous little villages on the water, lush rice paddies and charming rural life.

Reason to go: Backwaters

GOA

Goa's long history as a Portuguese colony has left a legacy, evident in the area's many 17th century churches and spice plantations. In addition, with its spectacular coastline stretching along the Arabian Sea, Goa is renowned for having some of the best beaches in the country. Popular beaches include Baga and Palolem, as well as those in charming fishing villages like Agonda.

Reason to go: Beaches

GOLDEN TRIANGLE TOUR



GOLDEN TRIANGLE TOUR – 6 NIGHTS

Delhi | Agra | Jaipur | Delhi

Day 1 You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure to explore. **Overnight Delhi**

Day 2 Half day tour of Old & New Delhi including Raj Ghat, Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Qutub Minar, India Gate, Parliament Building and Rashtrapati Bhawan. Rest of the day at leisure. **Overnight Delhi**

Day 3 Travel to Agra & check into hotel. Afternoon city tour to see the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. **Overnight Agra**

Day 4 Drive to Jaipur, check into your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure. **Overnight Jaipur**

Day 5 Visit Amber Fort, enjoy an elephant or jeep ride to the fortress. Afternoon city tour of Jaipur to see the City Palace and the Astronomical Observatory. **Overnight Jaipur**

Day 6 Enjoy some leisure time until around midday before you travel back to Delhi. **Overnight Delhi**

Day 7 After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home.

MUMBAI & GOA TOUR



MUMBAI & GOA TOUR – 7 NIGHTS

Mumbai | Goa | Mumbai

Day 1 Arrive in Mumbai, transfer to hotel. **Overnight Mumbai**

Day 2 Half day morning city tour of Mumbai to see Mani Bhavan, Prince of Wales Museum and Jain Temple. Enjoy panoramic views and sights en route. Afternoon at leisure to explore. **Overnight Mumbai**

Day 3 Transfer to the railway station for your train to Goa. Arrive in Goa and



transfer to your hotel. **Overnight Goa**

Day 4 After breakfast, enjoy a half day city tour of Goa to see the Pillar monastery, Margao City and Colva Beach. **Overnight Goa**

Day 5 & 6 Days at leisure. **Overnight Goa**

Day 7 Transfer to the railway station for your train to Mumbai. On arrival in Mumbai, transfer to your hotel. **Overnight Mumbai**

Day 8 Transfer to airport for your flight home.

EXPLORE INDIA

EXTEND YOUR INDIA EXPERIENCE

The fabulous 5-night Golden Triangle Tour, featured on the previous page, can be extended to 10 nights, stopping over in either Udaipur, Amritsar, Mumbai or Varanasi



KOLKATA AND COCHIN

Colourful Kolkata (Calcutta) is full of crowded markets and temples adorned with flowers. It's the country's cultural centre, the heart of literature, music, cinema as well as spirituality. Located on the Kerala coast, Cochin is the most important port in Southern India. Colonised by the Portuguese in the 15th century, the city still retains a Portuguese influence, making it a fascinating destination to explore.

Reason to go: Kolkata's markets; Cochi in Cochin

AMRITSAR

Set in north-western India in Punjab, 455km from New Delhi and near Pakistan, Amritsar's Golden Temple is one of the Sikh faith's most spiritual sites. You will have time to explore at leisure and enjoy a half-day tour to visit the spectacular Golden Temple, made of white marble and copper gilt with a gold leaf dome. Inside is the Guru Granth Sahib, holy book of the Sikhs. Visit historic Jallianwala Bagh, which commemorates hundreds of Indians killed or wounded by the British in a massacre under their rule. Also explore the Ram Bagh gardens. Spend an evening watching the Wagah Border ceremony.

Reason to go: Golden Temple

UDAIPUR

Known as the city of Sunrise, Udaipur is an extraordinary city. Explore the City Palace overlooking Lake Pichola. Built in 1725 with filigreed balconies, ornate windows and exquisite glass decorations, it stretches for over a mile. Inside is a maze of courtyards, apartments and decorated halls. Rooms are covered with frescoes, glass mosaics, painted windows and ornamental doors. The Sun Window is the divine symbol of the house of Wewar. In complete contrast, the bustling old market is a maze of spice shops, jewellery stores, silver goods and local produce. Enjoy a boat ride on Lake Pichola to see the city from a different perspective.

