



Detailed itinerary

FairMail Trial Photography Expedition

“The Holy Rivers“

“The Holy Rivers” Trial Photography Expedition is a journey connecting the holy Ganges and Narmada Rivers in central India. During this 10 day expedition we visit the holy ghats (temples) in the cities of Varanasi and Jabalpur on the central Indian plains, before travelling by train up to the lush green mountain town of Pachmarhi with its breathtaking viewpoints and refreshing waterfalls. Besides Varanasi these destinations are not visited by many tourists. This guarantees an adventurous journey far from the beaten path, filled with authentic photography moments.

The journey starts in the city of Varanasi on the borders of the famous Ganges River. This is a holy city for Hindus and has almost 100 ghats along the river’s shore providing a breathtaking view of the daily activities that take place. Although possibly overwhelming, in Varanasi you will have a few days to get used to Indian life. You can relax along the shores of the Ganges, enjoy a boat trip over the river or take a long walk past the many ghats. In Varanasi you will also meet the FairMail teenagers, the FairMail office and learn more about how FairMail works. During the first photography exercise you can start to get to know each other while working together.

After two days in Varanasi, you travel by train with the entire group from the central plains to Pachmarhi hill station in the Satpura mountain range. During five days we will explore the beautiful natural environment of this fresh hill station. On walking distance or a short drive away we will find many beautiful viewpoints, refreshing waterfalls, caves, temples and rock paintings. During our day hikes we will be able to practice nature photography and do photography exercises together in this inspiring surrounding. On the way back to Varanasi we will stop for two days in Jabalpur. This city is located next to another holy river, the Narmada River. We will take time to see the impressive cascades, the surrounding ghats and enjoy the marble rocks on a boat ride over the river. After 9 days we take the train back to Varanasi. During the last day we will have time to visit the houses of the teenager’s families to share experiences of our unforgettable journey with the parents who will be very happy to see their children back safe and sound.

About travelling with FairMail

The Fair Mail team likes to invite travellers during our photography journey. If you want to join us, you have to realize that you travel with teenagers and that you’ll have to adapt to their mode of transportation. The main goal of the whole group is to take pictures, not to view as many touristic sites as possible. Due to the limited budget of FairMail and the teenagers, we sleep in a basic accommodation, use public transport as much as possible and we eat in local restaurants. Sometimes we will walk for a few hours in a row in a mountainous area with primitive footpaths. Walking shoes and a raincoat are part of your equipment! Alternately we speak Hindi, English and Dutch in the group. There is a Dutch and English speaking tour guide, so it is not



necessary to speak Hindi. It is possible to take some Hindi lessons during your first days in Varanasi.

Trial Expedition

After 10 successful FairMail photography excursions in Peru this will be the first photography excursion FairMail organizes with the new teenagers from FairMail India. That is why we call it a trial expedition. This means we are trying something new and can't really guarantee what is going to happen. It will be the first time we will visit these destinations with this group of teenagers. It will probably be great fun, but also a new experience for you, us and the teenagers to travel together. A unique way to get to know each other better. You are most welcome to share this new experience with us and enjoy the spontaneous way of travelling in a small group. Beforehand we will make train reservations, but for the rest we will see during the trip exactly what we will be doing each day, where we will be staying and eating.

About the accommodations

We mostly use small basic hostels during this journey. We use them because there is no alternative on the destinations we visit, but also because of the limited budget we have. The teenagers are not accustomed to luxury and for you it can be a new experience. By this way of travelling you get to understand what living in India is like, and it also gives the local owners a benefit from tourism in their area.

About the meals

The food is included during the part of the journey with the teenagers. Only in Varanasi you pay for your own breakfast and dinner. This means that you eat the same food as the rest of the group. This is the best way to experience some of the excellent local dishes! Due to the budget and the expectations of the teenagers we often eat in simple and inexpensive local restaurants and not in tourist restaurants. Of course you are free to order something else at your own costs.

About transport

We use trains, buses, rickshaw's and sometimes private cars during this journey. Travelling by train is a unique experience and way to get to know the country. As the distances are long (sometimes more then 10 hours) we do make use of the more luxurious trains that provide meals and beds with sheets, toilets and even have air conditioning!

For the routes between smaller cities there are only simple buses available. When the quality is acceptable and the distance not too long on these routes, we use public transport. For a couple of times it is also a nice to experience how the public transport is organised in a developing country like India. Sheep on the roof, chickens in the bus, loud hindi music on the radio and there you go. And stop again, and go!

