

Spa by the Baradari@ Ranbanka Palace

The 'Spa by the Baradari' has been commended for its signature therapies. The scent of the kewara greets you as you enter this haven of tranquility. The Spa at Ranbanka palace offers a complete bouquet of re-energizing and revitalizing packages. It's an oasis of serenity a real delight for the senses, rejuvenating, detoxifying, enhancing packages that allow you to relive the days of royal glory. What could be more agreeable than relaxing in a bath full of flowers, with the scent of roses regaling your senses into absolute bliss?


Take yourself on a journey of transformation as you indulge your mind, body and soul in a refreshing and nourishing experience. Ranbanka Palace's poolside 'Spa by the Baradari' offers its patrons traditional royal treatments, Ayurveda massages and exotic therapies. Rejuvenating Spa treats are tailored to each guest's discerning requirements. All ingredients are natural products sourced

exclusively from Indian herbs, salt and pure essential oils to renew the senses and relax the mind. The trained therapists provide guests a range of treatments to choose from including massages, scrubs, wraps and facials.

The following spa therapies give the best results:
 • Abhyangam • Shirodhara with Abhyangam
 • Deep tissue massage • Aroma oil massage
 • Foot reflexology • Almond body Polish • Dead sea salt scrubs • R3 Signature massage • R3 Signature facial.

All the above are good for relaxing the muscles and joints which stiffen up in Monsoon.

It can be recommended that they take a sun bath for 20 min. after the massage and then take a warm bath (warm bath only not cold.)

Ranbanka Palace recently became the first hotel in Jodhpur to be classified as a Classic Heritage hotel. Ranbanka's magnificent sandstone building captures the prevalent colonial influences of its time and immerses them in the echoes of another bygone era. 



A ROYAL RETREAT

Sapna Khanna

For the longest time, my idea of holidaying has been to head to the hills or the beach depending on which time of the year I choose to soothe my overworked nerves and soak my senses in nature's glory. Even though my first brush with Rajasthan had been as early as my teens when my dad took me through Jaipur, Alwar and Ajmer to experience a little bit of Rajasthan, I had fallen in love with the dancing peacocks, the royal edifices dotting these towns and my spiritual encounter with Ajmer Sharif, I never got the opportunity to visit any of Rajasthan again. Till recently.

An invitation to the Ranbanka Palace in Jodhpur, today a heritage hotel property in Jodhpur, brought back Rajasthan's royal vista on the mind's radar, and nostalgic musings tugged at my heartstrings. The Ranbanka Palace, built by Maharajadhiraj Ajit Singh, the younger brother of Maharaj Umaid Singh, is today managed by the third generation heir to the royal founders, Rajkumar Karanvijay Singh. So keen was I to study the lineage as much as the prop-

erty that I did come away with a flow chart of the regal family tree. But let me start at the beginning.

An overnight train journey to the blue city, and we dropped off at the station at the early hour before sunrise. A 10-minute drive from the station and we were at the palatial property. Bleary eyed, I admired the beautifully lit red imperial structure as it came to sight but postponed the detailed recce to later as we walked along long passageways, the kinds you would see in old Hindi movie havelis, spooky yet beautiful with dimly lit lamps and sheer curtains framing the one side overlooking sprawling green lawns. As we stumbled

into the luxury suite, to crash out on the inviting bed and complete our interrupted inertia.

Waking up to chirping birds couple of hours later, I pulled the curtains aside to admire the green landscaping of the lawns laden out with garden chairs and tables, a beautiful central platform surrounded by greenery to eat out in and an inviting pool at the far end. The spa right next to the pool with steps from there leading into the pool makes for a pretty picture. I made up my mind to go for a dip the first thing.

A breakfast of eggs, toast, date pancakes and cold coffee later, I request for a property tour. The resort has 80 rooms of four categories - the two top of the line Royal Suites, the six Luxury Suites, the around 30 or so Club Rooms and the remaining Deluxe Rooms in that order. The in-house souvenir shops makes for an interesting visit even though you may be reserved about making all your purchases here. But the Morjari (Jodhpuri jutti) seller who comes in everyday and sets up shop on the lawns is as competitive in his rates as the local shops; I did pick up six pairs!

There is not much to see in Jodhpur itself with the exception of the Umaid Bhawan Palace that is visible from Ranbanka Palace, and the Mehrangarh Fort, both of which are a mere twelve-minute drive from the hotel property. The hotel property does organise Desert Safari on request but that's around 60

Umaid Bhawan Palace, the royal residence



Towering above the blue city, Mehrangarh Fort

HOW TO REACH

By Rail: It is an overnight train journey to the blue city. There are three trains, Jaisalmer Express, Mandor Express and Rajasthan Sampark Kranti that depart from New Delhi and Sarai Rohilla stations.

By Road: NH-8 is the best route to reach Jodhpur by road. The distance is about 592km and takes about 8-11 hours. You can also take Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC) buses from inter state bus depots.

By Air: Air India and Jet Airways take about 1-2 hours to reach Jodhpur.

Ranbanka Palace & Jodhpur showcase blue-blooded luxury



The pool and outdoors dining space at Ranbanka Palace

km away, Jodhpur being situated at the edge of Thar desert. Then there is Bisalpur, a village court built by Maharajadhiraj Ajit Singh 35km from Jodhpur, where you can mix around with the village folk in a rustic ambience.

The Umaid Bhawan Palace, an architectural marvel with well manicured lawns, is the royal residence and even now has Maharaja Umaid Singh's grandson, Maharaja Gaj Singh living in one wing that is cordoned off from the visiting public. One part has been converted into a museum inside with relics and artefacts from the personal life and lifestyle of the former ruler of Jodhpur. Outside, a modern looking garage with walls of see through glass house a long string of vintage cars belonging to the royal family.

The Mehrangarh Fort is an absolute delight. Built on top of a hill, it makes for a steep walk up to the interiors of the fort even after you have driven uphill and parked your vehicle outside. There is a lift to take you up, but skip it if you want to really enjoy. On the way up, there is that one point at a bend, where the view is simply breathtaking. Here is where you will get to see the blue city view, one that you may have

seen in pictures, films and television — a city full of houses with blue facades. The fort too has a multi-level museum, with every level housing all things royal — paintings, weaponry, armours, palanquins, clothing, history, the royal rooms including the sheesh mahal, the royal sitting room, bedroom, entertainment room, public hearing room and sheer beauty of the architecture. At the end of the climb, you descend from another staircase and visit the royal temple on your way down.

Back at the Ranbanka Palace, I spent the remaining weekend either soaked in the pool, or getting a massage or two at the spa. The food here is great, and even though we

were never too hungry, the Rajasthani special meal served by the chef on request gave us the true flavours of the local cuisine. And the desserts that we gorged on, including fried ice-cream, caramel custard and fruit trifle passed with flying colours as we indulged with spoonfuls to seconds. Dining outdoors over Rajasthani folk music entertainment and puppet shows each night is a memory that will hold special for a long time, rest assured. I strongly recommend, collect your memories here but skip the peak summer months. Ranbanka Palace and Jodhpur showcase blue-blooded luxury most part, but summer here can be a royal pain.

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