A Passage to India
Extended Easter Departure

Following in the footsteps of E.M Forster’s classic tale, A Passage to India, this wonderful and innovative itinerary takes you from the very edge of the great subcontinent at Mumbai’s Gateway to India, via the famous Buddhist caves of Ellora and Ajanta and on to the beautiful Vale of Kashmir. On this trip you will witness many of India’s most inspiring monuments – including the Taj Mahal and the Golden Temple – whilst visiting some of her most colourful cities and enjoying some of her serene and mellow villages. It is a trip that has something for everyone including staying in some awe inspiring palaces and forts. At Wild Frontiers we pride ourselves on being able to produce a tour that is not only different but exciting as well…in our Passage to India itinerary, we believe we have done just that.

“Our Passage to India was a magical journey. Wild Frontiers enabled us to take in the whole experience of India: the good, the bad, the sublime and the ugly, which is what India is all about.” Dick and Buggsie Heath-Brown

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<tr>
<th>Duration: 18 Days</th>
<th>Average group size: 5 - 12</th>
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<td>Start: Fri 14 Apr 17</td>
<td>Finish: Mon 01 May 17</td>
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Looking for alternative dates? Check the website or give us a call
TOUR DETAILS

TOUR CODE: PTI/A

HIGHLIGHTS

- Mumbai and the Gateway to India
- UNESCO listed Buddhist caves at Ellora and Ajanta
- Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal
- Amritsar and the Golden Temple
- The tranquil lakes of Kashmir

Accommodation: As an overall ethos, wherever possible we aim to use characterful accommodation that enhances the overall travel experience, not just offers a bed for the night. This can obviously vary dramatically from country to country and from trip to trip.

On this tour we have a wonderful variety of accommodation from converted palaces and castles to smart hotels and houseboats - you will not be disappointed! Indeed, in Ahilya we believe you will stay at one of the very best properties the subcontinent can boast of.

However please remember that heritage properties are old buildings, and although possessing great character, certain facilities are sometimes not quite up to Western standards and therefore patience is occasionally required.

Please note that the accommodation mentioned in the itinerary is intended as a guide only and is always subject to availability.

Transport: On this tour we will use domestic flights, 2nd class AC trains, mini-bus coasters and jeeps.

Climate: The weather in India at this time of the year will be hot in Mumbai and through Central India, with a day time average around the mid-30’s. The temperature will become more pleasant once up into Kashmir. The days in here should be warm and crisp, though the nights may be chilly. It is a lovely time to be in the Vale, just as the orchard blossoms are out and the yellow mustard fields are draped in yellow. However, you should still bring some warm layers just in case.

Is this trip for me? It may sound obvious but Wild Frontiers tours are not always for everyone and it is important to us that the tour you choose is the most suitable. Please therefore take time to read the dossier carefully. All our tours are graded to give an overall picture of the trip but these are only guidelines and you should check the daily itinerary. Should you have any concerns about your ability to partake in any aspect of the tour then please contact the office.

Adventure Rating ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆
Comfort Grade ★★★★★★★★☆☆☆☆
Fitness Level ★★★★★★☆☆☆☆
Cultural Interest ★★★★★★★★☆☆☆☆

Additional Comments:
Please be advised that on this trip vegetarians can be catered for but the selection and variety may be limited.
Day 1: Tour Starts In Mumbai: The tour starts early this afternoon at the joining hotel. After a late lunch we’ll take a wander around this fascinating city, with time at the famous arch that is ‘the Gateway to India’. We’ll end our day with a visit to the Taj, a great place for a drink overlooking the harbour, before dinner at a good local restaurant.
Fariyas Hotel or similar (L,D)

Day 2: In Mumbai: After breakfast we’ll head out to visit the ‘Mahalaxmi Dhobi Ghat’, otherwise known as the largest non-mechanised laundry facility in the world! Although there are some machines on site, most of the washing is done by hand in a long series of concrete wash basins, each with its own flogging stone to beat the clothes against. From here we will do a walking tour of the Dharavi slum, made famous in the film ‘Slumdog Millionaire’. After lunch we will visit a number of the most famous buildings Mumbai is noted for, including Chhatrapati Shivajitrain train station (formerly Victoria Terminus), the Mahalakshmi temple, the Rajabai Clock Tower and library, and the colonial general post office, before having dinner at a local restaurant.
Fariyas Hotel or similar (B,L,D)

