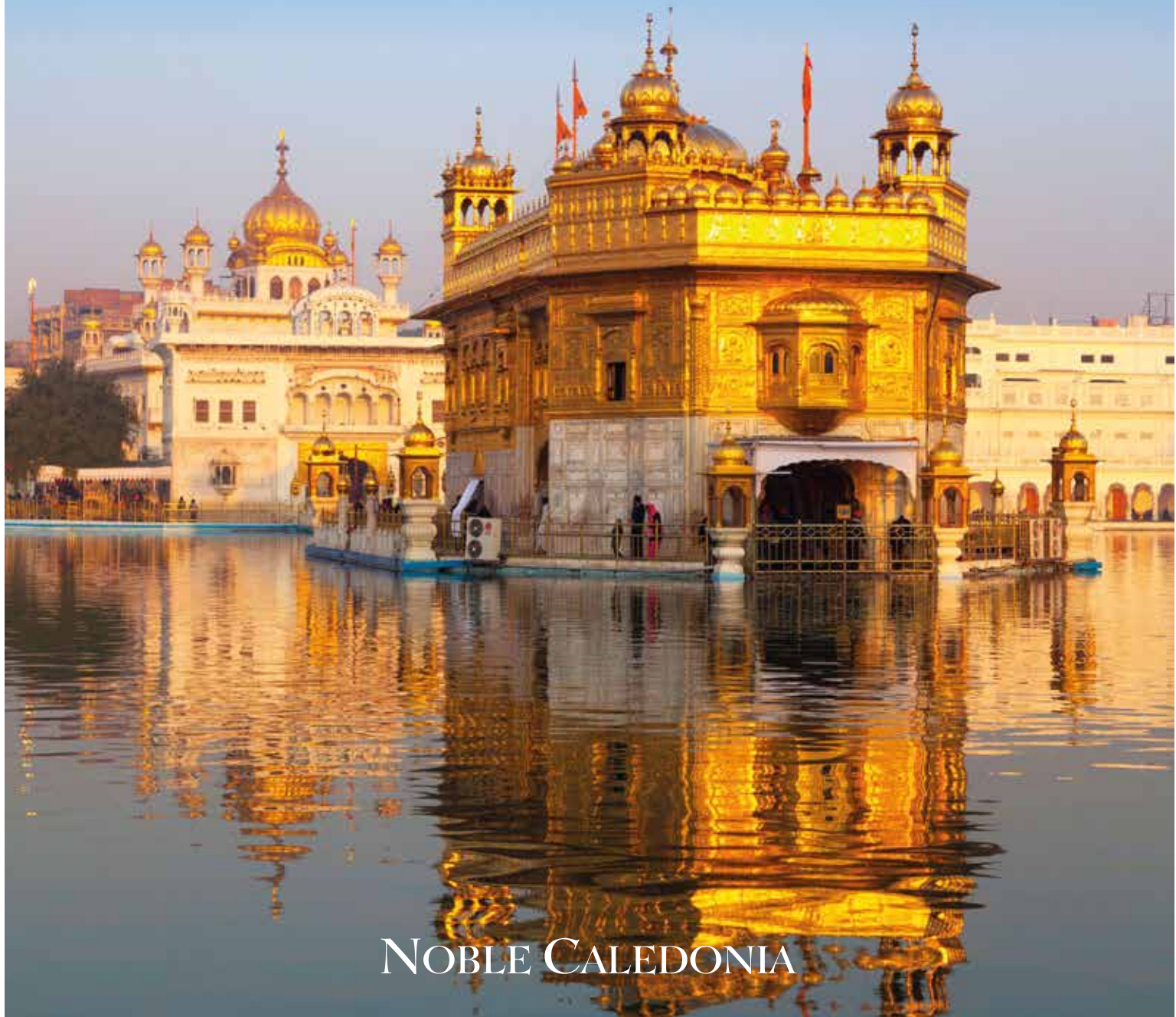


TEMPLES, TIGERS & TRAINS OF NORTHERN INDIA

A LUXURY ESCORTED TOUR INCLUDING THREE NIGHTS
ABOARD THE MAHARAJAS' EXPRESS PRIVATE TRAIN
17TH TO 30TH OCTOBER 2024 & 6TH TO 19TH MARCH 2025



