

Gujarat-Kutch Textiles and Stepwells

January 16-30 2022

Optional: Off-beaten-path Rajasthan
Jan 30-Feb 5, 2022

"There are some parts of the world that, once visited, get into your heart and won't let go. India is such a place....I had been seeing the world in black & white and, when brought face-to-face with India, experienced everything re-rendered in brilliant technicolour." - Keith Bellows, National Geographic Society



Photo: © Victoria Lautmann,
Vanishing Stepwells

One tour, two spectacular hits

Textiles, Arts&Crafts

Handmade textiles are the warp and weft of India's historical, social, and economic fabric as is its culture of vibrant arts and crafts.

Immerse yourself in the 5000-year-old crucible of rural Gujarat-Kutch. On this sensitively conceived tour, visit artisanal villages, meet award-winning artisans, and engage in celebrated weaving, embroidery, dyeing, and printing techniques that have distinguished India over millennia. Enjoy renowned textile museums with curators. Explore centuries-old arts and crafts. Traverse a hidden India from desert to buzzing cities. Optional: off-the-beaten-path Rajasthan.

Stepwells

Fascinating, yet largely unknown, subterranean stepwells once supplied communities with water, and served as refuges, gathering places, and sacred sites. Strung along ancient Silk Road stops, stepwells were at the confluence of fresh ideas, trends, and trade. As magnificent as any of India's palaces – except underground up to nine storeys deep and lovingly ornamented with sculptures and carvings. Many feature patterns seen today on handwoven textiles. We will trace the history and architecture of stepwells, beginning with the oldest 6th CE and culminating in the grandest 11th CE UNESCO designated Rani ki Vav.

Eyhotoours.com



Meghwal tribeswoman



Madha Vav. Photo: © Victoria Lautmann, *Vanishing Stepwells*



Learning the lexicon of embroidery stitches

Why go? Why with us?



- Relatively unexplored part of India
- Stunning diversity of artisanal skills
- Stepwells are only just registering on tourist radars. Go before the crowds do
- Rural communities living as they have done for centuries
- Led by textile and stepwell experts
- Hosted by E.Y.H.O. founder Shila Desai, Canadian-based Gujarati, steeped in the lore of her ancestors
- Deep knowledge and passion for this region. . . we will decipher inside stories and societal context as only people who have grown up in this culture can!



Past Travellers speak

*Very well organized with a good balance of non-textile visits, which gave a fascinating insight to an amazing country plus the extra add-ons like the film in Jaipur, brilliant! **There are so many fabulous memories it would take too long to list but just want to say thank you for an amazing introduction to India*** – Anne Alldread, Derbyshire, U.K.

*One of the **top events of my life**, exceeding my fondest expectations* — Marylou S. Washington D.C.

*This was **a trip of a lifetime** and **I am moved beyond words** that I got to experience all we did through your eyes. To so clearly see and have you share your love for India.* – Susan Oher, New York City

*The sights I have seen, the experiences I was honoured to have undertaken will **stay with me forever*** – Jodie Watkins, Western Australia

