

Uttar Pradesh



Uttar Pradesh is the state where the glory of Agra remains undiminished even after 500 years; the streets of Lucknow are imbued with a distinctive and refined culture; the land where Lord Rama and Lord Krishna were born; where the Ganges flows past the spiritual Kashi. Uttar Pradesh is your gateway to the holy trails and sacred rites and all that showcases Indian tradition and culture.

LUCKNOW

This city of *nawabs* and *kebabs*, though rapidly turning modern, still retains its past glory and is renowned for its cultural refinement. It is also associated with legendary hospitality, the culture of *pehle aap*, leisurely moods of life and world-renowned cuisine. The capital of Uttar Pradesh, on both sides of the river Gomti offers plenty of places of historical interest in its beautiful arches, pavilions, domes and mansions.

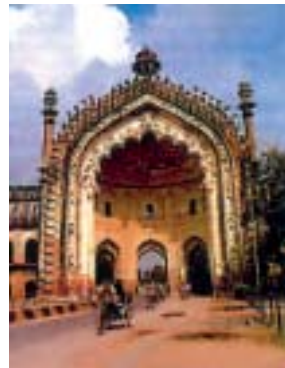
City Lights

Mosques like the **Jama Masjid**, built by Muhammad Ali Shah in the typical Mughal style with two minarets and three domes, the **Hussainabad Imambara**, the **Clock Tower**, the tallest clock tower in India, are some



Hussainabad Imambara

of the finest examples of architectural splendours in Lucknow. The **Bara Imambara** is believed to have the world's largest pillarless arched room, **Rumi Darwaza**, an impressive gateway, built by Nawab Asaf-ud-daula in 1784, showcases the heart and soul of Awadh architecture. The **State Museum** is a multipurpose museum



Rumi Darwaza

UTTAR PRADESH

Uttar Pradesh

with sculptures, bronzes, paintings, natural history and anthropological specimens, coins, textiles and decorative arts. Open on all days except Monday, from 10.30 am to 4.30 pm. The **Residency**, once home to British residents, was badly damaged in 1857, but continues to be a favourite picnic spot. The **Shaheed Smarak**, a tall marble tower commemorates freedom fighters. The **Baoli Palace** is another historical structure. It is supposed to have hosted Viscount Valentia in 1803; Shahzada Aali Qadar Taimuri also stayed here along with his wife during Saadat Ali Khan's time; Wajid Ali was installed as Nawab in this very building.

Fairs & Festivals

Shi'ite Muharram celebrations are observed with much fanfare. Decorated *taziyas* are carried through city streets as mourners beat their breasts, accompanied by drumbeats. **Lucknow Mahotsav**, is a 10-day programme that begins on November 25. It is marked by kathak, ghazals and sitar recitals, and above all, the heavenly cuisine of Awadh.

Gourmet's Delights

The famous Awadhi 'Dum Pukht' way of cooking originated in this city and continues to be very popular. Other treats are the vast range of *kebabs*, *rotis*, *pulaos* and sweets. The legendary Tunde Mian's *kebabs* originated here! **Hazratganj** (MG Road) is lined with restaurants pandering to diverse palates. Some listings: **Nawab's**, **Muman's Royal Café**, **Mini Mahal**, **Moti Mahal**, **Falaknuma**, **Moments**, **Tunde-Ka-Kabab** and **Wahid Biryani**.

Shopper's Paradise

Aminabad and **Chowk** are interesting places even if you are window-shopping. They have a wide range of goods: antique furniture, furnishings, utensils, dress materials, etc. **Dussehri** mangoes are exported throughout the world from here. It is Lucknow's speciality. *Itar* (concentrated perfumes) have long been used in the city and are available in various fragrances and in exquisite bottles of fine cut-glass. The best shopping areas are **Hazratganj**, **Aminabad** and **Chowk**.

Must-Do

Get charmed by Chikankari! In Lucknow, everyone shops for the famous chikankari, embroidered handicrafts. Done originally on pristine white fabric and embroidered to create delicately textured surfaces on fine mulls and muslin, chikankari craft was Empress Noorjahan's gift to India. In most markets, you will find amazing varieties in which chikan can be used: in bedspreads, napkins, curtains, cushion covers, besides sarees and suits for men as well as women. Some shops: **UP Handlooms**: 2215318, **Changamal Ram Saran Garg**, Hazratganj: 2223252.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: All domestic carriers have regular scheduled flights to Amausi, Lucknow's airport, about 15 km away from the city-centre. **By Rail:** Lucknow is serviced by North & North-Eastern Railways by express and superfast trains. The best train from Delhi is Shatabdi Express. Direct trains connect Lucknow to

