

EXPLORE JEWISH INDIA

AN INSIDER'S TOUR

with Rahel Musleah, Journalist, Author, Educator, Singer, Calcutta Native

UPCOMING TOUR

NOVEMBER 2024

Join us for an experience you will never forget, a spirited and spiritual journey into the intriguing history, culture, customs, and music of the Jewish communities of Bombay, Cochin, Calcutta, and Delhi.

Alongside our Jewish journey, India's magnificent vistas, diverse religions, and welcoming people will open your hearts, minds and senses. From the Taj Mahal's stunning beauty to a bicycle-rickshaw ride through Delhi's bustling markets and an elephant ride in Rajasthan, this tour is truly the trip of a lifetime.

"This is not just a trip. This is a trip with neshamah!" — Norm Z., Newton, MA

www.ExploreJewishIndia.com

CONTACT

Rahel@explorejewishindia.com

Reserve your place now! Space is limited.



**EXPLORE
JEWISH INDIA**

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM RAHEL



India is a vast country of dramatic contrasts, extraordinary cultural richness, and religious diversity. Any visitor to India can choose from a wide array of tours. What distinguishes ours is its “insider’s” perspective.

I was born in Calcutta to a family with Baghdadi roots; I live in the United States today and speak widely about the Indian Jewish communities — always adding music wherever I go. My tour partner, Joshua Shapurkar, is a member of the Bene Israel community of Bombay and has been leading general and Jewish tours for twenty-five years. Together we have an intimate knowledge of the Indian Jewish communities and close relationships with its members.

You, too, will be treated as part of our broader family. You will meet and interact with community members, enjoy local hospitality, experience India’s magnificent cultural tapestry, and enjoy its rare Jewish treasures. We will share spirited and spiritual experiences, including participating in Shabbat services together in Bombay and Calcutta. I will lead services in the Baghdadi-Indian tradition in the Maghen David Synagogue, where my father was rabbi, and share my memories with you as we walk together through streets and bazaars. Our accommodations are deluxe — and you won’t have to worry about meals or transportation in India: everything is included.

PLEASE JOIN US ON THIS UNFORGETTABLE ADVENTURE!

What all our tours offer that others don’t:

- Personalized attention
- Cohesive groups
- “Insider’s” perspective
- Interaction and meals with local communities
- Freshly prepared gourmet meals
- Home hospitality dinner
- In-depth exploration of Jewish history
- Introduction to India’s other religions and cultural heritage
- A fabulous team of guides
- Best value for the price!

ITINERARY 2024



DAY 1

Namaste and welcome to India! Arrive in Mumbai and transfer to the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel. Optional pre-tour to Elephanta.

DAY 2 MUMBAI

Breakfast at hotel. Visit synagogues that reflect the thriving presence of the Bene Israel and Baghdadi Jews: Magen David and Tipheret Israel. Tour the city of Mumbai: Marvel at the Dhobi Ghat, an immense, colorful outdoor laundry. Learn about India's multifaceted religious heritage at a Hindu temple and Parsi Towers of Silence. After lunch, walk through the village surrounding the Banganga Tank, a sacred pool hidden in the luxurious locality of Malabar Hill. Enjoy Shabbat services and a sumptuous kosher dinner with the community at the Knesseth Eliyahu synagogue. Walk back to hotel.

DAY 3 MUMBAI

Walk to the Knesseth Eliyahu Synagogue for Shabbat services and lunch, followed by an optional heritage walk featuring the David Sassoon Library and Prince of Wales Museum with its huge collections of art, archaeology, and natural history (tickets will be purchased in advance). Dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY 4 MUMBAI

Depart by ferry to visit the villages along the coast of Bombay where, according to Bene Israel tradition, seven couples were shipwrecked over 2,000 years ago. Visit the original landing site and monument at Navgaon, as well as the Magen Aboth Synagogue. On our return, visit the Chabad House to remember the victims of the 2008 terrorist attack, followed by dinner on your own.

DAY 5

MUMBAI-COCHIN

Fly to Cochin, on the southern tip of the Indian peninsula. Cochin was once home to another flourishing Jewish community. Today only 21 Jews remain. Visit the dramatic Chinese fishing nets and walk along Jew Street to the exquisite 450-year-old Paradesi Synagogue in Mattancherry. Explore the area's antique shops and spice markets and visit the Dutch Palace. Check in to hotel and dinner on your own.

