

# Rajasthan- a Tactile Textile Tour

## 8–27 October, 2016

### Lead by Fiona Wright

#### Praveen Nayak.

This is the tour our company started with, an adventure through the dramatic desert state of Rajasthan and beyond...

As always our tour has the opportunity for lots of hands-on activities- a goldwork embroidery workshop, chundri [tie and dye], indigo dyeing with mud resist block print, ideas for a travel journal, a day in our own workshop- block printing your own scarf, and a cooking class so you can later share some of the wonderful flavours of India with your friend's back home.

We include a visit to a wonderful old fort in Gurgurat where our host's family have been the rulers of the area for the past eight generations. Wandering through the local market we can visit the knife and arrow maker, a potter and watch life slowly pass by. We squeeze in a visit to the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad as well as spending a few days relaxing in Udaipur.

A sunset camel [or camel cart] safari before dinner and gypsy dancing, mighty forts and palaces, serene temples, bustling market places; the list of new experiences seems endless.

As they say- "In India, madam/sir anything is possible!"

**Creative Arts Safaris tours are – art and culture based with a hands-on, get out and about type attitude.**

- all inclusive utilising good quality mid-range up to flash accommodation and excellent dining experiences – *we look for atmospheric places to stay [off the beaten tourists trails where possible] always good, clean bathrooms, friendly service and comfortable rooms.*

- groups of 8-14 participants

*These trips are not traditional package tours, rather it is hoped we can travel as a group of friends; Creative Arts Safaris have done the research, our tutor handles the artistic side and a host makes sure it runs smoothly; we all share our observations and knowledge along the way. [any info you pick up in preparation is easy to share with the group via the internet and helps you 'meet' the others too]*

**Day 1-Sat 8 Oct, 2016**

Home/New Delhi

Arrivals and airport pickups at New Delhi Airport.

**Day 2-Sun 9 Oct, 2016**

Delhi

Sightseeing Delhi and gently easing our way into India.

**Lakshmi Narayan Temple-** you always visit the Gods before a new undertaking and this temple, built by the Industrialist Birla in the 1930's has a lovely feel. To the left of the main temple is a small description of the significance of

the sacred swastika to Hindus which is good to grasp at the outset as you see it everywhere and it can be a shock for Westerners (and the true depth of perversion of the Nazi's use of it can be understood).

**Raj Ghat-** to pay our respects at the cremation site of Gandhi, the beloved hero of India. [Knowing the nation's greatest hero is a man of vision and peace and their most recognised building is a monument to love tells you a lot about this place]

**Akshardhan-** [www.akshardham.com] a brand new temple complex [opened Nov, 2005]- a superb example of stone and marble carving- I am sure a new wonder of the world in its workmanship. 300,000,000 man hours went into the carving and construction over 5 years- breathtaking! Great lunches here as well.

**Craft Museum-** an absolutely wonderful display of textiles and many other craft items in a traditional style building. As the displays tend to be a bit dark, but are displayed in such a way that you can almost put your nose on them I would suggest a magnifying glass (some of the handwork is so fine you can hardly see the stitches!). [inc- breakfast, dinner]

**Day 3 -Mon 10 Oct, 2016**

Delhi/ Agra, UP

Early start for Agra and to whet your appetite first stop is **Itimad-ud-Daulah** [sometimes called the little Taj] I think the fine stone inlay here would be fabulous inspiration for a quilt. Later a visit to A Zardozi [Goldwork] Embroidery Museum and a free evening round out our day.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 4- Tues 11 Oct, 2016**

Agra

Early morning visit to the Taj Mahal, watch as the colours change and the dome starts to glow as the sun lights it up and the colourful crowds of people start to arrive, and then we will spend the afternoon in a Goldwork embroidery workshop as students.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 5- Wed 12 Oct, 2016**

Agra /Jaipur, Rajasthan

Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's atmospheric abandoned city in the cool of the morning and then onto Jaipur. Our afternoon will be dedicated to visiting some contemporary designers, nice coffee and cake and cruising.

