



## Tracking Bears in India

Ideal Travel Time: Early October or April





## INTRODUCTION

There are eight (8) species of bear species found in the world, of which 4 species are found in the Indian Subcontinent. We have the Himalayan Brown Bear, Himalayan Black Bear, Sun Bear and the Sloth Bear - which is endemic to this region. The smallest of these bears is the Sun Bear and perhaps the most difficult to seek out in the wild. The largest land carnivore in the Subcontinent is the Himalayan Brown Bear.

The range of the brown bear is the widest of any species of bear in the world. They are found in localized populations in eastern and Western Europe, across northern Asia, portions of the Himalayan Mountains, and on the island of Hokkaido in Japan.

Our adventure plans to give us the best opportunity to see 3 of the 4 species that can be seen in India - The Himalayan Brown Bear, Himalayan Black Bear and the endemic Sloth Bear. The Sun Bear is found in Eastern India and their sightings are not as consistent as the other three species.

While exploring the landscapes for these three species you might also get the opportunity to see the following species: The Tibetan Wolf, Ibex, Red Fox, Blue Sheep, Leopard, Gaur, Dhole and the Bengal Tiger.



## ITINERARY MAP







## Detail Itinerary

### Day 1:

On arrival into Delhi our representative will receive you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel. Remainder of the day is at leisure. Excursions can be planned to explore the city with a city expert based on your interest areas – please ask!

**Overnight will be at a hotel in Aerocity, Delhi**

### Day 2:

Early this morning you will check-out and transfer to the airport and fly to Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir.

On arrival in Srinagar, we shall break for breakfast before travelling to our lodge near Dras. The journey to Drenmo Lodge shall take about 4.5hrs and you can expect to arrive at the lodge in time for lunch. At the time of arrival there will be a briefing and orientation by the tour leader and spotter. This afternoon is at leisure to acclimatize to the higher altitude.

**Overnight will be at Drenmo Lodge.**

### Day 3:

Start the day with an early walk along the Mushkow river. Here we try spotting the bears in the mountains and valleys.. On a good day you will be able to spot over 30 varieties of resident and migratory birds.





This area has some great walks amidst blooming tulips and other wildflowers through the summer. Breakfast can be a picnic depending on the weather conditions and sightings.

During the day, we will visit the nearby Shina villages towards Goshen or Pandrass. This valley also boasts of other wildlife such as marmots, Ibex, Fox, and Wolves.

**Overnight will be at Drenmo Lodge.**

#### **Day 4 & 5:**

On both these days we have an early start to the day at 5am. Depending on the snow conditions, we will hike up or use ponies to reach the adjacent hillside, which provides a good vantage point to scan for bear movements in the area. Also, our spotters will accompany us, and with their trained eyes and tracking skills, help us get to find and see this magnificent animal. Again, depending on sighting situations, the naturalist/spotters will decide for lunch as a picnic or back at lodge.

Morning and evening Brown Bear tracking. Depending on the sightings in our base valley, we can drive to other adjacent valleys such as Umba La (based on snow levels at that time of the year) Pandrass, Matayen, Shimsha Kharbu, Suru or the apricot orchards in the beautiful village of Karkitchu.

**Overnight will be at Drenmo Lodge.**

#### **Day 6:**

This morning you get a longer lie-in followed by a leisurely breakfast, after which we shall check-out and make our way back to Srinagar. Our home in Srinagar is Nadis on the foothills of Zabarwan hills and few kilometers from the famous Mughal garden,





Nadis is a modern Kashmir House, inspired by the picturesque alpine landscape and rich heritage of Kashmir culture. You should arrive at the hotel by lunch time.

This evening we begin exploring Dachigam National Park. The park is located about 22 km outside Srinagar city; however, Nadis is located at the edge of the park. The park has been a protected area since 1910, first under the care of the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and later under the observation of the concerned government authorities. It was initially created to ensure a supply of clean drinking water for Srinagar. It was upgraded and declared a National Park in 1981.

**Overnight will be at Nadis Hotel.**

#### **Day 7 & 8:**

Continue to explore Dachigam National Park. The mountain sides below the tree line are wooded. Most of this coniferous forest consists of broad leaf species. Interspersed between these are alpine pastures, meadows, waterfalls, and scrub vegetation with deep gullies, locally known as Nars, running down the mountain face.

