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# Brand Pushkar: The Cultural and Religious Heritage as USP

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**ABSTRACT:** Tirth Raj Pushkar, abode of Lord Brahma is a small town situated 14 kms. North West of Ajmer city (Rajasthan state) in the Aravali ranges and stands as a testimony to the rich culture of Rajasthan and religious heritage of India. It is considered as one of the most sacred place of Hindus and a holy dip in the Pushkar Lake is essential for all. A colorful and lively huge cattle fair is held every year on Kartik Purnima and lacs of pilgrims and ascetics gather here

**KEYWORDS:** Pushkar, brand, cultural, religious, USP, heritage

## I. INTRODUCTION

A trip to Pushkar, the holy abode of the creator of the universe, Lord Brahma, would pretty much encapsulate the entire 'Eat, Pray' experience. And unlike Elizebath Gilbert, you won't need to travel three countries to experience indulgence with life, food, mysticism, uncanny coincidences and situations. Pushkar simply enthrals and entraps a visitor. Just when everyone thought Pushkar as a destination was dying a slow death, the quaint locale known for its annual fair, has done a turn around. Growing out of the annual cattle fair, Pushkar is transforming into a destination on its own, with several new hotels setting shop in the holy town.[1,2,3]

That Pushkar is a trip to the cattle fair is an understatement. For the first time visitor to the cattle fair, there is little you can absorb beyond the camels, horses, cattle. However, once done with that, the vivacious spirit of the town simply takes over you.

And according to a tour operator, this experience is the USP of Pushkar, something that attracts hoards of foreign tourists to the town. Unlike other destinations Pushkar is a rare combination of the dunes, lakes, hills and the forest, a town that invites a visit 'encore. Particularly on Kartik Poornima (the full moon night) the small town of Pushkar transforms into a cultural phenomenon when villagers dress in vibrant colours. Devotees, musicians, acrobats, folk dancers, traders, comedians, sadhus and tourists all throng the holy town for the Pushkar fair. If at one end, sadhus at different ghats can be seen performing puja, pilgrims — men, women and children believe in taking a holy dip in the water on the full moon night for salvation. The 52 ghats, in all, are packed with large crowds.

According to travel agents, Pushkar is a destination where East meets the West. During the fair foreign nationals participate with verve in camel races, folk performances, body tattooing, ethnic shopping, puppet shows, hot air ballooning and taking a ride on the quintessential village giant wheel.

Most of them are repeat visitors who carry back with them a bit of Pushkar with every visit. "Besides the destination is an apt sobriquet of composite culture, where people of all faith and culture — Muslims to Naga babas', 'bagwa' or the 'jatau' sages soak in the ethos of the town," said Bina Kak, minister tourism, art and culture.

In a destination that has evolved over years, the culinary diversity would amaze a gourmet lover. From lip-smacking 'maalpuas' and 'kachories', Pushkar can offer the best pizzas and enchiladas, which according to restaurant owners have been mastered to perfection under supervision from foreign tourists. "Over the years, our staff has picked the culinary skills from visiting tourists," said Babulal Dagdi owner of the Sun-Set Café who switched from farming to running a hotel and a cafe by the lake side.

That's not all. For a shopaholic too, Pushkar is a treat. Countless shops with all sorts of products, including traditional Rajasthani jewellery, clothes and artifacts' are a big draw with the crowds. "The traders sell a lot of products like woollen blankets of Merta, bead necklaces of Nagaur, textiles printed in Ajmer and Jodhpur, brassware of Jodhpur and Jaipur," said a shopkeeper.

