

**Escape** Travel | Culture | Adventure



**Bejewelled:** The ornate beauty of traditional Rajasthani dress



**Wow factor:** Spend a night at the awe-inspiring Falaknuma Palace



**Fruits of the loom:** Get a feel for pashmina wool and visit Kashmir

A brand new exhibition at the V&A celebrates the vivid textile makers of India. **Richard Mellor** is inspired to take a holiday

**Travel with an expert**

THE V&A's exhibition is co-curated by specialist Rosemary Crill and it's she who lectures on a special, 13-day tour with Steppes Travel next year. Departing 5 November 2016, Textiles And Artisans Of Gujarat And Hyderabad focuses on little-visited, semi-arid northwestern Indian regions known for their incredible craftsmanship. Stand-outs include a final-night stay at the towering Taj Falaknuma Palace, surely India's most ornate hotel, plus special permits for access to Banni villages famed for elaborate mirror decorations, a meeting with tie-dye specialists from Bhuj and a guided tour around the world-renowned Calico Museum Of Textiles – a pulse-quickenng pilgrimage site for any Indian fabric fan.

*From £4,620, including flights, accommodation and most meals, [steppestravel.co.uk](http://steppestravel.co.uk)*

**Mumbai movers**

IN Mumbai, India's unofficial fashion capital, Cazenove & Loyd offers a day package allowing visitors exclusive access to key industry figures. Begin by meeting buyers at Bombay Electric, one of the country's most forward-thinking fashion houses – a haunt of Bollywood stars and the place where Liz Hurley launched her beachwear



# Spin a yarn



**Mumbai marvellous:** Liz Hurley launched her beachwear collection at Bombay Electric

collection. After going behind-the-scenes as next season's lines are decided upon, have lunch with a top fashion blogger and then explore the

workshops of two designers, who'll each be on hand to reveal their ideas and inspirations. Personal shoppers can also be arranged for those hitting the stores.

*The Fashion Scene experience day from £270. Personal shoppers from £200pp per day. Five-nights in Mumbai from £880pp inc flights, transfers and B&B at the Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, [cazloyd.com](http://cazloyd.com)*

**Pashmina paradiso**

INDIAN slow-travel firm Breakaway specialises in authentic, immersive trips such as a six-day Kashmir By Hand small-group adventure that will introduce visitors to

pashmina wool amid the country's far, Himalayan-edged north. They are only available between April and October, so get in quick or plan a trip for 2016.

And talk about fine: pashmina fibres are one-tenth as wide as human hairs. Along with watching artisans meticulously create shawls – meditatively chanting in Persian as they go – guests explore the floating markets and busy backstreets of Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar, day-hike across an idyllic wildlife reserve and see poetry-writing woodcarvers at work. Make room in your tummy for vast Wazwan feasts – a Kashmiri speciality often spanning 40 dishes, including



Over 5,000 seats at  
**£49\***

Including flights to Dalaman, Lanzarote & Tenerife

Over 1,500 seats at  
**£99\***

to Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt

& 1,000s of holidays from £239pp\*

**Hurry**  
sale ends midday  
**Tomorrow**

For travel October - December 2015

For great service book now at [Monarch.co.uk](http://Monarch.co.uk)



**Making shapes:**  
A silk weaver at work in Darasuram



**Eye openers:** Eye-catching saris at the V&A; below, ornate decoration is everywhere in Rajasthan



**Perfect reflection:** See traditional mirror decorations being made when you visit Banni villages

# for yourself in India

meatballs, kebabs and curries – as well as in your suitcase for irresistible garments purchased direct from weavers.

*From £713 inc transfers, most meals, homestay and houseboat accommodation and guiding, break-away.in*

## Bag a bargain suit

WITH its cheap labour costs, India's a classic destination for picking up a low-cost, high-quality, made-to-measure suit that fits like a glove. The country's biggest cities, Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi, are your surest bets; the well-established Raymond outlets in all three are reliable. Better still, make friends with locals in your destination and request their tips – but don't ask taxi drivers



**Make some shapes:** Take part in block-printing workshops in Jaipur

or concierges, as they'll be on commission from chums and you'll end up with a sorry excuse for a suit. Choose a fabric grade above 110 to

ensure quality and bring a photo to demonstrate your desired styling. Expect to pay £150-250 per suit, and to have to wait a couple of days.

## Jaipur block party

ON Colouricious's eight-day trip to Rajasthan's 'Pink City' of Jaipur, guests don't just learn about the block-printing technique; they also take part in at least four workshops using paints and muds to actually undertake this ancient printmaking form. Held in rural villages, classes cover authentic carving, embroidery and bandhani dyeing. Ample time is also reserved for shopping – including meetings with tailors and the opportunity to visit Babu Bazar – and for a tour of Jaipur's premier landmark, the palatial Amer Fort.

*From £1,995, inc flights, transport, accommodation, most meals and workshops, colouricious.com*

## A trip down Silk Road

EVER seen silk weavers at work? It's a mesmerising experience, and one available in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. Wholly authentic, the small town of Darasuram is essentially a silk-weaving colony – visitors are readily invited into locals' houses to witness how saris are precisely formed using traditional raised-pit looms.

Before that, silk skeins are dyed in the streets, pools of vivid colour collecting

everywhere. Equally impressive of course is Darasuram's plant-ringed, Unesco-protected Airavatesvara temple, complete with a pyramid-like crown and exquisitely detailed

carvings. Stay nearby at the riverside eco-resort of Mantra Veppathur, set among coconut plantations and boasting a spa and pool.

*Real Holidays has 12-day Tamil Nadu trips featuring Mantra from £1,675 including flights, transport, B&B and a guided Darasuram tour, realholidays.co.uk*

**The V&A's new Fabric Of India exhibition features 200 objects illustrating textile-making skills via dyeing, weaving and embroidery. vam.ac.uk**



91% of customers rate our service as good or excellent. Based on over 300,000 independent reviews on Feefo.com since December 2013. \*Terms and conditions apply. See website for more details. Holidays prices are subject to availability, per person and based on 2 adults staying 7 nights. Many of the flights and flight-inclusive holidays in this advert are financially protected by the ATOL scheme. But ATOL protection does not apply to all holiday and travel services listed in this advert. Please ask us to confirm what protection may apply to your booking. If you do not receive an ATOL Certificate then the booking will not be ATOL protected. If you do receive an ATOL Certificate but all the parts of your trip are not listed on it, those parts will not be ATOL protected. Please see our booking conditions for information, or for more information about financial protection and the ATOL Certificate go to: [www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate](http://www.atol.org.uk/ATOLCertificate)