
South Pakistan: History, Culture, Heritage Sites September 29-October 9, 2022

Pakistan is the site of some of the earliest human settlements, home to an ancient civilization rivaling those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and the crucible of two of the world's major religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, both of which have their roots in the subcontinent.

We shall visit several UNESCO World Heritage sites in Islamabad and Peshawar as well as the Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in the ancient Indus Valley

Sep 29 Day 1: Arrival in Islamabad-Peshawar / Hotel Papae near airport (B,L)

Most flights arrive early morning. On arrival transfer to hotel for immediate check-in and breakfast. If you book a flight arriving in afternoon or evening, book it for the day prior.

At about 10 am drive approx. 45 min to Taxila and visit world heritage archeological sites:

- ❖ Dharmarajika Stupa, 2nd c. CE (World Heritage)
- ❖ Sirkup Archaeological site, approx. 180 BC (World Heritage)
- ❖ Jaulian Buddhist Monastery ruins, 2nd c. BC (World Heritage)
- ❖ Taxila Museum

Lunch at a local restaurant and continue the drive, approx. 2 hrs to Peshawar, located in a beautiful valley in the Hindukush Range of Mountains. It has always been a very important route for many invaders to Southeast Asia, including Alexander the Great, Scythians, Ghengis Khan and numerous others.

Transfer to Hotel Pearl Continental, Peshawar

Suggest dinner at the famous Namal Mandi (pay direct).

Sep 30 Day 2: Peshawar-Islamabad / Hotel Pearl Continental (B,L,D)

This morning we depart the hotel at 9 am and visit:

- ❖ Peshawar Museum— Housed in a Victorian Mughal-Gothic hall across the tracks from the Old City, the Peshawar Museum has the largest collection of Gandharan art in the world, ranging from statues and friezes depicting the Buddha's life to winged cupids and Herculean heroes. It's an amazing display of Graeco-Bactrian art. There's a small Islamic collection with some delightful illustrated books, and an ethnographic section with wooden effigies taken from a Kalasha cemetery, including an ancestor figure riding a two-headed horse.
- ❖ Qissa Khwani Bazaar
- ❖ Mohabat Khan Mosque, located inside the bazaar

Lunch and then return to Islamabad, approx. 2.5 hr drive.

- ❖ Early evening visit Daman-ekoh viewpoint: you can see the twin cities of Rawl Pindi/Islamabad.

- ❖ Dinner at a local restaurant.

Oct 1 Day 3: Islamabad / Islamabad Hotel (former Holiday Inn) (B,L,D)

Enjoy a leisurely morning. Depart at 10:30 am and visit:

- ❖ Faisal Mosque

Renowned Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay designed this beautiful mosque of unconventional design. Without a typical dome, the mosque is shaped like a Bedouin tent, surrounded by four 260 feet (79 m) tall minarets. The design features eight-sided shell shaped sloping roofs forming a triangular 40 metres high worship hall which can hold 10,000 worshippers. It is the 5th largest mosque in the world and largest in South Asia. Spread over 1,89,705 sq. meters, it is located at the northern most end of the city at the foot of Margalla Hills, the westernmost foothills of the Himalayas. It is situated against a picturesque backdrop of the national park.

At about 12 noon we meet the travelers from our North Pakistan tour at a local restaurant for lunch. They will continue with us traveling in South Pakistan.

After lunch, we continue our touring of Islamabad.

- ❖ Lok Virsa Folk Heritage Museum <https://lokvirsa.org.pk/heritage-museum/>

Located also on the Shakarparian Hills, it was renamed Pakistan National Museum of Ethnology in 2004. Presents history and living traditions from the mainstream and remote regions of the country. The museum consists of several buildings as well as an outdoor museum. Covering an area of 60,000 sq. ft, it features several exhibit halls making it the largest museum in Pakistan.

Five minute walk to Pakistan Monument and Museum.

- ❖ Pakistan Monument and Museum

A national monument and heritage museum located on the western Shakarparian Hills. It was constructed to symbolize the unity of the Pakistani people. Rather than symbolizing the four provinces (as is mistakenly assumed), the four large petals represent the four different cultures of the people of Pakistan: Punjabi, Balochi, Sindhi and Pakhtun. The three smaller petals represent the Minorities: Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. The star of the flag in the monument is designed in shiny black granite with golden stars, which represent the people who sacrificed their life for Pakistan. The moon crescent is made from stainless steel with inspirational writings of Quaid-e-Azam, Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal. The petals are built of granite (projecting in a suspended cantilever form, among the largest in Asia) and its inner walls are covered with artwork depicting the various landmarks of the Pakistan. Its' elevation makes it visible from across the metropolitan area of Islamabad-Rawalpindi. Covering a total area of 2.8 hectares (6.9 acres), the design of the monument is rooted in the rich Mughal architecture of the subcontinent. The petal shaped structure is derived from the traditional muqarnas.

