

TRAVEL PHOTOGRAPHY ADVENTURE

PRE-TRIP DOSSIER 2009/2010

INDIA



GRASSHOPPER
ADVENTURES

PHOTOGRAPHY
by Ewen Bell

Photo adventures designed by photographers, for photographers. Advance your photographic skills while travelling through the Indian province of Rajasthan on a 14 day adventure. We have created an integrated programme of travel and discussion themes to create the most wonderful opportunities you could ever imagine - for beginners and advanced photographers alike. You get 2 leaders, a guaranteed maximum group size of 8 and the experience of a lifetime.

ITINERARY



Day 1-2 : Mumbai

On the first day we are scheduled to meet in the hotel lobby at 6pm. We start our first night getting to know our small group of eight, discussing some details of the travel ahead of us and discussing the fundamentals and philosophy of the photographic journey too. We spend the following morning exploring the streets of Mumbai and getting familiar with your photographic goals, new ways of looking at the art of photography and getting a start on the technical issues that challenge you most. The afternoon is free to explore more the city or continue your initial learning curve with some one-on-one time with the leaders.

Days 3-4 : Udaipur

We take an early morning flight to Udaipur, a unique city with artisans on every street, fascinating temples and the palace in the lake. There are diverse religious influences at work in India and we want to explore that through the lens. The colour and culture of Udaipur provides rich inspiration for photography. Our first day in Udaipur will end with a sunset view and a lovely hotel befitting of this city. There is a free day here as well to immerse more deeply in the streets of Udaipur, or to take up some options for exploring further around the city. Udaipur rests in a rural area that is fertile and green with crops.

Day 5 : Narlai

Half way between Udaipur and Jodhpur is the little village of Narlai. Aside from being a pleasant place to stop en-route to northern cities, it has its own charms in the way of volcanic batholiths and hundreds of temples. We also make a stop en-route to visit Ranakpur Temple.

Day 6-8 : Jodhpur

The journey out of Narlai also gives us a chance to visit the additional highlight of the Roopraj Durray villages. They are unique elements of the Rajasthan landscape. The marble masterpiece of Ranakpur's Jain Temple is worth the journey alone, while the cultural charms of durray makers and their unique rugs bring life and colour to the desert. We arrive in Jodhpur in time for dinner overlooking the Sadar Market. We start the next day with an orientation of the city, its markets and the juice stalls. This will provide an in-depth opportunity to meet locals, reveal some of our favourite locations and become familiar with the full colour of Rajasthan. Jodhpur

is called the Blue City because to this day it still features a sea of blue-washed walls. The rest of the day is free to pick a market to photograph on your own, or you can join us for another stroll to a remote temple near the fort to watch the sunset.

Day 9 : Khimsar

We board our private bus in the morning for the drive to Khimsar and our desert escape. On arrival we will head into the dunes on camels to watch the sunset and enjoy a very Rajasthani dining experience. Khimsar is not a luxury resort, it's a remote experience which will give you a chance to be inspired by the desert and have the time to photograph it.

Day 10 : Pushkar

As we head further east toward Agra we stop overnight in the unique city of Pushkar. This is a holy place with a beautiful lake surrounded by dozens of temples. Our itinerary gives us time to explore the town in the afternoon, and for the active minded a quick walk up the hilltop very early the next morning

Day 11-12 : Agra

This is the hardest travel day of the tour. Agra is far away from anywhere quiet and peaceful, including Pushkar. Our private bus will take us all the way to the city of Agra. We don't arrive until late afternoon, but will finish with a sensational dining experience in our favourite Mogul restaurant. The following morning will be dedicated to a sunrise engagement with the beautiful Taj Mahal. The haze and dust over Agra add a new dimension to the photography of an iconic building. After breakfast we go into the Taj Mahal itself and share the majestic architecture with thousands of Indian tourists. This is the most romantic place in India, and is popular with newly weds. There will be time today to visit the Agra markets, rug factories, the Red Fort or the Baby Taj.

