

Temple tour of gujarat

Day 01: Ahmedabad

Arrive at Ahmedabad Airport / Railway Station. Transfer to the hotel. Afternoon sightseeing of the city.

Places to visit

- **Akshardham**: Lord Swaminarayan, born in Chapaya in Uttar Pradesh, took a seven year pilgrimage in Gujarat to preach his religion. He built six temples, the first being at Kalupur in Ahmedabad. Akshardham, the Swaminarayan temple of Gandhinagar, is a modern complex, built in traditional Indian architectural style from 6,000 metric tons of pink Rajasthan sandstone, carved by expert artisans from Bansipahadpur. The temple is set in a multi-acre garden called Sahajanand Van, with intricate sculptures of Hindu Gods. There is a gold leaf copper sculpture of Lord Swaminarayan that faces similar sculptures of Gunatinand Swami. The interiors have beautiful columns in rosewood, that rise up to a high dome. The first floor galleries house a museum portraying the 500 parahansas, a letter to his guru, Ramanand, a piece from an old tree from Chapaya, his pure wool shawl, a replica of his old home, a diorama of the lord on a horse and other displays. The galleries outside have a state-of-the-art exhibition using Chezy Integrovation shows, audio-visuals, multi-media, dioramas for the life of Lord Swaminarayana and from the Hindu epics to introduce visitors to the concept for the Akshardham movement, founded in 1907 AD to promote the preachings of Lord Swaminarayan. (remain closed on Monday).

- **Gandhi Ashram** :On a quiet peaceful stretch of the Sabarmati river, Mahatma Gandhi set up a simple retreat in 1915. This was his Satyagrah Ashram and for many years it was the nerve centre of India's freedom movement. It was from here, in 1930, that Mahatma began his famous Dandi March to the sea to protest against the Salt Tax imposed by the British. Hridaya Kunj, the simple cottage where he lived, is now a national monument and preserved as it was during the Mahatma's life-time.

- **Hutheesingh Jain Temple** :Built outside the Delhi Gate in 1850 by a rich Jain merchant, the Hutheesingh Temple is the best known of Ahmedabad's many ornate Jain temples. Overnight at Ahmedabad.

Day 02: Ahmedabad – Dakor – Pavagadh – Ahmedabad (300 KMS / 04:40 HRS)

Today after breakfast proceed for a day excursion to Dakor and pavagadh.

Dakor:

Dakor, in its earlier phases as pilgrimage center in Gujarat, was famous for the Danknath temple, a place of shiva worship. In the later phases it developed into a Vaishnavite center with the growing fame of Ranchhodraiji temple, which was built in 1772 A.D. Today this place is known not only as a pilgrimage center but also a trading center where one can get the articles related to puja, and other rituals

- **Pavagadh**: Most of the Hindus in India have faith in goddess Mahakali, particularly from the western region covering the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan & Maharashtra. The famous and the oldest temple of Mahakaili is situated at Pavagadh, near Vadodara, one of the main cities of Gujarat. The temple has become the place of the pilgrimage for almost all Hindus in India. This temple is among the three main Shaktipeeths in Gujarat. It has been said in Hindu Shastras that after the famous Tandava dance of Lord Shiva, the various parts of the body of Sati fell at many places. These places are called Shaktipeeths. It is said that the left breast of the Sati had fallen here at Pavagadh. As the name suggests, the temple is located on a mountain, near to the Champaner town. Overnight Ahmedabad

Day 03: Ahmedabad – Dwarka (460 KM / 07:40 HRS).

• **Dwarka:** An ancient city, housing one of the principal pilgrimages - 'Dwarkadhish temple' of Hindus. According to the legend, Lord Krishna moved to this coastal town to set up a capital. Marine excavations of the Dwarka coast have revealed important evidences of ancient city, which probably include the 'Dwarawati' of the 'Krishna Lila'. Today, it is not only a major pilgrimage site but a pleasant spot for a beach holiday. Another popular place in Dwarka, part of the Dwarkadhish Temple is Sabha Mandap. It is a 60-pillared hall, which houses almost 2500 years old scriptures. The hall has 'jharokhas', offering a nice view of the nearby flowing Gomti River. Attend evening aarti at Dwarkadhish temple. Overnight at Dwarka

