



Wanderlust & Lipstick
P.O. Box 16102
Seattle, WA 98116

Women's North India Tour 2010

Itinerary dates: November 4 – November 21, 2010

Tour Leader – TBD

This 18-day **women-only tour** focuses on North India's highlights including the **Taj Mahal**, the **erotic temples of Khajuraho**, the ghats of **Varanasi**, **Diwali celebrations** and the **Pushkar Camel Fair!** The group will visit Delhi, Varanasi, Khajuraho, Agra, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur and Pushkar.

Day 1 – November 4, 2010 - Delhi

The tour starts with a tasty typical lunch in Delhi. Afterward, the group will spend the afternoon seeing some of the city's more popular sights including **India Gate**, **Humayun's Tomb** and **Qutab Minar**.

In the late afternoon, there will be some leisure time prior to dinner and **Diwali festivities** including a puja (prayer), games and music.

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** Diwali is the festival of lights. Shops, restaurants and homes will all be decorated with candles, lights and garlands of flowers and there will be fireworks and firecrackers being set off in celebration throughout the city. Overnight in Delhi.

Day 2 – November 5, 2010 – Delhi – Varanasi

On this day, the group will enjoy sightseeing in Old Delhi including the **Red Fort**, **Jama Masjid** (mosque) and the bustling alleyways of **Chandni Chowk**. This area is home to one of the most chaotic markets in the world, and has witnessed much history unfold in its serpentine alleys.

The Jama Masjid is an architectural marvel built by Shahjahan and is the country's largest mosque. In the lanes outside it one can find gastronomical delights that rival the Mughal courts themselves.


Late in the day, the group will depart for the railway station for the overnight train to Varanasi which is a must in India!

★ **HIGHLIGHT!** The food available in Chandni Chowk is quite unparalleled and includes the **paranthe waali galli** (or the alley of Indian breads). The alleys are also bursting with vendors selling everything from spices to firecrackers.

Day 3 – November 6, 2010 – Varanasi

The group will arrive in Varanasi early in the morning and immediately check into the hotel where you will enjoy breakfast. There will be some time at leisure so you can walk around this fascinating city prior to the group reconvening for lunch.

In the afternoon, the group will enjoy the sights of Varanasi around the ghats as well as a private musical performance by world-renowned musicians and dancers. In the evening, you'll enjoy a boat ride on the Ganges and see the special evening aarti (prayers) that take place along the ghats. Overnight in Varanasi.


 **HIGHLIGHT!** The aarti is a musical and visual feast. As your boat glides along the Ganges, you'll be able to enjoy a closeup view of the Hindu practitioners as they chant, ring their bells and light candles during this beautiful nightly ceremony.

Day 4 – November 7, 2010 – Varanasi

This will be a full day of sightseeing with opportunities to shop for silk in this city which is so famous for its cloth. The group will also go to Sarnath (about 30 minutes away) to visit Deer Park, where Buddha Shakyamuni gave his first lecture. Overnight in Varanasi.

Day 5 – November 8, 2010 – Varanasi – Khajuraho

The group will leave in the morning for the airport and take a flight to Khajuraho. There will be time in the late afternoon to visit these Hindu temples most famous for their forthright eroticism. Overnight in Khajuraho.

 **HIGHLIGHT!** The immaculately restored sandstone temples in Khajuraho were built between the 10th and 12th centuries. The most spectacular of these are found in the Western Group.

Day 6 – November 9, 2010 – Khajuraho – Orchha – Agra

In the early morning, the group will set out for more sightseeing covering the Eastern and Southern groups of temples. You'll then depart by noon for nearby Orchha, where you will have lunch. This medieval town, whose name means "hidden place", sits amid a scrubby forest and is an interesting place to stop for some sightseeing before driving on to board the train in Jhansi.

The train will then take you on a leisurely ride to Agra, where you'll arrive late in the evening. Overnight in Agra.

Day 7 – November 10, 2010 – Agra

This will be a full day of sightseeing in and around Agra including the Red Fort, Akbar's mausoleum and Fatehpur Sikri.

Agra is a small city that served as the capital of the Mughal rulers of India at the peak of their empire, from 1526 to 1658. They built many monumental buildings in the Mughal architectural style, a distinctive mix of Indian and Islamic styles, and Agra has some of the finest examples.

It's also one of the most aggressive cities in all of India with regard to the touts. You'll want to stay close to the group here to avoid being Agra-vated.

In the evening there will be a lovely cultural program at a local restaurant.

Day 8 – November 11, 2010 – Agra – Jaipur

The group will spend time at the resplendent Taj Mahal on this day with time to take in the history and beauty of this mausoleum that can easily take your breath away. The group will then depart by train in the late afternoon for Jaipur. Overnight in Jaipur.

★ **HIGHLIGHT! Taj Mahal** – This “monument of love” is actually a mausoleum built by the Mughal emperor Shahjahan in the memory of his wife Mumtaz Mahal whose very name means “Ornament of the Palace”. The Taj is one of the most well preserved and architecturally beautiful tombs in the world, one of the masterpieces of Indian Muslim architecture and one of the great world heritage sites. Tagore called it “a teardrop on the cheek of eternity”. Even though it’s one of the most photographed monuments in the world, actually seeing it is still awe-inspiring. One must appreciate the passion that was behind its construction to fully appreciate its beauty.