Connecting to the Peoples Monument by a large piazza, known as the Freedom Plaza, is the Pakistan Monument Museum which narrates the history and tells the story of the creation of Pakistan. These two structures are connected. Though the name of the architect–Arif Masoud–is inscribed in stone in the main Dedication Plaque located at the beginning of the main plaza–he has honored all construction workers by placing their hand impressions all along the long walls flanking this Freedom Plaza on both the sides. At the farthest end is a viewing platform which gives a birds-eye view of Islamabad city.

- ❖ Shakarpariyian Hills National Park

Its terraced garden offers pleasant and sweeping vistas of Margalla and Murree hills, Rawal Lake, Rawalpindi and Islamabad. There is corner where many plants are located that were planted by foreign

Head of States. The old Gakhars (Rajput clan) tribe leaders settled here before Indo-Pak partition in 1947. Later the clan was relocated to create a park for the new federal capital of the country in 1960-61.

❖ Dinner at Rawal Lake.

Oct 2 Day 4: Islamabad-Lahore / Hotel Pearl Continental (B,L)

Depart at 7:30 am and drive one hour to visit the Khewra Salt Mines (2nd largest in the world).

Afterwards, 3.5 hour drive to Lahore, lunch en-route.

Lahore is the capital of the Pakistani province of Punjab and the historic cultural centre of the wider Punjab region. It is the country's 2nd largest city after Karachi and 18th largest city proper in the world. Lahore is one of Pakistan's wealthiest cities, with an estimated GDP of \$84 billion (PPP) as of 2019.

Depart at 3 pm for the 45 min drive to Pakistan – India border (Wagah) to attend the Flag ceremony, called Beating Retreat and the Change of Guard. It is a very heart-felt touching experience. The lowering of the flags ceremony is a daily military practice that the security forces of India and Pakistan have jointly followed since 1959. Soldiers from both countries march in perfect drill, going through the steps of bringing down their respective national flags. The drill is characterized by elaborate and rapid dance like maneuvers and raising legs as high as possible. As the sun goes down, nationalistic fervor rises and lights are switched on marking the end of the day amidst thunderous applause. The ceremony starts at 4:15 in winter; entrance to venue closes at 4 pm; duration is 45 minutes.

Afterwards, experience dinner at the food street in Wagah village, if you like. Your guide can show you the best places.

Oct 3 Day 5: Lahore / Hotel Pearl Continental (B,L)

This morning depart at 9 am to visit Lahore Museum: <https://lahoremuseum.punjab.gov.pk/>
Was originally established in 1865-66 on the site of the hall or building of the 1864, The Museum contains some fine specimens of Mughal, Sikh and British times. There are also relics from Gandhara and Indus Valley Civilizations as well as Tibetan and Nepalese exhibits.

Afterwards, we tour the old walled city and visit:

❖ Lahore Fort: <http://walledcitylahore.gop.pk/lahore-fort/>

The Lahore Fort is a citadel inside the old walled city. The Mughal Emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar built the massive Lahore Fort in 1566 AD. It is rectangular in shape. Two main gates are located along side the centre of the western and eastern walls. The entrance is through Alamgiri Gate built by Aurangzeb. The Pictured Wall is a spectacular display of Mughal court life and is a remarkable mural, the only one of its kind in the world. Most of the northern wall was rendered in tile mosaic during Jahangir's reign. (Closes 30 min before sunset, approx. 4:30 pm in Fall).

❖ Sheesh Mahal – Palace of Mirrors

Located inside Lahore Fort, It was constructed under the reign of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan in 1631–32. The ornate white marble pavilion is inlaid with pietra dura and complex mirror-work of the finest quality.

Lunch and a one minute walk to the mosque.

❖ **Badshahi Mosque:**

Located west of Lahore Fort along the outskirts of the Walled City, the Badshahi Mosque is considered to be Lahore's most iconic landmark. The Mosque made up entirely of red stone, was built by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1674 AD. It is said to be the largest mosque courtyard in the world for outdoor prayers. Within the mosque, almost all the colors have been used to paint the floral designs but the overall effect remains one of sobriety, elegance and simplicity.

