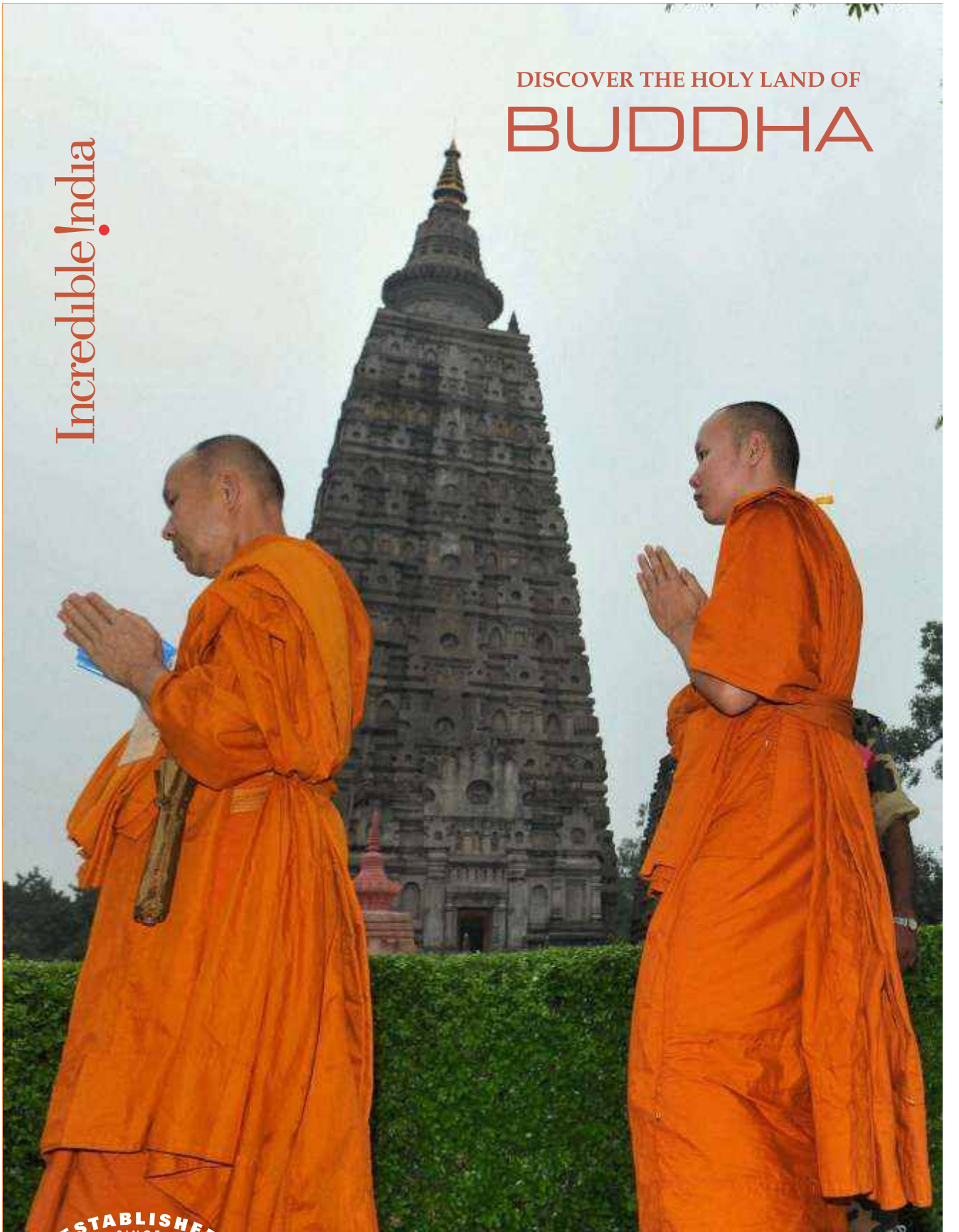
Incredible India

DISCOVER THE HOLY LAND OF

# BUDDHA



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# A Journey to India on the footsteps of Buddha

