

## Colours of India - Gujarat Textiles

Explore India at its most flamboyant in the company of renowned textile artist, Sue Lawty.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Tour
Duration	18 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Sue Lawty
Land only	Joining in Ahmedabad, India

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2026 Dates:

Mon 09 Feb - Thu 26 Feb

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

## Your guides

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### **Sue Lawty**

Sue is one of Britain's finest textile artists. Alongside many other materials, Sue has worked in textiles all her life and has exhibited all over the world. She is a tutor and visiting lecturer and as well as going on 'weaving journeys' to Bhutan, Morocco, America, Australia, India, Nepal and Poland she has been visiting artist at the Australian National University in Canberra, and also Artist in Residence at the V&A Museum from 2005 to 2010.

Sue is an accomplished climber and trekker and has led many successful trips for Mountain Kingdoms since she led our first Weavers' Trail in Bhutan in 1995, later also leading treks to Dolpo and Zaskar. More recently, in 2019 and 2025, she has returned to Bhutan to lead our specialist Weavers' Trail walking holiday and in 2022 led our first Colours of India trip.



### **Pravan Dangera - Local Guide**

Pravan started guiding international tourists at Kutch in 1995. He became a full time guide in the Gujarat region in 2001 having completed his state level tourism guide training. He is the founder and president of the Tourist Guides Association of Kutch. Over the years his in-depth local knowledge has led him to work with many travel writers, journalists and film units including the BBC and Discovery Channel, and he also been a location manager for many Bollywood and Hollywood movies.

He has an MA in archaeology and a keen interest in photography as well as specific expertise in the culture and textiles of Gujarat. He takes particular pride in the strong relationships he has developed with the artisans and villagers of the region.

## Your trip highlights

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- Enjoy a carefully curated itinerary in the company of Sue Lawty, one of Britain's foremost textile artists.
- Learn about the rich Gujarat textile culture; Bhandani (tie-dye), wood block printing, embroidery, weaving and much more.
- Experience first-hand the unique and colourful textile traditions of Gujarat.
- Visit the picturesque villages of the Banni Grasslands and meet local craftsmen and women.
- See some of the fine palaces and temples of this vibrant region.
- Jeep safari to explore the Little Rann of Kutch with its wild asses, flamingos and other wildlife.
- Take a heritage walk around Ahmedabad.
- Spend a day at the Meka Dada Mela Festival in Dhrang.

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Overnight flight to Ahmedabad. Visit Sabarmati Ashram and the paper factory shop.
Days 3-4	Sightseeing in and around Ahmedabad including the Mata Ni Pachedi workshop, Pethapur craft village, Calico Museum and Indigo Museum. Possible visit to the Asif Shaikh studio.
Day 5	Visit Sarkhej Ka Roza. Drive to Muli. See Ikat dying and weaving at family workshops.
Day 6	See Cotton processing and different weaving techniques in Muli.
Day 7	Drive to Bhuj. Attend the Meka Dada Mela Festival in Dhrang.
Day 8	Sightseeing in Bhuj. Attend bandhani workshop workshops and visit textiles collection of AA Wazir.
Day 9	See embroidery at Dhaneti village. Visit Khamir centre. Visit master indigo weaver and dyer in Bhujodi.
Day 10	Block printing workshop. Visit to LLDC Shrujan Centre.
Day 11	Visit various villages to see different craft traditions and traditional Bhunga houses.
Day 12	See Mashroo weaving in S Kutch, wooden ship building at Mandvi on the Gulf of Kutch.
Day 13	Mirror embroidery workshop and Tanabana workshop.
Days 14-15	Drive to Dasada at the Little Rann of Kutch. Jeep safari.
Days 16-17	Sightseeing around Dasada. Drive to Ahmedabad. Heritage walk and afternoon free.
Day 18	Transfer to airport and fly home.

## Trip summary

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Gujarat in western India is renowned for its dazzling textiles and fine handicrafts. The many different styles, from mirror work to fine embroidery, are each connected to the traditions of a particular community or ethnic group and go back generations.

Led by acclaimed artist Sue Lawty you will explore Gujarat's rich architectural, artistic and cultural heritage, visiting a number of key textile centres along the way including Ahmedabad, Muli, Bhuj, Kutch, Dasada and Patan. From village markets and local museums which have an incredible array of fabrics and textiles on display, to craft workshops with hands-on demonstrations of age-old techniques such as wood block printing, tie-dye manufacture, and weaving, you will gain an insight into the role that textiles have played in Gujarat over the centuries.

