



**Duration :** 8 Days/ 7 Nights

**Destinations :** Mumbai - Vadodara - Udaipur - Jodhpur - Bikaner - Jaipur - Ranthambore - Agra – Delhi

A truly spectacular journey through Western India and the legendary Taj Mahal ! India is a country that holds a deep fascination for the world and is home to some of the most spectacular architecture and monuments, all steeped in rich history. Join us on this incredible 8 - day journey of exploration of India's diversity, discovering timeless traditions and exotic locales. Discover the vibrant, bustling city of Mumbai, imperial Delhi, marvel at the immortal beauty of the Taj Mahal, come face to face with a tiger in Ranthambore, visit the Amber Fort in Jaipur and explore the shimmering Lake City of Udaipur. All of this in true-blue royalty, of course.

## **Detail Itinerary**

### **Day 01 / Saturday**

#### **Board The Maharajas' Express in Mumbai – Onto Vadodara**

Welcome aboard the Maharajas' Express.

This evening, assemble and complete your registration and check in formalities at the hotel for the Maharajas' Express. Following tea, you will proceed to the Station. On arrival you will board the Maharajas' Express and will be greeted with a welcome drink.

The Maharajas' Express departs Mumbai in the evening and travels from the land of the Marathas to Gujarat.

Dinner on board Overnight on the Maharajas' Express.

### **Day 02 / Sunday**

#### **Vadodara**

Today you arrive into the Royal city of the Gaekwads, Vadodara situated on the famous River Vishwamitri. Enjoy a relaxed morning on board the train, following a leisurely breakfast.

Later, following disembarkation, you will be driven in a convoy of cars through some of the picturesque countryside to the quaint hamlet of Jambhughoda. On arrival participate in the traditional welcome and fanfare of the feudal lords of Jambhughoda, where you relish their royal cuisine, typical only to their family. You have an opportunity to interact with the family members and catch a glimpse of their royal past.

Following a sumptuous lunch, return to Vadodara, enroute enjoy a brief stop at the famous World Heritage site of Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park, an ancient town full of ruins scattered over the foothills of Pavagadh. The Pavagadh hill is one of the oldest rock formations in India. Visit the magnificent Jami Masjid, an architectural marvel built in 1513 with tall minarets and minutely carved gates.

For guests who wish to return, after lunch, to the train for a brief rest, may do so and may later join a splendid supper hosted by the Laxmi Vilas Palace.

On arrival in the city, proceed on a visit to the Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum. A must for every art lover, it exhibits a royal collection of work by the important 19th century painter Raja Ravi Verma. It also displays 19th and 20th centuries European paintings of old masters like Raphael, Titian and Murillo.

Enjoy 'Supper' at the magnificent Laxmi Vilas Palace. Designed in Indo-Saracenic style of architecture, the palace built by Maharaja Sayajirao III in 1890 is the residence of the Royal family. Witness the grandeur of its ornate Durbar Hall, the Venetian mosaic floor, Belgium stained glass windows and sculptures of bronze and marble by Fellici. Witness a lovely folk dance performance, typical to the Royal House as you savour a wide array of delicacies from the Royal kitchens.

Return to the station and board the train for your onward journey.

Breakfast on board; Lunch at Jambhughoda; Supper at Laxmi Vilas Palace Overnight on the Maharajas' Express.

## **Day 03 / Monday**

### **Udaipur**

This morning you will wake up in the picturesque region of Mewar, one of the most popular and royal states of the Rajputana. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast and admire the magnificent landscape of the Aravali Hills arriving into Udaipur- the City of Lakes and Sunrise.

Popularly referred to as the Venice of the East, Udaipur is an enchanting image of white marble palaces, placid lakes and green hills. It is an oasis of colour in a stark and arid region. Picturesque havelis, ghats and temples along Lake Pichola and the lively bazaars make Udaipur one of India's greatest destinations.

Disembark the train as you begin your visit to the City Palace, the largest palace complex in Rajasthan, with its scalloped arches, fretted balconies, and cupolas. Visit Mor Chowk and see its lavish mosaics of peacocks; Moti Mahal with beautiful mirror work; Chini Mahal covered in ornamental tiles and the spectacular Zenana Mahal.

