

North India Culinary Tour 2014

Itinerary dates: November 2 - 14, 2014

Highlights

- * Visit the iconic **Taj Mahal**
- * Experience a **walking tour of Delhi** to learn about the area's snack (chaat) vendors and spice markets
- * Take part in **cooking classes/demonstrations**
- * Enjoy meals in the **homes of several families**
- * Visit Sambhali Trust and know that **part of your tour cost goes to helping women and children**

Itinerary

Day 1

Sunday, November 2, 2014 - Arrive Delhi

Meals: None

Upon arrival at the airport (usually late evening), you will be met by a driver and transferred to your hotel.

Overnight at [Clarion Collection](#) or similar in Delhi.

Day 2

Monday, November 3, 2014 - Delhi

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

On this, our first full day in India, the group will tour both **Old and New Delhi**. We'll start by visiting New Delhi with its wide tree-lined boulevards and upscale homes. We'll see beautiful parks, the magnificent **Parliament Building**, the **President's residence**, and **India Gate**. We'll also visit **Qutab Minar** and **Humayun's Tomb**.


For lunch, we'll enjoy a magnificent feast of **typical South Indian cuisine**.

In the afternoon, get ready for a tour of **Old Delhi**, filled with **markets** and **bazaars** found among a maze of narrow lanes. We'll visit the famous **Red Fort and Jama Masjid Mosque**, and take a rickshaw ride through **bustling Chandni Chowk** – an area known for its variety of **street stalls and shops**.

We'll then take a **walking tour** of the area. We'll explore the gulies (streets) of **Shahjahanabad** and visit the local bazaar to experience a variety of snacks (chaat), including **laccha tokri, kulche chole, chaat papri, desi ghee tikki, moong pakori**, and we'll see some of the oldest shops producing these **world-famous treats**.

After the walking tour, we'll be welcomed into a **traditional Hindu haveli** (home) for a cooking demonstration and a tasting of **home-style Indian vegetarian cooking**. If you like, you can participate in the preparation!

Dinner and overnight at [Clarion Collection](#) or similar in Delhi.

 **HIGHLIGHT!** The traditional home we'll be visiting is in a wonderful building built in the style of **traditional Mughal architecture** and will be a very special glimpse of daily life in Delhi.

Day 3

Tuesday, November 4, 2014 - Delhi - Jodhpur

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll depart for the airport for our flight to Jodhpur, where we'll then check into our hotel and have lunch.

In the afternoon, we'll visit **Sambhali Trust**.

NOTE – *A portion of your tour cost will cover a donation made to Sambhali Trust. This organization provides underprivileged Rajasthani women and girls with educational, vocational and social skills to help them become confident and financially independent. They work specifically with Dalit (untouchable) women and girls, who usually have little or no access to education or basic health services.*

Dinner and overnight in Jodhpur at [Indana Hotel](#) or similar.



HIGHLIGHT! You'll be deeply touched by the good work of the **Sambhali Trust** and you'll get to learn about the **confidence and skills** the organization instills upon its beneficiaries.

Day 4

Wednesday, November 5, 2014 - Jodhpur

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll tour Jodhpur, visiting **Mehrangarh Fort** and **Jaswant Thada**, a marble memorial to Maharaja Jaswant Singh. Some sections of the thin marble walls are translucent (often referred to as something of a miracle). We'll also visit **Umaid Bhawan Palace** – the only Indian palace built in the mid-20th century and a good representation of Indo-colonial style.

For lunch, we'll **visit a local family!** We'll see a **typical Rajasthani home**, learn about the life of a local family and enjoy **traditional dishes** prepared in every Jodhpur home.

In the afternoon, we'll have time to **visit the local market**, which is quite a happening place. Here we'll find vendors selling clothes, sweets, fruits, bangles, handicrafts and groceries.

Dinner and overnight in Jodhpur at [Indana Hotel](#) or similar.



