

A photograph of a Himalayan monastery built into a cliffside. The monastery features white walls, red roofs, and golden stupas. It is situated on a steep, rocky cliff with a blue sky and clouds in the background. The monastery has multiple levels and is surrounded by lush greenery and trees.

Brandeis | TRAVELERS

Himalayan Kingdoms: India and Bhutan

ART, RELIGION, AND CULTURE

Featuring *Professor Harleen Singh*, Senior Associate Provost
for Academic and Strategic Initiatives, Brandeis University

March 22–April 6, 2025

DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

Join us for a 16-day luxury tour of the Himalayas! Featuring special Brandeis excursions and private encounters ranging from home-cooked meals to meetings with Indian alumni and local experts, you will discover the intricate tapestry of religion, art, and culture on a custom-curated journey to the Himalayas in northern India and Bhutan.

This spectacular journey will be led by Brandeis Professor Harleen Singh, Senior Associate Provost for Academic and Strategic Initiatives, Director of the Women's Studies Research Center, and a teacher of Literature and South Asian Studies. Born and brought up in India, and an expert in Indian literature, film, and culture, Professor Singh will enrich and inform the tour by sharing her in-depth insights and expertise.

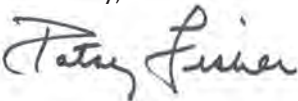
We will begin our journey in Delhi, with time to explore the city, followed by a welcome dinner and relaxing stay at the Taj-Ambassador. We then fly to Dharamshala, a serene hill town, home to the Dalai Lama and the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile. Here, we visit the Norbulingka Institute, Dolma Ling Nunnery, and Sobha Singh Art Gallery, and explore Andretta Village, an artists' colony in Himachal Pradesh.

In Rishikesh, we will experience one of India's most sacred sites near the headwaters of its mythical and revered river, the Ganges. View the famous suspension bridges, Lakshman Jhula and Ram Jhula, and visit Raghunath Temple and Triveni Ghat. Later, we will descend to the banks of the Ganges to view an evening prayer beside the river. Enjoy a visit to the Beatles Ashram to see where the musical group spent time in search of spirituality and inspiration.

After traveling through the breathtakingly beautiful countryside of the Indian Himalayas, return to Delhi for your flight to Paro, Bhutan. Enjoy visits to the Royal Textile Academy, the Giant Buddha statue at Kuensel Phodrang, the Tango Monastery, and the Sangay Gang reserve in Thimphu. Next, explore the National Museum and the iconic Paro Dzong in Paro. Conclude with an epic hike to the monastic retreat of Taktsang, known as the "Tiger's Nest." You may also join an optional prelude to Delhi and Agra, to visit one of the seven wonders of the world, the majestic Taj Mahal.

Space is limited on this once-in-a-lifetime journey. Make your reservations today by calling our tour operator, Criterion Travel, at **(888) 328-2089** or by emailing res@criteriontravel.com.

Sincerely,



F. Patricia Fisher
Vice President, Alumni Relations

HIGHLIGHTS

Visit the peaceful hill town of Dharmshala, home to the Dalai Lama and the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Explore the town of Rishikesh and some of the holy sites peppered around the headwaters of one of the planet's most important rivers, the Ganges.

RISHIKESH



Hike to see the famous Taktsang Monastery, a place so holy that all Bhutanese try to visit it at least once in their lifetimes. The monastery's white temples dramatically cling to a cliff at nearly 10,000 feet.

AGRA FORT



Pre-tour extension in Agra includes World Heritage Sites of Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal.

FACULTY LEADER



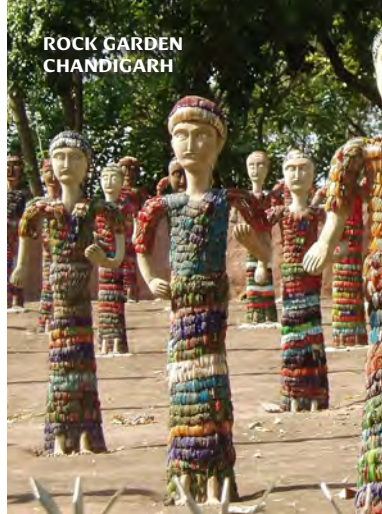
HARLEEN SINGH is Senior Associate Provost for Academic and Strategic Initiatives, Director of the Women's Studies Research Center, and Associate Professor of Literature and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at Brandeis. Born and brought up in India, she received her undergraduate degree from Sweet Briar College in Virginia and an M.A., M. Phil. and Ph.D. in Literature from the University of California, San Diego. Her work focuses on British colonialism in India with a special emphasis on literature written by women. She has published widely on novels, films, popular culture, art, and music and is a frequent contributor on issues of gender, politics, and culture in the media.

