



TRAVEL CLUB
travel without judgement

COLOUR, CULTURE & CONTRASTS *of rajasthan*



15 DAYS | 14 NIGHTS

24 OCTOBER - 7 NOVEMBER 2023

HI THERE CLUBBERS!

COLOUR, CULTURE AND CONTRASTS OF RAJASTHAN.

This fabulous tour has proven to be a real winner with many Clubbers in the past. We have already run the programme twice in conjunction with Sri Lanka back in 2017 and again 2018. This time around we are going to run it in conjunction with our new 'ONTRACK ADVENTURES' Northeast India programme. Many Clubbers last time took the opportunity to value add and utilise one international airfare to tick both boxes and experience two different destinations. To see what our Northeast India programme is all about please click below to visit our website for our:

'ONTRACK NORTHEAST INDIA ADVENTURE' - The Tribal, Tiger and Temple Tour

THINGS JUST KEEP GETTING BETTER!

We always invest in our Clubbers feedback and for this reason we listened and have made a few subtle changes. Those changes being an upgrade for our joining hotel in Delhi along with some additional inclusions and a minor tweak to our timings. We have also flipped the order of some of the amazing sights which improves the overall travel experience for everyone.

For those of you who have travelled with us already on a G&T Travel Club trip you can see how we do things a little different to the regular tour companies. For those of your family and friends who haven't they may be interested in reading what we see as our point of difference below.

There are some good tour companies out there, but they all tend to follow the same path and the same style. We are not re-inventing the wheel but feel that our 'product' has some distinct differences and personal touches. Most importantly G&T Travel Club trips will always have Gools and Thommo on each and every departure.



HOW WE DIFFER

The following are some of the considerations we made while developing the trips.

a We wanted to develop an **interesting itinerary** that will 'wow' you each day with great value inclusions that everyone would be interested in and none of those 'kitch' touristy things that just waste your time and patience. We will be there daily to point out the different ways to enjoy your shopping and bargaining experiences. We will not take you to those big tourist trap Emporiums and Carpet sellers, but instead show you how these businesses work and show you how to get a good deal on your own. We will offer you the freedom to do your own thing. In fact, we will encourage you and help you to get the most out of your holiday by listening to what your personal needs are. You may want to go shopping for something special or want to head out on your own or in a smaller group. G&T will help and guide you to do just that. We keep our group size small and in fact our coach is often bigger than our group size requires so there can be spare seats to spread out a little.

b **Accommodation** choices are paramount and chosen for their great location, view, style, feel and facilities, not just to a Star Category. We use fantastic Castles, Royal Palaces, Colonial Residences and Heritage style Hotels, all hand-picked and researched thoroughly by us! All the accommodation options include great breakfast spreads to start each day with both western and local foods available to suit your taste.

c You will have an **option to eat** out at some of our favourite great restaurants which are often within walking distance to our accommodation. You can choose to join us and eat out or simply stay and eat in, it's up to you! Funnily enough some of the best restaurants are typically within our chosen accommodation already. We have also personally checked restaurant menus to make sure that they can cater for most of the obvious dietary requirements. Because the majority of dinners are not included we make sure that we have a good variation between set menu, buffet and ordering from the menu with both western and local choices. The restaurants for our Special Farewell Dinners have been chosen for the amazing food and the experience as well as something to truly remember.

d Having both **Goals and Thommo** along as hosts gives you something no one else can match. We will be with you the whole time looking after you personally. On top of that we will also have a National Tour Guide, a Driver and Assistant and Local City Guides throughout the tour. You are in safe hands and in a small group environment. This is great because with so many support staff on hand you can create your own travel experience. You may have had a 'group tour' experience before where you felt rushed and dragged along by your guide. We make sure that everyone gets to walk at a comfortable pace and have time to have a good look at things along the way. If you are a keen photographer then you will have time to get the shot without losing the group. If you need to buy something while we are out and about then we can make this happen without making the group wait. In our opinion this is really important in a group travel environment.

e Most importantly we made sure we put together a **'Great Value'** product, not necessarily the cheapest but well worth the few extra dollars for an amazing experience! We have chosen our dates and itinerary for each country with consideration of the best seasonality, best possible weather, the lesser crowds and noting any special holiday dates.



