



# Temples, Monasteries and Tea Gardens: Sikkim, Darjeeling, Dharamsala and Beyond

8 NOV – 24 NOV 2015

Code: 21540

Tour Leaders **Assoc. Prof. Alex McKay**

Physical Ratings 

Travel to India's spectacular foothills. With the snow-capped Himalayan peaks as a backdrop visit majestic Tibetan Buddhist monasteries like Rumtek in Sikkim & the Dalai Lama's centre above Dharamsala

## Overview

### Tour Highlights

This tour is limited to 14 participants

- Visit spectacular Tibetan Buddhist monasteries (including the Dalai Lama's own Namgyal monastery), in company with Himalayan historical and cultural specialist [Dr Alex McKay](#), who has spent many years in these regions.
- Join elated pilgrims from throughout India as they make twilight offerings of flowers and candles on the banks of the sacred Ganges river at Haridwar.
- Discover the former Himalayan Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim and learn about its colourful history and vibrant culture from leading experts at Gangtok's Tibetology Institute, where Dr McKay is a visiting fellow.
- Mingle with families enjoying colourful evening displays of Hindu gods at the great *Diwali* festival, ('the festival of lights') and learn about their beliefs.
- See a rich variety of India's wild birds and animals in one of India's best-managed game reserves.
- Learn about the Anglo-Indian culture of 'Hill-stations' and the fascinating history of the Himalayan peoples from ancient to modern times.
- Wander through colourful bazaars in small towns and vibrant shopping centres in India's sophisticated capital, New Delhi.
- Encounter the Tibetan system of medicine and discuss the latest discoveries in scientific 'mind-body' research with their experts.
- Explore Masrur, an ancient rock-cut temple hidden in rugged hill country, as well as an atmospheric old colonial church in the woods.
- Talk with English-speaking Tibetan monks about their life and beliefs.
- Admire the snow-capped Himalayan mountains that dominate the landscape.
- Savour the incredible range of Himalayan orchids found in Sikkim.
- Tour a Darjeeling tea garden and sample its finest teas.
- Enjoy a dazzling range of Indian regional cuisines in some of North India's best eating places.
- Relax in comfortable hotels – mostly British colonial retreats such as the [Elgin Norkhill](#), that have been selected for their historical heritage – and savour their glorious views of snow-capped mountains or sacred rivers.

### 17 days in India: Sikkim, Darjeeling, Dharamsala & Beyond

Overnight Kalimpong (1 night) • Gangtok (3 nights) • Darjeeling (2 nights) • Haridwar (2 nights) • Rajaji National Park (1 night) • Haridwar (1 night) • Delhi (1 night) • McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala (4 nights) • Delhi (1 night).

### Overview

An exclusive tour through northern India's spectacular foothills, with renowned Himalayan specialist Dr Alex McKay – former lecturer at London University's School of Oriental and African Studies. Alex will escort us through the extraordinarily varied cultures of this frontier between great mountains and crowded plains. With snow-capped Himalayan peaks as a backdrop (but no high altitudes included – maximum is Darjeeling at 2050m), we'll visit majestic Tibetan Buddhist monasteries including Rumtek in Sikkim and the Dalai Lama's own centre above Dharamsala, home to India's Tibetan community in exile. We'll enjoy an evening's entertainment from the Tibetan Performing Arts group, gain insight into Tibetan medicine at their traditional hospital and admire the remarkable weaving skills on display at their handicraft centre. We'll take

in the sunrise over the mountain tops from Tiger Hill in Darjeeling, ride the famous Toy Train through the hills, tour a local tea garden while sampling wares, and admire the colours of Sikkim's famous orchids. We'll immerse ourselves in the unique culture of the formerly Buddhist kingdom of Sikkim, enjoying talks with scholars, monks and everyday people. We'll embrace colourful festivals, including *Diwali*, the Hindu Festival of Lights, where colourful displays of Hindu gods line the streets and experience an Indian classical music concert. We'll visit amazing Hindu temples carved out of solid rock in ancient times, and take in wayside shrines of local deities. At Haridwar, a sacred city where the Ganges emerges from the hills, we'll relax watching Ganga Aarti – the timeless ritual worship of the river at sunset. We'll observe India's birds, elephants and other wildlife in their natural habitat at Rajaji National Park; explore ancient hilltop forts and wander in bustling markets; admire the incredible endurance of the early climbers at the Everest museum; sample India's wonderful regional cuisines and relax in specially selected hotels, many still redolent of the Days of the Raj. We'll taste highlights of Delhi – Connaught Place's glowing shops and the quiet but spectacular Bahá'í Lotus temple – before returning home with new memories forged by a very special part of India.

## Leaders



### Assoc. Prof. Alex McKay

is a former lecturer and research fellow at the London University School of Oriental and African Studies. He has spent many years travelling widely in the Himalayas and has published many books and articles on the region.

Dr Alex McKay has been interested in Asia since he travelled there overland, becoming a relief worker in northern Bangladesh during the famines and smallpox epidemics of the early 1970s. Since then he has spent around six years travelling and researching in India and its Asian neighbours. Much of his published work concerns Tibet, which he first visited when it opened to Western travellers in 1984, and in 1986 he was one of the first Europeans to cross the newly-opened border (the world's highest) between Pakistan and China en route to Kashgar and Central Asia.

After funding his travels working on North Sea oil rigs and as a private investigator in Sydney, his love of the region finally led him to study South and Central Asian history and culture at the School of Oriental and African Studies (London University), where he obtained a BA (Hons.) in Religious Studies and History and PhD in South Asian History (1995). Much of that time was spent on fieldwork in the Himalayas and in the National Archives in New Delhi, where he lived for a year. Dr McKay subsequently became a Lecturer in South Asian history and a research fellow at both the University of London (SOAS & UCL), and the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden (The Netherlands). He remains a visiting fellow at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology in Sikkim and the ANU in Canberra. He has published extensively, given more than 50 seminar and conference papers in a dozen countries, and organised academic conferences in several locations, notably Bhutan and Sikkim (India). In 2006 he took early retirement to return to Australia, where he lives in the Manning valley (NSW) with his artist wife, and he has recently completed a history of the multi-faith pilgrimage to Mount Kailas in western Tibet.

Alex has travelled in many remote corners of Asia, and his interests have always been in the actual world of the people there, rather than in Western academic theories. He most enjoys the fact that his works are widely read by the peoples of the Himalayas and he maintains friendships there with people from all ranges of society. Alex has also travelled extensively in the Arab and Islamic worlds, and has led ASA tours not only to Bhutan (2009, 2011 & 2014), Tibet (2010), and the Silk Road (2011, 2013) but also to Morocco (2014).

His publications have mostly concerned the colonial encounter between East and West, particularly in the political, personal, and medical spheres; Buddhist, Hindu, Sikh, Islamic, and local tribal religious culture – particularly pilgrimage and asceticism; the early history of tribes and migrations; as well as modern sports and pastimes – with his most requested article being on football in Tibet! He remains a keen supporter of the Bhutanese football team.



## Itinerary

Daily activities described in this itinerary may be rotated and/or modified in order to accommodate changes in museum opening hours, flight schedules & road conditions. All meals are included in the tour price and are indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=evening meal.

