

Incredible India Tour (23 Days/ 22 Nights)

Delhi-Jaipur-Agra-Jhansi-Orchha-Khajuraho-Varanasi-Mumbai-Kochi-Thekkady-Madurai-Tiruchirappalli-Thanjavur-Puducherry-Mamallapuram-Kanchipuram-Chennai

Full of colorful pageantry, enriching culture and exquisite traditions, India is a land of contrasts that evokes countless images even in the minds of the most seasoned travelers. Embark on this Incredible India tour and get yourself a hold over a delectable serving of customs, culture and tradition with a hint of heritage to top it all.

Day 1: Delhi

Arrive Delhi. Meet assist at the airport & transfer to hotel. Night stay in Delhi.



Day 2: Delhi

After a leisurely breakfast sightseeing tour of New Delhi where ornate buildings recall the days when India was the Jewel in the crown of the British Empire. Visit the 11th century Qutab Minar, India Gate and the grand government buildings, The President's House, Red fort, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial, Also visit Laxmi Narayan temple popularly known as Birla Temple. Night stay in Delhi.



Day 3: Delhi - Jaipur

After breakfast drive to Jaipur (262 Kms/5 hrs.). Arrive & transfer to hotel. Later proceed to visit City Palace, still home to the Maharaja although several of the rooms are now open to the public. Many antiques and artifacts belonging to the ruling family are housed here. Also explore the different markets with colorful handicrafts. Night stay in Jaipur.



Day 4: Jaipur

After breakfast sightseeing tour of Jaipur visiting Amber Fort Situated atop a hill overlooking the city, was the old capital before Jaipur was built. The Palace is laid out at different levels on the hillside and surrounded by a fortress. A ride on a decorated elephant to ascend the hill to the Palace is a thrilling experience for every visitor where a ride on the elephant is highlight of the tour. After



lunch visit the Pink city because of the pink color of the buildings, is picturesquely situated in the heart of Rajasthan surrounded on all sides except on the south by rugged hills crowned with medieval fortresses. Visit the Mubarak Hall, Chandra Mahal and Pothikhana, which house a rare collection of paintings and manuscripts as well as the museum of Arms and Armoury. Also visit Jantar Mantar - Jai Singh's observatory and the Hawa Mahal or Palace of Winds. Night stay in Jaipur.

Day 5: Jaipur - Agra

Early morning after breakfast drive to Agra Enroute visiting the Deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri (250 kms/ 6 hrs), Fatehpur Sikri -Twenty seven miles from Agra, Akbar's Capital where phantoms of ancient pomp and splendor fill a deserted city, silent witnesses to a vanished dream. The capital had to be abandoned by the emperor for lack of adequate water supply. The marble tomb of the Saint Salim



Chisti and the Bulland Durwaza, the highest gateway in the world, are some of the highlights of the place. On arrival transfer to hotel. Night stay in Agra.

Day 6: Agra

Morning at sunrise visit the world famous Taj Mahal, built by the Mughal Emperor Shahjehan in 1630 for his queen Mumtaz Mahal to enshrine her mortal remains, Also visit the Agra Fort, containing the Pearl Mosque - the rusty and majestic red- sandstone fort of Agra stands on the banks of the river Yamuna and the construction was started by Emperor Akbar in 1566. At the Diwan-I-Khas (hall of private audience) where marble pavilions with floral inlays lend an ethereal ambience, the Emperor sat on his gem-studded peacock Throne and met foreign ambassadors and rulers of friendly kingdoms. Also visit Itmad-ud-Dau's tomb, built by Noorjehan in memory of her father. Night stay in Agra.

**Day 7: Agra - Jhansi - Orchha**

Morning transfer to railway station to board the train to Jhansi , Arrive Jhansi & drive to Orchha & transfer to hotel. Later tour of this historical site with magnificent temples and monuments. Some of the palaces were decorated with painted murals which represent the finest flowering of the Bundela school of painting. Night stay in Orchha.

