

Tasting India with Christine Manfield

Christine's love affair with India has been an enduring one. From years of travelling to this beguiling country for pleasure and work to her more recent lengthy stays undertaking research for her soon to be released book "Tasting India", Christine brings a remarkable perception to the culinary and cultural heritage of this astonishing country. Our tour in November 2011 will be a celebration of her life long passion for the subcontinent offering guests the opportunity to share in this passion and discover first hand the exotic charm of India.

Our tour will explore many of Christine's favourite places from Delhi to Amritsar, Rajasthan to Mumbai and ending in Hyderabad. We will taste the Royal cuisine of the Raj, stunning street food in Amritsar and the rich aromatic cuisine of the Nizams in Hyderabad.

The tour will commence in Delhi where we are privileged to have a private lecture with the world famous writer and Indian authority, William Dalrymple — author of many books on India including City of Djinns, The White Mughal, The Last Mughal and more recently Nine Lives. William will talk with us about Delhi where he currently resides — reflecting on the City of Djinns and the implications for the city resulting from the economic and social changes that are occurring in India.

We visit Amritsar and its spectacular Golden Temple before spending a few days relaxing in one of the most beautiful desert properties in Rajasthan — Amanbagh. An astonishing blaze of colour awaits us in Rajasthan, where customs, heritage, art and architecture will unfold in an unparalleled kaleidoscope before your eyes.

After an exciting few days exploring Mumbai and its hidden treasures our final destination, Hyderabad, offers one of the most enduring Indian experiences imaginable. We stay in the magnificently restored Falaknuma Palace previously home to one of the Nizams of Hyderabad and now after more than 14 years of restoration is the shining star for the Taj Hotel group. The city of Hyderabad offers a deep and rich history of the Muslim Dynasties that ruled the region for many centuries. The magnificent collection of often faded but beautiful Islamic architecture is a highlight along with the best Biryanis in India.

Christine's passion for and deep connection with India seeps through every element of our exhilarating journey where we will dine in some of her favourite restaurants, sleep in majestic hotels and gain a privileged insight into the culinary secrets that sustain one of the world's most vivid and alluring cultures.



Trip length	Start/Finish	Cost	Dates
16 days, 15 nights	Delhi / Hyderabad	\$15,590, single supplement \$3475	30 October – 14 November 2011

SUNDAY, 30 OCTOBER 2011**ARRIVE DELHI**

Our journey begins in Delhi, the Capital of India with its monuments and Imperial City built by the British. Delhi is a heady experience of old and new and we enjoy its architectural masterpieces, unbeatable shopping and boundless and vivid energy.

Today you will arrive into Delhi. On exiting the baggage reclaim area you will be met by our Banyan Tours representative and transferred to The Manor Hotel.

Meals Included: None

Overnight: The Manor, Delhi

MONDAY, 31 OCTOBER 2011**DELHI**

We meet for breakfast at the hotel, followed by a full day tour of Delhi.

We start the tour by exploring the fascinating living legacy of the Indo-Islamic culture and the lifestyle in Old Delhi with Navina Jafa our guide for our time in Delhi. We wander in the busy and narrow streets of the mile long Chandni Chowk, popularly called "The Silver Street", surrounded by shops and bazaars. We visit the famous food streets and the centuries old and largest spice market — Kari Baoli. We also visit the largest mosque of Old Delhi which can accommodate 20,000 people at one time — Jama Masjid with its tapering minarets and wonderful marble domes. We meet the owner of the oldest roadside Dhaba — Karims famous for its authentic Mughlai fare.

We enjoy a Kebab lunch at Khan Chacha, famous across India since 1972 for tasty kebabs served in Roomali Rotis. The specialty is the Kathi roll, stuffed with chicken, mutton or paneer and is arguably the tastiest memento of New Delhi.

Dinner tonight is at Kainoosh. The cuisine is exquisite, consisting of contemporary Indian food, steeped in Indian culinary heritage. Chef Marut Sikka has created a perfect combination of cuisine and ambience.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Overnight: The Manor, Delhi

TUESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2011**DELHI**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning we take a walking tour of Mehrauli, the oldest continuously inhabited area of Delhi, with a history of more than 1,000 years. Discover the local culture, visit historic sites, meet the communities, and share in their traditions. We also visit the shrine of the Sufi saints Jamali and Kamali, the Archeological Garden, the flower bazaar and spectacular site of Qutab Minar.

