

Just Tigers!

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Depart London
Day 2	Delhi
Day 3	Full day in Delhi; overnight to Jabalpur
Days 4/10	Kanha Tiger Reserve
Day 11	Final morning at Kanha; overnight train to Agra
Day 12	Full day's sightseeing in Agra; transfer to Delhi
Day 13	Return London

Chambal & Bharatpur extension

Day 12	Evening transfer from Agra to Chambal
Days 13/15	Chambal/Bharatpur
Day 16	Delhi
Day 17	Return London

Bharatpur & Ranthambore extension

Day 12	Bharatpur
Days 13/15	Ranthambore
Day 16	Delhi
Day 17	Return London

Dates and costs

See next page for a complete list

Single room supplement

£895 (Extension: £395)

Focus

Tigers, other mammals, and birds



Royal Bengal Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*)



Sloth bear (*Melursus ursinus*)



Taj Mahal at Agra



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Royal Bengal Tiger



Royal Bengal Tiger, male, patrolling his territory



Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)



Indian Wild Dog/Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*)



Swamp Deer/Barasingha (*Rucervus duvaucelii*)



White Rumped Shama (*Copsychus malabaricus*)



Northern Plains Grey Langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*)



Leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*)

Departures

2026

Friday 6th November – Wednesday 18th November 2026	Cost: £4,295
Extensions: Tuesday 17th November – Sunday 22nd November 2026	Cost: £1,495

2027

Friday 8th January – Wednesday 20th January 2027	Cost: £4,495*
Extensions: Tuesday 19th January – Sunday 24th January 2027	Cost: £1,495

Friday 26th March – Wednesday 7th April 2027	Cost: £4,295
Extensions: Tuesday 6th April – Sunday 11th April 2027	Cost: £1,495

Friday 5th November – Wednesday 17th November 2027	Cost: £4,295
Extensions: Tuesday 16th November – Sunday 21st November 2027	Cost: £1,495

2028

Friday 7th January – Wednesday 19th January 2028	Cost: £4,495*
Extensions: Tuesday 18th January – Sunday 23rd January 2028	Cost: £1,495

Friday 24th March – Wednesday 5th April 2028	Cost: £4,295
Extensions: Tuesday 4th April – Sunday 9th April 2028	Cost: £1,495

Friday 3rd November – Wednesday 15th November 2028	Cost: £4,295
Extensions: Tuesday 14th November – Sunday 19th November 2028	Cost: £1,495

Notes:

1. * - The extra cost of this departure provides a flight from Delhi to Jabalpur/Nagpur, rather than an overnight train journey, plus an overnight stay in Agra.
2. £500 reduction if booked without flights, land only trip.

Introduction

This holiday is designed to maximise your chances of Tiger sightings by spending an extended period in one of India's best Tiger reserves – Kanha. We will also enjoy Kanha (National Park and) Tiger Reserve's excellent variety of birds and mammals, which provide excellent alternative wildlife viewing if Tigers prove hard to see. In order to make this holiday affordable to as many people as possible, its length has been restricted to suit those with limited holiday time, though this does mean that time spent outside Kanha Tiger Reserve will be limited. If you would like to extend your holiday and visit other national parks or cultural sites we can organise this for you.

On this holiday you must be prepared for a long journey both to and from Kanha. Kanha is one of India's more remote reserves, and for this reason offers some of the subcontinent's finest mammal viewing. We have seen Tigers on 100% of tours to Kanha Reserve over the last six years and there is still a good chance of seeing this magnificent animal here, though of course this can never be guaranteed. Tigers were seen during the 1990s, but there was a dip in sightings during these years caused by poaching. However, numbers of Tigers have increased again thanks to a combination of more guards and good management practice by the Reserve's forest department.

If you enjoy birds, mammals and wild environments and look upon a Tiger sighting as a bonus earned from spending a lengthy time in such an environment, and are prepared to put up with the rigours of travelling in India at a hot time of the year (and for that reason the best for mammals), please do join us! The departures from November to January offer cooler weather, though there can be fewer Tiger Sightings during that season.

For those of you preferring not to make the return journey to Kanha by overnight train, we offer you the more expensive option (8th January 2027 and 7th January 2028) of taking a direct flight from Delhi to Jabalpur (just a 4-hour drive from Kanha). This itinerary has the additional bonus of an overnight stay in Agra on Day 11.

NB. From the time that Tigers start being seen on a more regular basis each year, we carefully monitor where they are most frequently sighted. If for any reason they are showing more regularly in reserves other than Kanha we will advise you and be pleased to offer an extension to the best location of the moment.



Day 1

Friday

In Flight

We depart from London on direct British Airways scheduled flight to Delhi at 6.55pm. We will be in flight overnight.