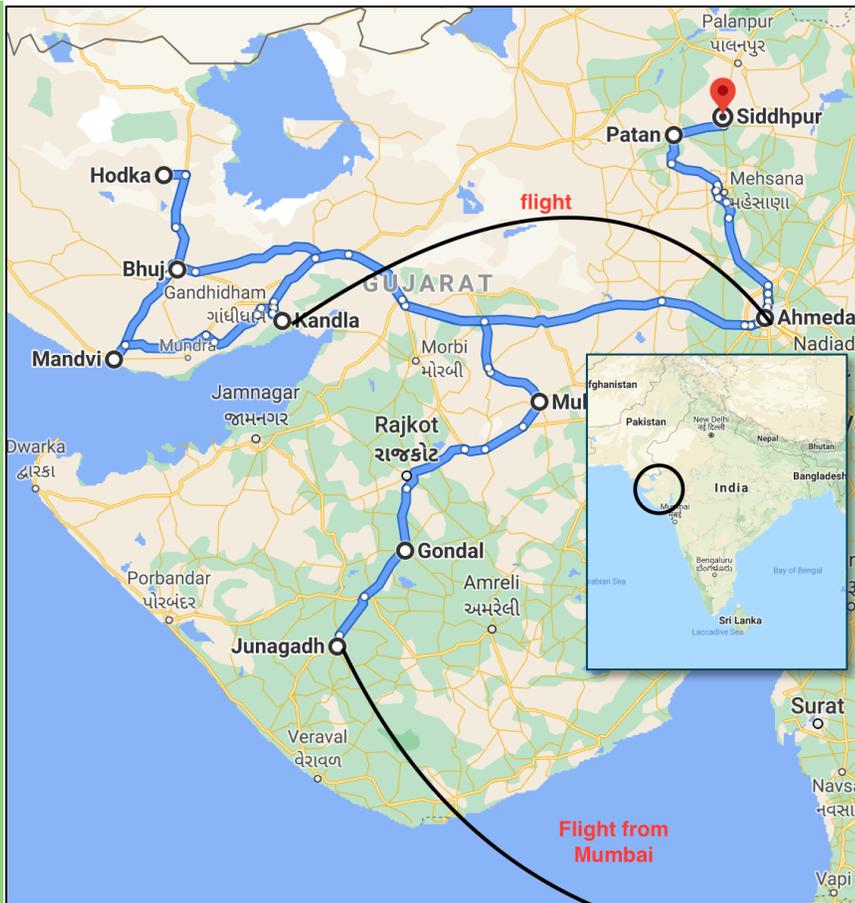


Gujarat – Kutch

15 Days (14 nights) + Optional 7 days Rajasthan

- 2 nights Junagadh: earliest 8th C stepwells, 3rd C Buddhist caves
- 2 nights Gondal – Navlakha Palace, oldest stepwells of Dhank
- 2 nights Muli – Tangalia weaving and Wadhvan stepwells
- 2 nights Bhuj – bandhni tie-dye, Shrujan, Bhujodi weaving
- 1 night Hodko, Salt Desert – Banni villages, Rogan painting, pottery
- 2 nights Mandavi – Arabian Sea, Gharchoda tie-dye, batik
- 2 nights Ahmedabad – Gandhi Ashram, Calico Museum, UNESCO Old City; 2 stepwells, Mata ni Pachedi
- 1 night Patan – UNESCO stepwell, double-ikat weaving. Modhera
- En route: Sidhpur’s old Bohra havelis, Palanpur, Modhera Sun Temple
- Optional: 7 nights – off-beaten-track Rajasthan: Mt Abu, Udaipur, Bundi, Kota, Jaipur. Please enquire

While we make every effort to stay within the itinerary, occasionally we may substitute according to local conditions and desires of the group



Cost USD per person

Main Tour: Gujarat-Kutch 15 days

\$ 3980 double occupancy / 1330 single supplement

Optional: Off-Beaten-Track Rajasthan 7 days

\$ 1925 double occupancy/650 single supplement

- Minimum group size: 8 pax/ Maximum 14 pax
- Tour dependent on minimum numbers being met
- We suggest international flights into Mumbai (BOM) and depart from Mumbai or Delhi (DEL)

“What I love about this itinerary

Combines the seminal features of this unique land: textiles, arts and crafts, and stepwells. Since cotton was domesticated here 5000 years ago, and the first loom tied, an incredibly rich culture has sprung up around the region’s exquisite textiles, arts and crafts. To sustain the population and promote rich Silk Road trade, spectacular engineering feats gave rise to monumental water architecture. Even as interest is rising, stepwells are vanishing before our very eyes. This tour affords unparalleled opportunities to partake in a fast-disappearing India.

~ Shila Desai, conceptualizer



Day 1-2 Jan 16-17 **Jungadh**

History dating from 300 BCE when Chandragupta Maurya constructed the still-standing fort. Markets and mosques abound, and the song-dance culture is evident everywhere. Visit oldest engineered stepwells at Adi Kadi and Dhank.



Day 3-4 Jan 18-19 **Gondal**

A stay in a heritage palace for some pampering and down time. Navlakha Palace, local markets, delectable cuisine, including the drying fields of the famous Gondal red chillies.



Day 5-6 Jan 20-21 **Muli**

Bastion of the Parmar erstwhile royal family, also boasts exquisite and rare Tangalia weaving as well as intricate bead work. Close by are three delightful stepwells to explore.



Day 7-8 Jan 22-23 **Bhuj**

Gateway to much-loved Kutch! Charming Bhuj is home to bandhni, Ajrakh blockprinting, and natural dyeing vats, as well as a stunningly beautiful stepwell. Curator visit at LLDC Museum of Kutch heritage, Rogan painting, and pottery.



Day 9 Jan 24 **Hodko**

The furthest point before Kutch is swallowed by the world's largest salt marsh. Surreal landscape punctuated with colourful villages, held together by an unsullied lifestyle. Visit Banni villages for Mutwa embroidery, lacquer work, and bell-making.



Day 10-11 Jan 25-26 **Mandvi**

Private beach on the Arabian Sea – with a difference. Stunning sunsets, camels, and access to one of the world’s oldest wooden ship building yards. Visit *gharchoda* tie-dye and batik workshops.



Days 12-13 Jan 27-28 **Ahmedabad**

Fly Kandla to Ahmedabad. Arrival and transfer to beautiful heritage hotel near UNESCO heritage site of Old City, Ahmedabad. Gandhi Ashram. Calico Museum. Adalaj Stepwell. Visit Mata ni Pachedi, a form of textile painting, as well as Asavali weaving.



