

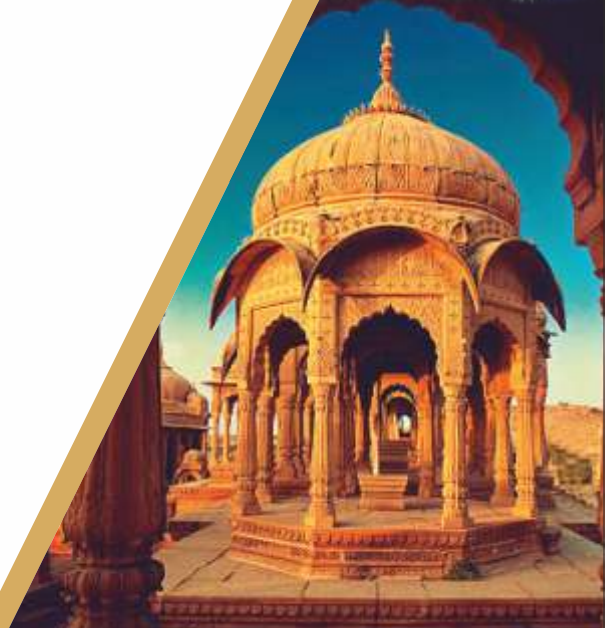


# Explore INDIA

*With*

**Royal Trails Pvt. Ltd.**

Real Time Experience for Lifetime Memories







Dear Partner,

What makes a Traveller's trail to be called as Royal, Regal or Classic? The answer to this question pretty much defines the vision statement of the team at Royal Trails Private Limited (RTPL).

We, at Royal Trails, strongly believe that as a traveller. You venture into the unknown and leave a trail while exploring the story of a destination and enriching your soul, mind and body and at the same time ticking all that is on your bucket list. Travellers want to quench their thirst for knowledge, happiness, recreation, enthusiasm, adventure, fun and leisure so they pack their rucksacks, win against time by taking a few days off from their routine and set off on a trail to explore a particular dream destination. That trail on which you leave the footprints will be royal only if the destination seems to be welcoming you royally by showcasing its rich cultural heritage with exceptional warmth and hospitality of its people, who although, are welcoming you to a land that might be foreign to you but at the same time making you feel like staying at a home away from your home.

Your trail is specially curated and tailored so as to suit you and resonate with your expectations.

The elements of your trail are the tourism products and services bundled together to enable you explore a destination. These elements are hotel accommodation, Transport services, activities, experiences, attractions at the destinations, amenities, and of course the human touch involved at every step of the services offered during the tour.

All these elements are crafted and tailored to provide you the best experiences that make you feel special while you are sitting on the pedestal of exceptional hospitality and warmth that has been the guiding light of India's tourism thus truly emanating from the phrase "Aththi devo Bhava" (meaning : The guest is equivalent to God).

For RTPL – The Luxury is not determined by staying at the luxurious high-end palaces, instead, enabling you to feel at the epicenter of all the services curated and offered with utmost care. The word Special is synonymous to the word Royal. We, at Royal Trails, strive to encompass these elements & services to ascertain that you are special. Our endeavor is to ensure the feeling of you belonging to India!! The essence of our offerings are not just the right value for money but also to make you believe that the places you visit are a part of you and the people here are welcoming you to a home away from home!! Does that make you feel royal enough? To check, why don't you book a tour with us?

Let's get started !!

From the TEAM at Royal Trails

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# Golden Triangle Trails



## Delhi-Agra-Jaipur

### DAY 01 – ARRIVE NEW DELHI

Today arrive in Delhi and transfer to your Hotel.

India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its folds - the ancient with the modern. Amidst the fast-spiraling skyscrapers the remnants of a bygone time in the form of its many monuments stand as silent reminders of the region's ancient legacy. The first impressions for any visitor traveling in from the airport are of a spacious, garden city, tree-lined with a number of beautiful parks.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

#### Overnight at hotel

### DAY 02 – IN DELHI

After breakfast proceed for tour of Old and New Delhi. Old Delhi, the Mughal Capital of Shahjahanabad. Visit the Jama Masjid which is the principal mosque of Old Delhi in India. Commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal, and completed in the year 1656 AD, it is the largest and best-known mosque in India. It lies at the origin of a very busy central street of Old Delhi, the Chawri Bazar Road. The mosque of Friday was built from 1644 to 1658 during the reign of Shahjahan. The mosque is 80 m long and 27 m wide. The courtyard can accommodate 25,000 worshippers and occupies 408 square feet.

Later we proceed to visit Raj Ghat where Mahatma Gandhi - The Father of Nation, was cremated and drive past the Red Fort [ from outside] - the palace for Shahjahan's new capital, Shahjahanabad, the seventh Muslim city in the Delhi site. Wander in the busy streets of the mile long Chandni Chowk, popularly called "The Silver Street". Enjoy the 'Cycle Rickshaw' ride in Old Delhi.



In the afternoon proceed for tour of New Delhi, which reflects the legacy the British left behind. The division between New and Old Delhi is the division between the capitals of the British and the Mughals respectively. The division in the walled city and New Delhi also marks the division in the lifestyles. The walled city is all tradition where one will be able to glean a past lifestyle in all its facets, colours and spells. New Delhi in contrast, is a city trying to live up to the best of 21st century standards.

The tour to Imperial Delhi will start by visit to the Qutab Minar, the tallest stone tower in India. The Qutab Minar was started in 1199 AD by Qutab-ud-Din Aibak and completed by the sultan's successor and son-in-law, Iltutmish. The building is 72.5 m high and has 379 steps from the bottom to the top. The Minar is tapered with the diameter of the base is 14.3 m while at the top floor it is 2.7 m. The Qutab Minar is still the highest stone tower as well as one of the finest Islamic structures ever raised in India.

Later visit Humayun's Tomb, built by the widow of the second Mughal Emperor, Humayun, it is an outstanding monument in the Indo-Persian style, a precursor of the Taj Mahal.

Drive past the imposing India Gate, the Parliament building and the Rashtrapati Bhawan, the President's residence.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 03 : DELHI TO AGRA BY ROAD – 200 KMS / 04-05 HRS**

After breakfast drive to Agra; Arrive Agra and transfer to your hotel. Agra came into limelight during the rule of Afghan King Sikandar Lodhi - who had made it the capital of his empire. Later in 1526 A.D., the Mughal Emperor Babar took upon himself the task for rendering Agra, a unique character and beauty of its own. Agra - in terms of ambiance is still associated with its Mughal period. The Mughals, besides being great rulers, were also great builders and they preserved their best architectural wonders for Agra & its neighbourhood. It has many wonderful monuments and the Taj Mahal, the greatest of them all, is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture at its best.

Later visit the Taj Mahal (closed on Friday) - The Taj Mahal (closed on Friday) - The Taj Mahal is everything that has been said about it and more. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as an expression of his love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal, in mid-17th century, the Taj Mahal is truly one of the wonders of the world. Though the Taj appears to be amazingly perfect from almost any angle, it is the close-up marble inlay work, which is really astounding.

Later visit The Agra Fort, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture. Agra Fort - the seat and the stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. This was the seat of Mughal rule. Shahjahan added the impressive quarters and the mosque while Aurangzeb added the outer ramparts. Visit its Hall of

Public Audience and its Royal Pavilions. Besides the historical monuments, one can also explore Agra's rich heritage of handicrafts in its markets.

Also visit Itmad ud Daula - This tomb was built in 1622 for Ghiyas Beg, father of Empress Noor-Jahan, the wife of Emperor Jahangir. It is beautifully conceived in white marble, mosaic and lattice and set a precedent as the first Mughal building to be faced with white marble inlaid with contrasting stones. Sometimes also called 'Baby Taj', it is small, intimate and has a gentle serenity.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 04 : AGRA TO JAIPUR BY ROAD – 250 KMS / 06 HRS**

After breakfast proceed drive to Jaipur visiting Fatehpur Sikri enroute. The deserted red sandstone city was built by the Great Mughal Emperor, Akbar, as his capital and palace in the late 16th century. It was abandoned soon after it was built when the local wells went dry, and it remains today in much the same condition that it was over 300 years ago. It is complete with palaces and mosques and used to be a town larger than London when it was originally constructed. Now it is an extraordinary place to wander around with its buildings in near perfect condition.

Later drive to Jaipur; arrive in Jaipur and transfer to hotel.

The capital of Rajasthan Jaipur - popularly known as the "Pink City" as the Pink sandstone was used to construct the buildings in the old walled city. Jaipur owes its name, it's foundation and it's planning to the Great-Warrior-Astronomer Maharaja Jai Singh II (1699-1744 AD). Jaipur (City of Victory) was founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1727. It is the only city in the world symbolising the nine divisions of the Universe through nine rectangular sectors sub-dividing it. The architect who formalised the city's plans on the Shilpa Shastra, the epic Hindu treatise on architecture, mixed it with the sublimity of the Mughal and Jain influences of those times. The city was painted pink in 1853 in honour of the visit by Prince Albert. Except for the busy traffic of bicycles, cars, and buses, little seems to have changed.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**





#### DAY 05 : IN JAIPUR

After breakfast proceed for full day city tour of Jaipur – visiting Amer Fort located at a distance of 11 kilometers from Jaipur and was the old fort of the Kachhwaha clan of Amber. It used to be the capital, till it was moved to Jaipur. The fort is built with white marble and red sandstone and looks even more attractive because of the Maota Lake in the foreground. The fort in itself is a beautiful sight to behold but as one looks on the fort with its clear reflection on the lake in the front; one cannot help but wonder if it is a dream or a beautiful illusion. An elephant [Subject to availability/alternatively by jeep] will spare you the trouble of climbing up to the fortress. Once on top, stroll through the sprawling complex of courtyards and halls with a well-informed and well-spoken guide who would regale you with tales of yore.

Later visit, the City of Jaipur. Among the highlights to be seen while touring Jaipur include the City Palace, which is an overwhelming complex of exquisite palaces, gardens and courtyards, decorative art, and carved doorways. The palace museum houses collections of rare manuscripts, armours, costumes, carpets, and miniature paintings.



Walk to the adjacent Jantar Mantar or Astronomical Observatory made by the Maharaja of Jaipur, built in 1726 and is one of the five such astronomical wonders built by Sawai Jai Singh and makes accurate predictions even to this day. Jaipur is a shopper's paradise. Most of the bazaars are in an old city with a wide range of things to buy, from jewellery (precious and semi-precious stones and handcrafted silver) to textiles to handicrafts and antiques. No doubt, for an avid shopper “Jaipur” is the choicest of the city to shop and collect memorabilia.

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**Overnight at hotel**

#### DAY 06 : DEPART JAIPUR

In time transfer to Jaipur Airport / Railway Station to board your flight / train for an onward journey to your next destination.



# Taj & Raj Trails



Delhi-Agra-Jaipur-Jodhpur-Ranakpur-Udaipur

## DAY 01 : ARRIVE NEW DELHI

India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its folds - the ancient with the modern. Amidst the fast-spiralling skyscrapers the remnants of a bygone time in the form of its many monuments stand as silent reminders to the region's ancient legacy. The first impressions for any visitor traveling in from the airport are of a spacious, garden city, tree-lined with a number of beautiful parks.

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Later visit The Agra Fort, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture. Agra Fort - the seat and the stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. This was the seat of Mughal rule. Shahjahan added the impressive quarters and the mosque while Aurangzeb added the outer ramparts. Visit its Hall of Public Audience and its Royal Pavilions. Besides the historical monuments, one can also explore Agra's rich heritage of handicrafts in its markets.

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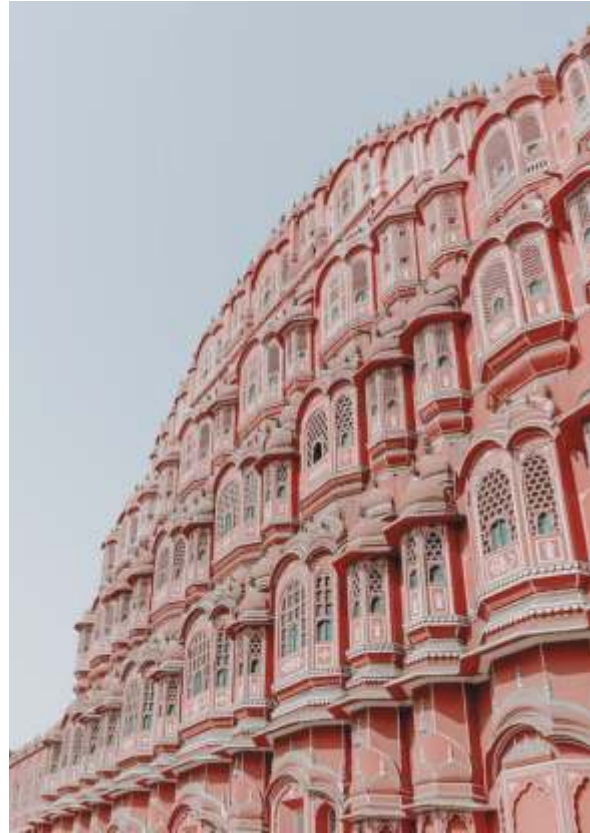
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Later visit the City of Jaipur. Among the highlights to be seen while touring Jaipur include the City Palace, which is an overwhelming complex of exquisite palaces, gardens and courtyards, decorative art, and carved doorways. The palace museum houses collections of rare manuscripts, armours, costumes, carpets, and miniature paintings. Walk to the adjacent Jantar Mantar or Astronomical Observatory made by the Maharaja of Jaipur, built in 1726 and is one of the five such astronomical wonders built by Sawai Jai Singh and makes accurate predictions even to this day. Jaipur is a shopper's paradise. Most of the bazaars are in an old city with a wide range of things to buy, from jewellery (precious and semi-precious stones and handcrafted silver) to textiles to handicrafts and antiques. No doubt, for an avid shopper “Jaipur” is the choicest of the city to shop and collect memorabilia.

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**Overnight stay at your Hotel.**



#### DAY 06 : JAIPUR TO JODHPUR BY ROAD – 350 KMS / 07 HRS

After breakfast drive to Jodhpur; Arrive Jodhpur – Arrive to the Blue City – Jodhpur and transfer to your hotel.

An oasis in the arid Thar Desert, Jodhpur is the second largest city in the state of Rajasthan. Representing this colourful city with shades of blue, Jodhpur has a history that is rich and a present that beckons strongly to the discerning tourist. Forts and palaces, temples and havelis, culture and tradition, spices, and fabrics, colour and texture, Jodhpur has them all and in plenty. Situated in Western Rajasthan, Jodhpur has long attracted both the domestic and outside tourist. It not only offers tangibles, in terms of what you can see and buy but also fills one with a sense of history and the splendours of an era gone by. The hospitality of the locals, the demure women, and the colourful turbans -all set against the beloved desert (Marwar) is something to feel, not just see. Every pore of Jodhpur tells its own tales of heroic deeds that made legends out of kings and soldiers, romances that continue to warm the heart and a time when epics were lived out on the streets by everyday man.

Later proceed for half day city tour of Jodhpur. Visit the Meherangarh Fort, situated on a low sandstone hill. The palace apartments like Sukh Mahal, Phool Mahal, and Sheesh Mahal etc are beautifully decorated and house

Jewellery, costumes, armoury, palanquins, howdahs, and other remnants of the past. See the Jaswant Thada, an imposing marble memorial to Maharaja Jaswant Singh II built in 1899. Later the royal crematorium and three other cenotaphs were also built here. Also visit Sardar Bazaar and Clock Tower markets where you can see the vegetable, spice, Indian sweets, and textile and silver markets. These colourful markets with tiny shops dot the narrow lanes replete with woodcarvings, wrought iron, lacquer work, silver and ivory ornamentation and leather handicrafts. Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight stay at your Hotel.**

#### **DAY 07: JODHPUR TO UDAIPUR BY ROAD – 300 KMS / 06-07 HRS**

After breakfast proceed drive to Udaipur enroute visiting Ranakpur – It is the largest Jain temple complex in India and dates to the 15th century. The main temple is dedicated to Adinath, the first Tirthankar. Intricate carvings detail mythological figures, patterns and motifs on the walls, pillars, and domes. There are 1444 ornately carved marble pillars in the complex and none of them are similar. The beautiful lace-like interiors of the domes are a superb example of western Indian temple style. Surya temple and other Jain temples are side attractions. (Temples open only at 1200 Hrs. Leather belts, footwear, bare legs, and black clothing not allowed).

Later drive to Udaipur; Arrive Udaipur and transfer to your hotel. Set on the shores of Lake Pichola and surrounded by hills, Udaipur grew in complete contrast to the harsh deserts of the rest of Rajasthan. As capital of the old Mewar State it was the only Rajput stronghold to uphold its Hindu allegiance in the face of Muslim invasion.

This fairy – tale city, with its marble palaces and lakes surrounded by a ring of hills, was founded by Maharana Udai Singh in 1559. The city is dominated by massive City Palace, which overlooks Lake Pichola with its romantic island palaces. Picturesque havelis, ghats and temples line the lake front, with the lively bazaars of the old walled city stretching behind them.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight stay at your Hotel.**

#### **DAY 08 : UDAIPUR**

After breakfast proceed for half day city tour of Udaipur – visiting the City Palace and Museum. The largest palace complex in India, it is a blend of Mughal and Rajput influences. Also, see the 17th century Jagdish temple, drive around the Fatehsagar Lake, and visit the Sahelion ki Bari (the Garden for the Maids of Honour), an ornamental pleasure garden with fountains and marble kiosks. Later visit the Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandir or the Folk Art Museum.

