

PUSHKAR

a map made by Zostel
for young travellers

FREE MAP • RAJASTHAN



LIVE IT. NOW

ZOSTEL



Khamma ghani, Pushkar!

Khamma ghani! We're the Pushkar Zpbus, and this is our town: a small lake in a fold of the Aravallis, ringed by 52 ghats and hundreds of temples, with low dunes and rose fields at its edge. Rulers from across Rajasthan and beyond built the steps; travellers from across the world come for a few days and stayed on. The town is vegetarian and dry, and with malpua frying in the bazaar nobody misses a thing. Take your shoes off at the water, climb Savitri's hill before the sun, bargain with a smile, and come in Kartik, when the camels dress up for the fair. Then come home to our pool on Panch Kund Road.



Stay with us in Pushkar

One Zostel: on Panch Kund Road, a short auto ride from the Gurudwara and Marwar bus stops.

Zostel Pushkar

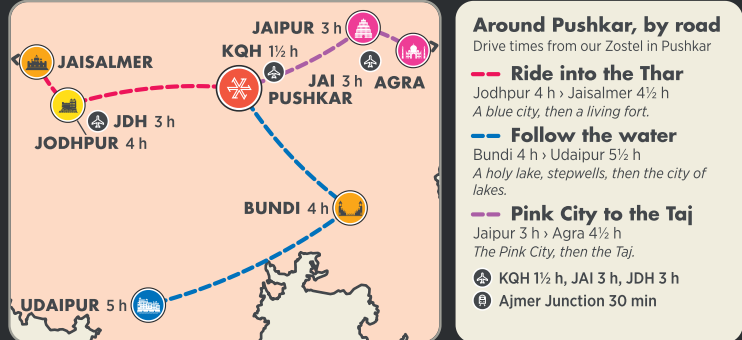
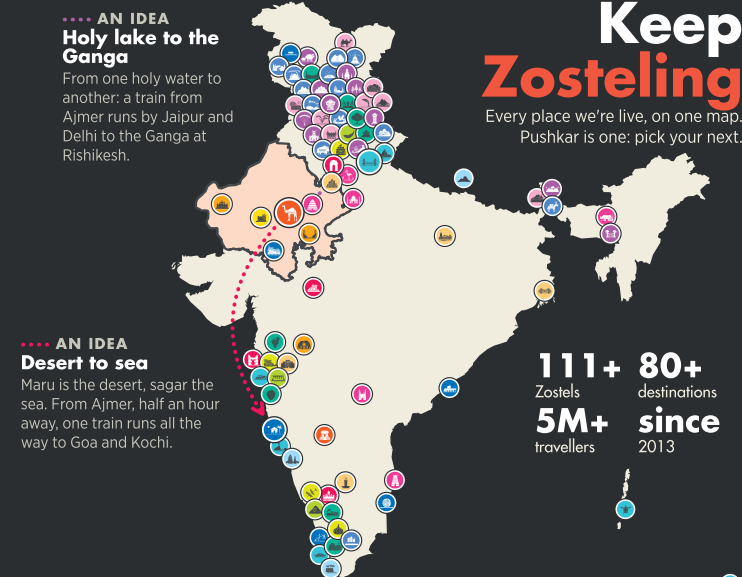
On Panch Kund Road east of the old town, under the Aravallis: a swimming pool, snooker and workstations in the common room, and jamming on the rooftop while the sun sets behind the hills.

Maps: © OpenStreetMap contributors (ODbL), data fetched 2026-10-13 (UTC); Terrain: Terrain Tiles on AWS (Mapzen/Tilezen), from SRTM courtesy of NASA and the U.S. Geological Survey, Walk Lines routed by FOSSGIS OSRM on OpenStreetMap. Drawings: the Zostel brand's own. Things change: check the day's timings at the gate.

Practical tips

Getting in, by Ajmer

Ajmer is the gateway: its railway station is about 14 km away, over Nag Pahar. Local buses and shared vehicles run from Ajmer's bus stand; for us, get off at the Gurudwara or Marwar bus stop. The nearest airports: Jaipur, about three hours; Kishangarh, about an hour and a half. Direct buses also come from Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur.



India and its states: DataMeet (CC BY 4.0), the Survey of India outline. Roads, airports, station: © OpenStreetMap contributors; drive times by FOSSGIS OSRM, scaled to Zostel's own published times (2026-10). Pins nudged apart where they crowd; edge pins point the way. Flights and trains change: check before you plan.

