

Indian Magic

15 – 31 January 2025

With extension to Ooty 31 January - 4 February 2025

Our signature tour offering the best of culture & heritage railways! It's not just a railway tour – get up close and personal with India's colourful ambience, plenty of sightseeing too! A truly immersive holiday!

Tour highlights

- Tour Kolkata by private vintage tram, and see India's busiest station at Howrah
- The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway needs no introduction – our usual unrivalled programme including a three-course dinner as steam blasts its way through the forests, plus steam-hauled charters over the whole of the available length.
- See the world-famous Taj Mahal – inside and out!
- A visit to the National Railway Museum, and its outpost at Rewari
- Ride the narrow-gauge Kalka-Shimla line in one of their amazing vintage railcars
- Sightseeing highlights: Apart from the Taj Mahal, there's Kolkata's Victoria Memorial, Darjeeling tea gardens, Delhi (the capital), the Himalayas at Darjeeling, not to mention all the colourful bazaars and busy cities.
- A lot more fun & untold authentic insight into India!

Please note all times are based on current timetables at February 2024 and are subject to change.

Tour add-ons

- Optional extension to the Nilgiri Mountain Rack-railway - 31 January to 4 February 2025

Wednesday 15 January

We'll check in mid-morning (we can offer a choice of regional airports) for our flights to...

Thursday 16 January

...to arrive Kolkata by morning! After clearing immigration you will meet your Tour Manager and board the coach for the transfer through the city suburbs to our hotel in the centre of Kolkata for two nights. (B,D).

After we have checked-in and rested for an hour, we will enjoy a relaxing introductory guided city tour to visit the grand **Victoria Memorial**, English's answer to the majestic Taj Mahal built in white marble. Visiting **Mother Teresa's House**, Missionaries of Charity. Walk through the busy & bustling streets of Kolkata. Try one of the local bars and a ride back to the hotel in an **Ambassador car!**

Friday 17 January

In the morning we'll take a chartered ride on one of Kolkata's remaining **Trams** – it's an excellent way of seeing the city in relative peace whilst still being close to the action. In the afternoon, we'll take a gentle stroll through the teeming streets to see some of the city's historic buildings, a couple of steam locomotives, the famous **Howrah Bridge** and **Howrah station**. Just down the road is Kolkata's wonderful **Railway Museum**, well worth a visit (B)

A mesmerising sunset boat ride on the Hooghly river with the iconic Howrah Bridge in the backdrop.

Saturday 18 January

Today we will fly up to Bagdogra, the local airport for **Siliguri** and **Darjeeling**. From the airport, coaches will take us to the Cindrella Hotel, where we stay for two nights and from where the Indian arm of the Darjeeling Railway Society is run. The hotel's restaurant is pure vegetarian, but the food is delicious! After a quick check-in, we'll take the buses down to Siliguri Junction shed to meet the DHR's fleet of 'B' class steam locomotives. This will be followed by one of our exclusive '**dining train**', with a full three course dinner served on the train as it climbs through the forest to Rangtong. (B,D).

Sunday 19 January

We'll take a charter steam special from **Siliguri Junction** onto **Tindharia** where we will pay a visit to the railway's workshops there, where the whole of the railway's fleet of rolling stock is maintained. As road and rail run together, a coach will accompany the train for those who wish to take photographs, and there are regular opportunities to change between coach and train. We'll then return by road to our hotel in Siliguri for the night. (B,D).

Monday 20 January

We will have a second steam charter running between **Tindharia** and **Darjeeling**. Again, a coach will run alongside for the photographers. There will be a short break at **Kurseong**, where we can enjoy the station cafeteria. We then, continue our chartered steam hauled ride to Darjeeling. Don't miss the famous photo shots of the train making it's way out of the narrow **Kurseong Bazaar**. Our hotel for the next three nights is the iconic **Windamere**, Darjeeling's premier hotel for the last 200 years! (B,D)

Tuesday 21 January

We'll have a relaxed guided tour of Darjeeling to visit the popular **Himalayan Mountaineering Institute (HMI)**, which houses the memorabilia's of the local legendary Sherpa Tenzing Norgay who along with his Kiwi partner Sir Edmund Hillary Mt Everest in 1953. Further visit the adjoining **Zoo** to witness some the rarest Leopards such as clouded and snow leopards amongst The Royal Bengal Tiger, Red Panda & Sloth Bear! Also visit the **Tibetan Self-Help Centre**.