## II. DISCUSSION

It is reluctantly the place of Zen and peace. The city is located among the mountains. Pushkar is basically located 15 kms from Ajmer, i.e. half an hour journey and on the way, the entire view changes from a city to a mountain. You will get anything and everything in this place, only on two conditions - Stay by the rules of the People & No liquor. It is hard to believe that Pushkar is the only place in the world to have a Lord Brahma Temple in its heart, yet the faith of the people is towards their truthful dedication in maintaining this city. This attitude has attracted many foreigners[4,5,6] and this place flooded with them. Rather, people around the world leave their jobs and lives and have settled among the people of Pushkar, working for odd jobs or having a small business within this city. Hence, you will find a lot of hippie culture and people. The serene and calmness of the people will actually make you forget your life and you will enter into a world of peace and Zen. In the centre of the city is the Pushkar Lake, which is surrounded by various ghats. We stayed at Hotel Lake View, which was located on one of the ghats itself. The USP of this hotel was the view and huge lounge area which they turned into a cafe. The best part of the city was the evenings, when the entire population of Pushkar, gather up near the ghat for the Evening Aarti. The lake is suddenly is brightened with lots of floating lamps and various aarti kavandal's on the ghat. If you believe or don't believe in god, P.S. I am an atheist by mind not by heart, you must witness this aarti as you will be engaged with sounds and chanting's of the aarti. Seriously, we felt a lot of peace and tranquility as we had daily attended the evening aarti.

Life in Pushkar begins at around 5 AM from the morning aarti, the exact same way it happens in the evening, followed by the arrival and darshan of the various devotees who flock in to pay their respect to Lord Brahma and Pushkar Maharaj. The lake is surrounded by the Pushkar Market which gives a taste of ethnic and hippie culture and clothing. T-shirts, harem pants, kurta, bandana's, accessories, etc. all are available at very cheap and profitable rates. The quality is also brilliant as I myself had done a lot of shopping for almost everyone, except for me. For crazy shopping people, including and especially all the girls, Pushkar is like a "Mother ship of Shopping".

And for crazy foodie's, like me, Pushkar is delight of variety and taste. Most of the restaurants and cafe's serve you Western food; you will hardly find any place to have Indian food. Yet, all the cafes and restaurants serve Indian taste also. If you are interested in having something of Pushkar specialty then have Gulkand Lassi near the steps of Brahma Temple. This lassi will not just excite you with its taste, but the aroma of gulkand and lotus petals will roam in your throat and stomach.

Below is a list of the breakfast food we had in our 5 day stay:

- 1.) Veg. Porodna
- 2.) Cheese Tomato Toast
- 3.) Finger Chips
- 4.) Mangofie Pie
- 5.) Mix Fruit Salad
- 6.) Veg. Fried Rice
- 7.) Almond & Fried Pizza
- 8.) Milk Coffee
- 9.) Honey Cheese Pancakes
- 10.) Cheese Spinach Roll.

(P.S. this is the list of only the morning breakfast we had, I forgot what we had during lunch and dinner.)

Learn Free Drum Classes: Nathulal Solanki is on the most famous and master drum players of Pushkar. He plays in the evening from 5 to 6 near the ghats. He puts a few sets of Rajasthani Drums and sticks, and you can just sit with him and join with him to play the drums. It sounds weird in the beginning, but rather you will enjoy and feel blissful by playing those drums. He charges no fee, only accepts genuine donations, and plays along with a few foreigners and locals.

Dip in Lake: You can take as many dips you want in the lake; however you have to at least perform one aarti for Pushkar Maharaj. The only thing you have to make sure is that you don't click or take any videos of the people bathing along the lake.

Cycle Away: You can simply hire a cycle for a day or two and you can paddle yourself in the city. The city being small in size, you won't feel tired and bored also. Cycling away in the city will make you relieve your days of childhood when you used to cycle.

Visit to Temples: Being in Pushkar and not visiting the only Brahma Temple in the entire world, would make your trip incomplete. Yes, the Brahma Temple is the only temple in the world where Lord Brahma is worshiped. Devotee's flock

around from every corner of India and show their devotion to Lord Brahma. From there, you can walk up Savitri Mandir by taking 500 steps to the temple which is located near the mountain across the lake.