NOBLE CALEDONIA

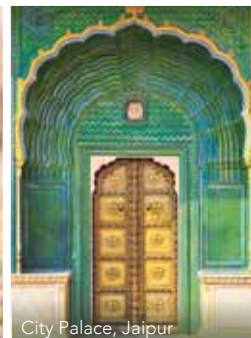
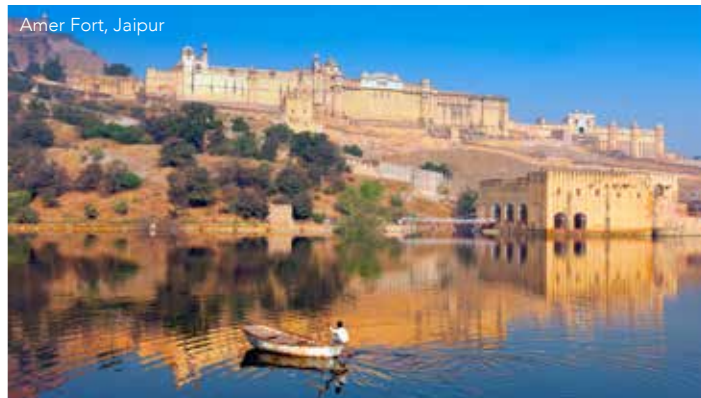
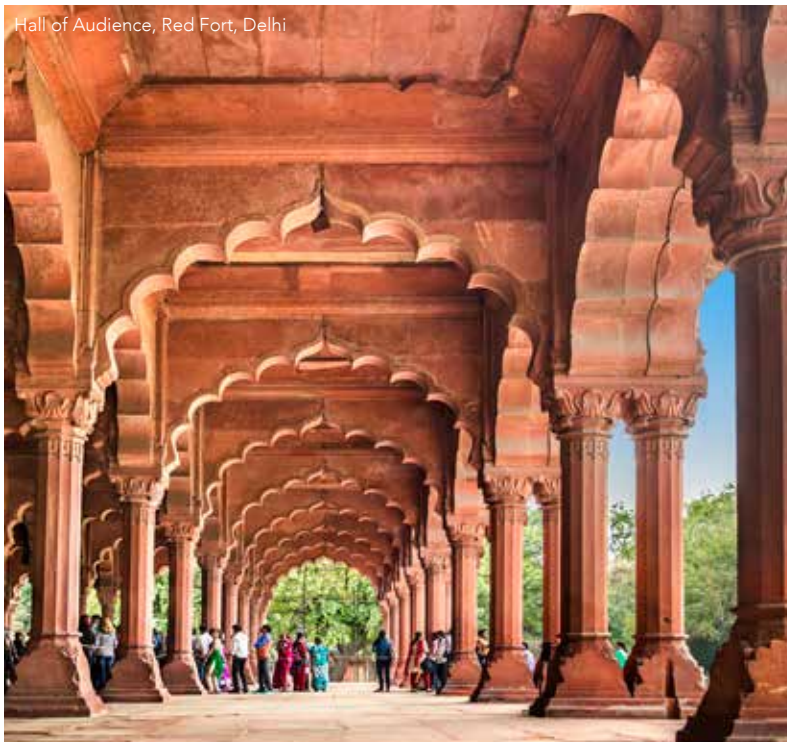
A trip to India is no ordinary travel experience. For a start the sheer size of the subcontinent can be a daunting prospect when considering which region to visit. With this new escorted tour our aim is to show you in some depth the areas we consider to be the most rewarding and the focus of our two week tour will be the north of the country with its magnificent palaces and forts, monuments and temples. All so often it is the unheard of and out of the way places that form the happiest of memories. No amount of travel books or documentaries can prepare you for a trip to India; the sights and sounds of this vibrant and diverse country have to be experienced to be believed.

During our exploration we will learn about the country's cultural, colonial and religious history beginning with a full day to explore India's capital where the Medieval atmosphere of the bazaars of Old Delhi contrasts sharply with the open, spacious streets of New Delhi. From the comfort of the Maharajas' Express private train we will then visit Agra, home to India's most famous monument, the stunning Taj Mahal, and wildlife rich Ranthambore National Park before arriving in Rajasthan at the enchanting pink city of Jaipur. Further north the Punjab offers the Sikhs' holy city of Amritsar with its fabled Golden Temple and the modern city of Chandigarh which was designed by Le Corbusier. Our final days will be spent in the Himalayas at the hill resort of Shimla, the summer capital of India before independence, which is surrounded by beautiful landscapes and has retained its old-world charm.

In our view, India needs to be absorbed slowly and at eye-level in order for the experience to be enjoyable and enlightening and we have selected a number of modes of transport including three nights aboard the luxurious Maharajas' Express, a jeep safari in Ranthambore National Park in search of the elusive tiger and the toy train from Kalka to Shimla in the foothills of the Himalayas. In addition, for your comfort and enjoyment, we have selected some of the finest accommodation and to enhance your tour further, local historians will join us for dinner at select locations.



