



HOURS IN

LUCKNOW

The capital of Uttar Pradesh is a mix of historic heritage, architectural gems, and delectable cuisine. Lucknow is famed for its *tehzeeb*, that not-quite-translatable Urdu word that essentially means cultured refinement. Add to this a rich cuisine, and you have a holiday destination that ticks all the boxes.

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Morning

Begin your day like the locals do with a cup of chai and a bun *maska* at Sharmaji ki Chai in Lalbagh. For a more substantial breakfast, Bajpai Kachori Bhandar at Hazratganj serves scrumptious, deep-fried *puri-kachori* with a side of spicy potato and chickpea sabzi.

Next, head to Lucknow's most iconic attraction—the Bara Imambara complex. A sacred hall built for the mourning of Muharram, it has striking Mughal-style decorative architecture. Upstairs is the labyrinth or *bhul bhulaiya*. It's easy to lose your way in this maze of tunnels and doorways, so hire a guide who can show you around. The terrace offers a spectacular

CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: The majestic Bara Imambara features intricate detailing both on its minarets and interiors.

The Shahi Hamam Bouli royal bath in the Bara Imambara complex.

The iconic Asfi Masjid minaret is a symbol of the city.



view of the city and the *imambara* complex, which has a large landscaped garden, a stepwell, and the rather attractive Asfi Masjid.

Another must-see monument is the Rumi Darwaza. The imposing, ornamental gateway dates all the way back to 1784 and once

marked the entrance to the old city. The gateway was modelled on the ancient gates of Constantinople, then the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire. A busy arterial avenue passes through this gate, so be mindful of traffic when you're taking photos here!



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Afternoon

It's time for lunch at the stunning blue-and-turquoise Azrak restaurant at Lebua Lucknow. The restaurant offers traditional Awadhi cuisine resurrected from the royal kitchens. Feast on an array of kebabs, *nihari* (a flavourful stew with tender mutton), biryani, and more. Next, head to Seva Chikan to witness Lucknow's famous embroidery come to life. Drop in at the workshop and watch women making delicate, intricate patterns of white thread on white or pastel-coloured muslin cloth. At the adjoining shop you can pick up dress material, saris, and dupattas.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The chikan market is a good place to pick up souvenirs.

The Chota Imambara is a blend of Indo-Islamic and Persian influences.

The sun sets over the Bara Imambara.

Lucknow's tender *galauti* kebabs and chicken tikka.



Evening

Lucknow probably has the best street food culture in India, which really comes alive in the evening. Start with Shukla Chaat House, a hole-in-the-wall stall in Hazratganj that opens for business at 4 in the evening. One of the oldest chaat houses in the city, it is popular for its aloo tikki chaat and *matar* chaat. Then, head to the Chowk area for Raheem's lip-smacking *nihari*, to be mopped up with hot-off-the-tandoor *kulchas*. Round off the meal at Ram Asrey, a sweetmeat shop that has been around since 1805. Here you can get a taste of Lucknow's special *malai ki giloni*, a soft, pillow-like triangle made with sweetened layers of malai folded together.



Night

Many of the city's attractions acquire a different aura when the sun goes down and the lights come on. Head back to Rumi Darwaza to see the incandescent light cast a beautiful glow on the gate's architecture. For a late-night snack, head to the one and only Tunday Kebabi (open until 11 p.m.). While many kebab stalls now use the name 'Tunday', the original shop opened in the chowk way back in 1905 and has been serving succulent, absolutely melt-in-the-mouth *galauti* kebabs since. The kebab incorporates no fewer than 160 different spices and the recipe is a closely guarded secret.

If you decide to spend the night in Lucknow, we recommend the boutique hotel, Lebua Lucknow, the only heritage hotel in the city. This pristine white Art Deco bungalow from the early 1900s has been lovingly restored into a luxury hotel that blends old-world charm with modern hospitality. [90](#)