



# NAMASTE!

(Nah-mahs-teh) In a number of India's many languages (including Hindi), the word for hello greetings, good-bye, etc. Derivatives of this word include namaskar, namaskara & namaskaram.

DECEMBER 2018 EDITION (Originally published April 2010)

# JAIPUR!

India is, by its very nature, a land of great contrasts. For instance, it has been listed as both one of the driest & wettest places in the world. At Cherrapunji (in the far northeastern part of the country), it is not unusual for the total annual rainfall to be 40 FEET. In the Great Indian Desert (also called the Thar Desert), rainfall can often be less than 1 inch per year.

Take a look at the great metropolitan areas of India. The 6 major ones are Bombay (now called Mumbai), Madras (now Chennai), Calcutta, Delhi, Bangalore and Hyderabad. This is where about 10% of the total population of the country lives.

In fact, India has more cities of 1 million or more inhabitants than any other country in the world. On the other hand, India is home to over 600,000 villages that have a population of 5,000 or less.

Jaipur is the capital city of Rajasthan. Rajasthan is a place of great contrast to much of the rest of India. It is a desert city, now with a population of at least 6 million people, and is one of the fastest-growing cities in the world. The Rajasthani people are just—well, they are different. They are Indian, to be sure, but with a flair that is not found in other places of the country.



A busy street in the city of Jaipur

They dress differently. For the most part, women wear a skirt with a long blouse that comes to below the waist, and a long scarf (dupatta) that is draped from the waist, almost to the ground, and then back up over their heads. When women wear a sari, it is different than many in India, because saris in Rajasthan are very light weight. They must be, since the climate is so very hot. Rajasthan is a desert state—and silk is usually too hot for the summers there. Even then, they arrange the end of the sari (called the pallu) over their heads.

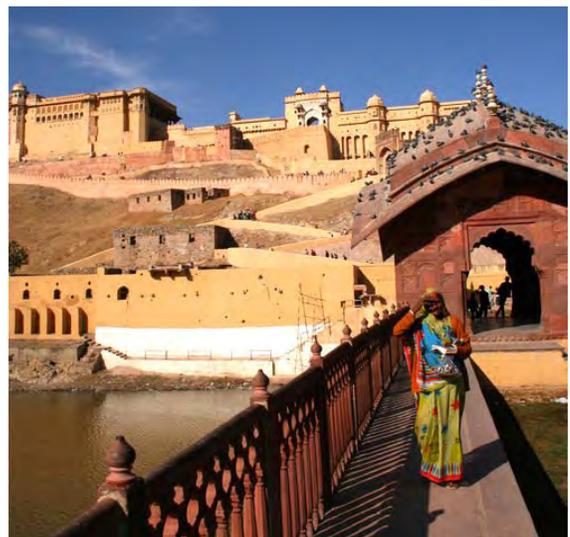
The custom of covering the head (and most of the face) is called “purdah”. In this part of India, the tradition of keeping the woman’s face covered is a centuries old practice, some of which is due to the Muslim influence. Purdah in that part of India is more pronounced than in most places. This is not to say that all women have continued with the practice, but in the villages this tradition is the norm.

Some of the village women have a type of “top knot” they wear under their dupatta (scarf), to make the center part of it stand up giving it a raised, almost pointed appearance. This is a bit hard to describe, but it gives the appearance of a little tent under the dupatta. This varies from village to village and area to area. Others have a type of ball (made of some fabric) that sits in front of the “tent”, giving them a little different look from other places in Rajasthan. Karen once tried to get different women to show her what it was that was under the dupatta, but nothing would convince them to show her what this was.

Men in Rajasthan are typically taller than the average Indian man. They wear a special turban, either with the 4 colors that are traditional Rajasthani (red, green, black and yellow), or with other very bright colors. The men wear bulbous turbans that are piled high on their heads. They wear the dhoti, a light weight cotton cloth that is wrapped around and between their legs. Their shirts are tight-fitting and vary just a bit from area to area in Rajasthan. The men’s shirts usually have an inset in the front upper portion of the shirt that looks much like a bib.

In the cities of Rajasthan, all sorts of clothing will be seen—the traditional Rajasthani types plus western wear (especially for the men). The villages are basically very traditional—not only in clothing, but in every other way. Rajasthan has a flair that is different from so much of India. One thing will be evident to anyone who visits Rajasthan—it is home to the most colorfully dressed people in all of India.