Guwahati (Awadh and Lohit Express), Varanasi (Kashi Vishwanath), Puri (Neelanchal Exp.), Kolkata (Doon, Hingiri Exp.), Dehradun (Doon Exp.), Allahabad (Triveni, Nauchandi) and Ahmedabad (Sabarmati Exp.). **By Road:** Lucknow is on the important cross routes of NH 24, 25 and 28. UPSRTC bus stand is at Charbagh area, opp. railway station. There are frequent coaches to Kanpur, Agra, Varanasi, Dehradun among others. **Distances:** Kanpur 79 km, Ayodhya 134 km, Allahabad 210 km. **Getting Around:** Autos and tempos connect the railway stations and bus stands to all parts of the city. The other option is a cycle-rickshaw, where the rate is negotiable. Private cars may be hired from hotels. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 29°C, Max 45°C; Winter: Min 11.1°C, Max 21.1°C. **Rainfall:** 44 cm. **Best time to visit:** October to February.

City Code: 0522
Indian Airlines: 2224618
Jet Airways: 2239612
Air Sahara: 2334426
UP Regional Tourist Office: 2638105
UP Govt Info Counter: 2215005
UP Tours: 2212659
Railway Reservation Office:
 Computerised Reservation Enquiry: 1331, 1332
 Manual Enquiry: 131
Police: 100
Banks: HDFC Bank: 2220814, State Bank of India: 2613074
Hospitals: Vivekanand Hospital: 2321277, Lifeline Hospital & Heart Centre: 2321686, Aliganj Hospital: 2378156, King George's Medical College: 2265424
Chemists: Anand Pharmaceuticals: 2246799, Ashish Agencies: 2246799

Home Away From Home

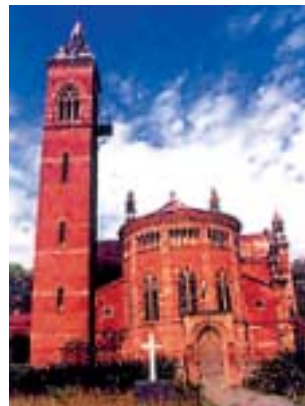
Taj Residency: 2393939, Clarks Awadh: 2620131, Sagar International: 2206601, La Place Park Inn International: 2282201, Gomti: 2214708, Deep Palace: 2636441, Maharana Mahal: 2638181.

KANPUR

The largest city of Uttar Pradesh, a major business and industrial hub, situated on the banks of the Ganges, Kanpur has a historical, religious and commercial significance, very much of its own. Believed to be founded by king Hindu Singh of the erstwhile state of Sachendi, Kanpur was originally known as 'Kanhpur', or 'Cawnpore' as the Britishers chose to spell it later.

City Lights

Begin your explorations of the city with **Phool Bagh**, in the heart of the city, to its west is the **Nana Rao Park**. The **Kanpur Memorial Church**, built in 1875, honours the British who lost their lives in the war of 1857. Inside the church are a few mementoes of the mutiny, including some memorial



Kanpur Memorial Church

Uttar Pradesh

tablets. Also, noteworthy is the **King Edward VII Memorial Hall** in the city. The mound of **Jajmau**, on the eastern end of the city, had unearthed antiquities ranging from 600 BC to 1600 AD during excavations done in 1957-58. Jajmau, known as Siddhapuri in ancient times, is supposed to have been the kingdom of Yayati, the Pauranic king and the high mound overhanging the Ganga is known to be the site of his fort. Today, Jajmau houses the Siddhnath and Siddha Devi temples and the mausoleum of Makhdoom Shah Ala-ul-Haq, the famous Sufi Saint, built by Firoz Shah Tughlaq in 1358. A mosque built by Kulich Khan in 1679 also stands here. The **Shri Radhakrishna Temple** or **JK Temple**, is a unique blend of ancient architecture with modern. The five shrines in the temple



Shri Radhakrishna Temple or JK Temple

are dedicated to Radhakrishna, Laxminarayan, Ardhanarishwar, Narmadeshwar and Hanuman. The **Jain Glass Temple** is decorated with glass and enamel work. The **Allen Forest Zoo** here ranks among one of the best zoos in the country (2543678). Close by is the **Kamla Retreat**, which has an artificial-wave pool, parks, a canal, and a museum with a good collection of historical and archaeological artefacts. (For permission: 2311478/9).

Gourmet's Delights

Though not exactly offering connoisseur's cuisine, Kanpur's traditionally popular restaurants include **Kwality**, **Haritma Village**, **Little Chef**, **Angithi**, **Buddhasen** and **Chung Fa**.

Shopper's Paradise

Cured hide is the best known product of Kanpur. The main shopping centres in the city are located at: **The Mall**, **Birhana Road**, **Gumti No. 5**, **Parade**, **Naveen Market**, **Meston Road** and **PPN Market**. Quality leather goods may be purchased here.