Pink Floyd Cafe: Yes, you heard it. This cafe is especially dedicated to Pink Floyd. It is a cafe and a hotel, where there are rooms on the 1st and 2nd floor, and the cafe is on the 3rd floor and the roof. The cafe plays continuous Pink Floyd music and serves you with some awesome food and drinks. It is a heaven for those who follow Pink Floyd or their culture. [7,8,9]

Well, there are other lot of things that can be done in Pushkar which I might have not experienced but the most important thing you can do is be at Peace. Yes, I experienced a lot of peace and calmness in Pushkar which also helped me polish my skills of writing and observations. And yes the best part of my trip was none other than Indian Ocean Live at Pushkar. Yes, Indian Ocean had performed live at Pushkar when we arrived. The show was staged on the Pushkar Chowk, with open to all. The crowd went mesmerizing with the soulful tunes and beats of the music and lyrics of Indian Ocean.

In the end, I would like to share two quotes from this Trip. The first one was written on a tea stall, where we had coffee.

### **III. RESULTS**

The holy city of Pushkar is located in the Ajmer district of Rajasthan. It is known as one of the scared pilgrimage centers or dhams for the devout Hindus. It is believed Lord Brahma created the Pushkar Lake and the site is considered the king of all other pilgrimage sites in the country.

#### **Pushkar Fair and Celebrations**

Pushkar fair upholds the rich cultural heritage of the city. Pilgrimage and livestock fair constitutes the two aspects of the Pushkar Fair. The trade in camel and cattle are the major attractions for the locals as well as the tourists that happen in the beginning of the festival.

The local breeders and herdsmen buy and sell different breeds of cattle, horses and camels in the largest cattle fairs. The whole town of Pushkar comes to life with the bustling and vibrant activities of the fair. The town gets flooded with musicians, traders, tourists, journalists, photographers from far and wide.

Villagers in the hinterland wait all through the year to attend the world famous festival. Different friendly contests are held in course of the fair that benefits the locals as well as the tourists. The contests are held in amphi-theatres specially built on the outskirts of the towns.

#### **Handicrafts in Pushkar**

Ethnic costumes, clothes, groovy accessories, silver jewelry, traditional handicrafts and souvenirs such as embroidered fabrics, puppets, and brass utensils are some of the home ware items. There is different variety of clothes such as kaftans, culottes, kurtas, tunics, dhoti pants, sarongs, shrugs and dresses made of silk and polyester fabrics that you can get here. Make sure to look into the beaded necklaces, lac bangles, funky bracelets, oxidized silver, fancy footwear and other traditional items that depict the cultural heritage of Pushkar.

#### **Food Culture in Pushkar**

Being a holy town, the food served in hotels and restaurants are purely vegetarian. The common ingredients used in food are ginger, garlic, turmeric, curd and pure ghee is also in many dishes. The everyday menu includes vegetable dishes, puri, chapatti, rice, aloo barta, pakori kadhi, papad ki sabzi, daal baati churma. The city is well known for malpua, a kind of sweet dish.

#### **Lifestyle in Pushkar**

Pushkar, being a small town depicts simple living practices. While touring around the city, you can get an idea about the tremendous potential of the city. Pushkar generally has a traditional society, however; the lifestyle can be said a perfect mixture of modernity and traditionalism. There is no dearth of cosmopolitan and traditional culture in the city.

- While roaming around you will come across suave and simple habitants
- People living there are extremely hospitable
- You can feel a strong blend of modern together with traditional values
- People there are highly religious
- Shopping constitutes a major pass time of the people there



- There is a strong influence on dance and music in their daily life[10,11,12]

Lifestyle in Pushkar largely depends on the weather conditions. The city experiences extreme summer conditions and in winters the temperature dips down to extreme level. People gather together and enjoy the Pushkar fair. They shop around, eat, and participate in games to make the most of the fair. Camel trading is highly popular in different parts of the city.

**Destination Overview:** Nestled within the pristine embrace of the western Aravalli Range, Pushkar stands as a confluence of tradition and modernity. With its revered temples, picturesque landscapes, and vibrant culture, the town has long captured the hearts of pilgrims and travellers alike. However, beyond its spiritual allure, Pushkar has emerged as a promising investment destination in the hospitality sector.