The tour starts in Ahmedabad, famous for its connection with Mahatma Gandhi, where you will visit the Calico Museum and several cultural sights. Travelling on to the villages of Muli you will learn about cotton production as well as the traditions of Ikat dying and Tangiliya weaving.

Moving on to the desert town of Bhuj, there are seven days to explore its many fascinating attractions including local markets and palaces, as well as travelling out to beautiful Banni villages with their fine artistic heritage, and to Mandvi on the coast and centre for traditional boat building and mashroo weaving. There is also time to enjoy the festivities at the Mekan Dada fair in Dhrang where rural traditions are celebrated.

Driving across the spectacular Road to Heaven, which crosses the vast salt plains of the Great Rann of Kutch, you arrive next at the Little Rann (desert) of Kutch. Here, a real highlight is an early morning jeep safari in search of rare Asiatic wild asses and other birds and wildlife. And for a final fabulous flourish you visit the master craftsmen of Patan Patola, who create the most magnificent Double-Ikat silk textiles. On your return to Ahmedabad, you will enjoy a guided heritage walk before a farewell meal.

### Special notes

#### Alcohol in Gujarat

You should be aware that Gujarat is a 'dry' state and sale of alcohol is not permitted. Foreigners, and visitors from other parts of India, can apply online for a temporary permit to allow them to buy alcohol and there are 35 stores across the state, including nine in Ahmedabad, that sell liquor on production of a physical copy of the permit. Any alcohol purchased using this permit system, must then be consumed in the privacy of your room. If you decide to take in some 'duty free' liquor into Gujarat with you, please be circumspect about it. If you have any queries, please contact the Mountain Kingdoms office.

# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London to Ahmedabad

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Depart London on your overnight flight to Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Ahmedabad. Visit Sabarmati Ashram and paper factory shop.

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You will land at Ahmedabad around 3.00am and be transferred to your boutique heritage hotel where rooms will be ready for you. Here you will have plenty of time to rest after your long flight. Your hotel has a pool if you fancy a refreshing dip!

Ahmedabad, the city of Ahmed Shah (the medieval ruler of Gujarat), is known for its rich past as well as its association with Mahatma Gandhi. The city features a unique style of architecture, which is a blend of Hindu and Islamic styles - the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture. The monuments of Ahmedabad mainly date back to the 15th century. Ahmedabad has been known for its industry since medieval times and is famous for its textile mills - in the past it was referred to as the 'Manchester of the East'.



In the afternoon you will visit Sabarmati Ashram. This ashram was Gandhi's headquarters during the long struggle for Indian Independence. It was founded in 1915 and Gandhi established a school here that focused on manual labour, agriculture, and literacy, with the aim of advancing his efforts for self-sufficiency. It was from here that in 1930 Gandhi launched the famous Dandi march with 78 companions to protest the British Salt Law, which taxed Indian salt to promote sales of British salt in India. Today, the Ashram serves as a source of inspiration and as a monument to Gandhi's life mission. Gandhi's spartan living quarters are preserved as a small museum and there is a pictorial record of the major events in his life.

Opposite the ashram is the Kalamkhush Handmade Paper Centre. In Hindi the words 'Kalam' and 'Khush' translate to pen and happy. Mahatma Gandhi introduced papermaking as a part of the Gandhi Ashram's activities - it turned into a discrete handmade paper manufacturing unit in 1956. The factory still handmakes paper from cotton fabric scraps and a small shop sells the beautiful papers and paper products. An early opportunity perhaps to purchase a special souvenir!

Returning to the hotel, tonight's dinner is a traditional Gujarati meal at its award winning rooftop terrace restaurant.

**Overnight: House Of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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## Day 3: Morning visit to Jamalpur flower market and Mata Ni Pachedi Workshop. Afternoon visit to the craft village of Pethapur..

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Your day begins with a visit to the famous Jamalpur flower market with its extensive displays of fresh flowers - lilies, lotus flowers, roses and marigolds - often concocted into garlands for weddings or temple displays. From the market you will go to the Mata Ni Pachedi workshop which is tucked away in a different area of the city. Mata Ni Pachedi's literal meaning is 'belongs to the backs of the gods. These hand painted cloths are traditionally used to cover the idols of Hindu gods in the temple or hung to form a temporary shrine. Filled with religious symbols, they depict elaborate mythological stories, epics of the gods and folk tales. The fine detailed images are drawn using bamboo twigs and natural colours made using iron rust, jaggery, tamarind seeds or indigo. A Mata Ni Pachedi fabric may take up to 3 months to complete.