### Kalimpong, West Bengal - 1 night

Day 1: Sunday 8 November, Bagdogra – Kalimpong

- Arrival at Bagdogra Airport on the ASA 'designated' flight 9W711 at 1240hrs
- Afternoon Tea and Introductory Talk, Kalimpong
- Orientation Walk in Kalimpong

We arrive at Bagdogra Airport and transfer to Kalimpong. Our journey takes us through teak forests and along the banks of the Teesta river before the gentle climb to Kalimpong. This small town was once the centre of the wool trade with Tibet and under the British it became a hill-station, one of the towns to which the colonial government retreated in the hot season to get away from the sweltering heat of the plains. Kalimpong is now a laid-back multi-ethnic market town, where the fertile soil encourages flourishing trees and gardens. As in most other destinations on the tour, we have selected a hotel of history and character, in this case the Himalaya, a place redolent of the days of the British Empire (the Raj). It was built in the 1920s as the family home of David Macdonald, the British Trade Agent in Tibet, and was subsequently converted into a hotel that remains in the Macdonald family.

Note: due to the arrival time of flight, bottled water and fruit will be supplied for the drive. Fruit bowls will also be available in your hotel room. (Overnight Kalimpong, West Bengal) D

### Gangtok, Sikkim - 3 nights

Day 2: Monday 9 November, Kalimpong – Gangtok

- Dr. Graham's Homes School, Kalimpong
- Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok
- Talk on Sikkimese culture by research officer, Dr Anna Balikci-Denjongpa
- Damovar Ropeway (Optional)
- Sikh Temple – Gangtok Gudwara
- Sikkimese Cuisine

Former hill-stations retain many traces of the British era, and we begin the morning with a visit to Dr Graham's Homes School. Established by a long-serving Scottish missionary to house Anglo-Indian orphans, it continues to be run on British public school lines. We then make the 3-hour journey north to Gangtok, the capital of the Indian state of Sikkim which until 1975 was a semi-independent Himalayan Buddhist kingdom. The road crosses the fast-flowing Teesta river before climbing steadily through thick jungle-covered hills to Gangtok, which straddles a mountain ridge offering wonderful views of the world's third highest mountain, Mount Kanchenjunga. Gangtok, an ethnic melting pot of Sikkimese Bhutias, Lepchas, Nepalis, and Bengalis remains relatively small, rustic and gently paced, with a distinct character of its own.

Our hotel here was once the guesthouse of the Sikkimese royal family and contains many photographs and paintings of historical interest, as well as offering gracious hospitality and wonderful views.

In the afternoon we will learn more about Sikkimese culture from the leading anthropologist of the region, Research Officer Dr Balikci-Denjongpa, who will welcome us on a private tour of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (better known as the Tibetology Museum). The Institute is a centre for the study of Buddhism that was established in 1956 by the present Dalai Lama and the last Chogyal (Buddhist king) of Sikkim in order to preserve the Tibetan Buddhist culture that was already under threat in its homeland. Along with a library of Tibetan and European language books and manuscripts, items that were brought there from Tibet include a huge collection of masks, Buddhist scriptures, statues, and tapestries, along with over two hundred Buddhist icons. A Buddhist monk who has worked there for many years will answer any questions you might have on these items – or on Buddhism and the monastic life!

You will then have the option to take a short ropeway ride which gives a breathtaking view of the scenery around Gangtok before enjoying, in a change of cultures typical of this multi-ethnic town, the *bhagans* (evening song worship) at a small Sikh temple nearby. The Sikh religion is an offshoot of Hinduism that arose in the Punjab more than 500 years ago and Sikhs are very much in a minority in Sikkim, but they welcome outsiders and we will learn the basics of their faith in this remote corner of their world.

Tonight we dine with local hosts at a restaurant specialising in Sikkim's unique cuisine, which features many local plants and flowers. (Overnight Gangtok, Sikkim) BLD

### Day 3: Tuesday 10 November, Gangtok – Rumtek – Gangtok

- Rumtek Monastery, East Sikkim
- Lecture: *Tibetan/Sikkimese Buddhism and its monasteries*
- Jawaharlal Nehru Botanical Gardens
- Orientation walk of Gangtok

Today we drive to the spectacular and colourful Rumtek, one of Sikkim's most sacred Buddhist monasteries. This is the seat of the Karmapa Lama, the leader of one of the four major Tibetan sects, the Kagyu. Rumtek was the focus of international media attention in 2000 after the present head of the order, the seventeenth Karmapa, fled Lhasa and sought refuge here. The monastery houses some of the world's rarest sacred Tibetan Buddhist scriptures and religious objects in its reliquary and houses several hundred monks.

Reconstructed in the 1960s, the new building is modelled on a similar monastery in Lhasa, Tibet, but much of the old monastery still remains, and we will also wander through this quiet and relaxing setting.

Sikkim is a botanist's delight, famous for its extraordinarily rich plant life and particularly its wonderful orchids. The great plant collector J.D. Hooker, a friend of Charles Darwin, worked here in the early 19th century and thanks to men like Hooker you may recognise many plants that are now common in Australian gardens. To gain further insights into the botanical richness of Sikkim we will visit the Jawaharlal Nehru Botanical Gardens, near Rumtek, which house many species of orchid and as many as fifty different species of tree, including many oaks.

In the evening we will have time to join the local people as they promenade along the pedestrian thoroughfare in the centre of Gangtok, where traffic has been banned since 2008. We will join the many families enjoying the evening among shops full of supplies and souvenirs. (Overnight Gangtok, Sikkim) BLD

#### Day 4: Wednesday 11 November, Gangtok

- Deorali Orchid Sanctuary
- The Himalayan Zoological Park
- Lunch at Netuk House
- Gangtok: Handicrafts Centre and Thakurbari (Hindu) Temple
- Lecture: *An introduction to Hinduism*
- *Diwali* Festival – events to be confirmed

Gangtok's Deorali Orchid Sanctuary is renowned for its extensive collection of orchids, including many rare types. The tropical, humid climate of the north-east region of India is ideal for them and of 454 orchid species known to exist in the world, 200 are found in this sanctuary. Many of these will be in bloom when we visit. Besides orchids, about 40 genus of rhododendron can also be seen in the sanctuary.

We also visit the Himalayan Zoological Park, an important development in local wildlife conservancy which exhibits a variety of Himalayan fauna in their natural habitats. Among the animals on display are Sikkim's state animal – the red panda, as well as Himalayan black bear, snow leopards, barking deer, leopard cats, the Tibetan wolf, the masked palm civet, and the spotted deer.

Our lunch spot, Netuk House, is a small family-run hotel where traditional Sikkimese meals are served in the cosy dining room. There are great views from the terrace and verandahs of the city and mountains beyond.

After lunch we visit the state Handicrafts Centre to see traditional Sikkimese weavings and crafts being produced. We will then begin our encounter with Hinduism, the religion of the majority of Indians today, with a visit to the Thakurbari Temple, located in the heart of Gangtok. Established in 1935 on a prime piece of land donated by the then Maharaja of Sikkim, it is one of the oldest and best known Hindu temples in Sikkim.

