



Rajasthan Encompassed



DAY 1: ARRIVE DELHI

Arrive in Delhi generally very late in the evening from Australia.

After clearing immigration and customs and collecting your baggage, you will be met by our representative in the arrivals hall, who will transfer you to your hotel.

Overnight: The Claridges – Claridges Room with breakfast, 2 nights
OR The Imperial - Heritage Room with breakfast, 2 nights
Websites: www.claridges.com or www.theimperialindia.com

DELHI - reflects the legacy and heritage of Mughal Delhi which is popularly known as Old Delhi. Pulsing with energy and colour, Old Delhi is laced by a maze of narrow lanes where you get a glimpse of many contrasting flavours from wedding bazaars to expansive spice markets, to graceful architecture. In contrast to Old Delhi – the imperial city or New Delhi created by the British has numerous fine buildings and wide boulevards laid according to the master plan of the great colonial architect Lutyens.

The capital of India, Delhi is a modern city but possesses an ancient history. The river Yamuna bears witness to the glorious and tumultuous 5,000 year old history of Delhi. Occupied by rulers who battled for control over this region and the subcontinent, Delhi boasts of seven cities within itself. Dotted with innumerable ruins, it is at the same time a pulsating and vibrant metropolis.

DAY 2: DELHI

This morning, you will be allowed a sleep-in to recover from the flight.

Start your day by exploring the fascinating heritage and the living legacy of the Indo-Islamic culture, lifestyle in Old Delhi. In 1638 Moghul emperor Shahjahan transferred his capital from Agra to Delhi and laid the foundations of Shahjahanabad, the seventh city of Delhi. Today this is known as **Old Delhi**.

In this part of the city you will visit the largest and best-known mosque in India which can accommodate 20000 people at one time. **Jama Masjid** was built by Shah Jahan in the 17th C. Awe inspiring and beautiful with its three domes and elegant tapering minarets this active mosque also houses some sacred relics of the prophet.

To get a real feel of this area, take a rickshaw ride in the busy and narrow streets of the mile long Chandni Chowk, also known as “The Silver Street”. The throbbing energy of this area is palpable: shouting vegetable vendors, alley shops doing brisk business, roadside snack stalls, browsing students, jostling laborers negotiating carts through narrow lanes, and so much more!

This afternoon drive through the **government buildings area**. Drive past the magnificent Parliament Building, built in a circular shape supported by 144 pillars. The Rashtrapati Bhawan (the official residence of the President of India) is spread over 330 acres and was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens. Also drive past the **India Gate**, an arch which is a war memorial honouring the 90,000 soldiers of the British-Indian army, who lost their lives fighting for the British during WW1. End the tour at **Humayun’s Tomb** which was built in the 16th century and is architecturally considered the forerunner of the Taj Mahal. Commissioned by the widow of Humayun, the second Mughal emperor, it was subsequently used as a burial place for members of the royal family. Today it is rated one of the most beautiful sites of North India.

Evening is free, if you would like to get in a little shopping. Explore the designer markets of Delhi – Shahpur Jat, Hauz Khas and Meharchand.

Overnight Delhi

DAY 3: DELHI TO AGRA (approx. 5 hrs drive/2 hrs by Express Train)

Early morning assisted transfer to New Delhi Railway Station to board train to Agra, with a packed breakfast.

Shatabdi Express Departing Delhi at 06:15AM Arriving Agra at 8:10AM

The ancient city of Agra lies on the banks of the river Yamuna and is one of the oldest settlements of India. Between the 16th and 17th C it was the seat of power of the Mughals and three generations of Great Mughals ruled a huge empire from here. It was also a centre of learning, Culture, Art and Religious philosophies which produced some of the most renowned writers and scholars.

Visit **Agra Fort**, strategically situated along a bend on the Yamuna River. Built 16th century AD by three generations of Mughal emperors, it is a superb synthesis of stern military fortifications with delicate interior details. The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan was imprisoned by his son here. Here you will see the art and crafting of the white marble that has made the area so famous, and the Halls of Public and Private Audience.

