

TAJ AND TEMPLES

Delhi-Jaipur-Bharatpur-Agra-Gwalior-Datia(Sonagir)-Orchha-Khajuraho-Varanasi-Delhi

DAY 1 ARRIVE DELHI

Arrive Delhi this evening by SQ408 at 2200hrs. Upon arrival you will be received and taken to the hotel.

The city consists of two parts -Old & New Delhi. Old Delhi was the capital of Muslim India between 17th and 19th century and has many mosques, monuments and forts. New Delhi, the imperial city was created by the British as the capital of India. In 1911, Edwin Lutyens', the most renowned English architect of the day, was chosen to design New Delhi. Luytens' architectural conceptions were totally different from the Hindu or Mughal architecture. The city centre has wide, straight



avenues in a strict layout, plenty of parks and low colonial buildings with spacious gardens.

Meals included: None

Overnight:

DAY 2 DELHI

This morning visit Old Delhi, it pulses with the energy and colour, the hustle and bustle of thronged bazaars and is laced by a maze of narrow lanes which twist and turn between tall, leaning houses full of the sights, sounds and aromas of the Indian sub-continent. You will see the famous Red Fort surrounded by shops, and bazaars, the Jama Masjid with its tapering minarets and wonderful marble domes and the Chandni Chowk. In Old Delhi you will also have an opportunity to enjoy rickshaw ride.

In the afternoon you will be taken on a tour of New Delhi. It is a city of wide boulevards which offers ever changing perspectives of Lutyen's landscaped city. It is a city known for its formal parks, magnificent Parliament Building, the Rashtrapati Bhawan (the official residence of the President of India designed by Sir Edwin Lutyen) and India Gate. In New Delhi you will also visit Qutab Minar, the 72.5 m high tower dating back to 13th century and Humayun's Tomb (built in the 16th century and architecturally the fore runner of the Taj Mahal).

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

DAY 3 DELHI- JAIPUR

After breakfast, you will be driven to Jaipur (approx 5 hours drive). On arrival you will check in at your hotel for two nights.

Rest of the day is at leisure to relax.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

DAY 4 JAIPUR

Today you will do a full day tour of Jaipur. In the morning you will be taken to Amber Fort where you arrive atop an elephant.



Amber, the ancient capital of the region, still recalls its heydays in the majestic ramparts rising steeply along the contoured hillsides. Here, elephants still carry visitors in stately splendour to the main Palace, through unusually high gateways, obviously designed to accommodate this archaic

mode of transport. It is an extremely well preserved building and very delightful to explore. Visit the Jagmandir or the Hall of Victory glittering with mirrors, Jai Mahal and Temple of Kali.

After visiting the fort, in the afternoon, you will be taken on the city tour. Jaipur is blessed with a wealth of wonders. Here you will see the Jantar Mantar (Astronomical Observatory) and the Maharaja's City Palace. Jaipur is a city of pink, and the light playing upon the buildings, creating shadows and highlighting every nuance of the architecture will enchant you.

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

DAY 5 JAIPUR-AGRA

After breakfast, you will be driven to Agra – en route visiting Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary. The Keoladeo National Park, Bharatpur is a World Heritage Site. Located in eastern Rajasthan (50 kms from Agra), it was artificially created by a planned system of canals, embankments and sluices, as a private wildfowl shooting preserve by the Maharaja of Bharatpur in the 1850s. Now a National Park, Keoladeo attracts thousands of migratory birds during the winter months, which fly in from Central Asia, Siberia or China to escape the severe cold and restricted daylight hours of their homelands. It is one of the finest waterfowl reserves in the world: over 350 species of birds have been spotted here. October to February is the recommended period for visiting Keoladeo as the park fills up with the migratory birds. August-October breeding season is also interesting. Here you will enjoy walking tour and rickshaw ride to explore th park.

After lunch at local restaurant, you will continue drive to Agra visiting Fatehpur Sikri en-route.

The deserted Mughal city of *Fatehpur Sikri* was built by Emperor *Akbar* in 1569 and abandoned after fifteen years due to scarcity of water. Here you will see the graceful buildings including the *Jama Masjid*, the Tomb of *Salim Chishti*, the *Panch Mahal* & the other palaces.

On arrival in Agra, check in at your hotel for two nights

Rest of the day is at leisure

Meals included: Breakfast

Overnight:

DAY 6 AGRA

Today early morning you will enjoy visit to the incomparable Taj Mahal at sunrise (closed on Fridays). Later after breakfast, you will be taken on a tour of the rest of the Agra city – visiting Agra Fort and Itmad-Ud-Daula also known as “Baby Taj”.

