

Earthbound Expeditions

Buddhist Circuit Golden Tour

14 days, from US$1,867 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
14 days	**15 people**	**India**

Buddhist Circuit Golden Tour Overview

A pilgrimage tour of the Buddhist holy places, the Taj Mahal, India and the Nepal Himalaya

A pilgrimage tour of the Buddhist holy places, the Taj Mahal, India and the Nepal Himalaya

This tour combines the Buddhist Circuit with India's Golden Triangle. It visits the four Buddhist holy pilgrimage sites (Bodhgaya, Kushinagar, Sarnath and Lumbini) and several other well-known historical sites in Nepal and India.

This pilgrimage tour takes you to the sacred places of Buddhism, along with other historical and spiritual sites. The four main places are Lumbini, where Prince Siddhartha was born; Bodh Gaya, where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment and became the Buddha; Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first teachings; and Kushinagar, where the Buddha entered Mahaparinirvana. Visiting them gives a deeper understanding of the Buddhist teachings and the Buddhist way of life.

As well as the holy sites of Buddhism, you visit other historical places in India and Nepal where spirituality is an important part of their history. The highlights include the Golden Triangle in India, Varanasi, Kathmandu and the Nepal Himalaya.

Earthbound Expeditions is recommended by Lonely Planet, TripAdvisor, The New York Times, The Guardian and many other national and international newspapers and magazines. The Buddhist Circuit Golden Triangle Tour costs $1,876. For more information on trekking, hiking and travel in Nepal, please contact us.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Delhi

Our representative meets you at the international airport in Delhi and transfers you to your hotel.

Altitude: 215 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Delhi Meals: Dinner

Day 2

New Delhi city tour and drive to Jaipur

Today we visit the main landmarks of New Delhi. We begin at India Gate, a war memorial dedicated to the 70,000 soldiers of the British Indian Army who died between 1914 and 1921 in the First World War. We stop at Humayun's Tomb, the resting place of the Mughal Emperor Humayun, built in 1569 by Persian architects. Next is Rashtrapati Bhavan, the residence of the President of India, the world's largest democracy. It was first designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and built by thousands of labourers. The Sansad Bhavan (Parliament House) was also designed by the British architect Edwin Lutyens and took six years to complete. Extensive gardens surround the building. We also visit the city's business centre, known for its Georgian-style buildings, international chain stores, old cinemas and Indian restaurants. After New Delhi, we travel to Jaipur, the city of forts.

Altitude: 430 m On foot: Easy walking, 1–2 hrs Night: Hotel, Jaipur Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 3

Jaipur sightseeing

After breakfast, we go to the Amber Fort, where you can ride up on the back of an elephant. We then continue into Jaipur city to see its main monuments. These include the Hawa Mahal, built in 1799 AD, which has 953 windows and is said to resemble the crown of Krishna, and the Chandra Mahal, with its mixture of Mughal and Rajasthani architecture. You also see the Shri Govind Dev Temple and the City Palace Museum. At a rug and gem workshop, the workers explain how rugs and gems are made. We then visit

the Jantar Mantar Observatory, which has the world's largest stone sundial, and you can buy souvenirs in the Johari Bazaar.

Altitude: 430 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Jaipur Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 4

Jaipur to Agra via Fatehpur Sikri

From Jaipur we travel to Agra, stopping on the way at Fatehpur Sikri, a small city in northern India known for the group of red sandstone buildings at its centre. We then continue to Agra.

Altitude: 170 m On foot: None, 5–6 hr drive Night: Hotel, Agra Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 5

Agra to Delhi and fly to Varanasi

The best-known landmark in Agra is the Taj Mahal, regarded around the world as a monument to love. It was built by the Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his third wife, Mumtaz Mahal. The white marble mausoleum took about 20 years to complete and involved thousands of artisans and architects. After exploring Agra, drive to Delhi and fly to Varanasi. Our representative meets you at Varanasi airport and transfers you to the hotel. In the evening, you can watch the evening ceremony at Dashashwamedh Ghat before returning to the hotel.

