



SPENCER *Gems*

INDIA 2019

FULLY ESCORTED AND AN EXCLUSIVE GROUP OF 20



13 TO 25 OCTOBER 2019

DELHI - VARANASI - AGRA - JAIPUR - UDAIPUR - MUMBAI



Please contact gems@spencertravel.com.au for more information





INDIA

13 TO 25 OCTOBER 2019

DELHI – VARANASI – AGRA – JAIPUR – UDAIPUR – MUMBAI

SUNDAY, 13TH OCTOBER

ARRIVE DELHI

Welcome to India!

Your TBA flight will land at Delhi's international airport sometime during the evening hours.

As you disembark, you will be met by our airport representative and assisted with Immigration and Customs formalities. In the arrival hall the airport representative will introduce you to your tour escort who will drive you to your hotel and assist you to check-in.

Hotel Taj Palace Delhi

Room Deluxe

Meals None

MONDAY 14TH OCTOBER

DELHI

Today, you will visit **Humayun's Tomb** (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Humayun's Tomb is the earliest example of Mughal architecture in India and was built in the 16th century as a memorial to the Mughal Emperor Humayun.

The mausoleum was built from 1562-1572 AD with the help of Persian architects, who were brought in from Herat (Afghanistan). Recently renovated, with the gardens restored to their former splendor and the fountains to working condition, it is a very attractive site.

Next, you will visit the **Gurudwara Bangla Sahib**, the temple of the followers of the Sikh religion.

The Sikhs, which means "disciples", are one of the country's most recognizable groups; their beards and turbans give them a distinctive look. The Sikhs believe that everyone, regardless of their station in life, should do "seva" or "social service".

This resulted in the "**Langar**" or Community Kitchen, where every member of the religion considers it an honour to put in a couple of hours, cooking thousands of Indian breads and making huge vat loads of curry for visiting pilgrims and anybody looking for a hot meal.

We will time your visit to coincide with the lunchtime service. You may like to serve the food yourself or help in the kitchen making Rotis

Lunch will be served at **Chor Bizaare** restaurant.

You will drive to the walled city of **Old Delhi**, the former capital of several empires. You will disembark and trade your vehicle for a cycle rickshaw and ride through the narrow lanes of Chandni Chowk market. This is a fun ride as you navigate traffic through the narrow lanes of this 300-year-old wholesale market.

Next, you will drive past Rajpath or '**King's Way**' and the wide tree-lined avenues of New Delhi, which served as the capital city of the former British Empire. Today it is the address for some of the most iconic buildings of modern India. Among the buildings you will drive past are the **Secretariat buildings, Parliament House, Presidential Palace** (Rashtrapati Bhavan) and India Gate, a memorial to 82,000 soldiers of the undivided Indian Army who died in the period 1914-21.

You will then return to your hotel (around 4.30 or 5 PM) and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

Tonight, a special **Welcome Dinner** will be organised at **Spice Route, Imperial**.

Hotel Taj Palace Delhi

Room Deluxe

Meals Breakfast, Lunch
and Welcome Dinner



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DELHI – VARANASI – AGRA – JAIPUR – UDAIPUR – MUMBAI

TUESDAY, 15TH OCTOBER

DELHI/VARANASI

After breakfast, you will be escorted to the airport to board your Indigo flight to Varanasi.

Depart Delhi at 08:15 hours by 6E- 906

Arrive Varanasi at 09:40 hours

(Flight timings are subject to change)

One of India's seven holy cities, Varanasi is the holiest of them all, and devout Hindus will visit Varanasi at least once in their lifetime. It is believed, if you are cremated in Varanasi, you are released from the endless cycle of rebirth. Varanasi is also amongst the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world, with excavations suggesting that it has been inhabited since 1800 BC.



In the arrival hall, you will be met by our **Spencer Gems** colleague who will escort to your waiting vehicle and you will drive straight to **Sarnath**, which lies a short distance from the main city. This is the place where **The Buddha**, in 500 BC, gave his first sermon after gaining enlightenment.

From here, you will drive to **Shivaay restaurant for lunch** before check-in to your hotel.

Afternoon at leisure at hotel.

In the evening, you will head to the banks of the Holy Ganges to board your boat for a sail on the river.

