

Colours of India - Gujarat Textiles

Explore India at its most flamboyant in the company of renowned textile artist, Sue Lawty.



Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Tour
Duration	16 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	5 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 5
Trip Leader	Ms Susan Lawty
Land only	Joining in Ahmedabad, India

Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available



tel: +44 (0)1453 844400 fax: +44 (0)1453 844422 info@mountainkingdoms.com www.mountainkingdoms.com

Mountain Kingdoms Ltd, 20 Long Street, Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire GL12 7BT UK
Managing Director: Steven Berry. Registered in England No. 2118433. VAT No. 496 6511 08

Departures

Group departures

2024 Dates:

Thu 11 Jan - Fri 26 Jan

Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 5 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

Your guides



Sue Lawty

Sue is one of Britain's finest textile artists. Alongside many other materials, Sue has worked in textiles all her life and has exhibited all over the world. She is a tutor and visiting lecturer and as well as going on 'weaving journeys' to Bhutan, Morocco, America, Australia, India, Nepal and Poland she has been visiting artist at the Australian National University in Canberra, and also Artist in Residence at the V&A Museum from 2005 to 2010. She devised the World Beach Project, in association with the V&A, which ran for 5 years, from 2007 to 2012, a global project, where participants uploaded

Sue is an accomplished climber and trekker and has led many successful trips for Mountain Kingdoms since she led our first Weavers' Trail in Bhutan in 1995, later also leading treks to Dolpo and Zaskar. More recently, in 2019, she has returned to Bhutan to lead our specialist Weavers' Trail walking holiday and in 2022 led our first Colours of India trip.



Pravan Dangera - Local Guide

Pravan started guiding international tourists at Kutch in 1995. He became a full time guide in the Gujarat region in 2001 having completed his state level tourism guide training. He is the founder and president of the Tourist Guides Association of Kutch. Over the years his in-depth local knowledge has led him to work with many travel writers, journalists and film units including the BBC and Discovery Channel, and he also been a location manager for many Bollywood and Hollywood movies.

He has an MA in archaeology and a keen interest in photography as well as specific expertise in the culture and textiles of Gujarat. He takes particular pride in the strong relationships he has developed with the artisans and villagers of the region.

Your trip highlights

- Specially devised itinerary taken in the company of Sue Lawty, one of Britain's foremost artists
- Learn about the rich Gujarat textile culture, Bhandani (tie-dye), wood block printing, embroidery and silk weaving
- Experience first-hand the unique and colourful textile traditions of Gujarat
- Visit the picturesque villages of the Banni Grasslands and meet local craftsmen and women.
- See some of the fine palaces and temples of this vibrant region
- Take a jeep safari to explore the Little Rann of Kutch with its wild asses, flamingos and other wildlife.
- Take a heritage walk and enjoy the kite festival of Ahmedabad

At a glance itinerary

Days 1-2	Overnight flight to Ahmedabad. Visit Law Garden Market.
Day 3	Visit Calico Museum of Textile. Visit Pethapur Village in Gandhinagar.
Day 4	Morning visits to Sarkhej Ka Roza and flower market. Afternoon at kite festival.
Days 5-6	Drive to Gondal. Visit Navlakha Palace. Visit the Khadi centre, local market and Swaminarayan Temple in Gondal and the village of Jetpur.
Day 7	Drive to Bhuj via salt marsh. Visit LLDC Shrujan Museum.
Day 8	Sightseeing in Bhuj plus visits to a bandhani workshop and textiles museum shop.
Day 9	Day leisure.
Day 10	Hands on block printing workshop. Drive to Khamir. Visit village of Bhujodi.
Days 11-12	Excursion to see mashroo weaving in south Kutch and wooden ship building at Mandvi with time at beach. Drive to visit Banni villages and White Rann salt flats.
Day 13	Attend tanabana workshop in Bhuj and Ahir embroidery at Dhaneti village. Drive to Rann Riders.
Day 14	Jeep safari across Little Rann. Drive to Ahmedabad with visit to Patan Patola Museum and Rani Ki Vav step well.
Day 15	Heritage walk of Ahmedabad with visit to and Sabarmati Ashram. Farewell dinner.
Day 16	Group transfer to Ahmedabad Airport for overnight flight to London.

Trip summary

Gujarat in western India is renowned for its dazzling textiles and fine handicrafts. The many different styles, from mirror work to fine embroidery, are each connected to the traditions of a particular community or ethnic group and go back generations.

Led by acclaimed artist Sue Lawty you will explore Gujarat's rich architectural, artistic and cultural heritage, visiting a number of key textile centres along the way including Ahmedabad, Gondal, Jetpur, Junagarh, Banni, Kutch, Dasada and Patan. From village markets and local museums which have an incredible array of fabrics and textiles on display, to craft workshops with hands-on demonstrations of age-old techniques such as wood block printing, tie-dye manufacture, and weaving, you will gain an insight into the role that textiles have played in Gujarat over the centuries.

The tour starts in Ahmedabad, famous for its connection with Mahatma Gandhi, where you will visit a local market, the Calico Museum and several cultural sights as well as spending an afternoon at the International Kite Festival - a dazzling display of modern and traditional kites from all around the world. Travelling on to Gondal you visit the Navlaka Palace with its fine collection of crafts and learn about the textiles of this area. Moving on to the desert town of Bhuj, you will have six days to explore its many fascinating attractions including local markets and palaces, as well as travelling out to beautiful Banni villages with their fine artistic heritage, and to Mandvi on the coast and centre for traditional boat building and mashroo weaving.

A real highlight of the tour is an early morning jeep safari across the Little Rann (desert) of Kutch in search of rare Asiatic wild asses and other birds and wildlife. And for a final fabulous flourish you visit the master craftsmen of Patan Patola, who create the most magnificent Double-Ikat silk textiles. On your return to Ahmedabad, you will enjoy a guided heritage walk and end your trip on a high at a Bollywood-themed eatery.

Your trip itinerary

Day 1: Fly London to Ahmedabad

Depart London on your overnight flight to Ahmedabad in Gujarat, arriving in the early hours of Day 2.

Overnight: In flight

Day 2: Arrive Ahmedabad. Visit Law Garden Market.

You will land at Ahmedabad around 3.00am and be transferred to your boutique heritage hotel where rooms will be ready for you. Here you will have plenty of time to rest after your long flight. Your hotel has a pool if you fancy a refreshing dip!

Ahmedabad, the city of Ahmed Shah (the medieval ruler of Gujarat), is known for its rich past as well as its association with Mahatma Gandhi. The city features a unique style of architecture, which is a blend of Hindu and Islamic styles - the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture. The monuments of Ahmedabad mainly date back to the 15th century. Ahmedabad has been known for its industry since medieval times and is famous for its textile mills - in the past it was referred to as the 'Manchester of the East'.

Later in the day you will be driven to the Law Gardens (one of the best known gardens of Ahmedabad) for a visit to the famous and colourful Law Garden Evening Market. The bustling street market is renowned for its traditional textiles; wall hangings, bandhej sarees, chaniyas (long colourful skirts), as well as other handicrafts such as antique jewellery and items made from cane and wood.

For dinner tonight you will have a traditional Gujarati Thali at the award winning rooftop terrace restaurant at your hotel.

Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: D)

Day 3: Visit the Calico Museum of Textiles and the craft village of Pethapur.

In the morning, you will visit the Calico Museum of Textiles, India's premier textile museum. This museum contains one of the world's finest collections of antique and modern Indian textiles, all handmade and many up to 500 years old, with hundreds of beautiful pieces displaying incredible virtuosity and opulence. Here you learn about the history of textiles in Gujarat and how Ahmedabad emerged as a textile hub. The museum is housed in two buildings, one displaying textiles of religious significance and the other traditional court fabrics, tents, carpets and costumes.



Lunch will be at a local restaurant in the city, and then in the afternoon you drive for approximately 45 minutes to visit the craft village of Pethapur in Gandhinagar. The village is famous for its beautiful saris and is a hub for wood block makers. These wooden blocks are carved with elegant patterns and then used for hand-printing on cloth. The villagers of Pethapur have been supplying customized wood blocks to centres of block printing all over India (and now worldwide) for at least 200 years.

Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)

Day 4: Visit Sarkhej K Roza and Jamalpur flower market. Afternoon attend the International Kite Festival.

Your day begins with a visit to Sarkhej Roza - an ancient royal necropolis just a few miles outside of Ahmedabad in the village of Markarba. Dating back to the 15th century it comprises many elegant monuments and tombs surrounding a large lake, or tank. Although timeworn in places there is still much intricate sandstone and marble carving to appreciate especially when the light falls through the beautiful carved screens, or jalīs, producing beautiful patterns on the stone floors. Returning to Ahmedabad you will visit the famous Jamalpur flower market with its extensive displays of fresh flowers - lilies, lotus flowers, roses and marigolds - often concocted into garlands for weddings or temple displays.

In the afternoon you will attend the International Kite Festival which has been hosted in Ahmedabad since 1989. It is a spectacular aerial display showcasing the latest developments in kite flying from around the world alongside traditional kites produced by the most renowned master kite makers. The skies are filled from before dawn till after dusk with a bewildering array of creations in all shapes and sizes and a multitude of bold colours. The kite battles are extremely popular with the locals. The International Kite Festival is part of the wider Gujarati festival of Uttarayan when kites are traditionally flown to mark the days in the Hindu calendar with winter starts to turn to summer. It is a time for family and friends to gather and you will see many children flying their own kites in the streets and on the rooftops of the city.

Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)

Day 5: Drive to Gondal - 260km/162 miles, 6-7 hours. Visit Navlakha Palace.

Today you will drive to Gondal, a city to the southwest of Ahmedabad which has several interesting palaces. The city was once the capital of a princely state and during this time Gondal was ruled by a family of car enthusiasts whose royal passion resulted in a fine collection of automobiles which are now part of a museum in the palace premises. It was this royal passion that it led to Gondal having the best planned road system in pre-independence Gujarat.

After lunch at your hotel you will visit the Navlakha Palace, the former palace of the maharajas of Gondal, now converted to a museum. Also known as the Darbargadh, the name Navlakha evidently refers to the cost of this seventeenth century structure, which reputedly cost nine lakhs rupees - a lakh being 100,000 rupees. The palace has fine stone carvings with jharokhas (enclosed balconies), a pillared courtyard, delicately carved arches, and a unique spiral staircase. The large chandelier-lit durbar (court) contains stuffed panthers, gilt wooden furniture, and antique mirrors. The Palace Museum has a display of silver caskets which were used to carry messages and gifts for Maharajah Bhagwat Sinhji during his silver jubilee as ruler of Gondal.

Overnight: Orchard Palace or Similar, Gondal (Meals: BLD)

Day 6: Visit the Khadi centre in Gondal and see screen printing in Jetpur. Visit the local market and the Swaminarayan Temple in Gondal.

This morning you will visit the Khadi centre in Gondal. Khadi is a hand-spun and handwoven fabric made from locally grown cotton silk and you will get the chance to try your hand at the processes involved in its production. You will then drive to Jetpur, a textile town renowned as one of India's largest centres for block printing, screen printing and dyeing. It is also famous for printed cotton saree production and the town is a major exporter of khanga and kitenge. Jetpur is the go-to place for raw materials for the production of ethnic wear. The air of Jetpur is laden with the smells of dye stuffs, fabrics spill out of large copper vats and translucent layers of coloured fabrics are laid out to dry, while the air resounds to the percussive beat of wooden printing blocks. You may have the opportunity for a hands-on experience of the processes of printing and dyeing.

Returning to Gondal you will take lunch at your hotel before heading out to the local vegetable and spice market - alive with noise and heady aromas. Your final stop of the day is the beautiful Swaminarayan Temple.

