An exciting tour of Udaipur

When planning a tour to Rajasthan, one must consider Udaipur as the most prioritized place. It is often referred to as the Venice of the East, amid azure water lakes with lush green hills of Aravallis surrounding it.

Not only rich in art and architecture but also for its rich culture and flora and fauna in and around, Udaipur is an awe-inspiring tourist place.

## History of Udaipur

Udaipur is a royal city that was the capital of the Mewar rulers for centuries. There is a story behind the origin of Udaipur, a romantic city. Once, Maharana Udai Singh was on his hunting expedition in Aravilli Hills to meet a holy sage. The sage advised the king to establish a kingdom in the fertile valley, well protected by the high Aravalli hills. Subsequently, Maharana Udai Singh laid the foundation stone of Udaipur in 1557 AD.

Chittorgarh was the previous capital of the Rajput kingdom of Mewar. Maharana Udai Singh was the successor of the Sisodia, who claimed to be the descendants of the Sun God. Sisodia is believed to be the oldest ruling family in the world. Among the warrior families, the Sisodias have been recognized as the most powerful people in Rajasthan. Another reason for shifting the capital from Chittorgarh to Udaipur was the constant onslaught of enemies.

In 1568, Chittor was attacked by the Mughal Emperor, Akbar and to overcome this threat, Udai Singh transferred the entire kingdom to Udaipur. Udaipur was naturally protected under the fortifications built by the Aravalli Hills. Since that time, Udaipur has developed into a full-fledged city. As the Mughal Empire gradually weakened, the Sisodid regained their independence. He recaptured most of Mewar except Chittorgarh Fort.

Udaipur remained the capital of Mewar until it became a princely state of British India in 1818. When India became independent in 1947, the Maharaja of Udaipur handed over the city to the Government of India. At that time, Mewar was merged into the state of Rajasthan. In the present date, Udaipur enjoys a favourable position on the map of Rajasthan. Udaipur is known for its picturesque surroundings and its royal past. Various ancient monuments, huge palaces, architectural temples and beautiful lakes attract people to visit the ancient land of royalty.

# Most exciting places to visit

## Udaipur palace

Udaipur City Palace, towering over Lake Pichola, contains four major and several minor palaces. Maharaja Udai Singh started the construction of this fabulous palace in Rajasthani and Mughal architectural style. The castle, built in over 400 years, is considered one of the largest palaces of that time. The balconies, domes, and the palace's towers show a fantastic view, and the central part is reserved for the museum.

## Sajjangarh Palace

Situated on the frontier of Udaipur, this palace is the site of the Mewar dynasty. The palace is named after its patron Maharana Sajjan Singh. This palace was built at the height of the Aravalli hills to trace the monsoon clouds, and that is why it is also called the Monsoon Palace. Being situated at such a height, you can view the entire city from here. Moreover, the sparkling little houses of the city from a height will add to the scene at night.

## Vintage Car Museum:

This museum, run by the descendants of Maharana Pratap, is also included in Udaipur's famous places of interest. A glimpse of the luxurious royal family of Mewar is visible in it. You will get to see some such models of cars here, which are unique. Seeing all these cars, you can get a good idea that the King-Maharaja must have been very fond of them. If you have a keen interest in cars, you must come here because you will not find such extinct models anywhere else.

## Jagniwas palace

Maharana Jagat Singh built lake Palace or the original Jagniwas palace as his summer palace in 1754 AD. The castle stands on Jagniwas island, converted into Lake Palace Hotel in the 1960s by Maharana Bhagwat Singh,later handed over to Taj Group of Hotels, allowing only residents now. The majestic, luxury hotel Taj Palace has been maintained well, with gardens, fountains, pillared terraces, and gleaming courtyards. The palace walls are made of black and white marblestone adorned with ornamental niches and semi-precious stones.

## Dudh Talai Musical Garden:

Its modern architecture and musical fountain are the centres of attraction all over Rajasthan. People also know it as Deendayal Park. If you want to come here and have a panoramic view, then sit in the cable car and watch the sunset view, which you will find very pleasant, and this is why travellers come to this place. It is open seven days a week, so you can go to any day to capture the picture of the setting sun in your camera.

## Other palaces

Jag Mandir Palace and Monsoon Palace are two other palaces of interest. Jagdish temple, an example of Indo Aryan style of architecture, is dedicated to Lord Vishnu with carved pillars, graceful ceilings, and painted walls.

## Haldi Ghati

Haldi Ghati, a famed mountain pass in the hills of Aravalli Range at 40km from Udaipur, is named after the soil's color.

## Temples of Udaipur

Nagda houses a temple dedicated to Lord Shastra Bahu, a form of Lord Vishnu, with intricate carving borders green marshland.The Temple, constructed in the 10thcentury, is featured on an archeological survey of India.

## Recreational places

The main attractions of Udaipur are lakes in the city; being a part of the Aravalli range away from the desert has added many advantages to the town. There are about five famous lakes in the city, maintained by the Indian government, namely,

* Udai Sagar Lake, formed as a result of a dam on river Berach,
* Fateh Sagar Lake An artificial lake connected to Lake Pichola by a canal, housing Nehru Island, on which stands the Udaipur Solar Observatory,
* Pichola Lake, named after Picholi village, which holds Jagniwas and Jagmandir islands. A boat ride at sunset times in this lake gives a mesmerizing view of the Lake and City Palace, which stands on the lake's eastern banks.
* Doodh Talai lake lies on the way between Udaipur and Pichola lake. Nestled between small hillocks, it attracts tourists as a popular destination to spend some time in the gardens surrounding it.
* Badi lake is an artificial freshwater lake with a calm ambiance.
* Jaisamand Lake is considered as second largest artificial sweet water lake in Asia. It is also one of the most popular picnic spots for its beauty, a hub for various migrating and native birds at the center island.
* Miner is a village with two lakes 48km from Udaipur, whichhosts several migratory birds like Greater Flamingo, White-Tailed Lapwing, Marsh Harrier, Black Kite, Jungle Quail, Crow Pheasant etc., during winter.

