**The town of Patiala: a place you will never forget**

Punjab is considered as the Golden Land of India, Bread Basket of India, Granary of India and so on. The state got its name due to the five rivers flowing in the state. It is a state with rich hearted hospitable people known for their bravery, colorful dresses, festivals, folk dances, and songs that attract everyone.

Such a state with so many specialties, even more so in Patiala, nestled in the southeast of the state. The city has strong historical and cultural roots surrounded by architectural marvels and destinations for exploring the core traditions of Punjab.

Some of the famed things you can look out for in Patiala have to be checked out. One of them is the Patiala Gharana of Hindustani Classical Music. There are culturally 5Ps which are mentioned: traditional headgear worn by Sikhs*, Patiala Shahi Pag,**Paranda* or the Colored braids worn by women in the hair, a type of woman pants or *Patiala Salwar, Patiala Jutti,* or flat fiber-based footwear and finally what everyone wants to have a go when in Patiala, *Patiala Peg* a unique measurement of liquor.

Punjab holds the record of being the most extensive whiskey market in the world. Patiala Peg is a ‘measure of whisky defined by the distance between the index and the little finger when they are held parallel against a glass’ that comes to about 120ml.

**Visiting Places in Patiala**

**Qila Mubarak Complex** is a rampart fort cum palace constructed in Sikh Palace architectural style. One can observe the similarity with the Mughal and Rajput styles of architecture. The palace was built under the patronage of Maharaja Ala Singh in the year 1764 AD. The palace consists of many sections like Ran Baas (Guest House), Darbar Hall, Qila Bahadurgarh and Qila Androon, with an underground sewage system in the Qila can be seen.

The gate is almost 50ft high and is made of solid ivory and many other artifacts made out of elephant tusks can be seen inside also.

**Patiala Kali Mata Mandir**, a religious, auspicious temple dedicated to Goddess Kali, was built in the year 1936AD by Bhupinder Singh, a Maharaja of Patiala. The temple is built entirely with white marble. The temple walls are adorned with beautiful murals, inscriptions, and frescoes, telling the tales of Hindu mythology and stories from Hindu epics. The idol of Goddess is 6ft tall in standing position in a gold-plated sanctum, in her popular image - bloodshot eyes, gaping mouth and a drooping tongue, with a bent sword and a human head in her hand.

The temple, which displays the love of the Punjabi rulers towards art and architecture, is declared a National Monument.

**Sheesh, Mahal** was built as a part of the Old Moti Bagh Palace in the 19th century, which literally means palace of Mirrors. Under the reign of Maharaja Narinder Singh, many frescoes made are displayed here. The palace is a galaxy of art and culture, displaying antique Rajput and Kangra style paintings, bronzes, sculptures, and portraits of the Maharajas of Patiala, and many more. The artificial lake in front of the palace has a hanging bridge with the same name as Lakshman Jhula of Haridwar, which adds to this historical monument’s beauty.

The museum has many medals from many parts of the world, as many as 3200 medals collected by Maharaja Bhupinder Singh. The Order of the Grater (England, 1348 A.D), Golden Fleece (Austria, 1430 A.D), St. Andrews (Russia, 1688), and The Order of the Rising Sun (Japan) are some of the important medals found here. The collection also consists of a vast range of coins, even from punch-marked coins issued by the princely states.

The Punjab Government takes care of the palace now.

As the name suggests, **Gurudwara Dukh Nivaran Sahib Mandir**, anyone with ailments or illness gets cured when they visit this place and take a dip in the holy water with complete devotion. Managed by the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, visitors have faith in the healing qualities of the water here and pay an annual tribute to this Gurdwara. It is one of the famous Gurudwaras of Punjab.

Like all gurudwaras, people can also volunteer themselves in some activities like cleaning the premises, helping in the kitchen, serving the people with food apart from praying. Definitely a worth place to visit this place when one comes to Patiala.

Many special occasions like Basant Panchami, the day Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji arrived here) and Guru Nanak Jayanti or Lohri are celebrated, and many newlywed couples and newborns are blessed here.

**Moti Bagh Palace,** an ancient magnificent 4-storeyed palace, is located near Sheesh Mahal. It was originally built in the year 1840 by the Maharaja of Patiala but later in 1920 was renovated and expanded during Maharaja Bhupinder Singh’s reign. The main attractions of this palace are Chhatris, Jharokas and 15 dining halls. The palace has been converted into a museum and a National Institute for Sports. The National Institute for sports is a place made for sports lovers with awesome infrastructure and trainers.

