



Jhagadh Fort



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Junagarh Fort, Bikaner

Junagarh Fort was built by Raja Rai Singh who gave the supervision task to his prime minister Karan Chand. The real name of the fort was Chintamani which was changed to Junagarh Fort in 20th century. The fort was abandoned because the ruling family shifted to Lalgarh Palace.

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

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

Prerequisites

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.

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1. Junagarh Fort — Overview

Junagarh Fort, previously known as **Chintamani**, is situated in Bikaner. **Karan Chand**, the prime minister of **Raja Rai Singh**, supervised the construction of the fort. The construction of the fort was started in 1589 and ended in 1594. The fort was attacked many times and only **Kamran Raza**, son of Mughal Emperor **Babur**, was able to win it and that too for one day only. At that time, Bikaner was ruled by **Rao Jait Singh**. The fort includes palaces, temples, gates and many other structures.



Bikaner

Bikaner is a city of Rajasthan state situated in the northwest. The city was founded by **Rao Bika** in 1486AD. Bikaner was previously a forest area and was known as **Jangladesh**. His father **Maharaja Rao Jodha** founded the city of Jodhpur. Rao Bika has the ambition of having his kingdom rather inheriting it or the title of Maharaja from his father. So he built the city of Bikaner at Jangladesh. In 1478, he built a fort which ruined. After 100 years, Junagarh fort was constructed.



Visiting Hours

Junagarh Fort is opened for the public at 10:00am and closed at 4:30pm. The fort is opened on all days of the week including government holidays. It takes around two to three hours to visit the whole fort as there are many structures inside that the tourists can visit.

Ticket

Tourists have to pay an entry fee to visit Junagarh Fort. For Indian tourists, the cost of the ticket for adult is Rs. 50 and for students Rs. 30. For foreign tourists, the cost of ticket for adults is Rs. 300 and for students Rs. 150. Tourists can use still camera free of cost but they have to pay Rs. 100 for carrying video camera.

There is a museum that opens at 9:00 and for that the tourists have to buy ticket separately whose cost is Rs. 20. For carrying still camera in the museum, tourists have to pay Rs. 20 and Rs. 100 for carrying video camera. For visiting Phool Mahal and Chandra Mahal, tourists have to pay Rs. 100. For audio tour, tourists have to pay Rs. 350 for adults and Rs. 200 for students.

Best time to visit

Best time to visit Junagarh Fort and Bikaner is from October to March. December and January are very cold but still tourists can enjoy visiting the place. The period from April to September is hot and humid and unpleasant weather will not let the visitors enjoy visiting.

Where to Stay?

There are many hotels in Bikaner that range from inexpensive budget hotels to expensive five-star hotels. Some of the popular hotels of Bikaner are as follows:

- **Five-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Kishan Palace located at Gajner Road
 - Hotel Babu Heritage located nearby Railway Station
- **Four-Star Hotels**
 - Vesta Bikaner Palace located at Himmatsar
 - The Laxmi Niwas Palace located at Dr. Karni Singh Road
 - Lalgarh Palace located at Lalgarh Complex
 - Hotel Simran located at Railway Station
 - Hotel Gaj Kesari located at Bypass Road
- **Three-Star Hotels**
 - Hotel Basant Vihar Palace located at Sriganganagar Road
 - Hotel Desert Winds located at Karni Singh Stadium Bikaner
 - Hotel Heeralal located at Modern Market
 - Gajner Palace Hotel located at Kolayat
 - Hotel Banwari Palace located at 0.5km from Railway Station
- **Budget Hotels**
 - Hotel Brindavan Regency located at Bypass Road
 - Suraj Hotel located at Bypass Road
 - Bahadur Vilas Hotel located at Karni Singh Stadium
 - Hotel Chirag located at Sriganganagar Road
 - Hotel Marudhar located at Gandhi Colony

2. Junagarh Fort — History

Establishment of Bikaner

Junagarh fort was built on the ruins of an old fort built in 1478 by Rao Bika, second son of Maharaja Rao Jodha. Jodhpur was the city founded by Maharaja Rao Jodha. Since Rao Bika, was the second son so he had no chance of inheriting his father's kingdom. So he decided to make his kingdom and founded Bikaner at a place called Jangladesh.

