

Gujarat-Kutch-Rajasthan Textiles and Tribal Cultures with ancient Kite Festival

January 12-28, 2020

"There are some parts of the world that, once visited, get into your heart and won't let go. India is such a place....I had been seeing the world in black & white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant technicolour." - Keith Bellows,
National Geographic Society



Photos: Shila Desai

Accolades rolling in for our 2019's tour . . .

"Sitting in the airport after just completing the 17-day North India textile tour encompassing Gujarat for the most part. Notwithstanding a couple of health issues and the shock of poverty, filth and rubbish in India this has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. Our guide Nirav was a font of knowledge and bent over backwards to make sure our trip was as stress free and enjoyable as possible - a truly remarkable man that words cannot do justice. We visited villages that tourists rarely go and were welcomed into homes that I am sure would not have been possible if it wasn't for Nirav's friendly and enthusiastic manner with everyone he encountered. So generous to share his knowledge. A particular highlight (amongst hundreds) was his self-tailored outfits to match the artisanal craft we were visiting that day. Shila met up with us in the last week and she too is an amazing woman, very warm and personable. A lovely, lovely woman who is highly knowledgeable about India and its customs and culture. The sights I have seen, the experiences I was honoured to have undertaken will stay with me forever. Just waiting now for a big package to arrive in a few weeks. A word of warning, only a very strong person not interested in textiles will fail to purchase. The quality of the work we saw was exceptional! I would be happy to talk to anyone thinking about doing this tour to share my experiences and reassure them that they would not regret it. Thank you Shila and Nirav."

Jodie Watkins, Australia



Embroidery workshop, Meghwal village



Nirav explains lexicon of embroidery stitches



Tribal girl

Photos: Shila Desai



Immerse yourself in the 5000 year-old textile crucible of rural **Gujarat, Kutch, and Rajasthan.**

Explore **artisanal villages**, meet **award-winning artisans**, engage in **hands-on workshops** and **demos** of the world's most celebrated **weaving, embroidery, dyeing, and printing** techniques.

