

SELVEDGE TOUR OF INDIA

2024



selvedge

INTRODUCTION

Selvedge has always been devoted to India, a country that has filled the pages of the magazine with an almost incomprehensible wealth and variety of textiles. The emotional attachment I feel for cloth is shared by the people of India, from the wealthy who wear heirloom saris as well as the designs of Aneeth Arora and Neeru Kumar, to village women who work in the fields adorned in colourful odhani, choli, and ghagra. We could fill each and every issue with the beautiful material from the subcontinent. It's my pleasure, then, to invite you on a voyage to India, a journey that will see the pages of *Selvedge* come to life, from handloom weaving, and the exuberant, colour-filled streets of Rajasthan, to the metropolitan cities of Delhi and Ahmedabad, where modernity juxtaposes with traditional lifestyles.



Polly Leonard, founder, *Selvedge* Magazine @selvedgemagazine

Tour Overview

Join *Selvedge* as we take you on a tour of India and its incredible textile culture. From misty Delhi mornings, to the delicate beauty of the palaces of Jaipur and the craft workshops of Gujarat, this journey is a must for those who combine a love of textiles with an adventurous spirit. The winter months are beautiful in India, when the North offers clear blue skies and Hindus celebrate Sankranti, marking the start of longer days. Over 28 days you will journey through six states – Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, and Ladakh – visiting the private homes and studios of talented designers and fascinating collectors, traditional dyers and weavers, and see unforgettable historical sites and natural wonders.

Beginning in Delhi, the capital of the Mughal Empire and now of modern India, the tour will lead you on north to Ladakh in the Himalayas, to the western states of Rajasthan and Gujarat, before concluding our journey in Kerala, where you will glimpse the traditional textile arts of block printing, bandhani, and lahariya (Indian shibori), metallic embroidery, and a fine tailoring workshop. You will visit the pink city of Jaipur built by the Rajput maharajas, as well as the cultural hub of Ahmedabad, home to the Calico Museum and its exquisite silk paintings and textiles. Throughout the trip you will stay in some of India's most iconic and luxurious hotels, including the Taj Mahal Palace in Mumbai.

Group sizes will be limited to no more than 14 people.

Expert Guides

Your guides for this trip will be Polly Leonard and Param Pandya.

Polly Leonard founded *Selvedge* Magazine in 2003 after a decade-long career as a teacher of textiles. Since its launch, *Selvedge* has revolutionised the way textiles are presented and become the world's leading authority with a dedicated international readership of over 75,000. Polly has specialist knowledge of all aspects of textiles with a particular interest in the role textiles have played in the evolution of humanity. Her own practice encompasses embroidery, weaving, printing, and basket making.



Param Pandya is native of Ahmedabad, where he lives in an a multigenerational household with his Asian American wife Amruta. He holds masters degrees in Heritage Management and Folklore and Culture Studies. Param works with the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Heritage Department to design and deliver heritage experiences, as well as leading tours throughout India. He has specialist knowledge of the intangible and tangible cultural heritage of India.



Unforgettable Experiences

Together Polly and Param will lead you on a journey that goes beyond the surface of tourist experience. You will enjoy walking tours, hands-on workshops with artisans, intimate dinners with collectors, and visits to small design studios. You will experience Indian living traditions: khadi being spun and woven, Gujarati applique, natural dyeing, warp sizing, zardozi and mirror embroidery. Polly and Param will introduce you to textile dealers, and show you their favourite shops where you will find historical and tribal textiles, phulkari from Punjab, banjara embroidery, fine block printing, and folk and court textiles. Under their guidance, rather than taking home only souvenirs, you will leave India with an in-depth understanding of Indian culture and the role textiles play. Together we will encounter Lutyen's Delhi, India's temples, exquisite step wells, the Gandhi Ashram and the Modernist National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad, as well as a diverse array of museums and galleries. We will experience the Pink City's Palace, home of the Jaipur royal family, and visit the legendary forts of Rajasthan, built by the Rajput maharajas.



Delhi, National Capital Territory

On arrival at Gandhi International Airport, Delhi, you will be met by Mr. Don, who will accompany you to the Hotel. The long journey to India can be tiring, and with a busy itinerary planned, if possible, you may like to arrive a few days in advance of the tour to adjust to the time difference. Please let us know if you would like us to arrange for extra nights at the hotel. The Ambassador is located in central New Delhi, within easy reach of India Gate, National Museum, and Lodhi Gardens. The Ambassador is the perfect place to recover from any jetlag. The hotel is a heritage building, built in 1945 by the colonial architect Walter George, in a combination of British and Art Deco style. In the evening we will enjoy a relaxed dinner at a restaurant in the Kahn Market.

Delhi, India's capital territory, is a massive metropolitan area in the country's north. In Old Delhi, a neighbourhood dating to the 1600s, stands the imposing Mughal-era Red Fort, a symbol of India, and the sprawling Jama Masjid mosque, whose courtyard accommodates 25,000 people. Nearby is Chandni Chowk, a vibrant bazaar filled with food carts, sweet shops, and spice stalls. The seat of power for many rulers, Delhi's importance is reflected in its architecture and bustle. From the Georgian style colonnades of Connaught Place, where you will find shops, cinemas, bars, and restaurants, to the winding lanes of the ultra-fashionable Haus Khas village, or in the peace of one of the city's plentiful parks, Delhi is a city with something for everyone.

