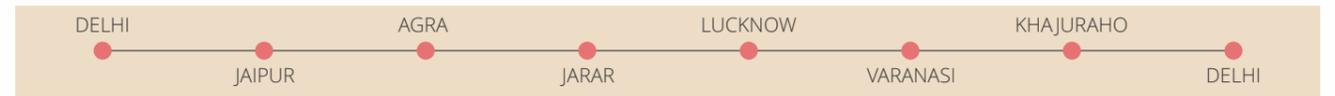




NRT5 > 14 DAY TOUR

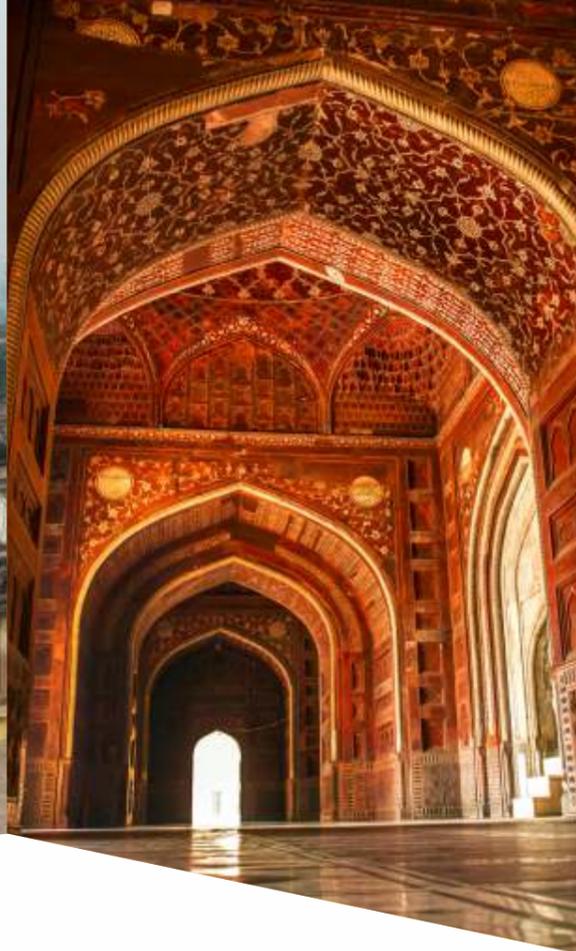
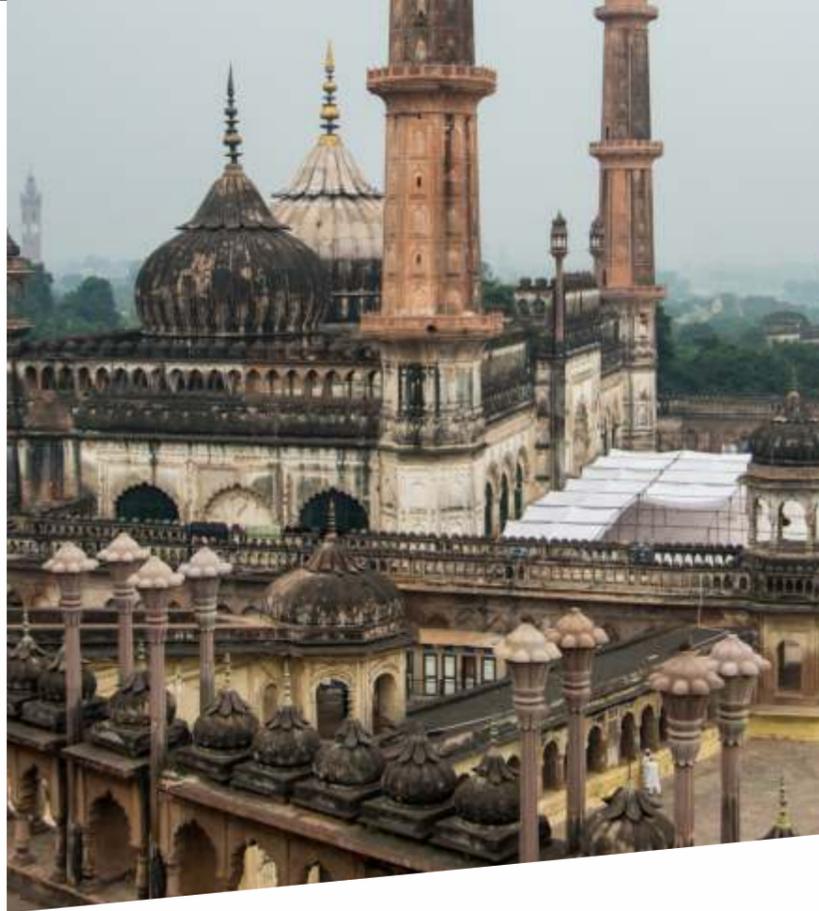
## CLASSIC NORTH INDIA