Junagarh Fort under Rai Singh

The Rajput king Raja Rai Singhji was the sixth ruler of Bikaner who accepted the sovereignty of Mughals. He was given a high position in Mughal army and he won territories for Mughals. He received rewards from them in the form of jagirs in Gujarat and Burhanpur. He earned a large amount of revenue through these jagirs and built Junagarh Fort at Bikaner. The construction of the fort was started in 1589 and completed in 1594.



Raja Rai Singh

Junagarh Fort under Karan Singh

Karan Singh was also one of the Rajput rulers who ruled from 1631 to 1639 under the sovereignty of the Mughals. He built the **Karan Mahal** inside the fort. The rulers who reigned Bikaner after Karan Singh added more floors to the Karan Mahal.

Junagarh Fort under Anup Singh

Anup Singh ruled Bikaner from 1669 to 1698 and built many palaces and Zanana quarters for females. He renovated the Karan Mahal and named it **Anup Mahal**. He also converted some parts of the palace to Diwan-i-Aam.

Junagarh Fort under Other Rajput Rulers

Gaj Singh ruled Bikaner from 1746 to 1787 and built **Chandra Mahal**. He was succeeded by **Surat Singh** who ruled from 1787 to 1828. He decorated the Diwan-i-Aam with

glasses. **Dungar Singh** ruled the city from 1872 to 1887 and built the built a palace called **Badal Mahal**. The palace was given such a name as the king was inspired by a painting of rainfall.



Raja Gaj Singh

Raja Ganga Singh

Raja Sadul Singh

Dungar Singh was succeeded by **Ganga Singh** who ruled the city from 1887 to 1943. Ganga Singh built **Ganga Nivas Palace** having towers at the entrance. Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob was the architect of the palace. Ganga Singh was succeeded by **Sadul Singh** but the kingdom was later unified with India. Sadul Singh died in 1950.

Junagarh Fort under Ganga Singh

Ganga Singh, one of the Rajput rulers, got the title of **Knight Commander** from the British. He represented the British at various places like **First World War conferences** and **Versailles Peace Conference** and so he was given the title.

He built many halls, Ganga palace, and durbar hall. He also became the owner of the Lalgarh Palace which he got from the British. He shifted to the palace in 1902 and left the Junagarh Fort. The palace has now been converted into a hotel and the royal family lives in one of its suite.

Junagarh Fort under the British

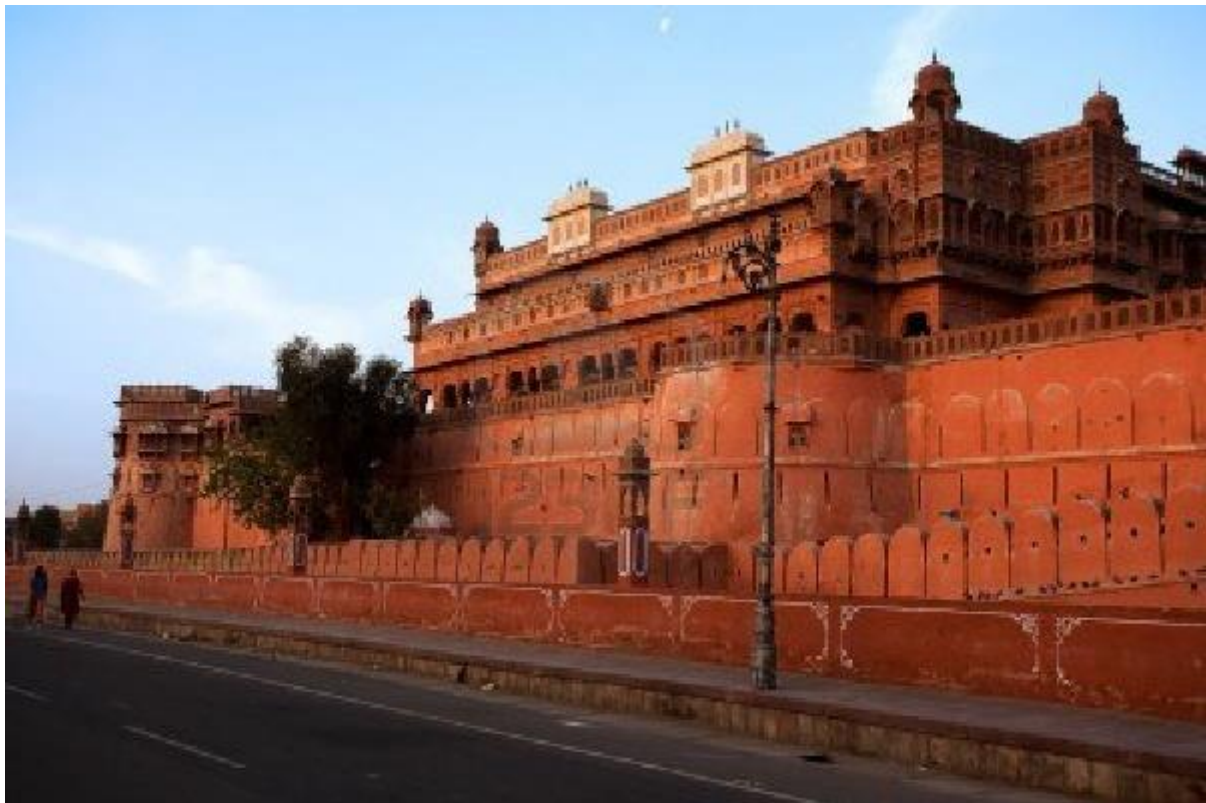
British signed a treaty in 1818 with Maharajas of Bikaner and the city came under the sovereignty of the British. The treaty was signed after the British intervened in the battle and put it down that was being fought between the rulers of Bikaner and Jodhpur. Two entrances of the Junagarh fort were damaged.

3. Junagarh Fort — Architecture

Junagarh Fort is one of the massy forts of India that was built in 1589. Many rulers came and ruled over Bikaner and constructed many structures inside the fort. The fort is designed in a rectangular pattern on a plain land in Bikaner. It is one of the forts in Rajasthan that is not built on a hilltop like Chittorgarh Fort or Jaisalmer Fort. The fort has 37 bastions or burj used to attack the enemy through cannons.

Dimensions of the fort

The length of the fort is 986m. The width of the walls is 4.4m and height is 12m. The total area of the fort is 5.28 hectares. The moat surrounding the fort has the depth of 6.1 to 7.6m. The base width of the moat is 4.6m while the top width is 9.1m.



Structures inside the fort

There are seven gates inside the fort out of which two are main gates. Besides these, the fort has many Hindu and Jain temples, pavilions, palaces, and many other structures. One of the great features of the fort is the stone carving that was done with red and gold sandstones. Rajasthani style was used while painting and decorating the interiors of the fort.



One other feature of the Junagarh fort is the large number of rooms built in a palace as the kings did not want to live in the room of their predecessors. Because of having several structures in the fort, it has become a monument of composite culture. The monuments that were built earlier in the fort have Rajput architecture. Later Gujarat and Mughal architecture were also used. Semi-Western architecture was also used for building some of the monuments.

Junagarh fort was ruled by 16 generations of Rajputs who built many structures inside the fort. The following structures can be found inside the fort:

- Symbolic hands of sati
- Seven Gates
- Nine Temples
- Four Deep Wells
- Three Gardens
- Old Jail
- Palaces

The structures were made from red sandstones that were brought from Khari and Dulmera quarries. Each storey has different number of palaces. Second storey has 15, third storey has eight, fourth has eleven and fifth has five palaces.

