

The Jewish Soul of India
Delhi, Agra, Mumbai, Alleppey, Cochin
9 days - 8 nights
Heritage, Culture, History, Spirituality

India is perhaps one of the only countries in the world where there has never been any anti-Semitic sentiments expressed by the local communities. Jews continue to live and prosper in India, though with a population of only 6,000. India has a legacy of four distinct Jewish groups: (a) the Bene Israel, (b) the Cochin Jews, (c) the Sephardic Jews from Europe, and, (d) the "Baghdadis" from Iraq. Their history dates back to over 2000 years ago where there is evidence listed on the cemeteries in Hebrew. Today the community has shrunk considerably; however, there is a large community still active to share the history with us.

This program combines both Jewish history and remarkable Indian culture. You will not just have the opportunity to meet with fascinating Jewish communities and learn the unknown secrets of the Jewish experience in India but also witness the breathtaking scenery and fascinating culture of India!

Day 01 - Mon: Delhi

Arrive at Delhi International Airport. After clearing customs, immigration formalities and baggage collection, you will meet our representative after which you will be transferred to your hotel for check in and overnight.

A kingdom that has created more than one empire, 'Delhi' today is an incredible combination of the ancient and the contemporary. It was the magnet that drew the Mongols, Turks, Persians, Afghans, Mughals and the British, all of whom contributed to its glorious but turbulent past. The fascination with Delhi was such that even though it was abandoned many times, its rulers returned to it again and again rebuilding it at least seven times. Today, the twin cities of Old and New Delhi, give out a stark contrast for a first-time traveler. You may find high-rise towers, swanky malls and BMWs' in harmony with the historical monuments, rustic ruins and bullock carts. An excellent doorway to unwind flashback without compromising on luxury, this city is sure to take you by surprise.

Day 02 - Tue: Delhi

This morning experience pure indulgence and immersion in the local cultural flavors of a beautiful historical city. The Mughal-built city of Shahjahanabad eats, breathes and lives history. Enjoy a memorable rickshaw ride through the alleys of Chandni Chowk that offer a unique insight into its historic past and present day's cultural fabric, making Old Delhi the perfect amalgamation of living traditions and a spectacularly built heritage. Enjoy this unique essence of Old Delhi at a leisurely pace on our rickshaws with customized pit stops that are designed to suit your needs and requirements and give you a compelling snapshot of Old Delhi. Lunch at Veda Restaurant and, in the afternoon, visit Humayun's tomb which is known as the precursor of Taj Mahal. This is one of the finest examples of Mughal architecture with four gardens. The monument was built by Hamida Banu Begum for her husband unlike most of the other monuments which were built by the husbands for wives. Visit Judah Hyam Synagogue between 4:30 and 6:00 pm. Overnight stay in Delhi. [B/L/D]

Day 03 - Wed: Delhi (Agra)

Morning, transfer to railway station to board a train to Agra departing at 8:10 am and arriving at around 9:50 am. You will be received on arrival by our guide and commence your guided tour of the Taj Mahal. Agra in terms of ambiance is still associated with its Mughal period. The Mughals besides being great rulers were also great builders and they preserved their best architectural wonders for Agra & its neighborhood. It has many wonderful monuments and the Taj Mahal, the greatest of them all, is a masterpiece of Mughal architecture at its best. Their architectural genius can also be seen in the forts, palaces and aesthetically laid out gardens - each one a silent witness to a grand style of a golden era. Said to be one of the most elegant and a harmonious building in the world, Taj Mahal was built by Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in 1630 AD to enshrine the mortal remains of his beloved Queen Mumtaz Mahal. Taj Mahal manifests the wealth and luxury of Mughal art as seen in architecture and garden

design, painting, and calligraphy. The 144-foot double dome of the Taj is capped with a finial and the four minarets each 131 ft. high and crowned by an open octagonal pavilion highlighting the perfect symmetry of the tomb. Lunch at Trident Hotel Agra. Later, explore the Agra Fort. The fort was the seat and stronghold of the Mughal Empire under successive generations. This was the seat of Mughal rule and administration and the present structure owes its origins to Akbar who erected the walls and gates and the first buildings on the eastern banks of the Yamuna River. Shah Jehan added the impressive quarters and the mosque while Aurangzeb added the outer ramparts. Visit its Hall of Public Audience and its Royal Pavilions. In the late afternoon drive back to Delhi (4 hours) for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Bombay also known as Mumbai is the economic powerhouse of India. It is young, it's lively and a confluence of varied cultural currents and cross currents have given Mumbai a unique position of the most multi-ethnic city of India. Mumbai is the most populous city in India, and the fourth most populous city in the world, with a total metropolitan area population of approximately 20.5 million. Mumbai is also the country's financial and commercial hub and has a principal port on the Arabian Sea. It is also the hub of Indian film industry, which has played a pivoted role in the development of cinematography. "Bollywood", as it is called, produces the second most number of pictures in the world every year, next only to Hollywood, U.S.A. Mumbai claims to be the world's largest production center for films.

