

IRC



Indus Resource Centre



EXPLORING HERITAGE

Join us for a sightseeing program filled with enjoyment, historical learning and the hospitality of the land of sufis



A Tour of Sindh

The Indus Resource Centre, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation starts its 4-day 'Tour of Sindh' from Karachi to north of Sindh, from December 28th 2015 to 31st December 2015.

During winter, the weather turns particularly pleasant, much colder than Karachi. Spattered with historic buildings and monuments, despite rapid urbanisation, still delightfully rural, our main destination, Khairpur-Mirs is an ideal getaway for family and friends.

❖ Day One – Karachi to Khairpur via Indus Highway

6:30 Coach departs from Karachi

Tea on the way in one of IRC's village schools

12:30 Lunch at **Ranikot** the best kept secret in Pakistan. Possibly the largest fort in the world (perimetre 26km), it is called the Great Wall of Pakistan, and is made of gypsum and limestone.

There is no agreement on the time of its construction, which could be anywhere between the 9th and the 17th centuries, but there is no question that it is a sight to behold.



2:30 Pay tribute to **Hazrat Laal Shahbaz Qalandar** at Sehwan: the great Sufi is buried here, and his shrine is visited each year by thousands of Muslims and Hindus particularly during the annual *urs in*

Shaaban. His shrine has a gold plated door gifted by the Shah of Iran.



5:30 A taste of Sufi Music at **Hazrat Sachal Sarmast's Shrine** in Daraza Sharif at Khairpur; the 'truthful mystic' was a sufi poet of seven languages in the 18th century and has left a legacy of love of God and meditation. His shrine is decorated with colourful tiles and devotees sing his poetry in the evenings.



7:00

arrive at **IRC Guest House**: a recently built modern building with a small garden.



8:30 Dinner at Guest House Khairpur

❖ Day Two Kotdiji – a Heritage

8:00 Leave for **Mehrano**: 20 miles from Khairpur is a well hidden private Game Reserve, inhabited by some of the rare species that used to be abundant in Sindh, but has become almost extinct as forests have been cut down to claim land for agriculture. Developed and managed by the erstwhile rulers, the Mirs of Khairpur, Mehrano is home to the Black Buck, Hog Deer, Wild Boar, and resident and migratory birds from Siberia.



10:00 Visit IRC's **Faiz High School Kotdiji**

This school was set up by Talpurs, then nationalized by the government and later on moved to another building. This beautiful building remained abandoned for 12 years till IRC renovated and resumed it as a school on the request of Talpur family.



11:00 **The Kotdiji Fort:**

25 miles east of the Nara-Rajasthan desert lies the Kotdiji Fort, said to have been built in the 18th century against Afghan invasion and considered invincible to attack by cannon or elephants. It had been in a dilapidated condition for several years. IRC is managing the Tourism Facilitation Centre adjacent to the Fort and then formed a Female Crafts Centre

in ages old katcha structure known as 'tapedar's dera' restored recently by Heritage Foundation.



1:00 Lunch at **Khazana Kotdiji**



2:00: meet women from surrounding villages at the Crafts Centre, being trained by IRC

Sheesh Mahal: also known as the Shahi Mahal, it is decorated on the inside with coloured, ornate mirrors that give a particularly beautiful image when reflecting the sunlight.



3:00 **Tea at the Dates Orchard:** originally left to grow wild, it was bought by IRC and tended carefully to grow fruit, especially dates of a very sweet variety.

Khairpur grows almost 85 percent of Pakistan's date produce and this orchard is proof of how charming such places can be.



8:00 Dinner and Shopping at Khazana Khairpur

Khazana, known as 'Landhi' was built around 180 years ago, it was once used as a rest house by the Talpur royal family whenever they visited the city from their nearby castle of 'Kot-Deji' earlier, a swimming pool, a bazaar and a park were built here but after the construction of the FaizMahal as their residential place, it was used for storage only. This was an abandoned property when IRC signed an agreement for 25 years with Talpur Estate in 2006 to restore its glory.



❖ Day Three - Sukkur and Vicinity

8:00 Visit to Sukkur district: Take a boat trip to see how Muslims and Hindus have lived in harmony over centuries in Sindh.

The **Sadhu Bela Udasin** Ashram was found in 1823 in Sukkur and is one of the most revered and visited temples for Hindus throughout India and Pakistan. It is located in an island at the centre of the Indus amidst picturesque surroundings.