Later in the evening take a boat ride (On direct payment) on the 4 km long and 3 km wide Lake Pichola, which is fringed with hills, palaces, havelis, ghats, embankments and temples and offers spectacular views of the city. Visit the Jag Mandir Island with its exquisite Gul Mahal Pavilion.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight stay at your Hotel.**

#### **DAY 09 – BY AIR / TRAIN – DEPART UDAIPUR**

In time transfer to Udaipur Airport / Railway Station to board your flight / train for onward journey to your next destination.





# Rajasthan Trails The Princely State



Delhi-Agra-Jaipur-Khimsar-Dechu-Jodhpur-Udaipur-Delhi

## DAY 01: ARRIVE DELHI

You will arrive early in the morning at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. Following customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, a representative will meet you as you EXIT the ARRIVALS TERMINAL building thereafter you will be transferred to your hotel for check-in (Check-in time at the hotel is 1400 Hrs. Early check-in will be subject to availability of rooms and at the discretion of the hotel).

India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its fold the ancient and the modern. One of the most historic capitals in the world, Delhi is a treasure trove that reveals the ultimate combination of tradition and trends. Delhi is made up of seven ancient cities, spanning the period from the 11th to 20th centuries. The city has seen the rise and fall of many emperors, which have left behind a plethora of monuments that commemorate the grandeur and glory of bygone ages. Very few cities in the world can express such a profusion of architectural styles. Its many-layered existence is tantalizing and can entice the curious traveller into a fascinating journey of discovery.

A holiday in Delhi, the capital city of India, will expose you to innumerable facets of Indian heritage, culture and tourism. It will be a vacation much beyond just monuments, museums or gardens of the Mughal and British period. Delhi offers you a wealth of new age tourist attractions to choose from. With shopping malls, multiplexes and amusement parks springing up around Delhi, the city has left behind its image of being a sedate city of politicians and has acquired a younger and more dynamic feel, which you will discover on your Indian holiday in Delhi.

Rest of the day will be free at leisure (No transport services).

## Overnight in Delhi

## DAY 02: IN DELHI

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning proceed for the sightseeing of Delhi.

Morning proceed on a guided tour of the Old City of 'Shahjahanabad'. Your introduction to the city will be with a visit to Raj Ghat - the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi, arriving at the Red Fort - the magical monument in red sandstone built at the pinnacle of the Mughal Empire. From here proceed by bicycle rickshaws through the bustling streets to Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India built by Shahjahan.

Continue tour of New Delhi, which reflects the legacy the British left behind. You will visit Qutab Minar, the tallest stone tower in India built to establish the might of Islam and onset of Muslim rule in India and Humayun's Tomb, the first great example of a new distinctive style, which developed to become the hallmark of the Mughal Dynasty. The tour also includes a drive past the imposing India Gate (War Memorial Arch), the Parliament buildings and the Rashtrapati Bhawan (the President's residence).

Dinner at hotel

## Overnight in Delhi.

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner





#### DAY 03: DELHI-AGRA

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to Agra (4-5 hrs drive approximately).

On arrival, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Known to the world as the city of the 'Taj Mahal', Agra is still associated with the Mughals, who besides being great rulers were also great builders. The architectural splendour of the mausoleums, forts and palaces is a vivid reminder of the opulence of the legendary Mughal Empire. From the Taj Mahal to the massive Agra Fort; Agra is amongst the most remarkable city of the world and a must visit.

Later in the afternoon visit to Mehtab Bagh (Moonlight Gardens) will take approximately one hour (depending on your personal preference). Built as the ultimate viewing place of the Taj Mahal, these beautiful gardens are the exact width of the Taj Complex and are aligned perfectly with the Taj Mahal itself. Restored to its former glory by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1994 the 25 acres garden houses a variety of walkways, fragrant flowers and fountains.

**Overnight in Agra**



#### DAY 04: IN AGRA

Sunrise visit to Taj Mahal (Closed on Fridays)

Taj Mahal (Remain closed on Fridays), built by Emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century as a mausoleum for his wife Mumtaz Mahal, a masterpiece in marble and one of the world's most famous landmarks. As the sun sets, a chaste and secretive image of the Taj starts to emerge, casting a very soft light illuminating the contours of this enchanting monument in marble. Referred to as one of the wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal in Agra is the epitome of tourism in India and is celebrated for its architectural magnificence and aesthetic beauty. A symphony in white marble, a tribute to eternal love, it was built by the Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Breakfast at the hotel.

Later proceed for visit of Agra Fort, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture and the seat and stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. Shah Jahan, the Taj's creator, spent the last years of his life imprisoned at the fort by his son Aurangzeb. It was built in the late 1560's by their predecessor, Akbar, with later embellishments by Jehangir, his son, and Shah Jahan, his grandson.

Post tour, return to your hotel.

Afternoon at leisure for independent activities.

**Overnight in Agra**

## DAY 05: AGRA-JAIPUR

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning you will be driven to the pink city of Jaipur (a journey of 260 Km/ 7 hours drive approx).

En-route visit to Fatehpur Sikri.

Located 40 kms from Agra, Fatehpur Sikri was built by Mughal emperor Akbar in 1571 in honour of the Sufi saint, Sheikh Salim Chisti. It was the Mughal capital for 14 years after which it was abandoned due to paucity of water. It is made of red sandstone and combines influences from both Hindu and Mughal architecture. Even to this day, the entrance to the fort is through the road that Akbar built which leads to the Buland Darwaza, a huge 54 metres gateway. Other inspiring monuments in Fatehpur Sikri are the Hiran Minar that Akbar built in memory of his favourite elephant, Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti, Birbal's House and the Diwan-i-Khas. Continue drive to Jaipur and en-route visit Chand Baori Stepwell at Abhaneri.

On arrival you will check into your hotel.

The vibrant capital of Rajasthan renowned for its forts and palaces is popularly known as the 'Pink City' because of the pink-colour buildings in its old city. An ideal base for touring the royal state, the city has the distinction of being the third jewel of India's "Golden Triangle". Its main claim to fame is that it is India's first 'planned' city built by the famous 18th century astronomer King Sawai Jai Singh II.

Jaipur is not only the gateway to the state; it is also the most natural place to begin a discovery of Rajasthan's multifaceted attractions. Its beautiful buildings including the City Palace, Amer Fort and the landmark Hawa Mahal are truly worth seeing. Browsing through the markets in Jaipur, where skilled craftsmen display jewellery, paintings, carvings and colourful textiles, is an enjoyable experience for tourists.

**Overnight in Jaipur.**

## DAY 06: IN JAIPUR

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning you will proceed on a full day tour of Jaipur City. Drive to the ancient capital of Amer to see the fabulous Amber Fort, situated on a ridge just outside Jaipur city. Maharaja Mansingh, Mughal Emperor Akbar's most successful General, started the construction of Amber Fort in the 17th century. Before the City Palace was constructed in Jaipur, Amber was the seat of power.

The fort is surrounded by fortified battlements and overlooks the Moat Lake. Ruins and remains are spread over the Aravalli hills and sprawling crenulated walls lattice the surrounding area.

Tour the chambers and hallways of the palace, famous for the excellence of its design and decoration. Within the complex is Ganesh Pol, an imposing gateway painted with the images of the elephant-headed god, Ganesh. The merging of Rajput and Mughal architectural styles is captured in the Sukh Niwas and Jas Mandir apartments, and the Charbagh garden with its perfectly proportioned landscaping. Pierced screen windows offer views from different vantage points and shimmering mirrors encrust the walls of Sheesh Mahal.

Following your visit to Amber, enjoy a tour of the Pink City, an "abode of rajahs". Photo stop at the Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) - a five-storied wonder with a spectacular pyramidal facade and overhanging windows with latticed screens, domes and spires. Proceed for your visit to the City Palace, the former royal residence built in a blend of the Rajasthani and Mughal styles. An overwhelming complex of exquisite palaces, gardens and courtyards, decorative art and carved doorways, the Palace also houses a museum with a superb collection of Rajasthani costumes and armoury of Mughals and Rajputs including swords of different shapes and sizes with chiselled handles. The art gallery showcases an excellent collection of miniature paintings, carpets, royal paraphernalia and rare astronomical works in Arabic, Persian, Latin and Sanskrit. Carry onwards to the awe inspiring Jantar Mantar Observatory, a stone astrological and astronomical Observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh in the 18th century.

**Overnight in Jaipur.**



#### DAY 07: JAIPUR - KHIMSAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning, you will be driven to Khimsar (Approximately 300 km/ 6-7 hrs). Upon arrival, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Rest of the day at leisure

**Overnight in Khimsar**

#### DAY 08: KHIMSAR- MANVAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to Dechu (125 Kms/ approx. 3 hours)

Evening jeep safari to Bishnoi Village and visit a typical desert homes, a craftsman's home and meet some locals. Spend some time with elders of the Bishnoi village and witness an opium ceremony.

Lunch & Dinner at hotel

**Overnight in Dechu (Manvar)**

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

#### DAY 9 : IN MANVAR DECHU

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning is at leisure.

This evening; take a camel ride to the sand dunes. The ripples on the wind-caressed dunes create enchanting mirages - a photographer's delight. Adventure freaks can go out on a camel safari - getting the real feel of the desert on the camel-back.

Lunch & Dinner at hotel

**Overnight in Dechu (Manvar)**

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

#### DAY 10 : DECHU-JODHPUR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to Jodhpur (120 Kms/ approx. 3 hours)

Jodhpur, also called the 'Blue City' located on the edge of the Thar Desert was once the capital of the former princely state of Marwar state founded in 1459 by Rao Jodha and is now the second largest city of Rajasthan. Flanked on its western side by the Mehrangarh Fort, and on the eastern side by the stately sandstone Palace of Umaid Bhawan; the monuments temples and gardens of Jodhpur depict a multi-faceted grandeur.



While the graceful palaces, forts and temples bring alive the historic grandeur; exquisite handicrafts, folk dances, music and the brightly attired people lend a romantic aura to the city. Countless festivities celebrate the rich past and culture of the princely state. The Marwar Festival held annually is one such spectacular bonanza.

Today visit the magnificent Mehrangarh Fort, one of Rajasthan's finest forts, looks down protectively over the city, from the hilltop. Still run by the Maharaja of Jodhpur, this 5 km long majestic fort on a 125 metre high hill is one of the most impressive and formidable structures. There are seven gates that lead into the fort. Inside the fort is a series of courtyards and palaces. The palace apartments with marvellously carved panels, latticed windows have evocative names such as Sukh Mahal (Pleasure Palace), Moti Mahal (Pearl Palace), the Phool Mahal (Flower Palace) and the Sheesh Mahal (Palace of Mirrors). These palaces house a fabulous collection of trappings of Indian royalty including a superb collection of palanquins, elephant howdahs (used when the Maharajas rode their elephants in processions), miniature paintings, musical instruments, costumes and furniture. The Chamunda Devi Temple, dedicated to goddess Durga, stands on the southern end of the fort.

Continue your tour to Jaswant Thada, located a short distance from the fort, just off the fort road, is a white marble memorial to Maharaja Jaswant Singh II. The cenotaph built in 1899, was followed by the royal crematorium and three other cenotaphs that stand nearby. There are some beautiful marble jali (lattice) work and fine views from the terrace in front of the cenotaphs.

**Overnight in Jodhpur**





### DAY 11 : JODHPUR-UDAIPUR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to Udaipur en-route visit to Kumbhalgarh Fort.

Located 85 km from Udaipur and 1,100 meters above sea level is the Kumbhalgarh Fort. Built in the 15th century by Rana Kumbha, one of Mewar's greatest warriors, this vast bastion was renowned for its inaccessibility. It was captured only once (that too due to poisoning of its water supply) and was the most important fort in Mewar, after Chittor. It had 7 massive gates and 7 ramparts, one within another, strengthened by rounded bastions and towers. It encloses a smaller fort called Katargarh, the Palace of Rana Kumbha and the ethereal Badal Mahal or Palace of the Clouds along with numerous temples.

On arrival check in at the hotel.

**Overnight in Udaipur**

### DAY 12 : IN UDAIPUR

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the morning, you will proceed on a half day city tour. Commence your tour with a visit to the City Palace which stands on a hill on the banks of Lake Pichola, surrounded by crenulated walls. Built in 1567, it is composed of 4 major palaces and several minor palaces that form a single façade. Its main entrance is through a triple arched gate, the Tripolia, built in 1725. The gate leads to a series of courtyards, corridors and gardens. Visit Jagdish Temple. Continue to Saheliyon-ki-Bari (Garden of the maids of honour), a small ornamental garden which was a popular relaxing spot where royal ladies came for a stroll and hence the name. The garden has many fountains in its four delightful pools, chiselled kiosks and marble elephants. Drive around Fatehsagar Lake & return back to your hotel

Evening boat ride on Lake Pichola on sharing basis (subject to adequate water level)

**Overnight in Udaipur**

### DAY 13 : UDAIPUR-DELHI

You will be met at the hotel by the Representative and transferred to airport to board flight your flight to Delhi.

Departure: Udaipur At: 1410 Hours By: 6E 2315

Arrive: Delhi At: 1540 Hours

On arrival in Delhi our Representative will transfer you to your hotel. Upon arrival, proceed for Check -in at the hotel.

**Overnight in Delhi**



### DAY 14: DELHI DEPARTURE

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning at leisure. Check-out from your hotel at 1200 hrs.

Later you will be met at your hotel by a representative and assisted transferred to airport for your flight for onward journey.

Meals: Breakfast





# Rajasthan Routes & Trails

Delhi-Mandawa-Bikaner-Jaisalmer-Jodhpur-Udaipur-Pushkar-Jaipur-Agra-Delhi

## DAY 01 : ARRIVE DELHI

Arrival in Delhi; arrive in Delhi and transfer to your hotel.

India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its folds - the ancient with the modern. Amidst the fast-spiraling skyscrapers the remnants of a bygone time in the form of its many monuments stand as silent reminders of the region's ancient legacy. The first impressions for any visitor traveling in from the airport are of a spacious, garden city, tree-lined with a number of beautiful parks.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

Overnight at hotel

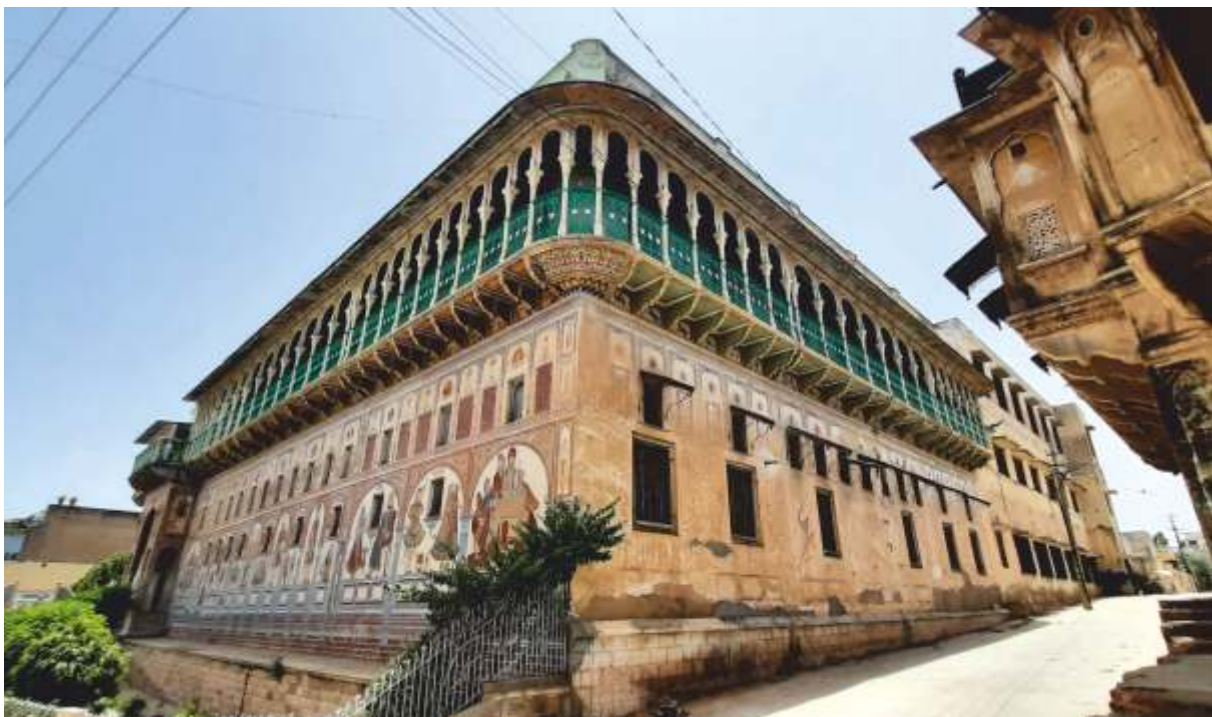


## DAY 02 : DELHI TO MANDAWA BY ROAD - 270 KMS / 06-07 HRS

Morning Drive to Mandawa - Visit Mandawa Village drive 180 kms to Mandawa, often referred to as Rajasthan's open art gallery. Mandawa is a sleepy little typical Rajasthani town, which is deep rooted with culture. Stay here in your heritage hotel, Castle Mandawa. Later enjoy a walking tour of Mandawa, which includes the medieval fort that gradually rises on the horizon like a mirage. A painted arched gateway adorned with Lord Krishna and his cows leads to the bazaar. A breathtaking view of the town can be seen from the terrace of Castle Mandawa. The Mandawa family has a collection of traditional ceremonial costumes.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

Overnight at hotel





**DAY 03 : MANDAWA TO BIKANER BY ROAD – 190 KMS / 05-06 HRS**

After breakfast leave for BIKANER, (190 km), which was once a major trading post between Africa, West Asia, and the Far East. The arts prospered receiving the patronage of a wealthy merchant community. The city is renowned for the best riding camels in the world. This afternoon during your tour you will visit Camel Breeding Farms; Junagarh Fort, a formidable structure encircled by a moat and having some beautiful palaces within. Situated at a height of above seven hundred feet above sea level, it towers over the city and can be seen from a distance.

