



City Palace in Udaipur

Optometry in North India

22 February – 6 March 2021





The Taj Mahal

India is a land like no other in the richness and diversity of its people, its culture and its history. It is home to one of the world's oldest religions, arguably the world's most beautiful man-made structure – the Taj Mahal – and a vibrant and colourful society clinging to ancient traditions whilst embracing the modern world. This tour starts in Delhi, a city where Mughal and colonial history rub shoulders alongside a vibrant contemporary culture. Continue to Agra, dominated by the majestic Taj Mahal, onto the pink city of Jaipur and the royal blue city of Jodhpur, to finish in elegant Udaipur - the 'Venice of the East.' The varied cultural programme is balanced by a wide-ranging professional itinerary of visits, talks and meetings with optometrists and eye care practitioners in both rural and urban India.

Arrive Delhi and check into your hotel before an orientation tour of New Delhi in the afternoon. See the highlights of imperial Delhi, including India Gate and magnificent Rashtrapati Bhawan, the President's House, which is larger than

Versailles and encompasses exotic gardens. In the evening enjoy a welcome dinner with the group.

Next morning hear a talk on the background to optometry in India, with a partner programme to a local market. In the afternoon visit the All India Institute of Medical Sciences School of Optometry.

The following day take a cycle rickshaw tour through the narrow lanes of the Chadni Chowk,



Browse amongst vivid silks at the bazaar in Delhi



The floating Lake Palace on Lake Pichola, Udaipur (top);
A typical street scene in the blue city of Jodhpur (above)

visiting the spice market and Jewellers' Lane. In the afternoon drive to Agra, the centre of the Mughal Empire and most famously the home of the Taj Mahal. Transfer to your hotel.

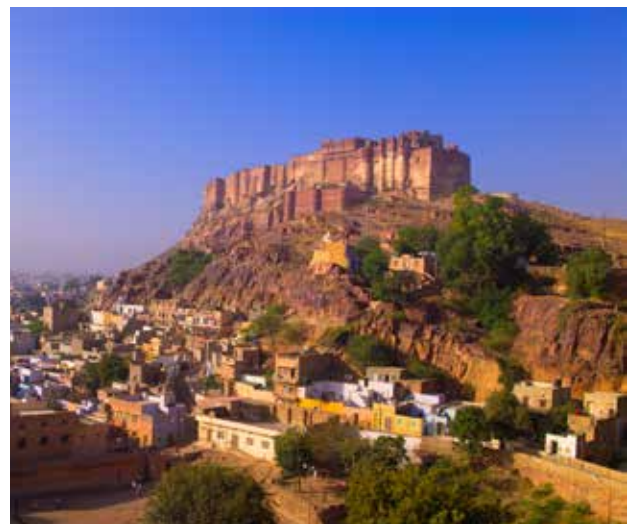
Rise at dawn the next day to take horse drawn carriages to India's most famous monument, the Taj Mahal, created by Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan as an expression of his love for his wife Mumtaz. Many have tried to describe the beauty of this white marble mausoleum, which is a perfect exercise in symmetry, set high against the blue sky. The central Taj structure is made of semi-translucent white marble, carved with flowers and inlaid with thousands of semiprecious stones in beautiful patterns. Return to the hotel for breakfast before driving to Jaipur, stopping en route to visit the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri, built at the behest of Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1571 and abandoned less than twenty years later. The beautiful red sandstone city remains perfectly preserved after hundreds of years. Arrive in Jaipur and check in to your hotel.

Visit Amber Fort the next morning and explore this ancient citadel with its ornate artistic style, remarkable for the way in which it blends both Hindu and Muslim elements. In the afternoon visit the City Palace Museum before continuing to the jewellery and textile bazaars to take place in the bazaar trail.

