

# Rajasthan- "Padharo Mhare Desh"

Rajasthan is a vibrant and culturally rich state located in the northwestern part of India. Known for its historical significance, architectural marvels, and diverse landscapes, Rajasthan is a popular tourist destination. Here are some key aspects of this fascinating state which attract both domestic and international tourists.

- **Rich History:** Rajasthan boasts a rich history with a legacy of princely states and Rajputana valor. It was home to many influential empires and dynasties, which left their mark on the region.
- **Palaces and Forts:** The state is renowned for its opulent palaces and grand forts. Iconic structures like the Jaipur City Palace, Udaipur's Lake Palace, and the mighty Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur showcase the state's architectural splendor.
- **Thar Desert:** Rajasthan is home to the vast Thar Desert, also known as the "Great Indian Desert." The sand dunes, camel safaris, and desert culture are significant attractions.
- **Cultural Diversity:** The state is a melting pot of cultures, with diverse communities such as Rajputs, Jats, Bhils, Meenas, and more. Each group contributes to the rich tapestry of Rajasthani culture.
- **Festivals and Traditions:** Rajasthan celebrates numerous festivals with great enthusiasm. Diwali, Holi, and Teej are just a few examples. The state's traditional music, dance forms (like Ghoomar and Kalbelia), and colorful attire add to its cultural vibrancy.
- **Cuisine:** Rajasthani cuisine is known for its unique flavors. Dishes like Dal Baati Churma, Gatte ki Sabzi, and Ker Sangri are popular and offer a taste of the region's culinary heritage.
- **Wildlife:** The state is home to several wildlife sanctuaries and national parks, including Ranthambore, Sariska, and Keoladeo National Park, offering a chance to spot tigers, leopards, and a variety of bird species.
- **Arts and Crafts:** Rajasthan is famous for its handicrafts, including textiles, pottery, jewelry, and miniature paintings. Shoppers can explore local markets for beautifully crafted items.

Rajasthan's blend of history, culture, and natural beauty makes it a captivating destination that offers a glimpse into the royal heritage and traditions of India. It continues to be a place where the past and present coexist in perfect harmony.

We also thought of exploring one of the most popular tourist destinations in India - Rajasthan, the "Lands of Kings". Our 16-day journey through Rajasthan, the "Land of Kings," was a mesmerizing adventure filled with rich history, stunning architecture, vibrant culture, and diverse landscapes. Starting from Bangalore on December 21, 2023 and returning on January 5, 2024, our itinerary allowed us to explore the best of this regal state. Here's a brief day-by-day summary of our incredible journey:

Our itinerary includes that we started from Bangalore on 21st December, 2023(Thursday) in Rajdhani Express Train at 8.00 pm and reached Agra on 23rd December, 2023 (Saturday) at 4.30 am.

Click on the Place to see the detailed itinerary of the Place.

- Day 1: Agra
- Day 2: Ajmer and Pushkar
- Day 3 & 4: Jaipur
- Day 5, 6 & 7: Jaisalmer
- Day 8: Jodhpur
- Day 9: Ranakpur & Kumbhalgarh
- Day 10 & 11: Udaipur
- Day 12: Chittorgarh

On 3rd January 2024, we boarded a train to Mumbai and reached on 4th January, 2024 and then from Mumbai we took a flight back to Bangalore and reached home on 5th January, 2024 early morning.

Embarking on a 12-day journey through the vibrant and culturally rich state of Rajasthan, beginning with the historical city of Agra, has been an unforgettable experience. This journey has taken us through some of the most iconic and historical destinations, each offering a unique glimpse into the majestic heritage of Rajasthan.

Starting in **Agra**, we were mesmerized by the timeless beauty of the Taj Mahal, a symbol of love and an architectural marvel. The visit to the Agra Fort further enriched our understanding of Mughal history and grandeur.

Continuing to **Pushkar**, we marveled at the sacred Pushkar Lake and the only Brahma Temple in the world. The serene ghats and the bustling bazaars set the perfect tone for our adventure.

Next, **Ajmer** welcomed us with the spiritual aura of the Ajmer Sharif Dargah, a revered pilgrimage site for people of all faiths. The city's historical significance and tranquil lakes left a lasting impression.

In **Jaipur**, the Pink City, we explored grand palaces and forts, including the Amber Fort, City Palace, and Hawa Mahal. Jaipur's vibrant markets and exquisite handicrafts showcased the city's royal heritage and artistic excellence.

The golden sands of **Jaisalmer** enchanted us with its magnificent Jaisalmer Fort, intricate havelis, and the serene beauty of the Thar Desert. A camel ride in the Sam Sand Dunes was a highlight, offering a true desert experience.