Duration: 15 Nights / 16 Days

**Delhi – Bodhgaya – Nalanda – Rajgir - Bodhgaya - Varanasi - Kushinagar – Lumbini – Sravasti – Lucknow – Delhi – Agra – Fatehpur Sikri – Jaipur – Delhi**

Discover the major Buddhist Pilgrimage places in India & Nepal like Bodhgaya (enlightenment), Sarnath (first-sermon), Kushinagar (Mahaparinirvana) and Lumbini in Nepal (birth). Along with these Buddhist places, will also get a chance to explore some historic sites and the most exciting Taj Mahal.

**Day 01 : Arrive Delhi**
Transfer to hotel for check-in & overnight.

**Day 02 : Delhi – Gaya By Flight AI-433, 13:40 / 15:15 hours**
After breakfast, transfer to Delhi airport to board flight for Gaya. Upon arrival in Gaya, transfer to hotel for check-in. Evening attend a lecture on Buddha's life & teaching by a local Buddhist Monk and Scholar. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 03 : Bodhgaya**
After breakfast, tour begins with the briefing about Bodhgaya. Start the sightseeing with visit to Mahabodhi Temple. The temple is an immense attraction to the Buddhists and stands near the Maha Bodhi tree under which Gautama attained enlightenment. It is a must visit not only due to its importance but also for the architecture and the art objects. Mahabodhi Tree- The tree is considered holy since Lord Buddha attained enlightenment under it. It is probably the fifth succession of the original tree. Lunch, Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 04 : Bodhgaya (Same day excursion to Nalanda & Rajgir-Approx. 100 Kms / 2 Hours drive each way)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Excursion to Nalanda and Rajgir. Nalanda – a great centre of Buddhist learning and one of the most famed university citadels of ancient time. UNESCO has declared the ruins of Nalanda Mahavihara – a World Heritage site. With the inclusion of Nalanda, this would be the second UNESCO Heritage Site after Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya. Rajgir- Buddha visited this city multiple times and delivered a famous sermon on the Gridhakuta (Vultures Peak). Visit the top of the hill and you will discover a stupa built by the Japanese government, while on top of another hill you will find a cave where the first Buddhist council was held. Lunch at hotel in Rajgir. Evening: Return to Bodhgaya. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 05 : Bodhgaya – Varanasi (By flight AI-433, 15:50/16:25 Hours)**
After breakfast, again get a chance to explore Mahabodhi Temple. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Transfer to Gaya airport to board flight for Varanasi. Upon arrival at Varanasi airport, transfer to hotel for check-in. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 06 : Varanasi**
Early morning enjoy boat ride on the river Ganges to see the rituals performed at the Ghat along the Ganges. Watching people taking bath, performing rituals, worshiping to the Sun is always a unique experience. Later return to hotel for breakfast. Morning: Enjoy sightseeing tour of the city including the Bharat Mata Temple with a big relief Map of India in Marble, Kashivishwanath Temple and Banaras Hindu University . Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Excursion to Sarnath, located 10-km from Varanasi where Buddha preached his first sermon more than 2500 years ago. The site is marked by the massive Dhamek stupa erected by The Emperor Ashoka who spread the Buddha's message of love and compassion throughout his vast empire. Nearby is an Archeological Museum where rare collection of manuscripts and other items related with Lord Buddha can be seen. (Sarnath Museum remains closed on every Friday.) Evening attend a lecture by a local Buddhist Monk and Scholar. After sightseeing, return to hotel for dinner & overnight.

