

YORK COLLEGE GOES TO INDIA

10 days

Itinerary downloaded on: June 30, 2025

Day 1: *Departure from Washington*

Today we depart Washington, IAD. Flight details TBA.

Day 2:

Day 3: *Arrival in Delhi - Delhi City Tour*

Early this morning (just after midnight), we arrive in Delhi and transfer to our hotel for immediate check-in.

Later this morning we embark up on our sightseeing program in Old and New Delhi. We start with a drive north into Old Delhi, passing along the Rajpath (King's Way) and stopping for photos at the India Gate. The 42m high India Gate, an "Arc de Triomphe"-like archway in the middle of a crossroad, commemorates the Indian soldiers who lost their lives fighting for the British Army during WWI. This landmark also bears the names of British and Indian soldiers killed in the Northwestern frontier in the Afghan War of 1919.

Next we will make a visit to the Jamma Mosque. Located in the heart of Old Delhi, the largest mosque in India can accommodate as many as twenty-thousand worshippers. This imposing architectural monument, with its three gateways and two minarets, took fourteen years to complete (1644-58). Time permitting we will enter to have a brief look inside.

From here we board our cycle rickshaws for a tour of Chandni Chowk (Silver Street). Here we are given a glimpse into an old world lifestyle slowly fading from Delhi. The hustle and bustle of everyday life can be felt in the Chandi Chowk's narrow lanes. We will reboard our bus after the rickshaw ride, going past the Red Fort (photo stop), and we disembark at the Raj Ghat, set within a beautiful park. This national monument is where the father of the nation, Mahatma Gandhi, was cremated.

We continue our sightseeing with a visit to Humayan's Tomb, an excellent example of Mughal architecture, predating the Taj Mahal by almost 100 years. Persian in style, this is a beautiful red sandstone building inlaid with black and white marble.

We will finish our day with a visit to the Qutub Minar. Few other monuments are as closely identified with Delhi as the Qutub Minar, this first monument of Muslim rule in India. It heralded the beginning of a new style of art and architecture which came to be known as the Indo-Islamic.

Overnight in Delhi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 4: *Delhi: Orphanage Visit & Overnight Train to Varanasi*

This morning we will have a chance to visit an orphanage. Later this afternoon, we transfer to the railway station for Shiv Ganga

Express train (dep: 1855 hrs).

Overnight train.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 5: *Arrival in Varanasi - Visit Sarnath*

This morning we arrive in Varanasi and transfer to the hotel for breakfast (check in at the hotel at 1400 hrs).

With more than 2,000 temples and shrines Varanasi has been the religious capital of the Hindu faith since its beginning. No one knows how old it really is -- when Buddha came here in 550 BC it was already a flourishing ancient settlement. The town is a maze of small streets and alleyways, hiding no fewer than 2,000 temples and shrines. Domes, pinnacles, towers and derelict 18th century palaces dominate the left bank of the Ganges River. The antiquity of Varanasi can be traced back to at least the middle of first millennium BC. Since time immemorial, it has served not merely as holy center of pilgrimage, but also as a great seat of traditional Hindu learning and culture.

We take a short journey to the buried city of Sarnath. After attaining enlightenment at Bodh Gaya the Buddha went to Sarnath; and it was here that he preached his first discourse in the deer park to set in motion the 'Wheel of the Dharma'. It is one of the most holy sites as in this place the stream of the Buddha's teaching first flowed. The Dhamekh Stupa, Dharmarajika Stupa (the Main shrine where the Buddha sat in meditation), the sacred promenade from where he preached, and the Ashoka Pillar are monuments that still stand today.

This evening we experience the Aarti ceremony on the river Ganges.

Overnight in Varanasi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 6: *Varanasi*

Early this morning we take a boat ride on the sacred Ganges. Hindus regard the Ganges as the elixir of life bringing purity to the living and salvation to the dead. At dawn, thousands stand waist-deep in water praying to the rising sun. At dusk, hymns and prayers are uttered by the faithful in the light of hundreds of lighted lamps. The bathing ghats, over three miles in length, lead down from a steep bank to the river. Manikarnika burning ghat is the chief cremation centre of Varanasi.

We will have a walk through the narrow streets of Varanasi before enjoying an afternoon at leisure for independent exploration. Possible compulsory New Year's Eve gala dinner (not included in tour cost).

Overnight in Varanasi

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 7: *Varanasi - Agra*

HAPPY NEW YEAR! This morning we transfer to Varanasi railway station for the Seldah Ahmer Express train (dep: 10:07, arr 19:10). Transfer to the hotel.

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Agra continues to be medieval in structure: narrow, crowded streets and lanes, full of colourful shops sell that all kind of goods, especially local handicrafts, including gold and silver embroidery, imitation Mughal inlay on marble, and fine leather goods. Agra Fort lies on the bend of the River Yamuna, almost in the heart of the town. It was built by Akbar as his citadel over the years 1565 to 1573 in the finest architectural style. It has imposing gates and walls of red sandstone and a moat. The fort was successively occupied by three great Mughals -- Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jehan, each of whom made significant structural contributions to this complex.

Overnight in Agra

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 8: *Agra: The Taj Mahal & Red Fort*

Today we tour the city and visit its main attraction: The Taj Mahal, one of the world's most beautiful buildings. Called "A dream in marble," the Taj Mahal was built by Shah Jehan as a memorial to his queen Mumtaz Mahal. Shah Jehan built the Taj to enshrine the body of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal (elect of the palace), who died shortly after giving birth to their 14th child in 1631.

Construction by a work force of 20,000 men from all over Asia commenced in 1632 and the tomb was completed in 1653. Marble was brought from Makrana, near Jodhpur, and precious stones of onyx, amethyst, malachite, lapis lazuli, turquoise, jade, crystal and mother of pearl were carried to Agra from Persia, Russia, Afghanistan, Tibet, China and the Indian Ocean.

The Taj is remarkable for its perfect proportions and rich pietra dura, with minute details executed with great skill. The building marks the most developed stage of Mughal architecture. The designer of this grand sepulchre is believed to be Ustad Ahmad Lahori, a master architect of the age. The calligraphic ornamentation on the Taj was authored by Amanat Khan Shirazi, a great writer of the 17th century.

The balance of our day will be spent visiting some of Agra's other remarkable monuments such as the Agra Fort, as rugged as the Taj Mahal is ethereal where we will have a chance to view the perfectly-proportioned Moti Masjid (Pearl Mosque) and have a visit to the Itimad-ud-daulah Mausoleum on the other side of the Yamuna River.

Overnight in Agra

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 9: *Agra - Delhi - Vishakhapatnam*

This morning we travel by road back to Delhi (+/- 5hrs) to connect with our flight to Vishakhapatnam.

Visakhapatnam is a port city on the southeast coast of India. With a population of 2,035,299, it is the second largest city in the state of Andhra Pradesh and the third largest city on the east coast.

Own arrangements in Visakhapatnam.

Overnight in Vishakhapatnam

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 10: *Vishakhapatnam*

Own arrangements in Vishakhapatnam.

21 Jan, fly back to Delhi and connect with international flight to Washington, arriving same day.

BON VOYAGE!