

EXPLORE!

Book with confidence



Discover Rajasthan and the Taj Mahal - Private Tour

INDIA - TRIP CODE PTRD

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

This memorable Indian journey traces the old camel caravan routes through Rajasthan, discovering magnificent forts, ornate temples and delightful market towns. From Delhi to Udaipur, wind your way through Rajasthan's 'must sees' as well as some hidden gems.

- **Jaipur & Agra** - Visit Amber Fort to overlook the enchanting 'Pink City' and witness sunrise at the Taj Mahal
- **Ancient Desert Citadels** - Explore the 'Golden City' of Jaisalmer in the heart of the Thar Desert, the 'Blue City' of Jodhpur which sprawls around the imposing Mehrangarh Fort, and Udaipur, the glorious 'City of Lakes'
- **Heritage Accommodation** - Sleep like a maharaja in a selection of historic palaces and forts throughout

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INCLUDED MEALS Breakfast: 13	TRIP STAFF Explore Tour Leader Driver(s) Local Guide(s)	TRANSPORT 4WD Car	ACCOMMODATION 9 nights premium hotel 4 nights comfortable hotel	TRIP PACE: Full on

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Trip begins in Delhi

Arrive in New Delhi, India's bustling capital which successfully combines the ancient with the modern. Amidst the tall and modern skyscrapers, there are still the remnants of a bygone time with numerous monuments and temples.

You will be met on arrival at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport (DEL) by a local guide, and driven to your centrally-located hotel. The city is about 12km and a 45 minute drive from the airport. There are no activities planned today, so feel free to arrive in Delhi at any time. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than two weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel The Hans (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Explore New Delhi's Qutub Minar. Drive to Agra

Explore New Delhi today on a guided city tour, taking in the President's Palace, Lok Sabha (Parliament), India Gate, Qutub Minar and Humayan's Tomb. After this busy morning, set off on the four hour journey to Agra with a driver who will remain with you throughout the rest of the trip.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Clarks Shiraz (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Watch the sun rise over the beautiful Taj Mahal

An early start this morning with a guided visit of one of the world's most famous buildings, the magnificent Taj Mahal. Over 300 years have elapsed since its construction, yet it stands today unscarred by age, its beauty and symmetry seemingly beyond man, time and space. Created by Shah Jahan as a funerary monument to his favourite wife, Mumtaz, it took 22 years to build (1630-52). The Great Moghul lies beside his beloved under the white marble dome. Inlaid with precious gems, the building cost a fortune and later Shah Jahan moved his capital to Delhi before being overthrown by his son, Aurangzeb. Later in the day, visit Agra Fort, built by Akbar the Great, which contains the Moti Mosque, a beautiful building decorated with pearls and the Itimad-ud-daula, more commonly known as the Baby Taj.

The Taj Mahal is closed on Fridays, so we recommend not booking this trip to start on a Wednesday.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel Clarks Shiraz (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 4 - Visit deserted Fatehpur Sikri en route to Jaipur

After breakfast, start the drive to Jaipur, stopping along the way to visit the deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri with a local guide. Founded in 1569 and abandoned just 16 years later, it is a perfectly intact example of Akbar's imperial court. Among the many noteworthy buildings is the 5-storied Panch Mahal, probably a pleasure pavilion for the ladies of the harem. In the centre of the courtyard is the Pachisi Board where the emperor played a game of chess with dancing girls as pieces. Perhaps the finest structure of all is the lotus shaped carved central pillar of the Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience), its extraordinary capital supporting a vaulted roof. From here continue on to Jaipur, stopping for a while (this is unguided) at the spectacular Chand Baori stepwell which is over 1000 years old and is dedicated to the goddess of joy and happiness.



ACCOMMODATION:
Traditional Haveli (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 5 - View the famous facade of the Palace of the Winds

Sometimes called the Pink City, Jaipur was first painted terracotta pink by Maharajah Sawai Ram Singh to celebrate the visit of Prince Albert in 1853. With your guide for the day, head to the outskirts of the city and visit the dramatic Amber Fort, perched high on a hillside with impressive views back down to the city. Make a stop on the journey to view the ornate facade of the Palace of the Winds, built to allow the ladies of the harem an opportunity to look out over the city. This afternoon, visit the lavish and well preserved City Palace with its fine collection of textiles, costumes and armoury. Jai Singh, the great Maharajah-astronomer, built his extraordinary (and very accurate) star gazing observatory (Jantra) here. You will have an opportunity to visit the observatory and also the Old City with its fine gates set in to the pink walls.



