



MUSEUM TRAVEL  
— ALLIANCE —

BY ARRANGEMENTS ABROAD



THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION

Americans in Alliance with the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

# Echoes of India

Art, Empire, Faith & Tradition

February 7 - 22, 2026

With Christopher Noey, *Lecturer*



# Accommodations



The Imperial Hotel, Delhi

## **The Imperial Hotel, Delhi**

A centrally located Art Deco landmark with museum-quality corridors, in-house galleries, and attentive service, the Imperial combines colonial elegance with modern comfort.

## **Brijrama Palace Hotel, Varanasi**

This restored 19th-century palace blends Maratha architecture with contemporary luxury. Accessible only by boat, the hotel offers stunning views of the Ganges. *Note: This hotel does not serve alcohol, and all meals are strictly vegetarian.*

## **Taj Bengal, Kolkata**

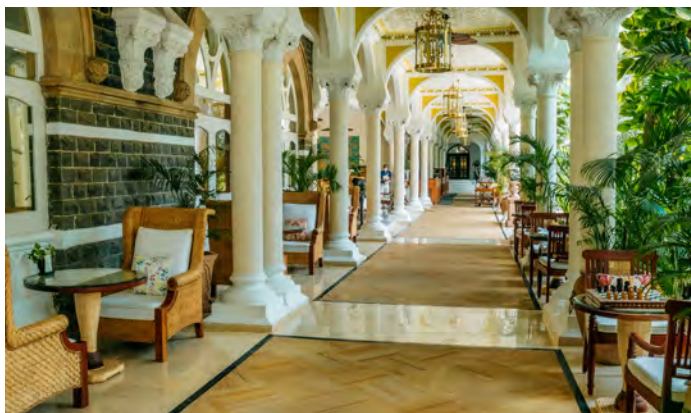
An elegant landmark in the heart of Kolkata, this grand hotel is known for its art-filled interiors, exceptional service, and refined ambiance.

## **Vivanta Aurangabad, Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar**

Nestled in a former palace estate, the hotel features Mughal-inspired architecture, beautifully landscaped grounds, and all the modern amenities needed for a relaxing stay.

## **The Taj Mahal Palace Mumbai**

Since 1903, this legendary hotel has hosted royalty, dignitaries, and travelers alike, offering a perfect blend of grandeur, history, and impeccable service.



The Taj Mahal Palace, Mumbai

## Is the Museum Travel Alliance New to *You*?

MTA trips offer exclusive cultural experiences to members from over 100 of America's leading museums. These art-filled programs feature all your favorite lecturers from past trips, with the same expert guidance and behind-the-scenes access you have come to expect.

*All MTA trips are operated by Arrangements Abroad.*

## Trip Highlights

***Travel*** with art historian **Christopher Noey** through the great cultural centers of northern and western India, where imperial grandeur and deep spiritual traditions come alive alongside the dynamic contemporary art scenes of **Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai**.

***Wind*** through **Old Delhi's** narrow lanes on a traditional rickshaw, stopping at **Haveli Dharampura** for a private lunch in a beautifully restored mansion evoking the grandeur of a bygone era.

***Experience*** the **Aarti ceremony**, one of India's most mesmerizing rituals, on a private boat on the Ganges River during sunset in **Varanasi**.

***Enjoy*** special access not available to the general public at the **Indian Museum** in Kolkata and take an exclusive look at rarely seen Rajput and Mughal paintings.

***Savor*** a home-cooked Bengali lunch amid a delightful personal collection of paintings, textiles, and antiques during a memorable encounter with **a prominent Kolkata art collector**.

***Admire*** ancient Buddhist murals and marvel at the monumental Kailasa Temple while exploring the **Ajanta and Ellora Caves**, both UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

***Discover*** how thousands of homemade lunches are delivered with precision in Mumbai's most densely populated neighborhood while **meeting with Mumbai's legendary dabbawalas**.

***Encounter*** the birthplace of Buddhism's teachings, examine ancient ruins, and view magnificent Buddhist sculptures on a visit to **Sarnath** and its accompanying museum.

