



INDIA
Romantic
Luxurious
Traditional
Spectacular
Colourful
Delicious



Solo Travellers Club Royal Rajasthan Escorted Tour with Sue Verrall

Join me as we journey through the enchanting northern province of Rajasthan, awash with all the colours of India
 - Tour Escort, Sue Verrall

Sue has a great deal of experience in escorting tours to India and is excited to show you the colours and culture of this land, which reminds her so strongly of East Africa where she has lived for 16 years.

A very popular tour leader, Sue's passion for revealing the essence of a culture will enhance your experience of this vibrant country. Come along and join her on this stunning journey.

Don't miss this 'Solos' tour

Specifically designed with our Solo Travellers Club members in mind, this tour offers 5* deluxe hotels with single room occupancy throughout the journey.

Meet your fellow travellers

Meet Sue and your fellow travellers at our social evenings held prior to the tour and, of course, get detailed information about the tour, as well as hints and tips for your travels.



19 day Escorted Tour 11-29 September, 2017

Rajasthan is made up of a collection of former princely states and has attracted travellers, traders and explorers for centuries. This exceptional journey takes you slowly around the state, exploring some of the smaller forts and palaces scattered around the countryside, along with visits to Rajasthan's major cities - Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur. There is a chance to experience the unhurried pace of village and rural life in Ravla Khempur featured in the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel film. Take in the sights and smells of the antique bazaars and street markets of Jodhpur, where the mighty Mehrangarh Fort sits majestically over this historic city.

Your tour concludes in Agra - home of the majestic Taj Mahal. Take in the spectacular sunrise view of this splendid monument and learn how to make delicious Indian dishes at home, which will forever remind you of this exotic destination!

Your tour highlights:

- Rickshaw ride and the ambience of Dilli Haat in Old Delhi
- Elephant ride at Amber Fort in Jaipur
- Expansive Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur
- Boat ride on lake Pichola in Udaipur
- Visit Fatehpur Sikri, UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Cooking demonstration followed by dinner in Agra
- Sunrise at Taj Mahal
- The "Best Exotic Marigold Hotel"



Experience. The Difference.



Your Tour Itinerary

11 Sep

Depart Christchurch mid-morning, arriving in Singapore early evening.. Overnight in the Airport Transit Hotel.

12 Sep Delhi

Depart Singapore early morning, arrive in Delhi and transfer to your hotel. Your time is your own.

13 Sep Delhi

We begin our day with a guided sightseeing tour of Old & New Delhi. In Old Delhi we drive pass the Red Fort Palace to reach Jama Masjid - the largest mosque in India built in red sandstone. Between the mosque and Chandni Chowk is a narrow shop-lined street along which you will be transported by cycle rickshaw on a photogenic journey through the city.



We also visit Khari Baoli, Asia's largest wholesale spice market, selling a variety of spices, nuts and herbs. This afternoon we discover New Delhi and its historical buildings and conclude our day with a visit to Qutub Minar - an important landmark with calligraphically decorated interiors and inscriptions of verses of the Holy Quran.

This evening we visit Delhi Haat and experience the ambience of a traditional rural village market - a mix of crafts, food and cultural activity. We'll have a light meal here, which is locally known as Chaat, and return to our hotel for our welcome dinner at Patra, a specialty restaurant, famous for its North Indian cuisine. (B,D)

14 Sep Delhi - Mandawa

Today we travel for approx. 5 hours to Mandawa, a small, delightful town in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan. Founded in the mid-18th century, this

town is known for its forts, castles, stunning havelis and beautiful paintings, all of which we will explore. Our visit to Mandawa also includes a visit to the majestic Mandawa Fort; its archway has a beautiful painting of Lord Krishna and the rooms are architecturally adorned with mirror work. The city is quite rightly named as "The Open Air Art Gallery of Rajasthan". (B, D)

15 Sep Mandawa - Bikaner

After breakfast we head towards Bikaner, approx. 4 hours' drive north-west of Rajasthan, and is the centre of art and culture of medieval India. This desert city has a stark beauty which is totally unique, with widespread dunes, marvellous palaces, temples and archaeological treasures, all combining to make it a city of lasting charm. Our afternoon includes a guided visit to a Camel Breeding Farm. We visit the small Camel Museum, where we get to taste products made from sweet camel milk, like Ice cream, tea and coffee. (B, D)

