



BEYOND THE TAJ



15 Days: Moderate Touring



INDIA – BEYOND THE TAJ

Seize the rare opportunity to travel India alongside Sanjay Saxena, the destination’s foremost expert and travel specialist for Condé Nast Traveler and WendyPerrin.com. On this seamless tour, you will experience the wonders for which India is renowned—ancient temples, exotic wildlife, dynamic cuisine, inviting villages—all while avoiding the congestion of major commercial centers.

Sanjay has utilized his intimate destination knowledge and industry contacts to craft once-in-a-lifetime journey that allows travelers to experience India on a deeper level.

This unfolding itinerary of unique “wow” moments includes the Jawai leopard sanctuary, meeting Bishnoi people who have lived for centuries by tenets of sustainability, a private tour of Mehrangarh Fort, exploring one of the original UNESCO sites in the monuments of Hampi, and the tranquil dunes of the Thar Desert.

Truly this is an insider’s India journey.

DEPARTURE DATE(S): January 23 – February 6, 2023

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Chandni Chowke bazaars of Old Delhi
- Sunset cruise on Lake Pichola
- Leopards of Jawai
- Visit Bishnoi tribals in Jamba
- Rabari tribals in Jawai
- UNESCO World Heritage sites of Hampi

ACCOMMODATIONS:

- 2 nights at The Imperial, Delhi
- 2 nights at Lake Palace Hotel, Udaipur
- 2 nights Jawai Sagar, Jawai
- 1 night at Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur
- 3 nights at Dera Dune Retreat, Jamba
- 1 night at Taj Westend, Bangalore
- 3 nights at Evolve Back, Hampi

Day 1
Monday, January 23
WELCOME TO DELHI

You will be met upon arrival and transferred to the hotel.

(The Imperial - Heritage Room)

Day 2
Tuesday, January 24
EXPLORING DELHI

Even when Bombay and Madras were mere trading posts and Calcutta a village of mud huts, Delhi had been the seat of an empire for five hundred years. Through the centuries, eight cities have been built on this site by Hindus, Mughals and the British, each adding their own flavor. In a matter of minutes you can be transported from a sprawling, elegant garden city to the ancient twisting alleyways of Old Delhi.

On your tour of “Old Delhi,” you will head out to explore this exotic locale with its narrow dirt roads, its myriad people and

inexpensive, colorful bazaars that keep alive the traditional workmanship for which Delhi has always been famous. Driving past the Red Fort, trade your motor vehicle for a bicycle rickshaw, which will take you into the heart of Chandni Chowk (the silver square, so named because of the silver merchants). Negotiating alleyways, which seemingly get narrower and narrower, you end up at the Jama Masjid, the largest Muslim mosque in India.

This afternoon, explore New Delhi. Your guide will point out the Raj-era architecture in the city center, including the renowned India Gate and Edwin Landseer Lutyens’ and Herbert Baker’s monumental governmental building on the Raisina Hill. From there, visit Humayun’s Tomb, where the 2nd Mughal Emperor is interred. This magnificent building was to serve as an inspiration for the Taj Mahal. The tomb is an exquisite example of early Mughal architecture.

This evening you are treated to a “home-cooked” Indian meal where you also have the opportunity of learning the nuances of various spices used in Northern Indian cuisine.

(The Imperial - Heritage Room; B, D)

Day 3
Wednesday, January 25
TO UDAIPUR

After a leisurely morning, transfer to the airport for our flight to Udaipur.

On arrival in Udaipur, we are transferred to the shores of Lake Pichola, where we board a boat and cross the lake to our hotel –the fabled Lake Palace Hotel. The Lake Palace has a lengthy history as a royal residence and is now one of the world’s most renowned luxury hotels.

The Palace, located in the middle of Lake Pichola is a dream of white marble and mosaic glistening in the moonlight, very reminiscent of the most beautiful tourist cliché in the world; the Taj Mahal. Conceived in romance, the palace was built in 1746 by Maharana Jagat Singh II, 62nd successor to the royal dynasty of Mewar – believed to be descendants of the Sun God. Set against the backdrop of the majestic Aravalli Mountains on one side of the lake, and lofty palaces on the other, the Taj Lake Palace spreads across a four-acre island – an almost surreal vision in marble. The Royal Butlers, descendants of the original palace retainers, look after all contemporary comforts and ensure that all guests are treated like Royalty.

This evening you will take a cruise on Lake Pichola, watching the sunset on the magical Lake Palace, the lovely City Palace complex and scenic Udaipur.

