

Wild India

Tigers, Leopards, & Desert Wildlife

January 31 to February 17, 2028



Bengal Tiger
© Georgia Struhsaker

SAFARI OVERVIEW

An immersive 17-day journey across three of India's most compelling wildlife regions — from Delhi's layered history to the tiger-dense forests of **Bandhavgarh**, the leopard hills of **Bera**, and the salt-flat wilderness of the **Little Rann of Kutch**. Along the way, you'll track **Bengal tigers** through Sal forest, watch **leopards** move through granite hills where they've coexisted with pastoral communities for generations, and search the salt flats for the threatened **khur (Indian wild ass)**, found nowhere else on Earth. Designed with five nights in Bandhavgarh — including a rare full-day safari permit few travelers ever get — provides exceptional time in one of India's highest tiger-density parks, while Udaipur's palaces and artisan quarters add a rich cultural counterpoint. Led by Cheesemans' co-owner and wildlife photographer **Scott Davis** alongside expert local naturalists, in small vehicle groups built to maximize time in the field, this trip pairs India's wildlife spectacle with its deep cultural texture.

WHY CHOOSE THIS TRIP?

- **Explore Three Distinct Wildlife Regions:** The Sal forests of Bandhavgarh, the granite leopard hills of Bera, and the salt flats and wetlands of the Little Rann of Kutch — three ecosystems, three very different kinds of encounters, in one trip.
- **Spend Five Nights in Tiger Country:** Enjoy multiple morning and afternoon game drives plus a rare full-day safari permit, which allows extended time and greater flexibility within Bandhavgarh National Park.
- **Learn About Human–Leopard Coexistence:** Track leopards through rocky dens and granite hills where the pastoral Rabari community has shared the landscape with these cats for generations — a rare window into how wildlife and people coexist.

- **Discover the Rare Wildlife of the Little Rann:** Look for khur (Indian wild ass), desert foxes, jackals, wild cats, antelope, flamingos, cranes, waterbirds, and raptors in one of India's most unusual and least-visited ecosystems.
- **Culture Woven Throughout:** Explore Delhi's Mughal History and Udaipur's palaces and artisan quarters with knowledgeable local guides, learning how history, livelihoods, and wildlife shape contemporary India.
- **Expert Leadership, Small Group:** Led by co-owner and wildlife photographer Scott Davis and expert local naturalists, with small vehicle groups designed to maximize your time and your photos in the field.

LEADERS: Scott Davis and local guides.

DAYS: 18, including estimated travel time.

GROUP SIZE: 10.

COST: \$12,800 per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See the *Costs* section on page 6.

Date	Description	Accommodation	Meals
Jan 31–Feb 1	Travel from home. Travel to Delhi, India.		
Feb 2	Arrive in Delhi. Arrive in Delhi from home.	The Claridges, Delhi	–
Feb 3	Cultural Exploration. Explore Delhi's Mughal heritage, Old Delhi markets, Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk, and Bangla Sahib Gurudwara.		B, L, D
Feb 4–8	Tiger safaris in Bandhavgarh. Journey to Bandhavgarh, one of India's premier tiger reserves, where one of the country's highest tiger densities shares the forest with more than 25 mammal species and 250 bird species. Morning and afternoon game drives, along with a full-day safari permit, provide exceptional opportunities to observe this remarkable wildlife.	The Untamed, Bandhavgarh	B, L, D
Feb 9	Travel to Udaipur. Drive to Jabalpur and fly via Delhi to Udaipur.	Taj Fateh Prakash Palace, Udaipur	B, L, D
Feb 10	The Magic of Udaipur. Explore Udaipur's City Palace, temple, markets, and artisan neighborhoods; continue to Bera.	Bera Safari Lodge, Bera	B, L, D
Feb 11–12	Looking for Leopards. Morning and afternoon drives in Bera's leopard country.		
Feb 13	More Leopards and then to the Salt Flats. Morning wildlife drive, then travel to the Little Rann of Kutch via Modhera Sun Temple.	Royal Safari Camp, Bajana	B, L, D
Feb 14–15	The Biodiversity of the Little Rann. Explore the Little Rann's salt flats, wetlands, grasslands, and wildlife-rich "bets", looking for the rare and unique khur (wild ass), along with white-footed desert fox, golden jackals, desert and jungle cats, and striped hyena.		B, L, D

Feb 16	Depart for Home. Drive to Ahmedabad Airport. Depart for home or fly to Delhi to join our Snow Leopards trip.		B
Feb 17	Arrive home.		

ENHANCE YOUR TRIP

- Continue your journey on our [Snow Leopards](#) trip from February 14 to 28, 2028. Explore the grandeur of the Himalayas, experiencing great wildlife viewing and the conservation success stories of its parks, along with rich cultural history.

