

Orient Odyssey – *Journeys beyond the ordinary™*

# 17 Day Grand India Panorama

Explore India's most compelling sights and monuments and the game viewing at the Tiger Reserve  
With an possible optional extension to Nepal

Then there is the inexpressible Taj Mahal – *"the gem of man's handiwork"* Lord Curzon called it,  
*".....without flaw or blemish, impossible to criticize, in capable of improvement,  
the most perfect structure in the world."*

## Special Highlights- We cut no corners!

A stirring, misty, early-morning look into the soul of India from a boat on the sacred Ganges River  
An excursion for tiger sighting and game viewing at incomparable Ranthambore Tiger Reserve  
A stroll in the exquisite 10<sup>th</sup>-century Chandela Temples famous for the erotic carvings  
An unforgettable boat journey to the majestic Lake Palace in Udaipur  
Unique **"People to People Contacts®"** feature throughout the journey  
Interact with locals to obtain true insights of Indian life, random stops at villages and markets  
Featuring multiple famous and less known UNESCO World Heritage and Culture Sites throughout  
Exquisitely decorated palaces, forts, ancient carvings, grand monuments, and magnificent ruins  
Elephant ride to an ancient fort, rickshaw ride to a village, and even a short, thrilling downhill jeep ride



- **Mumbai** – Ferry cross the bay to explore carvings at the Elephanta Island, visit Prince of Wales Museum and more...
- **Udaipur** – Ferry cross the bay to explore carvings at the Elephanta Island, visit Prince of Wales Museum and more...
- **Jaipur** – Palace of the wind, The fabled Amber Forte, Elephant Ride, City Palace Museum, Jantar Mantar, and night bazaar
- **Ranthambore Tiger Reserve** – Game Drives, Jungle Safaris for possible Tiger Sightings!
- **Agra** – Timeless ruins of Fatehpur Sikri, the magnificent Taj Mahal, Imdad ud Daula and the Agra Fort
- **Khajuraho** – The vivid details of the beautiful erotic carvings, and rickshaw rides to the nearby villages
- **Varanasi** – Sunrise cruise on the holiest Ganges River, walk the narrow alleys of this 4000 year old city, and more...
- **Delhi** – Explore both Old and New Delhi, world's largest mosque, India Gate – the national monument, and a lot more...

## Enjoy our signature True All Inclusive® value

There are no last minute surprises, and hidden costs.....

This program is all inclusive - all listed guided sightseeing, admission and culture shows are included

### Tour Cost Includes:

1. Guided comprehensive sightseeing, admission and culture shows as per specified
2. Deluxe and superior accommodations - luxurious 5 star, or local best 4 star hotel room and surcharges
3. Carefully selected experienced, professional government certified English speaking guide in each city
4. Daily buffet breakfast at the hotel, some meals as per specified
5. India domestic transportation via air, bus, train and boat as per specified
6. Round trip transfers and luggage handling

### Tour Cost Does Not Include:

1. International airfare between USA & India
2. Tipping, Travel Insurance, India and Nepal single entry visa fee and handling
3. Any misc. charge with personal natures that are not mentioned in the itinerary

Call **Orient Odyssey** **1-800-637-5778**

1385 Gulf Road, Suite 203, Point Roberts, WA 98281, E-mail: [info@orientodyssey.com](mailto:info@orientodyssey.com) Web: [www.orientodyssey.com](http://www.orientodyssey.com)

# Orient Odyssey – Journeys beyond the ordinary™

**Tour Name:** Grand India Panorama (with Optional Nepal Extension)  
**Tour Code:** INP – 2014 / 2015

## Unsurpassed Flexibility.....

- Join the following suggested departures or choose your own date – prices are the same!

## Personalize Your Journey.....

- Add another town, change tour length, stage a stopover at another countries on route, or include a meal package with local flavors.....we work with travelers to customize each and every departures!

## Premium Quality and Optimum Personal Attentions.....

- All **Orient Odyssey** journeys feature optimum personal attentions with an English speaking guide, a driver and a vehicle serving you (yes, you only!) exclusively throughout the trip. No more wasting time or waiting around for others!

## Travel with Friends and Family Together and Save BIG.....

- Additional generous discounts are available for as little as 4 passengers traveling together.....

## SUGGESTED GUARANTEED DEPARTURES

Or choose your own departure date – you can depart on any date throughout the year!

| Tour Code | Arrival Date<br>Day 2 - Arrive Mumbai | Exit Date<br>Day 17 - Exit Delhi | Land Cost<br>(not include int'l air)<br>Day 2-17 Mumbai-Delhi | Single Supplement |
|-----------|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|-------------------|
| 0113INP   | Jan 14, 2014                          | Feb 29, 2014                     | \$3770  | 1155              |
| 0210INP   | Feb 11, 2014                          | Feb 26, 2014                     | \$3770  | 1155              |
| 0310INP   | Mar 11, 2014                          | May 26, 2014                     | \$3770  | 1155              |
| 0324INP   | Mar 25, 2014                          | Apr 9, 2014                      | \$3770  | 1155              |
| 0421INP   | Apr 22, 2014                          | May 7, 2014                      | \$3660  | 855               |
| 0512INP   | May 13, 2014                          | May 28, 2014                     | \$3660  | 855               |
| 0602INP   | Jun 3, 2014                           | Jun 18, 2014                     | \$3660  | 855               |
| 0915INP   | Sep 16, 2014                          | Oct 1, 2014                      | \$3660  | 855               |
| 1006INP   | Oct 7, 2014                           | Oct 22, 2014                     | \$4055  | 1220              |
| 1103INP   | Nov 4, 2014                           | Nov 19, 2014                     | \$4055  | 1220              |
| 1222INP   | Dec 23, 2014                          | Jan 7, 2015                      | \$4055  | 1220              |
| 0112INP   | Jan 13, 2015                          | Jan 28, 2015                     | \$4220  | 1330              |
| 0209INP   | Feb 10, 2015                          | Feb 25, 2015                     | \$4220  | 1330              |
| 0309INP   | Mar 10, 2015                          | Mar 25, 2015                     | \$4220  | 1330              |
| 0406INP   | Apr 7, 2015                           | Apr 22, 2015                     | \$4220  | 1330              |

### Important Remarks:

- India domestic air ticket tax of \$182 per person is extra.
- Sample special low season fares for your round trip international flight **USA – Mumbai**, open jaw, **Delhi – USA** are as follows:  
 From Los Angeles: \$674 + tax / fuel surcharge \$393 = total about \$ 1067 per person  
 From San Francisco: \$840 + tax / fuel surcharge \$393 = total about \$ 1233 per person  
 From New York: \$681 + tax / fuel surcharge \$393 = total about \$ 1074 per person  
 Fares are subject to availability and seasonality. Prices may change without notice. Lower rates might be available due to local sales.
- Prices quoted are in US currency, based on per person double occupancy. Payment can be made by check, money order, or credit cards – we accept Visa, Master, and Discover card.

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# 17 Day Grand India Panorama

Tour Code: INP – 2014 / 2015

Operated by Orient Odyssey



B-Breakfast, L-Lunch, D-Dinner, F-In flight snacks & meals,  
SL / SD-Special local flavor meal or banquet

## Day 01 USA – Mumbai

Depart from Los Angeles, New York, or any other major US gateways. Enjoy in-flight meals and services. Move your watch one day ahead as you fly cross the international dateline. **F**

## Day 02 Arrive in Mumbai (Bombay)

Your flight will land at the Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport. After immigration and customs, you will be greeted by our representative who will escort you to the 5 star, luxurious, *Trident Nariman Point Mumbai*. Take a rest from the jetlag and get ready for tomorrow's adventure. **F**

## Day 03 Mumbai (Elephanta Carvings)

The story of Mumbai is fascinating. From obscure, humble beginnings as a set of seven small islands with tidal creeks and marshes

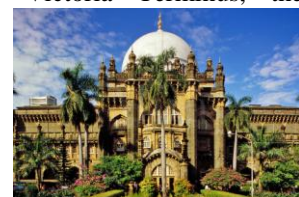


between them, the city has risen to such eminence that today it is India's most dynamic and important commercial and industrial centre, and is also the main hub for the Indian film industry "*Bollywood*", producing more films each year than any other city in the world. It is also one of the world's top 10 centers of commerce in terms of global financial flow, generating 5% of India's GDP, and accounting for 25% of industrial output, 70% of maritime trade in India (Mumbai Port Trust & JNPT), and 70% of capital transactions to India's economy. It is a melting pot for Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsees and Sikhs. Its municipal corporation provides primary and secondary education in at least 10 languages, including English. Today we will board a wooden ferry at the impressive monument of Gateway of India, a triumphal arch to commemorate the visit of Britain's **George V** and **Queen Mary** for the Delhi Darbar in 1911. The sea facing honey-colored basalt of the arch catches the light of the rising and setting sun, and changes from shades



of gold to orange and pink. It was through this arch that the last of the British troops left India by sea. The 1 hour scenic boat ride takes us across the harbor to the magnificent series of rock-cut cave temples of the Elephanta Island. Carved between 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> centuries A.D., most famous piece is the massive 18 feet three-headed bust of **Shiva**, representing his manifestations as Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. Return to the city, we explore the exciting city via an interesting drive. We will pass the High Court, the ornamental University Building, the 280 feet high Rajabhai Clock Tower, the ornate Victoria Terminus, the colorful Crawford Market, and the Flora Fountain.

Our next stop is the Prince of Wales Museum, home to





a world class collection of China ware, miniature paintings and sculpture. Then we drive along the Marine Drive, once called “*Queen Victoria’s Necklace*”, a gracefully curving road along the buttressed sea-coast, to the Malabar Hill, passing Malaxmi Temple. We will visit Mani Bhavan, the house where Mahatma Gandhi stayed during his visits to Mumbai. It became the focal point of his political activities between 1917 and 1934. From here Gandhi initiated the famous Non-Corporation, Charkha (Hindi for Spinning Wheel), and the Home Rule Movements. Today the two stored structure standing on the Laburnum Road is the city’s pride. We end today’s program at the bustling Colaba Causeway, the “*Culture Square*” of Mumbai. The architecture here is reminiscent of the old Bombay. In addition to being the hub of various art galleries, it is also home to numerous up market retail showrooms, mom and papa small



shops, pavement book stalls dating back several decades, footpath outlets selling everything from artifacts to shawls, carpets to minor antiques to slippers of all kind....., and here we can also find some of the city’s best restaurants, cafes, and road side eateries. **B**

#### Day 04 Mumbai - Udaipur

Throughout the day we will take advantage of **Orient Odyssey’s** unique “**People to People Contact®**” and seek interesting sights of the local life. We begin the day with a visit to Banganga, a sacred water-tank surrounded by four-hundred-year-old Walkeshwar Temples Complex and the modern skyscrapers.

Here we can observe in close range the local barber, blacksmith, cobbler and other residents going about their daily life. Nowhere is Mumbai’s



Paradox more evident than Banganga. Local legend has it that Hindu God **Rama**, the exiled hero of the epic Ramayana, stopped here five thousand years ago in search of his kidnapped wife **Sita**. Overcome with fatigue and thirst, **Rama** asked his brother **Lakshmana** to bring him some water. **Lakshmana** shot an arrow into the ground, where the water gushed forth from, creating a tributary of the Ganges that flows over a thousand miles away, hence its name, Banganga – the Ganga created on a baan (arrow). Our next stop is Kotachiwadi, a rarely visited



interesting coastal community of Christians from Maharashtra and Goa who have preserved their old Portuguese heritage styled homes and their culture. After enjoying tea, coffee and refreshments at home of the famous fashion designer **Mr. James Ferreira**, we set out to stroll the narrow street and take in the picturesque houses, most of which are made of wood, with large open front veranda, a back courtyard garden, and an external staircase to access the top bedroom. Before we head to the airport, we will take a photo stop at the famous Dhobi Ghat, a well known open air Laundromats with several hundred rows of open-air concrete wash pens, each fitted with its own flogging stone. Hundreds or maybe thousands of washers, locally known as Dhobis, work in the open to



wash clothes from Mumbai’s hotels and hospitals. This evening, our **Jet Konnect** flight S2 2073 departs at 7:10 p.m., reaching Udaipur at 8:25 p.m.. The local representative will greet and escort us to the 5 star, luxurious, **Lalit Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel**. **B**

#### Day 05 Udaipur

Welcome to Udaipur, a majestic city of lakes and palaces. It was founded by **Maharana Udai Singh II** (the 62<sup>nd</sup> successor to the royal dynasty of **Mewar**) in 1559. Fondly referred to as Rajasthan's most romantic city, its rich history is matched by a picturesque setting among the Aravalli Range. Today we first explore Udaipur's most venerated Jagdish Temple, lavishly built in 1651 by **Maharana Jagat**



**Singh**. Then we head to the City Palace, home of the Maharanas of Udaipur. This incredible complex of four granite and marble interconnecting places towers grandly over the shimmering Lake Pichola. Now preserved as a museum, it displays a large and diverse array of precious artifacts. We will also take a boat ride on the Lake Pichola and marvel at its beauty, enhanced by the surrounding hills, palaces, temples, bathing Ghats and embankments. We sail past Jag Mandir, the island that served as the refuge for **Prince Khurram** (later known as **Emperor Shah Jahan**) when he was exiled by his father. We will also



visit the famous Lake Palace Hotel, originally called Jag Niwas, built in 1743 as a royal summer palace. The Maharana, ruler of Udaipur was very friendly with Mughal Emperor **Shah Jahan** and encouraged his craftsman to copy



some of the glories of his incomparable buildings at Agra. The palace was constructed facing east, allowing its inhabitants to pray to the Sun God at the crack of dawn. The successive rulers used this cool haven as their summer resort, holding their regal durbars in its courtyards lined with columns, pillared terraces, fountains, and gardens. Our final stop of the day is beautiful Saheliyon Ki Bari, or "*Garden of the Maidens*". It was laid for forty-eight young maids who accompanied the princess to Udaipur as part of her dowry so all of them, including the royal ladies, can enjoy pleasurable moments away from the political intrigues of the court. Set below the embankment of the Fateh Sagar Lake, the garden is embellished with serene lotus pools, marble pavilions, chiseled kiosks, lush green lawns, flowerbeds, and elephant-shaped fountains, which are fed by the water of the lake gushing through ducts. Each water channels has its distinct sound, and the mingling of these sound complement the ambience. The Later Maharana **Bhopal Singh** added a pavilion of rain



fountains which are in the forms of sculpted birds that spurts water from their beaks, producing an illusion of rain dancing in cadence with dancing maids. Time permits, we might also wander through the old city, sharing the moldering roads with cows, locals, and the ubiquitous Indian "two wheeler". The walk leads us past colorful homes and bazaars selling everything from saris to fresh vegetables and antiques. **B**

### Day 06 Udaipur - Jaipur

We depart Udaipur in the morning and drive to Jaipur (about eight hours) on the busy national highway, passing villages, towns and markets. Enjoy **Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact®"** and take random stops on route at a village or market, where we can observe and interact with locals to gain insights into true rural Indian life. Early evening we reach Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, the city of "*jai*" or victory. It was built in 1728 in a simple grid pattern by **Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II**. Seven blocks of



buildings are divided by wide, tree-lined avenues. At the heart of the city is the palace which covers a further two blocks. These rectangular divisions represent the nine divisions of the universe. All are surrounded by a crenellated wall with seven imposing gates – the “*pols*”, still in use today. We check-in at the superior, boutique, **Hotel Umaid Mahal Jaipur**, for a much needed rest, while savoring the delicate Rajasthan interiors and ambience. **B**



### Day 07 Jaipur

With “*the tone of the autumn sunset*”, the so called pink city was not always pink. The original city was light grey, edged with white borders and motifs. In honor of the visit in 1883 of **Prince Albert** it was ordered to be painted pink, the traditional color of welcome, which has been retained today. We first head to Jaipur’s best known sight - Hawa Mahal, the “*Palace of Winds*”. This extraordinary façade of 953 airy



niches and windows, used by the royal ladies of the palace, who were kept in “*pudah*”- secluded from the public, to watch the outside world of the streets below. Next we embark on an excursion to the magnificent Amber Fort and Palace, the backdrop in the work of famous Indian



movie director **Mira Nair** *Kama Sutra – A Tale of Love*. We will ride on the painted ceremonial elephants up the hill to enter the main gate. The massive gateways, pillared pavilions and palaces all remind us the glory and wealth of its master, **the Maharaja Man Singh**, the commander-in-chief of **Mogul Emperor Akbar’s** army. We

will explore the Temple of Kali, the Hall of Victory, the Hall of Pleasure, and the Ahish Mahal – the “*palace of mirrors*”, where the walls are inlaid with exquisite mirrored motifs that dance to the flame of even a single candle. Exiting the fort, it is time to take a short thrilling downhill jeep ride through the village. In the afternoon we return to the city to visit the City Palace - the royal residence. We will enjoy the stroll through its majestic courtyards, pavilions, and gardens, take in the impressive collections of fine Rajput and Moghul paintings, rare manuscripts and the royal armory. Today part of the compound is still occupied by the royal family and is off limit to visitors. The last stop of the day is the impressive Jantar Mantar, an astronomical observatory built by **Maharaja Jai Singh**. The construction and precision of the observatory were a unique achievement in 1716. The 16 instruments each have a specific role, tracing the movements of the stars and planets. The evening is free at our own disposal – we can enjoy a stroll in one of Jaipur’s many bustling bazaars at our own pace. **B**



### Day 08 Jaipur – Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

After breakfast we drive to the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve and National Park (about five hours). The reserve’s romantic setting, complete with an unspoiled fortress, lakes and the rare Bengal tigers have made Ranthambore a popular destination for wildlife game viewing. Tigers are frequently spotted during daylight hours, hunting or lazing about, oblivious of explorers and their cameras. Here was once the private hunting grounds of the Maharaja of Jaipur. Upon arrival, we check-in at the 4 star deluxe, local best, **Tiger Den Resort** and get ready for tomorrow’s adventure! **B/L/D**



### Day 09 Ranthambore Tiger Reserve

Today we will explore this magnificent park, enjoying wildlife viewing while learning the local history. Two game drives are planned - one in the early morning and one in the evening.



presumably the best time for game viewing. These jungle safaris will be carried out in shared open air canter (open sided mini trucks). Each safari is for a duration of 3 hours, during which we may view many diverse and endangered animals of India, including



deer, nilgai, blackbuck, Indian gazelle (chinkara), crocodile, and of course, the famous Bengal tiger. **B/L/D**

- Sighting of tigers is not guaranteed and is subject to conditions, weathers and seasonality.

#### **Day 10 Ranthambore – Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary – Fathpur Sikri – Agra**

Rise early, we board train Kota Jan Shatabadi Express from Sawai Madhopur Station at 7:05 a.m.. After a smooth ride across the vast plains of Rajasthan, we reach Bharatpur at 9:23 a.m.. We will explore the Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary on a rickshaw at Keoladeo Ghana National Park, a



UNESCO World Heritage Site. Our rickshaw driver will point out various species of birds along the way.

