



in/step
adventures



THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT FOR THE DISCERNING TRAVELLER

INDIA • SRI LANKA • BHUTAN • NEPAL

INTRODUCTION

India • Sri Lanka • Bhutan • Nepal

The Indian Subcontinent. One of the most vibrant corners of the world. A corner we are fortunate to know well.

This is a land blessed with spectacular natural beauty and diversity, playing host to a staggering wealth of flora and fauna.

A land across which history has created a fascinating weave of cultures, traditions, fables, faiths, rituals, architectures, arts, crafts and cuisines.

Our story so far...

Growing up in Delhi in a family where appreciating history, architecture, culture, travel and photography was as much a part of the diet as cricket and my mother’s legendary mutton curry, I was fortunate enough to have travelled widely before I had even finished school.

Memories of being awestruck with the Mughal monuments of north India, marvelling at the stone carvings on Karnataka’s temples, climbing Rajasthan’s hill forts and gazing at Calcutta’s Victoria Memorial are still fresh. Those trips were history lessons, art and craft appreciation classes and photography tutorials all rolled in to a family holiday.

Moving to Cambridge and a successful career in technology and marketing didn’t quell the deep love of travel and exploration of the Indian subcontinent. The quest has continued through the years. World Heritage sites, off-the-beaten track locations, wildlife reserves, remote villages.

The more I discover, the more I feel remains to be explored.

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On my travels, I was lucky to befriend champions of heritage and wildlife. Experts, historians, photographers, authors, guides and mentors.

Unfortunately, I also met far too many tourists rushing around on clichéd itineraries, unaware of the wonderful experiences they were missing in a rush to get to the next city, or being given inaccurate and at times absurd explanations by amateur guides. Both the tourists and the local communities are frequently being short-changed by mass-market tourism.

From such threads of personal journeys, dialogues with stakeholders in local communities and interactions with disappointed tourists, the idea of 'tourism done better', and the vision of Instep Adventures was woven.

Instep Adventures was born out of my passion for this land and a desire to offer you fresh perspectives. I want my passion to come across in every trip we plan. I want you to fall in love with this land, its people and its wildlife. Ours is a more contemporary tourism, aware of its potential and indeed, duty, to enrich both the guest and the host.

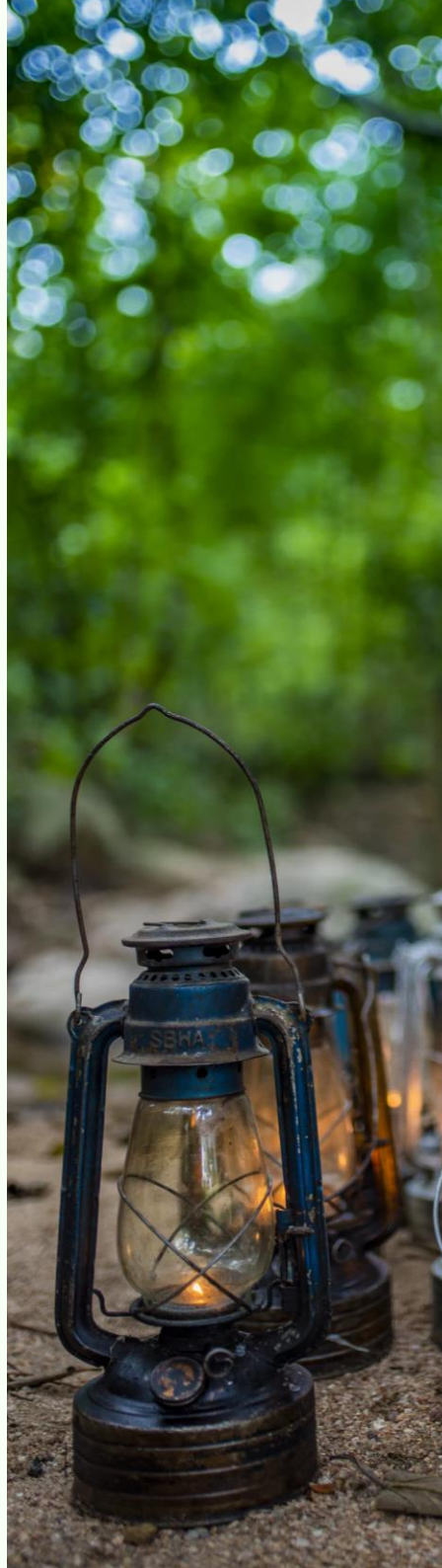
Travelling with Instep Adventures isn't about ticking off boxes, mass-market itineraries or group tours that rush you through without time to linger, savour and absorb. Talk to us and we'll put together a holiday that you'll remember.

**Welcome to the Indian Subcontinent.
Welcome to Instep Adventures.**



SUMIT SAHAI
Founder, Instep Adventures

Author 'The instep guide to
Watching Wildlife in India
and Sri Lanka'



WHY TRAVEL WITH US

Destination Expertise

Our destination expertise stems from our personal connections with this land. Its peoples, its cultures. Its cities, its villages and its jungles. We believe no one knows a land better than those who've lived there, read its history, and explored its length and breadth many times over. ***We know because we have.***

We are not just another travel company selling holidays to all corners of the world. We evangelise the land that we know best. ***Personally.***

Quality and Value

We are ***lean***. We run a tight ship. We don't print tons of brochures or send armies of 'experts' around the world to learn at your expense. We are ***keen***. We have trusted relationships with the best and ethical guides, naturalists, hoteliers and suppliers so you can rely completely on our network. Being lean and keen allows us to deliver quality and value.