On our tour we will focus on the colourful state of Rajasthan. We will visit iconic Agra and the incomparable Taj Mahal, along with Rajasthan's capital the 'Pink City' of Jaipur. We'll see turbaned men, snake charmers, blue painted houses and vibrant markets while visiting all the major towns of Rajasthan. Jaisalmer with its fairy tale fort, Jodhpur, the 'Blue City' and Udaipur 'Venice of the East'. We discover amazing palaces, deserts and temples noting the contrasting colours, cultures and faces of Northern India!

Day 1 ARRIVE DELHI

Welcome to **Delhi!**

Make your way to our Hotel the using your included arrival day airport to hotel transfer
Arrival day is a free day at leisure.

Meals Included: None

Overnight: Imperial Hotel New Delhi (or similar)

Style: Colonial Luxury



Day 2 DELHI SIGHTSEEING

NB: Today you will need to be dressed in the appropriate clothing for the temple/mosque. This includes long pants for men and long pants or a long skirt for women and shoulders must be covered for both men and women. We remove our shoes to enter the temple/mosque as well. **NB:** We will note where Temple Clothes are required throughout the itinerary.

Once the capital of the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, **Old Delhi** is a riot of colour, noise and chaos. Using cycle rickshaws we explore the Chandni Chowk Bazaar at the heart of the Old City. One of the highlights of Old Delhi is the **Jami Masjid mosque**. Built of Red-stone, Jama Masjid is the largest mosque in India. The courtyard of the mosque measures around 1000 square meters and has a capacity of 20,000 people. The mosque is so big that the Muatllawi (the second cleric), once stood on the Dikka and repeated the Ayats said by the Imam (the chief cleric) to the devotees who were unable to hear him. The mosque took some 14 years to construct.

From the top of the southern minaret there is a view of **New Delhi**. Nearby is the imposing **Red Fort**. Built in the 1600s its enormous red sandstone walls stand over 30 meters above the heart of the Old City which swirls around it. We'll take a rickshaw ride through **Chandni Chowk** and have a wander through the **Spice Bazaar**. Be sure to have your camera ready to capture all the wonderful sights including the chaotic electrical wiring, cheeky monkeys, traders on bikes with massive loads, and the traffic in general. By some kind of sixth sense and tolerance the drivers and pedestrians seem to just miss each other. For those who are adventurous you can stay on and enjoy more of the Bazaar at leisure or you can board the coach and return to the hotel for a free afternoon. Perhaps a short walk from the hotel to the shops and markets at **Connaught Place** is more your thing.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Imperial Hotel New Delhi (or similar)

Style: Colonial Luxury



Day 4

DRIVE VIA FATEHPUR SIKIRI TO KARAU LI

NB: Temple clothes required for the afternoon

After breakfast we leave bustling Agra and head for **Fatehpur Sikri** (37 Kms / 1.5 hrs).

Once the site of the Moghul Emperor Akbar's court. This city was inhabited for just 16 years after its construction in 1569 before being totally abandoned. Still standing virtually intact, just as it did in the sixteenth century, the place is a treasure house of royal buildings. In the centre of the main courtyard is the Pachisi Board, once used by the Emperor for games similar to chess, but using live slave girls as pieces. We'll see also the **Panch Mahal**, towering five stories high, and the remarkable **Diwan-i-Khas**, with its lotus shaped central pillar. It is so easy to imagine yourself living back in the day as we explore this amazing site.

After our visit we will continue the drive to **Karauli** (130 Kms / 3.5 hrs). Enjoying the ever changing countryside we will be entertained by the antics of the traffic and wonder why life seems so simple out of the big cities.