Lunch today will be at Mirch Masala, a local Bollywood themed restaurant in the city, and then in the afternoon you drive for approximately 45 minutes to visit the craft village of Pethapur in Gandhinagar. The village is known as a hub for wood block makers. These wooden blocks are carved with elegant patterns and then used for hand-printing on cloth. The villagers of Pethapur having been supplying customized wood blocks to centres of block printing all over India (and now worldwide) for at least 200 years.

**Overnight: House Of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 4: Visit the Calico Museum of Textiles and the Indigo Art Museum. Possible visit to the studio of Asif Shaikh.**

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This morning you will visit the Calico Museum of Textiles, India's premier textile museum. This museum contains one of the world's finest collections of antique Indian textiles, all handmade and many up to 500 years old, with hundreds of beautiful pieces displaying incredible virtuosity and opulence. Here you learn about the history of textiles in Gujarat and how Ahmedabad emerged as a textile hub. The museum is housed in two buildings, one displaying textiles of religious significance and the other traditional court fabrics, tents, carpets and costumes.



After lunch you will go to the Indigo Art Museum which is an homage to the colour indigo and how it has been creatively expressed in art. The museum has many interesting exhibitions and installations and is a very cool and soothing place to visit.

If you are fortunate, there will also be the opportunity this afternoon to visit the studio of Asif Shaikh. This world renowned embroidery studio was established in 2002 when Asif Shaikh began creating stunning embroidered garments, often blending his own hands-on embroidery with the craftsmanship of his team of artisans. His work is characterised by fine embroidery techniques, notably Aari (chain stitch) and Zardozi (an ancient form of embroidery using metallic threads, named after the Persian words "za" for gold and "dozi" for craftsmanship). In recent years, Asif has become particularly well-known for his miniature embroidery, which is so delicate and intricate that it is best appreciated with a magnifying glass. In 2015, he also reintroduced the art of Kasab gold-thread embroidery, further elevating his craft.

Unsurprisingly, Asif and his work are in great demand, so he is often touring around the world. At these times his studio is closed to visitors.

**Overnight: House Of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Visit Sarkhej Roza. Drive to Muli - 2½-3 hours. Ikat dying and weaving workshops**

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Leaving your hotel after breakfast you head southwest, stopping a few miles outside of Ahmedabad at Sarkhej Roza - an ancient royal necropolis in the village of Markarba. Dating back to the 15th century it comprises many elegant monuments and tombs surrounding a large lake, or tank. Although timeworn in places there is still much intricate sandstone and marble carving to appreciate especially when the light falls through the beautiful carved screens, or jalis, producing beautiful patterns on the stone floors.

From Markarba you continue your journey to Muli in the Surendranagar district of Gujarat. Muli is a renowned center for Ikat weaving, particularly known for its silk-cotton (Sico) fabric. Ikat is a resist-dyeing technique where the yarns are tightly bound and dyed before being woven into intricate patterns. Muli's weavers are famed for their ability to create vibrant, geometric designs through this painstaking technique.

The weaving process begins with selecting the finest silk and cotton yarns. The threads are tightly wrapped in specific patterns to form resist areas before being dyed in multiple rounds to achieve the desired colors. After the yarns are dyed and dried, they are woven into fabric using traditional looms. Muli's Sico Ikat, a blend of silk and cotton, is known for its distinctive texture and drape. While synthetic dyes are sometimes used, natural dyes derived from indigo, turmeric, and madder root remain popular. The entire process is meticulously handcrafted, ensuring that each piece carries its own unique character. In addition to the standard Ikat technique, some of Muli's weavers also specialise in Double Ikat, where both the warp and weft threads are dyed before weaving, creating even more complex and visually stunning patterns.

**Overnight: Ambika Nivas Palace or Similar, Muli (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Further day in Muli seeing Tangaliya weaving and cotton processing.**

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Another style of weaving practiced domestically in Muli is Tangaliya weaving, also known as Daana weaving. This highly skilled technique involves twisting tiny dots of extra weft around the warp threads, resulting in intricate geometric patterns that resemble bead embroidery. Originally, Tangaliya weaving was done using hand-spun wool, which was readily available locally. However, with changing market demands, the weavers have adapted to using other fibers. Cotton is now a popular choice, bought from Ahmedabad and

Surendranagar, while acrylic yarns have become a preferred alternative to wool for making the distinctive thread beads or dots. Silk yarn, often used for high-end products, is sourced from Surendranagar.

