



Aroon & Kusum visit Kutch

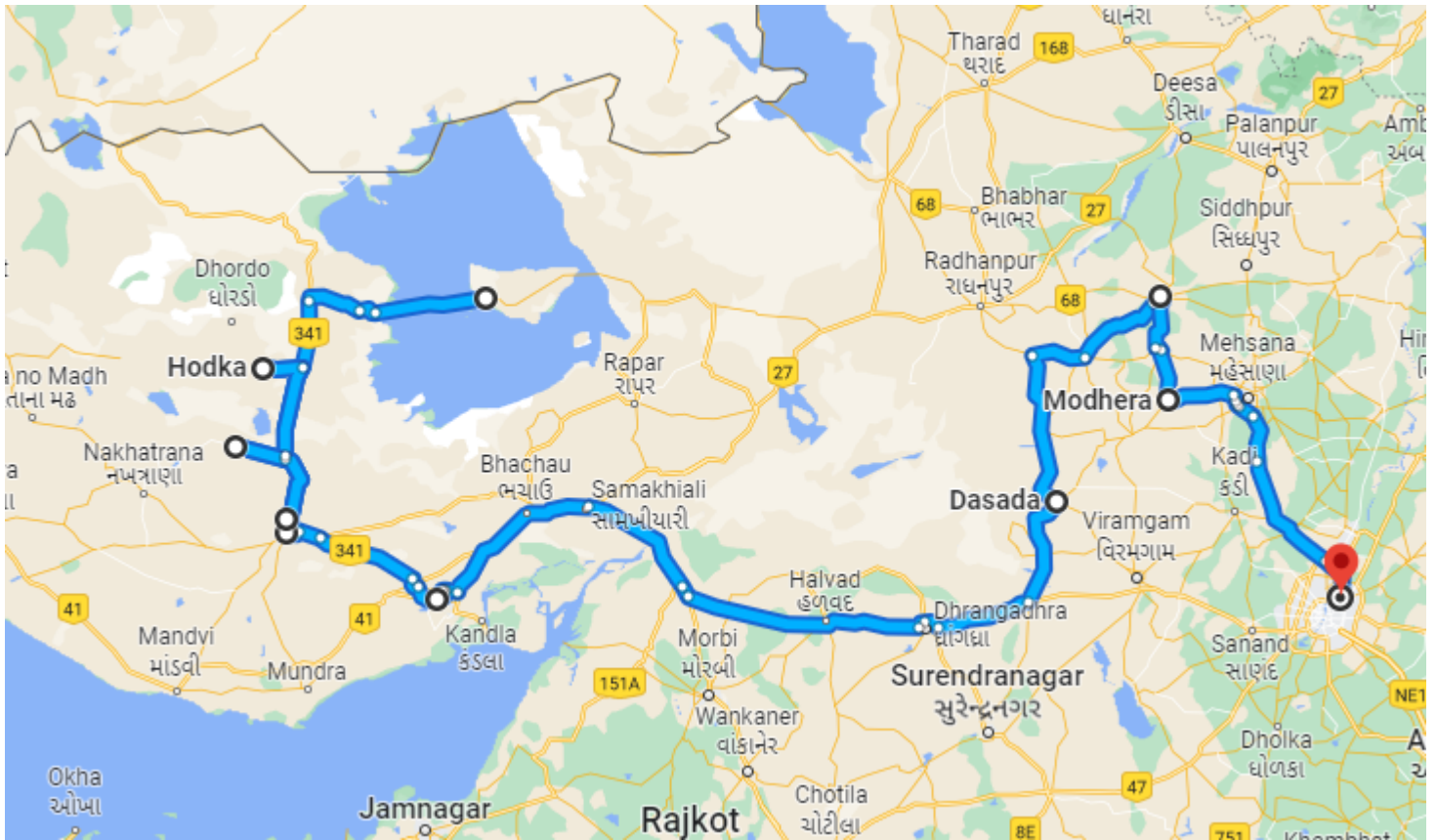
February 3rd–February 9th 2024



Come indulge in a rich, diverse cultural journey, complete with historical context, wrapped with local interactions and cuisine with Breakaway

A journey filled with new friendships, fonder appreciation & understanding on Indian textiles and memories worth a thousand counts.