Day 3: Mumbai - Aurangabad - Ajanta Caves: This morning we’ll take an early morning flight to Aurangabad and transfer to our hotel on arrival. After freshening up we’ll drive north for a couple of hours to the Ajanta Caves. Predating those at Ellora, the Ajanta Caves are entirely Buddhist and famous for their exquisite paintings. After the decline in Buddhism, the caves were forgotten only to be rediscovered in 1819 by a group of British soldiers out on a hunting trip. Their beauty was soon unveiled and they now represent one of Maharashtra’s best-known sites. We’ll then drive back to Aurangabad for dinner.
Lemon Tree Hotel or similar (B,L,D)

Day 4: Aurangabad & The Ellora Caves: Aurangabad is a quiet and remarkably uncrowded city and could easily stand alone were it not overshadowed by the famous Ajanta and Ellora caves nearby. Today we will head out and explore some of the attractions, including the Bibi-ka-Maqbara mausoleum and Panchakki watermill. In the afternoon we will drive to the Ellora Caves, a truly amazing series of underground temples, some with extraordinary sculptures, built between the 7th and 11th centuries AD. Afterwards we will return to Aurangabad for a relaxed evening at our hotel.
Lemon Tree Hotel or similar (B,L,D)

Day 5: Aurangabad - Maheshwar: After breakfast we will transfer to Manmad railway station and take the train to Khandwa. On arrival we’ll drive for about 3 hours or so to the stunning Fort Ahilya. A stay here is an experience straight out of the 18th century. Situated high above the banks of the sacred Narmada River, it was once the capital of one of India’s celebrated female rulers, Ahilya Bai Holkar. Her fortress has been converted into a wonderful heritage hotel of discrete charm, where guests can appreciate the surroundings which have hardly changed since her reign. The Wada palace is simple and elegant; built in 1766 it’s a typical example of the Maratha architecture of the period. We will spend the evening at the ghats of Maheshwar observing the aarti - or puja - and enjoy the chanting and prayers as the local people place candles to drift along the river. From here we’ll return to Fort Ahilya for the night.
Fort Ahilya or similar (B,L,D)

Day 6: In Maheshwar: This morning we’ll visit the local handloom manufacturers of the Maheshwari saris and see their village - the houses here are mostly built using
Day 7: Day Trip to Mandu: After breakfast we’ll drive the short distance north to visit the impressive ruined city at Mandu. Built by local Mughal rulers in the 7th century, and then added to by the Sultans of the 12th century and the Moghuls of the 17th century, this truly awesome collection of forts, palaces and temples is said to be the largest in all of Asia. In the afternoon we will return to Fort Ahilya.

Ahilya Fort or similar (B,L,D)

Day 8: Maheshwar - Jhalawar: After an early start we will continue north, our journey taking us through the rural Indian countryside and a region known as Malwa. Around lunchtime we will stop at Ujjain, where we’ll visit the only temple in India dedicated to the alcohol drinking god of death, Kal Bhairav. From here our journey north continues as we drive to Prithvi Vilas, home of the Maharaja of Jhalawar. We should arrive by the late-afternoon, and this evening promises to be a real treat as we get to stay with the Maharaja and his charming wife in their extraordinary home-cum-museum.

Prithvi Vilas or similar (B,L,D)

Day 9: In Jhalawar: There is so much to see and do in Jhalawar. For a start, the palace - the former hunting lodge of the present Maharaja’s grandfather - is so amazing you could easily spend a day simply relaxing in the quiet grounds. But the city itself is interesting to look around with a fine palace and library. After lunch we will visit the nearby pilgrimage town of Jhalrapatan, one of the purest towns that remains to be seen in India today. Although more than 800 years old the town is very well planned, with most of it still lying within the city walls that were built to defend against local dacoits and looters. The town is home to some beautiful temples and a lovely local market, as well as the famous temples of Chandrabhaga just outside of the city walls. After visiting the sites we will return to Jhalawar for dinner.

Prithvi Vilas or similar (B,L,D)

Day 10: Jhalawar - Agra: After breakfast we’ll transfer to the station and take the morning train to Bharatpur, from where we will visit the famous deserted town of Fatehpur Sikri. This extraordinary city, almost perfectly preserved, was built by the great Mughal Akbar and became a great Moghul stronghold, until a lack of water forced its speedy decline and eventual abandonment in the 17th century. The vast and well-preserved remains make for a fascinating stop, and after our visit we will drive on to Agra for the evening.

Trident Hotel or similar (B,L,D)

Day 11: Agra - Amritsar: This morning we will wake early and do our best to beat the crowds into the grounds of the Taj Mahal! Sunrise can be a wonderfully peaceful time to visit this iconic site, as the sun comes up over the Yamuna River burnishing the white marble to flamingo pink. After a couple of hours here we will head to Agra Fort, a vast riverside complex comprised of exquisite palaces and mosques. From here we’ll transfer to Bharatpur train station to catch the overnight train to Amritsar.

