



TORAH in MOTION
travel

JOURNEY THROUGH JEWISH HISTORY IN INCREDIBLE INDIA

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ITINERARY *(subject to change)*

WEDNESDAY: ARRIVAL IN MUMBAI

You will be met and transferred to the Taj Palace Hotel. Namaste: Welcome to India!
Welcome dinner in the hotel.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Palace Hotel**

THURSDAY: JEWISH LIFE ON THE KONKAN COAST

It's a short stroll to the Gateway of India to board a chartered boat to visit the nearby coastal villages of Awas and Alibag, home to the Magen Avoth Synagogue, built in 1848 and sporting a bright pink-and-white exterior. Nearby is the hamlet of Navgaon, the landing site of the Bene Israel's arrival in India, which the community dates back more than 2,000 years. From there, we will visit the Beth El Synagogue, built in 1848 and located in the village of Revdanda. After touring, we'll return that evening to the hotel for dinner.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Palace Hotel**

FRIDAY: MUMBAI

See Mumbai's Jewish life, both the historic - at the 19th-century Magen David and the 18th-century Tiphereth Israel - and the heroic - at Mumbai Chabad House, recently reopened after the 2008 tragic events, for lunch. Our city tour will include major sights such as Flora Fountain, Rajabai Clock Tower, Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus, formerly Victoria Terminus Station, the posh neighborhood of Malabar Hill, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Museum, and the unique Mahalaxmi Dhobi Ghat, the city's largest open-air laundry. This evening, Kabbalat Shabbat at the nearby 19th-century Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue. Dinner at the hotel. *Shabbat Shalom!*

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Palace Hotel**

SATURDAY: SHABBAT IN MUMBAI

Shacharit at Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue, followed by kiddush and lunch at hotel. A walking tour of Colaba will lead us to Chabad for Mincha. Return to hotel for Seudah Shlishit and Maariv, followed by Havdalah.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Palace Hotel**

SUNDAY: KOCHI

Morning flight to the southwest coastal city of Kochi, one of the happiest chapters of the Jewish Diaspora. Kochi is history! After lunch, we will learn the history of the Kochi Jews, and cross the harbor by boat to Fort Kochi to visit the iconic Chinese fishing nets, open-air market, and Koder House where local Jewish “royalty” lived. Performance of Kathakali dance, unique to this part of India, followed by dinner at the hotel.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Vivanta by Taj Malabar, Kochi**

MONDAY: KOCHI

A full day of sightseeing, beginning with rural Jewish life in Kerala. Go back in time to explore Muziris, the name the ancient Romans gave to this area, on a heritage tour of the villages of Paravur and Chendamangalam. There, Jewish life once thrived, replete with synagogues that are among the oldest in the region and recently restored to their former glory. You will also visit the splendid 18th-century Paliyam Nalukettu, residence of the Hindu prime ministers where women ruled. The journey continues with a cruise of the area’s scenic backwaters where you’re sure to see fishermen, cargo boats transporting goods as they have for centuries, and traditional village life. Returning to Kochi, tour the 16th-century Mattancherry “Dutch” Palace of the Raja of Kochi, who granted Jews land on which to build their synagogue next to his Hindu temple. The beautiful Paradesi Synagogue, built in 1568, boasts a Hebrew clock tower, jewel-encrusted 22-karat gold Torah crown gifted by a maharajah, and the original 11th-century copper plates that established Jewish autonomy. We will meet the leader of the dwindling community for a discussion in the synagogue. Be sure to mail a postcard from Jew Town – it’ll be imprinted with a Star of David cancellation by the post office! Dinner at hotel.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Vivanta by Taj Malabar, Kochi**

TUESDAY: KOCHI - KOLKATA

Morning flight to the northeast city of Kolkata, once the capital of British India and filled with historic Raj-era architecture, fascinating street life, lovely parks, and rich intellectual and artistic traditions. From the late-18th to the mid-20th centuries, Kolkata had a thriving Jewish community that played a key role in the city’s development, built synagogues and schools, and thoroughly integrated into the fabric of society. Dinner at hotel.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata**

WEDNESDAY: KOLKATA

Get ready to tour landmark sights: Victoria Memorial, built in 1921 as a tribute to Queen Victoria and set amid lovely gardens, a scenic walk along the Hooghly River, and a visit to the nearby Mullik Ghat Flower Market to experience the riot of color, intoxicating fragrance, and hustle-and-bustle of the city’s largest floral supplier. From there, it’s Chinatown and Idol Makers’ Street, where craftsmen fashion colorful deities for the city’s many religious festivals. Get an insider’s view of Kolkata Jewish life when a local community leader shows us the 19th-century, Italian Renaissance-style Magen David Synagogue, which was recently restored to its former glory. Over dinner at the hotel, learn more about the city’s now-waning Jewish community from a local Jew who was educated and a professor in the U.S. before returning to her native land to document Kolkata Jewry. Capping the evening will be a performance of North Indian classical music.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata**

