

Travel Log - India-Rajasthan April,2026

Day-1

It can only get better from here. Our tour doesn't start until tomorrow, so we booked a half day trip of New Delhi. Tomorrow we will be touring Old Delhi. First impressions: So many people. 28 million in Greater New Delhi, scorching heat (36 C in the shade) and surprisingly a very green city with parks, monuments, temples and a more modern city than its reputation. Tomorrow is the Old Delhi tour. Prepare for a totally different experience.

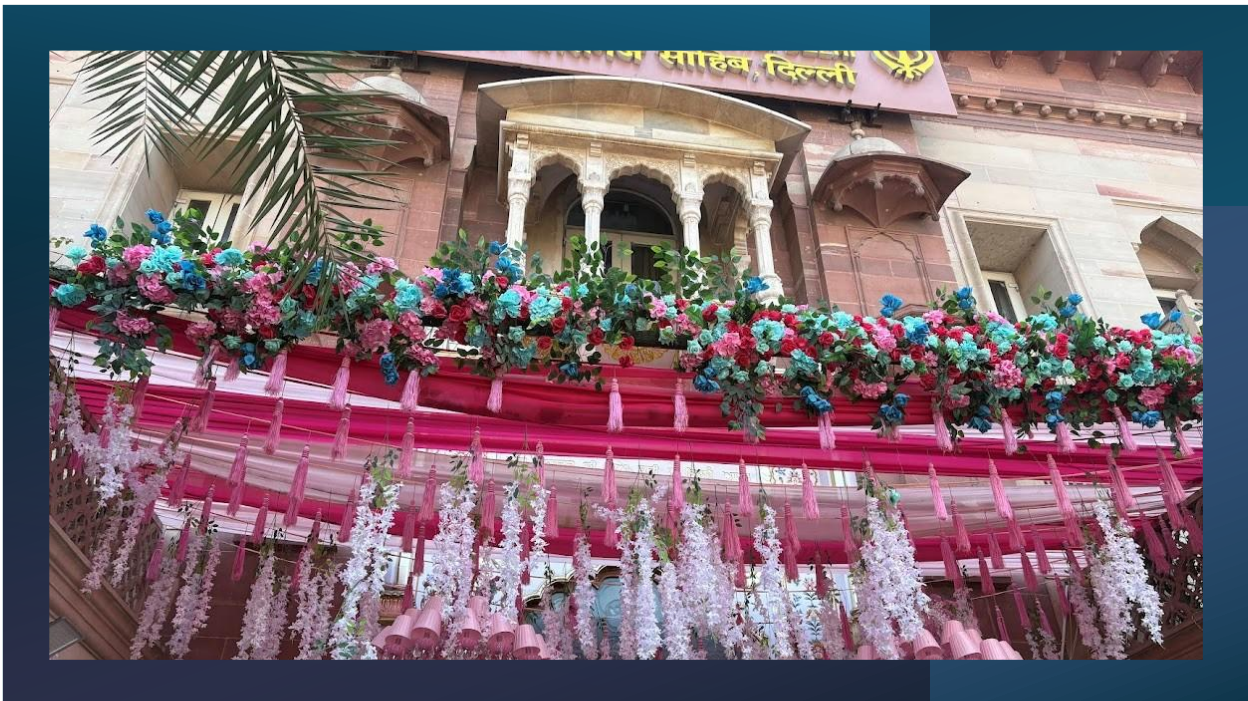
The day started with mom getting hit by a reversing car and down splash on her ass. In fact, our guide took the hit on his knee and fell backwards on mom who than took a dive. Painful throughout the day but thankfully no cuts or broken limbs. Then it was my turn climbing some stairs to the top of a temple and stretching my hamstring. Which brings up the question: what in hell are we doing? and the tour didn't start yet.