**Day 6- Thurs 13 Oct, 2016**

Jaipur

We visit Bagru village for a mud resist and indigo dyeing workshop in the morning before visiting City Palace and their great textile museum, evening free.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 7- Fri 14 Oct, 2016**

Jaipur /Udaipur

Today is a bit of a long drive, the good news is that at the other end we will be in the heart of Udaipur and its chilled out old city, our home for the next few days. Afternoon is free to check out the neighbourhood. [inc-breakfast, lunch]

**Day 8- Sat 15 Oct, 2016**

Udaipur

First off we will visit City Palace, this magnificent complex stretches for ever along the shore of Lake Pichola. On the highest point is the oldest part which we will visit, then comes a part turned into a heritage hotel, then the section where the current Maharana lives. This is not a typo -he is a Maharana which is a higher rank than a Maharaja and although since Independence he has no legal status, he still takes a great interest in his former kingdom and is much beloved by it's people.

Then a twirl around the market - we can show you Sadhna women's co-operative- superb stitch work. Fancy a visit to a great street for sparkles and haberdashery? Turban market around the corner,

**Cost – US \$ 4350-** twin share

Single US\$ 1250

Deposit US\$ 1800 to book today

Booking Deadline 8 July, 2016

Full payment due 8 July, 2016

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or phone +91 998 203 2755

# Creative Arts Safaris

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after lunch we will visit  
[inc-breakfast]

**Day 9– Sun 16 Oct, 2016**

Udaipur

Today we will visit Yaqob-ji, a well respected block printer and master of tie and dye for a workshop in chundri [tie and dye]. Later in the day....time to catch your breath , wander the markets at your leisure or hang out around the pool and have a massage.

We'll take you for cocktails and dinner at the Maharana's Garden Restaurant in the evening.

[inc-breakfast, dinner]

**Day 10-Mon 17 Oct, 2016 Udaipur/Ahmedabad, Gurgurat**  
Ahmedabad is busy, busy.

Our Heritage Hotel is like an oasis in this bustling place; we have an afternoon in tuk tuks planned, taking in the sites of the Old City and then we will venture forth to the Sparkle Market for a sparkling, beaded and embellished textiles experience. Get ready to barter hard here at Sparkle Central

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 11– Tues 18 Oct, 2016**

We hope to visit the Calico Museum this morning.... unfortunately paperwork is crazy at this venue and they will not confirm our visit until 3 months before. We have put our name on the list– keep your fingers crossed.

Lunch at the Gandhi Ashram and an afternoon visit to the inspiring Gramshree Women's Co-operative.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Notes**

**Weather** – At this time of year is warm in the daytime but perhaps evenings and mornings can be cool; a cardigan and socks appreciated

**Clothing** – light weight layers of clothing is good. To respect local customs it is best for skirts or trousers to be mid-calf length at least, tops not too revealing. Light, loose layers work well with the climate. Generally I find 3 or 4 outfits sufficient, there is always the opportunity to pick up things along the way. Pack a pair of socks and cardigan for the cool of the morning.

**Shoes** – sensible walking shoes such as sneakers or strapped on sandals are the best options. Surfaces are often rough and you really want your footing stable so you can focus on all the wonderful things everywhere to look at! Pair of rubber thongs or flip-flops are good – often bathrooms are marble and can be slippery when wet.

**Money** – ATMs are everywhere so you can use a travel card, visa debit or credit advance easily. If you plan to use a card overseas DO warn your bank to expect overseas activity – some will freeze the card wondering what is happening.

Money changes can be found to change travellers cheques or currency.

**Camera** – we have a laptop so can download your pictures onto a memory stick [don't forget your connection leads].

**Power** – 240 volts, European adaptor plugs are the most useful.

**Begging?** – is generally not to be encouraged. Giving gifts of pens and lollies to children is encouraging them to learn a begging mentality [if you like to give a gift to children we can hand it onto a school]. There is no pension in India – a few rupees to a very old person or a handicapped person is very kind.

