

THE Nation. TRAVELS

INDIA ITINERARY | MARCH 10–24, 2018

DETAILS & PRICING

Exploring the World's Largest Democracy: Embark on a once-in-a-lifetime grand adventure—full of iconic sites, exclusive meetings with renown experts, and privately curated tours!

B: BREAKFAST

L: LUNCH

D: DINNER

R: RECEPTION



MARCH 10 & 11

Depart the United States on international flights to Mumbai and arrive the following day. Transfer to the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel.

MARCH 12. MUMBAI

B, L, D

- Attend a welcome meeting with fellow travelers and an introductory overview of Indian history with **Dr. Mariam Dossal**, the former head of the department of history at the University of Mumbai.
- Depart the hotel for a morning orientation tour. Visit the magnificent Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, which showcases the decorative and industrial arts and life in 19th-century Mumbai, and meet with the museum's honorary director, **Tasneem Mehta**.
- After lunch at a local restaurant, visit the Apne Aap

Women's Collective and attend a presentation on human trafficking and the problems of Mumbai's sex-trade industry. Hear from woman involved in a project that helps girls in the red-light district train for alternative careers.

- Enjoy a festive welcome dinner at the Indigo restaurant.

MARCH 13. MUMBAI

B, L, D

- After breakfast, depart the hotel for the Gateway of India jetty and embark on a private boat ride to the tranquil forested island of Elephanta, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Originally called Gharapuri, or Fort City, the island was renamed Elephanta by the Portuguese after a huge stone elephant statue that once stood there. Upon arrival, take a short train ride to the Elephanta Caves. Visit the unique

cave temple, whose Shiva sculpture is a fine example of Hindu architecture. Inside this impressively excavated eighth-century cave, Shiva takes the form of a cosmic dancer.



- Return by private boat to Mumbai and ride to Dharavi, a teeming community of 1 million people, where as many as 18,000 residents crowd into a single acre. Routinely called the “largest slum in Asia” and featured in the award-winning movie *Slumdog Millionaire*, Dharavi remains unique among packed urban spaces. Although Dharavi is the archetypal Indian slum, it is also home to many different productive micro-economies that defy many urban planners’ concepts of poverty.
- Here, we’ll visit the Aashyen Community Centre for a light lunch and a meeting with alumni of the Youth Empowerment Program. Afterward, we’ll break into smaller groups of four to five people and walk through part of Dharavi to see what life is like there firsthand. Observe food-making, clothes-making, paper-making, temple offerings, pottery, bakeries, and a soap factory.
- End the day at the Gandhi Museum and Research Institute. Here we will be met by **Dr. Usha Thakkar**, former professor and head of the department of political science at SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai, and now honorary director of the Institute of Research on Gandhian Thought and Rural Development. Dr. Thakkar will discuss Gandhi’s journey and India’s freedom struggle.
- Enjoy dinner at the Leopold Cafe.

MARCH 14. MUMBAI

B, L

- This morning, meet with **Kalpana Sharma**, an independent journalist and media consultant who until recently was the deputy editor and bureau chief

of *The Hindu* in Mumbai. Her special areas of interest are environmental and development issues.

- Depart for the Churchgate Railway Station to observe Mumbai’s *dabbawallas*, who deliver 200,000 homemade hot lunches on time every day, with clockwork precision, across long distances while battling Mumbai’s chaotic traffic. Their flawless management system has been studied by business schools worldwide.
- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. Afterward visit the Dhobi Ghat, the world’s largest outdoor laundry, where washers, known locally as *dhobis*, wash clothes and linen from Mumbai’s hotels and hospitals using open-air concrete wash pens, each fitted with its own flogging stone.
- Dinner will be at your own leisure.



MARCH 15. VARANASI

B, L, D

- Transfer to the airport in time for a late-morning flight to Varanasi.
- Varanasi, also known as Kashi, the City of Light, is Hinduism’s holiest city, with a spiritual and religious legacy that dates back nearly 3,000 years. The city is located on the sacred Ganges River, and its riverbank is lined with temples and shrines. Witness the endless cycle of Hindu religious practice—from simple everyday rituals to profound rites of passage.
- Upon arrival, transfer to the Gateway Hotel Ganges, located in the Nadesar Palace grounds amid 40 acres of greenery.
- After lunch, enjoy a rickshaw ride through the bustling bazaars of Varanasi to the riverfront steps



of the Ganges, called *ghats*, to watch the Ganga Aarti, a much-awaited nightly ritual. When dusk sets, the *ghats* are illuminated with earthen lamps and decorated with marigold flowers.

