



6-11 November, 2011

India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, India

TOUR CODE (CT- 2) OVERNIGHT TRIP TO TAJ & FATEHPUR SIKRI (01 NIGHT/02 DAYS)

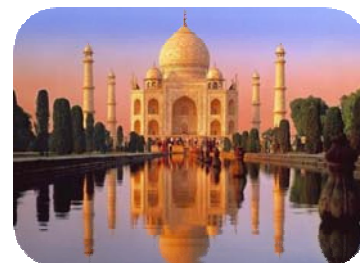
DAY 01: DELHI – AGRA

(APPROX. 205 KMS – 4-5 HRS DRIVE)

Morning vehicle will depart from the venue at around 08: 30 AM by road. The journey will take approx. 4-5 hours to reach Agra. Upon arrival check in to the Hotel.

After wash and change in the hotel, proceed for a half day visit of Taj Mahal & Agra fort.

At the time of the Mughals, in the 16th & 17th centuries, Agra was the capital of the grand Mughal Empire. During this period the city became a leading center of art, science, commerce and culture. The city's origins are dim but Emperor Akbar's grandfather Babur is credited with Agra's founding. The short golden age of Agra came to an end with the seventeenth century reign of Shah Jehan, mastermind of the unforgettable Taj Mahal.



The Taj Mahal, built by an emperor in memory of his beloved queen. Construction of the Taj Mahal began in 1631, and is believed to have taken 22 years to complete, with over 20,000 craftsmen working around the clock. The design and construction is said to be that of the legendary architect, Ustad Ahamad Lahori. Legend has it that once construction was completed, Shah Jehan had Lahori's hands cut off, and blinded, so he would never be able to duplicate the structure. What makes the Taj Mahal unique is its perfect proportions, distinct femininity, medium of construction and ornamentation.

Its marble exterior reflects rose and golden tints at sunrise and sunset, while it is dazzling white during the day. It is impossible to visualize the Taj Mahal in any surrounding others than its beautifully laid gardens. Paradise, in Islam, is visualized as a lush garden where running streams flow. When the Mughals brought this concept to India they elevated it to heights of incomparable artistry.

Special note: Taj Mahal is closed on Friday

After visiting Taj Mahal proceed for lunch (on own)

Afterward proceed to visit the Impressive **Agra Fort**.

Akbar, king at 14, began consolidating his empire and, as an assertion of his power built the fort in Agra between 1565 and 1571, surrounded by a 70-foot high wall which still retains the irregular outline of the demolished mud-wall fort of the Lodis. The magnificent towers, bastions and ramparts and majestic gateways symbolized the confidence and power of the third Mughal emperor, Akbar.



The fort contains splendid palaces both in red sandstone and white marble built by two generations of prolific builders, Akbar and later on by Jahangir and Shahjahan. Some of the most significant ones are Jahangiri Mahal, the principal zenana palace (palace for women belonging to the royal household), used mainly by the Rajput wives of

Akbar. A splendid gateway leads to an interior courtyard surrounded by grand halls covered with profuse carvings on stone, heavily fashioned brackets, piers, and crossbeams. One can still spot remnants of decoration in gold and blue done in the prevalent Persian style), Khas Mahal and Sheesh Mahal (Both Jahangir (Akbar's son) and Shahjahan (Akbar's grandson) were enamored of the sensuous effect of white marble; in their quest to make buildings of marble,



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they demolished many of Akbar's red sandstone structures. Khas Mahal (built by Shahjahan), is an airy edifice, overlooking the specially laid Angoori Bagh (grape garden; a simple formal Mughal garden). Windows closed with jali (intricately perforated decorative stone screens) present fabulous view of the riverfront. The two copper-roofed pavilions built in the Bengali traditions were meant for prominent ladies of the harem. On three sides of this garden are residential quarters of women. Sheesh Mahal (mirror palace) or the royal hammam (bath) is decorated with myriad glass pieces and a central fountain), Musamman Burj (is the most romantic, ornamental pavilion wherein lived two most beautiful and powerful Mughal queens-Nurjahan and Mumtaz Mahal. The quality of pietra dura decoration is fabulous and perfect. Here Shahjahan spent his last few years as a captive held by Aurangzeb. Shahjahan languished and died looking at the Taj Mahal), Diwan-I-Khas (Hall of Private audience is a small hall with double marble columns inlaid with pietra dura decoration. Shahjahan built the structure between 1636 and 1637 and it is where the emperor used to receive the important dignitaries.

On the terrace, in front of this hall, are two marble thrones. The black throne belongs to Jehangir who, as Prince Salim in rebellion against Akbar at Allahabad, had ordered it for himself. Below this terrace lies the grand courtyard of Machchi Bhawan, meant for the harem functions. On another side stands a small mosque built for Shahjahan by Aurangzeb), Diwan-I-Aam (Hall of Public audience constructed by Shahjahan, who replaced an earlier wooden structure. The arches are covered with white lime polished to a smooth finish. The triple arched royal canopy has lavish pietra dura ornamentation. Here was kept the famous Peacock Throne ordered by Shahjahan. He met officials and commoners and listened to the petitioners in the Diwan-I-Aam), Moti Masjid (or the pearl mosques, three domes in white marble raising their heads over the red sandstone wall. Moti Masjid is known for its sheer grandeur and perfect proportions).

After visiting Agra Fort return to the hotel for an overnight stay.

DAY 02: AGRA – DELHI

Breakfast at the hotel. After breakfast proceed to visit Fatehpur Sikri, 40 kms away from Agra city. **Fatehpur Sikri** the deserted red sandstone city that was built by Emperor Akbar as his capital. It was a veritable fairy tale city and its 'ruins' are still in a pristine condition. It is not hard to imagine what the court life must have been like in the days of its grandeur.



After visiting Fatehpur Sikri return to the hotel for lunch (on own) and check out.

After lunch drive back to Delhi. Upon arrival own arrangements for hotel accommodation in Delhi.

===== Tour ends =====

The above tour includes:

- Accommodation on twin sharing basis with breakfast in Agra for a night only
- Monument entrance fees at Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri
- Battery bus charges at Taj Mahal
- English speaking local guide at Agra
- 01 bottle of Mineral Water per person per day
- All transfers, sightseeing's and excursions using an air - conditioned vehicle.
- Medicated wet tissues during the tour
- All government taxes at the hotels as on dates (subject to change)

The above tour does not include:

- Accommodation in any hotel in Delhi



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- Any expenses of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, mineral water etc.
- Any insurance
- Any camera or video fee at the monuments (guest can pay directly for this at the monuments)
- Any meals other than specified
- Service tax @ 2.57%
- Any other services not mentioned above

Special note:

Prices are subject to change due to increase in Fuel charges / Govt. Tax. / State Road Tax if any in the near future.
Rates include only those items as specified in the above Itinerary.



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