



AUDLEY

Your Indian Adventure!

By Niall Causer

Detailed itinerary

DAY 1:



YOUR TRIP BEGINS



THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE & TOWER

Welcome to India – You'll be met at the airport by our local representative to help orient you and answer any questions before you are transferred to your hotel to relax after a long journey.

DAY 2:



THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE & TOWER



CLASSICAL TOUR OF MUMBAI

Private tour with your driver and guide

Drive past the Mumbai High Court, built in Gothic style, and the Old Secretariat. The ornamental university building, with its 85.34-metre high Rajabai Clock Tower, the ornate Victoria Terminus, the colorful Crawford Market, the Flora Fountain in the large bustling square at the heart of the city, the Prince of Wales Museum (closed on Monday), which houses a varied collection of Chinaware, miniature paintings, and sculptures.

Drive along the Marine Drive, which is known as the Queen's Necklace, and on to Malabar Hill with the Kamla Nehru Park. Visit the Hanging Gardens, which offer a splendid view of the city, and drive past the Mahalaxmi Temple (if time allows).

DAY 3:



THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE & TOWER



HALF DAY MUMBAI MARKET TOUR

Private excursion with your driver and guide

Spend the morning on our Mumbai Market Tour that will take you through the sprawling and colorful markets of Mumbai. The journey starts at the historic Crawford market with its bas-reliefs depicting scenes from market life carved by Lockwood Kipling, father of the writer Rudyard Kipling. Crawford market is a wholesale fruit, vegetable, and poultry market, and now sells imported items including cosmetic and household goods. From there you will stop to peruse the steel-pot shops on Lokmanya Tilak Road before making your way to the market stalls around Mumba Devi Temple, the shrine which gave Mumbai its name. After this you will move on to the flower sellers of Bhuleshwar Market, the Zaveri Bazaar (Jeweler's Market), Yagnik Chowk (where plumbers and painters wait for customers on the pavements) and finally the antique market of Chor Bazaar (Thieves Market). The tour will take about four hours.

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AT LEISURE IN MUMBAI

Recommendations for your free time

Mumbai is just an airport hub but for some, there is lots more to discover across India's largest city.

As well as the endless 'traditional' sights (Victoria Terminus, Horniman Circle, Flora Fountain, the High Court, Mumbai University, Gateway of India) there are lots of alternative options for you to get under the skin of this fascinating metropolis.

Take a wander through the historic downtown area. It has an incredibly rich collection of colonial-era buildings, monuments, and museums as well as shopping malls, bustling markets and some of India's finest restaurants and bars. Although busy, it's easy to stroll around and locals will be able to help if you need directions or are looking for a particular shop or sight.

If looking for something a bit more relaxed, escape the hectic pace of city life in the numerous parks and gardens, along the seafront, or on a boat trip to Elephanta Island to see its interesting cave temples.

If you're willing to get up early, the markets at dawn are really interesting and although you may receive a few intriguing looks, the locals will be warm and welcoming. Chowpatty Beach is a social hub for Mumbai's melting pot population - take a walk to see kites flying, saris being sold, fish being caught, families catching up and just to absorb the bustling atmosphere.

It's worth noting that some areas are best explored with a guide. If you'd like, ask your specialist about visiting a Bollywood Studio or exploring the Dharavi slum. We would not recommend that you enter or explore the slum without a local guide.

DAY 4:



THE TAJ MAHAL PALACE & TOWER



MUMBAI AT DAWN TOUR

Private excursion with your driver and guide

Get an early start to your day exploring Mumbai at dawn, which provides an opportunity to see the life of Mumbai that many visitors do not have the chance to see.

Every year millions of people come to this city in search of a better future and leave a permanent imprint on its culture. They make the city what it is - one that is hustling, bustling and constantly on the move. Little wonder then that Mumbai is christened as the Industrial capital of India. The eclecticism and the industrious nature of its people is what contributes to the culture of this city, which, when observed in the morning, is quite unique.

