



# GWALIOR FORT



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## Gwalior Fort, Gwalior

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Gwalior Fort was built in 8<sup>th</sup> century and it consists of many palaces, temples, and other structures. The fort was built on a steep sandstone. Many rulers of different periods captured the fort and has seen many battles including the battles related to independence from the British.

This tutorial will let you know about the history of the fort along with the structures present inside. You will also get the information about the best time to visit it along with how to reach the fort.

## Audience

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This tutorial is designed for the people who would like to know about the history of Gwalior Fort along with the interiors and design of the fort. This fort is visited by many people from India and abroad.

## Prerequisites

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This is a brief tutorial designed only for informational purpose. There are no prerequisites as such. All that you should have is a keen interest to explore new places and experience their charm.

## Copyright & Disclaimer

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# 1. Gwalior Fort – Overview

Gwalior Fort was built in 8<sup>th</sup> century by Suraj Sen. The fort stands on a solitary rock known as **Gopachal**. The fort was ruled by many rulers of various dynasties who also built many palaces and temples inside the fort. The combined forces of **Rani Lakshmi Bai** and **Tatya Tope** also fought here against the British.



## Gwalior

Gwalior district is situated in Madhya Pradesh state of India. The city, situated nearby Agra, has many mosques, palaces, temples and other structures. Tomars, Mughals, Marathas, and Scindias ruled the city in different periods. The city has hot subtropical climate from March to June, hot and humid climate from July to October and winter from November to February.



### Visiting Hours

Gwalior Fort is opened for the tourists from 9:00am to 5:00pm on all days. It takes around one to two hours to visit the whole fort. Sound and light show is also organised in the fort. The show in Hindi starts at 7:30pm and in English from 8:30pm.

### Tickets

Tourists have to pay an entry fee in order to visit the fort. For Indian tourists, Rs. 75 is charged for adults while Rs. 40 for children. Foreign tourists have to pay Rs. 250 in order to visit the fort. There is no charge for the children up to 15 years.

### Best Time to Visit

The period from October to March is most suitable to visit the fort as the climate in this month is pleasant. Though December and January are chilly, but tourists still like to visit the fort in this period.

### Where to Stay?

Gwalior has many hotels where tourists can stay. These hotels range from inexpensive budget hotels to expensive five star hotels. **Usha Kiran Palace** is the only five-star hotel in Gwalior. Besides hotels, there are resorts, cottages on hire, government guest houses, farm houses, and many other places where the tourists can stay.

## 2. Gwalior Fort – History

According to a legend, Gwalior was once ruled by a king named **Suraj Sen**. A time came when he was suffering from leprosy which was incurable. A sage named **Gwalipa** gave him water from a sacred pond which cured his disease. In order to honour the sage, the king constructed the fort.

The king got the title of **Pal** from the sage and a boon that the fort will be in his possession and the generations to come. History says that 83 generations of the king successfully ruled from this fort but the king of 84<sup>th</sup> generation named **Tej Karan** could not protect the fort and lost it.

### Gwalior Fort from 6<sup>th</sup> Century to 13<sup>th</sup> Century

There are inscriptions in the fort which date back to sixth century and indicate that the fort may have been constructed in those times. **Mihirakula**, a Huna emperor, built a sun temple here.

In 9<sup>th</sup> century, Teli ka Mandir was built by the rulers of **Gurjara-Pratihara** dynasty. In 10<sup>th</sup> century, Kachchhapghatas controlled the fort. These people worked under the leadership of Chandelas.

In 11<sup>th</sup> century, Muslim dynasties began attacking the fort. **Mahmud of Ghazni** attacked the fort in 1022AD. **Qutubuddin Aibak** captured the fort in 1196AD and annexed it to Delhi Sultanate. Though the sultanate lost the fort but was again captured by **Iltumish** 1232.



Mahmud of Ghazni

### Gwalior Fort in 14<sup>th</sup> Century and Further

**Tomar Rajputs** captured the fort in 1398. **Maan Singh** was one of the famous Tomar Rajput who built many monuments inside the fort. **Sikandar Lodi** attacked the fort in 1505 but could not capture it. His son **Ibrahim Lodi** attacked the fort in 1516. In this attack, Maan Singh was killed and after a long siege Rajputs surrendered.

**Mughals** captured the fort but lost it to **Suris**. In 1542, **Akbar** again captured the fort and made it a prison. He executed his cousin **Kamran** in the fort. **Aurangzeb** also killed

his brother **Murad** and his nephews here. After Aurungzeb, **Ranas of Gohad** captured the fort. They lost to the Marathas and Marathas lost it to British. The British gave the fort to the Ranas of Gohad in 1780.



Aurangzeb

Marathas again captured the fort in 1784. This time due to the hostility of Ranas of Gohad, British cannot capture the fort. British defeated **Daulat Rao Scindia** and recaptured the fort later. In 1886, India was in full control of the British so they gave the fort to the Scindias who ruled the fort till 1947.

## 3. Gwalior Fort – Temples

Gwalior Fort is one of the massive forts of India. It includes many structures like palaces, temples, and water tanks. The fort is spread in an area of 3km and is built at a height of 35 feet. There are two gates to enter the fort. One of them is **Hathi Pol** or **elephant gate** and other one is **Badalgarh gate**. Elephant gate is the main entrance to the fort. Many temples are there which are still in use. They are as follows:

### Siddhachal Jain Temple Caves

Siddhachal Jain Temple Caves was built during the period of 7<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> century. There are 32 Jain temples in the fort out of which eleven are dedicated to the Jain Tirthankaras. The remaining ones are situated in south of the fort. **Rishabhanath** or **Adinath** was the first Jain Tirthankara and his idol is the tallest one as its height is 58 feet 4 inch or 17.78m.



### Urvashi Temple

Urvashi is a temple in the fort that consists of many idols of tirthankaras sitting in various postures. There are 24 idols of Jain Tirthankaras sitting in the posture of **padamasana**. Another group of 40 idols are sitting in the position of **kayotsarga**. The number of idols carved in the walls are 840.

### Gopachal

Gopachal is a hill which consists of 1500 idols. The size of these idols range from 6 inches to 57 feet. The period of carving these rock-cut idols is between 1341 and 1479. One of the largest idols is of **Bhagwan Parsvanath** whose height is 42feet and width is 30 feet.





### **Teli ka Mandir**

Teli ka mandir or oilman's temple is said to have been built in 8<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> century and was renovated in 19<sup>th</sup> century. The temple includes north and south Indian architectural styles. The temple was built in rectangular shape and people can enter the temple through a staircase.



The door of the temple includes the idols of river goddesses on top and their attendants at the lower part. From the door, devotees enter the **garbha griha**. It is said that previously the temple was dedicated to **Lord Vishnu** and was later dedicated to **Lord Shiva**. The outer and inner part of the door includes **Shaiva** and **Shakta dvarpalas**. The outer walls are carved with the statues of many Hindu gods and goddesses. There is also a **Garuda monument** near the temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

### Sas Bahu Temple

King Mahipal of Kachchhapaghata dynasty built Sas Bahu temple also known as **Sahastrabahu temple**. The area covered by the temple is 32m x 22m. Devotees can enter the temple through three gates located in three different directions. The main deities who are worshipped here are Brahma, Vishnu, and Saraswati and their idols are located above the entrance door.



The temple is called sas bahu temple because wife of Mahipal used to worship Lord Vishnu while her daughter-in-law used to worship Lord Shiva so another temple was built for her.

## 4. Gwalior Fort – Palaces

There are many palaces in the fort which are as follows:

### Man Mandir Palace

Man Mandir palace was built by Raja Man Singh between 1486AD and 1517AD. The exterior of the palace was decorated with tiles and the walls include carvings of ducks floating in water. There were large rooms which served as a music room for royal women.



During the Mughal period, prisoners were imprisoned in underground dungeon. During the Rajput period, the womenfolk performed jauhar in a jauhar pond during an attack or invasion. Tourists can go to the palace through the elephant gate or Hathi Pol.

### Karan Mahal

**Kirti Singh** built this palace in the fort. He was the second king of Tomar dynasty. **Karan Singh** was another name of Kirti Singh and so the palace was named as Karan Mahal.



## Vikram Mahal

Vikramaditya Singh was the elder brother of Man Singh. He constructed Vikram Mahal which was also known as **Vikram Mandir** because it had a temple of Lord Shiva which was destroyed during the Mughal period. The temple has now been rebuilt in front of the palace.



## Gujari Mahal

Gujari Mahal was constructed by Raja Man Singh for his queen Mrignayani. She demanded a separate palace with uninterrupted water supply. The palace has now been converted into an archaeological museum. The museum now has weapons, statues, artifacts made of stones and other materials.



## 5. Gwalior Fort – Other Monuments

There are many other monuments in the fort which are as follows:

### Hathi Pol

Hathi Pol or elephant gate is the main gate through which tourists can enter the fort. This gate also leads to the Man Mandir Palace. The gate is located at the south-eastern part of the fort. The gate is named as hathi pol due to the huge statue of an elephant which adorned the gate. Stone has been used to build the gate. The gate has cylindrical towers and cupola domes which are linked by carved parapets.



### Chhatri of Bhim Singh Rana

Bhim Singh Rana belonged to Gohad state and also ruled Gwalior from 1740. He captured Gwalior when Mughal Governor **Ali Khan** surrendered. Bhim Singh also built a lake named **Bhimtal** in the fort. The chhatri of Bhim Singh Rana was built by his son and successor **Chhatra Singh** near the bhimtal. On the occasion of **Ram Navami, Jat Samaj Kalyan Parishad** organizes a fair every year.

