

Dear Cricketers,

You are invited to join an amazing cricket tour to India in Jan/Feb 2015. It is going to be an epic, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to play cricket in the world's nuttiest and most cricket-mad country. Play on some international and first-class grounds and fancy private clubs and stay at nice hotels, enjoy organised activities, and get some cool tour kit, with a great bunch of guys from around the world.

The most important details are provided below. Let us know if you have any questions. Also check out the tour's Facebook page – www.facebook.com/indiatour2015 – for more up-to-date updates.

If you are interested, please contact Jim at (occidentalcricketers@gmail.com).

Cheers,

Jim Morrison
Tour Organiser

When: January 17 to February 14, **2015**. We'll be back in time for the World Cup. :)

The tour is a long one (4 weeks), but you are welcome to join for as much or as little as you like, depending on your availability and financial limitations.

Where: The tour includes four locations – Mumbai, Pune, Bangalore and Goa – with 4–8 days in each place (see below for more info).

Who: The tour party will be comprised largely of players (mostly ex-pats) from North America (mainly the Toronto Cricket Skating and Curling Club and the British Officers Cricket Club of Philadelphia), as well as enthusiastic players from other selected clubs. We are joining forces under the banner of the "Occidental Cricketers".

What: 17–18 games of cricket, plus rest days and organised activities, team functions, etc.

How much:

Below are some *estimates* of the per-person cost for each phase. These are subject to change, but hopefully not by a great deal. Your deposit will go towards these costs (obviously), and the balance will be due closer to the tour itself.

Note that any money left over at the end of the trip will be refunded to tourists on a pro-rated basis. This refund will be based, among other things, on the number of games played (think of it like a "reverse match fee"). For example, if you paid for the full tour but only played 8 games, you would be refunded for the other 9 or 10 games that you didn't play.

All leftover funds will be redistributed to the tourists – this is absolutely *not* a for-profit venture (to answer a question that we received)!

There will be a fixed fee of about US\$150 to cover all other team costs, including team apparel (which is yours to keep), gifts to hosts, administration, etc. This cost will only apply to playing tourists. Again, any leftover will be refunded, so this could (hypothetically) be reduced down to less than \$100 (we won't know until after the tour).

All figures are in US\$. Variable costs (estimates!):

Phase 1 (Mumbai) - 6 games in 9 days (January 18–26, 2015)

Player: \$1000

Non-player: \$680

Phase 2 (Pune) - 2/3 games in 4 days (January 27-30)

Player: \$456

Non-player: \$330

Phase 3 (Bangalore) - 5 games in 8 days (January 31-February 7)

Player: \$920

Non-player: \$630

Phase 2 (Goa) - 4 games in 6 days (February 8-13)

Player: \$725

Non-player: \$480

Again, it is important to reiterate that these costs are based on someone who played *every single game*, which is quite unlikely. The net cost will almost certainly be *less* than that mentioned above, once the refunds are paid back.

The above costs *do* include the following: Accommodation, match fees (ground rental, logistics, umpires, scorers, match balls, etc.), all breakfasts, lunches & refreshments on game days, transportation to and from games, and a “team fund” (which covers things like gifts to hosts, tips, local agent fees and any other unexpected costs [any unspent team funds will be returned to tour members]).

Not included are: Flights to and from India, travel insurance, transportation between cities [this won't be expensive; I will advise these costs once determined], transfers to/from airports, meals and drinks other than those mentioned above, personal excursions, etc.

Flights: Details of flights to and from India are now available. A good starting point is a website such as www.skyscanner.com.

Itinerary: We are working together with local clubs/grounds to arrange the fixtures and the schedule (which can be quite tricky in India). We already have confirmed matches at a number of excellent grounds (e.g., “gymkhanas” and first-class/international grounds). I'll let you know the details as soon as I have them.

Highlights

- * Play on some of the best grounds in the country, including international and first-class grounds and some of the leading gymkhanas (private members' clubs)
- * 5-star accommodation (at discounted prices)
- * Fully organised

If you have never been to India, this may be the best opportunity you ever have to see this amazing country, not to mention playing some great cricket and having a fantastic time with fellow cricketers.

Some common questions are answered below. If you have any others, or if you would like to express your interest in coming, please let me know.

FAQs

Q. What if I can't commit to the full tour?

A. Four weeks is a long time, so don't worry if you can't stay for the whole thing. One of the great things about this tour is that you can join it for the period of time that best suits your schedule. Come for the start, middle, end, or any combination thereof.

You are most welcome to stay for the full tour, of course, but if you can only make it for a week or two, that is just fine!

Q. Do I have to pay a deposit?

A. There is a non-refundable deposit of \$500 due by June 1st, 2014. The balance will be due about 2 months before the tour starts.

Q. Why did you choose those locations?

A. Mumbai is an eye-popping town with lots to see and do and is a great "Gateway to India". We also have several contacts there who are setting up some top-notch fixtures for us. Pune is a place you don't hear much about, but still has 6 million people and some nice private gymkhanas. Bangalore is a bustling, modern city that offers a slightly cooler climate and will give us a taste of Southern India. The former Portuguese colony of Goa is a relaxed holiday area that has beautiful beaches and a real laid-back feel – plus we will probably be there during the famous Goa Carnival, which makes it the perfect way to end the tour.

Q. What will the standard of cricket be like?

A. The cricket should be at a suitable level for everyone. We anticipate that the opposition will include a combination of enthusiastic youngsters and experienced 'old hands'. Depending on the squad that we assemble, we will ask our hosts to select appropriate opposition.

Q. What kind of grounds will we play on?

A. Most of the games will be at 'high-end' venues, such as gymkhanas and private-members' clubs. We are also hoping to get at least two games at international and first-class venues. Some of the venues might be a bit more mid-range, but that is all part of the Indian experience. Games will mostly be 40- and 50-over affairs, with the odd T20 and night (floodlit) game as well.

Q. When do I need to commit by?

A. As mentioned, the \$500 deposit is due in June, 2014. The balance will be due about 2 months prior to departure (date TBC). Because spaces are somewhat limited, it is a good idea to commit as early as possible. At the very least, please "express your interest" to Jim by e-mail so we can put you on the list. The deposit is non-refundable, except in the unlikely event that the tour is cancelled.

Q. Can my wife/girlfriend/kids come?

A. Spouses and significant others are very welcome. We will be arranging plenty of activities to ensure that "cricket widows" have plenty to do while their hubbies are at the games (if they wish). Their cost will be less than that of the players because they will not have to pay the match fees.

Q. I'm concerned that India is a bit dodgy and I'll get sick.

A. India can be a bit of a culture shock, but as every part of the tour is organised and relatively upscale, you will be able to "shield" yourself from any parts that you are worried about. Whether you would like to immerse yourself in everything that India has to offer, or take the safe option, it will be an incredible experience!