

For tours departing beyond 2010, itineraries may be subject to change. This will be confirmed by the publication of the 2011 brochure (issued in Oct 10).

2010
Tour Dossier

EXPLORE!

INDIA Dossier Ref. RD, MGR & Pushkar Camel Fair – see p4, RD & Nagaur Cattle Fair – see p5

Rajasthan – Land of the Maharajahs

Amended 08 Apr 2010. Valid from 01 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010

Since first issue this dossier has been updated with amendments to the following sections: personal expenses; page 5

As our itineraries may be amended from time to time, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers, please ensure you have the most up-to-date copy of this dossier immediately before you travel. You can download the dossier from our website, www.explore.co.uk. Of course we will notify you of any significant changes, but sometimes minor changes may simply be added to the tour dossier.

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

Rajasthan – Land of the Maharajahs
Ref. RD 16 days/15 nights Land Only
Delhi back to Delhi

Join Delhi (day 1)

End Delhi (day 16)

Moghul Highlights + Rajasthan – Land of the Maharajahs Ref. MGR
21 days/20 nights Land Only
Delhi to Delhi

End Delhi (day 21)

Clients booked on 'Land Only' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point in Delhi. Please refer to separate 'Joining Instructions' for name and address of hotel and time of rendezvous with tour leader.

GROUP FLIGHTS FROM LONDON

Rajasthan – Land of the Maharajahs
Ref. RD 17 days/16 nights Tour
including Connecting Group Flights
London-Delhi-London

Depart from London Heathrow Airport for overnight flight to join tour in Delhi next day (early on day 1 of Land Only itinerary). Transfer to hotel.

Return from Delhi (day 16 of Land Only itinerary) and arrive London Heathrow the same day.

Moghul Highlights + Rajasthan – Land of the Maharajahs Ref. MGR
22 days/21 nights Tour including
Connecting Group Flights
London-Delhi-London

Return from Delhi (day 21 of Land Only itinerary) and arrive London Heathrow the same day.

Passengers with non-group flights booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are

Carbon Offsets Included

As part of our responsible tourism policy we offset carbon emissions from all customer and staff flights booked by Explore. Our carbon offset partner is Climate Care. If you are making independent flight arrangements to join one of our tours, may we urge you to offset your carbon emissions through Climate Care, or a similar offsetting scheme.

not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Among the many highlights featured on this tour, we particularly mention:

- * **DELHI** Guided tour of Old and New Delhi.
- * **JAIPUR** Visit the Observatory and palaces.
- * **NAWALGARH** Visit to painted villages.
- * **BIKANER** Colourful bazaars and camels.
- * **JAISALMER** Walking tour of Old Walled City.
- * **2 DAY CAMEL TREK** in the Great Thar Desert. **Note:** You can choose to spend more time in Jaisalmer instead.
- * **JODHPUR** Visit the famous Jodhpur Fort.
- * **RANAKPUR** Beautiful Jain Temples.
- * **UDAIPUR** Historic city on Lake Pichola.

MGR Combination Only:

- * **FATEHPUR SIKRI** Visit to Akbar the Great's Deserted City.
- * **AGRA** Tour of Taj Mahal and Agra Fort.

A memorable journey through Rajasthan. We'll visit the famous desert cities of Jaisalmer and Jodhpur, and organise a 2-day Camel Safari across the wild and undulating landscape of the Thar, the Great Indian Desert, enjoying its starkly arid beauty and experiencing the old desert way of life of village tribespeople. This tour may be combined with our Moghul Highlights tour to include some of the main highlights of Jaipur, Agra and the wildlife parks at Sariska and Bharatpur Ref. MGR. Certain departures in November have extended and revised itineraries to include the Pushkar Camel Festival and we also offer a February departure to visit the Nagaur Cattle Fair.

LAND ONLY ITINERARY

Be Prepared: While our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day route published below, a degree of flexibility is built into the itinerary. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

Rajasthan covers a large area and in order to see everything we'll have some necessarily long drives; see daily itinerary below.

Please note that festival dates and events may be subject to last minute changes and we cannot guarantee exactly what will take place. We would endeavour to contact you to inform you of any change made known to us in advance of departure.

Accommodation and Included Meals: please find the key to our accommodation ratings overleaf, and note that included meals are indicated in the itinerary below and are shown on the day they are provided (B =

Earth Matters

- Many organisations and individuals in India are desperate for good quality second hand clothing. If you have space in your bag, why not take some along. Your Tour Leader will ensure that they are delivered to those in need.
- Time spent with your camel guides in the desert, provides you with a good opportunity to learn about their lifestyle.
- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>



breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner).

