

16 NIGHTS



Ultimate Reality Tours

A Mindful Journey Through India

16 February – 3 March 2024

About the Journey

Join Buddhist teacher, Grahame White, and North Indian Tour Leader Sunit Tiwari on a magical pilgrimage to some of the most sacred sites in India. In the north we shall visit the holy towns of Bodh Gaya, Sarnath & Varanasi.

In the South we will take a special trip to the spectacular World Heritage Listed site of Ajanta & Ellora Caves in the city of Aurangabad.

A journey not to be missed

As well as visiting these Buddhist sites, we will take an amazing journey through Uttar Pradesh (home of the Taj Mahal) & Rajasthan, where we will visit many of the most iconic sites and take in the colourful life of these regions.

During this pilgrimage, local guides will further our knowledge about the historical sites we are visiting. Daily meditation practices, led by Grahame, will also be offered most mornings and evenings to enhance our mindful journey.

This pilgrimage will be suitable for those with some meditation experience as well as beginners who have an interest in learning Vipassana meditation and exploring the teachings of the Buddha within India. In our daily meditation practice we will be concentrating on Vipassana meditation in daily life. On the cushion, off the cushion.

We invite you to join us for this unique opportunity to enhance your Vipassana meditation practice, amongst the beauty of India.

Daily Tour Itinerary

16 February

Arrive Kolkata International Airport - The City of Joy

One of India's most historic and cosmopolitan cities, Kolkata has been at the centre of activity of various civilizations. Large populations of Chinese, Armenian, Jewish, and other immigrant communities have all called Kolkata home, and the city's stunning architecture pays testament to its social, political, and cultural richness.

- Arrival at Kolkata International airport
- Group will be met by our bus and tour leader, outside the airport and transferred to the hotel
- Hotel check in, early night sleep

17 February

Kolkata | Bodh Gaya

- Breakfast and orientation meeting with Tour Leader and Grahame, followed by some sightseeing in and around Kolkata, including Mother Theresa House, Queen Victoria Memorial and more if time permits
- Back to hotel for lunch and hotel check out
- Group transfer to Kolkata train station to catch afternoon Rajdhani Express train to Gaya. (Departs at 4pm and arrives Gaya 10pm). Dinner on the train.
- Enjoy an evening scenic Indian train ride
- Group bus pickup at Gaya train station and transfer to Bodhgaya hotel

Evening Train to Gaya & Stay Bodh Gaya

18 February

Bodh Gaya - Enlightenment Site of the Buddha

- Breakfast at hotel
- Morning meditation at Maha Bodhi Temple followed by a guided tour of this sacred site
- Visit to historic Burmese Vihara
- Lunch then rest back at hotel
- Late afternoon visit to Tibetan Temple
- Early evening meditation and chanting at the Japanese Zen Temple
- Dinner at hotel



Mahabodhi Temple, Bodh Gaya.

19 February

Bodh Gaya - The Root Institute for Wisdom & Culture

The Root Institute for Wisdom Culture is a beautiful oasis of tranquility, located near Bodh Gaya in the north Indian state of Bihar. With close vicinity to the Mahabodhi Stupa, where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment, the Root Institute is a unique place for practice, contemplation and blessings.

- Early morning, we head to the Root Institute for Wisdom for meditation in the Gompa and guided tour of the grounds
- Back to our hotel for breakfast
- Continue with sightseeing in/around Bodh Gaya, visiting all the temples and places of worship
- After lunch afternoon visit to Sakyadhita International Association of Buddhist Women's Nunnery. The nuns will offer meditation and chanting in the Tibetan tradition.
- Dinner provided at hotel
- Evening meditation at the Maha Bodhi Temple

Stay 3 nights in Bodh Gaya



20 February

Varanasi

The Holy Hindu City Also known as Benares or Kashi, Varanasi is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world and is regarded as the spiritual capital of North India. The Ganges is considered the most sacred waterway in India, to people of Hindu faith. Pilgrims descend on the holy city each year to cleanse their sins in its purifying waters.

- Depart Bodh Gaya after breakfast for a scenic rural drive to Varanasi, the spiritual heartland of Hinduism
- Arrive by lunch and check into hotel. Afternoon rest/free time
- With our local guide we shall take a beautiful sunset guided walk along the famous "ghats" on the Ganges River to witness the life along the Ghats
- Evening meditation with Grahame before group dinner



Ganges River, Varanasi.

21 February

Varanasi

- Sunrise boat journey along the Ganges River to witness all the morning rituals, bathing and puja by the locals
- Return to hotel for group breakfast
- Meet in reception for further sightseeing tour in/ around Varanasi
- Sunset we shall experience the Holy Hindu Arti/Fire ceremony on Ganges. Arti is a fire puja conducted by a Hindu priest, in worship to Mother Ganga



22 February

Varanasi - Sarnath

Sarnath, located 10kms outside of Varanasi, is where, circa 528BC, at 35 years of age, Gautama Buddha taught his first Buddhist sermon after attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya.

