

Cultural and Yoga Experience with Life Essence Retreats

Best of India!!

For someone for the west, India provides an authentic adventure - stimulating, absorbing, daunting, sometimes moving and shocking. Here is one of the world's great dramas; an ancient, vast and crowded land committed to the most formidably challenging exercise in mass democracy. It is a spectacle in which hope, pride, paradox and uncertainty mingle and struggle. It is conducted on the whole, and to India's credit in the open. The lasting memories of the land are hospitality, kindness, good humor and generosity. Here is a society of over a 1000 million people, growing by a million a month, divided and united by language, caste, religion and regional loyalties. It has often been described as a functioning anarchy; and it is in many ways an amiable one, of marvelous fluidity and tolerance. Indeed, the true Indian motif is not the Taj Mahal, the elephant or the patient peasant behind the ox drawn plough. It is the crowd, the ocean of faces in the land of multitudes, endlessly stirring, pushing and moving. It is in this human circulation that one sees India's color, variety, busyness, and, senses also its power, vitality and grandeur.



Namaste! - We welcome you with folded hands

Thu Sept 14: Brisbane – Delhi (Thai Air 6:00pm / 5:40am +1)

Late afternoon make your own arrangements to reach airport for your flight to Delhi, INDIA.
Overnight: En Route

Fri Sept 15: Arrival / Delhi (5:40am)

Early morning arrival. Meeting and assistance upon arrival as our representatives welcome you and escort you to your hotel.

Check in time is 12 Noon.

Whilst the room keys and check-in is organized, our representative would introduce the tour to you and hand over the documents to you.

Welcome to India, or as we say 'atithi devo bhava' (the guest is an incarnation of God). Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you!

Overnight at Hotel – Samrat Hotel or Similar (No meals)



Sat Sept 16: Delhi



After breakfast, we proceed on a guided tour of New Delhi, Visiting such sights as, Humayun's Tomb (1586), the Qutab Minar 72 meters high and one of the most perfect towers in the Persian world. The Iron Pillar which has survived the vagaries of weather for over 1500 years. Continue with a drive through Embassy area, the Government buildings (1921-1930) and Connaught Place, the heart and main shopping district of the capital. We will also visit the India Gate.

Afternoon, go for a rickshaw tour in Old Delhi - one of the best examples in the world where you can witness the cultural mixtures of "old and new". Uncover the sights, scents, and the flavors of "Purani Dilli" (Old Delhi) while you are sitting comfortably and safely in your cycle rickshaw. Our major highlights would

include a visit to the Jama Masjid, Fatehpuri Masjid, Chandni Chowk market (literally meaning the moonlit square), Darba Kalan (a 17th century jewel street), Kinari bazaar (a market, especially for wedding & traditional outfits), Kari Baoli (Asia's largest spice market), as well as the narrow alleys of Ballimaran (well-known for the renowned poet Mirza Galib's house). Moreover, the people and the streets here have many stories to



tell you about the yesteryears of Delhi!! Yes, Please, this magical ride will give you a perfect opportunity to discover a different Delhi; all Natural and all earthy from the safety of your rickshaw.

Overnight at Hotel – Samrat Hotel or similar (B)

Sun Sept 17: Delhi / Agra (205 Kms) (04 Hrs Drive)

After breakfast, we will drive to Agra along one of India's finest freeways.

Upon arrival in Agra, check into Crystal Sarovar Premier.