ACCOMMODATION:
Traditional Haveli (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Travel to Bikaner and visit Junagarh Fort

This morning, leave Jaipur and start out on the six-hour drive to the desert city of Bikaner. Situated directly on the ancient camel caravan routes that came from Africa and West Asia, Bikaner was once a great trading centre. Its colourful bazaars and buildings of reddish-pink sandstone still suggest its ancient wealth. Take a tour to the Junagarh Fort built by Raja Rai Singh (1571-1611), which is distinguished by its high defensive light red sandstone walls. The well-preserved palaces within the fort area are noted for their fine stone carvings. Bikaner still remains a defensive town and was the home of the famous Camel Corps - you'll explore this history with a visit to the Old Town.



ACCOMMODATION:
Gajner Palace (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 7 - Drive to the golden city of Jaisalmer

Today's drive takes you to Jaisalmer. The city is set in the vast Thar Desert and today still retains much of the medieval atmosphere as camel carts pass through the narrow streets alongside rickshaws. The fort is a lively hub of activity, with shops and restaurants, and well worth a wander through. The city is famous for handicrafts in particular stone carvings, leather ware and brass items and the bazaars are packed with stalls offering almost everything you can imagine. The drive is around six hours, and on arrival you'll have some free time to explore.



ACCOMMODATION:
Gorbandh Palace (or similar)

Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Explore Jaisalmer's Fort and Jain Temple

After breakfast, meet your local guide and set out to explore Jaisalmer on foot. The relatively compact city (by Indian standards!) is easy to navigate - visit the Gadi Sagar Tank and the Jaisalmer Folklore Museum, as well as the lively fort and some of the many elaborately carved Jain Temples and havelis, including the Patwon-ki Haveli, considered to be the finest in Jaisalmer.



ACCOMMODATION:
Gorbandh Palace (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - Transfer To Jodhpur

Drive six hours to Jodhpur, where the impregnable fortress commands a superb panorama of the surrounding countryside. The city itself has a unique atmosphere, with many fine old buildings and temples. Jodhpurs, those trousers-cum-riding breeches, are named after the horsemen of this city. Arriving mid-afternoon, the rest of the day is free to wander the atmospheric streets of the Old City.



ACCOMMODATION:

The Fern Residency (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Discover the dramatic Mehrangarh Fort

The majestic Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur is built across the top of a steep escarpment 125m above the plains below. It has a huge, sheer drop to the south where it overlooks the city. The visit this morning affords wonderful views, not only across Jodhpur, but also way into the distance across the surrounding desert plains. The Rajput palace buildings within the fort are typically Mughal - very ornate and flamboyant, but also very practical and as always, built with defence in mind. This afternoon there is the chance to make an optional visit to some nearby Bishnoi villages. The Bishnoi are renowned for their protection of wild animals and trees.



ACCOMMODATION:
The Fern Residency (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Visit Ranakpur Temple on the way to Udaipur

There is a full-day drive today, ending at the beautiful lakeside city of Udaipur. After approximately four hours, stop at the little-visited temple town of Ranajpur, one of Rajasthan's hidden gems, home to some of the most beautifully sculpted Jain Temples in India. Situated in a wooded valley the temples date back to the 15th century with the carvings depicting scenes from the lives of the Jain Saints at that time. You won't have a guide here, but it's easy to explore solo. The Adinath temple is well worth a visit, containing 1444 exquisitely carved pillars, with no two alike. Continue from here to Udaipur.



ACCOMMODATION:
The Garden Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - Discover Udaipur; have the chance to take a boat trip on peaceful Lake Pichola

The city is dominated by Lake Pichola, its island palace (now a hotel) and Jag Mandir Island. Here the future Shah Jahan sought sanctuary from his father after he had been found guilty of plotting against him. The first stop this morning is the huge City Palace, which offers an insight in to the opulent life of the Maharajahs. You will also visit the Jagdish Mandir, a large ornately carved Hindu Temple set in the middle of the old town.

