

Culinary journey into the heart & soul of India

Created by Greaves Travel

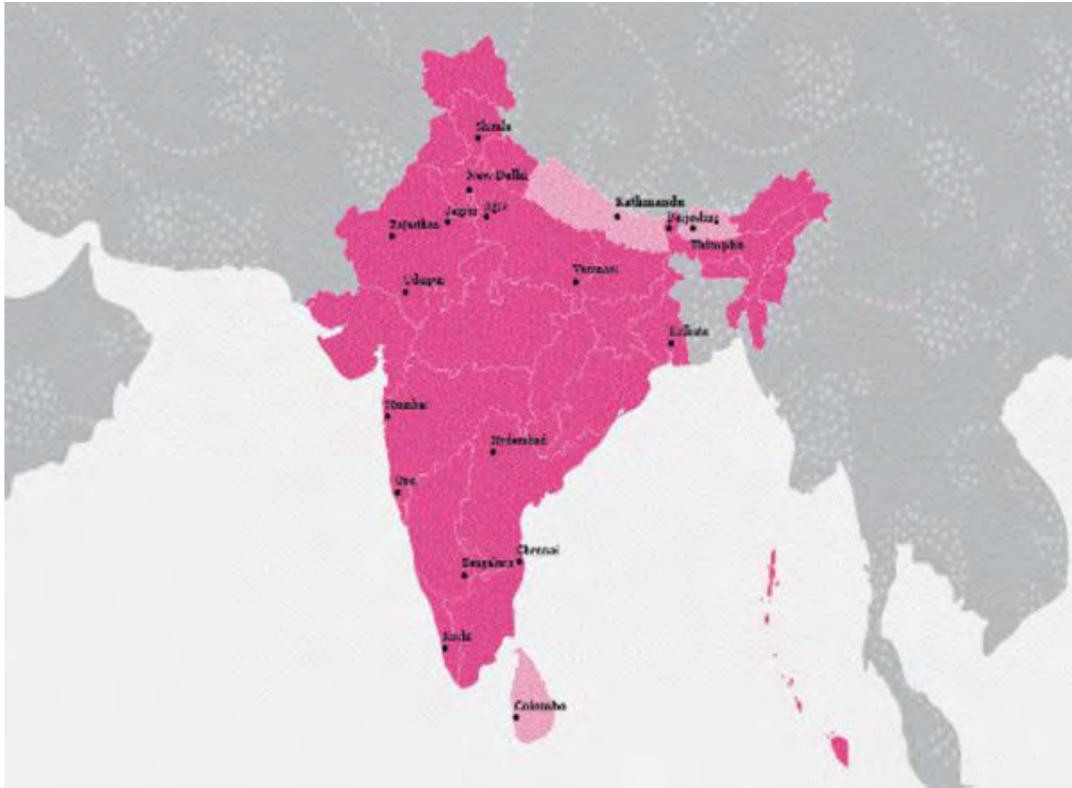
05th – 18th January 2014

GREAVES INDIA





Greaves Travel
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GREAVES TRAVEL

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ITINERARY SUMMARY

India: 05th – 18th January 2014

Sunday 05 January	Depart London
Monday 06 January	Arrive Mumbai – Ahmedabad
Tuesday 07 January	Ahmedabad
Wednesday 08 January	Ahmedabad
Thursday 09 January	Ahmedabad – Delhi
Friday 10 January	Delhi – Amritsar
Saturday 11 January	Amritsar
Sunday 12 January	Amritsar – Delhi – Kolkata
Monday 13 January	Kolkata
Tuesday 14 January	Kolkata
Wednesday 15 January	Kolkata – Hyderabad
Thursday 16 January	Hyderabad
Friday 17 January	Hyderabad
Saturday 18 January	Hyderabad – London



In all its recorded history of over 5000 years, Indian cuisine has evolved from being a rustic, nomadic diet consisting of meat and grains to using the indigenous and imported spices and fresh ingredients to create mouth-watering dishes. This journey has been a fascinating one – and the piecing together of the evolution of Indian cuisine, even more so. From archaeological evidences of tools, remnants of utensils, ancient cave paintings, language analysis to detailed accounts left behind by emperors, traders and travellers all help us understand various influences that have resulted in the Indian food of today. What emerges out of the history of the food is more than just what people eat. Religious beliefs, customs and practices, the historical influences of the invaders are all deeply linked to the food and the eating habits of the people. The fascinating interplay of all these factors have resulted in complexities in Indian cuisine that is taken for granted by locals and often goes unnoticed by visitors. On this tour, the culinary journey of just four cities will bring to the fore the variety and complexity of the cuisine but more importantly, you will get an in-depth view on the culture of the people that is inseparable from the food they eat.