Day-2

A better day for sure. Mom still has pain in her butt from the accident but soldiered on as usual. I wasn't that much better. 83 sucks. Today we saw the "real" Delhi as depicted on TV: masses of people, chaotic traffic, narrow dirty streets but no homeless people on the sidewalks and people friendly faces. The highlight of today was a visit to the Sikh temple. We learned so much about the origins and value system of their faith. We had to take our shoes and socks, wash our feet and cover our heads with traditional cloths. The temple

was beautifully decorated and many young and old sitting on the floor and praying or meditating to the sound of traditional live music. Next to the temple there is a kitchen where all volunteers staff are feeding 300,000 people, regardless of their faith with a hot meal so that no one goes hungry. It a sight to be seen and experienced. We also visited an Islamic Mosque the largest in Delhi. Beautiful architecture in a vast complex of structures. We ended our guided tour in one of the most modern upscale malls we've ever seen with all the stores you could imagine. As if you were transported to a new universe from the streets around it. There we had our first Indian food as you can see in the picture. By then we were pooped yet decided to go on our own to see the famous Red Port. A massive set of structures as part of an ancient wall city. A good and interesting day but at 15+K steps, way over our quota and crashed at the hotel by 5PM. Tomorrow Agra and the Taj Mahal.



Day-3

The highlight of the entire trip so far and likely by its end. The Red Fort in Delhi is no competition to Agra's Red Fort. A massive complex of ancient temples and palaces. An architectural wonder that held the title of best in class...

only until later we arrived at the Taj Mahal one of the world's official wonders and indeed it is. When you arrive the sight of Taj Mahal makes you gasp in awe.

Interestingly Taj Mahal is more impressive from a distance than from its inside.



Day-4

Today was an educational day. Started with a demonstration of hand weaving carpets and a display of beautiful carpets of all sizes and patterns. Then on the bus ride to our next destination Kuldeep our guide explained in great and personal details about Indian wedding rituals. How they are mostly still arranged, in two different categories: parents' arranged, couple seek both parents consent after a Horoscope matching report by an astrologist. The

values of family and tradition reign supreme. India divorce rate is 8 in a 100K likely the lowest in the world. Values are family togetherness on both sides. Living together, celebrating together. There no “cousins” only brother and sisters on both sides. Fascinating description of the actual wedding day(s) minimum 3. Then of course education almost always-Engineering. Engineers are first like our Lawyers and Doctors. After a long drive and an Indian luncheon - actually very good we arrived at a 600 years fort converted by its family owners of the Port’s palace to a “hotel” as it has little to no amenities like AC or reasonable shower never mind TV. Authenticity is no compensation for no AC when the outside temperature is 42 degrees - yes-Celsius. Let’s see if we survive the afternoon’s village walk followed by a climb back to the “hotel” perched at the top of the hill.

Mom made her best decision today by skipping the village tour and getting more than an earful explanation of every little detail. Way TMI. Not only was the walk at the peak of the heat but after an hour and a half walk, we had to make it back to the Fort/Hotel perched at the top of a mountain overlooking the village. Later in the evening a good group dinner and a costume party for lighting things up. Oh, mom recorder her (I say) 4th fall in 4 days, this time missing a step for a head long dive. Mom denies it was 4th and admits to 3 but who is counting?