Feel like a king as you experience the hospitality at the Durbar Hall reminiscent of the ancient Mewar glory. Feast your taste buds over a vast spread of International cuisine.

Following lunch, you may if you wish, return to the train for a relaxed afternoon on board. Or you have the option of enjoying spa facilities in a palace hotel. Later in the afternoon, proceed for an optional 'Walking Tour' through the Old Market of Udaipur. Browse through shops selling exquisitely embroidered and printed fabrics, jewellery, paintings, carved wood artefacts and other local crafts. Return to the luxury of the train and look forward to another exciting journey.

Breakfast on board; Lunch in Durbar Hall; Dinner on board Overnight on the Maharajas' Express.

## **Day 04 / Tuesday**

### **Jodhpur**

This morning, the Maharajas' Express, continues her journey from the pristine environs of Mewar region into the stronghold of the Marwar region. Enjoy a leisurely breakfast and lunch on board as your train passes through some of the dramatic landscapes of the Thar Desert, arriving into the Blue City of Jodhpur.

Following lunch, disembark and explore the erstwhile capital of Marwar- Jodhpur. Set like a jewel amidst the golden sands and famous for its magnificent forts and palaces from the Rajput era, it is home to some of the finest architectural wonders.

Proceed on a walking tour of the Old Clock Tower market experiencing the hustle and bustle of the market as well as get an insight of the daily lifestyle of the local residents as you walk through a section of the blue city, past some of the oldest houses and havelis. Continue to the magnificent Meherangarh Fort. Admire the intricate latticed windows, elaborately carved panels and elegantly curved porches. Tour the palaces and temples built by successive rulers, with priceless jewels and a dazzling collection of arms. The highlight of the day is a Royal Cocktail evening with a wide array of sumptuous Marwar culinary delights served in the Royal courtyard of Meherangarh Fort as you admire the cityscape from atop.

Return to the train and continue your journey to glorious Bikaner.

Breakfast on board; Lunch on board; Barbeque at Meherangarh Fort Overnight on the Maharajas'

Express.

## **Day 05 / Wednesday**

### **Bikaner**

Your journey through the desert continues. As you relish your breakfast on board, enjoy observing the desert - the scattered procepis cineraria trees; the villagers attired in their bright turbans and the occasional herd of camels breaking the monotony of the desert.

The medieval city of Bikaner was once a major centre in the cross-desert caravan trade. Popularly known as Camel Country, Bikaner has the best riding camels in the world. Bikaner's forts, palaces and temples are splendid creations made in red and yellow sandstone and are living reflections of its rich historical and architectural legacy.

Late morning arrive into the desert citadel of Bikaner. You have the option of relaxing on board the train. Or you may choose to embark on an optional tour of the city visiting Lalgarh Museum displaying some fascinating exhibits on the royal heritage of Bikaner. Another intriguing optional is a half-day excursion to the Karni Mata Temple in Deshnok, situated on the outskirts of Bikaner. Popularly known as the "Rat Temple", the temple complex has hundreds of rats swarming the courtyard, an integral part of the temple rituals and customs as they are considered very sacred. Following your participation in any one of the optional tours, you will return to the train for lunch.

Following lunch, you will disembark and proceed on a visit to the Junagarh Fort, an unassailable fortress built in 1593 AD by Raja Rai Singh. While the fort is a formidable structure encircled by a moat, its real beauty lies inside. Be overwhelmed by the Diwan-i- Khas, Phool Mahal (Flower Palace), Hawa Mahal, Badal Mahal and Anup Mahal. The Fort Museum is fascinating and adorned with ornate decorative costumes and jewellery.

Continue on an experience of a lifetime! Catch a glimpse of rural Rajasthan, as you are escorted through the surrounding village. Experience the royal pageantry as a convoy of decorated canopied camel carts accompanied by musicians takes you for a Sundowner in the Sand Dunes. Enjoy cocktails, savour traditional mouth watering barbecue delicacies as you enjoy traditional folk artists like the Langaas and Kalbeliyas whose music and dance will mesmerise you.

