



## 2023 January Goddess Tour: Highlights of South and North India: Culture, Culinary, and Spiritual

### Highlights:

- *A blessing from a temple elephant and private celebration in a South Indian Temple.*
- *Circumnavigate the sacred mountain of Arunachala by the full moon.*
- *View the Taj Mahal at sunset and sunrise.*
- *Elephant ride into the palatial Amer Fort.*
- *View the morning and evening aarti celebrations on the sacred river Ganges.*
- *Witness the kite and lantern festival of Makar Sankranti.*
- *Visit the ancient Galta Temple and enjoy a panoramic view of Jaipur from the Sun Temple.*
- *Wander the thousand-year-old stone forts and temples of Gingee.*
- *Stay right on the banks of the river Ganges at the luxurious Brijama Palace.*

**Itinerary Overview:** 14 Days: Chennai-Tiruvannamalai-Gingee-Auroville-Pondicherry-Mahabalipuram-Chennai-Jaipur-Agra-Varanasi-Delhi

**Dates:** January 5-20, 2020

#### January 5

##### Arrive in Chennai

Late evening or early morning arrival. Transfer to the hotel and rest up.

**Hotel: The Leela Palace**

#### January 6

##### Day 1: Chennai-Tiruvannamalai

Welcome to India. After breakfast, we will drive overland to Tiruvannamalai and enjoy the full-moon walk around the sacred mountain Arunachala. Visit the temples by moonlight and pilgrimage with thousands around the mountain.

**Hotel: Sparsa Resort**



**January 7**

**Day 2: Tiruvannamalai**

After breakfast, visit Sikander Ashram, a short journey up the base of the sacred mountain Arunachala for a scenic overlook of the whole city and vast temple complex.

We will have time for mindfulness in several sacred caves along the mountainside. Bask in the bliss and serenity of these ancient spiritual places.

Evening visit to the fire temple and one of the most significant temples in India.

**Hotel: Sparsa Resort**

**January 8**

**Day 3: Tiruvannamalai via Gingee to Auroville**

Gingee Fort is known as an impregnable fortress believed to be built in the 9th century by Cholas and later modified by the successive rulers, known as the "Troy of the East." Wander through the Fort and surrounding Temple Complex.

**Hotel: Villa Shanti**



**January 9**

**Day 4: Auroville**

Morning visit to the magical Matramandir. Enjoy a quiet moment at this spectacular temple and enjoy the surrounding gardens.

After lunch visit the picturesque Irumbai Temple located in the rural village of Irumbai.

\*Recommended stop: Bread and Chocolate for afternoon tea.

**Hotel: Villa Shanti**



**January 10**

**Day 5: Pondicherry**

Morning visit to Pondicherry to the local fish, produce, spice, and flower markets and the revered Aurobindo Ashram.

After lunch, enjoy an afternoon walk to the local temple to be blessed by the temple elephant, and experience a private temple blessing. Enjoy an evening stroll on the Promenade by the Bay of Bengal.

**Hotel: Villa Shanti**



**January 11**

**Day 6: Pondicherry to Mahabalipuram to Chennai**

Drive to Mahabalipuram, an ancient port for the Pallava kings during the 7th and 8th centuries whose shore temple and rock carvings are now a World Heritage site. Mahabalipuram has some of the most important buildings in Indian architectural history. The tradition of carving continues today with the presence of stone sculptors all over the city.

**Hotel: Ideal Beach**



**January 12**

**Day 7: Chennai-Jaipur**

Fly from Chennai to Jaipur. Early evening visit to the Jal Mahal promenade.

**Hotel: The Trident**



## January 13

### Day 8: Jaipur

Morning excursion by elephant into Amer Fort. Amer is a fascinating blend of Hindu and Muslim architecture. Built in the 16th century by Raja Mansingh in red sandstone and white marble, the palace complex is broken into spectacular compartments such as the Jai Mandir, Sheesh Mahal, Sukh Niwas, Ganesh Pol, and the Temple of Kali. We will also visit a traditional step well and Jagat Temple in the ancient village of Amer.

Afternoon visit to the Wind Palace (Hawa Mahal) and Jantar Mantar followed by leisure time in the old city for shopping.

**Hotel: The Trident**



## January 14

### Day 9: Jaipur

Morning visit to Galta Temple, an ancient temple complex famous for its seven bathing pools and unique bathing pool just for monkeys. Hike through the complex and up to the Sun Temple for a panoramic view of Jaipur.

After lunch, day at leisure for exploring the old city, shopping, and markets.

Optional meeting with an astrologer.

**Hotel: The Trident**



**January 15**

**Day 10: Jaipur-Agra**

After breakfast overland to Agra.

Late afternoon visit to Mehtab Bagh where you will have the opportunity for your first glimpse of the Taj Mahal during sunset.