Visit **renowned textile museums**: Indigo (new!), Anokhi, Calico and Shrujan



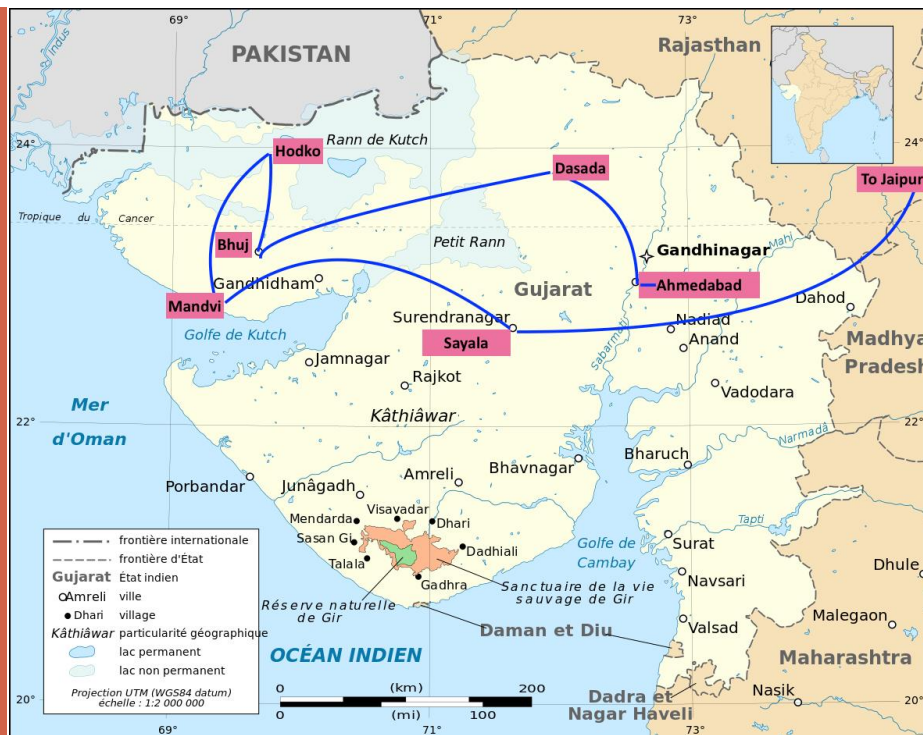
Past Travellers speak

*The whole tour was very well organized. There was a good balance of non-textile visits, which gave a fascinating insight to an amazing country plus the extra add-ons like the film in Jaipur, brilliant! **There are so many fabulous memories it would take too long to list but just want to say thank you for an amazing introduction to India** – Anne Alldread, Derbyshire, U.K.*

*The tour was one of the **top events of my life**, exceeding my fondest expectations — Marylou S. Washington D.C.*

*I want to make sure you know that this was **a trip of a lifetime** and **I am moved beyond words** that I got to experience all we did through your eyes and so clearly see and have you share your love for India. – Susan Oher, New York City*





At a glance

17 Days (16 Nights)

- 3 nights Ahmedabad – ancient kite festival, Gandhi Ashram, Calico Museum
- 1 night Dasada – Sun Temple, Mir tribal market, stepwell
- 2 nights Sayla/Muli -- Tangalia weaving, Beadwork, Ikat
- 2 nights Mandavi – Arabian Sea, Gharchoda tie-dye, batik
- 1 night Hodko, Salt Desert – Banni villages & embroidery
- 2 nights Bhuj – bandhni tie-dye, Shrujan, Bhujodi weaving
- 1 night overnight train 1st class AC Bhuj-Ahmedabad
- 4 nights Jaipur – palaces, forts, block-printing heaven!

While we make every effort to stay within the itinerary, occasionally we may substitute according to local conditions and desires of the group

Cost Minimum 10 pax

17 Days fully escorted,

USD 3470 per person in double occupancy

Add USD 1180 for single room throughout

Includes

- 4 hand on workshops inc. materials
- Several demos
- Led by textile experts in Gujarat-Kutch and Rajasthan
- Conceptualised and organised by Shila Desai
- Accommodation in 4-5* hotels or family/community run heritage lodging with breakfast
- All transportation in private air-conditioned vehicle
- All tours, excursions, and entrance fees
- Several hosted lunches and dinner

“What I love about this itinerary

To explore the lands and culture of the Thar Desert is to probe the very warp and weft of India's existence. The Indus Valley civilization of 2500 B.C., which domesticated cotton and tied the first loom, has given rise to a rich culture. It is encoded in exquisite textiles and passed on from mother to daughter, father to son. A sensorial and textural delight, this tour affords unparalleled opportunities to experience the fast-disappearing lifework of these warm and hospitable people. Come meet and create alongside humble masters of some of the world's greatest textile arts!

~ Shila Desai, conceptualizer



Day 1: Sun Jan 12

Ahmedabad

Welcome to Ahmedabad! Be met on arrival and transfer to our beautiful heritage hotel in the centre of Ahmedabad.

(Please enquire for arrangements for arrivals into Delhi/Mumbai. We are happy to arrange your internal flights, hotels, and transfers)

Relax after your long journey.

Evening, welcome briefing and hosted traditional dinner at an outdoor recreation of a typical Gujarati village. Take in a tour of a private collection of vessels. Watch folk dances and listen to music under the stars.

Meals: D



Day 2: Mon Jan 13

Ahmedabad

Morning guided visit to Calico Museum, a world-renowned textile museum. This gem boasts the private collection of industrialist Sarabhai family spanning 3-4 centuries from India and neighbouring regions.

Late afternoon visit to Mata ni Pachedi, a 300-yr old painted cloth that constitutes a temple of the goddess for nomadic Vaghari community who were barred from entering temples.

Energy levels permitting, evening kite bazaar visit.