(Lake Palace Hotel - Palace Room; B)





Day 4
Thursday, January 26
EXPLORING UDAIPUR

Udaipur, described as the “City of Sunrise,” sits in a valley amid green hills on the banks of Lake Pichola. Udaipur is truly a royal city, founded as the capital of the Rajput kingdom of Mewar by the Maharana Udai Singh in the 16th century. Udai Singh and the Mewars were fiercely independent upholders of Rajput independence. The city abounds with spectacular palaces and is blessed with a beautiful natural setting.

Visit the Jagdish Temple, the largest and most venerated temple in Udaipur. Built in 1651 A.D. by Maharaja Jagat Singh, the temple is decorated with friezes and enshrines a black stone image of Vishnu. Walk about the Garden of Maidens (Sahelion Ki Bari), which consists of an ornamental lotus pool with delicately carved cenotaphs of black and white marble and soapstone. You can explore the rest of the Maharajah’s City Palace, an imposing edifice of granite and marble, standing atop a ridge overlooking the blue waters of Lake Pichola and the exquisite Lake Palace.

(Lake Palace Hotel - Palace Room; B, D)

Day 5
Friday, January 27
TO JAWAI BANDH

After an early breakfast we start our overland journey into the heart of Rajasthan exploring small villages and ancient temples along the way. Tonight’s destination is the Jawai Bandh (dam) wilderness area where leopards and other mammals have found sanctuary.

The inhabitants around the water body belong to the ecologically minded Rabari tribe of Rajasthan. It is believed they originally migrated here over a millennium ago from Persia (today’s Iran).

In the afternoon we head out for our first encounter with leopards.

(Jawai Sagar - Deluxe Tent; B, L, D)

Day 6
Saturday, January 28
JAWAI LEOPARDS & RABARI TRIBESMEN

Leopards across the world (including other parts of India) make the jungles and forests their habitat, but here the caves in the granite hills around the Jawai dam are home to 50-60 leopards





(recent estimate for the Forestry department.) In addition to leopard the region is also home to hyenas, desert foxes, wild boars, antelopes and other smaller mammals. During the winter months the banks of the dam hosts thousands of migratory birds, including the Demoiselle Cranes from Mongolia and the Greater Flamingo from other regions of Asia.

But it's not just the unique habitat of the leopard that brings us here, but the jewel of the story is of local conservation and co-habitation of humans and nature.

Thanks to the booming economy and rampant growth of the last few decades, India, has changed beyond recognition and the pressure of population growth has seen an increase of wildlife-human conflict. However, like the Bishnoi people that we will visit in the next few days, here in Jawai, the semi-nomadic Rabari tribe who inhabit the lands along the mountain stream have lived peacefully with nature and surrounding wildlife.

We will spend the day exploring the region on the lookout for leopards, while we also meet with Rabari folks and get an understanding of their way of life.

(Jawai Sagar - Deluxe Tent; B, L, D)

Day 7 Sunday, January 29 JAWAI TO JODHPUR

After breakfast we start on our 3-hour drive coming out of the Aravali hills to Jodhpur the "Blue City," which derives its moniker from the lovely azure painted dwellings that make up the heart of the city.

Jodhpur was the ancient Capital of the Marwar Kingdoms, and was founded in 1459 by Rao Jodha, a Rajput chief belonging to the Rathore clan. The city is located on the strategic road linking Delhi to Gujarat. This enabled it to profit from a flourishing trade in opium, copper, silk, sandals, date palms and coffee. The old city is enclosed by a six-mile wall that separates it from the desert sands that stretch for miles on every side.

After lunch on the Verandah of our Palace Hotel, we head out to explore the old town.

Our first stop is Jaswant Thada. This site also offers impressive views of the ramparts of Mehrangarh Fort, which you visit next. The Crown Jewel of Jodhpur, Mehrangarh is truly a Palace Fortress. After exploring the many palatial rooms crowded with artifact of the Maharaja, twisting corridors steeped in history, you come out to the ramparts overlooking the "Blue City."





You now embark on a six-section zip-line around the Fort. Fly high over the outer battlements of the fort, glide serenely over two desert lakes, trek through the Rao Jodha eco-park and enjoy the best view of Mehrangarh and the Blue City.

Later, in the evening visit the bustling Clock Tower bazaar to get a further flavor of this historic city.

