

## DAY 1

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### Arrive Delhi

Welcome to Delhi, the intriguing cultural and historical centre of India's past and future, built over 450 years by a succession of empires - first the Hindu and Muslim dynasties, followed by the powerful Mughal dynasty who ruled until the British took over. Delhi offers its visitors glimpses of the stupendous power and wealth of its past. Where even the most modern parts of the city retain their distinctly Indian identity, here you will find a model of the latest car cruising through the streets and at the busiest intersection you will find a herd of doe-eyed cows oblivious to the traffic. It is in Delhi that a Mercedes Benz and a cycle rickshaw co-exist in the same neighborhood. In keeping with this Old and New Delhi are so different from each other but yet one complements the other.

Duration            2 Nights

Accommodation        Suryaa New Delhi

## DAY 2

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### Delhi

This morning proceed to explore Old Delhi popularly known as The Walled City, was once the capital of Muslim India between the 17th and 19th centuries. Drive past the magnificent Red Fort, an eternal symbol of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan's power and style are among the main attractions of Old Delhi and the imposing Jama Masjid, the great mosque of Old Delhi, with its onion shaped dome and characteristically Mughal architecture.

Enjoy a cycle rickshaw ride through Chandni Chowk. Today it still contains its fabled, colorful bazaars and a myriad of narrow streets, of which Chandni Chowk, with its never-ending but ever fascinating chaos remains the most famous.

This afternoon you will notice the sharp comparison the architecture of New Delhi or 'Lutyen's Delhi' commissioned in 1911 and inaugurated as recently as 1931 is a combination of British and Indian styles and this whole area of Delhi is magnificently planned. At one end of the avenue known as the Rajpath (literally the 'King's Way') is the War Memorial Arch, better known as India Gate, a memorial to the 90,000 Indians who gave their lives in World War I. At the other end stands the Rashtrapati Bhavan, one of the largest and most grandiose of the Raj constructions, built originally for the British Viceroy and now the official residence of the President of India Visit Humayun's Tomb, Emperor Humayun, the father of Emperor Akbar, lies buried in this magnificent monument built in red sandstone. Haji Begum, Humayun's first wife and mother of Emperor Akbar designed and supervised the entire construction. Marvel at the Qutab Minar, India's tallest stone tower. At a height of 234 feet, the 'Tower of Victory' is considered by some to be the world's most perfect specimen of tower architecture. A mathematical marvel, this building has remained standing for nine centuries.

Meal Plan            Breakfast

## DAY 3

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### Delhi to Agra

This morning you will depart for Agra, the capital to the Mughals in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Though Agra's history is largely recognized with the Mughal Empire, this city was established much earlier and has links to the Mahabharat period in 1000 BC. However, the Golden Age of this city began with the Mughals and was known then

as Akbarabad. Home to three generations of one of the most dynamic dynasties in the medieval world - with each generation playing a different role in its making! Agra is home to the finest examples of Mughal architecture in India, of which the Taj is simply the most famous. The beauty of these buildings will bowl you over, but knowing something of the dramatic history that played itself out on these stages makes the entire Agra experience come alive.

This afternoon you will visit the magnificent Agra Fort. Emperor Akbar built it as his citadel over the years 1565-1573. With imposing gates, walls of red sandstone and moat, it dominates the center of the city. Aurangzeb imprisoned his father, Shah Jehan, at Agra Fort, a mild punishment considering the luxury of the fort. Legend states that Shah Jehan died in Muasamman Burj, a tower with a marble balcony with an excellent view of the Taj Mahal.

At sunset proceed to visit the Taj Mahal, to experience its splendour and beauty graced by the light of the setting sun. Visitors are asked to remove their shoes prior to entering the interiors of the Taj Mahal. This ethereal monument took 22 years and more than 20,000 men to build. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal who died at the age of 39 for giving birth to her fourteenth child. Its unique beauty and immaculately intricate execution all contribute to the breathtaking first impression as you pass through the arch of the entrance gateway.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

Duration        1 Night

Accommodation      Clarks Shiraz Hotel

#### DAY 4

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##### Agra to Jaipur

This morning you will drive to Jaipur stopping en route to visit Fatehpur Sikri literally translated as 'The City of Victory' where we find the site of the deserted city of Emperor Akbar. The vast, imperial capital with its 500 splendid buildings was abandoned after only fourteen years due to the drying up of the city's water supply.