After this visit if you like you can learn about marble inlay work which is unique to Agra. This centuries old art embellishes the Taj Mahal, and it is interesting to see how intricately shaped pieces of semi precious stones are neatly laid into the hard marble.

Later visit the sublime **Taj Mahal** in the traditional mode of transport- a Tonga or a horse carriage, decorated with fragrant marigold flowers. Enjoy the rhythm of the clip clop of the horse's feet and get transported into a by- gone era! This may be at sunset (Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays). The Taj is a tribute from a great emperor to the memory of his beloved wife, it was 22 years in the making (1631-1653) and is a cerebral experience that defies description. Widely regarded as the earthly replica of paradise, Taj Mahal is likened to "a vision, a dream, a poem and a wonder".

Overnight: **The Trident - Deluxe Garden View Room with breakfast, 1 night**

OR **Oberoï Amarvilas - Premier Room with breakfast, 1 night**

Website: www.tridenthotels.com or www.oberoihotels.com

DAY 4: AGRA TO JAIPUR

After a leisurely breakfast you will be driven through the beautiful countryside to Jaipur (approx 6 hrs), travelling through small industrial towns, and agricultural villages.

Enroute, visit **Fatehpur Sikri**, an enigmatic deserted Mughal city. This spacious, red sandstone city was built in the 16th century by the great Mughal Emperor, Akbar, one of India's greatest rulers. The architecture of Fatehpur Sikri is a combination of Hindu and Muslim styles, expressing Akbar's vision of synthesizing the two cultures. Akbar occupied Fatehpur Sikri for 14 years before the city was mysteriously abandoned. This hauntingly beautiful city has been painstakingly restored and is now a World Heritage

Upon arrival in Jaipur you will be assisted check-in at your hotel.

This evening, you may like to enjoy a stroll through Jaipur's traditional markets, set amidst the memorable backdrop of Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob's vernacular architecture.

Overnight: **Samode Haveli - Deluxe Suite with breakfast, 3 nights**

OR **Rambagh Palace - Palace Room with breakfast, 3 nights**

Websites: www.samode.com or www.tajhotels.com

DAY 5: JAIPUR

Today do a full day city sightseeing tour of Jaipur.

Drive to **Amber**, the ancient capital that preceded Jaipur. Originally built in the 11th century AD and expanded in size and scope by succeeding dynasties and their rulers, Amber is a fortress town of visual awesomeness. Ride up to its imposing hilltop location by jeep and explore the maze of passages, corridors, pavilions, ornamental gardens and ramparts.

Here you will visit the **City Palace**, home of the royal family and its excellent private museums that display royal memorabilia, particularly armaments, art, books, costumes and textiles.

Walk to adjacent **Jantar Mantar** or Astronomical Observatory built in 1726 by the Maharaja of Jaipur. It is one of the five such astronomical wonders built by Sawai Jai Singh that makes accurate predictions even to this day.

Suggestion for lunch: Niro's, this six decades old, highly popular restaurant offers a range of the choicest continental, tandoori, mughal and Chinese cuisine. Their tandoori (clay oven baked) meals are particularly famous.

If you like today you can also shop for Jaipur's famous textiles and jewelry.

OPTIONAL

Visit a textile showroom where you will learn all about traditional hand block printed textiles. Here you can make your own block print garment as well. Jaipur is famous for hand block printing, and is a great place for guests to learn this skill and create their own clothes. Guests can choose colours, pattern and style and under the watchful eye of a master printer can print the fabric. Later the fabric will be tailored into a garment for the guest and delivered to them.

Overnight Jaipur

DAY 6: JAIPUR

The rest of the day is at leisure. For those, who are looking for something more personal, authentic and different from the usual sightseeing tour, we suggest below options.

