

# Paulist Pilgrimages

*Meaningful Journeys for Today's Traveler*

## The Spirit of India

*February 9-March 2, 2017*



\$3599 LAND ONLY

\$125 TIPS / \$400 REGIONAL AIR

International Airfare: \$990

Single supplement: \$1600

# Paulist Pilgrimages

## The Spirit of India

*February 9 - March 2, 201*

### ITINERARY

#### 10 FEB 2017: ARRIVE DELHI

Arrive Delhi International airport. Meet and assist by our representative and transfer to your hotel.

Delhi is the eighth largest metropolis in the world by population with 16,753,235 inhabitants in the Territory at the 2011 Census. There are nearly 22.2 million residents in the greater National Capital Region urban area. Owing to the migration of people from across the country, Delhi has grown to be a multicultural, cosmopolitan metropolis. Its rapid development and urbanization, coupled with the relatively high average income of its population, has transformed Delhi into a major cultural, political, and commercial centre of India.

Relax for rest of the day to recover from Jetlag. Overnight at Delhi.



#### Hotel: Vivanta by Taj

Meals: Dinner only

#### 11 FEB 2017: DELHI

Morning after breakfast you may proceed for a sightseeing tour of Old Delhi visiting Red Fort, Jama Masjid, Chandni Chowk, Raj Ghat, Shantivan etc.



**Red Fort:** The Red Fort was the residence of the Mughal emperors of India for nearly 200 years, until 1857. It is located in the centre of Delhi and houses a number of museums. In addition to accommodating the emperors and their households, it was the ceremonial and political centre of Mughal government and the setting for events critically impacting the region.

Shahjahanabad. Created by the builder of Taj Mahal, this city, with the Red Fort as the focal point and Jama Masjid as the praying centre, has a fascinating market planned to shine under the light of the moon, called Chandni Chowk. Shahjahan planned Chandni Chowk so that his daughter could shop for all that she wanted. It was divided by canals filled with water, which glistened like silver in moonlight. A ride on the Rikshaw through the busy streets here is a memorable experience.

**Chandni Chowk:** The living legacy of Delhi is



**Raj Ghat:** On the banks of the legendary Yamuna, which flows past New Delhi, there is Raj Ghat-the resting place of Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the nation. It has become an essential point of call for all visiting dignitaries.

Overnight at Delhi.

**Hotel: Vivanta by Taj**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

#### 12 FEB 2017: DELHI

Morning after breakfast, proceed for New Delhi sightseeing. Visit Qutab Minar, Humayun's tomb and drive through India Gate, President's house, Parliament house etc.

**Qutab Minar:** The Qutab Minar is located at a small village called Mehrauli in South New Delhi. Qutub-ud-din Aibek of the Slave Dynasty, who took possession of New Delhi in 1206, built it. It is a fluted red sandstone tower, which tapers up to a height of 72.5 metres and is covered with intricate carvings and verses from the holy Qur'an.



**India Gate:** A memorial inscribed with the names of the valiant Indian soldiers who laid down their lives in World War I. The green, velvety lawns at India Gate, particularly, are a popular evening and holiday rendezvous for young and old alike. A must visit place in New Delhi.

Overnight at Delhi.

**Hotel: Vivanta by Taj**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

#### 13 FEB 2017: DELHI - VARANASI

Morning check out and transfer to Delhi airport to board flight to Varanasi.

Arrive Varanasi airport. Meet & assist and transfer to your hotel. Check in to your room and relax. Later proceed for a Temple Tour with an English speaking guide. Some of the famous Temples are: Kashi Vishwanath Temple, Durga Temple, Tulsi Mans Temple, Bharat Mata Temple.

Kashi Vishwanath Temple is arguably the most famous of all Hindu temples and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is located in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India, and the holiest existing place of Hindus, where at least once in life a Hindu is expected to do pilgrimage, and if possible, also pour the remains of cremated ancestors into the River Ganges. The temple stands on the western bank of the holy river Ganges, and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest of Shiva temples. The main deity is known by the name Vishwanatha or Vishweshwara meaning Ruler of the universe. The temple town, which claims to be the oldest living city in the world, with 3500 years of documented history, is also called Kashi and hence the temple is popularly called Kashi Vishwanath Temple.



Overnight at Varanasi.

**Hotel: Taj Gateway**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

**14 FEB 2017: VARANASI**

Early morning proceed for a boat cruise through the River Ganges to observe the way of life of pilgrims by the Ghats.

Later after breakfast proceed to Sarnath with an English Speaking Guide.