Our visit to Gangtok coincides with *Diwali*, the colourful 'Festival of Lights', which is a major Hindu celebration for all the family. Following a lecture on Hinduism and its basic forms, we will view the brightly-lit displays of Hindu deities that line the streets of Gangtok before dining at our heritage hotel. (Overnight Gangtok, Sikkim) BLD

#### **Darjeeling, West Bengal - 2 nights**

#### Day 5: Thursday 12 November, Gangtok – Darjeeling

- Darjeeling: Tour of the Happy Valley Tea Estate
- Darjeeling Heritage Walk
- Lecture: *Reading a temple; the mandala concept*

We depart Gangtok for the morning drive to Darjeeling, the most renowned of the British hill-stations in eastern India. The road descends and ascends the jungle-covered hills where birds and monkeys flourish and wayside temples line the route. As we approach Darjeeling the jungle gives way to neatly-ordered tea-gardens, for Darjeeling has been synonymous with tea since it was introduced by the British during the 19th century.

In Darjeeling we will stay at the former summer residence of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar. Built in 1887, this colonial-style mansion is now a luxury Heritage Hotel and we will have time to appreciate its history and hospitality.

After lunch at our hotel, we visit a tea garden to see the journey of Darjeeling's famous crop from bush to cup, and of course to sample a selection of different varieties of tea.

Darjeeling's cool climate made it a favourite hill-station for British colonial officers seeking refuge from the summer heat on the plains, and it remains a favourite holiday and honeymoon spot for Indians today. In the late afternoon we join them for a guided walk among the colonial bungalows and along the shop-lined Mall, the centre of life in Darjeeling.

Following pre-dinner drinks and a lecture, 'Reading a temple; the mandala concept', we dine together at the hotel. (Overnight Darjeeling, West Bengal) BLD

#### Day 6: Friday 13 November, Darjeeling

- Sunrise at Tiger Hill/Observatory Hill
- Toy Train to Ghoom
- Yiga Choeling (Ghoom) Monastery
- Mountaineering Institute
- Afternoon at leisure – optional visit to Lloyd's Botanical Gardens, Everest Museum or walk around exterior of the Raj Bhavan of Darjeeling
- Lecture: *Pilgrimage and Sacred Landscape*

The day begins with an (optional) early morning visit to Tiger Hill to take in the spectacular sunrise over the snow-capped Himalayan peaks.

We then take the famous 'toy train', from Darjeeling to Ghoom, where we visit the historic Buddhist monastery and, time-permitting, the railway museum. The 'toy train' is a remarkable feat of engineering, providing a regular service on the narrow gauge line that winds slowly around the mountain ridges, offering views of both mountains and local farms and villages.

After returning to Darjeeling we visit the Mountaineering Institute which was for many years headed by Sir Edmund Hillary's Everest partner, Tenzing Norgay, a Sherpa who first came to Darjeeling as a young boy seeking work as a porter.

The remainder of the day is at leisure. We will have the option to take in more sites or to relax in the hotel gardens and enjoy the Himalayan views. You may wish to visit the Lloyd's Botanical Gardens or gain further insights into mountaineering with a visit to the Everest Museum, which also celebrates the



remarkable achievements of the early Himalayan climbers who were recently brought back into the spotlight in Wade Davis's enthralling book *Into the Silence*.

Following pre-dinner drinks and a lecture entitled 'Pilgrimage and Sacred Landscapes', we dine together at the hotel. (Overnight Darjeeling, West Bengal) BLD

### Haridwar, Uttarakhand - 2 nights

Day 7: Saturday 14 November, Darjeeling – Bagdogra – Delhi – Dehra Dun – Haridwar

- Fly Bagdogra – Delhi (9W 712 1320-1540)
- Fly Delhi – Dehra Dun (9W 2825 1810-1920)
- Coach to Haridwar

Today we fly from the eastern to the western edges of the Himalayas. On arrival we take a short (1.5hrs) coach journey to the sacred Hindu town of Haridwar. Our hotel, a traditional urban mansion converted into a comfortable hotel, is situated beside the river amidst bustling and brightly lit streets in the old bazaar. Snacks will be provided for our journey to Haridwar, and a late evening meal will be served at the hotel. (Overnight Haridwar, Uttarakhand) BLD

**Note:** Haridwar and Rishikesh are vegetarian and non-alcohol towns but alcohol and meat can be served at the Jungle camp in Rajaji National Park.

Day 8: Sunday 15 November, Haridwar – Rishikesh – Haridwar

- Rishikesh Bazaar and sacred bathing *ghats*
- Forest Walk to Neer Garh Waterfall
- Indian Classical Music (or dance) Performance
- Lecture: *Yoga, Tantra and Saddhus*

In the morning we drive to nearby Rishikesh, where the Ganges emerges onto the plains from the surrounding mountains. This was where the Beatles stayed when they made their famous visit to the *ashram* of the Maharishi, a famous Hindu spiritual guide, and there are many reminders of their presence here. We will stroll through the colourful Ramjula bridge market area beside the Ganges, with time to view the vibrant throng of pilgrims, travellers, and Indian holy men (*saddhus*) who are drawn to this ancient centre of Hinduism. You will soon begin to recognise the different types of pilgrims and religious figures and learn more about their lives and customs.

We will take lunch at a popular local eating place famed for its excellent northern Indian cuisine, as well as for its colourful 'living god' welcoming you, and its almost identical competitor next door.

In the afternoon will visit a local *ghat* (sacred bathing place) on the shores of the Ganges to observe both how the community there revolves around the age-old pilgrimage traffic and how the pilgrims perform their rituals. Time permitting, we can also enjoy a pleasant walk through the forest to a popular waterfall.

We return to our hotel in time to enjoy watching the timeless sunset rituals of worship on the riverbank. Haridwar has been a pilgrimage place for many centuries and neither the Mughal or British empires had much impact on this Hindu centre. Most of the town is devoted to religious activities and temples and *ashrams* (pilgrim hostels) line the banks of the Ganges river as it flows towards the north Indian plains. Devotional music and worship is constant here, but the pace is unhurried and the atmosphere tolerant and

welcoming.

Following a lecture on *Yoga, Tantra and Saddhus*, we dine together at the hotel, where we will also be treated to a performance of Indian classical music. (Overnight Haridwar, Uttarakhand) BLD

### Rajaji National Park, Dehradun, Uttarakhand - 1 night

Day 9: Monday 16 November, Haridwar – Rajaji National Park

- Temple and *ashram* tour of Haridwar
- Jeep Safari Tour, Rajaji National Park

Haridwar is a city of temples, ranging from wayside shrines to spectacular landmarks that attract followers from around the world. It regularly hosts the famous *Kumb Mela* that attracts many millions of pilgrims to its river banks.

In the morning we will visit two of the most famous of the many colourful temples, one dedicated to the great Indian deity Shiva and another to a local goddess, illustrating the blend of local and national gods that make up the Hindu pantheon. We will also visit an *ashram* where we can see how the majority of pilgrims are housed and provided for in this sacred city.

