

National Parks of Central India...



February 8-24, 2027

From \$9,900 double occupancy, \$1,600 single supplement

Roaming Naturalists is partnering with Encounters Asia to offer this journey.

From India, a land that evokes flights of imagination and curiosity, a canvas of spectacle and color. Ruled by a succession of native kingdoms and often overrun and inhabited by invading armies of Central Asian origin, followed by the Mughals and finally the British, the transformation has been never-ending, and the results are deeply and visibly etched in today's milieu. A profusion of races and cultures, and the magnitude of their legacies, are evident today. This journey takes the traveler along a richly historic route, full of lore and splendor, punctuated by photographic attractions, and features varied sightseeing and sojourns in historic places.

Encounters Asia – For the inspiring and the unbelievable, for the au courant and the traditional, for the beautiful and the bizarre, a company for travelers, not tourists. As we say in our local dialect, 'Kuch hat kar' means something different in our endeavor to let you experience India in a whole new way, with a fresh perspective. A voyage with us will not only leave you with a sense of thrill and delight but will also deepen your wisdom, lasting beyond your vacation and heightening your pleasure, awareness, and intellect.

ITINERARY

February 9, 2027

Depart Home

Depart Home

Your long flight to Delhi departs the United States today.

You will be met at the airport by our team for the drive to your New Delhi

Delhi, the capital of India, is a city that offers a glimpse of both ancient and modern-day India. It is the third-largest city in India and one of the fastest-growing in Asia. This city is rich in culture, always changing with time but never hiding its splendid past. The various ancient ruins seen in the city are silent witnesses to its magnificent history.

Overnight, The Clarridges, Delhi.

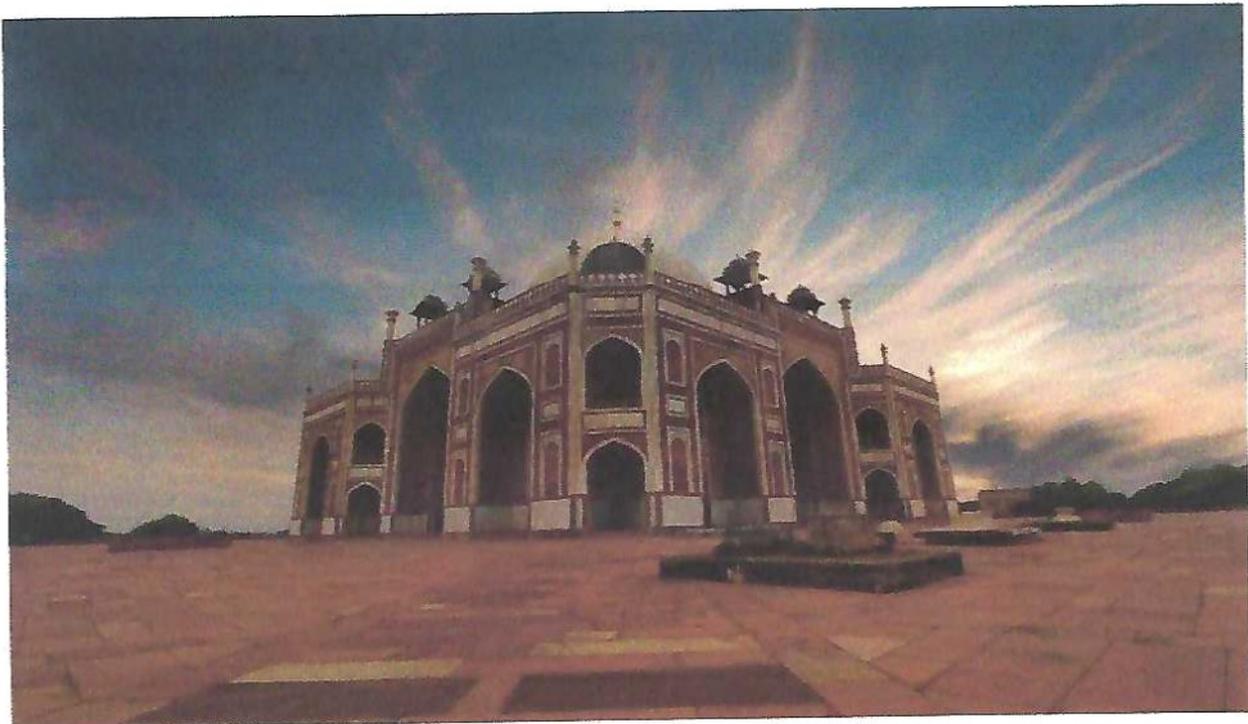
FEBRUARY 11

DELHI

(B, L & D)

You'll have a delicious breakfast at the hotel, after which you depart for a sightseeing tour of Delhi.