Meals: B, L



Day 3: Tue Jan 14

Ahmedabad

Awaken with the city on a guided walk through the walled communities of Old Ahmedabad, India's first UNESCO city. Join morning worshippers at Hutheesing Jain Temple.

Late breakfast. Relax in the afternoon. Early evening, grab a kite head to the terrace of a heritage home. Celebrate the world's largest Kite Festival under a rainbow-hued sky in a joyous festival of rivalry and revelry. Enjoy a high tea of traditional delicacies specific to this region and festival. Enjoy the spectacular evening when fireworks illuminate the dusk.

Meals: B, High Tea



Day 4: Wed Jan 15

Dasada

Soak in morning calm at Gandhi's Ashram on the banks of the Sabarmati River. Gandhi launched his *ahimsa* movement from here. Watch *khadi* weaving demo on the *charkha* spinning wheel. Visit with descendants of weaver who made Gandhi's first *dhoti*.

After lunch, drive 3 hours to Dasada at the edge of the Little Rann of Kutch. Check in at our oasis-like resort, and continue to Modhera for a guided visit to 11th century Sun Temple, pride of the Solanki Dynasty. Dinner and folk dancing back at resort.

Meals: B, D



Day 5: Thur Jan 16

Sayla

Morning visit the spectacular 11th CE subterranean Rani ki Vav or Queen's Stepwell, an elaborately carved caravanserai extending 7 storeys down. After a packed lunch, drive to Muli, where hereditary artisans continue their 700 yr tradition of Tangalia weaving characterised by counted weft/warp raised dots or "dana" achieved by the unique wrapping of weft yarn over warp yarn. This is the only region of Gujarat that does this weaving. Check in at our palace heritage hotel, and enjoy being pampered by descendants of maharajas.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 6: Fri Jan 17

Sayla

Morning visit with local Kathi families who specialise in stringing together tiny glass beads to achieve art and function in everyday objects.

Followed by ancient techniques single and double-ikat weaving. Witness the tying and dyeing of strands of yarn before setting on loom. Each sari takes a master craftsman six months to create. In ancient lore, a stash of Patola fabric threatened a kingdom.

Evening at leisure at our palace homestay.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 7: Sat Jan 18

Mandvi

On the road today with a 7 hr transfer to the Arabian Sea. Come armed with iPads and podcasts if interesting sights on Indian roads aren't enough of a distraction! Nirav and Shila will take your questions and share cultural tidbits.

Stop en route at Mandvi to admire traditional hand building of wooden ships much as it has been done for millennia.

Check in at our beach lodging on a delightful private beach belonging to an erstwhile Kutchi royal family.

Meals: B, D



Day 8: Sun Jan 19

Mandvi

Drive 1hr to Mundra for the ultimate tie-dye intricacy in a traditional red wedding sari: *Gharchoda*, treasured as a family heirloom and lovingly crafted by the Memon/Khatr communities. Learn how to drape a wedding sari.

Followed by a batik demo. Batik in India is almost always on cotton, using paraffin wax. Learn about the commercial process behind producing a range of hand-made batiks. Return to Mandvi for a late lunch and an afternoon on the beach, or a visit of the Vijay Vilas Palace with sweeping views.

Meals: B, L, D



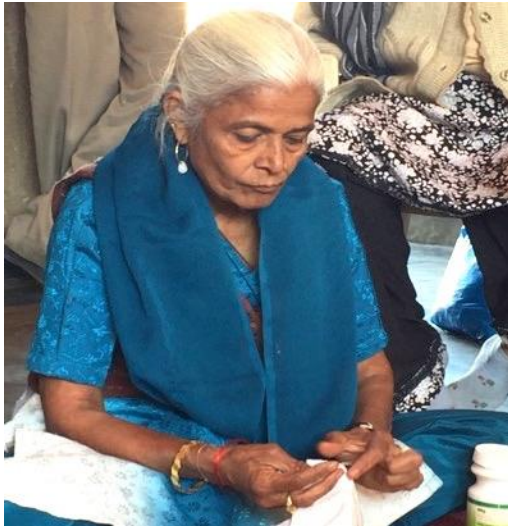
Day 9: Mon Jan 20

Hodko

Drive 3 hrs to Hodko via Bhuj on edge of Salt Desert. Lunch at our unique village style eco-resort. Visit a Banni village with beautifully decorated desert huts. Demo of Mutwa embroidery with tiny mirrors. Visit second Banni village for a workshop in a different embroidery style.