Day 13-14: Agra

Another long travel day ahead on the busy road from Agra to Delhi. We leave Agra before lunch, scheduled for arrival in Delhi in the early evening and our last group dinner. Checkout time from the hotel is 12 noon and the 14th day. If you want to see Delhi in detail you should schedule additional nights accommodation. You can also extend your tour with a side-trip to Varanasi.



THIS ADVENTURE

We aim to provide two things on the photographic adventures. Firstly, an unparalleled opportunity to practice photography in an exotic land. We help you to get the right sunset, to access the most idyllic wilderness, to meet the real people of India and to make sure you have the time to explore your craft in the process. You won't be worried about travel and accommodation - it's taken care of for you. And you won't be rushed from hotel to hotel; you will have time to take photographs and to review them at the end of each day.

Secondly, we present a series of photographic themes which introduce key concepts and techniques which will help you improve your photography. Each session will discuss a topic and outline associated techniques. A set of technical notes are provided to accompany these sessions. Your travel itinerary has been developed in conjunction with the session themes, so you can immediately practice the skills you learn.

We will also encourage people to share their work during the trip. Review is very important and can greatly assist the development of your own personal style. Throughout the trip you will be free to consult with your instructor as well. You are not confined to the sessions to talk about your work and ideas! This will be a 14 day immersion that will accelerate your learning and development.



TAKE BETTER PHOTOS

The photographic themes designed into this trip are aimed at people with a fundamental knowledge of their camera, but who want to learn more. A basic knowledge of aperture, focal length, depth of field and exposure is useful, but not essential. We will even help you learn the technical use of your camera, if that's what you need. For more experienced photographers the itinerary alone will be an inspiration for your artistic output, plus the chance to share stories with an award winning travel journalist.

People of many different skill levels and ambition will be gathered for the journey, so expect to be in the company of diversity. This tour will appeal to anyone who wants to immerse themselves in the process of cultivating skills and exploring cultures. You will have a chance to discuss techniques and principles, then immediately go out and practice. This will not give you a qualification, but hopefully will give you confidence and direction to take better photos.



WHO TRAVELS WITH US

Our photographic journeys appeal to both the young and old, the experienced and novice. Most tours are made up of people aged 25-65, and all of them like-minded souls who enjoy combining travel with photography. It doesn't matter what your skills and interest in photography is, you will enjoy sharing a creative and immersive experience in Rajasthan. You can read feedback from our past travellers by visiting www.ewenbell.com



HOW WE TRAVEL

Experience a unique and challenging journey through some of India's most beautiful regions. You will be more than a traveller however, you will be learning new photographic techniques along the way and getting the chance to put these skills into practice. This trip will immerse you in the cultural, scenic and human richness of India while giving you an unparalleled opportunity to develop your own style and techniques as a photographer.

Key attractions are included on this itinerary, such as the remarkable deserts of Rajasthan and the romantic Taj Mahal, but we have also included out of the way destinations and the time to enjoy them. You will never be rushed from one place to another, instead you will have time to delve a little deeper and make your own connection. This is a vital ingredient to successful travel photography and the process of cultivating your skills.



ACCOMMODATION

The standard of accommodation for our tour in India will be much better than your ordinary small group tour, and our hotel selections offer character and charm that reflect the unique cultures of each province. Expect hot water, clean rooms, and climate control when staying in the city. Rural areas may offer more rustic charms where accommodation is concerned, such as haveli houses and former palaces, but is always comfortable, clean and safe.

This trip operates on a twin share basis, hence single travellers will be allocated a same-sex room mate. Please ask for a single-room rate if you do not wish to share your accommodation for the duration of the trip. Please ask for an elective single-suppliment if you do not wish to share your accommodation for the duration of the trip.





RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

At all times during our journey we need to be mindful of how our presence can impact on the cultures we wish to observe. Travel photography carries an even greater burden to ensure that you respect cultural beliefs and personal privacy. We never take photos of people without their express consent; instead we will learn techniques to enable you to overcome language barriers and actually take better photos that reflect a sense of connection with the people we meet.