Taj Mahal



THE ITINERARY

Day 1 London to Delhi, India. Fly by scheduled flight.

Day 2 Delhi. Arrive today in Delhi, India's largest city which has been one of the country's commercial and economic hubs for centuries and as a result is incredibly rich in culture and history. After clearing immigration, we will transfer to the Maidens Hotel and check in for our two night stay. The remainder of the day is at leisure before we meet tonight for dinner in the hotel. (D)

Day 3 Delhi. After breakfast, we begin our full day city tour of Old and New Delhi including a visit of the 17th century Jama Masjid before a rickshaw ride through the narrow, winding lanes of colourful and bustling Chandni Chowk. See the Mughal Empire's opulent Red Fort, Raj Ghat, where Mahatma Gandhi was cremated, the Presidential Palace, the one-time imperial residence of the British viceroy, and India Gate, a memorial raised in honour of the Indian soldiers martyred during the Afghan war. We end at the Rail Museum, a unique museum that has a fascinating and exotic collection of over 100 real size exhibits of Indian Railways. This evening an Indian railway historian will join us for dinner. (B, L, D)

Day 4 Maharajas' Express & Agra. After an early breakfast we transfer to the railway station to board the luxury Maharajas' Express, our home for the next three nights. After settling into our compartment we will start our journey to Agra, a city that dates back to the Mughals who proclaimed it their capital in 1565. After lunch on the train we see the legendary beauty and the white marble domes of the elegant Taj Mahal. Built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan as an exquisite mausoleum for his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal, Rudyard Kipling described the building as "the embodiment of all things pure". After our visit we return to the train for dinner as we remain overnight in Agra. (B, L, D)

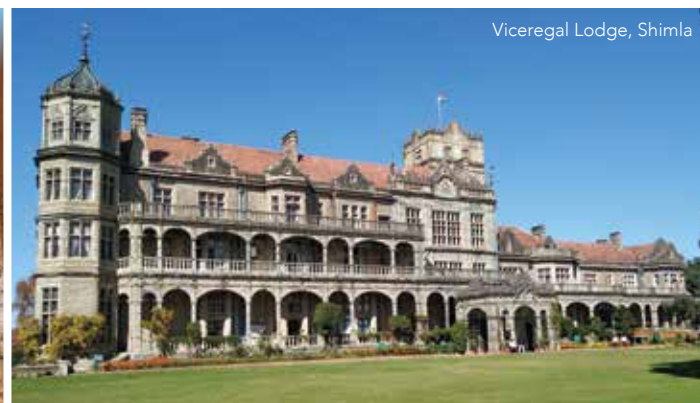
Day 5 Agra Fort & Ranthambore National Park. The early risers can enjoy a dawn visit to Agra Fort, built by the Mughal Emperor Akbar in 1565, before our train departs over breakfast. Spend the morning watching the scenery from the train as we make our way to Ranthambore National Park. Named after the historic Ranthambore fortress, which lies within the park, this used to be the hunting ground of the Maharaja of Jaipur and in 1972 the sanctuary came under the Project Tiger scheme. One of the largest national parks in Northern India, Ranthambore offers some of the finest opportunities for wildlife sightings including the magnificent tiger, basking crocodiles, king vultures, serpent eagle, sloth bears, jackal and hyena or spotted deer which we hope to see on our afternoon safari. Return to the train for dinner as we depart this evening for Jaipur arriving later tonight. (B, L, D)

Day 6 Jaipur. This morning we leave the city to visit the Amer Fort located on the outskirts of Jaipur. The magnificent Amer Fort is an extensive palace complex that has been built with pale yellow and pink sandstone, and white marble, and is a fine example of Rajput architecture. The attractive, opulent palace is laid out on four levels, each with a courtyard. Return to the train for lunch and an afternoon at leisure to explore "the Pink City" at your own pace or join one of the optional excursions offered on board. After dinner at one of the city's palaces we start our journey back to Delhi. (B, L, D)

Day 7 Delhi to Amritsar. Disembark the Maharajas' Express after breakfast and transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to Amritsar. Located in the northern state of Punjab, near the Pakistan border, Amritsar is the holiest city of the Sikh culture and home to the Golden Temple. Arrive this afternoon and transfer to the Taj Swarna Hotel where we check in for our two night stay and enjoy some free time. Those interested may wish to see the evening Palki Ceremony, a daily ritual that takes place twice a day where the Guru Granth Sahib (holy book) is taken from the Golden Temple to the Sri Akal Takht located opposite. (B, D)

