

Chunar Fort - Overview

Chunar Fort is also popular by the name of **Chandrakanta Chunargarh** and **Charanadri**. The fort is located in Chunar town on the banks of Ganga River. The fort was captured by Suris, Mughals, Nawabs of Awadh, and the British. The fort was under the British till independence. There are many legends related to the fort and the history of this fort is recorded from 56 BC during the time of **Raja Vikramaditya** of Ujjain.



Visiting Hours

The fort is opened for the public at 10am and closed at 4:00pm. The entry timings of the fort is from 10:00am to 2:00pm. The fort is opened on all days. It takes around two to three hours to visit the whole fort.

Tickets

There is no entry fees to visit the fort and people can enter the fort free of cost.

Where to Stay?

Chunar is not a developed town and people like to stay in Varanasi which is around 45km from Chunar. Mirzapur is around 34km from Chunar and people can stay

there also. Varanasi has around 419 hotels which include inexpensive budget hotels and expensive star hotels where people can stay. Along with these, cheap guest houses are also there for accommodation. Mirzapur has got only budget hotels.

Chunar Fort - History

Chunar Fort is also known as Chandrakanta Chunargarh and Charanadri which has got long history along with some legends. The fort is located on **Kaimur Hills**. History of the fort dates back to 56 BC when Raja Vikramaditya was the ruler of Ujjain. Then it went under Mughals, Suris, Nawabs of Awadh and finally into the hands of the British.

Chunar Fort under Mughals and Suris

In 1529, many soldiers of Babar were killed during a siege. Sher Shah Suri acquired the fort in 1532 by marrying the widow of a governor of Chunar named **Taj Khan Sarang Khani**. Taj Khan was the governor during the reign of **Ibrahim Lodi**. Sher Shah also received much wealth by marrying another widow.

He then shifted his capital to Rohtas in order capture Bengal. **Humayun** attacked the fort and asked Sher Shah Suri to leave Bengal. He also said that he will not acquire the fort of Chunar and Jaunpur. Humayun also asked for the treasure and proposed Sher Shah to come under the Mughal protection.



Humayun



Sher Shah Suri

When Humayun was on his way to Bengal, Sher Shah Suri again captured the fort. Islam Shah, son of Sher Shah Suri, succeeded him in 1545 and the fort was under him till 1553. Islam Shah was succeeded by his son **Adil Shah** who died in 1557 when the king of Bengal attacked the fort.

After the death of Adil Shah, the last ruler of Suri dynasty in 1557, Mughals captured the fort in 1575 during the reign of Akbar. Then Akbar rebuilt the fort which included a gate in the west and other structures. **Iftikhar Khan** was appointed as the **nazim** of the fort by Jahangir while **Aurangzeb** appointed **Mirza Bairam Khan** as governor. A mosque was constructed by Bairam Khan in the fort. In 1760, **Ahmad Shah Durrani** captured the fort.

Chunar Fort under British

Major Munro attacked the fort and captured it in 1768. The British used the fort for keeping artillery and other weapons. **Maharaja Chet Singh** acquired the fort for some time but evacuated it in 1781. In 1791, European and Indian battalions made the fort their headquarters. The fort was used as a house for prisoners from 1815 onwards. In 1849, **Rani Jind Kaur**, wife of **Maharaja Ranjit Singh**, was imprisoned but she escaped and went to Kathmandu. After 1890, the fort was used as a jail for prisoners.

Chunar Fort - Architecture

Chunar Fort was built on the banks of Ganga River. The fort was built from sandstone which were also used during **Maurya** period. The fort covers an area of 1850 yards. The fort has many gates out of which the west gate was built during Akbar's reign. Some of the structures inside the fort are Bharthari Samadhi, Sonwa Mandap, Bawan Khambo ki Chhatri, and Residence of Warren Hastings.

Bharthari Samadhi

Bharthari was the brother of King Vikramaditya. The Samadhi of Bhathari is behind the fort. The Samadhi has four gates that are used for various religious ceremonies. A tunnel in front of the building was used by Princess Sonwa as she used to take bath in a baoli which was filled by the water of Ganga River.



Sonwa Mandap

Sonwa Mandap was built according to the Hindu architecture. The building has 28 pillars and a baoli having width of 7m and depth of 200m. This baoli was used by Princess Sonwa to take bath.