In the late afternoon, you have the option to take an afternoon boat ride on Lake Pichola. At some times of the year the level of the water in the lake may drop or even, after a poor monsoon, dry up completely.



ACCOMMODATION:
The Garden Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 13 - Fly to Delhi and explore Old Delhi's narrow streets.

This morning, leave Rajasthan and fly back to Delhi's city sprawl. Explore Old Delhi with a local guide this afternoon, viewing the Red Fort from the outside and Jami Masjid Mosque, one of the biggest in India. Take cycle rickshaws to explore the winding lanes of Chandni Chowk bazaar, a sprawling market where you can buy almost anything you need from household wares to souvenirs - the perfect final stop before your flight home.



ACCOMMODATION:
Hotel The Hans (or similar)



Grade: Premium Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 14 - Tour ends in New Delhi

Your trip ends today, and you will be taken to the airport to meet your international flight. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from the Indira Gandhi International airport (DEL) at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel.





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

Climate and country information

India

Climate

There is considerable variation between the different regions of India but, in general, the climate is tropical. Summer temperatures on the plains are very hot, but cooled by the South-West Monsoon, which lasts from June- September. During these months it can be very wet and therefore very humid. At altitude, temperatures can become quite cool at night even in the summer and may drop below freezing between December and February so warm clothing is necessary. In the winter, northern and mid India can be very cool, with cold evenings, so warm clothing, including plenty of layers, are essential. The south of India remains warm and sunny during the winter months.

Time difference to GMT

+5

Plugs

3 Pin Round

Religion

Catholicism, Hindu, Islam and Sikhism

Language

Hindi and English.

Budgeting and packing

Clothing

Bear in mind that between November and March daytime temperatures are warm and comfortable, but evenings and nights in the desert can be extremely cold and hotels rarely have heating arrangements comparable with the UK. Lightweight clothing plus warmer garments are essential. Local people may be offended by western styles of dress so short shorts and tight-fitting clothing etc. should be avoided by both men and women.

Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack. Remember - hotel porters are not always available, so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Tipping

Local crew

In India, tipping is a recognised part of life. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. That being said, a certain degree of firmness is required in certain instances. If you do not need the help of porters, you must say so and be firm with them. It is useful to keep some small denomination notes for tipping and small purchases.

As a guideline, a small party of two people can budget the following per person for tips:

Porterage at hotels - 100 INR per piece

Drivers who travel with you (ie staying overnight) - 300 INR per day

Transfer drivers - 100 INR

Local guides - 500 INR half day tour / 600 INR full day tour

India

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£8	£10	£3	£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Indian Rupee Recently new 500 and 2000 rupee notes have been bought in to circulation and as the old notes are no longer accepted there have been some cash flow issues. You don't need to worry about being given old notes as it's very easy to tell the difference, the new notes are pristine in comparison with most Indian money which is fairly tatty.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

GBP/US\$ are the best currency to change into local currency.

Where To Exchange

The Indian rupee is a restricted currency and it is best not to obtain in the UK as rates are very poor. You can either change money at the airport on arrival or in major towns during the tour. Your Tour Leader will advise you on the best places in each town. Both GBP and USD cash are easy to exchange at the airport and at hotels however you will be restricted to changing £60 cash at a time and it's not possible to change money at these locations using a credit or debit card.

ATM Availability

ATMs are available in most large cities in India but they are very limited elsewhere so please do not rely on this.

Credit Card Acceptance

Very rarely, only in the larger outlets.

Travellers Cheques

Opportunities to exchange are limited.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

4WD, Car

Accommodation notes

Accommodation in India is as varied as the country itself. On this tour you will stay in a mix of mid-range hotels and heritage properties with lots of character. Standards do not equate to standards in the UK, with occasional slow service or hot water only at certain times of day, and it's best to approach each type of accommodation with an open mind. For the most part hotels do not have heating so in the winter months it can be chilly and if you feel the cold you may wish to ask for extra blankets.