***Visit*** some of India's **most prominent private art galleries and studios** in Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai, and gain insight into the latest trends championed by emerging and established artists.



## Traveling With *You*

**Christopher Noey** is an art historian, author, and Emmy Award-winning producer of films on art and culture. At The Metropolitan Museum of Art, he created video installations for a wide range of exhibitions and served as series director for the innovative online features *82nd & Fifth* and *The Artist Project*. An expert in Asian and Islamic art, Mr. Noey has taught at Williams College and the City College of New York.

India presents a remarkable continuum of culture, where millennia of royal power, religious faith, and creative achievement coexist and continue to evolve. From **February 7 to 22, 2026**, the Royal Oak Foundation and our friends at the Museum Travel Alliance invite you on an in-depth journey into India's heritage.

With the guidance of lecturer **Christopher Noey**—a specialist in Islamic and Asian art who has led numerous journeys to the subcontinent—go behind the scenes inside some of the world's oldest museums, UNESCO-listed rock-cut temples, private collections, and more. **To reserve your place** on this exceptional program, contact the Museum Travel Alliance at Arrangements Abroad at 212-324-1893 or [trips@museumtravelalliance.com](mailto:trips@museumtravelalliance.com).

### What is the story of this journey?

**Christopher Noey:** We'll track the evolution of power, faith, ritual, and artistic expression across northern and western India. **Delhi**, capital of both the Sultanate and Mughal empires, reveals the foundations of Indo-Islamic art and architecture. We then move to the ancient spiritual centers of **Varanasi**, the heartland of Hinduism, and **Sarnath**, the birthplace of Buddhist doctrine. **Kolkata** adds another dimension: In this former colonial capital, British grandeur mingles with the intellectual awakening of the Bengal Renaissance.

**Mumbai** completes this cultural panorama with its UNESCO-listed Victorian Gothic and Art Deco districts. Throughout Delhi, Kolkata, and Mumbai, we'll share exclusive access to leading contemporary galleries, private collections, and artist studios, witnessing how today's Indian creators draw from—and sometimes challenge—the profound traditions we encounter along the way.

### We'll explore three of India's greatest rock-cut temple sites: Ajanta and Ellora near Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (Aurangabad) and Elephanta near Mumbai. What do they reveal as a group?

**Christopher Noey:** These UNESCO World Heritage Sites will show us the remarkable development of rock-cut architecture across centuries. Ajanta preserves extraordinary Buddhist narrative paintings in near-pristine condition. The awe-inspiring monumental sculptures at Ellora's Kailasa Temple and Elephanta, reached by boat from Mumbai, speak to the creative flowering that accompanied the resurgence of Hinduism 1,500 years ago.

### Beyond exclusivity, what makes the "special access" moments intellectually valuable?

**Christopher Noey:** The viewing of rarely seen Rajput and Mughal paintings at Kolkata's Indian Museum, for example, allows for a close study of courtly styles not available to the general public. I'm thrilled for you to meet Mumbai's *dabbawalas*, the city's famed workers who hand-deliver homemade lunches to office workers with near-perfect accuracy. They'll provide insight into an indigenous form of urban organization that thrives within the megacity, offering a compelling contrast to the high art and imperial history we experience elsewhere.

# Echoes of India

Art, Empire, Faith & Tradition

February 7 - 22, 2026

**An optional prelude in Agra is offered from February 5–8, 2026.**

## Saturday, February 7:

### *Departure*

Depart for Delhi on an overnight flight.

