

# INDIA EXPLORING RAJASTHAN



September – March: Private Departures  
12 Days: Moderate Touring







## INDIA – EXPLORING RAJASTHAN

Intoxicating...incomparable...bewitching...exhilarating...India has it all. Superlatives are seldom enough to describe this amazingly vibrant and vivacious land, where the ancient mixes with the modern, and the senses are constantly tempted with sights and sounds of the most exotic kind. India is more than a country; it is a continent in its own right. Indeed, it may be even more than this – perhaps a microcosm of all that the world has to offer.

For many, Rajasthan embodies myriad dreams of a fairytale India, exuding an unparalleled air of the exotic. A region abounding with magnificent forts and palaces, Rajasthan is the fabled land of the Maharajas of India. Images of elegant, bejeweled and luxuriously attired Rajput princes, holding court in opulent citadels loftily perched atop their mountain aeries, continue to haunt the romantic imagination. Throughout history, the princely states and people that comprised traditional Rajasthan were legendary for their fierce independence and military prowess. Indeed, the Rajputs' highly evolved code of honor and chivalric notions rivaled that of the knights of medieval European.

Still as proud and independent as ever, the Rajasthani people are equally friendly and warm, and delight in welcoming visitors to their homeland.

**DEPARTURE DATE(S):**

This is a private departure offered September through March

**HIGHLIGHTS:**

- Chandni Chowke bazaars of Old Delhi
- Stepwells of Rajasthan
- Leopards of Jawai
- Visit Bishnoi tribals in Jamba
- Rabari tribals in Jawai
- UNESCO World Heritage sites of Hampi

**ACCOMMODATIONS:**

- 2 nights at The Imperial, Delhi
- 2 nights at Rawla Narlai
- 2 nights Sujan Jawai
- 3 nights at Suryagarh, Jaisalmer
- 2 nights at Dera Dune Retreat, Jamba

**Day 1**

**WELCOME TO DELHI**

You will be met upon arrival and transferred to the hotel.

*(The Imperial - Heritage Room)*

**Day 2**

**EXPLORING DELHI**

Even when Bombay and Madras were mere trading posts and Calcutta a village of mud huts, Delhi had been the seat of an empire for five hundred years. Through the centuries, eight cities have been built on this site by Hindus, Mughals and the British, each adding their own flavor. In a matter of minutes you can be transported from a sprawling, elegant garden city to the ancient twisting alleyways of Old Delhi.

On your tour of "Old Delhi," you will head out to explore this exotic locale with its narrow dirt roads, its myriad people and inexpensive, colorful bazaars that keep alive the traditional workmanship for which Delhi has always been famous. Driving past the Red Fort, trade your motor vehicle for a bicycle rickshaw,

which will take you into the heart of Chandni Chowk (the silver square, so named because of the silver merchants). Negotiating alleyways, which seemingly get narrower and narrower, you end up at the Jama Masjid, the largest Muslim mosque in India.

This afternoon, explore New Delhi. Your guide will point out the Raj-era architecture in the city center, including the renowned India Gate and Edwin Landseer Lutyens' and Herbert Baker's monumental governmental building on the Raisina Hill. From there, visit Humayun's Tomb, where the 2nd Mughal Emperor is interred. This magnificent building was to serve as an inspiration for the Taj Mahal. The tomb is an exquisite example of early Mughal architecture.

This evening you are treated to a "home-cooked" Indian meal where you also have the opportunity of learning the nuances of various spices used in Northern Indian cuisine.

*(The Imperial - Heritage Room; B, D)*

**Day 3  
TO NARLAI**

After breakfast, transfer to Delhi airport to connect with flight to Udaipur. On arrival, drive approximately 3 hours to reach the rural village of Narlai. Above the village rises a massive 350 foot high granite rock, known as "Elephant Hill", for the temple and life size statue of an elephant on the top of the hill. There are about 700 steps that lead to the top, offering fabulous sunrise or sunset panorama of the surrounding region that were once the private hunting reserve for the Maharajahs of Jodhpur.

We stay in Rawla Narlai, an elegant 17th century property that was the hunting lodge of the royal family of Jodhpur. The hotel features a historic and a contemporary wing, decorated with ornate artworks and antique furnishings.

In the afternoon we head out to explore the nearby settlements to visit and interact with the Meghwal and Satiyaa tribes.

*(Rawla Narlai - Grand Heritage Room; B)*

**Day 4**

**EXPLORING NARLAI**

Early morning we have the option of climbing up 'elephant hill' to take in the sunrise or head to Seli Bandh, a nearby dam which is habitat for numerous birds.

