

TRAIN : The Deccan Odyssey
JOURNEY : Splendours of Northern India with Shimla & Amritsar
Journey Duration : Upto 15 Days

DAY 1 DELHI

Arrival day at Delhi Airport, where you will be met and transferred to the five-star Taj Palace Hotel.

DAY 2 DELHI TO SHIMLA

Experience the timeless charm of Shimla, the revered “Queen of Hills” and erstwhile British summer capital. Marvel at snow-capped peaks, lush greenery, serene lakes, and the vibrant countryside, all while relishing a delightful journey aboard the Kalka-Shimla railway.

The UNESCO World Heritage acclaimed “Toy Train”, is a narrow-gauge marvel winding through the picturesque Shivalik hills, offering breathtaking vistas of the Himalayas. Dating back to 1898, this historic railway, adorned with 107 tunnels and 864 bridges, once connected Shimla to the rest of India, a testament to engineering prowess.

Retire for the night at the esteemed Hotel The Oberoi Cecil, where luxury meets heritage, ensuring an unforgettable sojourn for the next three nights.

DAY 3 SHIMLA

Embark on an exhilarating journey after breakfast as we delve into the rich history of the Kalka-Shimla railway at the Balku Ram rail museum. Named in honour of the legendary Baba Bhalku, a revered saint believed to possess extraordinary engineering skills, the museum showcases rare artifacts from the railway’s storied past. Marvel at the ingenuity that shaped this iconic rail track, a testament to human perseverance and innovation.

Later, immerse yourself in the heritage of Shimla with a captivating afternoon Heritage Walk. Explore the charming hill station, steeped in colonial splendour, as you visit historic landmarks such as the State Museum, Christ Church, and the iconic Gaiety Theatre. Wander through the vibrant Mall, soaking in the colorful ambiance of this timeless destination.

DAY 4 SHIMLA

Today presents an opportunity for leisure, allowing you to bask in the splendor of Shimla’s natural beauty and cultural charm.

DAY 5 SHIMLA TO AMRITSAR

This morning, we drive from Shimla to Ambala to board the train for Amritsar.

Amritsar, a cultural gem and spiritual nucleus of the Sikh community, awaits your exploration. Founded in the 16th century by Guru Ram Das Ji, the city's rich history is steeped in Sikh tradition and heritage. Witness the grandeur of the Golden Temple, a sacred sanctuary initiated by Guru Ram Das Ji and completed by Guru Arjan Dev Ji, a testament to divine devotion and architectural brilliance.

As night falls, immerse yourself in the serene ambiance of the Palki ceremony at the Golden Temple, when the holy book of Sikhs, Guru Granth Sahib is put to bed in an elaborate ceremony with continuous chanting of Gurbani (hymns) by the devotees.

Retire for the night to the opulent comforts of Hotel Taj Swarna for a two-night stay, where refined luxury and impeccable service await, ensuring a restful and indulgent stay.

DAY 6 AMRITSAR

Following a sumptuous breakfast, indulge in a morning filled with cultural immersion as we return to the resplendent Golden Temple, a jewel in the Sikh crown. Marvel at the intricate marble sculptures, gilded spires, and opulent interiors of this sacred sanctuary, where devout pilgrims partake in purifying rituals amidst the tranquil waters that envelop it.

Venture next to the serene gardens of Jallianwala Bagh, where a solemn memorial stands as a poignant tribute to the tragic events of the 1919 massacre, a somber reminder of resilience amidst adversity.

Delve deeper into history with a visit to the Partition Museum, offering a comprehensive narrative of India's tumultuous partition in 1947. Gain insight into the human experience of this pivotal moment, from the prelude of independence to the enduring aftermath.

In the afternoon, embark on an exclusive excursion to the India-Pakistan border at Atari, where the enthralling flag-lowering ceremony unfolds. Witness the captivating spectacle as soldiers from both sides engage in a spirited display of precision and patriotism.

DAY 7 AMRITSAR TO DELHI

Today we will travel by scheduled flight from Amritsar and return to Delhi where we enjoy an overnight stay at Hotel Taj Palace.

DAY 8 DELHI

One of the oldest cities in the world, Delhi is a bustling and vibrant city, famous for its traditional bazaars and street markets.

Our fascinating city tour in this pulsating metropolis takes in the Raj Ghat memorial to Mahatma Gandhi, the World Heritage Site of Humayun's Tomb, the first example of Mughal architecture in India, and the towering Indo-Islamic Qutab Minar, the tallest brick minaret in the world at 238ft (73m) which dates from 1368. Tonight, we enjoy a sumptuous dinner on board our private train as we continue our journey across India.

Late evening sees us boarding our private train, Deccan Odyssey, for the perfect way to experience the colour, character and amazing diversity of India. Settle into your beautifully appointed private en-suite cabin and enjoy the hospitable atmosphere of the stylish Bar Lounge Car as we begin our rail journey.

