



Punjab

Tourism

Land of Hospitality & Infectious Zest for Life





Prakash Singh Badal
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Punjab

Punjab is bounded on the northwest of India surrounded by Pakistan on the west, the Indian states of Jammu and Kashmir on the north, Himachal Pradesh on its northeast and Haryana and Rajasthan to its south.

Climatically the state has three major seasons Hot weather is from April to June when the climate of the plains is excessively hot and dry with temperatures as high as 49° C (120° F).

Rainy season is from July to September. The average rainfall annual ranges between 96 cms in the sub-mountain region and 58 cms in the plains. More than 70 percent of the annual rainfall occurs during this monsoon season.

Winters are cool with some frosts. Annual rainfall ranges from about 915 mm (about 36 in) in the north to 102 mm (4 in) in the south. The average temperature in January is 13° C (55° F), although at night the temperature sometimes lowers to freezing. Winter months are October to March with cool and pleasant weather.

Best season is October to March.

Getting around in Punjab is not difficult, but one should know the possible means of transportation before going to Punjab. Punjab is easy to reach by road, train, or airplane. From New Delhi, Chandigarh, the capital of Punjab, is 246 kilometers. Amritsar, the holiest city for the Sikhs, is 446 kilometers.

Geography, Climate, Weather, Temperature, Capital, Population, land, Religions, Language, Currency, State Animals, Bird, Tree

About Punjab

Here are few facts about Punjab. If any one needs more information regarding any details mentioned or require more detailed information, please contact us and we may be able to help you find more resources on the topic requested. This topic covers location, area & other major point worth knowing about Punjab in brief.

Area: 50362 square kilometers (Punjab occupies 1.54 % of the country's total geographical area.)

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Cotton clothing are suitable for the summer months and woolens are required for the winter months.

Capital: Chandigarh. Population: 642,000

Population: 23.51 million (P) for the year 1999

Rural: 16.56 million (70.45)%



Sukhbir Singh Badal
Hon'ble Dy. Chief Minister of Punjab

Urban: 6.95 million (29.55%)
Religion: Hindus (34.46%), Sikhs (62.95%), others (2.59%)

Languages Spoken: Punjabi and Hindi are the main languages for communication, but now English has also taken over in the big cities of Punjab. Many people are fluent in English. Urdu is also one of the languages among the people.

Currency: An Indian Rupee (100 paise equals one rupee)

State Animal: Black Buck - Locally called kala hiran, the Black Buck is a graceful antelope is blessed with a striking color and spiraled horns. The fawn's coat is yellowish but it becomes turns black at maturity. It is found in the plains and avoid forests and hilly tracks. Mostly found in herds of 20-30, large herds may number several hundreds. With a keen eyesight and speed, it responds to alarm call by leaps and bounds.

State Bird: Baz (Eastern Goshawk)

State Tree: Shisham

Major Land Features: Most of Punjab is a fertile plain; toward the southeast one finds semi-arid and desert landscape; a belt of undulating hills extends along the northeast at the foot of the Himalayas. Four rivers, the Ravi, Beas, Satluj and Ghaggar flow across the state in a southwesterly direction. They have numerous small and seasonal tributaries. In addition, Punjab is watered by an extensive canal system.

Tourism to boost Punjab Economy

Tourism in Punjab will be promoted from a commercial angle so that it can become a vehicle for boosting the state economy, the state's tourism minister Sarwan Singh Phillaur, said on Sunday. Phillaur, who had come here to inaugurate a heritage hub, told reporters that he had recently met Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal regarding the need to give a boost to tourism in the state.

"The chief minister has assured liberal allocation of funds for boosting tourism," he said. He admitted that the state lacked in promoting tourism commercially and more marketing was required in this regard. Phillaur also said that a major thrust will be laid upon pilgrimage and heritage tourism. "A heritage village is coming up in the holy city of Amritsar. Other holy cities in state are being declared heritage sites while Kartapur has already been given this status," he informed.

- Centre stays hanging of Beant Singh killer
- Chief Ministers on Union Budget 2012-13
- Bhupesh Bhandari: Akhilesh's bumpy ride
- Parkash Singh Badal is Punjab CM for record 5th time
- Badal to take oath heading an 18-member cabinet in Punjab
- UPA allies keep govt on tenterhooks

When asked about some tourist complexes in the state lying closed, the minister said that some of them have already been given on lease while others are having court cases or departmental



Sarwan Singh Phillaur
Tourism Minister, Punjab

disputes. **"We have engaged lawyers to pursue these cases speedily,"** he said.