- 1. ART AND CRAFT TOUR:** We would recommend a visit to the **Albert Hall** that houses the central museums superb collection of fine arts and traditional crafts from across Rajasthan. Head to Kripal Kumbh for viewing blue pottery. This is the private residence of late master potter Kripal Kumbh who began the studio at 1960's. His daughter who is a potter herself runs the studio. See the artists at work on traditional works including a unique lotus design. There is an option to visit the village of Sanganer printers that preserve the traditional form of block and screen printing.
- 2. EXCURSION TO SAMODE PALACE:** You have an option to drive to **Samode Palace** for lunch. Samode, nestled in the foothills of Aravalli is small village that offers a rich rural experience with various attractions like the 400 year old gates, chhatris, palaces, gardens, step wells and a diverse local art and crafts. Here you may explore the village in a camel cart.
- 3. ELEPHANT SAFARI AND DINNER:** Enjoy an elephant safari and dinner at **Dera Amer** with a noble family. Dera Amer is situated behind the hills of the famous Amer Fort. A local Rajput family who themselves reside in the area organize elephant safaris in the jungle using their beautiful home and camp as a base encouraging guests to interact with the local farmers in the village.

Overnight Jaipur

DAY 7: JAIPUR TO CHHATRA SAGAR

This morning, you will be to the village of Chhatra Sagar (approx five hours drive).

This idyllic haven comprises just 11 tents pitched on a dam, overlooking a lake teeming with birds. The family is all personally involved in looking after guests and the tents are elegantly furnished, each pitched to ensure privacy and all facing directly onto the lake. The meals served here represent some of the finest Rajasthani home cooking you will find and the charming family ensures you want for nothing. Due to its location, surrounded by farmland and small villages, a stay here allows you to experience rural Rajasthan in the best way.

Overnight: Chhatra Sagar – Tents with all meals, 2 nights

Website: www.chhatrasagar.com

DAY 8: CHHATRASAGAR

Experience true village life in rural Rajasthan: visit a 9th century temple, and enjoy the sun setting behind the dam which gives a golden glow to the lake before it sinks behind the dam with its abundant bird life. Sip a cocktails as you watch the sunset or stroll around the area.

Overnight Chhatra Sagar

DAY 9: CHHATRASAGAR TO NAGOUR

After a leisurely morning you will be driven to Nagaur (approx 5 hours). Glorified by the bards, the history of Nagaur finds mention even in the Mahabharata. Located mid way between Jodhpur and Bikaner it was once situated on the important trade routes from the Arabian Sea ports to Delhi, and is one of Rajasthan's most historic cities.

Overnight: Ranvas Haveli - Royal Suite with breakfast, 1 night

DAY 10: NAGOUR TO JAISALMER

Take the morning to explore Nagaur and the 18th century Ahhichatragarh Fort.

After lunch you will be driven to Jaisalmer (5 hrs drive). Jaisalmer is one of the western most desert posts of India. It is a beautiful fortified city, carved out of yellow sandstone located on the edge of the Thar Desert. Once a staging post on the trading routes west, it is a walled citadel, formidably fortified, of a sand colour that turns golden in the setting sun, and it contains a labyrinthine fort surrounded by palaces and temples. Below the forest of intricately carved spires and turrets is a merry jumble of buildings, alleys, animals, humans, shops and cafes, wonderful golden havelis and numerous fine Jain temples. It is the habitat of a rare desert bird known as the Great Indian Bustard.

Overnight: The Serai - Tented Suites with breakfast, 2 nights

Website: <http://www.the-serai.com/index.html>

DAY 11: JAISALMER

Today take a walking tour with a local expert through the winding streets of Jaisalmer which are dotted with beautiful temples, and ancient havelis (mansions).

The Jaisalmer fort rises like a fabulous mirage out of the sands of the Thar Desert, the contours of its 99 bastions softened by the golden hue of the stone. Standing on the peak of the Trikuta Hill, in medieval times the entire population of Jaisalmer lived within the fort and even now thousands of people live here. The Royal palace, a cluster of exquisitely carved 15th & 16th Jain temples, mansions and shops are all contained within its walls. Outside the fort is the main market place called Manek Chowk, from where a short walk takes you into the lanes flanked by beautifully carved havelis.

