



## HOLI FESTIVAL 2024

21<sup>st</sup> March to 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2024



*Holi Festival is the Festival of colours, happiness, and a whole lot more. The Festival signifies the victory of good over evil, the ability for Hindus, to laugh, forget and forgive. The explosion of colours at Holi is a strong influence from the story of Sri Krishna and Radha. Radha had always had a fair complexion of which Krishna was jealous, so his Mother said he could colour Radha's face and colours he wished, and he did. The Festival mends broken relationships and brings people together in peace and unity.*

*After Holi we will embrace the radical Architecture of Le Corbusier in Chandigarh which will delight. You will experience unusual and imposing buildings, later you will embrace the Golden Temple in Amritsar, Qutub Minar in Delhi built almost 1000 years ago, the more recent Architectural extravagance of Akshardham Temple, the quintessential Taj Mahal in Agra, the gorgeous town of Shimla, the Summer retreat for the English during their occupation. Enjoy the weird Wagah Border ceremony on the border between Pakistan and India! Visit the home town of the Dalai Lama, and enjoy ALL this being guided through your experience with Kehren Eade and Rakesh Singh, hosts.*

### **Program**

#### ***Delhi***

*3 nights*

*21, 22 & 23 March*

*On arrival in Delhi you will be met with a Garland welcome and transferred to your glamorous 5-star hotel. Have a good night's sleep, you deserve it, and awaken refreshed and 'ready to go'.*



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## Delhi

**Old Delhi and Jama Masjid** - Relax and take it easy, as you might still be jet lagged. After a late breakfast, proceed to the old part of Delhi for a rickshaw ride through the back alleys of Old Delhi, the silver streets, vegetable and spice markets and visit the famous Jama Masjid, one of the oldest mosques in Delhi.

**Lotus Temple** - Design Iranian Architect Fariborz Sahba. Lotus Temple for all, regardless of religion. The building is composed of 27 free-standing marble-clad petals arranged in clusters. The Lotus Temple has won numerous architectural awards.

**Humayun's Tomb** - now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, built in the 16<sup>th</sup>-C by Haji Begum, wife of Humayun the second Mughal emperor, Humayun's Tomb is an example of Mughal Architecture in Delhi.

**Qutub Minar** - this 72.5 m high Victory Pillar is a victory stand of a Muslim King Kutub-ud-din- Aibak in India. In 1199 Kutub-ud-Din started its construction and it was completed in 1236 by Iltutmish, the son-in-law of Kutub.

**India Gate** - National monument of India. India gate is in the administrative locations of the country. Constructed in memory of 90,000 soldiers of British-Indian army who fought in the Second World War, the structure was built under the leadership of Sir Edwin Lutyens. The architectural complex is made of red stone and granite and is the finest example of Indo-British architectural monument.

And let's go along Rajpath, past the imposing India Gate, Parliament House, the President's Residence and would end with a drive through the Diplomatic Enclave.



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## Hotel

'Deluxe Room' at [Metropolitan Hotel](#) or similar

## Mathura/ Bharatpur

2 nights  
24 & 25 March  
(Holi Festival)

After a hearty breakfast you will be collected by the mini-bus to go to Bharatpur to your amazing Indian Palace hotel then on to Mathura, the spiritual home of the Holi Festival. Holi is the Festival of Colours, the Festival of Happiness, and so much more. For Hindus it is a Festival where they can rejoice in the victory of good over evil, it announces the arrival of Spring and the end of Winter, and a time to meet, greet, laugh, forget, forgive and enjoy family and friends. Holi gifts are given between people and the



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application or throwing of paints on each other is a time honoured tradition as noted in our introduction. The colour red is used as the colour of love. Embrace three days of festivities, it is a wonderful cultural festival full of fun and for people to get together. Near Bharatpur, you can also see the Lohagarh Fort (Iron Fort) - constructed by the Bharatpur Jat rulers of the time. Maharajah Suraj Mal used all his power and wealth for good causes and he built numerous palaces and Forts across his kingdom with Lohagarh Fort being one of the strongest built in Indian history. Monuments in the fort include Kishori Mahal, Mahal Khas, Kothi Khas, Moti Mahal and Fateh Buri. These were all erected to commemorate the victory of the Mughals over the British Army.



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**Taj Mahal** - And for those keen to see the Taj Mahal, a short (ish) drive is available during these three days, if desired. Taj Mahal means 'Crown of the Palace' and is constructed of ivory white marble. It is a mausoleum commissioned in 1632 by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan for his beloved wife. The Taj Mahal was designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983, and is still regarded by many as the best piece of Mughal Architecture on the planet. With 20,000 artisans working on the project and taking nearly 20 years to complete, the Taj Mahal is truly a work of art.



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Hotel

'Royal Suite' at [Laxmi Vilas Palace or similar](#)

**Chandigarh**

2 nights  
26 & 27 March

Morning after breakfast drive to Chandigarh – one of the best known, well planned cities in the world, was designed by the Swiss-French modernist architect, Le Corbusier. Chandigarh is famous for its amazing Post-Modernist Architecture and cityscape.



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Chandigarh, the capital of the northern Indian states of Punjab and Haryana, provides examples of Le Corbusier's Architecture including the Capitol Complex with its High Court, Secretariat and Legislative Assembly, as well as the giant Open Hand Monument. The extravagant Rock Garden features stone sculptures and beautifully 'weird' landscapes.



  
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Chandigarh, relaxed day to pursue hidden treasure troves, or completely chill out and do 'bugger all'. Come back and make us all ENVIOUS or show us your tan!

Hotel

'Hyatt King Room' at [Hyatt Regency or similar](#)

**Shimla**

Shimla was once the summer capital of British India and is in the Himalayan foothills. The famous 'Shimla Toy Train' is a narrow-gauge railway which traverses a mountainous route from Kalka to Shimla. The railway was built between 1898-1903 to connect Shimla with the rest of the Indian rail system. In July 2008, UNESCO added the Kalka-Shimla railway to the mountain railways of India World Heritage Site.

2 nights

28 & 29 March



  
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Investigate the town of Shimla and visiting the Mall Road and Christs Church, one of the largest Churches in North India and visiting the Himachal State Museum, famous for its ancient coins, paintings and local craftworks. A village-like atmosphere in such a historical cultural environment.



  
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Visit the Jakhoo Temple - the temple has the biggest statue of Hanuman (the bodyguard of Rama). Legend has it that Lord Hanuman stopped here to rest while he was searching for the Sanjivni Booti to revive Lakshmana in the Epic Ramayana. This temple is in honour of the Monkey Lord. Later in the day we will visit the Himalayan bird park, famous for indigenous Himalayan bird life.



  
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Hotel

'Deluxe Room' at [Woodville Palace or similar](#)

## ***Dharamshala***

2 nights  
30 & 31 March

Proceed to Dharamshala, a tiny town on the edge of the Himalayas. Dharamshala is a city in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Surrounded by cedar forests on the edge of the Himalayas, this hillside city is home to the Dalai Lama. The Thekchen Chöling Temple Complex is a spiritual centre for Tibetan Buddhism, while the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives houses thousands of precious manuscripts.



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Full day to privately explore the Namgyal Tsemo Monastery, proud home of his holiness Dalai Lama. If you wish, visit the local Tibetan school and village.



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## ***Hotel***

‘Superior Room’ at [Chonor House or similar](#)

## ***Amritsar***

2 nights  
1 & 2 April

Upon arrival in Amritsar, experience the most blissful visit to the Famous Golden Temple and enjoy this sacred time. The Golden Temple is located in the city of Amritsar, Punjab, India. It is one of the most revered spiritual sites of Sikhism. The construction of Harmandir Sahib was intended to build a place of worship for men and women from all walks of life and all religions to worship God equally. Partake in the free community kitchen and meal (Langar) regardless of any distinctions, a tradition that is a hallmark of all Sikh Gurdwaras.



