

India

Fascinating Animals, Culture and People



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Impressum

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Country & People

A brief insight into everyday life,
culture and customs

While the main objective of our trip was to visit the five national parks and to photograph the wildlife in particular, we also had a lot of contact with the people and were impressed by our - albeit - brief look at the country's wonderfully diverse architecture, often influenced by religious beliefs.



Compared with the full scale of the historical and cultural area, the region we visited between Agra and Khajuraho may seem like just a grain of sand in the desert, but this small area boasts four World Heritage Sites and among many other monuments also the palaces of Orchha, where the territory of the Mughal Empire meets the Hindu kingdoms.

Three of the World Heritage Sites in this area were commissioned by Mughal Emperor Akbar (1556-1605), the third ruler of the Mughal Dynasty, along with many other

structures built during his reign. This impressive era also produced the Red Fort in Delhi, commissioned by his grandson Shah Jahan, and the “Eighth Wonder of the World”, the Taj Mahal.

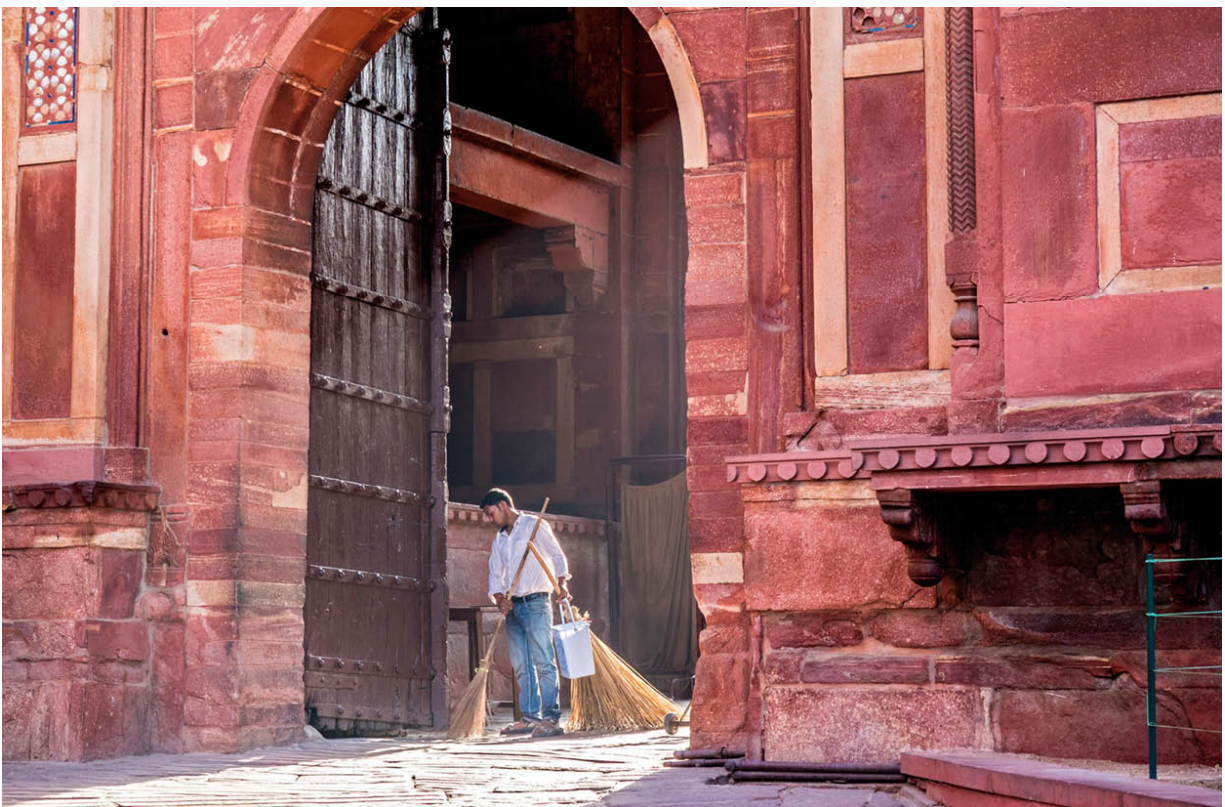


Khajuraho

The rulers of the Chandella Dynasty, a Rajput clan, built 80 or so temples in the small town of Khajuraho between around 950 and 1120. The town was soon forgotten, which meant the temples were left unscathed by the military expeditions of the Mughal emperors in later times. They were “rediscovered” in 1840 by the British in the village, which was home to around 300 inhabitants at the time. Maintenance and repair work carried out in the 20th century has made it possible to open up some 20 of the temples to tourists.

The outer areas of the temples are exceptionally richly

adorned with - in some cases very erotic - depictions. Deities and “beautiful girls” in poses such as “applying mascara”, “painting feet”, “looking in the mirror” - always full-breasted with closely fitting, thin clothing - are evidence of a different attitude towards sensual pleasures than is the norm today. It is generally assumed that these figures and the positions the lovers are in are Tantric in origin. Put simply: Reality is the result of the symbiosis of the male (= Shiva) and female (= Shakti) principles. The Lakshmana Temple with the Parvati Temple and the figure “man stabbing lion”, the mighty double temple of Kandariya Mahadeo and Devi Jagadambi, and the Parsvanath Jain temple are just a few examples.



Agra - Agra Fort

In 1565 Mughal Emperor Akbar had a fort built on the south bank of the Yamuna river, the brick walls of which were clad