## Sunday, February 8:

### *Delhi, India*

Upon arrival in Delhi, you will be transferred to the Imperial Hotel for immediate check-in. The day is at your disposal for rest and acclimation. This evening, the group will convene for a welcome reception. **R**

## Monday, February 9:

### *Delhi*

Today, we will explore the structure of **Old Delhi**, the walled city of Shahjahanabad. We will proceed by rickshaw through its markets before continuing on foot to **Haveli Dharampura**, a restored 19th-century mansion where lunch will be served. The afternoon is dedicated to the **Qutub Minar**, a 13th-century victory tower that marks the beginning of Muslim rule in Delhi. The day concludes with a group dinner. **B,L,D**



Map of the region



Humayun's Tomb, Delhi

## Tuesday, February 10:

### *Delhi*

We will begin with a curatorial introduction to the modern and contemporary Indian art displayed in the hotel's public spaces. We will then undertake an expert-guided study of **Humayun's Tomb**, the 16th-century Mughal mausoleum whose design influenced the Taj Mahal.

Within the tomb complex, a curator will lead us through the new subterranean **Sunken Museum**, which houses artifacts spanning 2,000 years. In the afternoon, we explore the collections of the **National Museum of India**, including Gandharan Buddhist sculpture, Chola bronzes, and miniature paintings **B,L,D**



## Wednesday, February 11:

### *Delhi / Varanasi*

A morning flight takes us to **Varanasi**, the spiritual heartland of Hinduism. Upon arrival, we transfer to the BrijRama Palace Hotel. In the evening, from a private boat on the Ganges, we will observe the **Aarti ceremony**, a central Hindu ritual of fire and chanting. A group dinner follows. **B,D**

## Thursday, February 12:

### *Varanasi*

An optional sunrise boat ride offers an opportunity to view the morning rituals performed by pilgrims along the city's *ghats*. The morning continues with a visit to the **Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum**, where we'll discover its collections, including Rajput paintings and Mughal-era artifacts.

In the afternoon, we will take a tour of **Sarnath**, the UNESCO-listed site where the Buddha is said to have delivered his first sermon. We will inspect the remains of ancient *stupas*, monastic structures, and the third-century A.D. Ashoka Pillar. The adjacent **Sarnath Museum** provides a focused study of the region's Buddhist sculpture. We will reconvene for dinner this evening. **B,L,D**



Aarti ceremony, Varanasi, photo by Ghiora Aharoni



Victoria Memorial, Kolkata

## Friday, February 13:

### *Varanasi / Kolkata*

We fly to **Kolkata** this morning and check into the Taj Bengal hotel. Our introduction to the city, once the capital of British India, begins with a lecture and an elevated view of the city's colonial core from the **Glenburn Penthouse**, overlooking the Victoria Memorial. We will return to the hotel before the evening's group dinner. **B,L,D**

## Saturday, February 14:

### *Kolkata*

Today takes us through the civic and cultural history of colonial Kolkata. A morning tour with an expert guide will cover **Benoy-Badal-Dinesh Bagh**, the administrative core of the British Raj, which includes the former East India Company seat at the Writers' Building.

At the **Indian Museum**, we will enjoy a private, behind-the-scenes viewing of Mughal and Rajput paintings not accessible to the public. We will then examine the city's evolution under British rule through the art and artifacts at the **Victoria Memorial**. This afternoon, we will be hosted in the **private home of a prominent Kolkata collector** for a presentation of his personal holdings over a home-cooked meal of Bengali cuisine. The day concludes with a group dinner. **B,L,D**



## Sunday, February 15:

### *Kolkata*

Our day is dedicated to art, philosophy, and craft in Kolkata. We'll enjoy a private visit to the **Marble Palace**, a 19th-century mansion containing a Bengali merchant's collection of European and Indian art. Next, we will have a guided tour of **the ancestral home of Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore**, now a museum to his life and work.

