



## **6N/7D Package of Bhuj – Ahmedabad – Vadodara** **(White Desert – Patan – Modhera – SOU)**

### **Day 1: Ahmedabad – Bhuj**

Arrival in Ahmedabad – a World Heritage City. Proceed towards Bhuj (350 kms/7 hours). Visit LLDC Museum in Ajrakhpur on the way to feel the vibrancy of the colourful handicrafts of Kutch District.

LLDC stands for 'Living and Learning Design Centre'. The LLDC museum hosts glorious heritage of Kutch and it is a tribute to the brilliant artisans of Kutch. The museum has three galleries, studios and a library. Kutch is home to 12 tribes such as Ahir, Rabari, Maghwal, etc., that are indigenous communities of Kutch. The motive of the LLDC museum is to train, educate, support and promote the traditional crafts and communities of Kutch region. The biggest attraction of the museum is the textile and different embroidery styles of the locals, which is revered by the world. Tourists can see the different art and craft artefacts and also learn how they are created here. Also, a few more galleries are slated to be opened here featuring pottery, metal, wood and stone crafts. 'The Living Embroideries of Kutch' – the first show by the LLDC museum – had been seen by more than 30,000 people in just first couple of years. There are also craft shops where people can purchase the indigenous craft articles and there is also a café where the tourists can experience the local cuisine. The museum also hosts amazing sculptures and installations such as the metal installation created in the artificial pond.

Reach Bhuj – a city which rose from the ashes after the 2001 devastating Earthquake. Visit Swaminarayan Temple in Bhuj and overnight at Bhuj.

### **Day 2: Bhuj – White Desert – Black Hills – Bhuj**

Today morning, visit:

#### **White Desert:**

The Great Rann of Kutch is a salt marsh in the Thar Desert in the Kutch District of Gujarat, India. It is about 7500 km<sup>2</sup> (2900 sq miles) in area and is reputed to be one of the largest salt deserts in the world. The Great Rann of Kutch, along with the Little Rann of Kutch and the Banni grasslands on its southern edge, is situated in the district of Kutch and comprises some 30,000 square kilometres (10,000 sq mi) between the Gulf of Kutch and the mouth of the Indus River in southern Pakistan. The marsh can be accessed from the village of Kharaghoda in Surendranagar District. The Great Rann of Kutch together with the Little Rann of Kutch is called Rann of Kutch. In India's summer monsoon, the flat desert of salty clay and mudflats, which average 15 meters above sea level, fills with standing water. In very wet years, the wetland extends from the Gulf of Kutch on the west through to the Gulf of Cambay on the east. Every Year, in the vicinity of the White Desert, Gujarat Tourism celebrates the Rannutsav or the White Desert festival highlighting the white Desert and the colourful handicrafts of the district of Kutch which attracts thousands of people in the desert.

#### **Black Hills:**

Kalo Dungar or Black Hills stands as the highest point (462 m) in Kutch and is famous for its 400-year-old Dattatreya Temple. This is probably the only place from where you can enjoy the panoramic view of the white desert. The sunset from the Black hills is a treat to watch. Every day, at 12 in the noon, the jackals are served with food and then the holy Prasad is given to the people and this sight is recommended for the visitors to see.

Return back to Bhuj and overnight at Bhuj.

### **Day 3: Bhuj – Ahmedabad**

Today morning, check out and proceed towards Ahmedabad (350 kms/7 hours). Reach Ahmedabad and visit:

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### **Swaminarayan Akshardham:**

One of the two Akshardham of the Bochasanwasi Aksharpurushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), Akshardham in Gandhinagar was the first to be constructed and completed in 1991. Built in Pink Sandstone, this magnificent structure is a sight to behold. Thousands of people visit it every day for its beauty and also the exhibition halls and the first Spiritual Light and Sound Show in the world 'Sat-chit-anand'. This famous temple was attacked by the terrorists in 2002 where around 30 people lost their lives. The main deity of the temple is Lord Swaminarayan who is considered as an incarnation of Lord Krishna and have a ardent following in the state of Gujarat.

Overnight at Ahmedabad.

### **Day 4: Ahmedabad – Patan – Modhera – Ahmedabad**

Today morning, proceed towards Patan (140 kms/ 3 hours). Visit:

#### **Rani Ki Vav:**

One of the most magnificent structures in India, Rani Ki Vav, a UNESCO World Heritage Site has been considered as the Queen among the stepwells in India. The Stepwell was constructed by Queen Udayamati in memory of his husband Bhimadev I of the Solanki Dynasty. Constructed primarily for storing water for the locals, the stepwell was submerged with silt and sand due to the floods in the nearby Saraswati River in the 13<sup>th</sup> Century which was then excavated in 1960s by the ASI when they found more than 500 God sculptors in Pristine Condition. The statues of Dashavatars, Yoginis and various Gods and Goddesses adorn the walls of the Stepwell. It surely will leave the tourists in awe with the kind of workmanship on the stepwell. The length of these historic stepwell is about 64 m, width about 20 m and the depth is about 27 m. It was included in the UNESCO World Heritage site list in 2014 and also has been inscribed on the new Rs. 100 Currency Note in India. Rani ki Vav will certainly impress the visitors not only for its architectural craftsmanship but also for its sculptural decoration that reflects the true artistic mastery of the nation during medieval period. The sculptures and the figurative motifs along with proportion of empty and filled spaces provide genuine aesthetic character of the stepwell.

