



**Know India Travel  
presents...**


## **BEST OF INDIA**



### **Proposed Itinerary**

Journey to some of the most beautiful, historical, and interesting places in India, where architecture, spirituality, and colorful culture combine to make an amazing experience you will never forget. With **Dr. Arvind Singh**, one of the best guides in all of India, you will learn about the real India while enjoying the best it has to offer. Dr. Singh holds an MA in Indian History & Culture, an MA in Indian Philosophy & Religion, and a PhD in Archaeology and is the author of three books and 16 research articles on different aspects of Indian culture, numismatics, and archaeology.

<p><b>Day 1-2</b></p>	<p><b>Fly to Delhi</b> Arrive Delhi late in the evening of Day 2 and be met at Indira Gandhi International Airport and taken to your hotel.</p>
<p><b>Day 3</b></p>	<p><b>Delhi</b> India's capital and a major gateway to the country, contemporary Delhi is bustling metropolis that successfully combines the ancient with modern. Set amidst the rapidly multiplying skyscrapers are forts, palaces and other monuments of the region's ancient legacy.</p> <p><b>Morning:</b> Breakfast between 7:30 and 9:00 a.m. Orientation to India and introduction to Delhi by Dr. Arvind Singh. Tour begins at 10:00 a.m. Start your tour with a puja ceremony in Shree Lakshmi Narayan Temple followed by a visit to Bangla Sahib Gurudwara, a Sikh temple. Drive past the Rashtrapati Bhawan (formerly Governor General House), India Gate and other Govt. buildings.</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> After Bangla Sahib drive to Old Delhi, rest and take lunch in the Broadway hotel and then continue the tour. Visit Jama Masjid, the largest mosque of the Indian sub-continent, known for its architectural beauty and grandeur. It was built by Emperor Shah Jahan (the builder of Taj Mahal) in 1656. From there you will go to the Red Fort, capital of the Mughals until 1857, when Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was exiled by the British Indian government, and then to Raj Ghat the memorial of Gandhi.</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Early dinner and then leave for Jodhpur by overnight train, the Mandor Express at 8.45 PM.</p>



<p><b>Day 4</b></p>	<p><b>Jodhpur</b>  <b>Morning:</b> Reach Jodhpur and check in at the hotel. After breakfast, rest and relax. Jodhpur is popularly known as the “blue city.” Today, its gentle atmosphere belies a stormy yet glorious past, with city walls, 7 gates, numerous 16<sup>th</sup> century’s bastions and towers and its majestic Mehrangarh Fort.  <b>Afternoon:</b> Start your guided tour with Jaswant Thada, a cluster of white marble Royal cenotaphs built in 1899 by a queen in memory of her husband Maharaja Jaswant Singh. From there we will drive to the massive Mehrangarh Fort, set on a high hill overlooking Jodhpur’s rugged and rocky terrain. The enclosed palaces are intricately adorned with long carved panels and latticed windows exquisitely wrought from red sand stone. This Fort has got a huge museum inside, housing a nice collection of artifacts owned by the royal family.  <b>Evening:</b> Dinner with a traditional Jain Family.</p> 
<p><b>Day 5</b></p>	<p><b>Jodhpur</b>  <b>Morning:</b> After breakfast enjoy a little free time before you embark on a village safari by jeeps. In your jeep safari you will see the village life around Jodhpur as well the local wildlife. We will visit the homes of potters, weavers, and farmers, including the village of Vishnois, a pastoral community known for their love and reverence for nature and animals. Even today, their life is lived compatibly with nature.  <b>Afternoon:</b> After the tour, come back to the hotel around late afternoon, and rest or enjoy walking in the old part of the city, shopping, reading, or whatever you like.  <b>Evening:</b> After dinner take an overnight train Delhi-Barmer Express at 10.30 PM. for Jaipur.</p>
<p><b>Day 6</b></p>	<p><b>Jaipur</b>  <b>Morning:</b> Arrive Jaipur early in the morning. Jaipur, the vibrant capital of Rajasthan is popularly known as the Pink City, because of the pink color given to the houses and shops in the old city. It sits on a dry lake bed in somewhat arid landscape surrounded by forts and palaces. The walled old city is in the northeast of Jaipur, the new areas spread to the south and west. Jaipur offers a combination of splendid sightseeing and shopping opportunities. When you arrive check into your hotel where you stay for the next two nights.  <b>Afternoon:</b> Visit Birla temple built out of pure white marble at the outskirts of the city. Also visit a Sanganeri block printing place where you will see the famous Rajasthani textiles being dyed and printed.  <b>Evening:</b> Free for resting, shopping or exploring.</p>
<p><b>Day 7</b></p>	<p><b>Jaipur</b>  <b>Morning:</b> After breakfast take a guided tour of majestic Amber Fort, and enjoy the elephant ride. The ancient capital of Amber, just outside present day Jaipur, was once the seat of power before the City Palace of Jaipur was built. See elaborately decorated halls, some with delightful fresco paintings, glass or inlaid precious stones. One of the most outstanding rooms is the Mirror Palace where the light from a single lamp, reflected in the many mirrors, illuminates the entire room.  <b>Afternoon:</b> Visit the famous City Palace, a large complex of palaces, gardens and courtyards that is now a museum. It houses a wonderful collection of Mughal and</p>

