Ayelet TOURS

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

Cultural Crossroads: Exploring Jewish Heritage in INDIA

New Delhi • Agra • Jaipur • Varanasi • Mumbai • Cochin



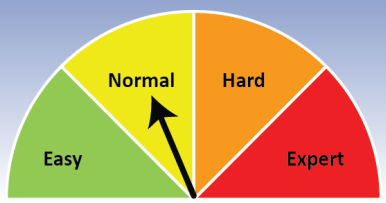
Led by Dr. David Mendelsohn
November 8 - 20, 2025

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as of 8/28/2024

India is a country of magnificent architecture, breathtaking nature and diverse cultures. Embark on a transformative journey through India's rich tapestry of Jewish heritage, where ancient traditions and vibrant cultures intertwine. Discover the hidden gems of historic synagogues, lively Jewish communities, and sacred sites that have thrived for centuries in this diverse land. Immerse yourself in captivating stories and explore the unique contributions of the Jewish community to India's cultural mosaic.

Physical Activity Scale



DAY 1

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2025
DEPARTURE

- We depart on our overnight flights to New Delhi, India!

DAY 2

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2025
WELCOME TO INDIA!

- **Welcome to New Delhi!** Upon arrival at Indira Gandhi International Airport, we are welcomed by an Ayelet Tours representative.
- We check into our hotel and refresh before our **welcome dinner and orientation with Dr. Mendelsohn**.

Overnight in New Delhi (D)

DAY 3

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2025
SEEING THE SIGHTS
IN NEW DELHI

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We begin the day with a leisurely **sightseeing tour of New Delhi's highlights**, including notable landmarks an cultural sites. Our first stop is at **India Gate**, a war memorial in the heart of New Delhi dedicated to the 70,000 Indian soldiers who lost their lives fighting for the British Army during World War I.
- Next, we visit **Rashtrapati Bhavan**, the official office and residence of the President of India.
- Afterwards, we tour **Samsada Bhavana**, India's Parliament House, an architectural gem where the country's legislative activities take place.
- Although India does not have an official state religion, it is central to daily life. We visit **Gurudwara Bangla Sahib**, a prominent Sikh house of worship, and the historic **Judah Hyam Synagogue**, the principal place of worship for New Delhi's Jewish community.
- This evening, we drive to **Agra**, roughly 3.5 hours south, enjoying **lectures by Dr. Mendelsohn** along the way.
- Upon arrival, we check into our hotel and enjoy **dinner** together this evening.

Overnight in Agra (B, D)



DAY 4

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2025
THE CROWNING SPLENDOR OF INDIA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- The **Taj Mahal** is considered one of the Seven Wonders of the World. We tour this UNESCO World Heritage site, known for its stunning architecture and romantic history.
- This afternoon, we drive to **Jaipur**, capital of India's Rajasthan, about 5 hours away. En route, we stop for lunch on own and learn together via **lectures with Dr. Mendelsohn**.
- After checking into our hotel, we join together for **dinner** this evening.

Overnight in Jaipur (B, D)

DAY 5

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2025
JAIPUR - INDIA'S PINK CITY

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Early this morning, we embark on a **sightseeing tour of Jaipur**. We begin at the majestic **Amber Fort**, known for its artistic Hindu-style elements.
- Next, we explore the **City Palace**, a royal residence whose museums showcase the treasures of India's royal family.
- Our tour continues at **Jal Mahal**, the luxurious Water Palace in the middle of Man Sagar Lake.
- Afterwards, we visit **Hawa Mahal**, the magnificent Palace of Winds, famous for its unique honeycomb architecture.
- At **Jantar Mantar**, a UNESCO World Heritage site, we see the astronomical observatory with its impressive instruments.
- We continue to a **local market** famous for its luxurious **carpets and textiles**.
- The early evening is ours to explore Jaipur on own, followed by a group **dinner** later tonight.

Overnight in Jaipur (B, D)

DAY 6

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2025
INDIAN ENLIGHTMENT

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Early this morning, we **fly from Jaipur to Varanasi**.
- We drive a short distance to **Sarnath**, near the confluence of the Ganges and Varuna Rivers. Here, we visit the **Deer Park**, where **Buddha delivered his first sermon**.
- We check into our hotel to refresh, then enjoy **Dr. Mendelsohn's lecture** before we attend **Aarti at the Ganges**, a spiritual ceremony on the banks of the holy river.
- We join together for **dinner** this evening.

