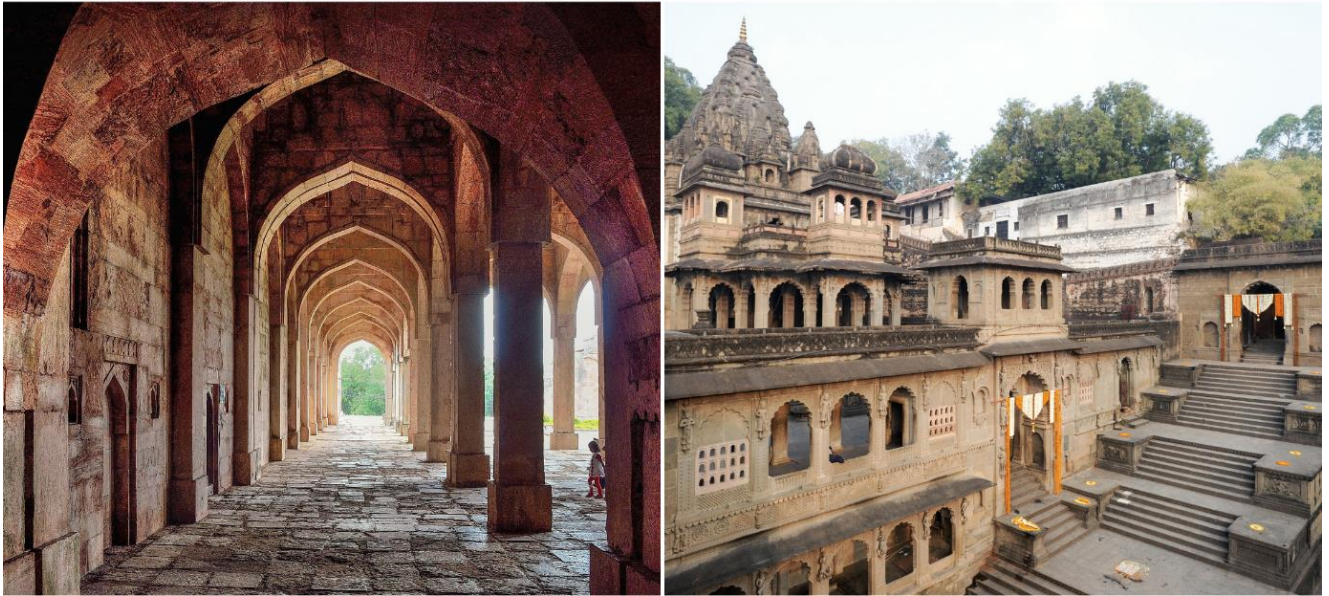


MANDU & MAHESHWAR



Mandu, once known as the 'City of Joy', is a romantic ghost town. Beautifully located on a plateau of forests, lakes and ravines, Mandu was built over generations of rulers and empires, and it still bears their unmistakable stamp. It is an abode of some of the nation's best examples of Afghan architecture as well as the amazing baobab trees that originated from Africa. It will transport you into an era of royalty, history and medieval splendour. Located on the banks of the Narmada, Maheshwar is a treasure trove of beautiful temples and the stunning Ahilya Fort. It is also a centre of handloom weaving since the 5th century. A beautiful place to visit.

ITINERARY

Day 1 – 6 October – Arrival Indore | Head to Mandu

Arrival into Indore. (All flights to arrive into Indore before 1200 hours.)

On arrival, you will be met at the airport and the transfer to our chosen restaurant in Indore will be arranged for you.

Over a sumptuous lunch in Indore, we will hear stories of the ultimate bon vivant, Ghiyath Shah and his 600-year-old Nimatnama, a "book of pleasures". Ghiyath Shah was a mughal emperor, the sultan of Malwa in the late 15th century and was perhaps the Hugh Hefner of sorts of the time. He was also deeply interested in food. In fact, so much so that he fused the miniature style of painting with food, and left behind for us the Nimatnama, a book that is mostly devoted to Shah's favourite dishes.

Post our leisurely lunch, we will leave for Mandu arriving in the evening.

You will be booked at the Malwa Resort or similar for a stay of 2 nights.

After dinner at the hotel, we will leave for Hindola Mahal to see the stunning **Mandu by Night**- this is sound and light show of Mandu.

Set against the magnificent backdrop of Hindola Mahal (Jahaz Mahal premises), a spectacular sound and light show unfold as you step back in time and relive history.

Return to the hotel post the spectacular show. Overnight in Mandu

Day 2 – 7 October – Mandu

Early this morning, we will head out to see sunrise at **Roopmati Palace**. We will enjoy breathtaking views from the palace and then have a special breakfast at the Palace, if possible.

From here, we continue on our sightseeing tour of Mandu. We will begin with visit to the **Jahaz Mahal** (ship Palace) that was built by the fifth Sultan of Malwa, Ghiyasuddin. Located between two man-made lakes – the Kapur Talao and Munja Talao – giving you the feeling on being aboard an anchored ship! We will also visit the Hindola Mahal (Swing Palace), Jain Temple and Champa Bhaoli. Our visit will include the Hammam which is situated within the Royal Palace complex and features several really interesting water features - including a sauna and the provision of hot and cold water for bathing. Much of the quite complex water system can still be clearly seen. We will continue on to Jal Mahal or Water Palace, surrounded by water, Dilawar Khan Mosque, the oldest building in the Royal Enclave and the Nahar Jharokha, Tiger Balcony.