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Experience the morning prayer at the Golden Temple, then proceed to Jallianwala Bagan, the very place where the massacre of so many people occurred. The crowd gathered were non-violent Indian nationalists, protesting British conscription of Indians and heavy war tax, and pilgrims celebrating the holiday of Baisakhi. Fifty British soldiers, under the leadership of Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer, opened fire on the gathering; Dyer told his men to shoot to kill and they did. This massacre set the tone for British/Indian relations.



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Early evening, we will head out for a real time experience of visiting the Wagah Border of India and Pakistan. The lowering of the flags ceremony at the Wagah border is a daily military practice that the security forces of India and Pakistan have jointly followed since 1959. The drill is characterized by elaborate and rapid dancelike manoeuvres. It is alternatively a symbol of the two countries' rivalry, as well as brotherhood and cooperation between the two nations.



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Hotel 'Deluxe Room' at [Welcomhotel Raja Sansi](#) or similar

**Delhi**  
1 night Flight to Delhi and time at your leisure for last-minute shopping, overnight at the magnificent Roseate House. Flight from India in the early afternoon of 3 April , homeward bound, arriving 4 April.  
3 April

Hotel 'Deluxe Room' at [Metropolitan Hotel](#) or similar

### **Flights to India and back home again**

As your itinerary may vary from this tour, your flights and carrier is at your selection. We are happy to assist in your decision making if this is helpful.

### **Hosted Tour Experience**

**AUD \$4,132.00** full experience including accommodation (excluding airfares)

- Price based on per person twin-share, flexibility with dates may be able to be accommodated.
- Luxury 8 to 10 guests private tour, highest quality accommodation, fine cuisine.

### **Land Only Costs Include**

- Accommodation on bed and breakfast basis as per mentioned above hotels or similar
- Early hotel check-in and late check-out, where possible, subject to availability
- All sightseeing, excursions; transfers using A/C Minibus (8-10 pax) as per program
- Parking, permits, gasoline, border taxes for the vehicle
- Services of accompanied English speaking escort for the entire duration of the program
- All Monument/Temple entrance fees as noted
- English speaking guides

### **Land Only Costs Exclude**

- Any additional activities/unique experience in the program on direct payment basis
- Any item of a personal nature such as drinks, laundry, telephone calls, etc.
- Camera fees (still/video) at any monuments
- Visa fees
- Any additional meals (unless specified)

## **Terms and Conditions**

Land only prices exclude flights from Melbourne. \$1500 per person non-refundable deposit required at time of booking. Deposit is only refundable should [DFAT](#) issue a 'Do Not Travel' alert on their website within 30 days of departure. Otherwise, booking is non-refundable & dates are non-changeable once booking is confirmed. Please note above pricing is correct at time of printing. Pricing can change due to fluctuations. You are responsible for all visas, entry, health and other requirements and any documents required by laws, regulations, orders and/or requirements of countries visited. Pillow Menu Tours is not responsible for passport and visa requirements or for any loss you sustain for failing to comply with laws, regulations, orders and/or requirements of countries visited. The health and safety of our guests has always been our priority. Now more than ever it has been essential to revise and upgrade our Health and Safety policy. Effective immediately we will be implementing the below procedures for every guest that travels with us. All our guides have also undertaken a registered Covid-19 health and safety course.

## **COVID Response**

- Proof of COVID vaccination (and booster) required in order to travel with Pillow Menu Tours.
- Antibacterial hand gel, face masks and single use gloves will be available on board.
- The exterior and interior of our vehicle is being thoroughly cleaned at the end of each day.
- All vehicles exterior and interior touch points will be sterilized prior to each individual guest boarding.
- Our friendly and professional guides will warmly welcome guests but will not shake hands. As always however, our guides will open and close the vehicle door. Guides will thoroughly clean their hands using alcohol based liquid gel and wash their hands with soap and water where possible.
- Consideration will be taken in relation to vehicle loads.

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