



North India with Annie Carpenter Feb 19 – Feb 28, 2018

Feb 19 - Arrive Delhi (Overnight at The Lalit Hotel)

This is the official arrival day for the retreat (although some of you may opt to arrive a day or two early). Our representative will meet you at the airport and drive you to our hotel, The Lalit. This 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 starting at approximately 1:30-2pm in the hotel lobby, returning to the hotel at 5pm. Annie will lead us in a light yoga practice from 6-7pm followed by dinner in the hotel at 7:30pm.

Feb 20 - 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 17th century and drive past the famous Red Fort. Lunch will be at a popular favorite. 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 area 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 charming boutiques and galleries. We will then return to the hotel a light dinner.

Feb 21 - Delhi > --> Agra (Overnight at the Trident Agra)

Today we catch an early morning train to Agra, which leaves at 6:15am from New Delhi railway station. Just being at the train station will be an incredible sight! We will have breakfast on the train and the journey takes around 2 hours. Upon arrival at the train station we will be met by our local guide and taken for a visit to the Red Fort, an imposing red sand stone fortification was the stronghold of the Mughals, where they ruled and controlled the empire from for centuries. We will then head the hotel to rest and the rest of the day is free for your own activities.

Feb 22 - Agra >Jaipur (5-6 hours drive) (Overnight at The Jai Mahal Palace)

Breakfast, then a rarefied sunrise tour of the great Taj Mahal. the 17th century wonder inspired by love who Shahjehan, the 5th Mughal Emperor, had built for his wife. It's a breathing-taking experience to walk the grounds of this exquisite monument to love

which attracts people from around the world. We will check out of the hotel and 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 UNESCO 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 an estimated arrival to the hotel in Jaipur at 5pm. At the hotel we will rest, shower, enjoy a yoga class with Annie and then 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 23 - 27 Jaipur (Overnight at The Jai Mahal Palace)

Our time in Jaipur will be spent exploring this fascinating city and its environs with plenty of time to dig into our yoga practices through classes in both the morning and evening. Every day we will offer an excursion which will provide insight into the culture, people and art of this region with ample space to also soak in every day life in India. We will visit places like the spectacular Amber Fort, 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 enjoy a custom-curated tour of Jaipur’s legendary bizarre to explore little known gems hidden deep in the labyrinthine market as well all of the classic sites like the Royal Palace and the gorgeous Hawa Mahal, a façade of *jharkhas* (enclosed balconies/windows) made from intricate lattice work where royal women sat unseen to take in life on the streets below. Off the beaten track shopping tours to explore the incredible artistry of Jaipur craftspeople will provide us the chance of bringing back treasures which we will no doubt enjoy for years to come. Evenings will be spent sampling incredible award-winning restaurants, a private dinner concert with Rajasthani folk musicians in small haveli, or just relaxing at our gorgeous 5-star luxury hotel.

Feb 28 - Day of Departure

After breakfast and time permitting we will enjoy our final yoga class with Annie after which our trip will conclude and we will depart for the airport for our flights home.

For those wanting to participate in the optional 3-night extension to incredible Varanasi, please read more below:

OPTIONAL CULTURAL TOUR OF VARANASI

Feb 28 – March 4, 2018

Feb 28 - Fly from Jaipur to Varanasi

An early wake up with put us on our flight from Jaipur (via Delhi) 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 before arriving 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.

March 1 - Varanasi (Overnight at Gateway Hotel)

The day begins with a pre-dawn excursion for the Subah-e-Banaras, a District Cultural event held at Assi Ghat which includes Surya Aarti, recital of Vedic hymns, yoga, and classical music. Back to the hotel for rest and lunch, followed by drive 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. 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!

March 2 - In 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. The rest of the day is free to explore on your own.

March 3 - Fly Varanasi/ Delhi

After breakfast we will check out and head to the airport for midday departure for the airport to catch our return flight to Delhi. We will arrive in Delhi at approx. 5pm when our retreat will conclude at the airport.

***Exact itinerary subject to change and yoga times to be advised