



itineraries
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In the footsteps of Buddha

From To

2011

Available on request – minimum 2 persons

Best times to visit – Spring March to end of April, Autumn end of September to end of November

Grade: Easy
Cultural tour



Duration: 15 Days

Land only price per person (join in Delhi). Includes 4 star heritage hotel in Delhi, local deluxe hotels elsewhere & central heritage hotel in Kathmandu

Group Size	2-6	7-12
Deluxe hotels & guesthouses	£1695	£1395
Flight Delhi to Varanasi	From £95 per person economy one way subject to change & availability	
Flight Kathmandu to Delhi	From £100 per person economy one way subject to change & availability	
Flight UK to Delhi	From £300 economy return	
Single hotel supplement	£710	

Introduction:

This wonderful cultural tour takes you on a journey to some of the holiest places in India and Nepal, both ancient and modern day, focusing on key sites along the journey and path of Lord Buddha. From the home in exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala to the eternal city of Varanasi on the banks of the sacred Ganges. View outstanding collections of sculpture, paintings and textiles and visit sites of key spiritual and cultural importance on this special spiritual journey as you follow in the footsteps of Lord Buddha.

Day 01: Arrive Delhi

Welcome to Delhi, a fascinating city amid the wonder of India. You'll be met and assisted at the airport by our local representatives who will arrange the transfer and check in to your hotel for a good night's rest.

Day 02: Full day Delhi & overnight train to Pathankot

After breakfast enjoy a full day city tour of Old & New Delhi. This morning we'll visit Old Delhi, the capital of Mughal India between the 12th and 19th centuries. See the 17th century Jama Masjid and walk through the narrow, winding lanes of colourful and bustling Chandni Chowk. Explore the Mughal Empire's most opulent fort, the impressive Red Fort. We'll also make a short visit to the serene Raj Ghat, a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, marking the spot where he was cremated following his assassination in 1948. This afternoon we'll explore New Delhi. There have been at least eight cities built over the millennia around modern New Delhi, the capital of India. This afternoon, we'll drive past the majestic government buildings and wide boulevards designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens in the 1920s as well as see monuments left behind by other rulers and invaders, including the 16th-century Tomb of Humayun. This afternoon we'll also visit Lakshmi Naryan Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu and the Lotus Temple – a Bahai Temple of exquisite marble in the form of a blossoming lotus, surrounded by acres of gardens. After evening dinner at a local restaurant you'll be picked up for the short transfer drive to the railway station to board the overnight train to Pathankot, departing Delhi at 2125 and arriving into Pathankot tomorrow morning at 0720. Overnight on board the train.

Day 03: Pathankot to Dharamsala



This morning we arrive into Pathankot at 0720am. From here we'll be met and picked up for the transfer drive to Dharamsala, also known as 'Little Lhasa' and the home in exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Splendidly situated and at a height of 1400m, Dharamsala is a beautiful town set amidst forests of pine. A faint colonial aura still lingers around cottages that snuggle into the hillside and in the stone church of St. John in the wilderness with its beautiful stained glass windows. Up in Macleodganj is a charming Tibetan settlement with bustling bazaars that sell carpets, handicrafts and delicious Tibetan food. A giant prayer wheel ornaments a main street and in the monastery, a serene statue of the Lord Buddha presides over the gentle chanting of the monks. The Dalai Lama resides in Macleodganj, which is now the School of Tibetan Studies housing rare manuscripts and ancient texts, the Tibetan Institute for the Performing Arts and a handicrafts centre.

Since 1959 this charming hill station has been the home and base in exile of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet and the Tibetan Government. Since then, a strong community of Tibetan people have made this area their home, a place also now visited by travellers from all over the world, drawn by the colourful and unique local culture. Macleod –ganj is the Tibetan part of Dharamsala and an important centre of Tibetan culture and learning as well as a bustling place with its colourful bazaars selling handicrafts and delicious Tibetan food.

Lower Dharamshala is the civil and business area while the upper Dharamshala, some 1,500 metres higher, is where Rajera places like Mcleodganj and Forsythganj are located which have now become distinctly Tibetan. The area is also famous for the Kangra School of miniature paintings.

This afternoon and tomorrow enjoy visits to key sites in Dharamshala including visiting the Buddhist learning centers and other places of interest at Mcleodganj, home to HH the Dalai Lama – visiting Tsuglag Khang; Namgyalma Stupa; the Church of St. John's in wilderness; Dal Lake; Bhagsunag; Dharamkot; Triund; Norbulingka & the famous Tibetan Market. We'll also visit the Kangra situated 17 km away from Dharamshala. The area is famous for the Kangra School of miniature paintings and is one of the prettiest valleys of Himachal with its lush green terraces and orchards, overlooking a gushing stream - the Banganga. Kangra is also known for its magnificent temples and as a centre of arts. We'll also visit the Bajreshwari Temple today, once known for its legendary wealth was subject to successive depredations by invaders from the north.