You will sail upstream, arriving at Dashashwamedh Ghat in time for the evening "aarti" ceremony, when priests perform the rituals to put the river gods to sleep and to ward off evil. Accompanied by the hypnotic beat of drums and bells and the chanting of prayers, the whole ceremony is mesmerizing, ending with the release of hundreds of lamps into the waters.

Before the ceremony is completed, your boat will drift gently down the river to a secluded ghat. Here, your private priest will perform the 'aarti' only for you. And just for tonight, it will be you that puts the Mother Goddess to bed!

You will then return to your hotel. Tonight you have dinner at **Varuna restaurant** (Vegetarian only)

Hotel	Taj Gateway Ganges
Room	Executive
Meals	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

WEDNESDAY, 16TH OCTOBER

VARANASI /AGRA

A visit to Varanasi is incomplete without a tour of the **Ghats** at sunrise. After the boat ride, you will explore the **Old City** with your guide as you make your way through narrow lanes where history goes back thousands of years.

After breakfast, you will be escorted to the airport to board your Air India flight to Agra (AI-406 departing at 12.10 hours and arriving in Agra at 13.20 hours). This flight operates on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays only.

In the arrival hall, you will be met by our Spencer Gems colleague and escorted to your hotel where you will be assisted with the check-in formalities.

Lunch at the hotel restaurant.

You will then return to your hotel for breakfast.

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Two great Mughal monarchs, **Akbar** and **Shah Jahan**, transformed the little village of **Agra** into a befitting second capital of the Mughal Empire. It is not surprising, that modern Agra still reflects its Mughal heritage most conspicuously. Today, a visitor to Agra is caught up in a world of contrasting edifices of red sandstone and white marble, narrow gullies and quaint buggies, and that irresistible charm that this favorite city of the Mughals still retains.

At 16:00 hours, your escort will meet you in the hotel lobby, and together, you will visit the stunning **Taj Mahal** (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

The Taj Mahal is best seen at different times of the day when the white marble reflects the nuances of the changing light from the sun. Described by poet laureate, Rabindranath Tagore as “a teardrop on the cheek of eternity”, the Taj Mahal is a mausoleum and a symbol of the enduring love of Emperor Shah Jahan for his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died during childbirth in 1631. Legend has it that she bound him with a deathbed promise to build her the most beautiful tomb ever known. It is said that 20,000 stone carvers, masons, and artists from across India and as far as Turkey and Iraq were employed under a team of architects to build the Taj Mahal in the lush gardens on the banks of Agra’s Yamuna River.

It took them from 1631 to 1648 to complete the epic task. Today, the mausoleum is an important place of pilgrimage since the empress died in childbirth, making her a martyr.

You will stay at the Taj through sunset before returning to your hotel.

Hotel Taj Gateway Fatehabad

Room Executive

Meals Breakfast, Lunch

THURSDAY, 17TH OCTOBER

AGRA – JAIPUR

This morning, you will have the option of a sunrise visit to the Taj Mahal.

You will then return to your hotel.

After breakfast, you will drive to **Jaipur** (approximately 5 hours, excluding stops).

About an hour outside Agra, you will stop to see one of the Mughal Empire’s most inspired creations, Fatehpur Sikri (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). This was temporarily the capital of the Mughal Empire under Akbar the Great.

Built by the Emperor to honour the saint who foretold the birth of Akbar’s son and heir, this complex was constructed entirely in vibrant red sandstone and is as pristine as when it was first chiseled.

You will then proceed a further hour to Bharatpur, where you will be served lunch at a heritage hotel, “Laxmi Vilas Palace”.

After lunch, you will continue your journey to Jaipur where you will reach towards the evening. On arrival, you will check-in to your hotel.

Evening you will do the Palace tour of Rambagh Palace with in-house historian with a glass of sparkling wine.

Dinner at Swarna Mahal Restaurant.

Hotel Taj Rambagh Palace

Room Palace

Meals Breakfast & Lunch, Dinner



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DELHI – VARANASI – AGRA – JAIPUR – UDAIPUR – MUMBAI

FRIDAY, 18TH OCTOBER

JAIPUR

This morning, you will visit the **City Palace**, which at the behest of Sawai Jai Singh, was built near the temple of his personal deity Govinda Deva. The Palace is a superb marriage of the Rajput and Mughal styles of architecture.

