

Tigers of Central India

Departs March 2026

Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different



Itinerary correct as at 24 Feb 2024, but subject to change. All flights to be confirmed. www.bluedottravel.com.au



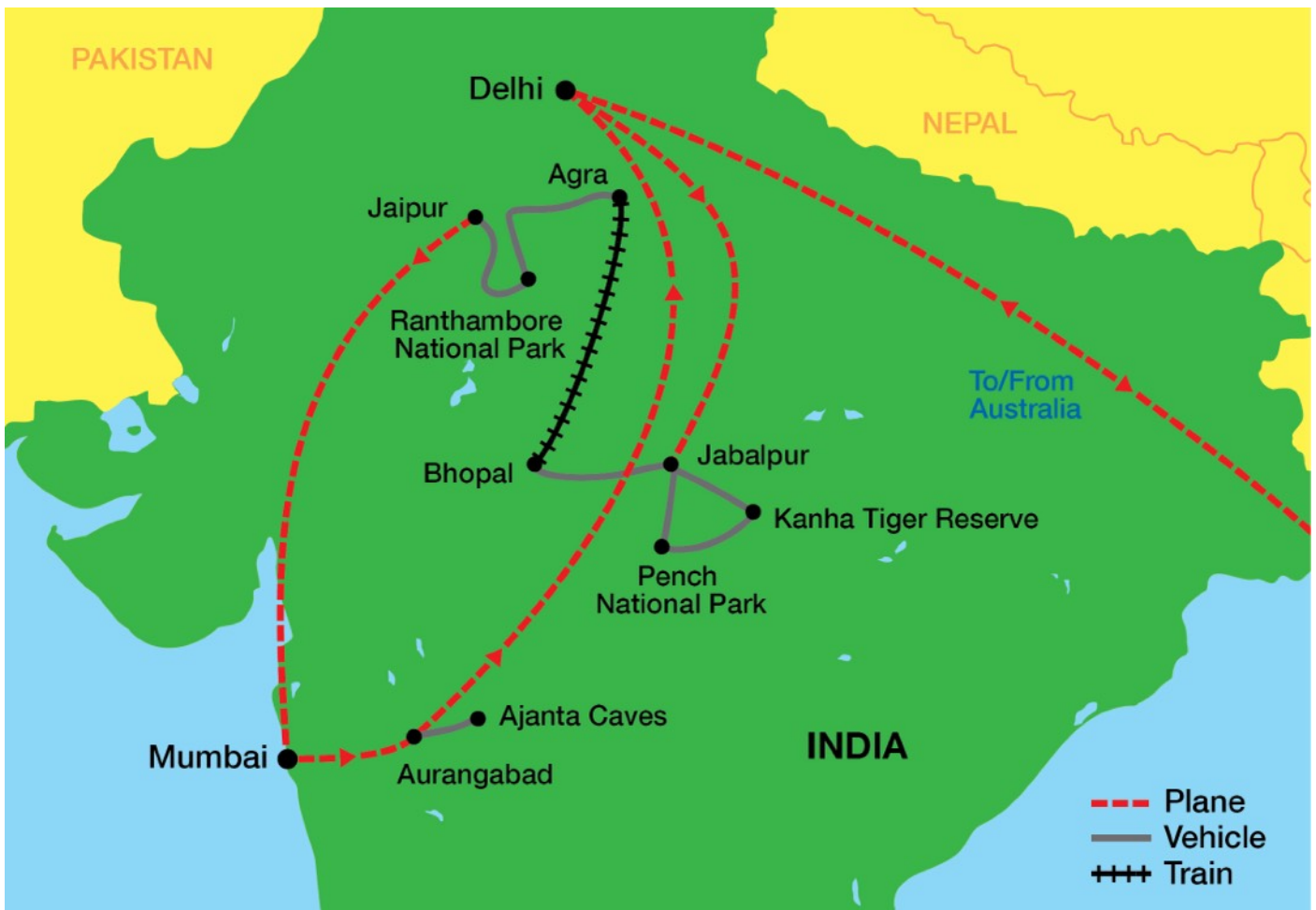
TIGERS OF CENTRAL INDIA

India is a study in contrasts; bustling cities that bear the legacies of once-glorious empires, a patchwork of farmlands and hamlets fringing lush forests, destinations steeped in history making their inexorable way towards modernity. A land that is more than history, diverse in geography, a land of peace and plenty that brought empires and colonies to its shores, a nation that throbs with the stories of the past paving the way to a bright future.

