

Jaipur

3 days | Starts/Ends: Delhi



A favourite of travellers, the architecturally flamboyant capital of Rajasthan is often referred to as the 'Pink City'. Enjoy a visit to the City Palace, the Amber Fort and Jantar Mantar, a medieval astronomical observatory.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- The ornate and sprawling City Palace
- Jantar Mantar Observatory - nearly 300 years old and still giving accurate readings

What's Included

- Return train journey from Delhi to Jaipur, air-conditioned chair class
- 2 nights standard accommodation (superior and deluxe available on request) including breakfast daily
- Guided sightseeing in Jaipur. Travel by jeep to the Amber Fort in Jaipur
- Services of English-speaking Indian guides at some sites
- Transfer from hotel to New Delhi railway station
- Transfer from New Delhi railway station to hotel (if additional accommodation has been booked) or to the airport

- Entrance fees for included excursions

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas
- Laundry, drinks, items of a personal nature
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Delhi to Jaipur

Delhi - Jaipur. Early morning transfer to New Delhi railway station for Shatabdi Express train to Jaipur - air conditioned chair class. Arrive to UNESCO-listed Jaipur and transfer to your hotel.

Enjoy a sightseeing tour this afternoon taking in the wonderful sights of the City Palace and Museum, Hawa Mahal and Jantar mantar.

The capital of Rajasthan, also known popularly as the 'pink city', Jaipur was founded in the year 1727. Here you will see the Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds), which remains only a façade today, was originally built to enable ladies of the royal family to watch the everyday life and processions of the city.

The Jantar Mantar (Observatory) was built between 1728 and 1734. Each of the instruments serves a particular function and each gives an accurate reading.

Situated in the centre of the city occupying a large area divided into a series of courtyards, gardens and buildings, the City Palace is an interesting place to visit. You can see the textile and costume museum, arms and armour museum, art gallery and hall of public and private audience. **Overnight - Jaipur**

Day 2 : Amber Fort

After breakfast, head out to the Amber Fort, a Rajput extravaganza. For security and defence purposes, the impressive fort has a commanding view of the surrounding area, sheer walls and a curved route that leads to the palaces within. The fort is beautifully mirrored in Maota Lake, which stands adjacent to the Dilaram Garden. The private apartments begun by Man Singh in the 17th century combine Hindu and Mughal styles and the Sheesh Mahal (Hall of Mirrors), its walls covered with tiny mirrors, becomes a dazzling fantasy with the light of a single match! Make sure you visit the Jag Mandir or the Hall of Victory, glittering with mirrors, Jai Mahal and the Kali Temple.

Note: On departures prior to 01 October 2016 there will be the option to reach Amber Fort by elephant rather than jeep. **Overnight - Jaipur (B)**

Day 3 : Jaipur to Delhi

Jaipur - Delhi. Free time in morning to do your own thing. Late afternoon transfer to

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Jaipur

Jaipur railway station for Shatabdi Express train to Delhi - air conditioned chair class. Upon arrival in Delhi, transfer to hotel (should you have booked additional accommodation for this night) or to the airport for your onward flight.(B)

Shatabdi Express Schedule

Note: The Shatabdi Express train runs daily except Wednesdays.

Tipping

Tipping is much a part of Indian Culture. For a job well done we would suggest that you reserve the following amount per person per day to cover tips along the way.

- INR400 (USD\$8.50) if the day includes local guide & sightseeing
- INR200 (USD\$4.50) if the day excludes local guide & sightseeing

Festival India

India is a country of colourful festivals and special events. Two of the biggest festivals in the Hindu calendar are Diwali (Deepavali) and Holi. Meanwhile, the Pushkar Camel festival in Rajasthan brings together one of the most colourful spectacles on earth.

Diwali – the Festival of Light is the happiest festival of the Hindu calendar. At night, countless oil lamps are lit to show Rama the way home from his period of exile. In all the festival lasts 5 days. On day 3, time is spent worshipping Lakshmi – the goddess of fortune. Traditionally, this is the beginning of the new financial year for companies. Diwali has also become the Festival of Sweets. Giving sweets has become as much of a part of the tradition as lighting oil lamps and firecrackers. It is also celebrated by the Jains as their New Years Day. For Diwali dates this year and next, please visit our website.

