

# A Royal Indian Odyssey



## TRIP OVERVIEW

From Delhi to Mumbai, this epic journey through royal Rajasthan delves into the history of India's Maharajas, discovers magnificent forts, opulent palaces and breathtaking scenery along colonial railways deep into the heart of this majestic country. Feel the magnetism of Pushkar's pilgrimage site, marvel at the white marble Ranakpur temple complex and discover the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri.

## ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to India. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as hotel details and visa requirements.

### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, BR = Brunch, L = Lunch, D = Dinner,

### DAY 1: UK to Delhi

Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Delhi.

### DAY 2: Delhi L/D

On arrival in Delhi, you will be met by your local guide and transferred to the hotel. After lunch and some time to settle in, a short tour of the beautifully planned city of New Delhi will follow. Offering a taste of its imperial glory, you'll drive past the India Gate, President's House, Parliament Building and visit the Birla Temple, made purely out of 2,000 tons of Rajasthani white marble.

### DAY 3: Delhi B/L/D

A full day tour of Delhi commences after breakfast, beginning with the historic Old Delhi in the morning. Lying side by side, Old Delhi dates back to the Mughal period, whilst New Delhi was built just over a hundred years ago. Travelling through the narrow and crowded streets on a rickshaw will transport you back in time, passing vibrant food markets of Old Delhi where bread makers bake delicious scented naan from the tandoor ovens and chai wallahs brew their sweet tea. A visit to the regal Red Fort gives you a sense of the lavish life once led by the former rulers before stopping for lunch in a local restaurant. Your tour will continue on to New Delhi to see the Mahatma Gandhi memorial and the 12th century Qutab Minar. Built on the foundations of Jain and Hindu temples, the complex was built in 1193 after the defeat of Delhi's last Hindu kingdom and displays fine examples of Indo-Islamic architecture as well as the tallest stone tower in India.

### DAY 4: Delhi to Agra B/L/D

Waking early, it's time to board the Taj Express (or similar) to Agra. This train journey swiftly leaves behind the hustle and bustle of Delhi and arrives into Agra with time for lunch before your afternoon excursions. Despite being a small city, Agra was once the capital of the mighty Mughal dynasty whose strength manifested itself in the huge forts and buildings built to maintain its power. During the afternoon, you will visit the vast red sandstone Agra Fort. The colossal walled city is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, built by the Mughals in 1573 and boasts gigantic pavilions, grand palaces and spectacular courtyards. *Please note breakfast today will be either a packed breakfast from the hotel or on the train, due to the early train departure.*

### DAY 5: Agra to Jaipur B/L/D

This magical day starts with an early morning tour of one of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Taj Mahal. Words do not do this remarkable palace justice; it really must be seen to appreciate its stupendous beauty. Taking 17 years and 20,000 men to build, the heartbroken Mughal Emperor Shahjahan dedicated this stunning white marble monument of love to his deceased wife to enshrine her mortal remains. After breakfast back at the hotel, visit Fatehpur Sikri. Built in 1569, it is the ancient capital of Akbar and known as the 'abandoned city' as the area suffered from water shortages making it an unsuitable residence. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant with some time to spare in the afternoon before proceeding to the railway station to catch your train to Jaipur

### DAY 6: Jaipur B/L/D

Begin your first day in Jaipur with a visit to the spectacular Amber Fort, the ancient capital of the royal family until 1728, located just 11km from Jaipur. Spanning over four huge courtyards, you will travel to the centre of the fort by either elephant or jeep, passing snake charmers, harems of the Maharajah and the Palace of Mirrors along the way which all make for a truly unforgettable morning. An afternoon city tour of Jaipur takes in the major sights including the home of the royal family of Jaipur - The City Palace and the Jantar Mantar, an astronomical observatory. Lastly, marvel at the hundreds of tiny windows on the facade of the Hawa Mahal, known to many as the Palace of Winds, where it is said that the women of the royal family could once watch the streets below without being seen. Stop for lunch at a local restaurant and some time to walk through the colourful bazaars before returning to the hotel for dinner.

### DAY 7: Jaipur to Pushkar and Jodhpur B/L/D

Depart your hotel after breakfast and travel onwards by train to Ajmer, then transfer to Pushkar, an important Hindu pilgrimage site. The town has hundreds of temples, the most famous being Brahma Temple, said to be one of the few temples in the world dedicated to this deity. The town winds around a vast lake where Hindus come and use one of the 52 ghats to enter and bathe in the holy water during religious ceremonies and festivals. After a tour of the city, continue by coach to Jodhpur, arriving in time for dinner at your hotel.