**Day 8: Orchha - Khajuraho**

After breakfast drive to Khajuraho- the legendary temples of Khajuraho are an incomparable experience. Acknowledged as one of the world's artistic wonders, these temples dedicated to the Hindu pantheon of Gods are covered in carvings that are a paean to life and love. Built within a short span of a hundred years by the Chandela Rajputs, the 10th century temples lay forgotten until they were discovered in the present century. Khajuraho has achieved fame for the sensual appeal of its erotic sculptures. Arrive Khajuraho and transfer to hotel. Evening at leisure. Night stay in Khajuraho.

**Day 9: Khajuraho**

The fascinating temples of Khajuraho, India's unique gift of love to the world, in the state of Madhya Pradesh, were built between 950 and 1050 A.D. The divine sculptures in these temples, are a tribute to Life itself, embodying everything that is sublime and spontaneous about it. The murals depict the life and times of the Chandelas, and celebrate the erotic state of being. They not



only testify to the mastery of the craftsman, but also to the extraordinary breadth of vision of the Chandela Rajputs under whose reign, these temples were constructed. The temples are grouped into three geographical divisions : western, eastern and southern. After breakfast explore the Western, eastern and southern temples of Khajuraho while your guide explains the intricate meaning and legends behind each describable sculpture. Western Group, Kandariya Mahadeo: This is the largest, and most typical Khajuraho temple. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, it soars 31 m high. The sanctum enshrines a lingam, while the main shrine is ornately carved and depicts various gods, goddesses, apsaras (heavenly maidens) in elaborate detail. Chaunsat Yogini: The oldest surviving temple in the group (900 A.D.), this is the sole granite temple dedicated to Goddess Kali. Another Kali temple, which was originally dedicated to Lord Vishnu, is the Devi Jagdambe temple. Chitragupta Temple: Dedicated to the sun-god, Surya, this temple faces eastwards to the rising sun. Vishwanath Temple: The temple enshrines a three-headed image of Lord Brahma. Lions guard the northern entrance to the structure, while elephants flank the southern flight of steps that lead up to it. A Nandi bull faces the shrine. Lakshmana Temple: The lintel over the entrance of this temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu, shows the holy trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva with Goddess Lakshmi, Vishnu's consort. The sanctum is adorned with a three-headed idol of Vishnu's incarnations, Narasimha and Varaha. Matangeshwara Temple: This temple, which happens to be outside the precincts of the western group, is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It boasts of an eight feet high lingam. Eastern Group Parsvanatha Temple: The largest in the group of three Jain temples, the Parsvanatha image in this temple, was installed in 1860. Ghantai Temple: This Jain temple has a frieze depicting the 16 dreams of Mahavira's mother, and a Jain goddess perched on a winged Garuda. Adinatha Temple: The last of the Jain temples, is dedicated to the Jain saint, Adinatha, and is gorgeously adorned with sculptures of yakshis among others. The three Hindu temples in this group are the Brahma temple, which has a four-faced lingam, The Vamana temple which is embellished with images of ravishing apsaras at their alluring best; and finally the Javari temple, with its ornate gateway and lavish carvings. Southern Group Duladeo Temple: Dedicated to Lord Shiva, the highlights of this temple are the sensuous images of the apsaras, and other exquisite sculptures. Chaturbhuja Temple: This temple sports a huge, elaborately carved image of Vishnu in the sanctum. Night stay in Khajuraho.

Day 10: Khajuraho - Varanasi

After breakfast transfer to airport to board the flight for Varanasi-said to be the India\'s most sacred city situated on the western bank of the holy river Ganga. It is also the oldest living city in the world. As a place for devotion and worship, with hundreds of temples dotting the city, sunrise on the river front as seen from a boat can be a spiritually uplifting sight. It has a

fascination uniquely its own, a quality of sublime beauty, a timeless eternal appeal. Varanasi is the city which cannot be described, only experienced. Arrive Varanasi and transfer to hotel. Later proceed for sight seeing of Varanasi (the oldest and holiest city of India) covering Temples, Aurangzeb\'s Mosque and one of the biggest university of India. Evening view "Aarti" ceremony on the Ghats. Night stay in Varanasi.



