

India

Cycle Orissa

12 days ex Kolkata

Cycle from Bhubaneshwar to the colonial seaside town of Gopalpur-on-Sea, via the UNESCO (World Heritage Site) temple of Konark the holy town of Puri and the tranquil Chilika Lake.

Ever thought about being able to give something back to the communities that you travel through? Well this is your chance! Our Orissa bike trip does exactly that. Included in the cost of this tour is a brand new bicycle, which you will use along the way – at the end of the trip, we'll donate it to a local community! Bikes are a standard mode of transport in these rural areas and our donation really does make a difference!

India's vast East Coast remains one of India's least explored regions; herein lies it's charm! The rural India of Gandhi and coconut palms built on centuries of independent traditions – this is India at its natural best!

Experience the flagging grandeur of Kolkata with its bustling markets, temples and streets all set against a back drop of elegant colonial monuments. Our cycling starts in the ancient city of Bhubaneshwar, before continuing south through palm fringed paddies and sleepy rural hamlets. Our journey weaves its way through carefully researched routes that provide a fascinating insight into traditional Orissan life where farmers, cattle and temples are a common sight. We continue through the majestic UNESCO (World Heritage Site) listed Sun Temple at Konark and the ancient city of Puri, home to the incredible Jagannath Temple.

We also cycle the length of Asia's largest estuarine lake, island hop between traditional fishing communities and beautiful natural forests before ending in the eccentric coastal town of Golpalpur-on-Sea!



Itinerary

Days 1 | Kolkata

As people will be arriving throughout the day we'll meet in the evening to discuss the tour and to get to know each other before heading out for a delicious local Bengali meal. (D)

Days 2 | Kolkata

Today, we'll head out into the heart of West Bengal's throbbing capital. We'll explore the maze of stalls at the flower market, gain an introduction to Hinduism with a visit to the Kalghat temple, take a walk along the Howrah bridge and a jump on a ferry across the Hoogley river. We'll even throw in a tram ride through downtown Kolkata. A free afternoon provides time for you to branch out alone - take in a cricket match on the Maidan, visit the State Museum or Victoria Monument, walk around the tranquil Botanical Gardens or indulge in a spot of shopping at one of the many local markets. (B)

Days 3 | Bhubaneshwar

A morning train ride takes us south to the bustling ancient capital of Orissa, Bhubaneshwar. With a history of over 2000 years, Orissa's capital once housed as many as 7000 religious shrines and we'll take an afternoon walk through these historic old quarters. Our walk takes in Mukteshwar and Parsurameshwar, we'll skirt the length of Bindu Sagar and have a chance to circumambulate the Lingaraja Temple. There's also an option to visit Ekaamra Haat, an outdoor craft market showcasing local textiles and handicrafts from around the area. (B)

Days 4 | Bhubaneshwar to Konark | 60km

Day 4 sees the start of our incredible cycle through Orissa! We'll start the day by having a bike fitting before embarking on the ride to Konark. Just outside of Bhubaneshwar, we'll drop into an ancient tantric temple in the village of Hirapur. The temple is dedicated to 64 manifestations of female creative energy - a bonus for the ride ahead! Our route to Konark winds its way through quiet country backroads and provides a fascinating insight into village life and Orissa's rural landscapes. (B)

Days 5 | Konark to Puri | 40km

We'll start today with an early morning visit to the Sun Temple. Built in the 13th century by King Narasimhadeva, the temple is one of only two built in India to worship the sun. The easiest way to understand the symbolism of Konark's unique architecture is to think of it as a huge stone chariot - a truly spectacular site! From here we continue our journey along the coast to the holy city of Puri. As one of the oldest cities in eastern India, Puri is a center of religion and home to the legendary Jagannath Temple. (B)

Days 6 | Puri | Cycle to Raghurajpur | 30km

On Day 6 we'll cycle off the beaten track to Raghurajpur, a traditional heritage village where a long lineage of artisans maintain their century old skill as painters. Our route skirts paddy fields, ducks in and out of villages and takes us along dykes built to protect the rice paddies. Raghurajpur is a heritage village and you'll have the chance to see artists etching out exquisite designs on palm leaves and silk. After a spot of lunch in the shade of a tree in the riverbed and a refreshing dip for those who fancy it, we'll head back to Puri. (B)

Days 7 | Puri | Rest Day

Puri is one of the oldest towns in eastern India and most famous for its Jagannath Temple or 'White Pagoda' as it was dubbed by the early European marines. It was declared one of four Hindu holy places back in the 9th century and consequently, Puri throngs with pilgrims. We dip into this traditional temple culture and the labyrinth of communities connected to this old world way of life. We'll take a



short cycle ride through the area seeing artisans, chefs, potters and pilgrims who all rest their faith and livelihoods on the temple, the heart and epicenter of Puri. The rest of Day 7 is free to relax, swim or wander the many old streets of this impressive ancient city. (B)