Day 2

Saturday

Delhi

We arrive in the morning at 8.50am and transfer to our hotel located close to the airport. Our stay in Delhi for this holiday is usually at the 5-star hotel, usually The Pride Plaza for a convenient access to the Delhi airport, (we



cannot guarantee a particular hotel, but always endeavor to book one of a high standard not far from the airport). This hotel features an array of exceptional dining experiences, offering a selection of fine restaurants and elegant lounges. The Roseate New Delhi is renowned for its tranquil setting, contemporary luxury, and outstanding hospitality. Surrounded by beautifully landscaped gardens and water features, it provides a peaceful retreat before a long flight. If we do not stay at Roseate House or Pride Plaza New Delhi,

a hotel offering an equivalent standard of accommodation, facilities, and service will be used.

The middle part of the day (and tomorrow morning) will be free, allowing you time to sample some of Delhi's avian and historical sights, or to just relax and recover after your flight.



In the afternoon there will be a birdwatching trip to Sultanpur National Park and Bird Sanctuary, 13 miles from our hotel. Sultanpur covers 1.5 sq km and was declared a bird sanctuary in 1971 and was upgraded to the status of national park in 1991 by the Haryana Government. This is an ideal birding spot; large numbers of migratory species arrive each year. The habitat is a mix of wetland, woodland and grassland. In the wetland area several trees have been planted on the mounds, which provide good nesting and perching opportunities for birds. Bird species of particular

interest includes: White Pelican (*Pelecanus onocrotalus*), Little Cormorant (*Microcarbo niger*), Painted Stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), Black-headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*), Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*), Great Egret (*Ardea alba*), Spot-billed Duck (*Anas poecilorhyncha*), Eurasian Thick-knee (*Burhinus oedipnemus*), Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*), Black-winged Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), Black-tailed Godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Spotted Redshank (*Tringa erythropus*), Shikra (*Accipiter badius*), Grey Francolin (*Orygornis pondicerianus*), Black Francolin (*Francolinus francolinus*),

Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*), White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*), Crested Lark (*Galerida cristata*), Red-vented Bulbul (*Pycnonotus cafer*), Rose-ringed Parakeet (*Psittacula krameri*), Laughing Dove (*Spilopelia senegalensis*), Spotted Owlet (*Athene brama*), Magpie Robin (*Copsychus saularis*), Greater Coucal (*Centropus sinensis*), Hoopoe (*Upupa epops*), Purple Sunbird (*Cinnyris asiaticus*), Baya Weaver (*Ploceus philippinus*), Bank Myna (*Acridotheres ginginianus*), Common Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*), Blue-tailed Bee-eater (*Merops philippinus*) and Green Bee-eater (*Merops orientalis*), Bluethroat (*Luscinia svecica*), Paddyfield Pipit (*Anthus rufulus*), to name a few.

Day 3

Sunday

Overnight Train to Jabalpur

Today, we have a chance to sample some of Delhi's historical sights; New Delhi was built by famous British architects Sir Edward Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker in the 1900's. In New Delhi you will see the famous Qutb Minar built by the one of the first Muslim rulers of Delhi Qutbuddin Aibak, the Humayuns Tomb which is considered to be an inspiration for the Taj Mahal and is also the mausoleum of the second Mughal ruler and later on we will drive past the Presidential Palace, the government buildings and the tree lined avenues of New Delhi.

It is probably a good idea to check out from the hotel in the morning. This will leave you free to enjoy the excursion before going directly to the railway station in the afternoon to board the train for the long journey to Kanha, which departs at 5.50pm.

Generally, we board the overnight train in the late-afternoon for our journey southwards from Delhi to Jabalpur, and travel in air-conditioned sleeper carriages.



Day 4

Monday

Kanha Tiger Reserve

Jabalpur lies in the huge central state of India, Madhya Pradesh, about 106 miles from Kanha Tiger Reserve. We will be met and transferred to a hotel for breakfast, before boarding our transport for the 4-hour drive to Kanha. On arrival at Kanha, we will settle in for our 7-night stay and, the afternoon would be for you at leisure if you wish to our tour leader would be happy to show you the wonderful birdlife in and around the lodge.

On most of our Just Tigers! tours we base ourselves for our lengthy stay in Kanha at The Safari Lodge Kanha or Courtyard House. Set amidst natural surroundings, the lodge offers comfortable cottage-style accommodation designed to blend with the wilderness environment. The property offers a peaceful atmosphere, landscaped gardens, wholesome cuisine, and attentive hospitality. Its proximity to the park makes it an excellent base for wildlife safaris and exploring the diverse flora and fauna of Kanha.



