



INSIDER
JOURNEYS

Iconic India

Duration
17 days

Guaranteed
4 travellers

Group size
16 travellers

Price
From AUD \$ 6,588



WHAT TO EXPECT

Experience the charm of Old Delhi on a rickshaw ride tour, immersing yourself in the vibrant way of life. In Varanasi, witness the ancient city come to life on a boat ride accompanied by a traditional flute artist. Explore the mesmerizing Ghats of Varanasi and indulge in local snacks like samosas. Discover the Pink City of Jaipur on a rickshaw tour, guided by well-trained women who reside in the slums and low-income areas of Jaipur. Immerse yourself in village life with a walk to Deogarh village. A scenic rural train ride offers panoramic views of scrub jungle and surrounding hills, providing a simple yet captivating journey. Finally, be captivated by the beauty of Lake Pichola in Udaipur as you enjoy a serene boat ride.

Day 1: Arrival in Delhi

Welcome to India! Upon arrival in Delhi, you will be welcomed and transferred 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 – Varanasi

This morning starts by taking a short flight to Varanasi. Drive straight from the airport to Sarnath, a complex of stupas and temples where more than 2,500 years ago Buddha gave his first sermon, and which now attracts Buddhist pilgrims and other visitors from around the world. Explore the vibrant trading streets of Varanasi's old town, where lanes are so narrow vehicles are unable to gain access, before continuing to the city's famous riverbank to embark on a boat ride along the ghats for a fantastic view of the evening aarthi ceremony where Hindu priests stage a spectacular offering.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch
- Activities included: Spiritual - Evening "aarthi" ceremony on a boat along the Ganges river

Day 4: Explore Varanasi

Rise early to experience this unique city. Take a stroll along the ghats before commencing a boat trip to witness spectacular scenes, where thousands of Hindus bathe daily. We will board small boats, and from the river we have the perfect spot to watch the colourful ghats slowly come to life, as pilgrims begin to bathe themselves in the holy river and offer prayers as the sun rises – a sight believed to have changed relatively little for a millennia. Not only is Varanasi reputed to be one of the oldest cities in the world, it is also one of India's holiest sites. For any Hindu to die in Varanasi represents a chance to attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death, and smoke from the cremation ghats can be seen rising all hours of the day and night. Enjoy the sounds of a local musician on board your boat to add ambience to your journey. Take some free time after your early morning touring before taking a trip in the afternoon to a local ashram, to gain an understanding of what life is like in an ashram for many devotees throughout India.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Spiritual - Morning boat ride with folk musician on river Ganges to see Hindus' bath ritual in the holy river and offering prayers as the sun rises, Visit of a local ashram

Day 5: Varanasi to Agra

After breakfast, fly to Delhi before driving approximately 4 hours to Agra. Time permitting, watch the sunset with a view of the Taj Mahal from Mehtab Bagh gardens or take a short street walk around Agra with your tour leader.

- Meals included: Breakfast

Day 6: Agra to Jaipur

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. Later, return to your hotel for a late breakfast. After your hotel checkout, tour Agra's imposing fort on the banks of the holy Yamuna River. 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. We then drive to Jaipur.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Unique - Visit of the Taj Mahal at sunrise, Tour of Agra's fort

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.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Unique - Immersion in a local milk market, Visit of Amber Fort

Day 8: Jaipur to Jodhpur

Leaving Jaipur after breakfast, we spend the day travelling on good roads to Jodhpur. Another of Rajasthan's great cities, Jodhpur is known as the 'Blue City' due to the many brightly-painted buildings traditionally signifying the home of a high caste Brahmin family. The city is dominated by one of India's mightiest forts, the Meherangarh.

- Meals included: Breakfast

Day 9: 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 10: Jodhpur to Deogarh

Depart Jodhpur today by road for the village of Deogarh. Stroll the streets of Deogarh on a walking tour and gain an insight into daily life in such rural villages.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Visit of the village of Deogarh

Day 11: Deogarh to Udaipur

Leave Deogarh and drive to the celebrated temples of Ranakpur. Set in a picturesque hill location, the temple complex houses several Jain temples, produced from marble with intricate and beautiful carvings. After lunch nearby, continue to Udaipur by road. Check-in to your Udaipur hotel and perhaps take dinner in the nearby old town by the lake or explore the old city streets.

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

Day 12: Explore Udaipur

This morning begin your city tour of Udaipur with a visit 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 town and Lake Pichola. Following the palace, stroll through Udaipur's colourful market the Barra Bazaar. In the afternoon, you are free to explore or make last minute handicraft purchases before a sunset cruise on Lake Pichola past the fairy tale Lake Palace – the perfect end to your northern Indian exploration.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: City tour of Udaipur, Visit to the City Palace, Sunset cruise on Lake Pichola

Day 13: Udaipur to Aurangabad

Have a relaxing morning before checking out for your onward flight to Aurangabad. You are free to spend the afternoon at leisure, doing as much or as little as you please.

- Meals included: Breakfast

Day 14: Explore Aurangabad

After an early breakfast, venture approx. 3 hours to Ajanta Caves. The Ajanta Caves have 30 rock cut Buddhist caves which date from the 2nd century BCE to about 480 CE. The caves also include a visual form of the life of Buddha and interesting stories from Jatakas. Later, make your way back to Aurangabad.

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Excursion to Ajanta Caves

Day 15: Aurangabad to Mumbai

After breakfast enjoy a visit of Ellora Caves. The Ellora Caves are listed in the world-heritage list. They are located about 30 km from Aurangabad. The Kailash Temple of the Ellora caves is the most attractive masterpiece of the creator. Visit Daulatabad Fort. Later, transfer to the airport for your onward flight to Mumbai – The city that never sleeps!

- Meals included: Breakfast
- Activities included: Excursion to Ellora Caves, Visit of Daulatabad Fort

Day 16: Explore Mumbai

After breakfast, enjoy a heritage walk of Mumbai. Start from the Gateway of India where you will walk up Shivaji Marg past the members – only colonial relic Royal Bombay Yacht Club on one side and the Art Deco residential-commercial complex Dhanraj Mahal on the other. Visit the National Gallery of Modern Art, the David Sassoon Library, and the Keneseth Eliyahu Synagogue. Continue walking towards St Thomas' Cathedral before you end your walk at Churchgate station. This evening enjoy a farewell dinner at Konkon Café.

- Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner
- Activities included: Heritage walk of Mumbai, Visit the National Gallery of Modern Art, the David Sassoon Library, and the Keneseth Eliyahu Synagogue

Day 17: Departure from Mumbai

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

- Spiritual - Evening "aarthi" ceremony on a boat along the Ganges river
- Spiritual - Morning boat ride with folk musician on river Ganges to see Hindus' bath ritual in the holy river and offering prayers as the sun rises
- Taste - Walk along one of Delhi's most famous food streets
- Unique - Visit of the Taj Mahal at sunrise
- Unique - Immersion in a local milk market in Jaipur
- Unique - Walk from the Meherangarh fort down to Jodhpur's colourful bazaar

Accommodation

16 nights in 3-4 star hotels

Transport

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

Meals

- Daily breakfast
- 1 local lunch
- 1 local dinner

Touring

- English speaking tour guide
- All entrance fees
- All tipping

Contact your local travel agent