DAY 6

COCHIN

Visit the 19th-century Chennamangalam Synagogue and museum. Its close proximity to a Hindu temple, church and mosque highlights India's religious tolerance. Stop at the Parur Synagogue, an architectural gem dating from 1616. All aboard for a lush backwater tour along Kerala's local canals. Lunch overlooking the Arabian Sea and enjoy a Kathakali dance drama. Dinner on your own.

DAY 7

COCHIN-JAIPUR

Visit the amazing synagogue in Ernakulam, part of Cochin (it's hidden behind an aquarium and garden shop) before flying to Jaipur, the "Pink City of India." The capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur is nestled in India's mountains. Overnight at hotel.

DAY 8

JAIPUR

Prepare to be awed by the Amber Fort, the ancient citadel of Jaipur's rulers, and ride an elephant! Stop at the city palace and the Jantar Mantar observatory. Take time to shop in this beautiful city, known for textiles, jewelry, and carpets.

DAY 9

JAIPUR-CALCUTTA

Take an early morning flight east to Calcutta, once the capital of the British Raj and — Rahel's birthplace! Visit the dazzling and peaceful Jain Temple. Enjoy British-era architectural masterpieces including the Raj Bhavan (Governor's House) and Writers' Buildings. Check in to hotel and prepare for Shabbat. Walk to the Maghen David Synagogue, enjoy a Shabbat service that Rahel will lead, and savor a bountiful Baghdadi meal with members of the local community. Overnight at Lalit Great Eastern Hotel.

DAY 10

CALCUTTA

Rahel will lead Shabbat services. After lunch at the synagogue, enjoy a walking tour of local sites, including the flower market and the ghats (steps) that lead down to the holy Ganges River. A festive dinner follows after Shabbat.

DAY 11 **CALCUTTA-DELHI**

Fly to Delhi, the second most populous city in the world, and the seat of the Indian government. Drive by India Gate; Parliament and President's Houses, and visit Qutab Minar, a 13th-century Muslim monument marking victory over Delhi's last Hindu kingdom. Learn about Delhi's Jewish history. Check in to hotel and dinner on your own.

DAY 12 **DELHI**

Visit Raj Ghat, the cremation site of Mahatma Gandhi. Experience an unforgettable bicycle rickshaw ride through the narrow, bustling lanes of Old Delhi. Stop at the tomb of Sarmad, a Persian mystic, poet, and saint, who was born a Jew. After lunch, stop at the Sikh Temple. Shopping at Khan Market, where you can find fashion, crafts, jewelry and more. Dinner on your own.

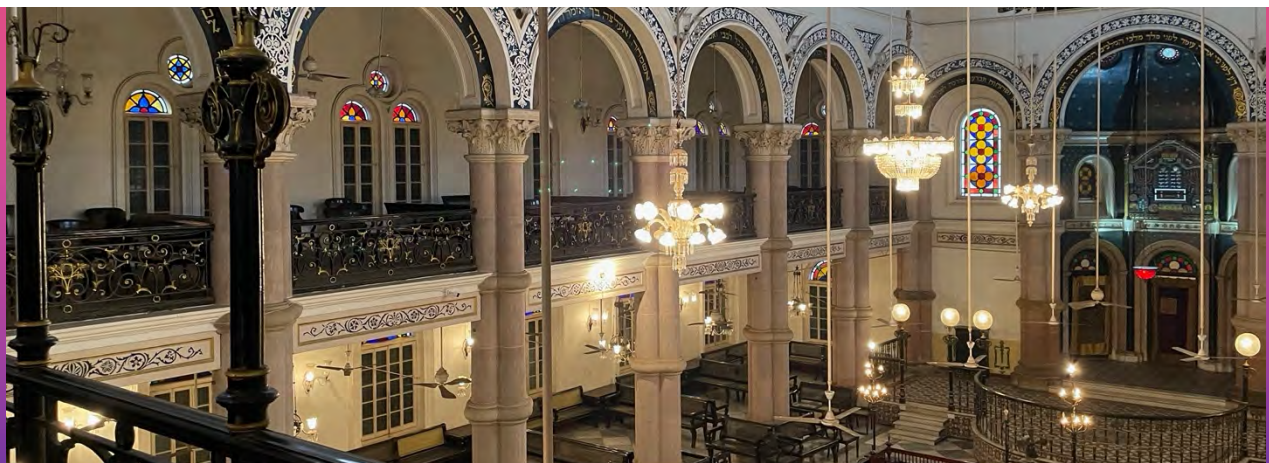
DAY 13 **DELHI-AGRA**

Leave by road to Agra and marvel at the city's Red Fort. Visit the awe-inspiring Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, built by the emperor Shah Jahan in the 17th century. Overnight at hotel.

