

# THE MUSLIN TRAIL

## A Textile Journey In India



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TOURS





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## A Textile Journey In India

Commencing from Mumbai, this wonderful 15-day journey takes you off the well-worn path to discover the cultural beauty and fabulous textile treasures of North India.

Explore the villages of West Bengal and see some of the region's best embroidery and fabric creations. Take a guided tour of the historic cities of Kolkata, Mumbai, Mandu and Maheshwar, enjoying ancient sights and exquisite textile displays.

Step back in time as we follow the muslin trail into quaint villages and ancient lands strewn with magnificent palaces, tombs and monuments. Enjoy some wonderful shopping opportunities, fascinating sights and delicious food throughout the journey.

This amazing tour will delight and enchant you!



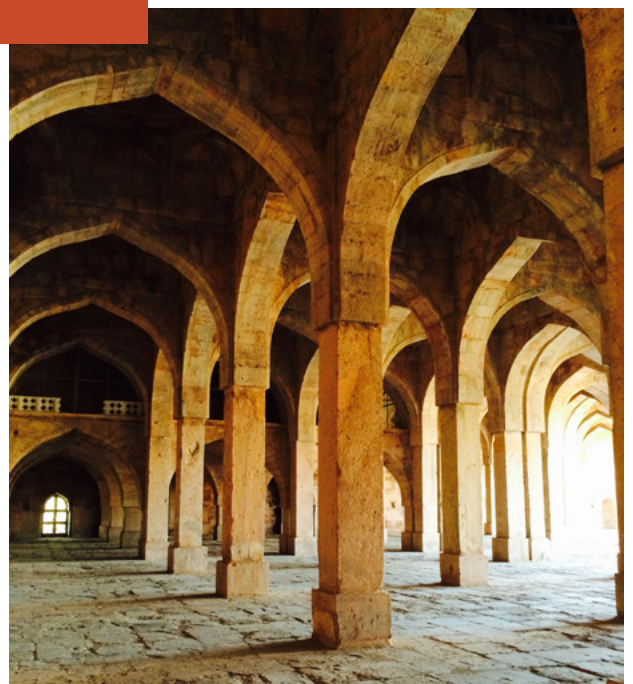
# ITINERARY

## Day 1

Arrive in Mumbai any time today and transfer to our lovely hotel for a rest and some free time.

## Day 2

After a group meeting, we head to an inner city block printing unit where the Khatri family work with natural dyes and use traditional Ajrakh as well as contemporary blocks to create beautiful prints in silk and wool. In the afternoon we will visit the Chatrapati Shivaji Museum and a few important landmarks of South Mumbai.







### Day 3

Today we have a short flight to the city of Indore followed by a drive to Maheshwar. Enjoy some free time to stroll around this ancient holy city.

### Day 4

This morning we start with a tour of Maheshwar, a captivating place situated on the banks of the great river Narmada and packed with spiritual significance. This town is mentioned in the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, India's two major epic sagas and still draws sadhus and pilgrims to its ancient ghats and temples. Although Maheshwar has had a weaving tradition since the 5th century, the credit for the birth of the famous Maheshwari silk and cotton handloom sarees goes to the pious Queen Ahilyabai, who in the 18th century settled a number of skilled weavers here to weave the 9 yard sarees for the royal household and visiting dignitaries. Included in our weaving trail today is a visit to Rehwa, a co-op that has revived and made the Maheshwari craft more contemporary. We also walk through the streets of the weavers colonies where almost every home has a wooden loom.



### Day 5

Today we have a guided tour of Mandu, a lovely historical town with a wealth of monuments. The buildings are a mix of Hindu and Afghan style of architecture. Mandu is a celebration in stone, of life and joy, of the love of the poet-prince Baz Bahadur for his beautiful consort, Rani Roopmati. See the stunning Jahaaz Mahal, Rani Roopmati's Pavillion and other heritage sights. Drive to Dhar for overnight.





## Day 6

Enjoy the rural scenery as we drive through a remote region of Madhya Pradesh to the small town of Bagh, renowned for its hand block printing. The people of the Khatri community in this region make use of a limited colour palette of black and red alternating on white backgrounds, featuring geometrical and floral compositions. Watch the different stages in the process of creating these amazing textiles. Also visit Bagh Caves, a group of rock cut Buddhist monuments outside the town. Return to Dhar.



## Day 7

Enjoy a leisurely morning before we transfer to the airport for our flight to Kolkata.

## Day 8

After breakfast we have a guided tour of Kolkata, capital of India under the British Raj from 1772 to 1911. The city abounds in colonial architecture, art galleries and cultural festivals. We take an historical walk around the city's cultural monuments and colonial buildings and tour the main sights. A visit to the Potter's enclave where they make intricate idols of Hindu deities in all sizes with clay gives us a peek into the religious traditions of West Bengal.



## Day 9

Today, we head north on our Muslin Trail into the rural areas of West Bengal. Heading for Berhampur, we stop en route at villages that specialise in cotton and silk handwoven sarees, dhotis, jacquard and jamdani muslin weaves of superfine texture.







## Day 10

This morning we visit a large silk production cooperative where we see the fascinating process of extraction, reeling and spinning of different kinds of silk followed by a guided tour of the beautiful Hazarduari Palace and Katra Mosque in Murshidabad.

## Day 11 & 12

After breakfast we drive to Santiniketan. Here we will visit Visva Bharati University which has evolved from the vision of Rabindranath Tagore the revered poet, writer, playwright, musician and painter who was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize for Literature. In 1901 Rabindranath laid the foundation of a system of education based on the ancient Vedic pattern of study where connection with nature and freedom of spirit was most important. We will have a guided tour of the campus with its unique structures and outdoor works of art and visit the poet laureate's residential quarters. The craft demonstrations you will see in and around Santiniketan include kantha embroidery, batik printing, tussar silk weaving, embossed leather works and hand-made jewellery.



## Day 13

Venture on to Bishnupur stopping en route at Bikna a village where we will see the ancient craft of non ferrous metal casting using the lost wax process known as dokra. After lunch, we visit the amazing terracotta temples that Bishnupur is famous for.

## Day 14

This morning includes a trip to a potter's village that specialises in making terracotta horses known as Bankura. Also see the handloom weaving of the prized Baluchari silk sarees depicting detailed scenes from Indian mythology. In the afternoon, drive to Kolkata





with a brief stop to see fine grass mat weaving done by the Mahishyas community of Midnapore.

### Day 15

Today is our last day, which we have kept free for shopping, including a visit to the state Government emporia complex and other local markets. After dinner, we transfer to Kolkata airport for flights home, concluding our magical journey!

## ADDITIONAL INFO

Your 15-day experience includes air-conditioned travel, all accommodation, internal flights, all excursions, entrance fees, local guides, guide tips and some meals. The tour is lead by a local textile and village industry expert.



### For booking information contact:

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Please note: The itinerary may be subject to change depending on altered circumstances.

