



# AMAN-I-KHAS

Experience Guide

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# The Aman-i-Khás Experience

Welcome to the wilderness.

Once a royal hunting ground for the maharajas of Jaipur, today the forests of Ranthambhore have been transformed into a richly diverse animal sanctuary and one of the first protected parks in India, shielding around 80 of the country's 3,000 endangered Bengal tigers.

As well as the iconic big cats of Kipling fantasy – which can be spied on morning and afternoon game drives – the park is also home to rare leopards, striped hyenas, king cobras, grey langurs and troupes of mischievous macaques.

While others rush to reap the benefits of Ranthambore, Aman-i-Khás lingers – taking time to observe the park's animals, lakeside ruins and formidable Ranthambore Fort, raised on a rocky bluff, encircled by red-stained Flame of the Forest trees.



## Revisit the Past

The area around Ranthambhore Fort is one of the region's most historic settlements. Built from the 10th century onwards, it later controlled the trade routes between central and north India and remained in Mughal possession until the mid-18th century.

Inside the grounds, the ruins of its palace of Hammir are among the oldest surviving examples of an Indian palace and views from its clifftop perch reach out across the forest around which tigers roam. In 2013, Ranthambore Fort, along with five other Rajasthani citadels was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Delve into the area's rich history via village visits and tours of nearby landmarks, complete with romantic breakfast picnics with views across the wilderness.





### **Historic Ranthambore**

One of India's oldest forts, Ranthambhore Fort is dotted with the remains of barracks, beautiful Jain and Hindu temples, the tomb of a Muslim saint, palaces, domed chhatra pavilions and reservoirs. The ramparts extend over three miles, with sheer cliffs on three sides. The best time to visit the fort, with its breathtaking panoramic views of the park, is in the cool morning or late afternoon. Enjoy a breakfast picnic in a secluded spot at the old fort and look out for the royal cats down by the lake.

Within the fort is the Ganesh Temple, which attracts half a million visitors from across India travel every September to celebrate the 10-day Ganesh Festival.

Younger guests love visiting and trying to beat their parents up the hundreds of steps to the top. Happily, this excursion is complimentary for children under 12, accompanied by their parents.

### **Trekking at Khandar Fort**

Perched on a mountain, 1,000 feet above the plains, Khandar Fort is perhaps Rajasthan's most dramatic – and arguably its most forgotten – ruin. Its history spans a millennium, though today little is known about the fort, which comparatively few tourists visit.

The full-day excursion starts with a scenic 90-minute drive before the guided trek begins. The route takes guests above the village of Khandar before winding its way up an ancient stone road to the summit, where guests will find themselves atop the mountain, within the ancient walls of a forgotten world.

The plateau on which the fort is built is scattered with fascinating ruins of palaces, residences, temples and stepwells. Today, nature has reclaimed what was once the royal gardens of the maharajah. Exploration of the fort is followed by breakfast or lunch served in a magical location.



### Village and Old City Tour

Visit the village surrounding Aman-i-Khás with your guide, where you'll witness the staggering contrast between the old and new worlds, where today's people (with mobile phones in hand) still follow a way of life that has remained unchanged for centuries.

Journey onwards to the Old City, situated within the outer perimeter walls of the Fort. As your open-top Jeep passes through the dramatic ancient gates, time seems to slow down, even as vibrant Indian street scenes prevail. Lining the narrow main thoroughfare are dozens of eclectic shops, from food sellers to carpenters and cobblers. At noon, chanted prayers and the smell of spices and roasting peanuts mingle in the air.

On the way in or out of the city, stop at the Elephant Temple, a fascinating complex that pays homage to Hindu and Jain gods. If the sadhus (local spiritual people) are present, they will beat their drums and offer blessings to visitors.

This excursion is a favourite with families. In the village, our neighbours and the families of our staff welcome everyone. Parents can enjoy a glass of homemade nimbu pani (Indian-style lemonade) while the children join forces for a game of gillidanda or cricket. The excursion is complimentary for children under 12, accompanied by their parents.





## Safaris

Ranthambhore is one of the finest places in India to see majestic wild tigers in their natural habitat. Witness to dramatic battles and the rise and fall of assorted dynasties over the centuries, today it observes the unfolding of a different sort of struggle: the survival of the endangered tiger. Through the dedication and perseverance of tiger experts such as Fateh Singh Rathore and Daulat Singh Shaktawat, the big cats are back on the prowl. Today, Ranthambhore is home to about 80 tigers, a couple of hundred crocodiles and more than 300 species of birds. Also roaming the scrub woodlands and rolling hills are leopards, civets, sloth bears, striped hyenas, jackals, wild boar, sambar, Indian wolf and spotted deer.

## **Wildlife Excursions**

Ranthambhore presents a unique opportunity to see one of India's most beautiful and successful national parks. The best time for viewing games is in the early morning and late afternoon.

Excursion times are set by the park authorities, as only a limited number of vehicles are permitted inside the park at any time. The park operates 4x4 Jeeps and caters to twice-daily excursions out of Aman-i-Khás. Safaris are led by Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve guides, who take guests on one of a range of routes through the park.