Overnight Jaisalmer

DAY 12: JAISALMER TO JODHPUR

After a leisurely breakfast, drive 6 hours to Jodhpur. Upon arrival, check-in to the chic “Raas”, a boutique hotel in the heart of the old city with breathtaking views of the Meherangarh Fort. Jodhpur is Rajasthan’s second largest city and lies at the entrance to the Thar Desert in a region called Marwar. The massive Meherangarh Fort overlooks the city founded in 1459. Jodhpur is also called ‘blue city’ because of the indigo-washed houses in the old town.

Later this afternoon, you have an option to visit **Lalji Warehouse** to hunt for treasures in this local landmark full of antiques and handicrafts. Do not miss the vintage Bollywood posters and firecracker boxes.

Overnight: Raas – Luxury Fort View Rooms with breakfast, 2 nights
Website: www.raasjodhpur.com

DAY 13: JODHPUR

This morning drive up to Meherangarh Fort, where your private guide will take you on a tour of this impressive fort. Rising 393 ft. above the surrounding plain, its massive and rugged exterior contains delicately latticed and decorated palaces. One of the best-run private museums in India, the Fort contains period rooms, art collections, and a conservation centre.

Drive back to the Old City Bazaar in tuk tuks (auto rickshaws), the Bazaar’s, noted for its craft stores that manufacture and sell silver jewelry, lacquer ware, tie dyed fabrics, puppets and camel hide leather products. Jodhpur is also known for its antique warehouses that sell a varied an interesting collection of bric-a-brac.

Lunch can be arranged at the Chowkelao Gardens right next to it.

Overnight Jodhpur

DAY 14: JODHPUR

In the morning, we can arrange a jeep safari into the nearby villages where you can watch dhurrie (rug) makers at work. Optionally, in the evening, take an excursion to the Manvar sand dunes (2 hours each way), where we will arrange a camel ride on the dunes with sunset drinks.

Overnight Jodhpur

DAY 15: JODHPUR TO UDAIPUR

A morning at leisure and then drive (6 hours) or fly to Jodhpur, depending of flight availability. On arrival, check-in to the hotel overlooking the lake. Later this evening enjoy a **serene boat ride on Lake Pichola** (exclusive), visiting Jagmandir Island and taking in the heady lakeside vistas. (Water levels in the lake permitting).

Overnight: Lake Palace – Palace Room with breakfast, 3 nights
OR Udai Kothi – Lake View Suite with breakfast, 3 nights
Websites: www.tajhotels.com or www.udaikothi.com

DAY 16: UDAIPUR

Udaipur, the enchanting City of Dawn, looms up like a vision in white. Considered to be one of India’s most beautiful locales- the medieval town of Udaipur is set around a patchwork of lakes, and beautiful gardens, ringed by low hills. 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.

Spend the morning visiting the **City Palace**, built in 1725. It is actually a series of interconnected palaces with private apartments, airy gardens on the upper floors, paintings and portraits, and a miniature painting gallery.

Take a guided walk through the old part of the city, seeing fruit and vegetable markets and farmers displaying their produce. Take tea at a local gallery, with an introduction to the art of Udaipur miniature painting.

Witness the almost forgotten art of Damascening

Visit a family that specializes in the art of "Damascening". The inlay of gold and silver wire on iron objects was traditionally used to ornament swords, hilts and daggers for Rajputs rulers. Only a few families remain that can produce this intricate and beautiful art.

Rest of the day is at leisure to enjoy your hotel amenities or shop in town.

