



**TRAVEL THERE CO**

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## Best of Southern India

**Days:**Kochi toKochi

### What's Included

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Your G for Good Moment: Lunch at Theuvoram Women Empowerment Project, Alleppey

Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group

Your Local Living Moment: Kerala Backwaters Homestay, Alleppey. Fort Kochi orientation walk. Kathakali dance show. Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary walk and safari. Chaumundi Temple and Mysore Palace visit. Mamallapuram Shore Temple visit. Pondicherry orientation walk. Madurai cycle-rickshaw ride and Sri Meenakshi Temple visit. Cardamom Hills spice plantation tour. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

### Itinerary

#### Highlights

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Relax in the peaceful backwaters of Kerala, spot wildlife in beautiful parks, uncover ancient temples, explore tea and spice plantations, take a rickshaw ride through the streets of Madurai

#### Dossier Disclaimer

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## Itinerary Disclaimer

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While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## Important Notes

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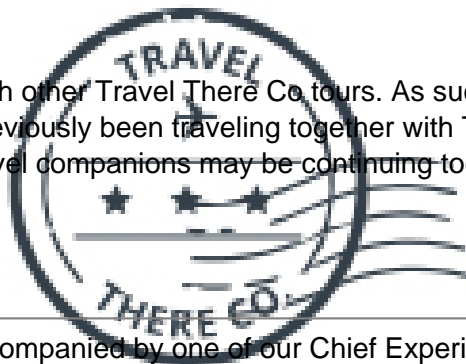
### 1. CULTURE

India is a country which is very different to anything you will have experienced before. Although this means it is not the easiest place to travel, this is also what makes it so special. Pollution, poverty and the crowds can result in initial culture shock but should be seen as an exciting new challenge. During our time here we have come to love this large and wonderfully different country but we know that we should always expect to encounter some difficulties along the way.

In India there are very different attitudes to time keeping, public cleanliness, privacy and service. Trains will sometimes be late, plumbing can sometimes be temperamental and power will often just vanish. Optimistic menus turn out to have only one dish available and everyone, just everyone, will want to know your name. If you are able to travel with a lot of patience and a healthy sense of humour, then we know that you - like all of us - will be captivated by what India has to offer.

### 2. COMBO TRIP

Please note that this tour combines with other Travel There Co tours. As such, the staff and some travel companions on your tour may have previously been traveling together with Travel There Co, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, some staff and travel companions may be continuing together on another Travel There Co tour, after your trip concludes.



## Group Leader Description

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All Travel There Co group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

## Group Size Notes

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Max 15, avg 12

## Meals Included

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1 breakfast, 2 lunches, 2 dinners

## Meals

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Eating is a big part of travelling. Travelling with Travel There Co you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Vegetarians will be able to find a huge

range of different foods - India is vegetarian heaven. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

## Transport

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Train, private vehicle, cycle-rickshaw, auto-rickshaw, ferry.

### About our Transportation

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#### TRAIN

Traveling in India by train is an experience. Distances in India are long and Indian trains aren't the worlds fastest, but traveling in these adds a fascinating new dimension to a visitor's experience in the country. There is virtually no better way to get to make friends with the people and see the spectacular views of the diverse Indian countryside. The chaos on the Indian Railway stations is a replica of the life in India.

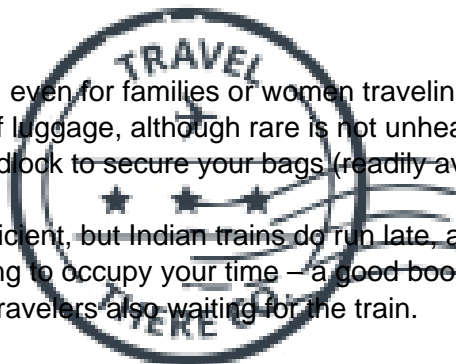
Travel There Co uses a combination of AC 2 tier, AC 3 tier and sleeper class (for overnight journeys) and AC Chair car or second class seats for day journeys.

There are no restaurant or buffet cars on Indian Railways, but on long distance trains an attendant will appear in your coach and ask you if you would like to order food. Regular stops are made at stations where food is also available and on some trains many vendors board the train selling chai, cold drinks and crisps and biscuits.