**Jodhpur**, the Blue City, welcomed us with the majestic Mehrangarh Fort, which towers over the city. The bustling streets and vibrant blue houses of the old city added to the charm of Jodhpur.

**Ranakpur** brought us a sense of peace and awe with its stunning Jain temples, particularly the intricately carved Ranakpur Temple, known for its architectural brilliance and serene ambiance.

**Kumbhalgarh** impressed us with its formidable fort, surrounded by the second-longest continuous wall in the world. The panoramic views and historical significance of Kumbhalgarh Fort were truly awe-inspiring.

The romantic city of **Udaipur** captivated us with its stunning lakes, palaces, and gardens. A boat ride on Lake Pichola, visits to the City Palace and Jag Mandir, and the serene Saheliyon ki Bari made Udaipur a highlight of the journey.

**Chittorgarh** showcased the valor and sacrifice of Rajput warriors with its massive fort, Chittorgarh Fort. The tales of Rani Padmini and the fort's grand architecture left us deeply moved.

This 12-day journey through Rajasthan has been a kaleidoscope of experiences, from spiritual and historical explorations to the vibrant and colorful culture of the region. Each city has left us with indelible memories of Rajasthan's rich heritage, warm hospitality, and timeless beauty.

As we conclude this remarkable journey, we carry with us a deep appreciation for the history, culture, and natural beauty of Rajasthan. This adventure has not only enriched our knowledge but also our souls, leaving us eager to return to this magnificent land of kings and legends.

## Day 1: 23 December, 2023 - Agra

On Day 1 of our memorable journey, we started our adventure from Agra (UP), a city known for its historical significance and, most notably, the iconic Taj Mahal. Our itinerary for the day was focused on exploring this architectural marvel and other notable sites in Agra.

Agra, a city in northern India, is renowned for two iconic UNESCO World Heritage Sites: the **Taj Mahal** and the **Agra Fort**. So we thought of exploring these two places only, as our next train was at 2.30 pm to Pushkar. Here's a brief summary:

We reached at 4.30 am, on 23rd December 2023 by Rajdhani Express from Bangalore, the train was late a bit but it was a boon in disguise on a cold night of winter. It was dark outside but the station was busy with tourists and auto and taxi drivers. We already had a pre-booking hotel for half a day as we just needed the hotel to freshen up. We booked a Taxi and reached our hotel at Tajganj. We then quickly took a bath, had our breakfast and went to visit the Taj Mahal at 7.30 am. Early in the morning the fog was less but gradually it started to increase later.

### Note:

- You should be cautious not to carry any eatables such as biscuits, chips, chocolates with you as it is not allowed inside.
- You can buy online tickets from the archeological dept. Two types of tickets are available for visiting Taj Mahal only from outside and another ticket to go inside the Taj Mahal Mausoleum.
- You should also plan your trip excluding Friday as it remains close on that particular day.
- Guides are also available who will explain in detail about certain specific things, do check the govt. rates before hiring them.
- **Taj Mahal:** Our first stop was the majestic Taj Mahal, one of the Seven Wonders of the World. We marveled at this UNESCO World Heritage Site, constructed by Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. The Taj Mahal is a magnificent white marble mausoleum built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in memory of his beloved wife Mumtaz Mahal. Completed in 1653, this architectural masterpiece is considered one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. The Taj Mahal's symmetrical design, intricate carvings, and its stunning setting along the Yamuna River make it a symbol of eternal love and a prime example of Mughal architecture. The intricate marble work and the poignant love story behind its creation left us in awe.

We took around 3 hours to completely explore the Taj Mahal and after that we did some shopping for souvenirs and had our lunch and next, we visited the Agra Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site that served as the main residence of the Mughal emperors for generations. For Agra Fort also entry tickets can be booked online and they even have counters from where you can buy the tickets.

- **Agra Fort:** The Agra Fort, also known as the Red Fort of Agra, is another UNESCO World Heritage Site situated near the Taj Mahal. It was constructed by Emperor Akbar in the mid-16th century and later renovated by his grandson Shah Jahan. The fort served as the main residence of the Mughal emperors until the capital moved to Delhi. Agra Fort

showcases a blend of Persian, Turkish, and Indian architectural styles and includes notable structures such as the Jahangiri Mahal, Diwan-i-Khas, and the iconic Moti Masjid. We explored its stunning architecture and The fort offers a glimpse into the rich history of the Mughal Empire and provides panoramic views of the Taj Mahal from certain vantage points.