DAY 9 FATEPHUR SIKRI & AGRA FORT

After breakfast, we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Fatehpur Sikri. Known as a 'ghost city', this red sandstone town was abandoned only shortly after being built due to lack of water in 1585.

This afternoon our journey takes us to Agra Fort, a magnificent structure that dominates the skyline and acted as the main residence for emperors of the Mughal Dynasty until 1638. Its red sandstone walls run for 2.5 km and contain many fairy-tale palaces and two beautifully preserved mosques.

DAY 10 AGRA (FOR TAJ MAHAL)

Today is devoted to visiting the impossibly beautiful Taj Mahal, built entirely of white marble on the south bank of the Yamuna River and indisputably the most famous building in the world.

Completed in 1648 by Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan, the Taj Mahal is a mausoleum for his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, and took 22 years and 20,000 artisan workers to complete. Nowhere else on the planet will you experience such a poignant architectural statement dedicated to the enduring nature of human love and inspirational artistry.

A very early start to the day as we avoid the crowds and visit the Taj Mahal at sunrise to appreciate this iconic building in all its magnificence. Later we enjoy breakfast (weather permitting) in the gardens at the Taj Kema hotel, offering a stunning view across to the Taj Mahal in the distance.

We return to the Deccan Odyssey for lunch as we continue our rail journey towards the state of Rajasthan.

DAY 11 JAIPUR

With a breakfast arrival into the capital of Rajasthan, the 'Pink City' of Jaipur overwhelms the senses as we embrace its rich and colourful past. This morning, we visit the Amber Fort and explore its breath-taking and ornate majesty, including the magnificent Hall of Mirrors.

After lunch in a local restaurant, we continue our exploration with a tour of the Jantar Mantar Observatory, the imposing and vast City Palace and the beautiful Hawa Mahal, or Palace of Winds. This delicately stunning yet enduring monument is constructed entirely of pink sandstone and was built in 1799 to allow royal ladies to discreetly observe everyday life. Finally, if time permits, we explore a famous fabric market before returning to the train to refresh ourselves.

This evening, we dine in the elegant Rambagh Palace Hotel, originally built in 1835 and once the residence of the Maharaja of Jaipur. The palace retains its elaborate splendour, extravagantly decorated with hand-carved marble 'jalis' or latticework, sandstone balustrades, cupolas and 'chattris' or cenotaphs, and elaborate Mughal Gardens.

DAY 12 UDAIPUR

We spend a leisurely morning on board as the landscape and spirit of India unfolds before us. We then have the opportunity to listen to a talk on Indian culture before arriving at Udaipur, known as the 'City of Lakes' or 'Venice of the East'. A beguiling tapestry of breath-taking lakes and opulently majestic palaces from the Rajput era awaits your discovery.

The afternoon is spent admiring the awe-inspiring beauty of the Lake Palace. Constructed entirely of marble, it sits on its own island in the shimmering waters of Pichola Lake. We go on to visit the medieval grandeur of City Palace.

DAYS 13-14 MUMBAI

Day 13 ushers in our arrival in Mumbai, bidding adieu to the esteemed Deccan Odyssey as we transfer to the illustrious five-star Taj Mahal Palace & Tower Hotel for an indulgent two-night sojourn. Revel in the opulent accommodations of this flagship Taj establishment, offering unrivaled vistas of the Arabian Sea and the iconic Gateway of India, complemented by a legacy of refined hospitality spanning over a century. Hosting monarchs, dignitaries, and luminaries worldwide, this legendary abode epitomises extravagance.

Guests of the Deluxe Class will stay in the Tower Wing, while patrons of the Presidential Suite will reside in the prestigious Palace Wing.

Mumbai, a captivating metropolis steeped in cultural opulence, awaits our exploration during this exclusive stay. We unveil the mesmerizing 'Dhobi Ghats', an outdoor laundry spectacle, where traditional dhobis meticulously cleanse and press linens, epitomising historical grandeur.

Our itinerary further encompasses a tour of Fort Bombay and Gandhi's House, a poignant museum honoring his inspirational legacy. Weather permitting, a brief cruise from the Gateway of India transports us to the verdant Elephanta Island, a UNESCO World Heritage Site enveloped in lush foliage. The awe-inspiring cave complex, dating back to the 3rd – 5th century, pays homage to Lord Shiva, an esteemed Hindu deity.

Indulge in a delectable seafood luncheon at the renowned Trishna restaurant, savouring culinary excellence amidst Mumbai's vibrant ambiance.

Included in our touring program, guests are also afforded leisure to independently explore Mumbai's myriad delights or perhaps peruse its vibrant local markets.

DAY 15 MUMBAI

After breakfast you will be transferred to Mumbai Airport to begin your journey home.