

Rajasthan– a Tactile Textile Tour

30 October– 18 November, 2010

Lead by Fiona Wright Parveen Nayak.

This is the tour our company started with, an adventure through the dramatic desert state of Rajasthan and beyond.

We now include a visit to a wonderful old fort in Gurgurat where our host's family were the rulers of the area for the past eight generations. Here we are looked after with their warm hospitality, wonderful kitchen and have a chance to peak at their breathtaking textile collection and time to incorporate some of our finds into some small felted and stitched 'postcards' through a workshop with Fiona Wright. We squeeze in a visit to the Calico Museum in Ahmedabad before spending a few days relaxing in Udaipur.

As always our tour has the opportunity for lots of hands-on activities- chundri [tie and dye], indigo dyeing with mud resist, block printing. A sunset camel [or camel cart] safari for dinner in the desert and gypsy dancing, mighty forts and palaces, serene temples, bustling market places the list of new experiences seems endless. As they say- "In India, madam/sir anything is possible!"

Creative Arts Safaris tours are – art and culture based with a hands-on, get out and about type attitude.

- all inclusive utilising good quality mid-range up to flash accommodation and excellent dining experiences – *we look for atmospheric places to stay [off the beaten tourists trails where possible] always good, clean bathrooms, friendly service and comfortable rooms.*

- groups of 8-14 participants
These trips are not traditional package tours, rather it is hoped we can travel as a group of friends; Creative Arts Safaris have done the research, our tutor handles the artistic side and a host makes sure it runs smoothly; we all share our observations and knowledge along the way. [any info you pick up in preparation is easy to share with the group via the internet and helps you 'meet' the others too]

Day 1-Sat 30 Oct, 2010 Home/New Delhi
Arrivals and airport pickups at New Delhi Airport.

Day 2-Sun 31 Oct, 2010 Delhi
Sightseeing Delhi and gently easing our way into India. Lakshmi Narayan Temple- you always visit the Gods before a new undertaking and this temple, built by the Industrialist Birla in the 1930's has a lovely feel. To the left of the main temple is a small description of the significance of the sacred swastika to Hindus which is good to grasp at the

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outset as you see it everywhere and it can be a shock for Westerners (and the true depth of perversion of the Nazi's use of it can be understood).

Raj Ghat- to pay our respects at the cremation site of Gandhi, the beloved hero of India. [Knowing the nation's greatest hero is a man of vision and peace and their most recognised building is a monument to love tells you a lot about this place]

Akshardham- [www.akshardham.com] a brand new temple complex [opened Nov, 2005]- a superb example of stone and marble carving- I am sure a new wonder of the world in its workmanship. 300,000,000 man hours went into the carving and construction in the last 5 years- breathtaking! Great lunches here as well.

Craft Museum- has an absolutely wonderful display of textiles and many other craft items in a traditional style building. As the displays tend to be a bit dark, but are displayed in such a way that you can almost put your nose on them I would suggest magnifying glass (some of the handwork is so fine you can hardly see the stitches!).
[inc- breakfast, dinner]

Day 3 -Mon 1 Nov, 2010 Delhi/ Jaipur, Rajasthan
Early start for Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan. In the afternoon we will visit the beautiful Amber Fort .
[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 4– Tues 2 Nov, 2010 Jaipur
We visit Sanganer village, a textile printing village for a mud resist and indigo dyeing workshop and later the Anokhi Textile Museum. Hopefully we can fit in a visit to Mojari Shoes Emporium- this shop sells the traditional shoes for a UN supported project to help 3,500 rural leather-workers [traditionally some of the poorest members of society]. Seriously fantastic shoes!
[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 5– Wed 3 Nov, 2010 Jaipur/ Pushkar
Pushkar today via the Barefoot College at Tilonia. Barefoot College was started to bring education to rural workers, they support education and health services in the area and create wonderful textiles in their Fair Trade ventures with local people.

If you would like we can also visit the Shakti Project www.shakti-streetkids-pushkar.org; a project we help as we can that helps with education and food for the street kids of Pushkar. [if you fancy filling some of the empty space you will have in your bag on the way to India with second hand kids clothes, stationary items etc- they are a big help to the project].

Dinner will be after a trip to the desert via camel [or camel cart- you choose] for sunset, it will be traditional Rajasthani dal- butti– chorma accompanied by a Gypsy Dance performance.
[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 6—Thurs 4 Nov, 2010 Pushkar
A day around town, perhaps an early morning walk around the Holy Lake, time to wander the market and an afternoon adventure via local bus into Ajmer.

In Ajmer the Dargarh or shrine of the Sufi Saint Christi, a teacher from the 13 century is the first port of call. He interpreted religion in terms of human service and exhorted his disciples "to develop river-like generosity, sun-like affection and earth-like hospitality." The highest form of devotion, according to him, was "to redress the misery of those in distress – to fulfil the needs of the helpless and to feed the hungry."