LEADERS

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris carefully selects leaders who are experts in their field to ensure that your experience is the best it can be. Two leaders will provide a range of expertise for your trip.

Scott Davis

Scott is a professional photographer specializing in wildlife, nature, and travel. Originally trained as a wildlife and marine biologist, his research and photo assignments took him to the far corners of the globe. National Geographic, BBC, Animal Planet, and renowned magazines have used his photography. His patience for teaching and love of capturing the essence of his subjects make him one of our most popular tour leaders.



Surya Ramachandran

Surya is an award-winning naturalist and wildlife guide with extensive experience across India's most biodiverse regions. He has spent the past six years developing community-based snow leopard and Himalayan brown bear tracking programs. Author of the Photographic Guide to Central Indian Wildlife and recipient of the 2016 TOFT Award, Surya is widely respected for his deep ecological knowledge, conservation work, and expertise in India's wildlife and landscapes.



DETAILED ITINERARY

Jan 31–Feb 1 ~ Travel to Delhi, India

Depart home and begin your journey to Delhi, India — the historic gateway to three weeks of tigers, leopards, and desert wildlife across three distinct regions of the subcontinent.

Feb 2 ~ Arrive in Delhi from home

Meet our local representative at Delhi International Airport and transfer to The Claridges, your base for the next two nights. With the remainder of the day free, rest, settle in, and get your first taste of Delhi before the adventure begins in earnest tomorrow.

Feb 3 ~ Cultural exploration.

Explore the many layers of Delhi, where Mughal monuments, British-era avenues, Sikh traditions, vibrant markets, and contemporary city life meet.

Begin at Humayun's Tomb, one of the best-preserved Mughal monuments and an architectural precursor to the Taj Mahal. Continue into Old Delhi and Shahjahanabad, traveling by rickshaw through Chandni Chowk and visiting Jama Masjid. Along the way, learn about the city's history, religious traditions, and distinctive cuisine.

Conclude at Bangla Sahib Gurudwara, where the sound of gurbani hymns and the calm of this sacred Sikh complex provide a thoughtful close to the day. Time permitting, visit Khan Market's boutiques, cafés, and bookstores before returning to your hotel.



Delhi at Dusk

Feb 4–8 ~ Tiger safaris in Bandhavgarh

Fly from Delhi to Jabalpur, then drive approximately four hours through rural Madhya Pradesh to Bandhavgarh National Park. Set beneath an ancient hilltop fort in the Vindhya Hills, Bandhavgarh protects a mosaic of Sal forest, bamboo thickets, grasslands, and wooded valleys and holds one of India's highest densities of wild tigers.

After arriving at your lodge, take time to settle in and, depending on timing and energy, join a naturalist for a walk near the property before dinner.

You will spend four full days in this beautiful park providing exceptional opportunities for wildlife viewing and photography. Your days will begin before dawn with tea or coffee, then you'll enter the park in open 4x4 vehicles to get out for that early morning light. Bandhavgarh is celebrated for its tiger habitat, but the forest also supports leopards, Indian wild dogs, sloth bears, gaur, sambar, chital, barking deer, and a rich supporting cast of birdlife – more than 25 mammal species and 250 bird species. Each outing offers a new look at the forest as light, temperature, and animal activity change through the day.

Return to the lodge for lunch and a midday rest before heading back out for an afternoon game drive. Wildlife determines the rhythm of each outing, and your guides will follow tracks, alarm calls, and recent sightings while interpreting the ecology of this remarkable forest in real time. A rare full-day safari permit, which few visitors get to experience, provides exceptional flexibility, allowing your vehicle to enter shortly before standard opening time, remain in the park throughout the day, travel beyond normal zoning and routing restrictions, and depart shortly after regular closing time.



Bengal Tiger
© Georgia Struhsaker

Feb 9 ~ Travel to Udaipur

After breakfast, drive back to Jabalpur Airport and fly via Delhi to Udaipur. Arrive in the evening and transfer to the Taj Fateh Prakash Palace, overlooking Lake Pichola.

Known as the City of Lakes, Udaipur was founded in 1559 and is shaped by its historic palaces, temples, havelis, stepwells, and the living neighborhoods of its old city – a striking change of pace after five days in the forest.

Feb 10 ~ The Magic of Udaipur

Explore Udaipur's City Palace complex, an expansive group of courtyards, balconies, and chambers and perched above Lake Pichola. Visit Jagdish Temple, then walk through old-city lanes and markets to meet artisans – jewelers, potters, and bamboo craftsmen carrying on traditions passed down through generations.



