

Explore Jewish India: An Insider's Tour with Rahel Musleah

Journalist, Author, Educator, Singer, Calcutta Native

Learn about the intriguing history, culture, customs, and music
of the Jewish communities of Bombay, Cochin, Calcutta, and Delhi.
Eat, pray, and mingle with members of the community.

Visit the Taj Mahal and other top attractions.
Enjoy a bicycle rickshaw ride through Delhi's bustling markets,
a lush backwater tour along Kerala's peaceful canals,
an unforgettable elephant ride in Rajasthan, and yoga in Cochin.

November 2023
February 2024

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

Five-star hotels, most meals (vegetarian),
and all transportation within India included.
International flight on your own.

www.explorejewishindia.com, www.rahelsjewishindia.com

Contact: Rahel@explorejewishindia.com (516) 524-4708

Reserve Your Place Now! Space Is Limited

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 attend 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!



Rahel leading a service in Calcutta. Photo by Joan Roth/Photographer

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

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 Eliahoo synagogue. Walk back to hotel.

Day 3

Mumbai

Walk to the Knesseth Eliahoo 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!

Explore Jewish India: What You Need to Know

Costs:

- \$5,990 pp double occupancy.
- \$7,975 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.
- Gratuities for guides and drivers.

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. Other exceptions for refunds may be made on an individual basis in case of emergency.
- 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.
- Travel/cancellation insurance is highly recommended.
- Visa, valid passport ,and proof of Covid vaccines 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: Six nights, Delhi-Rajasthan (Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur).

Resources:

- For more information about the tour, please contact Rahel Musleah, rahel@explorejewishindia.com. 516-524-4708.
- For questions about travel and accommodations within India, please contact our tour guide and travel consultant, Joshua Shapurkar, joshuashapurkar@jitours.in.
- For expert guidance with international arrangements, contact Anna Psarros, anna@carlisletravel.com, 646-945-4772.
- For travel insurance, contact AJ Steele at Faye: 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 sooooo 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*

“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*

“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*

“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!**” -Arlene 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

“What a pity you only do India! What about Japan, China . . .?” -Shulamith D., Brazil



Photo by Joan Roth/Photographer

Explore Jewish India: Registration

NAME (as it appears on your passport): _____

ADDRESS: _____

TEL: _____ MOBILE (CELL): _____

EMAIL: _____ FAX: _____

BIRTH DATE: _____

PASSPORT: COUNTRY _____ NUMBER: _____

EXPIRATION DATE: _____

COVID VACCINE REQUIRED (please upload documentation with registration): _____

PROFESSION: _____

TOUR DATES: _____

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE: _____

HOTEL: Room preference: Single _____ Double _____

I will room with: _____

Preference for double rooms: 2 Twin _____ 1 Queen/King _____

Do you want a room on a lower floor for Shabbat? _____

FOOD ALLERGIES OR NECESSARY HEALTH REQUESTS _____

EMERGENCY CONTACT:

Name: _____

Relationship: _____ Tel: _____

ABOUT YOU (OPTIONAL): Your interests, special talents, hopes for this tour, or anything else you'd like us to know:

You've Come So Far: Don't Miss These Post-Tour Extension Options Varanasi 3 Nights—Option A



"In order to understand the soul of India, travel to Varanasi." —Stephan U, Denver, CO

Day 1: 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.

City	Selected Hotels or similar	Nights
Delhi	Novotel Aerocity	1
Varanasi	Taj Gateway Ganges	2

Double: \$1,310 pp

Single: \$1,705 pp

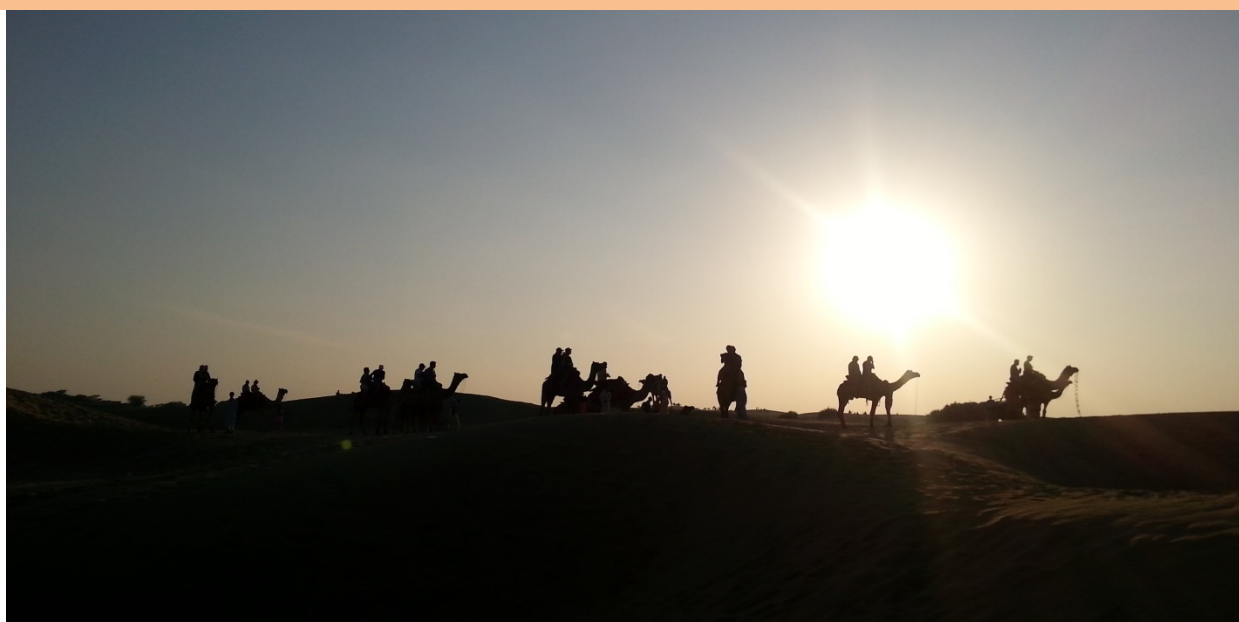
PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- ✓ Assistance on arrival and departure.
- ✓ Accommodations and breakfasts.
- ✓ Exclusive AC vehicle for transfers & 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:

