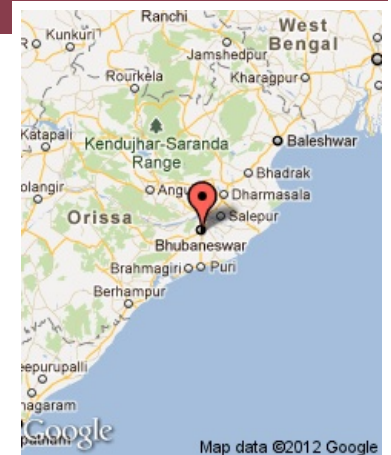


Highlights of Orissa



Highlights

With an ancient and unique cultural heritage and unparalleled ecological diversity, Orissa is one of India's most captivating states. Surprising, then, that it's also one of the least visited. Buck the trend with this spellbinding six-day tour taking you to the temples of Puri and the tranquil waters of lake Chilika!

The east Indian state of Orissa is among the least spoilt and most enigmatic in the subcontinent, boasting vast expanses of jungle and grasslands, an incredible diversity of flora and fauna and some of the oldest temples in India. There are mountains, lakes and mile upon mile of glorious coastline, not to mention the vibrant city of Bhubaneswar, with its 3,000 year history, and Puri, a beautiful and ancient coastal town. More intriguing though are the state's tribal cultures with an extraordinary diversity of independent customs and rituals. Inhabiting Orissa's remote hills surviving today very much as they have for many millennia.

This six-day tour is an awesome introduction to the wonders of Orissa! Starting in Bhubaneswar, home to countless medieval temples dotted along broad, tree-lined avenues, you'll head cross-country to Puri, one of East India's oldest cities. Explore the old city, take a stroll down the beach and meet traditional painters and craftsmen, then grab a bite to eat at one of the lively night markets! Your next port of call is Konark, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where "the language of stone surpasses the language of man". The tour closes with a well-earned chance to chill out on Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish lagoon and a haven for migratory birds and playful dolphins.

Is it for me?

This is a lovely, laid-back little tour through some of India's least spoilt country. There's a nice mix of adventure and relaxation, and you're guaranteed a whole host of new experiences, from riding in a bullock cart to watching the sun set on a serene/tranquil lake. We'd recommend this to anyone with an interest in India and its history, especially those who haven't been before and are looking for a 'way in'. You'll get most from this tour if you're not afraid to try new things and even look silly in the process. And given that you'll be doing a fair amount of socialising (with others travellers, villagers and so on), it helps if you're pretty personable and outgoing.

Accommodation

For this tour you'll be based at a combination of guesthouses with en suite rooms (four nights) and camps (one night). All accommodation is simple but clean and beautifully located, often with gardens and temple views. Some food is included on this tour, but you should budget for around ten euros per day for meals out.

This is a great chance to sample some of Orissa's fantastic cuisine, dishes like khechedi (rice and lentils with vegetables), luchi (deep fried bread) and the terrifically sweet rasgulla and chhenapodapitha. And thanks to its long coastline, Orissa serves up some excellent fresh seafood, from curried crabs to beach-barbequed fish!

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar, the lively capital of Orissa since the ancient 'Kalinga' empire, boasts settlement stretching back 2000 years. Explore animated medieval temples and broad tree-lined avenues to unearth the spirit behind the

Prices from

363 GBP (6 days) per person

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city.

Days 2 - 4: Puri

Marvel at the ambitiously conceived, intricately carved ancient temples of Puri. Soak up the traditional cultures of Puri, wander through the old city, stroll along the beach and pick up local souvenirs at the lively night market. You'll have a chance to meet village craftsmen skilled in traditional painting, then behold the famous UNESCO World Heritage site at Konark. Conceived as a giant solar chariot, this is one of India's most sublime monuments. Later, traverse lush countryside and experience life in a charming rural village, where you'll savour home cooked cuisine and delight in an extraordinary traditional dance performance.

Day 5: Chilika Lake

Unwind on the tranquil waters of Chilika Lake, Asia's largest brackish water lagoon and a Ramsar Wetland of International Importance. Spot rare migratory birds & playful dolphins while you bask in the tropical sun, feast on fresh seafood and camp under the stars.

Day 6: Depart Puri

Glide through serene sun-kissed waters and journey back to Puri by midday. You are free to depart or stay on and enjoy the relaxed ambience. Additional Accommodation and a transfer by private air-conditioned vehicle to the airport can be arranged for you.

Details

Getting there

The meeting point for this tour is at the Hotel Royale in Bhubaneswar.

Price includes

Some meals (one breakfast, two lunches, one dinner); accommodation; activities, all transport; guide

When is best

Other departures can be arranged on request, please contact us for more information.

Typical Duration

6 days

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed