

Rajasthan Explorer

Country(ies): India

Tour type: Small Group

Transport: A/C minivan/minibus and sleeper train

Group size: Min: 2 | Max: 12

Days: 15 days

Start Location: Delhi, India

End Location: Delhi, India

Meals: Breakfasts - 14, Lunches - 2, Dinners - 3

Highlights:

Old and New Delhi, Taj Mahal, Agra, local village in Suroth Mahal, Pink city of Jaipur, hill top fort, Abhaneri step well, Tigers in Ranthambore National Park, Holy town of Pushkar, Fort and Blue Streets of Jodhpur, Ranakpur Temples, Lakeside Udaipur



Itinerary

Day 1: Your Indian adventure starts in Delhi, hotel transfer included

When you arrive in Delhi - one of our staff will meet you and transfer you to your hotel. Once you've settled in, we'll run through the itinerary for the next few days and arrange a time to collect you tomorrow.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Single room supplement (INSGRE) Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour

Day 2: Exploring Delhi, Rickshaw Ride & Street Food Tasting

We start with a morning tour of India's capital, New Delhi. Nestled on the banks of the Yamuna River, New Delhi is a city where ancient and modern seamlessly blend together. We'll visit the India Gate - a 42-metre high archway, built in remembrance of the 82,000 soldiers who participated in the undivided Indian Army.

New Delhi is India's political hub as well, and we'll drive past many government buildings such as the President's Palace and the Parliament of India. We'll also pass Humayun's Tomb, the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent and a UNESCO World Heritage Site as well as the Bangla Sahab Gurudwara Sikh Temple.

We'll then hop onto a metro train with the locals at Connaught Place Station - as we make our way to Old Delhi. Here, we'll explore one of its oldest and busiest markets - the Chandni Chowk, before exploring the Chawri Bazar, famous for its brass, copper and paper creations.

We'll also be introduced to Old Delhi's unique street foods and delicacies, giving us a first taste of authentic Indian cuisine. Once our taste buds are sufficiently satisfied, we'll take a rickshaw ride to the Jama Masjid Mosque, one of the largest in India.

Finally we head to the train station to catch the overnight sleeper train to Udaipur. You'll see a lot of busy Delhi life through the windows as the train makes its way out of the city this evening.

OVERNIGHT: Delhi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 3: Head to Agra. Sheroes Hangout, Mughal Heritage Walk. First glimpse of the Taj Mahal

We head to Agra this morning, home of the famous Taj Mahal. After arriving in Agra we'll make a stop for lunch at the Sheroes Hangout Cafe. The cafe was set up by the Chhanv Foundation and is run by victims of acid attacks. The cafe works to raise awareness of acid attacks in India and to empower those who have sadly been the victims of these heinous crimes. Prior to gaining employment in the cafe, many of the 'Sheroes' led solitary lives, rarely going outside due to shame associated with their scars. At Encounters Travel we're proud to support such an organisation, which has the sole aim of helping these women find acceptance, a supportive community and a

means of income. Lunch will be included whilst at the cafe.

Once you've checked in into your hotel, we'll spend the afternoon on a Mughal Heritage Walk through the ancient village of Kachhpura and surrounding farmland on the banks of the Yamuna River across from the Taj Mahal and Red Fort. This walk has been designed by a local NGO and helps support the local community through employment and new infrastructure. During the walk one of the villagers will give a guide to their village life, the layout of their homes, with living, cooking & religious areas, the farming done, and the local cottage industry for leather shoe making which helps Agra export shoes all over the world. You'll also see some lesser known but important Mughal era monuments. Finally today we'll stroll around the park at Mehtab Bagh - originally built by Emperor Babur as the last in a series of 11 parks on the Yamuna River's east bank, before taking in the magnificent sight of the Taj Mahal at sunset.

A special evening option is available today, where you can join a Hindu family for a Vegetarian Thali cooking lesson and meal.