Lansdowne Bridge: was considered a wonder of mechanical construction and had the longest rigid girder bridge in the world in the 19th century when it was built by the British. The arch was built in 1960-62 and is called the Ayub Arch. The bridge is the first "railway desk slung on coiled wire rope suspenders.



The Seven Sister's Tomb: Satian jo asthan is a cave with seven marked graves, said to be the resting place of seven sisters who had come and camped here during the days of Raja Dahir. When his drunken soldiers attacked them and their honour was threatened, they prayed to God and were buried there in their piety.



Khwaja Khair Khizr's (Darya Laal) shrine was equally claimed by both Muslims and Hindus until 1894 as their own. The shrine is said to have been built in memory of Khwaja Khizr, whose blessings enabled the daughter of a visiting merchant from Delhi to escape the evil intentions of the ruling King. The father decided to build a monument.



The **Sukkur Barrage** was built during the early 1900s and controls the flow of water to the largest irrigation system in the world through a system of iron gates. The iron works were made in London and brought to Karachi from Bombay.



Faiz Mahal depicts the grandeur of the Mughal era. Built in 1798 as the family palace for the rulers, it is still the family home of the descendants, although the Talpur Mirs ascended to Pakistan in 1956.



❖ Day Four - Garhi Khuda Bakhsh, Mohenjo-daro and back

Garhi Khuda Bakhsh: is a village in Ratodero noted mainly for the burial place of Zulfiqar, Murtaza, and Benazir Bhutto's mausoleum. It was founded by Khuda Bakhsh Khan Bhutto, the ancestor of Bhutto clan.



Back to Khairpur and night stay at the guest house

Mohenjo-daro: a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1980, these are ruins of one of the oldest Indus Valley civilisations that date back to 2600 years BC. They were discovered in 1922 and excavations show remarkably advanced urban planning systems.



Lunch at Dadu: On way to Karachi from Mohenjo-daro via Indus Highway, the group will stop for lunch at Dadu city.

Shopping of Hala Handicrafts: Hala is the home of a remarkable variety of traditional crafts and traditional handicrafts that carry with them centuries of skills. Hala's artisans manufacture high-quality and impressively priced wooden handicrafts,

textiles, paintings, handmade paper products, and blue pottery.



Pay tributes to Hazrat Shah Abdul Latif Bhitai: Shah Bhitai is said to be the greatest poet of Sindhi language, and a well-known sufi, mystic and scholar of the 17th century. He developed a large following during his lifetime, due to his piety, writings and ascetic lifestyle. His mausoleum stands in Bhit shah where a three-day urs, which is also a literary festival, is held every year.



Group Options: If you wish to book a particular group, you must book at least eight persons in that group. For availing student concession, the group size should be at least 20 persons

Group number: tours will operate when a minimum of 8 persons have confirmed their bookings.

Accommodation: in comfortable, spacious bedrooms in the guesthouse with all basic facilities. The rooms will be allocated on twin-sharing basis. Families can avail extra beds facility for children.

Tour Guide: An IRC staff member will accompany groups all the way from Karachi to ensure a smooth journey, while other IRC offices will facilitate stop overs and trips throughout the journey.

Price: includes travel throughout four days from and to homes in Karachi, three meals and evening tea, and a comfortable stay at the guesthouse. However, the guests will pay for room service, additional snacks, mineral water etc. Price per person for the 4-day tour is Rs 20,000. Special discount of Rs 2000 per person will be given to a group of four (4) or more. Children below the age of 4 will be taken free of cost and up to 12 years of age at a discount of 25 %. Payment will be taken either in cash or through crossed cheque in the name of **Indus Resource Centre**, when confirmation of the booking is made on phone or email.

Special Tariff for Student Groups: For student groups, a special discount is offered. A group of 25 students and two or three faculty members can be accommodated easily, provided 5 students share a room. The rates for such groups will be Rs 12,000 per person for a minimum group size of 20 for all the above-mentioned facilities and services. Special program can also be designed on the request.

Climate: The weather is pleasant during the winter; temperatures vary between 24-18 degree C during the day and 3-8 degree C during the night. Since this is essentially an outdoor tour, so come prepared with walking shoes, a sun hat/block and stock up on crisps and nuts.

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