**Itinerary**

**Day 01 Arrive Delhi**

Arrive in Delhi late night by international flight. After clearing immigration, you will be by our representative in the arrival hall. He will then take over to assist you with the transfer and check in at hotel. **(Check in time at hotel is 2 pm. Early check in will be subject to availability)**

**DELHI:** The capital city of Independent India is often the starting point of a visit to India . Like Rome it is an eternal city and is a name with music in it for most of the people. For Indians it is the capital of their country, the centre of power and cultural; for the simple villager it is identified as the home of Panditji, as Mr. Nehru was affectionately known. For foreigners who have read of it in their newspaper and seen on their Television, it is a strange, and sometimes puzzling blend of ancient and modern, of pageantry and socialistic planning.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 02 In Delhi**

After leisurely breakfast proceed for full day combine city tour of Old and New Delhi

In Old Delhi drive past the Red Fort, - a marvel in red sandstone, the Raj Ghat, - memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, Jama Masjid, - the largest mosque in India. Proceed to Chandni Chowk to savour the ambience of an oriental, crowded bazaar.Old Delhi was once known as the city of Shahjahanabad. This fortified city has a long and interesting history and even today, the remains of its glorious past can be seen in the form of Kashmiri Gate, Ajmeri Gate, Turkman Gate, Delhi Gate and Feroz Shah Kotla. At Chandni Chowk & take rickshaw ride to see the massive area packed with shops, bazaars, and people. As Asia's largest wholesale market, Chandni Chowk features an array of goods available at the shops and stalls.

Continue to New Delhi; pass by India Gate (memorial to the Indian army soldiers who died in the World War I), the Rashtrapati Bhavan (formerly the viceroy's residence) and the Parliament House.

Visit the imposing Lakshmi Naryan Temple, see the 12th century Qutab Minar - gracefully hand-carved for its entire height of 234ft, and the Ashoka iron pillar, which has withstood the ravages of time and not rusted even after 1500 years and the mausoleum of emperor Humayun - a forerunner of the Mughal style of architecture.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 03 Delhi - Agra**

**Morning drive to Agra.**

**Agra:** Two great Mughal monarchs, Akbar and Shah Jahan, transformed the little village of Agra into a befitting second capital of the Mughal Empire - giving it the name Dar-ul-Khilafat {seat of the Emperor}. Today, a visitor to Agra is caught up in a world of contrasting edifices of red sandstone and white marble, narrow gullies and quaint buggies, and that irresistible charm that this favorite city of the Mughal still retains. It is not surprising, that modern Agra still reflects its Mughal heritage most conspicuously.

Upon arrival, check in at Hotel.

Afternoon visit the **Taj Mahal** ,which is perhaps the world’s most perfectly proportioned monument. This stunning mausoleum immortalized the name of Shah Jahan’s last wife Mumtaz Mahal, “light of the palace”. Built by Indian artisans and artisans from neighboring Islamic countries, it is aptly described by the poet laureate Tagore as “A tear on the face of eternity”. Decorated with a mosaic of semi-precious stones and Persian calligraphy recreating verses from the Koran, the mausoleum is an *“Urs”,* an important place of pilgrimage since the empress died in childbirth making her a martyr. Prayers are said and passages from Koran are constantly recited in the mosque and cenotaph chamber.

Later you visit **Agra Fort.** The present structure stands on the site of 14th century fort that was occupied by the Lodi Sultans of Delhi. When the Mughal Emperor Akbar established his supremacy in Northern India, he began his first architectural venture, rebuilding the fort as a beautiful fort palace. The work was completed by his son and grandson, highlighting the Mughal’s ability to blend defensive and decorative architecture. Richly decorated with marble and mosaic, it was in a part of this fort that Shah Jahan spent the last years of his life, imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb. His private quarters where he was confined, has a magical view of the Taj Mahal across the river Yamuna.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 04 Agra – Jaipur**

Morning drive to Jaipur en-route visit Fatehpur Sikri, a UNESCO World Heritage site. A deserted red sandstone city that was built during the second half of the 16th century by the Emperor Akbar, Fatehpur Sikri (the City of Victory) was the capital of the Mughal Empire for only some 10 years. The complex of monuments and temples, all in a uniform architectural style, includes one of the largest mosques in India, the Jama Masjid.

After visit continue drive to Jaipur.

