

Westernmost India

Westernmost India

PRICING & ACCOMMODATIONS



Date

January 12 – 27, 2020

Price

\$5,300

Duration

16 DAYS

Availability

Open

BOOK NOW

About This Tour

Gujarat was once part of the Indus Valley Civilization which ranked with Egypt and Mesopotamia as one of three earliest cultures in the Old World. The westernmost state of India, it is a mystical kingdom of Lord Krishna & the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. Overlooked by many travelers visiting more famous sites, Gujarat is a rewarding detour from the usual tourist track. Home of India's only openly gay prince, we visit the LGBTQ Empowerment Center he founded on his ancestral estate.

World Heritage palaces and monuments, varied terrain and numerous sacred sites, amazing wildlife and some of India's finest textiles and handicrafts make this an outstanding destination, even in a country already so overloaded with "wow" experiences. Toto Tours is known for specializing in focused regional itineraries in India, and we are excited to offer this state for the first time. From religion to nature, from economy to culture, Gujarat is one of the most glorious destinations in India.

Tour Highlights

- Vadodara, residence of the Maratha royal family
- Rajpipla's Vadia Palace
- Pavagarh Archaeological Park in Champaner *
- Jambughoda's tribal villages
- Old Ahmedabad *
- 11th century Modhera Sun Temple
- Rani-ki-Vav stepwell in Patan *
- Little Rann of Kutch, Asiatic Ass sanctuary
- Bhuj Artisan Culture
- Salt Desert
- Fortified Town of Gondal
- Junagadh's Uparkot Fort
- Somnath, Holy Place of Lord Shiva
- Sasan Gir National Park

EXTENSION HIGHLIGHTS

- Mumbai's bustling fish market
- Mumbai's open-air laundry
- Visit to a Mumbai slum
- Mumbai's Victorian & Art Deco buildings *
- Mumbai's Victoria Terminus rail station *

*** UNESCO World Heritage Sites**



MAIN TOUR ITINERARY

Sunday, January 12, 2020

Arrive in Mumbai, India

Arrange your international flights to arrive today in Mumbai, India. Most international flights typically arrive in the late evening or early morning hours after midnight. A driver will meet you at the airport and transfer you to our hotel on the beach not far from the airport. Tour services begin with overnight accommodations tonight, and your room will be available for you at 3pm today. If you arrive in the early morning hours today, you will need to reserve your room for January 11 to have immediate occupancy when you arrive at the hotel. Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport has the three-letter code: BOM. Use this code when researching flights from your home city. *(No Meals)*



Tour Map - Click to Enlarge

Monday, January 13, 2020

Relaxation in Mumbai

We have a quiet day today to adjust to the new time zone and enjoy the amenities of our lovely beachfront hotel. A spa, health club and swimming pool offer pampering before we launch into our adventure tomorrow. You might want to go shopping for some spirits to take with you on the tour since they are not readily available in Gujarat. Toto Tours hosts a Welcome Dinner this evening, including drinks. Overnight in Mumbai. *(Breakfast / Dinner)*



Rest and relax in luxury

Tuesday, January 14, 2020

Vadodara / Rajpipla

After an early breakfast, we check out of our hotel and transfer to the airport for our morning flight to Vadodara. Upon arrival, we meet our driver and guide and travel to Rajpipla. After hotel check-in and lunch we begin our experience of Gujarat at the ancestral palace of Prince Manvendra Singh Gohil at Hanumanteshwar. The prince is India's only openly gay royalty, facing a lot of societal disapproval after he came out in 2006. We have informed him of our visit and are working to arrange a meeting with him (if his schedule permits). The prince is developing in association with his Lakshya Trust an LGBTQ Community Center on his property. [Click here](#) to read an article about the project. We return to our hotel for dinner and a free evening. Overnight in Rajpipla. *(All Meals)*