Returning to Dharamshala later today the rest of the late afternoon and evening is at leisure to rest and relax or perhaps take a stroll to explore the local area. Overnight at a local hotel.

Day 04: Dharamshala

We'll continue our sightseeing today picking up from yesterday. We'll also visit Namgyal Monastery and Tsochling Monastery today as well as pay a visit to the Tibetan Parliament, Library and traditional Medical centre. After finishing our sightseeing tour the rest of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the area. Today and tomorrow, subject to his presence in Dharamshala a meeting with the Karmapa Lama can be organised on request. Overnight Dharamshala.

Day 05: Dharamshala to Pathankot to Delhi

This morning we'll visit the Tibetan Children's village and handicraft centre with the rest of your afternoon at leisure to rest, relax and explore the local area. Later this afternoon we'll leave for the drive back (around 3 hours) to Pathankot to catch the 4034 Jammu Mail train leaving at 1850 hrs for Delhi, arriving into Delhi at 0500 tomorrow morning. Travel by train in India is always interesting with lots to see. Enjoy your overnight stay on board the train. Overnight in 2 tier air conditioned cabin.

Day 06: Delhi

This morning we'll arrive early into Delhi at 0500. We'll be met off the train for the transfer drive to our hotel. The rest of today is free to rest and relax, perhaps do some local shopping. Overnight Delhi.

Day 07: Delhi to Varanasi

This morning after breakfast it's another short transfer this time to the domestic airport for your flight to Varanasi, departing Delhi at 1040 and arriving into Varanasi at 1150. On arrival you'll be transferred to your hotel and after checking in enjoy an after noon sightseeing tour of Sarnath.

Varanasi, also known as the 'eternal city', crowded with temples and a labyrinth of streets is Hinduism's most important city, located on the banks of the sacred River Ganges, and has been the center of learning & civilization for over two thousand years.

After checking in and lunch at the hotel this afternoon we'll visit "Bharat Kala Bhavan" which lies within the sprawling grounds of Banaras Hindu University. Its outstanding collection of sculpture, paintings and textiles began with the private collection of the enlightened Rai Krishnadasa. The sculpture collection includes terracotta and clay objects, stone and bronze and cast metal objects. The ancient terracotta objects vary from ritual icons to toys to utilitarian objects and date to the Indus Valley Civilization, Mauryan, Sunga and Gupta period. We'll also visit the Kali Temple today before returning to the hotel as Bharat Mata Temple, Vishwa Hindu University and Kali Temple before a return to the hotel where the rest of your evening is at leisure to rest and relax. Overnight Varanasi.

Day 08: Varanasi to Bodh Gaya

We'll get an early start this morning for an early morning boat ride along the bathing ghats on the holy Ganges river. At sunrise the Hindu faithful flock to the river to cleanse themselves of their sins. You'll see the cremation ghats and the Deswameedha ghats. To die in Varanasi is to end the Hindu cycle of re-birth, thereby making it a popular place to end one's life. After sunrise we'll visit some of the temples in the surrounding area such as Bharat Mata Temple, Vishwa Hindu University and Kali Temple before a return to the hotel for buffet breakfast.



Afterwards this we'll leave Varanasi for the drive to Bodhgaya (243 kms, around 07hrs) taking a packed lunch for the journey. En route we'll stop to visit Sarnath, around 12km from Varanasi. After attaining enlightenment Lord Buddha came to Sarnath where he gave his first sermon. In the Sylvan surroundings of a deer park, he initiated his first five disciples into the Buddhist monkhood. Here began one of the greatest belief systems of the world. Emperor Ashoka erected a magnificent stupa here. Forgotten for centuries, Sarnath, a renowned school of learning from the 6th century BC to 12th century AD was rediscovered and excavated by British archaeologists in 1836.

On arrival to Bodh Gaya we'll check in to our hotel with the rest of the evening at leisure. Overnight Bodh Gaya.

Bodh Gaya is where a prince became a seer. Twenty-five centuries ago, a prince of a tiny kingdom on the Indo-Nepal border, was dissatisfied with life. He wandered for many years then came to a spot in a forest where he sat under a Bodhi tree. There, in a burst of illumination, he discovered the meaning of existence and became Lord Buddha. The Place is Bodega (Bodh Gaya). Indian missionaries carried the Buddha's gentle, reasonable creed to other lands. So, when the many streams of Buddhism returned to Bodhgaya, and built temples of their own, this religious town took on an eclectic international character. Today, it is a town of temples and monasteries from all the major Buddhist areas of the world.

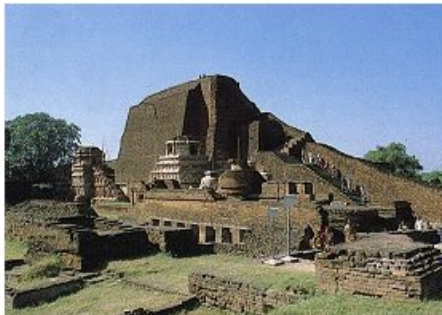


Day 09: Full day - Bodh Gaya

This morning we'll visit Mahabodhi Temple with a chance to offer prayers or just to enjoy the atmosphere and architecture. This temple is an architectural amalgamation of many centuries and cultures – architectures of the Gupta and later ages, with inscriptions describing visits of pilgrims from Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and China over the ages among others. The highlights of the temple include tall stone lotuses, figures of Buddha sitting in different postures on the walls, his footprints on stone, and a colossal golden Buddha in the sanctum sanctorum. The Bodhi Tree is also here, situated inside the temple premises, under which Buddha attained illumination. White, green and red flags, tied onto the tree, form a canopy over seven sacred shrines, which symbolize the seven weeks that Buddha spent here.

After our visit to the temple we'll continue our tour today with a visit to Shaivite Monastery, near the Mahabodhi Temple. Four temples dominate a huge courtyard full of shrubs and samadhis represented by stones shaped like upturned urns. Cells, which served as living quarters of the monks, can also be seen. The Buddha Archaeological Museum (open 10:00-17:00 hrs and closed on Fridays), near the temple, houses a rare collection of Buddhist sculptures from the 1st century BC to the 11th century AD. The Jagannath Temple, near the Mahabodhi Temple, is a Shiva Temple housing a four-armed statue of the deity believed to have healing powers. We'll also visit Sujata Village & Nirjana river close by today before bringing the day to a close with a return to the hotel and the evening at leisure. Overnight Bodh Gaya.

Day 10: Bodhgaya to Rajgir & Nalanda to Patna



After breakfast today we'll set out on the drive to Patna with an en route visit to Rajgir & Nalanda (04 hrs approx).

Rajgir was the capital of the Magadha empire until Ajatasatru moved to Pataliputra (Patna) in the 5th century BC. Rajgir is an important Buddhist pilgrimage site since Buddha spent 12 years here and the first Buddhist council after Buddha attained nirvana was held here. It is also an important place for Jains, as Mahavira spend some time in Rajgir and the hills are topped with Digambara shrines.

Nalanda, founded in the 5th century BC, was one of the world's great universities and an important Buddhist centre until it's sacking by the Afghans in the 12th century. When Chinese scholar and traveller Xuan Zhang visited between 685 and 762 AD 10,000 monks and students resided here. The extensive brick-built remains include a few intact votive stupas around it, and the monks' cells. An Archeological Museum [open from 10:00-17:00 hrs] houses the Nalanda University seal, sculptures and other remains found on the site. After our visits here we'll continue our drive to Patna, approximately 3 hours, where the evening is at leisure. Overnight at local hotel, Patna.

Day 11: Patna to Vaishali to Kushinagar

This morning we'll leave for the drive to Kushinagar, 280km and around 7- 8 hrs. En route we'll break the journey with a visit to Vaishali around 60km from Patna. Vaishali is believed to be the first republic of the world, having an elected body of representatives, and holds special significance for Buddhist devotees. At Kolhua, Lord Buddha delivered his last sermon, hinting at his impending departure from the

mortal world. Later, Emperor Ashoka erected a huge pillar to commemorate the spot. Vaishali was also the centre of the 11th Buddhist Council congregation, held after 100 years of Buddha's Parinirvana to discuss the ten points of Vinaya, the rule of conduct under dispute. Other important sites at Vaishali are Raja Vishal Ka Garh, Buddha Stupa I and II (4th Century B.C). Vaishali is also important for Jains as Mahavira the first tirthankara was born here.

After visiting here we'll continue on to Kushinagar where we'll be able to check in on arrival with the evening at leisure. Overnight Kushinagar.