**Jaipur:** The origins of the beautiful city of Jaipur can be traced back to the eighteenth century, during the reign of Jai Singh II who ascended the Amber throne in 1699. Jaipur today epitomizes the spirit of Rajputana. Inspite of growing into bustling metropolis, it still retains it’s character and history.... a beautiful fusion of yesteryears and modernity. For long called the Pink city because of the extensive use of the locally abundant pink plastered stone, painted so in honour of the visit of the royal consort of Queen Victoria. Jaipur thrills the soul with its massive forts, magnificent palaces, exquisite temples and lush gardens.

Upon arrival check in at Hotel.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 05 In Jaipur**

After breakfast you will visit Amber Fort. Hill forts were always important to the Rajput rulers. Belonging to the Hindu “Kshatriya” or warrior class, they believed in the line from the sacred holy book, the Purana that “a fort is the strength of a king”. They built a number of such forts all over the state of Rajasthan; some made for purely defensive purposes, but most built as fort palaces. **Amber** is one of the finest examples of a fort palace, built similar in style to the surrounding richly decorated Mughal courts.

This afternoon you will proceed on a city tour of Jaipur. You will tour part of the **City Palace** which is open to the public. The most striking building on entering through the *Atish Pol* or stable gate is the beautiful marble and sandstone *Mubarak Palace*, initially used to welcome foreign dignitaries and later used as the Cabinet Office. Today the palace houses the textile gallery exhibiting an excellent collection of costumes and rich textiles from the private collection of the Jaipur royal family. The armory is entered through the magnificent marble inlaid *Singh Pol* or Lion Gate. The most impressive part of the place is the Diwan-I-Khas or the hall of Private audience. Entered through a gateway richly decorated in *pietra dura* and flanked by a pair of elephants carved out of a single block of marble, the star exhibits of this area are a pair of enormous sterling silver vessels used to store holy water from the Ganges. The water was used by the Maharaja for his daily bath when traveling overseas, to protect him from ritual pollution. Also of interest is the Art Gallery which has a collection or royal memorabilia. **The Jantar Mantar** which you visit next is a collection of futuristic structures and astronomical instruments designed by Sawai Jai Singh the founder of Jaipur. This was a result of this intense study of Astrology and Astronomy, and these 17th century extraordinary structures are accurate even today.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 06 Jaipur - Bikaner**

After breakfast leave for Bikaner

**Bikaner** is a medieval flavored city set along the old caravan route, which linked Central Asia & North India with the Gujarat seaports. Bikaner takes its name from Rao Bikaji, the sixth son of Rathore Rajput Prince Rao Jodha, the founder of Jodhpur. Bhika set up his independent kingdom in 1488. Charming red stone havelis (mansions) (unlike the gold sand stone one’s of Jaisalmer) stand in the old part of this walled city and a leisurely lifestyle still prevails in this sublimely picturesque place surrounded by harsh desert.

Afternoon city tour of Bikaner.

Visit the **Junagarh Fort**, one of the finest of Rajput monuments. Paved courtyards, narrow staircases and terraces in this Rathor stronghold connect all thirty-seven palaces, pavilions and beautiful Jain temples built by different kings. One must take particular note of the designed ceilings of the various homes in this region - done either in wood, or copper plates, which are then covered with intricate painting work.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 07 Bikaner – Jaisalmer**

**After city tour of Jodhpur drive to Jaisalmer**

Founded by Prince Jaisal in 1156, **Jaisalmer** grew to be a major staging post on the trade route across the forbidding Thar Desert from India to the West. Set in a sea of golden tinged sand, Sonar Kila, a golden fort rises out of a rock of topaz. The entire living area of Jaisalmer lies within the gigantic citadel walls.

On arrival transfer to hotel

Overnight at Hotel

**Day 08 In Jaisalmer**

**Morning after breakfasts proceed for half-day city tour of Jaisalmer.**

Visit the silent 12th century **Fort** built by Prince Jaisal and the Palace. The uniqueness of this fort, is that it is the only ‘living fort’only fort in Rajasthan – people still reside within the fort walls. The fort stands at the highest point (100 metres) above the marketplace. Also visit the **Jain Temples** (12th-15th century) which lie within the fort complex. Some of them have quaint but impressive figures of Jain saints of white marble and of red and black stone. Others have beautiful images of deities, which indicate the remarkable religious tolerance of that age. The famous art of the stone carvers of Jaisalmer is evident in the elaborate facades of the yellow sandstone desert havelis (mansions) which glow softly in honey tones. Visit intricately carved **Havelis** built by Merchants, the largest and most elaborate of the famous havelis of Jaisalmer is Patwon ki Haveli. Patwas were the merchants trading in rich brocades, gold and silver embroidery, sequins and ribbons. This family eventually expanded their business to include opium, banking and revenue collecting. A brief stop at **Gadhi Sagar** is a must – a man made pond; a luxury in the centre of the Thar Desert

Afternoon camel ride at Sam dunes..