Excursions

Bithoor: 27 km away, this tranquil spot on the banks of the Ganges is of considerable historical and religious importance. **Bhitargaon:** 59 km away, houses a unique architectural specimen, a brick temple belonging to the Gupta era. The very first shrine with a *shikhara*, it dates back to 600 AD. **Musanagar:** 65 km away, has the ancient temple of Muktadevi, which is said to have been built in Treta-Yug by Raja Bali. A large fair is held at Muktadevi temple on the occasion of Kartik Poornima. **Kannauj:** 80 km away, this 7th century capital of Emperor Harshavardhana's empire, is today better known for manufacturing essence or *itar* used in perfumes. **Nawabganj Bird Sanctuary:** 43 km away from Lucknow, along the Lucknow-Kanpur highway near Unnao. The Priyadarshini Motel of U.P. Tourism provides good boarding and lodging facilities at the sanctuary.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: Alliance Air operates daily flights to Delhi. Apart from Chakeri Airport here, the nearest airport is Amausi Airport in Lucknow, (65 km). **By Rail:** There are direct rail links to Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai, Agra, Allahabad, etc. It is well connected to all the major stations of the country by express, superfast and passenger trains. **By Road:** Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation and the SRTC's of neighbouring states connect Kanpur to various centres in the region, such as Lucknow, Allahabad, Varanasi, Agra, Unnao, Rae Bareilly, Kannauj and Jhansi. **Distances:** Kannauj 80 km, Lucknow 79 km, Allahabad 193 km, Jhansi 222 km, Agra 269 km, Varanasi 329 km. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 30°C, Max 44°C; Winter: Min 4°C, Max 24°C. **Best time to visit:** November to February.

City Code: 0512

UP Government Tourist Office:

26/51 Birhana Road (Backlane),

Opp. Post Office.

UPSRTC Bus Stand: 2261705

Chunni Ganj Bus Stand: 2210646

Banks: SBI : 2312218,

PNB: 2311577, UBI: 2313109,

Standard Chartered Bank: 2318089,

ANZ Grindlays: 2311462

Post Office: R.K. Nagar: 2291521

Hospitals: Chacha Nehru Children's

Hospital: 262895, UHM Hospital:

2328170, General Hospital: 268186,

CGHS Hospital: 2368876,

Dufferin Hospital: 262500

Police: 100

Home Away From Home

Swagat: 2541923, Holiday Inn:

2219852, Hotel Ganges: 2320113,
The Landmark Hotel: 2305305,
Sarvodaya Plaza: 2217126, Gaurav:
2369599, Anand Guest House:
2220496, Hotel Ashoka: 2312742,
Hotel Basera: 2355398.

ALLAHABAD

Once called **Prayag**, Allahabad is a holy city, located on the confluence, (famous here as **Sangam**) of the Rivers Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati. Worth seeing here is the massive Akbar's Fort which overlooks the sangam. This tranquil town is also the venue of the **Kumbh Mela**, which occurs once in 12 years and ardh khumbh which occurs every 6 years when devotees from the world over, converge here for a holy dip at the Sangam. Lately this has become quite a media event, given the



Kumbh Mela at Allahabad

publicity the holy men receive!

The city is known for its stately University from whose hallowed portals, many learned minds have emerged to add to India's stature. The city has an old world timelessness that is fiercely protected by its inhabitants.

Facts at a Glance

Access: Allahabad is well connected to all major cities of India by rail. Roads too provide ample connectivity

Uttar Pradesh

since NH 2 and 27 pass through it.
Distances: Lucknow 204km, Varanasi 125 km, Ayodhya 167 km, Khajuraho 294 km.

City Code: 0532

Regional Tourist Office: 2601873

Home Away From Home

Allahabad Regency: 2601519, Yatrik: 2601713, Kanha Shyam: 2420281.

AGRA

Embellished by the architectural glory of the Mughal era, crowned by the Taj, Agra could well be said to be the other name for Shahjahan's monument of love. Besides this epitome of love and beauty, the other monuments evoke an ambience that is still associated with its memorable Mughal period. The Taj Mahal, essentially one man's monumental testimony to love, has become synonymous not only with this city, but with India as a whole. Agra, with its laid-back lifestyle and wealth of architecture, handicrafts and jewellery, is amongst the most remarkable cities of the world.