Off-the-beaten track adventures

We know you want to visit special places and enjoy special moments, and we know these are not always where the crowds are. Our curated itineraries offer a mix of unmissable sights and hidden gems.

Experienced Local Guides

The stories of the Indian subcontinent are rich and multi-layered. We know the value of having a good guide so whether it is history, culture or wildlife you care about, we pick the most experienced, knowledgeable and passionate guides to enhance your journey.

Responsible Travel

Our [Responsible Travel Charter](#) guides every step we take. We create adventures that are a force for good, respecting and benefitting the lives and places we touch. We recommend authentic experiences and meaningful interactions with locals such as eating out in local restaurants, staying in family owned accommodation and joining tours run by organisations such as [Pink City Rickshaw](#) and [Salaam Baalak Trust](#). Wherever feasible, we offer sustainable choices like train journeys instead of flying.

And finally...

Our membership of The Travel Trust Association (TTA) provides 100% financial protection to your holiday, for complete peace of mind.



YOUR TAILOR-MADE ADVENTURE

Your choices, our expertise.



Interests



Destinations



Pace



Travel Modes



Guides



Hotels



Budget

Our tailor-made holidays are created bespoke for you, reflecting your interests, tastes and aspirations.

The 'ready-to-go' itinerary ideas on our website are excellent starting points and inspirations to personalize your holiday.

After consulting you, we create your holiday reflecting your personal interests, tastes and aspirations.

We curate destinations you'll love, set the pace you're comfortable with, select the modes of travel you prefer, arrange guides for as many and as few days as required and pick the hotels that suit your style.

We keep you informed as we confirm your travel arrangements. During your holiday, we provide 24/7 support to ensure all goes smoothly.



Before, during and after your tailor-mode holiday, we are always there for you.

INDIA

A lifetime isn't enough to fully explore it, yet a day is enough to fall in love with it.

For centuries, India has seduced visitors with its charms. From the towering Himalayan peaks in the north to the vast tropical southern peninsular, India offers such variety of cultures, languages, traditions, cuisines, architectures, landscapes and wildlife. Each corner of India feels uniquely distinct, and yet always remains distinctly Indian.

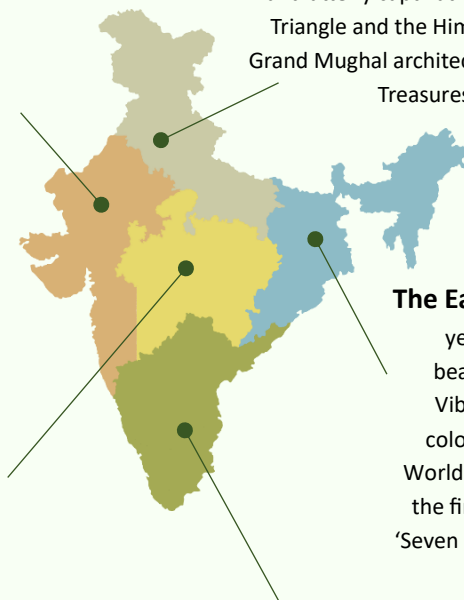
The West. Sample the romance and splendour of Royal Rajasthan, the wild beauty, history and textiles of Gujarat, Mumbai's modern Indian vibes, or just chill on the golden beaches of Goa.

Central India. Best known for its numerous tiger reserves, India's heartland is also rich in history, and strewn with architectural gems. Khajuraho's erotic art, Sanchi's Buddhist stupa, and mediaeval forts.

The North. India at its most culturally diverse and utterly captivating. Home to the Golden Triangle and the Himalayas. Beguiling Delhi. Grand Mughal architecture. Scars of Partition. Treasures of the Gangetic Plains.

The East. Off-the-beaten track, yet richly blessed in natural beauty, history and cultures. Vibrant yet gently crumbling colonial Calcutta. Darjeeling's World Heritage Hill Railway and the finest tea in the world. The 'Seven Sisters' of the North East.

The South. Explore verdant and tranquil Kerala, grand Hindu Chola temples of Tamil Nadu and the jewel hiding in plain sight that is Karnataka. A heady cocktail of ancient traditions, bygone empires and glorious coastlines.





The Golden Triangle. Delhi, Agra and Jaipur offer a heady cocktail of history, culture and cuisines. Delhi, as majestic and ancient as Rome. Jaipur, the gateway to Rajasthan. Agra, so much more than the magnificent Taj Mahal.

Timeless Varanasi. One of the seven holy Hindu cities. Among the world's oldest continually inhabited places. Witness the timeless rituals of life and death, prayer and supplication taking place on the banks of the Ganges.

Ladakh. Starkly beautiful high-altitude deserts, glaciers and green valleys. A land of mural-decked Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and whitewashed stupas. Home to Snow leopards and other magnificent wildlife.

Amritsar. Home to the glittering Golden Temple. The old town's streets and markets are lively, and the food is lip-smacking good. Jallianwala Bagh, and the excellent Partition Museum showcase the city's poignant history.

Dharamsala & McLeodgunj. Home to the Dalai Lama, these twin towns have a spiritual and Tibetan vibe. Picturesque Dharamsala is great for hiking, or watching cricket at one of the world's most scenic cricket grounds.

Colonial Shimla. The summer capital of the Raj. Once, one-fifth of humanity was ruled over from the Viceregal Lodge. Stroll back in time through the Victorian town, and travel on the World Heritage Shimla-Kalka heritage train.



Chettinad. Marvel at the exquisite *nattukotai* mansions reflecting the wealth of 19th century Chettiyars. The region's towns and villages are a time-capsule, inviting slow travel and leisurely dining on the famed cuisine.

