

INDIA - TIGERS AND TAJ MAHAL



"Seeing a majestic Bengal Tiger in the wild has to be one of the most thrilling experiences and our chances are excellent. Tadoba NP has a fantastic reputation for gifting its visitors with memorable views of the world's most impressive cat, plus Leopard, Dhole, Sloth Bear and Gaur." Julian Sykes

Dates Sat 4 - Sat 18 Feb 2023
Price £5,995
Deposit £1,350 Single Supp £700

Leaders Julian Sykes plus local guides
Flights British Airways, scheduled
 Outbound: Overnight, Heathrow-Delhi
 Inbound: Morning, Delhi-Heathrow
 Internal, local airline: Nagpur-Delhi
Weather In the mornings and evenings it is likely to be cool. During the middle of the day it can become hot. It is the dry season but it can rain at any time. It will be chilly on the jeep safaris, especially in the mornings. 10°-25°C
Walking Mostly on flat, well-used tracks and trails. Walking shoes or trainers are sufficient, sandals useful for around lodges
Meals All included from lunch on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 15
 Expect excellent local cuisine
Health Anti-malarial medication is recommended for Tadoba. Please consult your doctor
Insects There will be some biting insects so insect repellent is essential
Accom Twin and single rooms/cottages all ensuite, apart from overnight train which has shared facilities
Visa/Fees Indian Tourist Visa to be obtained online before travel, additional cost £30.
 There are charges to use cameras and video cameras in the Parks and Sanctuaries, payable locally per visit. Please note this could total 11,000 Rupee (approx £115)
Group 12

A Central India extravaganza - from world famous wetlands and monuments, to the mammal-rich reserve of Tadoba, known for its Bengal Tigers, along with Wild Dog, Leopard and Sloth Bear

- A fabulous chance to see Royal Bengal Tigers in Tadoba National Park
- Leopard, Sloth Bear, Jungle Cat and Wild Dog all possible
- Boat safari for Ganges River Dolphin, Gharial and Indian Skimmer
- Visit Agra, home of the iconic and stunning Taj Mahal
- Rickshaw rides to Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary
- Indian Courser, Yellow-wattled Lapwing and Chestnut-bellied Sandgrouse
- Indian Palm Civet and Indian Flying Fox in the garden at Chambal Safari Lodge

1-2 After an overnight flight from London we transfer to our hotel to drop off our luggage and freshen up before heading to Sultanpur Jheel wetlands, which is fabulous for waterbirds and an excellent way to start our Indian adventure. Nilgai are regular here and can be seen at the side of the water, along with a host of birds including Tawny and Eastern Imperial Eagles, Garganey, Painted and Black-necked Storks, Spot-billed Duck, White-tailed and Red-wattled Lapwing, Citrine Wagtail, Greater Flameback and Black Drongo.

3-5 After breakfast we have a long drive to Bharatpur, hopefully arriving by lunchtime, followed by our first visit to the famous bird sanctuary, known as Keoladeo National Park. Here we hope to find Sarus Crane, Open-billed Stork, Lesser Whistling Duck, Bronze-winged

Jacana, plus many other species. Dusky Eagle and Indian Scops Owls are possible, along with Siberian Rubythroat, Orange-headed Thrush and Long-tailed Nightjar. As it's so good, we also spend the whole of the following day here, giving us the full experience.

These wetlands host many raptors such as Greater Spotted, Tawny and Eastern Imperial Eagles, Saker and Black-winged Kite. Rhesus Macaques and Five-striped Palm Squirrels can be found around the temple and there's always a chance of a Porcupine, Golden Jackal along with Sambar, Spotted Deer and possibly Jungle Cat. One day we take a short drive to search an area for Indian Courser and if time permits call in at a local site to check out some small ponds, or a canal in search of the elusive and cryptic looking Greater Painted-snipe.



Just some of what we hope to see:

Royal Bengal Tiger	Sarus Crane
Jungle Cat	Indian Skimmer
Sloth Bear	Yellow-wattled Lapwing
Dhole	Greater Painted-snipe
Gharial	Changeable Hawk Eagle
Hanuman Langur	Indian Scops Owl
Ganges River Dolphin	Asian Paradise-flycatcher

"I have been lucky to visit most areas of the Indian Sub-continent several times and it's always a highlight of my annual calendar. Embracing the culture, daily life and customs of this flamboyant country is always a challenge, but well worth the effort as it brings new experiences and its wildlife is superb, with a fabulous range of mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and butterflies." Julian Sykes



6-8 After breakfast we leave Bharatpur for the excellent Chambal Safari Lodge, where we first enjoy an alfresco lunch in the beautiful garden, then an afternoon walk to explore the grounds and local rural areas. Indian Hare is a distinct possibility here and also resident Indian Flying Foxes leaving their roost. At dusk we may have a chance to glimpse an Indian Palm Civet, which also resides in the grounds.

