

GARDEN TOURS



Incredible Northern India Garden Tour

March 14th - March 26th, 2012

DELHI -AGRA - BHARATPUR - JAIPUR -JODHPUR -UDAIPUR - DELHI

INDIA



INCREDIBLE NORTHERN INDIA GARDEN TOUR

In a country as diverse and complex as India, it is not surprising to find that people here reflect the rich glories of the past, the culture, traditions and values relative to geographic locations and the numerous distinctive manners, habits and food that will always remain truly Indian.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 12 Nights accommodation in Deluxe Category hotels comprising 5 Star & Heritage Hotels
- All transfers / tours and excursions by AC chauffeur driven vehicle.
- Daily Breakfast.
- 12 Lunches
- 6 Dinners
- Domestic Airfare: JAIPUR – JODHPUR, JODHPUR – UDAIPUR and UDAIPUR – NEW DELHI
- Demonstration of Marble craftsmanship in Agra.
- Demonstration of Carpet weaving.
- Demonstration of Gem cutting & polishing in Jaipur
- Boat ride on Lake Pichola, Udaipur
- Elephant ride at Amber Fort, Jaipur (Subject to availability of Elephant).
- Entrance fee to Monuments as per itinerary
- Sightseeing as per itinerary
- Service of English speaking escort throughout tour

In a country as diverse and complex as India, it is not surprising to find that people here reflect the rich glories of the past, the culture, traditions and values relative to geographic locations and the numerous distinctive manners, habits and food that will always remain truly Indian.

Ethnically Indians speak different languages, follow different religions, eat the most diverse varieties of food all of which add to their rich Indian culture. The beauty of the Indian people lies in the spirit of tolerance, give-and-take and a variety of cultures that can be compared to a garden of flowers of various colours and shades of which, while maintaining their own entity, lend harmony and beauty to the garden as a whole - Incredible India!

Delhi, capital city of the Federal Republic of India. It is one of India's fastest growing cities. It has sprawled over the West Bank of the river Yamuna, straddling the river. The city has two distinct parts, Old Delhi & New Delhi. Delhi is the second most widely used entry point into the country, being on the route of most major airlines. It is well linked by rail, air and road to all parts of the country. The remains of seven distinctive capital cities - among them Shahjahanabad and Qutub Minar - can be seen. Here, museums, art galleries and cultural centers attract the finest exhibitions. Delhi - a canvas that reflects the complexities, contradictions, beauty and dynamism of a city where the past co-exist with the present. Many dynasties ruled from here and the city is rich in the architecture of its monuments. Diverse cultural elements absorbed into the daily life of city have enriched its character. Exploring the city can be a fascinating and rewarding experience.

Agra - famous as being home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World - the Taj Mahal.

Much of the city's impressive past lives in evidence even today, in the haunting presence inside the monuments, the majesty of the buildings, the exquisite arts and crafts and not to forget, the lure of an exceptional cuisine... all, cherished as priceless legacies of a nostalgic past.

The older city of Agra has impressively retained much of its resplendent history... captivating every visitor with fond memories to take back home. Today, luxury and modern convenience also exist adjacent to tradition - luxury hotels, shopping malls and plazas, wide avenues and a superb choice of venues for recreation, business, sports, pleasure, education and the arts.

Jaipur - Widely known as the 'Pink City', Jaipur was colour washed pink to welcome Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria of England who visited India in 1883. The city was founded in 1727 by one of the greatest rulers, Jai Singh II. Jaipur is surrounded by hills on three sides, crowned by formidable forts and majestic palaces, mansions and gardens. Jaipur is the only city in the world, which is sub-divided in to nine rectangular sectors symbolizing nine divisions of the universe. Jaipur is the first planned city designed in accordance with 'Shilpa Shashtra' - epochal treatise of Hindu architecture.

Jodhpur - It is the home of the Rathors - the awesome princely state of Rajasthan, who conquered Marwar or Maroodesh, land of the sand after the fall of Delhi and Kannauj. In 1459 AD, Rao Jodha, chief of Rathore clan of Rajputs, who claimed descent from Rama, the epic here of the Ramayana, laid the foundation of Jodhpur. A high stonewall protects the well-fortified city. The wall is nearly 10 km in length and has eight gates facing various directions. Within, stands an imposing fort on a low range of sandstone hills, about 125m above the surrounding plains. Invincible! and dauntless in its league with time! The city lies at the foot of the hills. The clear distinction between the old and the new city is visible from the ramparts of the fort.

Udaipur - On the banks of the shimmering lake Pichola, is one of the most romantic cities of Rajasthan. Nestled among the lush hills of the Aravalis, it has inevitably been dubbed the 'Venice of the East'. It is a kaleidoscope of fairy-tale palaces, lakes, temples, gardens and narrow lanes strewn with stalls, carries the flavour of the heroic past, epitomizing valor and chivalry.

Your incredible land itinerary:

Wednesday, March 14th , 2012 Day 01

ARRIVE DELHI

Upon arrival in Delhi, our Executive will meet you at the Airport followed by transfer from Airport to Hotel.



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Delhi blends an historic past and a vibrant present. Legend has it that the Pandavas, the august heroes of the epic Mahabharata, originally founded Delhi, then called Indraprastha, around 1200 B.C.

Delhi has many tourist attractions to offer. Visit the vibrant shopping complex of Connaught Place, the Delhi Haat for handicraft goods and delicious food and excellent Mughal architecture.

Delhi, a canvas that reflects the complexities, contradictions, beauty and dynamism of a city where the past co-exist with the present. Many dynasties ruled from here and the city is rich in the architecture of its monuments. Diverse cultural elements absorbed into the daily life of the city have enriched its character. Exploring the city can be a fascinating and rewarding experience.
architecture

Your Hotel: The Claridges for 3 nights



Graceful architecture, elegant décor, and a seamless blend of old-world charm and contemporary facilities have made The Claridges, New Delhi one of the best addresses in Lutyens' Delhi since the 1950s. The flagship hotel of The Claridges Hotels & Resorts, set amid the verdant centre of the city in close proximity of the



business district, shopping and cultural centres and historical landmarks, recreates the magic of old-world charm coupled with gracious Indian hospitality.



