

Pushkar Fair - Forts & Palaces Ride, India – 2020

(Full itinerary including Agra)

This exciting itinerary combines riding, with experiencing the Diwali Festival and also the wonderful Pushkar Fair. If you are short of time it is possible to leave the itinerary from Jaipur and return to Delhi without continuing to Agra.

Friday 13-Nov-20

Rooms are available from midday.

If time permits, have a short sightseeing tour of Delhi.

Overnight at Hotel Vasant Continental or similar.



Saturday 14-Nov-20

After an early breakfast you set off for the drive to Dundlod. This takes between six to seven hours and you have lunch on the way.

Arrive late afternoon and have dinner and overnight at Dundlod Fort.

DUNDLOD, in the heart of the Shekhawati region, was built in 1750. This majestic fort surrounded by a moat, is a mix of Mogul and Rajputana architecture. The majestic Diwan Khana (the Audience Hall) is furnished with Louis XIV furniture. This old building has been carefully restored but continues to be the family home. It has a huge banquet hall and each bedroom is

different with its own charm. The Fort is located on the edge of a small village of the same name.

This is the time of Diwali, one of the most important festivals of India.

DIWALI or the Festival of Lights is held and celebrated every year in honour of Lord Rama's (one of the Indian Gods, the hero of the Ramayana and a reincarnate of Lord Vishnu) return to his capital Ayodhya after the exile of fourteen years. Thousands of years have passed by, and yet so ideal is the kingdom of Rama that it is remembered to this day. Consequently, to commemorate the return of Ram, Sita and Lakshman to Ayodhya people celebrate Diwali with the bursting of crackers and by lighting up their houses with earthen diyas (lamps) or other lamps in the grandest style, year after year.

On the Diwali day prayers are offered to Lord Ganesha, the elephant headed God and to Goddess Laxmi, the Goddess of wealth. It is believed that the Goddess of wealth would grace your home/business on this day.

It is worth taking a walk in the market areas - the shops are beautifully decorated and are crowded with people in lovely dresses and costumes.

At night the whole town is lit up with earthen oil lamps, candles and fireworks reverberate with the sound of crackers and sounds of joy and happiness.

Sunday 15-Nov-20

Today you will try the horses and ride in and around Dundlod and visit one of the best Marwari Horse stud farms in the country.

In the afternoon you may see a display of Tent Pegging (an equestrian sport which is very popular in India).

For more information contact in the saddle. Tel: 01299 272 997, Fax: 01299 272 935, Email: rides@inthesaddle.com, Internet: www.inthesaddle.com



Overnight at Dundlod Fort.

Monday 16-Nov-20

Ride to Mandawa (about 22 km) passing through villages and farmlands speckled with the Khejri trees. The terrain is soft and sandy and good for riding.

MANDAWA, a remote feudal principality in the centre of the Shekhawati region, was a trading outpost for the ancient caravan routes that stopped here from China and the Middle East. The Rajput ruler of Mandawa, Thakur Nawal Singh, built a fort in 1755 to protect this outpost. The township that grew around the fort soon attracted a large community of traders, who settled here. When the caravan traffic ceased in the late 18th century, the traders moved to other parts of the country but returned to Mandawa to build palatial mansions in their hometown.

Like many historic homes, Castle Mandawa is a curious mixture of the old and the new. Medieval turreted towers and planquin-roofed balconies blend with modern comforts. Family portraits, antique cannons and arms add to the charm of this family run hotel where tradition still runs strong. Time is even measured by a different clock – a huge brass gong is struck by the resident timekeepers at the fort every hour.

Overnight at Mandawa Castle.

Tuesday 17-Nov-20

Ride to Dundlod Stables (about 22 km). Today's ride is mainly along soft and sandy tracks passing through a couple of villages, farmlands and farmers dwellings.



At the end of the day you will leave the horses at the Dundlod stables and be transferred by car to Nawalgarh (about 8 km). Later visit the frescoed havelis.

