

Gujarat Textiles and Tribes Women-only Tour

Itinerary dates: January 22 – February 3, 2023

Trip Leader: Beth Whitman

HIGHLIGHTS:

- Visiting the homes of **extraordinary artists** to learn about their unique artisan crafts
- Traveling throughout the region to see and shop for **exquisitely made textiles and paintings**
- Sightseeing in **Mumbai** to see how the locals experience life
- Going on a jeep safari searching for **leopards in Rajasthan**

The adventure starts in **Mumbai** on **January 22, 2023**. If you'd like to arrive early, we can arrange additional hotel nights prior to the tour.

The tour ends in **Delhi**. You can fly home or to your next destination via **Delhi** or return to **Mumbai** for your onward travels. Alternately, you might fly roundtrip into/out of **Delhi** and then we can help you book a separate flight from **Delhi** to **Mumbai** for the start of the trip.

ITINERARY

Day 1 – Mumbai

Sunday, January 22, 2023

Meals: N/A

Upon arrival at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in **Mumbai**, you'll be met by a driver and taken to our hotel. Many international flights arrive at night so no activities or meals are included on this day.

India's second most populous city (after Delhi), Mumbai is comprised of seven islands and is the **financial, commercial** and, of course, **entertainment** capital of India. Though it can be a bit overwhelming for the first-time visitor, it has much to offer!

Overnight at [Trident Nariman Point](#) or similar in Mumbai.

Day 2 – Mumbai

Monday, January 23, 2023

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll start our tour with a peek into the world of the **dabbawalas**. The whats? A dabbawala is, literally, a **person with a box**. In Mumbai, it's the dabbawalas (sometimes called tiffin wallahs), who **collect (from homes) and deliver cooked food** to office workers. It's an elaborate system that keeps the city of Mumbai fed. We'll meet these entrepreneurs and learn how they manage their flawless business of getting food to workers six days a week!

After lunch at a local restaurant (not delivered by a dabbawala!), we'll take a tour of **Dharavi**, the **largest slum in Asia** where people from all over India are settled. Set aside your preconceived notion of the word "slum" as the industries that take place in Dharavi have an annual turnover of approximately \$665 million U.S. During this tour, we'll see a wide range of activities that take place including **pottery, embroidery, baking, soap making, tanning leather** and more.

Dinner and overnight at [Trident Nariman Point](#) or similar in Mumbai.



★ **HIGHLIGHT!** You'll be dazzled by the **low-tech productivity** that takes place in Mumbai. Perhaps surprisingly, you'll feel the strong **sense of community** and **spirituality** within the city's narrow alleyways as we witness the entrepreneurship that takes place here.

Day 3 – Mumbai – Bhuj
Tuesday, January 24, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



This morning, we'll grab a to-go breakfast from the hotel in order to catch our very early **flight to Bhuj** in Gujarat. Upon arrival, we'll be met by our driver and taken to our hotel for an early check-in.

After lunch, we'll begin our first day of touring in **Gujarat**. We'll start with a visit to the **Living & Learning Design Centre** where the finest of textiles from around the region are on display. It's here that you'll see **the most exquisite textiles you'll likely ever see**.

Afterward, we'll visit a small village known for **ajrakh**, a type of intricate block printing, and we'll visit a **textile collector** to learn more about the art and crafts created in this area. We'll finish the day by visiting **Aaina Mahal**, an 18th century palace now converted into a museum.

Dinner at a local restaurant and overnight at [Hotel ILARK](#) or similar in Bhuj.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** You'll be forever changed by the absolute beauty of the textiles on display at the **Living & Learning Design Centre**, where the goal is to preserve, revitalize and promote this craft.

Day 4 – Bhuj
Wednesday, January 25, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today after breakfast, we'll set out for the village of **Nirona** to learn about a type of art called **Rogan**. This work, a form of **decorating fabrics with dyes**, can only be purchased in Nirona directly from the artist(s). It is so highly regarded that it's been presented by India's **President Modi to President Obama**.

We'll then take a short walk through this village to visit a **bell-maker** and also learn about the making of **lacquerware**, which is produced here as well.

Lunch will be at the home of a local woman before we visit a textile workshop where the local **Ahir embroidery** is created. While the textiles at the Living & Learning Design Centre are all behind glass, here you'll be able to touch, feel and purchase **exquisite handicraft**.

In the evening, we'll have dinner at our accommodations and enjoy a **folk music program** by a local tribe.

Overnight at [Mahefeel e Rann Resort](#) or similar in Bhuj.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** There are not many places in the world where an **artform is so coveted** that you **MUST** buy directly from the artist. You'll see why when you see how Rogan pieces are created!

Day 5 – Bhuj
Thursday, January 26, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we'll head to **Hodko Village** where we'll visit with locals who continue their tradition of **embroidery, quilt-making and leather-work**.

Afterward, we'll visit the village of **Ludiya** which is comprised of about 2,000 people. Most are Muslim while some are Harijan—this term means “child of god” and was coined by Gandhi to refer to the lowest caste of people.

Here, we'll have a **cooking demonstration** and then enjoy lunch in a local home. It's in Ludiya where women **specialize in their own form of embroidery** which we'll get to see.

We'll then drive on to **White Rann** where we'll overnight.

Dinner and overnight at [Mahefeel e Rann Resort](#) or similar in Bhuj.

Day 6 – Bhuj – Bajana
Friday, January 27, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Today will mostly be a travel day as we drive to **Bajana**, about six hours away. We'll break up the drive with a visit to **Muli** for lunch and have the chance to **walk through this local village**.