Your Claridges Room awaits you...

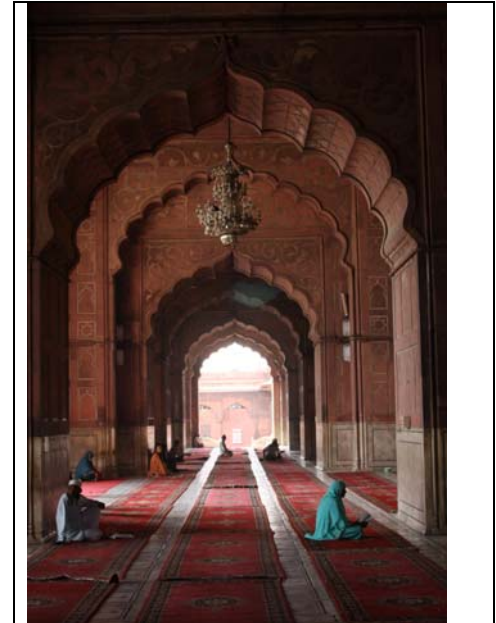
<http://www.claridges.com/the-claridges-newdelhi/overview.asp?links=nd1>

Overnight at hotel

Morning sightseeing of Old Delhi visiting

Raj Ghat -- The mortal remains of Mahatma Gandhi were cremated on this spot on the west bank of the river Yamuna on the evening of January 31, 1948. A simple open platform inscribed with the Mahatma's last words, 'Hey Ram' (Oh God) is set in a garden with fountains and a variety of exotic trees. followed by a visit to

Jama Masjid -- Work on the Jama Masjid mosque was begun in 1650 by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to complement his palace at the Red Fort. More than 5,000 workers toiled for six years to complete the largest mosque in India. Every Friday, the emperor and his retinue would travel in state from the fort to the mosque to attend the congregational prayers. A fine example of Mughal architecture, the Jama Masjid has three gateways. & Photo stop at

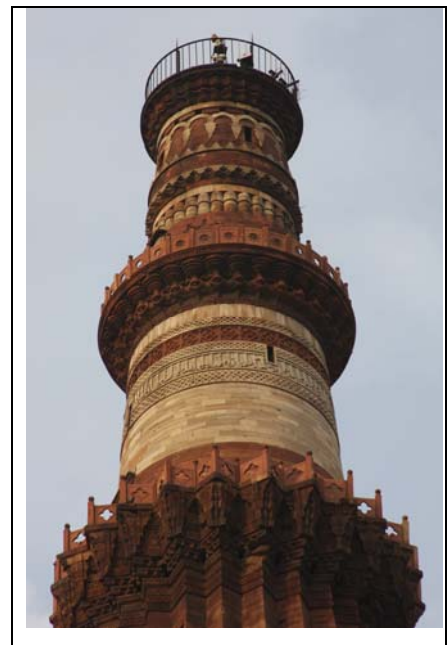


Red Fort -- The Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, after ruling from Agra for eleven years, decided to shift to Delhi and laid the foundation stone of the Red Fort in 1618. It is called so because of the red stone with which it is built. The Red Fort is one of the most magnificent palaces in the world. India's history is also closely linked with this fort. It was from here that the British deposed the last Mughal ruler, Bahadur Shah Zafar, marking the end of the three century long Mughal rule. It was also from its ramparts that the first Prime Minister of India, pandit Jawharlal Nehru, announced to the nation that India was free from colonial rule.

Afternoon sightseeing of New Delhi where you visit



Qutub Minar -- The origins of Qutub Minar are shrouded in controversy. Some believe it was erected as a tower of victory to signify the beginning of the Muslim rule in India. Others say it served as a minaret to the muezzins to call the faithful to prayer. No one can, however, dispute that the tower is not only one of the



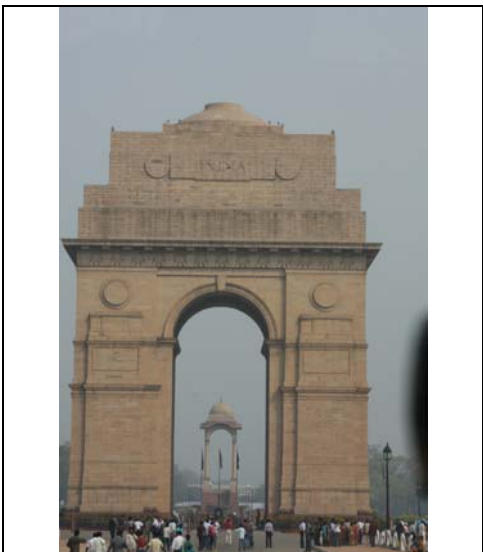
finest monuments in India, but also in the world. Qutub-ud-din Aibak, the first Muslim ruler of Delhi, commenced the construction of the Qutub Minar in 1200 AD, but could only finish the basement. His successor, Iltutmush, added three more storeys, and in 1368, Firoz Shah Tughlak constructed the fifth and the last storey.

And



The unique lotus shaped **Bahai Temple**, a marvel of modern architecture. It is made in the shape of a lotus and is one of the major attractions for national and international tourists. It represents the Bahai's faith which is an independent world religion, divine in origin, all-embracing in scope, broad in its outlook, scientific in its method, humanitarian in its principles and dynamic in the influence it exerts on the hearts and minds of men. All around the lotus are walkways with beautiful curved balustrades, bridges and stairs, which surround the nine pools representing the floating leaves of the lotus. <http://www.bahaindia.org/temple/introduction.html>

Photo stops at



India Gate -- Built as a memorial to commemorate the 70,000 India soldiers killed in World War I, India Gate was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and completed in 1931. Located on Rajpath, the road that leads to the magnificent Rashtrapati Bhawan, the gate is 160 feet high with an arch of 138 feet. Built from sandstone, the arch also houses the Eternal Flame, a gesture in memory of the Indian soldiers who laid their lives in the 1971 war with Pakistan. The India Gate today also houses the Indian Army's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the Amar Jawan Jyoti.

