



**This magnificent 14-day challenge includes trekking through the foothills of the Himalayas, a chance to explore the home of the Dalai Lama and a visit to the stunning Taj Mahal – a fitting finale to an amazing challenge. In just two weeks you will experience the real India as you journey from lively Delhi to spiritual Dharamsala.**

#### DAY 1 International Travel

#### DAY 2 Delhi and ActionAid project visit

Arrive in Delhi, India's bustling capital. We start our challenge with a visit to an ActionAid street children project; a wonderful and often emotional experience that highlights the importance of all your fundraising. Overnight sleeper train to Dharamsala.

#### DAY 3 Dharamsala

Arrive early morning and transfer to Dharamsala. Known as the 'Little Lhasa in India', this is the centre of a vibrant Tibetan community and home to the Dalai Lama. Today, providing His Holiness is in residence, we will attend teachings or a public audience given by the Dalai Lama at his home and temple complex – a rare, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity\*.

#### DAY 4 Dharamsala to Bir

After a warm-up walk to the Bhagsu waterfall, we have time to see more of Dharamsala and browse the many stalls of handicrafts and gifts available. In the afternoon we explore the Dalai Lama's temple complex, weaving our way through prayer wheels, monks and prayer flags to visit the peaceful temples. Later we make the scenic transfer to Bir at the foothills of the Himalayas.

#### DAY 5 Bir

Free day to explore the pretty Tibetan colony of Bir and acclimatise to the mountain air. The local

people are incredibly warm and friendly and live a lifestyle unchanged for centuries. We will visit the amazing Sherabling monastery, home to a jewel encrusted three-storey high Buddha. In the afternoon there will be time to explore this charming village with its beautiful Tibetan handicrafts and we meet our trek support team.

#### DAY 6 Trek to Barot (approx. 6hrs)

Today our trek begins, centred around the Uhl valley and river, in the shadows of some of the world's highest peaks. We trek upwards through oak and rhododendron forests towards Haribag pass (2,500m), with incredible views of the surrounding mountains. We then head down to Barot, a favourite spot for nature-lovers, well known for its diverse wildlife and birds. We celebrate the end of a great first day around a campfire.

#### DAY 7 Trek to Thadkot (approx. 6hrs)

Today's trek is along a track frequented by shepherds and local people. We cross the Sun pass (2,700m) and follow the Thadkot river through terraced fields and a picturesque valley. As night falls, the distant peaks turn from white to crimson and the skies become alive with bright stars.

#### DAY 8 Trek to Banghla (approx. 6-7 hrs)

We cross three passes today as the path winds around the mountain for a spectacular panoramic view of the Shivalik Mountains and the plains towards the Punjab, while to the north stands the mighty snow-capped Dhauladhar range. We wind our way uphill to a simple old colonial hunting lodge; a beautiful spot and our home for the night.

#### DAY 9 Rest day / optional trek (approx 5 hrs)

If you feel like an additional challenge today you can climb to a beautiful spot where we enjoy a leisurely lunch and take in the panoramic views. Alternatively you can spend the day relaxing at the lodge.

#### DAY 10 Trek to Bal (approx 6 hrs)

Today we trek through Shilpadhani, a beautiful village perched on a steep slope and surrounded by thickly wooded pine trees and lush green fields. Some of the inhabitants are the legendary Himalayan shepherds – the Gaddis – who lead a nomadic life and are renowned for their friendliness

and hospitality. Tonight we camp in Bal beside the Uhl river.

#### DAY 11 Trek to Ropa & transfer to Taragarh Palace (approx 2-3 hrs)

The last day of the trek takes us up to Dena park where we'll be greeted by the team and congratulated on our achievement! We then transfer to the Taragarh Palace and en route visit Baijnath temple, an ancient and important pilgrimage site. Tonight we will enjoy some well-earned luxury with a celebratory banquet at the Taragarh Palace, home to the Maharajahs for centuries.

