



INSIDER  
JOURNEYS

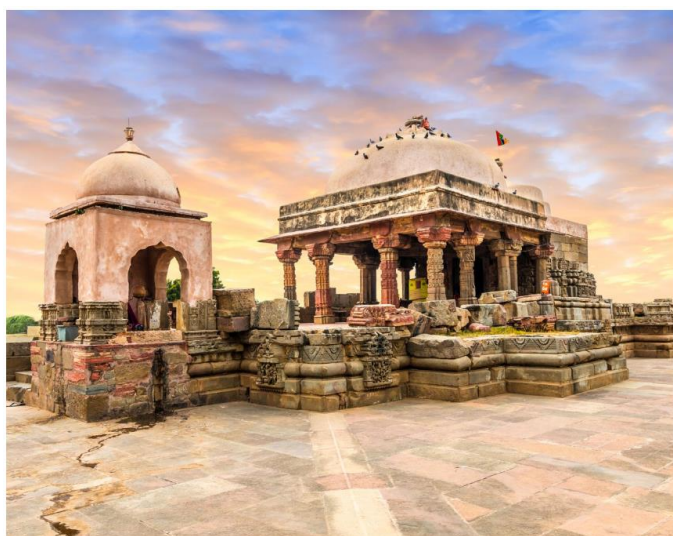
## Highlights of Rajasthan

Duration  
**14 days**

Guaranteed  
**4 travellers**

Group size  
**16 travellers**

Price  
**From AUD \$ 4,676**



### WHAT TO EXPECT

Visit the Taj Mahal, a timeless symbol of love. The gleaming white marble of this magnificent monument preserves the profound love of a man for his wife. Embark on an exhilarating game drive in one of India's finest forests, Ranthambore National Park, in search of the majestic Royal Bengal Tigers. Immerse yourself in local traditions as you share a memorable dinner with a welcoming Jaipur family. Experience the authentic desert of Rajasthan with a captivating camel ride in Manvar. Prepare to be enchanted by the breathtaking beauty of Lake Pichola in Udaipur, where a serene boat ride awaits you.

#### Day 1: Arrival in Delhi

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in Delhi, a transfer will take you to your hotel. In the evening, gather in the reception area of your hotel to meet your tour leader and the rest of your group for welcome drinks and a tour briefing. Please note that international flights often arrive in Delhi late at night, so your tour briefing may be scheduled for the following day.

#### Day 2: Explore New Delhi

This fascinating city has many faces, from ancient alleyways and monuments of Old Delhi to regal New Delhi. Today, we begin our exploration of this historic city, of over 15 million people, with a drive to the Red Fort. View this monumental 400-year old landmark from outside – a great opportunity for a photo. Then embark on a bicycle rickshaw ride through colourful Chandni Chowk – one of the oldest and busiest markets in Old Delhi – and then to Delhi's famous spice market, Khari Baoli. Afterwards, take a fascinating walk through the food street of Parathey wali gali, perhaps stopping to sample some local food or masala chai. Walk to the great mosque of Delhi, the Jama Masjid, said to be the largest mosque in India, dating back to the mid seventeenth century before continuing to the stunning Gurudwara Bangla Sahib to get a glimpse of Sikh worship. After lunch we visit the 16th century tomb of the Mughal emperor Humayun, with graceful architecture and recently restored ornamental gardens. This World Heritage-listed site provides an introduction to Mughal architectural style which reached its peak in the magnificence of the Taj Mahal. Drive past Rajpath – home to India's government buildings and the President's residence, all featuring graceful Lutyen's architecture which characterises New Delhi, and India Gate, a memorial to Indian soldiers who gave their lives during World War One. Finally, end this memorable day with a look at Lodhi art district.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Guided city tour of Delhi, Bicycle rickshaw ride through Chandni Chowk and Khari Baoli, Taste - Walk along one of Delhi's most famous food streets

