

### Consumer Protection - Total Payment Protection (topp) Policy cover

For your financial protection, we hold an ATOL Licence number 10045 issued by the Civil Aviation Authority.

In compliance with the UK Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 and the Civil Aviation (Air Travel Organiser's Licensing) Regulations 1995 an insurance policy has been arranged with Travel & General Insurance Company plc, authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority, to protect customers' prepayments in the unlikely event of our financial failure and paid in respect of:

- flight inclusive packages commencing and returning to the UK
- non-flight inclusive packages commencing and returning to the UK
- flight inclusive packages, where the initial flight from your home country, which is outside of the UK, was included in the package price of the holiday
- the ground handling aspects of packages where the customer is responsible for arranging travel to the destination

offered in this document (subject to the terms of the insurance policy), for:

- a refund of such prepayments if customers have not yet travelled, or
- making arrangements to enable the holiday to continue if customers have already travelled

Customers' prepayments are protected by a topp policy. In the unlikely event of financial failure please contact the claims helpline on 0870 037965. A copy of the policy is available on request.

In common with most tour operators, should government action increase the costs of the tour (for example, by raising airport taxes), we reserve the right to pass them on to our clients. We will notify you of any changes as soon as possible.

### Cancellation

Cancellation prior to three months before departure will involve the loss of £150 (the balance of the deposit will be returned). Thereafter, cancellation involves the loss of the full deposit. Cancellation within ten weeks of departure will involve the full cost of the holiday.

The tours generally require a minimum number of 15 people to run. In the unlikely event that it is necessary to cancel, the decision will be made nine weeks before departure, and all monies paid will be refunded in full.

### Changes to the itineraries

All times, dates and activities quoted in our itineraries or on the website are current, however, we reserve the right to change the times, dates or activities before the date of travel as circumstances prescribe. We will of course let you know if there are any significant changes to an itinerary.



Thank you for your interest in our tours to India. The following is some information about what to expect, what's included in the price, passport/visa information, medical arrangements, insurance, payment and cancellation information. We suggest you read this first and, if you have any questions you'd like answering before booking, just give us call and we'll be happy to help.

### The Darjeeling Tours Difference!

The most important point of difference is that our tours aren't like standard package tours with the participants isolated from the local population, and carried hither and yon in hermetically sealed transport. The vast majority are run with a special interest in mind, be it railways, photography, textiles or something else. This means that a significant proportion of the tour will be geared towards indulging that interest, and a lesser proportion towards general sightseeing and tourism. But rest assured that on any tour there will be plenty for everyone, not just for the specialist!

Whilst there are times when we use motor coaches and flights, the tours are designed so that you can experience the real India in a safe and enjoyable manner. For example, on some days on our Indian tours participants may be invited to negotiate their own rickshaw or taxi fares. Of course, willing advice will always be available from your tour manager(s), experienced travellers who will accompany the tour throughout.

We've set out clearly in the itineraries exactly what elements are included in the tour price, what is available as an option at extra cost and what is excluded. In particular in India, the cost of living is remarkably low and none of the elements which are excluded are particularly expensive – in most cases the exclusion has been arranged to allow flexibility. For example, you may wish to have dinner in your hotel, or perhaps go out to a local restaurant. In either case, the price should be modest.

### More on India

Experienced travellers in India will know that, very often, things don't go to plan, through no fault of tour organisers. Our tours have been planned to give the best chance of being able to complete the tour without major disruption, but it is possible that a major disruption will occur. If that should happen, the tour managers will do their best to make alternative arrangements to get the tour back on track with the minimum disruption and making the best of the circumstances to ensure that no attractions get missed unless there is absolutely no alternative. For example, a train or flight may run late in which case we may have to re-schedule activities, or an advertised attraction may be unavailable, in which case we will endeavour to identify suitable alternatives.

If we save money because an advertised attraction or service is not available, that saving will be passed back to the tour participants, but that will be the limit of our liability. See our Terms and Conditions for full details. Please note we are **NOT** able to accept bookings for part of the ground arrangements. We are however able to arrange the tours on a 'ground only' basis (i.e. the full package minus the international flights and airport/hotel transfers) if you would prefer to make your own arrangements.

### The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway

We've developed an enviable reputation for our series of successful tours to India and, in particular, to delivering what is promised. This is our sixteenth season and our tours are carefully timed to give us the best chance of finding the full length of line open, as it often suffers monsoon damage during the summer period. If we're lucky and get some reasonable weather, the memory of the stunning views from the Darjeeling area across to Kanchenjunga will remain with you all your life. On the railway, we normally have a full two day charter train to allow proper appreciation of this wonderful line, with stops for photography and to see one or two of the local villages along the way. The maximum number of participants will be limited to about 30 per tour to allow the photographers and videographers to take all the shots they wish without overcrowding.