We take a lunch break at Gunpowder — The Peninsular Kitchen (open from 1230 till 1500hrs, Monday closed), where we enjoy delicious South Indian Cuisine. Later we enjoy a short stroll in Hauz Khas ruins and village market, where the chic boutiques nestle among 14th century monuments.

This evening we are privileged to share a private evening lecture with William Dalrymple, renowned author and Indian authority. William's books City of Djinns, The Last Mughal and Nine Lives will form the basis of the discussion. We then enjoy dinner at The Indian Accent restaurant at our hotel.



Chef Manish Mehrotra prepares innovative cuisine which is essentially Indian but combines the Oriental and Western touches with authenticity, panache and skill. Manish's creativity is showcased by the unique amalgamation of the freshest local produce combining home style nostalgic tastes with unusual ingredients from across the world. The result is a menu that excites the adventurous yet satisfies traditional palates.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Overnight: The Manor, Delhi

WEDNESDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2011**DELHI TO AMRITSAR**

Early breakfast at the hotel followed by our transfer to the airport to connect with our flight to Amritsar

Flight	Jet Airways Connect	9W2631
Depart	Delhi	0750hrs
Arrive	Amritsar	0905hrs

We are met by our local representative in Amritsar and transferred to our hotel.

The word Amritsar means Pool of the Nectar of Immortality named after the sacred pool in the Golden Temple, the holiest site of the Sikh religion. Amritsar is the spiritual and cultural centre for the Sikhs, but it is also famous for its food.

After a quick freshen up at our hotel we visit Harmandir Sahib (Temple of God), popularly known as the Golden Temple. The Temple houses the holiest literature — the Sri Guru Granth Sahib — worshipped by the Sikhs. The building is crowned with a dome shaped like an inverted lotus flower. With the first light of dawn, the reflection of the temple in the pool gives an ethereal atmosphere to the complex. The temple building has four entrances instead of the usual single entry. This is symbolic of the openness of Sikhism and indicates that followers of all faiths are welcome inside. The walls within are decorated with carved wooden panels and elaborate inlay work in silver and gold.

Lunch is at The Golden Temple. Here we will witness the largest community kitchen in the world where you are free to try your hand at rolling chapattis or serving free food to the devotees.

Late in the afternoon we visit the lanes where Wadi and Papad are made. Wadi is dried spicy lentil dumplings preserved and used in cooking while Papad is a thin, crisp Indian preparation sometimes described as a cracker or flatbread and often served as an accompaniment to a main dish. Later we walk through the food lanes observing the renowned Bharava da dhaba famous for its Paranthas — another form of Indian flat bread usually stuffed or cooked in layers with clarified butter. We end the day's tour at Kesar da Dhaba, one of the oldest Dhabas in Amritsar. The lentil here is cooked and served after being stirred in Desi Ghee for 12 hours.

Dinner at Kesar Da Dhaba.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Overnight: Ista, Amritsar

THURSDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2011**AMRITSAR**

This morning we visit another food lane of the city famous for its Kanha sweets and delicious Pinni's and Ram Lubhaya Ram Di Redi for its original Kanpuri aam papad (a fruit leather made out of mango pulp, sugar and then sun dried). We end the flavors of Amritsar with a visit to the popular Dhaba at Maqbool road — Sucha Singh Kulcha Wala and view the technique for making Kulcha, an Indian flatbread made of flour dough, mashed potatoes and lot of spices rolled into a flat round shape and baked in an earthen clay oven until golden brown.

We enjoy lunch at Ranjit Svaasa's rooftop Dhaba for authentic Punjabi cuisine with Punjabi folk dances amidst a rustic rural ambience

Later in the afternoon we drive to the border station of Atari and the Wagah check post between India and Pakistan to see the flag lowering ceremony on the Wagah Border. This is the only overland opening between the two countries, which have continued to have hostile relations since independence in 1947. We witness the unique parade of the changing of the guards and the retreat of troops at sundown. The drill, choreographed with aggressive posturing and saber rattling, draws loud cheers from spectators on both sides.

Dinner at the hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Overnight: Ista, Amritsar

FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2011**AMRITSAR TO AMANBAGH**

After breakfast at the hotel we transfer to the airport to connect to our flight to Delhi.

Flight	Jet Airways Connect	9W2632
Depart	Amritsar	0950hrs
Arrive	Delhi	1015hrs

On arrival at Delhi we transfer to Amanbagh, a 4-5 hour drive through agricultural fields and small villages.

Situated in the foothills of the Aravalli Hills and built haveli-style using soft sandstone and pale pink marble, Amanbagh is a regal garden estate in the starkly beautiful wilds of Rajasthan. Circled by walls, which enclose a verdant oasis watered by a nearby lake and tributaries of the Chambal River, Amanbagh was once the site of the Maharajah of Alwar's hunting lodge. Evoking the cultural richness and the dramatic romance of the Mughal era, Amanbagh pays homage to India's golden age with palatial splendor in the finest of details.

Dinner at the hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Overnight: Amanbagh, Ajabgarh

SATURDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2011**AMANBAGH**

Morning at leisure.

Late in the afternoon we depart by open Jeep for the ruined city of Bhangarh. This magnificent city of bazaars, temples, bathing pools and Queen's Palace was deserted overnight after only a generation of habitation.

We enjoy dinner at the hotel.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner at the hotel
Overnight: Amanbagh, Ajabgarh

SUNDAY, 6 NOVEMBER 2011**AMANBAGH**

Morning at leisure.

Today we take a walk through the organic farms of the resort as the hotel Chef shares the secrets of his Indian kitchen.

We enjoy a relaxing lunch followed by an early evening cooking demonstration with the hotel's Chef.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Overnight: Amanbagh, Ajabgarh

MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2011**AMANBAGH TO JODHPUR**

After an early breakfast at the hotel, we depart for our road trip to Delhi to connect to our flight to Jodhpur.

Lunch is at the airport café or on board at own expense

Flight	Jet Airways	9W721
Depart	Delhi	1400hrs
Arrive	Jodhpur	1500hrs

Upon arrival at Jodhpur we are met by our local representative and transferred to our hotel.

RAAS Hotel has a sensational position beneath Jodhpur's imposing Mehrangarh Fort; offering fabulous views of the fort. By grafting contemporary architecture and ambience onto the 300-year-old mansion the hotel embodies style and understated elegance.

Jodhpur is the second largest city in Rajasthan and lies at the entrance to the Thar Desert in a region called Marwar. The massive Meherangarh Fort overlooks the city founded in 1459. Jodhpur is also called the 'blue city' because of the indigo-washed houses in the old town.

Late in the afternoon, we have an option to visit Lalji warehouse to discover the treasures in this huge multi-coloured warehouse full of antiques and handicrafts.

Dinner is at the hotel at Darikhana Restaurant where we enjoy authentic Rajasthani cuisine served in a traditional style. Being a desert state, Rajasthan's food culture has been strongly influenced by the availability of ingredients and the inadequacy of water. Rajasthani cuisine is a blend of various influences and is known for its spicy nature. Milk, buttermilk and clarified butter (ghee) are used in cooking as substitute to water. Dal, bati and churma are the most widely recognized dishes of Rajasthan.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner
Overnight: Raas, Jodhpur

**TUESDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2011****JODHPUR**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning we visit the Meherangarh Fort with our local guide. Rising 393 feet above the surrounding plain, the fort's massive and rugged exterior contains delicately latticed and decorated walls. One of the most outstanding private museums in India, the Fort contains period rooms, art collections, and a conservation centre.

We enjoy a casual lunch at Chokhelao Garden Terrace Café located at Meherangarh Fort. The 18th century garden has been lovingly restored and is a tranquil place to enjoy an authentic meal.

Later we take a walk through the Old City Bazaar, noted for its craft stores that manufacture and sell silver jewelry, lacquer ware, tie dyed fabrics, puppets and camel hide leather products.

From here we will visit some of the food stores producing local delicacies such as Mawa ki Kachori which is a sweet made of Mawa (solidified milk) stuffed in Kachori (a round flattened ball made of fine flour) stuffed with filling and deep fried.

Dinner tonight is at Hanwant Mahal — the former palace of the Royal family of Jodhpur and now converted into a club. The Polo Lounge offers a breathtaking view of Umaid Bhawan Palace and has developed a reputation for fine contemporary Indian dining.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner
Overnight: Raas, Jodhpur

WEDNESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 2011**JODHPUR TO MUMBAI**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning is at leisure or you may stroll in the streets of Jodhpur.

We enjoy an early lunch at the hotel's Baradari Pool Cafe before transferring to the airport for our flight to Mumbai.

Flight	Jet Airways	9W316
Depart	Jodhpur	1405hrs
Arrive	Delhi	1540hrs

We are met by our local representative and transferred to our hotel — the famous Taj Mahal Palace.

Since it opened in 1903, The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai has created its own unique history. The hotel is an architectural marvel and brings together Moorish, Oriental and Florentine styles. Offering panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and the Gateway of India, the hotel is a gracious landmark of the city.

Later in the evening we take a stroll through the vibrant local bazaars of Mumbai and take in the color, noise and pulsating energy of the trading. Time permitting we also visit Crawford Market with its bewildering variety of local vegetables & fruits, Zaveri Bazaar or the Jewellers Market, Mangaldas Market for fabric and the spice market.

Tonight we dine on delicious seafood at Mahesh Lunch Home. The first and original Mangalorean seafood restaurant in Mumbai, it is famed for its crabs, prawn gassi and black promfret curries and home-style cooking.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight: Taj Mahal Palace and Tower, Mumbai

THURSDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2011**MUMBAI**

After breakfast we take a fascinating architectural walking tour with a local expert. The walk will start from the Asiatic Library — one of the oldest surviving colonial buildings and fine example of neoclassical architecture. We will cover Horniman circle, Asia's oldest stock exchange, the Mumbai University Campus where we view the archetypal neo-gothic buildings built in the 1860's and 1870's including the University Library and the grand imposing High Court. From here we will walk to the culturally vibrant Kala Ghoda Crescent with its numerous art galleries, museums and cultural spaces and the many heritage structures of Victorian Neo-Gothic, Indo-Saracen, Renaissance Revival and Edwardian neoclassical styles. We end the tour at Oval Maiden to see a row of superb 1930's art deco apartment buildings.

We stop for a delicious vegetarian lunch at Soam which offers a wide range of Gujarati and Marwari cuisine in the form of light snacks.

We return to the hotel for a freshen up.



Later in the afternoon we visit the sacred Banganga Tank, which refers to an ancient water tank (or pool) that forms part of the Walkeshwar Temple Complex in Malabar Hill area of Mumbai revered by Hinduism. The origin of the tank is shrouded in Hindu myth and related to the Hindu god Rama. The site has a reputation for medicinal abilities and purification. Hindus on pilgrimage to the Walkeshwar Temple Complex ritually wash in the Banganga Tank before entering the temple compound. The site has become a cultural centre as well as a place of spiritual pilgrimage. The Tank, one of the oldest surviving structures of antiquity in Mumbai, enjoys protection by the Indian government as a national heritage site.

Dinner is at Bademiya where for over 50 years, crowds have been gathering every night for Kebabs around this open-air charcoal grill. Locals love it. We then walk to the ultra modern European influenced restaurant Indigo for dessert and a nightcap.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight: Taj Mahal Palace and Tower, Mumbai

FRIDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2011**MUMBAI TO HYDERABAD**

After a leisurely breakfast at the hotel we transfer to the airport to connect with our flight to Hyderabad.

Flight	Jet Airways	9W2006
Depart	Mumbai	1255hrs
Arrive	Hyderabad	1415hrs

Lunch today is on board our flight.

We are met upon our arrival at Hyderabad by our local representative and transferred to our stunning hotel the Falaknuma Palace.

After a restoration that took 14 years and \$US35 million, the palace has been returned to its former glory. Once home to the 7th Nizam of Hyderabad and lavish accommodation for visiting dignitaries from around the world it now offers travellers a unique opportunity to experience this luxuriant lifestyle.

The Taj Hotel group flew artisans and experts in from around the world to restore the Victorian sofas and one-off french dressers, the amazingly intricate parquet floors, Belgian chandeliers and large collection of portraits, which were all lying among moth-eaten curtains and layers of dust. Most of the furniture is original; including the 101-seat, 33-metre dining table where its guests once ate from solid gold plates. They sourced curtain tapestry from Europe and bought the finest New Zealand wool, which was dyed up to 300 times to get the correct shade for carpets. The hotel offers a taste of life for the Nizam – believed to be the world's richest man at the time of India's independence.

