



Colours of India



Tour Length: 15 Days



Tour Departs: Your preferred dates

Journey through India's iconic landmarks and living culture.

India is full of contradictions and idiosyncrasies where each day you stand in awe and amazement at things you have never seen before. It is where wealth and poverty sit side by side, where politicians consult astrologers before selecting election dates, where once godly maharajahs have become hotel managers and where bullock carts carry space age weapons in Republic Day parades.

After all the spectacular scenery, monuments, temples and palaces, we always come back to the people, all 1.21 billion plus of them who inhabit India. Their openness, friendliness and hospitality, as well as their curiosity will be etched in your mind as everlasting memories of a wonderful trip to India.

Highlights

- Delhi – the nation's capital. We include both Old & New Delhi
- Agra – Taj, Mahal, the Monument to Love
- Jaipur – the Amber Fort
- Udaipur – Lake Pichola
- Varanasi – the Holy City

We base our costs on using First Class / Deluxe hotels all the way. Many of the hotels will be as good as you will find anywhere. We include most meals – full breakfast daily, most lunches and most dinners. As well, a very comprehensive sightseeing programme is included but balanced by ample time for rest and relaxation.

Tour Costs Per Person

Priced from

Price available on request

* This is an independent non-escorted package

* Packaging price and dates subject to availability. We can customise this package to suit your requirements.

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more about this tour

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Tour Costs

Inclusions

- First Class/Deluxe hotels as listed or similar
- All breakfasts included. Guide will recommend lunch and dinner locations.
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as specified in the itinerary.
- Air-conditioned coach transportation
- English speaking guides and assistance throughout
- All tips/gratuities to local and national guides, coach drivers, baggage handlers etc.

Exclusions

- International airfares
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (advice and assistance offered)
- Items of a personal nature eg telephone calls, laundry, gifts etc

To register for this tour please contact us at 0800 500 518 or tours@mahertours.co.nz

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Tour Itinerary

15 Days

Day 1 | Delhi

(B)

Arrive in New Delhi. Our representative will be at the airport to receive and escort you to a private vehicle which will take you to the hotel.

DELHI: New Delhi, the capital and the third largest city of India is a fusion of the ancient and the modern. Delhi unwinds a picture rich with culture, architecture and human diversity, deep in history, monuments, museums, galleries, gardens and exotic shows. Comprising of two contrasting yet harmonious parts, the Old Delhi and New Delhi, the city is a travel hub of Northern India. Narrating the city's Mughal past, Old Delhi, takes you through the labyrinthine streets passing through formidable mosques, monuments and forts. The imperial city of New Delhi displays the finely carved architecture of British Raj.

Overnight in the hotel.

Day 2 | Delhi

(B)

After breakfast, proceed for the Old Delhi Sightseeing of the city with an English speaking guide:

Old Delhi: Old Delhi was once known as Shahjahanabad. Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan established and made it his capital. This fortified city has a long and interesting history and even today, the remains of its glorious past can be seen in the form of Kashmiri Gate, Ajmeri Gate, Turkman Gate, Delhi Gate and Feroz Shah Kotla.

RED FORT (Drive Past): Shah Jahan shifted his capital from Agra to Shahjahanabad and laid the foundation of Red Fort, or the Lal Quila, on 16th April 1639. It took nine years to build this mighty citadel and it got completed on 16th April 1648. Built of red sandstone, it is octagonal in shape, with two longer sides on the east and west.

CHANDINI CHOWK: One of the main markets of Delhi, Chandni Chowk was once lined with beautiful fountains. But today the place is very crowded and congested. Chandni Chowk is located opposite the Red Fort. The area has got the Digamber Jain Temple which houses the Birds' Hospital. On one end of Chandni Chowk is the Fatehpuri Mosque which was erected by the wives of Shah Jahan. Opposite the old police station or the Kotwali is the Sunheri Masjid from where Nadir Shah ordered his troops to plunder and massacre Delhi. Cycle-rickshaw ride will be provided in the bazaar.

Return to the hotel and relax.

Day 3 | Delhi

(B)

After breakfast, proceed for the New Delhi Sightseeing with an English speaking guide:

Spacious New Delhi was built as the imperial capital of India by the British with its wide avenues and regal buildings. New Delhi is where the high fashion socialites meet over frothy cappuccinos or frosty cocktails at swanky cafés and bars.

