



KOOL KASHMIR & BEAUTY BEYOND

14th - 26th June 2023



Kashmir is the northernmost geographical region of the Indian Subcontinent. Until the mid 19th Century, the term 'Kashmir' denoted only the Kashmir Valley between the Great Himalayas and the Pir Panjal Range. Today it denotes a much larger area, 'Jammu' and 'Kashmir' as well as the Pakistani administered areas of 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Gilit-Baltistan' and additionally the Chinese administered territories of 'Aksai Chin' and the 'Trans-Karakoram Tract'. In the first half of the first millennium, the Kashmir region was a very important centre of Hinduism and later, Buddhism. In 1339, Shah Mir became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir. From 1586 to 1751 Kashmir was part of the important Mughal Empire and thereafter, until 1820, part of the Afghan Durrani Empire. The British later sold the region under the Treaty of Amritsar and the Raja of Jammu, Gulab Singh became the ruler of Kashmir. With tutelage in place from the British Crown, the reign lasted till partition in 1947 when the former princely state of the British Raj was claimed by both India and Pakistan.

The infamous lakes of Kashmir will entice and delight whilst you drift along in your own luxury 5-star traditional Indian houseboat enjoying traditional foods prepared just for you. The valleys of the Kashmir region hold beauty the likes of which you will never see again. Visit Sonmarg to visit the paddy fields, and the famous Thajwas Glacier. And in Leh, visit the array of Buddhist Monasteries with some dating as far back as the 10th Century. You will embrace the Nuba Valley and Khardung la Pass, the highest road in the world at 5600 metres. Visit relaxing sulphur hot springs, and one of the Seven Wonders of the World the BEAUTIFUL 'Taj Mahal' in Agra, the amazing cities of Jhansi and Orcha where the Palace will unfold its beauty to you, and once finally back in Delhi, we will show you sights and attractions of unbelievable beauty.

Program

Delhi

2 nights

14 & 15 June

On arrival into Delhi in the early evening you will be met at the airport and transferred to your glamorous 5-star hotel. Have a good night's sleep, you deserve it, and wake up refreshed and 'ready to go'.

Old Delhi and Jama Masjid - Relax and take it easy, as you might still be jet lagged. After a late breakfast, proceed to the old part of Delhi for a rickshaw ride through the back alleys of Old Delhi, the silver streets, vegetable and spice markets and visit the famous Jama Masjid, one of the oldest mosques in Delhi.

Lotus Temple - Design Iranian Architect Fariborz Sahba. Lotus Temple for all, regardless of religion. The building is composed of 27 free-standing marble-clad petals arranged in clusters. The Lotus Temple has won numerous architectural awards.

Humayun's Tomb - now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, built in the 16th-C by Haji Begum, wife of Humayun the second Mughal emperor, Humayun's Tomb is an example of Mughal Architecture in Delhi.

Qutub Minar - this 72.5 m high Victory Pillar is a victory stand of a Muslim King Kutub-ud-din- Aibak in India. In 1199 Kutub-ud-Din started its construction and it was completed in 1236 by Iltutmish, the son-in-law of Kutub.

India Gate - National monument of India. India gate is in the administrative locations of the country. Constructed in memory of 90,000 soldiers of British-Indian army who fought in the Second World War, the structure was built under the leadership of Sir Edwin Lutyens. The architectural complex is made of red stone and granite and is the finest example of Indo-British architectural monument.

And let's go along Rajpath, past the imposing India Gate, Parliament House, the President's Residence and would end with a drive through the Diplomatic Enclave.



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Hotel

'Deluxe Room' at [Metropolitan Hotel](#) or similar

**Srinagar –
Kashmir**

3 nights
16, 17 & 18 June

After breakfast this morning you will be driven to the airport for your flight to Srinagar in beautiful Kashmir. Upon arrival in Srinagar our driver will meet us and take us to our houseboats. These are **THE BEST** houseboats available, Indian design out of traditionally carved wood. On the houseboat you will be offered traditional Kashmiri tea called 'Kehwa'. Enjoy an extravagant home-made lunch and spend the afternoon floating through the lakes of Kashmir. Early evening enjoy an optional Shikara ride and later, Dinner is served on your boat too. The backwaters of Srinagar are superb and you will visit the floating gardens on the backwater which is a real treat also. The food is fragrant and delicious! After breakfast we will go on a tour of the **Nishat Gardens** and the **Shalimar Gardens**. A **MUST SEE** is the **Shahi Hamadam Mosque** built in 1395 of beautiful proportions and history. If you desire, we can go to a silk and carpet factory where we will see weaving in progress after which we will return to the houseboats in time for early evening drinks and a sumptuous dinner and a second night on the houseboats.




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Houseboat

'Super Deluxe' Room at [Naaz Kashmir or similar](#)



Sonmarg

2 nights

19 & 20 June

After breakfast on the houseboats we will drive to Sonmarg, a simple 3.5 hour drive, taking in the paddy fields en-route and stopping at local villages. On arrival into Sonmarg we will visit the very famous **Thajwas Glacier** and enjoy the snow and the ice. Enjoy sledging as you desire as time will permit. Afterwards, relax into the hotel and soak up the warmth and the local cuisine. Awake the next day by the river and there will be as many walking expeditions or relaxing experiences as you wish within the local area.



