

## AJANTA & ELLORA CAVES TOUR SUPPLEMENT

### Day 01:

#### Aurangabad: Arrival

Reach Aurangabad from Delhi / Mumbai and check in at hotel.

The city of Aurangabad was founded in 1610, on the site of a village, Khirki by Malik Ambar - the Prime Minister of Murtaza Nizam Shah II. When Fateh Khan, Malik Ambar's son turned successor in 1626, he gave the city the name 'Fatehpur'. Later in 1653, when Prince Aurangzeb became Viceroy of the Deccan, he made the city his capital and called it Aurangabad. Aurangzeb added the walls that enclose the central part of the city in 1686 in order to withstand attacks from the Marathas. There are four principle gateways to the city - the Delhi Darwaza, the Jalna Darwaza, the Paithan Darwaza and the Mecca Darwaza. Nine secondary gateways also formed a part of the defensive system of this city.

Aurangabad district has always been a prominent region on the Deccan plateau. Having been inhabited since the Stone Age, it has a long artistic and cultural history - to which several dynasties have made major contributions over the years. Maurya rule marked the arrival of Buddhism in Maharashtra.

Aurangabad today is a bustling city of Maharashtra with diverse big and small industries, fine silken textiles, and exquisite hand woven brocades of silver and gold fabrics, Himroo of world fame. To scholars and lovers of art and culture the city is more familiar as the gateway to the ancient caves of Ajanta and Ellora, both famous as treasure houses of Indian Art and Sculpture.

Overnight will be at Aurangabad.

### Day 02

#### Aurangabad:

Breakfast will be served at the hotel.

Proceed for a full day sightseeing with excursion to Ajanta Caves.

**Ajanta caves:** Nestling in an inner fold of the Sahyardi hills, 100 km from Aurangabad in the shape of a mammoth horse-shoe, are the 30 rock-hewn caves of Ajanta. The Caves date from the 2nd century BC. Discovered in 1819 by a group of British army officers, these startling achievements took around 600 years to create. Carved with little more than a hammer and chisel, Ajanta, once the retreat of Buddhist monastic orders features several 'chaityas' (chapels) and 'viharas' (monasteries). The exquisite wall and ceiling paintings, panels and sculptures of Buddha's life are famous throughout the world as the earliest and finest examples of Buddhist pictorial art.

Return to Aurangabad and overnight will be at Aurangabad.

## Day 03

### Aurangabad:

Breakfast will be at the hotel.

Proceed for a visit to the Ellora Caves, Daulatabad Fort and Aurangabad Caves.

**Ellora Caves:** Impressive in their own right is the rock-hewn temples and monasteries of Ellora that lie just 30 km away from Aurangabad city. In all, there are 34 cave temples, 12 Mahayana Buddhist caves (550-750 AD), 17 Hindu caves (600-875 AD) and 5 caves of the Jain faith (800-1000 AD) 22 more caves, dedicated to Lord Shiva, were recently discovered. Kailas Temple (cave16), the central attraction at Ellora, is the most remarkable. Chiseled by hand from a single massive rock, it includes a gateway, pavilion, courtyard, vestibule, sanctum, sanctorum and tower which bear testimony to the excellence of Dravidian art. It is believed to have taken 7000 laborers, working in continuous shifts and 150 years to build. Ever since the first European visitors in 18th Century, Ellora has attracted chroniclers, antiquarians, scholars and in more recent years, ever-increasing number of tourists.

**Aurangabad Caves:** The almost forgotten caves of Aurangabad lie just outside the city. Excavated between the 2nd and 6th century AD, they reflect TANTRIC influences in their iconography and architectural designs. In all there are nine caves which are mainly viharas (monasteries). The most interesting among these are **Caves 3 and 7**. The former is supported on 12 highly ornate columns and has sculptures depicting scenes from the legendary 'Jakata' tales. Cave 7 with its detailed figures of bejeweled women also has a dominating sculpture of a 'Bodhisattva' praying for deliverance.

**Daulatabad Fort:** Once known as 'Devgiri', this magnificent 12th century fortress stands on a hill just 13 km. from Aurangabad. It was given the name Daulatabad, the 'city of fortune', by Muhammad Tughlaq, Sultan of Delhi. Initially a Yadav stronghold, it passed through the hands of several dynasties in the Deccan. One of the world's best preserved fort of medieval times, surviving virtually unaltered, Daulatabad yet displays the character that made it invincible. This is a Fortress that was conquered only by treachery. A series of secret, quizzical, subterranean passages lie coiled like a python amidst the fort. Here flaring torches were thrust upon an unwary enemy. Or hot oil poured down his path, as he deliberated in the labyrinth. Also the heat from a brazier was blown into the passage by a process of suction suffocating the entire garrison within. The Fort itself lies in the body of an isolated hill; the steep hill - sides at the base falling so sharply to the moat that no hostile troops could scale the height. The moat, 40 ft. deep with mechanical drawbridges teemed with crocodiles. A 5-kilometer sturdy wall, artificial scarping and a complicated series of defenses made Daulatabad impregnable. The 30-meter high Chand Minar (Tower) built much later with 3 circular galleries had a defensive and religious role in the fortress.

Overnight will be in Aurangabad.

## Day 04

**Aurangabad – Departure:  
By Air**

Breakfast will be at hotel. Transfer to airport for flight to Mumbai / Delhi.

**TOUR ENDS**

**THE PACKAGE INCLUDES:**

- ACCOMMODATION AT MENTIONED HOTELS,
- SIGHTSEEING TOURS AS MENTIONED IN THE ITINERARY,
- ALL AIR-CONDITIONED CAR TRANSPORT WITH DRIVER,
- ENGLISH SPEAKING GUIDE FOR ALL MENTIONED TOURS,
- ASSISTANCE AT THE AIRPORTS ON ARRIVAL / DEPARTURE,
- DAILY AMERICAN BUFFET OR A LA CARTE BREAKFAST,
- ALL APPLICABLE TAXES AND SERVICE CHARGES,
- MINERAL WATER ON DRIVES,
- ALL MONUMENT ENTRANCES FEES INCLUDED AND
- DOMESTIC FLIGHTS AS PER SUPPLEMENT.

**HOTELS:**

<b>Destination</b>	<b>Deluxe Hotel</b>	<b>Nights</b>
Aurangabad	Taj Residency	03

**PRICING: (PER PERSON IN US\$)**

<b>OCCUPANCY DETAILS</b>	<b>TOUR PRICE</b>
Double Occupancy	550.00

The above are per person rates and valid for minimum two persons and maximum four persons traveling together. Please note that lunches and dinners (other than the mentioned) are not included along with personal expenses and camera, etc. fees at places where applicable. Trains and flights to & from Aurangabad are not included in the tour price.