

India Private Tour + Ranthambore Option

Each private luxury tour is custom to the wishes of each client. This itinerary is a sample. Our Sister Company, TRAVNET, may provide assistance with mileage point conversion. Do not hesitate to call Randy to create your custom tour.

Overview

We feel multicultural India to be perhaps the most colorful, diverse, and geographically contrasting land on the planet. The largest democracy in the world, India's geography ranges from the deserts of Jaisalmer to the mountains of the Himalayas, and to the clear waterways of Kerala. The magnificent Hindu shrines and temples, our favorites being Varanasi, provocative Khajuraho, and the Ajanta caves, engender a deep sense of spirituality that few other destinations can match. The culinary choices here are unique and varied, though one should certainly be prepared for an unsettled stomach along the way. Despite the country's pervasive poverty, do not be deterred, as for those seeking a unique, multifaceted, cultural experience; India will surely provide.

INDIA

Temperature Range

Highs: High 90s°F
Lows: Low 70s°F

Area

3.3 Million SQ KM
1.3 Million SQ Miles

Population

1.3 Billion

Language

Hindi & English

Capital

New Delhi

Currency

Indonesian Rupiah

Day 1

Fly to Delhi

Through our sister company, premium air provider TRAVNET, we may assist with your international airfare, as well as with mileage points conversion.

Day 2

Arrive Delhi

Upon arrival in Delhi, you will be privately transferred to the Imperial Hotel.

Imperial Hotel

Built in 1931 and designed with a compelling mix of Victorian and Art Deco aesthetics, the 5-star Imperial is truly one of our favorite hotels in the world. Based on the hospitality culture of both the Mughals and the British, you feel a spirit of the British Raj while staying here. With the largest collection of colonial and post-colonial art and artifacts of any hotel in India, wandering the halls of the Imperial is always fascinating. Each of the 190 rooms and 43 suites is

lavishly decorated and have nice marble baths. Amenities here include eight different dining options, a spa, salon, gym, health and racquet club, and a swimming pool.

Accommodations: Imperial Hotel

Day 3

Delhi Private Tour

Your Delhi private touring will begin with a walking tour of Old Delhi, including a visit to the Red Fort, a massive fortress of Persian and Timurid architecture, and UNESCO World Heritage Site. You will continue to the Parliament House; Rashtrapati Bhavan, the residence of the President with lush Mughal gardens; and Humayun's Tomb, built in the 16th-century and considered to be the architectural forerunner for the Taj Mahal. In the evening you will visit Dilli Haat, an open-air market with delicious food and local artisanal handicrafts.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Imperial Hotel

Day 4

Fly Delhi/Varanasi + Sarnath Private Tour

Varanasi, also known as Benares, is supposed to be the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world, dating back over 2,000 years.

Upon arrival, you will take an excursion to Sarnath, where the Buddha is believed to have preached his first sermon on enlightenment and the eightfold path. Following, you may enjoy a boat ride on the River Ganges. In the evening, you will again board a boat to witness the traditional aarti (prayer) ceremony and rituals performed by the priest and pilgrims, with thousands of lamps sailing along the ghats.

Taj Nadesar Palace

With only 10 rooms occupied in a former Maharajah's palace, the Nadesar is truly a luxurious oasis in the midst of the chaos and noise of bustling Varanasi. The 5-star Taj Nadesar Palace's modern amenities include flat-screen TVs, contrasting interestingly with the traditional furnishings and history of this impressive hotel, open since 1835. Each of the rooms have four-poster beds and are decorated in rich hues and artwork coming from the Maharaja's own collection. Set along the banks of the Ganges, we especially enjoy the 45-acre landscaped grounds — the rose and jasmine gardens are a special treat. The elaborately detailed check-in procedure at Nadesar is among the most unique we have experienced anywhere! A fun experience is taking a carriage ride along the Nadesar's grounds, where you may learn all about the history of the hotel and Varanasi itself. Amenities here include a dining room, croquet court, fitness center, swimming pool, and a mini-golf course.