Day 1. Join tour Delhi

Arrive Delhi and check into hotel. This afternoon we go on a city tour and see the main sights of New Delhi, which include the President's Palace, Lok Sabha (Parliament), India Gate, the Rajpath and Humayan's Tomb, before driving to the hustle and bustle of the bazaars of Old Delhi where we'll also visit the famous Jami Masjid Mosque.

Please note: the Delhi section of this tour will be accompanied by a local guide. You will meet your tour leader on arrival in Jaipur. Overnight hotel H++.

Day 2. Train to Jaipur; visit Observatory, City Palace and Palace of the winds.

This morning we will transfer to the train station where we will catch a train to Jaipur. Sometimes called the Pink City, Jaipur was first painted terracotta pink by Maharajah Sawai Ram Singh to celebrate the visit of Prince Albert in 1853. In the afternoon we will meet our tour leader and will then proceed on a sightseeing tour including a visit to the lavish and well preserved City Palace with its fine collection of textiles, costumes and armoury. Jai Singh, the great Maharajah-astronomer, built his extraordinary (and very accurate) star gazing observatory (Jantra) here. We will get an opportunity to visit the observatory and also the Old City with its fine gates set in to the pink walls.

Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B).

Day 3. Drive to Mandawa

We will be joined by the group doing the MGR tour (MG tour and RD tour combined) today and we will all drive to Mandawa (approx 6hrs). On arrival we will have a free afternoon to explore the area and walk amongst the painted houses. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D)**

Day 4. Drive to Bikaner

A short drive takes us to Nawalgarh, where we tour the vividly painted houses and impressive havelis in the Shekhavati area of the town. The buildings are decorated with bold, highly coloured folk art depicting elephants, horsemen, parrots, peacocks, and festive scenes like weddings. We also visit the main bazaar before driving to the desert city of Bikaner (approximately 5 hours). Situated directly on the ancient camel caravan routes that came from Africa and West Asia, Bikaner was once a great trading centre. Its colourful bazaars and buildings of reddish-pink sandstone still suggest its ancient wealth. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 5 In Bikaner

This morning we take a tour to the Junagarh

To book please call 0844 499 0901 • www.explore.co.uk

For bookings outside the UK please contact your local travel agent representing Explore.

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Fort built by Raja Rai Singh (1571-1611) which is distinguished by its high defensive light red sandstone walls. The well preserved palaces within the fort area are noted for their fine stone carvings. Bikaner still remains a defensive town, and was the home of the famous Camel Corps. We will also take the opportunity to visit the Old town and Bhandasar Jain Temple. The afternoon is left free for further discoveries such as an optional trip to Deshnoke (Rat) Temple. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 6. Drive to Jaisalmer

Today's drive takes us across the great Thar Desert to Jaisalmer (approximately 7 hours). This is an arid and forbidding place, with shifting sand dunes and high summer temperatures. Like Bikaner, Jaisalmer was on the ancient camel caravan routes and would have been like a vision from the '1001 Nights' after several days crossing the barren desert. Arriving late afternoon there may be time to wander in this marvellous walled city. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 7. In Jaisalmer

Every corner of this walled desert city presents an unforgettable sight. We discover alleyways, often no wider than out-stretched arms, whitewashed houses painted with bands of ochre round doors and windows, sometimes with stylised patterns and designs on our tour of this fabled city. Here the Rajput nobles and wealthy merchants havelis have intricately carved facades of which we seek out the most impressive. We will also visit the fort and some of the many elaborately carved Jain temples. **(Included meals: B).**

Days 8 & 9. Camel Safari in Thar Desert; last night in Jaisalmer

The Thar Desert forms part of the desert belt extending from the Sahara of North Africa, across Arabia and Rajasthan to its furthest extremity in the Great Gobi of Central Asia. Our camel safari recaptures the traditional means of desert travel allowing us to experience something of the remote life of the tribesmen and their families. Our party consists of a group leader, local guides, a cook and several camel herdsmen. We plan to camp in the desert beneath a myriad of brightly glowing stars. 2-man tents and all food and cooking equipment are provided. Riding camels can be quite relaxing and sitting high up enables us to appreciate the unique beauty of the desert. Many people find that they prefer to combine riding with periods of walking, so ensure that you have appropriate footwear. **Note:** If you do not wish to take part in the camel trek you can elect to spend more time in Jaisalmer. 1 night hotel and breakfast. Please advise your tour leader on arrival in Delhi. **1 night camping C (included meals: B, L, D). 2nd day arrive Jaisalmer for overnight hotel H+**

(included meals: B, L).

