

INDIA – RAJASTHAN

THE NAGOUR FAIR & THAR DESERT RIDE

January 22 - February 5, 2010

10 riders

"The whole experience was an intoxicating assault on the senses - the noise (the music - the calling to prayer - the traffic - people), the smells, the sights (where does one begin! the Taj - the red fort - all the forts on our ride - the fairs - the clothes - the faces) and finally the spiritualism which is part of their raison d'être and which becomes totally addictive. As for the ride itself - I knew it would be wonderful - and it was.... a holiday of a lifetime!"

Lorna Chetwynd - London – UK

Rajasthan is known as the land of Princes and Warriors who fought legendary battles with their *risalas* (cavalry) and where man and horse have forever been close companions, serving one another in times of war and peace. These were the days when sunset marked the end of the day and horsemen dismounted to set up camp.

Travel back in time as you ride across the golden sands of the Thar Desert, along ancient trade routes from Central Asia. During the course of this trip stay in romantic Heritage properties that have been lovingly refurbished by their owners, a select group of palaces, Deluxe permanent tented camps fit for a king (each tent with its en-suite facilities and service to match), and in the comfort of your own personalized mobile tented desert camp.

This exclusive journey begins with the 'Nagaur Camel, Bullock and Horse Fair', the second largest in Rajasthan. Nagaur bulls are renowned for their size, strength and beauty - and gorgeous Marwari horses can be admired here along with the colorfully dressed people of Rajasthan. The first day's ride takes place within the Nagaur fair, a memorable sight to behold from horseback. For the next 8 days, in a style reminiscent of the days of the Raj, the ride progresses through the Thar Desert offering an exclusive insight of desert rural India: a variety of magical landscapes punctuated with small villages and hamlets of weavers and potters (*high quality durries are woven here*), impressive sand dunes and areas still rich in wildlife (*desert fox, nilgai Black buck, elegant Chinkara gazelles...*). On this ride, the terrain is mostly soft and sandy which allows for numerous great canters! After saying goodbye to our horses in Osian, the trip concludes with a short stopover in Jodhpur and some days for sightseeing, shopping and a party in Jaipur!

Yoga – During the ride (Jan. 25- Feb. 1) *Asha Bhatnagar* will conduct her popular evening Yoga classes, a combination of Yoga breathing /stretching exercises. The perfect way to re-energize the body after a day in the saddle!

Logistics

- | | | |
|---------------|---|--|
| Jan 22 | Arrive Delhi under own arrangements (usually late evening or night). Meet and greet, transfer to the Hotel Oberoi for the remainder of the night. | <i>o/n Imperial Hotel 5*L</i> |
| Jan 23 | Day in Delhi – at leisure – optional sightseeing. | <i>o/n Imperial Hotel 5*L</i> |
| Jan 24 | Delhi – Jodhpur – Nagaur
Noon flight to Jodhpur and drive to Nagaur to HRH Royal Camp in the Nagaur Fort. Dinner and Overnight | <i>Royal Camp-Nagaur Fort</i> |
| Jan 25 | Nagaur
Attribution of the horses. Short ride to connect with your mount, adjustments etc.. followed by visit of the Nagaur Cattle and Camel Fair on Horseback and on foot.
Picnic lunch at horse camp. Dinner and overnight | <i>Royal Camp - Nagaur Fort</i> |
| Jan 26 | Today our riding trek starts: ride from Nagaur to Khari - Approx. 30 kms (<i>villages, farmlands, sand dunes, wildlife</i>). Picnic lunch on the way.
Dinner and overnight | <i>private Tented Mobile Camp</i> |
| Jan 27 | Ride from Khari to Tantwas (approx. 30 kms)
In Tantwas we will be greeted by the village chief who takes great pride in showing the guests his collection of small armory and handicrafts.
Dinner and evening entertainment by the village people.
Overnight | <i>private Tented Mobile Camp</i> |

