



Riding in Rajasthan
With Simon Lawrance
23rd March – 7th April 2018

The Ultimate Travel Company
Escorted Tours



Mehrangarh Fort

Riding in Rajasthan

With Simon Lawrance

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Simon Lawrance

Simon has been based in the Chipping Norton area of Oxfordshire for 25 years. He has produced and evented horses up to CCI 4 star level, having completed Badminton and Burghley on several occasions. He is a very well established name in Eventing and hunting circles. Simon has trained with Emile Faurie, Lars Sederholm, Yogi Breisner and Ginny Elliot, and is a member of the British Eventing Coach Programme. He has trained all levels of riders for many years, and is a British Eventing accredited UKCC level 3 (eventing specific) trainer, and under 18 Coach for the Central Region. Simon has been fieldmaster for the Heythrop Hunt since 2002, and Joint Master of Hounds since 2006.

Detailed Itinerary

This captivating riding tour combines Rajasthan's proud tradition of horses and horsemanship with its rich and colourful Mughal heritage. It is perfect for the experienced rider who not only enjoys well schooled horses at all paces on varied terrain, but also seeks the opportunity to explore one of India's most fascinating regions in a very unique way.

The seven-day ride journeys from the acacia scrubland of the eastern Thar Desert to the rolling foothills of the Aravalli Hills. It combines not only the thrill of riding through the region's diverse landscape with its surprising variety of flora and fauna, but also the rich cultural heritage that abounds in grand Mughal fortresses and palaces, ancient Hindu temples and remote tribal villages.

The ride is arranged and accompanied by Thakur Khem Singh, a nobleman of the ancient House of Ghanerao. With well-schooled and responsive horses, attentive guides, accommodation ranging from a luxury tented camp to the former palaces and hunting lodges of Rajasthan's rulers, fascinating sights and delicious regional food, this is a challenging yet comfortable way to discover the magic of India.

Following the riding safari we will then venture on to the beautiful city of Udaipur to explore the treasures of the imposing City Palace complex, visit the Jagdish Temple and enjoy a cruise on Lake Pichola, before continuing to the 'Rose City' of Jaipur, with its colourful markets and eclectic blend of architecture including the magnificent Amber Fort. We will then spend one night in Agra to see the impressive Agra Fort and the famous Taj Mahal before continuing and finishing our journey in Delhi exploring the contrast between bustling Old Delhi and Sir Edwin Lutyen's New Delhi.



the blue city of Jodhpur



Rohet Garh

Day 1: Friday, 23rd March

London / Mumbai

Morning departure from London Heathrow on a Jet Airways flight to Mumbai.

Day 2: Saturday, 24th March

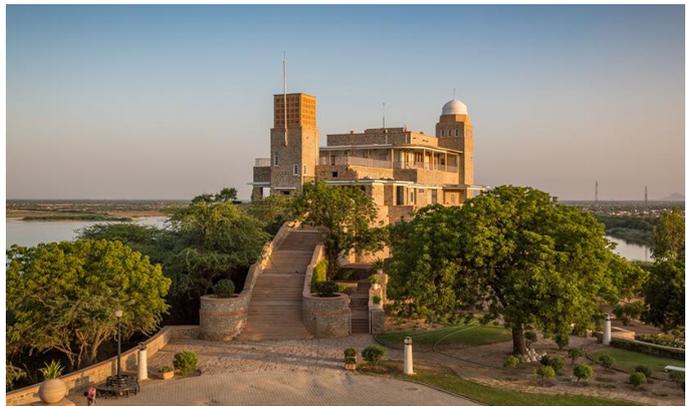
Mumbai / Jodphur

On arrival (at 00.20 hrs) transfer to the five-star Leela Hotel which is a short drive from the airport and where one night is spent. Breakfast at the hotel before transferring back to Mumbai Airport for a Jet Airways flight to Jodphur, known for its white and blue houses dominated by an impressive hilltop fortress. Met on arrival and transfer to Fort Chanwaa.

Late lunch at a local restaurant en route. Visit the impressive hilltop Mehrangarh Fort which dominates the town before continuing driving to Rohet to meet the horses, which are pure-bred Marwari, half-bred or thoroughbred polo ponies. They have all been polo trained and are light on the mouth. The height varies from 14.3 to 15.3 hands, and saddlery is English or Universal Steel Arch Cavalry. The pace will be moderate to fast with opportunities for long canters and, during three to five hours riding each day, covering up to 28km. Check into Kandi Wilderness Camp (or similar) where one night is spent. Dinner at the hotel.