Days 8 | Puri to Satpada (Chilika Lake) | 55km

Days 8 see us cycling in, around and over India's largest estuarine water lagoon. Chilika Lake covers an area of 1100sq km and is studded with small islands, fishing villages and abundant wildlife. The lake is a unique combination of fresh and salt water and is now recognized as a Ramsar Wetland for its biodiversity. The lake is home to over one million migratory birds and homes over 225 fish species - you may even get the chance to spot the playful Irrawaddy dolphin. Our ride winds its way across islands and were we can't cycle, we'll be punted across the water to the next destination. Tonight we camp under a starlit sky on an island between the lake and the Bay of Bengal. (B,D)

Days 9 | Chilika Lake to Ramnbah | Island hop | 40km

Today we continue our cycle across the southern ridge of the lake, riding along inter connecting islands before continuing onto the hilltop bungalow at Rambha, offering spectacular views over the vast expanse of Chilika Lake as it stretches towards the Bay of Bengal. (B,D)

Days 10 | Ramnbah to Gopalpur-On-Sea | 60km

This morning's cycle is an easy cruise decent from the hills at Rambha to the flats further south. We brave the 4 lane highway for a short while where hazards include herds of goats, animal carts and trucks. Our final leg bounces along rural roads before arriving in the eccentric seaside town of Gopalpur-on-Sea. As a once favorite retreat for the British East India Company, Gopalpur's hey days may be well and truly over but something of its colonial charm lingers on today. (B)

Days 11 | Gopalpur-On-Sea | Rest Day

Today is free to explore Gopalpur with opportunities to visit the vibrant fish market, watch the local fishing boats hauling in a fresh catch or just wander the vast expanse of coastline. We'll also donate our bikes to a local community today where you'll have a chance to experience a local home-cooked meal by the appreciative villagers. This is a great chance to learn firsthand about the communities in which you are benefiting. Tonight we'll enjoy a late night BBQ dinner on the beach. (B,L,D)

Days 12 | Gopalpur-On-Sea

The tour ends today after breakfast. (B)

Tour Details

Style

Fully supported cycling tour

Inclusions

Support vehicle, tour leader / local guide, some meals, entry fees, locally made bike

Group size

minimum 4 and maximum 14

Food

12 breakfasts, 7 lunches and 6 dinners. You should consider bringing some of your favourite energy snacks and electrolyte powder for the cycling days.

Accommodation



9 nights comfortable hotels with en-suite bathrooms, 2 nights in basic tourist bungalows and 1 night under the stars in tented camp.

Due the nature of cycling trips we stay in some towns where the general standard of accommodation is quite low. In these places we have chosen the best possible place to stay - trust us there's nothing better

Single Room Supplement

On Grasshopper Adventures tours single travellers do not have to pay any extra to join our trips - we will match you up with another same sex, single traveller. However, should you wish to choose to take a single room we are happy to book rooms for you for an extra charge. This single supplement is completely voluntary and only applies to hotel accommodation, on overnight train trips there are no single rooms available. We should point out that on occasion single rooms may not be available and in these instances you may need to share for a night or two - we will refund part of your single supplement in these cases.

Additional Accommodation

Should you require additional accommodation at either end of the tour then we can offer you competitive rates at our group hotels. Please request extra nights when you book your trip. Prices are available on request.

Arriving in Kolkata

Meeting Point - this trip will begin at a hotel to be advised. The hotel will be a short way from the central Old Market area where there are many restaurants, Internet cafes, travel agents, market stalls and banks. The hotel has comfortable rooms with private bathroom, air conditioning, TV and 24 hour reception. There is also Internet and a restaurant at the hotel. From the airport there are prepaid cars (US\$5) and vans (US\$7) that will take you to the hotel. If you are bringing your own bike you might need to take a van. The hotel is well know and the drivers at the airport will know its location.

Transport

All transport listed in this tour is included

Cycling Details

Days Cycling

6 days on the road and 1 day local bike tour

Kilometers Cycled

278km

Difficulty Rating

Easy to Moderate

Cycling Conditions

50% sealed roads, 50% dirt roads. Road conditions in India vary from one place to another; dirt tracks skirting rural villages exist beside brand new 4 lane superhighways. Big cities can be difficult to negotiate with their heady mix of horns, pollution and chaotic traffic. This trip steers mostly off main roads and benefits from backlanes, short cuts and country roads that only local insiders know of. The route is fairly flat throughout and takes in some of the most scenic countryside in Orissa. Traffic is light, however pot holes, excited children and stray cows are an integral part of the terrain.

Bicycles

The cost of a bicycle purchased locally is included in this tour. The bikes are adequate although quite basic. We have kept cycle distances down to a reasonable level and as the roads are predominantly flat, the one gear speed is fine. If you would prefer to bring your own bike then please let us know. You should have your bike serviced by a professional bike mechanic before travelling to ensure that it



is in good working order. While we do provide mechanical assistance and carry some spare parts during the trip you will need to bring spare parts (including tubes) for your bike as different bikes use different parts and we cannot guarantee that we will have a part to suit your bike.

Helmets

Helmets are now compulsory on all Grasshopper Adventures bicycle tours. Please bring your own or let us know if you require us to provide one.

