



RIDING A MOTORCYCLE IN INDIA

TOP 5 MYTHS

TOP 5 TIPS

OF A PRO TOUR GUIDE

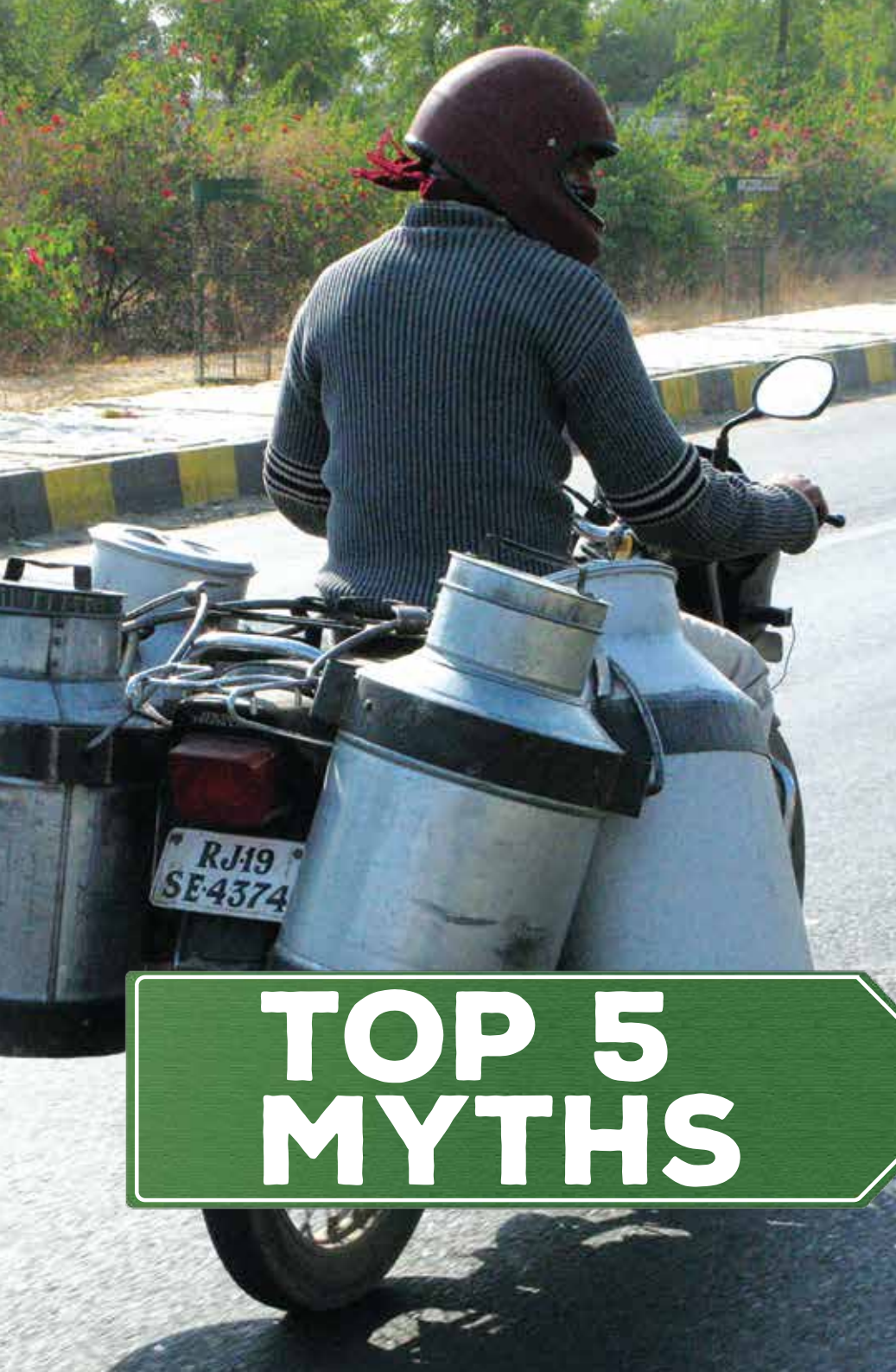


***Atul Bhardwaj** , a professional motorcycle tour operator with 8 years of touring experience, discusses some of the myths about travel in India, as well as some useful tips for first-timers mulling over the idea of riding a motorcycle in India.*

About 20 years ago, I too was a novice traveller in India. The fact that I am Indian and have lived in this incredible country all my life was of little help given how culturally and geographically diverse India is. India is made up of 22 languages with around 1500 dialects, and spans about 3000km north to south and east to west; it is called a sub-continent for a reason. Put simply, it is a place like no other.

Before you go travelling in India, it's always wise to become familiar with the cultural and geographical aspects of the area in which you are travelling. However, it's important not to be misguided by the myths that often circulate the web.

To help you prepare for your trip, I have outlined the biggest misconceptions about travelling in India and offer my top tips to consider before you depart.



MYTH #1

INDIA IS NOT A SAFE COUNTRY TO TRAVEL

Hygiene conditions are below-average, crime is rampant, and there are no road rules!