**Day 07 : Varanasi – Kushinagar (Approx. 250 Kms / 07 Hrs drive)**

After an early breakfast, drive to Kushinagar where Buddha had his last breath (Attend Mahaparinirvana). Lunch enroute. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for check-in. Afternoon: Visit Kushinagar. Here are several peaceful, modern temples where you can stay, chat with monks or simply contemplate your place in the world. The Monuments of Kushinagar are situated in three districts comprising the main site of Mahaparinirvana temple, the Rambhar Stupa where Lord Buddha was cremated and surroundings Monasteries. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 08 : Kushinagar – Lumbini (Approx. 200 Kms / 6 Hrs drive)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Drive to Lumbini (Nepal) where Lord Buddha was born. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for check-in. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Visit Maya Devi temple, the Stupas and the Ashokan Pillars - a series of columns erected with edicts by the Mauryan King Ashoka. A visit to Lumbini is not only for spiritual enlightenment but also for solace and satisfaction that one gets in such a calm and peaceful place. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 09 : Lumbini - Sravasti (Approx. 225 Kms/ 7 Hours drive)**

After breakfast, drive to Sravasti enroute visiting Kapilavastu. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for check in. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Visit to Sravasti also known as Sahet-Mahet - capital of the ancient kingdom of Kosala, an active centre for Buddhism. The Major attraction of Sravasti is Jetavana which is said to once host Lord Buddha and his pilgrims, where one of his followers, a rich merchant, covered the whole ground of the park (Vana) with gold coins. Lord Buddha used these coins to build a Vihara here. There are some sculptures built by The Ashoka which are none the less attractive than other monuments built by him. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 10 : Sravasti – Lucknow (Approx. 175 Kms / 4 Hrs drive)**
**Lucknow – DelhiBy Flight 9W-2638, 18:50/20:05 Hours**

After breakfast, drive to Lucknow. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for Lunch. Later transfer to Lucknow airport to board flight for Delhi. Upon arrival at Delhi airport, transfer to hotel for check in. Dinner at local restaurant or hotel. Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 11 : Delhi – Agra (Approx. 205 Kms / 4 Hours drive)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Drive to Agra. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for check-in. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Visit to the most famous and attractive world Heritage sites – Agra Fort & Taj Mahal. Agra Fort – Agra Fort is the former imperial residence of the Mughal Dynasty located in Agra. It was built by four generations of Mughal, on the banks of the River Yamuna. Taj Mahal - An immense mausoleum of white marble, built in Agra between 1631 and 1648 by order of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favourite wife Mumtaz. The Taj Mahal is the jewel of Muslim art in India and one of the universally admired masterpieces of the world's heritage. (Taj Mahal remains closed on every Friday.) Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 12 : Agra – Fatehpur Sikri – Jaipur(Approx. 252 Kms / 06 Hrs drive)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Leave Agra for Jaipur by drive enroute visiting Fatehpur Sikri. Fatehpur Sikri is one of the finest examples of Mughal architectural. It was built between 1569 and 1585 and was intended to be the joint capital with Agra, but was soon deserted because the water system could not support any residents. Fatehpur Sikri is the best example of the culmination of Hindu and Muslim architecture. Lunch enroute and continue drive to Jaipur. Upon arrival, transfer to Hotel for check-in. Dinner at hotel or (Optional: Enjoy a special Theme Dinner). Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 13 : Jaipur**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Excursion to Amber Fort built in the 16th century by Raja Mansingh in red sandstone and white marble. The palace complex has some very interesting apartments such as Jai Mandir, Sheesh Mahal, Sukh Niwas, Ganesh Pol and Temple of Kali. Elephants are provided to ascend the fort to visit the complex. (Between 0730 am – 1130 am, subject to availability). Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Proceed to visit Maharaja's City Palace-the home of the erstwhile royal family and visit the Observatory. Drive past Hawa Mahal or the Palace of winds built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh & also drive past the old part of Jaipur. Dinner: Evening enjoy an Interactive cooking lesson with dinner hosted by a local family. Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 14 : Jaipur– Delhi (Approx. 260 Kms / 6 Hrs drive)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Drive to Delhi. Upon arrival, direct transfer to local restaurant for Lunch. After Lunch, transfer to hotel for check-in and relax. Evening: Enjoy live entertainment show in Bollywood style at Kingdom of Dreams with dinner at its Culture Gully. Overnight stay at Hotel.