Overnight Train (B,L,D)

Day 12: In Amritsar: Arriving into Amritsar we will transfer to our hotel for breakfast, visiting the spectacular Golden Temple and Jallianwala Bagh later in the morning. In the afternoon we will see the world famous Wagah border ceremony between India & Pakistan at the Wagha/Attari road frontier. In the evening we will head into town to see the evening ceremony at the Golden Temple, in many ways the most magical time to see this impressive site whilst lit up at night.

Ranjit Svassa Hotel or similar (B,L,D)

Days 13: Amritsar - Srinagar: After a relaxing morning we’ll take an afternoon flight from Amritsar to Srinagar. On arrival we’ll transfer by shikara to our houseboat on a quiet area of Dal Lake.

Royal Houseboat or similar (B,L,D)

Day 14: In Srinagar: Sitting at the heart of the Vale of Kashmir lies this extraordinary city, famed for centuries for its clean, clear air, its idyllic setting and, of course, its lakes. Framed by high-forested hills that rise up in the distance to the snow-capped Himalayas, it’s simply one of the
most picturesque places you’re ever likely to visit. To drift across Dal or Nagin Lake on the elegant shikaras is relaxation at its most peaceful, and at this time of year as spring is appearing it’s even more magical. On our first full day here we will simply relax and enjoy this serene location.

Royal Houseboat or similar (B,L,D)

Days 15-16: In Srinagar: Of course, there’s plenty to see and do whilst staying in Srinagar for nearly four whole days. There’s the floating vegetable market, the beautiful Moghul gardens created by Empire Akbar, and the old city with its narrow streets and ancient mosques to explore. We may also take a stroll up to the imposing 18th-century Hari Parbat Fort, built by Akbar in the 1590’s and visible from virtually anywhere in Srinagar. Until recently this fort was closed off to the public but is usually open these days, providing stunning views of the surrounding area from the top. There is also the opportunity for some shopping, though in truth that doesn’t require much effort as usually the hawkers of flowers, jewellery, pashminas etc come to the houseboats! We will also visit a local Kashmiri family for lunch, where we’ll enjoy Kehwa (green tea added with spices), almonds and Kashmiri bread prepared in a traditional Kashmiri ‘Samovar’. Our food will be served on a dastarkhwan (tablecloth) on the floor of the room during which we’ll get to meet and interact with our hosts. We’ll have most other meals on our houseboat, sampling the delicious cuisine and enjoying this beautiful location.

Royal Houseboat or similar (B,L,D)

Day 17: Srinagar - Delhi: This morning we will transfer to Srinagar airport in time for our flight down to Delhi. Depending on what time we land in the capital there should be some time to visit some of the sites of New Delhi this afternoon. Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner.

The Claridges or similar (B,L,D)

Day 18: Tour Ends In Delhi: The tour ends after breakfast this morning. Those on the suggested group flights will transfer to Delhi airport in time for their early afternoon departure.

(B)

Extensions: If you have more time available, why not arrive early to adjust to a new time zone or just to get a feel for the country before your tour starts? Or alternatively you might choose to allow a few extra days after the tour to relax or to undertake some further exploration.

The choice is completely yours and we can usually arrange anything from simply additional accommodation and transfers to full tailor-made itineraries.

Here is just a small sample of what you could do:

Mumbai - Fly to Mumbai early to acclimatise and take a boat trip to Elephanta Island (pre tour).

Leh or Ladakh - Why not extend your journey to one of these cities? (post tour)

Shimla - Spend a couple of days at this traditional Raj Hill Station (post tour)

Rajasthan - Take a few days to visit the splendours of the Forts and Palaces in Jodphur, Jaipur and Udaipur (post tour)

The South - Take a few days to relax on the beaches in Goa or Kerala (pre or post tour)

Ranthambore - Visit one of India’s most prestigious Tiger Parks (post tour)

Please contact the office for more details and to discuss your individual requirements.
Warning!
The British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) sometimes advises against certain parts of this itinerary. Before deciding to book this trip you should first read the advice on their website - www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice. You will need to sign a disclaimer to confirm you have read the advice and if you are a UK citizen, you will also need insurance that will remain valid throughout the entire trip. One such insurance policy is Travel & General’s Wild Frontiers Standard policy *. For more information, please see the Insurance section below or contact us.

Non-UK clients should check the travel advice of their own governments as well as the small print of their insurance policy.

Please remember that all Wild Frontiers tour prices mean NO hidden extras, NO local payments and NO compulsory single supplements.

