

HIMALAYAN HERITAGE TOURS

FROM Raja Hoon at **HERITAGE GETAWAYS**

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Delhi-Amritsar-Paragpur-Dharamsala-McLeodganj-Shimla-Rishikesh-Delhi

Duration *12 days*

Grade *Moderate*

Best Season *March - June & August - February*

The Itinerary

DAY 1 ARRIVE DELHI

You are met on arrival and transferred to your hotel for an overnight stay.

DAY 2 IN DELHI

Today proceed for a half-day tour of Delhi visiting **GURDWARA BANGLA SAHIB**. A magnificent and spacious bungalow in Delhi owned by Raja Jai Singh Amber (Jaipur) who commanded great respect and honour in the court of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, it now enjoys the status of a holy shrine called Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. The eighth Guru Sri Harkishan had stayed here for a few months as a guest of Raja Jai Singh. Since then it has become a place of pilgrimage for both, Hindus and Sikhs. Later, proceed to **PURANA QILA**. It is one of the most prominent monuments in Delhi. Before you drive back to the hotel you visit the **BAHAI TEMPLE**. Bahai faith represents the equality of mankind and oneness of its soul. The same feeling has been successfully transcended into the beautifully and scientifically deigned Bahai Temple in Delhi, designed by Fariburz Sahba, an Iranian-born Canadian architect, in the shape of a lotus flower, the symbol of purity. Return back to the hotel for an overnight stay.

DAY 3 DELHI - AMRITSAR BY SHATABDI EXPRESS (0720/1310 HRS)

In time transfer to the railway station to board your Train for Amritsar. You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel. Check into your accommodation and later in the afternoon visit the **Golden Temple** which sits on a rectangular platform in the centre of the Amrit Sarovar. It is surrounded by a white marble corridor, which is encircled by pilgrims visiting the shrine. A narrow causeway links the Harmandir, or Darbar Sahib, the temple. The entrance to the temple is through an ornate archway with intricate inlay work. Verses from the Granth Sahib are inscribed on the doorway.

Also visit the **Jallianwala Bagh**, about 400 metres north of the Golden Temple, is a small stretch of plain ground now converted into a park. Here, on 13th April, 1919 British troops led by General Dyer fired upon a group of assembled people, including women and children. The grounds are surrounded by high building walls on all sides, except a narrow access lane. A memorial plaque at the entrance recounts the history of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. Inside, a martyrs' memorial stands on the eastern end, while the well and bullet-ridden walls remain testimonials to the bloody massacre.

After the visit drive back to your hotel for overnight stay.

DAY 4 AMRITSAR TO PARAGPUR - BY SURFACE / 170 KMS / APPROX 6 HRS

After breakfast drive to Paragpur. On arrival check into your accommodation. In the afternoon experience the local flavor of India's first heritage village. Walk down streets dressed with cobblestone that retain the medieval essence. Sun - baked houses stand in close harmony to the wooden facades of the colonial style buildings. The architectural wonders emit a strong aesthetic statement with undertones either historical, cultural, religious, architectural, archeological or antiquarian significance. The village has retained its traditional character and charm. Visits to weavers can be very satisfying. Excellent shawls and blankets are hand woven with the wool that is available in the village market. Local silversmiths offer a variety of handcrafted trinkets. Handloom and other fabric can be quickly "Block Printed" to your choice. Enjoy the courteous hospitality of these rustic but extremely gracious villagers.

DAY 5 IN PARAGPUR - DAY'S EXCURSION TO CHINTPURNI, HARIPUR & GULER

Spend an engrossing day on a visit first to **Chintpurni** - a Shakti Temple famous for granting wishes. Nearby is Dharamsala - Mahanta a village where time has stood still with a temple complex having many fading Kangra Wall Paintings. From here proceed to **Haripur** - the fort of Haripur and an ornamental tank below are historical. The principality of Haripur was founded in 1464 AD. Also visit **Guler** - famous as the cradle of the Kangra School of Paintings. The narrow gauge train is quaint with equipment from the turn of the last century. An oil lamp is still used to light the signal at dusk.

