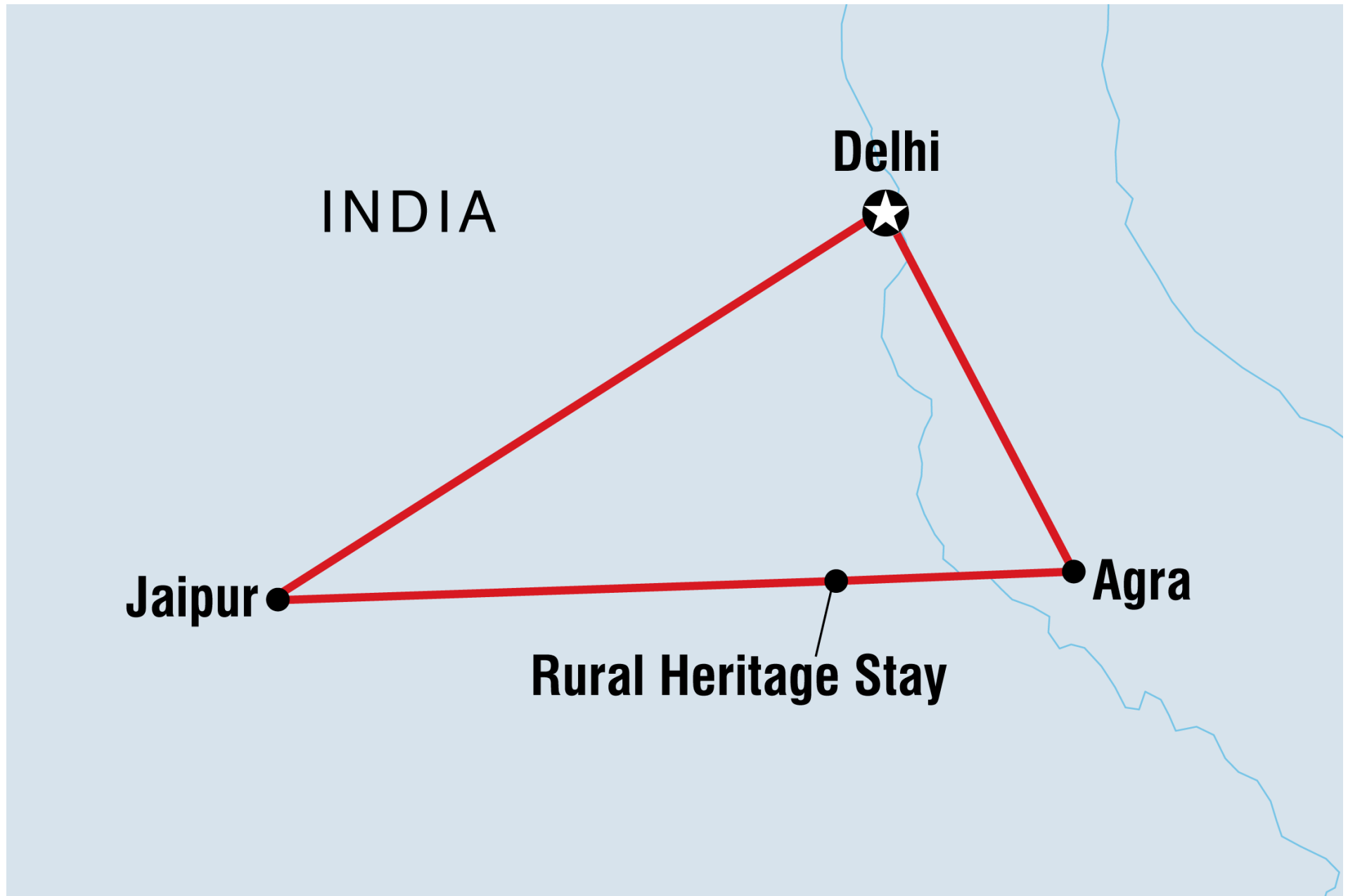




India's Golden Triangle

Overview & Itinerary

Start	Delhi, India
Finish	Delhi, India
Destination	India
Style	Original
Theme	Explorer
Code	HHSN
Trip rating	4.84
Validity	01 Jan 2020 to 31 Dec 2020



Is this trip right for you?

- This is our most compact trip in India in Original style and a lot is packed in to the itinerary. If you are after a trip that spends longer in the north of India, see trip codes HHSR, HHSU or HHSC on our website.

- India can reach extremely high temperatures in the summer. While we aim to do our walking tours early in the morning when it's cooler, remember to keep hydrated and to bring a hat, sunscreen, a long-sleeved shirt and anything else that will protect you from the sun.
- We visit a number of temples on this trip, which requires a certain level of modesty. Please bring clothes that cover the arms and pants/skirts that go past the knees so we can be respectful and comfortable during our sightseeing.