The afternoon includes a walk through the **Kumartuli potters' market** to observe sculptors creating clay deities for festivals. We will also visit a private art gallery or studio for an insight into Kolkata's contemporary work. An optional visit to the 19th-century Kalighat Mandir, dedicated to the Hindu goddess Kali, is available. In the evening, we will have **dinner and a musical performance at a private palace**. **B,L,D**

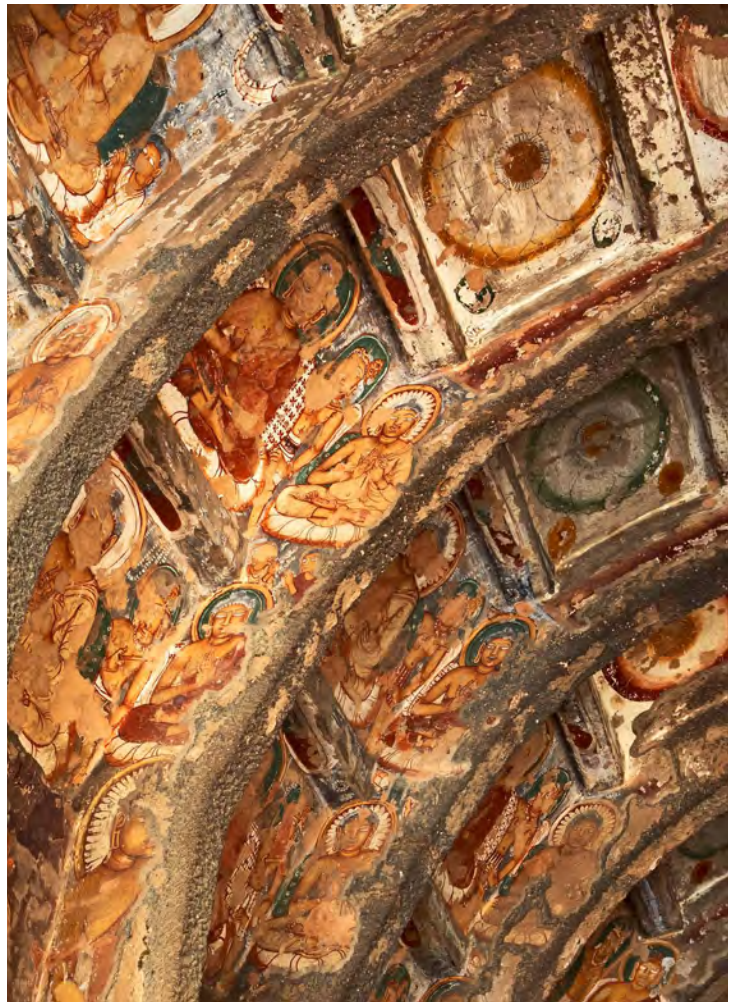
## Monday, February 16:

### *Kolkata / Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar (Aurangabad)*

We will fly to **Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar**, formerly Aurangabad, and check into the Vivanta Aurangabad hotel. The city serves as our base for experiencing the region's rock-cut cave temples. An afternoon lecture will prepare us for the sites we will visit. The evening is at leisure. **B,L**



Kumartuli potter's market, Kolkata



Frescoes, Ajanta Caves, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

## Tuesday, February 17:

### *Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar*

An excursion takes us to the **Ajanta Caves**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will explore the complex of 30 rock-cut caves, created between the second and fifth centuries A.D. The site preserves one of the most significant corpuses of early Buddhist visual culture, and we will focus on the narrative frescoes, noting their refined execution and use of natural pigments. The afternoon is at leisure before the group convenes for dinner. **B,L,D**

## Wednesday, February 18:

### *Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar*

Enjoy an excursion to the **Ellora Caves**, a rock-cut complex recognized by UNESCO. We will witness its co-located Buddhist monasteries, Hindu temples, and Jain shrines, which were carved into basalt cliffs between the sixth and tenth centuries A.D. In the afternoon, we will visit the **Daulatabad Fort**, a 12th-century medieval fortress, to study its defensive architecture and history of use by successive dynasties. We return to the hotel for a period of rest before our group dinner. **B,L,D**



## Thursday, February 19: *Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar / Mumbai*

We will fly to **Mumbai** and, upon arrival, begin a guided tour of the city's colonial urban plan. We will see key landmarks inherited from the British Raj, including the UNESCO-listed Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus railway station. This is followed by **a meeting with the city's dabbawalas** to learn about the 19th-century analog system they still use to deliver lunches with precision.

