



MOMENTUM COACHING & YOGA

# India Yoga Pilgrimage

14 – 28 October 2019

with  
Natalie Snooke & Eli Fletcher

Rishikesh ~ Varanasi ~ Vrindavan



## Welcome to Sacred India

Discover the joy, devotion and spirituality of northern India on this 15-day yoga pilgrimage.

You'll experience a transformative journey to three of India's most sacred places - Rishikesh, Varanasi and Vrindavan - guided by two highly experienced Australian yogis who share a passion and love for India.

- Experience the unique fun, beauty and complexity of Indian culture;
- Deepen your self-awareness with daily yoga asana, pranayama and meditation practice;
- Relax in quality, four-star accommodation;
- Savour the powerful spiritual energy of yoga ashrams and holy temples;
- Learn about Yoga and Vedic philosophy from experienced teachers;
- Be rejuvenated by Ayurvedic massage and body treatments;
- Share the journey with a group of open-hearted yogis; and
- Enjoy a balanced and diverse daily program.

*"In India you're taught that there are certain qualities that make you a divine human being."*  
~ Deepak Chopra



Eli receiving a blessing, from a colourful character.

## Yoga Pilgrimage

A pilgrimage to India promises an adventure like no other. India is full of contrasts. It is a beautiful, noisy, chaotic, sacred, magnificent and dirty place. The amount of grit is equal to the amount of grace!

But the poverty is no match for its richness in spirit.

More than a holiday, and different to a retreat, to go on pilgrimage is a joyful, ritual journey where every step along the way is intentional and has meaning. And the pilgrim-traveller knows that life-changing challenges, epiphanies and insights will emerge.

As we journey on the outside, so too will we journey on the inside - letting-go of expectations, habits and mental obstacles to awaken the depths of our hearts and our being, made possible only by India's unique way of stirring the soul.

Our pilgrimage requires that participants are mature, self-aware, take responsibility for their actions and are able to practice kindness in all our daily interactions and activities.

Participants will also need to have a moderate level of fitness, for walking most days, and at times on uneven surfaces or up hills on a trek.

## Experienced Teaching & Guidance

*"India teaches us how to be yoga, to live yoga, not just how to do yoga."* ~ Natalie Snooke

Each morning we will greet the day with *sadhana*, with the mindful practice of meditation, pranayama, yoga asana (slow-flow vinyasa and restorative) led by Natalie, and open to students of all levels and abilities. Beginners will be guided through the basics of practice.

Natalie offers heart-centred guidance with skillful instructions and diverse themes for each practice. Sessions for chanting, *satsang* (spiritual talks), philosophy and fire ceremony will also be offered, with interactive time for questions and discussion.

Self-reflection and making sense of daily challenges and insights is an important part of the India experience. In addition to our yoga, we will hold sessions for open discussion and reflection, where participants can share their observations and learning.

Natalie has been a dedicated teacher of yoga and meditation for 12 years, including running six international retreats, the first to India in 2016. Natalie is also a qualified, experienced life coach and the director of Momentum Coaching & Yoga, established in 2007.

Eli has been a yoga devotee all his life and began running Maharani Tours to India 16 years ago. He has a distinct appreciation of India spirituality and culture.

Both Natalie and Eli offer a rich and sensitive understanding of the unique challenges, intensities and mystery that can happen in India - and they look forward to sharing their love of India with you.

### **Accommodation**

Accommodation throughout the pilgrimage is in four-star hotels with twin-share (or private room, with surcharge). All accommodation offers free WIFI and excellent food at their on-site restaurants.

In Rishikesh, we stay at the Divine Resort, on the banks of the Ganges River and at the foothills of the Himalayas, with breathtaking views of the fresh, clear turquoise waters. Rare species of birds, butterflies and flowers inhabit the resort's grounds. Facilities include on-site Ayurvedic massage and a swimming pool. Our rooms are beautifully light and most have river views and a balcony.

In Varanasi we stay at the Hotel Ganges View at Asi Ghat, one of the five most sacred places of pilgrimage in Varanasi. An eclectic past, the hotel has become a meeting point for artists, writers and scholars over the years and has a vast art collection. Our morning yoga practice will greet the sunrise over the Ganges.

Finally, in the pilgrimage city of Vrindavan we stay at the tranquil MVT Guesthouse with its exquisite gardens, peacocks and parrots. Home of Bhakti Yoga, at MVT we will experience the joy of yogic devotion and simplicity of ashram-style living. Our rooms will be simple yet comfortable and delicious food will be prepared and served, with love, by yoga devotees.

### **Program and Itinerary**

Included is a rich mix of ashram/temple visits, ceremonial blessings and daytrips to sacred places. There will also be ample time to rest, relax and enjoy casual site-seeing and the vibrant shopping that most visitors to India adore.

Our daily itinerary (subject to change, as always in India, the unexpected can arise) takes a 'less is more in India' approach. To receive the most out of the pilgrimage, we encourage and recommend participants fully engage in the scheduled activities; however participation is always by invitation.