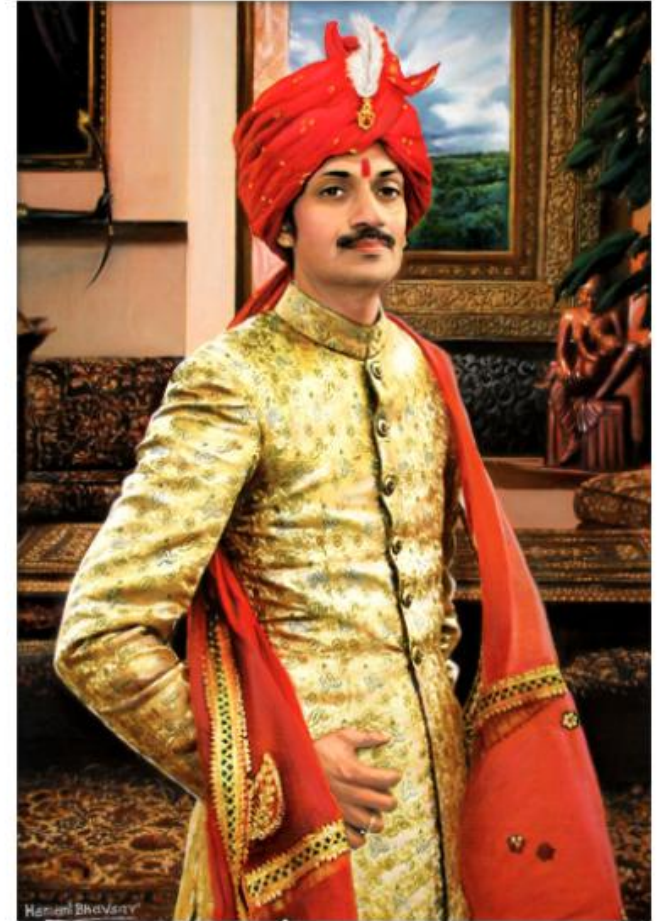


Vadadora University

Wednesday, January 15, 2020

Royal Rajpipla

Today we explore another royal site: the Indrajit-Padmini Mahal. It is a marvel of architecture and one of the iconic palaces of India. There are several museums inside the Palace. The Royal Museum displays certain personal and ancestral collection of the royal family. The Heritage has the Royal state marble throne, goddess Durga statue, items and photos of the Darbar and religious ceremonies. The Tribal has daily-use items depicting the lifestyles of various tribes in this region. We also visit the 400-year-old Harsiddhi Mataji Temple in the western part of town. Harsiddhi Mataji is the diety of the Rajpipla royal family but is also worshipped by people from far and near. *(All Meals)*



Manvendra Singh Gohil

Thursday, January 16, 2020

Vadadora

After breakfast we drive back to Vadodara. Once we have checked into our hotel, we take a tour to the offices of the Lakshya Trust, the foundation established by the gay prince dedicated to the Empowerment of the LGBTQ community. Your tour price includes a contribution to this worthy cause, which we will present during this visit. This afternoon we visit Laxmi Vilas Palace and Maharaja Fate Singh Museum. Laxmi Vilas Palace is home to the royal family of Vadodara, the Gaekwads. The Palace is a huge building that is said to have been the largest private dwelling ever built. The interiors of this palace are reminiscent of a large European country house with some modern amenities like elevators. Maharaja Fate Singh Museum is housed within the Palace's ground. Established as a school for the Maharaja's children, it now houses a huge number of artifacts, paintings of Raja Ravi Varma, and works of art collected by the Maharaja as well as a collection of sculptures in bronze and marble. *(All Meals)*



Laxmi Vilas Palace

Friday, January 17, 2020

Champaner / Jambughoda

After breakfast we drive to Jambughoda. Along the way we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Champaner, a historical city dating back to the 8th century and the site of the Pavagarh Archeological Park--a vast complex of 114 monuments, with eleven different types of buildings including mosques, temples, granaries, tombs, wells, walls, and terraces. We check into Jambughoda Palace, a simple royal mansion amid mature gardens. Most of the tribal communities living in and around Jambughoda are superstitious and God-fearing people, whose front entrances are richly carved wooden doors with figurines and tribal icons. In the afternoon we drive to Khandi vav village, a few miles from Jambughoda, to visit a family of potters and experience their handicrafts and way of life. *(All Meals)*

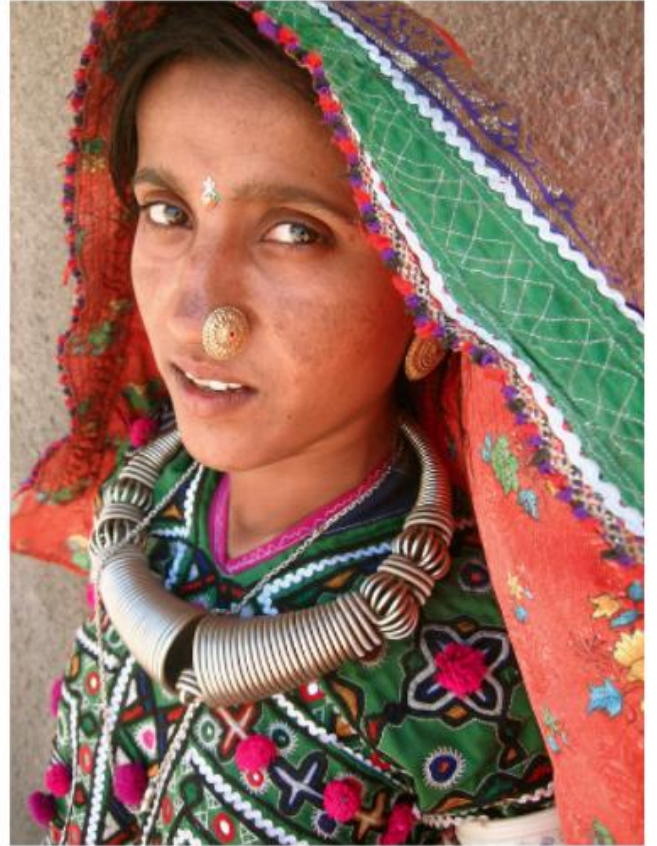


Champaner

Saturday, January 18, 2020

Excursions to Tribal Villages

We have full day excursion to Chhota Udaipur, near the various hamlets of Bhils, Rathwas, Bhilalas and other tribes. The tribal people can be spotted sporting colorful attire and large items of jewelry. A tour of the tribal villages and hamlets offers an insight into the traditional architecture, lifestyle & handicrafts of each aboriginal community. The tribal market called 'hatt' occurs at different villages. Pithora paintings, pottery, terracotta figures, Langoti clothing and bamboo basket weaving are the main attractions. You will want to return home with beautiful things that can be found nowhere else! We'll also visit the tribal museum of Chhota Udaipur village, which has a large collection of tribal artifacts. *(All Meals)*



Tribal Woman

Sunday, January 19, 2020

Ahmedabad

After breakfast we drive to Ahmedabad, checking into our hotel upon arrival. This afternoon, visit the Adalaj Step Well, built in 1499 by Queen Rudabai, a five-story step well that was both a cultural and utilitarian space, as well as a spiritual refuge. It is believed that villagers would come every morning to fill their water jugs, offer prayers to the deities carved into the walls and interact with each other in the cool shade of the well. We end our day's touring at Law Garden, the evening market which displays the beautiful textile handicrafts of Gujarat. This evening we enjoy a traditional Gujarati vegetarian dinner with local dances and music at Vishala, an authentically created Gujarati crafts village complete with traditionally decorated mud huts where potters and weavers are at work. *(All Meals)*

