



# ESSENTIAL INDIA

**14**nights **15**days

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

- **DAY1-** Arrive Delhi
- **DAY2** – Delhi Sightseeings – Chandni chawk , jama masjid, Red fort, Qutab Minar, Humayuns Tomb, Raj Ghat. India Gate and presidential palalce
- **DAY3** – Transfer to Jaipur by luxury AC volvo bus
- **DAY4** – Jaipur sightseeings – Amber fort, City palalce, Hawa Mahal, Jantar Mantar observatory, exploring the Jaipur street markets
- **DAY5** – Transfer to Ranthambore + explore the historic Ranthambore Fort sorroundings
- **DAY6** – Full day wildlife game drive in Ranthambore National park
- **DAY7** – Transfer to Dhula village & walking tour around village
- **DAY8** – Transfer to Agra via Fatehpur Sikri
- **DAY9** – Full day Taj Mahal, Red fort, Baby taj
- **DAY10** – Transfer to Khajuraho via Orchha Temple complex
- **DAY11** – Full day Khajuraho temple complex
- **DAY12** – Transfer to Varanasi + Evening Ganga Arti Ceremony
- **DAY13** – Buddhist Sarnath temple complex
- **DAY14** – Ganges boat ride + Transfer to Delhi
- **DAY15** – Return flight from Delhi

## ITINERARY

### **DAY1 – FLIGHT to DELHI – Meet and greet at Delhi airport + Transfer to hotel**

Meet your Tour Manager at the Indira Gandhi International Airport after your arrival at Delhi. Later get transported to your hotel and rest for the day.

### **DAY2 – DELHI – Full day Delhi sightseeings**



Enjoy a leisurely start to the day, allowing yourself time to relax. Our tour of Old Delhi starts with a visit to the bustling laneways and shops of Chandni Chowk Bazaar, followed by the Jama Masjid, India's largest mosque designed by Shah Jahan. Lastly, we will marvel at the Red Fort, yet another

17th-century masterpiece by Shah Jahan. Unfortunately, the fort was plundered by the marauding armies of Nadir Shah and British soldiers after its construction.

After lunch, we begin our exploration of the planned city of New Delhi with a visit to the Qutab Minar, a towering stone monument built to symbolize the rich Islamic heritage and architectural brilliance of the time. Nearby is Humayun's Tomb, a wonderful example of Mughal architecture. In complete contrast to Old Delhi, we will head to Raj Ghat, a serene memorial dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi. Passing through the capital, we shall view India Gate, the Presidential Palace, and Parliament.



### **DAY3 – DELHI - JAIPUR –*Transfer to Jaipur by bus***



Today after breakfast you will be transferred to **Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan** by bus. The distance from Delhi to Jaipur is around 300 kms and it takes around 5 -6 hrs by road to reach there. Known as the Pink City for its rose-colored buildings, Jaipur is home

to the famous Amber Palace and revered craftwork in jewelry, enamel, and printed textiles. After you reach there, complete the check in formalities, freshen up and rest for the day. In the evening you can opt to explore the streets and market places on your own.

Dinner and overnight at Jaipur hotel.

### **DAY 4 – JAIPUR –*Full day Jaipur sightseeings***

Breakfast. Proceed to **Amber Fort**. The Fort sits on top of a rugged hilltop and overlooks Lake Moata. The Fort is unique in that it's outside, an imposing and rugged defensive structure, is very different from its inside, a lavish interior influenced by both Hindu and Muslim styles. Return to the base of the fort by jeep.



Continue to explore the city including a photo stop at **Hawa Mahal (the Palace of Winds)** as well as visit to the **City Palace, museum and the JantarMantar Observatory**.



Post lunch, enjoy a guided walking tour through the Pink City's offbeat streets and markets where the authentic way of life remains undisturbed.

Dinner and overnight stay at Jaipur.



**DAY5 – JAIPUR - RANTHAMBORE – Transfer to Ranthambore +Rnathambore Fort sorroumdings**



Today after breakfast, board your bus to be transferred to Sawai Madhopur and home to Ranthambore National Park.. Ranthambore is about 150 kms from Jaipur and it takes around 3 – 4 hrs to reach there. The park was originally the hunting reserve for the Maharaja of Jaipur and it was declared

a game sanctuary in 1955. In 1972, the park came under Project Tiger and finally in 1980 it became a National Park. Ranthambore is one of the best locations to get a close view of the tigers.