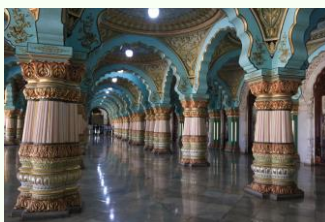
Kerala. Sandy beaches, languid sailing on a rice boat on serene backwaters watching rural life go by. Tea and spice plantations. Historic Fort Kochi. Vibrant dance and martial art performances. It's easy to see why Kerala is a favourite.

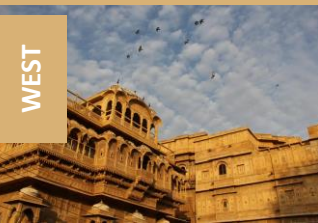
Chola Temples. Tamil Nadu's three World Heritage listed 11th century temples are the spectacular epitome of artistic achievements of the Chola empire. Remarkably, they are still in active religious use.

Pondicherry. Walk around this small seaside town soaking in the beguiling mix of French and Tamil cultures, and its bohemian-chic vibe. A French enclave till 1962, it still carries French echoes in architecture and daily life.

Hyderabad. South India's main Islamic city offers a mix of the grand Golconda Fort, mausoleums, mosques, bazaars full of bangle makers and saree embroiders and the iconic Charminar tower. The biriyani here is legendary.

Karnataka. This spectacular yet often-overlooked state is an amalgamation of the best: rainforests of the Western Ghats, thriving wildlife, coffee plantations, miles of sandy beaches, World Heritage sites, palaces and a rich culture.





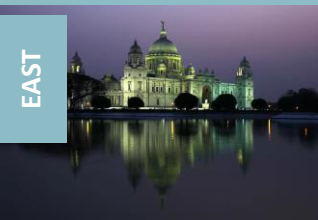
Royal Rajasthan. Grand citadel cities tell stories of valour, romance and clan rivalries. Stay in restored palaces and *havelis*. The splendour will take your breath away. Slow down and catch it back in Rajasthan's rural heartland.

Ahmedabad. Gujarat's vibrant capital is full of fine architecture. Explore its *pols*, markets, stepwells, mosques and *havelis*. Visit Gandhi Ashram for a glimpse into Gandhi's life and the Calico textile museum.



The Little Rann of Kutch. A vast expanse of scrub-dotted saline plain, the last stronghold of the Asiatic Wild Ass, and home to rich wildlife. The *Agariya* tribe produce 30% of India's salt in this hauntingly beautiful, stark landscape.

Goa. Escape to secluded sandy beaches and endless blue skies. Enjoy R&R in boutique resorts. Explore Catholic cathedrals and historic city quarters where the cuisine, music and culture still carry Portuguese flavours.



Calcutta. Explore colonial monuments, some crumbling away faster than others, in what was once the grandest city in the British Empire. Feel the vibes of modern Kolkata, the epicentre of Bengali culture and cuisine.

Tribal villages and Rope bridges. The seldom visited North East has a wealth of natural beauty, wildlife and tribal cultures. In Meghalaya, aerial roots of rubber fig trees are made into suspension bridges by *Khasi* tribes.

Fine teas and steam trains. Sip the finest teas in the world in Darjeeling, a quaint hill station. Stay at a colonial era tea plantation for a full tea experience. Ride the World Heritage Darjeeling Hill Railway.

Exotic Wildlife. The East's wildlife reserves are home to some of India's rarest and lesser-seen species. Spot the adorable red panda, or go looking for Hoolock gibbons, fishing cats and golden langurs. The birdlife is excellent.



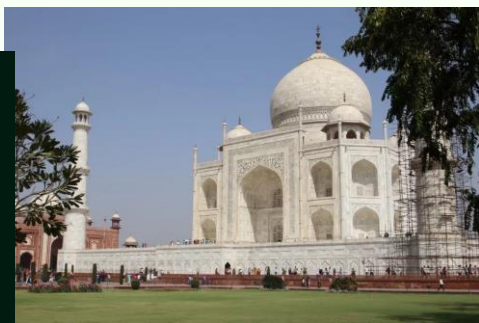
Khajuraho. This enigmatic complex of 22 temples is covered with the finest erotic sculptures, considered to be among the greatest masterpieces of the subcontinent.

Go Tiger spotting. Central India's vast jungles are host to a healthy population of tigers, leopards and prey species, making it a hotspot for wildlife lovers. Stay in a luxury ecolodge, or a tented camp for a unique jungle experience.

Marvel at Mandu. This World Heritage site has exquisite palaces, canals, baths and pavilions. A medieval pleasure resort where extravagant celebrations were held amongst architectural gems.

Soak in Narmada's spirituality. Maheshwar, on the holy river Narmada, is the perfect relaxing stop on your holiday. Stay at the boutique hotel within the restored palace. Explore the ghats, silk weaving centres and temples.





The Responsible Golden Quadrangle

Skip tired Golden Triangle tours. Instead, enjoy a responsible tour of the Golden Quadrangle.

Explore Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and Amritsar, the four historic cities of north India. World Heritage sites, magnificent architecture, tons of history, bustling markets. Tiger safaris. Meet artisans at work and courageous locals turning lives around.

Delhi • Agra • Jaipur • Sariska NP • Amritsar [12 Days]



Regal & Divine

India is a land of regal forts and palaces, ancient temples and timeless rituals. This itinerary explores the World Heritage treasures of Delhi, Agra and Khajuraho, venerable Varanasi, holy Allahabad, and Lucknow, the town of the refined Nawabs. There are some hidden gems for you to discover too.