### Day 3: Delhi to Agra

After breakfast, we drive to Agra, a journey of approximately 4 hours. Check-in and after lunch visit Agra's imposing fort. Built by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1565, it was also home to Emperor Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal and was later imprisoned here by his son. Enjoy your first tantalizing glimpses of the great domes of the Taj from the Fort's ramparts, on the banks of the holy Yamuna River. Also visit a marble-inlay workshop, to see the intricate work and unique skill which goes into each finely detailed piece of marble inlay, using a variety of beautiful semi-precious stones. Retire early tonight in preparation for your early start tomorrow.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Tour of Agra's fort, Arts & Craft - Visit a marble-inlay workshop in Agra

### Day 4: Agra to Ranthambore National Park

Rise early to see the magnificent Taj Mahal at dawn. Commenced by Emperor Shah Jahan in 1631 and completed in 1653, it was dedicated to his beloved second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who tragically died in childbirth. Enter through the West gate with its arch framing and revealing the beauty of the Taj within. Take time to marvel at the Taj's unique and stunning symmetry, and the exquisite pearly marble, bathed in the pink light of dawn. Explore many perspectives from the platforms, pavilions and gardens around the main tomb, and the marble walls decorated with a myriad of semi-precious stones in the 'pietra dura' inlay work. Return to your hotel for a late breakfast, and afterwards check out and depart for Ranthambore National Park. En route we stop at Abhaneri village to enjoy a high tea and a visit to 1,300-year old Chand Baori Stepwell. The drive to Ranthambore will take you into Rajasthan and its distinctive rural environments. Don't be surprised to share some roads with camel carts, goat herds or tractors hidden under metres of hay! You will arrive in Sawaii Madhopur late afternoon and check in to your hotel.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Unique - Visit of the Taj Mahal at sunrise, High tea in Abhaneri village, Visit of Chand Baori, a 1,300-year old stepwell

### Day 5: Ranthambore National Park

One of India's most famous national parks and an early Project Tiger reserve, Ranthambore covers an area of more than 1,300 square kilometres and is home to a host of wildlife such as Sambar, Chital and Barking Deer, Jackal, Hyaena, Sloth Bear, Leopard, and of course its much-celebrated Tigers, estimated to be over 35 in number. The park's picturesque lakes are home to huge Marsh Mugger crocodiles and a host of colourful water birds, especially in winter months when Ducks, Storks, Waders and Eagles migrate from as far as Siberia and Mongolia. Rise early for a dawn game drive, as this is one of the best times to see wildlife. Seeing a Tiger is to some extent a matter of luck, with peak sightings from February to April, but in recent years our groups have enjoyed a high sighting rate. In addition to wildlife, the park's terrain is ruggedly beautiful, with Ranthambore's fortress on the plateau above recently receiving World Heritage status, and lakes fringed with ruined Rajput pavilions. The game drive will take around 4 hours after which you will return to your hotel for a late breakfast. There will also be an opportunity to stop at a unique local women's cooperative where you can see beautiful local handicrafts and have a cup of chai with the women. Depart again for a late afternoon game drive of around 3 hours in duration.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Unique - Game drive at dawn in Ranthambore National Park (4 hours), Social - Stop at a local women's cooperative, Late afternoon game drive in Ranthambore National Park (3 hours)

### Day 6: Ranthambore National Park to Jaipur

Depart by road for Jaipur, a journey which lasts around 4-5 hours. Jaipur is Rajasthan's capital and one of Rajasthan's most iconic and colourful cities. Jaipur's façades were painted a pinkish-ochre, a colour traditionally associated with hospitality, to celebrate the arrival of England's Prince of Wales in 1876. The colourful tradition has been maintained ever since and gives Jaipur a unique style of its own. After lunch, enjoy a visit to Jantar before taking a pink rickshaw

ride to your hotel to check-in. Finish the day with some free time to explore – a chance to shop for Rajasthani handicrafts in Jaipur's popular bazaar streets, where jewellery, fabrics, lamps, bangles, bags and shoes sit alongside spices, oils and everyday items. This evening you might like to have a henna tattoo or palm reading (at your own expense) or join your tour leader for the experience of seeing a Bollywood movie in one of India's finest art deco cinema halls.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Pink rickshaw ride, Visit to Jantar, Arts & Craft - Bollywood movie in one of India's finest art deco cinema halls