Overnight at Roop Niwas Kothi.

Dundlod, Mandawa and Nawalgarh are a part of the Shekhawati region which is Rajasthan's open-air Art Gallery. No other region in India, or perhaps even in the world, has such a large concentration of high-quality frescoes (mural paintings) as the region of Shekhawati. In the beginning, this semi-arid region had only its blank monochromatic palette to offer. No school of painting thrived till history and circumstances took up this colourless page and made it blossom with art for almost two centuries - from 1750 to 1930.

The town of Nawalgarh was founded in 1737 and has a colourful bazaar and the largest number of painted Havelies in the Shekhawati region. The various Havelies are covered with frescoes depicting the whole gamut of social and religious life; history is painted with humour.

Wednesday 18-Nov-20

After breakfast you are driven to Khirod (about 10 km) where you will meet up with the horses.

Ride to Bhaironji Temple (about 28 km) passing through several villages and past farmers' dwellings. The landscape changes dramatically on this day as it takes you close to the great Aravali range of hills.

After lunch, ride for some time through farmlands, and then follow a dry riverbed running parallel to the Aravali Hills.



This area has a history going back several thousand years and has strong religious links. Pilgrims from all over Rajasthan and India come here to visit the various temples in this area

Overnight in tented camp near a small temple.

Thursday 19-Nov-20

Ride to Kochor (about 25 km). The ride takes you across a varied terrain consisting of flat land and sand dunes, passing through quaint villages and farmland. After lunch you get to see a big salt-water lake with the hills in the background.



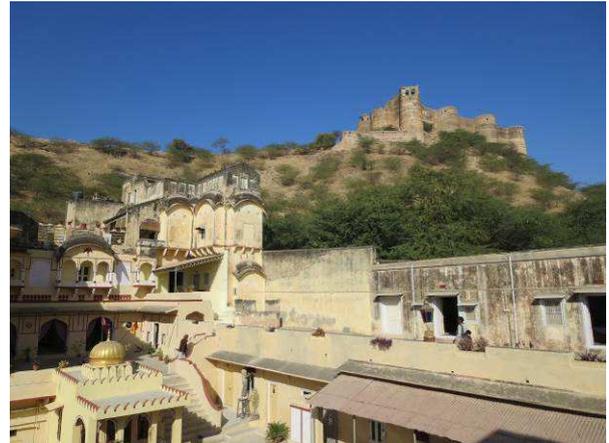
Overnight in a tented camp near Kochor village.

Friday 20-Nov-20

Ride to Danta (about 20 km). Today's ride is a short one along a huge lake and across a spectacular landscape of sand dunes, hills and farmlands. Cross several villages and see a couple of old forts until you reach Danta Fort.

The village of Danta is surrounded by two fortresses on top of a hill. One of the fortresses is now a hotel,

the Danta Kila (Kila means fort), where you stay overnight.



Overnight at Danta Kila.

Saturday 21-Nov-20

After an early breakfast you bid goodbye to your horses and grooms and drive to Pushkar (about 4 hours drive).

Arrive Pushkar and transfer to your hotel.

In the afternoon visit the Pushkar Fair, which at this time will be at its peak as far as animals are concerned.



Overnight at Aaram Bagh Resort or similar.

PUSHKAR FAIR, excitement, gaiety and keen sense of competition fill the air as the long journey to Pushkar begins. Spirited columns of people with camels, horses, bullock-carts, cars and jeeps head for Pushkar soon after Diwali.

The origin of Pushkar is lost in myth. It is believed that Brahma, the creator, was in search of a place to perform a Vedic yagna (sacrifice). As he pondered, a lotus fell from his hands and water gushed from the

spot. Today, the faithful bathe in the holy waters of the Pushkar Lake on Kartik Poornima (full moon in November). And on its banks, a mammoth 200,000 people and some 50,000 cattle become a part of the annual Pushkar Fair.

The fair offers a matchless opportunity to trade in cattle and leather goods. People shop for bangles, clothes, utensils and other household items too.