President Palace & Parliament House.

Parliament House -- The seat of Indian Parliament is a marvelous piece of architecture designed by the famed architect Lutyens and constructed under the direct supervision of Sir Herbert Baker. Designed as a circular structure, the House is 171 meters in diameter and about one-third of a mile in circumference. The two semicircular house chambers flank the Central Hall with its impressive dome. The building has a continuous open corridor on the first floor fringed with a colonnade of 144 creamy sandstone pillars. The exterior walls of red sandstone are carved in geometric patterns that echo Moghul jaalis.

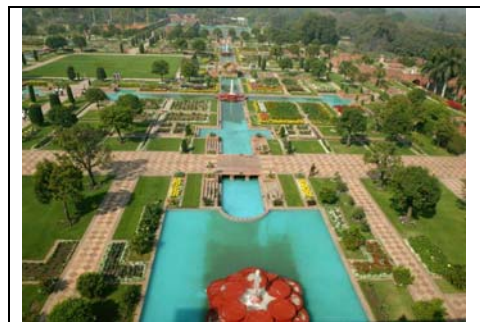
Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Overnight at the Claridges

Friday, March 16th, 2012 DAY 03 DELHI

This morning after breakfast visit

Mughal Gardens

Sir Edwin Lutyens, the architect of Mughal Gardens, made this Garden for Lady Harding. Mughal Gardens are very unique gardens in the sense that these are a combination of Mughal and British Architecture. There are Mughal canals, European flowerbeds, lawns and privet hedges, shrubs, herbs, plants and trees all around the garden. It has four water ways with different fountains. The Mughal Gardens are situated in the Rashtrapati Bhavan - the Presidents House of India. These are open for a few days in the months of February to March. The rest of the year these are closed.



To the west of the house overlooks the beautiful Mughal Gardens, terraced at three levels. A series of ornamental fountains, walls, gazebos and screens combine with scores of trees, flowers and shrubs to create a paradise so delightful that Indians called the garden 'God's own Heaven'.

It occupies an area of 13 acres and is divided into three sections (rectangular, long and circular garden) and sports a blend of the formal Mughal style with the design of a British Garden. Mughal style canals, fountains and terraces and chatris adorn the landscape of the garden, along with flower beds, hedges and a large variety of trees and flowers like roses, marigold, bougainvillea, sweet william, viscaria etc among many others. The garden has four waterways with uniquely crafted fountains at their intersections that consist of 3 tiered huge red sandstone discs that resemble lotus leaves. The checkered flowerbeds lend an enchanting look to this wonderfully landscaped garden.

<http://presidentofindia.nic.in/mughalgarden.html>

Rashtrapati Bhavan - Formerly the Vice regal Lodge, the building is the highlight of Lutyen's New Delhi and was completed in 1929. Located in an area of 130 hectares, the palace has 340 rooms. At one time, 2,000 people were required to look after the building and serve the Viceroy's household.

And



A Wonderful example of early Mughal Architecture, the Humayun's Tomb was built by the wife of Humayun, Haji Begum in the mid 16th century. This red sand stone structure is considered to be the predecessor of Taj Mahal.



Humayun's Tomb -- The Mughals brought with them a love for gardens, fountains and water. The first mature example of Mughal architecture in India, Humayun's Tomb was built by the emperor's grieving widow, Haji Begum, in 1565 AD. Constructed with red sandstone and ornamentation, it marks the beginning of a new tradition of ornate style culminating in the Taj Mahal of Agra. Designed by the Persian architect, Mirza Ghyas, Humayun's Tomb shows a marked shift from the Persian tradition of using coloured tiles for ornamentation. Located in the midst of a large square garden, screened by high walls, with gateways to the south and west, the tomb is a square tower surmounted by a magnificent marble dome. The dome stands 140 feet from the base of the terrace and is topped with a copper pinnacle. In addition to the remains of Humayun, the complex also houses the grave of many other distinguished members of the Mughal dynasty.

Breakfast and Lunch included and Dinner on your own

Overnight at the Claridges

Saturday, March 17th, 2012 DAY 04

DELHI – AGRA



In the morning after breakfast we drive to Agra. Agra is famous as being **home to one of the Seven Wonders of the World** - the Taj Mahal. The architectural splendour of the mausoleums, the fort and the palaces is a vivid remainder of the capital in the 16th and early 17th centuries. While its significance as a political centre ended with the transfer of the capital to Delhi in 1634 by Shah Jahan, its architectural wealth has secured its place on the international map.

Agra is known for its superb inlay work on marble by craftsmen supposedly the descendants of those who worked under the Mughals on the Taj. The city is also famous for its carpets, gold thread embroidery and leather shoes. Agra was once the capital of the Mughal Empire and even

today it seems to linger in the past. Not surprising, for the Mughal emperors with their passion for building, endowed the city with some of the finest structures in the world. It is very easy to slip away here through the centuries into the grandeur and intrigues of the Mughal court. Agra is an old city and it is said that its name was derived from Agrabana, a forest that finds mention in the epic Mahabharata. In more recent times Agra came into prominence when Sikandar Lodhi made it his capital city in 1501. The Lodi rule was to end very soon and Agra passed into the possession of the Mughals. It was during the time of the third emperor Akbar that Agra came into its own. He embarked on the construction of the massive Agra Fort in 1565. Akbar was diverted into building a new capital at Fatehpur Sikri not far away. Agra continued to retain its importance and Shah Jehan, Akbar's grandson ornamented the city with that masterpiece of Mughal architecture - the Taj Mahal and built several other beautiful buildings within the Agra fort.