#### **Day 7: Explore Jaipur**

Begin today with a visit to a local milk market. Witness it coming to life, with turbaned farmers cycling their fresh milk in and haggling over prices in ways little changed over the past century or more. After this insight of a farmer's daily life, continue on to admire the striking façade of the Hawa Mahal, the Palace of the Winds, designed for the royal ladies to watch the processions and daily life of the city without being seen themselves – a result of the strict "purdah" which was observed until the 20th century. The impressive Amber Fort, around 20 minutes' drive outside Jaipur itself, is our main site for the morning. This imposing fort is situated atop a mountain in the midst of stark and dramatic landscape and dates back to 1592. You will drive up to the fort by jeep and explore the various buildings. Marvel at the beautifully painted traditional Mughal doorways and the remarkable Sheesh Mahal with its thousands of mirrored tiles. Walk down from the fort and return to downtown Jaipur. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to continue your exploration of Jaipur. In the evening venture into the old walled city and enjoy dinner with a local family in their historic haveli home. Learn about local life in Jaipur and also see how some typical Rajasthani dishes are prepared.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Unique - Immersion in a local milk market in Jaipur, Visit of Amber Fort, Taste - Dinner with a local family in their historic haveli home

#### **Day 8: Jaipur to Kherjarla**

After breakfast start your journey to Kherjarla, deep in the Rajasthan countryside. Arriving early afternoon, you can settle into your remarkable accommodation for the night – the stunning 400-year old Fort Kherjarla. This property is steeped in history and a section of the Fort remains the residence of the royal family and is considered one of the best heritage hotels in India. Enjoy some free time to explore this wonderful property or take a short market and village walk with your tour leader. Later in the day take a jeep safari to surrounding local villages where you can witness local craftsmen at work and visit a historic 6th century Durga Mata temple. This is a great opportunity to experience small town Rajasthan and the many traditional scenes such as cobblers, tailors, metal workers and vendors in the town's colourful streets. In the evening, enjoy a cooking demonstration in the forts grounds, with local musicians providing entertainment.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Short market and village walk (optional), Excursion to surrounding villages to see local craftsmen at work, Visit of a historic 6th century Durga Mata temple, Taste - Cooking demonstration in the forts grounds, accompanied by local musicians

#### **Day 9: Kherjarla to Manvar Desert Camp**

Depart Kherjarla by road and head towards Rajasthan's famous Thar Desert, which stretches all the way to the border with Pakistan. The desert is inhabited by several unique communities with rich traditions alive to this day, and the camel continues to play an important working part in desert lives. Here we will reach our accommodation and desert home for the evening. Enjoy a dinner in the desert. Tonight your home is in spacious and comfortable Rajasthani tents (all ensuite equipped), with musicians bringing the evening desert night to life.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

- Activities included: Unique - Night in a Rajasthani tent in the desert, with musical performance

#### **Day 10: Manvar Desert Camp to Jodhpur**

This morning explore traditional desert villages around your camp on an open air jeep safari. Learn about the tribal Bishnoi people who live here and their rich traditions. Small herds of chinkara (Indian gazelle), Nilgai (blue bull), flocks of colourful Peafowl and partridges commonly share the fields and villages. Witness camels being used in agriculture, Rajput men at work with their brilliant turbans and signature gold earrings, and women in colourful saris with arms decked in bone bangles. Visit a village house and you may see local artisans such as potters and blacksmiths at work. After the morning's exploration, we depart for Jodhpur, sometimes called the 'Blue City' due to many brightly-painted buildings, traditionally signifying the home of a high caste Brahmin family. Jodhpur is a classic Rajasthani desert outpost dominated by its breath-taking fortress.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch
- Activities included: Exploration of traditional desert villages