#### **Sun Temple:**

Sun Temple of Modhera is a beautiful intricately carved temple constructed by King Bhimadev I in 1026. A perfect example of Solanki Architecture, Sun temple of Modhera lies exactly on the Tropic of Cancer and has been constructed in such a way that the first rays of the Sun on the two equinoxes of the year fell exactly on the crown on the head of the deity's idol in the Garbha Griha. The Crown was stolen and the temple was destroyed considerably during the invasion of Alauddin Khilji in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century. The temple has 3 Parts: Surya Kund, Sabha Mandapa and the Maha Mandapa. The walls of the temple has beautiful statues of various Hindu Gods and Goddesses primarily Sun God as he is the presiding deity there. There are 52 pillars in the sabha mandapa symbolizing 52 weeks of the year each having stories of Ramayana and Mahabharata carved out on it. The temple revives the comparison with that of Konark Sun Temple of Odisha in terms of architectural styles and influence. The place where the temple has come up found its reference in scriptures of Brahma Purana and Skanda Purana. A perfect day excursion from Ahmedabad, the Sun Temple of Modhera has been attracting tourists with the majestic Rani Ki Vav as a complement.

Return back to Ahmedabad and overnight at Ahmedabad.

### **Day 5: Ahmedabad – Vadodara**

Today morning, proceed towards Vadodara (120 Kms/ 3 Hours). Visit:

#### **Laxmi Vilas Palace:**

One of the biggest residence palaces of the country, the Laxmi Vilas Palace is the official residence of the Princely Gaikwads of Vadodara. Constructed by Maharaja Sayajirao Gaikwad III in 1890 under the supervision of the chief Architect Major Charles Mant, the Laxmi Vilas Palace is 4 times bigger than the Buckingham Palace of England and a sum of GBP 1,80,000 were spent to build this super-imposing structure. The windows of the

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palace are inlaid with stained Belgium glass, and the walls have complex mosaic ornamentation. Archived within the palace are priceless collections of bronze sculptures, armory items as well as terracotta and marble artworks designed by Fellici. Emerging out of the Durbar, one steps into a quadrangle that has been made in an Italian fashion with water fountains and channels. Landscaping of the palace grounds was done by William Goldring and appears like a green, velvety carpet. The edifice even at the time of its construction in the late 19th century had facilities like elevators and resembles a European manor or country house. The royal descendants of the Gaekwad dynasty still use the premises as their private residence who's Durbar Hall has a floor built out of Venetian mosaic tiles.

#### **Sayaji Baug:**

Sayaji Baug, an immensely sprawling garden located in Vadodara with the Vishwamitra River flowing beside the patch is easily one of the city's most popular tourist attractions. Also called Kamati Baug, it is the biggest garden in the western part of India with a total land area exceeding 113 acres. The prime attractions of the garden are the Baroda Museum & Picture Gallery, Sayaji Baug Zoo and Aquarium, Sardar Patel Planetarium, floral clock, and the toy train. The garden is also home to a rich variety of flora comprising of 98 tree species. There are a total of three gates that allow visitors access to the garden. The first gate is situated in close proximity to the railway station and the new bus terminal is also not very far away either. Countless visitors comprising residents of Vadodara as well as tourists and travelers make a trip to the verdant garden for whose upkeep the Vadodara Municipal Corporation is responsible.

Overnight at Vadodara.

#### **Day 6: Vadodara – SOU – Vadodara**

Today morning, proceed towards SOU (100 kms/2 Hours). Visit:

##### **Statue of Unity:**

The Statue of Unity is the statue of freedom fighter and the first Home Minister of the independent India – Bharat Ratna Shri Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, looking at the majestic Sardar Sarovar Dam. With the 182 metres height, it is the tallest statue in the world. It is 89 metres taller than the Statue of Liberty. The design of the Statue of Unity was created by veteran sculptor Padma Shri Ram Suthar. In the year 2013 – 14, a campaign was launched across India for donating Iron and Soil to be used in the creation of statue. 134.25 metric tonnes of Iron was collected from different states and used in the foundation of the statue. The statue was created in just 46 months of time it was inaugurated by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the 143<sup>rd</sup> birth anniversary of Shri Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, on 31 October 2018. The statue is a tribute to the 'Iron Man' of India, who was responsible for the unification of 562 different princely states and creation of the United India. And it has become one of the major tourist spots in the country now. The statue offers scenic view of the Satpuda and Vindhya hills, the Sardar Sarovar Dam and Narmada river, from its viewing galleries at the height of 135 Metres. The laser show in the evening is a treat to watch depicting the story of Sardar Patel and the building of the Statue.

Return back to Vadodara and overnight at Vadodara.

#### **Day 7: Vadodara – Ahmedabad Drop**

Today morning, check out and visit:

##### **Champaner-Pavagadh Archaeological Park:**

Champaner – Pavagadh Archaeological Park is a UNSECO World Heritage Site near Vadodara on the foothills of the Pavagadh Hill. It is located around the historical city of Champaner, a city which was founded by Vanraj Chavda, the most prominent king of the Chavda Dynasty, in the 8th century. He named it after the name of his friend and general Champa, also known later as Champaraj. In the 15<sup>th</sup> Century, it was conquered by the Sultan Mahmud Begada and became the Capital of Gujarat for a brief time. The heritage site is studded with forts with bastions starting from the hills of Pavagadh, and extending into the city of Champaner. The park's landscape includes archaeological, historic and living cultural heritage monuments such as chalcolithic sites, a hill fortress of an early Hindu capital, and remains of the 16th-century capital of the state of Gujarat. There are

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palaces, entrance gates and arches, mosques, tombs and temples, residential complexes, agricultural structures and water installations such as stepwells and tanks, dating from the 8th to the 14th centuries. It was inscribed as the UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2004, a first in Gujarat State.

Proceed towards Ahmedabad (150 kms/3 Hours) and drop as per schedule.

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