Physical rating



Joining point

Hotel Good Times
8/7, W.E.A. Opposite Ramjas School Pusa Road
Karol Bagh
Delhi
110005
INDIA
Phone: +91 1145144444

Joining point description

Located in the Karol Bagh market area, surrounded by a mix of local stalls, shops and restaurants, as well as some western shops. It is only a 25 minutes ride by auto rickshaw (INR70-80 with bargaining) to get to the heart of Delhi, Connaught Place. www.goodtimeshotel.com

Joining point instructions

Delhi's Indira Gandhi's International Airport is approximately 25km from Karol Bagh. One of the biggest airports in the world, it can be quite chaotic and can take some time to process your visa and collect your luggage.

Intrepid offer a pre-arranged transfer service option. Enquire with your agent and advise your flight arrival details at least 14 days prior to your trip departure. If you have purchased an arrival transfer you will be met in the arrivals hall after clearing customs, your representative with sign board will be standing near the Costa Coffee next to gate no 5. Please ask them to confirm your name.

Please do not exit the gates, Costa coffee is just before the exit gate no.5.

If you have any problems and cannot locate our representative, or if your flight is delayed please call the following 24 hour number:

+91 9911 972 636

If you do not have a mobile phone, there are public phones next to Costa Coffee. Calls cost 1 rupee per minute

Failing the above please take a taxi to the hotel (using the instructions below) and advise your group leader. When you walk out of the exit door, you will easily be able to spot popular metered taxi counters such as Meru Cabs/Mega Cabs or Easy Cabs, show them your drop location and pay them as per the meter once you get to your hotel.

Taxis from the airport to our starting point hotel take approx 1 hour and costs between INR 500 - 600 (prepaid traffic police booths).

IMPORTANT: Please avoid taxi touts who tell you that they have a metered taxi parked outside the airport. Previous passengers have complained that they have been charged hefty amount for the transfers.

The Delhi metro is another option from the airport. Trains depart between approx 5am and 11:30pm, the trip takes approx. 45 mins and costs around INR100. Please refer to the metro map for lines, changes and directions to Karol Bagh where most of our hotels are located. <http://delhimetrorail.info/delhi-metro-map>

Check in time at hotel is 12 midday.

Problems and emergency contact information

GENERAL ISSUES ON YOUR TRIP

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. But we do ask you to be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is complete.

For general contact details please use the following page: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>

In case of a genuine crisis or emergency, transfer or accommodation issues, you can reach our local India Intrepid office on their 24 hour number:

Intrepid Emergency number: +91 9999 005 019

Itinerary

 **Expand All**

Day 1: Delhi

Namaste! Welcome to India. Your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 6 pm. Please look for a note in the hotel lobby or ask reception where it will take place. We'll be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this meeting, so ensure you bring these details to provide to your leader. Perhaps visit the World Heritage-listed Humayun's Tomb, Qutub Minar or Red Fort of Delhi if you arrive early today. After the meeting, head out for an optional meal with your group at a local restaurant nearby.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Optional Activities

- Delhi - Humayun's Tomb - INR500
- Delhi - Red Fort - INR500
- Delhi - Gandhi's Delhi Urban Adventure - INR2700
- Delhi - City Food Crawl Urban Adventure - INR3500

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Special Information

To book an Urban Adventure before you meet your tour leader, go to <https://www.urbanadventures.com/>

Day 2: Delhi

Join your group leader on an excursion through Old Delhi. Ride the city's metro system, and then hop in a rickshaw to the once water-filled square of Chandni Chowk. Discover the Jama Masjid, Delhi's oldest mosque, before learning about the history of the Sikh religion at the Sheeshganj Gurudwara.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Delhi - Old Delhi walking & rickshaw tour
- Delhi - Jama Masjid
- Delhi - Sheeshganj Gurudwara (Sikh Temple)

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 3: Jaipur

Travel by private vehicle into Rajasthan and on to its capital, Jaipur (approximately 5 - 6 hours). A friendly, busy city crammed with palaces and bazaars full of jewellery, textiles and folk arts, Jaipur is a favourite for many travellers. Our suggestions are to stop by the Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds), then head over

to Jaipur's Royal City Palace and explore its extravagant rooms and apartments. Later, discover one of the five astronomical observatories built by Maharaja Jai Singh, the founder of Jaipur.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Jaipur - Walking & market tour

Optional Activities

- Jaipur - Bollywood Movie at Raj Mandir Cinema - INR400
- Jaipur - Jantar Mantar Observatory - INR200
- Jaipur - City Palace - INR600

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 4: Jaipur

Choose to take an early morning hot air balloon experience, often a highlight of visiting Jaipur. Ballooning can be done over Jaipur on the morning of day four between September and June. Mid afternoon visit the Amber Fort. Set on a hilltop overlooking Maota Lake, the fort is an authentic example of Rajput architecture and the Sheesh Mahal (Hall of Mirrors) is one of its more spectacular buildings.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Jaipur - Amber Fort

Optional Activities

- Jaipur - Balloon Safari - USD260

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 5: Karauli

Leave the 'Pink City' of Jaipur behind and drive to Karauli (approximately 5-6 hours). This delightful town was founded in 1348 and is packed with rural ambience and traditional temples. Take a guided walk around the Old Quarter, interacting with friendly locals and learning about rural Indian life off the tourist trail. Be sure to visit the eclectic market stalls along the way and sample some seasonal local sweets made from Indian ingredients, including petha (pumpkin), jaggery (organic sugar), peanut brittle and gazak (sesame seeds). Stay in a restored heritage property tonight where dinner is included.

