

GUJARAT TEXTILES & HANDCRAFTS TOUR

23 January – 7 February 2027

retreat|recreate is delighted to offer this **16 day/15 night** women's tour exploring Gujarat's fascinating, rich heritage of superb textiles and handcrafts. **A textile feast awaits!**

Participate in **SIX hands-on handcraft workshops**: kalamkari fabric painting, **batik** (wax resist), **bandhani** (tie & dye), **embroidery and tassel-making**, **ajrakh block printing (including indigo dyeing)** and a **thread embellishment, embroidery and applique** workshop. There's also the opportunity to briefly try your hand (if you wish) at **cotton spinning, loom warping and weaving** and watch demonstrations of **wood block carving, silk brocade weaving, single and double ikat weaving, khadi denim weaving, mashru weaving** and more.

Be inspired by incredible craftsmanship; **wowed** by stunning landscapes; and **awestruck** by the superb architecture of stepwells, palaces, temples and heritage buildings.

Visit specialist textile museums, artisan villages, handcraft ateliers and a non-government handcraft organisation; **explore** colourful bazaars and fascinating cultural and historic sites; **engage** with local artisans and masters of their craft; and **experience** traditional Gujarati culture, delicious cuisine and wonderful hospitality.

Join us for this exciting trip of a lifetime!

W: www.retreatrecreate.com
E: retreatrecreate@gmail.com

ITINERARY

as at 8 May 2026



Day 1 **Saturday 23 January**

AHMEDABAD

Welcome to Gujarat!

Upon arrival at Ahmedabad International airport, you'll be met and transferred to our boutique starting point hotel. An arrival transfer is included in your tour cost - refer to the Trip Notes for details.

We encourage you to arrive in India a day or two before the tour, to recover from flights between time zones and explore this fabulous city.

Additional nights at our Ahmedabad starting point hotel may be booked through us at an additional cost (subject to availability). You may also wish to book one or more optional, pre-tour, guided sightseeing tours through us (at additional cost). Details will be provided to successful applicants.

We'll gather for a **'welcome' briefing meeting at 6pm (TBC)** at our hotel where you'll be introduced to your fellow travellers, retreat|recreate host and local tour leader.

Afterwards, we'll enjoy a delicious **welcome dinner** together.

Meals: Dinner



Day 2 **Sunday 24 January**

AHMEDABAD

The bustling city of Ahmedabad has many attractions. We'll start by taking a **walking tour of the old city** exploring temples, havelis (mansions), pols (small communities of houses historically enclosed by a gate) and some of the heritage streets.

We'll visit a museum which celebrates the history and artistry of **indigo**. The exhibition of textiles, paintings, sculpture and installations explore the role of indigo across the globe in both traditional craftsmanship and contemporary experimentation. The same museum also boasts an impressive exhibition of **historical textiles**.

In the afternoon we'll spend time with one of the few families who continue to practice the 3000+ year old art of **Mata Ni Pachhedi**. This traditional style of painting on cloth depicts the different forms of goddesses and their stories. Using the intricate **kalamkari** technique, design outlines are drawn onto cloth with a kalam (pen-like instrument) and then infilled with natural dyes. The practise of this art is itself considered an act of reverence and a form of devotion. We'll enjoy a **hands-on kalamkari workshop** with a master artist and his delightful family.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 3 Monday 25 January

AHMEDABAD

This morning's excursion takes us to Gujarat's oldest community of **block carvers** where we'll watch wood carvers at work and learn about the intricate process for creating the designs in wood.

We'll also visit a village famous for **Ashavali silk brocade weaving** where we'll watch a demonstration by a master weaver. Named after the city of Ahmedabad, (which was once known as Ashaval) the intricate motifs in Ashavali brocade cloth are so finely woven that they appear to have been embroidered. This labour-intensive, luxury textile was historically only available to the Mughals, local royalty, and the rich mercantile class. Today the brocade cloth continues to fetch high prices.