(Umaid Bhawan Palace - Palace Rooms; B, L, D)

Day 8
Monday, January 30
TO JAMBA

A 3-hour drive from the Jodhpur into the hinterland brings you to the “off-the-tourist-trail” region of Jamba, the stronghold of the fascinating Bishnoi tribes. All Bishnois follow the 29 (bis-noi) tenets laid down by the 15th-century guru Jambheshwar, affectionately known as “Jamba-ji.” They fervently believe in the sanctity of animal and plant life so wildlife finds a natural sanctuary around their villages.

We spend three nights at the private Dera Dune Retreat. This is an exclusive property, set atop a 130’ high sand dune with panoramic views of the Thar Desert. The Retreat features

exquisite examples of traditional Rajasthani architecture used throughout, with stonework and carvings using local design and sustainable materials and, most importantly, utilizing the skills of local craftsmen. It has individual deluxe cottages, a swimming pool, spa and beautiful restaurant.

(Dera Dune Retreat - Stone Cottage; B, L, D)

Days 9 & 10
Tuesday-Wednesday, January 31 & February 1

EXPLORING JAMBA

We have two full days to explore the Jamba area. Using 4-wheel drive vehicles we travel cross-country on dirt and sand roads to continue your exploration of “Jamba-ji’s” land. These excursions introduce you to traditional Rajasthani hospitality, and give you a chance to witness rural Rajasthani life up close. The villages are built with painted adobe walls, and village life continues unaffected by the big cities nearby.

Bishnoi villages are immaculate, scrubbed daily by brightly clad women who are weighed down by silver jewelry and festooned with bangles stacked the length of their arms. By contrast, their tall men dress entirely in white, with their large turbans loosely swathed around dark skinned, weathered faces.





You will also have an opportunity, if you are so inclined, to go on a two- to three-hour camel safari or ride on a camel cart. Return to Dera Dune Retreat in time to watch the setting sun illuminate the desert.

When guests are in camp, musicians and dancers from nearby villages usually come to dance away the evening.

(Dera Dune Retreat - Stone Cottage; B, L, D)

**Day 11
Thursday, February 2**

DRIVE TO JODHPUR / FLY TO BANGALORE

Essentially a travel day as we wind our way from North to South India. After breakfast we drive to Jodhpur for the afternoon non-stop flight to Bangalore, the IT Capital of the country.

In Bangalore we stay in the heart of the city with the evening at your leisure to explore some of the fine dining options the city has to offer.

(Taj Westend - Deluxe Room; B)

**Day 12
Friday, February 3
TO HAMPI**

Morning flight brings us to Vidyanagar and an hours' drive from the airport to Hampi, one of the original UNESCO World Heritage Sites of India.

The grandiose site of Hampi was the capital of the last great Hindu Kingdom of Vijayanagar. Founded in 1336 CE, the rich southern princes built Dravidian temples and palaces and was a 'must see' city for travelers till the mid 16th century, when it was conquered by the Deccan Muslim empire in 1565. The city was completely plundered before being abandoned. Isolated and unconnected to main stream India, what was once the hub of travelers is now a road less traveled.

Hampi's spectacular setting is dominated by river Tungabhadra with open plains leading to craggy hill ranges framing over 1600 surviving ruins that include forts, temples, pillared halls, Mandapas, memorial structures, gateways, defense check posts, stables, water structures.

We stay at the recently constructed Evolve Back whose core values align with Nomadic Expedition in providing unique experiences while preserving the purity of nature and culture of the land.

(Evolve Back - Nivasa Room; B)





Days 13 & 14
Saturday-Sunday, February 4 & 5
EXPLORING HAMPI

We have two full days to explore the temples and places of Hampi while also enjoying the nature setting of our hotel and the region.

Some of the sites that we visit:

Vithala Temple Complex - The most splendid monument of Hampi is undoubtedly the Vithala Temple Complex with its 56 musical pillars. The centerpiece is the famous Stone Chariot with stone wheels that revolve. In front of the shrine stands the great mantapa. Resting on a richly sculpted basement, its roof is supported by huge pillars of granite, each consisting of a central pillar surrounded by detached shafts, all cut from one single block of stone.

The Virupaksha Temple rises majestically at the western end of the famous Hampi Bazaar. The temple has a 120 feet tall tower on its eastern entrance. The temple contains the shrines of Shiva, Pampa and Bhuvaneshwari. Parts of this temple are older than the Vijayanagar kingdom itself. The work of this style dates back to the 11th or 12th century.