Date	Location	Hotel	Activities	No of nights
Feb 3 rd	Mumbai--Bhuj--Dholavira	https://www.rannresortdholavira.com/	flight from Mumbai at 6:10am arrival at 8:20am. Drive to Dholavira Resort. Visit Fossil park , Dholavira. Sunset at Great Rann	1
Feb 4 th	Hodka	https://www.hodka.in/	Visit the Great Rann again in the morning if you wish Textile Interactions: Nirona for Rogan painting, bell metal craft, Kalaraksha in Sumrasar for their work with Embroideries , and a Pako embroidery community	1
Feb 5 th	Hodka--Bhuj	https://www.thebhujhouse.com/	Bhuj Aina Mahal, Parag Mahal, lake, market. Temples---Shree Swaminarayan Temple Bhuj (Bhuj Mandir), Tapkeshwari temple(9 kms) & Trimandir Textile interactions to see Ajrakh, extra weft weaving, natural dyeing, the LLDC Museum, visit Shrujan, SIDR, Khamir, Champa Siju and Madam Hall. Kharad Rug Weaving, Single ikat, Salim bhai vintage textile collections.	3
Feb 6 th	Bhuj			
Feb 7 th				
Feb 8 th	Bhuj---Adipur--Dasada		Museum Of Sindhiology, Sindh settlement at Adipur	1
Feb 9 th	Dasada--Patan--Modhera--Ahmedabad		Patan Stepwell, Salvi family to see dbl Ikat Patan Patola, Modhera Sun temple. From Ahmedabad Indigo flight at 19:35, reach Mumbai 21:05	



Location	Approx distance	Approx time taken
Bhuj airport to Dholavira Resort	123 kms	2.15 hrs
Resort--part of Great Rann	10--15 mins walk	
Resort--Dholavira	4 kms	15 mins
Resort--Hodka	84 kms	1:45 hrs
Hodka--Nirona	53 kms	1 hr
Nirona--Bhuj	40 kms	1 hr
Bhuj--Adipur	52 kms	1.5 hrs
Adipur--Dasada	237 kms	4.5 hrs
Dasada--Patan	81 kms	1.45 hrs
Patan--Modhera	33 kms	1 hr
Modhera--Ahmedabad airport	93 kms	2 hrs

Journeys are about self-discovery and the discovery of new places, people, cultures and traditions.

Get into the heart of India. Experience one of the most appreciated traditions while meeting the finest craftsman and connecting with the stories that have kept traditions that date back to the 15th century alive. Taste the exquisite cultures of rural India while travelling through the corridors of India's textile rich states.

Come to explore a land where opulence is woven into rich silks and cottons and where the *finer things* are detailed in the embroidery of the most elegant garments and accessories. Chats and interactive visits with a textile design expert and local artisans nurture our understanding of the various weaving and printing techniques and historical context as it shapes India's contemporary textile culture. Reflective in the art, framed in old forts and sold in the local markets, we channel our way through these places with experienced textile designers and scholars.

Unique to Breakaway is our network of storytellers - a bunch of multi faceted domain experts in different fields, be it textile design, regional cuisine, wellness, or creative writing, all intrepid travelers at heart who help us see rather than look , listen rather than hear and quietly sculpt our trip with an unimaginable dimension.

They pack their passion , years of experience in the industry of trade, design and production and individual experiences into our interactions

Explore the rich, historic heartlands of India and discover the most lavish and intricate displays of hand block printing and embroidery traditions native to India. Breakaway offers an immersive interaction with the craft communities that will leave you asking for more...

The notion of culture of India and its textiles is interwoven. Nothing quite like the insightful embrace of one of India's most respected and valued cultures - textiles. Breakaway takes you on a journey to meet textile craft communities in Gujarat..

It begins at Bhuj. A meeting with artisans in Bhuj allow us to spiral into discussions on traditional printing and weaving techniques and embroidery styles. As we surround ourselves by looms, blocks , colorful yarns and threads , Breakaway offers a chance to get up close and personal with the craft community as they share some of their challenges with us. Captivating real-life experiences of the local textile craftsmen, offers a deeper, richer journey into the quality of craftsmanship Gujarati textile is all about.

