

# Classic Journeys *A passion for travel*

T: 07858 410677 E: [journeys@classicjourneys.co.uk](mailto:journeys@classicjourneys.co.uk) Web: [www.classicjourneys.co.uk](http://www.classicjourneys.co.uk)



## **INDIA – PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR, DESERT TOWNS OF RAJASTHAN & TAJ MAHAL PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR**

India is a land of great culture and diversity; myths, legends, sacred rivers, religious icons and spiritual pilgrimages. Held each November during the full moon, India's Pushkar Fair and Asia's largest camel and livestock market provides an opportunity to witness and photograph the colour, spectacle and carnival of one of the last great traditional festivals. A sleepy holy town where pilgrims come to bathe in the sacred Pushkar Lake in order to "wash away the sins of a lifetime" turns into a riot of colour as villagers from far and near gather together to buy, sell and celebrate.



The fair is a mass of stalls selling glittering necklaces, bangles, intricate silver ornaments and crafts from across Rajasthan, as well as the paraphernalia associated with the camels themselves including saddles, colourful beads, woven and embroidered saddle-straps. This is a wonderful way to capture the vibrancy of Rajasthan and there is a wealth of photographic opportunities, with the barren desert providing a stunning backdrop to elegantly dressed, preened and perfumed camels and their equally stylish owners.

Many Hindu pilgrims also converge on Pushkar at this time to bathe in the holy lake and visit the Hindu Brahma temple, the only one of its kind in the world.

On this trip we will also be visiting other fascinating destinations such as Delhi, Agra, Jaipur, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer. We begin in bustling Delhi where we have time to visit both old and new sections of the city. From Delhi we fly to Jodhpur, a town nestled on the edge of the Thar desert. The town is dominated by a massive fort, topping a sheer ridge right in the middle of town. Jodhpur is affectionately referred to as the "Blue City" because of the indigo-coloured houses lining the fascinating winding streets of the old town. These can be seen from the ramparts of the mighty Mehrangarh Fort, which looms high above the buzzing city.

We then travel to the golden city of Jaisalmer which rises like a mirage from the flat expanses of the Thar Desert. The thick walls of the fort enclose a maze of narrow streets. Our time here will provide an excellent insight into a way of life seemingly little changed for centuries and we are sure to capture some amazing images.

From Jaisalmer we travel to our luxury encampment at Manvar, an ideal base from which we explore Indian desert life and the surrounding Bishnoi villages amidst a landscape of breathtaking beauty. Our next stop is Luni, a charming village which reflects the royal past of Rajasthan. Here many artisans still practise their ancestral profession of carving metal, clay or wood into intricate forms. This small bustling village will provide many photographic opportunities.

We also visit Rajasthan's capital and largest city, Jaipur. The ancient and exquisitely beautiful city offers us wonderful Indian architecture including magnificent carved arches, marble columns and the striking Hawa Mahal palace with its intricately carved jali screens.

Our journey would not be complete without travelling to Agra, home to the sophisticated elegance of the Taj Mahal. The change in colour of the white marble at sunrise and sunset is amazingly beautiful. We have plenty of time to photograph the beautiful attire of the Indian people who are visiting the monument and explore the Taj from alternative vantage points.



## Outline Itinerary

### Day 1 – Depart UK

Depart UK on the flight to Delhi.

### Day 2 – Delhi

Arrive Delhi. Here we are met and transferred to our hotel. We have time to relax and recover from the international flight and enjoy dinner together. Overnight hotel. (D)

### Day 3 – Delhi

After breakfast we begin our guided tour of New and Old Delhi. Delhi is a city that has moved forward with the rest of the world while having its roots firmly planted deep into the past. Home of the capital of India, Delhi is the fusion of eight former capitals under different rulers of India. The historic architectures of Delhi are the majestic Red Fort, the towering Qutub Minar, the unique Jama Masjid and the Rashtrapati Bhavan. However, it is along the wayside, within bazaars and at almost every curve in Delhi, that there are fascinating ruins of tombs, palaces and mosques, unnamed and unmarked waiting to be explored. Today is a great way to start our tour sightseeing and photographing the monuments and people in Old & New Delhi. Overnight hotel. (BD)