Overnight Udaipur

DAY 17: UDAIPUR / MUMBAI

AIR INDIA AI 471 Udaipur / Mumbai 15.05 / 16.20

On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel

Overnight: Taj Mahal and Palace - Deluxe Sea View Room with breakfast, 2 nights

OR Taj Mahal and Palace - Luxury Grand Sea View Room with breakfast, 2 nights

Website: www.tajhotels.com

OPTIONAL

In the evening enjoy a decorated horse carriage ride along the Marine Drive (around the beach)

DAY 19: MUMBAI

Today your local expert will take you on the half day sightseeing tour of Bombay city. The tour includes a visit to the Victoria Terminus and Dhobi ghats. The Victoria Terminus, popularly known as VT is the major railway station and is considered the most beautiful edifice in the city. Dhobi Ghat or washer man's enclave provides a very interesting insight into Bombay's local culture - the world largest open air laundry quarters

Time permitting meet the Dabbawallas - a 125 year old trade formed by a unique and incredible network of 5,000 men with the complex task of delivering 200,000 home made lunches each day from suburban homes to downtown offices in the city of Mumbai... all within a period of approximately 3 hours! That's about 65 million 'dabbas' a year with almost no mistakes!

In the afternoon you have the choice to relax and unwind at the pool or take a market walking tour which is another 2-3 hour walk. Walk the vibrant local bazaars of Mumbai and take in the color, the noise, the pulsating energy of the trading. The tour covers Crawford Market with its bewildering variety of local vegetables & fruits, Zaveri Bazaar or the Jewellers Market, Mangaldas Market for fabric and the spice market. (25 minutes one way from the hotel)

Overnight Mumbai

DAY 20: MUMBAI

After breakfast, you will walk across to the Gateway of India, starting point of your three hour heritage walk which will take you around the surrounding Apollo Bunder Precinct, including the Taj Mahal Hotel and the Royal Yacht Club. Walk to Regal Circle, past Phillips Images Gallery, which showcases a superb collection of photographs of Old Bombay. Covering the sleepy by-lanes of old Colaba, visit the splendid university campus and enjoy the arcade bazaar along the Victorian style DN Road and reach throbbing Kala Ghoda Art District to learn about the details of buildings around including the Elphinstone College, David Sassoon Library and Prince of Wales Museum (closed on Mondays).

Afternoon is free to relax.

OR you could take an excursion to the Elephanta Caves. The Elephanta Caves are caves located on Elephanta Island in the Arabian Sea off the city of Mumbai a distance of 1 hour by boat from the Gateway of India. The Elephanta Island was so named by the Portuguese, after the statue of an elephant near the landing area of the island. The Island was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987 to preserve the artwork. These caves house rock cut temples dating back to the 5th century. Today Elephanta showcases legends of Lord Shiva carved in rock cave temples. The cave complex is a collection of shrines, courtyards, inner cells, grand halls and porticos arranged in the splendid symmetry of Indian rock-cut architecture and filled with exquisite stone sculptures of Hindu Gods and Goddesses. The temple complex is also said to be the abode of Shiva. Each year, in February, the Elephanta Dance Festival is organized where renowned dancers, artists and musicians perform live outside the caves, rejuvenating the mind body and the soul of a great audience.

Overnight Mumbai

DAY 21: MUMBAI TO AHMEDABAD

Transfer to the airport to connect with your flight to Ahmedabad

JET AIRWAYS 9W 2049 Mumbai / Ahmedabad 13.40/ 14.45

Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Afternoon at leisure.

The city was named after Sultan Ahmed Shah, who founded it in 1411 A.D. Situated on the banks of Sabarmati River, Ahmedabad is the commercial and cultural capital of Gujarat. A Quintessential mix of the Old and New, it has a lot to offer to an art lover and cultural architecture. Its local flavor, friendly people and sunny weather make it an interesting destination.

In the evening, view the private collection of the Hutheesing family at their *haveli* (family home). Meet the creative consultant - Umang Hutheesing - who is also actively involved in various philanthropic activities.