**GOLDEN GODDESS
AT THIMPHU**





GANGA AARTI CEREMONY
IN RISHIKESH



ROCK GARDEN
CHANDIGARH

ITINERARY

**Saturday-Sunday,
March 22-23**

U.S./DELHI, INDIA

Take an overnight flight to Delhi, India, and transfer to the Taj Ambassador Hotel. The remainder of the day is at leisure to explore the city on your own. Gather for a group welcome dinner in the hotel.

TAJ AMBASSADOR HOTEL (D)

Monday, March 24

DHARAMSHALA

After breakfast, fly from Delhi to Dharamshala, the seat of the Tibetan government-in-exile. Transfer to hotel and check in, followed by lunch. The rest of the day is free to relax and enjoy the hotel amenities and surroundings.

TAJ NORBU THE MONTANNA (B,L,D)

**Tuesday-Wednesday,
March 25-26**

DHARAMSHALA

Over the next two days, explore the following sites while in Dharamshala (the exact order of sites visited will be determined closer to departure):

- Norbulingka Institute, dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture and artistic traditions.
- Dolma Ling Nunnery, educational institution and home to over 200 Tibetan nuns. In the evening, observe a Tara puja prayer and lamp lighting ceremony.
- Sobha Singh Art Gallery and the artists' colony at Andretta village.
- Palampur Tea Gardens – learn how tea is grown, manufactured, dried, and sorted on a private tour of the plantation and factory, followed by a Tea Tasting session.

There will also be some additional specially arranged visits in Dharamshala.

TAJ NORBU THE MONTANNA (B,L,D ON MARCH 25; B,L ON MARCH 26)

**Thursday, March 27
CHANDIGARH**

Early this morning drive to Chandigarh, approximately 5-6 hours with stops, with lunch at a local restaurant en route. In the afternoon, visit the unique Rock Garden of Chandigarh, a remarkable 40-acre sculpture garden of over 2,000 sculptures crafted from recycled materials, showcasing the creativity and artistic genius of Nek Chand Saini.

TAJ CHANDIGARH (B,L,D)

**Friday, March 28
RISHIKESH**

Depart Chandigarh and drive about 5-6 hours with rest stops and lunch to Rishikesh, in the foothills of the Himalayas. The rest of the day is free to relax at the resort and enjoy its amenities, pool, spa, and beautiful surroundings.

TAJ RISHIKESH RESORT (B,L,D)

**Saturday, March 29
RISHIKESH**

After breakfast, start a sightseeing tour of Rishikesh, one of India's holiest cities. Cross the iconic suspension bridges over the Ganges River,





Lakshman Jhula and Ram Jhula. Visit the revered Raghunath Temple and Triveni Ghat, a sacred bathing site at the confluence of three sacred rivers. In the evening, descend the banks of the Ganges to witness the spiritual ceremony Parmarth Niketan Ganga Aarti, in which devotees offer prayers, chant hymns, and light oil lamps to express devotion and gratitude to the river, considered sacred in Hinduism.

TAJ RISHIKESH RESORT (B,L)

Sunday, March 30

RISHIKESH

Early this morning there is an optional drive to visit Kunjapuri Temple, a revered Hindu shrine, at sunrise for breathtaking views of the Himalayas. Return to the hotel for breakfast, then explore Vashistha Cave, believed to be the meditation retreat of Hindu Sage Vashistha, the human son of Lord Brahma. Its natural beauty and spiritual heritage make it a unique and peaceful spot in Rishikesh. Because of the mountain roads, local touring will be in 5-seat passenger vans. The rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy the resort's amenities. TAJ RISHIKESH RESORT (B,L,D)

Monday, March 31

DELHI

Transfer to Dehradun Airport early this morning and fly back to Delhi. On arrival, visit Qutb Minar Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site whose tower and other structures date from the Slave Dynasty (1206-1290) and reflect the beginnings of Islamic architecture in India. The complex initially housed about 27 Hindu temples that were destroyed, and their material was reused for constructing the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque and the iconic Qutb Minar, the tallest brick minaret in the world at 73 meters.

