

## Colours of India - Gujarat Textiles

Explore India at its most flamboyant in the company of renowned textile artist, Sue Lawty.



### Group departures

See overleaf for departure dates

### Holiday overview

Style	Tour
Accommodation	Hotels
Grade	Tour
Duration	15 days from London to London
Min/Max group size	4 / 12. Guaranteed to run for 4
Trip Leader	Ms Susan Lawty
Land only	Joining in Ahmedabad, India

**Private Departures & Tailor Made itineraries available**



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# Departures

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## Group departures

### 2022 Dates:

Sun 18 Sep - Sun 02 Oct

### Group prices and optional supplements

Please contact us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or visit our website for our land only and flight inclusive prices and single supplement options.

### No Surcharge Guarantee

The flight inclusive or land only price will be confirmed to you at the time you make your booking. There will be no surcharges after your booking has been confirmed.

### Will the trip run?

This trip is guaranteed to run for 4 people and for a maximum of 12. In the rare event that we cancel a holiday, we will refund you in full and give you at least 6 weeks warning. Many trips do fill up quickly - we advise you to book early if you want to secure a place(s) on the dates of your choice.

### Insurance

We offer a travel insurance scheme - please contact us for details.

### Private Departures

We can also offer this trip as a private holiday. A Private Departure follows exactly the same itinerary as the group departure but at dates to suit you (subject to availability) - please contact us with your preferred dates.

### Tailor Made service

We pride ourselves on the level of quality and choice we provide for our clients who want a fully tailor made holiday. A holiday will be created especially for you by one of our well-travelled experts. They will be able to advise on the accommodation best suited to your needs, the sights you should visit (and those to avoid!) and the best walks and activities matched to your ability. In short, we will work together with you to create your perfect holiday. If you would like to explore the idea of a Tailor Made holiday with Mountain Kingdoms then please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 or see the Tailor Made pages of our website for further inspiration.

# Your guide

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Sue Lawty is one of Britain's finest textile artists. Alongside many other materials, Sue has worked in textiles all her life and has exhibited all over the world. She is a tutor and visiting lecturer and as well as going on 'weaving journeys' to Bhutan, Morocco, America, Australia, India, Nepal and Poland she has been visiting artist in Bankfield, Halifax, visiting artist at the Australian National University in Canberra, and also Artist in Residence at the V&A Museum from 2005 to 2010. She also devised the World Beach Project, in association with the V&A, which ran for 5 years, from 2007 to 2012, a global project, where participants uploaded photographs of their own patterns made on a beach with stones.

Sue is an accomplished climber and trekker and has led many successful trips for Mountain Kingdoms since she led our first Weavers' Trail in Bhutan in 1995, later also leading treks to Dolpo and Zanskar.

## Your trip highlights

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- Specially devised itinerary taken in the company of Sue Lawty, one of Britain's foremost artists
- Learn about the rich Gujarat textile culture, Bhandani (tie-dye), wood block printing, embroidery and silk weaving
- Experience first-hand the unique and colourful textile traditions of Gujarat
- Visit the picturesque villages of the Banni Grasslands and meet local craftsmen and women.
- See some of the fine palaces and temples of this vibrant region
- Jeep safari to explore the Little Rann of Kutch with its wild asses, flamingos and other wildlife.
- Celebrate Navratri, a colourful local festival

## At a glance itinerary

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Days 1-2	Overnight flight to Ahmedabad. Visit Law Garden Market.
Day 3	Visit Calico Museum of Textile and Sabarmati Ashram. Visit Pethapur Village in Gandhinagar.
Day 4	Heritage walk of Ahmedabad and Shreya's Folk Museum. Visit Navratri festival.
Day 5	Drive to Gondal. Visit Navlakha Palace.
Day 6	Drive to Jetpur. Visit Junagadh and return to Gondal.
Day 7	Drive to Jamnagar with visit to Watson Museum. Visit Bandhani community.
Days 8-9	Drive to Bhuj with visits to Ajrakhpur and Dhaneti. Sightseeing and visit markets in Bhuj.
Day 9	Sightseeing in Bhuj. And visit A. A. Wazir's Textiles Museum Shop.
Day 10	Visit Banni villages.
Day 11	Drive to Khamir. Visit village of Bhujodi.
Day 12	Drive to Dasada. Visit Rabari and Bhairwad community villages round Dasada.
Day 13	Jeep safari across Little Rann. Drive to Ahmedabad with visit to Patan Patola Museum.
Days 14-15	Transfer to Ahmedabad Airport for overnight flight to London.

## Trip summary

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Gujarat in western India is renowned for its dazzling textiles and fine handicrafts. The many different styles, from mirror work to fine embroidery, are each connected to the traditions of a particular community or ethnic group and go back generations.