Overnight: Orchard Palace or Similar, Gondal (Meals: BLD)

Day 7: Drive to Bhuj - 270km/157 miles, approximately 6 hours. Pass the salt flats en route. Visit the Shrujan Museum.

Today you will drive from Gondal to the town of Bhuj. On the way you will pass through the low laying salt marshes and salt pans. The area is also rich in minerals used in tile making and products are exported all over India. On the drive we will pass fields of castor oil plants, stone works and beautiful Jain temples. Along the side of the road we may see the nomadic pastoral Rabari men in their distinctive white clothing herding camels sheep or goats. The women traditionally wear darker garments.

Before reaching Bhuj you will visit the inspiring galleries of the Living and learning Design Centre (LLDC) - a pioneering project of the Shrujan Trust. Shrujan (which means creativity in Sanskrit) is a not-for-profit organization working with craftswomen in Kutch to



revitalise the ancient craft of hand embroidery and to allow women to make a living from their craft. These craftswomen create a range of beautiful hand embroidered items. Over the years, Shrujan's work has expanded to include research into, and documentation of, the diverse embroideries of Kutch, and the communities that practise these embroideries.

Arriving in Bhuj you will find an ancient desert town dating back to the 16th century. Despite the catastrophic earthquake of 2001 the old town still maintains some of its medieval character with an atmospheric bazaar, old walls and gateways, ancient palaces and temples. Bhuj is famous as a centre for the historic craftsmanship of the Kutch region, including Bandhani, embroidery, and leatherwork. Artists of nearby villages bring their artwork for sale in 'Bhuj Haat' market. Bhuj is also famous for its regional cuisine and famous Gujarati sweets.

Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)

Day 8: Sightseeing in Bhuj. Visit to Khatri bandhani workshop and A A Wazir's Textiles Museum shop.

Your sightseeing in Bhuj starts with a visit to the extravagant Aina Mahal, an 18th century palace, known as the 'Palace of Mirrors' which is one of the finest examples of Indo-Saracenic architecture in India. The Aina Mahal was ornamented with Venetian-style chandeliers, silver objects, clocks, tiles glass and other objects all produced locally. You then continue to see the nearby Prag Mahal Palace, a 19th century palace.

Your morning then moves to the fascinating bandhani workshop run by two brothers Abduljabbar and Abdllah Khatri. Bandhani (tie-dye) fabrics are produced through a laborious process, 500 years old and involving thousands of tiny knots in a piece of folded fabric. The term Bandhani is derived from the Sanskrit verb 'to bind or to tie'. The intricacy of the pattern depends on the skill of the maker, the number of knots and the fineness of the cloth before dyeing. You will see a demonstration of this superb art and a fine selection of cloths traditionally used for wedding saris and dupattas.

After lunch you will visit the textile museum/shop of Mr A. A. Wazir, an award winning artist who has a passion for textiles. The Wazir family has a long established and stunning collection of more than 3,000 pieces, including museum quality historic embroidery, antique quilts, torans, dowry bags, traditional outfits and cattle caparisons, adorned with stitch-work of the Rabari, Jat, Mutava, Meghval, Ahir and Sodha tribes, featuring pieces from Kutch but also from other parts of India and as far afield as Pakistan. About half the items shown here are for sale.

Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)

Day 9: At leisure.

Today is at leisure for you to relax and unwind or explore some of Bhuj's sights. You may wish to visit one of the local markets or wander down a street and see where it takes you. Perhaps you'd like to take a rickshaw ride or visit the grand and newly opened Smriti Van Memorial Earthquake Museum. Or you may prefer to stretch out on a walk up Bhujia Hill for fabulous views of the surrounding area.

Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: B)

Day 10: Block printing workshop in Ajarakhpur. Drive to Khamir and Bhujodi village.

After breakfast you will head to Ajarakhpur and have the opportunity to participate in a block printing workshop run by Dr Ismael Khatri & Sons. Dr Khatri is the head of a 10 generation block-printing business renowned for its use of bold, geometric designs in indigo. All natural dyes are used in the process from which many different types of textiles are produced including saris, tablecloths and shawls.

