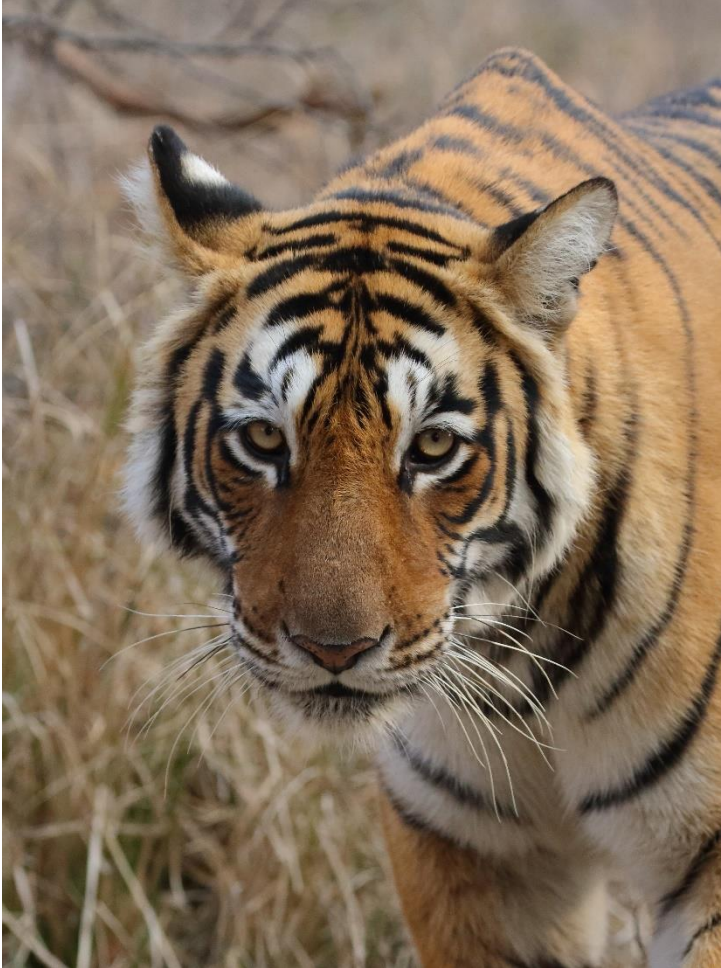




Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Bengal Tiger

Northern India's Birding, Wildlife and Culture, 2024

12 Nights/13 Days

Home to Bengal Tigers, Indian Leopards, Sloth Bears, and over 1,300 bird species, India is considered a mega-biodiverse country. On this tour we'll visit some of the best birding and wildlife sites in Northern India and will not only expect to encounter a good number of this vast country's 1,300+ bird species, but we will also have the chance for wonderful mammals such as Tiger, Leopard, Jungle Cat and more. We will visit world-famous sites such as the magnificent Taj Mahal, explore centuries old forts, embark on Tiger safaris in Ranthambore National Park, and spend a full day at perhaps the best birding area in India, Keoladeo National Park. And along the way, we will have the benefit of India's very best local guides who know the nature and history of every site we visit.

Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrive Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL), transfer to hotel.

Day 2: AM flight to Udaipur and drive to Jawai Hills.

Day 3: Jawai Hills AM and PM birding and Leopard safaris.

Day 4: Drive to Jodhpur and the Merangarh Fort/market.

Day 5: AM train to Jaipur and PM birding and Leopard/game safari at Jhalana.

Day 6: AM transfer Jaipur to Ranthambore National Park, PM Tiger safari.

Day 7: Ranthambore National Park AM and PM Tiger safaris.

Day 8: AM Tiger safari, drive to Bharatpur.

Days 9 and 10: Keoladeo National Park.

Day 11: AM transfer to Agra and The Taj Mahal, PM drive to Chambal Lodge.

Day 12: AM birding/boating of the Chambal River, transfer to Delhi.

Day 13: International flights home from Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL).

Indian Roller



Indian Gazelle

9 Night/10 Day Itinerary:

Day 1, Arrival:

We will arrive on our international flights to Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi. Here we'll be picked up at the airport and taken to the Vasant Continental Hotel/Home. We will all meet in the restaurant for dinner and orientation.