Accommodation

- Heritage Property (1 night)

Included Activities

- Karauli - Village walk

Meals Included

- Dinner

Special Information

Due to the popularity of this trip we have added extra departures: February 8th, 2019 and March 15th, 2019. Please note that these departures will not be visiting Karauli. Instead they will stay in the ancient walled town of Suroth and stay in the Suroth Mahal, a stunning 800 year old Rajput palace.

Day 6: Fatehpur Sikri - Agra

On the journey to Agra, stop en route at the one-time capital of the Mughal empire, Fatehpur Sikri (approximately 4 hours). Its stunning mosque displays both Persian and Hindu design and is secured by a 54-metre high entrance. Once in Agra, there's the option of visiting the marble tomb that was saved for the greatest of the Mughal Emperors, Akbar's Mausoleum. The day then culminates in a visit to the Taj Mahal, built in the 1640s as a memorial to the wife of Emperor Shah Jahan.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Fatehpur Sikri - Guided tour
- Agra - Taj Mahal

Optional Activities

- Agra - Additional entries to Taj Mahal - INR1300

Meals Included

- Breakfast

Day 7: Delhi

In the morning, take a guided tour along the banks of the Yamuna River to the iconic Agra Fort. Originally designed by Emperor Akbar in 1565 to be a military structure, it was converted into a palace during Emperor Shah Jahan's reign and later became his prison. Perhaps stop for lunch at Sheroes Hangout, a vegetarian & vegan cafe. This beautiful cafe is a one of kind social enterprise providing employment and opportunities for women who were the victims of acid attacks. In the early afternoon, take the 3-4 hour journey back to Delhi by private bus. Arrive back at the hotel with enough time to freshen up and decide where to enjoy one final dinner with the group.

Accommodation

- Hotel (1 night)

Included Activities

- Agra - Agra Fort

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Day 8: Delhi

There are no activities planned for the final day and you're able to depart the accommodation at any time. Check out time from the hotel is 12 noon. If you are departing later, you can arrange luggage storage at the hotel. If you decide to stay an extra couple of days, there are plenty of activities in and around the city to enjoy.

Optional Activities

- Delhi - Home-Cooked Experience Urban Adventure - INR4000
- Delhi - Culture Vulture Urban Adventure - INR2500

Meals Included

There are no meals included on this day.

Finishing point

Hotel Good Times
8/7, W.E.A. Opposite Ramjas School Pusa Road
Karol Bagh
Delhi
110005
INDIA
Phone: +91 1145144444

Finishing point description

Located in the Karol Bagh market area, surrounded by a mix of local stalls, shops and restaurants, as well as some western shops. It is only a 25 minutes ride by auto rickshaw (INR70-80 with bargaining) to get to the heart of Delhi, Connaught Place. www.goodtimeshotel.com

Finishing point instructions

A departure transfer from our hotel to the airport is available, if arranged at the time of booking. Please advise your flight arrival details at least 30 days prior to your trip start date. If you plan to stay longer, this departure transfer can only be offered in conjunction with post-tour accommodation booked through Intrepid.

Before check-in you must have your check-in luggage X-rayed and sealed. Also, ensure at check-in that your hand luggage is tagged (this is a mandatory in order to clear security). You must have a print out or e copy of your itinerary.

A taxi to the Delhi Indira Gandhi Airport takes about 1 hour and should cost between INR500 - 600. Hotel reception or your leader can help you arrange a taxi.

The Delhi metro is another option to the airport. Trains depart between approx 5am and 11:30pm, the trip takes approx. 45 mins and costs around INR100. Please refer to the metro map for lines, changes and directions to Karol Bagh where most of our hotels are located. <http://delhimetrorail.info/delhi-metro-map>

If you have pre-booked a departure transfer with us it is vital that you reconfirm your pick-up time from the hotel before departure day. Please ask your leader to assist you with this.

Check-out time from the hotel is 12 noon. If you are departing later, you can arrange luggage storage at the hotel.

Itinerary disclaimer

ITINERARY CHANGES:

Our itineraries are updated regularly throughout the year based on customer feedback and to reflect the current situation in each destination. The information included in this Essential Trip Information may therefore differ from when you first booked your trip. It is important that you print and review a final copy prior to travel so that you have the latest updates. Due to weather, local conditions, transport schedules, public holidays or other factors, further changes may be necessary to your itinerary once in country. The order and timing of included activities in each location may also vary seasonally to ensure our travellers have the best experience. Your tour leader will keep you up to date with any changes once on tour.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES:

A selection of optional activities that have been popular with past travellers are listed in the day-to-day itinerary. This isn't an exhaustive list and should be used as a guide only for some of what might be available. Prices are approximate, are for entrance only, and don't include transport to and from the sites or local guides unless indicated. All activities are subject to availability. It may not be possible to do all the activities listed in the time available at each destination, so some pre-planning for what you are most interested in is advised. When it's recommended that travellers pre-book these activities, look for a note in the Special Information section of the day-to-day itinerary. For most, they can either be organised independently on the day, or let your leader know you are interested and they can assist.

