

India



Riding the Real Rajasthan

13 days ex Delhi

rural Rajasthan up close and personal – desert fortresses – intricate temples – wildlife sanctuaries and lake palace

Rajasthan is one of India's most captivating states, famed for its Rajput forts and palaces, desert villages, spice markets and the warmth of its people. However the deserved popularity of Rajasthan's key sights sometimes leaves scant room for a sense of adventure. Traveling by bicycle is the perfect antidote to this and, as well as some of the big drawcards like Jodhpur, Rankapur and Udaipur, our back-road discovery takes us through barren desert and lush oasis to remote villages where traditional Rajasthani life continues untouched by the outside world, as it has done for centuries.

The exact back-country route we take between Jodhpur and Udaipur is a closely guarded secret, but distances covered are between 40km and 80km a day, and the route progresses from the flatlands south of Jodhpur, climbing up to the Araveli Hills towards the end of the journey. Along the way we take rest stops at the principal attractions as well as at a few places where you'll have the chance to experience rural Rajasthan firsthand. Indeed you may well find that the highlight of your tour is a chance encounter with a pink-turbaned man miles from anywhere, or maybe a shared Rajasthani family meal. That's the beauty of this trip!



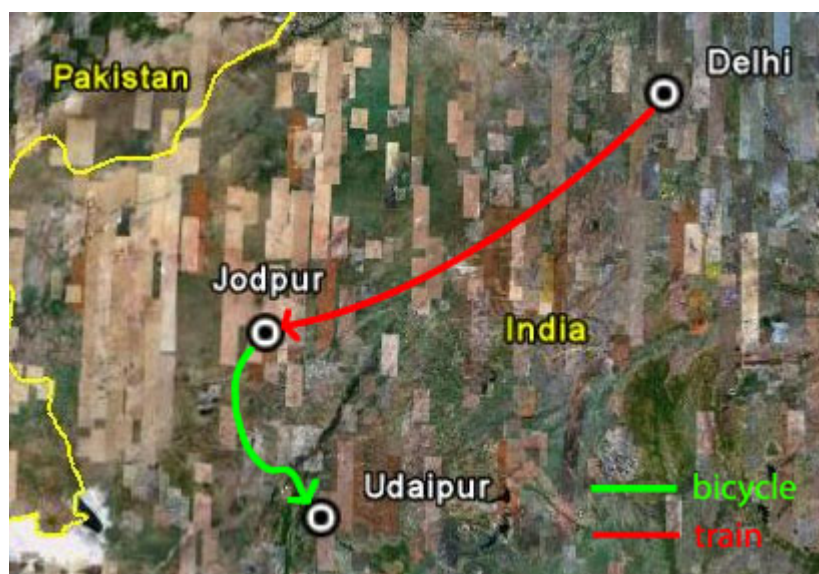
Itinerary

Day 1 | Delhi

On the evening of day 1 we have an introduction to the tour and get to know one another over a local meal.

Day 2 | Delhi

Today we get an introduction to the diversity of India by visiting a Hindu temple, a Sikh Gurudwara and the Jama Masjid. In the evening we take an overnight train to the start point of our ride through Rajasthan: Jodhpur on the edge of the Thar Desert.



Day 3 | Jodhpur

Today we explore the fascinating backstreets of the Blue City and take a walk up to the mighty Meherangarh Fort.

Day 4 | Luni

Today we begin our epic journey across Rajasthan, starting gently with a 40km ride to the historic Fort Chanwa in the village of Luni.

Day 5 | Sardar Samand

A 60km ride east through small villages brings us to Sardar Samand, a hunting lodge for the Maharaja of Jodhpur. The lodge is perched on a rocky outcrop overlooking a watering hole frequented by countless bird species.

Day 6 | Dhakri

Today it's just a 30km hop to the small village of Dhakri where we stay at a homestay with a difference. In the afternoon we'll take a village safari by bicycle, visiting local artisans and homes.