India is no more dangerous than any other modern country. In some cases, it's much safer. And believe it or not, road rules do exist! Drivers in India operate at a slower pace, and the enforcement of road rules are little more relaxed than what you'd be used to. If i'm honest, i feel safer driving in India, than abroad.

MYTH #2

YOU ARE GUARANTEED TO GET "DELHI BELLY"

Many travellers have expressed concern about becoming sick due to contaminated food or water. Yes, you must be careful about drinking water (bottled water is best) and exercise caution when choosing restaurants. However, don't let this deter you from enjoying your adventure.

As for the spice...Many hotels and restaurants have become accustomed to hosting western travellers, and as such minimise the spiciness of their food. But you can always ask for more, if you're up for it!

TOP FIVE MYTHS



MYTH #3

THERE IS POVERTY EVERYWHERE

India is a developing country and you are bound to witness some of the poverty that many people face on a day-to-day basis. However, given the entrepreneurship of the hard-working, happy and resilient Indians who are striving towards a positive future, a few days in India are sure to give you a new perspective and appreciation for life.

TOP FIVE MYTHS



MYTH #4

THERE IS NOTHING TO SEE EXCEPT THE TAJ MAHAL

The Taj Mahal is certainly a must-see. But India's also abundant with historic buildings, forts, palaces and temples. With the breath-taking Himalayas reason enough to take the trip!

TOP FIVE MYTHS



MYTH #5

LEVITATING “SADHU’S” AND ROPE TRICKS ON THE STREETS

With a cultural history that spans 4500 years, India is certainly the land of myth and legend. In reality, however, you might only see a snake charmer or two at the most – the capturing of snakes is banned by law so they are disappearing from the scene.

TOP FIVE MYTHS





TIP #1

TIP ONE - IS INDIA CALLING?

What makes India one of the most interesting countries to travel by motorcycle, can also be the reason for doubts to others. On one hand, India is the picture of modernity and opulence and on the other it's the epitome of archaism and poverty.

Having an understanding of what to expect is very important prior to your trip. If India is calling you, don't wait for the 'right' time. As they say, "there's no time like the present".

**TOP 5
TIPS**



TIP #2

WHERE TO GO AND WHEN

Deciding where and when to travel might be the most difficult for you to determine. Consider the following when planning your trip:

HIMALAYAS

- Picturesque views of high, snow-capped mountains, a pristine environment and a sense of adrenalin.
- The roads can be rough and unpaved, challenging even the most experienced riders.
- Best time to travel is between June and September

RAJASTHAN

- Rajasthan is more densely populated than the Himalayas, you will see more culture, tradition and history in your travels
- Depending on when you tour, the weather can be really hot. The coolest time to ride is between December and January.

TOP FIVE TIPS



TIP #3

HOW TO ORGANISE THINGS

You'll need a reliable bike if you're planning on touring around India. If you can't bring your own, you can rent one or book a tour - like mine!

WHEN RENTING KEEP THESE POINTS IN MIND:

- Rent a newer bike, even if this is more expensive.
- Take photos and video of the bike, ensuring all existing dents and scratches are viewable to the owner. Read the rental agreement carefully.
- Ask the owner to supply a few spares (control cables, spark plugs and fuses).
- Choose a local brand of bike that has decent sales and a service network.
- Finding a competent mechanic to fix imported bikes on the road is troublesome.

IF AN ORGANISED TOUR IS MORE YOUR THING:

Joining a tour takes care of the planning for you. Most importantly, it gives you great company and an opportunity to share the journey with other like-minded individuals. When booking, ensure that you choose wisely and ask any questions that you want answered.



TIP #4

ON THE ROAD

The big tip here is to stay relaxed when riding, and if possible avoid starting your ride from a big city. Follow these rules to stay safe on the road:

KEEP IT SLOW:

Try and average 50 km/hour in the plains and 30 km/hour in the mountains. This does not include stops or breaks.

USE THE HORN:

The horn is an acceptable part of the culture here. In short amounts, it's used to announce your position on the road as well as your intention.

START EARLY:

Try making an early start and ensure that you do not have to ride in the dark.

TIP #5

WEATHER & CLOTHING

Indian summers can be extremely hot (up to 45°C between April and July), and depending where you are, winter can be freezing. So it goes without saying...dress for the conditions.

Hitting the Himalayas?

- Best time to travel is between June and September
- Wear a full mesh riding jacket
- On cooler days, insert warm linings or wear fleece underneath
- Gore-tex trousers or something similar
- High ankle-boots to protect from water and rocks in the creeks
- Two pairs of gloves; one for the normal days and one for the days going over the highest passes.

Riding the plains?

- Best time to travel is between Nov/Dec and Feb/March
- Wear a full mesh riding jacket
- Kevlar jeans and knee guards on top
- Comfortable riding boots (no creek crossing is involved) and summer gloves
- Any waterproof clothing can go on top if necessary
- Bring your favourite helmet with you if possible

Given its cultural diversity and vibrant nature, India is simply incomparable. It will amaze you, excite you, amuse you and delight you. And once you've been, you'll always be back.



ABORIGINALTOURS@GMAIL.COM

WWW.INDIANMOTORCYCLETOURS.COM