

**Chapter 1 : North India Tours, Itinerary, Sightseeing, Trips**

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Events To some extent this depends on your interests and experience of travelling in Asia. The plains of northern India are dry and dusty, punctuated with extraordinary cities built by Mughal emperors and Rajput princes; they are crowded, vibrant places that can overwhelm. Life among the lush green hills and valleys of southern India is peppered with the ruined cities of long-vanished medieval empires is altogether slower and less crowded. More Telegraph Travel expert guides If you are a timid traveller I would opt for an escorted tour that does not try to cover too much ground. Joining a smaller group of 12 to 16 gives a more intimate experience. You will stay in more characterful hotels and travel in minibuses that can negotiate narrower roads through villages. Itineraries often include guided walks, meals in local restaurants, visits to craftspeople and train and rickshaw rides. Private journeys with a car and driver let you set the pace. Joining a large group will mean travelling on main roads in a coach and visiting only the main sights in a city Credit: They form the basis of the classic tour of northern India, despite the fact that constant exposure to noisy crowded cities and crazy driving on traffic-choked roads can turn people off the country for ever. That said, Delhi can be a pleasant place to start a visit if your hotel is in New Delhi, the planned British city designed by Edwin Lutyens, with tree-lined avenues and low-rise buildings. The Thirties Imperial theimperialindia. The best of the four-star hotels is The Claridges claridges. An affordable choice is the Nath Bungalow lutyensbungalow. If you are travelling independently, sign up for a private tour with Surekha Narain delhimetrowalks. A keen historian, she can shepherd you through the crush of Old Delhi so that it seems like a walk in the park, and arrange private access to all sorts of places. To keep safe use a pre-paid taxi counter at the airport use a private company rather than the government-licenced black-and-yellow cabs and ask your hotel to send a taxi to the railway station to meet you off a train. The best place to stay is Amarvilas oberoihotels. The best alternative is the low-rise Agra Trident tridenthotels. A lovely homestay within walking distance of the Taj is The Coral Tree thecoraltrreehomestay. It is hard to love Jaipur. Sights such as the Palace of the Winds and Amber Fort take a good photograph, but this is another exhausting city where touts are hard to shake off and negotiating the human and motorised traffic is exhausting. There are several luxurious palace hotels in spacious grounds, but for character choose Samode Haveli samode. For style and top-class service choose Rajmahal Palace sujanluxury. For a simple welcoming guesthouse choose Khatu Haveli in the old city khatuhaveli. From here it is an easy transfer to Jodhpur, worth visiting for the Mehrangarh fort alone. Official guides have an office at the fort entrance and offer good private tours of the old town on foot. Tour operators rate highly the boutique hotel Raas raasjodhpur. A cheaper option is the delightful family-run Ratan Vilas ratanvilas. They offer the chance to explore smaller towns and villages before you tackle another big city. Jodhpur, is worth visiting for the Mehrangarh fort alone Head south-east from Agra to Orchha picturesque riverside setting, medieval fort palace, evening rituals in a village temple and on to Khajuraho a small town famed for its erotic temple art before tackling Varanasi on the banks of the Ganges where all life and death is laid bare. Varanasi is India for the experienced. Its crowded narrow alleys can induce claustrophobia even in seasoned travellers: But those who enter the fray will see India at its most profound and spiritual. It has a small team of superb guides who lead daily walks through different areas of the city varanasiwalks. Tour groups usually stay at the Taj Gateway thegatewayhotels. The best riverside choice is the mid-range Suryaoday Haveli suryaodayhaveli. Ask for a top floor room. The alternative itinerary is to head west from Agra into southern Rajasthan. Start with a visit to Ranthambore National Park, where there is a moderate chance of spotting a tiger or spend a few nights at Ramathra Fort ramathrafort. Off the main tourist circuits, it sees few tour groups and the streets of its busy, blue-painted old town are free of hustlers. Popular with Western artists, it has a vast crumbling fort-palace filled with world-class murals mirrored in a lake. There are no luxury hotels yet, so stay in the family-run Bundi Vilas guesthouse bundivilas. It is a tourist honeypot but easier to negotiate than Jaipur or Jodhpur. There are several royal guesthouses on the opposite shore but my favourite is a small heritage property, Amet Haveli amethaveliudaipur. Kerala Kerala is a green land of rice paddies, coconut groves and hills thickly

cloaked in indigenous forest as well as tea and coffee plantations. It is a softer introduction to India, with smaller, more ordered cities, a slower pace of life and a cleaner environment. It also has one of the most literate populations in the world. The ancient trading port of Kochi Cochin is a good place to start a tour. Stay at Malabar House malabarhouse. Behind the coast, a network of inland waterways and canals weaves through coconut plantations and riverside villages clustered around white Catholic churches. Most tour operators offer backwater cruises on converted rice barges. There are convivial homestays in bungalows on spice and tea plantations around Munnar and Thekkady, gateway to the Periyar National Park, where there is a good chance of seeing wild elephant. Its Meenakshi Temple is one of the most impressive in the country, with processions, performances of music and an endless stream of pilgrims weaving through pillared halls carved with exquisite figures. Stay at the Taj Gateway tajhotels. In Kerala, beaches, as elsewhere in India, are very much the preserve of fishermen. While hotels clean their frontages, a walk along the beach will uncover sands strewn with rubbish, fish scales and human waste. The sea is rough, the water murky, and sunbathing on the beach will attract unwanted attention in these predominantly Muslim communities. All offer a range of spa treatments, visits to villages and nature walks. Goa and Hampi Charter flights started serving Goa in the late Eighties, selling the state and its golden beaches as India-lite. A Portuguese colony until , it really was a gentle introduction to India in those days. Families called da Souza and Pereira rented out rooms in pretty cottages set in flower-filled gardens to backpackers; richer tourists stayed at the Taj Holiday Village on Candolim beach, north of the capital, Panjim. Roads were the preserve of bicycles and carts, and cows roamed the largely deserted and relatively clean beaches. Regular visitors to India now see Goa as a place to relax for a few days at the end of a tour rather than a destination in itself. There is a strong Russian presence in winter at five-star hotels. Money heads for the Leela Beach Resort on Kovalam; smart money for a country guesthouse such as Nilaya Hermitage nilaya. The Alila Diwa Goa aliladiwagoa. Charter flights started serving Goa in the late Eighties, selling the state and its golden beaches as India-lite Credit: This small riverside village in neighbouring Karnataka sits among the ruined temples, bazaars and palaces of the 16th-century capital of the Vijayanagar kings who ruled all of south India. There are plenty of thatched-hut guesthouses along the river, notably Shanthi shanthihampi. Download the free Telegraph Travel app to destinations worldwide:

**Chapter 2 : 13 Amazing Things to Do in India**

*Before I left for India, those who had been said the same thing to me: it will be a place that you love and you hate, that you will find chaotic and dizzying and that will leave its imprint on you for years to come.*

View from the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur. Moustaches and hennaed moustaches and beards. Amazingly complex moustaches, curled up and oiled and flamboyant. And in addition, many of the beards of Muslim men in Northern India were hennaed as well, dyed a bright orange. Friends in India noted that Muslim men are not permitted to use non-natural dyes, so opt for henna. If anyone can confirm this, please do in the comments!

Udaipur auto-rickshaw driver Dying clothing using indigo in Chandelao

When I first arrived in India, readers both Indians and foreigners left comments on my fan page about the food, urging me to pick up some of these magic green pearls. Made from concentrated mint and herbs, they are meant to be taken after a meal to alleviate upset stomach and heartburn. And they work, oh boy do they work. By the end of my trip I had everyone around me hooked on them. Even if your stomach is upset, this is a great way to end a meal. And, they are on Amazon! Fennel seeds, called saunf in India, are served after a meal with sugar, sometimes coated in sugar and other times in a bowl like the photo below. Occasionally they are in packets with rose petals and anise seed and fenugreek too, adding an additional punch of flavour. Why do we use wintergreens when we can just use fennel? The fennel settles your stomach, gives your mouth a fresh liquorice burst and is simple, so simple. Hangsies with my mum. The last time I took a trip with my mother was when she visited me in France. I was living there to study, doing a masters in Aix-en-Provence. We rented a car and we drove and drove and drove – km total in a few weeks time, looping up toward Paris, to Arras, back down to Provence and through the winding hairpin curves of Eze and Gordes and other tiny towns. The trip was beautiful but it was a logistical nightmare; I insisted on driving, we got lost a lot and we often ended up negotiating those curves in the dead of night. This time the logistics were out of my hands, and though I snuck my mum away to eat street food when I could, we were taken from A to B without my input – possibly a good thing. When asked, my mum says she liked India more than she expected to. She will write something herself, but overall she had a great time and did not once get sick from the street food. Moreover, we got to spend time together for 3-weeks straight, she celebrated her birthday in Bangkok, and she got a glimpse of what my post-law life is like. She has always been supportive, but also remained a bit baffled about how I met people, how I ate and what I did. These weeks in India and Bangkok gave her far more input into those choices, which benefits all of us in the long run. My mum and I at Taj Mahal, in the pouring rain. My mum and I in Jodhpur

Because of the trip we chose Land of the Maharajas , we ended up staying in older heritage guesthouses, called havelis, instead of hotels. This meant on one hand that we were isolated at times and with no choice for food – though happily these havelis had chefs that not only made great meals, but let me into the kitchen – but also that we were staying in places rich in history. Each had a story, and someone to go into that story and how India and its property ownership has changed over the years. While not a full picture – it was just a few weeks after all – the heritage houses and their accompanying narratives made the trip more personal for me and for my mum, a historian. Singh, the owner of the haveli we stayed at in Chandelao, telling us about the history of his home. I made the mistake of calling these tuk-tuks on Instagram and was quickly reprimanded. With raucous drivers, hilarious editorial and – as expected – some serious haggling needed to get the price you know you want, they were a lot of fun. Chilli and lime to ward away bad spirits. Like the blue nazar boncugu in Turkey, chillies and limes are meant to ward away evil. Strung vertically and occasionally plastic, they were found hanging from the grill of trucks just above the ground, over doorways in havelis, over awnings in shops and on the rearview mirrors of cars and buses. A totally unexpected quirk, once I noticed them I started seeing them everywhere. Chilli and lime to ward away evil spirits. Visiting Northern India during a national holiday. We were in town during Navratri , a day festival that culminates in a big celebration called Dussehra. As a result, much of the area was on holiday. This meant that not only were we visiting Indian shrines and temples and monuments, but so was just about every school child in the vicinity. A lot of fun. They smell fantastic and they are just about everywhere in Northern India. Chickpea flour treats, seasoned

with cardamom, chilli and other spices and served everywhere from Bikaner to Jaipur to Delhi, both in bags and " as you can see from the photo below " in bulk and by weight. As a celiac these are safe for consumption, and spicy as hell. Bhujia in Bikaner Like jeepneys in the Philippines, Indian truck drivers take decorating seriously. Two of many different colourful options from the trucks in the north, below. Trucks at a roadside stop outside of Delhi