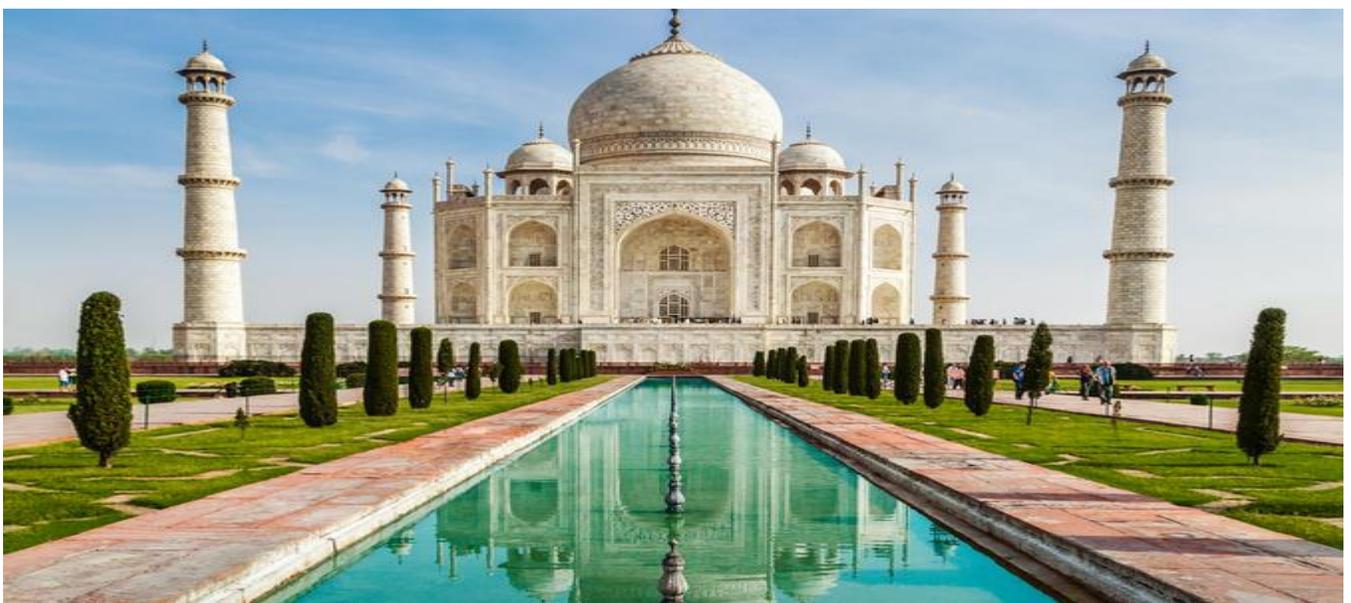


After rest & relaxation, we ride to the massive Agra Fort. The elegant buildings inside reflect an interesting synthesis of Hindu and Central Asian architectural styles, built by Emperor Akbar, the maze of the courtyards, mosques & private chambers of the fort echo the story of the Mughal Empire.

Evening, we will visit to Mehtab Bagh. The Moonlight Garden was an extension of the Taj Mahal Garden - on the other side of the river. In 1652 Aurangzeb wrote to his father telling of a visit to 'the blessed tomb' and commenting that the Mehtab Garden was completely inundated and has lost its charm, but soon it will regain its verdancy. The octagonal pool and the pavilion around it are in splendid condition. The Mehtab Bagh was lost under the mud but re-excavated in the 1990s. Originally, the garden was planted with fragrant flowers and used in the cool of the night as a place from which to view the Taj Mahal reflected in the octagonal pool and in the river.



Overnight at Howard Park Plaza or Similar (B)



Mon Sep 18: Agra / Fatehpur Sikri / Jaipur (245 Kms) (06 Hrs drive)

Agra is the city of the Taj Mahal, perhaps the most photographed monument in the world. However, there is a degree of enigma about the Taj. Once you hear about a building so much and once you see so many pictures of a building your expectations are real high; and this is the enigma about the Taj Mahal. No matter how many pictures you have seen or no matter how high your expectations are the Taj never lets you down - the unparalleled glory and beauty of the building surpasses beyond all human imaginations. At sunrise we visit one of the greatest sights of one's lifetime - Taj Mahal. A dawn visit to the fabled Taj Mahal to witness the magical effects caused by the reflections of the changing colors of the rising Sun on this brilliant white marble building. Later we return back to our hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast, we drive to Jaipur stopping at the deserted capital city of Fatehpur Sikri. This abandoned capital of the Mughals is a perfectly preserved city at the height of the empire's splendor. The city divided into religious and secular parts has interesting well-sculpted buildings. From here we continue riding to Jaipur.