City Lights

Taj Mahal is one of the wonders of the



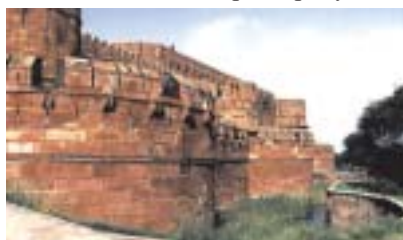
Taj Mahal

world, built by Shahjahan in memory of his queen, Mumtaz Mahal. The construction is believed to have taken 22 years with over 20,000 craftsmen working round the clock. This extraordinary monument of love, is one of the most visited and most photographed places in the world. **Itmad-ud-daula**, situated opposite the Taj Mahal on the other side of the river Yamuna, is the magnificent



Jahangir's Palace at Agra Fort

mausoleum of Ghias Beg, father of Noorjahan, who was *wazir* to Emperor Jahangir. It is famous for the pietradura work in marble. The **Agra Fort**, on the banks of the river Yamuna, was built principally as a



Agra Fort

military establishment but later occupied by succeeding rulers. It offers visitors a glimpse of architectural styles favoured by three of the most famous Mughal Emperors. Akbar favoured red sandstone, Jahangir marble and Shahjahan inlay work. **Jama Masjid**, was built by Shahjahan in 1648. The main gate of

this mosque has inscriptions written on it saying that it was built by Jahanara Begum, the favourite daughter of Shahjahan who was imprisoned with him. The absence of minarets and the shape of the dome gives it a distinctive character. **Chini-Ka-Rauza** is a memorial dedicated to a poet-scholar and later the prime minister of Shahjahan, Allama Afzal Khan Mullah Shukrullah of Shiraz. When Babur came to India, he laid the first Mughal gardens 500 m north of Chini-Ka-Rauza in **Ram Bagh** (earlier Aram Bagh). These well laid gardens are not even a fraction of what they used to be. Situated across the Yamuna, about 4 km away, **Sikandra** houses the tomb of Emperor Akbar. **Mariyam's Tomb** is dedicated to Akbar's wife. **Dayal Bagh**, a splendid mausoleum of carved and inlaid marble, is the birthplace of the founder of the Radhaswami sect, Swami Shiv Dayal born in 1861.

Fairs & Festivals

Taj Mahotsav which occurs every year in February, is a 10-day extravaganza held at Shilpgram, close to the Taj Mahal. It celebrates the art, craft and culture of India and has classical dance and song performances by well known artists during the



Shopping for Id

period. Apart from this, ghazal programmes are also organized. Agra is best known for its **Id Melas** and the colourful *tazias* taken out on **Muharram**.

Gourmet's Delights

Mughlai cuisine is the speciality, with rich cream-and-curd-based sauces, succulent *kebabs* and unique breads such as the *naan* and *tandoori paranthas* roasted in earthen ovens. Though most deluxe hotels have world class restaurants attached to them, some stand alone restaurants are also worth visiting **Dasaprakash** (South Indian): 2260360, **Only Restaurant** (multi-cuisine): 2364333, **Zorba the Buddha**: an Osho restaurant, **Satkar**: (Mughlai), **Petals**: 2363807, **Gazebo**: 2260268, **Taj Khema** and **Golden Gate Restaurant** on the Bypass Road.

Shopper's Paradise

The perfect souvenir is a Taj Mahal miniature in marble, or in a marble look-alike stone called 'talc'. However, Agra is also famous for inlay work, leather goods, brass wares, carpets, chikan work fabrics and Mughalesque jewellery. In the craft emporiums and shops there are sandal and rosewood items, brass decorative pieces and stone-carved images. The main shopping areas include the **Taj Mahal Complex**, **Kinari Bazaar**, **Raja-Ki-Mandi**, **Sadar Bazaar** and **Munroe Road**. The Gangotri at Taj Mahal Complex and the UP Handlooms, UPICA at the Sanjay Palace are two UP Government emporiums. Almost all shops accept major credit cards. Some of the popular names are: **Oswal Emporium** (Munroe Road), **UP**

Uttar Pradesh

Handicraft (Fatehabad Road), **Akbar International Emporium** (Fatehabad Road), **Craft Palace** (Near Agra Caterers), **Jewel House** (Opp. Circuit House), **Oriental Arts** (Taj Ganj), **Bachoomal Rajender Singh & Sons** (Taj Road), and most state emporia.

Excursions

Van Vihar Wildlife Sanctuary: 50 km away, harbours many species of animals and birds and can be approached from Agra by taxi, bus or by train upto Dholpur. Accommodation at rest houses is available inside the sanctuary through the Forest Department. **Fatehpur Sikri:** 37 km away, lies the city Akbar planned as his capital, but shortage of water compelled him to shift back to Agra. Fatehpur Sikri built between 1571 and 1585, remained Akbar's capital for 14 years. Beautifully preserved, it is like a 'ghost city' waiting to be re-occupied. **Mathura:** 58 km away, is one of the major pilgrimage spots for Hindus as Krishna, one of the incarnations of Lord Vishnu, was born here. It is located before Agra if travelling from Delhi. Must buy *pedas* (a sweetmeat) from here. **Firozabad:** 44 km away