After breakfast (back at our hotel) we head out to Ranakpur, home to some of India's most exquisite Jain temple architecture. Situated in the lovely valley of Aravalli Hills, less than 40km away, are the ornately carved temples of Ranakpur. One of the holiest places for Jain pilgrims, the Chamukha temple is three-storied, 80







domes structure, supported by 1444 carved pillars, each different from one another. This temple is dedicated to Adinathji. We will leisurely explore the temple site and nearby villages before returning back to Narlai.

This evening we have our dinner by the 1000 year old step well.

*(Rawla Narlai - Grand Heritage Room; B, D)*

### Day 5 TO JAWAI BANDH

After an early breakfast we continue our overland journey into the heart of Rajasthan exploring small villages and ancient temples along the way. Tonight's destination is the Jawai Bandh (dam) wilderness area where leopards and other mammals have found sanctuary.

The inhabitants around the water body belong to the ecologically minded Rabari tribe of Rajasthan. It is believed they originally migrated here over a millennium ago from Persia (today's Iran).

In the afternoon we head out for our first encounter with leopards.

*(Sujan Jawai - Tented Rock Suite; B, L, D)*

### Day 6

### JAWAI LEOPARDS & RABARI TRIBESMEN

Leopards across the world (including other parts of India) make the jungles and forests their habitat, but here the caves in the granite hills around the Jawai dam are home to 50-60 leopards (recent estimate for the Forestry department.) In addition to leopard the region is also home to hyenas, desert foxes, wild boars, antelopes and other smaller mammals. During the winter months the banks of the dam hosts thousands of migratory birds, including the Demoiselle Cranes from Mongolia and the Greater Flamingo from other regions of Asia.

But it's not just the unique habitat of the leopard that brings us here, but the jewel of the story is of local conservation and co-habitation of humans and nature.

Thanks to the booming economy and rampant growth of the last few decades, India, has changed beyond recognition and the pressure of population growth has seen an increase of wildlife-human conflict. In the first six months of 2021, over a hundred leopard had been killed by poachers and villagers across the country. However, like the Bishnoi people that we will visit in the next few days, here in Jawai, the semi-nomadic Rabari tribe who inhabit the lands along the river have lived peacefully with nature



  
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and not one killing of a leopard has been seen or reported in the last 150 years.

We will spend the day exploring the region on the lookout for leopards, while we also meet with Rabari folks and get an understanding of their way of life.

*(Sujan Jawai - Tented Rock Suite; B, L, D)*

### **Day 7** **JAWAI TO JAISALMER**

Our longest travel day as we drive 5-6 hours, heading to the edge of the Thar Desert. Our destination for the day is Suryagarh in Jaisalmer District.

Check-in on arrival with the balance of the day at your leisure to enjoy the nature setting of your hotel.

*(Suryagarh - Pavilion Room; B)*

### **Days 8 & 9** **EXPLORING JAISALMER REGION**

We have two full days to leisurely explore this desert citadel. Rise early and go to Gadsar Lake. This lake once provided water to the entire city, but today it is greatly reduced in size. It is still a picturesque spot and a great location to watch the sunrise on

Jaisalmer Fort. You will then walk back to the Jaisalmer Fort through back roads (a 20- to 30-minute walk), watching the bazaar come to life.

Later in the morning, you will take a walking tour to see the architectural dream that is the city of Jaisalmer. In the narrow cobbled alleyways cluster havelis, mansions of the rich, wrought with stone carvings and latticework of breathtaking intricacy. You then visit and explore the fascinating Jaisalmer Fort (pictured above), built overlooking the city in 1156, and the Jain Temple complex within it.

*(Suryagarh - Pavilion Room; B)*

### **Day 10** **TO JAMBA**

A 3-hour drive from the Jaisalmer further into the hinterland brings you to the "off-the-tourist-trail" region of Jamba, the stronghold of the fascinating Bishnoi tribes. All Bishnois follow the 29 (bishnoi) tenets laid down by the 15th-century guru Jambeshwar, affectionately known as "Jamba-ji." They fervently believe in the sanctity of animal and plant life so wildlife finds a natural sanctuary around their villages.

We spend two nights at the private Dera Dune Retreat. This is an exclusive property, set atop a 130' high sand dune with panoramic views of the Thar Desert.



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The Retreat features exquisite examples of traditional Rajasthani architecture used throughout, with stonework and carvings using local design and sustainable materials and, most importantly, utilizing the skills of local craftsmen. It has individual deluxe cottages, a swimming pool, spa and beautiful restaurant.