Jaipur is called the “Pink City” of India. Almost every building in the city is made of pink sandstone or is painted pink (actually, a terra cotta pink). This all started with the visit of the Prince of Wales in 1853, when the whole city was painted pink as a welcome to him. The Prince of Wales was to become King of England after the death of Queen Victoria—none other than Edward VII. Edward did not become king until 1901 and had the dubious distinction of being the heir apparent to the throne longer than anyone in history.



Royal Fort at Jaipur in Rajasthan

The custom of coloring most of the houses and shops in Jaipur pink has continued from that time. And it is truly lovely. When added to the distinctive style of Rajasthani architecture, Rajasthan is truly unique. Jaipur is replete with such architecture. This is difficult to describe, so we are including a number of pictures to help give you the idea of this style of building.

Jaipur was founded by Maharajah Sawai Jai Singh II in 1727. “Maharajah” is a compound word composed from “maha” (great) and “rajah” (king). He was the ruler of the princely state of Amber, which is now a deserted fort and palace 11 kms. from Jaipur. Today, Amber has gone from being the capital of that kingdom to just a small town near the palace. Amber fort and palace are among the top tourist attractions of Jaipur (it is one of my favorite places to visit when we are there). It is simply breath-taking.



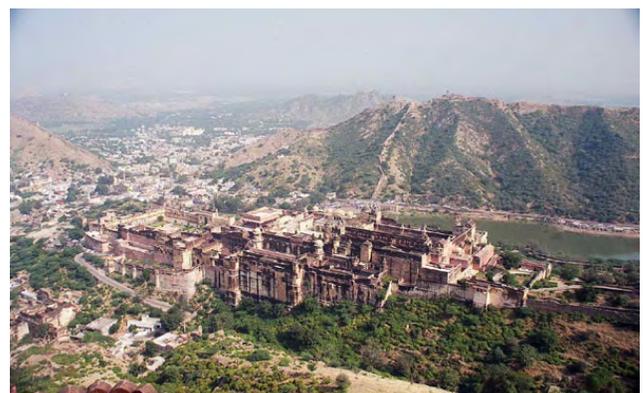
**Jain Temple at Jaipur**



**The Amber Fort**

The city of Jaipur was built and the capital moved there because of the scarcity of water and a rapidly growing population in Amber. Jaipur was to be a planned city. Sawai Jai Singh II consulted renowned architects and read books on architecture in planning a grand city—a city that was, for its time, the most advanced and the best on the Indian subcontinent. It took 4 years to complete the major palaces, the city square and roads. Jaipur was divided into 9 blocks—2 for the royal palaces and buildings, with the balance for the common people. Huge walls were built to fortify the city, along with 7 strong gates.

The very structure of Jaipur bears the look and taste of the Rajputs and the royal families that were so much a part of the great history of India. (The Rajputs are “sons of kings” {from the Sanskrit language} and thus were the main ruling class of most of India from the 6<sup>th</sup> century until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. There were 36 clans of the Rajputs throughout India. What is now known as Rajasthan was formerly Rajputana, a term coined by the British during their occupation of India from 1600 through 1947.)



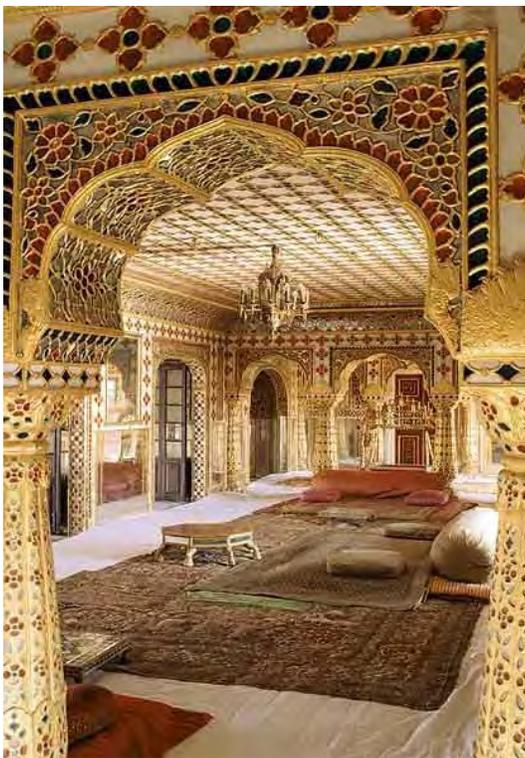
**View of Amber Fort from Jaigarh Fort**