Reason to go: City Palace

MUMBAI

Also known as Bombay, Mumbai is India's economic powerhouse, its fastest moving, most affluent and most industrialised city. You'll find evidence of its fascinating history when you explore Mumbai at leisure and on a half-day sightseeing tour, visiting Mani Bhavan, the house where Mahatma Gandhi stayed, now a museum, as well as the Prince of Wales Museum and Jain Temple. Drive past the Towers of Silence, Kamla Nehru Park and the Hanging Gardens.

Reason to go: The city is the gateway of India



VARANASI

Located in Northern India, this 11th century city is India's spiritual capital. Hindu pilgrims flock here to bathe in the Ganges' sacred waters and visit some of the 2,000 temples. One of these, the magnificent Kashi Vishvnaath Temple, or Golden Temple, is dedicated to the Hindu god, Shiva. Another holy spot is the Bharat Mata Temple, dedicated to Mother India, home to a relief map of the country carved out of marble. Mahatma Gandhi officially opened this unique temple. Other temples include the Jateshwar Mahadev Temple, with a black stone statue of Shiva, the Bhairav Nath temple and 9 other Bhairav temples in the city.

Reason to go: Aarti at River Ganges

KERALA TOUR



KERALA TOUR – 10 NIGHTS

Cochin | Munnar | Periyar | Kumarakom | Alleppey | Kovalam | Trivandrum

Day 1 Arrive in Cochin. Transfer to hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight Cochin

Day 2 Enjoy a tour of Cochin to visit the Dutch Palace, Jewish Synagogue, Chinese Fishing Nets and St Francis Church. **Overnight Cochin**

Day 3 Drive to Munnar and check into your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure to explore. **Overnight Munnar**

Day 4 After breakfast, enjoy a half-day tour of a tea plantation. Afternoon is at leisure to explore on your own. **Overnight Munnar**

Day 5 After breakfast, travel to Periyar, check into your hotel. Enjoy Spice

Plantation tour this afternoon. **Overnight Periyar**

Day 6 Visit Periyar National Park to view wildlife by boat. Then travel to Kumarakom. Check into your hotel. Rest of the day is at leisure to explore.

Overnight Kumarakom

Day 7 Full day at leisure. **Overnight Kumarakom**

Day 8 Visit Periyar National Park to view wildlife by boat. Then travel to Kumarakom. You have the rest of the day at leisure to explore this fascinating village. **Overnight Kumarakom**

Day 9 Breakfast on houseboat, then travel to Kovalam by road. Check into your hotel with the rest of day at leisure. **Overnight Kovalam**

Day 10 Full day at leisure. **Overnight Kovalam**

Day 11 Transfer to the airport for your homeward flight.

PALACE ON WHEELS TOUR



PALACE ON WHEELS TOUR – 7 NIGHTS

Day 1 Arrive in Delhi before your luxurious Palace on Wheels embarks on its journey through Rajasthan.

Day 2 Visit Jaipur to see the Palace of Winds, City Palace and Astronomical Observatory. On to Amber Fort, Chamber of Mirrors and Hall of Victory. Lunch at Amber Fortress. Tour the fort in a jeep. Return to the train for dinner and overnight.

Day 3 Enjoy an early morning game drive in Sawai Madhopur. After breakfast, travel on to Chittourgarh with lunch on board. Enjoy an afternoon tour of Chittourgarh Fort. Evening tea and Light and Sound Show at the Fort before returning to the train for overnight.

Day 4 After breakfast, enjoy a sightseeing tour of Udaipur to see the City



Palace. Lunch at a 5 star hotel, visit Crystal Gallery at Fateh Prakash Palace Hotel. Enjoy a boat ride across Lake Pichola. Return to train for overnight.

Day 5 Arrive in Jaisalmer and visit this city of sandstone 'havelis' in an ancient fort. Enjoy a camel ride on the sand dunes, then return to Jaisalmer for dinner and entertainment at a local hotel. Overnight on the train.

Day 6 Wake up in Jodhpur. Visit its main sights before travelling on to Jaswant Thada for lunch at the local Palace Hotel. Return to the train for dinner and overnight.

Day 7 Arrive in Agra and head for Keola Deo National Park to the Ghana Bird Sanctuary. After breakfast on the train, enjoy a sightseeing tour of Agra Fort. Lunch is at the local Palace Hotel before visiting the Taj Mahal.

Day 8 Arrive at Delhi's Safdarjung Railway station. After breakfast, disembark.



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