Delhi, the work of Hindu, Muslim, and British builders, consists of two distinct sections: the fascinating 12th- to 19th-century capital and the New Delhi, designed in the 1920s by British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens. We will take time to explore the architectural wonders of Delhi. Gurudwara Bangla Sahib is one of the most prominent Sikh gurdwaras, or house of worship, instantly recognisable by its golden dome. As with all Sikh gurdwaras, the concept of *langar* is practised, and all people, regardless of race or religion, may eat in the gurdwara kitchen (langar hall). The langar (food) is prepared by gursikhs who work there and also by volunteers who feed over 75,000 people every day.

We will learn about the cultural heritage of the sari with Rta Kapur Chishti. At the National Handicraft and Handloom Museum, we explore their collection of Indian textiles where we will begin to identify different materials and techniques. Our exploration continues as we venture out of the city to the Surajkund International Crafts Mela, which brings together artisans from all parts of India.

Day 1 Wednesday, 14 February

Welcome Dinner at Greenhouse

Day 2 Thursday, 15 February

Hindu Birla Temple
Gurudwara Bangla Sahib
Lunch at Connaught Place
Visit Lals Antique Market
Sari experience with Rta Kapur Chishti
Dinner with Anita Lal of Good Earth India

Day 3 Friday, 16 February

Kashmir Loom
National Handicraft and Handloom Museum
Lunch at Lola
Suraj Kund
Dinner at the International House with Dipali Patwa of Fab India

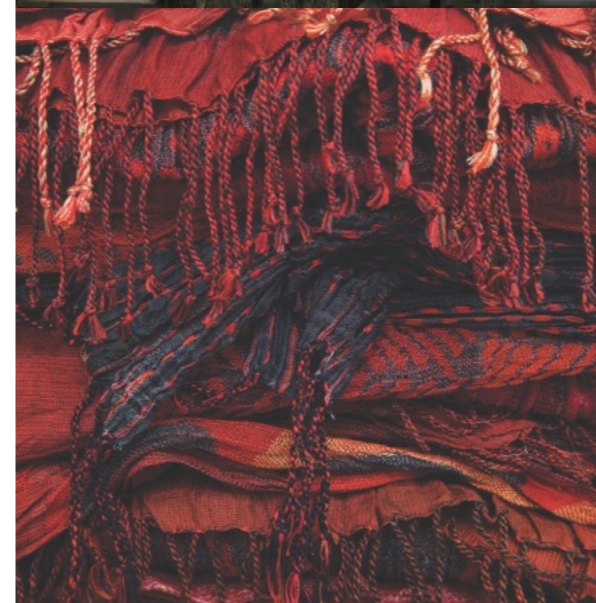
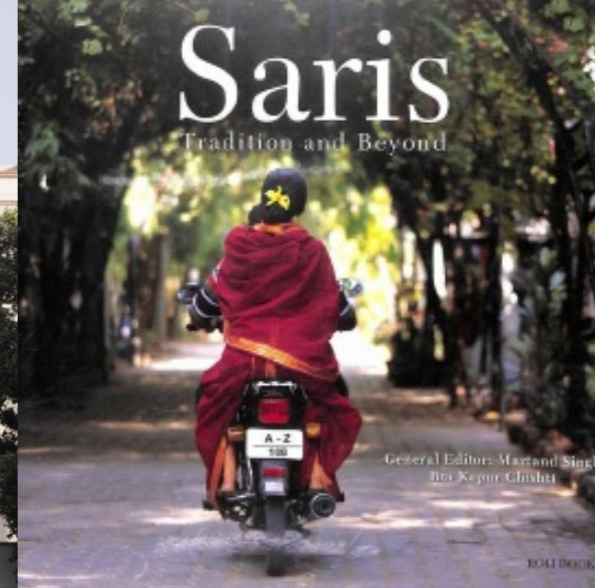
Day 4 Saturday, 17 February

Lodi Gardens for yoga
Heritage walk
Jama Masjid mosque and Chandni Chowk
Lunch and cooking demonstration experience
Studio visits: Neeru Kumar, Studio Medium, Aneeth Arora, and Raw Mango
Dinner with Karun Thakar

Highlight Introduction to Indian textiles

"As a weaver, spinner, and dyer, I was drawn to Selvedge magazine's tour of India. I wanted a trip that would focus on the textile handicrafts, avoiding the usual tourist spots. For my first trip to the country, the month-long itinerary ensured that I would get a broad view of India's landscape, while also allowing an in-depth appreciation of its culture and the skills of its craftspeople. My expectations were far exceeded." —**Micky Stam, participant, USA**

"India is the quintessential land of textiles. From the humblest hand-woven sari worn in a remote village, to glittering gold-thread embroideries for a maharaja's palace, the range of fabrics made and used in India over centuries is truly astonishing. Traditionally, woven textures and dye effects have been valued in India as much as, sometimes more than, costly materials, and this appreciation of cloth in all its forms is what makes India's textiles so rich and varied. They are familiar to us in myriad ways; many of us have block-printed cottons, pashmina shawls, and mirror-work embroidery somewhere in our homes — but we scarcely scratch the surface of the variety of India's fabrics." —**Rosemary Crill, Selvedge, issue 66**



Leh, Ladakh

Nestled within the dramatic landscape of the Indian Himalayas, Leh is the enchanting capital city of Ladakh, the northernmost state in India, a region renowned for its rich cultural heritage and storied history. Primarily influenced by Tibetan Buddhism, the city's monasteries and stupas punctuate the skyline, and prayer flags flutter in the mountain breeze. As a vital stop for Silk Road merchants and traders, Ladakh is home to generations of artisans creating exquisite garments, furnishings, and liturgical items from an array of fibres. The history of Leh is also architecturally etched into its ancient palaces, forts, and stupas. The Leh Palace, a nine-story marvel, is a testament to the region's royal past, overlooking the town with grandeur. The 17th-century Shey Palace, once the seat of Ladakh's royalty, still echoes with tale of regal opulence and political intrigue.