So overwhelming is the exquisite beauty and presence of this marble mausoleum that centuries later today, even the very land where it has been located - Agra - has been immortalized as the City of the Taj. Yet, it doesn't take much for the roving eye to discover that there's more to Agra than just the fabled Taj Mahal. The city is a virtual gateway to a world of discovery... a freeze-frame from a resplendent era that's long since gone by.

Much of the city's impressive past lives in evidence even today, in the haunting presence inside the monuments, the majesty of the buildings, the exquisite arts and crafts and not to forget, the lure of an exceptional cuisine... all, cherished as priceless legacies of a nostalgic past. The older city of Agra has impressively retained much of its resplendent history... captivating every visitor with fond memories to take back home. Today, luxury and modern convenience also exist adjacent to tradition - luxury hotels, shopping malls and plazas, wide avenues and a superb choice of venues for recreation, business, sports, pleasure, education and the arts.

On arrival check in to the hotel. The rest of the day free at leisure.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included

Your Hotel: Jaypee Palace for two nights



The regal Jaypee Palace Hotel and Convention Centre, a glorious structural blend of red sandstone and marble, is spread over an unbounded 25 acres of elegantly landscaped luxuriant greenery. Sprinkled with enormous water bodies and endless walkways, this magical



creation impeccably blends Mughal and contemporary architecture with modern amenities.

<http://www.jaypeehotels.com/jp-page.php?id=jpWelcome>

This morning after breakfast visit the



Taj Mahal is not only about the seeing the mausoleum in white marble, but also its surroundings, especially the Taj Garden - Charbagh. In Islamic style of architecture, the garden is not just another feature but has a well-defined



meaning and it symbolizes the spirituality. According to the Holy Koran, a garden is symbolic of paradise. The Taj Garden covers most parts of the Taj. Out of a total area of 580 m by 300 m, the Taj Garden alone covers 300 m by 300 m. The guiding principle in creating this garden is one of the symmetry and it can be experienced everywhere. The four regions of the garden within the Charbagh are divided into 16 flowerbeds, making a total of 64. It is said that each flowerbed was planted with 400 plants. Trees were planted carefully in accordance with the symmetry of the overall plan. The trees, which were generally preferred, were either cypress (*Cuprussus*) (signifying death) or different fruit bearing trees (signifying life). These trees were home to many birds, which migrated from distant places to enhance the liveliness of the Taj Mahal.



For centuries, the Taj Mahal has inspired poets, painters and musicians to try and capture its elusive magic in word, colour and son. Since the 17th century, travelers have crossed continents to come and see this ultimate memorial to love, and few have been unmoved by its incomparable beauty.

The Taj Mahal stands in the city of Agra, in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, on the banks of the Yamuna river. It was built in the memory of the beautiful Arjumand Bano Begum, who won the heart of a Mughal prince. She was married at 21 to Emperor

Jahangir's third son Prince Khurram and stayed loyally by his side through good times and bad: in the luxurious royal palaces of Agra as well as the transient tents of war camps.

In AD 1628, Khurram became king after a bloody battle of succession; he took the name Shahjahan or King of the World and showered his beloved begum with the highest titles. She became Mumtaz Mahal, the Exalted of the Palace and Mumtaz-ul-Zamani, the Exalted of the Age. But Mumtaz Mahal was not destined to be queen for long. In 1631, Shahjahan went on an expedition to the South and, as always, Mumtaz Mahal accompanied him. But she died in childbirth at Burhanpur. She had borne Shahjahan fourteen children, of whom four sons and three daughters survived. When Mumtaz Mahal died, she was just 39 years old. Shahjahan was inconsolable and contemporary chronicles tell of the royal court mourning for two years. There was no music, no feasting, and no celebration of any kind.



Shahjahan, who was a passionate builder, now decided to erect a memorial marble that the world would never forget. The site selected for the tomb was a garden by the Yamuna river, unshadowed by any other structure. The garden had been laid by Raja Man Singh of Amber and now belonged to his grandson, Raja Jai Singh. By a royal decree, Shahjahan gave Jai Singh four havelis in exchange for the garden. The site was also chosen because it was located on a bend in the river, and so could be seen from Shahjahan's personal palace in Agra Fort, further upstream.

Work on the mausoleum began in 1633 and 20,000 workers laboured for 17 years to build it. The most skilled architects, inlay craftsmen, calligraphers, stone-carvers and masons came from all across India and lands as distant as Persia and Turkey. The master mason was from Baghdad, an expert in building the double dome from

Persia, and an inlay specialist from Delhi. The tomb was completed in AD 1650. But, Shahjahan was deposed by his son Aurangzeb in 1658 and imprisoned in the Agra Fort. He spent his last years in the Mussalman Burj looking downstream at the Taj where his beloved Mumtaz Mahal lay. Sixteen years later he, too, was laid to rest beside her.



Shahjahan's two biggest passions were architecture and jewellery and both are reflected in the Taj Mahal. He visualized a building in marble and then had it decorated with semi-precious stones inlaid with the delicacy of handcrafted jewellery. Marble in purest white was brought from Makrana in Rajasthan, yellow marble and rockspars from the banks of the Narmada river, black marble from Charkoh and red sandstone from Sikri. For the intricate pietra dura the finest gems were collected - crystal and jade from China, lapis lazuli and sapphires from Sri Lanka, jasper from Punjab, carnelian from Baghdad and turquoise from Tibet. Yemen sent agates, the corals came from

Arabia, the garnets from Bundelkhand, onyx and amethyst from Persia. Mumtaz Mahal's final resting-place was ornamented like a queen's jewel-box.