**Albert Hall Museum**



**Up the steep road to the Amber Fort**



**Inside the Jaipur City Palace**

In keeping with the royal nature of Rajasthan in general and Jaipur in particular, there are many palaces in the state. There are a number of them in the city of Jaipur. Some of these palaces contain smaller palaces within a larger compound. For instance, the City Palace has a main building for the king, but also has the famous Hawa Mahal or “Palace of the Winds” (“mahal” means palace) on the palace grounds (see page 6). This was a façade (only about 6 feet deep) for the wives, children and other family members of the maharajah to see various festivals, parades, etc., below while still preserving the custom of purdah. Those in the Hawa Mahal could see down below, but no one on the street could see them.

There are other structures on the grounds of City Palace. Mubarak Mahal was a guesthouse for important dignitaries who came to visit the maharajah. And the Chandra Mahal, “palace of the moon”, served as the very private chambers of the maharajah and his wives. Finally, there is the Anand Mahal, “palace of joy”, which is near the Chandra Mahal.

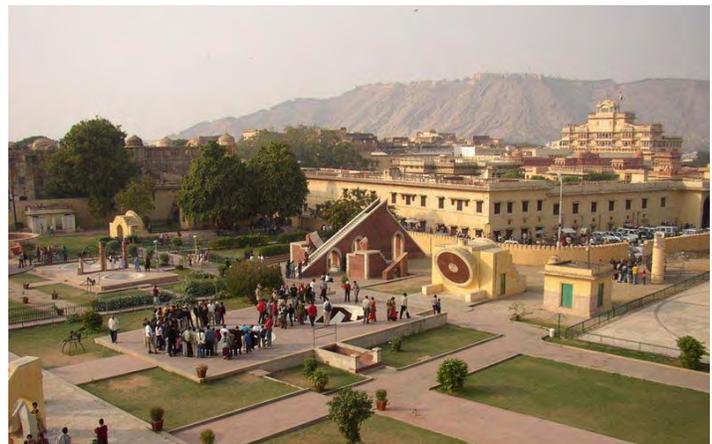
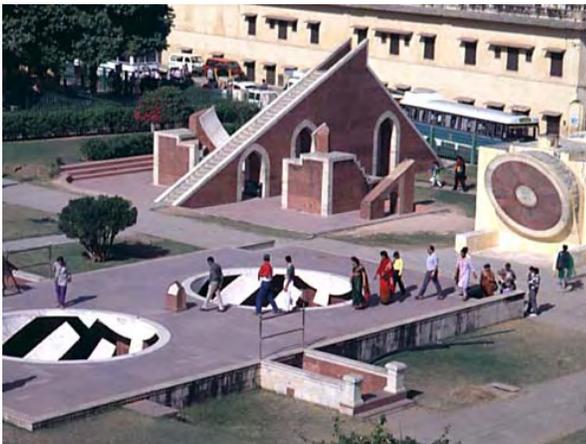
Another great palace in Jaipur is the Rambagh Palace (RIGHT). This means “garden of the gods”, and it truly is spectacular. Today, Rambagh Palace is a hotel—one of the most luxurious and expensive in India. If you want to live like a king for a day, this would be a pretty good place to give it a try. But bring your credit card! Rooms start at \$300 per night and go up to \$1844 per night! You can guess that I have never stayed there.





There is another palace of interest. It is the Jal Mahal “water palace” (LEFT), so called because it is in the middle of a small lake (Man Sagar) on the outskirts of the city and on the way to Amber Fort. It was restored and enlarged by Jai Singh II of Amber in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In following years, flooding (and the recurring problem of sewage entering the palace because of those floods) forced the palace to become a place of desolation instead of a palace for royalty.

History abounds everywhere in Jaipur, and is one of the things that brings so many tourists from all over the world to see its beauties and seek its mysteries from the past. Another truly outstanding sight to see is the world-famous Jaipur Observatory. This observatory consists of 14 major geometric devices. These measure time (the world’s largest sundial is found here), track the location and movement of stars, predict eclipses, determine celestial altitudes and declination of the planets.



**The Jaipur Observatory is a must-see for anyone visiting this historic city**

There are many sights to see in and around Jaipur. A tourist could go for a week to 2 or 3 sites each day and still not see all the wonderful places to visit. Jaigarh Fort, Nahargarh Fort, the Albert Hall Museum (also called the Central Museum), Birla Temple, the Jain Temple are just a few. Throw in the various gardens and the city zoo, and you have a real holiday!