### Day 4 – Delhi to Jodhpur

After breakfast transfer to the airport for the flight to the blue city of Jodhpur (11:00 / 12:10). Upon arrival check in to the hotel. In the afternoon we'll have a guided tour of the Blue City. Set on a steep rocky outcrop, Jodhpur's fort provides an outstanding vantage point overlooking the sprawling blue and whitewashed houses scattered below. The Meherangarh Fort, or 'Majestic Fort', is one of the most impressive in Rajasthan. We'll visit the massive fort, royal palaces, the armory and Jaswant Thada - the Royal Crematorium. Overnight Jodhpur (BD)

### Day 5 – Jodhpur

In the morning we will have the opportunity for sunrise photography of the amazing Blue City. Free time in the afternoon before exploring and photographing another part of the city. Overnight Jodhpur (BD)

### Day 6 – Jodhpur to Jaisalmer

After breakfast we drive through a desert landscape to Jaisalmer, stopping along the way for any photo opportunities. We may arrive in Jaisalmer with enough time to take a quick look at the Jaisalmer Fort, with its exquisite carving on yellow sandstone. The Golden City of Jaisalmer rises like a mirage from the flat expanses of the Thar Desert. The thick walls of the fort enclose a maze of narrow streets. Our time here will provide an excellent insight into a way of life seemingly little changed for centuries and we are sure to capture some amazing images. At sunset we'll move from the fort to the outskirts of town to photograph a golden sunset at the nearby Cenotaphs. Overnight Jaisalmer (BD)

### Day 7 – Jaisalmer

In the morning we plan to photograph Jaisalmer Fort at sunrise and then explore the alleyways of the fort where one third of the population of the old city lives. This will provide an excellent insight into a way of life seemingly little changed for centuries. The fort contains many ornate havelis and several Jain temples which we will explore and photograph.

In the afternoon we will drive to the fascinating desert village and golden dunes of Khuri. The sand is sculpted by the wind into smooth curves and ripples, and the sunset over the sand dunes is truly breathtaking.

At Khuri Village we will experience the hospitality that is so much associated with Rajasthan. The local villagers are known for their friendliness and we will visit their simple mud homes with earthen floors and no electricity or running water. The warmth of the people is a unique and personal way to experience Rajasthani culture. Here the women walk two kilometres to the well and carry the water home on their heads. We will also explore the desert on camel back and photograph the scene at sunset. Overnight Jaisalmer (BD)

### **Day 8 – Jaisalmer to Manvar**

Today we wake up early to photograph sunrise over Gadisar Lake then return to our hotel for breakfast. After breakfast we drive to Manvar where we check into the permanent tents located in the heart of the Great Indian Thar Desert. Sunset jeep safari. Overnight at the Manvar Desert Resort (Tented Camp). (BLD)

### **Day 9 – Manvar**

A leisurely day to explore and photograph the desert and local Bishnoi villages. Manvar (symbolizing desert hospitality in the local dialect) blends with the beautiful surrounding landscape and is an ideal base to explore Indian desert life. Manvar Tented Camp is situated in the midst of the Thar desert, a rare sanctuary of pristine beauty, tranquility and solitude. We enjoy a camel or jeep safari to local villages in the middle of the desert. In the evening we will enjoy a cultural performance of dance and music under the stars. The ideal opportunity for learning how to photograph in low light. Overnight Manvar Desert Resort (Tented Camp) (BLD)

### **Day 10 – Manvar to Luni**

After breakfast we will begin our drive to Luni. Along the way visiting Bishnoi Villages, where centuries old traditions are still followed. We may witness an opium tea ceremony, a ritual which is given to honoured guests as a sign of respect and to welcome them. We will then drive to Luni where we will spend the night at the Fort Chanwa hotel, Luni. Overnight Luni (BD)

### **Day 11 – Luni to Pushkar**

After breakfast we drive to Pushkar. On arrival check into our hotel. After lunch we begin our explorations of Pushkar. The lowing of cattle, the swirl of skirts, the whorls of red dust, moonlight skimming off the lake and the silhouette of boney camels against the dusky sky – this is what Pushkar is all about. Also famous for being the only place in India with a separate temple dedicated to Brahma. Though a quiet place through the year, come November it comes to life with the advent of the annual cattle fair. Overnight hotel. (BD)

### **Day 12 – Pushkar**

A full day to concentrate on photographing the Pushkar fair. The annual Pushkar Fair, in the heart of Rajasthan attracts thousands of pilgrims and always coincides with the full moon. Exploring the massive sand dunes, we join jugglers, acrobats, storytellers, magicians, and musicians who mix and mingle among the turbaned Rajputs and their brilliantly jewelled wives. Their tents cover the dunes as far as the eye can see. There is also time to photograph the town with its sacred lake, 400 Brahma temples, and 52 Hindu bathing Ghats and bustling bazaar. Overnight hotel. (BD)