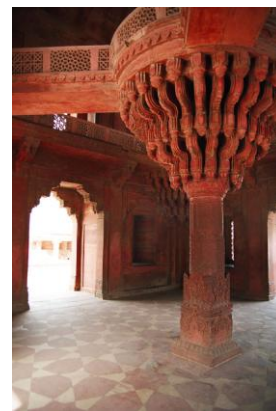
The park was once a hunting ground for the Maharajas of Bharatpur, a tradition dating back to 1850. Duck shoots were once organized yearly in honor of the British Viceroys. In one shoot alone in 1938, over 4,273 birds such as mallards and teals were killed by **Lord Linlithgow**, the then Governor-General of India. Today it is still a mosaic of dry grasslands, woodlands, swamps and wetlands.

The diverse habitats are home to 366 bird species, 379 floral species, 50 species of fish, 13 species of snakes, 5 species of lizards, 7 amphibian species, 7 turtle species and a variety of other invertebrates. Every year thousands of migratory waterfowl visit the park for wintering breeding. According to **Sir Peter Scott Keoladeo**, It is the world's best bird area. After the visit we continue our scenic drive and stop at the magnificent ruins of Fatehpur Sikri, the well-



preserved ruins of once the dream capital of **Akbar's** powerful Mughal Empire between 1570 and 1586. Fatehpur, "*town of victory*", was built of sandstone quarried from the surrounding hills. It was only occupied for 14 years before **Akbar** shifted his capital to Lahore. Everyone at Fatehpur Sikri will explain that it was because the water ran out, but it may also have been for strategic reasons. Today we will take time to stroll I the glorious courtyards and halls, marvel

at the mysterious past. Walk under the Buland Darwaza, the "*victory gate*" looming 134 feet high, we reach the imperial Jami Masjid, the Panch Mahal and the Hall of Public Audience. Check-out the Pachchisi, paved with black and white marbles, where the Emperor used to play chess using live slave girls as figurines. Reaching Agra in the afternoon, we check-in at the 5 star, luxurious, **Hotel Jaypee Palace Agra**. **B**



#### **Day 11 Agra**

It is the time to enjoy the optimum highlight of our journey, a visit to the Taj Mahal, standing grandly on a terrace beside a bend in the Yamuna river. It is the tomb of **Mumtaz Mahal**, wife of

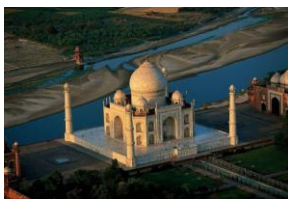




**Emperor Shah Jahan**, to whom she was married for 19 years. During this marriage she accompanied him on his military campaigns, shared his confidence on all matters of state and bore 13 children for him. Seven of them, including the next emperor, **Aurangzeb**, survived into adulthood. In 1631 she died in her 14<sup>th</sup> childbirth. **Shah Jahan** was desolate, and built the Taj Mahal in her honor, exhausting the financial and manpower of his empire. He was later deposed by **Aurangzeb** and imprisoned in Agra Fort. Thus Taj Mahal is regarded as the most extravagant monument ever built for love. It took seventeen years, 20,000 workers and a king's treasury to achieve what is standing today. The colossal monument was made by white semi translucent marble, and was inlaid with countless semi precious stones in beautiful patterns at literally every surface. Four identical facades surround the center dome in perfect symmetry.

*"The gem of man's handiworks"*, **The Lord Curzon** of **Kedleston**, who also became the Viceroy of India, took on the restoration work of Taj during his rule,

called it, *"without flaw or blemish, exquisite, irresistible, impossible to criticize, incapable of improvement, the most perfect structure in the world."* Today we will wander the inner chambers and the marble platform, marvel at the architectural brilliance, and the unfulfilled commitment that went into this project – just across the Yamuna River, **Emperor Sha Jahan** envisioned another identical Black Taj for himself, which was never materialized. In the afternoon we will tour the magnificent Agra Fort. Built in 1564, it was described as *"from top to bottom the fire-red stones, linked by iron rings, are joined so closely that even a hair can not*



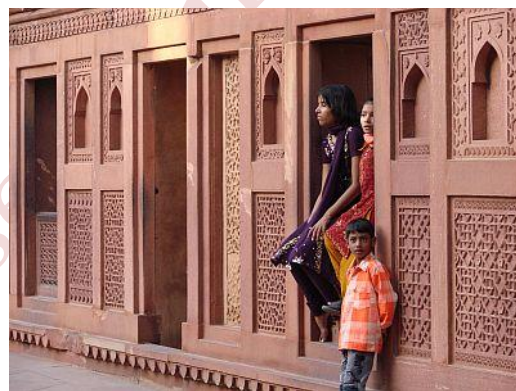
*find a way into their joints"*. Behind its forbidding immense red sandstone battlements lay palaces that tell the story of four generations of the Mughal Empire. We will visit the Mussaman Burj – *"Octagonal Tower"*, where

