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## GEEO ITINERARY

India 7/9/2024

### **Day 1: Delhi Arrive in Delhi at any time. Meet your group for a welcome meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m.**

Arrive in Delhi at any time. Due to the potential for flight delays or cancellations, we recommend that you plan to arrive in Delhi at least a day in advance. This will also give you time to adjust to the time difference and overcome any jet lag. We can book extra hotel nights for you in Delhi before and/or after the trip. For no extra cost, you will be picked up at the airport by Women With Wheels, a non-profit organization that trains Indian women from underprivileged backgrounds to get their professional chauffeur's licenses. Our tour operator employs all-female graduates to provide our travelers with safe and reliable transportation. We are proud to use our arrival transfers as a means of supporting local Indian women. Please note: If you are coming to Delhi before our program begins and will be staying at a different hotel than the one your tour is using in Delhi, we will not be able to provide you with this complimentary transfer service. Please note that hotel check-in usually opens around **2:00-3:00 p.m.**, so if your flight arrives early in the morning, you may wish to book a pre-trip hotel night so that you can rest when you arrive. There are no planned activities until an intro meeting around 6:00 or 7:00 p.m., usually in the hotel lobby. Check for a sign or ask at the reception desk about the exact time and location of the group meeting. Please make every effort to arrive in time for this meeting. If you are delayed and will arrive late, please inform us. Your tour leader will then leave you a message at the front desk informing you of where and when to meet up tomorrow. After the meeting, you might choose to get dinner at a nearby restaurant with your traveling companions and your tour leader to further get to know one another. New Delhi, the capital of India, is one of the most historic capitals in the world, and three of its monuments – the Qutab Minar, the Red Fort, and Humayun's Tomb – have been declared World Heritage Sites. It offers a multitude of interesting places and attractions to the visitor, so much so that it becomes difficult to decide where to begin exploring the city. We cover some of the city's highlights on the second day of this trip, but we are just scratching the surface of Delhi during this trip. You might consider arriving early if you would like to see more. Beware, however, Delhi is chaotic and intimidating for seasoned and unseasoned travelers alike. In Old Delhi, there are attractions like mosques, forts, markets, and other monuments depicting India's Muslim history. New Delhi, on the other hand, is a modern city designed by Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker. Tree covered wide streets with many roundabouts are notable in New Delhi. Home to many government buildings and embassies, as well as Rashtrapati Bhawan, the one-time imperial residence of the British viceroys, and the India Gate, a memorial raised in honor of the Indian soldiers martyred during the Third Anglo-Afghan War. Further out in the southern suburbs you will discover more history, including: Humayun's Tomb, said to be the forerunner of the Taj Mahal in Agra; the Purana Quila, built by Humayun, with later-day modifications by Sher Shah Suri; Qutab Minar, built by Qutb-ud-din Aybak of the Slave Dynasty; and the incredible lotus-shaped Bahá'í House of Worship. There are a number of outstanding museums worth visiting including the Craft Museum, the National Gallery of Modern Art, Birla House (also known as "Gandhi Smriti"), and the Indira Gandhi Memorial Museum. Please note: Many museums are closed on Monday. If you are looking to try a range of Indian cuisines, consider visiting the delightful food stalls at Dilli Haat, where the cuisine of different states is available for purchase. Set amidst a spacious crafts bazaar, the cafes of Dilli Haat are a very pleasant place to enjoy food and take in the local culture.

### **Day 2: Delhi City tour of Delhi, including the Raj Ghat Gandhi Memorial, National Crafts Museum, and Akshardham Temple. (Itinerary may vary due to traffic and opening hours.)**

Today, we get to see the sights of Delhi on a guided tour. We will visit the Raj Ghat Gandhi Memorial, the National Crafts Museum, and the Akshardham Temple. Please note: Raj Ghat is occasionally closed to the public for official ceremonies. In your free time, opt to visit Humayan's Tomb, a mausoleum built in 1572 that served as a model for the Taj Mahal, or the Red Fort, which served as the main residence of the emperors of the Mughal dynasty for nearly 200 years. Please keep in mind that Delhi traffic is unpredictable, so plans may need to be adjusted.

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**Day 3: Delhi/Āgra Enjoy another tour of more of Delhi in the morning, including visits to the India Gate, the Chandani Chowk area, Jama Masjid Mosque, and the Qutab Minar Complex. Later, travel to Āgra, the location of the Taj Mahal.**

See more of Delhi today with your tour leader. Stops will include India Gate and the surroundings, the Chandani Chowk area, Jama Masjid Mosque, and the Qutab Minar Complex. Please note: Qutab Minar's entrance fee isn't included. Participants will pay 250 INR locally (roughly \$5 USD). Later, travel to the city of Āgra, the site of India's most famous landmark, the Taj Mahal. Approximate travel time: 3-4 hrs by private vehicle

**Day 4: Āgra Set eyes on the sparkling Taj Mahal at sunrise. In the afternoon, visit the I'timad-ud-Daulah (Baby Taj) and the Agra Fort.**

The Taj Mahal was constructed between 1631 and 1654 by a workforce of 22,000 laborers. It was built by the Muslim Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as a mausoleum for his favorite wife, Arjumand Bano Begum, better known as Mumtaz Mahal. Mumtaz had already borne the emperor 14 children when she died in childbirth, and it is the romantic origin of the Taj as much as its architectural splendor that has led to its fame worldwide. Actually an integrated complex of many structures, the Taj Mahal is considered the finest example of Mughal architecture, itself a combination of Islamic, Hindu, Persian, and Turkish elements. In the afternoon, visit the I'timad-ud-Daulah (Baby Taj) mausoleum that looks like a jewel box, built before the Taj Mahal by Queen Nur Jahan for her father. Marvel at the structure's intricate details; it was the first Mughal building faced with white marble and where "pietra dura" (precious stones inlaid into marble) was first used. Next, enjoy a visit to the impressive Mughal Agra Fort made of red sandstone and white marble.

