



ICONS & HIDDEN TREASURES OF NORTHERN INDIA

From elaborate royal palaces to the most desolate landscapes, enter into a world of extremes in northern India. Discover Delhi's colonial grandeur and mouth-watering cuisine.

Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



India, Indian Subcontinent



16 days from AU\$13,030 pp



Private

Journey Overview

From elaborate royal palaces to the most desolate landscapes, enter into a world of extremes in northern India. Discover Delhi's colonial grandeur and mouth-watering cuisine. Take in the imposing magnificence of Jaipur's City Palace and hillside Amber Fort. And let the Taj Mahal mesmerise at sunrise and sunset. Then, head into a limitless wilderness where the leopard roams wild and free and rare birdlife provides a delightful diversion. Live like a maharaja in regal palaces, historic havelis and luxury tented camps – after all, this is the Land of Kings.

Journey Highlights

- Wander through the colourful bazaars and temples of Old and New Delhi
- See the resplendent Taj Mahal at sunset and sunrise
- Soak in the sunset on a lake cruise in the 'Venice of the East'
- Discover the lesser-known wonders of Jaipur, the 'Pink City'
- Search for leopards during your private jeep safaris



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Delhi

Namaste and welcome to Delhi, India's northern gateway. Nowhere are India's rich cultural contrasts brought more sharply into focus than Delhi with its ruin-studded gardens, a growing contemporary art scene and world-class cuisine. Receive a warm A&K welcome and be transferred privately to your luxury hotel. Settle in and discover the superb service and facilities or step outside on your own to explore all that this dazzling city has to offer.

The Oberoi New Delhi

Day 2: Delhi

Take in the sights of Old and New Delhi today. starting with a visit to the thumping heart of Old Delhi where the towering minarets of India's largest mosque, Jama Masjid, loom high above the crowded streets. Hop onto a cycle rickshaw and weave your way through the colourful bazaars of Chandni Chowk. Take a photo stop at the Red Fort, the residence of the Mughal Emperors and the seat of the Mughal capital till 1857. Gaze at the ancient ramparts, the stage for some of India's most momentous cultural and historical events.

In New Delhi, drive down the tree-lined Rajpath (the royal path) to the 42-metre-high stone arch of India Gate, a majestic monument commemorating the contribution of Indian soldiers who laid down their lives for the British Empire in World War I. At the far end of the boulevard, glimpse the sprawling President's Residence, Rashtrapati Bhavan. Finish your tour at the Qutub Minar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the tallest free-standing tower in the world. Built in the early 13th century in red sandstone and marble, the tower is covered with intricate carvings of words from the Quran.

The Oberoi New Delhi / Meals: B

Day 3: Delhi - Agra

Begin with a visit to the heritage-listed Humayun's Tomb. Built in 1570 for a Mughal emperor, this beautiful palatial tomb was the first garden-tomb on the Indian subcontinent. Bid farewell to Delhi and journey overland to Agra, home to the mesmerising Taj Mahal. Standing proud in the heart of the city, the Taj Mahal was built by Emperor Shah Jahan for his wife Mumtaz and is now the world's preeminent expression of passionate mourning. Drink in the breathtaking sunset over the Taj Mahal before returning to a royal welcome at The Oberoi Amarvilas, where you can continue to bask in uninterrupted views of the landmark from your luxury room.

The Oberoi Amarvilas / Meals: B

Day 4: Agra

Rise early and return to the Taj Mahal as the morning light bathes the marble dome and minarets in a soft glow. Return to the hotel for a sumptuous breakfast, then venture to the former imperial city of the Mughal rulers, the heritage-listed Agra Fort. Within its red sandstone walls discover a labyrinth of highly decorated palaces and ornate marble mosques built by the great Mughal emperor Akbar I.

Return to your luxury hotel for some time at leisure before continuing your discovery of the rich Mughal architecture. Explore the city's laneways, bustling spice market, sacred mosques and temples. Sample treats at a 200-year-old sweet shop, hop on a cycle rickshaw and hear legends that have been passed down through generations.

Marvel at the mausoleum of Itmad ud Daulah, nicknamed "the Baby Taj". This architectural jewel is the final resting place of Mirza Ghiyas Beg, grandfather of Mumtaz Mahal (to whom the Taj Mahal was dedicated). Admire its exquisitely carved marble surfaces and see why it's often considered an architectural first draft of the Taj Mahal.