Don't expect pristine western standards anywhere in India, but you'll find AC2, AC3 and AC Chair class fairly clean by Indian standards, with both western-style and squat toilets usually in a reasonably sanitary condition. Sleeper Class and 2nd class toilets may be a different matter! Bring your own toilet paper and hand wash soap or liquid.

Indian trains are quite safe to travel on, even for families or women traveling alone, and you are unlikely to have any problems. Having said that, theft of luggage, although rare is not unheard of, so just for peace of mind you might like to take along a chain and padlock to secure your bags (readily available at all Indian stations).

Generally, Indian Railways are very efficient, but Indian trains do run late, and sometimes it's hours rather than minutes. Make sure you have something to occupy your time – a good book, magazine or photos of your home country and family to show the Indian travelers also waiting for the train.



#### ROAD

Traveling by road is certainly not what people are use to in Western countries. Rules are not always followed, drivers appear to speed, do not stay in their lanes, overtake in seemingly dangerous situations, rarely use their mirrors or driving lights at night time. The horn however is used very frequently and can range from the latest Bollywood tune to Britney Spears! Although the government is investing large sums of money improving the road infrastructure, there is a lot more to be done. As a result some of the roads are poorly maintained, pot holed and uneven. This gets even more pronounced particularly during and after the monsoon. Travel time is very long in comparison to Western countries and short distances can take a lot longer than at home.

### Local Flights

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All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

Please Note: Only 1 piece of luggage that weighs up to 15kgs will be permitted on our internal flights in India. For any extra weight the airline may charge an additional fee at the time of check-in.

### Solo Travellers

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We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our

Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## Accommodation

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Hotels (12 nts), homestay (1 nt, multi-share).

## About Accommodation

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A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used in India. These can vary in terms of service, efficiency and cleanliness. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home. Power cuts can and are a regular occurrence in many places, especially throughout North and Central India. Although a number of hotels have generators there may be times when these won't work. It is also recommended when you are in your room to lock the door, as staff will sometime enter without reason.

## Joining Hotel

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For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the Travel There Co App or contact your travel agent.

## Joining Instructions

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When arriving at Kochi Airport you will need to get a taxi to take you to the hotel as public buses are not reliable and the airport is located some 30kms outside the city. The drive should take between 45-60 minutes depending on the traffic and the time of day. Please order your taxi from the prepaid taxi booth in the arrivals hall. The cost is about INR 550-650. The taxi booth will give you a receipt that you need to give to the driver but not until you arrive at the hotel.

Be aware too, that touts at the airports, even at hotel-reservation counters, may try to trick you into booking a hotel room by claiming that your prior reservation is invalid. Ignore them.

If this is your first trip to India a transfer is recommended. If you have paid for an arrival transfer when you booked your trip our driver/local operator will be waiting for you with a Travel There Co sign with your name on it. Please check carefully once you exit the baggage hall. Please contact Mr. Sathish if you don't see your transfers in Kochi and his mobile number is (+91) 99944248795. The office number is (+91-44) 27443260.

## Arrival Complications

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We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your CEO, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## Emergency Contact

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Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the Travel There Co Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our Travel There Co Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through Travel There Co or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

If your call is specifically concerning airport transfer complications at Cochin International Airport, please call our local Travel There Co Transfer providers directly at:

Mr Prajeesh Kumar: 09633033680

Mr Aravind: 096330 33 561

## EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

Travel There Co Local Office (South India)

During office hours, Mon-Fri 9am-5pm:

From outside of India: +91 9633033680

From within India: 09633033680

Travel There Co South Asia Manager, Sorab (Delhi, India)

>From outside of India: +91 88 5180 6614

>From within Delhi: 88 5180 6614

>From within India, but outside Delhi: 088 5180 6614

Travel There Co Office Bangkok, Thailand

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time): +66-02-3815574

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below, which will connect you directly with our 24 hour Sales team, who will happily assist you.

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999



## What to Take

What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen and the countries or regions you are planning to visit. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for Travel There Co trips! Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when travelling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones. If your trip involves overnights in homestays, villages or camping then you usually have the opportunity to rent sleeping bags if need be instead of bringing them with you.

