Lucknow

A historic city on the banks of Gomti river, this political capital features a rich cultural heritage. The city boasts of old architecture, handicraft industries and a decadent culture and lifestyle, including a typical, charming use of language. Visit Lucknow to experience the culture of central India, and the strong Awadh influences it has. While you’re here, you can also pay a visit to Bara Imambara, the British Residency, Hazratganj, Dr. Ambedkar Park and Rumi Darwaza.

Famous For: City

Lucknow has been closely associated with the history of India, particularly since it was one of the places where the First War of Indian Independence in 1857 emerged. Of this, the ruins of the Lucknow Residency and Museum are standing witnesses, with traces of cannon-balls still existing on its walls. The outcome of a long standing tryst with the Nawabi culture, Lucknow exemplifies both "tehzeeb" and "adab", each defining the grace, beauty and charm of a typical Lucknowi way of life. Home to some of the most delicious Awadhi and Mughlai food, Lucknow offers a great opportunity for those on a culinary pilgrimage. The renowned "chikankaari" embroidery has become synonymous with this city, available as garments or for home decor. The capital of one of the most prominent states in India, Lucknow continues to be a seat of politics, industry and a vibrant cultural heritage of central India.

Lucknow is a city best known for its delicacies and rich cultural heritage. It is a city which is really famous among filmmakers. Movie like Daawat-e-Ishq, Tanu Weds Manu, Youngistaan, Gadar, Ishaqzaade, Ladies vs Ricky Bahl, and Omkara have featured several gorgeous locations from in and around Lucknow.

Lucknow can come as a bit of a shock to the uninitiated. Well versed with stories of the dignity and tehzeeb of this Avadhi queen; of the bravery of her citizens, who brought a colonial power to its knees — for a short while at least. Given the promise of a city whose leitmotif is a lavish, leisured lifestyle, what the first-timer finds instead is eternal chaos. So, were all those stories about galouti kebabs and Lucknavi adaab, the promises of films like Umrao Jaan and Pakeezah all false? Not necessarily. There are really three Lucknows, and all you have to do is find the one you dreamt about.

There’s the Lucknow built by the Nawabs — rich in colour and character — with mosques, imambaras and narrow, twisting lanes. There’s a British Lucknow — colonial and stately. Finally, there is modern Lucknow, which purists refuse to recognise. It's like any other concrete jungle in India, the traveller can give it a miss.

When To VISIT

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Pleasant weather. Carry Light woollen, umbrella.
Max: 28.6°C  Min: 21.0°C  Rain: 40.9mm

Sep
Pleasant weather. Carry Light woollen, umbrella.
Max: 24.5°C  Min: 19.7°C  Rain: 211.5mm

Oct
Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.
Max: 21.0°C  Min: 13.6°C  Rain: 7.4mm

Nov
Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.
Max: 16.5°C  Min: 9.5°C  Rain: 12.6mm

Dec
Cold weather. Carry Heavy woollen.
Max: 16.5°C  Min: 9.5°C  Rain: 12.6mm

What To SEE

1 Bara Imambara
Machchhi Bhavan, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 226003, India
Enveloped in legends and myths, one of the most beautiful monuments in Lucknow stands tall in all its grandeur. Intermingled with stories and beliefs, the aura of Bara Imambara encompasses you as soon as you enter. Constructed in 1784 by Barak Imambara Asaf-ud-Daula, it is also known as the 'Gravity Defying Palace'. The central hall of the monument has received its fair share of acclaim worldwide. One of the largest and most distinctly arched constructions in the world, the hall at 50 by 16 meters width, and over 15 meters tall, has no beams or pillars supporting the ceiling. Echoing whispering sounds throughout the main hall is the arresting balcony in the monument. To make things a wee bit more interesting is the confusing web called Bhul Bhullaiya, bordering the main hall on the first floor, and a step well that connects the building to the river. Offering a breathtaking view of the city from the top of the monument, the maze is an absolute delight. Made with more than 1000 labyrinthine passages, the maze may lead you to a dead end, a surprising fall or strange entry and exit points. Along with such mysteries, the Imambara also houses the mausoleums of Asaf-ud-Daula and his family. Discover the beautiful monument at your own pace, but preferably with an authorised guide to help you. It's quite easy to lose your way around this grand monument, so hire a guide and unravel the secrets that call out to you, without getting lost!

2 Shah Najaf Imambara
The Shah Najaf Imambara is another important monument to visit when you're in Lucknow. Resembling the tomb of Hazrat Ali (another name of Shah Najaf) in Iraq, this monument was built by Nawab Ghazi-ud-Din Haider and serves as Haider's own mausoleum, as according to his wishes, he was buried here along with his three wives. The place is also known as Karbala for the same reason.

3 Kaiserbagh Palace
The Kaiserbagh Palace was constructed in 1850, when Lucknow was ruled by Nawab Wajid Ali Shah. This grand palace complex expands from the Chattar Manzil to the Tarawali Kothi on the northern side, and from Roshan-ud-Daula Kothi to the Chaulakhi Kothi on the southern side. Some parts of the palace were demolished by the British after the revolt of 1857, as the palace became a stronghold of the Nawab's wife, who was a leader of Awadh revolutionaries at the time.