The two most important fibres in Ladakh are silk and yak wool, woven with varying importance depending on sociocultural factors. For instance, the Changpa nomads of Changthang raised goats that produced pashmina fibre, but they wove everything they needed for their daily use from the sturdier sheep and yak wool. Ladakh is also notable among nomadic cultures for its gendered distinctions. Women weave on backstrap looms and men on heddle looms. Historically, Ladakh was located at a major crossroads of trade for northern India and Central Asia. As such, there are a huge variety of trade-induced textile fusions: Kashmir shawls, Tibetan carpets, and Chinese metal-thread embroidered silks, to name just a few. One of the key legends that illustrates the significance of Ladakh's weaving tradition is that of Duguma, the wife of King Gesar, an iconic character from a regional epic. Duguma, as the story goes, weaves one row a year. The day she completes her weaving, the world will end.

On our trip, we will visit LAMO, a project spearheaded by Dr. Monisha Ahmed, which aims to create an environment where people can engage with the textile culture and heritage of Ladakh. With the restoration of the 17th-century Munshi House and the Gyao House, LAMO demonstrated how architectural rejuvenation can aid the social and cultural life of a city. The houses now hold art exhibitions, festivals, workshops, and more.

We'll uncover traditional building styles at the Central Asian Museum, which has elements of Himalayan local architecture: slate-stone floor paving, Kashmiri-styled old windows, and Islamic floral carvings. We also explore the bustling market where we can look at, feel, and buy antique textiles and crafts.

Day 5 Sunday, 18 February

Fly to Leh; rest and acclimatise
Lunch at the hotel
Fibre workshop with Looms of Ladakh
Dinner with Dr. Monisha Ahmed

Day 6 Monday, 19 February

Stok Monastery, Festival
Lunch
Market tour
Central Asian Museum
Dinner with Jigmat Norbu

Day 7 Tuesday, 20 February

Lah heritage walk
LAMO centre
Dyeing workshop with Lena
Dinner at hotel

Highlight Silk road, pashmina, cashmere, yak, and shatoosh fibre

"The small size of the group allowed not only some flexibility in our schedule but it also made it easier to squeeze a lot into each day. And a lot was squeezed in every day. On the other hand, Polly Leonard, the group leader and editor of Selvedge Magazine, was always gauging the energy level of the group. Fortunately, we were all ready to take in everything on the full schedule. And that schedule was so much fun and educational that we never yearned for time off to rest or go off on our own. We could relax and let them lead us to the next adventure." **—Lesley Pennington, participant, Sweden**

"As an architect involved in determining fabrics as finished materials that are appropriate for a place in a project, the tour gave me an appreciation for the painstaking work and steps involved before reaching the finished material that I hadn't fully understood. Also appreciated the inclusion of other disciplines including paper, art, architecture, and history. Other highlights were visiting people's houses and having meals there and the extracurricular events – the golden temple in the crowded market and the cremation. The tour guide at the Calico Museum will never be forgotten." **—Larry Johanson, participant, USA**

"At the back of a street food stall in the tiny village of Korzok, on the bank of the sacred lake Tso Moriri, a middle-aged woman sits weaving on a foot loom. Clickety-clack. Clickety-clack. Sunlight streams in through the skylight. A window behind the weaver reveals breathtaking views of mountains. [...] Jigmat Norbu told me, "Weaving has historically been a household activity in Ladakh." Given the region's remote location, Ladakhis wove everything they needed – tents, bags, saddles, shoes, and clothing. But Ladakh was also a key part of the trading web we call the Silk Route." **—Prasad Ramamurthy, Selvedge, issue 112**



Jaipur, Rajasthan

Jaipur is the largest city in Rajasthan and, built in the 18th century, it was India's first planned city. Known as the "Pink City," the present colour of the buildings in the old town dates to 1876, when Maharaja Ram Singh painted the city pink, a colour associated with hospitality, to welcome the Prince of Wales.

In Jaipur we visit to Nila House, where we will enjoy an indigo dye workshop. Nila House was founded in 2019 by Carole Bamford as part of the Lady Bamford Foundation, which works with communities around Jaipur to encourage sustainable production and enhance business efficiency in artisan workshops, with a focus on natural dyes and handloom textiles. Nila House stemmed from Bamford's passion for Indian textiles, combined with the desire to make a positive environmental commitment in the country that she fell in love with 40 years ago, and where today, wastewater from the synthetic dyeing process has contaminated many rivers.

We will drive to out of the city to Bagru known for natural dyes and hand-block printing, to enjoy a workshop and lunch with Dheeraj Chhipa. Dheeraj practices *Dabbu* (mud resist) printing, a craft practiced around the Bagru and Sanganer regions, with motifs derived from flora and fauna forms. The Dabbu process begins with the collection and storage of mud from the local pond. The fabric is washed to remove all the starch, treated with *harda* (mordant) then dried again. The end printing is executed by applying a wooden block dipped in the dabbu paste on the treated cloth. The fabric is then dyed. Depending on the design, the fabric undergoes a second round of resist printing or washing, which removes the mud paste. The final dyeing imparts colour to the previously resisted areas.

We will explore the exquisite City Palace Museum, filled to the brim with sculptures, regal memorabilia, and Mewar painting. The textiles in the collection range from garments worn by members of the Mewar family such as woven shawls, Ghagra and Choli, and embroidered saris to household door hangings, silk chair covers, and embroidered carpets.

