



## The Romance of India

### CELEBRATING THE HOLI FESTIVAL IN RAJASTHAN: MARCH 14 – 27, 2011



Of the many festivals in India, Holi, the festival of colours, is the most vibrant and joyous. It is a unique celebration with people taking to the streets to douse each other in coloured powder, or gulal, and literally paint the town red (and pink and blue and green).

Our trip begins with a brief look at the essentials of bustling Delhi. Next, we head to Agra, to marvel at the incomparable Taj Mahal. Then we're off into majestic Rajasthan, where Holi is at its most colourful. The mood at Holi is happy and friendly with visitors welcomed and invited to take part. Palaces, shrines and markets are decorated for the occasion and everyone is dressed up in exotic finery. We'll tour Rajasthan watching the preparations and take in the Holi Festival in the village of Nimaj. Our explorations include the pink city of Jaipur, the blue city of Jodhpur and the delightful village of Narlai. Our trip concludes in Udaipur, the picturesque city on the lake surrounded by the Aravalli Hills.

Accommodation is in very comfortable international style hotels and a choice selection of fine heritage properties including one night in an exotic tented camp amidst the dunes of the Thar Desert. We'll travel by elephant, jeep and our own deluxe coach. We'll learn to prepare a traditional meal, how to wear a sari and a turban and how good karma can truly shape our lives. Experience India at its most colourful with this fully escorted trip, exclusively for Canadian Universities.

#### SIGNATURE MOMENTS:

- Exploring Old Delhi by rickshaw
- Experiencing the desert at the Manvar Desert Camp
- Learning to prepare a thali with our cooks at Narlai Palace
- Visiting schools in Rajasthan
- Counting the camels along the road from Udaipur to Jaipur
- Bollywood movie night in Jaipur
- Bargaining in the bazaars
- Luxuriating in splendid heritage palaces
- Marvelling at the Taj

**COST: \$4,595 CAD** per person + air

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT: \$1,995 CAD**

#### INCLUDED FEATURES:

- Accommodation in heritage and 4 star hotels
- Breakfast and either lunch or dinner daily
- Transportation by private coach
- Entrance fees to all sites
- Full time specialist guide
- Gratuities



## ITINERARY IN BRIEF:



### Day 1: Arrive in Delhi

A late night arrival in Delhi – straight to our hotel.

*Overnight: Delhi*

### Day 2: Delhi

The new and the old — the imperial city built by the British in the 1920s — the red sandstone Humayun's Tomb, predecessor of Taj Mahal — the Qutab Minar tower built in 1199 to celebrate victory against a Rajput King — a rickshaw ride through Old Delhi through the labyrinthine streets passing formidable mosques, monuments and forts — a welcome dinner this evening.

*Overnight: Delhi / Meals: B, D*

### Day 3: Agra

Off to Agra by road — afternoon visit of Agra Fort commissioned by the great Mughal Emperor Akbar housing the Moti Masjid, a white marble mosque akin to a perfect pearl.

*Overnight: Agra / Meals: B, D*

### Day 4: Jaipur

Up very early this morning for a special dawn look at the Taj, glowing white through the early morning fog — it may be a visual cliché, but it is also the one of the few architectural icons that surpasses expectation — by road to the the "Pink City", known for the terracotta plaster that coats buildings in the old part of the city — en route stop at the UNESCO World Heritage site of Fatehpur Sikri, briefly capital of the Mughal Empire, with one of the largest mosques in India within a marvelous complex of monuments and temples.

*Overnight: Jaipur / Meals: B, L*

### Day 5: Jaipur

Extensive exploration of the monuments of Jaipur's golden age — by elephant back to Amber Fort, a beautiful complex of palaces, halls, pavilions, gardens and temples and is magnificently preserved — the

Jantar Mantar, the largest of the five remarkable observatories representing the high points of medieval Indian astronomy — the City Palace, a former royal residence built in the centre of the old city in a blend of the Rajasthani and Mughal style — off to the movies tonight for a Bollywood film complete with Indian popcorn.

*Overnight: Jaipur / Meals: B, D*

### Day 6: Nimaj

A taste of rural India in the village of Nimaj — by jeep to explore nearby tribal settlements of the Gujar, Kalbelia and Dhani peoples — a walk in the village to see the temples and mosques — celebrate Holi the traditional way.

*Overnight: Nimaj / Meals: B, D*

### Day 7: Nimaj — Jodhpur

By road to the blue city in the heart of the Thar Desert — a maze of medieval streets in the old town.

*Overnight: Jodhpur / Meals: B, D*

### Day 8: Jodhpur

To market this morning — an incredible bazaar — a detailed visit of Meherangarh Fort, the setting of Kipling's The Jungle Book — impenetrable walls rise like cliffs from the rocky outcrop — a spectacular dinner on the ramparts of the fort.

*Overnight: Jodhpur / Meals: B, D*

### Day 9: Manvar Desert Camp

Explore the untouched sand dunes — visit the homes of desert craftsmen and the chili and mustard farms — overnight in a permanent desert camp with private facilities and a commanding views over the desert wilderness — dinner under the stars is a breathtaking experience.

*Overnight: Manvar / Meals: B, L, D*

### Day 10: Narlai

Travel into the Aravalli hills to the sights and sounds of the 17th century village of Narlai —

a stroll in the village with visit to the Hindu and Jain temples — our accommodation for the night is a magnificent restored hunting lodge, now a delightful heritage hotel.

*Overnight: Narlai / Meals: B, D*

### Day 11: Narlai

By jeep to visit the villages in the area and local schools — a visit to the impregnable Kumbalgarh Fort with its massive gates and ramparts.

*Overnight: Narlai / Meals: B, L, D*

### Day 12: Udaipur

By road to Ranakpur to visit the magnificent Jain temples, the marble complex noted for the 29 halls supported by 1,444 pillars, each adorned with hundred of carved figures, with no two alike — onward to Udaipur, the "City of Sunrise", India's most romantic city, built around four lakes — our hotel is a delightful sanctuary overlooking the hills.

*Overnight: Udaipur / Meals: B, L*

### Day 13: Udaipur

An in-depth visit of the city; the City Palace, the centerpiece of twelve palaces in Rajasthan's largest royal complex — Jagdish Temple and the Pratap Memorial — the breathtaking collection of crystal at Fateh Prakash Palace — an afternoon cruise on Lake Pichola offers spectacular views of the City Palace from the water.

*Overnight: Udaipur / Meals: B, D*

### Day 14: Depart Udaipur

Morning at leisure before the transfer to the airport for your homeward bound flights.

*Meals: B*

*Itinerary subject to change.*