Early in the afternoon we will arrive at Karauli and check-into our hotel (The Royal Residence of the current Maharaja). After changing into our temple clothes we will take a camel cart ride to visit the quaint **Karauli Palace**. This ride is a fun way to get ourselves to the palace. Be ready for lots of photo opportunities as we wind our way through the small streets of this fascinating rural village. The local children and some of the fun loving adults will find it very entertaining to smile and wave as we pass by. We will then visit a local temple and view an **'Aarti' ceremony**. This ceremony is an interesting religious ritual where most Hindu people like to worship. The local people are very happy to have us share the experience with them.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Overnight: Bhanwar Vilas Palace (or similar)

Style: Heritage Maharaja's Residence

Day 3 MORNING TRAIN TO AGRA

After an early breakfast we transfer to the railway station to board our train to **Agra**

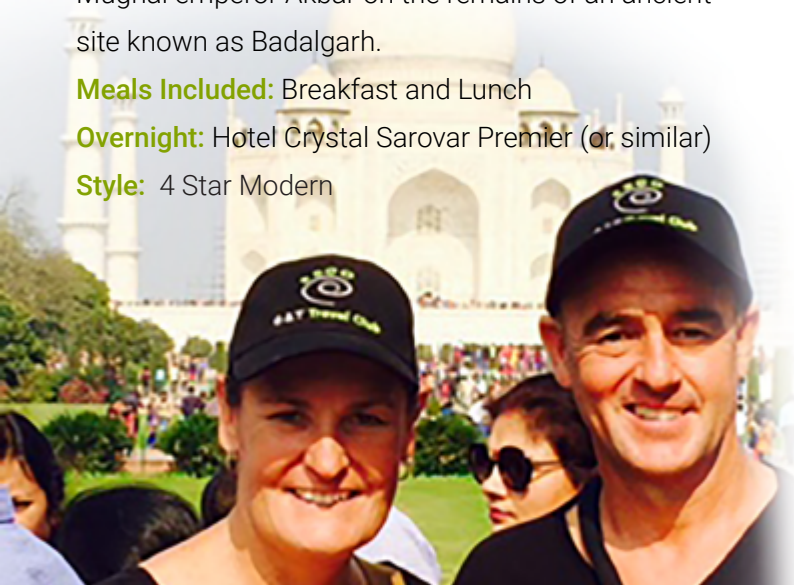
(Departs 08:10am, Arrives 09:50am current schedule).

Upon arrival at Agra station we transfer to our coach and make our way to the majestic **Taj Mahal**. Built some 300 years ago, the Taj never fails to stun the viewer. The symmetry and elegance, the perfect proportions, making it in the views of many, the world's most perfect building. The Taj took 22 years to build, using the labour of 20,000 men, on the orders of Shah Jahan who wanted a monument to prove his love for his wife Mumtaz. The Emperor joined her under the white marble dome of the Taj after his own death. After that breathtaking first view of the Taj we will have a guided tour of the building and surrounds. A little later we will go for lunch (included) before continuing on to the amazing world heritage site of **Agra Fort** (now included). The fort is one of the most important and robustly built strongholds of the Mughals. It is embellished with a number of richly decorated buildings encompassing the imposing Mughal style of art and architecture. It was constructed by the third Mughal emperor Akbar on the remains of an ancient site known as Badalgarh.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Lunch

Overnight: Hotel Crystal Sarovar Premier (or similar)

Style: 4 Star Modern



Day 5

DRIVE TO JAIPUR. AFTERNOON SIGHTSEEING

After breakfast we depart for **Jaipur** (185 Kms / 5 hours).

A morning tea stop along the way and we arrive in town in time for lunch. After lunch we will visit the remarkable **observatory built by the Maharaja** and astronomer Jai Singh. We will learn a little about the fascinating night sky and see how time was measured before time pieces were even invented.

A little later we will visit the **City Palace**, including the collection of wonderful textiles and intricate Rajasthani costumes. The highlight of today is perhaps the **Hawa Mahal, 'Palace Of The Winds'**. Built in the late eighteenth century, this 5 storied structure is arguably the most iconic structure in the city. We will have an opportunity to view this amazing building from the bustling market area that is located around it. This is a good opportunity to hone your bargaining skills as there are some fantastic stalls here selling all sorts of colourful and iconic Rajasthani souvenirs.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Mandawa Haveli (or similar)

Style: Heritage Palacial Mansion (Haveli)