- ❖ The Shahi Hammam, also known as the Wazir Khan Hammam, is a Persian-style bath which was built in Lahore, Pakistan, in 1635 C.E. during the reign of Emperor Shah Jahan. It was built by chief physician to the Mughal Court, Iltam-ud-din Ansari, who was widely known as Wazir Khan

Oct 4 Day 6: Lahore – Harappa - Multan / Hotel Ramada (B,L)

Depart at 8 am for the 4 hour drive to Harappa, an archaeological site, once the center of the core region of Indus Valley civilization. The Harappan architecture and Harappan Civilization was one of the most developed in the old Bronze Age. We spend 1.5 hours here. Lunch nearby.

Continue 2.5 hrs to Multan for overnight.

Oct 5 Day 7: Multan - Sukkur / Hotel One (B,L)

This morning depart at 8 am and drive 4.5 hrs to Sukkur.

Lunch on arrival and afternoon tour:

Drive about 20 min to Sadhu Bela Mandir, a Hindu Temple complex on an Island near Sukkur City. The Hindu saint (sage) Baba Bankhandi Maharaj settled here and then this place became known as the Sadhu bhelo. ... The word Sadhu Bela means the woods of the sage. The temples are associated with the syncretic Udasi movement. The island is famous for Teerath Asthan which is the biggest Hindu temple in Pakistan. The complex, spread onto two connecting islands, has eight other temples, a library, dining areas, a huge garden, along with rooms and residences for monks and people who want to stay on the island on a spiritual retreat.

Then visit Minaret of Masoom Shah in Old Sukkur. Mir Muhammad Masoom Shah Bakhri also known as Syed Nizamuddin Mir Muhammad Masoom Shah was a sixteenth-century Sindhi Muslim historian, physician and pharmacist from Bakhar, Sindh. He is known for writing a history of Sindh, Tarikh i Sind, published in ca 1600. The minaret of Ali Abuzar is the most conspicuous structure of Sukkur town, dating back to 1607 during the Mughal Empire in the Indian subcontinent. Masum Shah was the governor of Mughal Emperor Akbar who appointed him as the Nawab of Sukkur. The minaret was built in about 1607 the monument, built of red brick, is more or less conical in shape, slightly off the perpendicular and surmounted by a dome to which an internal stone staircase gives an access. It is about 26 metres in circumference and has 84 steps to the top. It is about 31 metres feet in height and can be seen from miles away. This minaret is believed to have been used as a watch tower. The courtyard around the minaret is the cemetery where Mir Mausum Shah and his family members are buried.

Family and offspring of Nizam-ud-Din Mir Muhammad Masum Shah still lives in old sukkur where he lived during his ruling time. The minaret and its surroundings are still under power of Masumi Family even though Government of Pakistan has taken the management control of this historical site.

Oct 6 Day 8: Sukkur – Mohenjo-daro – Sehwan Sharif / Divine Hotel (B,L)

This morning depart at 7 am and drive 1 hr 50 min to the ancient site at Kot Diji, the forerunner of the Indus Civilization. The occupation of this site is attested already at 3300 BCE. The remains consist of two parts; the citadel area on high ground, and outer area. The Pakistan Department of Archaeology excavated at Kot Diji in 1955 and 1957. It is located about 25 miles east of the Indus River and at the edge of the Thar Desert. It sits above a pre-Harappan Civilization archaeological site dating to 2500 to 2800 B.C.E.

Then drive 1 hr 40 min to Mohenjo Daro, or "Mound of the Dead" (UNESCO World Heritage Site) is an ancient Indus Valley Civilization city that flourished between 2600 and 1900 BCE. The site was discovered in the 1920s and lies in Pakistan's Sindh province. Only a handful of archaeologists have excavated here. The site contains the ruins of a Bronze Age fortified city, which was part of the Cemetery H culture and the Indus Valley Civilization, centered in Sindh and the Punjab. The city is believed to have had as many as 23,500 residents—considered large for its time.

Continue 2.5 hrs to Sehwan Sharif, lunch en-route.

