

India Cultural Tour

17 Nights/18 Days

Delhi-2, Varanasi-2, Khajuraho-1, Agra-2, Ranthambore-2, Jaipur-2, Khimsar-1, Jaisalmer 2, Jodhpur-1, Udaipur-2

Day 01

Delhi (Arrival)



Arrive Delhi, Meet, greet and transfer to Hotel. Delhi has a long historical past dating back to the pre-historic 6th Century BC era when it was founded as 'Indraprastha', the capital of the Pandavas of the Mahabharata epic. It was earlier known as 'Hastinapur' or 'Elephant City' according to the ancient Hindu Sanskrit text. It is said that the ancient Indraprasth Village existed where the Old Fort stands after which it was demolished by the British to make way for constructing New Delhi towards the late 19th Century. Archaeological excavations in 1966 revealed fragments of grey painted ware dating back to the Pandava era and the remains of 7 cities, relics dating back to the Mauryan Period including two sandstone Pillars with inscription of Emperor Ashoka [273 BC-236 BC] discovered near Noida in Srinivaspuri that were brought to the city by Firuz Shah Tughlaq in the 14th Century.

Day free for leisure and own programme. Overnight stay.

Day 02

Delhi



After Breakfast, visit **Red Fort**, The Red Fort or the Lal Quila as it is traditionally called is situated in old Delhi, the capital of India. The Red Fort was built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century that took around 9 years to complete this magnificent structure and around 10 million rupees to build the fort. The Red Fort is a masterpiece of architecture and is one of the most visited spot in old Delhi. The Masjid-i Jahān-Numā, commonly known as the **Jama Masjid** of Delhi, is the principal mosque of Old Delhi in India. Commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal, and completed in the year 1656 AD, it is the largest and best-known mosque in India. The name Jahān-Numā comes from Persian meaning "World-reflecting". It lies at the origin of a very busy central street of Old Delhi, Chandni Chowk. The later name, Jami Masjid, is a reference to the weekly Friday noon congregation prayers of Muslims, Jummah, which are usually done at a mosque, the "congregational mosque" or "jāmi' masjid". The courtyard of the mosque can hold up to twenty-five thousand worshippers. The mosque also houses several relics in a closet in the north gate, including an antique copy of the

Qur'an written on deer skin. This City of New Delhi is probably one of the well planned cities designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker around the likes of the British rulers with **India Gate** and the surrounding areas of Raj path forming the main plan of central Delhi including the Rashtrapati Bhavan formerly known as the Viceroy's Palace commanding a panoramic view of the city. The view stretches from Raisina Hills running seamlessly across India Gate and Raj path but is hindered only by the National Stadium of Delhi. India Gate was initially constructed to symbolise as the gateway of Delhi for the British Leaders entering into the Palatial grounds of the Viceroy's Palace and their surrounding administrative

