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Rajasthan: India's 'Land of Kings'

Posted by Steve Winston 02/04/13 8:00 AM EST
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Rajasthan is an Indian state with its own distinct culture and history - and the title of "Land of Kings."

It's a land of diversity, from the iconic cities of Jodhpur and Jaipur to the rural villages of Ramathra. And it's a land where many of the most precious treasures are its people, foods, and customs.



A resident of "The Land of Kings." (Courtesy Geringer Global Travel)

Now, you can unpeel these layers of treasure for yourself. A Connecticut company called Geringer Global Travel, which runs trips all over the Indian subcontinent, can take you on a 15-day trip called "Gems of Rajasthan."

On this journey into the heart of Rajasthan, you'll walk the streets of Old Delhi with a local expert. You'll discover the charming village of Rawla Narlai and enjoy a gourmet dinner at a lit stepwell (a sort of romantic pond). You'll take a safari through the Bishnoi tribal villages in Jodhpur. You'll cook dinner with a well-known Jaipur chef. And, in Agra, you'll get to check an item off your Bucket List - sunset over the Taj Mahal.

The trip begins in the northern city of Delhi, filled with the mosques of the ancient Mughal emperors. Guests then move west to the village of Delwara, where they'll lodge like royalty in the restored 18th-Century Devi Garh palace, now an all-suite hotel. Next is the lakeside city of Udaipur, "Venice of the East," filled with palaces and impressive Hindu and Jain temples.



You'll pass through the scenic Aravalli Hills, and on to Ranakpur, one of the five important pilgrim centers for the Jain community. It's the site of their most beautiful temple, made of marble. That night will be spent at the Rawla Narlai heritage hotel, with a candlelit dinner by the lit stepwell.

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The next day, it's the bustling city of Jodhpur - "The Blue City" - on the edge of the Thar Desert. Jodhpur is known for its

vibrant folk art and bazaars, and its magnificent Mehrangarh Fort. There's also a safari to ancient villages that were practicing conservation centuries before the word became popular. Then it's on to Nagaur, once a center of Chishti sufi saints and famed for its sandstone fort, fought over many times.

Next is the city of Pushkar, revered by Hindus...and home to over 400 temples. On the tenth day of the journey, you arrive in Jaipur, built on a grid system based on Hindu architecture, making it the only planned city of its time. After taking an elephant ride or jeep ride up to visit the Amber Fort, you'll explore the pink Hawa Mahal Palace ("of the winds"), the 17th-Century observatory, and the City Palace, where you'll walk in the footsteps of the Maharajas. You'll cap off the day by cooking dinner with Thakur Durga Singh, an expert on Indian culture and history.

You'll pass through Fatehpur Sikri, a red sandstone city built by Emperor Akbar as his capital, but then mysteriously abandoned. After arriving in Agra, you'll take High Tea with a local family, and explore historical landmarks like the Agra Fort.



You'll dine in the style of ancient Indian royalty. (Courtesy Geringer Global Travel)


The best is, fittingly, saved for last - watching the sun set over the Taj Mahal. Built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in the 1653, it's a mausoleum and an enduring symbol of love for his deceased third wife.

As you watch the sun set over the most famous building in the world, splashing it in shades of purple and pink and lavender, you'll experience the true essence of this ancient land.

And you'll be changed forever.

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