Led by acclaimed artist Sue Lawty you will explore Gujarat's rich architectural, artistic and cultural heritage, visiting a number of key textile centres along the way including Ahmedabad, Gondal, Jetpur, Junagarh, Banni, Kutch, Dasada and Patan. From village markets and local museums which have an incredible array of fabrics and textiles on display, to craft workshops with hands-on demonstrations of age-old techniques such as wood block printing, tie-dye manufacture, and weaving, you will gain an insight into the role that textiles have played in Gujarat over the centuries.

The tour starts in Ahmedabad, famous for its connection with Mahatma Gandhi, where you will visit local markets, the Calico Museum and the Sabarmati Ashram as well as seeing something of Ahmedabad's historic centre. During your time in Ahmedabad, the nine-day Hindu Navratri festival, will be taking place and in the evening you will join the celebrations as the streets come alive with music and dance. Travelling on to Gondal you visit the Navlakha Palace with its fine collection of crafts and learn about the textiles of this area. In Jamnagar you will be astounded by the wood-block printing and fabulous tie-dye fabrics, before moving on to the desert town of Bhuj, where you visit local markets and palaces, as well as travelling out to beautiful Banni villages which have a fine artistic heritage.

A real highlight of the tour is an early morning jeep safari across the Little Rann (desert) of Kutch in search of rare Asiatic wild asses and other birds and wildlife. And for a final fabulous flourish you visit the master craftsmen of Patan Patola, who create the most magnificent Double-Ikat silk textiles.



# Your trip itinerary

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## Day 1: Fly London To Ahmedabad

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Depart London on your overnight flight to Ahmedabad in Gujarat.

**Overnight: In flight**

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## Day 2: Arrive Ahmedabad. Visit Law Garden Market.

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On arrival in Ahmedabad you will be met and transferred to your boutique heritage hotel. Here you will have time to rest after your long flight before later driving to the Law Gardens, one of the best known gardens of Ahmedabad, for a visit to the famous and colourful Law Garden Evening Market. The market is renowned for its traditional textiles; wall hangings, bandhej sarees, chaniyas (long colourful skirts), as well as other handicrafts such antique jewellery and items made from cane and wood.

Ahmedabad, the city of Ahmed Shah (the medieval ruler of Gujarat), is known for its rich past as well as its association with Mahatma Gandhi. The city features a unique style of architecture, which is a blend of Hindu and Islamic styles - the Indo-Saracenic style of architecture. The monuments of Ahmedabad mainly date back to the 15th century. Ahmedabad has been known for its industry since medieval times and is famous for its textile mills - in the past it was referred to as the 'Manchester of the East'.

You will have dinner tonight at Vishalla, a traditional Gujarati restaurant serving healthy high quality vegetarian cuisine.

**Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: D)**

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## Day 3: Visit Calico Museum of Textiles, Sabarmati Ashram, Shreya's Folk Museum.

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In the morning, you will visit the Calico Museum of Textiles, India's premier textile museum. This museum contains one of the world's finest collections of antique and modern Indian textiles, all handmade and many up to 500 years old, with hundreds of beautiful pieces displaying incredible virtuosity and opulence. Here you learn about the history of textiles in Gujarat and how Ahmedabad emerged as a textile hub. The museum is housed in two buildings, one displaying textiles of religious significance and the other traditional court fabrics, tents, carpets and costumes.



Later you will visit Sabarmati Ashram. This ashram was Gandhi's headquarters during the long struggle for Indian Independence. It was founded in 1915 and Gandhi established a school here that focused on manual labour, agriculture, and literacy, with the aim of advancing his efforts for self-sufficiency. It was from here that in 1930 Gandhi launched the famous Dandi march with 78 companions to protest the British Salt Law, which taxed Indian salt to promote sales of British salt in India. Today, the Ashram serves as a source of inspiration and as a monument to Gandhi's life mission. Gandhi's spartan living quarters are preserved as a small museum and there is a pictorial record of the major events in his life. The ashram still makes handicrafts, handmade paper and spinning wheels.

You return to your hotel for lunch and then in the afternoon drive for approximately 45 minutes to visit the craft village of Pethapur in Gandhinagar. The village is famous for its beautiful saris and is a hub for wood block makers. These wooden blocks are carved with elegant patterns and then used for hand-printing on cloth. The villagers of Pethapur having been supplying customized wood blocks to centres of block printing all over India (and now worldwide) for at least 200 years.

**Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 4: Ahmedabad Heritage Walk. Visit Shreya's Folk Museum. Navaratri Festival.**

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The best way to experience the splendours of Ahmedabad and appreciate its architecture, art and traditions is on foot, so this morning you will take a heritage walk round Ahmedabad, accompanied by a local guide who will explain the historical background and significance of the places you see. You will also visit Shreya's Folk Museum.

Ahmedabad was founded in 1411 on the ancient site of Ashaval and Karnvati, and the city has some of the finest monuments and temples in India - Islamic, Hindu and Jain. The carved wooden houses of the city are a unique architectural tradition. A special feature of Ahmedabad is the plan of the old city, which comprises numerous 'pols', traditional self-contained neighbourhoods accommodating whole communities. Some of these 'pols' are virtually small villages, traversed by narrow streets and terminating in a square with community wells and featuring little cul-de-sacs, alleyways and secret passages, as well as the characteristic chabutaras, typical Gujarati tower-like structures for feeding birds, especially pigeons.

In the evening you will join local people out in the streets celebrating the festival of Navratri, one of the most popular Hindu festivals in India. The festival is dedicated to the Hindu deity, the goddess Durja, and celebrates fertility and the harvest. In Gujarat it is marked with a nine day dance festival and in villages and cities throughout the state, people gather to celebrate the female divinity, known as Shakti, and to dance.

**Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 5: Drive to Gondal - 260km/162 miles, 5 hours. Visit Navlakha Palace.**

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Today you will drive to Gondal, a city to the southwest of Ahmedabad which has several interesting palaces. The city was once the capital of a princely state and during this time Gondal was ruled by a family of car enthusiasts whose royal passion resulted in a fine collection of automobiles which are now part of a museum in the palace premises. It was this royal passion that it led to Gondal having the best planned road system in pre-independence Gujarat.

After lunch at your hotel you will visit the Navlakha Palace, the former palace of the maharajas of Gondal, now converted to a museum. Also known as the Darbargadh, the name Navlakha evidently refers to the cost of this seventeenth century structure, which reputedly cost nine lakhs rupees - a lakh being 100,000 rupees. The palace has fine stone carvings with jharokhas (enclosed balconies), a pillared courtyard, delicately carved arches, and a unique spiral staircase. The large chandelier-lit durbar (court) contains stuffed panthers, gilt wooden furniture, and antique mirrors. The Palace Museum has a display of silver caskets which were used to carry messages and gifts for Maharajah Bhagwat Sinhji during his silver jubilee as ruler of Gondal.



**Overnight: Orchard Palace or Similar, Gondal (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 6: Drive to Jetpur - 31 km/45 minutes. Visit Junagadh and return to Gondal.**

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After breakfast you will drive to Jetpur, a textile town renowned as one of India's largest centres for block printing, screen printing and dyeing. It is also famous for printed cotton saree production and the town is a major exporter of khanga and kitenge. Jetpur is the go-to place for raw materials for the production of ethnic wear. The air of Jetpur is laden with the smells of dye stuffs, fabrics spill out of large copper vats and translucent layers of coloured fabrics are laid out to dry, while the air resounds to the percussive beat of wooden printing blocks. In Jetpur you will have the opportunity for some hands-on experience of the processes of printing and dyeing.

You will have lunch in a local restaurant and then drive to Junagadh, a city whose name means ancient fort. The history of Junagadh dates back many centuries. The Mauryan king Chandragupta Maurya constructed the famous Junagadh Fort as long ago as 319 BC. Under the Mauryans, Junagadh was a regional capital, and Emperor Ashoka had stone edicts placed there in the 3rd century which can still be seen today. Nowadays Junagadh is famous for its old fort and its markets. After a thorough exploration you will return to Gondal for dinner at your hotel.

**Overnight: Orchard Palace or Similar, Gondal (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 7: Drive to Jamnagar - 135km/84 miles, 3 hours - visiting Watson Museum at Rajkot en route. Visit community renowned for Bandhani.**

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This morning you will drive to Jamnagar stopping on the way you to visit the Watson Museum in Rajkot. The museum commemorates Colonel John Watson, British political agent in the region during the time of Queen Victoria, who had an interest in history and archaeology and started the idiosyncratic collection on which this museum is based. The museum is a good introduction to the cultural heritage of the Saurashtra region, famous for housing artefacts, handicrafts, pottery, and princely relics dating back to 13th century, as well as manuscripts, textiles, folk embroidery and handicrafts.



You continue to Jamnagar, the largest city in the western region of India, located on the coast of the Gulf of Kutch. Before the recent coming of the oil industry and the building of nearby oil refineries, the main occupation of Jamnagar, was the making of brass utensils and tie-dye fabrics, Bandhani. Earlier still, Jamnagar was also called 'pearl city' as it was a centre for pearl fishing, with one of the biggest pearl fisheries in the world. The city is situated on a lake with a beautiful promenade, ornate, decaying buildings and colourful bazaars.

After lunch you will visit the artisan community responsible for the production of Jamnagar's famous, brilliant-coloured Bandhani (tie-dye) - these fabrics are produced through a laborious process, 500 years old and involving thousands of tiny knots in a piece of folded fabric. The term Bandhani is derived from the Sanskrit verb "to bind or to tie". The intricacy of the pattern depends on the skill of the craftsman, the number of knots and the fineness of the cloth. You will see a demonstration of this superb art.

