

## Study Abroad trip to India

Interested in visiting India? Instructors Jonas Mabey and Chris Howell at RRCC will be offering a nine day trip to India in Spring of 2011 (late MAY). Religion and world history credits will be available with an emphasis on Tibetan Buddhism and the complex relationship between historic India and the modern world.

Highlights of the trip include:

- Train visit to the Taj Majal
- Extended stay in a Himalayan Buddhist monastery and conversation with monks
- Inside access to national museum with largest collection of Buddhist and Hindu objects and world's oldest religious writings
- Visit to the third largest mosque in the world and the world's largest ancient forts of Moghul Empire times
- Visit sites associated with the life of Mohatma Ghandi
- Guaranteed life changing experiences from food and smells to spices and populations
- Fall exploratory meeting followed by Spring class on Thursday afternoons 3-5 (approx. 10 weeks)
- Late May trip to India
- Cost estimate of 2000-2500 \$ U.S. including air, land, lodging, local transport, food, and guides.

We will host a fall exploratory meeting and then hold Thursday afternoon class meetings during part of the spring term before leaving for India in late MAY.

We estimate the cost to be between 2000-2500 U.S. dollars including air, land, food, and spending money. The dollar is strong against the Indian rupee (1:45 ration) and makes this a great time to take that trip of a lifetime to the land of Hinduism and Buddhism, curries and sacred cows, and of course the Taj Majal and the Himalayas.

Below is a summary outline of our itinerary, please do let us know if you have an interest in the trip.



[http://www.tropicalisland.de/india/uttar\\_pradesh/agra/pages/AGR%20Agra%20-%20Taj%20Mahal%20panorama%20with%20watercourse%20before%20sunrise%203008x2000.html](http://www.tropicalisland.de/india/uttar_pradesh/agra/pages/AGR%20Agra%20-%20Taj%20Mahal%20panorama%20with%20watercourse%20before%20sunrise%203008x2000.html)

### **Tour - Delhi - Agra and Ladakh tour**

Duration -08 Nights & 09 Days

**Routing - Delhi – Leh - Delhi**

## Detailed Itinerary

### 16 May : Arrive Delhi

Arrive by international overnight flight, after traditional '**Swagat**' (Welcome) will transfer to hotel for check in.

**Delhi** is a bustling metropolis but very different from American cities with its mix of the ancient and modern. Its strategic location was the prime reason why successive dynasties chose it as their seat of power from 5,000 BCE on it is referred to as *Indraprastha* from the Hindu epic Mahabharata. India has incorporated many conquerors and travelers In the first half of 20th century much of New Delhi was planned by Sir Edwin Lutyens, who laid out a grandiose central administrative area as a testament to British rule in India. The division in walled city & New Delhi also marks the division in life styles.

### Day at leisure to recover from flight and explore Dehli. Overnight Hotel - Delhi (B,L,D)

### 17 May : Delhi - Agra - Delhi by day train (200 kms. - Approx 2 hrs./ one way)

Early in the morning, transfer to New Delhi railway station to board train for Agra. Arrive at Agra Cantt. railway station. Meet our representative and proceed to Agra home of the Taj Majal.

**Agra**, is beautifully situated on the banks of the Yamuna River. It achieved prominence as the capital of the Mughal Emperors from the year 1526 to 1628, it is a major tourist destination because of the splendid Mughal-era monuments, most notably the Taj Mahal, Agra Fort & Fatehpur Sikri, all three are **UNESCO World Heritage sites**.

Visit **The Taj Mahal**, Known as '*Symbol of Eternal love*', this monument Built by Emperor Shah Jahan over a period of 22 years from 1632, in memory of his beloved late wife Mumtaz Mahal. Situated on the banks of the River Yamuna, the Taj Mahal stands at the northern end of formal gardens. The white marble came from Makrana in Rajasthan and the red sandstone from Fatehpur Sikri. Precious stones like jade, crystal, turquoise, lapis lazuli, sapphire, jade, coral and diamonds were brought from far-flung places in Tibet, China, Sri Lanka, Persia and Afghanistan. It is believed that a fleet of 1000 elephants was used to transport the material. The gardens enclosed by high walls are divided into four parts or the charbagh, which symbolizes the Gardens of Paradise in Islam. There are fountains and water channels flowing through the garden, representing the rivers of water, milk, wine and honey. On both sides of the Taj are two identical red sandstone mosques. The one to the left holds Friday prayers even today. The one to the right, the *jawab* (answer) was built only for symmetry and holds no prayers since it faces away from the Mecca.

