

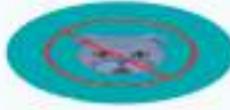
STATETIMES

SUNDAY

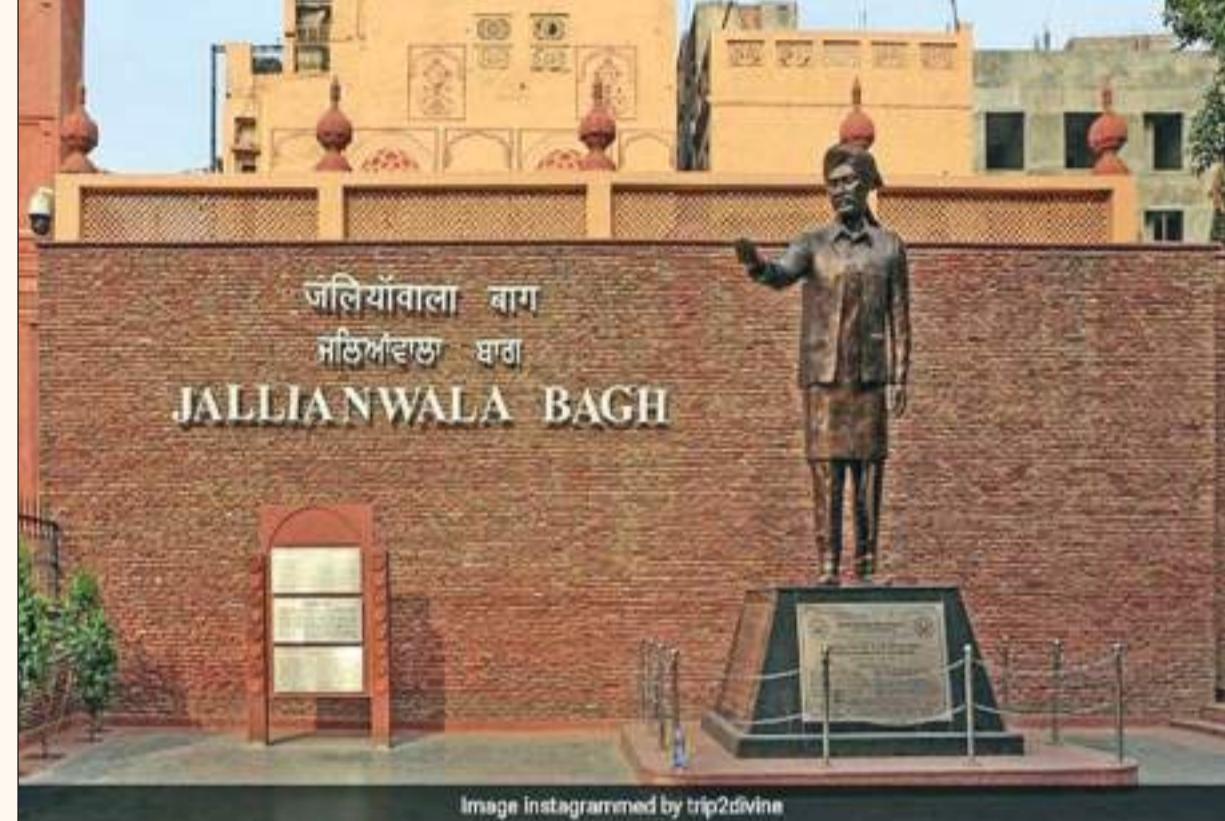
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Republic Day: Places In India That Make You Feel Patriotic



India drafted the Constitution of India, which came into effect on 26 January 1950. It was drafted by the Constitution Drafting Committee headed by Dr B R Ambedkar. This legal document gave Indian citizens the power to govern themselves by selecting their own government. From then on, this day has been celebrated as the Republic Day.

The Constitution of India
WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, have solemnly resolved to constitute India into a SOVEREIGN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC and to secure to all its citizens;
JUSTICE; social, economic and political;
LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;
EQUALITY of status and opportunity; and to promote among them all
FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the unity of the Nation;

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November 1949, do HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.

Here are six places you could visit as a family this Republic Day weekend.

New Delhi

The day starts with the President of India unfurling the national flag. This is followed by the various regiments of India - Army, Navy and Air Force marching past in their uniformed finery.

Starting from the Rashtrapati Bhawan, along the Rajpath, past India Gate and on to the Red Fort - it is a true display of our forces' might. Cultural tableaus from each state with vibrant colours and portrayals, are also on show. It all comes to a grand end with the beating retreat ceremony. If you are not too keen on watching the proceedings in a crowded space, you can visit the other heritage sites in New Delhi.