Late morning we transfer to Rajaji National Park, where after lunch, we take a Jeep Safari. Rajaji National Park is one of India's best wildlife reservations. The park, which will be flourishing after the rainy season, is home to more than 500 species of birds, as well as native animals including elephants, leopards, bears, hyenas, langurs, and monkeys. Dinner will be served in an open air restaurant at the luxury camp. (Overnight Jungle Camp, Rajaji National Park, Uttarakhand) BLD

### Haridwar, Uttarkhand - 1 night

Day 10: Tuesday 17 November, Rajaji National Park – Ananda – Haridwar

- Early morning Jungle Walk
- Lunch at 'Ananda in the Himalayas' (or The Glasshouse on The Ganges)
- Walk on Hari Ki Pauri Ghat and *Ganga arti* at hotel

The day begins with another opportunity for wildlife viewing as we take an early morning guided jungle walk (or elephant ride if available).

After this taste of the type of jungle that inspired the writings of Rudyard Kipling, we then drive into the richly forested hills for a private lunch at the 'Ananda in the Himalayas' resort, which follows the principles of *Ayurveda*, the earliest Indian healing system. In Indian *Ayurvedic* understanding food should both tempt the palate and assist health and well-being, and here we will take in the wonderful views over the Ganges valley while enjoying a meal especially created for us.\*\*

We then return to Haridwar to experience some of the extraordinary varieties of Hindu worship in and near our hotel, including the memorable evening worship of the river deity, when pilgrims set coconut boats filled with flowers and a burning candle afloat on the river to the accompaniment of sacred music. There is a reverential family atmosphere on the river-bank and you will be welcome to watch or join in as you choose.

You may also wish to spend more time wandering through the many colourful shops and stalls in the vicinity or enjoy a quiet evening looking out over the Ganges, with the campfires of the pilgrims and the flickering

lights of temples illuminating the scene. River dolphins can often be seen swimming past. (Overnight Haridwar, Uttarakhand) BLD

\*\* Our meal at the Ananda Restaurant is subject to confirmation, and may be replaced with lunch at The Glasshouse on The Ganges – set in a lychee and mango orchard of the Maharajas of Tehri Garhwal, with a garden of tropical plants.

### Delhi - 1 night

Day 11: Wednesday 18 November, Haridwar – Delhi

- Shatabi Express: Haridwar – Delhi (0625-1110)
- Afternoon in Delhi's Connaught Place

In the morning we experience a fully-escorted journey across the rich agricultural plains of north India to the capital city, New Delhi. We will be travelling on India's finest class of train, the Shatabi Express, which is still a very Indian experience. Indian railways are a unique blend of order and chaos, with ever-changing views of Indian life and culture both rich and poor, and the trip will offer us an unforgettable travel experience.

After transferring to our hotel we will have time to visit Connaught Place, the ordered and sophisticated centre of New Delhi. Shops include outlets for both modern and traditional Indian goods and fabrics, books, jewellery, and clothing as well as a variety of eating places and market stalls selling every conceivable item. In the evening we will relax over dinner at our luxury heritage hotel, The Maidens. (Overnight Delhi) BLD

### McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala - 4 nights

Day 12: Thursday 19 November, Delhi – Dharamsala

- Fly Delhi – Dharamsala (SG2191 1130-1255)
- Introductory walk through bazaar
- Lecture: *Tibet in Exile*

After a mid-morning flight we arrive in the market town of Dharamsala and transfer to McLeod Ganj, ('Little Tibet'), the small tree-fringed village above Dharamsala where the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan exile government have been based since 1959. We stay in a modern Tibetan-run hotel in the centre of the market area.

In the afternoon we will orientate ourselves with a leisurely walk through the bazaar and further our encounter with Tibetan Buddhist culture. The Tibetans are probably the world's most successful refugee community, and they attract a constant stream of both Indian and foreign visitors to their vibrant town. Tibetans have always had a reputation for being keen traders, and lining the roads there are numerous shops and stalls with a fascinating range of Tibetan books, music, food and fabrics.

Following a lecture entitled 'Tibet in Exile', we dine together at the hotel. (Overnight McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh) BLD

Day 13: Friday 20 November, Dharamsala

- Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute (Men-Tsee-Khang)
- Gamru Village School

- Lunch at Chonor House
- Tibetan Handicraft Centre
- Afternoon at leisure – optional forest walk

This morning we will learn about their medical system during a tour and talk at the centre for modern Tibetan medical practice. The Tibetan government in exile maintains both Western and Tibetan medical centres in Dharamsala, but their traditional medical practices have had considerable appeal internationally. They are also heavily involved in mind-body experimentation in collaboration with Western scientists and will be happy to share their knowledge of recent discoveries in this area.

While there are many wealthier and better schools in the area, we end our morning with a visit to a local village school where the children of migrant labourers from poorer regions of India receive their education courtesy of a small local charity. Here we will have the opportunity to interact with students who are tremendously keen to learn about the outside world.

Lunch is taken in the secluded gardens of Chonor House, the small but beautifully decorated Tibetan government hotel in the centre of McLeod Ganj.

After viewing the making of traditional Tibetan handicrafts, the remainder of the afternoon is free to wander in the bazaar. Alternatively you may wish to take a guided walk through the pine forests above the town where monkeys, langurs and pine-martins abound, and where we can take in the extended view over the plains below.

Dinner will be taken in a Tibetan restaurant. (Overnight McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh) BLD

#### Day 14: Saturday 21 November, Dharamsala – Kangra Valley – Dharamsala

- St John in the Wilderness, Forsyth Gunj
- Kangra Fort and Maharaja Sansar Chandra Museum
- Masroor Rock-Cut Temple
- Dorzong Jamchub Jong (monastery)
- Evening Performance: Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (subject to confirmation)

Today we travel out of McLeod Ganj, with a brief halt in the forest at the delightful little Christian church of St John in the Wilderness. Dharamsala was both a minor British hill-station and had a nearby army cantonment, and the graves of British colonial residents interred here include those of a former Viceroy of India and victims of earthquakes and bear attacks.

We then drive to the local Maharaja's small and fascinatingly eclectic museum of his family and kingdom before touring the awe-inspiring Kangra fort. The largest in the Himalayas, it has stood on a rugged rock outcrop for more than 2,000 years.

We then continue our drive through the rugged Sivalik hills to visit the ancient Masroor rock-cut temple. The only one of its type in North India, it has been carved from solid rock monoliths, probably around 1500 years ago. Quite who built it, and why, remains a mystery.

In the late afternoon we take a guided tour of the spectacular new monastery of Jamchub Jong, which nestles below the snow-covered mountains. Another centre for the Kargyu sect of Tibetan Buddhism, it is a fabulous example of how traditional Tibetan architecture and decorative skills survive and are deployed in the modern world. If you have read books like *Seven Years in Tibet* you will recognise this other-worldly

setting.

In the evening we will enjoy a modern Tibetan-style dinner and performance by the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, which is dedicated to preserving the artistic heritage of Tibet. This will include a selection of both folk dances and Tibetan opera excerpts, and explanations of them. (Overnight McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh) BLD

Day 15: Sunday 22 November, Dharamsala

- Dalai Lama's monastery complex (Namgyal Monastery)
- Lunch at White Haven Estate
- Events to be arranged

In McLeod Ganj's Tibetan exile community they begin their day in the traditional way, twirling their prayer wheels as they walk a circular path around the grounds of the Dalai Lama's monastery (the sacred centre of their journey). This morning we will join the throngs of worshippers. This temple (or *tsuglakhang*) is part of the Namgyal monastery complex, which is home to around 200 monks, as well as the private apartments of the Dalai Lama and other Tibetan government institutions. It includes a museum of modern Tibetan history that highlights the events that sent them into exile from China.