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch

Accommodations: Taj Nadesar Palace

Day 5

Varanasi Private Tour

You will begin your day with a boat ride down the River Ganges followed by a walking tour of the old part of Varanasi. The Holy City of Varanasi, the Religious Capital of Hinduism, crowded with temples and a labyrinth of streets with their throngs of people, is certainly a city to be experienced. You will then visit the outside of Kashi Vishvanath (Golden) Temple, a gold-spiraled temple rebuilt in the 18th-century and dedicated to Shiva, where only Hindus are allowed in. Your other temple stops today include Bharat Mata Mandir, dedicated to Mother India and considered to be the most sacred and famous temple in Varanasi; and the marble-built Vishvanath Temple, the tallest in India.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Taj Nadesar Palace

Day 6

Fly Varanasi/Dehli + Private Transfer to Agra

Once you arrive in Delhi, you will be privately driven to the Oberoi Amarvilas in Agra.
Oberoi Amarvilas

Only a couple hundred yards from the Taj Mahal, the 102-room Oberoi Amarvilas offers unobstructed, stunning views of the iconic building. This property is modeled after a Mughal palace, with cascading fountains, arched passageways, and gold leaf frescoes. The rooms feature a simple yet classic design, with original Mughal coins and antique Indian fabrics adorning the walls. Amenities here include two restaurants, a bar and lounge, a spa, fitness center, and swimming pool. The Oberoi Amarvilas is truly one of the nicest hotels in all of India.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Oberoi Amarvilas

Day 7

Taj Mahal & Agra Private Tour + Private Transfer to Jaipur

There's nothing in the world quite like the [Taj Mahal](#) — a varying kaleidoscope of solitude, color, and mood. The Taj Mahal truly is one of the wonders of the world. It is a monument of love built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1630 for his Queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains.

Afterward, you will travel to Agra Fort via a horse-drawn carriage. Agra Fort is strategically situated along a bend on the Yamuna River. Built in the 16th-century by three generations of Mughal emperors, it is a superb synthesis of stern military fortifications with delicate interior details. You will then be driven to Jaipur, where you will be taken on a walking tour of a traditional market.

Amanbagh

Located in the foothills of the Aravalli hills, a 90-minute drive from Jaipur, the scenic 37-suite luxury Amanbagh is among our favorite adventure and spa retreats in all of India. Within reach (an approximately one-hour drive) of Sariska National Park and its tiger reserve, wildlife viewing here includes tigers, jaguars, sambar deer, and much more! The exceptional wildlife is a nice compliment to the property's Ayurvedic wellness spa, which features several treatment options. Set in this relatively remote area, the rose-pink Mughal-inspired design and surrounding lush gardens are quite striking! Of course, no Asia AMAN is complete with a striking pool - in Amanbagh's case, there is a 108-foot lap pool!

Rambagh Palace

The former residence of the Maharajah of Jaipur, the Rambagh Palace has been faithfully restored with period cupolas, parapets, marbled colonnade, and massive scalloped archways. Spread out over 47 acres of lush lawns and gardens, the 70 rooms face landscaped courtyards and fountains. We especially enjoy the daily evening folk dance and musicians performing in the upper front lawn. Featured in Peter Coat's *Most Beautiful Gardens in the World*, the palace gardens are lush and have an array of exotic birds. You will see magnificent peacocks, babblers, mynahs, red-vented bulbuls — many varieties! Cultural performers are normally planned at the Rambagh every evening at 7:00 p.m. and are most entertaining!