**Day 5: Āgra/Dhula Village Travel to Dhula Village, stopping en route at Fatehpur Sikri, the former capital of the Mughal Empire, and the Chand Baori stepwell in Abhaneri. Tonight's accommodation is in spacious and comfortable tents outfitted with beds, lamps, and simple en suite bathrooms.**

Depart Āgra and stop at Fatehpur Sikri, the now-deserted former capital of the Mughal Empire and a stunningly-preserved UNESCO World Heritage Site. Explore the magnificent red sandstone fort city and keep an eye out for elements of different religions, as King Akbar built three palaces for each of his favorite wives—a Hindu, a Muslim, and a Christian—in the city. Next, visit a stepwell in Abhaneri and marvel at this uniquely Indian water harvesting system. Walk around the amazing Chand Baori, a tenth century water tank that's an impressive 20 ft deep. Learn about ancient Indian environmentalism; a "baori" is a unique Indian invention for harvesting rainwater. In the afternoon, travel to Dhula Village and get a closer look at rural life in Rajasthan. At Dhula Village, you will have the opportunity to learn about local life. Meet shepherds and their flocks, play a fun game of cricket, cycle through hamlets, have tea with villagers at the local temple, trek in the hillocks, or just relax in the peaceful atmosphere. Tonight, relax by the fire and take in the starry night sky before settling into your cozy tent. Approximate travel time: 4 hrs by private vehicle

**Day 6: Āgra/Jaipur Continue to the "Pink City." Explore this beautiful city and visit the Palace of the Winds.**

Continue to Jaipur, known as the "Pink City." Jaipur was first painted terracotta pink by Maharajah Sawai Ram Singh in 1853, to celebrate the visit of Prince Albert. Built according to Hindu architectural principles, the city utilizes a unique organization unlike anywhere else in India. Enjoy an orientation of the Pink City by cycle-rickshaw. Later, visit the Palace of the Winds and wander the bustling streets. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs by private vehicle, 1 hr tour by cycle-rickshaw

**Day 7: Jaipur Marvel at the Amber Fort and Hawa Mahal. Opt to go on a cycle tour, visit a nearby village, or see the Jantar Mantar observatory.**

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This morning, we visit the Amber Fort, which clings to the surrounding hills, marveling at its beautiful Hindu and Muslim architecture. We then travel back to Jaipur to visit the City Palace and see the Hawa Mahal, or the "Palace of the Winds." This famous building is in fact only an elaborately carved facade built to enable the purdah ladies in the zenana to watch the goings-on in the street below without being seen. There are so many things to do in Jaipur, and you will have some free time to choose what is most of interest to you. You may want to explore by bicycle, which will introduce you to sights, sounds, and smells that a vehicle just can't match. Marvel at the architectural wonders as you enter the walled part of the city and stop at the City Palace to visit the Govind Dev temple. Wander through the historical spices and sweets market, stopping for tea and a tasty snack of pakoras before heading towards the majestic Albert Hall Museum where the cycle tour ends. You might instead prefer to head out to the nearby village of Sanganer to see blue pottery, handmade paper, or hand-block printing. Or you may wish to discover more of the wisdom and history of the Mughals by wandering around the Jantar Mantar, an observatory built in the 1700s. Jaipur is one of the most important centers in the world for gems, jewelry, and small diamonds. It is also a great place to buy block-printed textiles, blue pottery, and handmade paper. There are many shops selling these items and some wonderful markets in the Old City selling more traditional items such as mojari, Rajasthani slippers. If buying gems or jewelry, please take caution as there have been several instances of scams where fake jewelry has been passed off as real.

**Day 8: Jaipur/Delhi Opt for a morning hot air balloon ride over Jaipur, and then return to Delhi for free time.**

If you aren't afraid of heights, opt for a morning hot air balloon ride over Jaipur. Admire the Pink City from above by pre-booking the morning Jaipur Balloon Ride when booking your tour. Return to Delhi in the afternoon and enjoy free time to explore more of the bustling city. Approximate travel time: 6 hrs by private vehicle

**Day 9: Depart Delhi Depart Delhi at any time.**

There are no planned activities today, so you may depart Delhi at any time. If you wish to extend your stay in Delhi, consider booking post-tour accommodation with us. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is usually mid-morning, but luggage storage services are available at the reception desk. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEEO programs in the same school year and receive a discount! GEEO will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs per year). If you would like to extend your time abroad but don't see another GEEO program that interests you, let us know. We can work with you to find a trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Their tours are open to the general public and not designed specifically for educators, but we can still offer you and your travel companions a discounted educator price on any additional tours that you book.