From the heart of modern India in New Delhi to the ghats of the holy city of Varanasi, this itinerary covers the classic cities of North India showcasing history, architecture, religion, nature and the subtle nuances of diverse cultural distinction that India is known for. An ideal introduction for the first time visitor to India spanning four states and the capital – New Delhi – much of whose heritage from the British Raj is now symbolic of the world's largest democracy. While, the Pink City of Jaipur offers a glimpse of the aristocratic Rajasthani culture, Agra is synonymous with the romance of the magnificent Taj Mahal. Relish a bit of the countryside and nature at the Chambal Safari Lodge with its home style food. Lucknow, the medieval cultural capital of India, is the legendary centre of Nawabi etiquette and culture. Be it cuisine, clothes, music or dance, Awadh and the Nawabs were more refined than any. Immerse in its delicate culture. Then, deep dive into Hindu mythology, philosophy and spirituality in the city of light – Kashi, an ancient seat of learning with a legacy that goes back to more than 3000 years on the banks of the holy Ganga, India's most venerated river. End the tour in Khajuraho. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the temples here were built in the 9th and 10th centuries, and are widely regarded as being the pinnacle of expressive north Indian temple architecture.



### Insider Tips:

- From mid-December to mid-January heavy fog descends over north India. Expect delays/cancellation of flights/trains and disruptions in the itinerary during this period.
- The 45 minute Change of Guard Ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan, which takes place every Saturday, is a great way to start the Delhi sightseeing (timings vary depending on the time of the year).
- When in Jaipur we recommend a half-day block printing workshop, at the end of which you will have created a souvenir for yourself; or if there are families travelling with children we have a delightful half day interaction with elephants post lunch.
- The annual Bateshwar Fair of Chambal, held in October/November, is one of the oldest cattle fairs in India.
- Chambal Safari Lodge is operational from October to March.
- The Khajuraho Dance Festival showcasing the classical dance forms of India is held during February/March and is a great time to visit the city.
- Dev Deepawali, not to be confused with Diwali - the Indian festival of lights, is held in Varanasi in the month of November. Locals and pilgrims take a holy dip in the Ganga on this auspicious day and light earthen lamps in the evening. When dusk falls, all the ghats on the river-front are lit with millions of earthen lamps.
- Etawah can be added on this itinerary en route Jarar to Lucknow. It has a unique landscape highlighted by undulating ravines between the rivers Yamuna and Chambal. The city was an important centre of the Revolt of 1857. Interestingly, A.O. Hume, who founded the Indian National Congress was the District Collector here during the revolt. Etawah still retains several buildings associated with A.O. Hume, including his residence, the four public buildings each designed to form a single letter of his name H-U-M-E, the Victoria Memorial – a strange amalgamation of styles built through local subscriptions, the St. Mary's Church, the British cemetery, the old bazaar and the Jama Masjid mosque.
- Gwalior and Orchha can also be woven in this itinerary, which are otherwise included in our Foothills of the Vindhyas itinerary in the following pages.
- The wildlife parks of Madhya Pradesh are a wonderful extension to this classical itinerary. Add Bandhavgarh, Kanha and Pench at the end of the programme.



## TOUR ITINERARY | NRT 5

### DAY 01 ARRIVAL DELHI

Warm welcome at the airport by our representative and transfer to the hotel.

### DAY 02 IN DELHI

Start the day with a choice of tour, depending upon the interest: breakfast trail or a rickshaw ride or a bicycle ride for a bit of adventure through the streets of Old Delhi. Visit the 16th century Humayun's Tomb, the first garden tomb of Asia and the Qutab Minar, the magnificent 12th century minaret later in the day. Both are UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Spend the evening exploring the 13th century Hauz Khas Village with its quirky shops, art galleries and restaurants.

### DAY 03 DELHI – JAIPUR

Drive or fly to the capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur. Explore the hidden gems of the old city of Jaipur and indulge in its culinary delights on a walking tour with a local expert.

### DAY 04 IN JAIPUR

Visit the 16th century Amber Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, followed by the City Palace and the Royal Observatory. In the evening, enjoy a Rajasthani cooking session with a local resident, followed by dinner. Alternatively, an elephant ride around a private jungle camp followed by dinner.

### DAY 05 JAIPUR – AGRA

Take the early morning train to Bharatpur and head out to the 16th century deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Continue by road to Agra. Later in the afternoon, visit the Agra Fort and the Taj Mahal at sunset, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

### DAY 06 AGRA – JARAR

Drive to Jarar to the Chambal Safari Lodge. Visit Bateshwar, the sleepy town on the banks of the river Yamuna for an afternoon cup of tea on the terrace of an old *haveli*. Walk along the bank exploring the many

temples along the river and end the day by witnessing the evening *aarti* (prayer ceremony).