Day 6

MORNING SIGHTSEEING JAIPUR THEN DRIVE TO MANDAWA

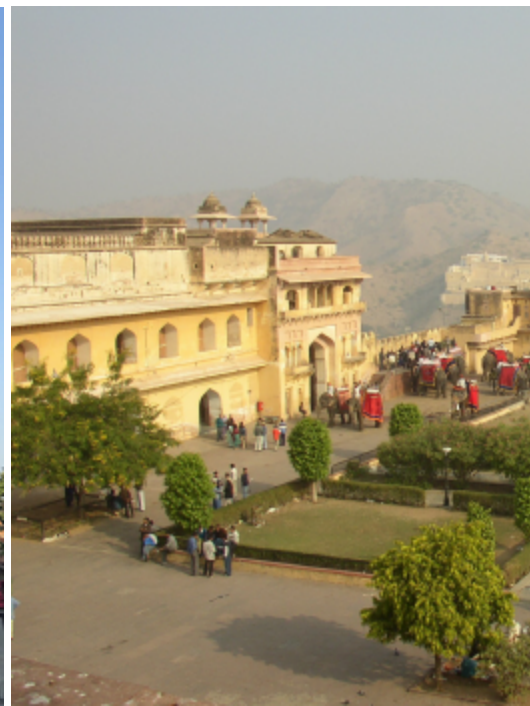
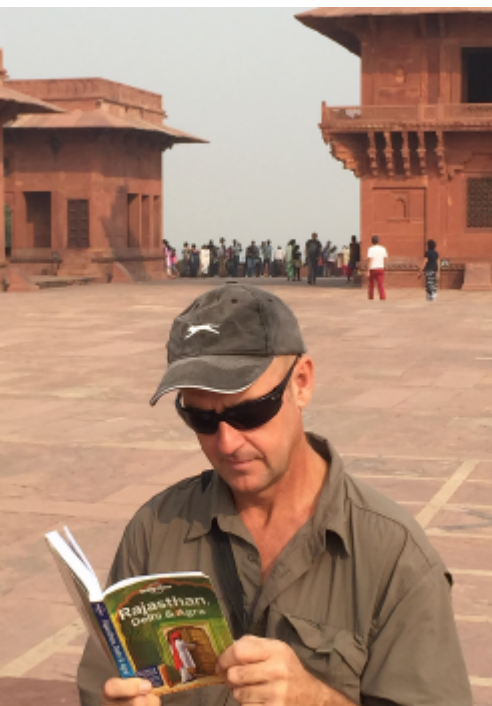
After a beautiful breakfast we make our way out of town to **Amber Fort**. Reached by a winding pathway by jeep, this hilltop Fortress gives a glimpse of the opulence of the Moghul world with the stunning **Chamber of Mirrors** being perhaps the most memorable part of the complex. After exploring the fort and taking in the views over the surrounding plains we head back into bustling **Jaipur**.

We then drive to **Mandawa** (150 Kms / 3-4 hours) Stopping along the way for lunch Mandawa lies in the heart of Shekhawati, a semi-arid region located in the northeast part of Rajasthan, famous for its **Heritage Havelis and colourful fresco art**. When we arrive Mandawa we will check-in to the historical **Castle Mandawa**. (yes an actual castle) After a freshen up we will enjoy a fascinating walking tour of this unique sleepy little town to witness the amazing collection of frescos that adorn many of the beautiful Haveli's. (Traditional merchant homes from a bygone era)

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Castle Mandawa (or similar)

Style: Heritage Castle





Day 7 MANDAWA TO BIKANER

After breakfast we drive to **Bikaner**
(200 Kms / 5 hours)

We will break the journey with a stop along the way for morning tea. On arrival in **Bikaner** we will have a relaxing lunch then explore the impressive **Junagadh Fort** - constructed between 1588 and 1593 by Raja Rai Singh. The fort has a 986 meter long wall with 37 bastions & two entrances. Situated at a height of above seven hundred feet above sea level, it towers over the city and can be seen from a great distance. The beautifully designed palace has interiors decorated with shell-work, mirror and glass inlays, gold leaf, lacquer work etc. Highlights include **Diwan-I-Khas, Phool Mahal and Chandra Mahal, Anup Mahal the coronation hall, Gaj Mandir with its mirrored Shish Mahal, and Har Mandir**. Time permitting we may visit the museum containing manuscripts, weaponry and jewellery. We may also see the **Bhand Sagar Temple**, a 16th century Jain temple within the complex. Bikaner is also known for the fine camels bred here. There is a government camel-breeding farm nearby so often camels can be seen around the city streets!

