

INDIA'S MUGHAL EMPIRE

HILLTOP FORTS, LAKESIDE PALACES
& DESERT KINGDOMS

Fatehpur Sikri

OVERVIEW

The power of the great Mughals over the Indian subcontinent began with the arrival of Babur from Central Asia in 1526, and lasted until 1857, when the Indian Mutiny ended their rule and handed power formally to Great Britain.

This period of just over 300 years brought all the drama, conflict, and intrigue associated with any great empire but also witnessed some of history's greatest and most enduring achievements in art, architecture, literature, and cultural change.

Visiting the significant, and magnificent, sites of the Mughal Emperors, this 16-day tour takes us from Delhi, Shah Jahan's glittering city, to the heart of India in Uttar Pradesh, visiting the ruins of the old city of Lucknow and the fabled Taj Mahal in Agra. From here we head to Rajasthan, the Land of Kings, where we visit the hilltop forts, lakeside palaces and sacred holy sites in a region whose desert kingdoms were both the Mughal's greatest allies and darkest threats.

As we travel, we experience both the past and the living history of these extraordinary places.



TOUR LEADER

Judy Tenzing has a degree in South Asian History. She has been variously living, working, and studying India for over 40 years. Her passion for the great sub-continent has become an integral part of her life.

TOUR DATES

November 12-27, 2024

TOUR PRICE

\$11,270 per person, twin share
\$3,380 single supplement

TOUR DEPOSIT

A **\$1,000** non-refundable deposit is required per person to confirm your booking on tour.

GROUP SIZE

Maximum number of **16** in group

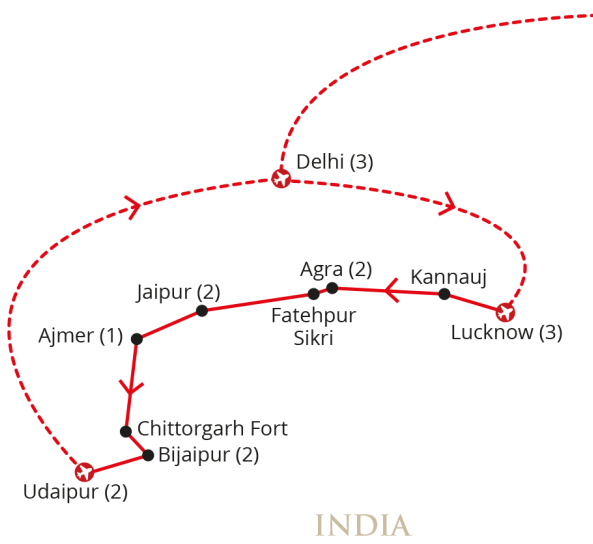
ITINERARY

New Delhi (3 nights), Lucknow (3 nights), Agra (2 nights), Jaipur (2 nights), Ajmer (1 night), Bijapur (2 nights), Udaipur (2 nights)

INCLUSIONS

15 nights' accommodation in centrally located 4 and 5-star hotels. All breakfasts, 8 lunches and 6 dinners. Services of an expert tour leader and an experienced tour manager throughout. Economy flights Delhi-Lucknow and Udaipur-Delhi. All ground transport, entrance fees and tipping.

DETAILED ITINERARY



Start & Finish

The tour starts on Tuesday 12 November with a late arrival at The Claridges Hotel, New Delhi.

The tour ends in the early evening on Wednesday 27 November at Delhi Airport.

Included meals are indicated with B, L, D.

Tuesday 12 November

Arrive Delhi

Passengers make individual travel arrangements to Delhi and check into the hotel independently. Overnight Delhi.

Wednesday 13 November

Old Delhi

Our group meets for a tour briefing in the hotel after breakfast this morning. Our immersion in Mughal India then begins with a walking tour of the old city of Delhi, once known as Shahjahanabad for the man who had it designed and built – the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan. Here we see the extraordinary results of the emperor's ambitious building program including the Red Fort, a massive complex whose innovative fusion of architectural traditions is seen as a pinnacle of Mughal architecture, and the majestic Jama Masjid, which served as the imperial mosque until the decline of the Mughal empire. We also enjoy our welcome lunch in a beautifully restored merchant's haveli, a traditional multi-storey mansion whose rooms are arranged around a courtyard to provide light and ventilation. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Delhi (B, L)

Thursday 14 November

New Delhi

While the old city of Delhi remains the heart of the Mughal city, it is in New Delhi that we find the mausoleum of the second ruler of the Mughal Empire, the Emperor Humayun. The construction of this beautiful garden tomb in the 1560s brought together Persian and Indian craftspeople, creating a site whose style and monumental scale can be seen as a precursor to the Taj Mahal. Our day also includes a relaxed walk through the lush green spaces of the Lodhi Gardens, which offer an oasis of calm in a busy city, and an early evening journey to visit the shrine of the great Sufi mystic Nizamuddin, renovated and restored by the Aga Khan Trust a decade ago in a bustling area in west Delhi. Returning to the hotel, there is time to freshen up before dinner. Overnight Delhi (B, D)

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

Delhi

Delhi – old and new – part of the great empire's power base and site of some of its greatest architectural marvels, such as the Red Fort, the majestic Jama Masjid mosque, and the tombs of Mughal Emperor Humayun and the great Sufi mystic, Nizamuddin Auliya.