The fort and its palaces are profusely decorated with magnificent stone carvings. 30 kms south of Bikaner is the village of Deshnok, where the famous Mata Karni Temple is situated. The 600-year-old temple is dedicated to Karni Mata, an incarnation of Goddess Durga.

The temple plays host to thousands of rats that form the major attraction here. The rats are considered sacred and worshipped accordingly. You have to be very careful while entering the inner sanctum, because it is believed that if you accidentally step on a rat, a gold replica has to be made to compensate for the lost life.

Evening is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**

**DAY 04 : BIKANER TO JAISALMER BY ROAD – 350 KMS / 07 HRS**

After breakfast, drive 350 km to Jaisalmer - a fairy-tale town in the Thar Desert founded about 800 years ago by Rajah Jaisal. Unlike any other city, this desert fortress is one of Rajasthan's most exotic and unusual towns. Jaisalmer, an important ancient trading centre because of its strategic location on the camel trade routes, is often described as the 'golden city'. The havelis, built by merchants of the 19th century, are exquisitely carved from golden-yellow sandstone and are still in beautiful condition. The fort built by Rawal Jaisal in the 12th century, stands on the 80-metre high Trikuta hill, with beautifully carved Jain temples. The annual desert festival takes place in January and February each year and is a riot of colour and activity. Jaisalmer is also famous for its embroidery, Rajasthani mirror work, rugs, blankets, antique, stonework and camel safaris into the barren sand-dunned desert.

Before Arrival in Jaisalmer 15 KMS BEFORE you will visit the War museum to showcase bravery of Army - 'Jaisalmer War Museum' has been established in the military station of Jaisalmer to showcase the traditional bravery of the Indian Army and also to commemorate

the sacrifice of its heroes' displaying valour and courage of exceptional order during India's wars. The Indian Army has set up a historical war museum in Jaisalmer. This war museum, which is the first-of its-kind on the western front, traces the evolution of the Indian Army and covers in detail its inspiring contribution in mainly 1965 Indo-Pak War and 1971 Longewala battle including all combat operations and other nation building activities. The war museum is located 10 km short of Jaisalmer on the Jaisalmer-Jodhpur highway. This historical war museum could become a new tourist spot for all Indian and foreigner tourists coming to Jaisalmer.

Arrival and check in at Hotel Late Lunch and you will visit the Gadsisar Lake -The beautiful arched gateway across the road down to the tank A scenic rainwater lake with numerous beautiful shrines around. The lake is an idyllic spot for outings.

Bada Bagh, cenotaphs of the Jaisalmer Rawal's, has some magnificent chhatris (canopies) set amidst an oasis of greenery. It is indeed a great place for a stopover and photography. Another beautiful place is the Gadi Sagar Tank, the main source of the city's water supply.

Evening is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**

**DAY 05 : IN JAISALMER**

After breakfast, leave for the city tour of Jaisalmer. Visit the famous Havelis (mansions) known for their frescoes. Jaisalmer's strategic position on the camel terrain route brought it great wealth. The merchants grew prosperous and commissioned great havelis, or mansions, to flaunt their ever-growing status in society. Made of local golden-yellow sandstone and wood, some of the havelis are still in excellent condition. The most elaborate and magnificent of all the Jaisalmer havelis is the Patwaon Ki Haveli. Five Jain brothers-built Haveli between 1800 and 1860. Salim Singh Ki Haveli and Nathmal Ki Haveli are the other two havelis that are open to visitors. Built in 1156 by the Bhatti ruler, Jaisal, THE FORT here stands atop the 80 m high Trikuta hill. 3 walls and 99 bastions surround the fort. Over the centuries, the golden sandstone fortress witnessed many battles between the Bhatti's, the Mughals, and the Rathore's of Jodhpur. Within the fort complex lie the beautifully carved Jain Temples built between the 12th and 15th centuries. The Maharawals (rulers) of Jaisalmer were devout Hindus but were tolerant of Jainism and encouraged art and religion. There are 7 temples in the complex - Chandraprabhu, Parasnath, Shitalnath, Sambhavnath, Shantinath,



Kunthunath and Rikhabdev Temple. The temples are all connected by a series of corridors and walkways. Close by is the Gyan Bhandar, a library founded in 1500 A.D. This house is priceless ancient manuscripts and other exhibits like astrological charts, besides the Jain equivalent of the Christian Shroud of Turin.

In the evening, proceed for the excursion to Sam Sand dunes. Located at a distance of 42 kilometers from Jaisalmer, Sam Sand Dunes is the closest point to witnessing the total sandy desert. You can also see the patterns and motifs created by the shifting sands and air. Moreover, Sam Sand Dunes also provide you with an unforgettable experience of camel rides and the sunset.

**Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 06 : JAISALMER TO JODHPUR BY ROAD – 300 KMS / 06-07 HRS**

After breakfast, drive to Jodhpur, Call it by its many names and they will not do Jodhpur justice. An oasis in the arid Thar Desert, Jodhpur is the second largest city in the state of Rajasthan. Representing this colorful city with shades of blue, Jodhpur has a history that is rich and a present that beckons strongly to the discerning tourist. Forts and palaces, temples and havelis, culture and tradition, spices and fabrics, color and texture, Jodhpur has them all and in plenty. Situated in western

Rajasthan, Jodhpur has long attracted both the domestic and outside tourist. It not only offers tangibles, in terms of what you can see and buy, but also fills one with a sense of history and the splendors of an era gone forever. The hospitality of the locals, the demure women, the colourful turbans -all set against the unmerciful desert is something to feel, not just see.

Every pore of Jodhpur tells its own tales of heroic tales that made legends out of kings and soldiers, romances that continue to warm the heart and a time when epics were lived out on the streets by everyday man.

Visit the MEHRANGARH FORT in the afternoon. Considered one of India's best forts, this invincible stronghold of the Marwar sits on a steep hill lording over a wonderful view of its surroundings. It is also a beautiful fort and undoubtedly, the jewel of Jodhpur. Intricate latticed windows, elaborately carved panels and elegantly curved porches speak of beauty and taste. No matter what part of the fort you are in, its ambience will leave you in awe and your senses reeling. Take in the sight high up on the rampart where the second largest cannon in Asia rests, the recoil of which requires an area as large as a football field! Also visit Jaswant Thada - a white marble memorial built in memory of Maharaja Jaswant II in 1899 A story goes that Maharaja Jaswant succumbed to injuries in this place while fighting the Mughal king Jehangir.



Also visit Sardar Bazaar and Clock Tower markets where you can see the vegetable, spice, Indian sweets, and textile and silver markets. These colourful markets with tiny shops dot the narrow lanes replete with woodcarvings, wrought iron, lacquer work, silver and ivory ornamentation and leather handicrafts.

**Overnight at hotel**

**DAY 07 : JODHPUR TO UDAIPUR BY ROAD – 300KMS / 06-07 HRS**

This morning we'll drive through valleys in the remote and peaceful Aravalli Range to RANAKPUR to visit one of the most important Jain temples in India. This marble complex is noted for the 29 halls supported by 1,444 pillars, each adorned with hundreds of carved figures, no two alike. We'll continue driving south, arriving Udaipur, described as the "City of Sunrise" in the evening.

Arrive in Udaipur and transfer to your hotel. Set on the shores of Lake Pichola and surrounded by hills, Udaipur grew in complete contrast to the harsh deserts of the rest of Rajasthan. As capital of the old Mewar State it was the only Rajput stronghold to uphold its Hindu allegiance in the face of Muslim invasion. This fairy - tale city, with its marble palaces and lakes surrounded by a ring of hills, was founded by Maharana Udai Singh in 1559. The city is dominated by the massive City Palace, which overlooks Lake Pichola with its romantic island palaces. Picturesque havelis, ghats and temples line the lake front, with the lively bazaars of the old walled city stretching behind them.

Later in the evening take a boat ride on the 4 km long and 3 km wide Lake Pichola, which is fringed with hills, palaces, havelis, ghats, embankments and temples and offers spectacular.

Lake Pichola, the largest artificial freshwater lake in Udaipur, was built in the year. Around 30 feet deep, this beautiful lake boasts of four main islands - Jag Niwas, Jag Mandir, Mohan Mandir and Arsi Vilas.

Jag Niwas is home to the beautiful Lake Palace, a well-known heritage hotel. Jag Mandir features the famous Lake Garden Palace. Mohan Mandir used to be where the King would witness the Gangaur celebrations while Arsi Vilas was built by the Maharanas to enjoy the beautiful views of the sunset. The best way to catch scintillating views of the lake is to take a boat ride, especially around sunset, and enjoy the tranquility.

Evening is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**

**DAY 08 : IN UDAIPUR**

After breakfast proceed for city tour of Udaipur –

Visiting the City Palace and Museum. The largest palace complex in India, it is a blend of Mughal and Rajput influences. The most impressive attraction in Udaipur is the magnificent City Palace which is now a museum and houses fine art works in glass mosaics, and miniature paintings, of which Udaipur is famous, depicting glories of an ancient past.





**Crystal Gallery** - Situated at the Fateh Prakash Palace, the Crystal Gallery houses an extravagant collection of crystals. It is an unused collection that includes crystal chairs, sofas, tables and even beds. Other precious items include crystal dressing tables, chairs, crockery, table fountains and even the regal beds. In 1877, Maharaja Sajjan Singh ordered this rare crystal from F&C Osler & Co in England but died before the package arrived.

**JAGDISH TEMPLE** -The Jagdish Temple is a great focal point for the Hindu people of Udaipur. The temple is dedicated to Vishnu, The Jagdish Mandir is an excellent example of Indo -Aryan architecture. One of the popular tourist attractions on the map of Rajasthan, the Jagdish Temple is a large Hindu temple located in the heart of Udaipur. It enshrines a black stone image of Lord Vishnu, considered as 'The Creator' in Hindu mythology.

**Sahelion Ki Bari** - Sahelion Ki Bari, also known as 'Courtyard of the Maidens' is a popular tourist attraction in Udaipur, Rajasthan. Set below the embankment of the Fatah Sagar Lake, the gardens is decorated with beautiful lotus pools, elephant-shaped fountains, paintings, glass mosaics and marble pavilions. Legend says the king himself designed this garden and presented it to the queen.

**Shilpagram**- Shilpagram in Udaipur can be literally translated as the 'Craftsmen's Village'. It depicts the lifestyle of the folk and tribal people of the West Zone.

Udaipur Vintage collection of classic cars The collection comprises a variety of classic and interestingly rare and

well-maintained vehicles. The Maharaja personally visits the museum weekly to ensure that the cars are in mint condition. Double up on the ticket with the Rajasthani Thali offered inside, and it will make for a memorable experience for both car and food enthusiasts.

#### **Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 09 : UDAIPUR TO PUSHKAR BY ROAD – 300 KMS / 06 HRS**

After breakfast transfer to Pushkar enroute visit Ajmer- Ajmer was founded in the 11th century by Chauhan ruler Ajaipal and is dominated by the Taragarh fort. It is a major centre for Muslim pilgrims during the fast of Ramzan on account of being home to the Dargah of Sufi saint Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti. Seven pilgrimages to Ajmer are supposed to equal one to Mecca. Ajmer has some superb examples of early Muslim architecture and a lively bazaar and is located conveniently close to Pushkar. Visit the Dargah (tomb) of Khwaja Moin-ud-din Chishti, the Ana Sagar Lake.

Later drive to Pushkar; at its heart is one of India's most sacred lakes. There are 52 ghats around the lake, and numerous temples. The Brahma temple, especially, attracts pilgrims all year round. Apart from its religious significance, Pushkar is known for its Cattle and Camel fair held every year in the month of Kartik (October/November), which attracts visitors in their thousands. You can also witness and participate in the evening prayer meetings in the temples. Being a religious town, alcohol and non-vegetarian food are taboo.

Pushkar separated from Ajmer by Nag Pahar, the snake mountain. This traveller-friendly town clings to the side of the small Pushkar Lake with its many bathing ghats and temples. For Hindus, Pushkar is a very important pilgrimage centre, and you'll see plenty of Sadhus (individuals on a spiritual search). Pushkar boasts temples, the most famous is the Brahma Temple, said to be one of the few temples in the world dedicated to this deity.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

#### Overnight at hotel

### DAY 10 : PUSHKAR TO JAIPUR BY ROAD – 145 KMS / 03 HRS

Arrive at Jaipur and transfer to your hotel. The capital of Rajasthan Jaipur - popularly known as the “Pink City” as the Pink sandstone was used to construct the buildings in the old walled city. Jaipur owes its name; its foundation and its planning to the Great-Warrior-Astronomer Maharaja Jai Singh II (1699-1744 AD).

Jaipur (City of Victory) was founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1727. It is the only city in the world symbolising the nine divisions of the Universe through nine rectangular sectors sub-dividing it.

The architect who formalised the city's plans on the Shilpa Shastra, the epic Hindu treatise on architecture, mixed it with the sublimity of the Mughal and Jain influences of those times. The city was painted pink in 1853 in honour of the visit by Prince Albert. Except for the busy traffic of bicycles, cars, and buses, little seems to have changed.

After Lunch Visit the City of Jaipur. Among the highlights to be seen while touring Jaipur include the City Palace, which is an overwhelming complex of exquisite palaces, gardens and courtyards, decorative art, and carved doorways. The palace museum houses collections of rare manuscripts, armours, costumes, carpets, and miniature paintings. Walk to the adjacent Jantar Mantar or Astronomical Observatory made by the Maharaja of Jaipur, built in 1726 and is one of the five such astronomical wonders built by Sawai Jai Singh and makes accurate predictions even to this day. An observatory equipped with instruments of astonishing size and precision, including a 90-foot-high sun dial. See the Hawa Mahal or Palace of Winds, a major Rajput landmark built in 1799. This five-story building in the old city is a pink sandstone masterpiece with semi octagonal and delicately honeycombed windows. The monument was originally conceived to enable ladies of the royal household to watch the city's everyday life and royal processions in absolute privacy.



Jaipur is a shopper's paradise. Most of the bazaars are in an old city with a wide range of things to buy,

#### Overnight at hotel

### DAY 11 : IN JAIPUR

After breakfast proceed for full day city tour of Jaipur – visiting Amer Fort located at a distance of 11 kilometers from Jaipur and was the old fort of the Kachhwaha clan of Amber. It used to be the capital, till it was moved to Jaipur. The fort is built with white marble and red sandstone and looks even more attractive because of the Maota Lake in the foreground. The fort in itself is a beautiful sight to behold but as one looks on the fort with its clear reflection on the lake in the front; one cannot help but wonder if it is a dream or a beautiful illusion. An elephant [Subject to availability /alternatively by jeep] will spare you the trouble of climbing up to the fortress. Once on top, stroll through the sprawling complex of courtyards and halls with a well-informed and well-spoken guide who would regale you with tales of yore.

Continue past through the Jalmahal, a photo stop and drive to Ram Niwas Gardens and architecturally impressive Albert Hall. Ram Niwas Bagh & Albert Hall Central Museum Built by Sawai Ram Singh II in the 1868 A.D, Ram Nivas Bagh is a lush sprawling garden with a zoo, an aviary, a greenhouse, an herbarium, a museum, and sports ground in the premises.

Albert Hall This fine example of example of Indo Saracenic style of architecture, in the Ram Nivas Bagh was designed by Sir Swinton Jacob. The Hall is home to an exquisite collection of sculptures, paintings, objects d'art, natural history specimens, an Egyptian mummy, and a beautiful Persian carpet. Recently, the Rabindra Manch with an auditorium, a modern art gallery and an open-air theatre, has been added to promote cultural events.

Later on, pass through the Moti Doongri Palace – a privately owned hilltop fort built like a Scottish castle and Birla Temple.



Evening visit the Chokhi Dhani Village for Dinner (On Direct Payment) – Chokhi Dhani Village has been the mirror of Rajasthani culture since 1989. Live dance and music performance all through the evenings is one of the major attractions at Chokhi Dhani Village.

**Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 12 : JAIPUR TO AGRA BY RPAD 250 KMS 06 HOURS**

After breakfast drive to Agra enroute visiting Fatehpur Sikri.

Fatehpur Sikri - the deserted red sandstone city was built by the Great Mughal Emperor, Akbar, as his capital and palace in the late 16th century. It was abandoned soon after it was built when the local wells went dry, and it remains today in much the same condition that it was over 300 years ago. It is complete with palaces and mosques and used to be a town larger than London when it was originally constructed. Now it is an extraordinary place to wander around with its buildings in near perfect condition.

Later continue drive to Agra. Arrive Agra and transfer to your hotel.

Agra came into limelight during the rule of Afghan King Sikandar Lodhi - who had made it the capital of his empire.

Later in 1526 A.D., the Mughal Emperor Babar took upon himself the task for rendering Agra, a unique character and beauty of its own. Agra - in terms of ambiance is still associated with its Mughal period. The Mughals besides being great rulers were also great builders and they preserved their best architectural wonders for Agra & its neighbourhood. It has many wonderful monuments and the Taj Mahal, the greatest of them all, is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture at its best.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

**Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 13-AGRA TO DELHI BY ROAD – 200 KMS / 05 HRS**

After breakfast proceed for half day city tour of Agra. The Taj Mahal (closed on Friday) - The Taj Mahal is everything that has been said about it and more. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as an expression of his



love for his wife Mumtaz Mahal, in mid-17th century, the Taj Mahal is truly one of the wonders of the world. Though the Taj appears to be amazingly perfect from almost any angle, it is the close-up marble inlay work, which is really astounding.

