

Red Earth Holi Tour of Braj

Thursday 5 - Sunday 8 March 2009 / Three nights-four days

Tour Cost: Rs. 10,000/-

Inclusive of accommodation and travel

Not inclusive of food & other expenses

Free for kids below 15

Please register before 1 March 2009 to ensure availability.

To register contact Himanshu Verma : Himanshu@redearthindia.com / 011-41764054

General Description

This year, we shift the focus of our Holi madness to the epicentre of the festival, Braj. It is in the magical land of Braj, the playground of Krishna that Holi is celebrated with a gusto that is unmatched anywhere else in India. Our special Holi tour is designed to give you a flavour of the varied events, nuances, and the beauty of Holi in this *dev-bhumi* (land of the gods). The tour aims to be a window into the traditional ethos of the celebration of the festival, and into the philosophy centred around traditional celebrations, and the ever-increasing accelerating madness of colour that begins in Braj much before we in Delhi start playing Holi.

Holi in Braj carries on for more than 10 days. The Holi celebrations are centred around the opposition, and change in power equations between the male as embodied in Krishna and the female, as embodied in Radha.

Pushti-Margi temples, spread throughout North and Western States of India, celebrate the festival. The Deity, and the laity, are liberally sprinkled with perfumes, saffron water, kesudo, and covered in sandalwood aswell as the white and pink powder, abir and gulal. Joyous celebration is accompanied by classical music, poetry and folk songs appropriate for the occasion.

Itinerary

Some details and timings are subject to confirmation, but the tour dates are fixed.

Day One: Thursday 5 March 2009

10 am: Leave Delhi for Barsana, Halt for Tea en route

1 pm: Reach Barsana / Lunch

2 pm – 7 pm: Barsana Lathmar Holi

8 pm: Check in to Hotel / Dinner

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The Holi celebrations in Braj begin at Barsana, Radha's (Krishna's consort) village, six days before Holi. Krishna arrives, with the men from Nandgaon. The people of Nandgaon and Barsana play Holi together. The men wear huge turbans decorated with leaves to protect themselves from the colour and beatings of the women of Barsana. Lathmar Holi (literally Stick Beatings Holi) is played at sunset, when women dressed in beautiful sarees hit the men with sticks. They unleash a shower of sticks on the naughty boys of Nandgaon to teach them a lesson for all the broken pots and for teasing the girls of Barsana.

Day Two: Friday 6 March 2009

12 am - evening: Nandgaon Holi

The next day, the fifth before Holi, the celebrations shift to Nandgaon. The Barsana folks go to Nandgaon, and play Holi there. The women of Nandgaon beat the men of Barsana this time, but with much lesser force, for the real power lies with the feminine (Barsana, Radha). During Holi, Krishna & his gang remain at the receiving end.

Day Three: Saturday 7 March 2009

10 am - evening: Holi in and around Vrindavan with visit to some temples and sites

After Nandgaon, Vrindavan is the next hot spot for the festivities. From Ekadashi to full moon, the temples and streets are filled with colour, dry and wet, music and dance. All the temples drench their visitors with the coloured water prepared by boiling tesu flowers. Raas Lilas are held and flower petals are thrown at the devotees.

Day Four: Sunday 8 March 2009

10 am - evening: Holi in Vrindavan with visit to some temples and sites

7 pm: Leave for Delhi

9 pm: Reach Delhi

Please note:

1. Tour price has to be paid fully in advance at the time of registration.
2. The participants will report to a common point in Delhi from where the tour will depart. Likewise, they will be dropped at the same point when the tour finishes, and will have to make arrangements to reach the starting point on their own.
3. Prices quoted are for accommodation on single room basis. Subject to availability, prices for twin sharing may be nominally cheaper.