

# **Glimpses of North and Central India**

## **12 Nights / 13 Days**

**Delhi – Jaipur – Agra – Orchha – Khajuraho – Varnasi – Delhi**

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### *Detailed Tour*

#### **Day 1: London – Delhi**

Fly from London to Delhi, on arrival in Delhi you will be met by our representative and Transfer to your hotel.

In the afternoon, you will be taken for a tour of New Delhi. In 1911, the British asked Lutyens to re-design the city, resulting in the creation of New Delhi which, with the architectural designs, sophistication of the buildings and the wide tree lined avenues, New Delhi is reminiscent of many European cities. You will visit Connaught Place the hub of the city, mainly devoted to shops, banks and restaurants. Then drive to The Rajpath, flanked by Ornamental ponds and lawns, with India Gate (war memorial) at one end and Rashtrapati Bhawan, the Presidents house at the other. This part of the city most clearly reflects Lutyens European influence. Drive past the Presidents house and the Parliament House, Sansad Bhawan, the seat of the Government. Finally visit Qutub Minar, built in 1199 either as a victory tower or as a minaret to the adjacent mosque, at a height of 72.5 meters it is still the highest, and one of the finest stone towers in India.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 2: Delhi**

After breakfast you will enjoy a morning tour of Old Delhi. Visit the old city of Shahjahanabad where you will see imposing Red Fort, one of the most magnificent palaces in the world. Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India and a stunning example of Mughal architecture, followed by visit to the famous main street in Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk, full of all kinds of shops it overflows with people from all walks of life amidst traffic chaos, sounds and smells. Conclude the tour at the Memorial of Mahatma Gandhi (father of the nation) at Raj Ghat, situated on the banks of the legendary Yamuna River, where his mortal remains were laid to rest.

Rest of the day is at leisure.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 03: Delhi – Jaipur**

After an early breakfast, drive from Delhi to Jaipur (246 kms/5 hours)

Jaipur is one of the largest city in the state of Rajasthan. It was built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh in 1727 AD, who had the vision to create a meticulously planned city as his capital. During the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1876 AD, who was later crowned as king Edward VII, the whole city was painted pink and thus also became

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popular as 'Pink City'. The colour pink is reminiscent even today in the old part of the city that houses the famous Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) which is still painted pink.

Overnight stay at your hotel in Jaipur.

#### **Day 04: Jaipur**

After breakfast enjoy visit to the Amber Fort a classic, Rajasthani Fort Palace located on a hillock, with huge ramparts and watchtowers. You will ride on a caprisoned elephant to the Fort. Amber was the seat of power before city of Jaipur came into existence. Visit the Marble Palace, Temple of Victory and Hall of Mirrors, all of which are excellent examples of ancient Rajput architecture.

Later in the afternoon, enjoy a half day tour of the city including a visit to the City Palace the former Royal Residence, part of which is now converted into a Museum. Hawa Mahal, the Palace of the Winds, a five storey building with semi octagonal and delicately honey combed sandstone windows, built to allow the queens and the palace maids to watch the royal processions passing through the roads without being seen. Finally visit Jantar Mantar an 18th century astronomical Observatory which is the largest stone and marble crafted observatory in the world, located near the gate of the City Palace, the observatory has 17 large instruments including an accurate 90 feet Sundial.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 05: Jaipur – Fatehpur Sikri – Agra**

In the morning drive from Jaipur to Agra (221 kms/5.5 hours) en-route visiting the deserted township of Fatehpur Sikri.

This deserted fortress was built by Emperor Akbar in 1569, and was the old capital of the Mughal rulers. After just 15 years it was abandoned due to acute scarcity of water. This graceful fortress with tall entrance houses buildings including the Jama Masjid, Tomb of Salim Chisti, Panch Mahal and other palaces, which are still preserved in their original glory, much of the credit of which goes to Lord Curzon.

On arrival in Agra, check-in at your hotel.

Agra is a land with a glorious past created by skilled architects as the seat for the Mughal Empire. Situated on the banks of river Yamuna, with its crowded alleys and its predatory rickshaw riders, Agra is much like any other north Indian city. Also referred to as 'Agarbana' (Paradise) in the epic of Mahabharata, the city houses the finest monuments built during the rule of Mughal emperors, which bear testimony to the aura of grandeur.

Rest of the day is at leisure.

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#### **Day 06: Agra**

After breakfast, this day is for sightseeing of the city of Agra.

Visit the Agra Fort, situated on the banks of river Yamuna. This crescent-like fort was designed and built by Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1565 AD and is surrounded by a 70 foot high wall. It houses the beautiful Pearl Mosque and numerous palaces including the Jahangiri Mahal, Khas Mahal, Diwan-e-khas, Diwan-e-aam, Machihi Bhawan and Moti Masjid. The fort has four gates and is enclosed by a double-cemented wall of red sand stone.