We partner with Khamir and Shrujan to provide unique encounters with bell metal and leather craftsmen and crafts women working on sustaining the traditional embroidery of the Mochi Bharat (cobbler's stitch) and Rabari techniques unique to Gujarat. Interactions are hosted at Khamir and Shrujan, responsible for providing a sustainable means of income generation for over 3,000 women in over 100 villages in the region.

To add onto our creative pursuits and textile inspiration, meet a textile intellectual, who walks us through a tie-dye technique known as Bandhani, and another who works with Ajrakh , another very elaborate form of traditional natural dyed printing.

We then set our eyes on the most exquisite hand embroidered and patch worked garments and accessories, using only natural fibers and dyes at a grassroots enterprise committed to preserving the traditional arts and textile of Kutch.



Day 1: Feb 3rd : Dholavira

Arrival from Mumbai at 8:20am, the get into your waiting car (Innova Crysta) along with your guide & drive down straight to Dholavira . Stay at a very simple resort . After resting a bit leave for archaeological site (Harappan site) of Dholavira (3 kms away)

Dholavira is the larger of the two most remarkable excavations of the Indus Valley Civilization or Harappan culture, dating back to 4500 years ago. Crumbling walls of this citadel stand silently in the burning sun as an array of subterranean nocturnal creatures slither, scuttle and flap their way through its gutters and reservoirs. There is a small museum which houses old relics and excavated findings from the site.

Located 10 km away from Dholavira is **Fossil Park**. The park was established in 2002 by Visionary Mohan Sinh Sodha. He is the man who worked single-handedly and continuously added different fossil collections which are displayed in the exhibition area of two small rooms. There are many interesting fossils shown in this place. There is a collection of more than 10,000 specimens of fossils here.

Back to the resort for a simple lunch.

In the evening visit part of **Rann of Kutch** which is just behind your resort. Enjoy the sunset on the white desert. Time permitting other places you can visit here **Karni Mata Mandir & BSF check post**.

Dinner at your resort.

Day 2: Feb 4th : Hodka



After breakfast drive down to Hodka.. Stay at an eco village resort.

Visit a renowned quilter Ramji bhai, in Hodko. **Ramji Bhai** works with fine Ajrakh prints and converts them into traditional gudri quilts and bedcovers. Here we also see indigenous mud homes decorated by women, with a royal color sensibility and embedded with mirrors for a touch of local glamour.

Along with your guide visit a village which is the home of **Paako Embroidery**. Kutch is home to a range of embroidery styles such as Paako, Rabari & Suf which are unique to diverse communities that live here-the Rabaris, Ahirs, Mutwas etc. Paako is distinct to Meghwar community.

Simple gujarati lunch at the resort. Post lunch visit **Kalo Dungar** (Black Hill) which marks Kutch's highest point (462 m).

Evening will be spent at the **Great Rann of Kutch**. Much of it consists of one of the world's largest salt desert, measuring about 10,000 square kilometers (3,800 square miles). What makes it even more amazing is that the salt desert is underwater during the main monsoon season. For the remaining eight months of the year, it's an enormous stretch of packed white salt.

Soak in the spirit of the Rann. As you wait for moonlight, you realise, the sun, moon and stars have fascinated humankind since time immemorial. Aside from giving us a measure of time and geographical orientation, celestial bodies feed our imagination. Gazing into the night sky, you sense the vastness of the universe and mysteries beyond your comprehension. Back to the resort for dinner & some much needed rest.

Days 3, 4 & 5 : Feb 5th, 6th & 7th: Bhuj



After breakfast leave for Bhuj. On the way visit Nirona village to see **Rogan art**. The tradition of Rogan art is sustained by the last Abdul Gafur family in Nirona village. It has evolved from being a decorative art to today a unique intricate fine art. **Metal bells** give voice to centuries old craft tradition that the Muslim lohar community brought to Bhuj from Sindh. These metal bells are used to decorate the necks of cattle, camel, sheep and goat. Bells chimed their way into Kutch from Sindh centuries ago, tied to the necks of migrating cattle.