The seven-storeyed "Chandra Mahal" (Moon Palace) is a sprawling complex with multiple courtyards, public buildings, zenana mahals (harems) and an astronomical observatory. The basic layout is Mughal, with open courtyards and large airy buildings, while the details are drawn from centuries of Rajput and Jain architectural styles.

You will also take a private tour of the residential areas of the City Palace, not open to the general public. This will be followed by a glass of sparkling wine in the Royal Living Room.

From the City Palace, you will enter the extraordinary "**Jantar Mantar**" (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), the astronomical observatory built by Raja Sawai Jai Singh II in 1827. Roughly translated, the name means "The Formula of Instruments". This is one of the five observatories he built in northern India. The massive futuristic structures that you will see are actually highly sophisticated instruments that are accurate even today.

Your morning tour will end with a **specially designed walk through the bazaars of the Old City**.

The **bazaars of the old city** are colorful, aromatic, happily chaotic and offer everything from the famous Jaipur "minakari" jewelry to ordinary and mundane household goods. These artisans and tradesmen who have been plying their trade for generations have become an integral part of the city's economic growth. Strolling through the bazaars is a lesson in the lifestyle of ordinary people.

You will then return to your hotel and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

Vehicle will be at disposal for shopping tour.

Evening at Leisure, own arrangements.

Hotel Taj Rambagh Palace

Room Palace

Meals Breakfast

SATURDAY, 19TH OCTOBER

JAIPUR

After breakfast, you will visit the **Fort-Palace at Amber** (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

From Amber, you will be taken to the excellent **Anokhi Museum** of Hand Printing. The museum chronicles the regeneration of hand-block printing techniques in Rajasthan using traditional methods.

Lunch will be served at a local noble family house in Jaipur (Strictly subject to availability)

You will then return to your hotel and the rest of the day will be at leisure.

Hotel Taj Rambagh Palace

Room Palace

Meals Breakfast & Lunch



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SUNDAY, 20TH OCTOBER JAIPUR/ UDAIPUR

During the morning hours, you will be escorted to the airport to board your Spice Jet flight to Udaipur (SG-8623 departing Jaipur at 0725 and arriving in Udaipur at 0830 hours).

On arrival in Udaipur, you will be met by our Spencer Gems colleague and escorted to your waiting vehicle.

As the hotel's check-in time is 14:00 hours, your room will not be available. Therefore, you will be driven straight to the **Old City** for the sightseeing. Sharing space with cows, elephants, people and cycles, the walk through the winding lanes is an interesting insight into everyday life in "small town India".

Your escort will take you to the home of a priest. Here, you will see the ancient art of '**painting on water**', a dying skill practiced by very few today. A complete canvas takes anywhere from 4 to 10 hours to complete and today you will arrive in time to see the priest put the finishing touches to one such painting

You will also see shops selling a variety of items, unexpected folk art decorating the walls of houses and small architectural gems like a latticed Haveli (mansion) window.

This will be followed by lunch at a local restaurant –The Bungalow. Thereafter, you will check-in to your hotel.

The rest of the day will be at leisure.

Hotel Taj Lake Palace
Room Palace
Meals Packed Breakfast & Lunch



MONDAY, 21ST OCTOBER UDAIPUR

After breakfast, you will visit the **City Palace**.

This sprawling palace was built over three centuries and is a series of four interconnecting palaces, illustrative of various architectural styles. The main section is a blend of Rajput military architecture with lavish Mughal-inspired decorative art on the inside. In terms of an exemplary eye for detail and craftsmanship, few palaces in India match the artwork here.

Also of particular note is the exquisite collection of priceless Rajput Miniature Paintings done in the Mewari tradition.

You will then return to your hotel and the rest of the afternoon will be at leisure.

Optional: You have an option to visit **The Vintage and Classic Car Collection** of The Palace of Udaipur. Today, the museum has become a landmark in the city. The grand limousines and cars showcased in the collection belong to the Royal family and are still in perfect running condition.

In the afternoon, you will visit the Molela Potters Village: This is the home of the Maru potters who make an assortment of hand-modelled votive plaques and idols.

