

# RAJASTHAN AND BEYOND JOURNEY

## February 12 - 24, 2017

### Itinerary

#### February 11-12, 2017 U.S. to New Delhi

Arrive Delhi late night of the second day.

We will be met at arrival by our representative at the International Airport and transferred to the Claridges Hotel [www.claridges.com](http://www.claridges.com)

Dinner at the hotel.

#### February 13, 2017 New Delhi

Delhi is one of the world's oldest cities, inhabited continuously as far back as 2 BC. It has been the capital of dozens of empires, the royal playground for hundreds of kings, the site of furious battles and devastation, and the centre always of intrigues and power struggles that sought to control the rest of the country. The British legacy of Lutyen's Delhi formally divides the city into Old and New Delhi, each beautiful in its own way. While Old Delhi is a maze of narrow serpentine lanes lined with shops, New Delhi with its wide avenues and colonial mansions was built by the British in the 1930s as their imperial capital.

After breakfast we begin our sightseeing with a colonial walk of New Delhi, a city that largely owes its present-day avatar to a man named Edwin Lutyens, a man best known for adapting traditional architecture to contemporary styles. Head towards the India Gate, a monument commemorating the deaths of over 70,000 Indian soldiers in the British Forces during the World War I. Older British buildings that were used as power hubs house today's Parliament and Secretariat.



Afterwards we visit Gurudwara Bangla Sahib, the most famous Sikh temple in Delhi. It is an amazing experience to witness the worshipping of a religion that treats everyone as equals and dates back 500 years. Every day in Sikh temples volunteers cook free vegetarian meals for thousands regardless of their back ground. Because equality is so important in Sikh religion, everyone who comes in eats at the same level in the dining hall. We will get to help in the kitchen and see the lunch preparation in process.

After lunch in a lovely Delhi restaurant we continue our sightseeing with a visit to Humayun's Tomb, the 16<sup>th</sup> Century tomb of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Mughal Emperor Humayun. Tucked away in the heart of Delhi is this treasure trove of history spread over 100 acres of beautiful greens. This was the first garden tomb on the Indian subcontinent and is said to have inspired the design of the Taj Mahal. The next stop is Birla House – the location where Mahatama Gandhi spent the last 144 days of his life and was assassinated in 1948. It was acquired by the Government of India in 1971 and opened to the public in 1973 renamed the Gandhi Smriti.

Afterwards we have an opportunity for shopping at Khan Market with Fabindia and Anokhi stores – exclusive selection of ready to wear Indo Western clothing for both men and women and impressive selection of home linen and lifestyle products.

Dinner will be on our own.

### **February 14, 2017 Delhi to Jodhpur**

After an early breakfast we depart for the airport to board our flight to Jodhpur where we arrive just before noon. We check into our beautiful hotel, the Raas Haveli

<http://www.raasjodhpur.com>

Jodhpur epitomizing the romance and feudal splendor of Rajasthan with the majestic Mehrangarh Fort towering over it. The city of Jodhpur was once a flourishing trade centre for opium, silk and copper. Painted a brilliant shade of blue, Jodhpur is the last bastion of fort ramparts, colorful bazaars, animated people with their storytelling traditions before the desert sands and dunes stretch away towards the horizon.

This afternoon we visit Mandore, located north of Jodhpur city. There are beautiful examples of cenotaphs, with Hindu and Islamic architectural influences. Cenotaphs unlike tombs, are erected in memory of people whose mortal remains may have been interred elsewhere or were never found. We enjoy a lovely dinner at Darikhana Restaurant at our Haveli.

### **February 15, 2017 Jodhpur**

After breakfast we visit Mehrangarh Fort, one of the most majestic of Rajasthan's forts, described by the author Rudyard Kipling as "the creation of angels, fairies and giants". Its forbidding ramparts are in sharp contrast to the flamboyantly decorated palaces within. Founded in 1459, the sandstone fort was added to by later rulers between 17th and 19th centuries. We explore the massive fort complex and the exquisite museum collection. From coronation thrones to pleasure palaces and sunken gardens, the Mehrangarh Fort houses a citadel of immense grandeur. The Blue City is the historic district that surrounds the foot of Meherangarh Fort and has a mysterious quality to its quiet lanes, exquisite havelis, and pale indigo walls. Many believe that the indigo was mixed in the lime to provide a cooling effect against the harshness of the desert sun.



Tonight we dine at the Hanwant Mahal, serving Rajasthani delicacies in a lavish space overlooking Mehrangarh Fort.