Next, proceed to the world famous Taj Mahal, built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1653 AD in memory of his beloved queen Mumtaz Mahal after she died while giving birth to his 14<sup>th</sup> child. This architectural marvel, which took 17 years to complete, is a perfectly proportioned masterpiece fashioned from raw white marble which stands testimony to the skill of 20,000 craftsmen brought from Persia, Turkey, France and Italy (this monument is closed on Fridays)

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 07: Agra – Jhansi (train) and Jhansi – Orchha (drive)**

After an early breakfast, you will be met and transferred to the railway station to board an air-conditioned deluxe train for Jhansi, the nearest railhead to reach Orchha. Your train departs Agra at 0810 hours. Arrive in Jhansi railway station at 1040 hours, where you will be met and transferred to Orchha by surface (18 kms/45 minutes).

On arrival in Orchha, check-in at your hotel.

Orchha is a medieval city founded by Bundela rulers with palaces and temples of the 16th and 17th century that have remarkably withstood the onslaught of time. The river 'Betwa' picturesquely flanks the city. In the afternoon you will enjoy visit to the surrounding fortress and local Ram Raja Temple.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 08: Orchha – Khajuraho**

After breakfast, drive from Orchha to Khajuraho (180 kms/5 hours)

In the temple architecture of India, the Khajuraho Temples remains unique. Over a thousand years ago, under the generous and artistic patronage of the Chandela Rajput kings of Central India, 85 temples, magnificent in form and richly carved, came up on one site near the village of present day Khajuraho. In the amazingly

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short span of 100 years, from 950 AD-1050 AD, saw the completion of all the temples, in an inspired burst of creativity. Today, of the original 85, only 22 survive. In the evening you will have a choice to visit a nearby venue to witness a Tribal Dance performance.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 09: Khajuraho**

After a leisurely breakfast at your hotel, this day is for visiting the Eastern and Western Group of Temples.

The Western group is certainly the best known, because it is to this group that the largest and most typical Khajuraho temples belong, The Kandariya Mahadev. Perfectly symmetrical, it soars 31 meters in height.

The Eastern group has the three Hindu temples Brahma, Vamana and Javari Temples. A double row of 'Apsaras' (fairies or celestial nymphs) adorn the outer walls of the Vamana Temple. A variety of sensuous attitude that are languid, provocative, mischievously inviting; give credibility to the theory that Khajuraho erotica were meant to test the devotees who came to worship their God at the temples.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 10: Khajuraho – Varanasi (flight)**

After breakfast, the day is at leisure until your transfer to airport in time to board your flight for Varanasi.

On arrival in Varanasi you will be met and transferred to hotel.

Varanasi, formerly known as 'Kashi' or 'Benares' is said to be among the oldest living cities with history dating back as many as 5000 years. The religious capital of Hinduism, Varanasi is situated on the banks of river Ganga and derives its significance from the Ramayana, and many other Hindu scriptures. The city is also famous for one of the important temples dedicated to Lord Shiva. Shiva the God of destruction is said to have blessed the city with divine life after death, to those who are cremated on the bank of the river Ganga.

In the afternoon you will visit Sarnath, the buried ruins from where Buddha preached his first sermon after attaining enlightenment at Bodhgaya. Sarnath was a renowned school of learning from 16th century BC to 12th century AD. You will visit the ruins, the Dhammek Stupa, the Buddhist Temple and Sarnath Museum (this is closed on Fridays).

Overnight stay at Hotel

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#### **Day 11: Varanasi – Delhi (flight)**

Very early in the morning, you will be taken for a boat-ride on the holy river Ganges where you can see the bathing Ghats (river bank) and cremation Ghats; besides people performing their early morning religious rituals. The first rays of the sun on the riverfront, is a picturesque and spiritually uplifting sight. The life on the Ghats bound in an endless string of rituals; ever-changing aspects of the river and the landscape have fascinated visitors from all over the world.

Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Later proceed for the sightseeing tour of the city visiting the Bharat Mata Temple with a big relief map of India carved on marble in accurate proportions; the Durga Temple, also called the monkey temple for the common sightings of the monkeys; Tulsi Manas Mandir and Benaras Hindu University, a world famous centre for learning which also has an Art Gallery.

Later in the afternoon you will be transferred to the airport in time to board your flight for Delhi.

On arrival in Delhi, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 12: Delhi**

After breakfast, this day is at leisure to browse the surroundings of your hotel or visit the flea markets of central Delhi.

Overnight stay at Hotel

#### **Day 13: Delhi – Onwards**

Depending on the time of your flight, you will be met and transferred to airport in time to board your homebound flight.

**End of Tour**