

Specialized - Customized - Personalized Journeys to India & Beyond

Our expertise is your advantage

CST 209-9942-40



Escorted by
Tara Gupta, CTIE
President

MEMBER
NSA
NATIONAL SPEAKERS ASSOCIATION

india  by design



Taj, Tigers & the Pushkar Fair 2011

An Insider's Adventure (limited to 15 guests)

Day by Day Itinerary – 13 Nights

Tour begins in New Delhi on Friday 28th Oct 2011

Tour Ends in New Delhi on Thursday 10th November 2011

On a Journey with Tara, the Possibilities are Endless & the Discoveries Magical!



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Pre-tour days in Delhi – When you arrive in New Delhi, we will gladly provide a private transfer from IGI airport to your hotel in the city center (nominal charge)

Day/s at leisure to recover from jet lag or to explore the several **“Insiders’ Experience”** with Tara – E.g. On 26th October, celebrate Diwali, the Festival of Lights with Tara and her close family/friends. Have tea/meal with a local multi-generational family living together in a family home. Explore the many museums of Delhi; attend a worship ceremony at a temple, gurudwara or monastery; shop for beautiful cottons and silks and get your clothes custom tailored by Tara’s Tailor Master for over 25 years. Or simply relax at an Ayurvedic Spa or dine at the several gourmet restaurants of Delhi. Whether you want to eat where the locals eat or want fine dining with gourmet cuisine at one of the luxurious hotel restaurants, you have several choices – including delicious vegetarian street food (Chaat) of Northern India, a truly authentic South Indian meal or perhaps you want to chat with students over dinner time in their college dining room.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Hotel Lalit (formerly Intercontinental)

Day 1 New Delhi – Friday 28th October 2011:

Our representative awaits your group arrival at IGI airport to escort you to your hotel in the city center.

After a leisurely breakfast we discover New Delhi with its war memorial, **India Gate**, the impressive palatial sized buildings of **Rajpath** and **President’s House**, designed and built by the British in the 1920’s. Explore the ruins of **Qutab Minar**, a world heritage site, an excellent example of Afghan architecture. Soak in the peace and tranquility of the **Lotus temple** (Bahai temple) which signifies purity and equality of all religions. At the **Akshardham Temple** we enjoy a leisurely walk through the grounds with its musical fountains and lights show.

Tonight, you are invited to a home cooked typical Punjabi meal at Tara’s home with her family and childhood friends.

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner **Hotel:** Hotel Lalit (formerly Intercontinental)



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Day 2 New Delhi to Agra – Saturday 29th October 2011

This morning we head out to explore the historical monuments of Old Delhi. We visit, **Red Fort**, a beautiful red sandstone monument built in 1648. We take a rickshaw ride through the narrow alleys of **Chandni Chowk** a colorful and bustling market of Old Delhi. We visit **Jama Masjid**, the largest mosque in India and stop at **Raj Ghat**, the memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, to pay our respects to the Father of the Nation.

After lunch we depart for Agra by our motor-coach. *The evening is at leisure to enjoy a relaxed dinner with cultural performance at a restaurant of your choice or at your hotel.*

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** The Gateway Hotel (Taj Group) with Taj view rooms.

Day 3 Agra – Sunday 30th October 2011

We begin exploring this city of the Mughals after breakfast. We drive to Fatehpur Sikri – a perfectly preserved red sandstone “ghost town” which was the estranged capital of Mughal Emperor Akbar, built in 1569 and deserted when its water supply failed. Then we visit **Agra Fort**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site situated on the banks of river Yamuna. Inside this massive red sandstone Fort, we witness the medieval lifestyles of 16th and 17th century Mughal emperors. We also visit **Itmad-ud-Daula's Tomb**, a Mughal mausoleum often called the Baby Taj, regarded as a draft of the Taj Mahal. Built by Nūr Jahān, for her father Mirzā Ghiyās Beg, on the left bank of the Yamuna river, the walls are of white marble encrusted with semi-precious stone decorations - cornelian, jasper, lapis lazuli, onyx, and topaz. Time permitting we will enjoy a rickshaw ride through the city which reveals the hustle bustle of Agra’s old markets.

The evening is at leisure to perhaps enjoy a relaxed dinner with cultural performance at a restaurant of your choice or at your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** The Gateway Hotel (Taj Group) with Taj view rooms.



