

## "A Day in Varanasi"

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### Bharat Mata Mandir

"Temple For Mother India"

If there was ever a word to describe the concept and layout of Bharat Mata Mandir, it is INIMITABLE. This one isn't an ode to the legacies of Laxmi, Shiva, Ganesha, Hanuman or Ram; it is the ultimate tribute to Mother India (Bharat Mata). Upon entering, one is stunned into silence with the sunken-level three-dimensional relief map of undivided India, carved from marble and with every proportion in place. The range of Himalayas protruding upwards particularly catches the eye, so do the smaller mountain ranges and oceans along the west coast. Brainchild of the artistic duo of Babu Shiv Prashad Gupta and Shri Durga Prashad Khatri, this matchless work of art was built in 1936 and inaugurated by Mahatma Gandhi.



📞 +91 542 220 6638 (Tourist Information)

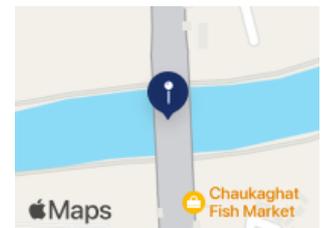
📍 Vidyapeeth Road, Varanasi



### Varuna River

"The Silent Messenger"

Named after Varuna, the Vedic god of water and the sea, this river is a small tributary of the mighty Ganges. The river flows into the Ganges at the northern side of Varanasi, and there are believable theories that the city got its name because of the convergence of two rivers Varuna and Assi. This small and gentle river carves a simple landscape in the northern neighborhoods of the city before reaching out for the confluence.



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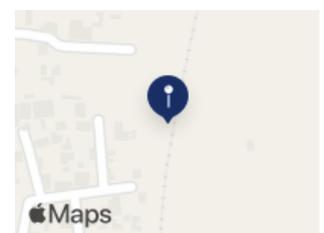
📍 Chowka Ghat Bridge, Varanasi



### Godowlia Market

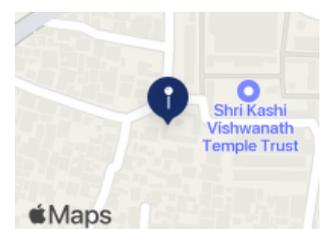
"Busy Shopping Alley"

Nestled in the heart of the buzzing Maheshpur town, Godowlia Market is swarming with local traders selling all kinds of stuff at great bargains. Found at a short distance from the nearest railway station, it is labeled as one of the busiest open markets of the city, and quite rightly so. The cramped lanes are packed with stalls selling household essentials, ethnic jewelry, handmade shawls and zari garments, among other intricately designed apparel. Post a tiring shopping spree at Godowlia, one may choose the visit the serene Kashi Temple lying a few blocks ahead.



📷 by aloiswohlfahrt ©

📍 DLW Road, Near To The Entrance Of Kashi Temple, Maheshpur, Varanasi



## Vishwanath Gali

"Kashi's Buzzing Shopping Hub"

A bustling market in the heart of the holy city, Vishwanath Gali is where you can find all things local and traditional. While the market largely caters to pilgrims headed to the nearby Kashi Vishwanath Temple, it is also buzzing with a number of shops that sell Banarasi sarees, dress materials, religious books, statues and jewelry. Particularly popular with foreign tourists are brass items and the Rudraksha mala.



Vishwanath Gali, Near Kahivishwanath Temple, Lohari Tola, Varanasi

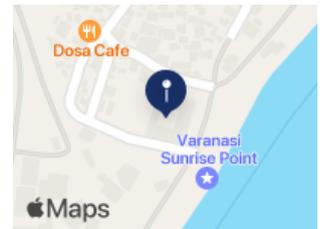


## Jantar Mantar

"Sacred City's Prime Obervatory"

Perched on the terrace of the magnificent Man Mahal Palace, Jantar Mantar is Varanasi's prime observatory, designed to the likes of the ones found in New Delhi and Jaipur. Constructed by Maharaja Jai Singh in they year 1737, the science museum showcases various milestones of India achieved in the field of astrology and science. Apart from serving its main purpose of helping determine stars and planet positions, it also helps to measure altitude, local standard time and the sun position.