HIGHLIGHT! Jodhpur, the second largest city in Rajasthan, is also called **the blue city**, due to the many blue-painted homes. It's a city of **palaces, forts and temples**, and the residents have become known for their **handicrafts**

Day 5

Thursday, November 6, 2014 - Jodhpur - Ranakpur - Udaipur

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll make the drive to **charming Udaipur**. This will be a long drive (six hours total), but will be broken up with a visit to **Ranakpur** to see the spectacular Jain temples located there.

We'll then continue the drive to Udaipur where we'll check into the hotel.

In the late afternoon, we'll enjoy a **boat ride on the placid waters of Lake Pichhola** (subject to the water level in the lake). Afterward, we'll have dinner at a **fantastic lakeside restaurant** with beautiful views of this small city and the palace.

Overnight in Udaipur at [Lalit Laxmi Vilas Palace](#) or similar.



HIGHLIGHT! Ranakpur is home to **spectacular Jain Temples** acclaimed for intricate carvings and considered the **most important temples** for Jain followers.

Day 6

Friday, November 7, 2014 - Udaipur

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll go to **Eklingji and Nagda Temples**. Located on Lake Bageela (about 15 miles from Udaipur), these are built from sandstone and marble and are a **Hindu pilgrimage site**.

After visiting the temples, we'll be treated to a four-hour **cooking class with Shashi**. We'll learn many new skills from this amazing woman, including how to make chai, chutneys, curries and breads. Yum!

After enjoying a sumptuous lunch, we'll take a sightseeing tour of Udaipur in the afternoon. This will include the **Udaipur City Palace Complex**, considered the largest palace complex in Rajasthan, **Durbar Hall**, the **Crystal Gallery**, **Palace Museum** and **Jagdish Temple**.

Dinner and overnight in Udaipur at [Lalit Laxmi Vilas Palace](#) or similar.



HIGHLIGHT! Udaipur is called **The Venice of the East** and you'll soon see why. This enchanting city is surrounded by the Aravalli mountain range and is situated on the **edge of three lakes**.

Day 7

Saturday, November 8, 2014 - Udaipur - Deogarh Mahal

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll drive to **Deogarh Mahal** (about 3.5 hours away). This is an incredible **fortified palace** from the 17th century. It's surrounded by a small town on a hilltop in the heart of Rajasthan's Aravalli Hills. We'll have lunch and some time to relax at this beautiful hotel.

In the afternoon, we'll take a **Jeep safari to nearby villages**. This will be a drive through natural surroundings where people can be seen tending their fields.

We'll visit a cave temple - a **cavernous rock** in which a shrine of Lord Shiva is ensconced. The top of this rock offers a **panoramic view of black volcanic rocks**. The drive then leads to a lake that attracts migratory birds.

In the evening, we'll be treated to a **cooking demonstration** that will include traditional Rajasthani cuisine. This will consist of traditionally cooked food garnished with chillies and mustard oil. Delicacies include **laal maas**, **safed maas**, **daal baati choorma**, **besan batta**, **ker sangri** (vegetarian dishes) and more.

Dinner and overnight at [Deogarh Mahal](#) or similar.

Day 8

Sunday, November 9, 2014 - Shahapur Bagh - Jaipur

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll depart for **Jaipur** (about 3.5 hours away) but stop along the way for a tour of Deogarh via a train safari.

This will be a one and a half hour journey that **chugs through tunnels and over bridges and past quaint railway stations**. As it's the lifeline of the locals, it will be an excellent way to get to meet them along the rugged landscape.

We'll then drive back to Deogarh and drive onward to Jaipur.

Known as the **Pink City**, Jaipur owes its name to the pink-colored buildings throughout the city. We'll have lunch along the way.

The city sits on a dry lake bed in a wild and somewhat arid landscape, surrounded by barren hills and fortresses. In the afternoon, we'll explore the **local colorful bazaar** where you can **souvenir shop** and **sample local vendor foods and sweet treats**. The afternoon is free for walking around the town, cultural sightseeing, or browsing the many **handicraft, fabric, and gem shops** in town. You may also get your **hands painted with henna** from roadside mehandiwalas (ladies that specialize in painting hands with henna).

Tonight we'll have **another cooking demonstration**, this time in a local Rajasthani home! We'll be able to participate or simply watch the preparation and then enjoy a **traditional home-style Indian meal**.