Delhi • Agra • Fatehpur Sikri • Chambal Heartlands • Gwalior • Orchha • Khajuraho • Allahabad • Varanasi • Sarnath • Lucknow [18 Days]



Secrets of India

Sample the best of wildlife, history and culture on this special itinerary. Visit some of north and central India's best tiger reserves and the stunning World Heritage sites of Taj Mahal and Khajuraho, along with some excellent hidden gems.

Agra • Ranthambhore NP • Jabalpur • Bandhavgarh NP • Panna NP • Khajuraho • Orchha [14 Days]



Discover Ladakh

An epic journey into India's far north. Be enchanted by a land of rugged beauty, warm welcomes, and the ancient palaces and monasteries of the Indus valley. Relax in the remote Nubra valley, and travel along Khardung La, the world's highest drivable pass.

Leh • Khardung La • Nubra valley • Diskit & Hundar [11 Days]



Royal Rajasthan

Let Rajasthan's grandeur sweep you off your feet on this 'Grand Tour'. Visit the mighty citadel cities of Jaipur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Kumbhalgarh. Enjoy the painted havelis of Sekhawati and the intricately carved temples of Ranakpur. See why Rudyard Kipling called the Bundi palace a work of goblins. Nature lovers will love the avian spectacle at Keechan and tiger safaris in Ranthambhore.

Delhi • Jaipur • Sekhawati • Bikaner • Jaisalmer • Jodhpur • Kumbhalgarh • Udaipur • Bundi [21 Days]



Iconic Wildlife of Western India

Join our expert naturalists on this fascinating adventure across North-Western India in search of some of India's most iconic wildlife and birds. Tigers, leopards and Asiatic lions are the stars. The saline marshlands of Little Rann of Kutch are home to the wild ass and a host of bird species, while Velavadar's grasslands host blackbucks and roosting marsh harriers. A sprinkle of exceptional cultural and historical sites rounds off a memorable trip.

Ahmedabad • Gir NP • Velavadar NP • Little Rann of Kutch • Jawai • Pushkar • Ajmer • Ranthambhore NP • [15 Days]



Heart of India

Dare to look beyond the Golden Triangle and explore the very heart of India on this luxury 'treat for all senses' tour. Visit World Heritage Sites, stay at heritage luxury palaces, explore the historic cities of Bhopal and Indore. Soak in the spirituality of Narmada and Ujjain, and the romance of the World Heritage site of Mandu.

Bhopal • Sanchi • Bhimbetka • Ujjain • Indore • Mandu • Maheshwar [12 Days]



Bengal & Sikkim

An enthralling voyage on a road less travelled. Be captivated by Calcutta, then travel northwards, visiting West Bengal's best historic sites up to Darjeeling – the home of the champagne of teas and the Darjeeling Hill Railway. Explore the remote erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim, to take in the majestic Himalayan scenery, monasteries and pristine air.

Calcutta • Bishnupur • Shantiniketan • Murshidabad • Gaur • Pandua • Darjeeling • Gangtok • Pelling • Kalimpong • Bagdogra [16 Days]



Kerala, Actively

This expedition takes in the best of Kerala's scenery, wildlife, indigenous culture, rural life and local cuisine while trekking, walking, cycling and kayaking. It's a perfect choice for families with active teenagers, and all those who seek an active adventure that balances cultural exploration, exertion and exhilaration.

Cochin • Thatekkad • Munnar • Periyar NP • Vagamon
• Backwaters • Marari [14 Days]



Rarities of the East

Go beyond the ordinary with this special wildlife itinerary that includes nocturnal stakeouts to spot rare fishing cats, searching for tigers in the Sundarbans mangroves and looking for India's only apes on foot. A trio of Assam's best reserves offer excellent chances to spot tigers, elephants and rhinos on the same safari, along with a great support cast of mammals and birds.

Sundarbans NP • Manas NP • Orang NP • Kaziranga NP
• Gibbon Sanctuary [16 Days]



Quintessential South

A grand tour from Chennai on the east coast across Tamil Nadu and Kerala to Cochin on the west coast. Discover the grand living temples of south India, the colonial histories of British Chennai, French Pondicherry and Dutch-Portuguese Cochin, the cuisine and architecture of Chettinad and Periyar's rich wildlife. Cruise on the Backwaters of Kerala.

Chennai • Mahabalipuram • Pondicherry • Chola heartland • Thanjavur • Chettinad • Madurai • Periyar NP • Kerala Backwaters [13 Days]



Kerala and the Western Ghats

Enjoy the natural beauty of Kerala and the Western Ghats on a holiday through tea estates, backwaters and tropical jungles. Visit north Kerala, a lesser visited, more authentic region. From colonial Ooty, board the World Heritage Nilgiri Railway for a journey through the Western Ghat. Enjoy an overnight backwater cruise on a luxury rice boat. Get close to wildlife and birds in Wayanad and Periyar.

Cochin • Tellicherry • Wayanad • Ooty • Munnar • Periyar NP • Kerala Backwaters [14 Days]

SRI LANKA

Good things come in small packages.

Few places in the world can claim to possess as many charms on such a small island. Here, you are never far from a beautiful sandy beach, tropical foliage, scenic vistas or spectacular ancient ruins. Wildlife reserves host leopards, elephants, sloth bears and a great variety of birdlife. The coasts are internationally renowned hot spots for watching whales and dolphins.

Add in a vibrant culture, friendly locals, delicious food, colourful festivals and an abundance of good weather, and you have all the ingredients for a holiday of a lifetime.

The West. Colombo's a beguiling mix of bustling markets, temples, colonial architecture, leafy suburbs, stylish bars and fine dining. Negombo's chilled vibe is the perfect hello or goodbye to Sri Lanka. Spot dolphins in Kalpitiya and leopards in Wilpattu.