Getting around

Pushkar is small: walk it, round the lake and through the bazaar. Scooters are for hire in town, with a helmet; autos and taxis cover the rest. The lanes are narrow and shared with cows, so slow down and give them the right of way.

When to come

October to March is the pleasant season. April to mid-July is desert heat. August and September bring rain, green hills and fewer people. The fair fills the town in Kartik, October or November; Holi falls in March.

Pure vegetarian, and dry

Pushkar is a holy town with its own rule: every restaurant inside the town limits is vegetarian, and the town is dry. Respect it in your room and on the street; there's malpua.

At the ghats

The whole town counts as sacred ground. Leave your shoes before the steps down to the lake, and cover knees and shoulders. Someone may press a flower into your hand 'for the lake', lead a prayer, then ask for a large donation; a red thread round your wrist may be sold as a 'Pushkar passport'. You need neither: no offering is compulsory. Say no kindly and keep walking.

Money

UPI works at our home; keep cash for the bazaar, the sweet shops and the autos. Bargaining is expected in the market: start low and keep smiling. On packaged goods, check the printed price before you pay.

The heat

This is the edge of the desert. From April the days are hot and dry: climb the hills at sunrise or as the sun goes down, rest in the middle of the day, cover your head and carry water. Refill a bottle at our home.

Photos at the ghats

Never photograph anyone bathing, and follow the signs: some ghats forbid cameras outright. Ask before you photograph people, and at the fair ask the camel's owner too.

Every number is a tip on the map overload, in the colour of its kind: Fifty-two Ghats and Counting

- 🌳 Hills, Dunes, Roses
- 🍌 Shudh Shakahari
- 🍌 Mela and Memory
- 🍌 Came for Two Days. A drawing beside a line shows what you will find there:



5 minutes of history

4th century BC
Older than the stories
Punch-marked coins found here date the lake back some 2,400 years; inscriptions at Sanchi name it in the 2nd century BC, and the Chinese traveller Faxian notes its visitors in the 5th century AD.

12th century
A lake held by a dam
A dam across the headwaters of the Luni is credited with holding the lake as it is, in a valley between two ridges of the Aravallis, with Nag Pahar between it and Ajmer.

14th century
A rare temple
The Brahma temple's present structure, of marble and stone with a red spire, dates to the 14th century, with later rebuilding. It is one of very few temples to Brahma in India.

Around 1600
A guest house on the lake
Man Singh I of Amber builds the Raj Ghat, and Man Mahal rises by the water as a royal guest house.

1615
An emperor's hunting lodge
Jahangir builds a hunting lodge by the lake and comes back to hunt sixteen times. The lodge is a ruin now.



1700s and 1800s
Every kingdom its own steps
Rulers of Amber, Bundi, Bikaner and Jaisalmer restore the lake and its temples; the Maratha Daulat Rao Scindia builds the Kot Tirth Ghat. The ghats still carry their names: Jaipur, Kota, Gwalior, Karmi.

1818
Ajmer turns British
Daulat Rao Scindia cedes Ajmer to the British in 1818. In the years after, the British add a cattle fair to the pilgrimage to pay for the lake's upkeep. Ajmer stays British until 1947 and joins Rajasthan in 1956.

After 1948
Gau Ghat becomes Gandhi Ghat
Mahatma Gandhi's ashes are immersed at Gau Ghat, and the ghat takes his name.

1960s and 1970s
Came for a few days
The hippie trail brings travellers overland from Europe; in Pushkar some came for a few days and never left. Its cafes and bohemian bazaar still keep a little of those years.

Today
A lake looked after, a fair changing
The lake dried out entirely during the fair of 2009 and is being de-silted and cleaned since. A state law of 2015 keeps camels from being sold out of Rajasthan, and fewer come to the fair; the horses still do.



