



Welcome to Rajasthan, Delhi & Agra

The Golden Triangle

This book's first steps take in the famous Golden Triangle, a traveller's trigonometric survey of emblematic India. It starts at the daunting mega-metropolis of Delhi with its majestic Mughal heritage, and then directs you to Agra, where one of the world's most famous tombs, the Taj Mahal, defines a city. The third apex is the gateway to Rajasthan, Jaipur – a city painted pink with the Palace of the Winds and some of the most colourful bazaars in India. From here, the rest of Rajasthan beckons. The colours of this region are impossible to ignore and the effect of emerald green, canary yellow and fire-engine red turbans and saris is simply dazzling. Rajasthan is

India's major drawcard and once you step into a palace, stare up at a fort or see your first lac bangle being made, you will soon appreciate why this is so.

Magnificent Monuments

Most travellers to this region will arrive by air in the nation's capital. Delhi is an overwhelming, bursting-at-the-seams city that still manages to charm visitors with its magnificent heritage and heady cocktail of old and new. The former capital of Shahjahanabad, the seventh city on this ancient site, anchors the Old City with its massive Red Fort while evocative tombs of empires past are islands in the sprawl of New Delhi. A short train journey to the south, the Taj



OPEN HARVEY

Against a backdrop of desert sands, fairy-tale palaces and massive forts, modern and traditional India puts on its greatest show. From elephant rides to colourful festivals, this is India at its high-definition, surround-sound best.

(left) Jagdish Temple (p201), Udaipur
(below) Image of the goddess Parvati, Mewar Festival (p177)



KIMBERLEY COOLE

Mahal lives up to its hype with its perfect proportions and marble tones. For many, though, it's Agra's red-stone fort and its sorrowful gaze across the Yamuna River towards the Taj Mahal that captures their imagination.

Land of Kings

Rajasthan is literally the Land of the Kings. It is home to the chivalrous Rajputs, and its battle-scarred heritage has bestowed legacies of pride and tradition. The upper echelons of this medieval society built magnificent palaces and forts, many of which are now glorious hotels and museums. In addition, stunning handicrafts and fine arts were developed

and nurtured through patronage of the maharajas. At the other end, village Rajasthan is so steeped in tradition that it has been one of the slowest segments of Indian society to modernise. But, just like the rest of India, the pace of change is ever accelerating. Witnessing turbaned men bartering for decorated camels brings history to life, even if the successful deal is relayed home by a mobile phone. Snapshots of the everyday in Rajasthan capture India at its most evocative – the twirl of a moustache, a veiled glance or a puff of blue hashish smoke. It will fill your memory card many times over.