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# *Made for the Maharajas*

FORTS & PALACES,  
RAJASTHAN

An experience to fulfill the insatiable desire for the enigmatic phenomena, that of our erstwhile Maharajas. Capture the romance that was princely India, as your procession to the magnificently illuminated fort, preceded by horsemen is welcomed by caparisoned elephants, bedecked camels, drummers and musicians amidst shower of rose petals. Draped in traditional wear, experience a grand ceremony under a floral 'mandap' accompanied by the soul-stirring music of the shehnai. This fairytale evening will culminate in a royal feast on the sprawling environs.





# *Backwater Sojourn*

BACKWATERS, KERALA

As the noon sun starts its journey ahead, step into your abode in water – the traditional houseboat of Kerala. The serenity of the lake, matches the noiseless drifting of the boat. The view from the deck creates a spectacular experience, with the gentle winds caressing your skin. As the little settlements pass by, a Kathakali performance in its full grandeur entralls the audience, and the sparkling champagne flows as freely as the waters below. Fireworks and royal dinner at the Palace, completes the fairytale evening.



# *A night in the Thar* DUNES OF RAJASTHAN

An adventurous safari ride on camels and carts to the simmering sand dunes under the cover of darkness, illuminated with 'mashaals' (lighted torches) dotting the periphery. Mesmerise your senses with the exotic musical dance of the ancient Kalbelias (folk dancers) around the luxurious shelter of the tents, under the serene canopy of stars. An unimaginable night of sheer romance in the desert, with barbequed dinner around the blazing bonfire.







# *The Riversutra Luncheon*

WHITE WATER RAFTING, NEPAL & INDIA

A two hour scenic journey from the heritage rich Kathmandu brings you to another magical world. Aboard your raft on the swirling waters, the adrenaline rushing, you wrestle your way through the turbulent rapids to arrive at the picturesque environs of the luncheon party. The shimmering sands cloaked on one side by rising forests and flowing waters on the other; lazing under the expansive shades, hear the thundering waters clap against the rocks to create a musical harmony with the rustling of the leaves, the chirping of the woodside birds.....



# *The Great Mughals* AGRA, THE CITY OF TAJ

An evening of imperial opulence of the Mughal dynasty – the illuminated expansive courtyards and poolside gardens around the ever so lavish Amarvilas, with the beautiful mausoleum of love, the Taj Mahal visible in the backdrop. Like an emperor, walk through the stately welcome by the Mughal army. As you soak into the luxurious low seating comforted with deep cushions, under the regal gazebos; relish the barbecued cuisine cooked in pits right in front of you served by the soldier attendants, and let the exotic Mughal enthused dance performance enthrall your senses.







## Agra

Agra stands on the right bank of the river Yamuna, was once the seat of the Mughal rulers, the zenith of art and an enshrined romance. The passion of the Mughals for building endowed it with some of the loveliest buildings in the world, now world heritage monuments.

**Taj Mahal** a poem in white marble, this beautiful masterpiece was built by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in the memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. This perfectly symmetrical edifice is set amidst landscaped gardens on the banks of the Yamuna River. Its marble exterior reflects rose and golden tints at sunrise and sunset, while it is dazzling white during the day and glows pearl-like in the moonlight and during the monsoon.

**Agra Fort** designed and built by Akbar in 1565 AD, houses the beautiful Pearl Mosque and numerous palaces. The Agra fort is on the same bank of the Yamuna as the Taj Mahal, which is visible in all its beauty from one side of the fort. Emperor Shahjahan, a prisoner of his son Aurangzeb in his old age was put in a cell from where he could gaze at the Taj Mahal. It is an imposing structure with walls of red sandstone almost three kilometers long.

**Fatehpur Sikri**, a beautiful and deserted medieval city built by Mughal emperor Akbar in the 16th century to serve as the capital of his vast empire, was later abandoned for lack of water.



## Delhi

In its 3000 years of existence; seven cities have risen where the present capital of India stands. It is a fascinating blend of ancient and contemporary architecture, where government buildings, medieval palaces and bazaars exist beside a modern metropolis.

**Red Fort**, a 17th century imposing fortress, built in red sandstone, holds exquisite palaces and beautiful gardens.

Opposite the Red Fort lies **Jama Masjid** made of red sandstone and white marble, completed in 1656 is India's largest mosque where more than 20,000 people can kneel in prayer.

The **Raj Ghat** on the banks of the river Yamuna is Mahatma Gandhi's Memorial, where he was cremated following his assassination in January 1948.

**India Gate**, commemorates the 90,000 Indian soldiers killed in the Afghan War of 1919, their names are engraved on the arch and foundations.

**The Rashtrapati Bhawan** once the Viceroy's residence, now the official residence of the President of India is an exemplary example of British architecture.

**The Humayun's Tomb**, built in the 16th century is an early example of Mughal architecture, considered the predecessor of the Taj Mahal. It is the only Persian dome in India.

**Qutab Minar**, the landmark of Delhi, is a nine-storied tower of victory around 72.5m high. The most striking feature, are the verses from the Holy Quran that have been inscribed on its walls.







## Cochin

Cochin or Kochi is till date influenced by medieval Portugal, Holland and England. The city displays a blend of different people and architecture and it is one place where you can see a Jewish synagogue, Portuguese churches, Dutch architecture, Mosques, Hindu temples and Chinese fishing nets.