Upon arrival in Jaipur, check into Shahpura House. The Traditional Rajput architect, a mixture of Mughal and Indian, a facade with domes and frescoes. The House is a very fine example of Shekhawati frescoes and architecture. Conceived as a traditional Indian palace, The Shahpura House showcases the rich heritage of the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan with its rambling courtyards, gentle rippling fountains, reflecting pools and gardens. Interiors embellished with decorative domes, hand painted frescoes, intricate mirror work and beautifully crafted artifacts create an ambience of regal splendour. The family portraits, which add to the charm of this family hotel where tradition still runs strong.

After rest & relaxation, we will explore the unending shopping options of Jaipur along with our Guide. An essential starting point for Rajasthan craftwork is block making and block printing and we will be exploring the process from start to finish in some of the popular stores here. The opportunity also exists here to tailor make outfits to your design and size.



We also explore one of the chief attractions of Jaipur - its jewelry, which offers a variety that ranges from chunky tribal jewelry to enameled gold to modern diamond jewelry. Kundan (art of stone setting) and enamel jewelry has been a specialty of Rajasthan, particularly that of Jaipur. The stones are embossed into decorative shapes & patterns and embellished with delicate enamel ornamentation in the champ eve (raised field) technique. Jaipur is well known for its gold and silver enameling. Colorful bangles made of lac and set with semiprecious stones make an inexpensive buy. The craftsmen take great pains to embed the hundreds of stones into the lac. The skilled gem-cutters of Jaipur carve enchanting little animals and birds from rock, crystal, jade, smoky topaz and amethyst. Intaglio beads & buttons and crystal scent bottles are also available.

We also visit the temple of Govind Dev Ji. It is one of the most sacred and famous tourist destinations in India. The temple is located in the City Palace complex, of Jaipur. The idol of Govind Dev Ji is strikingly beautiful for its complete resemblance with Lord Krishna, and the temple is placed between Chandra Mahal and Badal Mahal in the City Palace complex. Every day, various 'Aartis' and 'Prasad' or 'Bhogs' are offered at the temple, at seven different times.

Overnight at Shahpura House or Similar (B)

Tue Sep 19: Jaipur



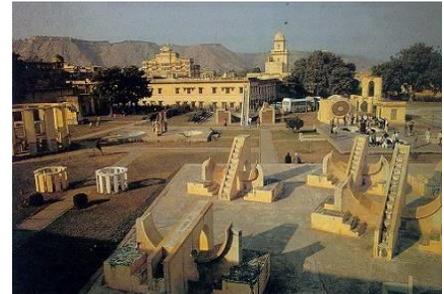
Morning we visit Amber Fort, the former capital of the royal Jaipurs. Few fail to be moved by the dramatic Rajput grandeur of this hilltop fortress-palace 11 km north of Jaipur. Set on the dry wrinkled Aravali Hills, and surrounded by fortified battlements, the palace straddles two sepia-hued tundra hills overlooking Maota Lake, and its sprawling crenellated walls lattice the surrounding hills.

We will ride up to this hilltop palace on a caparisoned, painted elephant, passing through the ancient main gate where Maharajas of Jaipur have entered for four hundred years. Our guide will elaborate on the history of this architectural

masterpiece with its mirror-studded alcoves, dazzling mosaics and water-cooled swings that delight today's visitors as they did their former royal residents.

We shall visit the Hawa Mahal or Palace of the Winds, a five-storied structure of pink sandstone with semi-Octagonal and delicately honeycombed windows overlooking the main street of the old city. It was built in 1799 so that veiled royal women could peer down unseen by the world through its 593 stone screens

Later, we proceed on a tour Of the City Palace & Observatory. The City Palace in the heart of the old city is a blend of Rajasthani and Mughal architecture. The palace lies in the heart of the city and occupies the whole central grid. The fortified wall has seven gates and was built for protection from invading armies and animals that lived in jungles, which surrounded the wall that time. Next, we visit the Solar Observatory - an astronomical treasure house, with solar device that give accurate predictions till date.