Mumbai by dawn is a unique offering where you see the bustling city of Mumbai wake up. You get to peek into the underbelly of the city and get insights into what makes this magnificent city tick, from seeing hundreds of newspaper vendors sort out newspapers in seven different languages and experiencing a one-of-a-kind fish auction of 20 tonnes of fish to seeing an 'only green' herb market sprawled across a popular bridge. From watching the milkmen drive past with their canisters and the melee of color at the flower markets to experiencing the clamor and chaos of the arrival of over 100 tons of vegetables, fruits and meat, Mumbai by Dawn truly defines the character of the city like no other. What's interesting is that when you walk through the same lanes a few hours later you won't find any evidence of the morning's hustle and bustle. It comes at a price though - waking up at 5.15 for one!



MUMBAI STREET FOOD TOUR

private excursion with your guide

Mumbaikars (as people from Mumbai are known) lead busy lives and therefore picking up snacks from the many street food stalls on the way to and from work is an integral part of their life. Those who are fortunate to live in central Mumbai also enjoy a wander down to the beach early evening to soak up the atmosphere and take a bite to eat.

This afternoon's street food tour takes you to the heartland of Mumbai's street food scene where you will have the chance to sample many of the city's famous delicacies. It is a great opportunity to soak up the atmosphere of Mumbai in the early evening.

Following this, you will proceed to a local Mumbai café, to enjoy a typical late afternoon snack of buttered bread and spicy chicken pastries and of course a cup of chai. Locals love to dip the buttered bread into the

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chai before eating.

It is then time to head to the beach, to enjoy the seafront in the same way as the locals, which is early evening catching up with friends and enjoying famous Mumbai snacks at the color street stalls that line Chowpatty beach. Here you will have the chance to watch Pao Bhaji being made before sampling it. You will also be able to taste a Bombay Sandwich, Bhel (puffed rice dish), and if you are feeling brave Pani Puri (a specialty in Mumbai).

The next stop will be a dosa shop, where you also get to see the dosa (rice pancake) being made before of course sampling them.

The final stop on the tour is for something sweet, Kulfi, Indian ice cream, which is available in multiple flavors. Tour usually finishes around 8pm depending on traffic.

Notes: Please note that this tour is designed to give you an insight into everyday life in Mumbai in the early evening and taste some of the local snacks. If you want to see the food made and learn more about it, but not taste this is also fine.

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DAY 5:



IMPERIAL HOTEL



FLIGHTS

Mumbai, Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport to New Delhi, Indira Gandhi International Airport

Today you'll be transferred to the Mumbai airport for your domestic flight to Delhi. On arrival to Delhi, once you have cleared airport formalities, you will be met by your guide and driver. The journey to Delhi will take around one hour depending on traffic/time of arrival. Spend the afternoon at leisure, relaxing at the Imperial Hotel, or you may wish to explore the local area on your own terms.

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DAY 6:



AMANBAGH

Today you'll meet your private driver and begin the journey from Delhi to Alwar, which will take around four hours, traveling through the Shekhawati Region. This is the homeland of the Marwari people, famed for their talent as traders.

You'll be taken to Amanbagh, your hotel for the next two nights, which is situated in an area of great natural and historical interest. Its remote location makes it one of the few Rajasthani gems where you are likely to be the only visitor.

DAY 7:



AMANBAGH

Set on the former location of an ancient empire, the rural countryside reveals hidden treasures amidst the rolling greenery of the Aravalli hills.

The most spectacular of these are the ruins of Bhangarh, a former township built in the 1500s. Supposedly haunted, legend has it that this city was deserted overnight after being cursed by an evil magician. The remains reveal an elegant and wealthy empire that is evident in the well-preserved fort and temple, and even the streets lined by crumbling shops. Recommended by many as one of the top ten Indian sites, Bhangarh is an astounding area of archaeological interest and one that shouldn't be missed!