**Day 15 : Delhi**

After breakfast, proceed to enjoy full day sightseeing in Old and New Delhi. In Old Delhi, proceed to visit the Red Fort named for its red-sandstone walls and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Red Fort remains closed on every Monday). In front of the Red Fort, there is the imperial avenue known as Chandni Chowk. Enjoy Rickshaw ride in Chandni Chowk and pass through alleyways, it seems getting narrower and we end up at the Jama Masjid which is the largest Muslim mosque in India. Lunch at Local Restaurant. Afternoon to New Delhi. Continue visit to Qutab

Minar and India Gate, a 42 meters archway built for memorial of Indian soldiers killed during the First World War. Watch the famous War Memorial Arch and see the contrast between old and New Delhi. Carry on our tour, drive past Rashtrapati Bhawan. It was initially constructed as the Imperial residence of the Viceroy in the early 20th century and nowadays, it becomes the current residence of the President of India. Also drive past to Parliament House and Government secretariat buildings. Dinner at local restaurant. Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 16 : Delhi departure**
After breakfast, transfer to the International Airport to connect flight for onward destination.

## Learning the Buddhist way of Life with Cultural India

**Duration: 16 Nights / 17 Days**

Kolkata – Patna – Nalanda – Rajgir - Bodhgaya - Varanasi - Kushinagar – Lumbini – Sravasti – Lucknow – Jaipur – Samode – Jaipur – Fatehpur Sikri – Agra – Delhi

*Discover the major Buddhist Pilgrimage places in India & Nepal like Bodhgaya (enlightenment), Sarnath (first-sermon), Kushinagar (Mahaparinirvana) and Lumbini in Nepal (birth). Along with these Buddhist places, will also get a chance to explore some historic sites and in Kolkata the house of Mother Teresa.*

**Day 01 : Arrive Kolkata**
Transfer to hotel for check-in & overnight.

**Day 02 : Kolkata**

After breakfast, enjoy full day tour of Kolkata city. Visit to Indian Museum (Closed on Mondays) – an amazing structure housing a wealth of knowledge. St. Paul's Cathedral, noted for its gothic architecture. Mother Teresa's House (Closed on Thursday) who was probably one of the greatest women in the history of the world who dedicated her entire life serving humanity. Victoria Memorial (Closed on Mondays) considered as a symbol of Kolkata. White marble surrounds the wonderful garden, housing a museum that contains memorabilia connected to *Queen Victoria* during the British Raj. Continue with the tour to Eden Gardens contains a tiny Burmese pagoda at a small lake. You may notice that one of the important spectacles that frame the skyline of the riverfront is Howrah Bridge. Head over and discover a peaceful ambiance, much can be seen from this great structure. After sightseeing, evening return to hotel. Lunch, Dinner & Overnight stay at Hotel.

**Day 03 : Kolkata – Patna By Flight 6E-339, 09:30 / 10:35 hours**
**Patna – Nalanda – Rajgir Approx. 100 Kms / 2 Hrs drive time**
After an early breakfast, fly to Patna. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for lunch. After lunch, drive to Rajgir enroute visiting Nalanda– a great centre of Buddhist learning and one of the most famed university citadels of ancient time. UNESCO has declared the ruins of Nalanda Mahavihara – a World Heritage site. With the inclusion of Nalanda, this would be the second UNESCO Heritage Site after Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya. Upon arrival in Rajgir, transfer to hotel for check-in. Dinner & overnight stay at hotel.