**Overnight: Fortune Palace or Similar, Jamnagar (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 8: Drive to Bhuj - 255km/159 miles, 5 hours - with visits to Dhamadka and Dhaneti. Visit local markets in Bhuj.**

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Today you will drive north from Jamnagar to the town of Bhuj. On the way you will break your journey at Ajrakhpur to see traditional Ajrakh block printing using natural dyes such as indigo, pomegranate, henna, turmeric and iron. Ajrakh printing is a complicated and skilled process of 16 stages of dyeing and printing. Carved wooden blocks are used for the printing with a separate block used for each colour. In some cases the fabrics are washed 20 times and it can take up to 20 days to complete one piece.

You will also stop at the village of Dhaneti, famous for the exquisite traditional embroidery work created by the women of the local Ahir community, people who are thought to have originally brought their skills from Sindh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Lunch will be in a local restaurant in Bachau and then you continue to Bhuj, the major town of Kutch. Bhuj is an ancient desert town and its founding dates back to the 16th century. Despite the catastrophic earthquake of 2001 the old town still maintains some of its medieval character with an atmospheric bazaar, old walls and gateways, ancient palaces and temples. Bhuj is famous as a centre for the historic craftsmanship of the Kutch region, including Bandhani, embroidery, and leatherwork. Artists of nearby villages bring their artwork for sale in 'Bhuj Haat' market. Bhuj is also famous for its regional cuisine and famous Gujarati sweets.

You will check into your hotel and then in the evening visit some of the Bhuj's local markets where you can see Khadi work, block print, tie and dye, colourful thread work and embroidery work. The handloom products of Bhuj are famous for their intricate mirror work and brilliant colour combinations.

**Overnight: Regenta Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 9: Sightseeing in Bhuj.**

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Your sightseeing in Bhuj starts with a visit to the extravagant Aina Mahal, an 18th century palace which is one of the finest examples of Indo-Saracenic architecture in India. The Aina Mahal was ornamented with Venetian-style chandeliers, silver objects, clocks, tiles glass and other objects all produced locally. You then continue to see the nearby Prag Mahal Palace, a 19th century palace.

Next on the tour is the Kutch Museum, the oldest museum in Gujarat. Here you will find the largest existing collection of Kshatrapa inscriptions, dating to the 1st century AD, as well as examples of the extinct Kutchi

script (now the language is mostly written in the Gujarati alphabets) and an interesting collection of coins, including the kori, Kutch's local currency. A section of the museum is devoted to tribal cultures, with many examples of ancient artefacts, folk arts and crafts and information about tribal peoples. The museum also has exhibits of embroidery, paintings, arms, musical instruments, sculpture and precious metalwork.

After lunch you will visit the textile museum/shop of Mr A. A. Wazir, an award winning artist who has a passion for textiles. Mr Wazir has a long established and stunning collection of more than 3,000 pieces, including historic embroidery, antique quilts, torans, dowry bags, traditional outfits and cattle caparisons, adorned with stitch-work of the Rabari, Jat, Mutava, Meghval, Ahir and Sodha tribes, featuring pieces from Kutch but also from other parts of India and as far afield as Pakistan. About half the items shown here are for sale.

**Overnight: Regenta Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 10: Visit the Banni villages.**

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The Banni grassland of Gujarat is the largest natural grassland in the Indian subcontinent and is known for its rich wildlife and biodiversity. The Banni has a long history of migratory pastoralism going back at least 500 years with links to a broader geographical landscape that in the past included Sindh in Pakistan and even extended into parts of Baluchistan and Afghanistan. The area is important ecologically and is particularly known for its rich diversity of migratory birds.

The Banni is also of great cultural importance to Gujarat, and the attractive villages here are being developed to showcase local arts and crafts as well as the ancient architecture of Kutch, and also to introduce visitors to traditional Kutchi cuisine. Today you will visit several villages, firstly calling in at beautiful Ludiya, well known for its lovely decorated houses called 'bhunja', with their intricate decorations both inside and outside, and for the beautiful embroidery work of its women and the decorated furniture of the menfolk.



You will also call at Hodka village, home to traditional craftsmen working in leather. You will have lunch at Hodka Village and then you will then travel on to the beautiful Kutch village of Bhirandiyara, another lovely village of colourful mud 'bhunjas' and home to traditional craftsmen. This village is also famous for a delicious sweet made from milk and sugar called Maavo. Finally you explore the village of Sumraser, home to Kala Raksha, an organisation that aims to preserve and promote the arts of Kutch. Kala Raksha works with 600 artisans and seven different communities, and has a small museum in Sumraser. It may be possible to meet some local artisans and see them at work. From Sumraser you will return to your hotel in Bhuj.

**Overnight: Regenta Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**

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#### **Day 11: Drive to Khamir - 40 minutes. Visit the village of Bhujodi.**

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Today you drive the short distance to Khamir, another town which promotes the traditional arts and culture of this region. Here you will visit a workshop of local artisans to learn about the techniques of a new project producing Kala Cotton. Kala Cotton is indigenous to the region and in this project it is being produced organically and sustainably. After years of experimentation and the perfecting of spinning and weaving techniques, Khamir began producing the first Kala Cotton goods in 2010. A workshop will be organized for you here so that you can have some hands on experience with the craftsmen of Khamir.

