



## In the Foothills of the Himalayas with Amritsar - 11 Days

Day	Destination
2 Nights	Amritsar
1 Night	Hoshiarpur
2 Nights	Dharamsala
1 Night	Pragpur
3 Nights	Shimla
1 Night	New Delhi

### Day 1: Day 1: Arrive Amritsar

Amritsar is the spiritual capital of the Sikhs and gained its name, meaning ‘Holy Pool of Nectar’, from the body of water around Harmandir Sahib, the Golden Temple. The temple itself is a must see, receiving well over 100 000 people every day, who come to worship at the holy shrine. It is located just 28 kilometres from the Pakistan border post, and a highlight of the area is the Wagah border ceremony that occurs every evening at sunset. Full of pomp and flair, soldiers from both sides parade and lower the two nation’s flags in a ceremony punctuated with theatrics.

**Fly into Amritsar** where you will be met by your **Trail Blazer Tours Representative** who will transfer you to your hotel.

Evening witness **Palki ceremony at Golden Temple.**

Situated in the middle of a sacred lake fed by an underground spring, the golden structure is a unique

blend of Hindu and Muslim architectural styles. Within the temple is the AdiGrantha, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs, displayed on a jewel-studded platform. Dozens of devotee's act as a human conveyor belt to carry the Granth Sahib (a shrine containing the AdiGrantha) from the main shrine to the sanctum, where it is kept until the opening ceremony the following morning. Visitors may participate in the ceremony, taking their turn to shoulder the weight of the enormous shrine.

## **Day 2: Day 2: In Amritsar**

### **Day Itinerary**

After breakfast, enjoy a half day sightseeing tour of Amritsar city.

#### **The Golden Temple**

Everybody, irrespective of cast, creed or race can seek spiritual solace and religious fulfilment without any hindrance here. It also represents the distinct identity, glory and heritage of the Sikhs. To pen-down the philosophy, ideology, the inner and outer beauty, as well as the historical legacy of Sri Harimandir Sahib is a momentous task. It is a matter of experience rather than of description.

#### **Take part in Guru KaLangar (Langar Hall): Community Kitchen**

Everyone is welcomed to share the Langar; no one is turned away. Each week a family or several families volunteer to provide and prepare the Langar. This is very generous, as there may be several hundred people to feed, and caterers are not allowed. All the preparation, the cooking and the washing-up is done by volunteers and or by voluntary helpers (Sewadars). In the Golden Temple Community Kitchen at an average 75,000 devotees or tourists take langar in the Community Kitchen daily; but the number becomes almost double on special occasions. On average 100 Quintal Wheat Flour, 25 Quintal Cereals, 10 Quintal Rice, 5000 Ltr Milk, 10 Quintal Sugar, 5 Quintal Pure Ghee is used a day. Nearly 100 LPG Gas Cylinders are used to prepare the meals. 100's of employees and devotees render their services to the kitchen.

#### **The JallianwalaBagh Garden**

Home to a national memorial, which serves as a lasting tribute to an innocent crowd of peaceful celebrators who lost their lives during a massacre by the British army. Today, the garden is mostly visited by tourists to learn about the killings and to admire the vast greenery or simply for relaxation and meditation.

#### **Wagah Border**

The border serves as a transit point for goods and commuters between India and Pakistan and plays host to the daily lowering of the flag ceremony performed by the Border Security Force of India and the Pakistan Rangers in Pakistan. This ceremony commemorates the unity and cooperation between the two nations who were once rivals.

## **Day 3: Day 3: Amritsar- Hoshiarpur**

After breakfast leave for Hoshiarpur. (approx 120 kms/ 03 hours drive)

Hoshiarpur is surrounded by the Shivalik Hills and sandwiched between the Vyas and Sutlej rivers. It boasts a colourful culture, a fascinating history and a host of archaeological remnants. This city is a major hub for transport and industry in the region including oilseed pressing and silk weaving.

Afternoon proceed for a guided walk through the farm and even enjoy picking some fruit during the season (November through February).

In the evening enjoy culinary tours, learn how to cook traditional Punjabi Food with the home made traditional family recipes.

## **Day 4: Day 4: Hoshiarpur- Dharamshala**

Situated in the upper reaches of the Kangra Valley, Dharamshala is one of Himachal Pradesh's most irresistible destinations. Famous as the home of the exiled Dalai Lama, this small market town is the centre of the Tibetan world in India. Most travellers head 10 kilometres uphill to the suburb of McLeod Ganj, also known as Upper Dharamshala. Surrounded by dense coniferous forest, this beautiful hill station attracts Buddhists, pilgrims, students and bohemian travellers seeking spiritual enlightenment and a possible encounter with this holy man.

Morning enjoy village safari to see the rural settings and experience the Punjabi lifestyle.

Later leave for Dharamshala, upon arrival check-in at hotel. **(approx. 245 kms / 5 hours drive)**

## **Day 5: Day 5: In Dharamshala**

Breakfast at the hotel. Enjoy half day sightseeing tour of Dharamshala.

### **Norbulingka Institute**

Norbulingka Institute is a unique institute dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan arts and culture. The institute is a self-sustaining community and is dedicated to ensuring that the integrity of Tibetan artistic traditions are maintained for future generations. The studios produce museum quality artwork using methods that have been practiced and passed down for many centuries.

### ***Tsug laKhang, The Dalai Lama's temple***

This is the life-blood of the village. It houses the Namgyal Monastery and shrine rooms. The largest shrine contains a huge gilded statue of the Buddha, along with two smaller statues of Chenresig and Guru Rinpoche. Parts of these statues were brought at great sacrifice from Tibet. The Dalai Lama's residence and administrative offices are adjacent to the monastery.

