# Royal Rajasthan

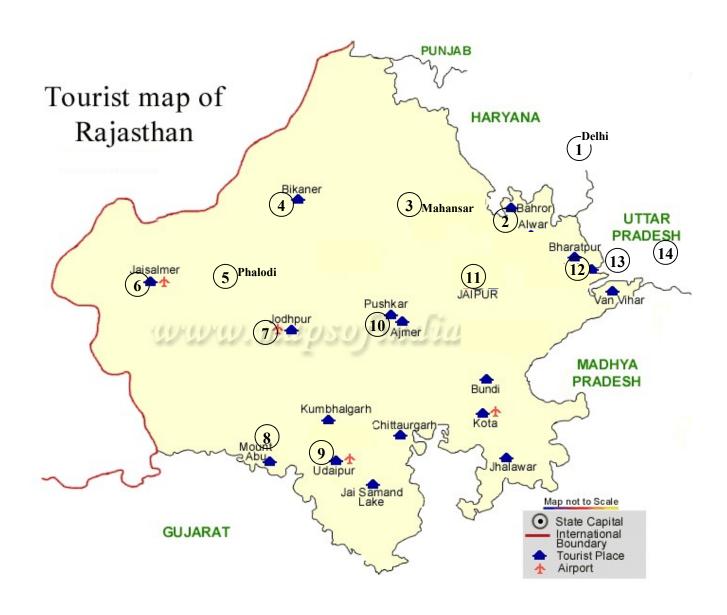


www. WorldOnWheels.tours

Life is a DARING ADVENTURE or nothing at all!



# Royal Rajasthan Motorcycle Safari



## **Destinations and Places of Interest**

- 1. Delhi
- 2. Neemrana
- 3. Mahansar
- 4. Bikaner
- 5. Phalodi
- 6. Jaisalmer
- 7. Jodhpur
- 8. Mt. Abu
- 9. Udaipur
- 10. Pushkar
- 11. Jaipur
- 12. Bharatpur
- 13. FatehpurSikri
- 14. Agra
  - 1. Return to Delhi



# Royal Rajasthan Motorcycle Safari

## Itinerary for February 2018

Day		Date	Details	Distance
1	S	Feb 04	Fly to Singapore then on to Delhi; arrive afternoon or evening	
2	M	05	½ day in Delhi for motorcycle familiarization, ½ day ride to Neemrana	120k
3	T	06	From one Maharaja's fortress to another, Neemrana to Mahansar	200k
4	W	07	From Mahansar through the Shekhawati region to Bikaner	185k
5	T	08	From Bikaner across the Great Thar Desert to Phalodi	160k
6	F	09	From Phalodi to the golden fortress town of Jaisalmer	170k
7	S	10	* Day sightseeing in Jaisalmer, with afternoon camel safari	-
8	S	11	From the golden city of Jaisalmer to the blue city of Jodhpur	300k
9	M	12	* Day sightseeing in Jodhpur, visit sensational Meherangarh fortress	-
10	T	13	From Jodhpur to the only hill station in Rajasthan, Mt. Abu	265k
11	W	14	½ day exploring Mt. Abu then ½ day ride to Udaipur	165k
12	T	15	* Sightseeing several palace museums in Udaipur	-
13	F	16	Udaipur to the world-famous camel fair center of Pushkar	280k
14	S	17	½ day exploring Pushkar then ½ day ride to the state capital Jaipur	160k
15	S	18	* Sightseeing and shopping in Jaipur, elephant ride to Amber Fort	-
16	M	19	Jaipur to the bird sanctuary of Bharatpur; for some wildlife spotting	185k
17	T	20	Bharatpur to the deserted city of FatehpurSikri then on to Agra	60k
18	W	21	Visit the sensational TajMahal, then final ride from Agra to Delhi	200k
19	T	22	Final day in Delhi, farewell dinner followed by evening flights home	
			, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,	2450k

<sup>\*</sup> indicates consecutive night in same hotel, allowing for laundry, etc.