At the Jantar Mantar Observatory, we uncover a collection of astronomical instruments and instrumental innovations. The observatory was built in the early 18th century at the end of the Mughal period and is one of the most significant and comprehensive historic observatories in India. Just across the road we find Mr. Sharma at the Singh Gate Textile Dealer with a mouth-watering array of museum quality treasures.

Day 8 Wednesday, 21 February

Fly to Jaipur
Lunch at Jaipur Modern
Jantar Mantar Observatory
Singh Gate Textile dealer
Textile Gallery City Palace Museum
Dinner at the hotel

Day 9 Thursday, 22 February

Brigitte Singh
Amber Fort
Lunch at Amber Fort
Anokhi Museum
Narayan Niwas shopping centre
Dinner with Durga Singh and puppet show

Day 10 Friday, 23 February

Mr. Ikramuddin Mohd Sabir Neelgar a Leherriya artisan
Nila House indigo dyeing workshop
Lunch at Anockhi
Sanganar block-printing village
Dinner at Johri with Rachael Singh

Day 11 Saturday, 24 February

Suraj Narain Titanwala Museum
Block-printing workshop in Bagru
Lunch with Dheeraj Chhipa
Studio Chinar
Dinner TBC
Fly to Bhuj

Highlight Block printing, court dress and contemporary design

"Polly, with her knowledge of textiles, and Param Pandya, with his expertise in Indian culture, were the perfect team. Each was able to enrich every experience, while seamlessly managing logistics. And the logistics were complex, with multiple in-country flights, movement to new lodgings every couple of nights, ground transportation, and several appointments with designers, artisans, and museum curators each day." –**Solveig Wilhelmsen, participant, Norway**

"In Rajasthan there's a rainbow around every corner. Vibrant, dazzling, vivid, garish – none of these words do Rajasthan justice. Every street is a sensory assault, from lime to mint, saffron to crimson, turquoise to indigo, magenta to lavender. This regal Indian state is known for the splendour of its forts and Maharajas' palaces, where the sun shines through emerald, ruby, and sapphire Belgian glass windows, to dance on paintings of past opulence." –**Miranda Innes, Selvedge, issue 66**

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Bhuj, Gujarat

Nestled in the heart of the vibrant state of Gujarat, Bhuj is a city that pulsates with the essence of culture and history, while being surrounded by a captivating natural environment. Steeped in antiquity, Bhuj's cultural tapestry weaves together a diverse blend of traditions, reflecting its rich heritage. The city's culture is a manifestation of its long and illustrious history, with influences from the ancient Indus Valley Civilization, the Mauryan Empire, and the vibrant Kutchi community. The locals take immense pride in preserving their age-old customs and artistic expressions. The Kutchi handicrafts, renowned for their intricate embroidery, mirror work, and vibrant textiles, adorn the bustling bazaars, offering a glimpse into the city's artistic soul.

Kutch in Gujarat is the largest district in India. Its geography is characterised by an extreme ecological divide, with the Arabian Sea to the south and the vast Thar desert in the north. Over the past 800 years, many nomadic and semi-nomadic communities have made the desert region of Kutch their home. These communities have made Kutch world renowned for the production of wonderful and intricate embroideries. Each community has its own distinct stitch, motifs, and patterns that reflects their unique customs and culture, and marks their identity. Textile dealer Salim Wazir offers an extensive collection including textiles from all over the Indian sub-continent. They specialise in Khutchi embroideries, block prints, bandhani, turban cloths, and quilts.

Our second day in Bhuj begins with a visit to Kala Raksha, a non-profit trust founded in 1993 and located in Sumrasar Sheikh village. The trust works with around 1,000 embroidered and patchwork artisans from 26 villages aiming to preserve and promote Kutch arts.

We learn about the craft heritage of Kutch at the Shrujan Trust Living & Learning Design Centre, which houses an extensive craft museum. Their permanent exhibition *The Living Embroideries of Kutch* celebrates the rich and diverse embroideries of the region. We will try our hand at some practical crafts through both a Bandhani workshop with Abduljabbar Khatri and an Ajrakh workshop. These crafts are unique forms of textile design found mostly in Gujarat: tie-dye and block-printing. Shamji Vankar will demonstrate the art of cotton spinning.

We will visit the Rann of Kutch seasonal salt marsh in the Thar Desert, one of the largest salt deserts in the world, inhabited by the Kutchi people, as well as the ancient city of Dholavira.

Day 12 Sunday, 25 February

Lunch at Hillview

Salim Wazir Museum quality Textile dealer

Shamji Vankar, Bhujodi spinning demonstration

Dinner with Pankaj Shah of Qasab

Day 13 Monday, 26 February

Kala Raksha Sumrasar village

Rogan painting and Bell maker

Lunch at Rann Resort Dholavira

Ancient city of Dholavira, and the salt desert

Dinner at Mehfil E Rann

Day 14 Tuesday, 27 February

Shrujan Museum of Living & Learning Design Centre

Lunch at Shrujan café

Ajrakhpur workshop

Earthquake Museum

Dinner at the home of Mr. Ramji Maheswari

Day 15 Wednesday, 28 February

Bandhani workshop with Abduljabbar Khatri

Lunch at Times Square Club

Fly to Ahmedabad

Dinner at the hotel

Highlight Embroidery, Ajrak and rural village life

"For me, the trip was fabulous and informative. I especially appreciated the contact with all of the talented artists and experts who were associates of Polly. The entree to homes of all socio-economic levels was most appreciated for me. It was wonderful to enjoy the hospitality of so many different families. I know the pace was fast, jam-packed, and the days were lengthy. I appreciate that every effort was made to provide us with all sorts of cultural experiences as well as textile-related experiences, and I very much appreciated that. I loved the opportunities to be on the streets, in the villages, and with the people. I hope that future tours will continue to offer last-minute changes to the itinerary that open travellers up to real immersion into the culture. Please continue to provide those sorts of experiences."