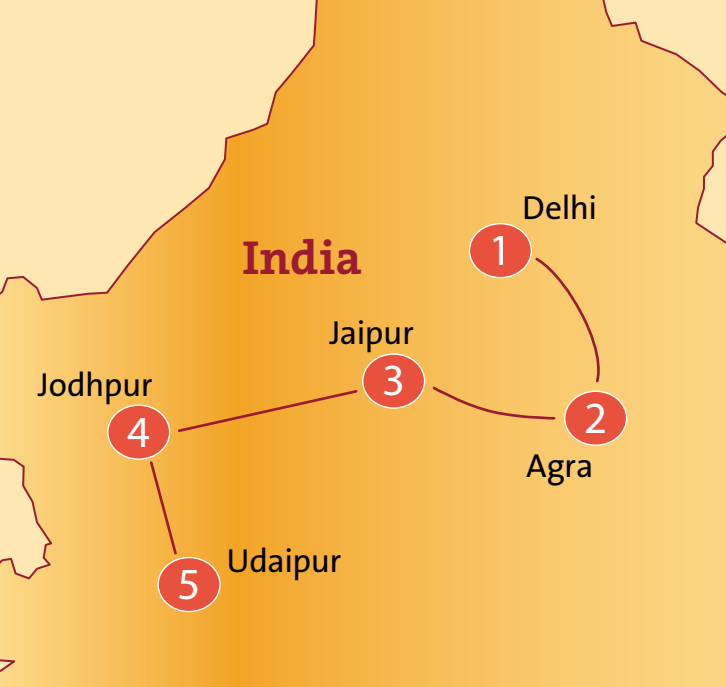
Next day visit The Eye Destination, an innovative and successful local optometry practice. See the famous Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds), where the ladies of the harem were kept sheltered from prying eyes, and Jantar Mantar, a fascinating observatory dating back to 1693. In the afternoon visit an Ayurvedic clinic and learn about this ancient medical system. There is the option to visit the Elephantastic Elephant Camp later in the day, where you may bond with the placid giants by feeding, washing and even painting them in traditional Indian style.

Next day drive to the spectacular 'Blue City' of Jodhpur, its 16th century heart dominated by magnificent Mehrangarh Fort overhanging the city. Visit the tribal Bishnoi villages on the way. Arrive and transfer to your hotel.

The next morning visit mighty Mehrangarh Fort, with its intricate carvings and expansive courtyards, and take a tuk-tuk ride through the old city to the craft market, passing cotton, vegetable and spice bazaars on the way. Spend the afternoon at leisure.



Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur



In the afternoon see the solar observatory and take a boat cruise across Lake Pichola.

Next morning take an optional cookery class, which includes a visit to the market to shop and lunch, or spend the morning at leisure. The rest of the day is at leisure to relax or explore at your own pace before a farewell dinner on a rooftop restaurant.

The following day transfer to the airport for your return flight home.

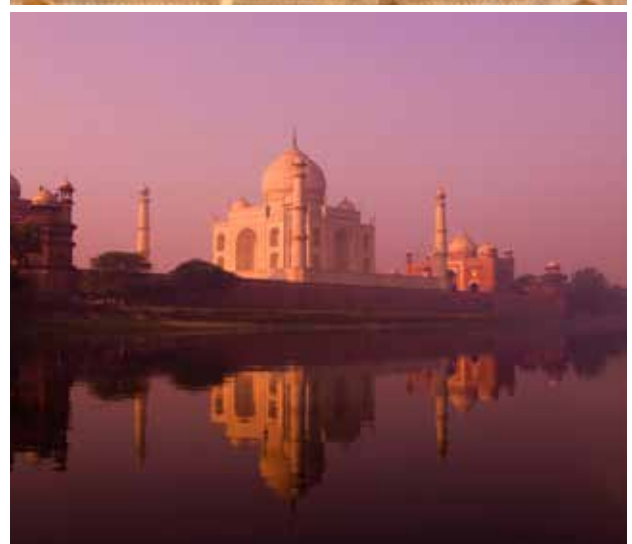
“I could not believe how welcome I was made. As a single traveller I was apprehensive but I have never had such a fabulous holiday.”

**Gabrielle Belford, Optometry & Eye Care
in North India, April 2013**

The Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital is a charitable trust in Jodhpur and provides a variety of ophthalmic outpatient and surgical facilities to all, irrespective of caste, creed, sex or religion. Free services are provided to the poor and underprivileged of Jodhpur city as well as those from outlying villages, and it runs numerous free rural eye camps every year through its mobile outreach programme. Visit this inspirational family run programme, which is also our supported project for the tour – more details on inside back page – and see or take part in their screening process at the hospital. In the evening take a camel safari into the sand dunes at sunset.

The following day drive through the hills to Udaipur and check into your hotel, before dinner on the shores of Lake Pichola.

The wonderful city of Udaipur lays claim to being Rajasthan’s most seductive. Its nickname is ‘The Venice of the East’ for its combination of whimsy, splendour and waterside vistas. The centrepiece of the city is the floating Lake Palace, set in the middle of magnificent Lake Pichola at the heart of the city, which also featured in the Bond film ‘Octopussy’. Visit the Saheliyon-ki-Bari, a quaint little ornamental garden with fountains (water permitting), kiosks, marble elephants and a pretty lotus pool, and the imposing City Palace, Rajasthan’s largest palace, with its balconies, towers and cupolas towering over Pichola Lake.