A sensory overload - it's hard to recount the times this phrase has been used to describe an experience in Delhi. With its rich archaeological history, built over generations by kingdoms that ruled the city, Delhi is a melting pot of cultures. It was bred on the milk of royal culture, brought up in the lap of kings, and reached maturity in an atmosphere of learning and knowledge.



Amidst such diversity, how does one truly experience the heart of the city? The Five Senses Tour of Delhi is a unique offering that allows you to indulge your senses to your heart's delight. A carefully curated selection of experiences will transport you across Delhi's rich cultural syncretism, which has served as both its greatest strength and vulnerability.

Sight that Beholds You:

This tour begins with Humayun's Tomb, one of the best-preserved Mughal monuments. This spellbinding mausoleum is the first example of Mughal architecture in India. A century after its construction, Humayun's tomb inspired the construction of the more famous Taj Mahal. A must-do in any Delhi itinerary, Humayun's Tomb is a favorite among Dilliwallas (People from Delhi), with many even preferring it to the Taj.

Walk and Smell to captivate you:

Our Mughal Conversation continues with a walk towards Shahjahanabad, the beautiful Mughal city built by one of the strongest rulers of the Taj fame: Shah Jahan. You will then participate in a workshop that stimulates your senses - the Ittar or perfume-making workshop. There are several stories about the origin of matter, including one involving Mughal emperor Jahangir, who is credited as the first patron of the industry because his wife, Empress Noor Jahan, used to bathe in water perfumed with rose petals. Visit an 8th-generation ittar studio, where you can experience a wide range of ittars and create your unique blend, which can be named after you!

Optional: You can try a quintessential Old Delhi snack that has been part of the area's culinary history for centuries.

Then, take a Rickshaw to Chandni Chowk:

In their heyday, the streets of Chandni Chowk were adorned with silver and gold jewelry amidst shops selling the most delectable food. Today, chaos thrives in the area, but as you cycle down the street, you're transported by the magic in the air to the era of the Mughals. After this, you enter the Jama Masjid, a beautiful pocket of calm at the heart of Old Delhi's mayhem; the capital's largest mosque is built on a 10m elevation. It can hold over 25,000 people. The marble and red sandstone structure, also known as the 'Friday Mosque,' was Shah Jahan's final architectural triumph, built between 1644 and 1658. A walk here takes you back in time, with conversations that delve into various cultural, religious, and historical aspects, including the 1857 uprising. (Please dress conservatively for the mosque)

The Taste of Delhi:

We follow this up with a break for our favorite sense: Food. Here, we'll try the quintessential food of Delhi in an interesting setting.