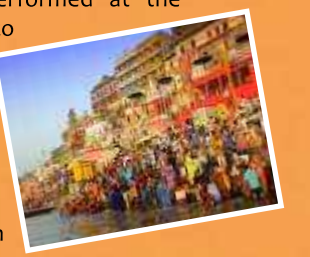
**Day 04 : Rajgir – Bodhgaya(Approx. 80 Kms / 2 Hours drive)**
Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Visit Rajgir- Buddha visited this city multiple times and delivered a famous sermon on the Gridhakuta (*Vultures Peak*). Visit the top of the hill and you will discover a stupa built by the Japanese government, while on top of another hill you will find a cave where the first Buddhist council was held. Lunch at hotel in Rajgir. Afternoon: Drive to Bodhgaya, upon arrival transfer to hotel for check-in. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 05 : Bodhgaya**
After breakfast, tour begins with the briefing about Bodhgaya. Visit to Mahabodhi Temple. The temple is an immense attraction to the Buddhists and stands near the Maha Bodhi tree under which Gautama attained enlightenment. It is a must visit not only due to its importance but also for the architecture and the art objects. Mahabodhi Tree- The tree is considered holy since Lord Buddha attained enlightenment under it. It is probably the fifth

succession of the original tree. Evening attend a lecture on Buddha's life & teaching by a local Buddhist Monk and Scholar. Lunch, Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 06 : Bodhgaya – Varanasi (Approx. 275 Kms / 6 Hrs drive)**
After breakfast, drive to Varanasi. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for check-in & lunch. Later in the afternoon, proceed to witness "Aarti" ceremony at Dasaswamedh Ghat. Ganges Aarti takes place after the sunset for around 45 minutes. The best view of Aarti ceremony is through cruising on a boat at river Ganges. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 07 : Varanasi**
Early morning enjoy boat ride on the river Ganges to see the rituals performed at the Ghat along the Ganges. Watching people taking bath, performing rituals, worshiping to the Sun is always a unique experience. Later return to hotel for breakfast. Morning: Sightseeing tour of the city including the Bharat Mata Temple with a big relief Map of India in Marble, Kashivishwanath Temple and Banaras Hindu University, lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Excursion to Sarnath, located 10-km from Varanasi where Buddha preached his first sermon more than 2500 years ago. The site is marked by the massive Dhamek stupa erected by The Emperor Ashoka who spread the Buddha's message of love and compassion throughout his vast empire. Nearby is an Archeological Museum where rare collection of manuscripts and other items related with Lord Buddha can be seen. (Sarnath Museum remains closed on every Friday.) Evening attend a lecture by a local Buddhist Monk and Scholar. After sightseeing, return to hotel for dinner & overnight.