Reach Ranthambore and check in to our hotel. Post lunch late afternoon we explore the sorroumdings of historic Ranthambore Fort.

Dinner and overnight at Ranthambore.

**DAY6- RANTHAMBORE –Full day game drive in Ranthambore**

After breakfast go for a morning game drive in the national park. Ranthambore is one of the best locations to get a close view of Royal Bengal tigers They are sighted almost daily somewhere in the park - especially early in the morning. The luckiest visitors may catch a glimpse of tigers hunting, and the females taking care of their cubs. And seeing these magnificent animals in the wild is a fantastic experience.



Post lunch, go for a final afternoon game drive in the park while you enjoy its flora and fauna till evening. Ranthambore National Park is the perfect place to indulge in wildlife photography. Numerous animals are found in this park and it is common to spot antelopes, nilgai, sambhar

and chital. Down by the lake and at the water holes many other animals can be sighted like the sloth bear, wild boar, porcupine, jackal, leopard, jungle cat and crocodile. A large number of birds are also found within the park and there are over 300 different species of birds here.

Dinner and overnight at Ranthambore



### **DAY7 – RANTHAMBORE – DHULA VILLAGE – Transfer to Dhula Village + Walking tour around the village**

Today after breakfast get ready to be transferred to Dhula village to have a glimpse of Indian village life. After we reach Dhula village go



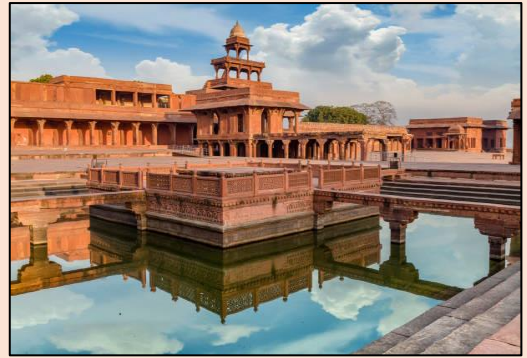
for a guided walking or cycling tour around the village . you may see camels and goats being driven to pasture by herdsmen in traditional garb, women carrying water pots to the village well or prayers being sung at the local temple. In Evening relax by the fire, and take in the

starry night sky. Tonight's accommodation is in spacious and comfortable tents outfitted with beds, lamps, and simple en suite bathrooms. Dinner and overnight at Dhula village.

### **DAY8 – DHULA VILLAGE - AGRA –Transfer to Agra + Enroute visit Fatehpur Sikri**

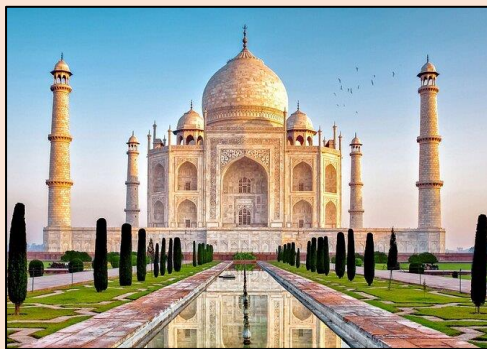
Today, after breakfast get ready to be transferred to Agra. On the way to Agra, we'll stop and visit the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. Founded in 1569 and abandoned just 16 years later, it's a perfectly intact example of Akbar's imperial court. Among the many noteworthy buildings is the Panch Mahal, most likely built as a

pleasure pavilion for the ladies of the harem. In the centre of the courtyard is the Pachisi Board where the emperor played a game of chess with slaves as pieces. Perhaps the finest structure of all is the lotus-shaped central pillar of the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience), an extraordinary capital supporting a vaulted roof.