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Day 4 Agra to Ranthambhore – Monday 31st October 2011

Wake up early to fall under the spell of the spectacular **Taj Mahal**, at sunrise. Bathed in the glowing light of dawn we will bask in the glory of this world famous mausoleum with its perfect architecture, as its white marble reflects the rays of the rising sun. We return to our hotel for breakfast and relax before heading out to shop for marble inlay work, handicrafts, carpets and artwork for which Agra is well known.

We continue our journey to Ranthambhore National Park, a wildlife enthusiast and photographer's dream with its numerous species of animals, birds and reptiles. Evening is at leisure to enjoy the resort amenities or browse the local village arts and craft factories and shops.

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner **Hotel:** Dev Vilas

Day 5 Ranthambhore – Tuesday, 1st November 2011

Today you will venture out for **two game drives** by Jeep - one in the early morning and the other in the afternoon.

With an area of 400 sq. km encompassing rocky hillcrests which descend to open valleys, dotted with water pools and fruit trees, this park gets its name from the thousand year old fortress, which looms above the forest. Well known for the diurnal activity of tigers, Ranthambhore is an unusual area where a natural present meets a historical past. Gazelles, Sambar, Cheetal, Chinkara, Nilgai, Langoor, wild bull, the elusive leopard and a few tigers are regularly sighted.

Evening is at leisure to enjoy the resort amenities or browse the local village arts and craft factories and shops.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner **Hotel:** Dev Vilas



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Day 6 Ranthambhore to Jaipur – Wednesday 2nd November 2011

After a leisurely breakfast we leave for Jaipur, the fabled “pink city” of the desert named after Jai Singh, the former Maharaja of Jaipur. The palaces and forts of the yesteryears, which were witnesses to the royal processions and splendors are now living monuments. In Jaipur, experience the charm of traditional Rajasthan Royalty during your stay at your Heritage hotel.

This afternoon, we visit the **City Palace** and the **Palace Museum** to see its fabulous display of miniature paintings and traditional Rajasthani royal costumes. We stop at **Hawa Mahal** as a backdrop for a brief photo opportunity. A stunning monument of 5 stories with 365 windows, it is also known as the Palace of Winds. Its façade is encrusted with delicate screens and carved balconies from which the royal ladies, confined to their quarters, could sneak views of the outside world. We visit **Jantar Mantar**, Jai Singh's observatory, where time has been accurately measured since the 17th century.

Enjoy a relaxed evening at your resort to see a cultural program with dinner at your hotel. Or perhaps visit a gem and jewelry factory followed by shopping in the bazaars for colorful Jaipuri fabrics, artwork, handicrafts, jewelry and gemstones.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Shahpura House

Day 7 Jaipur – Thursday 3rd November 2011

A not-to-be-missed opportunity is a visit to the massive **Amber Fort**, one of the most splendid examples of Rajasthani architecture. Relive the days of the Maharajas and ride a fantastically caparisoned elephant to reach the top of the Amber palace. Inside the Fort we will see the Hall of Victory or Jag Mandir and the famed Sheesh Mahal, a room with its walls and ceiling completely embedded with glittering mirrors specially imported from Belgium at the time.

Rest of the day is at leisure to relax at your resort. Enjoy ayurvedic spa treatments or dinner show. Or shop in the bazaars for colorful Jaipuri fabrics, artwork, handicrafts, jewelry and gemstones.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Shahpura House



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Day 8 Jaipur – Pushkar – Friday 4th November 2011

After breakfast we drive to the sleepy little village of **Pushkar**, which comes alive with thousands of tourists who converge to witness the annual Camel and Cattle Fair during Kartik Purnima. Surrounded by hills on three sides, Pushkar, abounds in temples, the most famous being the only Brahma Temple of the country. Once a year, the entire region is pulsating in a week-long celebration of fun and games with threads of religious fervour. Bedecked and festooned cattle wait in clouds of sand and pilgrims come from across the world to take a dip in this holy Lake with its fifty-two bathing Ghats. This is a unique opportunity to see all the colors and traditions of Rajasthan in one place and an experience you will never forget.

