



RECENT PRESS: COX & KINGS IN THE NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2010



ELITE TRAVELER, May/June: India Express

Traveling in India is now far more enticing with the launch of the country's first luxury train to cross state lines, the Maharajas' Express. Guests stay in well-appointed cabins named after gemstones like pukhraj (yellow sapphire) with a butler at-hand serving chilled champagne or opt for the Presidential Suite (\$2500 per person per day). Evenings are spent in the two restaurants, where dress is formal and the food is excellent. On the Delhi to Calcutta trip (Mumbai to Delhi is also an option), we saw tigers at the Bandhavgarh National Park, temples in Gaya and the incredible Ganges in Varanasi. Guests have access to exemplary tour guides from Cox & Kings who started in India in 1758 and specialize in insider travel.



Town&Country, June 2010: Maharajas' Express, The Raj by Rail, India

Exploring the subcontinent can be a daunting task even for seasoned travelers, but the new Maharajas' Express takes the hassle out of interstate touring in India. Mixing the refinement of the Raj era with a host of contemporary conveniences (LCD televisions, private baths), the train puts everything on wheels, engineering a ride that's ultra comfortable and rich in cinematic allusion. Choosing from seven- or eight-day itineraries that focus on royal palaces and gardens in western India or the spiritual centers the east, passengers can spend days off the rails on custom adventures, such as a sunrise cruise on the Ganges, and evenings aboard the moving equivalent of a plush hotel. Just outside their spacious cabins, they can dine in one of two restaurants, then have a nightcap in the club carriage, with game tables and granite-topped bar — all the while watching the lights of the tort towns roll by.



VIRTUOSO LIFE, May/June 2010: On Track Section

Over on the subcontinent, Cox & Kings offers departures on India's first luxe cross-country train, the newly built 88-passenger Maharajas' Express. Thirteen- and fifteen-day trips between Mumbai and Delhi in the west and Delhi and Kolkata in the east include tiger safaris, elephant polo matches, and visits to Udaipur palaces and the Taj Mahal. In-depth tours of Mumbai, Delhi or Calcutta, depending on departure, bookend the seven days of rail travel. Departures: Multiple dates October 20, 2010, through January 3, 2011; from \$7945, including all meals and most drinks and excursions.



RECENT PRESS: COX & KINGS IN THE NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2010



VOGUE LIVING/Australia: May/June 2010, Royal Tour

The Maharajas' Express evokes the splendour of travelling India in regal style. India's first Pan-India train offers journeys between Mumbai and Delhi, and Delhi and Kolkata, capturing the enticing colour and excitement of this great continent. Exciting trips straddle state borders and offer distinctive itineraries: "Royal India" is a week-long epic including a champagne lunch overlooking the Taj Mahal, a tiger safari in Ranthambore National Park, and elephant polo matches in Jaipur.



ARareWorld, May 2010: Maharajas' Express

In India, we hopped aboard one of the inaugural journeys of the Maharajas' Express. Having just begun departures in mid-March, this new train line brings unprecedented luxury and a "cruise on wheels" experience to a nice mix of India's most favored destinations with a few diversions unto the road less traveled.

For many, a trip to India is more of an "experience" than a holiday. If you haven't been yet, perhaps you're too scared after hearing a friend recount an emotional and trying yet life changing trip where they spent the majority of their time sitting

in the back of a car with a stomachache while the driver dodged livestock, children, and the occasional dead body. Though the fact of the matter remains that this densely populated country is just as densely packed with real world experiences, there is now a new way to make the trek which will have you wondering what your friend was fussing about.

The Maharajas' Express is a new luxury train line from the Indian Railways Catering & Tourism Corporation (the country's single largest employer with over 1.6 million on the payroll). Though there are a few other luxury trains traveling the Indian rails, this is the one the others will envy for her opulence, her attention to detail, and her newness.

Also, compared to the others, the Maharajas' Express offers a uniquely ambitious route. The train offers 6 or 7-night itineraries in either direction between Mumbai and Delhi or Delhi and Kolkata. Upon arrival, prepare for a truly theatrical experience. Flowers were flying. People were dancing, beating drums, and passing out beverages.