by Ghumakkar Punit



Dashashwamedh Ghat Road, Rajendra Prasad Ghat, Dasaswamedha, Bangali Tola, Varanasi



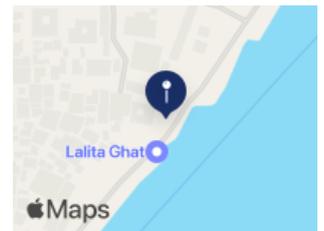
## Nepali Temple

"Beauty in Wood"

Wooden carvings adorn the walls of this small beautiful temple, built by the King of Nepal, at the Lalitha Ghat. Reminiscent of a rich tradition of craftsmanship, the temple creates awe in the eyes of every visitor. The setting is peaceful and calm with a natural silence lingering around the place. Inside the shrine is the Pasupathi Nath Shiva Linga, which is worshiped by devotees. There is a nominal entry fee to visit the Nepali temple, which goes to the welfare trust of the temple.

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Lalita Ghat, Varanasi



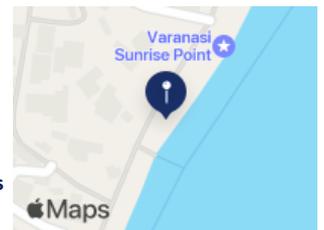
## River Ganges

"Holy Waters"

Carving one of the world's mostly populated river beds, River Ganges, believed to be arising directly from Lord Shiva's head, is the holy mother for North India. The ancient city of Varanasi is one of the most prolific gifts of this stunning river which ranks top among the world's big rivers in the amount of water discharge. The 7 kilometer (4.34 mile) stretch of the ghats along River Ganges is a major site of sacred rituals in Hindu tradition; Dasashwamedh Ghat and Manikarnika Ghat being the most popular. Originating from Himalayan glaciers, this river is considered as one of the largest in India and surely is a ravishing sight in spite of the devouring pollution.

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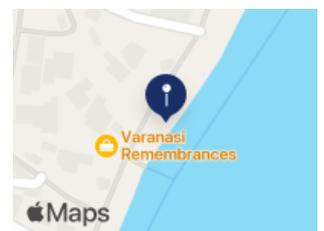
Dasashwamedh Ghat, Varanasi



## Dasashwamedh Ghat

"The Prayer to Ganges"

Pointing to a time when horse sacrifice was common, the translation of the name Dasashwamedh says 'the place where ten horses were sacrificed'. Hindu mythology says the creator Brahma did a sacrifice here to let Lord Shiva get back to Varanasi; and thus it is one of the most



auspicious sites for Hindus all over the world. This is the site of the stunning Ganga Aarti, which is performed daily on the raised platforms on the ghat with seven priests doing choreographed ritualistic offerings to mother Ganga. Considered as the most important ghat along the banks of Ganga, a large number of guesthouses and restaurants are located around the area. The main burning ghat, Manikarnika is towards the north. One of the most ancient sites in the city, Dasaswamedh Ghat is a legendary sight filled with tourists and pilgrims.

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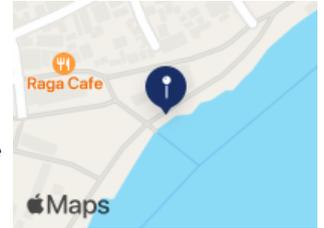
Dasaswamedh Ghat, Varanasi



## Manikarnika Ghat

"Ashes Liberate!"

According to Hindu tradition, people cremated at the Manikarnika Ghat after death will be freed from the chain of life and death. That explains the chaos, mystery, indifference, noise and everything surrounding this area which is said to be the abode of Lord Shiva. The name Manikarnika goes back to the story where Shiva dropped his earrings at the well here during his transcendental dance and it came to know as Manikarnika Kund. The cremations take place without break and fills the air with the smell of burning flesh which is surprisingly not repulsive. Foreigners from all around the globe watch the activities here with much intrigue and the locals take it with compassion though not without a fragment of disdain. The apparent indifferent face of death is reinforced with the underlying philosophy of material transition and is something that has to be experienced.



