



# 10-DAY HORSE SAFARI

## Shekhawati - The Wonderland of Frescoes

There are few experiences to rival riding horses through the beautiful rugged terrain of Shekhawati in northeast Rajasthan. Feel at one with nature as you explore this wild semi-arid area on the gentle Marwari horses; meet simple folks tilling the land, tending their cattle or baking chapatis for a hearty meal; the men wear colourful turbans women bright skirts as if to compensate for the stark landscape they inhabit. You can rejuvenate body and mind with Ayurvedic massages; pamper your palate with the wild rhythms of slow-cooked local cuisine; and enjoy comfortable accommodation in magnificent heritage forts, castles & palaces owned and operated by members of the former ruling families who will enchant you with their genuine warmth and hospitality. A part of the heritage of Shekhawati not to be missed is the treasure trove of fresco paintings that adorn the havelis ( mansions ) in towns throughout the region. Boost your Instagram likes with photographs of frescos and colourful bazaars throbbing with activities. The whole region is a photographer's delight.

### Trip Highlights

- Daily Horse Riding (25 and 40 kms)
- Delicious lunch served during the ride.
- Stay in beautiful heritage castles and havelis
- Three rejuvenating Ayurvedic massages
- A thrilling jeep safari deep into the forests of a wildlife sanctuary.
- Evening entertainment such as folk dances, sublime desert music & puppet shows with BBQ
- A farewell gala dinner with unlimited drinks hosted by the safari organisers
- NOTE: Riding gear is not included: We request that horse riders bring their riding gear or purchase Jodhpuri breeches, hat and boots etc. from the local market.
- Basic riding ability is required to fully enjoy our horse safaris.
- Guests should be comfortable putting the horse through its paces.
- Best time : Mid-September to March



# Itinerary

## Day 1 : New Delhi

On arrival at Delhi International Airport you will be met by our representative and transferred by air-conditioned vehicle to the hotel. Here the guests will be received in the finest Hindu tradition with a garland of roses and an application of vermillion on the forehead. This marks an auspicious start to your journey.

Dinner & Overnight at the hotel.

## Day 2 : New Delhi - Mandawa

After an early breakfast, we depart on the 5-hour drive to Mandawa, a beautiful town located in the heart of the Shekhawati region. Mandawa is world-famous for its frescoes. Check into Castle Mandawa. After lunch, we will take a walking tour through the town, visiting the colourful bazaar, with plenty of stops to chat with the locals and take plenty of photographs. The locals are generally delighted to be photographed - and no permission is required! Return to the Castle for a swim, an Ayurvedic massage and a spicy buffet dinner.

Overnight at the Castle.

## Day 3 : Mandawa

After breakfast there will be a briefing from the local guides regarding the horse-riding safari, after which we will take a guided walk of the town to visit the fresco painted havelis. Return to the Castle for a buffet lunch and maybe enjoy a short siesta or take a swim in the pool. Later in the afternoon we will depart for the stables for a familiarisation tour of the facilities and horses before taking a casual evening ride to acquaint everyone with the horses.

## Day 3 .....

This important session is to ensure that everyone is comfortable with their equipment and saddles before the safari starts on the next day. Guests will take high tea at the stables and take part in an interactive session with the safari leaders to discuss any issue regarding the horses or equipment, and to answer any queries regarding the upcoming safari.

Return to the Castle for sumptuous dinner and an evening of gentle folk music.

Overnight at the Castle.

## Day 4 : Mandawa - Churi Ajitgarh

Churi Ajitgarh is a mofussil (provincial or rural) town situated 28 km from Mandawa. The ride will start from the Desert Resort and head to a water reservoir that was constructed nearly 250 years ago. From here we will ride to a hamlet where we will be warmly received by the villagers. They will be delighted to be photographed with the guests. We will enjoy tea and snacks with the villagers. We will continue for a while to a picnic spot where lunch has been laid out. After a 2-hour break we will ride to the lovely 19th century Vivaana Haveli to arrive by sunset.

Dinner & overnight at the haveli.

## Day 5 : Churi Ajitgarh - Nawalgarh

After breakfast we will depart on a journey of about 25km to Nawalgarh which has the largest number of fresco adorned havelis in the area. An important feature of these havelis is a central courtyard within them. Some of these havelis are more than 300 years old with amazing facades of colourful frescoes depicting the social and religious life of the people.



#### Day 5 .....

As we ride through this beautiful and rugged terrain we will stop to see some of these frescoes as well as absorb the atmosphere of local village life. We will take a stop for tea in one of the villages before continuing to a picnic spot for lunch. On arrival in Nawalgarh we will check into the exquisite Koolwal Kothi which was built in 1934. The Kothi reflects the regal grandeur of that era. Its fresco painted restaurant has a beautiful ambience.

