

Traders and Rulers

An adventure with Sudhakar Selwyn

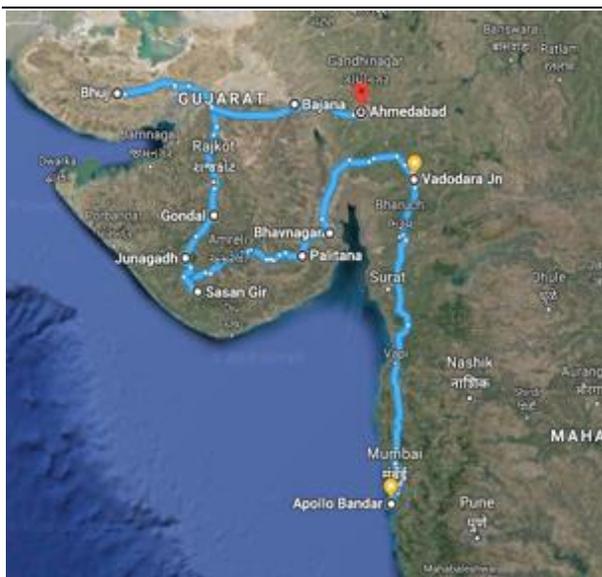
Feb 2020



Highlights of the trip

1. 3 Nights stay in Taj Mahal Tower Hotel in Mumbai
2. Hike on the Hills of Palitana to explore Jain edifices
3. Learn about the various handicrafts of Gujarat
4. Heritage walk in the old Ahmedabad Town
5. Gir National Park (only place where Asian Lions live)
6. Day in the life of Tribals

Route Map



Unique Accommodations

- ❖ Taj Mahal Tower , Mumbai
<https://taj.tajhotels.com/en-in/taj-mahal-tower-mumbai/>
- ❖ Heritage Palaces , Gondal
<http://www.heritagepalacesgondal.com/>
- ❖ The House of MG, Ahmedabad
<http://houseofmg.com/>



Itinerary

Day 1
26 Jan 2020
Sunday

Mumbai

Arrival in Mumbai

Free time for recovering the long haul flight

On your arrival you will be transferred to our Hotel Mumbai, formerly Bombay, is big. It's full of dreamers and hard-labourers, starlets and gangsters, stray dogs and exotic birds, artists and servants, fisher folk and crorepatris (millionaires), and lots and lots of people. It has India's most prolific film industry, some of Asia's biggest slums (as well as the world's most expensive home) and the largest tropical forest in an urban zone. Mumbai is India's financial powerhouse, fashion epicentre and a pulse point of religious tension. <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/india/mumbai-bombay>
In the afternoon we do a orientation walk around the Hotel in Colaba area. Rest of the day is free

Taj Mahal Tower, Mumbai Check in time after 1200 Noon

Day 2
27 Jan 2020
Monday

Mumbai

After our breakfast in the Hotel, we set out to explore Mumbai's life. Our local guide, will take us to Mani Bhavan. Mani Bhavan, a modest two-storied building on the Laburnum Road in the comparatively quiet locality called Gamdevi, served for about seventeen eventful years (1917-1934) as the nerve centre in Bombay for Gandhiji's activities. It belonged to Shri Revashankar Jagjeevan Jhaveri who was an ardent devotee of Gandhiji and his affectionate host during that period. Today Mani Bhavan is a hallowed memorial to Gandhiji, to his stay here and to the activities he initiated from here <http://www.gandhi-manibhavan.org/>

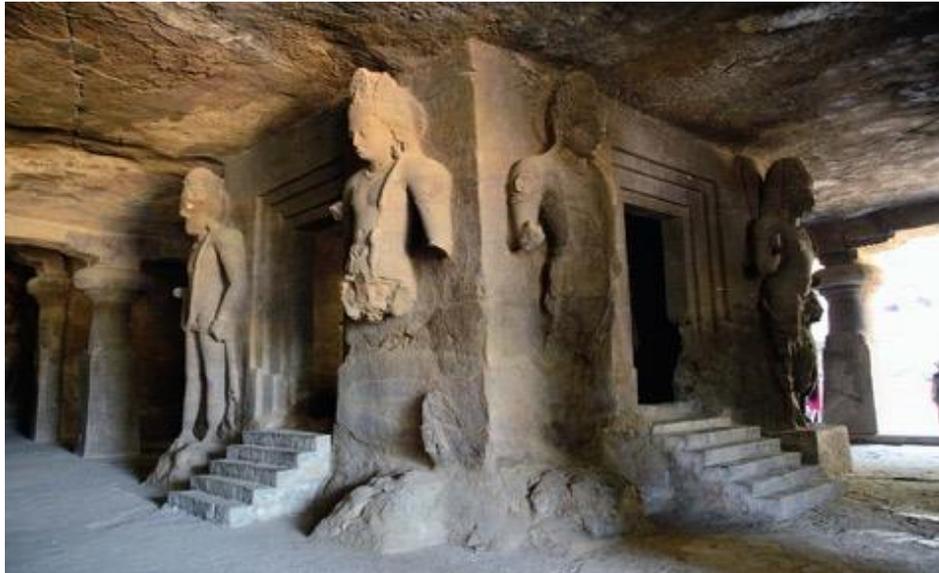
Later, we move to Churchgate station to interact with the world renowned Dabbawalas at work. <http://mumbaidabbawala.in/>