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Overnight at Shahpura House or Similar (B)

Wed Sep 20: Jaipur / Bangalore (6E 642 – 0905 / 1125 Hrs)

Bangalore / Cochin – Alleppey (6E 407 – 1255 / 1355 Hrs)

After breakfast, transfer to the airport to board you flight to Cochin via Delhi.

Meeting & assistance upon arrival in Cochin and drive one hour to your Ayurvedic Heritage Resort

Overnight Manjistha Heritage Resort. (B,D)

Thu Sep 21: Alleppey

Day at leisure to enjoy the resort and participate in one of the ayurvedic treatments. The Ayurvedic centre provides highly experienced male and female therapists and provide treatments associated with nasal and ear ailments, chronic headache and rheumatic problems only after consulting with the doctor.

Optional Ayurvedic Treatments:

- **RASAYANA CHIKILSA (REJUVENATION THERAPY):** This treatment is to reverse the degenerative process happening in the body. An ideal program to feel young.
- **PANCHAKARMA SODHANA CHIKILSA (BODY PURIFICATION PROGRAM):** This program helps in purifying the whole body to attain the Deha equilibrium as well as in helping reinforcing the body immunity system.
- **KAYAKALPA CHIKILSA (BODY IMMUNIZATION THERAPY):** It is an optimum combination of purification & rejuvenation program.
- **MANASWASTA CHIKILSA (STRESS MGT THERAPY):** This therapy help you to manage and reduce the effects of stress, depression & melancholy.
- **MEDHODHARA CHIKILSA (SLIMMING PROGRAM):** This program includes restricting the diet and a combination of massages and oral meditation



Fri Sept 22: Alleppey / Dewalokam (66 Kms) (66 Kms) (02 ½ Hrs drive)

After breakfast, we will drive to Dewalokam.

Upon arrival we will make our way to Dewalokam. Professor Jose and his family live on the premises – an organic farm with goats, cows, buffalo, pigs, chickens, ducks and guineas fowls. Delicious Kerala dishes are prepared for guests using the farm produce. From the patio of your room you can see the Sahyadris mountains (the local name for the Western Ghats), beyond the river and forest.



Following lunch we will go native! How? We ride on a public bus for a short distance to a neighboring village. Upon arrival we will walk through the rubber estate to the village where we will witness traditional dwellings, interact with the natives, learn about their beliefs, as well as practices, and, get a better understanding of people and culture. Along the way you will also get to see a rubber factory started by the British in 1913. Following the walk, we would have a special ride in a unique public transport – the local tuktuk!

In the evening (at leisure) you may choose to book yourself into regular Ayurvedic massages and treatments. The resort has well appointed Ayurveda center.



Following a little downtime it is time to get working again - sorry! We will participate with the chef and undertake a cooking lesson. Here, you will be explained significance of various spices and measures that we need to bare in mind when preparing South Indian recipes. This is also hands on experience, either make or break your dinner.

Overnight at Dewalokam (Standard Room) (B, L & D)

Sat Sept 23: Dewalokam / Periyar (100 Kms) (03 ½ Hrs drive)

After breakfast, we visit the organic farm of Dewalokam (guided) that produces almost all the vegetables, fruits and spices. Dewalokam is in the Spice Belt. The Birthplace of spices like pepper, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, curry leaves, etc. Almost all the vegetables used in the kitchen are produced on the farm. A walk in the garden, plucking, smelling, and, tasting, will enrich your earth experience. In these plantations you will see many of the spices growing that you buy in the Department Stores.