4. Junagarh Fort — Gates

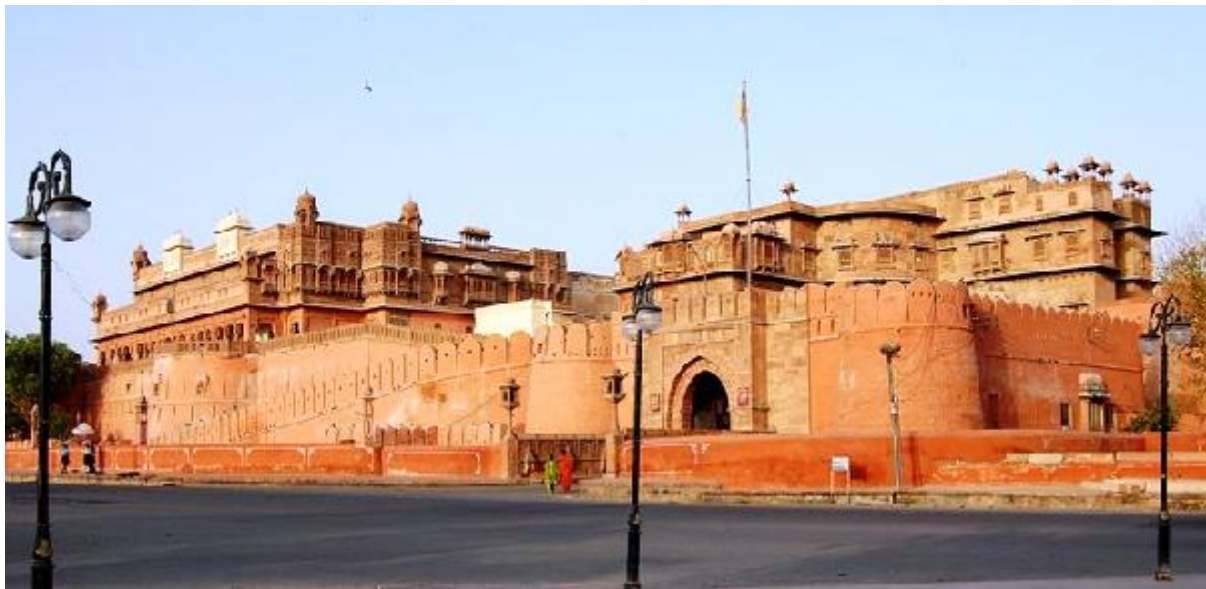
There are seven gates in the fort of which two were main entrances. Karan Pol was entrance from the east while Suraj Pol from west.

Karan Pol

Karan Pol faces east and is used as an entrance into the fort. Tourists have to cross the gate and through the second gate they can enter the fort. Karan Pol has been built with red sandstone. Karan Pol has iron spikes in order to protect the gate from the attack of elephants.

Suraj Pol

Suraj Pol is situated on the western side of the fort and is the other main gate to enter the fort. The gate is made up of yellow sandstone which shines like gold when sun's rays fall on it. The gate has iron spikes that were used to save the gate from elephant attack. There are statues of two elephants with mahouts sitting on them at the entrance. The gate was also used to make announcement of the arrival and departure of royal people.



Daulat Pol

Daulat Pol is situated to the right of Karan Pol. Tourists can find 41 hand imprints on the wall of the gate. These hand imprints belong to the wives of various Rajput rulers who committed sati after the death of their husbands. These imprints are in red colour.

Tripolia Pol

After crossing the main gate and the palace, tourists can reach Tripolia Pol or triple gate. This gate is the access to the royal chambers. Nearby the gate is the **Har Mandir** where the royal people used to worship. Chand Pol and Fateh Pol are the two other gates in the fort.

