

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE
.....
1963-2013

STAY AT

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF

LIFESTYLE

SPOTTED BY SITA

TOP CHEF RECOMMENDS

DESTINATION INSIDER

6 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT

FESTIVALS

INSPIRATION LOCATOR

TRADE SHOWS



Art of Travel



Fort Begu, Chanoud Garh, Ranvas

Fort Begu: [Fort Begu](#) - a 600 year old heritage property makes for an ideal stopover after Jaipur and just before Udaipur. "After the rather hectic Golden Triangle (Delhi-Agra-Jaipur) with all the press and clamour of the crowds, a stay at Fort Begu with its laidback vibe and 600 year old history is like a time machine transporting you back in time. It slows you down giving your clients an opportunity to introspect about their time spent in India so far and is the perfect precursor to the romantic Udaipur by the Lake Pichola, which is only 3 hours away," says Kuntil Baruwa from our Destination Knowledge Centre, who stayed at Fort Begu recently. Your clients will love the sundowners organised by the family at their Summer Palace located on the Rajgarh Lake. The Begu family stays on the Fort and plays perfect host. "During my stay at Fort Begu, the 70 year old Rao Sahib, head of the Begu family cooked a recipe he learnt from his mother, just for me. He not only cooked it for me, but also typed the recipe for me in a type-writer he hadn't used in the past 20 years. I was overwhelmed. And how was the food? Absolutely delicious and the food served at different locations during your stay here is a highlight of the Fort Begu experience," adds Kuntil.

Chanoud Garh: On the road between Jodhpur and Udaipur, immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of Rajasthan's countryside by spending one night at [Chanoud Garh](#). "This 300 year old fort will charm you with its 7 stylish suites and is ideal for your FITs and small groups. History apart, Chanoud could almost be called a Homestay-Fort, since you are welcomed by the owners who stay in the property. At the end of the day, you can even participate in the Aarti ceremony in the family temple or have a drink watching the sunset from the roof-top whilst enjoying the panoramic view. Everything here is unique in Chanoud Garh," says Jean Noel Esteve from our Destination Knowledge Centre, who recently stayed at Chanoud Garh.

Ranvas: [Ranvas](#), built as a residence for the queens of Jodhpur in the 18th century as a pleasure palace and as a refuge far away from courtly politics, offers the most elegant accommodation possible inside any fort of India. The walls of the massive fort seem to cocoon the palace from the hustle and bustle of the city. "You will love the opulence of the palace right in the middle of the Thar desert," says Soumya Mukherji from the Destination Knowledge Centre. Jodhana Heritage, who owns Ranvas organise two major events every year

Stay At



Rajgarh, the Summer Palace of the Begu family

-[Nagaur Cattle Fair](#) and the [Sufi Festival](#). "Since they have experience to handle events at such a huge scale, Ranvas can be an ideal destination for incentives. Desert Safaris to the nearby un-spoilt sand dunes accompanied by sundowners and dinner. Or maybe replicate a Sufi night at one of the many mesmeric locations within the Nagaur Fort," adds Soumya.



Arjun Singh, Fort Begu



A Day in The Life of Arjun Singh

It was Day 2 at [Fort Begu](#). There was a soft knock on my door. I was late for breakfast. I was busy downloading the videos in my hard-disk. Having started shooting in a whim, I absolutely had no idea what it entails and was struggling initially with only a 4GB memory card. I was completely unprepared. Shoot, download, shoot again. But I found a name for what I had started that stretched over 5 weeks covering Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Mumbai: India Handheld- Raw and Extempore ([click here for a sample video shot near Udaipur](#)).... a collection of no fuss, no sauce hand-held videos.....stories and experiences narrated on camera by locals, who are friends of the Destination Knowledge Centre. A whopping 500 GB of High Definition Videos which will be available on the [Sita website](#) soon. The knock became a bit louder. And I knew it was Arjun Singh. I opened the door and it was indeed Arjun. A white hibiscus flower in hand. "Good Morning Sir. Breakfast?," he smiled and held out his hand holding the flower. It was for me.

I took it and smiled. "10 minutes," I said. There aren't too many heritage properties in Rajasthan where you are welcomed in the morning with a flower. No wonder the ladies go ga-ga over Arjun who has the "working knowledge" of over 7 languages including English. "One time coming to Fort Begu, remembering long time," was a part of that repertoire that most guests staying at Fort Begu love and remember. Arjun Singh functions as a personal butler for guests staying in the 5 room Fort Begu which makes for an ideal stopover for those of your clients looking for something off-the-beaten track after Delhi-Agra- Jaipur and just before Udaipur which is merely 3 hour 30 minutes away. In fact it is Arjun, who will receive your guest on the highway on his bike and guide their car to the property. Of course, after a warm introduction. At the property, he is your one point contact for everything 24 x 7.