Sloth Bear
© Georgia Struhsaker

After lunch, drive about three and a half hours to Bera, where granite hills, caves, scrub, and agricultural fields form a distinctive landscape for leopards and people. Settle into Bera Safari Lodge for the nights ahead.

Feb 11 – 12 ~ Leopards of Bera

Spend two days exploring Bera's rocky hills during early-morning and late-afternoon drives, the times when leopards are often most active. Local trackers, who know every den site and rock outcrop in this landscape, guide each outing.

The region is particularly notable for the long coexistence between leopards and the pastoral Rabari community. Leopards occasionally take livestock, yet they continue to live near villages and move through a landscape genuinely shared by people and predators. Watch too for other wildlife possibilities, including nilgai, jungle cat, crocodiles, raptors, storks, and other wetland birds.



Leopard
© Amit Sankhala

Feb 13 ~ More Leopards and then to the Salt Flats

After a final morning drive in Bera, travel approximately six hours toward Bajana. En route, visit the 11th-century Modhera Sun Temple, dedicated to Surya and renowned for its intricately carved stonework.

Continue to the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch, a vast saline desert of salt pans, marshes, seasonal waterways, scrub-covered islands, and rocky outcrops. This unusual landscape is seasonally inundated during the monsoon and becomes a broad, wildlife-rich plain during the dry season when you'll be visiting.

Feb 14–15 ~ The Biodiversity of the Little Rann

Spend two full days exploring the Little Rann by 4x4 vehicle. Drive between elevated islands known as “bets,” where grasses and scrub provide refuge for wildlife amid the salt flats. The otherworldly landscape is the world’s last stronghold for Indian Wild Ass, an endemic equid adapted to this demanding environment and found nowhere else on earth. Local conservation efforts have led to it moving from endangered with less than 400 in the 1960s to today’s status of vulnerable with several thousand in the Little Rann.



Indian Wild Ass

Look too for desert and jungle cats, white-footed desert foxes, golden jackals, striped hyenas, wolves, nilgai, blackbuck, and chinkara. Wetlands and seasonal marshes attract greater and lesser flamingos, pelicans, spoonbills, cranes, geese, waders, sandgrouse, larks, and an impressive assemblage of raptors.

The Rann rewards patience and careful observation. Slow drives across open flats, time near wetlands, and visits to vegetated islands reveal how wildlife survives in this stark but highly productive ecosystem. Time permitting, meet members of the local Mir community whose lives are closely tied to the landscape and the wildlife it supports.

Feb 16 ~ Depart for home

After breakfast, drive to Ahmedabad airport to board your flight for home or, for those continuing the adventures, to join our [Snow Leopards](#) trip.

Feb 17 ~ Arrive Home

Arrive home with three regions and ecosystems behind you, and a lifetime of photographs and memories — of India's living history, and of the tigers, leopards, and wildlife whose future you've witnessed being protected firsthand.

COSTS (ALL COSTS ARE IN US DOLLARS)

Cost

Type	Cost per Person
Trip Cost, double occupancy	\$12,800
Single Supplement	\$3,620

Costs are per person, double occupancy, not including airfare, singles extra. See *Included* and *Not Included* sections for more details.

If you are a single traveler, we will try to find a roommate for you, but if we cannot pair you a roommate, we may charge you a single supplement. Single rooms cost extra and are subject to availability.

Payment Schedule

Payment	Due Date	Amount per Person
Deposit	Due now to reserve your space	\$1,500
Final	August 24, 2027	Remaining Balance

Payments are due based on the schedule above. All reservations require a deposit to confirm reservation of your space.

Cancellations

Until the Final Payment due date, deposits are refundable except for a cancellation fee of \$1,500 per person (\$1,500 per person is for the pre-purchased, **non-refundable** and **non-transferable** game drives in Bandhavgarh and the three internal flights); \$150 per person of the cancellation fee can be applied toward another trip if reserved within six months of the canceled trip's departure date. Cancellations are non-transferable. No refunds are given after the Final Payment due date.

Included

- All leaders, transport, park entry fees, and permits for all activities unless described as optional.
- Transfers between the The Claridges hotel and the Delhi Airport on February 2 and Royal Safari Camp, Bajana to Ahmedabad airport.
- Accommodations for the nights of February 2 through February 15.
- Meals from breakfast on February 3 through breakfast on February 16.
- Internal flights from Delhi to Jabalpur and Jabalpur to Udaipur (via Delhi); non-refundable and non-transferable.
- Transportation by private bus in Delhi.
- Game drives by 4x4 jeep in Bandhavgarh; all-day safari ticket non-refundable and non-transferable.
- Refillable water stations at hotels.
- Gratuities for porters, local guides, restaurants, park guide, jeep driver, lodge naturalists and drivers
- Trip Materials – information about flights, packing, entry and departure requirements, airport transfers, etc.