Glass Factory at Firozabad

from Agra is a city known for glassware, especially glass bangles, cut-glass items and chandeliers.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: Agra is connected to Delhi by a 35 minutes Indian Airlines/Alliance Air flight on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Kheria Airport is 6 km from the city centre. **By Rail:** Agra Cantonment, Idgah, Agra Fort, Yamuna Bridge (across river), Agra city (north of the town) and Raja-Ki-Mandi (northwest of old Agra) are the main stations in Agra. Agra Cantonment is the main terminal, 2 km from the city centre. Trains like Delhi-Bhopal Shatabdi (2 hrs), Taj Express (2½ hrs) and Intercity Express (3 hrs) are convenient while Karnataka Express, Jhelum Express, AP Express and Toofan Express have their stoppage here. **By Road:** Agra has the national highway numbers 2, 3, 11 passing through it, making it well connected with most major cities. Situated just 203 km from Delhi, Agra is within easy driving reach of Jaipur (235 km) as well. From Delhi, the best route is by Mathura Road via Faridabad, Vrindavan and Mathura. There are rest houses with catering facilities on the highway every 50 to 75 km. The state roadways as well as many private operators offer deluxe coach services. Express bus services (some air-conditioned) are available from Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow, Gwalior and Jhansi. **Getting Around:** Within 5 km radius of the Taj Mahal, only non-motorised vehicles are permitted, so take a cycle-rickshaw. In the rest of the city, auto-rickshaws and taxis are available. Rates negotiable. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 22°C,

Max 42°C; Winter: Min 4.2°C, Max 29°C. **Best time to visit:** March and October.

City Code: 0562

Indian Airlines: 2226820/21

Rail Reservations: 2364131

India Tourism: 2226368-378

UP Tourism: 2226431

Banks: Allahabad Bank at Hotel Clarks Shiraz: 2368941,

Andhra Bank at Taj Road: 2363962,

Canara Bank, Sadar Bazaar: 2363292,

IOB, Fatehabad Road: 2361140,

PNB, Shahzadi Mandi: 2363266,

SBI, Sadar Bazaar: 2363642

Hospitals: Cantonment Hospital: 2363307, District Hospital: 2361099,

Jaggi Nursing Home: 2360616,

Lady Lyall Hospital: 2267987,

SN Hospital: 2361318

Home Away From Home

WelcomHotel Mughal Sheraton: 2331701, 2331728, Amar Vilas: 2231515, Jaypee Palace: 2330800, Clarks Shiraz: 2226121, Taj View: 2232400, The Trident: 2331818, Agra Ashok: 2361223, Man Singh Palace: 2331771, Howard Park Plaza International: 2331870, Holiday Inn: 2523460, Hotel Sunrise: 2330602, Amar: 2331885, Hotel Atithi: 2330878.

AYODHYA

This much revered and ancient town is closely associated with Lord Rama, the seventh incarnation of Lord Vishnu. Ayodhya is a city of worship not only for Hindus but also Buddhists, Jains and followers of Islam. According to Jain tradition, five tirthankar's were born in Ayodhya, including Adinath (Rishabhadeva), the first tirthankar.

The ancient city of Ayodhya, according to the Ramayana, was founded by Manu, the law-giver of the Hindus. For centuries, it was the capital of the descendants of the Surya dynasty, of which Lord Rama was the most celebrated king. Then known as Kaushaldesh, Ayodhya by Skand and



Ayodhya - The Sacred City

some other ancient texts rank it as one of the seven most sacred cities of India.

City Lights

The chief place of worship in Ayodhya is the site of the ancient citadel of **Ramkot** which stands on an elevated ground in the western part of the city. This sacred place attracts devotees from all over India and abroad on 'Ram Navami', which is celebrated with great pomp and show, in the Hindu month of Chaitra (March-April). The temple of **Treta-Ke-Thakur** has idols in black sandstone recovered from the river Saryu and placed in the temple, also famous as Kaleram-Ka-Mandir. Standing about 65 feet tall, some scholars think **Maniparvat** to be of Buddhist origin. This mound also has a legend connected with Hanuman. Also worth a visit is **Kanak Bhavan** which, Rani Kaikeyi had built for Sita. Also known as **Sone-ka-Ghar**, the temple here has images of Sri Rama and Sita wearing gold crowns. Situated in the

centre of the town, the **Hanuman Garhi** temple is approachable by a flight of 76 steps. The temple of **Nageshwarnath** is said to have been established by Kush, the son of Rama. The Hindi version of the Epic Ramayana, "The Ramcharitmanas" is said to have been composed by Tulsidas, at **Tulsichaura**. The monument to him, **Tulsi Smarak Bhavan**, is used for religious sermons and singing of devotional songs. It also houses the **Ayodhya Shodh Sansthan** where a large collection of literary works of Swami Tulsidas can be seen. A cultural centre of performing Arts also functions here.