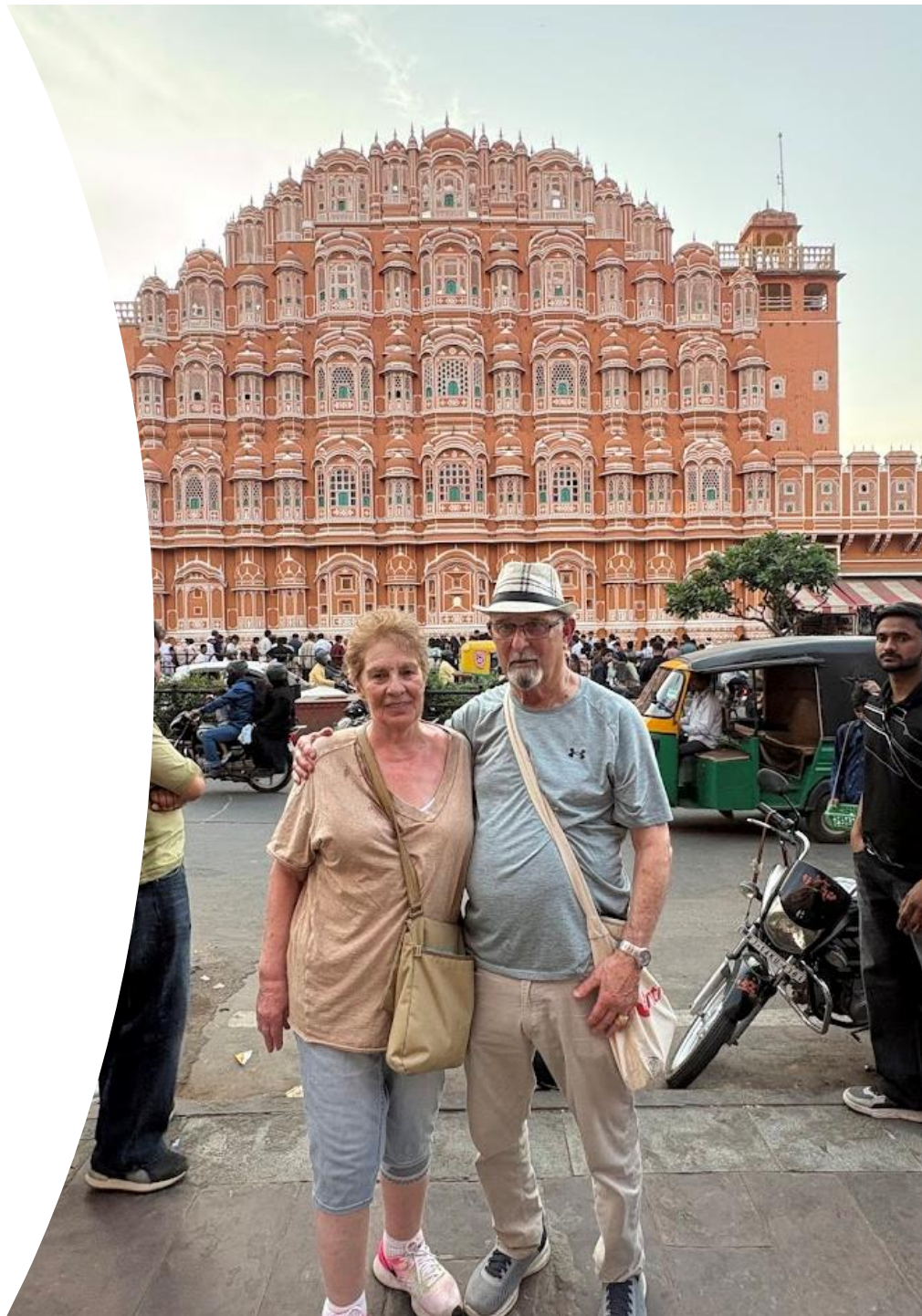


Day-5

The morning breakfast was a disaster. Avoid Mehrgarh altogether. On the way to Jaipur. where the main attraction is a tour of Jaipur via Amber. Another massive complex of palaces. A real wonder. Entering the city limits you see - again the mayhem, traffic jams, dirty roadside small trade and hundreds of “poachers” trying to sell you “things” from

magnets to trinkets. Once you get to the fort aka palaces you are in awe once again as only the pictures can prove. At least we are staying at a more than reasonable modern day Hotel. The verdict is out on our tour leader Kuldeep: Like many young men in India- an engineer. Like engineers. Efficient, master of Indian history and tradition. Facts and figures oriented, excellent time management. Delivers TMI in detail that even younger people will never remember. Impersonal, no sense of humour and personal interest in engaging with group members only to deliver site information and logistics. Inundates us with details we forget as soon as he stops talking. Yet experienced, a walking encyclopedia of Indian history altogether-TMI. The sites themselves are breathtaking as evident by the many photos.