### DAY 8: Jodhpur B/L/D

Situated on the edge of the Thar desert, Jodhpur is the birthplace of the last Maharaja of India. You'll begin your day-long tour with a visit to the Mehrangarh Fort, a beautiful fort founded in the 15th century by the Rathore Rajputs that appears to rise from bluff-coloured sandstone within the hill itself making it hard to tell where the land ends and the building begins. Strolling through stately palace apartments you'll get a real feel for life as a royal in an Indian court. Later visit Jaswanth Thada, the traditional cremation ground of the rulers of Jodhpur with grandiose white marble memorials amongst ornamental gardens.

### DAY 9: Jodhpur to Deogarh B/L/D

Leaving Jodhpur, en-route to Deogarh you will visit the world famous Ranakpur temple complex. Acclaimed for their intricate and superb architectural style, the temples are the largest of the Jain cult and form one of the five major pilgrimage sites. Wholly constructed in marble with more than 1,400 exquisitely carved supportive pillars, they contain numerous beautifully and delicately carved sculptures and are definitely a highlight of any trip to this area. There will be a break for lunch in a local restaurant before continuing the journey to Deogarh, arriving in time for dinner at the hotel.

### DAY 10: Deogarh to Udaipur B/L/D

Begin your day with a trip on Deogarh's metre-gauge train for a journey around the picturesque local area, passing waterfalls and thick jungle, soaking up the ambience of a bygone era. After lunch in a you'll continue on to Udaipur.

### DAY 11: Udaipur B/L/D

Affectionately known as 'The Venice of the East', magical Udaipur is a city of romance with beautiful lakes and fantastical palaces all bordered by lush, forested hills. This morning you will visit the huge City Palace, lining the eastern shore of Lake Pichola, with its balconies gazing out towards the stunning Lake Palace seemingly floating on the waters across the shimmering lake. Next make a stop at the celebrated Jagdish temple, the largest in the city and whose 79-foot sculpted spire dominates the skyline. Here you can appreciate the three-storied temple that is dedicated to Lord

Vishnu, the preserver of the Universe.

### DAY 12: Udaipur to Ahmedabad B/L/D

Leaving Rajasthan behind the tour travels onwards to Ahmedabad where you'll explore the city on a varied sightseeing tour, visiting Sabarmati Ashram, the former home and retreat of Mahatma Gandhi, Swaminarayan Temple and Sidi Saiyyed Mosque, famous for its intricately carved ten stone latticework windows.

### DAY 13: Ahmedabad to Mumbai B/L/D

This morning board the 'double decker express train' to Mumbai which arrives in the afternoon. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the surrounding area before dinner with your group.

### DAY 14: Mumbai B/L/D

An early morning start to commence your full day tour of Mumbai awaits you. Your first stop is the iconic stone arch landmark known as the Gateway of India to board a motorboat to Elephanta Island, explore the

ancient caves dedicated to the Hindu God Shiva which are a UNESCO World Heritage Site (**Please note there are 120 steps with a steep climb to access the ancient caves on Elephanta Island**). Back in Mumbai you will delight in admiring such sites as the grand Jain Temple before meandering through the picturesque Hanging Gardens which offer beautiful views of the city and sea before arriving at the beach at Chowpatty. Continue to the museum of Mani Bhavan where Mahatma Gandhi stayed during his visits to Mumbai between 1917-1943 and finally explore the beautiful Kamala Nehru Park. Enjoy a final dinner together with your group on your last evening in India.

### DAY 15: Mumbai to the UK or extension B

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

## ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

### Accommodation guide

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to leisure hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and India. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

**Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

### Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



## ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Delhi you will be met by a representative from our local agent, Jayasree Travels and Tours, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/India Travel Service representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact Jayasree Travels and Tours during your stay the details are:

### Jayasree Travels and Tours

Address: F 341-Ground Floor Lado Sarai New Delhi 110030

Telephone Number: 0091 471 2505067

### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for Jayasree Travel and Tours:

Contact	Telephone number
Ms Jayasree Vikraman	0091 974 700 5888
Mrs Samitha Azhar	0091 974 471 3380
Mr Biju Unnikrishnan	0091 952 618 8860
Mr Harish Kumar	0091 952 618 8859
Mr Amit Bhardwaj	0091 995 898 8719

## WHAT TO PACK

- Sunglasses, sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Warm clothing and thermals in winter
- Camera and charger/spare batteries
- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars
- Mosquito Repellent
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit
- Anti-bacterial hand gel
- Long sleeve shirt and long trousers

- Swimwear
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- An electric plug converter - The voltage in India is 220 Volts with plugs and sockets having either grounded 3 pin connections or ungrounded 2 pin connections. Should you plan to use your own hairdryer, travel iron, video camera, battery charger, electric shaver etc, it is advisable to bring a multi-adaptor.

### WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

#### Visas

A visa is required for entry into India. British Citizen Passport Holders will need to obtain a tourist visa. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The Travel Visa Company can only apply for this 120 days before your proposed travel date. When calling the Travel Visa Company they will advise you of any changes to the fees or the procedure, they will also advise you of all information they will require in order to apply for the visa. Alternatively you can visit The Indian Visa Application Centre in London: 142-148 Goswell Road, London, EC1B 7DU. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months before you enter India. Visa requirements are subject to change and obtaining a visa is the responsibility of the traveller and not Mercury Holidays. We recommend you check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy prior to departure for the most up to date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

#### Tour Guides

This is an escorted tour, meaning the you will have the services of an English speaking guide during each excursion ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

#### Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

#### Tipping

It is at your customary to tip your guide and driver. This is at your discretion, but we recommend you allow approximately £3 per person per day. It is asked that you tip in pounds and not local currency, please do not give coins as these are difficult to exchange.

#### Currency Exchange

The currency in India is the Rupee or Rs. The Rupee is a closed currency and officially you are not allowed to take any cash out of India. US Dollars and GBP are also widely accepted in India should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you. There are restrictions on taking Indian rupees into India. Visitors, including tourists, are not permitted to take any amount of Indian currency into the country. You can take cash or travellers' cheques (in pounds sterling or another foreign currency) and/or a bank card with you and exchange or withdraw rupees once in India.

We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

#### Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £200- £300 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

#### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 35. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

### FLIGHT INFORMATION

**IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.**

#### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

#### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

#### Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote **'WK830'** for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

#### Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk), [www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk), [www.hpa.org.uk](http://www.hpa.org.uk), your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

#### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats.

The tour pace for A Royal Indian Odyssey is challenging. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spent at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home.

Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

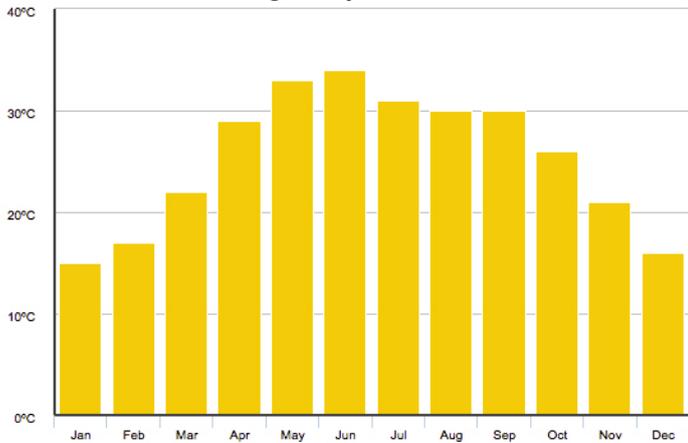
#### Credit Card Information

As normal practice you may be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

