



## WOMEN'S INDIA WELLBEING JOURNEY

India

14 days | 13 nights

### OVERVIEW

Join Big Heart Adventures for an incredible journey into India's spiritual and cultural layers. With a focus on wellbeing, reflection and discovery this adventure includes gentle walks, meditation and yoga.

Embark on an awe-inspiring journey through Northern India with Big Heart Adventures, where well-being, yoga, self-reflection, and socially conscious adventure converge to create an unforgettable travel experience.

Discover the timeless allure of the Taj Mahal, explore the vibrant streets of Delhi, where ancient traditions blend seamlessly with modernity, and give time to yourself over 3 nights at an Ashram in Rishikesh, on the banks of the Holy River Ganges. Immerse yourself in the spiritual haven of Dharamshala, home to the Dalai Lama, finding serenity amidst majestic mountain vistas. Prepare to be captivated in Amritsar, witnessing the pomp and ceremony of the Pakitan Border Ceremony and the breathtaking Golden Temple.

Prepare to awaken your senses as you savour the vibrant flavours and aromas of India's culinary delights, from street food to exquisite regional dishes.

Join us on this inspiring odyssey as India unveils its wonders and stirs your soul, leaving an indelible imprint and creating a travel experience that is both grounding and transformative.

### DETAILS

- Type: Women's Trips
- Adventure: Women's India Wellbeing Journey
- Destination: India
- Group Size: Max 12 plus leaders

### ITINERARY

#### Day 1 | Arrival in Delhi

Namaste! Welcome to India. On arrival, once you have cleared immigration and collected your luggage, you will be accorded a traditional welcome with marigold garlands before you are led to your vehicle and transferred to your hotel.

The remainder of the day is yours at leisure.

Overnight Jaypee Siddharth or similar.

Meals Included: n/a

#### Day 2 | Delhi to Agra

Departing after breakfast this morning, you will travel along the Express Highway to the city of Agra. Agra is the city of love and longing – meticulously planned, built and nurtured by three successive Mughal emperors – Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jahan, during the most glorious era of the Mughal empire. The buildings spread across Agra are stellar examples of Mughal architecture and engineering skills. Conversations about Agra usually begin with mentions of the Taj Mahal.

**BIG HEART ADVENTURES**  
more than just a trek...

[www.bigheartadventures.com.au](http://www.bigheartadventures.com.au) | [hello@bigheartadventures.com.au](mailto:hello@bigheartadventures.com.au)

PO Box 6046 West Lakes Shore SA 5020 | ph 08 7006 5620



@bigheartadventures



@bigheart\_adventures

We will have a vegetarian lunch at Cafe Sheores (She-girl Heroes), dedicated to women who have fought to survive after receiving a debilitating blow to their appearance and self-esteem by some members of the society. Unlike any other café or a general restaurant, this one is going to be solely run by the acid attack survivors. These acid attack survivors come from various backgrounds and diverse levels of competency.

Continuing on, visit Agra Fort and immerse yourself in Mughal grandeur. Agra Fort is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with stunning architecture, intricate designs, and captivating history.

2 nights Hotel Grand Imperial or similar.

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch**

### Day 3 | Agra

This morning, head to the Taj Mahal and spend time here until the sun rises, witnessing the beautiful wonder of the world changing its colour. This is one of the most beautiful times to view this iconic monument – one of the Seven Wonders of the World, celebrated for its architectural magnificence and aesthetic beauty. Emperor Shah Jahan built this exquisite white marble mausoleum for his favourite queen Mumtaz Mahal. The monument was commissioned in 1631 and took 20,000 artisans 22 years to complete.

Return to your hotel for breakfast before continuing to the Agra viewpoint, where you take in views overlooking the Taj Mahal offering a different perspective. From here, enjoy a foodie walk through the old lands of Agra, where time seems to have stood still.

Return to the Taj Mahal for sunset.

