



North India with Varanasi & Khajuraho

Mumbai • Udaipur • Jaipur • Agra • Khajuraho • Varanasi • Delhi
(13 nights / 14 days)

Routing

DAY 01	ARRIVE MUMBAI	<i>By International Flight</i>
DAY 02	MUMBAI	
DAY 03	MUMBAI – UDAIPUR	<i>By Domestic Flight</i>
DAY 04	UDAIPUR	
DAY 05	UDAIPUR – JAIPUR	<i>By Surface</i>
DAY 06	JAIPUR	
DAY 07	JAIPUR – AGRA	<i>By Surface</i>
DAY 08	AGRA	
DAY 09	AGRA – JHANSI JHANSI – KHAJURAHO	<i>By Train</i> <i>By Surface</i>
DAY 10	KHAJURAHO – VARANASI	<i>By Domestic Flight</i>
DAY 11	VARANASI	
DAY 12	VARANASI - DELHI	<i>By Domestic Flight</i>
DAY 13	DELHI	
DAY 14	DEPART DELHI	<i>By International Flight</i>

*** END OF TOUR ***



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DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 01 ARRIVE MUMBAI

BY: INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT

You will arrive today at Mumbai, International Airport. Following customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, OUR Representative will meet you as you EXIT the ARRIVAL TERMINAL building after which you would be transferred to your hotel.

Bombay also known as **Mumbai** is the economic powerhouse of India. It is young, its lively and a confluence of varied cultural currents and cross currents have given Mumbai a unique position of the most multi-ethnic city of India. Mumbai is the most populous city in India, and the fourth most populous city in the world, with a total metropolitan area population of approximately 20.5 million. Mumbai is also country's financial and commercial hub and has a principal port on the Arabian Sea. It is also the hub of Indian film industry, which has played a pivoted role in the development of cinematography. "Bollywood", as it is called, produces the second most number of pictures in the world every year, next only to Hollywood, U.S.A. Mumbai claims to be the world's largest production centre for films.

On arrival, check in for your stay.

Meal Plan: No Meal

DAY 02 IN MUMBAI

Morning take a half day excursion to the island of **Elephanta**. An hour away from Mumbai by ferry, the cave temples here were excavated between the 5th and 8th centuries AD and are famous for their magnificently sculpted panels. The best known is the one that depicts the Maheshmurti – a three-headed image of Lord Shiva, which signifies the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe as per Hindu mythology. The Portuguese named this island after a large stone elephant that was found near the landing. The elephant now stands at the Victoria and Albert Museum on the mainland.

Return to the mainland and proceed on the city tour, driving past **Marine Drive**, Mumbai's most popular seaside promenade and see the **Kamla Nehru Park** and Hanging Gardens on the slopes of the Malabar hills, offering a nice view of the marine lines. Visit the **Jain temple, Mani Bhawan** - where Mahatma Gandhi used to stay and the **Dhobi Ghat**.

Meal Plan: Breakfast



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DAY 03 MUMBAI – UDAIPUR BY FLIGHT: AI 472 AT 1400 / 1530 HOUR

Morning at leisure. Midday transfer to the airport to board the flight for Udaipur.

Arrive Udaipur and transfer to the hotel. On arrival, check in for your stay.

Udaipur: 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. From the late 16th century, peace brought about an era of renaissance in the arts and encouraged the building of beautiful palaces around the lake, culminating in the City Palace, one of the largest palace complexes in the world. The lake itself is a romantic setting surrounding the gleaming white Lake Palace and the Jag Mandir.

Rest of the day at leisure.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 04 IN UDAIPUR

This morning, proceed for the **sightseeing of Udaipur City**, also known as the City of Sunrise

First on your sightseeing tour, you will proceed for a tour of the **City Palace**, which overlooks the Lake Pichola. The City Palace was built in 1725 of granite and marble with filigreed balconies, ornate windows and craftsmanship in glass. The royal palace walls stretch over a mile on the eastern side of the lake. Within the palace is a maze of courtyards, apartments and decorated halls. The rooms are covered with frescoes, displays of royal processions, stone and glass mosaics and ornamental doors and painted windows. The marble throne in the coronation rooms was last used during the time Maharana Sangram Singh II (1710-30) and nearby is the Sun Window installed by Maharaja Bhim Singh (1778-1828). This is the divine symbol of the house of Mewar, which traces its lineage to the Surya Vansha, descendants of the Sun. Each palace within is an outstanding creation of art. Visit **the museums** and the **hall of public audiences, the private chambers of the royal ladies at the palace** and **Sahelion-ki-Badi**.

