A colorful visit to the City of Jaisalmer

Located close to the Pakistan border, Jaisalmer acts as the guard to the Western Rajasthan of India’s frontier. Popularly known as the ‘Golden City,’ Jaisalmer stays in close proximity to the Thar desert. The city stands on yellowish sandstone and is crowned by forts of the past times, Jain temples, and museums and also holds several festivals that uplift culture and heritage.

One can always plan to visit this astonishing town atleast once, to witness the life, art and architecture of our ancestors, modern time war museum and desert wildlife and safari.

## History of Jaisalmer

Jaisalmer is very special and known for its beauty and desert. If you have made up your mind to visit Jaisalmer, then first you must read the history of this city. Jaisalmer is situated in the Thar Desert in the far west of India.

Jaisalmer was founded about 840 years ago by Bhati Rajput Rawal Jaisal in 1156 AD. Jaisalmer was formerly known as Valla Mandal, and its capital was Loudrava, and the Pawar kings ruled there. Then the name of this city was Bhavnagar. Jaisalmer, which has cherished its tradition, art, and culture for centuries, has become a major center of attraction for domestic and foreign tourists. Every year many tourists come here to see the architectural style, fine crafts, and handicrafts carved on yellow stones. Jaisalmer has a very ancient history. This city has been the area of ​​the ancient Indus Valley Civilization. The land area of ​​the present Jaisalmer district was famous in ancient times as 'Madhara' or 'Vallabhmandal.' The ancestors of the former rulers of Jaisalmer, who consider themselves descendants of Lord Krishna, probably settled on the territory of Jaisalmer in the 6th century. The first capital of Bhati Rajputs, descendants of Yadavas in the district, was Tanot, second at Loudrava, and third at Jaisalmer.

## Geographical Area of ​​Jaisalmer

Its geographical area was spread over a wide area of ​​16,062 square meters. However, due to its location in the extreme conditions of the desert, the population here was reduced to only 76,255 at the beginning of the 20th century.

According to the Indian map, Jaisalmer is from 20001 to 20002 north latitude and 69029 to 72020 east longitude. But according to historical events, the boundaries of Jaisalmer always keep on increasing. According to this, the area of ​​the state can also be more or less sometimes.

In this region, there are high dunes, both permanent and temporary, which keep changing their places along with strong wind storms. Therefore, in the middle of the sandy dunes, there are also Rocky Mountains and plateaus. The entire slope of this area is towards the Indus River and the Rann of Kutch, i.e., west to south.

## Reagional language of Jaisalmer

The main language of Rajasthan is Marwari. But two types of language are spoken in the Jaisalmer region; first is the Thali language, which is spoken in the desert area of ​​Thar, the second is Marwari.

In ​​Lakha, Myajlar, Malni Ghat, language is spoken as a mixed language. On the other hand, in the language of Pargana Sam Sehgarh and Ghotadu, a colloquial language consisting of a mixture of Thaat and Hindi language is spoken. Among the ganas on Visangarh, Khuhdi Nachana, etc., are attached to Bahawalpur Sindh.

Mad is a mixture of the Bikaneri and Sindhi languages. Similarly, there is a mixture of Ghat languages in ​​Lathi, Pokaran, Phalodi. A beautiful blend of Maad, Sindhi, Malani, Punjabi, Gujarati language, a mixture of all these dialects spoken in the Rajasthan capital!

# Places to visit in Jaisalmer

## Forts of Jaisalmer

### Sonar Quila

Sonar Quila or the Golden fort is another name of Jaisalmer fort built with yellow sandstone. The unique life inside the fort helps one imagine life centuries back when kings used to rule them. The only living fort still has around 3000 people with homes, businesses, homestays, cafes, and temples inside. In 2013, Jaisalmer fort was declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The fort has 99 bastions, of which 92 were constructed in the 17th century. The three-layered walls give an idea of why it took eight years for the fort to be captured and the kingdom to fall. The center of attraction of the fort is the Fort palace, Dussehra Chowk, an 11-story palace, a private residence of rulers. The vantage points for tourists once served as unrestricted viewpoints to see through the plains ifthe enemy was trying to invade.

## Rang Mahal

Another place called Rang Mahal is attractive due to its painting and mirror work, used as a bedroom of king Mulraj II. Some other places of attraction in the palace are a gallery of sculptures where the stamps of states of Rajputana are displayed. The drummers use a balcony to raise the alarm to alert the natives about the enemy attack.

There are about seven intricately carved Jain temples within the walls of the fort. Dedicated to Jain Tirthankaras, these temples are built in the famed Diwara style. Connected to one another by corridors and walkways these temples were built between 12th and 15th centuries.

## The Havelis

Patwa ki Haveli and Nathmal ki Haveli are two attractive mansions built by rich people other than the king. The Patwa ki Haveli is a cluster of five Havelis, with a view of the fort. The youngest Haveli, Nathmal ki Haveli, served as home to the prime minister of Jaisalmer. The main attraction of this place is the intricate carving on the outside and beautiful paintings on the inside. You can view it, especially on the first floor, where about 1.5kg of gold leaves were used.

## Gadisar lake

The Gadisar lakewas theonly water source to the town till 1965 AD, named after GadsiSingh. An artificial reservoir is a sightseeing place with many temples and shrines around. Boating, feeding the catfish or simply watching the migrating waterfowls during winter are the main activities here.

## Cenotaph Garden

A cenotaph garden, Baba Bagh, located about 6 km from Jaisalmer, stands at the foot of a hill in the memory of late rulers. It is a great place of peace though not maintained well. Vyas Chhatri is another such cenotaph dedicated to sage Vyasa of Mahabharata time, and others along with cremation ground for Pushkarana Brahmin community. The main reason for visiting this place is the beautiful view of the Sun setting on the horizon.

