

REMARKABLE RAJASTHAN

9th October – 26th October 2023 (18 days)



Rajasthan, Northern India, the 'Land of Kings', is synonymous with heroism, royalty and honour. Established in the era marked with wartime ballads yet living in the modern period, this beautiful region is a travellers' destination. Those looking out for the remnants of the past should not pass up a trip to Rajasthan. And for those of you who plan to have a quiet sojourn gazing at the beauty of golden sands, Rajasthan will top your list. Come join us, explore the miscellany of the old and the new in Rajasthan, the glittering jewel of India. And you can enjoy this and 'Diwali' (Festival of Light). Diwali is a five-day event, culminating in the evening of one special day (12th November) celebrated by millions of Hindus, Sikhs and Jains across the world. The festival, which coincides with the Hindu New Year, celebrates new beginnings and the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. While each faith has its own reason to celebrate the festival, one of the most popular stories told is the legend of Lord Rama and his wife Sita returning to their kingdom in northern India from exile after defeating the demon king Ravana in the 15th century BC. Houses are decorated in excess with colourful lights, and firework displays are held while families feast and share gifts. Diwali celebrates the union of religions and the joy of sharing abunds

Program

Delhi

3 nights
9, 10 & 11 Oct

On arrival into Delhi in the early evening you will be met at the airport and transferred to your glamorous 5-star hotel. Have a good night's sleep, you deserve it, and wake up refreshed and 'ready to go'.

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.



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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 16th-C by Haji Begum, wife of Humayun the second Mughal emperor, Humayun's Tomb is an example of Mughal Architecture in Delhi.



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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 [Shangri-La Hotel New Delhi](#) or similar

Mandawa

2 nights

12 & 13 Oct

After breakfast we will drive from Delhi in our comfortable A/C mini bus to Mandawa. On arrival in **Mandawa** check into our amazing hotel. Stop for lunch at a traditional dhaba and afterwards, complete our journey arriving early to mid afternoon. You should take some time to relax at the hotel, and in the afternoon or early evening take a walk through the village. Mandawa is famous for its colourful houses and havelis, palaces and paintings. The structures remind us of the cultural and social hotspot this place used to be in a bygone era. The town has a population of 21,000 and was settled and fortified in the 18th-C by dominant merchant families. The wealthy businessmen of the village constructed many havelis and **baolis** with coloured paintings adorning their walls. Today these are some of the major attractions for tourists visiting Rajasthan.



And now it's time to explore the beautiful town of Mandawa and surrounding areas, to see a big variety of havelis including **Murmuria Haveli**, **Chockhani Haveli**, **Hanuman Prasad Goenka Haveli** among others. The Mandawa Fort is one of the most famous forts in Mandawa and is adorned with paintings of Lord Krishna. The Mandawa Fort is an attraction as it helps reveal a lot about the rich history while revealing the unique features of Rajasthani architecture. As you desire, make time for the main bazaar, it's an interesting walk through the town.



Hotel

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

Bikaner

2 nights

14 & 15 Oct

A great morning journey by A/C mini bus to Bikaner and checking into our amazing hotel. Once you have relaxed for some time, let's do an afternoon city tour. The **Junagarh Fort** of Bikaner is a magnificent structure around which the city of Bikaner grew up. The fort was built in 1478 by Rao Bika but just existed as a stone fort then. The present grand structure was inaugurated on 17th February 1589. Besides having a rich history, the Junagarh Fort is a feat of Architecture. The Palaces inside the fort, the gardens, balconies, etc. depict a composite Architectural style which is influenced by the cultural differences of the different rulers and foreign inspirations.



Today, another must visit is to **Karni Mata Temple** which is also known as the Temple of Rats (not for the faint hearted). Once again time for cocktails and great food and enjoy every sumptuous moment at our great home, the Narendra Bhawan Hotel.



Hotel

'Residence room' at [Nadrendra Bhawan Hotel](#) or similar

Jaisalmer

2 nights
16 & 17 Oct

A drive to **Jaisalmer** where we will check into our perfect home with views from the rooftop, all over Jaisalmer. **Jaisalmer** is also called the 'Golden City of India' as it is famous for its grand forts and amazing sand dunes. Jaisalmer is a former medieval trading centre and a princely state in Rajasthan, in the heart of the Thar Desert. It's distinguished by its yellow sandstone Architecture. Dominating the skyline is Jaisalmer Fort, a sprawling hilltop citadel buttressed by 99 bastions which sits on our hotel doorstep. Behind its massive walls stand the ornate Maharaja's Palace and intricately carved Jain temples. Let's take it easy in the afternoon and either walk the narrow laneways or relax on the roof deck and look at the life below in Jaisalmer.



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Morning after breakfast will proceed for the tour of Jaisalmer town visit **Jaisalmer Fort**. Jaisalmer Fort is a World Heritage Site declared by UNESCO. The fort was built by the Rajput ruler Rawal Jaisal in 1156 AD. Jaisalmer fort stands amidst the sandy expanse of Trikuta Hill and has been the scene of many battles. Its massive yellow sandstone walls are a tawny lion colour during the day, fading to honey-gold as the sun sets, thereby camouflaging the fort in the yellow desert. For this reason, it is also known as the Sonar Quila or Golden Fort. Jaisalmer fort rises to a height of 76 metres and 4.6 metre tall wall forming a double line of defence.