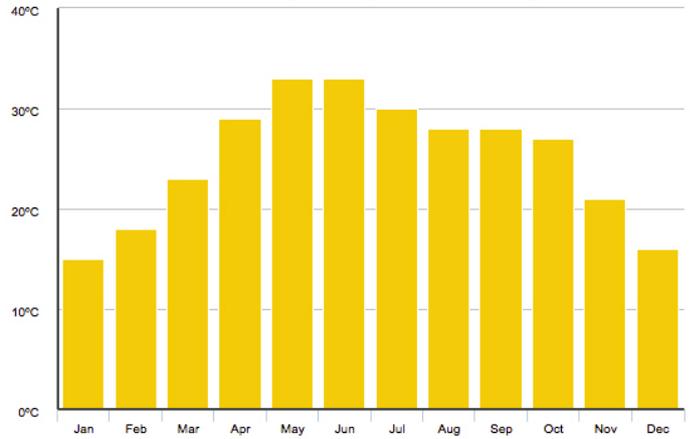
**WEATHER AND CLIMATE**

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

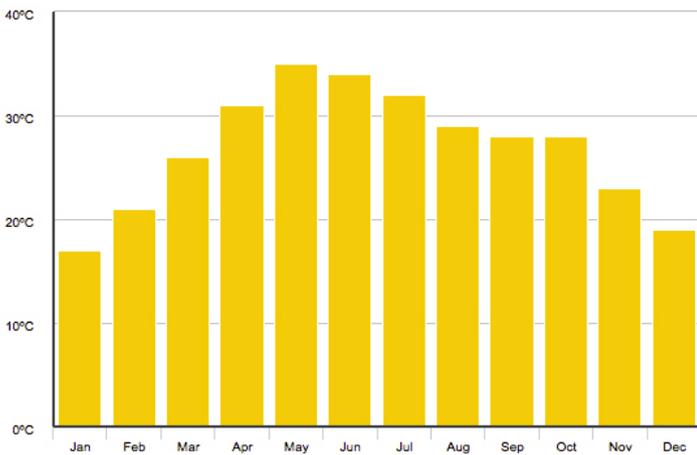
**Average Temperature for Delhi**



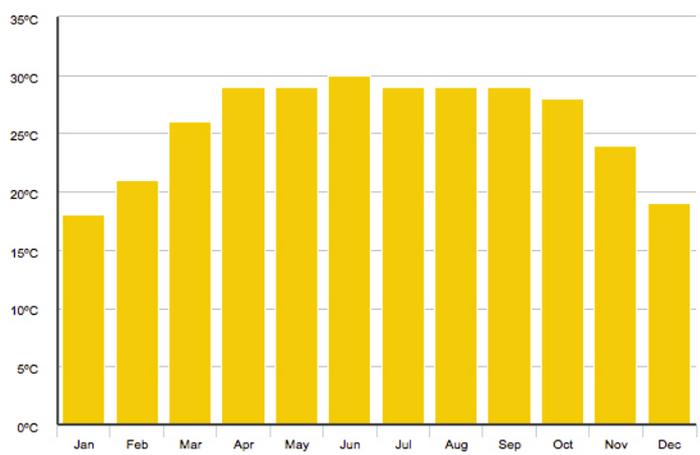
**Average Temperature for Jaipur**



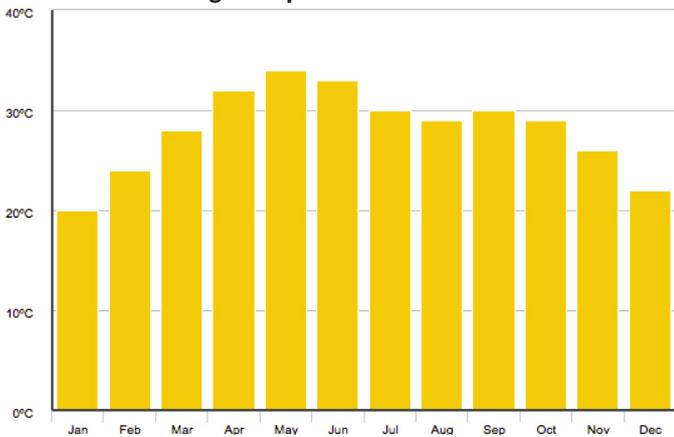
**Average Temperature for Jodhpur**



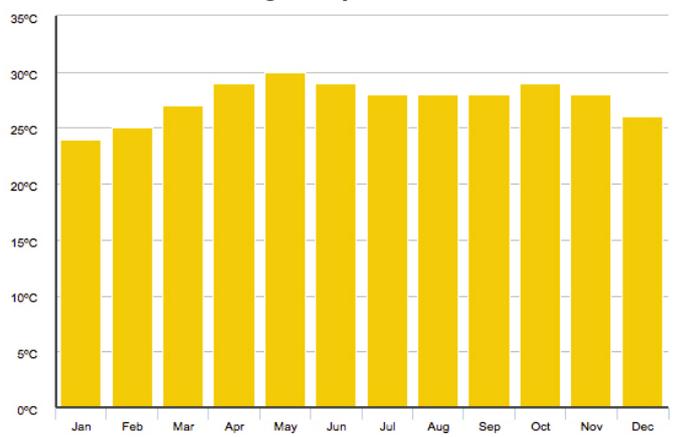
**Average Temperature for Udaipur**



**Average Temperature for Ahmedabad**



**Average Temperature for Mumbai**



## Mumbai Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



### TRIP OVERVIEW

Home to India's financial hubs, tropical forests, religious epicentres, a booming fashion industry and culinary hotspots shaped by the country's wild flavours, discover Mumbai's intriguing sights on your three night extension in the city.

### ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your Mumbai extension.

#### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

#### Day 15: Mumbai B/L/D

Today is at leisure to relax or explore your surroundings.

#### Day 16: Mumbai B/L/D

This morning embark on a full day tour of Mumbai including visits to The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, one of the finest functional railway station buildings in the world; Crawford Market, one of Mumbai's most famous markets and the Oval Maidan.

#### Day 17: Mumbai B/L/D

Enjoy a day at leisure to relax or perhaps venture into this bustling metropolis.

#### Day 18: Mumbai to UK B

This morning transfer to the airport for your return flight to the UK.

#### Hotel Information

**5★ The Fern Residency (3 nights):** Showcasing contemporary Indian designs throughout, the Fern Residency offers guests the perfect cosmopolitan retreat with the additional benefit of a nearby monorail in walking distance. Each room is fully air-conditioned with tea/coffee making facilities, safe, Wi-Fi and room service. Outside of your room, discover a large outdoor swimming pool and restaurant serving a delicious selection of international cuisines.

Hotel information: The Fern Residency Mumbai- No. B-411, Hemu Kalani Marg, Sindhi Society, Chembur East, Mumbai, Maharashtra 400071, India Telephone number: 0091 22 2523 8000

#### Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry, drinks and snacks.

#### Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour extension, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip.



The Fern Residency

### FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**