[In the late afternoon, there's the option to enjoy a beginner Garba dance class. This vibrant, traditional Gujarati folk dance is often danced in a circle \(reflecting the cyclical Hindu concept of time\) and is an essential component of the Hindu Navratri festival and social events such as weddings and parties. Our class is sure to be lots of fun and is an opportunity to experience another aspect of Gujarat's rich cultural heritage.](#)

Meals: Breakfast



Day 4 Tuesday 26 January

AHMEDABAD - GONDAL

Leaving Ahmedabad, we'll drive towards the city of Gondal, one of Gujarat's former princely states. Located on the banks of the Gondali River, the town is known for its numerous beautiful palaces and their detailed architecture.

We'll stop on the way to visit a community of weavers who specialise in creating **hand-woven, single ikat cloth**. The intricate process of tying and dyeing the warp threads before weaving requires patience, skill and time, but the sublime ikat motifs and designs are well worth the effort!

Upon arrival in Gondal, we'll check into our heritage hotel, the 18th-century former residence of the Crown Prince.

In the late afternoon we'll visit **Navlakha Palace** which dates back to the 17th Century, making it one of the oldest palaces in Gujarat. We're privileged to have the opportunity to explore the ruling family's **private collection of textiles, beadwork, brassware, hand-painted toys and silverwork.**

Meals: Breakfast



Day 5 Wednesday 27 January

GONDAL

Today we'll visit one of Gujarat's major hand-loom weaving units which is recognized as the region's leading producer of **khadi (hand spun, hand woven cotton cloth)**. The collective is dedicated to empowering artisans and supports over 2000 weaving families in sustainable textile production. We'll see demonstrations of **cotton spinning using an Amber Charkha** (a semi mechanised spinning wheel) and **weaving on traditional peddle looms.**

We'll also visit the workshops of skilled artisans to witness the **dyeing of cotton yarn with indigo** and other **natural dyes**, followed by a demonstration of weaving **Khadi denim** - a sustainable alternative to regular denim material.

In the afternoon, we'll enjoy a hands-on **batik workshop**. There's the opportunity to explore a range of batik (wax resist) techniques using metal blocks, wooden blocks and foam sponges depending on the intricacy of your chosen design. We'll each create a batik scarf to take home as a memento of our trip.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 6 Thursday 28 January

GONDAL - JAMNAGAR

Our journey today takes us to Jamnagar. In addition to the city's rich history as a princely state, Jamnagar was also once famous as a small pearl fishing town. For the last 500 years, Jamnagar has maintained a solid reputation for its mastery in the art of **bandhani, the traditional technique of tie and dye.**

During our **bandhani workshop** with a local talented artisan, we'll cover the detailed process and techniques for knotting, tying, dyeing, boiling and washing the fabric.

This evening we'll get a glimpse into Jamnagar's local life and culture as we take a tour exploring bustling markets and bazaars filled with **Gujarati spices, snacks, handmade goods and textiles.** We'll enjoy late afternoon views of picturesque **Lakhota Lake** and briefly experience the serene **evening aarti ceremony** at a Hindu temple.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch



Day 7 Friday 29 January

JAMNAGAR - BHUJ

This morning we'll travel towards Bhuj in the region of **Kutch** (sometimes spelled Kachchh), regarded as **one of India's richest areas for handicrafts.**

On the way, we'll visit the fabulous and highly acclaimed **Living and Learning Design Centre**, which aims to preserve, revitalise and promote the **glorious craft heritage of Kutch**. LLDC provides training, education and support, enabling craftspeople to practice traditional crafts and earn a dignified and prosperous livelihood – values which align perfectly with ours at retreat|recreate.

We'll see an impressive and vast collection of many types of **beautiful and exquisitely worked embroidery**. You'll gain a sense of the diversity of the various tribes in the region as well as their traditions, culture and textile techniques, styles and motifs.

In the late afternoon, we'll settle into our resort. You may wish to take a dip in the resort's large swimming pool.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 8 Saturday 30 January



Day 9 Sunday 31 January



Day 10 Monday 1 February



Day 11 Tuesday 2 February



Day 12 Wednesday 3 February

BHUJ

For the next four days, we'll be accompanied by our passionate and highly knowledgeable local Kutchi guide (in addition to our main guide) who is deeply immersed in the local handcraft communities of this desert region.

We are privileged to visit a delightful family of weavers who design and create the most exquisite, fine cotton shawls. They'll demonstrate the various steps of spinning cotton yarn, preparing the warp threads and weaving on a hand loom. You'll have the option to briefly try your hand at these tasks before we enjoy a delicious home-cooked lunch with the family at their home.

