Regal India: Rail Journey

Through Rajasthan

Featuring Five nights on the Palace on Wheels and the Dussehra Festival

October 21–November 2, 2012

With MIT Professor Emeritus Samuel Jay Keyser

Join us to explore the rich cultural, natural, and historical jewels for which Northern India is famous: Delhi, Agra and the Taj Mahal, Jaipur, Udaipur, and Ranthambore and Keoladeo Ghana National Parks.

Accompanied by popular MIT study leader Jay Keyser and his wife, Nancy Kelly, learn about Mughal empires, visit majestic forts and palaces, experience diverse cultures, and marvel at the vibrant colors contrasted against the desert landscape. Experience the Hindu festival of Dussehra, celebrated with performances of the Ramlila epic—the legendary triumph of Lord Rama over the demon-king Ravana and the rescued of Rama's abducted wife, Sita—along with fairs, parades, and bonfires.

Traveling by train is a classic way to experience the bygone era of royal maharajas and the best way to visit Rajasthan’s remote and legendary cities. We are fortunate to spend five days aboard the newly renovated Palace on Wheels and experience firsthand the elegance, luxury, and outstanding service once accorded to the former rulers of the princely states of northern India.

Overnights

- 2 nights in Delhi
- 1 night in Jaipur
- 5 nights aboard Palace on Wheels
- 1 night near Keoladeo Ghana National Park
- 1 night in Agra

Exclusive to the MIT Community

Maximum group size: 23 travelers

Space on this exclusive MIT tour is limited and will fill quickly, so we urge you to register today. If you have any questions, or wish to make a reservation, please call the MIT Alumni Travel Program at 800-992-6749 or email us at compass@mit.edu. You may also contact the tour operator, Criterion Travel, Inc., at 888-328-2089.
Monday, October 29: Jodhpur

Jodhpur’s old city is separated from the new city by a six-mile-long wall punctuated by eight gates. Dominating the city is the massive Mehrangarh Fort, built on a hilltop in 1459 and surrounded by the city’s iconic blue-painted houses, traditionally homes of the Brahmins. Within the fort’s walls are a variety of royal palaces with a collection of priceless jewels and armor. After lunch at the Hanuman Mantar Hotel, return to the Palace on Wheels for our final night aboard the train. Palace on Wheel (B,L,D)

Tuesday, October 30: Bharatpur/Keoladeo Ghana National Park

Disembark the train for a visit to Keoladeo Ghana National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage-designated bird sanctuary renowned for massive flocks of egrets, Siberian cranes, migratory water fowl, and many other species of birds. Enjoy bird watching from rickshaws followed by a cooking demonstration and lunch at The Bagh, a luxury boutique hotel adjacent to the park and our home this evening. A relaxing afternoon includes a walking tour through the village of Bharatpur, where you can meet local merchants in the market and visit the children’s school if classes are in session. In the evening enjoy a music and Raas Leela dance performance. The Bagh Resort (B,L,D)

Wednesday, October 31: Bharatpur/Fatehpur Sikri/Agra

En route to Agra visit the UNESCO World Heritage site of Fatehpur Sikri, the deserted red sandstone complex built by Emperor Akbar in the late 16th century. It was the capital of the Moghal Empire for only 14 years before it was abandoned due to the lack of an adequate water supply. The well-preserved palaces, fountains, courtyards, pools, and enormous mosque are a ghostly reminder of this jewel of Moghal architecture. Continue to Agra for lunch and an afternoon tour of Agra Fort, beautifully situated along the Yamuna River. At sunset visit the iconic Taj Mahal, completed in 1654 under the orders of Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz and often described as the most extravagant monument ever built for love. Enjoy a festive farewell dinner this evening. ITC Moghal Hotel (B,L,D)

Thursday & Friday, November 1 & 2: Agra/Delhi/U.S.

