

Snapshot

ESCORTED TOURS IN INDIA

With e-visas available again to UK visitors, it's time to sell an India trip, says **Adam Shaw**

star attraction...



Amazing architecture

India's biggest state, Rajasthan, was once home to ancient kings and ruling maharajahs and is dotted with imposing forts at places such as Jaisalmer and Gagron. Wendy Wu Tours' Rajasthan Panoroma tour takes guests to stay in a traditional camp in the Thar desert, to see the 'pink city' of Jaipur (so named due to the distinctive hue of its palatial buildings), and to visit Agra and the iconic Taj Mahal.



we love...

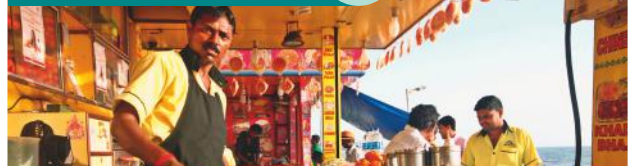


Walk on the wild side

India is home to an array of wildlife, from cheeky rhesus macaques to imposing sloth bears and hundreds of colourful bird species. A highlight of any trip to India is a tiger safari. Although critically endangered, conservation efforts mean their numbers are back on the up and escorted tours can help support this. Mercury Holidays' new Indian wildlife package takes visitors into the tiger heartland of Madhya Pradesh, while Exodus offers similar trips.



culinary delights...



Tempt your tastebuds

Intrepid's Real Food Adventure takes in the markets of places such as Old Delhi, where spices are piled high and sweet street foods such as *kachori* and *jalebi* are hawked by vendors. Guests can also learn how to cook some of the country's diverse favourites – from veggie *pav bhaji* from the north to Malvani fish dishes from the west coast.

don't miss...



Climb every mountain

Suggest clients head out east to Kolkata and the surrounding Himalayas. Kuoni offers trips to this mountainous part of the country, which boasts dramatic waterfalls and ancient Buddhist monasteries. See relics of the British Raj in the West Bengal state capital, before embarking on trips to mountain towns and the Darjeeling tea fields.

make time for...



Discover the countryside

Southern India's sleepy backwaters have been attracting visitors for years. Most operators build tours around Kerala, taking in the state's ancient and colonial history, impact on the tea and spice trade and the diverse wildlife, including elephants and wild pigs, around Lake Periyar. Several companies, including Mercury Holidays and Titan Travel, can arrange packages covering the Keralan countryside, as well as cities such as Cochin and Alleppey. Trying Keralan food is a must, too – think flavoursome vegetable and coconut dishes, served on banana leaves.



PICTURES: Lena Szedlova; Dmitry Rukhlenko; Konmesa Belikova; Oksana; silentswings_M_Ghosh

beach life...



Take to the coast

There are plenty of impressive beaches along India's coast, such as Mandarmani Beach in West Bengal, which is known for its population of red sand crabs, and Rushikonda in Andhra Pradesh, which is flanked by stretches of woodland. But arguably India's best sand and sea offerings can be found on the west coast in Goa. The state has been shaped by its position as a former Portuguese outpost, with European and Catholic traditions living on alongside local ones. Wendy Wu Tours' Goa Beach Stay takes in these golden sands, Panaji market and several churches, including the Basilica of Bom Jesus.

