

This tour is designed to follow a week at the MCKS Ashram near Pune

January 28- February 7 2010.

This tour needs a minimum of 15 people to guarantee the departure, a \$400 CAD per person non-refundable deposit by October 15 2010 to secure your place on the tour.

India: 12 Days A spiritual journey of India....

February 6th - 17th 2011

\$2,895 Cad Land only

Our tour will highlight the 8 Ganesh temples near Pune, the spiritual sites of Rishaseh, Tirupathi and explore the Varanasi- India's Holiest Hindu city with a legacy that goes back over 3000 years. Our tour will end with an optional extension to see the Taj Mahal in Delhi. ...

Tour includes:

Flights: 5 domestic flights in India:

Nasik-Bombay, Bombay-Tirupati, Madras- Delhi, Delhi- Varanasi, Varanasi- Delhi

-Accommodation in Three & Four star Hotels

-Meals as specified in the itinerary

-Sightseeing and entrance fees as mentioned in the itinerary

Payment:

You can secure your place on the tour with a \$400 per person non-refundable deposit. We take payment by cheque, VISA or MasterCard for the \$400/ person DEPOSIT.

The invoice for the balance owing will be sent in early November 2010. Payment for the balance of the tour will be due on December 6 2010. Prices quoted are for FINAL PAYMENT made BY CHEQUE.

Airfare Our preferred routing is with Cathay Pacific Airlines. Please call our office for a quote

Not included:

-**Visa fees.** Canadian passport holders require visas for India (currently \$62). As part of our service, we will send you the documentation to obtain your Visa from the Indian Consulate at your convenience.

-Lunches,

-Trip Cancellation / Interruption and Medical Insurance. We offer insurance coverage with RBC Insurance

-Single Supplement charge, if requested (\$500 Canadian)

-Personal Expenses such as souvenirs, laundry, drinks not included at meals.

-tipping of driver, guides, hotel staff

Single Supplement

Should you wish to be GUARANTEED a single room the single supplement charge is \$500 Canadian



Sunday February 6th

Our tour begins this evening in Pune.

Overnight Pride Biznotel or similar. Dinner.

Monday February 7th Pune

Full day excursion to Ashtavinayak temples . We shall visit the Ganesh temples at Theur, Moregoan, Siddatek & Ranjangaon.

Thevoorcha Shri Chintaamani - An east facing image of Ganesha, is enshrined in this temple which has interesting features such as gold inlays

Moregaon arises from the fact that this region once abounded in peacocks. The name Mayureshwar also arises from the legend that Vinayak rode a peacock mount in a battle against evil demons. An east facing image of Ganesha flanked by brass images of his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi is enshrined in this temple.

The Siddhatek Siddhivinayak temple is a hill temple, built by Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar, who is also credited with rebuilding the Vishnu Pada temple at Gaya, the Vishwanath temple at Benares and several other temples. Ganesha is enshrined in a seated posture with his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi. **Ranjangaoncha Mahaganapati** Mahaganapati is portrayed, seated on a lotus, flanked by his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi. **Second of three nights in Pune. Pride Biznotel or similar Breakfast & Dinner.**

Tuesday February 8th Pune

Full day excursion to Ashtavinayak temples . We shall visit the Ganesh temples at Lenyadri, Ozar, Mahad & Pali: **Lenyadricha Girijaatmaja** An irregularly carved image is the object of worship here. This stone temple, and is located on a hill accessed through a flight of 238 steps. **Ozarcha Shri Vigneshwara** - An east facing image of Ganesha flanked by his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi is enshrined in this grand temple which has interesting features such as a spacious courtyard, a grand entrance, sculptural and mural work. **Mahadcha Varadavinayak** is portrayed, seated on an east facing throne. Stone images of his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi are also seen in the temple. A lamp in this temple is said to have been glowing uninterrupted for over a hundred years.

Palicha Shri Ballaleshwara - An east facing image of Ganesha flanked by his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi is enshrined in this majestic fort like temple temple **Third of three nights in Pune. Pride Biznotel or similar Breakfast & Dinner.**

Wed Feb 9th Pune – Shirdi - Nasik - Bombay

Early his morning drive to Shirdi. and visit the **Sai baba** temple- this temple attracts millions of devotees of all religions, castes and creed who come to pay homage to

Shri Sai Baba. The temple is a beautiful shrine that was built over the Samadhi of Shri Sai Baba. People also realised that this "Baba" was no ordinary person but a person with extraordinary godly powers