Travel to Northern India: Effects of tourism gone wrong. In a few of the smaller villages, the children would come up and ask for photos and just sit and stare. Candy, no " those teeth are important! But this is from years of travel and reading and of course sometimes the things we do that we think are good, or make a positive impact, can do worse when we leave. I, too, had to pee often and had trouble finding a place. Either way, every time I turned around, there was a guy peeing. The photo below was me trying to capture the railway tracks. But there he was. Again not limited to India, but in a country with so many people it makes sense that there would be an exponential amount of waste. Plastic bags are no longer allowed in Delhi soft fabric ones were given instead but the garbage, oh the garbage. Piles and piles of it, sitting on the ground. They genuinely fought him on his arguments, not seeing the problem. She had no idea it would never biodegrade. Cow Dung A lot of cows means a lot of cow dung. My mum met a guy in a quiet part of the Jaipur market who, seemingly out of nowhere, wanted to know why tourists keep saying no to him when he comes up to sell something. She responded that in our country it is not customary for someone to come up expecting to sell something, that if we wanted something then we would go and find it ourselves. We were warned, of course, and we were for the most part sheltered from them since we were part of a tour. But in the bigger tourist centres, anywhere in the world, you will find aggressive salespeople and you will be exhausted by the end of wading through them. Everyone needs to make a living, of course. This is by no means limited to India, but pretty much the same everywhere. Me, to his friends after he peeled off in a cloud of dust on his motorbike: Still, the good news is that they grow up eventually, right? I was glad to visit the rat temple but I was not glad when the gentleman behind me kept flinging rat food on my bare feet so that the rats would come and scurry over them. The temple, homage to Hindu sage Karni Mata, is filled with thousands of rats. Smaller than what we are used to in North America, they resemble field mice with scrawnier tails. The temple was built in the s and was filled with pilgrims who were coming to pay homage to Karni Mata in the hopes of prosperity and health. No shoes are allowed in the temple so I had a pair of socks that I quickly discarded upon leaving the premises. It was a fascinating stop near Bikaner but still gives me the shivers when I think of it. Pilgrims at the Karni Mata Temple Rats aplenty. This guy was hogging all the coconut pieces. Perhaps because I am not large enough to be a threat, perhaps because they know I am not remotely fond of them " regardless of why, they make a beeline for me. I know one cannot stereotype one monkey for all monkeys but I have to say, not a fan. And there are a LOT of monkeys in India. Brevity is clearly not my forte. But I wanted to give some overview of the things that stood out, even after years of travel, and the things that lingered. I did not spent enough time there to speak to those complicated subjects, though I highly recommend people read this smart, researched piece from Amartya Sen. If you want to read some books about India, I would highly recommend the following:

**Chapter 3 : India Road Maps | Detailed Travel Tourist Driving**

*Think of India and it's likely that visions of formidable forts, palaces, and temples will come to mind, set against a backdrop of bright colors and history. That's exactly what north India provides -- and more! These top tourist places to visit in north India showcase the region's diverse beauty.*

While modern-day Rajasthan was founded in , this desert state has been home to civilization for five thousand years. Hundreds of tribes have occupied the land at one time or another, resulting in a fusion of Rajput, Mughal, and Hindu architecture that defines the landscape. For the inaugural issue of goop Magazine on newsstands through December , we collaborated with Black Tomato –one of our go-to travel companies for one-of-a-kind vacation experiences–on a fully immersive Rajasthan experience. They also created goop itineraries for Marrakech , Iceland , Tokyo , and Kyoto. The ten-day itinerary version of the Rajasthan trip is broken down below. Built in the traditional Haveli style, with multiple stories constructed around a courtyard, the original carved stone panels and antique shrines of the thirty-nine suites and common areas, including a breathtaking pool, were carefully preserved during renovation. For example, the stables are now cozy nooks for reading. Best of all, the elevated position over Jodhpur lends a panoramic view of both the old and new cities. Try the Ky Nye, a treatment meant to balance the five elements earth, wind, fire, water, and ether , using five essential oils and a combination of massage and acupressure, while crystals and herbal poultices are placed along your meridian energy lines to ease tension. With its outdoor terrace, all-white upholstery, and bleached wood, Darikhana is one of the few contemporary-style spaces in the city. While the menu has Mediterranean and Thai options, go Rajasthani and start with the dahi kebab-spiced yogurt dumplings. All the spices come from a two-hundred-year-old Delhi emporium and the vegetables are grown in the on-site organic garden. This ancient neighborhood is home to several bazaars, including Sardar, which has more than seven thousand stalls selling carpets, leather sandals, antiques, and jewelry. At Indique , located in the Pal Haveli hotel just through the gates of the old city, order thali, a sharing platter of lentils, pickles, breads, and curries. The restaurant sprawls across the roof, offering a panoramic backdrop for the food, which has its roots in the dry desert climate and nomadic lifestyle of the region. Track down manager Mukesh Jain and ask him to take you through the vibrant displays of cashmere, alpaca, and silk shawls, hand-embroidered scarves and patchwork quilts, which are all handmade by local artisans. Just try leaving empty-handed. A short tuk-tuk ride from the hotel, the family-run Gems and Jewels Palace has been making jewelry for the Maharajahs since –the sourcing, cutting, polishing, and designing of the ruby-, diamond-, and emerald-encrusted jewels is all done in-house. Bangles are serious business in India: The colors and combinations worn by women throughout the country signify everything from marital status to social position. A yellow bangle indicates happiness, green is said to manifest fertility, and gold of course suggests prosperity. Bibaji Churi Wale may look unremarkable at first glance, but owner Abdul Sattar and his family have been supplying the women of the city with their requisite bangles for every occasion–including marriage–for more than a hundred years. Mehrangarh Fort, chiseled into the rock mountain, has looked over Jodhpur for five hundred years. Built by Rao Jodha who founded the city in , the thick walls–still marked by bullets and cannonballs from earlier battles–protect several palaces built inside. Martins grad Anjali Singh and her husband Jaisal–takes glamping to another level. The hand-sewn tents come complete with en-suite bathrooms, private verandas, and vintage furniture. The royal tented suite has its own outdoor heated pool and includes butler service and a private Jeep for game drives. Some say that this part of Rajasthan has more leopards than tourists, due in large part to the local belief that they are the sacred guardians of temples. While leopards are definitely the main attraction, keep an eye out for pink flamingoes, monkeys, and when you reach the lake–crocodiles. In addition to traditional driving safaris, Jawai offers yoga, walking, and cycling experiences. Chamukha temple, dedicated to Adinathji, the first Jain saint, is a 15th century marble edifice supported by 1, pillars, no two of which are alike. The RAAS Devigarh , an 18th-century palace restored and upgraded by Indian hotelier Nikhilendra Singh, is a secluded, minimalist-meets-traditional retreat in the Aravalli hills, overlooking centuries-old Delwara village. While the suites are equipped with all the trappings of a luxury hotel, the focus