Cultural Triangle. Sweeping landscapes. World Heritage sites of Anuradhapura, Sigiriya, Polonnaruwa and Dambulla.

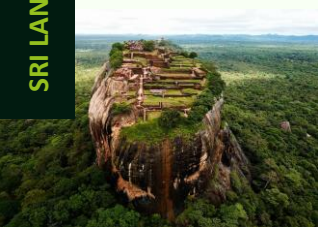
Hill Country. Pristine forests and rolling tea plantations. The Pekoe Trail and *the* iconic train journey. Historic Kandy, scenic Ella and a magical dawn atop Adam's Peak.

The North. Off-the-beaten track, remote and hauntingly beautiful. Tamil and Hindu heartland's distinct vibes.

The East. The island's best beaches, endearing small towns and fishing villages that retain a local rather than touristy vibe. Excellent snorkelling, diving and surfing. Or just chilling by the beach.

The South. Miles of sandy beaches, tropical forests and colonial Galle. Yala is Sri Lanka's most visited National Park. Kumana is just as spectacular, without the crowds. Visit Sinharaja Reserve for birding and Mirissa for whales.





Climb Sigiriya. This dramatic granite monolith lies at the heart of Sri Lanka, rising abruptly 180m high from the jungle canopy. Not just a striking sight, but of historic significance with a 5th century fortress atop.

Ride the Tea Country train. The iconic Hill Country line winds and climbs slow though picturesque countryside of rolling hills and tea estates.



Explore Dambulla's Cave Temples. Dambulla's well preserved reclining Buddhas and the 2000-year-old murals are some of the best examples of the island's ancient religious art.

Esal Perahara. Kandy's spectacular festival is held over 10 days in July/August. Pageantry with dancers, drummers and fire-eaters and ornately decorated elephants in processions.



Walk the Pekoe Trail. Pick from the 22 stages between Kandy and Nuwara Eliya. Discover tea plantations, remote villages, wildlife habitats, stunning viewpoints, forests and historical locations.

Life's a beach. You're never far away from a perfect strip of sand. The west and south coast offers exceptional beaches, while the east coast is perfect for those seeking endless golden sands all for themselves.



Go whale watching. With three great locations to choose from, no holiday to Sri Lanka is complete without a spot of whale watching.

Jaffna. In the far north, off-the-beaten track lies Jaffna, the bastion of the island's Tamil culture. Multicoloured towers of Hindu temples, colonial sights and remote tropical islands in shimmering seas.





Ultimate Ceylon

Explore Sri Lanka's distinctive culture on this relaxed trip. Take in some great sights, beaches and wildlife. Experience life in its cities and villages. Meet the *Veddah*, the original tribe who call this island home. Enjoy nature in off-the-beaten track places.

Colombo • Wilpattu NP • Sigiriya • Minneriya NP • Veddah village • Gal Oya NP • Uda Walawe NP • Hikkaduwa [14 Days]



Unseen Sri Lanka

Explore lesser-visited gems on an adventure that takes you to memorable places in the north. You're guaranteed a wonderful time away from crowds, and your visit really helps local economies. Add the best of the Cultural Triangle, and spotting leopards in Wilpattu and Wasgamuwa to round off this unique holiday.

Anuradhapura • Wilpattu NP • Mannar • Jaffna • Delft Island • Trincomalee • Polonnaruwa • Wasgamuwa NP • Sigiriya • Dambulla • Negombo [14 Days]



Cultural Vignettes

Sample the best of the island's culture. The bustling streets and markets of capital Colombo, the Cultural Triangle with some of Asia's greatest archaeological treasures, the Hill Country vistas of tea plantations and beautifully renovated British-era tea bungalows, and the historic cities of Kandy and Galle.

Colombo • Minneriya NP • Cultural Triangle • Kandy • Nuwara Eliya • Horton Plains • Ella • Galle [13 Days]



Ceylon Tea & Spices Odyssey

Journey into the world of fine teas and spices, with hands-on experiences. Learn all about tea cultivation, plucking, processing and tasting like a connoisseur. Ride the famous train through the island's tea country. Staying at the finest tea estates rounds off a spectacular adventure.

Matale • Kandy • Nuwara Eliya • Ella • Galle [14 Days]



Wild Sri Lanka

A wildlife lover's delight, this itinerary takes you to some of the finest locations for observing the island's rich wildlife including the Big Five. Blue and Sperm whales, spinner dolphins, leopard, Asian elephant, sloth bear, sambar and spotted deer along with a range of smaller mammals. Crocodiles and monitor lizards are frequently seen in riverine habitats.

Sinharaja • Uda Walawe NP • Yala NP •
Lunugamwehara NP • Bundala NP • Whale Watching •
Galle [9 Days]



Sri Lanka with Teens

Perfect for a family with active teens, or for people of all ages who'd like a short but active holiday, this itinerary combines the best of Sri Lanka's culture and natural beauty with hands-on, enriching activities and experiences. This trip is ideal for a half-term break, and can easily be extended if you have more days to explore.

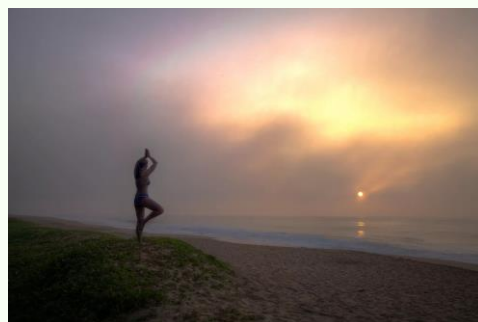
Kithulgala • Adam's Peak • Kandy • Minneriya NP •
Sigiriya • Polonnaruwa • Negombo [8 Days]



Sri Lanka's World Heritage

Did you know that Sri Lanka is blessed with more World Heritage sites than Egypt? Take in all eight of Sri Lanka's World Heritage sites on an unforgettable adventure across this beautiful island. Seek the abundant wildlife and soak in the cultural experiences.