Day 7 | Jojawar

Today we ride 60km south to the 250 year old palace at Jojawar where we overnight.

Day 8 | Ranakpur

An 80km day of riding brings us to Ranakpur, home to the famed Jain Temples which are nestled in a lovely wooded valley.

Day 9 | Ranakpur

Today we have a free day to explore the intricate Jain Temple complex, visit a local wildlife sanctuary, take a horse ride, or just relax by the pool.



Day 10 | Kumbalgarh

Although it's only a 50km ride, the route from Ranakpur up into the Araveli Hills is one of our most challenging. The terrain here is completely different from the rest of our ride and we'll pass small hill villages and see traditional ox-drawn wells. Later in the afternoon we visit the incredible hilltop fortress of Kumbalgarh.

Days 11-12 | Udaipur

In the morning of day 11 there's the chance for a jeep safari through Kumbalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary before riding on for another 80km down from the green heights of the Araveli Hills, down through desert lowlands until we reach the fabled lake city of Udaipur. On Day 12 you'll be free to explore the manifold wonders of the white city.

Day 13 | Tour Ends

The tour ends after breakfast.

Tour Details

Style

Fully supported bicycle tour

Grasshopper Leader

Simon Foster, India Rough Guides 2003 author will introduce you to the region.

Inclusions

Support vehicle, tour leader, local guide, many meals, entry fees

Group Size

Minimum 4, Maximum 14

Accommodation

11 nights comfortable guesthouses / hotels, 1 overnight train

Single Room

On Grasshopper Adventures tours single travellers do not have to pay any extra to join our trips – we will match you up with another same sex, single traveller. However, should you wish to choose to take a single room we are happy to book rooms for you for an extra charge. This single supplement is completely voluntary and only applies to hotel accommodation, on overnight train trips there are no single rooms available. We should point out that on occasion single rooms may not be available and in these instances you may need to share for a night or two – we will refund part of your single supplement in these cases. Please contact us for the price of a single room.

Arriving in Delhi

Upon arrival at Delhi International Airport you will need to make your way to the start point hotel. The easiest way is to take a prepaid taxi which should cost under US\$10. Be wary of taxi drivers or touts who approach you at the airport and try and dissuade you from joining the queue for the pre-paid rank. We will provide you with the full details of the start point hotel closer to the tour date.

Additional Accommodation

Should you require additional accommodation at either end of the tour then we can offer you competitive rates at our group hotels. Please request extra nights when you book your trip. Prices are available on request.

Meals Included



11 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 9 dinners plus water, fruit and biscuits on cycling days. You should consider bringing some of your favourite snacks and electrolyte powder for the cycling days.

Cycling Details

Days Cycling

7

Kilometers Cycled

Approx 400km

Difficulty Rating

Moderate

Cycling Conditions

Predominantly small, flat, country roads and lanes with little traffic. Occasional stretches on busier roads. Two days hill riding at the end of the tour.

Bicycles

You can either bring your own bike or we have Trek 4300 mountain bikes for hire for US\$125.

Helmets

Helmets are now compulsory on all Grasshopper Adventures bicycle tours. Failure to wear a helmet will result in not being accepted on the tour.

Support Vehicles

Throughout the tour we will have vehicle support. The vehicles will carry all our luggage and any riders who are unable to ride at any time. We will use the same vehicles to make transfers for any sections that we do not ride.

Travel Details

Visas

Indian visas are required by most nationalities. You must apply for these in advance at your local embassy or through a travel agent. Prices are variable.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel. If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

Flights

International and domestic flights to the starting point and from the finishing point are not included in the price of this tour. We can assist with the purchase of inter-Asia flights and/or provide advice if you are considering overland travel. This tour starts in Delhi which is served by airlines worldwide. The tour ends in Udaipur which has regular flights to other major Indian cities including Delhi and Mumbai.