Ramkatha Museum: The Ramkatha Museum, set up in 1988, is engaged in collection, preservation and conservation of antiquities related to the story of Rama. Timings 10.30 am to 4.30 pm, closed on Monday. **Swarg Dwar** is where Lord Rama was cremated.

Main Ghats: Guptaghat, Rajghat, Ramghat, Lakshmanghat, Jankighat, Nayaghat.

Tanks: Sitakund, Suryakund, Vibhishankund, Brahmakund, Daturavan, Vidhyakund.

Hill-tops: Sugreev Tila, Angad Tila, Nal-neel Tila, Kuber Tila and Maniparvat.

Jain Shrines: Kesari Singh, the treasurer, of Nawab Faizabad, built five shrines to mark the birth places of these tirthankar's, which bear the date of Vikram Samvat, 1781. The temple of **Adinath** is near the Swarg Dwar, while the **Anantanath** temple stands on the Gola Ghat while **Sumantanath** shrine is at Ramkot.

City Culture

Ayodhya is popular for **Mandali Ram Lila**. The performance is dialogue based and presented on a platform with songs and kathak dances and eye-catching background décor. **Ram Navami Mela, Shraavan Jhula Mela** images of Rama, Lakshman and Sita are placed in swings in the temples.

At Ayodhya, one can do circumambulations called the Parikrama. It can be a '**Panchkoshi Parikrama**' or '**Chaturdashkoshi**



Mandali Ram Lila

Parikrama'. After taking a dip in the Saryu river, the devotee commences the parikrama and covers various temples, *ghats* and *kunds*.

Faizabad: 7 km away, has notable buildings like **Gulab Bari, Moti Mahal, Khurshid Mahal, Dilkusha** and **Tomb of Bahu Begum. Bara Banki:** 107 km away, is famous for the mausoleum of a Sufi Saint, Syed Haji Ali Waris Shah, 13 km from the town.

Gonda: 44 km away, is famous for the temple of **Devi Patan** and a tank which apparently was made by Karna in honour of his father, the Sun God.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airports

are Amausi (Lucknow, 134 km) or Bumrauli (Allahabad, 166 km). **By Rail:** Ayodhya is situated on the broad gauge Northern railway line on Mughal Sarai Lucknow main route. Express trains like Saket, Doon, Jammu Tawi, Ganga Yamuna, Saryu, Yamuna and Sabarmati connect with Ayodhya/Faizabad. **By Road:** NH28 runs through Ayodhya on its way from Faizabad to Gorakhpur. **Distances:** Lucknow 134 km, Gorakhpur 132 km, Allahabad 166 km, Sravasti 109 km, Varanasi 209 km. **Getting Around:** Taxis, tongas, tempos, buses and cycle-rickshaws. The railway station, tourist bungalow, and some of the major sights are all located within walking distance of the bus station and tempo stop. Important ghats along the river Saryu can be reached by rickshaw. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 21°C, Max 45°C; Winter: Min 4°C, Max 31°C. **Annual Rainfall:** 66 cm. **Best time to visit:** October to March.

City Code: 05278

UP Tourism (at Faizabad): 223214

Home Away From Home

Kanak Bhavan Dharamshala: 232024, Birla Dharamshala: 232252, Gujarat Bhavan Dharamshala: 232074, Jain Dharamshala, Janaki Mahal Trust Dharamshala and Ram Charit Manas Trust Dharamshala. Tourist Bungalow Saket (UPT): 232435, 234367.

Quality accommodation is available at Faizabad town, 7 km away. Try Krishna Palace Hotel, Abba Hotel, Hotel Shan-e-Awadh, Hotel Priya.

MATHURA & VRINDAVAN

Also known as Brij Bhoomi, Mathura

is the place where Lord Krishna, an incarnation of Vishnu the preserver, was born. Not just Mathura or Gokul, where he grew up, or Vrindavan where his devotee Mirabai spent her days, all the locations related to the legend of



Mathura – The City of Lord Krishna

Krishna are important pilgrim centres. There are over 2,000 temples and sites associated with the legend of Krishna in Brij Bhoomi.