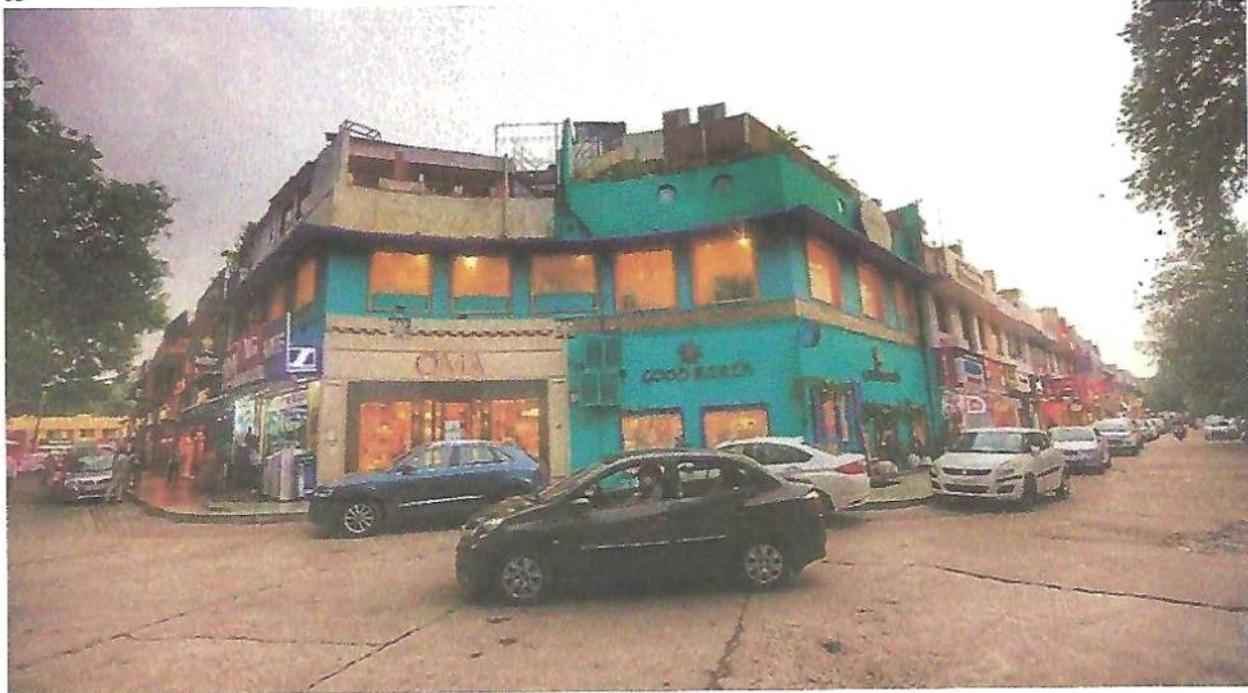
From Old to New: From here on, you make your way toward New Delhi, and as we drive past British structures, we learn about how the British envisioned their new capital. The palpable architecture, along with its deep contrast to Mughal buildings, makes this stop not only a stop for colonial stories but also a look into its architecture.

The sound of the Gurbani at Delhi's biggest Gurudwara

Once you're done with the bustling neighborhood, it's time to move to possibly an oasis of service, solitude, and syncretism: The Bangla Sahib. Part of our sense of sound.

The magic that the Gurudwara envelopes you into is undeniable. What ties together this beautiful experience is the sweet sound of Gurbani playing in the background as you reflect on the experiences your senses have undergone.

After sightseeing, our plan is flexible, based on your interests and energy. Want to explore boutiques and bookstores where the trendy local shops are located? Then, head over to **Khan Market**. Home to



many boutiques, restaurants, and local bookstores, or a great spot to people-watch through one of the coffee shops or wine bars, Khan Market is the place to be. Some popular boutiques to explore include Good Earth, Nicobar, Oma, Anokhi, and Fab India. Popular Cafés/Restaurants – Good Earth Café, Town Hall, Perch Wine & Coffee. Popular bookstores – Baharisons.

Stay overnight in Delhi.