Day 12: Kushinagar to Lumbini (Nepal)



Following breakfast enjoy a morning tour of Kushinagar, a revered place for Buddhist pilgrims. It was here that the Tathagata, the reciter of truth, breathed his last with the last words, *"Behold now, brethren, I exhort you, saying, decay is inherent in all component things! Work out your salvation with diligence!"* A temple dedicated to the event – the Mahaparinirvana Temple today stands amidst a serene "sal" grove as if still remembering the great demise. The huge statue of the Reclining Buddha, excavated in 1876 at the temple, is one of the most momentous of all sights for the devout. The whole of Kushinagar, since Mahaparinirvana of Gautam Buddha, was turned into a memorial site with stupas

including the relic stupa – Mukutbandhana and Gupta Period Chaitayas and Viharas, built by the devout kings.

Later today we'll leave for the drive to Lumbini (190 km, 04 hrs) in the south of Nepal. On arrival we'll be able to check in and rest for the evening. Overnight Lumbini.

Day 13: Lumbini to Kathmandu

It was in Lumbini that Buddha was born around 2500 years ago in 563 BC. The Rummindei Pillar, raised in 249 BC, marks this sacred spot. Plinths of huge temples and a pond, where the infant and his mother bathed, have now been unearthed. This morning we'll visit the Sacred Gardens marking the place where the Buddha is reputed to have been born. Sections of the Maya Devi Mandir are believed to date as far back as the 3rd or 4th century BC, though much of the structure consists of later additions. The Peepul Tree that was cut down was almost certainly not the one below which Maya Devi gave birth; the original [considered to have been sal] may have survived into 6th or 7th Century AD. Most important the Ashokan Pillar, has a circumference of 2.78 metres and stands at 7.79 metres, though a large section is below ground. It was erected by greatest of Mauryan Emperors, Ashoka in 250 BC, in the 20 years of his reign. The pillar is Nepal's oldest known monument.

After our visit here we'll begin the drive, around 4 hours to Nepal's vibrant capital Kathmandu, stopping en route for a hot lunch. Arriving into Kathmandu later today we'll be able to check in and relax for the evening or perhaps explore the local area. Overnight Kathmandu.



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Day 14: Kathmandu to Delhi

Enjoy a morning half day tour of Kathmandu today including visits to Swoyambhunath, also known as the Monkey Temple, a huge Buddhist stupa that overlooks the city. We'll also visit Durbar Square at the heart of Old Kathmandu and site of the ancient palace complex, the Kumari (Living Goddess) temple and surrounding temples as well as Boudha, one of the largest Buddhist stupas in the world and centre of the Tibetan culture in Nepal. The rest of your afternoon is at leisure to explore the local area and perhaps do some last minute shopping in the bustling Thamel area before it's time for your transfer to the domestic airport and short flight back to Delhi. On arrival to Delhi you'll be met and transferred to your hotel with your evening at leisure. Overnight Delhi.

Day 15: Depart Delhi

Today your time is free to relax until departure or to commence any additional optional trips or activities you may have booked. If departing, you'll be transferred to the International airport in time for your return flight home.

Extending your holiday

There are many choices and options if you'd like to extend your holiday before or after your main booking. Here are just a few suggestions of extensions available for this trip:

- Trek some of the world's best trekking routes
- See the wonder of the Taj Mahal and enjoy relaxed sightseeing around Delhi
- Visit the neighbours – take a trip to nearby Nepal, Bhutan or even Tibet
- Enjoy the adrenaline rush of white water rafting
- Relax and cruise the waterways of Kerala on a traditional houseboat
- Relax and be pampered at a luxury spa resort

Please contact our UK office if you'd like to extend your stay by booking one of the above options, if you would like ideas or advice on how best to spend your time and budget or if you would like help with arranging any special celebrations during your trip.

Useful Information

The following information is aimed at helping you to decide whether this trip is right for you. Additional information can be found on our website and in our brochure. If you have any questions or would like advice on any aspect of this trip please contact us and we'll be happy to go through everything with you.

Day to Day Itinerary

It must be realized that with adventure travel changes to an itinerary may occur, for example due to unexpected weather conditions. The day to day itinerary is provided as a general guideline and is intended to give you a general sense of what to expect, including places visited and activities during the trip to help with your decision regards which trip is the best one for you. Activities and timings may vary slightly from those outlined Your guide will make any changes necessary and all arrangements during the trip, including explaining reasons for any changes to the itinerary that may occur.



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Trip Duration and Grading

This trip is 15 days with Day 1 beginning in Delhi and ending on Day 15 with departure from Delhi. The trip has been graded easy and is a cultural tour. There will be some day walks as part of your guided sightseeing, for example when visiting temples and monasteries, usually a maximum of a few hours walking each day. A reasonable level of fitness is required for this tour.

Group Size

The maximum number of persons on this trip will be 12 and the minimum number 2 persons. By keeping group sizes small it means we can provide a more personal service to you.