The following airlines fly from Udaipur and can be booked online:

- Indian Airlines - indian-airlines.nic.in
- Jet Airways - www.jetairways.com
- Kingfisher Airlines - www.flykingfisher.com
- Spicejet www.spicejet.com



Money

The official currency of India is the Indian Rupee which should be used for all transactions. India has a modern banking system with ATMs (Visa/Mastercard/Cirrus/Maestro) and money changers in larger towns. You should, however, carry traveler's cheques and some cash as a backup. Most international currencies can be exchanged so it is not necessary to bring only US dollars - AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centres. For current exchange rates visit: www.oanda.com

Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$20 for food and general living costs per day while on the tour. It is customary to tip the guide and support crew. You should allow approximately US\$75 for tips. Note: this is a guide only, feel free to tip more or less (or nothing) depending on your satisfaction.

Electricity

India works on a 230 volt system and generally uses the old British-style 3 round pin plugs. You can easily buy an adapter in India for much cheaper than in your home country.

Health

There are no specific health requirements for entry into India. However, you should consult your doctor for up to date information regarding vaccinations, high altitude medication and medications for any foreseeable illnesses that may affect you while traveling in India. Also remember that we will be in remote areas and away from medical facilities for some time during this trip for this reason we strongly recommend that you carry a personal First Aid kit as well as sufficient quantities of any personal medical requirements.

Packing

When packing please remember that we will have only limited luggage space in the support vehicles and that you will have to carry your luggage at times. Your luggage should weigh no more than 15kg.

You should consider bringing the following items:

Personal Items

- Backpack
- Long trousers
- Shorts
- Shirts
- Warm clothes for evenings
- Hat
- Sandals/Light Shoes
- Sunglasses
- Light Rain Coat
- Toiletries
- Small Towel
- Sunscreen
- First Aid Kit
- Mosquito Repellent
- Camera and Film/Memory
- Alarm Clock

Bicycle

- Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. day pack
- Helmet
- Cycling gloves
- Bike shorts with something to put on over the top while off the bike (note for women you will be expected to always wear something over bike shorts - sorry!)

Travel Items

- Passport with 6 months validity and 2 spare pages
- Travel insurance details
- Flight tickets
- Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques
- Phrase book

Climate

India stretches from the Himalaya through the northern deserts and down to the balmy beaches of Kerala. Rajasthan is one of the driest regions in the country and we travel at the best time of year



when midday temperatures aren't too high and the desert evenings aren't too chilly. It is unlikely we will see any precipitation during the tour.

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Delhi												
daily max (C)	21	24	30	36	41	40	35	34	34	35	29	23
rainfall (mm)	25	22	17	7	8	65	211	173	150	31	1	5
Jaisalmer												
daily max (C)	24	28	33	38	42	41	38	36	36	36	31	26
rainfall (mm)	2	1	3	1	5	7	89	86	14	1	5	2

Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit. Traveling is as much about how you visit as where you visit. Our guides and group leader follow detailed guidelines on acceptable behaviors and practices. These cover cultural considerations, reduction and disposal of waste and protection of endangered wildlife.

Dress

Despite what you see in Bollywood movies India is still a very conservative country. In rural areas and temples overly revealing clothing is considered offensive. You should make an effort to dress more conservatively in these situations. When visiting temples shorts are acceptable providing they cover the knee. Sleeveless tops are not acceptable in temples. Cycling shorts will generally be considered offensive when off the bikes so please carry something to cover your shorts with.

Phrase Book

A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people that you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak English but away from these areas you should learn a few words of Hindi. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations

In spite of recent development, India remains a poor country and on our journey we will witness poverty of a nature inconceivable in North America, Europe or Australasia. The instinctive human reaction is to want to give, but the debate about whether or not to give to beggars is complicated, and even if you choose to give there is then the decision about who to give to and how much to give. Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving items away to local people can create an expectation that a visiting foreigner equals free giveaways. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. In order to ensure that donations directly benefit the communities in the regions we travel through we can suggest good local projects to sponsor.

