

ALL GAY INCREDIBLE INDIA

**INDIA with optional NEPAL
10 DAYS**

October 8 – October 17/October 20, 2011

India is far more than a destination. It's a delightful encounter, one that's overflowing with dazzling color, wafting aromas, zesty flavors, and exhilarating rhythms. Join a Hermes Tours small group in this thrilling part of the world, and we'll reveal cities that pulsate with a heady mix of ancient tradition and modern ambition. We'll venture into the countryside to explore a famed monument to love ... a temple of 1,000 columns ... a tiny village of age-old environmentalists ... and gleaming, hilltop fortresses that recall the days when maharajahs ruled. It's incredible India!

- **Old Delhi**, including Raj Ghat, Jama Masjid Mosque, and Chandni Chowk
- **New Delhi**, including India Gate, Presidential Palace, and Parliament House, Qutab Minar, and Humayun's Tomb
- **Udaipur**, including City Palace and Lake Pichola boat ride
- **Ranakpur**, including Jain temple
- **Jodhpur**, including Mehrangarh Fort, Jaswant Thada, and city bazaar
- **Bishnoi Village** visit
- **Jaipur**, including Jantar Mantar Observatory, City Palace, and Hawa Mahal
- **Amber Fort**, including elephant-back transport, Jag Mandir and Sheesh Mahal
- **Fatehpur Sikri**, including Jama Masjid Mosque, Panch Mahal, and Salim Chisti's
- **Agra**, including Taj Mahal and Agra Fort
- **Kathmandu**, extend your stay and visit this wonderful nation
- Accommodations for 9 nights in 5-star hotels
- Services of a Hermes Tours escort
- Services of an expert, local guide in all cities
- \$100 per person savings if you reserve 5 months before departure!

Day 1: Oct 8, 2011 / Arrive Delhi

We arrive in India's vibrant capital today and transfer to our hotel.

*The Lalit 5**

Day 2: Oct 9, 2011 / Delhi City Tour

Today we experience Delhi Old and New. This morning's tour of Old Delhi takes us past Raj Ghat, the revered monument to Mahatma Gandhi. We'll continue to Jama Masjid Mosque, India's largest, and the colorful, bustling market place of Chandni Chowk. On this afternoon's New Delhi tour, we marvel at the impressive arched India Gate with its eternal flame and the Presidential Palace and Parliament House. Then we stop to visit Qutab Minar, the world's tallest brick-and-stone minaret, and Humayun's Tomb, the first of the great Mughal Tomb complexes. Tonight toast your upcoming discoveries at our Hermes Tours welcome dinner.

The Lalit 5 – B, D*

Day 3: Oct 10, 2011 / Delhi / Jodhpur

We take an early afternoon flight to Jodhpur. The city founded in 1459 by Rao Jodha the city is all the more grandeur by the sand dunes. Jodhpur was the capital of the state of Marwar during the rule of the

Rathor clan. Set right at the edge of Thar Desert, Jodhpur is strewn with forts and palaces that go back to the 15th century, all vividly testify to the history of the princely state. The rest of the afternoon is free to relax.

Taj Hari Mahal 5 - B*

Day 4: Oct 11, 2011 / Jodhpur

Our tour today begins at the Mehrangarh Fort, one of Rajasthan's most stunning forts. Its thick walls seem to emerge from the rocky hill upon which it perches. Inside we'll see some of its grandest rooms: Moti Mahal, Ghana Mahal, Rang Mahal and Phool Mahal. Later, we stop to admire Jodhpur's Jaswant Thada, a marble cenotaph built in 1899 as memorial to Maharaja Jaswant Singh II, and explore the old city bazaar, brimming with locally made tie-dye, puppets and jewellery.

Afterwards we journey to the arid outskirts of Jodhpur to experience the exotic ambiance of a Bishnoi Village. Here, amidst clusters of conical, thatched roof huts, we learn about herbal remedies and the local crafts of spinning and carpet-weaving. En route, we might spot the rare black buck, a beautiful indigenous antelope protected by local Bishnoi tribes. Back in Jodhpur, we have the rest of the day free, perhaps to explore more of the local markets.

Taj Hari Mahal 5 - B*

Day 5: Oct 12, 2011 / Jodhpur / Udaipur

We have a 7-8 hour transfer today, driving to Udaipur, the romantic "City of Lakes," – a glittering gem of gardens and narrow lanes surrounded by the Aravali Mountain. Along the way, we stop at the Jain temple in Ranakpur, one of the five holy places of the Jain Community. The scope of this temple complex is astounding; spread over 48,000 square feet, it features 29 halls and 1,444 intricately carved pillars. Its 80 spires supported by 420 columns.

The Lalit 5 - B*

Day 6: Oct 13, 2011 / Udaipur

Start the day with a tour of Udaipur's glorious City Palace, actually a series of majestic, turreted palaces on a hillside. We'll enter through the grand, triple-arched gate, or Tripola, and see the Suraj Gokhada (Balcony of the Sun) and More Chowk, or the Peacock Courtyard, named for its vivid glass mosaics. This afternoon, enjoy the hotel spa, or embark on a boat ride on lovely Lake Pichola.

The Lalit 5 - B*

Day 7: Oct 14, 2011 / Udaipur / Jaipur

This morning we drive from Udaipur to Jaipur. En route we stop at the Chittorgarh Fort for a tour.