Phillaur, who also holds the portfolio of Jails Department, denied that former Punjab minister and ex-SGPC president Bibi Jagir Kaur, lodged in Kapurthala Model jail after her conviction in a case, was being given any VIP treatment there. When his attention was drawn to Bibi's own reported remark in a section of press that she felt like being in a hostel and not in a jail, Phillaur quipped, **"She means she feels like being in a hostel only because the Model jail is a modernised one, having all facilities for its inmates".**

Phillaur asserted that neither the jail manual was flouted nor any special treatment was given to Kaur. On general administration in jails, Phillaur said that plans were afoot to install jammers, X-ray machines and scanners in jails to prevent the use and entry of mobile phones into the jail premises. "The system has already been installed in the Central jails and remaining jails will get it soon. A grant of Rs 2 crore was in the pipeline for this project," said Phillaur.



Punjab Tourism on the way of Shining

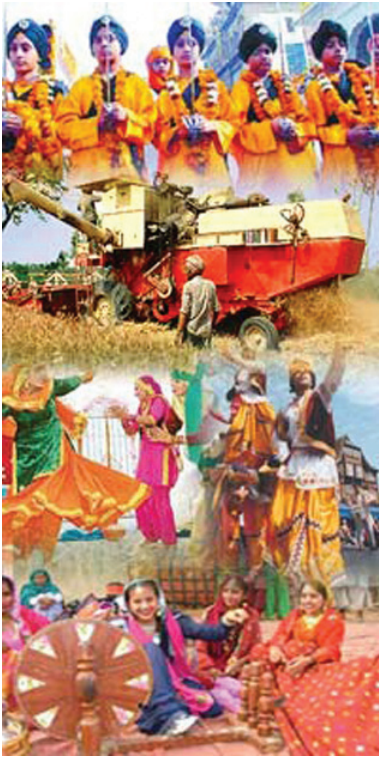
Punjab is one of India's most beautiful states. The century old Punjabi culture is renowned for its tolerance, progressive and logical approach to life. The state is the location of one of the world's first and oldest civilizations - the Indus Valley Civilization. Above all, the warmth and hospitality of the people are the main attractions in this region. Punjab has many things to offer to an enthusiast who wants to explore it. Some of the main cities in Punjab are Amritsar, Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala. Punjab has a vast public transportation network, which provides excellent tourist transportation.

Punjab fulfills the dream of a perfect traveler. This north Indian state is a perfect destination for pilgrimage tour in the country. The world's largest gurdwara - the Golden Temple is here which attracts millions of devotees from across the whole world to see its inimitable architecture. Apart from gurdwaras, the land is also studded with historical monuments, temples, churches, mosques and a number of other holy shrines that remain

unexplored.

Tourism in Punjab is principally suited for the tourist interested in culture, ancient civilization, and spirituality and epic history. Punjab has a rich history incorporating Sikhism and Hinduism. Along with the celebrated Punjabi culture, the royal Punjabi palaces, historic battles, shrines, temples and examples of Sikh Architecture.

Punjab, the land of five rivers and integrated cultural history, is a treasure trove for an avid tourist. For this land of great Gurus not only boasts of ancient monuments but throbs with historical embodiments. It is no secret that whoever comes to this land of yellow fields with Blue Mountains providing the romantic and picturesque backdrop has never gone back without imbibing the essence of Punjab. There is no dearth of breathtaking palaces, for Punjab was the seat of royalty, as the imposing Quila Mubarak will tell you. Museums galore and so are the religious places with the Golden Temple offering succor to the mind and soul of anyone visiting. If you are a wild



life freak, then Punjab can take you on a tour of sanctuaries, which are hot favourites with migratory birds. Since this State Borders Pakistan, there are two main posts, from which you can peep into the land that was once the integral part of Punjab and experience the feelings of the people separated by a line.

Currently tourism is a swiftly expanding sector in Punjab. Punjab is to be India's favourite destination by 2010.

Punjab Tourism Policies and Vision

The Punjab government has formulated a plan for the promotion of heritage tourism and culture, and crafts, under which annual state festivals would be organised in the different parts of the state.

The tourism department has decided to develop 90 sites declared heritage sites and to preserve and develop old historic mansions as tourist resorts.

Punjab Tourism Minister said this while addressing a meeting of officers at Punjab Agricultural University, where the Punjab government is organising first such Punjab Mela to showcase the history and culture of Punjab.

Speaking to Business Standard, the tourism minister said that the state had good potential for religious and heritage tourism to attract the NRI and foreign tourists. "Every year around 4 million tourists visit Amritsar; of them, 200,000 arrive by air. With this Punjab Mela, people, particularly farmers, can avail themselves of the opportunity of seeing the oeuvre of artists of various states at a single place," Kang added.

Giving further details about the Punjab Mela, Kang said, "An exhibition-cum-sale of handicraft products has been organised as part of festivities." Jagjit Puri, secretary, tourism, said this would be the first such Mela in the state with five stages, where artists would present items relating to the heritage, culture, and folklore of the state.