RADISSON BLU HOTEL (B,L,D)

Tuesday, April 1

THIMPHU, BHUTAN

Take an early morning flight to Paro, Bhutan, and then transfer to Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan. En route, stop to see the 15th century iron bridge built by Tibetan saint Thangthong Gyelpo as well as the Tachog Monastery, also from the 15th century, across the river. In the afternoon, visit Buddha Dordenma, the massive golden Buddha sitting atop a gilded meditation hall overlooking the picturesque Thimphu Valley. Tour the Royal Textile Academy and learn about Bhutan's rich weaving heritage. DRUK HOTEL (B,L)

Wednesday, April 2

THIMPHU

This morning there is an optional hike through a beautiful oak forest to Tango Monastery, a monastic school and retreat built in 1688. In the afternoon visit the Arts and Crafts School, which

offers students instruction in Bhutan's 13 traditional arts, specializing in carving, painting and sculpting. Visit Sangay Gang, a reserve for the takin, the national bison-like animal of Bhutan. DRUK HOTEL (B,L,D)

Thursday, April 3

PARO

Drive to Paro and explore the National Museum, showcasing the rich cultural heritage and history of the country through a diverse collection of artifacts, textiles, and traditional art. Visit the 17th-century fortress-monastery Paro Dzong, the center of civil and religious authority in the valley, renowned for its massive stone walls, intricate woodwork, and vibrant murals.

ZHIWALING HOTEL (B,L,D)

Friday, April 4

PARO

Today, embark on a rewarding 4-6 hour hike to the famous Taktsang Monastery, also known as Tiger's Nest. This sacred Buddhist site clings to a cliff's edge, about 2,700 feet above the Paro Valley, offering a dramatic setting amid breathtaking natural beauty. The trail winds through dense forests, across scenic landscapes, and up steep inclines, rewarding hikers with stunning panoramic views along the way. Alternatively, spend the day exploring Paro independently. This evening, enjoy a farewell dinner. ZHIWALING HOTEL (B,L,D)

Saturday, April 5
DELHI, INDIA

After breakfast, take a late morning flight to Delhi and transfer to the airport hotel. Depart on your late-evening or early-morning flight from Delhi. RADISSON BLU PLAZA (B,L)

Sunday, April 6
DELHI/HOME
Arrive in the U.S.

Program Rates

Per person, sharing accommodations	\$10,690
Per person, single accomodations	\$13,140

What to Expect

This will be a fast-paced, active program covering rugged terrain, with considerable walking and several rigorous travel days with early morning departures. Daily excursions involve one to three miles of walking, including stairs without handrails, high thresholds, and cobbled uneven paths.

Motorcoach rides to remote locations are sometimes long and over bumpy or mountainous, winding roads. Two drives will last up to five or six hours, and some days we will travel in small passenger vans to better navigate the narrow mountain roads. All vehicles will be air-conditioned.

The Bhutan portion of this itinerary takes place at moderately high altitude. Our hotels are at approximately 7,500 feet, and, we will be visiting sites at higher elevations. The optional excursion to Taktsang Monastery (Tiger's Nest) is a rigorous 4 to 6 hour hike on a sometimes steep and rocky trail with several hundred steps – it's around 4 miles roundtrip and is at an altitude of 10,240 ft. Participants can opt out of this excursion if preferred. Altitude sickness is most common above 8,000 feet, but some participants may experience some symptoms of altitude sickness, including headache, fatigue, and insomnia. In addition, higher altitudes can exacerbate health issues you already have.