Where activities are considered medium or high risk, we work with operators whose safety and credentials we have sighted and assessed. Although it is possible that you may find the same activity cheaper with another operator on the ground, we cannot vouch for the safety or quality of that operator. Medium and high risk activities not listed above have not been assessed by us and as such our staff and leaders are unable to assist you with organising these activities. Activities that contravene our Responsible Travel policies are also not listed. Please remember that the decision to partake in any activity not listed is at your own discretion and risk.

Feedback

After your travels, we want to hear from you! We rely on your feedback. We read it carefully. Feedback helps us understand what we are doing well and what we could be doing better. It allows us to make improvements for future travellers.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/feedback/>

Essential Trip Information

Important notes

1. A Single Supplement to have your own room is available for this trip and is applicable for all nights .
2. Hot air balloon flights are operated by Sky Waltz in Jaipur. Flights operate from September 1st to April 31st and last approximately 60 mins. Return transfers, tea and coffee plus light refreshments and a certificate of flight are included in the cost. You can register your interest and pay your tour leader at your joining meeting on day 1 of your trip. Payment must be made by cash in either INR/AUD/USD/GBP only and is USD\$260pp (subject to change). Flights are subject to availability and weather conditions (tickets are fully refundable in case of bad weather).

Passport and visas

Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveller. Entry requirements can change at any time, so it's important that you check for the latest information. Please visit the relevant consular website of the country or countries you're visiting for detailed and up-to-date visa information specific to your nationality. Your consultant will also be happy to point you in the right direction with acquiring visas. Visas can take several weeks to process, so familiarise yourself with any requirements as soon as you have booked your trip to allow for processing time.

INDIA:

An E-Tourist Visa (eVT) visa on arrival is available for select nationalities including but not limited to the following: Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, UK & USA. Passport holders from these countries can apply for an eVT to have their visa issued upon arrival at 16 major airports in India.

Please follow the instructions at - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html> and complete the application for your eVT.

IMPORTANT:

- Please be aware of strict conditions regarding application and travel (check under ELIGIBILITY section of the website).
- E-Tourist Visas are available for entry of up to 90 days. For residents of USA, UK, Canada and Japan e-Tourist Visas are available for up to 180 days. If you plan to be in India longer you will need to apply for a tourist visa at an Indian visa application centre in your home country.
- Please note that travellers entering India overland from Nepal are required to apply for a visa in advance their home country. Visas will NOT be issued on the Nepal/Indian border.
- The e-Tourist Visa DOES NOT apply to travellers entering India overland. Please check your trip notes if you are crossing a border between India and Nepal.
- Indian visas are difficult and time consuming to obtain in Nepal.

Tourist visas are available in Single and Multiple Entry. Be sure to check the date you require a visa from and the length of time you will need to cover, especially if you change countries during your trip.

For your visa application you need to include the following information under the local contact section towards the end of the application. :

PEAK India
25/3 East Patel Nagar
Delhi 110008
Phone: +91 11 4500 6400

Please note that this information can change at any time. Please always refer to <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html>

This is the only official visa online site. There are many other mirror sites that are run by visa service companies or scammers and may not be reliable.

Medical and health information

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please note that if, in the opinion of our group leader or local guide, any traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, Intrepid Travel reserves the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements as they may not easily be obtained at the locations on this trip. Please ensure that you are adequately prepared.

MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES:

Malaria is a risk in many parts of India, including major cities. Cases of dengue fever are reported, especially in the period after the monsoon. Other mosquito-borne diseases (including Japanese encephalitis, chikungunya fever and filariasis) also occur. Take preventative measures such as wearing long

clothing, using repellent and being indoors particularly around dusk and dawn. Consult a medical professional regarding prophylaxis against malaria. For more information, see the World Health Organisation's fact sheets: http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/vector_ecology/mosquito-borne-dise...

ZIKA VIRUS:

India is classified as an ongoing transmission zone for Zika, with confirmed cases in Tamil Nadu and Jaipur. Basic precautions for protection from mosquito bites should be taken by people traveling to Zika transmission areas, especially pregnant women.

OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

Water-borne, food-borne, parasitic and other infectious diseases (including meningitis, cholera, typhoid, hepatitis, tuberculosis, diphtheria and rabies) are common in India. Tap water is not safe to drink. Home-made or unlabelled alcohol can be poisonous. Seek medical attention if you suspect food poisoning, if you have a fever or suffer from diarrhoea.

AIR POLLUTION:

During winter months (October-February), air pollution levels in parts of India can spike to hazardous levels. Severe pollution can increase the risk of respiratory problems. Those with pre-existing medical conditions, particularly heart and lung conditions, may be especially affected. Your leader can assist you to obtain a face mask if required.

