

## ROMANCING RAJASTHAN

FROM Raja Hoon at *HERITAGE GETAWAYS*

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**(14 nights / 15 days)**

### DAY 01 ARRIVE DELHI

You will be met and assisted on arrival in Delhi and transferred to your hotel.

**Overnight stay is at the hotel.**

### DAY 02 IN DELHI

Morning after breakfast proceed for the combined 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 and enjoy a walking tour in CHANDNI CHOWK- the silver street of Delhi bustling with activity. 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. Evening is at leisure to explore the local market.

**Overnight stay is at the hotel.**

### DAY 03 TO MANDAWA

After breakfast check-out of the hotel and drive 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, which 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.

**Overnight stay is at the hotel.**

### DAY 04 TO KUCHAMAN

After breakfast, drive to beautiful KUCHAMAN fort. The Kuchaman fort in the Nagaur District of Rajasthan, is a rare master piece of royal heritage. An erstwhile garrison, built by the Gujar Pratiharas to Control the ancient trade route from Central Asia, between 450 to 750 A.D., it was later taken over by the Chauhans of Ajmer in 950 A.D., then by the Gaurs who subsequently surrendered to the Rathores. The direct descendent of the former Rathore ruler brought about a major metamorphism in the fort to regain its splendid glory. The Fort is now a Super Deluxe

Heritage Hotel but its original architectural character and magnificence remain unchanged. The superlative luxury of the hotel, set amidst centuries old setting of royal splendor, presents an amazing contrast of the modern with the ancient. Rest of the day is at leisure or just to walk around in the fort.

**Overnight stay is at the fort only.**

#### DAY 05 TO KHIMSAR

Drive to beautiful KHIMSAR FORT. Perched on the edge of the Great Thar Desert in the heart of rural India lies this unique 16th century fort that offers experience after exhilarating experience. The battle-scarred walls & turrets remind of the glorious past. Hundreds of years of history unfolds as you glance at its battle-scarred walls and stroll down its ramparts. As you sip tea on the terraces you realize the beauty of being surrounded by acres of lush green gardens. A true rarity of any desert in the world!!! Peacocks, parrots, pigeons and as many as forty six varieties of birds greet you to add to the charm and splendor of this ancient fort. The beauty, the grandeur, the layout or the magnificence of this castle even as you approach it through sand dunes and narrow countryside roads. It suddenly hits you on a blind corner. Come and savor the experience.

Rest of the day is at leisure or just to walk around in the fort.

**Overnight stay is at KHIMSAR Fort only.**

#### DAY 06 TO JAISALMER

There is a long drive to Jaisalmer planned for today. Jaisalmer a fairy-tale town in the Thar Desert founded about 800 years ago by Rajah Jaisal. Unlike any other city, this desert fortress is one of Rajasthan's most exotic and unusual towns. The fort built by Rawal Jaisal in the 12th century, stands on the 80 metre high Trikuta hill, with beautifully carved Jain temples. The annual desert festival takes place in January and February each year and is a riot of colour and activity. Evening is free to walk around in the colorful and bustling bazaars.

**Overnight stay is at the hotel.**

#### DAY 07 IN JAISALMER

Full day is at leisure to explore this fascinating city. Visit the famous Havelis (mansions) known for their frescoes. The most elaborate and magnificent of all the Jaisalmer havelis is the PATWAON KI HAVELI. The haveli was built between 1800 and 1860 by five Jain brothers. SALIM SINGH KI HAVELI and NATHMAL KI HAVELI are the other two havelis that are opened to visitors. Built in 1156 by the Bhatti ruler, Jaisala, THE FORT here stands atop the 80 m high Trikuta hill. The fort is surrounded by 3 walls and features 99 bastions. Over the centuries, the golden sand stone fortress witnessed many battles between the Bhattis, the mughals and the rathors of Jodhpur. Within the fort complex lie the beautifully carved Jain Temples built between the 12th and 15th centuries. Evening is at leisure to explore the local market.

**Overnight stay is at hotel.**

#### DAY 08 TO JODHPUR

Morning drive to Jodhpur, known as the "Blue City" for the predominance of blue houses within the city's historical district. Jodhpur lies on the once strategic Delhi-Gujarat trade route and the Marwaris managed and benefited from the traffic of opium, copper, silk, sandalwood, dates, and coffee.