### **Day 13 – Pushkar to Jaipur**

In the morning we will return to the Pushkar Fair to ensure we have as many images and memories as possible of this spectacle. We will then drive to Jaipur (3 hours). Arrive Jaipur and check into our hotel. The people of Jaipur are very colourful, and a late afternoon walk through the bazaars is like a walk through history and should provide many interesting photo opportunities. Overnight hotel. (BD)

### **Day 14 – Jaipur**

Dyed pink by Maharaja Man Singh II to welcome the Prince of Wales in 1876, this capital of Rajasthan, is one of the most well-preserved cities of historic importance in India, crammed with historic buildings, forts, palaces and other monuments.

In the morning we will visit and photograph Amber Fort, a 16th century hilltop fortress north of Jaipur. We will visit the palace and its many intricate chambers and hallways, which has breathtaking views of the Jal Mahal (Water palace) below.

In the afternoon we will visit the City Palace, which is still inhabited by Jai Singh's descendants and is a superb fusion of Rajput and Mughal architecture. A city within a city, it includes the Govind Deo Temple, the Jantar Mantar astronomical observatory and the Maharaja's museum with his personal collection of weaponry, miniature paintings, royal attire and jewellery. On the periphery of the Palace stands the Hawa Mahal, the Palace of Winds, an elaborate pink sandstone façade behind which the ladies of the court used to watch the daily goings on in the street below. Overnight hotel. (BD)

### **Day 15 – Agra**

After breakfast drive to Agra, possibly stopping en-route to visit Fatehpur Sikri, a masterpiece of Muslim architecture built by Emperor Akbar in 1568 as his capital. The town's palaces, courts and other monuments are a perfect example of the fusion of Hindu and Mughal architectural styles. According to one account, the red sandstone city was abandoned 14 years later due to water scarcity. Salim Chishti's Dargah or tomb in the Royal Mosque is another major draw; it continues to attract pilgrims in large numbers who come here to have their wishes fulfilled.

We will check into our hotel and then head out for evening photography, possibly of the Taj Mahal from across the river or a walk through the many bustling bazaars. Overnight hotel.(BD)

### **Day 16 – Agra to Delhi**

Before breakfast we will visit the Taj Mahal for sunrise. Built as a monument of eternal love by Shah Jahan to his bride Mumtaz Mahal, the Taj Mahal looks amazingly graceful from almost any angle. It was built over a period of 20 years by 20,000 labourers and craftsmen and displays superb craftsmanship. The close up detail of the Taj Mahal is as exquisite as the overall architectural design, with semi-precious stones and beautiful patterns covering the marble surface. We will have time to explore the grounds and photograph the ever changing light on the Taj.

Return to our hotel for breakfast and then set off on our drive to Delhi stopping along the way. In the evening we will enjoy a celebratory meal having completed a fascinating Indian journey. Overnight hotel. (BD)

### **Day 17 – Depart Delhi**

Transfer to international airport for your flight departure. (B)

*The day-to-day schedule should be taken only as a general guide. A variety of factors, including adverse weather conditions, difficulty with transportation and politics can lead to enforced changes. Because of this it is not possible to guarantee that any of our holidays will run exactly according to the planned itinerary. The trip leader will make any changes, which are necessary.*

Meal key: B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner



### **INCLUDED IN THE COST**

- Accommodation on a twin share basis (unless single occupancy has been requested) for the nights listed in the itinerary.
- Meals as specified.
- Airport – Hotel – Airport Transfers.
- All internal transport as the itinerary.
- Domestic flight tickets (Delhi-Jodhpur)
- English speaking Indian guide
- Entrance fees at to the monuments
- Tour leader – Simon Watkinson who will provide photographic tuition and tutoring throughout the trip

### **NOT INCLUDED IN THE COST**

- International flights
- Airport taxes
- Visa fees
- Travel Insurance
- Medical examination (if required) & vaccination costs
- Personal expenditure, bar bills, laundry, telephone calls, etc
- Porters, guides & other tips
- Meals not specified
- Personal clothing & equipment
- Optional trips
- Charges incurred as a result of delays beyond Classic Journeys control
- Anything not specified in the Cost Includes section

### **GROUP SIZE**

Minimum 4, Maximum 10

This holiday will operate once the minimum group size has been reached.