Afternoon, checkout from hotel and drive to Kofiland



On arrival check into Kofiland at Thekkady, an eco-friendly resort set in hundreds of acres of greenery that exudes the most exotic experience of God's own country - Kerala. Built mostly using rock, stones and mud from the area, the architecture of Kofiland is contemporary and influenced in no small measure by the profusion of nature. A lake formed between adjacent hill slopes is however the central motif, casting its bewitching allures into all the cottages that offer splendid views from the balcony. Set between the lobby and pool, is the resort's multi cuisine restaurant elegantly appointed with robust wood furniture, and, earth toned fabrics, serves the

distinctive flavors of the different cultures of Kerala that are bound to delight a discerning plate.

In the **evening** we would walk through the Spice plantation and Ayurvedic plants of Kofiland. A naturalist will accompany introduce us to various spices and plants. The walk winds through the vines of pepper and vanilla, past cardamom bushes and tracts of clove, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric and nutmeg. Besides, there is also a café and an Organic store set at the entrance to the plantation. Here you can refresh yourself and also buy some exclusive organic souvenirs for your near and dear ones.



After an absorbing fun filled day with Elephants and Spices, it's now Showtime, as we witness tribal dances, and, a kaleidoscopic dance drama. The various performances include - Episode of Kathakali, Traditional Welcome dance of Kerala, Mohiniyattom, the classical dance of Kerala, Bharathanatayam, the south Indian classical dance and many more!! **(This would be a part of hotel service)**

Overnight at Kofiland Resort or similar (B)

Sun Sept 24: Kofiland (Periyar Trek – Morning Tour)

Early morning we would trek inside the periyar forest. The birdlife comprises of Butterfly, darters, cormorants, kingfishers, great hornbills (the great Malabar hornbill) and racket-tailed drongo. The reptilian population boasts of monitor lizards that can be spotted basking in the sun, on the rocks along the lakeshore, especially in the cooler months. Pythons, king cobras, flying lizards, flying squirrels, flying snakes and to top it all, flying frogs are the other inhabitants of this amazing sanctuary.



Late morning we experience a unique time with elephants, this two hour tour offers you the chance to experience the idyllic natural beauty of Thekkady and getting up close and personal with Kerala's iconic elephants. Start off on elephant back for a marvelous trek through the nearby forest, a beautiful & very exotic experience for your memories of Thekkady. You get quality time with the

elephants, starting with a ride through the jungle & ending in the river where you can bathe them. You are guaranteed to have an once-in-a-lifetime experience. Your adventure includes witnessing elephants timber dragging and, hand feeding of these wonderful animals. After a genuinely thrilling experience you will be served a refreshing cup of a Tea or Coffee.

Afternoon we would experience a unique visit to a tea garden and a tea factory where you witness the entire process of making tea. In the tea gardens, we would see plucking of tea leaves by women and storing in beautiful bamboo baskets on their back, strapped to their foreheads. From here we will proceed to witness the multi-staged tea processing in the factory. You would notice how the leaves are dried,

crushed, and, different grades are finally made. Of course you will also have an opportunity to buy what you have just seen. **(This would be a part of hotel service)**

Overnight at Kofiland Resort or similar (B)

Mon Sep 25: Periyar / Alleppey / Houseboat

After breakfast we ride to Alleppey for a houseboat experience through the narrow canals and channels of the backwaters of Kerala.



The materials that go into the making of houseboat are all local and Eco-friendly; bamboo poles, coconut fiber ropes, bamboo mats carpets etc. The main wood used is "Anjali ". The Houseboat provides all comforts - Beds, a kitchen, western toilets and an upper deck. Traditional lanterns are used as lights. The cuisine is of traditional Kerala flavour along with the local Specialities - delicious fish and prawns.

We spend the day Cruising on our boat through remote tribal villages along the tranquil backwaters of Kerala is a superb experience. Sensational in its own silent way, the cruise takes you along snake boat docks, friendly cheering villagers, coir (Jute) making communities, toddy (local spirit) shops, fishing nets pitched for the day's catch, banded paddy fields and manual canoes of different sizes criss-crossing each other. The experience enables you to reach beautiful untouched areas.