Dinner and overnight in Jaipur at [Shahpura House](#) or similar.

Day 9

Monday, November 10, 2014 - Jaipur


Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, we'll take a full-day tour of **Jaipur**, starting with the **Amber Fort**. You may ride an elephant or walk the short distance to the main palace. This is an extremely well-preserved building and delightful to explore. We'll have a chance to visit the **Hall of Victory** (glittering with mirrors), **Jai Mahal** and the **Temple of Kali**.

After lunch at a nearby restaurant, the city tour will continue with stops at the **Jantar Mantar** (the Astronomical Observatory) and the **Maharaja's City Palace**.

In the evening, we'll have a special dinner at a local restaurant quite famous for its exquisite food.

Overnight in Jaipur at [Shahpura House](#) or similar.

 **HIGHLIGHT!** Located high on a hill, the **Amber Fort** was built in the 1700s. You'll enjoy exploring it as it blends both **Hindu and Rajput architecture**, giving it a unique style.

Day 10

Tuesday, November 11, 2014 - Jaipur - Fatehpur Sikri - Agra

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll drive to **Agra** (approximately 4.5 hours), stopping at **Fatehpur Sikri** along the way.

Upon arrival in Agra, we'll check into the hotel, freshen up and then have lunch at a local restaurant.

In the late afternoon, we'll visit **Agra Fort**, a massive structure with **70-foot-high, 1.5-mile-long walls**. The fort encompasses a collection of well-preserved buildings. Shah Jahan (who built the Taj Mahal), was deposed by his son and imprisoned in Agra Fort where he remained until his death. Sadly, he spent the rest of his life looking out along the river at the Taj, the final resting place for his wife.

Dinner and overnight in Agra at [ITC Mughal Luxury Hotel](#) or similar.

Day 11

Wednesday, November 12, 2014 - Agra - Varanasi

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll rise early for coffee and then a visit to the legendary **Taj Mahal for sunrise**, the best time to photograph the Taj.

After returning to the hotel for a full breakfast, we'll transfer to the airport to board the flight for **Varanasi**.

Upon arrival, we'll check in to the hotel to freshen up.

In the afternoon, we'll tour Varanasi and, in the evening, visit the Ganges where we'll take an unforgettable sunset boat ride before witnessing the evening Aarti (prayer) ceremony.

Dinner and overnight at the [Radisson](#) or similar in Varanasi.



HIGHLIGHT! Nothing can prepare you for your first viewing of the **Taj Mahal**. Built by Shah Jahan, the Taj is a white marble memorial to his wife Mumtaz Mahal. It took **22 years to complete** and is perfectly symmetrical with **elegant domes, intricately carved screens** and some of the **best inlay work ever created**.

Day 12

Thursday, November 13, 2014 - Varanasi

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

In the early morning, we'll drive to **Daswamedh Ghat** and take a sunrise boat ride on the Ganges, this time to see the **cremation Ghats**. This is a Hindu tradition from one of the world's oldest and most important religions.

We'll also visit **Kashi Vishwanath Temple** before returning to the hotel.

After lunch, we'll be treated to a city tour that includes a visit to **Bharat Mata Mandir** (Mother India Temple), **Durga Temple** and **Benares Hindu University**.

In the early evening, we'll be **guests in a local home** for dinner. This will give us insight into the lives of local families, their beliefs, customs, dreams and food!

Overnight at the [Radisson](#) or similar in Varanasi.

Day 13

Friday, November 14, 2014 - Varanasi - Delhi

Meals: Breakfast

After breakfast, we'll take an exciting tour through **Old Varanasi by rickshaw**. We'll travel through the narrow lanes, where oxen, cows, buffaloes and people all vie for space.

In the afternoon, we'll transfer to the airport to board the flight to **Delhi**.

Upon arrival, you'll be met at the airport and will have a chance to refresh up at a hotel and change before your return flight home that night (most international departures leave very late at night or early morning).

If you're interested in staying in Delhi, we can help with booking additional nights accommodations.

**** Itinerary and hotels subject to change without notice.**