Local Representatives and Guides

You will be met at the airport on arrival by our local representatives who will always be available to help with your arrival, departure and any queries or requirements during your trip. The group will be accompanied by a local English speaking guide throughout the trip. Once you have confirmed your booking we will send you details of how you will be met on arrival and you will meet your guide just after you arrive.

Accommodation

During this trip you will spend 03 nights at the 4 star Oberoi Maidens heritage hotel in Delhi. You'll spend 02 nights on board the overnight train Delhi to Pathankot and Pathankot to Delhi staying in a 2 tier air conditioned cabin. You'll spend 02 nights at Asia Health Resort in Dharmasala and 01 night at the Ramada Hotel at Varanasi. You'll spend 02 nights at the Lotus Nikko hotel in Bodh Gaya and 01 night at the Maurya Patna hotel in Patna. In Khushinagar you'll spend 01 night at the Lotus Nikko hotel and 01 night at the Buddha Maya Garden hotel in Lumbini as well as 01 night at the central Shanker Hotel in Kathmandu.

All accommodation is based on twin share. If you are traveling on your own and are happy to share with someone, we will arrange for you to share a room with someone of the same sex, at no extra charge. If you request a single room the single room supplement charge for this trip will apply. It is usually possible to arrange single room accommodation but please contact our office to confirm this.

Meals

Meals on bed and breakfast basis only are included throughout except at Boudhgaya, Kushinagar and Lumbini where meals on half board basis (breakfast and either lunch or dinner) are included. Packed dinner on board the train is included. Other meals, snacks, bottled drinks including mineral water and alcohol are not included. Meals or snacks during transfer journeys are not included.

Flight Inclusive Price and International Flights

The flight inclusive price is based on best available price (at the time of producing our current brochure) of economy return flights from the UK added to the 'land only' price. Flight prices are subject to change and do vary throughout the year. We use a variety of airlines and scheduled flights on our trips including British Airways, Air India, Gulf Air, Qatar Air etc. Our ATOL licence is T7199 and we work with other ATOL holders to issue flight tickets. For exact air fares and flight classes available at the time you wish to travel please contact us.



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Land Only Option

Our trips are based on 'land only' as well as flight inclusive options to allow you the flexibility to choose to make your own arrangements for flights or perhaps to arrive a few days earlier or leave a few days later than the trip or to join the trip from anywhere in the world. If you choose the land only option we will provide full details of how and when to meet the rest of your group, details of your hotel and local contacts upon confirmation of your booking. All accommodation during your trip is included in the price although additional days before or after the start and end dates of your trip are not included. We are happy to book additional accommodation or optional activities, based on your requirements and budget, on request.

Please note that whilst at all times we aim to run our trip even with just a few persons, on some of the longer treks or trips, should the group size be less than our minimum operating level we may cancel the trip up to 6 weeks before departure. In the rare event that this happens, we will offer alternative dates or trips or refunds as appropriate and agreed with you. If you are arranging your own flights and accommodation prior to the start date of a group trip we recommend that you book fully flexible and refundable accommodation and transport if booking more than 6 weeks in advance, as should we need to cancel the trip compensation will not be paid for any arrangements that have been made independently.

Climate and Weather

Depending on where you want to go and what you want to do, it is possible to visit India throughout the year. The coolest weather is from November to mid March when there are cool fresh mornings and evenings with dry sunny days. The best times for this trip are from March to the end of April and from September to November.

Clothing and Equipment

Generally lightweight to medium weight clothing in natural fabrics from March to October with something warmer for the evenings and warm clothing for winter. We also suggest you take comfortable walking shoes and a small day pack or shoulder bag. Upon booking with us we will send you a suggested clothing and equipment list appropriate to your trip including details of any must have items or items that can be hired (if required).

Baggage Allowance

We request that you aim for a maximum weight of 15 to 20 kg for your main baggage including clothing and personal equipment. Many of our trips involve porters and/or local flights and 15kg is the maximum safe weight allowance for porters and permitted on local flights. International flights will usually permit up to 20kg maximum weight. If trekking, some additional baggage can usually be stored until you return from your trek. Remember you may also want to leave some weight allowance for any items you have bought during your trip! The Himalayan Adventure Company and our local partners are not responsible for excess baggage charges.

Complimentary Himalayan Adventure Company Travel Gift

On confirmation of booking we will provide a complimentary Himalayan Adventure Company travel gift. In the past, gifts have included items such as trek bags and shirts and vary each season, and we aim to provide useful gifts which can be used and enjoyed during your trip with us and afterwards.



