

India

BIG 5



- Search for India's Big 5 - Bengal Tiger, One-Horned Rhino, Elephant, Wild dog and Sambar
- Join wildlife experts exploring *Kipling Country* and the Foothills of the Himalayas
- Explore Kanha and Kaziranga on game drives, elephant safaris and boat journeys
- Includes a donation to the Singinawa Foundation and a visit to a traditional tribal community

SUMMARY



Housing one of the richest diversities of life forms on earth, India is a veritable Eden and although under siege from one fifth of humanity, remarkably it survives in all its diverse forms. This unique wildlife journey visits parks and sanctuaries which focus on the forests of Central India and the foothills of the Himalaya with wildlife experts on hand to open up an India in a way that only the best guides can.



The parks of Kanha, said to be the inspiration for Kiplings Jungle Book and the lush swamps of Kaziranga on the banks of the mighty Brahmaputra River offer the wildlife enthusiast a unique opportunity to explore wilderness areas away from the crowds, in search of India's very own Big 5.

Not only will you experience game drives in specially adapted 4WD, but will also head out on foot on nature trails through the forests, search for wildlife on elephant back safaris and visit local village markets to gain an understanding of the role traditional Indian communities' play in today's modern India.

YOUR EXPERTS

Our experts are chosen for their commitment to working for the welfare of both the wildlife and the rural people of India and are an invaluable part of the success of our tours.

Nanda Rana

Nanda hails from the Royal Rana Family of Nepal and has spent the last 20 years studying tigers in Madhya Pradesh. Acknowledged for his commitment to the conservation of tigers, Nanda was appointed as the Tiger Consultant in 1998 by National Geographic and has worked with Discovery and BBC to make films on tigers.



Latika Rana

A wildlife biologist with a D.Phil on Tiger Conservation and Management from Oxford University. She has worked with numerous international organisations on many species including the Asian Elephant, Gangetic Dolphin and the wild buffaloes. However it is tigers for which she is best known and was even the star of her own National Geographic documentary, *The Tiger Princess*.

GROUP FLIGHT DETAILS

Date	Route	Flight Number	Depart	Arrive
Day 1	Heathrow to Delhi	BA 257	15:25	05:05+1
Day 12	Delhi to Heathrow	BA256	06:55	11:00

+ 1 Arrival the following day

We are aware that when it comes to booking international flights there are a number of different options available to you which may be cheaper than the fares Steppes Discovery is able to offer. Please bear in mind however that when booking international flights with Steppes in conjunction with your holiday you are afforded a much greater level of financial protection than if you book your flights separately through a different source. This is down to EU Package Regulations which state that if a tour operator is booking international flights combined with ground arrangements on your behalf and the flight from the UK is unable to take off, then the tour operator is obliged to refund the full cost of your holiday.

Recently, this has become most pertinent on the occasions when flights were grounded in April 2010 due to volcanic ash and in December 2010 due to snow and frozen runways. Those travellers who had booked hotels and ground arrangements through a tour operator but had booked flights independently were still liable for the cost of their holiday, despite not being able to fly from the UK. Those travellers who had booked a 'package' through a tour operator including flights and ground arrangements were fully refunded the total cost of their holiday or, as in most cases with Steppes' clients, were found alternative arrangements at a later date at no additional expense.

This additional insurance against unforeseen circumstances can offer not only peace of mind but valuable cover should the unexpected occur.

DETAILED TRIP ITINERARY



Day 1 - Arrive Delhi

On arrival in Delhi, you will be welcomed by your guide and taken to the nearby Shanti Home, a small boutique, family run guesthouse with only 17 rooms in the quieter parts of Delhi. With the metro line only a 2 minute walk away, the main attractions of Delhi are easily accessible, or you could choose to stay and relax on the shady roof-top terrace. This evening you are given a briefing on your wildlife adventure that awaits and a chance to get to know your fellow travellers over a delicious home cooked Indian meal. Overnight Shanti Home (BB)

Day 2 - Fly to Jabalpur - Drive to Kanha

This morning you are taken to Delhi Airport for your flight to Jabalpur and on arrival you will be met and then transferred to Kanha National Park, a journey of around 5-6 hours including stops for lunch. Kanha is considered by some as India's greatest park and was the inspiration behind Kipling's famous Jungle Book. The sheer size (over 1,940-sq-kms) and remoteness means that Kanha is often less busy than other parks and the densely forested hills of Sal and bamboo, grassy plateaus and extensive meadows intertwined with the meandering streams of the Banjar River make for one of India's most picturesque parks.