Punjab Chief Minister will inaugurate the Punjab Mela, along with the Kisan Mela of PAU, tomorrow morning and would be chief guest at the cultural programme in the evening at PAU.

Punjab Tourism to introduce tourism act

With an aim to develop tourism in the state, Punjab is introducing a tourism policy. In an exclusive interaction with Express TravelWorld, Punjab Heritage and Tourism Promotion Board (PHTPB) informed, "The state is planning to come up with a Tourism Act. The process is in the making and the draft for the same is doing rounds at various departmental ends to get an overall perspective on the sector to formulate it accordingly." According to him, tourism's potential in the state has long been realised and there is a need to create a strategic framework to take it forward. "We are looking to create avenues through various segments that would be of interest to tourists and aim to increase their stay in the state by one day to begin with," he said. The Tourism Act will enable the state to get its tourism mechanism, and various systems that affect tourism indirectly, right. The tourism department has also identified the need to regularise the system of hotels and bring their standards up to an international level. Bhandari revealed, "We are also taking steps to regularise the system existing for hotels in order to bring clarity to hospitality and keep a check on mushrooming of hotels where it is not desired. The state tourism board will work together with the hotel sector in the state to help in identifying the quality, accessibility and standards desired for hotels to accommodate tourists. Simultaneously, a regularised operation will throw up correct numbers of travellers coming to the state, as we are aiming to increase the stay of travellers," Bhandari added.





Punjab Tourism

LAND OF HOSPITALITY AND INFECTIOUS ZEST FOR LIFE



Cities

Amritsar City

Golden Temple



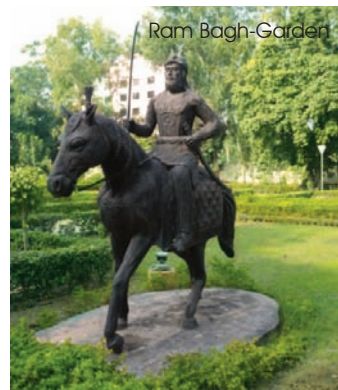
Har Mandir Sahib or Golden Temple : Amritsar City. With a part of the land granted by Emperor Akbar, the foundation stone laid by a Muslim Sufi Saint, Mian Mir, the construction was completed in 1601. Free kitchen and recitation of the divine word never cease here.

Goindwal Sahib : Within easy reach of Tarn Taran was the centre of Sikh religion during the time of the third Prophet, Guru Amar Das ji. The deep well (bauli) in the Gurudwara has 84 steps. Whoever takes a bath here and recites Japji Sahib (divine composition of the first



the times of kamayana, at sarai Amanat Khan we come down to a highway inn of the Mughul times, at Wagha Border we suddenly land into the present. The pageant of the beating of the retreat and the change of guard within handshaking distance of the Indian and Pakistani forces here makes the most charming of the spectacles as a daily evening drill. Ascertain the timings before you leave to see this spectacle since these are changed seasonally.

Wagah Border : The Wagah border, often called the "Berlin wall of Asia", is a ceremonial border on the India-Pakistan Border where each evening there is a retreat ceremony called 'lowering of the flags', which has been held since



Gurdwara Khadoor Sahib



Its four gates invite everyone from all directions, the scripture is unique, it contain the divine message as received by saints, bhagats and pirs of all the faiths of India.

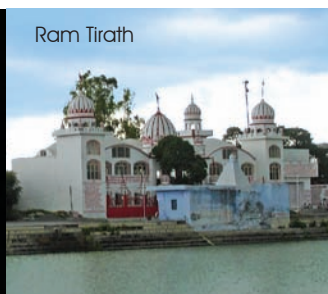
Prophet of the Sikhs, Sri Guru Nanak Dev ji) at each step, and repeats the recitation followed by bath in the Holy Well 84 times, attains moksh, because he lives out 84,000 cycles of



Jallianwala Bagh



Ram Tirath



Firozpur City

It comprises an area of 11,142 km². The surface is level, with the exception of a few sand-hills in the south and south-east. The country consists of two distinct tracts that are liable to annual fertilizing inundations from the Sutlej, the only river, which runs along the north-western boundary. The principal crops are wheat, barley, millet, gram, pulses, oil seeds, cotton, tobacco, &c. The manufactures are of the humblest kind, consisting chiefly of cotton and wool-weaving and are confined entirely to the supply of local wants. The other important towns and sea of commerce are Zira, Fazilka, Abohar,