Wilpattu NP • Anuradhapura • Sigiriya • Polonnaruwa
• Dambulla • Knuckles Range • Kandy • Ella •
Sinharaja NP • Galle • Colombo [15 Days]



Ceylon Relaxation

Step away from busy lives and reset your mind, body and soul. A balanced mix of visiting some of the most beautiful, relaxing places in Sri Lanka, and rejuvenating yourself at some of its best wellness resorts will allow you to reconnect with your inner self without feeling like you are attending a boot camp.

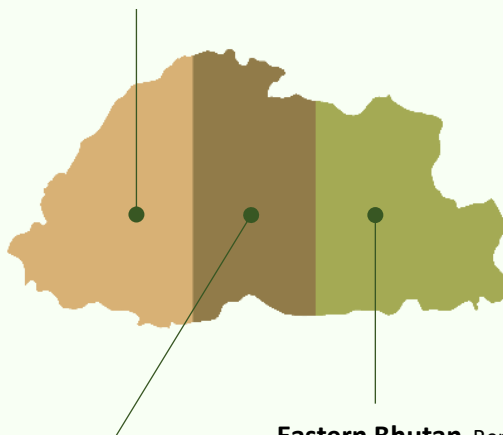
Negombo • Kandy • Santani Spa • Nuwara Eliya •
Horton Plains • Yala NP • Talalla Retreat [14 Days]

BHUTAN

Mountain Kingdom embracing the world on its own terms.

Nestled in the Eastern Himalayas between India and Tibet, Bhutan is a land of snow-capped peaks, lush green gorges, crystal-clear rivers and majestic fortress-like monasteries clinging to sheer cliffs. Bhutan's unspoilt natural beauty, hospitable people, vibrant festivals, cultural values and philosophies of life make it a unique destination.

Western Bhutan. Bhutan's most visited region is its true microcosm. Modern Thimphu's gentle buzz, Paro's religious sites, historic Punakha, dramatic Black Mountains and remote valleys offer the perfect introduction to this Shangri-La. Hike up to Bhutan's most recognizable monument, the Tiger's Nest monastery



Central Bhutan. This is Bhutan's spiritual heartland. Pristine National Parks, the Phobjika and Bumthang valleys, cultural and religious sites, rivers, gorges and colourful festivals.

Eastern Bhutan. Remote and rugged, this least visited region offers long scenic drives through mountains and gorges, fields and forests, unspoilt villages, wildlife sanctuaries. Truly authentic rural Bhutan.



Hike up to Tiger's Nest. Bhutan's most sacred spot clings to a vertiginous ledge. Hiking up takes half a day, climbing amidst blue pines and rhododendrons. The hike is a truly unmissable experience.

Punakha Dzong. Superbly situated at the confluence of two rivers, Punakha Dzong is perhaps the most beautiful dzong in Bhutan. The elaborately painted carved timbers in deep golds, reds and blacks are an impressive sight.



Enjoy a hot stone bath. *Dotsho*, the ancient Bhutanese bath is excellent for aching limbs after a hard trek, or as an indulgent luxury. When put in water, heated river stones crack and steam, releasing beneficial minerals.

Phobjika Valley. Visit this wildlife reserve for the overwintering Black-necked Cranes and its excellent walking trails with sweeping views over the pine covered slopes.



Rhododendron blooms. Emblematic Rhododendrons and magnolias bloom in spring to cover the Bhutanese high passes in masses of pinks, red and white.

Attend a festival (*tsechu*). The Bhutanese love their festivals and welcome visitors with open arms. At colourful annual festivals held in monasteries, music and masked dances enthrall visitors.



Walk the Druk Path. One of Bhutan's most popular short treks (55km), it typically takes 5-6 days. Connecting Paro and Thimphu, it passes through ancient trading routes, high mountain passes, and stunning landscapes.

Visit the weavers of Khoma. Bhutan's best weavers reside in this remote eastern village. Women can be seen working on traditional back-strap looms set up on their doorsteps, making the finest brocades on silk.





Essence of Bhutan

Marvel at how Bhutan's snow-capped mountains, verdant valleys, dense jungles and crystal-clear rivers complement its calm Buddhist culture.

Enjoy the sights of Paro, Thimphu and Punakha, hike up Tiger's Nest and walk in the valley of the Black-neck Cranes. Let the wonders of Bhutan captivate you.

Paro • Thimphu • Punakha • Phobjika Valley [9 Days]



Active Bhutan with Druk Path

A perfect holiday for those who'd like to stretch their legs while exploring Bhutan. Walk the Druk Path, the most popular trek in Bhutan. Explore the treasures of Paro, Thimphu and Punakha; watch the dawn break over the High Himalayas; hike up the iconic Tiger's Nest monastery; enjoy a bird's eye view of the Thimphu and Paro valleys and get to soak tired muscles in a hot stone bath.

Paro • Druk Path • Thimphu • Punakha [10 Days]



Best of Bhutan

This memorable journey takes you through Western and Central Bhutan. The scenic beauty of mountains and gorges, verdant rural vistas, smiling locals and the spiritual energy of its monasteries will leave a lasting impression. A leisurely holiday that reveals the best of Bhutan.