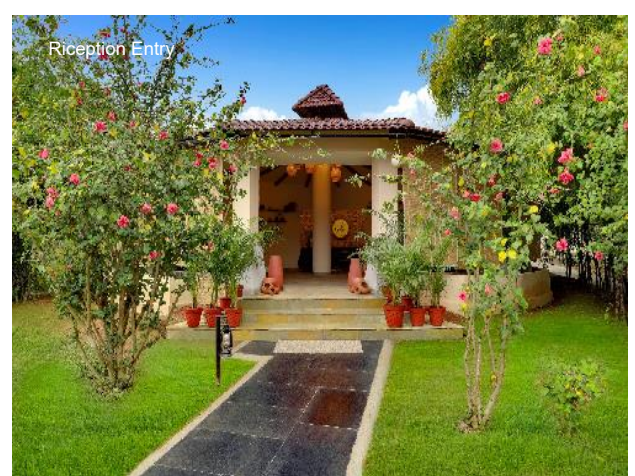
Cottage



Cottage Facade



Common Area



Reception Entry

Days 5 – 10

Tuesday – Sunday

Kanha



Indian Golden Jackal wading through water

Kanha Tiger Reserve encompasses 1,945 sq km and is one of the largest reserves in Madhya Pradesh. It occupies a beautiful location on a plateau in the Maikal range of hills and comprises a crescent of forested hills that embraces broad undulating grasslands dotted with clumps of bamboo and Sal forest. There are small pools and a perennial lake, which provide essential drinking holes for the animals. The Reserve was first established in 1955 for the protection of Swamp Deer/Barasingha

(*Rucervus duvaucelii*), for which it is famous. Once these deer roamed India in herds of many thousands. Today there are more than 1500 left, though this represents a good recovery since 1970 when just 70 individuals remained. Since the launch of 'Project Tiger' in the early 1970s, Kanha has been one of the Project's key Tiger Reserves and, because its wide meadows are so suited to successful Tiger viewing, it is one of the best places in the world to

search for them. Besides Tigers, we can also hope to observe plenty of Sambar (*Rusa unicolor*), Spotted Deer/Chital (*Axis axis*). We should also see Gaur (*Bos gaurus*), Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*), Northern Plains Langur (*Semnopithecus entellus*), Golden Jackal (*Canis aureus*), and with luck Leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) and Indian Wild dogs/Dhole (*Cuon alpinus*). Around 120 species of birds are likely to be encountered around the Reserve during our stay, and these will be among the highlights of the tour. There is a good variety of birds of prey here, including Black-shouldered Kite (*Elanus caeruleus*), Crested Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis cheela*), White-eyed Buzzard (*Butastur teesa*), Shikra (*Accipiter badius*), and a variety of vultures (e.g., White-rumped Vulture *Gyps bengalensis*). Open country birds such as Painted Francolin (*Francolinus pictus*), Indian Roller (*Coracias benghalensis*), Yellow-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus malabaricus*) and Red-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus indicus*), and a variety of woodpeckers (Black-rumped Flameback *Dinopium benghalense*), pigeons (Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*), larks (Ashy-crowned Sparrow-Lark *Eremopterix griseus*), pipits (Paddyfield Pipit *Anthus rufulus*), and drongos (Black Drongo *Dicrurus macrocercus*) are common. In the forests, the elusive Malabar Pied Hornbill (*Anthracoceros coronatus*), Black-headed Oriole (*Oriolus xanthornus*), and a selection of flycatchers (Tickell's Blue Flycatcher *Cyornis tickelliae*), babblers (Jungle Babbler *Argya striata*), and Common Tailorbird *Orthotomus sutorius* may be found. Sloth Bear (*Melursus ursinus*) and two of India's lowland antelopes – Chousingha (*Tetracerus quadricornis*) and the beautiful Blackbuck (*Antelope cervicapra*) can also be spotted in the rolling meadows of Kanha.

During our stay at Kanha our aim will be to observe, enjoy and photograph the Reserve's many species of mammals and birds. Naturally, we will spend a great deal of time looking for Tigers, and with luck we may see and photograph this magnificent animal. Although Kanha is one of the very best reserves for Tiger sightings, and we will be going at one of the best times of year, we cannot guarantee them!



Our daily programme will include both morning and evening jeep drives inside the Tiger Reserve. These are, of course, all optional and there may be times when you'd prefer to relax back at the lodge and recharge your batteries, though the more game drives you do, the more you'll see! You are likely to see Tigers as well as most of the other wildlife you will encounter during the holiday on these game drives.

Each morning, we will aim to leave our lodge at around 5.45am, taking a picnic breakfast with us which we can eat at one of several designated stopping places, and we'll stay in the Tiger Reserve until midday, when it closes (during the hottest part of the day). We will return to the Reserve when it opens again at 3 or 4pm, depending on the season, and stay there until dusk, at around 6.30pm (From 1st November to 15th February the Reserve opens in the afternoon at 3pm and our stay will last until dusk at around 5.30pm) In the middle of the day, after lunch, there will be time to rest or go on short birdwatching walks around the lodge.

At some stage we will also visit the Kanha Museum, located inside the park, which contains fascinating, well-conceived exhibits relating to the entire ecosystem and its fauna and flora. Outside Kanha Tiger Reserve we will

be able to enjoy the area's birdlife on foot, walking being forbidden in all the Tiger Reserves of India, for obvious reasons!

