



Varanasi and the ghats at sunrise

Medicine in North India with the RSM

16 – 30 March 2025



The ROYAL
SOCIETY of
MEDICINE

Level 3
MODERATE



Jon Baines
tours



Amber Fort, Jaipur

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 and some of its most beautiful man made structures, spectacular landscapes and wildlife and a vibrant and colourful society clinging to ancient traditions whilst embracing the modern world.

The tour starts in Delhi, where Mughal and colonial history rub shoulders alongside a vibrant contemporary culture. Continue to the pink city of Jaipur, onto Agra, dominated by the majestic Taj Mahal, to Lucknow, an important centre of Shia Islam, also influenced by Persian

and British culture, and the great spiritual centre of Varanasi, where life and death meet. The tour finishes in the Bengali capital of Kolkata, the former capital of the British Raj. You will stay in a variety of lovely hotels during the tour.

The varied cultural programme is balanced by a wide-ranging professional itinerary of visits, talks and meetings with medical practitioners in both rural and urban India. These visits reveal the great diversity in healthcare within India and include a large prestigious public hospital in Delhi, an innovative NGO and a traditional practitioner in Jaipur, a talk on belief in the spiritual centre of Varanasi and a visit to a cancer hospital outside Kolkata.

Tour Activity Level

Level 1 Relaxed



A gentle pace, involving minimal walking and exertion. Shorter travel distances and a full but relatively relaxed itinerary.

Level 2 Gentle



Easy walking at a mostly leisurely pace. Slightly more daily activity and travel.

THIS TOUR IS CLASSIFIED AS:

Level 3 Moderate



Regular walking at destinations, extended standing and /or increased travel distances. Good fitness is required.

Level 4 Active



Longer and fuller days. Significant levels of walking, covering longer distances, requiring very good fitness and mobility.

Level 5 Challenging



May involve extended drives, hikes and multiple visits across busy days. Excellent fitness is required.

Tour Leader

Janice Liverseidge was previously Director of Membership at The Royal Society of Medicine and is now a full time guide and in her spare time a trustee of both the Royal Medical Benevolent Fund and the London Handel Festival. Earlier in her career she worked for the British Medical Association. She is also a registered Blue Badge tourist guide and regularly leads groups in London on medical history walks, tours of the Wellcome Collection and other healthcare locations plus provides music and art tours for the Foundling Museum and the London Handel Festival. Janice has travelled extensively, including an eight-month journey around India, South East Asia and Australia, and has led highly successful RSM tours to Vietnam and Cambodia, Sri Lanka, Cuba, South Africa, China and Japan.



Visit the Taj Mahal at dawn



Itinerary 16 – 30 March 2025

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

2 nights Delhi – 3 nights Jaipur – 1 night Agra – 3 nights Lucknow – 2 nights Varanasi – 3 nights Kolkata



Day 1: Delhi (Sun, 16 March) **D**

Pm: Orientation tour of New Delhi to see the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the India Gate and Parliament.

Day 2: Delhi (Mon, 17 March) **B L D**

Am: Visit the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), India's most important hospital.

Pm: Sightseeing tour of Old Delhi, once the capital of Mughal India, containing medieval treasures. Walk through the narrow lanes of the Chandi Chowk, visit the spice market and Jeweller's Lane.

Eve: Welcome dinner.

Day 3: Delhi / Jaipur (Tues, 18 March) **B D**

Am: Take the train from Delhi to the 'Pink City' of Jaipur, home to stunning hilltop forts and glorious palaces amidst the dusky pink buildings of the old town.

Pm: Check in to the hotel and at leisure. Option to visit Jaipur's textile and jewelry bazaars.

Day 4: Jaipur (Wed, 19 March) **B D**

Am: Explore the ancient citadel of Amber Fort, which combines both Hindu and Muslim elements within its ornate style, and the City Palace Museum.

Pm: Return to the hotel via the Hawa Mahal (Palace of the Winds), where the ladies of the harem resided, and Jantar Mantar, an observatory dating back to 1693.

Eve: Dinner at Dera Amer Elephant Camp.

Day 5: Jaipur (Thurs, 20 March) **B D**

Am: Visit the Jaipur Foot factory and rehabilitation unit, which now operates all over the world providing free and low-cost prosthetics limbs to the poor.

Pm: Visit the Chakrapati Ayurvedic Centre and learn about traditional approaches to pain relief. Options for massage. At leisure.

Day 6: Jaipur / Agra (Fri, 21 March) **B D**

Am: Drive to the bird sanctuary of Bharatpur. Continue to the city of Fatehpur Sikri, built in 1571 and abandoned less than twenty years later. The beautiful red sandstone city remains perfectly preserved.

Pm: Drive to Agra and check in to the hotel.

Day 7: Agra / Lucknow (Sat, 22 March) **B D**

Am: Rise early to visit India's most famous monument, the Taj Mahal, created by Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan for his beloved 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.

Pm: Drive to Lucknow and at leisure.

Day 8: Lucknow (Sun, 23 March) **B D**

Am: Explore Lucknow, renowned for its culture, elegance and rich cuisine. Start with the Lucknow Residency and the colossal tomb of Bara Imambara.

Pm: Drive by tongas (horse drawn carriages) to Hussainbad Complex.