Whilst in Muli it is also worth seeing the process involved in ginning and packing cotton. This involves several key steps, starting with the harvesting of raw cotton. The cotton is then processed through ginning machines that separate the cotton fibers (lint) from the seeds and impurities. After ginning, the cotton is further cleaned to remove any remaining debris before being compressed into bales for storage and transportation.

**Overnight: Ambika Nivas Palace or Similar, Muli (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Drive to Dhrang for the Mekan Dada Mela - 5-6 hours. Drive to accommodation near Bhuj - approximately ½ hour.**

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Today you will first of all drive to Dhrang, on the edge of the desert. On the way you will pass through the low laying salt marshes and salt pans. The area is also rich in minerals used in tile making and products are exported all over India. You will pass fields of castor oil plants, stone works and beautiful Jain temples. Along the side of the road you may see the nomadic pastoral Rabari men in their distinctive white clothing herding camels sheep or goats. The women traditionally wear darker garments.

In Dhrang you will attend the celebrations at the Mekan Dada Mela. Mekan Dada, thought to be born in 1667, was an important Sufi saint who saved thousands of people who became lost in the Rann of Kutch. From Dhrang village, where he lived at the edge of the desert, he gave shelter, directions, food and water to nomads and travellers. An annual Mela (fair) is held in Dhrang village on the day of the Hindu festival Mahashivaratri to celebrate his life. Ahir and Rabari women gather in beautiful bright costumes to enjoy their traditional dance at the campus of the temple dedicated to his memory. There is much music and many people from the surrounding communities arrive to join in the festivities, processions and ancient rural traditions such as cart racing. (Please be aware that the date the fair is held may be changed, but we will endeavour to re-arrange the itinerary to include it during your time in Kutch).

From Dhrang, you make the short drive to your accommodation for the next seven nights - the peaceful Kutch Safari Resort. You will be led to your own individual round house. Here you can enjoy magnificent sun rises over the tranquil lake and an impressive range of bird species in the surrounding trees.

**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Sightseeing in Bhuj. Visit to Khatri Bandhani workshop and to A A Wazir's Textiles Museum shop.**

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After breakfast, perhaps outside on the terrace overlooking the lake, you will drive into Bhuj. You will find an ancient desert town dating back to the 16th century. Despite the catastrophic earthquake of 2001 the old town still maintains much of its medieval character with an atmospheric bazaar, old walls and gateways, ancient palaces and temples. Bhuj is famous as a centre for the historic craftsmanship of the Kutch region, including Bandhani, embroidery and leatherwork. Bhuj is also famous for its regional cuisine and famous Gujarati sweets.

Your sightseeing in Bhuj starts with a visit to the extravagant Aaina Mahal, an 18th century palace, known as the 'Palace of Mirrors' which is one of the finest examples of Indo-Saracenic architecture in India. The Aina Mahal was ornamented with Venetian-style chandeliers, silver objects, clocks, tiles glass and other objects all produced locally. You then continue to see the nearby Prag Mahal Palace, a 19th century palace.



Your morning then moves to the fascinating bandhani workshop run by two brothers Abduljabbar and Abdllah Khatri. Bandhani (tie-dye) fabrics are produced through a laborious process, 500 years old and involving thousands of tiny knots in a piece of folded fabric. The term Bandhani is derived from the Sanskrit verb 'to bind or to tie'. The intricacy of the pattern depends on the skill of the maker, the number of knots and the fineness of the cloth before dyeing. You will see a demonstration of this superb art and a fine selection of cloths traditionally used for wedding saris and dupattas.

After lunch you will visit the textile museum/shop of Mr A. A. Wazir. The Wazir family has a long established and stunning collection of more than 3,000 pieces, including museum quality historic embroidery, antique quilts, torans, dowry bags, traditional outfits and cattle caparisons, adorned with stitch-work of the Rabari,

Jat, Mutava, Meghval, Ahir and Sodha tribes, featuring pieces from Kutch but also from other parts of India and as far afield as Pakistan. About half the items shown here are for sale.

**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Visit embroiders at Dhaneti Village. Drive to Khamir for artisan demonstrations, and to Bhujodi village to visit a master dyer and weaver.**

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you begin the day with a visit to Dhaneti Village, famous for the exquisite traditional embroidery work created by the local Ahir community. These are the people who are thought to have originally brought their skills from Sindh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

You then drive to Khamir, another community which promotes a wide range of the traditional arts and culture of this region, including long term development of Kala Cotton. Here you will have demonstrations by local artisans to learn about the techniques practised there. Kala Cotton is indigenous to the region and in this project it is being produced organically and sustainably. After years of experimentation and the perfecting of spinning and weaving techniques, Khamir began producing the first Kala Cotton goods in 2010. In contrast Khamir has also developed an interesting project called 'The Recycled Plastic Initiative'. Providing employment to plastic waste collectors and schools, Khamir cleans, sorts and segregates the used plastic, which is then cut into long strips and woven into durable textiles using traditional looms.