City Lights

The ornate sandstone **Holi Gate** at the entrance to the old city is Mathura's major landmark. To the east, the riverfront is small compared to Varanasi, and so are the *ghats*. The remains of the **Kansa Qila**, a fort built by Raja Man Singh of Amber and rebuilt by Akbar, lie to the north. Towards the south, the brightly coloured **Vishram Ghat** is the 'place of rest' where Krishna is said to have recuperated after killing the evil Kansa. Several shrines around its marble paved courtyard include one in the corner to Krishna Balava and another to the river goddess Yamuna in a small annexe. Boats for river excursions can be rented at the ghat. At Radha Dhiraj Bazaar is the ostentatious **Dwarkadhish Temple**, approached by steep steps off the busy main road. Directly behind the mosque



Dwarkadhish Temple

is a shrine to mark Krishna's exact birthplace; the prison cell where his parents were held in captivity. Inside the adjacent Bhagwat Bhavan is the modern, towering, flamboyant **Gita Mandir**. Nearby, the impressive stepped sandstone tank of **Potara Kund** is believed to have been used to wash Krishna's baby clothes.

Fairs & Festivals

Rath-Ka-Mela (March) at Vrindavan, **Guru Purnima** (July) at Govardhan,

Annakut (Sept-Oct) at Govardhan, are some of the popular festivals celebrated here. But the real thrillers are **Holi, in early March, or Krishna Jayanti (Janmashtami)** celebrations in August-September.

Shopping

Mathura, the land of cows, is famous for its **milk based sweets**, like the famous *Mathura Pedas*. Hand-made embroidery pieces, sculpture, **paintings, trinkets stamped with Lord Krishna** come in all sorts of shapes and sizes.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Kheria (Agra), 58 km. IA operates a daily hopping flight on the Delhi-Agra-Varanasi-Khajuraho sector.

By Rail: Mathura is on the main lines of the Central and Western Railways



Holi in Mathura

and is connected with Delhi, Agra, Mumbai, Jaipur, Gwalior, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow, etc.

By Road: Mathura is connected to all the major cities by National Highways. Regular state bus services of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana connect the town with the surrounding cities and states. **Distances:** Alwar 288 km, Delhi 145 km, Agra 58 km, Deeg 42 km, Bharatpur 39 km, Vrindavan 10 km. **Getting Around:** Tempos, autos, cycle-rickshaws and tongas are common. Trax and commander-jeeps as well as cars can be hired too for local movements. **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 22°C, Max 45°C;

Winter: Min 14°C, Max 32°C.

Rainfall: 65 cm (June to September).

Best time to visit: Mid-October to January, or during Janmashtami.

City Code: 0565

UP Tourism: 2505351

Banks: Central Bank of India:

2405834, IOB: 2409129,

PNB: 2406254, SBI: 2405601

Hospitals: District Hospital:

2403006, Methodist Hospital:

2404860, PL Saraf Hospital: 2442038

Home Away From Home

Hotel Madhuvan: 2420064,

Best Western Radha Ashok: 2530395/

2530396, Hotel Mansarovar Palace:

2408686, Agra Hotel: 2403318,

Dwapar Resorts: 2842103,

Hotel Braj Vihar: 2404209,

UPSTDC Tourist Bungalow: 2407822

VARANASI

The religious capital of Hinduism, Varanasi, earlier known as **Kashi**, is



Varanasi – The Holy City

one of the oldest living cities of India, or perhaps of the world. Full of temples and ghats, a trip at dawn to see the sunrise by boat can be a spiritual experience. 12 km away is **Sarnath**, where Lord Buddha gave his sermon post enlightenment.

City Lights

Ghats & Temples: The best way to view ghats or temples is from the river. Start at the **Dasaswamedh Ghat**, one



Varanasi Ghat

of the largest, and view them all. **Panchganga Ghat** is a good place to watch kite-fights, a popular sport in the city.

Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore built the **Vishwanath Temple** or Golden Temple in 1776. Fifty years later 800 kg gold was used to plate the domes, giving it its colloquial name. The most sacred temple in Varanasi, it

Uttar Pradesh

is dedicated to Shiva and is located in a narrow alley of the old city. Non-Hindus are not allowed inside. A **New Vishwanath Temple** was set up by the Birlas. **Tulsi Manas Temple** is inscribed with verses from *Ramcharita Manas*. The **Bharat Mata**



Vishwanath Temple

Temple was inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi. Inside, there is a marble relief map of India and other related memorabilia.

Forts & Museums: The 17th century **Ramnagar Fort-Palace**, built by Maharaj Balwant Singh, is the ancestral home of the former Maharaja of Varanasi. It is situated across the river to the south of the city with a temple and a museum within the grounds. The temple is dedicated to Ved Vyasa, the author of the Mahabharata, who stayed briefly at the



Banaras Hindu University

Ramnagar Fort. The museum has an interesting collection of ornate palanquins, gold-plated *howdahs* and an extensive display of weapons. **Banaras Hindu University:** Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya founded this university in 1917 as a centre for education in Indian art, music, culture and philosophy and the study of Sanskrit. You can walk around the quiet leafy five sq km campus and visit the **Bharat Kala Bhavan** that has a fine collection of miniature paintings, sculptures and old photographs of Varanasi. **Gyanvapi Mosque:** This great mosque of Aurangzeb was built with materials salvaged from plundered Hindu temples. The minarets are 71 m tall. The rear portion of the mosque reveals traces of its Hindu origins.