We break for included Lunch in a local restaurant

In the afternoon, we explore the Asia's largest slum, Dharavi.

Later free time around Colaba market and Dinner on your own

Hotel Taj Mahal Towers B, L



Day 3
28 Jan 2020
Tuesday

Mumbai
Elephanta

This morning after Breakfast, we set out for a Guided City Orientation trip. Later after our lunch Break (on your own), we will take a public boat to reach the UNESCO site, Island of Elephanta.

The Elephanta Caves are located in Western India on Elephanta Island, which features two hillocks separated by a narrow valley. The rock-cut Elephanta Caves were constructed about the mid-5th to 6th centuries AD.

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/244>

After our return we have free time for your shopping in Colaba market.

Later we meet together to go for Dinner in a local restaurant.

Radisson B, D

Day 4
29 Jan 2020
Wednesday

Mumbai
Baroda
(Vadodara)

Local train ride to Baroda(Vadodara)

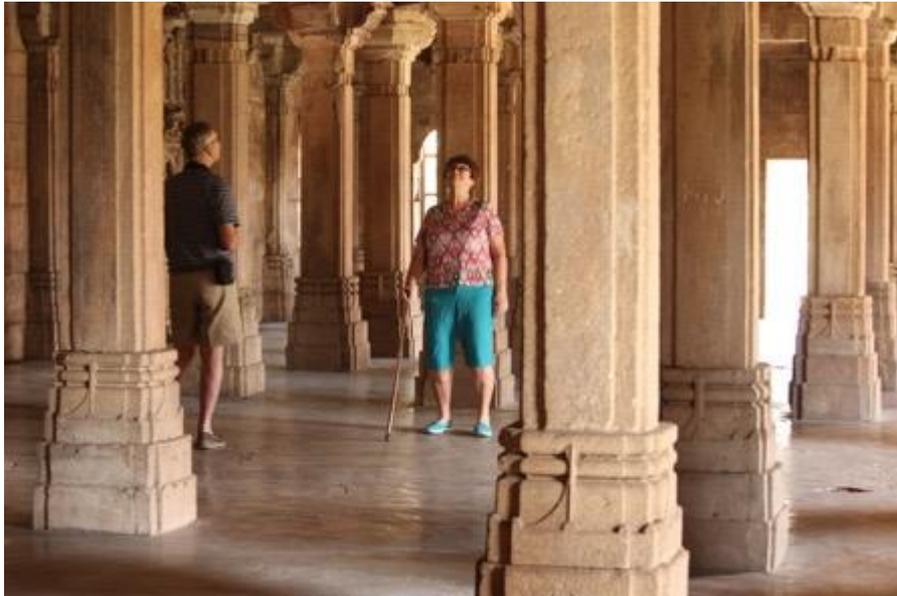
The Princely State of Baroda was ruled since its formation in the year 1721 by the Gaekwad dynasty till the year 1949, when the princely state was acceded to the Union of India. The city of Baroda, presently known as Vadodara, served as the capital of the state. Baroda was amongst the wealthiest and largest princely states in India which existed alongside British dominated India and lucratively earned from the developing cotton industry. During the period when the nation attained independence, the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda was among the only five Indian princes. The city is mixture of many eras and its reputation as "Cultural Capital" dates largely from the late 19th c, when it was the capital of the princely state of Baroda.

In the late afternoon, we stroll and explore in the old town of Baroda

In the evening we have Dinner together

Hotel Royal Orchid B, L, D





Day 5
30 Jan 2020
Thursday



Baroda
(Vadodara)
Champaner

In the morning we drive about 25 miles to explore Champaner the old ruin palace and Mosque

Champaner was founded in the 8th century by the Maharaja Vanraj Chavda of the Chavda Kingdom. The city and surrounding state of Pavagadh became an important buffer area between Mandu and Gujarat, as well as a key station on trade routes leading from Gujarat to both North and South India.

