

THE BEST OF RAJASTHAN

FROM Raja Hoon at *HERITAGE GETAWAYS*

E-21 ANAND NIKETAN, NEW DELHI-110021

PHONE; 001-41662199

e-mail-heritagegetaways@airtelmail.in

e-mail-heritagegetaways@hotmail.com

www.heritagegetaways.net

9 nights /10 days



Day 01 - ARRIVE DELHI

Room is blocked for you in Delhi from 1200 hrs today.

Day 02 - IN DELHI

On arrival at Delhi's international airport, we will be met by our representative and taken to your hotel, where the room is blocked for you from previous night for immediate occupancy. Late morning you will enjoy a full day guided city tour of New Delhi and Old Delhi. Delhi - the capital of India, is a fascinating city with complexities and contradictions, beauty and

dynamism, where the past co-exists with the present. Many dynasties ruled from here and the city is rich in the architecture of its monuments.

In New Delhi visit the Qutab Minar, a Tower of Victory that was built in the 12th century by Qutbuddin Aibak. Within its spacious courtyard stands the Iron Pillar, which dates back to the 4th century AD and bears a Sanskrit inscription in the Gupta style. The Humayun's Tomb - the magnificent structure in red sandstone and white marble is one of the finest examples of the garden tomb, and a precursor to the Taj Mahal. Its proportionate spaces, double dome and refined elegance are characteristic of Mughal architecture. Also visit India Gate, the memorial of the First World War and the road that leads from there to President House, which is flanked by the houses of Parliament and the Government Secretariat buildings. In Old Delhi visit the historic Red Fort - Shah Jehan's elegant citadel in red sandstone, which was built as an octagon measuring 900m by 550m and surrounded by a 9-meter deep moat which was at its inception fed by the waters of the Yamuna river. Very near the Fort is the Jama Masjid (Friday Mosque), India's largest mosque, also built by Shah Jahan. Take an interesting rickshaw ride through the famous bazaars of Chandni Chowk, which is adjacent to both the Fort and the Mosque. Also visit Raj Ghat - the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi.

Day 03- DELHI / AGRA (220 kms / 4 hours drive)

Drive to Agra (204 km/ 3.5 hrs) late in the morning and arrive there in roughly four hours.

In the afternoon visit the Taj Mahal - the inimitable poem in white marble. Built over a period of 22 years, by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1630, for his Queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains, it is one of the seven modern wonders of the World. Also visit the Agra Fort, built by three Mughal Emperors starting from Akbar the Great in 1565 AD, which is a masterpiece of design and construction. Within the fort are a number of exquisite buildings including the Moti Masjid, Jahangir's Palace, Khaas Mahal and the Sheesh Mahal, Diwane-i-Am, Diwane-i-Khas and Musamman Burj, where Emperor Shah Jahan, the fifth Mughal Emperor, died a prisoner. Return to your hotel in the evening for overnight stay.

Day 04 - AGRA / FATEHPUR SIKRI / KARAULI

After early breakfast, drive 38kms.- 35 minutes to the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri. This exquisite city built by Akbar the Great in 1569, in red sandstone; with its forts, palaces and mosques was abandoned 14 years after its creation due to political reasons. The Diwan-i-am - a vast courtyard in which the emperor gave daily public audience; Diwan-i-khas - a large quadrangle which contained all the major functions of the Palace, Pachisi court, the Emperors private living quarter, Jodha Bhai's Palace, Mariam's Palace, Birbal's Palace, Hawa Mahal and Panch Mahal are some of the important buildings of this residential complex. The Friday Mosque and the exquisite tomb of Sheik Salim Chisti are in the religious grounds set aside in a separate enclosure adjacent to the secular buildings.

Continue your drive to KARAULI and stay at BHANVAR VILAS PALACE. It was built as a royal residence in the year 1938 by Maharaja Ganesh Pal Deo Bhadur, the then ruler of Karauli. The architecture is of colonial style and the interiors are furnished in art - de-decor period furniture. The spacious grounds are home to a variety of plants and animals.

Day 05- KARAULI - RANTHAMBORE

A remote ancient town. A devotional city. A wealth of history and a magnificent palace built in 1635. That is Karauli, your new destination in Rajasthan. A blend of warm royal hospitality, a serene rural environment and an opportunity to see historical monuments and magnificent temples, will make your visit to Karauli a memorable experience. The old City Palace is a treasure trove of architecture, stone carvings, gorgeous jalli work and classic paintings. The spellbinding beauty of Darbar Hall is an experience in itself.