INFLUENZA

Cases of influenza A(H1N1) are widespread in India during winter with a number of recent cases in Rajasthan. Discuss influenza vaccination requirements with your doctor or a travel health professional before departing and maintain good hygiene practices by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing, and washing your hands regularly. For more information, see the World Health Organisation's fact sheets: [https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-\(seasonal\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/influenza-(seasonal))

Food and dietary requirements

FOOD IN INDIA:

Food is a way of life in India. You can snack for a bargain or dine in the finest Indian restaurants. Generally you can eat very cheaply in India. There is a huge choice of restaurants and street stalls serving traditional and local Indian food. In bigger restaurants in areas frequented by more tourists there is a choice between Indian, Chinese and Western style food. Here's some ideas of what to try: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/best-food-in-india/>
<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/foodies-guide-south-india/>

Please note that service in restaurants (especially with a group) can be quite slow so patience is a must.

India caters very well towards vegetarians and vegans with almost all restaurants having a veg and pure veg section of the menu. If in doubt please check with your tour leader. See our guide to eating vegan in India here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/india-vegan-food-guide/>

Your tour leader will be able to direct you towards restaurants that are known to have better hygiene, especially in tourist areas where they are travelling with our groups regularly. For some more advice on avoiding "Delhi belly", see our article here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/how-to-avoid-delhi-belly-in-in...>

Accommodation

Hotel (6 nights), Heritage Property (1 night)

OCCASIONAL ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION

The style of accommodation indicated in the day-to-day itinerary is a guideline. On rare occasions, alternative arrangements may need to be made due to the lack of availability of rooms in our usual accommodation. A similar standard of accommodation will be used in these instances.

TWIN SHARE / MULTI SHARE BASIS

Accommodation on this trip is on a twin/multishare basis. Please note there may be times where facilities will be shared rather than ensuite and rare occasions when you share a room with passengers travelling on a different Intrepid trip than your own.

CHECK-IN TIME

Throughout the trip we request that our hotels prepare rooms in time for our arrival, especially if we're arriving prior to normal check-in time. However this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check-in immediately on arrival at some hotels. Instead, we can store our luggage and explore our new destination.

PRE/POST TRIP ACCOMMODATION

If you've purchased pre-trip or post-trip accommodation (subject to availability), you may be required to change rooms from your trip accommodation for these extra nights.

ACCOMMODATION:

Some of the accommodation along the way is basic or simple, staying in local guesthouses and homestays. Some may have shared bathroom facilities with cold water only. We use a mixture of air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned rooms. Some areas of India experience daily load shedding. This is where the power may be turned off at certain times of the day and usually occurs for a few hours in early afternoon. Most hotel properties have a restaurant or cafe serving local meals. Many restaurants and hotels do not serve alcohol for religious reasons or due to local laws.

SHOWERS:

Showers at some hotels only have hot water at peak times (usually morning and evening). Outside of these times you may need to speak to reception to obtain hot water.

ROOM ISSUES:

If you have any issues with your room, please speak to the hotel and your tour leader right away rather than your travel agent so that the problem can be addressed without delay.

Transport

Private vehicle, Shuttle Bus, Cycle rickshaw, Auto rickshaw, Metro

TRANSPORT IN INDIA:

Main roads in India are usually very busy with an assortment of vehicles from the biggest trucks (who always have right of way) down to bikes (and animals!). Overtaking on blind corners at speed is common as is the total use of the horn as a form of communication. Our leaders have complete authority to remove groups from local transport if the driver is not driving safely. Drivers of our private vehicles are experienced and well trained. If you are uncomfortable with your driver, please always let your tour leader know immediately. Please ensure you wear your seat belt at all times.

TRAVEL TIMES:

Distances in India do not reflect the driving time and to cover 100km may take much longer than you would expect at home, even if much of the route is on a highway.

TRAINS:

India has a massive network of trains and millions of people travel by rail every day. Trains often travel the length of the country over several days. Trains are a great way to see the countryside and get you away from the busy road system. Delays and cancellations are common on trains. Your tour leader will check the train status to see if there are delays and will do their best to keep you informed of any changes.

From December to February, delays are more common, especially in the north of the country due to fog. It's not uncommon for trains to be delayed for up to 12 hours. On occasion your trip may be rerouted to allow for these delays. Your tour leader in conjunction with our local office will advise any changes to the itinerary.

The Indian Railway system is one of the largest railway networks in the world and quite complex. Seat allocation is completely computerized on a centralized reservation system and we do not have control over seat allocations. Despite booking tickets months in advance of a departure your group's seats, or sleeping berths on overnight trains, may be spread out within one carriage or multiple carriages of the same class. There's a chance you'll be sharing a compartment with local travelers of either gender.

For a detailed look into the experience of travelling by overnight trains read more here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/india-trains-guide/>

AUTO RICKSHAW:

On this trip we travel on local style of transport called an auto rickshaw. These small, motorised three wheeled vehicles are a common form of transport in India and do not have seatbelts.

FLIGHTS:

Airlines in India are of excellent quality. Airports are becoming more modern (especially in the major and tourist cities). To enter the airport, you must have a copy of your flight ticket and passport. Schedule changes and delays do occur, especially when weather conditions make visibility poor.