This geographically unique landscape was once part of the Arabian Sea and is called the **Rann of Kutch**. It is now a featureless plain encrusted with salt (rendering tap water undrinkable in this area!).

Dinner and overnight at [Royal Safari Camp](#) or similar in Bajana.

Day 7 – Bajana
Saturday, January 28, 2022
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today we'll head to **two tribal communities** to visit the Rabari and the Mir. The **Rabari** are one of the **last nomadic peoples** in the world and can easily be recognized by their dress. The men wrap their heads in **turbans**, **dress in white** and often wear a **gold earring** while the women dress in **elaborately embroidered clothes** and are **bedecked in gold and silver rings, bracelets and earrings**.

The **Mir, a Muslim tribe**, are also nomadic, but they dress more in a **Rajasthani style** with the women wearing a short, backless blouse, kurti (sleeveless jacket), a 20-meter skirt and a 5-meter veil. They'll be most recognizable because of their **copious amounts of jewels**.



Dinner and overnight at [Royal Safari Camp](#) or similar in Bajana.

Day 8 – Bajana – Palanpur
Sunday, January 29, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



After breakfast, we'll drive onward to **Palanpur** (a six-hour drive) but we'll make a few stops along the way.

Our first stop is at the **Modhera Sun Temple**. Considered one of the finest pieces of architecture of the 11th century, it features a beautifully carved arch gateway.

We'll then visit Patan. Built in the 1050s, it is home to the **oldest and perhaps grandest** of the stepwells in Gujarat. A **stepwell** holds water used by the community and is called such because of the steps that descend down to the water level. They are found in the more arid regions of the Indian subcontinent and in Pakistan.

We'll have lunch in Patan and afterward visit a shop where the local Patola saris are made. These are magnificent **double-ikat woven fabrics made of silk**. There are only **three families** who now weave these prized saris once worn only by **royalty and the very wealthy**.

Dinner and overnight at [Balaram Palace](#) or similar in Palanpur.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** The Patola saris made in Patan are **intricately-made and very expensive**, taking six months to a year to create one sari.

Day 9 – Palanpur
Monday, January 30, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, we'll head out into the countryside to visit **tribal villages** as well as the **terracotta horse** shrines for which this region is most famous. We'll have a chance to walk through the villages and step inside local homes to see the **traditional way** in which they live.

We'll have lunch back at our hotel and may have time in the afternoon to **walk through the markets and town** for more photography and to **visit with the friendly locals**.

In the evening, there will be a **cultural folk dance** performed on the grounds of the hotel.

Dinner and overnight at [Balaram Palace](#) or similar in Palanpur.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** The tribal people continue to practice their **age-old traditions** and ceremonies. When we visit their villages, we'll get a taste of their **ancient practices** and way of life.

Day 10 – Palanpur – Bera
Tuesday, January 31, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today, we'll depart Gujarat and head east into the state of **Rajasthan** to the town of **Bera** (about 2.5 hours away). Along the way, we'll stop at the **Ambaji market**, where the Garasiya tribe sells their wares.

We'll arrive at the hotel in time for lunch. In the afternoon, we'll have some down time and you can either **wander into the village** or spend the afternoon **at the hotel pool**.

In mid-afternoon, we'll head out for a few hours to go on a **leopard safari!** As we travel through the countryside in jeeps, chances are very high that we'll see at least one of these magnificent animals as this region has the **largest population of leopards** in the world.



We'll have a late dinner and overnight at [Jawai Sagar Pali](#) or similar in Bera.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** This region has become famous for its **leopards** which are attracted by the scrub, cactus and caves that dominate the landscape. It helps that the locals have learned to co-exist with them, helping make our chances of spotting them even better!

Day 11 – Bera
Wednesday, February 1, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today after breakfast, we'll spend our time visiting the unusual **Raika Rabari tribes**. The Rabari are a **nomadic camel-herding** people whose name means "outside the way." While most Rabari are Hindus, the Raika are Muslim (giving them their name of being outside of the rest of the tribe). You can easily spot the **women who often wear black**. While most of their homes are thatch-roofed huts and dung walls, the villages themselves are centered around a **brightly painted concrete temple**.

Dinner and overnight at [Jawai Sagar Pali](#) or similar in Bera.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** It's said that the Rabari were put on earth by Shiva to **tend to the camels** owned by Parvati. We might be lucky enough to see one of these pastoral groups with their camels.

Day 12 – Bera – Udaipur
Thursday, February 2, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, dinner



Today we'll drive onward to Udaipur (about three hours away), known as the **Venice of the East** (except it isn't sinking!). This enchanting city is filled with stunning palaces—where movie stars often come to get married—and is surrounded by lakes and mountain ranges.

We'll check in to the hotel where we'll have lunch and enjoy some free time. In the later afternoon, we'll visit the home of **Sashi, a local chef** who has made a wonderful business for herself by offering some of the best cooking classes in India. Sashi shares her story while preparing our dinner and also allowing us to participate in the cooking of it.

Overnight at [LaLiT Udaipur](#) or similar in Udaipur.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** You'll fall in love with the very entrepreneurial **Sashi and her story of creating a business** when all seemed lost to her! You'll love her cooking, too!!!

Day 13 – Udaipur – Delhi
Friday, February 3, 2023
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

This will be our last full day in India and you'll have the morning to explore on your own **for last-minute souvenir shopping**.

We'll depart for the airport in the early afternoon and then **fly to Delhi**. From here you can take your international flight home.

Dinner is included this evening at the hotel as is your room (at the Radisson Blu). This is for you to wash up and get organized before your next flight or travels onward. Most flights depart late evening or early morning but you're welcome to stay until checkout the next day at noon.

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