**Tippling?** – it is the local custom so have a pocket full of small change to be ready If you receive a personal service – e.g. bags into or out of hotel, cup of tea through room service, laundry delivery, it is customary to give a tip [10-50 rp]. If you enjoy the commentary of a guide, a performance, take a photo of some one posing in the street etc it is customary to give them a 20-50 Rp tip. Set something aside for our driver – he will take us safely and comfortably through the adventure of many Indian roads.

**Step lightly** on our environment, be frugal in water use, turn off power switches, take rubbish with you where possible.

**Say NO to Plastic!** Please bring a cloth carry bag.

**Day 12-Wed 19 Oct, 2016** Ahmedabad/ Poshina  
Patan and a fabulous Step-well, then the double ikat Patolia weavers of Patan and a family of silk/cotton musru weavers.

Heading onto Poshina we will be staying in the home of the hereditary rulers of the area. Our host and his wife always offer us a warm welcome and the most fantastic home cooked meals in their lovely old Fort. Ask to see their collection of Indian textiles or visit the kitchen when dinner is cooking for some clues on their delicious recipes

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 13–Thurs 20 Oct, 2016**

Poshina

Another day in the Zenana [women's quarters of this old fort]

Much to do here– lots of relaxing, stitching, journals in the courtyard, jeeps to visit local villages and a serene lake, wander through the market to see the arrow makers [and yes they are still used out there in the hills], potters and an ancient temple defaced by the last Mughal Aurangzeb hundreds of years ago.

Feel like a king or queen and do nothing.... Drinks of the terrace in the evening a must

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Creative Arts Safaris tours include:**

- pickups from the airport for arrivals on Day 1
- departures last day of tour

*[we are happy to organise pick-ups if you arrive earlier or depart later at an extra fee, we are also happy to help with accommodation etc if you wish to stay longer]*

- accommodation from the evening of Day 1 up to and including the night of our Farewell Dinner

*Our accommodation is generally mid-range. We use heritage hotels where we can. All places are clean, friendly and have western bathrooms! It is the ambiance and friendliness we are looking for. This is the range where we may meet locals as well – top end is far removed from this and just full of foreigners!*

- all transportation, road taxes and fuel costs for the tour
- all breakfasts and many other meals

*Food is a reflection of the culture and we are pleased to say we will sample a range of good dining experiences.*

- sightseeing entrance fees [which covers the use of a still camera]

- all tuition fees

**You need to cover:**

- some meals
- all drinks
- laundry
- the one expense that we can't guestimate' for you is shopping! *[this is not a shopping expedition but you will see some amazing things and you will probably want to indulge!]*

- **airfares**

- **travel insurance**

- **visa** [necessary]

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organisations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category [more info in the notes to follow] Don't worry there are also lots of other markets and bazaars we can visit too!

In India we look after our drivers and support staff and only use hotels where our drivers also receive good quality accommodation [some hotels look after their guests and treat their driver miserably]. We have decided to use heritage hotels where we can. They are wonderful, atmospheric places and we believe it helps to keep them maintained rather than leave them deteriorating...

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**Day 14– Fri 21 Oct, 2016** Poshina/ Jodhpur, Raj  
Visiting the Dhurrie Rug Weavers of the Bishnoi people along the way to Jodhpur. The family of weavers have impressed earlier tours with their vivid colour range and the quality of their workmanship.

An afternoon visit to the Clock Tower Market, quite a few second hand dealers here and other bits and pieces....a good spot for great traditional sparkle bangles– Madam should never have her wrists naked, you know.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 15– Sat 22 Oct, 2016** Jodhpur/ Pushkar

First a visit to the mighty Mehrangarh Fort, this Palace and Fort is truly the fabric of fairy tales- the might, courage and culture of the proud Rajasthani people shines out from this Fort. Later we be travelling through many a camel packed village as we head to Pushkar, our home base. To welcome you with desert hospitality we will have a camel safari [or camel cart if you like] out to our place, we will cook dinner together— a relaxed Cooking Class [we will email a small booklet of our current favourite meals so you can cook for those at home] then Gypsy Dancers will perform later in the evening...swirly skirts for dancing are fun.