After lunch in a local restaurant you will drive to Bhujodi a major textile centre of Kutch. Bhujodi is home to the nomadic Rabari people who weave in camel wool and villagers are skilled in traditional Bhandani (tie-and-dye), block printing and weaving, as well as Piltoom weaving, Mewada embroidery and woodcarving. Here local artists demonstrate their skills and there will be the opportunity to purchase goods such as shawls and blankets direct from the artisan.

In Bhujodi you will visit an organisation called Shrujan (which means creativity in Sanskrit), a not-for-profit organization working with craftswomen in Kutch to revitalize the ancient craft of hand embroidery and to allow women to make a living from their craft. These craftswomen create a range of beautiful hand embroidered items. Over the years, Shrujan's work has expanded to include research into, and documentation of, the diverse embroideries of Kutch, and the communities that practise these embroideries.

**Overnight: Regenta Resort or Similar, Bhuj (Meals: BLD)**



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**Day 12: Drive to Dasada - 255km/158 miles, 5 hours. Visit Rabairi and Bhairwad community villages.**

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Today you will drive east to Dasada, a village located on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch, an area of desert, mudflats and salt marshes which is renowned for its wildlife. The region is also well known for its cultural heritage and local arts, and in particular, Dasada is famous for the fine embroidery of the local Bharwad and Rabari peoples and you may study the handiwork of these local artisans and weavers. Dasada is the best place to see production of this embroidery as well as seeing some fantastic examples of the art.



You will also be able to visit some local villages of the region to see their traditional farming practices while in nearby Kharaghoda you will see salt workers producing salt, which they harvest from the salt pans.

**Overnight: Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 13: Jeep safari across Little Rann of Kutch. Drive to Ahmedabad - 210km, 5 hours. Visit to Patan Patola Museum en route.**

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As a contrast to all your textile related activities, today, in the very early morning around 06:00 hours, you will head out on a vehicle safari to the Little Rann of Kutch, an area famous for its rare wildlife and birds. Your safari takes you across the mud flats in search of Gudkhur, endangered wild asses, which are just a little smaller than donkeys and are found only on the Little Rann. The Rann mudflats, which are inundated with water during the rainy season, are an ancient sea bed dotted with small islands, 'bets', which are covered with grass and scrub and support a wide range of birds including flamingos, pelicans, common cranes, ducks and geese as well as animals such as black buck, blue bull, hyenas and of course the Asiatic wild ass.

After your safari you return to the hotel for breakfast, check out and start the return drive to Ahmedabad. En route you will visit the Patan Patola Museum. The textiles of Patan Patola are renowned for their unique gem like qualities, gorgeous colours and lovely designs. These fabulous textiles are woven from silk by master craftsmen, in a process called Double-Ikat, meaning that fabrics have no reverse side, both sides having equal intensity of colour and design. This fine quality production has its origins in an intricate and difficult technique of Bhandani tie-dyeing and knot dying which is performed on the warp and weft separately before weaving. This is a centuries old technique possibly dating back as far as the 11th century and utilizing pure silk and natural dyes.

After lunch in Patan you will complete the drive to Ahmedabad where you will spend your final night in India.

**Overnight: House of M G, Ahmedabad (Meals: BLD)**

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**Day 14: Group transfer to airport. Depart Ahmedabad.**

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Today there will be a group transfer to Ahmedabad Airport for your overnight flight home.

**Overnight: In flight (Meals: B)**

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**Day 15: Arrive London.**

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### Special notes

#### Alcohol in Gujarat

You should be aware that Gujarat is a 'dry' state and sale of alcohol is not permitted. Foreigners, and visitors from other parts of India, can apply online for a temporary permit to allow them to buy alcohol and there are 35 stores across the state, including nine in Ahmedabad, that sell liquor on production of a physical copy of the permit. Any alcohol purchased using this permit system, must then be consumed in the privacy of your room. If you decide to take in some 'duty free' liquor into Gujarat with you, please be circumspect about it. If you have any queries, please contact the Mountain Kingdoms office.



## What the price includes

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**Mountain Kingdoms** aims to offer the best value for money. We do not charge extra for meal packages or apply local charges and try to ensure that all the key elements of your holiday are included.

### What's included:

- ✓ Services of Sue Lawty as trip leader
- ✓ Local English-speaking guide and driver to accompany group throughout.
- ✓ Economy class return air fares from the UK and UK departure tax (flight inclusive only).
- ✓ Single, timed group airport transfers for international flights on arrival and departure.
- ✓ Good standard accommodation with meals as indicated in itinerary, on twin share basis
- ✓ All sightseeing, entrance fees and visits as mentioned in the itinerary.
- ✓ Meals as indicated in itinerary
- ✓ All road transport by private vehicle
- ✓ A free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle
- ✓ Carbon offsetting with the Ecoan Tree Planting Project (for clients taking our flight inclusive option)
- ✓ Opportunity to join a pre-trip meet in the Cotswolds

### Airport transfers

The cost of a transfer to/from the airport is included in the price of your holiday. This is a single group transfer which is arranged to coincide with the timings of the group flights. If you book your own flights which arrive/depart at different times to this, or we book flights at your request that have different timings, we will be happy to provide a quote for a separate transfer. Please contact us should you require any further information.