5. Junagarh Fort — Temples

There are many temples in the fort that are related to Hindu and Jain religions. The temples were built in 16th century by Rajput rulers.

Har Mandir

Har Mandir was a temple where royal people came to worship. They used to celebrate the festivals of Dussehra and Gangaur here. During the festival of Dussehra, the royal people used to worship weapons and horses. The deity worshipped in this temple was Lakshmi Narayan which is the combination of Lord Vishnu and his wife Lakshmi. Besides these, birthdays and marriage functions of the royal family were also arranged and celebrated here.



Ratan Behari Temple

The temple is also known as **Krishna temple** and was mainly used to worship Lord Krishna. The temple was built by the 18th ruler of Bikaner in 1846. The temple was built on the basis of Indo-Mughal architecture and white marble was used to build it.



Gaj Mandir

Gaj Mandir is a beautiful temple whose walls are beautifully decorated. There are carvings on the walls along with impressive designs. The panels of the temple are also very beautiful. Gaj Mandir was built by **Maharaja Gaj Singh** and he lived here with his wives **Phul Kanwar** and **Chand Kanwar**.

6. Junagarh Fort — Palaces

Bikaner was ruled by many Rajput rulers and they built many monuments inside the Junagarh fort. Each king either built his palace or separate room in a palace as none of them wanted to use the room of his predecessor. That's the reason many palaces have been built.

