



RIDE WORLD WIDE INDIA 2024-2025

RIDE INFORMATION

These rides take place in Rajasthan, west of Delhi, a geographically varied area comprising the Thar Desert, the Aravalli mountains and large areas of semi-desert scrub. Historically this is one of India's richest regions. It includes the former kingdom of Marwar, the capital of which was Jodhpur and is dotted with ancient forts and magnificent palaces that were the private homes of royal princes. Rides are organised with Raghuvendra Singh, known as 'Bonnie', an ex-Indian army officer and now one of India's top breeders of Marwari horses as well as an accomplished polo player. Bonnie has a stable of 30 or so horses at his family home, Dundlod Fort which is the starting point for most rides. He is a knowledgeable, charismatic guide and together with his excellent team of staff, will show you the whole spectrum of life in Rajasthan. From the peasant farmers who eke out a living in the dusty scrub and desert, the simple, traditional subsistence villages you ride past, to the splendid, privileged life of the royal princes and ancient aristocratic families whose historic homes open their doors to you. The combination of Bonnie's wonderful horses and horsemanship, the insiders' knowledge and connections within the country, and a thorough understanding of the expectations of overseas visitors, mean you are in the best possible hands to see this part of Rajasthan.



DATES

Rides are arranged from set dates between November and February for 11 to 15 nights with tailor-made trips (for 2 or more), and shorter itineraries possible on request. Please see the dates overleaf and call us to discuss plans and availability. Extensions can easily be added to any ride itinerary with lots of options possible - a day or two to see the iconic Taj Mahal (included in some itineraries), a visit to one of India's wildlife reserves to search for tigers or some time on the beach in Goa or the southern state of Kerala.

HORSES

The horses used are from Bonnie's private stables and are mainly pure-bred native Marwari horses (an elegant, spirited breed with lovely 'bell' shaped ears) or Kathiawari horses, with some Thoroughbred crosses. Many have been home bred and are used for endurance competitions, tent pegging and polo. Most are between 15hh and 16hh. They are slight and generally narrower in build and quite a bit thinner than horses in the west but are athletic, energetic and forward going. They are also responsive and sensitive yet sensible, brave and calm making them a real pleasure to ride and most are trained to neck rein like polo ponies.

TACK

Military saddles (based on an English style but with a short leg panel) are used and saddle-bags are provided where necessary.



RIDING

Most itineraries are a combination of riding and sightseeing as there is so much to see in this part of India. Itineraries usually include 6 days with about 4 to 6 hours in the saddle each riding day. There are breaks to stretch your legs or if the terrain requires to lead your horse, and also for lunch and sightseeing. The daily riding programme varies a little with the route and time of year. Rides are lead by Bonnie himself or by one of his English speaking colleagues, accompanied by a local back-up rider, whilst grooms follow by jeep to attend the horses during the ride, at night and at lunch stops. The back-up team is lead by the wonderful Sunayana (who manages Dundlod and the camps). Group size depends on the trip but will be a maximum of 10 to 14 guests.

WEIGHT LIMIT

The rider weight limit is about 95kg (15 stone) but please contact us if you are close to this to ensure suitable horses are available. Some heavier riders may be taken by prior arrangement.



PACE

The riding pace varies with the terrain and itinerary chosen, but the rides are usually at a well balanced, moderate pace overall with plenty of good opportunities for fast canters on sandy going, where the horses can spread out. As is the army habit in India, most of the riding is at a walk or canter, with many of the horses used to moving directly from walk into canter. The pace on tailor-made rides can be varied to suit.

RIDING EXPERIENCE

Rides are aimed at reasonably experienced, confident riders. To take part you should be comfortable, balanced and secure in the saddle and able to control a well-schooled horse in open country at a walk, trot and fast canter. Marwari horses are naturally a fairly spirited, sensitive breed (like a small English Thoroughbred) and participants should be confident, relaxed riders, used to riding different, forward going horses outside, through varied terrain and environments. You will also enjoy your trip much more if you are fairly riding fit - some rides include quite long hours in the saddle and long, fast canters as a group over varied terrain. If you do not ride regularly at home, we recommend concentrated practice in the months before you go to get accustomed to the riding hours.



TERRAIN

The rides take you through the open, sandy, desert-like scrub of Marwar where the terrain is generally excellent for riding - largely flat with sandy tracks bordered by sand dunes, rough scrub, acacia and Khejri trees. You will also ride through rural farmland (again largely on flat, sandy going) where crops of millet, wheat and chick-peas are grown by local farmers who work the land with cattle and camels. Early in the season, before the crops are harvested, you will ride along dirt and sand tracks and around the fields; after the Diwali festival in early November, when the crops have been harvested, there is more scope to cut across ploughed fields. In the countryside there are chances to see game such as Black Buck, Chinkara deer and Nilgai antelope, the largest of India's antelope. On all rides you pass through small villages, settlements and larger towns, on dirt or tarmac roads, watching local people as they carry on with their everyday lives. You also ride past monuments and temples, see local women and children collecting water at village wells and men and women working in the fields. The local people especially the children, are very friendly and love to watch the horses pass.



ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation on the rides is in a combination of hotels, ancient Forts and 'Havelis' (merchants houses) that have been converted to hotels, other comfortable hotels or in private tented camps set up for you by staff. Some hotels were once private palaces and are renowned for their unique setting, imposing architecture and wonderful (though often faded) grandeur. Udaipur's floating Lake Palace Hotel is probably the best known, but Rajasthan is full of lesser known, charming and often intricately built forts, castles and palaces, many of which are now used as hotels.



Most rides start with a night or two at Dundlod Fort, Bonnie's family home, and an imposing building dating back to the 1700s. Sadly the Fort itself is now rather dilapidated and run down, but it is an interesting place to stay giving a real insight into how the old Indian families used to live. It has a large central grass courtyard and an attractive pillared reception area, decorated with frescos and colourful carpets. There is a good sized dining room and another attractive, walled courtyard, often hung with colourful banners, that is used as an atmospheric outside dining hall. Winding staircases lead through thick walls to the various guest bedrooms, all of which are different. Bedrooms are simple each with its own small bathroom with flush loo and rudimentary shower (a pipe with shower attachment on the wall, open to the room (not enclosed in a separate shower unit) with water draining along the tiled floor). Beds are fairly narrow / small with traditional mattresses - these seem thin and hard at first but generally give a good nights sleep! Bedrooms at the other smaller hotels are also often simple, in similar style and although plumbing and décor can be tired, hotels are carefully chosen and all are different with a particular highlight such as a beautiful building, setting or wonderfully personalised atmosphere to make up for this.



Some of the bigger hotels are luxurious and newly renovated, with magnificent reception and dining halls, swimming pools and gardens and several offer extras such as Ayurvedic massages and spa treatments. All hotel rooms have private bathroom with loo and shower or bath. Hot / running water and electricity is reliable in most, although bear in mind that services in rural India are not as reliable or sophisticated as in the west and occasionally supplies may be limited or interrupted. When camps are set up, large, round, walk-in tents are used with comfortable camp beds, bed-side tables and fold up chairs or stools provided. There is a separate portable shower and loo unit(s) shared between guests and sometimes the camp is set up in the ramparts of an ancient fort or building so there will be a good water supply and flush loos nearby. Rates assume twin-shared accommodation but single rooms / tents are usually possible at a supplement. If you are travelling alone you will need to book a single room (and pay the supplement) unless you are prepared to share with another guest AND we definitely have someone to share with you.

MEALS

The food on the rides is good and great care is taken in its preparation. Meals are a combination of local and European food, with spicy local dishes toned down to suit western palates. The day may start with a breakfast of cereal or porridge, toast and eggs if you wish, served with tea, coffee or fruit juice. Lunch, is often a hot buffet-style picnic whilst you are out riding, with a choice of local dishes such as soup, rice and various curries, samosas, chapattis and lentil dahl. It is generally served from a table, then eaten seated on small fold-up chairs set around a large picnic mat. Dinner, again often buffet style, is a chance to taste some of the more elaborate specialities of the region and is either eaten at your hotel, or when camping, at a long table or around a camp fire. Some bottled mineral water is included (one bottle per person per day - the limit is to discourage waste and that it is used, rather than being thrown if slightly warm for example!) and further supplies as well as beer, wine and a selection of soft drinks can be bought for an extra charge. Although Indian wine is not the best and is quite expensive, the local beers are excellent!



WEATHER

Rides are run during Rajasthan's winter and spring months. December and January are winter and days are usually dry, sunny and, except in windy weather, warm enough for shirtsleeves with average daytime temperatures in the 20s C. It can be cold at night however, particularly in the desert, with temperatures sometimes dropping to freezing. March is the start of spring and hot weather usually sets in towards the end of March / April. In early March days are warm to hot, although you may need a light pullover at night. October is usually quite hot

WHAT TO BRING

We will send you a list when you book

ITINERARIES

Various itineraries are offered from set dates and tailor-made rides can be arranged on request to suit. A brief summary of the rides can be found below but **please contact us for detailed day by day itineraries** of each individual ride. Please note that several itineraries include sightseeing and visits before or after the riding to make a more complete program. It usually possible to cut some of the extra days if, for instance, you have already visited the Taj Mahal. Please contact us to discuss your preferences.



Marwar Festival Ride (12 nights, with Jaisalmer & Jodhpur visit)

Begins with 2 nights in Delhi then fly to Jodhpur and transfer to Nagaur, followed by 6 days riding through the desert to Osian. Nights in tented camps, forts and hotels. After riding the itinerary includes visits to Jaisalmer & Jodhpur.

Shekawati Haveli Ride (11 nights, with Jaipur & Taj Mahal visit)

Begins with a night in Delhi then transfer to stables at Dundlod Fort, followed by 6 days riding through the Shekhawati region. Nights in tented camps, privately owned forts and hotels. After riding the itinerary includes visits to Jaipur, Agra and the Taj Mahal.