Hazara Ramaswami temple is believed to have been the private place of worship of the royal family. The chief attraction of the temple is the series of scenes from the Ramayana carved on two of the inside walls of the mantapa. The genesis of the place known today as Hampi dates back to the age of the Hindu epic Ramayana when it was the site of Kishkinda, a monkey kingdom.

Also visit the Achyutaraya Temple and walk through the bazaars of Sule and Hampi.

(Evolve Back - Nivasa Room; B)

Day 15
Monday, February 6
TO BANGALORE AND OUTBOUND

Fly to Bangalore and connect outbound.

(B)

B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner

Nomadic Expeditions reserves the right to change the above itinerary if necessary.



2023 LAND PRICE

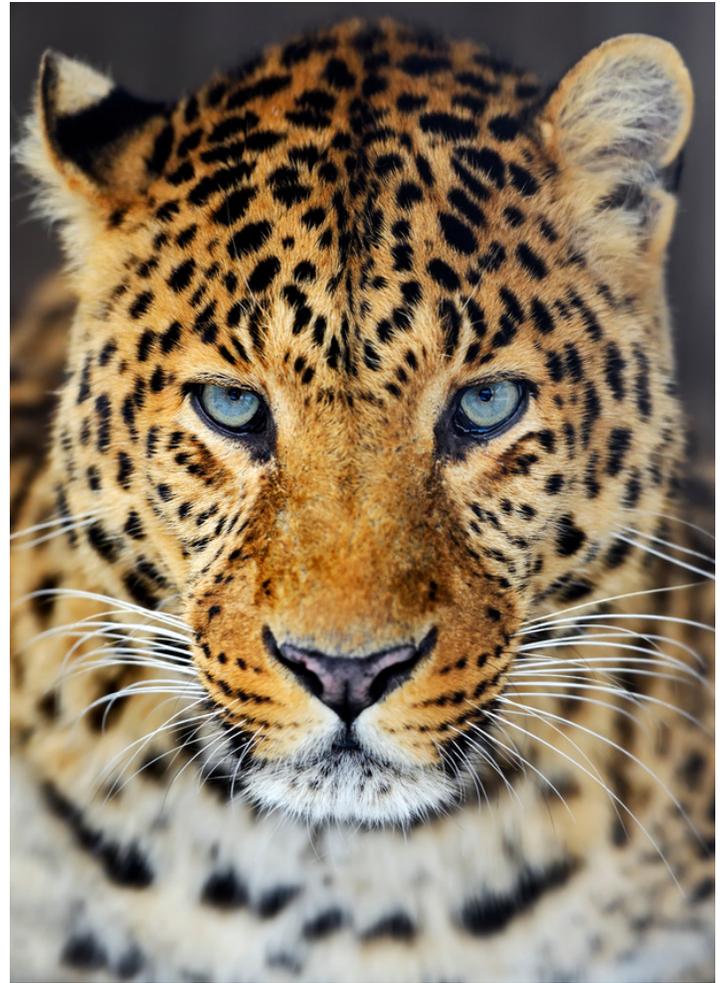
6-9 Travelers: \$11,960 per person

10-12 Travelers: \$10,700 per person

Internal Airfare: \$350 per person

Single Supplement: 3,545 per person

NOTE: Land Price is based on double occupancy and Internal Airfare is subject to change by airlines.



LAND PRICE INCLUDES:

- All accommodations as listed in the above itinerary, based on double or twin occupancy;
- Meals as noted in the above itinerary;
- Ground transportation in India as described in the itinerary;
- All arrival/departure airport/hotel transfers;
- Bottled/filtered water throughout the trip and soft drinks during meals;
- All excursions, entrance fees, and visits as described in itinerary;
- Extensive pre-departure Travel Guide, reading list, important information about your trip, and luggage tags;
- Services of Nomadic Expeditions Tour Leader Sanjay Saxena throughout the trip
- - Bishnoi village dance performance in Jamba
- Private dinner with music on lake Pichola, Udaipur
- Home hosted dinner in Delhi

LAND PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- International airfare; internal airfare is quoted separately and subject to change by airlines;
- Passport and visa fees;
- Excess baggage charges;
- Gratuities to local staff (drivers, guides, etc.);
- Items of a personal nature, such as alcoholic beverages, laundry, phone calls, photography and video fees;
- Comprehensive medical and trip insurance;
- Other items not specifically mentioned as included.



We would love to share this exceptional adventure with you!