LEARN A LITTLE

This is a special way to learn about photography. Time is set aside during the trip for theme sessions which introduce techniques and concepts. After each session you will have a chance to put them into practice. There will be frequent opportunities to review your work and discuss your experiences for that day. The skills covered in this journey are aimed at travel photography particularly, but will benefit all areas of your photographic pursuit.

No matter what your level of skill or experience you will learn invaluable techniques on our travels. For 14 days we will be at your disposal to explore the high level concepts and fine detail practicalities of travel photography. Beginners can expect to learn basic skills, new ways of thinking about their photography and gain structured themes to help them take great photos in challenging conditions. Advanced photographers are also invited to discuss the world of publishing, travel journalism and finding the line where photography becomes art.



ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT



We recommend the use of Digital SLR cameras for this journey, but you are not restricted from using any type of camera you may have, including conventional film SLRs and compact cameras. Digital SLR cameras offer excellent manual controls and plus us the ability to review our work at the end of each day - a valuable part of this experience. A minimum of 4Gig of memory cards should accompany your camera, plus an additional 20Gig or greater of external storage (hard drive or laptop).

We also recommend that you carry a wide angle lens in preference to telephoto. Most of our shooting involves being close up with the subject. We strongly advise that if you own a Digital SLR camera that you purchase an equivalent 18mm lens or even wider for the purpose of this journey. (Remember that most Digital SLRs multiply a standard lens by roughly 1.5, so factor this in when determining your wide-angle). The range of 18mm to 80mm will cover almost every need, be it a single wide-angle zoom lens or two of fixed focal length.

A good quality day pack will be an essential part of the packing list. Crumpler and Lowe make excellent packs that are designed for camera equipment. Ideally your pack should be comfortable, spacious, and practical. The traditional type of 'over-the-shoulder' camera bag is not very suitable for travel photography, a day-pack is better. Remember that you will be carrying your gear for days on end, so it's worth buying something comfortable with good shoulder straps and a little extra room to fit both your camera gear and your daily necessities.

Flash equipment and tripods are not recommended. Our study themes will not address the use of advanced flash photography and the additional weight and bulk must be considered against the rare occasions of use - if used at all. Similarly for tripods, they are cumbersome and difficult to travel with. Practise and experience with using your digital equipment and fundamental skills will negate the need for tripod or monopod.

Finally, full travel insurance and coverage for your 'additional items' is absolutely necessary. Standard travel insurance is generally inadequate to cover the value of your equipment unless you stipulate your equipment when buying insurance. It costs very little, so don't be caught short.. Please check very carefully that you are fully covered and have completed all necessary details to qualify for suitable coverage.





WHY SHOOT DIGITAL

For the purpose of this journey a digital camera is the most suitable equipment to carry. We will save the debate about film vs digital for the journey, there will be plenty of time to discuss opinions! Our trip is a chance to develop new skills and the immediate feedback offered by digital cameras is hence valuable. The quality, manual control and practicality offered by Digital SLR's make them perfect for travel photography. Your instructor will also be carrying a laptop computer for the journey, so there will be ample opportunity to review your photographs and study your image in detail.