Day 11: Varanasi - Mumbai

Early morning boat ride on the Holy river Ganges to view the religious activity at the bathing Ghats for an insight into the cultural background of India. It provides an absorbing spectacle of thousands of Hindus engaged in their ritual bathing. Later excursion to Sarnath, 10kms. East of Varanasi, is one of the Buddhism\'s major centers of India. After attaining enlightenment, the

Buddha came to Sarnath where he gave his first sermon. Today Sarnath is considered as one of the richest place to have antiques since the Ashoka period to the 12th century. Afternoon transfer to Airport in time to connect flight for Bombay. Arrive, meet assist at the airport & transfer to hotel. Night stay in Bombay.



Day 12: Mumbai

After breakfast proceed for half day tour of Mumbai covering Gateway of India - The stone archway designed by Wittett in the 16th century Gujarati style, Prince of Whales Museum, Chowpatty Beach, Dhobhi Ghat- a vast outdoor laundry & Marine Drive. Night stay in Bombay.



Day 13: Mumbai - Kochi

Morning transfer to airport to board the flight for Cochin. Arrive Cochin & transfer to hotel. Afternoon sightseeing tour of Cochin covering The Dutch Palace at Mattancherry is renowned for its wall murals depicting scenes from the Ramayana. The Jewish Synagogue at the heart of what is locally called the Jew Town. The St. Francis Church, the oldest European church in India. The

Santa Cruz Basilica, originally built in 1557 by the Portuguese. The Chinese fishing nets are huge cantilevered fishing nets believed to have brought to Kochi by Chinese traders. Finally, the Willingdon Island, named after Lord Willingdon, is the headquarters of the Southern Naval Command of India. Night stay in Cochin.



Day 14: Kochi - Thekkady

After Breakfast drive to Periyar (185 Kms/5 hrs). The Houseboat will cruise at a leisurely pace along palm-fringed waterways, giving a panoramic view of Kerala Village Life. Night stay in Periyar.



Day 15: Thekkady

Morning Drive to Periyar (130Km drive). The Periyar Forest is one of the finest wildlife reserves in India. Lying at an altitude of 900 - 1800m above sea level and spread across 777sq.Km, the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1978. Noted for its geomorphology, diversity of wildlife and scenic beauty, it's the only sanctuary in India where you can view

wildlife at close quarters from the safety of a boat on the lake. Periyar's biggest attractions are the Herds of Elephants that come down to water and play at the lakeside. Night stay in Periyar.



Day 16: Thekkady - Madurai

After breakfast drive to Madurai (137 kms/4.5 hrs). Afternoon visit the Famous Meenakshi Temple , a structure in the Dravidian style of architecture. The history of the city dates back over 2,000 years when it was the capital of the Pandyas. The most interesting feature of the temple is its Hall of a thousand pillars. Night stay in Madurai.



Day 17: Madurai - Tiruchirappalli

After breakfast drive to Trichy (316 Kms/8hrs). Evening Visit Temples of Trichy one of the very ancient towns of Tamil Nadu, has many interesting relics of Pallava art (7th century A.D.) - only 6 miles away is the great temple of Srirangam - an island on the Cauvery. This is a massive temple with a 100 pillar hall highly decorated with carvings. Night stay in Trichy.



Day 18: Tiruchirappalli - Thanjavur

After breakfast drive to Tanjore (54 kms/2 hrs) . Afternoon sightseeing of Tanjore. Also called a city of temples, Tanjore is dotted with no fewer than 74 temples - the most famous of which is the Brihadeshwara temple. Visit this fascinating temple and the Thanjavur Palace. Tanjore is once the capital of the Cholas, a powerful dynasty of the kings who ruled from the 10th to



the 14th Centuries A.D. is to this day, a well known center of classical art and literature. Also visit the Saraswathi Mahal Library containing rare collections of ancient books and manuscripts in various languages on various subjects. Overnight stay in Tanjore.