The level of comfort during this journey

The places we visit are not the general tourist hotspots in India. That's what makes our trips different. This does mean that we visit places where the tourist infrastructure is not as developed as you might be used to. The accommodations are fine, but consider that you mostly stay in primitive hostals, not always with hot water for example. The state of many roads



in India is bad and the traffic is chaotic. The advantage is that you drive pretty slowly, so you can enjoy the beautiful scenery.

What to take?

- Cash, during some days there won't be any ATM's. (There are ATM's in Varanasi and Jabalpur)
- Raincoat / extra dry clothes
- Warm clothes (during the night-time and when travelling in the winter)
- Hiking shoes
- Light clothes (during hot days)
- Cap or sun protection for your head
- Bathing suit
- Photo or video camera
- Valid pasport and Visa for India
- Copies of travel documents
- Daypack
- Towels
- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses
- Flashlight
- Pocketknife

What makes this journey sustainable?

Why is this journey different than other journeys? Or in other words, what makes this journey sustainable? The good thing about FairMail photography journeys is that you not only treat yourself to a unique holiday but also one of the teenagers from FairMail. With your contribution to the journey, we can cover the costs for one of the Fair Mail teenagers to go with us on tour. It's obviously not just about money. You can also share your western view on beauty with the teenagers, so they learn what customers of FairMail cards like to see on their postcards. This helps them to sell more cards and earn more money for their education. In a fun and relaxed way you support talented, but underprivileged teenagers, to improve their future! You also have the option to "make your seat green" during your flight to India by using Atmosfair. This organisation plants trees to reduce your greenhouse gas emissions, for a small additional amount. Atmosfair is one of the few CO2 compensation options that have the 'Gold Standard' by the World Wildlife Fund. For more information you can check their website www.atmosfair.com.

By booking this journey you also support economic development of the communities we visit. We mainly use services from people who live in the area like accommodation, transport and guides. Other travel agencies mainly use large tour operators who visit the area, but don't leave any positive things for the residents.

Minimum amount of days

Minimum of 10 days and the possibility to extend your journey with extra days in Varanasi to relax, learn Hindi or yoga or travel by yourself. If you can stay longer you can also volunteer for FairMail as photography trainer.

Prices

Everybody has different wishes and a different budget. That's why we offer the Basic Program of 10 days for a fixed low price. The Basic Program is a total journey without hidden costs. We expect that our customers support the FairMail teenagers, so € 165,00 contribution to the project is included in the price of the Basic Program. For this amount of money we can take one of the teenagers on this journey!

Basic Program - 10 days: € 506,00

Included:

- Dutch speaking guide (founder of FairMail)
- All overnight stays in a shared room in hostals.
- All meals, except the breakfast and dinner during the first two days in Varanasi
- Transport during basic program
- Entrance fees during basic program
- Train station or Airport pickup in Varanasi
- Lunch meeting with the FairMail teenagers before departure
- Preparation Package
- Project contribution (€ 165,00)

Excluded:

- Flight to India
- Transport by train or airplane Delhi to Varanasi
- Airport pick-up Delhi
- Overnight stay in Delhi
- Any (taxi) transport besides the basic program
- Food en drinks besides the 3 daily meals.
- Photography equipment
- Tips
- Optional tours around Varanasi

Travel itinerary

Day	Activity	Transport	Sleeping
1	Morning: Presentation FairMail India: Office, teenagers, photography exercise, lunch together Afternoon: Free	Walking	Hostel
2	Morning: Boat excursion Ganges river to main ghat and Ganges beach Afternoon: Free Evening: Departure Varanasi to Piparia	Train	Train
3	Morning: Arrival Pipariya train station Afternoon: ride to Pachmarhi	Train and bus	Hostel
4	Pachmarhi	Walking	Hostel
5	Pachmarhi	Walking	Hostel
6	Pachmarhi	Walking	Hostel
7	Morning: Travel to Pipariya by bus Afternoon: Travel by train to Jabalpur	Bus and train	Hostel
8	Jabalpur Narmada boat trip	Walking and boat	Hostel
9	Jabalpur 21.20 Train to Varanasi	Walking and train	Jabalpur
10	Morning: arrival in Varanasi Afternoon: Visit to houses of the teenagers		

Day to day program

As this is a trial expedition we cannot guarantee the day to day program below. It should be used as a rough idea of what we could be doing. But if we run into a great other opportunity along the way we might change plans in consultation with the rest of the group members.