## Other places to visit

* The Crystal Gallery exhibits unique items made of crystal-like dining table, sofa, washing bowl, tray, decanter, candle stands, perfume bottles, pottery etc.Even the bed, goblet, royal Punkah, and jewel-studded carpet embodying peerless class and many more artifacts are designed byF. C. Osler, a Victorian-era manufacturer of monumental glass cut luxury objects.
* Udaipur Biological Park, open all around the year, houses many animals and birds of many species, a haven for wildlife lovers.
* Udaipur Fish Aquarium is marked as India's first hi-tech virtual fish aquarium. It has about 125m long gallery, which displays hundreds of varieties of fish from around the world.
* Sajjangarh Biological Park, spread over 36acre of land at the foothill of Bans-Dahara outside Sajjangarh wildlife sanctuary, is a natural habitat for many carnivore and herbivore animals.
* Gulab Bagh and Zoo have innumerable species of roses, so the name is 100acre wide, themost extensive garden in Udaipur.
* Sulkhadia circle, Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandir, Saheliyon ki Bari, Wax Museum, Vintage Car collection at Garden Hoteland other places one can visit on tour.

## Delicacies of Udaipur

Though the Rajasthani food is predominantly vegetarian, based on pulses and grains, Udaipur cuisine is highly influenced by Rajput rulers of the Mewar regions, who were good hunters of the time. The royal cooks used a lot of ghee, yogurt, chilies, and garlic to flavor the meat and matched it according to the taste of powerful rulers. Unlike other regions of Rajasthan, the freshwater lakes in and around the city have their contribution of fish-food in the cuisine list.

## Jagdish Temple:

This is a temple of Lord Vishnu located in the City Palace. Experienced artists have carved the idols here on the stone to speak now. The peaceful atmosphere here attracts travellers. The main idol here in which Vishnu has been made with four hands is only one black stone. The idol is surrounded by four small idols: Lord Ganesha, Sun God, Goddess of Shakti and Shiva.

## Some of the famous food items one can taste in Udaipur

Dal Bhati Choorma, wherein the balls of wheat or jowar are roasted on charcoal and served with a simple lentil soup-like dish, Choorma is the balls crushed to powder and served with ghee and jaggery. It is an iconic Rajasthani dish.

Gatte ki Sabzi, steamed chickpea dumplings, are cooked in a tangy- spicy yogurt-based ubiquitous dish of Rajasthan. Sometimes, Tomato and onion are added to the gravy and are eaten with Makke di Roti (corn flour flatbread).

Kadhi Pakora, a more common food here, has small portions of chickpea flour fried in oil and placed in thick gravy of yogurt, chickpea, and spices.

Ker Sangri, arather unusual dish comprised of a pickled wild variety of berries and beans, is available in the Thar desert.

Laal Maas, Safed Maas are two varieties of non-veg food served earlier to royal families. Men liked goat (Laal Maas) while the ladies were usually served the mellow Safed Maas).

Banjara Murgh, Boiled Egg Bhurji, Mirchi Bada, and Kachori are other foods.

Machli Jaisalmandi or Fish Curry got its name after the lake Jaisalmand. Khargosh Ke Kabab, offered only at a few restaurants, was once royal food.

Other than these,many foods of different regions, Indian and Foreign, areavailable on the streets andin restaurants.

## Shopping areas of Udaipur

Besides exploring the lakes and royal buildings, one of the other things to do is shopping in effervescent markets with authentic Rajasthani products.

Bapu Bazaar is a place where one gets a lot of things, like books, bags (cloth and leather), electronic gadgets,Khadi products and so on.

In Bada Bazaar, you can buy expensive gold and silver items to traditional Rajasthani clothes,including Bandhani and Batik print textiles. This busy market Mochiwada Bazaar also sells beautiful handmade Juttis (shoes).

Hathipole, here, you can buy items like traditional clothing, Bandhej and Leheriya, Jaipuri Razai, Pichwai or Phad arts and so on, which mirror the cultural greatness of the Rajasthan.

Chetak circleis a place where you can get incredible crafted works, metal products, welcome cards, designer stones, boxes, puppets, lovely earthenware, and more. Another essential item one can buy here is herbs and spices locally grown.

Shilpagram is where the tourist is surprised to see the mud cottages, wooden houses of straws and sticks. With folk music in the background, you can spend time seeing stoneware, rock depictions, wood furnishing etc. It is a place where an annual festival is held to exhibit the village life of Rajasthan along with a shopping experience to the visitors.

In Ghanta Ghar,a person can get designer jewelry, Meenakari, Kundan, Polka work and ornaments of Rajasthan.

Jagadish temple street, City Palace Street, Malda's street are other places where items like ethnic outfits, customized wooden toys, handcrafted items are sold. Diaries and journals made from camel leather are available, especially at Jagadish Temple Street.

## How to reach Udaipur?

One can visit Udaipur at any time of the year, but it is advisable to seeit in winter and post-monsoon season, i.e., from September to March, for the best experience.

Being one of the most sought after for visiting, Udaipur has many facilities, apart from road transport and rail. It has an airport called Maharana Pratap Airport at Dabok, 22 km from the city connecting all major cities of India. Many trains run through Udaipur Railway station from Delhi, Mumbai, and Jaipur. The brilliant road network of the Rajasthan transport department has made it convenient for all visitors to come to the this 'City of Palace' from many major and minor cities through buses, taxis or by cars.