Dinner and overnight at this Kothi ( mansion )

#### Day 6 : Nawalgarh - Meetwas

An early start as we take a short tour of the town, visiting the iconic Poddar Museum, Sheesh Mahal (Mirror Palace), and Morarka Haveli temples. Return to the hotel for breakfast before we continue on our horse safari and leave for Meetwas, which is located 30 km from Nawalgarh. We will take a rest stop and enjoy a picnic lunch before arriving at Meetwas where accommodation will be provided in beautifully appointed tents with attached bathrooms, sitting area and a verandah. The tents are well-equipped with running hot and cold water, a toilet (with seat), a basin, shower area, clothes and towel rack. There is no electricity but lighting will be provided. We will enjoy a bonfire and BBQ, accompanied by lilting folk music. Enjoy the illuminated night sky with the help of your guide and a telescope!

#### Day 7 : Meetwas - Mahansar

After breakfast we will depart on a 30km ride to Mahansar, an ancient town and fort which was renowned for trading in ornaments and precious stones. Riders will disembark at a local village, Thimoli, for lunch. There will be an opportunity to try some kite flying while traditional folk musicians provide some gentle entertainment. We will continue on to Mahansar Fort where a warm welcome is guaranteed. Whilst much of the trading has moved to the larger towns and cities, Mahansar has maintained its tradition of heritage liquor brewing. The scions of the former royal family have continued the tradition and the liquor they brew has earned world-wide fame. It is produced from herbs, clarified butter and dry fruits. Learn of the fort's history as we take a tour of the fort. The family that owns the fort loves to cook and we are sure to enjoy excellent local delights including delicious kebabs, mutton dishes and biryanis. Overnight at the Fort.

#### Day 8 : Mahansar - Alsisar

After breakfast we will leave Mahansar Fort for Alsisar. We will ride through quaint villages & hamlets, the dwellings largely made of mud. At lunch time we will stop at a lovely spot where food will be served. After resting for a couple of hours we will embark for Alsisar and check into the exquisite Indra Vilas Hotel. Alsisar, founded in 1783, is a mofussil town located in the arid semi desert. Typical of the Shekhawati region, the area has a heritage castle, havelis and cenotaphs.

There will be time to rest a while, or take a swim before enjoying an Ayurvedic massage. After which there will be an opportunity to enjoy a walking tour of Alsisar. After what is sure to be a sumptuous dinner there will be a photography & interactive session. Overnight at the hotel.

#### Day 9 : Alsisar - Mandawa

Today we head towards Castle Mandawa situated 40 kms from Alsisar. There will be a 2-hour stopover for a delicious lunch enroute. On reaching Castle Mandawa guests can enjoy a well-deserved and rejuvenating Ayurvedic massage. This evening there will be a farewell gala dinner with unlimited drinks. Overnight at the Castle.

#### Day 10 : Mandawa - New Delhi

After breakfast, drive to New Delhi well in time to board your flight back home. Our representative will provide you full assistance at the airport to ensure a smooth departure.





#### A NOTE ABOUT MARWARI HORSES

Indigenous to Marwar, which lies in the Western part of Rajasthan State, these horses were mostly used as battle horses and for their great endurance. A distinctive feature of a Marwari horse is its turning ears which meet at the top, giving it excellent all around hearing, making it extremely alert to dangers. Marwari horses are very intelligent and quick to respond to the rider. A brave and faithful servant, the horse is integral to much of the history of this art of Rajasthan.



#### USEFUL ITEMS RIDERS TO BRING OR PURCHASE LOCALLY

Riding cap or helmet \* Sheepskin for saddle \* Small torch, flashlight and binoculars \* Sun hat \* Sun cream \* Lightweight raincoat \* Leather chaps \* Camera \* Battery charge with a cigarette lighter lead \* Sunglasses \* Lanyards \* Riding gloves \* Bandana \* Jodhpuris or long trousers \* Long-sleeved cotton shirts \* Insect repellent \* Any medicines taken regularly.

#### MEDICAL CONDITIONS & ALLERGIES

Please let us know if you have any pre-existing medical conditions and/or allergies so we can make any necessary adjustments to the itinerary or food.

#### OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Minimum age: 8 years

Maximum weight: 95 kgs (15 stone)

We strongly recommend that riders wear a helmet and proper riding breeches and boots. Non-riders can join this tour: they can enjoy several exciting activities on each day.

Best time: Mid-September to March.

Minimum riders : 4

Maximum riders: 12

#### Inclusions:

AC transport throughout on vehicular transfers

Accommodation in heritage forts, castles, palaces havelis and ac tents

All breakfasts, lunches & dinners.

1 x Farewell gala dinner including unlimited drinks

Groom charges.

All entrance & other activities fees as per itinerary.

Snacks, mineral water & juices & beer

Taxes

#### Exclusions:

Flights

We can extend the itinerary as required. Why not add-on a 4-day Golden Triangle extension and visit the majestic cities of Jaipur and Agra.