**Meals Included: Breakfast**

### Day 4 | Agra to Delhi

Following breakfast at your hotel, return to Delhi. This afternoon, visit an NGO that provides legal awareness, counselling, and aid to victims of domestic violence and assists their rehabilitation through vocational training in computer application, beauty culture and cutting and tailoring.

Overnight Jaypee Siddharth or similar.

**Meals Included: Breakfast**

### Day 5 | Delhi to Rishikesh

Early this morning, explore wellness with a session of Hatha Yoga at Lodhi Gardens. In Lodi Gardens, you may encounter a local laughter club – just laugh your lungs out as they say, “Laughter is the best medicine.” Check out and hit the road as you drive to Rishikesh.

Rishikesh lies in the foothills of the lower Himalayas on the holy River Ganges. The views are breathtaking, and the atmosphere is

serene and lush. The city is renowned as a centre for studying yoga and meditation. Temples and ashrams (centres for spiritual studies) line the eastern bank, a traffic-free, alcohol-free and vegetarian-only area.

Swami Dayananda Ashram is a spiritual sanctuary dedicated to the teachings of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. It offers a serene and contemplative environment for seekers to study Vedanta, engage in meditation, and deepen their understanding of Hindu philosophy while surrounded by the beauty of the Himalayas. The following are strictly prohibited at the ashram: smoking, drinking intoxicants, using drugs, eating eggs or other non-vegetarian foods, playing cards, watching television, playing music on speakers and yelling or loud noises.

This afternoon, experience the enchanting Aarti Ceremony on the ghats of Rishikesh, India. As dusk sets in, witness the rhythmic chants, melodious hymns, and the mesmerizing sight of oil lamps floating on the holy River Ganges. It's a spiritual and uplifting ceremony that leaves a lasting impression on your soul.

3 nights Swami Dayananda Ashram or similar.

**Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner**

### Day 6 | Walk Portomarin to Ventas de Naron

Rise early this morning for your yoga and meditation class before setting off on foot to explore Rishikesh.

This is a city where the roads are lined with bustling markets selling ethnic arts and handicrafts, fresh produce, as well as holy shrines and orange-robed sadhus. Included is a stop at Lakshman Jhula an iron suspension bridge over holy River Ganges (Ganga) offering views of Rishikesh city, the river and temples.

Visit Bharat Mandir, an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Hrishikesh Narayan, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu in Kaliyuga. The temple houses a stunning idol of Lord Vishnu, carved from a single black stone known as Shaligram. Legend claims that the idol of the temple was reinstalled in 789 AD and since then, Saligram has been taken out for a bath in Mayakund and for grand processions through the streets.

Be sure to visit the sacred tree, which is actually a combination of three different trees whose roots are entwined. It is believed that these trees represent Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Mahesh the destroyer. Witness the fascinating Hindu religious ritual, the Aarti Ceremony, in which lamps with wicks soaked in ghee (purified butter) or camphor are offered to one or more deities. Be amazed to see holy saints called “Sadhus” roaming the river and seeking spiritual bliss overlooking the temples.

You will also see many bulls and cows wandering peacefully along the riverbank as if they too, are searching for a guiding light. Enjoy



the cool breeze from the river waters. The priests make preparations to celebrate the great ceremony of "Ganga Aarti". Attendees are mesmerized by the sacred chants and songs while the prayers are performed. The priests worship the holy River Ganges as a mother goddess.

Return to your ashram.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 7 | Rishikesh

Start the morning with an invigorating yoga and meditation session. The day is then free to relax and reflect or opt to have ayurvedic wellness treatments or visit the famed Beatles Ashram, Har Ki Pauri and Mansa Devi Temple.

This evening join a calming meditation session.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

### Day 8 | Rishikesh to Nalagarh

After morning yoga, settle in for the drive to Nalagarh in the foothills of the mighty Himalayas. Here you will walk through the village and stay the night in a heritage hotel at the Nalagarh Fort, built in 1421.

