INDIA ITINERARY | MARCH 14–28, 2020

Exploring the World’s Largest Democracy: Embark on a once-in-a-lifetime grand adventure—full of iconic sites, exclusive meetings with renown experts, and privately curated tours!

MARCH 14 & 15

- Depart the United States on international flights to Mumbai and arrive the following day. Transfer to the Taj Mahal Tower.

MARCH 16. MUMBAI

- After a brief orientation meeting, meet with Kalpana Sharma, an independent journalist, columnist and media consultant who until recently was the deputy editor and bureau chief of The Hindu in Mumbai. She will give an overview of India with a focus on environmental and developmental issues. Learn more about Ms. Sharma here: scroll.in/author/1534.

- Drive to Dharavi, a teeming community of 1 million people, where as many as 18,000 people crowd into a single acre. Routinely called the “largest slum in Asia” and featured in the award-winning movie Slumdog Millionaire, Dharavi remains unique among packed urban spaces. Although Dharavi is the archetypal Indian slum, it is also home to many different productive micro-economies that defy many urban planners’ concepts of poverty.

- After a simple lunch, we’ll break into smaller groups and walk through parts of Dharavi to see what life is like here first-hand. Observe food making, temple offerings, clothes-making, potteries, bakeries, a soap factory and paper-making.

- End the day with a meeting at the office of the Society for Nutrition, Education & Health Action (SNEHA), a non-profit organization founded in 1999, that works with women, children and public health and safety systems. Their innovative work in urban informal settlements aims to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity, child malnutrition and gender-based violence. The group will meet with a senior staff member and after meet with “Sanginis” who are a group...
of 160 volunteers that partner with other women living with violence. SNEHA is working in Dharavi, with the help of women and men, to end violence against women. Learn more about SNEHA here: snehamumbai.org

- Enjoy a welcome dinner tonight at a local restaurant.

MARCH 17. MUMBAI  

- After breakfast depart the hotel for the Gateway Jetty to take a private motor launch to the tranquil forested island of Elephanta, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Originally called Gharapuri, or Fort City, the island was renamed Elephanta by the Portuguese after a huge stone elephant statue that once stood there. Upon arrival, take a short train ride to the Elephanta Caves. Visit the unique cave temple, whose Shiva sculpture is a fine example of Hindu architecture. Inside this impressively excavated eight-century cave, Shiva takes the form of a cosmic dancer.

- Return by private boat to Mumbai and enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

- Drive to Prerana, an organization accredited with several innovative social interventions that address elimination of prostitution and protection of children from sexual abuse and assault. Co-Founder and Director Mrs. Priti Patkar will meet with the group. Learn more about Prerana here: preranaantitrafficking.org

- Dinner tonight is at a local restaurant.

MARCH 18. MUMBAI  

- This morning meet with Mr. Sidharth Bhatia, a journalist and writer based in Mumbai and founding editor of The Wire. Mr. Bhatia writes on politics, society and culture and is also an Associate Press Fellow of Wolfson College, Cambridge University. Learn more about The Wire here:thewire.in

- Depart the hotel for the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Museum, which showcases the decorative and industrial arts and life in 19th-century Mumbai. Meet with the museum’s director Ms. Tasneem Mehta.

- Enjoy a simple lunch at a local restaurant before ending the day at the Gandhi Museum and Research Institute. Meet with Dr. Usha Thakkar, formerly Professor and Head, Department of Political Science, SNDT Women’s University, Mumbai and now Honorary Director, Institute of Research on Gandhian Thought and Rural Development. Dr. Thakkar will discuss Gandhi’s journey and India’s freedom struggle.

- Dinner tonight is at leisure.

MARCH 19. VARANASI  

- Transfer to the airport in time for a late morning flight to Varanasi.

- Varanasi, also known as Kashi – the City of Light, is India’s holiest Hindu city with a spiritual and religious legacy that goes back nearly 3000 years. Sanctified by Shiva’s all-pervading presence and the sacred Ganges, the 90 or so ghats along the river define the life and identity of Varanasi. Lined with temples and shrines they reverberate with the endless cycle of Hindu religious practice – from daily rituals to profound rites of passage.

- Upon arrival in Varanasi transfer to the Taj Ganges Varanasi, located in the Nadesar Palace grounds among 40 acres of greenery.