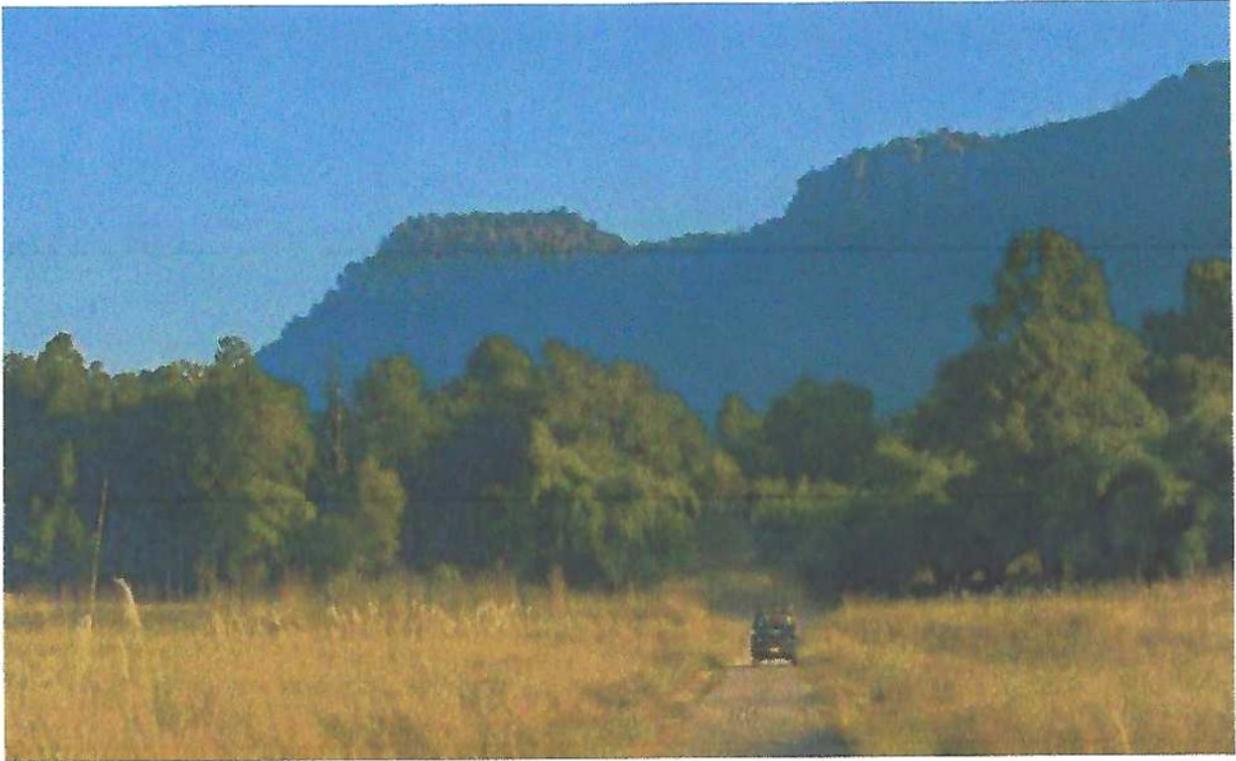
FEBRUARY 12 DELHI - JABALPUR - BANDHAVGARH (B, L & D)

You'll be picked up after breakfast and transferred to the airport to board the flight for Jabalpur (approximately 200 km, 4 hours).

Indigo Airlines, Delhi/Jabalpur, Departure: 1:50 p.m.

After your 1.5-hour flight, you will be driven to Bandhavgarh National Park, approximately 200 km (4 hours) away.

Bandhavgarh National Park, situated in the Vindhya Hills of Madhya Pradesh, spans 168 square miles of sal and mixed forest, comprising bamboo, grassland, and a complex of deciduous forests.



Bandhavgarh National Park derives its name from the Bandhavgarh Fort, situated at the summit of



the highest hill in the region, which reaches an elevation of 800 m. The origins of this fort are lost in the mists of time.

However, it is thought to be at least 2000 years old. The fort is surrounded by 32 smaller, flat-topped hills that form a maze of well-forested valleys, spurs, and flatlands. This area was the private game reserve of the Maharajas of Rewa.

Mohan, the ancestor of most captive white tigers, was

captured from these forests by the Maharaja of Rewa. After independence, due to relaxed control, the forests in this region began to deteriorate rapidly. To halt this process and preserve the forests, an area of 105 square kilometers was declared a National Park in 1965. The park's location was increased to 448.84 sq. km. in 1982.

In 1993, it was included in the Project Tiger Network.

Bandhavgarh is home to over 25 species of mammals, more than 250 species of birds, approximately 80 types of butterflies, and a variety of reptiles. Apart from the tiger, the mammals living in Bandhavgarh include panthers, wolves, hyenas, wild dogs, gaur, chital, sambhar, barking deer, sloth bears, and many other species. Bandhavgarh has long been recognized as an exceptional tiger habitat, boasting the highest density of tigers in the world. Among wildlife enthusiasts in India,

it is commonly said, "In most parks, you have to be lucky to see a tiger; in Bandhavgarh, you have to be unlucky not to see a tiger."

Overnight Bandhavgarh Jungle Lodge.

The jungle lodge has been designed on the theme of an Indian village to create a friendly, informal, and relaxed environment. Since the jungle lodge is located close to Bandhavgarh National Park and near the entrance gate (in Tala village), guests can listen to the sounds of the Jungle right in their backyard.