As the sun sets, walk the world's largest saltpan, which floods during the monsoon. Hitch a camel wagon ride and practise yoga asanas in the dusk light. Back at our hotel, enjoy a folk music performance under the desert stars.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 10: Tues Jan 21

Bhuj

Transfer 2 hours to Bhuj, known for finest *bandhni* or tie-dye. Take in a bandhni workshop with a master UNESCO-recognised artisan who regularly participates at International Folk Art Market in Santa Fe. Learn about traditional and contemporary design, tying process, and dyeing in several steps.

After lunch, stroll a buzzing market for antique and vintage fabric finds. Take in sunset at 11th C. cenotaphs marking ceremonial cremation sites of ancient royalty. A photo-taking opportunity!

Meals: B



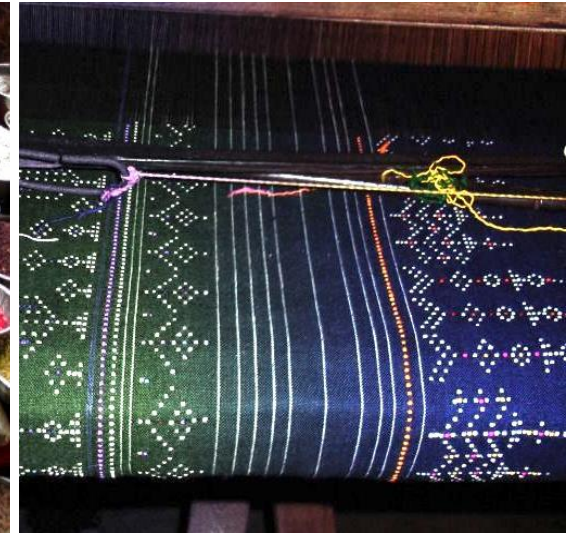
Day 11: Wed Jan 22

Bhuj

Morning guided visit to award-winning Shrujan museum that chronicles textiles and arts/crafts of Kutch's tribal people. Browse the excellent museum shop and enjoy a festival of Jammu and Kashmir crafts. Lunch can be enjoyed in their open-air café.

After lunch, visit Ajrakhpur for a demo of the complex 16-step blockprinting process called "Universe in a Textile" or Ajrakh.. Learn about using natural dyes, natural mordants, and the design process before heading back to Bhuj.

Meals: B



Day 12: Thur Jan 23

Bhuj to Ahmedabad

Morning at Bhujodi village for its famed pit-loom weaving which produces 9 yard long cloth in hand-carded merino wool, silks, and indigenous *kala* cotton. Strong and fine enough for both farmer and royalty turbans. Introduction to indigo dyeing vats, and how each family closely guards their indigo-mixing recipe.

After lunch, time permitting, visit Dhaneti for Ahir tribal embroidery. The Ahir, traditional cowherds, favour embroidery with pastoral motifs. Transfer to Bhuj, dinner, and board overnight train to Ahmedabad.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 13: Fri Jan 24

Ahmedabad - Jaipur

Arrive at 5 am in Ahmedabad. Check in to hotel for breakfast, rest and refresh. Later, enjoy a guided visit of newly opened Indigo Museum in a 1905 colonial house, showcasing over a thousand years of Indian art.

Catch a 5pm flight to Jaipur. Seat of the Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh who founded India's first planned city, Jaipur is awash in pink to denote famed Rajasthani hospitality. Arrive 8pm. Check in at our arts-residency homestay and dinner.