[inc- breakfast, dinner]

**Day 16– Sun 23 Oct, 2016** Pushkar

Everyone loves our local market, so many little nooks and crannies to check out, and we have our own workshop just outside our town...today will be a chance for a blockprint workshop to create your own scarf and time to wander the market. IF we pre-plan, you can send us block designs– we'll have them carved and waiting for you when you arrive. [cost for this is an extra]

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 17– Mon 24 Oct 2016** Pushkar/ Jaipur

Heading north to Jaipur today– we'll veist a papermill on the way– cotton waste converted to beautiful papers.

This afternoon is un-planned but we are in Jaipur so the possibilities are large...if you like I we could visit a few textile dealers I love to peak into or you can take a tuk tuk and explore at leisure. We'll plan on the way.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, ]

**Day 18– Tues 25 Oct, 2016** New Delhi/ Jaipur

Heading up to Delhi today...but first a lovely morning visit to Anhoki Blockprint Museum and another step well– completely different to others we have visited...something that would have given Escher a buzz!

Then off to Delhi –after your arrival take a visit to the market around our Delhi hotel I know you will be itching to get our there again this afternoon, and it will feel so much more relaxed than your first days here when India seemed to foreign and busy.

[inc- breakfast, lunch ]

**Day 19– Wed 26 Oct, 2016** New Delhi

Last day of sightseeing, we will start in the peaceful Lodi Gardens and then head to Khan Market for looking at contemporary textiles [yes I mean shopping in this up-market shopping area]. Check out Fab India and Anokhi shop for some great stuff and look at all the other interesting boutiques. Yummy cosmopolitan restaurants as well.

In the evening we will celebrate our time together with a Farewell Dinner.

[inc- breakfast, dinner]

**Day 20– Thurs 27 Oct, 2016** New Delhi/ home

Departures from Delhi Airport.

We will drop you to the airport.

[breakfast]

**A little preparation will really add to your experience, here are a few suggestions– see what your local library has to offer....**

Movies-Have a look at a Bollywood movie or two- lots of hype and glam but you will also get some idea of the intricacy of family relationships

- Gandhi- his presence is still very much an influence to life here
- The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel...charming, almost India certainly quite true in the way things happen

A good read

**Michael Woods– A History of India. Excellent book or DVD very approachable and concise history of India– Great introduction to this ancient and continuous culture.**

William Dalrymple- a British writer who lives in India, anything he writes is worth a read.

-*City of the Djinns*- a year in Delhi- great insight into the history of Delhi.-*White Mughals- The Age of Kali*

Madhyr Jaffrey- *Climbing the Mango Tree*- autobiography a of a well known food writer, excellent read and great recipes

And much more to discover....

My latest finds have been by Indu Sundaresan "*The Taj Trilogy*" great background history in the form of novels for the times around the creation of the Taj Mahal. Good read.

### Fair Trade

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organizations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category.

By Fair Trade we mean those places where the products are produced with the workers being paid a 'liveable' wage. Some of these projects also support healthcare and education for the families of their workers.

The Indian Government actively supports the founding of Craft Peoples' Co-operatives, with education and marketing support, tax breaks and help with visa card access. The combined bargaining power of a Co-operatives means better prices for the workers, a combined buying power for better priced materials and being able to collectively meet the demands of the marketplace.

A Co-operative takes the power of determination into the people's own hands rather than terms being dictated to them if they work at piece work. When working at piece-work materials are delivered to them, work must be completed by a certain date and the payment is determined by the middleman.

Co-operatives lead to people empowerment and a better standard of living for the craftspeople whilst continuing ancient traditional skills.

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Be the change you want to see in the world  
Gandhi

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Do and in doing...

Become.

Sartre

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