Equally worthy of a visit is the village of Ajabgarh where crumbling havelis and intricately carved buildings line the street, giving way to a small and friendly village of traditional trades and local shops where the sheep and goats take priority, followed proudly by their shepherds in colorful turbans and saris.

A walk to Somsagar Lake is also recommended, where breakfast can be taken looking out over the shrines that dot the water and where birds and wildlife may join you at this popular watering hole. A longer walk through the valley can also be arranged, where you are sure to see every aspect of traditional Rajasthani life, from the shepherds in the fields to the men on the way to market with bicycles laden down with produce.

Please note that all excursions at Amanbagh can be arranged on arrival.

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DAY 8:



SAMODE PALACE

Today's journey will take around three and a half hours from Alwar to Samode village

Samode lies 42 kilometers north of Jaipur and is a small village nestled in a fold of the dry and rugged hills of the Aravalli Range. The Palace of Samode is well known for the beautiful decorations of both the exterior and the magnificent Durbar Hall. The palace was used as a set in the filming of the 'Far Pavilions' and, until relatively recently, the palace was chosen by the British Embassy for their private guests. Above the palace, a steep zigzag path leads to Samode Fort, from where there are stunning views of the valley below and further walks into the hills. The village itself is full of character and has many old painted havelis. Local craftsmen still make glass bangles and produce printed cloth. Four kilometers from the palace, down a bumpy, dusty road, lies Samode Bagh. Set in 80,000 square meters, the formal Mughal gardens dotted with pavilions and cooled by pools and fountains appear like an oasis in the surrounding desert.

DAY 9:



RAAS

Today's trip from Samode to Jodhpur by road takes about seven to eight hours, passing through increasingly arid countryside until the outskirts of Jodhpur. There are plenty of opportunities to stop en route for refreshments or photographs. Enjoy your evening at the RAAS hotel at leisure, enjoying its magnificent views of the city's fort.

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DAY 10:



RAAS



JODHPUR CITY TOUR (HALF DAY)

Private excursion with your driver and guide

Many devotees of India rate Jodhpur as one of the most unspoilt cities of the north. Your guide will show you around the main sights as well as taking you off the beaten track, away from the crowds.

On the road towards Mehrangarh Fort is the Jaswant Thanda, a dazzling white marble cenotaph to Maharajah Jaswant Singh, who died in 1899. It's a peaceful spot which offers great views across the Blue city and up to the fort itself.

Another memorable sight is the Umaid Bhawan Palace. Finished in 1945, and presently a hotel under the management of the Taj group, the palace was possibly the last great building created in India before the maharaja had to cede his property to the new nation. Designed by the Royal Institute of Architects, the palace was a job creation project for 3,000 of the maharaja's subjects, who were suffering from the effects of successive droughts starting in 1923. The superbly styled building is a resonating statement of wealth and power. You can visit the part of the building which is now a museum.

The Chokhelao Bagh is a pretty garden within the Mehrangarh Fort; its design laid out in 1739 by Maharaja Abhai Singh. The garden has three terraces, each displaying different themes, and can be enjoyed at any time of the day. This is a must for gardeners and provides a tranquil place to escape the hustle and bustle.

Down in the heart of the Blue City are cobbled stone streets and bazaars to explore. Together with your guide, you'll visit some of the more undiscovered areas of the old city - Brahmpuri, Nav Choukiya, Sarafa Bazaar and Katla. Brahmpuri is the settlement of the Brahmins; their blue houses are packed together along narrow streets.

Nav Choukiya is a bustling square in the heart of the Old City that has been a popular meeting place for many centuries. Local villagers in vibrant dress congregate here to find work, old men sip chai and play cards, and the place is perfect for people-watching and photo opportunities. Gangshyam Ji Ka Mandir is a lively temple dedicated to Lord Krishna. This is a Bhakti temple where the devotees initiate the prayers, which take place six times a day. At these times, the temple is alive with beautiful chanting.

Sadar Bazaar, dominated by the clock tower, offers an eclectic and fascinating array of goods and sights, including the basket weavers, clay pots, beautiful second-hand saris, and the bustling wholesale market.