Later visit The Agra Fort, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture. Agra Fort - the seat and the stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. This was the seat of Mughal rule. Shahjahan added the impressive quarters and the mosque while Aurangzeb added the outer ramparts. Visit its Hall of Public Audience and its Royal Pavilions. Besides the historical monuments, one can also explore Agra's rich heritage of handicrafts in its markets.

Also visit Itmad ud Daula - This tomb was built in 1622 for Ghiyas Beg, father of Empress Noor-Jahan, the wife of Emperor Jahangir. It is beautifully conceived in white marble, mosaic and lattice and set a precedent as the first Mughal building to be faced with white marble inlaid with contrasting stones. Sometimes also called 'Baby Taj', it is small, intimate and has a gentle serenity.

Later drive to Delhi; arrive in Delhi and transfer to your hotel.

India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its folds - the ancient with the modern. Amidst the fast-spiraling skyscrapers the remnants of a bygone time in the form of its many monuments stand as silent reminders of the region's ancient legacy. The first impressions for any visitor traveling in from the airport are of a spacious, garden city, tree-lined with a number of beautiful parks.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

#### Overnight at hotel

#### DAY 14: IN DELHI

After breakfast proceed for tour of Old and New Delhi. Old Delhi, the Mughal Capital of Shahjahanabad. Visit the Jama Masjid which is the principal mosque of Old Delhi in India. Commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal, and completed in

the year 1656 AD, it is the largest and best-known mosque in India. It lies at the origin of a very busy central street of Old Delhi, the Chawri Bazar Road. The mosque of Friday was built from 1644 to 1658 during the reign of Shahjahan. The mosque is 80 m long and 27 m wide. The courtyard can accommodate 25,000 worshippers and occupies 408 square feet.

Later we proceed to visit Raj Ghat where Mahatma Gandhi - The Father of Nation, was cremated and drive past the Red Fort [ from outside] - the palace for Shahjahan's new capital, Shahjahanabad, the seventh Muslim city in the Delhi site. Wander in the busy streets of the mile long Chandni Chowk, popularly called "The Silver Street". Enjoy the 'Cycle Rickshaw' ride in Old Delhi.

In the afternoon proceed for tour of New Delhi, which reflects the legacy the British left behind. The division between New and Old Delhi is the division between the capitals of the British and the Mughals respectively. The division in the walled city and New Delhi also marks the division in the lifestyles. The walled city is all tradition where one will be able to glean a past lifestyle in all its facets, colours and spells. New Delhi in contrast, is a city trying to live up to the best of 21st century standards.

The tour to Imperial Delhi will start by visit to the Qutab Minar, the tallest stone tower in India. The Qutab Minar was started in 1199 AD by Qutab-ud-Din Aibak and completed by the sultan's successor and son-in-law, Iltutmish. The building is 72.5 m high and has 379 steps from the bottom to the top. The Minar is tapered with the diameter of the base is 14.3 m while at the top floor it is 2.7 m. The Qutab Minar is still the highest stone tower as well as one of the finest Islamic structures ever raised in India.

Later visit Humayun's Tomb, built by the widow of the second Mughal Emperor, Humayun, it is an outstanding monument in the Indo-Persian style, a precursor of the Taj Mahal.

Drive past the imposing India Gate, the Parliament building and the Rashtrapati Bhawan, the President's residence.

Afternoon is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars for personal exploration or shopping.

#### Overnight at hotel

#### DAY 15: BY AIR / TRAIN - DEPART DELHI

Today in time transfer to Delhi Airport / Railway Station to board your flight / train for onward journey to your next destination.





# Indian Trails

Delhi-Varanasi-Khajuraho-Agra-Ranthambore-  
Jaipur-Udaipur-Mumbai-Madurai-Munnar-Periyar-Alleppey-Kochi



## DAY 01 : ARRIVE DELHI

You will arrive at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. Following customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, a representative will meet you as you EXIT the ARRIVALS TERMINAL building thereafter you will be transferred to your hotel for check-in (Check-in time at the hotel is 1400 hours. Early check-in will be subject to availability of rooms and at the discretion of the hotel).



India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its fold the ancient and the modern. One of the most historic capitals in the world, Delhi is a treasure trove that reveals the ultimate combination of tradition and trends. Delhi is made up of seven ancient cities, spanning the period from the 11th to 20th centuries. The city has seen the rise and fall of many emperors, which have left behind a plethora of monuments that commemorate the grandeur and glory of bygone ages. Very few cities in the world can express such a profusion of architectural styles. Its many-layered existence is tantalizing and can entice the curious traveller into a fascinating journey of discovery.

A holiday in Delhi, the capital city of India, will expose you to innumerable facets of Indian heritage, culture and tourism. It will be a vacation much beyond just monuments, museums or gardens of the Mughal and British period. Delhi offers you a wealth of new age tourist attractions to choose from. With shopping malls, multiplexes and amusement parks springing up around Delhi, the city has left behind its image of being a sedate city of politicians and has acquired a younger and more dynamic feel, which you will discover on your Indian holiday in Delhi.

Rest of the day will be free at leisure (No transport services).

#### **Overnight stay at the hotel in Delhi.**

#### **DAY 02 : IN DELHI**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning proceed for walking tour of Delhi.

Enjoy a guided walking tour of Old Delhi, which was built by Shah Jahan during the 17th century and is considered today as an epitome of Indo-Islamic architecture. Savour the sights, smells and sounds of the fabled streets. The tour is full of legends and unfolds tales of Old Delhi, which go back thousands of years. The tour takes you through the Dariba Kalan – the silver street, Kinari bazaar and Chandni Chowk where you can see the quaint shops with incredible wares. The tour takes you through Jama Masjid – the largest mosque in India, drive past the Red Fort & then proceed to

Raj Ghat – the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi.

Lunch at a local restaurant

The tour also includes a drive past the imposing India Gate (War Memorial Arch), the Parliament buildings and the Rashtrapati Bhawan (the President's residence). Visit Humayun's Tomb, the first great example of a new distinctive style, which developed to become the hallmark of the Mughal Dynasty & end the day with the

visit of Qutab Minar, the tallest stone tower in India built to establish the might of Islam and onset of Muslim rule in India.

#### **Overnight in Delhi.**

#### **DAY 03 : DELHI-VARANASI**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning you will be met at your hotel by the Representative and transferred to airport to board flight to Varanasi.

Departure: Delhi

On arrival at the airport our Representative will transfer you to your hotel. Check-in 1400 hours.

Located along the west bank of the holy river Ganges in the state of Uttar Pradesh, the city of Varanasi is a sacred Hindu pilgrimage site and is one of the oldest. It is a city which enshrines the very essence of Hinduism - temples, shrines and devotees, sunrise boat rides, flower ceremonies with traditional music and walks on the ghats. A city of colourful bazaars, exquisite and bright silks, festivals - all centring around the teeming ghats of the holy Ganges.

Later in the evening, enjoy the evening Aarti at the Ghats.

#### **Overnight in Varanasi.**

#### **DAY 04 : IN VARANASI**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Early this morning, enjoy a boat cruise on the river Ganges. Varanasi's principle attraction is the string of bathing ghats, which line the western ghats of River Ganges. The spectacular 4 Km sweep of the Ghats is a unique sight, best viewed at dawn. An early morning boat ride presents an incredible scene as the multitudes of devotees come to the river to pay homage to the Sun God. Pass the bathing ghats where thousands of pilgrims immerse themselves in the holy water of the Ganges River and the burning ghats where cremations are conducted.

Return to the hotel.

Rest day at leisure (No Transport Foreseen).

#### **Overnight in Varanasi.**

#### **DAY 05 : VARANASI-KHAJURAHO**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning you will be met at the hotel by the Representative and transferred to airport to board your flight.



**Departure: Varanasi**

On arrival in Khajuraho, our Representative will transfer you to your hotel. Upon arrival, proceed for Check -in at the hotel.

Situated in the heart of India in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Khajuraho lies in the forested plains of the region of Bundelkhand and world renowned for its temple architecture and exquisite sculptures. Built under later Chandela kings between 950 and 1050 AD in a truly inspired burst of creativity, the temples are superb examples of architecture. The engravings on these temples are highly sensual and erotic that depicts in graceful forms intimate scenes of the whole range of human emotions and relationships. These sculptures congeal in stone a lyrical paean to love and passion and reflect the Chandela dynasty's immense appreciation for art.

This afternoon enjoy a guided visit to the Western Group of temples which are entirely Hindu, and constitute some of the finest examples of Chandela art at its peak. The largest being the Kandhariya Mahadev dedicated to Lord Shiva, followed by a granite temple - Chaunsath Yogini. The Chitragupta Temple is dedicated to the Sun God, while the Vishwanath Temple sports a three-headed image of Brahma - the Creator of the Universe. The Lakshmana Temple is superbly decorated, while the Devi Jagdambi Temple is dedicated to Goddess Kali. Other temples in the Western Group include the Varaha

Temple with a nine-foot high boar-incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the Matangeshwara Temple with an eight-foot high lingam, and the Brahma Temple.

**Overnight in Khajuraho.**

**DAY 06 : KHAJURAHO-AGRA**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning check out from the hotel and drive to Jhansi (180 Kms / approx. 4 hours). En route visit the medieval city of Orchha which seems to have frozen in time, its palaces and temples still retaining their original grandeur. The city, located by the side of the beautiful Betwa River, was founded by the Bundela Rajput chieftain, Rudra Pratap, in the 16th century. Apart from the famous landmarks like Jehangir Mahal, the Laxminarayan Temple, the area is peppered with fascinating little shrines and memorials, all of which add to the overwhelming feeling of nostalgia, the city evokes in the visitor.

Lunch at a local restaurant

Continue on to your drive to Jhansi railway station in time to board the New Delhi Shatabdi Express train to Agra.

Depart: Jhansi At: 1840 hours

By: New Delhi Shatabdi

Arrive: Agra At: 2110 hours



On arrival in Agra, you will be met and transferred to the hotel.

The city of Agra, the quintessence of the grand Mughal era, reigns to this day in the public mind as the embodiment of royal grace, imposing architecture and power. Agra is globally renowned as the city of the Taj Mahal. But this royal Mughal city has, in addition to the legendary Taj, many monuments that epitomize the high point of Mughal architecture. No tour to India can be complete without paying a visit to this erstwhile capital of the Mughals and the city of the Taj Mahal, the world's most beloved monument. With its laidback lifestyle and its immense wealth of architecture, handicrafts and jewellery, Agra is amongst the most remarkable city of the world.

**Overnight in Agra.**

#### DAY 07 : IN AGRA

Morning visit Taj Mahal at Sunrise (Remains closed on Friday).

Referred to as one of the wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal in Agra is the epitome of tourism in India and is celebrated for its architectural magnificence and aesthetic beauty. A symphony in white marble, a tribute to eternal love, it was built by the Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Return to the hotel for breakfast.

This morning proceed for tour of Agra Fort.

Agra Fort, Few forts in the world have a more fascinating story to tell than the Great Fort of Agra, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture and the seat and stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. Originally planned as an impregnable military structure by Akbar, the Agra Fort, over a period of time, acquired all the elegance, lavishness and majesty of an imperial palace. Situated on the right bank of the Yamuna, the Agra fort was built under the direction of Akbar, by Mohammed Quasim Khan, his commander-in-Chief and Governor of Kabul and added to by his son Jehangir and grandson Shahjahan. An imposing structure with walls of red sandstone, almost 3 kilometres (two miles) long. The eastern part of the fort (the only part open to visitors) contains palaces, audience halls and mosques built by all the three emperors.

Lunch at local restaurant.

Return to the hotel. Remainder of the day at leisure

**Overnight in Agra.**

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch

#### DAY 08 : AGRA-RANTHAMBORE

(Every Wednesday park will be closed)

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure

This morning in time, you will proceed on to your drive to Bharatpur station (60 Kms /approx 2 hours) in time to board the Kota Janshatabadi train to Sawai Madhopur.

Depart: Bharatpur

At: 1503 hours

By: Kota Janshatabadi

Arrive: Sawai Madhopur

At: 1806 hours

On arrival in Ranthambore, you will be met and transferred to the hotel.

Dinner at hotel

**Overnight in Ranthambore**

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner



#### DAY 9 : IN RANTHAMBORE

Early morning enjoy canter safari to the Park.

Breakfast at the hotel

Afternoon post lunch proceed for your 2nd Canter safari to the Park.

Dinner at hotel

**Overnight in Ranthambore**

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner



#### **DAY 10 : RANTHAMBORE-JAIPUR**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning you will proceed on to your drive to Jaipur (180 Kms /approx 4 hours) en-route visit the Abhaneri Stepwell.

On arrival you will check into your hotel.

The vibrant capital of Rajasthan renowned for its forts and palaces is popularly known as the 'Pink City' because of the pink-colour buildings in its old city. An ideal base for touring the royal state, the city has the distinction of being the third jewel of India's "Golden Triangle". Its main claim to fame is that it is India's first 'planned' city built by the famous 18th century astronomer King Sawai Jai Singh II.

Jaipur is not only the gateway to the state; it is also the most natural place to begin a discovery of Rajasthan's multifaceted attractions. Its beautiful buildings including the City Palace, Amer Fort and the landmark Hawa Mahal are truly worth seeing. Browsing through the markets in Jaipur, where skilled craftsmen display jewellery, paintings, carvings and colourful textiles, is an enjoyable experience for tourists.

Lunch at local restaurant

**Overnight in Jaipur.**

#### **DAY 11 : IN JAIPUR**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning you will proceed on a full day tour of Jaipur City. Drive to the ancient capital of Amer to see the fabulous Amber Fort, situated on a ridge just outside Jaipur city. Maharaja Mansingh, Mughal Emperor Akbar's most successful General, started the construction of Amber Fort in the 17th century. Before the City Palace was constructed in Jaipur, Amber was the seat of power. The fort is surrounded by fortified battlements and overlooks the Moat Lake. Ruins and remains are spread over the Aravalli hills and sprawling crenulated walls lattice the surrounding area.

Tour the chambers and hallways of the palace, famous for the excellence of its design and decoration. Within the complex is Ganesh Pol, an imposing gateway painted with the images of the elephant-headed god, Ganesh. The merging of Rajput and Mughal architectural styles is captured in the Sukh Niwas and Jas Mandir apartments, and the Charbagh garden with its perfectly proportioned landscaping. Pierced screen windows offer views from different vantage points and shimmering mirrors encrust the walls of Sheesh Mahal.

Following your visit to Amber, enjoy a tour of the Pink City, an "abode of rajahs". Photo stop at the Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) - a five-storied wonder with a spectacular pyramidal facade and overhanging windows with latticed screens, domes and spires. Proceed for your visit to the City Palace, the former royal residence built in a blend of the Rajasthani and Mughal styles. An overwhelming complex of exquisite palaces, gardens and courtyards, decorative art and carved doorways, the Palace also houses a museum with a superb collection of Rajasthani costumes and armoury of Mughals and Rajputs including swords of different shapes and sizes with chiselled handles. The art gallery showcases an excellent collection of miniature paintings, carpets, royal paraphernalia and rare astronomical works in Arabic, Persian, Latin and Sanskrit. Carry onwards to the awe inspiring Jantar Mantar Observatory, a stone astrological and astronomical Observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh in the 18th century.

**Overnight in Jaipur.**

#### **DAY 12 : JAIPUR-UDAIPUR**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning you will drive to Udaipur (390 Kms/approx. 06-07 hours). Upon arrival, proceed for Check-in at the hotel.

Udaipur, the 'City of Lakes' is the capital of the erstwhile kingdom of Mewar, one of the oldest surviving dynasties in the world and was established around 1567 A.D. The history of Mewar is showcased in the city of Udaipur, which is akin to an oasis in the desert state of Rajasthan. It is a rich and beguiling tapestry of lakeside palaces, forts, temples, havelis and gardens, reflecting the varied influences of the centuries. Also referred as the 'Venice of the East', Udaipur is located in the Aravalli ranges of the royal state of Rajasthan. Surrounded by ancient mountains and set on the edge of three lakes, it is a beautiful old city with narrow lanes meandering through it.

Lunch at the local restaurant,

**Overnight in Udaipur.**

#### **DAY 13 : IN UDAIPUR**

Breakfast at the hotel.

In the afternoon, you will proceed on a half day city tour. Commence your tour with a visit to the City Palace which stands on a hill on the banks of Lake Pichola, surrounded by crenulated walls. Built in 1567, it is composed of 4 major palaces and several minor palaces that form a single façade. Its main entrance is through a triple arched



gate, the Tripolia, built in 1725. The gate leads to a series of courtyards, corridors and gardens. Visit Jagdish Temple. Continue to Saheliyon-ki-Bari (Garden of the maids of honour), a small ornamental garden which was a popular relaxing spot where royal ladies came for a stroll and hence the name. The garden has many fountains in its four delightful pools, chiselled kiosks and marble elephants. Drive around Fatehsagar Lake & return back to your hotel

#### DAY 14: UDAIPUR-MUMBAI

Morning you will be met at the hotel by the Representative and transferred to airport to board flight your flight to Mumbai.

Departure: Udaipur

Arrive: Mumbai

On arrival in Mumbai, our Representative will transfer you to your hotel. Upon arrival, proceed for Check -in at the hotel.

**Overnight in Mumbai.**



#### DAY 15 : IN MUMBAI

Breakfast at the hotel.

Proceed for tour of Mumbai.