buildings and offices. This form of design was planned to probably imitate the Mughal Style of creating massive and impressive gateways situated at the peripherals of the Palace grounds sprawling over hundreds of acres of land to mark the entry and exit points of the Emperors and Royalties followed by his courtiers and administrative heads. These entrance and exit gateways had a special significance for the Emperors and Sultans through which they enter and leave their kingdom and well protected cities to travel to other parts of the country. India Gate may have once been the pride of the British Empire; however, today it is correctly converted into one of the largest 'War Memorials' in India formerly called as the 'All India War Memorial' and forms the most prominent, distinguished feature and National pride of Delhi and the Country. The famous **Humayun's Tomb** of Delhi is the first garden tomb in India. A complex commissioned in 1562 CE by Hamida Banu Begum Humayun's wife and designed by Mirak Mirza a Persian architect this monument is one of the first specimens of Mughal architecture in the Indian subcontinent. Located on the banks of the River Yamuna this structure was declared a UNESCO Heritage site in 1993. The famous Humayun's Tomb of Delhi is considered to be the precursor of the 'Taj Mahal' as far as the architectural structure is concerned. It represents the Mughal style of architecture at its best. One of the major attractions in the city this mausoleum serves as the burial ground of several Mughals apart from the emperor himself. The Humayun's Tomb is a magnificent piece of architecture that took almost 9 years to complete with an expenditure of nearly one and a half million rupees. The mausoleum is a 140 feet high structure with a central dome. The double-layered dome has a white marble exterior but the rest of the tomb is made of red sandstone, with white marble ornamentation. Built over acres of lush green land and surrounded by fountains this complex is home to a well manicured garden, a beautiful mosque and several other tombs. **Qutub Minar** is the pride of Delhi. The tall minaret was constructed in 1192 by Qutub-ud-din Aibak, and later completed by his successor Iltutmish. The soaring conical tower is an exquisite example of Indo-Islamic Afghan architecture. Qutub Minar is a World Heritage Site and has survived the ravages of time impressively. The Minar of Delhi is surrounded by a lush green garden, which is an ideal leisurely place for visitors. Qutub Minar is the favourite destination of tourists. It is India's most visited monument attracting around 3.9 million visitors every year. Each of the 5 storeys and tower of Qutub Minar has unique designs. It was hit by lightning couple of times and was damaged. The subsequent rulers repaired it. Thus it is standing mightily as it was before till date. Qutub Minar is a great masterpiece of Mughal architecture. The base of the Qutub Minar measures 14.32 meters and the top of the structure measures 2.75 meters. The bird eye's view of Delhi city from the top is amazing. The base of first storey has alternate angular and circular flutings, the second one is round. The third storey of the Qutub Minar has angular flutings. The balconies projecting out heighten the beauty of the Minar. The tower is so high that around 379 steps are needed to be climbed to reach the top. Another taller tower adjacent to Qutub Minar is named Alai Minar which is somewhat tilted in one direction. The verses from the holy Qur'an are carved on sandstone walls of Qutub Minar. This monument serves the purpose of calling people for prayer in the Quwwat-ul-Islam mosque. This is a tower of victory, a monument that signify the might of Islam, or a tower for keeping a check for defense.

Back to hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 03
Delhi>>Varanasi



9W 723 Delhi Varanasi 1045 Dep 1200 Arr

After Breakfast, checkout and drop at Domestic Airport to take a flight to Varanasi. On arrival sightseeing tour of Sarnath one of the holiest Buddhist sites in the world, where Buddha preached his first Sermon in 590 B.C. Here you will witness the ruins of a once flourishing Buddhist monastery and then visit a fine Museum which houses an excellent collection of Buddhist art and sculptures found at the site.

(Sarnath museum is closed on Friday)

Day 04 Varanasi

After Breakfast boat ride on the sacred river Ganges to see the cremation Ghats and witness the living traditions of one of the world's oldest and most important religions. Visit some of the many Hindu temples that line the river Ganges. Stroll along the narrow lanes and bazaars full of shops selling, among other things, the world famous Benaras Silks.

Back to Hotel. Rest of the day is free for leisure. Overnight stay.

Day 05 Varanasi>>Khajuraho



9W 723 Varanasi Khajuraho 1230 Dep 1315 Arr

After Breakfast, checkout and drop at Airport to take a flight to Khajuraho. On arrival, meet and transfer to Hotel. After Lunch, visit the City of **Khajuraho** is situated in the forested plains of Madhya Pradesh in the region known as Bundelkhand. Check-in. After Lunch, visit Khajuraho Temples are the most graphic, erotic and sensuous sculptures of India, the world has ever known Architecturally these temples are unique. While each temple in Khajuraho has a distinct plan and design, several features are common to all. They are all built on high platforms, several metres off the ground, either in granite or a combination of light sandstone and granite. Each of these temples has an entrance hall or mandapa, and a sanctum sanctorum or garbha griha. The roofs of these various sections have a distinct form. The porch and hall have pyramidal roofs made of several horizontal layers. The inner sanctum's roof is a conical tower - a colossal pile of stone (often 30m high) made of an arrangement of miniature towers called shikharas.

The famous Western group of temples are designated as the World Heritage Site and is enclosed within a beautifully laid out park. The Lakshmana and Vishwanath Temples to the front and The Kandriya Mahadev, Jagadami and Chitragupta Temples displays the best craftsmanship of Khajuraho.