You then drive to Khamir, another community which promotes a wide range of the traditional arts and culture of this region. Here you will have demonstrations by local artisans to learn about the techniques practised there. Kala Cotton is indigenous to the region and in this project it is being produced organically and sustainably.

After years of experimentation and the perfecting of spinning and weaving techniques, Khamir began producing the first Kala Cotton goods in 2010. In contrast Khamir has also developed an interesting project called 'The



Recycled Plastic Initiative'. Providing employment to plastic waste collectors and schools, Khamir cleans, sorts and segregates the used plastic, which is then cut into long strips and woven into durable textiles using traditional looms. From Khamir you will make the short drive to Bhujodi, an important textile village of Kutch. Bhujodi is home to the nomadic Rabari people who spin and weave in camel hair, local sheep wool 'desi' and kala cotton; and dye with natural dyes such as pomegranate, madder and indigo,

Here we meet Shamji Vankar and his family at their weaving and dyeing complex. A master dyer, Shamji will demonstrate the particularities of dyeing with the indigo from his established vats and explain the processes of making a warp and weaving on the traditional pit looms of the Kutch. Working with both long established methods and continually experimenting with materials and structure, the work here is constantly evolving. There will be opportunity to purchase goods directly from the small shop.

Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)

Day 11: Mashroo weaving in south Kutch. Drive to Mandvi to see wooden ship building and spend some time at the beach.

The south of Kutch is home to the technique of mashroo (or mashru) weaving and this morning we will see this process demonstrated. Mashroo textiles were traditionally woven for Muslim communities who believed that silk should not touch a person's skin but still wanted their clothes to have the appearance of pure silk. To achieve this, a textile was created that was cotton on one side and silk on the other. Popular until the 1900's, the traditional practice of mashroo weaving is now a dying craft being kept alive by the Maheshwari family and other weavers of the area. It will be fascinating to see the different parts of the complex processes involved in its production.

You will then head into the town of Mandvi which is set on the bank of a wide tidal estuary, facing the Arabian Sea. Once a large, flourishing port, Mandvi still supports another rare and dwindling craft - dhow building. You can see the traditional wooden boats, or dhows, being hand built alongside the estuary. They are handbuilt from long wooden planks using nails up to 1m long, produced by local blacksmiths. It takes 50 men roughly two years to build each dhow which are mainly used by wealthy Gulf Arabs as pleasure boats or floating casinos.

There is a sandy beach in Mandvi and you will have time at leisure here before driving back to Bhuj, some 60km north.

Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)

Day 12: Visit the Great Rann of Kutch and Banni villages.

Today we head north from Bhuj to see the Great Rann of Kutch. This vast salt desert known as the White Rann, is reputedly the largest salt desert in the world. During the monsoon season the Rann is under water but, once the rains dry up, the water evaporates and a striking carpet of white sand is left behind. It's a dramatic and photogenic sight.

En route you travel through the Banni grassland of Gujarat - the largest natural grassland in the Indian subcontinent, known for its rich wildlife and biodiversity. The Banni has a long history of migratory pastoralism going back at least 500 years with links to a broader geographical landscape that in the past included Sindh in Pakistan and even extended into parts of Baluchistan and Afghanistan. The area is important ecologically and is particularly known for its extensive diversity of migratory birds.

The Banni is also of great cultural importance to Gujarat, and the attractive villages showcase the local arts and crafts as well as the ancient architecture of Kutch.

You will also visit Hodka village, home to traditional craftsmen working in leather, where you will have lunch before travelling on to the beautiful Kutch village of Bhirandiyara, another lovely settlement of colourful mud 'bhunjas' with their intricate decorations both inside and outside. Here you will have opportunity for a hands-on experience learning the detailed stitches in the traditional embroidered mirror work.



This village is also famous for a delicious sweet made from milk and sugar called Maavo. From Bhirandiyara you return to your hotel.

Overnight: Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)

Day 13: Tana Bana workshop. Stop at Dhaneti village. Drive to Dasada - 255km/158 miles, 5 hours.

