



India – Rajasthan Musical Expedition

28th September to 10th October 2017

In association with

Sound Travels
MUSICAL EXPEDITIONS THROUGH INDIA

Songlines Music Travel, in association with Master Travel and Sound Travels, invites music lovers and travellers alike on this wonderful trip to the 'Land of Kings', Rajasthan, where you will get a chance to experience the majestic Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF), as well as gain an insight into the culture and heritage of this enchanting region of India.

Accompanied by musicologist Georgie Pope and cultural anthropologist Gopal Singh, you will gain unique access to the artists and musicians of the region, and share intimate knowledge of the places you will visit.

Highlights include:

- Experiencing the very best music from local and international artists and enjoying the vibrancy and atmosphere of the Rajasthan International Folk Festival
- Meeting the local communities and discovering their lifestyles and music cultures
- Visiting the majestic shrines, temples and forts
- The opportunity to get hands-on and learn some basic drumming, dancing and singing techniques from local musicians along the way
- Enjoying a camel safari and staying overnight in a desert camp



What to expect

Rajasthan, at the crossroads between Central and South Asia, has fascinated travellers for centuries. It is famous for its majestic forts that rise out of the desert landscapes, as well as its lavish palaces, stunning scenery, vivid colours and vibrant culture and music.

For four days every October, Jodhpur hosts the RIFF, which takes place against the splendid backdrop of the Mehrangarh Fort. This unique event, which hosts performances from dawn until dusk, is a fantastic showcase for singers and musicians from Rajasthan and all over India, as well as a selection of international artists.

On our trip across some less frequented corners of the state, we will experience private encounters with local artists and musicians, visit the spectacular lakes and temples, and share a wealth of stories and legends with our travel leaders, musicologist Georgie Pope and cultural anthropologist Gopal Singh. Georgie and Gopal will accompany the group throughout the journey, helping us to truly absorb the atmosphere and get to know the personalities of the region.

The beginning of our journey: Delhi to Mandawa

Our journey will begin in Delhi, where you will meet Georgie Pope and the rest of the group in the hotel for a welcome dinner and music. We will hear and have the opportunity to try out the *tabla* (a pair of Indian classical drums), and learn

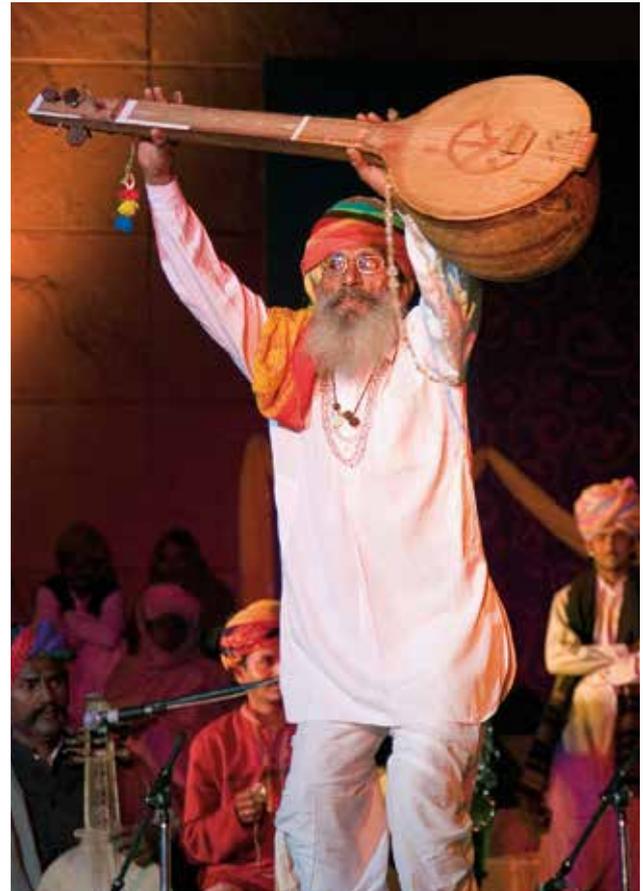
some basic ideas about rhythm, counting and *bol*, the spoken rhythmic system of Hindustani music. From Delhi, we will drive to the beautiful town of Mandawa, stopping for lunch along the way. We will spend two nights in Mandawa, a small 18th Century town famous for its beautifully painted *havelis* - traditional homes built around an open courtyard. Located at the heart of Shekhawati, this is the ideal place to explore the villages around this desert region, and to meet with the local communities to experience their devotional music and drumming. A relaxed invitation will be offered to join in with a joyous folk dance, as well as trying out various folk drums.