We now going to head out to visit **Kalaraksha** in Sumrasar, Kala Raksha Trust, a grassroots social enterprise, is dedicated to preservation of traditional arts. Uniquely committed to documenting existing traditions, the Trust maintains a collection of heirloom textiles housed as a local Museum. Artisans participated in establishing this Museum. Thus it embodies a simple but revolutionary concept: involve people in presenting their own cultures. Also **visit the leather artisans** of Bhuj. Then drive down straight to your homestay, a 19th-century courtyard house located in the erstwhile Parsi district of Bhuj. It is the ancestral home of the Bhujwala family, who restored the house in 2015 and opened it as a heritage homestay with four guest rooms and a delightful courtyard pantry, serving traditional Parsi and local cuisine.

Jabbar Khatri, a textile intellectual who walks you through a tie-dyeing technique known as Bandhani, a laborious all hand done tie-dye printing process. His take on Bandhani (SIDR) with a contemporary color palette is just breathtakingly beautiful

Salim Bhai whose father was an avid textile collector cum expert, and look at some of his collections dating back to the late 1800 and early 1900s, not just in the rabari embroidery styles but also the most exquisite phulkaris and kanthas. Food for the soul truly. Lunch at his place.

Bhuj



Bhuj Contd..

Madam Hall, passionate about creating and working with local artisans, in 2012 Lisa packed her bags, took her 3 Aussie cats and her sewing machine and moved to Bhuj from Australia, to begin a new life designing exclusively with Kutch hand crafts.

Lisa Hall, better known as Madame Hall, has a studio in Bhuj, a place where you can come and have a chat about your trip, meet her and see how she transforms Kutch handicrafts into fashionable clothing. You'll find something new, different and exquisitely crafted by Madame Hall herself nearly everyday...you'll never see another quite like it because all the materials used to create a 'Madame Hall' are unique and/or vintage and simply....unrepeatable.

Lisa also has a stunning collection of Silver tribal jewelry, most of it is vintage.

Dr. Ismail Khatri, masters in Ajrakh and a pioneer in the art. Ajrakh literally means aaj ke din rakh, or 'keep it for today' because that is what the process is. At every stage of the tedious dying process, the fabric should dry for three to four days. Nature plays an important role in the making of Ajrakh. Craftsmen work in total harmony with their environment, where the sun, river, animals, trees, & mud are all part of its making.

You will see **Ralli quilts** at some of the places you are visiting. Traditionally, patchwork rallis are the most common ones found on the village beds throughout Sindh. They are made from small pieces of hand dyed fabric either torn or cut into geometric shapes.

A visit to **Kasab**, in Bhuj, another grassroots enterprise committed to preserving the traditional arts and craft of Kutch, reveals the most exquisite hand embroidered wall art, cushions and accessories



The Living and Learning Design Centre (LLDC), a pioneering new effort of the **Shrujan** Trust to preserve, revitalize and promote the glorious craft heritage of Kutch. Dedicated to the craftspeople of Kutch, LLDC is envisioned as a multi-dimensional crafts education and resource centre. It is situated on a three-building, eight-acre campus in Ajrakhpur, Kutch. LLDC aims to train, educate and support craftsperson to practice their traditional crafts for contemporary markets so that they can earn a dignified and prosperous livelihood. Also visit Satish Reddy & Kirit Project. Take a break at the LLDC café.

After our interactions, we drive down to **Khamir**, it means 'intrinsic pride' in Kachchhi, the local language. In Hindi it means 'to ferment,' an equally apt name given the constant fermentation of ideas and activity on going both within the organization, and in Kachchh at large. It serves as a platform for the promotion of traditional handicrafts and allied cultural practices, the processes involved in their creation, and the preservation of culture, community and local environments. Lunch with the team at Khamir, we spend time looking at other crafts that Kutch is also home to - wood, leather, pottery, and metal crafts. Lunch at Khamir.

Visit Samat Tejsi to see **Kharad weaving**, another form of weaving which is fast going extinct. For generations, kharad rugs were woven from camel, goat & sheep wool on traditional nomadic looms which could be easily set up & moved throughout the desert. The rugs' geometric designs replicate regional patterns & motifs. There are only two remaining families in Kutch who practice this craft.