here is very much on wellness, with dawn yoga, meditation, sound healing, and a spa menu full of Ayurveda-rooted treatments. For a powerful recharge, spend time in the hand-carved Himalayan salt cave or try one of the two-hour treatments aimed at balancing different chakras. After a session, make your way to the pool and soak up the view stretching over the Aravalli hills. In the afternoon, explore the village in the valley below with the help of a local guide. With just over two thousands residents, Delwara village is teeny but offers a broad view of day-to-day life in rural Rajasthan, with a great craft trade. Not to be missed: Walk around the surrounding area and watch craftspeople practicing koftari, the inlaying of gold and silver wire into iron, and Jal Sanjhi, a religious ritual of drawing on water with colored powders. The most efficient way to get a feel for local cuisine is by way of a cooking lesson in an authentic home kitchen with local chef Mrs. Typically, these are garam masala, cumin, coriander, turmeric, green cardamom, chili, and black pepper. Ayurvedaâ€™far from the one-size-fits-all approach often found in western wellnessâ€™ recognizes the individuality of our personalities and body types. While you could opt to do a seven-day Panchakarma in an ashram, when it comes to spas, Ananda is the place to go. Guests checking in for a shorter stay can still take part in a comprehensive Ayurveda program of spa treatments, yoga, Vedanta lectures, and meditation. Nothing unpleasant, this involves answering a set of questions to get a full picture of your health and lifestyle, which helps determine your doshaâ€™the energy that characterizes your physical, emotional, and mental make-up. One of the most transporting elements of Ananda is that they remove as much decision-making as possible from the equation. Photo by Chris Caldicott See: Chant, sing, and celebrate the supreme that is within and all around us during Aarati, a Hindu worship ceremony performed daily on the banks of the river Ganges. Fires are lit as an offering to the deity, and sacred herbs and ghee are poured into the flames, signifying the death of negative energy. This is one of those once-in-a-lifetime experiences, and a window into the deep spirituality and ritual that pervades much of Indian daily life. You can choose to have your practice one-on-one with a teacher or in a class setting. There are additional deep-stretching classes to help maximize flexibility, unwind, and improve your at-home practice. After, stop by one of the twice-daily Vedanta sessions and learn about this ancient philosophy from scholars who have spent 1, consecutive days studying the topic. Take your final supper in India up in the tree-deck restaurant to soak in the views of the Himalayas.

**Chapter 4 : Travel to Northern India: the Good, the Bad, & The Ugly**

*I have used Alistair Shearer's travelog on Northern India on two occasions and can testify to this book's value. It is unparalleled in its guide to the sacred places of Northern India.*

But, until that time, my friend Wandering Earl is picking up the slack. Wandering Earl is my other half – a hard core budget traveler who loves exploring the world. As he gears up for his nineteenth trip to India leading yet another sold out tour, I asked him to share some of his favorite locations in the country to give you and me some ideas on what to do in a country so vast! Everywhere you turn in India, there is something to do or to see that you probably have never done or seen before. There are experiences to be had – whether fascinating or shocking or rewarding or confusing or educational or frustrating – all day long, no matter where you happen to be. When I traveled to India for the first time back in , just my first two weeks in the country involved camping at a pristine lake in a remote tribal region, hiking in the Himalayas, visiting Tibetan villages and monasteries, drinking mango lassis for the first time from a market stall in Kolkata, playing cricket with a group of Indians I met at a Hindu temple, and spending an evening with the family of a taxi driver who invited me to his home for dinner. The result of such an incredible variety and frequency of memorable experiences is exactly what has happened to me and countless other travelers: And though one post on India could never do the country justice, today I want to share 13 of my favorite things to do in India after 18 visits there, both as a traveler and a tour guide: On this lane are a handful of well-known eateries, all serving up the same dish: While the usual filling is potatoes, on this street you can get them stuffed with anything, from cheese to squash to raisins to mint to mixed vegetables to cashews and more. Opened in , this large art-deco structure is my favorite place in the country to catch a Bollywood film. Join the lines, order a large sweet lassi, and sit back and enjoy its pure deliciousness! Constructed by King Chanda of the Nikumbha Dynasty in BCE, the massive rectangular well is approximately 30 meters deep and consists of over 3, steps intertwined in a precise maze-like pattern on three sides, playing with the sunlight reflecting off of its angles. When you are inside, be sure to have a look at the dozens of statues of Hindu gods and religious scenes that line the outer walkway of the well, some dating back a thousand years. Apart from a few hotels and a couple of restaurants, the only other structure is the Ranakapur Jain Temple, one of the most important Jain temples in the world, dating back to the 15th century. Set in the forest, this temple is supported by over 1, intricately carved pillars, of which no two are the same, creating an almost eerie atmosphere as you wander through the courtyard, as if in a never-ending ancient maze. I highly recommend the audio guide that comes with your ticket, as regular guides are not allowed inside. The narration offers a thorough look at how this temple was created, its period of abandonment, and its resurrection as a major place of worship. Not too many people visit Ranakpur compared to other destinations, and even fewer spend the night in the village. I could sit in that enclosure for hours, hanging out with these energetic dogs that seem truly excited to be in this special place. Animal Aid is a great spot to visit, either for a tour by one of the staff which they are happy to do or even to volunteer. Short-term and long-term volunteers are always welcome with open arms. A thali is a meal that consists of a variety of foods, usually all served on a large, round metal plate. Natraj is located in the Bapu Bazaar area, about a minute walk from the City Palace. There is no menu – you simply eat what they cook: Some dishes might be spicy, so be sure to ask before you take a bite! But even apart from the paintings, joining Kukki is absolutely wonderful, as he takes you to seldom-visited areas of Rajasthan, tells you endless stories about his fascinating life and work, and teaches you about the general history of the region. Apart from the usual sights and experiences, however, there is one tiny room located down a lane in the Bengali Tola area of the Old City that I always get excited to enter. This is the Jolly Music House, run by the always-friendly Jolly, a middle-aged man and talented musician who offers courses and lessons on all types of traditional Indian instruments. Tell him Earl sent you! Wake up early, before the buses arrive, and rent a bicycle. Once evening comes around and the bus tours are gone, wander into the courtyard of the Ram Raja Temple, a major pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Ram. Climb onto a rooftop and observe life below, as there are often festivals and ceremonies taking place by the temple. Be sure to head over to the Langar Hall, the community