### **GUIDE / TOUR LEADERS**

On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Professional photographer, Simon Watkinson (ABIPP) will escort this trip. Simon will provide photography tuition and help you improve your photography.

### **TOUR GRADE**

**EASY CULTURAL TOURING:** Most of this tour involves overland travel in comfortable vehicles. Some of the roads in India are poorly maintained and sections will have potholes. Early starts are normal. Some of the sightseeing involves easy walking.

### **HEALTH & FITNESS REQUIREMENTS**

The pace is considered easy and should enable anyone in good health to participate. While there are no specific physical requirements, it is important that travellers are in good health, have a positive attitude, a sense of humour and a spirit of adventure. Tours can consist of early starts, some long days or climbing into vehicles. The transport provided is the best available for the area and type of terrain being visited but be prepared for some lengthy journeys, bumpy dirt roads or the occasional delay. The amount of walking involved in this trip varies.

Most of the sightseeing and exploring the cities will be on foot in order to take photographs. We carry a basic first aid kit but recommend that each person carry their own personal first aid kit including any prescription medication they require; a suggested contents list will be provided on booking in the country information dossier. We also provide details of the recommended vaccinations needed.

## ACCOMMODATION

Comfortable 3 and 4 star hotels throughout with private facilities. Manvar Tented Camp is a deluxe camp with safari style tented accommodation with private facilities.

## SINGLE SUPPLEMENTS

If you are a single person booking this holiday you do not have to pay single supplements if you are happy to share. If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired with another single client of the same gender. However your booking is accepted only on the understanding that if no roommate is available then you accept a single supplement will be levied. Single supplements are payable if you specifically request to have a room to yourself. If you have requested single accommodation we will do our best to secure this although this may not always be possible.

## FOOD

Breakfast, dinner and the occasional lunch

Most hotel restaurants usually provide both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, continental, Indian and traditional cuisine. Please ask the staff if you have any specific request, especially regarding flavours and spices, as they will do their best to adjust menus accordingly and cater for your tastes.

## WEATHER

Mostly hot, dry and sunny. From April to June is the hottest season, with temperatures ranging from 32°C to 45°C. From July to September the temperature drops slightly but humidity increases making it very uncomfortable, 90% of the rains occur in this period. In October through to December, after the rains, the average maximum temperature is 33°C to 38°C with the minimum between 18°C and 20°C. Winter or the cold season is from January to March (10°C to 27°C). Early morning and evenings can be cold in November through to February.

## SUGGESTED PHOTOGRAPHY EQUIPMENT

You will need a DSLR, Digital SLR or mirrorless camera with lenses offering a focal length from wide (24mm or wider) to telephoto (70 - 200mm or longer). A laptop computer loaded with Adobe Lightroom would be useful if you want to process images while on tour. Additionally we strongly recommend a back-up device such as an external hard drive.

Simon advises all group members to take the following photography equipment. If you would like to discuss equipment or have any photography related queries, please do not hesitate to contact Simon by email: ([office@world-infocus.co.uk](mailto:office@world-infocus.co.uk)) or telephone during office hours (9am to 5pm): 07526 018081 or 07511 075739. You can also contact Ann at Classic Journeys by email ([journeys@classicjourneys.co.uk](mailto:journeys@classicjourneys.co.uk)) or telephone: 07858 410677.

- **Suggested Camera Body:** A 35mm DSLR or mirrorless camera system with interchangeable lens will allow you to get the best shots in most conditions.
- **Suggested Lenses:** A wide angle (16 – 35 mm or 24 – 105 mm or similar) and a telephoto (70 – 200mm or 100-300mm or similar) are very useful. Skylight / UV filters protect your lens.
- **Filters:** A polarising filter is useful for landscapes. Optional ND filters x 4 and x 8.
- **Batteries, Memory & Storage:** Bring spare batteries (2 or 3), battery charger, travel adapter, sufficient memory cards and digital storage device.
- **Camera bag:** Preferably a backpack type.
- **Lightweight tripod:** of a professional quality.
- **Miscellaneous:** A brush for cleaning your lens and air blower are important and your camera and lens need to be in protective cases. A shutter release cable.
- **Laptop Computer** preferably loaded with Adobe Lightroom if you wish to process images on tour.

## **CLOTHING**

Casual clothing is the order of the day. Hard wearing, easy to wash travel clothes are ideal. You may wish to pack one set of slightly smarter clothes to wear at the hotels. Laundry service will be available at all the places we stay. During the day you will need a wide brimmed sun hat and sunglasses. Lightweight, comfortable walking shoes are advised for throughout the holiday and for sightseeing.