We took around 3 hours to completely explore the Agra Fort. We then rush to the Agra Fort station to catch our train for our next stop, Ajmer. We were there for half a day so we thought of exploring the two UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

Together, the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort stand as enduring symbols of India's rich cultural and historical heritage, attracting millions of visitors from around the world. If you have more time to spare you can visit other places as well in Agra.

Other places to visit:

- **Fatehpur Sikri:** Fatehpur Sikri, a UNESCO World Heritage Site located approximately 40 kilometers from Agra. Explore the well-preserved architectural marvels of Fatehpur Sikri, including the Buland Darwaza, Jama Masjid, Tomb of Salim Chishti, and Panch Mahal.
- **Mehtab Bagh:** In the evening, you can head to Mehtab Bagh, a beautiful garden that offers a spectacular view of the Taj Mahal across the Yamuna River. It provided a serene and picturesque backdrop for photos.
- **Local Cuisine:** To conclude a day in Agra, you can sample delicious local cuisine, including Mughlai dishes like biryani and kebabs. Agra is also famous for its sweets, and we couldn't resist trying some delectable petha.

Day 1 in Agra was filled with awe-inspiring architecture, rich history, and mouthwatering cuisine, setting the tone for the rest of our Rajasthan journey. Our train started from the Agra Fort station at 2.30 pm and we reached our next stop Ajmer at 9.00 pm.

## Day 2 : 24 December, 2023 - Ajmer and Pushkar

Ajmer and Pushkar allowed us to explore the spiritual and cultural facets of these two cities. The tranquil vibes of Ajmer and the colorful, bustling markets of Pushkar provided a delightful contrast, making it a well-rounded day of exploration and cultural immersion. Exploring Ajmer and Pushkar in one day is possible, but it would be quite a packed itinerary.

We started our day very early to make the most of our time, and went to visit Ajmer Sharif Dargah.

### Ajmer:

- **Dargah Sharif:** Our first stop in Ajmer was the Dargah Sharif, a revered Sufi shrine and a place of pilgrimage for people of various faiths. Ajmer Sharif Dargah is one of the most important places to visit in Ajmer. It's a Sufi shrine dedicated to the Sufi saint Moinuddin Chishti. We paid our respects at the shrine and experienced the peaceful atmosphere.
- **Ana Sagar Lake:** After visiting the Dargah, we strolled along the picturesque Ana Sagar Lake, enjoying the serene ambiance and the beautiful views of the surrounding gardens and historic structures. It's a beautiful artificial lake, perfect for some peaceful moments.

After that we had our breakfast and booked a taxi for Pushkar. The distance between Ajmer and Pushkar is around 15 kilometers, so you can hire a taxi or use public transportation to reach Pushkar.

### Pushkar:

- **Brahma Temple:** We then traveled to Pushkar, a holy city known for its sacred lake and the Brahma Temple. This temple is one of the few dedicated to Lord Brahma and holds great spiritual significance. We explored its architecture and observed the rituals performed by the devotees.
- **Pushkar Lake:** At Pushkar Lake, we soaked in the spiritual aura and observed pilgrims taking a holy dip in the sacred waters, which is considered sacred by Hindus. The lake is surrounded by ghats, temples, and colorful markets, creating a vibrant and peaceful atmosphere.
- **Lunch:** Grab a quick lunch at a local restaurant in Pushkar relishing traditional Rajasthani cuisine before taking some time exploring the vibrant markets of Pushkar.
- **Local Markets:** Pushkar is famous for its vibrant and bustling markets. We had the opportunity to shop for souvenirs, clothing, jewelry, and local handicrafts. Prices are quite reasonable.
- **Sunset at Savitri Temple:** For a panoramic view of Pushkar town and the surrounding desert landscape, hike up to Savitri Temple. It's a bit of a climb, but the sunset view is worth it. But since we had to catch a train from Ajmer to Jaipur at 6.30 pm, we had to rush to Savitri temple. We took the rope-way on both sides so that we could manage our

time. But since temples have opening and closing time so accordingly you have to wait. The queue for tickets was quite long; it took around 2 hours. Then we rushed to Ajmer.

**Ajmer:** We then went to visit Sone Ki Nasiya (Nasheyan ki Baoli).

- **Sone ki Nasiya:** Sone ki Nasiya is a popular tourist attraction in Ajmer, drawing visitors with its historical significance and architectural beauty. The carvings on the walls depict various scenes from Hindu mythology, including stories from the Ramayana and Mahabharata. The stepwell is made of sandstone, which gives it a golden hue, hence the name "Sone ki Nasiya" (Golden Temple).

After that we rushed to our hotel, collected our luggage and went to the railway station to catch our train at 6.30 pm to explore our next stop Jaipur (the Pink City).