### Train travel

Aside from the narrow-gauge hill railways, which are an attraction in themselves, we try and include as much rail travel as reasonably possible. Our experience is that this is one of the best ways to see India, and is preferred to air travel by our clients for all but the longest of journeys. However, just like everything in India, you'll find that rail travel is a rather different experience to that which you might be used to in Europe or other 'Western' countries. Bear in mind that Indian Railways is geared up to transport 25 million people daily throughout the sub-continent, and this herculean task is sometimes achieved at the expense of speed and comfort. When you realise that most rail journeys in India are of sufficient duration to be travelling through the night at some stage, you'll understand why the majority of long-distance trains are sleepers. Many of our tours will incorporate an overnight train at some stage. The standard we use is known as 2-tier AC (Air Conditioned), which is the standard of choice for middle-class and professional Indians. This can best be described as dormitory accommodation, comprising two-tier berths separated by curtains. Clean sheets, blankets and pillows are issued by an attendant upon boarding and, on some trains, meals are brought to your berth during the journey. When we make a block booking for our party approximately two months prior to departure, it's normal for Indian Railways to berth everyone together in the same part of the train. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and it's not unusual to be sharing with a local family who will want to know all about you! Whilst we believe this is all part of the Indian experience, it may not be to everyone's taste, in which case we're happy to make alternative arrangements at an extra cost.

### Hotels

Because you're going to India to pursue a particular interest, we believe the focus should be on the special interest rather than on hotel luxury. We pay particular attention to using hotels which are interesting in themselves, possibly heritage "Raj-era" establishments, or because they may be close to a site of particular interest to the tour group. We don't stay in luxury hotels, where the price of services, meals and drinks can be eye-wateringly high! You can be rest assured that the hotels we use are clean, comfortable, and can be classified as 3-4 star unless we specifically say otherwise in the itinerary.

### Preparation for India

We strongly recommend that you read a copy of the "Lonely Planet Guide to India", which sells for about £20. This gives excellent background advice to the country and its customs and offers much useful advice on what to pack, what to buy and what to see. Alternatively, there is "The Rough Guide to India" and the "Footprint" guide, both of which are good.

### Medical arrangements

It's important to consult your doctor as soon as possible. He/she will advise on what precautions you should take. Some courses of injections can take a period of months, so the sooner you start, the surer you can be that you are properly protected. Although Darjeeling is not at the top of the risk of malaria list, it is still wise to take your doctor's advice on the precautions to take. Although the hotels we are using will all be able to call a qualified local doctor, it is advisable to carry a small personal first aid kit - in addition to the usual aspirin, plasters and bandage, do take some medicine to cover stomach problems, antiseptic cream, antihistamine, insect repellent and (we hope) a high factor sunscreen. Again, take advice from your doctor.

### Extending your trip?

You may wish to stay a little longer in India and visit somewhere that's not on the tour itinerary, or you may want to arrive a day or so earlier. Either way, we can arrange this for you on an unescorted but supported basis. This means that you'll have access to our local agents at every stage, and we can include as much or as little as you require in the way of transport, accommodation and guides. Just annotate the Booking Form with the basics and we'll get back to you to arrange the details and to give you a price.

### Passports and visas

Many countries (including India) require your passport to be valid for six months beyond the date of your intended visit. Visa requirements vary from country to country. If you are travelling to India you are likely to need a visa, and we can assist if required. We'll send detailed information with your booking confirmation.

### Insurance

You must have suitable travel insurance to participate in these tours. We recognise that you may well have suitable annual insurance – as long as it meets the following minima:

- 24 hour emergency medical service
- Medical and other expenses (including returning home early) (minimum £2 million)
- Personal accident (minimum £25,000)
- Personal public liability (minimum £1 million)
- Loss of passport (minimum £250)

There is wide insurance market, and the internet provides good leads. For a good personal service, we recommend Barraclough and Partners: we will send contact details with your confirmation.

### Payment

If you are a party of one, and would like to share (to avoid the supplement), please let us know and we will, if possible, arrange it. The booking deposit is £295 per person. The balance of payment is payable nine weeks before departure and we will send out a reminder letter. We much prefer cheques or payments via internet banking, but we do accept credit cards (Visa and Mastercard).