Day 11

Monday

Overnight Train to Agra

We must reluctantly leave Kanha behind today, making a morning start to retrace our steps by car to Jabalpur. From there, we will take the overnight sleeper train to Agra.

Day 12

Tuesday

Agra & Delhi

We arrive in the fascinating Moghul city of Agra in the morning. After refreshing ourselves at a city hotel we will head straight for Agra's most famous monument, the Taj Mahal. We will spend the whole morning enjoying the magnificent atmosphere of the Taj, its splendid gardens with their backdrop of the Yamuna River and the bird life within the grounds. Later, after tearing ourselves away from the magical Taj, we will visit Itmad-ud-Daulah (meaning 'baby Taj'), the mausoleum of Mirza Ghiyas Beg (the grandfather of Mumtaz Mahal, the lady of the Taj). This monument is as magnificent as the Taj Mahal itself and set in idyllic riverside gardens. Agra Fort, too, is a marvellous structure, with towering walls 2½km high. By the time we are ready to board our evening express train to Delhi, we'll have had a wonderfully cultural day.



Taj Mahal, Agra

Arriving in Delhi three hours later, we will check into our 4-star hotel, Hotel Roseate House or Pride Plaza hotel for some rest and a good night's sleep!

Day 13

Wednesday

London

We transfer to Delhi airport to catch a British Airways mid-morning flight to London. We are due to arrive in London by afternoon.

NB. Please note that the itinerary offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some reordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Chambal & Bharatpur Extension

(The minimum number of people required to run this extension is five; however, we may decide to operate it with fewer people, at our discretion, with local guides.)

Cost from: £1,495

Single room supplement: £295

Day 12

Tuesday

Chambal

After spending today enjoying the historic monuments of Agra, we will travel by road for one hour to Chambal, where we will spend the night at the Chambal Safari Lodge, a simple but comfortable eco-lodge (with private facilities) ideally situated for tomorrow's exploration of the region. The National Chambal Sanctuary, on the Chambal river, is a refuge for the rare and endangered Gharial and the Ganges River Dolphin. The area is best explored on boats, and we will be taking a spectacular wildlife viewing boat trip on the calm and gentle Chambal



Chambal Safari Lodge (left and centre)



Birdwatching in the grounds (right)

river. The River Chambal is one of India's most beautiful and least polluted river systems. In 1979 a 400km stretch of the river was given 'protected area status' with the creation of the National Chambal Sanctuary, which spans 635 sq km and protects this pristine river ecosystem, complete with its varied flora, aquatic life and avifauna, among which is an interesting selection of rare and exotic species. These include the elusive and endangered Ganges River Dolphin, both Marsh Mugger and Gharial Crocodile, a variety of freshwater turtles, otters and a great many species of fish. The riverside habitats of the Chambal also offer excellent birdwatching opportunities, and the chance to see species such as River Tern, the increasingly uncommon Black-bellied Tern, Great Black-headed Gull and the bizarre Indian Skimmer, often to be found resting on sandbars in mid-river. Other attractions include the beautiful Small Pratincole, the Greater Thick-knee and many other waterbirds, including Little and Great Cormorants, Grey Heron, Cattle Egret, Lesser Whistling Duck, Bar-headed Goose, Ruddy Shelduck, Comb Duck, Spot-billed Duck, Red-crested Pochard, Osprey, Black-winged Stilt, Little Ringed and Kentish Plovers, River and Red-wattled

Lapwings, Common and Spotted Redshanks, Greenshank, Green, Wood and Common Sandpipers, and Little and Temminck's Stints. Other species present in the area include Black Kite, Steppe Eagle, Indian Peafowl, Rose-ringed (or Ring-necked) Parakeet, Indian Roller, White-throated and Pied Kingfishers, Sand Lark, Plain Martin, Barn and Wire-tailed Swallows, White, Masked and White-browed Wagtails, Large Grey and Jungle Babblers, Common and Bank Mynas, Black Drongo and House Crow.



Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*) basking in the sun, Chambal river

Days 13 – 15

Wednesday – Friday

Bharatpur



After spending almost the whole day at Chambal, we will complete it with a 3-hour drive to Bharatpur. Here we will be based for three nights at The Birder's Inn, situated just outside the Sanctuary. This small privately owned lodge offers 24 spacious rooms that overlook a garden populated with fruit trees that attract various garden birds. You have all the necessary modern comforts like air-conditioning, swimming pool, hot and cold running water, a multi-cuisine restaurant & grill that serves a delectable variety of dishes.

Keoladeo Ghana National Park at Bharatpur (otherwise known as Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary) is arguably the finest bird reserve in the world, and certainly the best known. Formerly a shooting preserve of the Rajput maharajahs of Bharatpur, it covers just 29 sq km but contains a remarkable diversity of habitats. The wetlands – marshes and flooded 'jheels' – are contained within acacia-lined

'bunds', or embankments, and irrigated by a system of canals and sluices. Around them lie semi-arid grasslands and scrubland and some excellent broadleaved Kadam woodland. Over 350 species of birds have been recorded in the park and in just three days we are likely to see about 100 of them. Among these will be an unequalled array of wetland species, a great variety of vultures, eagles, hawks, falcons and owls, plus numerous small passerines. As well as birds, the park has an excellent variety of wild animals. Nilgai (or Blue Bull), Sambar and Spotted Deer, Wild Boar, Golden Jackal and two species of mongoose are all common. The Indian Rock Python is another highlight that is usually seen. We have two days to enjoy this exceptional feast of wildlife, and the superb photographic opportunities that it presents.