The first ever study of the tiger was undertaken here by the famous zoologist, George Shaller and besides tiger, Kanha is also home to the impressive gaur, or 'wild cattle', sloth bear, Indian fox, striped hyena and leopard and is the last remaining habitat for the Barasingha or Swamp Deer, along with an impressive 350 species of birds.



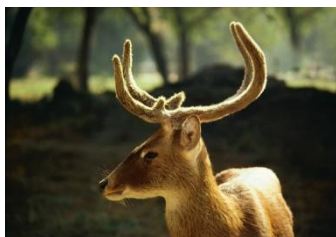
You will be staying at the excellent Singinawa Jungle Lodge, located on 55 acres of land, offering a unique experience of the jungles of central India with all the comforts of a world class lodge. The lodge offers the chance to not only learn about the tiger and its habitat but to also experience ecologically responsible tourism and see conservation at work benefitting the surrounding local communities.

Day 3 - 6 - Kanha National Park

Over the next few days, you will explore Kanha National Park, with safaris taking place twice a day in customized 4x4 vehicles, with breakfast taken with you. Morning visits can be up to six hours long and you will be accompanied throughout by wildlife experts who know the park intimately to offer a fascinating insight into the region. For some there is an optional the opportunity to view tigers from elephant back, subject to availability as the elephants are owned and operated by Park authorities.



When not on safari, there is a two kilometre nature trail on the lodge grounds, several walks along the Tannaur river and bicycles available for those who would like to explore the surrounding areas. There is also the chance to visit the tribal village of Kohoka to glimpse the lifestyle of traditional Indian communities.



In the evening, slide shows and illustrated talks on the park, tigers and their conservation are presented by Nanda Rana or one of the naturalists for a fascinating insight in to the region and the conservation issues faced each day. Alternatively, you can relax around the camp fire and listen to the sounds as night falls. Overnight Singinawa, full board.



Day 7 - Fly Back to Delhi

This morning you retrace your steps and fly back to Delhi for the night, returning to Shanti Home, necessary because of the limited number of flights and distance from here to Kaziranga. Overnight Shanti Home, bed and breakfast.

Day 8 - Fly to Guwahati - Drive to Kaziranga

This morning you are flown to Guwahati Airport and then driven to Kaziranga National park, a 5- 6 hour drive along the foothills of the Himalayas, making for some beautiful scenery. Kaziranga is one of the largest protected areas in India and also a World Heritage Site. Lying along the mighty Brahmaputra river, the park covers an area of about 430-sq-kms and its swamps and grasslands with tall thickets of elephant grass and patches of ever green forest support the largest number of Rhino population in the whole of Indian subcontinent (over 80% of the world's population). For over 100 years this realm of the Rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros unicornis*), has become successful model in wildlife conservation, also providing an ideal habitat for numerous other threatened species. As well as the Indian rhino, the park is also home wild elephant, tiger, a small population of hoolock gibbon, capped langur, leopard, wild boar and sambar.



You will be staying at the comfortable Diphlu River Lodge, consisting of thatch, bamboo and wooden boutique rooms on raised stilts, overlooking the Diphlu River, which you can explore in dugout canoes, looking out for otters, buffalo, deer or rhino grazing on the far bank. This area is also perfect for the barbecues and camp fires that the lodge arranges. Overnight Diphlu River Lodge, full board.



Day 9 - 10 - Kaziranga National Park

For the next two days you will head out at first light, to head into the park for some close encounters with the one horned Rhino and the rest of Kaziranga's wildlife, exploring the vast valley floor with the Karbi Anglong Hills as a backdrop. This beautiful and little visited park not only offers some of India's most authentic wildlife encounters, including large herds of elephants and buffalo, but the birding here is also excellent and includes herons, storks, fish eagles, kingfishers and a large grey pelican colony. Overnight Diphlu River Lodge, full board.



Day 11 - Fly back to Delhi

Today you retrace your steps, returning to Guwahati airport for your flight back to Delhi. In the evening, you will have a farewell meal with your guide at Shanti Home when you can look back on your adventure. Overnight Shanti Home, bed and breakfast.

Day 12 - Depart

Today is at leisure, before being transferred to the airport for your flight home.