#### **Additional Tips:**

- **Transportation:** It's advisable to hire a taxi for the day or use a combination of taxis and public transportation for convenience.
- **Timing:** Be mindful of the opening and closing hours of the attractions to make the most of your time.
- **Comfortable Clothing:** Wear comfortable shoes and clothing, especially if you plan to visit temples or walk around a lot.
- **Respect Local Customs:** When visiting religious sites, dress modestly and maintain decorum.

This itinerary provides a glimpse into the cultural and religious heritage of both Ajmer and Pushkar, allowing you to experience the essence of these two fascinating cities in one day. If you have more time to explore then you can consider the following places as well:

**Ajmer:** Adhai Din Ka Jhopra, Taragarh Fort, Prithviraj Smarak

**Pushkar:** Rangji Temple, Varaha Temple, Pap Mochini Temple, Gurudwara Singh Sabha and also Aarti at Jaipur Ghat at 5.30 pm.

### **Day 3 & 4 : 25 & 26 December, 2023 - Jaipur**

On Day 2 of our Rajasthan adventure, we departed from Ajmer and made our way to Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, often referred to as the "Pink City" due to the pink-colored buildings in its historical center. Jaipur allowed us to immerse ourselves in the rich history, architecture, and culture of the "Pink City," leaving us excited for the adventures that lay ahead in the coming days. Here's a detailed summary of our experiences in Jaipur:

Exploring Jaipur in two days allows us to cover many of the city's highlights while still immersing ourselves in its rich history, culture, and vibrant atmosphere. Here's a suggested itinerary:

#### **Day 1: Historical Jaipur**

- **Nahargarh Fort:** We started our day early, and headed to Nahargarh Fort, a hill fort that offers stunning panoramic views of Jaipur. We marveled at the fort's intricate design and enjoyed the scenic beauty of the Aravalli hills. It will take around two and half hours to complete the tour of the fort.
- **Jaigarh Fort:** After visiting Nahargarh Fort, we proceed to Jaigarh Fort, a massive hilltop fort overlooking the Amber Fort and explore its impressive architecture, including the world's largest cannon on wheels, Jaivana, and the breathtaking views of the Aravalli hills. The complete tour of the Jaigarh Fort will also take around two and half hours.
- **Lunch:** We have lunch at a local restaurant near Jaigarh Fort, where we can savor authentic Rajasthani cuisine, like Dal Baati Churma, Gatte ki Sabzi, and more.
- **Amber Fort (Amer Fort):** In the afternoon, we made our way to the magnificent Amber Fort, situated on a hilltop overlooking the city. We explored the fort's palaces, courtyards, and the Sheesh Mahal (Mirror Palace) with its stunning glass mosaics, located a short distance from the city center. The magnificent architecture of this UNESCO World Heritage Site and enjoying the panoramic views of the surrounding hills is breathtaking. It took around three hours for us to take the complete tour of the Amer Fort.
- **Elephant Ride (Optional):** To make the Amber Fort experience even more memorable, some of you can choose to take an elephant ride up the hill to the fort entrance, a traditional mode of transport.
- **Light and Sound Show (Optional):** If available, attend the light and sound show at the Amber Fort or the Nahargarh Fort to learn about Jaipur's history in an engaging way. The show narrated the history of the fort and the city, adding a magical touch to your Jaipur's experience.
- **Jal Mahal:** Evening we took a leisurely walk around the lake to enjoy the scenic views and capture some memorable photographs of Jal Mahal, the "Water Palace" located in the middle of Man Sagar Lake. Admire the stunning architecture of this palace, which appears to float on the serene waters of the lake.



- **Jagdish Temple:**After exploring Jal Mahal, we headed to Jagdish Temple in the heart of Jaipur's old city. This 17th-century temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu is known for its impressive architecture, intricate carvings, and religious significance.
- **Patrika Gate:** Then we visited the Patrika Gate, located at Jawahar Circle Garden. Patrika Gate is a relatively modern attraction known for its vibrant colors, intricate designs, and depiction of Rajasthan's rich heritage and culture. Spending some time exploring the various sections of the gate, each representing different aspects of Rajasthan's history and culture.
- **Local Market Exploration:** We spend some time exploring Jaipur's vibrant markets, such as Johari Bazaar for jewelry, Bapu Bazaar for textiles, and Chandpole Bazaar for handicrafts and souvenirs.
- **Dinner:**Enjoy dinner at one of Jaipur's renowned restaurants, where you can relish delicious Rajasthani delicacies or international cuisine.
- **Chokhi Dhani (Optional):** If you're interested in experiencing Rajasthani culture, you can visit Chokhi Dhani, an ethnic village resort offering traditional food, entertainment, and activities.

