



## A TALE OF TWO RIVER

For 7 days



India's riverine civilisations have been a source of myths, faith and a way of life. This eclectic tour takes you to Varanasi and Maheshwar on the banks of the River Ganges and River Narmada respectively, introducing you to the rich cultural tapestry of India.

Varanasi, also known as Banaras or Kashi, is Hinduism's most holy city. Elaborate religious ceremonies, full of pomp and splendour and the ebb and flow of life are performed on the ghats, infused with a particular intensity. As one moves inland, however, other facets of this city open up: the weavers patronized by the Mughals, whose cloth was so fine as to pass through the "eye of a needle"; Sarnath, where the Buddha delivered his first sermon; and Islamic provincial settlements where time, it seems, has stood still.

Next, you fly to Indore and drive to the lovely town of Maheshwar. Here the Narmada is said to "cascade, flow and bless". An elegant town on the bank of River Narmada, Maheshwar is famous for its eponymous woven saris. Excursions to Mandu, redolent with majesty and possessing an air of melancholic romanticism, complete our central Indian journey.

## DAY 1 | ARRIVE VARANASI

Arrive Varanasi today, where accommodation is held from 12 noon. Early evening, visit the ghats along the Ganges to view the evening prayer ceremonies and stroll through the traditional markets.

### ACCOMMODATION

[Connoisseur : Nadesar Palace](#)

[Explorer : Hotel Ganges View](#)

## DAY 2 | VARANASI

The City of Shiva is Hinduism's holiest and among the world's most ancient. The dawn boat trip to view the morning prayer provides an unforgettable spectacle of devotion. At Banaras Hindu University, a deeply venerated centre of learning, visit the Bharat Kala Bhawan (closed Sundays/university holidays), which exhibits a precious collection of ancient sculptures and medieval paintings. Adjacent to Varanasi is quite another world - Sarnath - where the Buddha preached his first sermon in 528 BC after attaining Enlightenment.

## DAY 3 | VARANASI

Day excursion north to Zaffarabad and Jaunpur (156 km roundtrip/2.5 hours drive each way), two provincial Islamic settlements that bear the distinctive stamp of Delhi Sultanate, Sharqi and Mughal influences in the form of the Old Shahi Fort, Atala Masjid, Jami Masjid and the Akbari Bridge. Somewhat cocooned and time warped, nothing much seems to have changed here.

## DAY 4 | VARANASI/ DELHI/ INDORE/ MAHESHWAR

After a final morning in Varanasi, fly via Delhi to Indore in central India. Drive to Maheshwar (97 km/2 hours) on the northern bank of the sacred Narmada River.

## DAY 5 | MAHESHWAR

Spend the day exploring the ancient town of Maheshwar, its many lanes, temples and markets. The ghats overlooking the Narmada are a magnet for pilgrims throughout the day. Contributing much to the town's atmosphere and colour are its looms where the resplendent and renowned Maheshwari saree is woven.

### ACCOMMODATION

[Connoisseur : Ahilya Fort](#)

[Explorer : Ahilya Fort](#)

## DAY 6 | MAHESHWAR

Day excursion to Mandu (126 km round trip/1.5 hours driving each way), site of the once dreamlike capital of the pre-medieval Malwa Sultans, still redolent with majesty and aura as it stands in silent abandonment after its conquest by the Mughals nearly five centuries ago.

## DAY 7 | MAHESHWAR/ INDORE - DEPART

Transfer to Indore to connect a flight or train to your onward destination.

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