Ride a camel cart to the village to visit the **Brahma Temple**. Built with marble, decorated with silver coins and a silver turtle on the floor, the temple enshrines a life-size idol of Lord Brahma. See **Pushkar Lake**, one of the most sacred spots in India, believed to have been created by the lotus petals, which fell from the hand of Lord Krishna.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner **Hotel:** Pushkar Fort

Day 9 Pushkar – Saturday 5th November 2011

Enjoy an entire day at the Pushkar Fairgrounds. Witness a fascinating mix of activities including camel trading, cattle racing, cattle beauty contests, acrobatics, cultural shows, music and dance performances and competitions. Perhaps enjoy this spectacle from the skies in a hot-air balloon ride over the Fair Grounds at sunrise or at sun-set.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner **Hotel:** Pushkar Fort

Day 10 Pushkar – Jodhpur Sunday 6th November 2011

This morning we drive to Jodhpur, once the capital of the state Marwar. At the edge of the great Thar Desert, Jodhpur is built on the slopes of a low sandstone hill. At the summit of this hill, above a perpendicular cliff stands the **Meherangarh Fort**, an imposing landmark built in 1459. A visit inside the fort reveals handsome, red sandstone palaces, barracks, temples and havelis with delicately latticed windows and pierced screens. The palaces – Moti Mahal, Phool Mahal, Sheesh Mahal and other apartments are exquisitely decorated with traditional paintings that still grace the ceilings and walls. Nearby is **Jaswant Thada**, a royal crematorium in marble, built in 1899 for Maharaja Jaswant Singh.

Evening is at leisure to browse the local markets and shop for Rajasthani fabrics, antiques and paintings.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Marugarh



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Day 11 Jodhpur – Ranakpur – Udaipur Monday 7th November 2011

En route our drive to Udaipur we stop at the superbly preserved Jain Temples of Ranakpur built in the 15th century. In the centre is the main “Chaumukha Temple” dedicated to Adinath. The most distinctive features are the 29 halls supported by 1444 pillars, of which no two are exactly alike. Every conceivable surface is carved and every corner and angle is engraved with Jain images.

After lunch we continue to Udaipur, surrounded by the ancient Aravali Mountains and set on the edge of three lakes. Udaipur is a brilliant kaleidoscope of narrow lanes flanked by bright stalls, gardens, lakes, palaces and temples. The evening is at leisure to enjoy the royal surroundings of your luxurious hotel and the multitude dining opportunities of this romantic **City of Dawn**.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Chunda Palace

Day 12 Udaipur Tuesday 8th November 2011

Today we explore the majestic **City Palace**, an architectural marvel perched on a hill with incredible views of Lake Pichola. A conglomeration of courtyards, pavilions, terraces, corridors, rooms and hanging gardens, each palace within its walls is an outstanding creation of art. We also visit the **Bhartiya Lok Kala Museum** which houses an immense collection of Indian folk art, costumes, ornaments, puppets, masks, dolls and musical instruments. Stroll through **Sahelion ki Bari** or “Ladies Garden”, with its rich foliage and intricately designed fountains. A highlight of the day will be a **boat ride on Lake Pichola** on which the majestic Lake Palace Hotel is situated. The view of the city palace, the ghats and the skyline around the lake is spectacular. We dock at the Jagmandir Island where Shah Jehan was once given sanctuary by the Maharana of Udaipur.

This evening we gather over a farewell dinner to toast this fascinating journey with our fellow travelers.

Meals: Breakfast and Dinner **Hotel:** Chunda Palace



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Day 13 Udaipur – Delhi Wednesday 9th November 2011

After breakfast we drive to the airport for a domestic flight back to Delhi. Rest of the day is at leisure.

Perhaps explore “**Dilli Haat**” a beautiful food and crafts bazaar in South Delhi which is like a treasure house of Indian culture, handicrafts and ethnic cuisine. Alternatively, near your hotel you can browse the shops of **Janpath**, **Palika Bazaar**, the various State Emporiums and Connaught Place.

Meals: Breakfast **Hotel:** Hotel Lalit (formerly Intercontinental)

Day 14 New Delhi – Home Thursday 10th November 2011

Your day is at leisure until hotel check-out.

For those departing today, a transfer to IGI airport for your onward journey is included. If you are spending a few more days in Delhi, Please arrange your “insider experiences” with Tara at the time of reservations.

Meals: Breakfast