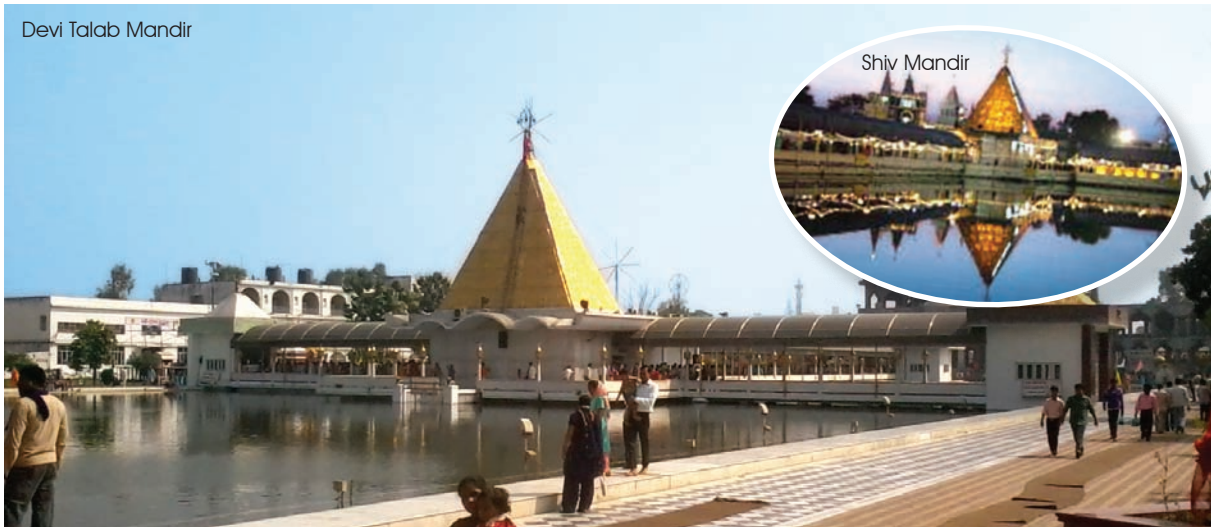
Dharmkot, Mallanwalla, Talwandi Bhai and Jalalabad. Geographically it is the biggest district of Punjab. Owing principally to the dryness of its climate (apart from annual rains in September and October), Ferozpur has the reputation of being an exceptionally healthy district. It has second most rice mills in Punjab and used to be big trade centre before partition of India and Pakistan.

Firozpur city is the capital of this District. The Firozpur Cantonment adjoining Ferozpur city combines with the city to give the district its most urban hub. It is one of the oldest cantonments in India

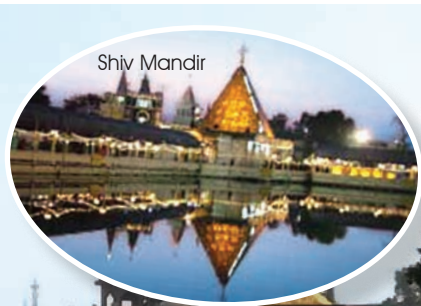


Jalandhar City

Devi Talab Mandir



Shiv Mandir



Devi Talab Mandir : Devi Talab Mandir in Jalandhar is an ancient temple, which is, situated just 1 km from the railway station of the city. The temple is believed to be more than 200 years old. The old structure of the Devi Talab has been renovated and a number of new changes have been made. In the center of the temple premises a new temple has been recently constructed. In the temple premises very recently a model of Amarnath Yatra has been constructed.

Shiv Mandir : One of the most ancient temples of the region, the "Shiv Mandir, Gur- Mandi, Jalandhar" represents the deep religious fervor of Punjab. Agricultural advanced and industrially developed state of Punjab, also nurtures an intense faith in the "Supreme Being". Being one of the most secular state of our country, Punjab portrays the rich religious and cultural tradition of the by gone golden era.

Kanjli Wetland, Kapurthala : Maharaja of Kapurthala had built a lake after making a barrage on river Kali Bein. Many rivulet discharges into this river and a beautiful lake is still there. On



Patiala City

1,844,934 is the 6th most populated



district of the Punjab after Amritsar, Ludhiana, Gurdaspur, Sangrur and Jalandhar as per 2001 census.



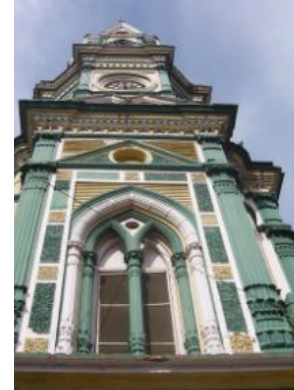
Faridkot City

Faridkot district is one of the twenty districts in the state of Punjab in North-West India. According to Punjab's Geo-Area, Faridkot is a Malwa District. It is one of the biggest cotton markets in South-East Asia. The name 'Faridkot' is derived from Baba Farid, a god-lover who wanted see the God. Faridkot was feudlist province under British rule, but now it is a district in Punjab in independent India. Few part of District Moga & Mukatsar were also

taken from Faridkot.

Qilla Mubarak

The fort with its impressive architecture still adorns the city of Faridkot. Its foundation is believed to have been laid by Raja mokalsi,





The charming state of Punjab is a quixotic amalgam of the bucolic farmlands and bustling urban cities. The state has an age-old history whose narratives are personified by the multitude of forts and palaces. Punjab, an erstwhile princely state of India and the former empire of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is opulent in majestic and lavish palaces and crenellated forts. The state, which played an active role in India’s tumultuous struggle for Independence, was also a mute spectator to the horrors of the Jalianwala Bagh massacre. Punjab has innumerable forts that are surrounded by rampart, crenellated walls and paint a vivid picture of the state’s martial history.

Gobindgarh Fort - Amritsar

The fort occupied a unique place in the Indian military history. Built in 1760, it was called Bhangian Da Kila (Bhangis was one of the twelve Sikh misles). According to historians, during 1808, the fort was known as the fort of Gujjar Singh Bhangi. Later it

1948, the fort was handed over to the Indian Army. This fort holds a special significance in the freedom struggle. It has been a witness to many nameless freedom fighters who kissed the gallows willingly. Gen O Dyer’s office-cum-residence was



was re-built by Maharaja Ranjit Singh with the help of Jodh Singh. The legendary Maharaja strengthened the fortification of the fort in order to keep his treasures and treaties in safety. The specially constructed Toshakhana, in the centre of the fort, also stored large amount of grains and provisions for the 12,000-strong army.

The fort was constructed with brick and lime with numerous army bastions and iron gates with 25 cannons on the ramparts, now replaced with modern weaponry. The fort was constructed on a square pattern with a parameter of 1500 sq mt with two strong gates, four large bastions and well-defined rampart. The majestic entrance has been named Nalwa Gate, after the great Sikh warrior. The other end of the gate is known as Keelar Gate and it is rumoured that in its close proximity existed an escape tunnel, connecting to Lahore tunnel. However, the army authorities said that they had not been able to locate any such tunnel so far.

The British Army had added Darbar Hall, Hawa Mehal and Phansi Ghar (hanging place) to the fort after the annexation of Punjab. After Partition, the fort provided a temporary shelter to a large number of refugees from Pakistan. In October

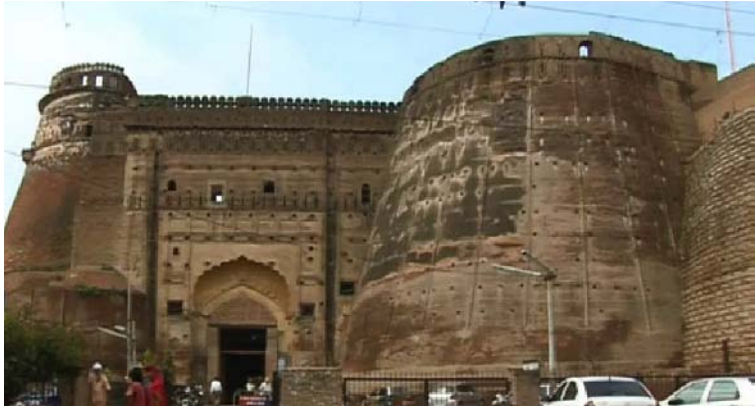
located just opposite the Phansi Ghar. It is said that he got sadistic pleasure watching the hanging of the patriots in the Phansi Ghar. Even the staunchest critics



agree that the army had tried its best to keep the buildings in the fort intact. However, reservations are already being expressed whether the state government would be able to preserve (and restore) its original glory. A large number of city residents, who had lost their dear ones during summary trials under the British rule, have been trying to gather information about their relatives who were hanged to death in the Phansi Ghar. Some of the freedom fighters had sought the permission of the government to build a suitable