Talk like a local

Khamma ghani
Hello, the warm Marwari one
khum-maa gh-nee

Ghani ghani khamma
The reply to it
gh-nee gh-nee khum-maa

Ram Ram sa
Hello, the everyday one; sa adds respect
raam raam saa

Padharo mhare des
Welcome to my land
puh-dhaa-ro mhaa-ray days

Aap kaiso ho?
How are you?
aap kai-so ho

Maaf karo
Sorry, forgive me
maaf kuh-ro

Dhanyavaad
Thank you
dhuhn-yuh-vahd

Kitna hai?
How much is it?
kit-naa hai

Shakahari
Vegetarian: the whole town is
shaa-kaa-haa-ree

Badhiya!
Great, delicious
buh-rhi-yaa



Eat like a Pushkar local

Pushkar eats sweet, fried and strictly vegetarian: by the town's own rule nothing but vegetarian food is sold, the town is dry besides, and nobody misses a thing. Malpua out of the wok by Gau Ghat, khasta kachori for breakfast, dal-baati-churma for lunch, rose lassi in a kulhad, and giant falafel rolls in the main market. The old counters first, then the dishes to hunt down.

3 Sarvadia Mishthan Bhandar. Our city guide's malpua with rabri, in the sweet-makers' lane by Gau Ghat; food walkers call it the most popular shop in town.

"Malpua with rabri, hot from the wok in Halwai Gali. Don't wait for it to cool."

7 Laxmi Mishthan Bhandar. By Gau Ghat: malpua of rabdi and khoya fried in ghee, straight into cardamom syrup, and a Rajasthani thali.

"Two woks by Gau Ghat, ghee and syrup. Eat the malpua the moment it leaves the second."

Radhey Ji. Near Varah Ghat: hot, soft, sweet malpua, the one our 2019 guide nearly cried over.

"Hot, soft and sweet by Varah Ghat. Order two."



Round the lake: the ghats, the temples and the bazaar

3 km • about 3 hours with stops • 8 stops

From the Brahma temple down to its ghat, along the shore to Gandhi Ghat, into the bazaar for malpua, past the south-eastern-style Old Rangji temple to Varaha Ghat, then round past Man Mahal and back. Shoes off at the ghats.



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The stops

- 11 Brahma Temple**
The silver turtle facing the shrine
- 8 Brahma Ghat**
Shoes off at the top step
- 6 Gandhi Ghat (Gau Ghat)**
The four-script stone
- 1 Main Bazaar**
Malpua frying in the pans
- 14 Old Rangji Temple**
A southern-style gopuram
- 18 Varaha Ghat**
Bells and lamps at dusk
- 15 Varaha Temple**
Carvings on the old walls
- 22 Man Mahal**
The palace over the water

Rajasthani food, all vegetarian

1 Malpua with rabri. Batter fried till the edges crisp, soaked in syrup and topped with thickened milk. Eat it hot.

Dal baati churma. Wheat balls baked hard and drowned in ghee, with lentils and a sweet crumble; Rajasthan's whole meal.

Kachori. Born in Marwar, fried khasta, flaky: a breakfast you hear.

Ker sangri. Desert berries and khejri beans, dried and cooked with spice: the Thar on a plate.

Kalakand. Milk cooked down into a soft, grainy sweet. Buy a box for the road.

1 Falafel. Pushkar's adopted street food: giant rolls in the main market.

The rose garden of Rajasthan. Roses are farmed all round Pushkar; nearly 700 hectares of them by one count, a trade centuries old.

Picked before dawn. Families pick the flowers before dawn, before the buds open, to keep their scent.



Good to know

Travel light to Brahma. Bags, cameras and phones are not allowed inside the Brahma temple: there are lockers by the entrance. Walk the lake light, or leave things at home.

Why Brahma has so few temples. Brahma began a sacrifice here and, when his wife Savitri was late, married Gayatri to complete it. Savitri cursed him never to be worshipped, then softened the curse for Pushkar alone: her temple stands on the highest hill.

Who goes into the sanctum. By the Brahma temple's custom, married men do not enter its sanctum; ascetic priests do, and pass everyone's offerings in from the hall, where visitors see the image like everyone else.

The king of pilgrimages. Pushkar's lake is called Tirtha Raj, the king of pilgrimage sites, and Hindu tradition counts it among the five sacred lakes, with Mansarovar, Bindu Sarovar, Narayan Sarovar and Pampa Sarovar.

A lotus, three lakes. The name is read as the place where a lotus fell from Brahma's hand; its petals fell in three places, which made the three Pushkars. On Kartik Purnima some pilgrims walk a circuit of all three.

Old Pushkar. About 5 km north-east, on the Merta road, Budha Pushkar is a second, smaller sacred lake, one of the three Pushkars of the old texts, among rose fields.