You enter the Taj complex through an arcaded forecourt where some of Shahjahan's other queens lie buried. The forecourt also has the Jilau Kana, a bazaar with cloisters leading to the main entrance of the tomb. The imposing gateway is made of red sandstone highlighted with marble and has octagonal kiosks on top. The gateway is an imposing 30 metres high and a fitting entrance to the Taj Mahal. The soaring arch is inscribed with a beautiful design of inlaid flowers and calligraphy.

As you enter the dark octagonal chamber under the gateway, the light streaming in from the opposite doorway draws you towards it. Here, framed by the arch of the doorway, the Taj Mahal reveals itself to the viewer with dramatic power. It stands at the end of a long walkway, framed by landscaped gardens and an ever-changing sky, its snowy marble glittering in the sunlight.

Taj Mahal stands at one side of a garden laid in the tradition charbagh style, with its square lawns bisected by pathways, water channels and rows of fountains. Halfway down the path there is a square pool, its limpid waters reflecting the marble tomb. Unlike other tombs, Taj Mahal stands at one end of the garden instead of the centre. This was done deliberately, to leave its vista uncluttered by any other building.

The tomb stands on a marble plinth six-metres high. The four minarets at each corner beautifully frame the tomb. The plinth stands on a high sandstone platform and at the far ends of this base are two identical sandstone structures, a mosque to the west and its jawab, or echo, to the east. This was the mehman khana or guesthouse. Thus, the main building is not just of great size but beautifully proportioned and balanced in design. The octagonal central hall has four smaller octagonal halls round it and is decorated with magnificent inlay and dado panels done in high relief. The bulbous, perfectly-balanced double dome rises to a height of 45 metres and the four chhatris flanking and balancing the high drum give it added height. Taj Mahal rises 75 metres high and is, in fact, taller than the Qutb Minar.

An ornate marble screen, carved so fine that it almost has the texture of lace surrounds the cenotaphs in the central hall. As was the tradition during Mughal times, the actual graves lie in an underground crypt directly below the cenotaphs.

What is most amazing about the Taj Mahal is the fine detailing. The coloured inlay is never allowed to overwhelm the design, as carvings done in relief sensitively balance it. The ornate pietra dura and relief carvings are of floral, calligraphic and geometric designs. However, flowers remain the main decorative element as the tomb depicts a paradise garden. The skill of the inlay worker is so fine that it is impossible to find the joints, even when as many as 40 tiny pieces of semi-precious stones have been used in the petals of a single flower. Some of the best calligraphy of Koranic verses can be seen around the entrance arches and on the two headstones.



Taj Mahal changes its moods with the seasons and the different times of the day. At dawn, the marble has a delicate bloom in shell pink, by noon it glitters majestically white, turning to a soft pearly grey at dusk. It can be solid and earthbound, fragile and ethereal, white, amber, grey and gold. The many faces of Taj Mahal display the seductive power of architecture at its best.

And Visit to **Agra Fort**

Few forts in the world have a more fascinating story to tell than the Great Fort of Agra.



Originally planned as an impregnable military structure by Akbar, the Agra Fort, over a period of time, acquired all the elegance, lavishness and majesty of an imperial palace.



Also enjoy Marble craftsmanship with the demonstration of the inlay work of precious and semi precious stones.

Breakfast and Lunch included and Dinner on your own

Overnight at the Jaypee Palace Hotel

Monday, March 19th, 2012 DAY 06 AGRA – BHARATPUR (ENROUTE FATEHPUR SIKRI)

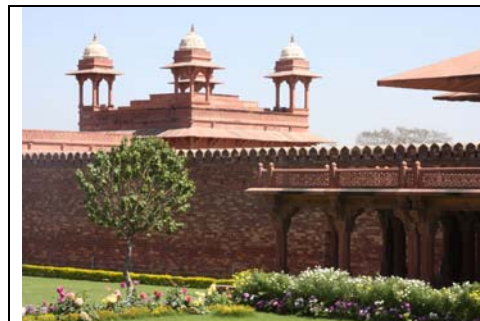


This morning after breakfast drive to Bharatpur. Enroute visit Fatehpur Sikri. Fatehpur Sikri, a city built in red sandstone by Emperor Akbar to commemorate the birth of his son.

Perched a top a rocky ridge 37 km west of Agra, **Fatehpur Sikri** came into being four centuries ago when the Emperor Akbar, not yet 28 years old, created the first planned city in Indo-Islamic style. The city was actualized with great energy, but was completely abandoned a little more than a decade later. A shortage of water is believed to be the reason. Today it is a ghost city, its architecture is in a perfect

state of preservation, and wandering through the palaces it is easy to imagine that this was once a royal residence and a dynamic cultural centre. It is a UNESCO World Heritage site.

In 1568, Akbar was secure and powerful but he had no son and heir. His search for blessing for the birth of a successor brought him to the Sufi mystic Shaikh Salim Chisti, who lived in Sikri village. The saint prophesied the birth of three sons and soon after was born Prince Salim, later to become Emperor Jehangir. In gratitude for the blessing Akbar decided to create imperial residences in Sikri, which would function as a joint capital with Agra. As a mark of his faith and his recent victories, he named his new city Fatehpur Sikri. Akbar was a keen builder and the plan of Fatehpur Sikri reveals an architectural mastermind at work. Research has proved that it was planned on a definite mathematical grid.