Today you make two fascinating visits to extremely skilled artisans before making your way east to Dasada.

The first is to the home of Ramji Maheshwari, a graduate of the Somaiya Kala Vidya Design School. Known as TANA BANA (which means warp and weft) Ramji is an innovative weaver who grows and spins his own organic Kala cotton. He enjoys experimenting with traditional and non-traditional mixes of threads including things like bamboo, linens and silks. He will be happy for you to try your hand on his customary charkha spinning wheel or weave at the traditional pit loom. Many of his high quality items are for sale.

Later you will stop en route at the village of Dhaneti, famous for the exquisite traditional embroidery work created by the local Ahir community, people who are thought to have originally brought their skills from Sindh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia. It is the detailed work of many of these women that is held in the Shrujan collection we visited earlier in the trip.

You then head to Dasada, a village located on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch, an area of desert, mudflats and salt marshes which is renowned for its abundant and varied wildlife.

Overnight: Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada (Meals: BLD)

Day 14: Jeep safari across Little Rann of Kutch. Drive to Ahmedabad - 210km, 5 hours. Visit to Patan Patola Museum and Rani Ki Vav step well en route.

As a contrast to all your textile related activities, today, in the very early morning around 06:00 hours, you will head out on a vehicle safari to the Little Rann of Kutch, an area famous for its rare wildlife and birds. Your safari takes you across the mud flats in search of Gudkhur, endangered wild asses, which are just a little smaller than donkeys and are found only on the Little Rann. The Rann mudflats, which are inundated with water during the rainy season, are an ancient sea bed dotted with small islands, 'bets', which are covered with grass and scrub and support a wide range of birds including flamingos, pelicans, common cranes, ducks and geese as well as animals such as black buck, blue bull, hyenas and of course the Asiatic wild ass.



After your safari you return to the hotel for breakfast, check out and start the return drive to Ahmedabad. En route you will visit the Patan Patola Museum. The textiles of Patan Patola are renowned for their unique gem like qualities, gorgeous colours and lovely designs. These fabulous textiles are woven from silk by master craftsmen, in a process called Double-Ikat, meaning that fabrics have no reverse side, both sides having equal intensity of colour and design. This fine quality production has its origins in an intricate and difficult technique of Bhandani tie-dyeing and knot dying which is performed on the warp and weft separately before weaving. This is a centuries old technique possibly dating back as far as the 11th century and utilizing pure silk and natural dyes.

After lunch in Patan you will continue your journey to Ahmedabad with one final stop at the Rani Ki Vav step well. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is the oldest and most impressive step well in Gujarat. Dating back to the early 11th century it was buried under silt for many centuries before being re-discovered and excavated in the 1980s. 28 metres deep, with seven sets of stairs, it is a multi-storied, elaborately carved work of both art and architecture and remains in excellent condition.

Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)

Day 15: Ahmedabad Heritage Walk. Visit Sabarmati Ashram and paper making factory. Farewell meal.

The best way to experience the splendours of Ahmedabad and appreciate its architecture, art and traditions is on foot, so this morning you will take a heritage walk round Ahmedabad, accompanied by a local guide who will explain the historical background and significance of the places you see.

Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 on the ancient site of Ashaval and Karnvati, and the city has some of the finest monuments and temples in India - Islamic, Hindu and Jain. The carved wooden houses of the city are a unique architectural tradition. A special feature of Ahmedabad is the plan of the old city, which comprises numerous 'pols', traditional self-contained neighbourhoods accommodating whole communities. Some of these 'pols' are virtually small villages, traversed by narrow streets and terminating in a square with community wells and featuring little cul-de-sacs, alleyways and secret passages, as well as the characteristic chabutaras, typical Gujarati tower-like structures for feeding birds, especially pigeons.