Day 10. Drive to Jodhpur

This morning we drive to Jodhpur, where the impregnable fortress commands a superb panorama of the surrounding countryside (approximately 6 hours). The city itself has a unique atmosphere, with many fine old buildings and temples. Jodhpurs, those trousers-cum-riding breeches, are named after the horsemen of this city. Arriving mid afternoon, the rest of the day is free to wander the atmospheric streets of the Old City. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 11. In Jodhpur

The Majestic Meherangarh Fort in Jodhpur is built across the top of a steep escarpment 125m above the plains below. It has a huge, sheer drop to the south where it overlooks the city. Our visit this morning affords wonderful views, not only across Jodhpur, but also way into the distance across the surrounding desert plains. The Rajput palace buildings within the fort are typically Mughal – very ornate and flamboyant, but also very practical and as always, built with defence in mind. This afternoon there is the chance to make an optional visit to some nearby Bishnoi villages. The Bishnoi are renowned for their protection of wild animals and non-felling of trees. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 12. Drive to Ghanerao

Our morning's drive takes us on to the temple town of Ranakpur, one of Rajasthan's gems (approximately 4 hours). Little visited, it is home to some of the most beautifully sculpted Jain Temples in India. Situated in a wooded valley the temples date back to the 15th century with the carvings depicting scenes from the lives of the Jain Saints at that time. We visit the Adinath temple, which contains 1444 exquisitely carved pillar, with no two alike. Continuing we then drive to Ghanerao (approximately 1 hour) where we will spend the night. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

Day 13. Drive to Udaipur via Kumbalgarh

This morning we drive to visit Kumbalgarh's imposing 15th century fort – one of the finest examples of defensive architecture in Rajasthan. Lying 1,100m above sea level, the fortified ramparts protected palaces, temples and even farms, ensuring that the complex was self contained and able to withstand a long siege. We then continue to the beautiful lakeside city of Udaipur, with its white palaces and translucent waters (approximately 3 hours). **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 14. In Udaipur

We have a day full day to relax in Udaipur. The city is dominated by Lake Pichola, its island palace (now a hotel) and Jag Mandir island. Here the future Shah Jahan sought sanctuary from his father after he had been found guilty

of plotting against him. A city sightseeing tour can be arranged to include the City Palace and Jagdish Mandir. Or you may wish to visit one of the nearby villages by bike or foot. **Note:** At some times of the year the level of the water in the lake may drop or even, after a poor monsoon, dry up completely. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 15. Fly to Delhi

This morning is left free for further personal exploration or last minute shopping. This afternoon we fly back to Delhi for our final night and fond farewells in this fascinating country. **Overnight hotel H++ (included meals: B).**

Day 16. Tour ends Delhi

(Included meals: B).

Moghul Highlights + Rajasthan – Land of the Maharajahs Ref. MGR

Day 1. Join tour Delhi; City tour of New Delhi

Arrive Delhi and check into hotel. This afternoon we include a city tour of the sights of New Delhi, a creation of the British Raj of the 30's, and includes the Lok Sabha (Parliament), India Gate, the Rajpath Qutb Minar and Humayan's Tomb. **Overnight hotel H+.**

Day 2. In Delhi; city tour of Old Delhi; drive to Agra

This morning we include a visit to Old Delhi with its hub at Chandni Chowk Bazaar, a jamboree of deafening barter. A short cycle rickshaw ride takes us to the Jami Masjid mosque and we pass by the Red Fort before an afternoon drive to Agra. **2 nights hotel H++ (included meals: B).**

Day 3. Taj Mahal and Agra Fort

We visit the Taj Mahal at sunrise. Created by Shah Jahan as a funerary monument to his favourite wife, Mumtaz, it took 22 years to build (1630-52). We'll also visit the Agra Fort, built by Akbar the Great. Rest of the day is free in Agra to revisit the Taj (optional) or visit the so-called "baby Taj" on the east bank of the river. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 4. Drive to Bharatpur via Fatehpur Sikri

Booking a Single Room

All of our tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. On this particular tour we are pleased to be able to offer customers the option of pre-booking a guaranteed single room for each night of the tour other than on our Pushkar departures, for the dates of which see below.

ACCOMMODATION: An important feature of many Explore tours is the wide range of accommodation used, and since the beginning our philosophy has been to select accommodation to suit the itinerary - not the other way round. To help gauge the comfort level on your chosen tour, we have graded the accommodation standards at all night-stops using the rating guide below. Please keep in mind however that standards can vary from one trip to the next, and occasionally we may need to change a night-stop without advance warning. Please note descriptions are only intended as guidelines in order to give a flavour of the type of accommodation to expect. We cannot guarantee the use of particular properties. Facilities and characteristics may vary from those described.