Holi – the Festival of Colour is one of most exuberant Hindu festivals, with people marking the end of winter by throwing coloured water and powder (gulal) at one another. It gets quite mad! Don't wear good clothes on this day, and prepare to duck! On the night before Holi, bonfires are built to symbolise destruction of the evil demon Holika. It is mainly a northern festival; there is no real winter to end in the south, so it isn't as

widespread there. Please visit our website for Holi dates this year and next.

If you are interested in visiting India whilst one of the above or many other festivals are on, head to the India - Unique Adventures section of our website.

Fabulous Food

India's vast range of climates, cultures and peoples has produced a very diverse culinary repertoire. Curry is the word that springs to mind when people think of India food. Believe it or not, there is no such thing as 'curry' in India. It's an English invention, an all-purpose term to cover the whole gamut of Indian spicing. Although all Indian food is certainly not curry, this is the basis of Indian cuisine. Curry doesn't have to be that hot it'll blow your head, although it can be made that way, if you ask! Rather, for the most part Indian food is very, very aromatic, since the spices used by Indian chefs and cooks in India don't arrive in the cooking pot via a pre-packed tub of spice.

Indian chefs and cooks have about 25 spices on their regular list and it is from these that they produce the curry flavour.

Normally spices are freshly ground with a pestle and mortar, and blended in certain combinations to produce varying flavours and heat. It is the freshness of the spices that transform the dish. Curries can be vegetable, meat-lamb, mutton or chicken in content, though never beef. The cow is sacred to the Hindu people and India in general, so it is extremely rare to see beef on any menu across the country. Lamb also substitutes beef at McDonalds in India. Ask for a Maharajah Mac!

Thalis

Thalis are an all-purpose Indian dish offering a variety of curried vegetable dishes, relishes, poppadams, puris or chapatis and a mountain of rice. Often served on a metal tray with a number of small bowls known as katoris holding each dish or just small indentations moulded into the metal tray, Thalis are consistently tasty and cheap.

Secular India

India, despite being a secular state, harbours arguably the world's richest heritage of spirituality and religious experience. India's major religion, Hinduism is practised by more than 80% of the population. In numbers, that translates to in excess of 700 million people.

No definition of Hinduism truly justifies the true meaning and significance of Hinduism. Hinduism has many layers. Hinduism is not just a religion but a complex body of social, cultural, religious beliefs and practises evolved in and largely confined to the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is marked by a caste system, an outlook tending to view all forms and theories as aspects of one eternal being and truth, and the practice of the way of works, the way of knowledge, or the way of devotion as a means of release from the round of rebirths. It is not based upon a single scripture or the teachings of one prophet. It has no founder, central authority or hierarchy. You can't be converted; to be a Hindu you must be born one. The strictly orthodox maintain only a person born in India of Hindu parents can truly claim to be Hindu.

Hinduism has the largest number of adherents of any religion in Asia. Along with Buddhism, Jainism and Zoroastrianism, it is one of the oldest extant religions with roots extending back to 1000BC. Buddhism and Jainism arose around the same time as one another in the 6th century BC at a time of social and religious discontent. Both were reactions against the strictures of Brahminical Hinduism. Although more recent, Sikhism too has its roots in a protest movement in the late 15th century, the bhakti (devotional tradition) that started in southern India as a reaction against the caste system and Brahmin domination of ritual. It was conceived at a time of great social upheaval and was an attempt to fuse the best of Islam and Hinduism.

Today, there are some 16 million Sikhs in India, mostly from Punjab. The Golden Temple in Amritsar is the holiest shrine of Sikhism. Islam was introduced to the north by invading armies (in the 16th century the Mughal empire controlled much of India) and to the south by Arab traders.

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Today, Islam is the largest minority religion in the country with in excess of 100 million adherents. Christianity arrived in southern India not with the first Europeans but with Syrian immigrants in the 4th century. A sect of the Syrian Orthodox church was established and still survives today, along with other eastern Orthodox sects. Catholicism arrived with the Portuguese and Protestantism with the English and Dutch. Today, India has around 18 million Christians, of who around 75% are South Indian.

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