Day 04 - Tue: Delhi, Mumbai

Early morning you'll be picked-up and transferred to the airport for your flight to Mumbai. Upon arrival in Mumbai you'll be driven to the hotel for check-in and lunch. Later, take a half-day excursion to the island of Elephanta, an hour away from Mumbai by ferry. The cave temples here were excavated between the 5th and 8th centuries AD and are famous for their magnificently sculpted panels. The best known is the one that depicts the Maheshmurti, a three-headed image of Lord Shiva, which signifies the creator, preserver and destroyer of this universe according to Hindu mythology. The Portuguese named this island after a large stone elephant that was found near the landing. The elephant now stands at the Victoria and Albert Museum on the mainland. Evening transfer to the hotel for overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 5 - Fri: Mumbai

This morning experience a Jewish heritage walk to understand the Jewish connection of Mumbai. Drive to the Sassoon Docks, the first wet dock in the city, where over 25 tons of fish arrive every morning. Then, drive towards the architecturally stunning Kenneseth Eliyahu Synagogue, with its beautiful interiors, and the David Sassoon Library. Next, visit the oldest synagogue in Mumbai, the Shaar Harahamim or Gate of Mercy Synagogue, built in 1796, by Samaji Hasaji Divekar, a Bene Israeli. From here, drive to the Magen David Synagogue, a tall blue building with a Gothic feel that towers over all the other buildings in the area. The Synagogue has a beautiful tebah (reader's platform that marks the center of Sefardic synagogues) and hekhal (ark which holds Torahs in cases of hammered silver). Regular worship services are conducted here also. David Sassoon built an elementary school near the synagogue which is now the Sir Jacob Sassoon Free High School. The synagogue runs under the Sir Jacob Sassoon Charity Trust. Continue towards the stunning Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum (formerly the Victoria and Albert Museum) - the oldest museum in Mumbai, which was built in the style of a synagogue. The museum is a treasure house of the decorative and industrial arts. Today, it is probably one of the finest contemporary Museums in the city. In the evening attend Shabbat services at the famous Chabad house along with the local Jewish community. Overnight stay in Mumbai. [B/L/D]

Day 6 - Sat: Mumbai

Early morning, today, explore the city at dawn. Seeing this lively city wake up, gives you deep cultural insights into the real Mumbai that go beyond the glossy glass facades and urban boardrooms. You experience the underbelly of this magnificent city and understand what makes Mumbai tick. Mumbai by Dawn is a tour that pays homage to the people of Mumbai and venerates all those who go about

their business obstinately with one purpose – a better life. At the start of this tour you will find yourself at the clamorous and chaotic docks, where amidst understanding the life and times of the Koli fisher-folk (the original inhabitants of Mumbai), you will see the arrival and grading of 25 tons of fish. You will also witness a one-of-its-kind fish auction of the famous Bombay Duck. You will be right in the center of all the action when thousands of illiterate vendors will sort out newspapers of 7 different languages, that too in the middle of the road. You will understand the logistics of the food distribution in the city as 100 tons of meat, fruits and vegetables enter the various markets. These markets are not only a great introduction to the people of Mumbai, but also a photographer's dream come true. Milkmen driving past with milk canisters; delivery of freshly baked bread and the melee of color and fragrance at the flower market - all these bazaars add to the frenzy of Mumbai. Another highlight is the 'all herb mandi' spread across a popular bridge. Possibly the only market of its kind in the world, this green market has a thousand vendors sitting atop a bridge selling various leafy vegetables. What's interesting is that when you walk the same lanes a few hours later, you wouldn't find any evidence of the morning's flurry. Return to hotel for a late breakfast. Lunch by own. Afternoon guided tour of highlights of the city driving along Marine Drive, the sea-front boulevard, also known as the Queen's Necklace as in the evening, the streetlights on this U-shaped road light up. The view from south Bombay's skyscrapers or from the exclusive residential area, is that of a Queen's Necklace. Next, visit the dhobi ghats (photo-stop), the massive outdoor laundry site where dhobhi wallahs (laundry workers) beat, wring, iron and code millions of pieces of laundry daily. End the tour with a visit to Mani Bhawan - a memorial dedicated to the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

Kochi, or more familiarly Cochin, is spread across islands and promontories in a stunning location between the Arabian Sea and the Backwaters. The city was founded in 1341 when a flood created a natural safe port, which became the principal harbour for Malabar Coast's spice trade. Cochin was on the main trade route between Europe and China. The rulers invited people of various religions to settle here, attracting the Jews and the Christians who built places of worship and their own communities.

