

Marwar Yatra

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I visited Marwar in February 2013 for the Jaisalmer Desert Festival. During a ten day trip covered other parts of Marwar as well. Took a train from Mumbai to Jodhpur from where I hired a taxi. Here is the travel program.

1. Jodhpur to Bikaner via Nagaur.
2. Bikaner to Jaisalmer.
3. Jaisalmer to Barmer.
4. Barmer to Jodhpur, train to Mumbai.

This travelogue is presented in the sequence of places as I travelled. Format is name of place, what to see and link to photo album. Every photo has detailed captions.

1. Nagaur

Jodhpur to Nagaur is about a two hours drive. Places to see Cattle Fair, Fort, Mirchi bazaar.

Fair held every February. At cattle fair look for Nagaur Ox, Black stallion, camels by gypsy. To see pics of Nagaur Cattle Fair <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Nagaur-Cattle-Fair.aspx>

Next was the Ahhichatragarh Fort, is famous for its wall paintings. It is not a very big fort but something special about it. To see pics of Nagaur Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Nagaur-Fort.aspx>

The town is best visited during the Ramdeoji Ka mela and Tejaji ka mela (fair) in February and August respectively.

2. Karni Mata Mandir

About one hour from Nagaur is the world famous Karni Mata Mandir, the deity is an incarnation of Ma Durga. It is the only temple where rats are worshipped, has a richly carved entrance with silver doors. To see pictures of temple <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Karni-Mata-Mandir-Bikaner.aspx>

3. Bikaner

Mandir to Bikaner is slightly over an hour's drive. I stayed at the Rajasthan Tourism Hotel, simple, clean, functional with good food.

Next morning visited the famous Junagarh Fort. It opens at 10 am. Keep 3-4 hours. In the fort complex are some magnificent palaces like Anup Mahal, Badal Mahal, Chandra Mahal, Ganga Niwas and Rang Mahal or palace of pleasure. Super fort and very well maintained. Must see.

To see pics of

1. Junagarh Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Junagarh-Fort.aspx>
2. Prachina Museum ie in the fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Prachina-Museum-Bikaner.aspx>.

From there went to the Lallgarh Palace Hotel. This grand palace is an architectural masterpiece in red sandstone, and was built by Maharaja Ganga Singh in the memory of his father Maharaja Lall Singh in 1902. Sir Swinton Jacob designed this oriental fantasy. This architecture is a fusion of Rajput, Mughal and European architecture. The exterior contrasts dramatically with the oriental interiors and amenities. The palace has beautiful latticework and filigree work, which are the hallmarks of great craftsmanship. The Palace has an amazing collection of well maintained paintings and hunting trophies. Visit museum here. To see pics of hotel <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Lallgarh-Palace.aspx>

In the evening went to the camel farm and Devi Kund ie Chhatris. In January there is a Camel Race organised by the state tourism department. Bikaner is known for its sev, chaat, and rasgullas – do not miss. There is Ganga Government Museum not impressive. Do visit the Prachina Museum (royal costumes) in Junagarh Fort and a smaller museum in the Lallgarh Palace Hotel. Also visit the Bhandeshwar Jain Mandir, a 15th century Jain temple i.e. the oldest monument in Bikaner.

We missed seeing the sand dunes and havelis of Kotharis, Rampuridas, Vaidis and Dagas.

To see pics of Bikaner town <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Bikaner-City.aspx>

4.Gajner Palace, Kolayatji and Indira Gandhi Canal

About one hour drive from Bikaner is the Gajner Palace and wild life sanctuary. It is on the banks of a lake. Only when you stay in the hotel do you get access to the sanctuary. I was happy to see so much water and greenery in this part of Rajasthan. To see pics of Gajner Palace <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Gajner-Palace.aspx>

Next halt was Kolayatji, reminded me of Pushkar because of its huge lake. Revered highly by locals. To see pics <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Kolayatji.aspx>

I was keen to see the Indira Gandhi Canal and its impact on areas where it flows. To see pics of the canal <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Indira-Gandhi-Canal.aspx>

We reached Jaisalmer at about 1 am and checked into the Rajasthan Tourism Hotel. Again good place to stay, good rooms and food, very functional.