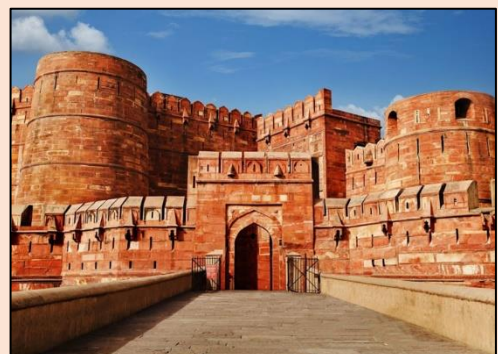
Dinner and overnight at Agra

### **DAY 9 - AGRA – Full day Taj Mahal + Agra Fort**



Today after breakfast we'll make our way to one of the seven wonders of the modern world, the **Taj Mahal**. The marble-domed building is perhaps one of the world's greatest symbols of eternal love, having been created by Shah Jahan as a funerary monument to his beloved wife, Mumtaz. Over 300 years have elapsed since its construction, but it still stands unscarred by age. It took over 22 years to build (1630-52) and an army of builders, artisans, and craftsmen to create the architectural masterpiece of marble and sandstone, which is said to change its colour depending on the time of day. We will aim to visit at sunset, when the surface of the Taj takes on a soft golden hue.

Post lunch, we'll visit **Agra Fort**. Built by Akbar the Great, entirely from red sandstone, it blends Persian, Islamic and Hindu architecture. The story goes that after losing his grip on power and being imprisoned by his son, Emperor Shah Jahan was confined here to a high tower,





where he spent his dying days gazing longingly downriver at his beloved Taj Mahal.

We'll also explore the gardens of Metah Bagh and the tomb of Itmad Ud Daulah, more commonly known as **Baby Taj** due to it being regarded as the first attempt at a Taj-like structure by the Mughals.

**DAY 10 -AGRA - KHAJURAHO – Transfer to Jhansi by train + Orchha Palace complex + Transfer to Khajuraho by car**

Board a train with service from Agra to Jhansi. The train ride is approximately 2.5 to 3 hours.

Meet your private driver for a transfer from the Jhansi train station to Khajuraho. Approximate transfer time is 3 hours.

Enroute visit the ancient **temple complex of Orccha**

Situated in a town in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, about 620 kilometers southeast of New Delhi, this unique location is one of the most popular tourist destinations in all of India.



**DAY 11 – KHAJURAHO - Full day Khajuraho Temple**

Khajuraho contains the largest group of medieval Hindu and Jain temples, which are famous due to the erogenous nature of the sculptures. The Khajuraho group of monuments has been listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is considered to be one of the "seven wonders" of India.



The city of Khajuraho was the original capital of the Chandela Rajputs, a Hindu dynasty that ruled this part of India from the 10th to the 12th century. These marvelous Khajuraho temples and the whole

surrounding area were enclosed by a wall with eight gates, each flanked by two golden palm trees. There were originally over 80 Hindu temples, of which only 22 now stand in a reasonable state of preservation, scattered over an area of about 8 square miles.



Your tour includes a visit to the **Kandariya Mahadev Temple**, the largest and most magnificent temple in Khajuraho. You will also visit the **Lakshman Temple**, a striking temple that is one of the three largest temples of Khajuraho. The temple faces the East and is dedicated to Lord Vishnu.



Continue to explore the Eastern group of temples, where you will visit the **Parsvanath Temple** which is this group's largest Jain temple and is exquisite in detail. The sculptures on

the northern outer wall are artistic in design with themes depicting in charming detail, everyday activity.

This afternoon visit the South Eastern group of temples including the **Duladeo Temple**, dedicated to Lord Shiva in the form of a linga. This was the last of the temples built during the Chandela period. The figurines carved in the temple have soft expressive features unlike the other temples and the walls have a display of carved celestial dancers or asparas. **The Chaturbhuj Temple** is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is the only temple which does not have erotic sculptures.



**DAY 12 – KHAJURAHO - VARANASI** *Flight to Varanasi + Evening Aarti ceremony and boat ride on the Ganges*



Enjoy your flight from Khajuraho to Varanasi today. The flight duration is approximately one hour.