-Dori Towne, participant, USA

"The summer sandstorm blew at the railway station as I arrived hot and sweaty from a one-and-a-half day journey from Delhi. The swirling red dust almost obscured the city walls of Bhuj, but I could see the towers of a Victorian building reminiscent of an English public school hovering in the haze above them. [...] No other land enjoys such profusion of creativity in the production of textiles as the South Asian sub-continent."



Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Ahmedabad, the largest city in the Indian state of Gujarat, is a dynamic metropolis that blends a rich cultural heritage with a bustling urban environment. As one of the oldest cities in India, Ahmedabad's culture is steeped in history, with a tapestry woven from diverse threads of traditions and influences. Ahmedabad is a hub of textile traditions, renowned for its intricate handwoven textiles, including the world-famous Patola double-ikat sarees. The bustling markets of Law Garden and Rani no Hajiro are a treasure trove for those seeking traditional handicrafts, textiles, and jewelry. The city's festive spirit comes alive during events such as Uttarayan, the vibrant kite festival that paints the sky with colorful kites, and Navaratri, a nine-night celebration of dance, music, and devotion.

A particular highlight will be the Sabarmati Ashram, one of the many residences of Mahatma Gandhi, where he lived for a total of 12 years. It was from here that Gandhi led the Dandi March for Indian independence.

We learn about the legacy of the Sarabhai family, especially siblings Gautam and Gira Sarabhai, who played a major role in establishing the National Institute of Design, the premier design institution in Asia. They worked on the project with the American design partnership of Charles and Ray Eames. In 1949, Gira Sarabhai established, designed the building, and curated the Calico Museum of Textiles, which houses a historic collection of Indian fabrics. Considered to be one of the most comprehensive in the world. Other members of the family are still active in the community. We enjoy an Indian dance demonstration at the Darpana Academy of Performing Arts, where we are introduced to Indian classical dance.

A walking tour of the historical centre will provide an opportunity to explore its rich cultural and architectural heritage. Ahmedabad was named India's first world heritage city in 2017. The old city features rich wooden architecture, havelis, khadkis, and pols, exemplary of the unique heritage of Ahmedabad. Getting our hands involved again, we enjoy an appliqué workshop with Hetal Shrivastav.

"From a crowded rooftop in the characterful old part of the city of Ahmedabad, the sky is filled with colour. Music blares, festive cooking smells fill the air while everyone's eyes are turned upwards. It is January 14 – the day of Uttarayan – an annual Kite Festival. [...] Across the city, leading up to the festival, many street corners feature lively scenes associated with kite making. The kite string (manja) is coated with a coloured mixture of rice paste and ground glass which enables flyers to cut each other's kites with ease." –**Meena Kadri, Selvedge, issue 50**

Day 16 Thursday, 29 February

Soham Dave Studio
Darpana Indian dance demonstration
Lunch at Darpana
Rajka workshop, with Mallika Sarabai
Dinner at the hotel with Indian folk dance class

Day 17 Friday, 1 March

Dada Harir Step Well
The Arvind-Indigo Museum
Ashram's papermaking
Sabarmati Ashram
Lunch at Hyatt
Calico Museum of Textiles
Dinner with Umang Hutheesing,

Day 18 Saturday, 2 March

Old City walking tour
Art Book Center at Ellis Bridge
Asal organic shop in Paldi
Kalam Kari
Lunch at Swati Snacks
National Institute of Design
Raasleela applique workshop
Dinner at Vishalla

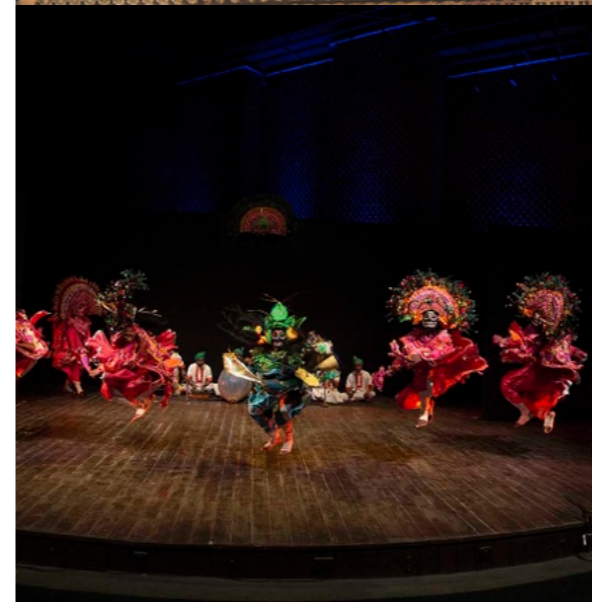
Day 19 Sunday, 3 March

Patola Heritage Museum in Patan
Modhera Sun Temple
Lunch at The Grand Raveta
Patan City Museum
Rani-ki-Vav step well
Textile Gallery Tour with the curator at House of MG
Sidi Saiyyed Mosque and Lucky Restaurant
Dinner with Asif Shaikh at hotel