In the afternoon you will enjoy a **motor launch cruise** on the placid waters of **Lake Pichola**. The beautiful Lake Pichola was enlarged by Maharana Udai Singh after he founded the city. The city palace extends a considerable distance along the east bank of the lake. From the boat you will be able to view the city of Udaipur as it rises majestically above the lake in the middle of the Rajasthan desert. One would get an interesting view of the Dhobi (laundry) ghats. Also visit the Jag Mandir Palace - a lovely island palace in the middle of the lake.

In the evening, experience the hustle bustle of the old market at Udaipur. Walk past the spice shops, jewellery shops, utensil shops, jiggery shops, silver market and local meat & food shop.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

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DAY 05 UDAIPUR - JAIPUR**BY: SURFACE 395KM / 07 HOUR**

Morning drive from Udaipur to Jaipur. Today's drive takes you across the Aravalli Hills, the oldest mountain range in the world. The scenery along the way is superb and you will see many vignettes of Rajasthani rural life. Among the sights you see are colorful villages, farms where an ancient system of irrigation using bullocks and a Persian wheel are still in practice, outdoor schools and the sartorially vibrant people who add a splash of color to the countryside.

Arrive Jaipur by the evening and on arrival check in for your stay.

Jaipur - the City of Victory was founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1727. It is the only city in the world symbolizing the nine divisions of the Universe through nine rectangular sectors sub-dividing it. The architect who formalized the city's plans on the Shilpa Shastra, the epic Hindu treatise on architecture, mixed it with the sublimity of the Mughal and Jain influences of those times. The city was painted pink in 1853 in honor of the visit by Prince Albert. Except for the busy traffic of bicycles, cars and buses, little has changed.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 06 IN JAIPUR

This morning, take an excursion to **Amber Fort**. Jaipur's Maharaja Man Singh, Mughal Emperor Akbar's most successful General, started constructing Amber Fort in the 17th century. Before the City Palace was constructed in Jaipur, Amber was the seat of power. The Fort is surrounded by fortified battlements and overlooks the Moat Lake. Once you are on top, stroll through the sprawling complex of courtyards and halls. Many of the rooms have delightful wall paintings, with precious stones and mirrors inlaid in the walls. Most fascinating, perhaps, is the Sheesh Mahal (hall of mirrors) where a single lamplight is reflected in the many mirrors, lighting up the room.

Afternoon, you will explore the city starting with **Jantar Mantar**, an observatory built by Sawai Jai Singh II in the 18th century. The Maharajah, a scientist as well as an astronomer, had the principles of Euclid translated into Sanskrit. One of the most remarkable sites in Jaipur, the Jantar Mantar has fourteen major geometric devices for measuring time, predicting eclipses and tracking stars and planets.

Take a photo-stop at **Hawa Mahal** (the Palace of Winds). Five stories in height, and built of red and pink sandstone highlighted with white quicklime, it is thought that the women of the royal harem used the many casements to observe everyday life in the street below without being seen.

Continue to the **City Palace** built within the fortified area of the original city, with one of the finest monumental entrances in India. The Palace is now principally a museum housing a collection of great treasures, including miniature paintings, carpets, royal garments and other interesting objects from Jaipur's intriguing past. The former royal family retains a part of the palace for their personal use.



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Cultural connections (*Optional*):

- Evening Bazaar walk. The pulse of the city often lies in its bazaars or markets. Mingle and talk with the locals whilst observing some of the regions culinary delight. Observe local artisans in their workshops; jewelers and silversmiths, gold and silver foil makers. The iconic Hawa Mahal also called the Palace of the winds is the meeting - point at which this walk begins. Here you also have the option of seeing and trying the art of Henna painting.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 07	JAIPUR – AGRA	BY: SURFACE 240 KM / 06 HOUR
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Today, you will drive to Agra en-route visiting **Fatehpur Sikri** - the deserted red sandstone city that was built by Emperor Akbar as his capital. Ponder the mysterious desertion of this capital city that was dramatically abandoned a few years after it was built. It was a veritable fairy tale city and its 'ruins' are still in a pristine condition. It is not hard to imagine what the court life must have been like in the days of its grandeur.

