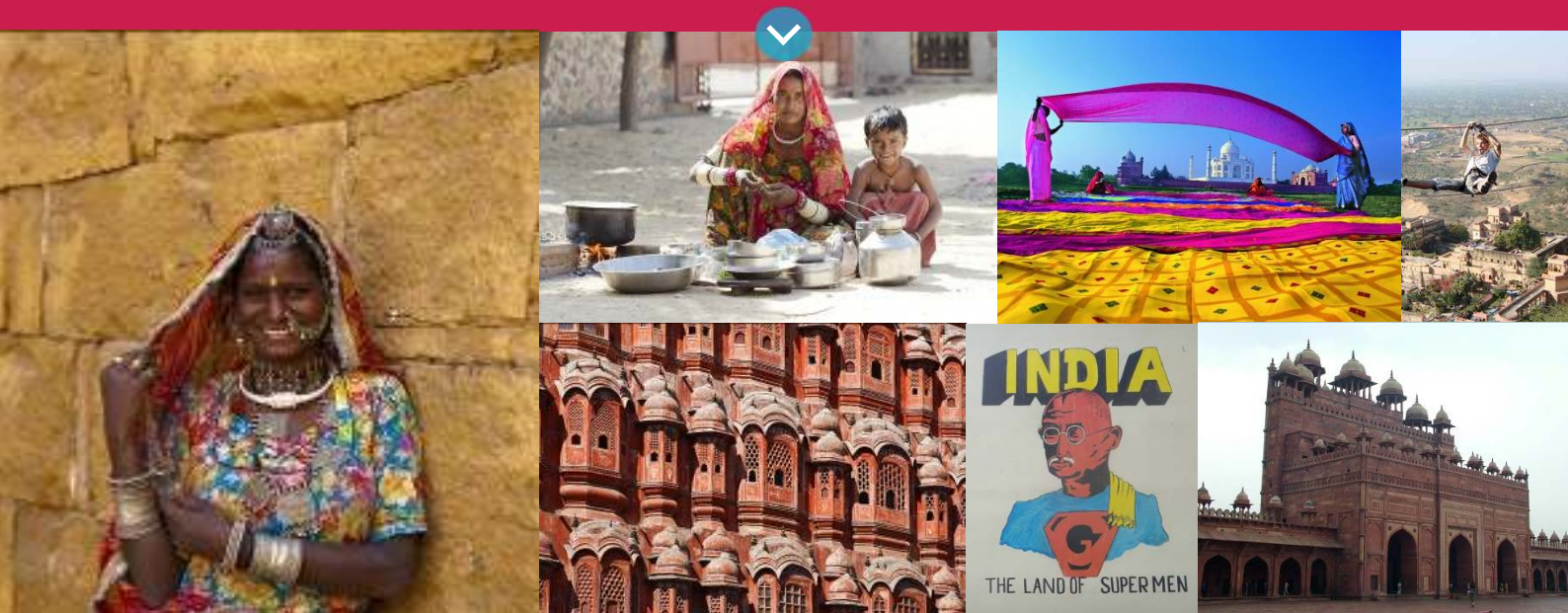


India

Saris, Solar and Spectacular India



A lifetime wouldn't be enough to explore all of the wonders that India has to offer, but this 10 day tour certainly takes us through some of her most interesting sights. The classic Indian 'Golden Triangle' tour of Delhi, Agra and Jaipur with a few extra special touches thrown in, from the deserted stronghold of Fatepur Sikri to the beautiful artwork inscribed on the havelis of Shekhawati. As it is part of our Girl's Adventure programme, we've made sure to explore the colourful lives of women in the Indian sub-continent. Cookery classes, mehndi art, the incredible work of the Barefoot College and an enlightening discussion on Indian wedding traditions are sure to bond and inspire students and local women alike.



Recommended Itinerary:

Day 1: Depart UK

We leave the UK on an overnight flight to Delhi.

Day 2: Arrive Delhi, City Tour

Upon our arrival at Delhi Airport, we will meet our Trip Leader and transfer to our hotel to freshen up. Afterwards we will be able to explore the many sights which Delhi has to offer including India Gate, Lakshmi Narayana Temple, Humayun's Tomb and the thrill of a rickshaw ride. This evening we will take part in a cookery class with a local female chef and begin to learn a little about the importance of food in Indian culture. Afterwards we can enjoy a feast of our own making!