A Shiva temple underground. In the old town, Atmatweshwar Mahadev's sanctum is underground; Rajasthan Tourism dates the temple to the 12th century. Its festival is Shivaratri. Ask locally for the door.

Agastya's hill. Nag Pahar, the ridge towards Ajmer, is by local belief where the sage Agastya lived; its caves used for long meditation. There's no marked trail: go with someone who knows the hill.

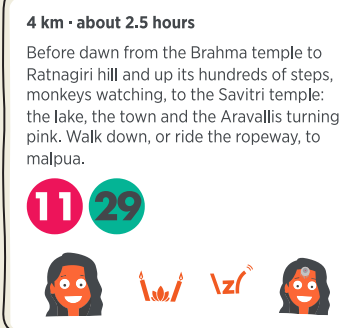
The Rangji temples' inner ghats. At the Rangji temples the inner sanctum and the main gopuram are not open to foreign visitors; the outer courtyard usually is. Look from the court, and ask at the gate.

At the gurudwara. Everyone covers their head and washes hands and feet before going in.

No smoking in public. India's tobacco law bans smoking in public places, and in a town that counts every street as sacred it is noticed: smoke only where your stay allows it.

Up Savitri's hill for sunrise

4 km • about 2.5 hours
Before dawn from the Brahma temple to Ratnagiri hill and up its hundreds of steps, monkeys watching, to the Savitri temple: the lake, the town and the Aravallis turning pink. Walk down, or ride the ropeway, to malpua.



From Pushkar to Ajmer. Every day hundreds of kilos go from the farms round Pushkar to Ajmer, sold in baskets at the stalls outside the Dargah.

Gulkand. Rose petals slow-cooked with sugar, sometimes honey, into a thick, sweet preserve: a spoonful on its own.

Rose water. The water left when rose petals are distilled for their oil, the attar, or petals steeped in water. For sweets, lassi and milk.

9 Rose lassi. Thick curd whipped with rose, a little sugar and salt, in a kulhad under malai.

3 Malpua, how. A batter of rabdi, khoya and flour, fried straight into an iron wok, lifted straight into a second wok of cardamom syrup.

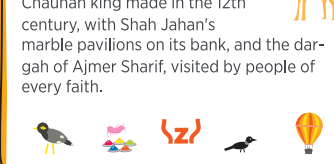
3 With rabri. Rabri is milk reduced slowly in a kadhai till it thickens; spooned over malpua, it's the town's favourite.

3 Gulab jamun. Fried milk balls in syrup, in Halwai Gali the size of tennis balls.

12 The Pushkar fair (Kartik). From the start of Kartik to its full moon, October or November: camels, horses and cattle traded on the mela ground, then music, contests and giant wheels. In 2026: 17 November to 24 November.

Kartik Purnima. The full moon that ends the fair, the lake's biggest day of the year. The ghats and temples fill: come early, go slowly.

Ajmer. Over Nag Pahar, about 16 km: Ana Sagar, the lake a Chauhan king made in the 12th century, with Shah Jahan's marble pavilions on its bank, and the dargah of Ajmer Sharif, visited by people of every faith.



11 Holi (March). The bonfire of Holika Dahan the night before, then a whole town in colour, with the main chowk near the Brahma temple at its loudest. Wear old clothes; women, go in a group.

12 The trade. Camels, Marwari horses, cattle, sheep and goats change hands on the mela ground, the animals dressed in bright cloth and bells. It began as a herders' fair, and still is one.

The contests. The longest moustache, turban-tying, matka phod, a bride-and-groom contest visitors dress up for, and a tug of war, locals against foreigners. The locals nearly always win.

The dances. Ghoomar, Bhavai and Chari, Rajasthan's folk dances, and old songs of love, union and life.

The old games. Gilli-danda, langdi tang and sitolia come back for a week: join in.

12 The wheels. Ferris wheels and magic shows turn the fairground into a funfair after the trading.

6 Gandhi Ghat. Once Gau Ghat, renamed after Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed here.

A lake looked after. Silt from bare hills made it shallow, and in 2009 it dried out entirely during the fair. De-silting, check dams and new trees on the hills are bringing it back.

18 Crocodiles, once. Crocodiles lived in the lake until the British netted them and moved them away. Nart Singh Ghat is said to keep a stuffed one.