Continue drive to Agra driving across the increasingly dry farmlands of northern India and on arrival, check in for your stay.

Agra - Once a small village on the banks of the Yamuna, it was transformed by two great Mughal monarchs, Akbar and his grandson Shah Jehan into the second capital of the Mughal Empire – Dar-ul-Khilafat, or 'seat of the Emperor' in the 16th & 17th century. A world of contrasting edifices of red sandstone and white marble, narrow galleys, bustling streets and small buggies, Agra retains the irresistible charm that made this the favorite city of the Mughals.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 08	IN AGRA
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You leave the hotel early for your dawn visit to the **Taj Mahal**. It is fitting to see this extraordinary monument by the first light of day as its exemplary beauty is awe-inspiring and will create an unforgettable memory.

Built by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in 1630 AD to enshrine the mortal remains of his beloved Queen Mumtaz Mahal, Taj Mahal manifests the wealth and luxury of Mughal art as seen in architecture and garden design, painting, and calligraphy. The 144 foot double dome of the Taj is capped with a finial and the four minarets each 131 ft high and crowned by an open octagonal pavilion highlight the perfect symmetry of the tomb.



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Return to hotel for breakfast before setting out to see the beautiful Agra fort.

Agra Fort - the seat and the stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. Approachable by two imposing gates and constructed of red sandstone, the citadel was built by the Mughal Emperor Akbar between the years 1565 and 1573. Encircled by a moat, this dramatic city within a city was the palace of three emperors, Akbar, Shah Jehan and Aurangzeb, each of whom made significant contributions to the wonderful architecture of the inner buildings – a combination of Persian (Islamic) and local Hindu styles.

In the afternoon, return to the hotel to enjoy the pool.

Cultural connection (*Optional*):

- In the evening walk through Kachhpura village to Mehtab bagh a Mughal era garden which is being restored, just behind the Taj Mahal across the river Yamuna. The walk conducted by an NGO working for the local community and includes some lesser known Mughal era monuments along the way.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 09	AGRA – JHANSI JHANSI – KHAJURAHO	TRAIN - 0810 / 1025 HOUR BY: SURFACE 170 KM / 04 HOUR
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Early morning, transfer to the railway station to board the train for Jhansi. Tea and snacks will be served on board the train. Upon arrival, drive to Khajuraho, stop enroute at Orchha (18 km from Jhansi) for sightseeing of the city, frozen in time.

Orchha was founded in the 16th century by the Bundela chieftain, Rudra Pratap Singh, who built this new capital on large wooded islands on the River Betwa. Today, remains of the fort and palaces speak eloquently of Orchha's time of glory, of its splendid legacy of art and culture.

Place of interest in Orchha include the multi-tiered **Jehangir Mahal**, built in 1606 AD; the Raj Mahal noted for its fine murals and the Rai Praveen Mahal, a palace set in the gardens of Anand Mahal. Orchha has tall-spired temples that are certainly worth visit. Notable among them are the Ram Raja Temple, Laxmi Narain Temple with its exuberant frescoes and the Chaturbhuj Temple.

Continue your drive to Khajuraho and on arrival check in for your stay.

Khajuraho was founded in the 9th and 10th centuries by the rulers of the Chandela Dynasty, and influenced by Tantrism. Eroticism becomes a theme of philosophical interest and the aim is sublimation of sexual relationship in the sexual act or "Maithun", women being regarded as the incarnation of the divine energy or "Shakti". It is also possible that the carvings of Khajuraho were influenced by "Kama Sutra", the famous treatise on erotic arts, written by Vatsyayana in the time of the Guptas. The erotic love making images of celestial nymphs, gods and goddesses sculpted in delicate detail have caught the imagination of people from all over the world.