Paro • Thimphu • Dochu La • Punakha • Gangtey • Phobjika Valley • Bumthang Valley • Trongsa • Haa Valley [12 Days]



Bhutan Odyssey

This epic adventure across Bhutan takes in historic dzongs, stunning landscapes and unique arts and crafts. From the popular Western Bhutan, to the quieter, alpine valleys and historical monasteries of Central Bhutan, and further east through winding roads to Eastern Bhutan's warmer climes and rural life, immerse yourself in Bhutan.

Paro • Thimphu • Punakha • Bumthang Valley • Mongar • Trashigang • Khoma [13 Days]

NEPAL

A land of endless discoveries and unique experiences.

Emblematic Himalayan peaks offer a choice of adventure or blissful calm. The Terai jungles are home to tigers, elephants and rhinos. World Heritage sites in Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur invite the culturally curious to medieval courtyards, alleys, markets and palaces. Temples and stupas dot the landscape.

The Himalayas. Some of the most iconic and accessible hiking, with rugged trails to Mt. Everest and the Annapurnas. Adrenaline junkies are spoilt for choice: white water rafting, canyoning, climbing, kayaking, paragliding and mountain biking, all against the backdrop of dramatic landscapes.

Kathmandu Valley.

Kathmandu's sights and sounds are intoxicating. The wider valley is a patchwork of terraced fields and sacred temple towns.

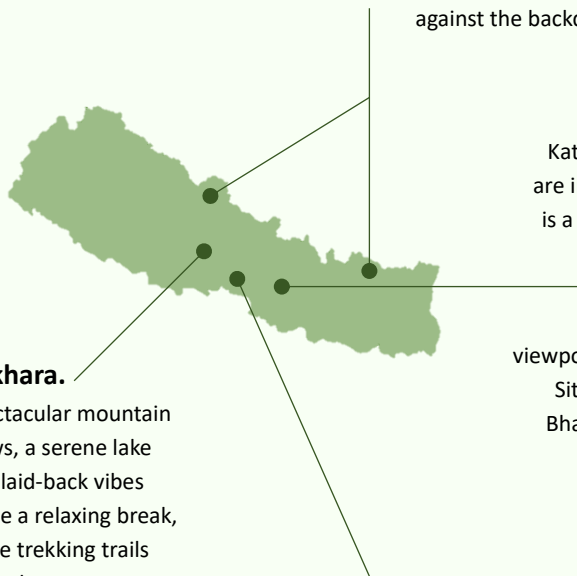
Centuries-old temples, breathtaking Himalayan viewpoints and the World Heritage Sites of Patan, Kathmandu and Bhaktapur. Marvel at Malla and Newari architecture.

Pokhara.

Spectacular mountain views, a serene lake and laid-back vibes invite a relaxing break, while trekking trails and adventure sports beckon for a more active stay.

The Terai.

Chitwan, Bardia and Sukla Phanta National Parks offer tigers, elephants and rhinos. Koshi Tappu is the place for spotting rare birds. Sacred Lumbini is the Buddha's birthplace.





Bhaktapur. The well-preserved micro city of Bhaktapur is full of iconic Newari architecture, temples and pagodas spread across three central squares, each edged by temples and shrines and pottery workshops.

Watch magical Himalayan views. Spectacular Himalayan views are never far away but Nagarkot and Sarangkot are the most popular viewpoints. For a closer look, jump on a Mt. Everest scenic flight.



Spot tigers in Chitwan. Tigers and rhino are among the star attractions. A rich array of wildlife and birdlife can be spotted on a jeep or boat safari in these Terai jungles.

Patan. Patan, the erstwhile capital of a powerful independent kingdom is full of courtyards and hidden temples. Quieter than Kathmandu, this World Heritage site is known for its fine Newari architecture.



High-altitude treks. Classic trails of the Everest and Annapurna regions offer close-up views of the very highest peaks, dramatic scenery and local life. Many off-the-beaten track options are also available.

Discover Lumbini. The birthplace of the Buddha is now a World Heritage site with monasteries and significant archaeological remains. The exact spot of the Buddha's birth has been rediscovered only a century ago.



Old Kathmandu. Kathmandu's medieval heart of temples, pagodas, courtyards, narrow lanes and bustling bazaars is a must see. The historic Durbar Square is a great place to explore Nepal's rich cultural history.

Pokhara. Lakeside Pokhara is one of Nepal's biggest draws. Admire the white peaks of the Annapurna range, hike the trails, paraglide, meditate or just relax on a boat or in a bar.





Kathmandu Valley

Visit all the great cultural treasures of the Kathmandu Valley, including its six World Heritage Sites. Patan's spectacular Durbar Square, Kathmandu's medieval temples and palaces, mountain views at Nagarkot and Dhulikhel. Hike to the temple at Changu Narayan. This excellent short trip can also be enjoyed as a perfect combination with time in North India or Bhutan.

Kathmandu • Patan • Nagarkot • Bhaktapur • Dhulikhel • Namobuddha [8 Days]



Nepalese Adventure

This spectacular adventure combines the best of Nepal for families with teenagers and those seeking an easy paced yet active holiday. We've put together a mix of moderate hiking, river rafting, wildlife and cultural exploration, all set amongst breath-taking mountain scenery.

Kathmandu • Bhaktapur • Namobuddha • Chitwan Pokhara • Seti River Rafting • Patan [12 Days]



Discover Nepal

Explore the best of Nepal from the Kathmandu Valley and beyond, with cultural, historical, spiritual highlights. Explore the rich wildlife of Chitwan. Be amazed at jaw dropping views of the Annapurna range, and get close to Mt. Everest on a scenic flight. A great trip that ticks all the boxes.