We will take lunch in the palatial gardens of White Haven estate, an old colonial property which was established in 1857 and has breathtaking views of the snow-capped Dhauladhar range above Dharamsala. We will have time to admire the atmospheric hunting trophies and old portraits on the walls before returning to McLeod Ganj for the afternoon program – which is currently under preparation. (Overnight McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh) BLD

### Delhi - 1 night

Day 16: Monday 23 November, Dharamsala – Delhi

- Fly Dharamsala – Delhi (SG 2192 1315 – 1440)
- Lotus Temple (Bahá'í Temple), New Delhi
- Evening Farewell Meal

Following some time at leisure and perhaps a last visit to the bazaar, we transfer to the airport for our return flight to India's bustling capital, Delhi, made up of 'Old' and 'New' Delhi. On arrival we transfer to The Claridges, one of British India's best, which ranks with the Maidens Hotel for its atmosphere and service. Along the way we will see the vibrancy of a modern Indian city, with its extremes of wealth and poverty and its optimism for the future.

En route we visit the beautiful Lotus Temple, a Bahá'í House of Worship completed in 1986 which has won numerous architectural awards and been featured in hundreds of newspaper and magazine articles. The Bahá'í are a faith of Iranian origin that emphasises non-violence and harmony. The Bahá'í faith has found a home alongside similar Indian traditions. While less known than Delhi's grand Mughal or colonial buildings, the Lotus Temple is a quiet and peaceful corner of the bustling city that deserves greater renown. Tonight we enjoy a farewell dinner in the atmospheric surrounds of our heritage hotel. (Overnight Delhi) BLD

Day 17: Tuesday 24 November, Depart Delhi

- Red Fort, Old Delhi
- Lunch: A final taste of Indian Cuisine
- Time at leisure
- Departure on SQ403 at 2200hrs

This morning after breakfast we visit one of India's greatest buildings, the Red Fort. In 1639 the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan laid the foundation of a new capital to be named Shahjahanabad (now Old Delhi). At the eastern edge of the new city the Red Fort was constructed as his imperial citadel. Enclosed in vast formal and almost impregnable walls, it contains some of the finest examples of Mughal architecture, including a suite of grand audience halls and exquisitely chaste inlaid marble pavilions set in formal gardens with ornamental pools and fountains. After viewing this great monument and enjoying a final taste of Indian cuisine at lunch there will be some time at leisure before continuing to Delhi Airport for the return flight to Australia. BL

## Accommodation

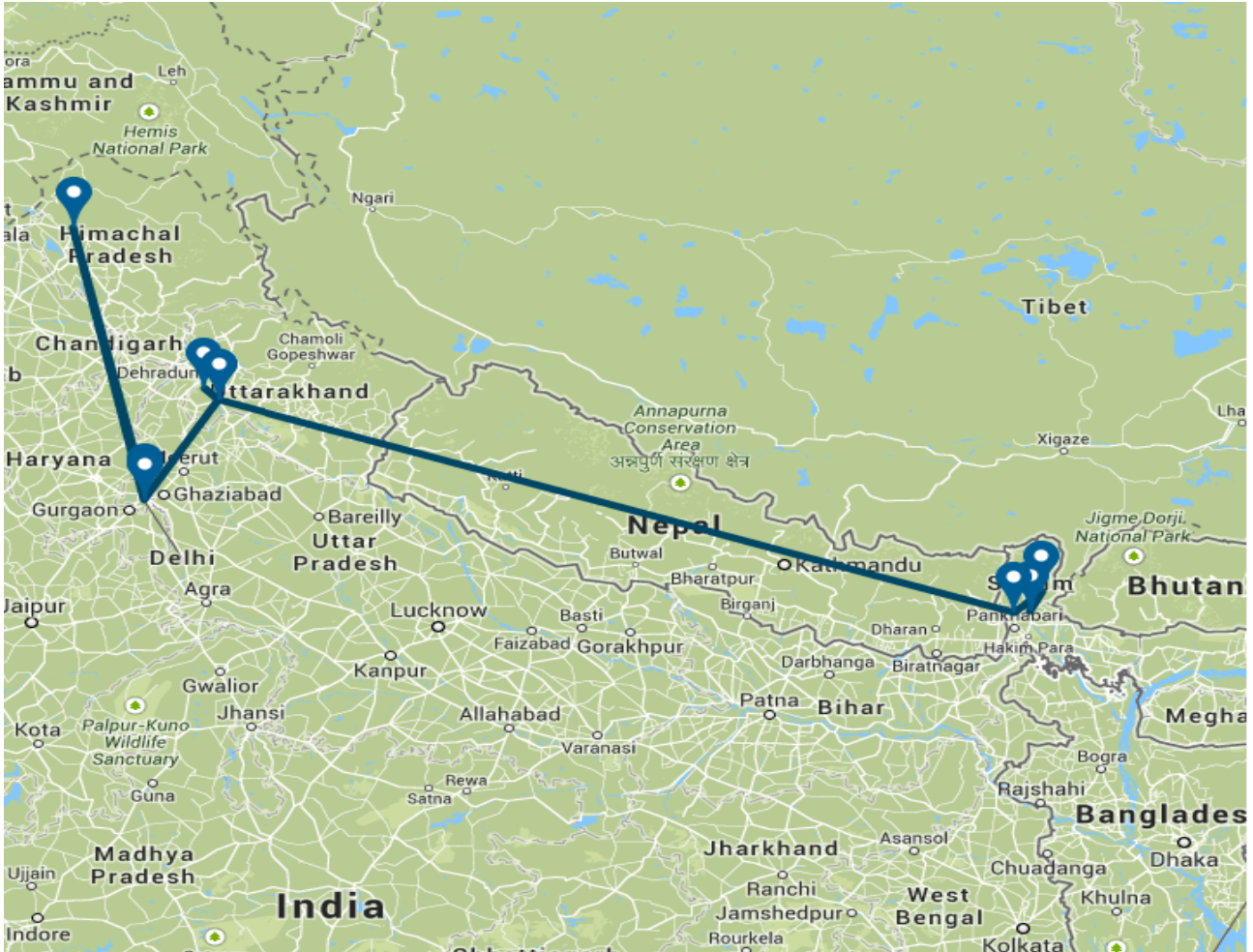
### 17 days in India

Throughout this trip you will stay in some of the region's finest heritage properties. Most of these hotels are partly museums, decorated with old family photos and fascinating historical relics or even temples, and they boast fabulous views of the Himalayan peaks, the sacred Ganges, or British colonial-style gardens. All rooms are equipped with a shower or bath and WC. While the ambience, comfort and service at these hotels is generally superb, be aware that power cuts are always a possibility in India, particularly in the Himalayas. In addition, it may not always be possible to make international telephone calls from your hotel room and not all hotels have facilities for changing foreign currency. Single rooms may be requested – and are subject to availability and payment of the single supplement. Further information on hotels will be provided in the 'Tour Hotel List' given to tour members prior to their departure.

