

**Millenium International Travel & Tours Inc.**

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**JEWISH HERITAGE TOUR**

Day 1: Arrive in Bombay. Met at the airport and transfer to the Taj Mahal Palace hotel.

Day 2: Bombay / Taj Mahal Palace

A full day excursion south of Mumbai to the rocky outcrop, where the legend of the Bnei Yisrael started. The story is that 7 men and 7 women survived a shipwreck in the time of Solomon. They became oil pressers and remained in the area. There are a few shuls there and still Jews doing oil pressing today. The area is also considered to be the holiest shrine for the Bene Israelis of Mumbai. This is where it is believed the prophet Elijah arrived on his chariot and the mark can be seen on the rock. Malida Ceremony--- The Malida is a ceremonial offering which the Bene Israel describe as a dish offered in the name of god, accompanied by an invocation for the presence and blessings of the Prophet Elijah. This ceremony is also known as the Eliyahu-ha-navi ceremony. The ceremony includes recitation of specific Hebrew verses. The pizmon-Eliyahu-ha-navi is first read followed by several different blessings quoted from the Bible, the first of which begins with the Hebrew words vayiten-lecha. The verse Hamalach Hagoel is read thrice and then the readings conclude with Psalm 121. A minyan is not required for this ceremony and a cantor may or may not be present to lead this ceremony. The Bene Israel offering usually consists of a mixture of so-called beaten rice, grated fresh coconuts, raisins, cardamom, sugar, and five different kinds of fresh fruits. All this is nicely arranged on a large platter. Occasions for which the malida ceremony is always performed are: before the start of the preparation for a wedding; a house warming ceremony; in times of illness or of other difficulties or crisis; whenever there is reason to express deep gratitude; the evening following a circumcision; on the holiday of Tu be shvat. The actual origins of the Bene Israel Malida ceremony however remains a mystery.

Day 3: Bombay / Taj Mahal Palace

Morning drive down to the Gateway of India for an introduction to the Indo-Saracenic architectural styles that influenced many of India's monuments. From here board a boat for a half-hour journey across Mumbai harbor to the cave temples on Elephanta Island. Excavated during the 9th century, the caves were carved between 450 and 750 A.D. and are dedicated to a trinity of Indian deities - Bhrama, Vishnu and Shiva. You will also visit the Mahadeva Trimurti (triple headed Shiva) and the Ardhanareshvara sculptures, famous iconographical representations of Lord Shiva. The caves are at the top of a gentle outdoor staircase lined with handicraft stalls and monkeys.

Afternoon visit the Prince of Wales Museum, the largest Fine Art Museum in India, and Gandhi House.

Day 4: Bombay - Cochin / Grande Residencia or Tea Bungalow

Transfer to airport to connect flight IT3151 dep. 1025 / arr. 1225 to Cochin. An ancient harbor town, Cochin reflects the influence of the many foreign traders who visited the city. After check-in, we walk in the heritage zone, which has preserved the original architecture of the city. We visit St Francis's Church and the Chinese fishing nets, which line the mouth of Cochin harbor. In the evening we attend a Kathakali performance. Kathakali is a classical dance form that has its origins in Theyyam a ritual tribal dance of north Kerala and Kalaripayattu the martial arts which goes back 1000 years. The dancers use dramatic costumes and exaggerated facial make up, and to accompaniment of drums and cymbals, use stylized movements to relate episodes from the

Mahabharat and Ramayan. We arrive early at the theatre to watch the dancers apply the elaborate make-up and prepare for their performance.

#### Day 5: Cochin / Grande Residencia or Tea Bungalow

In the morning, we visit the Jewish Community and the beautiful Pardesi Synagogue. This Synagogue was built by Samuel Castiel, David Belila, Ephraim Sala and stands on the grounds of the Maharaja of Cochin's residence. It is the first synagogue in India, and one of the oldest in the world. Near the synagogue is an interesting market selling spices, and antiques, bursting with activity and variety. We spend time in the markets and walk to the Mattancherry Palace, which was commissioned by the Portuguese for the raja of Kochi in exchange for trading rights. The palace is two stories high and is built in the traditional Kerala style known as nalukattu (four buildings). The palace exhibits memorabilia from the raja of Kochi' collection, but it is best known for its outstanding murals painted on the wooden walls. The royal bedroom has ceilings and walls covered with forty-five 16th century paintings illustrating the Ramayana.

