



MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
TOURS  
INDIA  
DOSSIER



# INDIA



Make A Difference Tour with Yoga by Michelle Cassidy

*See the world. Be inspired. Change lives... Make A Difference.*

## OVERVIEW

**Duration:** 12 days / 11 nights

**Dates:** 6th - 17th March 2020

**Cost:** \$3090 (deposit \$1000)

**Start:** New Delhi, India

**Finish:** Jaipur, India

**Route:** New Delhi > Rishikesh > Agra > Jaipur

**Group:** max 10 people

**Guides:** Radha Melis, Michelle Cassidy & local Indian guides for monuments

**Yoga Teacher:** Michelle Cassidy

**Transport:** train, taxi and auto rickshaw

**Accommodation:** Twin Share in Hotels & Homestay

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

All accommodation, all breakfasts, 1 lunch, 4 dinners, airport transfers to and from, trains, taxis & auto rickshaws for all scheduled activities, donations for all charity organisations visited, fees & charges for all scheduled sights & activities, western guide/ group companion & western yoga teacher for duration of tour, local english speaking guides for sights and monuments.

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Airfares, visa, travel insurance, some meals & bottled water.

Make A Difference Tours is a 100% not-for-profit organisation aimed at improving the future for underprivileged women and children in India by providing educational funding and mentorship. Make A Difference Tours is a small, hands on organisation dedicated to long term sustainable outcomes. By joining a MAD Tour, you are choosing to embark on a journey that will be life changing and enriching not just for yourself, but also for women and children who have hopes and dreams just like you!

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Yoga daily with Michelle Cassidy
- Holi Festival of Colours
- Ganga Aarti (Hindu Holy River Ceremony)
- Sunrise Temple Trek - Himalayan Foothills
- The Beatles Ashram
- Mother Miracle - School for Underprivileged Children
- Taj Mahal
- Sheroes Hangout - Stop Acid Attack Movement
- Jaipur the Pink City
- Janta Manta - Ancient Astrology Calculation Centre
- Amber Fort Palace
- Elephant Sanctuary - Wash & Feed Elephants
- All profits support the Make A Difference education fund for underprivileged children in India



# days one - five



Rishikesh, Holi Festival, Beatles Ashram and Mother Miracle School

Our journey will begin in the hustle and bustle of New Delhi before commencing our train journey to the lush foothills of the Himalayas, staying in a village near the holy city of Rishikesh. From our boutique hotel we look out over the Himalayan mountains where the great spiritual figures of India's mystical past once walked. Here people come from all over the world in search of the meaning of life, making Rishikesh the modern "Yoga Capital of The world"! While in Rishikesh we will celebrate the Hindu spiritual festival Holi, also known as "the festival of colours", we will visit the "The Beatles Ashram", where The Beatles themselves retreated in the late 60s in search of spiritual meaning and where they famously wrote "the white album". We will watch the sun rise across the Himalayan mountain peaks from Kunjapuri Temple, set high in the mountains, then hike down the range back to Rishikesh through the lush valley, resting at a small waterfall along the way. We will do lots of yoga and most importantly, we will visit the first of our non-for-profit organisations: Mother Miracle - a school for impoverished children, working to break the cycle of poverty. Here you will have the opportunity to meet our sponsor child - the included donations within your tour cost will collectively be used to sponsor a child's education at Mother Miracle for a year.