Day 8 Amritsar. Our day will start at the Partition Museum before we visit one of the most spiritual places in India, the Golden Temple which, also known as Sri Harmandir Sahib, is the holiest shrine in all of Sikhism. Located right in the heart of Amritsar, the stunning golden architecture of the temple and the daily Langar (community kitchen) attract a large number of visitors and devotees each day. The temple is open to all faiths and serves over 100,000 people from all walks of life with free food. Later we see the Jallianwala Bagh, a historic garden and 'memorial of national importance' close to the Golden Temple complex, preserved in the memory of those wounded and killed in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. After some free time for lunch we visit the Wagah Border, which marks the boundaries between the Indian and Pakistani borders, running along the Grand Trunk Road. The Wagah Border Ceremony, or the Beating Retreat Ceremony, held every day, is the prime attraction. Every evening, just before sunset, the soldiers from the Indian and Pakistan military meet at this border post to engage in a 30 minute display of military camaraderie and showmanship. (B, D)

Day 9 Amritsar to Chandigarh. Check out this morning as we drive (4 hours) to Chandigarh, Punjab's modern capital city and India's first planned city which was designed by Le Corbusier. After checking into the JW Marriott Hotel for our overnight stay, the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the hotel facilities or explore at your own pace. Maybe visit the Government Museum and Art Gallery, the National History Museum, Le Corbusier Centre or Leisure Valley, a garland of gardens that ornaments



the city from one end to another. Out of the many theme gardens that have been developed in this valley, the Rose Garden is perhaps the most famous of all. The garden is located in the Sector 16 of Chandigarh and is spread over an area of 25 hectares. We meet tonight for dinner in the hotel. (B, D)

Day 10 Chandigarh to Shimla. Waking early we take the morning toy train from Kalka to Shimla which lies deep in the foothills of the Himalayas and is the capital city of Himachal Pradesh and the gateway into the more remote northern regions of Kashmir. During British rule Shimla was declared a summer capital and required a form of transport for quick access. In 1903 the Kalka to Shimla narrow gauge railway was launched and passes through 100 tunnels and 800 bridges in its 60 miles. Enjoy the wonderful scenery this morning from the train as we climb into the mountains to Shimla, located at 2205 metres above sea level. On arrival we transfer to the Oberoi Cecil, our base for the next three nights, and have an afternoon at leisure. We will be joined by a local historian for a pre-dinner drink to learn more about the city. (B, L, D)

Day 11 Shimla. Our guided tour this morning includes the Gaiety Theatre which was built in 1887 as part of a larger town hall and has been a central part of the town's cultural life. Rudyard Kipling and Baden Powell are among those that trod the boards here. Also see the Victorian-Gothic Christ Church and Scandal Point - so named because it was a popular meeting place for people to gather and share gossip. The afternoon is free to explore at your own pace. (B, D)

Day 12 Shimla. Our morning tour takes in much of the local colonial heritage. This includes Viceregal Lodge which resembles a Scottish castle and when completed in 1888 was one of the first electric buildings in India. Summer residence of the Indian Viceroy, it was here that many decisions, including partition, were devised and discussed. Post independence many Indian Presidents continued to use the lodge as a summer retreat. Also see the Sankat Mochan temple, dedicated to Lord Hanuman and nestled amid lush greenery with a mountainous backdrop. The afternoon is free to explore further or relax in the hotel. (B, D)

Day 13 Shimla to Delhi. Check out this morning and drive to Chandigarh (3.5 hours) where we connect with the high-speed train to Delhi arriving this evening. Transfer to the ITC Maurya Hotel for our overnight stay and enjoy the farewell dinner in the hotel this evening. (B, L, D)

Day 14 Delhi to London. After breakfast in the hotel we transfer to the airport for our scheduled flight to London. Arrive this afternoon. (B)



EXCURSIONS & TRANSPORTATION

We have planned the itinerary to be less strenuous than most to the region, however, the tour will involve being on your feet for long periods, navigating multiple train journeys and travelling in 4 x 4 jeeps on unsealed roads during safaris. Also, many of the sites are reached by uneven steps without handrails. To best enjoy your experiences in India, you should be in good physical condition.

PRICES PER PERSON

Based on double occupancy

Twin £9995

Twin for sole use: £13995

PRICE INCLUDES: Economy class scheduled air travel • Nine nights hotel accommodation as described (or similar) • Three nights accommodation aboard the Maharajas' Express Train • Meals as indicated (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner) • Drinks (soft drinks, Indian beer and wine) with included lunches & dinners • Excursions • Noble Caledonia Tour Manager • Gratuities • Transfers • Airport taxes • Porterage.