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Passport and Visa Requirements

A full valid passport and a current visa for India and for Nepal is required for this trip. Passports must have at least 6 months validity after the completion date of your trip. To secure your booking and avoid any additional charges, information (eg spelling of name) provided to us on your booking form must match exactly the details as shown in your passport.

All foreigners (adults and children) who plan to visit India are required to obtain a valid Visa in their home country before arrival to India. Tourists wishing to visit India are usually granted short-term tourist visas, effective from the date of issue and valid for 6 months or up to 1 year depending on the type of visa issued. These tourist visas are non-extendible and non-convertible.

If you are planning to visit restricted or protected areas you will need an additional special permit and should contact the VF Services Ltd or the High Commission of India, London to check whether the places you intend to travel to are categorised as restricted/protected areas. For example if you plan to visit Sikkim or Ladakh you will need to mention this when applying for your Visa to ensure you are issued with the appropriate permits for your travel.

No Visas are issued upon arrival in India – you must have a valid visa prior to arrival in India. If you are simply transiting in India and will not be going through immigration but immediately taking an onward flight you may not require a visa. Please check with us for information & guidance.

The procedure for applying for a visa has now changed with effect from June 2008 aimed at improving Visa services. The visa application process has now been outsourced to VF Services (UK) Limited to whom all visa applications must now be made. The main way to apply for your India visa is online where you will also be able to track the progress of your visa application. In addition to the online application form a number of Indian Visa Application Centres (IVACs) in London and Birmingham will provide visa processing services.

To apply for your India visa you will need to submit your visa application to either of the VF Services (UK) Ltd. offices in person or by post or use the main online process where you can apply and find more information at <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk>. This link is also available from the Useful Links page of our website at www.thehimalayanadventurecompany.com or www.greathimal.com

The new system is very much based around an online application process and you are advised to complete the Indian visa application form and pay the fees [online](#). After doing this you will then be able to make an appointment to drop your application and passport at the Visa Application Centre or send it by post and to plan your trip to the [India Visa Application Centre](#) and avoid unnecessary queues and delays. You will also still be able to walk into an India Visa Application Centre (IVAC) and wait in the queue to submit your application if you prefer.

Processing times vary from application to application at the sole discretion of the High Commission of India and its Consulates in the UK, and some applications may take longer than others to get processed. However general guidelines are that applications submitted in London and Birmingham will take a minimum 2 to 3 working days to be processed. Postal applications need approximately 15 working days to be processed. This does not include the period they are in transit to and from the High Commission or the Consulate General.



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For more information or guidance please contact VF Services Ltd can be contacted via their website at <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/index.aspx> , by post at 142-148 Goswell Road, London EC1V 7DU, email info.inuk@vfshelpline.com, by telephone (answered between 0830hrs to 1600hrs) +44 207 8287369 or by fax on +44 207 8284979

If you'd like guidance and more information we will also be happy to help and you can contact us at info@greathimal.com, by phoning 0845 094 0273 or by visiting our website at www.greathimal.com

To enter Nepal you will also require a visa which can be obtained in advance from the Royal Nepalese Embassy in London (UK applications) or on arrival at the airport in Kathmandu for a fee of US\$25 for a visa valid for up to 15 days. The visa process has changed in 2008 and all visas are now multiple entry. We will provide up to date information on visa requirements, costs and the application process on confirmation of your booking or on request. For a shorter stay in Nepal you may choose to obtain a transit visa from Airport Immigration valid for a period of 48 hrs only on the presentation of an onward airline ticket and fee of US\$5 per person.

You are responsible for ensuring you have a valid passport and visa prior to departure. Where appropriate, we will arrange any special permits or visas required to visit specific restricted areas included as part of the itinerary whilst you are in the country and may request information from you to allow us to do this.

Permits

To enter certain areas e.g. National Parks or other trekking or protected areas, you may require a permit. All our trip prices include the cost of relevant permits and entrance fees. Where this is not the case, for example you have booked a tailor made private trip, we will inform you of any required permit fees before you make a booking with us.

Health and Medical Information

It is your responsibility to ensure you are well and fit enough to join the trip. If you are unsure of this please contact our office to talk it through with one of our experienced staff members. We also recommend you speak to your GP if you are in any way unsure of your fitness level required to join the trip. We also suggest you have a thorough medical and dental check up before you travel. You may need specific vaccinations appropriate to the country or area you will visit. You must tell us if you have an existing medical condition or disability that might affect your holiday before you make a booking with us. If, in our reasonable opinion, your chosen holiday is not suitable for your medical condition, disability or level of fitness, we reserve the right to cancel the contract or to suggest more appropriate alternative options for you. A group medical kit will be carried on each trip or trek but we also recommend that individuals carry their own basic first aid kit and we will send a suggested list of items for this when you make a booking.