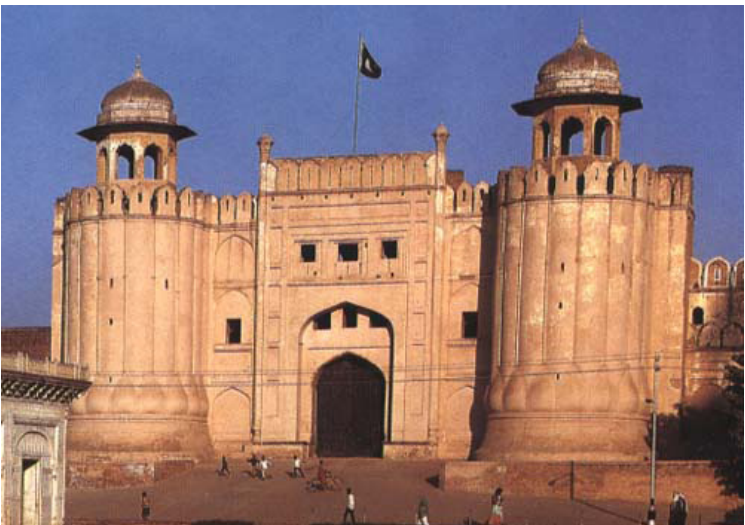
Bathinda Fort

Schooner shaped fort stands like a ship in a sea of sand; design eminently suited to the desert environment; is reputed to be 1800 years old. The Bathinda fort, which has stood since the period of Raja Deb (3rd century), one of the ancestors of Vainipal is, an endangered structure now. The first woman ruler (1236 AD) of India, Razia Sultan, was imprisoned in this fort. It was the capital of the kingdom of Jaipal (1004). Mahmud Ghazni captured the town and laid it waste by his loot, arson and plunder. Patiala ruler Maharaja Karam Singh (1813-1834) renamed it Gobindgarh in memory of the visit of Guru Gobind Singh’s to the fort.



Faridkot Fort - Bathinda

According to the compiler of the Gazetteer of Faridkot State (Lahore, 1914), the old fort was built by Raja Mokulsi on square-shaped land, measuring more than 10 acres. Around 1775, it was reconstructed by Raja Hamir Singh. The main building seen at present and other important structures were built around 1890 by Raja Bikram Singh (1842-1898) and by Raja Balbir Singh (1869-1906). Raja Bikram Singh, who ruled for 24 years, contributed a lot to Faridkot state. Raja Balbir Singh died



in 1906 and was succeeded by Raja Barjinder Singh, who ruled up to 1918. The next and the last ruler of Faridkot state, Raja Sir Harinder Singh Brar Bans Bahadur, ascended the rajgaddi

in 1918 after the death of Raja Barjinder Singh. On assuming power, he established many educational institutions and other important buildings in the town.

The beauty of this fort lies in its magnificent architecture. Elegantly designed in European style and constructed by skilled masons, it is a masterpiece of workmanship. Its floors, ceilings, walls and arched openings have been executed with artistic precision.

Fashioned out of small Nanakshahi bricks and lime mortar, more than 20-foot-high ramparts and large bastions (burjs) constructed for the security guards and to mount the guns are still safe and sound, thanks to the repairs carried out by the Maharawal Khewa Ji Trust, Faridkot. But the main building and other structures of the complex (except Sheesh Mahal and Moti Mahal) need massive repairs and restoration work.

The entrance to the fort is provided through a beautiful multi-storeyed deori. It has a 14-foot-wide and 22-foot-high heavy wooden gate, which was used as a protective shield during war. The splendid artistic pattern on the ceiling of the deori is praiseworthy and attracts visitors. On the first floor of the deori is the beautifully designed Sheesh Mahal or hall of mirrors. The concave and convex glasswork is quite romantic. Some beautiful paintings decorate the walls. The desire of Raja Sir Harinder Singh to have a large museum in Sheesh Mahal is yet to be fulfilled. To make the fort impressive, two big guns placed in the baradari welcome visitors to the fort. The main building and other structures of the fort have been constructed on a ground which is 12 feet above the main road and entrance gate, for safety reasons.

Quila Mubarak, Patiala

Patiala, a city of gardens and palaces, has a rich architectural and cultural heritage. The oldest part of Patiala is the walled city within which Quila Mubarak; the oldest fortified palace of the city, sits on a raised mound. Quila Mubarak forms the core around which the walled city developed. It dates back to 1763 AD. Baba Ala Singh, who was the founder of the Patiala dynasty built a kachigarhi (mud fortress) and named it Quila Mubarak. Later, it was reconstructed in baked bricks.

Maharaja Amar Singh (1765-1781 AD) completed the construction of the inner palace called the Quila Androon. Maharaja Sahib Singh (1781- 1813 AD),



Maharaja Karam Singh (1813 AD - 1845 AD) Maharaja Narinder Singh (1845 AD to 1862) had also resided in this fort. The Quila is spatially preceded by the Quila Chowk and encircled by three major commercial spines, the Gur Mandi, Bajaja Bazaar and Shah Nashin Bazaar. The Adalat Bazaar starts from the Quila

and terminates at the Anardana Chowk.

The Quila Mubarak Complex comprises numerous buildings, namely the Quila Androon, Ran Basa, Darbar Hall, Jalaui Khana, Sard Khana, Quila Mubarak Gateway and the boundary walls. The Quila Mubarak Gateway is the only entrance to the Quila Mubarak Complex; it leads into a large public space called the Quila Androon Chowk. It is from this space that the monumental scale of Quila Androon can be experienced. The Quila Mubarak Gate is rendered in red sandstone and carries the appearance of a rather permeable latticed structure due to its multiple arched openings. On the inner edge of the Quila Androon

Bahadurgarh Fort (near Patiala)

Bahadurgarh Fort 6 kms from Patiala originally founded by Nawab Saif Khan in 1658. Maharaja Karam Singh of Patiala built the present fort in 1837. It has two circular ramparts and is surrounded by a moat and covers an area of 2100 sq meters. This rather compact but nicely designed citadel is in the custody of the Department of police.

The four wails of the fort enclose the village Saifabad located on the left side of the Rajpura-Patiala Road. Saif Khan, a relative of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb, after holding several important offices, became a hermit and settled



down here. After his death he was buried here. His tomb behind the fort, a structure of 177 x 177 ft. is in a state of neglect. Notwithstanding this, his followers still lit a lamp on the tomb every Thursday.

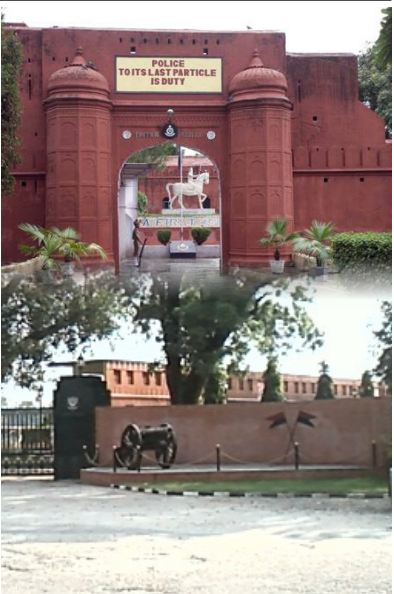
The two inscriptions in the fort testify that the village and the mosque were founded in 1668 during the reign of Aurangzeb. As the custom goes, Nawab Saif Khan was a great admirer of Guru Teg Bahadur. He invited him to use rainy season here. His trip is commemorated by two gurdwaras- One inside the fort and the other outside across the road. It is well known

Phillaur Fort, Ludhiana

The Town of Phillaur in which this Fort is located owes its origin to a Sanghera Jat Phul called the town after him Phulnagar. Subsequently the Naru Rajputs under Rai Shahr whose territory extended from Mau to Selkiana occupied it & when his son Rai Rattan Pal abandoned Mau & settled at Phillaur.

The Jats Left the modern town dates from the time of Shah Jahan (1627-1658 A.D.) when the sites covered with ruins reoccupied having been

selected for the erection of a Serai on the imperial line of road from Delhi to Lahore, of its earlier history nothing of interest is recorded. On the rise of the Sikhs to power, one Sudh Singh Kakara, who made it the capital of a considerable Estate, seized the place. His family became extinct in 1807 & the place then fell in to the hands of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who recognized its importance as a frontier town commanding the most frequented ferry of the Satluj.





Punjab is the true cradle of the Indus Valley civilization. The state of Punjab astonishingly combines both antiquity and plenty. In fact the festivals of Punjab can be redefined as a spiritual canvas of soul stirring celebration. Punjab participates in almost all the festivals taking place in the country. The festivals of Punjab would not only enliven your spirits but also would be a warm welcome from the monotonous schedule of your regular life. Festivals of almost all religions are celebrated with equal splendor and jollity in the state of Punjab. No one can shy away from the simple but the enthralling charm of the festive season of Punjab. The festivals of Punjab embody the robust and composite cultural heritage of our nation. The time of festivals is the ideal time to listen and watch the world`s renowned artists performing live; it will be a thrilling experience to listen the traditional music and folklore in the perfect ambiance.

Birthdays

Guru Nanak Sahib
Guru Nanak Sahib (the First Nanak, the founder of Sikhism) was born on 20th



October, 1469 at Rai-Bhoi-di Talwandi in the present district of Shekhupura (Pakistan), now Nanakana Sahib. The Birthday of Guru Nanak Sahib falls on Kartik Purnamashi i.e. full moon day of the month Kartik. On this day the Birthday is celebrated every year. The Shrine (Gurdwara) representing the home of Baba Kalu (Father) and Mata Tripta (Mother) is called

Gurdwara Janam Asthan, situated at Rai-Bhoi-di-Talwandi in the present district of Shekhupura (now Nanakana Sahib in Pakistan). The Sikhs from all over the world gather here and celebrate the Gurupurab every year with great devotion and enthusiasm.
Guru Gobind Singh's
Guru Gobind Singh Sahib, the tenth Nanak was born at Patna Sahib on 22nd December 1666, (Poh Sudi Saptmi). His birthday generally falls in December or January or sometimes twice within a year as it is calculated according to Hindu Bikrami Calendar based on moon-year.



Martyrdom Day

Guru Arjan's
Guru Arjan's martyrdom day falls



towards the close of May or beginning of June. Nowadays this day is celebrated everywhere in gurdwaras and by leading processions and serving chabeels.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's
Guru Tegh



Bahadur's martyrdom day falls in November-December. The day is celebrated by organising processions, singing hymns in gurdwaras, and by organising lectures, sermons, kirtans, etc.

Lohri

Lohri, which comes on the last day of Poh (December-January), is another extremely popular festival. A huge bonfire is made in every house and the fire god is worshipped. This is a special day for making offerings to fire. When fire is lit up in the evening, all the members of family go round it, pour

offerings into it, and bow before it in reverence. The first Lohri for a new bride, or a new-born babe, is enthusiastically celebrated, and sweets are distributed. Children visit homes in the neighbourhood and sing songs. Lohri marks the end of the winter season.



Maghi

Next day after Lohri comes Maghi, also called Makar Sakranti (entry of the sun in the sign or Capricorn). It is very popular with the punjabis. The people go out for a holy dip and give away a lot of charity. The special dish of the day is kheer cooked in sugarcane juice. On this day fairs are held at many places. For Sikhs, Maghi means primarily the festival at Muktsar, a district town of the Punjab, in commemoration of the heroic fight of the Chali Mukte, literally, the Forty Liberated Ones, who laid down their lives warding off an attack by an

imperial army marching in pursuit of Guru Gobind Singh. The action took place near a pool of water, Khidrane di Dhab, on 29 December 1705. The bodies were cremated the following day, the first of Magh (hence the name of the festival), which now falls usually on the 13th of January. Largest assembly takes place at Muktsar in the form of a big fair during which pilgrims take a dip in the sacred sarovar and visit several shrines connected with the historic battle. A mahala or big march of pilgrims from the main shrine to gurdwara Tibbi



Sahib, sacred to Guru Gobind Singh, marks the conclusion of the three-day celebration. Maghi is also celebrated in the Gurudwaras.

Holla Mohalla

Holla Mohalla is a Sikh festival celebrated in the month of Phalgun, a day after Holi. An annual festival held at Anandpur Sahib in Punjab, Holi Mohalla was started by the tenth Sikh Guru, Gobind Singh, as a gathering of Sikhs for military exercises and mock battles on the day following the festival of Holi. It reminds the people of valour and defence preparedness, concepts dear to the Tenth Guru who was at that time battling the Mughal empire.
On this three-day festival mock battles are held followed by music and poetry competitions. The Nihang Singhs (members of the Sikh army that was founded by Guru Govind Singh) carry on the martial tradition with mock battles and displays of swordsmanship and horse riding. They perform daring feats, such as Gatka (mock encounters), tent pegging, bareback horse-riding and standing erect on two speeding horses.
There are also a number of durbars where Sri Guru Granth Sahib is present and kirtan and religious lectures take place. Sporting shining swords, long spears, conical turbans, the Nihangs present a fierce picture as they gallop past on

horseback spraying colors on people. On the last day a long procession, led by Panj Pyaras, starts from Takht Keshgarh Sahib, one of the five Sikh religious seats, and passes through various important gurdwaras like Qila Anandgarh, Lohgarh Sahib, Mata Jitoji and terminates at the Takht.
For people visiting Anandpur Sahib, langars (voluntary community kitchens) are organized by the local people as a part of sewa (community service).
Raw materials like wheat flour, rice, vegetables, milk and sugar is provided by the villagers living nearby. Women volunteer to cook and others take part in cleaning the utensils. Traditional cuisine is served to the pilgrim who eat while sitting in rows on the ground.
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Baisakhi

Punjab being a predominantly agricultural state that prides itself on its food grain production, it is little wonder that its most significant festival is Baisakhi, which marks the arrival of the harvesting season. For the Sikhs, Baisakhi has a special significance because on this day in 1699, their tenth guru, Guru Gobind Singh organized the Order of the Khalsa. Baisakhi is New Year's Day in Punjab. It falls on the month of Vaisakh.
The tenth guru Guru Govind Singh selected the auspicious day of Baisakhi to form the order of the Khalsa. On the 13th of April in 1699, at a meeting in Anandpur in Punjab, the guru called upon his people to come forward to sacrifice themselves for the good of the clan. Initially there were no response from the audience. However, after several calls from the guru five persons- Daya Ram Khatri, Dharm Das, Mokhan Chand, Sahib Chand and Himmat Rai -were

ready to offer themselves. Guru took each of them to the tent nearby and every time he returned alone with his bloodied sword. Then the guru went to the tent yet again, this time for a long time. He reappeared followed by the five men, clad in saffron-colored garments.
They sat on the dais while the guru prepared water to bless them. In an iron vessel, he stirred the batasha that his wife, Mata Jitoji had put into water, with a sword called Khanda Sahib. The water was now considered the sacred nectar of immortality called amrita. It was first given to the five volunteers, then drunk by the guru and later distributed to the crowd. All present, irrespective of caste or creed, became members of the Khalsa Pantha. Those five men were christened the Panch Pyare. He discontinued the tradition of gurus and asked all Sikhs to accept the Grantha Sahib as their

