



Rajasthan Musical Expedition

8th – 22nd October 2013

In association with Songlines Magazine

Our musical adventure delves into a soul-inspiring part of the world: the desert state of Rajasthan. Stopping off for workshops and seminars with local experts, performances in the desert and interactions with extraordinary artists, the tour culminates in the famous Rajasthan International Folk Festival, hosted in the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur.

This is an exploration of a vibrant living culture. We spend at least two days in each destination and are shown around by an artist or musicologist, so there's time to absorb the atmosphere and get to know personalities as well as places.

Day 1 : Tuesday 8th

DELHI

At our special welcome dinner, you will meet your fellow travellers and host, Delhi-based musician and anthropologist Georgie Pope who will accompany you for the rest of the tour.

Days 2 – 4: Wednesday 9th to Friday 11th

CHURU

This lesser known city in the Shekhawati region of Rajasthan boasts some of the finest *haveli* painting of the state. It also provides a perfect base for us to explore the music forms of the area. Our host here is of regal descent. Jai Singh Rathore will offer us his comfortable heritage Hotel Bhawani Kothi, excellent food and fascinating insights into the cultural history of his home town.

Translator and musicologist Gopal Singh will join us here, to explain the music we're hearing, and enhance interactions with the local musicians.

During our stay in Churu, we will meet local *dholi* singers, part of the largest musical community in Rajasthan and the only one which traditionally allows its women to sing in public. We will also visit the villages of two different drumming communities: the *Gogaji* worshippers and a *Holi* troupe.

Days 5 – 6: Saturday 12th – Sunday 13th

JAIPUR

We'll spend a couple of days lounging in the stunning garden of Hotel Diggi Palace, in the state capital of Jaipur. Here you will be introduced to the work of the Jaipur Virasat (Heritage) Foundation – the organisation behind the Jodhpur Festival where we're heading.

Anthropologist Vinod Joshi will introduce you to the fascinating itinerant performers, the *kalbeliya* – Rajasthan's snake charming, dancing, singing travelling community.

There will be the opportunity to explore the amazing Hand Block Printing textile story, with a trip to the Anokhi museum and factory and, if we're lucky, a meeting with the founder of Anokhi and the Jaipur Virasat Foundation John Singh.

Days 7 – 9: Monday 14th – Wednesday 16th

AJMER – PUSHKAR

This section of the trip begins at the Ajmer Sharif, the most important site for Muslims throughout India and beyond. Here we will be hosted by a direct descendant of Saint Moinuddin Chisty, to whom the shrine is dedicated, and hear qawwali music in this awe-inspiring sacred place.

The next two days are spent in Pushkar with the fabulous and famous percussionist Nathoo Lal Solanki, who will give you a percussion workshop on the side of lake Pushkar, introduce you to his incredibly musical family, and take you on a camel cart adventure into the desert, where there will be more musical surprises waiting.

The sites and stories of Pushkar, including a hill-top temple at sunrise, for those of you who are game, will be shared with you by Mukesh, the most unusual and charismatic pundit in the world.

Days 10 – 14: Thursday 17th – Sunday 20th

RAJASTHAN INTERNATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL, JODHPUR

We spend a long weekend staying at the quirky Krishna Prakash Heritage Haveli, in walking distance of the incredibly varied and beautiful Rajasthan International Folk Festival. Your guide Georgie Pope worked at the festival for three years and is available for questions, help and advice throughout its duration. Otherwise, be free and party!

Day 14: Monday 21st: The festival ends with a stunning dawn devotional performance at the Jaswant Thada, after which we will start our drive back home. In the evening we will reach the gorgeous Hotel Neemrana for our last night in India.

Day 15: Tuesday 22nd: Today we rise early and drive the last stretch to Delhi International Airport where we wish each other goodbye and a safe onward journey.

END OF SERVICES

PRICE

For full fifteen-day tour: £1800 (single room supplement = £300 per person)

For shorter, twelve-day tour: £1650 (single room supplement = £250 per person)

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE

- **ACCOMMODATION:** 14 nights accommodation total: of which 13 nights in a standard double/twin room/single hotel room with attached bath inclusive of presently applicable local taxes and 1 half day camel safari with overnight in Desert Camp with dinner & folk music and breakfast (please note tents will not have attached bath). In general, hotel check-in/check-out time is 12 Noon. Standard rooms have been used everywhere. Single Room supplement has been provided for single room occupancy.
- **MEALS:** Breakfast at all hotels. Welcome dinner in Delhi on first night (day 1), lunch and dinner in Churu (days 2 and 3), one dinner at Pushkar Camp (day 9) = all breakfasts, four dinners and two lunches
- **TRANSPORT:** All ground transportation, as detailed in the itinerary, starting from Delhi Guesthouse on October 8th, ending at Delhi airport on October 22nd in air-conditioned chauffeur driven coach.
- Full festival pass at Rajasthan International Folk Festival
- Accompaniment by Sound Travels director Georgie Pope and musicologist/ guide Gopal Singh
- All activities detailed in the above itinerary

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR PRICE

- Any extra meals other than as specified above.
- Any private airport transfers in Delhi/Jodhpur
- Entry fee and camera fee to any monument
- Expenses of personal nature - these can include:
 - tips to guides/drivers/porters
 - alcoholic drinks, bottled beverages/mineral water with meals at hotels
 - room service
 - telephone/internet/fax charges
- Travel/health insurance. An adequate cover is compulsory
- Any train fare, domestic airfare, visa fee to India & international airfares + airport taxes
- Any locals assistance anywhere – at hotel, airports, rail stations.
- Donations to temples/Ajmer Sharif
- Anything not specified in the itinerary or inclusions

EXTRA SERVICES

For any extra travel services before or after the above trip, email ravi@quovadis.in