- ⊗ Personal expenses such as laundry, telephone calls, tips, liquor.

Jaisalmer-Jodhpur-Udaipur: 6 Nights – Option B



"India's nature and beauty is magical and magnificent!"-Merav Darzi, Brooklyn, NY. Photo by Merav Darzi

Day 1: Overnight at Novotel Aerocity in Delhi.

Day 2: Delhi-Jodhpur-Jaisalmer (Flight and 5-hour drive)

After breakfast transfer to airport for flight to Jodhpur. From Jodhpur travel by road to Jaisalmer. Overnight at hotel.

Jaisalmer, located deep inside the famous Thar Desert in Rajasthan, intrigues visitors with its tales of unequalled valor by courageous rulers and citizens of bygone eras. It is unique in its beauty and undaunted spirit.

Day 3: Jaisalmer-Dunes-Jaisalmer

After breakfast, leave for sightseeing. **Jaisalmer Fort** is famously known as the Golden Fort of Rajasthan due to the golden and yellow mixed sandstone with which it was constructed by Raja Jaisal, Rajput ruler in 156 CE. It ranks among the largest forts in the world. With its 99 turrets rising from the desert sands like a mirage, the fort is a magical sight to behold.

Bada Bagh (“Huge Garden”), was constructed in the 16th century by Maharawal Jait Singh and his son Lunakaran. The garden, which offers stunning views and beautiful photographic moments—especially during sunrise and sunset—served as a memorial where the nobles and their families were cremated.

Patwon-Ki-Haveli, located in the main city, was built by a famous trader named Guman Chand and his sons. This massive five-storied yellow sandstone construction has five huge and intricately decorated suites. The large corridors and the decorated walls are excellent representations of the prevailing art form. The grandeur and architecture of the monument add immense value to the cultural heritage of the city. Out of the five havelis, one is converted into a museum.

Dunes: Set off on camelback or jeep for a desert safari from Sam Sand Dunes. Travel along crests and troughs and watch the picturesque desert sunset. Overnight at hotel.

Day 4: Jaisalmer-Jodhpur (5 hours)

Breakfast at hotel. Travel to Jodhpur, stronghold of the fierce Rathore clan. The city was founded in 1459 by Prince Jodha . 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. Overnight at hotel.

Day 5: Jodhpur-Ranakpur-Udaipur (5 hours plus sightseeing of Ranakpur Temple)

After breakfast & checkout from hotel, depart for Udaipur, visiting the Jain temple en route. Arrive at Udaipur and transfer to the hotel. **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. Evening at leisure. Overnight at hotel.

Day 6: Udaipur

Breakfast at hotel. Morning 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 7: Udaipur-Delhi-Next Destination

After breakfast, transfer to airport for flight to Delhi (arrival by 9 pm) and next flight home.

Hotels

City	Selected Hotels or similar	Nights
Delhi	Novotel Aerocity	1
Jaisalmer	JW Marriott	2
Jodhpur	Ajit Bhaawan Palace	1
Udaipur	Trident	2

Double: \$2,940 pp

Single: \$3,820 pp

PACKAGE INCLUDES

- ✓ Assistance on arrival and departure.
- ✓ Accommodations and breakfasts.
- ✓ Exclusive A/C vehicle for transfers and sightseeing.
- ✓ Entrance to the monuments.
- ✓ Accompanying English-speaking guide for minimum of 2 people.
- ✓ Flights: Delhi-Jodhpur & Udaipur-Delhi.
- ✓ Boat ride on Lake Pichola in Udaipur with other guests.
- ✓ All currently applicable taxes.

PACKAGE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- ⊗ Personal expenses such as laundry, telephone calls, gratuities, liquor.



Photo by Merav Darzi



rahel@explorejewishindia.com