The main species that Dachigam is known for is the Hangul, which is also known as the Kashmir Stag. It is a subspecies of Central Asian red deer endemic to Kashmir and surrounding areas. Besides these the other species that can be found in this park are the Musk Deer, Himalayan Serow, Musk Deer, Himalayan Black Bear, Himalayan Brown





Bear, Leopard Cat, Yellow-throated Marten, Himalayan Weasel and even the Snow Leopard. The park is also an excellent birding destination. All explorations will be on foot.

**Overnight will be at Nadis Hotel.**

#### **Day 9:**

Most part of today will be to transfer to our last destination – Satpura. This morning after an early breakfast check-out and transfer to the airport and catch your flight to Delhi and connect on to a flight to Bhopal.

You will be received at the airport in Bhopal by our office representative and will then continue the remainder of your journey to Satpura by road. The drive time to Satpura from Bhopal is approximately 3.5hrs.

Your home in Satpura will be the Reni Pani Jungle Lodge. The lodge is an owner run property. It is part of Jehan Numa hotels. The Nawab Begums of Bhopal who ruled between 1819 and 1926, each succeeded by her daughter, were dynamic and charismatic women. Their personalities, vision, preferences, beliefs, and action highlighted, and in some ways redefined Bhopali tradition with its combined Muslim and Maratha heritage. A cosmopolitan culture took root under the peaceful rule of the Begums.

The lodge owner, Aly Rahid belongs to this family. Wildlife and the wilderness has been a passion for Aly ever since childhood. This passion for wildlife inspired him to work with his family to set up and run Reni Pani Jungle Lodge, one of the finest wilderness camps in India.



At Reni Pani Aly has been heading the naturalist team for over 7 years and in this time his passion for wildlife has been instilled in the ethos of the lodge atmosphere. A trained naturalist and ornithologist, he has travelled across the country and has been involved with wildlife in various localities. His deep involvement with Satpura since his childhood has been a motivation to protect and conserve wildlife in this landscape.

**Overnight will be at Reni Pani Jungle Lodge.**

#### **Day 10,11 & 12:**

We begin exploring Satpura Tiger Reserve today. Satpura is one of the best parks to find and observe the endemic sloth bear. What makes Satpura unique is that it is perhaps the only park in India today that allows one to explore the park in different ways. Unlike other tiger reserves that you have visited Satpura offers different types of safari experience such as:

**Canoe & Boat Safaris:** The Denwa river divides the buffer from the core areas of the park. Canoe and boat safaris allow you to explore the river and the streams that go into the forest. More than the boat safari it is the canoe safaris which allow us to get closer to the birds on the river, along with crocodiles, and offers a low angle view of land mammals coming to the river to graze on the fresh grass and to drink water.

In a canoe safari you do not row – there is a forest guide who would row the canoe while you take in the views and enjoy their safari. Interesting spots on the river have been identified where you can land to enjoy your morning breakfast.





**Walking Safaris:** Satpura allows guests to explore the park on foot. Exploring on foot takes place in a different part of the park so that you don't get dusted upon by jeeps moving about in the park. It allows you to explore wildlife that often camouflages well and is often missed while in jeeps. One gets a very different perspective of the jungle when on foot. A must do experience for all. Please note there is a minimum age limit of 12 years for this safari experience.

**Dusk Drives:** The buffer forests that also has a decent wildlife population is explored on these drives. They offer an excellent chance to view nocturnal animals such as sloth bears, leopards, rusty-spotted cat, jungle cat, the rare four-horned antelope along with nocturnal birds such as nightjars and owls. They do tend to be more successful as we get into warmer months as animals get drawn to the shrinking waterbodies.

**Open Jeep Safaris:** These of course are necessary to cover ground in order to find the larger mammals and the big cats.

There will be two activities on each of these days - one jeep safari and the other will be one of the other activities so that you experience a more wholesome wilderness experience. Please note breakfast is usually carried into the park on days when you are doing safaris.

**Overnight will be in Satpura.**

### Day 13:

This morning is at leisure. You plan your departure from the lodge by around 12pm and head back to Bhopal. Should you be interested you could explore Bhimbetka Rock Shelters enroute. Bhimbetka is a UNESCO world heritage site that has rock paintings dating back 10,000 years. Once in Bhopal catch your flight to Delhi.



Once in Delhi our team shall transfer you to the international terminal so that you can connect on to your international flight back home.

Want to extend your bear adventure? Then the whole of India can be accessed from Delhi! Enjoy more wildlife or birding in some of India's splendid nation parks, spend a few days in Delhi soaking up the history and culture, catch a train to Rajasthan, or spend some time at the beach in Goa or further afield in the Maldives – please ask!

**TRACKS SAFARIS – WE GET YOU CLOSER TO INDIA!**

