

India Tour Itinerary: December 31, 2011 - January 22, 2012

December 31, New Delhi

Arrive in New Delhi. Our hotel in New Delhi, the Imperial, a restored memento of Colonial India with large grounds, is centrally located in New Delhi. (Imperial Hotel)

January 1, New Delhi

We'll visit the National Museum, by any standard a world class museum, offering general coverage of the panoply of Indian art from ancient times. Superb Rajput painting, Tantric, Mogul and Tribal folk art exhibits. Lunch at a favorite South Indian restaurant. Afternoon visit to the Crafts Museum. (Imperial Hotel)

January 2, New Delhi – Khajuraho

We'll fly on a morning flight to Khajuraho, a Unesco World Heritage Site, in the state of Madhya Pradesh to visit the famous temple complex of the 9th and 10th century Chandela period. Khajuraho is second only to the Taj as India's foremost tourist attraction. Its remoteness has preserved the beautiful stone sculptures that so liberally decorate the many fine temples with scenes of everyday life of a thousand years ago, where themes of sex and women predominate. There is an evening sound and light show that is spectacular. (Chandela Taj)

January 3, Khajuraho – New Delhi

This morning we will visit erotic Temples and then catch a 1:30 pm flight to New Delhi. In the afternoon we will visit Qutub Minar – The Might of Islam, started 1193, India's first Mosque. (Ashok Country Resort)

January 4, New Delhi - Agra

In the morning we depart for Agra, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, a four-hour drive. Beginning today, our travels will be on a privately owned bus with plenty of room to spread out as we travel through villages and towns. Today we will visit Agra Fort, a World Heritage Site on the Yamuna River that was begun in 1565. (Hilton Trident)

January 5, Agra

We will visit the Taj Mahal. Fatehpur Sikri, the "City of Victory", includes one of the largest mosques in India. Built during the second half of the 16th century is a complex of monuments and temples. (Hilton Trident)

January 6, Agra –Jaipur

Bus to Jaipur (approximately 5 hours). Visit Anokhi, a women's co-op clothing store and on to a textile shop where, if you like, you can have clothes made. (Trident Jaipur)

January 7, Jaipur

We will visit the City Palace. This remains the residence of Jaipur's royal family. You have this afternoon free. (Trident Jaipur)

January 8, Jaipur - Jodhpur

Approximately a 5 hour bus ride. We'll explore the old center of Jodhpur, the Sardar Market and maze of alleys and bazaars. Jodhpur is justly famous for its antique shops and markets (antique furniture, architectural devices, carved temples, crafts, etc. Shipping can be easily arranged). (Ajit Bhawan Palace)

January 9, Jodhpur - Jaisalmer

We'll leave early, (approximately 6 hours) to give us time when we reach Jaisalmer to take a quick visit to the weavers' cooperative, Kadi Bundar, before our traditional margaritas at sunset on the roof of our hotel. Jaisalmer is the quintessential desert citadel, carved by man and the wind in golden sandstone from the Thar Desert. The Hill of King Jaisal became wealthy as a stop for the trading caravans passing through from the coast, but the development of a railway system and the port of Bombay made it a ghost town. We may be grateful that events left us this medieval gem in such pristine condition. (Narayan Niwas Palace)

January 10, Jaisalmer

We'll visit the Citadel, Royal Palace and a Jain Temple. We will see weaving, tribal textiles, arts, antiques, and much more) (Narayan Niwas Palace)

January 11, Jaisalmer - Manvar

Camel ride. (Manvar Resort)

January 12, Manvar - Rohet

We'll visit Mehrangarh Fort, Rajasthan's largest, that dominates the city of Jodhpur. Lunch at On The Rocks. Rohetgarg House is a pleasant country house whose owners were big landowners in former days. They now take guests out in jeeps to visit the villages and family compounds of a group of people called the Bishnois, which in Hindi means 29, the number of precepts in their long-dead founding guru's list of commandments. They are vegetarians and the world's earliest conservationists. One of the precepts is to protect animal life, and consequently they live surrounded by the blackbuck who, though wild, lack the fear of man. The safari returns to the house for supper before dark, having visited weavers and potters in their beautiful homes built of the earth of the desert and painted with simple designs, and participating if you like in a welcome ritual called the opium ceremony. (Rohetgarg House)

January 13, Rohet - Kumbalgarh

We're off in the morning to Ranakpur, a Jain temple complex set in remote and beautiful country in the Aravalli range. The temple was built in 1439 and boasts 1444 pillars, no two alike. We'll lunch nearby at a lovely rural, outdoor restaurant, and then continue on through wooded hill country to Kumbalgarh. (Aodhi Hotel)

January 14, Kumbalgarh

In the morning we'll visit the Palace at Kumbhalgarh which affords a beautiful panoramic view of the battlements. Then an afternoon free. The hotel has a pool. (Aodhi Hotel)

January 15, Kumbhalgarh – Dungarpur

In the morning we'll drive through beautiful country to Dungarpur and visit the old castle that claims some of the best preserved wall paintings in Rajasthan. Our hotel has a swimming pool and trophy rooms in the new palace by a lake. (Udai Bilas Palace)

January 16, Dungarpur – Ahmedabad

A morning drive (approximately 5 hours) to Ahmedabad, in the state of Gujarat. Afternoon to the Shreyes Folk Art Museum. For the evening, we will have a Tali rooftop dinner. (House of MG)

January 17, Ahmedabad – Udaipur

Visit the Calico Textile Museum, which has our vote for the world's finest and certainly the mecca for those with an interest in Indian textile arts. Five hour drive in the afternoon to Udaipur. We will visit Ganesh Imports for textile shopping. (Shikar Badi)

January 18, Udaipur

We'll visit the City Palace with its various collections, architectural wonders and labyrinthine passageways, and have lunch overlooking the Lake Palace. There will be plenty of time to wander this most charming town and take advantage of the splendid shopping opportunities (puppets, antiques, jewelry, clothing, paintings, etc. This afternoon is free. (Shikar Badi)

January 19, Udaipur – Pushkar

EARLY morning departure. Arrive late afternoon in Pushkar. This is a city sacred to Hindus, built around a holy lake said to have appeared when Brahma dropped a lotus flower. One of the world's few Brahma temples is here. No alcohol. We stay at the Pushkar Palace on the lake. You will find many shops to visit and delight in wandering the streets. We will visit Lal's for textiles and jewelry. (Pushkar Palace)

January 20, Pushkar – Samode

We stay in elegant tents in the Palace gardens, with marble bathrooms. Packing time. (Samode Bagh)

January 21, Samode – Kesroli

We drive to Kesroli, where we stay at a delightfully remote, restored hill fort in quiet farm country. (Hill Fort)

January 22, Kesroli– New Delhi

4 hour drive to New Delhi. We will get to airport by 9 pm for our 11:35 pm departure.