We will have included lunch at the local restaurant

In the afternoon we get back to Vadodara and explore the palace complex.

Evening we have free time for you to explore around the Hotel and dinner on your own.

Hotel Royal Orchid

B, L

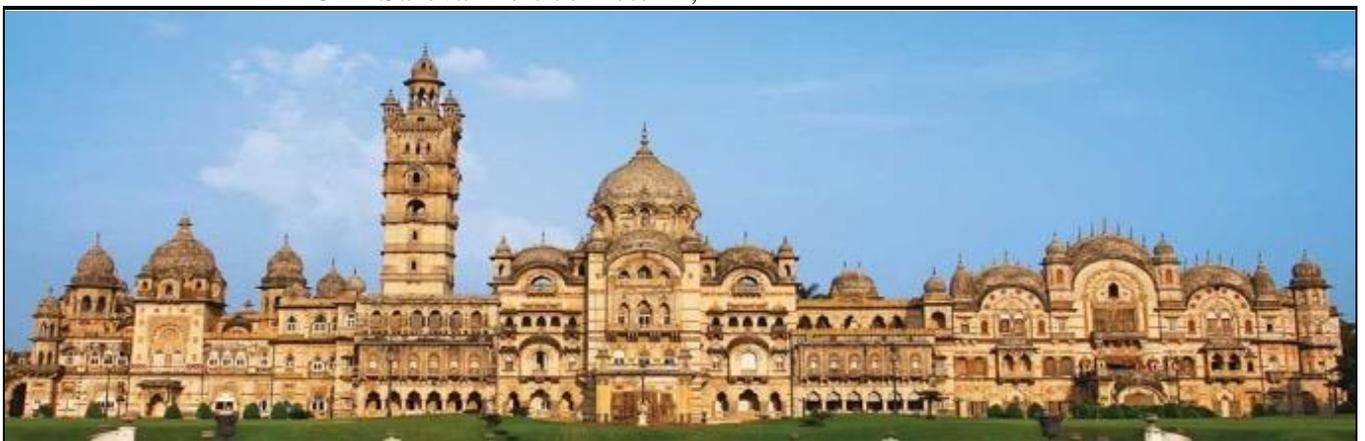
Day 6
31 Jan 2020
Friday

Vadodara
Bhav Nagar

This morning after a relaxed breakfast, we set up for a 5 Hour drive to Bhav Nagar. North of Ganga Jalia Tank, Bhavnagar's old city is well worth a wander, especially in the early evening – it's busy with small shops and cluttered with dilapidated elaborate wooden buildings leaning over the colourful crowded bazaars.

In the evening we sit together for an early Dinner as we have an early morning departure to Palitana, next day.

EFCEE Sarovar Portico Hotel B, D





Day 7
01 Feb 2020
Saturday

Palitana

We leave early morning today to reach Palitana (35 miles) 2 Hours bus ride. The stunningly beautiful **Temples of Palitana** are an important pilgrimage for the **Jains**. The temples, or *derasars* as they are called by Jains, can be accessed after a tiring hike on the **Shatrunjay Hills** and are a must visit for anyone who loves architecture and culture. These temples are actually a cluster of about 863 temples and they belong to both sects of Jainism - **Digambar and Shwetambar**.

After the hike to this holy hills, we drive back to our Hotel in Bhav Nagar. EFCEE Sarovar Portico Hotel B, D

Day 8
02 Feb 2020
Sunday
Gondal

After Breakfast we drive to Gondal

Gondal like its neighbors has some visually exciting palaces and living spaces; some like the Riverside Palace commissioned in 1875 by Bhagwatsinghji is now a Heritage Hotel. The palace grounds form a private forest reserve with frolicking deers and a variety of birds adding to the tranquil beauty of the place. A building worth visiting is the old Darbargadh a seventeenth century structure. The palace is built on series of arches delicately carved and inscribed in stone with a magnificent spiral staircase leading all the way to the top. The interior of the Darbargadh is open to visitors and for a fee one can experience the opulent living style of the Maharajas of old. To experience Gondal is to take a walk down its winding streets inhaling the soul of the city and its people!

Afternoon we explore the Palatial complex and the Personal car collections of the Maharaja.

