

## Himalayan Foothills and the Jungles of Terai

This unique itinerary is designed to explore the Bhabar and Terai jungles of Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh. These regions boast remarkable biodiversity.

The Bhabar supports species adapted to drier conditions, such as leopards, wild boars, and various reptiles. The Terai, with its lush vegetation and wetlands, provides a sanctuary for an array of wildlife, including the Bengal tiger, Indian rhinoceros, and Asian elephants.

Additionally, it is a paradise for birdwatchers, hosting over 500 avian species. These include the endangered Bengal florican, Sarus crane, and various migratory birds.

The rich interplay of diverse habitats supports a vibrant ecosystem, making the Bhabar and Terai jungles crucial for conservation efforts and a testament to the natural wealth of the Himalayan foothills.

A primary objective of this journey is to find big cats. We have planned to explore Rajaji Tiger Reserve for Leopards and Elephants, Corbett Tiger Reserve in search of Tigers, Elephants, Ghural, Serow and the wonderful avian diversity of the park and lastly, we wish to explore the Terai jungles of Dudhwa, Kishanpur, and Pilibhit for Tigers, Elephants, Rhinos, Fishing Cat along with Softground Barasingha, Hog Deer, Crocodiles, Gharials and the amazing birdlife.

This trip will take place in March/April 2025, with exact dates to be finalised.

### Day 1:

On arrival in Delhi our team will meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel.

Depending on your arrival time, a tour of Delhi can be arranged for this afternoon with an English speaking guide.

Overnight at the Roseate House, Aerocity.

### Day 2:

Early this morning we make our way to Aalia Jungle Retreat in the Rajaji Tiger Reserve. The park lies about 4.5hrs from Delhi. We should arrive at the lodge before lunch. After lunch you take your first drive into Rajaji Tiger Reserve.

Rajaji Tiger Reserve, located in the Indian state of Uttarakhand, spans over three districts: Haridwar, Dehradun, and Pauri Garhwal. Nestled at the foothills of the Shivalik range, it covers an area of approximately 820 square kilometers.

The reserve boasts a rich variety of forest types, including Sal forests, riverine forests, broadleaved mixed forests, and scrubland. Rajaji Tiger Reserve is home to the majestic Bengal tiger, which is the apex predator in this ecosystem. Other significant fauna include Asian elephants, leopards, Himalayan black bears, sloth bears, and deer species such as chital and sambar. Additionally, the reserve hosts various reptiles and over 300 species of birds, making it a haven for birdwatchers.

Overnight be at the Aalia Jungle Retreat.

### Day 3:

Two more jeep safaris have been planned for today. The nearest park gate to the lodge is Mohund Gate, about 30 minute away. There are 3 tourist entry zones towards Haridwar side which are about 45 minutes away from the Lodge. Should you feel that you would like to explore a different zone we recommend one of these two drive be taken into a different zone.

Overnight at the Aalia Jungle Retreat.

#### Day 4:

This morning after an early breakfast we check-out and make our way to the landscapes of Corbett. Our exploration of Corbett is split into two stays – Vanghat Lodge & Infinity Resorts Corbett. The journey to Corbett takes close to 6hrs by road. Note: In Corbett we would like to offer a night stay inside the park in one of the Forest Rest Houses (FRH), however, it is difficult to secure bookings here so we have budgeted for Jim's Jungle Retreat.

We shall try to get a night stay in the FRH, however, in case we cannot the stay will be at Infinity Resorts Corbett.

We should reach Ramnagar (closest town to Corbett Tiger Reserve) around lunchtime and break the journey here. After lunch we continue onwards to Marchula – the nearest road head to Vanghat Lodge. Getting to the lodge itself is an adventure. The Vanghat team meets you at a pedestrian suspension bridge across the Ramganga River. The porters will carry your bags while you are accompanied by a naturalist on a hike of about 2-2.5km through rural and wild landscape birding along the way. At the end of the hike, a simple bamboo raft awaits you and you cross the river using this raft. Another 200 meters and you will arrive at your lodge in the buffer forests of Corbett Tiger Reserve. This simple yet sustainable lodge shall be your home for 2-nights. Once settled into your room you'll have time to explore along the banks of the Ramganga River for birds and wildlife.

It is not uncommon to hear calls of leopards and tigers that begin their patrol around this time of the day.

Overnight will be at the Vanghat Lodge.

#### Days 5 & 6:

On these two days we have planned longer hikes through the jungle in search of birdlife and wildlife. Depending on the water level we shall cross the river once again on a similar raft and explore the jungles on the far side of the river. Key species to look for around the Ramganga River are the Pallas Fish Eagle, Lesser Fish Eagle, Great Indian Hornbills, Indian Grey Hornbills, Oriental Pied Hornbills, Tawny Fish Owl, Brown Fish Owl, Collared Owlet, Collared Falconet, Spotted Forktail, Little Forktail, Large-billed Thrush, Large-tailed Minivet, Red-billed Blue Magpies, Crested Hawk Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Flycatchers, Kingfishers, Bulbuls, Woodpeckers and Thrushes to name a few. Mammals you can see include seek out the Ghural, Serow, Otters, Barking Deer, Spotted Deer, Sambar Deer, Elephants, Leopards and even the Tiger.