After the Taj we visit **Agra Fort and Palace**, one of the largest in the world, built of red stone by the Lodhis and emperor Akbar in the 16th century. Then we visit the "baby taj" **Itmad-Ud-Daulah's Tomb**, built by Nur Jahan for his father between 1622 and 1628. This white marble tomb was the first complete marble Mughal structure and became the model for all later "Taj Majal" style structures throughout India.

We return to Agra Cantt. railway station to board train for Delhi and hotel.

### Overnight Hotel - Delhi (B,L,D)

### 18 May : In Delhi

#### Full-day tour

City tour of both old and new Dehli today. First, a guided tour of **Old Delhi**, the 17th century walled city of Shah Jahanabad, Visiting the great **Jama Masjid**, the principal mosque of Old Delhi. Built in 1656 by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, it is the largest & best known mosque in India. Then it is on to **Chandni Chowk**, the old bazaar of Shah Jahanabad to reach the **Red Fort**, built in 1648 by Shah Jehan.

In **New Delhi**, we visit **Raj Ghat**, memorial to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. It is a simple black marble platform that marks the spot of his cremation on 31 January 1948. Drive through the **India Gate**, and by the **President's House and Government Palaces**.

Later we visit the **National Museum**, with over 200,000 works of ancient India including some of the most sacred Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic works and texts in the world. If time permits we will visit the **Qutub Minar**, built in 1206 by Qutub-ud-din Aibek as the tallest (72m) brick minaret in the world and a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. On the way back to our hotel we hope to visit the **Lakshminarayan temple**, popularly known as 'Birla temple', dedicated to God *Narayan* and Goddess *Lakshmi* and participate in **Hindu religious rituals**.  
**Overnight Hotel - Delhi (B,L,D)**

### **19 May : Delhi - Leh by flight**

Early morning hotel checkout and flight to Leh from Delhi. Upon arrival at Leh, we will drive to Saboo and check in at **Togden Rinpochey Monastery**. The rest of the day is yours for exploration and acclimatization. Colorado individuals will feel very comfortable in the Himalayan foothill climate.

Make an evening visit to **Leh Market & Shanti Stupa** then spend night at monastery.  
**Overnight - Choeje Togden Rinpochey Monastery (B,L,D)**

### **20 May : In Leh**

#### **Full-day excursion to Monasteries**

After Breakfast, proceed for Indus Valley Monastery tour including **Shey Palace**, The ancient capital of Ladakh, and **Thiksey** an impressive complex rising tier upon tier on a hill above the village followed by a visit to **Hemis Gompa**, the largest monastic foundation of the Drukpa Kagyu Order of Tibetan Buddhism. If time permits we will visit **Sindhu Ghats (steps) & Stok Palace Museum**.

**Overnight - Choeje Togden Rinpochey Monastery (B,L,D)**

### **21 May : In Leh**

#### **Full-day excursion to Pangong Lake**

After an early breakfast we leave for Pangong Lake through **Changla pass** 5486 Meters onto **Pangong Lake**, situated at 14,000 feet (4,267 m). This is well above even Aspen or Leadville so be prepared to go slow in this intermontaine valley between China and India. A few years back the government decided to open it to tourists though the lake and valley is under army surveillance. After spending some time at Pangong we will drive back to the monastery.

**Overnight - Choeje Togden Rinpochey Monastery (B,L,D)**

### **22 May : In Leh**

#### **Full-day excursion to Khardung-la Top**

After breakfast, we will drive to Khardung-la, the highest road in the world at 18,390 ft. or over 4,000 feet higher than Pikes Peak or Mt. Evans roads!. It is around 39 kilometers (22 miles) away from Leh. The views from the top of the pass are amazing. Dress warmly!

Return to the monastery for hot lunch, we will need it! Afternoon should be free for you to rest or explore depending on how the elevation has impacted you.

In the evening **enjoy a Question & Answer session with a Lama**.

**Overnight - Choeje Togden Rinpochey Monastery (B,L,D)**

### **23 May : Leh - Delhi by flight**

Morning check-out and transfer to Leh airport to board flight for Delhi. Arrive Delhi, meet our representative and transfer to hotel for final night and evening at leisure in the city.

**Overnight Hotel - Delhi (B,L,D)**

**24 May : Depart Delhi**

Timely departure transfer to Delhi international airport to board departure flight.