Arjun stays close to Fort Begu. 25 minutes is what it takes him by bike every morning. "But season time, busy time, I stay in Fort Begu," Arjun tells me. His day starts early at around 05:00 in the morning. Arjun has to co-ordinate with the kitchen staff and ensure that the bed teas are served on time to guests. I liked the fact that he got my "usual" without much difficulty - masala tea with 2 spoons of sugar first thing in the morning. Sometime people like me need a little nudge when they get late for breakfast. Yes, with a hibiscus flower. Arjun style. I sat down for breakfast after 15 minutes with an apology. Though there are no rigid



meal times, I realised that the everyone at Fort Begu; including the owners, work very hard to personalise your experience; working more with less and a delay on an agreed time kind of throws things out of gear.

Post breakfast, Arjun readies himself to accompany the owners who takes guests personally to the places of interest nearby. We went to the 11th century Meenal Group of Temples, not so far away from Fort Begu. Arjun was always around handing me bottles of chilled water or wet tissues. Pointing out to interesting things. "My pleashaar," would be his reply with a smile always. As you prepare to return to the property for lunch, Arjun would co-ordinate with one of his colleagues who would be ready with a glass of juice and wet towels on arrival. Post Lunch Arjun is ready again, should your clients have the energy to go for a walk with him in the town and its many interesting lanes. This walk is designed by Arjun himself, where he takes to visit some of his friends. Or should your clients want to be at leisure post lunch, Arjun sets up this amazing sundowners at the family's summer palace in the middle of the lake close by. "Enjoy your drink Sir," and Arjun would disappear allowing you to enjoy the peace and quiet.

Back in the property in the evening, as the owners pour you drinks just before dinner, feel free to check out Arjun "working knowledge" of over 7 languages. He is more than happy to give you a demonstration. It was hilarious but we loved it. Post dinner Arjun would lead you to your room, flashlight in hand. "Careful Sir," he was concerned. The staircases of this 600-year old property was steep and confusing. "Morning Tea what time?" It was 11 in the night and he was still smiling. And in the middle of all that he not only organised a charger for my laptop from Udaipur; something I forgot to carry from home, but ensured that it was delivered on time, just before we sat down for our evening drinks. "All in Fort Begu," Arjun said. I agree.



Lifestyle



Zen and the Art of Cooking Outdoors!!

An age-old tradition amongst the women in the Rajput community of Rajasthan had led to a fine culinary practice in the region. The art of cooking meat outdoors by the Rajput men folk. "In the kitchen of every Rajput household there would be a shrine of the Goddess and a newly married woman spends a lot of time in the kitchen and is expected to do the daily rituals. It was because of this, Rajput women traditionally gave up eating meat once they get married," says Raj Rathore, a Rajput, and one of my colleagues in Distant Frontiers. "It's not that meat isn't cooked. When there are guests and meat needs to be cooked it is done in an annexe close to the kitchen where separate utensils are provided," adds Rathore. You guessed it right, it was the menfolk of the family who would do the cooking.

And the Banas, as Rajput men are lovingly called, are some of the finest cooks I have ever seen when it comes to meaty affairs. In fact I am yet to meet a Rajput man who is a bad cook. Talk about cooking and particularly meat and their eyes light up. During my stay at the 600-year old [Fort Begu](#), the 70-year-old head of the family served me a different meat dish every day and shared stories behind these dishes with a lot of passion. He even cooked me a succulent lamb dish, the recipe of which he learnt from his mother. In fact it was his father who taught her this particular recipe when she arrived in Fort Begu as a newlywed bride. "Since it was left for the menfolk to cook their meat, we Rajputs grew up watching our fathers cook, who would want us to run errands such as mixing the spices, pouring a drink while they cooked. Many a times I also accompanied our cousins who are elder to us for weekend outings, where they would cook meat outdoors in the countryside. I used to help and observe them. And as I grew up we started cooking outdoors with my group of friends," says Raj Rathore.

[Click here](#) to read more.





Water Chestnut Pickers

While taking a stroll around the lake where Hemendra Singh from [Bhainsrorgarh](#) cooked a delicious lunch in vintage Rajput style for Kuntal Baruwa from our Destination Knowledge Centre, (more in our Lifestyle section), Kuntal spotted this water chestnut picker at work. Water chestnut is a water herb that grows in shallow lakes and ponds and produces a black four-horned nut which is sweet in taste and has a crunchy texture. It is sold in the streets of Rajasthan and you will see the salesman with a can of water to sprinkle on it as it dries out very fast in the sun. “Water chestnut is eaten mostly raw in India and is used for treating jaundice and itching. But the most interesting part is the flour made out of it. When Hindus fast during holy occasions they are allowed to have breads made only out of chestnut flour,” adds Kuntal.