Ram Rasodais is a charity kitchen which serves food to 150 people every day. See the volunteers preparing rotis and vegetarian dishes in the spotless kitchen. Outside, watch gold and silversmiths working traditionally in their small shops. Visit the Inderraj Singhvi ki Haveli, which belonged to the prime minister of the former king. Jaisalmerio Kigali was settled by migrants from Jaisalmer and has a unique architectural style, with balcony carvings in the ornate style of their original hometown.

Katla is a market where everything from household items to vegetables and jewellery is sold - see a lac bangle-maker demonstrate his craft. Achal Nath Ji Ka Mandir is a temple maintained by Naga Sadus and dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Enjoy some local and traditional snacks en route if you like, including makhaniya lassi and mawe ki kachori. If you are interested in seeing how lac bangles are made, please ask your guide to take you - the back streets of Jodhpur are not exactly pristine, but it's worth picking your way through to visit the tiny bangle shops. These are usually family-run businesses and some of the decoration work will be done at home.

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DAY 11:



CHANOUD GARH

Today you journey south to Chanoud in your private vehicle, a trip that takes around two and a half hours in total. The last 30 minutes are along a small rural road, passing through villages and farmland. You'll no doubt pass shepherds in colorful turbans as they tend to their flock, and overloaded vehicles transporting goods. Chanoud is the perfect place to simply relax and absorb your surroundings from the hotel's grounds.

DAY 12:



CHANOUD GARH

Today is at your leisure to enjoy Chanoud. This classic Rajasthani village surrounded by farmland makes a great base to explore. During the day why not visit the nearby salt lake, then in the evening, take a jeep ride into the countryside, hot tea and snacks are provided while you watch the sunset.

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DAY 13:



DEV SHREE

Today's journey will take around three and a half hours from Chanoud village to Deogarh. The journey is predominantly passing rural settlements and agricultural land before arriving in to the small, yet characterful town of Deogarh.

Spend your time at Dev Shree relaxing by the pool or enjoying a cup of tea in the tranquil gardens, overlooking the lake. If you want to explore, set off on a village walk with one of the property's staff members. Learn about the family businesses that flourish in the village; the farmers, the potters, and the craft makers to name a few. In the evening, you could opt to enjoy a leisurely drive in the property's safari jeep through the beautiful surrounding countryside and villages, keep your eyes peeled for wildlife and birdlife. Expect to come across a few local farmers herding their goats too.

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DAY 14:



TAJ LAKE PALACE

Today you'll head 125 kilometres (77 miles) from Deogarh south to Udaipur. A worthwhile diversion and stop en route in the rugged Aravalli hills, is at the Jain sanctuary of Ranakpur, which offers a unique insight in to the spiritual and temporal practices of one of India's most intriguing religious groups.

In common with early Christianity, they have taken both austerity and monasticism as central tenets. A profound respect for nature in all living things underlies their overall philosophy. The temples are well worth the visit, for the intricacy of the architecture alone. It is the most extensive (3,600 square meters) and ornate (1,444 carved pillars) Jain temple complex in India.

You can find lunch, or a rest stop at the sanctuary itself (very basic), or there is a nearby hotel resort at Maharani Bagh. Alternatively, depending on your timings, you may prefer to take advantage of the hospitality at the Aodhi hotel.

DAY 15:



TAJ LAKE PALACE



UDAIPUR WALKING TOUR

Private excursion with your guide

The best way to explore the Lake City of Udaipur is on foot. Udaipur bazaars are really colorful and have a lot to offer visitors.

The walk starts from Jagdish Temple, a famous temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu, the preserver of the Universe. The bazaar here is full of small shops on both sides of the road selling handicrafts. Continue walking towards the Clock Tower area, where you will see many interesting local shops selling a variety of daily used articles. From the Clock Tower you turn toward the silver market, where shops sell silver jewelry and articles. Enter Mochiwara Street - the famous shoe bazaar. This is again a very interesting marketplace, where you can buy the typical local embroidered shoes known as 'jutties'. At the end of the road, you will enter the vegetable market square, where local people come to buy fresh vegetables.