dining hall where all visitors – Indian and foreigners – are welcome to enter for a simple but tasty free meal, available at almost any time. It typically feeds up to , people per day. You sit on the floor, they dish out the food, you eat, and you leave, so that another group of several hundred people can do the same shortly after.

Palolem Beach Goa If you want the Indian beach experience, this is my favorite spot for that. Located in the well-known state of Goa, Palolem is very low-key, offering an affordable mix of beach huts located in a fully walkable and welcoming village setting. The whitish sands are clean and backed by towering palm trees, the bluish water is calm and perfect for swimming, and the sunset is consistently stunning as the sun dips behind jungle-filled Monkey Island at the far end of the beach each evening. The main reason I like this area is that it has a little bit of everything: Give yourself days to complete the loop – it just might be the most memorable period of your travels. The possibilities are literally endless. Wandering Earl has been on the road for close to 15 years, having got the travel bug when he worked on a cruise ship. He helps people travel on a budget and visit off the beaten path destinations around the world. One of my all-time favorite travel blogs, Earl can be found on his website, Wandering Earl , as well as Facebook and Twitter.

**Chapter 5 : Top 25 Hotels in the World - TripAdvisor Travelers'™ Choice Awards**

*A newlywed couple honeymooning in the Himalayan town of Nainital, in India's northern state of Uttarakhand, awoke to find an intruder in their hotel Read More Watch: the Himalayas From 24,*

This makes it the second most populous country in the world, behind China. Rich in history, vibrant culture, and diversity, India is the birthplace of 4 world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism. The topography is varied, ranging from tropical beaches to foothills, deserts, and the Himalayan mountains. The north has a more temperate climate, while the south is more tropical year-round. Many travelers prefer India during the winter—November through March, when the temperatures are more agreeable—although some, particularly families with children, must travel during the summer vacation time. India is becoming more popular for US travelers, and rates of travel from the United States are increasing. International businesses are flourishing in India; tourists are flocking to the temples, beaches, and the Taj Mahal. For some new US residents, India remains their homeland, and they make frequent visits to family and friends. In addition, India has a large and growing medical tourism sector. Because tourists could not possibly visit all the sites in India during a 2-week holiday, they usually select a part of India for any given trip. Agra is the home of the Taj Mahal, a breathtaking monument to lost love. Along the northern travel circle, one can stop to enjoy the magnificent bird sanctuary at Keoladeo Ghana and the tiger reserve at Ran Thambore see Map Varanasi, sacred to Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, welcomes Hindu pilgrimages and boasts extraordinary experiences along the Ganges. A more southern route might swing through Goa and its beautiful beaches along the western coast, a destination in the past forming the backdrop for great parties and old-time hippies, which has now become a haven for writers and artists boasting a chic new culture. Mumbai, a common entry point to India, hosts Bollywood, the largest film industry in the world. Kolkata Calcutta is considered the cultural capital of the country. The old seaside town of Kochi Cochin shows evidence of its Portuguese heritage, and Hyderabad shows off its old granite fort, many mosques, and bazaars. Despite the many and varied itineraries, most health recommendations for travelers to India are similar. The incidences of some illnesses, such as those transmitted by mosquitoes, increase during the monsoon season May—October with the high temperatures, heavy rains, and the risk of flooding. Some of the most important health considerations of travel to India are those for travelers who are visiting friends and relatives VFRs. These travelers often do not seek pretravel health advice, since they are returning to their land of origin. Such travelers may stay in rural areas often not visited by tourists or business people, live in homes, and eat and drink with their families, and thus are at higher risk of many travel-related illnesses see Chapter 8, Immigrants Returning Home to Visit Friends and Relatives [VFRs]. Particularly important is making sure that the traveler is immune to measles. India has not had a case of wild poliovirus since early , obtained its polio-free certification from the World Health Organization in March , and celebrated 5 years of being polio-free in January Polio vaccine is no longer recommended for US travelers. However, all travelers residents and nationals from countries reporting cases of polio should check to see if there is a requirement for a dose of polio vaccine prior to entry into India. Although some assume that those born in India would have been exposed to hepatitis A in childhood and thus be immune, this may no longer be true, particularly for younger people. Thus, even for short-term travel, a typhoid vaccine should be recommended. Patients who are hesitant to be vaccinated may find it even more compelling that typhoid fever acquired in south Asia is becoming increasingly resistant to quinolone antibiotics, sometimes requiring parenteral therapy. Paratyphoid fever, a similar disease caused by *Salmonella enterica* serovar Paratyphi A, B, and C, has become increasingly prevalent in south Asia, but typhoid vaccines are not protective against this infection. Risk is highest during the monsoon season from May through October; however, the season may be extended or year-round in some areas, especially in the south. Vaccination is not recommended for the typical 2-week trip most travelers take to see the major tourist sites in urban areas. Publicized outbreaks in recent years have not been in typical tourist destinations. Dogs roam in packs in many areas of the country. Unfortunately, human rabies immune globulin is not readily available except in some clinics in major cities. Information about such clinics can be obtained from the website of the International Society of Travel

