

My City
My Heritage

Patiala

 Trail

Pieces to the Patiala Puzzle

 200 kms

 Fatehgarh Sahib/Sirhind

Photos by Meenal Upreti and Wikimedia Commons.
Illustration by Jisha Unnikrishnan.

To understand Patiala, one must become acquainted with the city's relationship with its neighbours. This trail begins with Fatehgarh Sahib — erstwhile Sirhind — and ends in Nabha, with stops in Malerkotla and Sangrur. While most of these were connected through the Phulkian Dynasty, they emerged as important and historic centres in their own right

Each of the cities were central to Sikh, Mughal, and, eventually, independent India's history. This Malwa belt, once the stronghold of royals for two centuries, emerged as a bastion of Punjabi communism and leftist activity post-independence: it was known for its '*jholey wale*', members of various socialist groups who would wander around with a bag and their books in tow. In search of these overlapping and opposing histories, we undertake this longer trail.

1 Fatehgarh Sahib/ Sirhind

Forty kilometres north of Patiala, Fatehgarh Sahib is an important site in the intertwining history of Sikhs and Mughals. Sirhind is the older commercial town, reclaimed after Sikh military commander Banda Singh Bahadur won it at the Battle of Chappar Chiri from the Mughals; Fatehgarh Sahib is the district headquarters. Many historic gurdwaras and dargahs dot both towns. Gurdwara Fatehgarh Sahib, Rauza Sharif, and Aam Khas Bagh bring together stories of Sufi saints and



events from Sikh history. Rauza Sharif is dedicated to Ahmad Sirhindi of the Naqshbandi Sufi Order and Aam Khas Bagh retains the remains of a highway inn built by Akbar and renovated by Shah Jahan on the Grand Trunk Road.

2 Malerkotla

Malerkotla is best known as a symbol of communal harmony in Punjab: during Partition, the Muslim population of the town remained unharmed. Today, it remains a bastion of syncretism and royal history. Enter the Old City through one of its gates and make your way to Mobarak Manzil, the former royal residence. Close by is the Shahi



Maqbara, the royal burial grounds built in Mughal architectural style. Finally, after a short detour at Jeeru Rehmani for their *korma* and *phirni*, visit the fifteenth-century shrine of Baba Haider Sheikh, the founder of the city and the predecessor of the Afghan Sherwanis, the Nawabs of Malerkotla.

3 Sangrur



Former capital of the Jind princely state, Sangrur's old city is symmetrically planned. Banasar Bagh, its green axis, was built as a leisurely retreat by the royals in a blend of Mughal and later colonial architectures. On the outskirts of Sangrur is Gurdwara Nankiana Sahib, associated with Guru Nanak's visit. This is also the home of Bibi Gulab Kaur: born in Bakshiwala village, she was a Ghadar revolutionary who joined the Ghadar Party in Manila and was central to its publishing activities. With a press pass in hand, disguised as a journalist, she would distribute arms to other Gadarites.

4 Nabha



Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha played a central role in the beginning of Jaito Morcha, a significant event in the Akali-led Gurdwara Reform Movement in Punjab that successfully transferred control of Sikh religious institutions to the community instead of British-decided *mahants* (caretakers). Within the Old City today, you will find the remains of Nabha Qila. Nearby is Gurdwara Dera Baba Ajaypal Singh (Ghorhian Wala), dedicated to Guru Gobind Singh Ji's *nagarchi* (war drummer), said to have resided there for four decades. Finally, there is the private property of the erstwhile Nabha Riyasat, Hira Mahal, whose ground floor holds relics important to Guru Gobind Singh.





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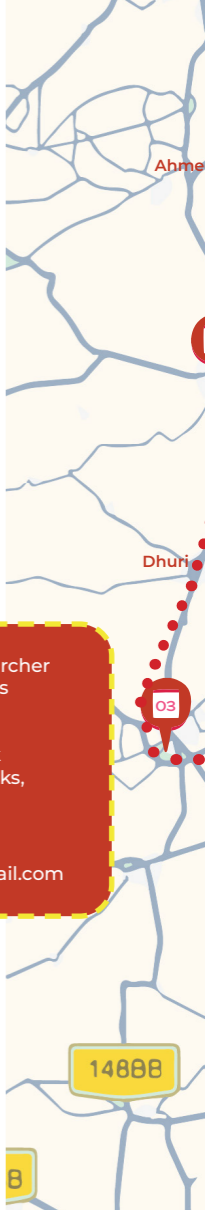


Please Note:

- Photography is allowed (in the interior and exterior buildings).
- For this trail, participants will either require a vehicle or need to make use of the local autos once in the city.
- Wear comfortable clothes, footwear, and carry a hat/ umbrella along with a bottle of water. Carrying a scarf when entering the dargah is advised.
- Kindly respect the cultural and religious significance/sentiments of the spaces.

Aalekh Dhaliwal is a researcher and practitioner working across architecture, politics, cities, gender, food, migration, and ethnography. Her current work focuses on coffee trade networks, their politics, and ensuring fair returns for farmers.

Email: aalekhdhaliwal73@gmail.com





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01. Fatehgarh Sahib/Sirhind

02. Malerkotla

03. Sangrur

04. Nabha

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