Day 3: Agra

This morning we will travel 3-4 hours south to Agra, home to perhaps the World's most iconic building: the Taj Mahal. It is certainly a clear declaration of love which took 22 years to complete and utilised the skills of 20,000 artisans. No trip to India is complete without a visit to this monument and we will not be disappointed once we see it in real life. This afternoon we will also pay a visit to the Sheroes Hangout, a café run by female acid attack survivors. Acid attacks are an ongoing problem in India but this inspirational project is giving survivors the confidence to show their faces in public once more.

Day 4: Fatehpur Sikri, Jaipur

We have the option of rising early this morning to visit the Taj Mahal once more in the golden light of dawn. After breakfast we will begin our journey onwards to Jaipur. En route we will stop at the fortified city of Fatehpur Sikri. This World Heritage Site was once the capital of the Mughal Empire; now it lies mostly deserted but is a stunning example of architecture. After our tour we will continue on our journey to Jaipur where we will check into our hotel for the night. This evening we will meet with a local Indian woman to learn about the rich history and traditions surrounding Indian marriages and to discuss the concept of arranged marriages. According to some reports up to 90% of marriages in India are arranged. While this may seem shocking, only 13/1000 marriages end in divorce compared to 2/5 of UK marriages. We will also be able to try our hands at mehndi designs which it is traditional for Indian brides to have.

Days 5/6: Jaipur, Barefoot College

We will have plenty of time to explore the bustling pink city of Jaipur. Highlights of our visit will include the honey-combed Hawa Mahal (The Palace of Winds), originally built so that the women of the royal household could observe street festivals while unseen from the outside, the Amber Fort, the City Palace and the World Heritage listed Jantar Mantar Observatory. At the observatory, we will find huge stone instruments which were designed to measure a whole host of astronomical

Culture shock rating: 

Physical rating: 

activity. You might recognise some parts of Jaipur from the 2011 film *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* and many of the local stall holders will proudly show you their selfies taken with the cast of the film!

During our stay in Jaipur, we will also pay a visit to the Barefoot College, located in Tilonia about two hours from Jaipur. This fantastic voluntary organisation works in the fields of education, skill development, health, drinking water, female empowerment and electrification through solar power. Here we will have the opportunity to explore the campus and learn about the projects being undertaken by the college and its students. Of most interest, perhaps, will be how the use of solar power has allowed so many women to become literate and educated as they are now able to attend night schools. It is an inspiring example of giving people the power to liberate themselves and shape their own future through education.

Days 7/8: Nawalgarh

Moving on from Jaipur we will enter the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan. Famous for their mural painted havelis it will also be a chance for us to experience rural India. A haveli is the type of town house and mansion found in this region and derives from the Arabic word *haveli* which means partition. Traditionally, these are built with layers of courtyards to separate the men and women living there.

Our first stop will be the twin villages of Jhajad and Nahasinghani to experience the Sanjah Chula (community kitchen) which operates here. Under the instructions of a Head kitchen Leader, local women cook and share other chores, saving themselves from the gasses and pollutants which are produced when using traditional cattle dung fires. The project also encourages women to work together and development of entrepreneurial skills to run the kitchens. Later we will visit the heritage conservation at the Morarka Haveli Museum and lunch at Hari Singh's Farm, village Chelasi.

Over these days we will stay in the small town of Nawalgarh where we will also have time to visit some of the famous havelis and local sites including the British Clock Tower, Nawalgarh Fort and the Ganga Mai Temple.

Day 9: Neemrana

This morning we will leave Nawalgarh and drive to Neemrana. Here we will stay in the famed Neemrana Fort-Palace, one of India's oldest heritage resort hotels. If we have the time we will be able to take part in various activities here including a zip-wire tour, the 18th century step well and a self-guided tour of the fort. It is without a doubt a spectacular place to spend our last night in India, admiring the view from its hilltop location and reminiscing over our trip.

Day 10: Return to UK

Today we will transfer to Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi ready for our return flight to the UK and to wave goodbye to beautiful India as we take off.

Important information:

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes or natural events, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



DAYS FOR GIRLS This trip can include a session working alongside Days for Girls, a grass roots organisation aimed at giving every woman and girl access to proper feminine hygiene products and health advice. For more information look on our website: www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls



The School
Travel Consultancy

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