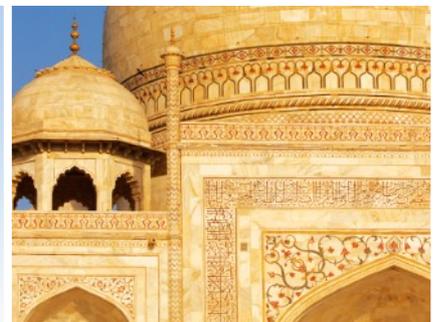




# days six - seven

Agra, Taj Mahal and the Sheroes Hangout

Making our way from the Himalayan Foothills back down onto the desert plains of Mughal India, we come to Agra, home of one of the world's greatest architectural treasures, the majestic Taj Mahal. This awe-inspiring white marble palace, built by the emperor Shah Jahan as an eternal symbol of love for his departed wife, sits alongside another of India's sacred rivers, the beloved Yamuna. Here we will stay in a beautiful and vibrant bed & breakfast, hosted by a wonderful local family. Meals shared with our gracious hosts are a highlight, while the well-established tranquil gardens are the ideal place in which to relax and do some yoga. Here we will visit the Sheroes Hangout. Nestled right in the middle of the hubbub of Agra's main street, this seriously awesome women's empowerment project is designed to create awareness of acid attack crimes while providing solidarity, optimism and opportunities for victims. During our visit we will get to meet some of the inspirational women behind this project while enjoying a delicious lunch from their "pay as you like" menu, all taken care of by your included donation.



Contact MAD Tours +61 401 185 616

info@makeadifferencetours.com

www.makeadifferencetours.com

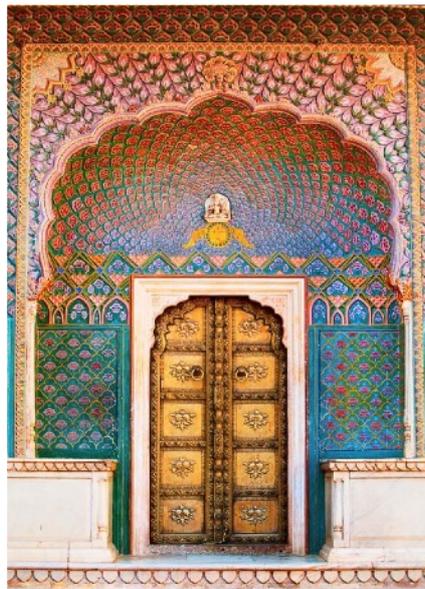
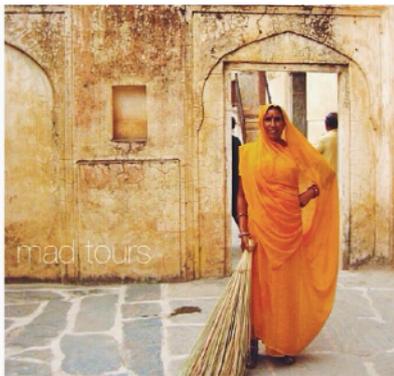
© 2018 Make A Difference Tours. All Rights Reserved.

# days eight - twelve



Jaipur, Pink City, Amber Fort and Elephantastic

Next stop will be the vibrant city of Jaipur, famous for its beautiful handicrafts, textiles, jewellery, gems, trinkets and antiques. After settling in to our beautiful Heritage hotel we will spend the next few days seeking out the cultural treasures of Rajasthan as we explore the historical landmarks, markets and temples scattered across the 'Pink City'. Visiting the awe inspiring Amber Fort, City Palace and more, we will learn about the majestic history of this fabled capital of the Rajput kings. We will enjoy rooftop yoga and dining and watch a Rajasthani cultural performance. Then, before returning home, what better way to finish up than with a visit to the Elephantastic elephant rescue centre, where those up for the challenge will get a chance to bathe, feed and ride an Indian elephant! All while helping to support the ongoing care and rescue of elephants in need. We will conclude our tour with one final group dinner, where we will share and reflect on our journey. The following morning, after enjoying a leisurely breakfast, you may depart at your convenience.



# accommodation



As a conscious policy, MAD tours only take small groups to insure the most authentic Indian experience possible. Keeping our groups on the small side also enables us to stay in exclusive accommodation that would otherwise not be possible with a larger group. Our accommodation venues have been carefully selected and pre-visited by our tour guides to ensure quality and “specialness”. Our first night will be spent in Delhi in a clean and modern hotel where we can relax comfortably upon arrival. The following day we head to the beautiful village of Rishikesh, nestled in the bend of the holy river Ganga at the foothills of the Himalayan. Here we stay in a beautiful hotel overlooking the aqua river Ganga and green mountain ranges. Next stop is Agra and two nights spent with a lovely local family in their uniquely decorated garden homestay. Here we will also enjoy a traditional Indian meal with our hosts in their family kitchen. Then, off to Jaipur where we bring in a touch of luxury at our majestic Rajasthani style hotel, decorated throughout with traditional Rajasthani hand painted walls and ceilings. Here we will spend our final night together in the rooftop restaurant being treated to a traditional Rajasthani style dance.



# Making A Difference



What it's actually all about...

Our journey to India is much more than a simple holiday. It is a chance to expand your experience of the world and also yourself. To understand what life and home and work means for many millions of people around the world. To extend the hand of kindness and receive the overwhelming gift of fulfilment in return. Our journey is one of service, love and transformation.

At each of our tour destinations, our group will visit a different local community project or charity that has been carefully hand selected by MAD Tours because of the wonderful ways in which they are changing lives. During our visits you will have the chance meet some of the people who work in these projects, ask questions and see first hand how they are making a difference. You can read more about these projects and how MAD Tours supports them on our website: [www.makeadifferencetours.com/makingadifference](http://www.makeadifferencetours.com/makingadifference)



Contact MAD Tours +61 401 185 616

[info@makeadifferencetours.com](mailto:info@makeadifferencetours.com)

[www.makeadifferencetours.com](http://www.makeadifferencetours.com)

© 2018 Make A Difference Tours. All Rights Reserved.

# Your Guides

MAD TOURS



“As one person I cannot change the world, but I can change the world of one person” Paul Shane Spear

## Radha Melis



Growing up in a deeply spiritual family, I was familiar from a young age with the Indian Vedic teachings and yogic system of living, so, naturally, at the first opportunity - 18 and fresh out of high school - I headed off to India. From those first moments when I stepped out of the airport, transfixed by the sounds, smells and chaos of Kolkata, I felt right at home. So began the first of many pilgrimages through some of India's most exotic regions and its sacred temples and villages.

Although working over the years to establish my career in Australia, India kept calling and I found myself drawn again and again to the ancient land, notching up more journeys than I can remember. As exotic and charming as India is, throughout my travels I came across so many scenes of poverty, abuse and environmental degradation, that I began to find myself drawn increasingly to the projects working to alleviate these situations. Eventually, I stumbled upon a small grassroots project in the foothills of the Himalayas, working to help vulnerable children and families. I fell in love

with the project and it's beautiful people and over the coming years I continued to visit regularly, helping however I could. I soon realised that although I was helping others, it was really I who was being transformed... I now truly understand that losing yourself in the service of others is the most effective way to find yourself.

It was through my association with different humanitarian projects in India and wanting to help them further, that the concept for Make A Difference Tours gradually began to take shape. Now, fifteen years on from that first fateful journey to India, my life looks very different to what I had imagined it would as a young girl - life certainly had a different plan for me, with India at the centre of it. My experiences in India have shaped who I am by opening my heart and my eyes to a world beyond my own existence. India has taken me on the journey of a lifetime and now I would like to take you on that journey too.

## Michelle Cassidy

Michelle Cassidy is the founder and operator of popular Essence of Living Yoga & Pilates studio and the International Teacher Training Academy on the Gold Coast, Australia. After first discovering Yoga and Pilates at the young age of 16, Michelle knew, with every cell of her being, that she had found her calling, and wished to share both the spiritual and physical benefits of the practice with others. Michelle's yoga classes will leave you feeling stretched out, blissed out and empowered.

Michelle and Radha first met back in 2009 when Radha began her formal yoga training at Essence Of Living. They developed a very close friendship and now, together they are “making a difference”.



