

## **A PASSAGE TO SPIRITUAL INDIA**

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### ***Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Varanasi, Khajuraho - 12 days***

Departure: December 01, 2019

Return: December 12, 2019

### ***Essence of Indian Culture***

*Experience some of the oldest cities renowned for their spirituality.*

*Witness the splendid religious ceremony on the bank of Ganges, spectacular exotic temples and impressive visit of The Taj Mahal.*

*Dazzling a ray of architecture, culture and spiritual wonder.*

### **Saturday, November 30. (D)\* UNITED STATES – DELHI**

Depart this evening on the airline of your choice to Delhi, India. Dinner and light breakfast served on the plane.

### **Sunday, December 1. (B, L, D)\* DELHI**

Continue flying on your airline to Delhi. Lunch and Dinner on the plane. You arrive late night at the Delhi International Airport. We meet you outside the customs and transfer you to the hotel, where we stay three nights at the deluxe centrally located hotel.

### **Monday, December 2 (B, D). DELHI**

This afternoon we will begin our sightseeing of the Old City to see the Qutub Minar built in 1210, drive by India Gate, Rashtrapati Bhawan (President's House), and other government official buildings built with wide boulevards, epitomizing the spirit of the British Raj. Briefing and cocktails followed by Welcome Gala Dinner at the hotel.

*Delhi is a sprawling metropolis of 12 million, with a stunning backdrop of ancient and modern architecture. Geographically as well as historically, it consists of*



*seven successive cities, with the British- built New Delhi making an eighth. Monuments in marble and sandstone are dotted around the Old City, whereas the colonial-style buildings from 1911 and the modern architecture after Independence on August 15, 1947, are found next to each other in New Delhi, which has been the seat of the central government since 1931. Delhi's brand new metro system, designed by American engineers Parsons Brinckerhoff, opened first phase in December 2002 and is expected to be completed in 2020. In the meantime, one has to weave a path through bicycles, auto- rickshaws, mopeds, cars, vans, buses, trucks, cows, bullock carts and hand- pulled trolleys to flow with the traffic, looking at Hindus and Moslems dressed in orthodox clothes, women wearing colorful saris or businessmen dressed in suits and ties going about their daily ordeals.*

### **Tuesday, December 3. (B). DELHI**

This morning, we visit Humayun's Tomb with its lovely gardens, The RAJ GHAT, site of the cremation of three of India's most revered leaders, Mahatma Gandhi in 1948, Indira Gandhi (no relation to the saintly man) in 1984 and her son Rajiv in 1991, all three assassinated by fanatics. We will drive around the state Government buildings designed by Sir Lutyens, visiting Rajpath, the Kings Road leading up from the India Gate the war memorial arch, up to the imposing presidential palace – the Rashtrapati Bhawan built on Russia hill and flanked by the secretariat buildings. In the afternoon we will drive around Old Delhi, the capital of kingdoms and empires.

### **Wednesday, December 4. (B). DELHI – AGRA**

Today we drive southeast witnessing the mass of people moving about or selling goods along the highways, dressed in the most colorful clothes imaginable. We arrive in Agra where we stay two nights at the deluxe ITC Mughal hotel. This afternoon we will visit Agra Fort built by the great Moghul emperor Akbar and augmented by successive emperors until the last one Aurangzeb, who imprisoned his old father Shah Jahan here. From there you can catch a fabulous view of the TAJ MAHAL across River Yamuna, lit up by the setting sun.

*Agra, the capital of India under Moghul rulers is the third apex of the "Golden Triangle". Jaipur and Delhi are others. It fully merits its status due to the magnificent Taj Mahal, which was best described by the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore as a "tear on the face of eternity". It is above all, a*



*mausoleum built by the Moghul emperor Shah Jahan (meaning Ruler of the Universe) over the tomb of his favorite wife Mumtaz Mahal who died in 1631 and later his tomb. Only he, of all his predecessors, had experience since the age of sixteen in designing monuments, and the recent discovery of an enigmatic diagram inscribed with numerous Islamic scriptures on the façade, leads scholars to believe that his tomb was intended as a reproduction of God's throne in Heaven.*

#### **Thursday, December 5. (B). AGRA**

This morning we will visit the most alluring monument, The Taj Mahal built of white marble, with inlaid precious stones on its facades shinning like multi – colored garlands around one of mankind's greatest creations. This afternoon we will visit the Itmad-ud-Daula described as “jewel box” or sometimes called the “Baby Taj”, built between 1622 and 1628. This mausoleum was commissioned by Shah Jahan's mother Nur Jahan.

#### **Friday, December 6. (B, L). AGRA – JAIPUR**

This morning, we drive west to stop first at the former capital of the great Mughal emperor Akbar, Fatehpur Sikri, now a ghost city. We visit the Royal Palace, Jodha Bai's Palace and Birbal's Mansion. Lunch enroute. Late afternoon we will arrive in the beautiful pink city to stay at the super – deluxe centrally located hotel.

*Jaipur is one of most attractive and enchanting cities of India. It is the capital of the state of Rajasthan. It was founded by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1727. He designed Jantar Mantar, the largest stone built observatory in the world. In 1876 the city was spruced up for the visit of Queen Victoria and Prince of Wales. Entire city was painted in terracotta pink color wash, and since it is known as “Pink City”.*

#### **Saturday, December 7. (B). JAIPUR**

Morning sightseeing of this flamboyant showcase of Rajasthani architecture begins with driving by Jaipur's landmark, Hawa Mahal or “Palace of Winds” built in 1799 to enable women of the court to watch street processions, while remaining unseen behind finely screened windows. We visit part of the City Palace Museums, Mubarak Mahal and the Hall of the Private Audience. We also visit the unique Jantar Mantar observatory to see a total of 18 instruments erected by Maharaja Jai



Singh, many of them his own inventions, built between 1728 and 1734. This afternoon is free for shopping, spa or swim. Overnight at the hotel.

### **Sunday, December 8. (B). JAIPUR**

Today we drive northeast to stop first in Amber, the ancient Capital of Maharajas of Jaipur, where we begin the sightseeing of the Amber Fort, swaying up to the top of the hill on the back of an elephant. We visit the Palace Complex, with its lofty Hall of Public Audience, the dazzling Seesh Mahal – private chamber of former Kings and queens, and Sukh Mahal, where the marble rooms were cooled by water cascading through fine perforation in the center of the wall- an early and very efficient system of air -conditioning. Afternoon is at leisure. Overnight at the hotel.

### **Monday, December 9. (B). JAIPUR - VARANASI**

This morning we will board the flight to Varanasi. This afternoon we will visit Sarnath where Lord Buddha is believed to have given his first sermon. Late this afternoon, we will take a boat ride on the River Ganges. To see one of the most colorful open-air ceremonies, known as ‘Aarti’ is performed every sunset, on banks of the holy river, by Hindu priests chanting and ringing bells. Dinner at the hotel.

VARANASI is one of the oldest living cities in the world, best described by Mark Twain as “Banaras is older than history, older than traditions, older even than legend, and looks twice as old as all of those put together”. It has attracted pilgrims and sages including Buddha for millenniums, from all over India and the world.

### **Tuesday, December 10. (B, D). VARANASI - KHAJURAHO**

Early this morning, we go down to the banks of the River Ganges to visit one of the Ghats. A Ghat is a platform, built of stone, on the waterfront. We will see priests performing pooja (offerings), people practicing meditation or yoga, and some pilgrims who come for their morning prayers. We take a domestic flight to Khajuraho. We will arrive at Khajuraho in afternoon, where we will stay one night.



### **Wednesday, December 11. (B, D). KHAJURAHO**

This afternoon we visit the Khajuraho temples in the western Group, which are the most spectacular in the world. Left in their original state. Dinner at the hotel. Overnight at the hotel.

*Khajuraho temples are famous worldwide for their forthright eroticism of sculptures which were erected between the 10th and 12th centuries, and abandoned since then. The artisans used incredible skills to carve the buff colored sandstones to show exquisite details of ornaments and hairstyles, down to manicured nails of gods and goddesses and to make them stand out in a three-dimensional high – relief form.*

### **Thursday, December 12. (B, L). KHAJURAHO – DELHI - U.S.A.**

we visit The Eastern Group temples. This afternoon, we take a domestic airline flight to Delhi. We transfer you to the Delhi International Airport for the flight on airline of your choice back to U.S.A., arriving home the next day.

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\* B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner



## LAND COST

DOUBLE: \$6,550 PER PERSON

SINGLE: \$1,250 PER PERSON

DEPOSIT: \$2,000 PER PERSON

BALANCE DUE: SEPTEMBER 1, 2019

## TOUR INCLUDES

- Hotel accommodations in 5-star deluxe hotels
- Domestic flights Jaipur to Varanasi, Varanasi to Kahjuraho and Khjuraho to Delhi
- Buffet breakfast daily one lunch and two dinners
- Private air conditioned vehicle with chauffeur throughout the tour
- Experienced English speaking local tour guides
- Entrance fees to World heritage sites and museums
- Private sightseeing in each city
- Domestic airfare as per the itinerary
- Elephant ride at the Amer Fort
- Rikshawe ride in Delhi
- Boat ride in Varanasi

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