Essential Information

Government Travel Safety Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Price Guarantee

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa and Passport Information

Visas are required for citizens of the UK, Australia, New Zealand, US and Canada and can be obtained in

the form of an e-visa. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

The e-visa can be applied for through the official Indian government visa website only - <https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/evisa/tvoa.html> . Please check all eligibility criteria that can be found on the website but important points are listed below -

You must be arriving into one of 28 selected entry points which can be found via the official Indian Government website link above. However, you can exit from any of the authorised immigration check posts in India.

Passports must have at least 6 months validity from the date of arrival in India and at least two blank pages for stamping. Visa applications will take approximately 4 days to process.

There are different validity visas and the costs are as follows:

30-day validity (travelling between April and June) - \$10

30-day validity (travelling between July and March) - \$25

1-year validity - \$40

5-year validity- \$80

Those applying for a 30 day electronic visa can only apply within 30 days of arrival for your visa to be valid. Furthermore double entry is permitted and you can only obtain two 30-day visas in a calendar year.

Please note these costs are subject to frequent change so you should check on the official Indian government visa website mentioned above. Biometric data will be collected on arrival in India.

If you are not eligible for the e-Tourist Visa, please refer to VFS Global to apply for your Indian visa - https://www.vfsglobal.com/india/uk/how_to_apply.html

Whilst the online form offers a relatively quick way to apply for a visa, some applicants have reported difficulty in completing the form. If you do require assistance, then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. They can complete the online visa on your behalf for a fee of £30 + the visa cost. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

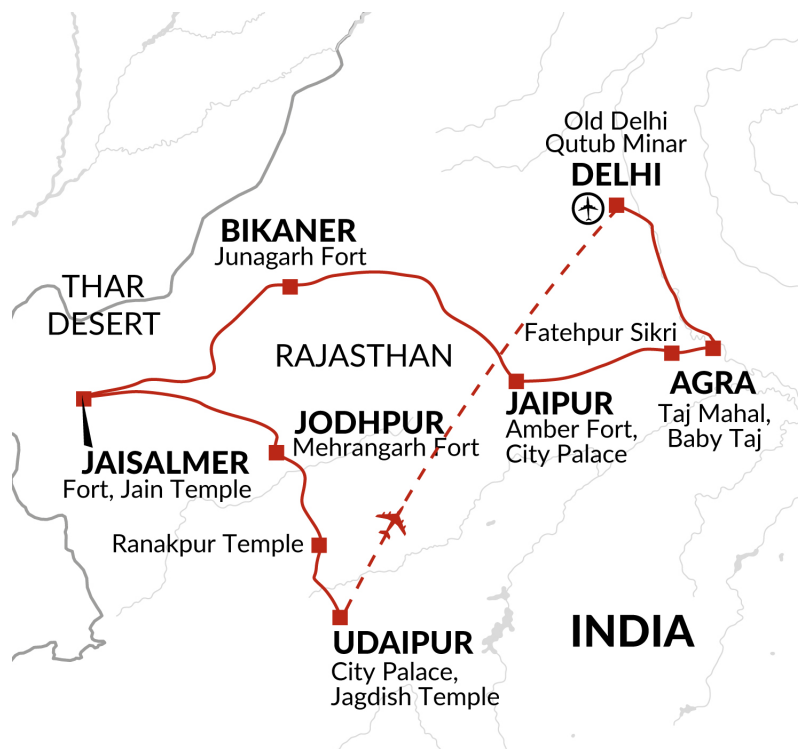
On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

India

Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against Tetanus, Infectious Hepatitis, Typhoid and Polio. Please consult your travel clinic for the latest advice on Malaria, Dengue and Zika Virus. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

Additional Information



Tour Staff

Unlike our group tours our private journeys do not have a Tour Leader. However, you are still in safe hands as we work closely with our expert local suppliers on the planning and organisation of your holiday to ensure that you have a fantastic time. You'll be met on arrival in Delhi by one of our english-speaking representatives, who will go through your holiday details and answer any questions you may have. The guides throughout the trip are excellent, and will help to bring the destination to life. At times you will travel only with a driver (rather than with a guide), but you will have all the information that you need to explore and there is always the reassurance that you have someone on hand with our 24/7 emergency contact number.

Reviews



PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE



AIRPORT
TRANSFERS