## Village life of Jaisalmer

Kuldhara, a village until recently a hidden gem of Jaisalmer, is about 35km from the town. The story of Kuldhara gives an idea of the smart agricultural technique, followed even today, developed by the resourceful Paliwal Brahmin families, which successfully converted barren land into fertile land. The treacherous plan of the Diwan Salim Singh (ZalimSingh) of the king of Jaisalmer to marry a beautiful girl of this Brahmin community forced the locals to abandon the village. But the girl became a victim of the honor killing. Until now,it is believed that her spirit continues to haunt this village, and nobody lives here.

## Heritage Museum

Owned and operated by private, local historian and storyteller LN Khatri, the Thar Heritage Museum offers the culture of the region. One can see the fossils and portraits, photos and sculptures, portraits, and manuscripts, as well as weapons and kitchen equipment used in the past. He also owns a Desert handicraft Museum.

## Recreational activities

You can also have some refreshing and thrilling experiences with desert safari, camel ride along with historical place visit.

Away from civilization, you can have camped under the stars and sunrise at early dawn as the first thing in the morning to witness the sands stretching the horizon are some of the rare experiences one must not miss. Deep into the desert, one can see a sea of sand dunes. Some popular places of tourist interest are Sam and Khuri, which are always crowded with visitors.

## Desert safari

Many independent hotels have camel safari packages that offer various options according to visitors’ choices. One can go for a single-day camel safari, overnight safari and camping that may last from 2 days to months. One can opt for a safari from September to March and get sunscreen, a pair of sunglasses and a hat, and proper warm clothes to withstand wintry weather.

## Desert wildlife experience

The Desert National Park displays the varied wildlife and ecosystem of the Thar desert. The undulating dunes, jagged rocks, dense salt-lake, and inter-medial areas are some landforms usually seen here. A traveler will get to seevarious species of animals that can be spotted here, like blackbuck, chinkara, desert fox, Great Indian Bustard, one of the world’s endangered, heaviest flying birds and so on. Migrating raptors flock around the park. Some are Himalayan and Eurasian Griffon Vultures, Eastern Imperial Eagle, and the Saker Falcon.

## War museum

The Jaisalmer war museum is located on Jaisalmer-Jodhpur Highway. The exhibits pay respect to all the soldiers who took part and lost their lives in the India-Pakistan battle of 1965 and the Loungewala warin 1971. Many war trophies, vintage equipment, tanks, military vehicles, murals of the soldiers, and a Hunter aircraft by the Indian Air Force are displayed here. One can see several captured tanks and other memorabilia from the war. Video clipping of the interview with Major Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri, who played a crucial role in the battle of Loungewalais played in an audio-visual room.

## Temples of Jaisalmer

One of the important places in Jaisalmer is Tanot Mata Temple at around 120 km from Jaisalmer. The goddess is considereda reincarnation of HinglajDevi.

**Some delicacies of Jaisalmer**

Over a period of time, Jaisalmer has seen many changes in the food habits due to many visitors, from Mexican to Tibetan and Italian to Rajasthani. One can cherish the lovely moments, sitting in the restaurant with camel carts ambling along the desert, the strains of traditional music/songs being played nearby. All kinds of food are available here.

Traditional Dal BaatiChoorma, Gatte Ki Sabzi, Rajasthani Laal Maas are some of the cuisine and Mohal Taal, Makhania Lassi are the popular sweet items. Ker Sangri is one of the delicious cuisines found only in Jaisalmer, made of Sangri and Ker (grown only in desert areas) with added local species. One can consume this cuisine with Bajra or wheat roti. This high savory dish is rich in nutritional value. Sweetened Bhaang Lassi, made from cannabis, is rare but found here in a few legally authorized shops.KesariyaThandai is one must not miss during a visit to Jaisalmer for its rich specialty-saffron, dry-fruits, rose petals and Malai.

No one can prevent themselves from eating snacks like Pyaz ki Kachori, MirchiBhajia and Channe Jaisalmer Ke, which are not onlymouth-watering but also highly inviting and toothsome.

**Shopping addas**

Sadar Bazar is a place where one gets all kinds of items, from leather goods to carpets, paintings, handicrafts, jewelry, shoes, and sarees. Colorful dupattas and scarves are some of the attractive traditional clothing accessories one can shop at Seema gram. Leather items at Manak Chowk, home décor items, popular puppets, and traditional dresses at Pansaribazaar, and silk fabrics one can try at Bhatia bazaar. For authentic and traditional Rajasthani silver items and fascinating and funky accessories, one can visit Sonaron ka baas.

The empty sands around Jaisalmer come alive with a mesmerizing performance of rich and colorful Rajasthani folk culture. Not to ignore, the Desert Festival is arranged every year in January and February by the Department of tourism for three whole days. The festival, unique in its tradition, hosts many performances by men and women in their brightest costumes with musicians singing ballads of valor, romance and tragedy. The puppeteers, acrobats, camel tattoo shows, camel races, camel polo, camel mounted bands. Folk dances are some other attractions of the festival.

**How to reach Jaisalmer?**

Many transport facilities connect Jaisalmer with the famous towns of Rajasthan. One can reach Jaisalmer from Jodhpur, Bikaner, Barmer, Mt. Abu, Ahmedabad, etc. direct trains from Delhi, Jodhpur, Jaipur, and the palace on wheels connect to Jaisalmer. International and domestic flyers can reach Jodhpur Airport and from there, they can reach Jaisalmer by rail or road. Jaisalmer is 275km from Jodhpur airport.