

TAJ AND WILDLIFE, INDIA

08 nights / 09 days

Ranthambhore National Park opens from 1st October till Mid June. Rest of the time Park is closed for visitors.

ITINERARY: -

Day 01 Arrive Delhi

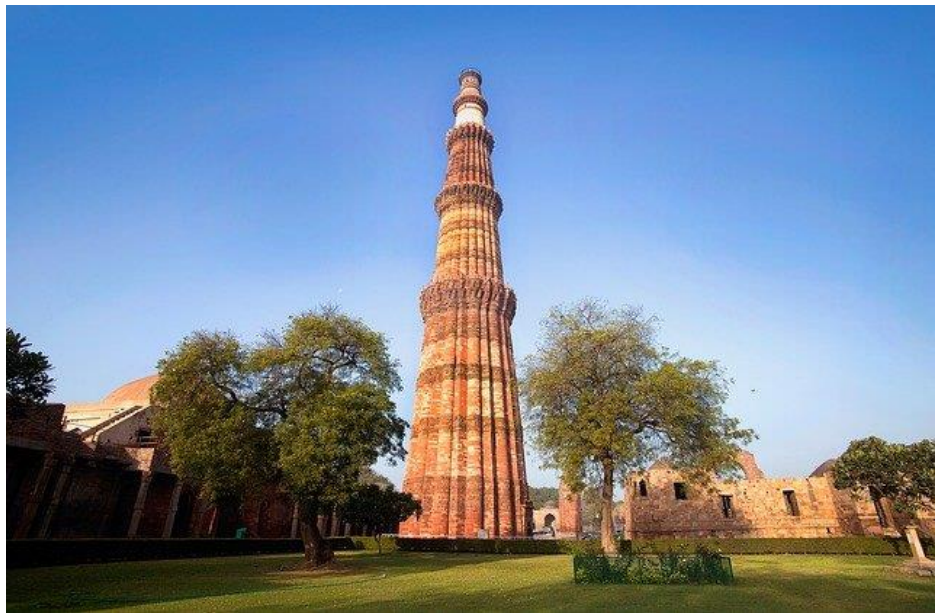
Upon arrival at Delhi Airport, you will be met by your car with chauffeur for the short transfer to your hotel for night stay. Rest of the day free. Night in Delhi.

Note: No meals neither early check in is Included on day1 in Delhi.

Day 02 in Delhi

Breakfast. Full day sightseeing of Delhi with guide. You could include some of the following: Old Delhi, Red Fort from outside, the Jama Masjid Mosque, with a rickshaw ride through the Chandni Chowk visiting the Spice, Wedding and Silver Markets and then the Birla Temple, Parliament Buildings of Sir Edwin Lutyens, India Gate and Humayun's Tomb.

Start the morning with a visit to Old Delhi. Built in the first half of the 17th Century by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan this old city is still a dense network of overcrowded homes, markets and endless alleyways dominated by the enormous **Red Fort**. Go by **cycle rickshaw through Chandni Chowk** (closed on a Sunday) a bustling thoroughfare of shops,



craftsmen's workshops, mosques, and temples. Continue onto **Jama Masjid** the largest mosque in India and then to the Red Fort (closed on a Monday) with its imposing appearance and towering entrance. Also visit **Rajghat**, the cremation place of Mahatma Gandhi.

Continue to visit the **Qutub Minar** complex housing an impressive 13th Century 72m victory tower.

In the afternoon drive south to New Delhi designed by British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens in a combination of western and eastern styles. Proceed up to **Rashtrapati Bhavan** once the Viceroy's abode but now the official residence of the President of India and then across to the eastern end of the Rajpath to the imposing **India Gate**. This war memorial, designed by Lutyens, commemorates the Indian soldiers who died in the First World War, on the Northwest Frontier and in the Afghan War of 1919 and, most recently, in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. Overnight stay in Delhi.

Day 03 Delhi - Samode – Jaipur (By surface, Aprox 06h)

Half Board. After breakfast drive to Jaipur, capital of Rajasthan. This is a busy bustling city where the bazaars spill over on to the streets, to mingle with the handcarts, camels, elephants, scooters, rickshaws and tuk-tuks. It is lively and colourful and painted pink!

Lunch. Before reaching Jaipur, en route stop for lunch at Samode - 50 Kms from Jaipur famous for the elegant Palace, we explore the splendid Palace and have the lunch in the Palace.

Continue to Jaipur, for 02 nights stay. (Approx. 01 hrs drive). The highly distinctive planned city of Jaipur, founded in 1727 by Maharaja Jai Singh II, is a colourful capital characterized by fine bazaars, intricately carved palaces and havelis as well as powerful forts. Inheriting the kingdom in a period of instability Maharaja Jai Singh II defeated the Maratha armies of Gujarat and Maharashtra and successfully forged diplomatic ties with the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb thus achieving the political stability he needed to pursue his scientific and cultural interests.

Jaipur is very much the product of his intellectual talent and with the Brahmin scholar Vidyadhar Bhattacharya he was able to utilize his love of mathematics, science, and astrology to design his city on a distinctive grid based on Hindu representations of the universe which lasts to this day.

Day 04 in Jaipur

Breakfast. Whole day to sightsee with an English-speaking guide. Suggest you begin the day to visit Amber Fort Palace, (**Elephant ride**) to view the beautiful palace with its ornate mosaics, coloured

stone inlays, intricately painted murals, palaces, temples & cooling courtyard watercourses. In the afternoon take a guided walking tour through the old city to explore the colourful markets & bazaars before continuing onto the **City Palace** complex that occupies the centre of Jaipur. Painted pink as a mark of welcome, the City Palace was completed in 1732 & houses the intriguing Armory Museum. Nearby is the **Hawa Mahal**, or Palace of the Winds, which forms



part of the east wall of the City Palace complex. Built at the turn of the 19th Century these five storied structures with its elaborate façade were built for the ladies of the harem and is best seen from the street outside. Further along is the **Jantar Mantar (Observatory)** the largest stone observatory in world.

