



## **Northern India with Erin Fleming Feb 8 – 17, 2018**

### **Feb 8 - Arrive Delhi (Overnight at The Lalit Hotel)**

This is the official arrival day for the retreat (you may want to arrive a day or two early to get acclimated). Our representative will meet you at the airport and drive you to our hotel, The Lalit. This first day of the retreat is a day for resting up after the big flight and getting oriented. If you are feeling like exploring you can join our optional walking tour of Delhi at 2pm in the hotel lobby, returning to the hotel at 5pm. Erin will lead a Yin yoga practice from 5:30-7pm followed by dinner in the hotel at 7:30pm.

### **Feb 9 - In Delhi (Overnight at The Lalit Hotel)**

Today begins with breakfast and a visit to the bustling, byzantine streets of Old Delhi which we will tour by bicycle rickshaw. We will tour the Jama Masjid built by the fifth Mughal emperor, Shahjehan, in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and drive past the famous Red Fort. Lunch will be at a popular favorite restaurant. You will have the option of returning to the hotel to relax and restore in preparation for our big day in the morning. For those interested, we will continue with our exploration of Delhi and visit Hauz Khas Village, a hip, upscale neighborhood that curiously popped up out of an ancient section of Delhi with buildings that date back to the 1300s. The work of cutting-edge, contemporary designs from India's new generation of artists are featured in Hauz Khas along with charming boutiques and galleries. We will then return to the hotel a light dinner.

### **Feb 10 - Agra (Overnight at the Trident Agra)**

Today we catch an early morning 6:15am train to Agra, from the New Delhi railway station. Just being at the train station will be an incredible experience! We will have breakfast on the train during this 2 hour journey to Agra. We will meet our local guide who will escort us to the Red Fort, an imposing red sand stone fortification that was the stronghold of the Mughals, where they ruled the empire for centuries. We will then head to the hotel to relax and then rest of the day is free for your own activities.

### **Feb 11 - Jaipur (Overnight at The Jai Mahal Palace)**

Early breakfast, then a rarefied sunrise tour of the great Taj Mahal. We will squeeze in a discreet public practice at the Taj Mahal. We then head to the royal "Pink City" of Jaipur by private, air-conditioned bus. The five-hour journey covers the beautiful Indian countryside, giving us a peak at rural life in India and includes a stop at the UNSECO

World Heritage site, Fatehpuri Sikri, a beautiful complex of temples built in the 1500s and the Mughal Capital for 10 years. We will have lunch on the way, as we travel to Jaipur with an estimated arrival to the hotel of 5pm. At the hotel we will rest, shower, some light yoga and a relaxing dinner at our hotel, the Taj Jai Mahal Palace, a 270-year-old Indo-Saracenic architectural masterpiece set amidst landscaped Mughal gardens.

### **Feb 12 - Jaipur (Overnight at The Jai Mahal Palace)**

Yoga, breakfast, then departure for the spectacular Amber Fort. This was the capital of the Jaipur Estate before the construction of Jaipur city in 18th century. It is a magnificent fort built on a strategic hill top location surrounded by the Aravali Hills with panoramic views of the city and the surrounding area. We will travel by elephant to reach the fort. We'll enjoy lunch back at the hotel and have the afternoon free to rest or further explore or shop on our own (recommendations will be provided). Private dinner concert with Rajasthani folk musicians in small haveli.

### **Feb 13 - Jaipur (Overnight at The Jai Mahal Palace) – Shivaratri!**

After breakfast we will set off for site-seeing and shopping in central Jaipur including a visit to the gorgeous Hawa Mahal, a façade of *jharokhas* (enclosed balconies/windows) made from intricate lattice work where royal women sat unseen to take in life on the streets below. Next is the Royal Palace, now converted into a museum except for a one section where the erstwhile royal family still lives. The Palace cum museum is constructed in the fortified campus style and covers more than half of the old city. After our tour, will have lunch at the museum's beautiful outdoor cafe followed by a custom-curated tour of Jaipur's legendary bizarre created just for us by Jaipur resident and fine jewelry designer Sapna Mehra. Sapna will share little known gems hidden deep in the labyrinthine market alleys, including active workshops artisans working in silver, gems and enamel, a parfumerie from the 15th century, and her personal favorites among the bizarre's traditional stores. We return to the hotel for a spot of yoga and a change of clothes in preparation for a lavish, al fresco dinner.

### **Feb 14 - Fly Jaipur > Delhi > Varanasi (Overnight at Gateway Hotel)**

Early morning 6:30am flight to Varanasi, the Holy City of India and considered the home of Shiva, located on the bank of the Ganges. To get there we will have an unavoidable several hour layover in Delhi — our chance for some airport yoga! We arrive in Varanasi for afternoon check-in to our hotel. Life centers on the Ganges in Varanasi, so once settled and refreshed we head directly to the River by rickshaw where we will take a sunset boat ride followed by witnessing the theatrical evening *aartis*, or rituals, performed under the stars on Varanasi's famous *ghats*. We return to the hotel for a late dinner and an early bedtime to be up for the next morning's pre-dawn special excursion to the river.

### **Feb 15 - Varanasi (Overnight at Gateway Hotel)**

We begin today with a sunrise *Bhajan Prabha*, boat ride on the Ganges with live

classical Indian musicians performing ragas for the dawn — a stark contrast to the theatrical, sensory saturated atmosphere of the evening aartis the night before. The quiet atmosphere of the dawn invites us into deep states of peaceful contemplation. We will have the opportunity to say prayers for those who have passed and offer lotus candle flowers in their memory to the river. We will witness the activities taking place at Varanasi's cremation grounds, where people from all over India come to die to ensure a karmic-free death. Following the boat ride we will explore the maze of ancient lanes and temples, sadhus and a sacred cows of Varanasi's Old City. Back to the hotel for brunch and nap time. Afternoon of yoga with Erin. It will have been a long day with another pre-dawn event the day following, so this evening is free to rest up — or explore on your own if you're up to it!

### **Feb 16 - Varanasi – (Overnight at Gateway Hotel)**

The day begins with yoga and breakfast and then some free time. We will leave midday to Sarnath, the site where Gautam Buddha gave his first teachings after attaining enlightenment. Following Sarnath we will stop at a silk factory and store where you can purchase saris, scarves, and more made of the silk of Varanasi — considered the finest in all of India. We return to the hotel for late afternoon yoga, closing ritual and early farewell dinner.

### **Feb 17 - Fly Varanasi/ Delhi**

Leisurely breakfast, and a midday departure for the airport to catch our return flight to Delhi. We will arrive in Delhi at around 5pm when our retreat will be concluded. Safe journey onward!

\*\*\*Exact itinerary subject to change.