During your walk around this area, you will see the wholesale grain market, spice sellers, colorful local grocery shops, tea shops, shops selling cheese and milk products, fruit, vegetables, local beauty products ... the list is endless!

Every little shop presents interesting insights into life in this region of Rajasthan. Colorfully dressed men and women from adjoining rural areas flock to the markets for all their needs, so this walk also provides a great opportunity to see different communities within the area.

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BOAT RIDE ON LAKE PICHOLA

Recommendation for your free time

This shared boat excursion on Lake Pichola leaves from the jetty outside Shiv Niwas and the City Palace every hour on the hour (follow the boat ride signs to find your way there). Heading off anti-clockwise around the Lake Palace, firstly you get great views of the City Palace and the Old City ghats, where there are usually local women doing their washing. As you turn away from the city you're confronted by the spectacular domes of Udai Vilas, passing an Oberoi luxury hotel before being dropped off on Jagmandir Island. The island was built in 1620 and famously provided refuge to Prince Khurram (who would later become the Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan) while he rebelled against his father. A wander around this tiny island offers great photo opportunities of Udaipur and the Lake Palace. Drinks and snacks are available from a restaurant on the island, and boats back to the jetty leave regularly.

The best time of day for boat rides is shortly before sunset, when there's a wonderful golden glow spreads across the water.

DAY 16:



TAJ WEST END HOTEL



FLIGHTS

Udaipur, Maharana Pratap Airport to Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru

Today you'll make your way from Udaipur to Bangalore via a short domestic flight. On arrival, once you have cleared airport formalities, you will be met by your guide and driver. The journey to Bangalore will take around one hour depending on traffic/time of arrival.

DAY 17:



TAJ WEST END HOTEL



BANGALORE CITY TOUR

Private excursion with your driver and guide

Bangalore comes as quite a surprise for visitors who have become accustomed to India. Although the city was extended and fortified by Tipu Sultan, it was overthrown by the British who set up a cantonment and made it into an important military station. In the 1800s its climate, broad streets and green public parks led to its being known as the 'Garden City'. As well as smart homes, the avenues are now lined by tower blocks, and its booming IT industry, modern shops and pubs give it quite a different atmosphere to anywhere else in India.

A visit to Lalbagh Botanical Gardens is a great way to escape the hectic pace of the city. Greatly expanded by the British who brought in gardeners from Kew, the gardens now cover almost a million square meters and have an excellent collection of trees and plants. Tipu's Summer Palace is similar to the one at Srirangapatnam near Mysore, but regrettably much of its painted decoration has been destroyed. The active Bull Temple (Dodda Basavana Gudi) attracts devotees to its huge granite statue in a small garden area. Eight kilometers from the center is the modern new temple of the ISKON (International Society of Krishna Consciousness), which contains venerated images of Krishna and Radha.

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BANGALORE 'PETE' WALKING TOUR

Private excursion with your driver and guide

Bangalore itself is more of a new build city, without the charm of other northern cities in India. However, this tour showcases more of the local life and is really interesting.

“Pete” in the local dialect translates as city. Your walking tour takes you to Bangalore's oldest neighborhood where you will experience the hustle and bustle of daily city life. As you explore the maze of narrow alleyways with your guide, you will get a glimpse of old trade Bangalore, witnessing hundreds of vendors of all faiths and professions working harmoniously together - from traditional wrestlers to silversmiths, Sufi saints, and astrologers. Soak up the quintessential Bangalore - a melting pot of cultures and a juxtaposition of the modern and the old, intermingled with local tales.