Day 16

Saturday

Delhi

After a final half-day's birding at Bharatpur, it will be time to drive to Delhi (a 4-hour journey). Here we will transfer to our Hotel Roseate House or Pride Plaza for some rest and a good night's sleep!

Day 17

Sunday

London

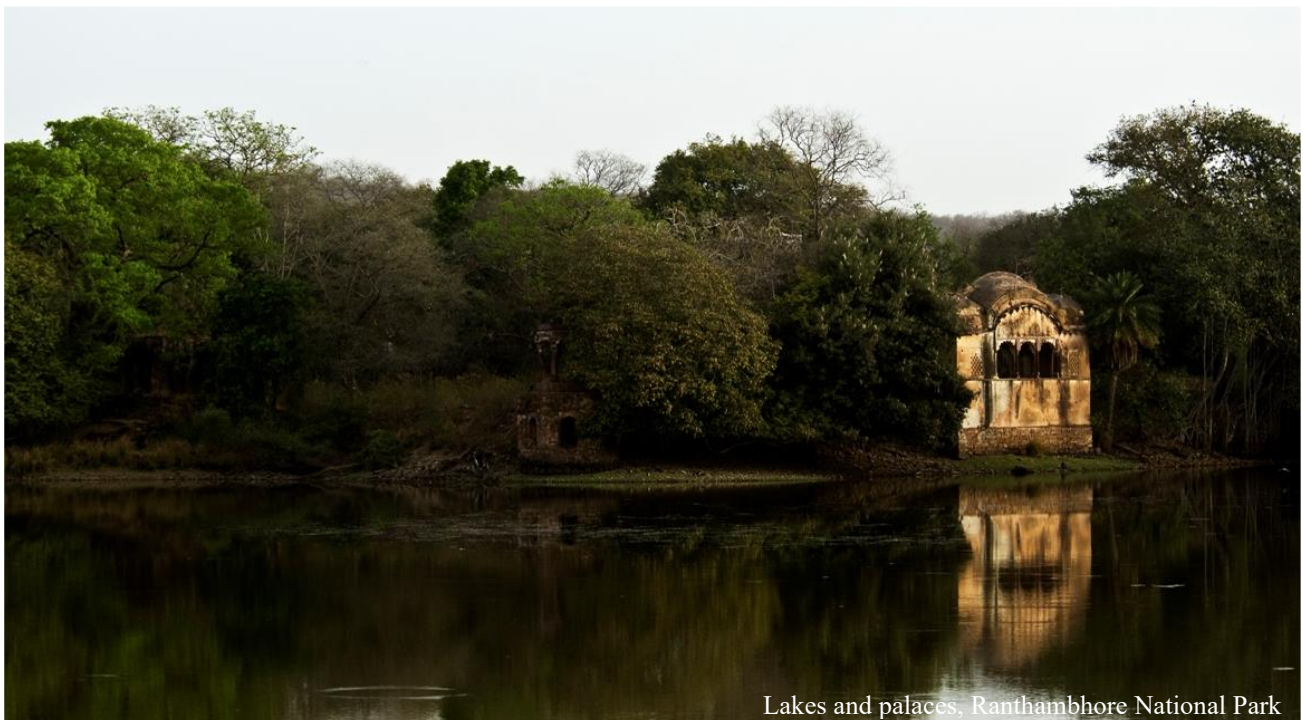
We transfer to Delhi airport to catch a British Airways mid-morning flight to London. We are due to arrive in London by afternoon.

Bharatpur & Ranthambore Extension

(The minimum number of people required to run this extension is five; however, we may decide to operate it with fewer people, at our discretion, with local guides.)

Cost from: £1,495

Single room supplement £295



Lakes and palaces, Ranthambore National Park

Day 12

Tuesday

Bharatpur

After our day enjoying the historic monuments of Agra, we will drive this evening to Bharatpur and spend the night at The Birder's Inn, situated just outside the Sanctuary. This small privately owned lodge offers 24 spacious rooms that overlook a garden populated with fruit trees that attract various garden birds. You have all the necessary modern comforts like air-conditioning, swimming pool, hot and cold running water, a multi-cuisine restaurant & grill that serves a delectable variety of dishes.