WHAT IS INCLUDED?
• Full services of a Wild Frontiers Tour Leader with local guides and drivers
• Meal plan as detailed in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner) with drinking water as required with the majority of meals being taken in local restaurants where viable
• All transport as outlined in the itinerary.
• All accommodation
• All entrance fees, as per itinerary
• A carbon-offsetting contribution to Carbon Clear (if booking international flights through WF office)

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED
• Visas (if applicable)
• Local airport taxes
• Tips (always optional, but some guidance will be given in the pre-departure information pack you’ll receive after booking)
• Beverages other than drinking water & any costs of a personal nature
• International flights to/from the start/finish of the trip
• Airport transfers (unless booking suggested flights through WF office)

GETTING THERE
For this trip our suggested flights from the UK (subject to change) are:
13APR 9W117 LHR-BOM 21:20/11:00+1
01MAY 9W122 DEL-LHR 13:35/18:20

Key:
LHR - London Heathrow
BOM - Mumbai
DEL - Delhi
9W - JET Airways

NB If you wish to arrange your own flights you are completely free to do so and in this case we can arrange any transfers or supplementary accommodation that you may require.
Please note that if you are planning on making your own flight arrangements, we recommend that you first check with us to see if the trip is guaranteed. We then suggest that you purchase flights that are flexible and ideally refundable as due to the nature of adventure travel, itineraries and destination accessibility can change at any time. For more information, please refer to our booking conditions.

Insurance: Insurance that provides cover for emergency repatriation in case of a medical emergency is compulsory for all tours. You should be aware that due to some of the geographical areas visited and some of the activities included on certain of our trips some standard insurance policies may not always provide adequate cover. As such we strongly recommend that you purchase a policy that adequately covers your trip.

Travel & General offer a tailor-made policy that provides cover for all Wild Frontiers trips. Under this policy there are two different levels of cover available - Standard and Elite.

Cover explained:

Standard policy: a comprehensive travel insurance policy that provides cover for all Wild Frontiers activities, including trekking up to 6,000m. This policy does not provide cover for travel to areas where the FCO is advising against all or all but essential travel except where it has been previously agreed.

Elite policy: provides the same comprehensive level of cover as the standard policy. In addition the Elite policy also provides cover for travel to areas where the FCO is advising against all or all but essential travel. Except in the case of terrorism, the policy will not provide cover for any claims arising from or relating to the reasons why the FCO is advising against travel.

For this trip the minimum requirement would be the Standard policy *.

These policies are only available to those travelling on a Wild Frontiers holiday and can be purchased on a trip-specific basis or annual cover. For more information please refer to the details on our website www.wildfrontierstravel.com/insurance or by calling Travel & General direct on +44 (0) 20 3794 2954. This insurance is available to EEA residents (i.e. EU countries as well as Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway) up to the age of 78. It covers horse riding, mountain walking, trekking, white-water rafting and all other activities we offer as part of our tours.

If you are over 78 then you may still be able to get your insurance arranged by Travel & General Insurance Services Limited. Please contact us for assistance with this.

* The insurers have confirmed that the Standard policy (see above) is sufficient for this trip even though some parts of the trip contravene FCO advice. If you have alternative insurance you should check with your insurer that your cover is adequate.

If you do decide to purchase alternative insurance, then you must ensure that it covers you for every aspect of this trip. Please pay particular attention to ensuring that you are covered for travel to areas advised against by the FCO*.

* The insurers have confirmed that the Standard policy (see above) is sufficient for this trip even though some parts of the trip contravene FCO advice. If you have alternative insurance you should check with your insurer that your cover is adequate.

Visas: Visas are necessary for many of the destinations we travel to and while we aim to provide you with the most up-to-date information, requirements frequently change and as such for the latest advice we advise that you check with the relevant embassies or contact our recommended visa agency for this trip, details of which are below:-

Travcour
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8543 1846
www.travcour.com

Wild Frontiers Limited is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Travel & General Insurance Service Ltd, details of which can be found at the website of the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) www.fca.org.uk

Please note that no insurance policy will cover every eventuality and terms and conditions will apply in the event of any claim.
Non-UK passport holders or non-UK residents should contact the relevant embassies for individual requirements.

Further details will be sent out to you on booking, however ensuring that correct and valid visas are obtained remains the sole responsibility of the client.

**Responsible Travel:** Responsible travel and sustainable tourism are fundamental ideas that Wild Frontiers has been committed to since our birth. It is our strong belief that these words should not be simply ‘tagged on’ to dossiers and websites but should be at the very core of each trip, and our adventures are therefore designed with the local people, culture and eco-system in mind. We believe that a successful trip not only delivers a unique and unsurpassable journey for our clients, but that it also benefits the peoples whose lands we are privileged to visit.