Safari game drives can be booked in either the morning session or the afternoon session. However, they need to be pre-booked and are strictly subject to availability. We recommend taking at least two safaris during your stay with us – one in the morning and one in the late afternoon, as the park reveals different characteristics and wildlife at different times of the day.

Regular safaris last for approximately 3.5 hours and are regulated by Ranthambhore National Park.

## **Morning Safari**

You will be woken up by your butler at a time of your choice with tea or coffee and biscuits served in your tent or by the fire pit as the sun comes up. Your butler will notify you when your safari vehicle arrives at camp. Thereafter, you will depart for your morning safari. On your return to the camp, a full breakfast will be served.

### **Afternoon Safari**

Your butler will notify you when your safari vehicle arrives at camp. Thereafter, you will depart for your afternoon safari. Pre-dinner drinks and snacks will be served on your return from safari around the fireplace, and dinner will be served at a time of your choosing.



### **A Special Safari Guided by a Local Legend**

See the wilderness come alive as you experience Ranthambhore National Park with wildlife conservationist Daulat Singh Shaktawat. An expert in animal behavior and tracking, he spent nearly 40 years with the Rajasthan Forest Department, working with threatened and endangered species including Bengal tigers and leopards.

The recipient of multiple conservation and environmental awards, as well as an author of numerous books, Mr. Singh is known for his heroism and bravery in critical rescue operations, continuing his mission to save India's wildlife even after losing an eye in a tiger attack in 2010.

On numerous occasions he has been responsible for tracking and tranquilizing large carnivores when injured and requiring medical care, or when they have wandered outside of protected areas into human territory. It is these situations that often prove to be extremely high pressure, with fearful crowds and a defensive predator on alert and at its most dangerous. His success in darting these animals, so they can be taken back to the national park safely, has contributed considerably to India's conservation efforts.

Mr. Singh is available to join Aman-i-Khás guests on drives into Ranthambhore National Park, sharing his knowledge of the wilderness and the stories of his encounters with these magnificent creatures. The safari Jeep can accommodate a maximum of five guests, excluding Mr. Singh.





### **A Cosmic Safari**

Come and experience an evening of stargazing, immersing yourself in the wonders of the night sky. Our knowledgeable astronomy expert will guide you on this hour-long astronomical safari with the help of a powerful eight-inch Dobsonian telescope, guaranteeing the observation of at least four to six major celestial objects. Depending on the season, you can expect to marvel at the moon, planets, nebulas, galaxies and various constellations.

The best vantage point to view the night sky on clear evenings is the lawn, adjacent to the Dining Room Tent. Kindly inform your butler ahead of time.



## Active Adventures on Land

Whether by foot, camel or stately horses – Ranthambore and the other undiscovered corners of Rajasthan beyond the national park, are filled with memorable adventures waiting to unfold.

### **Nature Walk**

Discover the wonders of our countryside up close. Guided two-hour nature walks can be arranged within the surroundings of the camp. In-the-know naturalists will explain the region's flora and fauna while pointing out birdlife, mammals and several ancient monuments that dot the countryside. For your comfort, cool morning walks or afternoon tours are recommended. Walks normally last for two hours and take place in tiger-free territory.

Please wear comfortable clothing in neutral colours as well as walking shoes. Your guide or naturalist will be equipped with sunscreen, water and selected soft beverages.

Parents are welcome to let guides escort children on a junior nature walk, teaching them about birdlife, bugs, insects, termite mounds and all things nature amid the wilderness.



### **Historic Ranthambore**

A camel safari is the ideal way to get a true feeling of the extraordinary terrain around Aman-i-Khás with the chance to spot foxes, deer, antelope and many bird varieties.

For families with young children, this excursion can be taken as a camel-cart ride on the monkey-safari road to Dastkari. Once you reach Dastkari, the whole family can get creative with vegetable colours and design your own block-print paper art. Thereafter, you may return to the camp by camel cart, or we can arrange an open-top Jeep.

Please book well in advance as the camels need to travel from Sherpur village to Aman-i-Khás.



### **Ride with the Royals of the Past**

Embark on a horse safari through the unspoiled terrain of the Land of Kings, astride a Marwari horse – a rare breed from the Marwar (Jodhpur) region that was highly prized by the Rajput royals.

The mighty Marwari horses were bred to lead warriors into battle and were prized possessions of the noble royals. Praised for their loyalty and superior understanding, Marwari horses never fail to bring riders home. Native to Rajasthan, it can withstand all weather conditions, even during long rides. The breed is famed for its distinguished stance and its distinctive lyre-shaped ears, which curve inward to meet at the tips.

This horse safari gives guests a taste of regal Rajasthan. Several routes are available, with stops to view glistening lakes and dams.





# Active Adventures by the Water

Explore the waters of the wilderness – a world inhabited by birds, reptiles and some of the rarest freshwater creatures on the planet. In Rajasthan’s multitude of rivers and lakes, a new realm awaits – best seen either from the shores or on the waters by light vessel.