Highlights of this fabulous tour include retracing India's Mughal and colonial eras on a historic trail through Delhi; reliving Mowgli's days in the Kanha and Pench forests with glimpses of the incredible wildlife that featured in the Jungle Book films, and viewing Central India's wildlife on jeep safaris and/or canoeing on the Denwa River on the fringes of Satpura National Park.

We shall watch a glorious sunrise over the Taj Mahal – one of the world's seven wonders. We'll walk on the wild side at Ranthambore National Park – a wildlife refuge set against a backdrop of waterholes and ruined ramparts; witness the legacy of Jaipur's feudal rulers with a sightseeing trail through the 'pink city' in the state of Rajasthan and visit the unique 5th Century monolithic rock-cut temple at Ellora and Ajanta's painted frescoes dating back to the 2nd Century BC.

For an exclusive glimpse into India, this itinerary offers a perfect mix of history, culture and wildlife — a chance to explore the landmarks of well-known cities like Delhi, Jaipur and Agra to retrace their history, trail through lush forests of Kanha, Pench, Satpura and Ranthambore in search of the tiger and discover a rare legacy in stone at Aurangabad's ancient Buddhist rock-cut and frescoed caves.



Departure
AUSTRALIA TO DELHI

Depart Australia for Delhi. We will provide a personalised flight schedule based on your needs.

Day 1
OLD DELHI CITY TOUR

We will start the day in Delhi with a rickshaw ride through Old Delhi. If trees and streets could talk, the stories pouring out of Delhi would keep listeners



mesmerised for years. With a history as a capital, Delhi has seen the tides of several rulers from those that people the pages of the epic poem, Mahabharata to the Tughlaq and Mughal empires from Persia, from the

imperial colonial armies to the present-day government. Looted, plundered, and resurrected over the years, Delhi emerges from the ashes of her past to take her place in the world as a global capital — politically, culturally and commercially. Head down to Chandni Chowk in Old Delhi, partly by rickshaw, partly on foot, to experience the sacred yet secular way of life that is so typical of India. The Colonial Delhi trail will take you past the India Gate, a monument commemorating the deaths of over 70,000 Indian soldiers in the British Forces during World War I and older British buildings that house today's Parliament and Secretariat. Lunch can be enjoyed at

your own discretion today. This evening, a welcome dinner. Overnight at Claridges. *B/D*

Day 2
DELHI – JABALPUR

Today we transfer to Delhi Airport for our flight to Jabalpur. We'll be picked up at the airport, for the 4.5-hour drive to Kanha, where we'll check in to our lodge. A mixed forest bamboo and sal, of grassy meadows and winding ravines, Kanha National Park was one of the first areas in India to fall under the Project Tiger Conservation program to save the Royal Bengal Tiger. Kanha boasts abundant mammal populations and diverse birdlife, and it offers sanctuary for the endangered barasingha (12-horned) deer, the blackbuck, lesser florican among others. The deep, dark jungles of Kanha inspired Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book and gave us a slew of immortal characters from Mowgli to Sher Khan, Bagheera to Baloo. Overnight at the world-class Singinawa Jungle Lodge where you'll stay for three nights. *B/L/D*

Day 3
KANHA

This morning is for relaxation. The Singinawa Jungle Lodge offers a unique experience of the jungles of central India with all the comforts of a world-class lodge. The lodge offers a chance to not only learn about the tiger and its habitat but to also experience ecologically responsible tourism and see conservation at work benefitting local communities and the tiger reserve. After lunch at the lodge, we'll head out for a jeep safari with

the naturalist. Return in the afternoon in time for dinner. **B/L/D**

Day 4 **KANHA**

Early morning, head out for a jeep safari with our naturalist. The forest is beautiful as it wakes up and the sun lifts the mist from the surface and dew glistens on the dense foliage. This is an excellent time to watch predators coming home from a night hunt and the symphony of birdsong echoes through the woods. Return to our lodge for a leisurely breakfast. After lunch, head back into the jungle for an afternoon safari. **B/L/D**