Return to the Taj Mahal this morning to see its beautiful white marble washed in the pastel colors of dawn. After breakfast at the hotel, drive to Delhi and check in to day rooms at the Taj Mahal Hotel to relax and freshen up before boarding late-night flights home. Arrive back in the U.S. on November 2. (B,L,D)

Dussehra Festival

This itinerary coincides with Dussehra, a popular ten-day Hindu festival celebrated exuberantly throughout the country. Reenactments of the Ramli, a folk play based on the epic story of Rama’s defeat of the demon Ravana and subsequent rescue of his wife, Sita, who had been abducted by Ravana, are staged in vast open spaces in most of the cities in northern India. Actors dressed as Rama shoot flaming arrows at effigies stuffed with firecrackers, songs are sung in praise of Rama, and thousands witness this traditional theater with its exaggerated costumes and masks, jewelry, makeup, and drama.

Optional Post-Trip Extension to Varanasi: November 1-5, 2012

Spend three days in the fascinating city of Varanasi on the banks of the Ganges River, one of the most important pilgrimage sites for Hindus, Buddhists, andJains. Experience the colorful street life and the bathing ritual called aarti on the riverside steps, or ghats. Varanasi has been a center of learning and civilization for more than 3,000 years and is the home of Banaras Hindu University, the largest residential university in Asia. A visit to the university includes Bharat Kala Bhawan Museum, which has a fine collection of miniature paintings and sculptures from the 1st to 15th centuries. In Sarnath, where Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon in Deer Park after receiving enlightenment, explore the ruins of monasteries, built more than 2,000 years ago. Here you will see the famous sandstone Ashoka Pillar, whose lion capital has been adopted as the state emblem of India. Complete details and pricing will be sent to confirmed participants.

Itinerary is subject to change.
PALACE ON WHEELS

The Palace on Wheels is a classic train built in the royal style of the Maharajas with old world charm and modern amenities. Completely refurbished in the summer of 2011, the train boasts new furnishings, carpets, upgrades to the bathrooms, and furniture with inlaid motifs specially created for the Palace on Wheels. The train has 14 fully air-conditioned deluxe saloons, each with four twin-bedded cabins, a lounge equipped with color television and a CD player, and an attendant to take care of all your travel needs. Two lavish restaurants—the Maharaja and The Maharani—serve Continental, Chinese, Indian, and Rajasthani cuisines in a Rajasthani ambience, and the well-stocked bar offers Indian and international brands.

FACULTY HOST

Samuel Jay Keyser is professor emeritus in the Department of Linguistics and Philosophy at MIT and currently holds the position of Special Assistant to the Chancellor of MIT. Aside from his current career as a theoretical linguist, he is also a jazz trombonist with the Aardvark Jazz Orchestra, the New Liberty Jazz Band, and the Dave Whitney Swing Orchestra. Jay has published extensively in the field of theoretical linguistics as well as two books of poems, Raising the Dead and The Proud God and Other Stories, which earned the 2003 Lee Bennett Hopkins Honor Award for children's poetry. Excerpts from Jay's A Safari Journal: Featous of Heart in the Heart of Darkness appeared in the May 2000 issue of The Atlantic Monthly. He is an occasional commentator on the National Public Radio's All Things Considered. Jay will be joined by his wife, Nancy Kelly, a professional photographer. Together they have hosted 16 MIT trips.

PROGRAM RATES

- Per person, double occupancy: $8,990
- Per person, single occupancy: $11,580

Single accommodations are very limited.

Airfare U.S. domestic and international airfare between the U.S. and Delhi is not included in the program rates. In order to provide you with the greatest flexibility with the variety of travel options, you are free to make your own air arrangements for this program. Arrival transfers are included for all participants. Round-trip economy-class airfare between New York and Delhi is approximately $1,570 per person as of November 2011 and is subject to change without notice.

Program Rates Include: A full program of briefings, lectures, and presentations by an MIT study leader and local guides • All accommodations and meals as specified in the itinerary • Five nights in deluxe cabins aboard the Palace on Wheels • All excursions as specified in the itinerary • Arrival transfer in Delhi • Baggage handling • Gratuities to porters, wait staff, guides, and drivers and to Palace on Wheels personnel • Entrance fees • Welcome and farewell wine receptions • Bottled water on motorcoaches • Indian value-added tax • Complete packet of pre-departure information • Professional tour manager and Indian escort throughout.

