



JAIPUR AT A GLANCE

Jaipur along with Delhi and Agra forms, the Golden Triangle which is India's most popular destinations. The city's regal aura coupled with its excellent infrastructure and the traditional Rajasthani hospitality of "Padharo Mahare Desh" is the main reason why tourists from all over the world flock to this princely state.

The capital of Rajasthan, Jaipur also known the Pink City is renowned in the world over for its majestic forts, opulent havelis, beautiful lakes and shimmering sand dunes. Designed by Vidyadhar Bhattacharya as per the Shilpa Shastra- an ancient treatise on architecture and built by Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur is built entirely of pink stucco in imitation of the red sandstone. The City palace, the Amber Fort, Jaigarh Fort, Hawa Mahal, Jantar Mantar observatory, Jal Mahal and Nahargarh Fort are some of the famous attractions of the city. Jaipur is famous for its semi-precious stones, miniature paintings, silver jewellery and lac items and the city's colorful bazaars make shopping an exhilarating experience.



History of Jaipur

The history of the Amer-Jaipur region can be traced way back to the 11th century when Prince Dulha Rai left his patrimony of Narwar for Dausa in Eastern Rajasthan. Married to a daughter of a Chauhan Chief of Moran. His son and successor Kakil Dev was equally brave. He established his control over the Amber-Bairath region, built the Ambikeshwar Mahadeva Temple, and made Amber his capital. It was under Maharaja Bharmal, the fourth son of Prithvi Raj that Amer became a very powerful Rajput state and began to play an important role in the subsequent history of Rajasthan. The next important ruler to have come to the throne of Amer was Sawai Jai Singh II. A great Statesman and a keen astrologer, he along with his architect Vidyadhar Bhattacharya laid the foundation of the present city of Jaipur. Divided into nine blocks and encircled by a masonry crenellated wall that has seven gates, the city follows the grid system with wide straight roads, streets and lanes.

However, it was in the 19th century that Jaipur earned the epithet "Pink City". According to the local fables, when some ambassadors of the Prince of Wales visited the city prior to his visit, someone insultingly called them the 'pink-faced monkey', as a result of the contempt for the British who had India under their clutches. To make up for his rashness and as a diplomatic tact, Raja and his ministers maintained that the person had called them so in reverence, as the 'monkey' was worshipped in the region as 'Hanuman' and pink was the sacred color of the region. To give conviction to their seemingly improbable reason they painted the city pink on the Prince's arrival.

Tourist Attractions

The City Palace: Built in early 18th century by Maharaja Jai Singh II, the City Palace represents a unique blend of Rajasthani and Mughal styles in its pillars, arches, mehrabs, grills and beautiful inlay works. The palace complex comprises of many structures, courtyards, gardens and halls like the Chandra Mahal, Mubarak Mahal and Badal Mahal. There is also a famous temple called the Shri Govind Temple within the precincts of the palace as well as a museum called the City Palace Museum. The Mahal has now been converted to a textile museum.



Amber Fort: Located at a distance of 11 kilometers from Jaipur is the Amer Fort, one of the most important monuments of Rajputana. A stunning piece of Indian architecture, the exterior of the Fort is not in the least like its interiors. One of India's best-preserved medieval citadels, the fort built of white marble and red sandstone is renowned for its Sheesh Mahal- the Mirror Palace. Patterned mosaics, colored glass and mirror decorate the Sheesh Mahal from floor to ceiling, creating a palace of almost unbelievable beauty. The fort is dominated by two buildings- the Diwan-e-Aam (the Hall of Public Audience) and the intricately painted double-storied Ganesh Pol gate which leads to the residential apartments of the Maharaja.

Hawa Mahal: Jaipur's best-known landmark, the Hawa Mahal or Palace of Winds built by the poet King Sawai Pratap Singh in 1799 is a remarkable structure that overlooks one of the main streets and also provides some excellent views of the city especially the Jantar Mantar. Designed for the royal ladies to watch and enjoy the processions and other activities, on the street below, this five storied stunning semi-octagonal monument having 953 windows with over hanging latticed balconies is a fine piece of Rajput architecture. Built of pink & red sandstone as a giant honeycomb. The palace gets its name because of its small windows that circulate cool air naturally throughout the building even in the hottest months of



June and July. A small archeological museum located just near the Mahal further provides a

glimpse of art and craft of Rajasthan.

Jantar Mantar: One of the five observatories built by the astrologer king Sawai Jai Singh II, the Jantar Mantar of Jaipur was constructed in the year 1728 A.D. Located close to the City Palace. It was built to measure the local time, the sun's declination, altitude, the declination of stars, planets and to determine eclipses.



Jaigarh Fort : Falling in the category of the 'Giri or Parvata Durg', the Jaigarh Fort standing in the midst of thorn-scrub Aravali hills is one the most forbidding and imposing forts of Jaipur. The Jaigarh fort built by Mirza Raja Jai Singh was subsequently developed by his succeeding rulers. The fort has palaces, granary, a well-planned cannon foundry, several temples, a tall tower and a giant cannon known as Jaivan, believed to be the largest cannon in the world.



However, it is the Jaivana, reportedly the world's largest cannon on wheels that forms the highlight of the Jaigarh tour. Built in the Jaigarh's foundry during reign of Maharaja Sawai Jaisingh, the canon weighing 50 tons with a trajectory of about 20km is said to have been fired once during its lifetime (in 1720). The impact of it was so enormous that a lake got formed at the very spot where the cannon ball landed. Many houses collapsed in Jaipur and the person who had fired the canon died immediately after the firing, before he could even jump into water. Infact, such was the fear of the canon that nobody ever attacked the fort. The Fort has a lot of wide water channels, which were a part of a rainwater harvesting system. There are 3 underground

tanks at the fort, the largest one of which could store 60, 00,000 gallons of water. Other sights worth seeing at the fort are the seven-storied Diya Burj.



Nahargarh Fort: Built in 1734, the Nahargarh Fort provides some stunning views of Jaipur city. One of the first three forts built by the rulers of Jaipur, the Nahargarh fort, just like the Jaigarh fort was built to bolster up the defence of Amer. Though it was built by Sawai Raja Jai Singh. A very interesting feature of Nahargarh Fort is the Madhavendra Bhawan. The Bhavan has a cluster of 12 identical suits for queens which are arranged in such a way that the king could visit any one queen's room without the knowledge of the others. According to the story, the fort is named after Nahar Singh, a Rathore prince.



Kanak Valley: Settled in the midst of the beautiful Aravalli ranges on one side and the Dharbawati River on the other is the Kanak valley. A popular place for picnics, excursions and film shooting, the valley with its dhok and kadamba trees, cascading waterfalls, brooks, ponds and tons of vegetation, including many flowering and fragrant variety of plants makes an idyllic stopover point for the wearied traveller. In between the two temples lies the Kanak Bagh- a geometrically designed garden with eight sections, four chhatris and four kabanis all arranged geometrically.

Sisodia Rani ka Bagh: Built in 1728 by Raja Sawai Jai Singh for his Sisodia bride, the beautiful Sisodia Rani ka Bagh appears like a green oasis in midst the vast barren land. Located on the Jaipur Agra road, the garden provided the perfect gateway to the queen to escape the daily court intrigues and enjoy the beautiful landscape and fresh air. Nearby these beautiful gardens are the natural springs of Galta where the famous temples of Lord Vishnu, Lord Shiva and Lord Hanuman are located.



Laxmi Narayan Temple: The Laxmi Narayan temple also known as the Birla Mandir is located close to the Moti Doongri fort. The temple built by the Birlas, a wealthy industrialist family symbolizes the secular spirit of the country with its three domes representing three different faiths. An architectural marvel, the temple which appears to glow in the moon light, the temples houses many Hindu deities of Hindu pantheon while its exterior showcases great historical personages and religious figures from other religions. ■