

INDO ASIA DIARIES

Issue 02 | May 2015



INDO ASIA TOURS

Since 1987

FRAMED

CROSSING
CULTURES

TOP
SPOT

NEWS
& VIEWS

IA SAYS





James Leacock

A trailing spouse, I arrived in Bangalore in 2008. Like many people who arrive in India for the first time, I was simply astonished at what I saw, heard, felt and smelt! After a year or so I joined a group of photographers and we began to explore Bangalore and all it had to offer. Some of my favourite places of India are Varanasi, just one of the most spiritual and moving places on earth and Amritsar with its splendid temple and of course the wonderfully welcoming and hospitable Sikhs. Probably the highlight of five or so years photography in India was the opportunity to visit the Maha Kumbh Mela a couple of years ago. Currently residing and snapping in Hong Kong, India is a world apart but I will be forever grateful for my time there and the opportunity to engage in such a truly amazing and unique county.

www.facebook.com/jamesleacockphotography



NUDGE THE STORYTELLER IN YOU TO SUBMIT A PHOTOGRAPH FROM YOUR TRAVELS AND WIN A TRIP TO EXPLORE THE MARVELS OF INDIA.

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT](#)

FRAMED

CAMEL HERDER IN PUSHKAR MELA

Photo Location : Rajashtan, India



A farmer dashes through the tracks at the Kambala Buffalo race in Karnataka.

There are few more things more photogenic and exciting than local festivals in India - only a few. So if you get a chance to be part of any of the celebrations around Gods, historical figures, onset of seasons, full moons and nature, don't miss it.

Indians love to celebrate and consider yourself lucky if you can be included in the reverie. Not only are the festivals an exceptional way of photographing timeless ceremonies but also a great way to be invited to sumptuous feasts and night-long dance and music performances. It's like being let into a secret! Planning a trip around a major festival or even a local village celebration is the most authentic way of getting oriented to the region's culture. What more? Consider that you will be certainly invited to shake a leg and be fed with the zeal of a worried mother.

Festivals are also a time to shed inhibitions and acquire superlatives - whether it is bhaang (processed marijuana) induced merriment at Holi or largest congregation of devotees in the world at the Kumbh Mela. A mix of boisterous revelry, hypnotic strains folk tales, sumptuous food and sombre commemoration to Gods, the festivals of India offer an unmatched insight into the most authentic social fabric of the region. Apart from the more popular Diwali, Navratri, Durga Puja and Holi, look out for the regional festivals of the area that you are planning to visit. Chances are, that you may be able to tweak your plan and overlap the days and go on a cultural adventure - one that will be etched in your memory, forever.

Even in the coming months, despite the arrival of the great Indian Summer, you can find some of the most colourful festivals of India across the span of the country; Moatsu Festival in Nagaland, Chithirai in Madurai, Ganga Dushera on the ghats of Varanasi, the film festival of Dharamsala, Hemis in Leh or Ochira Kali in Kerala fill up



The hypnotic draw of the Kumbh Mela is hard to miss.

the days with boundless energy and fun. This is also the most ideal time to plan for the winter months between October and December. Nagaland's Hornbill Festival, Pushkar Mela and Bundi Utsav are some of the festivals to keep in mind for end of the year.

And don't forget some easy hacks to make the best use of your time.

Arrive early to catch behind the scene action, find an accomodation that is close by and mingle with the locals. Festivals are valuable assets of India and an excellent addition to the itinerary for culture vultures.

CROSSING CULTURES

FESTIVALS FOR CULTURE VULTURES

STORIES FROM THE SUB-CONTINENT



Deogarh – Time travel with the Kings of Mewar



**TOP
SPOT**

FRAMED

CROSSING
CULTURES

**TOP
SPOT**

NEWS
& VIEWS

IA SAYS



SUPRIYA SEHGAL

Footloose in Deogarh Journey into the heart of India.

A traveller for the last decade, Supriya has travelled to almost all parts of India, but the beauty of Rajasthan is still hard to fathom for her. The insipid browns of the dunes and sandstones are enriched with the bright colours of daily wear – pinks, reds and yellows are seen on men’s turbans as well women’s skirts and odhnis (shawls). And the same browns of the earth are chiseled to such perfection, that it’s hard to imagine what it must have taken to build forts and palaces of such exuberance. Supriya set out to cover the state, starting her journey from the capital and then to the key towns of Jodhpur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer and Bikaner. But what struck her as awe-striking was the rich culture in not only the main sights but the smaller destinations in between. The warm hospitality, timeless lesser-known palaces and distinct local vibe of a place is what makes every town, city and village of Rajasthan, unique in its own way.



