



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

Journalist, Author, Lecturer, 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 crowded markets, a backwater tour along Kerala's canals, and an elephant ride in Rajasthan. Experience Bollywood dancing and yoga.

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February 2019

"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.rahelsjewishindia.com, www.explorejewishindia.com
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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



Itinerary

Day 1

Namaste and Welcome to India!

Arrive in Mumbai and transfer to the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower Hotel.

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, and Mani Bhavan, Gandhi's house from 1917-1934, now a museum. Learn about India's multifaceted religious heritage at a Hindu temple, the Hanging Gardens, 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 Indian-Baghdadi 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 a gourmet kosher Baghdadi feast. After lunch, optional heritage walk featuring the David Sassoon Library, Flora Fountain, 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. Pick out the Jewish stars on some of the homes on Israel Street. Visit the Chabad House, followed by dinner at JCC Mumbai.

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 26 Jews remain. Visit the dramatic Chinese fishing nets and the Saint Francis Church, the burial place of Vasco da Gama, the Portuguese explorer who discovered India. Walk along Jew Town Road to the exquisite 450-year-old Paradesi Synagogue and cemetery in Mattancherry; explore the area's antique shops and spice markets, and visit the Dutch Palace. Meet two of Cochin's last Jews, both women, and purchase hand-made *kippot* and tablecloths if you wish. Check in to Crowne Plaza hotel.

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. After a late lunch overlooking the beach, all aboard for a lush backwater tour along Kerala's local canals. Before dinner, enjoy a Kathakali dance drama.

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 via Mumbai. Jaipur, the “Pink City of India” and capital of Rajasthan, is nestled in India’s mountains. Overnight at Trident 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 Victoria Memorial, Raj Bhavan (Governor’s House), and Writers’ Buildings. Check in to hotel and prepare for Shabbat. Walk to the Beth El 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 at one of the synagogues. 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. For dinner, savor the hospitality, a cooking demonstration and a vegetarian feast at the home of Flower Silliman, a cookbook author and caterer who owned her own kosher restaurant in Jerusalem, and her daughter Jael, author of two books about the Calcutta Jewish community, and curator of the digital archive, “Recalling Jewish Calcutta.”

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 at Judah Hyam Hall, the local synagogue. Dinner at a local restaurant and overnight at Meridien New Delhi.

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 Humayun’s Tomb and the Sikh Temple. Shopping and dinner on your own at Khan Market, where you can find fashion, crafts, jewelry and more.

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 Double Tree by Hilton.

Day 14**Agra-Delhi**

Return by road to Delhi. Overnight at Novotel Aerocity Hotel near airport.

Day 15**Delhi**

Namaste! Transfer to the Delhi International Airport for flights home or for post-tours.

Explore Jewish India: What You Need to Know

Costs:

- \$5,650 pp double occupancy.
- \$7,450 single occupancy.

Cost includes:

- 15 days, 14 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.

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 with registration. 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 and valid passport 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: \$75. Other optional day tours also available.
- Post –Tour: Itineraries attached.
 - Option A: Two nights, Delhi-Varanasi.
 - Option B: Five nights, Delhi-Rajasthan (Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Udaipur).

Resources:

- For more information about the tour, please contact Rahel Musleah, rahel.musleah@gmail.com. 516-829-2358.
- For questions about travel and accommodations within India, please contact our tour guide and travel consultant, Joshua Shapurkar, joshuashapurkar@hotmail.com.
- For expert guidance with international arrangements and travel insurance, contact Brenda Kopelowitz, Travel with Brenda, travelwithbrenda@yahoo.com; 516-482-2787

Looking forward to having you join us!



