

Entrance gates



Entrance arch

Virendra Pol, Udai Pol near Jaleb chowk and the Tripolia Gate (triple gate) are the entry gates to the City Palace. The Tripolia gate is reserved for entry into the palace by the royal family. Common people and visitors can enter the place complex only through the Virendra Pol and the Udai Pol or the Atish Pol (Stable Gate). The entry from Virendra Pol leads to the Mubarak Mahal. The gateways are richly decorated.

Mubarak Mahal



Mubarak Mahal

Mubarak Mahal, meaning the 'Auspicious Palace', was built with a fusion of the Islamic, Rajput and European architectural styles in the late 19th century by Maharaja Madho Singh II as reception centre. It is a museum; a fine repository of variety of textiles such as the royal formal costumes, sangneri block prints, embroidered shawls, Kashmiri pashminas and silk saris as part of the Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II Museum. A note worthy display here is of the set of voluminous clothes worn by Sawai Madhosingh I, who was 1.2 metres (3.9 ft) wide and weighed 250 kilograms (550 lb) but interestingly had 108 wives.

Chandra Mahal



Chandra Mahal. Seen at the top is the flag of the royal family,

Chandra Mahal or Chandra Niwas is the most commanding building in the City Palace complex, on its west end. It is a seven-storeyed building and each floor has been given a specific name such as the Sukh-Niwas, Ranga-Mandir, Pitam-Niwas, Chabi-Niwas, Shri-Niwas and Mukut-Mandir or Mukut Mahal. It contains many unique paintings, mirror work on walls and floral decorations. At present, most of this palace is the residence of the descendents of the former rulers of Jaipur. Only the ground floor is allowed for visitors where a museum is located that displays carpets, manuscripts and other items that belonged to the royal family. There is beautiful peacock gate at the entry to the Mahal. It has screened balconies and a pavilion at the roof from where a panoramic view of the city can be seen. It is set amidst well laid out gardens and a decorative lake in the foreground.

Also seen at the top of the Chandra Mahal is the flag of the royal family, which is seen unfurled when the Maharaja is in the palace. It is a one and quarter sized flag. However, when the king is away, the queen's flag is hoisted on the building.



Left:Chandra Mahal in 1885



Right: Chandra Mahal now

There is an interesting anecdote narrated about the ‘one and quarter flag’, which is the insignia flag of the Maharajas of Jaipur. Emperor Aurangzeb who attended the wedding of Jai Singh, shook hands with the young groom and wished him well on his marriage. On this occasion, Jai Singh made an irreverent remark to the Emperor stating that the way he had shook hands with him made it incumbent on the Emperor to protect him (Jai Singh) and his kingdom. Aurangzeb, instead of responding in indignation at the quip, felt pleased and conferred on the young Jai Singh the title of ‘Sawai’, which means “one and a quarter”. Since then the Maharajas have pre-fixed their names with this title. During

residence there, they also fly a one and a quarter size flag atop their buildings and palaces.

There is also a tragic story linked to this palace. Ishawri Singh, son of Jai Singh who was unwilling to face the advancing army of Marathas, ended his life humiliatingly by getting bitten by a snake. Following this, his 21 wives and paramours also committed the then accepted ritual of sati or jauhar (self immolation on the funeral pyre of their husband).

Pitam Niwas Chowk



Left: Pitam Niwas gate,



Right: Peacock Gate

It is the inner courtyard, which provides access to the Chandra Mahal. Here, there are four small gates (known as Ridhi Sidhi Pol) that are adorned with themes representing the four seasons. The gates are the Peacock Gate (with motifs of peacocks on the doorway) representing autumn; the Lotus Gate (with continual flower and petal pattern) suggestive of summer season; the Green Gate, also called the Leheriya (meaning: “waves”) gate, in green colour suggestive of spring, and lastly, the Rose Gate with repeated flower pattern representing winter season.

Diwan-I-Khas



Diwan-I-Khas



Left:Diwan-I-Khas,

Right: Silver Urn

Diwan-I-Khas was a private audience hall of the Maharajas, a marble floored chamber. It is located between the armoury and the art gallery. There are two huge sterling silver vessels of 1.6 metres (5.2 ft) height and each with capacity of 4000 litres and weighing 340 kilograms (750 lb), on display here. They were made from 14000 melted silver coins without soldering. They are officially recorded by the Guinness Book of World Records as the world's largest sterling silver vessels. These vessels were specially made by Maharaja Sawai Madho Singh II, who was a highly pious Hindu, to carry the Ganga river water to drink on his trip to England in 1901 (for Edward VII's coronation) as he was finicky about committing religious sin by consuming the English water. Hence, the vessels are named as *Gangajelies* (Ganga water holding urns). There are a number of crystal chandeliers hanging from the ceiling (normally covered with plastic sheets to prevent dust collection), which are uncovered on special occasions.

Diwan-I-Aam



Diwan-I-Aam

The 'Diwan-E-Aam' or the 'Hall of Public Audience' is an enchanting chamber, with the ceiling painted in rich red and gold colours, which still looks vibrant. It is a major attraction in the Mubarak Mahal courtyard. This chamber, functioning now as an art gallery, has exhibits of exquisite miniature paintings (of Rajasthani, Mughal and Persian art), ancient texts, embroidered rugs, Kashmir shawls and carpets. The ceiling is richly decorated. At present, it is an art gallery showcasing enthralling painted ceilings and rare ancient handwritten original manuscripts of Hindu scriptures (the Hindu holy scripture of the Bhagavad Gita handwritten in tiny script). Also seen in the art gallery is the Golden throne (called as Takth-e-Rawal) that was the seat of the Maharaja during public audience. It was mounted on an elephant or carried by palanquin bearers during the Maharajas visit outside the palace. At the entry gateway to the hall, two large elephants, each made out of single marble rock are on display.

Maharani palace

Maharani's Palace was originally the residence of the royal queens. It has been converted into a museum, where weapons used by the royalty during war campaigns are displayed,

including those belonging to the 15th century. The ceiling of this chamber has unique frescoes, which are preserved using jewel dust of semiprecious stones. A particular weaponry on display is the scissor-action dagger, which when thrust into an enemy's body is said to disembowel the victim, on its withdrawal. The other artefacts on display include swords with pistols attached to it, the sword presented by Queen Victoria to Maharaja Sawai Ram Singh (1835-80) which is inlaid with rubies and emeralds, guns serving as walking sticks and a small canon which could be mounted on a camel's back and many more.

Bhaggi Khana

Bhaggi Khana is a museum in the palace complex where a collection of old carriages, palanquins and European cabs adopted as baggis to Indian situations are on display here. The baggi which attracts attention is the one gifted by Prince of Wales to the Maharaja in 1876, called the Victoria baggi. Also on display here are the *mahadol*, a palanquin with a single bamboo bar that was used to carry the priests and a Rath (chariot) that was used for carrying the idols of Hindu gods in procession on festive occasions.