Shopper's Paradise

Simply called **Banarasi** sarees, the mesmerizing sarees in their shimmering hues are worth buying. In fact many in UP, visit the town whenever there is a wedding in the family! The workmanship of each sari is distinctive and prices differ depending on the intricacy and materials used. The city is also known for the manufacture of traditional

musical instruments. The shopping areas are **Temple Bazaar** near the **Vishwanath Temple, Chowk, Thatheri Bazaar**. Some reliable names are: **Handloom House** at Sagra, **Imtiaz Ali** at Siddh Giri Bagh, **Bhagwan Lila Exports** (2357003), **Bhagwan Silk Sarees** (2322365).

Gourmet's Delights

The tangy *paapri-chat*, layered with yoghurt and sweet-sour *chutney*, is a typical Banarasi treat you should not miss. The piece de resistance is the sumptuous *Banarasi Paan*, packed with an assortment of goodies, topped with the essence of rose. The restaurants at hotels are world class, so here are some independent ones, offering choices for all. In the **Old City** area: **Ganga Fuji** (Indian, Chinese, Japanese), **Ayyar's Café** (South Indian), **Madhur Jalpan Greh** (Snacks & Sweets). In **Cant. Area**: **Palm Springs** (Indian), **Canton** (Indian, Chinese, Continental).

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The Babatpur Airport is 22 km northwest of the city. IA has shuttle flights between Varanasi and Khajuraho, Agra and Delhi. There are also daily flights to Mumbai. Sahara connects Varanasi to Lucknow and Mumbai, 4 times a week and to Delhi, thrice a week. **By Rail:** Varanasi has two main stations, one in the Cantonment area called Varanasi Junction, and the other at a distance of 12 km from the city called Mughal Sarai. There are trains connecting Varanasi to almost all the major metros. **By Road:** Located on the junction of three highways NH2, NH7

and NH29, the connectivity is excellent. **Distances:** Allahabad 135 km, Bodhgaya 243 km, Gorakhpur 212 km, Sarnath 9 km. **Getting Around:** Unmetered tourist taxis are available, and autos remain a common mode of transport. However, it is advisable to walk around if in the **ghat area**. **Temperatures:** **Summer:** Min 30°C, Max 45°C; **Winter:** Min 15°C, Max 30°C. **Best time to visit:** September to March.

City Code: 0542

Indian Airlines: 2622494, 2502527

Jet Airways: 2506444

Air Sahara: 2507872/73

India Tourism: 2343744

UP Tourist Info Counter: 2346370

Railways (computerised): 2348135

UPSRTC Bus Stand: 2343476

Hospitals & Chemists: SPG

Hospital: 2333723,

BHU Hospital: 2316833,

Indian Medical Association: 2354122,

Indian Red Cross Society: 2354304.

Ratan Medical Stores, BHU Gate;

Koh-i-Noor Stores at Lanka Main

Road; Mahesh Medicals at Vijaya Cinema.

Home Away From Home

Hindustan International: 2351484,

Clark's Varanasi: 2348501,

Clarks Tower: 2348250, Varanasi

Ashok: 2346020, Best Western

Kashika: 2348091, India: 2507593.

SRAVASTI

Intimately associated with the life of Lord Buddha, Sravasti is said to have been founded by the mythological king Sravast. In 6th century BC, it was the capital of the kingdom of Kosala and Buddha is believed to have spent

Uttar Pradesh

24 monsoons in the city. It is here that Buddha sat on a lotus with a thousand petals and multiplied his image a million times!

Age-old stupas, majestic monasteries and several temples near the village of **Sahet-Mahet**, point to Buddha's association with Sravasti. An important religious site is the **Jetavana Monastery**, which was



Jetavana Monastery

erected in a garden outside the walls of the city and presented to the Buddha by a wealthy banker, Anathapinaka. Other important Buddhist monasteries were the **Rajakarama** and the **Purvarama**. An exquisite garden here has the famous 'Anandabodhi' tree—an offspring of one said to have been planted by Buddha's main disciple **Ananda**. The **Sobhanath Temple** is believed to be the birthplace of Jain tirthankar Sambhavanath.

Excursions

Devi Patan Temple: 28 km away, is an important pilgrim site in the region, revered by Hindu devotees in India and Nepal.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airport is Lucknow (134 km). **By Rail:** Sravasti is 18 km from Balrampur, the nearest



Mural at Sravasti Famous for a Pilgrimage of Buddha