Day 7 - Sun: Mumbai, Cochin

Morning transfer to the airport and flight to Cochin (Please note, luggage allowance on this flight is 15 kg (33 Lbs.) checked in baggage and 8 kg (17.6 Lbs.) hand luggage). On arrival in Cochin you'll be assisted and transfer to the hotel. In the evening visit a local theatre to experience Kathakali, a classical Indian dance literally meaning "story play". It's a pantomimic dance drama, the dancing and the acting being blended together into an inseparable form. It is a combination of facial expressions and body movements, which brings out the thought and emotion of the character. Return to the hotel for dinner and overnight. [B/D]

Day 8 - Mon: Cochin (Alleppey)

After a leisurely morning, drive to Alleppey to board a Kettuvallam, a traditional houseboat, and spend several hours drifting through the backwaters of Kerala and enjoying lunch onboard. The Kettuvallam or 'boat with knots' - was so called because the entire boat was held together with coir knots only - not even a single nail is used during the construction. The boat is made of planks of jack-wood joined together with coir. This is then coated with a caustic black resin made from boiled cashew kernels. With careful maintenance, a kettuvallom can last for generations. While most boats are poled by local oarsmen, some are powered by a 40 HP engine. The backwaters are a network of canals, lakes, lagoons and estuaries stretching over almost 1000 square miles. Here, palm-fringed narrow canals wind through a vast expanse of paddy fields. As we float along, enjoy the picturesque hamlets that line the banks, migratory birds in abundance, water lilies and coconut groves. Lunch will be served on board Houseboat. Disembark in the evening and drive back to the hotel in Cochin for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

Day 9 - Tue: Cochin, USA

The morning is free to pack and complete the check-out formalities at noon. Lunch at the hotel. In the early afternoon explore the city with a walk through the bustling harbor area and quaint backstreets to discover its rich and multifaceted past. St. Francis Church, originally named after Santo

Antonio and dedicated to him as the Patron Saint of Portugal. Once a wooden building, it was replaced by the present stone building. Vasco da Gama died on site in 1524 and was originally buried in the cemetery. His grave is still marked with a plaque and a brass rail, though his remains are back home in Portugal. Walk past, the four-century old Jewish synagogue. Built in 1568 AD, it was destroyed by the Portuguese and rebuilt by the Dutch a century later. Stepping inside is an extraordinary experience of light and airiness, given partly by the flooring of 18th century blue Cantonese ceramic tiles, hand painted and each one different. In the 19th century, when the Jewish emissary Jacob Sapir (1822-55) visited Cochin, he described the Paradesi synagogue as amazingly wonderful and of perfect beauty. To this day it remains one of the most beautiful Jewish sites in India. The Paradesi synagogue site was given to the Jews by one of the most famous of the Perumpadappu Swarupam Maharajas, Bhaskar Ravi Varman (1565-1601) and is located very near his palace and temple in Jew Town, which indicates the importance given by the Raja to the Jewish community. Later explore the Jew-town, which abounds with fascinating antique shops and wares. Looming protectively over the synagogue is the Mattancherry palace, erstwhile home to the Verma kings and today a fine museum. In the evening transfer to airport in-time to board your flight back home. [B/L]



[B] = Breakfast | [B/L] = Breakfast and Lunch | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Your Tour includes:

- All required transfers
- 8 nights' accommodation:
 - Delhi – 3 nights
 - Mumbai – 3 nights
 - Cochin – 2 nights
- Meals
 - Breakfast daily
 - 6 lunches
 - 7 dinners
- Tonga ride in Agra
- Kathakali dance show at local theater in Cochin
- Day cruise on Houseboat in Kerala
- Entrance fees at sites & monuments visited
- Transportation by air-conditioned vehicle as per the itinerary
- English speaking local guides
- English speaking accompanying guide for parties of 7 or more passengers

- Packaged drinking water in the vehicle throughout
- Portage during check-in/out at the hotels
- All currently applicable taxes

Price does not include:

- International or Domestic airfares
- Any taxes and surcharges relating to airfares
- Travel insurance
- Wi-Fi at hotels
- Visa fees for India
- Kosher Meal/ meal during Sabbath
- Camera fees at the monuments (if applicable)
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Other meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Extras and gratuities
- Early check-in, late check-out

Hotels in your Tour:

City	Hotel Name	Room Category	Tripadvisor
Delhi	The Taj Mahal	Deluxe	4.5
Mumbai	Taj Mahal	Superior Seaview	4.5
Cochin	Grand Hyatt	Standard King	4

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices:

Season	2-3 Pax		4-6 Pax		7-9 Pax	
	Double	Single	Double	Single	Double	Single
Deluxe						
Jan-Dec	\$4,219	\$5,885	\$3,745	\$5,409	\$3,679	\$5,345

Prices are per person, are valid until 20 December '20 and may change without notice.

Airfare Supplement:

Routing	Fare
Jaipur/Mumbai/Cochin	\$220

* The domestic air portion may be cheaper if calculated as part of the international ticket. Ask your Travel Agent or HWDT to calculate your total fare.

Tour Code: IN07DEL20TC