

Himalaya Paragliding

Bir Billing - 15 days

Trip Notes Bir Billing Flying Adventure



Welcome to Himalaya Paragliding adventures! We hope you will enjoy flying in the Indian Himalayas as much as we do. Be prepared for some serious adventure: stunning scenery, thermalling to 5000m, flying with vultures, incredible cross country flights and an amazing cultural experience. India has it all.

Group size

8 maximum

Accommodation

Delhi: middle class business hotel in Karol Bagh, a very colourful market area of Delhi

Chaughan: 1 or more Tibetan Guesthouses depending on group size and availability (13 nights)

Overnight train AC class, 2 tier: travel with the biggest railways in the world, but don't expect velvet cushions! (2 nights)

Additional accommodation at the end of the trip is available at the starting point hotel (see below). You can arrange this once you are in Delhi. The costs for additional accommodation have to be paid for by you.

Transport

Train, private taxis.

Trip notes

1. A word of warning about travelling in India: India is a country which is very different to anything you will have experienced before. Although this means it is not the easiest place to travel, this is also what makes it so special. Pollution, poverty and the crowds can result in initial culture shock but should be seen as an exciting new challenge. During our time here we have come to love this large and wonderfully different country but we know that we should always expect to encounter some difficulties along the way.

2. In India there are very different attitudes to time keeping, public cleanliness, privacy and service. Trains will sometimes be late, plumbing can sometimes be temperamental and power will often just vanish. Optimistic menus turn out to have only one dish available and everyone, just everyone, will want to know your name. If you are able to travel with a lot of patience and a healthy sense of humour, then we know that you - like all of us - will be captivated by what India has to offer.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on a Himalaya Paragliding adventure. You will not be permitted to fly with the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your guide, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy we require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency rescue, repatriation and personal liability, and does *not* exclude hazardous sports like paragliding. We also strongly recommend that the policy covers cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

Equipment

Himalaya Paragliding requires you to bring along your own paragliding equipment (harness, paraglider, emergency parachute, helmet, radio, vario, GPS, etc). Your equipment should include an emergency parachute. Without an emergency parachute you cannot participate on a Himalaya Paragliding adventure. Each and every pilot is responsible for the state of her/his equipment. We do not accept any responsibility for any malfunctioning of equipment.

During our adventure we shall use a 2 meter band radio for communicating in the air. Our radio's can receive PMR frequencies as well, but we will only use these frequencies when the whole group can transmit and receive on this frequency.

Health

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information about India before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip, and for legal reasons our guide(s) are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc.

Money exchange

Current rates are appr.: US\$1 = 46 Rps, Euro 1 = 54 Rps. There are now many ATM machines throughout India, though mainly limited to major cities, which accept both Visa and Mastercard. During our trip the only ATM you will encounter is in Delhi. Travellers cheques can be changed without any problem in Delhi. We strongly recommend you to change the necessary amount of money in Delhi and bring this in cash with you to the flying area. There is a possibility in Chaughan to change travellers cheques/cash but this takes 1 day and will cost you more in commission than in Delhi.

Spending money

You will need to allow enough money for the following:

- US\$150 for meals
- US\$50 in case you are interested in doing some optional activities.
- Money for alcoholic drinks and shopping.
- Departure tax - Departure tax for all flights is 500Rps and a Passenger Service Fee of US\$5 is also charged, but both of these costs should have been included in your flight ticket.
- Please also make sure you have access to an additional US\$100 as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (e.g. a natural disaster, a paragliding accident) necessitate a change to our itinerary.

Furthermore a 600 rps tipping kitty will be collected from you during the group meeting, to cover the tipping of hotels, drivers, etc. Please have this money ready when coming to the group meeting.

Keeping in touch – communication while on the road

If you need to be contacted while travelling we recommend that you set up an email address that can be accessed on the road, rather than relying on postal mail. Email cafes are becoming increasingly commonplace and cheap throughout the regions we visit, and has quickly become the preferred way to stay in touch. There are currently two internet café's in Chaughan.