You will proceed to see some of the distinct landmarks the city is famous for. Visit the Gateway of India, which was built to commemorate the visit of King George V in 1911 is followed by a drive through the Afghan Church - The Church of St. John the Evangelist, is an Anglican Church in Mumbai, India, built by the British to commemorate the dead of the First Afghan War and the disastrous 1842 retreat from Kabul, drive through the stretch of Marine Drive, popularly known as the Queen's Necklace, visit the Jain Temple. Continue to visit Mani Bhawan which was the residence of the Father of the Nation and serves as a museum today. Visit The Haji Ali Dargah is a mosque and dargah located on an islet off the coast of Worli in the southern part of Mumbai. It is the shrine of Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari the Sufi saint from Uzbekistan. Near the heart of the city proper, the dargah is one of the most recognisable landmarks of Mumbai. Photo-stop at the largest open-air laundry - Dhobi Ghat, which is still popular with the citizens despite the advent of the washing machine! (Not available on Saturday & Sunday) Then you will be driven to Crawford Market that was probably the last bastion of British Bombay, poised between two worlds - the Fort and the by lanes of the old town. The market is straight out of Victorian London

with its sweet smell of hay and 50-feet high awning. Until recently this was a wholesale bazaar that handled nearly 3000 tones of fresh produce daily; even today tropical fruits are sold in Himalayan heaps several feet high, while vendors sit like unflappable Buddha's between peaks of apples, guavas and mangoes.

Visit Sassoon Docks which is one of the oldest docks in Mumbai. It was the first wet dock constructed in 1875 in Bombay. It is one of the few docks in the city open to the public. It is situated in Mumbai harbor in South Mumbai area of Colaba. It is one of largest fish markets in the Mumbai city (No photography allowed)

Then proceed to The David Sassoon Library is the name of a famous library and heritage structure in Mumbai, India. The idea for a library to be situated in the center of the city was the brainchild of Albert Sassoon, son of the famous Baghdadi Jewish philanthropist, David Sassoon.

End the day with visit to The Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum is the oldest museum in Mumbai. Situated in Byculla East, it was originally established in 1855 as a treasure house of the decorative and industrial arts, and was later renamed in honour of Bhau Daji – (Wednesday closed)

**Overnight in Mumbai.**

#### **DAY 16: MUMBAI-MADURAI**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning you will be met at the hotel by our Representative and transferred to airport to board flight your flight to Madurai.

Departure: Mumbai

Arrive: Madurai

On arrival in Madurai, our Representative will transfer you to your hotel. Upon arrival, proceed for Check -in at the hotel.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Known as the Athens of the East, Madurai, the second largest city in Tamil Nadu is situated on the banks of the river Vaigai. An ancient city, more than 2,500 years old, Madurai is believed to have been built by the Pandyan King Kulasekara in the 6th century BC. The city is said to have got its name from the drops of nectar (Mathuram) that fell from Shiva's locks when he came to bless its people for constructing a temple for him. Originally named Madhurapuri or the 'land of nectar', the name later got modified as Madurai. From such legendary beginnings, the actual history of Madurai emerged sometime during the 3rd century BC.

Overnight in Madurai.



#### **DAY 17: IN MADURAI**

Early in the morning, you will visit the bustling and colourful flower market.

Following breakfast at the hotel, you will enjoy a visit to the Palace of Tirumalai Nayak, an Indo-Saracenic building constructed in 1523. There is no other building in Madurai which can better illustrate the architectural style of the Nayaks. The most remarkable part of this palace is the Swarga Vilasam which served as the audience hall. Its dome which lies beyond a huge courtyard is a magnificent example of the engineering skill of its builders, rising as it does to a height of 20m without support of any kind. Continue to the Meenakshi Temple. One of the most important places of Hindu pilgrimage, the temple is the very centre of cultural and religious life for the residents of the city. It is a riotously baroque example of Dravidian architecture with gopurams (spires) covered from top to bottom in a breathtaking profusion of multi coloured images of gods, goddesses, animals and mythical figures. The temple complex has two main shrines, one dedicated to Sundaeswarar (Shiva) and the other to his consort Meenakshi (Parvati). The Kampathadi Mandapam (pillared hall) in front of the Sundaeswara shrine depicts the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. The 1000-pillared hall in the complex houses the Temple Art Museum, which contains friezes, stone and brass images and the best exhibits on Hindu deities.

In the evening visit the Temple to witness Aarti Ceremony.

**Overnight in Madurai.**

#### DAY 18 : MADURAI-MUNNAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to Munnar (165 Kms/approx. 04 hours).

Munnar is a magnificent hill station in the Western Ghats at about 5000 feet above sea level and is the major centre of Kerala's tea industry. It is surrounded by about 30 tea estates, amongst the highest in the world and a forest that is still rich in wildlife that continues to survive the increasing commercial use of the hills. The luxuriant forest is hung with pepper vines. The hills around Munnar are covered with the rare Neelakurunji plant giving it a wonderful look, especially when the flowers bloom to cover the entire mountain range. It is said that this exotic plant flowers every 12 years and the last scheduled flowering time was in the year 2006.

Arrive and on arrival, check in at the hotel.

Rest day at leisure.

**Overnight in Munnar.**

#### DAY 19 : IN MUNNAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning visit the Tea Plantation & Tea Museum (Closed on Monday) : An area surrounding a lovely lake that offers some of the most stunning views of the region. Visit a Tea Museum before you enjoy tea tasting. End the tour with visit to Mattupetti Dam.

Rest day at leisure.

**Overnight in Munnar.**

#### DAY 20 : MUNNAR-PERIYAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning you will be driven towards Thekkady (135 Kms /approx 4-5 hours).

Upon arrival, Check in to the hotel. Check in 1400 hours.

The heart of God's own country! Thekkady is located about 4 km from Kumili in Idukki district. The very sound of the name conjures up images of elephants, unending chains of hills and spice scented plantations. Here, in the crisp, cool air of the Western Ghats you will experience the most enchanting holiday. In the Periyar forests of Thekkady is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India, and spread across the entire district are picturesque plantations and hill towns that hold great opportunities for treks and mountain walks.

Afternoon proceed for nature walk through the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.

Lunch & Dinner at hotel

**Overnight in Periyar.**

Meals: Breakfast , Lunch & Dinner





# MUNNAR



## DAY 21 : PERIYAR-ALLEPPEY

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to one of the spice hills to Alleppey (140 Kms/approx. 4.3 hours) en-route visiting the Spice Gardens.

From Alleppey jetty you will embark the houseboat to enjoy backwater cruise on the backwaters including lunch on the houseboat.

Once the guests are on board, houseboat sets sail along the main waterway on Vembanad Lake and enters the Alleppey canal.

The area stretching from Kottayam to Alleppey is known as the backwaters. This cruise explores these picturesque waterways, revealing boats carrying loads of coir, copra and cashews and, along the water's edge, numerous churches and marketplaces.

Lunch will be served on board.

Observe the preparation of your lunch by one of the boatmen who also doubles up as an expert cook on board the 'kettuvallam'.

In the earlier days, when the kettuvallam was used primarily to transport freight and time was of the essence, boatmen rarely stopped along the waterways for meals. Their diet consisted of freshly caught backwater fish, and non-perishable staples such as lentils, rice etc. As of today a typical prepared meal onboard the kettuvallam would consist of kootu, a coconut gravy-based dish using lentils and snake-gourd, topped with black mustard shreds; drumstick and dal curry; thoren, another Keralan vegetarian specialty; and a variety of grilled seafood, including fish (when available) & local prawns succulently prepared with lime, pepper and other spices.

In the afternoon, cruise through the narrow canals and waterways of Kerala's backwaters. Cruise till 1700 hrs after which the boat will be anchored. Boats cannot cruise after this time as this is when the fishermen take their nets to the water to begin their night's fishing.

**Overnight stay at the houseboat.**



## DAY 22 : ALLEPPEY-KOCHI

Breakfast on board.

Check out at 0900hours.

Later drive to Kochi (90 Kms/ approx. 2 hours 30 mins.), where on arrival, you will transfer to a hotel. Check in time of the hotel is at 1400hours.

Afternoon day at leisure (No Transport Foreseen).

Cochin, a commercial city of the state of Kerala, has one of the best natural harbours in the country. It is set amidst lagoons and backwaters with aromatic backdrop of swaying coconut palms. Kochi, a commercial capital city of the state where land and water share extraordinary kinship. This land which is believed to have sprung forth from the sea womb, continues to bask in the tender life giving care of the waters that lap gently on its coast, cascade, down its hills and valleys and collect into exotic backwaters and lagoons.

Traders from the west came to Kerala as far back as the 3rd century BC and took back with them spices, ivory and teak. Much later, in the 15th century, the Portuguese, Dutch, French and British came to this region in the guise of merchants, some to stay on as colonial rulers. Each nationality left its imprint on this coast; Cochin itself became home and safe harbour to Jews down through the centuries, specially following the inquisition in Iberia.

**Overnight in Kochi.**



### DAY 23 : IN KOCHI

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning explore the 'Queen of the Arabian Sea', Cochin. Unravel the ancient treasures of this quaint harbour port town visiting the fascinating sights on foot. Visit the St. Francis Church (Excluded on Sunday), Visit - The Santa Cruz Cathedral Basilica at Fort Kochi is one of the eight Basilicas in Kerala. Counted as one of the heritage edifices of Kerala, this church is one of the finest and most impressive churches in India and visited by tourists the whole year round. The Chinese Fishing Nets, the Mattancherry Palace (Closed on Friday) - built by the Portuguese for the Raja (King) of Kochi in exchange of trading rights; walk through the narrow cobbled streets, lined with antique & handicraft shops of the Jew Town to the Jewish Synagogue (Closed on Friday and Saturday), the oldest living synagogue in the world.

Lunch at local restaurant

Rest day at leisure.

Overnight in Kochi.

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch



### DAY 24 : DEPART KOCHI

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure (No transport)

Check out time of the hotel is at 12 noon.

In time, departure transfer from hotel to airport to board flight for onward journey.

Meals: Breakfast



# HIMALAYAN Trails



Amritsar-Chandigarh-Shimla-Delhi--Agra-Delhi  
11 Nights / 12 Days

Himalayan Trails



34



## DAY 01 : ARRIVE AMRITSAR

You will arrive at Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport, Amritsar. Following customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, a representative will meet you as you EXIT the ARRIVALS TERMINAL building thereafter you will be transferred to your hotel for check-in (Check-in time at the hotel is 1400 Hrs. Early check-in will be subject to availability of rooms and at the discretion of the hotel).

Amritsar, the Sikh holy city, is the second largest town in the state of Punjab and a premier tourist destination.



It was founded in 1577 by Ram Das, the fourth guru of the Sikhs. The name Amritsar meaning 'Pool of Nectar' is named after the sacred pool around which the Golden Temple is built. The city is an important regional market centre for agricultural goods and the centre for India's border security. The city is characterized by some of the must visit religious, historical as well as contemporary sites of importance. The Golden Temple, where Sikhs from all over the world come to pay their reverence to Guru Granth Sahib and take a dip in the Amrit Saras Kund (Pool of Immortality) for spiritual purification is the major landmark of the place.

Rest of the day will be free at leisure (No transport services).

## DAY 02 : IN AMRITSAR

Breakfast at the hotel

Today enjoy full day sightseeing of Amritsar:

Highlights include a visit to the Golden Temple, located in the heart of the city and the most visited tourist attraction of Amritsar. Characterised by its four entrance doors (called deoris) in all four directions and the tastefully decorated shrines, in terms of art and architecture, the Golden Temple welcomes everyone regardless of the religion or faith one follows. The stunning sanctum, shimmering in the water of the holy tank, flanked by spotlessly clean marble walkways and pavements makes it breathtakingly beautiful. Here you would also get an opportunity to visit community kitchen at Gurudwara. Continue to the Jallianwalah Bagh which is located at a distance of five minutes from the Golden temple, where the martyrs of the AD 1919 massacre are immortalized. A historical monument that tells the sad story of mass killing during the independence movement in India. Visit the Martyr's Gallery to pay homage to those who lost their lives in one of the worst carnages of its times. Amritsar also houses a wonderful temple "Durgiana Mandir", dedicated to the Hindu goddess Durga. Easily accessible from the Golden Temple, the Mandir lies in the middle of a medium sized lake giving it a wonderful overall view.

Late afternoon proceed for an excursion to Wagah Border located on Indo-Pakistan border. A good number of visitors come to this place to witness the "Change of the Guard" ceremony and the flag hoisting and lowering activities, carried out with great skill and precision by the border security forces of both countries, a sight you cannot afford to miss.

Following visit, return to your hotel.

**Overnight in Amritsar**

## DAY 03 : AMRITSAR - CHANDIGARH

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning you will be driven to Chandigarh (225 kms/ 05 hrs drive approx.). Upon arrival, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

The city of Chandigarh, which spans 56 square kilometres in area, is the first planned city of India and is the capital of Punjab and Haryana. However, the city does not belong to either and is a Union Territory, administered by the Government of India. The city has well-laid roads, which are lined with endless rows of trees, shrubs and boulevards and the buildings have been brilliantly planned against the backdrop of the mountains.



Afternoon proceed for city tour including visit to Secretariat and High Court buildings are veritable proofs of the architectural expertise of Le Corbusier, Rock Garden - a surreal fantasy land fashioned from fragments of shattered plates, neon strip lights, pots, pebbles, broken bangles and assorted urban-industrial junk & drive past by Punjab University, Secretariat and assembly chamber, Governor's Residence, Sukhna Lake which is an artificial lake spread over an area of 3 sq. Kms and Rose Garden.

Following sightseeing tour, return to your hotel.

**Overnight in Chandigarh**

## DAY 04 : CHANDIGARH - SHIMLA

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning you will be driven to Shimla (115 Kms/ 05 Hrs Approx). Upon arrival, check-in at your hotel.

Resting at the foothills of the majestic Himalayas is Shimla, the queen of hill stations and once the summer capital of the British Raj. Shimla was the most important British hill resort, prior to India's independence. It is named after its patron goddess, Shamla Devi, a manifestation of Kali. Shimla, located at an altitude of 7,267 feet, is inhabited around a crescent - shaped ridge, which is blessed with perennially cool air and amazing views. It provides superb panoramic sights of the valleys, and the lofty peaks of the great Himalayan range, on both sides.

Rest of the day will be free at leisure (No transport services).

**Overnight in Shimla**



#### DAY 05 : IN SHIMLA

Breakfast at the hotel.

Sightseeing tour of Shimla.

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Shimla exploring the main attractions including The Mall, the main promenade that runs along the top of the ridge, a busy shopping area with old colonial buildings, souvenir shops and restaurants. At the top end of the Mall is Scandal Point, a large open square with a view of the town. Overlooking it is the elegant Christ Church with its fine stained glass windows. Your tour will also include the visit to Indian Institute of Advance Study (Remains closed on Monday, National Holidays & Government Holidays).

Following visit, return to the hotel.

Afternoon you will be free to explore The Mall & The Ridge.

**Overnight in Shimla**



#### DAY 06 : IN SHIMLA

Breakfast at the hotel

Full day at leisure for independent activities (No transport services)

**Overnight in Shimla**

#### DAY 07 : SHIMLA - CHANDIGARH - DELHI

Breakfast at the hotel

Followed by drive to Chandigarh Railway Station (115 kms/ 03-04 hrs drive approx). Upon arrival, board your train to Delhi

Departure Chandigarh

Train: CDG NDLS Shatabdi -120462

Arrival Delhi At: 1525 hrs

Train operates daily except Sunday

Upon arrival meet & greet services at Railway station and thereafter assisted transfer to your hotel for check-in.

India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is a bustling metropolis, which successfully combines in its fold the ancient and the modern. One of the most historic capitals in the world, Delhi is a treasure trove that reveals the ultimate combination of tradition and trends. Delhi is made up of seven ancient cities, spanning the period from the 11th to 20th centuries. Delhi has seen the rise and fall of many emperors, which have left behind a plethora of monuments that commemorate the grandeur and glory of bygone ages.

#### DAY 08 : IN DELHI

Breakfast at the hotel

Full day sightseeing tour of Old & New Delhi.

You will head for a guided city tour of the Old City of 'Shahjahanabad', founded by one of the greatest Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Your introduction to the city will be with a visit to Raj Ghat - the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi, Drive Past Red Fort (Remain closed on Mondays) - the magical monument in red sandstone, built at the pinnacle of the Mogul empire. From here proceed in bicycle rickshaws through the bustling streets to Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in Asia built by Shahjahan.

Continue your tour of New Delhi visiting India Gate - War Memorial Arch, Qutab Minar (Tower of Victory) - built to establish the might of Islam and onset of Muslim rule in India and Humayun's Tomb - the first great example of a new distinctive style, which developed to become the hallmark of the Mughal Dynasty. Also drive past the Rashtrapati Bhawan - the President's Residence, the Parliament House - the Government headquarters and other Government buildings.

Following sightseeing, return to your hotel

**Overnight in Delhi**



## DAY 09 : DELHI - AGRA

Breakfast at the hotel

Morning you will be met at your hotel and assisted for transfer to Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station to board your train to Agra.

Departure Delhi At: 0810 Hours

By: Gatimaan Express-12050

Arrival Agra At: 0950 Hours

(Gatimaan Express operates daily except on Friday)

Upon arrival meet & greet services at Railway station and thereafter assisted transfer to your hotel for check-in (Check-in time 1400 hrs/ early check-in is subject to availability).

The city of Agra, the quintessence of the grand Mughal era, reigns to this day in the public mind as the embodiment of royal grace, imposing architecture and power. Agra is globally renowned as the city of the Taj Mahal. But this royal Mughal city has, in addition to the legendary Taj, many monuments that epitomize the high point of Mughal architecture. No tour to India can be complete without paying a visit to this erstwhile capital of the Mughals and the city of the Taj Mahal, the world's most beloved monument. With its laidback lifestyle and its immense wealth of architecture, handicrafts and jewellery, Agra is amongst the most remarkable city of the world.

Afternoon proceed for the sightseeing of Agra.