Shah Jehan's son imprisoned him in the magnificent fort at Agra. Here you'll see the art and crafting of the white marble that has made the area so famous, the Pearl Mosque and the Halls of Public and Private Audience. The Taj Mahal truly is one of the wonders of the world. It is a monument of love built by the Mughal Emperor Shahjehan in 1630 for his Queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains. For twenty-two years 20,000 men laboured day and night to build this masterpiece that has held the world awe struck ever since.

Later you will be taken to a nearby marble factory where you will experience the art of stone inlay work by the local craftsmen doing this work since generations.



Meals included: Breakfast
Breakfast Overnight:

DAY 7 AGRA-GWALIOR

After Breakfast you will be driven to Gwalior (drive time - 3 hours approximately). On arrival check -in at your hotel.



Afternoon enjoy a sightseeing tour of Gwalior city.

Surrounded by beautiful hills on three sides, Gwalior is studded with numerous monuments. The Gwalior Fort, which dominates the city, was built by Suraj Sen as a gratitude to Gwalipa, an ascetic who had cured him from leprosy. The holy pool on the rock was enlarged and came to be known as Suraj Kund. Gwalior is also sacred to the memory of the heroic queen, Rani of Jhansi and Tatia Tope who led the revolt against the British in 1857.

Gwalior Fort built by Raja Man Singh Tomar, is one of the biggest and best Forts in India. The sights in the city include the Chhatris or Cenotaphs commemorating the rulers of the Scindia dynasty, which ruled the region till independence. The Mansingh Palace built between 1486 to 1517 AD, the Gujari Mahal built by Raja Mansingh in the 15th century for his favourite queen, is interesting sites. The latter now houses an archaeological museum. Sas Bahu ka Mandir is an 11th century temple of Lord Vishnu, while the Teli ka Mandir is an over 300 meter high Vishnu Temple of the 9th century.

Meals included: Breakfast
Breakfast Overnight:

DAY 8 GWALIOR-ORCHHA

After Breakfast, you will be driven to Orchha (drive time – 3 hours approximately) en-route visiting Sonagir- Datia.

Sonagiri means the golden peak. It is located in Datia district and is famous for its complex of **Jain temples**. Sonagir is also known as a holy site for the Digambar sect of the Jains. History says that King Nanganag Kumar had attained salvation and got liberated from the cycles of death and life in this place. He was followed by millions of his followers. Thus, Jain saints who seek salvation or practice the paths to Nirvana flock to this place.

Later continue your drive to Orchha, where you will arrive and check in to your hotel.

Meals included: Breakfast

Breakfast Overnight:

DAY 9 ORCHHA-KHAJURAHO

In the morning, enjoy sightseeing tour of Orchha Fort and Temples.

Once the capital city of Bundela, Orchha is now just a village, set amongst a complex of well preserved palaces and temples. It's definitely worth a visit. Orchha was founded in 1531 and it's golden age was during the first half of the 17th century. A special palace, Jehangir Mahal was built when Jehangir visited the city in 1606. It is of impressive size and there are good views of the countryside from the upper levels.

The Raj Mahal nearby has superb murals. Dinman Hardaul's palace is also interesting palace. Orchha's worth visiting temples date back to the 17th century. They are still in use today and are visited regularly by thousands of devotees. Ram Raja Temple with its soaring spires. The Lakshmi Narayan temple is worth the walk for its well preserved murals. The walled Phool Bagh gardens, a cool summer retreat, are also worth visiting other places to see include the dilapidated Sundar Mahal and Chhatris (memorials) of Orchha's rulers, down by the betwa river.

Later drive to Khajuraho (drive time – 4 hours approximately)

Rest of the day is at your leisure.