HUMAYUN'S TOMB: Built by the wife of Humayun, Haji Begum, in the mid – 16th century, this red sandstone structure is considered to be the predecessor of Taj Mahal. The structure is one of the best examples of Mughal Architecture. Humayun's wife is also buried in the red and white sandstone, black and yellow marble tomb.

INDIA GATE: It is a 42m high stone Arch of Triumph. It bears the name of the 85,000 Indian Army Soldiers who died in the campaigns of World War I, the North-West Frontiers operations and the 1919 Afghan Fiasco. Below the arch is the "Memorial to the Unknown Soldier".

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Day 3 | Delhi (cont.)

(B)

RASTRAPATI BHAWAN (Drive Past): It is the official home of the President of India. It may refer to only the mansion which has 340 rooms in the main building, located within 320 acres of huge presidential gardens (Mughal Gardens). It also has large open spaces, residences of bodyguards and staff, stables, other offices and utilities within its perimeter walls.

QUTAB MINAR: It is undoubtedly one of the finest stone towers in India and one of the most important landmarks of Delhi. Iltutmish, the son-in-law and successor of Qutubuddin, completed its construction. Built in red sandstone, this tower sports the inscriptions of verses of Holy Quran and some intricate carvings. Situated in the courtyard of the Quwwatu'l-Islam, the famous Ashoka Iron Pillar, belonging to the 4th century, has a Sanskrit inscription in Gupta script confirming the date.

Overnight in the hotel.

Day 4 | Delhi - Varanasi

(B)

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight AI 2673 to the Holy City – Varanasi at 13:20 Hrs. Arrive at 14:45 Hrs. On arrival you will be received and transferred to the hotel.

VARANASI: Picturesquely situated on the crescent shaped left bank of the holy River Ganga, Varanasi is said to be a compound of the names of two streams – the Varuna and the Assi – which still flow in the north and south of the city respectively. Varanasi is probably one of the most ancient “living cities” in India from time immemorial. It has been a great religious centre for Hindus and one of their most sacred places of pilgrimage, being visited by millions of people every year. Ganga Ghats are full of pilgrims who flock to the place to take a dip in the holy Ganges, which is believed to absolve one from all sins.

Afternoon relax in the hotel. In the evening, witness the “Ganga Aarti Ceremony” on the banks of the holy river with an English speaking guide:

GANGA AARTI CEREMONY: Every evening, a magical “Aarti” is performed at Dasashwamedh Ghat. The presiding priests stand on a wooden chauki (Stool). To the chant of Sanskrit mantras, and the clash of cymbals and drums, the holy river is worshipped with flowers, incense, sandalwood, milk and vermilion. First the blazing camphor and then the many-flamed Aarti lamps are raised high and then arched back – the dark river reflecting the golden flames as Ganga accepts the worship.

Overnight in the hotel.

Day 5 | Varanasi

(B)

Early in the morning, enjoy boat ride on River Ganges and participate in “floating of the lamps” – quite an ethereal experience! Later proceed for local sightseeing through the narrow streets of the city with an English speaking guide:

VISHWANATH TEMPLE: The most sacred temple in Varanasi is the Vishwanath Temple, located at Vishwanath Gali and dedicated to Lord Shiva. The Shivalinga at the Vishwanath Temple is among one of the 12 Jyotirlingas. The current temple was built in 1776 by Ahalya Bai of Indore with about 800 kg of gold plating on the towers, which gives the temple its colloquial name – Golden Temple.

DURGA TEMPLE: It was built in the 18th century by a Bengali Maharani and is stained red with ochre. The Durga Temple is commonly known as the Monkey Temple due to the many frisky monkeys that have made in their home. Non-Hindus can enter the courtyard but not the inner sanctum.

Day 5 | Varanasi (cont.)

(B)

BANARAS HINDU UNIVERSITY: Banaras Hindu University, an internationally reputed and innovative university was founded by the great nationalist leader, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya, in 1916. It has produced many great freedom fighters and builders of modern India, as well as a large number of renowned scholars, artists, scientists and technologists. The area of the main campus of this premier University is 1300 acres with well-manicured lawns.

Later, proceed for an excursion to Sarnath:

SARNATH: It is located 10 Kms from Varanasi, is where Lord Buddha delivered his first sermon to the five holy men – preaching the middle path to final ‘NIRVANA’. Shakyamuni also walked from Bodhgaya to Sarnath to meet the five ascetics who had left him earlier. Also visit the local Museum maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India housing important excavations from the area including the famous “Ashoka Emblem.”

We will also visit the Silk Weaving Factory, time permitting.