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Lallgarh Palace (or similar)

Style: Heritage Palace

Day 8 DRIVE TO JAISALMER

After breakfast we set off for **Jaisalmer**
(330 Kms / 6-7 hours including morning tea, lunch and rest stops).

A really interesting drive as we head deeper into the desert. We will traverse the scrubby desert environment and actually note many similarities to the Kimberley region in Australia (where we work). Spotting wildlife along the way we'll pass Phalodi and Khichan before reaching **Jaisalmer**. The city, sometimes referred to as the golden city, was founded by the Rajput chief Jaisala, from whom it takes its name. The city was established in the year 1156 atop the Trikut hill by the Maharaja as a defensive measure.

The initial capital of the Bhatti Rajput clan was at Lodhruva which lies some 15 kilometres to the south east. Jaisalmer grew rapidly in the medieval period and amassed great wealth from the caravans that traversed the region. The two routes that connected India to Persia, Africa, Egypt and the Western countries passed through this region and Jaisalmer prospered. As we approach our destination the desert landscape gives way to the awesome views of Jaisalmer itself. After checking into our hotel, we have time to wander the streets of this frontier desert town. We will point out our favourite restaurant which is right next door to Hotel Mandir Palace.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Mandir Palace (or similar)

Style: Heritage Palace



Day 9 JAISALMER FULL DAY SIGHTSEEING

NB: Temple clothes are required today.

We have a full day to explore this fun city, and we start with a guided tour. We'll visit **Gadisagar Lake** before heading for **Jaisalmer Fort**. About a quarter of the old city's population still resides within the fort walls making it so different to the previous forts already visited. The fort is entered through a forbidding series of massive gates leading to a large courtyard. The fort stands proudly, surrounded by stretches of the great Thar Desert, on Trikuta Hill, and has been the scene of many battles. We'll also visit a **Jain Temple** and a **Haveli**. After our tour there is plenty of free time to wander the narrow lanes and explore the bazaar at your own pace. Maybe some of you will be keen to bargain for some silver jewellery or perhaps try and decide which colourful bedspread you like the best.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Hotel Mandir Palace (or similar)

Style: Heritage Palace



Day 10 DRIVE TO JODHPUR

After breakfast, we leave the sandcastle fort behind and head to **Jodhpur** (305 kms / 5-6 hours). Breaking the journey as usual with both morning tea and lunch. Another oasis in the arid **Thar Desert**, Jodhpur is the second largest city in the state of Rajasthan. Representing this colourful city are the many shades of blue and Jodhpur has a history that is as rich and vibrant to match. Jodhpur is one of our favourite cities! Forts and palaces, temples and havelis, culture and tradition, spices and fabrics, colour and texture, Jodhpur has them all. Situated in western Rajasthan, Jodhpur has long attracted both domestic and international tourists. It not only offers tangibles, in terms of what you can see and buy but also fills one with a sense of history and the splendours of the years gone by. The hospitality of the locals, the conservative nature and dress of the women, and the colourful turbans worn by many men - all set against the unmerciful desert is something to feel, not just see. Every corner of Jodhpur tells its own tale of heroism that made legends out of kings and soldiers, romances that continue to warm the heart and a time when epics were lived out on the streets by everyday man. We arrive in Jodhpur early afternoon then have an opportunity to visit the **Sardar Bazaar and Clock Tower markets** where you can see the vegetable, spice, Indian sweets, and textile and bangle markets. These colourful markets with tiny shops dotting the narrow lanes sell woodcarvings, wrought iron, lacquer work, silver and leather handicrafts. Perhaps for the culinary minded you can pick up some traditional Indian curry serving bowls for your next dinner party at home.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Devi Bhawan Hotel (or similar)

Style: Elegant Boutique Hotel





Day 11 FULL DAY IN JODHPUR

After a relaxed breakfast we make our way to **Mehrangarh**, the massive fort. In the olden days this must have been impregnable since its rocky base is scraped straight down making it nearly impossible to ascend. Once inside, royal palaces abound with fascinating history and priceless jewels. We continue on to the armoury and then **Jaswant Thada - the Royal Crematorium**. This for many is their favourite fort. For most the decision is too hard as each and every fort is so different and magical. After our fort visit we have a free afternoon to give you more time to explore this colourful city.