**Emperor Shah Jahan** lay on his deathbed,

imprisoned by his son, gazing out at the Taj Mahal he had built. We will also see the Moti Masjid, *"the Pearl Mosque"*;

the Jasmine Tower; Dewan-e-Amn - *"the Throne Hall for Public Audiences"*;

and Dewan-e-Khas where foreign dignitaries are



received. Before the day's end we drive across the Yamuna River to explore the forerunner of the Taj Mahal, the elaborate tomb of Itmad ud Daula. It was built by **Queen Nur Jahan** in 1622 in memory of her father. Historians often describe this mausoleum as the *"petite Taj"*, and consider it the imminent precursor of the Taj Mahal, due to the similar design and the elaborate carvings and inlay works. We end our program at Mother Teresa's Charity, which is now a home to orphaned children and infirmed adults. Return to our hotel, and the evening is at our own leisure. **B**

## **Day 12 Agra – Jhansi –Khajuraho**

After breakfast, we board the train **Bhopal Shatabdi Express** at 8:11 a.m.. Enjoy the smooth ride that passes villages, fields, bridges, and rivers, arriving in Jhansi at 10:45 a.m.. We then head for Khajuraho by coach (about four hours). Early afternoon we will arrive at the 4.5 star, deluxe, **Radisson Jass Hotel Khajuraho**. We will trade our bus for bicycle rickshaws,



traveling on the bumpy countryside roads to nearby villages. Enjoy

**Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact"** we take a walk in the

village and interact with children and villagers, gaining some the interesting insights of the rural life in India. **B**



### Day 13 Khajuraho – Varanasi

Khajuraho is a small town that was once the religious and cultural capital of Chandela Rajputs, a Hindu Dynasty that once ruled this part of India from the 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Numerous elaborate temples were built over a span of 200 years, from 950 to 1150 AD. These temple structures were designed to lead one's eyes from ground level ever upwards to the ultimate heaven, "*Kailasa*". They are ornately

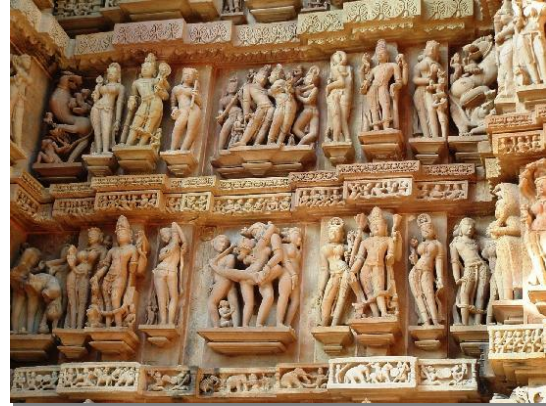


carved, well known for the extensive use of erotic figures. **James McConnachie** in his *History of the Kama Sutra*, describes the Khajuraho sculptures as "*the apogee of the erotic art*". He wrote: "*Twisting, broad-hipped and high breasted nymphs display their generously contoured and bejewelled bodies on exquisitely worked exterior wall panels. These fleshy apsaras run riot across the surface of the stone, putting on make-up, washing their hair, playing games, dancing, and endlessly knotting and unknotting their girdles....Beside the heavenly nymphs are serried ranks of griffins, guardian deities and, most notoriously, extravagantly interlocked maithunas, or lovemaking couples*".

Today we will visit and photograph these interesting temples,



namely Kandariya Mahadev of 1025 AD., Vishvanath temple of 1002 AD. and the Lakshmana temple of 930 AD., all adorned with exquisitely sculptured figures at every inch of the surface. Take in a galaxy of gods and goddesses, beasts and serpents, and a multitude of erotic couples, all representing a paean to life,



to love and to joy. We will head to the airport around noon to check-in for **Air India** flight AI 405, leaving at 3:05 p.m., arriving in Varanasi at 3:55 p.m.. We will be met and transferred to the 5 star, deluxe, **Radisson Hotel Varanasi**, one of the best and the newest properties in town. Welcome to Varanasi, also known as "*Benares*", one of the oldest living cities in the world. For more than 2,500 years it has attracted seekers and pilgrims, and has been a center of learning and civilization. The heart of the city lies between the streams of Varuna and Assi, both flow into the Ganga. Together they form the name Varanasi. But the city's other name, "*Kashi*", probably derives from the Sanskrit "*to shine or look brilliant*". That light is the **God Shiva's**, and Varanasi is his home. **Shiva**, literally means auspiciousness or happiness and, according to the local saying, every single pebble and stone in Kashi is **Shiva**. An nineteenth century Indologist, and senior missionary in Varanasi, **Matthew Atmore Sherring**, wrote in his *Benares – The Sacred City of Hindus in Ancient and Modern Times*: "*Twenty-five centuries ago, at least, it was famous. When Babylon was struggling with Nineveh for supremacy, when Tyre was planting her colonies,*



*when Athens was growing in strength, before Rome had become known or Greece had contended with Persia, or Cyrus had added*

luster to the Persian Monarchy, or Nebuchadnezzar had captured Jerusalem, and the inhabitants of Judea had been carried into captivity, she had already risen to greatness, if not to glory". For Hindus, **Shiva** is the one great God. To die here in his city on the banks of the holy river is to achieve "*moksha*" - liberation from the cycle of life and death. It is India in microcosm, both the beautiful and the repellant.