Meals: B, D



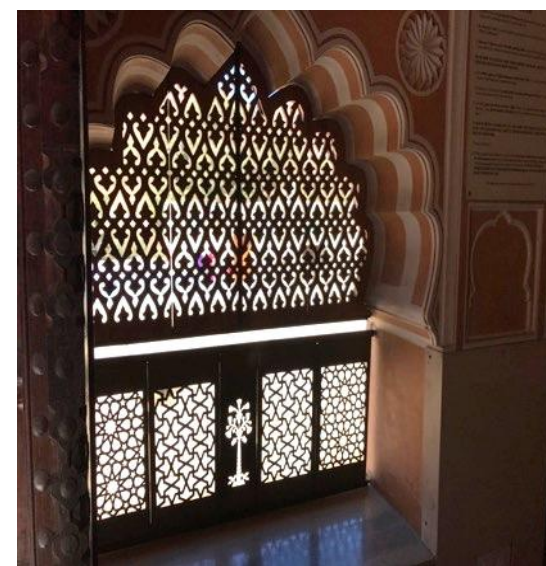
Day 14: Sat Jan 25

Jaipur

Today, take in a 6 hr. block printing workshop in our homestay's block-printing studio with an expert artisan (10 am - 4pm with break for lunch). Learn about the technique of layering blocks and colours for a desired final result.

Evening, free to perhaps enjoy a Bollywood movie in the iconic Raj Mandir art-deco cinema or attend the world-acclaimed Jaipur Lit Fest.

Meals: B, L



Day 15: Sun Jan 26

Jaipur

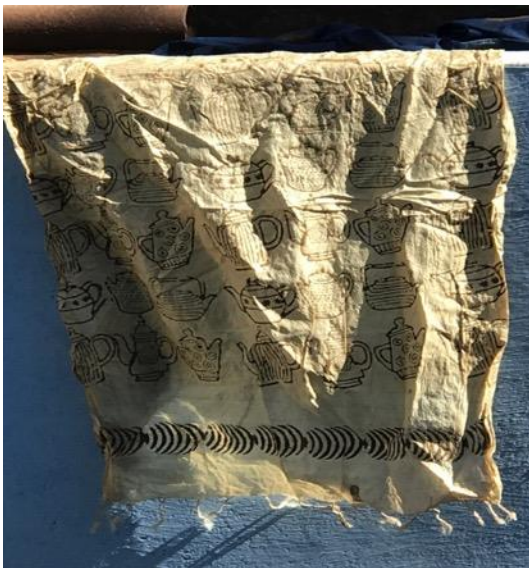
Morning guided visit of Anokhi Museum of Block Printing, lauded for reversing challenges of technological and social change to traditional block-printed textiles. Transfer to central Jaipur for lunch at Anokhi café, and (try to) resist the siren call of their well-stocked boutique.

Optional: Jaipur sightseeing -- spectacular Amer Fort (early am) and City Palace (pm) arranged for a nominal sum.

Evening, free to pursue your own interests, perhaps shop the bazaars, or attend the Jaipur Lit Fest.

Meals: B

Itinerary



Day 16: Mon Jan 27

Jaipur

2 hour drive to artisanal village for breakfast with local family, followed by resist block printing workshop with generational *Chippa* artisans. Design, block print and dye your own stole. Traditional Rajasthani lunch with host family, and village walk while your masterpiece dries. Late afternoon, transfer back to Jaipur.

Evening, don your newly acquired finery for our farewell dinner.

Meals: B, L, D



Day 17: Tue Jan 28

Jaipur

Depending on your flight timings, linger in Jaipur (guide can be arranged) for last minute shopping or sightseeing.

Transfer and departure for international flights via Delhi or Mumbai

Namaste, and safe journeys home!

Meals: B

A sampling of accommodations: heritage boutique/ community-run where possible.