Bishnoi desert village



Sardar Samand Palace

Day 3: Sunday, 25th March

Rohet

Ride out (3.5hrs / 18km) past desert villages and through desert terrain to reach some Bishnoi villages. In spite of the region being quite dry and arid, it is surprisingly rich in wildlife including over 200 bird species. Continue to Rohet.

Check in and lunch at Rohet Garh, a 17th century fortified ancestral home, where one night is spent. Remainder of the afternoon at leisure to enjoy the beautiful gardens, swimming pool and spa. Dinner at Rohet Garh.

Day 4: Monday, 26th March

Rohet / Sardar Samand

Ride (5hrs / 28km) through sandy tracts and scrubland, passing quaint hamlets occupied by the colourfully clad Bishnoi desert tribe to Sardar Samand. Arrive and check into Sardar Samand Palace, a superb art deco former hunting lodge which was built by Maharja Umaid Singh in 1933 and retains many original features with an impressive exterior and elegantly decorated interiors and where one night is spent. It is set in extensive grounds on the edge of the lake and offers comfortable accommodation furnished in period style.

Lunch at Sardar Samand Palace. The rest of the afternoon will be at leisure to enjoy the hotel's many facilities, which include an elegant swimming pool. Alternatively there are options for fishing or rowing on the lake as well as tennis or walks through the forest to observe a variety of flora and fauna or to the nearby village. Poolside dinner at the hotel.

Day 5: Tuesday, 27th March

Sardar Samand / Kotri Raola

Morning drive (2hrs) past the busy town of Pali to reach the Jawali Shiva Temples where we will meet our horses.

Picnic lunch. Ride (4 hrs / 20 km) into the low foothills and open grassland before reaching Kotri, a small shepherds' village situated between mountainous Mewar and the desert of Marwar. Check into Kotri Raola, a 250-year-old ancestral castle owned by the nobility of Ghanerao, where one night is spent. Dinner at Kotri Raola.



Ranakpur Jain Temples



Kumbhalgarh Fort

Day 6: Wednesday, 28th March

Kotri Raola / Rawla Narlai

Ride (3.5hrs / 15 km) out past open farmlands to the rocky hills of Narlai. Check into Rawla Narlai, a 17th century former hunting lodge of the Jodhpur royal family where one night is spent.

After lunch at Rawla Narlai the remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Dinner at Rawla Narlai.

Day 7: Thursday, 29th March

Narlai / Ghanerao Castle

Ride out (3hrs / 12km) past farms, lakes, colourful shepherds with their flocks and farmers working the fields, to Muthana Lake, a haven for wildlife and migratory birds. Continue riding through scrub forest land until reaching the road where we will transfer to jeeps and drive through the merchant town of Sadri. Arrive at Ghenerao Castle, which dates back to 1606, where one night will be spent.

Lunch at Ghenerao Castle. Afternoon visit to the intricately sculpted 15th century Jain temples of Ranakpur. Dinner at Ghenerao Castle.

Day 8: Friday, 30th March

Ghanerao Castle / Kumbhalagarh

Ride out (4hrs / 18km) pas Garasia tribal villages and farms along the Aravalli Hills before entering the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, home to leopard, flying squirrel, sloth and wolf, and ride up a steep trail, climbing 2000ft. Check into the Aodhi Hotel which offers wonderful views of the Kumbhalgarh Fort and features a swimming pool, where one night is spent.

Lunch at the Aodhi Hotel. Afternoon visit to the vast 15th century Kumbhalgarh Fort, one of the most impressive fortresses in the ancient Kingdom of Mewar. Constructed in the 15th century, the perimeter walls are over 36 km in length and 20 ft thick. The complex of buildings, temples and palaces within these walls needs time to be explored. Kumbhalgarh fort and its adjoining areas have been declared a wildlife sanctuary

which protects one of the India's few families of wolves as well as leopards and flying squirrels. It is a fairly steep climb up to the fort but well worth the effort as the views are fabulous, out over the surrounding hills. Dinner at the Aodhi Hotel.



Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary



Lake Palace, Udaipur

Day 9: Saturday, 31st March

Kumbhalagarh / Udaipur

This morning you will be met and transferred to Udaipur, considered one of the most beautiful cities in India, where two nights are spent at Amet Haveli situated on the Western Banks of Lake Pichola. The hotel offers a unique panoramic of the old city, lake Pichola, Ghanghaur Ghat, Mohan Mandir, Lake Palace, Jagmandir and the beautiful Aravali ranges.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon tour of the grand City Palace Complex which towers over Lake Pichola, started in 1567 by Maharana Udai Singh with carefully integrated subsequent additions. Within are a series of courtyards, corridors and gardens, along with a fascinating collection of museums. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 10: Sunday, 1st April

Udaipur

Morning visit to the superb 17th century Jagdish Temple noted for its imposing 25-metre pagoda covered with bas-relief of horsemen, dancers, musicians and elephants, along with black stone images of Vishnu as Jagannath. Also visit the small Saheliyon-Ki-Bari ornamental garden.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Afternoon at leisure. Evening cruise on Lake Pichola, followed by dinner at the hotel.

Day 11: Monday, 2nd April

Udaipur / Jaipur

Early morning transfer to Udaipur airport for a domestic flight to Jaipur, known as the 'Rose City', having been painted pink in 1876. On arrival transfer to the Trident Hotel (or similar), where two nights are spent. With breath-taking views of the serene Mansagar Lake and the striking Aravalli range, the hotel offers elegant rooms and lovely gardens and is conveniently located between the central city and Jaipur's famous Amber Fort.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon tour of the city including the City Palace Complex, Jai Singh's model palace, with its magnificent Hawa Mahal, known as the Palace of the Winds, an elaborate five storey façade of windows and tracery from where the ladies of the court used to sit and observe the outside world and enjoy the cooling breezes (hence the name). Visit Govind Devi Temple, with its series of courtyards and gardens

and also the 18th century Royal Observatory with its monumental sundials and signs of the zodiac. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 12: Tuesday, 3rd April Jaipur

Morning visit to the impressive Amber Fort which dates from the 16th / 17th centuries, where the majestic 18km ramparts rise steeply above its hilltop site and elephants carry visitors up to the entrance gate. Within, a series of courtyards lead to a rich interior of lavishly decorated pavilions, rooms and apartments – gold and silver, coloured and mirrored glass, carved marble, plaster and wood and exquisite wall paintings abound.

Lunch at the hotel. Afternoon city tour of Jaipur visiting the Maharaja's City Palace and the Observatory (Jantar Mantar), the Albert Hall Museum and Ram Niwas Gardens whilst driving through the pink residential and business areas of Jaipur. Continue to Dera Amer, an elephant camp run outside a local family's ancestral home. Located at the foothills of the Aravali Range and surrounded by just a few hamlets housing the local villagers, the birdlife in the area is thriving and occasionally hyenas and wolves have been sighted in the surrounding hills.

There is an optional elephant trek through the local villages, agricultural scrubland and ancient ruins. Dinner at the camp.



Amber Palace, Jaipur



Elephant at Dera Amer

Day 13: Wednesday, 4th April Jaipur / Agra

Early morning transfer to Agra and check into the Trident Hotel where one night is spent. Set amidst lovely gardens, fountains, landscaped central courtyards, the Trident Agra is a modern style property, built in red stone reminiscent of the Mughal era. Ideally located, it is just a 1 ½ kilometres from the famous Taj Mahal.

Lunch at the hotel. Visit the impressive 16th century Agra Fort, which was started in 1565 by Akbar with later additions made by his son, Jahangir, and grandson, Shah Jahan. Continue to the white marble Tomb of Itimad ud Daulah, known as the Baby Taj, considered to be the forerunner of the Taj Mahal and profusely decorated with non-precious stone inlay work. End the afternoon with a visit to the Taj Mahal, the world's greatest monument to love and devotion, with its superb craftsmanship of semi-precious stones inlaid into the marble in beautiful patterns, a process known as *pietra dura*. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 14: Thursday, 5th April Agra / Delhi

Dawn visit to the Taj Mahal before returning to the hotel for breakfast. Transfer (with luggage) to Delhi and check into the Taj Mahal Hotel, where two nights are spent. One of the most distinguished addresses in the

national capital, The Taj Mahal Hotel is located in the exclusive residential area of Lutyens' Delhi, close to the seat of government.

Late lunch at the hotel. Afternoon visit to Qutb Minar, the world's tallest brick minaret, and Humayun's Tomb, an early example of the ornate Moghul style. Dinner at the hotel.



