OPTIONAL DELHI & AGRA POSTLUDE
January 14 – 17, 2024

Monday, January 15  DELHI
Enjoy a privately guided morning visit to the National Museum, housing an impressive collection of artifacts from India and around the world. With more than 210,000 art objects spanning 5,000 years of Indian craftsmanship, the museum exhibits diverse sculptures, paintings, manuscripts, coins, jewelry, textiles, precious manuscripts, temple hangings, brocaded saris, painted pottery, and more. With context provided by your expert guide, discover its world-famous pieces like the 4,000-year-old “Dancing Girl,” the Chola bronze sculpture “Nataraja,” and the Buddha Relics, consisting of 20 bone fragments of the Lord Buddha, some of Buddhism’s most venerated objects.

After lunch, visit a beautiful UNESCO World Heritage Site, Qutub Minar, a 237-foot-tall, red-sandstone tower of victory and the world’s tallest brick minaret. Built between 1199 and 1503, it is a towering masterpiece of Indo-Islamic architecture, boasting intricate carvings, inscriptions, and five stories with projecting balconies, inspiring numerous minarets and towers.

Later, visit Gandhi Smriti, a museum on the life of Mahatma Gandhi, occupying the house where Gandhi spent his final 144 days and was assassinated in 1948. Peruse its collection of artifacts, including photographs, paintings, sculptures, and Gandhi’s personal belongings. Additionally, the Eternal Gandhi Multimedia Museum is housed within the building, providing a comprehensive tribute to Gandhi’s life and legacy. Dinner is at leisure this evening.

B,L

Humayun’s Tomb, Delhi, photo by Dmitry Rukhlenko

Qutub Minar, Delhi

ITINERARY

Sunday, January 14  BANGALORE, INDIA / DELHI
Take a flight from Bangalore to Delhi. Upon arrival, transfer to the Claridges Hotel for two nights. In the afternoon, begin your exploration of Old Delhi with a drive past India Gate, an arch of triumph that bears the names of 85,000 Indian Army soldiers who died in World War I.

Then join an expert behind the scenes at Humayun’s Tomb, India’s first garden-tomb and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built in 1570, it serves as the resting place for Humayun, the second Mughal emperor, and influenced the design of the Taj Mahal, which you will see later. Blending Persian and Mughal elements—it was commissioned by Humayun’s Persian-born widow, Haji Begum—Humayun’s Tomb exhibits a magnificent double-domed structure with intricate inlays of white marble and red sandstone. Its symmetrical gardens house the tombs of Humayun’s descendants and followers, and the complex includes other notable Mughal garden-tombs. Gather for dinner at the hotel this evening.

B,D

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CST 2059789-40
Tuesday, January 16   DELHI / AGRA

This morning, transfer to Agra, once the capital of the Mughal Empire. Arrive at your five-star hotel in time for lunch. In the afternoon, visit Agra Fort, one of the Mughal Empire’s most important strongholds. Constructed during Akbar’s reign in 1573 and renovated by Shah Jahan, the fort features a distinctive blend of red sandstone and marble. With its imposing double battlemented walls, semicircular shape, and four grand gates, including the majestic Delhi Gate, the fort served as the primary residence for Mughal emperors until 1638. Over the years, it witnessed battles and ultimately fell under the control of the British East India Company in 1803.

At sunset, visit the iconic 17th-century Taj Mahal, often called “the world’s greatest monument to love” and “a poem in stone.” On this private experience away from the usual daytime crowds, enjoy this spectacular treasure transformed in the vibrant red glow of the setting sun (weather permitting).

Shah Jahan commissioned the Taj Mahal in memory of his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal. Completed in 1653, this structure is renowned for its perfectly symmetrical design, harmonious blend of solid and void spaces, arches, domes, captivating light and shadow effects, and meticulous use of materials like red sandstone, marble, and inlaid precious stones.

Its unique garden layout features intersecting canals and a design in homage to India’s holy rivers. The interior houses monuments and tombs adorned with intricate carvings and calligraphy.

Wednesday, January 17   AGRA / DELHI / RETURN

After checking out of the hotel, transfer by motor coach from Agra to the Delhi airport for your flights back home.

ACCOMMODATIONS

The Claridges New Delhi

Opened in 1955 as India’s first five-star hotel after achieving independence, the Claridges beckons discerning travelers seeking a harmonious fusion of timeless elegance and modern opulence. Situated in the prestigious Lutyens’ Delhi, this historic landmark boasts luxurious rooms and suites and a collection of acclaimed dining venues. Embracing classic architecture and set against sprawling lawns, the Claridges epitomizes refined charm, creating an unforgettable experience for guests.

Tajview, Agra-IHCL SeleQtions

This five-star hotel houses 100 rooms, most of which offer a view of the iconic Taj Mahal, which is less than two miles away. Nestled in six acres of meticulously landscaped gardens, the Tajview provides an exquisite experience with smart rooms and top-notch amenities. Enjoy impeccable service and hospitality, ensuring a carefree stay.

POSTLUDE RATE

$2,599 per person, double rate
$2,999 single rate

Postlude Rate Includes:

- Two nights accommodations at the Claridges Hotel New Delhi; one night accommodations at the Tajview, Agra-IHCL SeleQtions; one-way, economy-class flight (Bangalore-Delhi); meals as per itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner); sightseeing as per itinerary.

NOTE: The optional postlude will be confirmed when it reaches a minimum of six total participants. The Brandeis faculty leader’s participation is in the main program only; the postlude will include local guides and experts.

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