Spotted By Sita





Royal Mutton

The 70 year old Rao Sahib, head of the Begu family is a simple man who is a foodie. He plays host, along with his two sons Ajay and Maha during your clients stay at the 600 year old [Fort Begu](#) (more in our Stay At section) and recommends the Royal Mutton as a must try during your stay here. “It’s a recipe I learnt from my mother. It was my father actually who taught her this particular recipe when she arrived in Fort Begu as a newly wedded bride,” says Rao Sahib. “But you have to ask Rao Sahib to cook this special recipe and he is most likely to oblige (more in our Stay At section). Talk about food and you can see the sparkle in his eyes. The best way to eat this dish cooked with spices in the most simple way, is to place the succulent pieces of goat meat on top of a roti (Indian bread) and have both together using your hands preferably. The local way. That’s what was recommended and I enjoyed it immensely. Rao Sahib is very hands-on when it comes to food served at Fort Begu. Every day he personally supervises all non-vegeterian dishes cooked in the kitchen for guests, while his wife does the same for the vegetarian dishes. And Rao Sahib even serves food to guests while sharing interesting stories and anecdotes about what’s being served,” says Kuntal Baruwa from our Destination Knowledge Centre.

Top Chef Recommends





Between Jodhpur and Udaipur

If you are selling the journey between Jodhpur and Udaipur with only a pit stop at the Ranakpur Jain Temple in between like everyone else, your clients are missing out on the many exciting possibilities enroute which can add so much to their Rajasthan holiday. Between Jodhpur and Udaipur, why not stop briefly at the Shrine of the Bullet Baba where people pray to a, believe it or not, motorbike for a safe journey. It is an oddity that your clients will treasure for the rest of their life. And between Jodhpur and Udaipur is [Chanoud Garh](#), where we at the Destination Knowledge Centre highly recommend your FIT clients, small groups spend a night before they continue to Udaipur. We have been receiving some excellent feedback from our clients. Jean Noel, my fellow explorer recently stayed at Chanoudgarh and this is what he has to say : “On the road between Jodhpur and Udaipur, immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of Rajasthan's countryside by spending one night at Chanoud Garh. This 300 year-old fort will charm you with its 7 stylish suites and is ideal for your FIT clients and small groups. History apart, Chanoud could almost be called a Homestay-Fort, since you are welcomed by the owners who stay in the property. At the end of the day, you can even participate in the Aarti ceremony in the family temple, or have a drink watching the sunset from the roof-top whilst enjoying the panoramic view..... everything is unique in Chanoudgarh.” Head out to Udaipur next day, via Ranakpur Jain Temple and the Kumbhalgarh Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

For those interested in Wildlife and Wilderness, the Bera and Jawai area also between Jodhpur and Udaipur, makes for a fantastic 1 night stop to go Leopard sighting. Undulated with hills and gullies; its thick bush punctuated by patches of open ground, some 45 leopards thrive on Bera and Jawai's natural cover. It is home to Rajasthan's most adorable Leopard couple, Monarch and Zara. If you want your clients to experience an India that is fast vanishing, Bera and Jawai is the place to be. Hanging on to the back of a 4WD Jeep on a bumpy dusty road, I followed Monarch in the scrub as he moved as smooth as silk, laughed at the sight of Monarch trying to woo Zara and miserably failing and was thrilled to see their cub Prince on a kill, maybe 15 feet away from our jeep, whilst we drank our single malt whisky. And if you happen to be there on a full-moon night, the Jawai Dam with its shimmering silvery water looks stunning. [Leopard Lair](#) (10 rooms) and [Castle Bera](#) (7 rooms) at the moment makes for an

Destination Insider



agreeable 1 night stay, while your clients go in search of Monarch and Zara. While Devi Singh who runs Leopard Lair has over 1000 hours of footage, he himself filmed of Leopards in the area including photographs, Baljeet Singh of Castle Bera does wonderful morning safaris and his wife is from Sailana in Madhya Pradesh; a royal house legendary for their cuisine worldwide. [Click here](#) to read more.