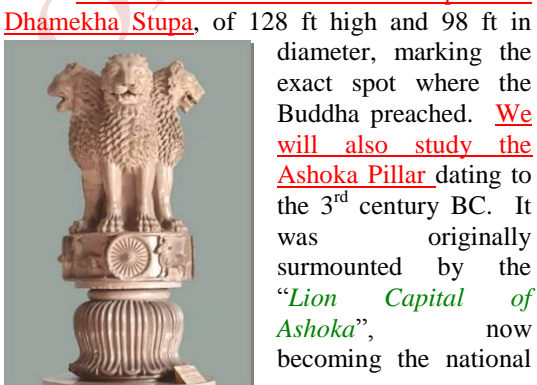
At sunset, we make our way down to the River Ganges by rickshaw to observe the evening Aarti, a cacophonous prayer ceremony in which chanting priests line the banks and perform ritual dances with bells and incense while hundreds of candles are lit and floated onto the river. B

#### Day 14 Varanasi (Sarnath Excursion)

After breakfast, we embark on a drive to Sarnath, one of the most important Buddhist pilgrimage



site of India. It was here at the Deer Park that Buddha preached his first sermon after attaining enlightenment at Bodhgaya, and returned to spend the rainy season several times during his life. We will take a look at the impressive



Dhamekha Stupa, of 128 ft high and 98 ft in diameter, marking the exact spot where the Buddha preached. We will also study the Ashoka Pillar dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. It was originally surmounted by the "*Lion Capital of Ashoka*", now becoming the national

emblem of India and is one of the outstanding displays in the nearby Sarnath Museum, where we will visit and enjoy its collections of some of the most impressive ancient relics. Through **Orient Odyssey's "People to People Contact"** we will enjoy a random stop in the countryside. Explore a village and a farmer's home, chatting with the household members and learn about the daily agriculture life in India. We also have time to stop in a cottage industry and study the making of Varanasi's most famous silk brocades, and the beautiful Banaras Saree. B

#### Day 15 Varanasi - Delhi

This morning we will rise early early, to take a boat-ride on the Ganges, and to see the majestic sunrise and the famous bathing ghats. Dawn on the Ganga is



a truly fabulous sight. As the sun rises, the golden rays fall on the innumerable temples and the bathing ghats – who are in the increasing number from tens of thousands to millions every minute. As our boat glides on the smooth water, we observe these pilgrims gather on the steps that lead down to the Ganges and immerse themselves into the sacred water, to



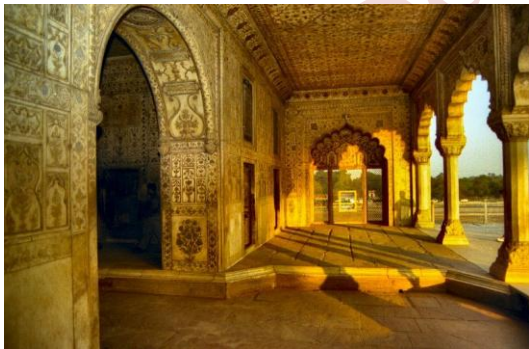
cleanse their sin hence to be released from the cycle of rebirth, while the city comes alive in the magical misty light of dawn. One can also take a look of the cremation



grounds by the river. Death is not hidden in India - it is part of life. Back on land, we walk through the narrow, dark, congested alleys of the old city, observing its busy daily about. On route we will pass the sacred Vishvanath Temple, also called "*the Golden Temple*", with a gilded dome of pure gold weighing tons. The temple is closed to non-Hindus, but we may climb to second floors of surrounding buildings to have a close look. After returning to the hotel for breakfast and a short rest, we head out again for a fascinating driving tour of the ancient city. We will drive through the campus of the famous Hindu University, the country's greatest seat of oriental learning. Then we stop at the Bharat Mata "*the Mother of India*" Temple, and Durga "*Goddess of Power*" Temple, also popularly known as the Monkey Temple because of the hordes of red macaques frequently spotted at its courtyard. made here their home. In the afternoon we depart via *Jet Konnect* flight S2 2424, leaving at 3:20 p.m., reaching Delhi at 5:00 p.m.. The representative will greet and escort us to a luxury heritage property; the 4 star, deluxe, *Maidens Hotel Delhi*. Enjoy remaining of the day free to rest or explore at own pace. **B**

