



48 hours in Jaipur

Eat paneer ghevar, explore Hawa Mahal and visit the Johari Bazaar.
By Neeharika Satyavada

Jaipur earned the moniker Pink City when Maharaja Ram Singh painted the entire city pink in honour of the Prince of Wales's visit to India in 1876, for the colour pink symbolised hospitality. One corner of the famous golden triangle (Delhi-Agra-Jaipur), Rajasthan's capital is an enchanting city, bustling with modernity and yet steeped in tradition and history. Here's what you ought to do in Jaipur if you find yourself there either on work, or are in town for a couple of days.

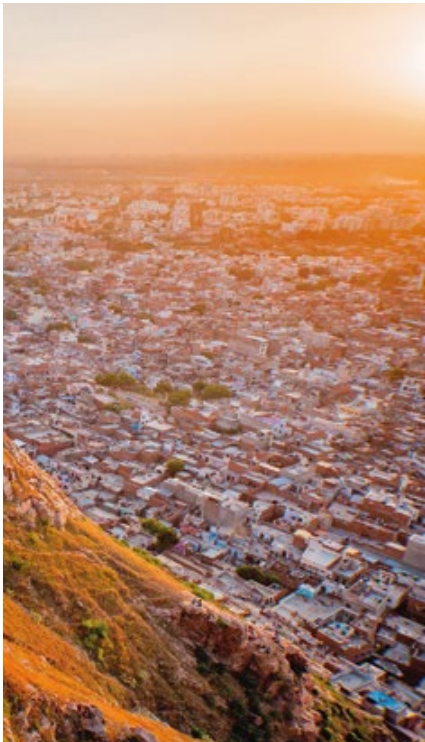
Eat

Lunch like a royal at the Rajput Room, an all-day fine-dining restaurant at the Taj Rambagh Palace. The erstwhile home of the celebrated beauty, Maharani Gayatri Devi, queen of Jaipur, the Rambagh Palace is everything that India is associated with. A palace of marble elephants, Mughal gardens, hand-carved marble *jalis* (latticework), sandstone balustrades and *chhatris*. The Rajasthani thali at Lakshmi Misthan Bhandar, lovingly called LMB, is surely a





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Amber Fort, with Maota Lake in the foreground; Hawa Mahal; and an aerial view of Jaipur from Nahargarh Fort



must-try. For, when you are in Jaipur, you cannot not have the ghee laden Daal Baati Churma at least once. This vegetarian restaurant in the old part of Jaipur has been going strong since 1954. And, if you need a break from all the vegetarian food then head to yet another old favourite, Niros. Locals swear by the butter chicken here.

See

The stunning Amer Fort, sitting atop a hillock and reached by a road traversed not just by your everyday vehicles but also by hundreds of elephants (if that's your style), is Jaipur's star attraction. Scenes and songs from the 2008 Bollywood blockbuster, *Jodha Akbar*, were shot here. An extensive complex of palaces that led down to the citizens' houses was once the thriving capital of Mewar, before it was moved to Jaipur. Along the road up to Amer Fort, stop by at the Panna Meena ka Kund, a small but beautiful eight-storeyed step well, complete with the quintessential Rajasthani *chhatris* at its four corners. The City Palace and the Jantar Mantar, both in the old walled city (Pink City) of Jaipur, located one opposite the other, were built by the founder of Jaipur, Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh II. Within

the City Palace is the Mubarak Mahal or the erstwhile palace of reception, which is now the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum showcasing unique royal costumes with the traditional Sangneri prints and folk embroidery. A section of the palace is still home to the last ruling royal family, while another section houses a restaurant, only lately opened. Jantar Mantar, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is the largest of the five astronomical observatories built by the Maharaja. A beautiful garden that houses sixteen intricate and extensive geometric devices built in bricks and mortar was designed to measure time, track celestial bodies, and observe the orbits of the planets.

Shop

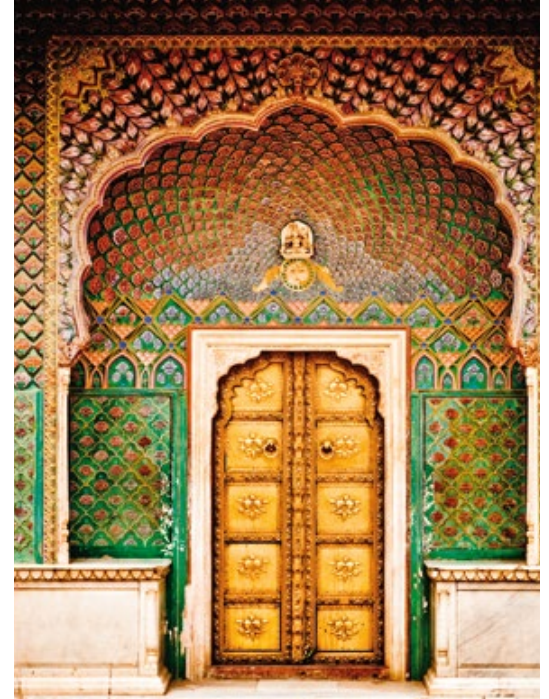
Johari Bazaar, or jeweller's bazaar is Jaipur's most popular shopping street. From silver trinkets to exquisite jewellery set in *kundans*, precious gems and diamonds, it truly is an experience, even if it is just to take a look at designs that hark back to a regal era. Tripolia Bazaar and Krishnapol Bazaar are the other local markets to shop for colourful *bandhani* sarees, turbans, *juttis*, puppets and mirror-work umbrellas.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Don't forget to pick up ghevar in Jaipur; a door at the city palace in Jaipur; and traditional lamps at Johari Bazaar



Do
Catch the sunset at Nahargarh Fort. Also called the Tiger Fort, the Nahargarh Fort is famous for its sunset views of the city. First built in 1734, this fort on the edge of a ridge was named after a prince, Nahar Singh Bhomia, whose restless spirit wouldn't allow anything to be constructed here. Legend has it that whatever was built during the day crumbled down at night, and it was to appease his spirit that this fort was named after him and stands till today, even after over two and a half centuries. Explore the Hawa Mahal from inside. Hawa Mahal is a paradox. It is at once Jaipur's – or even Rajasthan's – most iconic monument and it is also probably its most underrated. Everyone's visit to this beauty in pink begins and ends with a picture outside it. But you really enjoy it and begin to appreciate its name, Hawa Mahal, the Palace of Winds, only once you are inside. Going up the winding passageways, discovering the numerous little windows and their tiny embellished doors, the larger stained-glass windows through which sunlight filters into little squares of green and red, the countless arches and the expansive terraced courtyards that offer you views of the nearby Jantar Mantar and the City Palace, Hawa Mahal has much more to offer than meets the eye. Visit the Anokhi Museum of Hand Printing, located just outside the exit of the Amer Fort. Set



up to showcase and sensitise visitors to the art of traditional hand-block printing on fabrics, this museum, housed in a restored *haveli* under the shadow of the Amer Fort, has been making it to the must-visit list of the discerning traveller interested in understanding the artisanal heritage of a place. If not for anything else, just to take a look at the hundreds of fabrics on display and see the artisans themselves at work should be an interesting and offbeat experience.

Take Back

The 'world famous' paneer ghevar from Lakshmi Misthan Bhandar. A traditional sweet made of fresh cottage cheese, milk, sugar, ghee and flour, it looks like a honeycomb and melts in your mouth delightfully. Blue pottery is the traditional craft of Jaipur. From the typical urns and vases to modern-day tea sets in hues of white and blue painted with animal and floral motifs, they all make for beautiful souvenirs not just to use but also as decor.



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