Hotels / lodges / guesthouses - or similar

H++ : Comfortable hotels, lodges or guesthouses with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. With air-conditioning/heating where appropriate and with reliable hot and cold water. Generally good levels of service and often with added amenities such as restaurant, bar, gardens or swimming pool.

H+ : Standard hotels, lodges or guesthouses, usually with twin or single rooms and en suite facilities. These are generally standard, no-frills hotels with adequate amenities and service standards. Whilst comfort levels are perfectly acceptable to most, please don't expect too much! These are often small, family run establishments.

Camping

C : Basic camping in wild camps where facilities / amenities may be limited or non-existent. Generally there is no running water, and we dig a temporary bush toilet. Two person tents are often used, but occasionally we sleep under the stars. Participation normally required and sleeping bags usually not provided.

With its rapidly expanding economy, accommodation choices in India are expanding. Whatever the level, from basic guesthouse to high end city centre hotel, you should always be prepared for standards to be different than in the West. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be somewhat erratic and although the welcome is always warm, service levels may be less efficient than you may be used to.

On this tour we stay in the Maharaja's mansion in Ghanerao where the rooms are furnished with antiques and are all different. The atmosphere of faded grandeur takes one back to the days of the Raj! In Udaipur our family run hotel has a superb location overlooking Lake Pichola with views of the City Palace. Whilst new and boasting modern amenities, our mid-range hotels in Mandawa, Bikaner and Jaisalmer aim to capture something of the essence of Rajasthan in their fort and palace influenced architecture. Whilst in Delhi we stay in a larger conventional city centre hotel. Many of these properties have swimming pools, although please note these may not always be operational, especially during mid winter. Facilities at our overnight desert camp are basic - we use 2-man "A frame" style tents with foam mattresses and blankets provided. We recommend that you take a sleeping sheet. A toilet tent is provided and water is available for handwashing.

To book please call 0844 499 0901 • www.explore.co.uk

For bookings outside the UK please contact your local travel agent representing Explore.

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We continue our journey west and soon come upon the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. Founded in 1569 and abandoned scarcely 16 years later, it is a perfectly intact example of Akbar's imperial court. Later in the afternoon we arrive at the Keoladeo Ghana National Park in Bharatpur. Covering 12 square miles, more than 300 species have been sighted.

Overnight hotel H++ (included meals: B, D).

Day 5. Drive to Karauli via Mahuwa & Hindaun
Leaving Bharatpur, we continue to Karauli. This holy town is famous for the pale red sandstone wall which surrounds it. Legend has it that the ruling family were descendants of Lord Krishna, one of the most loved Gods in Hindu mythology. This afternoon, we hope to ride along in camel drawn carts to the 600 year old fort which is an imposing highlight of the town. If time allows, we may also be able to visit the renowned Madan Mohanji Temple. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

Day 6. Drive to Jaipur

We continue to Jaipur, capital of the desert state of Rajasthan. On arrival, we will take a sightseeing tour to include the City Palace and the observatory built by the great Maharaja astronomer, Jai Singh. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 7. In Jaipur; visit Amber Fort

Today we will visit the Palace of the Winds, a 5-storey facade which has been the subject of countless Indian posters. Afterwards, we will drive to Amber Fort. This impressive hilltop fortress possesses what must be the world's finest Chamber of Mirrors and affords glorious views of the surrounding plains. We will have a free afternoon to relax and explore Jaipur (please note your tour leader will be with the RD group this afternoon) **(Included meals: B).**

Day 8. Travel to Mandawa

This morning we join with the RD group and all drive to the colourful merchant's town of Mandawa on arrival we will have a free afternoon to explore and walk amongst the painted houses. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

For days 9 to 21 please see days 4-16 of the RD tour (see above for further details).

PERSONAL EXPENSES

You'll also need some extra money to cover meals not included in the price, optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Foreign Exchange

Local Currency: Indian Rupee.

Recommended Currency for Exchange: US\$ or GBP.

Where to Exchange: Major cities - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

ATM Availability: Delhi.

Credit Card Acceptance: Larger shops and hotels.

Travellers Cheques: Major cities only.

Additional Information: Camera and Video Fees: Bear in mind that at some sites there is an additional camera charge. Video filming fees up to £3.00 per site may be payable.

Up-to-date information re: global exchange rates can be obtained at <http://www.currency-express.com/explore/>

Meal Plan

RD: 15 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners;
MGR: 20 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 5 dinners are included on this trip; please be prepared to pay for all other meals. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location and the prices below are given as an average guide only.