Day 6 | Varanasi – Delhi - Agra

(B)

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for flight AI 405 to Delhi at 12:50 Hrs. Arrive at 14:30 Hrs. On arrival, you will be received and driven straight to the “Mughal City” – Agra. Arrive and check- in at the hotel.

AGRA: The Mughal love of architecture translated into beautiful monuments such as Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Fatehpur Sikri and Sikandra. The glory of Agra was at its peak during the reign of Emperors Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan. Akbar made it the centre of art, culture, commerce and learning and Shah Jahan saw it in full bloom. Mughlai cuisine and the skilled craftsmen can still be seen in the narrow lanes of the city as a reminiscent of the lost times.

Return to the hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 7 | Agra

(B)

Early in the morning, visit the “Monument of Love” – Taj Mahal by sunrise with an English speaking guide:
(Note, Taj Mahal is closed on every Friday)

TAJ MAHAL: Sheer poetry in marble! Majesty and magnificence unrivalled! The Taj Mahal – the one and only one of its kind across the world – is a monumental labour of love of a great ruler for his beloved queen. The ultimate realisation of Emperor Shah Jahan’s dream and one of the Seven Wonders of the World! From 1631 A.D., it took 22 years and 20,000 workers in the making – an enchanting mausoleum on the banks of the River Yamuna.

Return to the hotel for breakfast, later proceed to visit the Agra Fort with an English speaking guide:

THE AGRA FORT: The great Mughal Emperor Akbar commissioned the construction of the Agra Fort in 1565, A.D. although additions were made till the time of his grandson Shah Jahan. The forbidding exteriors of this fort hide an inner paradise. There are a number of exquisite buildings like Moti Masjid – a white marble mosque akin to a perfect pearl; Diwan-I-Am, Diwan- I-Khaas, Musamman Burj – where Shah Jahan died in 1666 A.D.- Jahangir’s Palace, Khaas Mahal and Shish Mahal.

Day 8 | Agra - Jaipur

(B)

After breakfast, depart for Pink City – Jaipur. Stopping en route to visit Abhaneri Stepwell.

ABHANERI STEPWELL: Abhaneri is a village in the Dausa district of Rajasthan. The place is popular for the Chand Baori Stepwell and Harshat Mata Temple.

Later proceed onto Jaipur. Arrive and check – in at the hotel.

JAIPUR: Jaipur is the capital of Rajasthan state. It has many architectural marvels and palaces and a history of a bygone era involving the Maharaja and Royal family of Jaipur. Amber Fort is one of the three antique forts providing a spectacular view of the city and in the heart of Jaipur lies stunning City Palace.

Overnight in the hotel.

Day 9 | Jaipur

(B)

After breakfast, proceed for an excursion to Amber Fort with an English speaking guide:

THE AMBER FORT: The Amber Fort, located 11 km north of Jaipur, was the capital of Kachchwaha Rajputs till Sawai Jai Singh changed the capital to Jaipur. The Fort is one of the most popular attractions in Jaipur, with excellent views of Maota Lake from the top of the hill.

Afternoon city sightseeing:

HAWA MAHAL: Built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh, it is the most “recognisable” monument of Jaipur – a 5 storied stunning semi-octagonal monument having 152 windows with over hanging latticed balconies and a fine piece of Rajput architecture. Originally designed for the royal ladies to watch and enjoy the processions and other activities passing by on the street below.

THE CITY PALACE: A major part of the City Palace has been converted into a Museum while the remaining portion is still being used by the royal family of Jaipur as residence. The Palace is built in the fortified ‘campus’ style and covers almost a seventh of Jaipur in area! There are different sections of the Museum dedicated to subjects like arms & ammunition, textile, costumes and art.

In the evening, visit the local Spice and Vegetable Market – “Choti Chaupar”.

Day 10 | Jaipur - Jodhpur

(B)

After breakfast, depart for the Blue City – Jodhpur. Arrive and check-in at the hotel.

JODHPUR: Jodhpur was founded by Rao Jodha in 1459 and is named after him. It is divided into two parts – the old city being separated from the new by a 10 km long wall surrounding it – with eight gates leading out. With many beautiful palaces and forts, it is also referred to as the “Blue City” due to the vivid blue-painted houses around the Mehrangarh Fort.

After settling in, proceed for city sightseeing with an English speaking guide:

MEHRANGARH FORT: Mehrangarh is one of the largest and most magnificent forts in Rajasthan. It is situated on a 150 m high hill and was founded by Rao Jodha in 1459. Inside the fort, there are several palaces with sprawling huge courtyards. One of the fort’s palaces – the Moti Mahal (Pearl Palace) houses the royal throne of Jodhpur.

