

Small Group
UNLOCK INDIA
10-DAY ADVENTURE



WHEN:

13 - 22 March 2023
10days/9nights

WHERE:

New Delhi, Agra,
Jairpur & Udaipur

WHAT:

Cultural and historical
tour through Rajasthan



Summary

Photo: Jovyn Chamb

“Can there be anywhere else in the world that is such an assault on the senses? Those who know the country of old just go about their business. But nothing can prepare the uninitiated for this riot of noise and colour. For the heat, the motion; the perpetual teeming crowds.”

Evelyn (The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel)

Join us as we travel through Rajasthan; the jewel in India's crown. It is quite literally the Land of the Kings or Maharajas. The upper echelons of this society built magnificent palaces and forts, many of which are now sumptuous hotels and impressive museums open for us to peek into life as it once was.

On arrival all your senses will instantly be put into overdrive; India is, by design, a fast-paced, bundle of fun to visit. Our intention is not to meet them at this pace, but rather to slow things down. Give ourselves time to learn, appreciate and experience the country for what it is, and has to offer.

This tour is not about seeing India from the viewpoint of five-star hotels while those around struggle to make ends meet. We have designed this tour to be comfortable by staying in traditional Havelis but located just steps from the centre of everyday India.

Havelis were built by the up-and-coming merchant class who flaunted their wealth by decorating their homes with intricate artwork and skillful architectural designs. These are now beautiful boutique hotels that are an absolute gem to stay in.

From Delhi to Agra, Jaipur, and Udaipur this tour will introduce you to their fascinating history, delicious food, show you artisan trades, colourful markets and not forgetting one of the seven Wonders of the World!

ICON Adventures, PO Box 11406, Toowoomba QLD 4350

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Delhi - Agra

Photo: Jovyn Chamb

Day 1 Arrive Delhi

We suggest you take a day flight from your home city and arrive in the evening in New Delhi, that way you go to bed at the same time as the locals and can get up the following morning refreshed and ready to hit the road running. Do try and have a bit of a snooze on the flight though, don't sit there catching up on Marigold Hotel movies as we'll be seeing that in real life.

Our delightful guide, Vikas, will be there at the airport with a wave and smile ready to take good care of us from the get-go. First stop - a comfortable hotel for a good night's sleep.

O/N: Hotel, Delhi Aerocity, Aloft Hotel or similar

Day 2 Delhi - Agra (B)

India is going to hit you right in the senses. Every. Single. Day. The sights, scents, noise, and general hustle and bustle takes a bit to get used to, so we're going to whisk you away from Delhi to the slightly less hectic Rajasthan.

It's so easy to visit India and get caught up with the face paced flow, but we're going to slow things down, and take our time to enjoy each day. And I have forgotten the last two senses, taste and touch, these are going to get the same workout that only India can give them.

After breaky, we'll leave the city behind and drive to Agra, allowing plenty of free time to explore Agra Fort. We'll walk through the Old Mughal city where the direct descendants of the 20,000 artisans who built the Taj Mahal still live. If you like marble artifacts then this is the place for you!

O/N Agra Hotel Charks Shiraz or similar

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Agra - Jaipur

Photo: Helena Moore

Day 3 Agra - Jaipur (B)

Don't panic! We haven't forgotten that the Taj Mahal is in Agra. We've left this visit until this morning, at sunrise when the light is perfect and the crowds are still in bed.

The Taj Mahal is India's most-photographed monument, so if you can't beat 'em, join 'em and bring your camera (or mobile phone). The Taj was built in the mid-1600s by artisans under the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. He built it to honour his wife, Mumtaz Muhal, who sadly died giving birth to her 14th child. She was not just his wife, but his favourite wife, hence the Taj was built as a sign of his love and heartbreak after her death.

After visiting the Taj, we'll return to our hotel for breakfast and then travel to Jaipur, the Pink City by car reaching the capital of Rajasthan by mid-afternoon.

You'll have the rest of the afternoon to explore Jaipur with a visit to the Hawa Mahal, City Palace or visit one of the many bazaars.