### **February 16, 2017 Jodhpur to Udaipur via Ranakpur**

After breakfast we depart for Udaipur and stop at the famous Jain Temple in Ranakpur. Set in a secluded wooded valley of the Aravali Hills, the 15th century Ranakpur Temple complex is one of the five great holy places of the Jain faith. The grand scale and the sheer architectural complexity of the white marble temple along with its exquisite sculptural ornamentation makes it the single most impressive example of Indian temple architecture. Each of the temple's pillars is carved with different patterns of floral motifs and the play of light and shadow on the pillars as the sun moves is one of the glories of this monument. After our temple visit we have lunch at the Mountbatten Lodge, an exclusive property in a stunning location.

In the afternoon we continue our drive to Udaipur and on arrival check into our hotel Fateh Garh <http://www.fatehgarh.in>  
Dinner will be on our own.

### **February 17, 2017 Udaipur**

After our breakfast we begin our sightseeing of Udaipur, an oasis nestled in the lap of the Aravalli Mountain range with a tranquil serenity that belies its tumultuous past. Udaipur, originally a thriving caravanserai later became a capital of local, royal clans. The serene lakes, beautiful gardens and magnificent palaces lend it a nostalgia that has often earned Udaipur the acclaim of being one of the most romantic places in the world. Apart from a place in history, Udaipur has been immortalized in contemporary culture in iconic films from Jewel in the Crown, James Bond's Octopussy to Gandhi.

We explore the City Palace, with its blend of stern Rajput military architecture and lavish Mughal-inspired decorative art. This is the largest palace in Rajasthan sprawled out over an area of 5 acres, built between the 16th and 20th centuries. We then continue to Jagdish Temple, a three-storied wonder of architecture comprising of an intricately sculpted spire, beautifully carved pillars, decorated ceilings and painted walls dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the sustainer in Hindu mythology. We walk through the old city to discover the various facets of markets and artists and artisans at work. Udaipur is famous for its traditional miniature paintings, which are mural-like depicting incidents from Rajput or Mughal history and legends or stories from the Hindu mythology.

Lunch at Royal Repast Restaurant.

In the evening we enjoy a tranquil ride on the Lake Pichola listening to the lapping of the water alongside your boat, one of the most beautiful ways to take in the city of Udaipur.  
Dinner on our own.

### **February 18, 2017 Udaipur to Shahpura**

After breakfast we take a four hour drive to Shahpura and arrival check into our hotel, the Shahpura Bagh <http://www.shahpurabagh.com>

Before dinner we walk into Shahpura town to watch artisans at work and visit an ancient temple, Ram Dwara. Dinner at our wonderful bungalow.

### **February 19, 2017 Shahpura**

This morning we drive through the beautiful countryside to visit the 140 acre family farm in the company of one of the family members, an authentic rural India experience with a drive through quaint villages and an opportunity to relax in the shade of century old trees on the farm. s ago! Enroute option to stop at a School supported by Shahpura Bagh wherein over a 100 under- privileged children are studying between Kindergarten and Class Eight. We can interact with the teachers and local children.

Return to Shahpura Bagh for lunch and to relax at the pool, read a book or take in all the colorful impressions. Late afternoon we drive to Dhikula Fort owned by the family. We enjoy a stunning 360 degree view of the country side at sunset with a glass of wine. Return to the hotel for dinner.

### **February 20, 2017 Shahpura to Jaipur**

After breakfast we drive to Jaipur, a four hour drive. The city was erected during the 18th Century by the ruler of Amer as a “city of victory”, and was north India’s first planned city. Jaipur is often known as the pink city because of the distinctive rosy sandstone used in its construction, others claim it was painted pink to welcome the Prince of Wales. Either way, the city is a beautiful symphony of the history with the present; well expressed in the planned, gridded network of streets.

On arrival we visit the the City Palace complex, the seat of the Maharajah of Jaipur, which consists of an impressive array of courtyards, gardens and buildings.

Nearby is the ornate Hawa Mahal, the pink Palace of Winds - a delightfully idiosyncratic five-tier composition of arches and balconies.

The Palace of the Winds is Jaipur’s most distinctive landmark. Its construction was started by Man Singh I in 1592, and was completed by his descendent Jai Singh I. Towering over the city, the Hawa Mahal was built to resemble Krishna’s crown and its purpose was to allow ladies of the court to remain unseen as they watched the goings-on in the streets below. Its forbidding exterior belies an inner paradise where beautiful fusion of Mughal and Hindu styles finds its ultimate expression.



We continue our drive to check into our hotel <http://www.khasbagh.com>

Dinner at our hotel.

### **February 21, 2017 Jaipur**

After breakfast we visit Jaipur’s most famous landmark, Amer Fort, the citadel of the clan who later became the rulers of Jaipur. With its sprawling apartments, pleasure

gardens, and temples, Amer is one of the most intricate and beautiful Rajput fortresses in all of India. We take time after our Fort visit to explore Jaipur's fabulous gem and fabric shops before returning to our hotel to relax for our evening activity.

