



**RAJASTHAN**

**The Incredible State of India !**

Opening up the windows of a unique landscape

**SAMBHAR**



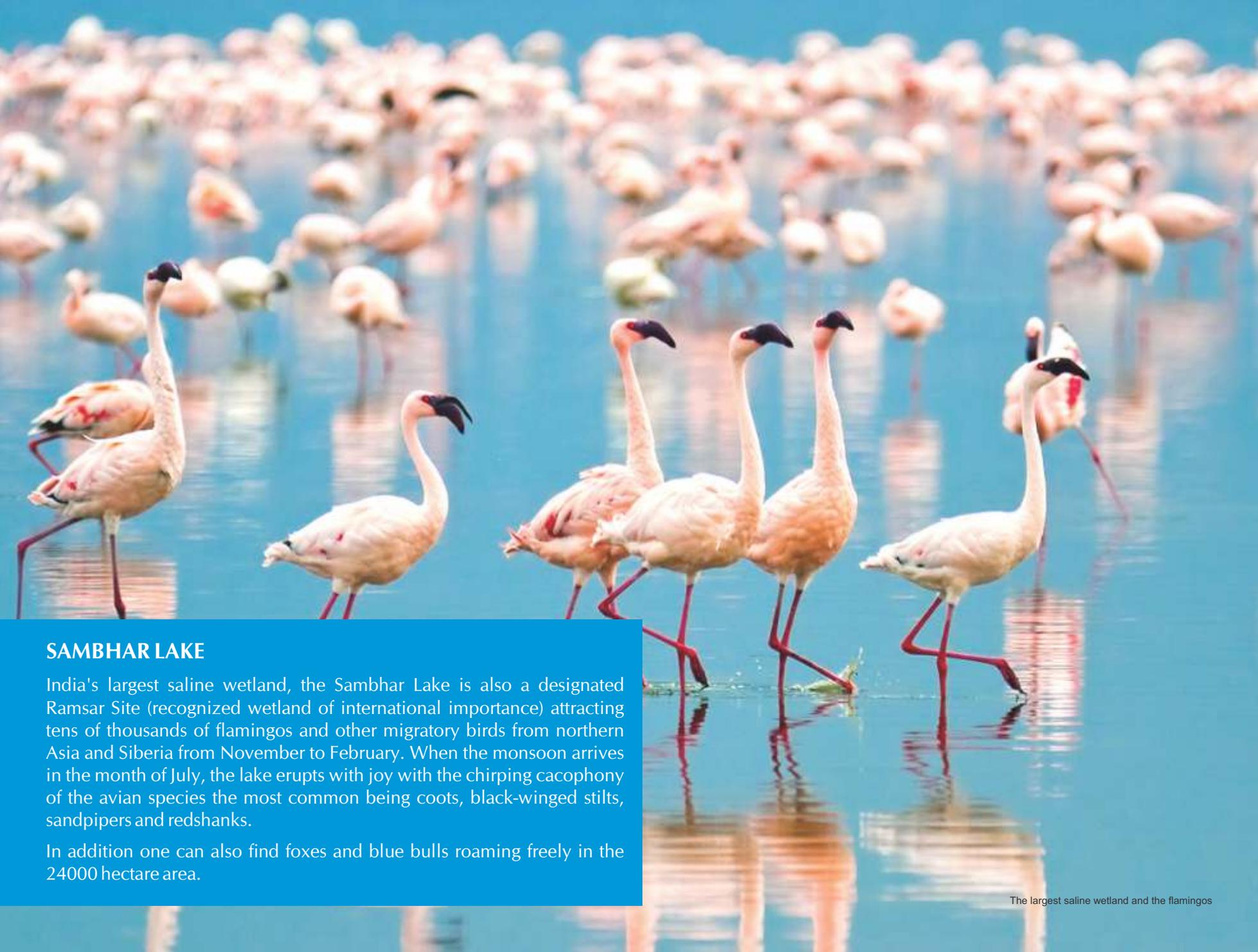
The civilization of the quaint salt town, Sambhar, goes back to the legendary epic of Mahabharata; mentioned as part of the territory of the demon king Vrishparva and as the place where the wedding of the daughter of priest Sukracharya, Devayani, and King Yayati took place.

Historical records reveal that the town of Sambhar was founded by Raja Vasudev of the Chauhan dynasty in 551 AD.

Over time, the Sindhias, Marathas and Mughals ruled it and in 1709, it was retrieved by the Rajputs. The rulers of Jaipur and Jodhpur jointly owned the lake, and who in 1870 leased it to the British.

The name, Sambhar, stems from the 2500 years old tutelary deity, Shakambhari, of the Chauhan Rajputs (Prithviraj Chauhan).

The colonial time infrastructure here includes heritage buildings, old salt museum, trolley train and the Circuit House.