Day 1. Varanasi

You will get a warm welcome from your Dutch and English speaking tour guide in Varanasi. Together you will walk to the FairMail office. Today you meet your travel companions in Varanasi, the FairMail teenagers and the other participants. You'll get the chance to meet everyone and to see how FairMail works. We might even share a first photography exercise together. In the afternoon we all have lunch together. Later that afternoon you will have some time by yourself to explore the ghats along the Ganges River and enjoy dinner in a shoreline restaurant. A lot of new impressions will pass through your head when you reach your bed in your hostel.

Day 2. Varanasi

In the early morning we will meet for a scenic boat ride with the whole group along the Ganges River. A beautiful way to view the ghats from the water and take pictures. The morning mist and sunrise provide a beautiful light for this. We might also go to the beach on the other side of the river and enjoy how local families play, fish and worship. The rest of the morning and afternoon are free for yourself to explore and prepare for the train trip to Pachmarhi hill station. The train to Piparia leaves from Varanasi at the beginning of the evening. The scheduled travel time of the train is 15 hours. Luckily we will have beds reserved in the more comfortable train classes with dinner service, sheets and pillows, toilets and air conditioning. 15 hours is a long time, but playing cards with the kids, watching the scenery from your bed and making new friends in the train the time will fly by!

Day 3. Piparia – Pachmarhi

When you wake up we will be close to Piparia in Madhya Pradesh. Here we get off of the train for the two hour busride up to Pachmarhi hill station. Situated at 1.000 meters above sea level this location is known for several rare plants including some rare orchids in its unique topography containing thick forests and rocky ravines, Tiger, Panther, Wild boar, peacock, monkeys and Langurs are found in the forests. It is a part of Satpura National Park and two wildlife sanctuaries (Bori, Pachmarhi) within it. After the long trip it is time to find our hostel and freshen up a bit. In the afternoon we will have our first photography exercise dedicated at exploring the town: a photography treasure hunt!

Day 4, 5 & 6. Pachmarhi

The coming three days we will have the time to discover all that Pachmarhi, its surroundings and inhabitants have to offer. The small mountain village is surrounded by waterfalls, caves, temples and rock paintings. All within walking distance or a short car ride away. So we won't be bored. Amongst the places we visit will be:

*Jamuna Prapat (Bee Fall). A spectacular fall in the stream which provides drinking water to Pachmarhi. The bathing pools above the fall are great for a refreshing swim.

*Handi Khoh. Pachmarhi's most impressive ravine has a 300 feet high precipice and dramatically steep sides.

*Mahadeo. Regarded as holy for countless of generations, Mahadeo hill has a shrine with an idol of Lord Shiva and an impressive Shivlinga. On the East side of the hill is an excellent cave shelter with beautiful cave paintings.

*Dhoopgarh. The highest point in the Satpura range, with a magnificent view of the surrounding ranges. A very popular spot for viewing sunsets.

*Vanshree Vihar (Pansy Pool). A beautiful spot on the Denwa stream, cool and shady among trees, ferns and semi-tropical vegetation.

Apart from free photography during the day hikes we will also be practicing table top photography near the

hostel and incorporating practical exercises into the visits we make. Also the teenagers will be working on individual photography assignments. You can choose to help them with this or take some time by yourself.

Day 7. Pachmarhi – Jabalpur

In the morning of day 7 we will be leaving Pachmarhi back to Piparia to catch the 3 hour train ride to Jabalpur. Jabalpur is the capital of Madhya Pradesh and famous for the marble rocks in the gorge of the holy Narmada River. Depending on the arrival time of the train we will be staying in Jabalpur to practice some street life photography or go straight on to a hostel near the river.

Day 8. Narmada boat trip

More than enough to do today close to the river. Apart from taking a boat trip along the river to appreciate the gorge and the beautiful marble rock formations there are also many places of worship to visit and the impressive Dhuandhar cascades to see. We will sleep in a hostel close to the river.

Day 9. Jabalpur - Varanasi

On the last day we will spend some more time close to the river before going back into the city. A last chance for the teenagers to improve their promising table top photographs. And of course the showing of a selection of the best pictures made during the trip! How many new postcards will have been produced over the last few days? In the evening the same luxurious train takes us back to Varanasi in a scheduled time of about 12 hours.

Day 10 Varanasi.

We arrive early in the morning in Varanasi. The teenagers go back to their parents and you can freshen up in your hostel if you like. In the afternoon you will probably be invited to visit the houses of the teenagers. After travelling together for 10 days and building a special relationship with these teenagers it is very interesting to see where they come from, see their houses and meet their families. Usually the last day is one of the most intense experiences of the photography trip, sharing great experiences and experiencing where the FairMail teenagers come from. Intense not in the least because of the moment of good bye that is rapidly approaching.