**A courtyard in Amber Fort, Jaipur (top);
The Taj Mahal bathed in morning light (above)**

Itinerary 22 February – 6 March 2021

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

2 nights Delhi – 1 night Agra – 3 nights Jaipur – 3 nights Jodhpur – 3 nights Udaipur

22 Feb (Mon) Delhi **B D**

Am Arrive Delhi and transfer to Ashtan Sarovar Portico
Pm Orientation tour of New Delhi and visit Rashtrapati Bhavan, India Gate and Parliament House

23 Feb (Tue) Delhi **B D**

Am Visit Indian Optometric Association. Talk: *“Optometry in India”*. Partner programme: Hauz Khas Market walk with local guide
Pm Visit the All India Institute of Medical Sciences School of Optometry

24 Feb (Wed) Delhi / Agra **B D**

Am Take a cycle rickshaw ride through the narrow lanes of the Chadni Chowk and visit the spice market and Jewellers’ Lane
Pm Drive to Agra and transfer to the Grand Imperial Hotel

25 Feb (Thur) Agra / Jaipur **B D**

Am Dawn visit to the Taj Mahal. Visit the Taj Mahal. Return to the hotel for breakfast. Drive to Agra. En route visit the abandoned city of Fatehpur Sikri
Pm Arrive Jaipur and transfer to the Lemon Tree hotel and at leisure

26 Feb (Fri) Jaipur **B D**

Am Visit Amber Fort
Pm Visit the City Palace. Continue to the jewellery and textile bazaars and take part in the Bazaar Trail with a local guide

27 Feb (Sat) Jaipur **B D**

Am Visit The Eye Destination Optometric Clinic. See Palace of the Winds and visit the observatory
Pm Visit the Ayurveda Clinic and learn of this ancient medical system. Option to visit the Elefantastic Elephant Camp. Feed, wash and paint an elephant

28 Feb (Sun) Jaipur / Jodhpur **B D**

Am Drive to Jodhpur via Rajasthani villages
Pm Arrive and transfer to the Ranbanka Palace Hotel

1 Mar (Mon) Jodhpur **B D**

Am Visit the mighty Mehrangarh Fort. Tuk-tuk through the old city past cotton, vegetable and spice bazaars to the craft market
Pm At leisure to explore

2 Mar (Tue) Jodhpur **B D**

Am Visit the Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital and learn of their charity work
Pm Witness or take part in screening and health checks
Eve Take a camel safari into the desert dunes for sunset

3 Mar (Wed) Jodhpur / Udaipur **B D**

Am Drive through the hills to Udaipur
Pm Arrive and transfer to the Lakend Hotel
Eve Dinner on the shores of Lake Pichola

4 Mar (Thur) Udaipur **B D**

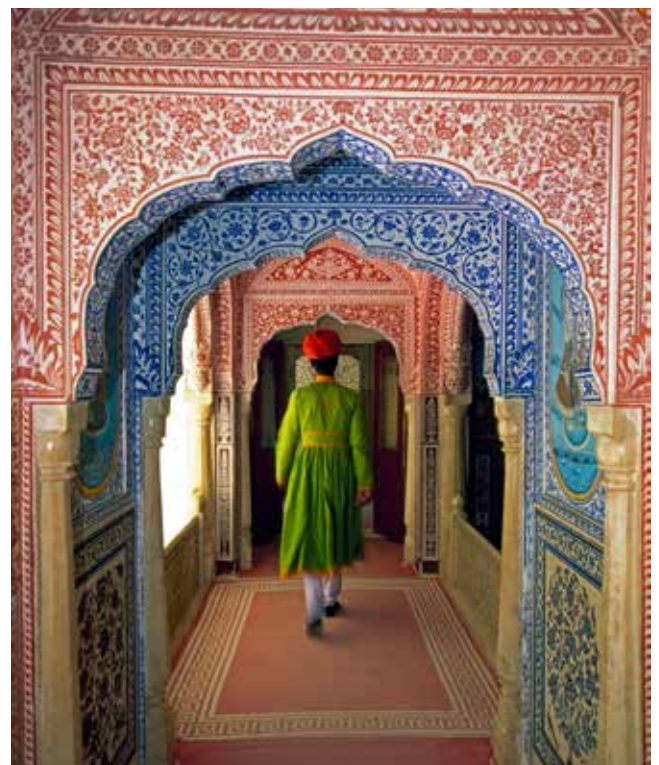
Am Visit the Saheliyon Ki Bari water gardens and the City Palace
Pm See the Solar Observatory and take a cruise on Lake Pichola

5 Mar (Fri) Udaipur **B D**

Am Optional cookery class including a visit to the market, a cookery class and lunch or at leisure
Pm At leisure
Eve Farewell dinner on a rooftop restaurant

6 Mar (Sat) Udaipur / Delhi or Mumbai **B**

Am Fly from Udaipur to Delhi or Mumbai to connect with onward departure (flight not included)



Rajasthani elegance



Piles of spices and dyed powder in the spice market (top);
Passing the time in Jodhpur; A painted elephant;
Rajasthani women in traditional dress

Hotels

Ashtan Sarovar Portico (Delhi)

A contemporary and comfortable 4-star hotel, the Ashtan Sarovar Portico is well situated in the new Green Park Extension of New Delhi, with warm and friendly service and very good food.

Grand Imperial Hotel (Agra)

A beautiful boutique hotel, The Grand Imperial is the oldest heritage hotel operating in Agra. Built in the early 1900 during the height of the British Empire, the hotel is elegant and stylish with magnificent grounds and a lovely pool.

Hotel Lakend (Udaipur)

A 4-star deluxe hotel situated on the shore of peaceful Fatehsagar Lake in Udaipur, this elegant hotel has 2 bars and a restaurant, as well a rooftop bar with wonderful views.

Lemon Tree Hotel (Jaipur)

Lemon Tree Premier are a chain of upscale business and leisure hotels that retain a distinctive freshness, quirkiness and energy, with warm and efficient service.

Jodhpur Ranbanka Palace (Jodhpur)

An attractive heritage hotel set in the heart of Jodhpur, this hotel combines contemporary style with traditional Rajasthani details and provides a lovely garden, an outdoor pool, a beautiful courtyard and a spa and wellness centre.

Hotel Lakend (Udaipur)

A 4-star deluxe hotel situated on the shore of peaceful Fatehsagar Lake in Udaipur, this elegant hotel has 2 bars and a restaurant, as well a rooftop bar with wonderful views.

“An amazing and wonderful trip. Our first visit to India, this was an excellent ‘taster’.”

Bryan and Jenny Teall, Grand Heritage Tour to India, 2018

Tour Leader

David Shannon graduated in 1986 from Southern College of Optometry, Memphis, Tennessee, as a Doctor of Optometry. Between 2010 and 2013 he was Chairman of the AOP (Association of Optometrists). Previously he was AOP Board member responsible for OT (Optometry Today). He has consulted for Johnson & Johnson Vision Care and has trained practitioners across the UK. Until 2014 he worked in the family practice, Shannon and Carton Ltd. David has supervised undergraduate optometry students at City University's contact lens clinic. David has led many successful optometry study tours to China, Cuba, India, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, Nepal and Peru.

“David Shannon is a tour leader par excellence”

Ian W. Shaw, Optometry in Nepal, April 2018

Project

The **Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital** in was built in 1986 under the direction of founder Dr Navin Desai FRCS. Dr Navin Desai's two sons both followed their father in becoming eye surgeons. Today, they are the driving force behind the operation, which saves some 2,000 people from blindness every year by the free cataract operations performed both at rural eye camps and at the Base Hospital in Jodhpur.

The Tarabai Desai Eye Hospital provides a variety of ophthalmic outpatient and surgical facilities to all, irrespective of caste, creed, sex or religion. Free services are provided to the poor of Jodhpur city as well as those from outlying villages. Every year an average of 30 free rural eye camps are organised through the mobile outreach programme. In each camp about 100 intra-ocular operations are performed free of charge. Jon Baines Tours provide a donation to the hospital during our visit. www.eyecamps.org

The ground only cost of the tour is USD \$3,611
(excludes international flights and airport transfers)

The cost includes:

- Tour leader (David Shannon)
- Breakfast and dinner daily
- 12 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with medium grade, heritage and first-class hotels

The single room supplement is USD \$856

- A full programme of cultural visits and partner programme
- A full programme of professional visits as per the itinerary
- All transport from Delhi to Udaipur
- Admission fees
- National guide throughout
- All tips

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned
- All personal extras such as personal tips, portorage, laundry, inoculation fees and drinks
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance and visas
- International flights

NB Due to the nature of the tour, places are strictly limited. All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

Flights

Please contact Jon Baines Tours in London on **020 7223 9485** or in Melbourne on **03 9343 6367** if you require assistance with booking your flights.

Dr Desai examining a patient in a rural eye camp



About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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Jon Baines Tours (London)
Hyde Park House, 5 Manfred Road,
London, SW15 2RS
Tel: +44 (0) 207 223 9485 / 5618
Email: info@jonbainestours.co.uk
www.jonbainestours.co.uk

Jon Baines Tours (Melbourne)
PO Box 68, South Brunswick,
Victoria 3055
Tel: +61 (0) 3 9343 6367
Fax: +61 (0) 3 9012 4228
Email: info@jonbainestours.com.au
www.jonbainestours.com

USA and Canada:
(Toll Free) 1-8777-398-764



Local women at Mehrangarh Fort (top); A room within Mehrangarh Fort; Jaswant Thanda Mausoleum, Jodhpur; Ride camels into the sand dunes at sunset (above)



Jon Baines
tours