Was hoping to stop by at Pokran to see *Pokran Fort* but it was too late and I was running out of time. Pokran is also renowned for its furniture and crafts for interior decoration. The fort is located about one and a half kilometres from the bus stand and has an assortment of weaponry, brocade clothes and various games of dice and dominoes on display

5. Jaisalmer

I spent three days in Jaisalmer as the Desert Festival is for three days. It starts with the inauguration on day one morning, followed by dance/musical programs every evening. Day two morning was the camel race by BSF. Day three evening is held at Sam Dunes. So during day got time to see other parts of the town. Festival includes turban tying, longest moustache competition, superb folk dance and fire dance on last day.

Bhati Rajput ruler Rawal Jaisal, after whom the city finds its name, founded Jaisalmer in 1156 AD. Places to see are morning Aarti at Ramgarh temple, Patwon-Ki-Haveli, Deewan Nathmal Ji Ki Haveli, Deewan Salim Singh Ki Haveli – see from outside only, Govt Museum - state bird Godawan, Badal Mahal – ex rulers family, Gadsisar Lake–go sunrise and during day, Vyas Chhatri, Sadar Bazaar and Jaisalmer Fort. Do visit the Jain Temple in the fort. It is the only fort where people continue to live to this day.

Excursions

Bada Bag situated six kms north of Jaisalmer on way to Ramgarh. Royal cenotaphs with carved images of late Maharawals and their families are seen.

Jain Temple at Lodurva ie 16kms away, *Tanot Mandir* i.e. 120 kms away (go to Border i.e. a further 20 kms away for which special permission), go to Longewal i.e. a slight detour on the way back and Sam Dunes (lots of hotels here, suggest spend a night at Sam Dunes).

Khuri Village & Sand Dunes. Khuri is a village 45 km south west of Jaisalmer. It is a delightfully peaceful place with mud and straw decorated houses. One km away from the village, patches of sand dunes are additional attractions for the tourists.

Kuldhara and Khabha. Medieval Deserted village of Paliwal Community) 84 villages were abandoned by Paliwal Brahmins overnight, out of which the 2 most prominent villages are Kuldhara and Khabha located about 18 and 30 kms respectively from Jaisalmer. The ruins of Kuldhara and Khabha exhibit the architectural excellence of those times and are an attraction for peace-lovers, photographers and movie makers. Must see, go early morning.

Missed seeing Puppet Shows + Desert National Park 45 kms – blackbuck, chinkara and desert fox. Baisakhi. It is only 16 kms from Jaisalmer which attracts a number of devotees on full moon day of Baisakh every year for a holy dip. It has a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva.

Picture links.

1. People of Marwar photo collection has large number of pics of the Jaisalmer Desert Festivals. U can see men with large moustaches, folk dance and ladies in local dress with lots of jewellery. To see <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/People-of-Marwar.aspx>
2. Jaisalmer Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Jaisalmer-Fort.aspx>
3. Jaisalmer City <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Jaisalmer-City.aspx>
4. Tanot Mandir <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Tanot-Temple.aspx>
5. Longewal <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Longewal.aspx>
6. Sam Dunes <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Sam-Dunes.aspx>
7. Havlis of Jaisalmer <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Havelis-of-Jaisalmer.aspx>
8. Jain Temple Lodurva <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Jain-Temple-Lodurva.aspx>

Left Jaisalmer at about 9 am to reach Barmer at around 12.30 pm.

6. Barmer

The main purpose of visit to Barmer was to meet an NGO that works with women in villages in the field of textiles and appliqué work. After having snacks left for villages where I had a great time as you will see in the pictures. I finished village visit by about 3.30 pm after which left for Kiradu Temples i.e. 35 kms away. Have no words to describe these temples, must see.