Transporting Your Bike

Most international airlines consider bicycles as part of your regular luggage weight allowance, so you will need to pack light. The best way to transport a bicycle is to package it in a bike box. Most bicycle stores are happy to give away boxes for free. You will need to remove the front wheel (and sometimes the rear wheel), handle bars, pedals and seat post. Tape any loose parts to the bike frame and pack a few extras in the box such as your helmet. You can keep your box until the end of the trip to pack it for the trip home.

Support Vehicles

For the cycling days we will have the backup support of a small bus that will carry our luggage, snacks, water, and anybody not cycling. You can use the support vehicle whenever you feel like no longer cycling.

Travel Details

Visas

Indian visas are required by most nationalities. You must apply for these in advance at your local embassy or through a travel agent. Prices are variable.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel. If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

Flights

International and domestic flights to the starting point and from the finishing point are not included in the price of this tour. We can assist with the purchase of inter-Asia flights and/or provide advice if you are considering overland travel. This tour starts in Kolkata which is served by a host of airline carriers from around the world. The tour ends in Golpalpur-on-Sea from where you can transfer by road to Bhubaneswar for connecting flights around India (including Kolkata, Delhi and Mumbai).

Money

The official currency of India is the Indian Rupee which should be used for all transactions. India has a modern banking system with ATMs (Visa/Mastercard/Cirrus/Maestro) and money changers in larger towns. You should, however, carry traveler's cheques and some cash as a backup. Most international currencies can be exchanged so it is not necessary to bring only US dollars - AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centres. For current exchange rates visit: www.oanda.com

Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$30 for food and general living costs per day while on the tour. It is customary to tip the guide and any support crew. You should allow approximately US\$50 per person for tips. Note: this is a guide only, feel free to tip more or less (or nothing) depending on your satisfaction.

Packing

When packing please remember that we will have only limited luggage space in the support vehicles and that you will have to carry your luggage at times. Your luggage should weigh no more than 15kg.



You should consider bringing the following items:

<p>Personal Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpack • Long trousers • Shorts • Shirts • Warm clothes for evenings • Hat • Sandals/Light Shoes • Sunglasses • Light Rain Coat • Toiletries • Small Towel • Sunscreen • First Aid Kit • Mosquito Repellent • Camera and Film/Memory • Alarm Clock 	<p>Bicycle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. day pack • Helmet • Cycling gloves • Bike shorts with something to put on over the top while off the bike (note for women: you will be expected to always wear something over bike shorts - sorry!) <p>Travel Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport with 6 months validity and 2 spare pages • Travel insurance details • Flight tickets • Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques • Phrase book
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Health

There are no specific health requirements for entry into India. However, you should consult your doctor for up to date information regarding vaccinations and medications for any foreseeable illnesses that may affect you while traveling in India. Also remember that we will be in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip for this reason we strongly recommend that you carry a personal First Aid kit as well as sufficient quantities of any personal medical requirements.

Climate

India stretches from the Himalaya through the northern deserts and down to the balmy beaches of Kerala. West Bengal and Orissa suffer from monsoons and extreme heat and we travel at the best time of year when midday temperatures aren't too high and the chance of rain is low.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Kolkata												
daily max (C)	26	29	34	36	36	34	32	32	32	31	26	27
rainfall (mm)	13	22	30	50	135	263	320	318	253	134	29	4
Puri												
daily max (C)	27	28	30	31	32	31	31	31	31	31	29	27
rainfall (mm)	9	20	14	12	63	187	296	256	258	242	75	8

Communication

You will be able to access email, phone, fax and post offices only in the larger towns on this trip. You should leave you family or friends your tour leader's local cellphone number or Grasshopper's Taiwan office number in case of an emergency. Our office staff will be able to get in touch with us in an emergency.

Electricity

India works on a 220 volt system and generally uses the old British-style 3 round pin plugs. You can easily buy an adapter in India for much cheaper than in your home country.

Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we



visit. Traveling is as much about how you visit as where you visit. Our guides and group leader follow detailed guidelines on acceptable behaviors and practices. These cover cultural considerations, reduction and disposal of waste and protection of endangered wildlife.

Dress

Despite what you see in Bollywood movies India is still a very conservative country. In rural areas and temples overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations. When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Sleeveless tops are not acceptable in temples. Cycling shorts will generally be considered offensive when off the bikes so please carry something to cover your shorts with.

Phrase Book

A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people that you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak English but away from these areas you should learn a few words of Hindi. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations

In spite of recent development, India remains a poor country and on our journey we will witness poverty of a nature inconceivable in North America, Europe or Australasia. The instinctive human reaction is to want to give, but the debate about whether or not to give to beggars is complicated, and if you choose to give there is then the decision about who to give to and how much to give. Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving items away to local people can create an expectation that a visiting foreigner equals free giveaways. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. In order to ensure that donations directly benefit the communities in the regions we travel through we can suggest good local projects to sponsor.

Important

All information in these tour notes is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures

