

#WILDLIFE

Shorter, Fatter, and Hairier

Fun facts about the world's smallest Reindeer.



While they won't be pulling Santa's sleigh anytime soon, Svalbard reindeer (*Rangifer tarandus platyrhynchus*) objectively could win a North Pole cuteness contest. This subspecies of reindeer is only found on Norway's Svalbard archipelago and stands at roughly five-foot long and three-foot tall and about half the size of other reindeer.

"They are actually quite morphologically unique from other reindeer. They're shorter, they're fatter, they're hairier," Samantha Paige Dwinnell, an Ecologist who studies this unique subspecies in Svalbard, tells *Popular Science*. "Their hair is twice as long and they are the fattest of the deer family in the world." Here are some more things to know about Earth's smallest reindeer.

• Svalbard is like their own little paradise

Svalbard reindeer have been living on this archipelago for 5,000 years. Over that time, they have been very isolated from other populations of reindeer on mainland Europe. "They don't have any real natural predators and they evolved in an ecosystem without real predators," says Dwinnell. "Polar bears occasionally kill any reindeer. But since polar bears are technically a marine mammal, they just usually actually don't have much spatial overlap."

• They are master adapters

Like other reindeer and caribou, they have adaptations for their ever-shifting world. They technically live in what's considered a high arctic desert, where there is not a lot of deep snow, but it is still very cold. Summer temperatures typically only reach the mid-40s Fahrenheit. "Their hooves can essentially be zero degrees Celsius, while their core body temperature stays stable," explains Dwinnell. The cell structure in their eyes also changes from the winter to the summer to allow them to see more of the low lights in the winter and deal with almost 24 hours of sunlight during the summer months.



• A special sense, for plants

Most reindeer and caribou eat lichen, a hybrid of algae or cyanobacteria that grows on bark, wood, mosses, rock, soil, peat, glass, and even human-made materials such as cloth, metal, and plastic. "There isn't a whole lot of lichen available to them here," says Dwinnell. "So, Svalbard reindeer are a bit unique in their diet, and they largely eat grasses."

Since they are quite dynamic in their responses to their home, they are also quick to adapt to changes to their food sources. For example, during periods of rain-on-snow events, where the vegetation is frozen under ice, they will change where they go to find food. They will also watch for more seasonal changes. "As autumn comes and plants start to die, all of their nutrients go into the roots of the plants," explains Dwinnell. "We found that Svalbard reindeer actually go to these places, where they can dig up into the soil, then, they eat the roots of the plants during these years, where it's warmer."

• 'Flamboyant' attempts at kicking

While they are pretty docile, some of them will react when approached by a human or something it perceives as a threat. "Svalbard reindeer do this little kick where they, kind of, go up and try to kick, but oftentimes, they're so fat that they barely leave the ground," says Dwinnell. "Unfortunately, for a lot of the readers who want to think that reindeer fly, they sort of, disprove their ability to fly with their front legs. It's just this very flamboyant and quite hilarious."

A Haven Amidst Chaos

For the Williams family, Christmas at the church is a tradition that has spanned three generations. Anna Williams, the family matriarch, describes it as "a time when we reconnect, with each other, with our faith, and with the essence of what it means to belong." Inderjit Khanna, a former IAS officer and a member of the church says, "Every year on Christmas at the Holy Communion Service, the congregation numbers are two and half times more than the normal days. People from all over India as well as the world attend this service. After the service, it is a get-together of sorts over cups of coffee and cake."



