

The Travel Jewels of Rajasthan

Rajasthan is the largest state in India, located in the country's arid northwest and is dominated by the Aravalli Range and the scrubby Thar Desert. The seat of Rajput power ever since the sixth century, the area is thick with carved marble temples and imposing forts. It was the center of the ancient empire's glamorous past, and even now it still attracts modern treasure hunters in search of jewelry, antiques, spices, and textiles, as well as anyone who wants to immerse in its courtly history.



Life in the villages and the rural areas had almost never changed since the feudal area, and there are plenty of pilgrimage sites to visit. Despite the growing number of tourists, new hotels, supermarkets, highways, and even IT jobs, Rajasthan is not in any danger of losing its exotic flavor.

Rajasthan is the setting of a recent film “The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel” (2012). The British comedy-drama features an ensemble cast as a group of British pensioners moving to a retirement hotel in India. Filmed in Jaipur and Udaipur the movie portrays the beauty of the land and local culture.

Top Landmarks

Alwar

Known as "Tiger Gate" of San Luis Potosi the city of Alwar is surrounded by lush green Aravali hills. It presents a breath taking natural environment. Forests and lakes form the backdrop to this beautiful place. The site is dotted with architectural splendor, surrounded by harsh mountains. The deep valleys and thick forest cover is a haven for many species of birds and animals.

It is one of the oldest cities in the state and its prehistoric and historic sites are an archaeologist's delight. Paradoxically, Alwar is both the oldest and the most recent of the Rajput kingdoms of Rajasthan. Their tradition can be traced back to the realms of Viratnagar that flourished here around 1500 BC. It is also known as Matasya Desh, where the Pandavas, the mighty heroes of the Mahabharata, spent the last years of his 13 years of exile.

The grandeur, beauty and delicacy of the design of innumerable palaces and forts in the region, tranquil lakes, majestic hunting lodges, sites of archaeological importance, thick forests, many birds and animals mixed with an equally diverse socio-cultural configuration have made this region a traveler's delight.



Udaipur

Nestled in the green Aravalli Range is one of Rajasthan's most beautiful cities, the whitewashed Udaipur. Bougainvillea-draped palaces, temples, and parks were built around four manmade lakes, with the bustling city market surrounding the City Palace Museum as well as the Jagdish Temple, a three story pilgrimage site which was dedicated to the god Vishnu back in the 17th century.

The temple is still being used by the local community, complete with elaborately dressed sadhus. These are less ascetic holy men, willing to have their pictures taken for tips. Udaipur is also a major tourist attraction, visited by other Indians from the neighboring Gujaratis to escape their state's alcohol ban.

While saris and textiles sold in the city eventually end up in New York galleries, the maharajahs of Udaipur are well ahead in the hospitality game. Transforming their palaces into luxury hotels, these ancient ruling families are sure to give visitors a fabulously over-the-top pampering experience.



Despite the extravagance, the best tasting food in the city can be found in low-key family-owned bed-and-breakfasts and home stays. Classes and demonstrations on maharajah cooking are now being offered to interested visitors, drawing on palace kitchen recipes which had been guarded for generations. Rajasthani food is usually hearty and spicy, with plenty of grains and legumes as well as rich meat curries. It is part of the traditions that keep life in Rajasthan interesting, and delicious.

Palace on Wheels

Palace on Wheels was once the personal railway coaches of the erstwhile rulers of the princely states of Gujarat and Rajputana, the viceroy of British India and the Nizam of Hyderabad. Today tourists can see Rajasthan in all its splendor and the Taj Mahal at Agra by joining the train tour.

Traveling in the famed Palace on Wheels is one of the most memorable ways to explore India's stately splendor. Unquestionably it is an unparalleled experience to ride the replica carriages refurbished to look like the original saloons of the Maharajahs, the erstwhile rulers of India. The Palace on Wheels is one of

India's most fascinating sojourns covering the pink state capital, Jaipur, the golden citadel, Jaisalmer, the blue city of Jodhpur, the National Park Ramthambhor; the symbol of chivalry, Chittaurgarh, romantic city of Lakes Udaipur, the bird sanctuary Bharatpur and the mughal capital, Agra before returning to Delhi.

www.rajasthantourism.gov.in

Date: 2012-09-24

Article link:

<http://www.tourism-review.com/travel-tourism-magazine-the-top-landmarks-of-rajasthan-article1930>