



HIDDEN TREASURES OF GUJARAT MUMBAI TO MUMBAI - 8 Days / 7 Nights

Mumbai - Vadodara - Palitana - Sasan Gir & Somnath- Little Rann of Kutch - Modhera & Patan - Nashik - Mumbai

Welcome to Hidden Treasures of Gujarat, a spellbinding railroad journey on board the iconic Deccan Odyssey, one of India's most luxurious and opulent trains. On this exciting journey through Gujarat, India's most westerly state, explore the medieval capital of Vadodara and the pilgrim town of Palitana. Discover the pugmarks of history at the only sanctuary of Asiatic Lions in the Subcontinent; marvel at the unique featureless landscape of the Little Rann; wander through the architectural wonders of Modhera and visit the holy city of Nashik, before culminating your journey in the financial city, Mumbai.

Day 1 Saturday

Board the Deccan Odyssey at Mumbai – on to Vadodara

Welcome aboard the Deccan Odyssey.

Early this evening, assemble at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus at approximately 1530 hours to complete the registration process and check in formalities for your *Hidden Treasures of Gujarat* journey, as you receive a traditional Indian welcome and enjoy a refreshing welcome drink.

After completion of all formalities, you will be shown to your delightful cabins. As you settle in, the Deccan Odyssey shall depart Mumbai for Vadodara.

Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 2 Sunday

Vadodara

As you enjoy breakfast this morning the Deccan Odyssey arrives at the capital of the Gaekwads - Vadodara, located along the seasonal river Vishwamitri.

Breakfast over, you will disembark and proceed to visit Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site and the only complete and unchanged pre-Mughal Islamic city in India. This concentration of largely unexcavated archaeological, historic and living cultural heritage properties is cradled in an impressive landscape. Marvel at the Jami Masjid (Great Mosque) built in 1513 representing a perfect blend of Hindu and Muslim architecture which was a model for later mosque architecture in India.

Drive back to Vadodara for a leisurely lunch on board the Deccan Odyssey.

After lunch, you will visit the Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum, originally constructed as a school for the Maharaja's children. Today, art lovers can view a large number of works of art displayed in the museum including a collection of the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma and other renowned European Masters as well as a collection of sculptures in marble and bronze.

Enjoy high tea at the resplendent Laxmi Vilas Palace, built in 1890, and the residence of the Royal family even today. Reputedly four times the size of Buckingham Palace, its overwhelming Durbar Hall boasts a Venetian mosaic floor, Belgian stained glass windows and walls with intricate mosaic decorations. The palace also houses a remarkable collection of old armoury and sculptures in bronze, marble & terracotta by Fellici. Witness a folk performance typical of the region as you savour some of the special delicacies from the Royal kitchens.

Return to the Deccan Odyssey for dinner as it departs for Palitana.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner onboard; High tea at Laxmi Vilas Palace

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 3 Monday

Palitana

Rise early this morning and after breakfast head out to explore one of the world's largest temple complexes, Palitana, famed for its spectacular cluster of Jain temples exquisitely carved in marble.

Spend the day exploring the most significant of the over 900 temples located on a hilltop at Palitana - considered to be the most sacred pilgrimage of the Jains.

After a full morning with the Jain Tirthankars, return to the Deccan Odyssey for a sumptuous lunch as it makes its way to Sasan Gir, the sole home of the Asiatic Lion.

The afternoon is at leisure for you to relax and enjoy some of the activities available on board. Watch a movie, learn the rules of 'carrom', a popular Indian board game, from a Deccan Odyssey team member or book yourself a relaxing massage in our spa on board.

Relax and watch the tapestry of rural India unfold as you sip a sun downer before dinner.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 4 Tuesday

Sasan Gir - Somnath

Wake up to a golden dawn and after an early breakfast, disembark for your drive to Sasan Gir - The Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary. A guide will accompany you for your morning game drive into the Gir forest; keep your fingers crossed for a sighting of the majestic and extremely rare Asiatic lion! Experience the magic of the wild all around you as you venture deep into this natural habitat, with everything from tiny wild birds, not easily seen, but heard, singing in the forest canopy, to crocodiles sunning themselves in marshy waters.

After the excitement of the morning, enjoy a relaxed lunch followed by a tribal dance at the Gateway hotel before proceeding to the Somnath temple.

Watch the vibrant village panorama unfold as you drive to one of the 12 Jyotirlingas (manifestations of Lord Shiva) of India, housed in the beautiful Somnath temple. Located on the shores of Arabian Sea, Somnath, first said to be built in 4th century AD, is positioned such that there is no land mass between it and the Antarctic. The temple has been destroyed, looted and rebuilt several times.

