

TRACKS SAFARIS

WE GET YOU CLOSER



TIGERS AND FORTS OF CENTRAL INDIA & THE TAJ

Delhi, Agra, Chambal, Gwalior, Orchha, Khajuraho, Panna,
Bandhavgarh, Delhi



DAY ONE

On arrival into New Delhi international airport you will be met by Tracks Safaris representative and transferred in an air-conditioned vehicle to your hotel - The Claridges, New Delhi – approximately 40 minutes' drive from the airport.

Time permitting, you will enjoy a privately guided walking tour of New Delhi – after the tour you will be driven back to the hotel.

Overnight stay will be at The Claridges, New Delhi



DAY TWO

Early morning you will be driven to the New Delhi station (approximately 30 minutes' drive) to board your train to Agra (0600/0810 hours; air-conditioned chair car). Upon arrival at Agra station you will be met by your driver and be driven to the **Taj Mahal** for a guided tour.

Taj Mahal: A poem in white marble built in the 16th century by Emperor Shahjahan as a monument of love. Agra was once the capital of the Mughals and the relics of their glory are scattered all over the city.

After visiting Taj Mahal, we will continue our journey to Chambal, which is a road journey of 1.5 hours from Agra. You should reach the lodge well before lunch. After lunch one can do some birding with the lodge naturalist around the property or explore the surrounding farmland in a jeep safari in search for blackbuck antelope and blue bull antelope. Although rare the region is also home to striped hyenas, Indian wolf, Indian fox and jungle cats. Palm civets are often seen on lodge grounds itself.

Enjoy a hot breakfast in a local restaurant before being driven to Chambal River Sanctuary (1 hour 30 minutes' drive) where you will check-in to The Chambal Safari Lodge. Later in the day – enjoy a boat safari on the River Chambal.

Chambal River Sanctuary is one of the smaller sanctuaries of India – yet this place has an impressive list of birds, mammals and reptiles. The area is best explored on motorized boats and a couple of boat trips allow one a good chance to see the endemic Indian Skimmers. Apart from rare birds, reptiles like the *Gharial* or the Fish-eating Crocodile and the Marsh Crocodile, a number of turtles and rare mammals like the Gangetic Dolphin, Jungle Cat, and Common Palm Civet are sighted here.

Overnight stay will be at The Chambal Safari Lodge



DAY THREE

Today early morning enjoy a boat safari on the River Chambal. After the safari, you will be driven back to your lodge for breakfast. After breakfast, the day is at leisure. In the afternoon, you may be driven to the nearby Bateshwar village or take a walk in the near and surrounds with the lodge naturalist.

Overnight stay will be at The Chambal Safari Lodge

DAY FOUR

This morning you will be driven to Gwalior (3 hours' drive). On arrival, check in at the hotel for overnight stay. Later take a privately guided tour to explore the magnificent Gwalior Fort complex and the Scindia Palace.

Overnight stay will be at The Taj Ushakiran

DAY FIVE

This morning you will be driven to Orchha (3 hours' drive) – on arrival check in at the simple but well-appointed Amar Mahal or a similar hotel. Later, you will be taken for privately guided tour of Orchha temples and cenotaphs. At day break a short boat ride on the Betwa River is a possibility.

Overnight stay will be at The Amar Mahal

DAY SIX

Post breakfast, you'll be driven to ***the city of Moon God – Khajuraho***. Situated in the heart of India in the state of Madhya Pradesh, **Khajuraho** lies in the forested plains of the region of Bundelkhand and world renowned for its temple architecture and exquisite sculptures. Built under later Chandela kings between 950 and 1050 AD in a truly inspired burst of creativity, the temples are superb examples of Indo-Aryan architecture. The engravings on these temples are highly sensual and erotic that depicts in graceful forms intimate scenes of the whole range of human emotions and relationships. These sculptures congeal in stone a lyrical paean to love and passion and reflect the Chandela dynasty's immense appreciation for art.

This afternoon proceed to visit world famous **Eastern & Western group of temples of Chandela Dynasty**. These temples are divided into three groups of which the western is the largest and best known. All but three

temples, which are built of local granite, are constructed with hard river sandstone dug from the east bank of the Ken River, 13 miles to the east.



None of the temples are enclosed, rather they are erected on high masonry platforms, each on an east-west axis. It is their detailed sculpture which gives Khajuraho its appeal and importance. Less than a tenth of it can be called '**erotic**'. Numerous interpretations have been given for the erotic sculpture but there is nothing sordid about these inspired carvings showing beauty and voluptuousness of the female form. Most of the temples are 'banded' by horizontal panels of statues.

The purvasins, or divine ladies, are shown engaging in commonplace human activities such as having a bath, feeding a bath, getting dressed and applying makeup. Figures of Lord Shiva often protruded from the band.

The long frieze with scenes of battles, processions and hunting that rind the base of the **Lakshmana temple** are some of the best examples of narrative sculpture.