From Khamir you will make the short drive to Bhujodi, an important textile village of Kutch. Bhujodi is home to the nomadic Rabari people who spin and weave in camel hair, local sheep wool 'desi' and kala cotton; and dye with natural dyes such as pomegranate, madder and indigo. Here you will meet Shamji Vankar and his family at their weaving and dyeing complex. A master dyer, Shamji will demonstrate the particularities of dyeing with the indigo from his established vats and explain the processes of making a warp and weaving on the traditional pit looms of the Kutch. Working with both long established methods and continually experimenting with materials and structure, the work here is constantly evolving. There will be opportunity to purchase goods directly from the small shop.

**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 10: Block printing workshop and screen printing in Ajrakhpur. Visit LLDC Shrujan Museum.**

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This morning you will head to Ajrakhpur and have the opportunity to participate in a block printing workshop run by Dr Ismail Khatri & Sons. Dr Khatri is the head of a 10 generation hand block-printing business using traditional Ajrakh processes. The most detailed textiles involve hundreds of steps by hand. All natural dyes are used from which many different types of textiles are produced including saris, tablecloths and shawls. Whilst in Ajrakhpur you will also see screen printing.

After lunch you will visit the inspiring galleries of the Living and learning Design Centre (LLDC) - a pioneering project of the Shrujan Trust. Shrujan (which means creativity in Sanskrit) is a not-for-profit organisation working with craftswomen in Kutch to revitalize the ancient craft of hand embroidery and to allow women to make a living from their craft. These craftswomen create a range of beautiful hand embroidered items. Over the years, Shrujan's work has expanded to include research into, and documentation of, the diverse embroideries of Kutch, and the communities that practise these embroideries.



**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 11: See traditional Bhunga houses in Maaldhari hamlet. Quilt making in Hodka. Craft workshops and Rogan Art in Nirona Village.**

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After breakfast you make the journey to visit a small Muslim hamlet situated along a rough road, well off-the-beaten-track. The Maaldhari people who live here are Muslims and cattle breeders who live in traditional, Bhunga houses and lead a very simple existence. This special visit will allow you to quietly spend time in amongst the everyday doings of village life as the men take care of their livestock of sheep and goats and the women embroider rich and colourful textiles.

From Maaldhari you go to the village of Hodka. This small Banni village is home to villagers who not only produce quilts for personal use but also sell them as part of their livelihood. These quilts are made using traditional methods and serve as a testament to the region's textile culture. You will enjoy lunch in the village.

From Hodka you drive on to Nirona village, which has become well known in the area as a hub of creative activity. Here you will learn about several very different skills:

#### Lacquer work

In an open area, among the village houses and trees, bright lacquerware - rolling pins, spatulas and spoons - are laid out in wonderful vibrant colour patterned rows. In India this craft dates back more than 400-500 years and is often used for furniture. The lacquer is made from lac, a resinous secretion from lac insects, which is applied in numerous prepared colours using a simple hand powered rotation system. The women carve the wood and make the colours from natural stones and materials and the men apply it with great precision and dexterity to decorate the implements. The resulting products are smooth and shiny, temptingly winking their lustrous hues.



#### Copper Bell Making

A small workshop where the master bellmaker cuts a rough rectangle of metal; hammers it, bends it, shapes it and beats it some more - a spellbinding transformation and a beautifully formed bell sits in the palm of his weathered hand. The bells are made for cattle, each one with a subtly different sonorous tone, used to identify each cow or buffalo out on the grasslands.

#### Rogan Art

Said to have originated in Persia, this once dying art was revived by Abdul Gafur Khatri who came back to Nirona to learn the technique from his father and grandfather. Now with over forty years' experience, Rogan painting has seen a resurgence due to his dedication and teaching. Rogan paint is a thick, shiny, glutenous substance, achieved by boiling castor oil for 12 hours and mixing it with cold water and vegetable dyes. You will see how the family warm it in the palm of a hand and apply it to the fabric as a fine 'thread' using a thin stick. The detail achieved is remarkable. You will be invited to try this for yourself.

There may also be time to visit a local tailor.