- Later, enjoy a rickshaw ride through the bustling bazaars of Varanasi to the ghats to watch the
**Ganga Aarti**, a much-awaited daily ritual. When dusk sets, the steps on the riverfront of the Ganges are illuminated with earthen lamps and marigold flowers and look breathtakingly beautiful.

- Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

**MARCH 20. VARANASI**

- In the morning participate in a private yoga and meditation session.

- This morning visit **Kotwa** weavers’ village near Varanasi. Kotwa is well known for its silk weaving. The Banarasi sarees made by these weavers are among the finest sarees in India and are known for their gold and silver brocade or zari, fine silk and opulent embroidery.

- Later meet with a local Muslim weaver to learn more about what it means to be Muslim in a country where Hindus form the majority. Currently the Muslim population accounts for over 14% of the population or over 200 million and is expected to grow to over 310 million by 2050 making it the most populous Muslim country in the world. The state of Uttar Pradesh has one of the largest populations in India.

- In the afternoon, drive 6 miles northeast of Varanasi to **Sarnath** where in the 6th century BC Siddhartha Gautama – who came to be known as the Buddha, the “Awakened One” – gave his first sermon and set in motion the Wheel of Law. Also visit the archaeological museum that exhibits a superb collection of Buddhist artifacts including the Ashokan lion capital in polished sandstone, India’s national emblem.

- Dinner is at a local restaurant. Afterward, enjoy a **Kathak Dance performance**, one of the major classical Indian dance styles.

**MARCH 21. AGRA**

- Stretched along a crescent bend of the Ganges, Varanasi’s waterfront is dominated by landings where pilgrims come for their daily ritual ablutions. In the early morning enjoy a boat cruise on the river Ganges and also walk through the old bazaars. Return to the hotel for breakfast.

- After breakfast transfer to the airport in time for a flight to Agra. Upon arrival, transfer to the **Trident, Agra**. Set amidst landscaped gardens and water fountains, this tranquil retreat is located less than two miles from the glittering monument of love, the Taj Mahal.

- Agra was the seat of Imperial Mughal court during the 16th and 17th centuries before the capital was shifted to Delhi. The city strategically located on the banks of the Yamuna, flourished under the patronage of the great Mughal Emperors attracting artisans from Persia, Central Asia and also from other parts of India who built luxurious forts, palaces, gardens and mausoleums.

- In the afternoon visit the **Taj Mahal**. The Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan built this extravagant monument in the memory of his favorite wife, Mumtaz Mahal, who died at the age of 39 while giving birth to their 14th child. See this spectacular site at sunset when the monument appears to change its hue, tinted by the glow of the setting sun.

- Enjoy dinner tonight at the hotel.

Scheduled events and their timing are subject to change

Discover all Nation destinations at: [www.thenation.com/travels](http://www.thenation.com/travels)
MARCH 22. SAMODE  B, L

- This morning enjoy a visit to the Agra Fort situated on the banks of river Yamuna. This imposing structure of palaces, mosques and audience halls contained within its massive walls was founded by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1565. The high red-sandstone ramparts of Agra Fort dominate a bend in the River Yamuna northwest of the Taj Mahal.

- Depart Agra and drive to the ghost city of Fatehpur Sikri, a former capital of the great Mughal emperor Akbar. Built between 1571 and 1585, it has lain silent for almost four centuries. Now deserted, it is almost perfectly preserved – a masterpiece in sandstone with the stunning elegance of its palaces, mosques and courts glowing in subtly changing shades of red.

- After lunch, drive four hours through scenic Rajasthani countryside to the village of Samode. This village, where local artisans produce printed cloth and glass bangles, is nestled picturesquely within the dry rugged hills of the northern Aravalli range.

- Upon arrival transfer to the Samode Palace Hotel. Dinner tonight is at leisure.

MARCH 23. SAMODE  B, L, D

- After breakfast explore the remarkable Samode Palace, which is decorated with 300 year old fine Sekhawati-style wall paintings.

- Enjoy lunch at the hotel.

- After lunch visit a local school and some of the studios of local craftspeople before returning to the hotel. Enjoy time at leisure in the afternoon.

- This evening attend a very special event on a private terrace at the palace. We will receive a royal welcome surrounded by twinkling lamps, dancers, fireworks and an elaborate dinner.