The dining area at Vanghat doubles up as a hide regular sightings include species such as the Red-billed Leiothrix, Blue-winged Minla, Rusty-cheeked Scimitar Babbler, Blue-throated Barbet, Great Barbet, Greater and Lesser Yellownape Woodpeckers, and later in the evening as the light fades away one often finds barking deer and porcupines creeping in to take away any fruits or grain left in the area.

In the evening you enjoy another hike or sit by the river watching schools of the Golden Mahseer or watching the Ghurals coming down to the river to drink.

Overnight will be at the Vanghat Lodge.

#### Day 7:

After a hearty breakfast check-out and make your way back to the vehicle that will now take you to the southern periphery of the park to a wonderful lodge called Infinity Resorts Corbett beside the Kosi river.

Once settled, this afternoon we'll take our first private jeep safari into Corbett Tiger Reserve accompanied by a lodge naturalist. Our focus on these drives is now more on the larger mammals such as tigers, leopards & elephants.

Overnight will be at Infinity Resorts Corbett.

Day 8:

We have planned morning and afternoon safaris in Corbett Tiger Reserve. The park today is divided into 7 zones thus we shall plan to explore different regions, if possible, based on safari availability (zones are allocated on a first come first serve basis).

Overnight will be at Infinity Resorts Corbett .

Day 9:

After breakfast we check out and transfer by road to Camp Tiger Lily, located at the fringe of Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, one of Terai's most exceptional wilderness areas. We plan on exploring 3 parks in the Terai – Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Dudhwa Wildlife Sanctuary.

Expect today to be a long day. The journey from Corbett to Pilibhit will take about 4.5hrs, so we should arrive around lunchtime. After lunch we have planned a jeep safari in Pilibhit tiger reserve. After our safari we will continue our journey to the lodge. This should take about 2.5hrs.

Overnight will be at the Camp Tiger Lily.

Days 10, 11 & 12:

Over these three days we will be exploring Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. The tiger reserve is made up of three wildlife sanctuaries – Kishanpur, Dudhwa and Katarniaghat. We plan to do morning and afternoon drives in Dudhwa and Kishanpur largely focusing on the tiger, elephant, rhino and the fishing cat.

We also plan to visit Katarniaghat. Since this is about 2.5hrs from the lodge it is planned as a full day excursion. We recommend an early breakfast around 06:30am and depart for Katarniaghat by 07:15am.

On arrival we first take a boat safari on Girwa River which divides India and Nepal. The boat safari is a chance to see the endemic gharial crocodile, smooth coat otters, Indian skimmers, osprey, and the other birdlife on the river. After the boat safari we'll take lunch by the Forest Rest House before an afternoon jeep safari into Katarniaghat in search of Leopards and Tigers.

Overnight will be at the Camp Tiger Lily.

Days 13 & 14:

The wildlife portion of our trip ends today and after breakfast we head for Lucknow; a drive of approximately 4.5 hours.

Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh, India, is a city steeped in history and culture, offering a unique blend of traditional and contemporary experiences. Established as a significant seat of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century, Lucknow blossomed under the Nawabs of Awadh, becoming a hub of culture, art, and architecture. The city's historical significance is reflected in its magnificent monuments, such as the Bara Imambara, Rumi Darwaza, and the British Residency. Renowned for its exquisite Chikankaari embroidery, Lucknow is a paradise for textile enthusiasts. Lucknow is also famed for its culinary delights. The city's cuisine, especially its kebabs, biryanis, and sweets like kulfi and sewaiyan, is a culinary journey that tantalizes the taste buds. The legacy of the Nawabs is evident in the elaborate cooking techniques and the use of aromatic spices that define Awadhi cuisine.

A one and half days of sightseeing has been planned in Lucknow over these two days with an English-speaking city expert.

Overnight will be at Novotel, Lucknow.

Day 15:

Since this is your last day in India, we have not planned any activities. Morning is at leisure. In the afternoon transfer to Lucknow airport to catch your flight to Delhi. On arrival in Delhi our team

shall receive you at the airport and shall transfer you to one of the Aerocity hotels where you can relax and dine in the coffee shop / restaurant before heading to the international terminal to catch your flight back home.

#### INCLUSIONS

- Accommodation in India for Fourteen (14) nights.
- Meal plans in Delhi and Lucknow include only Breakfast whereas all meals are included in the wildlife lodges.
- Half day sightseeing of Delhi with an English-speaking city expert.
- Three (3) private jeep safaris in Rajaji Tiger Reserve.
- Two and half days of exploration on foot around the Ramganga Valley when at Vanghat Lodge.
- Three (3) private jeep safaris in Corbett Tiger Reserve.
- One (1) private jeep safari in Pilibhit Tiger Reserve.
- Two (2) private jeep safari in Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Two (2) private jeep safari in Dudhwa Wildlife Sanctuary with one special permit for the Rhino Conservation area.
- One (1) full day excursion to Katarniaghat as described in the itinerary.
- One and half days of sightseeing in Lucknow with an English-speaking city expert.
- All transfers will be in an AC Toyota Innova if only 2 guests are travelling, else we shall use an AC Tempo Traveller.
- Domestic flight in economy on Lucknow – Delhi sector.
- All currently applicable taxes

#### WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- Any international flights or visas.
- Any gratuities.
- Any expense of personal nature including alcoholic beverages as well as soft drinks. Any camera fee.
- Any unusual escalation in taxes, permit costs, fuel costs or major fluctuations in foreign exchange.