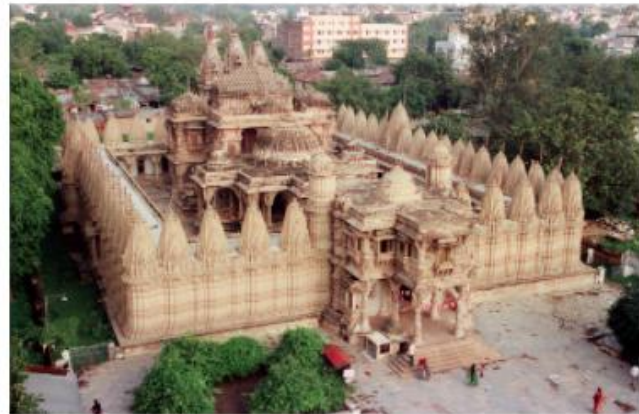


Adalaj Step Well

Monday, January 20, 2020

Ahmedabad

This morning visit the Calico Museum of Textiles, exhibiting rare tapestries, wall hangings and costumes from all the regions of Gujrat as well as the rest of India. See a variety of textiles ranging from incredibly long, colorful embroidered wall hangings to saris embroidered in gold. We return to the hotel for some free time and lunch. In the afternoon, visit the Sabarmati Ashram, situated on the western bank of the Sabarmati River. This ashram, founded in 1918 by Mahatma Gandhi, revitalized the textile industry in this region and became the headquarters of the struggle for Indian Independence. Fittingly, it is now primarily a spinning wheel factory. The rest of the day is free. *(All Meals)*



Ahmedabad Temple

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Modhera / Patan / Bajana

After breakfast we drive to Modhera Sun Temple, one of the finest examples of Indian architecture of its period (early 11th century). Every inch of the edifice, inside and out, has magnificently carved figures of Gods and Goddesses, birds, beasts and flowers. We continue to Patan, a beautiful old town with Jain temples and carved wooden houses. Next we visit the Queen's Step Well, an excellent example of the subterranean architecture of Gujarat. The exclusively carved side walls, pillars, beams, series of steps & platforms lead to the elaborately carved water well. Every surface is adorned with finely chiseled sculptures of maidens, Hindu deities, religious motifs and geometrical patterns. We arrive in Bajana and check in to our safari camp. *(All Meals)*



Modhera Sun Temple

Wednesday, January 22, 2020

Bajana / Bhuj

This morning we take a safari to Little Rann Of Kutch, a sanctuary for the Asiatic Wild Ass or Gudkhur, one of the most endangered species in the world. Other mammals we might come across include antelope, gazelle, Indian wolf, Indian desert fox, jackals, wild cats, and countless species of birds. Afterwards, we drive to Bhuj stopping along the way to experience Bhujodi, an artisan village where craftsmen are skilled in traditional Bandhani (tie & dye), block printing, weaving, and wood carving. Here we can view live demonstrations and purchase handicrafts directly from the artisans. We arrive at Bhuj and check into our resort for a free evening. *(All Meals)*



Asiatic Wild Ass

Thursday, January 23, 2020

Bhuj Traditional Culture

After breakfast, proceed for a full day excursion to the Handicrafts Villages scattered throughout the grasslands of the Banni Region. As the women of these groups do embroidery for their personal use and a secondary income, this is one of the highest concentration area of craftswomen in the world. We will visit the market town of Khavda, the herdsman villages of Ludia, and Gandhi nu Gam featuring beautifully painted Bhungas organized around a temple. We drive onward to Hodka, a cultural village on the edge of the great Salt Desert, where we eat a typical Kutchi lunch. Following a day steeped in a dazzling array of folk arts, we return to our hotel to enjoy an evening cultural program followed by dinner. *(All Meals)*



Bhuj Hand-Painted Bhunga

Friday, January 24, 2020

Drive to Gondal

Gondal is a fortified town located on the river Gondal. Its present day appearance and vitality is a testimony to the great visionary ruler Sir Bhagwatsinhiji, who introduced social reforms, planned the town's development, and created a model state of Saurashtra in the late 19th and early 20th century. In the early evening, visit the Royal Family's Vintage car collection including a new engine from 1910, a Delage and a Daimler from the 1920s, a 1935 Mercedes, 1935 Packard two-door convertible, Cadillacs and Jaguars, among many others. Most of these cars are restored and some bear the original Gondal State number plates. Enjoy a free evening at our hotel. *(All Meals)*



Gondal Naulakha Palace

Saturday, January 25, 2020

Junagadh / Somnath / Sasan Gir

We drive to Sasan Gir today making several stops along the way. In Gujarati "Junagadh" literally means ancient fort. The Junagadh town is located at the foothills of the sacred hill of Girnar. It occupies a special place in the history of Gujarat, at various times under the influence of four major religions: Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Muslims. Both political powers and religious influences enriched the culture and created fantastic edifices leaving their mark on the architecture here. The Ashoka edicts (from 250 BC) testify to its great antiquity. Visit Uparkot Fort (circa 319 BC), famous for its virtual inaccessibility with 60-foot-high walls. Somnath is one of 12 holy places of Lord Shiva, known as jyotirlingas. Today, Somnath is a site for holy pilgrimage, offering places of historic, religious and scenic importance. Finally, we reach our destination at Sasan Gir for dinner and overnight. ***(All Meals)***