Gently stroll back on **The Darjeeling Mall Road** through to Observatory Hill for your hotel. There is also the Planters Club, Das Studio's albums of historic photos, fancy cakes at Glenary's, and buy some tea from Keventers to take home.

In the evening, the 'Railway Club', with its library of DHR items will be open, with service from the bar. (B,D)

Wednesday 22 January

We'll have an optional '**joy train**' ride from Darjeeling up to Ghum to visit the Railway's excellent museum, and share a cup of 'chai' with the train crew. If we're lucky with the weather, there will be stunning views of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, and we'll have the opportunity to photograph the train with the mountain in the background on the **Batasia Loop**. Fabulous!

Or, just sit by and gaze the mighty & mysterious Himalayas and sip your cup of Darjeeling Tea!

We will also aim at visiting a local tea estate where you will be shown the process that takes place to produce the tea that we drink. Subject to weather!

Thursday 23 January

If you can stand being up for six-thirty and the weather is kind, the view of Kanchenjunga and the Himalayas from Observation Point (200 yards from the Hotel's back door) is nothing short of stunning, and not to be missed. After breakfast, the coaches will take us back down the hill to Bagdogra for our lunchtime flight over to Delhi, India's capital, our base for the next three nights. (B)

Friday 24 January

We'll arrange a guided sightseeing tour of India's capital city in the morning, seeing India's impressive **Parliament Building**, **India Gate**, and the impressive **Humayun's Tomb**. In the afternoon, we'll arrange a visit to the **National Railway Museum**, a very impressive collection of locomotives, stock and models. (B)

Saturday 25 January

We'll take the train for the ninety-minute journey to **Rewari**, the new outpost of the National Railway Museum where they keep their operational steam locomotives. There is the possibility that the train may be steam hauled for the outward journey with a steam locomotive – WP or the Fairy Queen. Sorry, no guarantees! On the return journey, our coach will call at the **Heritage Transport Museum** at Gurgaon, which has excellent displays of all forms of transport and transport related art. (B,L)

Sunday 26 January

We will take the early morning train from New Delhi for an early afternoon arrival at **Kalka**, the gateway to the famous 2'6" gauge line up to **Shimla**. On this line, we can make the journey in one of the Railway's iconic Railbuses, but accommodation is limited, and this is open to the first 12 applicants only. Otherwise, the journey will be on the Kalka Shimla Express in its first-class coach. We should arrive in Shimla by 6p.m for a three night stay. (B,D)

Your luggage will be transported from Delhi by road to Shimla for your comfort.

Monday 27 January

Explore this beautiful Hill Station, the summer capital of India in the days of the Raj with a guided tour, commencing with a stroll up **The Mall Road** where we start will stop at The Gaiety Theatre with a visit inside it and sharing experiences from their in-house curator and the mini picture museum. Further walk up to **The Ridge**, **Scandal Point** and **The Christ Church**. Return to hotel late afternoon with rest of the day to relax. (B,D)

Tuesday 28 January

A visit to the boastful & majestic Indian **Institute of Advanced Studies (IIAS)** building which was the former Viceroy's residence during the British Raj.

Rest of the day is free to explore the beauty of the Shimla town. Must visit to the small shops and bazaar in the Lower Mall road.