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Blue Bull (Nilgai) (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*)



Oriental Darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*)

Among these will be an unequalled array of wetland species, a great variety of vultures, eagles, hawks, falcons and owls, plus numerous small landbirds. As well as birds, the park has an excellent variety of other wild animals. Nilgai (or Blue Bull), Sambar and Spotted Deer, Wild Boar, Asiatic Jackal and two species of mongoose are all common, and this is one of the few places in India where the rare Fishing Cat may occasionally be seen. The Indian Rock Python is another highlight that is usually seen.

On this extension we can offer just one early morning excursion into the sanctuary to enjoy this exceptional feast of wildlife, but those of you who make the worthwhile effort to rise early and enjoy one of the best birdwatching times of the day will not be disappointed!

Day 13

Wednesday

Bharatpur to Ranthambore

We will leave Bharatpur mid-morning to drive to Ranthambore (a 4-hour journey). There we will be based for our 3-night stay at ‘Tiger Den’ or similar. This afternoon we will be at leisure. This will give us some opportunity to rest during our hectic schedule.

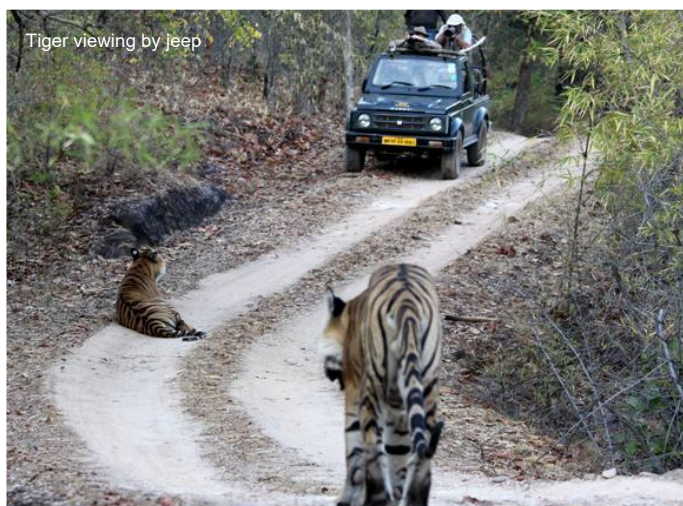
Days 14 – 15

Thursday – Friday

Ranthambore (National Park &) Tiger Reserve

Ranthambore is widely considered to be one of India's most beautiful Tiger reserves. Encircled by a series of high escarpments, the forests, lakes and dry scrub that make up the park are dotted with old forts and temples, creating a wonderful atmosphere for both bird and mammal viewing among a landscape oozing with ancient Rajput history and Rajasthani culture. Ranthambore is perhaps most famous for being one of the original 'Project Tiger' reserves and it provides one of the best opportunities anywhere in India of seeing a Tiger.

Each morning we will take a safari into the park between 6:30am and 10am (Oct, Feb and Mar) or 7.00am to 10.30am (Nov-Jan) or 6.00am to 9.30am (Apr-Jun), leaving after tea and biscuits, in order to gain our place in the entrance queue. We will return to the Reserve when it opens again at 2:00pm, 2.30 pm or 3:00pm, depending on the season, and stay there until dusk, at around 6pm. These timings can change anytime without prior notice. In the middle of the day, after lunch, there will be time to rest or go on short birdwatching walks around the lodge.



Whether or not you see a Tiger on this holiday, you cannot fail to be impressed by the sheer variety and number of other mammals and birds that make the Reserve their home. Common Langurs are abundant, as are both Spotted (Chital) and Sambar Deer; the latter often feeding so far out into the lakes that only their heads show above the water. Nilgai, the largest of India's antelopes, are also fairly common. For the very fortunate there is also a chance of an encounter with a Sloth Bear, a Leopard or perhaps a Chinkara Antelope (Indian Gazelle). Marsh Mugger Crocodiles are common in the lakes and monitor lizards are frequently seen around their shores. In addition to the mammals and reptiles, we will also see a wonderful diversity of birds. Flocks of Peafowl are on



Yellow-wattled Lapwing (*Vanellus malabaricus*)

almost constant show while, on the lakes, Cotton Pygmy Geese and both Bronze-winged and Pheasant-tailed Jacanas are common. The surrounding woodland and grasslands hold such species as Black-rumped Flameback Woodpecker, Tickell's Blue Flycatcher, Rufous-tailed Finch Lark (an Indian endemic), Painted Spurfowl, Jungle Bush Quail, Small Minivet and Stork-billed Kingfisher. In addition there is also the opportunity to find up to five species of owl, including Brown Fish Owl, Dusky Eagle Owl and Collared Scops Owl. On our morning and evening game drives we will be accompanied by

local guides, whose expert knowledge of the park can be invaluable when tracking down some of the more elusive species.

An optional visit to the spectacular ruins of Ranthambore Fort, whose massive battlements dominate the Reserve, are well worth a visit and afford a wonderful vantage point over the rolling hills which comprise Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, as well as the adjacent semi-desert areas where such dry-country birds as Indian Courser, Yellow-wattled Lapwing and sandgrouse species may be found.