### What's not included:

- ✗ Travel insurance
- ✗ India visa fees
- ✗ Lunch on departure day
- ✗ Tips

### Water-to-Go Reusable Bottle Campaign

We have joined the campaign to help cut down on the use of plastics and, in particular, single-use water bottles. To do this we have teamed up with the revolutionary company, Water-to-Go who have developed a multi-use drinking bottle with a reusable filter that eliminates over 99.9% of all microbiological contaminants. This makes water from virtually any source safe to drink and significantly reduces the need for travellers to buy bottles of water wherever they are in the world.

Our clients who are not given a free Mountain Kingdoms kit bag for their holiday (these are required for certain treks), will instead receive a free Mountain Kingdoms Water-to-Go bottle. These unique Water-to-Go bottles can also be purchased from us at a discounted rate.

For further information about our campaign visit [For further information about our campaign visit https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign.](https://www.mountainkingdoms.com/water-to-go-reusable-bottle-campaign)

## Your accommodation

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We will endeavour to secure the hotels named in the itinerary but if our first choice of hotel is not available we will book a suitable alternative of a similar standard.



### **House of M G, Ahmedabad**

The House of MG is a boutique hotel situated in one of the oldest houses in the city - a mansion formerly home to a prominent textile merchant and entrepreneur. The hotel has been tastefully restored with all its furniture and fixtures designed and sourced from local artisans. Mahatma Gandhi stayed here when it was a private house. The hotel offers modern amenities, a spa and pool, and free Wi-Fi.



### **Orchard Palace or Similar, Gondal**

The Orchard Palace was built in the 19th century as an annex of the Huzoor Palace, the family residence of the local Maharajas, to host their personal guests. It has been converted into a heritage hotel and is furnished with 1930s and '40s art deco furniture, antiques and handicrafts. Rooms are well furnished with modern bathrooms. The property gets its name from the orchards which it faces. More than 80 peacocks and peahens inhabit the gardens, and a variety of other birds can be watched while walking around the grounds.



### **Fortune Palace or Similar, Jamnager**

The Hotel Fortune Palace is a modern hotel in a good location not far from the centre of Jamnagar, with elegant and comfortable rooms and good facilities, including free Wi-Fi.



### **Regenta Resort or Similar, Bhuj**

The Regenta Resort is a luxury hotel conveniently located near to the centre of Bhuj. It has comfortable rooms with all facilities and Wi-Fi, and the hotel also has a pool and spa.



### **Rann Riders or Similar, Dasada**

Surrounded by fields and wetlands, Rann Riders is a tranquil and eco-friendly resort located on the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch. It is imaginatively designed using local materials to recreate the look of a village. Accommodation is in cottages, resembling the kooba houses of the Bajanias of Dasada and the bhunga houses of the Rabaris of Kutch, which are decorated with mirrors, mud-plaster work and embroideries. The rooms feature comfortable cane beds, and bathrooms have hot and cold showers.

## Meal arrangements

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All meals included from dinner on Day 2 to breakfast on Day 14.

## Flight arrangements

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### Flight inclusive from price

Our 'Flight inclusive from' price is based on the best fare available at the time of printing. As airfares change on a constant basis, this should be used only as a guide price. Rest assured that, at the time of booking, we will endeavour to get the best possible price for the flights you need. Remember, the earlier you book the greater your chances of securing the best fare.

Flight inclusive packages booked through Mountain Kingdoms are protected through our ATOL bonding scheme.

### Flight upgrades and regional Airports

Please call us on +44 (0)1453 844400 for flight options from regional UK airports, Business Class upgrades, alternative airlines and stopovers. Please also check our website for the most up to date flight inclusive 'from' prices.

## Further information

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When we receive your booking, we send you a full Trip Dossier which contains details of any visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. If you do have queries at this initial stage do call us on 01453 844400 and we will be pleased to offer advice.

## Our grading system

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Colours of India - Gujarat Textiles is graded as a Tour, as described below.

### Tours

Tours may include any of the following activities: sightseeing, visiting local villages, exploring temples, game viewing, birdwatching, husky sledding, mountain flights, city tours and dramatic journeys by road, rail, or river. Occasionally there will be short, gentle walks so that you can properly explore the cultural sites you are visiting.

