

## **VARANASI EXTENSION**

### **Jan 25: DELHI**

Those not taking part in the extension depart for Indira Gandhi International Airport whilst those travelling to Varanasi with Denis Glennon and Gavriel Jecan will stay at [The Trident Gurgaon Hotel](#). Dinner will be in the hotel.

### **Jan 26: DELHI & VARANASI**

After breakfast, transfer to airport for flight to Varanasi.

Flight SG 116 Delhi-Varanasi 0855/1010hrs.

Upon arrival at Varanasi, we will be met at the airport by our local representative/guide and transferred to the [Gateway Hotel on the Ganges](#).

Varanasi, known to devout Indians as Kashi, is considered to be one of the most important pilgrimage sites in India. It is a major tourist attraction. Situated on the banks of the Ganges River, the city has been a centre of learning and civilization for over 2000 years.

Photographers from all over the world throng Varanasi to capture the heart and soul of India's beliefs, traditions and religious life. We will take you to extraordinary places for great photography in one of the oldest living cities of the world – to an India that has refused to change with time. Prepare for a photographic journey to the ghats and galis of Varanasi, where much of what Mark Twain described over a hundred years ago can still be witnessed, unchanged. The lifeblood of Varanasi lies in its narrow lanes; its celebrations are hidden in the steps leading to the Ganges, and its people have beliefs and traditions that have remained unchanged for over 5000 years.

During next two days, we will explore some of the little known areas of Varanasi of special interest to photographers - capturing a sadhu meditating on the banks of Ganges, a traditional pooja (religious ceremony), a Buddhist Monk, someone having a haircut by the ghat (a hair tonsuring ceremony), or an Akhara, where local wrestlers learn the skills of traditional wrestling called Kusti.

In the late afternoon we will visit Dashaswamedh Ghat to photograph the glittering "aarti" ceremony of the holy river. Huge lamps are set ablaze and the priest holds forth the lamp as the multitude chants the hymns. We will drive to Beniabagh and from there walk to Dashashamedh Ghat (2 km/30-45 minutes) amidst crowded local market filled with spices, shops, cloths and vendors selling fruits, pickles, vegetables etc. on hand-pulled carts.

### **Jan 27: VARANASI**

In the early morning we drive to Dashaswamedh Ghat and take a boat ride on the river Ganges to photograph the cremation Ghats and witness a mesmerising array of living traditions of one of the world's oldest and most important religions. Board a boat with our

guide and proceed to the middle of the river, where at sunrise the sight unfolds before you – just unforgettable photography. We will visit the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and walk through a maze of narrow lanes to capture images of cows, buffaloes, bulls, oxen, pigs, people, sadhu and beggars all sharing the same common narrow lane – for first-timers to Varanasi, the memories of this experience will remain with them forever.

After a leisurely breakfast at our hotel we explore some of the more photogenic places of Varanasi, including Benaras Hindu University, Durga temple and Bharat Mata temple.

In the afternoon we will travel to Sarnath, once of the most sacred places for Buddhists, where it is believed Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment. Photographing the Dhamaekha Stupa, the Moolgandha Kuti Vihar and parts of the Sarnath museum's rich collection of antiques is an unforgettable experience. We will also have opportunities to photograph Buddhist monks.

### **Jan 28: VARANASI & VARANASI-DELHI FLIGHT**

After breakfast, we will photograph more of the kaleidoscopic life of the city's narrow lanes as well as a shoot in a weaving community. We conclude our time in Varanasi with lunch at a city restaurant before being transferred to the airport for the return flight to Delhi.

Upon arrival at Delhi, our local representative will meet us at the airport and finish the day with an early dinner at [Eaton Smart Airport Hotel](#), which is a transit hotel inside the airport.

Depending on individual departure times we will remain at the airport complex, in preparation for international connecting flights.

### **INCLUDED IN THE EXTENSION**

- Return Delhi/Varanasi economy class flights.
- Two nights' accommodation in Varanasi.
- Breakfasts, light lunches and dinners on 26, 27 & 28 Jan and water in vehicles during transfers.
- Air-conditioned mini coaches (e.g. Toyota Innova) for all transfers. In Varanasi large vehicles are not allowed in certain parts of the city where we will wish to photograph.
- Services of an English speaking local guide.
- Entrance fees to locations we wish to photograph.
- Rickshaw rides in Varanasi.
- Boat trip on the Ganges River.
- Assistance at airports and hotels during check-in/out.

### **NOT INCLUDED IN THE EXTENSION**

- International airfares.

- Travel insurance.
- Expenditure of personal nature.
- Gratuities (e.g. to bell boys, boatman, rickshaw puller, in restaurants, local guide). □ Laundry.
- Telephone calls.
- A la carte meals.

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO PHOTOGRAPH IN VARANASI**

The following images have been kindly provided by Gavriel Jecan who has been to Varanasi seven times either with Art Wolfe or alone. He knows the locations that will deliver the best photographic opportunities for us. All images are reproduced in tis PDF with Gavriel's permission.

Those who have photographed in Myanmar with Gavriel and myself will appreciate having available the prior experience of photographing in Varanasi – no time will be lost searching for photogenic subjects or locations.