The temple is always busy. Services are held daily and are attended by lamas, monks, nuns and lay people. In the shrine, you might come across a group of monks building an intricate sand mandala, and outside in the courtyard on Thursdays, monks debate Buddhist philosophy. Around the temple hill there is a long meditation trail — LingKhor — with small shrines, stupas, and a massive chorten. The shrines near the chorten are always covered in thousands of prayer flags placed by devotees. The

temple is located a short walk down the hill from the main square at the centre of town.

### ***St. John's Church [Closed on Sundays]***

Immerse in the composure of nature and a church amidst its greenest foliage! St. John's Church is the most ancient structure of the town and it is a gothic stone shrine amidst the forest in between McLeodGanj and Forsyth Ganj. It is an Anglican structure that is a tribute to John the Baptist. 'St. John in the Wilderness' is no more a hidden entity.

## **Day 6: Day 6: Dharamshala- Pragpur**

Morning after breakfast leave for Pragpur(approx. 65 Kms / 2 Hrous drive)

With its cobblestone alleyways, mud plastered and slate roofed houses, and its array of historically significant sites, a visit to Pragpur feels like a journey back in time. The village's most popular tourist attraction is 'The Taal', a pond located in the heart of the village which serves as a recreational space. It was constructed by the village brotherhood, which has maintained this ancient water system since the mid-1800s. The Taal is surrounded by many fascinating heritage structures including, among others: the Bhutail Niwas, the Radha Krishna Mandir and NeharBhawan. Don't miss the Judge's Court, a grand manor showcasing the Indo-European style of architecture..

Evening take a walk through the village.

## **Day 7: Day 7: Pragpur- Shimla**

Sitting at an altitude of 2159 metres, the city is blessed with a cool climate and beautiful views of river valleys, pine forests, apple orchards and steep mountains covered with maize terraces. The Mall, a long, winding pedestrian-only walkway, is the commercial and social hub of Shimla, while those looking for natural beauty should head uphill through the forest to Jakhu Temple or follow one of the many forest trails in the eastern part of Shimla. To the south of the city, the bazaars bustle with local flavour.

Morning after breakfast, leave for Shimla (approx 200 kms/ 4 hours drive)

## **Day 8: Day 8: In Shimla**

Morning proceed for short ride on the UNESCO World Heritage Toy Train from Shimla to Tara Devi (45 minutes ride)

Toy Train – The Shimla – Kalka rail route, offers the charm of old-world travel amidst lofty pines and lush green, misty mountains. This is one of the four narrow gauge rail routes on hill terrain in the country. Laid out on a 96 km long narrow gauge track that passes through 103 tunnels and across more than 800 bridges and viaducts, it is one of the most beautiful hill railways in India. It was considered the "crown jewel" of the Indian National Railways during British times. Flanked by hills on both sides, the rail line, like twin threads of silver, clings to the steep cliffs and ventures boldly over bridges, built over tiny streams that show off their radiance in the sunlight. The cool breeze sweeps

across your face as the train makes an arduous climb of almost 4800 feet.

Later enjoy half day sightseeing tour of Shimla.

### **Indian Institute of Advanced Study (Closed on Monday)**

Also called the Viceregal Lodge, the Indian Institute of Advanced Study is a research institute set in a historical building. As a residential centre for research, it encourages creative thinking in areas of deep human significance. The environment of the institute is eminently suitable for academic pursuits, especially in select areas of the humanities, Indian culture, religion and the social and natural sciences. It also has a comprehensive library and documentation facilities.

### **SankatMochan Temple**

A famous temple of Lord Hanuman in the region is located amidst the mist-clad mountains, providing a serene and scenic environs, making visitors get lost in the mesmerizing atmosphere of the place. The temple was built in the decade of 1960s. Originally dedicated to Lord Hanuman, the temple now also bears the idols of Lord Rama, Lord Shiva, and Lord Ganesha in various complexes.

### **Visit Shimla Mall Road**

The Mall Road is one of the most popular tourist attractions in Shimla that enfolds many hotels, restaurants, clubs, bars, banks, shops and offices. The Mall road is connected to the Ridge at the Scandal point, where a statue of the nationalist leader LalaLajpat Rai has been erected.

## **Day 9: Day 9: In Shimla**

A day at leisure

## **Day 10: Day 10: Shimla- Chandigarh- Delhi**

After breakfast leave for Chandigarh airport (approx 110 kms/ 4 hours drive) to board the flight for Delhi.

Upon arrival at Delhi, you will be assisted & transferred to the hotel for check in.

## **Day 11: Day 11: Delhi Departure**

At an appropriate time, you will be assisted by **Trail Blazer Tours Representative** & transferred to Delhi airport to board the flight for onward journey.

## **About Tour**

The journey covers travel to northern region of India covering Amritsar- the Holy city for Sikh religion and to Dharamsala – the seat of Dalai Lama in India.

## Highlights

- Visit Golden Temple in Amritsar.
- Visit Wagah Border to witness the lowering the flag ceremony between India & Pakistan.
- Enjoy a culinary tour in Hoshiarpur.
- Visit His Holiness Dalai Lama's temple in Dharamshala.
- Visit the beautiful city of Paragpur.
- Take a short ride on the UNESCO World Heritage Toy Train from Shimla to Tara Devi (45 minutes ride).
- Learn about the history of British rule & life in their summer capital Shimla.
- Explore the historic layers of the Old and New Delhi with its UNESCO world heritage sites.
- A heritage walk along with rickshaw ride through the fabled markets of "Chandni Chowk"