Money matters

The official currency of India is the Indian Rupee (INR). Its symbol is ₹. The most convenient and cheapest way to obtain local currency is via ATMs, which are readily available in most towns. Look for Bank of India or ICICI ATMs. Our experience has shown they are the most reliable ATMs to use for withdrawals. Cash shortages at ATMs can be a problem in rural areas. Foreign currency notes that are old, torn or faded can be very difficult to exchange, so please bring clean bills, and small denominations are most useful. The use of credit cards can be restricted, mainly to major hotels, shops and higher end establishments.

SPENDING MONEY:

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget a sensible amount for things like meals not included, drinks, shopping, optional activities and laundry. It's always better to bring a little more than you think you'll need. Also make sure you've read your trip details thoroughly so you know what's included in the trip price and what isn't. This should make budgeting a little easier. You'll find this info in the Inclusions section of your Essential Trip Information (that's this document).

Budget for meals not included: 180.00

CONTINGENCY FUNDS:

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. Please make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or

cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result there may be some extra costs involved.

TIPPING

If you're happy with the services provided a tip - though not compulsory - is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it's of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many Intrepid destinations.

Your Tour Leader:

You may consider tipping your tour leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline US\$3-US\$5 per person (in local currency), per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service. Please don't tip with coins, very small denomination notes, or dirty and ripped notes. This is regarded culturally as an insult

Commissions:

The receipt of commissions or kickbacks in exchange for recommending particular shops or services is ingrained in the culture of the tourism industry. Rather than turning a blind eye to this unavoidable issue in some areas, we have established a centralised fund whereby contributions from recommended suppliers are collected and distributed back into the business. We aim to provide the best value trips in the market, and this fund assists in keeping operating costs and trip prices low to you. A priority in establishing this fund is that the experience of our traveller - you - is not compromised in any way. Please let us know via the feedback form completed after your trip if we are successfully meeting this objective.

Optional Tipping Kitty:

On Day 1 your tour leader will discuss with you the idea of running a group tipping kitty, whereby everybody contributes an equal amount and then your tour leader pays the tips for drivers, local guides, and hotel staff (excludes restaurant tips). The leader will keep a running record of all monies spent which can be checked at any time, and any money remaining at the end of the tour returned to group members. This is often the easiest way to avoid the hassles of needing small change and knowing when and what is an appropriate amount to tip. Participation in this kitty at your own discretion, and you are welcome to manage your own tipping separately if you prefer. Please note the tipping kitty excludes tips for your tour leader.

Optional tipping kitty for this trip: 1500 INR per person

Packing

MAIN LUGGAGE

What you need to bring will vary according to when you are travelling. Generally speaking, we recommend you pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to carry and lift your own luggage, and walk with it for short distances including up and down stairs and in busy train stations. Our travellers usually find the smaller their luggage is, the more they enjoy the trip not having to worry about carrying heavy bags! Aim to keep your main luggage under 15kg.

Small, wheeled suitcases that can also easily be picked up and carried are the best for travel in this part of the world, although if you prefer, a back pack is also fine. If you are taking overnight trains, or primarily using public transport then the smaller your luggage the easier it will be to store under or above bunks.

DAY PACK

A day pack for carrying essentials when exploring destinations as well as for short overnight stays will be useful. On overnight trains packing this with the essentials you need to access during the trip will also be very useful.

Below are some ideas and helpful tips on what you specifically need for this trip.

ESSENTIALS:

- Lightweight clothing. A mixture of lightweight clothing and warm layers. Clothes should be easy to wash and dry. Maybe bring a change of smart clothes for dinner in bigger cities. Clothing that covers arms and pants/skirts that go past the knee for entry into local temples.
- Closed-in shoes (to protect from cuts/scratches/insect bites on city and countryside walks)
- Sun protection - hat, sunscreen, sunglasses

RECOMMENDED:

- Parts of India can get very cold (ie. below zero!) during winter (Dec to Feb) and northern regions of India are typically cool in the evenings throughout the year. Many hotels in India do not have central heating. We recommend checking local weather advisory websites before departing to get a better understanding of what to expect and how best to pack. Bringing extra layers and a beanie could improve your overall experience.
- Personal medical kit, we recommend you carry items such as mild pain killers, electrolytes, Band-Aids and insect repellent.
- Water bottle. At least 1.5litre capacity. The sale of bottled water contributes to an enormous environmental problem around the world. A large proportion end up in limited landfill or discarded in waterways and natural environments.
- Camera with spare batteries. Our trips have access to power to recharge batteries for phones and cameras most days but we recommend you take a spare battery for your camera.
- A small chain and padlock for overnight trains is handy to keep your luggage safe and secure.

