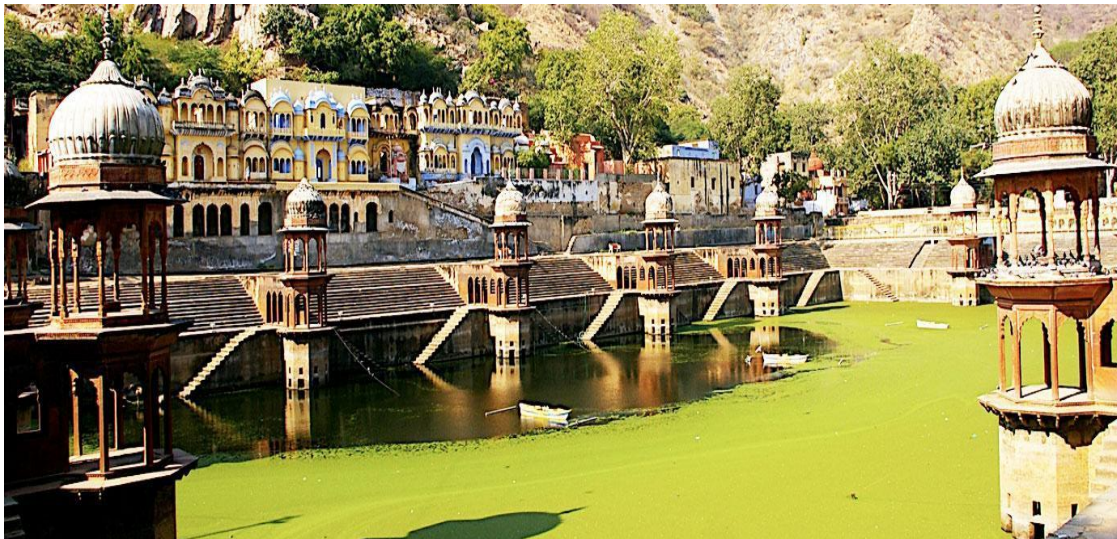




## *Cities and Its Heritage*

### *Alwar*



Alwar is the oldest city of Rajasthan. It was a princely state during the British Raj in India. It is uniquely located between Delhi and Jaipur. It was a princely state ruled by different Rajput sub-clans. The historic city was seized by the Sultanate of Delhi from the Rajputana around 12 BC. It gained prominence under the powerful rule of Maharaja Pratap Singh.

The city has an extensive range of flora and fauna because of the major river Ruparail. It is surrounded by the beautiful Aravali hills from all sides which protect it from the sandy and hot winds coming from the Thar desert. Alwar draws pride in its rich heritage and culture. The majestic forts, havelis, nature reserves etc. all makes this place interesting and worth visiting.

Alwar also draws pride from its reputation of being featured in a number of Bollywood movies. It is also famous for the Mega Alwar Trade fair held at Dussehra Ground every year and handmade Papier-mâché (literally 'chewed paper'). The place is also famous for its milk cake ('Alwar ka mawa').

The name of the city of Alwar has many theories. According to Cunningham the city derived its name from the Salva tribe and was originally called Salwapur, then Salwar, Halawar and eventually Alwar.

According to another school it was known as Aravalpur or the city of Aravali (A Hill system dividing Rajasthan roughly into third and two-thirds).



The historic city of Alwar is known for its ruler Maharaja Sawai Jai Singh. An interesting story of the Maharaja was that he made the famous, high end car Rolls Royce as a garbage car in India to teach a lesson. He was in London and happened to visit the showroom of Rolls Royce but he was not treated properly by the salesman. Having been insulted, the Maharaja decided to teach the company a lesson. This was how an Indian King taught a lesson for lifetime for a British company during the colonial era.

***THERE ARE MANY LAKES, CENOTAPHS AND FORTS IN THE CITY. LET'S EXPLORE SOME OF THE INTERESTING PLACES OF ALWAR-***

### ***Sariska***



The city of Alwar is known for the Sariska National Park. It is now known as The Sariska Tiger Reserve. The reserve is known for its majestic Royal Bengal Tigers. It is the first Tiger reserve to relocate tigers from Ranthambore. As it lies in the Aravali range, it has a number of exotic faunas apart from tigers such as leopard, hyena, sambhar, chital, nilgai and rhesus monkeys and also parakeet, partridge, crested

serpent eagle, red spurfowl and golden backed woodpecker, babble and bulbul. It was declared as a national park in 1982. Alwar has a unique recognition because of Sariska Tiger Reserve. It is called the 'Tiger Gate of Rajasthan'.