## Day 2: Cultural Jaipur

- **Hawa Mahal:** We begin our day by visiting Hawa Mahal. A visit to Jaipur is incomplete without seeing the iconic Hawa Mahal or "Palace of Winds." We admired its unique honeycomb-like structure and intricate lattice work from the outside. Admire its distinctive facade with intricately designed windows and balconies from inside.
- **City Palace:** We then visited the City Palace, a magnificent royal residence that still houses the Jaipur royal family. The palace complex offered a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of the royals, with its grand courtyards, museums, and beautiful architecture. It took us around 3 hours to complete the whole tour of the Palace.
- **Jantar Mantar:** Next, we explored the Jantar Mantar, an astronomical observatory and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This collection of astronomical instruments, designed by Maharaja Jai Singh II, was a fascinating blend of science and artistry.
- **Albert Hall Museum:** Explore the Albert Hall Museum, located near Hawa Mahal, a fine example of Indo-Saracenic architecture. This museum houses an extensive collection of artifacts, including textiles, paintings, and sculptures. It took around 2 hours for us to completely explore the museum which is also the house of one of the mummies which is 2345 years old.

After that we had a traditional Rajasthani lunch at a local restaurant, savoring more local delicacies, and then rushed to the railway station for our next stop in our Rajasthan journey, that is Jaisalmer. Our train was at 4.30 pm and Jaisalmer is an overnight journey.

Jaipur allowed us to dive deeper into the city's historical and cultural gems. The forts, step wells, and local markets offered a delightful blend of architecture, history, and shopping, leaving us with lasting memories of the Pink City. This itinerary offers a balanced mix of historical exploration, cultural immersion, and culinary experiences, allowing you to make the most of your two days in Jaipur.

**Additional Tips:**

- **Transportation:** Hire a private car or use a combination of taxis and auto-rickshaws for sightseeing.
- **Timing:** Plan your visit to each attraction considering their opening hours and any special events or ceremonies.
- **Comfortable Clothing:** Wear comfortable clothing and footwear, especially during the daytime when exploring forts and palaces.
- **Hydration:** Carry water bottles to stay hydrated, especially during the hot months.
- **Respect Local Customs:** When visiting religious sites or cultural attractions, dress modestly and respect local customs and traditions.
- **Photography:** Capture the beauty of each attraction but be respectful of any photography guidelines, especially in religious spaces.

## Day 5, 6 & 7: 27,28 & 29 December, 2023 - Jaisalmer

### Day 1: Jaisalmer

We reached Jaisalmer early in the morning by traveling overnight by train at 5.00 am. It was chilling cold at that hour so we booked an auto and reached our pre-booked hotel near Jaisalmer Fort. We started our day early as usual so that we could cover most of the places in our list. On Day 5 of our Rajasthan journey, we explored the enchanting city of Jaisalmer, the "Golden City," with a focus on its historical and architectural wonders. Here's a detailed summary of our experiences:

- **Jaisalmer Fort:** Our day began with a visit to the magnificent Jaisalmer Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explored the intricately designed palaces, temples, and havelis within the fort, taking in the breathtaking architecture and panoramic views of the city.
- **Patwon Ki Haveli:** We then proceeded to Patwon Ki Haveli, a cluster of elaborately carved havelis that showcased the wealth and artistic prowess of the merchants in the bygone era. The detailed sandstone work left us in awe.
- **Local Cuisine:** We enjoyed a traditional Rajasthani lunch at a local restaurant, relishing dishes that included local specialties like Ker Sangri and Mutton Saag.
- **Gadisar Lake:** After lunch, we visited Gadisar Lake, an artificial reservoir surrounded by temples and pavilions. The serene surroundings and the vibrant birdlife added to the charm of this historic site. We relaxed there and enjoyed the sunset, after sunset there was a lighting show which was worth watching.

After that we strolled a little and had dinner near the Fort under the moonlit and relaxing and enjoying the calmness and chilliness.

### Day 2: Sand Dunes

We continued our exploration of Jaisalmer, delving deeper into its cultural and historical aspects, as well as indulging in some local experiences. We started our day early at 7.00 am as we had to travel 120 km to Tanot Mata Temple and Longewala Border Post.

- **Tanot Mata Temple:** We began the day by visiting the Tanot Mata Temple, located near the India-Pakistan border. This temple holds historical significance, as it miraculously withstood enemy bombings during the Indo-Pak war of 1971. 109 bombs were thrown, none of them burst.
- **Longewala Border Post:** We also made a brief visit to the Longewala Border Post, which played a crucial role in the 1971 war. The border area gave us a glimpse into the

challenges and the dedication of the Indian armed forces. Where 120 soldiers fought against 30000 soldiers and safeguards the post.

- **Jeep Safari:** In the late afternoon, we embarked on an exciting jeep safari into the Thar Desert. Riding through the golden sand dunes, we enjoyed the tranquil desert landscape and the spectacular sunset.

There were lots of other activities such as paragliding, motorbike rides, camel safari etc. if you love adventure you can enjoy them and spend the evening in the tranquility of the Thar desert landscape.

- **Cultural Evening:** Our day ended with a cultural evening at a desert camp. We witnessed traditional Rajasthani music and dance performances, savored a delicious dinner under the starlit sky, and experienced the warmth of desert hospitality. We concluded with stargazing in the desert, admiring the vast expanse of clear skies and twinkling stars, a perfect way to end our Jaisalmer experience in Sand Dunes.

### Day 3: Jaisalmer

We wanted to explore desert tranquility early in the morning as well, so we opted for early morning camel safari which was included in our package for camp booking.

- **Camel Safari:** In the early morning, we embarked on an exciting camel safari into the Thar Desert. Riding through the golden sand dunes, we enjoyed the tranquil desert landscape and the spectacular sunrise.

We came back to the camp, had our breakfast and moved towards Jaisalmer. But on the way we decided to visit Kuldhara, the haunted village.

- **Kuldhara - The haunted village:** It is an abandoned village in the Jaisalmer village of Rajasthan, India. Established around the 13th century, it was once a prosperous village inhabited by Paliwal Village. It was abandoned by the early 19th century for unknown reasons, possibly because of dwindling water supply, an earthquake, or as a local legend claims, because of the atrocities by the Jaisalmer state's minister Salim Singh. Over the years, Kuldhara has acquired a reputation as a haunted site, and the Government of Rajasthan decided to develop it as a tourist spot in the 2010s. You will too feel the uncomfortable and eerie stillness in the deserted village.
- **Local Crafts and Shopping:** Returning to Jaisalmer, we explored local markets and shops, where we had the opportunity to purchase traditional Rajasthani textiles, jewelry, and handicrafts, providing us with unique souvenirs of our journey. We then had our lunch and rushed to the railway station for our next stop that is Jodhpur.

Our three days in Jaisalmer were filled with a blend of history, culture, desert adventures, and the warmth of Rajasthani hospitality. The city's forts, havelis, and desert landscapes left us with unforgettable memories of the "Golden City."

## Day 8: 30 December,2023 - Jodhpur

We traveled from Jaisalmer to Jodhpur, the "Blue City" known for its majestic Mehrangarh Fort and vibrant culture. Here's a detailed summary of our experiences in Jodhpur:

We reached Jodhpur the night before and we thought to rest for the day, so we relaxed and had our dinner in the rooftop restaurant enjoying the traditional musical show.

- **Mehrangarh Fort:** Our day commenced with a visit to the magnificent Mehrangarh Fort, one of the largest forts in India. We explored the intricately designed palaces, courtyards, and museum, learning about the history and heritage of Jodhpur. The panoramic views of the Blue City from the fort's ramparts were awe-inspiring.
- **Jaswant Thada:** After the fort, we visited the tranquil Jaswant Thada, a cenotaph built in honor of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II. The marble mausoleum and the peaceful surroundings provided a serene contrast to the fort's grandeur.
- **Local Cuisine:** We indulged in a traditional Rajasthani lunch at a local restaurant, savoring a variety of dishes, including Laal Maas (spicy meat curry) and Makki ki Roti (corn bread).
- **Mehrangarh Museum:** In the afternoon, we explored the Mehrangarh Museum, housed within the fort. The museum's extensive collection of artifacts, paintings, and royal memorabilia offered a deeper insight into Jodhpur's regal history.
- **Blue City Walk:** We embarked on a guided walking tour through the winding, blue-painted streets of the old city, Nachokiya. This immersive experience allowed us to absorb the vibrant culture, interact with locals, and discover hidden gems. Then we went to Pachetiya hills to unfold the beauty of the city after the sunset and relaxing and visualizing the sun meeting the horizon.
- **Clock Tower and Sardar Market:** We explored the bustling Sardar Market near the historic Clock Tower, where we shopped for handicrafts, textiles, spices, and other local products.
- **Cultural Evening:** Our day concluded with a cultural evening, featuring a live performance of traditional Rajasthani music and dance. We savored a delicious dinner as we were entertained by the vibrant folk art forms.

Day 8 in Jodhpur was a delightful mix of historical exploration, cultural immersion, and local market experiences. The fort, museum, Blue City walk, and cultural evening showcased the essence of the "Blue City" and its rich heritage.

