

HERITAGE RAJASTHAN



ITINERARY:

Meet on arrival at airport in Delhi

This 13 day/12 night itinerary is the very first we ran in India. It starts & ends in New Delhi, at the fabulous Imperial Hotel. We then fly to Jodhpur and travel from Marwar's semi-arid belt (Jodhpur Kingdom) to the forested mountains and lakes of Mewar (Udaipur Kingdom). We visit grand palaces, bustling bazaars, great forts and wildlife-rich rural areas. Accommodation is at unique Heritage Hotels, most owned by the Jodhpur royal family, where we contract suites or best rooms. This trip really is 'Classic Rajasthan'!



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 followed by 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 foreign guests 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 small lake on the edge of the town, 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 in the surrounding semi-arid tribal area through villages and hamlets, seeing how the tribal Bishnoi community lives and spotting for animals in this surprisingly wildlife-rich area.

PM Return to Rohet. Late afternoon optional short 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.

Day 6

AM Depart by road (1.5hrs) for Sardar Samand (2 nights), 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.

PM Stroll (1.5hrs) through scrubby forest, spotting for wildlife, in particular black buck and blue bull, to a Muslim shrine with a 9m long tomb (?!)

Day 7

AM This morning a jeep drive takes us through villages and the local countryside to the Jodhpur royal family's 5,000 acre farm. Here we see how various crops are grown and sample some of the produce during a picnic lunch.

PM Return to Sardar Samand for some leisure time. The marble swimming pool on one of the terraces is particularly enticing.

Day 8

AM Depart by road (3h) for Ranakpur and Maharani Bagh (2 nights). The accommodation is in very comfortable bungalows scattered throughout an extensive mango orchard also belonging to the Jodhpur royal family.

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

Day 9

AM Optional bird watching walk around Maharani Bagh's own nature reserve before breakfast. Later we head for the nearby town to visit a small but colourful market before driving into the foothills of the Khumbalgarh Nature Reserve to visit the group of temples at the start of the Pashuram pilgrimage trail. Lunch back at our accommodation.

PM Mid afternoon departure in jeeps to take us (45 mins) to nearby granite outcrops considered prime leopard habitat. The cats find shelter among the large boulders that are a feature of the area. The local Rabari (Herders) and farming communities tolerate the leopards and do not harm them. As with all wildlife there is no guarantee but with some patience and perseverance we have a good chance of spotting the big cats.

Day 10

AM Depart for Udaipur (3hr) and arrive at Amet Haveli (2 nights). This intimate boutique hotel offers wonderful views over Lake Pichola and the city's palaces 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!

PM Afternoon 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 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 continuously ruling royal line in the world). Back at our hotel for lunch. Afternoon at leisure.

Day 12

Departure for Udaipur Airport and a lunchtime flight back to Delhi. On arrival transfer to The Imperial Hotel for 1 night. There may be time for last minute shopping at the nearby Government emporium or you may just wish to make the most of this hotel's facilities.

Day 13

Transfers to Delhi International Airport for departure back home.