Day 9 – November 12, 2010 – Jaipur

The group will have a full day of sightseeing in Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan. This is a vibrant and bustling city, known as the Pink City, and is one of the most popular places in India for buyers from around the world to make purchases for export. The group will visit Nahargarh (Tiger Fort) and Amber Fort and also have time at leisure to walk and shop on your own.

★ **HIGHLIGHT! Amber Fort** – This massive fort-palace complex built in hybrid Hindu-Muslim style dates back to Raja Man Singh and was the royal palace of the Kachwahas from around 1600 to 1727. The name has nothing to do with the rather pretty pastel yellow color. Instead, the fort is named after the town of Amber, in turn named after the goddess Amba. The main sights within the fort include the Sheesh Mahal, adorned with thousands upon thousands of mirrored tiles on the walls and ceiling.

Day 10 – November 13, 2010 – Jaipur – Udaipur

There will be additional time to sightsee in Jaipur early in the day including a chance to visit the City Palace and Hawa Mahal (Palace of Winds), and then leisure time in the afternoon before dinner. In the evening, you’ll board a train to Udaipur. Overnight on train.

Day 11 – November 14, 2010 – Udaipur

The group will arrive very early in the morning, check in to the hotel and enjoy a leisurely breakfast. Morning will be spent at leisure with time to walk around this lovely small city. The group will reconvene at lunch and then sightsee in the afternoon. Overnight in Udaipur.

★ **Highlight! The City Palace Complex** is one of the most fascinating tourist attractions in Udaipur. This massive royal complex has earned the distinction of being the largest marble palace in the world. It is famous for the Nouchouki Palace, Mor Chowk, Zenana Mahal, Moti Mahal and other enchanting palaces, fountains, pavilions, durbar halls and shrines that form an integral part of the magnificent complex.

Day 12 – November 15, 2010 – Udaipur

Today the group will have a full day of sightseeing in this charming lakeside town. There will be time for visiting the City Palace, taking a boat ride, shopping and relaxing. Overnight in Udaipur.

Day 13 – November 16, 2010 – Udaipur to Rohet Garh

The group will depart early on this day for Rohet Garh, where you’ll enjoy lunch and the gardens at this beautiful estate. You may even enjoy a swim at the pool. In the afternoon, the group will set out on a very special jeep safari to enjoy the wildlife, a Bishnoi village and a special opium ceremony that is a daily ritual of the locals.

Afterward, you'll enjoy dinner and relaxing time back at the hotel, which features an open-air bar. Overnight in Rohet Garh.

★ **Highlight! Bishnoi Village Safari** – Living outside of the main city, Bishnois are a community of people that protect wildlife and the environment. During the safari, the guide will take the group around the Bishnoi villages in a jeep where you will see deer, blackbuck and peacocks roaming freely. You'll also visit one of the villages and learn how these people live in harmony with the environment and wildlife.

Day 14 – November 17, 2010 – Rohet Garh – Jodhpur

In the morning, the group will depart for nearby Jodhpur, the Gateway to Thar, as it is literally on the edge of the Thar Desert. There will be time for a day of sightseeing in this, the Blue City (called so because of the painted buildings). Depending on how much time the group has, you may have time to visit forts and palaces, temples and havelis. This city also has a booming handicrafts industry and there will be opportunities to browse for some souvenirs. Overnight in Jodhpur.

★ **Highlight! Mehrangarh Fort** – This is the largest fort in all of Rajasthan. Founded in 1458 as the site of Rao Jodha's new capital — hence the name, Jodhpur — the city has grown around it and in the 500 years that have passed, the fort has never been taken by force. It's easy to see why: it occupies the entire top of a 150-meter hill with commanding views all around, with some three kilometers of massive ramparts built around the edges. A number of people are employed here and they add to the flavor by dressing in period costumes and playing traditional instruments.

Day 15 – November 18, 2010 – Jodhpur – Pushkar

The group will get an early start and depart for Pushkar, where the Camel Fair will just be starting. You'll arrive in time for lunch and then have some time to enjoy the fairgrounds in the late afternoon and, if you like, a camel ride.

★ **Highlight! The Pushkar Camel Fair** will just be getting into swing when you arrive. There will be ample opportunity to people-watch and admire the camels that are brought from around the country to be traded.

Day 16 – November 19, 2010 – Pushkar – Delhi

There will time for a half day of sightseeing in town and at the Camel Fair. Or, you might choose to relax at the hotel poolside! After lunch, the group will depart for the railway station for a train ride back to Delhi late in the evening. Overnight in Delhi.

Day 17 – November 20, 2010 – Delhi

This is the last day in Delhi for any final sightseeing and shopping that the group might have missed at the beginning of the trip. This may include Gandhi's memorial or the Nizamuddin Shrine and shopping in Dilli Haat, Connaught Place or Khan Market. A final evening dinner will be enjoyed with the entire group. Overnight in Delhi.

Day 18 – November 21, 2010 – Delhi

The group will depart on this day after enjoying a leisurely breakfast.