#### Day 16 Delhi

Welcome to Delhi, the capital of India, presents a captivating combination of ancient and modern. As a major cultural centre, Delhi offers a glimpse of the diversity of the country's many states. It is the political and administrative center of the



world's largest democracy. Strategically located between the Aravalli hills and the Yanmuna river, it has been the capital of more than eight empires over the span of five thousand years. It was named after an earlier settlement, "*Dillika*", between the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD, when it served as the legendary capital of the Pandavas - "*the epic heroes of the Mahabharata*". Empires and dynasties rose and fell, while each left distinct legacies to this glorious city. Our adventure begins in Old Delhi,

the Mughal capital established by **King Shah Jahan** in 1638. We first tour the magnificent Red Fort. Within its walls are marble palaces and a grand audience chamber, the Diwan-i-Khas, where the Peacock Throne once stood. It is here **Jawaharlal Nehru** unfurled the flag of newly independent India on August 15, 1947. Next we visit the white onion dome and minarets of Jama Masjid, the largest mosque in India and the focal



point for Delhi's Muslims. We then drive by Chandni Chowk, one of India's oldest and busiest bazaars to visit Raj Ghat, Mahatma Gandhi's serene and evocative cremation site. The afternoon is devoted to New Delhi designed by British Architect **Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens**, balancing a perfect mixture of oriental extravagance and western constraint. We begin at the Qutab Minar, a remarkable 278 feet brick



tower, engraved with verses from the Koran, built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century by **Qutb-ud-Din-Aibak**, the first Muslim sultan of Delhi, to celebrate his victory over the Hindu kings Not to miss the unique Iron Pillar, never rusted since erected 700 years ago. At Humayun's Tomb (Humayun was the second Mughal Emperor), we can see the exquisite predecessor to the Taj Mahal as a prime example of early Mughal architecture and garden layouts. Afterwards we enjoy a drive on the impressive Rajpath, "the King's Way", and



the host to the annual Republic Day Parade. We will pass the Presidential Palace, the Rashtrapati Bhavan – former home of the viceroy, the parliament, and the secretariat buildings. After a picture stop at India Gate, Delhi's Arc de Triomphe, we continue our driving tour passing the Embassy district and the

Connaught Place, the main shopping venue in the center of the capital. B

### Day 17 Delhi – USA

After breakfast, there is still some free time to explore, pack or savor the memory of the thrilling journey of Grand India Panorama. Enjoy VIP private transfer service to the airport and check-in for the homebound transpacific flight. We will arrive back to USA on the same day or the next day depends on the international flight schedule. B/F

- Options to include daily dinners at hotels are available upon request.
- Special extension offer to **Nepal** can be added at the end of the journey.
- It is also possible to combine the **South India Prelude** with this trip for form a Grand India Journey.

*Kindly refer to General Terms & Conditions*

#### Featured luxury hotels and cruisers:

1. *Trident Nariman Point Mumbai* \*\*\*\*\*
2. *Lalit Laximi Villas Palace Udaipur* \*\*\*\*\*Palace
3. *Umaid Mahal Jaipur* \*\*\*\*\*Boutique
4. *Hotel Jaypee Palace Agra* \*\*\*\*\*
5. *Radisson Jass Hotel Khajuraho* \*\*\*\*\*+
6. *Radisson Hotel Varanasi* \*\*\*\*\*
7. *Maidens Hotel Delhi* \*\*\*\*\*+Boutique

#### Sample int'l flight schedule from Los Angeles:

|        |                            |             |
|--------|----------------------------|-------------|
| UA1244 | Los Angeles – New York EWR | 1020 / 1840 |
| UA48   | New York EWR – Mumbai      | 2010 / 2040 |
| UA83   | Delhi – New York EWR       | 2235 / 0445 |
| UA1439 | New York EWR – Los Angeles | 0630 / 0955 |

#### Sample int'l flight itinerary from San Francisco:

|       |                              |             |
|-------|------------------------------|-------------|
| UA994 | San Francisco – New York EWR | 1015 / 1847 |
| UA48  | New York EWR – Mumbai        | 2010 / 2040 |
| UA83  | Delhi – New York EWR         | 2235 / 0445 |
| UA342 | New York EWR – San Francisco | 0630 / 0949 |

#### Sample int'l flight itinerary from New York:

|       |                          |             |
|-------|--------------------------|-------------|
| EK204 | New York JFK – Dubai DBX | 1120 / 0750 |
| EK506 | Dubai DBX – Mumbai       | 0925 / 1355 |
| EK515 | Delhi – Dubai DBX        | 2120 / 2345 |
| EK203 | Dubai DBX – New York JFK | 0255 / 0825 |

- Special contract fares from other major US cities are available upon request.
- International and domestic flight schedules are subject to change without notice.

## Important Notice

- ❖ Itinerary is subject to change due to local condition and weather. Kindly refer to attached General Terms and Conditions. Living conditions and culture in India and Nepal are different from those in North America and passengers should be aware and prepared.
- ❖ Never pack your passport, international air tickets, insurance documents, and medication into the check-in luggage. Please always keep those important documents with you.
- ❖ Domestic flight schedule might involve minor changes. Guides in each city will advise the most updated schedule and assist the group to check-in for each segment.

Any questions for logistics and sightseeing details, please feel free to call **Orient Odyssey** at

**1-800-637-5778**

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