## Day 9 : 31 December,2023 - Jodhpur - Ranakpur- Udaipur

On Day 9 of our Rajasthan journey, we embarked on a scenic road trip from Jodhpur to Udaipur, a city known for its picturesque lakes, palaces, and romantic ambiance. Here's a detailed summary of our road trip and experiences en route to Udaipur:

- **Departure from Jodhpur:** We set out from Jodhpur in the morning, bidding farewell to the Blue City, and started our journey towards Udaipur, often referred to as the "City of Lakes."
- **Ranakpur Jain Temple:** En route, we made a stop at the Ranakpur Jain Temple, one of the most renowned temples dedicated to Lord Adinath. The temple's intricate marble architecture and peaceful surroundings provided a tranquil interlude during our journey.
- **Lunch:** We had a leisurely lunch at a local restaurant, relishing regional delicacies and enjoying some relaxation before continuing our drive.
- **Aravalli Hills Scenic Drive:** Our road trip offered breathtaking views of the Aravalli Hills, one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world. We marveled at the lush landscapes, winding roads, and the changing scenery and arrived in Kumbhalgarh fort.
- **Kumbhalgarh:** Kumbhalgarh is a Mewar fortress on the westerly range of Aravalli Hills in the Rajsamand district of Rajasthan, India. It is a World Heritage Site included in Hill Forts of Rajasthan. Built during the course of the 15th century by Rana Kumbha and enlarged through the 19th century, Kumbhalgarh is also the birthplace of Maharana Pratap, the great king and warrior of Mewar. The fort is now open to the public and is lit up spectacularly each evening for a few minutes. Approximately 36 km, making it the second-longest continuous wall in the world, after the Great Wall of China. The fort has numerous temples, palaces, and gardens within its walls, offering a glimpse into the rich history and architecture of the region
- **Nearby Attractions:** The Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary, which surrounds the fort, offers a chance to see a variety of wildlife and birds, making it a great spot for nature enthusiasts (If you have time you can visit it as well). Kumbhalgarh is a must-visit for history buffs, architecture enthusiasts, and those looking to explore the rich cultural heritage of Rajasthan.
- **Arrival in Udaipur:** As we arrived in Udaipur, the shimmering Lake Pichola welcomed us, setting the stage for our stay in this romantic city.
- **City Exploration:** In the evening, we explored the charming streets of Udaipur, taking in the vibrant markets, local life, and the regal architecture that defines the city's character.

- **Dinner with a View:** Our day concluded with a picturesque dinner at a restaurant overlooking Lake Pichola, where we savored delectable Indian and Rajasthani cuisine while admiring the beautifully illuminated City Palace and Lake Palace.

Day 9 was marked by the transition from Jodhpur to Udaipur, offering us the opportunity to enjoy scenic vistas, explore a remarkable temple, and savor the beauty of Udaipur, the "City of Lakes," at the end of our journey.

## Day 10 & 11: 1 January & 2 January, 2024-Udaipur

On Day 10 & 11 of our Rajasthan adventure, we delved into the enchanting city of Udaipur, often referred to as the "City of Lakes" and known for its romantic ambiance, historic palaces, and serene lakes. Here's a detailed summary of our experiences in Udaipur:

### Day 1: Udaipur - Haldighati

- **Depart from Udaipur:** We started our day early and left Udaipur by 7:00 AM to make the most of our day. Nathdwara is approximately 48 km from Udaipur, so it will take about an hour to reach.
- **Arrive in Nathdwara Shrinathji Temple:** We visit the famous Shrinathji Temple and begin our New Year morning with the blessing of Lord Krishna. It's a significant pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Krishna and known for its vibrant atmosphere and beautiful architecture. Participate in the Mangala Aarti, which is an early morning ritual.
- **Breakfast in Nathdwara:** Enjoy a traditional Rajasthani breakfast at a local eatery. Popular options include poha, kachoris, and chai.
- **Explore Nathdwara Town:** We walk around the town, visit local markets for souvenirs, and explore the streets to get a feel of the local culture and traditions.
- **Departure for Haldighati:** Haldighati is around 18 km from Nathdwara and takes about 30-40 minutes to reach by car. We then visited Haldighati Museum where we explore the Museum, which provides detailed information about the historic Battle of Haldighati fought between Maharana Pratap and the Mughal army and Battlefield. We then visited the battlefield site and the Chetak Samadhi, a memorial to Maharana Pratap's loyal horse, Chetak.
- **Lunch:** Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant. You can find traditional Rajasthani food options here.
- **Depart for Eklingji Temple:** Eklingji is about 45 km from Haldighati and takes approximately 1 hour to reach. We prayed and explored the Eklingji Temple complex, dedicated to Lord Shiva. The temple is known for its beautiful architecture and spiritual significance. Spend time admiring the intricate carvings and the serene ambiance of the temple.
- **Depart for Udaipur:** We started our journey back to Udaipur, which is approximately 22 km away and takes around 40 minutes to reach. Arriving back in Udaipur by early evening, allowing us some time to relax or explore more of Udaipur's vibrant streets and markets.

