



Travel Stories by Amaru & Suzanne



Udaipur, The Beautiful Lake City!

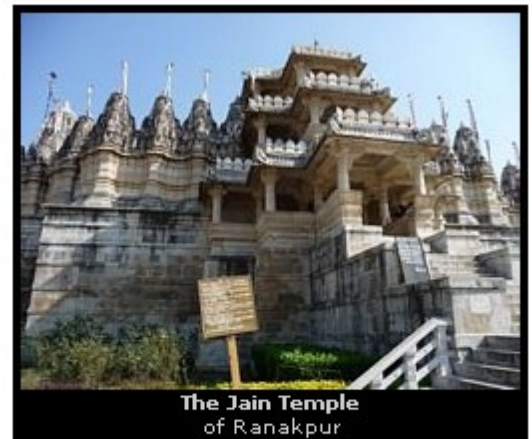
by Amaru & Suzanne, November 23rd 2009

Udaipur is the most romantic city in India... We couldn't be in a better place to celebrate our first wedding anniversary!

We left Jodhpur in the morning and made our way towards Ranakpur and the Jain Temple located there. On the way, our driver informed us that this would be his last drive with us as we're getting a new driver in Ranakpur. We obviously thought that this was a bit of a shame since we were so close to the end but accepted it...

The Jain Temple in Ranakpur was amazing, the outside is enough to impress anyone but the real treat starts once you step inside. There are carved marble pillars everywhere and from what we heard, no two of them are alike...

Once we had seen the temple and were ready to move on we found our driver who said that the new driver still hadn't shown up... Apparently he caught a bus from Udaipur that morning and should have been here waiting for us.



The Jain Temple of Ranakpur



Beautiful marble carvings fill the temple

This being India though, you can expect delays everywhere. The problem with the driver we heard was that his bus had broken down and had to wait for another bus. After an hour or so he finally showed up and we could continue towards Udaipur...

But, once more the unexpected arrived.... We were only about 45min or so from Udaipur when traffic was stopped. The highway is currently under construction and there was going to be a blast to expand the road. We waited for about 15min and were jolted by the blast. Once that was done though the real problem started... Apparently the blast had thrown a lot of debris onto the road and this would take a while to clear. I walked down to the area and a "little" debris meant that the entire road was blocked. We had to wait for a good 2 hours before we could continue...

You have to wonder though.... First of all, why not do this in the middle of the night when there is no traffic and second, did they mean to blast and have all that debris dumped on the road or was this a miscalculation.... Well, what can we say, this is India!

We arrived at our hotel at about 7pm, a good 10 hours since we started that morning, checked in, had dinner and then just wandered the streets for a short while... We were too tired from the trip to spend too much time walking so we retired early to our nice room with a great view of the Lake Palace.

The next day was our wedding anniversary, our first one, and I managed to sneak away from Suz for a while to set some things up ;)



The temple is filled with these pillars
And no two of them are the same



Another temple
Inside the Ranakpur complex

We spent the morning by seeing the City Palace which is huge... we felt like we were wondering forever without finding our way out. It's a great palace to see but by this point we were feeling that we've seen just about enough palaces, temples and forts. They all start to look the same after a while!

In the early afternoon we handed in the keys to our room to be cleaned and went for a well deserved traditional Indian massage. Suz and I were sent to different areas and then told to strip. It's a weird feeling at first getting a full body massage by a grown man but once I got over that it turned out to be a nice one.

We finished the day on the top of Sunset Point watching the sun as it went down over the horizon while colouring the city in beautiful colours.

When we got back to the hotel we were told that our room wasn't quite ready yet so we sat on the roof and had a drink. Suz was finding it a bit weird that it would take this long to get the room ready. Eventually the manager arrived with the key and said we could come down with him.

We entered our room and there were flowers everywhere! There were roses on the walls, big flower bouquets by the door, plus the fact that there were rose pedals EVERYWHERE! They had even used the rose pedals to make a heart shape on the bed.

Suz was very surprised and she had no clue I was planning this, I then mentioned that was why I've been trying to keep us from the hotel that day and insisted that the fact that the room wasn't clean was because we had handed in the keys late ;)



Our Driver
Who drove us through Rajasthan



A young playful monkey
Found him around the temple

We had a great dinner that evening at Ambrai which offered us great views of the City and Lake Palace and finished up the night by having a great local sparkling wine (Sula).