Welcome to Jaipur, a city, whose past is never too far from hand. The city of victory, Jaipur presides over the fascinating desert state and its people: surrounded by rugged hills, each crowned by a formidable fort; and beautiful palaces, mansions and gardens dotted throughout its precincts. The palaces and forts of yesteryear that were witness to royal processions and splendour are now living monuments, accepted quite naturally into the lifestyles of the people of the 'pink city'.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

Duration        2 Nights

Accommodation      Four Points by Sheraton Jaipur

#### DAY 5

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##### Jaipur

The morning you will drive along the streets of Jaipur to the Amber Fort, set atop a rugged hilltop and overlooking Lake Moata. The fort has been constructed in white and red sandstone. The Fort is unique in that it's outside, an

imposing and rugged defensive structure, is markedly different from its inside, an ornate, lavish interior influenced by both Hindu and Muslim styles of ornamentation.

This afternoon you will explore the city stopping first to view and photograph the Palace of Winds. Completed in 1799, the Palace was originally built to allow the sequestered ladies of the court to view the bustling life of the city. It is popularly known as Hawa Mahal, because of the perforated screen facade which catches the welcome breeze or Hawa.

Continue on including a visit to the City Palace complex that continues to evoke the splendour of a bygone era. In an unending series of delights, from its grand aged entrance to the play of ornamental fountains, the City Palace is a dazzling showplace of Hindu and Mughal architecture. Next to the city palace is Jantar Mantar, literally translated as Calculation Instrument. This Observatory was built between 1728 and 1734 by Maharaja Jai Singh, Jantar Mantar was built on a grand scale and was way beyond its time. This was modeled after the one that was built in Delhi, the then Mughal capital. He had constructed a total of five of which the one in Jaipur is the largest.

After your tour board a cycle rickshaw to explore the local markets. Jaipur is a shopper's paradise, renowned for gems and jewelry: precious and semi-precious stones set in gold, 'meenakari' (enamel work), antique and chunky silver jewelry; and Colombian emeralds which are actually brought to Jaipur for cutting and polishing and are available at reasonable prices. Other finds include carpets, 'Pechwai' and miniature paintings on silk and paper, a unique type of blue pottery and even glass bangles. Fabric-wise, there are brocades, tie-and-dye, block printed, and the famous 'mirror work' embroidery, also used in table linen, cushion covers and readymade garments.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

## DAY 6

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### Jaipur to Jodhpur

This morning you will drive to Jodhpur, also known as India's Blue City. Situated at the edge of the Thar Desert, it is the largest city in Rajasthan after Jaipur. Of Rajasthan's many princely settlements, Jodhpur is among the most distinctive. This five hundred-year-old settlement was the headquarters of the Rathore Rajputs' celebrations. A six-mile-long wall surrounds the old Jodhpur City with eight gates serving as entrances.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

Duration      2 Nights

Accommodation      Pal Haveli

## DAY 7

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### Jodhpur

This morning drive to the nearby Bishnoi Villages and enjoy a jeep safari through the village. The views of desert wildlife, like black bucks, chinkaras, blue bulls, desert foxes, hares and partridges. Visitors can enjoy a view of thousands of migratory demoiselle cranes from September to March. There is also opportunity to see craftsman, shepherds and farmers at work.

This afternoon explore the city and visit Meherangarh Fort. Founded by Rao Jodha in 1459, this majestic fort was one of the largest forts in India. Situated approximately 4 miles from Jodhpur, it overlooks the city from atop a 125m high hill. The fort also houses a large museum which houses some unusual artifacts.

During your decent you will see Jaswant Thada, an architectural white marble memorial built by Sardar Singh in 1899 in memory of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II. Within this cenotaph, there are also two more tombs. The Jaswant Thada is a traditional cremation ground of Jodhpur rulers. The grounds are also comprised of exquisitely carved gazeboes, a beautiful multi-tiered garden, and a small lake.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

## DAY 8

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### Jodhpur to Udaipur

This morning you will depart for Udaipur stopping en route to visit the magnificent Jain temple complex of Ranakpur. Light colored marble has been used for the construction of this grand temple which occupies an area of approximately 60 x 62 meters. Over 1444 marble pillars, carved in exquisite detail, support the temple. The pillars are all differently carved and no two pillars are the same. It is also said that it is impossible to count the pillars and all the statues face one or the other statue. One particular pillar has intentionally been made crooked. Cast your eyes over the bewildering maze of ornately carved pillars and see if you can spot it. The reason for making it crooked is that only God can create something perfect and this beautiful structure was made by mere mortals.