The siting of the Jama Masjid marked the actual beginning of the city, which came up around it. The palace courts were laid out parallel to the cardinally aligned mosque and the sequential order of the palaces were emphasized by changes in level. The most public space was at the lowest level, while the royal harem was at the highest. The Jama Masjid of Delhi, is the principal mosque of Old Delhi in India. Commissioned by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, builder of the Taj Mahal, and completed in the year 1656 AD, it is one of the largest and best-known mosques in India. It houses a copy of the Qur'an written on deer skin.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included

Upon arrival check in at hotel Laxmi Vilas Palace, a Heritage Hotel, for one night



Laxmi Vilas Palace at Bharatpur. Set amidst sprawling 50 acres, and surrounded by undulating, yellow mustard fields, the Laxmi Vilas Palace is an eclectic and lively fusion of Rajput and Mughal architecture. Laxmi Vilas Palace was built in 1887



for Raja Raghunath Singh, the younger brother of the then ruler of Bharatpur, Maharaja Ram Singh.

In 1994 their family home was converted into a hotel. Here at Laxmi Vilas Palace you may relive the history of Bharatpur, feel the warm hospitality extended to you by their present generation living in the Palace. The Inner Courtyard and garden makes a peaceful and serene Summer's evening memorable and delightful. Swimming Pool and Jacuzzi. There is also a museum in the central wing with a few exhibits dating to the 2nd century AD. <http://www.laxmivilas.com/>

Tuesday, March 20th , 2012 DAY 07, BHARATPUR– JAIPUR

This morning after breakfast drive to Jaipur. Upon arrival check in at hotel.

Settled in the rugged hills of the Aravalis, Jaipur is the pristine jewel in the desert sands of Rajasthan. Jaipur is as remarkable for its marvelous architecture and town planning as it is for the lively spirit of the people who inhabit it. The city presents a unique synthesis of culture that has to be experienced in order to be appreciated. With its origin buried deep into the pages of history, the city still exudes a magical old world charm; an aroma of chivalry and romance is evident, despite having evolved into a city that is the hub of modern commercial activity in the region. Tell-tale signs of the glorious past and regal splendour of the city lie strewn across with gay abandon.

Widely known as the '**Pink City**', Jaipur was colour washed pink to welcome Prince Albert, the consort of Queen Victoria of England who visited India in 1883. The city was founded in 1727 by one of the greatest rulers, Jai Singh II. Jaipur is surrounded by hills on three sides, crowned by formidable forts and majestic palaces, mansions and gardens. Jaipur is the only city in the world, which is sub-divided into nine rectangular sectors symbolizing nine divisions of the universe. Jaipur is the first planned city designed in accordance with 'Shilpa Shastra'- epochal treatise of Hindu architecture.

The lively spirit of fanfare, festivity and celebration of the people adequately match the colourful and intricately carved monuments. Even today, one can find weather beaten faces with huge colourful turbans, fierce moustaches and lips that spontaneously crease into a heart-warming smile. A city like Jaipur, where modernity and tradition live hand-in-hand, is truly rare. Perhaps this is what makes it an attractive destination for tourists who flock to Jaipur, year after year.

Later enjoy Demonstration of **Carpet weaving**,

We also visit Sisodia Rani Ka Bagh Garden



Sisodia Rani Ka Bagh is a beautiful garden, located at a distance of 10 kms from Jaipur, on Jaipur-Agra Highway. The Garden appeals more to the beholder, since it stands as a symbol of love. In 1728, Sisodia Rani Garden was built by Maharaja



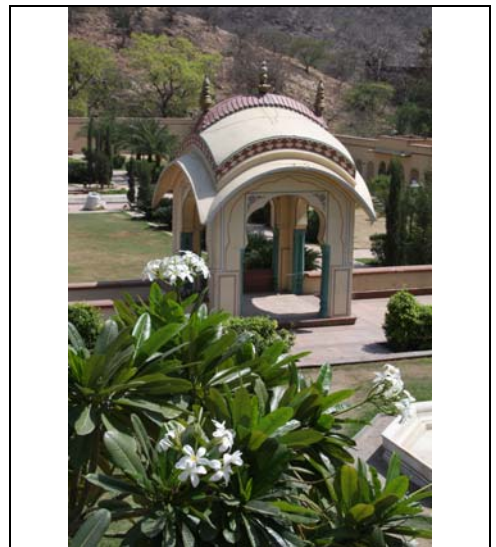
Sawai Jai Singh, with an intention to gift the garden, to his Sisodia Queen from Udaipur. As the name suggests, the Garden was named after the queen, who was adorable to the King. The structure of the garden is imbued from the Mughal style of Architecture, which makes it a well-designed garden. Sisodia Rani Garden appears to be designed on the theme of eternal lovers, Radha-Krishna.



The garden appeals to the artistic and visual tastes of the visitor with its layered gardens, fascinating fountains, painted pavilions and galleries. The interesting frescos, depicting the exotic scenes of Radha-Krishna, enthrall the visitors for their divine

appearance.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included (Dinner at hotel as it is a long day today)



Your Hotel: Jai Mahal Palace



Set amidst 18 acres of beautifully landscaped Moghul gardens, this incomparable Palace dates back to 1745 A.D. A masterpiece in the Indo Saracenic style of architecture, it blends spotlight-grabbing opulence with tantalizing comforts that transport guests to a world of Rajasthan magnificence. It is located downtown, close to the main shopping center and

historical monuments.

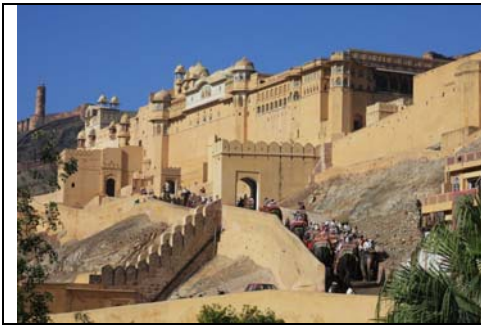
<http://www.tajhotels.com/Leisure/Jai%20Mahal%20Palace,JAIPUR/>





This morning visit the Amber Palace of the Kuchchawa rulers on the back of the elephant like the Maharajas and enjoy an Elephant ride (Subject to availability).