Continue to Mehtab Bagh (Moonlight Garden), an oasis-like garden complex across the Yamuna River from the Taj Mahal and watch the sunset cast a final golden glow over this iconic monument.

The Oberoi Amarvilas / Meals: B

Day 5: Agra - Jaipur

Journey overland towards the dusky beauty of India's Pink City, Jaipur. Pause en route at the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, just west of Agra, to admire one of the region's most scenic landmarks. Founded in the 16th century by a Mughal emperor Akbar I, the heritage listed red sandstone city is regarded as his crowning architectural legacy. Enjoy lunch before a quick photo stop at the majestic Chand Baori, one of the largest stepwells in the world, before you arrive at your hotel, the exquisite Rajmahal Palace.

RAAS Rajmahal Palace / Meals: BL

Day 6: Jaipur

After breakfast, embark on a tour of the Amber Fort for a fascinating insight into the life of the Moghuls. Pay a visit to the Anokhi Museum for a lesson in the traditional Rajasthani craft of hand printing from local artists.

Afterwards, explore City Palace and its museum which houses a superb collection of Rajasthani costumes and armour of the Mughals and Rajputs, including swords, antiques and artefacts.

Then, admire the heavens from within the Jantar Mantar Observatory, an astronomical and astrological hub packed with enormous instruments dating back to the 16th century.

Enjoy a brief photo stop at Jaipur's most famous building, Hawa Mahal ('Palace of Winds'), with its distinctive red and pink facade, before setting out on foot to discover the lesser-known wonders of the Pink City. Step inside lively temples to witness traditional customs, take part in a Hindu prayer ceremony, if you wish, and sip tea with locals in a beautifully restored haveli (mansion).

RAAS Rajmahal Palace / Meals: B

Day 7: Jaipur

Spend your day exploring at your own pace or choose from a range of activities including (additional charge):

- Leave the hustle far behind as you soar above Jaipur's yawning horizons and rolling hills in an enchanting early-morning hot-air balloon flight.
- Spend time in the home of a noble Rajput family for an intimate cooking demonstration.
- Step inside Clay Botik studio for a hands-on pottery lesson with a local artist.
- Enjoy a delicious afternoon High Tea on the terraces and manicured lawns of your luxury property.
- Pay a visit to Digantar, a local school supported by A&K Philanthropy.

RAAS Rajmahal Palace / Meals: B

Day 8: Jaipur - Rural Rajasthan (Nimaj)

Swap the city hustle for the serenity of Rajasthani tented camp Chhatra Sagar operated by descendants of the area's former rulers. Perched on the edge of a century-old reservoir teeming with birdlife, the five-star retreat comprises luxury en suite tents in an idyllic and peaceful rural setting. This evening get your bearings with a nature walk to spy some of the over 200 bird species before retreating to your private sitting area looking out across the water.

Raas Chhatrasagar / Meals: BLD

Day 9: Rural Rajasthan (Nimaj)

Wake up to views of the water and glorious birdsong. Then, explore your way from a selection of included activities. Tour the local farm and village by open-top jeep, witness the region's cottage industries in action, and meet local children at the school. For something truly relaxing, drift across the lake on a tranquil boat trip.

Raas Chhatrasagar / Meals: BLD

Day 10: Rural Rajasthan (Nimaj) - Jodhpur

Bid farewell to your tranquil setting and continue to Jodhpur on the edge of the great Thar Desert. Settle into your hotel, before exploring the treasures of the Blue City. Venture high to the majestic Mehrangarh Fort on a clifftop overlooking the city. Marvel at the intricately carved walls and relive the rich history contained within the fort. Then, marvel at the gleaming white Jaswant Thada in contrast with its red sandstone base. Continue into the heart of the old city and wind through the narrow alleys of the bustling Sardar Market, an explosion of colour and filled with trinkets and handicrafts. Sample one of the city's famous lassi, a sweet blend of yoghurt and spices, under the Clock Tower before returning to your hotel.

Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace / Meals: B

Day 11: Jodhpur

Drive to Salawas for a morning safari, and visit with local potters, weavers and the Bishnoi people. Discover a fascinating culture and ethnic community in the nearby Bishnoi villages. Founded by Guru Jambheshwar in 1451, the Bishnoi sect is founded on 29 (Bishnoi) principles, including unconditional love for nature and wildlife. Spend time learning why they are protective of their land and their unique traditions and customs. En route to Jodhpur stop at a small weaving workshop and watch as family members keep up a hundred-year-old tradition of dhurru weaving.