Overnight in Varanasi (B, D)

DAY 7

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 2025
MAGNIFICENT MUMBAI

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Mid-morning, we **fly to Mumbai**.
- On our drive to the hotel, we enjoy a **highlights sightseeing tour of Mumbai**.
- We check into our hotel and prepare for our evening out.
- As the sun begins to set, we join members of the historic **Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue** for **Kabbalat Shabbat**, followed by kiddush and a festive **Shabbat dinner with the Jewish community of Bombay**.
- A leisurely walk back to the hotel concludes the evening.

Overnight in Mumbai (B, D)

DAY 8

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 2025
SHABBAT IN MUMBAI

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Shabbat Shalom! We attend **Shabbat morning worship at Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue**, followed by kiddush and **Shabbat lunch**.
- The afternoon is at leisure to relax or explore Mumbai on our own.
- Following **Havdalah** and a **lecture by Dr. Mendelsohn**, we embark on a **sightseeing tour of Mumbai by night**, including **dinner** together.

Overnight in Mumbai (B, L, D)



DAY 9

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2025
EXPLORING MUMBAI

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today we explore Mumbai's Jewish and cultural landmarks. We visit the community's synagogues, including **Shaar Hashamayim** (Gate of Heaven), Mumbai's oldest synagogue, **Magen David Synagogue** and **Tiphereth Israel Synagogue**.
- We tour the **David Sassoon Library and Reading Room** and learn about the religious and cultural imprint of the Sassoon family on Mumbai.
- At the **JCC Mumbai**, we **meet with community leaders** and hear about the organization's various programs.
- Near Mumbai Harbor, we see the **Gateway of India**, an iconic arch-monument built to commemorate the 1911 royal visit of King George V.
- We continue with a visit to the **Gandhi Museum**, dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi and explore the colorful **Dhobi Ghat**, the city's largest open-air laundry facility.
- At the **Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus**, the UNESCO World Heritage site formerly known as Victoria Terminus Station, we see an outstanding example of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture.
- After time for **shopping in a local market**, we enjoy a night on the town and **dinner** together this evening.

Overnight in Mumbai (B, D)

DAY 10

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2025
COCHIN - QUEEN OF THE ARABIAN SEA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Early this morning, we **fly to Cochin** (Kochi).
- Upon arrival, we visit the **Paravur Synagogue** and its adjacent cemetery. We learn about the history of this synagogue, including its extensive and impressive conservation.
- We also visit the **Chendamangalam Synagogue**, one of the oldest known synagogues built by the Malabar Jews, and tour the museum on site.
- We check into our hotel and enjoy a **lecture by Dr. Mendelsohn**.
- The remainder of the day is at leisure until we meet for **dinner** together this evening.

Overnight in Cochin (B, D)

DAY 11

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 2025
JEWISH HERITAGE IN COCHIN

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning begins with a **lecture by Dr. Mendelsohn**.
- Next, our **Jewish heritage tour** of Cochin starts with a visit to the historic **Jew Town**, once the heart of vibrant Jewish life in Cochin. We explore the **Paradesi Synagogue**, the oldest active synagogue in the Commonwealth. We also visit the historic **Ernakulam Synagogue** and **Kadavumbhagam Synagogue**, as well as other Jewish landmarks.
- We expand our cultural appreciation of Cochin by viewing a **Kathakali dance performance** and enjoying **dinner** together tonight.

Overnight in Cochin (B, D)

DAY 12

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2025
KUMARAKOM BACKWATERS

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we drive to **Kumarakom** for a day of scenic beauty and outdoor recreation. Kumarakom is a picturesque village located in the backwaters of Kerala, a highlight of South India. Renowned for its tranquil waterways, lush greenery and vibrant bird life, it offers a serene retreat from bustling city life.
- We return to Cochin to refresh before our **farewell dinner** together.

Overnight in Cochin (B, D)

DAY 13

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2025
FAREWELL

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We **fly from Cochin to Mumbai** for our return flights home.

(B)

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

****Itinerary subject to change***





About Dr. Mendelsohn:

We are delighted that we have been able to secure Dr. David Mendelsohn to join us on our trip to India, in addition to our local guide, to bring added depth to our learning as we travel the country together. In addition to having led India trips in the past, Professor Mendelsohn's areas of expertise include Islamic Studies, History and Culture of Arabs with Israeli Citizenship, Bedouin Law and the relationship between language and culture in Arabic and Hebrew. Mendelsohn also lectures on the history and relationship between Middle East countries and militant organizations. David holds advanced degrees in diverse fields: a Ph.D. in Classics/Linguistics, an M.A. in Archaeology/Linguistics and an Honours B.A. in Classical Studies. David is the recipient of one of Canada's highest academic honors: the Trudeau Prize. He lives in Jerusalem with his with wife Ronny and 3 children.