Overnight Fort Nalagarh Resort or similar.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner

### Day 9 | Nalagarh to Dharamshala

Rise early for yoga before a scenic drive to Dharamshala, home to the Dalai Lama.

Take a walking tour around this vibrant city in the foothills of the Himalayas. "Dharamshala" translates to "a spiritual dwelling" or loosely, shelter or resting place for pilgrims and travellers. It is a beautiful former British hill station situated in the snow-capped mountains of Himachal Pradesh, in the foothills of the Dhauladar ranges.

The city is divided into lower and upper Dharamshala according to the altitude. A popular pilgrimage site, the town is filled with temples, markets, galleries and gathering places.

3 nights Norbu House or similar.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

### Day 10 | Dharamshala

Take a morning yoga class, then spend the day visiting key sites, including The Dalai Lama Temple complex, Norbulingka Institute, and hike to Bhagsunath Temple.

The Dalai Lama Temple Complex (also known as Tsuglakhang Temple) is a beautiful and peaceful place located in Upper Dharamshala. Decorated with colourful prayer flags, prayer wheels and artwork, it's perfect for long serene walks, reflection or meditation with chanting monks.

Explore a treasure trove of Tibetan culture in exile at the Norbulingka Institute. Many books, precious statues, and monasteries in Tibet were destroyed following the Chinese invasion in 1950, making the Norbulingka Institute one of the best places to learn about Tibetan culture and art anywhere in the world.

Hike to Bhagsunag temple, a sacred place for Hindus and the Gorkha community where worshippers pray to Shiva, the Hindu god of destruction. There are two pools in the temple complex that are believed to have healing properties and promote wellness. This ancient Shiva Temple is connected to a mythological legend and is believed to have been built by King Bhagsu.

Meals Included: Breakfast

### Day 11 | Dharamshala

Enjoy morning yoga, then opt to relax or take meditation or wellness therapies. Later, take an excursion to the ancient Masroor rock-cut Temples.

Still a mystery as to their origins, the Masroor Temples, also referred to as Masroor Temples or Rock-cut Temples, are an early 8th-century complex of rock-cut Hindu temples in the Kangra Valley. The main shrines contain the stone idols of Rama-Laxman and Sita, and it is claimed that all 15 temples are carved out of a single rock. Initially, there were 19 structures, and now only 15, plus the reservoir. Enjoy a tour of this enigmatic and mysterious place.

Some optional activities on offer today include (at own expense) the Tibetan Healing Centre and Tushita Meditation Centre.

Meals Included: Breakfast

### Day 12 | Dharamshala to Amritsar

After a morning yoga session, travel to Amritsar (private vehicle approx. 6 hours) and visit the India-Pakistan border to witness the pomp and pageantry of the border ceremony performed by both nation's border guards.

Later, visit the stunning Golden Temple, an important pilgrimage site for Sikhs. Amritsar, literally translates as "his pool of nectar", is a flourishing city and religious centre in Punjab. Important from a religious point of view to the Sikh religion, with many pilgrims coming to have a divine bath in the pool of nectar at the Golden Temple. Also, an important political city where in 1947, the separation of India and Pakistan created a long white line known as the Wagah Border between the two neighbours.

In Amritsar, watch the nightly ritual of moving the Guru Granth Sahib (holy book) from the temple to the neighbouring Akal Takht building in a gold palki (palanquin) preceded by the spectacular fanfare of religious leaders blowing long horns or beating drums. As the procession moves, people chanting wait for their chance to shoulder the sacred palki.

The Golden Temple kitchen serves a free meal called a “langar” to more than 40,000 visitors daily, and no matter how old or young, whether rich or poor, everyone eats together while sitting on the floor.

Overnight Ranjit Svaasa or similar.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Day 13 | Amritsar to Delhi**

After breakfast, visit Jalianwala Bagh Gardens as well as explore the local market and Gobindgarh Fort.

