



# Northern Rajasthan (Shekhawati)

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## Best Places to Stay

- » Apani Dhani (p237)
- » Hotel Jamuna Resort (p242)
- » Shekhawati Guesthouse (p237)
- » Hotel Mandawa Haveli (p249)

## Best Places to Eat

- » Bungli Restaurant (p250)
- » Art Café (p248)
- » Shekhawati Guesthouse (p237)
- » Narayan Niwas Castle (p245)

## Why Go?

Far less visited than other parts of Rajasthan, the Shekhawati region is most famous for its extraordinary painted *havelis* (traditional, ornately decorated residences), highlighted with dazzling, often whimsical murals. Part of the region's appeal and mystique is due to these works of art being found in tiny towns, connected to each other by single-track roads that run through lonely, arid countryside. Today it seems curious that such care, attention and finance was lavished on these out-of-the-way houses, but from the 14th century onwards, Shekhawati's towns were important trading posts on the caravan routes from Gujarati ports.

What makes the artwork on Shekhawati's *havelis* so fascinating is the manner in which their artists combined traditional subjects, such as mythology, religious scenes and images of the family, with contemporary concerns, including brand-new inventions and accounts of current events, many of which these isolated painters rendered straight from their imagination.

## When to Go?

Winter is the most pleasant time to visit Shekhawati. Spring and autumn days are still warm and occasionally hot, while summer can be unbearably hot with temperatures climbing into the mid-40s (Celsius) and even higher. Another important consideration is the monsoon, which usually starts around July but can be unpredictable. Although monsoon rains cool the air, they can also make a complete mess of the roads. As well as national festivals, Shekhawati celebrates a few events of its own (see p231).



## Northern Rajasthan (Shekhawati) Highlights

- ➊ Head out on a heritage walk among the painted *havelis* of **Nawalgarh** (p236)
- ➋ Experience the beautifully proportioned but derelict Khetri Mahal in **Jhunjhunu** (p240)
- ➌ Take time out in the wonderfully restored Haveli Nadine Le Prince in **Fatehpur** (p246)
- ➍ Enjoy the comical murals, good food and bustling bazaar in **Mandawa** (p248), Shekhawati's most visited town
- ➎ Stay in a castle and visit Sone ki Dukan Haveli in sleepy **Mahansar** (p244)
- ➏ Ride a magnificent Marwari horse across the desert from the romantic fort at **Dundlod** (p238)
- ➐ Find your favourite mural in the fading treasures of little-visited desert towns **Ramgarh** (p245), **Parsurampura** (p239) and **Lakshmangarh** (p250)