Lucknow

The old city of Lucknow, a Muslim stronghold and site of the great siege of 1857, now the centre of one of India's finest textile traditions, chikankari – intricately and exquisitely embroidered cotton.

Jaipur

Jaipur, home to the Rajput clans who cast their lot with the Mughals, where we visit the golden fort of Amer and the City Palace Museum, a treasure trove of the state's remarkable history.

Chittorgarh

Chittorgarh and the ruins of a vast fortress where a wily and determined Mughal Emperor, Akbar, besieged a Rajput King, with tragic results.

Udaipur

Udaipur, the beautiful lake city of Rajasthan and the last retreat from Akbar for the Mewari Rajputs after the siege of Chittor.

**Jama Masjid
Delhi**



Friday 15 November

Lucknow

Departing Delhi today we fly to Lucknow, the old city of the Muslim Nawabs of Awadh. Semi-autonomous regional rulers whose power was ratified by the reigning Mughal emperor, the Nawabs were noted patrons of the arts, enjoying a refined, extravagant lifestyle in a city which became known as the cultural capital of North India. Increasingly oppressive East India Company policy brought change to the city however and in 1857, in a stand against the British, rebels besieged the city and isolated the British garrison in the official Residency complex from May till November of that year. Today the city is renowned for its beautiful textiles, as well as its world-famous cuisine, and our first taste of local Awadhi food will be lunch today at the residence of a former noble family of Lucknow. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Lucknow (B, L)

Saturday 16 November

Lucknow stories

Our exploration of Lucknow begins at the site of the British Residency, a ruined complex of buildings still bearing the scars of the 1857 siege but today surrounded by tranquil landscaped gardens. From here we head to the great Imambara, or House of the Imam, a magnificent site which includes a meeting hall, mosque, courtyards, maze, and stepwell commissioned by the Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula as a decade long, famine-relief employment project which sought to help the population, both rich and poor, during a catastrophic drought which began in 1784. In testament to the esteem in which his work was held, the architect of the complex, Kifayat-ullah, is buried near the Nawab in the main hall. We also have an opportunity to see the chikankari – works of art in fine cotton with intricate hand-embroidery for which Lucknow is famous. Evening at leisure. Overnight Lucknow (B)

Chikankari



**Bara Imambara
Lucknow**



Sunday 17 November

La Martinière

This morning we visit La Martinière School, a private college established in 1845 with an endowment from wealthy French expatriate and former officer of the East India Company, Major General Claude Martin who had made his fortune serving Nawab Asaf-ud-Daula. In 1800 Martin's will specified that the house and grounds of his country residence "Constantia", built in an extravagant hybrid Indo-European architectural style, were to be repurposed as a school for young men but litigation over the will delayed the fulfilment of his wishes until 1 October 1845. The school now educates over 4,000 students each year, many funded by further bequests from Martin's endowment. The afternoon at leisure before we meet tonight for dinner. Overnight Lucknow (B, D)

Monday 18 November

Kannauj - Agra

Departing Lucknow after breakfast, today we drive to Agra via the ancient city of Kannauj, the heart of India's perfume