*(Dera Dune Retreat - Stone Cottage; B, L, D)*

### Day 11

#### EXPLORING JAMBA

We have two full days to explore the Jamba area. Using 4-wheel drive vehicles we travel cross-country on dirt and sand roads to continue your exploration of “Jamba-ji’s” land. These excursions introduce you to traditional Rajasthani hospitality, and give you a chance to witness rural Rajasthani life up close. The villages are built with painted adobe walls, and village life continues unaffected by the big cities nearby.

Bishnoi villages are immaculate, scrubbed daily by brightly clad women who are weighed down by silver jewelry and festooned with bangles stacked the length of their arms. By contrast, their tall men dress entirely in white, with their large turbans loosely swathed around dark skinned, weathered faces.

You will also have an opportunity, if you are so inclined, to go on a two- to three-hour camel safari or ride on a camel cart. Return to Dera Dune Retreat in time to watch the setting sun illuminate the desert.

When guests are in camp, musicians and dancers from nearby villages usually come to dance away the evening.

*(Dera Dune Retreat - Stone Cottage; B, L, D)*

### Day 12

#### TO DELHI AND OUTBOUND

This morning we drive to Jodhpur airport for our flight back to Delhi. Depending on your international departure time you will be transferred to the International terminal in time for your flight.

Transit rooms at airport hotel.

*(B)*

*B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner*

*Nomadic Expeditions reserves the right to change the above itinerary if necessary.*



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## 2023 LAND PRICE

2 Travelers: \$11,085 per person

3 + Travelers: \$10,685 per person

Internal Airfare: \$290 per person

Single Supplement: 4,660 per person

NOTE: Land Price is based on double occupancy and Internal Airfare is subject to change by airlines.

### LAND PRICE INCLUDES:

- All accommodations as listed in the above itinerary, based on double or twin occupancy;
- Breakfast every day
- Lunches and dinner as noted in the above itinerary with special welcome & farewell dinners in Delhi
- All ground transportation in private vehicles, including all arrival/ departure airport/hotel transfers;
- Bottled/filtered water throughout the trip and soft drinks during meals;
- All excursions, entrance fees, and visits as described in itinerary;
- Extensive pre-departure Travel Guide, reading list, important information about your trip, and luggage tags;
- Services of Nomadic Expeditions English speaking local guides

### LAND PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- International airfare; internal airfare is quoted separately and subject to change by airlines;
- Passport and visa fees;
- Excess baggage charges;
- Gratuities to local staff (drivers, guides, etc.);
- Items of a personal nature, such as alcoholic beverages, laundry, phone calls, photography and video fees;
- Comprehensive medical and trip insurance;
- Other items not specifically mentioned as included.

## WHY TRAVEL WITH NOMADIC EXPEDITIONS?

### *Unrivaled Expertise*

Nomadic Expeditions was founded in 1992. Nothing can compete with the experience we have attained over 25+ years of designing luxury adventure travel to Asia. While each trip we design is slightly different than its predecessor, our breadth of knowledge, network of contacts, and experience in the field is unrivaled.

### *Our People*

We hire the best in the business to create and execute memorable journeys for our clients. From our Expedition Specialists in the United States, Ulaanbaatar, Lhasa, and Thimpu who turn wish lists into reality to our English-speaking, professionally trained guides who share their extensive knowledge of the culture and natural history of our destinations, our staff is what makes Nomadic Expeditions successful.

### *Passion for Travel*

While our journeys open your eyes to a whole new world of experiences, we understand that choosing to book a trip with us requires time spent away from friends, family, and work. Your time is precious and we take that to heart. It's why we design journeys that go beyond a checklist of attractions. When you travel with us, we want you to remember drinking tea with a nomadic family or digging for fossils with a renowned paleontologist. We imbue our trips with encounters, whether it's with a local resident, a high-ranking government official, or a renowned wildlife conservationist, so you take home more than a set of photographs to frame on your nightstand.

### *Our Philosophy*

Nomadic Expeditions was founded on the principle of treading lightly long before sustainable travel was a buzz phrase. Every expedition is undertaken with the greatest respect for the lands we explore and the local people we meet. Those who travel with us do so with the assurance that the preservation and protection of the ecosystems and cultures we visit is of the utmost importance to us, both as individuals and as a company. Respect for the places we travel to is at the heart of everything we do, but over our 25+ years we have realized additional opportunities where we can lend a hand. We have gone beyond simply treading lightly and have wholeheartedly partnered with local communities and regions. Read more about our sustainable practices and philanthropic efforts on our website.

*We would love to share this exceptional adventure with you!*

Our Expedition Specialists are available from 9:00 AM- 5:00 PM EST, Monday thru Friday

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