We will have **lunch in a tribal home** this afternoon, giving you a true essence of village life

Post lunch we rest a little before heading out again to complete our sightseeing for the day. We will also visit **Baz Bahadur's Palace**, which stands as a mute spectator to the epic love story of Baz Bahadur and Rani Roopmati. The Jami Masjid, built in 1454, and believed to have been inspired by the great mosque at Damascus. We will also visit the first marble tomb of India, dedicated to Malwa's most powerful Sultan, Hoshang Shah. Built in 1440, the tomb is said to have been the inspiration for Shah Jahan's monument to love, the Taj Mahal.

We will head back to Rani Roopmati Mahal once again in time for sunset, as it gets bathed in the magical colours of the setting sun, a truly special sight

Back to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

Day 3 – 8 October – Mandu to Maheshwar

We have an early breakfast, check out and then head out again this morning to visit **Delhi Darwaza & Hathi Mahal**.

Post the tour, we will enjoy an unforgettable **Royal Baz Bahadur picnic lunch**, served in the shadow of the ancient Tarapur Mandu. Experience a delicious al fresco luncheon while you take in a panoramic view of the valley below

On completion of our tour, we make our way to Maheshwar, a town by the Narmada. (2 hours)

You will be booked at the beautiful **Ahilya Fort** for a stay for 2 nights.

Post check in, in the evening, we will walk through the temple courtyard and onto the Narmada ghats. This walk through and on to the ghats is a beautiful part of the fort and should be savoured. From here, we will embark on a **serene boat ride along the ghat of river Narmada** to Baneshwar Mahadev, a temple located on an islet midstream. Watching the sun set on the beautiful ghats is a very special sight.

Return to the hotel to rest and then dinner.

Day 4 – 9 October - Maheshwar

Early this morning, we will head out to see the **sun rise on the ghats** as we meander down the Narmada once again.

Return to the hotel in time for breakfast.

Post breakfast, we will go on a leisurely walking **tour of the fort**. The fort includes ancient- style courtyards, verandahs and stone walkways. It was once the residence of Ahilya Bai Holkar, one of the most celebrated women rulers of India during the 18th century. We will embark on a **Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Heritage Walk**. This heritage walk with a prolific storyteller will take us around the places connected to the Queen of Malwa in Maheshwar and focuses on her story and contribution. Our tour also includes a visit to the Rehwa Society where dexterous weavers create exquisite cotton and silk Maheshwari saris. Next door, children study at Ahilya School, founded in 1979 for the children of weavers.

Back to the hotel in time for lunch

Post breakfast, we head out to **visit the Maheshwari weavers**. The centuries-old tradition of Maheshwar weaving, which until the 1970s was a dying craft has since been revived.

We will then visit an **Organic Farm** located near Ahilya Fort. The farm plays an integral role in the daily preparation of the fort's lunch and dinner menus. Prince Richard Holkar takes pride in offering his guests the freshest and healthiest ingredients possible. The farm boasts ten acres of seasonal fruits and vegetables. Whilst you are at the farm, we can say hello to the animals - oxen, cows, goats, chickens, rabbits. Should you wish, you can also visit a nearby Gaushala, the hospice home for elderly cows just down the road. A charity started by a local Holy Man and funded by wealthy Hindus, the Gaushala protects and shelters over 100 cows. We will have **tea/coffee** and light snacks at the farm.

We will then return to the hotel. The rest of the evening is free for you to enjoy the hotel.

A special dinner will be arranged for you tonight. We will enjoy a beautiful **Candlelight Dinner in the Garden of the Boliya Nobles**. The ancient garden of the Boliya family, the Holkar State's chief nobles, is notable for the beautifully carved chattri of Sardar Boliya, and the smaller, delicate mazaar of his paramour, a Muslim dancing girl. Legend has it that her only wish was that in death she should "be at the feet of her lord and master". Hence, Sardar Boliya ordered that her grave be placed next to his chattri.

Overnight at Ahilya Fort.

Day 5 – 10 October – Maheshwar departure

This morning, before breakfast, you can head down to the palace temple and watch the the Lingarchan puja conducted in the courtyard at 8.30 a.m. This is a practice initiated by Ahilyabai Holkar in 1766 for the well-being of her subjects. River mud from the Narmada is ritually shaped into a thousand miniature Shiva lingas on a wooden board, before being immersed back in the waters.

Then the transfer to Indore airport will be arranged for you as per your flight departure timings.

*** Return with wonderful memories of your trip ***

Price per person on a twin sharing/single basis: Rs 67,900
Single room supplement: Rs 14,900

Inclusions

- Accommodation in the hotels mentioned in this itinerary for 5 nights
- All meals from Lunch on Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 5
- Transport in an-AC vehicle
- Services of a tour escort
- All Entrance fees
- Sightseeing Mandu as mentioned
- Special Village experience & tribal lunch in Mandu
- Special picnic lunch at the Baz Bahadur Palace
- Narmada Boat Ride
- Organic Farm visit with tea/coffee
- A special Candlelight Dinner in the Garden of the Boliya Nobles

Exclusions

- Airfare to Indore & back
- Tips to the driver / guide
- Any alcoholic / non alcoholic drinks
- Personal expenses
- Medical or Travel Insurance
- 5% GST

Please note

- All guests will be required to submit a Covid Negative test report 72 hours prior to the start of the tour
- We need a minimum of 8 guests to operate the tour
- Please note that accommodation in Mandu is simple, but clean.
- Due to various restrictions, we reserve the right to make changes in the plan if required.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience a storytelling lunch on the Nimmatnama
- A Tribal Lunch & Village experience in Mandu
- A beautiful picnic lunch at the Baz Bahadur Palace
- Tea at an Organic Farm
- Interact with Maheshwari Weavers
- A special dinner at the Garden of the Boliya Nobles



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