Udaipur

6 Things We Liked About

Our Explorers from the Destination Knowledge Centre Kuntal Baruwa, Jean Noel Esteve and Soumya Mukherji share 6 out of the ordinary experiences they sampled first hand and recommend them for your clients in Udaipur:

1. **Cooking Class at Dakshu's:** While in Udaipur, head out to Shikarbadi for an interactive cooking class at Dakshu's. "More than a cooking class, it is a fantastic insight into how kind and friendly Indians can be and how conversation over food can transform unknown people into friends. Rakshita and Dakshu will host you at their comfortable home in a leafy neighbourhood of Udaipur and will show you how to cook Bharva Baingan, Masala Bhindi and so many other delicious dishes. Everlasting and tasty souvenirs from "Venice of the East," says Jean Noel Esteve from our Destination Knowledge Centre.

2. **Samal Village Walk:** Explore the quaint village of Samal near Ranakpur that still stands rustic and has retained its rural character intact. "The best part about Samal village is that it is very conveniently located between Udaipur and the Ranakpur Jain Temples and can be easily offered to your clients travelling between Jodhpur and Udaipur and vice-versa. This is perfect for your clients, particularly groups who are pressed for time and have a packed Rajasthan itinerary which doesn't allow much opportunity to experience the sights and sounds of rural Rajasthan. Stop at Samal to walk around for a couple of hours for an insight into traditional professions that are fast vanishing in Rajasthan and elsewhere in India, unique agricultural practices and how people here co-exist in harmony, despite being divided into clusters based on their caste and class," says Kuntal Baruwa from our Destination Knowledge Centre. Samal village is located 1 hour 30 minutes from Udaipur, the Village Walk lasts for about the same time and Ranakpur Jain Temple is a mere 45 minutes away.

3. **Horse Riding at Kharwa:** "Arrive Kharwa Chanda by a local train from Udaipur, where you will be met in this quaint railway station by Satyendra Singh Chawra aka Sunny. He is a friend of Sita and has his own stable of Marwari Horses in his mud fort. Kharwa Chanda is located 25 miles south of Udaipur and has some of the most prettiest tracts which are also the least well known. This is truly Kipling's India, where you may never see another Westerner," says Kuntal Baruwa from



our Destination Knowledge Centre. Apart from the fantastic unspoilt landscape, the everyday life and colour of the countryside is amazing. Life here moves at a typical slow pace where a lot of people seem to spend a lot of time just sitting around chatting. "Well, they do. Nobody here seems to die of stress!!," says Sunny. Sunny will be your guide in this remarkable riding experience and there are a variety of routes that climb mountain passes or thread through valleys. "No one knows Kharwa better than Sunny. His forefathers were feudal lords of this area and he grew up exploring Kharwa's great outdoors on horseback," adds Kuntal [Click here](#) to read more.