### Day 2 : Udaipur



- **Jagdish Temple:** We started our day early so that we can make the most of it. Our day commenced with a visit to the Jagdish Temple, an architectural masterpiece dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The temple's intricate carvings and spiritual atmosphere left a lasting impression.
- **City Palace:** Our next stop was the City Palace, a magnificent royal residence that offers a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of the Mewar rulers. We explored the grand courtyards, museums, and took in the panoramic views of Lake Pichola.
- **Boat Ride on Lake Pichola:** After visiting the City Palace, we embarked on a serene boat ride on Lake Pichola. This scenic journey allowed us to see the Lake Palace, Jag Mandir, and the stunning landscapes that make Udaipur so picturesque.
- **Saheliyon Ki Bari:** We explored Saheliyon Ki Bari, a historic garden adorned with fountains, lotus pools, and marble pavilions. The garden's lush greenery and tranquil setting offered a peaceful escape.
- **Lunch:** We enjoyed a traditional Rajasthani lunch at a local restaurant, savoring regional specialties and delectable flavors.
- **Cultural Evening in Bagore Ki Haveli:** Our day concluded with a cultural evening at a local venue. We witnessed traditional Rajasthani music and dance performances, providing a delightful cultural immersion.
- **Dinner:** We enjoyed a sumptuous dinner at a rooftop restaurant, relishing Indian and Rajasthani cuisine while overlooking the beautifully lit Lake Pichola and the City Palace.

Day 11 in Udaipur was a delightful exploration of the city's history, culture, and romantic settings. The City Palace, boat ride, and cultural evening offered a perfect blend of heritage and serenity in the "City of Lakes."

## Day 12 : 3 January, 2024 Chittorgarh

On Day 12 of our Rajasthan journey, we ventured to Chittorgarh, a city renowned for its historical Chittorgarh Fort and the tales of valor that are embedded in its history. We had hired a guide who explained the historical aspect of it. Here's a detailed summary of our experiences in Chittorgarh:

- **Chittorgarh Fort:** We started from Udaipur early in the morning, to visit the monumental Chittorgarh Fort, one of the largest forts in India and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. We explored its grand palaces, majestic gates, and remarkable structures, all of which vividly narrate the city's history.
- **Vijay Stambh (Victory Tower):** The impressive Vijay Stambh, a symbol of victory built by Maharana Kumbha. The tower showcases the religious pluralism that was practiced by Rana Kumbha and the predecessors in Mewar. We enjoyed panoramic views of the fort complex and the surrounding countryside.
- **Kirti Stambh (Tower of Fame):** Our exploration continued with a visit to the Kirti Stambh, a Jain tower that showcases intricate sculptures and carvings depicting Jain mythology.
- **Rana Kumbha Palace:** We explored Rana Kumbha's palace within the fort complex, a structure that once served as the birthplace of Maharana Udai Singh II, the founder of Udaipur. The palace offered insights into the architectural grandeur of the Mewar dynasty.
- **Padmini Palace:** We visited Padmini Palace, known for its architectural elegance and its connection to the tale of Rani Padmini. The palace overlooks a reflecting pool, creating a serene and picturesque ambiance.
- **Meera Temple:** We also made a visit to the Meera Temple, dedicated to the revered poet-saint Meera Bai. The temple holds spiritual significance and is a place of devotion for her followers.
- **Lunch:** We had lunch at a local restaurant, savoring regional flavors and a chance to relax after our extensive exploration of the fort.
- **Return to Udaipur:** In the evening, we made our way back to Udaipur, reflecting on the historical significance and the tales of bravery we encountered in Chittorgarh.

Day 12 in Chittorgarh was a journey through the annals of history, with the Chittorgarh Fort and its historical structures offering us a glimpse into the valor and grandeur of this remarkable city.

Our Rajasthan journey concluded with a visit to the majestic Chittorgarh Fort, where tales of valor and sacrifice deeply moved us. Returning to Udaipur, we spent a serene evening at Fatehsagar Lake, enjoying the stunning sunset and reflecting on our incredible experiences. This journey through Rajasthan's vibrant culture, history, and natural beauty has enriched our souls and left us with indelible memories. As we depart, we carry a profound appreciation for this magnificent land of kings and legends, eager to return and explore more of its timeless charm.