#### DAY 12 Taragarh Palace - Norbulinka Institute – Delhi

After a relaxing morning spent exploring the grounds of Taragarh Palace, we travel to the peaceful Norbulinka Institute, situated against a backdrop of majestic mountains. The institute was established to teach and preserve traditional Tibetan art and crafts such as woodcarving, statue-making and embroidery. Tonight we take the overnight sleeper train back to Delhi.

#### DAY 13 The Taj Mahal

The grand finale of our trip – today we transfer to Agra to explore the Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. In the afternoon we transfer by train back to Delhi where we'll have the chance to shop at the local street stalls before our final meal together. After supper we head to the airport for our return overnight flight back to London.

#### DAY 14 Arrive UK

\*Subject to the Dalai Lama's availability, we will attend teachings in March and a public audience in November.

You will automatically be allocated a space on the next available departure date. If you have a specific date in mind, please request this on your registration form. You will also have the opportunity to arrange your own extension at an extra cost. There is limited availability so please request any flight extensions upon registration.

© Challenges Unlimited. The itinerary is complex and subject to change.



## WHERE ON EARTH AM I GOING?

### About India

India offers the spirituality of the hills and the bustle of the city. You will see both on this challenge. As India is a developing country, please drink only bottled or sterilised water and wash your hands regularly. Be reassured that all food is prepared by your trekking team and restaurants are checked by the team - the food is extremely healthy and nutritious! Please speak to your GP or travel clinic on vaccinations and anti-malaria tablets.

### ActionAid in India

Since 1972 ActionAid has been working with the poor and marginalised people of India. We focus our work on securing food and shelter



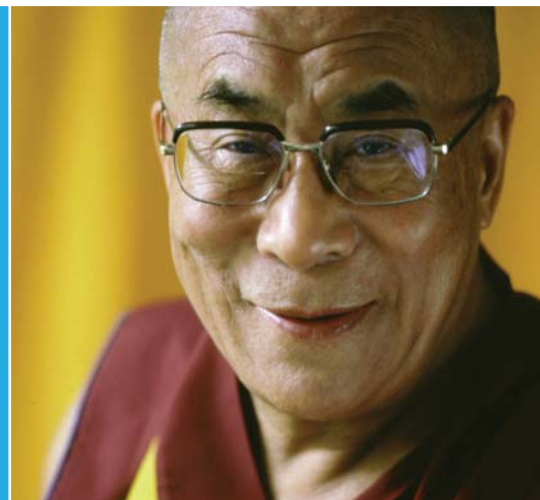
for vulnerable communities and addressing issues around education and HIV/AIDS. We reach more than 5 million of India's poorest and most marginalised people, supporting them to overcome their poverty and giving them a voice in the decisions which affect their lives.

This information is correct at the time of going to print. You will be advised of any changes before departure. ActionAid is acting on behalf of Challenges Unlimited, ATOL 6546. Charity Challenge aims to set responsible tourism standards within the charity expeditions industry. Every trip aims to benefit local communities whether through the employment of local people, using locally owned accommodation, providing participants with notes on environmental and cultural respect, or contributing to local community projects.

## TOP TIP!

"Start as soon as possible and plan two to three larger events or projects to raise larger sums of money"

Heidi Kenell, ActionAid Trekker 2006



## MONEY MATTERS

**REGISTRATION FEE: £300** (can be paid in two monthly instalments)

**MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP: £3,000**

The trip costs of **£1,635** will be taken from the minimum sponsorship. Trip costs will cover:

- flights and transfers
- accommodation
- all meals and drinking water
- passenger service charge and UK airport tax
- group first aid supplies
- an English-speaking expedition leader and full local support team
- Charity Challenge donate US\$20 per participant to ActionAid's street children project that you will visit in Delhi.

Additional extras that you will need to cover:

- any additional airline imposed fuel surcharge (£60 in 2006 but subject to change)
- Indian visa (approx. £38) – forms to be provided after registration.
- any optional activities not mentioned in the itinerary
- personal spending money
- travel to/from UK airports
- any required vaccinations
- tips for the local support team
- travel insurance of £65 (this must be purchased at the same time as registering - please make cheques payable to Challenges Unlimited)