**Sarnath** is situated 13Kms to north-east of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. It is the place where Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon to his five disciples named Kaundinya, Bashpa, Bhadraka, Mahanaman and Ashvajit after he attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya (Bihar). On the day before his death Buddha included Sarnath along with Lumbini, Bodh Gaya and Kushinagar as the four places he thought to be sacred to his followers. Sarnath is, thus, the place where foundation of Sangha, a new order of monks and Dharma, was laid. It is also a religious and sacred place for Jains.



Places of interests are: **Chaukhandi Stupa** – The first monument one encounters as one enters Sarnath. Originally said to be built by Emperor Ashoka. **Dhamek Stupa** – The most remarkable structure in Sarnath built partly of stone and partly of brick. **MulagandhaKutiVihar** – The modern temple erected by Mahabodhi Society. **Sarnath Museum** – The oldest site museum of Archaeological Survey of India. It houses the findings and excavations at the archaeological site of Sarnath.



Overnight at Varanasi.

**Hotel: Taj Gateway**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

**15 FEB 2017: VARANASI**

Full day free to explore the city by your own. Overnight at Varanasi.

**Hotel: Taj Gateway**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner



#### 16 FEB 2017: VARANASI - DELHI - JAIPUR

Morning check out and transfer to Varanasi airport and board flight to Jaipur via Delhi.

Upon arrival at Jaipur. Meet & assist by our representative and transfer your hotel.



Jaipur is popularly known as the Pink City. During the British rule in India, Jaipur was the capital of the princely state of Jaipur. Jaipur is located in the semi-desert lands of Rajasthan. The city which once had been the capital of the royalty now is the capital city of Rajasthan. The very structure of Jaipur resembles the taste of the Rajputs and the Royal families. At present, Jaipur is a major business center with all requisites of a metropolitan city.

Check in to your room and relax. Evening enjoy Rajasthani Folk Dance with dinner. Overnight at Jaipur.

**Hotel: Alsisar Haveli**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

#### 17 FEB 2017: JAIPUR

Morning after breakfast, visit Amber Fort with Elephant ride.

Amber Fort located high on a hill, is the principal tourist attraction in the Jaipur area. The town of Amer



was originally built by Meenas, and later it was ruled by Raja Man Singh I (December 21, 1550 – July 6, 1614). Amer Fort is known for its artistic Hindu style elements. With its large ramparts and series of gates and cobbled paths, the fort overlooks Maota Lake. It is the main source of water for the Amer palace. The aesthetic ambiance of the palace is seen within its walls. Constructed of red sandstone and marble, the attractive,

opulent palace is laid out on four levels, each with a courtyard. It consists of the Diwan-e-Aam, or "Hall of Public Audience", the Diwan-e-Khas, or "Hall of Private Audience", the Sheesh Mahal (mirror palace), or Jai Mandir, and the Sukh Niwas where a cool climate is artificially created by winds that blow over a water cascade within the palace. Hence, the Amer Fort is also popularly known as the Amer Palace.



Afternoon at leisure. Overnight at Jaipur.

**Hotel: Alsisar Haveli**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

## 18 FEB 2017: JAIPUR

Morning visit Jantar Mantar, Hawa Mahal, City Palace etc.

**Jantar Mantar:** Between 1727 and 1734 Maharajah Jai Singh II of Jaipur constructed five astronomical observatories in west central India. The observatories, or "Jantar Mantars" as they are commonly known, incorporate multiple buildings of unique form, each with a specialized function for astronomical measurement. These structures with their striking combinations of geometric forms at large scale, have captivated the attention of architects, artists, and art historians worldwide, yet remain



largely unknown to the general public

**Hawa Mahal:** 3 km from the center of Jaipur, was founded by Maharaja Sawai Pratap Singh in the year 1799. The Mahal is the 5 storied amazing semi-octagonal monuments that consists of 152 windows, latticed balconies specifically designed for the royal ladies to enjoy the day to day activities of the street



**City Palace:** City Palace forms one of the most famous tourist attractions and a major landmark in Jaipur. The beautiful palace was built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh during his reign. Among the various forts and palaces of Jaipur, City Palace stands apart, with its outstanding art and architecture.

Rest of the day free for independent activities. Overnight at Jaipur.

### **Hotel: Alsisar Haveli**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

## 19 FEB 2017: JAIPUR - AGRA

Morning check out and drive to Agra (Around 5 hrs drive). En route visit Fatehpur Sikri.



construction of a series of royal palaces, harem, courts, a mosque, private quarters and other utility

**Fatehpur Sikri** is a city and a municipal board in Agra district in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India. The city was founded in 1569 by the Mughal emperor Akbar, and served as the capital of the Mughal Empire from 1571 to 1585. After his military victories over Chittor and Ranthambore, Akbar decided to shift his capital from Agra to a new location to honor the Sufi saint Salim Chishti. Here he commenced the construction of a planned walled city which took the next fifteen years in planning and

buildings. He named the city, Fatehabad, with Fateh, a word of Arabic origin in Persian, meaning "victorious." it was later called Fatehpur Sikri.