We'll also be joined by other artisans who are keen to share their work. One creates the beautiful tassel-trim finish at each end of the hand woven shawls and sarees; another is a talented embroiderer. During a brief hands-on embroidery workshop, we'll each embellish a handkerchief with a small motif, mirror or tassel.

Later in the afternoon, there's the option to explore the historic walled city and market of Bhuj. We're likely to see vendors selling flowers, spices, textiles, braid and haberdashery plus farming equipment and more.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

BHUJ

Optional early morning yoga class – only fitting as India is the birthplace of yoga.

Our day begins with a visit to the workshop of artisans who produce Ajrakh - a double-sided, block printed, multi-purpose cloth traditionally worn by local herdsmen.

The cloth undergoes a lengthy preparation, resist and woodblock print process plus several stages of dyeing. The deep crimson and indigo background is interspersed with unprinted geometric and non-figurative white motifs which often reflect those appearing in Islamic-influenced Indian architecture. There are only a few families who continue to print Ajrakh cloth, so we're extremely fortunate to participate in a workshop. We'll each print our own cotton Ajrakh scarf to take home.

Rogan art is a unique method of creating designs on silk and cotton fabric using a mixture of hot castor oil and natural pigments. Only a few families continue to practice this art form. We'll visit a small atelier to watch a demonstration and learn more about this rare art form.

Afterwards, we'll return to our Bhuj accommodation for the evening.

Meals: Breakfast

BHUJ - HODKA

We'll each pack a small overnight bag (for one night) as we'll leave our main luggage at our Bhuj resort.

Our program today includes visits to several rural villages where a variety of age-old crafts continue to be practiced. Some families practice manual wood turning and lacquer-work, some make unique fabric dolls and others make the brass bells you'll see around the necks of cattle, camels, sheep and goats. The tone of the bells can be tuned differently so that each herdsman can recognise and locate their own stock from the distinctive sound of the bells.

In the afternoon, we'll check in to our community-operated resort which provides training in hospitality and jobs for local villagers. Our hand-crafted, round mud huts are decorated with local handcrafts and are basic but beautiful and comfortable. There'll be time for a rest before we head out to watch the sun set over the stunning, vast expanse of grassland.

We'll return to our desert resort for dinner, an informal performance of folk music and a relaxed evening.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

HODKA - BHUJ

After breakfast we'll head to a small hamlet in the Banni grassland region of Kutch. Here the families live in traditional mud huts and the women are famous for their embroidery and quilting. We'll watch as they skilfully demonstrate some of their needle and mirror-work (shisha) techniques and proudly display some of their finished pieces.

Kharad is the Sindhi word for carpet. This afternoon, we'll visit a kharad artisan who weaves rugs from sheep wool and camel hair on a portable loom. While this handcraft tradition has been practiced by the artisan's family for generations, there are now unfortunately only three families in Kutch who continue to practice kharad weaving. We feel it's important to support this rare craft and hope that this valued cultural tradition continues. We're privileged to enjoy a simple home-cooked lunch at the home of the weaving family.

In the late afternoon, we'll return to Bhuj for our last evening in Kutch.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

BHUJ - DASADA

As we leave Bhuj, we'll visit a wonderful family who have been dedicated to collecting superb quality and antique textiles for several generations. We'll view some of their vast and varied collection and learn more about India's amazing textiles. Our previous groups have been known to utter many an 'ooh' and 'oh, wow' as each piece is presented.

If, at this point, you realise you have somehow neglected to purchase a very special textile memento of your time in Gujarat, then this is an excellent opportunity to remedy the situation. However, please be assured there's absolutely no obligation or pressure to buy. You're welcome to simply view, appreciate and ask questions about the collection.

We'll spend the rest of the day travelling to our eco-friendly resort accommodation near Dasada.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 13 Thursday 4 February

DASADA

We'll enjoy an **early morning wildlife safari** at the Wild Ass Sanctuary in Little Rann of Kutch. During our jeep safari we'll explore the unique desert ecosystem which is the only remaining habitat of the Indian wild ass (known locally as khur). We may also spot foxes, hyenas and migratory birds.

We'll return to our resort for breakfast and a rest.

