

# THE SOCIETY FOR ASIAN ART PRESENTS

## Sacred Landscapes of India: Hills, Rivers, and Desert

SEPTEMBER 22 – OCTOBER 8, 2017



Varanasi Ghats: Varanasi is among the most continuously lived cities in the world for over 2000 years.

India's awe-inspiring landscapes encompass the Himalayas, the River Ganga and the Thar Desert, while its history includes some of the world's earliest cities and the emergence of four of today's great world religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. Each has inspired the creation of soul-enriching rituals and astounding arts that range from buildings and painting to epic literature and dance-drama.

Join Louise Nicholson, who has studied and visited India for 40 years, on an odyssey through northern India to see and take part in these living traditions, to experience renowned sites that are used as much today as when they were built, and to meet with local specialists.

### Tour Highlights

#### CHANDIGARH – 1 night

##### *Vivanta by Taj hotel*

- ◆ Explore Le Corbusier's only 'Ideal City' to have been built.
- ◆ Visit Nek Chand's Rock Garden.

#### SHIMLA – 2 nights

##### *Oberoi Cecil hotel*

- ◆ Scenic drive up the Lower Himalayas to Shimla.
- ◆ Enjoy the British summer capital, 'Queen of Hill Stations' – its Mall, Christ Church and Viceregal Lodge.

#### DHARAMSHALA – 2 nights

##### *Chonor House hotel*

- ◆ Our drive imitates the retreats of spiritual seekers for millennia.
- ◆ Visit McLeodgunj, the seat of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and Norbulingka Institute.
- ◆ Join monks in their meditations.

#### AMRITSAR – 1 night

##### *Vivanta by Taj*

- ◆ Descend the hills onto the Punjab plains.
- ◆ Find contemplation at Jallianwala Bagh.
- ◆ Visit the Golden Temple, Sikhs' most holy shrine.
- ◆ Join the evening ceremony for the holy Guru Granth Sahib.

#### VARANASI – 3 nights

##### *Jukaso Ganges hotel*

- ◆ See river life from our center-city bankside hotel and join pilgrims performing rituals by and in the sacred Ganga. Take part in the finale of the great Dussehra festival.
- ◆ Observe live Ram Lila performances.



Intricately carved stone pillars, Jain Temple, Ranakpur

- ◆ Visit Sarnath where the Buddha gave his first sermon.
- ◆ See the Banarasi brocade being woven.

#### UDAIPUR – 2 nights

##### *Amet Haveli hotel*

- ◆ Stay in a historic lake-side mansion.
- ◆ Visit the monumental City Palace.
- ◆ Enjoy a sunset boat ride on Lake Pichola.
- ◆ Stroll the colourful bazaars, see the great textiles of Western India.
- ◆ Visit Nathdwara's Shri Nathji (Krishna) shrine.

#### JODHPUR – 2 nights

##### *Balsamand Lake Palace hotel*

- ◆ Be mesmerized by Ranakpur's Jain temple.
- ◆ Visit cliff-top Mehrangarh Fort and its museums of paintings and textiles.
- ◆ Visit Rao Jodha Desert Park.
- ◆ Roam the bazaars of the walled city, see the Jodhpuri lac bangles being made.

#### NAGAUUR – 1 night

##### *Ranvas hotel*

- ◆ Enjoy the conserved palaces and water gardens of walled Nagaur Fort.
- ◆ Stay in the former queens' apartments.
- ◆ Join Sufis at a saint's Dargah.

#### DELHI – 2 nights

##### *The Imperial hotel*

- ◆ Explore Shah Jehan's Old Delhi and Edwin Lutyens's masterpiece garden-city, New Delhi.
- ◆ Enjoy quality shopping from fashion to jewelry.
- ◆ Visit the National and Modern Art museums.
- ◆ We hope to visit the Kiran Nadar and the Devi contemporary art foundations.

#### DIFFICULTY LEVEL and TRAVEL INSURANCE:

*There will be walking on uneven surfaces, stair climbing, and extended periods of standing. The trip is not suitable for those with mobility problems.*

SAA sells CSA Travel Protection Insurance 800.348.9505 [www.csatravelprotection.com](http://www.csatravelprotection.com), Producer code: 20100719. You can buy trip insurance which will repay all non-refundable costs for cancelling this trip for ANY reason. This must be purchased at the time of your initial deposit.

We travel through the cradle of four of the world's major philosophies. This is where the Vedas evolved, the ancient texts for what we now call Hinduism, and where the Buddha lived and first announced his enlightenment. It is where Mahavira's spiritual knowledge made him the first 'jina', or conqueror, and his followers Jains. It is where Guru Gobind Singh said henceforth Sikh teaching would rest in a book whose most sacred copy would be kept in the Golden Temple at Amritsar. So, our journey is as much about the people and their living spiritual sites and their cultures as it is about the cities, monuments and arts they created.