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Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 10 KHAJURAHO - VARANASI BY : FLIGHT 9W - 2424 at 1345/1435 HOUR

This morning, visit the **Western Group of Temples**, which represent the finest examples of North Indian temple architecture.

In the realm of architecture, Khajuraho holds a unique position. The temples here were built between 950 and 1050 A.D. by the Chandela dynasty, which claims descent from the Moon God and a mortal, Hemavati, with whom the God fell in love. The Chandelas built 85 temples and some 22 survive today. Architecturally, the temples have some unique features. Although famous for erotic depictions, these form only a small part of the wealth of the site. Taken in totality, the sculptures of Khajuraho depict the everyday life of the people and the court in the 10th and 11th century. Khajuraho is not something that can be described in words; it only has to be visited and experienced.

Check out of the hotel and transfer to the airport to board the flight for Varanasi.

Varanasi, the holy city of India, is also known by the name of Kashi and Benaras. Kashi, the city of Moksha for Hindus since centuries, is known for its fine-quality silks, 'paan' and Benares Hindu University and Avimukta of the ancient days, Varanasi is the most popular pilgrimage point for the Hindus. One of the seven holiest cities, Varanasi city is also one the Shakti Peethas and one of the twelve Jyotir Linga sites in India. In Hinduism it is believed that those who die and are cremated here get an instant gateway to liberation from the cycle of births and re-births.

Arrive Varanasi and check in for your stay.

Evening visit the Ghats to witness evening **Aarti ceremony**. Aarti is a Sanskrit word which stands for homage or devotion. The aarti or offering of the lamps is observed at prescribed hours of the day and night to invoke the gods. It is believed that the gods physically present themselves before devotees at this ceremony. The lamps are revolved before the idols in a clockwise manner along with the chanting of hymns. This recitation is accompanied by drums, blowing of the conch-shell and tolling of the temple bells. At the end of the 'aarti', the priest takes a handful of water which he revolves around the god's idol. This is to pacify 'agni' (the Fire God), who is pressed into service in the form of the wick lamp.

Meal Plan: Breakfast



DAY 11 **VARANASI**

Early morning visit the ghats to experience **dawn on the Ganges**, when multitude of Hindu pilgrims perform the most important ritual of the day - the invoking of the rising sun. Your boat glides down alongside the riverbanks or the 'ghats' - the steps that lead down to the river. These stone steps link the great Hindu city to the far greater river. Maharajas and other princely rulers built many of the Ghats. Each ghat has its own history and legend about its healing capabilities. In the early morning light, we hear the temple bells ringing, the conch shells being blown announcing the arrival of a new day. On the banks of the river or the 'ghats' we see pilgrims performing rituals to their ancestors, people practicing Hatha yoga and sitting in the lotus position in deep contemplation oblivious to the world around them. We also see Yogis floating in the Ganges performing Yoga in the water. The Brahmin priests offer prayers.

On return to hotel, visit the bazaars (local market) and Kashi Vishwanath Temple - the most sacred of the shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Afternoon, excursion to the **Sarnath** - Birthplace of Buddhism. It was here that Buddha revealed his doctrine and founded his monastic community. The museum at Sarnath is amongst the most important in India and contains carvings representing a whole range of styles - archaic, the Mathura School, Gupta, past Gupta and Medieval - covering work of sculptors from the 3rd century B.C. to the 12th century A.D.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 12 VARANASI – DELHI BY FLIGHT: 9W 2424 AT 1450/1620 HOUR

Morning at leisure. Check out 12 noon.

Afternoon, transfer to the airport to board the flight for Delhi.

Delhi is India's capital and a major gateway to the country. Perhaps there is no other capital city in the world so steeped in history and legend as the Indian capital Delhi. It was the magnet, which drew the Mongols, Turks, Persians, Afghans, Mughals and the British, all of whom contributed to its glorious but turbulent past. The fascination with Delhi was such that even though it was abandoned many times, its rulers returned to it again and again rebuilding it at least seven times. Today, the twin cities of Old and New Delhi still intrigue Indians and tourists alike as the cultural and political capital of the largest democracy in the world.

On arrival, check in for your stay.