### DAY 07 IN JARAR (CHAMBAL SAFARI LODGE)

Take a private boat safari on the Chambal River, home to the critically endangered *gharial* (the fish eating crocodile native to the Indian sub-continent), the red-crowned roof turtle, the Ganges river dolphin and the Indian skimmer – an IUCN red-listed endangered bird that breeds and lives here.

### DAY 08 JARAR – LUCKNOW

Drive to Lucknow via the expressway. In the afternoon, visit the La Martiniere School originally designed as a palatial home by the quirky Frenchman Major-General Claude Martin. Also visit Lucknow Residency and hear gruesome tales of the 1857 revolt. Dinner tonight would be at a private residence soaking in the *tehzeeb* (culture) and *tameez* (grace).

### DHABAS AND TRUCKS

With a cheerful 'OK Tata' or a terse 'Horn Please', packed-to-the-limit trucks thunder past you on the highway. Their ubiquitous presence has spawned a sub-culture, which flourishes in Dhabas that sprout just off the roadside. Here, burly truckers stop for meals, water to wash and a row of charpoy's under the open sky to sleep on. But there is no shortage of loud music or camaraderie, and the food served could well qualify as cuisine.



### DAY 09 IN LUCKNOW

Explore the quintessential Lucknow by visiting some famous buildings like the Asfi Imambara, Husainabad Imambara, Rumi Darwaza and the Asfi Mosque. Enjoy an Awadhi lunch at a local restaurant. Continue to the *Dhobi Ghat* on the banks of river Gomti to witness a spectacular sight of wet, coloured, hand embroidered *chikan* garments drying in rows across the bank.

### DAY 10 LUCKNOW – VARANASI

Take the early morning train or drive to Varanasi via the medieval town of Jaunpur. Witness the evening *aarti* (prayer ceremony) by the river Ganga. The Hindus believe that the purifying water of the holy river absolves them of their sins.

### DAY 11 IN VARANASI

Wake up at the crack of dawn for a boat ride on the river Ganga. Watch the throngs of locals and pilgrims descend on the *ghats* (stone steps) leading to the river to perform age old rituals. Later in the day visit the Benares Hindu University spread over 1350 acres and the Bharat Kala

Bhavan with its outstanding collection of paintings, sculpture and textiles. Post dinner, experience our extraordinary and philosophical Death and Rebirth Night Walk.

### DAY 12 VARANASI – KHAJURAHO

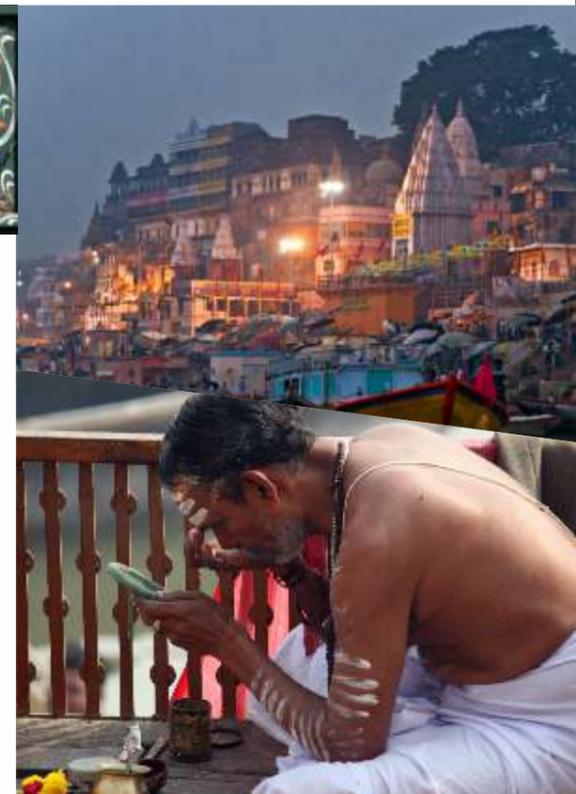
Visit Sarnath, where the Buddha gave his first sermon. Fly to Khajuraho – a UNESCO World Heritage site – for a slice of history, temples and erotic sculptures.

### DAY 13 IN KHAJURAHO

Spend the day admiring the stunning temples of the Late-Classical period, famous for their ancient expressive art, Nagara style of architectural symbolism and erotic sculptures.

### DAY 14 KHAJURAHO – DELHI – DEPARTURE

Fly to Delhi in the afternoon. On arrival, transfer to the international terminal for the onward flight.



Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have hot summers and pleasant to cold winters.



While Hindi is predominantly spoken in the area, various dialects ranging from Braj Bhasha, Awadhi to Bundeli are spoken in the region covered.

Namaste or 'Ram Ram' is a greeting used here most commonly.