Upon arrival at Agra, check in to your hotel and relax. Overnight at Agra.

**Hotel: Four Points by Sheraton**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

#### **20 FEB 2017: AGRA**

Early morning visit the famous Taj Mahal during sun rise.

The **Taj Mahal** is the epitome of Mughal art and one of the most famous buildings in the world. Yet there have been few serious studies of it and no full analysis of its architecture and meaning. Ebba Koch,



an important scholar, has been permitted to take measurements of the complex and has been working on the palaces and gardens of Shah Jahan for thirty years and on the Taj Mahal itself-the tomb of the emperor's wife, Mumtaz Mahal-for a decade. In 1983, the Taj Mahal became a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Later after breakfast, visit Agra Agra Fort and Itmad-Ud-Duala.

The Agra Fort is a UNESCO World Heritage site located in Agra. The present-day structure was built by the Mughals, though a fort had stood there since at least the 11th century. Agra Fort was originally a brick fort known as Badalgarh, held by Raja Badal Singh Hindu Sikarwar Rajput king (c. 1475).

Tomb of I'timād-ud-Daulah is a Mughal mausoleum in the city of Agra in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Often described as a "jewel box", sometimes called the "Baby Tāj", the tomb of I'timād-ud-Daulah is often regarded as a draft of the Tāj Mahal.

Afternoon free for independent activities.

Overnight at Agra.

**Hotel: Four Points by Sheraton**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

#### **21 FEB 2017: AGRA - DELHI - GOA**

Morning check out and transfer to Delhi airport (around 3-4 hrs drive) to board flight to Goa.

Arrive Goa airport. Meet & assist by our representative and transfer to your resort. Upon arrival, check in to beautiful beach resort and relax. Overnight at Goa.

**Hotel: The Zuri White Sand Goa Resort & Casino**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner



**22 FEB 2017: GOA**

Morning proceed for a city tour of Goa with English speaking guide. Places of interest are Basilica of Bom Jesus, Museum of Christian Art, Panaji city etc. Also attend holy mass at Basilica of Bom Jesus.

The Bom Jesus Basilica, perhaps Goa's most famous church and among the most revered by Christians worldwide, is partially in ruins but still a model of simplicity and elegance, and a fine example of Jesuit architecture. This is the only church in Old Goa, which is not plastered on the outside, the lime plaster having been stripped off by a zealous Portuguese conservationist in 1950. Located at Old Goa, 10 kilometres east of Panaji, the Bom Jesus Basilica is a World Heritage Monument.



Rest of the day free for independent activities. Overnight at Goa.

**Hotel: The Zuri White Sand Goa Resort & Casino**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

**23 FEB 2017: GOA**

Full day at leisure. Overnight at Goa.

**Hotel: The Zuri White Sand Goa Resort & Casino**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

**24 FEB 2017: GOA - CHENNAI**

Morning check out and transfer to Goa airport and board flight to Chennai.

Arrive Chennai airport. Meet & assist by our representative and transfer to your hotel. Rest of the day explore city by your own.

Chennai or Madras as it was called before, on the Coromandel Coast, is the capital city of Tamil Nadu, a State of the Indian Sub continent. It is a major industrial, commercial, cultural, economic and educational centre of the Southern India. The Chennai District's population is 46,81,087 [2011 census]. Chennai City is the sixth largest populated in Indian cities. It is known as the "Detroit of India" because many automobile industries are located here.



Overnight at Chennai.

**Hotel: Radisson Blu Hotel GRT**

Meals: Breakfast & dinner



## 25 FEB 2017: CHENNAI

After breakfast, we celebrate the liturgy at Saint Thomas Cathedral, Roman Catholic basilica built in the 16th century by Portuguese explorers, over the tomb of St Thomas. After Mass, proceed for a Kanchipuram sightseeing with English speaking guide.

If you aim to visit a destination that is religious, historical, cultural and entertainment clubbed in one,



Kanchipuram is the place for you. Considered the religious capital of South India, the city of thousand temples, has a lot to offer. If you set aside whatever faith you may follow, you are sure to be impressed by the sheer architectural skills exhibited in the temples in Kanchipuram. The temples stand proof for the dominance of Dravidian heritage and the city's glorious past, when it was ruled by kings who were not only powerful but loved and patronized arts. Kanchipuram, which is one of the tourist cities in Tamilnadu

is also famous for silk saris

Evening drive back to your hotel. Overnight at Chennai.