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Amanbagh or Rambagh Palace

Day 8

Jaipur Half-Day Private Tour

Amber Fort, the ancient capital that preceded Jaipur was originally built in the 11th-century and expanded in size and scope by succeeding dynasties and their rulers. The fort provides beautiful views of the surrounding

area of Jaipur. Today, you will ride up to the fort's hilltop location via jeep to explore the maze of passages, corridors, pavilions, ornamental gardens, and ramparts.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Amanbagh or Rambagh Palace

Day 9

Jaipur Half-Day Private Tour

Today you will explore the centerpiece of Jaipur, the City Palace, home of the royal family and known for its clutch of excellent private museums that display royal memorabilia; particularly armaments, art, books, costumes, and textiles. Lying adjacent to the City Palace is the medieval Jantar Mantar observatory built by Maharaja Jai Singh II, an inveterate astronomer who's curiously shaped and oversized implements are still astonishingly accurate today.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Amanbagh or Rambagh Palace

Day 10

Private Transfer Jaipur/Pushkar

Following breakfast, you will be privately driven from Jodhpur to Pushkar (an approximately three-hour drive). Following check-in at your hotel, the remainder of the day will be free for you to spend at your leisure. If traveling around October/November, you shouldn't miss Pushkar's famous annual Camel Fair, where thousands of camel, horses, and cattle descend from the sand dunes into town for this epic event.

Pratap Mahal, Ajmer

Situated in a picturesque green oasis, Pratap Mahal, Ajmer is set against the backdrop of the Aravalli hills. Part of the Taj Luxury Hotels group, the six-acre resort has only 81 rooms, designed in a luxury-palace style with Rajasthani accents. Though located just outside Pushkar, the Pratap Mahal features stunning views and gardens. There is a nice gym and spa with a large courtyard pool. We particularly enjoy swinging on jhoolas (hand-carved wooden bench swings) or sitting in private balconies that accompany every room, very relaxing!

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Pratap Mahal, Ajmer

Day 11

Pushkar Private Tour + Private Transfer Pushkar/Jodhpur

Following breakfast, you will be met by your private guide and driver for a half-day private tour of Pushkar, a prominent Hindu pilgrimage town, set on the border of the Thar Desert in northeastern Rajasthan. Pushkar's location around a holy lake with 52 bathing ghats reminds us of a mini Varanasi. The town also features 400 blue temples, including one of the world's few Brahma temples. The main street in town is essentially a long colorful bazaar, touristy but fun!

Following your tour, you will be privately driven from Pushkar to Jodhpur (an approximately four-hour drive). Following check-in at your hotel, the remainder of the day will be free for you to spend at your leisure.

RAAS Jodhpur

Looking back at notes from our last trip here, we were reminded of a client's stay at the RAAS Jodhpur in October 2013. In contrast to the more imposing luxury of the iconic Umaid Bhawan Palace, we feel our clients will very much appreciate the unique aesthetics of RAAS. Composed of four historical buildings of rose-red sandstone, the boutique 39-room, RAAS is ideally located northeast of the Walled City and beneath the striking Mehrangarh Fort. The original buildings have been meticulously restored and all rooms have been designed with modern amenities.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: RAAS Jodhpur

Day 12

Jodhpur Private Tour

Following breakfast, you will embark on a half-day of Jodhpur touring with your private guide and driver. The second largest city in Rajasthan, Jodhpur, often referred to as "the blue city" in India for its magnificent blue plaster hues, similar to Chefchaouen in Morocco, is noteworthy for its magnificent forts and palaces. Many of our clients feel the shopping in Jodhpur is among the most unique in all of India, especially for textiles (tie-dye fabrics) and antiques. Your tour today includes the Mehrangarh Fort, built in 1459 when Rao Jodha, forced from Mandore, selected a rocky range of sandstone hills on which to build his new city. Though Rao Jodha originally started the fort, Maharaja Jaswant Singh built the majority of the palaces and Aurangzeb (the last Mughal) occupied the fort until his own death in 1678. The fort remained the royal residence right up until the completion of the Umaid Bhawan Palace in 1943. Today the fort, with its incredibly beautiful palaces, contains impressive collections of miniature paintings, weapons, armory, palanquins, howdahs, and jewelry.

In the early evening, you may enjoy an optional excursion to Bishnoi village, a 15th-century, non-violent Vaishnava sect founded by Jambheshwarji, via open jeep (an approximately 45-minute drive away). The Bishnois, who live outside Jodhpur, follow 29 of the sect's principles and are well known for their gentle lifestyles.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: RAAS Jodhpur

Day 13

Fly Jodhpur/Delhi/Udaipur

Following breakfast, you will be privately transferred to the Jodhpur Airport for your flight to Udaipur via Delhi.

