

HERITAGE RAJASTHAN



ITINERARY

13 DAYS / 12 NIGHTS

Day 1

Pick up on arrival at New Delhi Airport and transfer to The Imperial Hotel, Delhi's best Heritage Hotel, in time for lunch.

PM 'Gentle' sightseeing at one of New Delhi's sights.

Dinner at The Imperial Hotel.

Day 2

AM Mid morning transfer to Delhi Airport (Domestic Terminal) for flight to Jodhpur, the capital of the Rajput Kingdom of Marwar. It was the largest in Rajasthan, and since the C14th the seat of the Rathore clan.

Our hotel, Orchard Palace Bal Samand, located just outside town, is a palace built on a dam and is the private property of the Jodhpur Maharaja. We contract the luxurious suites (2 nights).

PM Stroll through the extensive, manicured grounds of Orchard Palace. It was built at the turn of last century as a 'pleasure palace' where the Royal family could entertain away from the court's prying eyes. Apart from some excellent birdwatching there is plenty of exotic planting, and we visit the Maharaja's stables of Mewari horses.

Day 3

AM Visit Meherangarh Fort, Jodhpur's superb C15th fort, built on a sandstone outcrop and one of the largest in Rajasthan. Its stone is intricately carved and houses an excellent art collection. Guided visit on foot. (UNESCO WHS). Back to hotel for lunch.

PM Late afternoon stroll through the vegetable and spice stalls of Jodhpur's extensive Central Market. This is a real 'local' market, full of colour, scents, and friendly locals.



Day 4

AM Late morning departure (1 hour) to Rohet Garh (2 nights). We take over the Suites and Superior Rooms at this wonderful ancestral home of the Finance Ministers of

Jodhpur State. It was

here, on a lake on the edge of the village, that Bruce Chatwin wrote 'Songlines' and William Dalrymple penned 'City of Djinns'.

PM Jeep safari of the area, looking for wildlife, visiting hamlets and the farm compounds of different tribal and caste groups.

Day 5

AM Morning walk (4h) in the surrounding semi-arid tribal area through villages and hamlets, visiting farm compounds, seeing how the tribal Bishnoi community lives, and spotting for animals in this surprisingly wildlife-rich area. On arrival at Luni Garh (a Heritage Hotel) we can cool down in the hotel pool before a delicious lunch.

PM Return to Rohet (approx. 45 min drive). Late afternoon optional stroll through Rohet village. As the sun sets it is great time to watch locals shop in the bazaar and going about their activities, and for nosing into local shops.

Dinner at hotel.

Day 6

AM Depart by road (1.5hrs) for Sardar Samand (1 night), an Art Deco hunting lodge of the Jodhpur Royal family; even the furnishings are from the period. The palace is set on a hill overlooking a shallow lake formed by capturing Monsoon water (A haven for water birds). Lunch on the shaded veranda overlooking the lake.



PM Stroll (2.5hrs) through scrubby forest to a Muslim shrine with a 9m long tomb (!) Then through fields and along the lake shore spotting for wildlife,

Day 7

AM Depart by road (3h) for Ranakpur and Maharani Bagh (2 nights). The accommodation is in comfortable bungalows set around a tranquil mango orchard belonging to the Jodhpur Royal family.

PM Visit of Ranakpur Temples (UNESCO WHS). Thought by architectural historians to rival the Taj Mahal in terms of importance. This Jain temple has 1,444 differently carved marble columns on 2 levels. Walk back (1h).

Day 8

AM Morning drive (45 mins) to the village of Jawai, considered the world's best place to see leopard. The cats find shelter among the large granite boulders that are a feature of the area. The local Rabari (Herders) community tolerates the leopard and do not harm them. As with all wildlife there is no guarantee but we have a good chance of spotting the big cats.

PM Later in the afternoon optional walk in the buffer zone of the Kumbhalgarh National Park.

Day 9

AM Depart by road (2h) for Kumbhalgarh and Aodhi Lodge (1 night). This former watch tower is at 1,100m altitude in the Aravalli Hills, the world's oldest mountain chain.



PM Walk to Kumbhalgarh Fort and Palace for a visit. This is Rajasthan's 2nd largest fort, and the most impregnable. It is at 1,200m altitude and dominates the surrounding countryside.

Day 10

AM After breakfast we walk (3h) along the crest of the ridge, going past hamlets and cultivation, before dropping down on a stepped path to a cave temple dedicated to Pashuram. We continue through the extensive temple complex and forest before being picked up by our vehicle. Lunch at Maharani Bagh, Ranakpur.

PM Depart for Udaipur (3hr) and arrive at Amet Haveli (2 nights). This lovely intimate boutique hotel, offers wonderful views over Lake Pichola and the palaces of Udaipur from every room. We occupy the historical suites, a fitting end to our trip. The hotel's open air Ambrai restaurant is considered the 'Best' in town both for food and views!

Day 11

We spend the morning in town visiting the City Palace museum with a guide. The extensive complex houses a great collections of artefacts and the belongings of the Sisodia Clan (The longest continuous royal line in the world). Back at hotel for lunch and siesta. Sunset boat cruise on Lake Pichola, a romantic experience reflecting why Udaipur was called the 'Kashmir of the South' or the 'Venice of the East'.

Day 12

Free morning to wonder Udaipur's bustling alleys and bazaars before departure for the Airport and a mid afternoon flight back to Delhi. On arrival transfer to The Imperial Hotel for 1 night, dinner at the hotel.

Day 13

Transfers to Delhi International Airport for departure back home.