Diwali Festival Ride with Pushkar Fair (13 nights, with Pushkar Fair, Jaipur & Taj Mahal visit)

Begins with a night in Delhi then transfer to stables at Dundlod Fort, followed by 6 days riding through the Shekhawati region. Nights in tented camps, privately owned forts and hotels. After riding the itinerary includes 2 nights at the Pushkar Fair and visits to Jaipur, Agra and the Taj Mahal.

Pushkar Fair Ride (14 nights with Ranthambore Tiger Sanctuary, 13 nights without Ranthambore)

A ride to coincide with the famous Pushkar Camel Fair, this itinerary begins with 2 nights in Delhi, then a visit to Ranthambore Tiger Sanctuary in Rajasthan. You will then transfer to Pushkar to meet the horses and visit the Camel Fair before transferring to the stables at Dundlod, then 6 full riding days. The programme ends with a transfer to Jaipur for 2 nights, then a night in Agra to visit the Taj Mahal.



Christmas Ride (13 nights with visit to Jaipur)

Beginning with a night in Delhi then transfer to Dundlod Fort, 9 full days riding through the Shekhawati and Marwar regions. New Year's Eve at the lovely Alsisar Fort and you then visit Jaipur for a night with the final night back in Delhi.



DATES & RATES 2024-2025

Please note that due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, ride rates are quoted in US\$. The sterling price will be the equivalent sterling rate using the US\$/sterling exchange rate in force when you book/pay.

Marwar Festival Ride (12 nights with Jaisalmer & Jodhpur visit)
9th to 21st October 2024
Rate: US\$ 4475 per person (single room supplement US\$1190)

Shekawati Haveli Ride (11 nights with Jaipur & Taj Mahal visit)
22nd October to 2nd November 2024
Rate: US\$ 3995 per person (single room supplement US\$880)

Diwali Festival & Pushkar Fair Ride (13 nights with Taj Mahal or 11 nights without)
31st October to 13th November 2024
Rate: US\$ 4525 per person (single room supplement US\$1130)
31st October to 11th November 2024
Rate: US\$ 4145 per person (single room supplement US\$985)

Pushkar Fair (with Ranthambore Tiger Sanctuary) (15 nights with Ranthambore, 14 nights without)
8th to 23rd November 2024
Rate: US\$ 4725 per person (single room supplement US\$1145)
9th to 23rd November 2024
Rate: US\$ 4405 per person (single room supplement US\$1115)

Christmas Ride (13 nights)
21st December 2024 to 3rd January 2025
Rate: US\$ 4365 per person (single room supplement US\$990)

Rates assume a minimum of 8 and maximum of 14 riders. They are based on twin accommodation and **INCLUDE** all riding, meals except lunch in cities (Delhi, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Jaipur and Agra), mineral water when riding (one bottle a day), sightseeing, some monument entrances and the services of an English speaking guide.

They **EXCLUDE** international flights to Delhi and taxes, lunch in the cities (Delhi / Jaipur / Agra / Jodhpur), personal medical / travel insurance (which you must have), any camera fees, visa fees and items of personal nature such as tips, laundry, your bar bill etc.



Tailormade and Private rides

Private or tailor-made rides can be arranged on request from dates to suit between October and March (subject to hotel, guide and horse availability). Please call to discuss. Rates depend on the number of riders and the hotels used; there is generally some flexibility.

FLIGHTS & TRAVEL INFORMATION cont.

The meeting point for all rides is Delhi where the first night is usually spent so you can arrive at any time on the first day. On MOST rides you return to Delhi by internal flight or transfer in the late afternoon / early evening of the last day so flights out should be late evening on the last day. Please liaise with us before making travel plans

There are direct flights from London to Delhi with British Airways, Virgin, Air India and Vistara. Rates vary with the season and airline but expect to pay between £600 and £900 per person for an economy return. **Please call us if you would like further information on flights. (Our ATOL number for flight bookings is 6213)**

GENERAL VISA & HEALTH INFORMATION

(NB this is a brief outline - further information will be sent to you if you make a confirmed booking)

Visas British Passport holders require a visa to visit India and you will need to arrange this in advance either by applying for an e-visa, or by applications to VF Services (UK) Limited (the Indian High Commission now out-sources visa applications). Online applications take about a week to process plus postal time. We will send more visa information on receipt of your booking form.

Health No inoculations are legally required for India if travelling from Europe but the TravelHealthPro website (NaTHNaC) recommends most travellers are up to date with inoculations against Tetanus, Typhoid and Hepatitis A. Inoculations against Cholera, Hepatitis B, Japanese Encephalitis, Tuberculosis and Rabies may also be recommended in some cases. Although parts of India are high risk for Malaria, most of Rajasthan is rated low risk. You may still be advised to take anti-Malaria tablets however and should consult a health professional for further and more detailed advice.

(DRAFT 14/09/2024)