After lunch at the seafood restaurant **Trishna**, a curator will lead us through the **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS)**, one of India's major art and history collections. We will then check into the Taj Mahal Palace hotel before a group dinner. **B,L,D**

## Friday, February 20: *Mumbai*

The morning is dedicated to an expert-led excursion by boat to the **Elephanta Caves**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We will study the series of cave temples dedicated to Shiva, excavated in the sixth and seventh centuries, focusing on the relief carvings that depict early Shaivite cosmology.

In the afternoon, a curator will guide us through the **Bhau Daji Lad Museum**, one of Mumbai's oldest, to explore the city's history through local crafts and 19th-century topographical paintings. An optional visit to the Dharavi urban settlement is available to learn about its high-functioning micro-economies. Pending programming, an optional performance at the new **Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre** may be offered this evening. **B,L,D**

## Saturday, February 21: *Mumbai*

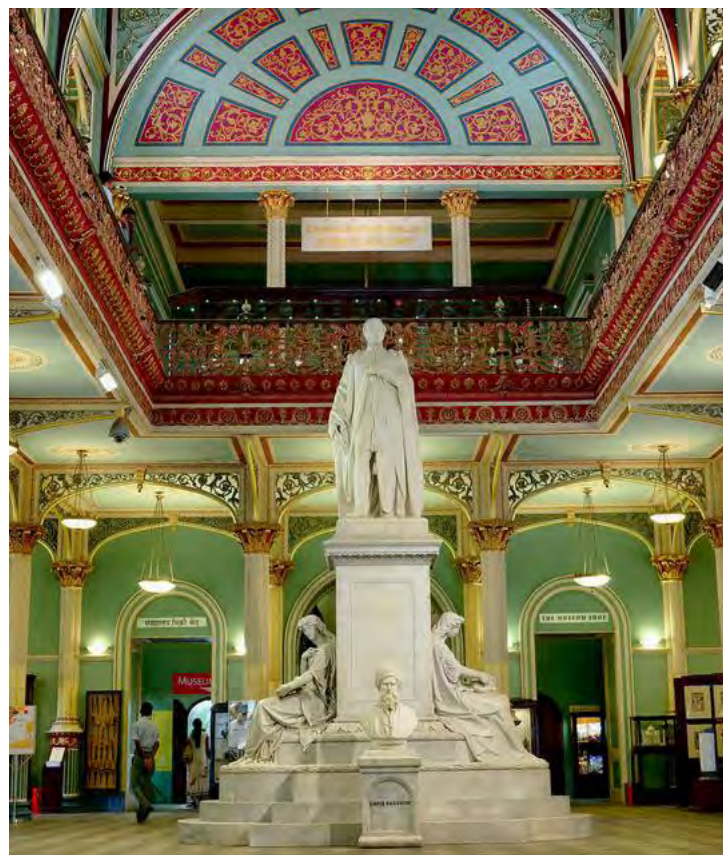
Our final full day begins with a curated walk through several of **Mumbai's leading contemporary art galleries**. The afternoon is at leisure. In the evening, we will visit a private collection before the farewell dinner. **B,L,D**

## Sunday, February 22: *Mumbai / Return*

Transfer to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport for flights home. **B**

**DISCLAIMER:** This itinerary is subject to change at the discretion of The Royal Oak Foundation and Museum Travel Alliance. For complete details, please carefully read the terms and conditions at <https://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms-conditions/>

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Bhau Daji Lad Museum, Mumbai

**Program Rate**  
**\$19,999 per person, double rate**  
**\$22,399 single rate**

### Rate Includes

- 14 nights hotel accommodations as per itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, R=Reception, D=Dinner). Bottled water, soft drinks, juices, and coffee/tea with all meals; house wine and beer at all included lunches and dinners
- Internal, one-way, economy-class flights (Delhi-Varnasi / Varanasi-Kolkata / Kolkata-Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar / Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar-Mumbai)
- Enrichment program of lectures and talks
- Escorted sightseeing, transportation, and entrance fees for all included visits
- Airport/hotel/airport transfers for participants on arrival and departure days
- Taxes, service, and portage charges; gratuities to local guides and drivers

**NOT INCLUDED IN RATES:** International airfare; passport/visa fees; meals not specified; alcoholic beverages other than what is noted in inclusions; personal items and expenses; airport transfers other than for those on arrival and departure dates; excess baggage; trip insurance; optional Agra prelude; any other items not specifically mentioned as included.



