



Himalayan trek and tiger conservation experience

in aid of Cats Protection

13 – 25 October 2018

This is a unique and thrilling opportunity to challenge yourself while raising vital funds for your local Cats Protection branch or centre. A registration fee and minimum sponsorship applies to take part, contact us to find out more.

Limited spaces available – get in touch now for this once in a lifetime opportunity.

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Information Pack

This trip is operated by The Different Travel Company (ATOL 6706) for Cats Protection (Reg Charity 203644 (England and Wales) and SC037711 (Scotland)). The Different Travel Company Ltd. is a company registered in England, number 05324268. All the flights as part of this challenge are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see our booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate

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About India

India conjures images of lush green tea plantations, brightly coloured saris, jasmine scented incense, ancient palaces and adorned maharajahs. There are many highlights in this vast country including the stunning backwaters of Kerala, the mighty Himalaya, the inhospitable deserts, the bustling cities, the magnificent coastline and of course the delicious cuisine.

Delhi is the capital city of India and a buzz of sights, sounds and smells. From busy highways where sacred cows cross the street to peaceful temples and lush gardens, Delhi is a contrast like no other. Spicy aromas and the sizzle of street food tantalises your senses and the beautiful ancient monuments will leave you breathless.



The Conservation Experience

You will spend three days in the Kanha National Park located in Madhya Pradesh state. The National Park was established in 1955 and was inspiration to Rudyard Kipling for his novel *The Jungle Book*. During your time here you will learn about the various efforts which are made to conserve the environment, especially for tigers. You will also have the opportunity to get involved in some of these activities.

We anticipate that you will take several safari drives into the National Park with the hopes of spotting tigers and other endemic animals. During these game drives you are likely to spot some of the other species such as langur monkeys, bison, wild boar, deer, maybe some jackals and if you are very lucky, perhaps even a leopard.



During a visit to the Wildlife Interpretation Centre you will hear about the history of Kanha National Park, the landmark achievements in preventing extinction of certain species, and the stringent conservation programs which have helped make Kanha one of the best maintained National Parks in India. You will hear from rangers who will explain the methods used to take tiger censuses, how to set camera traps and how they protect the tigers and other animals.



You will also get hands on and support the conservation efforts directly such as assisting with the removal of weeds, planting trees and habitat maintenance all of which are important tasks to keep the endemic plants in the National Park safe from invasive plant species which could change the ecological balance. There is also a possibility of helping with a tiger conservation lesson at a local school.

Trip Overview

After flying from London you will start your challenge in India's capital, Delhi where you will have an introduction to Indian culture and this fascinating city with a short city tour before boarding the overnight train to Pathankot.

After a night on the train you will transfer to the stunning hill station of Dharamshala which translates to 'a spiritual dwelling' and is surrounded by dense forest and in the shadow of the Dhauladhar mountain range. Mcleodganj, where you will stay, is a suburb of Dharamshala, and home to the Tibetan Government in exile and the Dalai Lama.

From here you will commence your journey into the Lesser Himalayan range of Northern India where, during four days of trekking, you will be awed by lush green forests, views of snow-capped peaks, deep valleys, gushing rivers and small villages with friendly and welcoming local people. You will reach altitudes of up to 2842m (at Triund) and will walk approximately 14km per day, taking around 6-8 hours.

After your trek ends you will return to Delhi and take a flight and a road transfer to the Kanha National Park and your home for the next few nights, Chitvan Jungle Lodge. The following three days will be spent learning about, and getting involved, with conservation activities at Kanha National Park under the guidance and direction of the Kanha National Park officials. On your final day you will fly back to Delhi and enjoy a celebratory meal together before flying back to London the next day.



Who accompanies us?

You will be accompanied by professional English-speaking guides and support staff who are First Aid trained and will support you throughout your journey. You will also be accompanied throughout by a UK tour manager and Cats Protection staff member.

What is the climate like?

Temperatures will depend on the weather with sunny days feeling hotter than overcast or rainy days. In Delhi and at Kanha National Park, temperatures can reach 35°C during the day, dropping to 20°C at night. The temperature in Dharamshala and during the trek is cooler with 23-25°C expected during the day, dropping down to 5°C at night. Weather conditions vary and could be bright and sunny, rainy, cloudy or humid. Please note that weather conditions in mountainous regions can be unpredictable so you should be prepared for all climatic eventualities. Although the temperatures and conditions above are historically accurate, climate change can impact the seasons so you may experience uncharacteristic conditions during the trip which are out of our control. Should this happen the guide will assess the situation and make decisions to ensure the best enjoyment and ultimately safety of the group as a whole.





What is the trek terrain like?