Bhaktapur • Namobuddha • Kathmandu • Patan • Chitwan • Pokhara • Bandipur [12 Days]



The Himalayan Realms

A fortnight in the twin Himalayan lands of Nepal and Bhutan is a window into another world, where the mountains have shaped culture and traditions. Visit the World Heritage sites in the Kathmandu Valley before exploring Paro, Thimphu and Punakha. Watch dawn break over the Himalayas. Hike to the top, or perhaps ride a mule to the iconic Tiger's Nest monastery.

Kathmandu • Patan • Nagarkot • Bhaktapur • Dhulikhel • Namobuddha • Thimphu • Punakha • Paro [13 Days]

ACCOMMODATION

The Indian sub-continent is awash with authentic and special places to stay, whatever your preference or budget.

Get pampered in grand palaces, or stay in cozy heritage homes?

Relax in luxurious beach resorts, or wake up in treehouses in the jungle?

Float on houseboats on the lakes of Srinagar, or sail on rice boats in the backwaters in Kerala?

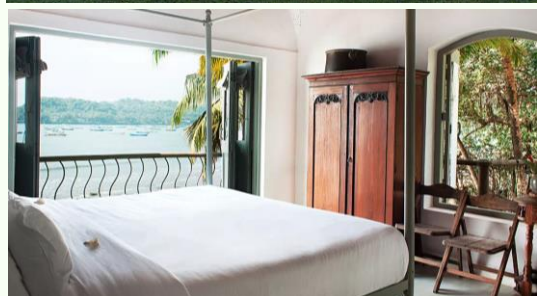
Sip tea in colonial bungalows or rejuvenate in wellness spas?

Rest in chic urban luxury or escape to quiet rural retreats?

Many of our personal favourites are privately owned: heritage properties restored with care and traditional craftsmanship; wildlife lodges built with natural materials; homestays run by genuinely warm hosts.

We actively seek out properties that support local communities, minimize their environmental impact and are committed to Responsible and Sustainable tourism.

Rest assured. Wherever you go. We have the perfect accommodation for you.



TESTIMONIALS

Thank you so much for arranging a most memorable silver wedding anniversary trip to north India. Our visit to the Taj was the highlight. Your expert guide brought history to life. Loved our relaxed stay in Agra, we had no idea there was so much to see here. **MR. AND MRS. BROAD**

On our trip to India I was concerned about asking for food for my specific dietary needs. Sumit understood my concerns and told me to ask for a specific local religious diet, and it worked like a charm in restaurants. The people instantly knew exactly what I needed and it saved a lot of stress and effort in having to spell my needs out. **CHRIS D.**

Our trip to central India was a great success. We saw more tigers in a week than we could've possibly dreamt of, and came back with so many wonderful memories. The guides and the hotels were great too. Cannot wait to go back!!! **MR & MRS. MILLER**

I had been thinking of visiting India for a long while, but I wasn't sure how best to spend my time there and make the most of my budget. Instep had lots of great ideas, and thanks to them, I had the most wonderful time in north India. **EDDIE**

Read more [Testimonials online](#).

RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Our [Responsible Travel Charter](#) defines our commitments across the pillars of communities, wildlife & habitats, and the planet. We create adventures that are a force for good.

- Our travels touch the lives of innumerable locals and communities. We aim to ensure that this contact is mutually beneficial.
- We believe that 'wildlife tourism, done right' is an essential contribution to wildlife conservation and habitat preservation.
- Our small actionable steps towards reducing our impact on the environment are two-fold: in sustainable practices in our office; and the choices we make on our holidays.
- All Instep holidays contribute towards conservation charities aligned with our charter.



THE in step GUIDE TO

Watching Wildlife

IN INDIA AND SRI LANKA



50
BEST
LOCATIONS

SUMIT SAHAI

Foreword by GEHAN DE SILVA WIJEYERATNE

"This guide is a must-have resource for anyone wanting to learn about this region's natural wealth and biodiversity. 50 best wildlife sites from both countries have been carefully curated, based on my personal experience. From tiger reserves to whale watching spots, birding hotspots and rainforests full of snakes and frogs, the list has it all.

The guide builds on three decades of my wildlife adventures across numerous national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. It is the ideal planning and travelling companion - whether you are looking for a dedicated wildlife holiday, or keen to add a splash of wild to your cultural holiday." – **Sumit Sahai**, author of 'The instep guide to Watching Wildlife in India and Sri Lanka'

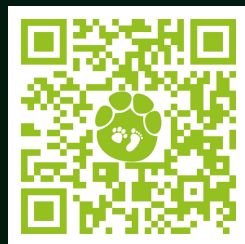
Not sure if an African wildlife holiday can be matched? Think India is just tigers?
Not sure what to spot and where to go?

Grab this essential guide before you book your next wildlife holiday.

"Sumit Sahai has for several decades had a deep interest in wildlife and explored the vast natural wealth of India and Sri Lanka. Sumit has seen first-hand and at close quarters, both positive and negative impacts of tourism on wildlife. He runs his own tour company, Instep Adventures, and passionately believes in watching wildlife responsibly."

"Voices and tour companies such as his have a major role to play in conservation, not only opening the eyes of their clients to the rich biodiversity and responsible travel choices but often engage with the local communities to ensure that wildlife tourism provides a sustainable livelihood. I hope this book will inspire visitors to experience the amazing wildlife of India and Sri Lanka."

Gehan De Silva Wijeyeratne, Chair of London Bird Club. Gehan is one of Sri Lanka's most high-profile wildlife personalities. He has authored and photographed over 300 articles and 15 books.



in/step
adventures