As the afternoon melts into evening, soak in the view of Somnath temple bathed in the hues of the setting sun. Return to the Deccan Odyssey and unwind with a drink before dinner on board, as you set off for the Little Rann of Kutch.

Breakfast on board; Lunch at the Gateway hotel, Gir forest; Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 5 Wednesday

Little Rann of Kutch

Breakfast at the first blush of dawn today as the Deccan Odyssey pulls into the Viramgam station where you will disembark to drive to a stop over point and transfer to jeeps for a safari into the deceptively named Little Rann of Kutch.

The Rann is a seasonal salt marsh, the largest in the world at over 7500 sq. km, a saline desert where the dry air whips your face, mirages abound and parched earth unfolds as far as the eye can see. During the monsoons, these arid flatlands fill with water creating a still, salty sea.

Explore the Rann on your jeep safari; the Wild Ass Sanctuary here is one of the few places to spot the *ghudkar*, or Indian wild ass. Other species here include the desert fox, jungle cat, jackal and several birds. Since there is virtually no vegetation for animals to hide behind, they are easy to spot while driving around.

After your visit to the sanctuary, lunch will be at the Rann Riders Resort with time to relax and refresh yourselves. Enjoy the regional specialties of the Maliks of Rann, and delicious Gujarati fare in this charming resort surrounded by the desert.

Spend some time walking around and meeting the other species of the lodge which include the unique to the region Marwari and Kathiawari horses.

Later, drive out for a village safari to meet the varied communities that call the Rann their home. You will find the Agarias, salt-panners, hard at work drying out the salt. Visit the homes of the Rabari tribe and experience their way of life. Another interesting aspect to look out for are the beaded bangles made by the Mirs of Dasada. Continue to a local school where you will be greeted by enthusiastic children eager to share information about themselves and learn about your part of the world.

Having taken in your share of this great white vastness, return to the Deccan Odyssey for dinner and head for Patan.

Breakfast & Dinner on board; Lunch at the Rann Riders Safari Resort.

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 6 Thursday

Modhera - Patan

This morning the Deccan Odyssey rolls into Patan, the 8th century fortified town, the capital of Gujarat in medieval times.

Breakfast over, disembark and drive to the sun temple at Modhera. This grand, awe-inspiring 11th century sandstone monument was built by the Solanki dynasty and is dedicated to the sun god. The complex is full of elaborate carvings and the resident priest enjoys explaining the legends they depict. A step tank in front of the temple has 108 shrines that lead down to the water.

After visiting the sun temple, drive to Patan to visit the lovely 11th century step well called Rani ki Vav, a fine example of subterranean well architecture. Walk down into the depths of this extravagant step well, one of the biggest in Gujarat, passing hundreds of delicate carvings and statues of Parvati, Shiva, Vishnu and other gods etched into its side walls. It is evident that this well was constructed not just to store water but was also a site for worship and community gatherings.

Thereafter, visit Patola house, the centre of the Salvi family's traditional craft, the creating of exquisite silk Patola sarees. Weavers since the 12th century, the Salvi's have enjoyed the patronage of the royalty of Gujarat as the sarees created by them have gained the reputation of works of art.

Having visited Patola house, drive back to the Deccan Odyssey for lunch on board. The afternoon is at leisure as you proceed towards Nashik.

In the evening watch the tapestry of rural India unfold as you sip a sun downer before dinner.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 7 Nashik**Friday**

This morning the Deccan Odyssey brings you to the holy city of Nashik, which is rapidly gaining the status of being the wine capital of the country.

After breakfast, disembark for an active start to your morning as you head to Pandu Leni - considered one of the most ancient Jain and Buddhist cave temples in India. Some of this set of 24 caves, date back to 1st century BC and others are from a more recent period like 13th century AD. After your climb down from the caves, drive to the Grover Zampa vineyards for an exclusive tour of one of the finest Indian wine producing facilities. Walk through vines laden with Chenin, Chardonnay and Shiraz grapes. Be taken through the age old '*méthode traditionnelle*' used to make one of the best known brands of sparkling wines in India. Allow the sommelier to acquaint your taste buds with their finest creations of white, red, rose and sparkling wines and experiment pairing them with your meal at the vineyards.

Return to the Deccan Odyssey for lunch, and relax for a while.

In the evening, disembark once more for a walk along the Godavari Ghats; observe the various Hindu rituals related to birth, death and initiation being performed here.

Once again, return back to the Deccan Odyssey for dinner as it rolls towards it's ultimate destination - Mumbai

Breakfast, Lunch at the vineyard, Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 8 Disembark in Mumbai**Saturday**

Early this morning, after breakfast, you will disembark at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus Railway Station, Mumbai.

Bid farewell to the Deccan Odyssey as your royal passage through the grand vistas of India comes to an end.