Amber Fort Palace - Amber is the classic romantic Rajasthani fort palace. Its



construction was started by Man Singh I in 1592, and completed by his descendent Jai Singh I. Its forbidding exterior belies an inner paradise where a beautiful fusion of Mughal and Hindu styles finds its ultimate expression.



Then

Half day city tour of the Pink City which includes Hawa Mahal (Photo-stop),



Hawa Mahal - The ornamental facade of this "Palace of Winds" is a prominent landmark in Jaipur. This 5 story pink building has 953 niches and windows built into it by Pratap Singh and was built for the palace women.



Built in 1799 by Pratap Singh, the Mahal was a royal grandstand for the palace women.

And

The City Palace Museums which contains the original collection of the Maharajas of Jaipur.



A delightful blend of Mughal and traditional Rajasthani architecture, the City Palace sprawls over one-seventh of the area in the walled city. It houses the Chandra Mahal, Shri Govind Dev Temple and the City Palace Museum.

In the evening enjoy a GEM-CUTTING & POLISHING demonstration as Jaipur is one of the world's most noted gem producers.

Breakfast and Lunch included and Dinner on your own

Overnight at Jai Mahal Palace

Thursday, March 22nd , 2012 DAY 09, JAIPUR – JODHPUR BY FLIGHT

This morning after breakfast transfer to Airport to connect flight to Jodhpur. Upon arrival, check in to hotel and rest of the day is at leisure.

A valiant sentinel in the desert, on the eastern fringe of the Thar Desert, it has the distinction of neither being a part of the Thar Desert nor out of it. At best it is a doorway to the wonderland of sand dunes and shrubs, rocky terrain and thorny trees. It is the home of the Rathors - the awesome princely state of Rajasthan, who conquered Marwar or Maroodesh, land of the sand after the fall of Delhi and Kannauj.

In 1459 AD, Rao Jodha, chief of Rathore clan of Rajputs, who claimed descent from Rama, the epic here of the Ramayana, laid the foundation of Jodhpur. A high stonewall protects the well-fortified city. The wall is nearly 10 km in length and has eight gates facing various directions. Within, stands an imposing fort on a low range of sandstone hills, about 125m above the surrounding plains. Invincible! and dauntless in its league with time! The city lies at the foot of the hills. The clear distinction between the old and the new city is visible from the ramparts of the fort.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included

Your Hotel: **Taj Hari Mahal** for 2 nights



Spread over six acres of lush, landscaped gardens, this palace of the 21st century offers luxurious refinement. With its Marwar style architecture and Moghul-inspired domes, enameled murals, slender columns, and grand interiors, this is



design that lives up to the fantasy. Located close to the city markets,



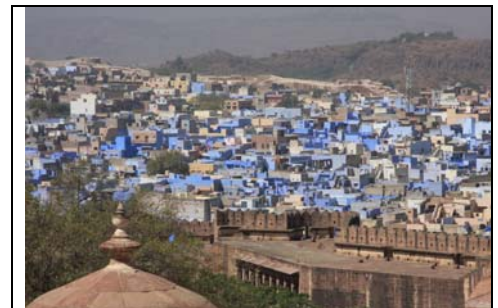
nearby guests can find much to see and experience. Swimming Pool and Spa
<http://www.tajhotels.com/Leisure/Taj%20Hari%20Mahal,JODHPUR/default.htm>

Friday, March 23rd , 2012 DAY 10

JODHPUR



After breakfast we enjoy a City tour of Jodhpur, gateway to the desert and beyond, home of the valiant Rathores of Marwar.





Visit the **Mehrangarh Fort**, rising up on a hillock. The fort was built on the advice of a pious hermit and overlooks the blue city. The fort houses several palaces, cannons, temple and a museum. Mehrangarh Fort, located in Jodhpur city in Rajasthan state is one of the largest forts in India. The fort is situated on a lofty height, 400 feet (122 metres) above the city, and is enclosed by imposing thick walls. Inside its territorial boundaries, there are several palaces, which are known for their intricate carvings and sprawling courtyards. And

You will also visit **Jaswant Thada**, a richly carved white marble cenotaph of Maharaja Jaswant Singh ji, which preserves the genealogy of the rulers of Jodhpur along with their life-size portraits. The Jaswant Thada is architectural landmark found in Jodhpur. It is a white marble memorial built by Sardar Singh in 1899 in memory of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II. The monument, in its entirety, is built out of intricately carved sheets of marble. These stones are extremely thin and polished so that they emit a warm glow when the sun's rays dance across their surface. Within this cenotaph, there are also two more tombs. The Jaswant Thada is a traditional cremation ground of Jodhpur rulers. The grounds are also comprised of exquisitely carved gazebos, a beautiful multi-tiered garden, and a small lake.



Breakfast and Lunch included and Dinner on your own

Overnight stay at Taj Hari Mahal Hotel

Saturday, March 24th , 2012 DAY 11

JODHPUR - UDAIPUR BY FLIGHT IT



We enjoy breakfast at hotel then leisure time until our transfer to Airport for flight to Udaipur. Afternoon arrival in Udaipur and check into the Hotel. Rest of day at Leisure until boat ride in evening.



On the banks of the shimmering lake Pichola, is one of the most romantic cities of Rajasthan. Nestled among the lush hills of the Aravalis, it has inevitably been dubbed the 'Venice of the East'. It is a kaleidoscope of fairy-tale palaces, lakes, temples, gardens and narrow lanes strewn with stalls, carries the flavour of the heroic past, epitomizing valor and chivalry.

Founded in 1568 A.D by Maharana Udai Singh, the city is a harmonious Indian blend of whitewashed buildings, marble palaces, lakeside gardens, temples and Havelis. According to the legend, Maharana Udai Singh, the founder was hunting one day when he met a holy man meditating on a hill overlooking the Lake Pichola. Maharana followed the advice of the hermit and founded the city. The marvelous architecture of the palaces is spell bounding.