Many fruit trees and bushes have been intentionally planted to attract a diverse range of butterflies, birds, and insects. Due to its proximity to the Bandhavgarh National Park, the Spotted Deer and the Langur Monkey can often be seen in and around the Lodge. In the morning, you wake up to a symphony of bird songs, while at night, you can usually hear the alarm calls of deer, which alerts you to a tiger or



Leopard on the prowl!

FEBRUARY 13 & 14 BANDHAVGARH (B, L & D)

An early morning wake-up call, accompanied by a knock on your door, served with tea or coffee.

You will wake up to misty mornings and the sounds of birds calling, making for an exciting start to your day. As soon as dawn breaks, depart for your Jungle Safari, accompanied by a resident naturalist and forest park guides in 4x4 jeeps. In the winter months, morning safaris require warm clothing, including woolen caps and gloves, to protect you from the wind chill factor in your open jeep. We provide blankets and, occasionally, a hot water bottle to keep you comfortable.

After lunch, we proceeded with the afternoon safari.

Stay overnight at Bandhavgarh.

FEBRUARY 15 BANDHAVGARH - KANHA (B, L & D)

You'll wake up to a knock at your door and enjoy a cup of coffee or tea. After the morning safari, drive to Kanha (approximately 160 km, 5 hours).



Our drive takes us through the rural countryside and colorful towns and villages, stopping in the sleepy town of Mandla, a sacred city for the Gond tribes, where the Narmada River, the second holiest to the Ganges, is the center of activity. En route, enjoy your picnic lunch, and arrive at Kanha, where you will check in at the Lodge.

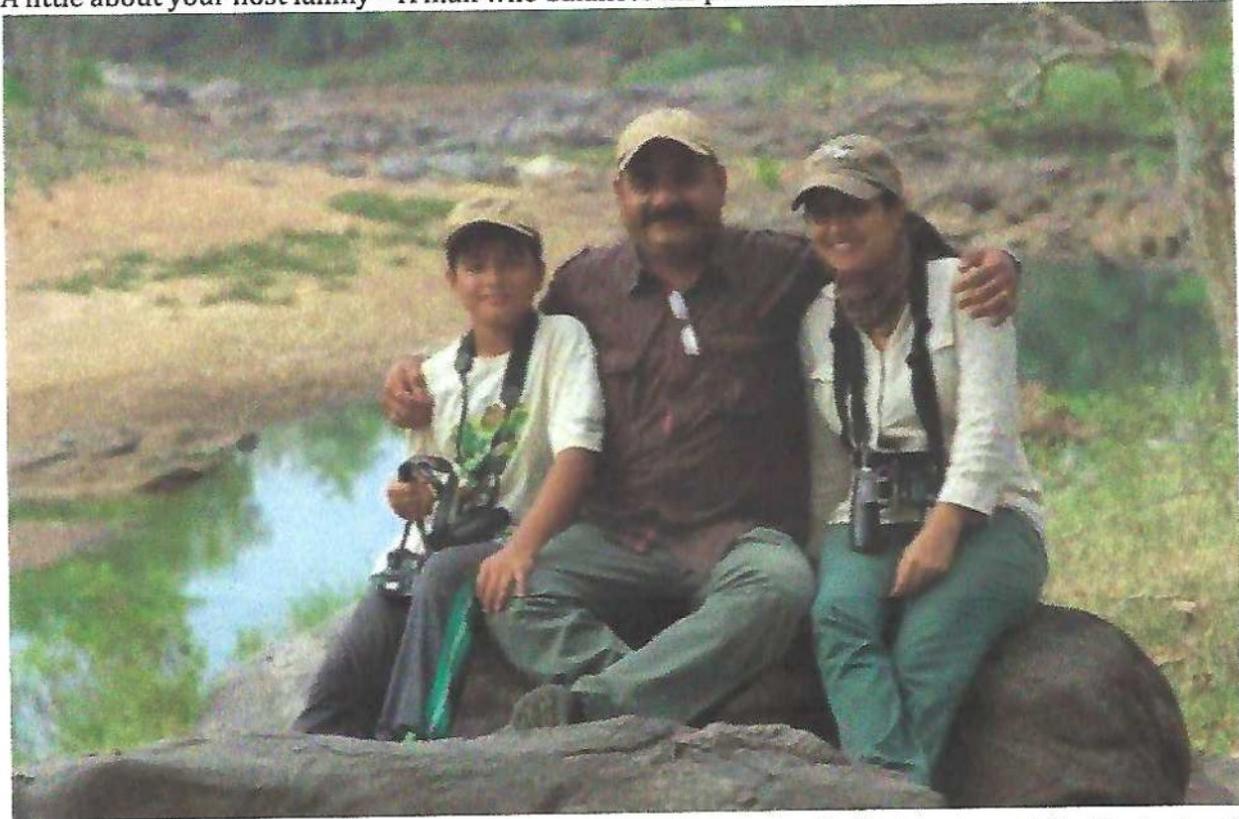
Kanha National Park, situated on the Chhota Nagpur Plateau in Madhya Pradesh, offers breathtaking vistas of grassy plains and sal forests. This 366-square-mile preserve was established to save two endangered species: the tiger and The Barasingha. One of the largest and most scenic National Parks in India, Kanha is an Ideal habitat for both tigers and their prey; the lush sal and bamboo forests, grassy meadows, and ravines of Kanha shelter a significant population of rare species such as tiger, leopard, sloth bear, Barasingha, wild dog to name a few. Kanha's mixed forests are interspersed with vast meadows known as maidens. Perennial streams run through several such meadows, providing a source of water for the wildlife even in the scorching summers. Kanha meadow, with its hundreds of chital grazing on a carpet of green grass against the backdrop of the