Any physical condition requiring special attention, diet, or treatment must be reported. All reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate special diets and treatment, but medical treatment is not at Western standards, and we cannot guarantee special arrangements. Some meals will be basic, and restaurants may not offer the kind of variety or service one finds in larger cities. Not all hotels have elevators; you may have to walk up several flights of stairs to your room. You should be prepared

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION In Delhi and Agra
March 19 – 23, 2025

Arrive in Delhi, India and transfer to the luxurious Taj Ambassador Hotel. Enjoy a full day exploration of Old and New Delhi before departing for Agra. Visit the iconic UNESCO World Heritage sites of Agra Fort and the Taj Majal before returning to Delhi to join the main program. TAJ AMBASSADOR HOTEL; ITC MUGHAL (3B, 3L, 2D)



Further details and pricing will be sent to confirmed participants.

to handle your own luggage at Customs points where porters are not permitted.

Restrooms outside the hotels and restaurants are often quite rustic (including some squat toilets) and may not supply toilet paper. Anyone with a serious medical problem, whose medical situation might be adversely affected by active travel at high altitude, or who might have difficulty walking, should not consider this program. This promises to be a memorable journey, but as with all travel, a flexible attitude, a spirit of adventure, and a willingness to explore new areas will enhance your enjoyment of this program. You do not have to participate in all the scheduled activities, except when traveling to the next destination. We are sure you will be pleased with the exciting educational program provided, but we want you to be aware of the pace and activity level.

Luggage: Due to the requirements for our on-tour flights, all guests are asked to limit their luggage to one checked bag weighing no more than 33 pounds and one carry-on, weighing no more than 15 pounds.

Flight Schedules between Delhi and Himalayan Regions change frequently; the actual timings and order of sites visited may change accordingly.

General Information

PROGRAM RATES INCLUDE:

Hotel nights as outlined in itinerary ■ All on-tour flights: Delhi-Dharamshala; Rishikesh-Delhi; Delhi-Paro; Paro-Delhi ■ Meals and excursions as specified in the itinerary ■ Comprehensive program of briefings, lectures and presentations ■ Motorcoach transfers on group arrival and departure dates ■ Baggage handling ■ Gratuities to porters, waitstaff, guides and drivers ■ Entrance fees ■ Welcome and farewell wine receptions ■ House wine, beer, and soft drinks with all group lunches and dinners ■ Bottled water

on motorcoaches ■ Criterion Tour Manager throughout the program ■ Bhutan group visa (\$40 pp)

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program rates. Valerie Wilson Travel, Inc., can help with airline arrangements for this trip and can be reached at (877) 376-1754. You are also welcome to book your air transportation through your local travel agent, an online travel site, or the airline of your choice. Further information about making flight arrangements will be sent to confirmed participants.

GROUP SIZE: This program is exclusive to Brandeis Travelers and can accommodate 28 participants.

PROGRAM RATES DO NOT INCLUDE: U.S. domestic and international airfare ■ **India individual dual-entry visa expenses (\$25 for US Citizens, subject to change)**

■ Medical expenses and immunizations if required at the time of travel ■ Private airport transfers or airport transfers outside of group arrival and departure days ■ Travel and trip cancellation insurance ■ Excursions that deviate from the scheduled tour options ■ Airline baggage charges ■ Meals not specified in the itinerary; dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks except as noted ■ Laundry or dry cleaning ■ Telephone, Internet and email charges ■ Room service ■ Other items of a personal nature.

TRAVEL INSURANCE: Brandeis Travelers partners exclusively with Meyer and Associates to offer trip insurance for our tours. Please inquire about trip insurance options once you've made your reservation to meet any time-sensitive requirements. For more information, please call Meyer and Associates at 800-635-7801 or email info@meyerandassoc.com.

A NOTE ABOUT RATES: Tour rates are based upon current fuel prices, currency values, taxes, tariffs, and a minimum number of participants. While we will do everything possible to maintain the listed rates, they are subject to change. If there are significant changes, details and costs will be advised prior to departure.

Terms & Conditions

Complete Terms and Conditions including Statement of Responsibility will be made available to you at time of registration, or in advance upon request. A signed "Terms & Conditions, Release from Liability, Assumption of Risk and Binding Arbitration Clause" is required from each applicant prior to participation on the tour.