- Morning meditation session with Grahame overlooking the Holy Ganges River
- Group breakfast back hotel
- Today we take an excursion to Sarnath, where Buddha first preached the 4 Noble Truths to his disciples in the 5th Century B.C. There will be a meditation session at Sarnath plus a guided tour of this sacred site.
- Afternoon free time & group dinner

Stay 3 nights in Varanasi

23 & 24 February

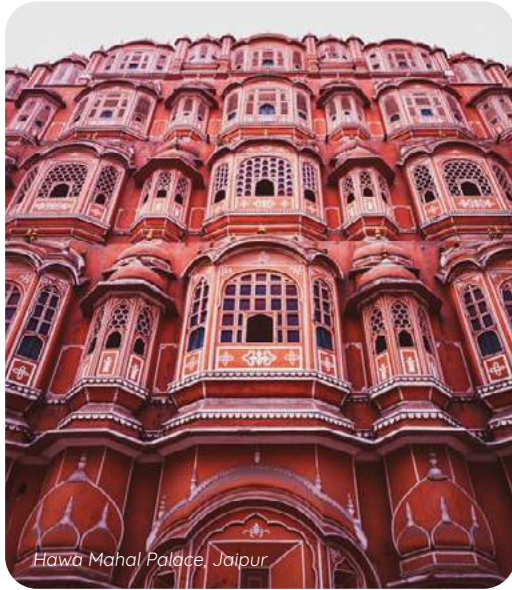
Delhi/Agra - The Taj Mahal Day of Travel

Delhi, India's capital city is a big metropolitan city. Agra is legendary as the home of the Taj Mahal, the immortal marble mausoleum and an ode to love.

- Check out of Varanasi hotel, taxi transfer to domestic airport for flight to Delhi (mid-morning)
- Arrive Delhi, and bus transfer immediately to Agra (approx. 3-hour drive)
- Check into hotel and evening meditation with Grahame before dinner
- Next morning sunrise entry into Taj Mahal & visit Agra Fort (1 ticket for both sites)
- Evening meditation and dinner at hotel



Taj Mahal, Agra



Hawa Mahal Palace, Jaipur

25, 26 & 27 February

Jaipur - The Pink City

The beauty of the Pink City the capital of Rajasthan is known across the globe. Surrounded by Aravalli Hills and residing next to the Thar desert, Jaipur is a splendor of history and culture.

- Depart early for scenic drive to Jaipur, (4-5hrs)
- Check into hotel, relax and if time permits evening meditation
- Next day local guided sightseeing around Jaipur, including visiting the City Palace complex and Amber Fort
- Evening meditation with Grahame and dinner.

Stay 3 nights in Jaipur

28 & 29 February

Jodhpur - The Blue City

Jodhpur is famous for its 15th-century Mehrangarh Fort, a former palace that's now a museum, set on a rocky outcrop, overlooking the cities beautiful sky blue painted houses

- Depart early from Jaipur (approx. 4 hrs.) to Jodhpur and enjoy the beautiful rural countryside, passing through small villages and stopping for chai along the way
- Arrive and check into hotel. Relax before dinner at the hotel
- Next day, local sightseeing with guide in and around the Blue city, including a walk up the Mehrangarh Fort and tour inside
- Last day to explore further around the old town, which may include shopping and local cafes/restaurants

Stay 2 nights Jodhpur

Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur



1 & 2 March

Aurangabad - Ellora & Ajanta Caves

These incredible caves are universally regarded as masterpieces of Buddhist religious art. The Ajanta Caves constitute ancient monasteries and worship-halls of different Buddhist traditions carved into a 75-metre (246 ft) wall of rock. The caves also present paintings depicting the past lives and rebirths of the Buddha, pictorial tales from Aryasura's Jatakamala, and rock-cut sculptures of Buddhist deities. Textual records suggest that these caves served as a monsoon retreat for monks, as well as a resting site for merchants and pilgrims in ancient India.

- Early morning flight to Aurangabad from Jodhpur (via Mumbai)
- Transfer to hotel and relax
- Next day, full day sightseeing of Ellora & Ajanta Caves with local guide
- Evening meditation class with Grahame

Stay 2 nights in Aurangabad



3 March

Fly Mumbai home

- Morning of meditation with Grahame
- Lunch followed by morning domestic flight to Mumbai from Aurangabad to connect with evening international flights back to your home countries.





\$5895 AUD pp (twin share). Single room extra \$2185 AUD pp

Includes - Mix 4 & 5★ hotels, 2 meals a day, all sightseeing, luxury private bus, internal domestic flights.

International Flights Extra.

NB itinerary is subject to change.