Afternoon exploring at your own pace or choose an activity (additional cost). Visit Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park located at the foot of Mehrangarh Fort or take a food walk in Jodhpur experiencing popular street food while walking down the heritage lanes of the old city.

Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace / Meals: B

Day 12: Jodhpur - Jawai Bandh

Venture into the heart of the wild Aravalli Hills to Jawai Bandh, where leopards roam free. Amid former kingdoms of Mewar and Marwar, the region is home to the charismatic Rabari herdsman, a people living in harmony with the indigenous wildlife. Spend some time relaxing in your luxury tented camp before joining one of the local guides on a leisurely stroll looking for nomadic shepherds as they return at the end of the day with their goats. This evening, enjoy the tranquil setting from the stillness of your private veranda.

Sujan Jawai / Meals: BLD

Day 13: Jawai Bandh

If you're hoping to see a leopard, there's no better place than Jawai Bandh. Head out on early morning and late afternoon drives in a customised 4x4 accompanied by your expert tracker-guide. Each drive is timed to give you optimal viewing opportunities of the sought-after spotted cat, plus a rich variety of wildlife. Between drives, immerse yourself in the luxury of your stunning tented resort. Indulge in a rejuvenating massage, unwind with meditation or yoga, watch flamingo on the lagoon, or explore the villages of Jawai or the countryside trails surrounding the camp by bicycle or on foot (additional cost).

Sujan Jawai / Meals: BLD

Day 14: Jawai Bandh - Udaipur

Drive south to India's most romantic city, stopping en route at the Ranakpur Temples. Admire the intricate architectural style of the largest and most important temples of the Jain religion. Built in the 15th century, the exquisite marble complex comprises more than 1400 carved pillars. Arrive in Udaipur and discover a place where cascading, whitewashed mansions sit alongside deep blue lakes and the undulating Aravalli Hills.

As sunset calls, take a private boat ride on the shimmering waters of Lake Pichola and see the city rising majestically above the lake in the middle of the Rajasthan desert.

The Oberoi Udaivilas / Meals: BL

Day 15: Udaipur

Set out on a morning discovery of Udaipur's distinctive architecture, arts and crafts. Your first stop is the enormous City Palace, a flamboyant fusion of Rajasthani and Mughal styles towering over the lake. Gleaming walls, marble balconies and the spectacular Peacock Courtyard will leave you in awe. Journey on to admire the beautifully carved pillars and painted walls of the three-storey Jagdish Temple. Continue to Saheliyon-ki-Bari ('The Garden of the Maids of Honour') to see a lavish tribute to the 48 ladies in waiting who formed part of a royal dowry. Step inside a gallery and be inspired by practising artists as they produce the miniature paintings that Udaipur is famous for. Known as the Mewar school, observe the artist using traditional stone and vegetable colours on various mediums like cotton, silk, bone and paper. Spend your afternoon at leisure.