In the afternoon, we'll visit some of the artisan communities in the area – many are traditionally nomadic pastoralists. The Rabari are known for their simple yet distinctive embroidery which often features mirror work. The Bharvads are recognized for their practical hand-woven, woollen shawls and colourful embroidered garments suited to their pastoral lifestyle. While the Mir community are mainly known for their music and storytelling, they also create embroidery and textile work with subtle designs.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Day 14 Friday 5 February

DASADA - AHMEDABAD

Making our way back to Ahmedabad we'll stop in Patan, famous for being one of only four places in the world where **Patola (double ikat)** is practiced.

We'll visit a **Weaving Museum** where several generations of one family continue to practice and preserve this extraordinary handcraft. Their collection includes exquisite samples of **single ikat weaving and rare double ikat** collected from around the globe.

We'll also visit the impressive UNESCO World Heritage-listed **Rani ki Vav stepwell** - one of the largest and most sumptuous structures of its type, with unique multi-storeyed pavilions. Serving as a long-lasting record, we'll see traditional Patola patterns carved into the stone panels of the stepwell.

Mashru cloth is woven from a mix of silk and cotton, such that only one side of the fabric is 'silky'. In Arabic, the word 'mashru' translates as 'permitted' and its Sanskrit variation 'misru' means mixed. We'll learn more about this interesting cloth and see a demonstration of mashru weaving when we visit an NGO dedicated to teaching and preserving traditional crafts, enabling women and families to earn a dignified, self-sustainable living.

Meals: Breakfast



Day 15 Saturday 6 February

AHMEDABAD

For our final workshop, we'll visit an all-women team known for their exquisite **hand-stitched, zero waste and guilt free clothing and products**. Care of the environment, process and maker are their top priorities, with fashion being a secondary consideration. We'll spend time with the delightful, talented women artisans and **participate in a hands-on thread embellishment, embroidery and applique workshop**.

The **Calico Museum** is considered to be India's **premier textile museum** and boasts one of the **finest collections of modern and antique textiles in the world**. During our guided tour this afternoon, we'll view some very special and rare exhibits including block printed and painted fabrics, embroidery, weaving, tie dye (bandhani), antique costumes and carpets.

There'll be some free time in the late afternoon to relax, explore Ahmedabad at your leisure or visit the **textile gallery at our boutique heritage hotel** before we gather for our farewell dinner.

Our **final group dinner** together will be an opportunity to reflect on memories of the last two weeks before we say a fond farewell to Gujarat and each other.

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner



Day 16 Sunday 7 February

AHMEDABAD

Our tour concludes after breakfast. There are no activities planned for today so you are welcome to depart at any time. Our hotel's check out time is 12:00pm.

Additional nights at our finishing point hotel may be booked through us at additional cost (subject to availability).

Airport transfers may also be booked through us at additional cost. Alternatively, you're welcome to make your own transport arrangements with reception at our tour hotel.

Note: This itinerary should be read in conjunction with the Booking Conditions and Trip Notes. Please pay particular attention to the notes on Health, Fitness and Mobility to ensure this trip is right for you.

Meals: Breakfast

PRICE:

Twin share: AU\$8150 per person

Single supplement: AU1950

- A deposit of AU\$1500 per person is required to secure your booking
- The tour balance is due no later than 7 November 2026

INCLUSIONS:

- Arrival airport transfer
- 15 nights accommodation as per the itinerary – refer also to the Trip Notes
- Meals as per the itinerary (15 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 5 dinners)
- Transport as per the itinerary
- Hands-on handcraft workshops (**marked in red**) & activities as per the itinerary
- Entrance fees to all museums, galleries, sights and excursion venues as per the itinerary
- Fully escorted by a local English-speaking tour guide and a retreat|recreate host

EXCLUSIONS:

- Airfares
- Travel insurance (required)
- Passports and visas
- Early check in / late check out
- Pre-tour and post-tour accommodation & sightseeing
- Departure transfers
- Personal spending (laundry, phone, porter charges, camera fees etc)
- Optional activities (**in blue**)
- Meals and drinks not included in the itinerary
- Tips - we'll establish a tips kitty on Day 1 so our local guide can tip on behalf of the group, as needed. Allow ~ INR9000 per person (TBC). Refer also to the Money section of the Trip Notes.