DAY 18:



GOLDEN CHARIOT PRIDE OF KARNATAKA - DAY 1 ABOARD

This morning you will travel to Yeshvantpur Railway Station for one of India's most famous luxury rail journeys, six days aboard the Golden Chariot. This journey takes you to my personal favorite destination in India, Hampi! After a formal welcome you will board the Golden Chariot where you will enjoy lunch as you make your way towards Nanjangud Town. Once you've reached Nanjangud you will disembark and travel by road to Bandipur, where you will have an evening safari before returning to the train for dinner. There are two restaurants available on board serving a spread of vegetarian and non-vegetarian culinary delights, and a separate bar with interiors modelled after the Mysore Palace.

This train is named after the famous Stone Chariot in Hampi, a World Heritage Site in Karnataka, South India. Each coach is named after the dynasties that ruled Karnataka and the accommodation is made up of 26 twin bed and 17 double bed cabins decorated with wall panels and furniture inspired by Mysore and Hoysala architecture. Each is equipped with Wi-Fi, LCD television, wardrobe, vanity/writing desk and private bathroom with first-class amenities and accessories.

DAY 19:



GOLDEN CHARIOT PRIDE OF KARNATAKA - DAY 2 ABOARD

After breakfast on-board, you will be taken on a road trip to visit the Mysore Palace.

Commonly described as the 'City of Palaces' this is the official residence of the Wadiyar dynasty. After the original wooden Palace was burnt to ashes during the 1896 Dasara festivities the Palace was rebuilt with grey granite and pink marble and complete in 1912 before being further extended in 1930.

Once you've spent time exploring the palace, you will be taken back to the train where lunch will be served. You have the option to visit the historical, religious temple town of Srirangapatnam this afternoon or you may wish to relax on board before dinner.

DAY 20:



GOLDEN CHARIOT PRIDE OF KARNATAKA - DAY 3 ABOARD

As you enjoy breakfast, the train reaches Banavar Railway Station. From here, you will be taken on a road trip to the heritage site of Halebidu. Spending the morning wandering around the temples, taking in fantastic examples of Hoysala architecture.

You will return for lunch and have time to relax as the train heads towards Chikmangalur. At around 3pm the train will roll into the hill town of Chikmangalur, where you will be taken on a plantation stroll, followed by coffee tasting and dinner.

Overnight stay in the train, as the train moves towards Hampi.

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DAY 21:



GOLDEN CHARIOT

PRIDE OF KARNATAKA - DAY 4 ABOARD

Following an early breakfast on board, you will proceed to visit the Hampi ruins; an UNESCO World Heritage Site which became the centre of the Hindu Vijayanagara Empire Capital in the 14th century. Hampi is a historical delight, surrounded by ancient monuments, beautiful temples, bustling street markets and bastions.

Return for lunch on board and enjoy the afternoon and evening at your leisure. Dinner will be served on board and an Indian evening will be conducted inside the train.

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DAY 22:

GOLDEN CHARIOT PRIDE OF KARNATAKA - DAY 5 ABOARD

After breakfast on board, there is an optional visit to the Badami Caves; a complex of Hindu and Jain cave temples which dates from the 6th century.

Please note that this is an optional tour as you need to climb more than 200 steps to reach the cave. After lunch, you will be taken on a sightseeing tour to the Pattadakal and Aihole monuments, before heading back to the train for dinner.

DAY 23:

GOLDEN CHARIOT PRIDE OF KARNATAKA - DAY 6 ABOARD

After breakfast you will be taken on a road trip for city sightseeing and visit the churches and museums of North Goa, before heading back to the train for lunch.

After lunch and a brief rest, you will be taken back to the city for a Bollywood evening and luxury dinner, before heading back to the train by 9:45 pm.

DAY 24:

GOKULAM GRAND HOTEL & SPA PRIDE OF KARNATAKA 6N - DAY 7 ABOARD

As the train reaches Yeshvantpur Railway Station early in the morning, you will enjoy your final breakfast on board, before checking out and disembarking, marking the end of your train journey. A driver will be waiting to transfer you to the Gokulam Grand Hotel & Spa for your final night in India.

DAY 25:

A driver will pick you up at your hotel today to take you to your international flight home.

FLIGHTS HOME