DAY 14 **AGRA-DELHI**

Return by road to Delhi and arrive at hotel near airport. Optional stay overnight (additional cost). Transfer to the Delhi International Airport for flights home or for post-tours.

NAMASTE!



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

COST

- \$6,190 pp double occupancy.
- \$8,175 single occupancy.

COST INCLUDES

- 14 days, 13 nights at five-star hotels.
- Most meals (vegetarian, with some fish and two kosher meat meals).
- All sightseeing costs.
- All travel within India, including flights, transfers, boat and ferry trips, and air-conditioned buses.
- Fully escorted by highly experienced, English-speaking guide from arrival until departure.
- Specialized talks about Jewish India and get-togethers with members of the local Jewish communities.
- All current applicable taxes.
- Hotels, cost and itinerary subject to change.

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

International airfare and visa fees.

SCHEDULE OF PAYMENTS AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

- \$1,000 non-refundable deposit upon registration. If participant tests positive for Covid and cannot join the tour, we cannot refund payments. We strongly recommend travel insurance that covers Covid.
- Non-refundable balance/final payment due 90 days prior to departure. Charges cover non-refundable expenses incurred on behalf of the participant and the group and help protect tour fares for the remaining participants.
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, porters, and others will be added as a supplement of \$350.
- Travel/cancellation insurance is highly recommended.
- Visa and valid passport are required.

OPTIONAL ADD-ONS

Pre-Tour

Additional night at Taj Mumbai: \$330 (per room, not per person).

- Mumbai day tour of Elephanta Island, a 7th-century Hindu cave and World Heritage site: \$100. Other optional day tours also available.

Post-Tour

Please request itineraries if you are interested).

- Option A: Three nights, Delhi-Varanasi.
- Option B: Five nights, Delhi-Rajasthan (Udaipur, Pushkar, Jodhpur). Additional Night at Novotel: \$230 per room.

RESOURCES

For more information about the tour, please contact Rahel Musleah at rahel@explorejewishindia.com.

For questions about travel and accommodations within India, please contact our tour guide and travel consultant, Joshua Shapurkar at joshuashapurkar@jittours.in.

For expert guidance with international arrangements, contact Anna Psarros, anna@carlisletravel.com, phone 646-945-4772.

For travel insurance, contact AJ Steele at Faye, phone 402-517-5087, aj.steele@withfaye.com, and book through this [portal](#).

Looking forward to having you join us!

TESTIMONIALS FROM PAST PARTICIPANTS

“A spiritual, enlightening, and consciousness-expanding tour. The people were like-minded and kind; a Zen atmosphere was present (whenever I needed it to be!). We had soooo many Jewish life-altering experiences, and equally as many fun Indian experiences. Can anyone forget the services in a local synagogue and Shabbat dinner with members of the community under the stars? To balance that out, an elephant ride around — and up — a fortress. The tour guides led with their hearts and guided us wisely and well. India, where “Guest IS G-D!”

BEVERLY B., LOS ANGELES, CA



“While it’s wonderful to be home, we are constantly asked about our trip to India. As we describe our enchanting journey, we relive our magical holiday and many fabulous experiences shared with great new friends. People are absolutely amazed at all we did and that we enjoyed India which we credit to our excellently organized tour.”

MARILYN AND GEOFF R., SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

“Traveling with Rahel was both exhilarating and a deeply emotional experience for me, as my family had lived in India for a few generations before immigrating to the West. The tour presented a good balance between Jewish and general attractions, and I liked the smaller number of participants as it allowed for a meaningful general interaction. Very ‘Indian’ experiences such as rickshaw and elephant rides added ‘spice’ and color. The tour was very comfortable in all aspects — great hotels and meals, transport, and the well-chosen places we visited and shopped at. It all worked so smoothly, due to the meticulous and thoughtful planning that went into creating such a memorable and meaningful experience.”

Yael S., SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

“Can anyone else who has traveled to India say that they have seen and done all that we’ve had in two weeks? I might intentionally miss my flight home.”

MERAV D., BROOKLYN, NY

“What a fabulous trip! I knew a little about the Jews of India — but never knew how much I didn’t know. This trip provided both experience and knowledge, in addition to the “tourist” sites that everyone must see. The guides were fabulous, each presenting a different aspect of India. And, it couldn’t have been a nicer group. Thank you for all your personal help and making India so real to us.”

SUE AND MARTY S., SARASOTA, FL

“Many of my friends who are interested in traveling to India were concerned about the thing that also terrified me the most: winding up sick or injured in an Indian hospital. They were very gratified when I told them how safe and wonderful you made it all.”