B, L, D





Day 9
03 Feb 2020
Monday

Sasan Gir
Veeraval
Somnath



Today we have bus ride (80 Miles) towards Sasan Gir. Gir is one of India's oldest sanctuaries, and is the only place in India to see Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*). The Government of Gujarat has declared an area of 1412.1 sq. km as Protected Area (PA) which comprises 258.7 sq. km as National Park and 1153.4 sq. km as Sanctuary. Besides this 470.5 sq. km of forest area forms a buffer Zone as reserve, protected and unclassified forest. Thus, a total area of 1882.6 sq km makes up the Gir forest.

<http://girlion.in/ForestVisitDetails.aspx>

We have lunch at the Local restaurant and check in.

In the afternoon, we take a safari ride in the Gir National Park to see the natural habitat of Asiatic Lions and the tribals.

B, L, D The Fern Gir Forest Resort

Day 10
04 Feb 2020
Tuesday



Sasan Gir
Junagadh
Gondal

In the morning after our breakfast, we drive to the coastal towns of Veeraval and Somnath.

Veeraval had Gujarat's largest fishing harbor and we drive through this fishing harbor where thousands of fishing boats are berthed. Seafaring dhows and wooden fishing boats are still built by the fishermen without the use of any modern technology. Traditional skills are passed down from father to son

Continue driving to the most of important pilgrimage centre for the Hindus, Somnath Temple. The modern temple complex was built in 1951, after the previous old structures were damaged by various invading monarchs.

lunch in the local restaurant.

Later return to our hotel for Dinner

B, L, D The Fern Gir Forest Resort



Day 11
05 Feb 2020
Wednesday

Junagadh
Rajkot



In the morning, we have also an option of going for another safari in the wildlife park and return to our Hotel for Breakfast and check out.

We drive to the Junagadh town to explore the old town. Junagadh is a city in the western Indian state of Gujarat. Mahabat Maqbara is the huge 19th-century mausoleum of a local ruler, which showcases intricate Indo-Islamic architectural details. Stepped in history, culture, spirituality and religion, Junagadh is the Soul of Saurashtra. We stop at the old town for lunch.

We further continue to drive towards Rajkot and check in.

The former capital of the princely state of Saurashtra, Rajkot was founded in the 16th c. by the Jadeja Rajputs, who ruled until independence. During the colonial period, the city was the administrative headquarters of the Saurashtra region, and today it is the district headquarters. The city is situated on the Aji River and sprawls with regal architecture. It is also an industrial center and an important hub for the body building of vehicles. The city proudly boasts of its association with Gandhiji, who spent his early years in Rajkot while his father was a Diwan to the local ruler. The house where he lived is now a museum. The district is also a handicraft and textile center known for its fine silverwork, Bandhani, Patola saris and beadwork.

Manasa Sarovar Portico

B, L, D





Day 12
06 Feb 2020
Thursday

Gondal
Bhuj



Day 13
07 Feb 2020
Friday

BHUJ

After a palatial breakfast, we get ready for a long Bus ride to the Kutch region of Gujarat.

Bhuj is the capital of the Kutch. Kutch literally means something which intermittently becomes wet and dry; a large part of this district is known as Rann of Kutch which is shallow wetland which submerges in water during the rainy season and becomes dry during other seasons. The same word is also used in Sanskrit origin for a tortoise. The Rann is famous for its marshy salt flats which become snow white after the shallow water dries up each season before the monsoon rains.

Bhuj is an ideal springboard for visits to the surrounding villages and to places of great natural beauty in the Great Rann, and textile tourism is attracting visitors from around the world. We arrive at the Hotel late afternoon after breaking for lunch in the local restaurant, Enroute.

B, L, D Hotel Regenta Park

Handicrafts are a way of life in Kutch and what makes it so unique, colourful and therefore well visited from guests from all over the world interested in exploring crafts. Around Bhuj there are several villages that specialize in different kind of handicrafts. These villages are home to numerous pastoral nomadic, semi-nomadic tribes. These villages, thanks to some grass root organizations have started to focus on embroidery / handicraft as principle source of livelihood and have begun to organise communities around this activity.

Today, we spend our day in couple of tribal villages and learn about the handicrafts they make and interact with them. We will have lunch in one of the villages

We return to the town after lunch and have some free time in the market of Bhuj and dinner on your own.

Evening optional visit to the nearby Swami Narayan temple to participate in the rituals.