Also visit **Champa Siju**, a young weaver from Avadh Nagar, close to Bhuj. Hailing from a family of weavers, Champa took keen interest in weaving at a young age & now she is using her loom to create art, most specifically using landscapes to become woven pictures.

In the past Champa used to weave conventional handloom products like her ancestors did for generations and sell them. Her husband and in laws still carry on with the traditional bhujodi weaving this area is well known for. But she does what she hopes to make into a flourishing career : artworks, runners, special bags. And she uses Instagram to show the world!



After early breakfast, we head to Bhujodi in the heart of Kutch to see the exquisite work at Shyamji Bhai's place.

Spiral into discussions on traditional pit looms and shuttle looms and hear from **Shyamji Vankar**, about the challenges faced by the vankars known for their extra weft wool weaving. Lunch with Shyamji.

Mr. Dharamshi Maheshwari has earned a distinct name and reputation in the field of making Single Ikat Patola Weaving, which is considered as one of the most intricate handloom weaving art. This is the only family involved in practicing this weave.

Patola is the most distinctive pattern of hand weaving Silk Cloth. It takes intense concentration of mind and skill to weave Patola material. Each thread is designed with different pattern and color on each thread is twinned by hand so that it matches exactly on horizontal and vertical threads in weaving on loom.

There is a Proverb...

“PADI PATOLE BHAT, FATE PAN FITE NAHI”

Means- “The design laid down in patola shall never fade even if cloth may be torn.





Bhuj

Visit **Aina Mahal**, also known as Hall of Mirrors. Master craftsman Ramsinh Malam, who trained as an artisan for 17 years in Europe, felt unappreciated by lesser rulers in the area, so he went to the royal court at Bhuj and appealed to the king for work, who commissioned this palace. Malam designed it in a mixed Indo-European style and set about creating the materials for the palace locally. He personally crafted the fountains, mirrors and glasswork, as well as many other wonders of artisanship—a pendulum clock in sync with the Hindu calendar, doors inlaid with gold and ivory... & more. Located next to it is Prag Mahal. A palace built in 19th century.

Indulge in some street shopping & visit Bhuj local market. Enjoy the sunset at Bhuj lake & check out **KCC shop** (Kutch Craft Collective is a collaborative of five leading craft organisations of Bhuj). before going back to the homestay.



Temples you will be visiting in Bhuj—

Bhuj is one of the six places where Lord Shree Swaminarayan constructed the temple Himself. The Gujarat Earthquake of January 2001 destroyed much of the city of Bhuj, including the side of the temple facing north which was built by Lord Shree Swaminarayan. Miraculously the divine idols remained as they were, without any damage whatsoever. A magnificent temple has been reconstructed using traditional Vedic architectural methods, on the banks of Hamirsar Lake. Expanding a 35,000 sq. feet area, this Temple has 7 sky touching pinnacles. It consists of one central dome, 25 minor domes and 258 pillars. The peripheries, which are beautifully carved into the icy marble of Makrana and Ambaji, give it heavenly beauty, serenity and the divine approach to the temple.

Tapkeshwari Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to goddess Tapkeshwari situated in a valley surrounded by the hills.(12 kms away). The name of the temple comes from the Gujarati word "tapakvu," which means "to drop." Spoken history states that this used to be the site of a year-round spring, causing water to "drop" down the cliff walls. No spring is present today.

Param Pujya Dadashri proposed **Trimandir** to honor Gods of Jainism, Shaivism, and Vaishnavism (along with Gods and Goddesses from other religions) with equal reverence on the same platform. Sharing equal reverence on the same platform, the idols of Gods of Jainism, Shaivism, and Vaishnavism (along with Gods and Goddesses from other religions) can be found within the temple. The idol of Lord Shree Simandhar Swami sits at the center, made entirely of marble and is 151 inches high.

Day 6: Feb 8th: Bhuj – Adipur--Dasada

After breakfast , leave to visit any textile interactions you've yet to cover from your list.