JASWANT THADA: On the way down from the fort, on the left is Jaswant Thada – the graceful marble cenotaph of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II. His son, Maharaja Sardar Singhji, built this “Taj Mahal of Marwar” in memory of his father. The main memorial has been built like a temple with intricately carved marble stone sculpted by genius artisans.

Day 11 | Jodhpur

(B)

After breakfast, proceed for an excursion to Rohet, enjoy the jeep safari and visit the nearby Bishnoi Village to meet the people and their way of life. You can observe the wildlife and blackbuck in the wild, and experience an “Opium Ceremony” in the nearby village.

ROHET: The fortified desert home of the descendants of the 16th century Rathores of the Champawat clan. The “Jagir” (Fiefdom) of Rohet was bestowed upon them in 1622 A.D. by the Maharaja of Jodhpur as a gesture of appreciation for their bravery in battle. Generations of valiant noble-men have built this their heritage home, where notwithstanding the inroads of modernity, aristocratic values are still respected. The visitor of today experiences the famed warmth of courteous Rajput hospitality. Brilliantly plumed peacocks strut about, perching under finely carved stone archways as the wind whispers through neem trees and bougainvilleas.

Enjoy lunch at Rohetgarh before driving back to Jodhpur. Overnight in the hotel.

Day 12 | Jodhpur - Udaipur

(B)

After breakfast, depart for The City of Lakes – Udaipur. Arrive and check-in at Hotel

UDAIPUR: Located around the shimmering clear blue water lakes, Udaipur is also known as the “City of Lakes” and has a distinct identity of being a “romantic city”. It is an inspiration for the imagination of the poets, painters and writers. The exquisitely carved marble palaces, impressively laid out gardens and lakes with hills & ravines all around give Udaipur a totally unique charm distinct from any other city.

Rest & relax and overnight in the hotel.

Day 13 | Udaipur

(B)

After breakfast, proceed for city sightseeing with an English speaking guide:

THE CITY PALACE: Built by Maharaja Udai Singh, the gorgeous City Palace is a marvel in marble. Majestically set on a hill, it is flooded with balconies, towers and cupolas, along with superb views of Lake Pichola and the city. It has a triple-arched gate at the entrance called Tripolia, which was built in 1725. A perfect amalgamation of Medieval European and Chinese architecture with number of astonishing buildings, well-planned gardens and fountains.

CRYSTAL GALLERY: The visitors here are privy to what is hailed as one of the most exclusive, exquisite and probably the single, largest private collection of crystal anywhere in the world! It was in 1877 that Maharana Sajjan Singh ordered the crystal collection from the Birmingham-based F&C Osler Company. The collection includes a bewildering number of objects d’art, dinner sets, perfume bottles, decanters, glasses, washing bowls and even furniture – including the only crystal bed in the world! The collection has been customized for the Royal family with the Crest of Mewar delicately etched on each crystal.

SAHELIYON KI BARI: On the banks of Fateh Sagar Lake, a beautiful garden was built for 48 maidens – meant to be a part of the dowry of the princess! Widespread lawns, gushing fountains and dappled walking lanes characterize the garden. The gardens appear distinct and immaculate in taste.

In the evening, enjoy Boat Ride on Lake Pichola in the backdrop of the setting sun.

LAKE PICHOLA: Maharana Udai Singh II significantly distended the gorgeous Pichola as a defence measure, when he founded Udaipur. Cradled amongst hills, gardens, havelis, temples and ghats, Lake Pichola is the picturesque spotlight of Udaipur. The lake sports two islands palaces – Jagniwas (popularly known as Lake Palace) and Jagmandir.

Day 13 | Udaipur (cont.)

(B)

JAG MANDIR: Another island palace in Lake Pichola, it was built by Maharaja Karan Singh in 1615. It derives its name from Jagat Singh who started the initial structure. It was never used for the purpose for it was built. This palace was used to provide shelter to the Mughal Prince Khurram (later Emperor Shah Jahan) who rebelled against his Emperor-father, Jahangir in the 1620s. During the 1857 Mutiny this island palace once again served as a safe haven for European women and children.

Day 14 | Udaipur

(B)

Full day at leisure. Enjoy the facilities of the hotel and relax.

Return to the hotel for an overnight stay.

Day 15 | Udaipur - Home

(B)

Today transfer to the airport for your flight back home.

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