Early evening we leave for Dera Amer - a rustic camp located at the foothills of the Aravalli range surrounded by wilderness. We enjoy a private elephant safari through the somnolent countryside. After our ride we are served a sumptuous dinner under the stars.

### **February 22, 2017 Jaipur to Agra**

This morning we drive to Agra with an en route stop at Fatehpur Sikri, a city capital built by Emperor Akbar to honor a Sufi saint, Salim Chisti, which is perhaps the best preserved vestige of the Mughal Empire. The city complex includes palaces, pools, public audience halls, mosques, other places of worship, and tombs. An excavation at Fatehpur Sikri in 2000 unearthed an older Jain city that existed before the 11th Century.

After our visit we drive to Agra, about an hour and check into our hotel The ITC Mughal <http://www.itchotels.in/hotels/itcmughal.aspx>

Dinner at our hotel

### **February 23, 2017 Agra**

After breakfast we visit Agra Fort. On the right bank of the Yamuna river, is one of the most important and robustly built stronghold of the Mughals, embellished with number of richly decorated buildings.

The origins of the city of Agra can be traced back to the days of the Mahabharata, the epic poem of Great India when it was called Agrevana, meaning the edge of the forest. Agra served as capital for the Mughal Empire during the 16th and 17th centuries and flourished as a centre of art, drawing

inspiration from Persian, Islamic, Turkish, Byzantine and Indian styles. It has been immortalized ever since by the Taj Mahal – a magnificent marble mausoleum that epitomizes love, yet Agra has so many more monuments that tell a rich narrative of the tides and times of Man.

Agra has been immortalized by Taj Mahal – the magnificent mausoleum, built by the emperor Shah Jahan for his queen, Mumtaz and India's own jewel in the list of 7 Wonders of the Modern World. Let our storyteller guide weave tales of Agra and the mausoleum, as well as the romance between Shah Jahan and Mumtaz. We begin our visit mid afternoon and watch the sunset from the Taj Mahal, a magical site!

Dinner at our hotel



### **February 24, 2017 Agra to Delhi**

We have the morning to rest up for the long journey home before traveling back to Delhi International Airport to arrive early evening for our flights home, leaving late evening or early morning of Feb. 25. A Travel Scope representative will provide assistance with check-in formalities at the airport.

### **February 25, 2017 Delhi to U.S.**

Early morning or afternoon arrivals in the U.S. depending on departures from India

## **VARANASI EXTENSION**

### **February 24, 2017 Agra to Delhi to Varanasi**

Varanasi at the confluence of two tributaries of the Ganges river, is a city of many names, bearing a history of over 3000 years, and had reached its zenith as a centre of religion and learning in the 7th century BC. A city steeped in spiritual sanctity and knowledge, which three great world religions – Buddhism, Jainism and Hinduism, acknowledge as a place of homage. Later named Benares, the city saw the establishment of the Benaras Hindu University, a pre-eminent center of Sanskrit language, culture, philosophy and learning. Today, Varanasi's riverbanks with the temples, shrines and the sacred waters of the Ganges, draw millions of pilgrims seeking spiritual salvation.

This morning after breakfast we drive from Agra to Delhi airport to board our flight for Varanasi just before 4PM. On arrival in Varanasi we will be transferred to our hotel, Taj Gateway Ganges <https://gateway.tajhotels.com/en-in/ganges-varanasi/>

### **February 25, 2017 Varanasi**

This morning after breakfast we visit Sarnath, a great center of learning where the Buddha preached his first sermon on the Dharmachakra, his code of conduct. Today, a Bodhi tree commemorates Buddha's initial moment of enlightenment during which he conceived the Eightfold Path to Nirvana. We visit the Archaeological Museum housing a well preserved and broad range of Buddhist relics and artifacts related to Buddhism.

No trip to Varanasi is complete, without a visit to the banks of the river Ganges. Just before sunset, we will be guided to the ghats, steps that lead down into the river, to witness an Aarti Ceremony, an evening ritual of lighting lamps against the darkness and offering prayers to the river deity.

### **February 26, 2017 Varanasi to Delhi to U.S.**

At dawn, we take another boat ride. We will have a perfect vantage point to watch the many ghats come to life; with pilgrims in their bright orange robes, elderly women in colorful saris offering prayers, sadhus meditating or lighting lamps.

This afternoon we fly back to Delhi where Travel Scope representative will provide assistance with check-in formalities at for your late evening/early morning flight home.

### **February 27, 2017 Delhi to U.S.**

Early morning or afternoon U.S. arrivals depending on departures from India.