The terrain will vary throughout the trek but in general you will experience undulating (uphill and downhill) terrain. There are very few flat sections so you should ensure your training includes plenty of hills. Underfoot there will be stony pathways, grass, rocks and perhaps a few small streams to cross too. Each day you will cover approximately 12-15km (7-9 miles) which, because of the variable terrain, can take up to 8 hours to cover.



Where will we sleep?

At camp you will stay in 2-man tents (two people to a tent). You will be provided with sleeping mats but you are welcome to bring your own if you prefer. While in Dharamshala, Kanha and Delhi you will stay in basic hotels or lodges on a twin-share basis.

What about bathroom facilities?

During the trek bathing facilities will be limited but you may be able to freshen up at rivers or streams along the way. You are recommended to bring eco-friendly toiletries (Lush and The Body Shop sell environmentally friendly products). Each morning you will be provided with a bowl of

hot water to freshen up for the day ahead. Biodegradable baby wipes are strongly recommended for your personal hygiene. Toilet facilities at camp will be a hole dug into the ground with a small privacy tent surrounding it. Toilet paper is not provided so you will need to bring your own – consider biodegradable toilet paper. During the trek you must pack up any toilet paper you use to dispose of properly at camp. Never leave toilet paper or other litter on the trail. At the hotels/lodge you will have en-suite bathroom facilities.

What is the food like?

Meals throughout the trek will be cooked by your dedicated trek chef and will be taken in a mess tent where a table, chairs, plates, mugs, cutlery and other equipment is provided for you. Meals are hearty, delicious and plentiful and a variety of mainly Indian and some Western-style meals that will keep your energy levels high for each day's trek. Meals in Delhi, Dharamshala and Kanha will be at your accommodation and at local restaurants. Special dietary requirements can be accommodated if we are advised in advance but please note that we cannot guarantee that food preparation will have taken place in a contamination free environment.



How tough is it?

The trek is graded *moderate to challenging* as you will trek over varying terrain for up to 8 hours a day, carrying a small daypack which may weigh up to 6kg, and camping in basic campsites along the way. You will also be exposed to altitudes up to a maximum of 2843m (9327ft). Whilst it is difficult to specifically prepare for trekking at higher altitudes, it helps to be physically prepared for the exertions of the trekking day by training in advance. It is advised that you arrive for the trek

feeling comfortable trekking for periods of up to 7 or 8 hours for at least two days consecutively. Having a positive and determined attitude is also a key element to your success on the trek.



Who can take part?

This challenge can be undertaken by anyone of any age (min. 18 unless accompanied by an adult).

It is advised that you are of a good fitness level before departure to ensure fast recovery from each day's exertions. An ideal candidate would be someone who enjoys being out of their comfort zone and trying something new, with a flexible and open minded personality. If you do not regularly exercise it is advised that you start training before departure to ensure your best chance of enjoyment on the trip. This could include speed walking, hill walking, swimming, running, cycling, gym workouts, team sports, boot camps, yoga etc.

You can download a number of free apps which will help you train and track your progress. E.g. iMapMyRide (cycling), C25K (couch to 5k run), MyFitnessPal (for a variety of sports). It is possible to complete the trip without training but it may hinder your experience, and the experience of your teammates.

Medical declaration

We require a medical form to be completed by everyone upon registering, and any pre-existing conditions, medications used and other medical issues **must** be noted and (if relevant) signed by your GP. Any conditions that develop must be declared and a new medical form completed and signed.

Different Travel's Online Training

Different Travel has teamed up with Brightside Personal Training to bring you a fun and unique way to train for your upcoming challenge without needing to leave the comfort of your home or signing up for an expensive gym membership. Please see details here:

<http://brightsidept.kajabi.com/sp/34357>

Altitude

The altitude you experience on this trek is up to 2843m which is slightly under the threshold that is considered high altitude (3000m). However there is a small likelihood that some people may notice altitude related symptoms. The local guides are very experienced in spotting signs of altitude sickness but it is important that you also research the effects so you can be aware of how your body is adjusting. A great source of information can be found at <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Altitude-sickness/Pages/Introduction.aspx> or <http://www.traveldoctor.co.uk/altitude.htm>.

Common mild symptoms of altitude sickness are headache, nausea, loss of appetite, disturbed sleep and fatigue. It is vital that you make your guides and tour manager aware of any symptoms immediately so you can be monitored.

Important information about altitude:

- If you begin to show symptoms of moderate altitude sickness, don't go higher.
- If symptoms increase, descend immediately. Your tour guides and tour manager's decision for you to descend must be respected.
- People acclimatise at different rates. Keep aware of your own symptoms.
- Stay hydrated. Drink lots of fluids to remain properly hydrated (water, soup, tea, juices etc.). Urine output should be copious and clear to pale yellow.
- Take it easy and don't overexert yourself. Acclimatisation is inhibited by overexertion, dehydration, and alcohol.
- Avoid tobacco, alcohol and other depressant drugs including, barbiturates, tranquillisers, sleeping pills and opiates such as codeine. These decrease the respiratory drive during sleep resulting in a worsening of symptoms.
- Eat a high calorie diet while at altitude.