Contact MAD Tours +61 401 185 616

[info@makeadifferencetours.com](mailto:info@makeadifferencetours.com)

[www.makeadifferencetours.com](http://www.makeadifferencetours.com)

© 2018 Make A Difference Tours. All Rights Reserved.



# Frequently Asked Questions

So, what's India like?

## **How Can I Have The Best India Experience Possible?**

Remember, above all, India is both an ancient and a developing country. Sometimes even the best hotels suffer a power cut or run out of hot water, things and people usually don't run on time ("so, is that an Indian one minute, or a real time one minute?") near enough is always good enough and service is invariably slow. So be prepared to roll with India as she is in all her dusty, noisy, imperfect glory. Be ready to let go, trust and enjoy what comes.... you will have a magical time!

## **Do They Speak English In India?**

Yes, many Indian's speak fluent or limited English, particularly in the cities and tourist areas. Hindi is the national language and primary tongue for 40% of Indians, however, there are 21 other official dialects in India.

## **Can I Get Internet Access In India?**

Yes. Many hotels, cafes and restaurants across India now provide wifi access, however you may find it is sometimes working very slowly or not working at all. This is part of the india experience! If you are dependant on constant and (mostly) reliable internet access, then consider switching your mobile data to roaming and access the internet via your phone or hotspot.

## **What Is The Mobile Phone Coverage Like In India?**

Mobile phone coverage is widespread and generally very good in most parts of India. If you need phone access while traveling, then ensure global roaming is activated on your phone before you arrive. If you wish to get a local sim card, this is possible, but can be a complicated process. To purchase a local sim card you will need: a photocopy of your passport photo page, photocopy of your visa and a passport size photo. Sim connection can take a few days to a week to activate.

## **Are There Atms In India?**

Yes. ATMs are available in cities and most towns. Keep in mind that when withdrawing cash from an ATM, the exchange rate for that bank may not be as high as for a cash exchange. Your bank at home may also charge an international withdrawal fee.

## **Can I Use My Credit Card In India?**

Credit cards are usually accepted by modern restaurants and large shops in tourist areas, though smaller shops and cafes may not have credit card facilities. It is best to carry enough Indian rupees to cover your daily expenses.

## **Should I Bring Cash?**

It is a good idea to bring a small amount of cash from your home country that can be exchanged if necessary.



### **Do I Need To Tip In India?**

Tipping room staff, porters, drivers and guides is customary in India. While not mandatory, it is a polite way to thank someone for their service to you. Most service staff in India are paid very low wages and it makes a huge difference to them when they receive a tip.

### **Is Water Safe To Drink In India?**

It is not recommended to drink the tap water in India. But filtered or bottled water is safe and available everywhere. It is recommended to also avoid brushing your teeth with tap water or inhaling the water in the shower. It is also a good idea to avoid eating raw salads or ice in drinks except in more upmarket establishments. When eating fruit, make sure you wash and peel it thoroughly.

### **What About The Toilets?**

While traveling in India you will come across a mix of western style and squat toilets, well maintained and poorly maintained toilets. Most hotels and some restaurant will provide toilet paper and a reasonable standard of cleanliness. One of the most enjoyable ways to travel in India and see the county is by train, however toilets on the trains are very poorly maintained, so be prepared. Always carry your own toilet paper/tissues and soap or hand sanitiser. You can purchase toilet paper easily at many general stores, so there is no need to bring more than one or two rolls with you.

### **What Indian Customs Should I Be Aware Of?**

At home it is common-place to exchange hugs with everyone. In India hugging is considered a very intimate gesture and not usually practiced between men and women in public. So to be on the safe side and avoid confusion, refrain from close physical contact with locals of opposite gender. If you are traveling with a partner, also try to refrain from obvious public displays of affections, as this is just not practiced in India and will be viewed as inappropriate.