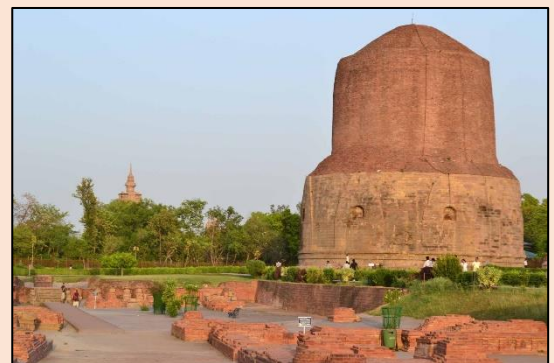
The Aarti Ceremony is a devotional Hindu ritual performed at dusk on the banks of the Ganges, using fire as an offering to, the affectionately referenced, Maa Ganga, goddess of the holiest river in India. Usually, a small oil lamp made of clay adorned with a candle and flowers is lit and floated down the river. It's a beautiful sight that takes place every sunset at the holy



Dasaswamedh Ghat. Young Hindu priests, all draped in saffron-colored robes, perform the highly choreographed ritual on an elevated stage facing the river. Clouds of incense fill the air, while priests chant and wave incense sticks in elaborate patterns or circle large flaming lamps that create a magnificent spectacle of colors against the darkened sky.

### **DAY 13 – VARANASI – *Sarnath excursion tour + Sarnath tour***

After breakfast at hotel proceed for an excursion to Sarnath, one of the main Buddhist centers in India. It is believed that Lord Buddha delivered his first speech after gaining Nirvana, or enlightenment here. Most of Sarnath's ruins are found in a, relatively, small and very well maintained area with the **Dhamek Stupa** - one of the most famous of all Buddhist stupas – dominating the site. It can be seen from, virtually,



anywhere you walk in Sarnath. Originally built during the reign of King Ashoka of the Maurya Dynasty (around 249 BCE), it has undergone a series of expansions and additions. It's solid, cylindrically-shaped edifice marks the spot where Lord Buddha preached the first sermon to his five disciples after attaining enlightenment in Bodh Gaya. Today, Buddhist pilgrims from around the world visit Sarnath to circumambulate the holy Stupa, chanting the mantra or sitting on the grass in solemn prayer



Explore the **Sarnath Museum**. The museum, which is part of the site, boasts a great collection of archeological artifacts .One of the most famous exhibit is the "lion capital of Asoka": this statue of four lions guarding the four cardinal directions has become the emblem of modern India



Lunch at local Vegetarian restaurant.

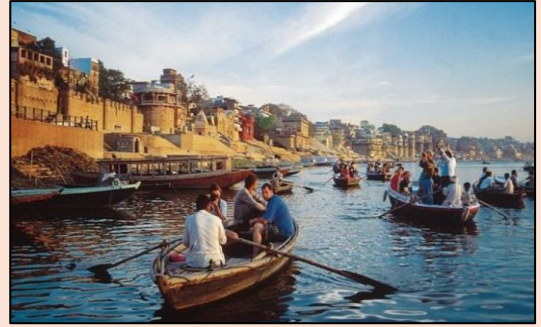
In the afternoon explore the city and its temples including a visit to the **Bharat Mata temple**. Unlike other temples in India which all house deities of gods and goddesses, this is the only temple dedicated to Mother India. The most peculiar thing about the Bharat Mata

Temple is that it houses a relief map of India, carved out of marble. Built by Babu Shiv Prasad Gupt and inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi in 1936. The statue of Bharat Mata is built in marble and is a model of undivided India, depicting the mountains, plains and oceans. Dinner at hotel.

### ***DAY 14 – VARANASI –DELHI - Sunrise Ganges Boat tour + Transfer to Delhi***

Early this morning, accompanied by your private guide, discover India's spirituality from another perspective — by taking an

unforgettable *sunrise boat ride on the Ganges*, floating past ghats as worshippers begin to appear on the banks. Varanasi's unique culture is associated with the river Ganges, where life and death intermingle. The living flock the ghats to pray with the belief that bathing in the waters of the sacred river would result in the remission of their sins, while the ashes of the dead are scattered in the water to break the cycle of reincarnation and let the soul rise to enlightenment.



Later transfer back to your hotel, have breakfast and then board your flight to Delhi.

Dinner at hotel.

### **DAY 15 – DEPART FROM DELHI - return Flight**

Have breakfast and then get ready to board your return flight from Delhi international Airport with happy memories of your trip.



We look forward to your next journey with us.

----- END OF JOURNEY -----

### **INCLUSIONS**

Hotels – 4star/5star

Meals – Breakfast , lunch, dinner

Transfer – private AC luxury vehicle

All entry tickets of the tour programmes

All sightseeings mentioned in the programme