

OM **Royal Camel Safari**

If you are the rough and ready adventurer who is looking for an unusual adventure, a camel safari through the deserts of the Great Thar is just for you. For this is one adventure activity that is sure to test your grit and determination if you want to see it through till the end! You could always opt for an easier and less rigorous route, of course, but the true fun and excitement of a camel safari is in doing it in the authentic style.

When on a camel safari in India, the ubiquitous hump-backed camel will be your ride and your constant companion, be it in the searing heat of the day, or the biting chilliness of the night. And as you travel through the desert, you will get a close glimpse of the rich culture, heritage and life styles of the colorful and royal state of Rajasthan. For what better way can there be of knowing about a people, than by actually being part of the activities and adventure of their lives?

The camel is known the 'desert ship' since time immemorial. It has been the confidant of the travails, disputes, laughter and love of the desert people as they roamed from place to place in search of water. And as you undertake a similar journey, the easy pace of the safari will make it possible for you to observe and enjoy the minutest detail of the land of citadels, colors and charming crowds.

Day 1 Delhi

Flight to Delhi. Arrival in Delhi and transfer to the hotel. Check in at the hotel.

Day 2 Delhi

Arrival in Delhi. Meet and greet at the airport and transfer to hotel. Lunch in hotel. Full day sightseeing in Delhi. Delhi is not only a modern Capital with Administration buildings, business streets and large gardens but also is a historic city which consist the seeing attractions of Muslim era (12.-18. Century).

City Tour of the Old Delhi, you see the Red Fort the huge Fort with 33m high walls, private and public Audience Halls and the private rooms of the Emperor which was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan (1639-48 AD) after he shifted his capital from Agra to Delhi. Opposite Red Fort lies Jama Masjid (Friday Mosque) made of red Sandstone and white Marble, the India's largest mosque which offers place to 20,000 people to pray. Sightseeing in New Delhi: You see Humayun's Tomb, built by his wife Haji Begum in 16. Century. An early example of mughal architecture, considered to be the predecessor of Taj Mahal. The next is Qutub Minar. The Quwat-Ul-Eslam mosque in the Qutub Minar complex was built by Qutub-ud-din Aibak using the building material and pillars of the demolished Hindu temples. In the middle of the

mosque there is an iron pillar from 4th century and has not developed any rust since then. You see 72,5m high victory tower (Qutub Minar). Pass by the Parliament Buildings. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Day 3 Delhi /Agra (204 kms)

After breakfast drive to Agra. Enroute excursion to Sikandra (34km) , the mausoleum of the Great Mughal King Akbar (1556-1605) built of red sandstone with 3 storey towers and a Cenotaph of white marble. It was built by Akbar's Son Jahangir in 1613 after his death. It has been named after Delhi's Emperor Sikander Lodhi (16th cent). Arrival in Agra and transfer to hotel. Afternoon sightseeing in Agra : Visit the most famous monument of India ,the Taj Mahal. 20,000 workers from the central Asia and Europe were employed to construct this most famous building ever made in the name of Love. Shah Jahan began the construction of Taj Mahal in 1632 following the death of his loving wife Mumtaz Mahal who died giving birth to their 14th child. It took 21 years (1632-53) to complete this building. Red Fort (Fort and Palace , made by Mughal King Akbar in 16th century and completed by his grandson Shah Jahan) Shah Jahan was imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb for 8 years in this fort, after which he died finally. Then to Itimad-ud-Daulah (Tomb of Mirza Ghiyas Beg the Father of Nur Jahan). Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Day 4 Agra / Jaipur (230 km)

After breakfast drive to Jaipur. Enroute visit of Fatehpur Sikri. It took 16 years (1570-1586) this city to be completed and Mughal King Akbar lived only 16 months and had to leave the city due to scarcity of water. The beautiful palaces, mosques and gardens tell their own story. The English traveller Ralph Finch described Fatehpur Sikri in 1589 as a city bigger than London with 1000 Elephants, 30,000 horses and 800 concubines. There is also the Grave of Muslim Sufi saint Sheikh Salim Chisti by whose blessing the childless Mughal Emperor Akbar got a child. Further drive to Bharatpur and visit the Bharatpur bird sanctuary park. Around 350 types of birds are found in Bharatpur out of which 117 are the local birds and rest of the bird species come from Siberia , China and Europe. Alone 80 types of ducks can be spotted in Bharatpur. This sanctuary park is spread over an area of 52 sq km with a huge lake. Drive to Jaipur. After arrival check-in in the hotel. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Day 5 Jaipur

Early noon excursion trip to Amber Fort. This city Fort is situated on a 130m high Aravali hill. Enjoy a joy Elephant ride upto the fort. Before you start with your Elephant ride ,all the male participants in the group will receive a colourful Turban of their choice. The ladies also get handkerchiefs with wonderful printing. In fort you see palaces , private and public Audience halls, halls with wonderful paintings and work with semi precious stones. Specially the mirror palace is very beautiful in which only one candle light is enough to lighten the whole palace. Return to Jaipur for lunch.

