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Mystical India

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Mystical India

Abstract
Suggested resources for the Penn Alumni Travel excursion to India. See the Library Guide for this bibliography here.

Keywords
india, bibliography, penn, alumni, travel, readings, guidebooks

Comments
Alumni Travel Reading List  
**Mystical India**

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**Suggested Resources**

**History**

India is a large country, with more than a dozen official languages, and a multiplicity of cultures. There are several good surveys on the history of India, more generally, South Asia. A few of them are listed here.

One of the most famous histories of the subcontinent was written by the Cambridge-educated first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. It is written in the fashion of statesmen writing national histories.

One of the most enduring textbooks for the study of Indian civilization and history has been the two volume set by Romila Thapar and Percival Spear. This work has been in print continuously since 1966.

This well-received history continues to be updated and used in the classroom.
Travel

There is no dearth of popular travel guides, most of which are particularly suited to Penn’s itinerary for what is known as the tourist triangle, comprised of Jaipur, Delhi, and Agra.


The guide includes cutaways, floor plans, and reconstructions of sights such as Humayun's Tomb, the Rajput Fort-Palace and the Taj Mahal. Also included are street-by-street maps of cities and towns, travel tips and local information religious beliefs and practices, wildlife, temples, bazaars, museums. In the DK fashion, this guide includes hundreds of full-color photographs, hand-drawn illustrations, and custom maps.

First published in 1989, this title is intended both for first-time visitors and experienced travelers to India. It provides a thoughtful companion to India’s preeminent attractions, exploring the intricacies of art, architecture and everyday life in modern north-west India.

This guide is the result of 15 weeks of research and includes 48 maps including a pull-out city map and 3D plans of renowned sites.

Urban Spaces, Cultures, & Landmarks

For cities and regions, the following readings provide interesting introductions to urban clusters and cultures.

Delhi

William Dalrymple’s memoirs provide a quick introduction to all of Delhi’s cities, past and present.

Rajasthan can be experienced virtually through multiple coffee-table books such as this one.
**Jaipur**

A wonderful little book with historical vignettes of the pink city of Jaipur.

**Ranthambore**


“The royal Bengal tiger is on the verge of extinction. There have been other moments in the past when the tiger in India has been threatened. This book traces the history of such crises and conservation efforts to battle them from the nineteenth century right up to the present crisis.” (From the Publisher)

“The tiger has always evoked awe, fear, and fascination. Ranthambhore: 10 Days in the Tiger Fortress creates an engrossing, unforgettable portrait of this magnificent creature, featuring many images of tigers in the wild never before captured on film.” (From the Publisher)

“After a lifetime devoted to the study and conservation of the tiger, Valmik Thapar turns his attention to the plants and animals that share the tiger’s domain. Thapar links the region’s tremendous diversity to the reverence shown to nature by Eastern religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism.” (From the Publisher)

“This book is about the very special "post monsoon" period of Ranthambhore National Park, which in 2011 received a record 1200 mm of rain.” (From the Publisher)
**Taj Mahal & Agra**

The wealth of literature about the Taj Mahal is overwhelming, but an excellent essay by Wayne Begley, explaining an alternative meaning of the Taj can be found in the *Art Bulletin* of March 1979 (vol. 61 no. 1).

DOI: 2307/3049862  
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/30498

A good stock guide to the Taj (of which there are plenty) can be supplemented with this heavily illustrated book. Most guides to the Taj Mahal will have notes and a small piece on the Agra fort.

**Khajuraho**

It is not unusual that the same author produces a scholarly monograph on a site, as well as a popular guide book. Such is the case for Khajuraho.


**Varanasi**

A good book on Varanasi in which Eck looks at the city in the context of history, spiritual and natural world, economics and quality of life, as well as the entirety of India.
Jim Corbett: Tiger Hunter, Conservationist

Thrillers about tigers in India are by a colonial-era hunter and later conservationist, Jim Corbett, who wrote a series of books, the titles of which start as ‘Man-Eaters of ….’

“This is a richly illustrated anthology of the great hunter and conservationist's best writing, selected from his many popular works. The collection is meant to represent all phases of the great tiger hunter's life and adventures.” (From the Publisher).

“The Second Oxford India Illustrated Corbett is another collection of Corbett's best-loved writings complemented by gripping illustrations. The stories reflect Corbett’s involvement with India, her people, and her flora and fauna, and this collection includes several written for children.” (From the Publisher).