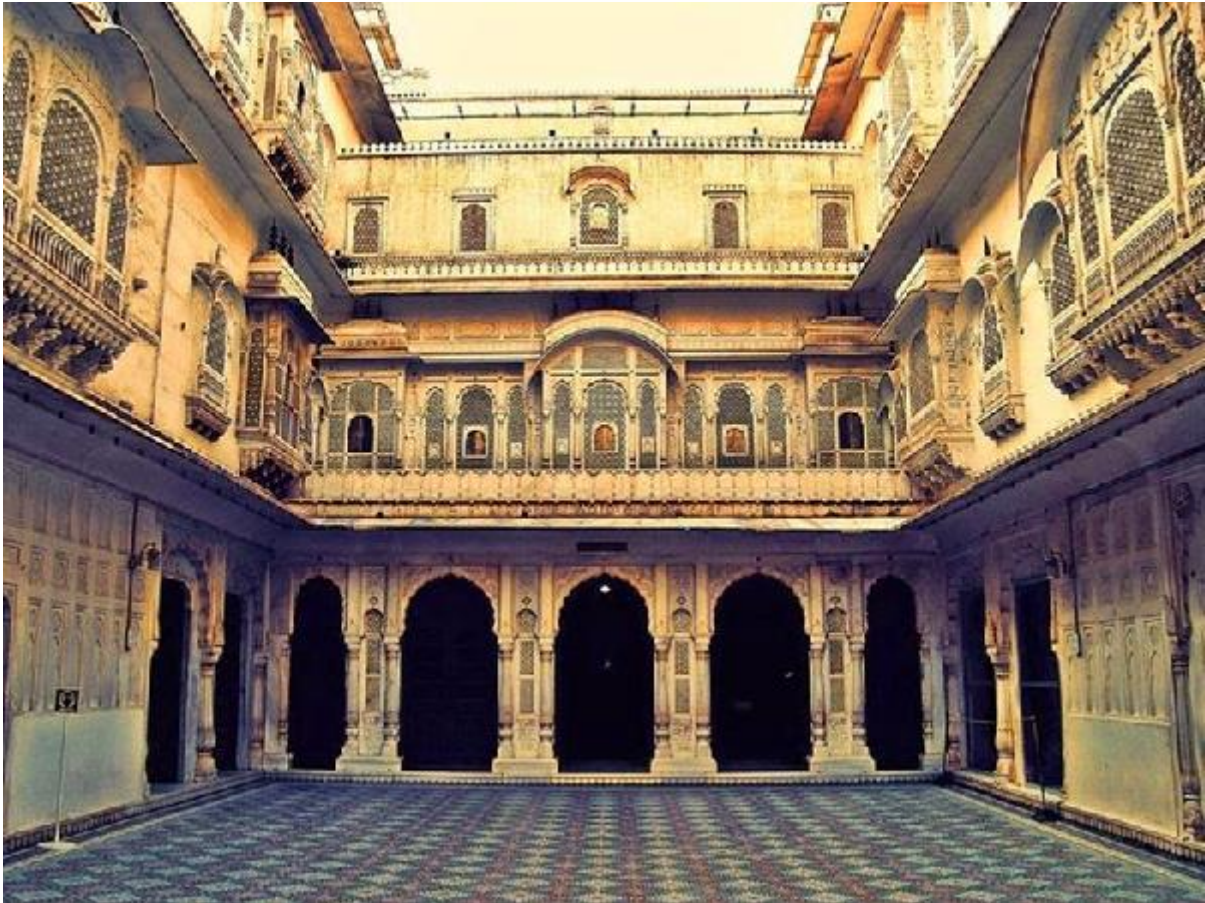
Karan Mahal

Karan Singh built the Karan Mahal in 1680 to celebrate his victory over Aurungzeb, the Mughal Emperor. The palace consists of beautiful gardens, carved balconies, and glass windows. Polychrome glass and pattern of mirrors were added to the palace by Surat Singh and Anup Singh. They also painted the palace with red and golden colour.



Phool Mahal

Raja Rai Singh built the phool mahal and it is considered as the oldest part of the fort. The palace is decorated with flower vases, rose water sprinklers, and motifs. The walls of the palace consists of glass and stucco work.



Anup Mahal

Anup Mahal is considered as a grandest construction of Junagarh Fort. It was built by Anup Singh. The palace was previously called Karan Mahal but Anup Singh added many rooms along with wooden ceilings having inlaid mirrors. The palace also had Italian tiles and lattice windows and balconies along with gold leaf paintings on the walls.



Chandra Mahal

Chandra Mahal is considered as one of the most luxurious palace of Junagarh Fort as the palace consists of gold plated deities. The palace also has paintings which have precious stones. The bedroom was built in such a way that the king would be able to see any intruder coming inside and this was done with the help of mirrors that have been placed inside the room in a well-planned way.



Ganga Mahal

Ganga Singh built the Ganga Mahal in 20th century. There is a museum inside the palace known as **Ganga Singh Hall** which was used as durbar hall during the reign of Ganga Singh. The museum includes weapons used during the times of Rajputs and an aeroplane used during World War I.



Badal Mahal

Badal Mahal is an extension of Anup Mahal and consists of paintings of **Shekhawati Dundlod Chiefs** who were respecting the king of Bikaner. The king is shown as wearing a long turban. There are some paintings to show faith and these include paintings of people who are standing on saws, nails, and swords. The walls has the paintings of **Lord Krishna** and **Radha** who are sitting between the clouds.



7. Junagarh Fort — How to Reach?

Bikaner is well connected to various cities of India through rail and road transport. The air transport has not been started yet though civil terminal has been constructed. The government is trying to boost up the air transport to increase international tourism. The cities nearby Bikaner with their approximate distance are as follows:

- **Bikaner to Jodhpur**
 - By air — 165km
 - By rail — 277km
 - By road — 269km
- **Bikaner to Jaipur**
 - By air — 272km
 - By rail — 345km
 - By road — 336km
- **Bikaner to Jaisalmer**
 - By air — 268km
 - By rail — 316km
 - By road — 331km
- **Bikaner to Delhi**
 - By air — 386km
 - By rail — 448km
 - By road — 447km
- **Bikaner to Ahmedabad**
 - By air — 559km
 - By rail — 732km
 - By road — 738km
- **Bikaner to Agra**
 - By air — 469km
 - By rail — 622km

- By road — 546km
- **Bikaner to Ajmer**
 - By air — 219km
 - By rail — 521km
 - By road — 269km
- **Bikaner to Amritsar**
 - By air — 430km
 - By rail — 607km
 - By road — 518km
- **Bikaner to Kota**
 - By air — 405km
 - By rail — 576km
 - By road — 535km

By Air

Bikaner airport is recently opened in 2014. The airport is 13km away from the city. Currently no flight arrives to or depart from the airport but the government is trying to start some flights soon. The nearest airport to Bikaner is Jodhpur. People can reach Jodhpur by air and from there they can reach Bikaner by train or by taxi.