### **Do I Need To Dress Conservatively?**

Yes, India is a very conservative country and dressing skimpily will draw unwanted attention to yourself, whether you are a male or female. Lightweight, loose fitting, non-see through, long legged clothing is best. Shoulders and knees should always be covered. If you are a woman, having a couple of light weight scarfs to drape across your shoulders and chest is recommended. In many of the places we visit, especially where the sacred or traditional holds special prominence, such as temples or pilgrimage sites, not dressing conservatively would cause offence. In general, if you dress and act respectfully, you will be treated with respect.

### **What About Shoes?**

It's up to you. In the warmer months (March - October) you may be very comfortable in just flip-flops or sandals. If you want to cover your feet, a light canvas shoe could be ideal. In the cooler months (November - February) a fully closed shoe that you can wear with socks would be a good idea. As it is often required to take your shoes off when entering temples, shops and homes, having shoes that are easy to put on/off will be helpful.

### **Should I Bring Swimwear?**

There wont be a lot of opportunity for swimming, however some hotels will have a pool, so if the weather is warm you may wish to go for a swim.

### **Should I Bring My Computer Or Ipad?**

Your choice. If you can do without them, we recommend taking full advantage of this opportunity to leave the world of technology behind for a while and fully immersing yourself in your India retreat experience. However, if you do choose to bring these items, make sure your travel insurance covers you should they be lost, stolen or damaged.

### **Kindle Or Books?**

Yes and yes. There will be a couple of long train journey which will be the perfect opportunity to settle down with a great story. Download some books before you leave or bring one or two books with you.



## Ok, I want to come! What do I do next?

### **How Do I Book My Spot On The Tour?**

To book your spot on a MAD Tour, call, email or visit our website below to fill in the registration form and pay your reservation deposit. As we only take 10 guests per tour, spaces are limited.

### **Do I Need A Visa For Entry Into India?**

Yes. You can easily apply for an Indian visa online. We will provide you with a step by step guide on how to do this

### **How Should I Book My Flights?**

When it comes to booking international flights, there are many options these days. Please choose the option that best suits your needs. Whether you choose to purchase flights online or through a travel agent, ensure you have chosen a reputable company and have triple checked your flights departure/ arrival dates & times. Ensure that you will arrive in India by the afternoon of the tour commencement date.

\*As all MAD tours require a minimum of 6 guests to operate, please do not book your tickets or apply for your visa until you received notice that your trip has the required numbers to operate. Confirmation will be given 8 weeks prior to the tour commencement date.

### **Do I Need Travel Insurance?**

Yes. It is a condition of MAD Tours that each tour guest holds valid travel insurance for the duration of the tour. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. We also recommend that it includes cancellation, curtailment and baggage cover. Please carry your travel insurance document with you as your tour guide will check the details on arrival at the starting point hotel. We will require a policy number and 24-hour insurance emergency contact number for your travel insurance provider.

### **How Much Spending Money Do I Need?**

For bottled water and meals that are not included in your trip, an extra AUD \$25 - \$30 per day is a fair budget. If you wish to do some shopping as well - and lets face it, you will want to! - then make sure you put some extra aside for that also.

### **Im A Solo Traveler, Do I Need To Pay The Single Supplement?**

No you don't. We often have a number of solo travellers on our tours, so if you choose the twin share option, you will be paired with a same sex room mate. If there is an odd number of solo travellers, then someone will occasionally get a room on their own at no extra charge. If you wish to guarantee your own room throughout the tour, then you can select the single supplement which will be charged at slightly higher rate. Please note, the single supplement option is not available on all tours.

### **Do I Need To Get Vaccinated?**

Vaccinations are not required by Australian law in order to travel in India. However, it is a personal choice and some travellers do choose to be immunised. This is a decision best discussed with your doctor. You may also wish to discuss with your doctor or pharmacist about other medications which may be helpful to bring with you in case of illness. If you live outside of Australia, please check your country's laws regarding vaccination requirements for travel inside India.