#### Day 6: Backwaters / House Boat

After breakfast embark a private deluxe Kettuvallom (traditional riceboat) for your overnight tour of the backwaters. A series of canals which thread their way through the state to the sea, allows you a glimpse of life in Kerala impossible to get from road and transport. Along the way you will pass rice fields, tiny villages, boats transporting children to school and farmers transporting their produce to the market, and women completing household tasks such as laundry, and washing utensils. You will disembark from the boat to wander in the villages and talk to the people. The "kettuvolloms" or rice boats are made completely of natural material. Each houseboat has furnished bedrooms with attached showers and toilets. At night the boat will anchor mid stream, and your meals will be specially prepared by the crew from freshly bought produce.

#### Day 7: Cochin - Delhi / Rasisson Marina

Disembark & transfer to Cochin airport for flight 9W7010 dep. 1410 / arr. 1830 to Delhi. On arrival transfer to hotel.

#### Day 8: Delhi / Rasisson Marina

A full day guided tour of Old Delhi, the 17th century walled city of Shah Jahanabad, visiting the great Jama Masjid, the principal mosque of Old Delhi. Built in the year 1656 AD by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, it is the largest & best known mosque in India. Later take a rickshaw ride through Chandi Chowk, the old marketplace of Shah Jahanabad now a picturesque bazaar to reach Red Fort, built in the year 1648 by Shah Jehan.

In New Delhi, visit Raj Ghat, memorial to the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. It is a simple black marble platform that marks the spot of his cremation on 31 January 1948. Further we drive past India Gate, memorial built in the year 1931 to commemorate the Indian soldiers who died in the World War I & the Afghan Wars. The names of the soldiers who died in these wars are inscribed on the walls. President's House, the official residence of the President of India, built in the year 1931. Until 1950 it was known as Viceroy's House & served as the residence of the Governor-General of British India. We will also visit Qutub Minar, built in the year 1206 by Qutub-ud-din Aibek. It is the tallest (72m) brick minaret in the world, an important example of Indo-Islamic Architecture.

Evening visit Chabad House in Delhi.

#### Day 9: Delhi - Agra (240 km) / Trident or Radisson

After breakfast drive to Agra. After check-in, visit Agra Fort, and Itmad-ud-Daulah Tomb, built by Noor Jahan, wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir, in memory of her father Mirza Ghiyas Beg. Before Taj Mahal was built, its rough design was already standing in the form of Itmad ud Daulah's Tomb.

Day 10: Drive Fatehpur Sikri-Bharatpur-Ranthambhore (280 km) / Ranthambore Regency  
Sunrise visit the incredible architectural excellence of Taj Mahal, built by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal.

After breakfast drive 60 km to Fatehpur Sikri, built in 1571, one of the world's most perfect ghost cities and a marvel of design and construction. It is a synthesis of the flourishing styles of the Persian courts and the prevailing Hindu-Islamic trends. Fatehpur (town of victory) Sikri was built by Akbar, the third and greatest of the Great Moguls. It is over 400 years old and today its pristine red sandstone buildings are as perfect as when they were first chiseled.

The town was erected after a holy man, Sheikh Salim Chisti, decreed the births of three sons to Akbar after all his children had died in infancy. There are three sections to the City: The Royal Palace (notable for the Emperor's throne), the outside of the Royal Palace and the Jami Masjid (the location of the Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chishti, a masterpiece in brilliant white marble). The centerpiece of this remarkable monument is the Jewel House of the Diwan I Khas. Architecturally extraordinary, the four doorways lead into a single-story room where a huge central pillar supports a seat reached by mid-air walkways.

After visiting Fatehpur drive to Ranthambore. On arrival transfer to hotel.

Day 11: Ranthambhore / Ranthambore Regency  
Morning and late afternoon safaris. Ranthambore National Park, one of the nine "Project Tiger" sanctuaries, was once the hunting preserve of the Maharajas of Jaipur.

Day 12: Drive to Jaipur (145 km / 4hrs) / Samode Haveli  
Early morning safari. Return to resort for breakfast and then drive to Jaipur. On arrival transfer to hotel. Rest of day independent.