- Dinner is at a local restaurant.

MARCH 16. VARANASI

B, L, D

- In the early morning, participate in a private yoga and meditation session.
- After breakfast, visit the weavers' village of Sarai Mohana, outside of Varanasi. The Banarasi saris made by these weavers are among the finest in India, known for their gold and silver brocade (or *zari*), fine silk, and opulent embroidery.
- In the afternoon, drive a short distance to Sarnath, where in the sixth century BCE Siddhartha Gautama—who came to be known as the Buddha, the “Awakened One”—gave his first sermon. The city also has an archaeological museum with a superb collection of Buddhist artifacts, including the Lion Capital of Ashoka in polished sandstone, which is India's national emblem.
- End the day at the Bharat Mata temple, which features a huge map of India carved in marble. The temple is purported to be the only one in the world dedicated to Bharat Mata, or Mother India.
- Dinner is at a local restaurant. Afterward, enjoy a Kathak dance performance, one of the major classical Indian dance styles.

MARCH 17. AGRA

B, D

- Stretched along a crescent bend of the Ganges, Varanasi's waterfront is dominated by landings where pilgrims come for their daily ritual ablutions. In the early morning, enjoy a boat cruise on the river and walk through the old bazaars. Return to the hotel for breakfast.
- Later, depart on a flight to Agra. Upon arrival, transfer to the Marriott Courtyard Hotel, which is set amid six tranquil acres of lush landscaped gardens.
- Agra was the seat of the imperial Mughal court during the 16th and 17th centuries before the capital was shifted to Delhi. The city, strategically located on the banks of the Yamuna River, flourished under the patronage of the great Mughal emperors. Artisans from Persia, Central Asia, and throughout India were attracted to the city and helped build luxurious forts, palaces, gardens, and mausoleums.
- In the afternoon, visit the Taj Mahal. The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan built this incomparable monument in the memory of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died at the age of 39 while giving birth to their 14th child. See this spectacular site at sunset, when the monument appears to change hue, tinted by the glow of the setting sun.
- Enjoy dinner at the famous South Indian vegetarian restaurant Dasaprakash.

MARCH 18. SAMODE**B, L**

- This morning, enjoy the Heritage Walk of Agra, which highlights a range of architectural styles, planning elements, and ornamental details. The walk begins at the magnificent Jami Masjid, or Friday Mosque (from which you'll ride in a decorated horse cart, or *tonga*), and includes the Mankameshwar Mahadev temple; the Rawat Para spice market; the famous Khoya Gali, an entire street devoted to the production and sale of sweets made from the popular dairy product *khoya*; the Namak Ki Mandi gold and silver market; the Akbari Masjid, a 16th-century red-stone mosque built by the Mughal Emperor Akbar; and the stone-paved streets of Kinari Bazaar, famed for its wedding market.



- Depart Agra and drive to the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri, a former capital of Emperor Akbar. Built between 1571 and 1585, it has lain silent for almost four centuries. Now deserted, it is almost perfectly preserved—a masterpiece in sandstone with the stunning elegance of its palaces, mosques, and plazas glowing in subtly changing shades of red.
- After lunch, drive four hours through the scenic Rajasthan countryside to Samode. This village, where local artisans produce printed cloth and glass bangles, is picturesquely nestled within the dry rugged hills of the northern Aravalli range. Upon arrival, transfer to the Samode Palace Hotel.
- Dinner tonight is at your own leisure.

MARCH 19. SAMODE**B, L, D**

- After breakfast, explore the remarkable Samode Palace, which is decorated with 300-year-old fine Shekhawati-style wall paintings.
- Participate in a cooking class featuring Northern

Indian cuisine with its strong Mughal influence and enjoy your creations for lunch. Afterward, visit some of the studios of local craftspeople before returning to the hotel for leisure time.

- This evening, attend a special event on a private terrace at the Samode Palace. Here we will receive a welcome surrounded by twinkling lamps. There will also be fireworks, a performance by traditional Indian dancers, and an elaborate gourmet dinner.

