



Understand Rajasthan, Delhi & Agra

RAJASTHAN, DELHI & AGRA TODAY.....304

Rajasthan is grappling with population growth, urbanisation and development while trying to conserve its culture and natural heritage.

HISTORY306

Few places can boast a more tumultuous history peppered with invasions, treachery, heroism and romance as Rajasthan, Delhi and Agra.

RAJASTHANI WAY OF LIFE.....320

Why can't you become a Hindu? Who are the Bishnoi and Mina tribes and what do they do?

ARTS, CRAFTS & ARCHITECTURE.....328

Rajasthanis love colour and design, and their artistic skills have been honed for centuries.

NATURALLY RAJASTHAN.....333

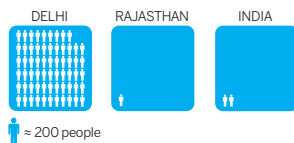
Internationally renowned wetlands host rare and beautiful birds, and – despite problems – there are still tigers lurking in the jungles.

RAJASTHANI FOOD.....338

Fancy a curry? Or how about a sidewalk snack? Take a taste test of some of Rajasthan's favourite foods.



population per sq km



Rajasthan, Delhi & Agra Today

A Populated Desert

Covering an area 342,236 sq km, Rajasthan represents roughly 10% of the Indian landmass. Much of it embraces the vast Thar Desert, which is populated with rural villages, trade-route towns and burgeoning cities of princely states.

The desert supports life because of the monsoon rains that percolate through the sands into the water table to be tapped throughout the year at the ubiquitous wells scattered across the country. In recent years, Rajasthan's life-giving monsoon has become less and less predictable, however, and the scarcity of rain and rapid drop in the water table has affected people's livelihoods as well as the greater environment. Chronic droughts have accelerated migration from the parched agricultural lands to the already overburdened cities. For those who remain on the land, it has become a battle for survival. No wonder then, that there were tears of joy as the waters from the Sardar Sarovar dam, part of the controversial Narmada River Project in Gujarat, finally trickled into deserts around Barmer and Jalore in 2008. Bringing drinking and irrigation water to millions of people affected by drought was a political triumph, but the ultimate financial, social and environmental costs have yet to be counted.

Tourism State & Hi-Tech City

Around 40% of all visitors to India come to Rajasthan, bringing in foreign revenue and providing much needed employment throughout the states. Tourism is the most important industry in Rajasthan, funding the conservation of Rajasthan's magnificent heritage and revitalising the region's splendid arts and crafts. The surge in tourism has provided many locals from all walks of life with alternative and promising career options. A large number of young Rajasthanis now earn a living by working

» Population
Rajasthan: 68.1
million

» Population
Delhi: 12.6
million

» Population
Agra: 1.7 million

» Rajasthan
Population
Growth Rate:
2.1%

» National GDP
growth rate:
8.3%

» Life expect-
ancy (women/
men): 68/65
years

Top Reads

Desert Places Robyn Davidson travels by camel through the Thar Desert.

City of Djinn William Dalrymple's fascinating study of Delhi.

The Last Mughal William Dalrymple on the dying days of the Mughal Empire.

Twilight in Delhi Ahmed Ali's novel paints a revealing picture of pre-independent Delhi.

Maharanis Lucy Moore's delightful account of the lives and loves of three generations of Indian princesses.

Top Indian Films

Pyasa (Thirst; 1957)

Kaagaz Ke Phool (Paper Flowers; 1959)

Gandhi (1982)

Fire (1996)

Earth (1998)

Water (2005)