

# Rajasthan- a Tactile Textile Tour

21 oct—7 Nov, 2017

## Lead by Fiona Wright

### Praveen Nayak.

This is the tour our company started with, an adventure through the dramatic desert state of Rajasthan and newly updated for 2017. As always our tour has the opportunity for lots of hands-on activities— a goldwork embroidery workshop, chundri [tie and dye], indigo dyeing with mud resist block print, ideas for a travel journal, a day in our own workshop— block printing your own scarf, and a cooking class so you can later share some of the wonderful flavours of India with your friend's back home.

We include a visit to a wonderful old fort in Shekawati where our host's family have been the rulers of the area for the past many generations, stay in a painted Haveli, visit weavers and felt makers, find time to relax in a Palace home and enjoy the garden....

A sunset camel [or camel cart] safari before dinner 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 21 Oct, 2017**

Home/New Delhi

Arrivals and airport pickups at Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi

**Day 2-Sun 22 Oct, 2017**

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 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] A spin around the laneways of **Old Delhi** by rickshaw, perhaps pick up a few bits in the haberdashery market and then lunch in a new... well old, made new gem hidden deep in the labyrinth of the Old City. An Old Haveli [businessman's palace] has opened its doors to guests and is a delight.

**Craft Museum-** a 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 a magnifying glass (some of the handwork is so fine you can hardly see the stitches!). [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 3 -Mon 23 Oct, 2017**

Delhi/ Mehansar, Raj

Early start for the Old Castle at Mehansar, founded in 1768 it is like stepping into the past where you are the very welcome guest to this sleepy little village. There is the Gold shop, an old ballroom and the castle itself to explore and perhaps a tippie of the family recipe Royal Heritage Liquor. A recipe handed down through the family for generations has been recently recreated as one of six heritage liquors of Rajasthan. Based on ancient recipes using herbs, ghee and local grains made using modern care for purity.... You could almost look at it a health elixir!

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 4 -Tues 24 Oct, 2017**

Mehansar/ Fatehpur

Travelling across the edge of the desert we are heading to a sleepy little village home to a women's cooperative specialising in fine Bandhani [tie and dye] work.

A day working with the women, learning about their art, making pices to take home, and being feasted on home cooked Rajasthani food.

In the evening we will be sleeping amongst the murals of a beautiful painted Haveli.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 5 -Wed 25 Oct, 2017**

Fatehpur/ Bikaner

We are in the heart of the Shekawati region of Rajasthan, long famed for its beautiful painted Haveli. A Haveli is a rich man's palace, built with double walls and an internal courtyard it was all about trying to stay cool and private in a very hot environment. One way of showing status was to paint them very intricately, today many are neglected but some jewels still exist, we'll explore this morning before heading further west, to a weaver's village and an evening in Bikaner.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Cost – US \$4230 -twin share**

Single US \$1010

Deposit US \$1700 to book today

Booking Deadline 21 July, 2017

Full payment due 21 July, 2017

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or phone +91 998 203 2755

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**Day 6 -Thurs 26 Oct, 2017**

Bikaner/Jodhpur

First stop this morning will be the Karni Mata temple at Deshnok- informally referred to as the Rat Temple, it can be a challenge for foreign visitors to contemplate rats, rats and rats everywhere and yet to enter and experience the pleasure and reverence of pilgrims opens one's eyes to a new perception of the place.

Along the road, we will stop into Nila Moti, an inviting women's work programme, the quality of the work is exceptional.

Onto Jodhpur and a stroll up to the Clocktower markets, past the scissor makers, sweet stalls along an old, old street with the might fort looming above us.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 7 -Fri 27 Oct, 2017**

Jodhpur/ Pushkar

Meherangarh, the mighty Fort of Jodhpur is our awe-inspiring start to the day. This fort is all you have ever dreamed of as a castle on the mountain top from fairy tales.

Then off to Pushkar, our home and a quieter pace for a few days.

We will welcome you to our workshop and introduce you around, then take a camel [or camel cart] to our place for dinner and gypsy dancers performance. Dinner is a cooking class, and we will supply recipes for you to take home and recreate some of the flavours of India later.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 8 -Sat 28 Oct, 2017**

Pushkar

Workshop day... your wooden blocks will be ready [ notes about design and instructions sent out when you book in, you

**Notes**

**Weather** – At this time of year is warm in the daytime but perhaps 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.

**Tippling?** – it is the local custom so have a pocket full of small change to be ready If you receive a personal service – e.g. bags into or out of hotel, cup of tea through room service, laundry delivery, it is customary to give a tip [10-50 rp]. 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.

send us your design and we will have them carved, oiled and waiting for you to use]

Blockprint workshop this morning, then time to explore, feel free to poke around.

Today is Stitching Ladies day, so you will meet some of our gang. We encourage our women to come and check out our foreign guests, we are sure you would like to also meet them, so it is a mutual meet each other situation! Praveen or someone can help translate so both sides can say 'hello' and chat a little.

You might like to raid the sari scrap and we can show you how to make twisted yarns, or the khadi cotton scrap for a little stitched piece.... Time and space to explore.

