

WILD PHOTOGRAPHY HOLIDAYS



NORTHEAST INDIA

LAND OF THE ANGHs AND NAGALAND TRIBAL FESTIVALS

- Explore the Land of the Anghs
- Aoleong Monyü tribal festivals
- Photograph Konyak tribal villages
- Four days photographing Angami Naga village life
- Photograph on the Myanmar border
- Remote Longwa village and tattooed tribals
- Assamese Vaishnava culture
- Majuli, one of the world's largest river islands
- Tea gardens of Assam
- Kohima Nagaland's capital city
- Ancient Mishing fishing communities
- Life on the Brahmaputra
- Weaving, pot making & drumming monks
- Calcutta street photography

- Magnificent street food, sample and photograph!
- Flower Markets & River Aarti ceremonies
- Mud wrestlers & River Hooghly boat tour

INTRODUCTION

We are thrilled to be heading back to Nagaland, Assam & Calcutta to run our new 15 night/16 day photographic tour in exotic Northeast India. We kick off in the culturally and photographically rich city of Calcutta. This is one of our own favourite cities known for its welcoming friendly inhabitants, fabulous street food and oodles of out of this world street photography. From Calcutta a relatively short flight to the Northeast transports us to Nagaland and Assam, two of India's remote eight sister

states. Once in Nagaland there will be ample opportunity to photograph the ancient spring tribal festival of Aoleong Monyü. During the last four days of our tour based in Mon we will visit some very remote Konyak Naga villages. These series of unique and separate tribal village celebrations are very raw, in their original form and without refinement. The Konyak Naga tribal villages are way out and spread up and beyond the Myanmar border. In addition to visiting several villages around our base main base Mon we will also visit Longwa one of the most remote villages of all.

The mid-part of our tour in Assam provides a wonderful contrast to its Naga neighbour. In Assam we will encounter a wild fusion of Indo Burmese, Mongolian and



Aryan influences, a land of red rivers and blue hills, drumming dancing monks and tea plantations. The mighty Bramaputra River defines the Assamese Landscape. We will visit one of the world's largest river islands where we find the Mishing tribes who originally moved down from mountainous areas such as Arunachal Pradesh. The Mishing are renowned for their unique fishing methods and river navigation prowess. WPH have been running photographic tours in Nagaland and Assam for ten years now. Throughout this time, we have worked closely with Angami Naga Teiso Yhokha, a talented photographer and excellent organiser. Thanks to his close relationships with the local community, we have been able to create some truly powerful documentary photography.

WE LOVE CALCUTTA!

Calcutta is a chaotic patchwork of colonial architecture, vibrant festivities and garlands of marigolds with a distinct scent of Bengali street food. Locally, Calcutta is regarded as India's intellectual, artistic and cultural cap-

ital and was once the capital of the British Empire in India. The city has witnessed many more cultures in its past than most others would even in this globalised present. The vibrant Bengali area contains a fascinatingly cosmopolitan blend of the seemingly incongruous architectural forms (from Islamic to Baroque, from Victorian to Bengali). Hooghly, a tributary of the Holy Ganges is integral to the very identity of Bengal. It gives and sustains life for the millions that depend on it. From the wrestlers who exercise on its soft clay to the boatmen who ferry people across, from the flower sellers who need the water to keep their produce fresh to the boys who throw magnets and retrieve coin offerings from its bed. Calcutta is a visually superb location for photographers from the riot of the flower bazaar to the clay idol makers' den, Kumartuli, from the Howrah Bridge to the cremation ghats – it's the buzz of life. If people and photographing people in their natural environment, crowded bazaars and magnificent street food is what gets you going then Calcutta is not to be missed. We will spend three nights and two whole days exploring a wide variety



of locations in the city before heading off on Day 4 to Nagaland. For an interesting insight into Calcutta check out this Conde-Nast Traveller piece: "Exploring the faded splendour of Kolkata":<https://www.cntraveller.com/gallery/travel-guide-to-kolkata>

PHOTOGRAPHY TUTORS

This tour will be led by [Martin Sammtleben](#) and [Geraldine Westrupp](#), who have extensively traveled in the region.