Highlight Textile design, museum collections

"Post-Independence, many modern buildings were constructed by renowned architects. Le Corbusier designed four buildings in the city including National Institute of Design (NID), and the Bhadra Plaza. Recent additions to the city are the Sabarmati Riverfront, Narendra Modi Cricket Stadium (with a capacity of 132,000)." –**Param Pandya Selvedge, issue 113**

"I thoroughly enjoyed the trip and thank Selvedge for the opportunity to join a lovely group of people to see and learn so much. I'll definitely go back to India, god willing" –**Jane Mulhause, participant, New Zealand**



Mumbai, Maharashtra

Mumbai, the bustling cosmopolitan heart of India's western coast, is a city of contrasts that melds a rich tapestry of cultures with a vibrant urban landscape. As the financial capital of India and a melting pot of diversity, Mumbai's culture is a vibrant fusion of traditions, languages, and lifestyles.

The city's cultural fabric is woven from its historical roots and the influx of people from across the country and beyond. Mumbai's colonial-era architecture, such as the Gateway of India and Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, stands in stark contrast to its towering modern skyscrapers, creating a captivating blend of old and new. The city's film industry, Bollywood, is a global phenomenon, churning out a multitude of films each year that capture the imagination of millions. We will enjoy watching a Bollywood film at the Regal Cinema and then explore a Bollywood film studio.

One of the brilliant curiosities of Mumbai is the system of Dabbawalas, a network of meal-delivery men, that distribute nutritious, home-cooked meals to around 175,000 busy professionals throughout the city. The meals are served in stainless steel dabbas, traditional containers with several distinct compartments that separate each element of the meal.

We get up for an early-morning walk to watch the city come to life. We will begin at Sassoon Docks, watching the Koli people sell fresh fish from the trawlers, then watch the newspaper wallahs ready the papers for delivery. We will see street barbers, Mumbai's busiest fruit, vegetable, and flower market, and Dhobi Ghat, the world's largest open-air laundry district. Here, the washers, known as dhobis, work in the open to clean clothes and linens from Mumbai's hospitality sector.

We will explore ARTISANS', India's first gallery at the intersection of craft and design, which highlights India's contemporary craft and cultural economy. ARTISANS' aims to both combine and eclipse the space of gallery or shop, becoming a movement that centers the handmade in all areas. The founder Radhi Parekh will present a lecture on the connection between the Gandhi and the Indian Independence movement and William Morris's Arts and Crafts Movement in the UK.

In Mumbai we stay at the world-famous Taj Mahal Palace Hotel where you can enjoy a relaxing Indian head massage, a swim in the outdoor pool, or indulge in some luxury shopping. You may like to visit India Gate or watch the ferries from the hotel restaurant.

Day 20 Monday, 4 March

Take train to Mumbai, stopping at Borodi to see Maneklal Gajjar archive
Saurat to see the TAPA collection
Dinner at hotel
Bollywood Film Regal Cinema



Day 21 Tuesday, 5 March

Sassoon Dock
Crawford Market
Flower Market
Dabbawalas at Church Street Station
Dharavi slum
Dhobi Ghat Makkajhamb
Something Special Haberdashery
Lunch at Knead
ARTISANS' Gallery lecture
Dinner with Finely Chopped Walks in Bandra

Day 22 Wednesday, 6 March

The Taj Mahal Palace outdoor pool and Indian head massage
India Gate
Walking tour of Art Deco Mumbai Art Deco Trust
Bollywood film studio
Lunch TBC
Ahmed Khatri of Pracheen
Padmaja Krishnan kantha presentation and workshop
Dinner with Padmaja Krishnan
Fly to Bengaluru

Highlights Museum collections, Bollywood film and streetlife

"This is a trip that would have been impossible to arrange on one's own, not only because of the complex logistics but also because of Polly's connections with the best of India's designers that specialize in the handmade and their artisans. At each of the ateliers, shops, and workshops we were able to see the breadth of the produced work, with designers spending at least an hour talking about their work. We watched artisans in action, such as weavers, block printers, spinners, with indigo dyers, while occasionally trying our own hands at a technique such as resist stamping for a cotton scarf. I can't imagine having such a rich experience without the caché that comes with a Selvedge tour. What an experience of a lifetime. I could go on and on about this incredible trip." **–Trisha Bigger, participant, UK**

"Very good because I visited places and met people off the beaten path, learned about the culture, and expanded my visual vocabulary." **–Olaf Willoughby, participant, UK**



Bengaluru, Karnataka

Bangalore, also known as Bengaluru, is a vibrant and dynamic city located in the southern part of India. It is the capital of the Indian state of Karnataka and is often referred to as the “Silicon Valley of India” due to its prominent role in the country’s information technology sector. The city’s modern identity as a technological hub began to take shape in the late 20th century with the establishment of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in 1909 and the rise of the IT industry in the 1980s and 1990s.

With this in mind, perhaps, it comes as a surprise to learn also of its rich textile heritage. Bengaluru’s home state Karnataka is the centre of India’s silk industry, developed by Tipu Sultan, ruler of the 18th century kingdom of Mysore and Karnataka. Karnataka still produces nearly half of India’s mulberry silk.

Here we will find the Registry of Sarees, a Research and Study Centre with a multi-disciplinary approach that enables design, curatorial, and publishing projects in the area of handspun and handwoven textiles. The Centre is currently home to two independent collections of textiles: The first is *Meanings, Metaphor: Handspun and Handwoven in the 21st Century*. The second, which is currently in development, deals more broadly with the textiles of India. The Registry of Sarees cares for these two collections with the aim of making them accessible for research to enhance and support field work.