Typically, the women prepare the clay, which is a mix of rice husk and donkey dung, while the men make the idols and decorate them. The entire process is done by hand without using moulds or machines.

You will return to your hotel.

Tonight, you will participate in a unique culinary experience conducted by a family that was once amongst the premier nobility of Mewar.

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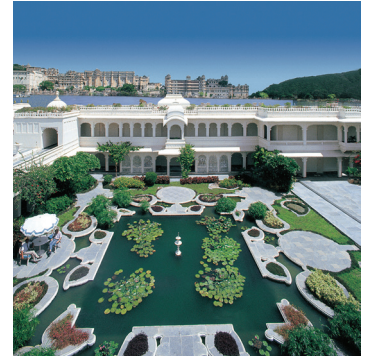
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The family has hosted Queen Elizabeth, Jacqueline Kennedy and the first Prime Minister of India. The secret, age-old recipes of the family have been passed through generations and are guarded zealously. You will have the opportunity of watching the meal being prepared (and try your hand, if you like) as they explain the intricacies of the process. This will be followed by **dinner with the host family.**

Hotel Taj Lake Palace
Room Palace
Meals Breakfast & Dinner



TUESDAY, 22ND OCTOBER UDAIPUR

After breakfast, a drive of 45 minutes will take you to the Delwara region of Rajasthan, which houses the beautiful temples of **Nagda** and **Eklingji**.

The temples in the small but beautiful complex at **Nagda** are known as the "Sas" and "Bahu" temples (literally, temples of the Mother-in-law and Daughter-in-law), and comprise elaborately carved 10th-century temples dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

On the larger Sas temple are beautiful friezes with scenes from the Ramayana, meetings of lovers, and images of the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The Bahu temple has a richly carved archway and columns profusely carved with female figurines.

This will be followed by a visit to the 8th-century **Eklingji Temple**. Eklingji was a reincarnation of the Indian deity Shiva, and the patron god of the Maharanas of Udaipur.

Later, you will drive back to your hotel in time for lunch.

In the evening you will take a private boat cruise on **Gangaur boat**, which is an antique Royal barge of the house of Mewar. Rowers in traditional attire take you on a cruise around the mystical lake. During the cruise, you will be entertained with dance performances. Cocktails will be served on board. (5:15 to 6:15 PM slot).

Tonight, a special dinner will be organized at **The Mewar Terrace**.

Hotel Taj Lake Palace
Room Palace
Meals Breakfast & Dinner

WEDNESDAY, 23RD OCTOBER UDAIPUR / MUMBAI

The morning will be at leisure and you may like to wake up at your own pace for a relaxed breakfast. In the afternoon, you will be escorted to the airport to board your **Indigo** flight to **Mumbai**. (6E-753, departing Udaipur at 1515 hours and arriving in Mumbai at 1645 hours).

In the arrival hall, you will be met by our Spencer Gems colleague who will escort you to your hotel and assist you to check-in.

Hotel Taj Mahal Palace & Towers
Room Luxury Grande
Meals Breakfast

THURSDAY, 24TH OCTOBER MUMBAI

This morning, we will take you on a "Colonial Walk" through **Mumbai**.

Covering the various tourist landmarks of Mumbai, this "heritage walking tour" will start at the **Gateway of India**. This victory arch was built to commemorate the 1911 royal visit of King George V. Ironically, it was through the Gateway that the First Battalion of the Somerset Light Infantry departed, signaling the end of British rule in India.

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Right opposite you will see the famous domed **Taj Mahal Palace** (where you will be staying), which has hosted heads of state, royalty and world famous sportspersons and entertainers in its more-than-a-century-old lifetime.

You will then walk past the **Royal Mumbai Yacht Club**, the **Police Headquarters**, the **National Gallery of Modern Art and the City Museum**. En route, you will wander through the **Kala Ghoda** area, Mumbai's art district.

Here, amidst stories of **Sassoon** and Jewish history, you will hear about the **Watson Hotel** – which is famous for being the first cast-iron building in the city and for hosting Mark Twain. As you walk past the **Sessions Court** and the **High Court**, you will see the **Rajabai Tower**, the Big Ben of Mumbai. This structure, built from the generous donation of a Mumbai-based businessman, still chimes old British tunes once every 15 minutes.