Junagadh Tomb

Sunday, January 26, 2020

Sasan Gir National Park

Sasan Gir Lion Sanctuary is one of India's success stories. From a pitifully small number of around twenty lions at the turn of the century there are now approximately three hundred lions in the park. If you compare this number to the populations of 30 to 40 tigers in most of India's tiger parks you can see that your chance of a lion sighting is very good. Gir is also home to one of the largest leopard populations of any park in India, and especially in the hotter season they can sometimes be seen at night close to the lodges. Other wildlife to watch for are the Four-Horned Antelope (which is the only four-horned ungulate in the world), Wild Boar, Wolf, Hyena, Jackal, Jungle Cat, Chinkara, Blue Bull, Marsh Muggers as well as a wonderful variety of bird species. We celebrate our adventures in Gujarat in style with a Farewell Dinner tonight at our lodge. *(All Meals)*



Sasan Gir Lions

Monday, January 27, 2020

Return to Mumbai / Departure

After breakfast drive to Rajkot, where we will have lunch in a local restaurant. Afterwards, we transfer to the airport for our short afternoon flight back to Mumbai, arriving by 5:00 pm. On arrival, we transfer to a nearby airport hotel to check into our day rooms (available until 10:00 pm) for a wash and change. We make a late evening transfer to the international airport for your return flights home. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Farewell to Gujarat

MUMBAI EXTENSION

Monday, January 27, 2020

Mumbai

After arriving in Mumbai, we transfer to Trident Nariman Point and check in for a free evening. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

Mumbai

After breakfast, we start a very exciting day of touring with a visit to Sasoon Dock, one of the oldest fish markets in the city. Visit the Gateway of India, built as a triumphal arch to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Bombay in 1911. Continue to the Prince of Wales Museum. This Gothic and Moorish style building is crowned by a sparkling white dome and houses a priceless collection of art, sculpture, china and other antiques. Drive past old colonial buildings like Victoria Terminus (undoubtedly the British Raj's piece de resistance, featuring carved stone friezes, stained glass windows and flying buttresses), Mumbai University and Rajabai Clock Tower.



Mumbai Fish Market

In late morning we observe the famous Dabbawala lunch delivery system. The concept of the dabbawala came into being when a person named Mahadeo Havaji Bachche started the lunch delivery service with about a hundred men. At the present time, Indian businessmen are the main customers for the dabbawalas, and the service often includes both cooking and delivery. Later drive past High Court, Mumbai University, and Oval Maidan. We proceed to the Open-Air Laundry known as dhobi ghat. A unique feature of Mumbai, the dhobi is a traditional laundryman, who will collect your dirty linen, wash it, and return it neatly pressed to your doorstep. All for a pittance. The "laundries" are called "ghats": row upon row of concrete wash pens, each fitted with its own flogging stone. The clothes are soaked in sudsy water, thrashed on the flogging stones, then tossed into huge vats of boiling starch and hung out to dry. Next they are ironed and piled into neat bundles, where almost two hundred dhobis and their families work together in what has always been a hereditary occupation. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Mumbai Dhobi Ghat

After lunch, participate in a truly memorable encounter which has been a highlight of previous visits to Mumbai: a tour of the Dharavi slum. Around 60% of the citizens of Mumbai live in slums. Dharavi, with a population of at least half a million, probably has become the most famous of them, especially after the success of the movie "Slumdog Millionaire." Our walking tour begins in the commercial area, where waste recycling is a big business. The residents scavenge materials from all over the city and bring them to the little workshops here to clean, process and recycle them. Climbing to a rooftop right in the center of the settlement, we can appreciate the vast dimensions of the place and the number of people working and living here. After the tour we return to the hotel where we have the use of our rooms to wash, change and rest until 8:00 pm. At that time, we transfer to the International Airport for return flights home. Let us know if you wish to extend your stay for a full night, with check-out tomorrow morning. *(Breakfast / Lunch)*



Mumbai Dharavi Slum

TOUR PREPARATION

Entry Requirements - All U.S. citizens need a valid passport and valid Indian visa to enter and exit India for any purpose. You apply for long-term visas (up to 10 years) at an Indian embassy or consulate. U.S. citizens entering India solely for tourist purposes, and who plan to stay no longer than 30 days, may apply for an electronic travel authorization at least four days prior to their arrival in lieu of applying for a tourist visa at an Indian embassy or consulate. [Click here](#) to visit the official government website where you can apply for the e-visa.