## The Fort and the River

Around 90 minutes by car from the camp lies the once majestic Khandar Fort. Following a narrow winding goat track brings you to the edge of the cliff, where you can explore the different fort dwellings, including several temples and step-wells. The view over the valley and ravines make this hike worthwhile.

Continue for another 10 minutes to the Chambal River, one of the few perennial rivers in Rajasthan. A leisurely upstream cruise with your naturalist guide will bring you face to face with various birds, water turtles and the elusive gharial crocodile, with its distinctive long, thin mouth.

End the cruise at a wonderful lookout point where lunch will be waiting for you before returning to the camp for a well-deserved drink at the fireplace.

## Banas Riverbed

Once one of Rajasthan’s mightiest rivers, the Banas River - whose name means ‘hope of the forest’ - is an excellent feeding ground for wading birds and other waterfowl, fringed by water grass and lilies. Enjoy a half-day excursion to this birder’s paradise, strolling the banks of the river with a naturalist guide or on a riverside camel ride. A picnic lunch is served in a peaceful spot and an open-top Jeep returns guests to camp.

Birdwatching is a family-friendly excursion and complimentary for children under 12, accompanied by their parents.

## Chambal River Cruise

A short scenic drive from the fort through the villages flows the most pristine river of northern India. The Chambal, a protected biological sanctuary and a habitat for rare gharial crocodiles scarcely distributed through the River Ganges and its tributaries. Chambal is also home to the rare Ganges river dolphin, hundreds of bird species and 20 varieties of freshwater turtles.

Cruising upstream for two hours along water-carved ravines and human-crafted fields, this tour travels on a Bayliner 180 with a naturalist before docking at a platform followed by lunch prepared and served overlooking the river.

## Surwal Lake (November to March)

When the rains subside, more than 200 species of birds descend on the wetlands and lakes of Rajasthan. Indigenous and migratory species fill the skies, turning Ranthambore into a true birder’s paradise. Spot raptors, waders, parakeets, kingfishers and countless others.

Depart camp early in the morning with our bird enthusiast while enjoying a cup of chai or coffee and a sweet Indian snack on the edge of Surwal while observing the avian spectacle.



## Culinary Journeys

Featuring Indian and Western cooking, the cuisine at Aman-i-Khás is flavoured with home-grown herbs and spices, grown in the camp's organic garden. Our food celebrates the produce and heritage of Rajasthan. Some dishes can be traced back to the royal kitchens of the Mughal emperors; others are simple family favourites from the homes of our chefs and staff members. By honouring this legacy passed down through generations, Aman-i-Khás aims to offer an authentic experience and share the secrets of India's culinary traditions with guests.





### **Forest Dinner**

Set within camp in a secluded sylvan location surrounded by trees and bushes, this experience is not to be missed. From your suite, you will be escorted by your butler to the venue and upon arrival, will be welcomed by our Aman chef. The chef will describe the menu for the evening and will be pleased to demonstrate the naan bread preparation in a tandoor (clay oven). The menu includes fresh soup, assorted kebabs cooked in the tandoor as a starter and Indian dishes as the main course.

### **Step Pool Dinner**

As the sun slowly disappears on the horizon, the camp's stepwell-style swimming pool will be transformed and dressed for the evening for a special destination dinner. Adorned with candles, lamps and rangolis (flower-art decorations), while musicians from the desert fill the night with traditional Rajasthani music, this spectacular dinner will be served with your choice of Indian or Western dishes, which our team can design according to your preferences.



### Guava Farm Breakfast

On return from your morning safari adventure, stop off at the local guava farm for a hot breakfast of curries and chutneys freshly prepared for you by camp chefs. The farm is set between guava orchards, inhabited by vibrant parrots, where juicy fruits can be eaten straight from the trees before returning home to camp.

This experience is available during the guava harvest season.



### Culinary Classes

A hands-on activity for the whole family, cooking classes begin at the local market where you can discover Rajasthan's fresh produce and other delicacies while choosing ingredients with the Aman-i-Khás chef. Back at the camp, pick fresh herbs from the camp's organic gardens, then prepare a northern Indian feast for lunch, learning to cook famous local dishes of your choice from recipes passed down through generations.

For adults, the meal can be paired with delicious local wines, and for children, our head barman can curate healthy mocktails or smoothies.



### **Machan Dining**

Rising 20 feet above a sylvan landscape amidst towering trees, the Machan at Aman-i-Khás offers a unique opportunity to immerse in the spirit of the wilderness.

Historically, machans were elevated platforms found in Indian jungles for safety during hunts. Today, they serve as prime vantage points for observing wildlife in reserves and are also built by farmers for night-time security over their fields.

Indulge in a culinary experience inspired by royal hunting feasts of the past. A butler will tend to every need, while a private chef showcases traditional country cooking over an open wood fire. The menu features specialities once served to royalty, made with fresh meat and local ingredients.



**AMAN-I-KHÁS**

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