Medicine www. Otherwise, if a traveler has not received preexposure rabies vaccination, a bite may result in having to leave the country for postexposure prophylaxis. Even so, a preexposure series is not recommended for all travelers to India. However, education about bite avoidance and management should be a part of every pretravel consultation. Cost is a consideration for many. Long-term travelers, expatriates, missionaries, and volunteers may want to obtain preexposure immunization for themselves and their children. Travelers may want to purchase a medical evacuation insurance policy that will cover travel for recommended rabies postexposure prophylaxis. Cholera vaccine is not routinely recommended for most travelers on typical tourist itineraries, but it may be considered for those at higher risk, such as those who are visiting friends and relatives or traveling for humanitarian aid work in disaster areas. Rates of *Plasmodium falciparum* have increased in the last few decades, and thus chemoprophylaxis is recommended for all destinations. Travelers should be reminded that malaria-transmitting mosquitoes primarily bite between dusk and dawn. High rates of resistance to multiple antibiotics have been shown among gram-negative such as, *Escherichia coli*, *Klebsiella* spp. In particular, bacterial resistance to carbapenems, third-generation cephalosporins, fluoroquinolones, and even colistin are becoming more common. It is poorly reported at the local and national levels, and large outbreaks continue to occur, including in many urban areas. The incidence is highest during the wet summer season, which includes the monsoon season May–October. Symptoms are similar to those of dengue and malaria, although often with severe and persistent arthralgia. A traveler who develops symptomatic hepatitis despite being immunized against hepatitis A will likely have hepatitis E. Cellulitis, fasciitis, and wound infections may result from scratches or bites of any animal. B virus is carried by Old World monkeys and may be transmitted by active macaques that are kept as pets, inhabit many of the temples, and scatter themselves in many tourist gathering places see Chapter 3, B virus. Monkeys can be aggressive and often seek food from travelers. When visiting temple areas that have monkeys, travelers should not carry any food in their hands, pockets, or bags. It is important to stress to travelers that monkeys and other animals should not be approached or handled at all. If travelers are bitten, they should seek medical care. Travelers who anticipate possible prolonged exposure to people with TB because they will routinely come in contact with clinic, hospital, prison, or homeless shelter populations should have a tuberculin skin test or TB blood test before leaving the United States. If the test is negative, they should have a repeat test 8–10 weeks after returning from India. Travelers who plan to work in high-risk settings or in crowded institutions such as medical clinics, hospitals, prisons, or homeless shelters should consult their health care providers about measures for prevention and testing before and after travel. Access to vaccine and lack of expertise in administering the vaccine are also barriers. Other Issues Arrival in India for the first time may be shocking to travelers who have never ventured into the developing world. The crowds, the intense colors, heat, and smells are striking and invade all the senses at once. It is difficult to enjoy the beauty without being touched by the enormity of the poverty. The close juxtaposition of the old and new is noteworthy. At times this can be overwhelming. Transportation in India remains problematic. While traveling through India, travelers should be advised to carry food and beverages with them in the event of delays, which are almost inevitable no matter the mode of transport. Travelers should make sure to keep passports and valuables safe while in a crowd. Roadways are some of the most hazardous in the world, and India has a large number of traffic-related deaths, including pedestrian deaths. Animals, rickshaws, motor scooters, people, bicycles, trucks, and overcrowded buses compete for space in an unregulated free-for-all. Fasten seat belts when riding in cars and wear a helmet when riding bicycles or motorbikes. Avoid overcrowded buses, travel by bus into the interior or on curving, mountainous roads, and long-distance travel at night. Rural nighttime driving should be discouraged, even when a paid driver has been hired. Air pollution is a problem in the major cities, so those with chronic lung disease or asthma may consider spending time outdoors when there is less traffic or staying in facilities outside major cities. Medical tourism is a growing industry in India. Many newer medical facilities have recently opened for travelers desiring cardiac, orthopedic, dental, or plastic surgery or transplantations at a substantially lower cost than in the United States. The benefits and hazards require careful examination see Chapter 2, Medical Tourism. Health care is quite variable in India and dependent on the location. In general, travelers feel safe while in India. It is always wise to pay attention to Department of State advisories in case of issues that arise at

some borders, or occasional increases in religious tensions or terrorist activities. Buhl MR, Lindquist L. Japanese encephalitis in travelers: High rate of multidrug-resistant gram-negative bacilli carriage and infection in hospitalized returning travelers: Acute and potentially life-threatening tropical diseases in western travelers—a GeoSentinel multicenter study, Am J Trop Med Hyg. Emergence of a new antibiotic resistance mechanism in India, Pakistan, and the UK: Laxminarayan R, Chaudhury RR. Antibiotic Resistance in India: Drivers and Opportunities for Action. Travel-associated illness trends and clusters, Typhoid fever in the United States, Travel Med Infect Dis.