- **Kalimpong (1 night):** The Himalayan Hotel – a Member of 'The Heritage Houses of The Himalayas', this is the former family home of David Macdonald, the British Trade Agent to Tibet in the early 20th century, and author of two books: *Land of the Lama* and *Twenty Years in Tibet*. This charming, family-run hotel is set in beautiful gardens and affords excellent views of Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world. It has hosted a veritable 'who's who' of Himalayan travellers from the earliest Everest expeditions down to the present day. [www.himalayanhotel.biz](http://www.himalayanhotel.biz)
- **Gangtok (3 nights):** Elgin Nor-Khill Hotel – built by the King of Sikkim in 1932 around a beautiful garden, it served as his royal guest house for receiving Heads of State and dignitaries. Having now been fully restored to its original grandeur, it is considered the finest heritage property in Gangtok. Located in the heart of town, it is within walking distance of the cafés, shops and bars along the famous M.G. road (Gangtok's High street, now closed to traffic). [www.elginhotels.com](http://www.elginhotels.com)
- **Darjeeling (2 nights):** The Elgin Hotel – formerly the summer residence of the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, this luxury heritage hotel is within walking distance of the famous Darjeeling Mall (High street), cafes, restaurants, bars and the Raj Bhavan (Governor's House). Built in 1887 around a beautiful garden, this colonial style hotel has been fully restored to its original grandeur and retains its 'old world charm'. [www.elginhotels.com](http://www.elginhotels.com)
- **Haridwar (2+1 nights):** Haveli Hari Ganga Hotel – a family-run heritage hotel housed in a beautifully restored *haveli* ('private mansion') within the bazaar. Originally built in 1913, the *haveli* is located on the banks of the Ganga (Ganges river) and includes its own temple to the river goddess. [www.havelihariganga.com](http://www.havelihariganga.com)
- **Rajaji National Park (1 night):** Haveli Hari Ganga – Jungle Camp – situated above a river in the Rajaji National Park. The eco-friendly superior cottage tents are equipped with all necessary facilities, and provide the perfect base for our excursions into the jungle. [www.leisurehotels.co.in/rajaji\\_national\\_park/accomodation.html](http://www.leisurehotels.co.in/rajaji_national_park/accomodation.html)
- **Delhi (1 night):** 4-star Maidens Hotel – set in 8 acres of lush gardens, Maidens is one of the finest examples of colonial architecture. Built in 1903 for the Delhi Durbar, it retains an old-world ambience while featuring all the conveniences a luxury modern hotel. [www.maidenshotel.com](http://www.maidenshotel.com)
- **Dharamsala, McLeod Ganj (4 nights):** Zambala Guest House – a charming guest house combining Tibetan tradition with modern influence, the hotel is located in McLeod Ganj, above the home monastery of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The rooms feature balconies that overlook the Indian plains and provide spectacular sunset views. [www.zambalahouse.com](http://www.zambalahouse.com)
- **Delhi (1 night):** The Claridges – graceful architecture, elegant décor, and a seamless blend of old-world charm and contemporary facilities have made this hotel one of the best addresses in Lutyens' Delhi since the 1950s. [www.claridges.com](http://www.claridges.com)

*Note: Hotels are subject to change. In this instance a hotel of similar standard will be provided.*

## Tour Map





## Tour Price & Inclusions

AUD \$8650.00 Land Content Only - Early-Bird Special: book before 30 June 2015

AUD \$8850.00 Land Content Only

AUD \$1380.00 Single Supplement

For competitive Economy, Business or First Class airfares and/or group airfares please contact ASA for further information.

### Tour Price (Land Content Only) includes:

- Accommodation in twin-share rooms with private facilities in heritage hotels of 3 or 4-star standard
- Breakfast daily, lunches and evening meals as indicated in the itinerary where: B=breakfast, L=lunch and D=evening meal
- Drinks at welcome and farewell meals. Other meals may only include tea, coffee and bottled water.
- Transportation by air-conditioned coach
- Domestic Airfares: Bagdogra - Delhi & Delhi - Dehradun (Day 7); Delhi - Dharamsala (Day 12); Dharamsala - Delhi (Day 16)
- Airport-hotel transfers if travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Shatabdi Express Train: Haridwar - Delhi (Day 11)
- Porterage of one piece of luggage per person at hotels (not at airports)
- Lecture and site-visit program
- Tour reference book
- Entrance fees
- Tips for the coach driver, local guides and restaurants for included meals.

### Tour Price (Land Content Only) does not include:

- Airfare: Australia-Bagdogra, Delhi-Australia
- Personal spending money
- Airport-hotel transfers if not travelling on the ASA 'designated' flights
- Luggage in excess of 20 kg (44 lbs)
- Travel insurance
- Visas (as applicable)



## Physical Endurance & Practical Information

Physical Ratings 

The number of flags is a guide to the degree of difficulty of ASA tours relative to each other (not to those of other tour companies). It is neither absolute nor literal. One flag is given to the least taxing tours, six to the most. Flags are allocated, above all, according to the amount of walking and standing each tour involves. Nevertheless all ASA tours require that participants have a good degree of fitness enabling 2-3 hours walking or 1-1.5 hours standing still on any given site visit or excursion. Many sites are accessed by climbing slopes or steps and have uneven terrain.

This 17-day tour involves:

- Extensive walking through narrow streets and busy markets, and some walking on rough ground
- Travelling long distances by coach with variable road conditions
- Several early-morning starts
- Risk of gastric ailments
- 8 hotel changes
- You must be able to carry your own hand luggage. Hotel portage includes 1 piece of luggage per person

It is important to remember that ASA programs are group tours, and slow walkers affect everyone in the group. As the group must move at the speed of the slowest member, the amount of time spent at a site may be reduced if group members cannot maintain a moderate walking pace. ASA tours should not present any problem for active people who can manage day-to-day walking and stair-climbing. However, if you have any doubts about your ability to manage on a program, please ask your ASA travel consultant whether this is a suitable tour for you.

**Please note:** it is a condition of travel that all participants agree to accept ASA's directions in relation to their suitability to participate in activities undertaken on the tour, and that ASA retains the sole discretion to

direct a tour participant to refrain from a particular activity on part of the tour. For further information please refer to the ASA Reservation Application Form.

### Practical Information

Prior to departure, tour members will receive practical notes which include information on visa requirements, health, photography, weather, clothing and what to pack, custom regulations, bank hours, currency regulations, electrical appliances and food. The Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade website has advice for travellers see: [www.smartraveller.gov.au](http://www.smartraveller.gov.au)

### Visas

Australian, New Zealand and British Passport holders will require a tourist visa for India. Participants will receive from ASA the relevant visa application forms prior to departure.

### Use of Professional Video/Camera Equipment

There are strict regulations with regard to the use of 'professional equipment' in India. For example, when using equipment such as a big video camera, shooting or filming materials normally associated with TV or movie shooting, special authorisation from the government is required. Generally speaking the use of cameras, and tripods etc used by photography enthusiasts is not a problem.

