

MINDFUL INDIA 2024

RAJASTHAN & THE NORTH

Color. Vibrancy. Spirituality.

An unforgettable journey of the senses and the spirit

February 28th – March 14th, 2024

Wednesday, 28th February, 2024 - The Adventure Begins

Israeli contingent departs Tel Aviv. International travelers are en route from their respective points of origin.

Thursday, 29th February, 2024

Namaste and welcome to India!

Arrive Mumbai where the Israeli and trans-Atlantic contingents meet.

Lunch included

Board a connecting flight to Jaipur.

Land Jaipur

Check in to our hotel.

Orientation, get acquainted and organized (including money-changing).

Dinner (included).

Overnight Jaipur

Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, was founded in 1728. Known as the Pink City because of the color of its houses, it is a bustling commercial center and the main gateway to Rajasthan, India's most flamboyant state. The colorful city combines the chaos of old and new: traffic - everything from auto-rickshaws, motorcycles, cars and trucks to cows, camels and elephants – swirls around Jaipur's splendid palaces, oases of calm evoking a different pace and another world. Jaipur is a shopper's paradise and commercial buyers from all over the world come here to buy jewelry, gems, crafts, textiles, block prints, blue pottery, carpets, antiques, enamels, and muslins.

Friday, 1st March, 2024

After breakfast, drive to Pushkar.

Enroute learn about the ancient art of block printing in a visit to Bagru, a community where this art has been practiced for 350 years, and the Titanwala Museum.

Lunch (included)

Arrival in Pushkar and check in to hotel.
Kabbalat Shabbat and dinner (included) at the hotel.
Overnight: Pushkar

Pushkar, on the shore of Pushkar Lake, means “born of a flower”. Hindus believe that a swan sent by the gods dropped a lotus flower marking the spot where Brahma, the Hindu god of creation, would perform a grand ritual (yagna). This makes Pushkar one of the five sacred pilgrimage sites (dhams) for devout Hindus. One of its primary temples is one of the few temples in the world dedicated to Brahma. Pushkar is also famous for its annual Pushkar Camel Fair, usually held in November.

Saturday 2nd March, 2024

After breakfast: Mindfulness workshop with Dr. Dina Wyshogrod.

Lunch (included)

Afternoon: Walking tour of Pushkar, including a visit to its unique Brahma Temple. This temple is one of very few existing temples in the world dedicated to the Hindu creator-god, Brahma, and remains the most prominent among them. We will get an insight into Hinduism.

Havdallah and dinner (included) at the hotel.

Evening – free time to enjoy this charming, exotic and mystic town and market.

Overnight: Pushkar

Sunday 3rd March, 2024

After breakfast, drive from Pushkar to Jaipur.

On the way, visit the inspiring Barefoot College (www.barefootcollege.org), an NGO run by and for villagers, empowering them to address problems of water supply, education, health and employment. It is the only college in India built and managed by the poor. The college identifies, respects and applies traditional knowledge, village skills and village wisdom to provide basic services to solve rural problems faced by Indian families living on \$1 a day. We will also learn how they use their traditional art of puppetry to inform the surrounding villagers about their rights.

Lunch (included)

Drive to Jaipur and check into our gorgeous hotel.

We are invited to our guide's home where he and his wife will treat us to a delicious, authentic vegetarian Rajasthani meal (included).

Overnight: Jaipur

Monday 4th March – Jaipur

After breakfast, we will visit Amber (pronounced Amer) Fort, a magnificent Rajput Fort and former capital of Kachwaha Dynasty. We'll ride up to the fort in style – on elephants (if available. It's also possible to access the fort by jeep).

Back in Jaipur, we will stop for a photo-op at Hawa Mahal (Wind Palace) and Jal Mahal (Water Palace).

Lunch (included)

Enjoy a Bollywood movie at Raj Mandir Cinema, one of India's most famous cinemas. This is *THE* place to see a Bollywood movie.

Return to the hotel to relax in gorgeous surroundings.

Dinner (included)

Overnight: Jaipur

Tuesday 5th March – Jaipur

After breakfast, visit the City Palace.

Visit the world-famous royal observatory Jantar Mantar.

Lunch (included).

Afternoon – we will enjoy a rickshaw ride to the bazaars of the Old City to explore Jaipur's market/commercial area. Indulge your senses in all that the market offers, from exotic spices and textiles in riotous colors to exquisite jewelry.

A shopper's dream.

Then, we'll enjoy a cooking class where we will learn to make some authentic and delicious Rajasthani vegetarian dishes.

Dinner (included)

Overnight: Jaipur

Wednesday, 6th March, 2024

Transfer to the airport for flight to Amritsar.

Lunch (included)

Arrive Amritsar and check in at the hotel

Dinner (included)

Overnight: Amritsar

Thursday, 7th March, 2024

After breakfast – we will visit Jallianwala Bagh, a memorial garden dedicated to an infamous massacre that took place there in April 1919, considered to be a turning point in India's struggle for independence.

Then we will visit the Golden Temple of the Sikhs, where we will get an introduction to Sikhism. Experience a key tenet of the Sikhs: hospitality.