SUNDAY 05 JANUARY:

DEPART LONDON

Depart London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 by British Airways flight **BA 199** at **2135 hours**

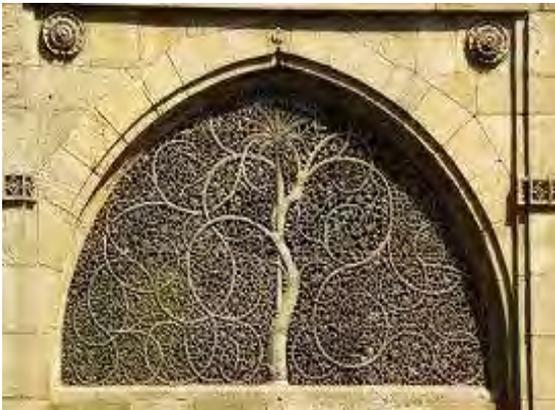
MONDAY 06 JANUARY: ARRIVE MUMBAI – AHMEDABAD

Arrive Mumbai International Airport Terminal 2 at **1125 hours**

On arrival transfer to Mumbai domestic airport to board Jet Airways flight

Flight **9W 321** for Mumbai – Ahmedabad (**1400 / 1505**)

On arrival, transfer to **The House of MG (Deluxe Room)**



Ahmedabad – situated on the banks of the Sabarmati River, the history of Ahmedabad dates back to the early fifteenth century. For centuries the city has been a thriving trading centre especially known for its vibrant textile business. Today, with a population of 6.3 million people, it is the seventh largest metropolis of India stretching its boundaries to satellite towns around. The population consisting of Hindus, Muslims and Jains and was rated in a recent survey as the best city to live in India.

Ahmedabad and Food

This city is clearly obsessed with eating – eating almost round-the-clock and the Ahmedabadis pride themselves on the variety of food that is available in the city. Large meals are interspersed with crunchy snacks and dinner is followed by visits to late night street food stalls for snacks (mispronounced here as ‘snakes’!), which are then chased down by huge helpings of ice cream. Though it has one of the largest vegetarian populations of India, the Muslim community here is equally enthusiastic about non-vegetarian food. Meat filled samosas and a wide variety of kebabs, curries and freshly baked naans are sold from the various outlets in the by-lanes of the walled city, each claiming to be famous for a specific dish.

Without question, this is the best city to start our culinary journey.

Overnight at hotel

TUESDAY 07 JANUARY: AHMEDABAD

0900 – 1100 hours: Visit the Gandhi Ashram



In the peaceful environs of Mahatma Gandhi's home by the banks of the Sabarmati River, we will begin the culinary journey by detailing out the trip's itinerary and giving an overview of Indian food history. Guests will also get a chance to express their expectations from the trip.

1100 – 1300 hours: Visit the Hathising Jain Temple

The Jain religion is one of the oldest in the world, which has over 4 million followers in India. The main principles of the religion rest on the concept of non-violence and renunciation. This is reflected in their food ethos as well which goes well beyond the normal definitions of vegetarianism. Strict Jains avoid any root vegetables and fermented drinks. In one of the most beautiful Jain temples in India, we will hear more about the religion, their beliefs and their customs and practices with regard to food.

After the talk, we will be served a pure Jain meal that has been prepared following the strictest of Jain customs.



1400 – 1700 hours: Visit the Utensils Museum and demonstration of Gujarati Snacks



We will spend about 45 minutes in one of the most unique museums at Vishala where centuries old utensils tell the tale of the evolution of Indian cooking techniques. The collection has utensils from various parts of the country and includes traditional urns, pots, coffee filters to name a few.

After the visit, we will see the creativity used to prepare steamed snacks in this region. Watch nimble fingers roll thin sheets of chickpea flour into khandvi, shaping the swiss roll like paatra using colocasia leaves, smearing rice flour on banana leaves to create the delicate paanki. Learn the process of tempering that is used throughout India to finish a dish and to bring out the most of the flavours of the spices.

1700 – 2000 hours: At leisure

2000 – 2200 hours: Dinner at Agashiye

One of the most popular traditions especially in this part of the region is that of the Thali. While the plate that is used to serve the food in is also referred to by the same name, thali is where a pre-plated meal is served and the guest can enjoy a taste of several dishes. More importantly, this meal reflects the traditional hospitality of the country where care is taken to make sure that the guests' plates are always filled.



Overnight at hotel

WEDNESDAY 08 JANUARY: AHMEDABAD

0800 – 1000 hours: Transfer by road to Modhera Sun Temple en-route visiting Patan
Travel Food

Indians travel across the country on holiday, work or to meet family and relatives. Increasingly, Indians have been keen on travelling outside of the country as well. The Gujarati community is one of the most eager to experience the joys of travelling. This community is well known for their ability to pack delicious home-cooked food even for long journeys and vacations to Europe. Today, while we travel a few hundred kilometres outside of Ahmedabad, we will enjoy the experience of



of eating a packed meal and we will discover that as far as this community is concerned, even while travelling, there can be no compromise on either taste or variety.

0930 – 1015 hours: Visit Modhera Sun Temple



Built in the 11 Century CE, the Sun Temple at Modhera is one of the finest dedications to the Sun God. The temple was built in such a way that the rays of the rising sun on the two solstices would reflect on the forehead of the gold idol that unfortunately was plundered by Mohd Ghazni. While parts of the temple have been destroyed, the remains stand testimony to the magnificence of this region's architecture.