Day 19: Thanjavur - Puducherry

After breakfast we drive to Pondicherry (177 kms/ 6hrs). Afternoon sightseeing of Pondicherry visiting This former French Colonial city in Tamil Nadu didn't come under Indian rule until 1954. Pondicherry otherwise known as Puducherry means a "New Hamlet" which is located on the Coromandal Coast. Here people speaking 55 different languages reside and in spite of Linguistic



plurilingualism there is no restlessness but absolute harmony. Its main attraction is actually outside of town: the ashram at Auroville, built by followers of Sri Aurobindo, a philosopher/prophet born in 1870. The International town where people of different countries reside belongs to humanity as a whole. Matrimandir the famous monument is constructed by the Auroville Society which represents the flower Lotus. Also visit 400 years old Manakula Vinayagar Temple which has several fresco paintings on the walls telling the life story of half human and half animal lord. You shall also visit Sri Aurobindo Ashram named after Sri Aurobindo, who was a National Leader, famous for his integral Yoga and philosophical literary works. A French Lady, Madame Mirra Richard, followed his spiritual path and the Samadhi of both Sri Aurobindo and Mother are situated at main premises of the Ashram. Overnight stay in Pondicherry.

Day 20: Puducherry - Mamallapuram

After breakfast drive to Mahabalipuram (100 kms/3 hrs). Afternoon brings you to the shore temples lashed by the sea. This is one of the early temples to be constructed in this area. The "Five Rathas", a group of monolithic monuments and animal figures carved out of solid rock are almost like an artist's experiment in variety of form. Later on relax on the beach. Overnight stay in Mahabalipuram.



Day 21: Mamallapuram - Kanchipuram - Chennai

Morning excursion to Kanchipuram & Mahabalipuram. Kanchipuram known as the Golden City of a Thousand Temples, is one of the oldest towns in India. It is famous for both its temples, many of them remarkably well preserved and for its hand-woven silks. Kanchipuram is one of the seven sacred cities of India and it is the only one associated with both Shiva



and Vishnu. Visit Ekambareshwar Temple, Kailashnath Temple, Kamakshi Temple, the Vaikunthaperumal Temple, all built in the 7th and 8th centuries. With a weaving tradition dating back to the Pallava era (when silk was the royal cloth), Kanchipuram is justly famous for its particularly fine silk saris, embellished with stunning patterns. Visit the local homes of the weavers and watch them create magic out of silk thread into saris. Mahabalipuram is a small, quiet seaside resort with a unique 7th century Shore Temple, a lovely beach and some of the most beautiful rock cut temples in the world. Situated on the shore of the Bay of Bengal, Mahabalipuram was already a famous seaport in the 1st century AD. This town was a workshop for temple building. Visit the seven pagoda style shore temples, lashed by the waves of the sea and the seven rathas or temple chariots, a group of monolithic monuments & animal figures carved out of solid rock, the earliest known examples of Dravidian architecture. They were constructed in a single century long burst of creative enthusiasm, starting in the reign of Narasimhavarmam 1 (AD 630-68). End the visit by photography of the beautiful Shore temples at sunset. Overnight stay in Chennai.

Day 22: Chennai

After breakfast Sight seeing of Chennai The capital of the state of Tamil Nadu and the cultural Gateway to South India. The National Art Gallery, the Museum with some beautiful temple prizes and the finest collection of South Indian bronzes are quite interesting. St. Mary's Church, Peoples Park and the beautiful Marina Beach which is the second longest



beach in the world as well as the clock towers are worth visiting and evening see traditional Dances. Overnight stay in Chennai.

Day 23: Chennai

After breakfast transfer to airport for the onward destination.



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