# Optional Prelude in Agra

February 5 - 8, 2026



Akbar's Mausoleum, Sikandra

## Wednesday, February 4: *Departure*

Depart for Delhi on an overnight flight.

## Thursday, February 5: *Delhi, India*

Upon arrival, transfer to the hotel for immediate check-in and rest.

## Friday, February 6: *Delhi / Fatehpur Sikri / Agra*

We will travel to **Agra**, stopping en route for a tour of **Fatehpur Sikri**, the late 16th-century capital founded by Emperor Akbar. After lunch, the afternoon offers an opportunity for a leisurely exploration of other Mughal-era sites, such as **Akbar's Mausoleum** in Sikandra. We will convene for dinner in the evening. **B,L,D**

## Saturday, February 7: *Agra*

The day begins with an exclusive early morning visit to the **Taj Mahal** before it opens to the public. We will also explore the history of the Mughal Empire through the contributions of its female patrons, with a visit to the marble tomb of **Itimad-ud-Daula**, commissioned by Nur Jahan in 1628 and considered a prototype for the Taj Mahal.

In the afternoon, we will share a guided tour of the UNESCO-listed **Agra Fort**, the 16th-century fortress-palace that served as the seat of Mughal power before the capital shifted to Delhi. A group dinner at the hotel will follow. **B,L,D**

## Sunday, February 8: *Agra / Delhi*

Following breakfast at the hotel, return to Delhi for the main program. **B**



Taj Mahal, Agra

**Prelude Rate**  
**\$4,599 per person, double rate**  
**\$6,499 single rate**

### **Prelude Rate Includes**

One night at the Imperial Hotel in Delhi and two nights at Oberoi Amar Vilas, Agra; meals as indicated in the itinerary (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner); sightseeing as noted. *See main program for exclusions.*

THE ROYAL OAK FOUNDATION  
Echoes of India  
February 7- 22, 2026  
**RESERVATION FORM**

To reserve a place, please call Museum Travel Alliance at 212-324-1893 or 855-533-0033, fax: 212-344-7493; email: [trips@museumtravelalliance.com](mailto:trips@museumtravelalliance.com); or complete and return this form with your deposit of \$2,000 per person (of which \$1,000 is non-refundable for administrative fees) to *Museum Travel Alliance*. Mail to: Museum Travel Alliance, 260 West 39th Street, 17th Floor, New York, NY 10018-4424.

Name(s) in full as on passport(s). Please print.

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone (mobile)

(home)

E-mail

**ACCOMMODATIONS**

Hotel Room preference ☐ One bed ☐ Two beds ☐ Single

I wish to share a room with

**OPTIONAL AGRA PRELUDE**

☐ I/ we would like to join the Optional Agra Prelude

Hotel Room Preference ☐ One bed ☐ Two beds ☐ Single

**FORM OF PAYMENT**

☐ Enclosed is my check (payable to *Museum Travel Alliance*)

☐ Debit card ☐ Credit card

Name on debit/credit card

Debit/credit card number

3- or 4-digit security code

Expiration date

I/We confirm that I/we have carefully read and agree to the Terms & Conditions of this Program (see <https://www.arrangementsabroad.com/terms-conditions/> to review or call for a copy). I/We agree to full payment by check, wire transfer, or credit card 120 days prior to departure. Each participant must sign below.

Signature (required)

Date

Signature (required)

Date

Front cover: Dhamek Stupa, Sarnath.

Back cover: Qutub Minar (top) Varanasi, photo by Ghiora Aharoni (bottom).

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