**St. Francis Church** is the oldest church built by Europeans in India. On his 3rd visit to Kerala, Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese trader who reached India from Europe by sea, fell ill and died in Kochi. He was buried in the St. Francis Church. Later his remains were taken back to Portugal. In spite of that, his burial spot inside the church has been clearly marked out.

**Chinese Fishing Nets:** The Chinese fishing nets (Cheenavala) are distinctly unique to Cochin. It is believed that traders from the court of the Chinese ruler Kublai Khan introduced these nets here. Oddly, these nets are found only in Kochi, outside China! Many fishermen earn their livelihood by fishing using these massive nets. A whole stretch of the coast along Fort Kochi and Vypeen are dotted with these nets.

The colorfully costumed **Kathakali Dance Drama** is a mask dance form of Kerala usually performed by males and is 1500 years old. This classical dance has 24 mudras expressing the nine emotions of serenity, wonder, kindness, love, valour, fear, contempt, loathing and anger.



## Nepal: Kathmandu

Kathmandu city is a living museum, with its magnificent Durbar Square, and the highest concentration of palaces, monuments and temples of unique architecture.

**The Shiva-Parvati Temple**, is a three storey temple famous for its erotic stone carvings.

The 2000-year-old stupa of Swayambunath, situated 70 m above the level of valley, is referred to as the 'Monkey Temple' and is believed to be famous in the tantric cult.

**Bodhnath** is one of the oldest, biggest imposing Buddhist monuments ever built in Nepal, standing some 36 meters on a massive three level mandala style platform surrounded by colourful private family houses. This stupa is said to have been built in the 5th century AD.

**Pashupatinath Temple** holds the most sacred of Nepal's Shiva shrines, located near the holy river Bagmati. This Hindu temple's twin-roofed pagoda is of gold-gilt-brass and the gateways are silver-plated.

**Bhaktapur** is the home of medieval art and architecture. Founded in the 9th century, it is shaped like a conch shell. The Durbar Square with its array of temples, is overlooked by the palace of 55 Windows built by King Bupatindra Malla. The Nyatapola Temple is the best example of the Pagoda style and stands on five terraces, on each of which stands a pair of figures, famous strong men, elephants, lions, griffins and goddesses.

Town of **Patan** or Lalitpur (City of Beauty and Fine Art) is an ancient city filled with exotic pagodas, intricate gateways, fabulous deities, and endless carvings.







**JAISALMER** is known as the 'Golden City of India' due to the use of yellow sandstone in every architectural form, giving a amber hue to the city. Situated in the middle of the vast Thar Desert, it is crowned by a commanding fort, which is still the site of an entire living area, home to a quarter of the city's population. Jaisalmer retains its medieval charm, which is evident in its colourful narrow streets, and intricately carved, opulent havelis built by the wealthy merchants of this important caravan route.

**Sand Dunes** near Sam village, now fenced to avoid the encroachment of further land by the district authorities, is one side of the Border road. The sunrise and the sunset at the Dunes have its own specialty.

**JODHPUR** known as the 'Blue City', is flanked on its western side by the Mehrangarh Fort, and on the eastern side by the stately sandstone Palace of Umaid Bhawan; its monuments, temples and gardens depict a multi-faceted grandeur.

**Mehrangarh Fort** on the outskirts of Jodhpur, was founded by Rao Jodha in 1459 AD and stands 90 m high above the blue city. It is an imposing site visible from a far distance. The fort houses a museum of miniature paintings of various schools, that have won many accolades and awards and an impressive Sileh Khana, the armoury section.

**Jaswant Thada**, built in the memory of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II, is an imposing white marble memorial marking the site of a royal crematorium. The four cenotaphs house portraits of successive rulers and commemorates notable acts of bravery and generosity of the four successive rulers.

**UDAIPUR**, the 'City of Lakes' founded in 1559 AD by Maharana Udai Singh on the banks of Lake Pichola.

The rich cultural and natural heritage is preserved through the surrounding lakes, rolling hills of the Aravalli range and lush green vegetation.

**City Palace** built on the banks of Lake Pichola is an impressive complex of several palaces, blending both Rajput and Mughal influences. Half of it is still occupied by the Royal family, and part converted into a museum.

**Sahelion-ki Bari**, an ornamental pleasure garden specially made for the ladies of the palace in the 18th century, has innumerable beautiful fountains, trees and flowers.







# Rajasthan

Rajasthan is the most colourful region in India, if not in the world. Literally the 'Land of Kings', much of India's history comes from this awe-inspiring land. Rajasthan still retains an elusive fairy-tale character, where the tales of valour of its medieval Rajput warriors are still sung by its traveling bards.

**JAIPUR**, the fascinating capital of Rajasthan, popular as the Pink City due to the terracotta-like paint finish of its buildings, was built in 1727 AD by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, who followed a grid system, making it the only planned city of its time. The beauty is that, till date the city gives one a feel of a medieval town.

**Amber Fort**, situated at a height of 130m, surrounded by the picturesque Aravali hills was the ancient capital of the Kachhawaha Rajputs till 1037.

The palace of winds or the **Hawa Mahal** is a five- storied building with just a 25cm thick façade and 953 windows and niches, for ladies of the royal family to view processions and festivals without being visible to the people.

**City Palace** right at the center of Jaipur, houses the Royal residence and museums with collections of textiles and costumes, armoury, manuscripts, paintings etc.

**Jantar Mantar** (1728-34) was built by the astrologer King Jai Singh II. The instruments are built of stone and metal, each serving a particular function and are accurate till date.