	<p>Rajput miniature paintings, rare manuscripts, traditional clothing and an armory. Also stop to see the amazing astronomical observatory( a World Heritage Monument) built by a king of Jaipur in 1728.</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Free</p>
<p><b>Day 8</b></p>	<p><b>Agra</b></p> <p><b>Morning-afternoon:</b> Breakfast and then drive to Agra, stopping on the way at the famous Mughal ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri (a World Heritage Monument), built by emperor Akbar the Great in 1571 and deserted 14 years later because its water supply failed.</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Arrive in Agra and check-in to the hotel where you will stay for the next two nights.</p> 
<p><b>Day 9</b></p>	<p><b>Agra</b></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> Rise early for a sunrise tour of Taj Mahal to view this incredible and extravagant monument as the sun bathes it in an ethereal light. Built in 17<sup>th</sup> century by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a memorial to his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, it took 22 years and the labor of 20,000 men. The white marble for this perfectly proportioned building with its amazing delicate inlay work was transported to the site by elephants from a quarry 200 miles away. Return to the hotel for breakfast.</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Visit Agra Fort, situated around the bend of the Yamuna river from the Taj Mahal. Construction of the red sand stone walls and gates of the fort was begun by Emperor Akbar as the seat and stronghold of the Mughal Empire. It was enlarged by successive generations including Shah Jahan, who built the Moti Masjid (the Pearl Mosque), the Royal Pavilions, and the Hall of Public Audience, and by Aurangzeb, who added outer ramparts.</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Free</p>
<p><b>Day 10</b></p>	<p><b>Khajuraho</b></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> After a nice breakfast, take the Shatabdi Express train to Jhansi, and then drive to Khajuraho, a place known for beautiful temples with erotic carvings. Enroute stop at Orchha for lunch. Once the capital city of the Bundelas, Orchha is now a village, set among a complex of well preserved palaces and temples.</p>  <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Check-in in your hotel and take a little rest. After rest go for the tour of temples. Built during the chandela period, a dynasty which survived for five centuries before falling to the Muslim onslaught, the Khajuraho temples have been divided into two parts, i.e., the Western and the Eastern groups of temples. The well preserved main temples are in the Western group and are designated a World Heritage Site. There are numerous temples in this group but the most important are the Lakshmi, Varah, Lakshman, and Kandarya Mahadev temples.</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Khajuraho light and sound show.</p>
<p><b>Day 11</b></p>	<p><b>Varanasi</b></p> <p><b>Morning-Afternoon:</b> After breakfast, fly to Varanasi, the most sacred city of Hindus and equally sacred for Jains and Buddhists as well. Situated on the holy Ganges, it is also known as the oldest living city on earth. During the time of Buddha, between 563</p>