India Gate originally known as the All India War Memorial is the central part of Rajpath, and one of the most prominent structures in New Delhi. If you get the chance, do see the gate illuminated with the tricolour.

Amar Jawan Jyoti, located at the India Gate is an eternal flame that burns day and night. It commemorates the Indian martyrs who lost their lives during the 1971 war with Pakistan.

While Red Fort takes centre stage on Independence Day, it is still an architectural marvel to visit on Republic Day or any day. It is on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites. Significantly India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru raised the Indian national flag above the Lahore Gate on 15 August 1947.

You can also visit the Rashtrapati Bhavan, Parliament House, which houses the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha assemblies, Rajpath or the National Gandhi Museum that is solely dedicated to the Father of our nation Mahatma Gandhi.

Amritsar, Punjab

Bloodshed and suffering have smeared the pages of Amritsar history with both Jallianwala Bagh and the Wagah Border located here. A dark day etched in Indian history - the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre - when the British troops opened fire on unarmed Indian civilians killing at least 400 people and injuring 1000. This event proved to be a massive turning point in India's fight against the British.

Preserved in the memory of those who lost their lives during the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre is the historic garden and 'memorial of national importance' in Amritsar. The 7-acre garden is located close to the famous Golden Temple. It houses a gallery, a number of memorial structures and a museum.

The bullet holes on the Jallianwala Bagh garden wall as well as the 'Martyr's Well' are grim reminders of the fatal day when victims lost their lives while celebrating the Punjabi New Year in 1919. A symbolic eternal flame to honour the people who lost their lives is also present here.

In the evening head over to the Wagah Border - the line that straddles the border between India and Pakistan to observe the ostentatious 'beating the retreat' ceremony, held every evening since 1959. Soldiers from both sides of the border engage in a half an hour display of military camaraderie and showmanship. On Republic Day, BSF rangers from India and Pakistan participate in an energetic parade topped off with the exchange of sweets. The ceremony starts at 4:15 PM in winters and 5:15 PM in summer. If you just wish to visit the border, it is open from 10 AM to 4 PM. Seating and entry are on a first-come, first-serve basis so make sure you get there ahead of time if you wish to have a good view. Feel your nationalistic fervour rise to the fore as you join the army personnel in singing patriotic songs. You are sure to feel goosebumps as you are just a few metres away from the men who guard our nation and risk their lives for our safety, every single day.

Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Ahmedabad is the hometown of one of India's most famous freedom fighter - Mahatma Gandhi. Sabarmati Ashram, which is

around 5km from Ahmedabad was famously the residence of Mahatma Gandhi and his wife Kasturba for close to twelve years. The Ashram is the site from where Gandhiji famously started the Dandi March or Salt Satyagraha in 1930. An important movement in India's Independence struggle; it is where Gandhi protested against the British salt laws, wherein Indian salt was taxed in order to promote British salt.

It was also the epicentre for other great freedom movements like Civil Disobedience, Non-Violence Movement and the Swadeshi Movement. Located along the banks of the Sabarmati River, the Ashram gives you a look back into the life of the Father of our nation. A museum 'Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya' has some of Gandhi's original personal letters and photographs on display. It also houses the timeless spinning machine wheel on which Gandhi spun khadi. Visitors can experience his life through photo galleries and relics on display at the museum. The national flag is hoisted along with all visitors on Republic Day - giving you a true sense of nostalgia and patriotism.

Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands

The Andaman and Nicobar islands are usually associated with blue waters, pristine sand and sunny days. But the infamous and dreaded colonial Cellular Jail, also known as Kaala Paani (black water jail) is also located here. Prisoners were tortured and served life sentences in solitary confinement. This structure was built by the British to exile political prisoners. The name Kaala Paani came about due to the inability of prisoners to escape as the jail was surrounded by water on all sides while the name, 'Cellular Jail', was derived from the solitary cells which prevented prisoners from communicating with one and another.

The architecture of the Cellular Jail was conceptualised based on the 'Pennsylvania System or Separate System' theory in which each inmate is in complete isolation from other inmates. Noted independence activists like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Batukeshwar Dutt and Yogendra Shukla were imprisoned here.

Transformed into a National Memorial now with a museum, the jail is open to the public to visit. The National Memorial is open on all days except Mondays and timings are from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM and 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM.

The museum will take you on a trip down memory lane as it depicts life in prison and the hardships experienced by some of India's political prisoners. There is also an art gallery, Netaji Gallery and a library housing books on the freedom movement. You can also look at the freedom fighters' photo gallery and have a deeper appreciation for the sacrifices made by our forefathers.