16 Sep Bikaner - Jaisalmer

Our morning starts with a visit to Junagarh Fort. Made of red and pink sandstone, it has 37 domes and is surrounded by high walls and a 30ft trench. We also ride tongas through the narrow alleys of Old Bikaner City, passing through the bangle, spice and vegetable market, along 'Tea Street', and traditional red sandstone 'havelis'. Built by well-heeled merchants, these havelis are intricately carved structures and are representative of the trending architectural styles of the 1900s. Our tour ends at the Jain Bhandeshwar Temple, where we will climb up to get a panoramic view of the city. We then drive to the Golden City of Jaisalmer, approx. 5 hours' journey and stay for two nights. (B, D)

17 Sep Jaisalmer

After breakfast we explore Jaisalmer visiting the Jaisalmer Fort, the only living fort in the world. Take a stroll in the narrow streets of the golden city and get a glimpse into the lifestyle of the locals. Every house is exquisitely carved having filigreed work on its walls. Move through ancient cobbled streets which house buildings dating back the 12th-15th century. Visit the Jain Temple followed by a visit to the beautifully carved Nathmal ji Ki Haveli.

Early evening we head to the desert to enjoy a camel ride on Jaisalmer's exotic sand dunes at sunset. En route, we stop at Kuldhara - an abandoned village, now believed to be haunted, it is said that it is



impossible for anyone to spend a single night there. It was the largest of 84 villages belonging to Paliwal Brahmins, all of which were abandoned on a single night in 1825. (B, D)

18 Sep Jaisalmer - Jodhpur

Today you will sense the feeling of travelling back in time as we journey to Jodhpur, as we catch a glimpse of the splendour and magnificence of this ancient desert city built on the edge of the Thar Desert. At its best, it is a doorway to a wonderland of sand dunes and shrubs, rocky terrain and thorny trees. The rest of the day is free to explore the rustic rural life of the locals. The folks here wear colourful costumes; bazaars have a range of items from tie and dye textiles, embroidered leather shoes, lacquer ware, antiques, carpets and puppets, as well as exquisite Rajasthani textiles, clay figurines, miniature camels and elephants, marble inlay work and classic silver jewellery. (B, D)

19 Sep Jodhpur

Built around 1460 by Rao Jodha, the fort is situated 125m above the city and is enclosed by imposing thick walls. Inside its boundaries are several palaces known for their intricate carvings and expansive



courtyards. The museum in the Mehrangarh Fort is one of the most well-stocked museums in Rajasthan. In one section, there is a selection of well-preserved royal palanquins, musical instruments and furniture. In the Old City, which is surrounded by a 10km wall and has 8 gates serving as entrances, blue and white painted houses align the winding streets and adjoining markets. A prominent landmark, the clock tower, is best visited at night and sits proudly surrounded by the sights and sounds of the Sadar market.

The afternoon is free to explore the local bazaars or there is an option to visit an organisation working for the welfare of women and children. (B, D)

20 Sep Jodhpur - Khempur

This morning we travel 5 hours by road to Khempur and check into the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, a.k.a. Ravla Khempur. Don't worry - although not ultra-luxurious, this charming converted palace hotel is a lot more comfortable than the film depicts! Once a famous stud, the palace is still home to some fine Marwari horses and the village and surrounding landscape is glorious. The hotel consists of 12 comfortable, en suite rooms which carry an equine theme - horse head coat hooks and the like. It has a number of quiet nooks and crannies and a lovely rooftop terrace. Made famous by the British film, the Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, Ravla Khempur has offered accommodation to such stars as Dames Judy Dench and Maggie Smith, and Bill Nighy. After lunch at the hotel, your afternoon is free to enjoy the surrounds. (B, L, D)

21 Sep Khempur - Udaipur

After breakfast we drive a couple of hours to Udaipur, passing through lush green valleys, streams and heart-capturing views before visiting Ranakpur, with its intricately carved marble pillars and domes of the Ranakpur Jain Temple. Ranakpur is amongst the five holiest places of the Jain community and is exceptional in beauty. Tucked away in a remote valley in the Aravalli ranges, it boasts one of the largest and most important Jain Temples in the country. (B, D)

