

CYCLING THROUGH THE COLOURS OF INDIA

Four distinctly different areas, one fascinating country – SpiceRoads cycle tours give you an in-depth and personal look at India. From the historical splendour of Rajasthan, the expansive tea plantations of Sikkim, to the raw rugged nature of the Himalayas in Ladakh and the backwaters of Kerala – India is a captivating place of adventure and discovery.

Riding Regal Rajasthan

Discover the magic of India's past by cycling through Rajasthan – The Land of Kings. Rustic rural roads through small villages lead you to fascinating historical sites where you can learn about Rajasthan's regal past. In addition to taking your water bottle, make sure you have your camera ready, not only for some great selfies, but as you encounter majestic forts rising out of the landscape, a former residence of the Maharaja, and famous temples of Brahma and Ranakpur.

A beguiling land of forts and palaces, Rajasthan will enchant you with its splendours. Riding through the former princely states will provide an insight into a majestic world as Rajasthan remains a land still connected to its regal past. The vibrancy and colours of Rajasthan will be ever present on this amazing cycle journey as you ride from the once powerful Raj state of pink-hued Jaipur, through the sandy-coloured land dotted by the vivid splashes of turbans and the skirts of villagers, to the blue city of Jodhpur and end at the alabaster 'City of Lakes', Udaipur.

Pedal down rustic and rural roads through small villages that nestle up against forts and spread through the countryside. Your fellow travellers include camels, goats and water buffaloes. The architectural marvels of forts rising suddenly out of the landscape will be a daily part of your adventure. Religion's vital role in the region will be evident as you visit the most famous Brahma temple in the world at Pushkar and the intricate carvings of the Ranakpur Jain temples.

This land has attracted travellers for centuries, but by bike, you will see traditional Rajasthani life up close as you immerse yourself in this rich culture.

Sikkim's Tea Trails

Explore the north-east through Sikkim, India's least populated state. Ride through beautiful mountains ranges, deep into valleys and past extensive tea plantations. Nature lovers, the biodiversity and stunning views are what you live for. The dramatic terrain of Sikkim guarantees stunning vistas of snow-capped Himalayan peaks and challenging biking on roads lined with a wide variety of rhododendrons. This state is bordered by Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan and the influence is seen in the people, the



majority of whom are ethnically Nepali, and the two predominant religions of Hinduism and Vajrayana Buddhism.

The tour starts at the state capital of Gangtok, the centre of Tibetan Buddhist culture. The first day of riding will be an easy cycle to get used to the higher altitude as you visit the 200-year-old baroque Enchey monastery. The next day the ascents and descents begin in earnest as you bike to Rumtek Monastery, the largest in Sikkim.

Drift into valleys and climb over passes as high as 2,100m, with the Kanchenjunga mountain range as the backdrop. Their five peaks in the range include Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world, at 8,586 m



(28,169 ft). There will be visits to Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, making a wish at Sikkim's holiest lake, sampling tea from local plantations, and riding a toy train in the colonial hill station of Darjeeling

Nubra Valley

The high altitude desert of Ladakh in northern India is the next destination on this epic journey. Bike across mountain passes, along glacier-fed rivers, to remote villages, into valleys and areas famous for Winter Snow Leopard sightings. You will see spectacular gorges along the Zaskar River, bike through remote Tibetan villages and thrill to downhill rides and white water rafting.

This exhilarating trip goes through the desert of Ladakh where you will be among the first to bicycle a new road over the Warila pass and cycle through the beautiful Sakti and Nubra valleys. This tour ends on the highest note possible, a cycle up (and of course down) one of the highest motorable roads in the world. After a flight over mountains to Leh, ride to monasteries, villages and go rafting to get used to the thinner air at this high altitude. Once acclimatized, it is pedalling through areas famous for Winter Snow Leopard Sightings and pass farming villages. Colourful granite cliffs rise from the ground to form gorges, archways and spires are framed in brilliant blue skies. Ancient monasteries are dramatically perched on cliff tops and in caves, reflecting the ancient and rich Tibetan Buddhist cultural background of this land

Kerala's Back Roads

Discover southern India biking through Kerala's rural backwaters. Enjoy tropical greenery, wildlife reserves and tea and spice plantations. The coastal sea breezes and cooler temperatures in the highlands make it a lovely area for cycling as it lives up to its tagline – "God's Own Country."

Kerala, sandwiched between the Arabian Sea and the mountainous Western Ghats, is known for its backwaters, wildlife reserves, and tea and spice plantations. Along the way you will stay at beautiful heritage hotels, eco-lodges and on a rice barge converted into luxurious accommodation. Of course there will be abundant delicious ethnic food, seasoned by the local spices. Then the climbing begins as you head up to areas known for tea plantations and spice estates. Four wildlife parks are visited on this tour where there are herds of elephants. Then it is on to Kumarakom where you'll enjoy a relaxing afternoon and night plying the backwaters on a houseboat. It is a flat ride to Kochi with time to explore this fascinating historic town

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