Transfer to the airport to connect with your flight to Delhi where upon arrival, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy a farewell dinner this evening at a typical Indian restaurant.

Overnight Lemon Tree Premier Aerocity or similar.

*Meals Included: Breakfast, Dinner*

### **Day 14 | Departure**

This morning is yours at leisure until it is time to transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

Please ask us if you would like to explore more of India independently. We can assist you in planning a longer stay.

*Meals Included: Breakfast*

## **INCLUSIONS**

### **Travel**

*Arrival transfer in Delhi on Day 1 when flying on same flights as Big Heart Leader*

*All transport and transfers to airport once in India Day 2 to Day 14*

*Local taxes*

### **Meals**

*All meals and snacks as per the itinerary*

*B x 13 | L x 3 | D x 6*

### **Accommodation**

*13 nights accommodation (twin share)*

### **Activities**

*Bhagsu Nag Waterfall trail hike*

*Hatha yoga at Lodhi Gardens*

*Yoga and meditation programs in Rishikesh*

*Yoga and meditation programs in Nalagarh*

*Yoga and meditation programs in Dharamshala*

### **Safety**

*Group First Aid kit and emergency communication device*

*Leader certified in Remote Area/Wilderness First Aid*

*English Speaking Local Guide*

### **Environmental**

*Small group guided experience*

*Leave No Trace principles*

*Invitations to connect with nature*

### **Big Heart Extras**

*Big Heart Adventures designed ioMerino hiking top*

*Big Heart Adventures designed head sock*

*Big Heart Adventures journal*

*Discount card for pre-departure purchases at Exurbia*

*A charity contribution to our Give Back program*

*Access and assistance from our Travel Agency with organising flight bookings and/or to extend your stay*

## **EXCLUSIONS**

- Flights (these can be arranged to join their host from Adelaide or en route to Delhi)
- Drinks
- Meals not stated on the itinerary – budget for snacks, lunches x 10 and dinners x 7 (optional to dine with your Leader)
- Items of a personal nature
- Travel Insurance
- Visas
- Tipping
- Optional activities suggested throughout the trip



## FITNESS REQUIREMENT

- A basic level of fitness is required to walk the trails on this trip
- You will be walking pack free (day packs only) on gentle walks
- Trail rating: Easy

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Eligible Past Traveller Discount applies if you've travelled with us on any of our guided tours which were 5 days duration or longer
- Read terms and conditions before booking
- Itinerary and price subject to change at any time
- Travel Insurance is recommended. Get a quote from Covermore or Go Insurance
- Note weather, group member welfare and a range of circumstances outside our control can mean last minute changes to our itinerary are necessary once on tour
- A limited number of single rooms are available on a first-come basis
- Please contact us before booking any flights. Depending on flight arrival and departure times extra nights accommodation may be required at own expense
- A minimum number of travellers are required for this trip to depart so ask someone to join you. If minimum numbers aren't reached, we may decide to still go or we will provide a full refund
- Rooming is twin share
- If you have additional needs please connect with us, we're committed to being inclusive and accessible

## ADVENTURE LEADERS

Our team is qualified, experienced and super friendly. We will ensure you have a fun and connecting adventure. Leaders are certified in Remote or Wilderness First-Aid. All leaders carry a group first-aid kit, emergency communications device, emergency documentation and equipment.

## PACKING LIST

A detailed packing list is provided prior to travel

- Gear you will need:
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Water bottle (1 litre) that can be refilled

- Day Pack
- Light rain jacket
- Warm jacket or jumper for mountain stay
- Swimming gear and towel
- Personal medications
- Clothing that is quick-drying, breathable and layerable as needed – consider merino/synthetic clothing
- Sun protection such as hat, sunglasses and sunscreen, insect repellent
- Sleeping attire

## ACCESSIBILITY

There are stairs, uneven surfaces and moving luggage to and from accommodation, plus walking the trails on this trip. Please talk to us about your accessibility needs before booking

