



# Jaipur

AREA: 65 SQ KM / POPULATION: 3.21 MILLION / TELEPHONE CODE: 0141

## Includes »

Sights .....	108
Activities .....	117
Courses .....	117
Tours .....	119
Sleeping .....	119
Eating .....	126
Drinking .....	128
Entertainment .....	129
Shopping .....	129
Amber Fort .....	136

## Best Places to Eat

- » Niro's (p126)
- » LMB (p128)
- » Dāsaprakash (p127)
- » Peacock Rooftop Restaurant (p126)

## Best Places to Stay

- » Rambagh Palace (p125)
- » Hotel Pearl Palace (p120)
- » Madhuban (p122)
- » Hotel Bissau Palace (p123)

## Why Go?

Jaipur, Rajasthan's capital, is an enthralling historical city and the gateway to India's most flamboyant state.

The city's colourful, chaotic streets ebb and flow with a heady brew of old and new. Careering buses dodge dawdling camels, leisurely cycle-rickshaws frustrate swarms of motor-bikes, and everywhere buzzing autorickshaws watch for easy prey. In the midst of this mayhem, the splendours of Jaipur's majestic past are islands of relative calm evoking a different pace and another world. At the city's heart, the City Palace continues to house the former royal family; the Jantar Mantar, the royal observatory, maintains a heavenly aspect; and the honeycomb Hawa Mahal gazes on the bazaar below. And just out of sight, in the arid hill country surrounding the city, is the fairy-tale grandeur of Amber Fort.

## When to Go

Jaipur is a year-round destination but in the height of summer, as temperatures soar, personal comfort is compromised. Spring and autumn days are still warm to hot, while winter days are very pleasant and the nights can be decidedly cool. Jaipur celebrates its own special festivals, as well as numerous state-wide and national festivals, with vigour and flair. It's worth visiting for any of these to catch the build-up, the dressing up and a few processions.

## History

*Je na dekkhyo Jaipario to kal main akar kaai kario?*

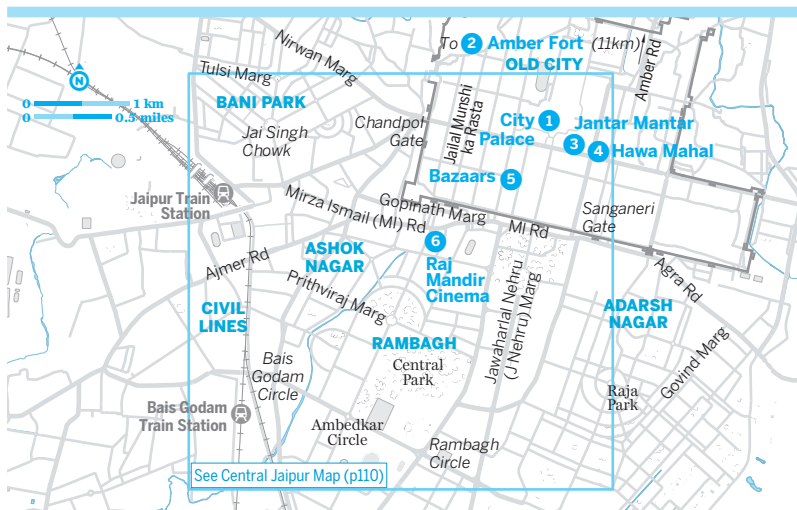
If one has not seen Jaipur, what is the point of having been born?

Jaipur is named after its founder, the great warrior-astronomer Jai Singh II (1688–1744), who came to power at age 11 after the death of his father, Maharaja Bishan Singh. The maharaja had been assured by astrologers that the boy would achieve great things in his lifetime, and young Jai (meaning ‘victory’) received the best education in the arts, sciences, philosophy and military affairs.

Jai Singh could trace his lineage back to the Rajput clan of Kachhwahas, who consolidated their power in the 12th century. Their capital was at Amber (pronounced amer), about 11km northeast of present-day Jaipur, where they built the impressive Amber Fort

(p136). The Kachhwahas had a talent for war and alliances of convenience, so their dominion spread, eventually encompassing a large area abutting the kingdoms of Mewar (in the Udaipur region) and Marwar (in the Jodhpur region).

It’s said that at 15 years of age, the prodigal Jai Singh – already king for four years – met the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. When the emperor grasped the lad’s hand, the youth retorted that, as the emperor had extended the traditional gesture of protection offered by a bridegroom to his new wife by taking his hand, it was incumbent on Aurangzeb to protect the young ruler and his kingdom in a similar fashion. Luckily Aurangzeb was impressed rather than peeved by such precocious behaviour, and conferred on Jai Singh the title ‘Sawai’, meaning ‘one and a quarter’, a title that was proudly borne by all of Jai Singh’s descendants – there is



## Jaipur Highlights

- 1 Marvel at the maharaja high-life in the opulent **City Palace** (p108)
- 2 Explore the imposing **Amber Fort** (p136), a mighty Rajput citadel rising from the rocks 11km from Jaipur
- 3 Follow your stars among the outsized astronomical and astrological

- instruments at the **Jantar Mantar** (p111)
- 4 Hide like the harem in the **Hawa Mahal** (p114), the Palace of the Winds, a multiwindowed honeycomb built for the women of the court
- 5 Barter and bargain with the wily shopkeepers in the

- colourful **bazaars** (p129) of the Old City
- 6 Catch a Bollywood blockbuster at the marshmallow-pink **Raj Mandir Cinema** (p129)
- 7 Join the party and the painted pachyderms at one of Jaipur’s vibrant **festivals** (p107)