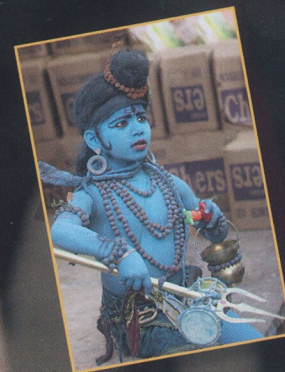


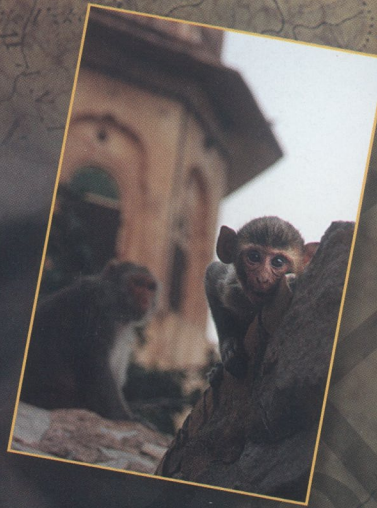
We also walked through the part of the desert separated as the trading grounds, and saw Nomadic Gypsy camps from all over Rajasthan. There were snake charmers, puppet makers, musicians, and dancing children. Food was cooked out on open fires, and camel deals were struck. Strict Hindu ethic dictates that no meat be eaten, and any form of alcohol is forbidden. We blessed our family and friends at the edge of a lake in Pushkar and gratefully went to sleep on our two inch mattress that night.



We journeyed onward to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, a confusing and crowded city. We found our way to the Old City, or "The Pink City" as it's also known, for the bright pink walls that encircle the main bazaars.

Maneuvering through the crowded streets where elephants roamed freely about, we drove around several cows, deemed sacred here. The cows sat stoically and uncooperatively wherever they wanted, even in the middle of the busiest streets.

We drove up the hill to watch the sunset from an ancient fort that overlooked the entire city. At sunset monkeys emerged from the trees and there were entire families of monkeys that jumped along the walls of the fort. It was a captivating and mystical experience. We ended that day at Umaid Bhawan, a hotel with beautiful Indian architecture and carved wood furniture. Roof top dining is common in these parts, and we enjoyed a panoramic view and vegetarian cooking at it finest.



The next part of our journey took us south to a place called Udaipur. We arrived at our hotel, The Amet Haveli, late in the day, just in time to watch the sun set over Lake Pichola. The large arched windows of our room overlooked the lake, the Lake Palace, and the City Palace. The view was breathtaking and we knew we had made a fortunate choice in accommodation. We were further rewarded with a thick mattress that night.