The next day it was time for our cooking class. I had found recommendations online to a cooking course named "Spice box" which we joined. We were in a class of 5 so we had to take turns cooking as only two could cook at the same time. This was not a problem though as it was fun to sit down and just watch each other cook. All the time while our cooking instructor was advising us how to use Indian spices. He was good fun, had easy to understand instructions and kept telling jokes...

We ended up making Masala Chai, Khadai Paneer, Malai Kofta, Biryani Rice and of course some Chapati bread. The best part of the cooking course was that at the end we got to eat it all.... YUM!

We spent the rest of the afternoon by first doing a boat trip around the lake which was very peaceful and quite interesting to watch the locals on the ghats doing some washing, swimming etc. The rest of the afternoon and evening was spent just relaxing on the rooftop terrace of our hotel, having dinner and drinks while enjoying a final look over the lake.

We loved Udaipur, the city has a relaxed vibe and to sit overlooking the lake is very peaceful which is quite rare in hectic India. The Lake Palace itself as it sits on the water is almost reason enough to come here. We definitely picked the right spot to celebrate our wedding anniversary.... the only problem now, how are we going to top this next year?

Trip Details:

Jodhpur to Udaipur - 290km - 10 hours
(including Ranakpur stop and road work delay)



Driving on the countryside almost makes you believe you've travelled back in time



This woman is carrying quite a load
You can't even see her head



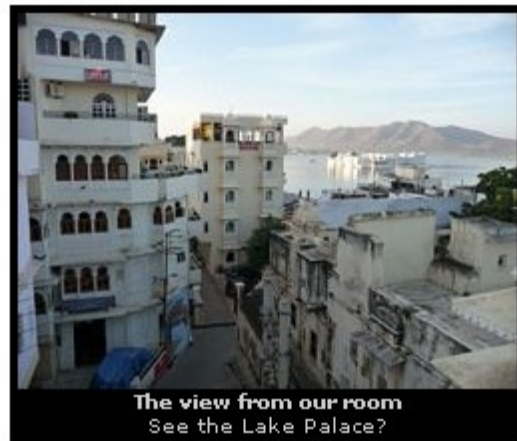
Roadwork...
This is where we had to stop



The blast sealed the road
and it took two hours to clear



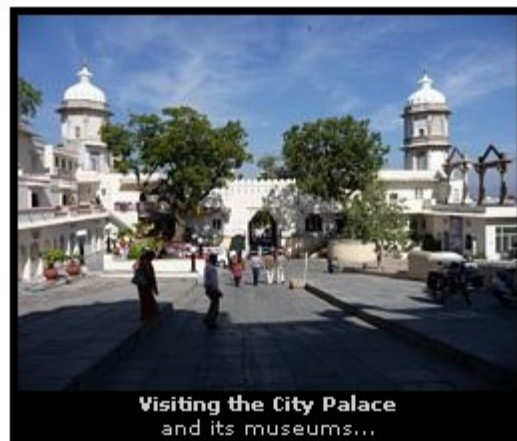
We finally arrived in Udaipur
The view from our room



The view from our room
See the Lake Palace?



Having breakfast
Nice and relaxed...



Visiting the City Palace
and its museums...



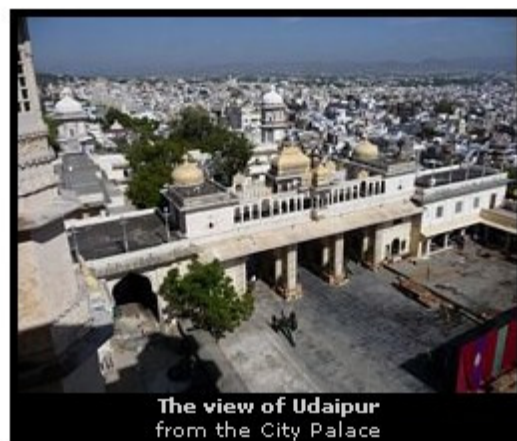
Get your photo taken in nice
traditional gear... we declined ;)



