

INDIA UNFOLDED · CITY EDITION

JODHPUR

The Blue City

No. 02 — RAJASTHAN COLLECTION · 32 PAGES

IN 60 SECONDS

In 1459, Rao Jodha moved his capital from Mandore to a bare rock roughly 120 metres above the plain — and Marwar never looked back.

The city that grew beneath Mehrangarh Fort painted itself blue, traded opium, silk and sandalwood on the caravan routes, and became one of the most powerful kingdoms in Rajasthan.

FOUNDED

1459

by Rao Jodha of the Rathores

BEST TIME

Oct – Mar

RIFF folk festival in October

GIVE IT

2 – 3 days

two full, three unhurried

GETTING IN

JDH

daily flights & overnight trains from Delhi

01 The Story, in Five Acts

I THE CURSE · 1459

Mandore, the old capital, had proven impossible to hold, so Rao Jodha moved his seat to a hill of birds — evicting the hermit who lived there. The story goes that the old man cursed the rock with drought, and that a villager, Raja Ram Meghwal, volunteered to be buried alive in the foundations to soften it. What is certain: the crown honours his family's land to this day.

II THE LAND OF DEATH

Marwar means, by the common reading, “the land of death” — yet the desert made Jodhpur rich. The city sat astride the caravan road from Central Asia to Gujarat's ports, taxing opium, silk, copper, sandalwood and dates as they passed beneath the walls.

III A HANDFUL OF MILLET · 1544

Sher Shah Suri took Marwar — at such a price he is said to have muttered that he had nearly lost the empire of Hindustan “for a handful of millet.” The Rathores took their desert back within a year of his death.

Stand here. Look for this.

Five things almost everyone walks straight past — where to stand, and what you're actually seeing.

1 The handprints

On the left-hand wall beside Loha Pol — small handprints at palm height, the sati marks traditionally dated to 1843. Most visitors walk straight past. Don't.

2 The cannonball scars

Dedh Kangra Pol, the old gate behind Jai Pol — the pocked stone from the 1807 siege was never repaired. Jai Pol in front went up in 1806, before the fighting, for an earlier victory over Jaipur and Bikaner.

3 The lattice walls

In the palace floors, whole walls are carved stone screens — the court watched the city below without ever being seen.

4 The palanquins and howdahs

In the galleries, read them as court life: who rode, who carried, who travelled hidden behind curtains.

5 The hill itself

From the ramparts, look down and understand Rao Jodha's choice: bare rock, no cover, every approach watched for miles.

One more thing

Go at opening, take the audio guide, and give it half a day — then walk down through Rao Jodha Desert Rock Park instead of the road (ticketed, and the gate shuts at 17:30 in season). Stay for the fort's last hour first: the ramparts face the blue city and the light goes amber on the walls, but the gates close at 17:00, well before sunset. For actual sunset, take the Jaswant Thada approach road or a west-facing rooftop.

01 ARRIVAL

The Fort Above the City

Pal Haveli · RAAS · Jaswant Thada road · Golden hour, morning or evening · 1x · landscape · timer

Fort high, city below, family in front looking at it — not the camera.

02 THE BLUE CITY

The Blue Lanes

Navchokiya lanes · First 2 hrs after sunrise · 1x · portrait

Indigo walls both edges; one of you small, walking away.

03 THE GATEWAY

Through the Gate

An old-city gate · Chand Pol or a Navchokiya arch · Mid-morning · 1x · portrait

Whole arch in frame; family walking away into the light.

04 THE FORT APPROACH

The Walls Close In

The ramp inside Jai Pol · Morning, fort open from 9:00 · 0.5x · landscape

Walls fill two-thirds; family small at the bottom, walking up.

05 INSIDE MEHRANGARH

The Carved Courts

Mehrangarh · the palace courtyards · Any open hour (9:00–17:00) · 1x · portrait

Carved screens edge to edge; one person beneath, looking up.

06 THE VIEW

The City from the Ramparts

Mehrangarh · cannon terrace · Fort's last hour (closes 17:00) · 1x · landscape

Family seated at the wall, backs to camera → blue city → horizon.