ABOUT YOUR LEADERS

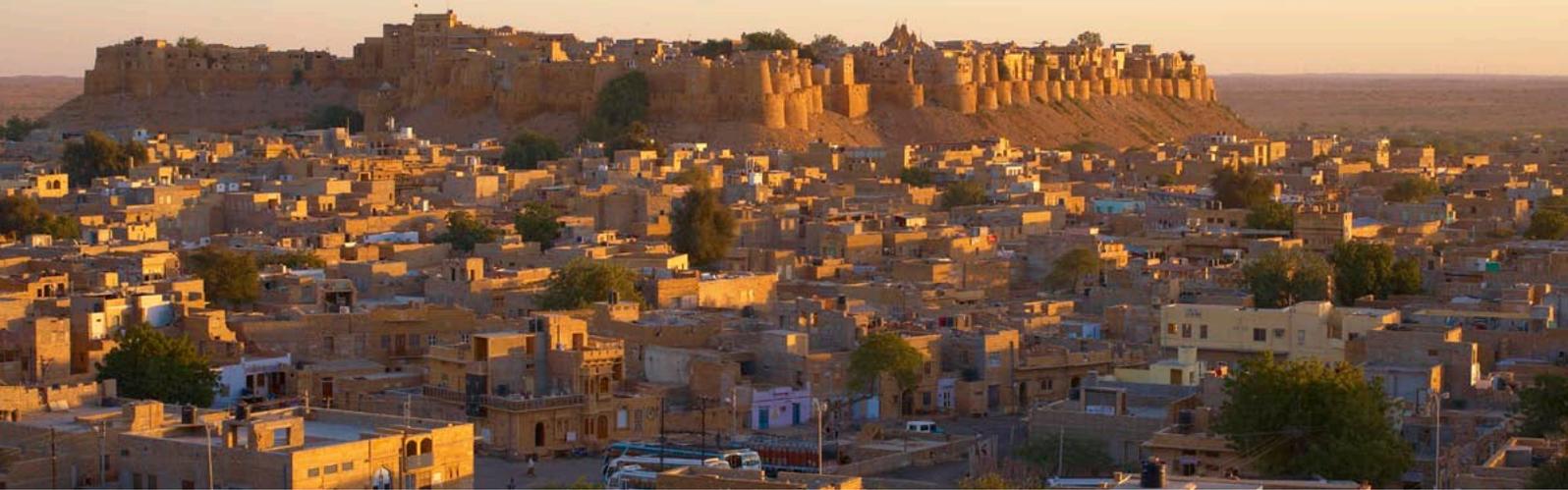
You will enjoy the company of two leaders for this journey. One is there to help you travel, the other to help you learn about travel photography.

Grasshopper Adventures are an experienced tour company that specialises in travel in Asia, China and India. They run bicycle tours, unicycle tours and now photography tours. Special interest touring for special interest people.

Ewen Bell has been a commercial photographer since 1990 and has experience in many aspects of photography – wildlife, travel, commercial and portraiture. Ewen's work is published in brochures for numerous travel companies and appears in regular travel publications including the Escape Weekend editions across Australia, Melbourne's Herald Sun and national magazines including Vacations & Travel and Holidays for Couples.

Ewen was also chosen by the ASTW as their 2007 Australian Travel Photographer of the Year.

PRE-TRIP ESSENTIALS



Additional Accommodation

Should you require extra accommodation in Delhi or Mumbai the people at Grasshopper Adventures can offer you competitive rates at our hotel. Please book extra nights when you book your trip. Rooms cost will be advised upon request and may vary according to season and proximity to date of travel.

Visas

Most western nations will require a visa before arrival in India, so be sure to contact the consulate in your country before confirming plans to travel and make sure you have a visa before you leave.

Money

The official currency of India is the Rupee, which should be used for all transactions. India has a modern banking system with ATMs and money changers in all cities and some tourist towns. In India it is possible to use Visa/Mastercard and Cirrus/Maestro cards, however, we do advise that you carry some cash currency in US Dollars as a backup. Travellers Cheques are not always as easy to change by comparison.

Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$20 for food and general living costs per day. Shopping money should be considered extra to this amount. Some meals are included with travel days and discussion sessions, but you will have the opportunity to choose between dining with the group or alone on most occasions.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

Health

There are no specific health requirements for travelling in India, however, we recommend that you visit a travel medicine doctor before travelling. Please advise your doctor that you plan to travel to northern regions of the country and they may recommend anti-malaria tablets to guard against infection. You should carry a well stocked first aid kit with you when you travel. All Grasshopper Adventures Group Leaders are first aid trained, however, they are not permitted to distribute any medications.

Group Size

8 maximum. Each group will have the services of a tour leader, photographic instructor and various local guides.

Important

All information in this Profile is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures.



HOW TO BOOK



Simply visit the website for Grasshopper Adventures and fill out the online booking form to reserve a place. Once they have received payment of the deposit your place on the trip is confirmed. You can make payment with your credit card or direct bank transfer...

www.grasshopperadventures.com

You can also find out more about this trip, the photographer Ewen Bell or other photo tours by emailing Ewen at ewen@ewenbell.com or go online to his website...

www.ewenbell.com