**Monday 14 October ~ Arrive Delhi.** Individual taxi transfers and check-in to Airport Hotel Lemon Tree by 8pm. Rest or relax with a swim or massage. Group welcome, first evening meal together and meet-greet your fellow travelling companions.

**Tuesday 15 October ~ Travel to Rishikesh.** Enjoy a good night's rest and leisurely morning to overcome jetlag. Afternoon flight and 45km bus travel north-east through serene, picturesque hillsides to Rishikesh, known as the birthplace of Yoga, at the foothills of the Himalayas.

**Wednesday 16 October ~ Rishikesh: Explore the town.** Walking tour to explore the city's daily life. Discover the suspension bridges with mountain and river views. Morning visit to the ancient, holy Tryambakeshwar (Shiva) Temple and Parmath Niketan ashram for evening Ganga Aarti fire blessing ceremony - take a holy dip in the Ganges if you like!



Eli's group at Parmath Niketan cave, Rishikesh.

**Thursday 17 October ~ Rishikesh: Yoga Ashrams.** Visit the Swarg Ashram spiritual district including: the Rajaji National Park (Beatles Ashram) and Sivananda Ashram. Lunch at Ramana's Café, where profits go to the on-site school and education centre.

**Friday 18 October ~ Rishikesh: Trekking.** After a gentle morning yoga/meditation practice we take a packed lunch and a mindful, scenic day trek (moderate climb) to the natural Neer Gaddu waterfalls, with optional freshwater swim.

**Saturday 19 October ~ Rishikesh: Sadhana Mandir Ashram visit.** We spend the day at the yoga ashram in the lineage of the acclaimed Swami Rama and the Himalayan Masters. Engage in their traditional sadhana program, with yoga, meditation, satsang, kirtan and other activities.

**Sunday 20 October ~ Rishikesh: As You Like.** Rest by the pool, indulge in body treatments, have your Indian astrology chart read and/or further explore any of the city's nature/trek trails, shopping or spiritual delights, at your leisure. We conclude our stay with a peaceful evening meditation practice on the sandy banks of the River Ganges.



The colourful ghats of Varanasi.

**Monday 21 October ~ Travel to Varanasi.** Morning yoga practice and/or optional mindful river walk. Checkout and coach transfer to Dehradun airport. Travel 1000kms south-east with flights to Delhi then Varanasi. Check-in to Hotel Ganges View with evening stroll and meal.

**Tuesday 22 October ~Varanasi: Dawn on the Ganges.** Observe the sacred, ritualistic Hindu cremation, blessing and temple activity along the

banks of the Ganges. Visit the ancient Kashi Vishwanath (Shiva) Temple with its golden domes. Evening walk along the ghats to Dasawamedh Ghat for Aarati (blessing ceremony) and dinner.

**Wednesday 23 October ~Varanasi: Shopping!** We explore the colourful markets and bazars aplenty with beautiful silk, jewellery, shawls, bangles and Hindu/Buddhist/Yogic statues. (Optional rest day if desired.)

**Thursday 24 October ~ Travel to Vrindavan.** Morning checkout and flight to Delhi, then coach travel 160kms (two hours) south west to Vrindavan. Check-in at MVT Guesthouse. Evening kirtan (chanting) with our friend Madhava and stroll.

**Friday 25 October ~ Vrindavan: Culture of Bliss.** We explore yogic life and share discussion sessions with Hare Krishna (ISKON) Swamis, plus long-term resident Westerners to understand what it's like to live, breathe and dress in an Indian devotional culture. Includes a visit to the Loi Bazar market.

**Saturday 26 October ~ Vrindavan: Temple Delight** We explore the beautiful, peaceful temples: Krishna Balaram, Pagal Baba, Prem Mandir (Temple of Divine Love) and lunch at Sri Govinda restaurant. Evening visit to the beautiful Yamuna River Ghat.

**Sunday 27 October ~ Sacred Places.** We partake in the colourful, musical parikrama (circumambulation; walking the path) to beautiful, sacred places around Vrindavan with the Hare Krishna devotees. (Optional rest day if desired)

**Monday 28 October ~ Travel to Delhi.** Morning checkout and 160kms (2 hours) coach travel to Delhi airport for flights home or onward travel in India. Pilgrimage concludes.

### Costs & Visas

Our intention is to keep your expenses reasonable and your stay as comfortable as possible, without being luxurious. Land travel

will be in deluxe, chartered, air-conditioned coaches and taxis.

Non-refundable deposit: AUD \$500  
Total cost early-bird: AUD \$3300  
Total cost standard: AUD \$3500  
Private room surcharge: AUD \$780

#### Included in the total cost is:

- \* 15 days/14 nights' twin-share room
- \* 2 vegetarian meals daily
- \* 3 internal India flights
- \* Airport transfers and land transport
- \* Daily yoga and meditation classes
- \* 1 Ayurvedic massage or body treatment
- \* Daily sight-seeing activities and entrance fees.

