

Photo Essay – May 2021



Welcome to Rajasthan - In the Realm of Kings

For our journey today, we are swapping the English coast for a world full of colours, myths, and indescribable splendour. We are taking you to India, more precisely to **Rajasthan**! Translated from Hindustani, the name aptly means "**Land of Kings**" - and you can feel that on every street corner here. No other state in India is as rich in majestic palaces and proud fortresses, where the spirit of the ancient Maharajas and the Rajput warrior caste is still omnipresent today.



Kumbhal Garh Fort, Kumbhalgarh

Gigantic Fortresses that Breathe History

Two of these historical wonders particularly impressed us. First, there is Chittorgarh, the former capital of the oldest ruling house in the world (House of **Mewar**, since 734 AD). Chittorgarh Fort is the largest fort in India by area and holds a dramatic history: It was besieged three times, and each time thousands of women committed ritual suicide (Jauhar) to escape captivity - most famously in 1303 when Sultan Ala-ud-din Khilji attacked the fortress.

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Padmini's Palace, Chittorgarh

Equally gigantic is Kumbhalgarh, which sits hidden in the Aravalli Range at an altitude of 1,100 meters. The fortress wall that surrounds the huge area with its 360 temples is 38 kilometres long! This makes it the second longest in the world after the Great Wall of China!

Golden Cities and Abandoned Villages

Besides the dense jungle, Rajasthan is primarily characterized by its vast, barren desert landscapes. In the middle of the Thar Desert, near the Pakistani border, lies the "golden city" of Jaisalmer. The fortress built of yellow-brown sandstone, which was erected on the Trikuta hill in 1156, bathes the whole city in a magical light.

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Gadisar Lake, Jaisalmer

We found an absolute contrast to the magnificent buildings in the village of Kuldhara. Imagine this: Over 200 years ago, all the inhabitants of this village - and 84 others in the surrounding area - hastily left their homes in a single night. Legend has it that they wanted to save the village chief's beautiful daughter from having to marry the tax collector who had fallen in love with her. A ghost village in the middle of the desert sand!



Musician, Jaisalmer



Traditional Clothing

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Sam Sand Dunes, Thar Desert



Camel ride, Kanoir

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The Art of Survival

Surviving in the drought, at temperatures up to 42 degrees, has always been a challenge. Even today, small farmers use the traditional technique of drawing water from the depths with oxen using giant cogwheels. Artificial lakes were created for the cities early on, such as Gadisar Lake in Jaisalmer (1367). Today, water even flows through the huge Indira Gandhi Canal from the Himalayas, some 650 kilometres away, all the way to the desert.



Traditional irrigation, Kamba

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A Festival of Gods and Colours

Despite the barrenness of the landscape, the people are incredibly full of life. Women wear the colourful, ankle-length skirt (Lehenga) and sparkling mirror tiles on their clothing, while men are often seen in their traditional outer garment (Angarkha) and colourful turbans. The Hindu pantheon is also omnipresent: There are said to be more than 5,000 temples in Udaipur alone.



Kirti Stambha (Tower of Fame), Chittorgarh

We could go on forever about the colours and myths of Rajasthan. Be sure to check out the gallery on our website to experience this magic for yourself.

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