Nothing better than tasting the authentic flavours of Mewar

The name Rajasthan conjures up images of undulating pale brown dunes dotted with a splash of colour with the bright dresses of locals, camel back rides, majestic forts and palaces rising like massive fairy tale set ups. Lore of the royal era and unimaginable splendour surrounds you. The sights and sounds of the state, pretty much define the Indian hospitality landscape as travellers imagine it to be. But once, when they set foot on in the vibrant land of Rajasthan, it is all what one expects, and more. Amongst the strains of heartfelt folk music and the balmy breeze that carry it to villages far and wide, one can fill the days



A village safari is a veritable addition to the itinerary

with visits to forts propped on hilltops, museums, local markets and havelis, which hoard a million stories.

Of all the experiences in Rajasthan, staying in a erstwhile palace has to be the most exquisite. Deogarh, in Rajasthan, fulfils all desires to feel like royalty of Mewar. The family’s roots can be traced back to being one of the sixteen feudal barons attending on the Maharaja of Udaipur. From the vast spread of the Kingdom, the family once ruled the fourth largest property in the whole of Rajasthan. The Deogarh family still occupies part of the palace and overlooks the smooth functioning of the parts that have been converted into the luxury heritage hotel. The customary Mewari hospitality is tinged with personalised attention, excellent service and hours of stories of the Kings of Rajasthan if you have an ear for them. Deogarh Mahal has lifted the bar to a superior level for heritage hospitality in the state.

Right from the entrance, to the courtyard and through to the rooms, the fort is befitting of what a royal stronghold would look like. A benchmark of heritage hospitality, the Deogarh family invites you into the luxurious fold of living like the Kings. Fill your days with village visits, camel cart rides, polo games, elephant football, cycling through the countryside, birdwatching and village visits to see local life at close quarters. The nature walk from Deogarh Mahal till Fort Seengh Sagar, village walk and a train ride on the 1930’s built rural train from Kamblighat to Phulad are some of the other additions to immerse in the Deogarh experience. It promises an unmatched time in the land of the Mewar Kings. So much so, that even after years, memories are hard to erase.

As Yvonne from Holland puts it, these are ‘romantic memories of Deogarh’. My story starts around 1997 when I was traveling monthly with groups from Jaipur to Udaipur – a tiring drive of 9 hours. A restful pitstop for lunch was much needed, but we couldn’t find something that would suit the clientele. Then I heard of a heritage



The splendor of Deogarh Mahal is best experienced in silence

property that had recently opened its doors to travellers. Deogarh came to our rescue. It was a time when mobile phones was a rarity and finding this mysterious property was a colossal task. Being a small village with a low city gate, the bus could not pass through. We had to drive around the city to the lake. From here, a canteen car took us to the fort through narrow streets, flanked with bright shops. On reaching the gate of Deogarh Fort, it was nothing like I had imagined. A majestic entrance and a bygone era welcomed us. Flower petals were sprinkled from a gallery, the beats of drums resounded in the palace and we got nothing short of a grand fairytale welcome. Food was served on pattals (plates made from leaves) - something we had never experienced before.

The heritage charm is still intact for many years. Not only with groups but I have also stayed at Deogarh privately and I am enthralled. The heritage hotel is the epitome of hospitality, with the lovely hosts giving ample personal attention to all the guests. Sweet memories of the moonlit nights in all the mirrors of the fort walls, the pelicans in the lake and the warm hospitality are still strong in my mind. There are not one but three options for guests – a choice between a caste, Singh Sagar (4 rooms in a small fort on an island) and Devshri Haveli (a heritage villa with 8 rooms)