	UK	India		
Tea/coffee		£1.20		£1.00
Soft drink		0.80		0.80
Bottle of Beer		2.50		2.50
Bottle water		0.80		1.00
2 Course Meal*		10.00		6.00
3 Course Meal**		18.00		9.00

*Cheap local fare in a small cafe or restaurant.

**Typical food in a simple, reasonably comfortable mid-range restaurant.

Tipping

Local Staff: In this area, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. Accordingly, you should allow an additional £25 for the MG section of the MGR tour (your leader will collect these amounts separately for each tour). Your tour leader will account to you for any organised tipping.

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Other Sightseeing

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date this dossier was originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

UDAIPUR City Palace guided tour £12.00.

JODHPUR Bishnoi Village Visit £8.00.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Seasonal Climate

There is considerable variation between the different regions of India, but in general the climate is tropical. The very best months to visit Rajasthan are October through to March. At this time there is minimum rainfall, with temperatures around 25°C during the day and 15°C at night. Although please note nights in the desert can be very cold with temperatures occasionally falling below zero in December and January.

Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/> weather. Seasonal weather patterns can be unpredictable. Up-to-date information on the weather worldwide can be found by following the BBC weather link on this page.

Visa Requirements

Entry visas are required by UK, AUS, NZ, USA, CAN citizens, other nationalities should consult the relevant consulate.

Please Note: It is no longer possible to obtain an Indian visa directly from the Indian Embassy. You must either apply for a visa through your travel agent or through the Explore Visa Service. Alternatively, you can go through to VSO global <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk> (the company who the Embassy has outsourced its visa service to) online, by post or at the centre after prior appointment. As of July 2009 all Indian visa applications require an additional health card to be filled in when applying for the visa. Please make sure you obtain one of these cards along with your Indian visa application.

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related issues with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

Vaccinations & Protection

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, infectious hepatitis and polio. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria.

Special Note: Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

The above is not an exhaustive list.

Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

Electric Supply and Plugs

For comprehensive information regarding voltages and plug types in use in the countries visited, follow the relevant link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory for all bookings. You must take your policy document with you on tour, as your tour leader will ask to see this at the start of the trip. Your documentation must state in writing that you are the named policyholder and that the cover is valid for your period of travel. Your policy document must also indicate that you have medical expenses and emergency repatriation cover and a 24-hour contact telephone number for your Insurance Company must be shown on your documentation in case of emergency.

If you are unable to provide all this information at the start of the trip you will not be allowed to join the trip. If you have purchased Explore Insurance you should carry the Master Certificate leaflet with you, which outlines the conditions of the policy together with a copy of your Confirmation Invoice, which is your proof of purchase of insurance. Explore Worldwide are an Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority.

Know Before You Go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination including safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements and health. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Traveladvice/>

PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

A complete list of clothing and personal gear is contained in Explore's 'General Information Booklet', available after a booking has been accepted. Here we make a few specific recommendations with regard to your tour.

Luggage: One main piece of baggage (left behind during camel trek) and a smaller bag which will be carried for you, and a daysac. Total allowance: **44lbs/20kgs**. During the 2-day Camel Safari, luggage will be transported for you and there is no need to carry anything other than your daysac.

Clothing: Pack essentially for 'All Tours' plus 'Hot Conditions'. Bear in mind that between Nov-Mar daytime temperatures are warm and comfortable, but evenings and nights in the desert can be extremely cold and hotels rarely have heating arrangements comparable with the UK. Lightweight clothing plus warmer garments are essential. For the Camel Safari you'll find that loose fitting shirts and trousers are most comfortable. Also bring a wide brimmed hat. Local people may be offended by western styles of dress. Brief shorts tight fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women.

Footwear: Comfortable shoes and sandals.

Equipment: Duvets are provided for the Camel Safari but you should bring a sheet sleeping bag or silk sleeping bag liner in colder conditions (Dec to Feb). Bring a torch, a water bottle and some suncream. Mattresses, eating and drinking utensils are also provided.

To book please call 0844 499 0901 • www.explore.co.uk

For bookings outside the UK please contact your local travel agent representing Explore.

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Land of the Maharajahs – Pushkar Camel Fair

Amended 08 Apr 2010. Valid from 01 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010
Since first issue this dossier has been updated with amendments to the following sections: Itinerary

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

**18 days/17 nights Land Only
Delhi back to Delhi**

Join Delhi (day 1)
End Delhi (day 18)

GROUP FLIGHTS FROM LONDON

**19 days/18 nights Tour including
Connecting Group Flights
London-Delhi-London**

Depart from London Heathrow Airport for overnight flight to join tour in Delhi, next day (day 1 of Land Only itinerary). Transfer to hotel.