Pune, Maharashtra

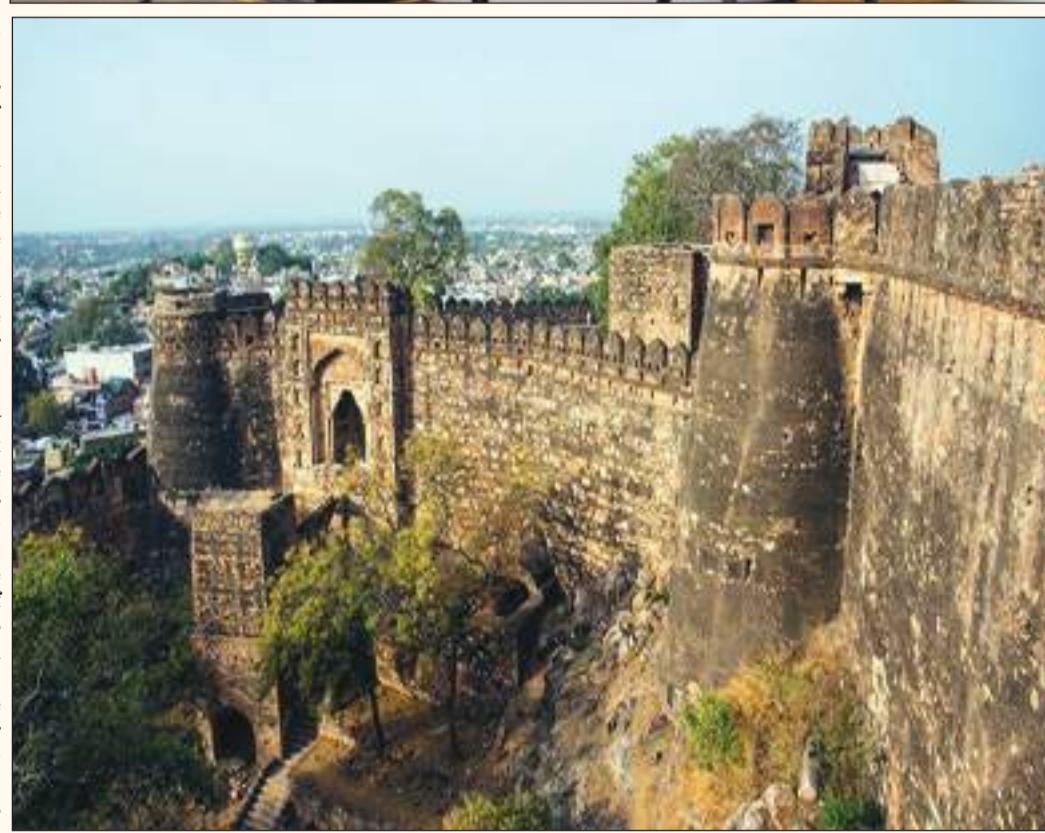
The Aga Khan Palace in Pune holds great significance in relation to the Indian independence movement. Built in 1892, the palace is infamously known for placing Mahatma Gandhi, his wife Kasturba Gandhi and his secretary Mahadev Desai under arrest at the start of the Quit India Movement.

Regrettably, Gandhi's wife and secretary died in captivity at the palace and have their samadhis (tomb) located there. While there is a photo gallery that you can scan through in the museum with powerful imagery from the freedom struggle movement, the palace also has some treasured personal items of Gandhi. They include the dining table where they all ate, the room where Gandhi taught his granddaughter and a letter from Gandhi on the death of his secretary. Making khadi is still very much a prominent activity at the palace.

Bangira, Uttar Pradesh

Rani Lakshmi Bai, the queen of Jhansi is the stuff Indian legends are made of, as she was one of the most prominent figures in India's first war of independence. When you stand on top of the Bangira Hill, the Jhansi fort will give you a vantage view of the city and shows how the fort worked as a watchtower for the city. Spanning across 15 acres of land and with 10 gates, you are sure to be blown away by this majestic fort, which is a true architectural marvel. The fort was a crucial centre during the Sepoy Mutiny in 1857.

Be prepared to walk through in order to enjoy the total experience. There is no greater time than this Republic Day weekend for you to take your child on a 'historic' trip showing them our country's rich history. Pack your bags and have an educational tour with your young one, as you visit the many remarkable and historically rich places that played a key part in our freedom fight. While enjoying a week away from the maddening crowds, you could also pay homage to the struggle that our forefathers went through to earn us our much-needed freedom!



You will see a diorama depiction of the bloody battle in which Rani of Jhansi fought, losing her life in order to protect her people from the hands of the British. There are numerous attractions to explore along the wide expanse of the property including the Panchkuian Temple, Rani Mahal, City Church, Government Museum, Ieson temple and War memorial.

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