*In India many local women don't travel alone period, especially in the more rural areas. Many men don't respect a woman traveling solo and will feel that this gives them license to harass you.*

Ice made with tap or well water  
Drinks made with tap or well water such as reconstituted juice  
Unpasteurized milk  
Take Medicine  
Talk with your doctor about taking prescription or over-the-counter drugs with you on your trip in case you get sick.  
Hide Prevent bug bites  
Bugs like mosquitoes, ticks, and fleas can spread a number of diseases in India. Many of these diseases cannot be prevented with a vaccine or medicine. You can reduce your risk by taking steps to prevent bug bites. What can I do to prevent bug bites? Cover exposed skin by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and hats. Use an appropriate insect repellent see below. Use permethrin-treated clothing and gear such as boots, pants, socks, and tents. Do not use permethrin directly on skin. Stay and sleep in air-conditioned or screened rooms. Use a bed net if the area where you are sleeping is exposed to the outdoors. What type of insect repellent should I use? Products with one of the following active ingredients can also help prevent mosquito bites. Higher percentages of active ingredient provide longer protection. What should I do if I am bitten by bugs? Avoid scratching bug bites, and apply hydrocortisone cream or calamine lotion to reduce the itching. Check your entire body for ticks after outdoor activity. Be sure to remove ticks properly. What can I do to avoid bed bugs? Although bed bugs do not carry disease, they are an annoyance. See our information page about avoiding bug bites for some easy tips to avoid them. For more information on bed bugs, see Bed Bugs. For more detailed information on avoiding bug bites, see Avoid Bug Bites. Some diseases in India—such as dengue, filariasis, and leishmaniasis—are spread by bugs and cannot be prevented with a vaccine. Follow the insect avoidance measures described above to prevent these and other illnesses. Zika is a risk in India. For more information, see Zika Travel Information.  
Hide Stay safe outdoors  
If your travel plans in India include outdoor activities, take these steps to stay safe and healthy during your trip. Stay alert to changing weather conditions and adjust your plans if conditions become unsafe. Prepare for activities by wearing the right clothes and packing protective items, such as bug spray, sunscreen, and a basic first aid kit. Consider learning basic first aid and CPR before travel. Bring a travel health kit with items appropriate for your activities. Heat-related illness, such as heat stroke, can be deadly. Eat and drink regularly, wear loose and lightweight clothing, and limit physical activity during high temperatures. If you are outside for many hours in heat, eat salty snacks and drink water to stay hydrated and replace salt lost through sweating. Protect yourself from UV radiation: Be especially careful during summer months and at high elevation. Because sunlight reflects off snow, sand, and water, sun exposure may be increased during activities like skiing, swimming, and sailing. Very cold temperatures can be dangerous. Dress in layers and cover heads, hands, and feet properly if you are visiting a cold location. Stay safe around water  
Swim only in designated swimming areas. Obey lifeguards and warning flags on beaches. Practice safe boating—follow all boating safety laws, do not drink alcohol if driving a boat, and always wear a life jacket. Do not dive into shallow water. Do not swim in freshwater in developing areas or where sanitation is poor. Avoid swallowing water when swimming. Untreated water can carry germs that make you sick. To prevent infections, wear shoes on beaches where there may be animal waste. Schistosomiasis and leptospirosis, infections that can be spread in fresh water, are found in India. Avoid swimming in fresh, unchlorinated water, such as lakes, ponds, or rivers.  
Hide Keep away from animals  
Most animals avoid people, but they may attack if they feel threatened, are protecting their young or territory, or if they are injured or ill. Animal bites and scratches can lead to serious diseases such as rabies. Follow these tips to protect yourself: Do not touch or feed any animals you do not know. Do not allow animals to lick open wounds, and do not get animal saliva in your eyes or mouth. Avoid rodents and their urine and feces. Traveling pets should be supervised closely and not allowed to come in contact with local animals. If you wake in a room with a bat, seek medical care immediately. Bat bites may be hard to see. All animals can pose a threat, but be extra careful around dogs, bats, monkeys, sea animals such as jellyfish, and snakes. If you are bitten or scratched by an animal, immediately: Wash the wound with soap and clean water. Go to a doctor right away. Tell your doctor about your injury when you get back to the United

States. Consider buying medical evacuation insurance. Rabies is a deadly disease that must be treated quickly, and treatment may not be available in some countries. Reduce your exposure to germs Follow these tips to avoid getting sick or spreading illness to others while traveling: Wash your hands often, especially before eating. If you need to touch your face, make sure your hands are clean. Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve not your hands when coughing or sneezing. Try to avoid contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, stay home or in your hotel room, unless you need medical care.

**Chapter 7 : Best India Tours Top 10, Best Feedback & Most Recommended Trips**

*For inner (and outer) peace, head south to the backwaters and beaches of Kerala, or north to India's captivating hill stations or the Tibetan-influenced valleys of the Himalaya in Ladakh, Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh.*

It was introduced into India by the Mughals and widely used since then. Its meaning varied, referring to a region that encompassed northern India and Pakistan or India in its entirety. Jainism came into prominence during the life of its exemplar, Mahavira. Politically, by the 3rd century BCE, the kingdom of Magadha had annexed or reduced other states to emerge as the Mauryan Empire. The Indian early medieval age, CE to CE, is defined by regional kingdoms and cultural diversity. Although at first disruptive for the Indian elites, the sultanate largely left its vast non-Muslim subject population to its own laws and customs. Areas directly governed by the British are shaded pink; the princely states under British suzerainty are in yellow. The appointment in of Lord Dalhousie as Governor General of the East India Company set the stage for changes essential to a modern state. These included the consolidation and demarcation of sovereignty, the surveillance of the population, and the education of citizens. Technological changes—among them, railways, canals, and the telegraph—were introduced not long after their introduction in Europe. Fed by diverse resentments and perceptions, including invasive British-style social reforms, harsh land taxes, and summary treatment of some rich landowners and princes, the rebellion rocked many regions of northern and central India and shook the foundations of Company rule. Proclaiming a unitary state and a gradual but limited British-style parliamentary system, the new rulers also protected princes and landed gentry as a feudal safeguard against future unrest. Mahatma Gandhi right led the independence movement. The rush of technology and the commercialisation of agriculture in the second half of the 19th century was marked by economic setbacks—many small farmers became dependent on the whims of far-away markets. It was marked by British reforms but also repressive legislations , by more strident Indian calls for self-rule, and by the beginnings of a nonviolent movement of non-co-operation, of which Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi would become the leader and enduring symbol. All were capped by the advent of independence in , but tempered by the partition of India into two states: Indian movies, music, and spiritual teachings play an increasing role in global culture. Geography of India A topographic map of India India comprises the bulk of the Indian subcontinent, lying atop the Indian tectonic plate , and part of the Indo-Australian Plate. It extends as far north as the Satpura and Vindhya ranges in central India. These parallel chains run from the Arabian Sea coast in Gujarat in the west to the coal-rich Chota Nagpur Plateau in Jharkhand in the east.