Return from Delhi (day 18 of Land Only itinerary) and arrive London Heathrow the same day.

Passengers with **non-group flights** booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

EXTRA HIGHLIGHT

PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR

The picturesque Rajasthani village of Pushkar, surrounded by hills and dunes, provides a stunning setting for the world's largest annual camel fair at which an estimated 25,000 beasts are traded. The convergence of these animals and their brightly turbaned and colourfully veiled tribes- folk owners brings the arid deserts-cape alive and a massive bazaar springs up to trade a myriad of items from lentils to jewellery. As well as trading, camels, horses and cattle are paraded and raced and a circus and fairground rides entertain the masses. We will spend 2 days at the festival, drinking in the electric atmosphere of this unique gathering. The timing of the fair broadly coincides with a religious festival dedicated to the Hindu creator god Brahma. Pushkar is an important sacred spot for Hindus and during the festival its otherwise tranquil lake is engulfed with thousands of devotees bathing in its holy waters.
Please note: not all tours will be in Pushkar at the time of the religious festival.

RD 03NOV10

Day 1. Join in Delhi; city tour

In the afternoon we will enjoy a sightseeing tour of both the Old and New city. **Overnight hotel H++.**

Day 2. To Jaipur

Leaving the capital by train this morning, we head west into Rajasthan. In the afternoon we enjoy a city tour which includes visits to the City Palace, Observatory and we also have the chance to explore a little of the old city. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 3. Drive to Mandawa

We drive to the colourful former merchant's town of Mandawa where we have the late afternoon free to walk amongst the many 'painted havelis'. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

Day 4. Drive to Bikaner

A short drive takes us to Nawalgarh, where we tour the vividly painted houses and impressive havelis (merchant's houses) in

the Shekhavati area of the town. The buildings are decorated with bold, highly coloured folk art depicting elephants, horsemen, parrots, peacocks, and festive scenes like weddings. We also visit the main bazaar before driving to the desert city of Bikaner (approximately 5 hours). Situated directly on the ancient camel caravan routes that came from Africa and West Asia, Bikaner was once a great trading centre. Its colourful bazaars and buildings of reddish-pink sandstone still suggest its ancient wealth. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 5. In Bikaner

This morning we take a tour to the Junagarh Fort built by Raja Rai Singh (1571-1611) which is distinguished by its high defensive light red sandstone walls. The well preserved palaces within the fort area are noted for their fine stone carvings. Bikaner still remains a defensive town, and was the home of the famous Camel Corps. We will also take the opportunity to visit the Old town and Bhandasar Jain Temple. The afternoon is left free for further discoveries such as an optional trip to Deshnoke (Rat) Temple. **(Included meals: B).**

Days 6 to 7. Drive to Jaisalmer; in Jaisalmer

We drive across the great Thar Desert to Jaisalmer. Every corner of this desert city presents an unforgettable sight. Here the Rajput nobles and wealthy merchants havelis have intricately carved facades and our local guide will show us some of the most impressive. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: Bx2).**

Days 8 to 9. Camel Safari

Our camel safari allows us to recapture the traditional means of desert travel. For one night we plan to camp in the desert. 2-man tents and all food and cooking equipment are provided. Covering about 10-12km each day, we ride our camels from village to village. Many people find that they prefer to combine riding with periods of walking, so ensure that you have appropriate footwear. **1 night camping C (included meals: B, L, D). 2nd day arrive Jaisalmer for overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, L).**

Day 10. Drive to Jodhpur

This morning we drive to Jodhpur, where the impregnable fortress commands a superb panorama of the surrounding countryside. Arriving mid afternoon the rest of the day is free. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 11. In Jodhpur

A morning visit to the Meherangarh Fort in Jodhpur, built across the top of a steep escarpment. This afternoon there is the chance to make an optional visit to some nearby Bishnoi villages. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 12. Drive to Pushkar

Leaving Jodhpur behind we drive to Ajmer, then continue up to the lakeside village of Pushkar. The normally quiet village, will now be teeming with travellers, holy men and pilgrims all arriving for the start of the Festival. We may find camel trading taking place prior to the start of the festival. **2 nights fixed camp C+ (included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 13. In Pushkar

Today we will have the special opportunity of visiting the famous cattle and camel fair. We leave the time in Pushkar free to absorb the atmosphere and to witness the hustle and bustle of this very special and unique event. **(included meals: B, L, D).**

Day 14. Drive to Ghanerao

We have a long drive today through the Aravalli Hills to Ghanerao. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

Day 15. Drive to Udaipur via Kumbulgarh
After a visit to Kumbulgarh's imposing Fort and Palace we continue to the lakeside city of Udaipur. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 16. In Udaipur

We have a day full day to relax in Udaipur. A city sightseeing tour can be arranged, or you may wish to take a boat trip or hire bicycles. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 17. Fly to Delhi

This afternoon we fly back to Delhi. **Overnight hotel H++ (included meals: B).**

Day 18. Tour ends Delhi

(Included meals: B).