	<p>BCE and 400 BCE, it was already a flourishing trade center and the main hub of culture in India. Varanasi has stood as the symbol of Hindu renaissance and continues to preserve many cultural traditions, philosophy and rituals. Its ghats on the Ganges and numerous temples form the major attraction in the old city.  <b>Evening:</b> Visit a silk weaving cooperative.</p>
<p><b>Day 12</b></p>	<div data-bbox="302 344 721 709" data-label="Image"> </div> <p><b>Varanasi</b>  Wake-up early in the morning to go for sunrise boat cruise on the holy Ganges. Here, weather permitting, you will see one of the most beautiful and memorable sunrises, during which the whole drama of life (from womb to tomb) is played out on the bank of Ganges.  <b>Afternoon:</b> free for shopping or rest.  <b>Evening:</b> Go to the Ganges for a spectacular evening aarti at Dashashwameth Ghat, the most fascinating daily ritual of Hinduism.</p>
<p><b>Day 13</b></p>	<p><b>Varanasi</b>  <b>Morning:</b> Rest or explore, or have a yoga session if you like.  <b>Afternoon:</b> Tour of Sarnath, the birthplace of Buddhism. It is Sarnath where Lord Buddha preached his first sermon after His enlightenment and where you will see the ruins of ancient Buddhist monasteries, stupas and temples. The archaeological museum has a beautiful collection of ancient sculptures and houses the famous Lion Capital (India's crest) and what is considered by many to be the most beautiful image of Buddha. From there we will visit a modern Buddhist temple and Bodhi tree.  <b>Evening:</b> Enjoy a performance of classical Indian music for which Varanasi is known.</p> <div data-bbox="1068 726 1442 1220" data-label="Image"> </div>
<p><b>Day 14</b></p>	<p><b>Varanasi-Delhi</b>  <b>Morning-Afternoon:</b> Morning yoga and then free time, before we catch the flight to Delhi. Arrive in Delhi in the evening and after dinner depart for the International Airport to catch your flight to home. Take with you the beautiful memories of your trip.</p>

**Cost: \$ 2250**

**Single room supplement: \$ 650**

**Cost includes:** All ground transportation, trains, boat ride, rickshaw ride, 3-4 star hotels (double occupancy), breakfasts and dinners, personal service from a first-class guide, porters, and all entrance fees. Cost does not include tip for guide, drinks, room service, non-group activities, personal expenses, or international airfare.

## Optional 5 days extension to Kathmandu, Nepal - \$800

- Day 14** Fly to Kathmandu. Airport pickup, hotel transfer. Walking tour to Kathmandu Durbar Square- built in 17th century, extraordinary sightseeing, crafts, temples and palaces. Listed as UNESCO's world heritage site. Visit Kumari Ghar home of a living goddess. Visit the museum also if time allows. Evening free for rest.
- Day 15** Visit the very famous self-created stupa Swyambhunath ( Monkey Temple), also a UNESCO world heritage site. Situated 300ft above Kathmandu, we will see beautiful views of Kathmandu valley and the Himalayas. Visit monasteries where the Tibetan monks are meditating and chanting mantras. Then we'll drive to Khokana Bungmati, a very old town famous for mustard oil, this area retains many traditional aspects, having refrained from modern developments. We'll see traditional houses, cultures, festivals and people. This area is not so much traveled to by tourists, and by staying off the beaten path you'll experience the real ancient Newari lifestyle. Then we'll visit Patan Durbar square, UNESCO World heritage site, famous for its arts and sculptures. This is another palace built by Malla kings in the 17th century. We'll visit some of exotic temples, monasteries and you'll be amazed by the wooden, metal and stone crafts and engineering by people at that time.
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- Day 16** Bhaktapur Durbar Square, probably the best durbar squares in the world. We'll see the five story Nyatapola temple, at one time the world's tallest landmark (164 ft). Famous for pottery and wooden crafts, we'll visit the Palace of Fifty-five Windows, an extraordinary museum, and walk around the 17th century era town. We will also visit a thangka painting school. Take your time for exploring, taking pictures or shopping, as Bhaktapur has everything to offer. Then, we'll drive to scenic Nagarkot hill station. It is famous for panoramic view of the Himalayas, as it stands above the clouds (higher than 8,00 m). We'll walk through the village and on the terrace farms, enjoy excellent sunset views, and return back to Kathmandu.
- Day 17** Free time to explore Kathmandu with your guide or on your own.
- Day 18** Pack your stuff and get ready! We'll make a quick visit to Pashupatinath on the way to the airport. Listed as UNESCO world heritage site, This is the biggest, oldest, and most important Hindu temple in Nepal, and the best place to see Sadhus, devotees, lots of temples, the holy river Bagmati, monkeys and cremation pyres. Departure to the Delhi International Airport for your departure flight.

Additional travel options in India and Nepal are possible with prior arrangement.