



CITADELS OF NORTHERN RAJASTHAN

For 11 days



Rajasthan, the desert state, is part fantasy and part reality. Once home to most of India's pre-Independence maharajas and their kingdoms, its legends and colourful past loom larger than life even today. Northern Rajasthan is a grittier and relatively less explored portion of the state.

Begin at Samode, an utterly Rajput retreat just outside of Rajasthan's capital Jaipur, before moving to Mandawa to see the fascinating frescoed 15th century homes of merchants. Skirt the edges of the Great Indian Thar desert to Bikaner; a town whose forts and old cities transport you back in time. Jaisalmer's tawny, sandstone fort walls enclose a universe of havelis and temples, which are some of the most outstanding examples of handcrafting on stone. Stop at the desert camp of Manvar before ending your journey at the blue city Jodhpur: a fitting finale to a panoramic tour.

DAY 1 | ARRIVE SAMODE

Arrive in Samode today, where accommodation is held from 12 noon.

ACCOMMODATION

Connoisseur : Samode Palace

DAY 2 | SAMODE

Day at leisure at Samode, with a vehicle at your disposal for local visits or perhaps explore Jaipur (84 km round trip/ 1 hour drive each way).

DAY 3 | SAMODE/ CHURU

Drive north into the desert region of Rajasthan, Churu(180 km/ 3 hours drive), also known as the gateway to the Thar Desert, a city with several late 19th and early 20th century havelis (mansions) are adorned with colourful themed frescoes on their exteriors and are unique to this part of the country.

ACCOMMODATION

Explorer : Malji ka Kamra

DAY 4 | MANDAWA/ BIKANER / NARENDRA BHAWAN

Drive this morning to Bikaner (180 km/ 3 hours plus stops), pausing en route at the towns of Fatehpur and Ramgarh whose havelis display the very best frescoes in Shekhavati. Stay overnight at Narendra Bhawan in Bikaner

ACCOMMODATION

Narendra Bhawan

DAY 5 | BIKANER

Day excursion to Bikaner (64 km roundtrip), one of the three great desert kingdoms that exudes a stately air till today. Predominant is the awesome Junagadh Fort, unconquered through its history. The walled city, with its havelis and markets, are reminders of an era gone by. Bikaner is home to the legendary Bikaner Camel Corps.

DAY 6 | GAJNER/ KHICHAN/ JAISALMER

Continue west across the great Thar Desert to Jaisalmer (275 km/ 5 hours plus stops), pausing en route at the town of Khichan to view wintering flocks of migratory demoiselle cranes, sometimes seen in their thousands. Towards the end of the journey, the Jaisalmer Fort rises like a mirage out of the sand.

DAY 7 | JAISALMER

Full day explorations of the walled city of Jaisalmer, still very medieval in feel with an air of remoteness about it, displaying varying in moods and colours as the hours go by. Within and outside the walls are several points of interest, an excursion can be made to the ancient town of Lodurva and the remarkable desert village at Khuri.

ACCOMMODATION
Connoisseur : Sonaar Haveli

DAY 8 | JAISALMER/ MANVAR

Morning at leisure. Early this afternoon, drive south east across the Thar to Manvar (180 km/ 3 hours) and then off the road into the wilds for two nights at a welcoming desert camp.

DAY 9 | MANVAR

A day to explore the wilderness and culture of this region, set amidst sand dunes and sparse scrub. Guided jeep, camel and walking safaris encounter villages, itinerant herders, occasional nomads and gypsies, and special desert flora and fauna.

ACCOMMODATION
Explorer : Manvar Desert Camp

***Closed April to September, during these months we will proceed directly from Jaisalmer to Jodhpur**

DAY 10 | MANVAR/ JODHPUR

After breakfast, return to the highway to connect to Jodhpur (110 km/ 2 hour). An afternoon tour of this magnificent desert gateway takes in the masterfully restored Mehrangarh Fort - "built by giants", wrote Kipling - and the serpentine lanes and bazaars of the old quarter.

ACCOMMODATION
Connoisseur : Raas

DAY 11 | DEPART JODHPUR

Depart Jodhpur today for your onward destination.

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