Altitude: 80 m On foot: None, flight day Night: Hotel, Varanasi Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 6

Varanasi and Sarnath

Varanasi is a major religious city that attracts thousands of pilgrims every day. The day begins at the ghats with an early morning boat trip on the Ganges. Afterwards, we return to the hotel for breakfast. During the day, we visit the Deer Park at Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon and where you can see deer. You can still see the ruins of the Dharmarajika Stupa and the Dhamek Stupa.

Altitude: 80 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Varanasi Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 7

Varanasi to Bodhgaya

After breakfast, drive to Bodhgaya, which takes approximately 5 hours, and visit the Mahabodhi Temple.

Altitude: 110 m On foot: None, 5 hr drive Night: Hotel, Bodhgaya Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 8

Bodhgaya to Rajgir and Nalanda

Bodhgaya is where Prince Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, attained enlightenment beneath a Bodhi tree. The small town is one of the most important places for Buddhists, and many pilgrims come here each year for prayer, study and meditation. Its sights include the Mahabodhi Temple, the Bodhi tree and the Great Buddha Statue. Travel to Rajgir to see the Buddhist statues and the nearby hot springs. From Rajgir, continue to Nalanda, the site of a large ancient Buddhist monastery. Afterwards, return to Bodhgaya.

Altitude: 110 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Bodhgaya Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 9

Bodhgaya to Kushinagar

After breakfast, we travel to Kushinagar, visiting Vaishali on the way.

Altitude: 80 m On foot: None, 8–9 hr drive Night: Hotel, Kushinagar Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 10

Kushinagar to Lumbini, Nepal

After breakfast, we visit the Mahaparinirvana Temple, which many believe is the place where Gautama Buddha died. Inside is a 6-metre reclining statue of the Buddha. We also visit the Ramabhar Stupa, then travel to Lumbini, Nepal.

Altitude: 150 m On foot: None, 4–5 hr drive Night: Hotel, Lumbini Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 11

Lumbini sightseeing

Today you explore Lumbini, the birthplace of Gautama Buddha. Visit the Mayadevi Temple, dedicated to the mother of the Buddha. Lumbini has many excavation sites, with ancient ruins, artefacts and temples, including the ruins of the old city. Other notable landmarks include the Myanmar Golden Temple, the World Peace Pagoda, various monasteries, and the ancient Ashoka Pillar, whose inscriptions confirm that Lumbini is the birthplace of the Buddha.

Altitude: 150 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Lumbini Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 12

Kathmandu sightseeing and drive to Nagarkot

After breakfast, we set off for a full day of sightseeing in the Kathmandu Valley, visiting the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Pashupatinath, Swayambhunath and Boudhanath. Afterwards, we drive to the hill station of Nagarkot.

Altitude: 2,175 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Nagarkot Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 13

Sunrise at Nagarkot and return to Kathmandu

Early in the morning, we watch the sunrise from the hill station of Nagarkot. Nagarkot is a quiet place away from the city, with fresh air and green hills, and a backdrop of snow peaks including the Annapurna range and the Jugal range. We return to Kathmandu via Bhaktapur. You spend the night in Kathmandu, with a cultural show and dinner.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Hotel, Kathmandu Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Day 14

Departure

We transfer you to Kathmandu airport for your flight home. Alternatively, you can extend the trip to visit Pokhara, Chitwan National Park, Bhutan or Tibet.

Altitude: 1,400 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- 3-star accommodation on a twin-share basis
- Daily breakfast and dinner
- Private air-conditioned minibus for the whole tour
- English-speaking guide throughout
- Boat ride in Varanasi
- Elephant ride at Amber Fort, Jaipur
- All entrance fees
- Flight from Lumbini to Kathmandu

- Tour of the Kathmandu Valley World Heritage Sites
- All taxes

Not included

- International airfare and travel insurance
- Any meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any other tourist activities
- Anything not listed as included

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/buddhist-circuit-golden-tour