**Chapter 8 : Irish Travellers - Wikipedia**

*India is becoming more popular for US travelers, and rates of travel from the United States are increasing. International businesses are flourishing in India; tourists are flocking to the temples, beaches, and the Taj Mahal.*

Origins[ edit ] The historical origins of Irish Travellers as a distinct group is still unknown. Research has been complicated by the fact that the group appears to have no written records of its own. A suggestion that they might be of Romani extraction [10] has been disproved by genetic evidence, which finds no connection to Romani groups. It has since been recognised that no single explanation is likely to be adequate in answering this complex question. Current scholarship is investigating the background of Gaelic Ireland before the English Tudor conquest. The mobile nature and traditions of a Gaelic society based on pastoralism rather than land tenure before this event implies that Travellers represent descendants of the Gaelic social order marginalised during the change-over to an English landholding society. The study provided evidence that Irish Travellers are a distinct Irish ethnic minority, who have been distinct from the settled Irish community for at least years; the report claimed that they are as distinct from the settled community as Icelanders are from Norwegians. This apparent distance though may be the effect of genetic drift within a small homogeneous population and may therefore exaggerate the distance between the two populations. An estimated time of divergence between the settled population and Travellers was set at a minimum of 8 generations ago, with generations at 30 years, hence years and a maximum of 14 generations or years ago. The best fit was estimated at years ago, giving an approximate date in the s. Irish Travellers are not an entirely homogeneous group instead reflecting some of the variation also seen in the settled population. Four distinct genetic clusters were identified in the study, and these match social groupings within the community. Two main hypotheses have arisen, speculating whether: This would favour the second, endogenous, hypothesis of Traveller origins. Shelta has been dated back to the 18th century, but may be older. Issues with mobile sections of the population came under loosely defined vagrancy laws , ultimately of English origin. In the 1863 government of Ireland established a "Commission on Itinerancy" in response to calls to deal with the "itinerant problem". The Commission had no Traveller representatives, neither were they consulted. With an overall population of just 0. There were found to be 9, Travellers in the 0-14 age range, comprising Children of age range 0-17 comprised Following the findings of the All Ireland Traveller Health Study estimates for , the figure for Northern Ireland was revised to 3, and that for the Republic to 36, In addition to those on various official sites there are a number who are settled in local authority housing. These are mostly women who wish their children to have a chance at a good education. They and the children may or may not travel in the summer but remain in close contact with the wider Traveller community. According to research published in , Irish travellers in the US divide themselves up into groups that are based on historical residence: The Cant spoken in the US is similar to the Cant spoken in Ireland, but differs in some respects in that the language has transformed into a type of pidgin English over the generations. They typically work in asphaltting, spray-painting, laying linoleum, or as itinerant workers to earn their living. This is evidenced in a report published in Ireland, which states that over half of Travellers do not live past the age of 39 years. Another government report of found: From birth to old age, they have high mortality rates, particularly from accidents, metabolic and congenital problems , but also from other major causes of death. Female Travellers have especially high mortality compared to settled women. The study, including a detailed census of Traveller population and an examination of their health status, was expected to take up to three years to complete. The birth rate for the Traveller community for the year was On average there are ten times more driving fatalities within the Traveller community. According to the National Traveller Suicide Awareness Project, Traveller men are over six times more likely to kill themselves than the general population. According to Judith Okely, "there is no large time spans between puberty and marriage" of Travellers. Okely wrote in that the typical marriage age for females was 16-17 and the typical marriage age for males was 18- Yet only 15-year-old enumerated Irish Travellers identified themselves as married. They are too small a minority, i. The term gypsy first appears in records dating back to the 16th century when it was originally used to refer to

the continental Romani people in England and Scotland , who were mistakenly thought to be Egyptian. Please update this article to reflect recent events or newly available information. Unemployment among male Travellers measured 73 percent according to the self-assessed principal economic status question on the census form. The national measure of unemployment for males on a comparable basis was 9. Corresponding rates for females were 63 percent for female Travellers and 8 percent for the female population overall. Such percentages for more valuable non-ferrous metals may be significantly greater. Many families choose not to reveal the specifics of their finances, but when explained it is very difficult to detect any sort of pattern or regular trend of monthly or weekly income. To detect their financial status many look to the state of the possessions: In March they were designated an Irish indigenous ethnic group. The European Parliament Committee of Enquiry on Racism and Xenophobia found them to be among the most discriminated-against ethnic groups in Ireland [83] and yet their status remains insecure in the absence of widespread legal endorsement. The court hearing in resulted in suspended sentences for all the defendants. A Study of Irish Travellers in Prison Mac Gabhann, found that social, economic and educational exclusion were contributing factors to the "increasingly high levels of imprisonment" of Irish Travellers. Halting site A complaint against Travellers in the United Kingdom is that of unauthorised Traveller sites being established on privately owned land or on council-owned land not designated for that purpose. However, Travellers also frequently make use of other, non-authorised sites, including public " common land " and private plots such as large fields and other privately-owned land. A famous example was Dale Farm in Essex. The Travellers claim that there is an under-provision of authorised sites. The Gypsy Council estimates an under-provision amounts to insufficient sites for 3, people.

## Chapter 9 : | Travel + Leisure

*The India Heritage Tour with Nepal is one of the most popular and it includes visits to significant places in North India like Delhi, Varanasi, Kathmandu, Jaipur, Shivpatinagar, Agra, Chitwan, Khajuraho and Pokhara.*