The Oberoi Udaivilas / Meals: B

Day 16: Depart Udaipur

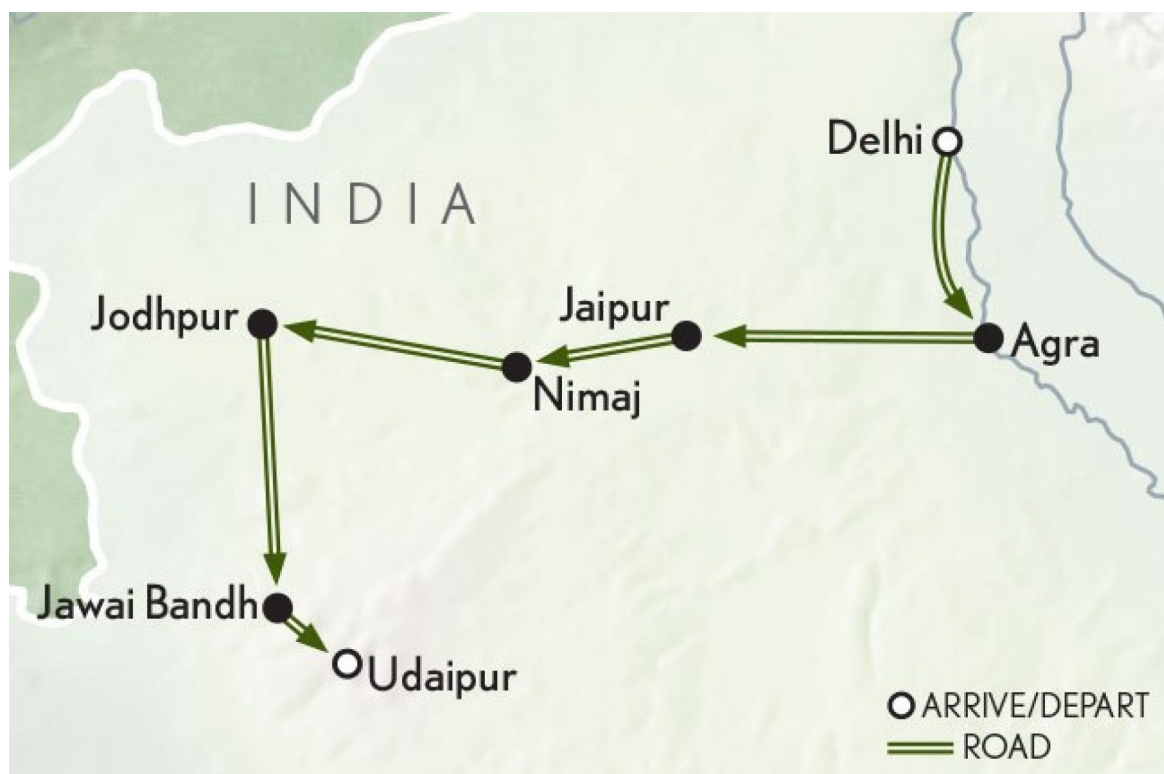
Depart Udaipur with a private transfer to the airport for your onward journey.

Meals: B

Journey Details

Please note: Sujan Jawai is closed from May to September. Please contact A&K for details.

Map



Accommodation

The Oberoi Amarvilas, Agra



The Oberoi Amarvilas is recognised as the leading luxury hotel in Agra. Built in a style inspired by Moorish and Mughal architecture, the resort is a splendid display of richly detailed interiors, terraced lawns, fountains, reflection pools and pavilions with rich interiors that take you back to an era of emperors and princes.

The rooms and suites are beautifully appointed. Most feature Burma Teak flooring, teak armoires and spacious marble bathrooms with both a bathtub and a separate shower cubicle, along with a basket of Ayurvedic toiletries. Some have the added benefit of a private balcony.

The hotel's Luxury Suites are a real treat. Located on the fifth floor, they have an entrance foyer, separate living and dining rooms and a spacious bedroom with a four-poster bed. Each suite has two private open-air terraces, both offering splendid views of the Taj Mahal.

Why we like it

- All rooms afford uninterrupted views of the Taj Mahal
- A deliciously eclectic choice of cuisine is served in the hotel's two restaurants
- The Oberoi Spa at Amarvilas offers an unmatched array of therapies, rituals and journeys designed to renew, refresh and replenish
- Set in the terraced garden, with an option of shade and open sky, the cobalt blue pool

is straight from the pages of the Arabian nights

Rajmahal Palace, RAAS Jaipur



One of the oldest and most treasured palaces in the pink city, Sujan Rajmahal has a grand original marble staircase and intricate chandeliers. Originally built in 1729 by the Maharaja of Jaipur, this palace has stood the test of time and has now been carefully renovated and refurbished to offer palatial living to the discerning traveller.

A myriad vibrant colour has been used to counterbalance the old world art and contemporary touches have been carefully added. 14 rooms and suites, including two magnificent Royal apartments, boast vibrant interiors with wallpapers that have been specially created for each room and tell the many stories of Jaipur. With two restaurants, there's a chance to dine in elegant surroundings discovering the authentic Indian flavours of Jaipur. Begin your evening at the bar with a handmade cocktail in the finest crystal glass. With a perfect location in Jaipur to explore the fabled pink city, Rajmahal Palace is a great choice for your Indian holiday.

Why we like it

- A cleverly redefined heritage hotel with the feel of a sumptuous private residence
- An all-suite boutique hotel
- Set in beautiful sprawling gardens
- A successful combination of classical architecture with a modern sensibility

RAAS Chhatrasagar, Rajasthan



Raas Chhatrasagar is located in a tranquil corner of Rajasthan, beside a serene reservoir. An ornithologist's paradise, bird-watching tours are arranged by the camp, as are ventures to watch local craftsmen, farmers and villagers going about their daily life.