11 A rare temple. The Brahma temple is one of very few in India to Brahma, the creator; its red spire is the town's landmark.

A dry, vegetarian town. Vegetarian, and dry. The kitchens are still never quiet.

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The lake and its 52 ghats

Fifty-two ghats. Fifty-two flights of steps ring the lake, and over 400 temples crowd behind them. Ten of the ghats are listed as monuments.

Built by kingdoms. Amber's Man Singh I built the Raj Ghat; the Maratha Scindias, Kot Tirth Ghat. Jaipur, Kota and Gwalior ghats carry the names of their states; Jaipur's was gifted in 1956.

Gandhi Ghat. Once Gau Ghat, renamed after Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed here.

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QUESTS

Dares for the brave and the curious. The map marks each with a star; tick them off as you go.

1 Say khamma ghani before you ask anything. Hello in Marwari is khamma ghani. The answer is ghani khamma. Try it at the sweet shop, the auto stand and the gate, and count the grins.

6 Leave your shoes at the top step. The whole town is sacred ground, and the steps to the water are barefoot. Find the shoe stand, then walk down slowly.

18 Walk the whole round of the lake. The parkira-ma goes all the way round, past ghat after ghat. Fifty-two of them: see how many names you can read on the way.

6 Find the ghat that changed its name. Gau Ghat became Gandhi Ghat after Mahatma Gandhi's ashes were immersed here. Find the name on the steps.

18 Find the crocodile on Nart Singh Ghat. Crocodiles once lived in the lake, until the British netted them and moved them out. One, stuffed, is said to be kept on Nart Singh Ghat by Varaha Ghat.

1 Crack open a khasha kachori. The kachori comes from Marwar, and the bazaar fries it flaky. Listen for the crack.

1 Break a baati into dal and ghee. Dal baati churma is Rajasthan's whole meal baked wheat balls, lentils and a sweet crumble. Crush, pour, mix, repeat.

12 Cheer the longest moustache at the mela. The fair's contests include the longest moustache, turban-tying and a bridal show. Pick a moustache and shout for it.

12 Pull for the foreigners in the tug of war. Locals against visitors is one of the fair's favourite contests, and the locals nearly always win. Pull anyway.

12 Learn to tie a turban. Turban-tying is a contest at the fair, and a skill all year. Ask someone to show you the wrap, then try it yourself.

12 Ride the giant wheel over the fair. Ferris wheels go up on the fairground every Kartik. From the top, camels, tents, the lake and the hills.

12 Spot a horse whose ears touch. The Marwari horse's ears curve inward until the tips meet. They're traded at the fair: find a pair of ears that kiss.

14 A southern gateway in the desert. Old Rangji Temple. In the lanes north of the lake, a Vishnu temple with a gateway tower, a gopuram, in the Dravidian style of South India: a surprise in Rajasthan. Busy, with music and yoga classes too. Then walk east to the newer Rangji temple and compare.

15 The oldest temple, often the emptiest. Varaha Temple. Among Pushkar's oldest temples, to Vishnu as the boar Varaha: damaged under Mughal rule, rebuilt by Rajput rulers. Fortress-like, ochre and white, with carved columns and life-sized figures. Often empty, which is half its charm.

16 Two bastis, many painted walls. Badi Basti and Choti Basti. The old town's two quarters, the big and the small settlement: light-coloured houses, cows in doorways, painted murals on the walls, and most of the town's 18th-century and later temples tucked in. Walk without a plan; the lake turns up eventually.

18 The baqr's ghat, and a crocodile. Varaha Ghat. One of the lake's ten protected ghats, named for the legend that Vishnu appeared here as a boar. Lively, with hot malpua nearby. Nart Singh Ghat next door is said to keep a stuffed crocodile, from when the lake had them.

22 A royal guest house on the shore. Man Mahal. On the lake's eastern shore, a guest house built for Raja Man Singh I of Amber and Pushkar's largest royal residence: arched corridors, ornate balconies, the lake in front. Ask at the gate.

24 An emperor's lodge in a holy town. Jahangir's lodge (Mahal Badshahi). On the southern shore, what's left of the hunting lodge Jahangir built in 1615-16. He came sixteen times to hunt, breaking the local taboo on killing animals near the lake: an odd footnote to a vegetarian pilgrim town. Mostly ruins.