In the afternoon proceed with a city tour of Jodhpur. Exploring the forts gives you a feel of the times when the Rajput might was at its peak. The gates and the walls of the forts speak of the

battles they have witnessed. One needs to spend enough time with these historical monuments to fully grasp the grandeur of the Rajput era. Situated at an altitude of about 125 metres, THE MEHRANGARH FORT is spread over an area of 5 sq. km in the heart of the city. The fort has seven gates of which the noted ones are the Jayapol, built by Maharaja Man Singh in 1806; Fatehpol or the Victory Gate built by Maharaja Ajit Singh; and the Lohapol or the Iron Gate. The 15 handprints, the sati marks of Maharaja Man Singh/ 's widows who threw themselves upon his funeral pyre in 1843, can be seen beside the Lohapol. On the wall, one can see the strategically located cannons. Inside the fort, a series of courtyards and palaces greet the visitor. The palace apartments house a splendid collection of the trappings of the Indian royalty. JASWANT THADA: It is a white marble memorial built in memory of Maharaja Jaswant II in 1899. A story goes that Maharaja Jaswant succumbed to injuries in this place while fighting the Mughal king Jahangir.

**Overnight stay is at the hotel.**

#### DAY 09      TO UDAIPUR

This morning we'll drive through valleys in the remote and peaceful Aravalli Range to RANAKPUR to visit one of the most important Jain temples in India. This marble complex is noted for the 29 halls supported by 1,444 pillars, each adorned with hundreds of carved figures, no two alike. This morning we'll drive through valleys in the remote and peaceful Aravalli Range to RANAKPUR to visit one of the most important Jain temples in India. This marble complex is noted for the 29 halls supported by 1,444 pillars, each adorned with hundreds of carved figures, no two alike. Continue your drive to Udaipur, described as the "City of Sunrise" and check-in at the hotel. Evening enjoy a leisurely boat ride on LAKE PICHOLA.

**Overnight stay is at hotel.**

#### DAY 10      IN UDAIPUR

Udaipur is also a centre of historic arts and crafts of Mewar, like the Mewar School of Miniature Painting. There is of course the modern face of Udaipur that one can look at if interested, but given the other sights from a glorious past, modernity is no real distraction. This is a place that will hold you in its thrall no matter who you are or where you come from. During a guided tour you will visit the CITY PALACE built in 1725, the grand City Palace is actually a conglomerate of eleven palaces overlooking the sprawling Lake Pichola. One of the largest, most beautiful palaces in the state of Rajasthan, it is now a museum, royal residence and a luxury hotel. This intricately designed monument is an architectural wonder in granite and marble; JAGDISH TEMPLE built in 1651 by Maharaja Jagat Singh, this temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and is located in the centre of the old city.

**Overnight stay is at hotel.**

#### DAY 11      TO PUSHKAR

Depart for Pushkar 11-kms from Ajmer on the edge of the desert lays the tiny tranquil town of Pushkar along the bank of the picturesque Pushkar Lake. This is an important pilgrimage spot for the Hindus, which has the only temple of Lord Brahma in the country and one of the few in the world. Lord Brahma is known as the creator of the world as per the Hindu mythology. It's marked by red spire, and over the entrance gateway is the Hans, or goose symbol, of Brahma, who is said to have personally chosen Pushkar as its site.

In the afternoon visit this ancient city. The lake here is supposed to be sacred and you can see devotees taking a holy dip. Visit the BRAHMA temple and other attractions today.

**Overnight stay is at the hotel.**

#### DAY 12      TO JAIPUR

Drive for 3 hours, 150 km. today to the pink city of JAIPUR, the capital of RAJASTHAN, India's most colorful state. During your afternoon tour 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.

**Overnight stay is at hotel.**

### DAY 13            IN JAIPUR

After breakfast drive to 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. Rest of the day is free to explore the colorful town independently. Spend time in crowded lanes & by lanes of pink city, haggling and souvenir-hunting.

**Overnight stay is at hotel.**

### DAY 14            TO AGRA

After breakfast check-out of the hotel and drive to Agra. En route to Agra we will stop at FATEHPUR SIKRI. This 16th century capital of Moghul emperor Akbar is a complex of forts, palaces and mosques built in sandstone. The city had to be deserted because of lack of water. The white marble Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti, Akbar's spiritual adviser, is now observed as a Muslim pilgrimage spot here.

Later continue your drive Agra and check-in at your hotel.

In the afternoon proceed for a half day city tour of Agra city. Visit the red sandstone AGRA FORT, which stands like a crescent on the banks of the Jamuna River enclosed by forbidding 20-meter high walls, with a 12- meter moat between them. Three successive Mughal emperors - Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan - helped create this massive structure which contains Hindu and Muslim architecture.

**Overnight stay is at hotel.**

### DAY 15            TO DELHI & DEPART

Early morning SUNRISE visit to the famous white marble mausoleum TAJ MAHAL, which was built in the middle of the 17th century by the Moghul emperor Shah Jehan for his wife Mumtaz Mahal. Completed in 1652, skilled craftsmen from Persia, Turkey, France and Italy and some 20,000 laborers worked for 17 years to build this edifice, constructed by Emperor Shah Jehan as a mausoleum for his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal.

Later drive 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.

End of the tour

Check-in & check-out time is 12 noon at all hotels.