#### **Departure Date**

The Royal Rajasthan Motorcycle Safari 2018 is scheduled to commence (ex Sydney) on **Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2018** as shown above, transiting briefly in Singapore and arriving in Delhi later that same day. Departures from other locations may require the previous day's flight and an overnight stay in Singapore. Please see our discussion on recommended flights herein.

#### **Tour Operator**

This Motorcycle Safari is one of several itineraries offered by *World On Wheels*, Australia's only professional tour operator specialising solely in international motorcycle adventures. Operating for 20+ years as *Ferris Wheels*, Mike Ferris pioneered the Himalayan Motorcycle Safari concept in 1994 with his first crossing of the world's greatest mountain range by a private group of Australian riders. In 1995, by now a qualified travel agent, he took his first commercial safari to the Khardung La in Ladakh (India), at 5,602 metres the highest road in the world. Mike and Denise Ferris now operate and personally lead annual *World On Wheels* motorcycle safaris to diverse destinations such as the Indian Himalaya, Nepal, Bhutan, Turkey, Morocco, the Dalmatian coastline, the South American Andes, Iceland, Mexico/Guatemala/Belize, South Africa and this one through Rajasthan, all of approximately three weeks in duration.

Be aware that this itinerary is a guide only and may need to change due to weather, road conditions or other factors. Please be flexible, but rest assured your Tour Leader will make the final day-to-day decisions only after consultation with our local agent, authorities and of course, group members.



#### **Package Price**

The Royal Rajasthan tour price, excluding airfares and joining in Delhi, is US\$7,500-00. Pillions are welcome and we also have a limited number of passenger seats available in our support vehicle, a 15-seater minibus which accompanies the riders for the length of the Safari – price for pillion or passenger is US\$7,000-00. Please note that our prices are subject to exchange rates and we reserve the right to alter any pricing, pursuant to Clause 9 of our Terms and Conditions, up to the date of final payment.

In this itinerary (and all others) our tour prices are set in US\$ for stability. We ask for a US\$1,000 deposit and will invoice you in US\$ thereafter for the remaining balance, but you have some flexibility as to when to pay. Final payment in US\$ will be due 60 days before the tour date, but if you choose to pay us say 90 or 120 days before tour date because you feel the exchange rate is favourable, this works well for everyone all round.

A feature of our Royal Rajasthan safari is that we choose to stay in Heritage Hotels at every available opportunity. These centuries-old palaces, forts and *havelis* (mansions) of maharajas and their nobles have been converted to provide modern accommodation facilities. They definitely add a royal and nostalgic dimension to the whole Rajasthan experience.

#### Price includes

- Full motorbike rental for the duration of the Safari (500cc Enfield Bullet)
- All accommodation throughout the Safari from day 1 to day 18 inclusive
- Twin-share basis; (single room supplement, additional US\$900) <sup>1</sup>
- All meals (breakfast, lunch and evening), including coffee or tea
- Experienced guide, local agent and Enfield mechanics
- Minibus support vehicle and driver, for luggage transport and assistance
- Spare parts, tools, medicines and first aid equipment
- All fuel costs, maintenance and repairs, third party insurance for the bikes
- Entrance to Taj Mahal and selected other monuments and attractions
- Airport transfers if arriving & departing via our recommended Singapore Airlines flights
- Complimentary World On Wheels long-sleeved Safari shirt

<sup>1</sup>Accommodation is provided on a twin-share basis and if you're on your own we'll do our best to bunk you in with an acceptable roommate. But if you're the <u>last</u> person to book, there's obviously a 50-50 chance you'll have to take a room on your own and will therefore be liable for the single room supplement. So the moral of the story is, book early or bring your own roommate with you. Or preferably both!