Day 16

Saturday

Delhi

After a final early morning game drive, we must leave Ranthambore for our return road journey to Delhi (a journey of about six hours). Here we will transfer to a 5-star hotel, Roseate house or Pride Plaza for some rest and a good night's sleep!

Day 17

Sunday

London

We transfer to Delhi airport to catch a British Airways mid-morning flight to London. We are due to arrive in London by afternoon.

Grading

This is a mammal and birdwatching tour, and accordingly the walking is graded A (easy). Unlike any other wildlife tour, it focuses on a lengthy study of one Tiger Reserve (the best for Tigers!), and avoids the tiring travelling that is a necessary component of some more typical wildlife tours in India which journey to one park after another. In November, central and northern India enter the early phase of winter, offering some of the most pleasant conditions for travel and wildlife viewing. At Kanha National Park, the post-monsoon greenery is still present, but drying trails and thinning vegetation improve wildlife visibility. Early morning safari drives can be crisp, with temperatures around 10–15°C, so a fleece or light jacket is recommended, though not as heavy as in peak winter. Afternoons warm up to a comfortable 25–28°C, making layered clothing ideal. In Agra and Delhi, the weather is dry and clear, with mild mornings and comfortably warm days, perfect for sightseeing without the crowds of peak season. Bharatpur and the Chambal region begin attracting migratory birds, making this an excellent time for birdwatching in soft golden light. November combines vibrant landscapes, active wildlife, and pleasant temperatures—an ideal transition between monsoon lushness and winter sharpness.



Striped Hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*)

Weather

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March, the dry season begins to take hold, and central India's landscapes shift to earthy tones. At Kanha, the grasslands and water sources begin to shrink, concentrating wildlife activity and making sightings increasingly rewarding. Early mornings are still mild and may call for a light fleece, but by mid-morning, temperatures rise quickly, reaching 30°C or more, especially in the open jeeps. Sun protection and hydration become crucial. Agra and Delhi are noticeably warmer, though still bearable, with clear skies and fewer foggy mornings than in winter. In Bharatpur and Chambal, birdlife remains active—though many migratory species begin their return journeys by late March. Overall, March offers excellent game viewing and cultural touring, but travelers should prepare for the building heat, particularly in the afternoons.

If you have any questions about weather, temperatures and packing, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Clothing

A separate clothing list will be sent to you on booking. Please inspect it thoroughly.

Inclusions / Exclusions

The following costs are included in the price of the holiday:

- International flights in economy class.
- Full board accommodation throughout (i.e. breakfast, lunch and dinner) except for main meals required in Delhi (the range of restaurants here is exceptional, and well worth taking advantage of). We use comfortable tourist lodges with private facilities (as described in the text above).
- All transport and guiding.
- All wildlife excursions, park fees and reserve entry fees.

The following costs are **not** included and should be budgeted for:

- Online visa (currently US\$25-US\$40 plus the bank transaction charges of 2.5%).
- Drinks (though most lodges in the national parks provide boiled drinking water or a bottle of water with their compliments).
- Discretionary tipping (leaders and drivers). During the course of your holiday you will receive periodic assistance from a wide variety of enthusiastic, friendly and helpful local guides, jeep drivers, trackers, hotel porters, waiters and other local people. The tipping of these individuals will be handled by your tour leader(s) and its cost is included within the price of your holiday.
- Any other personal spending e.g. souvenirs, laundry, camera fees.

Flights

We use the direct scheduled service of British Airways for most of our tours to India from London Heathrow Terminal 5 because they offer an excellent all-round service (including connecting departures from most of the regional airport, though such departures from regional airports will be subject to an additional charge of around **£295**). **If you are not happy with these flights, please contact Rajan as soon as you book the holiday – he will be happy to discuss alternative options with you.**

If you would prefer to travel World Travellers Plus (normally available at a supplement charge of around **£995**) or Business (normally available at a supplement charge of around **£3,995**) or if you would prefer to travel from regional airports, please let us know at the time of booking so that we can make the necessary arrangements.

Checklist & Previous Tour Reports

Where available, these are automatically provided on booking, and will gladly be sent to you before, if you wish for a more detailed preview.

Tour leaders

This tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders : Yusuf Rizvi, Swanand Deshpande, Shaan Shubiah, Rishin Basu Roy, Vedant Thite, Snehaa Sundaram, Pranad Patil or Akarsh Suresh

National Parks remain closed to public access on

All National Parks in Madhya Pradesh are currently closed on Wednesday afternoons. This includes Pench, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Satpura and Panna Reserves. The Zone 1- 5 area of Ranthambore Tiger Reserve remains closed on Wednesday, and Zone 6 to 10 will remain closed on Tuesday for an entire day.

Where the weekly park closure affects, we arrange alternative natural history activities either in the periphery of the National Parks or in nearby wildlife habitats.

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Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures, new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking. Please note that our Just Tigers! departures tend to book up a long time in advance. Please book as early as possible to avoid disappointment.