Arrival complications

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, please make the following contacts as soon as possible:

- send an email to info@himalaya-paragliding.com
- call Hotel Pooja Palace (our meeting point in Delhi) and request to speak to Vincent Verbon from Himalaya Paragliding or leave a message. For contact details see Joining point

Your fellow pilots

When booking a trip with Himalaya Paragliding there's always a possibility that there are other pilots in the group, sometimes even from different nationalities or of varying ages. We ask you to be understanding of the various needs and preferences of your group - patience with your fellow travellers is sometimes required for the benefit of everyone's travel experience. Remember too that you have responsibilities to the group. If you are requested to be at a place at a certain time, ensure that you don't keep the rest of the group waiting.

Your guide

All Himalaya Paragliding adventures are accompanied by a guide. It is the guide's responsibility to organise all transportations, organise accommodation, show you restaurants and interesting places in the areas that we visit. The guide will furthermore provide you with information on the flying area: take off, landing zone(s), dangers, where not to fly, GPS coordinates, general orientation, XC possibilities, etc.

Language

All Himalaya Paragliding trips are in English. We do speak a bit of French, German and Spanish but not enough to run a trip. Trips in Dutch are available as well.

Meals

Meals are not included in the trip to give you maximum flexibility in deciding where, what, when and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. There are not many restaurants in Chaughan, so food options are limited. The main pilot hang out is a hotel/café with a small garden where you can eat anything from pancakes, to delicious pasta (some Italians taught the owner how to make real pasta's!) and fresh bread with peanut butter.

Laundry

There is laundry facility available at the main pilot hotel/café.

Visa

It is your responsibility to arrange visas before you travel. All nationalities require a visa. They are not available at port of entry but must be obtained in advance. We advise you to start well in advance with your visa application.

What to take

Travelling with your paraglider on a plane is always a hassle. Try and find an airline that has extra allowance for sport equipment or otherwise carry as much as possible in your hand luggage. It would be best if you could fit all your stuff into your paragliding bag. Try and travel as light as possible, leave all those things at home that you think you need but in the end never use!

On the overnight train our luggage will be with us at all times. After arrival in the flying area your paragliding bag will be put on the roof rack of a car so make sure you carry all your essentials in your hand luggage.

Checklist

Travel documents: passport, visa, insurance papers, air tickets (perhaps make some copies as well)

Cash money, Visa/Mastercard, Travellers cheques

Money pouch

Pilot licence

Paragliding equipment: harness, emergency parachute, paraglider, vario, GPS, 2 metre radio, helmet, first aid kit, flying suit, warm gloves, knife

Warm clothes for the evening

Raincoat

Alarm clock

Medicines

Sunglasses

Sunscreen

Thermal underwear

Mobile phone

Mobile phone

Your European mobile phone usually works fine in India. Even on take off you will be able to phone. But once more inland into the Himalayas, don't expect your phone to work unless you have a satellite phone. Calling a rescue helicopter from somewhere in the Himalayas is highly unlikely. If you want to undertake XC flights into the interior Himalayas please take notice of this. You will need to be self sufficient and have a satellite phone to be able to contact anybody. For the XC flights that we normally undertake (100 km out and return flight to Dharamshala) a normal mobile phone and a two metre porto is sufficient.

Another option is to bring along your mobile and buy a local SIM card in Chaughan with pre-paid credit. This will definitely save you money when phoning or texting.

Electricity

Indian electricity has the same voltage as in Europe. The plugs can be different so it is wise to take a travelling plug with you.

Safety

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure.

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling.

Participation form

After arrival in India you will be asked to show us your insurance papers, and provide us with your passport information and contact details back home. Furthermore you will have to sign a so called participation form with the following wording:

"I am aware and understand that travelling with Himalaya Paragliding (from now on HP) may involve risks (and rewards) above and beyond those encountered on a more conventional holiday, and that I am undertaking an adventure trip with inherent dangers. I realise that Himalaya Paragliding is not a paragliding school: HP does not teach people how to fly. HP organises transportation and accommodation and all the things that make a trip work. I am aware that HP trips are for pilots holding a valid full paragliding licence only and hereby declare that I have such a licence. At all times I will be fully responsible for my own safety.