1100 – 1200 hours: Patan Rani ni vav

Patan was the capital of this region during the medieval times and is home to one of the most painstaking weaving techniques called Patola. The town also has a beautiful stepped well that is several storeys deep with intricate carvings on its pillars. For those interested in fabrics, we will make a quick stop at the weavers' homes to watch them carry out the intricate forms of Patola and Mushroom weaving.



1200 – 1400 hours *After a quick visit to the step well, enjoy the picnic lunch cooked by one of the local families. Large tiffin boxes bursting with theplas and aloo ki sabzi and various dry snacks and pickles will be served.*

1400 – 1630 hours: Return back to Ahmedabad

1630 – 1930 hours: At leisure

1930 – 2030 hours: Dinner at Navrangpura

2030 – 2230 hours: Street food walk

In order to get a first hand view of the Gujarati obsession with food, we will take two interesting walks along two almost parallel streets serving completely different kinds of street food. A passionate foodie couple from Ahmedabad will lead this walk. Karishma Pais affectionately called Kim is an omnivorous Christian from Mangalore and has lived in 16 cities across four countries and three continent in the past 15 years. Her husband Brajesh Bajpai comes from a Hindu Brahmin family that is traditionally vegetarian, but his width and range of travel have had him partaking in Naga feasts that include cat & dog meat and sucking snails in Morocco.



This warm hearted couple is passionate about travel, food and photography and has lived in Ahmedabad for the past couple of years and having explored hidden culinary gems.

The walk will start in the Muslim part of the city that serves up the most authentic meat dishes of the region. Meat filled samosas, kebabs, crisp, hot naans from hot ovens, steaming pots from where different meats dishes are served up to the huge crowds of waiting customers. Observe heaps of traditional sweets, local milk shakes of myriad colours and flavours, the sound of clanging of pots and pans, groups of people laughing over shared meals and jokes, mobile stalls inviting you to try their wares. The walk will be a great place to observe the local eating customs as well.



A short ride away is a completely different food scene. A part of town that is a vegetable market in the morning and a jewellery market in the day transforms into a street food lover's paradise after shops shut. This is the vegetarian part of the street food largely patronised by the Jain community. The experience is an assault on the senses: the local chaat stalls teeming with people yelling out their orders of bhel puri, paav bhaaji, the aroma of hot wadas and pakoras being fried in huge kadhais, the din of people gossiping over helpings of kulfi and ice creams. Apart from finding something to eat for everyone, this place is sure to give you a peek into the food obsession of this city.

Overnight at hotel

THURSDAY 09 JANUARY: AHMEDABAD – DELHI

0700 – 1000 hours: Optional Heritage walk in the Old city

1030 – 1200 hours: Visit the Farsaan Factory

Guratis like to snack on savoury sweets throughout the day. The most popular of these snacks are crisp, spiced thin bread called khakhra, sev, phoolwadi and a host of others that are usually bought from speciality stores. We will visit one of the places where these snacks are prepared and sold by a womens' cooperative.

In the 'factory', watch women skilfully roll out thin bread, pass chickpea flour dough through extruders into hot oil and pack huge quantities of these snacks for sale next door. Apart from satisfying your taste buds, this place will also show the role played by women's self help groups and how the ability to cook has played a big role in women's empowerment in this country.

1215 hours: Transfer to Ahmedabad Airport to board Jet Konnect flight

Flight **9W 2122** for Ahmedabad – Delhi (**1430 / 1545**)

(Jet Konnect is a subsidiary airline of Jet Airways and on these flights snacks and drinks are available on purchase)

On arrival, transfer to **The Manor Hotel (Manor Room)**

1900 – 2130 hours: Dinner at Indian Accent

Indian food has been seeing a trend towards modernity and well known chefs are exploring options of creating modern dishes with indigenous products.

There is also a trend towards creating fusion cuisine combining Indian flavours and ingredients with Mediterranean and Western cooking techniques that are making their mark on the high-end restaurant scene.



We will experience a special meal in one of the finest modern Indian restaurants in the country where celebrity Chef, Manish Mehrotra will rustle up an array of dishes that are his own interpretations of Indian dishes combined with flavours and techniques from across the world.

Overnight at hotel

FRIDAY 10 JANUARY:

DELHI – AMRITSAR

0630 hours: Transfer to Delhi Domestic Airport to board Jet Airways flight

Flight **9W 205** for Delhi – Amritsar (**0830 / 0935**)

On arrival, transfer to **Hyatt Hotel (Hyatt Room)**

Note: Hotel check-in is at 1400 hours

Considered to be the spiritual centre of the Sikh religion, Amritsar is situated on the ancient Grand Trunk Road that connected Peshawar in the West to Bangladesh in the East. Life in this city clearly revolves around the Golden Temple located in the middle of the holy lake. This holy place attracts more visitors every day than any other monument in the country.