Eve: Chai with the Nawab (Viceroy) of Awadh at Lucknow, who will share his historical knowledge, aristocratic family traditions and his views on modern Lucknow.

Day 9: Lucknow (Mon, 24 March)

B D

Am: Optional textile tour of Lucknow.

Pm: At leisure.

Eve: Awadhi Cuisine culinary tour.

Day 10: Lucknow / Varanasi

B D

(Tues, 25 March)

Am: Take a modern train with AC to Varanasi.

Pm: Arrive in Varanasi, one of the holiest places in India, where Hindus come to purify themselves in the holy water of the River Ganges and to be cremated at the end of their lives. Transfer to the hotel.

Eve: Take rickshaws to visit the ghats, the long string of bathing steps leading down to the Ganges, where Hindus pray and chant by oil lamp in the evening.

Day 11: Varanasi (Wed, 26 March)

B D

Am: Rise at dawn to embark on a Ganges cruise to watch pilgrims offering puja. Walk back through the old town of Benares to the hotel for breakfast. See the Golden Temple and visit the Bharat Mata Mandir.

Pm: Visit Sarnath, where Buddha taught his first sermon after attaining enlightenment circa 528 BCE. Explore the archaeological site, pilgrimage sites and the excellent museum.

Day 12: Varanasi / Kolkata

B D

(Thurs, 27 March)

Am: Visit the Pain and Palliative Care Unit at Benares Hindu University to learn about spiritual care. Visit their Ayurveda healing centre.

Pm: At leisure.

Eve: Fly to Kolkata and transfer to the hotel.

Day 13: Kolkata (Fri, 28 March)

B D

Am: Drive to Thakurpukur to visit the Saroj Gupta Cancer Centre and Research Institute and learn about their work.

Pm: At leisure in Kolkata.

Day 14: Kolkata (Sat, 29 March)

B D

Am: Optional early morning visit to the flower market. Kolkata was the centre of the Raj until 1911 and has long been a hub of Bengali culture, with a legacy of magnificent temples, buildings and parks. Take a sightseeing walk, visiting the Writer's Building, the Victoria Memorial and the Maidan.

Pm Visit the Anglican Cathedral, Park Street Cemetery and Mother Theresa Museum.

Eve: Farewell dinner.

Day 15: Kolkata (Sun, 30 March)

B

Am: Depart hotel after breakfast.

NB: All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.

Kolkata flower market





Saraca Lucknow

Hotels

Jaypee Siddharth (Delhi)

This contemporary and elegant hotel provides guests with 5-star service, excellent restaurants plus a lovely bar, a spa and wellness centre and steam bath facilities. It also provides an outdoor pool and fitness centre.

Trident Jaipur

Overlooking picturesque Mansagar Lake with the beautiful Aravallis in the distance, the Trident Jaipur is a lovely hotel with outstanding customer service. The location is second to none and the excellent facilities include airy, light-filled rooms, a selection of wellness and recreation facilities, landscaped grounds and a spacious outdoor pool.

Courtyard by Marriott (Agra)

An excellent 5-star hotel in a quiet location, Courtyard by Marriot has spacious, very comfortable rooms and efficient, friendly staff. Amenities include a health centre, swimming pool and spa.

Saraca Lucknow (Lucknow)

This is an outstanding hotel in a renovated heritage bungalow that brings Art Deco elegance to life. Soaring ceilings and light-filled rooms provide a luxurious and stylish experience within beautiful grounds that include a lovely pool. There are several excellent dining and drinking options, as well as a fitness centre.

Taj Ganges (Varanasi)

A luxury 5-star hotel in a central location, surrounded by expansive lush green lawns and mango orchards. Very comfortable rooms with elegant contemporary décor and facilities including a selection of excellent restaurants and bars, a beautiful outdoor pool, a luxury spa and fitness centre.

Oberoi Grand (Kolkata)

Fondly known as the Grand Dame of Kolkata, the luxury Oberoi Grand is centrally located, near bustling markets and cultural landmarks. Dating back to the late 1880s, The Oberoi Grand was frequented by the country's leading figures during colonial times and even today hosts grand functions for Heads of State in the city's largest pillarless Grand Ballroom.



A bayview window at Saraca Lucknow (top); Trident Jaipur pool at night; The lobby of the Taj Ganges, Varanasi; The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata (above)

The cost of the tour sharing a double or twin room is USD \$4,704

The cost of the tour with a room to yourself is USD \$6,090

The cost includes:

- Tour leader (Janice Liverseidge)
- Full time national guide throughout the tour
- Breakfast and dinner daily
- Filtered water daily (we do not use plastic bottles)
- 14 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms in first-class, medium grade and palace hotels.
- A full programme of cultural visits
- A full programme of professional visits as per the itinerary
- All transport in modern air-conditioned coach
- Two rail journeys (luggage taken by luggage truck) in AC carriages
- One internal flight (20 kilos of luggage allowance, can be topped up)
- All admission fees
- All tips

The cost excludes:

- International flights and airport transfers (except on extension)
- Indian visa and travel insurance
- All personal extras such as portorage, laundry, inoculation fees and drinks
- All optional excursions, tours and visits



A worker at Jaipur Foot

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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The Palace of the Winds, Jaipur (top); Bara Imambara, Lucknow; A woman on a boat in Varanasi; Women inside Amber Fort, Jaipur (above)



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