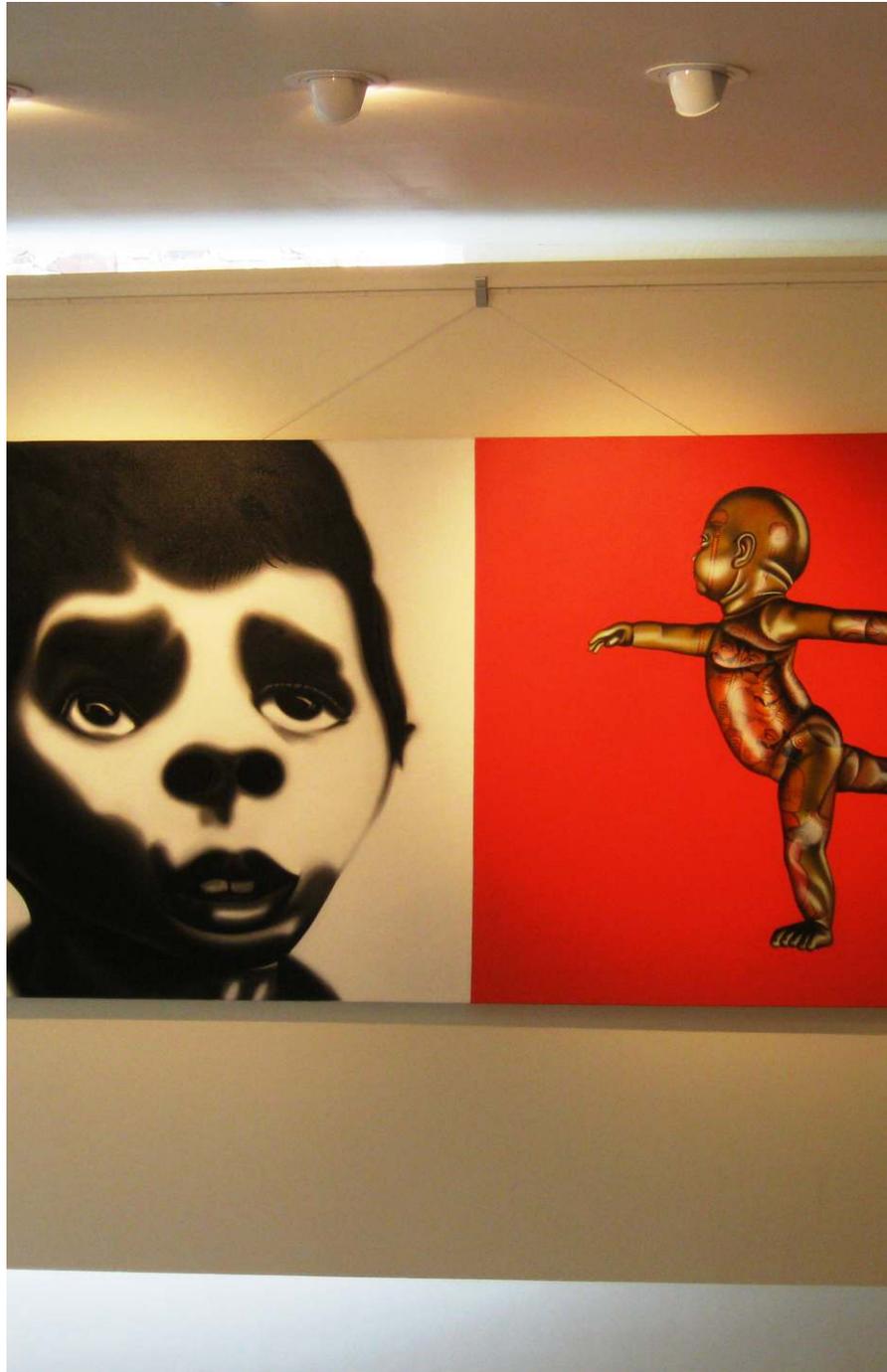


Festivals



The Indian Art Festival, Mumbai, 19-22 December, 2013

[The Indian Art Festival](#) in Mumbai is the only art fair in the Asian subcontinent in which art galleries and artists come under one roof. In this third edition of the festival, all Indian Master Painters represented by 30 art galleries will showcase their works with young and upcoming artists from fifty different cities. The highlights of the third edition of India Art Festival, apart from 35 participating art galleries and more than 500 participating artists, includes the 'Public Art Space' curated by Veerangana Kumari Solanki and 'Indian Art Festival Conversations' programmed by [Ranjit Hoskote](#). In the public art space, major art galleries from Mumbai and Delhi, such as Sakshi gallery, The Guild, Exhibit 320, Latitude 28 and Art Alive Gallery along with others are participating.





Tourist Map of INDIA

Scale: 1:7,200,000 (1 Centimetre = 72 Kilometres)
Kilometres 400 300
Miles

LEGEND

- National Capital
- State Headquarters
- Other Town
- Places of Tourist Interest
- ✈ International Airport
- ✈ Domestic Airport
- 🌳 Wildlife Sanctuary / National Park
- International Boundary
- National Highway
- Major Road

LIFESTYLE
Rajasthan

6 THINGS WE LIKED ABOUT
Udaipur

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF
Fort Begu

DESTINATION INSIDER
Rajasthan

TOP CHEF RECOMMENDS
Fort Begu

STAY AT
Fort Begu,
Chanoud Garh,
Ranvas

SPOTTED BY SITA
Bhainsrorgarh

Festivals
Mumbai

© Government of India Copyright, 2006
The responsibility for the correctness of internal details rests with the publisher.
The territorial waters of India extend into the sea to a distance of twelve nautical miles measured from the appropriate baseline.
The administrative headquarters of Chandigarh, Haryana and Puducherry are at Chandigarh.
The international boundaries between Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya shown on this map are as interpreted from the Border Security Force (Registration) Act, 1971 but have yet to be verified.
The internal boundaries and coastline of India agree with the Revised Major Copy certified by Survey of India.
The spelling of names on this map have been taken from various sources.
The state boundaries between Uttar Pradesh - Bihar, Bihar - Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh - Chhattisgarh have not been verified by the Government.



Meet us at the
Upcoming
Trade Shows

If you wish to schedule a meeting, do e-mail us at info@sita.in

Trade Shows	Booth No.	Whom to Meet
WTM London 4th -7th November	Hall No S8, Booth No IN200	Neeraj Bhatt
USTOA Scottsdale 5th -7th December	Sita Desk	Neeraj Bhatt

Trade Shows