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Reg Charity
203644 (England and Wales)
SC037711 (Scotland)

What does it cost?

To sign up you will pay a non-refundable registration fee of **£399**. This can be split into 3 consecutive £133 payments if you wish. Once your place is confirmed you can start your fundraising which is a minimum target of **£3,995 sponsorship** for Cats Protection. You will also need to personally budget for airport taxes (approx. **£280** which is payable 8 weeks prior to departure). These figures are *in addition to* the £399 registration fee.

The events team at Cats Protection will give you dedicated fundraising support to reach, and most likely exceed, this target which is very achievable.

Who is Cats Protection?

Cats Protection is the UK's leading feline welfare charity. Over the last five years we have helped more than one million cats through our rehoming and neutering programmes. We rehome and reunite over 46,000 cats and kittens a year through our nationwide network of 29 adoption centres, over 250 volunteer-run branches and two homing centres. We also promote responsible cat ownership with our education projects and run comprehensive neutering programmes involving approximately 170,000 cats every year. Our vision is a world where every cat is treated with kindness and an understanding of its needs.

What is included?

Return flights from London (*excluding* airport taxes), transfers and domestic flights in India, tents on trek, accommodation in 3 star hotels/lodges, all meals, water, local expert English-speaking Indian guides, porters and cooks, trek permits, and accompanying UK Different Travel tour manager and Cats Protection staff member.

What do I need to personally budget for?

Airport taxes (approx. £250), transport to and from UK airport, Indian e-visa (*current* cost US\$60), vaccinations, travel insurance, tips, personal trekking kit, drinks, souvenirs etc. The total could be in the region of up to £400-600 so we recommend saving small amounts each month to prepare for this.

Is the trip ATOL protected?

When you book you will be financially protected by the ATOL scheme. When you pay you will be supplied with an ATOL Certificate. Please ask for

it and check to ensure that everything you booked (flights, hotels and other services) is listed on it. Please see the booking conditions for further information or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate.

How are our trips responsible and sustainable?

During our trips The Different Travel Company uses locally owned hotels to ensure the local economy benefits from our presence. We ensure that our local partners provide a good working environment for staff, such as being properly equipped and being paid appropriate wages. We ask our participants to treat the local staff as they would like to be treated; with respect, dignity and care.

During the trek you are asked to adhere to good environmental practices, including disposing of litter properly, refilling water bottles, using a solar powered or wind up torches when possible etc. When washing facilities are available, we suggest water usage is kept to a minimum. You are also advised to take biodegradable toilet paper, soaps and other eco-friendly sanitary products to keep the trail clean to ensure we adhere to 'leave no trace' tourism.

There will be opportunities to make a difference to the lives of the local people; whether it is by buying a gift at a shop which will help pay for the vendor's children's education, remembering to, showing your appreciation of the amazing staff by tipping your guides and staff and by simply learning from the local people about their way of life. This trip is a unique way to give something back to the local community through positive tourism.

At the Kanha National Park you will learn about and be involved with conservation activities which will have an impact on the conservation efforts in the region and help support the natural habitat of the tigers and other animals that make Kanha National Park their home. Our community and environmental projects are selected very carefully to ensure their sustainability. Whilst our contribution is small, it is greatly valued and helps ensure the on-going success of the project.

Our full responsible tourism policy is available on request. Please note that the activities, views and practices of the National Park and its rangers do not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Different Travel Company or Cats Protection.



Itinerary

Days 1-2 (Saturday 13 – Sunday 14 October 2018): London – Delhi

Depart London for Delhi on an overnight flight. Upon arrival the next day, transfer to a central hotel where some rooms will be available to relax and freshen-up. After lunch enjoy a sightseeing tour of Delhi before transferring to the railway station for the overnight sleeper train to Pathankot (air conditioned sleeper class). *Meals: lunch, dinner.*



Day 3 (Monday 15 October 2018): Pathankot – Dharamshala

Arrive in Pathankot in the morning and transfer to Dharamshala (approximately 2.5 hours). On arrival in McLeodganj, the home of the Dalai Lama, check in at the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at leisure. Visit the Dalai Lama Palace and the Tibetan government-in-exile buildings, or simply enjoy the atmosphere and browse for souvenirs in the handicraft stalls before enjoying a Tibetan dinner this evening.