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Manikarnika Ghat, Varanasi

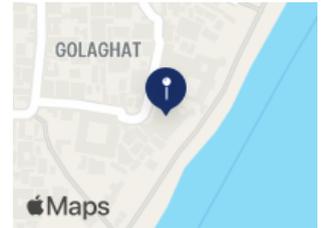


by Dibendu Nandi

## Kashi Vishwanath Temple

"Varanasi's Holiest"

The exalted Kashi Vishwanath Temple finds itself mentioned in ancient Hindu scriptures, and was actually built in 490 CE but fell prey to successive demolitions by the Mughal invaders all through the centuries. The present temple was built in 1790 by the warrior queen Ahilyabai Holkar who was aggrieved by the wanton destruction of age-old sacred structures. Hindus believe that a dip in the river Ganges and a visit to this temple serves to break free from the cycle of rebirth. Also referred to as Golden Temple because of the spire which was made from pure gold donated by Maharaja Ranjith Singh, this temple is a must-visit. The main deity here is a black lingam upon which devotees pour blessed water. Foreigners have to register their passports to enter the premises as security has been beefed up in recent years due to the looming terrorist threat. Mobile phones, cameras and bags of all visitors have to be deposited at any of the shops that line the entrance, while police urge crowds to hurry and keep moving. The experience is most intense, intriguing and divine.

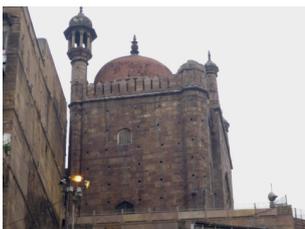


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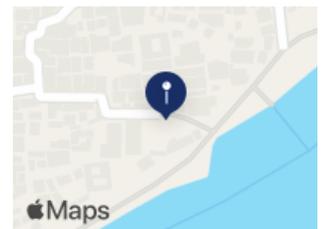
Vishwanath Gali, Varanasi



## Alamgir Mosque

"Magnificent Mosque"

Alternately known as Aurangzeb Mosque or Dharahara Mosque, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)- protected Alamgir Mosque enjoys a superb location along the relatively quieter Panchganga Ghat which is sacred to Hindu bathers. A steep climb will lead you up to one of Varanasi's most celebrated landmarks which pretty much defines the skyline with its spectacular brown minarets. Built by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb upon the site of the Bindu Madhava Temple, legend has it that this structure was actually much taller than its present state, and the Emperor enjoyed views all across to Delhi! While there is no way of verifying this, there remains no doubt that this mosque is a must-visit especially for its unusual architecture manifesting both Hindu and Mughal elements. Its proximity to the nearby Shri Laxmi Narayan Mandir and the



newer Bindu Mahadev Temple reflects the co-existence of 2 major world religions - Hinduism and Islam.

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Panchganga Ghat, Varanasi



## Durga Kund

### "Reflections of an Other World"

This rectangular pond beside the Durga Temple and Anand Bagh Park is a major land mark in the holy city of Varanasi. Landscaped by the the supreme aesthetics of the Durga temple, Durga Kund is visually appealing. The reflection of the stunning red structure of the temple bestows charm to the water in the pond which is otherwise dull. Built in the 18th Century by a Queen of Bengal, the pond was once used by devotees for a dip.