RD05NOV10

Day 1 Join tour Delhi, Day 2 Train to Jaipur, Day 3 Drive to Mandawa, Day 4 Drive to Bikaner, Day 5 In Bikaner, Day 6 Drive to Jaisalmer, Day 7 In Jaisalmer, Day 8 Camel Safari, Day 9 Camel Safari then overnight train to Jodhpur then drive to Pushkar, Day 10 & 11 In Pushkar, Day 12 Drive to Jodhpur, Day 13 In Jodhpur, Day 14 Drive to Ghanerao, Day 15 Drive to Udaipur, Day 16 In Udaipur, Day 17 Fly to Delhi, Day 18 Tour ends.

RD11NOV10

Day 1 Join tour Delhi; Day 2 Fly to Udaipur; Day 3 In Udaipur; Day 4 Drive to Ghanerao; Day 5 Drive to Pushkar - camel fair; Day 6 In Pushkar - camel fair; Day 7 Drive Jodhpur; Day 8 In Jodhpur; Day 9 Drive Jaisalmer; Day 10 In Jaisalmer; Day 11 & 12 Camel Safari; Day 13 Drive to Bikaner; Day 14 In Bikaner; Day 15 Drive to Mandawa; Day 16 Drive to Jaipur; Day 17 Train to Delhi; Day 18 Tour ends.

RD 03NOV10, RD05NOV10 & RD11NOV10

These tours will be visiting the camel fair.

MGR29OCT10 & MGR31OCT10

These tours visit the Pushkar Camel Fair. Itineraries correspond with RD03NOV10 and RD05NOV10 respectively.

HOPE FOUNDATION

The Hope Foundation works throughout India, supporting some of India's poorest and most vulnerable communities through developing healthcare, education and vocational training. We support the community of Pudupattinam in south India and also channel support to Hope's projects in Delhi; an orphanage, leprosy rehabilitation project and a healthcare project in the slums.

What you can do

Hope really are working with those who need it most and even a small donation will go far. Financial donations online are always the most significant way to help. The Asharan Orphanage in Delhi welcomes any donations of children's clothes, books and toys in good condition, for newborn to 9 years, or nappies. Note that due to the distance from the city centre, it is not possible to visit the Hope projects during the tour.

If there is time we will stop at the Mother Teresa Charitable Home en route to Bharatpur on the MG section of the tour.

www.hopefoundation.org.in

To book please call 0844 499 0901 • www.explore.co.uk

For bookings outside the UK please contact your local travel agent representing Explore.

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Land of the Maharajahs – Nagaur Cattle Fair

Issued 08 Apr 2010. Valid from
01 Jan 2010 to 31 Dec 2010

JOINING TOUR ABROAD

**18 days/17 nights Land Only
Delhi back to Delhi**

Join Delhi (day 1)

End Delhi (day 18)

GROUP FLIGHTS FROM LONDON

**19 days/18 nights Tour including
Connecting Group Flights
London-Delhi-London**

Depart from London Heathrow Airport for overnight flight to join tour in Delhi, next day (day 1 of Land Only itinerary). Transfer to hotel.

Return from Delhi (day 18 of Land Only itinerary) and arrive London Heathrow the same day.

Passengers with **non-group flights** booked through Explore should refer to their individual confirmation invoice for flight details. Transfers to and from the airport are not included unless purchased in addition to the tour package.

EXTRA HIGHLIGHT

NAGOUR CATTLE FAIR

Once a year around January/February time, the quiet Rajasthani town of Nagaur bursts into life with a massive livestock fair where tens of thousands of cattle, camels and horses are traded. Rural folk, many from various semi-nomadic tribes, converge from all over Rajasthan in a riot of colour – the men with their proud moustaches and brightly coloured turbans, women in their printed skirts and saris and heavy silver jewellery.