In 2012 we were delighted to be awarded the Guardian Observer Best Ethical Travel Award.

For more information, please refer to [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/rt](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/rt)

**The Wild Frontiers Foundation:** Supporting communities has always played a huge part of the Wild Frontiers’ ethos and from the outset we have contributed to projects in many of the places we visit. However in 2009 we decided to take things a step further by setting up our own charitable foundation. Through the Wild Frontiers Foundation, we have not only developed our own community projects but also - by working closely with certain carefully selected charity partners - helped fund the invaluable work they do throughout the developing world. With our mandate firmly based on education and sustainability we established our first project in 2010 in the remote Northern Pakistan village of Baleygon, where around 100 children are now being educated in a school built and maintained by the Foundation.

Working with charity partners we have also established a number of e-learning centres in schools across Ethiopia, sponsored an English class in rural Northern Laos and funded hospitality traineeships for a number of young people from the Kolkata slums in India. Where practicable, Wild Frontiers clients will have the opportunity to visit our projects whilst on tour.

Visit [www.wildfrontiersfoundation.org](http://www.wildfrontiersfoundation.org) to see details of all our projects, along with ways you can get involved by taking on the challenge of a charity trek, attending our fundraising events or simply giving what you can. Other ongoing fundraising schemes include:-

**Go Paperless:** For UK-based clients who are happy for all their final travel documents to be sent by email rather than through the post, Wild Frontiers will donate £5 from each booking to the Foundation.

**Kit Out for Kids:** Nomad Travel Stores generously donates 5% of purchases by Wild Frontiers’ clients to the Foundation. Quote WF1000 either online or in store when purchasing clothing and kit and Nomad will give you 20% off full priced clothing and kit, plus the charitable donation. Visit [www.nomadtravel.co.uk](http://www.nomadtravel.co.uk)

**The Environment:** Trying to do our bit for the environment, in 2005 we were among the first UK-based travel companies to automatically offset every client’s international flight (if booked with us) with a payment to Carbon Clear to help
promote sustainable energy. To read more about the work of Carbon Clear, please follow this link: [www.carbon-clear.com](http://www.carbon-clear.com)

**AITO Membership:** Wild Frontiers is a member of AITO, the Association of Independent Tour Operators. AITO’s charter states that its exclusive members strive to create overseas holidays with high levels of professionalism and a shared concern for quality and personal service. The Association encourages the highest standards in all aspects of tour operating. AITO sets criteria regarding ownership, finance and quality which must be satisfied before new companies are admitted to membership. All members are required to adhere to a Code of Business Practice which encourages high operational standards and conduct.

**British Foreign & Commonwealth Office:** The travel advice of the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) highlights potential hazards people might experience when travelling abroad and as an advocate of their “Know Before You Go” campaign we strongly suggest that you refer to it before booking and contact us if you have any queries or concerns. Details can be found on the website below.

[www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo](http://www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo)

Non-UK citizens should consult the travel advice of their respective governments.

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**Wild Frontiers Community**

If you’re still not sure if this trip is right or just want to see get some different perspectives, then why not have a look at the wide variety of resources we have on our website?

**Clients’ Views:** See what other travellers have said about our trips - [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/views](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/views)

**Blogs:** See what our tour-leaders, staff and clients have posted from the road - [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/blog](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/blog)

**Videos:** They may not find their way on the list for Oscars nominations but we have an extensive (and growing) collection of short videos giving you an insight in many of our destinations - [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/video](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/video)

**Photos:** Our popular “Photo of the month” competition has added to the vast gallery of photos we already have from around the world. See them here - [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/photos](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/photos)

**Events:** From time to time we hold informal presentations, photo exhibitions and dinner evenings mainly in the London area. To find out more see here - [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/events](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/events)

**Wild Miles Club:** Everyone that has booked a trip directly with us will become an automatic member of the Wild Miles Club gaining instant access to a range of exclusive discounts from a variety of travel partners from bookshops to outdoor clothing shops. In addition, regular direct bookers will earn “Wild Miles” which can earn you up to 10% in discounts off of all tours. For more information visit this page - [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/wild-miles](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/wild-miles)

**Facebook:** Keep up to date with the latest news and special offers by liking our Facebook page - [www.facebook.com/wildfrontiers](http://www.facebook.com/wildfrontiers)
**INDIA - THE FACTS**

Mumbai (Bombay): Mumbai is the capital of Maharashtra and the economic powerhouse of India (the last population count was over 15 million). The fastest moving, most affluent and most industrialised city in India, it is also home to the busiest international airport and seaport, handling nearly 50% of the total foreign trade. It is the stronghold of Indian free enterprise and a major manufacturing centre for everything from cars and bicycles to pharmaceuticals and petrochemicals. It is also, of course, the centre of the world’s biggest film industry. On your stay in Mumbai there are many things to see including the Mahatma Ghandi museum, The Gateway to India, the Hanging Gardens, the Jain Temple and Haji Ali’s Tomb.