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Durgakund Road, Varanasi



## Banaras Art Gallery

### "Varanasi on a Canvas"

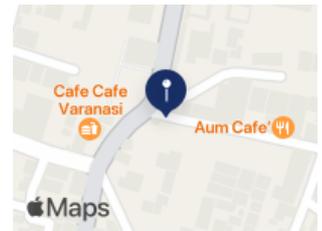
The holy city's Banaras Art Gallery is a thriving fine art exposition space established in the year 1988. Set up to promote the vibrant culture and illustrious heritage of the city, it supports various modern as well as tribal artistes of the region. Art lovers can explore myriad art works depicting Varanasi in various forms and portrayals. The gallery also runs the PUNARWAS art program in a bid to provide a successful platform to emerging artistes.

by Hans

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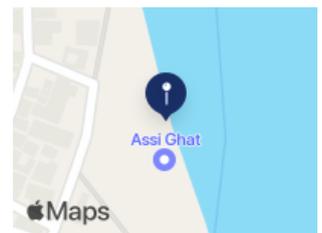
B 1/256 Asi Main Road, Rani Luxmi Bai Lane, near Chota Nagpur marriage lawn, Shivala, Varanasi



## Assi Ghat

### "Awesome Assi"

This is the unofficial yet lionized home of long-term backpackers, researchers and students who have chosen to stay on for extended periods of time in Varanasi. The southernmost ghat on the long stretch of ghats, life at Assi is as indulgent as the water buffaloes who wallow around for hours on end in the Ganges. Despite its distance from the main burning ghats, travelers head here for a break from the intrusive touts, guides, fake holy men, beggars, boat men, masseurs and even children who participate with great fervor in the contrived chaos. Assi has a large Jewish community and this is reflected through the hotels and cafes with names such as Haifa and Yafah which serve up typically Middle Eastern dishes like hummus, falafel, baba ghanoush and kawwah (Arabic Coffee). Assi Ghat has been mentioned in the ancient Indian Vedic texts and commands the respect of Indian pilgrims too who arrive here in boats or on foot for a holy dip.



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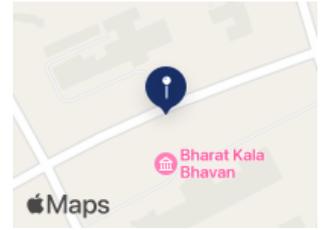
Assi Ghat, Varanasi



## Bharat Kala Bhavan

"Culture Preserved"

Established in 1920, this museum of Banaras Hindu University has a vast collection of artifacts portraying the cultural and artistic heritage of the region. Patronized by renowned poet Rabindranath Tagore, and art historian Rai Krishnadasa, the museum boasts an authoritative collection of decorative art, textiles and archeological materials. The collection is organized through specific galleries such as Mahamana Malviya Gallery, Nicholas Roerich Gallery, Chavi (Painting Gallery), Nidhi Gallery and the likes. The painting collection at Bharat Kala Bhavan richly portray the captivating expression of Indian fine art.



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[www.bhu.ac.in/](http://www.bhu.ac.in/)

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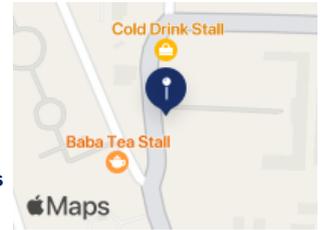
Off University Road, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi



## Archaeological Museum Sarnath

"Preserving Buddhist Culture"

Established in 1910, the museum building itself partly follows the construction plan of a monastery. The wide collection inside dates back from 3rd Century BCE to 12th Century CE. Lion Capital of Ashoka, which is exhibited at the center of the main hall 'Shakyasimha gallery', is the celebrated attraction of Archeological Museum Sarnath. Also on display is a large number of Buddha statues in various postures. Many historic landmarks detailing the evolution of Buddha philosophy can be observed at this authoritative collection which is a treasure-trove for researchers and scholars.