This afternoon a walking tour of the old city of Jaipur. We could have done without the walk. It only reinforced our opinion of the city and maybe India as a whole. Scorching hot, way too crowded, frankly dirty by our standards (not just the Bulgarian) and too much hassle and bustle. However, the Pink Palace was a real eye popper and the restaurant we went to was the best so far. We are in survival mode and now almost half the tour is behind us. Tomorrow a free day all day we'll get to sleep in a decide what else we may want to do, credit to our guide he posted a list of a dozen attractions we may chose from for tomorrow.



Day 6

Today is a well-deserved free day. There are more beautiful palaces to see but we are saturated with the many forts, palaces and temples. We are also tired and dread being outdoors in 40C. We slept in had a late breakfast at the hotel (if you can call it that or are we

too fussy?) For a while we entertained the thought of staying in our air-conditioned room all day but finally decided to hire a taxi driver to take us to the astrological observatory. Thinking high powered telescopes? Not at all! This is a 400-year-old park with many stone and marble installations each designed to tell time, distance between the Sun and Earth and other stars. It is the genius of the then ruler of the then Rajasthan state who was himself an astronomer and a mathematician who designed the “instruments” with the help of architects. Nothing that we knew or heard about before. It was a fascinating experience both from a scientific and architectural point of view. My iPhone just flashed a message I have never seen before: “Your iPhone needs to cool off” That it’s all for today. Afternoon nap and prepping for tomorrow’s National Park safari.



Day 7

We are off to Ranthambhore on a four hour drive to the Rajasthan Wild Life national park famous for its sparse Tigers' population but also many other species. Our leader interprets his job as to be a teacher of Indian culture, history, traditions etc. Each such lecture is a half or more of an hour and VERY detailed. Most are TMI but at least 3 of these lectures were interesting and retrainable. The history of Taj Mahal, the Indian society's class, some still say cast system and interesting and very personal and family stories. Those three so far were not only appreciated but will likely be remembered. Today we checked in (for the first time) to a more than decent resort and spa hotel. Great room, gardens, swimming pool and spa.

The Safari was the best nature experience so far. As usual scorching heat in a large open Jeep. There are only 24 tigers in the entire area. We were told in advance that the chances of spotting one are 1:10 so as not to be disappointed if don't. We ended up spotting two tigers at different times one strolled by our Jeep the other taking an afternoon nap. We also spotted a sloth bear and cubs, monkeys, crocodiles, peacocks, birds. The only downside again was local guide who just sat there and did not explain or help spot interesting species and even stop the Jeep for picture taking. The service attitude in India needs an overhaul if it wants to promote tourism. Pragmatic, impersonal bordering on inconsiderate. No falls to report today.