After that a wander with the locals through the Bazaar and snacks at a popular dhabas, our driver will pick us up to return over the mountain to Pushkar and free time this afternoon [inc Breakfast, snacking]

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Day 7– Fri 5 Nov, 2010

Pushkar

Today we will use some of the treasures we have found along the way and learn a new skill of felt making with Fiona Wright [www.fionawright.com] to create some small 'postcards'; something to hand stitch and remind us of our journey

This evening we will have a cooking class after a visit the local market for supplies, learn a few classic recipes to treat your friends back home then we will share what we make for dinner. Later this evening we will celebrate Diwali on the roof top with fireworks—like a Hindu version of Christmas with added fireworks and sweets— it is a fabulous time of year.

[inc-breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 8– Sat 6 Nov, 2010

Pushkar/ Jodhpur Travel

ing through many a camel packed village we head to Jodhpur and a visit to the mighty Merherangarh Fort . This Palace and Fort is truly the fabric of fairy tales- the might, courage and culture of the proud Rajasthani people shines out from this Fort. Perhaps a chance to visit a second-hand sari market later in the day. We stay at a simple family run guest house this evening, we love it for Mrs Dhilion's delicious dinners.

[inc- breakfast, dinner]

Day 9– Sun 7 Nov, 2010

Jodhpur/ Ranakpur Visit

ing the Dhurrie Rug Weavers of the Bishnoi people along the way to Ranakpur. The family of weavers have impressed earlier tours with their vivid colour range and the quality of their workmanship.

Ranakpur- a visit to the exquisite Jain temples, then wander up the road or just relax in this peaceful place and catch your breath. [inc-breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 10– Mon 8 Nov, 2010

Ranakpur /Poshina, Gurgurat We

Notes

Weather – At this time of year is warm in the daytime but evenings and mornings can be cool; a cardigan and socks appreciated

Clothing – light weight layers of clothing is good. To respect local customs it is best for skirts or trousers to be mid-calf length at least, tops not too revealing. Light, loose layers work well with the climate. Generally I find 3 or 4 outfits sufficient, there is always the opportunity to pick up things along the way. Pack a pair of socks and cardigan for the cool of the morning.

Shoes – sensible walking shoes such as sneakers or strapped on sandals are the best options. Surfaces are often rough and you really want your footing stable so you can focus on all the wonderful things everywhere to look at! Pair of rubber thongs or flip-flops are good – often bathrooms are marble and can be slippery when wet.

Money – ATMs are everywhere so you can use a travel card, visa debit or credit advance easily. If you plan to use a card overseas DO warn your bank to expect overseas activity – some will freeze the card wondering what is happening.

Money changes can be found to change travellers cheques or currency.

Camera – we have a laptop so can download your pictures onto a memory stick [don't forget your connection leads].

Power – 240 volts, European adaptor plugs are the most useful.

Begging? – is generally not to be encouraged. Giving gifts of pens and lollies to children is encouraging them to learn a begging mentality [if you like to give a gift to children we can hand it onto a school]. There is no pension in India – a few rupees to a very old person or a handicapped person is very kind.

Tipping? – we cover tips for the group – e.g. bags into and out of hotel, dinner etc. If you receive a personal service – e.g. cup of tea through room service, laundry delivery, it is customary to give a 10 Rp tip. If you enjoy the commentary of a guide, a performance, take a photo of some one posing in the street etc it is customary to give them a 20-50 Rp tip. Set something aside for our driver – he will take us safely and comfortably through the adventure of many Indian roads.

Step lightly on our environment, be frugal in water use, turn off power switches, take rubbish with you where possible.

Say NO to Plastic! Please bring a cloth carry bag.

will be staying in the home of the hereditary rulers of the area. Our host and his wife always offer us a warm welcome and the most fantastic home cooked meals in their lovely old Fort. Ask to see their collection of Indian textiles or visit the kitchen when dinner is cooking for some clues on their delicious recipes [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 11– Tues 9 Nov, 2010

Poshina

Another day in the Zenana [women's quarters of this old fort] Time to work on the projects we started in Pushkar and perhaps a travel journal– we have lots of ideas to share.

Day 12– Wed 10 Nov, 2010

Poshina/Patan/

Ahmedabad

In Paton we will visit the sole remaining family upholding the ancient tradition of the double ikat-dyed Patiala silk saris. [both the warp and weft are tie and dyed before weaving to produce these exquisite pieces]

Ahmedabad is busy, busy, busy. Our Heritage Hotel is like an oasis in this bustling place; from it in the late afternoon we can venture forth to a bookshop that

Creative Arts Safaris tours include:

- pickups from the airport for arrivals on Day 1
- departures last day of tour

[we are happy to organise pick-ups if you arrive earlier or depart later at an extra fee, we are also happy to help with accommodation etc if you wish to stay longer]

- accommodation from the evening of Day 1 up to and including the night of our Farewell Dinner

Our accommodation is generally mid-range. We use heritage hotels where we can. All places are clean, friendly and have western bathrooms! It is ambiance and friendliness we are looking for. This is the range where we may meet locals as well – top end is far removed from this and just full of foreigners!