I understand that I am travelling to geographical areas where, amongst other things, the standard of accommodation, transport, safety, hygiene, cleanliness, medical facilities, telecommunications and infrastructure development may not be of the standard I am used to at home or would find on a conventional holiday. I have read and understood the dossier for the trip I am undertaking and have provided details of any pre-existing medical conditions I have to Himalaya Paragliding. I accept these risks and obligations and I fully assume the risks of travel and paragliding. I release Himalaya Paragliding and its representatives from any liabilities connected to these risks to the maximum extent permitted by law.

I further agree that if I am injured HP may at my cost, arrange medical treatment, evacuation or any other emergency services on my behalf as HP deems necessary or appropriate for my safety and well being."

Joining point

Unless specifically stated otherwise, our meeting point is Hotel Pooja Palace. Your guide will be staying in this hotel to await your arrival on day 1. You can arrive at any time during the day. We will have a group meeting at the hotel to discuss the upcoming trip on **day two at 09.00 am**. The reason why the meeting is on the second day is that you will most likely arrive somewhere late evening/night on day 1. If you can't make it to the group meeting then please let us know immediately.

Address hotel:

Hotel Pooja Palace
15A/11 W.E.A.
Puja Park
Karol Bagh
New Delhi
Tel: (0112) 55460202 or 55460303/25745275 - 77
Fax: 0112 5787295

Joining instructions

Airport transfers *at the start of the trip* are included in the price. You need to email us your flight details at least one week in advance for us to be able to arrange the pick-up. When you arrive you just need to look out for our Himalaya Paragliding sign. The taxi will bring you straight to our joining hotel.

If for some reason you are unable to locate the pick-up then take a pre-paid taxi from the international airport to our joining point. You can book this taxi just after you have passed customs or otherwise outside the arrival hall. Just follow the signs saying 'pre-paid taxi'. The ride takes about 45 minutes and should cost between 200-300 rps depending on your arrival time (and the number of persons you are travelling with). There are plenty money changing facilities in the airport.

Finishing point

Hotel Pooja Palace
15A/11 W.E.A.
Puja Park
Karol Bagh
New Delhi
Tel: (011) 255460202 or 255460303/25745275 - 77
Fax: 011 25787295

Our responsibilities

Himalaya Paragliding does NOT provide paragliding courses. Our trips are for experienced pilots holding a full paragliding licence only. You yourself are responsible for your own safety. We will however:

- organise transport from Delhi to Billing and back
- provide you with information about the flying site(s)
- organise transport to take off
- organise accommodation

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival day. People will be coming from all different parts of the world to join our paragliding adventure. Planes from Europe generally land in the evening/night at Delhi. A taxi will be waiting for you to take you to the starting hotel. There are no activities planned on day 1.

Day 2: We start the day at 9.00am with the group meeting. After the meeting we will immerse ourselves in the smells and sights of Old Delhi. We will visit the Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk, a Sikh Gurudwara and the spice bazars of this historical place. Be prepared for a culture shock! In the evening we will board our overnight train to Pathankot.

Day 3: After arrival in Pathankot we will transfer to private taxis for our 3 hrs journey to Chaughan (near Bir) where we will check into our colourful Tibetan homes. After a quick look at the landing zone(s) we will take jeeps up to take off for our first flying day.

Day 4 - 14: During our flying days, we will fully explore the flying potential of this amazing area. Depending on the weather conditions and the aspirations of the pilots, we will set out challenging flying tasks. And when the conditions are optimal we will off course make some spectacular cross country flights. Flights of 50-100 km out and return are within reach of every pilot who has thermaling experience.

Day 15: Today afternoon we will take private taxis back to Pathankot to board the overnight train once more for our journey back to Delhi.

Day 16: Departure day. After arrival in New Delhi we will transfer back to our starting point hotel where we can use dayrooms to freshen up after the journey. Make sure you don't book a ticket home before 2 pm, in case of train delays.

We want your photos

We love to see your pictures! If you have some fantastic pictures of your flying adventure in the Himalayas, please do send them to info@himalaya-paragliding.com. Your picture might just appear in the gallery on our website!