



TRAVELLING TO NEW PLACES WITH CONFIDENCE

Trails of Ancient India

11-Day, 10-Night Journey

Mumbai, Aurangabad, Maheshwar, Indore, Ujjain, Bhopal

The history of ancient India civilization starts from the prehistoric era to the recent colonial era of modern India. Explore what makes this vast country abundant and its nation so culturally diverse.

Step back into prehistoric era to witness its rich heritage, centuries worth of passed-down traditions, and pre-historic customs. This journey will take you to remarkable pre-historic rock caves, solitary stone temples and monumental sculptures of Madhya Pradesh state in the heart of India that will simply have you inspired and craving for more. See prehistoric sketches and paintings as old as 10,000 years in the Bhimbetka rock caves. These truly remarkable sights will make wonderful stories and photos for long lasting memories of your visit.

◆ Customizable Private Tour

Trip Overview (*UNESCO World Heritage Sites)

- ▶ Mumbai City Tour
- ▶ **Elephanta Caves ***
- ▶ Gateway of India
- ▶ Prince of Wales Museum
- ▶ Hanging Gardens
- ▶ Mani Bhavan
(Gandhi's Museum)
- ▶ Haji Ali Dargah Temple
- ▶ Crawford Market
- ▶ Mahalakshmi Temple
- ▶ Shri Siddhivinayak Temples
- ▶ **Ellora Caves***
- ▶ Daulatabad Fort
- ▶ Bibi Ka Maqbara
- ▶ **Ajanta Caves***
- ▶ Maheshwar City Tour
- ▶ Asigarh Fort
- ▶ Omkareshwar Temple
- ▶ Maheshwar Fort
- ▶ Mandu City Tour
- ▶ Jahaz Mahal

- ▶ Hindola Mahal
(Swing Palace)
- ▶ Jahangir Mahal
- ▶ Baz Bahadur Palace
- ▶ Roopmati Pavilion.
- ▶ Street Dinner Experience
- ▶ Mahakaleshwar Temple
- ▶ Kal Bhairav Temple
- ▶ Bhopal City Tour
- ▶ Tribal Village Museum
- ▶ Udayagiri Caves
- ▶ **Sanchi Stupa***
- ▶ Bhojpur City Tour
- ▶ **Bhimbetka Rock Shelters***

Why You'll Love This Tour



A JOURNEY INTO THE PREHISTORIC PAST

Take an off-the-beaten-path journey to explore Bhimbetka rock shelters that are 10,000 years old, a 600 BC ancient walled city and 200 BC cave temples. Many of these were accidentally discovered in 19th century by British army officers.



LOVE AND ROMANCE MEMORIALS

The palaces, forts and mausoleums in this ancient land tell the stories of endearing mourning by a prince for his queen mother, and a sultan's consort who poisoned herself after her sultan was defeated by a Mughal general.



PALEOLITHIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

There are thousands of paintings that showcase India bison, rhinoceroses, elephants and tigers with scenes of hunting, battle and snapshots of daily life.

Inclusions

- ▶ Airport Transfers, Meet and Greet
- ▶ Hotel Accommodations
- ▶ Daily Breakfast & Selected Meals
(See tour plan for details)
- ▶ English-speaking Local Guide
- ▶ Entrance Fees to Monuments and Attractions per Itinerary

Exclusions

- ▶ Air Fare
- ▶ Travel Insurance
- ▶ Medical Expenses
- ▶ Visa Fee
- ▶ Gratuity
- ▶ Personal Expenses

Nearby Airport

Mumbai - Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (BOM)

Itinerary

(B)-Breakfast, (L)-Lunch, (D)-Dinner

DAY 1: MEET UP AT MUMBAI (BOM) | ARRIVAL & TRANSFER

Upon arrival at **Mumbai** airport, you'll be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. The remainder of the day is free.

DAY 2: MUMBAI | ELEPHANTA CAVE, CITY TOUR (B)

Formerly known as Bombay, Mumbai today is the financial capital of India. We start the morning with a catamaran cruise across the harbor to explore the amazing **Elephanta Island** and its famous caves with carvings and sculptures that date back to 550 A.D.

In the afternoon, enjoy a half-day tour starting at the **Gateway of India**, a monument that commemorates the landing of King George V and Queen Mary. Next, we visit the **Prince of Wales Museum** which houses many interesting artifacts. Then a drive down the seaside on Marine Drive to see the **Hanging Gardens**. Head to **Mani Bhavan** next, Gandhi's home from 1917 to 1934, which is now a permanent museum and memorial to the Mahatma. Enjoy a photo stop at the **dhobi ghats**, popularly known as India's largest open-air laundry where thousands upon thousands of pieces of clothing are processed every day. Next, is the 19th century **Haji Ali Dargah**, an Indo-Islamic shrine that seems to float like a sacred mirage off the coast (not accessible during high tide or religious events). Take a stroll through the bustling **Crawford Market**, Mumbai's most famous and largest market, and the first building in the country to be lit by electricity in 1882.

DAY 3: MUMBAI - AURANGABAD | ELLORA CAVES, DAULATABAD FORT, BIBI KA MAQBARA (B)

After breakfast, check-out from the hotel and transfer to Mumbai Airport to fly to **Aurangabad**. Transfer to the hotel, check-in and refresh yourselves.