#### **Price excludes**

- Airfares to/from Delhi (from Australia, approx. Au\$1800 via Singapore Airlines)
- Travel insurance policy covering use of motorbike <sup>2</sup>
- Tourist visa for India (currently Au\$105-00, valid for six months)
- Medical examination and vaccinations before departure (recommended)
- Expenses of a personal nature such as postage, laundry, souvenirs or alcoholic drinks
- Tips for support staff in India at the end of the tour (optional but appreciated; Au\$100 suggested) <sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Please note that a motorcycle safari overseas must be considered one of life's more adventurous pursuits and therefore personal travel insurance is <u>mandatory</u>. If you already have existing travel insurance, we will insist on sighting a copy of the policy before you will be permitted to participate in this tour. Or if you wish, we can help arrange comprehensive travel insurance for you (Australian clients only). **Be aware**, however,



that any travel insurance ceases immediately on return to your own country, even if on-going medical treatment or surgery is required. Private health cover or government Medicare resumes at that point.

<sup>3</sup> A note on tips. We recognize tipping is not generally part of the antipodean psyche, but it is pretty much expected in most other parts of the world. Daily hotel porters will expect a small reward for carrying your bags to your room, and our mechanics, drivers and support staff anticipate reasonable tips to supplement their modest wages whilst on tour with us. We suggest something like \$5 per day is affordable for your three weeks, but whatever funds are contributed by tour participants, we will match it dollar for dollar and the resultant pool of money will be distributed amongst our crew. If you've had a good time, we would encourage you to donate generously! If not, tell us why and we will contribute on your behalf.

#### Our benevolent side

It is important to us to make a positive contribution to some of the less privileged communities that we visit. Our strongest connection is with India, and in focusing our efforts we have decided certain communities therein are most deserving of our care and support. We provide financial support and facilitate the donation of clothing to the Ganga Brijghat Charitable Trust, a registered help center for poor and underprivileged people at Brijghat, on the shores of the Ganga (the holy river Ganges), about 90k northeast of Delhi.

We have also supported for many years the schooling of three sisters, Chimmed, Lhamu and Dolma in a small remote village called Darcha, which we visit each year on our Himalayan Heights safari.



#### **International Flights**

You will have to arrange your own airfares through your preferred travel agent, or Australian clients may wish to take advantage of an arrangement we have with our local agent, Press & James Travel Associates. Phone 02 9979 5235 or email natasha\_dann@travel-associates.com.au and mention you're joining the *World On Wheels* 'Royal Rajasthan' Tour. They have a copy of this itinerary and they can arrange your route and flights as well as any stopovers or extensions you desire. We recommend you book as early as possible and full payment will usually be required six weeks before your departure. Our suggested flight is Singapore Airlines SQ406 arriving in New Delhi in the evening, and if you arrive on this flight we will meet you at the airport for transfer to your hotel.

#### Food & Health

The quality of food in India, contrary to conventional belief and rumour, frequently surprises and delights visitors and is often described as a highlight of the tour. We take care in selecting clean and reputable establishments for our meals. However, an occasional upset stomach cannot always be avoided in remote areas, so we advise initial caution and we carry various medicines to ensure as much comfort as possible. Participants in any of our adventure activities are obviously expected to have a reasonably high level of health, fitness and capability, but **in all cases a consultation with your doctor is recommended** in order to identify necessary vaccinations and precautions, particularly if traveling overseas for the first time. Please note that when it comes to anti-malarial medication, it is our view that the commonly experienced side-effects of such strong medication often outweigh the potential benefit, for what is a very low likelihood of contracting this disease. If you're really concerned, use a mosquito repellent instead!



#### Climate & Clothing

The Indian state of Rajasthan consists largely of desert and has a typical desert climate; daytime temperatures can be quite hot whilst at night the mercury plummets. In the northern winter (Feb) we should enjoy mild weather with days in the high 20's and nights anywhere between five to 15 degrees. At times there will be little shade available, so plenty of sunscreen, sunglasses, hats and long sleeves will also be required. Jeans and our long-sleeved *World On Wheels* shirts tend to be the norm, with strong boots and riding gloves. Helmets, full or open-face as you prefer, should be brought with you from home.

