

Rajasthan: A Tactile Textile Tour

5-24 October 2019

Lead by Fiona Wright Praveen Nayak.

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

As always our tour has the opportunity for lots of hands-on activities— a goldwork embroidery, Bandhani [tie and dye], natural indigo dyeing, 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 you friend's back home.

We include a visit to a wonderful old fort in Shekawati where our host's family have been the rulers of the area for many generations, visit weavers and other crafts, find time to relax in a Palace home and enjoy the garden....

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 5 Oct 2019 Home/New Delhi
Arrivals and airport pickups at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi

Day 2-Sun 6 Oct 2019 Delhi
Sightseeing Delhi and gently easing our way into India. Lakshmi Narayan Temple- you always visit the Gods before a new undertaking

Cost – US \$4390 twin share

Single US \$1100

Deposit US \$1900 to book today

Booking Deadline 5 July, 2019

Full payment due 5 July, 2019

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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, it is an important Hindu symbol 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 modern 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- a 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 7 Oct, 2019 Delhi/ Mehansar, Raj
Early start for the Old Castle at Mehansar, founded in 1768 it is like stepping into the past where you are the very welcome guest to this sleepy little village. This is a home stay at The Singh's Castle. There is the Gold shop, an old ballroom and the castle itself to explore and quite spots to sit and relax. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 4 -Tues 8 Oct 2019 Fatehpur
We are in the heart of the Shekawati region of Rajasthan, long famed for its beautiful painted Haveli. A Haveli is a rich man's palace, built with double walls and an internal courtyard it was all about trying to stay cool and private in a very hot environment. One way of showing status was to paint them very intricately, today many are neglected but some jewels still exist, some are old and crumbling, some lovingly restored, all quite magic. One will be our home tonight [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 5 -Wed 9 Oct 2019 Fatehpur/ Khimsar
Poking around the area this morning and then onto Khimsar Castle for a little relaxing. Khimsar is home to Nila Moti, a women's work project... danger alert their work is sooo desirable. Our home tonight has a lovely pool, so the evening is free to sit and have a cocktail and swim, take a massage or dinner as

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you choose. [inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 6 -Thurs 10 Oct 2019 Khimsar/ Pushkar

Off early to Meherangarh, the mighty Fort of Jodhpur is our awe-inspiring start to the day. This fort is all you have ever dreamed of as a castle on the mountain top from fairy tales.

On the road to Pushkar via the dhurry rug weavers, who will kindly make us lunch. [inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 7 -Fri 11 Oct 2019 Pushkar

Workshop day... your wooden blocks will be ready [notes about design and instructions sent out when you book in, you send us your design and we will have them carved, oiled and waiting for you to use]. Raid the sari scrap or khadi for a stitch project, we have a number of ideas to explore.

We will welcome you to our workshop and introduce you around, lots to do, in the afternoon take a camel [or camel cart] to our place for dinner and gypsy dancers performance. Dinner is a cooking class, and we will supply recipes for you to take home and recreate some of the flavours of India later. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 8 -Sat 12 Oct 2019 Pushkar

Indigo morning, in our natural dye unit. We can share our recipe for a natural indigo vat and show some other plant colours. You'll have a scarf to dip, which we can start folding and tying the previous day.

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.

Pushkar itself is also a lovely little bazaar to wander, so the afternoon is free, stay at the workshop, take lunch with us and continue this morning's projects or go into Pushkar and enjoy the marketplace [inc- breakfast,

Day 9 -Sun 13 Oct 2019 Pushkar/Udaipur

Early start, off to Udaipur, sometimes called the Venice of the East.... No canals but lovely lakes, our hotel perched on the top of the hill has great views.

We'll pile into tuk-tuks and visit the Old Town, get you orientated and have a free afternoon to explore. [inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 10 -Mon 14 Oct 2019 Udaipur

City Palace, this morning, early before it is too busy, then a wander down through the market to Sadhna Women's Co-operative, further along to look for turbans if you are interested. Free afternoon [inc- breakfast, dinner]

Day 11 -Tues 15 Oct 2019 Udaipur

Bandhani day- Tie and dye that is, then an afternoon visit up, up into the clouds to the Monsoon Palace [we hope– something is happening with it?] and let's put on a bit of Glitz for dinner the

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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Garden Restaurant in the old palace that was once home to the Dowager Queens.

Day 12 -Wed 16 Oct 2019 Udaipur/Bundi
Akola village is not far off the highway along a busy country lane, famous for it's indigo work and making the wax resist blue and red country women's' skirts- great to poke around and then onto Bundi.

Bundi in the afternoon, a pleasant stroll through the bazaar to check out the step well, dinner by the lake beneath the Castle. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 13 -Thurs 17 Oct 2019 Bundi/Ranthambore
Driving across country we will visit Rathmore National Park this afternoon and hope to see tigers. Success in 2018! [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 14 -Fri 3 18 Oct 2019 Ranthambore
Early start to the day- out at sunrise looking for tigers, we will return to our hotel to have breakfast and then visit Ranthambore Dastkar, take a tour and spend the rest of the day on the veranda stitching patchwork with the women [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 15- Sat 19 Oct 2019 Ranthambore/ Jaipur
There are some great galleries in Jaipur these days, if anything looks good we could visit, otherwise we will drop into The Museum of Legacies and then our palace for the next few nights, we might visit some of the fabulous shops at Naryan Niwas...top end designers and Indian handwork and take a pre-dinner drink at Bar Palladio before moving onto dinner and retiring for the night. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 16- Sun 20 Oct 2019 Jaipur
Anokhi Blockprint Museum this morning, and a look around Amber Old Town, then an unstructured day- you might want to relax at our hotel... or we have the bus and can poke around at places like a vintage textile merchants and other treats found in Jaipur. [inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 17- Mon 21 Oct 2019 Jaipur/Agra
Off early to Agra, lunch on the way and a Goldwork embroidery workshop in the afternoon, followed by a visit to a Goldwork museum and jewellery display [inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 18- Tues 22 Oct 2019 Delhi
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, across the river to the Little Taj or Tomb of I'timād-ud-Daulah

Then off to Delhi [inc- breakfast]

Day 19- Wed 23 Oct 2019 Delhi
Last day we will start at the serene Lodhi Gardens for a stroll, then out and about to the chaos of Delhi.

We will drop into upmarket Khan Market for a little last-minute research into top end textiles and garments.... OK- retail therapy and lunch

In the evening let's put on all our sparkle for our Farewell Dinner. [inc- breakfast, dinner]

Day 20- Thurs 24 Oct 2019 Delhi/ Home
Flying out of Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi We'll drop you to the airport. [inc- 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 Djinn*s- a year in Delhi- great insight into the history of Delhi.-*White Mughals- The Age of Kali*
Madhyr Jaffrey- *Climbing the Mango Tree*- autobiography 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 piecework 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.

Be the change you want to see in the world
Gandhi

Do and in doing...

Become.

Sartre

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