Program Rates Do Not Include: U.S. domestic and international airfare • Passport and visa expenses • Medical expenses and immunizations • Travel insurance • Optional excursions or deviations from the scheduled tour • Excess baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary, dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks • Laundry or dry cleaning • Telephone, email, and fax charges • Room service • Other items of a personal nature

WHAT TO EXPECT

We strive to offer programs that optimize our travelers’ time and enjoyment and want participants to be aware of the physical requirements involved on each and every program. Tour managers are responsible for the whole group and may not be able to assist individuals with special needs. For the most satisfying experience, and in fairness to your fellow travelers, please note that this tour requires that participants be able to walk without assistance at least one mile over rocky terrain with uneven footing; climb sets of stairs without assistance; walk and stand for up to one hour at sites noted on the itinerary; keep pace with an active group of travelers and be on time for all scheduled activities.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Trip cancellation/interruption insurance, medical, emergency medical evacuation, and baggage insurance are highly recommended and should be considered for your protection. An application will be sent to confirmed participants.

RESPONSIBILITY

A detailed statement of limitations and exclusions of liability of Criterion Travel (the tour operator) and the MIT Alumni Travel Program for loss of property, injury, illness, or death will be provided to passengers upon enrollment and is available to prospective travelers upon request.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Reservations and Deposits: A deposit of $1,000 per person is required to confirm a reservation. You may reserve space immediately by calling the MIT Alumni Travel Program at 800-992-6749. Or you may send the completed reservation form with your deposit payment (check or credit card information) to the MIT Alumni Travel Program, 610 Memorial Drive, W98-2nd Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139. Final payment deadline is June 25, 2012. All prices quoted in this brochure are based on tariffs, costs, and exchange rates of the United States dollar that were in effect at the time of publication.

Cancellations and Refunds

Refunds, less a cancellation fee of $500 per person, will be made if the MIT Alumni Travel Program or Criterion Travel is notified on or before June 25, 2012, 120 days prior to departure. No refunds will be granted after that date. All cancellations must be in writing. Refunds cannot be made to passengers who do not complete the tour for any reason at all. Criterion Travel reserves the right, without penalty, to cancel the tour or to require any participant to withdraw from a tour at any time at its/her own expense, when such action is determined by tour staff to be in the best interest of the health, safety, or general welfare of the tour group or the individual participant, and subject only to the requirement that the recoverable portion of the tour price that corresponds to the cost of unused services and accommodation be refunded, in any.

Itinerary Changes

The itinerary presented for this tour is subject to modification and change by the MIT Alumni Travel Program (MITAA) and Criterion Travel (the tour operator). Every reasonable effort will be made to operate the program as planned; however, should unforeseen world events and conditions require the itinerary to be altered, MITAA and the tour operator reserve the right to do so for the safety and best interest of the group. Any extra expenses incurred in this situation are the responsibility of the participant.
Reservation Form
REGAL INDIA: RAIL JOURNEY THROUGH RAJASTHAN
October 21–November 2, 2012

To reserve today, fax this reservation form to the MIT Alumni Travel Program at (617) 258-6211 to hold your space for one week, pending receipt of your deposit check or credit card instructions. Please make your check payable to Criterion Travel and mail it with this reservation form to MIT Alumni Travel Program, W90-200, 600 Memorial Drive, Cambridge, MA 02139.

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**Single Travelers:**

- _____ I wish to have single accommodations.
- _____ I will share accommodations with _________________________________ (reservation form sent separately).
- _____ I am willing to share with another participant (shares cannot be guaranteed).
- _____ I am a Non-smoker  Smoker
- _____ I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of June 25, 2012, I will pay the single rate.

**Accommodations**

Bed preference in hotels (not guaranteed):  
- _____ One bed  
- _____ Two beds

Bed preference on train:  
- _____ Twin beds joined as double  
- _____ Twin beds separate

**Payment**

- _____ Enclosed is my check for $ _______ ($1,000 per person) to hold ___ place(s) on Rail Journey through Rajasthan.
- OR
- _____ Charge my deposit to:
  - _____MasterCard   _____ VISA   _____ Diners Club   _____ American Express   _____Discover Card

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Signature as it appears on credit card

I/We have read the Terms and Conditions section of this brochure and understand and agree with them as stated herein.

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Return to: MIT Alumni Travel Program, 600 Memorial Drive, W98-2nd Floor, Cambridge, MA 02139