## Booking Conditions

### Make a Reservation

#### ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the ASA RESERVATION APPLICATION and send it to Australians Studying Abroad together with your non-refundable deposit of AUD \$500.00 per person payable to Australians Studying Abroad.

### Passport Details

All participants must provide no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the program a photocopy of the front page of their current passport.

### Single Supplement

Payment of the single supplement will ensure accommodation in a single room throughout the tour (except in Tineghir where accommodation is limited to a total of 14 rooms for the whole group). **People wishing to take this supplement are therefore advised to book well in advance.** If you have booked a single supplement but must forego a single room in Tineghir the single supplement for this hotel will be refunded to you.



# Reservation Application

TOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_

TOUR DATES \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete **one application, per person in block letters and sign**. Parental signature is required for participants under 18 years of age. Please mail this form with the appropriate deposit to: **P.O. Box 8285, ARMADALE, VICTORIA, 3143**. On receipt of this Reservation Application and deposit, ASA will process your booking and if approved, send you a tour confirmation.

## Applicant Details (as in passport)

TITLE Mr  Mrs  Ms  Miss  Dr  Other \_\_\_\_\_

FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Preferred FIRST NAME \_\_\_\_\_

MIDDLE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SURNAME \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY \_\_\_\_\_ POSTCODE \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. (AH) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ TEL. (BH) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL address \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ GENDER Male  Female

Passport Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

Colour copy of my current valid passport enclosed  I'm renewing my passport  ASA has a colour copy of my current passport

## Travel Plans

I wish ASA to book my airfare, please contact me to discuss my options.  Business Class  Economy Class

I plan to leave Australia before the tour commences. Planned departure date \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

I will be arranging my airfare independently and taking the Land Content Only option.

Frequent Flyer \_\_\_\_\_ Name of Airline \_\_\_\_\_ Airline Seat preference \_\_\_\_\_  
Membership # \_\_\_\_\_ (please note request only)

## Tour Accommodation (rooming preferences)

I/we would like:  a twin-bedded room  a double-bedded room  a room for sole occupancy

I am travelling:  on my own  with a friend/family member Travel Companion \_\_\_\_\_

## Meals

I do not have any specific dietary requests

Please **X** the box if you **CAN NOT** eat any of the following:

fish  poultry  red meat  dairy products

eggs  pork  nuts

Allergies: Refer to the Medical Information

Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Correspondence

Your preferred method of correspondence  Postal Mail  Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Emergency Contact Details

Note: this person **MUST** be available by telephone and be present in Australia for the duration of your tour with ASA

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship to Traveller \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

TEL. (AH) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ TEL. (BH) ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Tel: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL address \_\_\_\_\_

The purpose of seeking this information is to assist ASA to determine, where necessary, whether ASA is able to make reasonable adjustments to accommodate your specific needs and whether your health and safety (or that of your fellow travellers) is likely to be compromised given your choice of tour. It will also assist you and ASA if you fall ill or have an accident whilst travelling.

- ASA reserves the right to decline your Reservation Application if this Medical Information section is not completed properly and may reject or cancel your reservation, or terminate your participation on any tour, if ASA subsequently learns that you have failed to make full and proper disclosure.
- ASA is committed to protecting the privacy of your personal information. ASA's privacy policy is available for viewing at [www.asatours.com.au](http://www.asatours.com.au)
- If ASA has any concerns about the information you have provided, it will contact you to request clarification before considering your Application.
- ASA requires you to consider carefully your limitations in light of ASA's Physical Endurance Star Rating System in ASA's Brochure and Itinerary when choosing your tour.
- If you are not likely to satisfy ASA's Participation Criteria (see below), ASA, in its sole discretion, may reject your Reservation Application.
- It is a condition of your tour that you agree to accept the directions of ASA's Tour Leaders in relation to your suitability to participate in activities planned on tour.
- ASA reserves the right to cancel your participation on a tour if your behaviour is in ASA's opinion causing undue distress or damage to any person or their property.
- If your participation is discontinued during a tour, ASA will assist by arranging your onward travel (if required) at your own cost, but you will not be refunded for forfeited parts of the tour.
- ASA tour groups are not accompanied by a medical practitioner. ASA recommends that you see your doctor for advice about your specific needs while overseas. You may also wish to contact a travel and vaccination clinic for advice. [www.traveldoctor.com.au](http://www.traveldoctor.com.au) tel: 1300 658 444; [www.travelvax.com.au](http://www.travelvax.com.au) tel: 1300 360 164.
- Travel insurers require you to declare all existing medical conditions.
- Please carry a complete list of medications with you during the ASA tour. Include **generic names** of each medication (consult your local pharmacy for information).

Please mark **X** in the YES or NO box to every question below and provide details where necessary:

## Participation Criteria

To participate in an ASA tour, you must be reasonably fit, in good health and able to participate in all activities without assistance from Tour Leaders or other tour members. If you require assistance, a fit and able travel companion must undertake to accompany and assist you with all tasks for the duration of the whole tour. The responsibility of the Tour Leader is to ensure that the larger group enjoys a relaxing and informative journey, and he or she cannot be relied upon to provide ongoing individual assistance to any one guest.

- |   | YES                   | NO                    |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Can you walk and stand unassisted for at least 2-3 hours a day in hot, humid conditions?           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. Can you walk unassisted on and over uneven surfaces?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. Can you climb at least 3 flights of stairs and/or walk up and down steep slopes unassisted?        | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. Can you walk at a steady pace and no less than 1km every 15 - 20 minutes unassisted?               | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. Can you organise, manage and carry your own luggage?   | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. Can you follow and remember tour instructions and meet punctually at designated times and places?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. Can you administer your own medication?  | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. Do you have impaired vision or hearing which may impact your capacity to participate on this tour? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

## Mobility and Fitness

As many of ASA's international sites do not provide access to wheelchairs or similar mobility aids, we regret that ASA tours are not suitable for people who require the use of a walking frame, wheeled walker, wheelchair or motorised scooter.

1. Do you suffer from any medical conditions that may compromise your mobility and/or fitness to participate on this program? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

\_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, how will you manage this on tour?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Allergies and/or Food Intolerances

ASA will make reasonable endeavours to organise meals to suit you, provided that you give ASA adequate notice of your specific dietary requirements or allergies. You may be required to research dietary alternatives, as not all destinations may be able to offer suitable food substitutes.

1. Do you have any food allergies or intolerances? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Have you ever had an anaphylactic reaction to anything? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you carry an epipen?

3. Do you have any other allergies or reactions to anything, including medical drugs? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

\_\_\_\_\_

## Existing Medical Conditions

You alone are responsible for managing any existing medical conditions, your medication and any medical equipment that you may need when on your tour. Please plan for contingencies and take extra medication, dietary supplements and/or fully charged batteries for medical equipment if your health and safety depends on these. You should take into consideration that power sources at some destinations may be unavailable, inadequate, inconvenient or unreliable.

1. Have you any significant medical conditions that may impact your capacity to complete this tour? YES NO
- If yes, please specify

\_\_\_\_\_  
 If yes, how will you manage this on tour?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you require some form of powered medical aid, such as a CPAP machine? YES NO

These machines may not be operable on certain international flights, modes of transport, in remote or other areas with inadequate or unreliable power sources without a fully charged independent long life battery or batteries.