After early Gujarati thali lunch in Bhuj, perhaps at Hotel Prince, (or simple South indian fare at Sankalp) leave for Adipur to visit **Indian Institute of Sindhology** . Kachchh has had historical links with Sindh; a long coast and greater portion of desert of Kachchh. It is said that many Sindhis used to visit Narayan Sarovar and Koteswar temples in Kachchh as this was considered to be a holy pilgrimage for Hindu Sindhis. The land of Kachchh and its people have affinity with Sindhi language; the local language of the region is considered to be one of the dialects of Sindhi. So it is quite plausible to visualize this land providing much needed notional matrubhumi for Sindhis who have now heralded it as the only place in India where one smells the fragrance of the soil of Sindh

Established in October, 1989, the Indian Institute of Sindhology (I.I.S.) is a centre for advanced studies and research in the fields related to Sindhi Language, Literature, Education, Art and Culture. Its primary aim is to preserve and promote the Cultural heritage of Sindhi Community and ensure its continuity by disseminating it in the younger generation.

Art Gallery/ Museum

More than thousand photographs and paintings in the art gallery display the history, geography of Sindh as well Culture of Sindhi Community along with portraits of prominent Sindhi personalities and the places of Sindh, it has been divided in following sections at present :

- Mohen-jo-Daro
- History of Sindh
- Sindhi Renaissance
- Participation of Sindhis in Freedom struggle
- Leaders who participated in Sindh's separation from Bombay presidency.
- Sindhi Martyrs
- Sindh Assembly
- Stage Artists
- Jhulelal's Amar Chitra Katha
- Shah – Sachal – Sami
- Saints of Sindh
- Sufis of Sindh
- Sindhi Writers
- Sindhi Members of Parliament
- Prominent Sindhis, awarded Padam Shri & Padam Bhushan

After all these visits leave for Dasada, **for an experience of the Little Rann of Kutch**. Your stay is at beautifully renovated Rann Riders resort. On the way you can visit a weaver to see Tangaliya weaving. **Tangaliya** is 700 years old traditional hand weaving technique,

Day 07, Feb 9th :Dasada—Patan— Modhera--Ahmedabad



A 6:00 am morning start is fit for a 2 hour safari. Around the **Little Rann of Kutch**, an Indian Wild Ass Sanctuary rich in biodiversity. After spotting some White-footed Desert Foxes, Striped Hyenas and Golden Jackal, we settle down for breakfast before checking out.

Visit to **Patan Step Well**, a storage system using steps to reach the water despite high or low water levels, often covered and a curious architectural interest.

Visit the Salvi family – they are the only ones weaving the **double ikat patan patola** in natural dyes, an art handed down in the family since the 11th century (Approx. 35 generations). Lunch at the home of the Salvi family

A quick stop over at the **Sun Temple in Modhera &** straight to Ahmedabad airport for your return flight at 19:35 p,

Your soiree with Gujarat ends here, this is truly just the tip of the iceberg, but it's a beginning.

Now put down that brochure and come discover the unseen natural riches of one of India's most bountiful states. Come, Breakaway.

Cost : will be shared once we have the confirmation on the itinerary

Includes:

- A 6N/7D program ex Bhuj inclusive of breakfast , stay as per plan on single room basis (2 rooms). Dinners included everywhere
- Your interactions with weaver and printers/communities and designer ateliers across locations
- A chauffeur driven Innova Crysta from the time you are picked up from Bhuj airport till you are dropped to Ahmedabad airport at the end of the trip, including driving to all locations for all visits in all places
- A guide with you throughout, who knows the communities in the region and has been chosen for his intimacy with the environment and who can make a difference to the appreciation of where you are.
- One jeep safari at Dasada

Excludes:

- 5% GST
- Domestic flights ((will be booked and billed separately)
- Airport transfers in Mumbai
- Lunches except where mentioned. Please note the guide will eat lunch with you when you are out for the day.
- 24/7 emergency medical/security evacuation services
- Shopping, Tips & Gratuities in hotels, to guides and driver
- Alcoholic beverages
- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, telephone calls, Internet/business centre expenses, spa/salon services and room service;
- Excess baggage / courier charges
- Prescription medications required for travel
- Cost incurred due to change / extension in the itinerary due to roadblocks, bad weather condition, flight delays, vehicle breakdowns, (time taken for replacement of the vehicle) etc