For useful health and general travel advice and information we suggest you visit the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website at <http://www.fco.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo> and also obtain a copy of the UK Department of Health leaflet *Advice on Health for Travellers* or speak to your local GP or practice nurse for their recommendations.



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What's Included in the Price?

Airport transfers on arrival to and departure from Delhi and Kathmandu, 14 nights accommodation as per the itinerary including 02 nights on board a train in a II tier air conditioned cabin, all accommodation on twin share bed and breakfast and (04 nights only) half board basis as per itinerary, packed dinner whilst on board the train, all local transfers by air conditioned private car/mini bus, local English speaking professional guide service, monument entrance fees to all sites visited as per the itinerary, train fare by air conditioned II tier cabin Delhi-Pathankot- Delhi, flight Delhi to Varanasi, one way economy class (subject to change & availability), flight Kathmandu to Delhi, one way economy class (subject to change & availability),, 03 nights at the 4 star Oberoi Maidens Heritage hotel in Delhi, 02 nights at the Asia Health Resort in Dharamsala, 01 night at the Ramada Hotel in Varanasi, 02 nights at the Lotus Nikko hotel in Bodhgaya, 01 night at the Maurya Patna Hotel in Patna, 01 night at the Lotus Nikko in Kushinagar, air-conditioned car for arrival/ departure transfers, sightseeing and excursions in India as per itinerary, professional local English speaking guide in Delhi, Dharamsala and Varanasi for sightseeing, accompanied English speaking local guide from Varanasi to Lumbini, monument entrance fees (01 visit per monument) in India as per itinerary, 01 night at the Buddha Maya Garden hotel in Lumbini, 01 night at the central heritage The Shanker Hotel in Kathmandu, half day guided sightseeing with professional English speaking local guide, car and driver and including entrance fees to sites visited as per itinerary in Kathmandu and the Valley, all applicable government taxes, complimentary travel gift, complimentary Safe Seat Plan issued to all our clients confirming 100% financial protection of your booking with us at all times.

What's Not Included in the Price?

International flights (available on request), personal travel insurance, airport departure tax (payable locally and directly), visa fees for India and Nepal, mandatory Airport Development Fee at Delhi*, vaccination charges, expenses of a personal nature eg, alcohol and other table/soft drinks and snacks, laundry, phone calls, tips for guides or drivers, personal clothing, meals other than specified, additional or optional accommodation, activities, transport or services not included in the itinerary (available on request), additional accommodation, transfers or other service required as a result of flight delays, strikes, weather or road conditions, illness or other unexpected event outside of our control (payable locally and directly if required), camera & video fees payable at some cultural sites (payable locally and directly).

Please note: Accommodation will be provided in mentioned hotels or hotels of the same category, air fares Delhi to Varanasi and Kathmandu to Delhi is subject to change and availability, best and latest rates available will be provided at the time of enquiry and/or booking.

**From 01 March 2009 for the next 3 years a mandatory Airport Development Fee (ADF) will be levied on all domestic and international flights by the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL). The charge will be INR200 (approx £2.74) for each domestic passenger departing from Delhi and INR1300 (approx £17.80) for each international passenger (including Kathmandu and Paro departures). All visitors to India from 01 March 2009 will be required to pay these new mandatory charges to the airport authorities directly at the time of departure.*



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Our Experience

We have a love of and respect for the Himalaya. Our founders and office staff are all experienced travelers who share many years of helping other travelers achieve their ambitions. The fact that we specialise in travel to the Himalaya and that we have extensive local knowledge and experience of the area means that we can offer you a wide range of travel options and provide the best standards of service to you. Being an independent specialist travel operator means we can offer a friendly personal service and are able to be flexible and use our experience and contacts to build new and tailor made programs as well as to continue to develop new and improved services. We have a wealth of experience in helping many individuals and groups in designing and planning adventures, ranging from romantic breaks to personal challenges to school study programmes to extreme adventure expeditions, from low budget to no expense spared and we have lots of ideas, suggestions and experience to share with you. We are also delighted to say that many of our clients return again and again to travel with us and many of our new clients are through recommendations and word of mouth from happy and satisfied clients who have previously traveled with us.

Fair Pricing

We aim to provide you with the best service at fair and competitive prices and excellent value for money. As part of this, most of our trips are priced for different group sizes with the higher price applicable for smaller groups. With larger groups the price drops so that everyone benefits from a cheaper holiday. We offer 'land only' prices, for travellers who prefer to make their own international flight and transfer arrangements but are happy to arrange flights for you on request, using a variety of international carriers from regional and national airports. Our ATOL number is T7199 and we work with other ATOL holders to issue flight tickets. Additionally, we offer special discounts for groups of 10 or over, schools and group leaders. Contact us for more information.