#### **Day 11: Explore Jodhpur**

Begin today's touring with a visit to the imposing Meherangarh Fort, surely one of India's most impressive forts and a dominating feature of the city. You will enter via a convenient lift, installed by the current Maharajah, taking you up to the fort's fine museum housing royal palanquins, elephant howdahs and regal costumes. The fort ramparts offer stunning views of the blue city below, out to Umaid Bhawan Palace where the royal family reside to this day. Walk from the fort down to the city's colourful bazaar, famed for its colourful bangles and jutis, the stylish leather slippers favoured by locals and visitors alike. The bazaar is alive with Rajasthani colour and is a popular shopping stop for desert women from outlying communities. You may also want to try the special Jodhpur lassi poured at a tiny but famous shack of a café near the clock tower, or some of the special fried snacks unique to the bazaar. Enjoy your afternoon at leisure or further explore the town of Jodhpur.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Visit of the Meherangarh Fort, Unique - Walk from the Meherangarh fort down to Jodhpur's colourful bazaar

#### **Day 12: Jodhpur to Udaipur**

Depart Jodhpur this morning for your drive through scenic southern Rajasthan to Udaipur. Around midday you will reach the celebrated temples of Ranakpur. These intricately-carved temples are one of the major pilgrimage sites for devotees of the Jain faith, one of India's ancient religions. The main temple is around 600 years old and features nearly 1500 marble supporting pillars, all elaborately decorated. After lunch nearby, we continue to the famous lake city of Udaipur, with its lakes framed by rugged hills and palaces, and lively old town. After arriving in the late afternoon enjoy your evening at leisure.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Excursion to the temples of Ranakpur

#### **Day 13: Explore Udaipur**

This morning begin your city tour of Udaipur with a heritage walk through some of the lively laneways of this white-washed town. Continue on to the City Palace. The Palace has been added to over the years by various Maharanas, the mighty rulers of Udaipur, with residential and military sectors and sweeping views over the town and Lake Pichola. In the afternoon, you are free to explore or make last minute handicraft purchases before a late afternoon cruise (water levels permitting) on Lake Pichola past the fairy tale Lake Palace – the perfect end to your Rajasthan exploration. This evening join your fellow group members for a delicious farewell dinner of north Indian delicacies in one of Udaipur's many fine restaurants.



- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Heritage walk of Udaipur, Visit of the City Palace, Afternoon cruise on Lake Pichola

## Day 14: Depart Udaipur

It's time to say goodbye, but just think of all the wonderful stories you will take home. A transfer will take you to the airport for your onward travel.

- Meals included: Breakfast

## Inclusions

### Insider Experiences

Arts & Craft - Visit a marble-inlay workshop in Agra  
 Arts & Craft - Bollywood movie in one of India's finest art deco cinema halls  
 Social - Stop at a local women's cooperative  
 Taste / Arts & Craft - Cooking demonstration in the forts grounds, accompanied by local musicians  
 ★ Taste - Walk along one of Delhi's most famous food streets  
 Taste - Dinner with a local family in their historic haveli home  
 Unique - Visit of the Taj Mahal at sunrise  
 Unique - Immersion in a local milk market in Jaipur  
 Unique - Game drive at dawn in Ranthambore National Park (4 hours)  
 Unique - Night in a Rajasthani tent in the desert, with musical performance  
 Unique - Walk from the Meherangarh fort down to Jodhpur's colourful bazaar

### Accommodation



12 nights in 3-4 star hotels  
 1 night in a luxury tented camp

### Transport



Airport transfer on arrival and departure  
 Air-conditioned vehicle  
 All flight specified in itinerary

### Meals



Daily breakfast  
 2 local lunches  
 6 local dinners

### Touring



English speaking tour guide  
 All entrance fees  
 All tipping

Contact your local travel agent