Day 5 **KANHA – PENCH**

This morning the group will drive to Pench and upon arrival check into our lodge. Travel time is approximately 4.5 hours. Spend the rest of the day at leisure exploring the premises of the property or on birdwatching trails with a naturalist. At Pench National Park's northern periphery lies the Jamtara



Wilderness Camp, so named after a nearby village. The Jamtara Wilderness Camp is a luxury tented camp that strives to provide the perfect balance between a rustic, wilderness experience and a comfortable stay. Overnight at Jamtara Wilderness Camp where you'll stay for three nights. **B/L/D**

Day 6 **PENCH**

Pench National Park was named after a river that flows through Central India's forests. It offers a corridor for wildlife across this diverse habitat of forest and grassland. The rich biodiversity of the area had been recorded in an ancient official document of the emperor Akbar, a Mughal ruler and the park continues to support large populations of herbivores, creating a favourable environment for carnivores — the most-sought after being the Royal Bengal Tiger. Forming a continuum with the Kanha forest, Rudyard Kipling's Jungle Book is often attributed to this jungle as well. Early morning, we'll head out on a jeep safari with our naturalist. Return to the lodge for a leisurely breakfast. Post lunch, venture back into the park for an afternoon safari. Overnight at Jamtara Wilderness Camp. **B/L/D**

Day 7 **PENCH**

Early morning the group will head out for a jeep safari with your naturalist before returning for breakfast. After some downtime and lunch, you'll head out back into the forest for an afternoon safari before returning well in time for dinner. **B/L/D**

Day 8 PENCH – SATPURA

Today there's an early morning departure for the drive to Satpura – around 6.5 hours. Upon arrival check into your lodge where you'll stay for three nights. The luxurious

Reni Pani Jungle Lodge is located in a pristine forest typical of the Satpura Tiger Reserve. The Lodge gets its interesting name from a neighbouring tribal village. **B/D**

Day 9 **SATPURA**

Start the morning with a jeep safari accompanied by your naturalist. The Satpura region is named after a west- to-east running hill range that divides India into two sections: the northern river plains and the mountains, and the southern peninsula.

Part of the mosaic of central Indian forests, Satpura hosts a wide variety of biodiversity and provides a corridor between other



stretches of forests for species like the Royal Bengal Tiger, the Asiatic Elephant, the Indian bison or gaur, the sloth bear, among others. The area is also a haven for bird life, with forest-dwelling and river- dependent species and rich diversity of raptors. Head back to the lodge for breakfast and a lazy morning. Post lunch, head out for a canoe safari along the Denwa River. The Denwa flows right through the Satpura National Park, as much a lifeline of the forest as an ecosystem in and of itself. A canoe down the river allows you to paddle quietly along the shore, drifting into little inlets and bays to watch animals quench their thirst, birds hunt in the shallows or crocodiles bask in the sun. The canoe experience is for the unhurried observer, who would like to experience the forest at its most languid.

B/L/D

Day 10 **SATPURA**

In the morning, the group will take in the biodiversity on a nature walk around the resort premises. This walking safari will be within the Lodge's buffer zone and include the naturalist so it offers a leisurely opportunity to learn about the wildlife and the surroundings. Return to the Lodge for breakfast and then in the afternoon, you'll head out in a jeep safari also with your naturalist. **B/L/D**

Day 11 **SATPURA – BHOPAL – AGRA**

This morning, after breakfast we will drive 3.5 hours from Satpura to Bhopal. The beautiful city of Bhopal, the capital of the state of Madhya Pradesh, fringes two urban lakes. Its history under the Bhoja dynasty, the Mughal empire, and as a princely state under British rule still resonates in its architecture. We'll stop for lunch followed by a city tour before making our way to Bhopal railway station for your reserved seat on the train with dinner included. On arrival late evening into Agra, you'll be transferred to the Hotel Trident where you'll stay for two nights. **B/L/D**

Day 12 **AGRA**

The origins of the city of Agra can be traced back to the days of the Mahabharata, the epic poem of Great India when it was called Agrevana, meaning 'the edge of the forest'. Agra served as capital for the Mughal Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries and flourished as a centre of art, drawing inspiration from Persian, Islamic,