Day 04: DWARKA – BET DWARKA – NAGESHWAR – DWARKA

Today we visit Bet Dwarka & Nageshwar temple. Bet Dwarka : Bet is situated at 30kms from Dwarka and is surrounded by sea from all sides. One can reach Bet from Dwarka through Okha by road. On reaching Okha port jetty, one can reach Bet through a little sea journey in a launch or in a small boat. Nageshwar Temple or Nagnath Temple is located on the route between Gomati Dwarka and the Bait Dwarka Island on the coast of Saurashtra in Gujarat. The Jyotirlinga enshrined in the Temple of Nagnath is known as Nageshwar Mahadev and attracts thousands of pilgrims all round the year. This powerful Jyotirlinga symbolizes protection from all poisons. It is said that those who pray to the Nageshwar Linga become free of poison. The Rudra Samhita sloka refers to Nageshwar with the phrase 'Daarukaavane Naagesham'. Return to hotel at Dwarka. Overnight stay at your hotel.

Day 05: Dwarka – Somnath (250 KMS / 04:30 Hrs)

Today, after breakfast, drive to Somnath.

• **Somnath:** One of the most revered & an important center of culture & nationalism. The legendary temple contains a 'jyotirlinga'. Looted & destroyed, built & rebuilt several times, it represents the eternal beauty & strength of the Indian society. The present splendid structure was rebuilt about five decades ago, at the exact spot where the original shrine was located. The iron man of India Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was instrumental in the construction of the present temple. Overnight at Safari Hotel and Resort located at walking distance from Somnath temple near Veraval. Overnight stay at your hotel

Day 06: Somnath – Bhavnagar (270 KM / 04:50 Hrs)

After breakfast proceed to Bhavnagar.

• **Bhavnagar:** Bhavnagar was founded by Bhavsinhji Gohil in 1723 AD near the Gulf of Khambhat, on a carefully chosen strategic location having potential of maritime trade. Till independence, Bhavnagar State was ruled by the Gohil Rajput clan.

Places to Visit:

- Gaurishanker Lake : A beautiful picnic spot near the lake. There is also a well laid out park.
- Takhteshwar Temple : Situated on a hill, the site provides a panoramic view.
- Lock Gate : The first of its kind in Gujarat. The sea-water here is impounded by the lock gates to keep ships afloat during low tide, which could be seen with special permission.

Sarangpur Hanuman:

This temple is among the more prominent ones in the Swaminarayan Sampradaya. The image of Hanuman was installed by Gopalanand Swami. According to author Raymond Williams, it is reported that when Gopalanand Swami installed the image of Hanuman, he touched it with a rod and the image came alive and moved. This story become a charter for the healing ritual performed at this temple. The image of Hanuman here is a stout figure with a handlebar moustache, crushing a female demon under his foot and baring his teeth, standing among sculpted foliage full of fruit

bearing monkey attendants. The image of this temple is said to be so powerful that a mere look at it by people affected by evil spirits out of the people affected. Saturday is the designated day for a special ritual (as Saturday is dedicated to Hanuman) for those affected by mental illnesses and mental disorders. They are brought to the temple to be touched by the rod used by Gopalanand Swami during the installation ceremony of the image. This rod has been covered in silver. The temple administration has hired a Brahmin householder to act as a priest at the temple & conduct this ritual. After this, the person affected is instructed to circumambulate the shrine and repeat this after doing darshan a number of times. Some people take a special vow to do this a certain number of times or to chant the Swaminarayan Mahamantra while doing this. Overnight Bhavnagar.

Day 07: Bhavnagar – Palitana – Bhavnagar (60 KMS / 01:10 HRS one way)

Early morning after breakfast proceed for the excursion to Palitana .

• Palitana : A 56kms. Drive from Bhavnagar. Palitana lies at the foot of the Shetrunjaya hill, with the Shetrunjaya river flowing to its south. The savred hill rises in a crescendo of magnificent temples – 863 in all – that soar in marble splendour to the top of the hill. The temples were built over an impressive span of 900 years with each generation of pilgrims making its contribution to the shrines of Shetrunjaya. The 600-metre climb to Shetrunjaya is usually made on foot. Dolis or lift-chairs are also available for the ascent Overnight Bhavnagar.

Day 08: Bhavnagar – Ahmedabad (200 KMS / 03:00 Hrs)

Today after breakfast proceed to Ahmedabad Airport / Railway Station to catch the flight / Train for your onwards journey. ***Tour ends...***