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Hotel

'Deluxe View room' at [1st Gate Jaisalmer](#) or similar

Jodhpur

2 nights
18 & 19 Oct

A drive to scenic **Jodhpur**, stopping (if you wish) for a camel ride in the desert en route. Afternoon tour of the amazing City of Jodhpur. Jodhpur is called the blue city of Rajasthan famous for its grand Jodhpur fort and blue pottery work, not to mention so many buildings being painted in blue also!



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Today we will visit the famous (and huge) **Meharagarh Fort**. The 15th-century Mehrangarh Fort is a former palace, now a museum, displaying weapons, paintings and elaborate royal palanquins. Set on a rocky outcrop, the fort overlooks the walled city, where many buildings are painted the city's iconic shade of blue. An additional 'must visit' is the **Umaid Bhawan Palace**, a building of Architectural magnificence, now a famous Luxury Hotel. Dependant on time, you may elect to visit the local market or merely return to our hotel to relax.



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Hotel

'Superior Room'
at [Radisson Blu](#) or similar

Udaipur

2 nights
20 & 21 Oct

A journey by A/C mini bus brings us to **Udaipur**. Beside shimmering **Lake Pichola**, with the ochre and purple ridges of the wooded Aravalli Hills stretching away in every direction, Udaipur has a romance of setting unmatched in Rajasthan and arguably in all India. Fantastical Palaces, temples, havelis and countless narrow, crooked, timeless streets add the human counterpoint to the city's natural charms. For the visitor there's the tranquillity of boat rides on the lake, the bustle and colour of ancient bazaars, a wonderful and lively arts scene, the quaint old-world feel of its better hotels, endless tempting shops and some lovely countryside to explore on wheels or on foot. **Udaipur** still enjoys the tag of 'the most romantic spot on the continent of India' (with slight bias from Udaipurians!). Your afternoon is free.

Day tour of city and of lakes, and visiting the famous **Udaipur City Palace**. The Palace is an example of the splendour that the rulers of Mewar enjoyed centuries ago, and it still appears to be just as majestic. It is located on the eastern banks of Pichola lake. The palace is a fusion of Rajasthani, European, Chinese and Mughal Architecture, making it one of the most alluring historical attractions of Udaipur. The Palace complex houses monuments like the Monsoon Palace, Lake Palace, Jagdish Temple, Jag Mandir, and Neemach Mata temple, and it is surrounded by the Aravalli Mountains, giving it a gorgeous background. Built completely with marble and granite, it also has the beautiful appeal of marble-work, mirror-work, silver-work, inlay-work, wall paintings and murals. This was originally a Palace of the Maharaja of Udaipur. A ride by boat on Lake Pichola (optional) is enjoyable and you can see where the famous James Bond movie 'Octopussy' was filmed in the middle of the lake, now a luxury hotel. Afterwards a wander through the market streets by will be wonderful.

Hotel

'Deluxe Room'
at [Amet Havelil](#) or similar



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Jaipur

2 nights
22 & 23 Oct

After breakfast will proceed (6.5 hour journey, sorry) to the 'Pink City of India' famous for its grand Fort, Palace and colours. Rajasthan's capital is the gateway to India's most flamboyant state. The city's colourful, chaotic streets ebb and flow with a heady brew of old and new. In the midst of this mayhem, the splendours of Jaipur's majestic past are islands of relative calm evoking a different pace and another world. At the city's heart, the City Palace continues to house the former royal family; the **Jantar Mantar**, the royal observatory, maintains a heavenly aspect; and the honeycomb **Hawa Mahal** gazes on the wonderful bazaar below



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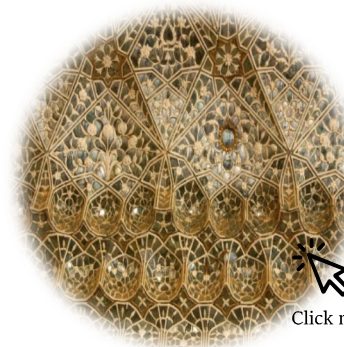
After breakfast we will go to the grand and famous **Amer Fort**. This magnificent fort comprises an extensive Palace complex, built from sandstone, and white marble, and is divided into four main sections, each with its own courtyard. You can walk up to the fort from the road in about 15 minutes or take a 4WD or motorbike to the top and back. You can embrace the outstanding workmanship done on this beautiful fort visiting the **Mirror Palace**, courtyards and see the inlay work done on the walls of the Palace. Later we will be visiting the City Palace, this is the Palace of the Maharaja of Jaipur and part of the Palace is converted into a very interesting museum. A stop for the most famous 'Lassi' in India is a great thing to do too. In the evening, we **MUST** go to Bar Palladio, right on the property!



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Hotel

'Standard Room'
at [Narain Niwas Palace](#) or similar



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Agra

2 nights
24 & 25 Oct

Onto Agra to our beautiful colonial hotel 'The Grand Imperial'. While in Agra for two nights we will visit **Agra Fort**, an historical fort, also known as the Red Fort. Rebuilt by the Mughal emperor Akbar in 1565 and completed in 1573, it served as the main residence of the rulers of the Mughal Dynasty until 1638. You will also visit the stunning **TAJ MAHAL**, an ivory-white marble mausoleum on the river Yamuna, commissioned in 1631 by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to house his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. A memorable, enchanting experience.



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Hotel

'Deluxe Room'
at [The Grand Imperial - Heritage Hotel](#) or similar

Delhi
Home sweet home
26 Oct

Leave Agra and drive direct to Delhi International Airport for your flight back to Australia in the afternoon / early evening. You will be dropped at the airport for your flight back home with (very) sweet memories, courtesy of Pillow Menu Tours.

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 \$4,526.00 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.
- 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

- Antibacterial hand gel 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.

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