Back to Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 06

Khajuraho>>Orchha>>Jhansi>>Agra



After Breakfast, checkout and drive to Orchha. The history of Orchha is linked with the local Bundela rulers. It has a chequered history. The Bundela dynasty was founded by one of the local Rajput princes in the 11th century. Garkhurar was the earlier capital of the Bundelas. The Bundelas ruled the central part of India from Orchha, from 1531 to 1783. Raja Rudra Pratap moved the capital of the Bundelas to Orchha in 1531. The association of the Bundelas with the Mughals created many problems for the Bundelas. Bir Singh Deo, the ruler of Orchha from 1605-27, got into serious trouble with the great Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1602, when he was associated with Prince Jahangir, the son of Emperor Akbar. Mughal forces all but destroyed the state of the Bundelas. However, the situation changed in 1605, when Akbar died and Jahangir became the Mughal Emperor. In 1606, Emperor Jahangir visited Orchha. For the next 22 years until 1627, Bir Singh Deo had good relations with the Mughals. In 1627, when Shahjahan became the Mughal Emperor, Bir Singh revolted against

the Mughals. However, this revolt was put down by Aurangzeb, the then 13-year old son of Shahjahan. Though the Mughals defeated the Bundelas, they revived their lost empire. In 1783, the Bundela rulers shifted their capital to Tikamgarh.

Lunch at Orchha. After lunch, visit **Orchha fort**, located on an island on River Betwa, having a number of palaces to visit within it. A four-arched bridge leads to the fort complex on the island. **The Jahangir Mahal**, which was built by Bir Singh Deo in the early part of the 17th century to mark the visit of the Mughal Emperor, is an important monument of this fort. It is known for its delicate work on one hand and balanced with strong masonry on the other. **Raj Mahal**, the second palace in this fort complex is well known for its murals, depicting religious themes. **The Rai Parveen Mahal**, dedicated to the 17th-century poetess-musician, is the third palace within this complex and is set amongst well-laid gardens.

Later drive to Jhansi, to take a train to Agra.

Train No.12279	Taj Express	Jhansi JN	Agra Cantt	1520 Dep	1847 Arr
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Arrive Agra. Meet and transfer to Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 07

Agra



Early morning at 6.00 am visit Taj Mahal. **(Friday Closed)** **Taj Mahal** was built by a grief stricken Emperor Shahjahan as a memorial to his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. A world-renowned wonder, Taj Mahal sits pretty on the northern side of this green paradise. It looks the same from all the four sides! The Quranic inscriptions on its four entrances are carved in such subtle increase in size that may appear to be of the same size from top to bottom! Shahjahan invited master craftsmen from as far as Italy and Persia to help design his ambitious tribute to love. The Taj Mahal is phenomenal not in the beauty alone that shines forth, but in the deep planning and design that went into its making, and the ethereal idea of immortalizing love. Delicate carvings in marble vie with gorgeous pietra dura for attention. Lapis-lazuli, Cornelian, Mother of pearl, Agate and Emerald are inlaid in floral and geometrical patterns in the marble itself. This enchanting mausoleum, on the bank of river Yamuna started in 1631 and it took 22 years to complete with the help of an estimated 20000 workers.

Back to Hotel for Breakfast. After Breakfast visit **Agra Fort**. Near the gardens of the Taj Mahal stands the important 16th-century Mughal monument known as the Red Fort of Agra. This powerful fortress of red sandstone encompasses, within its 2.5-km-long enclosure walls, the imperial city of the Mughal rulers. It comprises many fairy-tale palaces, such as the Jahangir Palace and the Khas Mahal, built by Shah Jahan; audience halls, such as the Diwan-i-Khas; and two very beautiful mosques. The Red Fort and the Taj Mahal bear an exceptional and complementary testimony to a civilization which has disappeared, that of the Mogul Emperors. Agra's history goes back more than 2,500 years, but it was not until the reign of the Mughals that Agra became more than a provincial city. Humayun, son of the founder of the Mogul Empire, was offered jewellery and precious stones by the family of the Raja of Gwalior, one of them the famous Koh-i-Noor. The heyday of Agra came with the reign of Humayun's son, Akbar the Great. During his reign, the main part of the Agra Fort was built. The Red Fort of Agra is a powerful fortress founded in 1565 by the Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) on the right bank of the Yamuna; it is placed today on the north-west extremity of the Shah Jahan Gardens which surround the Taj Mahal and clearly form, with them, a monumental unity.

This bastioned fortress, with walls of red sandstone rising above a moat and interrupted by graceful curves and lofty bastions, encompasses within its enclosure walls of 2.5 km, the imperial city of the Mogul rulers. Like the Delhi Fort, that of Agra is one of the most obvious symbols of the Mogul grandeur which asserted itself under Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan.