Day 8

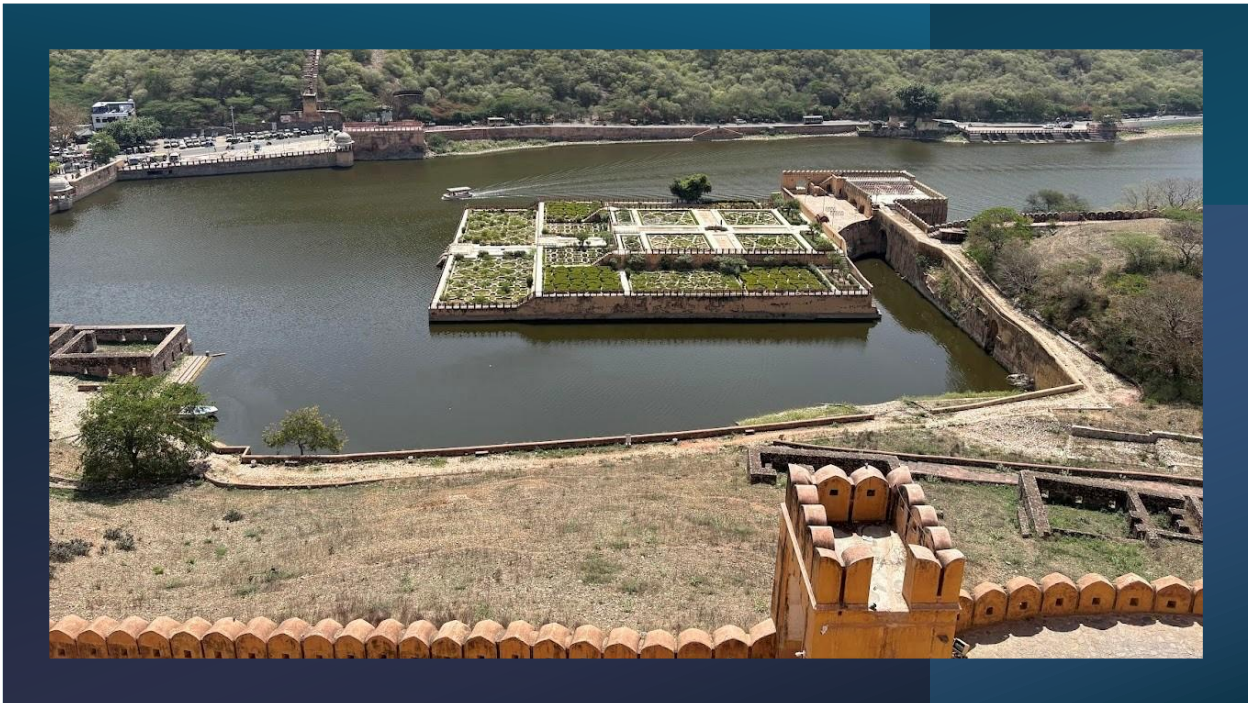
A long 4 hours drive to Bundi where the main attraction is (yet another) ancient fort and palace. We are staying in the home of the king of Bindi turned hotel and spa what an honour? However, to climb to the top of the mountain to see the palace which we were told was beautiful it takes the fitness and climbing experience of Ethan. Driving to the location by TikTok and returning by what was supposed to be a tour of the market. We happened to fall on a sort of Holiday with a colourful procession of mainly women dressed in their “Sunday best” saris. We watched the procession at the bottom of the palace when the rest of the group climbed to the palace. They all agreed that we made a good decision by avoiding the climb. From there to the hotel by foot through the market was a disaster. Dirt and filth and of course sacred cows roaming among chaotic traffic of motor bikes. We are not moving to Bindi. The catacombs of Yafo were a step up from this market. Net-Net, it just reinforced our already state of mind: Why did we do this? Mom for the first time hit the wall while with her pain and the heat and the (not for Bulgarians) dirt and mayhem. We were promised that the next two days are all about relaxation. Let’s hope so or we lose this match in overtime.



Day 9

The pace of this tour has been frantic much like the traffic in Delhi or the market in Jaipur. But today was a welcome exception. We travelled by country train (basic of the basics) for two hours to be picked by Safari Jeeps for two more hour to arrive at lake side resort with air-conditioned cottages, a great swimming pool for a well needed day of total relaxation. No forts, palaces, markets, village walks a complete contrast to everything we have seen

so far. Clean, quiet, lush and all you hear are birds singing. Of course, this is part of for the course in the West but a stark exception in this part of India. Mom is still in pain but nothing like last night when I honestly thought we may be losing her. The woman is a lioness, but something needs to change. When mom herself is worried about something bad happening in her body it's time in fact over time for a full examination. Mom must officially retire from all cleaning and cooking duties that require standing on her feet for hours. זמן לנוח



Day 10

Day started with mom's Delhi Belly. A double feature. Thankfully while we were in the resort during breakfast. Imodium NOW! The rural village walk was interesting. Still more cows than people in the streets but much cleaner, friendlier and a model of life in rural Indian farming communities. We skipped the farm visit and stayed in the Jeep. Harvest season is over so there is little to see compared to walking an hour in scorching heat and humidity. Can't wait to reach our castle. The Castle is very impressive as is our bedroom but most impressively the manicured grounds. We get to see how royalty used to live here in stark contrast to the commoners. Afternoon at the pool the second day in a row. This is the second and welcome slow-paced day. We can see the finish line. Oops... Yet another village walk. We learned a new skill: How not to step in cow poo. Dinner by poolside nicely set up with food we do not like.