Afternoon visit the “Pink City” Jaipur ,which because of the pink coloured houses and sandstone walls got this name. The palace of wind (Hawa Mahal) this 5 story building with 25cm thick facades from the 18. Century is full of windows and Niches which was made so that ladies of royal family could see the procession and events on the road without being visible to the Folks. Next is City Palace with its museum consisting the collection of textiles ,manuscripts ,paintings and weapon etc. In some parts still live the royal family. The construction of City Palace was begun by Jai Singh 1734. Next is Observatory (Jantar Mantar) built (1728-34) by king astrologer Jai Singh II. Finally you have time to stroll through the colourful bazaar of Jaipur for shopping. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

Day 6 Jaipur / Mandawa (170 km)

After breakfast further drive to Mandawa. You reach Shekhavati-Area. Shekhavati became rich because of its favourable position on the East-West business route. The merchants in this area are called Marwaris. They were in the business of spices , precious stones and silks and made huge profits. There are houses of these merchants with colourful fresko paintings called “Pukha Haveli”. In Nawalgarh and Dunlod there are numerous havelis (1869-1900) of these merchants. After arrival in Mandawa check-in and lunch in the hotel. Afternoon visit Mandawa and see “Pukha Havelis” as well as the fort of Mandawa. Dinner and overnight in Mandawa.

Day 7 Mandawa / Bikaner (210 km)

After breakfast visit Nawalgarh and see other seeing attractions in Shekhavati region. After lunch further drive to Bikaner. Dinner and overnight in Bikaner.

Day 8 Bikaner

Full day sightseeing in Bikaner : You see a Jain Temple , the golden jubilee museum with findings of Harappa time , sculptures of Gupta period and miniatures of Bikaner school as well as the Junagarh Fort (16.century). Dinner and overnight in Bikaner.

Day 9 Bikaner / Udasar (80 km)

Today begins the Camel Safari for the adventurous people of the group (the participants who don't want to join the Camel Safari can stay back in Bikaner and join the group in Jodhpur after the Camel Safari). Around 8.00 am leave Bikaner and drive to Nokha where the camels will be ready. A 5 hrs ride on camels better know as the “Ship of the Desert” through the small villages and sand dunes to Udasar. The local resident are Rajputs and different desert Tribals. There will be a cook who will look after the food. Overnight either in small huts or in village school of Udasar. For sleeping the mattresses , bed sheets and cushions will be available. Nevertheless we will advise you to bring your own sleep sack. Today's evening will be different from other evenings you spend on this holiday. You sit with the villagers in the middle of the desert. People

dance and sing on the tunes of Drums and other Indian instrument. After that you will be served a local alcoholic drink. Overnight in Udasar.

Day 10 Udasar / Dharnokh

After breakfast ride to Dharnokh (6hrs ride). Today you will be the guest of the Thakur of Sher Singh Ji in Dharnokh. You overnight in big Rajasthani huts. Our cook will prepare the dinner.

Day 11 Dharnokh / Chakhu

You take a heavy breakfast as today's ride is going to be a bit harder (around 9 hrs) to reach today's destination Chaksu. On the way you see huge blocks of sheeps and camels and pass by colourful villages. Lunch will be on the way. Overnight in tents.

Day 12 Chakhu / Jamba / Jodhpur

After breakfast ride to Jamba where you will have lunch at the house of the Thakur of Jamba. Finally you say goodbye to your camel and board in the bus for the further journey to Jodhpur. After arrival check-in in the hotel where you meet the rest of the participants who have not participated in the camel safari. Dinner and overnight.

Day 13 Jodhpur / Udaipur

After breakfast visit the impressive Mehrangarh fort on a 125m high hill which was built by Maharaja Jodh Singh in 1459 of red sand stone with its museum and its earlier rooms of the Maharaja and see Jaswant Thada, a white marbled chattri (umbrella) of Jaswant Singh II. Return to hotel for lunch. Finally drive to Udaipur via Ranakpur, visit to unforgettable Jain Temple of marble in Ranakpur. It took 65 years (1367/1432) this temple to be completed. It was financed by rich Jain businessmen. There are 65 halls and 444 pillars, which are not identical with each other. Further drive to Udaipur. After arrival check-in in the hotel. Dinner and overnight.

Day 14 Udaipur

Early noon visit Udaipur. The city lies in the heart of Rajasthan, surrounded by the hills with its fantastic lakes, temples and palaces considered to be an Oasis in the Thar desert. The maharaja of Udaipur is the high ranked Rajput of "Sun Dynasty". See the city palace on the bank of the Pichola Lake. The rich decorated walls and ceiling of inner palace and Audience Hall, make the visit worthwhile. Construction of this palace was begun in 1570 by Maharaja Udai Singh. Along with the lake you walk through the Sahelion-ki Bari or ladies garden which was specially made for the ladies of the palace in 18th century with beautiful fountains and flowers. You also visit the Lok Kala Mandir, the Museum which is famous for its Puppets and textiles. Afternoon visit Nagda (40 km) with the Jain Temple of Adbudji and Sas Bahu, the Mother and Daughter-in-law Temple. In an old place Eklingji see an old Shiva Temple. Dinner and overnight.

Day 15 Udaipur / Delhi

After breakfast transfer to airport and flight to Delhi. After arrival transfer to hotel. Rest of the day is free. Dinner and overnight.

Day 16 Delhi

Early morning transfer to airport and flight to Europe.