Turkish, Byzantine and Indian styles. It has been immortalised ever since by the Taj Mahal – a magnificent marble mausoleum that epitomises love, yet Agra has so many more monuments that tell a rich narrative of the tides and times of Man. This morning, set off on a sightseeing trail of Agra. Agra Fort- On the right bank of the Yamuna river, is one of the most important and robustly built strongholds of the Mughals, embellished with a number of richly decorated buildings – the Agra



Fort. Let our guide tell you the rich, evocative Mughal history of Agra Fort, and the emperors Babar, Humayun and Akbar. On the other side of the river, lies the Mehtab Bagh

Garden – which legend claims was to be the site of a Black Taj that the emperor Shah Jahan wished to build for himself, facing the monument he'd built for his love. Instead, the Mehtab Bagh is a four-garden layout, typical of Mughal constructions worldwide – with beautiful flowering plants, pools and fountains. Return to the hotel and then take a late afternoon visit to the Taj Mahal for sunset. Dinner at the hotel. *B/D*

 **Day 13**
AGRA – RANTHAMBORE

Start the day with a very early rise to watch the sunrise over the Taj Mahal. Agra has been immortalised by Taj



Mahal – the magnificent mausoleum, which the emperor Shahjahan had built for his queen, Mumtaz and India's own jewel in the list of 7 Wonders of the Modern World. Our storyteller guide will tell tales of Agra and

the mausoleum, as well as the romance between Shahjahan and Mumtaz. Then, we'll return for breakfast and drive to Ranthambore – about a 6.5-hour drive. Check in to the Sawai Villas for three nights. *B/L/D*

 **Day 14**
RANTHAMBORE

This former hunting ground of Maharajas, Ranthambore with crumbling fort ramparts interspersed by villages, with numerous watering holes, is today the regal empire of a clan of tigers, made famous by National Geographic's coverage. Conserving the tiger has also helped provide a refuge for a variety of other mammals like fox, jackals, nilgai (blue bulls), spotted deer as also other avifauna, and offers an unmissable safari experience. Today you can enjoy two jeep safaris into the national park, one early morning and other afternoon post lunch. Ranthambore's sweeping hunting grounds of watering holes and ruins is best explored by jeep, a perfect vantage point to see wildlife in its natural environs. Apart from the famed royal Bengal tiger, Ranthambore is also home to the common leopard,

nilgai or blue bull antelope, wild boar, sambar, hyena, sloth bear, grey langur, rhesus macaque and chital, among others. The numerous watering holes also support a rich birdlife and reptiles. Keep an eye out for one of the largest banyan trees in the country! Dine at the villas. *B/L/D*

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 **Day 16**
RANTHAMBORE – JAIPUR

After breakfast, drive from Ranthambore to Jaipur – about 4 hours. If there is an aspect of India that neither the Mughal empires nor the British Era could wipe out, it is the regal lifestyles of the chieftains and princes from the feudal times, and nowhere is it more in evidence than in Rajasthan. Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan state, is known fondly as the 'pink city' as most buildings are made of rosy sandstone.

Established by Sawai Jai Singh II, the ruler of Amber, thus named to signify a 'city of victory', Jaipur's bustling bazaars and labyrinthine by-lanes whisper the history of



4 eras. Upon arrival check-in at your hotel – the Samode Haveli where you'll stay for two nights. Towards late afternoon visit to Dera Amer to enjoy the activity "Rhythm with the Elephants" Situated on the outskirts of Jaipur, this private retreat was once a scrubland, when the Singh family acquired an expanse of 180 acres it. Dera Amer today is full of wilderness and natural beauty. Operating with an eco-sensitive mind set, with organic

farming practices, implementation of solar panelled water pumps, drip irrigation, engaging and empowering the local communities, and adopting elephants and camels that were rescued from a life of hard labour. Return to your hotel. **B/D**

Day 17 JAIPUR

Start with a visit to the Amer Fort - The citadel of the Kachhawaha clan who later became the rulers of Jaipur. With its sprawling apartments, pleasure gardens, and temples, Amer is one of the most intricate and beautiful Rajput fortresses in all of India. Then, experience a Pink