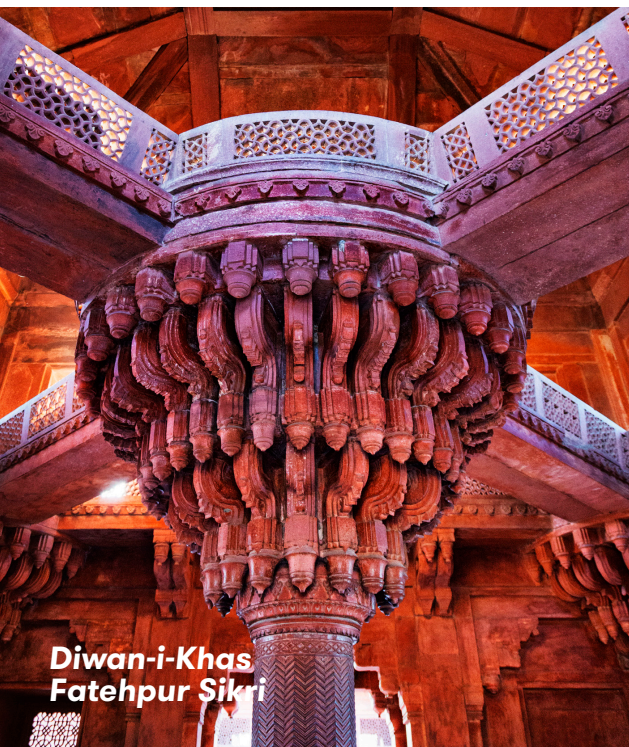
**Taj Mahal
Agra**



production. Roses grow well in the Ganges' alluvial soil surrounding the city and for centuries the region has produced oil-based botanical perfumes using age-old methods. Perfume was integral to the lifestyle of the Mughal courts, with heady attar scenting royal baths and palace fountains. During our visit we will see how the scents are distilled and blended and there is the opportunity to source your own vial of scented history before we continue to Agra, the first great capital of the Mughals. Overnight Agra (B, L)

**Tuesday 19 November
Agra**

The magnificent Taj Mahal complex, considered a masterpiece of Indo-Islamic architecture, is best visited before the crowds and full sun appear, so we start our day in the early morning. Inconsolable after the death of his wife Mumtaz Mahal following the birth of their 14th child, Emperor Shah Jahan had this beautiful ivory-white mausoleum built for her and was interred in the same complex after his own death in 1666. Our guided tour takes us through this extraordinary monument before we visit the exquisite nearby Itmad ud Daulah, said to be an architectural prototype for the Taj Mahal but perhaps even more beautiful in its own way. After lunch we visit the vast Agra fort, established by the great Mughal emperor Akbar as a military base and royal residence, and learn about the history of siege, mutiny and the heartbreak of an emperor and father associated with the site. Overnight Agra (B, L)



**Diwan-i-Khas
Fatehpur Sikri**

**Wednesday 20 November
Fatehpur Sikri and Jaipur**

Departing Agra today we head for Jaipur, the "Pink City" of Rajasthan and the home of the Ameri Rajputs, who found wealth and stability by embracing Mughal power. En route we will stop to explore the unique UNESCO world heritage listed site at Fatehpur Sikri, the deserted city of Emperor Akbar. Founded as Akbar's capital in 1571 the emperor abandoned it within 10 years, possibly diverted by a campaign in the Punjab or by the failure of the city's water supply. Better planned was our next stop at the Chand Baori, a 9th-century stepwell at Abhaneri village. Built by King Chanda of the Nikumbha Dynasty to store water and provide respite from the intense desert heat, the beautiful Chand Baori is one of the largest stepwells in the world. Overnight Jaipur (B, L)

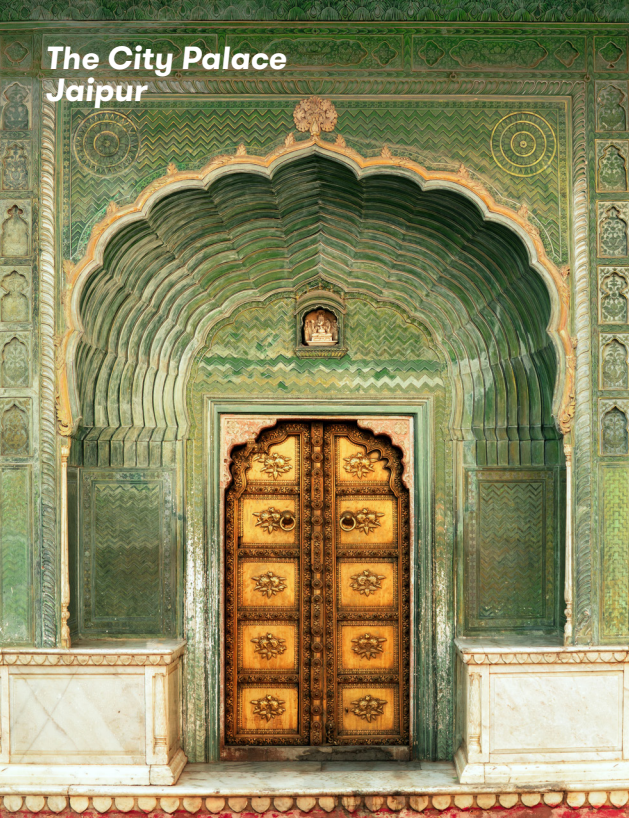


**Amer Fort
Jaipur**

**Thursday 21 November
Jaipur**

This morning we drive a short distance from Jaipur to the Amer Fort. Known as Jaipur's golden palace, the fort sits in the rugged Aravalli Hills, overlooking Maota Lake. Once the seat of power for the great Rajput princes this vast complex is Rajasthan's best example of traditional Rajput architecture, and our tour takes us through its many decorated halls, courtyards, corridors, and gardens. Returning to the city, we visit the City Palace Museum, an impressive complex of halls, courtyards, and gardens now home to the current royal family