majestic Sal forest, has been aptly referred to as "the Ngorongoro of India". Kanha is primarily renowned for its endangered swamp deer, also known as the hard-water barasingha, which inhabits the extensive, open grasslands within the forests of teak and bamboo. Brought back from the brink of extinction, these handsome animals are a remarkable conservation success story for Kanha.

Sal trees and open grasslands dominate the lowlands of Kanha. These grasslands, also known as maidans, are the result of once-relocated villages under Project Tiger. This was a vast country project launched in 1971 to protect the Tigers and their habitat. One of its initiatives was to control man-animal conflict by relocating villages from core areas to the buffer zone, allowing corridors to be reconnected. Hence, these maidans are live examples of the successful relocation of villages that have now turned into grasslands, allowing for the successful growth of a prey base for predators.

Overnight Kanha Jungle Lodge.

A little about your host family – A man who balances his passion for nature with his entrepreneurial



Spirit, **Tarun** has twenty years of experience in wildlife tourism. As the Manager of the Kanha Jungle Lodge, he is responsible for ensuring that your stay is as comfortable and memorable as possible. He goes the extra mile by not only taking care of your logistical needs, but he also takes pleasure in accompanying you on park safaris. An encyclopedia of knowledge with a particular interest in tigers and birding, he is an incredible source of information. With wildlife in his blood, it is no surprise that Tarun's own family represents a manifestation of his love for the natural kingdom. At first glance, one merely sees a ten-year-old boy interested in talking to new people, playing cricket in the afternoon, and trying out new games. But there's more to **Jai** than meets the eye. The little naughty naturalist was born and raised at the Kanha Jungle Lodge, receiving an education in warning calls, tracking skills, and how to identify the abundant flora and fauna that no classroom in the world

could teach him. For recess, he doesn't play on the swings but explores Mother Earth in all her glory. Kanha's real-life Mowgli is genuinely at home in a wildlife park.

Our Lady of the Lodge is a self-taught naturalist renowned for her insatiable curiosity and thirst for knowledge. And whatever Dimple learns, she loves to share with her guests. The first person to publish a book on Kanha wildflowers, she continues to research and document information on common butterflies in the area. When she isn't taking you on bird and butterfly strolls, she shows you the wonders of the stars through her telescope, teaches you how to savor the flavors of Indian cooking, and relaxes your mind and body through yoga. The woman's touch at Kanha Jungle Lodge will inspire you to discover all that is to learn in your backyard.