From here you will drive to **Churchgate Station** where you will get the opportunity to see the famed '**dabbawallas**' or 'lunch box carriers' in action.

The Mumbai dabbawallas are international figures now, thanks to Forbes Global. The Forbes story details the efficiency with which they deliver the dabbas or lunch pails of their customers. Around 5,000 dabbawallas collect and deliver 175,000 lunches every day and take the empty boxes back.

Their operation has a six sigma rating which implies less than 3.4 errors in every million transactions. This is the same rating that has made companies like Motorola and GE world famous for their quality!

Next, you will visit the venerated architectural masterpiece – the **Victoria Terminus Railway Station** (a UNESCO World Heritage Site).

Inspired by St. Pancras station in London, this Indo-Saracenic structure sees over six-hundred-and-fifty-thousand people pass through its portals each day.

From here, you will head towards **Dhobi Ghat** before lunch.

Dhobi Ghat or "washer folks' place" is the world's largest outdoor laundry and here Mumbai's traditional washer folk – or dhobis – provide a wonderful service, collecting dirty laundry, washing it, and returning it neatly pressed, all for a very small fee. With a large chunk of Mumbai's washing done here, it comes as no surprise that these dhobis have been christened the 'Washing Machines' of Mumbai.

Lunch will be served at **Bombay Canteen**.

After lunch, you will go on a special tour that is designed to show you the world of Dharavi – the industry, the people and their way of life. Contrary to popular belief, they are educated, employed, speak passable English and more importantly, are very happy. Your co-explorer will be a local, for whom Dharavi has been home since childhood. History has it that Dharavi was a fishing village with the kolis, or the fisher folk, as its main inhabitants.

Owing to the construction of a dam, the Dharavi creek dried up, making the fisherfolk move to greener pastures and paving the way for new settlements.

Today, Dharavi attracts thousands of people every day, and nurtures their dreams of a better life, making it possibly the only slum in the world where people come in vast numbers to make a living.

It is this migration that has, over the years, resulted in making this settlement a significant contributor to Mumbai's productivity. With thousands of small-scale industries thriving in the area, Dharavi, as a whole, generates estimated revenue of about US\$500 million annually!

This is not a slum tour, but a visit to highlight the entrepreneurial skills of the people here.

Tonight, a special Farewell Dinner will be organized at Khyber restaurant.

Hotel Taj Mahal Palace & Towers
Room Luxury Grande
Meals Breakfast, Lunch, Farewell Dinner

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DELHI – VARANASI – AGRA – JAIPUR – UDAIPUR – MUMBAI

FRIDAY, 25TH OCTOBER DEPART MUMBAI

Your day will start at 05.15 AM and you will go on a memorable tour to watch the city come to life.

The early morning start is well worth the effort because it is fascinating seeing this city wake up. What's interesting is that if you walk the same lanes a few hours later, you won't find any evidence of the morning's flurry.

The tour will start at the clamorous and chaotic docks, where you will see the arrival and grading of 25 tonnes of fish. You will also witness a one-of-a kind auction of the famous Bombay Duck (which is a fish and not a feathered friend)!

You will then move on to watch the newspaper delivery men in action. What makes this activity even more fascinating is that almost all of these thousands of vendors are illiterate and yet they sort through stacks of newspapers in 7 different languages at incredible speeds right in the middle of the empty streets before sending the sorted piles off for delivery.

As you drive along, milkmen will ride past you on bicycles with milk canisters, bakers rush to deliver freshly baked bread, while other vendors are busy with the logistics of distributing 100 tonnes of meat, fruits and vegetables to various markets.

The 'all herb mandi' (market) spread across a popular bridge is possibly the only market of its kind in the world, and hundreds of vendors sit atop the bridge selling various leafy vegetables to wholesalers, retailers and local housewives.

Driving through these markets is not only a great introduction to the people of Mumbai, but also a photographer's dream come true.

You will return back to your hotel.

Rest of the day will be at leisure. (Accommodation will be held till 7 PM).

7 PM: You will be met by our Spencer Gems colleague and escorted to Mumbai International airport in time to board your TBA homeward bound flight.

Meals Breakfast



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