Few forts in the world have a more fascinating story to tell than the Great Fort of Agra, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture and the seat and stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. Originally planned as an impregnable military structure by Akbar, the Agra Fort, over a period of time, acquired all the elegance, lavishness and majesty of an imperial palace. Situated on the right bank of the Yamuna, the Agra fort was built under the direction of Akbar, by Mohammed Quasim Khan, his commander-in-Chief and Governor of Kabul and added to by his son Jahangir and grandson Shahjahan. An imposing structure with walls of red sandstone, almost 3 kilometres (two miles) long. The eastern part of the fort (the only part open to visitors) contains palaces, audience halls and mosques built by all the three emperors; Itmad-ud-Daulah's Tomb, On the left bank of the Yamuna, is the perfectly proportioned marble mausoleum Itmad-ud-Daulah. Built by Empress Noor Jahan, the wife of Jahangir in memory of her father Mirza Ghiyas Beg during 1622-28 AD. The first building to be constructed of pure marble in Moghul India, this



two-storey mausoleum is small but perfectly executed, embellished with coloured stone inlay and filigree marble screens.

Following visit, return to the hotel.

## Overnight in Agra

## DAY 10 : AGRA - DELHI

Visit to Taj Mahal by sunrise (Remains closed on Friday).

Referred to as one of the wonders of the world, the Taj Mahal in Agra is the epitome of tourism in India and is celebrated for its architectural magnificence and aesthetic beauty. A symphony in white marble, a tribute to eternal love, it was built by the Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal.

Breakfast at the hotel

Check-out from your hotel by 1200 hrs & drive back to Delhi (202 Kms/ 04 Hrs Approx). Upon arrival, check-in at your hotel.

Overnight in Delhi

## DAY 11 : DELHI DEPARTURE

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure. (Hotel's check-out time is 1200 hrs. Late check-out will be subject to availability of rooms and at the discretion of the hotel).

In time you will be met at your hotel and assisted for transfer to International Airport to board your flight for onwards destination.

Meals :- Breakfast



# GUJARAT Trails



Ahmedabad-Jambughoda-Vadodra-Bhavnagar-Sasangir-Diu-Somnath-Porbandar-Dwarka-Jamnagar-Bhuj-Poshina-Dholavira-Patan-Modhera

## DAY 01 : AHMEDABAD

Arrive Ahmedabad, check-in at hotel & later we visit Sidi Saiyed Mosque, Hutheesinh Jain Temple, Gandhi Ashram, Adalaj Step-well & the beautiful evening market of handicrafts at Law Garden.

**Hutheesingh Jain Temple:** Built outside the Delhi Gate in 1850 by a rich Jain merchant, the Hutheesingh Temple is the best known of Ahmedabad's many ornate Jain temples.

**Gandhi Ashram:** On a quiet peaceful stretch of the Sabarmati River, Mahatma Gandhi set up a simple retreat in 1915. This was his Satyagrah Ashram and for many years it was the nerve centre of India's freedom movement. It was from here, in 1930, that Mahatma began his famous Dandi March to the sea to protest the Salt Tax imposed by the British. Hridaya Kunj, the simple cottage where he lived, is now a national monument and preserved as it was during the Mahatma's lifetime. Must pick gifts and souvenirs from the Ashram shop. Spend a little time here by the river watching the parrots and the squirrels. Peace and tranquility prevail here.

**Adalaj Step-well:** Step wells were built in olden times to serve the man purposes of - holding rainwater for later use, a resting place for the travellers, a watering hole for the travellers who had caravans and animals with them. Best examples of rainwater harvesting! The Adalaj step well is situated 17kms north of Ahmedabad. The step well at the village of Adalaj is another fine example of this magnificent architectural form. Adalaj Vav is richly carved, every pillar and wall surface covered with leaves and flowers, birds and fishes and friezes of ornamental designs.

**Overnight at Ahmedabad.**

## DAY 02 : AHMEDABAD-MORNING HERITAGE WALK OF AHMEDABAD-CHAMPANER/PAVAGADH (155KMS)-JAMBUGHODA (27KMS)

Today we start our day with morning heritage walk of Ahmedabad & then we drive to Jambughoda enroute visiting Champaner/Pavagadh.

**The Heritage Walk :** The Heritage Walk of Ahmedabad is a guided walk of two and a half hours.

The walk begins from the picturesque Swaminarayan Mandir in Kalupur and ends in the most glorious architectural legacies the Jumma Masjid, covering in between the numerous pols,

havelis, ornamental facades, workplaces of artisans and number of magnificent Hindu and Jain temples. From Kavi Dalpatram Chowk - which housed the great 19th century Gujarati poet - in Lambeshwar ni Pole, to the classic reminisces of the city's textile era - the Calico Dome to the century old Kala Ramji Mandir in the Haja Patel ni Pole with a unique idol of Lord Rama in dark colour and in a sitting posture.

**Champaner -** This city, located at 47 K in the north-east of Vadodara, was conquered in 1484 by Sultan Mahmud, and he renamed Begara Muhammadabad.

Named World Heritage Site by UNESCO, counts 114 monuments of historical and archaeological interest, among them stand the mosque of Jama Masjid, for its impressive interior courtyard, its porches, beautiful arches and slender minarets. Worth a visit also Shahr Masjid, with its row of columns, domes and delicate mihrab (niche facing Mecca) and Nagina Masjid with a charming porch.





**Pavagadh :** Most of the Hindus in India have faith in goddess Mahakali, particularly from the western region covering the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan & Maharashtra. The famous and the oldest temple of Mahakali is situated at Pavagadh, near Vadodara, one of the main cities of Gujarat. The temple has become the place of the pilgrimage for almost all Hindus in India. This temple is among the three main Shaktipeeths in Gujarat. It has been said in Hindu Shastras that after the famous Tandava dance of Lord Shiva, the various parts of the body of Sati fell at many places. These places are called Shaktipeeths. It is said that the left breast of the Sati had fallen here at Pavagadh. As the name suggests, the temple is located on a mountain, near to the Champaner town.

Later drive back to Ahmedabad.

#### **Overnight at hotel**

#### **DAY 03 : JAMBUGHODA-CHHOTA UDEPUR (40KMS)-JAMBUGHODA**

We drive for visit ChhotaUdepur to discover this border region of Madhya Pradesh, real tribal belt, where you can meet various ethnic groups, such as Rathva, which are the most numerous, but also Dhanaka. Chhota Udepur is the capital of a former princely state under Chauhan Rajput who ruled this tribal area. The main occupation of the tribes living near Chotta Udepur is farming, while the Rathwas have created an art form called the Pithora paintings, which they paint using special vegetable dyes and examples of it are evident in different villages.

The traditional men's suit is made Rathva a loincloth (loincloth) and a cap (phenta).

We discover many villages and crafts, particularly pottery and terracotta figurines.

Days of Tribal Markets (Haat) at various villages.

Monday - Kawaant

Tuesday - Bakhatgarh

Wednesday - Rangpur, Normal market in Jambughoda

Thursday - Dev Hat

Friday - Jhojh

Saturday - Chhota Udepur

Sunday - Paanvad / Ghoghamba

#### **Overnight at Jambughoda.**

#### **DAY 04 : JAMBUGHODA-VADODARA (75KMS)**

Today after breakfast drive to Vadodara and visit Lakshmivilas Palace, Maharaja Fatehsinh Museum and Tambekarwada.

**Laxmivilas Palace :** It was built by Shri Maharaja SayajiRao III. The first stone was laid by P.S. Melvill Esquire, C.S.I. Agent to the Governor General at Baroda, on the 12th Jan-1880 and completed in 1890. It was built in the Indo-saracenic tradition, with an eclectic mix of Indian, Islamic, and European Elements. It's a residence of the royal family. Its, ornate Darbar Hall has an Italian mosaic floor and walls with mosaic decorations. The Palace houses a remarkable collection of old armoury and sculptures in bronze, marble and terracotta.

Visiting Hours : 9.30 am to 5.00 pm, (Lunch time 1 pm to 1.30pm, Don't go during Lunch time)

Closed on : Monday & Public holidays

Note: Photography allowed from the outside of Palace.

Guide : They provide Mp3 Players with headphone to guide you during your visit.

**Maharaja Fatehsinh Museum :** The museum was established in 1961. The museum is run by a private trust. The museum is noted for its modern display. The collection includes a few copies of Greek, Roman and later European sculpture and some Masterpieces of European oil paintings, sculptures by Felici, French furniture etc. The museum collections fall into many categories. However, it is noted for oil paintings by Ravi Varma, sculptures made of marble, Greco-Roman arts, Chinese and Japanese art etc. The oil paintings representing members of the then Gaekwad princely ruling family are striking.

Visiting Hours : 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Closed : Monday and important public holidays.

**Tambekarwada :** It is located Near Raopura Area and it's a 4 storey haveli was the residence of Diwan of Vadodara. This is famous for his wall paintings from the 19th century Maratha tradition depicting scenes from the Mahabharata, lord Krishna's life and the Anglo-Maratha war.

#### **Overnight at Vadodara.**



**DAY 05 : VADODARA-BHAVNAGAR (224KMS VISIT NISHKALANK MAHADEV)**

We drive to Bhavnagar & visit Nishkalank Mahadev during low-tide.

Nishkalank Mahadev Temple : The temple in the present context is the Nishkalank Mahadev Temple, which is located in Bhavnagar and is completely submerged during high tides in the sea and emerges during low tides. It promises the devotees a chance to wash away all their sins, in the same way the Pandavas were forgiven for the sin of killing their cousins.

The shrine is 2 km inside the sea and can be reached only once the water levels recede. The structure is immersed in the sea and can be seen only during a certain period of time. One can identify the shrine with the help of a tall flag placed at the shrine. The tides are active especially during no moon and full moon days and devotees eagerly wait for the tides to disappear on these days.

According to historians, the temple was built by the Pandavas after the Kurukshetra War. The temple was built with a special care to withstand high tides and is truly an architectural marvel. The structure truly remains an unsolved mystery to modern engineers and technology experts.

The temple is open on all days; however, it is accessible only for a few hours when the water level recedes. High and low tides occurs every day and the amplitude of tides at the coast is influenced by the alignment of the sun and the moon. During full moon and new moon, when the earth, sun and moon are in line, both the high and the low tides are at their maximum levels and hence, it is the best time to visit the shrine.

**Overnight at Bhavnagar.**

**DAY 06 : BHAVNAGAR-PALITANA (52KMS)-SASANGIR (200KMS)**

Very early morning visit Palitana The Shatrunjaya Hill is located at a height of 591 metres. The Shatrunjaya Temple is the most sacred temple of the Jains and one of the largest of its kind in India. One has to climb up the hill for about 4 kms (600 meters) on a stepped path to Shatrunjaya (place of victory over worldliness). You can reach this place either in Doli or lift chairs or by walking. The rich persons visit this place on richly caparisoned elephants. There are about 863 white marble Jain temples, built over 900 years on the hilltop, each with its own enclosure

Afternoon continue drive to Sasangir, upon arrival transfer to hotel.

**Overnight at Sasangir.**



**DAY 07 : SASANGIR-DIU (120KMS)**

AM game drives at Sasan Gir.

[Subject to availability and prior to permission and 100% permits will avail by online only. The online window will open 90 days prior to visit date.]

Sasan Gir Lion sanctuary is home of some 300 Asiatic Lions. Sasan Gir is only place in world outside African continent where lion can be seen in its natural habitat. Gir Wild life Sanctuary is the last refuge of Asiatic lions in India and the lion population residing in the park is a little over 300. The whole coverage area of Gir Sanctuary is about 560-square-mile (1,450-sq-kms). Gir is not just about Lions, the second most commonly found predator in the Gir is Leopard. Infact, Gir national park is also home to one of the largest Leopard populations in any park in India, and especially in the hotter season they can sometimes be seen at night close to the lodges. there animal residents of the Gir national park are Sambar Deer, Chital Spotted Deer, Nilgai Antelope, Chowsingha Four-Horned Antelope, Chinkara Gazelle, Wild Boar, Langur Monkey, Jackal, and Hyena and numerous birds like Paradise Flycatcher, Bonneli's Eagle, Crested Serpent Eagle, Woodpeckers Flamingo etc. bout 10, 000 years ago lions spanned vast sections of the globe, but as the human population started to increase, trees were cut and forests were cleared to make more land for people to live in. Now lions only in small fractions in some parts of the world. And Asiatic lions, a subspecies that split from African lions perhaps 100,000 years ago, are only found in the Gir wildlife Sanctuar

Later we drive to Diu.

**Visit Diu Fort**

Diu Fort is a very large and imposing structure, situated on the coast of the island. This fort was constructed between 1535 and 1541 AD after the treaty signed between the Sultan of Gujarat and the Portuguese. The fort is surrounded by the sea on the three sides and a canal on the fourth side. The fort offers a magnificent view of sea. On the fort stands a giant structure which



now houses a Light House and the Diu jail. The beam from the lighthouse reaches to about 32 kms. Several canons are still located on the top of the fort and peep out of the holes on the walls of this gigantic structure.

#### St. Paul's Church

St. Paul's Church is dedicated to the Lady of Immaculate Conception. This church was built during the 17th century and the most elaborate of all Portuguese churches in India. St. Paul's Church was founded by Jesuits in 1600 and then rebuilt in 1807. Inside it is a great barn, filled with heavy dark wood, with a small cloister, next door. The main entrance of the church is adorned with volutes and shell-like motifs.

#### Diu Museum

Earlier there was no building in Diu to house the antique statues and various stone inscriptions, so the old St. Thomas Church was converted into Diu museum. Diu Museum houses wooden carvings, statues, idols, shadow clocks and other important artifacts collected from various sites.

#### St. Thomas Church

St. Thomas Church is a lovely simple building housing the Diu Museum. There is a spooky, evocative collection of worn Catholic statues. Once a year, on 1 November, this is used for a packed out mass. There are also some remains of the Jain temple. There is a guest house upstairs and you can also climb the roof for amazing views.

#### Overnight at Diu

#### DAY 08 : DIU-SOMNATH (89KMS)

Early morning you will drive for visit Vanakbara fishing village is a fascinating little fishing village and one of the highlights of the island. It's great to wander around the port, packed with colorful fishing boats and bustling activity - best around 06:30am to 8am when the fishing fleet returns and sells off its catch.

Later we drive to Somnath.

Today we drive to Somnath.



Somnath consists of a few streets leading away from its phoenix like temple. The rugged sea below gives it a lonely, wistful charm. Somnath is mainly known for the legendary shore temple of Somnath, which is dedicated to the Lord Shiva. The temple is an example of grit and determination and how to rise out of downfall as the temple has been plundered and destroyed many times and re-erected again in all its glory. To be precise, destroyed seven times and built eight!

The legendary shore temple of Somnath is one of the twelve most sacred shrines dedicated to the Lord Shiva. The temple contains the Jyotirlinga of Lord Shiva. According to the legends, the Somnath temple is very old and was originally built in gold by the Somraj, the Moon God. Later, it was rebuilt by Ravana, in silver; then by Krishna in wood and Bhim Dev in stone. Mahmud of Ghazni, upon hearing the description of the richness of the Somnath temple by Al Biruni, an Arab traveller, visited this temple in 1024 AD. At that time, this temple had about 300 musicians, 500 dancing girls and 300 barbers to shave off the heads of pilgrims. After a two day's battle, Mahmud destroyed the temple and carried away jewels and gold to his homeland. In all, the Somnath temple was rebuilt and destroyed eight times.

This temple was finally rebuilt in 1950 with the support of Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel. The current temple was built as per the traditional designs on the original site by the sea and is a serene, symmetrical and sinuous structure. Today, this majestic temple is a replica of the earlier temple.

Later visit Bhalka Tirth – Bhalka Tirth is situated halfway between Veraval and Somnath. At this place, Lord Krishna was mistaken for a deer and wounded by an arrow. It is here that Lord Krishna decided to leave his human form and proceed to the eternal world.

#### Overnight at Somnath

#### DAY 09 : SOMNATH-PORBANDAR (140KMS)-DWARKA (100KMS)

After breakfast drive to Dwarka visiting Porbandar enroute.

Porbandar, the coastal heritage town of Gujarat is located on the Saurashtra peninsula, on the Arabian Sea. This city is described in Skanda Purana as Sudamapuri and Ashmavati and had a flourishing trade with Africa and Arabia. Till date, the spice market in Porbandar draws a huge crowd. According to the legends, this city was the main link of the great friendship between Lord Krishna and Sudama. Porbandar was established as a capital by Rana Sartanji in 1785 AD. Porbandar was the former capital of the Jethwa Rajput petty princely state.



The most impressive feature of Porbandar is the city planning and the stone buildings with ashlar masonry and rich carving, the facades of the houses on either side of the streets, with windows and carved gateways. Porbandar is also associated with Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation as he was born here. Today, fine quality silk and cotton are manufactured here. There are also chemical factories and cement works.

Later visit Kirti Mandir – Kirti Mandir was the house of Mahatma Gandhi and Kasturba, his wife. This place is situated near the place where the Mahatma was born. This place is now a small museum and has a Gandhian library and a prayer hall. Bharat Mandir is another place to visit, which houses relief map of India and reliefs of great historical personalities who shaped India's future.

Later continue to drive to Dwarka; arrive Dwarka and transfer to your hotel.

Dwarka: An ancient city, housing one of the principal pilgrimages - 'Dwarkadhish temple' of Hindus. According to the legend, Lord Krishna moved to this coastal town to set up a capital. Marine excavations of the Dwarka coast have revealed important evidences of ancient city, which probably include the 'Dwarawati' of the 'Krishna Lila'. Today, it is not only a major pilgrimage site but a pleasant spot for a beach holiday.