We will also explore the wonderfully modern Museum of Art and Photography, which houses more than 20,000 varied objects, ranging from traditional textiles such as 1920s silk skirts and prayer mats, to mid-century sculpture and contemporary painting.

“Traditionally, Kanchipuram’s weavers rely on silk produced near Bangalore – a city that has simultaneously evolved into an Information Technology hub. Silk of the absolutely highest quality comes from Siddalagatta, a village roughly 30 kilometres from Karnataka’s capital. The silkworms have a pure mulberry diet. This helps ensure their silk is strong, and garments woven from it have a superior lustre and finish. The silk passes through numerous hands before it is draped around a bride. After its production in Bangalore’s hinterland, the silk is taken to a reeler. It is then delivered to a twister, and onwards to the thread-maker and dyer. Only then do the weavers get the silk, after which it still has to be traded.

Kanchipuram is filled with notable temples to visit, such as Amman and Vaikuntha Perumal, but no visit is truly complete without a visit to the showrooms of the city’s weavers.” –Stuart Forster, Selvedge, issue 66

Day 23 Thursday, 7 March

Saree Registry
Museum of Art and Photography
Lunch at museum
Central Silk Technological Research Institute
Dinner with The SummerHouse



Day 24 Friday, 8 March

Drive to Mysor and visit the Government Cocoon (Silk) Market
Lunch TBC
Ramanagara, Yelahanka, Khaloom recycling
Dinner TBC
Fly to Combator

Highlights Silk

“In spring 2023 I went to India on Selvedge’s textile trip, and that was a fantastic experience! I enjoyed every hectic minute, from when we met in Delhi until we parted in Kochi. We travelled, by bus, train, boat, plane and rickshaw. The temperature went from cool to hot as we moved from north to south. We visited artists, museums, shops, private homes, and did workshops...and we all deserve a diploma in shopping after this trip! With only one suitcase, which preferentially should have weighed 15kgs when travelling with domestic flights, our shopping made it necessary to ship goods either back home or to our last destination on the trip.

A couple of days before we were to embark on this trip, a sudden thought struck me – what if I do not like any of the people I am going to travel with for an entire month....Fortunately it was an unfounded thought, as my travel companions and our guide could not have been any better – we all bonded and had a great time discussing, laughing, learning, and enjoying ourselves. Spontaneous decisions were made – watching a movie (in Hindi!) in Mumbai. And getting up at 7 o’clock in the morning to participate in a Bollywood Fit Session!

We learned so much from everyone we met, our guides Polly and Param, artisans and lecturers and museum guides – and from each other. India has a very rich textile tradition that for centuries has been important for the rest of the world. We participants had different reasons for embarking on the tour, but with such varied input we all got something to bring home, either facts, inspiration, or contacts!

You will probably think it is a lot of money to spend, and yes it is, but I feel it was well worth it. I have been to India before, planning everything myself. That is a lot of work, and for some things one really needs Indian expertise to manage and book. It was so nice and relaxing to just board the bus or the plane, walk into the hotel, or sit down for dinner! Everything was taken care of! I highly recommend travelling with Selvedge – by the way, when and where is the next trip, Polly?” –Solweig Wilhelmsen, participant, Norway



Kerala

Nestled along the southwestern coast of India, Kerala is a land of enchantment that seamlessly weaves together a rich cultural heritage with a captivating natural environment. Known as “God’s Own Country,” Kerala’s culture is a harmonious blend of traditions, festivals, and artistic expressions that have flourished for centuries.

The cultural essence of Kerala is deeply rooted in its history, which has been shaped by influences from traders, explorers, and settlers from around the world. The state’s diverse religious landscape is reflected in its temples, churches, and mosques that stand as architectural marvels, such as the awe-inspiring Padmanabhaswamy Temple and the historic St. Francis Church in Fort Kochi. The vibrant festival of Onam, a harvest celebration, showcases the cultural richness of the state with its colorful processions, traditional music, and the iconic snake boat races.

Kerala’s environment is a lush paradise of emerald backwaters, palm-fringed beaches, and verdant hills. The iconic backwaters, a network of interconnected canals and lagoons, provide a serene escape where one can glide on traditional houseboats, taking in the tranquility of rural life and the beauty of nature. The Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, are a haven for biodiversity, home to numerous endemic species and lush rainforests, including the famed Periyar Tiger Reserve.

On the way from Munnar to Alleppey we stop off to visit a tea Museum and a spice garden. Here, we can observe the various stages of tea processing, and learn about the transition from the traditional processing methods to modern fully automated ones.

We learn about the ingenious coir fibre at a centre of coir production. Coir, also called coconut fibre, is extracted from the outer husk of the coconut and used primarily in the production of floor mats and doormats. We will enjoy a natural dyeing workshop with Aranya natural, a charitable enterprise to provide sustainable livelihoods for specially-abled young adults. At the Thirumeni Cultural Centre we watch a Kathakali and Kalaripayattu performance.