SHUDH SHAKAHARI

3 The lane that smells of hot ghee. Halwai Gali, the sweet-makers' lane. The sweet-makers' lane by Gau Ghat: malpua fried in iron woks of ghee, then dunked in cardamom syrup. Our guide's pick is Sarvadai Mishthan Bhandar, for malpua with rabri. Milk reduced in a kadhai, gulab jamuns like tennis balls. Eat it all hot.

4 Organic plates on a balcony over the bazaar. Laughing Buddha Cafe. A first-floor balcony on Main Market Road near Gau Ghat: an organic and vegan menu above the bazaar's noise. Coffee, a plate, and the cows negotiating the lane below. A small mercy in a town of ghee and malai.

9 Pink, thick and served in clay. The rose lassi stall, Brahma Temple Road. On Brahma Temple Road, the stall OpenStreetMap calls the Rose Lassi Stall, its sign Marwari makkhaniya lassi: thick curd whipped with rose, a little sugar and salt, in a kulhad under malai. Lassi and nimbu pani are how Pushkar cools down.

17 A Rajasthani town of thirty falafel fillings. The falafel stalls, Main Market Road. Main Market Road, Choti Basti: giant falafel rolls in laffa or pitta, with aubergine, avocado, paneer or olives, about thirty ways. Our guide's pick is Original Ganga Laffa and Falafel. Hummus on the side, and often a glass of chai on the house.

23 Coffee where the sun leaves the lake. Sunset Café, by Sunset Point. On the lake's parkrama road by Sunset Point, Choti Basti: coffee, baked and pizza, with the sun dropping behind the hills across the water. Come early for a lake-facing seat, and keep it quiet: the ghats below are a place of prayer.

28 Vegan bowls a short walk from home. Cafe Nature's Blessing. On Panch Kund Road, a short hop from Zostel Pushkar: a menu about half vegan, smoothies and salad bowls. The easy dinner on a lazy holiday day. All of Pushkar eats vegetarian; here you choose how far to go.

12 Camels, wheels and moustache contests. Pushkar Mela Ground. Open ground most of the year, in Kartik (October–November) the Pushkar Fair: Ferris wheels, Ghoomar and Bhawai dancers, and contests for the longest moustache, turban tying, matka races and tug of war. 2026's runs 17 to 24 November. Book early.

20 Two Gurus' visits, in white marble. Gurudwara Singh Sabha. East of the lake, by the bus stop named after it: a large white marble gurudwara remembering Guru Nanak's visit in the early 1500s and Guru Gobind Singh's in 1706. Everyone is welcome; cover your head, shoes off at the door.

27 Rajasthan's rose garden, past the town. Rose fields, Ganahera. Pushkar is called the rose garden of Rajasthan: fields toward Ganahera grow the small, fragrant desi rose for rose water, gulkand and perfume, a trade since Mughal times. Pickers start before dawn; go then, keep to the field edges.

30 Bani Thani's town, and fake snow. Kishangarh. An hour away, the home of the Kishangarh school's 'Bani Thani', the long-eyed 18th-century court singer and poet turned the school's best-known face. See Phool Mahal's floral walls, Mokham Vilas on the water, the Snow Yard's marble hills.

29 Beat the sun up Savitri's hill. Hundreds of steps up Ratnagiri hill, and the lake below turns gold as the sun comes up. The ropeway is for the way down, if you must.

13 Watch the town glow from Pap Mochani. A short climb north of town, a hilltop with the whole lake below. Come as the sun goes down and photograph the town lighting up.

1 Eat a malpua straight off the pan. Fried till the edges go crisp, soaked in syrup, served with rabri. Pushkar's sweet is best hot: watch it fried and eat it standing.

27 Smell the rose fields outside town. Pushkar is the rose garden of Rajasthan, and its fields lie just west of town. Then taste gulkand, the petals made into a sweet preserve.

1 Bargain with a smile. Start low, laugh, meet in the middle, and buy something you'll actually wear.

REACHING US

On Panch Kund Road

Zostel Pushkar. On Panch Kund Road east of the old town, under the Aravalli: a swimming pool, snooker and workstations in the common

10 A lake in the desert, ringed by steps. Pushkar Lake. The town wraps round it: 52 ghats of stone steps, rebuilt over centuries by Rajasthan's royal families, run down to the water with small temples crowding behind. Shoes off on every ghat, camera down where people pray. Come back late at night, when it's quiet.