Immunizations and Health - No immunizations are required, but the U.S. Center for Disease Control strongly recommends the following inoculations: tetanus, hepatitis A & B, typhoid, and Japanese encephalitis. [Please click](#) to visit the CDC website.

Exit Requirements - No airport tax is currently charged upon departure from India, nor is one anticipated. However, any such taxes or fees instituted after publication of this itinerary will be the responsibility of the clients to pay directly to the appropriate airport authorities.

Making Travel Arrangements to India

On this tour, international airfare is NOT included. You will need to get a round-trip flight between your home town and Mumbai, India (airport code: BOM). We encourage you to contact Steven Goldberg at Frosch Travel in Chicago, who can work with you to find the best flights to get you there and back.

Steven Goldberg / Frosch Travel

Toll-Free in USA: 1-800-323-1276

International guests, please call +1-312-371-9686

Email: steven.goldberg@frosch.com

When calling, please identify yourself as a Toto Tours participant. If you leave a message on Steven's voice mail, he will return your call promptly. He will be happy to discuss your travel plans and help you decide when to purchase your ticket for the best rate.

Included in the cost of this tour are the two internal flights within India: from Mumbai to Vadodara on 14 January, and from Rajkot to Mumbai on 27 January.

Hotel services begin in Mumbai on 12 January 2020 at 3pm. You can plan your arrival for any time this day, but be aware that your room might not be ready if you arrive before 3pm. Please do not schedule any departing flight from Mumbai before 9pm on 27 January. Most flights depart late at night. If you are participating in the Mumbai extension, book your flight departing late at night on 28 January. We can help you extend your stay at the beginning and end of the tour if you wish.

NOTE: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible we often must turn away last-minute registrants because we relinquish hotel space and air reservations 8 – 12 weeks prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

WHAT TO BRING

In January, the weather in India (in the locations we visit) will be very warm and humid during the day and much cooler at night. Mumbai will be between 62 to 85 degrees, with Ahmedabad and Patan getting a few degrees cooler at night. Laundry can be done at most of the places where we stay for two or more nights. You will be happier if you pack half of the clothes you think you need, do laundry along the way, and save room in your suitcases for fantastic purchases!

Suggested Packing List:

- Proof of citizenship. Passport and visa required.
- Comfy walking shoes for day tours.
- Polo shirts / T-shirts (5 - 6).
- Lightweight, long sleeve shirts (2 - 3) for cool evenings.
- Shorts – 1 or 2 pairs (this is a conservative area).
- Light jacket and scarf.
- Lightweight long pants – 2 pairs.
- Swimsuit.
- Sunscreen / lip balm.
- Sunglasses / sun hat with tie-on strap.
- Personal toiletries (Bring an anti-diarrheal remedy just in case!)
- Mosquito repellent, with Deet.
- Camera, lots of digital memory, extra batteries.
- Ziploc Bags (sandwich size for documents, gallon size for wet items or toiletries).
- Electrical Adapter. The electricity supply in India is 220 Volts. [Click here](#) to see what type of adapter you need.
- Pollution mask. At times the air quality in Mumbai can make breathing difficult, especially if you have any respiratory issues.
- A good book for the long flights.

MONEY MATTERS

The currency unit in India is the Rupee (INR). As of January 17, 2019, the interbank exchange rate was 70.97 INR to the U.S. \$1.00. ATMs are readily available in the major cities, and offer the best exchange rate for obtaining local currency. Credit cards are also widely accepted in establishments catering to tourists.

Tipping Guidelines -Virtually everyone in India expects to receive a tip. In tourist restaurants or hotels a 10% service charge is often added to bills.