Pushkar itself is also a lovely little bazaar to wander, your hotel is just on the edge of the market place so later in the afternoon is free for you to do so.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 9 -Sun 29 Oct, 2017**

Pushkar/Udaipur

Early start, off to Udaipur, sometimes called the Venice of the East.... No canals but lovely lakes, our hotel perched on the top of the hill has great views. We'll pile into tuk-tuks and visit the Old Town, get you orientated and have a free afternoon to explore.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**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 the 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 many 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

**You need to cover:**

- some meals
- all drinks
- laundry
- the one expense that we can't guestimate' 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** [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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**Day 10 -Mon 30 Oct, 2017** Udaipur  
City Palace, this morning, early before it is too busy, then a wander down through the market to Sadhna Women's Co-operative, further along to look for turbans if you are interested, then free time until we meet in the late afternoon, to visit an art gallery on our way to drinks on the Lawn and a traditional thali dinner at the Maharana's Garden Restaurant.  
[inc- breakfast, dinner]

**Day 11 -Tues 31 Oct, 2017** Udaipur/Bundi  
Chittorgarh, a fort dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century is our halfway place today. The biggest fort of India, sitting on top of a 180m plateau it has been at the centre of many epic wars and sieges. It is a symbol of all that was brave, true and noble in the glorious Rajput warrior tradition.

Bundi in the afternoon, a pleasant stroll through the bazaar and if you are inclined and part mountain goat, we can take a stroll... alright climb... up to the crumbling Taragarh fort. The women's quarters are a faded glory but hold a charming painted room- these are on the first level up the hill.... Up past that is monkey mountain to the fort at the top for the truly adventurous.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 12 -Wed 1 Nov, 2017** Bundi/Jaipur  
Driving across country we will visit a specular stepwell built in late 1600's to honour Hadhi Rani who gruesomely sacrificed her life to encourage her husband to go war.... Rajput women's honour was legendarily ferocious, many stories to share....

Tonk village and a visit to the felt makers- they use local Rajasthan wool, as tough as steel wool, it amazes me they can felt it.... So, we will look around, perhaps try our hand but I doubt many of us are strong enough to get it to felt.

Jaipur and our palace for the next few nights

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 13 -Thurs 2 Nov, 2017** Jaipur  
Mud resist printing and indigo dyeing today- bring your apron along. If you had some of your own fabric you have folded and clamped or knotted or stitched to make resists, you should bring it along also to pop into the indigo vat. Excellent fun with indigo today.

In the afternoon, a visit to a papermill that uses cotton waste to create beautiful paper and journals.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 14 -Fri 3 Nov, 2017** Jaipur  
Anokhi Blockprint Museum this morning, and a look around Amber Old Town, then an unstructured day- you might want to relax at our hotel... or we have the bus and can poke around at places like a vintage textile merchants and other treats found in Jaipur.

[inc- breakfast]

**Day 15- Sat 4 Nov, 2017** Jaipur/Agra  
Off early to Agra, lunch at the Sheroes café and a Goldwork embroidery workshop in the afternoon, followed by a visit to a Goldwork museum and jewellery display

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 16- Sun 5 Nov, 2017** Agra /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 start to arrive  
Then off to Delhi....

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

**Day 17- Mon 6 Nov, 2017** Delhi  
Last day we will start at the serene Lodhi Gardens for a stroll, then out and about to the chaos of Delhi. A friend has invited us to lunch, to experience her some of her heritage with a Lucknow style biriyani meal and a chance to view beautiful chikankari embroidery produced by the women's group she has worked with for the last 30 years. Exquisite embroidery I have only seen in museums before we met.

In the afternoon we will drop into upmarket Khan Market for a little last minute research into top end textiles and garments

.... OK- retail therapy and then our Farewell Dinner.  
[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 18- Tues 7 Nov, 2017**

Delhi/home

Flying out of Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi  
We'll drop you to the airport.

[inc- breakfast]

### **A little preparation will really add to your experience, here are a few suggestions- see what your local library has to offer....**

Movies-Have a look at a Bollywood movie or two- lots of hype and glam but you will also get some idea of the intricacy of family relationships

- Gandhi- his presence is still very much an influence to life here
- The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel...charming, almost India certainly quite true in the way things happen

A good read

**Michael Woods- A History of India. Excellent book or DVD very approachable and concise history of India- Great introduction to this ancient and continuous culture.**

William Dalrymple- a British writer who lives in India, anything he writes is worth a read.

-*City of the Djinn*s- a year in Delhi- great insight into the history of Delhi.-*White Mughals- The Age of Kali*

Madhyr Jaffrey- *Climbing the Mango Tree*- autobiography of a well known food writer, excellent read and great recipes

And much more to discover....

My latest finds have been by Indu Sundaresan "*The Taj Trilogy*" great background history in the form of novels for the times around the creation of the Taj Mahal. Good read.

### **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. Some 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 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 piece-work 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.

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Be the change you want to see in the world  
Gandhi

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Do and in doing...

Become.

Sartre

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