22 Sep Udaipur

This morning we start our sightseeing with a guided visit to the City Palace complex. The City Palace's

grandeur is evident in its blend of medieval, European and Chinese architecture - a conglomeration of several buildings with towers, balconies and cupolas built at the edge of Lake Pichola. It houses a crystal gallery, which boasts of royal artefacts and the world's largest private collection of crystal. Later we visit Jagdish Temple, dating back to 1651AD - an exquisite example of Indo Aryan architecture. We also visit the Bhartiya Lok Kala Mandir, an Indian folk arts museum before our afternoon boat ride on Lake Pichola, an artificial fresh water lake created in the year 1362AD, and named after the nearby Picholi village. The remainder of the evening is yours to explore on your own, visiting the numerous shops that dot the narrow, windings streets of Udaipur for souvenirs to take back home. (B, D)

23 Sep Udaipur - Pushkar

Today we travel for roughly 5 hours to a tiny tranquil town of Pushkar, lying along the bank of the picturesque Pushkar Lake, in a narrow dry valley, overshadowed by impressive rocky hills, offering spectacular views of the desert at sunset. In the afternoon we visit Pushkar Lake and Brahma Temple; the only one of its kind in the world. This is a city of pilgrimage from time immemorial with over 500 temples and Ghats, with each Ghat having its own miraculous qualities and healing powers. Pushkar begets a legacy of timeless architectural heritage and radiates an ambience of peace and spirituality. (B, D)

24 Sep Pushkar - Jaipur

After breakfast we make the 3 hour drive to Jaipur. The first planned city of India, it is a treasure-trove of culture, art and history, famous for its colour, lifestyle and Rajasthani cuisine. It is a city exuding royal heritage and extravagant richness and has many temples and shrines. Upon arrival check in to your hotel, with the remaining day at your disposal to explore the Jaipur Bazaar at your own pace or relax in the hotel. (B, D)

25 Sep Jaipur

After an early breakfast we'll start our guided sightseeing tour of Jaipur. We admire the façade of the Hawa Mahal, poetically known as the "Palace of Winds" whilst en route to the majestic Amber Fort,



the former ancient capital of Jaipur state, is a superb example of Rajput architecture. Enjoy an elephant or Jeep ride to Amber Fort and later, a guided tour of Jaipur City starting with the City Palace Museum. The Museum boasts a small collection of ancient, handwritten Hindu scriptures, miniature delicate paintings, preserved painted ceilings and elephant saddles (haudas), and is registered in the Guinness Book of Records as containing the biggest silver objects in the world. We conclude our sightseeing with a visit to Jantar Mantar; one of the famed observatories built by Sawai Jai Singh which is a complex of astronomical instruments, chiselled out of stone and still providing fairly accurate information to this day.

Later we'll explore the famous 'Johary Bazaar' jewellers' market, well known for its gold and silver enamelling. Colourful bangles made of lace and set with semi-precious stones make an inexpensive gift. Later we'll experience some of Jaipur's famed bazaars, where you can shop, or simply gawp at the amazing array of footwear, rich textiles, saris, leather ware, perfumes, gemstones, jewellery, rugs, carpets, furniture and carvings. This evening we meet our local henna painting experts who will surprise you with a design on both hands and feet while you relax and see why henna is so important in every Indian wedding. Alternatively, learn the technique for tying a sari, the traditional women's attire. (B, D)

26 Sep Jaipur - Fatehpur Sikri - Agra

After breakfast, check out hotel and drive for approx. 5 hours to The City of Taj - Agra. En route we will visit Fatehpur Sikri, an outstanding example of Mughal architecture and UNESCO World Heritage site. The





Your Tour Itinerary (continued)

perfectly preserved red sandstone buildings consist of palaces, courtyards, a life-size chess board, tombs and mosques. We'll also visit the Diwan-e-Khas with its remarkable central pillar and unmissable "Panch Mahal", the five storied structure used as the viewing station for the harem. We then continue our journey to Agra.