THURSDAY: KOLKATA-JAIPUR

Walk to the nearby India Museum, built in 1814 and India’s largest and oldest museum boasting rare antiques, Mughal paintings, and textiles. Fly to Jaipur, and have some time for shopping. Dinner at hotel, followed by an introduction to Rajasthan’s history and culture.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Jai Mahal Palace, Jaipur**

FRIDAY: JAIPUR

Our day begins with a stop at the Hawa Mahal, the city's iconic five-storey, honeycombed "Palace of the Winds" built in 1799 by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh for the female royal household to view goings on in the city. Next, it's on to the magnificent Amber Fort, a 16th-century World Heritage site also known as Amber Palace because much of the complex included the residences of the Rajput Maharajas and their families. From there, we head to the City Palace, a complex of courtyards, gardens and buildings right in the center of the Old City. Within the palace complex are several museums, including an interesting textile gallery with a fine selection of costumes from the royal collection. From the City Palace, enter the Jantar Mantar monument, an astronomical observation site that features the world's largest stone sundial. Erected in 1734 and later rebuilt in the 19th century, this World Heritage site's observatories are actually highly sophisticated – accurate even today. After all that touring, it's time for a little retail therapy! Jaipur boasts some of India's best shopping, known for its gems, jewelry, carpets, textiles, leatherware and so much more. Kabbalat Shabbat at the hotel, followed by kiddush and dinner.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Jai Mahal Palace, Jaipur**

SHABBAT: JAIPUR

Shabbat Shalom! Shacharit followed by kiddush and lunch at the hotel. Enjoy a relaxing day at this lovely, 270-year-old palace hotel that's set in landscaped Mughal gardens and offers a complimentary heritage walk, replete with stories of Rajput history and culture. After Havdalah, there will be a cultural program at the hotel. With any luck, we may see an Indian wedding celebration at the hotel – lavish and unforgettable!

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Taj Jai Mahal Palace, Jaipur**

SUNDAY: JAIPUR - AGRA

This morning, we drive to Agra, home to the iconic Taj Mahal. This stunning World Heritage Site has inspired countless descriptions by bards and philosophers, including 19th-century poet Bayard Taylor who called it "a castle in the air...brought down to earth and fixed for the wonder of ages." Built by Shah Jahan as a memorial for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal who died in 1631 giving birth to their 14th child, construction began the next year, with the entire complex completed two decades later. Decorated with a mosaic of semi-precious stones and Persian calligraphy recreating verses from the Koran, the mausoleum is a dargah, an important place of pilgrimage since the empress died in childbirth, making her a martyr. From there, you'll visit another World Heritage Site: the fantastic Agra Fort, a fortress built of red sandstone in the 16th century by the Mughal Emperor Akbar. Richly decorated with marble and mosaic, it was here that Shah Jahan lived out his last days, imprisoned by his own son Aurangzeb, with his private quarters looking out on the Taj Mahal. After dinner, we will learn more about the Mughals.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **Oberoi Amarvillas Hotel, Agra**

MONDAY: AGRA - DELHI

For those who'd like to see Taj Mahal at daybreak, you are welcome to join those willing to brave the pre-dawn hours for a sunrise visit. After return and breakfast at the hotel, we'll all board our private coach to Delhi. The capital of India, Delhi is the political and administrative center of the world's largest democracy. Home to 16 million people, making it India's third-largest city, it is steeped in history with millennia-old architecture, temples and monuments, while also exuding a 'New India' vibe with its modern metro system and mega-malls. We will start out by visiting the Judah Hyam Synagogue, built in 1956 and designed by the Bene Israel architect Joshua Benjamin, then the Chief Architect to the Government of India. While the congregation's membership once peaked at about 300 Delhi Jews, today few local families remain. Yet, the synagogue serves an important role for those still there, as well as for the nearby diplomatic community. It is run by community and spiritual leader Ezekiel Malekar. We will then transfer to the hotel for dinner.

ACCOMMODATIONS: **The Oberoi, New Delhi**

TUESDAY: DELHI – DEPARTURE HOME

Morning sightseeing of Old Delhi, begins with a visit to the Red Fort. Built in 1639 by the fifth Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as the palace of his fortified capital, the Red Fort is named for its massive enclosing walls of red sandstone. The fort saw the rise and the fall of Mughal power and stands in testament to two momentous events in Indian history: the Indian Mutiny of 1857 and Indian independence in 1947, when the national flag was first hoisted at the fort. Next, we'll take a cycle rickshaw ride through the teeming, narrow lanes of the old city's colorful Chandni Chowk market, ending up at the 17th-century Jewish-Sufi Sa'id Sarmad's tomb, just outside the main gate of Jama Masjid, built in 1656 and India's largest mosque. From there, we'll head over to New Delhi, built in the first part of the 20th century as the capital of British India and housing many fine example of Raj-era architecture. We'll drive past India Gate, Parliament House, Rashtrapati Bhavan (formerly the Viceroy's House, now the President's residence), South Block (Office of the Prime Minister of India) and other landmark buildings by famed British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. Sightseeing will come to a close as we return to our hotel that afternoon for lunch and check-out. Finally, we'll join together for a farewell dinner, and transfer to the airport for departure. ***Bon voyage! L'hitraot!***