Day 14 Jan 29 **Modhera Sun Temple**

Enroute to Patan. When the sun’s rays angle just right, an explosion of gold is seen in this skillfully constructed 11th CE temple to the sun god, Surya. Adjoining stepped reservoir is a sight to behold in symmetry and engineering.



Day 14 Jan 29 **Patan and Sidhpur**

Historic town of Sidhpur with colourful if decaying mansions filled with early 20th C Europe architectural detail. Patan, with its famous double ikat weaving and the incomparable UNESCO Rani ki Vav (Queen’s Stepwell)

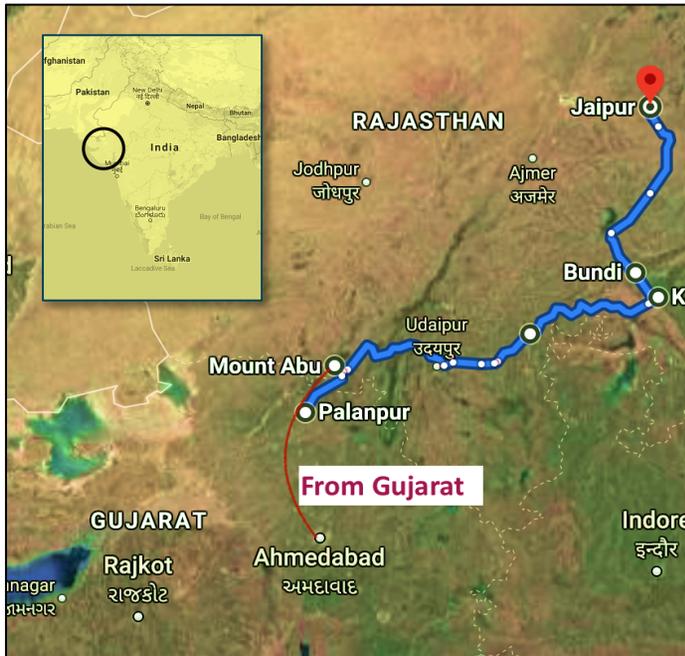


Day 15 Jan 30 **Departure or Rajasthan**

Transfer back to Ahmedabad for connecting flight to Mumbai and international destination. Or continue your Indian love affair: 7 nights off-beaten-track Rajasthan . . . little-known forts, palaces, stepwells, Kota weaving, magical Bundi, and outstanding shopping!

Rajasthan

Optional



Cost USD per person

\$ 1925 double occ /650 single supplement

- Minimum group size: 8 pax/ Maximum 14 pax
- Tour dependent on minimum numbers being met
- We suggest international flights into Mumbai (BOM) and depart from Mumbai or Delhi (DEL)

Off Beaten Path Rajasthan Jan 30-Feb 5, 2022

7 Days (6 nights)

- 2 nights Mount Abu – beautiful hill station, Jain Temples
- 2 nights Chittorgarh – via Udaipur. Romantic fort. Deepest stepwell
- Kota en route to Bundi – Kota Doria Weaving, painted rooms
- 2 nights Bundi – Bundi gallery with frescos, old town, Rani ki Baori
- Transfer to Jaipur – additional nights can be arranged for a fee. Also visit to Taj Mahal and transfer to Delhi for international flight. Please [enquire](#).

While we make every effort to stay within the itinerary, occasionally we may substitute according to local conditions and desires of the group

Accommodations

Spectacular fort palaces and heritage properties. The only way to do Rajasthan!

- Mt Abu: Ratan Vilas
- Chittorgarh: [Fort Begu](#)
- Bundi: Bundi Vilas

Note: actual choices depend on group size and booking availability but will be of similar grade

Inclusions

- All road transfers by private a/c vehicle
- Excellent English-speaking tour guides
- Art and culture tour leader
- All entrance fees and excursions
- All taxes
- Accommodation with daily breakfast

Not included: tips, meals not indicated, alcoholic beverages. Please add USD 100 for tipping.



Day 1-2 Jan 30-31 **Mount Abu**

Where Rajput kings came to cool off. Gorgeous setting atop the Aravali range, lakes, waterfalls, and spectacular 11th C Jain temples at Dilwana. Guided sightseeing, hiking, and visit to Dhrudivya Waterfalls. A chance to stretch, inhale, and rejuvenate!



Day 3-4 Feb 1-2 **Chittorgarh**

Via Udaipur. Largest fort in India and Asia. Attacked thrice over 300 years from 1300's by Islamic invaders when Hindu kings fought fiercely to maintain independence. On all three occasions when faced with certain defeat, men fought to their death and women committed mass self-immolation (*jauhar*) rather than submit.