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Hotel

'Deluxe Room' at [Villa Himalaya or similar](#)

Kargil

2 nights

20 & 21 June

Our next day we have an early start as we have a reasonable drive to Kargil. On the way we will experience the most scenic views through amazing passes with extravagant views. Once we reach Kargil we will do a quick check in and move to the town to discover the quaint and rich historical town. Surrounded by mountains all round and some of the most arid and barren landscapes through India, Kargil is unique and offers you the amazing **Mulbekh Monastery**.



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Hotel

'Deluxe Room' at [Zojila Residency or similar](#)

Leh

3 nights

22, 23 & 24 June

After breakfast we begin our wondrous drive to Leh via Lamayuru and Alchi. Once we hit Lamayuru you will be able to see the monasteries this town is famous for, some of the **monasteries dating back as far as the 10th Century AD!** After the monasteries visit, proceed to **Alchi**, a very old village by the Indus river, famous for its 'Gompa' which is approximately 1000 years old and which has original paintings of Buddha of varying scales. Arrival in Leh is in the mid to later afternoon and we will relax in the hotel and enjoy a traditional Indian meal together. For those that are interested (and I am for sure) we can watch one of the most famous Indian videos '**3 Idiots**' which we will reference the next day. Next morning we will track with our 4 wheel drives for a full day's excursion to the most renowned monasteries in the area of the Ladakh region. We will visit the **Thiksey Monastery** and the **Hemis Monastery** and on the way back to Leh see the **Shey Palace** and Rancho School of '**3 Idiots**' fame (last night's reference). The final day in Leh will allow you time for relaxation or adventure at your leisure.



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Hotel

'Deluxe' Room at [The Indus Valley](#)

Delhi

2 nights

25 & 26 June

Our driver will take us this morning to the Jhansi Railway Station, where again we will board our train for Delhi. Activities from our first time in Delhi shall continue on this final leg of our journey.

Leave for Delhi International Airport for your flight back to Australia in the afternoon/early evening. You will be dropped at the airport for your flight back home with (very) sweet memories, courtesy of Pillow Menu Tours.



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Hotel

'Deluxe Room' at [Metropolitan Hotel](#) or similar

Flights to India and back home again

As your itinerary may vary from this tour, your flights and carrier is at your selection. We are happy to assist in your decision making if this is helpful.

Hosted Tour Experience

AUD \$3,865.00 full experience including accommodation (excluding airfares)

- Price based on per person twin-share, flexibility with dates may be able to be accommodated.
- Luxury 8 to 10 guests private tour, highest quality accommodation, fine cuisine.

Land Only Costs Include

- Accommodation on bed and breakfast basis as per mentioned above hotels or similar
- Early hotel check-in and late check-out, where possible, subject to availability
- All sightseeing, excursions; transfers using A/C Minibus (8-10 pax) as per program
- Parking, permits, gasoline, border taxes for the vehicle
- Services of accompanied English speaking escort for the entire duration of the program
- All Monument/Temple entrance fees as noted
- English speaking guides

Land Only Costs Exclude

- Any additional activities/unique experience in the program on direct payment basis
- Any item of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls, etc.
- Camera fees (still/video) at any monuments
- Visa fees
- Any additional meals (unless specified)

Terms and Conditions

Land only prices exclude flights from Melbourne. \$1500 per person non-refundable deposit required at time of booking. Deposit is only refundable should [DFAT](#) issue a 'Do Not Travel' alert on their website within 30 days of departure. Otherwise, booking is non-refundable & dates are non-changeable once booking is confirmed. Please note above pricing is correct at time of printing. Pricing can change due to fluctuations. You are responsible for all visas, entry, health and other requirements and any documents required by laws, regulations, orders and/or requirements of countries visited. Pillow Menu Tours is not responsible for passport and visa requirements or for any loss you sustain for failing to comply with laws, regulations, orders and/or requirements of countries visited. The health and safety of our guests has always been our priority. Now more than ever it has been essential to revise and upgrade our Health and Safety policy. Effective immediately we will be implementing the below procedures for every guest that travels with us. All our guides have also undertaken a registered Covid-19 health and safety course.

COVID Response

- *Proof of COVID vaccination (and booster) required in order to travel with Pillow Menu Tours.*
- *Antibacterial hand gel, face masks and single use gloves will be available on board.*
- *The exterior and interior of our vehicle is being thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day.*
- *All vehicles exterior and interior touch points will be sterilized prior to each individual guest boarding.*
- *Our friendly and professional guides will warmly welcome guests but will not shake hands. As always however, our guides will open and close the vehicle door. Guides will thoroughly clean their hands using alcohol based liquid gel and wash their hands with soap and water where possible.*
- *Consideration will be taken in relation to vehicle loads.*

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