Hodko [Sham E Sharhad](#)



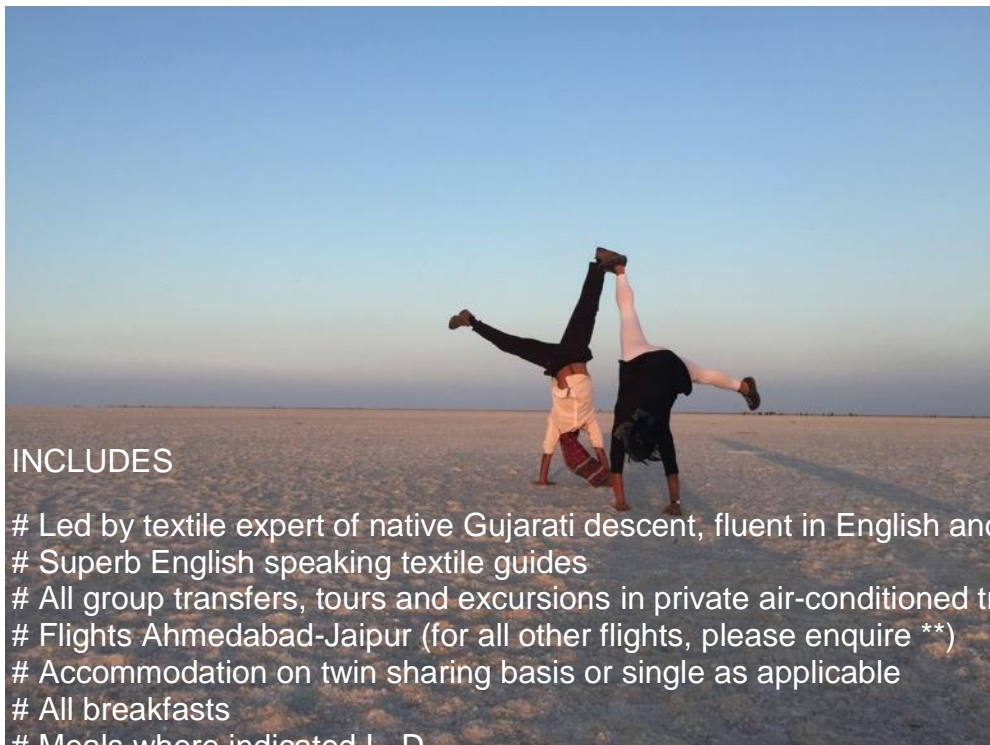
Muli [Ambika Niwas Palace](#)



Ahmedabad [House of MG](#)



"I was so fortunate to have selected E.Y.H.O.Tours" — Tina Crabtree, Healdsburg, CA.



INCLUDES

- # Led by textile expert of native Gujarati descent, fluent in English and Gujarati
- # Superb English speaking textile guides
- # All group transfers, tours and excursions in private air-conditioned transportation
- # Flights Ahmedabad-Jaipur (for all other flights, please enquire **)
- # Accommodation on twin sharing basis or single as applicable
- # All breakfasts
- # Meals where indicated L, D
- # Workshops in tie-dye bandhni, blockprinting, and embroidery including materials and instruction; many demos
- # All monument entrance fees
- # Kite Festival experience from heritage home
- # Dinner at Vishalla, Ahmedabad

EXCLUDES

- # Travel insurance
- # International flights
- # Gratuities - a USD120 pp tipping kitty for guides and drivers

** We can book your internal flights and extra night hotel stays/airport transfers

- BOM-AMD or DEL-AMD: USD 90

- JAI-BOM or JAI-DEL: USD 85

3* Delhi airport hotel with 2 way airport transfer: USD 195 per room inc breakfast and taxes

3* Bombay airport hotel with 2 way airport transfer: USD 190 per room inc breakfast and taxes

Please enquire about other options.

Cost

17 Days fully escorted – Minimum 10 pax

USD 3470 per person in double occupancy

Add USD 1380 for single room throughout

Enquiries

shila@eyhotours.com

Visit

www.eyhotours.com

TICO (Travel Industry of Ontario) accredited

Terms and Conditions

17 day fully escorted tour