DAILY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Calcutta

We will meet together at our city hotel as a group 18:00 for introductions and a tour briefing. City Hotel (BLD)

Day 2,3: Photography in Calcutta

For two days we will head out into the heart of Calcutta to explore the very best locations that this vibrant city has to offer photographically.

City Hotel (BLD)



Day 4: Calcutta to Dimapur to Tuophema, Nagaland

Early morning we leave our hotel and transfer to the domestic airport for a relatively short flight to Dimapur in Nagaland. Teiso and his team will meet us and drive us to the Naga village of Tuophema. We will pass through the scenic Patkai ranges dotted with villages and wayside local markets. Our accommodation is beautifully located on a forested hilltop in the heart of the village. Tuophema Village House (BLD)

Day 5: Tuophema, Nagaland

Early morning we head into the village to catch the locals going about their morning chores. The village is peaceful and rural, there is a school and many children. After breakfast we will spend more time exploring Tuophema and its surroundings. March, April and May mark the

summertime in Nagaland when the rhododendrons and orchids flower. There will be an evening cultural programme by the local village folks who are from the Angami tribe noted for their melodic singing. Tuophema Village House (BLD)

Day 6: Tuophema to Kohima, Nagaland

This morning we drive to Kohima and explore its wild, unusual local market. The Kohima market gives great insight into the Naga way of life. Early afternoon we head off to Kigwema village to see the last remaining traditional Angami Naga tribal houses. We will interact with some of the local villagers in their traditional attires. Late afternoon we return to Kohima. Kohima Hotel (BLD)

Day 7: Kohima and Khonoma Village, Nagaland

After breakfast we will drive to Khonoma Village to spend the day exploring the village where we will meet and photograph some of the local villagers in a traditional environment. We arrive back in Kohima late afternoon. Kohima Hotel (BLD)

Day 8: Kohima to Jorhat, Assam

After breakfast we leave the hotel and drive to Jorhat in Assam. En route will be an interesting photographic stop to explore a local and quite primitive brick factory. Our accommodation for the two nights in Jorhat is a lovely heritage tea estate bungalow. Banyan Grove is located in a world of leafy hills, misty mornings and the ambrosial aroma of tea everywhere. The rooms and decor, dating back a century, offer a truly vintage experience. The sur-



roundings are ideal for local photographic excursions. Banyan Grove Jorhat (BLD)

Day 9: Jorhat Market & Tea Gardens, Assam

After breakfast we visit the vibrant local market of Jorhat. Alongside the fruit and vegetables, hardware and animals we will find some more unusual offerings including delicacies such as deep fried spiders and grasshoppers. Not a common tourist venue the local people tend to be curious and welcoming. The afternoon will be devoted to photographing tea picking in Gatoonga Tea Estate, a beautifully attractive tea garden in the heart of Jorhat.

Banyan Grove Jorhat (BLD)

Day 10: Jorhat to Majuli River Island, Assam

This morning we head to Nimati port for the ferry across the Brahmaputra to Majuli one of the largest river islands in the world. Here we encounter heart of Vaishnava culture in Assam. The great 15th century Assamese reformer and saint, Shankardeva had come down here and set up 'satras' or monasteries to motivate the people to-

wards culture and religion without sects or caste. On the island, we will visit the pottery making village of Salmora where the villagers make earthen pots by beating the clay into shapes with a round stone and a stick. The potters use a driftwood fired kiln to bake their creations. For as long as they can remember, the Salmora potters have been seasonally selling their pots on the banks of the Brahmaputra and across the river on their boats.

Majuli Homestay (BLD)

Day 11: Majuli Island, Assam

After a leisurely breakfast, we will visit a Vaishnava Monastery to photograph the 'drumming dancing monks' followed by an interaction session with some resident monks. In the afternoon we visit a 'Mishing' tribal village to see and experience their lifestyle. 'Mishing' or 'Miri' people migrated down from the hills of Arunachal Pradesh many centuries back and settled down in various areas of Assam. They live in stilted houses, sharing many similarities with hill tribes. The Mishings are master fishermen and famous for their navigation skills on the peril-



ous waters of the Brahmaputra. The gorgeous yellow mustard seed fields are a feature of Assam and Majuli. We will visit and photograph a fascinating mustard oil processing project set up to provide work for the local people.