### Gurudwara Data Bandi Chhor

Gurudwara Data Bandi Chhor was a worship place where **Guru Hargobind Singh**, the sixth Sikh Guru, used to pray. After Guru Arjun Dev, he was made the sikh guru. Guru Hargobind Singh raised an army to fight the cruelty at that time. He also provided justice

to the people at Amritsar. When Jahangir came to know about this, he invited the guru to have a talk with him.



Jahangir was impressed by the guru and both had a good understanding. Once Jahangir fell ill and some people conspired and told that only a holy man can cure him. They suggested the name of Guru Hargobind Singh so Jahangir called him and asked him to live in the Gwalior Fort.

When the wife of Jahangir came to know about the illness of Jahangir, she summoned **Sain Mian Mir ji** who told that a holy man has been captured so the health of the emperor is declining. When emperor came to know this he ordered the release of the guru. The guru told that he will only leave if 52 other Rajput rulers will also be released. The place in the fort where the guru worshipped came to be known as Gurudwara Bandi Chhor.



## 6. Gwalior Fort – How to Reach?

Gwalior is a district of Madhya Pradesh state and is situated nearby Agra. The city is well connected with most of the Indian cities through road, rail, and air transport. The approximate distance of Gwalior from cities nearby are as follows:

- Gwalior to Agra
  - By air – 106km
  - By rail – 118km
  - By road – 121km
- Gwalior to Mathura
  - By air – 149km
  - By rail – 172km
  - By road – 175km
- Gwalior to Jhansi
  - By air – 97km
  - By rail – 97km
  - By road – 104km
- Gwalior to Kanpur
  - By air – 213km
  - By rail – 372km
  - By road – 262km
- Gwalior to Lucknow
  - By air – 281km
  - By rail – 446km
  - By road – 343km
- Gwalior to Delhi
  - By air – 329km
  - By rail – 313km
  - By road – 363km

- Gwalior to Bhopal
  - By air – 339km
  - By rail – 388km
  - By road – 429km
  
- Gwalior to Jaipur
  - By air – 253km
  - By rail – 357km
  - By road – 331km

### **By Air**

Gwalior has only domestic airport that is connected to many important cities of the country. The name of the airport is **Rajmata Vijaya Raje Scindia Air Terminal** which is 8km away from the city. People will get flights of Air India only which connects Gwalior to various cities.

### **By Rail**

Gwalior is well-connected to various cities through rail. Rajdhani, shatabdi, superfast, express, and mail trains connect Gwalior to cities like Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, etc. There are a few trains that originate from and terminate at Gwalior. The city falls on the route of New Delhi Jhansi section.

### **By Road**

Gwalior is well connected to many cities by road. People can catch buses for Agra, Bhopal, New Delhi, Jaipur, Ajmer, and many other places. MPSRTC provides bus services to these places. People can catch regular buses, AC buses, deluxe and super deluxe buses to reach their destination.

### **Local Transport**

There are many hiring agencies that provide cab or taxi for a fixed period. Besides this, the facility of local bus service is also available where people can travel either in regular local bus or luxury bus.

## 7. Gwalior Fort – Nearby Places

There are many places nearby Gwalior Fort which the people can visit. These monuments include tombs palaces, museums etc. Some of these monuments are as follows:

### Tomb of Mohammad Ghaus

Mohammad Ghaus was a Sufi saint in 16<sup>th</sup> century and was the teacher of **Humayun** and **Tansen**. His tomb was built during the reign of Akbar. The tomb is one kilometre away from Gwalior Fort. The tomb has a large dome on the top and a large room where the saint is buried. The room is surrounded by a veranda like structure having jaalis. The dome has been placed on a rectangular base having four chhatris.



### Jai Vilas Palace

Jai Vilas Palace was built by Jayaji Rao Scindia in 1874. The cost of building the palace was around Rs 1 crore. The palace was built on the basis of European architecture and is still the residence of Scindia family. There is a large darbar hall in the palace which is furnished with gilt and gold. The chandeliers in the palace weigh 3.5 tonnes and are placed at the height of 12.5m.



### **Tomb of Tansen**

Tansen was one of the nine jewels of Akbar's court. Tansen was buried in Gwalior and later his tomb was built at the burial place. The tomb was built on the basis of Mughal architecture. It has a very simple design and is surrounded by gardens. The tomb was built near the tomb of Mohammad Ghaus, the Sufi saint.



## Sun Temple

Sun Temple or Surya Mandir is an important place to visit in Gwalior. Many tourists and devotees come to visit the temple every year. **G.D. Birla** built this temple in 1988 as per the design of the sun temple built in Konark. The temple has beautiful sculpture of Sun God. The exteriors of the temple is made up of red sand.



### **Tomb of Khwaja Kanoon Sahib**

The full name of Khwaja Kanoon sahib was **Saiyed Saiyeduddin Kanoon Rehmat Ullah Aleh Chishtiya**. He came to Gwalior from Marwar in 1481AD and died in 1533AD. The tomb has two domes and each stands on a rectangular base. There are three entrances and a beautiful garden in front of the tomb.