Professional quality riding gear such as Cordura jackets, overpants and other protective clothing is an excellent investment and will go a long way to ensuring your comfort in what may sometimes be adverse conditions. Denise wears a Rukka jacket and pants, with a zip-in / zip-out padded liner for extra warmth and protection. Mike prefers the range from Dririder, an Australian provider of riding gear from 35 years. A couple of other products we've used for many years and are happy to endorse are the Kevlar-lined jeans and clothing Draggin Jeans in Melbourne (www.dragginjeans.com.au) and those Velcro alternative to 'occy' straps from Andy Strapz (www.andystrapz.com).





And while we're giving plugs, we'd like to suggest you consider a Rider Improvement course, regardless of your experience or perceived ability on a motorcycle, to brush up on your skills prior to joining an international riding safari. We've teamed up with motoDNA as our Adventure Training partner. An Australian outfit boasting an talented array of hugely impressive instructors (Mark McVeigh, Kevin Magee, Chris Vermeulen, Garry McCoy, Peter Goddard...) they have the skills and the syllabus to get the most out of your riding ability, which will give you the weapons you need to survive and enjoy your next ride,

whether it be the daily commute or an international adventure with **World On Wheels**. They offer track training, road training, off-road courses, bush bashing, sand and water techniques, you name it, in venues up and down Australia's east coast.

If you're in the Sydney vicinity and you think you could benefit from some off-road instruction, there's also a guy called David Smith who's toured with us and has recently set up a very personalised training program. He's been a qualified instructor for 20 years or so, and he rides with you in the paddock and bush trails and gives real-time coaching via helmet-to-helmet Bluetooth (provided). He gets right in your ear, so to speak. Check out his Facebook page, www.facebook.com/HandmadebyDavid.



#### Other important information you should note

India is not everyone's 'cup of tea'. It can be an extreme assault on the senses. In order to fully appreciate India's true beauty you will need the ability to leave behind western values and to turn a blind eye to some of the harsher aspects of life in a developing nation. If you can do so, you will find it truly a rewarding experience.

India can be quite trying in other ways also. The riding conditions are sometimes arduous and whilst 300k or so would *appear* to be quite an easy day's ride, this is not always so. Some days will require us to be on the road early to beat the morning traffic, and the days can be long and hot. It is obviously expected that you are able to handle a motorbike competently and are fit and strong enough to cope with some demanding conditions. An important part of this is your mental approach and attitude. If you are the type of person who prefers lounging by the poolside with a dry martini, then perhaps this motorcycle safari is not for you. Try Club Med instead! You will not find the word 'holiday' used anywhere in our documentation other than in this sentence.

Be prepared to rough it a bit, be prepared to accept delays and hastily changed plans, be prepared to be tolerant of India's oft-bungling bureaucracy and ineptitude. Be flexible and, above all, bring your sense of humour. But let's not pull any punches here. A tour such as this is potentially a dangerous undertaking; it's inherent in the very nature of the trip. You'll be on an unfamiliar bike, on unfamiliar roads in unfamiliar traffic conditions. It is important for you to recognize this and accept ultimate responsibility, firstly for joining and secondly for riding in a circumspect manner for the duration of the tour. Please read and acknowledge Paragraphs 15 and 16 of our Terms and Conditions! (End of sermon)

#### The Royal Enfield Bullet

Originally manufactured by The Royal Enfield Motorcycle Co of Redditch, Worcestershire, production ceased in Great Britain due to financial difficulties in the mid-1950s. The Indian subsidiary acquired the production line, transferred operations to Madras and simply continued to build Enfield Bullets without bothering to change any original design specifications. To this day they continue to churn out brand new, 60 year old bikes!