One of the many wall paintings
At the City Palace



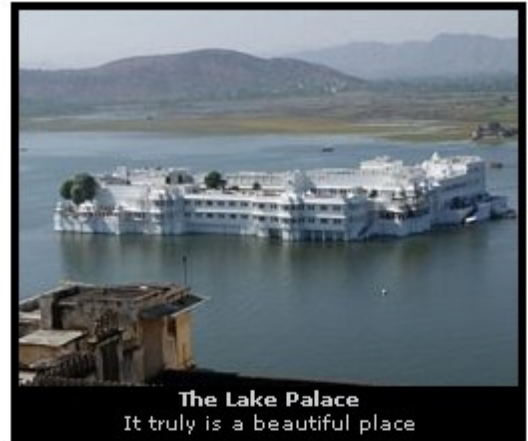
An inner courtyard
Beautiful and tranquil



The view of Udaipur
from the City Palace



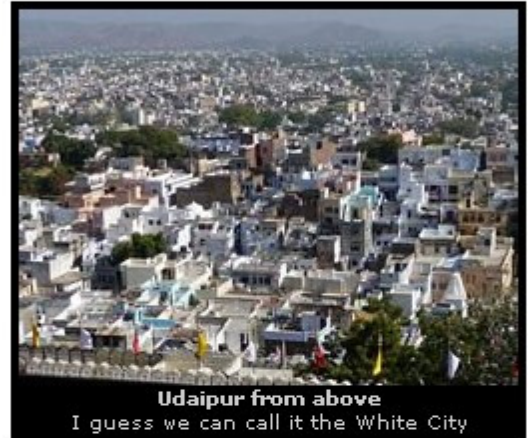
Inside the City Palace
It takes ages to wonder the halls



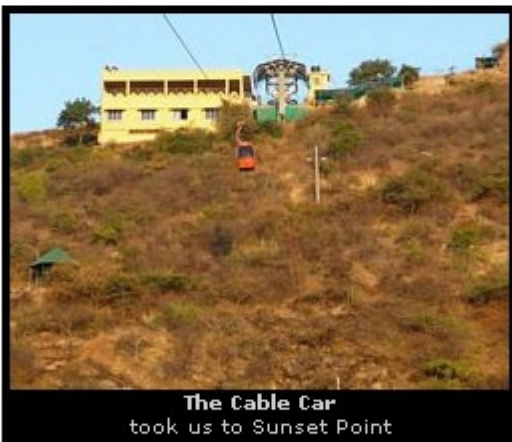
The Lake Palace
It truly is a beautiful place



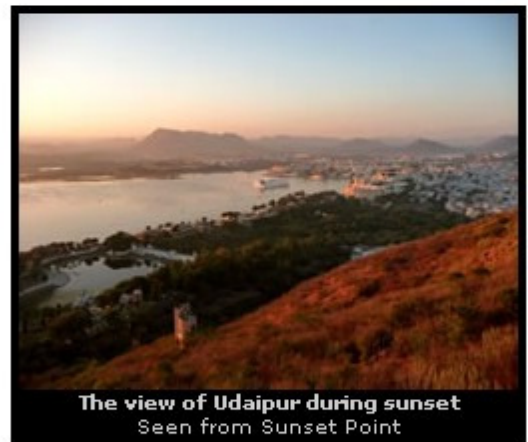
It looks as if it
just sits on the water



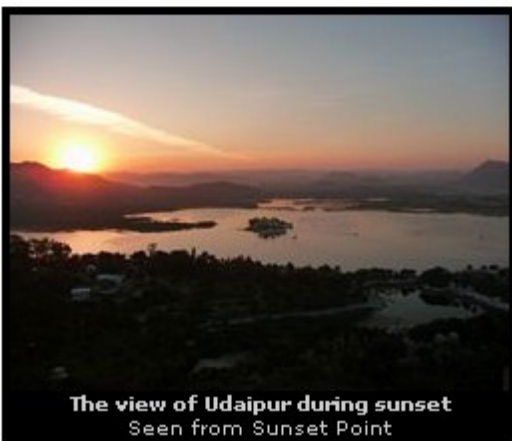
Udaipur from above
I guess we can call it the White City



The Cable Car
took us to Sunset Point



The view of Udaipur during sunset
Seen from Sunset Point



The view of Udaipur during sunset
Seen from Sunset Point



Udaipur during sunset
is truly magnificent!