This afternoon around 4.00pm we visit a local family to learn authentic home cooking. In these cookery classes you learn how to mix Indian spices and the "5C"s which are essential to Indian cuisine: Cloves, Cardamom, Cinnamon, Coriander and Cumin. The lady of the house will be your guru and together you will create approx. 6 dishes (1 non-veg, 2 seasonal



vegetable, 1 lentil, 1 rice dish and Indian bread). The dishes you learn will be a mix of 'quick and easy', that can be enjoyed as a mid-week supper, and slow cooked dishes, that will impress your friends and family. We'll relax once cooking is complete and dinner will be served with typical Indian

accompaniments. (B, D)

27 Sep Agra – Delhi

Early morning we drive approx. 4 hours to visit the Taj Mahal, a UNESCO World Heritage site, to catch the sun rising over the Taj Mahal – undisputedly one of the world's most beautiful buildings. In the soft morning light, as the mist rises from the Yamuna River, it seems to float like a mirage above the surrounding landscape. Built from dazzling marble, its colour changes from white to yellow, cream to almost orange... an exquisite image that you'll remember forever. After the visit we return to hotel for breakfast.

Later, we'll head out for a guided sightseeing tour of Agra Fort, built by Emperor Akbar it's a mix of Islamic and Hindu architectural styles. Next we'll visit Itimad-ud-Daulah, nicknamed as "baby Taj" – another fine example of Mughal architecture. While returning we visit a marble factory to witness some of the remaining artisans creating similar work as seen at the Taj Mahal.

Finally, we travel back to Delhi for a farewell dinner at hotel's restaurant for a unique dining experience. Our tour finishes with a transfer to Delhi airport to board our flight home. (B, D)

28 Sep Delhi – Singapore

Depart Delhi in the morning, arrive in Singapore and remain in transit before departing a few hours later.

29 Sep Singapore – Christchurch

Our flight arrives in to Christchurch mid-morning, where our tour concludes.

Welcome home!

Tour price from \$8,995

per person single occupancy*
\$7,795 pp share twin*

Price includes:

- Economy class airfares from CHC flying Singapore Airlines
- Tour Escort ex CHC
- 15 nights' accommodation in 5* hotel with private facility on a solo occupancy basis
- Private air-conditioned Mini Coach for travel, transfers and sightseeing as per Itinerary
- Meals as specified (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)
- Entrance fee/monument charges (one visit only)
- Assistance and transfers
- All current applicable taxes.

Not included: Travel insurance (compulsory), drinks and items of a personal nature.

To secure your place:

Send your \$1,500 non-refundable deposit per person with completed Booking Form to Discover Travel.

For more details and to book:

Phone: 03 364 3400 or 0800 747 737

Email: ideas@discovertravel.co.nz

Mail: PO Box 2477, Christchurch.

Discover Travel

We are the premier boutique travel agency within the House of Travel Group, and New Zealand owned and operated.

Specialising in travel to far flung places, our knowledge of India is extensive and kept current by regularly returning to discover more.

Our aim is to experience those places through your eyes and we return eager to share our findings with you.

Our goal is to genuinely connect you with the location and its culture.

Consequently, we like to think that our clients come back with the stories that everyone else misses.

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Travel

Experience. The Difference.

***CONDITIONS: Price** – The price of \$8,995 per person is based on single occupancy. Twin share is \$7,795 per person. Should you wish to extend your stay, please talk to us, we are happy to provide airfare and pre or post tour arrangements. **Business Class Supplement** available on request. Please check with Discover Travel. **Payments** – The price quoted is for payment by cash, cheque or direct bank transfer. Cheques: Should be made payable to 'Discover Travel'. Our postal address is PO Box 2477, Christchurch. **Bank Transfer:** 06 0801 0495605 02 - Discover Travel Worldwide Ltd, using 'Indochina' as a reference. **VISA or Mastercard** payments will incur a 2% convenience fee and American Express a 3% fee. **Deposit:** In order to confirm your booking, a non-refundable deposit of \$1,500 per person is required. Final payment will be due no later than 26 July 2017. Prices are based on a minimum group size of 10 (Maximum 16). Should the group size be less than 10, a small group surcharge will be applied.