Continue to Udaipur, with its picturesque setting and long royal heritage, Udaipur offers much to delight the eye. Also known as both the City of Sunrise and the City of Lakes, it is awash in romance. Providing a sharp contrast to its desert neighbours, it presents a serene picture of shimmering blue lakes, green hills and impressive white marble palaces. It provides a kaleidoscope of colour against stark surroundings.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

Duration      2 Nights

Accommodation      Fateh Niwas

## DAY 9

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### Udaipur

Your morning exploration of the city begins with a visit to the City Palace, the largest palace complex in Rajasthan. It is a spectacular complex containing decorated mirror works and galleries adorned with frescoes. Continue to the Jagdish Temple, one of the famous temples of Udaipur. Located in the City Palace complex of Udaipur, this temple is made in the Indo-Aryan style of architecture. In 1651, Jagdish temple was built by Maharana Jagat Singh, who ruled Udaipur during 1628-53. The temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu (Laxmi Narayan), the preserver of the Universe. It is celebrated for being the largest temple in the city of Udaipur.

Continue touring and visit Sahelion ki Bari Gardens built by Maharana Sangram Singh in the mid-18th Century. Literally translated as 'The Garden of the Maidens', it evokes vivid pictures of the luxurious lifestyle of the ladies of the court. The garden is said to have been made for the 48 girls that the Maharana received in his dowry.

Your tour ends with a boat ride on the placid waters of Lake Pichola. The beautiful Lake Pichola was enlarged by Maharana Udai Singh after he founded the city. The city palace extends a considerable distance along the east bank of the lake. From the boat you will be able to view the city of Udaipur as it rises majestically above the lake in the middle of the Rajasthan desert. You will be able to get a view of the Dhobi (laundry) ghats.

The afternoon is at leisure.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

## DAY 10

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### Udaipur to Mumbai

Early this morning proceed to the airport for your flight to Bombay, renamed as Mumbai in 1995. Mumbai originally consisted of seven islands and in the 500 years since its 'discovery' by the Portuguese. These islands, home to communities of fishing colonies have since been joined together by a series of reclamations. Now a sprawling metropolis of over 10 million people and the money capital of India.

After breakfast at your hotel you will proceed to explore the city.

Your tour begins at the Gateway of India Gateway of India is the landmark of Bombay, which, was before the advent of air travel, the only gateway to India. It was built to commemorate the visit of King George and Queen Mary to India in 1911. You will be then driven along Marine Drive, the sea - Front Boulevard. It is also known as the Queen's Necklace as in the evening, the breeze from the Arabian Sea comes over Marine Drive and as the streetlights on this U-shaped road light up, the view from south Bombay's skyscrapers or from the exclusive residential area, is that of a Queen's Necklace.

You will visit the Jain Temples, built of marble and dedicated to the first Jain Tirthankara. From the temples you will be driven along Malabar Hill via the Tower of Silence - a round stone construction on which Parsis place their dead to be eaten by the vultures and Hanging Gardens which is built over Bombay's reservoir. From here one can get a panoramic view of picturesque Marine Drive. You will than driven to the Dhobi Ghats a huge open-air laundry, which makes an interesting viewing.

You will drive past a most remarkable railway station. Inspired by St. Pancras Station in London, the Victoria Terminus was built during Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee year. It is an extraordinary conglomeration of domes, spires, Corinthian columns and minarets in a style described by journalist James Cameron as 'Victorian-Gothic-Saracenic-Italianate-Oriental-St.Pancras-Baroque.' The first train in India left from this station in 1853 and today more than a half a million commuters use the station every day.

Your tour ends with a visit to Mani Bhawan (Gandhi Memorial), the house where the Father of the Nation stayed on his early visits to the city. The room, in which Gandhi stayed, preserved as it was, and the scenes of Gandhi's life in photographs and models are of special interest.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

Duration      2 Nights

Accommodation      The Gordon House Hotel

## DAY 11

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### Mumbai

This morning proceed to the jetty and board a cruise to the serene and densely forested Elephanta Island where the caves are located. The rock cut architecture of the caves has been dated to between the 5th and 8th centuries however their origins are not clear. The caves are hewn from solid basalt rock and were also originally painted in the past, but now only traces remain.

The afternoon is at leisure.

Meal Plan      Breakfast

## DAY 12

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### Depart Mumbai

Proceed to the airport for your international onwards flight.

Meal Plan      Breakfast