Not yet having had our espresso, we thought we wouldn't need it anymore in the midst of the ceremony and commotion. However, we were still sleepy enough that we saw our bag traveling down the platform on a stranger's head, forgot we had checked it earlier, and thought for a moment that it was being stolen. We took about a step and a half towards him, but thankfully we came to our senses before chasing the young man who would soon be introduced to us



RECENT PRESS: COX & KINGS IN THE NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2010

as our carriage's valet. Once the doors were opened, we took the opportunity to board, and were handed the ornate and dainty tassled metal key to our suite with zero fuss.

Making the journey through covered inter-car passages and hallways adorned with gilded wooden panels for days, we finally arrived at our Junior Suite in the Moti car, at the very end of the train. The accommodations are spacious and have a certain nod for comfort with amenities one might never expect on a train moving through the wild of India. And yes, we could make complaints if we strength of the water pressure, or the reliability of the Wi-Fi connection to that of our favorite immobile hotels. However, it is more than likely that if this trip appeals to you, you won't care and will rather be fascinated with the quality of it all in consideration of where you are. And if you don't come to this conclusion on your own, it won't be long before your path crosses a passenger train so packed with faces that you will lose count. Like a cruise on wheels, the Maharajas' Express covers a lot of ground, quite a bit of which is away from the average tourist trail. We chose the

Classical India itinerary with six stops along the way from Delhi to Kolkata.

Highlights included being rowed along the Ganges at sunset looking onto the intensely magical ceremonial cremations, bragging to our onboard rivals about how we spotted more tigers than they did at Bandhavgarh National Park, and easing into meditation under the tree where it is said that Buddha achieved enlightenment. All of this, much more, and we only unpacked once.

Not the India those people were talking about...

Tour operations are looked after by way of the train's association with Cox & Kings. The company is no stranger to India, where it claims to have been in operation since the 1700s. Truly, the only thing one might find to complain about is a scheduling mishap here or there. On the morning of our early safari, we were delayed by over an hour as we were stuck behind a slow moving passenger train. Of course, what can one do but have an extra slice of toast or take a nap, but we did observe one lovely gentleman screaming at the guide as we were walking past.

He was demanding that they have the other train pull to the side so we could pass them, livid that he might miss the tigers. As you can imagine, he was a favorite of staff and guests alike. If you can't go with the flow just a little bit, then maybe this isn't for you. By the way, he saw more tigers than anyone.

Breakfast and dinner are served most days in either of the two dining cars. Mayur Mahal offers a casual atmosphere with high backed wooden chairs and ornate feather-inspired décor. Rang Mahal is more formal in appearance with its hand painted ceiling and upholstered banquettes. The two spaces share a kitchen and have the same menu. Daily selections are prepared for breakfast or one may choose to order any standard egg dish as well. We were amazed by how quickly they could turn out a well-prepared plate of scrambled eggs here.



RECENT PRESS: COX & KINGS IN THE NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2010

And though we were just a bit disappointed that there was no freshly squeezed orange juice, there was one fresh juice option available which rotated each morning. Our favorite was the watermelon. Cocktails are offered in either of two lounges. Dinner is three or more courses depending upon the day's activities, and generally an Indian or western option is offered for each course. We can't say we were ever truly wowed by the dinner on board, though we did note that the quality of everything improved exponentially every day. By the time you go, we imagine this will all be worked out.

When we tell our friends about our trip to India, there are no tales of long car trips or run-ins with "Delhi belly." Instead, we tell them about all of the extraordinary places we experienced with just the right amount of adventure, our back supported by a comfortable albeit firm mattress every mile of the way. Yes, we witnessed the poverty and devastation, but instead of taking on the problems of over a billion people, we decided instead to count our blessings, let someone carry our luggage, and enjoy the ride.



NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, Sunday, May 9th 2010

India's Maharajas' Express:

All aboard for a train vacation that takes the stress out of sightseeing

– By Mark Ellwood

Train travel through India can be luxurious when taking the 'hotel on wheels' known as the Maharajas' Express.

There's a brand-new train running on India's commuter railway, but it's a little more lavish than the LIRR or New Jersey Transit.

The Maharajas' Express has two restaurants — decked out in vibrant, gorgeous colors, like the swankiest Indian restaurant — as well as two bar cars and staffers with five-star service skills. There are also deluxe cabins, complete with private bathrooms and showers, since this train runs overnight. In fact, travelers step on board for seven days for a journey through the Indian countryside that's much like a cruise with wheels.