**Diabetics:** You may be travelling and sightseeing for many hours at a time. Insulin dependent diabetics must carry extra supplies of insulin (as this medication cannot be obtained in some destinations), regulators, applicators, storage and refrigeration equipment, as well as any necessary supplements. Accommodation may not provide refrigerators in rooms.

3. Are you diabetic? YES NO
- Are you insulin dependent? YES NO
4. Do you suffer from travel sickness? YES NO
- Remember to use an appropriate medication while on tour.



# Declaration, Liability and Booking Conditions

## Declaration

I declare that: I have read and understood the ASA Tour Itinerary, Reservation Application and Booking Conditions. I am aware of ASA's terms as relating to refunds, cancellations, responsibility and liability. I understand that ASA relies upon this declaration when considering this Application. I accept that there are inherent dangers and risks that may occur during any tour. I have made full and complete disclosure and have not knowingly withheld any medical information about myself from ASA. I have completed this Reservation Application honestly and accurately. I warrant that I am able to participate independently in all activities described by ASA in the itinerary without assistance from any person.

I will advise ASA in writing if any aspect of my fitness and or health conditions change materially at any time before my departure date. I understand and accept that the itinerary, accommodation and lecturers scheduled for this tour may change.

I agree and consent that ASA may give my personal information in this Reservation Application to tour service providers and relevant authorities as required by law, but for the purpose of making bookings with and engaging services provided for the tour. I understand that if I do not consent to the use of my personal information for this purpose, ASA will decline my Reservation Application.

In consideration of ASA's acceptance of my Reservation Application, I irrevocably release and indemnify ASA from all claims that I, or any other party, may have against ASA its employees, invitees, agents and contractors, however arising in respect of any loss, damage, injury, death or expense incurred in the course of travelling to, on and from any tour.

I understand and acknowledge that this Release and Indemnity applies with respect to:

1. Every general risk to which I or my personal belongings may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour
2. Every special risk, in particular medical risks, to which I may be exposed in the course of travelling to, on or from any ASA tour arising from, including, but not limited to:
  - a. intermittent power cycles and/or the temporary or permanent loss of power (beware CPAP or any other medical machine users);
  - b. dietary, food or other allergies (ASA cannot guarantee that traces of items to which you are allergic are not present in food or drink you are served, medication you are administered or other substances with which you may come into contact);
  - c. any event or situation that may compromise the administration of necessary medication or my health, safety and wellbeing generally.
3. All claims arising as a result of my or ASA's cancellation or termination of my continued participation on a tour for whatever reason (refund conditions in ASA's Booking Conditions excepted).

## Limitation of Liability

ASA is not a carrier, event or tourist attraction host, accommodation or dining service provider. All bookings made and tickets or coupons issued by ASA for transport, event, accommodation, dining and the like are issued as an agent for various service providers and are subject to the terms and conditions and limitations of liability imposed by each service provider. ASA is not responsible for their products or services. If a service provider does not deliver the product or service for which you have contracted, your remedy lies with the service provider, not ASA.

ASA will not be liable for any claim (eg. sickness, injury, death, damage or loss) arising from any change, delay, detention, breakdown, cancellation, failure, accident, act, omission or negligence of any such service provider however caused (contingencies). You must take out adequate travel insurance against such contingencies.

ASA's liability in respect of any tour will be limited to the refund of amounts received from you less all non-refundable costs and charges and the costs of any substituted event or alternate services provided. The terms and conditions of the relevant service provider from time to time comprise the sole agreement between you and that service provider.

ASA reserves the sole discretion to cancel any tour or to modify itineraries in any way it considers appropriate. Tour costs may be revised, subject to unexpected price increases or exchange rate fluctuations.

## Booking Conditions

### DEPOSITS

A deposit of \$500.00 AUD per person is required to reserve a place on an ASA tour.

### CANCELLATION FEES

If you decide to cancel your booking the following charges apply:

- More than 75 days before departure: \$500\*
- 75-46 days prior 25% of total amount due
- 45-31 days prior 50% of total amount due
- 30-15 days prior 75% of total amount due
- 14-0 days prior 100% of total amount due

\*This amount may be **credited** to another ASA tour departing within 12 months of the original tour you booked. We regret, in this case early-bird discounts will not apply.

**We take the day on which you cancel as being that on which we receive written confirmation of cancellation.**

### UNUSED PORTIONS OF THE TOUR

We regret that refunds will not be given for any unused portions of the tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation, flights or transfers.

### WILL THE TOUR PRICE OR ITINERARY CHANGE?

If the number of participants on a tour is significantly less than budgeted, or if there is a significant change in exchange rates ASA reserves the right to amend the advertised price. We shall, however, do all in our power to maintain the published price. If an ASA tour is forced to cancel you will get a full refund of all tour monies paid. Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of ASA make it necessary to change airline, hotel or to make amendments to daily itineraries. We will inform you of any changes in due course.

### TRAVEL INSURANCE

ASA requires all participants to obtain comprehensive travel insurance. A copy of your travel insurance certificate and the **reverse charge** emergency contact phone number must be received by ASA no later than 75 days prior to the commencement of the tour.

### FINAL PAYMENT

The balance of the tour price will be due 75 days prior to the tour commencement date.

## PLEASE READ THE ABOVE CAREFULLY, PRINT AND SIGN BELOW

- I accept the conditions on this booking form  I have read the information about the physical requirements of the tour in the detailed itinerary and confirm that I am able to meet these requirements

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Print Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

## Tour / Course Name

---

Name of Traveller 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Traveller 2 \_\_\_\_\_

I have enclosed a payment to the value of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (including CC or bank fee if applicable) for this tour

The above amount is payable for:

- Intention to Travel     Tour Deposit
- Balance of Payment     Upgrade from Intention to Travel to a Deposit
- Travel Insurance     Other (eg. Airfares, Accommodation) \_\_\_\_\_

## By Cheque

Please make cheques payable to *Australians Studying Abroad*

## Direct Deposit or Internet Banking

You will need to:

1. Provide your bank with ASA's bank details (see below) and the amount you wish to transfer OR make a direct deposit through any ANZ branch
2. Include any fees levied by the banks
3. Provide a reference number (Mobile or last name recommended).
4. Complete section below, including confirmation no. (given when transaction completed).

### Australians Studying Abroad bank details

Bank ANZ  
Branch 420 St Kilda Road, Melbourne Vic  
Swift Code ANZBAU3M  
BSB 013-423  
Account No 3472-32759

Bank confirmation No. \_\_\_\_\_

Reference used: Mobile or last name recommended  
\_\_\_\_\_

Date Money Transferred \_\_\_\_\_

## Credit Card Payment

Credit card fees apply: Mastercard & Visa 1.95%  
American Express 2.80%

Please debit my:  Mastercard  Visa  American Express

I authorise ASA to debit my credit card for the amount due plus the applicable fee as above

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code (CVC) \_\_\_\_\_

Bank the Card is linked to (eg. NAB or ANZ) \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholders Name \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholders Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholders Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## AUSTRALIANS STUDYING ABROAD

Office 6, Level 1, 1087-1095 High St (PO Box 8285) Armadale VIC Australia 3143

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