EVE V., SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA

“An extraordinary tour giving a true flavor and appreciation of the complexities of India. The Jewish connection led to my choosing this tour. Rahel and Joshua both have great knowledge and bent over backwards to satisfy every need.”

FREDA A., MARSHALL, MI

“The combination of Rahel’s personal and historical perspectives blended beautifully with Joshua’s extensive knowledge and experience as a guide. Each presented individual perspectives with balance, humor and understanding, providing immense flavor as well as substance.”

DEINYA M., JACKSONVILLE, FL

“On a scale of 1-5, I rate the tour a 5 overall. In spite of my being fairly nonobservant, I was increasingly interested in seeing the different synagogues in different, often extremely out-of-the-way places. I looked forward to the food and was not in the least disappointed by the quality or quantity. The tour ran extremely smoothly with meticulous attention to myriad, sometimes conflicting needs. No request was ignored and not satisfied; no question went unanswered.”

MARK H., AMBLER, PA

“Your passion for India and Jewish India is contagious! I’m grateful to have been part of this wonderful tour with such compatible people. Each hotel was special and provided luxury and amenities. The meals were delicious. Nothing was left out of the itinerary. This was the trip of a lifetime!

ARLINE U., POTOMAC, MD



“There are many organized tours to the fascinating country of India. There are even a few ‘Jewish’ trips to India. But there is only one Jewish heritage tour to India organized and led by Rahel Musleah and Joshua Shapurkar. Rahel’s and Joshua’s passion, knowledge, and many personal connections in the communities we visited greatly enhanced this trip experience for all participants. The few remaining Indian Jews are aging. Go now.”

NEAL FARBER, NEWTON, MA

EXPLORE JEWISH INDIA **REGISTRATION**

TOUR SELECTION: November 2024

NAME (as it appears on your passport): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: _____ MOBILE (CELL): _____

EMAIL: _____

BIRTH DATE: _____ PROFESSION: _____

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE (Orthodox/Conservative/Reform/Non-observant): _____

PASSPORT

COUNTRY: _____ NUMBER: _____ EXPIRATION DATE: _____

HOTEL

Room preference: Single Double

I will room with: _____

Preference for double rooms: 2 Twin 1 Queen/King

FOOD ALLERGIES OR NECESSARY HEALTH REQUESTS

EMERGENCY CONTACT

NAME: _____

TEL: _____ RELATIONSHIP: _____

ABOUT YOU (OPTIONAL)

Your interests, special talents, hopes for this tour, or anything else you'd like us to know.

PRE-TOUR OPTIONS

Begin your exploration with these pre-tour extension options.



OPTION A: **HIDDEN JEWELS OF MUMBAI**

Visit the Sassoon Dock, a wholesale fish market, and learn about the fishermen, the original inhabitants of the city. Witness the amazing lunch box system and watch the “*dabbawallas*” in action. Visit a local Hindu temple and see a religious ceremony. 9 a.m.–1 p.m. \$100 per person.

OPTION B: **ELEPHANTA ISLAND**

Enjoy a half-day tour of Elephanta Island, a seventh-century rock-cut Hindu cave temple and World Heritage site. Known in ancient times as Gharapuri, the name Elephanta was given by sixteenth-century Portuguese explorers, after seeing a monolithic basalt sculpture of an elephant found near the entrance. This island was once the capital of a powerful local kingdom.

Meet in the lobby at 9:00 a.m. and walk across the street to the ferry that will take us to the island. Return by 1:30 p.m. Lunch on your own. Restaurant options will be provided. Cost: \$100 per person.

NOTE:

Overnight stays at Taj Hotel for pre-tour nights are at an extra cost of \$330 per night. Once you book the tours with us, you can cancel up to 10 days in advance, but it may make a difference for others who have signed up. We can only run the tours for a minimum of 2 people.

POST-TOUR OPTIONS

You've come so far, don't miss these post-tour extension options.



“In order to understand the soul of India, travel to Varanasi.”

STEPHAN U, DENVER, CO

OPTION A: VARANASI

THREE NIGHTS

DAY 1: ARRIVAL

Overnight at Novotel Aerocity

DAY 2: DELHI-VARANASI

Transfer to airport for flight to Varanasi. Arrival assistance and transfer to hotel provided. Evening tour of Ganges ghats to witness the Aarti ceremony. Overnight at hotel.

Varanasi, one of the holiest cities of Hindus, has a fascinating array of shrines, temples and palaces rising in several tiers from the water's edge. It is also a city of fairs and festivals, celebrating about 400 of them during the year.