RESERVATIONS & PAYMENT:

To reserve space online visit https://account.criteriontravel.com/Booking/RefStart/BRAN/250322_HIM_BRAN/ or email Criterion Travel at res@criterion-travel.com. You may also return the completed reservation form with your \$1,000 per person deposit to: Criterion Travel, 4250 SW Hall Blvd., Beaverton, OR 97005, or fax to (650) 560-6400. Balance of payment is due December 23, 2024. After December 23, 2024, full payment is due upon registration. Final payment must be made by check or bank transfer.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUNDS: Upon payment of a deposit, all reservations are subject to the cancellation provisions set forth below and by which the passenger agrees to be bound. Cancellations shall not be effective until they are received in writing and confirmed by Brandeis Travelers and Criterion Travel. Deposits are refundable (less a \$250 per person admin fee) if written notice of cancellation is received within 30 days of booking; after that, deposits are 100% nonrefundable. After December 23, 2024 final payment deadline: All payments regardless of booking date are 100% non-refundable. For this reason, we strongly urge participants to purchase trip cancellation insurance. No refunds will be made for any part of this program on which you choose not to participate. **NOTE:** *Neither Brandeis Travelers nor Criterion Travel, the tour operator, accepts liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in conjunction with this tour.*

HEALTH: All participants should be in good health and capable of keeping up with an active group of travelers. By paying the deposit, the passenger certifies that he/she does not have any physical or other condition or disability that would create a hazard for him/herself or other passengers.

ITINERARY CHANGES: The itinerary presented for this tour is subject to modification and change by Brandeis Travelers and Criterion Travel, the tour operator. Every reasonable effort will be made to operate the program as planned; however, should unforeseen world events and conditions require the itinerary to be altered, Brandeis Travelers and the tour operator reserve the right to do so for the safety and best interest of the group. Any extra expenses incurred in this situation are the responsibility of the participant.

DISCLAIMER: Brandeis University is not responsible for any tour operator policies or for any refunds. Criterion Travel is the operator of this program and solely responsible for carrying out the responsibilities associated with it. Additionally, Brandeis University, as a sponsor, has no financial or legal responsibility for the program. Further documentation, including applicable Terms & Conditions associated with participation in this program, will be sent to confirmed participants.

California Seller of Travel Program CST
#2088800-40

Himalayan Kingdoms:
India & Bhutan

ART, RELIGION, AND CULTURE

March 22–April 6, 2025



RESERVE
ONLINE

For more information or to reserve by phone, please call (888) 328-2089 or (650) 328-2089; or email res@criteriontravel.com.

You may also complete and return this reservation form with your deposit of \$1,000 per person, payable to Criterion Travel, to: Criterion Travel, 4250 SW Hall Blvd., Beaverton, OR 97005, or fax the completed form to (650) 560-6400.

NAME #1 (as it appears on passport) BIRTHDATE

NAME #2 (as it appears on passport) BIRTHDATE

MAILING ADDRESS

CITY / STATE / ZIP or POSTAL CODE

HOME PHONE MOBILE PHONE

EMAIL #1 ADDRESS

EMAIL #2 ADDRESS

PAYMENT

Please charge the \$1,000 per person deposit to my credit card

(circle one): VISA / MC / AMEX / DISCOVER

NAME AS IT APPEARS ON CARD

CARD # EXP. DATE / CVV SECURITY CODE

SIGNATURE AS IT APPEARS ON CREDIT CARD DATE

☐ Enclosed is my check for \$_____ (\$1,000 per person, payable to Criterion Travel) to reserve _____ place(s) on Himalayan Kingdoms: India & Bhutan.

SINGLE TRAVELERS

☐ I prefer to have single accommodations (*limited availability*)
OR ☐ I plan to share accommodations with:

OR ☐ I'd like to know about roommates. *I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of December 23, 2024, I will pay the single rate.*

ACCOMMODATIONS

Bed Preference (*not guaranteed*): ☐ One bed ☐ Two beds

I/We have read the Terms & Conditions at left and understand and agree with them as stated herein:

SIGNATURE DATE

SIGNATURE DATE

Brandeis

TRAVELERS

Brandeis University
Institutional Advancement, MS 124
415 South Street
Waltham MA 02453-2728



Himalayan Kingdoms: India & Bhutan

ART, RELIGION, AND CULTURE

March 22–April 6, 2025