Ajanta Caves: Nestling in an inner fold of the Sahyardi hills, 100km from Aurangabad in the shape of a mammoth horseshoe, are the 30 rock-hewn caves of Ajanta. The caves date from the 2nd century BC. Rediscovered in 1819 by a group of British army officers, these masterpieces of religious art took around 600 years to create. Carved with little more than a hammer and chisel, Ajanta - once the retreat of Buddhist monastic orders - features several ‘chaityas’ (chapels) and ‘viharas’ (monasteries).

Ellora Caves: Impressive in their own right are the rock-hewn temples and monasteries of Ellora that lie just 30km away from Aurangabad city. In all there are 34 cave temples, 12 Mahayana Buddhist caves (550-750 AD), 17 Hindu caves (600-875 AD) and 5 caves of the Jain faith (800-1000 AD). 22 more caves, dedicated to Lord Shiva, were recently discovered. Kailas Temple (cave 16), the
central attraction at Ellora, is the most remarkable.

**Ahilya Fort & Maheshwar:** Maheshwar is a town of great antiquity, situated on the banks of the sacred Narmada River, in the Khargone district of the Indian State of Madhya Pradesh. The history of Maheshwar goes back some 4,000 years, making Maheshwar of the same antiquity as the Indus Valley civilization. In classical Indian history, Maheshwar was known as Mahishmati and is mentioned in the Vedas and later in Kautilya’s Arthashastra. In 1601 the city came under the rule of Akbar who built the present fort. In 1741, the Mughal rule came to an end, and in 1766 Maharani Ahilya Bai, the queen of the Holkar dynasty, made Maheshwar her capital. She ruled from Maheshwar for over 30 years and was famous throughout India. Ahilya Bai is known and revered throughout India for her work in rebuilding many important Hindu temples which were destroyed during the reign of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. At Ahilya Fort you will stay at one of the most special properties in the whole of the subcontinent.

**Jhalawar:** The princely state of the Jhalas, Jhalawar was created in 1838 AD after being separated from Kota by the British. Remarkable contributions from various rulers including Zalim Singh I made it a culturally rich state. Lying in the south-eastern region of Rajasthan at the edge of the Malwar plateau, Jhalawar has rocky but water-laden verdant landscapes. With some exquisite pre-historic cave paintings, massive forts, thickly wooded forests and exotic wildlife, Jhalawar boasts rich historic as well as natural wealth. One can spot countless species of birds as one drives through the lush countryside. Red poppy fields and orange laden orchards make the countryside all the more fascinating and colourful during the winter. The area around Bhawani Mandi is known for contributing a major share to the production of citrus in the country. But the highlight of a trip to this region is to spend time as guest of His Highness the Maharajah of Jhalawar at his most amazing home. This is a veritable treasure chest of fine antiques, hunting trophies and Raj memorabilia. The Maharajah and his wife are a charming couple that take great pleasure in showing you around their home and we feel privileged that we are able to stay.

**Agra & the Taj Mahal:** As one of the most photographed buildings in Asia, the sublime Taj Mahal hardly needs an introduction here. It is quite simply the most perfect building ever created. This most famous Moghul monument was constructed by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal – chosen of the Palace - and has been described as the most extravagant monument ever built for love, for the Emperor was heartbroken when Mumtaz died in child birth in 1631 having produced 14 children. (Speaking personally, though Jonny Bealby has been to India countless times he only visited the Taj recently, and can honestly assure you it does not disappoint!). Also in Agra is the vast Agra Fort, Akbar’s Tomb and the Moghul gardens of Ram Barg.

**Delhi:** Capital of modern India, of the British Raj and the Moghul empire, Delhi - the City of Djinns - is a fascinating place to explore, bursting with centuries of colourful history, of old imperial splendour and modern manic mayhem. From the chaotic, narrow alleyways of the old town to the relative tranquillity of the new, at almost every corner there is something - a fort, a mosque, an imperial palace - to excite and amaze the visitor. To wander unhindered down Rajpath - the Kingsway - from India Gate to Rajpati Bhrevan, stopping for a while in the shade of the sheltering neem trees to feast your eyes...
on Lutyens’ extraordinary work of architecture, will have even the most seasoned traveller gasping in awe. But just as impressive, and arguably a lot more fun, is to take a walk through the old town down the bustling Chandni Chowk and off into the narrow, sunless alleyways that make up Shajehanabad. Here, among the jewellery, fabric and wedding bazaars you will find a world barely changed from that of the Moghul times. With plenty more sight-seeing trips available to the Qutab Minar, Lodhi Gardens, the Lotus Temple or the awesome Humayun’s Tomb (inspiration for the Taj Mahal), you can also go on shopping expeditions on Janpath, Santoshi or to the Khan Markets, or just sip a quiet cup of tea at the Imperial. Whichever you choose, Delhi can have you busy for days. All Wild Frontiers’ groups stay at good hotels, in convenient locations.

Amritsar: Amritsar, literally a Pool of Nectar, derives its name from Amrit Sarovar, the holy tank that surrounds the fabulous Golden Temple. First time visitors to Amritsar could be forgiven for the impression that Amritsar is like any other small town in northern India. But Amritsar stands head and shoulders above any other city, its status elevated and sanctified by the presence of the venerable Golden Temple. Located in the heart of Amritsar, the temple complex is surrounded by a maze of narrow lanes, or katras, that house one of the busiest markets in India. But the Golden Temple is a serene presence, radiating a calm that makes people bow their heads in reverence. The gurudwara, as Sikh temples are called, is the holiest of Sikh shrines. It is not just Sikhs who travel to the Golden Temple to pay homage; Hindus and people of other faiths make the pilgrimage to offer prayers at Harmandir Sahib, equally revering the sacred shrine.

Another major attraction these days is the Indo-Pakistan border crossing at Wagah, just a short distance from Amritsar, with its elaborate change-of-guards drill with a lot of strutting and showing off by both sides.

Kashmir: Famed for centuries for its infinite natural beauty - its spectacular mountains, fertile valleys and tranquil lakes - Kashmir has long been regarded as a paradise on earth. It was to Srinagar that the Moghuls and British rulers travelled to escape the summer heat; in the sixties it was the turn of the hippies, and in the seventies and eighties so followed tourists and travellers for just the same reason. Shangri La... until at the end of 1989 when the region exploded in a violent struggle for independence that has continued with various levels of hostility for the past 15 years, claiming 60,000 lives. With Pakistan encouraging the militants on the one hand, and India suppressing, imprisoning and torturing the local population on the other, the situation has run and run, appearing like it has no end. Then, in early 2004, after regional elections the governments of India and Pakistan began to ease the tension with a series of talks that are continuing to this day. As nominal, yet crucial, changes began to take place - from international cricket matches to the opening of ‘friendship’ bus routes across the line of control - so the peace process gathered momentum. Finding themselves isolated, with dwindling support in the Vale and diminishing assistance from Islamabad, the militants agreed to a ceasefire and though this has been breached on occasions, the general mood has swung towards peace. Though all sides are still a long way from a lasting solution, just as in Northern Ireland it seems the stomach for an impossible war has started to evaporate in all the crucial quarters. The last time a
western tourist was attacked was over a decade ago.

In fact, realising the importance of the tourist dollar to the region, Hebz-i-Mujahadeen, who represents the main militant groups in the Vale, even came out with a statement announcing that under no circumstances were tourists to be harmed. As such, both domestic and international tourism has started to return. In 2004, 25,000 foreign travellers made their way to Kashmir, a number that almost doubled in 2005. There are still a huge number of Indian soldiers in Kashmir but on the whole their presence does not cast an oppressive ‘occupation’ vibe: the number of sandbag, machine gun posts has been reduced considerably as has the amount of police check points. On the lakes you would know nothing of the troubles and even in the countryside it has little effect.

With the situation between Islamabad and New Delhi continuing to improve, the latter has even agreed to start reducing the numbers of troops in the region. Ask a Kashmiri and most will tell you that while they are not entirely content with domination from Delhi, they are under no illusions about the chances of independence and after a decade and half of unrest, they now want things to go back to normal so they can get on with their lives and start doing what they enjoy doing best... making money from tourists!

Having spent time checking things out, we at Wild Frontiers Adventure Travel believe that travellers face no greater risk here than they do in a number of other places where tourism is encouraged, and we are confident therefore that the time has come to return to Kashmir. We are now into our 12th year of operations in the Vale, and have shown hundreds this amazing place.
How to Book:

In order to confirm your booking we need to have a completed signed booking form for each client together with a £400 deposit per person. You can either return your booking form to us by post or by booking online at [www.wildfrontierstravel.com](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com)

You can contact the office by email to [info@wildfrontierstravel.com](mailto:info@wildfrontierstravel.com) or we are very happy to take your call on + 44 (0) 20 7736 3968.