Day 5-6 Feb 3-4 **Kota and Bundi**

Kota is renowned for its Kota Doria weaving. We will visit weaving co-ops before heading to Bundi, famous for its charming blue-washed old town, Taragarh Fort, and miniature art gallery within the Bundi Palace. Our last stepwell will be the spectacular Chand ki Baori.



Day 7 Feb 5 **Jaipur and departure**

Transfer to fabled Pink City of Jaipur and onwards for your international flight, or stay awhile in this royal city to shop, relax, blockprint, and sightsee. We recommend our favourite [28 Kothi](#) as a base, and are happy to arrange your stay. You may also wish to visit the Taj Mahal if you're flying home from Delhi. Please [enquire](#).



Is this the right tour for you? If you:

- love piecing together how ancient societies lived
- are curious about how their past has shaped the present
- like to see how material cultures shape societies
- enjoy exploring off-beaten track destinations
- zig when the crowds zag

you'll enjoy this tour. In fact, we wager you'll fall in love with this relatively undiscovered corner of India and plan to return before you head back home.

This tour may not be the best fit if you:

- get overwhelmed by significantly different cultural norms than in the west
- insist on five-star luxury and comfort when you travel (*please see below for accommodations and transportation)

We'd be happy to customize a private tour to your exact liking. Please [write us!](#)

How strenuous is this tour?

If you can walk on level ground for 30 minutes, you'll be fine. Navigating some stepwells requires climbing down flights of stairs – but you needn't go all the way down. Often stepwells are best appreciated from ground level, looking down. On the other hand, a fitness-minded traveller will relish the daily exercise. Whatever your choice, you are never under duress to participate. At all times you will be accompanied to ensure your safety and well-being.

Stepwells. Where can I find out more about them?

<https://www.britannica.com/technology/stepwell>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/review-vanishing-stepwells-india-180962637/>

<https://www.outlookindia.com/outlooktraveller/see/story/68975/a-tale-of-the-forgotten-and-soon-to-disappear-stepwells-of-india>

<https://www.archdaily.com/395363/india-s-forgotten-stepwells>

Cancellation provisions during a pandemic?

We understand your predicament. You want to travel, but don't want to risk losing your money or being stuck in quarantine, or—worse—contracting COVID-19. While it's anyone's guess what travel will look like in January 2022, we are committed to safeguarding your position by:

- Generous, “better-than-industry-norm” cancellation terms. Full refund up to 60 days prior to tour start date
- Cancel 59-30 days prior and lose only internal flight costs (around USD 250) and a nominal admin fee (USD 100)
- Between 60-30 days: Rebook any E.Y.H.O. tour up to and including 2022 with no penalty.
- Cancellation between 29 days prior tour start: We would love to refund your cost. However, during this period, suppliers will have been paid and a change in group numbers will affect others. We cannot offer refunds for cancellations made during this time frame.

Please note, you are responsible for personal travel health and cancellation insurance. Under the laws of Ontario and T.I.C.O., E.Y.H.O. is mandated to carry liability insurance. We reserve the right to cancel the tour up to 30 days prior in the event of minimum numbers not being met, in the event of force majeure, and a perceived inability to deliver the tour safely.

More FAQ's [here](#)

“I was so fortunate to have selected E.Y.H.O. Tours” — Tina Crabtree, Healdsburg, CA.

A sampling of accommodations:
heritage boutique/ community-run where possible.

Hodko [Sham E Sharhad](#)



Muli [Ambika Niwas Palace](#)



Ahmedabad [House of MG](#)





Tour starts in Junagadh and ends in Ahmedabad, or Jaipur for Rajasthan travellers.

International airports to fly into: BOM

International airports to fly out from: DEL or BOM

We are happy to arrange your internal flights, transfers, and overnight stays prior to joining the tour. Please enquire.

Questions about best flights, routes, timings? Don't hesitate to contact us!

shila@eyhotours.com

INCLUDES – main tour Gujarat-Kutch

- # Led by textile expert of native Gujarati descent, fluent in English and Gujarati
- # Superb English speaking textile guides
- # All group transfers, tours and excursions in private air-conditioned transportation
- # Accommodation on twin sharing basis or single as applicable
- # All breakfasts
- # Lunch or dinner daily
- # Hands on workshops in tie-dye bandhni, blockprinting, and embroidery including materials and instruction. Many demos
- # All monument entrance fees
- # Internal flight Kandla-Ahmedabad
- # Gratuities for porters and hotel staff

EXCLUDES

- # Travel insurance
- # International flights
- # Gratuities - a USD 200 pp tipping kitty for guides and drivers

Enquiries

shila@eyhotours.com

Visit

www.eyhotours.com

TICO (Travel Industry of Ontario) accredited

Terms and Conditions

Contracted through Tourism Board of India Member,

accredited since 2005.

Register with deposit of USD 800