**Hotel: ITC Mughal**



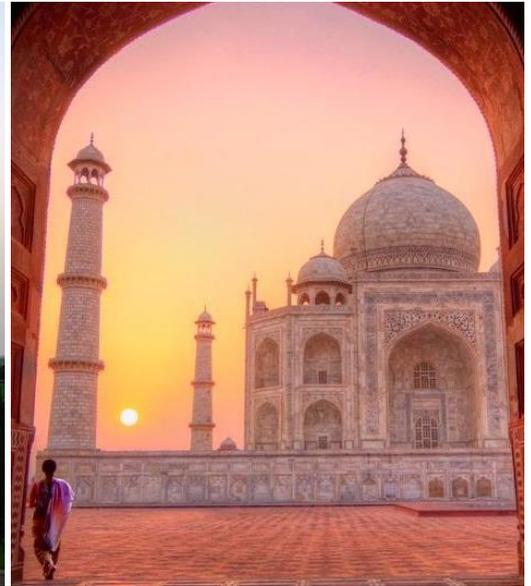
**January 16**

**Day 11: Agra**

Today, visit two UNESCO World Heritage Sites: Agra Fort and the immortal Taj Mahal. The Taj is flawless in its proportions and breath-taking in its beauty — a vision of unrivaled magnificence. Pay your first visit to the masterpiece this morning with the rising sun. Continue to the impressive Agra Fort. Built of red sandstone and marble, Agra Fort presents a formidable exterior and a graceful interior.

Enjoy an optional late afternoon Ayurvedic spa treatment at Rajasthan's premier spa Kaya Kalpa.

**Hotel: ITC Mughal**



## January 17

### Day 12: Agra to Varanasi

Catch a flight to Varanasi, a city of more than a thousand temples and shrines, sacred to Hindus and Buddhists. Varanasi is the epi-center of Hinduism and a well-traveled pilgrimage site. The Hindus believe that if you bring your dead to bathe in the Ganges, they will be liberated from the cycle of life and death. Check into hotel and optional evening viewing of the Ganga Aarti.

Hotel: Brijrama Palace

\*Brijrama Palace is a spectacular property. Be sure to enjoy the early-morning sunrise yoga, the classical music, and high tea every afternoon, the complimentary foot massages after your long walks and the evening boat rides to witness the Ganga Aarti pujas. Take time to sit in one of the many quaint seating areas in the hotel high above the ghats. This Palace is the absolute best way to interact with and experience the wild, holy, seething spirit of Varanasi.

Hotel: Brijrama Palace



## January 18

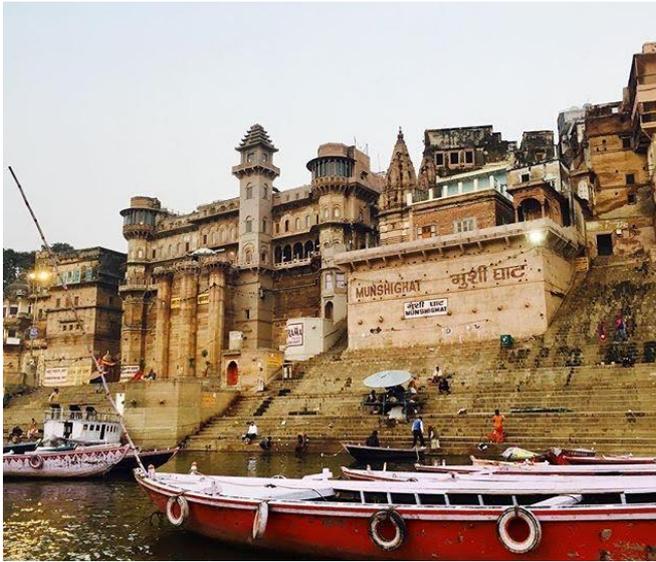
### Day 13: Varanasi

After breakfast, we'll embark on a walking tour of the old city of Benares exploring the temples, Ghats and slender alleyways that wind like a maze to the sacred river Ganges.

After lunch leisure time to explore the ghats on your own and enjoy the rich diversity of life on the river.

At dusk, we will float, by boat on the Ganges River, down to the cremation ghat. Afterward, we will witness the Aarti ceremony. Chanted prayers and rhythmic drumming fill the air as you watch lantern-bearing priests bid the gods and goddesses a restful slumber.

Hotel: Brijrama Palace



**Jan 19**

**Day 14: Varanasi**

Rise early for a sunrise cruise on the Ganges River to observe activity along the ghats.

After Breakfast, we'll drive to Sarnath, one of the most sacred places for Buddhists. This is where Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment.

Late afternoon fly to Delhi. Arrive in Delhi and transfer onward for international flights or to the hotel for following day or late-night departure.

**Hotel: Novotel Areocity**



Cost per person:

\$4870.00 based on shared room with double occupancy

\$6470.00 based on single room with single occupancy

**Cost Includes:**

- Accommodation in four and five-star hotels (listed in itinerary).
- All Indian Domestic Airport transfers.
- Private Air-Conditioned Car with Driver for transfers and sightseeing as per the itinerary.
- Breakfast daily.

- All Taxes including Government and Service Tax.
- Local English-speaking guides in each city.
- Sightseeing per the above itinerary.
- Elephant excursion into Amer Fort in Jaipur.
- Sunrise and Sunset boat rides on the Ganges River.
- Sunrise and Sunset visit to the Taj Mahal.
- Monument / Entry Charges per itinerary.
- Domestic Airfare (Chennai-Jaipur/ Agra-Varanasi/Varanasi-Delhi).
- Recommended Packing List, Reading List, Shopping, Spa, and Restaurant Guide.

**Cost Excludes:**

- Personal Expenses such as Laundry, telephone calls, tips, bottled water, Liquor, etc.
- Monument Camera Fees.
- Additional sightseeing or use of the vehicle not mentioned in the itinerary.
- Any other costs NOT mentioned under “Includes” header.