****PLEASE NOTE:** Numerous optional extensions can easily be arranged from here, please see below.



Pre & Post Trip Extensions

- Experience the monumental beauty and atmosphere of the Taj Mahal.
- Barter for printed cotton and silks in the pink city of Jaipur
- Explore Udaipur one of India's most romantic cities.
- Relax on a palm-fringed beaches in the lush backwaters of Kerala.
- Visit the tea plantations of Darjeeling in North East India
- Sleep under the stars in a luxury tented camp in the Thar Desert



These are only a suggestion, given the size and diversity of India there are a whole range of extensions to suit every taste! Please contact us to discuss your options.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Dates: 2012
11th to 22nd November

2013
05th to 16th March

Total cost: From £3,495.00 per person based on twin room excluding international flights

Please note that the itinerary is based on a minimum of 10 paying clients up to a maximum of 12. Previously we have obtained this group size, but in the unlikely event that there are less than the minimum numbers, we will review the situation 12 weeks prior to travel and discuss your options. *With this in mind, it is important that you do not pay for any supplementary details relating to this trip, such as flights, visas or vaccinations until we confirm the trip is definitely running. Any financial commitments made by you prior to the 12 week review will not be refunded should the trip be cancelled due to insufficient numbers.*

Single Supplement: If you are happy to share accommodation with a fellow traveller of the same sex then you will NOT be charged a single supplement for your holiday. This is of course dependent on there being another same sex traveller on the trip who is also willing to share. If we cannot find you a suitable room-mate, then we will pass on the single supplement, imposed by the properties we are using. We will endeavour to keep this supplement to a minimum and will discuss your room options 12 weeks prior to the date of departure. Should you however wish to guarantee a single room then the additional cost is £495.00

Includes: Domestic flights within India, accommodation in a twin room with meals as shown, transport and transfers by private vehicle, entrance to national parks, activities and all wildlife excursions with your expert naturalist guide as shown. Local guides, porters and a contribution to the Singinawa Foundation

Excludes: International Flights to Delhi, travel insurance, visas, vaccinations, departure taxes, meals in Delhi, gratuities and alcohol.

TRIP NOTES

Travelling in this region	Due to the nature of these tours and the area visited, from time to time we experience unforeseen schedule changes, imposed by airlines and ground agents which can adversely affect or interrupt your itinerary at any stage of the booking. Whilst we are unable to cover the cost of any additional expenses that maybe incurred as a result of these changes, we will of course make every effort to assist you in resolving these matters as quickly as we can and to ensure the trip runs as smoothly possible.
Weather	This trip travels during India's winter season, with cool mornings and evenings and warm sunny days. They are designed to maximise wildlife viewing as the drier weather draws game from around the park to the few remaining water sources and the undergrowth is much thinner, making it easier - in theory - to see wildlife.
Vaccinations and Visas	All British nationals require a visa for entry into India. Normal tourist visas are valid for six months. The visa costs £30 (plus admin fees) direct from VFS Global http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk/ and processing can take up to 3 weeks. Malaria is prevalent in India and we also recommend that you be inoculated against Hepatitis A, typhoid and tetanus. Please seek expert advice from MASTA on 09068 224100 or consult your doctor. Please note entry requirements are subject to change and whilst we are happy to help with visa's at all times, obtaining them remains your responsibility, so please ensure you read the up-to-date information on the above website.
Health and Fitness	Whilst this is not a physically challenging tour, a good level of fitness will help you enjoy the tour, given the short walks and nature trails that are included.
Essential Items	Please note that once confirmed we will send you a trip dossier containing a clothing and equipment list and general information.
Important notice about wildlife viewing	We must stress that seeing any wildlife can never be guaranteed as they are by nature, wild and as such have no fixed routine and finding them requires not only the skill and patience of the trackers/guides but also considerable luck!

SUPPORTING CONSERVATION



The Singinawa Foundation at Kanha includes 18 acres of land that has been purchased for a model farm that is being established to teach villagers about the use of indigenous plants to augment their incomes and improve lifestyles. In collaboration with the local school the foundation will be used to build a classroom for village school.

The Singinawa Foundation has also worked closely with the Park authorities and together with support from the Animals on the Edge Project, has constructed 5 waterholes in the Suphkhar and Bhaishanghat areas of the Tiger Reserve. In addition, assistance has been given to the Park authorities to procure essentials like trunks, mosquito nets and solar lights for all of the guard posts and seven four wheel drive vehicles for each of the ranges in the Tiger Reserve.

WANT TO DISCUSS THIS TRIP



Please contact chris on ++ 44 (0) 1285 643 333 for more details or to make a booking or e-mail him on chris@stepesdiscovery.co.uk

Having recently returned from tracking tigers, Chris heads up our India wildlife tours. From watching the sunrise over the Taj Mahal, tracking tigers through Indian forests to exploring India's stunning monuments, he will be happy to talk you through our tiger programs and any optional extensions.

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conservation