



PUSHKAR CAMEL FAIR IN INDIA

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This 16-day heritage tour through the heart of Rajasthan, including Pushkar, as well as Delhi and Agra, starts at \$2,350 per person, double*.

Westport, CT, August 15, 2012 - This November, Geringer Global Travel invites travelers to spend 16 days/15 nights in Rajasthan, India's largest state, whose rich cultural and historic heritage rightly deems it worthy of the title "The Land of Kings." Bordered by Gujarat to the southwest, Rajasthan encompasses much of the Thar Desert and contains many iconic cities, each with distinctive architectural and artistic style standing as a cultural testament to the diverse dynasties who ruled there. Rounding out this spectacular itinerary, travelers will have a once in a lifetime opportunity to witness and participate in Pushkar's annual Camel and Cattle Fair, one of the largest in the world, with livestock trading, artisan craftwork, dancing, dramatic performances and musical displays to enchant every eye. Whether marveling over the exquisite rose-tinted Palace of the Winds in Jaipur, visiting Pushkar's famous Hindu temple to Brahma or bargaining through the ancient caravan bazaars of Bikaner, Rajasthan's rich heritage royally delivers. Along with touring Delhi and Agra, Colors of Rajasthan with the Pushkar Fair winds through the heart of India's largest state, visiting the cities Jaipur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur, with special emphasis on Pushkar. The tour starts at \$2,350 per person, double, and includes 4-and 5-star accommodations, site entrance fees, transport services, English-speaking tour guides, unique activities, most meals and more.

Highlights Include:

- Watching the sun rise over the Taj Mahal in Agra, its light dappling the monument's white marble in a breathtaking pinkish-golden glow;
- Riding an elephant to the top of the Amber Fort in Jaipur, built by Raja Man Sing;
- Enjoying a camel-milk ice cream treat at a breeding farm in Bikaner, while learning all about these majestic caravan animals;
- Taking an afternoon camel ride to the sand dunes outside Jaisalmer;

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Riding through the bustling markets of Jodhpur via tuk-tuk (motorized rickshaw); Visiting the homes of textile artisans to learn the uniquely nuanced styles of Udaipur art.

The adventure begins in Delhi, the second largest metropolis in India, encompassing a unique blend of ancient and modern, from the Islamic mosques and Chandni Chowk Bazaar of the ancient Mughal emperors in Old Delhi to New Delhi's India Gate, a national monument to fallen Indian soldiers constructed after WWI and the Afghan wars. Then on to Agra, where travelers will get an up-close look at the magnificent Taj Mahal, a jewel of Muslim architecture widely considered one of the seven wonders of the ancient world and an enduring symbol of love, built by grieving Emperor Shah Jahan for his beloved wife. Travelers will also visit the Agra Fort, another Mughal site of familial power and dysfunction as it was from this lofty eminence that the emperors ruled their subjects and struggled for power.

Entering the rich state of Rajasthan, widely known as the land of Rajasthanis, or "kings", visitors will come to its capital city of Jaipur and marvel at the synthesis of Rajput and Mughal architecture, which stands as a testament to the power struggles between tribes who competed to rule the region. Jaipur is also known for its arts, jewelry, hand-painted fabrics and stone sculpture. Lovers of mystery will be entranced by the fairy-tale red sandstone city of Fatehour Sikri built by Emperor Akbar; a UNESCO heritage site which, despite its pristine condition, was mysteriously abandoned by Mughal emperors. Jaipur itself contains some of the most unique architecture, from the City Palace's complex alignment of pavilions, courtyards and temples to the ramparts, gates and cobbled paths of the Amber fort, a synthesis of Hindu and Rajput styles. Perhaps the most astonishing feat is the Hawa Mahal, or Palace of the Winds, an elaborate five-story pink sandstone façade resembling a honeycomb where Indian court ladies, secluded from men according to the custom of "purdah", used to eagerly observe the outside world from behind the 953 palace windows.

Stopping along the way at Ajmer, a holy pilgrimage site for Muslim Sufis in India, the tour proceeds to Pushkar, an oasis town at the edge of the desert, surrounding the sacred Pushkar Lake of the Hindus. Fifty-two ghats, or terraced steps clustered with numerous temples, lead down to the sacred body of water where devotees regularly bathe. A deeply religious town, Pushkar, allows no alcohol or non-vegetarian foods. Yet every year during the month of Kartik, a holy Hindu month that usually falls in November, the city's modest population of 12,000 swells to more than 200,000 visitors, coming from all corners of India to celebrate the annual Camel and Cattle Fair. Over the course of these five festive days, held under the auspices of the full moon, a tented city rises adjacent to the Pushkar Lake and traders come in droves to decorate, race and sell over 50,000 camels. Thousands of visitors gather in Pushkar, enlightening the town with vibrant festive dancing, singing, dramatic competitions, trading and, of course, camel racing.

There are more camels to be seen in Bikaner, a staging post on the old caravan routes and the next stop on the journey. Here, visitors will delight in the crenellated walls and old world charm of this mercantile town, bustling with bazaars, all the while learning how essential these majestic animals were to the



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ancient trade routes. Bikaner's heritage as the converging station for trade is further evidenced by its Junagarh Fort, one of the finest in Rajasthan, where travelers will marvel at the beautiful interior décor of shell-work, glass inlay, gold leaf and lacquer-work. Next the tour comes to Jaisalmer, a golden city standing on a ridge of yellow sandstone overlooking the Thar desert, and augmented by a series of exquisite Jain temples and javelis, ornate mansions built by famed Indian masons for the city's wealthy merchants.

Moving east, travelers will continue to Jodhpur, a town founded by a Rajput prince as the capital of the ancient Mawar Kingdom. Today Jodhpur is the second largest city in the state of Rajasthan, set in the stark landscape of the Thar Desert and enlivened by its beautiful palaces, temples and forts, many of which are painted blue. This so-called "Blue City" is especially famous for its Mehrangarh Fort, one of the best preserved fortresses in India and a popular tourist attraction due to its extensive heritage museum containing everything from arms, to costumes, to paintings, to royal palanquins! After exploring the city, visitors will embark on a Bishnoi village safari on the outskirts of Jodhpur, where they will learn about the eco-conscious lifestyle of the tribal farmers, potters and shepherds, a spiritual community pledged to the conservation of animal and plant life.

The journey finally winds down in romantic Udaipur, set on the verdant shores of Lake Pichola and surrounded by hills. Visitors will spend one of their last evenings enjoying a serene boat ride across the lake, admiring the spectacular views of the City Palace, the exquisite architecture and decor of the heritage mansions and the quiet beauty of the bathing ghats.

For a detailed itinerary: www.geringerglobaltravel.com/india-tour-destinations/india-tours/RajasthanPushkarFair/

** Pricing starts at \$2,350 per person, double occupancy, at 4-star accommodations. To upgrade to superior 5-star accommodations, rate starts at \$3,229 per person. International airfare is not included.

About Geringer Global Travel

Susan Geringer, India Travel and Tour Specialist, is the owner of Geringer Global Travel, a travel company specializing in custom itineraries to India and the Subcontinent. Susan's first visit to India was in 1980 and has since traveled to Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Susan travels to India about three times per year to discover new destinations, properties, hidden gems, and experiences that make her clients' itineraries even more exciting. Geringer Global Travel feels that it is important to have special experiences that immerse travelers into the culture. Susan is an Executive Board member for the New York City Chapter of PATA (Pacific Asian Tourism Association) and a New York ASTA member. Geringer Global Travel is an IATAN endorsed agency.



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