Meals included: Breakfast

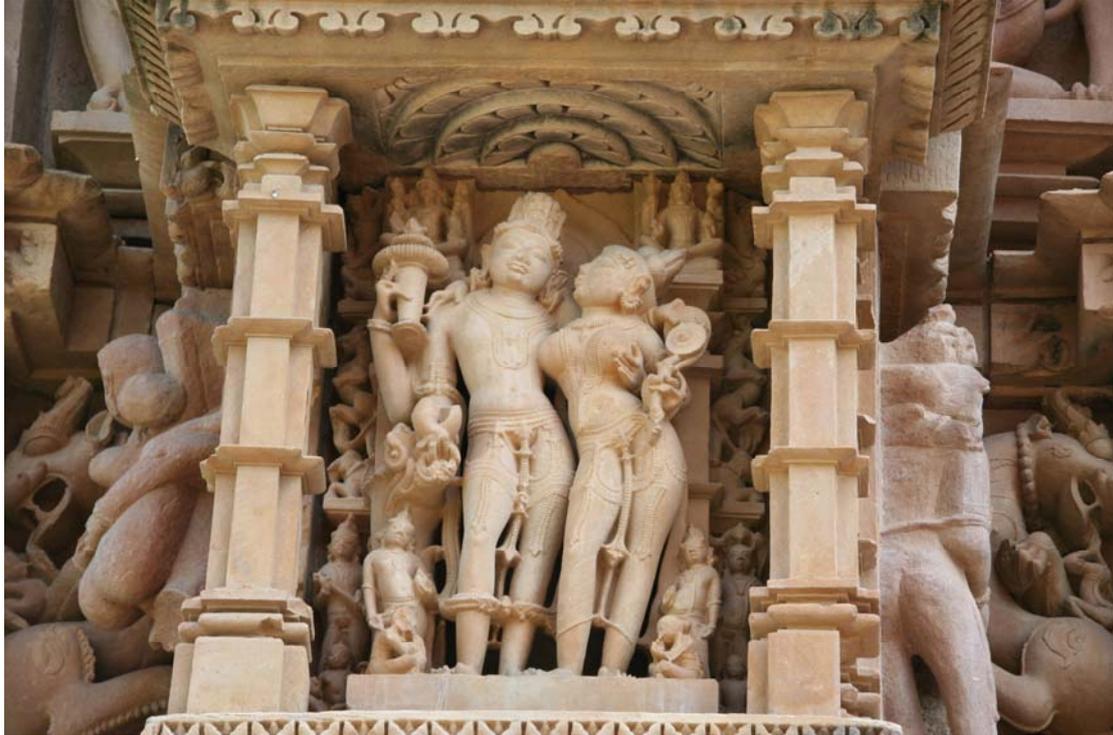
Breakfast Overnight:

DAY 10 KHAJURAHO

Today early morning, you will be taken to the famous Chandela Dynasty temples in the morning.

A thousand years ago, this was the seat of the Chandela Kings who built 85 temples, of which 22 remain in eloquent testimony to the glory of the reign. The famous Chandela Dynasty Temples built between 950 and 1050 AD immortalized

in stone is a wealth of sensuous and erotic sculptures, an exquisite depiction of human life and emotions, equating passion with spiritual union. The sculptures considered most perfect figures achieved in stone, depicts Gods and Goddesses and amorous couples.



Afternoon will be at leisure, Later in the evening enjoy Sound and Light show at Khajuraho Temples.

Meals included: Breakfast

Breakfast Overnight:

DAY 11 KHAJURAHO - VARANASI

Today the morning is at your leisure to relax.

Later in the late afternoon you will be transferred to the Delhi airport (approx 45 minutes drive) for your flight to Delhi.

Depart: Khajuraho at 1330 hrs

by Jet Airways Flight No. 9W 724

Arrive: Varanasi at 1410 hrs

You will be met on arrival and will be transferred to your hotel.



Later in the evening you will be taken to the ghats of holy river Ganges to experience the evening Aarti ceremony.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight:

DAY 12 VARANASI -DELHI

Today morning you will enjoy boat ride on river Ganges.

The early morning boat ride on the Ganges to view the Sunrise, as seen from the boat can be a spiritually uplifting sight. From dawn to dusk the riverfront (Ghats) are thronged by thousands of devotees, who perform their holy rituals in the hope of attaining eternal salvation, the “NIRVANA”.

You will continue your sightseeing and enjoy walking tour of the narrow lanes old city which includes a visit to the famous Kashi Vishvanath Temple (or the Golden Temple)- a gold spiraled temple rebuilt in the 18th century and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The spire is covered with tones of gold plating donated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh of Punjab. Only Hindus are allowed inside the main temple sanctorum.

Later enjoy visit to Sarnath, the buried Buddhist city where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment 2500 years ago. Visit the ruins, ancient stupas (commemorative pillars), a Buddhist Temple and the museum, designed to look like a monastery.

In the late afternoon you will be transferred to the Varanasi airport (45 minutes) for flight to Delhi.

Depart: Varanasi at 1440 hrs
Arrive: Delhi at 1600 hrs

by Jet Airways Flight No. 9W724

You will be met on arrival and will be transferred to your hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight:

DAY 13 DELHI -ONWARD DESTINATION

Today morning you will be collected from you hotel and transferred to the International Airport for your onward flight back home.

*******End of the Arrangements*******