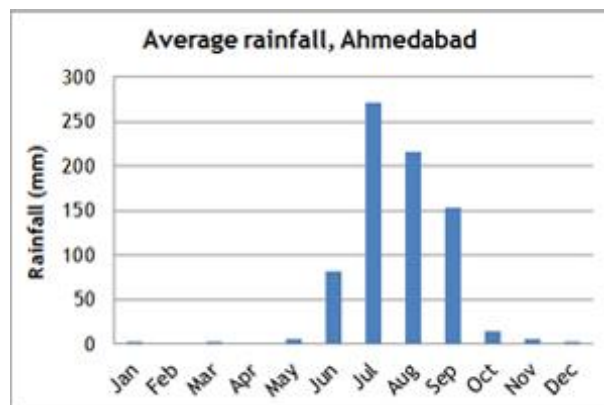
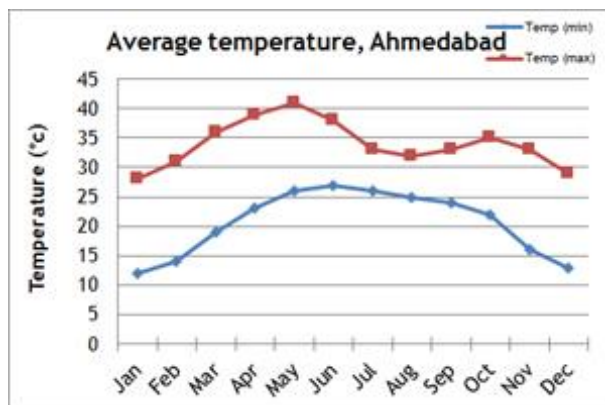
## The nature of adventure travel

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Every effort will be made to keep to this itinerary but we cannot guarantee that things may not change, either before you travel or while you are away. By its very nature, adventure travel involves an element of the unexpected, particularly in more remote areas. A variety of factors such as adverse weather conditions, changes to local schedules and difficulties with transportation can all contribute to the need to make changes to the itinerary, often at the very last minute. Our Operations Manager and your Trip Leader will make every effort to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary and minimise the impact of any changes, but an easy-going and flexible nature is a real asset! Please note that all timings and distances given are approximate.



## Climate information



## Extensions

### Extending your holiday

If you would like additional inspiration on how or where to extend your holiday please call us on 01453 844400. Alternatively, you can download a range of extension information sheets on our website, at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).



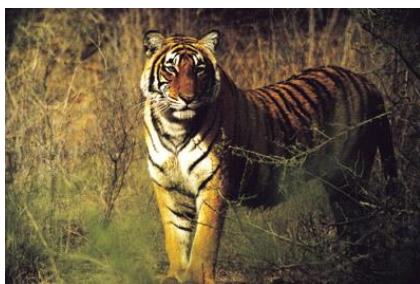
There are many ways you can extend your holiday with Mountain Kingdoms: you could book extra hotel nights at the start or end of your trip, arrange a personal sightseeing tour or enjoy some other exciting activities. In fact, whatever's available we can help make it happen. We're happy to suggest ideas, provide quotes and make all the arrangements. We can also assist with flight and hotel upgrades.

### Agra, Taj Mahal & Jaipur - from Delhi

We offer various extensions to Agra, from a one-day visit to see the majestic Taj Mahal to a six-day trip to visit both the Taj and the Amber Fort at Jaipur. All options travel to Agra (from Delhi) on the Shatabdi Express and include the services of an English-speaking guide, sightseeing and private transport.

### Ranthambore National Park

Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan is one of the finest national parks in northern India. It has a diverse range of habitats attracting a fantastic variety of wildlife including tigers, leopard, bears and monkeys as well as a large number of exotic birds. We can arrange a three night stay at a jungle camp from where you can enjoy many wildlife watching activities such as nature walks, jeep safaris and bird watching.



## Why book this holiday with Mountain Kingdoms?

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- This itinerary is unique to Mountain Kingdoms.
- Whilst clearly textiles focused, the tour also takes in Gujarat's must-see sights, including the rare wildlife of the Little Rann of Kutch.
- Leader Sue Lawty is an unrivalled expert on textiles.
- Accommodation has been handpicked and includes converted palaces, a beautiful boutique hotel and an eco-resort.
- Our maximum group size is 12 for this trip. This provides for a genuine small group travel experience and helps reduce the negative aspects associated with larger groups.
- We offer a flexible travel service and you can extend your holiday with extra hotel nights, upgrades and activities.
- As part of our commitment to 'Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency', we will be carbon-offsetting all international flights booked through us by donating funds to the Ecoan Tree Planting Project in Peru.
- We are an IATA accredited agent and work directly with some of the world's major airlines. If you wish to fly with a specific airline, from a regional UK airport or on alternative dates to the main group we would be happy to arrange this for you. Please contact our Flights Manager, April, for flight options, quotes and further information.

If we've tempted you to take your next holiday with us, we advise you to check availability and you can do this via our website: [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com) or by calling the team on +44 (0)1453 844400. Bookings can be made online, by phone or by completing a booking form and returning it to us. We can also provisionally hold places if you need time to consider your options.

# Mountain Kingdoms - distinctly different

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## **Truly independent**

In an age where many so-called 'independent' travel companies have in fact been bought out by multi-national giants, we remain fiercely independent with all the benefits this offers our clients.