The most dramatic events of the festivities are the cattle auction and the camel race. There are other sports involving camel as they are the friend of the desert folk of Rajasthan. Equally diverting are the gaily dressed rural folk.

Sunday 22-Nov-20

Full day in Pushkar – visiting the fair and the town.

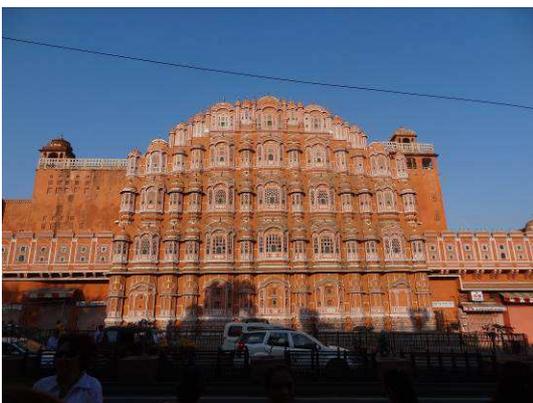


Overnight at Aaram Bagh Resort or similar.

Monday 23-Nov-20

After breakfast you drive to Jaipur (3 hours drive). Arrive in Jaipur and transfer to your hotel.

In the afternoon, there is sightseeing of Jaipur.



JAIPUR, the rose-pink capital of Rajasthan, is surrounded on all sides by rugged hills, crowned with forts. Enclosed by embattled walls, the city was built early in the eighteenth century. The Maharaja's palace stands in the centre of the city amidst lovely gardens. Houses with latticed windows line the streets, their rose-pink colour lending enchantment to the scene and almost magical at sunset. Jaipur is aptly called the "Pink City of India". It takes its name from the famous Maharana Sawai Jai Singh, who founded the city in 1728. A keen astronomer, he built an observatory, (Jantar Mantar) which still exists today and is equipped with quaint masonry instruments of remarkable size. The observatory was granted UNESCO World Heritage Site status in 2010.

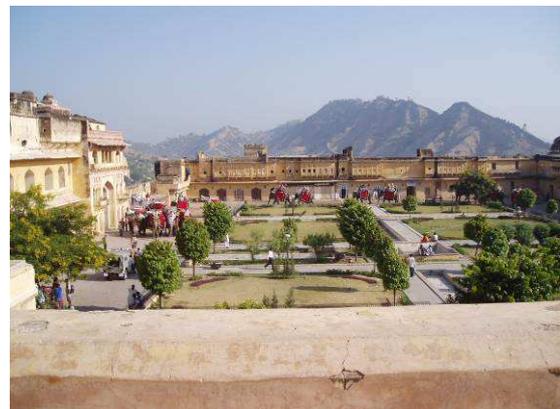
Jaipur is noted for its craftsmen skilled in the art of cutting precious stones and famed for its garnets and rubies. It is equally well known for brass inlay work, lacquer work and the printings of muslins.

CITY SIGHTSEEING in the City Palace which now houses a museum containing rare manuscripts, paintings, an armoury and the Jantar Mantar observatory. The Museum amidst the Ram Niwas Palace Gardens (founded in 1876 has a large collection of antiques; the palace of Winds and a landmark of Jaipur made of pink sandstone of unique design.

Overnight at Narain Niwas Palace or similar.

Tuesday 24-Nov-20

This morning you visit the Amber Fort.



AMBER FORT, 12 km from Jaipur lies the city of Amber with an ancient imposing fort cum palace overlooking the lake at the entrance to a rocky mountain grove. Built in the 17th century, the palace is a distinguished specimen of Rajput architecture and is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Jai Mandir (hall of victory) is

so delicately ornamented with fine inlay work that it glows. The fort of Jaigarh, crowning the summit of a peak is of amazing beauty and grandeur.

You will leave this afternoon on a flight from Jaipur to Delhi.

You may depart on a flight late evening on 24 November or very early on the morning of 25 November.

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