Taj Mahal, Agra



Humayun's Tomb, Delhi

Day 15: Friday, 6th April

Delhi

Morning drive through Sir Edwin Lutyens' New Delhi, passing India Gate and the Parliament Building. Also visit Rashtrapati Bhavan – the President's residence – where there is a visit to the famous Mughal Gardens designed by Lutyens for Lady Harding.

Lunch at a local restaurant. Afternoon rickshaw ride through Old Delhi's bustling and vibrant Chandni Chowk market place and a visit to the Jama Masjid Mosque, the largest mosque in India. Continue to the fascinating Crafts Museum and the old fort of Purana Qila where there are excellent views across New Delhi. Dinner at the hotel.

Day 16: Saturday, 7th April

Delhi / London

Morning transfer to Delhi International Airport for a Jet Airways early afternoon flight to London arriving in the late afternoon.

N.B The riding safari is aimed at the experienced English-style rider who is comfortable and secure in the saddle, and able to control a well-schooled horse over varied terrain at all paces. Riders should have a good level of riding and general fitness.



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Tour Price

COST PER PERSON: £5,365

Single supplement: £895

Visa fees: TBA

A fee of £95 per person will be charged for those who would like to travel out or back separately from the main group.

The tour cost includes:

- economy class international scheduled flights
- air passenger duty, passenger service charge, airline security charges, airport taxes and fuel surcharges where applicable – currently £375 for Economy Class
- domestic flights as shown in the itinerary
- trained Marwari horses with personal grooms and full saddlery
- accommodation throughout as shown in the itinerary
- breakfast daily; 14 lunches; 14 dinners
- all entrance fees, visits and excursions as per the itinerary
- all transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- local English-speaking guide/s and riding escort
- gratuities to driver/s; gratuities in restaurants; portage
- the services of your tour leaders throughout
- gratuities to guide/s

The tour cost does NOT include:

- travel insurance
- excess baggage
- items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- saddle savers and helmets for riding
- government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme on 06/02/17

Changes to the Itinerary

Please note, that certain elements of this itinerary, and/or the order of events, may well be subject to alteration due to circumstances beyond our control.

Fitness to travel

Whilst we do not impose any age limitations on joining a tour, participants must be reasonably fit. The very nature of the sightseeing involved in our tours (and the difficulties of direct access by coach in various places) means that a considerable amount of walking and standing is unavoidable on almost all tours. We regret that our tours are not suitable for people who have difficulty in walking, may require wheelchair assistance at any time, or are unable to keep pace with the group. If you are in any doubt as to the suitability

of a tour, please make this known to us before you book and we will advise you accordingly. The Ultimate Travel Company reserves the right to decline a reservation without necessarily giving a reason.

Airline Tickets

As a tour operator we have access to special airfares. While these offer good value, they do carry certain restrictions applied by the airline. Please ask us for details.

Note: If you are thinking about using air miles to upgrade to a premium cabin on the flights, please check with us first as fare restrictions might not permit this.

Health Requirements

No vaccinations are required for entry into India however if you have travelled within a yellow fever infected area during the previous six days prior to arrival you will require proof of inoculation. The following inoculations are recommended: Typhoid, Hepatitis A and B, Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio. Malaria is present throughout most of India so anti-malaria prophylactics are advised.

Please check recommended practice with your GP, practice nurse or travel health clinic.

Passport and Visa Information

British Nationals require a visa for India. This can be obtained through the new online e-Tourist Visa service (currently the easiest and cheapest option), through CIBT (our recommended visa service provider) or directly through one of the Indian Visa Application Centres located throughout the UK.

Passengers should hold a full passport, which should be valid for six months after you return to the UK and should also have at least three empty pages for the visa. Nationals of other countries should consult their local Indian Embassy.

For British passport holders and for non-British nationals resident in the UK, visas can be arranged through CIBT Visa Service Company (an application pack will be provided two months before travel) or direct to the High Commission at <http://in.vfsglobal.co.uk>.

Baggage Allowance

Please note that the internal flights within India have a baggage allowance of 23kg per person. Excess baggage is charged at a flat rate of INR 300 per kg inclusive of service tax.

FCO Advice

Travel advice issued by the Foreign & Commonwealth Office can be viewed at www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo.

Accommodation

Hotels are chosen on the basis of category, character and location. The majority will be at least 4 star, otherwise the best available. The projected size of the group will often rule out the use of luxury boutique hotels. Sometimes the style of hotel will mean that not all rooms are of the same size or have the same outlook.