## **PASSPORT & VISA REQUIREMENTS**

### **Entry Requirements:**

All visitors to India require a valid passport (at least 6 months from the date of entry into India) and an entry visa. It is your responsibility to get your own visa.

### **INDIAN VISA APPLICATION**

From August 15<sup>th</sup> 2015, Britons are one of 113 nationalities who will be able to apply for India's "e-Tourist visa", making the process of obtaining correct entry documents cheaper and quicker.

UK passport holders are able to apply and pay for an online visa using the Indian government's tourist visa website.

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in>

Follow this link for the **official Indian e-visa home page**.

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

**Please read the instructions carefully as the procedure must be followed exactly, especially details regarding the size and background of photographs.**

### **VISA AGENCY**

If you prefer to have the help of a visa agency in obtaining your India visa, [Travcour UK](#) have proved to be very helpful and efficient:

<http://www.travcour.com/page/visa-applications/india.php>

## **INSURANCE**

Insurance is essential and is a condition of booking that you have adequate travel insurance cover. It is very important that you obtain insurance cover against the usual risks associated with travel, from the time of booking your holiday until the time you return home. Please ensure that your insurance provides adequate protection against the two major concerns: medical/repatriation expenses while abroad and cancellation/curtailment charges in the event that you, a travelling companion or a close relative fall ill either before or during the tour. For trekking holidays your travel insurance must contain evidence of satisfactory cover for repatriation and helicopter rescue.

Classic Journeys do not provide any advice on travel insurance. Classic Journeys is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd. who are Authorised and Regulated by the Financial Services Authority. Campbell Irvine is a specialist travel insurance broker. The comprehensive policy they issue provides 24-hour medical emergency assistance and covers altitude and all adventurous activities undertaken on our holidays. For single-trip policies, the insurance provides cover for both UK and worldwide residents at very competitive rates. In addition an annual policy is available to United Kingdom residents.

To obtain insurance cover visit the [Campbell Irvine Ltd. website](#).  
([http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/classicjourneys\\_home.htm](http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/classicjourneys_home.htm))

**We require confirmation of your insurance, the policy number and 24-hour emergency telephone number who ever you take insurance with.**

## **SUGGESTED READING**

**India A Portrait: Patrick French** – tells the story of how India emerged from a turbulent struggle for independence to become a vibrant democracy with one of the fastest-growing economies in the world.

**In Spite of the Gods: Edward Luce** – assesses the forces that are forging the new nation. Cutting through the miasma that still clouds thinking about India, this extraordinarily accomplished book takes the measure of a society that is struggling to come to grips with modernity.

**Nine Lives: In Search of Sacred and Modern India: William Dalrymple** – A series of snapshots exploring how traditional religion merges with modern life in India told through personal stories.

**No Full Stops in India: Mark Tully** - A superb series of 'stories' which explore Calcutta, from the Kumbh Mela in Allahabad (probably the biggest religious festival in the world) to the televising of a Hindu epic.

**The Smile of Murugan: Michael Wood** – A journey to some of the great religious and historical sites of southern India

**The Story of India: Michael Wood** – Book and also DVD from the BBC Series

## **Guidebooks**

India, A Travel Survival Kit: Lonely Planet

Rajasthan, Delhi & Agra: Lonely Planet

India: Insight Guides, APA Productions

India: Berlitz Pocket Guide

## **BOOKS & MAPS AVAILABLE FROM:**

Stanfords ([www.stanfords.co.uk](http://www.stanfords.co.uk))

Cicerone ([www.cicerone.co.uk](http://www.cicerone.co.uk))

Amazon ([www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk))

Cordee ([www.cordee.co.uk](http://www.cordee.co.uk))

*If you have any questions or would like to know more about any aspect of this tour, please do not hesitate to contact the Classic Journeys office.*

All World In Focus clients will be required to complete a Classic Journeys Booking Form and booking will be subject to acceptance of the Classic Journeys Booking Conditions, which will be provided, and supersedes any information presented on the World In Focus web site or other World In Focus promotional literature. In addition, in the unlikely event that Simon Watkinson is unable to escort the tour, Classic Journeys reserve the right to send a suitable replacement if available. In such circumstances, the tour will not be cancelled and no compensation will be paid.

©Classic Journeys and World In Focus. All rights reserved. No portion of the text or images on these pages can be reproduced without the express written consent of Classic Journeys or World In Focus.