Witness devotional life at the temples of Madan Mohanji, Kalyanji and Kaila Devi. Visit local bazars for exclusive items of handicraft, and colourful bangles of Karauli.

In the afternoon you will drive for 2.5 hours, 110 kms to Ranthambore, one of the best Tiger Reserves in India where tigers can be encountered in broad daylight, quite unperturbed by the human presence. Overnight is at the resort.

Day 06- IN RANTHAMBORE

During our stay at Ranthambore, we will take morning and evening game drives into the reserve in search of its many mammals and birds. The splendid settings of the old forts and temples within the forests of Ranthambore provide a wonderful atmosphere for our bird and mammal viewing. This reserve affords one of the best opportunities anywhere in India of seeing a Tiger during the day. There may be a slide show on wildlife in India available at your resort or alternatively just listen to your naturalist telling you his harrowing experiences in the Jungle.

Whether or not we see Tiger, a wide variety of other animals is assured, amongst them Nilgai (the largest of India's antelopes), Spotted Deer, Chinkara, Sambar, Marsh Muggler Crocodile and perhaps a Sloth Bear or Leopard. We will also see an excellent variety of birds; amongst them such species as the enigmatic Painted Spurfowl, Painted Sandgrouse and a variety of waterbirds. We may also take time to visit Ranthambore Fort, whose massive battlements dominate the reserve. Rest of the day is free to walk around the sleepy town of SAWAI MADHOPUR, which is a photographer's delight. It is a real Rajasthani village with endless opportunities to picture most colorful people in their colorful attire, which is as good as it gets.

Day 07- RANTHAMBORE - JAIPUR

Leave for Jaipur (160 kms- 3 hours), the capital of Rajasthan and today. City is color washed pink - the color associated with hospitality in Rajput culture. This Pink City of fairy tale palaces, rugged fortresses perched on barren hills and broad avenues are picturesque. The first planned city of its time, a formidable wall encircles Jaipur.

During your tour of the pink city, visit the CITY PALACE - the former royal residence built in a blend of the Rajasthani and Mughal styles which houses a museum with a superb collection of Rajasthani costumes and armoury of the Mughals and Rajputs, including swords of different

shapes and sizes with ornate handles. It has an art gallery with an excellent collection of miniature paintings, carpets, royal paraphernalia and rare astronomical works in Arabic, Persian, Latin and Sanskrit. Also visit the JANTAR MANTAR - an astrological and astronomical Observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh in 18th century, which is remarkable for its accuracy even at the present times. Lastly stop at PALACE-OF-WINDS for taking pictures and spend time in crowded lanes & by lanes of pink city, haggling and souvenir- hunting. Return to your hotel for overnight stay.

Day 08- IN JAIPUR

You will drive 11kms in the outskirts of the city to visit AMBER FORT, the ancient capital of the State until 1728. Visit the Temple of Kali, the Hall of Victory or Jai Mahal and Jagmandir. You can have the unique experience of traveling on elephant back to and from the top of the hill on which the fort is situated. Ride an elephant to ascend the hill on which the Fort is situated.

Rest of the day is free to explore the narrow lanes of the crowded bazaars in the pink city.

Day 09- TO MANDAWA

Drive 180kms, 4 hours today to Rajasthan's Open Art Gallery, SHEKHAWATI and stay in Mandawa. Today, the world comes to this storybook town to see its colourful frescoes on every subject under the sun, that is, ranging from the religious to the erotic; from copies of popular English prints to witty social satire, rendered in the inimitable style of the local artist. And perhaps the best place to discover the legacy of Shekhawati is from the comfort of Castle Mandawa, a fortress, now converted into a luxurious heritage hotel.

Like many historic homes, Castle Mandawa is a curious mixture of the old and the new. Medieval turreted towers, palanquin-roofed balconies, blend with modern comforts in old-world rooms. Family portraits, antique cannons and arms add to the charm of this family-run resort where tradition still runs strong. Even time is measured by a different clock... a huge brass gong struck by the resident timekeepers at the fort every hour! Explore Castle Mandawa at your own pace. Spend a leisurely hour over a drink in the colonial verandah that accommodates the bar, or relax in the cosy comfort of the Diwankhana, the formal drawing room decorated with family portraits and an array of antique armour. Overnight is at the Castle.

Day 10- TO DELHI

Spend the morning lazing around in the castle complex or just walking leisurely in the sleepy village. Start late and drive for 5 hours to Delhi. Enjoy a farewell dinner at an airport hotel, before checking-in for your return flight. No accommodation in Delhi, only a few rooms for wash n change will be provided before the dinner.

Day 11- DEPARTURE

Connect your return flight home.

— End of our services —