Not Included

- All airfare (except flights listed as included), airport and departure taxes, and excess baggage fees.
- Passport and visa fees.
- Divergent airport transfers and extra hotel nights for an extra cost.
- Gratuities for accompanying local tour guide.
- Emergency medical and evacuation insurance and trip cancellation insurance. For more information see www.cheesemans.com/travel-insurance.
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, medical costs or hospitalization, room service, alcoholic and other beverages, items not on the regular menu, etc. If you have special dietary needs, please indicate them on your Traveler Form.

SIGN UP

Please contact us first to check availability, reserve your space, and obtain a Traveler Form. To confirm your reservation, we require a deposit and signed form from each participant.

Cheesemans' Ecology Safaris

Email: info@cheesemans.com

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Phone: (800) 527-5330 or (408) 741-5330

OTHER DETAILS

Climate

Temperatures generally range from the 50's°F at night to the 80's°F during the day. Although most days will be hot, it can be cool and breezy in the early morning. It is the dry season, but rain is possible.

Fitness Level

Expect early mornings, full days focused on wildlife viewing, and game drives over sometimes rough, uneven roads. Driving between destinations will be in various types of air-conditioned vehicles and range from approximately two to seven hours. Visits to cultural and historical sites involve a few hours of walking on uneven surfaces, while walking around the lodges between game drives is generally optional. Good mobility and stamina will help you fully enjoy the trip. Please contact us if you have any health concerns that may make this journey challenging.

Accommodations

All lodges have air conditioning.

Transportation

On game drives in the parks, you travel in open, six-passenger 4x4 jeeps that provide 360° viewing and excellent photography opportunities; we'll have three or fewer participants in each vehicle sharing with one of our resident guides, a park ranger, and a park driver. Between parks and cities, travel is by private van or bus, plane, or 4x4 vehicles.

Flights

Detailed logistical information is included in the Trip Planning Materials we will send you.

Please wait to book your flights until you receive confirmation from your Coordinator that the minimum number of participants has been met to operate the trip. If you choose to book flights before receiving this confirmation, we strongly recommend purchasing flight cancellation insurance to protect your investment.

Flights you book

- Arrive in Delhi, India (DEL) by 11:59pm on February 2.
- Depart from Ahmedabad, India (AMD) after 2:00pm on February 16. **If you are continuing on our [Snow Leopards trip](#)**, see the *Flights* section in its itinerary for departure information.

Flights we book for you

- The flights from Delhi to Jabalpur and Jabalpur to Udaipur (via Delhi) are included in the trip cost.

Terms and Conditions

Read our current [Terms and Conditions](#).

Conservation

Our company ethos has always regarded conservation as inseparable from responsible tourism. We struggle with the dilemma that traveling worldwide expends climate-changing carbon. However, we wholeheartedly believe that traveling with us will cultivate your passion for conserving our beautiful world while stimulating each destination's local economy. We encourage you to explore the various ways in which Cheesemans' operates within this context:

- **Ecotourism and Conservation for India.**
- **Cheesemans' Trips are Carbon Neutral.**
- **Offsetting your Travel to/from our Trip:** We ask you to pledge to offset the carbon emissions for your travel to and from our trips. You can purchase offsets with most airlines (Delta includes them automatically), use our handy [carbon calculator](#) and donate to Sustainable Travel International, or contribute to your favorite offsetting organization.

Together, we can continue exploring and cherishing this planet while working toward its long-term protection. Thank you for being part of this important journey with us.

FAQS

How close will we get to tigers?

Bandhavgarh is one of the world's premier destinations for Bengal tigers, and our itinerary includes multiple game drives—including all-day permits—to maximize our time in the park. While tiger sightings can never be guaranteed, the combination of experienced naturalists, flexible scheduling, and extended time in the field gives us an excellent chance of observing these magnificent cats, along with leopards, sloth bears, elephants, and a rich diversity of birds.

What is an all-day safari permit, and why is it valuable?

Unlike standard morning and afternoon safaris, an all-day permit allows us to remain inside the park throughout the day. This flexibility lets us stay with wildlife activity as it unfolds, spend more time observing interesting behavior, avoid the midday rush of vehicles entering and leaving the park, and enjoy a more relaxed pace. It is one of the best ways to maximize both wildlife viewing and photography opportunities.

What makes Bera and the Little Rann of Kutch special?

Bera offers one of the best opportunities anywhere to observe wild leopards in a spectacular rocky landscape. In contrast, the Little Rann of Kutch is a vast seasonal salt-flat wilderness where we'll search for Indian wild asses, desert wildlife, and a rich array of birds found nowhere else on our journey.