Itmad-ud daulah, one of the most beautiful of Mughal tombs, stands across the river Yamuna from the Taj Mahal, nearly one and a half kilometers up-stream. Belonging to the age of Jahangir, it contains cenotaphs of Mirza Ghiyas and Asmat Begum, parents of the powerful Mughal Empress Nurjahan queen of Jahangir, an exceptional beauty and an astute administrator. Mirza Ghiyas had left Persia in sheer penury in search of better prospects at the Mughal court. He benefited much from the influence of his daughter who he had once abandoned in the desert. Akbar offered him a good rank and privileges. Jahangir made him his prime minister with the title Itmad-ud-daulah (Pillar of the State). Nurjahan's brother Asaf Khan later became prime minister of Shahjahan. This Persian family formed at the Mughal court giving the grand Mughals two most celebrated queens-Nurjahan and Mumtaz Mahal (Lady of the Taj), daughter of Asaf Khan.

Back to hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 08

Agra>>Ranthambore (245 Kms/04 Hours)



After breakfast, checkout and drive to Ranthambore. Enroute visit **Fatehpur Sikri** 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. Fatehpur Sikri bears exceptional testimony to the Mughal civilization at the end of the 16th century. It offers a unique example of architectural ensembles of very high quality constructed between 1571 and 1585. Its form and layout strongly influenced the evolution of Indian town planning, notably at Shahjahanabad (Old Delhi). The 'City of Victory' had only an ephemeral existence as the capital of the Mughal empire. The Emperor Akbar (1556-1605) decided to construct it in 1571, on the same site where the birth of his son, the future Jahangir, was predicted by the wise Shaikh Salim Chisti (1480-1572). The work, supervised by the great Mughal himself, was completed in 1573. In 1585, however, Akbar abandoned Fatehpur Sikri to fight against the Afghan tribes and choose a new capital, Lahore. Fatehpur Sikri was to be the seat of the great Mughal court only once more for three months in 1619, when Jahangir sought refuge there from the plague that devastated Agra. The site was then finally abandoned, until its archaeological exploration in 1892.

Ranthambore - Situated in Eastern Rajasthan, where the Aravali Hill ranges and the Vindhyan plateau meet, the Ranthambhore National Park was once the hunting preserve of the Maharajas of Jaipur. The rivers Chambal in the South and Banas in the North bound the Ranthambore National Park . The landscape is dotted with ancient Banyan Trees, Dhok & Pipal trees, clusters of mango trees and crisscrossed with evergreen belts. The terrain is made up of massive rock formations, steep scarps, perennial lakes and streams and forest suddenly opening up into large areas of Savannah. This park is spread over an area of 1,334 sq km along with its nearby sanctuaries like - the Mansingh Sanctuary and the Kaila Devi Sanctuary. The park is majorly famous for its tigers and is one of the best locations in India to see the majestic predators in its natural habitat. The tigers can be easily spotted even during the day time busy at their ordinary quest- hunting and taking proper care of their young ones.

Arrive. Ranthambore. Check-in at Jungle Lodge. Overnight stay.

Day 09 **Ranthambore**



Early morning 3 hrs Jungle safari in a Canter (a vehicle which is open on the top) enjoy the game viewing in the national park and back to the hotel. After lunch second visit to jungle and enjoy the game viewing again. Back to Lodge. Overnight stay.