Built to commemorate Shah Najaf, the son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad, the Shah Najaf Imambara is another important monument to visit when you're in Lucknow. Resembling the tomb of Hazrat Ali (another name of Shah Najaf) in Iraq, this monument was built by Nawab Ghazi-ud-Din Haider and serves as Haider's own mausoleum, as according to his wishes, he was buried here along with his three wives. The place is also known as Karbala for the same reason.
The palace, parts of which are in ruins now, has a garden, styled in the Persian Charbagh layout. The architecture of the palace is the main attraction that draws visitors from all over the country. You will find here an amalgamation of different styles that come together to give the structure its unique character. From eye-catching columns to minarets and well-planned pathways, you will be in awe of this palace, beckoning you to come back again and again!

4 Dilkusha Kothi Palace

Dilkusha Kothi Palace, now partly in-ruins structure, gives an insight into the memories of bygone eras. Built in the year 1800 by Major Gore Ouseley, a Britisher who was a friend of the then Nawab of Awadh, Saadat Ali Khan, this monument was once a hunting lodge as well as a summer retreat of the rulers. The architectural style of this three-storied monument is different from the usual Indian style of that period as the building was designed in the European Baroque style. The huge pillars on the front, grand steps leading to those pillars and the spires (which are now barely visible) on the sides of the monument are examples of this style of architecture. The Archaeological Survey of India has taken up steps to preserve this place and today, the park around this monument is a favourite place for visitors, mostly during winter for the glorious sunshine. A visit to this marvellous piece of Lucknow, which is situated near the bank of the river Gomti, will provide you a glimpse of the ancient splendour and style, for which the city was and is famous all over the country.

5 Mankameshwar Mandir

Believed to be almost ancient, Mankameshwar Mandir is a popular temple in Lucknow. This temple is dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva and it sees many devotees everyday, throughout the year, specially on Mondays, which is considered to be an auspicious day to worship the lord.

If you are a devotee of Shiva, do visit this temple during Shivaratri festival and you will be amazed to see the number of devotees, who throng the temple with prayers on their mind and offering on their hands. Join the devotees in prayers and you will feel the holy vibe surrounding you all around. Apart from all these, the magnificent and colourful statues and designs on the entrance of the temple are something that should not be missed out.

Mankameshwar Mandir is also famous for having a woman as its chief priest or the ‘mahant’.

Where To Eat

1 Tunday Kababi

Mukarimnagar, Hasanganj Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh 226020, India

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What can one say about a place which is always bustling with people and is enveloped in an addictive aroma of herbs and spices? That it is one of the best eating joints in the city! Yes, Tunday Kababi represents the culinary delights that Lucknow is so famous for.

Delicately tucked away in a narrow street in Aminabad, the local eatery is not so much about the ambience as it is for its appetising, mouth watering food. Try everything and anything you can, from tender galauti kebabs to the mutton biryani and chicken korma.

If your foodie desires are still not satisfied, pack a plateful of biryani and there, your next meal is sorted!
One of the oldest eating joints in Lucknow, Royal Cafe still upholds its warm service and city wide reputation for delicious food. Their extensive multi-cuisine menu will leave you absolutely spoilt for choice. From the innovating basket chaat to the special Royal cafe chicken masala, the food here is finger licking good. Looking for a small snack or a scrumptious meal, Royal Cafe will not disappoint you. Bustling with people, the service may be a tad bit slow, but once the food is on your table, the wait will definitely seem worthwhile. Enjoy a lavish family meal here or fill your tummy with spicy delights before for an energetic shopping spree.

3 Oudhyana

A perfect blend of style and simplicity, Oudhyana is a real treat for foodies. The lovely restaurants offers an enticing variety of dishes. From the tender tundey kebabs to the finger licking good reshmi kebabs, non vegetarians will be satisfied beyond belief. You must also ask for the chef special for the day if you don’t want to miss out on delectable delights. The Sevian ka Muzzafar, which is an original vermicelli dessert, is absolutely out of the world with its subtle flavours. Head to Oudhyana and you can be rest assured that your day will be made just perfect!

4 Chote Nawab

Chote Nawab has been preserving the colourful culture of Lucknow, and literally so! A restaurant that serves the famous Lucknowi cuisine, with dishes ranging from Murgh Shami Kebab and Nawabi Ghost Sheekh Kebab to vegetarian delicacies like Pudina Paneer Tikka and Subz Shami Kebab, the aromas of Lucknow will tempt you to try out all the dishes on the restaurant’s menu. The ambience of this lovely restaurant is something that adds to the USP of the place. So, make sure you don not leave out this place when you are planning your itinerary for Lucknow.

5 The Yellow Chilli

Yellow Chilli is a chain of restaurants run by the famous celebrity chef, Sanjeev Kapoor. The Yellow Chilli in Lucknow has a plush interior with wooden furnishings and off-white walls that bring a happy glow to the place. The foodie in you will be more than delighted after reading the menu list. From vegetarian dishes like the spicy Haripa Paneer Tikka and the Aloo Nazakhat, that has a nutty taste, to the non-vegetarian delicacies like the Pudina Seekh and the fiery Bhatti Bhuna Murgh, you will be spoilt for choice. So leave your diet plans behind and start savouring!
Quick LOCATE

See
A: Bara Imambara
B: Shah Najaf Imambara
C: Kaiserbagh Palace
D: Dilkusha Kothi Palace
E: Mankameshwar Mandir

Accommodation
F: Levana Suites
G: Iris Villa
H: Oyo 10198 Hotel Aris
I: Levana Suites
J: Iris Villa
K: Oyo 10198 Hotel Aris
L: Levana Suites
M: Iris Villa
N: Oyo 10198 Hotel Aris

Food
O: Tunday Kababi
P: Royal Cafe
Q: Oudhyana
R: Chote Nawab
S: The Yellow Chilli