We begin in Chandigarh where the Himalayan foothills are our backdrop. We see how newly independent India wanted a cutting-edge capital for Haryana and Punjab states to share, and how an untrained artist, Nek Chand, has recently made his own contribution to it. Then we spend four days in the great Himalaya Mountains' forested hills. We enjoy breath-taking scenic drives and touch an altitude of 4,800 feet. Our two stops could not be more of a contrast: first, the surprisingly modest British-style hill town of Shimla, summer capital for a foreign government administering a quarter of the world's population; then, Dharamshala, headquarters of the exiled Dalai Lama, where we see the spiritual strength of his monks and, at Norbulingka Institute, learn about the safe-keeping of knowledge in the hills and its dissemination through monasteries to the world.

Back down on the plains, we visit two holy cities. At Amritsar, we join Sikh pilgrims at their sublimely serene Golden Temple, and we visit the moving memorial at Jallianwala Bagh, scene of the British massacre of nonviolent protesters. Varanasi is utterly different. Here, throngs of

pilgrims fill the lanes and riverside to offer their devotions to Shiva, who founded the city, and take a dip in the holy waters. Additionally, we have planned our trip so we can join the festivities for the Dussehra festival finale, marking Rama's triumph over his adversary Ravana to save his beloved Sita - just as we saw at the Asian Art Museum's 'The Rama Epic' exhibition.

Crossing to western India, it is time to indulge in some fairytale relaxation. Our three stops in Rajasthan encapsulate the finest of the Rajput kingdoms: Udaipur, uncompromising capital of Mewar kingdom; Jodhpur, desert capital of Marwar; and Nagaur, whose water-gardens and painted palaces live once again thanks to careful conservation - we shall see Jodhpur paintings (and the places they depict) that were in the 'Garden & Cosmos' and 'Yoga' shows that toured the US.

In this land of such a complex history it is fitting we end in Delhi, the strategic capital for Hindu kings, Muslim sultans, the British and now independent India whose 1.25 billion population have made it the world's third fastest-growing economy.

## Sacred Landscapes of India: Hills, Rivers and Desert

**\$5,349 per person sharing a room**

**Single Room Supplement \$1,217**

### **The Tour Cost includes:**

- Louise Nicholson as Tour director and resource
- Services of Quo Vadis travel agent and local associates
- 16 nights at hotels listed, based on double occupancy
- Breakfast and lunch daily; dinner in Shimla, Dharamshala, Amritsar, Nagaur
- Soft drinks and bottled water included with meals, and bottled water in local transit
- Sightseeing, entrance and camera fees
- International airport transfers per person
- Delhi-Chandigarh air-conditioned chair car rail fare
- Economy class air fares: Amritsar-Varanasi-Udaipur; Jodhpur-Delhi
- Private boat on the Ganga, sunrise and sunset, Varanasi; private boat on Lake Pichola, Udaipur
- Transportation by Toyota Innova, Chandigarh-Amritsar & Delhi; bus, Varanasi & Udaipur-Nagaur
- Portage
- All applicable taxes
- Tour-related gratuities to guides, drivers, waiters and porters

### **Not Included:**

- International airfare to and from India
- Passport and visa fees for India
- Personal insurance for health, baggage and trip cancellation
- Excess luggage charges, laundry charges, and communication (phone, fax, internet) charges
- Items of a purely personal nature and any items not listed
- A suggested \$400 donation to the Society for Asian Art

## RESERVATION FORM: Sacred Landscapes of India: Hills, Rivers and Desert

I would like to reserve \_\_\_\_\_ space(s) for SACRED LANDSCAPES OF INDIA: HILLS, RIVERS, AND DESERT, 2017

Enclosed is a deposit of \$500 per person, a total of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. Please make checks payable to LOUISE NICHOLSON  
(Your deposit is refundable anytime prior to June 16, 2017, less a \$250 per person administration fee)

**Room Arrangements:** ☐ Single Supplement ☐ Double Occupancy, I will be sharing a room with \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ I would prefer a roommate, but will pay the single supplement if one is not available.

### **Personal Information** (please write clearly)

Name (participant 1) \_\_\_\_\_

Name (participant 2) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (1) Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Land line \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (2) Cell \_\_\_\_\_ Land line \_\_\_\_\_

Email (1) \_\_\_\_\_

Email (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your Reservation Form and deposit check payable to Louise Nicholson to: Society for Asian Art, 200 Larkin Street, San Francisco, CA 94102.

*Applications will be accepted by mail only, enrollment priority will be based on the postmark date, and confirmed by email.*

*A declaration & waiver form and a travel insurance application will be mailed to you upon receipt of your deposit.*

CST: 2046776-13.