For those interested you may wish to join an optional afternoon village tour. Approx cost INR 1000 – 1500 You will get to witness many aspects of rural life while helping to sustain a local family.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Devi Bhawan Hotel (or similar)

Style: Elegant Boutique Hotel

Day 12 DRIVE VIA RANAKPUR TO UDAIPUR

NB: Temple clothes are required today

This Temple also strictly requests NO leather items to be worn. NO belts/wallets/handbags etc.

After breakfast we depart Jodhpur bound for **Udaipur** (175 km / 5 hrs stopping for both morning tea and lunch).

After lunch we will stop at **Ranakpur** to see one of the best Jain Temples in India. This Temple is definitely the largest and dates back to the 15th century. The main temple is dedicated to Adinath, one of the first Tirthankars. The intricate carvings on the walls, pillars and domes detail mythological figures, patterns and motifs. We learn that there are 1444 ornately carved marble pillars in the complex and no two of them are the same. The beautiful lace-like interiors of the domes are a superb example of western Indian temple style. The best way to experience this unique temple is to have an audio guide that you can wander at your own pace and enjoy the tranquil atmosphere and learn the story and belief behind the architecture.

We continue onto **Udaipur** (100 kms / 2.5 hours). Known locally as the 'Venice of the East' as it sits on the banks of **Lake Pichola** it is the seat of Rajasthan's wealthiest Maharajah and one of India's truly exquisite cities. Udaipur is full of architectural masterpieces; the **opulent City Palace, the romantic Lake Palace**, along with the simple life of the people on the streets in the old town. We arrive late afternoon and check-in at our hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Karohi Haveli (or similar)

Style: Heritage Hotel



Day 13 UDAIPUR FULL DAY VISITS

NB: Temple clothes are required today

Today we embark on a guided walking tour of **Udaipur**, visiting the **City Palace & Museum**, and take a boat ride on **Lake Pichola**. Our hotel is right on the lake so our walking tour starts at the hotel which means you can return to the hotel in your own time. Udaipur is a great place for some last minute shopping within the many tiny alleyways. You may want to just find a coffee shop to sit and relax and soak up the romance of this city.

The City Palace looms over the waters of Lake Pichola. Famous for its splendid royal apartments, lavish lawns and pavilions, the City Palace is one of the most important tourist attractions in Udaipur. According to a traditional custom the Maharanas of Udaipur would be weighed in gold and silver at the entrance of the Hathi Pol and the wealth would then be distributed amongst the poor.

We will also visit **Jagdish Temple** located 150 meters from the City Palace. One of the highlights of this temple is the large black stone idol of Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Lord Jaggannath (where the modern word Juggernaut comes from). The main Jagdish temple structure is situated in the middle with four smaller shrines in the four corners dedicated to Lord Ganesha, Sun God, Goddess Shakti and Lord Shiva.

Meals Included: Breakfast

Overnight: Karohi Haveli (or similar)

Style: Heritage Hotel



Day 14 FLY UDAIPUR TO DELHI

Enjoy a relaxing morning before transferring to the airport for our flight back to **Delhi** (included) (Departs 14:40, Arrives 16:20 – Current Schedule) The included baggage limit for this flight is 15kg per person. Many guests chose to store luggage at the Imperial Hotel in Delhi.

On arrival we will transfer to our hotel (included) We have plenty of time to freshen up before we head out for our **Special Farewell** Dinner together. We will share an evening of good laughs and good memories and good food.