Day 13: Jaipur / Samode Haveli  
Morning excursion to Amber Fort. Amber is the name of the ancient kingdom of Jaipur as well as the name of its ancient capital, before it was shifted to Jaipur, situated 7 miles away. Its history can be traced back to the 12th century. Amber Fort is superbly located, protected by the wild Arrival Hills on all sides. Originally built in the 11th century, it was expanded by Raja Mannish in the late 16th century. The rugged exterior belies a beautiful and delicate interior. The ascent to the Fort will be on elephant backs.

Afternoon, a city tour including the City Palace, Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) and the Jantar Mantar Astronomical Observatory. Browse the shops if you wish.

At the heart of Jaipur is its City Palace which houses an extensive collection of rare manuscripts, Mughal and Rajasthani miniatures, Mughal carpets, costumes and textiles, arms and weapons, royal buggies, chariots and palanquins and a remarkable carriage -the indiraviman - that was drawn by four elephants. At the center is Chandra Mahal, the seven-tiered moon palace where the present Maharaja still resides. The City Palace complex also contains the Govind Devji Temple, dedicated to Lord Krishna.

Just outside the gateway of the City Palace is Jantar Mantar, the Yantralaya of Sawai Jai Singh II, the last great classical astronomer in India. The modernistic structures known as Yantras are the unique creations of this astronomer-king, designed by him and built by experts to observe the movements of the sun, moon, planets and stars. This is the largest of five observatories founded by him in various parts of the country.

Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) is Jaipur's most-photographed building, a honeycomb palace with 953 latticed windows overlooking the bazaar and busy streets of Jaipur. Built in 1799 by the poet-king Pratap Singh, this extraordinary building was used by purdah-bound women to watch the grand processions that were a regular feature of the city.

Day 14 Jaipur - Pushkar (145 km / 2.5) Jagat Palace Camel **Festival (20-28 Nov, 2012)**

Drive to Pushkar. After lunch attend Camel Festival.

We are located near the fairgrounds and one can wander through the nomadic camel herders' camp quarters to see their lifestyles close up and to interact with them. They are very friendly and enjoy the exchange as well. The town of Pushkar surrounds a holy lake below the fair site and one can relax by the lake, explore the village on foot and check out cafes and shops, as well as visit the Brahma Temple.

Evening visit Chabad House in Pushkar.

Day 15: Pushkar - Jaipur - Delhi

Morning independent. Afternoon drive to Jaipur airport for flight IT2313 dep. 1920 / arr. 2020 to Delhi, remain airport for flight to home.

Our Quote PP in CA\$:

Based on 2 Pax: \$3778 (Travelling in One A/C Toyota Innova)

Based on 3 Pax: \$3598 (Travelling in One A/C Tempo Traveller)

Based on 4-6 Pax: \$3395 (Travelling in One A/C Tempo Traveller)

Single Room Supplement \$1490

**Extra supp cost for Pushkar Fair PP \$140 on twin sharing basis at Jagat Palace with all meals for 1 night.**

**Cost Includes:**

Accommodation on twin sharing basis

3 nights Bombay at Taj Mahal Palace - Tower wing (B)

2 nights Cochin at Grande Residencia or Tea Bungalow (B)

1 night on Backwaters (B, L, D)

2 nights Delhi at Radisson Marina (B)

1 night Agra at Trident or Radisson (B)

2 nights Ranthambore at Ranthambore Regency (B, L, D + 3 Jungle Safaris)

2 nights Jaipur at Samode Haveli (B)

1 night Pushkar at Jagat Palace (B)

All arrival, departure transfer and land transport in A/C Toyota Innova and A/C Tempo Traveller Professional English Speaking Local Guide during sightseeing in Bombay, Cochin, Delhi, Agra, Jaipur and Pushkar as per itinerary.

Monument/Museum entrances  
Entrance to kathakali dance performance  
Entrance to Ranthambhor Park and Safaris with a naturalist.  
Elephant Ride to Amber Fort in Jaipur  
India Gov. Service Tax 2.58%

Plus Airfare Extra PP: (Exact price TBD when booked)  
Bombay - Cochin min \$100 max \$395  
Cochin - Delhi min \$110 max \$650  
Jaipur - Delhi min \$90 max \$245

**Does Not Include:** International flight, insurance, portage, still camera fees, tips, meals other than mentioned, expenses of a personal nature such as laundry, phone calls, and drinks.