OPTIONAL:

- Sleeping bag. Useful for camping, overnight trains and poorly heated hotels, during the winter months of Dec - Feb
- Sleep sheet.
- Ear plugs/eye mask
- A good book, a journal and music player
- Binoculars for spotting wildlife

OTHER USEFUL THINGS TO TAKE

- reusable shopping bag for buying supplies for long journeys
- slippers or flip flops
- torch/flashlight
- travel wipes
- small towel
- head scarf for women (for when entering temples or mosques)

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- check weather in destinations you are travelling to online a few days before you go to make sure you pack appropriate clothing
- laundry facilities may not be available in all destinations, so make sure you have a few cycles of clothes to tide you over until your next chance to wash

VALUABLES:

Please try to avoid bringing unnecessary valuables, and use your hotel safe. It's also a good idea to purchase a money belt or pouch that is easily hidden. We strongly recommend that you photocopy/scan all important documents e.g. air tickets, passport, vaccination certificate, etc. and keep the copies separate from the originals.

MORE!

If you need some further tips for packing, you can always check out our ultimate packing list, or read this advice here:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/what-to-take-to-india/>

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/packing-list>

Phone and internet access

WIFI

Generally WiFi is available in most parts of India and at most of the accommodation we use. It's usually free in public areas of hotels but some properties will charge for in room use. Please ask your tour leader or the specific hotel reception upon check in. Many restaurants and cafes (especially in tourist areas) offer customers free WiFi. Ask for the password when ordering.

Internet cafes are widespread in India and connections are usually reasonably fast, except in more remote areas.

MOBILE

You can purchase a SIM at the airport (or at kiosks everywhere) for use while travelling in India. Airtel or vodaphone are a good bet. SIMs are relatively cheap. You will need to usually provide 2 passport sized photos and a copy of your passport will be made.

MAIL

Posting airmail letters to anywhere overseas costs ₹25/15. International airmail postcards cost around ₹12. For postcards, stick the stamps on before writing, as the post office can give you as many as four stamps per card. The post office is always a fun adventure in India!

Climate and seasonal information

INDIA SEASONS:

As a general rule have a look online to check the weather in India just before you are about to travel. This gives you a clearer understanding of what to pack.

Here are some general ideas of seasons in India:

December to March:

Pleasant weather – warm days, cool nights.

December and January bring chilly nights in the north.

Fog can delay trains travelling across the north of the country

Temperatures climb steadily from February.

April to June:

April is already hot; May and June are really hot and dry.

From June, the monsoon sweeps from south to north, bringing high temperatures and humidity

Cooler in the hills and mountains across the country

July to November:

Monsoon continues until November.

The southeast coast and southern Kerala see heavy rain from October to early December.

MONSOON:

Travel in rural areas during the monsoon season can be hazardous. Monsoon rains cause flooding and landslides that can cut off some towns and villages for days. It is not unusual for trains to be delayed or cancelled resulting in itinerary changes or for activities in towns near to rivers and lakes (ie Varanasi) to need to be changed during this time of year. During the monsoon, excessive rainfall can see the river Ganges rise to unsafe levels. This may cause the suspension of all water related activities by local government. At this time of year walking along the Ghats can also be dangerous. Your tour leader will be able to advise you locally on any changes.

WINTER:

Winter in India can be colder than you might expect and as this is not peak travel season hotels in some regions may not have adequate heating. In these months you may like to bring thermals for sleeping.

Group Leader

All Intrepid group trips are accompanied by one of our group leaders. The aim of the group leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. Intrepid endeavours to provide the services of an experienced leader however, due to the seasonality of travel, rare situations may arise where your leader is new to a particular region or training other group leaders.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense, you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. At Intrepid we aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit. If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all areas your itinerary covers. Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, flight tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests or relax and take it easy. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use

your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

For more details on the type of conditions and safety standards you can expect on your trip, please refer to Intrepid's operational safety policy on our website. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how well it's being implemented in the field:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/contact-us/safety>

WOMEN'S SAFETY:

Women should exercise caution when travelling in India. Reported cases of sexual assault against women are increasing; recent sexual attacks against female visitors in tourist areas and cities show that foreign women are also at risk. While the risk of an incident occurring on your trip is very low, below are some things you can do for your safety and peace of mind when travelling:

- Respect local dress codes and customs, perhaps dressing more conservatively than you do at home
- Avoid isolated areas, including beaches, unlit city streets and village lanes when alone at any time of day
- Avoid travelling alone on public transport, or in taxis or auto-rickshaws, especially at night
- If you have to use a taxi get them from hotel taxi ranks and use pre-paid taxis at airports. Try to avoid hailing taxis on the street. Some cities (including Delhi and Chennai) have special taxi services for women with women drivers
- If you're being collected at the airport by a driver make sure they have properly identified themselves before you set off.
- When leaving your compartment on overnight trains (ie. going to the bathroom), ask a male travel companion to accompany you where possible

For further information and advice, visit:

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/women-safety-india>

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/india-solo-female-traveller-st...>

www.gov.uk/government/policies/supporting-british-nationals-overseas/sup...

www.smartraveller.gov.au/tips/women.html

PERSONAL BELONGINGS:

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe-keeping of your passport, air tickets, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of our hotels have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

FREE TIME:

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your group leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

FESTIVALS:

Travelling in India and Nepal during Holi can at times be unsafe - drinking and drug use is more widespread during this holiday. Your leader/guide will advise your group on what places to avoid on this day.

It may be necessary to alter your itinerary for the day.