The Enfield is a true classic, with the single cylinder 500cc engine producing a deep, throaty rumble and powerful torque that have prompted some to christen it the two-wheeled tractor. High speed is not what the Enfield is about, it's about aesthetics, comfort and style. Riding an Enfield gives a pure, unadulterated pleasure particularly through the stunning scenery where you're going. It is the touring perfect bike for this part of the world, taking the rough Indian roads easily in its stride.



### **Detailed Daily Itinerary**

**Day 1**. Your journey to the rugged Rajasthani deserts of India begins when you arrive in the nation's capital, New Delhi. From your first glance at this sprawling metropolis you will immediately begin to appreciate that India is a land of contrasts, a land of diversity and variation unparalleled anywhere else in the world. Squalid slums sit incongruously alongside amazing modern buildings of stunning beauty, like the lotus-flower shaped Ba'hai temple. Five star hotels are served by 1950's-vintage taxi cabs with engines the same size as their batteries. Nine million people somehow manage to eke out an existence in this city whose levels of activity continue to escalate at an apparently unsustainable pace. At times confusing, at times challenging and at all times chaotic, Delhi is never still, never restful, never boring.

You will be met at the airport by our representative, to minimise what can sometimes be a testing introduction to the country. You will have already run the gauntlet of India's notorious bureaucracy at the Customs and Immigration counters and as you leave the main Arrivals Hall you are likely to be besieged with offers of good hotels, cheap taxis, special deals and all manner of improbable things. Ignore them all and locate our guide holding the *World On Wheels* paging board. He will ensure your safe and rapid transfer to the hotel, giving a short briefing *en route* on preparations for your trip and the program for the next couple of days. If you are arriving outside our suggested group arrival flights, we will have advised the location of your hotel and also how to locate and deal with the pre-paid government taxis.

**Day 2** and at the hotel we'll introduce you to the vagaries of your Enfield motorcycle. After a leisurely breakfast, the first half-hour or so is spent getting to know the bikes and having a practice ride in the (relative) safety of the hotel carpark. We set a leisurely pace and enjoy the burble of the bikes as we take National Highway 8 southwest from the capital and soon enter Rajasthan. We stay on the highway all the way until we peel off to spend the afternoon and night at Neemrana Fort Palace with its stunning garden setting and facilities, which include a swimming pool for the hardy (it's still winter!) Covering some 25 acres of land and built in 1464, it is the oldest heritage resort in all of India.

**Day 3** The state emblem of Rajasthan is the peacock and many can be spotted roaming freely in the rural areas we traverse today on our way to the Shekhawati region, famous for its beautiful *havelis*, those centuries-old mansions of wealthy merchants and noblemen. The intricate frescoes and murals which decorate many of the rooms in these buildings, depict the history of the area. Our stop for the night is a mediaeval castle, the rather dilapidated but charming Narayan Niwas Castle Hotel, near the regional capital of Jhunjhunu where the British based their famed Shekhawati Brigade.

**Day 4** sees us heading directly west through arid wastelands, approaching the Great Thar Desert, which constitutes much of Rajasthan. Our destination today is Bikaner, a town of half a million, once an important staging post on the great caravan trading routes of the middle ages. The old city, founded in 1488, is full of historic architectural masterpieces, and we'll spend some time this afternoon exploring one such example, the fort (with museum), the original palace.

**Day 5** will take us through progressively sparser vegetation and population, to the remote outpost of Phalodi. An obscure little spot mostly ignored by tourists and travel companies, it features a small lake nearby which offers a safe haven for thousands of migrating Siberian crane at this time of the year. If we're careful we can sneak up on them and bag a couple for lunch.