Mandawa to Jaipur

Next we will travel to Jaipur, where we will spend two days getting to know Rajasthan's capital city. We will explore the city's colourful, bustling streets, where careering buses share the roads with swarms of motorbikes rickshaws and

An extraordinary tour led by a very professional and knowledgeable leader. With her contacts she gave us access to people and places few tourists would even see! I feel honoured to have been part of it.

Hilary Smith



the occasional camel. Here, we will have an opportunity to explore the city on a guided tour of its famous sights including the City Palace which still houses the Royal family, and the fairytale grandeur of the Amber Fort. We will be introduced to the work of the Jaipur Virasat (Heritage) Foundation – the organisation behind the Jodhpur RIFF, and Anokhi, the company that revived hand block printing. On the second evening we will meet local musicians who have lived for generations in the old city of Jaipur. There will be the option to

learn how to sing and count a *lehra* – another basic building block of Indian music, as well as learning a few *mudras*, hand gestures used in Indian Classical dance.

Ajmer and Pushkar

From Jaipur, we will make our way to Ajmer Sharif, a most important shrine for Muslims throughout India and beyond. Here, we will be hosted by a direct descendant of Moinduddin Christi, the Sufi saint to whom the shrine is dedicated. We

Top facts about Rajasthan and its music:

- Rajasthan is the largest state of India and has a vibrant folk culture. But in a changing world the Jaipur Virasat Foundation and Jodhpur RIFF are doing essential work to keep it alive
- Many cities in Rajasthan are colour-coordinated. Jaipur is pink, Udaipur is white, Jhalawar is purple and Jodhpur is blue
- In Rajasthan there are different castes of musicians with their own specialities: The Langas and Manganiyars are the best-known professional musicians. The Bhopas tell stories while bowing the *ravanhatta* and the Kalbeliya are snake-catchers who play the snake-charming *pungi*
- There are many fascinating instruments important to Rajasthan - the *ravanhatta* fiddle, the *khartal* wooden castanets, the bowed *kamaicha* and the *nagara* kettle drums
- Gaj Singh, the Maharaja of Jodhpur was educated in Britain and is a fervent supporter of Jodhpur RIFF offering its spectacular location in the 15th century Mehrangarh Fort



will be able to experience qawwali music in this awe-inspiring sacred site.

We will spend the night in Pushkar, a town that is quite unlike anywhere else in Rajasthan. The town curls around a lake, and with its 52 bathing ghats and 400 temples, the town reverberates with the soundtrack of chanting, drums and gongs, and devotional songs. We will immerse ourselves in the sights and stories of Pushkar. We will be introduced to the nagara drum and take part in a percussion workshop by the side of the lake, hosted by the famous percussionist Nathu Lal Solanki, before heading off to our desert camp by camel cart. We will spend a magical night under canvas in the desert camp, eating and watching musical performances by the bonfire.

Rajasthan International Folk Festival

After breakfast in our camp, we will leave the wilderness behind and drive to Jodhpur. We will spend the next 4 nights staying at the Krishna Prakash Heritage Haveli, enjoying the incredible variety of music that RIFF has to offer, as well as being able to explore the 'Blue City' of Jodhpur. Here, you are free to cram in as much music and sightseeing as you want, and your guide

Quite extraordinary access to musicians – absolutely brilliant!

Duncan and Annette Campbell

This is an incredible tour. We had the privilege of meeting musicians in their own homes and villages – and listening to their music was an experience of a lifetime that I will never forget.

Tiki Kyte

Georgie Pope who worked at the festival for 3 years, will be able to offer an abundance of local and musical knowledge.