Because tourism is an integral part of Jaipur, it is no surprise that there are many handicraft shops. Now, I have to admit, I love to shop under those circumstances. I usually do not like to shop, but when it comes to handicraft items, I am at my best (as a shopper). Steve Snider (one of our elders) says that no trip to India is complete until you have seen me at work as a shopper (and bargainer). From stone boxes to exotic silk carpets; from wooden carved items (including beautiful and unique furniture) to gorgeous jewelry, Jaipur has it all.



Handicraft shops offer quite a selection.



There are many bangle shops as well.



The Hawa Mahal “Palace of the Winds” (upper right is a view from the inside)

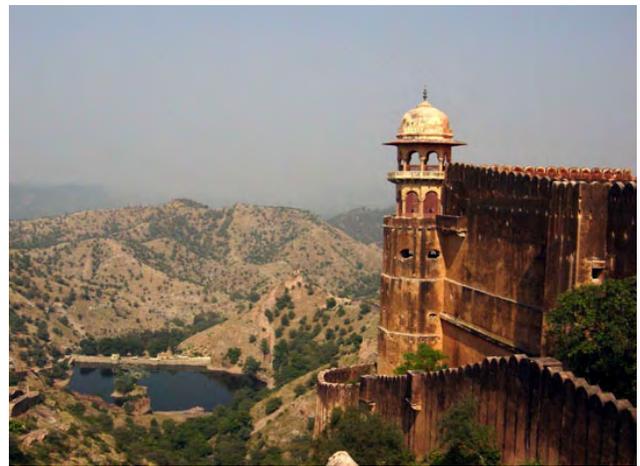
And then there are the different animals that are not seen in most parts of the world—animals that I did not dream would be there. I was prepared for tigers, elephants and cobras. I had no idea how many camels there are in Rajasthan! Millions of the critters, and they are BIG! And I had no idea that elephants would be found in a desert place, but there are good numbers of them in that part of the world. Most of them are used for tourist attractions, usually painted up with very bright colors.



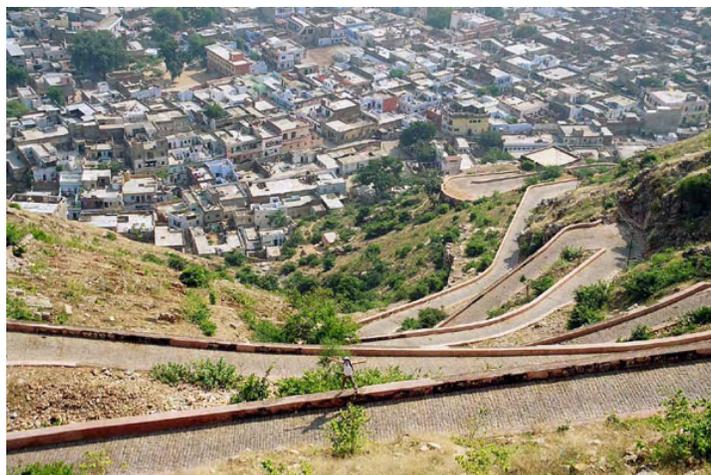
**Camals & Elephants & Tourists, Oh My!!!**



**Jaigarh Fort interior garden**



**Exterior view of Jaipur Lake from the fort**



**Jaipur city below the hairpin mountain road**



**Jaipur's Monkey Temple**

This is just a microcosm of what Jaipur offers. It is a unique part of India, for many reasons. The pictures included have hopefully helped give you a better idea of what things are like in this city, of unusual charm, mystifying sights and amazing attractions.

Last of all I want to let you meet this Rajasthani man with what must be the longest moustache in the world! He was kind of sour until we asked to see him “untie” his moustache, and then he became quite a ham!



If you ever want to come to India to help with the work and see one of the most unusual and unique cities anywhere in the world, Jaipur is the ticket. And the great blessing is that after 20 plus years of working to get the Lord’s work off the ground there, we are finally beginning to make a real dent. Pray for the church of the Lord in this growing city, and for the surrounding areas.

--Ron Clayton (Hamilton, Alabama)—

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**Also, please do not share any personal information about us or any of the Indian brethren on any website. Please keep references to the India mission work to details of a general nature. You might ask anyone wanting information to contact you or the church office where you attend worship.**

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God bless & keep you, every one.**