## **Value for money prices with an emphasis on quality**

We are not in the business of cutting our itineraries and services to the bone to offer eye-catching cheap prices. We use some of the best airlines, and typically 3 or 4 star hotels in cities. We include the majority of meals and private transport for road travel. We use excellent equipment and appoint well-trained staff and leaders. Last year, over 98% of our clients rated their Mountain Kingdoms holiday as 'excellent' or 'good'. We are members of AITO and bound by their quality charter.

## **Complete financial security**

You can book with us confident that your holiday has full financial protection. Flight inclusive holidays are financially protected by the Civil Aviation Authority under ATOL licence number 2973 and 'Land Only' holidays are covered by a bond secured with ABTOT.

## **No Surcharge Guarantee**

Your peace of mind is important to us so we have a No Surcharge Guarantee on all Land Only and Flight Inclusive bookings. This means that there will be no change to the price of your holiday once we have confirmed your booking, regardless of fluctuations in exchange rates or fuel prices.

## **Award winning Responsible Tourism**

We feel strongly that all our holidays should benefit local communities, protect the environment and respect local traditions, religion and heritage. You can read more about the charities we support and our Responsible Tourism commitments and initiatives on the following page or at [www.mountainkingdoms.com](http://www.mountainkingdoms.com).

## **Genuine small group travel**

Almost all of our holidays have a maximum group size of just 12, plus leader. This provides more contact with your leader, readier access to off-the-beaten-path areas, greater interaction with local communities and a reduced environmental impact.

## **Loyalty Discount**

If you have previously travelled with us we recognise your loyalty with a discount on future trips.

## **Booking your holiday - it couldn't be easier**

Once you've chosen your Mountain Kingdoms holiday you can book online, call the office or complete and post a booking form which can be found in our brochure or downloaded from our website. If you would like to hold a place on one of our trips, whilst you make up your mind, please give us a call to make a provisional booking. This is a no-obligation, no-cost booking and we will hold your place until space comes under pressure or we need your decision.

## **Comprehensive information**

When we receive your booking we send you a full trip dossier which contains details of visas and vaccinations required, a suggested gear and clothing list and lots of useful information. In fact, everything you need to know to give you peace of mind and allow you to prepare for your trip of a lifetime.





## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM STATEMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY PLAN



For over 33 years, Mountain Kingdoms has been offering people the chance to visit amazing places on this extraordinary planet. We now offer trips to all corners of the world, but we are conscious that inevitably our holidays have a detrimental impact on the world around us, and we want to do all we can to reduce our carbon emissions. We are a signatory to Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency, along with a growing number of like-minded, reputable tour operators. For more information, please visit [www.tourismdeclares.com](http://www.tourismdeclares.com)

From 2020 onwards, we will be focusing on how we can reduce the carbon emissions that our holidays produce, and how to counterbalance this carbon by supporting carbon offset measures. Here are some of our current and future plans to minimise the impact of our business as a whole:

### **Carbon Offsetting**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We have been offsetting carbon since 2007, but will be increasing our donations to the [Ecoan tree planting project](#) in Peru this year. This is with a trusted partner where the funds go directly to a project where the community plants trees on its own land.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We are working on making our carbon offsetting more accurate and targeted.
- ✓ In future, we will add to that a further estimate for carbon produced by hotels, local road travel, trains and internal flights to arrive at a carbon offset sum for each trip we operate.
- ✓ Carbon offsetting will be included in our holiday prices. For our Flight Inclusive holidays it will include the international flight and any emissions produced by inland travel and accommodation. Our Land Only prices will include the cost of offsetting emissions caused by inland travel and accommodation.

### **Reducing Carbon Emissions**

#### **Already doing:**

- ✓ We already offer the majority of our customers a free filtered water bottle which means they can instantly cut down on their single-use plastic consumption. This will be an ongoing project.
- ✓ We already predominantly use locally owned hotels, but will continue to ensure that, where possible, we use these rather than multinational chains.
- ✓ We have joined the Tourism Declares a Climate Emergency initiative to stand alongside like-minded travel companies, to work together to initiate best practices to make tourism as sustainable as possible.

#### **Will do:**

- ✓ We will re-evaluate our flights to make sure we are using the most fuel efficient airlines with the youngest fleets and, where possible, direct flights for each trip.
- ✓ We will stop offering unnecessary optional flights – for example our Everest sightseeing trip.
- ✓ We will eliminate unnecessary staff flights wherever possible.
- ✓ We will look at minimising internal flights.
- ✓ We will be asking all our worldwide agents and suppliers to look at their own carbon footprint and encourage them to reduce it.
- ✓ We will promote our more low impact trips to give customers an informed choice.

As part of our wider commitment to Responsible Tourism, we will continue to support a number of charities with whom we have had a long standing relationship over many years. These include: Shiva Charity in Nepal (Ginette Harrison School), Simien Mountains Mobile Medical Service and Porter Welfare, as well as setting aside a sum for emergency disaster relief should the need arise.