Meals included: Breakfast, Dinner

Overnight: The Imperial New Delhi

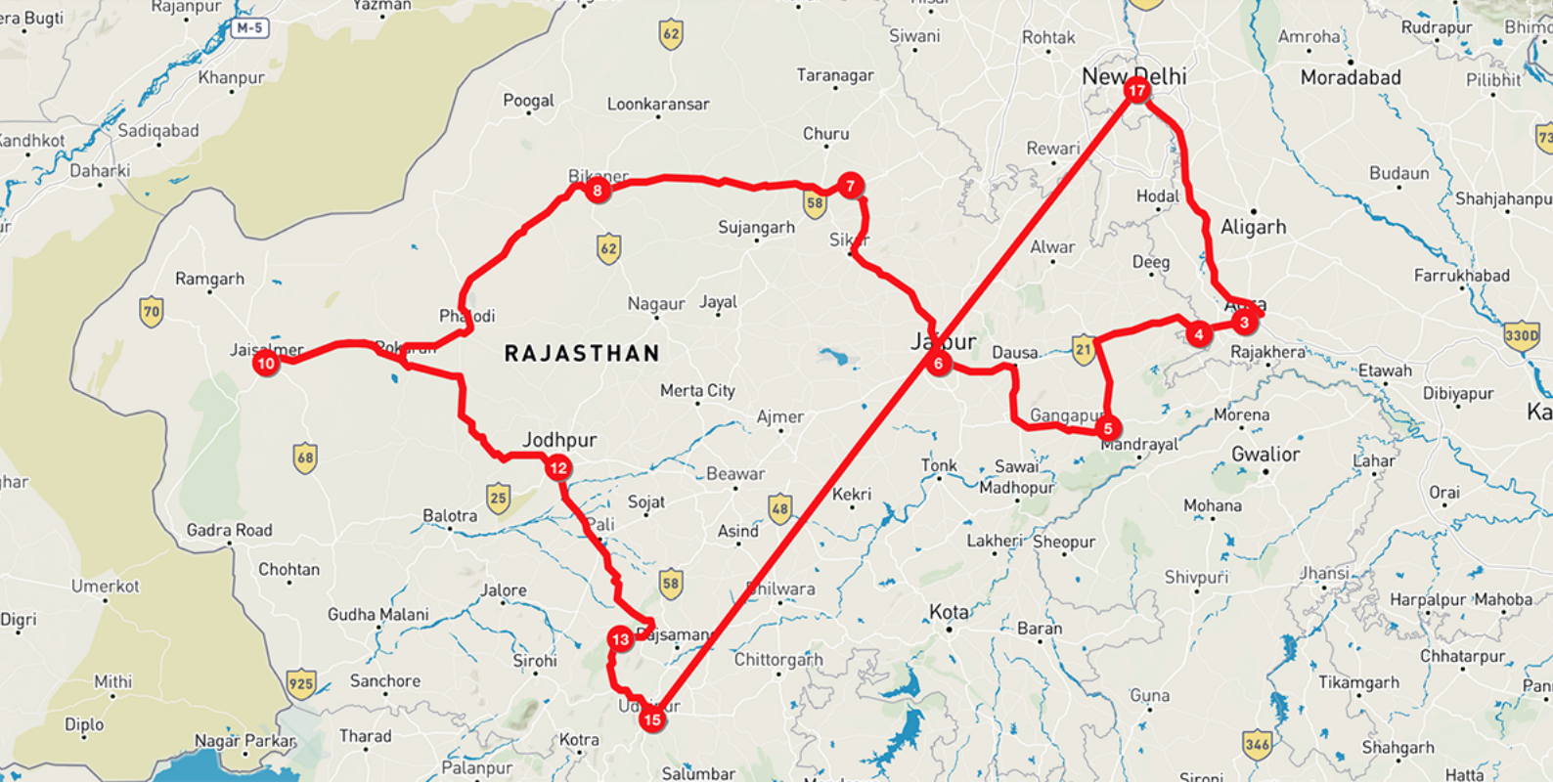
Style: Colonial Luxury

Day 15 DEPARTURE DAY

Enjoy a relaxing breakfast this morning before the tour ends. There may be time for a last minute shop before making your way to Delhi International airport to catch your flight home.

Meals Included: Breakfast





[CLICK HERE](#) to view an interactive version of the tour map online