There is the possibility that we may be able to arrange a steam-hauled excursion on the Kalka-Shimla line – if this can be done, we will contact you all to give you the option of riding it. (B,D)

Wednesday 29 January

We will travel back to Delhi today, starting at a relatively civilised 1030 from Shimla, taking the narrow gauge train all the way back down to Kalka. This connects with the evening Shatabdi to Delhi – dinner is served on the train, and we arrive in Delhi relatively late at 10pm. We will stay two nights. (B,D)

Thursday 30 January

Today, we'll transfer to Delhi's south-east suburban mainline Nizamuddin railway station to board the Gatimaan Express at 0810 down to Agra for the day. We will visit the **Taj Mahal** and the **Agra Fort**, both of which are justifiably world-famous, and should not be missed on any Indian tour. In the evening, the return train leaves Agra at 1740 hrs, and there will be good snacks served on the way back to Delhi, where we are due to arrive at 1930. We will have a short transfer back to our hotel which is less than 4 kms away

(B, L, light D).

Friday 31 January

We'll need to move to Delhi's international airport for the morning departures back to the UK. (B)

Optional extension to the Nilgiri Mountain Rack-Railway (NMR) – 31 January to 4 February 2025

Friday 31 January

We'll be at the airport for the 1145 direct flight to Coimbatore, due to arrive at 1445 hrs. A coach will meet us and take us for the hour's drive to Mettupalayam, at the foot of the Nilgiri Line, where we stay one night. There is a modest hotel here, handy for the station, we'll have a walk down before dinner to see the downhill train arrive, due at 1835. (B,D)

Saturday 1 February

The steam-hauled train (regular service) with the 0-8-2 rack tank pushing loud and hard climbs the 18 miles through lush green scenery to **Coonoor**, from where a diesel takes over for the last 11 miles to Ooty (for short – it was once Ootacamund, now Udagamandalam!). This is where the game of snooker was invented. A coach will take us round to our hotel for two nights. The afternoon is free to walk round this very British hill resort. (B,D)

Sunday 2 February

Today is a free day in Ooty if you wish to just enjoy the Hotel's beautiful gardens, or to explore the town walking through it's main Bazaar and the **Botanical Gardens**. (B,D)

Monday 3 February

Free time till mid-morning, then the coach will take us back down the hill to Coimbatore (3 hrs drive), where we'll catch the evening flight to Mumbai, due in at 2205 hrs, where we transfer to the international terminal flight back to UK...(B)

Tuesday 4 February

...due to arrive back in the UK between 0700 and 0800..

What's included?

- Economy class flights to/from India.
- Accommodation in 4-5 star hotels (*or best available locally for example in Mettupalayam*),
- Buffet breakfast and dinner (*) daily.
- All transport by deluxe airconditioned vehicles with experienced drivers
- Charter trains and excursions as set out in the itinerary.
- Services of a Darjeeling Tours Limited Tour Manager.
- All tips throughout the tour (except for the Tour Manager) are included and will be dealt with on your behalf.
- A lot more fun & untold authentic insight into India!
- Personal and incidental expenses are not included.

Optionals Not Included as may be suggested or mentioned in the programme above.

(*) Dinner is not included in Kolkata, Delhi or Mumbai, where there is plenty of choice, both in and out of the hotel. Food is not expensive, and this allows considerable individual flexibility.

On a daily basis, meals provided are shown with the following key: B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner.

The tour

This tour involves a walking tour of Kolkata & Shimla, the only practical way of seeing the city's highlights, and covers about 3km (2 miles) at a reasonably gentle pace, taking around three hours.

Prices

Per person basis on twin/double sharing basis.

Fully inclusive price from London:	£ 4,695
Ground only price (international flights excluded):	£ 3,895
Single supplement:	£ 666

Extension to Ooty: **£740** based on two people sharing
Single supplement: **£269**

Flights

If you would prefer to travel to India from a regional UK airport, we will do our best to find you something suitable. It usually works well from Birmingham, Manchester and Edinburgh, and can sometimes work from other airports too. Please let us know if you require a Premium Economy or Business and we will be happy to quote the supplement. Please note that all carriers, train times and flight times are subject to change at any time.