To add spice to the festivities, events like tug-of-war, camel and bullock races and cockfights along with enchanting folk music add a surreal charm to the whole festival. One of the most photogenic features of the festival is the vibrant red-chilly market. The "mirchi bazaar" as it is known locally, is the largest in Asia. We will spend 2 nights at the festival grounds accommodated in a special fixed camp featuring large pre-erected fully furnished tents with en suite facilities. One of the benefits of visiting Nagaur Cattle Fair is that relatively few tourists attend, allowing for a more intimate interaction with the local folk.

RD 03FEB11

Day 1. Join in Delhi; city tour

In the afternoon we will enjoy a sightseeing tour of both the Old and New city. **Overnight hotel H++.**

Day 2. To Jaipur

Leaving the capital by train this morning, we head west into Rajasthan. In the afternoon we enjoy a city tour which includes visits to the City Palace, Observatory and we also have the chance to explore a little of the old city. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 3. Drive to Mandawa

We drive to the colourful former merchant's town of Mandawa where we have the late afternoon free to walk amongst the many 'painted havelis'. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

Day 4. Drive to Bikaner

A short drive takes us to Nawalgarh, where we tour the vividly painted houses and impressive havelis (merchant's houses) in the Shekhavati area of the town. The

buildings are decorated with bold, highly coloured folk art depicting elephants, horsemen, parrots, peacocks, and festive scenes like weddings. We also visit the main bazaar before driving to the desert city of Bikaner (approximately 5 hours). Situated directly on the ancient camel caravan routes that came from Africa and West Asia, Bikaner was once a great trading centre. Its colourful bazaars and buildings of reddish-pink sandstone still suggest its ancient wealth. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 5. In Bikaner

This morning we take a tour to the Junagarh Fort built by Raja Rai Singh (1571-1611) which is distinguished by its high defensive light red sandstone walls. The well preserved palaces within the fort area are noted for their fine stone carvings. Bikaner still remains a defensive town, and was the home of the famous Camel Corps. We will also take the opportunity to visit the Old town and Bhandasar Jain Temple. The afternoon is left free for further discoveries such as an optional trip to Deshnoke (Rat) Temple. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 6 & 7 Drive to Nagaur; at the Cattle Fair

Leaving Bikaner behind we drive across the deserts to Nagaur and check into our fixed camp, specially erected near the site of the Cattle Fair. Its not just cattle but thousands of camels and horses are also traded. The normally quiet town, will now be teeming with livestock traders and their families all arriving for the start of the Fair. Our time for the next one and a half days will be left unstructured to allow the opportunity to mingle amongst the traders, absorb the atmosphere and to witness the hustle and bustle of this very special and unique event. **2 nights fixed camp C+ (included meals: Bx2, Lx2, Dx2).**

Days 8 to 9. Drive to Jaisalmer; in Jaisalmer

We drive across the great Thar Desert to Jaisalmer. Every corner of this desert city presents an unforgettable sight. Here the Rajput nobles and wealthy merchants havelis have intricately carved facades and our local guide will show us some of the most impressive. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: Bx2).**

Days 10 & 11. Camel Safari

Our camel safari allows us to recapture the traditional means of desert travel. For one night we plan to camp in the desert. 2-man tents and all food and cooking equipment are provided. Covering about 10-12km each day, we ride our camels from village to village. Many people find that they prefer to combine riding with periods of walking, so ensure that you have appropriate footwear. **1 night camping C (included meals: B, L, D). 2nd day arrive Jaisalmer for overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, L).**

Day 12. Drive to Jodhpur

This morning we drive to Jodhpur, where the impregnable fortress commands a superb panorama of the surrounding countryside. Arriving mid afternoon the rest of the day is free. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 13. In Jodhpur

A morning visit to the Meherangarh Fort in Jodhpur, built across the top of a steep escarpment. This afternoon there is the chance to make an optional visit to some nearby Bishnoi villages. **(included meals: B).**

Day 14. Drive to Ghanerao

We have a long drive today through the Aravalli Hills to Ghanerao where we overnight in a historic converted maharajahs mansion. **Overnight hotel H+ (included meals: B, D).**

Day 15. Drive to Udaipur via Kumbulgarh

After a visit to Kumbulgarh's imposing Fort and Palace we continue to the lakeside city of Udaipur. **2 nights hotel H+ (included meals: B).**

Day 16. In Udaipur

We have a day full day to relax in Udaipur. A city sightseeing tour can be arranged, or you may wish to take a boat trip or hire bicycles. **(Included meals: B).**

Day 17. Fly to Delhi

This afternoon we fly back to Delhi. **Overnight hotel H++ (included meals: B).**

Day 18. Tour ends Delhi

(Included meals: B).

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