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner



Day 4 (Tuesday 16 October 2018) Dharamshala – Kanol Village

After breakfast we take a short transfer to our starting point, Boh Village. Boh village is situated on the banks of the Brahal River and our journey there will reward us with spectacular views of the Dhauladhar Mountains. We start with a steep ascent for about 2 hours and arrive in the remote tribal village of Batuni, where we visit a local family house for refreshments. From Batuni a short walk takes us to our lunch spot, after which we descend through lush green fields, terraces and woodland to Kanol village where we set up camp for the night.

Approx. 12km trekking / 5 hours

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner

Day 5 (Wednesday 17 October 2018) Kanol village - Bahl

After experiencing our first night under the stars, we continue ascending through many charming villages, passing beautiful open meadows and pine forests on the way. We stop for lunch in a small village called Kareri before continuing through dense forests to the Rawa River and onward to Bahl, our second campsite.

Approx. 15km trekking / 6 hours

Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner



Day 6 (Thursday 18 October 2018) Bahl – Triund

This morning we make a steep ascent through mixed forests of oak, cedar and rhododendrons which takes us up to Triund, the highest point on our trek at 2843m. This alpine meadow situated on top of a ridge from where there are incredible views of the Dhauladhar peaks on one side and the Kangra valley on the other. This is the perfect spot to enjoy the sunset and our final night under canvas.

Approx. 15km trekking / 7 hours

Meals: *Breakfast, lunch, dinner*



Day 7 (Friday 19 October 2018) Triund – Pathankot

After rising early and watching the spectacular sunrise over the Dhauladhar Mountain Range we set off down a grassy ridge which gradually gets steeper until we reach the Bhagsu waterfall where we stop to enjoy lunch. From there we trek down to Bhagsu village where we join the vehicle to return to Pathankot and take the overnight train to Delhi.

Approx. 14km trekking / 6 hours

Meals: *Breakfast, lunch, dinner*

Day 8-11 (Saturday 20 October – Tuesday 23 October 2018): Delhi - Kanha

Arrive in Delhi and transfer to the airport for the short flight (approx. 1 hour 40) to Jabalpur. On arrival there is a 3-hour drive to reach Chitvan Jungle Lodge, our base for the next four nights. Over the following few days you will spend time in and around the Kanha National Park on a range of activities. *Meals: Breakfast, lunch, dinner*



Day 12 (Wednesday 24 October 2018): Kanha - Delhi

We complete our activities at Kanha this morning and return to the airport for our flight back to Delhi. Celebrate your achievements with a farewell dinner this evening.

Meals: *Breakfast, lunch, dinner.*



Day 13 (Thursday 25 October 2018): Delhi - London

Transfer to the airport for your return flight to London (may arrive the next morning depending on flight schedules). *Meals: Breakfast*

N.B. Big cat sightings are never guaranteed in the wild. This itinerary is complex and details may change due to unusual weather patterns, wildlife movements, and the ability of the group and so on. We will do our best to keep to the set itinerary however we cannot be held responsible for changes that might occur outside of our control. In all such circumstances your guides and tour manager will have the final say in the interest of the health and safety of the group.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who signs up for a challenge like this?

People just like you! Anyone aged over 18 years is welcome on the challenge (and 16 and 17 year olds if accompanied by a parent or guardian). There is no upper age limit and we welcome everyone from experienced trekkers to novices and everyone in between!

How will I raise the sponsorship required?

Most people find that this is far easier than they imagined, you will receive dedicated fundraising support from your Regional Fundraising Manager at Cats Protection, if you are not already in touch with them, please contact Rebecca on 01825 741 960 or Rebecca.worth@cats.org.uk and she will put you in touch with your fundraiser. Cats Protection will provide you with a comprehensive fundraising pack and also meet with you to help you plan a calendar of fundraising which will work for you and fit in around your lifestyle.

In the meantime here are some suggestions for how you could raise your sponsorship.

- Non-uniform day at local school - £300
- Two x supermarket bag-packs - £500
- Car boot sale/eBay auction - £250
- Quiz night - £250
- Sponsorship - friends, family, work - £300
- Host parties and charge entry fees - £400
- Ask five friends/family members to raise £100 each - £500
- Dress down day at work/lunch money donation - £300
- Donate your skills - ironing, babysitting, gardening, DIY - £250
- Karaoke night - £250
- Sponsored beard-shave/leg wax - £200

Total £3,500

How do I sign up?

Complete the enclosed booking form and email to info@different-travel.com.

Alternatively you can post your application to:
The Different Travel Company,
4 Downs Park Crescent,
Totton, Southampton,
Hampshire,
SO40 9GH

Once your place is confirmed we will email you a training guide, fundraising pack and much more!

Please add @different-travel.com to your safe sender list to avoid missing your confirmation email.

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