A Royal Offering: The Maharaja's Gift of Unity

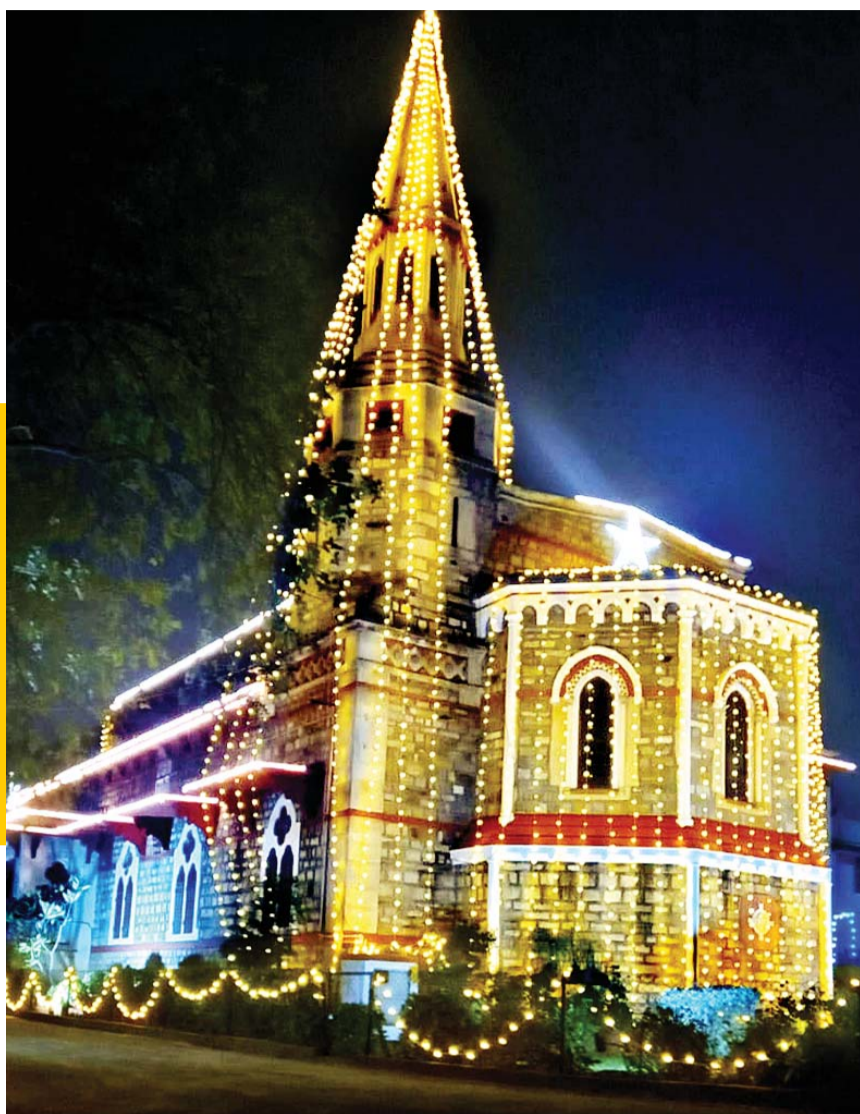
The story of All Saints' Church begins with an extraordinary act of generosity in 1875. Lieutenant General His Highness Maharaja Dhiraj Sir Sawai Madho Singh Bahadur, ruler of Jaipur, granted 17 *bighas* of land and Rs. 3,000 to build the church. This gesture was more than philanthropy; it was a statement of inclusivity, a vision of Jaipur as a city where diverse communities could thrive together. Bishop Robert Milman, who oversaw the project, was a man of great vision and determination. He secured additional funds and contributed personally to ensure that the church would become a sanctuary for Jaipur's Christian community. His efforts culminated in a structure that was not just a building but a symbol of unity and resilience. The final cost of Rs. 21,000 reflected more than monetary value; it represented the collective spirit of a community united in faith. It was a foundation that would support generations to come.

The First Christmas: A Morning to Remember

December 25, 1876 dawned crisp and bright, carrying an air of anticipation. The first service at All Saints' Church brought together a congregation eager to witness history. Mary, an elderly woman who attended that day, often recounted the moment to her family. "We lit candles, and as we sang, the light seemed to dance with the



THE WALL



#150 YEARS OF ALL SAINTS CHURCH



Rev. Sandeep Samuel Hiskiel, Presbyter-in-charge, with Samrit Richard Nag, Hon. Secretary of the Church, Ajay James, Hon. Treasurer.