Day 11

Today we drive for four hours to our next destination Udaipur. To our surprise Udaipur ranks second on the global list of the most beautiful cities in the world. We found it hard to believe on our orientation walk where once again we were walking down narrow dirty streets that looked like the ones we saw throughout our trip. We thought it was a joke until in the afternoon we walked down to the lake side and we discovered the “Venice of the South”. The main attraction here is a boat ride on the lake which convinced us that this title is justified. Ended the day with a folk dancing show and a roof top dinner overlooking the lake and the palaces surrounding it. The folk dancing was the most entertaining show we’ve seen in along time. This was by far the best most interesting and entertaining day of our trip. Mom is at her wits end and cannot wait to come home even though she admitted that today was a great day.



Day 12

The past two days in Udaipur compensated for the miserable few days between Jaipur and Udaipur. This morning we toured the City Palace the largest palace in all of Rajasthan. It is more than a huge marble structure with many courtyards. It takes two hours to tour the place that also includes numerous art and culture galleries. That's it. Noon time and the rest of the day off. Mom walked the palace tour with all the narrow paths and steep slippery steps and her mood and confidence was restored somewhat. Two more days and we are headed back to New Delhi to board our flight home.

We parted Udaipur with a romantic lake side restaurants with magnificent view of the temples surrounding the lake. This was followed by a harrowing ride in crazy traffic with road closures and scared for our lives... but we made it. Udaipur at the end lived up to its reputation.



Day 13

This morning a 5:15AM departure to the train station for a 6 plus hours on the way to our final tourist destination Pushkar known as the Mecca of India. Only 50,000 people and 300 temples for all religions and a Chabad House for the Jewish community that is made out mainly of young Israeli tourists. Pushkar is the go-to destination for Israelis who travel after their Army service. Some of the restaurants in the market have Hebrew lettering and serving Falafel and other Mediterranean dishes. There are few if any now as it is off season and with the war and all. The customary orientation walk of the city market (been there done that in every town) ending at a beautiful Sunset viewing by lake side. The walk came close to the proverbial straw that broke the camel back. (Pushkar is known for its camel safaris and camel racing) It was the heat 39C feels like 45 with the humidity. But...we made it and ended the day with a home cooked genuine Indian dinner at a host family courtyard. The first time we had a true Indian meal, and it was delicious if mom said so herself. Tomorrow is a full travel day back to New Delhi and on our way home the next morning.



It's almost time for final thoughts:

We should have known better! There should be an age restriction on a trip like this, and we broke it or it almost broke us. As mom says, "You get what you pay for" and we didn't pay much at all. This was a low budget and thus overall, a low if not bad experience. Kudos to mom for her perseverance but she would be the first to tell you that in hindsight it was a

bad mistake and we sort of expected it. We may be spoiled but some of the things we experience we really hated. In no special order: Food, crowded dirty streets and markets, cow dung hopping, Chaos (traffic), heat, traps for falling (uneven, slippery, steep steps), impersonal sub par service especially by our tour guide. We learned a lot about India its history, culture, traditions but this is not what we primarily came for. But not all is lost. We saw some breathtaking attractions. First as you would expect Taj Mahal followed by Agra fort, Udaipur city palace, folklore dancing show, Bahai Temple and the Sikh community centre and temple in Delhi, the pink city of Jaipur and many others as you'll see in the photos. Suffice it to say that this is likely our swan song when it comes to adventure travel. We are shifting focus to culture and recreation and a higher standard of comfort. זמן לנוח



Day 14

Long travel day by train to New Delhi. Another tuk-tuk escapade and breakfast in the town centre in a cafe strongly endorsed by Israelis in Hebrew handwriting. An hour in the pool and off to the train station on our way to Delhi.