Our evening will be spent orienting ourselves with the national park. We will examine some maps, understand the concepts of buffer areas and core areas, and identify the areas where we will conduct our safaris. Together with the camp's naturalists, they will be happy to answer any questions you may have. A key focus in this park is also to study the return of the Barasingha. A successful breeding program inside the national park has brought back a swamp Deer that almost went extinct.

Overnight Kanha Jungle Lodge

Kanha Jungle Lodge - The Lodge is situated amid a rich Sal forest and is thus designed as a Jungle.



Lodge, well camouflaged within the forest. It is tastefully developed with a low impact on the land and the environment, featuring 18 well-appointed rooms and two new cottages to provide a physical and emotional jungle experience. The Lodge is designed to provide a friendly, informal, and relaxed environment, offering plenty to observe, understand, and learn, where you can make new friends and support conservation. Since it is located close to Kanha National Park and is the closest to the Mukki entrance gate, it has been sensitive to the environment. Guests can listen to Jungle sounds during the

day or night, which makes for an exciting and chilling experience as they listen to the alarm calls of deer or the occasional roar of a tiger. Its sal forest and open meadow have become a favorite place for Deer to stay fearlessly within the compound. It is based on firm principles of environmental friendliness, and every aspect of its development and operation is carefully integrated to promote nature conservation. We have not cut any trees to construct the Lodge. We hope you will enjoy your stay and make it a learning experience!

FEBRUARY 16 & 17 **KANHA** **(B, L & D)** An early morning wake-up call, accompanied by a knock on your door, served with tea or coffee.
Morning safari in a 4x4 jeep, accompanied by a resident naturalist and forest guide.

square miles of sal and mixed forest, comprising bamboo, grassland, and a complex of deciduous forests.



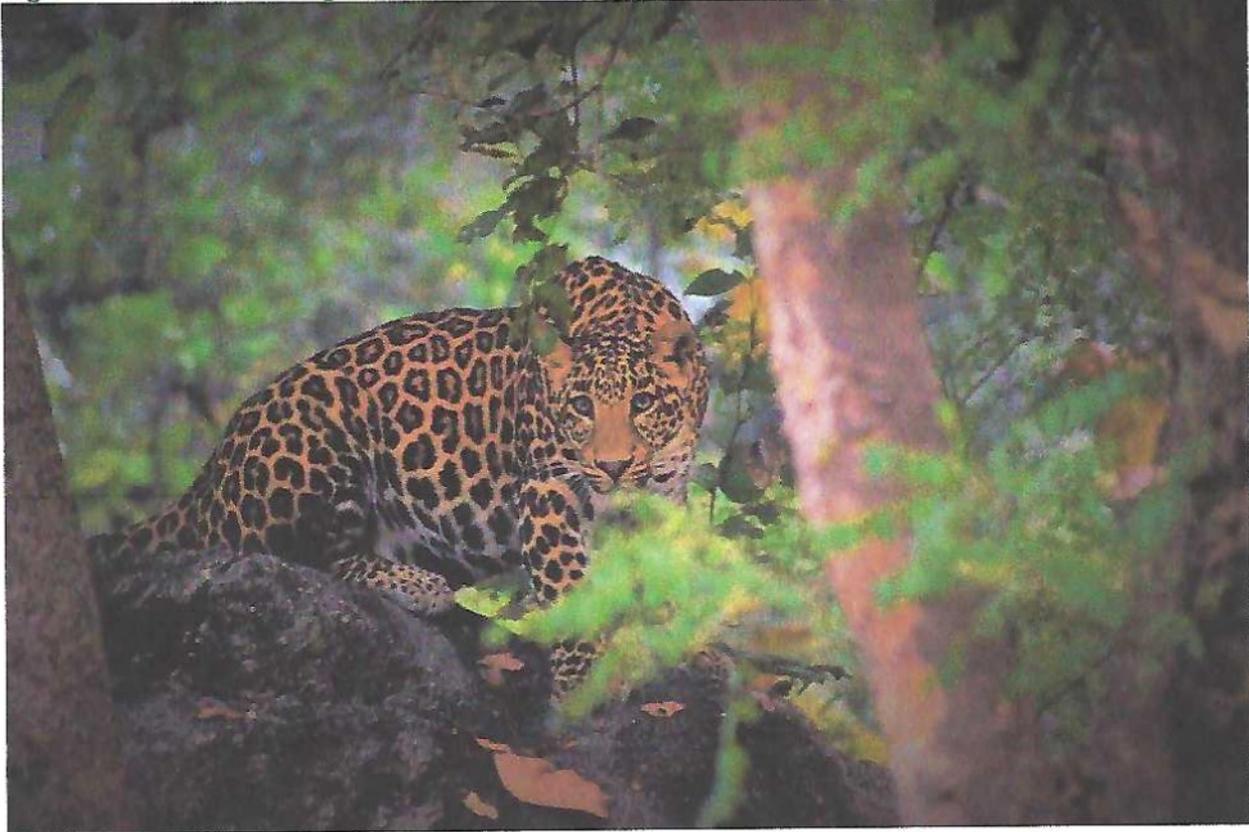
Proceeded with the afternoon safari. We are staying with the family whose heritage dates back three generations in Tiger Conservation. Kailash Sankhala was the founder and director of Project Tiger, under which the Project Tiger Reserves in India were established. Their Grandchildren run and manage Kanha Jungle Lodge and also own the travel company you are traveling with in India. We will have a firsthand opportunity to interact with them and spend an evening watching the award-winning documentary "Tigerland." Made by the Discovery Channel and premiered at the Sundance Film Festival.

