

Rajasthan – India's Golden Triangle

Tour Code RA

17 February – 5 March 2021

Following a tour of Delhi, this journey travels into the heart of Rajasthan and explores many of the region's magnificent forts and palaces, atmospheric cities and stunning desert scenery. We visit the pink city of Jaipur, the golden city of Jaisalmer timed to include the famous Desert Festival, the blue city of Jodhpur and the highlight: the romantic city of Udaipur famous for its Royal residences and setting on Lake Pichola. We also have an included homestay to fully appreciate authentic Rajasthani hospitality in a tranquil village setting.



Amber Palace, Jaipur

ITINERARY

Day 1/Day 2 Depart London/Arrive in Delhi

Arrive Delhi today. On arrival you will be received and escorted to your hotel (your room is available from 12 noon onwards). Two nights at the Metropole hotel

Day 3 In Delhi

Visit the medieval Jama Mosque followed by a walking tour through the spice and crafts market of Old Delhi. In the afternoon you will be taken to explore New Delhi – including Humayun's Tomb, Qutab Minar and drive past Lutyens' Delhi. Welcome dinner at a city restaurant (B,D)

Day 4 Drive to Agra. Visit Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal

We drive to Agra this morning. Built in the early 16th century and the capital of mighty Mughals for a long time, Agra is famous for its beautiful monuments of the medieval times. This afternoon we have a tour of the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort. Begun in 1565, the Forts' magnificent palaces, towers, bastions, ramparts and gateways symbolise the power of the mighty Mughals. Made mostly of red sandstone it is strikingly similar to the Red Fort in Delhi. The Taj Mahal was built by Mughal Emperor Shan Jehan in the memory of his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal, the complex took 22 years to be completed and is today counted among the Seven Wonders of the World. It is particularly stunning at the time of sunrise and sunset. Overnight at the Ekaa Villa hotel (B)

Day 5 Drive to Jaipur. Visit Fatehpur Sikri

After a sunrise return visit to the Taj Mahal we journey to the deserted Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri, built by great Mughal Emperor Akbar in the 16th century to serve as the capital of his vast empire. A citadel of grand courts, palaces, mosques and gardens that rivalled the splendours of Delhi and Agra. Today, even after the passage of 400 years, the magnificence of this royal city has not faded and remains immaculately preserved. With time-permitting, we may also visit the stepwells of Abhaneri known for its 'baoris' or stepwells which were constructed by the locals to harvest rain water. These tanks were used as cool places of retreat and as water reservoirs during parched times of the year. Chand Baori is the most popular of the wells in the region, and it is one of India's deepest and largest. This colossal, delicately carved well is located in front of a temple. It was a ritual to wash the hands and feet at the well before visiting the adjoining temple. We arrive in Jaipur early in the evening and spend three nights at the Khandela Haveli hotel (B)

Day 6 In Jaipur. Visit Amber Fort and the City Palace

The capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur is known as the 'pink city' because of the pink paint applied to the buildings in its old walled city. Jaipur is steeped in history and culture and the past comes alive here in magnificent forts and palaces, where once lived the maharajas. We visit the Amber Fort, built in 16th century and subsequently added on to by successive rulers. Inside the fort, we see the Palace of Mirrors, inlaid with millions of tiny glistening mirrors, the hall of Public Audience and the beautiful manicured gardens. This afternoon we visit the City Palace, home of the present Maharaja, wonderfully laid out with large courtyards, balconies, cupolas, arched entrances and gardens, which are a combination of Rajput and Mughal architecture. Built in 1799 the Hawa Mahal or the Palace of Winds is one of the landmarks of Jaipur city, although now it is little more than a façade. It is a five-storey building in pink, built to enable the women of the harem to see the activities of the outside world without being seen (B,L)

Day 7 In Jaipur. Day at leisure

Jaipur has been widely regarded as the first modern planned city in the world. Even though the city was founded and built in the 18th century, the city amazes any modern town planner and architect for its brilliance of planning and beauty of architecture. Today is left free to explore Old Jaipur at one's own pace and soak up its atmosphere where artisans make traditional Indian crafts, including jewellery, silver and silk in the shadows of the great havelis (mansions) above (B)

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Day 8 Drive to Chandelao

A long but scenic drive today to Chandelao Garh; the ancestral home of the landowners of the area, tastefully converted into a simple but comfortable hotel. The Garh provides you an authentic experience of traditional Rajasthani hospitality in a tranquil village setting. The activities available at the property include village walks and bird watching. The host family of Chandelao is also involved with Sunder Rang, which is a self-help group of women of Chandelao involved in making traditional Rajasthani handicraft. We spend the afternoon at the lovely village and explore the surroundings (B,L,D)

Day 9 Drive to Khichan.