11 The red spire everyone comes for. Brahma Temple. One of the very few temples to Brahma in India, and the most prominent: marble and stone slabs under a tall red spire, a hamsa (goose) motif, coins pressed into the walls. The present building is 14th century. Expect queues in fair season.

19 Three styles under one gopuram. Rangji Temple. East of the lake: Mughal, Rajput and South Indian styles under a tall, octagonal gopuram. Hundreds of steps (one count says 970); steep. Go at sunrise for the lake and town in first light. Monkeys live on the hillside: zip your snacks away.

21 Sunset Point, the whole lake in front. Jaipur Ghat (Sunset Point). The lake's south-eastern corner, by the Jaipur Ghats (given by the Maharaja of Jaipur in 1956): the town's Sunset Point, the sun dropping behind the hills across the water. Come early for a step, expect music and friendly, persistent vendors.

29 Hundreds of steps, monkeys, the view. Savitri Temple, Ratnagiri hill. On top of Ratnagiri hill, south-west of the lake: Pushkar's classic climb. Hundreds of steps (one count says 970); steep. Go at sunrise for the lake and town in first light. Monkeys live on the hillside: zip your snacks away.

31 The snake hill between two towns. Nag Pahar. The 'snake mountain', the Aravalli ridge between Pushkar and Ajmer: a backpackers' hike up to a cave and the Nag Kund, a small sacred water source. Paths aren't marked, so go early, with water and company. Look back for the lake.

5 The view beats the food, honestly. Out of the Blue. Upstairs above a handicraft shop on Main Market Road, Badi Basti: a roof over the town, popular for sitting a long while. Wikivoyage says the view beats the food, and that's fair. Coffee, pancakes, noodles, gnocchi for the homesick.

7 Malpua and a thali by Gau Ghat. Lauxmi Mishthan Bhandar. By Gau Ghat in Sadar Bazaar: one man between two woks, ghee to fry the malpua and cardamom syrup to soak it. Rich and soft, crisp at the edge, eaten the moment it leaves the syrup. Come for a Rajasthani thali, stay for malpua.

MELA AND MEMORY

2 Holi, the whole town in colour. Holi at the main chowk. In March the main chowk near the Brahma temple becomes one of India's best-known Holi: gulab, dhol and a whole town dancing, after the Holika Dahan bonfire the night before. Book early, wear old clothes, oil your skin, stay in a group.

CAME FOR TWO DAYS

26 A quiet station with few trains. Pushkar's railway station. Pushkar's own station, north-west of the lake, sees only a few slow trains; most travellers come through Ajmer. Our guide notes direct trains from Jodhpur, about five hours. Check the day's departures at the window, then take an auto into town.

Pushkar

Every number is a tip around the map, in its colour. Every star is a quest.

One home by the hills: Zostel Pushkar on Panch Kund Road, with a pool and Aravalli sunsets.

Jodhpur has its blue walls. In Kartik, Pushkar has the festival: camels, music and a giant wheel on the sand.

Coffee on a balcony over Main Market Road, the bazaar going by below. Three hours from Jaipur, well spent.

Bundi's stepwells are my backyard. A southern gopuram in a Rajasthani town was new to me.

Udaipur has more lakes. Pushkar has more ghats: fifty-two round one small lake, and a temple behind each.

From Jaipur, three hours by road through Ajmer. Fifty-two ghats round one small lake: worth every kilometre.

Stay with us

Zostel Pushkar

Panch Kund Road, east of the old town; an auto from the Marwar bus stop.

Around Pushkar

The box is the big map. Edge pins point the way (not to scale).

Kishangarh • 33.7 km ▶ **30**

Nag Pahar • 4.9 km ▶ **31**

4.4 km ◀ **32**

Fifty-two Ghats and Counting

Hills, Dunes, Roses

Shudh Shakahari

Bargain Bohemia

Mela and Memory

Came for Two Days

our Zostel

a quest (the list is round the map)

Round the lake, the walk (side A)

circled: don't miss it

a dot: its true place, where a number stands aside

a drawing by a number: what is there

landmarks

parks and gardens

the railway

a station

water

the hills

Our dunes back home are taller. Here I climbed Savitri's steps before dawn and watched the lake catch the light.

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