TOP SPOT

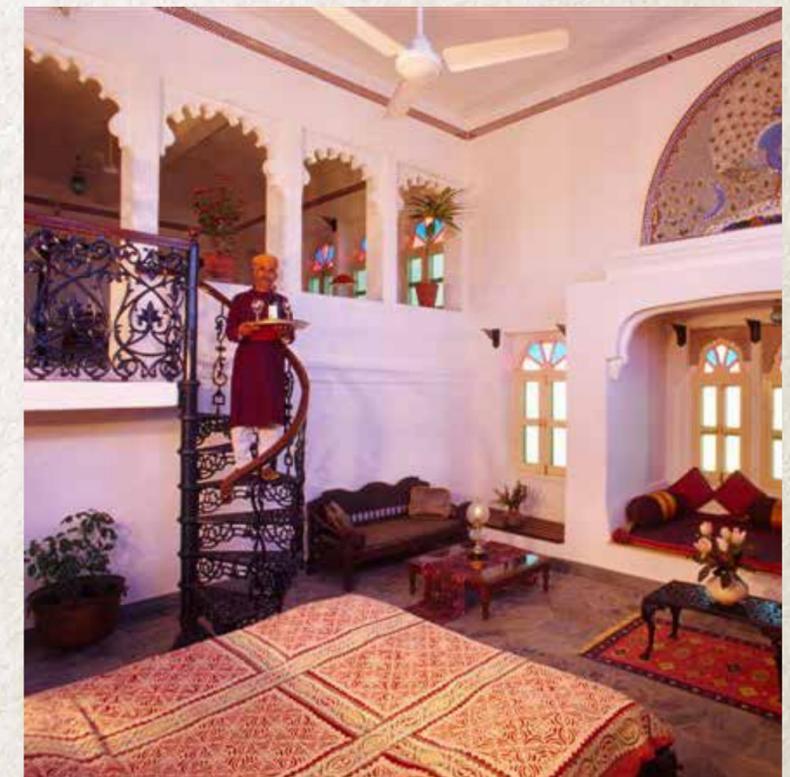


DEOGARH MAHAL

Abode of the Gods

- Built in 1670 A.D, Deogarh is the pride of the Aravallis.
- Renowned for miniature paintings.
- Restored and renovated meticulously for an exquisite stay.
- 3 Royal Suites, 2 2Deluxe Suites & 25 Deluxe Rooms transport you to a royal era.
- Soothing Ayurveda massages available at the Spa.
- Exclusive cuisines and dining atmosphere.
- Rural train ride for panoramic views of the scrub jungle, hills, tunnels 100-foot high bridges and lonely stations.
- Royal picnic based on a 200 year old miniature painting on a family fortress.
- Village excursions.
- Bird watching and nature walks.
- Excursions to local gems like the Jain Temples at Ranakpur, Kumbhalgarh Fort and Nathdwara and Eklingi temples.

www.theconsortiumhotels.com/deogarh.html



**TOP
SPOT**

FRAMED CROSSING CULTURES TOP SPOT NEWS & VIEWS IA SAYS



MEET US AT



Indo Asia Tours is participating in the below mentioned upcoming trade fairs. You can schedule an appointment at marketing@indoasiatours.com to meet us in person at these fairs :

- Arabian Travel Market, Dubai from 4th - 7th May, Hall 3 , Stand No. AS9320
- IMEX Frankfurt from 19-21 May, booth no A280

IA SAYS



“India is not just a destination, but an experience”.

your every hour count in India – be it a family vacation, a honeymoon, a spiritual retreat, cultural tour, ayurveda and wellness tour or a golf tour. Repeat clients give us the immense satisfaction to introduce them to different rich aspects of the country, which cannot be fully experienced in one trip. The country is so varied in landscape and traditions that every trip has an added charm with fresh perspective. It could be the adventure of climbing towering mountain peaks, bobbing in the luxurious houseboats of Kerala’s calm backwaters, tasting the fiery food of North India or getting immersed in the bustle of Rajasthan’s local markets – the choices are plenty.

As we always say, “India is not just a destination, but an experience”. At Indo Asia, we tirelessly strive to bring alive this experience with a dedicated team of staff with a collective pool of first-hand information from all over the subcontinent. Afterall, it is about creating the perfect experience called, ‘Hindustan’.

Sudesh Behl

For hundreds of centuries, India has held the mantle for being one of the most mystical destinations of the world. Remarkably prosperous in traditional crafts and arts, the country opens up like a Pandora’s box with hidden treasures for travellers across the world. Right from the rich history of the Indus valley civilization to a series of eras rife with culture, exploring India is a fulfilling journey of breathtaking sites, superlative culture and culinary surprises. The unique cultural ethos, coupled with the diversity across the length and breadth of the country, with all its ethnicities, is truly enthralling.

Indo Asia Tours strives to make this journey around India, exceptional on all aspects – be it comfort, range of activities and experiences and vivid memories to take back home. The spirit of Indian hospitality is what has guided our work for decades. We intend to make

EMPLOYEE
OF THE MONTH!



Yashpal Singh Negi | Asst Manager, Contracting

Having worked in Indo Asia Tours for more than 15 years, Yashpal is an asset to the company for not only his incredible and conscientious work, but his ever cheerful demeanour. Work crisis or not, you can always rely on Yashpal to put his best foot forward.