OVERNIGHT: Agra hotel

MEALS: Breakfast,Lunch

EXTRAS: Cook with a Hindu family in Agra

Day 4: Taj Mahal sunrise. Drive to Suroth Mahal, Village Walking tour

We start today early for our tour of the Taj Mahal. Truly one of the wonders of the world this elaborate monument to love was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan and took over twenty-two years to complete. Sunrise is a great time to visit as the light changes gradually with the colours of the Taj changing too.

After breakfast we leave the region's popular tourist areas and head into the heart of rural Rajasthan to the small town of Suroth. The property was a former palace, now welcoming guests as a hotel, but retaining its heritage charm, with rooms painted with murals.

The afternoon sees us exploring the village, interacting with the local villagers, getting invaluable insight into seeing their way of life. Our walking tour will pass by local shops, down narrow streets, we'll visit a small temple and perhaps even visit a local barber shop where you can have a shave or head massage. In the evening we'll have a cooking demonstration before enjoying dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

OVERNIGHT: Suroth Mahal heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast,Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 5: To Jaipur via the Abhaneri step well. Optional Bollywood Movie or Cooking Demo

Today we head to Jaipur, the capital and the largest city of the Indian state of Rajasthan in Western India. Enroute, we'll visit the Abhaneri step well, the largest and deepest step well in the world, which boasts 3500 steps and is 13 stories deep. You may recognise this as the place that Sonny tried to express his feelings for Sunaina in the recent movie The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel.

The remainder of the day in Jaipur will be free to explore at leisure or join one of our optional extras:

- A fun option this evening is to head out and watch a Bollywood movie at the Raj Mandir cinema.

- Another good choice for this evening is to visit a local family in their home for a cooking demonstration and dinner together.

OVERNIGHT: Jaipur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Jaipur Bollywood Movie - Raj Mandir Cinema Hot air balloon in Jaipur Jaipur Cooking demo and dinner with local family

Day 6: Amber Fort & Jaipur City. Block printing workshop

You have an option of going on an early morning hot air balloon ride over Jaipur, flying over its palaces, forts and lakes - a truly mesmerising experience.

If you chose to sleep a little later, your morning starts with a visit to the Amber Fort, the jewel in Jaipur's crown - an ancient fortress built on a hilltop in the 16th century dedicated to the ruling Kachhawa clan of Amber. Be mesmerised by this majestic architectural wonder, with its pink sandstone and marble palace shining in the sun. It's massive fortress walls sprawls across the hills, with many seeing a resemblance of the Great Wall of China.

Later, we return to the city for a tour of Jaipur, as we visit the strange Jantar Mantar monument, a collection of nineteen architectural astronomical instruments, built by the Rajput king Sawai Jai Singh II between 1724 and 1730. Jaipur was the first planned city of medieval India and we'll also explore its City Palace. Built by Raja Man Singh during 1729-1732 AD, the City Palace was once the seat of kings as it was from here that they ruled the region. This tangle of courtyards, manicured gardens and exceptionally crafted mahals is one of the most revered attractions in India.

We spend the remainder of the day walking in the walled city to discover some of Jaipur's famous crafts markets and craftsmen in action such as jewellers, silversmiths, textile workshops and bangle makers. Our tour will include a blockprinting workshop, where we learn the ways in which fabric is decorated using this ancient method and we'll also have a gemstone demonstration.

OVERNIGHT: Jaipur heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Hot air balloon in Jaipur

Day 7: Ranthambore - Home of the Bengal Tiger. Afternoon Game Drive

We leave Jaipur today and head to Ranthambore National Park, which is named after Ranthambore fortress, located within its boundaries. If you're looking to see tigers in the wild, this is the place to be. In 1973, the park was established as a sanctuary for the tigers and to help decrease the fatal interactions that were increasing between humans and tigers.

We'll have our first chance to see Tigers this afternoon as we join a shared canter for game drive through the park.