Another popular place in Dwarka, part of the Dwarkadhish Temple is SabhaMandap. It is a 60-pillared hall, which houses almost 2500 years old scriptures. The hall has 'jharokhas', offering a nice view of the nearby flowing Gomti River.

If time permits attend evening aarti at Dwarkadhish temple.

#### Overnight stay at Dwarka.



#### **DAY 10 : DWARKA-BET DWARKA-NAGESHWAR JYOTIRLINGA-RUKMINI TEMPLE-GOPI TALAV-DWARKA**

Today we visit Bet Dwarka & Nageshwar temple.

Bet Dwarka : Bet is situated at 30kms from Dwarka and is surrounded by sea from all sides. One can reach Bet from Dwarka through Okha by road. On reaching Okha port jetty, one can reach Bet through a little sea journey in a launch or in a small boat.

Nageshwar Temple or Nagnath Temple is located on the route between Gomati Dwarka and the Bait Dwarka Island on the coast of Saurashtra in Gujarat. The Jyotirlinga enshrined in the Temple of Nagnath is known as Nageshwar Mahadev and attracts thousands of pilgrims all round the year. This powerful Jyotirlinga symbolizes protection from all poisons. It is said that those who pray to the Nageshwar Linga become free of poison. The Rudra Samhita sloka refers to Nageshwar with the phrase 'Daarukaavane Naagesham'

The Rukmini temple, dating from 12 to 13 Century, was built in honor of Rani Rukmani, princess of Vidharba, which was to be married to Sishupala, but fled with Lord Krishna. This small temple, 1.5 km north of the city, is an architectural masterpiece. The temple walls are decorated with beautiful paintings and sculptures.

Gopi Talav : This is the place where Lord Krishna used to play with his Gopikas. There is a small pond where it is said that Lord Krishna used to play with the Gopika Strees (Gopika Women).

Bhadkeshwar Temple : Bhadkeshwar Mahadev Mandir is on the hillock in the sea. The revered temple is behind the Geeta Mandir, in the west of Dwarka. During the high tide the temple gets surrounded by water, but at the time of ebb when the water level come backs to normal one can reach there very easily. There are steps to get into the temple. Chandra-Mouliswar Shiva is the presiding deity at the core of the temple. The deity form was found at the confluence of Gomati, Ganga and Arabian Sea by the Acharya Jagatguru Sankaracharya himself. In addition, there are 1200 Salgramshilas, 1300 Shiva Lingas, metal forms of 75 Sankaracharyas.

Return to hotel at Dwarka Overnight stay at your hotel.



#### **DAY 11 : DWARKA-JAMNAGAR (140KMS)-GONDAL (120KMS)**

We drive to Gondal enroute visiting Jamnagar.

Jamnagar or the city of Jams was one of the most important princely states of Saurashtra. Today, the 200km long Jamnagar coast is dotted with several industries run by corporate giants in the region. Jamnagar itself is a centre for the brass industry, bandhani fabrics and zari work.

Visit Bala Hanuman Temple: Bala Hanuman Temple is a pilgrim place venerated by the devotees of Lord Rama. It is a world-famous temple, known for the continuous chanting of Jai Ram, Shri Ram. The chanting is going on since 1964 and has found a place for it in the Guinness Book of World Records. People chant the name of the Lord in shifts, 24hours a day.

Gondal State was one of the eight first-class princely states of Kathiawar Agency, Bombay Presidency in British India. Ruled by a Hindu Rajput dynasty of the Jadeja clan, the capital of the state was Gondal town.

Visit Swaminarayan temple, Naulakha palace, Royal Garage & Bhubneshwari Ayurveda Pharmacy.

#### **Overnight at Gondal**

#### **DAY 12 : GONDAL-BHUJ (280KMS)**

Today we drive to Bhuj enroute visiting Ajrakhpur & Bhujodi.

Ajrakhpur is a new village established by the traditional Muslim Khatri hand block printers after the earth quake that struck in 2001. This is a craft village where you will find artisans practicing traditional hand block printing in the resist technique on cotton/silk fabrics using the age old Ajrakh prints as well as new design motifs. Visit Ismail Khatri, a master artisan who has been awarded an honorary ph.D. Degree by De Montfort University for his knowledge of natural dye practices. You can also visit a number of block printing units like that of Abdul Rahim, Abdul Gani Hasam, Abdul Raheman Buddha, and Adam.

Bhujodi : Nestled away in Bhujodi is a community of master artisans versed in traditional handloom weaving. You can see live demonstrations and buy hand woven products such as woolen and cotton stoles, shawls, blankets, carpets, bed and table linens directly from the weavers as you walk through the village and explore each household. Famous among the weavers are Vankar Vishram Valji and Vankar Nanji Bhimji, national award winners. The village is also home to a vibrant Nanji Bhimji, national award winners. The village is also home to a vibrant Rabari community that embroiders beautiful motifs and mirror work on the shawls made by the



weavers. Their houses display traditional mud work and are well worth a visit. About a kilometre behind Bhujodi is the Hiralaxmi Crafts Park, a non-profit venture by the Ashapura Group of Companies to give artisans across Kachchh an open platform to display their skills and sell their products. The quality of products varies. On weekends, the park also organizes music and dance performances.

#### Overnight at Bhuj.

#### DAY 13 : BHUJ -KADIA DHROW (40KMS)-KUTCH FOSSIL PARK (25KMS)- THAN MONASTRY (05KMS)-BHUJ (80KMS)

Today we go for an excursion to Kadia Dhrow, Kutch Fossil Park & the Than Monastery.

**Kada Dhrow :** Immerse in this solace that Kutch offers in the form of Mamai Dev Kaliya Dhrow, a creation of Nature's artistry. Also, the beauty of the versatile landscape of Gujarat is unveiled here, where the curiosity of Geo Tourism enthusiasts gets fed. Colloquially also known as the Grand Canyon of Gujarat, it should be surely on your itinerary while you're visiting the Kutch region of Gujarat.

(Visitors are requested to not litter the place. An off-road drive of 4-5 km should be expected, thus a vehicle with good ground clearance is recommended if traveling through the same. Jeeps are available locally. As crocodiles are spotted here, visitors should not try swimming.)

**Kutch Fossil Park :** The Kutch Fossil Park was founded in the year 2002 by the visionary Mohan Sinh Sodha, the man who single-handedly worked and is continuously adding to the collection of the several fossils that are on display in the small 2 rooms' exhibition area. He has been doing this for almost 4 decades now since his first rendezvous with a fossil called Ammonite in the 70s. The discovery of that fossil changed his life and he went on to collect many of the fossils ranging from plants, fruits, gems, animals, reptiles etc.

The most astounding fossil exhibited here is of the Dinosaur and its egg that has been collected over the time in bits and pieces and then restructured to give a good shape. Recently he found a Sea cow fossil, which was reconstructed with the help of Roorke Institute of Technology. The species is now called Dommingia Sodhae in his honour!

Timings : 10AM TO 12PM & 3PM TO 6PM

**Than Monastery :** In the hills about 60kms northwest of Bhuj is the eire 12th-century monastery at Than. This is a laid-back place. It attracts a few sadhus (ascetics) and the main shrine contains a sacred fire said to have been burning since the monastery was founded.

The monastery was established by the holy man Dhoramnath. As penance for a curse he had made, he stood in his head on top of Dhinodhar hill for 12years. The Gods pleaded with him to stop, and he agreed, provided that the first place he looked at became barren – hence Great Rann. He then established the monastic order of Kanphata (Split Ears, because of large piercings monks made through the concha of their ears), and this is that monastery.

Today, Dhoramnath's penance continues during the Navratri festival, when the monastery's head monk spends a week sitting utterly still day and night and taking no food or water throughout the period.

#### Overnight at Bhuj

#### DAY 14 : BHUJ-BANNI VILLAGES-BHUJ

After breakfast visit to Banni Villages (North Bhuj) - you are suggested to carry packed lunch. Amidst the Desert land of infinite dimensions, are suspended, quaint little villages. These are the last villages on the India-Pakistan border. Here you will come across master craft people' exposing their traditional art, turning our master pieces every day. Their ornaments, clothes, utensils, everything they use - will make you feel as if you have stepped into lifestyle museum leaving you spellbound.

The traditions of needlework and textile arts are preserved by almost every community and caste in the semi-arid regions of Saurashtra and Kutch. A full day exploring some of the Kutchi village communities offers an insight into the traditions and the daily life of the artisans whose work is integral to the culture of the region. The village of Nirona is the only place in the world where the tradition of Rogan art is still practiced (a method of producing dyes from natural resources and castor oil and creating intricate and long-lasting designs on silk and cotton). Nirona also offers the chance to see artisans making copper bells and practicing wood lacquering. The villages of Dhordo and Ludia provide an



opportunity to see Bandhani (tie and dye,) block-printing and the intricate embroidery and embellished bead and mirror-work that encapsulates the folk culture of Gujarat.

**Overnight at Bhuj.**

#### **DAY 15 : BHUJ-DHOLAVIRA**

Today we drive to Dholavira.

Dholavira : Dholavira is the larger of the two most remarkable excavations of the Indus Valley Civilization or Harappan culture, dating back to 4500 years ago. While the other site, Lothal, is more exhaustively excavated and easier to reach, a visit to Lothal only complements, rather than replaces, a visit to Dholavira. What this site offers you, in the intense environment that comes with being surrounded by the Great Rann of Kutch, is a unique insight into the pioneering Harappan mind, with one of the world's earliest and best planned water conservation systems and what might be the world's first signboards, written in ancient Indus script.

The excavation also tells the story of the 7 stages of the civilization, from development to maturity to decay, the last of which hints at a strange piece of history, with more questions than answers. After the peak of the civilization Dholavira was temporarily abandoned, after which it seems that the settlers returned with a markedly de-urbanized culture. There are hints that they willingly chose to simplify their lives, rather than try to ride the collapse of their once glorified civilization. Here, on the ruins, you will have a chance to contemplate what progress and civilization mean and what, if anything, is truly permanent.

**Overnight at Dholavira**

#### **DAY 16 : DHOLAVIRA-LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH (250KMS)**

We drive to Little Rann Of Kutch.

The Sanctuary : The sanctuary is well known for its group of the stale joke brown Asiatic (Wild ass), which does not live elsewhere in Indian lowlands. We can see with Little Rann of Kutch blackbuck (Indian antelope), nilgai or blue bull (India's largest antelope) and the graceful chinkara (Indian gazelle) are other mammals. The main carnivores of the Little Rann of Kutch are the endangered Indian wolf, desert fox, Indian fox, jackals, desert and jungle cats, and a few hyenas; also we can see during the visits flamingoes, pelicans, ducks, cranes and storks.

Little Rann Of Kutch- Salt Pans : The Little Rann of Kutch is very famous for its unique salt-pans where salt is harvested by local tribes. Salt in India was the biggest source of revenue for centuries. The production of sea salt was not a major activity in India earlier as the technique of deriving salt from sea water had not developed in India as the sea water had less density of only 4.5 Be. Rann starts with an initial density of 14 Be in winter and goes up to 18 Be in summer. It was this inland salt that brought in revenue. India was the largest salt producer in the world in the past and Kharagodha was then the very hub of the salt industry in India.

Tangaliya Weaver at Bajana Village : It is 700 years old indigenous craft to make shawls are woven in pit looms at homes and knot a contrast color thread with the warp, which are woven into the textile to create the effect of raised dots, which have become the signature style of the textile. Besides dots, several, geometric patterns are also created.

**Overnight at Little Rann Of Kutch.**



**DAY 17 : LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH-PATAN (80KMS)-POSHINA (145KMS)**

Today we drive to Poshina visting Patan.

Patola Museum Patan : After 15years of methodical planning on real estate , finance and architecture, and 300years after their ancestors began to informally document details of the complex weaving technique of Patola weaving, opened the doors to a private museum in Patan in September 2014.

Rani-ki-Vav - Patan : Rani ki vav has been declared a Monument of National Importance and protected by the ASI. It was added to the list of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites on 22 June 2014. On the banks of the Saraswati river, was initially built as a memorial to a king in the 11th century AD. Stepwells are a distinctive form of subterranean water resource and storage systems on the Indian subcontinent. Designed as an inverted temple highlighting the sanctity of water, it is divided into seven levels of stairs with sculptural panels of high artistic quality, more than 500 principle sculptures and over a thousand minor ones combine religious, mythological and secular imagery, often referencing literary works. The fourth level is the deepest and leads into a rectangular tank 9.5m by 9.4m, at a depth of 23m. The well is located at the westernmost end of the property and consists of a shaft 10m in diameter and 30m deep.

Later we drive to Poshina.

Visit Dungri Garasia tribales - The Garasias are bisected in two neighbouring states, Gujarat and Rajasthan. Dungri Garasia is generic term, covering half a dozen endogamous hierarchical sub-tribes calling themselves Garasia or Dungri Garasia. Garasia is very close to Bhil. Due to paucity of good agriculture land there are a few chances of sustainable agriculture and animal husbandry

**Overnight at Poshina**



**DAY 18 : POSHINA-MODHERA (170KMS)-AHMEDABAD (75KMS)**

Today we drive to Ahmedabad visiting Modhera Sun Temple.

Modhera Sun Temple, Modhera Sun Temple dates back to early 11th century CE and was built by King Bhimdev I in 1026 CE. The temple at modhera is the most important of all sun temples built in the whole Gujarat. The temple is dedicated to the Sun God. The temple is magnificent and the finest example of the hindus architecture in Gujarat. One of the most striking features of the Modhera Sun Temple that the first ray of the sun falls on the deity at the time of the equinoxes. In front of the temple is a colossal tank, which was once known as Surya Kund or Rama Kund. The tank has a series of the carved steps leading to the bottom.

Today we enjoy dinner at Vishalla.

Vishalla Restaurant : Vishalla is a place where there are no closed rooms or halls, lanterns used instead of heavy lighting, natural air replacing air-conditioned air, folk songs being sung without mikes, muddy lanes, homely food served on a tree leaf, and everything around resembling a typical Indian village.

Utensils museum : A walk around the hut-like museum makes one's heart skip a beat, marveling at the inimitable beauty of these utensils of old. These utensils have been handed down through the changing seasons and times, over the years. They speak of the unmatched art and genius of humankind during the days of old when people did not have the modern facilities of our times. The designer could not let our rich heritage pass with these vessels being lost in the fire kilns! He was determined to preserve them, and today, his dream is a reality in the form of Vechar.

The museum will be closed on Monday. (on direct payment).

**Overnight at Ahmedabad**

**DAY 19 : DEPARTURE FROM AHMEDABAD**

Today we take a flight from Ahmedabad airport.



# Southern Trails



Chinnai-Mahabalipuram-Puducherry-Tanjavur-Madurai-Kumarakom-Cochin-Ooty-Mysure-Bengaluru 21 Nights-22Days.

## DAY 01: FLY TO CHENNAI

Fly overnight to Chennai

## DAY 02: ARRIVE CHENNAI

You will arrive at Chennai International Airport. Following customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, a representative will meet you as you EXIT the ARRIVALS TERMINAL building after which you would be transferred to your hotel for check-in (Check-in time 1400 hrs/ early check-in is subject to availability).

Chennai (formerly known as Madras), the largest city in South India and the fourth largest city in the country, the capital of Tamil Nadu is located on what is popularly called the Coromandel Coast of the Bay of Bengal. The varied aspects of traditional South Indian culture existing alongside the lifestyle of a modern city complete with its plush hotels, restaurants offering a range of continental to typical South Indian cuisine, long and uncrowded stretches of beaches, modern shopping malls, and cinema halls. While moving around in the city one cannot overlook the obvious British influence that is so evident in the various cathedrals, buildings in Indo-Saracenic style of architecture and wide tree lined avenues. However, despite the undeniable strong English legacy, Chennai has retained its traditional Tamil Hindu culture and effectively blended it with the foreign influence.

Popularly regarded as the "Gateway to the South", Chennai presents a culture that is distinctly different from that of northern India. Music, dance and all other art forms of the South are cherished and nurtured in this city, which, though industrialized, continues to be traditional and conventional in many ways.



Rest of the day at leisure (No transportation included).

Evening enjoy Welcome drinks & dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Chennai**

Meals : Dinner



### DAY 03: CHENNAI - MAHABALIPURAM

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, explore some of the colonial sights on a sightseeing tour of Chennai. Begin your sightseeing with a visit to the Government State Museum and the National Art Gallery (Remains closed on Fridays & on National Holidays) showcasing an interesting archaeological section and a bronze gallery. It houses items right from the Cholas, Vijaynagar, Hoysala and Chalukya periods to some very recent artwork. Drive past high court buildings, Marina Beach and visit Fort St. George Museum (Remains closed on Fridays & on National Holidays). Kapaleeswarar Temple (Outer courtyard) which is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It has a typical Dravidian gopuram (Non-Hindus are not allowed inside the temple premises). Near the temple, is the San Thome Cathedral, which is said to contain the remains of St Thomas the Apostle (Doubting Thomas).

Following sightseeing tour, you will be driven to Mahabalipuram (approx. 55 Kms/1 hr). Upon arrival at Mahabalipuram, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Mahabalipuram - Seaside village of 'Mamallapuram' popularly known as Mahabalipuram, once the main port of the Pallava Dynasty from the 5th - 9th centuries. Today, it is the site of several antique sculptural marvels. Declared as the world heritage site by UNESCO, Mahabalipuram boasts of some of India's most sublime rock-cut art. The only shore temple, which remains here, is the spectacular two-spired shrine, which is unique in that it houses both Vishnu and Shiva in its sanctum.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Mahabalipuram.**

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner

### DAY 04: IN MAHABALIPURAM

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning enjoy half day sightseeing tour of Mahabalipuram. You will visit the highlights of the famous sea port of the Pallavas in Mahabalipuram, which includes the famous rock-cut and the sea shore temple. 'Arjuna's Penance' is the world's largest bas relief measuring 27 meters by 9 meters. The hillside is scattered with eight temple porches with bold sculptures inside and there is also one surviving shore temple, built in the 1st century. A row of Nandi Bulls surrounds its walls and Mahabalipuram also boasts an excellent open-air museum where you can watch stonemasons at work. The tour of the temples ends with a visit to the 'Shore Temple' designed according to the description of the original plan from ancient Hindu texts, consisting of a compact temple with two spires.