Missed seeing woodcarving for which is famous, Sadar Bazaar i.e. a centre for embroidery and the town.

Photo links

1. Barmer Textiles <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Barmer-Textiles.aspx>
2. Kiradu Temples <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Kiradu-Temples-Barmer.aspx>

Left Barmer by about 8 pm to reach Jodhpur by about 12.30 am.

7. Jodhpur

I spent three days at Jodhpur and found it less. Day one morning went to meet a friend who has set up a management college some 40 kms away, afternoon went to Mehrangarh Fort and Heritage walk. Came back to fort at about 9 pm for a breadth taking view of the city, was nice and chilly as well. Next morning left for Osian to see the Jain and Mata temples. On way back went to Mandore Fort. Thereafter went to village Sarasar to meet Prajapati who makes o/s Dhurries. Third day reached Umaid Bhawan Palace Hotel before 6 am to click pictures, was there for three hours. After breakfast, went to meet a friend who makes furniture for exports. Early evening went to Jaswant Thada and from there went to the station for an evening train to Mumbai.

Places to see

1. Mehrangarh Fort Museum. Phool Mahal - The grandest of Mehrangarh's period rooms, the Phool Mahal was in all likelihood a private and exclusive chamber of pleasure dancing girls. The Jhanki Mahal, from where the royal ladies watched the official proceedings, in the courtyard, today houses a rich collection of the royal cradles.
2. Jaswant Thada, the graceful marble cenotaph of Maharaja Jaswant Singh II.
3. Government Museum.
4. Umaid Bhawan Palace Museum – 9 am to 5pm.
5. Govt Bangrur Museum.
6. Guda – Bishnoi Village. Missed seeing this.
7. Kailana Lake very beautiful. Missed seeing this.
8. Somnath Temple. This temple of Lord Shiva is famous for its historical background and sculptures. It is situated in the middle of the Pali City. Missed seeing this.
9. Terah Tali. The village Padarla is famous for its “Terah Tali Dance” all over the world because of its unique style. Among the folk dances it has become the symbol of Pali. Missed seeing this.

10. Osian Temple 65kms. It has 16 Hindu and Jain temples. The highlight of this place is its camel ride at the time of the sunset. Missed going to the sand dunes.
11. Mandore Fort 9 kms. Must see. It has lovely gardens, Hall of heroes 16 figures carved from a single rock.

To see pictures

1. Mehrangarh Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Mehrangarh-Fort-new.aspx>
2. Umaid Bhawan Palace Hotel <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Umaid-Bhawan-Palace.aspx>
3. Dhurries Jodhpur <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Dhurries-Jodhpur.aspx>
4. Osian Jain Mandir <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Osian-Jain-Temple.aspx>
5. Sachiya Mata Temple Osian <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Sachiya-Mata-Temple-Osian.aspx>
6. Mandore Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Mandore-Fort.aspx>

Friends in this life do visit Marwar atleast once. Best time to visit November to February. It would be great if you can combine trip with the Jaisalmer Desert Festival which is a wow experience by itself. Keep 10-12 days to enjoy the trip.

If you want to hire a taxi would recommend the person I used. His name is Lalit Singh 91 9352739277 and 91 9571750291. Very good service and knows his way around. Post this yatra he has become even better.

See more pictures of colourful Rajasthan

1. City Palace Udaipur <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/City-Palace-Udaipur.aspx>
2. Chittorgarh Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Chittorgarh-Fort.aspx>
3. Kumbalgarh Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Kumbalgarh-Fort.aspx>
4. Amber/Jaigarh Fort <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Amber~Jaigarh-forts-Jaipur.aspx>
5. Pushkar Fair <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Pushkar-Fair.aspx>
6. Bundi Paintings <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Bundi-Paintings.aspx>
7. Dilwara Temples <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Dilwara-Temples.aspx>
8. Jodhpur RIFF 09 <http://www.esamskriti.com/photo-detail/Jodhpur-RIFF-09.aspx>

Jai Bhawani.