Protection for you money:

The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT) provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for Wild Frontiers, and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following:

1. Non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK;
2. Non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; and
3. Flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK, which are sold to customers outside of the UK.

1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with Wild Frontiers.

If you choose to book your international flights with us then you will also be ATOL protected as we hold an Air Travel Organiser’s Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Our ATOL number is 5975. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will arrange to refund any monies to you that you have paid for an advance booking and ensure that you are not stranded abroad. For further information visit [www.atol.org.uk](http://www.atol.org.uk)

We recommend that you take out adequate travel insurance at the time of booking in the event that you are no longer able to travel as all deposits are non-refundable - full booking conditions can be found on the booking form and online at our website.

As I’m sure you can appreciate, Wild Frontiers trips can be quite complex affairs to arrange and certain elements (such as permits, visa authorisations, trains and flights) may need to be requested several months in advance. As such, wherever possible, we would encourage you to plan ahead and book early to avoid disappointment. Moreover, by booking early you are always guaranteed to get the best price with us as we will automatically offer you a retrospective discount if we happen to reduce the price of the tour later on. For further details, please refer to [www.wildfrontierstravel.com/price-guarantee](http://www.wildfrontierstravel.com/price-guarantee)

Further information:

When you make a confirmed booking with Wild Frontiers we will send you a pre-departure information pack giving you details on visas, health and vaccinations, packing lists, suggested reading on the region, photography and other useful tips to make your trip more enjoyable.
Why Wild Frontiers?

Wild Frontiers is proud to have been regularly voted one of the top ten tour operators by readers of Wanderlust Travel Magazine over the last ten years. A number of our innovative itineraries have been included in National Geographic Traveller Magazine’s “Trips of a Lifetime”, and our acclaimed Tour Leaders regularly feature in the Wanderlust World Guide Awards, with Mark Steadman winning gold in 2015. Responsible travel has always been incredibly important to us, so we were delighted to be awarded Best Ethical Tour Operator by The Guardian/Observer in 2012.

We are frequently asked what makes Wild Frontiers different from other tour operators. Below are a few of the factors that we believe set us apart from our competitors and form the reasons as to why our clients travel with us again and again...

Personal Service & Expertise: Our London office is manned by experienced expedition leaders and most trips we run stem from our first-hand knowledge - in short, we run the kind of holidays that as passionate travellers, we like to do ourselves. When you ring our office, you can be guaranteed to chat to someone who knows the region and the terrain and is able to offer sound and practical advice.

Authentic, Cutting-Edge Experiences: Our unique, original itineraries allow you to take journeys that venture beneath the surface of the region. We rarely run any group tour more than a couple of times a year and they are typically on routes we have discovered for ourselves, meaning we are able to give a truly authentic, off-the-beaten-track experience.

Be the First: Our style of travel is all about exploration, and nothing excites us more than opening up new routes to genuine travellers, even if that makes our job harder at times! We keep abreast of new destinations and are often the first to return to places that have vanished from the tourist map. We were the first back into Pakistan after 9/11, the first to return to Kashmir after a decade of tourist isolation, and amongst the first to run a commercial travel trip to Afghanistan for almost 30 years. Since then we have helped bring Colombia, Iran, Georgia and Bangladesh back into the tourist fold, specialising in ground-breaking reconnaissance trips and imaginative expeditions.

Small Group Size: On our escorted tours, we believe it is imperative to keep the group sizes small. Most trips are limited to an average maximum of 12 travellers, thus giving you more access to fragile cultures, better opportunities to interact with local people, and the knowledge you are making less of an impact while there. “Having been a bit apprehensive about joining a group as a single traveller, I found myself surrounded by interesting, friendly, helpful people who I hope to catch up with again on future trips.” Angela Chick, Kashmir Group Tour

Cost of Group Tours: We believe in an honest, upfront pricing structure so you know exactly what the tour will cost before you book. On our group tours we avoid local payments, 'optional extras' or forcing our clients to go through the annoying procedure of splitting every meal bill. Our tours are provided on a predominantly full board basis, with drinking water, government permits, entrance fees and transport all included.

Our clients: Your companions can make or break a trip, and it’s lucky therefore that our clients are often our greatest asset. Travelling to remote regions is not for everyone, and as such we tend to attract open-minded travellers looking for genuine experiences, and a desire to reach those hard to get to places.

Responsible Travel: Awarded 5 star status by AITO (Association of Independent Tour operators), responsible tourism (RT) has always been an integral part of our company ethos and our adventures are designed with the local people, culture and eco-system in mind. In 2012 we were awarded the Guardian Observer Best Ethical Travel Award. For further details please refer to the RT section of our website - www.wildfrontierstravel.com/rt