Jaipur is famous as a centre for carpet weaving – silk and wool – and for Jaipur blue pottery, but probably best known for its exquisite gems and jewellery. Night stay in Jaipur.

Day 05 Jaipur – Ranthambhore National Park (surface: approx., 4h)

After breakfast drive to Jaipur for Ranthambhore. The drive takes approx. 4 hours. Upon arrival check in at your hotel for 02 nights stay.

Ranthambhore National Park is probably the best place for wildlife sightings including tiger, leopard, and sloth bear. Bound by rivers, the park is characterized by rocky plains, flat hilltops and precipitous cliffs covered by dry forest. It houses a rich flora and fauna, villages, and farmland. Other animals found here are caracal, hyenas, crocodiles, wild boar and 300 species of birds. Tiger sightings at Ranthambhore are probably the highest anywhere in the north of India. Wear suitable clothing and avoid any bright colours including white. The Reserve is recognized for its variety of wildlife. The wildlife includes tigers, leopards, crocodiles, and a variety of deer, bear, and other similar animals. The park has several water bodies that attract a variety of migratory birds. Night stay in Ranthambhore.



Day 06 in Ranthambhore

Whole day in Sawai Madhopur to enjoy morning & evening jeep safaris with an English-speaking naturalist. Night stay in Ranthambhore.

If you wish, you can visit Ranthambhore fort after morning safari. The fort is located at the top of a rocky outcrop in the middle of the forest, which almost literally marks the meeting of the Aravali and Vindhya hills range. The fort is huge and covers an area of approximately 7 kilometers in circumference. It is one of the oldest forts in the country and is said to have been built in 944AD by a Chauhan warrior.

Due to its location and structure, it is considered to have been one of the most difficult forts to overthrow. Its repulsed attempts by great warriors such as Alaudin Khilji, Kutub-ud-din, Feroz Tughlaq, and Bahadur Shah of Gujarat. The most successful ruler of this fort is known to have been Rao Hammir in the 11th century. According to a legend, over a thousand women once committed mass suicide as they would rather have killed themselves than fall prey to the armies of a victorious invader. **Note:** There are steep stairs to various level, but the view and the fort is impressive.

Day 07 Ranthambhore – Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary (Car, approx,5h)

After breakfast, drive to Keoladeo Ghana National Park at Bharatpur, famous for its migratory birds. No less than 400 kinds of birds have been recorded here. More than 100 kinds have migrated from countries such as China, Siberia, and Afghanistan to pass the more temperate winters in India.

The best way to see the park is either by bicycle or by rickshaw. Binoculars are an asset. Just 10 km outside the city are the Udayagiri and Khandagiri Caves, which contain many carvings from the 1st Century BC. Night stay in Bharatpur.

Day 08 Bharatpur - Fatehpur Sikri – Agra (By surface, approx. 06h)

Breakfast. Leave Bharatpur after an early breakfast for the drive to Agra, stopping on the way to visit Fatehpur Sikri, the deserted capital city of Emperor Akbar. Visit the beautiful Dargah Mosque, the Buland Darwaza and the tomb of Shaikh Salim Chishti. Also, the palaces of Akbar's women; Jodh Bal Palace for his Hindu mother, Birbal Bhawan for his favourite courtier and Golden House for his Christian wife. Also make a visit to the Karawan Serai which is a courtyard surrounded by hostels used for visiting merchants, the Paanch Mahal, the Treasury, the Diwan-I-Khas and the Diwan-I-Am.



Continue to the short drive to Agra for overnight stay. Check in hotel and later afternoon visit the imposing **Agra Fort** on the banks of the River Yamuna which was established by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1565. This powerful imperial fortress dominates the centre of the city & the red sandstone walls enclose a vast area which comprises of palaces, impressive reception rooms and two incredibly beautiful mosques. Night in Agra.

Day 09 Back to Delhi airport. (surface. Aprox 4h)

Breakfast. Morning sightseeing with an English-speaking guide. We would suggest beginning your day visiting **Taj Mahal (closed on Fridays)**, the tomb of Mumtaz, beloved wife of the emperor Shah Jahan and arguably the greatest monument to love, built by Shah Jahan as a memorial to his wife Mumtaz & a building world renowned for its power and beauty. The craftsmanship is outstanding with semi-precious stones inlaid into the marble in beautiful patterns, a process known as pietra dura, whilst the white marble reflects every change in light allowing the Taj to appear to change its hue according to the light & time of day.

Continue to visit the tomb of **Itmad-ud-Daula**, one of the most beautiful existing Mughal Tombs, built entirely built in white marble in the region. The tomb is also quite famous for the glorious pietra dura (stone inlay) decoration which depicts cypresses, wine glasses and an amazing variety of geometrical arabesque. It stands across Yamuna River and approx. one and a half kilometres away from the Taj. This magnificent tomb belongs to the era of Jahangir and it contains cenotaphs of Mirza Ghivas and Asmat Begum, the parents of the powerful Mughal Empress Nurjahan, queen of Jahangir who was an exceptional beauty and an astute administrator. The tomb is significantly built quite departed and aloof from the other Mughal Tombs.

In the afternoon drive back to Delhi and in time drop at Delhi airport for onward journey...