The Lake Palace and Jagmandir island
in the background all lit up



The City Palace
At Night!



It's our wedding anniversary
And our room has been made up



Sula
Sampling the local bubbly



Suz with some bubbly
In our flower filled room



Fireworks over Udaipur
Only for us of course



Fireworks over Udaipur
Only for us of course



Indian Spicebox
It's time for our cooking course



Masala Chai
It all starts our with some great tea



It's Suz turn to cook
Five of us had to take turns cooking



Suz made a great
Khadai Paneer



"The Spice Boys"
As our teacher called us...



Making a Malai Kofta
A great dish!



Making Chapati
Very tasty and simple to make



Our Lunch
After all that cooking we also got to eat



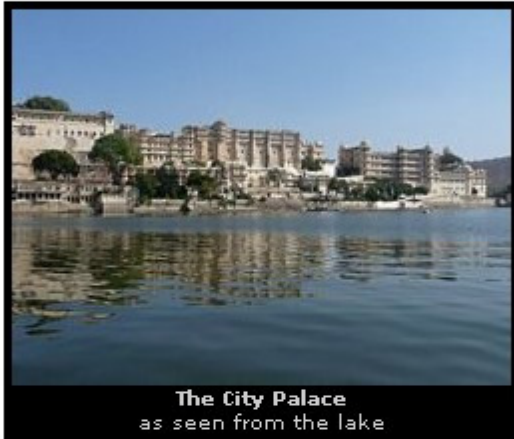
We're doing a boat trip
in Lake Pichola



The local women
doing some washing



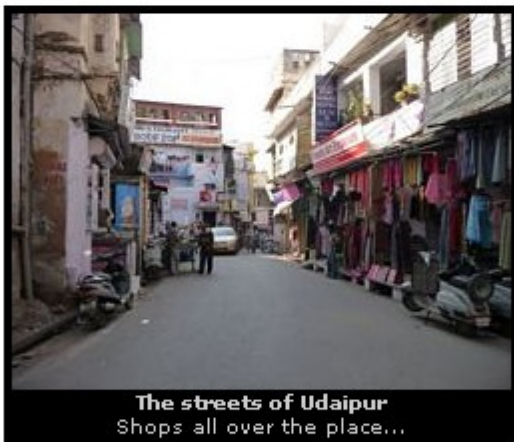
Some of the men
having a swim



The City Palace
as seen from the lake



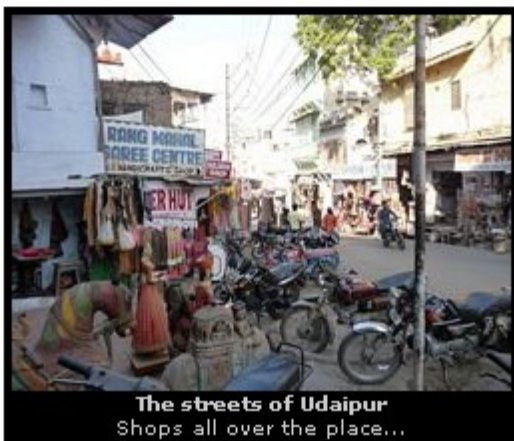
Cruising Lake Pichola
Lots of birds everywhere...



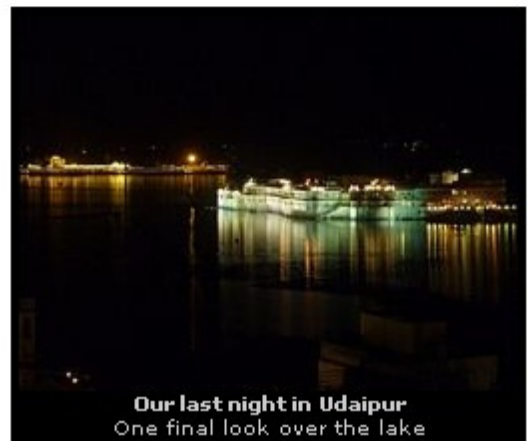
The streets of Udaipur
Shops all over the place...



"Way to Lal Ghat"
The area where we stayed



The streets of Udaipur
Shops all over the place...



Our last night in Udaipur
One final look over the lake