Not Included: Travel insurance, optional excursion in Jaipur, Indian visa.

YOUR ACCOMMODATION

Maharajas' Express – Three nights

The luxurious Maharajas' Express is the ultimate way to experience India. The train's décor recreates the elegance and pageantry of erstwhile Maharajas and you can enjoy state-of-the-art facilities in the spacious, well-appointed Deluxe Cabins. There are two dining cars where guests can feast on gourmet dishes served on gold-edged plates and drink wine from hand-cut Swarovski crystal glasses. Cocktails and snacks can be enjoyed in the Safari Bar while the lounge car also offers a well-stocked bar, library, souvenir shop, and board and card games. Other onboard facilities include live television and CCTV cameras in all public areas, complimentary Wi-Fi, a 24-hour paramedic, and an air ambulance in case of emergencies.



Mayur Mahal Dining Room



Exterior



Deluxe Cabin



'Rajah Club' - Lounge Bar

For our escorted tour of Northern India, in addition to the Maharajas' Express, we have selected some of the finest accommodations and you will be staying at the following properties:

Maidens Hotel, Delhi – Two nights

Established in 1903, the Maidens Hotel is a heritage hotel built in the traditional colonial style. It was one of Delhi's first hotels, built to host visiting dignitaries during the time of British rule. This luxury hotel offers comfort and hospitality within a traditional setting and is centrally located providing the perfect base for sightseeing. The hotel features 53 rooms and the spacious Heritage Rooms enjoy a picturesque view of the garden with its lush greenery. The swimming pool is just a few steps away from the Heritage wing where we will be accommodated and the Cavalry Bar serves cocktails and a variety of beverages.



Maiden's Hotel Entrance



Heritage Room



Swimming Pool

Taj Swarna, Amritsar – Two nights

The Taj Swarna Amritsar is a luxury hotel located in Punjab that is ideally located close to the popular attractions of the city. Accommodation is comprised of 148 stylish and spacious rooms and suites. Amenities include an LCD TV with satellite channels, complimentary Wi-Fi, a telephone, a desk, and fresh fruit. The Peg lounge and bar provides a relaxed space in which one can unwind with cocktails and quality drinks. The hotel also features leisure facilities such as a Health and Wellness Centre which offers access to a gym, fitness trainers, a swimming pool, a Jacuzzi and a steam bath.



Taj Swarna Hotel and Pool



Deluxe Room



Grand Trunk Restaurant

JW Marriott Hotel, Chandigarh – Overnight

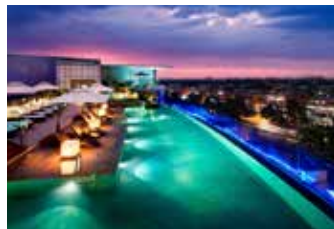
JW Marriott Hotel Chandigarh is located in the centre of the city's vibrant business district, offering convenient accessibility to an array of historic attractions and sites. Guests are immersed in the luxury of 164 guest rooms and suites featuring amenities like custom bedding, stunning city views and spa-like marble bathrooms. On-site facilities include a fitness centre, a gorgeous rooftop pool area as well as six restaurants and bars.



JW Marriott



Deluxe Room



Rooftop Pool

The Oberoi Cecil, Shimla – Three nights

Set amidst the majestic Himalayan ranges, the opulent Oberoi Cecil is located at the quieter end of the bustling Mall Road. During the times of the British Raj, it was the most exclusive five-star hotel in Shimla, known for its fabulous ballroom dances and fashionable clientele and it continues to maintain its exclusivity with a colonial charm and classic elegance that befits the best hotel in Shimla. Guest rooms and suites feature air-conditioning, high-speed internet, a mini-bar, an LCD television and a DVD player. Hotel facilities include a restaurant, an expansive swimming pool and a spa.



The Oberoi Cecil



Deluxe Room



Restaurant



ITC Maurya Hotel

ITC Maurya Hotel, Delhi – Overnight

Situated in the leafy diplomatic enclave of New Delhi, ITC Maurya has long been favoured by royal dignitaries and public figures from across the world. This luxury hotel has 438 rooms which all have a separate bath and shower and feature magnificent decor, impeccable service and the latest in modern conveniences and amenities. The ITC Maurya has a range of dining venues and there is also a large garden pool with sunbeds and cabanas, a salon and a gym with a steam room and whirlpool bath.



Executive Club Room



Alfresco Dining, Ottimo At The West View



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