**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 12: Mashroo weaving in south Kutch. Drive to Mandvi to see wooden ship building and spend some time at the beach.**

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The south of Kutch is home to the technique of mashroo (or mashru) weaving. These textiles were traditionally woven for Muslim communities who believed that silk should not touch a person's skin but still wanted their clothes to have the appearance of pure silk. To achieve this, a textile was created that was cotton on one side and silk on the other. Popular until the 1900's, the traditional practice of mashroo weaving was a dying craft. It is now being revived by the Maheshwari family and other weavers of the area. You will spend time with the Maheshwari family as they demonstrate the complex processes involved in its production.

You will then head into the town of Mandvi which is set on the bank of a wide tidal estuary, facing the Arabian Sea. Once a large, flourishing port, Mandvi still supports another rare and dwindling craft - dhow building. You can see these magnificent traditional wooden boats, or dhows, alongside the estuary being hand built from long wooden planks using nails up to 1m long, produced by local blacksmiths. It takes 50 men roughly two years to build each dhow which are mainly used by wealthy Gulf Arabs as pleasure boats or floating casinos.

There are sandy beaches in Mandvi and you will have time at leisure here (and possibly a swim in the Arabian sea) before driving back to Bhuj, some 60km north.

**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 13: Visit villages on Banni grasslands. Attend a Tanabana workshop in Sumrasar Village.**

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This morning you travel through the Banni grasslands of Kutch - the largest natural grassland in the Indian subcontinent, known for its rich wildlife and biodiversity. The Banni has a long history of migratory pastoralism

going back at least 500 years with links to a broader geographical landscape that in the past included Sindh in Pakistan and even extended into parts of Baluchistan and Afghanistan. The area is important ecologically and is particularly known for its extensive diversity of migratory birds.

The Banni is also of great cultural importance to Gujarat, and the attractive villages showcase the local arts and crafts as well as the ancient architecture of Kutch.

You will visit the beautiful Kutch village of Bhirandiyara, a lovely settlement of colourful mud 'bhunjas' with their intricate decorations both inside and outside. Here you will have opportunity for a hands-on experience learning the detailed stitches in the traditional embroidered mirror work. This village is also famous for a delicious sweet made from milk and sugar called Maavo.

In the afternoon you will visit the home of Ramji Maheshwari, a graduate of the Somaiya Kala Vidya Design School. Known as TANA BANA (which means warp and weft) Ramji is an innovative weaver who grows and spins his own organic Kala cotton. He enjoys experimenting with traditional and non-traditional mixes of threads including bamboo, metals, linens and silks. He will be happy for you to try your hand on his customary charkha spinning wheel or weave at the traditional pit loom. Many of his high quality items are for sale.

**Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 14: Drive to Dasada via the Road to Heaven and stop at Dholavira archaeological ruins. Total journey: 255km/158 miles, 5 hours**

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Today you make the long drive to Dasada, a village located on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch.

One of the highlights of the journey is the 30km long section of highway between Bhuj and Dholavira known as the Road to Heaven. This road was only opened in 2023 but has quickly become a tourist attraction in its own right. It cuts a straight path across the vast white salt landscape of the Great Rann of Kutch - one of the largest salt plains in the world - and is a scenically spectacular drive.

The road has also made the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Dholavira more accessible. Dholavira is one of the most remarkable archaeological discoveries of the Indus Valley Civilisation. The ruins offers a fascinating insight into the ancient Harappan culture, with one of the world's earliest and most sophisticated water conservation systems. The site also reveals the seven stages of civilisation, from its rise to its eventual decline, providing valuable clues about what led to its downfall.

From Dholavira it takes approximately 4 hours to reach Dasada and the Little Rann of Kutch.

**Overnight: Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 15: Jeep safari across Little Rann of Kutch. Time at leisure.**

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As a contrast to all your textile related activities, today, in the very early morning, you will head out on a vehicle safari to the Little Rann of Kutch, an area of desert, mudflats and salt marshes famous for its rare wildlife and birds. Your safari takes you across the mud flats in search of Gudkhur, endangered wild asses, which are just a little smaller than donkeys and are found only on the Little Rann. The Rann mudflats, which are inundated with water during the rainy season, are an ancient sea bed dotted with small islands, 'bets', which are covered with grass and scrub and support a wide range of birds including flamingos, pelicans, common cranes, ducks and geese as well as animals such as black buck, blue bull, hyenas and of course the Asiatic wild ass.



Returning to your hotel, the rest of the day is free to take advantage of the pool and relaxing environs of the Kutch Safari Resort. In the evening you may well be able to savour the stars and unwind further around a crackling outdoor fire.