City Rickshaw Ride (the duration of the ride is 1 to 1.5 hours). The Pink Rickshaw Company's initiative seeks to accomplish a triple bottom line impact, through which new economic opportunities are

created for women youth from low-income households, social capital will be built through enrolling these women and making them equity holders in a social enterprise which they will own and manage, and also impacting the environment through the e-rickshaws that are proposed to be deployed under the program. Follow this with a visit to the Jantar Mantar observatory built in the early 1700s by Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur's ruler and a keen astronomer who bears witness to Central Asia's rich legacy of astronomy. For a sense of history and art, step into the City Palace complex which exhibits royal collections of miniature paintings, armour, royal garments, textiles, and artefacts. Continue to the ornate Hawa Mahal or the Palace of the Winds, Jaipur's most distinctive landmark. Towering over the city, the Hawa Mahal was built to resemble Krishna's crown and its purpose was to allow ladies of the court to remain unseen as they watched the goings-on in the streets below. Its forbidding exterior belies an inner paradise where a beautiful fusion of Mughal and Hindu styles finds its ultimate expression. The group will also visit the Anokhi Museum of Handprinting. Located in a magnificently restored haveli or mansion, the Museum of Hand-printing displays a selection of block-printed textiles alongside images, tools and related objects, all chosen to provide an in-depth look into the complexity of this ancient tradition. Return to hotel. In the evening, will take you to the beautiful heritage haveli Dera Mandawa for a hands-on Rajasthani cooking experience in the Zenana Deorhi (ladies' courtyard) garden. Include a sit-down dinner which includes consumption of beverages, water, beer and Indian-made alcohol and wine. Overnight at Samode Haveli Jaipur. **B/L/D**

Day 18 JAIPUR – AURANGABAD

Today is mainly a day of transfers. After a leisurely morning, the group will depart for the airport around noon and fly from Jaipur to Aurangabad via Mumbai. (All flights to be confirmed). Arrive in time for a late dinner at

our hotel Vinanta by Taj, where we'll stay for two nights. **B/D**

Day 19 AURANGABAD – AJANTA CAVES – AURANGABAD

Named after the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, the city of Aurangabad's basalt topography is etched with some of the best examples of religious art in the country; the Ellora rock-cut temples and the Ajanta cave paintings dating to the Buddhist era in India. A theatre of great historical events during the Mughal, Maratha and colonial regimes, Aurangabad is today, an industrial hub driven by its textile and automobile industries. Start the day in Aurangabad taking in the famous Ajanta Caves: The rock cut caves with the finest examples of Indian paintings dating between the 2nd BCE to 480 or 650 CE. Discovered amidst overgrown forest by a British officer, the caves are covered with murals depicting the Jataka tales - didactic narratives tinged with the Buddhist philosophy. For the artists and the curious tourists alike, a rich world of iconography awaits at Ajanta, and the influences of this school of painting is evident in other places across the world, especially in Sri Lanka and Tibet. The 30 world-famous rock-hewn caves of Ajanta, arranged in the shape of a mammoth horseshoe date back to the 2nd century B.C. Tonight is our farewell dinner at the hotel. **B/L/D**

Day 20 AURANGABAD – DELHI

Start the day with an excursion to the Ellora Caves. The Ellora rock-cut cave sculptures exert a rare magnetism for the tourist. Built between the 5th and the 10 Centuries, the Ellora caves are a series of Hindu, Buddhist and Jain temples carved into the basalt Deccan traps. The numerous caves bear friezes, carved pillars and inscriptions — and traces of paintings illustrating mythological characters and events, and are testimony to the rare skill and the religious harmony of the time. Return to the hotel for lunch. In the afternoon, transfer to the Aurangabad airport for our flight to Delhi. We'll stay near the airport in the Novotel Aerocity. Dinner at your own leisure and cost (best to grab something in Aurangabad as arrival into Delhi will be late). **B/L**



Day 21 DÉPART DELHI

Final morning in Delhi before being transferred to the airport for the flight home (Flight to be confirmed). **B**

ARRIVE HOME

Arrive home in Australia (to be confirmed).



Icon indicates a day where there is **moderate physical exertion**. A basic level of fitness is required: eg. A trek over 'mostly flat' terrain or climbing several flights of steps without the support of handrails or elevators.



Icon indicates a day where there is a **particularly active section**. A good level of fitness is required: eg. A longer trek over non-groomed, uneven terrain, or ascending to reach a panorama. May also include exposure to higher altitude. **An alternate activity may be offered if you choose to sit out an active section.** Please call - we are happy to discuss each tour in more detail.