1400 hrs : Drive to Nasik airport. Driving time is 3 hrs.
1630 hrs : Reach Nasik airport. **Board flight for Bombay.Overnight at Hotel Suba Galaxy or similar .Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner**

Thursday Feb 10th Bombay – Tirupati

This morning transfer to domestic airport to board flight for Tirupati. **Depart Bombay 0930 hrs. Arrive Tirupati 1:40.** Later this afternoon visit the **temples of ISKCON** on the way to tirumala hills has the carving of Lord Narasimha Swamy, Lord Varaha Swamy and Krishna Leela. Lord Krishna"s playful acts on the windows glass reveals the colorful masterpiece in art work. The pillars are decorated with ten avatars of Lord Vishnu. A beautiful park is surrounded with lot of flowers, ponds and fountains. **Overnight Tirupathi at Hotel Fortune Kences or similar B & D**

Friday February 11 Tirupathi - Madras

0500 hrs : Early morning drive to Tirumala – 45 minutes drive where the **temple of Lord Venketshwara** is located in the hill town Tirumala.

0730 – 0830 hrs : Sarvadarshnam Temple visit.

0930 hrs : back to hotel. Breakfast at hotel.

Thereafter visit the temples of Tirupathi:

Sri Govindarajaswami Temple.

Sri Kodandaramaswami Temple

The temple of Anjaneyaswami

Sri Kapileswaraswami Temple

1500 hrs : Drive to Madras Overnight at Hotel Lemon Tree or similar. Breakfast & Dinner

Sat Feb 12 Madras – Delhi- Rishikesh

0500 hrs - 0530 hrs : Early Breakfast at hotel.

Flight:Depart Madras 6:45 hrs Arr. Delhi 9:30 hrs.

New Delhi is well planned with wide tree lined avenues, fountains and parks. We visit the 12th century Minaret **Qutub Minar**, and drive along the ceremonial avenues of Rajpath and view the splendid **Presidential Palace**. The nerve center is undoubtedly **Parliament** house nearby is the **India Gate** – a First World War memorial

We visit the **Sikh temple** - dedicated to the 8th Guru-Hari Krishan. Guru Hari Krishan, the boy prophet, became the eighth Guru of the Sikhs on October 6, 1661 AD During the short period of his pontificated he guided the Sikh community with great tact and wisdom in the face of threatening challenges. He sent missionaries to the farthest outpost of the country and inspired the seekers who came to him with eternal truth and the highest mystical and spiritual experiences.

This afternoon we drive to Rishikesh - The place is very much associated with the Hindu mythology and thousands come here for pilgrimage. Rishikesh is also famous for the sadhus (saints) and people come here to learn Yoga from them. **First of two nights in Rishikesh Hotel Carlson Inn & Suites or similar . Breakfast & Dinner**

Sunday February 13 Rishikesh

Today we visit the temples & sights of Rishikesh

Lakshman Jhula : A suspension bridge across Ganga situated 5kms from Rishikesh, on the way to Badrinath.. Built in the year 1939, Lakshman Jhula has turned out to be the chief attraction of Rishikesh.

Originally, there was a hanging jute (rope) bridge till 1889. This was rebuilt with iron ropes but it is completely suspended. If you walk in the middle of the bridge you will find the bridge swaying.

It is believed that Ram's brother Lakshman crossed the river here on a jute rope. On the west bank, there is a Lakshman temple also. On the side of this famous bridge is the well known Shri Raghunathji temple This bridge is the main way for people going up the hills and down to the Gita Bahvan and Swarg Ashram.

Ram Jhula : A suspension bridge between the Shivanand Ashram and the Swargashram. It provides an alternative to a boat ride from one bank of Ganga to another. Its construction is similar to that of the Lakshman Jhoola.

Neelkanth Mahadev : Neelkanth is situated at a height of 1675 m, on a hill above Swarg Ashram, and is one of the most revered temples of Rishikesh. Mythology says that in the ancient times when the ocean was being churned for 'amrit' (Potion for immortality), first venom oozed out. Lord Shiva drank the venom at a place which is now called Nilkanth Mahadeo. It is 24 Km from Rishikesh and is surrounded by peaceful forests.

Geetha Bhawan : One of the oldest temple complex in the area. The famous Indian epic Ramayana and Mahabharata are described here on the walls.

Rishikund Close to Triveni ghat is the most ancient place, the Rishikund. Ancient records relate this to Kubz Saint , who was blessed by the Goddess Yamuna by saturating this pond by its water. The pond reflects the temple of Ragunath , dedicated to lord rama and his wife

Haridwar - the holy city lies at the foot of the Shivalik range of the Himalayas Legend goes that when lord Shiva sent Ganga to quench the thirst of the people, she extricated herself from the matted locks of Lord Shiva and descended to the plains at Haridwar.

