

Ride the Great Indian Desert Rajasthan

WHY GO?

The stark desertscape of Rajasthan, once home to the powerful maharajas, is among India's most arresting natural and cultural destinations. The area is so isolated that many villages lack adequate medical services. "Exploring the historic palaces and forts is a key part of our trips," says Alexander Souri, founder of Relief Riders International (RRI), a humanitarian-minded outfitter that journeys to far-flung parts of the subcontinent. "But so is giving back to the local people." Riding Marwari

horses (the famous warrior steeds of the maharajas), guests on RRI's trips visit Rajasthan's architectural wonders while delivering supplies and medical aid. Since 2004 the outfitter has treated 8,400 villagers for cataracts—the region's leading cause of blindness. "The most frequent comment we get from people who have joined our expeditions is how much the experience changes their lives," says Souri.

NEED TO KNOW

Prior relief work or medical

experience is not required, but you do need basic horseback skills to handle four hours of riding a day. To assuage any saddle aches, guests spend nights in 1800s-style canvas tents, dining on regional cuisine and resting in comfortable beds.

DAYS: 15

OUTFITTER:

www.reliefridersinternational.com

COST: \$5,950