OVERNIGHT: Ranthambore Heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 8: Morning Game Drive in search of tigers

We'll head back out on an early morning game drive, giving you the best opportunity to see India's tigers in their natural habitat, but keep your eyes peeled for other wildlife such as leopards, sloth bears, black bucks, flying foxes, Indian porcupines, striped hyenas, jackals, jungle cats, wild boar, civets, desert cats, macaques, mole rats, and many more species.

We'll be transported through the jungle in an open-backed truck (shared canter), which allows us to travel deep into the park, as we search for India's unique wildlife. We'll also visit the ruined fort located within the boundaries of the park, which is beautifully elevated on a natural hummock, which towers at just over 200 metres high. The ancient ruined fort is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

In the afternoon you'll have some free time to relax or you could consider booking additional private jeep or shared game drives within the park.

OVERNIGHT: Ranthambore Heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS:

Day 9: Exploring the holy town of Pushkar

Today, we'll go on a morning drive to the town of Pushkar, located on the edge of the Thar Desert. Pushkar is one of India's oldest cities and also one of the Hindu religion's 5 most sacred dhams (pilgrimage sites). It is set around Pushkar Lake, whose waters are considered holy and are surrounded by 52 stone staircases which pilgrims use to bathe.

We'll arrive just in time for lunch, and once you've checked into your accommodation, we'll explore Pushkar Lake and its temples - including a 14th-century Jagatpita Brahma Mandir, dedicated to the god of creation and its surroundings. If time, there's also the option to take a sunset walk up to the Savitri Temple nestled in the Ratnagiri Hills which offers sweeping lake and valley views. There's also a cable car available to reach the temple.

Pushkar is also famous for its huge camel fair which takes place in October or November every year.

OVERNIGHT: Pushkar Heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 10: Travel from Pushkar to Jodhpur

We'll continue on our journey, with the destination being Jodhpur, the second largest city in Rajasthan.

Jodhpur, the "Blue City" of Rajasthan, is a mesmerizing destination where the mighty Mehrangarh Fort stands sentinel over a sea of houses painted in vivid shades of blue. This historic city boasts a rich tapestry of culture, with winding streets leading to bustling bazaars filled with handcrafted treasures like textiles, leather goods, and intricate jewelry. Jodhpur offers a captivating blend of ancient forts, grand palaces, and the timeless allure of the Thar Desert, making it a true Rajasthani gem.

OVERNIGHT: Jodhpur Heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 11: A walking tour of Jodhpur

Our morning starts with a visit to Mehrangarh Fort - one of the largest forts in India, standing on a perpendicular cliff, 410 metres above the city of Jodhpur. We'll also visit Jaswant Thada, a milky-white marble cenotaph built by Maharaja Sardar Singh of Jodhpur State in 1899 in memory of his father, Maharaja Jaswant Singh II.

We'll walk through the city, stopping to view the impressive Lord Krishna Temple - a marvel of rich architectural skill and craftsmanship, meeting with the priest and his family, before visiting Ram Rasoda, a community kitchen that has been in use for centuries.

We'll also visit the ancient temple of Jetha Bera, the deep step well of Toor ji ka Jhalra, said to be as old as the sixth century. It's an ancient well that often takes the shape of an inverted pyramid. For decades, the well sat filled with stagnant water, until the pool was recently purified and the steps were sandblasted.

Our walk takes us through narrow winding streets, between the city's famous blue-painted buildings to the grain, produce, silver, crafts and spice markets the streets around the clock tower. While we're walking, you can sample sweets such as Gulab jamun - a milk based sweet and Mawa Kachori - which is a fried puffed pastry stuffed with sweetened and flavoured khoya.

You'll have some free time in the afternoon to relax at the hotel or continue to explore at leisure.