- Jan 28** Ride from Tantwas to Isarnawda (Approx. 35 kms)
Highlights are some impressive sand dunes of the Thar desert and our camp location at the base of a spectacular sand dune.
Dinner and overnight ***private Tented Mobile Camp***
- Jan 29** Ride from Isarnawda to Khimsar (Approx 25 km).
Beautiful landscapes; ride over several sand dunes, through farms, small villages and an area where the Black Buck antelope is protected and has a healthy population.
Arrive Khimsar Fort to spend the next two nights in this splendid Heritage Hotel, complete with swimming pool and Ayurvedic Spa – all of which will be most welcome after the ride in the desert !
Dinner and overnight ***Khimsar Heritage Fort***
- Jan 30** A day to relax and ride around Khimsar ***Khimsar Heritage Fort***
- Jan 31** Khimsar towards Osian (approx. 30 km).
Resume our ride through some very interesting villages – quite different from what we have seen so far. Dinner and overnight ***private Tented Mobile Camp***
- Feb 1** Desert Camp to Osian (Approx 25 km)
Our last day of riding. The landscape changes as we progress towards Osian, an ancient town of the Jodhpur district, famous for its ruins of Brahmanical and Jain temples (8th to 11th centuries). Here we say goodbye to our loyal Marwari horses! The night is spent at the luxurious permanent 'Camel Camp' built on top of a huge sand dune which commands an impressive view of the town and its environs.
Dinner, evening entertainment, and overnight ***Reggie's Camel Camp - Osian***
- Feb 2** Osian – Jodhpur - Nimaj
After an early breakfast, drive to Jodhpur (approx. one-hour).
Visit Mehrangarh Fort and the market square followed by Lunch at the Umaid Bhawan Palace.
After lunch, drive to Nimaj (approx. 2 hours) to the exotic and charming 'Chatra Sagar Camp' located on the shore of a huge lake. The view of the lake from the tents' sitting area is spellbinding and a sharp contrast from what we have experienced so far.
Dinner and evening entertainment of music and local dances. ***O/N Chatra Sagar Camp***
- Feb 3** After breakfast, drive to Jaipur arriving in time for a late lunch.
Afternoon of sightseeing or at leisure.
Dinner and overnight ***The Raj Palace***
- Feb 4** Jaipur - A day of sightseeing and shopping.
Dinner party hosted by Asha Bathnagar at her residence
Overnight ***The Raj Palace***
- Feb 5** Jaipur – Delhi
Early morning visit to Amber Fort reached by elephant-back, followed by shopping....
Late afternoon flight to Delhi in time to connect with ongoing flight home.

End of services

Cost: \$6,890 per person in twin/double accommodation (assuming 10 riders)
\$ 2,010 single supplement

\$370 Air Fare p/p Delhi/Jodhpur- Jaipur / Delhi (subject to increase)

A 30% deposit is needed to confirm your booking.
Balance is due 10 weeks prior to commencement of the trip.

Includes:

All accommodation on full board except in Delhi where it is on bed and breakfast basis (to allow more flexibility), and Jaipur on half-board, all transfers by AC car/coach, all riding arrangements, all sightseeing with English speaking guide in Jodhpur and Jaipur, all monument entrance fees and elephant charges at Amber Fort. During the ride (February 4-11) yoga/stretch classes with Asha Bhatnagar and bottled water.

The cost does not include

International air transportation, meals in Delhi, drinks (alcoholic and non alcoholic), camera fees and items of personal nature such as tips, laundry, telephone calls, etc....

A typical day on horseback

The distances covered each day vary between 25km and 35km. An open jeep precedes the riders in the distance and can serve as a backup for anyone who gets tired.

After breakfast, we mount our horses between 9.00/9.30AM and ride approximately for 2 to 3 hours until lunchtime, stopping a couple of times en route and whenever there is something of interest to visit. A hot buffet lunch is served in a scenic spot, sometimes within the grounds of a typical farmhouse home to the *Thakur* (head) of a village. After a short siesta we resume the ride for another 2 to 2 _ hours arriving at our overnight destination in time for tea, some sightseeing and our stretch/yoga class before changing for drinks and dinner sometimes to the accompaniment of local folk musicians.

Horses: *Marwari* horses purebred and crosses. These beautiful "*war horses of the Rajputs*" are famous for their endurance, courage, speed and loyalty. You will want to take one home! They average 14 _ to 16.2 hh. in size.

Pace: moderate to fast – walk, periods of trotting with stretches of exhilarating canters. This ride is for the competent and experienced rider. **No beginners.** The *Marwari* horses have a competitive spirit!

Tack: Comfortable English-style Cavalry saddles each with its own saddle-bag. No western saddles.

Weight limit: 210 lbs.

Luggage: is transported by support vehicle and placed in your room at the destination.

Extensions can be arranged prior to (preferably) or after the ride.

Please call Christine Chauvin for details and further information (tel. 1-212-421 0671).