Online Bookings

tiwaritravel.com/a-mindful-journey-through-india

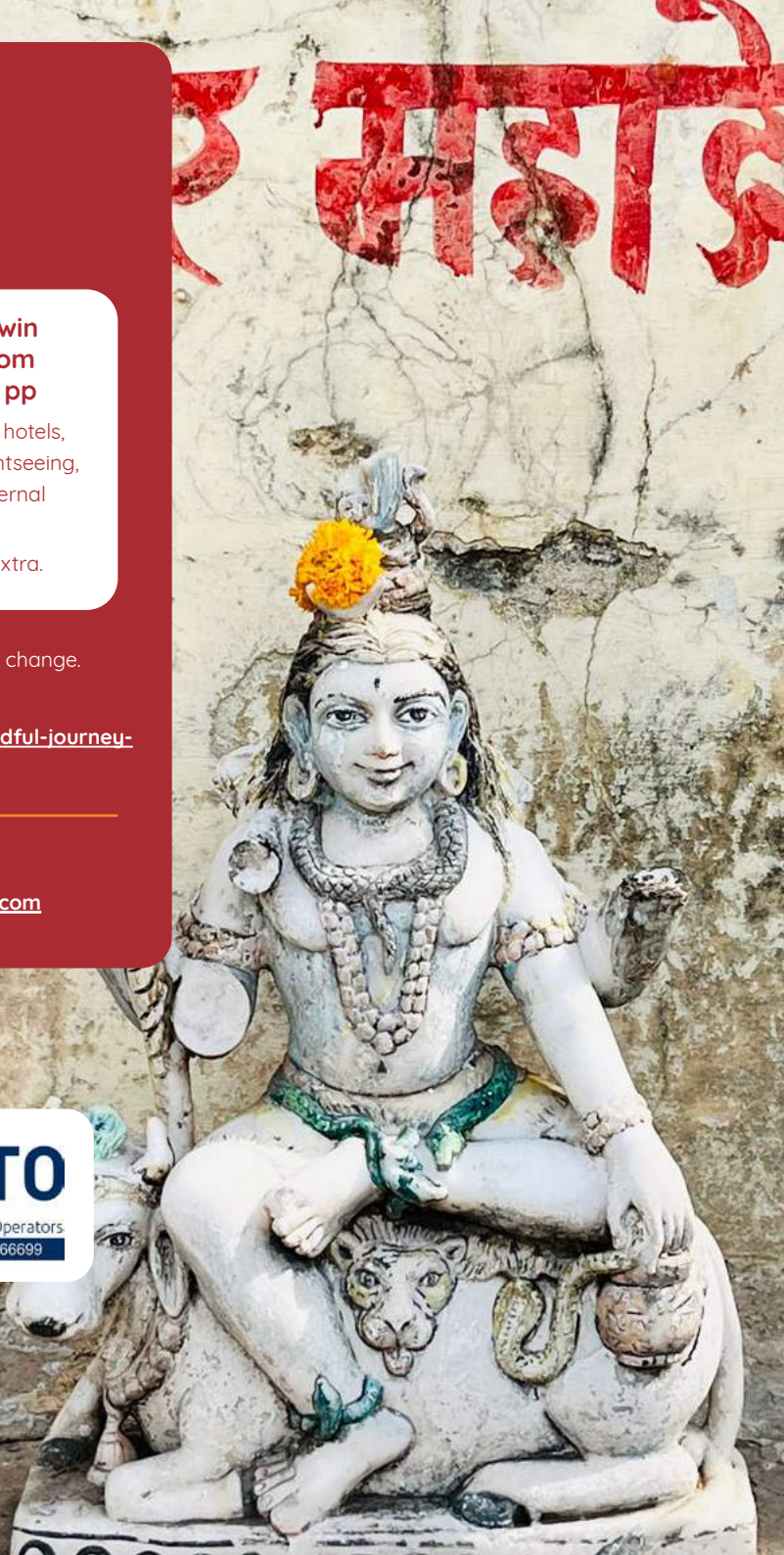
Enquiries & Flights

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Our Tour Leader

Sunit Tiwari – Tiwari Travel

Sunit is the owner of Tiwari Travel office in Varanasi. A highly experienced tour manager and guide who has been leading group tours around India for 18 years. He is from Varanasi and is a devout and practicing Hindu. Sunit has also lived in Australia & Europe and will be a great source of support and knowledge for our group journey.



Our Teacher

Grahame White

Grahame has been involved in Buddhist meditation practice for over 40 years. He began his study of Buddhism in England in 1969 before being ordained as a Buddhist monk for one year in Bodh Gaya, India in 1971. He took a primary role in the establishment of Vipassana meditation in the tradition of Mahasi Sayadaw in Australia and co-founded the Blue Mountains Insight Meditation Center. He currently leads introductory and day-long courses in Sydney and Wollongong. As well as being the teacher for Vipassana Illawarra he is a guiding teacher for Vipassana Hawaii, where he teaches regular retreats. Grahame has also helped pioneer the workshop format of teaching meditation that enhances the transfer of mindfulness from the formal sitting practice into daily life.



Our Australian Travel Agent

Meredith Wilks

Meredith is the manager/owner of Tiwari Travel Sydney, Australia office. An experienced Tour Operator/Travel Agent for India & Sri Lanka for the past 18 years. She is super passionate about her business. She has explored over 30 countries and lived on & off India for many years. One of her proudest personal achievements was trekking solo to Mt Everest base camp. Meredith is available for enquiries about the tour and booking of international flights, visas & travel Insurance.