



## SPICE DISCOVERY TOUR TO INDIA

8-22 January 2011

with

IAN (HERBIE) & LIZ HEMPHILL



*Explore India and enter the exciting and historic world of exotic spices that drew the early explorers from Portugal, Holland, France and England to this cradle of the spice trade, guided by Australia's own spice specialists, Herbie and Liz.*

Visits to India's famous icons, the Taj Mahal and Jaipur's Wind Palace, are mandatory for travellers to India. That's why we begin in the chilly "tourist triangle" of the North before heading for the steamy spice-rich regions of the South.

*In this land of great contrasts and unforgettable images, India's unpredictability is part of its charm. Will we see splendidly-attired temple elephants in Cochin, or camel trains in Pushkar? Or a colourful wedding procession as we arrive at our hotel? These were some of the unexpected delights encountered on previous tours.*



## ITINERARY

**Saturday 8 January:** Fly Sydney-Singapore-Delhi, arriving Delhi 10.00 pm. Overnight Delhi.

**Sunday 9 January:** We explore Delhi, including a rickshaw ride through Old Delhi, visit to spice godowns, and lunch at the Imperial Hotel. More of Delhi in the afternoon and a special cocktail party/dinner. You must transfer morning requisites to hand luggage, as large bags begin the bus trip to Agra overnight, in order to be there when we arrive. Overnight Delhi.

**Monday 10 January:** Early departure to train station. Travel to Agra by first class Shatabdi Express. We visit the fabulous Taj Mahal, see how marble is inlaid, and visit Kohinoor jewelers. Overnight Agra.

**Tuesday 11 January:** Morning exploration of the beautiful Agra Fort and the deserted palace-fort of Fatehpur Sikri built by Mughal Emperor Akbar, Lunch at Bharatpur, afternoon drive to the charming Castle Kanota to stay overnight

**Wednesday 12 January:** We spend the morning driving to the quaint village of Pushkar. Ride a camel into the village to see the Brahma temple and Pushkar Lake, and see gypsy dancing by firelight before dinner. Overnight in luxury tents at Pushkar.

**Thursday 13 January:** Morning drive to Jaipur. On arrival, check in to the historic Taj Jai Mahal hotel. See how carpets and block-printed fabrics are made, shop for fabrics and more. Overnight Jaipur.

**Friday 14 January:** \* Morning visit to the Amber Fort, where we travel by elephants. We lunch at Samode Haveli Hotel. In the afternoon, we brave the teeming streets, take a stroll through the markets, and see how the Mughals lived in the City Palace. Overnight Jaipur.

**Saturday 15 January:** An early start to catch a flight to Madurai via Mumbai. On arrival, check into the beautiful Taj Gardens Retreat and relax.

**Sunday 16 January:** We visit the amazing Hindu temple as big as a city block and have a blessing from the temple elephant. After lunch, drive to Kumily, perhaps seeing coir cottage industries and brick-making on the way. Overnight Spice Village Resort.

**Monday 17 January:** \* A relaxing morning after an early boat ride for elephant spotting – have a massage or stroll in the village. Mid-afternoon, a short bus trip takes us to a working spice farm where we see cardamom, nutmeg, pepper, cloves, vanilla and allspice growing. Overnight Spice Village Resort.

**Tuesday 18 January:** \* A well-earned day of relaxation. Kumily is a charming village for strolling, shopping, or chatting with the locals. Write postcards, swim, sleep or indulge in an ayurvedic massage. Evening cooking class to see local dishes prepared in a local home. Overnight Spice Village Resort.

**Wednesday 19 January:** An early departure as we head down the mountain. After visiting a tea factory, we have lunch at Johnny's Plantation House and see a rubber plantation. Drive to Coconut Lagoon on the Alleppey backwaters and relax in the serene atmosphere of this superb resort. Overnight Coconut Lagoon.

**Thursday 20 January:** Enjoy the luxury of Coconut Lagoon in the morning, then we lunch on board a rice boat as we cruise towards Cochin. Overnight at historic waterfront Brunton Boatyard.

**Friday 21 January:** \* We visit the food markets of Ernakulam, have a look (or a spree) at the famous Jayalakshmi silk emporium, then we enjoy a genuine South Indian thali lunch, served on a banana leaf. Afternoon visit to the Indian Spices Board. Overnight Brunton Boatyard.

**Saturday 22 January:** Today we do the tourist sights: the old synagogue and the Chinese fishing nets. Fort Cochin is a great place for last-minute shopping. Late checkout, dinner at Airport Hotel, departure time 11.40 pm.

**Sunday 23 January:** Arrive Sydney 8.15 pm.

\* denotes hotel laundry opportunities – please note no hotel laundry until 14<sup>th</sup> January.

### COMMENTS FROM PREVIOUS TRAVELLERS:

...a fantastic trip with wonderful, lasting memories and amazing experiences.  
What can I say but wow! and thank you, it was a great trip  
... you never know I could certainly do it again.  
I had a GREAT TIME and would travel with you anywhere any time  
The trip was splendid and surpassed all my expectations.



### WHAT TO EXPECT

**Clothing:** January in Delhi is cold and possibly foggy – warm clothes are necessary. The southern areas are humid and hot. Please refrain from wearing short shorts or very bare tops. Footwear should be suitable for tramping around farms! We change for dinner, but it is not formal.

**Laundry:** Hotel laundry is available on four days of the fortnight. We suggest that valuable garments not be sent to hotel laundry, but general basic garments are fine.

**Money:** Most costs are included in the price. You will need extra money for drinks, in-house provisions (ayurvedic massage, telephone, laundry), and any personal shopping and optional refreshments will be at your own cost. Some historic venues charge entry fees for cameras.

**Health:** Check with your doctor or with a Travel Centre specializing in travel medication in most capital cities. A course of pro-biotics before and during the trip is recommended. Bring basic first aid for your own requirements

**Fitness Level:** Many areas of interest have steps, so a moderate fitness level is required for full participation.

**Shopping:** India's specialties are jewellery, carpets, fabrics, and crafts. We have sought out reliable merchants of all of these to include in the tour, but shopping is not obligatory.

**All meals** provided are buffet style for budgeting purposes. The very nature of Indian food lends itself to buffet-style, however you can go out for an a la carte meal at your own expense if you wish.

**Buses** are air-conditioned and reasonably comfortable – but please remember, India is a developing country and standards of vehicles are not quite the same as Australian.

We are accompanied throughout the trip by a tour manager from Delhi, who handles check-ins and generally smoothes the way for us. The tour is relaxed, informal, informative and as stress-free as we can make it.



### TERMS AND CONDITIONS

The itinerary outlined in this brochure is as currently planned but is liable to minor alterations depending upon circumstances. Hotels named might be substituted by others of a similar standard.

Cost of approx \$9987 includes:

- Fully escorted by Ian "Herbie" and Liz Hemphill, and Manoj, our full-time Indian tour manager
- Return economy class air travel
- All meals
- Hotel accommodation on a share twin basis (single room supplement \$2879)
- All tours, transfers and sightseeing as mentioned in the itinerary
- All tips
- Departure taxes in Australia and India

The cost does not include:

- Visa fee (currently \$90)
- Insurance – details of a suitable policy will be provided
- Optional hotel services, drinks or sightseeing
- A la carte meals
- Surcharges for cameras and video cameras at monuments

For further information and bookings contact:  
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