Evening boat ride at Lake Pichola where you can visit the Jag Mandir Island.

Maharana Udai Singh enlarged the lake after he founded the city. He built a masonry dam known as Badipol and the lake is now 4 km long and 3 km wide. This picturesque lake encloses the Jag Niwas Island and the Jag Mandir, another island in the Lake Pichola, which is known for its garden courtyard. Shah Jahan took refuge here while revolting against his father. The City Palace extends along its eastern banks.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner included

Your Hotel: **Shiv Niwas Palace. A Grand Heritage Hotel** for 2 nights



A crescent adorning the southern end of the Palace complex, the Shiv Niwas Palace Hotel Udaipur was originally Maharana Fateh Singhji's residence. The rooms around this awe-inspiring courtyard were used as a place for entertaining personal guests. Shiv Niwas Palace Hotel Udaipur was the



vision of the His Late Highness Maharana Bhagwat Singhji Mewar, which led to its conversion into a luxury hotel. Shiv Niwas Palace Hotel Udaipur is now categorized as a Grand Heritage Palace as it has been restored to its original pristine glory.

http://www.hrhotels.com/HRH_Properties/shiv_niwas_palace_hotel.html

Sunday, March 25th , 2012 DAY 12

UDAIPUR



This morning after breakfast we enjoy a **city tour of Udaipur** including visiting **City Palace on lake Pichola**. City Palace towers over the Pichola Lake. Maharana Uday Singh initiated in the construction of the palace but succeeding Maharanas added several palaces and

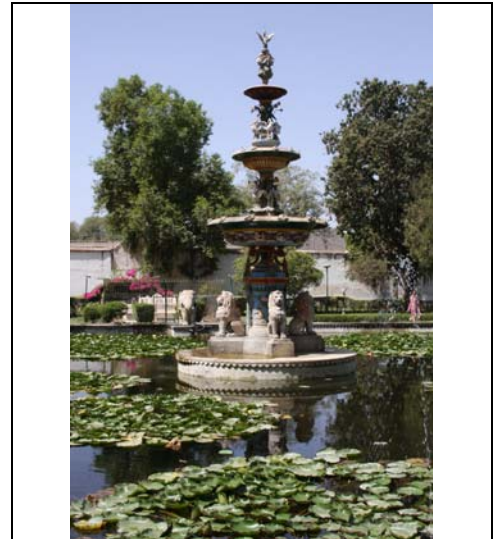


structures to the complex retained a surprising uniformity to the design. The entry to the Palace is from the Hati Pol, the Elephant gate. The Bari Pol or the Big gate brings you to the Tripolia, the Triple gate.

And

Sahelion- Ki -Bari, the "ladies garden"

Sahelion-ki-badi just adjoining the east of the embankment of Fatehsagar lake was constructed in its present form by Maharana Fateh Singh after the original garden had been washed away on account of the breach of its old embankment. A Profusion of flowers, well laid court yards and lotus pool studded with water fountains guarded by four marble elephants – each elephant sculptured out of a single piece of stone – will be a feast for the eyes of visitors. Spacious and well maintained lawns, beautified by blooming flowers and the setting of huge groves of trees, present a spectacular sight to enjoy. It is also aptly called the Garden of Fountains. When the fountains





are in their showery action creating rain-like sounds, white elephants spout water from their lovely trunks on lotus leaves and water cascades from the circular eaves of the pavilion standing in a huge water pool – visitors find themselves amidst the rain-like scenes and atmosphere to be seen, believed and enjoyed. The garden has assumed the attraction of being one of the glamour-spots of the city cine-film shooters and has contributed considerably to the scenic beauty of a number of film pictures. The visitor will feel himself carried into a fairy-land permeated with romantic air.

Fascinating Saheliyon-ki-Bari or the 'garden of maids' was designed and built under the express guidance of Maharana Sangram Singh II. It is believed that Saheliyon ki Bari was constructed for 48 maids who accompanied the Maharana's wife as dowry.

Breakfast and Lunch included and Dinner on your own

Overnight in Shiv Niwas Palace Hotel

Monday, March 26th , 2012 DAY 13

UDAIPUR – DELHI

After breakfast at hotel enjoy leisure time until transfer to airport to connect flight to Delhi. Upon arrival, transfer to local restaurant for Farewell lunch & transfer to International Airport to connect flight to onward destination.

Your land package includes:

- 12 Nights accommodation in Deluxe Category hotels comprising 5 Star & Heritage Hotels
- All transfers / tours and excursions by AC chauffeur driven vehicle.
- Daily Breakfast.
- 12 Lunches
- 6 Dinners
- Domestic Airfare: JAIPUR – JODHPUR, JODHPUR – UDAIPUR and UDAIPUR – NEW DELHI
- Demonstration of Marble craftsmanship in Agra.
- Demonstration of Carpet weaving.
- Demonstration of Gemcutting & polishing in Jaipur
- Boat ride on Lake Pichola, Udaipur
- Elephant ride at Amber Fort, Jaipur (Subject to availability of Elephant).
- Entrance fee to Monuments as per itinerary
- Sightseeing as per itinerary
- Service of English speaking escort through out tour

Not included:

- International Airfare, India visa, insurance, meals unless noted, items of a personal nature and extra hotel charges.

NOTE - India Visa REQUIRED – you will receive information on this after we receive your registration form.

Group Air is available out of Toronto with other city add-ons available.

Tour Dates - March 14th - March 26th , 2012



LAND only \$5,245 Cdn p/p sharing
SINGLE Supplement \$2,010 Cdn
See **Highlights Box** for all inclusions on this tour.

Note – Minimum of 10 tour registrants required for this tour to run, so do not book your air until you have heard from us that the tour is confirmed. If Carlson Wagonlit Travel is booking you as an air/land package then they will look after this for you.

Email: donna@icangarden.com

Toll Free – 1-866-642-7120