Amritsar and food



For a true foodie in India, the mere mention of Amritsar conjures up images of creamy lassi, fresh, hot kulchas – a local bread served with lashings of clarified butter, crispy fried tandoori fish, black lentils simmered overnight in large pots and other such rustic delicacies. The region is known for its rich quality of dairy products and combined with the large-heartedness of the Punjabi community is expressed in the region's cuisine through generous calorie filled helpings of paneer, ghee and butter. One visit to the city needs to be compensated with several hours in the gym! Inside the holy environs of the Golden Temple, however, the food is simple and vegetarian in respect of the sensibilities of the people from other communities who partake of the community meal in the temple every day.

The Punjabi community form a large part of the Indian diaspora in the US, Canada and the UK and their food was one of the first to make it to Indian restaurants across the world. Tandoori Chicken, Saag Paneer, Dal Makhni are a few dishes that are omnipresent in all Indian restaurants abroad. On this two-day food journey in Amritsar, you will have a chance to try the real deal in all its native glory.



1100 – 1300 hours: Visit the Golden Temple

One of the beliefs of Sikhism is that of equality where every human being is treated equally without any prejudice to caste, creed, social status or gender. Through the principle of Vand Chakko, the religion lays an emphasis on sharing everything with the community. More than just charity, this term



encompasses sharing of one's time and labour for the good of the community before considering one's own individual benefits. No place is this more clearly evident than in the langar (kitchen) of the Golden Temple where volunteers from the community cook and serve more than a 1,00,000 meals everyday. The food served here is simple, vegetarian and most importantly is served in a large community hall where everyone is seated together irrespective of caste or class.

After a quick tour of the temple, we will have a talk on Sikhism by Gurcharan Singh Aulakh an expert on the teachings of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion. He has also been a part of the armed forces of India and is currently associated with an organization that is engaged in activities aiming to preserve Sikh heritage and culture.

A tour of the kitchen in the temple is one of the most unique food experiences in India. It is a mammoth task to feed the huge number of people that visit the temple everyday. The kitchen runs for almost 20 hours each day and apart from the handful of people employed by the temple authorities, most of the work is done by volunteers. There is no better way to experience this than to be a part of the cooking of the day! After a tour of the kitchen premises including a stop at the automated 'roti' making machine room, we will spend about an hour in the kitchen premises helping with the chores related to the cooking process at that time.



After that, in the true spirit of community eating we will have a meal in the dining hall amidst thousand others.

1330 – 1530 hours: Visit the Organic Farm

India has been cultivating crops, vegetables and fruits for thousands of years and is a leading producer of the world. Most Indians are used to eating fresh, local produce and concepts like the 100 mile radius consumption is almost a given in most parts of the country. However, in the recent years, use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers has made the produce less nutritious and harmful to the body.

There is a growing trend of going back to traditional farming techniques that depend on organic means of growing and protecting the plants and crops. We will visit one such farm in the outskirts of the city and enjoy a good, wholesome meal cooked for us using the fresh vegetables. The farm is associated with an organization that runs a home for the destitute and physically challenged and provides the vegetables needed for the kitchens in the home.

Making of the Tandoor

The word most associated with Indian cooking apart from curry is probably tandoor but few know that the word actually refers to the clay oven that is used for cooking bread as well as meat. Punjab is one of the states where these ovens are present in almost every large home. In many villages, a large version of this is on most of the day and used by everyone as a community oven.

The technique of making this is simple though a tedious one. We will visit the locality where these ovens are shaped from clay and strengthened by mixing coir pieces in. Depending on the size of the oven and the weather conditions, a tandoor can be made in a few hours or could take 3_4 days to make.

1700 – 1830 hours: Visit the Wagah Border

The region of Punjab that literally means ‘the land of five rivers’ encompasses the area around the Indus and its tributaries and stretches over an area between India and Pakistan. The people from this region belong to a warrior race and during colonial times, the British using the policy of Martial Races recruitment policy inducted many of them into their battalions due to their bravery, strength and loyalty. The Punjab Regiment is one of the oldest in the country and after the partition of India the regiments were split, with the one predominantly Muslim one shifting to the Pakistan Army. Despite obvious political tensions between the two countries, the culture of the people especially in this region is very similar. Nowhere are these differences as well as the similarities more obvious than at the border ceremony between the two countries. We will travel to the border village of Wagah that is about half an hour away from Amritsar and witness the elaborate beating retreat border ceremony, which happens every evening. This ceremony has been described as ‘carefully choreographed contempt’ and involves the simultaneous lowering of the flags of both countries and mock theatrics between soldiers from both sides accompanied by vociferous roars from the onlookers on either side of the border.



On the way back to the city, we will stop at a restaurant for dinner near the border and watch the making of various kinds of kebabs in the traditional tandoor.

Overnight at hotel

SATURDAY 11 JANUARY: AMRITSAR

0800 – 1130 hours: An experience of Rural India

Despite the economic growth in recent years centred on industry and therefore the cities, India continues to remain dependent largely on its agricultural economy. Village life remains very different from city life and is much more simple and down to earth. People in the villages are known for their large-hearted hospitality and the modest resources never hold them back from welcoming guests into their simple homes. Punjab villages are also known for the fertility of the land and the images that come to mind are golden mustard fields and tractors carrying fresh produce on a cool misty winter day. At this time of the year, homes are awash with the smell of fresh makai ki roti (corn flatbread) being cooked in a tandoor with generous lashings of butter served with mustard greens.

We will visit a village about an hour and a half away from Amritsar where apart from touring the green fields and local homes, we will get to understand the methods of cooking and traditional cooking utensils used in rural India. We will also get to taste some of the breakfast dishes including chole (spiced chickpeas) and puris (fried bread) that will be prepared in front of us.

1230 – 1330 hours: Visit the Papad making unit

One of the favourite Indian condiments that adds crunch to a meal is the papad or popaddums. Amritsar is a city that is famous for the making of these condiments. Various small scale industries dot the spice markets of the city and the process of making and drying of these is carried out through the day. We will take a walk around the spice market and visit one of these units and watch the process of making of the papads.

1400 – 1630 hours: Visit to an Indian Wedding

Indian weddings are known to be colourful and crazy affairs and a whole lot of fun. Noisy bands playing the eternal Bollywood wedding classics (albeit a little off tune), the wedding party dancing in front of the groom on horseback on their way to the bride's home...it's a scene of chaotic fun! In many communities in India, food plays a role in the rituals as well. The bride



and groom feed each other sweets to seal the union, puffed rice is poured into the fire and clarified butter is used in the holy fire around which the wedding is sanctified. Of course, apart from the actual ceremony, a lot of importance is placed on the food that is served at the wedding. Guests rate the success of the wedding reception based on the number of dishes served and the taste and the bride's family wait nervously for comments from guests on the food.

We will witness a very special wedding first hand and be an active part of the proceedings. Apart from getting a ringside view of the various rituals, we will



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also witness the specialist wedding caterers prepare the special wedding dishes and enjoy a meal afterwards.

Overnight at hotel

SUNDAY 12 JANUARY: AMRITSAR – DELHI – KOLKATA

0845 hours: Transfer to Amritsar to Amritsar Airport to board Air India flight

Flight **AI 111** for Amritsar – Delhi (**1030 / 1150**)

On arrival, further connect with Air India flight

Flight **AI 764** for Delhi – Kolkata (**1700 / 1910**)

Option to have lunch available at the airport (On direct payment)

On arrival, transfer to **The Oberoi Grand Hotel (Deluxe Room)**

One of the largest trading hubs of India, Kolkata was the capital of the British East India Company till 1911 and that is immediately evident in the city's architecture. Situated on the banks on the Hoogly river, Kolkata is a city that is quintessentially British India with a population that prides itself on its culture. Many Bengalis from Kolkata have made huge contributions to Indian literature, poetry, film, drama and sports.

Kolkata and Food

The passion of the people extends to food in a very big way and it is no secret that Bengalis take their food very seriously. Fish, mustard and the creative use of vegetables and spices are central to Bengali cooking and the vast number of sweet shops in the city reveals their love for sweets. Over the centuries, the traditional Bengali cuisine has been influenced first by the Mughals who held sway and later by an incident in history where the Nawab of Lucknow was exiled to Kolkata and came with his retinue of hundreds of cooks and helpers. After the Nawab's death, these cooks were absorbed by the city and many opened their food stalls, thus leaving a fragrant imprint of the Lucknow cuisine in this region. Later, the British influence and the emergence of the Anglo-Indian community led to the development of a different type of cuisine here.

Dinner at a traditional Bengali Home

One of the few cuisines in India that is similar to the French style of service a la russe where the meal is served course-wise rather than all at once, Bengalis pride themselves on the subtlety of flavours as well as in not wasting any available part of the vegetables. Peels, stems, roots of vegetables, fish heads and other parts that is discarded by most are turned into delicious dishes in this region.

Unlike most other Brahmins across the country, the Bengali Brahmins eat fish considering it the 'flower of the ocean'.



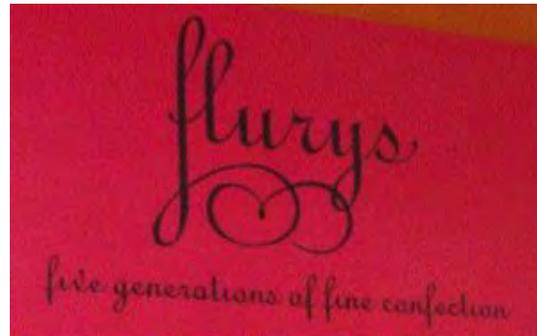
This evening, we will be offered a rare glimpse of the old Calcutta way of life, now sadly endangered. Mr. Surojit 'Bomti' Iyenger, an art collector and socialite, will welcome visitors to his charming flat in perhaps the most interesting heritage building on historic Chowringhee. Authentic and home-cooked Bengali cuisine and stimulating insights into Bengali Art (with some for sale) and Modern Kolkata make up Bomti's salon. The evening will begin with a talk on Hinduism, culture, food, and other traditions of Bengal, culminating in the evenings' highlight - a typically elaborate Bengali dinner with a complete synopsis of the menu.

Overnight at hotel

MONDAY 13 JANUARY: KOLKATA

0800 – 0930 hours: Breakfast at Flury's

Flury's is more than just a landmark tearoom on Park Street in Kolkata. It is perhaps the one of the few places where old world charm is still alive and the atmosphere transports you back to the 1930s British India in a heartbeat. From the time that it was set up in 1920s till today, it remains the classiest tearoom serving the best of continental food in an atmosphere that makes you want to sit back and linger over cups of the finest Darjeeling Tea. It is here, while tucking into a traditional English breakfast that we will begin our culinary journey of the day.



1000 – 1200 hours: Photo walk in Dalhousie

The name may have changed from Dalhousie Square to BBD Bagh but what cannot change is the footprint that the English left on this city. Today, inhabited by over 14 million people, the city is a huge commercial centre. Like anywhere else in the world, food stalls follow crowds and amongst the historical buildings of the British era, we will explore the by-lanes that feed the several thousands who come each day to work in this commercial part of the city.

The food stalls serve a mind-boggling variety of food to cater to the tastes of migrants from across the country who have made Kolkata their home. From the humble kettle of tea and toast over an open flame to the fancy Dhakai Paratha, from greasy fried snacks to healthy cut fruits, the selection is never-ending. Watch fresh food being cooked in cramped spaces and marvel at the organized chaos of the food stalls which aim to please the palates of hundreds of people each day.

This unique food walk, sprinkled with liberal doses of history will be led by Manjit Singh Hoonjan a professional photographer who will help us see the city through different lenses along with giving technical tips on food and monument photography.

1300 – 1500 hours: Indian Chinese

Calcutta's large Chinese community once thrived and made their mark on the city. The first Chinese immigrant is said to have settled in Hooghly district around 1700 CE. In recent years, the community has shrunk in numbers although they have retained their influence over the city's cuisine in a very big way. Street food stalls selling Chinese food are a common sight here and a predominantly Chinese locality called Tangra (new Chinatown) in the city with several restaurants is an automatic choice for any person in the city who wants to get a taste of Chinese food. The older families live in the central part of the city where even today, each morning, a few open-air stalls come up in the heart of Central Kolkata serving dumplings and soup, the traditional Chinese breakfast.



In order to get a better understanding of this community, their cuisine and the 'Indianisation' of Chinese food, we will lunch at a little restaurant that functions in the home of one such Chinese family, located in central Calcutta. The food is typically Indian Chinese cuisine that is now gaining popularity around the world. In simple surroundings, enjoy a meal including specialties like Chimney Soup, Cantonese Noodles, Steamed fresh water fish (whole), and other Indian-Chinese favourites.

1530 – 1730 hours: Private boat cruise on the Hoogly River

We will end the exploration of the city's British past on a relaxing cruise up the Hoogly. We will discover a hitherto unseen side of Kolkata, with a ring-side view of the myriad happenings on the river's 'Ghats'. This was the view that greeted many a nineteenth century adventurer as he stepped up to the Princep's Ghat. We will sail past Belur Math, headquarters of The Ramakrishna Mission, as the city's two huge and famous bridges, Howrah and Vidyasagar Setu pass overhead. It is a wonderfully relaxing end to the day with a sumptuous tea menu comprising popular Indian snacks and refreshing Darjeeling Tea.

Dinner at leisure (price not included)

Overnight at hotel

TUESDAY 14 JANUARY: KOLKATA

Morning food walk in a traditional bazaar

Traditionally, each neighbourhood in Indian cities have the all important bazaar or market, catering to communities residing in the locality. We will visit one of the oldest neighbourhood bazaars in the city – Jaddu Babu Bazar. This locality comprises of Indian communities who settled in Calcutta from the Raj days - Gujaratis, Punjabis and Sikhs, and of course the Bengalis. It is a one stop super market offering almost anything one would require – groceries, household wares, jewellery, shoes, clothes, and a host of other merchandise and amenities.



We will end the walk on a sweet note. Sweets or mishti as it is known, is much the ubiquitous Bengali way of life. In fact, certain famous confections are greatly sort after by a lot of people around India. Numerous sweet shops are situated in almost every locality in the city. One of the oldest specialists -Balaram Mullick Radharaman Mullick established in 1885, have many outlets in Calcutta. One branch is located at Jaddu Babu

Bazar. We will visit this confectionary shop to savour some of Bengal's sweet legacy!

The story of Tea in India

Today, India is one of the largest producers and consumers of tea and therefore it is almost impossible to believe that this beverage was not a part of the Indian kitchen even as late at the 19th century. In the early 20th century, the Indian Tea Association that was under the British embarked on a marketing campaign to introduce tea drinking to the Indian masses so as to increase their market base. Over a period of time, they succeeded beyond their expectations and today some of the best teas in the world come from Darjeeling, the Himalayan region that is situated in the Northern part of the state of West Bengal.

In order to understand more about the history of tea in India, we will visit the offices of one of the oldest family run tea companies. A talk on the origins, the industry and production of tea chronicles this worldwide popular infusion and we will end with a tea tasting session and sample some of the finest teas of this region.

This office building situated on Chowringhee, overlooking the Maidan, the large green area in the middle of the city that are often called the 'lungs of Kolkata' once housed the Army and Navy Stores. We will enjoy the panoramic vista from this special location, together with a scrumptious picnic lunch.



Afternoon optional visit to Kumartuli / Shopping

In the afternoon we will visit Kumartuli or the Potters' Market, where giant life-like religious idols are created for the city's numerous festivals out of river clay, bamboo and straw, and then adorned with elaborate jewellery and clothes, with beautifully painted features. The artisans from this state travel across the country to create life like statues of the various gods and goddesses that are worshipped during the several festivals of the country.

1930 hours onwards: Formal dinner at the Bengal Club



The Bengal Club Ltd. founded in 1827 under the auspices of the British Raj is one of Calcutta's most esteemed and prestigious institutions; membership numbers are limited, keeping the club an exclusive bastion for the business elite. Entry is restricted to Club members and their guests. It was established as a business club under the auspices of the British Raj, and continues to enjoy the patronage of the business and corporate world.

The club prides itself on the food served here and recipes are a closely guarded secret. Here, we will taste the influence of the British translated to the table through food as well as the customs around it and get a slice of what life would have been in those days.

Overnight at hotel

WEDNESDAY 15 JANUARY: KOLKATA – HYDERABAD

0500 hours: Transfer to Kolkata Airport to board IndiGo Airlines flight

Flight **6E 348** for Kolkata – Hyderabad (**0700 / 0900**)

(IndiGo is a no frill airlines and on these flights snacks and drinks are available on purchase)

On arrival, transfer to **Taj Falaknuma Palace Hotel (Luxury Room)**

Note: Hotel check-in is at 1400 hours

It is often said that Hyderabad is to cities what Taj Mahal is to buildings – a monument of love. Both were named to commemorate the respective beloveds – Taj for Mumtaz, Bhagnagar (the original name of Hyderabad) for Bhagmati.



Over several centuries, Hyderabad has become a place that epitomises an enchanting mix of cultures and traditions. You can see this reflected in the architecture, taste it in the cuisine of the region and feel it in the pulse of the city. The city reverberates with stories of Persian kings falling in love with Hindu dancers; Sufi saints spreading their message of universal brotherhood; Muslim rulers granting jagirs to build temples and offering Hindu puja to placate a flooding river; a British Resident risking it all to marry a Muslim noblewoman; Parsis and Arabs all celebrating Hindu festivalsthe stories are endless... In the time that you spend here, we hope that you will feel the wonderful amalgamation of Hyderaabad's lives, hearts and souls.

Food and Hyderabad

Influences of the various dynasties that ruled this region and the use of the local ingredients and spices have created the region's cuisine. Hyderabadi cuisine has borrowed heavily from the Persian and Mughal influences, added the local flavours and evolved a distinctive cuisine. The rest of the state, however, has a cuisine that is different from that of the city. The regions of Andhra on the coast and the inland Rayalseema region have their own cuisine that is very different from the Hyderabadi one.

Lunch at Local Restaurant – Three regions on a plate



While we have seen the differences in cuisines between the four regions of the country, differences are evident in the food within each state as well. In the state of Andhra Pradesh that has three distinctive cuisines, we will explore this in one meal.

We will have lunch in one of the leading restaurants of the city where the chef will lay out a selection of dishes that come from the three different regions and explain the differences between them. The uniqueness of each state is to do with the differences in the staples, spice levels and the use of vegetables that are dictated by geography and history.

Afternoon at leisure OR optional Weavers tour / Shopping tour

Rest of the day at leisure

(Dinner price not included in the tour)

Overnight at hotel

THURSDAY 16 JANUARY: HYDERABAD

Morning the food walk in the Old city

A typical Hyderabadi will spend hours debating the best place to have a cup of Irani tea and friendships have been threatened over arguments of the best Haleem joints in town.

The cuisine of Hyderabad is a result of its history of over four centuries and the involvement with food is more than just to satisfy a basic need; in fact, the right to good food is often taken for granted by the people of this city. On this food walk through the busy vegetable markets and by-lanes of the old city, you will get a glimpse into the food ethos of this region, as well as get a first-hand experience of the Hyderabadi passion for good food.

We will end the food walk in one of the monuments of the city where we will have a special stall set up serving the typical breakfast of this region. Watch

crisp dosas and pesarattus being cooked in front of you and try tasting the local favourite snack - the chilly fritter. Here, we will also meet a local expert who will explain the Islamic food practices and how they have played a role in the evolution of the Indian cuisine.

The Biryani Tour

One of the most popular dishes of Hyderbadi cuisine is the Biryani. Technically speaking, it is just a dish of rice and meat cooked with some spices but it evokes the most passionate emotions among many foodies. A good part of the Indian lifetime is spent hotly debating about which the best Biryani and wondering about its origins.

This tour will reveal the delectable path that this dish has taken across the different parts of India.

On this tour, we will get a detailed cooking lesson on the making of a biryani and enjoy a sumptuous meal with one of the traditional families in Hyderabad.

Palace Tour and Optional High Tea at the Falaknuma (High Tea price not included)

Falaknuma Palace, one of the most luxurious Palace hotels in India opened in 2009 after over a decade of painstaking restoration work. The Palace that was built in the late 19th century is shaped like a scorpion and has an eclectic mix of Western and Indian architectural styles and reflects the grandeur of another era associated with the Nizams, be it though the magnificent Venetian glass chandeliers above you or the peacocks roaming around in the sprawling gardens around the Palace.

After a tour of the Palace, we will end at the Gol Bungalow where the English influence in the city of Hyderabad can be experienced through the Palace High Tea. While enjoying the beautiful view of the city below, try out the delicacies of the past that have been transformed into gourmet bites by a highly qualified team at the Palace.

Post the high tea, you can relax and enjoy the royal surroundings of the Palace.

Dinner at leisure (Price not included)



Overnight at hotel



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FRIDAY 17 JANUARY: HYDERABAD

0900 – 1200 hours: A la Carte cooking lesson (Price not included)

After a ten day culinary journey, the group will be given cooking lesson options which will then be taught to them by the local expert home cooks. You could choose to learn North Indian dishes like the Dal Makhni, Matar Paneer and the breads or South Indian coconut based gravies and a variety of rice and chutneys.

1300 – 1430 hours: Fasting Or is it Feasting?!

For some Hindu communities, fasting during certain festivals is a usual custom. But certain fasts allow the consumption of fruits and vegetables. These communities have transformed these into complete meals that they enjoy during their 'fast'!

We will visit a beautiful home of one of these families in the heart of the Old City where we will sample some of these dishes. Over cups of hot masala tea, the hostess will describe the role of women during these festivals and the food traditions associated with them. The hostess is also a well known designer and you will get a chance to see some of her work being done in the workshops within the haveli.

1430 – 2000 hours: At leisure

2000 – 2230 hours: Special farewell dinner

Overnight at hotel

SATURDAY 18 JANUARY: HYDERABAD – LONDON

0345 hours: Transfer to Hyderabad International Airport to British Airways flight **BA 276** departing at **0655 hours**, arriving London Heathrow Airport Terminal 5 at **1215 hours**

*****End of Tour*****

PLEASE NOTE ALL FLIGHT TIMINGS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

The check-in time at hotel is 1400 hours and check out time is 1200 noon (unless otherwise specified in the itinerary)

We can approach the hotel for early / late check in / check out where required but we can only request this and it is subject to availability and hotel policy.



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This quotation has been prepared for the people named on the itinerary and not available if purchased through a travel agent.

COSTS:

From and subject to flight availability:

£5,750.00 Per Person staying in double/twin room

£6,900.00 for Person staying in a single room

THE ABOVE COST INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

- Return adult airfare on British Airways in World Traveller (Economy class) (Supplement for First, Club World or World Traveller Plus class on request)
- UK and Indian departure taxes and Passenger Service Charge
- Economy class domestic airfare using Jet Airways, Jet Konnect, Air India and IndiGo airlines flight for Mumbai – Ahmedabad, Ahmedabad – Delhi, Delhi – Amritsar, Amritsar – Delhi, Delhi – Kolkata and Kolkata Hyderabad sectors
- Hotel accommodation staying in single/double rooms on room with breakfast at all hotels (**Buffet or fixed menu breakfast in the restaurant**)
- All costs related to the expert tour companion and resource persons in the various cities
- All transportation in air-conditioned Toyota Innovas
- All meal costs unless otherwise mentioned in the itinerary
- Cost of all the food related experiences
- Entry tickets to monuments etc wherever applicable
- All tips & gratuities
- All applicable local taxes

THE ABOVE COSTS DO NOT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Meals except where stated, telephone, laundry or any personal items
 - Any changes you may choose to make during your holiday
 - India visa charges (currently **£150.00 Per Person** – including admin and courier charges, subject to change)
 - Travel insurance
 - Any surcharge levied on payment by Credit Cards (details on our booking form)
 - 01 dinner in Kolkata and 02 dinners in Hyderabad
 - A la Carte cooking lesson in Hyderabad
 - 01 high tea at Taj Falaknuma Palace Hotel in Hyderabad
 - Any additional optional experiences that are mentioned clearly in the itinerary
 - Any other experience/tour that is not mentioned in the itinerary
-



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***Supplement costs for superior room categories and for suites are available on request*

We can arrange visas only for British passport holders.

The prices quoted are subject to change and will be confirmed at the time of booking.

Please be advised that no flight or hotels have as yet been confirmed. We strongly suggest that you confirm this itinerary as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.