After lunch we have a jeep safari to the National Park in search of Indian Wild Dog, amongst other wildlife found in this wonderful area. Tadoba National Park is home to Royal Bengal Tiger and we have morning and afternoon safaris, searching for these impressive cats, with 'down time' in the heat of the day. The Park is also an excellent place to chance upon Leopard, Sloth Bear, Wild Dog and Indian Bison, making for a mouth-watering 'Big 5'.

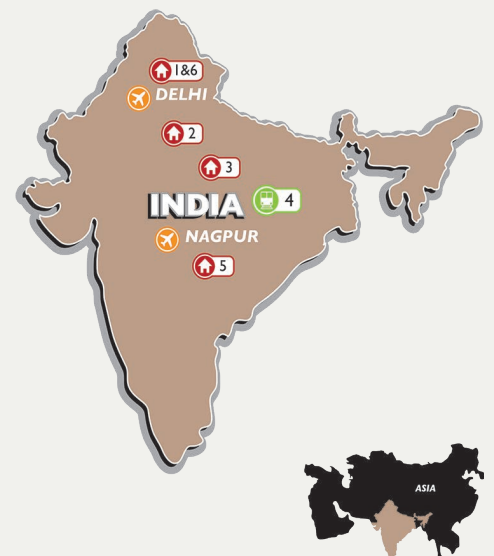
We have a boat trip along the mighty River Chambal, where our target species include Indian Skimmer, Greater Stone-Plover, Indian River Tern and Pallas's Gull. In addition, we should get close views of Gharial, along with the much larger Marsh Crocodile. We may catch a glimpse of the now very rare Ganges River Dolphins, as they fish these fresh expansive waters.

Tadoba also boasts an impressive bird list, which includes Brown Fish Owl, Indian and Savannah Nightjar, Scarlet Minivet, Asian Paradise-flycatcher and Greater Racket-tailed Drongo, along with the impressive Changeable Hawk Eagle and Oriental Honey Buzzard. Hornbills are possible, with Indian Grey being the most likely and as we drive along, we might come across a handsome male Red Junglefowl crossing one of the forest trails.

Our final morning will be quite relaxed with further time to explore, before leaving for the historic city of Agra, to visit one of the most famous buildings the world - the Taj Mahal. Masses of Black Kites and Egyptian Vultures circle overhead, with waders, gulls and terns on the Yamuna river below. We shall allow time to have dinner in a local restaurant before boarding the air-conditioned sleeper train departing for Nagpur.

14-15 After a final jeep safari in the morning, we set off to Nagpur for our internal flight to Delhi, for our last night. Next day we have a morning flight back to the UK, arriving mid-afternoon.

9-13 Our train is scheduled to arrive early morning and we shall stop for breakfast before continuing our journey to Tadoba National Park, with stops enroute for wildlife - however our aim is to arrive at our lodge around midday.



Outline Itinerary

- Days 1-2 Overnight flight to Delhi then half day visit to Sultanpur Bird Sanctuary
1 night Vivanta by Taj-Dwarka, Delhi
- Days 3-5 Drive to Bharatpur. Two half days and one full day birding inside Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary and local areas
3 nights Hotel Sunbird, Bharatpur
- Days 6-7 Drive to Chambal for local birding and a boat trip on Chambal River
2 nights Chambal Safari Lodge
- Day 8 Morning birding around lodge, then leave for Agra and visit Taj Mahal
1 night on air-conditioned sleeper train
- Days 9-13 Arrive Nagpur and drive to Tadoba for afternoon jeep safari in the National Park. 4 days of morning and afternoon jeep safaris in the Park
5 nights Jharana Jungle Lodge
- Day 14 Flight from Nagpur to Delhi
1 night Vivanta by Taj-Dwarka, Delhi
- Day 15 Flight back to UK

Julian Sykes: Tiger, Taj Mahal, Gharial, Jungle Cat, Indian Skimmer, Savannah Nightjar