Later return to the comfort of your train and embark on your onward journey to Jaipur.

Breakfast on board; Lunch on board; evening barbecue on dunes Overnight on the Maharajas' Express.

## **Day 06 / Thursday**

### **Jaipur**

Today, you will arrive into the 'Pink City' of Jaipur.

Jaipur is truly a pristine jewel in the crown of the desert state of Rajasthan. Built by Raja Jai Singh in the 18th century, Jaipur is renowned for its magnificent palaces, forts and temples.

Following disembarkation, your exciting tour of the pink city begins with an unique and enthralling experience – an Exhibition Elephant Polo Match. Your arrival at the venue will be accompanied by the royal military band and the beating of 'Nagadas' (huge Indian drums).

You have the option to watch or participate in the exhibition game. After the match, enjoy a Cocktail lunch over sparkling wine.

Following lunch you have the option of returning to the train. Or you may continue on a visit to the Amber Fort, situated on a ridge just outside Jaipur city, this fort palace is surrounded by fortified battlements overlooking the Moat Lake. A short jeep ride takes you up to the fort where you will enjoy a tour of the royal apartments, with striking views of the gorge. Step back into the Mughal era as you enter the Chamber of Mirrors (Sheesh Mahal), and the Hall of Victory. On completing the tour of Amer you will have the opportunity to shop for some of the finest jewellery, textiles and blue pottery for which the city is renowned.

Breakfast on board; Elephant Polo Lunch at private venue; Dinner on board Overnight on the Maharajas'

Express.

## **Day 07 / Friday**

### **Sawai Madhopur (Ranthambore) – Fatehpur Sikri**

On arrival in Sawai Madhopur, early in the morning, get ready for a jeep safari to the Ranthambore National Park. Originally the private hunting ground of the Maharajas, Ranthambore was declared a National Park in 1973. It is famous for its open sightings of tigers, sambar, chital, nilgai, chinkara, wild boar, sloth bear, hyena, jackal and leopard.

Wildlife cannot be compared to that of Africa and you are indeed fortunate if you spot the elusive tiger or the shy leopard.

Return to the train and continue your journey to the fabled deserted Mughal city of Fatehpur Sikri.

Admire the changing landscape as you savour a hearty brunch.

On arrival at the quaint station of Fatehpur Sikri, disembark and proceed on a tour of the fascinating sights comprising of imposing gateways, Halls of Private and Public audience, beautifully sculptured palaces with unique water bodies, reflecting a perfect blend of hindu and muslim architectural styles.

This deserted red sandstone city was built by the great Mughal Emperor Akbar as his capital in the late 16th century. It is now a famous UNESCO World heritage site. Then return to the train to enjoy an 'Indian night'!

Brunch and Dinner on board.

Overnight on the Maharajas' Express.

## **Day 08 / Saturday**

### **Fatehpur Sikri – Agra – Delhi (Disembark)**

Today, the train continues on her last leg of the journey towards the magical city of Agra. The jewel of India, home to one of the world's great architectural wonders - the Taj Mahal. With its spectacular monumental masterpieces and picturesque natural setting, Agra is a legendary city glorified by time.

Early morning, disembark and proceed to the world famous Taj Mahal. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it was built by Shah Jehan as a mausoleum for his favourite queen Mumtaz.

This incomparable marvel is constructed entirely out of white marble and is an architectural masterpiece with beautiful inlay work and marble screens. Approximately 20,000 of India's most revered craftsmen were recruited to give shape to this poetry in marble.

Then enjoy a Champagne breakfast gazing at the Taj Mahal, from atop the Taj Khema.

Following breakfast, you have the option of returning to the train or can enjoy shopping for some peitra dura inlay on marble or for exquisite jewellery.

Enjoy a hearty lunch on board as you continue your journey to Delhi. Bid farewell to the Maharajas' Express as your 'Princely India' journey comes to an end. The royal journey is over, but the memory of which will live on forever!

Champagne Breakfast at Taj Khema; Lunch on board.