Tips for your drivers and guides are included in the cost of this tour (new policy beginning in 2020).

ALCOHOL POLICY:Gujarat is dry (non-alcoholic) state. One must obtain a liquor permit online in order to carry or purchase any in the state. This is the link for liquor permit; <http://eps.gpeonline.co.in/> People are not permitted to consume liquor in restaurants or any open area. They can only consume liquor in their rooms. This online permit must be obtained after arrival into Gujarat, but you can get a head-start by setting up the account, uploading your photo and your passport in advance. It may be possible to purchase alcohol in Mumbai and bring it in your checked luggage.

THE TOTO SPIRIT

Toto Tours provides Adventure Travel Experiences as differentiated from tours in the traditional sense. Adventure Travel allows (even encourages) you to be an active participant. Adventurers can be identified by certain traits. They are:

- fun-loving optimists who have a sense of humor and accentuate the positive;
- good natured realists who are willing to accept situations as they exist;
- undaunted by the unexpected, like occasional delays or bad weather;
- willing to forego some of the amenities we normally take for granted;
- eager to try new things & test limits;
- punctual;
- not whiners!

Prepare for a royal gay adventure in a new Indian state during Toto's inaugural visit to Gujarat! If you have any questions, please email us at: tototours@gmail.com.

Travel Insurance

We recommend you purchase travel insurance with Travel Guard to cover for unforeseen events prior to and during your trip. Please follow the link below or call us for more information.

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PRICING – MAIN TOUR

Tour prices per person

Price: \$5,300 in double occupancy hotel accommodations. Add \$400 for Mumbai Extension.

Private Room: \$1,100 additional, for a total tour price of \$6,400. Add \$600 for Mumbai Extension (Paying a single supplement is not required. Toto Tours will try to match you with a roommate if you are traveling alone and prefer to share a room. If this is not possible, a single supplement will be applied to your reservation before the final payment date.)

Deposit: \$600

(Due at time of registration for the tour. May be paid with a credit card.)

Remaining Balance (main tour only): \$4,700 double / \$5,800 single

Remaining Balance (w/Mumbai): \$5,100 double / \$6,400 single

Remaining Balance Due: October 24, 2019 (80 days prior to departure)

(Full payment required with reservation form if enrolling after this date.)

Included: Airport transfers at the beginning and end of the tour; 15 nights hotel accommodations; hotel breakfasts daily plus Welcome & Farewell Dinners and other meals as specified in the itinerary; day room use for late departure from Mumbai; ground transportation in air conditioned motorcoach; internal flights within India (Mumbai to Vadadora; Rajkot to Mumbai); sightseeing activities and entrances as listed in the itinerary; 2 bottles of mineral water per day during drives; portage at hotels, railway stations and airports; festivals and cultural performances as indicated; \$100 donation to the Lakshya Trust for empowerment of the LGBTQ community; tips to drivers and guides. This is a fully guided and escorted tour.

Not Included: Round trip airfare to Mumbai, India (BOM); visa fees; airport taxes and departure fees; ground transportation for sightseeing on your own (taxis, local guides, etc.); meals and optional activities not specifically listed in the itinerary; camera fees; bottled water beyond two bottles included daily; alcoholic beverages; insurance; laundry; telephone calls; faxes; or any other expenses of a personal nature.

ACCOMMODATIONS – MAIN TOUR

Click hotel name to read description

- Mumbai (2 nights): [Sun N Sand](#)
- Rajpipla (2 nights): [Rajvant Palace](#)
- Vadodra (1 night): [WelcomHotel](#)
- Jambughoda (2 nights): [Jambughoda Palace](#)
- Ahmedabad (2 nights): [Hyatt Regency](#)
- Bajana (1 night): [Royal Safari Camp](#)
- Bhuj (2 nights): [Regenta Resort](#)
- Gondal (1 night): [Orchard Palace](#)
- Sasan Gir (2 nights): [The Fern Forest Resort](#)
- Mumbai (day room): [Kohinoor Continental till 9 pm](#)

ACCOMMODATIONS – MUMBAI EXTENSION:

Click hotel name to read description

- Mumbai ([one night & day room to 8pm](#)): [Trident at Nariman Point](#)

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