O/N Jaipur (for next three nights) Alsisar Haveli or similar

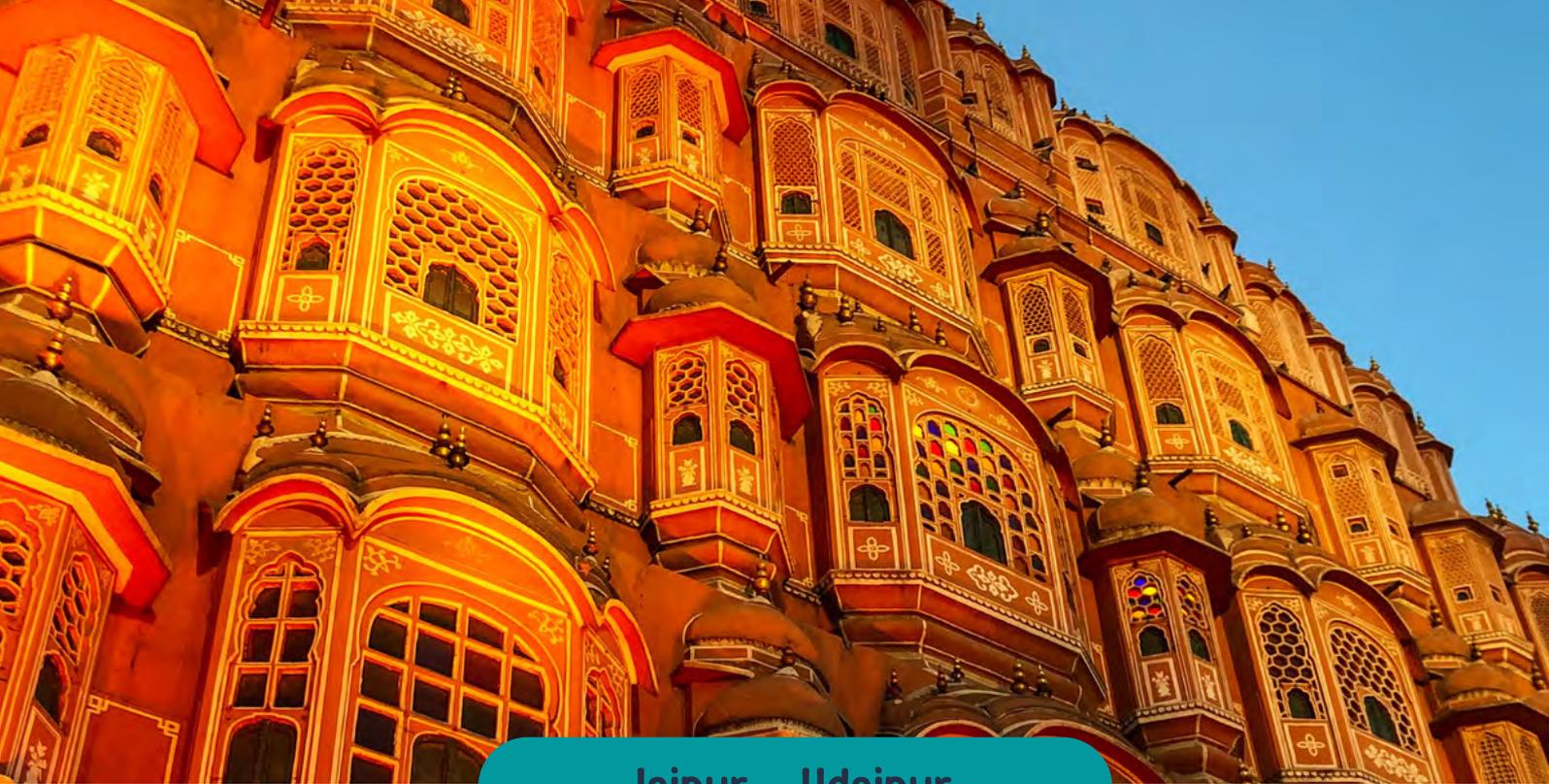
Day 4 Jaipur (B)

By now we're setting the pace, there's so much to see, do and taste, but at our own pace. On our second day in Jaipur, we'll visit the magnificent Amber Fort. This fort was built in 1592, and it has seen renovations and improvements for over two centuries! Its name is said to derive from the many jewels that are used for decoration inside...see for yourself!

This afternoon, if you are interested in fashion and textiles you may like to visit the Anoukhi Museum. Anoukhi is the saviour to the traditional block printing artisans, turning their almost lost skills into one of, if not, the most popular modern-day clothing stores throughout India. Anyone who's anyone and has been to India will have come home with an Anoukhi item of clothing (or two). And this time it may be you!

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Jaipur - Udaipur

Photo: Helena Moore

Day 5 Jaipur (B)

This morning we'll be up and at 'em to experience the city waking up. We have a visit to the local Vishnu and Hanuman temples to observe the local people praying to their gods. You will get to see women coming to pray with flower baskets. You will also visit the wholesale flower, vegetable, and milk markets.