Overnight: Gateway Umeed – Sup Garden View Room with breakfast, 2 nights

Website: www.thegatewayhotels.com

DAY 22: AHMEDABAD

Today, you will be escorted on a tour of the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad, a world treasure and pilgrimage site for textile lovers. The Calico Museum of Textiles (closed on Wednesday and only 20 people are allowed at a time) is only thirty-one years old, but is today justly regarded as among the foremost textile museums in the world. This very important institution houses an outstanding collection of Indian fabrics which exemplify Indian textile design and production spanning five centuries. Most significantly, the Calico Museum is a major reference resource for India's surviving textile artisans and the machine-woven industry. The astonishing collections of the Museum include textile swatches of Indian origin found at archaeological sites in Egypt, silk saris from across India, double-ikat silk sarongs made in Patan for the Indonesian market, chintz and curtains made for the Dutch, British and Portuguese colonial powers in Gujarat, floral embroidery from the Punjab, shawls from Kashmir, a richly embroidered Mughal tent that belonged to Shah Jahan, royal wardrobes from Rajasthan, manuscripts, religious narrative cloth paintings – and more.

Enjoy delicious vegetarian Gujarati Thali at the House of Mangaldas for lunch –paid locally

Evening guided walking tour of old Ahmedabad.

Overnight: Gateway Umeed – Superior Garden View Room

DAY 23 DEPART AHMEDABAD

Visit the home of Mahatma Gandhi (Sabarmati Ashram) or the Adalaj Step well Heritage site. You will have day use if your room until departure. Transfer to the airport to connect with your international flight

JET CONNECT 9W 2003 AHMEDABAD / MUMBAI 16.55 / 18.00

Connect to flights to Australia.

END OF ARRANGEMENTS

**TOUR PRICES VALID 2013
(Based on Twin Share / AUD / per person)**

TOUR PRICES (subject to change)

Land arrangements on twin share

1. Based on superior hotels AU\$ 6680 per person
2. **Based on deluxe hotels AU\$ 8150 per person**

Domestic Airway (Economy Class) AU\$ 450 per person
Jodhpur-Udaipur-Mumbai-Ahmedabad-Mumbai

UPGRADE SUPPLEMENTS IN LIEU OF SUPERIOR HOTELS

AGRA

For staying in Premier Room, Oberoi Amarvilas in lieu of Deluxe Garden View, The Trident AU\$ 438 per person per night

JAISALMER

For staying in Premier Room, Oberoi Amarvilas in lieu of Deluxe Garden View, The Trident AU\$ 159 per person per night

PRICE INCLUSIONS:

- Accommodation for 21 nights and 1 day use room on twin-share basis in the mentioned hotels or similar
- Meals as specified in the itinerary
- Transportation by an air conditioned Innova
- English speaking Local Guides as per the itinerary
- Portage at all Airports / Hotels
- Entrances for monuments (single entry) as per itinerary
- 1 full day tour of Delhi
- Rickshaw Ride in Delhi
- Half day tour of Agra Fort and Taj Mahal
- Decorated Tonga ride to Taj Mahal
- Guided bazaar walk in Jaipur
- Full day tour in Jaipur including Amber fort in jeep and visit to textile museum
- Rural experience, birding trip at Chhatra Sagar
- Half day tour of Jaisalmer, camel ride on dunes
- Half day tour of Jodhpur including tuk-tuk ride
- Half day jeep safari in Osian
- Full day tour of Udaipur
- Exclusive boat ride at Lake Pichola, Udaipur
- 2 Half day tours of Mumbai
- Full day tour of Ahmedabad
- Visit to Hutheesing Haveli
- All currently applicable taxes

PRICE EXCLUSIONS:

- Airfares in economy class for sector, quoted as supplement
- International air-fare, visa fees, airport tax or any kind of insurance cover
- Any pre/post dinner drinks or drinks of any nature along with the meals
- Tips or gratuities
- Any car arrangements on free days or days at leisure.
- Still and video camera fee at monuments and game parks
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, tips, camera fees etc
- Any other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Liability for change in itinerary due to reasons beyond our control like change in flight and train schedule; cancellation of flights, political disturbances, natural phenomenon
- Any other item not specifically mentioned above as 'INCLUDED'

GENERAL CONDITIONS:

- All prices are subject to any revision of tax and tariff structure
- Airfares quoted the best available fares as of now and are dynamic in nature. The final fare can only be decided at the time of ticket issuance.
- Check-in time is 1400hrs and check-out time is 1100hrs / 1200hrs