OVERNIGHT: Jodhpur Heritage hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 12: Jain Temple & monkeys at Ranakpur. Continue to lakeside Udaipur

We make our way towards the beautiful lakeside city of Udaipur today, with a stop on the way in Ranakpur to visit the spectacular white marble Chaturmukha Jain Temple there, the largest and most important temple in the Jain religion built in the 15th century to commemorate the first Tirthankara of Jainism - Lord Adinath. We'll take an audio tour here, and also look out of the large population of monkeys that make the temple their home.

We arrive in Udaipur this afternoon, a city often dubbed as the 'Venice of the East', as it's set around a series of artificial lakes and is known for its lavish royal residences. It was founded in 1553 by Maharana Udai Singh of the Sisodia clan of Rajput, when he shifted his capital from the city of Chittorgarh to Udaipur. You'll have some free time this evening to begin exploring.

OVERNIGHT: Udaipur hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 13: Exploring beautiful Udaipur

Today is all about exploring Udaipur. We'll start with a visit to the City Palace, which was built over a period of 400 years and is one of Rajasthan's architectural marvels. Located on the edge of Lake Pichola the palace comprises an assortment of pavilions, terraces, courtyards, terraces and hanging gardens, encircled by granite and marble fortifications. We'll also visit the Jagdish Temple, located just outside the Royal Palace.

We'll then head to Lake Pichola and board a boat ride to Jagmandir Island, which houses a palace built by Maharana Karan Singh II in 1620. At its entrance, you'll be met by massive stone elephants and the island has an ornate 17th-century tower, the Gol Mahal, carved from bluestone.

The remainder of the day is free. In the evening why not consider visiting Bagore Ki Haveli, an ancient palace that has been converted into a museum on the waterfront of Lake Pichola, where you can enjoy watching a traditional dancing and puppet show.

OVERNIGHT: Udaipur hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 14: Free morning in Udaipur. Sleeper train to Delhi

You'll have some free time in Udaipur this morning before being transferred to the train station for the overnight sleeper train to Delhi. We aim to use the Mewar Express (2nd class AC) which leaves at 1830, arriving in to Delhi around 7am tomorrow morning.

OVERNIGHT: Overnight sleeper train

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS:

Day 15: Arrive in Delhi where our tour comes to an end.

As our train arrives into Delhi our Indian adventure will come to an end upon arrival. If you plan on spending additional time in Delhi, we can help in organising extra nights or even extensions to the south of the country.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Goa beach extension Ranthambore National Park Safari Spinmonkey cycling tour Salam Balak Trust walk

Included:

- All accommodation in mid-range hotels and heritage properties
- All transport and transfers in AC vehicles
- 24-hour airport arrival transfer service
- Sightseeing tours and activities as per the itinerary
- Sleeper Train from Udaipur to Delhi 2nd Class AC car
- Delhi Tour, Rickshaw Ride & Street Food Sampling in Delhi
- Agra Sherries Cafe, Mughal Heritage Walk and Taj Mahal visit
- Suroth Mahal Village tour & cooking demonstration
- Jaipur Amber Fort, City Tour & craft workshop
- Ranthambore Shared Canter Game Drives in search of Tigers
- Pushkar Lake and Brahma Temple
- Jodhpur Fort, Jaswant Thada & Market Square
- Ranakpur Jain Temple
- Lakeside Udaipur tour and boat ride
- Services of a local tour leader and specialist local guides

- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded:

- International flights (available on request)
- Visa fees
- Travel insurance (mandatory, [get quote here](#))
- Departure Airport Transfer
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for driver and/or tour guide
- Entrance fees (allow approx. US\$120)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting. However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements. Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Single room supplement (INSGRE)

Min numbers: 1

This tour is based on twin-share accommodation, with single bookers paired up with another traveller of the same sex in the group. If the final group make-up means that no room share is available, you do not need to pay this supplement. However, if you would like to guarantee yourself a single room throughout the tour, then please add this option to your booking.

Note: Single supplement prices may vary seasonally.