Overnight Aboard air-conditioned Muthoot 02 Bedroom Houseboat (B, L & D)

Tue Sep 26: Houseboat / Alleppey / Cochin Cochin / Brisbane (8:50pm – 6:45am)

After a leisurely breakfast, we will disembark at Alleppey drive to Cochin. Upon arrival, we meet our tour guide for the Cochin city tour. The true character of the city is to be found in the older parts of the Fort Cochin area. It more or less exists as it used to be a 1000 years back, when it was first built. The roads have not been widened because the old haggard buildings, through patchwork repairs over the centuries, still stand on the edges. This part of the city reflects an unusual blend of medieval Portugal, Dutch and English country life grafted on to the tropical

Malabar Coast. The fishing community of Cochin is also very interesting. They ancient cantilevered fishing nets called Chinese Fishing Nets. The net is fixed to a pole on the shore. While fishing, the entire net is lowered by a primitive fulcrum mechanism using long bamboo poles. By the same mechanism the pole is lifted along with the catch. We will explore the sights of Photographic as well as cultural interest. We would also visit the 16th century Mattancherry Palace, also known as the Dutch Palace since the Dutch substantially renovated the palace in the 17th century. The double storied quadrangular building surrounds a courtyard containing a Hindu temple. The Central Hall on the first floor was the coronation hall of the Rajas of Cochin; on display are their dresses, turbans and palanquins. The most important feature of this palace, however, is the astonishing murals in the bedchambers and other rooms, which depict scenes from the Ramayana and other religious legends. These murals are undoubtedly some of the most beautiful and extensive anywhere to be seen in India. The unique feature here is the unexpected and isolated Jewish community, whose origins date back to AD 52. They are self-contained and have their own Synagogue.

The area around the Synagogue, known, as 'Jew Town' is one of the main centers of spice trade. Scores of small firms huddle together in old dilapidated buildings and the air is filled with the aroma of ginger, cardamom, cumin, turmeric and cloves. The area is very busy. The potters are loading gunny bags of spices on to carts, which keep running up and down the narrow lanes. We would visit Jew Town, in the Mattancherry section and a short walk from the ferry is one street long. Jews used to occupy virtually all the houses on Jew Town Road, where they sold fruits, vegetables and spices or worked as oil pressers or carpenters. The spice markets are still located on the narrow street.

Late afternoon, you will be transferred to the airport for your flight back home.

No hotel quoted for this day

END OF SERVICES

We do hope the flavour of India will remain on your taste buds for all times to come and hopefully would kindle an indelible fondness for the country and her people; Thank you for being our guest, and as we say in India 'Please Come back Soon'

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you!!

Tour Cost on Twin Sharing Basis (Min 6 Travelling members)	
Land Cost including the India Domestic Flight	<u>AUD\$2750 Per Person</u>
Single Room Supplement	<u>AUD\$ 995 Per Person</u>

Note:

- International Airfare are not included in this price.
- *Quotes Based On Accommodation Listed In the Above Itinerary – (Subject To Availability)
- The above mentioned quotes are valid from 01st Sep 2017 till 30th Sep 2017

Cost Includes:

- ❖ Accommodation on Twin Sharing Basis
- ❖ Meals as per the Itinerary (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch & D – Dinner)
- ❖ Old Delhi Customized Rickshaw Tour
- ❖ Spice Plantation & Elephant Junction in Periyar
- ❖ Jungle Trek in Periyar
- ❖ All journeys as per itinerary in a fine air-conditioned Tempo Traveler / 18 – Seater Mini Coach
- ❖ Local guides, all applicable taxes
- ❖ Entrance fees to monuments

Cost Does Not Include:

- ❖ Camera & Video fee to monuments.
- ❖ Meals other than as mentioned above.
- ❖ Expenses of Personal nature such as Laundry, Drinks, Telephone calls etc.