+91 542 259 5095

[www.asi.nic.in/asi\\_museums\\_sarnath.asp](http://www.asi.nic.in/asi_museums_sarnath.asp)

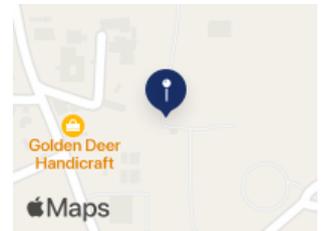
Dharmpal Road, Varanasi



## Sarnath

"Buddha Smiles"

Located 13 kilometers (8 miles) away from the holy city of Varanasi, Sarnath is a major site of Buddhist pilgrimage. The deer park here is believed to be the location where Gautama Buddha gave his first lecture after attaining enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree in Bodhgaya. Also known as Isipatana, the major sight here are the ruins of historic Buddhist establishments mostly destroyed by Muslim invasion. Dhamek Stupa, is another conspicuous sight inside this stunning archeological complex. The Archeological Museum and the base of the famous Ashoka Pillar are also things not to miss in Sarnath. The location is bestowed with a lot of Tibetan, Burmese and Chinese monasteries which interests visitors with their distinctive architecture and layout. A small number of guesthouses and restaurants are also available in the area.



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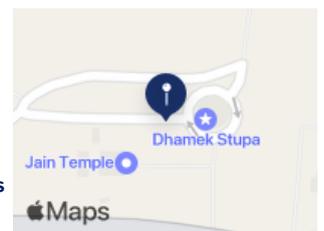
Sarnath, Varanasi



## Dhamek Stupa

"Massive Reminder!"

One of the most prominent sites in Sarnath, where Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon after attaining enlightenment, the original structure of Dhamek Stupa was built in 249 BCE by emperor Asoka. This structure was later replaced in 500 CE. Still withstanding some parts of the original build, this is a stunning sight and visited by pilgrims and tourists from all parts of the world. Beautiful stone carvings are visible at the base of this massive 43.6 meter (143.044 feet) structure, which was much taller in its original form. Part of the complex of Ancient Remains, the adjacent compound has a Jain Temple. Archeological Museum, Deer Park and Modern Reception Center are also nearby.





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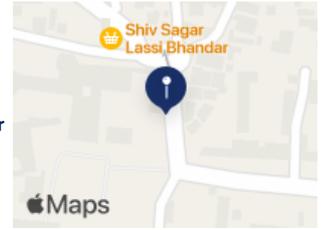
Dharmpal Road, Varanasi



## Ramnagar Fort

### "Majestic Fort"

Set upon the eastern banks of the River Ganges is the imposing Ramnagar Fort which was built from red sandstone and marble in the 17th Century by Maharajah Balwant Singh. The sprawling complex also includes a couple of temples which enjoy expansive views of the river and of melancholic sunsets which get further compounded by silhouettes of the water buffaloes trudging along forlornly in the distance. A museum within, captivates visitors with its collection of Rolls Royce cars, hunting rifles and palanquins which were used by members of the erstwhile royal family. The Maharajah of Varanasi lives here in his palace which is off-limits to casual tourists. The best time to visit is probably before sunset as this is one of the few attractions in Varanasi which affords visitors sunset views. Entrance to the fort complex itself is free but charges apply for museum entry.



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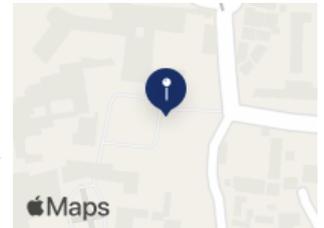
Off NH 7, Eastern Banks of Ganges, Varanasi



## Ramnagar Fort Museum

### "Inspiring Past"

With a vast collection of vintage cars, palanquins, weapons and other artifacts, the museum inside Ramnagar Fort takes you through a ride back to the glorious rule of Varanasi Kings. The museum effortlessly creates the atmosphere of royal living in tune with the general vibe felt at this nostalgic city. Like the surreal sunset that is visible from the Fort balcony, the museum creates a sense of well being and good taste through the numerous collectibles and art works. The dark corridors and the preserved courtroom tell stories of a rich past. The highlight of the Ramnagar Museum is an astrological clock which displays the phases of moon along with the correct time and date. Do not miss this awe-inspiring destination which is just ten minutes away from Assi Ghat. Also visit the few historic temples around the area like the Vyasa Temple and the Durga Temple. Admission price different for foreign nationals.



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Off NH 7, Ramnagar Fort, Varanasi

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