B, L



Day 14
08 Feb 2020
Saturday

Bhuj
Bajana
Little Rann of
Kutch

In the morning we start driving towards Bajana, the Little Rann of Kutch. Considering that it sprawls out over 5,000sqkm, the Little Rann of Kutch seems inaccurately named. Its name makes sense only in comparison with the salt desert next door: The Greater Rann of Kutch, which stretches out across 7,500sqkm. The word *Rann* means “salty desert” and while driving through the Little Rann of Kutch, a salty desert is all you see. The first drive into the terrain feels a little surreal. The ground is cracked, the air is dry, mirages abound, and the parched earth unfolds endlessly in all directions. The Little Rann contains one of the country’s largest wildlife reserves, the Wild Ass Sanctuary, where the topography varies from large marshlands to brown-grey patches of soil with a few small thorny shrubs.

We check in at the Hotel and later do a safari ride in the Little Rann of Kutch.

B, D Royal Safari camp

We start after breakfast to drive to the famous towns of Modhera and Patan

Modhera Sun Temple The sun temple at Modhera is a grand sandstone monument built by the Solanki dynasty in the year 1027 A.D. and is dedicated to Surya, the sun god. The complex is filled with elaborate carvings and the resident priest enjoys explaining the legends they depict. A step tank in front of the temple has 108 shrines that lead down to the water. Though the *garbhagriha*, or main shrine, was demolished in the 13th century by Allauddin Khilji, most other sculptures are intact

Rani ki Vav (Queen’s step well), in Patan is richly sculpted monument is considered a masterpiece dedicated to the king by his widowed wife Udayamati. The *Well* was later flooded by the nearby Saraswati River and silted over until the late 1980s.

If you are travelling here for the first time, you might get confused as you won’t see a tall museum or the remains of a ruin because it is built inside an opening in the ground, which makes it special.

After a brief stop for a lunch break, we drive towards Ahmedabad and check in at our Hotel and in the evening we get ready for a dinner in the local restaurant.

House of MG B, D

Day 15
09 Feb 2020
Sunday

Bajana
Modhera
Patan
Ahmedabad





Day 16
10 Feb 2020
Monday

Ahmedabad



Ahmedabad (also called Amdavad, Ahmadabad or Ahemdavad), Gujarat's major city, grows on you. Yes, during peak hours with traffic, noise, and air so thick you can chew it, the place can be a little overwhelming, but it's well worth taking the time to get to know this remarkable city. It wins you over with its wealth of architecture – from centuries-old mosques and mausoleums to cutting-edge contemporary design. Then there's the fascinating maze of an old quarter, fine restaurants, a bustling street-food scene and the tranquillity of the Sabarmati Ashram (Gandhi's former headquarters).

The old city, on the east side of the Sabarmati River, used to be surrounded by a 10km-long wall, of which little now remains except 15 formidable gates standing as forlorn islands amid swirling, cacophonous traffic. The new city on the west side of the river has wider streets, several major universities, and many middle-class neighbourhoods.

After our relaxed breakfast, we set out for exploring the Sabarmati Ashram, the first one to be established by Mahatma Gandhi. We allow ourselves to participate in any of the activities of the day happening in the Ashram. There will be also a guided tour of the Ashram.

<https://www.gandhiashramsabarmati.org/en/>

In the evening, we go to a heritage home for a home hosted dinner in the middle of the world heritage old town of Ahmedabad.

House of MG, B, D

This morning we explore the old city, walking. We do a guided heritage walk and learn about the life of people. We also explore the mosque.

We also break at the local restaurant for snacks in the old city.

In the afternoon break for on our own lunch and we have plenty of options around our hotel. In the evening we go to the river side to explore life there and later we will have our farewell dinner together today.

Day 17
11 Feb 2020
Tuesday

Ahmedabad

Day 18
12 Feb 2020
Wednesday

This morning is free for your own activities and airport transfers
Departure transfers

Cost of the Adventure:

For booking, price and further info kindly write to sudhakar@indiabeckons.in there is **no single supplement** for this adventure. The single rooms will be allotted on the first cum first served basis on signing up. There are only 5 single rooms available in this departure.
16 Travelers Maximum for this adventure

Inclusions

1. Twin Bedded room with Breakfast in the hotels mentioned or similar
2. All entrance fees for the monuments
3. All the local Guide Fees
4. Services of Tour Leader (Indian English Speaking)
5. All Airport transfers
6. Air conditioned SUV (Toyota) or mini Bus as per the program
7. Jeep safari in the National parks as mentioned in the program
8. Train tickets as per the program
9. All breakfast in the hotel and other meals as mentioned in the program
10. Bottled drinking water in the Bus, during included meals and in the room.

Not included

1. International Airfare
2. Health and trip insurance
3. Visa Fees
4. Meals which are not mentioned in the program
5. All Gratuities
6. Camera Fees in the National park and monuments
7. Any other expenses of personal nature



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