We head back to the hotel for a late breakfast and spend the rest of the day at leisure to wander around or explore the sights and colours of the Jaipur Markets including the famous Johari Bazaar (Jeweller's Market).

At lunchtime today we will take a cooking class with a local family. We'll learn to make local Rajasthani special biryani, along with other specialty dishes. We'll sit with the family and enjoy a meal together cooked by our own fair hands!

In the evening you can visit the most iconic cinema in Jaipur, Raj Mandir, for a taste of Bollywood's magical brand of entertainment. Bollywood movies are definitely the spiciest ones. Expected any movie to be full of entertainment, rich in culture, family and colours. A solid plot is not central to Bollywood movies but still, it is meant to be enjoyable.

Day 6 Jaipur - Udaipur (B)

After breakfast, we're going to take one of India's more common forms of transport - the train to Udaipur (approx. 6 hours). We'll be passing through the Thar Desert which separates India from Pakistan. You will witness the desert life of villagers dressed in colourful clothes herding their stock and raising their families in their traditional nomadic ways.

Arrive mid-afternoon and check into your hotel by Lake Pichola, Udaipur.

Udaipur, also known as the City of Lakes, is one of India's most picturesque cities. Palaces surround the city, the most famous being The Lake Palace, which covers an entire island and was featured in the James Bond film Octopussy. The city was founded in 1559 and was the capital of the Mewar kingdom. There's no doubt you'll enjoy this relaxing, seductive city.

O/N Udaipur (for next three nights) Kankarwa Haveli or similar

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Udaipur

Photo: Suzanne Holden, ICON Adventures

Day 7 Udaipur (B, D)

Join us for an early morning heritage walk and cycle around the Fateh Sagar Lake and witness the sunrise over the Aravali Hills. The serenity of this lake is mesmerising, especially at sunrise. Join our guide to learn the legends and history of the location.

After breakfast, we'll visit the massive City Palace and enjoy a boat ride on Lake Pichola. Followed by a visit to Bagore-ki-Haveli, a beautiful Haveli, housing an interesting art gallery featuring contemporary and a local dance performance.

Dinner tonight is at the rooftop restaurant which overlooks the stunning Lake Pichola, and the City Palace. Enjoy the sweeping views as the sunsets throwing silhouettes of light across the landscape. So very beautiful.

Day 8 Udaipur (B, L)

After breakfast we'll take an hour drive to the village of Khempur most famous for the film set location of The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel. We'll visit the Khempur Ravala where the film was based and enjoy a traditional Indian lunch. The film is over ten years old so you may need to rewatch it before travelling to India to reacquaint yourself with the eccentric storyline.

We'll spend the rest of the day exploring the surrounding village and meeting the locals. It's been a few years since they have seen any tourists so be prepared to be something of a celebrity yourself, much like Judi Dench, Maggie Smith or Bill Nighy.

We'll return to Udaipur for our final evening enjoying the sunsetting from the rooftop with icy drinks to reminisce over our time in Rajasthan.

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Photo:abhinav-srivastava

Udaipur - Delhi

Day 9 Udaipur - Delhi (B)

After breakfast would be the perfect time to get your going-home henna tattoo. Go all-out or as subtle as you like, the choice is yours! Ask yourself, have you really been to India if you don't return home with intricately decorated hands, arms, and possibly legs?

This afternoon we take a flight back to New Delhi. We'll stay in a comfortable hotel close to the airport for a great nights sleep before our flight home or on-going travel.

O/N: Hotel, Delhi Aerocity

Day 10 Departure (B)

This morning our trip will sadly come to an end as a group before we bid our farewells.

THE DETAILS

PRICE INCLUDES

- Small-Group fully hosted tour - min 8 - max 12.
- Airport transfers and private vehicles throughout tour
- Nine nights accommodation with breakfast (2 x Delhi, 1 x Agra, 3 x Jaipur, 3 x Udaipur)
- Train Jaipur to Udaipur
- Boat ride Udaipur
- All entrance fees and local guides
- 2 x dinners (Jaipur & Udaipur)
- Cooking class with local family
- Lunch at Best Exotic Marigold Hotel and village visit
- Heritage walks Jaipur and Udaipur
- Flight Udaipur to Delhi
- English speaking tour guide throughout

PRICE EXCLUDES:

- Flights to/from India.
- Indian visa
- Meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Expenditure of a personal nature eg laundry services, souvenirs etc
- Camera and video charges at local sights
- Tips and gratuities

COST PER PERSON

\$5,190/person with your own room
\$800/person discount if you bring a travel partner and share a twin or double room

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