Your Financial Protection

We understand how important it is that the money you spend on your holiday is securely protected. You may also have concerns about booking with an independent operator. To give you peace of mind and confidence in our service to you we have a number of ways in which we protect the money you pay for your holiday. The company is a full member of the Travel Trust Association (<http://www.traveltrust.co.uk>) membership number U3237, in compliance with the EC Directive on Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours. For flight bookings and issuing of tickets our ATOL number is T7199 and we work only with ATOL licence holders. For flight bookings the money you pay is protected under the ATOL holder's licence. For all other arrangements, your payment to us is held in a separate Trust Fund and only released to us on your return. In addition, we provide free to you, a 'Safe Seat Plan' insurance cover which means that in the unlikely case of your money not being held in the Trust Account or of our insolvency, you will be fully reimbursed for the loss of any monies paid to us, up to a limit of £11 000 per person. Therefore, for your peace of mind and confidence, all money you have paid to us is always 100% protected and available to pay for the services you have booked.



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Insurance

Before confirming your booking we will need to see evidence of adequate travel insurance. Whilst you are able to choose your insurance from any provider, as members of the Travel Trust Association (TTA) we are able to offer some of the best and most competitive travel insurance on the market to our clients. Policies can be printed and given or mailed out or emailed to you. For our higher elevation treks and tours such as this we are pleased to work with Snowcard who provide excellent and very competitive insurance services for adventure and activity based travel. If you'd like to contact Snowcard directly at this time they can be called on 01327 262805 or visit their website at www.snowcard.co.uk. If calling or emailing please mention you are a Himalayan Adventure Company client to obtain rates and quotes based on our trips which are very competitive and offer great levels of cover or to obtain a quote or purchase insurance yourself simply follow the link from the Useful Links or Make a Booking page of our website at www.greathimal.com. Contact us for more information, to request a quote, to see policy wording or to purchase your insurance.

Responsible Tourism

We believe that tourism should benefit local communities and that responsible travel does not mean a compromise in standards. We aim to promote responsible travel that respects and benefits local cultures, communities and environments and we support Tourism Concern, are a sponsor of the International Porter Protection Group and a friend of The Sahara Group. We only work with local guides and communities in each region where we operate and we work with local partners, guides, office and support staff and ensure they have good facilities and fair wages and we work as a team to ensure you a wonderful adventure holiday.

Suggested Reading

We recommend you learn about the places and cultures you will visit before you travel so that you can enjoy your travel even more. Below are just a few varied suggestions to get you started:

Seasons of Splendour: Tales, Myths and Legends of India, Madhur Jaffrey, Michael Foreman (Illustrator), Lord Buddha: Book of Omens by Chris Eann, Lord Buddha & his Message. Short essays by Gautama Buddha, Varanasi: the City of Burning and Learning by N K Sharma, Dharamsala: Tibetan Refuge by Jeremy Russell, The Revival of Buddhist Pilgrimage at Bodh Gaya 1811-1949 by Alan Trevithick, Two Wheels in the Dust: From Kathmandu to Kandy, by Anne Mustoe.

How to Book

Once you have chosen your trek or trip, contact our office to check availability and ask any questions you may have. We'll hold a provisional booking for 7 days. Please read our Terms and Conditions prior to making your booking. Then email, post or fax us your completed booking form (available in our brochure or downloaded from our website) along with the appropriate non refundable deposit of £250 per person and (if applicable) any payments for flight bookings. All flight fares are subject to change and availability until final confirmation and as they vary so much throughout the year, all flights must be paid in full at the time of confirmation. If you choose to phone us with your debit or credit card details, a signed and completed booking form will still be required for confirmation of booking. Bookings will only be confirmed once we receive a completed and signed booking form along with appropriate payment.



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We will confirm your booking and email you a trip dossier which will include confirmation of your booking, receipt of payment/invoice, a day by day itinerary, visa and trekking permit instructions, vaccination and health information, a suggested first aid pack list, a suggested equipment and clothing list, a suggested reading list appropriate to your destination, a responsible travel briefing and other useful information relevant to your booking.

The final balance for your booking will be due 12 weeks (3 months) before departure. **NO REMINDER WILL BE SENT.** Your Himalayan Adventure Company travel gift will be mailed to you separately, usually a few weeks before your departure date. For clients outside the UK, a gift will be sent on payment of delivery costs only.

We wish you a wonderful adventure.