## SAMBHAR LAKE

India's largest saline wetland, the Sambhar Lake is also a designated Ramsar Site (recognized wetland of international importance) attracting tens of thousands of flamingos and other migratory birds from northern Asia and Siberia from November to February. When the monsoon arrives in the month of July, the lake erupts with joy with the chirping cacophony of the avian species the most common being coots, black-winged stilts, sandpipers and redshanks.

In addition one can also find foxes and blue bulls roaming freely in the 24000 hectare area.

Sambhar Lake



Salt processing plant

## SALT MUSEUM & PROCESSING PLANT

The 80 sq km area of the eastern side of the 5.1 km long sandstone dam dividing the lake has the 1000 years old salt pans separated by narrow ridges and fed by the salt waters released from the 5700 square km catchment area in the west fed mainly by the Mendha and Rupangarh rivers. The railroad to the east of the dam built by the British provides access from the town of Sambhar to the salt works.

The destination also provides a glimpse into the process of salt extraction. Witnessing the salt wagging wagons and visit to the Salt Museum displaying salt samples from all over India housed in an old colonial building is a unique experience.

Salt Museum



Trolley train carrying salt



## Shakambhari Mata Temple

Legend has it that the Goddess Shakambhari Devi (the tutelary deity of the Chauhan Rajputs), converted the town of Sambhar to a plain of precious metals. Fearing that this will lead to endless feuds, the people here prayed to the Goddess to retract the boon and she obliged by converting the lake from precious metal to salt. The Salt Lake is known to have had its beginnings from here, and a temple in her honor stands under a rocky outcrop jutting into the lake, 15 km from the town of Sambhar in the village of Sirthula.

The 2500 years old temple dedicated to the Goddess Shakambhari, believed to be an incarnation of Goddess Durga is one the 3-shakipeeths attributed to Mother Shakambhari. It is a venue of a grand religious fair on the days of Bhado Sudi (Shukla Paksha) Ashtami.

According to another legend, the Mother had the austerity in this deserted place devoid of rains for hundreds of years. It is believed that during austerity she would consume Shakak-a vegetable only once in a month and the name Shakambhari stems from Shakak and Sambhar is further variation of Shakambhari.



Shakambhari Mata Temple



The little Pushkar, Devayani Kund

## Devayani Kund

Also known as the little Pushkar, Devayani Kund is one the several fresh water bodies surrounding the Sambhar Lake. The place finds mention in the epic Mahabharata as the site where Devayani, daughter of the guru of demons, Sukracharya married the King Yayati. A temple dedicated to Devayani stands by this tank.



Sharmistha Sarovar

## Sharmistha Sarovar

Sharmistha, the friend of Devayani was the daughter of great Daitya King Vrishparva and was given as dowry to King Yayati when he married Devayani. King Yayati also married Sharmistha and one of their three sons, Puru of epic Mahabharata is claimed as the progenitors of Jat clan. Sharmistha Sarovar is another such water body dedicated to Sharmistha.



Temple of Dadu Sect at Naraina

## Dadu Dwara Temples Naraina

70 km from Jaipur enroute Sambhar in the town of Naraina is the principal seat of the Acharya of Dadu Sect. Dadu means brother, and Dayal means the compassionate one. The founder, Dadu Dayal Maharaj born in 1544 AD is believed to be an incarnation of Sanat Kumar (the mind born son of the creator of universe-Lord Brahma). Dadu Dayal breathed his last at Naraina near Sambhar in 1603 A.D. He was a great mystic and spiritual master belonging to Nirguna Bhakti tradition as advocated by saints like Kabir, Guru Nanak, Meera Bai and Ravidas who all viewed the Lord as the ineffable absolute without shape or form. The Dadu Anubhav Vaani is a compilation of 5,000 verses of Dadu's composition recorded by his disciple Rajjab.

Chhatri  
at Naraina



## Bhairana

It is the place where mortal remains of the Saint Dadu Dayal were taken for the last rites. The place popularly known as Dadu Khol or Dadu Ganga having a large memorial is also a sacred spot where ashes of saints, sadhus and Dadupanthis (devotees of the Dadu Sect) are scattered.

Shree Dadu Vani  
Temple, Bhairana



## Naliasar

4 km south of the town of Sambhar, Naliasar is the site of archeological excavations. The terracotta figurines, coins and seals excavated at the site point to evidence of well-planned settlements going back to the Kushan and Gupta periods. The sculpture art appears to be influenced by Buddhism and a number of these sculptures from Sambhar are housed in Albert Hall Museum at Jaipur.



Archeological site of Naliasar



Heritage Toy Train Ride

## ACTIVITIES

Sambhar almost resembling the Rann of Kutch, Gujarat is not just a natural paradise but also offers a unique outdoor experience for adventure seekers.

Sitting under the night sky and gazing the stars; admiring the secluded vastness of the lake and walking on the salt bed is an enthralling experience.