Majuli Homestay (BLD)

Day: 12 Majuli to Mon, Nagaland

Early morning we take a ferry across the Brahmaputra back to Nimati. Once on the other side, we will continue driving towards Mon in Nagaland. En route we will stop at some of the archaeological sites of the Ahom kingdom in Sibsagar. We will also take time photograph local markets along the way. We will arrive in Mon late afternoon. The Mon district sits on Nagaland's northernmost tip at a lofty 898m. The area has a striking terrain of hills and valleys, forests and a cooler climate. Offering a glimpse into India's 'wild-east', Mon resonates with tribal culture and an altogether otherworldly aura. The town is perfect for our explorations of the Naga villages celebrating the Aoleong Monyü festival. The entire

Konyak Community of Nagaland observe Aoleong Monyü in the first week of April every year since time immemorial. The tribes make animal sacrifices to appease the divine spirit for a good harvest season. The festival is celebrated with immense joy, unity and happiness among the people.

Mon Hotel (BLD)

Day 13,14: Mon, the Land of the Anghs, Nagaland

For two full days we will explore Mon and visit different local villages to observe and photograph their tribal festivals. We will have an opportunity to meet the village tribals and see their way of life. Despite the new administrative structures, the old ways of governance too live on. The village chiefs (Anghs) are hereditary positions and they still command a fair degree of respect in these parts. They continue to receive tributes and gifts from their subjects either in the form of a portion of feast animals or in some cases even a cut on the sale of handicrafts to tourists. An outsider entering a village needs to pay his respects to the Angh and take his permission to visit the village. Polygamy too thrives for the chiefs despite the advent of christianity and its supposedly modern lessons. The young Nagas today are proudly reclaiming their identity and traditions! The Morungs (youth dormitories and places of traditional learning) are again active and one can hear the thumping of log drums once more resound in villages. The children and young people everywhere wear bright jewellery and outfits to participate fully in the celebrations of Aoleang.

Mon Hotel (BLD)



Day 15: Longwa Village on Myanmar Border, Nagaland

After an early breakfast we will drive to Longwa village for their Aoleang celebration. The drive from Mon to Longwa Villlage is beautiful. Undulating green hills in the Patkai range as far as the eye can see, punctuated only by thatched huts very widely set apart. Traditionally the tribals here are still less touched by modern ways. Longwa is one of the big remote Konyak villages on the border ridge between India and Myanmar (Burma). The Angh (king) of Longwa commands about 50 villages from both the side. Longwa still has a good number of tattooed people and photography here is a bit special. The Konyak Nagas in the Longwa area are possibly the fiercest and most photogenic of all the Nagaland headhunter tribes. The village offers wonderful panoramic views of the hills in both India and Myanmar.

Mon Hotel (BLD)

Day 16: Mon to Dibrugarh Airport, Nagaland

After breakfast we transfer to Dibrugarh Airport for the flight to Calcutta. Hotel accommodation is not included on Day 16. If you would like us to book you a hotel in Calcutta for this night please let us know at the time of booking.

(B)

Exact dates of the celebrations are subject to change depending on the lunar calendar and VIP movement in the area. The final programme will be confirmed at a closer date.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All meals
- 15 nights accommodation



- Comfortable transport
- Photographic tuition
- Naga guide/coordinator
- Various location guides
- All entrance fees
- Camera fees, except for any video equipment
- Airport transfers in India
- Two internal flights

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights
- Travel/medical Insurance
- Alcoholic beverages, soft drinks, snacks between meals
- Tips for local staff
- Indian Visa

JOINING ARRANGEMENTS AND TRANSFERS

We will meet on Day 1 at our first night hotel in Calcutta. Participants generally arrive at different times of the day or night, as they will book their own flights, opting for the best deals available. The first-night hotel will be avail-

