

5N/6D Package of Ahmedabad – Vadodara (Patan – Modhera – SOU – Champaner)

Day 1: Ahmedabad

Arrival in Ahmedabad – a World Heritage City. Check into the hotel and after freshen up, visit:

Gandhi Ashram:

Mahatma Gandhi, after coming back from South Africa had his first religious retreat built in Ahmedabad's Kochrab area in the year 1915 on 25th May. The ashram was later on shifted to one of the banks of the Sabarmati River on an open tract of land. Gandhiji named the retreat as 'Sabarmati Ashram' as it was located on the bank of the Sabarmati River that passes through Ahmedabad. The date of the shifting is recorded as 17th June 1917. He made this transfer because he had taken a resolve to lead life like a poor, rustic Indian who earned his livelihood through farming and farm-related activities. The ashram served as the nerve-centre for the nation's freedom struggle. It was from this ashram that Mahatma Gandhi launched the Satyagraha movement on 12th March in 1930 and journeyed all the way to Dandi Beach by foot covering a distance of more than 300kms that took about 24 days. Gandhi's office was located in 'Hridaya Kunj' which was actually a cottage that was eventually turned into a museum. Sabarmati Ashram is one of the most important monument in Indian Independence History and today it is the first thing for a tourist visiting Gujarat to visit.

Adalaj Stepwell:

Adalaj Stepwell near Ahmedabad is one of the most beautiful Step-well in India with a perfect mixture of the Hindu and the Islamic architecture. Originally, it was being constructed by Rana Veer Singh but was completed by Sultan Mahmud Begada of Ahmedabad as he had killed the former to expand his kingdom. The stepwell was completed as the Queen of Veer Singh demanded its completion from Mahmud Begada who had proposed to marry her after his husband's demise. This resulted in the fusion of Indo-Islamic architecture in the stepwell. This 5 storey stepwell is constructed in such a way that sunlight cannot penetrate directly inside the stepwell which results in difference of 5 degrees Celsius in temperature from the normal temperature. The intricate carving on the columns and the windows of the stepwell is a treat to watch for any architectural lover.

Swaminarayan Akshardham:

One of the two Akshardham of the Bochasanwasi Aksharapurushottam 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 2: 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 13th Century which was then excavated in 1960s by the ASI when they found more the 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 12th 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 3: 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 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 4: 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 143rd 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 Vindhyachal 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 5: Vadodara – Ahmedabad

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 15th Century, it was conquered by the Sultan Mahumud 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 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 visit:

Kankaria Lake:

Ahmedabad which used to be the erstwhile capital of the state of Gujarat continues to be the prime commercial city of the state. Modernity blends in harmoniously with the past in each and every section which becomes evident as one takes a tour of the city. And amongst the metropolis's top sightseeing attractions that attract tourists and holidaymakers from all parts of the world is the Kankaria Lake. The lake, whose origins can be traced back to the 15th century, is about a mile circumferentially and has a span of nearly 4 sq km and serves as the lungs of the city's south eastern section. The Kankaria Lake together with its lakefront and the surrounding areas once enjoyed a pride of place in the hearts of the urban residents owing to its graceful environs. The chief attractions that draw in the crowds are the Kankaria Zoo, kids' amusement park, Balvatika, Kids City, toy trains, ballooning complex, Nagina Wadi, joyrides, and stony Mural Park, and others.

Overnight at Ahmedabad.

Day 6: Drop

Today morning, check out and visit:

Heritage Walk:

Ahmedabad was declared as the First World Heritage City in India in 2017 and one of the most attractive thing is the Heritage Walk of Ahmedabad. Heritage Walk was started in 1997 to make aware about the hidden treasures in the old city of Ahmedabad. Heritage walk starts from Hindu Swaminarayan Temple in Kalupur area of Ahmedabad and ends at the Jama Mosque of Ahmedabad with hundreds of Pols and Jain Temples on the way. Therefore, the walk is also called the ‘Mandir se

Masjid Tak' walk. This 1.5 kms walk takes around 2 and a half hours to complete with passing through many Cul-de-sacs and intricate wooden carved Havelis. The real essence of the first World Heritage city of India lies in its Pols and a guided heritage walk would be the perfect way to understand this amazing city.

Hutheesingh Jain Temple:

One of the most beautiful Jain temples in Gujarat, Hutheesingh Jain Temple in Ahmedabad was constructed in 1848 by Sheth Hutheesingh and his wife Harkunvarba Shethani. It was constructed at an estimated cost of 1 Million Indian Rupees with Premchand Salat being the chief architect. The Temple has been dedicated to worship Dharamnath who was the 15th Tirthankar as per the Jain Religion. This artistic temple is filled with intricate carvings in each and every corner with perfect attention to details. The entrance of the temple is the most striking feature of the temple with its unbelievable piece of carving on the whole gate. The main temple that lies on the eastern end of the temple comprising of stunningly three carved spires that are been encircled with 52 mini shrines to other renowned Tirthankars of Jainism. The temple has infused modern and traditional elements for creating a divine background.

Drop as per schedule.