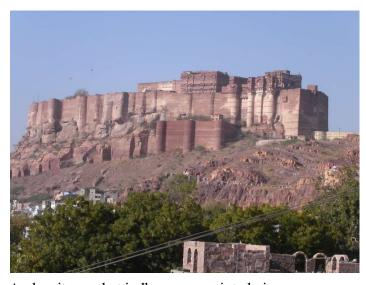
**Day 6** Only joking, of course. They're far too tough to eat. Day 6 brings us right into the heart of the desert. As we approach the western extremities of India near the border with Pakistan, an amazing spectacle rises from the floor of the Great Thar Desert. This is Jaisalmer, a stunning fortress city looking like something straight out of *Arabian Nights* or *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. With its incredible array of bastions,



battlements and ramparts, the colour of this sandstone fort at sunset has led to Jaisalmer becoming known as the Golden City.

Day 7 is a rest day spent exploring Jaisalmer, perhaps with an afternoon camel safari to view the sunset from the heights of the surrounding sand dunes. In earlier days it truly was a golden city, a place of great opulence on the caravan trading routes between India and central Asia. In Jaisalmer, much of the population still live within the walls of the Old City and fortress, but in recent and more peaceful times, the buildings have sprawled out into the desert all around. A feature of Jaisalmer is the abundance of splendid *havelis*, where intricate carvings and works of art are commonplace and visitors are welcome to roam freely throughout.





And so it was that jodhpurs came into being.

Day 8 is our longest day in terms of kilometres traveled, but the 300k to the Blue City of Jodhpur is mainly on good sealed highway without too many traffic hassles. Look out for the wildlife that abounds in this seemingly barren desert. Black buck, blue bull, gazelle, camel and various species of birds can all be seen roaming in the scrub along the highway. Jodhpur is famed for many things, not the least of which are the riding breeches of the same name. The Maharaja of Jodhpur found it quite impossible to play polo with the British in his long, flowing regal robes, so he summoned the court tailor and instructed that he design a pair of tight trousers which could be tucked into long boots but also allowed room for bending at the hip.

**Day 9** is spent sightseeing and getting to know Jodhpur. Although not appearing blue from ground level, the view over the town from the huge fortress of Meherangarh Fort is a true spectacle as all the blue-washed Brahmin houses shimmer in the sunlight. Not only is blue an auspicious colour for Brahmins, but apparently, it also repels mosquitoes. (If you don't get bitten wearing your blue **World On Wheels** shirt, you'll know this is true). The fort was one of the film locations for the Disney re-make of Rudyard Kipling's splendid *Jungle Book* and more recently for the film *Taj*, the story behind the construction of the world's greatest monument to love.

**Day 10** has us leaving relatively early to ride the 265kms to Mt. Abu. The British coined the term 'hill stations' to refer to several elevated military enclaves. Much cooler than Delhi and other low-lying centers, they were obviously a popular posting and much sought after. Although no longer militarily oriented, their popularity continues today, and Mt. Abu is virtually the only town in Rajasthan which can boast an altitude measured in quadruple digits, at 1200 metres.

**Day 11** We can spend the morning strolling around the picturesque lake, or at nearby Dilwara can be found a compound of magnificent Jain temples carved in white marble. Possibly the finest example of such temples



anywhere in India, or for that matter the world, the intricacy of the carving is nothing short of superb. In the afternoon we head off for the short ride to Udaipur, many would say our most romantic destination on the tour.



Day 12 is a rest day. As every second local will tell you, a scene of James Bond's Octopussy was filmed here, as were several segments of the 13-espisode TV drama, Jewel in the Crown. The Lake Palace, like so many other palaces in Rajasthan, has now been converted into a luxury hotel. A solarpowered launch is available for leisure trips, and the sunset over the lake with its stunning white palace provides great opportunities. Other places worth visiting are the markets, the City Palace complex (with its rare collection of 18th century Osler's crystal), or maybe a ride to the Monsoon Palace, 20mins out of town.