Sheraton Rajputana Luxury Collection – B

Day 8: Oct 15, 2011 / Jaipur / Amber Fort

We start today with a tour of Amber Fort, scenically overlooking Maota Lake. For six centuries, this citadel served as the capital of the Rajasthan, and we'll ascend to its heights in the most thrilling way: by elephant-back! We visit the Jag Mandir and Sheesh Mahal, or pavilion of mirrors where a single candle's flame reflects into infinity. Back in Jaipur after lunch, we visit the Jantar Mantar Observatory, the treasure-filled City Palace, and Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds) with its remarkable pink façade of 953 windows. Tonight, we have time to browse the local markets of the city.

Sheraton Rajputana Luxury Collection – B

Day 9: Oct 16, 2011 / Jaipur / Fatehpur Sikri / Agra

En route to Agra, we stop at Fatehpur Sikri, the 16th-century city that shared duties as the imperial capital with Agra Fort. The city was mysteriously abandoned, likely because its water supply ran dry. Its fortifications, massive gateway, and palaces have been remarkably preserved. We'll visit the sprawling Jama Masjid Mosque, the five-story Panch Mahal, and Salim Chisti's Tomb set like a jewel in a courtyard of pink sandstone. After our visit, we drive 6 or 7 hours to Agra.

ITC Mughal Luxury Collection – B, D

Day 10: Oct 17, 2011 / Agra / Delhi / Return home or extend to Kathmandu

Today we visit the magnificent Taj Mahal. This white marble masterpiece stands as a testament to the power of love, as it was built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan as a tribute to his favorite wife. It took 20,000 artisans 17 years to complete. We'll continue on to Agra Fort, a sprawling city fortified within imposing red walls. From the fort's hillside perch, we have incredible views of the Taj Mahal and Yamuna River from here. Later depart for Delhi. There, we've reserved a room for you until your departure for home. Or, join our extension to Kathmandu, Nepal's exotic capital.

Radisson 5 - B*

EXTEND YOUR VACATION IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL!

Day 10: Oct 17, 2011 / Arrive in Kathmandu

Upon arrival in Delhi, fly to Kathmandu – in the heart of the Himalayas.

*Soltee Crowne Plaza 5**

Day 11: Oct 18, 2011 / Arrive in Kathmandu

Weather permitting, join our optional flightseeing tour over the soaring Himalaya range this morning, perhaps seeing the peak of Mt. Everest. Then, discover the exotic warrens and squares of the city during our tour. In Durbar Square, we visit the shrine of Kumari Devi, or the Living Goddess. We venture west of the city to the famed Swayambhunath *stupa*, complex. After lunch we visit Patan, known for its fine woodworking and metallurgy. We'll marvel at its fascinating wooden temples and pause at local craftsmen's shops to watch blacksmiths shaping pots and statues.

Soltee Crowne Plaza 5 - B*

Day 12: Oct 19, 2011 / Arrive in Kathmandu

This morning we stop to view Pashupatinath Temple (non-Hindus cannot go inside) and witness some rituals to the Lord Shiva along the sacred Bagmati River. We also visit Bodhnath, one of the largest spherical *stupas* in Nepal, and car-free Bhaktapur, a fascinating medieval-era fortified hamlet in the Kathmandu Valley. It has changed little since the days when it served as a stop on the trade route between Tibet and India. We'll see the statue of King Bhupendra Malla and the pagoda-style, five-story temple of Nyatapole. Back in Kathmandu, the rest of your day is free.

Soltee Crowne Plaza 5 - B*

Day 13: Oct 20, 2011 / Return Home

This morning marks the end of our tour. You are free to make your return flight for any time.

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Included:

Please note that the above cost includes all accommodation in 5 star, gay friendly hotels, with private bath or shower, hotel taxes, portorage, tips and service charges. All activities as outlined in the itinerary; all meals as per itinerary; airport transfers on arrival/departure days; economy class air tickets between cities as indicated; all ground transportation as per itinerary; Entrance fees to all sites on itinerary. Guaranteed departure with a minimum of 2 participants; the services of a Hermes Tours Escort throughout the trip with minimum participation of 6.

Not Included:

International airfare to/from India/Nepal; passport & visa fees if applicable; personal travel and cancellation insurance; meals and activities not specifically included in the itinerary; services of a personal nature like alcohol; soft drinks; bottled water; laundry; telephone calls; faxes as well as customary tips to drivers and guides.

Hotels:

Travel in Style with Hermes Tours as we tour this wonderful country staying in 5 star hotels throughout our stay.

Delhi: Hotel Lalit 5*

Jodhpur: - Taj Hari Mahal 5*

Udaipur: - The Lalit 5*

Jaipur: - Sheraton 5*

Agra: - ITC Mughal 5*

Delhi Airport: - Radisson Airport 5*

Kathmandu: Soaltee Crowne Plaza: 5*

Airport Information:

Arrive into Delhi (DEL) on October 8th or before, anytime.

Departure from Delhi (DEL) (no extension) on October 17th pm (in the evening) or later or

Kathmandu (KTM) if taking the extension on October 20th anytime.

Costs: \$3495 per person based on double occupancy.

Single Supplement: \$999 per person

Early booking discount of \$100 when booked at least 5 months before departure (by May 11, 2011)

Deposit due at time of registration: \$500

Final payment due 80 days prior to departure

Extension to Nepal:

Costs: \$1150 per person based on double occupancy. Includes flight from Delhi – Kathmandu.

Single Supplement: \$300 per person

Please note that Hermes Tours has changed its payment policy for 2011 tours. Final payment may be made via credit card without surcharge. You will be asked to sign a credit card authorization form. For your convenience you may also set up a payment plan.

Hermes Tours recommends all travelers acquire medical and cancelation travel insurance. Please inquire about special policies that cover for acts of terrorism and/or political unrest.