By Train

Bikaner is connected to many cities by train as many long and short-distance trains start from Bikaner or go to other cities via Bikaner. No Rajdhani, Shatabdi, or Garib Rath trains run from the city but superfast trains and fast mail and express trains connects Bikaner to various cities. Bikaner is connected to Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer etc. by rail transport.

By Road

Bikaner is well-connected to different cities via road transport. Tourists can either book a taxi or catch state-owned or private buses to go to nearby cities from Bikaner. Tourists can get direct buses to Delhi, Jaipur, Agra, Ahmedabad, Pune, Jodhpur, Mumbai, Jaisalmer, and many other cities.

Local Transport

Bikaner is a very popular place to visit and tourists can either hire a taxi or take an auto-rickshaw to visit different places of the city. Due to sand dunes some roads are blocked often so tourists can hire a bicycle from railway station to roam around the city.

8. Junagarh Fort — Nearby Places

Besides visiting Junagarh Fort, tourists can also visit various other historical monuments and relaxing places like temples, zoo, beach, gardens etc. Some of these places are as follows:

Jain Temple Bhandasar

Bhandasar Jain Temple is very beautiful as it has yellow-coloured carvings. There are some paintings also which make it beautiful. The pillars of the temple has floral designs which depicts the love for 24 Jain Tirthankaras. It is said that instead of water, ghee was used in the mortar which now seeps in hot days.



Lalgarh Palace

Lalgarh palace was built for Ganga Singh who ruled Bikaner from 1902 to 1926. The architectural styles used in the palace are Rajput, Mughal, and European. The palace was named after Maharaja Lal Singh, father of Ganga Singh. **Karni Singh** opened a trust named Ganga Singhji charitable trust and gave a part of the palace to be used as office of the trust. A part is also given to be used as a hotel and the income from the hotel is used by the trust.



Shiv Bari Temple

Shiv Bari Temple was built in 19th century and is constructed by using red sandstone. **Lord Shiva** is worshipped here whose four faced statue along with the statue of **Nandi** is established here. The statue of the lord is made with black marble and Nandi is placed in such a way that it faces the Shiva Linga. The construction of the temple is based on Rajasthani architecture.



Kodamdesar Temple

The temple is located at a distance of 24km from the city. The temple was built by Rao Bika, the founder of Bikaner. The deity to whom the temple is dedicated to is Lord Bhairon who is worshipped here. The floor of the temple is made from marble and there is no roof over it. Newly-wedded couples and newly born babies are brought here to get blessings of Lord Bhairon.



Laxminath Temple

Laxminath temple, built by **Rao Lunkaran**, is said to be one of the oldest temple of Bikaner. The temple is 4km away from Junagarh Fort. The deities who are worshipped in the temple are **Lord Vishnu** and **Goddess Lakshmi**. A large number of devotees come here during the festival of Janmashtmi, Nirjala Ekadashi, Ramnavami, Diwali, and Geeta Jayanti.



Laxmi Niwas Palace

Laxmi Niwas Palace was built by Ganga Singh between 1898 and 1902 on the basis of Indo Saracenic architecture. Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob was the architect of the palace. When the palace was completed, Jacob made another plan to make it larger than the Lalgarh Palace.



The palace is made up of red sandstone and is a popular place in Bikaner. The palace is now used as a hotel and is managed by Golden Triangle Fort & Palace Pvt. Ltd.