Day 13 sees us heading out of Udaipur on Highway 8 once more to Pushkar, home to the annual, monthlong, world-famous Pushkar Camel Fair. Each November the town is invaded by thousands of camels, horses, cattle and oxen which are bought and sold with the enthusiasm and gusto that only an Indian crowd of around 200,000 traders can muster. While being a most colourful and flamboyant festival, it can also be chokingly crowded and an absolute haven for tourist rip-offs! Be on your guard.

**Day 14** But at other times of the year Pushkar is a peaceful and picturesque little town, with its beautiful lake a pilgrimage destination for devout Hindus who come to bathe in its waters. If we rise early we can catch the dawn bathing and prayer rituals ('puja') and watch the town come to life. For those with the energy and inclination, there's a one-hour trek up to the *Savitri Temple* perched on a hilltop overlooking the lake; it's a lovely walk and the view is magnificent. So we're told. Then we saddle up again and head off in the afternoon to the Rajasthan state capital, Jaipur.

Day 15 Jaipur is known as the Pink City. Pink is the traditional Rajput colour of hospitality and many of the homes in the Old City are this colour. The *Hawa Mahal* (Palace of the Winds), in the centre of town is a fine example of Rajput craftsmanship. It was built 200 years ago to allow the ladies of the court to observe everyday life and parades in the streets below, without themselves being scrutinised by any probing eyes.

At nearby Amber Fort in the afternoon we take a leisurely elephant ride up to the palace compound, another splendid example of middle-ages fortifications and defences.



Day 16 We hit the road again and head north to Bharatpur Bird Sanctuary. Even for non-birdlovers, this place is quite special and a haven of peace, as no motorised vehicles are allowed in the park. Cycle rickshaws and



their highly knowledgeable riders/guides can be hired at the entrance. Some 415 bird species have been identified here, migrating from as far away as Siberia in huge, apparently unsustainable numbers. Upwards of 3000 painted storks have been counted in one square kilometre of marshland. Recent feathered visitors include the rare Scopes Owl and the huge Dusky Eagle Owl. We'll make an early morning visit tomorrow through the park, the best time to appreciate the wildlife therein.

**Day 17** is when we leave Rajasthan behind and cross the state border (although you won't notice it) into Uttar Pradesh. After our early morning visit to the Bird Sanctuary we shall visit the incredible deserted city of Fatehpur Sikri, once the capital of the Moghul Empire for a brief period before being completely abandoned, due to a total lack of foresight in obtaining a reliable water source! Then we proceed to Agra in time for a sunset visit to that most famous of all Indian monuments, the Taj Mahal. This mausoleum is without doubt the world's greatest symbol of love, constructed between 1631 and 1653 by Emperor Shah Jahan as an eternal tribute to his beloved wife Mumtaz who had died in 1629 perhaps not surprisingly, giving birth to their 14th child in 17 years.

Day 18 and those who wish can make a second visit to the Taj Mahal at sunrise, to see the amazing colour changes on the brilliant white marble. We then head off on the last leg of our Safari to cover the 200km between Agra and Delhi, arriving late in the afternoon. The highway is very good, but there are a couple of chaotic towns to negotiate. On arrival at our hotel, your tour leader has the unenviable task of wresting the bike keys from you so the Enfields can be returned to their rightful owner!

Day 19 is a final day at leisure doing last-minute sightseeing and shopping, or those who want can make the pilgrimage to our bike supplier in Karol Bagh, an entire suburb dedicated to motorized transport of the two-wheeled variety. Then we'll have an early farewell dinner at one of the better eateries in Connaught Place before we transfer you to the airport for the evening departure to Singapore. It's been a lot of fun, but now it's home sweet home. Go tell all your friends!

~~~~~~~~~~

Further trip notes, including a list of essential clothing and equipment to take, health considerations, visa formalities, etc, will be sent upon receipt of a completed Booking Form and deposit. Contact our office any time for further information on (02) 9970 6370 or email adventure@worldonwheels.tours