Upon arrival in Udaipur, you will be transferred to the Taj Lake Palace. Udaipur is considered to be one of India's most lovely locales. Set on the shores of Lake Pichola and surrounded by hills, Udaipur grew in complete contrast to the harsh deserts of the rest of Rajasthan. Rising along Lake Pichola's eastern shore is the old city, dominated by the magnificent City Palace which presents a dramatic vista at sunrise and sunset.

Taj Lake Palace Hotel

If you are familiar with the 007 movies, you may recall the 1983 *James Bond* film, *Octopussy*, much of it was filmed here at the Taj Lake Palace! The Lake Palace Hotel is an 18th-century marble-palace right smack in the

middle of beautiful Lake Pichola, a truly unique setting. With only 83 rooms, the service here is personal and intimate. Although the spa is small, we thought their treatments were of very high quality.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Taj Lake Palace Hotel

Day 14

Udaipur Private Tour

Your day will begin with a visit to the City Palace, a complex of palaces linked by interconnecting paths that lead to many enclosures of private apartments and spacious balconies with hanging gardens. The Palace's massive octagonal towers offer incredible views of Lake Pichola and on the upper floors, you can view city paintings, portraits, and a miniature painting gallery. Visit Bagor Ki Haveli, a well-restored 18th-century nobleman's mansion that now has an excellent exhibition of regional arts and crafts, costumes, puppets, and musical instruments. Your day will end with a private boat cruise on Lake Pichola, with a stop at Jagmandir Island.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Taj Lake Palace Hotel

Day 15

Aravali Hills Private Tour

Today, you will be privately driven to the outlying countryside of the Aravalli Hills with a lunch stopover at the converted 18th-century palace/fort Devi Garh. Painstakingly restored to a 39-suite boutique hotel, Devi Garh is set in a verdant hilltop adjacent to Delawara Village and is among the most pristine settings for a pool we have ever seen. We also had our best meal in Udaipur here!

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Taj Lake Palace Hotel

Day 16

Fly Udaipur/Home

Following breakfast, you will be privately transferred to the Maharana Pratap Airport in Udaipur for your return flight home.

Meals: Breakfast

Ranthambore Extension

Fly Udaipur/Ranthambore

Once the scene of royal hunting parties, Ranthambore is mainly known for tigers, yet also has a large number of sambhar, chital, and Nilgai. Herds of boar and an occasional gazelle can be seen, as also the Indian hare, mongoose and monitor lizards. Among the lakes and pools you may spot leopards, hyenas, jackals, jungle cats, sloth bears and marsh crocodiles. Over three days here, you can enjoy game drives and a visit to the Ranthambore Fort, built in 10th-century and towering over the entire park area.

Oberoi Vanyavilas

An opulent resort located on the edge of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve, Oberoi Vanyavilas is the finest location for animal viewing. Set in walled gardens, each tent has a rustic exterior balanced with lavish décor inside, using traditional Indian materials, and a luxurious bathroom. From the observation tower, one can enjoy panoramic views of the natural surroundings. Amenities here include WiFi, a nice spa, a restaurant, and a swimming pool.

Aman-i-Khás

For our friends who wish for an alternative to the 5-star Vanyavillas in Ranthambore, we enthusiastically suggest the Aman-i-Khás. Offering daily tiger safaris in 4x4 jeeps similar to Vanyavillas, Aman-i-Khás offers more private, understated accommodations featuring only 10 air-conditioned luxury tents set around a communal outdoor fireplace. Each tent is assigned an experienced "batman" who will accompany you into the jungle along the River Chambal and to the various temples and cultural sites. Similar to our Botswana safaris, Aman-i-Khás offers ample spa treatments along with extraordinary dining options. We particularly recommend the property's Poornvandana massage, with its long, symmetrical strokes to soothe a high-stress, Western nervous system!

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodations: Oberoi Vanyavilas or Aman-i-Khás