

My City
My Heritage

Patiala

 Trail

Through the Old City of Patiala

 1.5 kms

 Samania Gate

Photos by Meenal Upreti and Harman Saini.
Illustrations by Jisha Unnikrishnan.

Patiala, a city with its own vibrant culture and charm, holds a special history. With its monuments showcasing a blend of Sikh, Mughal, and colonial architectural influences, one also finds Rajasthani *chattris* (cenotaphs) dotting heritage spaces of the city, alongside the city's reputation as a historic hub for arts and handicrafts like *phulkari* and *juttis*. Patiala's royal past, in particular, takes center stage in any discussion of the city, with several heritage structures bearing the mark of its royal legacy. This walk invites you to experience some of these structures through an exploration of its early settlements: Samania Gate, Adalat Bazaar, Shahi Samadhan, and the Qila Mubarak Complex.

1 Samania Gate

The gates of Patiala were commissioned to be built in the 1850s by Maharaja Narinder Singh after demolishing the mud wall around the city. Samania Gate stands on the old road, which went to the town of Samana. When the princely state was at its zenith, the gate also had a



functioning *gurdwara* in its upper storey and its arches are still beautifully painted with murals from Hindu epics, scenes of Sikh martial arts, and traditional wrestling themes.

2 Imperial Bank Building



The royal memorials are among the largest examples of Sikh architecture. Built in the 1840s, the *samadhi* of Baba Ala Singh and various small *chattris* of his successors and family members are located here. The façade of the mausoleum, primarily constituting sandstone and marble inlay, is replete with elaborate stucco work featuring Persian calligraphy and Hindu motifs. The *parikrama* (circumbulatory structure) is an ode to the design and symmetry of Sikh religious structures: a central chamber surrounded by smaller chambers for prayer. The Mughal-style central dome and its load-bearing arches are hallmarks of the mausoleum's design.

3 Adalat Bazaar

Central to the city's commerce, Adalat Bazaar can easily be described as Patiala's beating heart. With smaller markets like AC Market and specialised streets like Bartan Bazaar within its jurisdiction, this



is where one can buy anything one names: punjabi *juttis* that are handmade and customisable, jewellery ranging across one's financial means, colourful *parandis* (hair ornaments), or turbans in each shade of every colour group!

4 Darshani Gate

The first gateway to be constructed in all of Patiala, it connects the oldest settlement of Sirhindi Bazaar — where one of the first communities, the Hindus of Sirhind, settled — with the Qila Chowk. It also serves as the main entrance to Qila Mubarak. Today, the roof features floral frescoes and the internal area hosts a few jewellery stores.



5 Qila Mubarak

Founded as a mud fort by Baba Ala Singh in 1754, Patiala's Qila Mubarak served as the royal residence of the Royal family, with various additions made to it by



maharajas of Patiala. The fort is divided into two sections: Qila Androon, forming the interior older portion, whose different chambers are embellished with the unique Patiala School of Painting; the outer additions, which include Ranvaas, Durbar Hall, Sarad Khana, and Jalau Khana. Large parts of the fort complex were recently renovated, most significantly with the restoration of Ran Baas The Palace and the Qila Gallery.

6 Sarad Khana

The cool house of the maharajas was built in Neo-Gothic style to escape the brutal Punjab summers. With a monolithic marble fireplace and a deep well, water from which circulated within channels in the palace walls and basement, Sarad Khana is a wonder of traditional engineering. In addition to serving as the summer home for the royals, this was where European guests were hosted.



7 Ran Baas

The erstwhile royal guesthouse is now a luxury hotel within the Qila. Restoration began over a decade ago, in 2013, under Abha Narain Lamba. It once housed the female quarters (*lassikhana*), where food for 35,000 people was prepared. Other chambers here include a Sheesh Mahal, a chamber with mirrorwork. The complex also hosts intricate frescoes, depicting courtly scenes, Hindu mythology, motifs of regional architectural styles, and the artistry of master miniaturists from present-day Kashmir, Rajasthan, and Himachal Pradesh.





RAN BAAS



रान बास

© Ran Baas

Please Note:

- Photography is allowed but with caution within interiors, contingent on permissions.
- It is a leisurely stroll with several stops to talk and discuss.
- Please wear comfortable clothes, footwear, and carry a hat/umbrella along with a bottle of water.
- Please start early, as the roads tend to get busy, and the weather becomes less enjoyable later in the day during summers.
- Please respect the cultural and religious significance/sentiments of the spaces.

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Peeli Sadak

01. Samania Gate
02. Shahi Samadhan
03. Adalat Bazaar
04. Darshani Gate
05. Qila Mubarak
06. Sarad Khana
07. Ran Baas

Peeli Sadak

Old Sabji Mandi Road





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