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Mystical India

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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

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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.

Nehru, Jawaharlal. *Discovery of India*. Oxford University Press, 1990.

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.

Thapar, Romila and Percival Spear. *A History of India*. Penguin, 1966.

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.

Kulke, Hermann and Dietmar Rothermund. *A History of India*. 5th ed. Routledge, 2010.

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 DK Eyewitness Guide: Delhi, Agra and Jaipur. Eyewitness Travel Guides. DK Travel, 2013.

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.

Ward, Philip. *Rajasthan, Agra, Delhi: A Travel Guide.* Oleander Press, 2013.

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.

Brown, Lindsey. *Lonely Planet Rajasthan, Delhi and Agra (Regional Travel Guide).* Lonely Planet, 2011.

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

Dalrymple, William. *City of Djinn: A Year of Delhi.* Penguin Books, 2003.

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

Michell, George and Antonio Martinelli. *Palaces of Rajasthan.* India Books House, 2004.

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

Jaipur

Tillotson, Giles. *Jaipur Nama: Tales from the Pink City*. Penguin, 2006.

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

Ranthambore

Thapar, Valmik. *Battling for Survival: India's Wilderness over Two Centuries*. Oxford University Press, 2003.

Thapar, Valmik. *The Last Tiger: Struggling for Survival*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

“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)

Thapar, Valmik. *Ranthambhore: 10 Days in the Tiger Fortress*. Oxford University Press, 2008.

“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)

Thapar, Valmik. *Land of the Tiger: A Natural History of the Indian Subcontinent*. University of California Press, 1997.

“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)

Thapar, Valmik. *Tigers in the Emerald Forest: Ranthambhore After the Monsoon*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

“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>

Okada, Amina. *Taj Mahal*. Abbeville Press, 1993.

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.

Desai, Devangana. *The Religious Imagery of Khajuraho*. Franco-Indian Research, 1996.

Desai, Devangana. *Art and Icon: Essays on Early Indian Art*. Aryan Books International, 2013.

Desair, Devangana. *Khajuraho*. Monumental Legacy Series. Oxford University Press, 2004.

Varanasi

Eck, Diana. *Banaras, City of Light*. Columbia University Press, 1999.

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 ...’

Corbett, Jim. *The Oxford India Illustrated Corbett*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

“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).

Corbett, Jim. *The Second Oxford India Illustrated Corbett*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

“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).

Hawkins, R. E. ed. *Jim Corbett's India: Stories*. Oxford University Press, 1978.

Corbett, Jim. *The Man-Eating Leopard of Rudraprayag*. Oxford India Paperbacks, 1989.

Corbett, Jim. *Man-Eaters of India*. Oxford University Press, 1957.