Meal Plan: Breakfast



DAY 13 IN DELHI

Morning, start on a guided tour of Delhi. You will first drive to north of Delhi also known as “Old Delhi”, the capital of Mughal dynasty between the 16th and 19th centuries.

Arrive Old Delhi and visit **Jama Masjid** - the largest mosque in India built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in year 1650 AD and completed in the year 1656 AD. From here we board our cycle rickshaws for a tour of **Chandni Chowk** (Silver Street). Here you will get a glimpse into an old world lifestyle slowly fading from Delhi. The hustle and bustle of everyday life can be felt in the Chandi Chowk's narrow lanes. After the rickshaw ride, drive past the Red Fort (photo stop), and we disembark at the **Raj Ghat** – a memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, set within a beautiful park.

Afternoon, visit New Delhi. Drive past **Sansad Bhawan** (the Parliament House) and **Rashtrapati Bhawan** (the President's House) the one-time Imperial Residence of the British Viceroys governing India. Then proceed to **India Gate** for a photo stop. It's a memorial raised in honour of the Indian soldiers martyred during all the wars until now starting from World War I.

Later, proceed to visit **Qutab Minar**, the 12th century Tower of Victory built by a Slave King – Qutb-ud-din Aibak. The Qutb Minar is notable for being one of the earliest and most prominent examples of Indo-Islamic architecture. It is also listed as a UNESCO heritage site.

Cultural connections (*Optional*):

- Early morning visit to enjoy riots of colors at the flower market in front of a lively Hindu temple. A short walk from here will take you to a prominent and magnificent “Gurudwara” the Sikh Temple buzzing with the morning Prayer activities.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

DAY 14 DEPART DELHI

Transfer to the airport to board your onward connection.
Hotel check out 12 noon.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

TOUR ENDS ::



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North India with Varanasi & Khajuraho

Hotels Envisaged:

City	Nights	Deluxe	Superior	Meal Plan
Mumbai	02	Trident, Nariman Point-Superior room	The Fariyas - Standard room	CP
Udaipur	02	Fatehgarh-Renaissance	Ramada - Deluxe Room	CP
Jaipur	02	Hilton - Guest room	Holiday Inn City Center-Superior	CP
Agra	02	Double tree by Hilton-Guest room	Four Points by Sheraton-Superior	CP
Khajuraho	01	Radisson Jass Hotel - Deluxe room	Ramada - Superior room	CP
Varanasi	02	The Gateway hotel Ganges - Standard room	Rivatas by Ideal - Deluxe room	CP
Delhi	02	Le Meridien-Executive room	The Suryaa-Deluxe room	CP

Includes:

- Accommodation on twin share basis for total of 13 night's as per the hotels mentioned or similar.
- Buffet breakfast at all hotels.
- All transport services shall be provided as per the program
 - 02 –03 pax - Toyota Innova
 - 04 - 06 pax - Tempo Traveller
 - 07 – 14 pax –Mini Coach
- Services of English speaking local guides during sightseeing tours.
- On time monument entrance fee as per itinerary.
- Ferry tickets to visit Elephanta caves in Mumbai.
- Elephant ride in Jaipur.
- Boat ride on river Ganges.
- Rickshaw ride in Delhi.
- Air conditioned chair car train tickets for travel Agra to Jhansi.
- All applicable taxes.

Does Not Include:

- International/domestic airfare
- Any room service, telephone charges, mini bar, gratuities, tips.
- Any expenses of personal nature
- Any insurance of any kind.
- Any meals not specified in the itinerary.
- Any item not specified under 'cost includes'.

Special Notes:

- **This Itinerary can be customized and Pricing is available upon request.**
- Hotel Check-In time is 1400 Hrs & check out time is 1200 NOON.
- WE reserves the right to modify itineraries and/or substitute hotels of a reasonably similar quality, when available, should circumstances beyond our control deem it necessary.
- Taj Mahal is closed to public on Fridays.
- Elephant ride to visit Amber Fort in Jaipur is subject to availability as government has restricted the number of rides and prior reservation. Clients will have to queue themselves and wait to see if they can get a chance to have the elephant ride. There is no guarantee that even after queuing, they will get an elephant ride if the quota of rides is over. In this case, we shall provide Jeep ride to ascend the Amber Fort.



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