The Temple Kitchens feed over 100,000 people per day. Volunteer in lunch

preparation, followed by the unparalleled experience of eating with the locals and pilgrims.

Lunch (included)

Afternoon - drive to Wagah Border to witness the theatrical daily parade ceremony on the Indian and Pakistan border. Wagah Border lies about 28 kms. from Amritsar and is the only overland opening between the two countries.

Dinner (included).

After dinner – optional visit to the Golden Temple to see the Holy Book put to bed.

Overnight: Amritsar

Amritsar, with approximately one million residents, is one of the major cities of the Sikh religion and the site of the Sikh religion's holiest shrine, The Golden Temple. The Temple rivals the grandeur and majesty of the Taj Mahal.

The Wagah border, often called "the Berlin Wall of Asia", is a ceremonial border on the India-Pakistan border where each evening Border Security forces of both India and Pakistan engage in a colorful and very precise parade and the changing of the guard.

Friday 8th March, 2024

After breakfast, drive from Amritsar to Pragpur, India's first heritage village. Check in to our charming hotel, listed in a collection of India's unique heritage hotels.

Lunch included.

Kabbalat Shabbat in the hotel.

Dinner included.

Overnight: Pragpur.

Pragpur is a picturesque little village nestled in the lap of the snow-covered Himalayas, in the lush Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh. Its rich history and distinctive local color - picturesque cobblestone streets, mud-plastered walls, and slate-roofed houses - led to its being named India's first "heritage hamlet". A perfect spot for a restful and restorative Shabbat.

Saturday 9th March, 2024

Morning - Mindfulness workshop with Dr. Dina Wyshogrod.

Late morning - enjoy a village tour and nature walk (easy level) through bucolic scenery down to the river at Balahar where we'll savor a picnic lunch (included -

brought to us by the hotel staff) along the banks of the peaceful river. Less strenuous options include exploring the cobbled streets and alleys of this Heritage Village or simply kicking back and relaxing on the grounds of our lovely hotel.

Dinner (included) at our hotel.

Overnight: Pragpur.

Sunday 10th March, 2024

After breakfast, drive to McLeod Ganj.

Late morning - visit the Norbulingka Institute.

Arrival at McLeod Ganj, home of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government-in-exile.

Check in to hotel.

Lunch (included)

Late afternoon – visit Dalai Lama Temple.

Dinner (included).

After dinner – watch a movie about the Dalai Lama and how he was chosen to be the religious leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

Overnight: McLeod Ganj

The Norbulingka Institute, a seven-acre preserve about 15 km. from McLeod Ganj, was established by the Dalai Lama in order to preserve and develop Tibetan art and craftsmanship. Norbulingka, named for the summer residence of the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, Tibet, is graced by ponds, bridges and gardens. It was constructed without chopping a single tree or its branches. It includes a library, a temple, a college, and design studios and workshops where you'll see Tibetan artisans engaged in the traditional arts of Tibet, such as thangka painting, wood carving, statue making, and appliqué, ensuring the preservation of these skills and safeguarding these beautiful artistic forms for posterity.

McLeod Ganj is a suburb of Dharamshala in the north Kangra valley of Himachal Pradesh. The town was founded in 1860 and served as the civil administrative point and cantonment of the British. It was named after the British governor of the province, Sir Ian McLeod.

Today McLeod Ganj is known as "Little Lhasa" due to its large population of Tibetan refugees who followed the Dalai Lama when he escaped from Tibet in 1959. His presence and the Tibetan population have made Dharamshala – and McLeod Ganj in particular – a popular destination for Indian and foreign tourists, particularly those interested in Tibetan Buddhism.

Monday, 11th March, 2024

After breakfast, visit the Tibetan Children's Village.

Some free time for lunch (on your own) and exploring McLeod Ganj.

Afternoon - walk from Naddi village to Dharamkot (both suburbs of Dharamshala), enjoying breathtaking mountain views.

Dinner on your own.

Overnight: McLeod Ganj

The Tibetan Children's Village is home to almost 2,000 children of all ages who were either orphaned as a result of the Tibetan exile or who left their parents in Tibet seeking shelter in India. The school curriculum includes all general subjects plus Tibetan language, history, culture, and training in Buddhism. You'll learn how aspects of the program, including their summer camp program, were inspired by the experience of the Jewish people in keeping an age-old tradition and religion alive and vibrant in exile.

Tuesday, 12th March, 2024

Visit the Tibetan Refugee Museum.

Lunch on your own.

Afternoon/evening: we have been invited to a local village for home hospitality including a delicious dinner (included) and a program of Kangra folk dance and music performed by local students.

Overnight: McLeod Ganj.

Wednesday, 13th March, 2024

Fly from Dharamshala to Delhi.

Lunch (included)

Tour of Delhi – Red Fort and Gandhi Memorial.

Final dinner (included).

Overnight Delhi

Thursday 14th March, 2024

Tour of Delhi – Humayun's Tomb and Lodi Gardens.

Lunch (included)

Late afternoon – fly to Mumbai.

Transfer to Mumbai International Airport for flight home.