*Meals: Dinner
Lodging at Airport Hotel*

Day 2, Transfer to Jawai Hills:

This morning we fly to Udaipur before driving to Bera and our base among the Jawai Hills. The Jawai Hills area is a hauntingly picturesque location in the Pali district of Rajasthan, surrounded by dry forest, grasslands, riverbed, and grazing areas, from which rise dramatic mountains of solid rock. These Hills of Jawai were shaped by lava millions of years ago and contain natural caves and rock

shelters that are home to Indian Leopards, Striped Hyena, Jungle Cat, Langur Monkeys and more. The nearby Jawai Lake, formed by a dam built in the 1940's, makes the area a haven for bird life as well. Upon arrival we'll have time to rest and do some afternoon birding before embarking on our first Leopard safari this evening.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Varawal Leopard Camp or Jawai Sagar Resort*

Day 3, The Jawai Hills:

Today in the morning and afternoon we will venture out for an incredibly diverse mix of culture, birding, and Leopard Safaris as we roam the terrain with our guide in open-air, 4x4 vehicles. Many of Jawai's hills have ancient temples built within them, and in some places, Leopards actually live in and around the temples and alongside humans as they have done for centuries. We will also



Gray Langurs

visit the wetlands around Jawai Lake and Dam where we can see Green Bee-eater, Indian Roller, Red-wattled Lapwing, Greater Flamingo, Common Crane, Temminck's Stint, River Tern, Pied Kingfisher, Asian Openbill stork, Bar-headed Goose, Shikra and much, much more. Over 240 bird species are documented in this area, and in the evenings, we may see the massive Indian Eagle Owl as it heads out to hunt. In the late morning we'll stop at a small village for a fascinating demonstration on the historic use of opium among local tribes.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Varawal Leopard Camp or Jawai Sagar Resort

Day 4, Jodhpur:

Today after breakfast we will depart for Jodhpur, known as the Blue City for many of the buildings here are of a sky-blue color. Along the way we will pass through very rural areas known for Indian Gazelle and Blackbuck Antelope, upon arriving Jodhpur, we'll visit

the Merangarh Fort, one of the largest forts in India built in around 1459 and known for its intricate sandstone carvings and expansive courtyards. Afterwards we will have a tour of the local town market, a colorful kaleidoscope of Indian sounds, sights, and aromas. We'll check into our hotel in time for refreshing and dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Hotel Marugarh or similar

Day 5, Train to Jaipur:

This morning we catch an early morning train to Jaipur and check in at our hotel. In the afternoon we'll embark on a jeep safari at Jhalana Leopard Reserve, with its diverse and abundant wildlife. In addition to Indian Leopard, Nilgai Antelope, Spotted Deer, and Hyena, bird life here is abundant and includes Indian Peafowl, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Shikra, Eurasian Sparrowhawk, Indian Scops-Owl, Rose-ringed Parakeet, Common Woodshrike, Rufous Treepie,

House Crow, Red-vented Bulbul, Common and Jungle Babbler, Purple Sunbird, Black Kite, Indian Scops Owl, Black-rumped Flameback, Black Redstart, White-breasted Waterhen and White-throated Kingfisher, and more.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Holiday Inn or similar

Day 6, Ranthambore National Park:

Following breakfast, we will drive to Ranthambore National Park for check into the Ranthambore Kothi Resort, and after lunch will begin with our first Tiger Safari of the incomparably exciting Ranthambore National Park. Ranthambore is synonymous with Tigers, and due to its varied terrain and abundance of water bodies, it also has an excellent population of birds, both resident and migrant. In total, a list of 270+ species has been documented here.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Ranthambore Kothi Resort or similar

Day 7, Ranthambore Tigers and Wildlife:

Today we'll have morning and afternoon drives into the heart of Ranthambore as we go in search of Tiger and other mammals. Our priority will be Tiger sightings, but there are many other animals present with Spotted and Sambar Deer, Wild Boar, Nilgai, Leopard, Sloth Bear and Hyena all possible. Ranthambore is excellent for birds with Crested Serpent Eagle, Painted Spurfowl, Jungle Bush



Spotted Owlet

Quail, Brown Crake, Brown Fish Owl, Stork-billed Kingfisher, White-naped Woodpecker, Tickell's Blue and Taiga Flycatcher, Crested and White-capped Bunting among a wide range of possibilities. Outside the park and in-between safaris, we will spend some time exploring arid areas in search of Painted Sandgrouse, Variable Wheatear, and Southern Grey Shrike among other species.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Ranthambore Kothi Resort or similar

Day 8, Ranthambore to Bharatpur:

After a morning Tiger Safari in Ranthambore, we will transfer to Bharatpur and check into the spacious and historic Bagh Hotel. Bharatpur and nearby Keoladeo National Park is one of the best birding regions in India and will be our base for the next three nights. In addition to our visit to Keoladeo, our hotel has excellent wildlife viewing and photography blinds, and for a small extra fee we can enjoy close up and thrilling sightings of Jungle Cat, Small Indian Civet, and Golden Jackal.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Bagh Hotel

Day 9 and 10, Keoladeo National Park:

We have 2 days to explore the world famous Keoladeo National Park where the abundance of birdlife, in this oasis amongst a sea of surrounding agricultural lands, is simply breathtaking. These extensive flooded areas support huge flocks of wildfowl with the more interesting species including Garganey, Ferruginous and Knob-billed Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose and Bar-headed Goose. Pheasant-tailed and Bronze-winged Jacanas, Grey-headed Swampheens also paddle in the shallow water along with the much larger Blacknecked, Woolly-necked and Painted Storks and magnificent Sarus Cranes. A selection of waders should include White-tailed and Red-wattled Lapwing, Green and Wood Sandpiper and others. Dusky Eagle-owl is a particular specialty here, but Brown Hawk-owl can sometimes be found at their daytime roosts as well, with Large-tailed and Jungle the most likely to be seen. The area is a magnet for birds of prey and eagles are particularly well represented. We can expect Steppe, Eastern Imperial and Greater Spotted and perhaps we will also see Booted, Short-toed Eagles. Other raptors include Shikra and Marsh Harrier. In the more wooded parts of the park, we will hope to find Yellow-crowned and Brown-capped Pygmy Woodpecker, Indian Golden Oriole, thrushes such as Tickell's, Black-throated and the stunning Orange-headed. A nice selection of common warblers includes Siberian Chiffchaff, Blyth's Reed,

Greenish and Hume's, and with luck we may also see Smoky, Dusky, and Sykes's. Further possibilities among a long list of other commoner species we should find are Black-crowned Night-heron, Striated and Purple Herons, Indian Cormorant, Oriental Darter, Eurasian Spoonbill, Streak-throated and Wire-tailed Swallow, Bluethroat, Olive-backed Pipit and much more.

Mammals here are abundant as well, and Golden Jackal, Indian Crested Porcupine, Spotted Deer, Nilgai, Indian Hog Deer, Blackbuck and Indian Flying Foxes are often encountered. Reptiles are not to be left out either, and there are several places for seeing Indian Python if we have the time.

Depending on sightings, we may opt for birding the area around our hotel in the afternoon of day 10.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging Bagh Hotel

Day 11, Agra, The Taj Mahal, and Chambal Lodge:

Today after breakfast we will head to Agra and upon arrival, will visit the majestic Taj Mahal. An immense, gleaming mausoleum of white marble, built in Agra between 1631 and 1648 by order of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favorite wife, the Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and a universally admired masterpiece of architecture. After our morning visit at The Taj Mahal, we will drive to Chambal Safari Lodge, where we can bird around



Taj Mahal

the grounds in the late afternoon. Chambal is alive with birds and wildlife and in addition to nearby roosts of Indian Flying Foxes, Indian Hare, Mongoose, and a variety of birds including Indian Scops Owl, Spotted Owlet, Brown Hawk Eagle, Gray Hornbill, and more can be seen on the lodge grounds.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Chambal Safari Lodge

Day 12, Chambal River, return to Delhi:

Today we will have a morning boat ride along the magnificent Chambal River, a delightfully relaxing way to enjoy fantastic birds, reptiles, and mammals. We will be particularly keen to locate the sought-after Indian Skimmer which is regularly seen during these trips. We also have excellent chances to see both Black-bellied and River Terns, Great Thick-knee, Small Pratincole and a variety of wildfowl and shorebirds. Other species regularly seen here include

Long-legged Buzzard, Bonelli's Eagle, Western Osprey, Pallas's Gull and more. We should also see huge Muggers Crocodiles along the sandy banks, as well as the critically endangered Gharial. And with luck in the afternoon, we may also catch a sighting of the rare Ganges River Dolphin.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Airport Hotel

Day 13, International Flights Home

Included for the duration of this itinerary:

Included for the duration of this itinerary:
 Price includes accommodations and meals, guide and entrance fees to parks, AC Chair Car train tickets, Delhi to Udaipur airfare, sharing Gypsy for Tiger Safari, assistance on arrival & departure.

Not Included:

Personal items such as tips, international airfare, alcoholic beverages, gift shop, laundry, etc. are not included.

Travel insurance:

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance. In the event that you need to cancel your trip due to medical or other reasons, this insurance will protect you.



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