Day 10 **Ranthambore>>Jaipur (160 Kms/03 Hours)**



Check-in. Later visit **Birla Temple** or Birla Mandir is the common name for the Lakshmi Narayan Temple at Jaipur. It is called thus after the Birlas, a business family who constructed the temple in 1988. The Birla Temple stands at the foot of the Moti Doongri (a fortress which was turned into a palace for Gayatri Devi by Raja man Singh II) and the temple's excellent architecture and splendid marble carvings make it a pleasure to visit. The main idols of the temple are Lord Vishnu (also known as Narayan) and his consort Goddess Lakshmi but the temple has many small shrines devoted to various Hindu Gods and Goddesses. On the outside of the temple walls one can see many carvings of many historic and religious figures. The three marble domes of the temple represent the three major religions of the country. The Birlas have thus attempted to keep the temple out of religious bigotry and made it a place of secular worship. **Albert Hall Museum** or the Central Museum, sited amid the gardens of Ram Niwas Bagh in Jaipur, is one of the oldest museums in the state of Rajasthan. The Albert Hall Museum is modeled on the Albert Museum of London and represents the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture. This museum was designed by Colonel Sir Swinton Jacob in 1876 for the purpose of greeting King Edward VII, Prince of Wales on his visit to India. After ten years, it was opened to the public. Since 1969, the galleries on the ground floor of the museum have been thoroughly rebuilt and remodeled. Thus museum exhibits a rare collection of ancient stuffs including miniature paintings, carpets, metal and wood crafts, toys, dolls, arms and weapons and an Egyptian mummy belonging to the Ptolemaic Era. The most extraordinary of them is the carpet that depicts the scene of a Persian garden with gushing streams. This carpet was bought by Mirza Raja Jai Singh I at a dear price from Shah Abbas of Persia. The galleries on the ground floor of the museum display various jewelry and dresses that belong to the people of all sections of the society of Rajasthan. Thus there is an exhibition of the apparels of the privileged class consisting of the Rajputs and the wealthy merchants and the also the garments of the varied tribes of Rajasthan including the Bhils, Meenas, Bhopas, Gadoliya and Lohars. While walking through this gallery one can have an insight of the culture and lifestyle of the Rajasthani tribes. One gallery of this museum is dedicated entirely to the illustrious henna body art of Rajasthan art and this gallery is known as 'Mehndi Mandana'. This gallery exhibits the typical Rajasthani patterns and motifs that are uniquely considered as ethnic throughout the world. Another gallery displays the puppets and the Phad paintings (portraiture of the life of a folk hero of Marwar -Pabuji Rathore in painted scrolls).

Back to Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 11 Jaipur



After breakfast, visit the sprawling **Amber Fort** is a typical example of what the lives of our gallant Rajputs were like - militant, adventurous, temperamental and also self-indulgent. It is among the best hilltop forts

in India. Within the stern exteriors that seem to grow out of the rugged hills are mighty gates, temples, huge ornate halls, palaces, pavilions, gardens and even a ramp to take you to the hilltop palace! and guess who climbs the ramp? Elephants. Yes, beautifully- caparisoned elephants go up and down carrying visitors to and fro. These well cladded elephants make a joyride to Amber fort and in turn makes your travel to Amber fort a fascinating experience. This something which you cannot afford to miss in any Rajasthan travel. **Hawa Mahal** stands upright as the entrance to the City Palace, Jaipur. An important landmark in the city, Hawa Mahal is an epitome of the Rajputana architecture. The splendid five-storey "Palace of the Winds" is a blend of beauty and splendor much close to Rajasthan's culture. Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh built Hawa Mahal in 1779. The pyramid shape of this ancient monument is a tourist attraction having 953 small windows. This Mahal adjacent to the City Palace was for the royal women and girls of the palace. Sitting here, they could enjoy the air and have a city view. Lal Chand Usta built Hawa Mahal in pink sand stones keeping in mind the pink color of the other monuments in the city. Doomed canopies and the pyramid line of structure resemble that of Rajputana while the floral patterns are that of Mughal. Many tourists find it having a striking similarity with the Fatehpur Sikri. The main attraction in making of the Hawa Mahal is cooling chambers. **Jantar Mantar** at Jaipur is an observatory with architectural instruments for astronomical measurements and observations. Jantar comes from the word Yantra, which means an instrument. Mantar means formulae or calculations. So Jantar Mantar effectively means instruments and underlying formulae and calculations. Jantar Mantar at Jaipur is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Jantar Mantar was built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II (1688-1743), who became the ruler of Amber at the age of 11 after his father's death. Maharaja Jai Singh had a great interest in mathematics, architecture and astronomy. He built five Jantar Mantar's in the cities of Delhi, Jaipur, Mathura, Varanasi and Ujjain during the years, 1724-1735. Of these, Jantar Mantar at Jaipur is the biggest and the best preserved. The city of Jaipur is named after Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh. **City Palace** is the one of the most famous king's palace in the world and a major landmark in the Jaipur. It was built by the founder of Jaipur Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh. It has everything including beauty, design, architecture, show, royalness, stories and such other things that you can't ignore just to save your time. Once you enter in the City Palace, it starts to attract you more and more towards itself with its charm. **The City Palace Museum** in Jaipur is divided into three sections namely textile museum, arms museum and art museum. As one enters the City Palace area, the first museum that falls on the way is the textile museum that houses a number of garments and ornaments worn by the kings and other members of the royal family in the departed era. The major highlight of this museum is a garment worn by Sawai Raja Madho Singh II. It is said that as he had a bigger body frame, the cloth used for this garment was 190 meters of cloth. Several bridal dresses of the women of the royal family and the ornaments worn by them are also put on a display. The polo uniform of Sawai Raja Maan Singh II is worth noticing. Another section that the City Palace Museum in Jaipur is famous for is the famous arms museum. You can see different kinds of daggers and pistols here. Pistols with double barrels, three barrels and four barrels are a major attraction at the museum. Other attractions at the museum include guns with extremely long barrels that could only be blown by keeping the barrels on the back of an elephant or a camel. Different varieties of swords, daggers, shields and guns make for the constituents of the arms museum at the City Palace museum in Jaipur. The third and the final section of the City Palace museum in Jaipur is worth visiting a lot of times as no one seems to have enough of it in one go. You can see a 3D painting of Sawai Ram Singh here that seems to be looking in your eyes no matter which side of the painting you are. Several photographs clicked by Sawai Ram Singh who was also the first photographer of the country have been kept here. Paintings that were made by Sawai Ishwar Singh using his fingernails are also worth a see at the museum. A number of paintings from different art schools and manuscripts of great epics like Mahabharata written on rice paper are also displayed in the museum.