The festival focuses on two passionate people trying to save the Tiger. One of them is Kailash Sankhala.

Overnight at Kanha Jungle Lodge

After the morning safari, drive to Pench (Approx. 4 hrs).

Pench National Park, situated in the central Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, is the 19th Project Tiger Reserve and has long been one of the best-kept secrets among wildlife enthusiasts, who have



Been drawn to its immensely varied flora and fauna. No wonder the area provides a backdrop for its animal character, dominated by a relatively open canopy of mixed forest, predominantly teak, with open grassy patches. The park, with its undulating terrain, boasts the highest density of herbivores in any Indian park.

It has a large diversity of wildlife, including Leopards, Tigers, Jungle Cats, Dholes (Wild Dogs), Sloth Bears, Wild Boars, Mongooses, Gaurs, and the highest density of Herbivores, including Cheetals (Spotted Deer) and Sambar.

Overnight Jamtara Wilderness Camp

Jamtara Wilderness Camp – Situated in the Village of Jamtara, near Pench National Park, Jamtara Wilderness Lodge is a 10-luxury-tented property in the heart of rural Pench. Surrounded by tall Arjuna Trees and an ancient Banyan tree rooted in a dry riverbed, each tented room overlooks the forest, setting the perfect backdrop for this jungle experience. Each luxury tent is designed to feel light and airy, allowing guests to enjoy the optimum view of nature. With the option to roll up the front panels of the tent, guests can bring the outside in while still maintaining the privacy of their rooms.

Although these are tented rooms, the bathroom has been converted into a permanent structure for the comfort of guests. While many may choose to sleep inside the tent, others may prefer a more intimate setting.



Connection with nature and opt for sleeping outside on their patio. Mosquito netting will keep the bugs away, and quilts and hot water bottles will keep the cold away. Since we also believe in supporting the community of our lodge, a "Machaan" night can be booked while generating revenue for the farmers. Here, the concept is sleeping under the stars, just like the villagers. These Machaans are built on the land of the farmers, and a portion of the night's rate will be paid to the farmer. Sleeping up high on stilts will allow you to watch the sky and everything below. You never know what walks through the farms at night.

FEBRUARY 20 & 21

PENCH

(B, L & D)

Early morning game safaris into the Pench National Park. Safaris in Pench are organized in 4x4 open jeeps. Local guides and naturalists are at hand to enhance the experience.

After lunch, we proceeded with the afternoon safari. Overnight
Jamtara Wilderness Camp



FEBRUARY 22

PENCH - NAGPUR - DELHI

(B, L & D)

On-time transfer to Nagpur airport to board the flight to Delhi.

(Indi Go Airlines)

Nagpur/Delhi

6:40 pm

Upon arrival at Delhi, transfer to the hotel.

Overnight at Andaz by Hyatt

FEBRUARY 23 & 24

DELHI - ONWARD JOURNEY / HOME

(B, L)

You'll depart the hotel in time for your flight home.