- all transportation, road taxes and fuel costs for the tour
- all breakfasts and most other meals
- *Food is a reflection of the culture and we are pleased to say we will sample a range of good dining experiences.*
- sightseeing entrance fees [which covers the use of a still camera]
- all tuition fees
- all tips for meals, bags etc are included See *tipping in the notes section for tipping for personal requests or other tipping instances.*

You need to cover:

- some lunches
- bottled drinking water
- laundry
- the one expense that we can't guesstimate' for you is shopping! *[this is not a shopping expedition but you will see some amazing things and you will probably want to indulge!]*
- **airfares**
- **travel insurance**
- **visa** [where necessary]

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organisations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category [more info in the notes to follow] Don't worry there are also lots of other markets and bazaars we can visit too!

In India we look after our drivers and support staff and only use hotels where our drivers also receive good quality accommodation [some hotels look after their guests and treat their driver miserably]. We have decided to use heritage hotels where we can. They are wonderful, atmospheric places and we believe it helps to keep them maintained rather than leave them deteriorating...

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that specializes in the art, textiles and culture of India [best bookshop I have come across!] and onto the Sparkle Market for the ultimate in sparkling, beaded and embellished textiles. Get ready to barter hard here at Sparkle Central [inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 13– Thurs 11 Nov, 2010 Ahmedabad /Udaipur

A visit to the world renown Calico Museum to view their collection, then we head to Udaipur, finally a place to call home for a few days- catch our breath and check out what this wonderful city has to offer. Udaipur- an artistic, peaceful haven of a town wrapped around the magnificent lakes- Picola and Fateh Sagar. We will be staying in a quiet place in the middle of things overlooking one of the lakes and taking a few days here to feel like kings and queens in this land of kings- Rajasthan.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 14– Fri 12 Nov, 2010 Udaipur

City Palace is our first port of call, this magnificent complex stretches for ever along the shore of Lake Picola. On the highest point is the oldest part which we will visit, then comes a part turned into a heritage hotel then the section where the current Maharana lives.[not a typo -he is a Maharana which is a higher rank than a Maharaja and although since Independence has no legal status, he still takes a great interest in his former principality and is much beloved by it's people]

Visit Sahdna women's co-operative- superb stitch work. Fancy a visit to the best street for sparkles and haberdashery I have found so far in India? Turban market around the corner. Afternoon and evening at your leisure.

[inc- breakfast]

Day 15– Sat 13 Nov, 2010 Udaipur

We join Yaqob-ji, a well respected block printer and master of tie and dye for a workshop in chundri [tie and dye].

Free time to explore the market later in the afternoon and then meet up for a visit to Monsoon Palace for sunset- a bit of whimsy built by an earlier Maharana perched high above the city.

For dinner we will go to a restaurant in the garden rooms of one of the Maharana's former palaces for a Thali dinner served with an air of the old Raj.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 16– Sun 14 Nov, 2010 Udaipur/ Jaipur

Back to Jaipur -

Dinner at Choki Dhani– a traditional Rajasthani Thali dinner and festival ground– lots of fun.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 17– Mon 15 Nov, 2010 Jaipur/ Agra, Uttar Pradesh

An early start to visit Fatehpur Sikri, Akbar's atmospheric abandoned city and then onto Agra for the night. We will have a chance to visit a Zardozi Museum [gold work embroidery] in the afternoon.

Across the road from our hotel is a modern Indian shopping mall and supermarket...most interesting for poking around in, evening meal is at your leisure.

[inc- breakfast, lunch,]

Day 18– Tues 16 Nov,2010 Agra/ New Delhi

Early morning visit to the Taj Mahal, watch as the colours change and the dome starts to glow as the

sun lights it up and the colourful crowds of people starting to arrive, then off to Delhi.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 19– Wed 17 Nov, 2010 New Delhi

Last day of sightseeing, we will head to an enclave known for its antique shops, interesting bric-a-brac and a great antique textile shop– where you can drool over and handle pieces similar to some we have seen in Museums or visit Dilli Hart market– something to discuss and see what suits the group!

Khan Market for looking at contemporary textiles [yes I mean shopping in this up-market shopping area].

Check out Fab India and Anokhi shop for some great stuff and look at all the other interesting boutiques.

Yummy cosmopolitan restaurants as well.

The Crafts Council's shop- Kamala rounds out our day before our Farewell Dinner

[inc- breakfast, dinner]

Day 20– Thurs 18 Nov, 2020 New Delhi/ home

Departures from Delhi Airport.

We will drop you to the airport.

[breakfast]

Fair Trade

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organizations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category.

By Fair Trade we mean those places where the products are produced with the workers being paid a 'liveable' wage.

Many of these projects also support healthcare and education for the families of their workers.

The Indian Government actively supports the founding of Craft Peoples' Co-operatives, with education and marketing support, tax breaks and help with visa card access. The combined bargaining power of a Co-operatives means better prices for the workers, a combined buying power for better priced materials and being able to be better able to collectively meet the demands of the marketplace.

A Co-operative takes the power of determination into the people's own hands rather than terms being dictated to them if they work at piece work. When working at piecework materials are delivered to them, work must be completed by a certain date and the payment is determined by the middleman.

Co-operatives lead to people empowerment and a better standard of living for the craftspeople whilst continuing ancient traditional skills.

Be the change you want to see in the world
Gandhi

Do and in doing...
Become.
Sartre

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