Back to Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 12
Jaipur>>Khimsar (330 Kms/07 Hours)



After Breakfast, checkout and drive to Khimsar. This historic Khimsar Fort which was built in 1523 by Rao Karamsji, 8th son of the founder of Jodhpur Rao Jodha. Twenty one generations later, a part of this fort is still residence to the Karamsot Rathor direct lineage. Get yourself pampered to the royal Rajput hospitality, personally overseen by the royal family, on a grand and elegant scale.

Check-in. Later sightseeing of Fort and surrounding areas. Overnight stay.

Day 13

Khimsar>>Jaisalmer (295 Kms/6 Hours)



After Breakfast, checkout and drive to Jaisalmer. Check-in at Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 14

Jaisalmer



After Breakfast, visit **Jaisalmer fort** was built in 1156 and is the second oldest in Rajasthan. Two hundred and fifty feet tall and reinforced by an imposing crenellated sandstone wall 30 feet high, it has 99 bastion, 92 of which were built between 1633 and 1647. The fort is also known as the Golden Fort, for its amber hue, attracting a large section of tourists from all around. Almost one fourth of present Jaisalmer lies inside the complex of this massive fort. The fort nestles over Trikuta Hill and is guarded by number of gorgeous havelis, beautifully carved Jain Temples of the 12th-15th century AD and 5 royal palaces. The Havelis or mansions built by the wealthy merchants in the 19th century within the complex are famed for their exquisitely carved sandstone facades. The fort also has 4 gateways - Akhaiyal, Ganesh Pol, Suraj Pol and Hava Pol. **Patwon-ki-Haveli** - Two architect brothers built it in the 19th century. Interestingly, while one concentrated on the right, the other concentrated on the left and the result is a symphony

epitomising the side by side symmetry during construction. Paintings in miniature style monopolise the walls in the interior. Mighty tuskers carved out of yellow sandstone stand guard to the haveli. **Gadsisar Lake** -The rainwater fed reservoir, was built in 1156 AD and rebuilt in 1367AD by Maharwal Garsisingh. Until 1965, it remained the city's only water supply. It is adorned with an arched gateway, which is believed to have been built by a courtesan. The Tilon ki Pol, the palatial archway at the water's edge, was built by a local prostitute. The dismayed king tried to sever it down, but not the one to stay behind, Tilon constructed a tiny temple along the lake, dedicated to Lord Satyanarayan (Krishna, as truth) and ensured the building's survival. Along the lakeshore and on the islands, is a plethora of little temples and cenotaphs. Arrayed all around the tank, are many small shrines and temples. An extraordinary plumage of birds can be seen here. **Sam**, easily accessible from Jaisalmer displays an outstanding desert life. It is a great place to see patterns carved out by winds on the sand. Camel rides on the sand dunes are an unforgettable experience as is the sunset.