Diwali (a lunar festival generally held from mid October to mid November every year) is celebrated by local people letting off fireworks in the street. It can be very noisy for several days with extra pollution caused by fireworks. As there are no restrictions on buying fireworks in India there are often injuries caused by people exploding them inappropriately. During this festival your leader/guide may be required to alter your itinerary to avoid large crowds gathering and using fireworks.

PERSONAL SAFETY:

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

SCAMS:

Scams involving ATM and credit cards, train tickets, taxis, temple donations and tourist guides operate throughout India. If you are the victim of a scam, report it immediately to the nearest police station. Even though they may not be able to get your money or goods back, they can issue you with an official loss report for insurance purposes.

A couple of rules

Everyone has the right to feel safe when they travel. We don't tolerate any form of violence (verbal or physical) or sexual harassment, either between customers or involving our leaders, partners or local people. Sexual relationships between a tour leader and a customer are strictly forbidden.

Use or possession of illegal drugs will not be tolerated on our trips. If you choose to consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking, and expect that you'll abide by the local laws regarding alcohol consumption.

The sex tourism industry is known to exploit vulnerable people and have negative consequences on communities, including undermining the development of sustainable tourism. For this reason, patronising sex workers will not be tolerated on our trips.

By travelling with us you are agreeing to adhere to these rules. Your group leader has the right to remove any member of the group for breaking any of these rules, with no right of refund.

If you feel that someone is behaving inappropriately while travelling with us, please inform your tour leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in the Problems and Emergency Contact section of this Essential Trip Information.

Travelling on a group trip

As you travel on a group trip you will be exposed to all the pleasures and maybe some of the frustrations of travelling in a group. Your fellow travellers will probably come from all corners of the world and likely a range of age groups too. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting. We have found time and time again that the very best trips we operate are those where the dynamics within the group work well - this takes just a little effort on your part. Due to privacy reasons we are unable to provide you with contact details and any personal information about your fellow travellers booked on your trip prior to departure.

SINGLE TRAVELLERS:

Our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and don't involve a compulsory single supplement. Single travellers share with people of the same gender in accommodation ranging from twin to multishare. Some of our itineraries have accommodation booked on a mixed gender share basis and where applicable this will be specified in our Essential Trip Information. On a selection of our trips, you have the option to pay a single supplement to ensure that you have your own accommodation (where available). Please note that this only applies to accommodation during the tour - pre-trip and post-trip accommodation will be booked on a single room basis.

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all our trips. We require that, at a minimum, you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

When travelling on a trip, you won't be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24 hour emergency contact number has been seen by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/insurance.php>

Responsible Travel

We believe strongly in low impact or rather positive impact tourism. Broadly speaking this means that we try to minimise the negative aspects of tourism on the local cultures and environments that we visit and highlight the positive aspects. Please visit our website for further details and suggestions on how you can be a responsible traveller.

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/rt/responsibletraveller>

LOCAL CUSTOMS

It's always a good idea to learn something about local language and customs before you travel, and visiting India is no exception. Your leader will be on hand to guide you through cultural differences and teach you some basic language. Here are some Hindi phrases to take with you on your trip:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/how-to-sound-like-a-local-in-i...>

LOCAL DRESS:

Dress standards are conservative throughout Asia, especially outside major cities. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees by wearing sleeves and long trousers. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in areas of predominantly hot climate. In many rural areas women will need to wear modest clothing even to swim. Singlets, tank tops and topless sun bathing are all unacceptable. When visiting religious sites men often need to wear long trousers and women a long skirt or sarong.

The Intrepid Foundation

Help us change thousands of lives by creating meaningful work and supporting skills training in communities around the world.

The Intrepid Foundation is the not-for-profit for Intrepid Group. We work with local organisations around the world to improve the livelihoods of vulnerable individuals and communities through sustainable travel experiences. With our travellers' help, we've contributed more than AU \$6 million to over 100 community organisations since 2002.

Did you know that tourism is one of the biggest contributors to the global economy, making up 1 out of every 10 jobs? That's why we support local projects that create meaningful jobs and give people the skills they need to work in the destinations we take you to. And it's why we exist – to make it easy for travellers to give back to the communities and places they've been in an effective and meaningful way.

All donations to The Intrepid Foundation are matched by Intrepid Group dollar for dollar (up to AU\$10,000 per donor and AU\$500,000 in total each financial year, excluding emergency appeals). And because Intrepid Group covers all administration costs, every cent goes directly to the projects. Donating is simple and secure. Please ask your leader for information about the projects we support through The Intrepid Foundation or visit our website:

<http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>

Organisations and projects currently supported by The Intrepid Foundation in India include:

* Pollinate Energy is a social business with a simple mission – to improve the lives of India's urban poor by giving them access to affordable, clean energy products. Pollinate identifies and trains local people, their Pollinators, who have provided solar lights and cook stoves to over 8,000 families and counting.

www.theintrepidfoundation.org/projects/pollinate-energy/

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/india-kerosene-pollinate/>

For more information, or to make a donation please visit: www.theintrepidfoundation.org/projects/?projectcountry=india