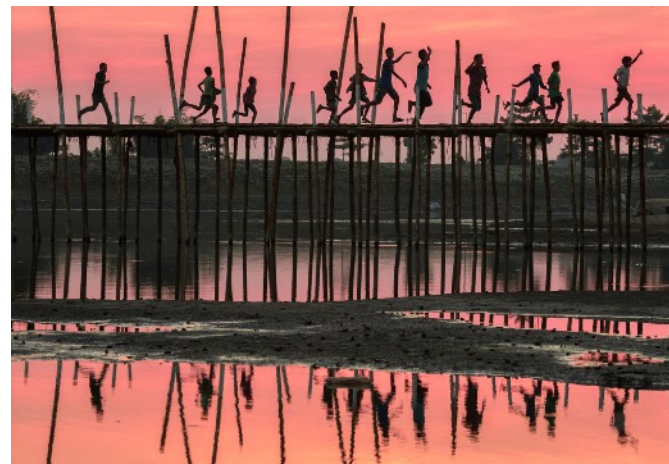
able for check-in early afternoon on Day 1. If participants arrive several hours before this, they may prefer us to book them in for an extra night in order to get some valuable rest. We will meet as a group at 18:00 in the hotel reception.

ACCOMMODATION

Calcutta: good city hotel (3 nights)
Jorhat: colonial heritage tea bungalow (2 nights)
Majuli: simple homestay (2 nights)
Mon: simple hotel with en suite facilities (4 nights)
Kohima: city hotel with good ensuite facilities (2 nights)
Tuophema: local cottages en-suite (2 nights)

FOOD

Western and continental-type food is often available and the standard of local Naga/Assamese cuisine will be high. We will always take care to eat in establishments that have good hygiene. Bottled water is readily available.



SPENDING MONEY

This always depends on personal habits. Prices in India tend to be cheaper than the West, although some things such as bottled beers can be similar. £200 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses. This amount will allow money for soft drinks and/or beer. If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, there are cash machines in the towns. Bulky items can often be shipped by the seller for a small additional cost.

GUIDANCE ON TIPPING

Tipping is an accepted and expected part of Indian culture, although you should only tip for services that are well done. The total amount that you can expect to pay in tips for your local guide and drivers, as well as hotel staff, railway porters, etc. is around £80.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

It is recommended that you take out appropriate insurance to cover personal accident, medical costs, repatriation, loss of baggage and holiday cancellation.

We will need a copy of your travel insurance at the time of booking.

VACCINATIONS

You should attend your own doctor and dentist for a check-up. Your doctor will have access to the most up to date information on the required vaccinations for India. A good resource is Scottish National Health [FitForTravel website](#)

PASSPORT AND VISAS

A passport with at least six months remaining validity at the time of arrival in India and a current Indian visa are required for this trip. Please note that your passport needs to be machine-readable.

You will need to apply for your Indian visa in advance. Citizens of most countries are eligible for the Indian eVisa. Apply online at indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/ at least 10 days before your planned arrival in India. If your country is not listed as eligible for the eVisa, you will need to apply for a standard visa from the relevant issuing authority in your home country. Standard visas can take quite a bit longer depending on your location. We recommend you make enquiries and apply well in advance. Obtaining a visa is not the responsibility of WPH.

HEALTH

We will have a first aid kit to hand at all times. Please bring your own small personal first aid kit, along with any medication for your own use. Hand wash that can be applied without water is always useful for getting rid of germs and removing greasy traces from fingers that will



be taking photographs! Nowadays, it is relatively easy to stay healthy and well in India.

CLIMATE

Assam: The shoulder season in Majuli falls between March and April. Temperatures begin to rise, ranging from 15°C to 30°C, with occasional rainfall. While the weather remains pleasant for outdoor activities and sightseeing, the number of tourists decreases, resulting in a quieter ambiance on the island.

Nagaland: summer in Nagaland, from March to May, is relatively mild with temperatures ranging from 16-31°C. In the higher villages towards the Myanmar border it can be chilly and it can rain so bring a warm jacket trousers and sturdy shoes

CURRENCY

Indian Rupee. Money can be exchanged either at the airport, or through cash machines and money exchangers



on the street. Bring dollars, pounds, Euros and/or debit/credit card.

LANGUAGE

The main language of North India is Hindi. It is spoken and understood in the areas that we visit. English is often spoken and understood. However, all of the areas we visit have distinct languages that are different from Hindi.

Nagaland: all the major Naga tribes have their own language. In actual practice, the language varies from village to village. In all, there are about thirty languages. The multiplicity of Naga languages is mainly because of the living conditions in the past. Villages were isolated and there was little of friendly inter-communication between them. It is interesting to find that some Naga tribes have borrowed Sanskrit words in their Assamese form. Hindi is understood too.