“The kasavu has an interesting journey throughout a person’s life in Kerala. The first cloth a baby, especially in the Hindu community, is wrapped in is the softest kasavu. When a person dies, the last cloth placed on the body is the kasavu. So the kasavu is a life long companion and, in this way, becomes a definer of body, culture, and where you belong in society.”—Lakshmi Madhavan, Selvedge, issue 113

Day 25 Saturday, 9 March

Vist a village to see the sizing of a warp
Appachi organic cotton ginning factory
Lunch at Appachi
Visit Pollachi and a sericulture farm
Dinner at the hotel



Day 26 Sunday, 10 March

Drive from Pollachi to Munnar, through forest and mountains of the Western Ghats and Anaimalai Tiger Reserve
Lunch at the Canteen
Paper making, botanical dyeing, or batik printing workshop at Aranya
Watch a Kathakali and Kalaripayattu performance at the Thirumeni Cultural Centre
Dinner at Bungalows

Day 27 Monday, 11 March

Drive to Alleppey, visiting a tea museum and spice garden on the way
Lunch with Ranhi John
Walking tour of Alleppey to see coir processing.
Cruise on backwaters
Drive to Fort Kochi
Dinner at hotel

Day 28 Tuesday, 12 March

Walking tour of Fort Kochi, Old Palace Museum, Chinese fishing nets Laundry, Parsedi synagogue, Mattancherry Palace in Jew Town
Lunch at Kashi Art Café
Folk Museum, Save the Loom and shopping
Farewell dinner at Fort House Restaurant

Day 29 Wednesday, 13 March

Early morning flights home from Cochin International Airport

Highlight, High count cotton, coir, spices and tea

“Coir is the fibre extracted from the tissues surrounding the seed of the coconut palm. Because of its resistance to salt water it has been used for fishing nets and rigging in the South Seas since ancient times. It was little known in Britain until the mid-19th century when enterprising Victorians found ways to process numerous plant products and a whole section of the catalogue of exhibitors at The Great Exhibition in 1851 was dedicated to their products made from animal and vegetable substances. On display amongst the India rubber, vegetable ivory, and hairbrushes made of quills were doormats made of harsh brown coir but Thomas Treloar & Son Carpet Co. of Ludgate Hill, London, went one better, using the tough fibre as backing for carpets and other floor coverings.”—Sarah Jane Downing, Selvedge, issue 52



The tour begins in **New Dehi on Wednesday, 14 February at 6 p.m.** with a welcome dinner. We recommend arriving a day or two earlier to rest before this fast-paced tour begins. The tour ends in **Fort Kochi on Wednesday, 13 March at 9 p.m.** after our Farewell dinner.

Fee: The fee for the 28 day tour is \$28,000. Participants can join and leave the tour at any point as we move from location to location. A pro-rata rate of \$1,000 per day will be charged for partial participation.

What Is Included: Single occupancy accommodation, airport transfers, all domestic flights, all meals and gratuities, museum entry, guides, local transport, visits to homes, studios, and workshops. We stay in a range of accommodation from a 5-star hotel in Mumbai to traditional Bhungas in the desert. We will take a range of transportation: planes, trains, and a bus, as appropriate.

What Is Not Included: Travel insurance, visas, vaccination fees, and international airfare are not included. Drinks at meals are not included. We use the tricount app to smooth these payments.

Payment Schedule: A 20% non-refundable deposit is required to secure your booking. Places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. A further 50% is due on 10 November and the final 30% due 10 January 2024.

Refund Policy: We charge a handling fee of 10% of the total cost of the tour for cancellations. This will be deducted from the percentage refunded.
Less than 90 days: 50% refund.
Less than 75 days: 20% refund.
Less than 45 days: no refund.

For payments from the USA:

Bank Wise Selvedge Limited
Routing no 0840 09519
Account number 9600007403962930
Account type Checking
Address 30 W 26th Street Sixth Floor, New York NY 10010, USA

For payments from Africa, Europe, Middle East, and Asia:

Bank Wise Selvedge Limited
SWIFT/ BIC CMFGUS33
Account number 8310020861
Account type Checking
Address 30 W 26th Street Sixth Floor, New York NY 10010, USA

Shopping

There will be the opportunity to shop everywhere we go. You may want to pace yourself. We visit three textile dealers that operate at the lower, middle, and upper end of the market. We compensate all artisans for their time so there is no obligation to buy. If you do spot something irresistible, I ask that you do not to bargain. *Selvedge* has worked hard to build respectful relationships with artisans. We will not take you to anywhere you will be exploited and we ask you to respect the artisans we visit and pay a fair price for their labour.

What to Bring

We recommend you travel light. Laundry is available most of the places we stay. Fees are charged for luggage over 32 kg on internal flights. You may choose to bring an empty suitcase for your purchases. We will arrange to ship boxes of purchases home from Bhuj. We will be traveling from Ladakh in the Himalayas (-3°C 27°F) to Kerala in the Tropics (33°C, 91°F) so layers are essential. We recommend comfortable shoes, (it is customary to remove shoes before entering a home,) sandals and a hat. Modest dress covering arms and legs is customary, as is a shawl to cover your head when visiting places of worship. The vast majority of places in India take credit card payments, but cash is available at machines in major cities. You may want to bring small gifts for the children of artisans.

What to Expect

We begin each day at 9 a.m. and end by 9 p.m. We aim to spend as little time traveling as possible and as much time learning about Indian textiles, art, and culture as possible. The tour includes nine practical workshops with artisans, lectures, demonstrations, and walking tours.

Visas

Visas are required for travel to India and can be applied for online.

Health and Safety:

Please check with your medical practitioner about required or suggested vaccinations. The trip is packed with visits. India is exhausting and you may suffer from jetlag, altitude sickness, and the somewhat inevitable travel-related illnesses. Listen to your body – if you need to opt out of an activity, please do so and we will work to enable to you rejoin the group. You don't have to join the group for every activity. We recommend you bring hand sanitiser and use it regularly throughout the day.

Recommended Reading:

The Fabric of India, 2016. Published to accompany the V&A's major exhibition, by Rosemary Crill. ISBN 9781851778539