Chandi Devi Temple : The temple of Chandi Devi is atop the Neel Parvat on the other bank of river Ganga. It is 3 kms trek from Chandighat . Legend has it that the army chief Chanda-Munda of a local demon King

Shumbh- Nishumbha was killed by goddess Chandi here after which the place got the name Chandi Devi **Mansa Devi temple** : The temple of Goddess Mansa Devi& is situated at the top of Bilwa Parwat .Here one statue of the Goddess has three mouths and five arms while the other statue has eight arms. The beautiful view of the city can be seen from this place. The temple can be reached by trolley through ropeway or on foot.

Evening witness the River worship ceremony at the **Triveni Ghat** - A sacred bathing spot on the bank of the river Ganga where devotees take holy dips and offer prayers. Hundreds of people come here every day to take a dip in the holy river. Triveni Ghat is believed to be the confluence of the Ganga, the Yamuna and the legendary Saraswati river.

The gentle murmur of the river is very fascinating. In the evening you will find thousands to people sitting on the bank to watch the religious function called "Arati" conducted during evening every day. The place is peace personified.. **Second of two nights in Rishikesh Hotel Carlson Inn & Suites or similar. Breakfast & Dinner**

Mon Feb 14 Rishakesh- Delhi- Varanasi

Drive to Delhi domestic airport to board flight for Varanasi Depart Delhi 1410 hrs. Arrive Varanasi at 1535 hrs. Afternoon free.

First of three nights in Varanasi Hotel Radisson or similar Breakfast & Dinner

Tuesday February 15 Varanasi

Early morning in the morning we embark on a **Boat Cruise on the Ganges**. Witnessing this spectacle of the practice of religion, unchanged over thousands of years is one of the most extraordinary experiences of a visit to India.

This afternoon we visit **Sarnath** - The Buddha came to this hamlet, to preach his message of the 'middle way' to nirvana after he achieved enlightenment at Bodhgaya. Later, the great Buddhist emperor Ashoka, erected magnificent stupa and monasteries here . **Second of three night in Varanasi Hotel Radisson. Breakfast & Dinner**

Wednesday February 16 Varanasi

Varanasi is home to about 2,000 temples. People from all parts of India as well as the world come to Varanasi to visit these temples, making the holy temples of Varanasi amongst the most visited temples in India. Most of the temples that are located on the river front [Ganga Ghats] are old and date back to the medieval period. According to legends the first Siva Jyotirlingas, the fiery pillar of light, came through the earth here and flared into the sky.

Therefore Varanasi is also called Kashi, "the City of Light." The Kashi Vishwanath temple, located near the Ganga Ghats, is the most famous and important temple of Varanasi. In this temple resides the guardian of the holy city, Lord Shiva. Other important temples of Varanasi are the new **Vishwanath temple**, the Sankat Mochan temple, the Durga temple, the Kal Bhairav temple and the Mritunjaya temple.

Kashi Vishwanath Temple - or Golden Temple, is the most sacred temple in Varanasi and is dedicated to Shiva as lord of the universe. The current temple was built in 1776 by Ahalya Bai of Indore, and the 800kg of gold plating on the towers. In Hindu religion it is believed that a simple glimpse of the Jyotirlinga is a soul-cleansing experience that transforms life and puts it on the path of knowledge and Bhakti (devotion). A single darshan of Vishweshwara Jyotirlinga is considered to merit more than the darshan of other jyotirlingas, scattered in various parts of India. The Kashi Vishwanath Temple has been a living picture of the timeless cultural traditions and highest spiritual values.

Lord Vishwanath is considered the supreme repository of the spiritual truth and strengthens the bonds of universal brotherhood.

Durga temple [also called Monkey temple] this small temple was built in the 18th century by a Bengali maharani and is stained red with ochre. It's in the north Indian Nagara style with a multi-tiered shikhara (spire). Durga is the 'terrible' form of Shiva's consort Parvati, so at festivals there are often sacrifices of goats. Non-Hindus can enter the courtyard but not the inner sanctum. Durga temple, also known as the "monkey temple" is one of the important temples of Varanasi. This temple is dedicated to Goddess Durga.