This wildlife sanctuary was once a hunting ground of the Maharaja of Alwar. The Sariska Palace which is located near the sanctuary is a magnificent piece of architecture. The palace is now converted into a luxury hotel.

## ***Bala Quila***



Bala Quila or the Alwar Fort stands atop a steep hill and provides a great view of the city from its watchtowers. It is a majestic structure known for its grandeur and architectural brilliance. This fort is said to have been constructed by Hasan Khan Mewati. It was finally conquered in 1775 A.D. by Maharao Raja Pratap Singh, the founder of Alwar.

The fort perching high gives a majestic look. It extends 5 kms from north to south and 1.6 kms from east to west. It is 595 meters above sea level and 304 meters above the city. It has 15 large and 51 small towers. The fort can be entered from six gates namely Jai Pol, Chand Pol, Kishan Pol, Andheri Pol, Suraj Pol and Lakshman Pol. These gates speak of the valor and chivalry of the Rajputs. The walls of the fort are finely crafted with ancient scriptures and sculptures. Each and every part of the fort echoes the features of the history. A fortress built by Alaghu Rai in 1049 A.D. is also located here.



### **Vijay Mandir Palace:**

This place is the royal residence that was built in 1918. It belongs to Maharaja Jai Singh and lies 10 km outside of Alwar. The imposing structure reflects its grandeur in the best possible way. The picturesque image is magnified in the waters of Vijay Sagar Lake.

### **City Palace:**

The City Palace of Alwar located right below the Alwar Fort in the foothills of the Aravali hills dates back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The palace is a blend of Rajput and Mughal style of Architecture. The Palace houses an artificial lake inside its premise constructed by Maharaja Vinay Singh in 1815.s as well as a museum that is one of the best in the state. There are also a number of temples on the banks of the lake. The palace is now used for government offices and district courts.



### **Moosi Maharani Ki Chhatri:**

'Chhatri' or cenotaphs are elevated dome-shaped porch are hallmarks of royal Rajasthani architecture. It is built to symbolise honour and pride of their ancestors. 'Moosi Maharani Ki Chhatri' is a historical monument of Rani Moosi and her King Bakhtawar Singh. It is situated outside the main palace of Alwar, built by Vinay Singh in memory of Alwar's ruler, Maharaja Bakhtawar Singh and his queen Rani Moosi who had committed 'Sati'. The Chhatri is located at the top of pillared sandstone and the double storied elephant structure built here serves as the major source of tourist attraction. It is one of the best cenotaphs in Alwar. The place is a double storied building with the upper floor completely made with marble stone. Mythological carvings adorn the walls with magnificent curves and polished roofs. Also, there is a water pond which is

located inside the premises. It was built by Vinay Singh in 1815 AD.



### **Bhartrihari Baba Temple:**

It is one of the most sacred spots in Alwar. The temple was named after the ruler of Ujjain, Raja Bharthari who ruled in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC and is built in his honour. He is a famous hero of the folk tales of North India. The temple is built in classic Rajasthani style with floral designed columns of shikharas and mandaps decorating its wide galleries.

### **Gopal Sagar Lake:**

This historical lake is located next to the city palace of Alwar. It was built around the 8th-9th century. The lake is surrounded by 12 canopies that are made of red sandstone. There is also a water fountain installed in the lake. The architecture is inspired from the stepwells of Rajasthan.

Another beautiful lake one can explore is the Siliserh lake. It owes its establishment to Maharaja Vinay Khan in the year 1845. The lake also houses a lake palace believed to have been made for hunting and royal lodge. The lake was formerly built to supply water to the city of Alwar.

### **Activity-**

1. Make a list of the monuments of Alwar

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

e. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Draw the map of Alwar with information and fun facts about each of the landmarks you want to include for your heritage walk.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing a map of Alwar and including information and fun facts about landmarks.

3. What role has your city played in History? Has it been part of trading or under a princely rule? Write down some few roles your city has played in history.

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