Assam: Assamese is the official language of Assam, spoken by over 13 million native speakers. It is spoken in parts of Arunachal Pradesh and other Northeast Indian states. Nagamese, an Assamese-based Creole language is widely used in Nagaland and parts of Assam. Small pockets of Assamese speakers can be found in Bhutan and Bangladesh.



CLOTHING

Generally speaking, light cotton clothing, allowing freedom of movement, will be well suited to the temperatures in Assam. In Nagaland we will be just on the edge of the cold season. It will be good idea to have a warm jumper, windproof jacket, a light waterproof jacket, a hat, light gloves and a pair of walking trainers or similar. Layering of clothes gives best versatility. Although the temperatures will occasionally be suitable for shorts, mostly these will not be appropriate for women to wear in certain areas. Good quality cotton clothing is available in the local shops and bazaars. A sun hat, sunscreen and a cotton/silk scarf to protect from the sun are essential in Assam.

SUN PROTECTION

We expect some sun so please ensure that you have some sort of sun protection. You will need sun lotion with an SPF of 30 plus, along with sunglasses with good quality lenses and a high degree of UV protection. Cotton/silk scarves and a sun hat will protect from the sun.

DAILY ROUTINE

You will need to have an adventurous approach in both mind and body. We will mostly be walking in towns and villages along well-defined trails. We will often photograph when and where opportunities arise. This requires a certain degree of spontaneity from participants. There will be opportunities for some early morning expeditions to make the best of the dawn light, conditions and locations. The sun sets early and dramatically around 16:20, so evenings will be relaxed and focused on socialising, dinner and an opportunity to view the day's images.

KNOW YOUR CAMERA

It's important that you are familiar with the basic operation of your camera, such as setting exposure/AF modes, aperture, shutter speed, ISO, etc. Nowadays there is a huge variety of cameras and systems, and while we will always do our best to help, it's impossible to know every model in depth.



PHOTOGRAPHIC EQUIPMENT AND INFORMATION

- Specially designed camera bags or rucksacks like F-Stop, Lowepro and Peak design.
- A camera with interchangeable lenses such as a digital SLR or a mirrorless system camera.
- A set of lenses to cover the whole range from wide-angle to telephoto, for example...
For full-frame cameras: 16–35mm wide-angle, 24–105mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom. For crop format cameras: 10–20mm wide-angle, 17–50mm mid-range and a 70–200mm or longer tele zoom. See also 'Special Lens Considerations' below.
- Spare camera
- Travel tripod (optional)
- Filters – neutral density, graduated filters and polarisers if you use these.
- Lens cloth
- Sensor cleaning device (optional)

- Lightweight 'trekking' absorbent towel for drying cameras and equipment
- Sufficient memory cards for the whole holiday as it may not be possible to buy more during the trip.
- A laptop with the image editing applications of your choice, essential for checking and presenting images during the trip and for one-on-one sessions with the tutor. Some of the places we stay in have Wi-Fi, but it can be flaky.
- Backup storage device (optional)
- Spare batteries and chargers
- All the electrical sockets are compatible with European two-pin, so you might need a travel plug adapter.

SPECIAL LENS CONSIDERATIONS

If you own any fast (f/1.4 or f/2.0) prime lenses such as 24,35,50 or 85mm (on full-frame), pop them in your bag. They will be very useful for photographing handheld at dusk & dawn and in dimly lit locations such as temples and markets. As a general rule the 85 makes a fabulous portrait lens while the 24 and 35 are excellent for capturing wider views.

PARTNERS

Although this is primarily a photography holiday, non-photographer partners will be very welcome as there are many options and interesting possibilities in addition to taking photographs.



MORE QUESTIONS?

While we hope that this information has answered most of your questions about the holiday, we know it will not give you all the information you need. If you have any more questions, please get in touch. Talking to us on the phone (we will always call you back) can often be a quick way of sorting out individual questions. It also helps us to get to know each other before the holiday.

BOOKING THIS HOLIDAY

Fill in the [online booking form](#), or give us a call on +44 (0)1270 440222.

LINKS

View [images and information for this tour](#) on the website. Read about [our approach to teaching photography](#)