MARCH 24. DELHI  B, L

- After breakfast drive 30 miles south to Jaipur, the flamboyant capital of the state of Rajasthan.

- On the outskirts of Jaipur visit the Amber Fort, the ancient capital of the Rajputs from 1037 to 1728. Admire the surrounding hills, high ramparts, and a succession of dramatic gates.

- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before visiting Jaipur’s most famous monuments, the Palace of Winds and Jantar Mantar Observatory, both within the City Palace Complex, at the heart of the “Pink City.”

- Transfer to the airport for a late afternoon flight to Delhi. Upon arrival transfer to the Taj Mahal, New Delhi. Dinner tonight is at leisure.

MARCH 25. DELHI  B, L

- Begin the morning with a city tour that focuses on Old Delhi.

- Take a rickshaw ride through the winding alleys of Chandni Chowk, one of the oldest markets in Old Delhi, before arriving at Delhi’s largest mosque – the Jama Masjid, a stunning red-sandstone monument built on a natural outcrop of rock.

- Enjoy lunch at Chor Bizarre, a restaurant that captures the spirit of the ‘thieves market’ within its kaleidoscopic interiors and serves authentic regional Indian cuisine in a unique atmosphere.

- After lunch meet with a professor from Jawaharlal Nehru University who will discuss many aspects of life in India including the caste system, education, poverty and inequality.

- Dinner tonight is at leisure.

MARCH 26. DELHI  B, L, D

- This morning take a guided tour of the National Museum, which provides an excellent overview of Indian culture and history.

- After visit the office of Balaknama, a monthly newsletter for and by street and working children who...
are determined to tell their stories, change people’s perceptions, and promote the dignity of street children.

Today the paper has 60 reporters between the ages of 12 and 20 based in Delhi and the neighboring states of Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Enjoy a simple lunch with the staff and children. Learn more about Balaknama here: balaknama.org

- Continue on to a meeting with Dr. Govind Singh, the Co-founder of Delhi Greens NGO and Editor-in-Chief of the Delhi Greens Blog. Based in New Delhi, Govind is an environmental activist and researcher and is working to generate environmental awareness and promote sustainable development across India. Learn more about Delhi Greens here: delhigreens.com

- This evening enjoy a farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

**MARCH 28**

- Arrive home.

**MARCH 27. DELHI (ROOMS RESERVED UNTIL 6 PM) B, L**

- This morning we have invited the South Asia correspondent for a Western newspaper to join the group to discuss media coverage of India.

- Continue on to Raj Ghat to visit the memorial of Mahatma Gandhi. A simple square platform of black marble marks the spot where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated following his assassination in 1948. It is surrounded by a beautiful park with labelled trees planted by notables like Queen Elizabeth II, USA President Eisenhower and most recently President Obama.

- End the morning with a visit to the most grandiose and elegant Victorian section of New Delhi which contains the majestic government buildings conceived by Sir Edwin Lutyens and assisted by Herbert Baker.

- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before returning to the hotel, where rooms will be kept for a late check-out. This evening, transfer to the airport for flights home.
**PRICING**

**GROUND PACKAGE PRICING***

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per person double occupancy</td>
<td>$7,950</td>
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<tr>
<td>plus $350 for internal flights</td>
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<td>Single supplement</td>
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*Rates are based on standard accommodations. Suites, superior rooms and other upgrades carry an additional fee.

**INCLUDED**

- Accommodation based on double occupancy in hotels as listed
- Meals as listed in the program – with bottled water at each meal
- All sightseeing and entrance fees listed
- Transportation in a private air-conditioned bus
- All private events and speakers as listed
- All entrance fees listed
- Airport transfer on designated group arrival and departure dates
- An English speaking national Indian tour manager who will accompany throughout the tour
- Local guides
- Bottled water on the bus at all times
- Porterage
- All gratuities to drivers, guides and tour manager

**DOES NOT INCLUDE**

- International airfare to and from India
- Internal airfare, which includes economy class seats from Mumbai/Varanasi, Varanasi/Agra, and Jaipur/Delhi. These will be billed separately for a total cost of $350 and arranged by tour operator
- Visa and passport fees
- Travel insurance
- Drinks other than bottled water with meals
- Excess luggage charges
- Laundry charges
- Communication (phone, fax and internet) charges
- Items of a purely personal nature
- Any items not listed