Back to Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 15

Jaisalmer>>Jodhpur (270 Kms/06 Hours)



After Breakfast, checkout and drive to Jodhpur. Check-in at Hotel. Later visit the **Mehrangarh Fort**, one of the colossal and majestic forts of India is located atop a 150 m elevated hill lying at a distance of 5km from Jodhpur in Rajsathan. The fort was built by Rao Jodha in 1459 when he transferred his capital from Mandore. Subsequently more additions were made by the other rulers of Jodhpur with passing time. The marks of canon balls from the past skirmishes are still prominent on the second gate of the fortress. The palm imprints that are smeared with vermilion paste and paper-thin silver foil on a gateway leading to the funeral pyre site, reminds the tourists of the princesses and the queens who committed self-immolation or Jawhar for the sake of their consorts. **Jaswant Thada** was built by Sardar Singh in 1899 in memory of Maharajah Jaswant Singh II. An architectural landmark, it is a white marble memorial. This 19th century royal cenotaph built in commemoration of Maharajah Jaswant Singh II, the 33rd Rathore ruler of Jodhpur, is made out of intricately carved sheets of marble.

When the sun's rays fall across their surface, these thin and polished stones emit a warm glow. Carved gazebos, a beautiful multi-tiered garden, and a small lake are also located within this cenotaph. Royal crematorium and three other cenotaphs are also located at this site. On the cenotaph, there is a marble jali work.

From the terrace in front of the cenotaph, tourists can get an aerial view of the destination. Portraits of the rulers and Maharajahs of Jodhpur are displayed on the cenotaph of Maharajah Jaswant Singh. Built like a temple, the Thada can be reached by passing through a rocky hill.

Back to Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 16

Jodhpur>>Ranakpur>>Udaipur (270 Kms/06 Hours)



After Breakfast, checkout and drive to Udaipur via Ranakpur. At Ranakpur visit the ' **Chaumukha Temple** ' or Four-faced temple dedicated to Adinath. Built in 1439, this huge, superbly crafted and well-kept marble temple has 29 halls supported by 1444 pillars, no two are alike. Within the complex are two other jain temples dedicated to ' Neminath ' and ' Parasnath ' and a little distance away, a ' Sun Temple . One kilometer from the main complex is the ' Amba Mata Temple.

Later drive to Udaipur. **Udaipur**, the city of lakes, is known as the Venice of the east. Maharana Udai Singh II founded Udaipur in 1568 after his citadel Chittorgarh was sacked by Mughal Emperor Akbar. The legend says that Udai Singh was guided by a holy man meditating on the hill near Pichola Lake to establish his capital on this very spot. Surrounded by Aravali Ranges, forests and lakes this place was less vulnerable than Chittorgarh. Maharana Udai Singh died in 1572 and was succeeded by Maharana Pratap who valiantly defended Udaipur from subsequent Mughal attacks. Maharana Pratap is the most revered Rajput icon and gallantly fought the Mughal at the Haldighati in 1576. Udaipur is also the centre for performing arts, craft and its famed miniature paintings.

Check-in at Hotel. Overnight stay.

Day 17 Udaipur



After Breakfast, visit the **City Palace** Towering over the beautiful Pichola Lake, stands the marvelous City Palace. Maharana Uday Singh took the initiative to built the palace complex. However, the interesting part is that the succeeding rulers or Maharanas contributed several palaces and magnificent structures to add to its glamor. The city palace is a structural wonder built with granite and white marble. The entrance to the complex is the majestic Hati Pol or the Elephant gate. The beautiful Jagdish Temple is placed here. Then there is the Bari Pol or the big gate which leads to the court yard joining the Tripolia-the triple gate. This is the place where Maharana used to get weighed in gold and silver, which was then distributed to the poor. Today, the main ticket counter is situated here. Crossing across the Tripoli, is the arena where regular elephant fights were held. City Palace is the home to numerous luxurious apartments adjoined with balconies, towers, hanging gardens and domes overlooking the enchanting view of the city.

Later visit **Maharana's Miniature Painting School** in Palace Complex and **Jagdish Temple**. In the afternoon enjoy at **boat ride in Pichola Lake** to have tea in Jag Mandir Island Palace.

Day 18
Udaipur>>Delhi



After breakfast, day free for leisure till noon. After lunch checkout and drop to Airport to take a flight to Delhi.

Arrive Delhi. Meet and transfer to International Airport or to your onward destination.