The Durga temple is also called Monkey temple because of the presence of large number of monkeys. In Hinduism, Durga is represented as the embodiment of shakti or female power, clad in red, riding a tiger and fully armed with Shiva's trident, Vishnu's discus and a sword. Non-Hindus can enter the courtyard of the Durga temple but not the inner sanctum. Thousands of Hindu devotees visit the Durga temple during Navratri and other auspicious occasions.

Sankat Mochan temple is one of the sacred temples of Varanasi. It is located in the southern part of Varanasi, near the Banaras Hindu University. It is dedicated to the Hindu God, Hanuman. The word "Sankat Mochan" means one who helps in removing sufferings i.e. Lord Hanuman. According to Hindu mythology, one who visits the Sankat Mochan temple regularly, his wishes get fulfilled.

According to Vedic Astrology, Hanuman protects human beings from the anger of planet Saturn and those who have ill placed Saturn in their horoscope visit the Sankat Mochan temple to get remedy

Tulsi Manas Mandir - built in 1964, Its two-tier walls are engraved with verses and scenes from the Ram Charit Manas, the Hindi version of the Ramayana

The Banaras Hindu University - built in 1917, it was founded by the great nationalist Pandit Malviya as a center for education in Indian art, music, culture and philosophy, and for the study of Sanskrit. The campus houses the Bharat Kala Bhavan which has a fine collection of miniature paintings, sculptures from the 1st to 15th centuries and old photographs of Varanasi.

The New Vishwanath temple of Varanasi is located in the premises of the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) The New Vishwanath Temple is dedicated to lord Shiva and is a replica of the original Vishwanath temple. The most important characteristic of the new Vishwanath temple is that it is open to people from all castes and religions. **Third of three night in Varanasi Hotel Radisson or similar. Breakfast & Dinner**

Thursday February 17 Varnasi - Delhi

Breakfast at hotel. Morning free time

Depart Varanasi 1440 hrs.

Arrive Delhi at 1600 hrs.

In time transfer to International airport to board flight for onward destination.

Breakfast & Dinner

BC Travel Reg 3379

May 2010

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Optional extension to the Taj Mahal - Agra [3 days]



Thurs. February 17-Sat. Feb 19 2011

\$399 CAD per person/sharing
[Single supplement \$175]

Thursday February 17: Delhi

Overnight Delhi. Airport Residency or similar Dinner

Friday February 18: Delhi - Agra

This morning transfer to railway station to board train for Agra – synonymous with timeless beauty of Taj Mahal Depart New Delhi at 0615 hrs. Arrive Agra at 0805 hrs.

On arrival visit **Fatehpur Sikri** - the deserted city literally means 'The City of Victory'. Built by Emperor Akbar. A glittering imperial capital conceived and built by Emperor Akbar. It is filled with red sandstone buildings, mosques and courtyards. The pearl Mosque here is designed after the mosque of Mecca and is a fine blend of Persian and Hindu architecture. The Bulund Darwaza or Sublime Gate flanked by colossal statues of elephants served as principal entrance to this ancient capital city. This nearly intact Mughal city is a masterpiece of Muslim architecture and is a designated 'World Heritage Site.'

Later visit **Agra Fort** - an impressive cluster of palaces fortresses and mosques on the banks of river Yamuna across the TajMahal. Construction of the massive red sandstone on the bank of the Yamuna River was begun by Emperor Akbar in 1565 though additions were made up until the rule of his grandson, Shahjehan. In Akbar's time the fort was principally a military structure but during Shah Jahan's reign it has partially become a palace.

The **Itmad – ud – daulah** - On the opposite bank of Yamuna, north of the fort, is the exquisite tomb of Mirza Gyas Beg. This Persian gentleman was Jehangir's chief minister, and his beautiful daughter, Nur Jahan, later married the emperor. Nur Jahan constructed the tomb between 1622 and 1628 in a style similar to the tomb she built for Jahangir near Lahore in Pakistan. **Overnight Hotel Howard Park Plaza. Or similar**
Breakfast & dinner

Saturday February 19: Agra- Delhi

This morning we visit the Taj Mahal - Mark Twain spoke of this monument "You cannot keep your emotions within bounds, when that soaring bubble of marble breaks upon your view. "Taj Mahal is like a silent rhapsody that you will carry in your heart. (Closed on Fridays)

Your next stop is at Sikandra - The tomb of Akbar the Great. Built in red sandstone inlaid with marble, it is a striking sight. Akbar started its construction himself, blending Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Christian motifs and style, much like the syncretic religious philosophy he developed called Deen Ilahi.

Thereafter drive to Delhi . On arrival transfer to International airport to board evening flight home.

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