

## **Havelis: The Magnificent Mansions**

By

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### **Abstract**

My lifelong passion for exploring historical and cultural landscapes has found its perfect match in my very own royal state of Rajasthan. In this land where every street whispers tales of the past, vibrant hues of culture adorn not just the bustling cities but also the quaint villages. Among the countless architectural treasures that dot the landscape, havelis hold a special place in my heart. Adorned with mesmerizing murals, intricate artwork, and timeless paintings, these havelis serve as repositories of antique artifacts and mementos from the medieval era.

What captivates me most is the distinct architectural style showcased in these havelis, reflecting the remarkable craftsmanship of both rulers and merchants alike. Each weekend, I find myself drawn to embark on a journey to one of these majestic mansions, each offering a glimpse into the grandeur and opulence of bygone eras. In Rajasthan, where every corner is steeped in history, these colorful havens serve as portals to a world of yesteryears, fueling my passion for exploration and discovery.

### **Keywords**

Havelis of Rajasthan, Ancestral mansions, Architectural marvels, Heritage.

### **Introduction**

Havelis, grandiose bungalows or multi-story ancestral mansions, were meticulously constructed by affluent merchants and landowners, symbolizing their wealth and stature. Serving as vibrant cultural hubs in the realm of royalty, these architectural wonders hold a rich tapestry of history and tradition. Among the most famous is Patwon Ki Haveli in

Jaisalmer, a collection of five intricately designed mansions renowned for their ornate facades and exquisite craftsmanship. Salim Singh Ji Ki Haveli, also in Jaisalmer, stands out with its 38 stunning balconies and distinctive architectural design, a testament to the vision of its namesake. Nathmal Ki Haveli, another gem in Jaisalmer, captivates visitors with its intricate carvings and fusion of Rajput and Islamic architectural styles.

In Bikaner, Bacchawaton-ki-Haveli dazzles with elaborate artwork, including intricate frescoes and ornamental detailing, while Rampuria Haveli showcases Rajput grandeur through its exquisite carvings and decorative elements. Jodhpur boasts the Patodi Ki Haveli, famous for its stunning blue exterior and ornate jharokhas, and the Jaswant Thada, a marble mausoleum adorned with intricate carvings and offering panoramic views of the city.

Mandawa's Mandawa Haveli and Goenka Double Haveli mesmerize with beautiful frescoes depicting mythological scenes and Rajasthani culture, while Morarka Haveli in Nawalgarh is renowned for its elaborate frescoes and architectural details. Dundlod Haveli captivates with its intricate frescoes and architectural grandeur, while Surana Haveli and Murmuria Haveli in Shekhawati region showcase stunning frescoes and intricate carvings, depicting religious and cultural themes. These havelis not only preserve Rajasthan's architectural beauty but also serve as magnets for domestic and international tourists, offering glimpses into the opulent lifestyle of the past.

## Features

Renowned for their intricate carvings adorning balconies, lattice-windows, and verandas, these mansions epitomize architectural splendor. Shekhawati Havelis, in particular, are celebrated for their mesmerizing murals, seamlessly blending various influences such as the Mughal architectural style seen in Bikaner havelis, as well as elements of Kishangarh and European artistry. The use of luxurious materials like red stone, sandy stone, wood, and cast metals further accentuates their grandeur. Remarkably, even the Vaishnav temples of medieval Rajasthan mirror the architectural elegance of havelis. Beyond preserving Rajasthan's architectural heritage, these havelis serve as captivating attractions that entice both domestic and foreign tourists alike.

## Some Notable Haveli Architecture Sites

### The Rampuria Haveli, Bikaner

Tucked away in the heart of Bikaner lies a true architectural gem worth venturing to discover. Comprising a collection of nine havelis crafted from the enchanting rose-colored Dulmera sandstone, each one boasts stunning intricate carvings, ornate facades, and breathtaking frescoes. Today, these havelis stand as iconic landmarks, capturing the imagination of visitors and earning their place as some of the most photographed buildings in the vibrant city of Bikaner.



**Image 1: The Rampuria Haveli, Bikaner**

### The Nathmal Haveli, Jaisalmer

Situated in Jaisalmer, this Haveli stands out as a pinnacle of beauty, boasting intricately carved exteriors and a breathtaking interior courtyard crafted from yellow sandstone. Resting upon a raised platform, it is flanked by imposing sculptures of elephants, adding a majestic touch to its entrance. The facade is adorned with exquisite artistic detailing, showcasing the masterful finesse of its craftsmen.