Bawan Khambo ki Chhatri

King Mahadeo built this structure in order to remember the victories got by his daughter Sonwa defeating 52 rulers. Those who were defeated were imprisoned. Sonwa was married to Alha who was the brother of King of Mahoba.



Residence of Warren Hastings

The residence of Warren Hastings has a **sun dial** which was built in 1784. There is an umbrella near the building which was built by **King Sahadeo** to commemorate the defeat of 52 rulers. The residence has now been converted into a museum.

Dargah of Shah Qasim Sulaimani

The dargah or tomb of **Saint Shah Qasim Sulaimani** is situated in the southwest direction of the fort. The origin of the saint was Afghanistan and he lived here during the reign of Akbar and Jahangir. At the age of 27 he went for pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. After returning, a lot of people became his disciples.

Akbar was displeased with him as the saint did not agree with the king's view on religion. The saint was sent to Lahore. When Jahangir ascended the throne, he thought to kill the saint but after counselling with his wazirs, he imprisoned him in Chunar fort where the saint died and his followers built a tomb for him.

Chunar Fort - How to Reach?

Chunar is a small place which is connected to nearby cities through road and rail but there is no connectivity by air. Varanasi, Mirzapur, and Allahabad are well-

connected through all the modes of transport and tourists can easily reach Chunar from these cities. The approximate distance of Chunar from these cities are as follows –

- **Chunar to Mirzapur**
 - By road – 34km
 - By rail – 31km
- **Chunar to Allahabad**
 - By road – 120km
 - By rail – 120km
- **Chunar to Varanasi**
 - By road – 45km
 - By rail – 45km
- **Chunar to Mughalsarai**
 - By road – 42km
 - By rail – 32km

By Air

Chunar does not have airport. The nearest airport to the town is **Babatpur** near Varanasi and **Bamrauli** near Allahabad. Tourists can reach Chunar from Allahabad and Varanasi through road and rail transport.

By Rail

Chunar is well connected to various cities through rail. Also nearby cities like Varanasi, Mirzapur, Allahabad and Mughalsarai are well-connected by rail. Tourists can either board a direct train to Chunar or change trains after reaching the nearby cities.

By Road

Adalpura is a Bus Stand in Chunar from where tourists can get buses to nearby cities. Varanasi, Mirzapur, and Allahabad are well-connected by buses to various cities so tourists can change the buses for Chunar after reaching these cities.

Chunar Fort - Nearby Places

There are many other places near Chunar fort which the tourists can visit. Some of these places are Ramnagar Fort, Banaras Vidya Mandir Museum, Vijaygarh Fort, and Vindhyavasini Temple.

Ramnagar Fort

Ramnagar Fort is located on the banks of river Ganga. The fort was built by **Raja Balwant Singh** of Kashi in 1750 with Mughal architecture. The fort was built using sandstone. The attractions in the fort are Veda Vyasa Temple, Dakshin Mukhi Temple, Museum, and King's Residence. Ramnagar fort is around 28km away from Chunar Fort.



Banaras Vidya Mandir Museum

Banaras Vidya Mandir Museum is also known as Ramnagar Museum and is located in the Ramnagar Fort. The museum consists of many artifacts used during medieval period. It also includes handicrafts and other items used by the royal family of Banaras. The artifacts include elephant saddles, furniture, pictures of celebration of Dussehra and others.



Vijaygarh Fort

Vijaygarh Fort was built during the time of Mahabharat by **Banasur**. Later the fort was renovated by a Rajput king **Maharaja Vijay Pal** in 1040AD. **Chet Singh** was the last Rajput ruler and after him British captured the fort.



There is one more fort inside the fort and that belongs to **Chandrakanta**. There is a tomb of **Hazrat Meeran Shah Baba** whose real name was **Sayyad Zain-ul-Abidin Mir Saheb**. Vijaygarh Fort is situated 30km away from Robertsganj and is 105km from Chunar Fort.

Vindhyavasini Temple

Vindhyavasini Temple is situated in Vindhyachal and is 43km away from Chunar Fort. The temple is also known as **Kajala Devi Temple** and Goddess Kali is decorated here. The temple is built on the banks of river Ganga. Devotees visit the temple daily and a large number of people can be seen during Navratri festival.



Other temples nearby are **Kali Khoh Temple** of Goddess Kali and **Ashtbhuj Temple** of Goddess Saraswati.