MARCH 20. JAIPUR**B, L**

- After breakfast, ride south to Jaipur, the capital of the state of Rajasthan, famous for its colorful culture, forts, palaces, and lakes. En route, visit a workshop that produces the stunning turquoise-blue pottery that Jaipur is famous for.
- Stop for lunch at a local restaurant before transferring to the Taj Jai Mahal Palace, a magnificent palace hotel set amid 18 acres of beautifully landscaped Mughal gardens.
- Speak with **Kavita Srivastava**, a seasoned champion campaigner for civil liberties, women's rights, and food access, on a special visit to her home. Srivastava is the general secretary for the People's Union for Civil Liberties, India's oldest and largest human-rights organization.
- Dinner tonight is at your own leisure. Enjoy an optional visit to the opulent Raj Mandir Cinema, which is considered the place to go if you want to see at least one Bollywood film while in India.

MARCH 21. DELHI**B, L**

- Travel seven miles north of Jaipur to visit the Amber Fort, the ancient capital of the Rajputs from 1037 to 1728. Ascend the fort by elephant and admire the surrounding hills, high ramparts, and a succession of gates.
- Afterward, visit two of Jaipur's most famous monuments, the Palace of Winds and the Jantar Mantar Observatory, both within the palace complex at the heart of the "Pink City."
- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.
- Transfer to the airport for a late-afternoon flight to Delhi. Upon arrival, check into the Taj Palace Hotel.
- Dinner tonight is at your own leisure.

MARCH 22. DELHI**B, L, D**

- Begin the morning with a city tour through Old Delhi. Walk through the palace of Shah Jahan, known as the Red Fort, or Lal Qila, so named because of the wall surrounding the palace built of red sandstone.
- Take a rickshaw ride through the winding alleys of Chandni Chowk, one of the oldest markets in Old Delhi, before arriving at Delhi's largest mosque—the Jama Masjid, a stunning red-sandstone monument built on a natural outcrop of rock.
- Enjoy lunch at Chor Bizarre, a themed restaurant that serves authentic regional Indian cuisine in a unique atmosphere that captures the spirit of the “thieves market” within its kaleidoscopic interiors.
- Continue on to Raj Ghat to visit the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi. A simple square platform of black marble marks the spot where Gandhi was cremated following his assassination in 1948. It is surrounded by a beautiful park with labelled trees planted by notables such as Queen Elizabeth II, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and, most recently, Barack Obama.
- End the day with a visit to the most grandiose and elegant Victorian section of New Delhi, which contains majestic government buildings conceived by Sir Edwin Lutyens, the British architect who was instrumental in designing and building New Delhi, with the assistance of Sir Herbert Baker, the main architect of several of the city's monuments, including the India Gate.
- Tonight, enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

**MARCH 23. DELHI** (ROOMS RESERVED UNTIL 6 PM)**B, L**

- This morning, visit the National Museum, which provides an excellent overview of Indian culture and history.
- Enjoy lunch at the Lodhi Gardens.
- Visit the office of *Balaknama*, a monthly newspaper by and for street and working children who are



determined to tell their own stories, change people's perceptions, and promote the dignity of street children. Today, the paper has 60 reporters between the ages of 12 and 20 based in Delhi and the neighboring states of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.

- This afternoon, meet with **Aruna Roy**, a former civil servant best known for her efforts to fight corruption and promote government transparency. After six years serving the government, she left to become a full-time social activist, founding Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, an organization that advocates for freedom of information and workers' rights. Their advocacy led to the enactment of the Right to Information Act in 2005.
- Return to the hotel, where rooms will be kept for a late checkout. This evening, transfer to the airport for flights home.

MARCH 24

- Arrive home.

PRICING

GROUND PACKAGE PRICING*

Per person double occupancy: **\$7,825**
plus **\$320** for internal flights

Single supplement: **\$1,980**

*Rates are based on standard accommodations. Suites, superior rooms and other upgrades carry an additional fee.

INCLUDED

- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels as listed
- Airport transfers on designated arrival and departure dates
- Meals as listed in the program with bottled water at each meal
- All sightseeing and entrance fees listed
- Transportation in a private air-conditioned bus
- All private events and speakers as listed
- Services of an English-speaking Indian tour manager who will travel with the group from the beginning to end
- Local guides in each city
- Bottled water on the bus at all times
- Porterage
- All gratuities to drivers, guides, and tour manager

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- International airfare to and from India
- Internal airfare, which includes economy class seats from Mumbai/Varanasi, Varanasi/Agra and Jaipur/Delhi, will be billed separately at a total cost of \$320
- Travel insurance
- Drinks other than bottled water with meals
- Excess-luggage charges
- Laundry charges
- Communications (phone, fax, and Internet) charges
- Items of a purely personal nature
- Passport fees
- Visa fee for India, which is currently \$123 per person plus a visa service fee of \$75
- Any items not listed