The last day of the festival ends with a stunning dawn devotional performance at the Jaswant Thada, a milky white marble cenotaph overlooking the lake. After this fitting finale, we will head back to Delhi, where after checking into the hotel, we will have a tour of the city and we will enjoy our final evening together as a group.

Front cover: Jodhpur RIFF dawn sessions

Itinerary page: Meharangarh Fort

Back cover clockwise from left: View of Jodhpur City from Fort; Kalbeliya dancer; Flute player from Chang Group

*Photographs, clockwise from top left: Jaipur Palace of the Winds; Ravanhatta player; Sajjan Dass with his tamboora
© Vipul Sangoi; Percussion workshop*



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Key:

- b** Breakfast
- l** Lunch
- d** Dinner

Please note that this is a provisional itinerary only. The final itinerary will be confirmed in your pre-departure pack which will be sent to you 2 weeks before departure.

28th September: Delhi **d**

Upon arrival in Delhi, make your way to the hotel, where you can rest after your flight. In the evening, meet Georgie Pope, who will accompany you on the rest of the trip, and the rest of the group.

29th September: Delhi-Mandawa **b l**

From Delhi, drive to Mandawa, stopping for lunch on the way at Pirmal Haveli. Enjoy your first taste of Rajasthani music in the evening.

30th September: Mandawa **b**

Explore Mandawa and the surrounding villages. Experience two exciting drumming traditions.

1st October: Mandawa-Jaipur **b**

Drive to Jaipur, where we will check into the beautiful Diggri Palace Hotel.

2nd October: Jaipur **b**

Tour Jaipur city and meet local classical musicians in the old part of the city.

3rd October: Ajmer-Pushkar **b**

Drive to the holy shrine of Ajmer Sharif, where we can hear qawwali music. Travel onwards to Pushkar where we will spend the night.

4th October: Pushkar **b d**

Rise early to visit a hill-top temple at dawn, accompanied by our guide Mukesh who will share stories and cultural insights. Take part in a percussion workshop in the afternoon before embarking on a camel safari and overnight in a desert camp.

5th-8th October: Jodhpur Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) **b**

Drive to Jodhpur and spend the next 4 days enjoying the atmosphere and sounds of the RIFF.

9th October: Jodhpur-Delhi **b**

Rise early for a dawn devotional performance at the Jaswant Thada. Head back to Delhi and spend overnight.

10th October: Delhi **b**

Our tour ends at breakfast, where we will say farewell before leaving for your flight home or onward journey.

Tour price excluding flights to/from Delhi: £2,350 per person

Secure your place with a £470 deposit, with the remainder payable in instalments

Single travellers: A single supplement of £501 is payable if you wish to guarantee a single room. This does not apply if you opt to share a twin room with a fellow participant.

The cost includes:

- Accommodation: 11 nights in standard hotel accommodation with attached bathroom. One night in desert camp. Twin share basis, or single on payment of supplement
- Flight from Jodhpur to Delhi
- Meals as per itinerary
- Transport: All ground transportation, as detailed in the itinerary in an air-

conditioned chauffeur-driven vehicle

- Tour Leader and Guide: All tour leader services, stories and explanations by Georgie Pope and Gopal Singh
- All musical activities listed in the itinerary above
- Tips to hotel staff and drivers

The cost excludes:

- International flights to/from Delhi
- Transfers between the airport and hotel
- Visas and travel insurance. Please ensure you purchase adequate insurance cover before you leave home.
- Meals not mentioned in the itinerary

**Early Bird
booking: £2,250 per person
valid only until
29th May 2017**

*After 29th May 2017, the tour price will be fixed at £2,350 for all travellers

- Entrance tickets to any optional sightseeing tours/activities not mentioned in the itinerary
- Alcoholic drinks, dinners, snacks or any purchases of a personal nature
- Anything not specified in the inclusions and itinerary above

International flights to/from Delhi

We would be delighted to arrange your flights to and from Delhi if you wish. Please contact the Master Travel office on +44 (0)20 7501 6741 or tours@mastertravel.co.uk for current prices and availability.

Please note that all itineraries in India are subject to change according to local conditions. Due to the nature of the tour, places are limited.