**Day 08 : Varanasi – Kushinagar (Approx. 250 Kms / 07 Hrs drive)**

After an early breakfast, drive to Kushinagar where Buddha had his last breath (Attend Mahaparinirvana). Lunch enroute. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for check-in. Afternoon: Visit Kushinagar. Here are several peaceful, modern temples where you can stay, chat with monks or simply contemplate your place in the world. The Monuments of Kushinagar are situated in three districts comprising the main site of Mahaparinirvana temple, the Rambhar Stupa where Lord Buddha was cremated and surroundings Monasteries. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 09 : Kushinagar – Lumbini (Approx. 200 Kms / 6 Hrs drive)**
Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Drive to Lumbini (Nepal) – the birth place of Lord Buddha. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for check-in. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Visit Maya Devi temple, the Stupas and the Ashokan Pillars. A visit to Lumbini is not only for spiritual enlightenment but also for solace and satisfaction that one gets in such a calm and peaceful place. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 10 : Lumbini - Sravasti (Approx. 225 Kms/ 7 Hours drive)**
After breakfast, drive to Sravasti enroute visiting Kapilavastu. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for check in. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Visit to Sravasti also known as Sahet-Mahet - capital of the ancient kingdom of Kosala, an active centre for Buddhism. The Major attraction of Sravasti is Jetavana which is said to once host Lord Buddha and his pilgrims, where one of his followers, a rich merchant, covered the whole ground of the park (Vana) with gold coins. Lord Buddha used these coins to build a Vihara here. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 11 : Sravasti – Lucknow(Approx. 175 Kms / 4 Hrs drive)**
**Lucknow – DelhiBy Flight 9W- 367, 15:10/16:25 Hours**
**Delhi – JaipurBy Flight 9W-2253, 18:15/19:15 Hours**
After breakfast, drive to Lucknow. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for Lunch. Later transfer to Lucknow airport to board flight for Jaipur via Delhi. Upon arrival at Jaipur airport, transfer to hotel for check in. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 12 : Jaipur**
Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Excursion to Amber Fort built in the 16th century by Raja Mansingh in red sandstone and white marble. The palace complex has some very interesting apartments such as Jai Mandir, Sheesh Mahal, Sukh Niwas, Ganesh Pol and Temple of Kali. Elephants are provided to ascend the fort to visit the complex. (*Between 0730 am – 1130 am, subject to availability*). Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Proceed to visit Maharaja's City Palace-the home of the erstwhile royal family and visit the Observatory. Drive past Hawa Mahal or the Palace of winds built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh & also drive past the old part of Jaipur. Dinner: Evening enjoy an Interactive cooking lesson with dinner hosted by a local family. Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 13 : Jaipur- Samode – Jaipur (Approx. 40 Kms / 1 Hour drive per way)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Excursion to Samode Palace. Samode - Samode is considered a very large & rich town in Rajasthan under the kingdom of Amber. Samode Palace was initially built in the sixteenth century as a Rajput fort, but in the early 19th century, under the nobleman Rawal Berisal, it was converted from a fort into an exquisitely designed palace in Rajput and Muslim architectural style. In 1987, it was converted into the heritage "Samode Palace Hotel". Lunch at Hotel Samode Palace. Also enjoy camel ride at Samode village. After sightseeing, return to Jaipur. Evening: Dinner at hotel or (Optional: Enjoy a special Theme Dinner). Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 14 : Jaipur – Fatehpur Sikri – Agra (Approx. 252 Kms / 06 Hrs drive)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning: Leave Jaipur for Agra by drive enroute have Lunch and visit Fatehpur Sikri. Fatehpur Sikri is one of the finest examples of Mughal architectural. It was built between 1569 and 1585 and was intended to be the joint capital with Agra, but was soon deserted because the water system could not support any residents. Upon arrival in Agra, transfer to Hotel for check-in. Dinner & Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 15 : Agra – Delhi (Approx. 205 Kms / 4 Hours drive)**

Early morning during sunrise, visit to famous and attractive World Heritage site – Taj Mahal. An immense mausoleum of white marble, built in Agra between 1631 and 1648 by order of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his favourite wife Mumtaz. *(Taj Mahal remains closed on every Friday.)* After sightseeing, return to hotel for breakfast. Later visit to another world Heritage site – Agra Fort. Agra Fort – Agra Fort is the former imperial residence of the Mughal Dynasty located in Agra. It was built by four generations of Mughal, on the banks of the River Yamuna. Lunch at hotel. Afternoon: Drive to Delhi. Upon arrival transfer to hotel for check-in. Dinner at local restaurant. Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 16 : Delhi**

After breakfast, proceed to enjoy full day sightseeing in Old and New Delhi. In Old Delhi, proceed to visit the Red Fort named for its red-sandstone walls and designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site *(Closed on Monday)*. This fort complex was constructed by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as to be his residence. In front of the Red Fort, there is the imperial avenue known as Chandni Chowk. Enjoy Rickshaw ride in Chandni Chowk and pass through alleyways, it seems getting narrower and we end up at the Jama Masjid which is the largest Muslim mosque in India. Lunch at Local Restaurant. Afternoon to New Delhi. Continue visit to Qutab Minar and India Gate, a 42 meters archway built for memorial of Indian soldiers killed during the First World War. Watch the famous War Memorial Arch and see the contrast between old and New Delhi. Carry on our tour, drive past Rashtrapati Bhawan. It was initially constructed as the Imperial residence of the Viceroy in the early 20th century and nowadays, it becomes the current residence of the President of India. Also drive past to Parliament House and Government secretariat buildings. Dinner at local restaurant. Overnight stay at hotel.

**Day 17 : Delhi departure**

Breakfast at hotel. Later on time departure transfer to the International Airport to connect flight for onward destination.


**Top Travel & Tours (P) Ltd.**

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