Proceed to the famous caves of Ellora. **Ellora** in Maharashtra has one of the largest rock-cut monastery temple cave complexes in the world, and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site (Closed on Tuesdays). After sightseeing at Ellora caves, we visit other historical monuments, **Daulatabad Fort** and **Bibi Ka Maqbara (mini Taj Mahal)**.



Return to hotel, with the rest of the day free for your own activities.

DAY 4: AURANGABAD – AJANTA CAVES (B)

After breakfast we visit the famous caves of Ajanta. The 2nd century BC to 6th century AD **Ajanta Caves** are 29 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments that pre-date Ellora Cave Temples (Closed on Mondays). According to UNESCO, these are masterpieces of Buddhist religious art that influenced Indian art that followed.

Return to Aurangabad, with the rest of the day free to relax or explore Aurangabad city on your own.

DAY 5: AURANGABAD – BURHANPUR (B)

After breakfast, hotel check out. Drive to Burhanpur and check-in at your hotel. This afternoon you may choose to visit few historic sites like original tomb of Mumtaz Mahal (Insight tips: Taj Mahal is not original tomb of Mumtaz Mahal).

DAY 6: BURHANPUR - OMKARESHWAR – MAHESHWAR | ASIGARH FORT, OMKARESHWAR TEMPLE (B, L, D)

After breakfast, hotel check out.

Today we explore the amazing forts and temples of **Maheshwar**. Maheshwar is believed to be built on top of an ancient city and has over 100 temples that tell the story of its history. Maheshwar is also a colorful city thanks to its long history of weaving. In fact, India's finest hand loomed fabrics are woven here with very intricate and distinctive designs of stripes, checks and floral borders. So it's a great place to buy a sari.

Next on the list is a drive to a 15th century **Asigarh Fort** where you can enjoy a panoramic view of the lush green plains below it. We explore the ruined walls, temples and mosques to appreciate the Mughal style of architecture that is a fusion of Islamic, Persian, Turkish and Indian styles. We then head to **Omkareshwar Temple** on an island on Narmada River. The island resembles the shape of the "Om" symbol and the prominent Omkareshwar Temple houses one of the 12 sacred shrines of Shiva.

DAY 7: MAHESHWAR – MANDU - INDORE | FORT & PALACES, NIGHT MARKET (B, D)

After breakfast, hotel check-out. Visit **Maheshwar Fort**, dating back to 16th century and is famous for its elegant architecture & spectacular view of the Narmada River. Continue to **Mandu**, a ruined fortress city that acted as an important military outpost. Enjoy its grand and beautiful architecture in a relaxed rural setting surrounded by stone walls dotted with gateways. Explore the **Jahaz Mahal** (Ship Palace), **Hindola Mahal** (Swing Palace), **Jahangir Mahal**, **Baz Bahadur Palace** and **Roopmati Pavilion**. Then end the evening with a **Sarafa Bazaar Street Dinner experience**. Sarafa Market in Indore city is a jewelry market by day and street food market by night.

DAY 8: INDORE – UJJAIN – BHOPAL | HINDU TEMPLES (B)

After breakfast, check-out and drive to Ujjain.

Ujjain is an ancient walled city dating back to 600 BC. It is near the Shipra River (Kshipra River) and is an important Hindu pilgrimage destination. The city is known for its centuries-old **Mahakaleshwar Temple**, a towering structure with a distinctively ornate roof and one of India's 12 sacred shrines of Shiva. We then visit the **Kal Bhairav Temple** followed by an afternoon drive to Bhopal.

DAY 9: BHOPAL | MUSEUM, ANCIENT CAVES & TEMPLE (B)

In the old city of **Bhopal**, admire Mughal and Islamic architecture as well as many interesting mosques, temples, palaces and **Tribal Village Museum**. Witness **Udayagiri Caves** that are twenty rock-cut from the early years of the 5th century AD. They contain some of the oldest surviving Hindu temples and iconography in India.

Sanchi is our next destination and from here you will see the **Sanchi Stupa**, known as the oldest stone structure in India, commissioned in the 3rd century BC. The relics of Lord Buddha are kept in the central chamber in this huge hemispherical dome shaped temple. After the 13th century, it was abandoned and forgotten until it was rediscovered in 1818 by a British army officer. It is also now deemed a UNESCO World Heritage site.

DAY 10: BHOPAL | BHOJPUR, BHIMBETKA ROCK SHELTERS (B)

Visit **Bhojpur** for **Bhimbetka rock shelters** which are known for their magnificent prehistoric sketches and paintings. It comprises more than 600 caves and thousands of rock paintings. The earliest caves are 10,000 years old. This is truly a UNESCO world heritage site you won't want to miss!

DAY 11: BHOPAL | END OF TOUR (B)

After breakfast, the tour comes to an end. Transfer to **Bhopal** airport for your flight to Mumbai airport or Delhi airport and your flight home.

Hotels

We carefully handpick our hotels to ensure they provide you with the best comfort and experience. For Private Tours, you may request specific hotels as one of the customizable options.