**Market Potential:** Pushkar's significance as a religious and cultural hub has paved the way for a flourishing tourism industry. Its annual Pushkar Mela, drawing thousands, underscores the town's capacity to host large-scale events. The availability of diverse recreational activities, from camel safaris to tranquil lake experiences, further augments its appeal to a wide spectrum of visitors.

**Investment Landscape:** Pushkar's evolving investment landscape reflects a symbiotic relationship between tradition and modernity. The hospitality sector has burgeoned, offering a range of accommodation options, from boutique guesthouses to luxurious resorts. This diverse portfolio caters to varying budgets, making it an attractive proposition for both domestic and international tourists.

**Market Dynamics:** The tourism industry in Pushkar thrives year-round, with the period from October to March marking the zenith of footfall due to favourable weather conditions. This predictable seasonality provides investors with a clear roadmap for optimized occupancy rates and revenue streams.

**Infrastructure Development:** As a response to the growing tourism demand, infrastructure development is a priority in Pushkar. Improvement of transportation connectivity, both within the town and its accessibility from key cities, is pivotal to sustaining the growth trajectory. Moreover, the enhancement of medical facilities and local transport systems is imperative for an all-encompassing visitor experience.

**Investment Potential:** Pushkar's investment potential lies in its ability to capitalize on its spiritual and cultural heritage while embracing modern hospitality trends. The town's capacity to host large events and its appeal to diverse traveller profiles make it a strategic location for hoteliers and investors eyeing the experiential travel segment.

Pushkar's evolution from a religious retreat to an investment haven mirrors its journey from tradition to modernity. As pilgrimage and leisure converge, the town's investment prospects grow in tandem. The symphony of spiritual richness and burgeoning hospitality creates a harmonious melody that resonates with both the spiritual seeker and the astute investor.

The Pushkar Fair, also known as the Pushkar Camel Fair, is one of the most vibrant cultural and religious events in India. It is an annual five-day event that takes place in the small town of Pushkar, Rajasthan. The fair is a unique combination of culture, religion, and livestock trading. Every year, the fair attracts thousands of visitors from across the world, who come to experience the vibrant atmosphere and participate in various cultural and religious events.

#### History and Significance of the Pushkar Fair[13,14,15]

The Pushkar Fair has a long and rich history that dates back to ancient times. According to Hindu mythology, Lord Brahma, the creator of the universe, dropped a lotus flower on the ground, which created a holy lake in Pushkar. The town is considered one of the most sacred places in India, and the lake is believed to have the power to wash away sins.



The fair is held in the month of Kartik, according to the Hindu calendar, which falls between October and November. The main purpose of the fair is to celebrate the Kartik Purnima, the full moon day of the Kartik month. It is believed that taking a dip in the holy lake during Kartik Purnima washes away all sins and brings good luck.

#### The Camel Fair - A Unique Blend of Culture and Trade

The Pushkar Fair is famous for its camel fair, where thousands of camels, horses, and cattle are traded. The traders come from all over Rajasthan and neighboring states to sell their livestock. The fair is an excellent opportunity for buyers to purchase camels and other animals for transportation, agriculture, and milk production.



Apart from the livestock trading, the fair is also a cultural extravaganza. The fairground is bustling with activities, including folk dances, music, and puppet shows. The locals dress up in traditional attire and display their skills in various competitions, including the mustache and turban tying competition.[16,17,18]

The Pushkar Fair is a unique blend of culture, trade, and tourism. The fair has become a major attraction for tourists from across the world, who come to witness the vibrant atmosphere and participate in various activities.[19]

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The Pushkar Fair is a celebration of culture, religion, and tradition. It is a unique blend of ancient mythology, livestock trading, and tourism. The fair offers visitors a chance to experience the vibrant atmosphere of Rajasthan and participate in various cultural and religious events. The camel fair is a major attraction, where traders from across the region come to sell their livestock. The fair is a must-visit destination for anyone who wants to experience the vibrant melting pot of culture, religion, and camels.[20]

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