Return to your accommodation of an overnight stay

DAY 6 PARAGPUR TO DHARAMSALA

After breakfast drive to **McLeodganj, the Tibetan town**, with its library, Buddhist temples and markets.

Arrive and check in at the hotel. In the afternoon visit the **Norbulingka Institute**. The Norbulingka Institute is a major centre for Buddhist teaching and practical working for survival of Tibetan Buddhist's cultural heritage.

Evening is at leisure to explore the Tibetan market and the monastery at McLeodganj

DAY 7 DHARAMSALA TO SHIMLA - BY SURFACE / 245 KM / APPROX 8 HRS

After breakfast drive to Shimla. Situated in the northwest Himalayas, Shimla is the capital of Himachal Pradesh. Spread across 12 kms along a ridge that overlooks terraced hillsides and cultivations, Shimla is magnificently robed in dense forests of oak and pine, fir and rhododendron. On arrival transfer to your accommodation for an overnight stay.

DAY 8 IN SHIMLA

A day to explore the town of Shimla. You begin by a walking tour of the **Mall**, which is the main shopping centre of Shimla with restaurants. The **Gaiety Theatre**, which is a reproduction of an old British theatre, is a center of cultural activities. **The Ridge**, a large open space in the heart of town, presents excellent views of the mountain ranges. Shimla's landmarks, the Neo-Gothic structure of Christ Church and the new-Tudor library building are worth seeing.

Also visit **Indian Institute of Advanced Studies**. This magnificent English renaissance structure was the former Viceregal Lodge. Its lawns and woodland are added attractions.

Return to your hotel for an overnight stay.

DAY 9 SHIMLA TO RISHIKESH - BY SURFACE / 290 KM / APPROX 8 HRS

After breakfast you will drive to Rishikesh. Known as 'the place of sages', Rishikesh is the official start-point for all pilgrims on the four-destination Char Dham pilgrimage. It is now almost entirely considered as a pilgrim destination with a series of Ashrams lining the east bank of the river. There are numerous Hindu and Jain temples in the bustling main town, mostly in the lower

west bank area. The evening prayers and candlelit offerings to the Ganga take place each sundown at the Ghats. On arrival at **RISHIKESH** check in to your accommodation.

Later in the evening you will walk to witness the Arti at Parmath Ashram situated across the Ram Jhoola suspension bridge. Parmath Niketan lies right on the holy banks of mother Ganga, nestled in the lap of lush, towering Himalaya. Additionally the Ashram runs schools, hospitals, ecological programmes and disaster relief projects and played a major role during the **TSUNAMI** in the South of India.

Later walk back your accommodation for dinner and an overnight stay.

DAY 10 RISHIKESH TO HARIDWAR - BY SURFACE 28 KMS / APPROX 1 HR
HARIDWAR TO DELHI BY SHATABDI EXPRESS (1755 / 2230 HRS)

Full day to explore Rishikesh. You will visit the **LAXMAN JHOOLA**, **OMKARANAND ASHRAM** and **SIVANAND ASHRAM**. Later in time transfer to Haridwar railway station to board the train for Delhi. Met on arrival and transferred to your hotel for overnight stay.

DAY 11 IN DELHI

After breakfast in the morning proceed for a city tour of Old & New Delhi. In Old city visit **RED FORT** built by Emperor Shah Jahan; **JAMA MASJID**, one of the largest mosques in India; **RAJ GHAT** - the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi.

In the afternoon visit **QUTAB MINAR**, the tallest stone tower in India; **HUMAYUN'S TOMB** built in the Indo Persian style and a predecessor to The Taj Mahal in Agra; **INDIA GATE** - A War Memorial Arch. Also drive past the President's House, Parliament House, Government secretariat buildings and Connaught Place - the heart of New Delhi and a busy shopping center.

Overnight is at the hotel.

DAY 12 FULL DAY TOUR TO THE TAJ MAHAL & DEPART DELHI

Early morning transfer to the railway station to board the shatabdi express for Agra. Meet and assist upon arrival and proceed to 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.

In the afternoon drive back to Delhi and on arrival, transfer to the international airport to board your flight for back home.

End of the tour