All aboard Palace on Wheels for an Enduring Romance of Royalty by Alisa Ray

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One of the most fabled destinations in India happens to be Rajasthan, the former domain of various clans of Rajput warrior princes. Ingrained in the legends and culture of this vibrant state is numerous tales of valor, chivalry and romance of the erstwhile maharajas. One of the unique ways to uncover the rich heritage, royal romance and vivid culture of Rajasthan is on board Palace on Wheels. Launched in 1982, this luxury tourist train service is a legend in itself.

When launched, the Palace on Wheels, first such train in India, was composed entirely of the personal carriages used by the maharajas of various princely states of India. The regal interiors, stately charm and traditional hospitality ensured that it was a huge success. This Indian luxury train was launched to promote tourism in Rajasthan and revive the art of elegant traveling in India following the benchmarks set by the Orient Express of the West.

The vintage cabins of former princes were later replaced with the replica cabins to accommodate technological advancements. Today, this luxury train is composed of 21 carriages. There are 14 guest carriages redolent with the grace and opulence of the days of yore. Each cabin comes equipped with attached bathroom, intercom and channel music. A Khidmatgar (personal butler) is also appointed for each carriage to ensure round the clock assistance to the guests.

For a complete experience of a royal palace on wheels, the train also comes equipped with two restaurants, a lounge bar and spa saloon. The cuisines served vary from traditional Rajasthani cuisines to the international platters. The bar offers a perfect oasis to relax and rendezvous with fellow passengers. The collection of wines and liquors along with non alcoholic beverages ensure that the spirits of the guests are kept high as they recharge their cells after a tiring day of off train excursion in perfect nonchalance.

Each Wednesday, the train chugs along from Safdarjung Railway Station in New Delhi on a weeklong odyssey across some of the most royal destinations in Rajasthan. The destinations of the train include Jaipur, Udaipur, Sawai Madhopur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Bharatpur and Agra. The tastefully crafted itinerary of this rail tour includes a dash of wildlife, adventure amidst the sand dunes, royal palaces and forts and ornithologistâ€™s paradise Keoladeo National Park with the sightseeing tour of the Taj Mahal forming the crescendo of the itinerary on the penultimate day of this royal rail journey.

The royal voyage on board the Palace on Wheels is a potpourri of Rajasthan vibrant culture. The erstwhile maharajas of Rajasthan were great patrons of arts. They sheltered artisans and skilled workers from all corners of India. Today these same skills are on offer to one and all â€“ be it the die-hard bargain-hunters or the flamboyant fashionistas - leaves Rajasthan empty-handed.

The itinerary ensures that no one leaves empty handed from the land of maharajas. Even a fussy shopperâ€™s only complaint is how to choose from the confounding assortment of textiles, jewelry, paintings, rugs, pottery and even kitchen utensils - and then how to fit them into your luggage.

Creating insider experiences, the Palace on wheels, rail tour unravels the rich tapestry of princely Rajasthan during its weeklong itinerary spanning over 168 hours. Whatâ€™s on offering in not just a run of the mill tour package in the land of erstwhile maharajas but an experience that is suffused with nostalgia in the consummate Ã©lan of the graceful interiors of Indiaâ€™s most revered luxury train. Red carpet welcome, gracious hospitality and a meticulously crafted itinerary to acquaint the guests with the eclectic mÃ©lange of royal India, this mesmerizing train tour is undoubtedly an experience to look

forward to.

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Alisa Ray - About Author:
When it comes to luxury travel, India is a destination with immense possibilities. Having traveled across the length and breadth of this country, Alisa Ray offers expert advice and travel tips for luxury travel and unique experiences in India to the connoisseurs of luxury traveling around the world. With years of experience behind her back, her tips on luxury train traveling comes handy to those planning to undertake luxury rail journeys including the a Indian Luxury Trains

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