**Image 2: The Nathmal Haveli, Jaisalmer**

### **The Samode Haveli**

This historic mansion has been lovingly transformed into a boutique hotel, welcoming guests to indulge in the sumptuous artwork displayed throughout its halls. From the exquisitely painted dining room to the spacious inner courtyards, and even the majestic elephant ramp at the entrance, each space serves as a testament to the opulent lifestyle once enjoyed by the Maharajas who once graced these very courtyards with their presence.

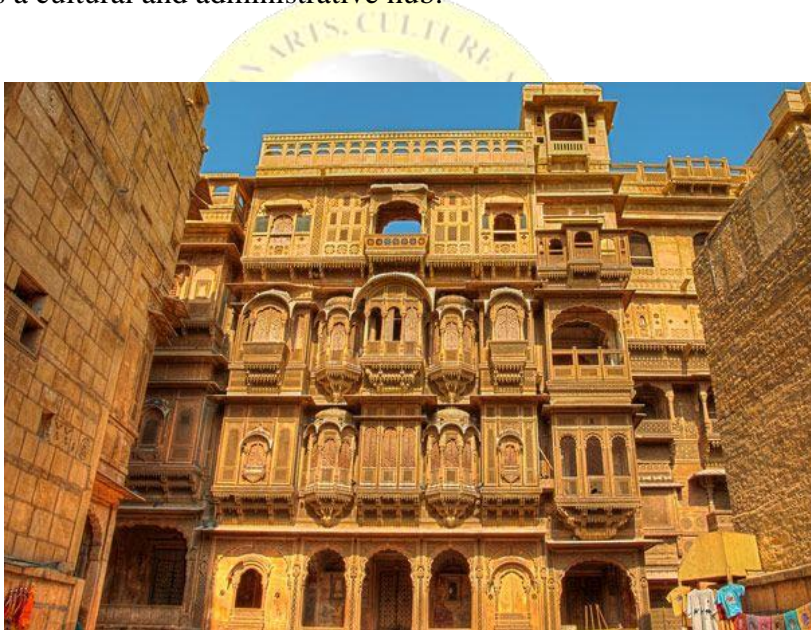


**Image 3: The Samode Haveli**



## Patwa Havelis

These havelis form a charming ensemble nestled within a quaint alley at the heart of the city. Among them, the first haveli known as Kothari's Patwa Haveli, stands out as a remarkable testament to preservation and restoration, inviting visitors to immerse themselves in the opulent lifestyle of the erstwhile Patwa family. Renowned as one of Jaisalmer's finest, oldest, and most expansive havelis, it boasts intricate artistic details adorning every corner, from delicately carved pillars to ornate façades and balconies (Jharokhas). Adorned with lavish decorations sourced from around the globe, this haveli showcases a fusion of Rajputi, Mughal, and Victorian architectural influences in its murals and interiors, creating a captivating ambiance that reflects its storied past. Collectively known as the "mansion of brocade merchants." Within its walls, this haveli accommodates the offices of both the Archaeological Survey of India and the State Art and Craft Department, adding to its significance as a cultural and administrative hub.



**Image 4: Patwa Havelis**

## Salim Singh Ji Ki Haveli

Salim Singh Ji Ki Haveli stands as a testament to the vision of Salim Singh, the esteemed Prime Minister during Jaisalmer's reign as the capital. This remarkable haveli features a

distinctive design and is renowned for its impressive array of 38 intricately crafted balconies, each telling its own story of opulence and prestige.



**Image 5: Salim Singh Ji Ki Haveli**

## Conclusion

The majestic havelis of Rajasthan stand as magnificent testaments to the region's rich heritage, showcasing stories of wealth, artistic mastery, and cultural vibrancy. Once the elegant abodes of Maharajas and Thakurs, these havelis now grace the desert landscape of Rajasthan with their timeless beauty. Reflecting influences from Mughal, Hindu, Shekhawat, and Jain traditions, each haveli exudes the grace and sophistication of its former owners. These palatial estates contribute to Rajasthan's allure as a captivating destination for travelers, offering a glimpse into architectural brilliance and grandeur. Many of these havelis have been lovingly restored into heritage hotels, providing guests with a regal retreat fit for royalty. Retaining their vintage charm and decor, these havelis transport visitors to a bygone era, enveloping them in a captivating medieval ambiance.

This artform is a visual treat, and a way to connect with our past, culture, and tradition.

## Acknowledgments

- Pictures are taken from various free sources over the internet.

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## About the Author

Ankurita Khajanchi, a native of Bikaner, Rajasthan, is an Officer in the Rajasthan Civil Services. Alongside her government role, she excels as a bilingual content and creative writer, demonstrating her prowess in both English and Hindi. With two published books - "Our Togetherness" in English and "Khushrang" in Hindi - Ankurita showcases her versatility and talent as an author. Her passion for writing, coupled with her eloquence in debates and speeches, has long been her forte, reflecting her deep-seated love for Writing and words.