**Overnight: Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 16: Drive to Ahmedabad - 210km, 5 hours. Visit the Sun Temple at Modhera, Patan Patola Museum and Rani Ki Vav step well en route.**

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You return to Ahmedabad today but you will make several visits to places of cultural and historic interest before the final drive back to House of MG.

Your first stop is the Sun Temple at Modhera. Dedicated to the Hindu solar deity Surya, this magnificent temple was completed in 1027 and is one of the finest monuments of the Solanki dynasty, which ruled parts of western India between the 10th and 13th centuries AD. It consists of the main temple shrine, an assembly hall, a pillared pavilion and a remarkable feature of four terraces and recessed steps descending to a large sacred sunken pool. The exterior of the temple is intricately carved with demons and deities. It became a pilgrimage centre where people paid homage to the sun.



Your next stop on the journey is the Patan Patola Museum. The textiles of Patan Patola are renowned for their unique gem like qualities, gorgeous colours and complex designs. These fabulous silk fabrics are woven by master craftsmen, in a method called double-ikat. This fine quality production has its origins in an intricate and difficult technique of knot tying and resist dyeing which is performed on the warp and weft separately before construction, the intended pattern being precisely formed when the two come together during the weaving process. The cloth has no 'wrong' side, both sides having equal intensity of colour and design. This is a centuries old technique possibly dating back as far as the 11th century and utilizing pure silk and natural dyes.

After lunch in Patan you will continue your journey to Ahmedabad with one final stop at the Rani Ki Vav step well. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the oldest and most impressive step well in Gujarat. Dating back to the early 11th century it was buried under silt for many centuries before being re-discovered and excavated in the 1980s. 28 metres deep, with seven sets of stairs, it is a multi-storied, elaborately carved work of both art and architecture and remains in excellent condition.

**Overnight: House Of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 17: Ahmedabad Heritage Walk. Afternoon at leisure.**

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The best way to experience the splendours of Ahmedabad and appreciate its architecture, art and traditions is on foot, so this morning you will take a heritage walk through the old city accompanied by our guide who will explain the historical background and significance of the places you see.

Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 on the ancient site of Ashaval and Karrnvati, and the city has some of the finest monuments and temples in India - Islamic, Hindu and Jain. The carved wooden houses of the city are a unique architectural tradition. A special feature of Ahmedabad is the plan of the old city, which comprises numerous 'pols', traditional self-contained neighbourhoods accommodating whole communities. Some of these 'pols' are virtually small villages, traversed by narrow streets and terminating in a square with community wells and featuring little cul-de-sacs, alleyways and secret passages, as well as the characteristic chabutaras, typical Gujarati tower-like structures for feeding birds, especially pigeons.

After lunch, you have the afternoon at leisure. The day ends with a farewell meal at your hotel and a chance to reflect on your colourful adventure in Gujarat.

**Overnight: House Of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 18: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London**

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Today there will be a group transfer to Ahmedabad Airport for your flight home. (Meals: B)

## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ Services of textiles expert, Sue Lawty, as trip leader
- ✓ All meals: 17 x breakfasts, 16 x lunches, 16 x dinners
- ✓ Good standard accommodation on a twin share basis
- ✓ Local English-speaking guide and driver to accompany group throughout.
- ✓ All sightseeing, entrance fees and visits as mentioned in the itinerary.
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK and UK departure tax (flight inclusive only).
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure.
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- × Travel insurance
- × Tips
- × India visa fees

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients, who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign).

## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### House Of M G, Ahmedabad

The House of MG is a boutique hotel situated in one of the oldest houses in the city - a mansion formerly home to a prominent textile merchant and entrepreneur. The hotel has been tastefully restored with all its furniture and fixtures designed and sourced from local artisans. Mahatma Gandhi stayed here when it was a private house. The hotel offers modern amenities, a spa and pool, and free Wi-Fi.



### Ambika Nivas Palace or Similar, Muli

Historic Ambika Nivas Palace remains the residence of the Muli Royal Family. Built in the 1930s, a portion of the palace was converted to a boutique heritage hotel, and it has retained its regal splendour. You may even be joined by members of the royal family who often join their guests to share the history of the family and their home. Well-appointed rooms combine traditional decor with modern amenities, and the hotel has a period dining room, swimming pool, wellness centre and extensive lawns.



### Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj

The Kutch Safari Resort is situated 15km outside of bustling Bhuj overlooking the Gorudra Reervoir - a haven for birds and wildlife. The cottage rooms are designed to look like traditional Kutchi homes with their circular, whitewashed appearance and straw-style conical roofs. Each cottage is air-conditioned with simple yet comfortable facilities and an outdoor 'terrace'. The resort has an open-sided restaurant so you can enjoy the views and the temperate climate as you dine.



### Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada

Surrounded by fields and wetlands, Rann Riders is a tranquil and eco-friendly resort located on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch. It is imaginatively designed using local materials to recreate the look of a village. Accommodation is in cottages, resembling the kooba houses of the Bajania community of Dasada and the bhunga houses of the Rabaris of Kutch, which are decorated with mirrors, mud-plaster work and embroideries. The rooms feature comfortable cane beds, and bathrooms have hot and cold showers.

## Our grading system

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Colours of India - Gujarat Textiles is graded as a Tour, as described below.

### Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

## Meal arrangements

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All meals are included. 17 x breakfasts, 16 x lunches, 16 x dinners

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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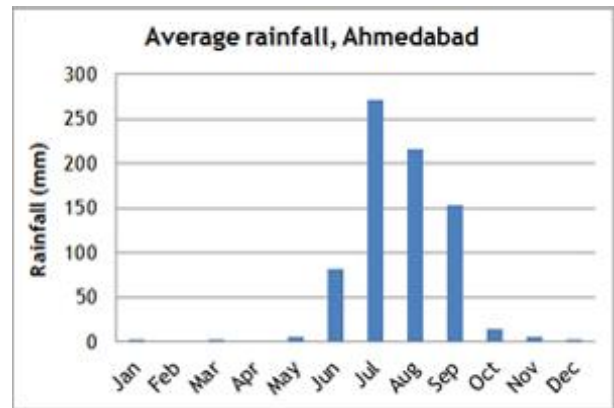
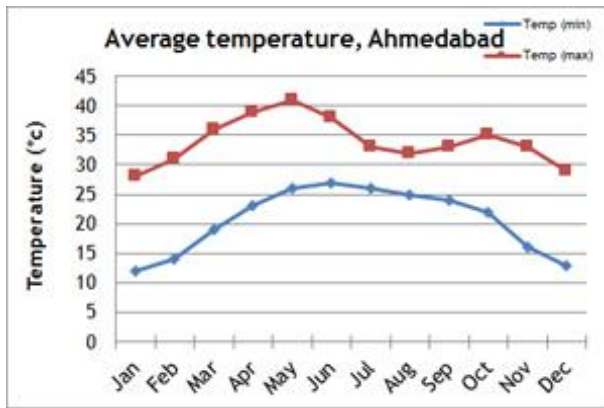
When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

# Climate information



## Extensions

### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400.



There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements.

We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.



### Agra, Taj Mahal & Jaipur - from Delhi

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra (from Delhi) on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English-speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.

### Ranthambore National Park

Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan is one of the finest national parks in northern India. It has a diverse range of habitats attracting a fantastic variety of wildlife including tigers, leopard, bears and monkeys as well as a large number of exotic birds. We can arrange a three night stay at a jungle camp from where you can enjoy many wildlife watching activities such as nature walks, jeep safaris and bird watching.

## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms.
- Whilst clearly textiles focused, the tour also takes in Gujarat's must-see sights, including the rare wildlife of the Little Rann of Kutch.
- Leader, Sue Lawly, has significant textile experience and has led several specialist tours for Mountain Kingdoms
- Accommodation is in good quality hotels, a safari resort and a converted palace. All have been carefully chosen for their character, comfort and locations
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger groups.
- We offer a flexible travel service and you can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

## What our clients say

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*Fabulous holiday! We saw such a variety of high quality textiles and watched the processes through from the cotton plant, via spinning, weaving, printing and dyeing, to stunning embroidery; all in real villages and towns in a fascinating part of India. The beautiful, gentle people of Gujarat made the trip very special.*

*-Gill, Melrose*

*The variety and quality of the textiles we saw far exceeded our expectations.*

*- Anonymous*



*A wonderful couple of weeks with a bit of everything from palaces to safaris, saris to festivals, and top notch artisan crafts. To see the processes from the cotton boll in the field to spinning, weaving, printing, dyeing, embroidery, etc was amazing. Such skills and lovely people.*

*-Jeannie Everington*



*If you love fabrics or sewing you will find heaven in Gujarat. You have the chance to watch fabric being made from scratch; spun, dyed, printed, woven, embroidered and finally worn. Throw the many wonders of India into the mix - exotic food, amazing temples and mosques or tranquil bird watching - and you cant not go!*

*-Janet Wallace, London*

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### **Carbon Offsetting**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