Overnight at Hotel

**Day 09 Jaisalmer - Jodhpur**

Morning drive to Jodhpur.

**Jodhpur** was founded in 1459 by Rao Jodha, a chief of the Rajput clan ‘Rathores’. Jodhpur certainly has one of the country's most spectacular fortress and palace complexes. It was from here that those baggie tight horse-riding trousers ‘jodhpurs’ took their name.

On arrival transfer to Hotel,

**Afternoon city tour of Jodhpur**

Visit magnificent **Meherangarh fort**, one of Rajasthan's finest forts, as it looks down protectively over the city from a hilltop. Still run by the Maharaja of Jodhpur, this 5 km long majestic fort on a 125 meter high hill is one of the most impressive and formidable structures. There are seven gates that lead into the fort. Inside the fort is a series of courtyards and palaces. **Jaswant Thada**, located a short distance from the fort, just off the fort road, is a white marble memorial to Maharaja Jaswant Singh II. The cenotaph built in 1899, was followed by the royal crematorium and three other cenotaphs that stand nearby. There are some beautiful marble jali (lattice) work and fine views from the terrace in front of the cenotaphs. Following sightseeing tour return back to hotel

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 10 Jodhpur - Udaipur**

Post breakfast drive to Udaipur enroute visiting Ranakpur Jain temples, situated in the remote and peaceful Aravalli valley. The temples are open for non Jains at 12 noon. The most famous is the Adinath temple, beautifully crafted and well-kept marble edifice, which has 29 halls supported by 1444 pillars – no two of which are alike. Among the five holy Jain sites, this is one of the best temple complexes in the country.

On arrival transfer and check in to Hotel.

The city of **Udaipur** or the city of `sunrise’ combines real beauty with a picturesque association of a great and glorious past. The legendary Ranas or kings of this state traced their ancestry back to the sun! It stands in a valley, amidst green hills on the banks of the wide, steel blue lake Pichola and is regarded as the most romantic spot in India. On little islands in the lake, from the waters edge, rise marble palaces of pure white that glisten like fairy castles. Crowning the ridge, in which the city clusters, along the shore of the lake, stands the massive palace of the Maharana.

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 11 In Udaipur**

**Morning: Sightseeing tour of Udaipur**

Highlights include a visit to the **City Palace** and **Sahelion-ki-Bari**. City Palace is composed of 4 major and several minor palaces that form a single façade. Its main entrance is through a triple arched gate, the Tripolia, built in 1725. The gate leads to a series of courtyards, corridors and gardens. The Rai Angan (Royal Courtyard) has a shrine, which is the oldest part of Udaipur. It is here that Udai Singh met an ascetic who suggested this site for Udaipur. The centrally located 17th century Mor Chowk (Peacock Courtyard) gets its name from inlaid glass mosaics of peacocks on its walls. Next, visit **Sahelion-ki-Bari**, Garden of Maids of Honour that comprises sof ornamental fountains, a lotus pool and rose garden. It was built specially for one of the queens of Udaipur, whose dowry included 48 maids

**Afternoon: Boat ride on the placid waters of Lake Pichola (Subject to sufficient water level in the lake)**

Lake Pichola derives its name from Pichola Village, with the City Palace extending along its eastern bank and the Jag Niwas Island and the Jag Mandir enclosed in its vast expanse. Maharana Udai Singh enlarged the lake after he founded the city of Udaipur and today it stands 4 kilometres long and 3 kilometres wide. The lake is surrounded by hills and its panoramic beauty is best viewed against the backdrop of the setting sun

Following sightseeing tour return back to hotel

**Overnight at Hotel.**

**Day 12 Udaipur – Delhi & fly out**

Morning free.

Afternoon transfer to airport to connect flight for Delhi. Meet & assist on arrival & transfer to international terminal to connect flight for onward destination.

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