This evening we attend the devotional dance of dervish at the Shia Shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, dedicated to the 13th century Shia mystic Lal Shahbaz Qalandar. It starts just before sunset, (in Oct approx. 5:30 pm)—drummers beat large drums, called naubat, as people — men and women, young and old — danced to their beat. The dhamaal, as the dance was called, is a form of devotion similar to the whirling of the Turkish dervishes. It is one of the most important Shia shrines in Pakistan, and attracts up to one million visitors annually. <https://shrine-of-hazrat-lal-shahbaz-qalandar.business.site/>

Oct 7 Day 9: Sehwan Sharif – Hyderabad / Indus Hotel (B,L)

Depart at 9 am for a 3.5 hr drive to Hyderabad.

After 1.5 hrs, we stop to visit Rani Kot Fort, a historical Talpur fort near Sann, Jamshoro District, Sindh. Ranikot Fort is also known as The Great Wall of Sindh and is believed to be the world's largest fort, with a circumference of approximately 32 kilometres. The fort's ramparts have been compared to the Great Wall of China.

Lunch at a local restaurant and continue 1 hr 45 min to Hyderabad.

Oct 8 Day 10: Hyderabad – Karachi / Pearl Continental Hotel (B,L)

Depart at 7:30 am to Karachi.

Drive approx. 2 hrs to visit Makli Necropolis, one of the largest funerary sites in the world, spread over an area of 10 kilometres near the city of Thatta, in the Pakistani province of Sindh. The site houses approximately 500,000 to 1 million tombs built over the course of a 400 year period. Makli Necropolis features several large funerary monuments belonging to royalty, various Sufi saints, and esteemed scholars. The site was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981 as an "outstanding testament to Sindhi civilization between the 14th and 18th centuries.

Continue 1.5 hr drive to Bhanbhore, 37 miles northeast of Karachi, a city dating to the 1st century BCE located in modern-day Sindh. The city ruins lie on the N-5 National Highway. It dates back to the Scytho-Parthian era and was later controlled by Muslims from the 8th to the 13th century, after which it was abandoned. The 10th century capital city Bhambo Raja, reached the height of its fame as the most important crossroad of the ancient trade route to China and the Middle East. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1211923>

Lunch at a local restaurant. Afterwards, visit Chaukhandi Tombs, an early Islamic cemetery situated 29 km east of Karachi. The tombs are notable for their elaborate sandstone carvings

Transfer to hotel. Enjoy an evening stroll around the Port Grand with its upscale open-air food establishments.

Oct 9 Day 11: Karachi – Depart / Pearl Continental Hotel (B,L)

This morning a city tour of Karachi including:

- ❖ Mohatta Palace
- ❖ Quaid-e-Azam House Museum
- ❖ Frere Hall, National Museum of Pakistan
- ❖ Tooba Masjid (known locally as GOL)(open 24 hrs)

❖ Empress Market (open til 7 pm)

Lunch at a local restaurant. Room available until departure. Most flights depart late night or early am.
Room available until departure. Transfer to the airport.

PRICE: \$3500 per person based on min 6 people. Single Room Supplement: \$880

Includes:

Accommodation with meals as listed:

Islamabad: hotel near airport, hotel De Papáe <https://www.hoteldepapae.com/>

Peshawar: Hotel Pearl Continental <https://www.pchotels.com/pcpeshawar>

Islamabad: Islamabad Hotel (former Holiday Inn) <http://islamabadhotel.com.pk/>

Lahore: Pearl Continental <https://www.pchotels.com/pclahore>

Multan: Ramada by Wyndham <https://www.wyndhamhotels.com/ramada/multan-pakistan/ramada-multan/overview>

Sukkur: Hotel One https://www.hotelone.com.pk/en/hotel_one_sukkur

Sehwan Sharif: Divine Hotel <https://www.trip.com/hotels/sehwan-hotel-detail-12475457/hotel-sehwan-divine/>

Hyderabad: Indus Hotel <http://www.indushotel.com/>

Karachi: Pearl Continental Hotel <https://www.pchotels.com/>

Meals: Breakfast at hotel, all lunches, 2 dinners in Islamabad at local restaurants

Bottled water, 2 litres per day

Private transport by ac Toyota Hiace or Coaster depending on group size

Accompanying guide + local guides at sites where required*

Private driver

Entrance fees to sites

*your accompanying guide will be translating at the sites as the local guides don't speak English

Does Not Include: International flight, visa fee, dinners, tips to driver and guide, personal expenses such as laundry, phone calls

Weather: We have dove-tailed the North and South Pakistan tours to gather a group with sufficient number of people. Therefore, we have chosen the best dates to be able to visit both the south and the north in one trip. Temperatures in the south in October will range from 76-86 °F during the day and evenings 60-64 °F.