**The City Palace
Jaipur**



**Chittorgarh
Fort**



**Marwari
Horse**



and a treasure trove of a museum dedicated to the state's remarkable history. Overnight Jaipur (B, L, D)

Friday 22 November

Ajmer

Departing Jaipur this morning we make our way to Ajmer, home to the Ajmer Dargah, one of the most sacred sites in Rajasthan. Built by Mughal Emperor Humayun the site is the final resting place of Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, a Persian Sufi saint renowned for his compassion and charismatic preaching. The Mughals were closely tied spiritually to Sufism and legend has it that Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti came to India from Persia and dedicated his life to helping and supporting the poor and underprivileged. Dominated by the white marble dome of Chisti's shrine, the complex is open to followers of all faiths. The evening is at leisure. Overnight Ajmer (B)

Saturday 23 November

Chittorgarh Fort

We head to Bijaipur today, stopping at the vast fortress of Chittorgarh. Dominating a hill above the Berach River the site sprawls over 280 hectares and comprises a variety of structures dating from the 8th to the 16th centuries, including palaces, temples, and memorials as well as ponds, wells and stepwells. The fortress is famed for the legendary siege of the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1567, in which hundreds of Rajput women committed Jauhar, leaping to their deaths in a fire rather than submit to the invaders. We have time to explore this extraordinary site, and gain a sense of its historical significance, before heading to Bijaipur with a stop for lunch en route. After checking into our hotel in the Vinhhyanchal Hills near Bijaipur there is time to freshen up before dinner. Overnight Bijaipur (B, L, D)

Sunday 24 November

Bijaipur

A slower pace today with time to explore the countryside around our hotel, a former palace built by the younger brother of the great Rajput warrior Maharana Pratap in the 16th century and converted to a heritage hotel by the ruling family in 1991. We take a jeep ride into the nearby desert to spot local bird and wildlife and explore the ruins of the 12th-century Pangarh Fort. A highlight of the day will be the opportunity to learn about the great Marwari horses of Rajasthan, noted for their loyalty and bravery in battle and their distinct curved ears, adapted to cope with the harsh desert winds. The great Mughal, Akbar, had 12,000 Marwari horses in his cavalry and favoured them above all other breeds. Overnight Bijaipur (B, L, D)

Monday 25 November

Udaipur and Lake Pichola

Departing Bijaipur we travel the short distance to Udaipur and spend the day relaxing and enjoying our hotel, an extraordinary palace on the eastern bank of Lake Pichola

HOTELS

Hotels have been selected principally for their central location. All hotels are a comfortable 4 and 5-star standard.

New Delhi, The Claridges

(3 nights)

www.claridges.com

Lucknow, Taj Mahal Lucknow

(3 nights)

www.tajhotels.com

Agra, Tajview Agra

(2 nights)

www.selectionshotels.com

Jaipur, Alsisar Haveli

(2 nights)

www.alsisarhaveli.com

Ajmer, Pratap Mahal Ajmer

(1 night)

www.selectionshotels.com

Bijaipur, Castle Bijaipur

(2 nights)

www.castlebijaipur.co.in

Udaipur, Taj Fateh Prakash Palace

(2 nights)

www.tajhotels.com

WEATHER

The weather in north India in November is warm during the day, with temperatures dropping at night. Daytime maximums may reach 30°C but will generally be around 25°C. Evenings are starting to cool down, with temperatures as low as 10°C.

FITNESS REQUIREMENTS

Grade Two

This tour is designed for people who lead active lives. You should be able to comfortably participate in up to five hours of physical activity per day. Please see our website for full details.

offering views across the lake and to the Aravalli Mountains. There is the opportunity to enjoy a boat ride on Lake Pichola itself and an evening aperitif on the terrace. Overnight Udaipur (B)

Tuesday 26 November

Udaipur

This morning we have a tour of the nearby City Palace Museum, housed in the former residence of the rulers of Mewar, an ornate fusion of Rajasthani Rajput architecture. The extraordinary museum collection includes stone carvings dating from the 7th to the 20th centuries, an extensive photographic archive, vivid paintings from the Mewar school and maps, as well as textiles, silver, palanquins, and armour from the Mewar Royal Family. Our tour is followed by a session with a local miniature painting expert, who will demonstrate the skills needed for this centuries-old artistic tradition, brought to its greatest heights under the patronage of the Mughal emperors. This evening we gather for our farewell dinner. Overnight Udaipur (B, D)

Wednesday 27 November

Depart to Delhi

Our tour concludes in the early afternoon with our flight to Delhi. Those departing later in the day or evening may like to pre-book time at the Airport Holiday Inn. (B)



ENQUIRIES & BOOKINGS

For further information or to secure a place, please contact **Lucy Yeates** on 9235 0023 (Sydney) or 1800 639 699 (outside Sydney) or email:

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