

# SACRED INDIA

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TOUR DETAILS		Duration
HIGHLIGHTS		7 days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Visit Varanasi - one of the world's oldest &amp; holiest cities</li><li>• Boat ride at sunrise and at night on the holy River Ganges</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marvel at Khajuraho's intricately carved erotic temples</li><li>• Explore the sleepy temple town of Orchha</li></ul>	
Off The Beaten Track Rating	● ● ●	Activity Rating ★ ★ ★

## ITINERARY

**DAY 1** On arrival into Delhi airport, you will be greeted by our Travel The Unknown representative, and then transferred to your hotel. Rest of day will be free. Overnight in Delhi. Meals: N/A

**DAY 2** After breakfast, set off for full-day tour of Delhi. Drive by India Gate, the Presidential Palace, lunch en-route, and then on to Old Delhi – visit impressive Red Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site - a symbol of India's Mughal past, and now of India's sovereignty. Immerse yourself in the chaos of Chandni Chowk on cycle-rickshaw. Visit the Qutub Minar, a symbol of Mughal rule in India. Later in the day, stroll around magnificent Humayun's Tomb and its gardens, and watch it change colour as the sun starts to set. Evening to relax and enjoy sumptuous Indian cuisine. Overnight in Delhi. Meals: N/A.

*The **India Gate** in New Delhi (All India War Memorial) is at the eastern end of **Rajpath** and is similar to the 'Arc de Triumph'. 42 metres high, it was built in memory of **90,000 soldiers** who lost their lives in World War One and the Northwest Frontier operations in the Afghan war in 1919. The Presidential Palace, Rashtrapati Bhavan, is the official residence of the Indian president. Designed by **Lutyens**, a British architect, it was completed in 1929, mixing british architecture with Indian decoration. **The Red Fort (Lal Qila)** was built between 1638 and 1648 by **Emperor Shah Jahan** in order to display his wealth and power. The fort walls are 2km long and vary from 18 to 30 metres in height. The Humayun's Tomb is of the Mughal era, built in 16<sup>th</sup> century by Haji Begum, **senior wife of the second Mughal emperor Humayun**.*

**DAY 3** After breakfast, transfer to Delhi airport for flight to Varanasi. Relax and lunch at hotel located by Asi Ghat (Ghat is a series of steps leading into the river). After lunch, depart for Sarnath Temple, where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon after achieving Enlightenment. The temple attracts pilgrims from all over the world. Take a walk around the serene temple gardens. Return to Varanasi for your evening boat ride on the holy River Ganges to witness the amazing Aarti ceremony on the Ghats. Float a candle in lotus flower on the river. This is an experience like no other and will leave you feeling at peace. Dinner on the roof terrace of hotel overlooking Ghats. Overnight in Varanasi. Meals: B

***Sarnath** is considered the most beautiful **Buddhist pilgrimage**, naturally preaching tranquillity and peace. **Dhamekh Stupa** attracts pilgrims from all over the world as it is where Lord **Buddha gave his first sermon** after achieving Enlightenment. It was built around 500 AD although parts are thought to be even older.*

**DAY 4** Early morning wake-up call for boat ride on the Ganges at sunrise. Watch the River come to life with devout Hindus bathing in the holy water, listen to the sound of prayer bells and even laughing yoga! Return to hotel for breakfast and freshen up. Set off for Temples tour, taking in Benares University (the world's largest Hindu university) and other intricate Hindu temples. Lunch locally and relax. Early evening, free evening to walk around Varanasi's labyrinth of alleys. Have dinner in one of the city's restaurants overlooking the Ganges at sunset. Overnight in Varanasi. Meals: B

***Varanasi** is one of the holiest places in India where people come to wash away their sins in the Ganges. The significance of the river is shown in the renaming Varanasi to incorporate the rivers **Varuna and Asi**. The city is viewed as the crossing place between **the physical and spiritual worlds**. The **Ghats** leading into the river are colourful, full of character and a have an unrivalled spiritual atmosphere. While Varanasi is thousands of years old, most of the buildings in the old city are only a few hundred years old due to the invasion of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb who destroyed and looted the temples and other buildings.*



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**DAY 5** After breakfast, transfer to airport for flight to Khajuraho. On arrival, transfer to hotel close to airport. Freshen up and then leave for tour of the magnificent Western and Eastern Temples. A UNESCO World Heritage site, these famous erotic temples date back hundreds of years, and are the largest group of Hindu and Jain temples in India. Marvel at the extraordinary detail of their intricate carvings. Lunch at local restaurant. Return to hotel for a rest and then return to the temples for the sound and light show where they are transformed at night. Dinner at restaurant close to the temples, then return to hotel. Overnight in Khajuraho. Meal plan: B

*Located in Madhya Pradesh, **Khajuraho** is famous for its **erotic carvings** on its ancient temples. A UNESCO World Heritage site, these famous erotic temples are the largest group of Hindu and Jain temples in India. Khajuraho was once the religious centre of the **Hindu Chandela Rajput kings** who ruled the central India between the **10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>** centuries and they built **85 temples**, although only 20 of them have survived. The legend behind the erotic sculpture carvings in the temples are that the **Moon God** seduced a beautiful Brahmin girl, Hemvati, resulting in the birth of **Chandravarman** (the founder of the Chandela dynasty). Later, Chandravarman had a dream where his mother requested him to make a temple, which would reveal all aspects of the treasure of passion and erotic fantasy to the world.*

**DAY 6** Early breakfast. Set off for the sleepy temple town of Orchha. Set along the banks of the Betwa River and surrounded by forests, Orchha's temples, forts and palaces reflect the glory of its former Bundela rulers, dating back to the 16th and 17th centuries. Highlights of Orchha include the magnificent Lakshmi Narayan Temple, Raj Mahal, and its other spired temples. Spend some time wandering this quiet town. Transfer to station in the evening for train to Delhi (1st class). Arrive into Delhi late evening, onward transfer to hotel. Overnight in Delhi. Meals: B

*The word **Orchha** means 'hidden'. With its palaces and temples still retaining their original grandeur, this medieval city seems to have **frozen in time**. Orchha prides itself as the capital of one of the largest and most powerful kingdoms of Central India. The city was founded in the 1501 AD, by the Bundela chief, Rudra Pratap Singh, who became the first King of Orchha, and also built the Fort of Orchha. He died in an attempt to save a cow from a lion. The Chaturbhuj Temple was built, during the time of Akbar, by the Queen of Orchha, while Raj Mandir was built by 'Madhukar Shah' during his reign (1554 to 1591).*

**DAY 7** After breakfast, transfer to airport at appropriate time. Meals: B

- END OF TOUR -

## PRICE INCLUDES

Airport pick-up & drop-off  
All internal flights  
Train ticket (1<sup>st</sup> class)  
Ground transport

Entrance fees to sites & parks  
Breakfasts and some meals (as per meal plan)

Accommodation  
Drivers and guides  
Climate Care contribution

## ABOUT OUR TRIPS

In addition to our scheduled group departures, **private and tailor-made trips** can be arranged that include some or all of the places on this itinerary. Please contact us with your requirements (e: [info@traveltheunknown.com](mailto:info@traveltheunknown.com), t: 0845 053 0352) and we will happily put together an itinerary for you and your group. No trip is too long or too short.