**Baradari Gardens**, a well-maintained leafy garden with ample matures large trees around. One can enjoy the evening with family or friends taking a decently long walk. The flowers blooming in the spring are a feast to the eyes, while the kid’s play area is busy all the time. The fresh air and the medicinal trees present are also the main attractions.

The garden was constructed during maharaja Rajinder Singh’s reign to see many colonial buildings here and his statue. The garden served as a royal residence with a cricket stadium, a skating rink, and Rajinder Kothi, a small palace that has now turned into a heritage hotel.

**Bahadurgarh Fort** was constructed in the year 1658 CE by Nawab Saif Khan and later renovated and remodeled under Maharaja Karam Singh in 1837 AD. It spreads over 21sq.km and is named after the 9th Sikh Guru-Guru Tegh Bhadur. The circular shape fort boasts two ramparts and a moat. A perfect example of a peaceful existence is displayed here as there is a mosque as well as a gurudwara in the fort premises. The school also uses the place to train Punjab Police Commandos.

**Bir Moti Bagh Wildlife Sanctuary**, located 5km from Patiala town, is another place in Patiala for visitors to visit. The best time is during winter, as many migratory birds are spotted. One can also see rare indigenous wildlife, notably the Chital, Hog Deer, Peafowl, Mynah, Partridge, etc. There is also a dedicated park for deer.

It has a sprawling area of 654 hectares of land and was declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in 1952 A.D. by the Government.

Strict rules to avoid plastic littering are followed here to maintain nature.

**Some Delicacies of Patiala**

With many upcoming restaurants, cafés, fast-food chains, and authentic old Dhaba/hotels, Patiala is becoming one of the eating destinations of the North region.

Punjabi Paratha, either stuffed or plain along with Chai or you can try the Ma Ki Dal, Punjabi Chhole, Makki di Roti with Sarson Ka Saag, chicken and mutton dishes. One of the crowd favorites is the Rajma Chaval, and many more are some foods that reflect Patiala’s version of Punjabi food.

Lassi topped with thick cream is one item that can not be forgotten to taste.

Papdi Chaat, Pani-Puri, Samosa, Kachori, Aloo Tikki, Jalebi are some snacks to enjoy during an evening walk.

The Punjabi flavors have influenced many original foods. Hence, along with fast food chain companies, many local restaurants have their own food items like Punjabi Pizza, rolls, Chicken Gol Gappe, a burger with a new stuffing etc.

**Shopping places in Patiala**

One can go all out when in Patiala for shopping. Visitors can check out shopping options while touring Patiala. The best places are Old Quila Mubarak Market, Arna Barna Chowk, Adalat Bazaar, Dharampura Market, Chandni Chowk Market, Phulkari Punjab Govt Emporium and many new malls like Easy day, Omaxe Mall, and Gur Mandi. With wide varieties of the products like Paranda, Patiala special Pyjama and Phoolkari work fabric, Nala’s, embroidered Juttis, Shahi Salwar and chunnis, and many more traditional and exclusive things. One can also buy branded items and electronics in the malls.

Achar Bazaar inside the Srihindi gate is famous for the pickles and Book Market for a large variety of books for youngsters and readers.

**How to reach Patiala**

Patiala has all three modes of transport and hence one can utilize any mode to reach Patiala. Many airlines, Air mantra, Air India, Kingfisher, Jet Airways et., fly the planes from major cities like, Delhi, Amritsar, Bangalore, Mumbai, Goa, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Leh and so on, to Patiala. The nearest airport to Patiala is Chandigarh so, one can use flight service till Chandigarh and from there they can use bus or cab to come to Patiala and vice versa.

The Punjab State Road Transport Corporation and many private travel services offer excellent services to the travelers through their service, by bus or cabs. Many vehicles run between the major cities of Punjab and Patiala so that one can come to Patiala from any city like Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Ambala, Chandigarh, Ludhiana, Amritsar and many more.

However, the rail department also has many trains running through Patiala Railway station. Many trains from Ambala, Amritsar, Barmer, Bathinda, Delhi, Haridwar and Kalka come here. Some of the trains coming here are Sri Ganganagar Intercity, Amritsar Dadar Express, Barmer Haridwar Link Express, Sri Ganganagar Haridwar Express, and Udyan Abha Toofan Express.

**Best time to visit Patiala**

One can visit Patiala any time of the year, but the delightful and suitable weather conditions during winter are better for sightseeing and local tours around the city. Extreme hot and humid weather during summer and abundant rainfall during rainy season are not preferred for outdoor activities. So, better plan for the trip between the month of October to February or till mid of March.