The Maharajas' Express offers a week-long trip through Rajasthan's greatest hits (plus some nearby unmissables like the Taj Mahal), with stops in Delhi and Mumbai.

At every station stop, red carpets roll out along the platforms and local musicians serenade the lush train's arrival.

One day it's Jaipur, the gem hub of India, with its booming jewelry industry and stores selling bargain-priced, topnotch gems; another day is spent exploring Udaipur, the so-called Venice of the East — dotted with watery oases (a little parched at the end of the dry season) and with a live-in royal family.

Yet another day is dedicated to Jodhpur, called the blue city, its houses covered in indigo paint to repel mosquitoes, making the skyline shimmer like a rough-cut sapphire. A century ago, the horse-mad maharajah here invented the



RECENT PRESS: COX & KINGS IN THE NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2010

billowy pants named after his hometown. No wonder Madonna passed through and spent time driving around the countryside (apparently, she asked her hotel staff why no one could clear away all the cows that blocked her path — maybe Madge missed the kabbalah class on their holy history here).

Such a jam-packed itinerary underscores the lure of train-cations: Indian sightseeing involves stressful travel between distant places on clogged, often pothole-riddled roads. But a luxury train trip is like a cruise on land, scooting effortlessly between must-see sites while its guests sleep; by breakfast each day, a new city slides into view.

No wonder train trips to hard-to-reach places are an emerging trend in the travel world. Don't mistake them for Carnival or Royal Caribbean on wheels, though. With their small capacity (the Maharajas' Express holds only 84 travelers), many trains are like chartered yachts privately piloted to exclusive destinations.

But this new train trend has brought more and more options for every budget. A trip on the Trans-Siberian Express, an almost 6,000-mile route from Moscow to Vladivostok via the brutal yet beautiful wilderness of Siberia, starts at just \$650 per person for a week.

Though the setup may be basic, it didn't deter 37-year-old Rachel Brown, whose first solo trip on the train was so inspiring, she's planning a return. "On the one hand, you're traveling across this vast piece of inhospitable land, and on the other it's a very cozy community in the train, almost a domestic situation," she says. "And being able to do that epic journey in a comfortable way was amazing. You get to meet people — you sit and have conversations you wouldn't have on a plane journey for three hours."

Canada is another country, like Russia and India, where sightseeing can involve vast distances, so rail trips to see hard-to-reach sights are booming there, too. Via Rail, the national carrier, runs a train from Toronto to Vancouver with a 360-degree viewing car (www.viarail.ca), while the Rocky Mountaineer offers itineraries covering the rugged western reaches (www.rockymountaineer.com).

The latter just launched a promotion offering a credit of just under \$500 on any seven-night booking (made by May 28), which starts at around \$1,852. Try the Western Explorer, which offers trips to Banff and Lake Louise, plus a daytime journey to gape at the spectacular scenery on a trip to Jasper.

"People want to see the land and get a sense of the country from looking at the landscape and the people who live there," says Janet Libert, editor in chief of Executive Travel magazine. "It's totally authentic, yet there's a retro exoticness to it as well. And it offers the opportunity to spend time with the people you're traveling with."

Railway fervor is so high that a quarter of U.S. travelers headed overseas book rail-based trips, says Menlo Consulting's travel expert Heather Hardwick. Trains are also on track for a larger role in vacations, Hardwick says, thanks to European environmental standards that require operators to substitute rail journeys for long bus rides on planned itineraries. It's feel-good do-gooding.



RECENT PRESS: COX & KINGS IN THE NEWS

MAY / JUNE 2010

When you're looking to book a train trip, approach it like you would a cruise. Check not only the amenities on board, from food to sleeping quarters, but also the excursions, says Libert. "After all," she says, "you're not spending all your time on the train and the tour opportunities, in the cities you stop in, are important to look at."

Certainly, when it comes to the Maharajas' Express, she's right. Lavish as the onboard setup might have been, it was the excursions that underscored the trip's uniqueness. As at the crack of dawn, driving through Ranthambore National Park, when a 4-year-old tigress — one of only 30 on the reservation — sauntered into view, stalking a pack of deer and pouncing for a kill.

Tracking (and shooting) such animals was once reserved for royals. Though guns may now be outlawed, it was that moment that put the maharaja in the Maharajas' Express.