

The Very Best of India

13-DAY ENLIGHTENED TOUR

From £4,495 per person



Richly exotic, intensely evocative, India promises a sensory journey. From the noisy, kaleidoscopic melée on the city streets, to the eerie peace of the Taj at dawn, the wildly diverse experiences are equally exhilarating.

Tour highlights

- Experiencing the noise and vibrancy of Old and New Delhi
- Crossing scenic Lake Pichola to travel from the lakeside hotel to City Palace in Udaipur
- Discovering the legends and breathtaking palaces of the 'Pink City' of Jaipur
- Marvelling at the flawless beauty of Amber Fort perched high on the hillside, and being captivated by the intricate carvings and mirrored mosaics
- Visiting the well-preserved World Heritage Site of Fatehpur Sikri and gazing upon the beautiful Jama Masjid mosque
- Watching the light change over the iconic Taj Mahal at dawn and again at dusk
- Learning the intriguing history of Agra Fort on the banks of River Yamuna, wandering through intricate terrace pavilions

“I was amazed at how different the Taj Mahal seemed as the light changed. At dawn, it's eerie and mystical, at sunset, it's dramatic and romantic”

Tour itinerary

Day 1 Depart London Heathrow

Join your Tour Manager and fellow travel companions in the executive lounge before boarding your flight.

Meals: In-flight.

Day 2 Arrive Delhi

This morning you'll arrive in the bustling metropolis of India's capital city, Delhi, often referred to as the hub of the country. Among the temples, tombs and centuries-old ruins of this fascinating city, there are also fine museums and art treasures. There's time to relax into the opulent surroundings of The Imperial, before this evening's welcome drinks and dinner.

Meals: In-flight, Dinner. Hotel: The Imperial.

Day 3 Delhi

Just driving through Delhi is an experience in itself, with the intense clamour of daily life, and today you'll really get a feel for this city as you explore its historic sights. The tour begins on a reflective note with a visit to Raj Ghat, India's memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, following his assassination in 1948. Then, you can admire the architectural splendour of Jama Masjid, which was built in 1656 from sandstone and white marble. It's the principle mosque in Old Delhi and the largest in India. Your tour continues with a visit to the bustling cultural delight of Chandni Chowk, or Moonlit Square, which is the oldest and most colourful market in Old Delhi. En route you'll take in a view of the monumental 17th century Red Fort and Palace of the Mughal Empire. You'll drive on to Rajpath and through to India Gate and the impressive Parliament House, known as the Sansad Bhawan. This magnificent circular building, which opened in 1927, is an architectural gem.

After lunch, you'll head into New Delhi, whose wide boulevards, parks and gardens were designed and built by the British in the 1920s. You'll visit Humayun's Tomb, an impressive garden tomb with high arches and a double dome, then continue on to the wonderful Qutub Complex, home to the Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque. The beautiful grounds here feature one of India's most famous structures; the well preserved tower of Qutub Minar, standing over 72 metres tall.

Meals: Breakfast. Hotel: The Imperial.

Day 4 Delhi to Udaipur

After a leisurely morning, you'll board a flight to the picturesque city of Udaipur, in a region of majestic palaces and beautiful lakes. Board a boat for a short ride to the hotel, then relax on the serene shores of Lake Pichola. You have the option of upgrading to a lake view room; just ask your Personal Travel Advisor for prices.

Meals: Breakfast. Hotel: Oberoi Udaivilas.



Day 5 Udaipur

An optional excursion offers an unforgettable experience, on a dawn hot air balloon ride over Udaipur, with the morning light creating an almost spiritual ambience across the spectacular scenery (this is extremely popular and places are limited so, if you're interested, we recommend you arrange it when you make your booking). Then, after breakfast, your day's tour starts with a scenic boat trip on Lake Pichola, past the Lake Palace and Jagmandir, before moving on to the City Palace; the largest palace in Rajasthan. You'll then continue on to Fateh Prakash Palace, where you'll be served afternoon tea in the Crystal Gallery, surrounded by an overwhelming collection of crystal treasures from all over the world, including an exquisite, antique, jewel-studded carpet, which has to be seen to be believed.