Testimonials from Past Participants

“Of the many trips abroad that my wife and I have taken, our India journey with Rahel and Joshua was the best! Joshua is the most wonderful travel guide, our exploration into Jewish India was fascinating and spiritually meaningful, and India’s people, colors, food, smells, and wonders were a constant delight!”—*Stephan U., Denver, CO*

“It was a delightful, memorable and fascinating tour of India with the added bonus of learning about another facet of Jewish history and culture. Joshua was excellent. Rahel was a full hands-on guide, providing the insights as only an insider can.”—*Judith P., Boston, MA*

“Joshua was fantastic. Can’t think of a thing he could have done to better help us. He was constantly aware of what people needed, was resourceful and able to resolve issues on the fly, and wonderfully knowledgeable about both the Jewish histories of India as well as the non-Jewish political and religious histories. He really knows his stuff, and shares it in a fascinating, informative and humorous way. Joshua and Rahel worked incredibly well together, in a beautiful melding of the Bene Israel and Baghdadi traditions. Rahel’s leading the Shabbat morning Torah service in Delhi was a total treat, and singing [Salamone] Rossi in the synagogue in Calcutta was a real gift. Rahel’s personal and musical history in combination with Joshua’s experience as a tour guide really made this a special trip.”—*Fredrica B., Brooklyn, NY*

“The tour was well-managed and stress-free considering we had a lot of ground to cover. I enjoyed the visits to the synagogues and the Taj Mahal; even crossing the streets was a highlight!”—*Carol D., Brooklyn, NY*

“What a sensory experience! The tour was a compelling introduction to India through the lens of the history of Jews in India. It was revelatory in many ways, bringing to light how Jews thrived in India.”—*Karen C., Santa Fe, NM*

“I loved all the meals and meeting members of the communities! Joshua and Rahel were outstanding guides and brought to life the history of the Jewish people of India. I would highly recommend traveling with them!”—*Loni B., Great Neck, NY*

“The tour was an eye-opening adventure from start to finish. I enjoyed learning about a Jewish culture and history that was new to me. I also came away with tremendous respect for the vitality, resilience and diversity of the Indian people.”—*Mara W., Wyomissing, PA*

“Thank you for putting this tour together! My eyes have been opened to the Indian Jewish community and to India in general. It’s a great combination. The musical addition was wonderful.”—*Bonnie K., Denver, CO*

“The trip offered a very nice balance between Jewish content and Indian sites. The time we spent with members of the Jewish community in Mumbai, Cochin, Calcutta and Delhi made it a unique experience. Rahel and Joshua planned the trip with amazing attention to detail and with love.”—*Karen R., New York, NY*

“Highlights included Shabbat at Knesseth Eliyahu in Mumbai, the tour of the Kerala backwaters, the dinner at Flower’s house, and the amazing Moghul palaces around Agra and Delhi.”—*Gabriella J., Jerusalem, Israel*

“We appreciated the opportunity to visit Jewish sites in India that we could not have seen on our own. We learned a lot about India as well. Hotel accommodations were excellent.”—*Marvin and Judy S., Center Conway, NH*

“This was a superb experience. My expectations were more than met! I connected with my personal past and gained a better understanding of past and present Jewish Indian life and community. Joshua gave me a strong message that there is a future for the Jews in India.”—*Nancy S., Newton, MA*

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



Rahel and Joshua. 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: _____

PROFESSION: _____

TOUR DATES: _____

HOTEL: Room preference: Single _____ Double _____

I will room with: _____

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

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

MEALS DURING TOUR:

Special 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:

Post-Tour Extension Options

Varanasi 2 Nights—Option A



Day 1: 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 2: 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 3: 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.

City	Selected Hotels or similar	Nights
Varanasi	Hotel Madin	02

-Double: \$825 pp

-Single: \$1,150 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: 5 Nights – Option B



Day 1: 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 valour by courageous rulers and citizens of bygone eras. It is unique in its beauty and undaunted spirit.

Day 2: 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 3: 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 4: 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 5: 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 6: Udaipur-Delhi-Next Destination

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

Hotels

City	Selected Hotels or similar	Nights
Jaisalmer	Gorbandh Palace	2
Jodhpur	Bhawan	1
Udaipur	Trident	2

Double: \$1,550 pp

Single: \$ 2,100 pp

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-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.