It is a dream destination for those in love with riding bikes for its huge vacant land. Not just bikes but if you like to ride Jeep then also Sambhar won't let you go despair. More adventurous can enjoy camping here. The activities also include motor sport and cycling on well marked tracks.

### Heritage Walk

Amidst the temples, kunds and bazaars, you can take a heritage walk exploring the historic settlement of Sambhar

**Tourist Walk-Sambhar Town:** Sun Temple (Chhota Bazaar), Joshiyon ki Gali (via Charbhuj Temple), Nizammat (Nagar Palika Bhawan), Dadu Dwara, Bada Bazaar, Nikasa Mohalla, Mataji ka Chabutra, Ram Leela Rang Manch, Dargah, Jain Temple, Gola Bazaar

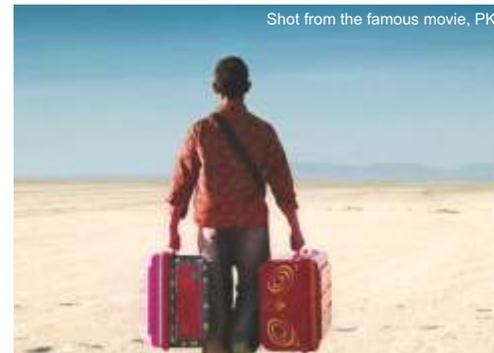
**Must Do:** Savour the delicacy of the Feeni Sweet of Sambhar and shop for the traditional village jewellery.

Also it is worth to visit Circuit House here standing witness to the town's British legacy. It still has a lift operating through a pulley system to haul food and related items to the second storey and its balcony offers a view of the entire lake system.



Camping in the lake bed

## SHOOTING DESTINATION



Shot from the famous movie, PK

For its exotic locations the Bollywood has found an interest in Sambhar. Scenes of some of the popular cinema shot here includes names like Rajkumar Hirani's popular film- PK, Ashutosh Gowariker's - Jodha Akbar, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra's -

Delhi-6 and Sanjay Leela Bhansali's -Ram Leela. Nissan GT-R recreated the approximate outline of Indian map spanning 3km in length and 2.8km in width with a total outline periphery of 14.7km at the vast expanse of Sambhar Lake.



Night sky and star gazing



Witness to town's British legacy, Circuit House



Banzaron ki chhatri

**2-Day Proposed Itinerary**

**Day I:** Heritage walk to Havelis and local Sambhar Town Bazaar, excursion to pilgrimage sites of Nairana, Bhairana, archeological site of Naliasar, return to Sambhar and Star Gazing at night

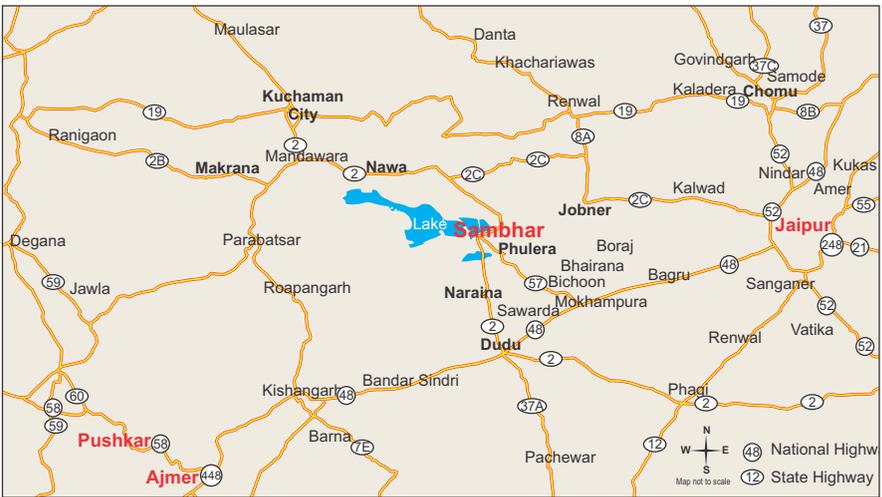
**Day II:** Early morning Bird Watching, Cycling Tour, visit to famous Shakambhari Temple, Devayani Kund, Sharmistha Sarovar and Train Ride at Sambhar Salt Lake



The old haveli in the town



Feeni



**Getting There**

Jaipur is the nearest international airport, 90 km. The railway station at Sambhar is well connected to daily train service from Jaipur, Jodhpur and Nagaur. By road from Jaipur, one can take Ajmer Jaipur NH 8 and then head further 28 km in north to Sambhar. Sambhar is just 8 km from Phulera on SH 57. Ajmer in the northeast is 64 km by road. State owned RSRTC buses ply regularly to Sambhar and tourist cabs can be hired for a day trip to Sambhar from Jaipur.

Tonga (horse carts) and auto rickshaws are there for local transportation and jeeps can be hired for the places of tourist interest and excursions around.



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The Incredible State of India !

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