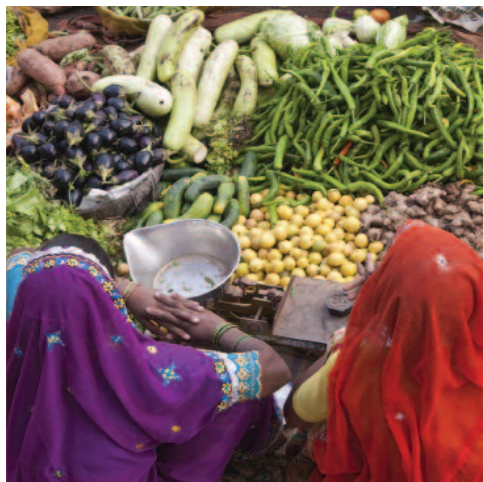
Meals: Breakfast, Afternoon Tea.

Hotel: Oberoi Udaivilas.

Day 6 Udaipur to Jaipur

You're free to relax this morning before your short flight to Jaipur, located in the desert lands of Rajasthan, which is often referred to as the Pink City because of the pink stone of its historic buildings. You'll transfer to the magnificent Rambagh Palace, the former residence of the Maharaja of Jaipur, where you can either relax in luxury, or go on an optional trip to Raj Mandir to watch a Bollywood movie. With its lavishly decorated auditorium, Raj Mandir is considered to be the best movie house in India.

Meals: Breakfast. Hotel: Rambagh Palace.



Market, Old Delhi

Day 7 Jaipur

This morning, take a seat in our fleet of air-conditioned cars to drive through Old Jaipur on the way to the 16th century palace, known as Amber Fort. Built from white marble and red sandstone, the fortress is an excellent example of Rajput architecture. Dramatically dominating the landscape, its familiar contours can be seen from miles away. The interior is just as intriguing, with its intricate carved marble pillars. You'll drive back through Old Jaipur, past bustling bazaars, to Hawa Mahal, known as the 'Palace of the Winds'. This unique building is designed like a pyramid, with tiny latticework windows. Legend states that its design was conceived to enable Royal ladies to watch the city's ceremonial processions without being seen. Your next stop is the City Palace and Museum, which covers one seventh of the city and is still home to the son of the last Maharaja.

Meals: Breakfast. Hotel: Rambagh Palace.

Day 8 Jaipur to Ranthambore

After breakfast, you'll drive to the small town of Ranthambore, home to the famous Ranthambore National Park. This evening, join your Tour Manager and fellow travellers for dinner in the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner. Hotel: Taj Sawai Madhopur Lodge.

Day 9 Ranthambore

Be ready for an early wake up call heralding your morning game drive in the Ranthambore National Park, returning to the hotel for breakfast. Later on, you'll visit nearby Dastkar, a craft centre which was set up and run by local women as a way of supporting their families. Here, all religions, castes and ages come together with a common purpose and for the common good. Together they dye and print up their own fabrics, which are then manufactured into an impressive range of good quality bedspreads, placemats, tissue box covers, bags, scarves, mobile phone covers, children's pyjamas and so on. Dastkar is now so successful that retail buyers from all over India come to place orders for their own shops. This afternoon, you have the option of booking another game drive into the park, although we suggest you pre-book it with us to avoid disappointment as it's very popular.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner. Hotel: Taj Sawai Madhopur Lodge.

“I stood in utter amazement on the edge of a local fruit and vegetable market. The hustle and bustle of the frenetic traders, amidst a thousand colours, sounds and scents, was intense and overwhelming. I shall never forget it.”