DAY 3: VARANASI

Early morning boat excursion on the holy river Ganges to see the bathing ghats and cremation site. Watch people bathing and worshipping at the Ghats — one of the most extraordinary experiences of a visit to India. After breakfast at the hotel, half-day sightseeing tour of the city including the Bharat Mata Temple with a marble relief map of India; Durga Temple, Tulsi Manas Mandir, Banaras Hindu University and art gallery, and the mosque of Moghul Emperor Aurangzeb. Afternoon excursion to Sarnath, the buried Buddhist city where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon. Sarnath was a renowned school of learning from the 6th century BCE to the 12th century. Overnight at hotel.

DAY 4: VARANASI-DELHI-NEXT DESTINATION

After breakfast, transfer to airport to connect to flight for Delhi (arrival by 5 pm) and flight home or to next destination. Arrangements to leave Varanasi after Shabbat can also be made and may affect cost.

HOTELS

City	Selected hotels or similar	Nights
Delhi	Novotel Aerocity	1
Varanasi	Taj Ganges/Madin	2

COST

- Double: \$1,310 pp
- Single: \$1,705 pp based on minimum two people traveling. If only one person travels, there is an additional supplement.

PACKAGE INCLUDES

- Assistance on arrival and departure.
- Accommodations and breakfasts.
- Exclusive AC vehicle for transfers and sightseeing.
- Boat and rickshaw rides in Varanasi.
- Flight: Delhi-Varanasi-Delhi.
- Entrance to the monuments.
- Local English-speaking guides during the sightseeing.
- All currently applicable taxes.

PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Lunches, dinners, and personal expenses such as laundry, telephone calls, gratuities, liquor.



OPTION B: DELHI, UDAIPUR, PUSHKAR, JODHPUR

FIVE NIGHTS



DAY 1: DELHI

Overnight at Novotel Aerocity in Delhi.

DAY 2: DELHI – UDAIPUR

Fly to Udaipur, the city of lakes, is admired for its fairy-tale palaces, lakes, temples, and gardens. Built in 1559 CE by Maharaja Udai Singh, the city has been described as the most romantic spot in India. Afternoon city sightseeing tour including the City Palace, Zenana Mahal, Fateh Prakash, Durbar Hall and Shambhu Niwas. Also visit Jagdish temple, Sahelion-ki-Bari (queen's resort for the friends).

Evening cruise on the waters of Lake Pichola. Overnight at hotel.

DAY 3: UDAIPUR – PUSHKAR

Drive to Pushkar, one of the oldest cities in India and a favoured destination for thousands of tourists. Visit the Chabad House in the evening for Shabbat prayers and meals. The Chabad House, a large complex with a synagogue and a large garden, provides services and meals for dozens, and sometimes hundreds of guests.

Overnight at hotel.

DAY 4: PUSHKAR

Walk to the Chabad House for Shabbat services. Enjoy a walking tour after the Shabbat meals. Overnight at hotel.

DAY 5: PUSHKAR – JODHPUR

After breakfast and checkout from hotel, depart for Jodhpur, stronghold of the fierce Rathore clan. The city was founded in 1459 by Prince Jodha.

In the afternoon enjoy Bishnoi village safari where you will meet with the local people and learn about their way of life. Overnight at hotel.

DAY 6: JODHPUR – DELHI

Visit the Mehrangarh Fort, situated on a low sandstone hill. Within the fort, visit Moti Mahal and Phool Mahal. Also visit Jaswant Thada, an imposing marble cenotaph, built in memory of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II, and Umaid Public Gardens.

Transfer to airport for flight to Delhi and next flight home or next destination.

HOTELS

City	Selected hotels or similar	Nights
Delhi	Novotel Aerocity	1
Udaipur	Fateh Garh / Trident	1
Pushkar	Brahma Horizon	2
Jodhpur	Radisson hotel / Ajit Bhawan	1

COST

- Double: \$2,500 pp
- Single: \$3,100 pp based on minimum two people traveling. If only one person travels, there is an additional supplement.

PACKAGE INCLUDES

- Assistance on arrival and departure.
- Accommodations and breakfasts.
- Exclusive A/C vehicle for transfers and sightseeing.
- Entrance to the monuments.
- Local English-speaking guides during the sightseeing.
- Flights: Delhi-Udaipur and Jodhpur-Delhi.
- Boat ride on Lake Pichola in Udaipur with other guests.
- All currently applicable taxes.

PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Lunches, dinners, and personal expenses such as laundry, telephone calls, gratuities, liquor.