## Hotel: Radisson Blu Hotel GRT

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

## 26 FEB 2017: CHENNAI - COCHIN - KUMARAKOM

Morning check out and transfer to Chennai airport and board flight to Cochin.

Arrive Cochin airport. Meet & assist by our representative and drive to Kumarakom (Around 2 ½ hrs drive).



Kumarakom is a serenely beautiful and scenic backwater destination, a charming peninsula jutting into the ever-effervescent Vembanad Lake that is dotted with plenty of traditional rice boats and canoes, leaving a scene that is immensely pleasing to the eye. The Vembanad Lake with its majestic canals, streams and distributaries along its banks weave an intricate and enchantingly beautiful web.

Upon arrival, check in to a beautiful backwater resort –Zuri Kumarakom

If interested, you can avail a rejuvenation massage at the Ayurvedic Centre here after consulting the in house Ayurvedic physician here.

Overnight at Kumarakom.

## Resort: Zuri Kumarakom

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

## 27 FEB: KUMARAKOM

Morning hours at leisure. By 1200 noon board a traditional Kerala Houseboat from your resort itself and cruise along the serene backwaters of Kumarakom.

During the cruise, the countryside offers a close look into an engaging rustic life. You can see skilled fishermen launching their cockshell boats, large flotillas of ducks waddling down to the water from thatched houses on the banks, women neck-deep in water, with their waist-length hair heaped in a crown, searching for fish with their feet and aimless cattle grazing in lush pastureland, where white lotuses lie here and there in small, low-lying pools.



Personal chef on the houseboat will prepare delicious Kerala style lunch for you onboard. Evening by 16:00 hrs disembark houseboat back at the resort. Overnight at Kumarakom.

### Resort: Zuri Kumarakom

Meals: Breakfast & dinner

## 28 FEB 2017: KUMARAKOM - KURISHUMALA - COCHIN

Morning, check out and proceed for a day return tour to Kurishumala (around 2 ½ hrs drive).



Kurisumala Ashram is a Cistercian Monastery in Syro-Malankara Catholic Church. "Kurusu" is the translation of the word Cross, into Malayalam the language of Kerala, the small State in the South West tip of India; "Mala" means mountain; "Ashram" means Monastery. Hence, the name describes the community of monks who practise austerity and live a strict monastic life on the mount of the Cross in the high hills of Kerala.

Afternoon drive to Cochin (around 3 ½ hrs drive). Upon arrival, check in to your hotel and relax. Overnight at Cochin.

### Hotel: Le Meridien

Meals: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

## 1 MAR 2017: COCHIN

Morning after leisurely breakfast, proceed for half day Cochin Heritage Tour.

Walk through the "Heritage Zone"; the Fort Cochin area, where the Portuguese settled in the 16th century. You will visit St. Francis Church, Santa Cruz Basilica and Chinese fishing nets are the main attractions in the Fort Cochin area.



You will then visit the Palace of the Raja (Dutch Palace) and the Jewish Synagogue which are situated in Mattancherry. Also walk through the Jew Street; the area around the Synagogue which is a center of spice trade and curio shops.



Evening visit Greenix Theatre and Museum to see the Cultural show “Kaleidoscope” at 17:00hrs. “Kaleidoscope show” is performance of various art forms like Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Kayaripyattu, Theyyam etc. The Kathakali make up starts at 17:00hrs and the show will start by 18:00hrs. The show ends by 19:30hrs. Later transfer back to your hotel.

Overnight at Cochin.

**Hotel: Le Meridien**

Meals: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

## **2 MAR 2017: DEPART COCHIN**

Morning after leisurely breakfast, check out and transfer to Cochin International airport (around 1 ½ hrs drive) to board your flight back home.

Meals: Breakfast only

### **Tour includes:**

- Meet & assist at all airports
- Entire ground transportation by AC Luxury 35 Seat Coach
- Service of English speaking tour guide wherever required
- Monument entrance fees at places of sightseeing as per the itinerary
- Elephant ride at Amber Fort and Jeep from Amber Fort to Bus Parking
- One hour talk on Buddhism at Varanasi
- Sightseeing as per the itinerary
- Cycle ride in Varanasi and Boating in Varanasi
- Day cruise in Kumarakom with lunch on board
- Cultural show at Greenix Village Cochin
- All applicable taxes and handling charges.

### **Tour price excludes:-**

- <sup>TM</sup> Hotel extras, tips, laundry, drinks and beverages
- <sup>TM</sup> All expenses of personal nature other than mentioned above
- <sup>TM</sup> Any meals, other than those mentioned in the itinerary
- <sup>TM</sup> Camera fee at places of sightseeing
- <sup>TM</sup> Entrances other than those mentioned in inclusions
- <sup>TM</sup> Any airfare, tourist visa, travel insurance etc.