Later you will visit Sabarmati Ashram. This ashram was Gandhi's headquarters during the long struggle for Indian Independence. It was founded in 1915 and Gandhi established a school here that focused on manual labour, agriculture, and literacy, with the aim of advancing his efforts for self-sufficiency. It was from here that in 1930 Gandhi launched the famous Dandi march with 78 companions to protest the British Salt Law, which taxed Indian salt to promote sales of British salt in India. Today, the Ashram serves as a source of inspiration and as a monument to Gandhi's life mission. Gandhi's spartan living quarters are preserved as a small museum and there is a pictorial record of the major events in his life. The ashram still makes handicrafts, handmade paper at the Kalam Khush unit close by, which we will visit. Here waste cotton fabric scraps are transformed to create handmade paper and paper products.

Your day ends with a farewell meal at Mirch Masala, Bollywood themed, restaurant.

Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)

Day 16: Group transfer to airport. Fly to London.

Today there will be a group transfer to Ahmedabad Airport for your flight home. **(Meals: B)**

Special notes

Alcohol in Gujarat

You should be aware that Gujarat is a 'dry' state and sale of alcohol is not permitted. Foreigners, and visitors from other parts of India, can apply online for a temporary permit to allow them to buy alcohol and there are 35 stores across the state, including nine in Ahmedabad, that sell liquor on production of a physical copy of the permit. Any alcohol purchased using this permit system, must then be consumed in the privacy of your room. If you decide to take in some 'duty free' liquor into Gujarat with you, please be circumspect about it. If you have any queries, please contact the Mountain Kingdoms office.

What the price includes

Mountain Kingdoms aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

What's included:

- ✓ Services of Sue Lawty as trip leader
- ✓ Local English-speaking guide and driver to accompany group throughout.
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK and UK departure tax (flight inclusive only).
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure.
- ✓ Good standard accommodation with meals as indicated in itinerary, on twin share basis
- ✓ All sightseeing, entrance fees and visits as mentioned in the itinerary.
- ✓ Meals as indicated in itinerary
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)

Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

What's not included:

- × Travel insurance
- × India visa fees
- × Tips
- × Lunch & dinner on day 9. Lunch on departure day

Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit <https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign>.

Your accommodation

We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



House of M G, Ahmedabad

The House of MG is a boutique hotel situated in one of the oldest houses in the city - a mansion formerly home to a prominent textile merchant and entrepreneur. The hotel has been tastefully restored with all its furniture and fixtures designed and sourced from local artisans. Mahatma Gandhi stayed here when it was a private house. The hotel offers modern amenities, a spa and pool, and free Wi-Fi.



Orchard Palace or Similar, Gondal

The Orchard Palace was built in the 19th century as an annex of the Huzoor Palace, the family residence of the local Maharajas, to host their personal guests. It has been converted into a heritage hotel and is furnished with 1930s and '40s art deco furniture, antiques and handicrafts. Rooms are well furnished with modern bathrooms. The property gets its name from the orchards which it faces. More than 80 peacocks and peahens inhabit the gardens, and a variety of other birds can be watched while walking around the grounds.



Kutch Safari Resort or Similar, Bhuj

The Kutch Safari Resort is situated 15km outside of bustling Bhuj overlooking the Gorudra Reervoir - a haven for birds and wildlife. The cottage rooms are designed to look like traditional Kutchi homes with their circular, whitewashed appearance and straw-style conical roofs. Each cottage is air-conditioned with simple yet comfortable facilities and an outdoor 'terrace'. The resort has an open-sided restaurant so you can enjoy the views and the temperate climate.



Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada

Surrounded by fields and wetlands, Rann Riders is a tranquil and eco-friendly resort located on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch. It is imaginatively designed using local materials to recreate the look of a village. Accommodation is in cottages, resembling the kooba houses of the Bajania community of Dasada and the bhunga houses of the Rabaris of Kutch, which are decorated with mirrors, mud-plaster work and embroideries. The rooms feature comfortable cane beds, and bathrooms have hot and cold showers.

Meal arrangements

All meals included from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 14, except for lunch and dinner on Day 9.

Flight arrangements

Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

Further information

When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

Our grading system

Colours of India - Gujarat Textiles is graded as a Tour, as described below.