A private room option (with surcharge) is available. The pilgrimage does not include participants' airfare travel to/from India.

To receive the early-bird special rate, the full payment must be received by Monday 1 April 2019. All final payments are due six weeks prior by Monday 2 September 2019.

In addition to personal spending money, participants should allow additional monies for temple donations and tipping drivers/hotel staff for their service, as is customary in India.

A Tourist Visa is required for all citizens of Australia, the US and most other countries to travel to India, issued before leaving home. Some countries now grant five-year Tourist Visas for India. Visas are valid from the date the Visa is applied to the passport, not the date of entry into India. Please check your country's India Visa requirements. Australians should visit: [www.vfsglobal.com/india/australia](http://www.vfsglobal.com/india/australia)

#### What to Expect, Wear and Pack

Standards in India are different to Western standards - and require patience, good humour and flexibility.

The hot climate, spicy food, accommodation, dress and customs will all require some adjusting, not to mention the sheer mass of people, persistent beggars, all manner of traffic conditions and the accompanying dust, air and noise pollution - the likes of which are not often

encountered in Western countries. We will take things gently. And India's incredible hospitality, warm humility and abundance of spiritual energy shines through and will touch us in mysterious ways, to bring all the chaos into perspective.

We will follow local customs and dress codes. Women should wear modest clothing that covers their shoulders and neckline. Men should wear pants. Cotton clothing is inexpensive and plentiful in India. There will be several opportunities to buy good quality Indian clothing, for both women and men, throughout the pilgrimage.

Since you will be responsible for carrying and transporting your own bags, we encourage you to pack as lightly as you can. We will provide participants with further advice on clothing and suggested items to bring, a few weeks before the pilgrimage takes place.

#### Food & Meals

Indian food is plentiful and delicious! We provide a hearty breakfast plus one other vegetarian meal each day. The third meal of the day is up to you, depending on your appetite and our group schedule - often many travellers find that two substantial meals per day are sufficient. We will have access to Western-style cafes, for your creature-comforts, including good coffee.

North Indian cuisine is mildly spicy, typically with roti/naan (toasted flat round bread), dahl, samosas, vegetable curries, dosas, plentiful fruit and some salads. India is also famous for its chai (spiced warm Indian tea) found brewing on every street corner with its delicious, spicy aromas and creamy taste!

Safe, bottled water will be provided to participants throughout the pilgrimage.



The peaceful gardens and yogic ambience, MVT Guesthouse, Vrindavan

## Health and Insurance

Travelling in India does involve greater risks than most Western countries, therefore some precautions are advisable.

Whilst the areas we are travelling in are considered to be safe, civil unrest is always a potential threat in India.

*Retreat participants are required to obtain comprehensive travel insurance and to provide proof of this, prior to travel.*

It is common for first-time travelers to India to receive stomach upset simply due to the different strains of bacteria present. We recommend carrying anti-diarrhea tablets, mosquito repellent, hand sanitizer, sun block and first aid items. We will have easy access to medical doctors at each of our accommodation.

Participants taking any prescribed medication should ensure they carry it with full labels attached. Good quality prescription medicine is widely available (and very cheap) in India.

Whether or not to vaccinate is a personal choice. The retreat leaders have found vaccination to be beneficial in their past visits to India. For more information on vaccinations for India go to: [www.travelclinic.com.au/india/](http://www.travelclinic.com.au/india/)

Participants should ensure any dietary restrictions are clearly outlined when they complete their Retreat Registration Form.

## Registrations

Places on this India Yoga Pilgrimage 2019 are limited to 14 persons, allocated on a first-in basis once deposit payment is received.

To register and secure your place, please complete a Registration Form and pay your \$500 deposit at our website: [www.momentumcoachyoga.com.au/india-yoga-pilgrimage](http://www.momentumcoachyoga.com.au/india-yoga-pilgrimage)

## Refund Policy

If a participant withdraws from the retreat before the retreat commences, for any reason, the \$500 paid is non-refundable but may be transferred to another person.

The balance of all retreat fees must reach Momentum Coaching & Yoga no later than six (6) weeks before the retreat commences. If not, the participant's place may be offered to someone on a waiting list and the participant will forfeit their deposit.

If a participant withdraws from the retreat before the retreat commences for any reason, and has already paid the full retreat fee, the following policy applies to the balance of the retreat fee (minus the deposit):

- 60 days or more withdrawal - 100% refund, less administration fee of \$100 AUD
- 30-59 days withdrawal - 75% refund
- 14-29 days withdrawal - 50% refund
- 1-13 days withdrawal - no refund.

Please note that we are required to organise our India accommodation months in advance and to pay up-front to hold our rooms. Our payments also involve transferring money overseas, with bank charges. If a participant withdraws their place it creates extra administration and is not without financial expense. For these reasons it is essential that our Refund Policy is understood and accepted.

## Information and Assistance

For further information, advice and assistance please contact:

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We look forward to serving you on the India Yoga Pilgrimage 2019.

*Namaste*