Extra day in Delhi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Delhi - post-tour

Min numbers: 1

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Hot air balloon in Jaipur

Min numbers: 1

Capture the spectacular views of Rajasthan's forts with an early morning hot air balloon ride over Jaipur for a different perspective of this vibrant capital. Float high above the pink painted rooftops and enjoy a bird's eye view of Jaipur.

This option runs from 1st of September to 10th of May each year, subject to weather conditions.

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the Indian 3-star and 4-star level on this tour as well as some carefully selected heritage properties. These heritage hotels are often converted from former palaces or merchant houses and are full of historical character, though they may feel a little dated. They are often a highlight of your stay. The specific hotels listed on our website are our preferred hotels for our small-group tours. However, these may be changed from time to time based on current availability and other logistics. In this event alternative hotels of a similar standard will be used. If you would like to guarantee any particular hotels for your trip, please contact us to request a tailor-made tour.

Accommodation is based on twin or double en-suite rooms with air conditioning. All couples will receive a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. Due to the somewhat chaotic nature of Indian roads, we only use private vehicles for all road journeys on this tour.

The tour also features an overnight journey on India's famous railway network, from Udaipur to Delhi. We aim to book seats in the AC2 class (2nd class air-conditioned carriage). This is relatively clean, comfortable and not overcrowded. You get a padded seat during the day which the carriage steward will convert into a flat padded bunk with pillows, sheets and blankets in the evening. There are no separate self-contained compartments, with the layout more open plan with curtained bays of four bunks on one side of the aisle (two upper and two lower) and two arranged along the wall of the carriage across the aisle from there. Meals and drinks are available on board. Tickets are issued 120 days in advance. If you book within 120 days of departure we cannot guarantee that you will be allocated a berth next to other people in the group, though the carriage stewards are generally very helpful in arranging to swap you with another traveller.

Due to the huge distances some trains cover, Indian trains are subject to delays and on these overnight journeys of around 12 hours a delay of an hour is not unusual. Delays can be longer in the winter months if the weather is foggy.

While in Ranthambore National Park we include two shared canter safaris (20 seater open backed lorry).

3. Transfers

The tour price includes a 24-hour airport meet & assist service in New Delhi airport, your arrival airport-hotel transfer and all other transfers. The departure transfer at the end of your tour has not been included in the tour price, to give you the flexibility of extending your time in Delhi if you wish.

4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to being a small group operator, as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. There's no point in us providing great guides if you've got to peer over 30-40 shoulders to see them! So, we won't ever put you in a 50-seater coach with 49 other people and just one guide. Instead, we set our India small-group departures to have a

maximum of 12 travellers. The minimum group size is 2.

In India we provide a fully trained, local English-speaking tour leader/driver to accompany our groups. On this tour they will accompany you throughout the whole loop from Delhi/Agra/Jaipur/Ranthambore and in to Rajasthan. On groups of 4 or more, a guide will accompany you for the duration of the tour, for groups of 2 to 3, you will have a driver and local guides in each city.

At Encounters Travel we have a policy of aiming to use only local Indian guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

5. Entrance Fees

The tour price does not include entrance fees to the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. This allows for fluctuations in the prices set by the local authorities, which do change from time to time.

You should currently allow approx. US\$120 per person to cover these entrance fees (this includes one visit to the Taj Mahal). You will also need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit that are not listed in the main tour itinerary. Your guide will offer to collect the entrance fee cost from everyone at the start of the tour and pay on your behalf, or you can arrange them yourself as you go along.

6. Dates & Prices

We run small-group departures on this tour between October and June, as Ranthambore National Park is closed to visitors during the monsoon months of July to September. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 travellers. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website (please check the website for up-to-date prices and special offers).

Private and tailor-made tours are available on any dates while the park is open and may be adjusted to fit your personal requirements, available time and budget.

Printed on: Friday 26th of September 2025

Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