## Checklist

Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)

- Required visas or vaccination certificates (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)

#### Essentials:

- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Toiletries (Preferably biodegradable)
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket



#### Health & Safety:

- Face masks (required)
- Hand sanitizer (required)
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)
- Rubber gloves

#### Train Travel (Optional):

- Slip-on shoes
- Small container with lid
- Travel cutlery
- Travel or camp cup

#### Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

Note: During the colder months (Oct-Apr) the mountains can be cold, so please make sure you pack warm clothes. During the months of Jul-Sep is the rainy season, so please make sure to pack waterproof clothes.

## Laundry

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.



## Visas and Entry Requirements

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All travellers must have a valid Indian visa prior to the start of their tour. Please note that visas for India are the responsibility of the individual traveller.

To obtain a visa for India, you may either apply for an e-Visa using the link below, or alternately visit the Indian embassy or consulate nearest you to apply for a physical visa on your passport.

As of 2017, India is now offering e-Visas for most nationalities. Please visit this link for further information and to apply: <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

As there are many fake websites, please only use the link above to apply for your e-Visa and for any additional information.

Please use the start hotel of your tour as a reference for your visa application. Contact us or your travel agent if you need further information.

\*\* Please note that the visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. For the most up to date information, please check your government's foreign ministry website or with your travel agent, as rules do change. It is important that you check for yourself. For most travellers, there will probably be an Indian embassy and consulate in the country that you live in.

## Spending Money

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Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

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As currency exchange rates in Asia fluctuate often we ask that you refer to the following website for daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

As of Feb 2012 the exchange rate for INDIA was 1 USD = 49.00 INR (Indian Rupees). There are many ATM machines that accept both Visa and Mastercard but these are limited to major cities. Major credit cards are accepted in most shops but they may charge a 2-4% transaction fee.

## Emergency Fund

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Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$200 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Departure Tax

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All departure taxes should be included in your international flight ticket.

## Tipping

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It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from USD1-2 per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your Travel There Co CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference;

however as a guideline USD20-30 per person, per week can be used.

## Optional Activities

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Madurai

- Meenakshi Temple Night Visit (50INR per person, 1000INR per group)

Periyar Lake

- Periyar Lake Boat Ride (500INR per group)

## Health

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Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our CEO are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. Travel There Co reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our group CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

## Safety and Security

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Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

**Protests and Demonstrations-** Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).



Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

<http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/>  
[www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/](http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/)

## Trip Specific Safety

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We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

## Medical Form

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## A Couple of Rules

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Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## A Word of Warning

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## Travel Insurance

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Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## Local Dress

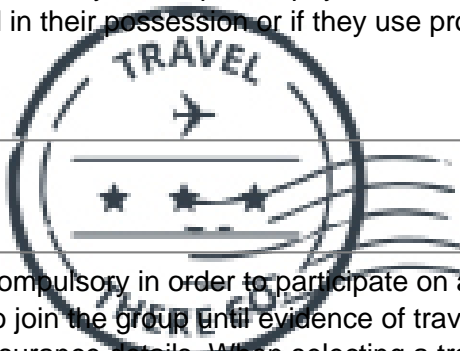
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In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting small rural communities or visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites as this may restrict your entry.

India is very conservative and you should dress accordingly. As a general guideline shoulders and knees should be covered at all times. The wearing of shorts is not allowed as it will restrict your entry into buildings of a religious nature and family homes. A light water and windproof jacket is useful and a hat essential.

NB: WE STRESS THAT IT CAN BE VERY COLD IN THE HILLS DURING THE MONTHS FROM DECEMBER TO FEBRUARY.

NB: During our trip there will be many opportunities for you to meet and "talk" with locals. One way to start any conversation is with pictures. We recommend that you bring some photos/postcards of your family, home, city or country where you live, animals peculiar to your country etc.



## Feedback

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After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next Travel There Co trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at [customerservice@gadventures.com](mailto:customerservice@gadventures.com) and we will send it on to you.

## Minimum Age

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You must be 18 to travel unaccompanied on a Travel There Co tour. For minors travelling with a guardian over 21 years old, the minimum age is 12.

## International Flights

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Check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

Last updated: Mon 06 May '24