RAAS Chhatrasagar has a total of 16 luxury tents, including 4 family tents. All tents are open all year around and are overlooking the lake in the East, the peaceful natural vistas on the other side and have private sit outs offering panoramic views. They are spacious, comfortably furnished with relaxing furniture and have well appointed private facilities. Food at Chhatra Sagar is authentic and delicious, with produce sourced from nearby farms used in traditional recipes.

Why we like it

- The perfect oasis from the hustle and bustle of India
- Lake side view
- Village tours to see local craftsmen
- Amazing birdlife

Umaid Bhawan Palace, Jodhpur



The Umaid Bhawan Palace is set amidst lush, peacock filled gardens and has 94 lavish rooms decorated in Art Deco style - a stay here is a truly memorable experience.

Designed by renowned Edwardian architect Henry Lanchester, the palace is a blend of eastern and western architectural influences. Its majestic 105 - foot high cupola is influenced by the Renaissance, while the towers draw inspiration from Rajput tradition. The lavish interiors with gilt furniture and elegant artwork follow the Art Deco style, complemented by the exotic murals of the self-exiled Polish artist Stefan Norblin.

The rooms too are designed in unmistakable Art Deco style, with patterned tile floors, polished wooden detail and antique furniture. Spacious and stylish, they are very much in keeping with the hotel's stunning exterior.

Why we like it

- Perched above the desert capital of Jodhpur, Umaid Bhawan Palace, a golden-yellow sandstone monument, is the last of India's great palaces
- Dining options include the superb Risala, which serves imaginative continental and Indian cuisine
- The Jiva Grand Spa offers an array of traditional and contemporary treatments in a wonderful location
- An outdoor pool is set in gardens and surrounded by sun loungers with shade. An indoor pool is located in the spa
- Other facilities include bars and lounges, a family museum, a fine collection of vintage cars including a Silver Ghost Rolls Royce,
- tennis courts and croquet lawns, secret gardens and stables, a boutique, a library, a bookstore and a gallery for fine antiques

SUJAN Jawai, Rajasthan



With a dramatic backdrop of kopjes, scrub and sandy river-beds, Sujan Jawai has been designed in a style that combines subtle opulence with abundant adventure. Bed down in one of the 10 beautifully styled white canvas tents which come complete with en suite bathrooms and a large private verandah. This is camping at its most elegant with a team of highly trained and gracious staff to look after your every need.

The Spa at Jawai is a perfect spot to unwind and relax with a wide range of treatments available. Daily game drives in customised 4WD jeeps with a driver-tracker and naturalist game drive are included with additional activities such as village visits and walks, vintage jeep rides, bird watching or meditation, yoga and massage.

For younger travellers, the camp runs junior ranger courses. Meals are superb with the finest cuisine created by a team of chefs and served in a variety of locations, the favourite being a granite kopje. There is a mess tent but most meals are enjoyed outside.

Why we like it

- Ten spacious luxurious tents, including a family tent
- A unique opportunity to spot the magnificent leopard
- Morning and evening wilderness drive lead by expert guides
- Swimming pool with panoramic views of the dramatic wilderness
- Member of Relais & Chateaux

The Oberoi Udaivilas, Udaipur



The Udaivilas' grand architecture is inspired by the palaces of Rajasthan, and paints a picture of majesty resplendent with pavilions and domes. The interiors, embellished with decorative domes, hand painted frescoes, intricate mirror work and beautifully crafted artefacts, create an ambience of regal splendour. Even arriving at this hotel is an enchanting experience - a short boat ride across Lake Pichola transports you to a ceremonial welcome at the resort.

The hotel's 90 rooms have terraces that open on to semi-private swimming pools and exquisite views. Inside, décor is decidedly opulent, featuring inlaid furniture, Rajput inspired decoration and marble bathrooms. The hotel's magnificently decorated suites are a real treat, not least thanks to their private swimming pools and outdoor dining pavilions.

Why we like it

- Selected rooms and suites have private pools
- A showcase of the rich Mewar heritage with rambling courtyards, gentle rippling fountains, reflection pools and verdant gardens
- Three restaurants serve fine international cuisine and the authentic flavours of Rajasthan
- The Oberoi Spa overlooking the lake is the perfect place to enjoy an indulgent treatment
- The hotel has two swimming pools; a luxurious spa swimming pool overlooking the lake and another set in a large green courtyard

Abercrombie & Kent

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