Day 10 Ranthambore to Agra

This morning you'll journey to Agra by road, stopping en route first for lunch and later to visit the Royal city of Fatehpur Sikri. This perfectly preserved 16th century Mughal capital is a recognised UNESCO World Heritage Site. You'll enter the historic complex through a massive gate to see the stunning architectural creativity within. The monuments and temples include Jama Masjid, known as the Friday Mosque. The cultural and political legacy behind the Royal City of Fatehpur Sikri remains unwritten, but legend has it that the Emperor used his subjects as human chess pieces on the giant chess board, who could only move at his command!

You'll arrive in Agra later in the day, ready for your first glimpse of the Taj Mahal at sunset. Standing majestically on the banks of River Yamuna, the Taj Mahal is synonymous with love and romance. Building started in 1631, commissioned by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The purity of its white marble exterior, the exquisite ornamentation and precious gemstones combine with a fairy tale love story to make the Taj Mahal a fascinating wonder of the world. At sunset, it's a particularly inspiring sight as the orange glow lights the translucent stone and casts dramatic shadows.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch. Hotel: Oberoi Amarvilas.



Day 11 Agra

Today you have an early start to see the Taj Mahal at dawn, capturing the subtle colour changes as the sun rises over the beautiful sandstone-vaulted gateways and mausoleum gardens. You'll return to the hotel for breakfast, before journeying on to the 16th century Agra Fort. This commanding red sandstone monument stretches 2.5 kilometres along the banks of River Yamuna and encompasses serene gardens and terrace pavilions, with imposing views back to the Taj Mahal. You have free time to relax in the afternoon.

Meals: Breakfast. Hotel: Oberoi Amarvilas.



Far left: Tuc tuc, Delhi

Right: Tiger, Ranthambore National Park

Below: Amber Fort, Jaipur





Day 12 Agra to Delhi

On the drive back to Delhi, enjoy the sights, scenery and glimpses of local life along the way. Tonight, sit down with your travelling companions for a special farewell dinner.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner. Hotel: The Imperial.

Day 13 Return to London Heathrow

After breakfast, you'll transfer to the airport for your flight home, and we hope you'll feel enriched by your Indian experience.

Meals: Breakfast, In-flight.

Your tour hotels

For full details of all the hotels featured on this tour please see pages 52-57.

Any questions? Chat to your Personal Travel Advisor on **0161 491 7616** or visit www.jod.uk.com

*Above: Lake Pichola, Udaipur
Right: Lahori Gate, Red Fort, Delhi*

Extend your holiday

Two highly contrasting experiences await you at the end of your tour of India. You can either fly to Kathmandu in Nepal for an incredible encounter in the Himalayas, with the opportunity to take to the skies over Everest. Or, you can opt for the more laid-back pace of life at Goa Beach or the Kerala Backwaters to relax, bask in the sun, pamper in the spa and feast on local cuisine.

To find out more, turn to pages 48-51.

Departure dates & prices

The Very Best of India		
2012	12 November	£4,495
2013	18 February	£4,595

Prices per person, based on double/twin share. Single supplement from £2,295.

Flight upgrades

For the ultimate experience, upgrade your flights. Simply ask your Personal Travel Advisor for prices when you call.

Your 13-day tour includes:

- A Journeys of Distinction Tour Manager on hand at all times
- Local guides, with an insider's knowledge, who give a true insight into the culture, history and lifestyle
- Invitation to the executive lounge at Heathrow
- Return scheduled flights on Jet Airways
- Exceptional, hand-picked hotels
- 11 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 afternoon tea and 4 dinners
- Sightseeing tours of Delhi, Udaipur, Jaipur, Fatehpur Sikri and Agra, including all admission fees
- Scenic boat trip on Lake Pichola
- Game drive in Ranthambore National Park
- Dusk and dawn visits to the Taj Mahal
- Travel by luxury air-conditioned vehicle and internal flights as described
- Luggage service throughout
- All local and state taxes
- Airport taxes including air passenger duty

Flying time

London to Delhi 8 hours 30 mins

Time difference

GMT + 5 1/2 hours

Average monthly temperatures – Delhi

J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
20°	24°	29°	36°	39°	37°	35°	34°	33°	28°	28°	23°