Following visit return to your hotel.

Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight in Mahabalipuram.

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner

### DAY 05: IN MAHABALIPURAM

Breakfast at the hotel.

Full day at leisure for independent activities.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Mahabalipuram.**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner





#### **DAY 06 : MAHABALIPURAM - PUDUCHERRY**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Following breakfast, you will be driven to Pondicherry (Approx 107 Kms/2.5 hrs) enroute visit Auroville.

"Auroville wants to be a universal town where men and women of all countries are able to live in peace and progressive harmony above all creeds, all politics and all nationalities. The purpose of Auroville is to realise human unity".

After visit, continue your drive to Pondicherry. Upon arrival, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Pondicherry has a rich French cultural heritage, having been the capital of the French colonies in India since the 17th century. The French legacy is visible in the well-planned town, neatly laid roads, wide and vibrant beaches, beautiful promenades, architecturally imposing churches and public buildings and the statues. Split into two parts, Pondicherry on one side is a bustling Indian Market town, and in its old French quarters, the cobbled streets, waterfront pavements and promenades were designed to resemble any seaside town, south of France.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Puducherry.**

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner

#### **DAY 07 : IN PUDUCHERRY**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning enjoy an orientation tour of Pondicherry visiting the main Ashram of Sri Aurobindo and walk through the main promenade, past elegant colonial mansions and tree lined boulevards. Also visit the Church and Flower Market. Rickshaw ride through the French and Indian Quarters.

Rest of the day at leisure for independent activities.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Pondicherry.**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner

#### **DAY 08 : PUDUCHERRY - THANJAVUR**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning drive to Thanjavur (160 Kms/ approx 4.5 hrs). Upon arrival, proceed for check-in at the hotel.

Thanjavur was the capital city of Chola kingdom from the 9th to the 13th centuries. It is the granary of South India and is known as the rice bowl of Tamil Nadu. This royal city has a rich and varied heritage for which it is known across the globe. There are more than 70 temples in Thanjavur, the most important being the famous Brihadeeswara Temple.

Afternoon enjoy sightseeing tour of Thanjavur including visit to Sri Brihadeeshwara Temple built by the great Chola King, Raja Raja I in the 10th century AD; this temple is an outstanding example of the Chola architecture. Guarding the inner shrine of the temple is the gigantic statue of Nandi, the Bull, while the walls of the sanctum are covered with wall paintings of Chola and Nayak periods. This superb monument has been listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO.

Continue on a visit to the Tanjore Palace and Museum. The Palace, adjacent to the temple is a vast structure of outstanding architecture built partly by the Nayaks and partly by the Marathas around 1550 AD. The Royal museum displays many items of the kings who ruled the palace in the past - the Royal clothes, hunting weapons, the head gears and many more such items. The Nayak hall of the palace is converted into an Art Gallery which has an excellent collection of artefacts from the Chola dynasty during the 8th and 9th century. Next to the art gallery is the Saraswathi Mahal Library with an amazing collection of manuscripts on palm leaves and paper. The library is not open to the public. But one can always go in the museum to have a look at the full Ramayana written on Palm leaf or a set of explicit prints of prisoners under Chinese torture.

Following visit return to your hotel.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Thanjavur.**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 09: THANJAVUR – TRICHY – MADURAI

Breakfast at the hotel.

Post breakfast, you will be driven to Madurai (Approx. 200 Kms/ 6 hrs) enroute visiting Trichy (known as Tiruchirapalli), which lies on the banks of the Cauvery.

Enjoy your visit to the Rock Fort Temple; the most famous landmark of Trichy is an 83m high rock, which is the only outcrop in the otherwise flat land. The most amazing fact about the rock is that it is one of the oldest in the world, approx. 3800 years. There are two main temples here - the Ucchi Pillayar Koil at the summit, a temple dedicated to Lord Vinayaka (Ganesh) and the Thayumanaswamy Temple half-way to the top, dedicated to Lord Shiva, where the lingam is a projection of the rock itself. From the summit one can enjoy a panoramic view of Trichy. On the southern face of the rock are several beautifully carved rock-cut cave temples of the Pallava period.

Note:

- Non Hindus are not allowed into the Sanctum.
- There is a long climb up of 344 steps cut into the stone to the top

Also visit the Srirangam Temple - The district's most important pilgrim centre is located in an island just 7 kms from Tiruchi. Srirangam, surrounded by the waters of river Cauveri on one side and its tributary kollidam on the other, is a 600 acre island-town enclosed within the seven walls of the gigantic Sriranganathaswami Temple.

Lunch at local restaurant.

Following visit continue drive, upon arrival proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Madurai Known as the Athens of the East, Madurai, the second largest city in Tamil Nadu is situated on the banks of the river Vaigai. An ancient city, more than 2,500 years old, Madurai is believed to have been built by the Pandyan King Kulasekara in the 6th century BC. The city is said to have got its name from the drops of nectar (Mathuram) that fell from Shiva's locks when he came to bless its people for constructing a temple for him. Originally named Madhurapuri or the 'land of nectar', the name later got modified as Madurai. From such legendary beginnings, the actual history of Madurai emerged sometime during the 3rd century BC.

Evening witness Aarti Ceremony at Meenakshi Temple

Following visit return to your hotel.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Madurai.**

Meals : Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

## DAY 10: IN MADURAI

Early this morning get ready for visit to Flower Market.

Here you would witness many varieties of flowers especially jasmine which are exported to other parts of India as well as to other countries. The jasmine; also known as the Madurai malli of Madurai, is considered at the top because of its unique fragrance that is not found anywhere else. For the jasmine and the rose, the Madurai flower market has also received an international recognition as both of these flowers are extensively used in the fragrance industry.

Following visit, return to your hotel.

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure for independent activities.

Afternoon enjoy half day sightseeing tour of Madurai

One of the most important places of Hindu pilgrimage, the Meenakshi temple is the very centre of cultural and religious life for the residents of the city. It is a riotously baroque example of Dravidian architecture with gopurams (spires) covered from top to bottom in a breathtaking profusion of multi coloured images of gods, goddesses, animals and mythical figures. The temple complex has two main shrines, one dedicated to Sundaeswarar (Shiva) and the other to his consort Meenakshi (Parvati). The Kampathadi Mandapam (pillared hall) in front of the Sundaeswara shrine depicts the various manifestations of Lord Shiva. The 1000-pillared hall in the complex houses the Temple Art Museum, which contains friezes, stone and brass images and the best exhibits on Hindu deities.

Continue your visit to the Palace of Tirumalai Nayak, an Indo-Saracenic building constructed in 1523. There is no other building in Madurai which can better illustrate the architectural style of the Nayaks. The most remarkable part of this palace is the Swarga Vilasam which served as the audience hall. Its dome which lies beyond a huge courtyard is a magnificent example of the engineering skill of its builders, rising as it does to a height of 20m without support of any kind.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Madurai.**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner



## DAY 11 : MADURAI - PERIYAR

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today after breakfast, your journey continues from the temple town of Madurai, through a succession of market towns to the spice land of Periyar (Thekkady) (160 Kms/ Approx 4 hrs).

On arrival, proceed for check-in at your hotel.

Thekkady - the heart of God's own country! The very sound of the name conjures up images of elephants, unending chains of hills and spice scented plantations. Here, in the crisp, cool air of the Western Ghats you will experience the most enchanting holiday. In the Periyar forests of Thekkady is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India, and spread across the entire district are picturesque plantations and hill towns that hold great opportunities for treks and mountain walks.

Dinner at the hotel

**Overnight in Thekkady (Periyar).**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner



## DAY 12 : IN PERIYAR

Early morning proceed to Guided Nature Walk in Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary.

This is an interpretive programme offering excellent opportunity to watch birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Different nature trails traversing diverse habitats form the trekking routes, generally 4 to 5 km in length. The trails often pass through evergreen and moist deciduous forests interspersed with marshy grasslands. Nature walk is the right programme to feel nature, hear her whispers and smell her flowers.

Note:

- Time slots: 7am, 7.30am, 10am, 10.30am, 2pm and 2.30pm [Duration: two-and-half hour].
- Group size: Minimum of four, maximum of six individuals

- Only children of 12 years and above are allowed to participate in the above programme.

Following visit return to your hotel for breakfast.

Afternoon, enjoy visit to Spice Garden.

Visit a local Spice Garden and discover crops such as cardamom, nutmeg, pepper, coffee and tamarind in their native environment and learn about their varied uses. For centuries Kerala has grown and exported spices around the world and a walking tour of a plantation will allow you to gain a first-hand experience of the cultivation, growth and processing of spices.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Thekkady (Periyar).**

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner

## DAY 13 : PERIYAR - KUMARAKOM

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning, you will be driven to Kumarakom (140 km/Approx 3.5 hrs). Upon arrival check-in at your hotel.

Located 16 km away from Kottayam town is an enchanting backwater destination on the picturesque Vembanad Lake. The village of Kumarakom is a cluster of little islands that have been converted into a number of tourist resorts, and is part of the Kuttanad region. Kumarakom is an unbelievable beautiful paradise. The blue backwaters and the surface of Vembanad Lake reflect the azure sky. The amazing shades of green of the vegetation that include mangroves, coconut palms, and paddy fields cover the verdant countryside. Channels and waterways wind their way through this green paradise. Water lilies and lotuses bloom in the water and birds from the bird sanctuary on Vembanad Lake call as they fly across the clear tropical sky. Kumarakom is an idyllic holiday destination.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Kumarakom**

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner



**DAY 14 : IN KUMARAKOM**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure for independent activities (No transport services).

Later, enjoy a day cruise on the backwaters of Kerala [Check-in time 1200 & check-out by 1630 hrs]. Calmly glide through the beautiful Vembanad Lake, on board a majestic house boat, past a cluster of islands rich with vigour and beauty. Lunch will be served on board the houseboat

Following cruise, return to your hotel.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Kumarakom.**

Meals : Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**DAY 15 : IN KUMARAKOM**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning enjoy a Guided – walk through Kumarakom Village.

Explore the rural environs of Kumarakom as you undertake a Village Walk where you will have an opportunity to interact with the locals and familiarize yourself with their culture and lifestyle.

Following walking tour, return to your hotel.

Rest of the day at leisure for independent activities. (No transport services).

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Kumarakom.**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner

**DAY 16 : KUMARAKOM – COCHIN**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Check-out from your hotel by 1200 hrs and drive to Cochin (90 Kms/ Approx 2.5 hrs). Upon arrival check-in at your hotel. (Check-in time at 1400 hrs/ early check-in is subject to availability).

The commercial capital of Kerala and the most cosmopolitan of the state's cities, Cochin or Kochi have long been eulogized in tourist literature as the 'Queen of the Arabian Sea.' Strategically located on the east-west sea route, Cochin is Kerala's major port, boasting of one of the finest natural harbours in the world, which forms the hub around which the city revolves. With its wealth of historical associations and its setting on a cluster of islands and narrow peninsula, the city of Kochi perfectly reflects the eclecticism of Kerala. Apart from being a major commercial hub, Kochi is also a major tourist attraction in southern India.

Cochin served as a very important seaport and centre of trade with the Chinese, Arabs, Phoenician, Romans and Greeks. One is able to catch a glimpse of the past through the old colonial churches, tiled houses built in the Chinese pagoda style, the famous Chinese fishing nets, colonial buildings, synagogues and mosques - all narrating fascinating tales of this enriched harbour town.

Evening you will witness Kathakali Dance performance (without guide).

Today you will be taken to watch a mesmerising Kathakali performance. Kathakali represents a synthesis of all that is best in dance, drama and music and has been recognized by connoisseurs of art, the world over as a 'total art form of immense sophistication and power'. It is the impression created by make-up and the costumes that make Kathakali a visual par excellence. Let the magic of this unique art form envelope you as you watch the emotions displayed by the performing artists.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Cochin**

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner

**DAY 17 : IN COCHIN**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning half-day sightseeing tour of Cochin

Explore the 'Queen of the Arabian Sea', Cochin. Unravel the ancient treasures of this quaint harbour port town visiting the fascinating sights. Visit the Chinese Fishing Nets, the St. Francis Church [Closed on Sunday during Mass], Dutch Palace or Mattancherry Palace [Remains closed on Friday] built by the Portuguese for the Raja (King) of Kochi in exchange of trading rights; Enjoy a walk around the bustling port area lined with old buildings, and the centre of spice trade. Experience the air filled with aromas of ginger, cumin, turmeric and various other spices, as you pass the lanes of Jew to the Jewish Synagogue [Remains closed on Friday's Afternoon and Saturday] the oldest living synagogue in the world. Walk through Historical buildings.

Note: Visitors to the Jewish Synagogue should be modestly dressed. Admission will be denied to men and women wearing short pants/skirts, sleeveless t-shirts/blouses. Bare shoulders and mid-riffs are not permitted and should be covered with shawls.

Afternoon at leisure for independent activities [No transport services included]

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Cochin.**

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner

**DAY 18 : COCHIN – COIMBATORE PALAKAD - OOTY**

**NOW TRAIN TO PALAKAD .... THEN LUNCH AT SRI CHAKRA RESTAURANT FOLLOWED BY DRIVE TO OOTY**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning you will be met at your hotel and assisted for transfer to railway station for your train to Coimbatore

Departure Cochin At: 0910 hrs  
Train Bangalore Express-12678

Arrival Coimbatore Palakad At: 1137 hrs

Train operates daily

Upon arrival, Lunch at local restaurant in Palakad

Later you will be driven to Ooty (85 Kms/ 3 hrs Approx).  
Upon arrival, check-in at your hotel.

Called the 'Queen of Hill Stations' picturesque, green Udhagamandalam better known as Ooty is the most popular hill station in the South. Located in the Western Ghats at a height of 2240m, Udhagamandalam is the headquarters of the Nilgiris district where the two ghats meet. Nature has been generous with this region which is by far the most beautiful in the state. Apart from coffee and tea plantations, trees like conifers, eucalyptus and pine dot the hillside in Ooty and its environs.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Ooty.**

Meals : Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**DAY 19 : IN OOTY**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Toy Train experience

In the morning, you will be met at your hotel and transferred to the railway station to board Toy train at 0915 hrs to Coonoor (Class: Second Class Non AC). Arrive Coonoor at 1025 hrs. Upon arrival you would be taken for the Tea Plantation and tea factory visit

Later you would be driven back Ooty (an hour drive approx).

Rest of the day is at leisure for independent activities.

Dinner at the hotel.

**Overnight in Ooty.**

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner

**DAY 20 : OOTY - MYSORE**

Breakfast at the hotel.

Today you will be driven to Mysore (180 Kms/ Approx 05 hrs) via Bandipur National Park. Upon arrival check-in at your hotel.

Mysore was the political capital of the Wodeyar dynasty which ruled the state of Karnataka for some 150 years till the independence of the country from the British. These kings were great patrons of art and culture and Mysore was the cultural capital of the south under the rule of the Wodeyars.



Mysore still carries on its placid shoulders the aura and glamour of palaces, the grandeur of festivals of times gone by, but all of it with a quiet, unhurried dignity. It is often called the Jewel of Karnataka - its arts, culture, buildings, festivals, gardens and parks being the quintessence of the state's heritage

Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight in Mysore

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner

#### DAY 21 : IN MYSORE

Breakfast at the hotel.

Enjoy guided tour of Mysore city.

The infatuation with Mysore begins with Flower and Vegetable market, later drive up to Chamundi Hill to see Chamundeshwari Temple, where stands a monolithic statue of the Nandi Bull. Continue visit Maharaja's Palace, at the heart of the city. It is a veritable treasure trove of exquisite carvings and works of art from the world over.

Following visit, return to your hotel. Rest of the day at leisure for independent activities.

Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight in Mysore

Meals :- Breakfast & Dinner



#### DAY 22 : MYSORE – BENGALURU

Breakfast at the hotel.

Post breakfast you will be driven to Bengaluru (145 Kms/ Approx 04 hrs) en route visiting Srirangapatnam

Located 16km on the Bengaluru-Mysore highway, it is built on a long island in the Cauvery River. The fortress was once the capital of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan. Inside the fortress walls there is a mosque and the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. A kilometer east of the fort is the Daria Daulat Bagh, the summer palace of Tipu Sultan built in 1784. It's adorned with ornate and beautiful frescoes and now houses a museum with a collection of family memorabilia and paintings depicting Tipu Sultan's campaigns against the British. Nearby is the Gumbaz, the onion-domed mausoleum of Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan.

Post visit continue drive to Bengaluru. Upon arrival check-in at your hotel.

Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight in Bengaluru.

Meals : Breakfast & Dinner

#### DAY 23 : BENGALURU - DEPARTURE

Breakfast at the hotel.

Morning at leisure for independent activities. (No transport services).

Check-out from hotel (Check-out time 1200 hrs and late check-out is subject to availability).

Intime a representative will meet you at the hotel & provide assisted transfer to airport to board flight for onward destination.

Meals : Breakfast

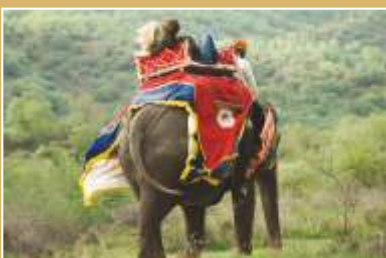




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