Please provide us with your passport details (passport number, date of issue, date of expiry and your date of birth) at the time of booking. It is important to note that game safaris will be booked using the same passport details that you provide us at the time of booking, and it will not be possible to change these details once they have been booked. (If you renew your passport after booking, please also bring the old passport whose details you gave us at the time of booking as this will also be required).

Early Booking on Tiger Tours is essential!

The new regulations, including a drastic reduction in the number of jeeps and visitors permitted to enter such popular reserves as Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Pench each day, meant that those booking late could often not be accommodated. The simple fact is that the number of beds available at the lodges servicing each of these parks now far exceeds the tiny number of visitors permitted to enter each day. We cannot therefore emphasise strongly enough that early booking is essential. You really do need to book now if you are to secure a place on a tour that visits one of these Tiger Reserves next season.

Nick Acheson reflects on a tour that's so much more than Just Tigers.

Not Just Tigers

Kanha National Park in Central India has long been a Naturetrek favourite. It's the home of our perennially successful Just Tigers! tour and it features prominently in two more superb tours: Tiger Direct! and Tiger Marathon. Little wonder as it's a serenely beautiful place: cool forests of sal trees echo with the sci-fi whistles of Black-hooded Orioles and the resonant purrs of Brown-headed Barbets while golden grassland nearby is full of the comings and goings of stately Barasingha.

Above all, though, it's for the Tigers that we come here. This is among the very best places on earth for watching these peerless animals and recently the Tiger-watching here has been so good as to be almost embarrassing. It's all to do with a magnificent male Tiger known as Munna. He made his Naturetrek debut in November 2008 when, still a handsome teen, he delighted our second ever Tiger Direct! group with point-blank photo opportunities in the hills at Umarpani. It was clear even then, as he strode nonchalantly past a line of jeeps, that he was destined to become an A-list Tiger. Replete now with females and three cubs which are quite as bold as their father, Munna has become one of India's most charismatic Tigers.

What luck for me therefore to have led Naturetrek's final Just Tigers! tour of spring 2011 when Munna and his family, plus countless other enchanting creatures, were much in evidence. The tone for the tour was set on our first afternoon in the park. Golden Jackals tiptoed along the roadside before we reached the park gate, Chital bucks nodded their magnificent antlers all along the road, every tree seemed decked with languid Common Langurs, and muscle-heavy Gaur with glossy coats strode magnificently from stands of bamboo. All of these delights fell almost by the wayside when we reached the beautiful grassland known as Kanha Meadows; for here a group of jeeps was already watching one of Munna's handsome cubs in short grass. My first instinct on seeing a Tiger, especially the first Tiger of a tour, is to look away from the cat and along the line of jeeps to make sure that all my clients are present. Mission accomplished. All of my jeeps had arrived, everyone was looking in awe at the fantastic feline, all faces were beaming and not a few of my clients were shedding their first Tiger tears. The cub wandered into a

stand of long grass along a stream, but the Tiger who emerged from the clump was not him but his mother. This radio-collared female is among the most richly orange Tigers in Kanha and, while not courting us quite so brazenly as her cubs or their father, she has regularly been admired by Naturetrek groups.

These are but a few of the memories – and a few of the Tigers – from a hugely successful tour. I could wax lyrical too about the Shikras displaying over Munna's head, the broken-eared Asian Wild Dog who made several appearances, or the Asian Paradise Flycatchers quivering their silver-ribbon tails in the bamboo while the Kisli male Tiger lounged in his bath during the sweltering heat of the day. In fact I could witter on for hours about this glorious park and its inhabitants.

But I won't so you'll just have to come with us and see. Why not join us on one of our unrivalled Tiger-watching tours to Kanha and pay court to Munna yourselves?



A yawning Royal Bengal Tiger



Royal Bengal Tiger in the deciduous jungles of India



Lesser Goldenback Woodpecker (*Dinopium benghalense*)



Blue Bull (Nilgai) (*Boselaphus tragocamelus*)

Highlights

An amazing tour. One particular highlight was of a Sloth Bear. Usually, a Sloth Bear sighting is uncommon. If we get to see them, they will usually be at a distance, but the sighting we had was rarest of the rare! Initially we saw it at a distance in the woods, then we realised there was a Tigress with cubs just 200 meters away from where we saw the bear. We rushed and saw the mother walking away towards the bushes. When we came back to the Sloth Bear spot, we saw it walking parallel to the road and then it crossed the road and went towards a Ficus tree which was

next to the road. We quickly positioned our vehicle and observed its behaviour for quite a long time. The bear sniffed the tree and stood up upright and started rubbing his back against the tree. The it laid down next to the tree on his back and started playing with the trunk of the tree. In between it raised his head to look at us and then it went back to doing its own stuff. Amazing!

Picture Credit – Lu Martin, Andrew and Robert Farrow, Colin Rownes, Particia Pearl, Louise Donovan, Anurag Yadav, Vedant Thite