The temples were built by the Chandela kings between 950 AD and 1050 AD. The most important are the **Chaunset Rogini Temple** dedicated to Goddess Kali. **The Kandariya Mahadev Temple**, **Chitragupta** or **Bharatji Temple** with a lovely image of 11 headed Vishnu, Vishvanath and Nandi Temples, Lakshmana Temple, Vishva Temple dedicated to Shiva, which is the largest and most typical of Temples.

Witness the Sound & Light show in Khajuraho

This cost-effective fascinating light & sound spectacle evokes the life and times of the great Chandela Kings and traces the story of the unique temples from the 10th Century to the present day. The 50 minutes sound and light show is conducted by tourism department in the garden of western group of temples. The show is entertaining and informative about the construction, history and importance of the temples. The show runs in Hindi and English every evening.

The life and times of the great Chandela kings and the legend and grandeur of the unique temples from the 10th century to the present day are narrated in the voice of Amitabh Bachchan – the Bollywood legend.

Overnight stay will be at The Lalit Khajuraho.



DAY SEVEN

After breakfast this morning you head out to explore the gorgeous Ranoh Falls. These are magnificent waterfalls in the monsoon season and as the river flow lessens, the pinks and greys of the nearly 100-foot-deep granite canyon are revealed. Some rock here are dated as being 2 billion years old.

Following your visit to Ranoh falls you make your way to Panna National Park.

Panna Tiger Reserve faced a big blow in 2008 when it lost all its tigers to poaching. But today Panna is a success story for tiger rehabilitation as tigers were again introduced into the forest and today the tiger population is more than 32 adults. Key to this success was the protection that was given to the big cat – all breeding females even today are radio collared and there is a team dedicated to monitor each tiger's movements.

Panna is one of the country's most dramatically scenic parks and is an excellent place to see a variety of central India's wildlife. The park is especially good for raptors and is an excellent destination for birders, but its grasslands and dry forest also reveal a number of ungulates and small carnivores and can provide wonderful sightings of tigers and leopards. The park today is home to tiger, leopard, dhole (Asiatic wild dog), sloth bear, jungle cat, rusty-spotted cat, Indian gazelle (Chinkara), Blue bull, sambar deer, spotted deer along with honey buzzard, red-headed vulture, Indian vulture, crested serpent eagle and crested hawk eagle to name a few. Evening enjoy Jeep Safari.

Overnight stay will be at Sarai at Toria.

DAYS EIGHT AND NINE

Panna National Park and the surrounding territorial forest area of North and South Panna forest division is the only large chunk of wildlife habitat remaining in North Madhya Pradesh in the otherwise fragmented forest landscape of the region. The National Park is situated at a point where the continuity of the Tropical and subtropical dry broadleaf forests belt, which starts from Cape Comorin in South India, is broken and beyond this the Upper Gangetic Plains moist deciduous forests of the great Indo-Gangetic Plain begins. This area is the northernmost tip of the natural teak forests and the easternmost tip of the natural 'Kardhai' *Anogeissus pendula* forests.

You spend your mornings and afternoon on safari exploring the park.

Overnight stay will be at Sarai at Toria.



DAY TEN

This morning you continue to explore the beautiful forests of Panna. The Bundelkhand belt surrounding Panna is full of magnificent plateaus and waterfalls. Quite often we spend time at the waterfall where we often have our breakfast while observing birdlife around the waterfall. These beautiful landscapes are also home to the Indian vulture which is often found nesting in the crevices of these waterfalls and if lucky you might find a tiger that will walk across the majestic falls.

Post early lunch you will be driven to Bandhavgarh (Try to keep this day Wednesday so that afternoon can be used for driving from Panna to Bandhavgarh). On arrival, check-in at lodge.

Overnight stay will be at Kings Lodge.

DAY ELEVEN

Today we begin exploring Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. We have planned 2 safaris today – one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. Bandhavgarh National Park takes its name from the Bandhavgarh Fort which is located on top of the highest (800m) plateau in this region. The origins of this fort are lost in time. However, it is thought to be at least 2000 years old. It is believed that the fort was a gift by Lord Rama to his younger brother Laxman – thus the name Bandhavgarh or Brother's Fort.

The fort is surrounded by 32 smaller plateaus forming a maze of well forested valleys, spurs and flatlands. This area was the private game reserve of the Maharajas of Rewa, in fact Mohan, the ancestor of most captive white tigers, was captured from these forests by the Maharaja of Rewa. After independence, due to relaxed control, the forests of this region started deteriorating rapidly. To stop this process and preserve the forests, an area of 105 sq. km. was declared a National Park in 1965. The area of the park was increased to 448.84 sq. km. in 1982. In 1993 it was included in the Project Tiger Network.

DAY TWELVE

Continue exploring Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve. The park today is divided into 3 core zones accessible to tourists – Tala, Magadhi & Khitauli. We will try our best to explore all the three areas. Today we have planned one safari, you can add one more safari in the afternoon if you wish.

DAY THIRTEEN

After breakfast at the lodge you will transfer to the Jabalpur airport to board the flight for home.



TRACKS SAFARIS – WE GET YOU CLOSER TO INDIA!

TRACKS SAFARIS
WE GET YOU CLOSER