Hyderabad is a melting pot of Muslim and Hindu cultures and has a legacy of both Persian and Islamic influences due to the long rule of the Nizams. This legacy pervades all aspects of Hyderabad culture, from the way the language is spoken, the appreciation for the arts and the renowned Hyderabad hospitality.

Late in the evening we enjoy the heritage walk of the Falaknuma Palace retracing the steps of Nizams, European royalty, enchanting Begums, distinguished Heads of State and Kings.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Dinner

Overnight: Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad

**SATURDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2011**
HYDERABAD

Breakfast at the hotel.

We commence our tour by visiting Chowmohalla, the beautiful palace where the Nizams and kings lived and ruled from. This is followed by a visit to the Nizams Museum which houses the world's largest wardrobe amongst other fascinating artifacts.

We drive through Banjara and the Jubilee Hills to take a lunch break at renowned Southern Spice for authentic Andhra cuisine.

In the afternoon we climb the Charminar and see the Mecca Masjid from the top. We walk across to the Laad Bazaar for an experience of the local bazaars for bangles, ittars (essential oils), Soorma (kohl), Mehendi (henna) and spices. We watch local artisans make the famous bangles and the embroiderers work on the silks and other materials to turn out the glitzy clothes. We visit the Mehboob Chowk, a typical Indian Typology of a market place and see how a typical Muslim family still lives in a Devdi. An evening view of the market is an experience in itself.

Meals Included: Breakfast and Lunch, dinner on own expense
Overnight: Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad

SUNDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2011**HYDERABAD**

Today we visit the once impregnable Golconda fort of the Qutab Shahi rulers and reflect on the significance of this remarkable structure. We also visit the Qutub Shahi tombs, arguably the world's largest royal necropolis to see the beauty of the Indo Saracen architecture.

Lunch is at Firdaus at Taj Krishna Hotel where we enjoy a light lunch of traditional Hyderabadi food.

Late in the evening we take some cooking tips with the Chef Ashyer as he prepares a Biryani feast for us.

Non-vegetarian Hyderabadi biryani is savored in all parts of India and forms an integral part of Indian cuisine. The Nizam's kitchen boasted 49 varieties, which included biryani made from fish, quail, shrimp, deer and hare. The most famous of all, Hyderabadi Biryani is called the "Kachi Akhni" Biryani as both the marinated meat and the rice are cooked together. Kachi Biryani is a special preparation of the dish that is cooked with mutton (and rarely with chicken). The dish is cooked with the meat and sauce being at the bottom of the cooking pot with a thick layer of rice on top, the rice and meat are mixed before serving.

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Overnight: Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad

MONDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2011**HYDERABAD TO SYDNEY VIA SINGAPORE**

Breakfast at the hotel.

This morning we visit the Paigah tombs, the aesthetic tastes of the greatest noble family of Hyderabad, who even in death wanted to lie in grandeur. In doing so, they left for posterity a remarkable architectural heritage. From here we drive to the Salarjung Museum — the envy of global collectors, a treasure house of antiques and an amazing display of art. The Salar Jung Museum is the largest single man collection in the world. Compiled by Mir Yousuf Ali Khan, the Prime Minister at the courts of the Nizams; the collection is incredible in terms of the number and variety of items on display.

We return to the hotel and lunch is at your own choice and the afternoon is at leisure. We meet for snacks on the terrace in the early evening before transferring to the airport for onward flights.

Day use room is available till 1800hrs.

**WHAT'S INCLUDED**

- Christine Manfield – tour leader
- Accommodation on twin-share basis
- Domestic airfares
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary above
- Transport in an air-conditioned mini coach
- Portage at the airports
- Local English speaking guides for the tour
- All entrance fees to monuments during sightseeing as per the itinerary
- Tips and gratuities
- Sufficient supply of bottled water during sightseeing and travel
- Domestic airfares

Prices DO NOT Include:

- International air-fares, visa fees, airport tax or insurance
- Items of personal nature like drinks, laundry, telephone calls, etc
- Any pre dinner drinks or drinks during the meal
- Any other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Any pre / post dinner drinks or drinks during the meal
- Any other meals than those mentioned in the itinerary
- Any other item not specifically mentioned above as 'INCLUDED'