Khichan village is known for a large number of demoiselle cranes (locally called Kurjas) that visit the region every winter. This annual bird migration began with around a hundred cranes in the 1970s, when a local couple started feeding pigeons. Other villagers joined their efforts, and as of 2014, Khichan now hosts over 20,000 demoiselle cranes each year. Afternoon at leisure at the Resort or visiting the village. Overnight at the Kurja Resort (B)

Day 10 Witness the Desert Festival, Jaisalmer

After breakfast we spend time watching the flocks of cranes at the feeding grounds before proceeding to Jaisalmer. We visit the abandoned village of Kuldhara before arriving at the Desert Festival site in Jaisalmer. Performing puppeteers and acrobats, camel racing, folk dances and musical bands all feature in this wonderful display of rich and colourful Rajasthani folk culture! Two nights at the Hotel Glaal (B)

Day 11 In Jaisalmer

We start at the famous Fort and within its walls a palace with beautifully carved balconies and exquisitely carved temples and havelis built by the Jain community. The Fort also has a large living complex dating back to 12th to 15th century, where people still reside. Each house here is exquisitely carved, having filigreed work all over, and hence Jaisalmer is also called the "Museum City". Jaisalmer has some of the most magnificent havelis with intricate carvings. We visit the best examples (Salim Singh-ki-Haveli, Patwon-ki- Haveli and Nathmalji-ki-Haveli). Later in the afternoon we will once again be taken to the festival site to spend the rest of the day at the venue (B)

Day 12 Drive to Jodhpur

We drive to Jodhpur this morning. Founded in 1459, Jodhpur was once the capital of the Marwar State and a major trade centre in the 16th century due to its location on the ancient silk route. Today, Jodhpur has grown to become the second largest city of Rajasthan without shedding its medieval splendour. The afternoon is left free to relax or venture into this enchanting city. Two nights at the Ratan Vilas heritage property with dinner (B,D)

Day 13 In Jodhpur

We visit the imposing Mehrangarh Fort with its sprawling courtyards and intricately carved balconies. Close to the fort is the 19th century royal cenotaph, Jaswant Thada, a creation in white marble which displays some rare portraits of Jodhpur's rulers. We have lunch in the city and the afternoon is left free perhaps to colourful Sardar market with its narrow alleys leading to the bazaars featuring textiles, silver and handicrafts (B,L)

Day 14 Drive to Udaipur. Visit Ranakpur Temples

This morning we drive to Udaipur and visit the stunning Ranakpur Temples. Built in the 15th century, the Ranakpur temples are very well preserved and one of the most holy places for Jain pilgrimage. These temples lie in a remote and peaceful valley of the Aravali range. The main temple, dating back to 1439, is called the Chaumukha Temple or the "Four-faced temple" and is dedicated to Adinath; the first of Jain teachers. We have lunch after our visit and continue to Udaipur arriving in the early evening. Two nights at the Fatehgarh Heritage hotel (B,L)

Day 15 In Udaipur

The entire state of Rajasthan is replete with fantastic hilltop fortresses, exotic fairytale palaces and gripping legends of medieval chivalry and heroism. Our city tour today includes the huge City Palace, towering over one of the three great lakes, is the largest palace complex in Rajasthan and nearby Jagdish temple in Indo-Aryan style. It enshrines a black stone image of Lord Vishnu as Jagannath, the creator of the universe. Also the beautiful gardens of Sahelion-ki-bari have beautiful lawns, lotus pools, marble pavilions and marble elephant-shaped fountains. We have our farewell dinner at a one of the city's celebrated restaurants (B,D)

Day 16/17 Fly to London via Delhi

After a leisurely morning in Udaipur we transfer to the airport at lunchtime for our flight to Delhi where our tour ends at the international airport for our various flights home to London (B)

Cost £2795.00 per person in a twin room (price based on min grp size of 6) Single supplement £775.00



Blue City of Jaipur

Price includes –

- ▶ Tour accompanied from London by Patrick Syder FRGS
- ▶ Specialist local guides in each city
- ▶ Domestic return flight Udaipur/Delhi with Jet Airways
- ▶ All transportation by a/c bus
- ▶ Full sightseeing programme including all entrance fees
- ▶ Stays in quality hotels and heritage (former palace) properties
- ▶ All breakfasts, four lunches and four dinners at local restaurants
- ▶ Airport transfers
- ▶ Porter, hotel and restaurant staff gratuities
- ▶ Based on min group size of 6 passengers

PLEASE NOTE – personal travel insurance, visa fees, alcoholic drinks, guide and driver gratuities, international flights to and from Delhi are not included in the land tour cost

(Included meals denoted by B Breakfast, L Lunch, D Dinner)