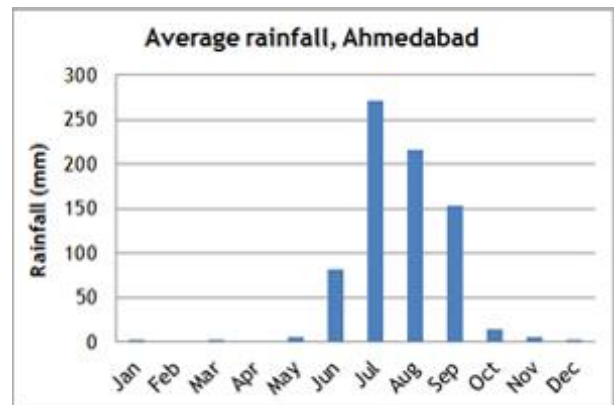
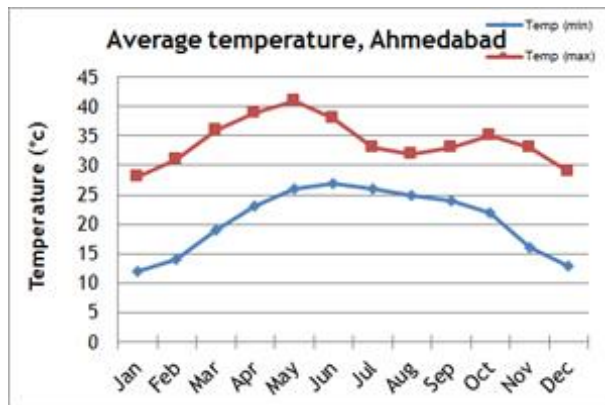
Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

The nature of adventure travel

Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.

Climate information



Extensions

Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at www.mountainkingdoms.com.



There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements. We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

Agra, Taj Mahal & Jaipur - from Delhi

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra (from Delhi) on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English-speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.

Ranthambore National Park

Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan is one of the finest national parks in northern India. It has a diverse range of habitats attracting a fantastic variety of wildlife including tigers, leopard, bears and monkeys as well as a large number of exotic birds. We can arrange a three night stay at a jungle camp from where you can enjoy many wildlife watching activities such as nature walks, jeep safaris and bird watching.



Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

- This itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms.
- Whilst clearly textiles focused, the tour also takes in Gujarat's must-see sights, including the rare wildlife of the Little Rann of Kutch.
- Leader Sue Lawty is an unrivalled expert on textiles.
- Accommodation has been handpicked and for comfort, character and convenience.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger groups.
- We offer a flexible travel service and you can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights team for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: www.mountainkingdoms.com or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

What our clients say



If you love fabrics or sewing you will find heaven in Gujarat. You have the chance to watch fabric being made from scratch; spun, dyed, printed, woven, embroidered and finally worn. Throw the many wonders of India into the mix - exotic food, amazing temples and mosques or tranquil bird watching - and you cant not go!
-Janet Wallace, London

We saw such a variety of high quality textiles and watched the processes through from the cotton plant, via spinning, weaving, printing and dyeing, to stunning embroidery; all in real villages and towns in a fascinating part of India. The beautiful, gentle people of Gujarat made the trip very special.
-Gill, Melrose



A wonderful couple of weeks with a bit of everything from palaces to safaris, saris to festivals, and top notch artisan crafts. To see the processes from the cotton boll in the field to spinning, weaving, printing, dyeing, embroidery, etc was amazing. Such skills and lovely people.
-Anonymous

The variety and quality of the textiles we saw far exceeded our expectations.
- Anonymous

Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

Truly independent

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

Complete financial security

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

No Surcharge Guarantee

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

Award winning Responsible Tourism

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at www.mountainkingdoms.com.

Genuine small group travel

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

Loyalty Discount

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

Comprehensive information

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.



RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit www.tourismdeclares.com

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

Carbon Offsetting

Already doing:

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

Will do:

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

Reducing Carbon Emissions

Already doing:

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

Will do:

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.