The Architect of Dreams: Sir Swinton Jacob

The architectural splendour of All Saints' Church owes much to Colonel Sir Swinton Jacob, a man whose genius shaped Jaipur's skyline. Known for his ability to blend English Gothic styles with Indian aesthetics, Jacob created a masterpiece that feels both universal and deeply rooted in its surroundings. The church's red marble pillars, intricate carvings, and luminous stained-glass windows are not mere decorations; they are Jacob's testament to the sacredness of the space. His personal bond with Maharaja Madho Singh added a layer of warmth to the project, transforming it into a labour of love. Jacob's legacy endures in every detail, from the polished stone floors to the carefully designed arches. His work is a reminder that architecture is not just about building structures; it is about crafting spaces that inspire and uplift the soul.

Artistry in Every Corner

Walking into All Saints' Church is like stepping into a gallery of devotion. The chancel, adorned with biblical inscriptions, invites quiet reflection, while the stained-glass windows narrate stories of hope and redemption. The central window, dedicated to Bishop Milman, depicts "The Good Shepherd," a poignant symbol of guidance and care. Nearby windows honouring the Beynon family weave personal histories into the church's fabric, reminding visitors of the countless lives connected to this sacred space. For historian Ramesh, who once spent an entire day sketching the church's interiors, the experience was transformative. "Every corner seemed alive," he later wrote. "The light through the windows didn't just illuminate the space, it filled it with life."

The Music of Faith: Bells That Resonate Through Time

In 1891, eight tubular bells were installed in the church's turret, their melodic chiming becoming an integral part of its identity. These bells have marked countless milestones, from joyous weddings to solemn funerals, and their sound has become synonymous with the rhythm of life at All Saints' Church. On one Christmas Eve in the early 20th century, a young boy named Samuel climbed the bell tower with his grandfather, the church's bell-ringer. Decades later, Samuel recounted the memory to his children. "Each chime felt like a thread connecting earth to heaven," he said. "It was a sound that lingered in the heart long after it faded." To this day, the bells remain a cherished feature, their melodies a reminder of enduring traditions and the constancy of faith.

A Respite from the Desert Heat

Jaipur's summers are infamous for their intensity, yet All Saints' Church remains a cool haven, thanks to its ingenious design. The architects employed slab stone sunshades and climbing creepers to create a natural cooling system,

shielding the interiors from the relentless sun. Inside, recessed alcoves with window seats offer more than physical comfort; they provide spaces for spiritual respite. Travellers from distant lands have often paused here, finding shade and serenity before continuing their journeys. One such traveller, an Englishman named Edward, wrote in his diary in 1904, "Amid the sweltering heat of Jaipur, I found solace in this beautiful church. Its walls seemed to breathe peace."

BABY BLUES



Hanukkah

The history of Hanukkah revolves around a tyrant king who was abusive to the Jewish people and destroyed their sacred Temple in 167 BC. With the aim of getting the temple back, some rebels called the 'Maccabees,' revolted against the king, taking the city back and rebuilding their temple. While the temple oil, used to light the menorah, should only have been enough for one day, it lasted for eight days and this was celebrated as a miracle. This thread continues in today's observance of Hanukkah, in the eight-day celebration and the lighting of candles.



Crafted by Local Hands

The church is a testament to Jaipur's rich craftsmanship. The marble altar, lectern, and pulpit showcase the skill of local artisans, blending Gothic design with regional artistry. The roof, made of stone slabs supported by All Saints' arches, adds durability without

sacrificing elegance. Interestingly, wood is used sparingly, confined to the pews and main doors, highlighting the thoughtful integration of local materials. This harmonious blend of global and regional influences makes All Saints' Church a cultural landmark.

Generations of Faith: A Journey Through Time

Over its 150-year history, All Saints' Church has witnessed countless transitions yet remained steadfast in its mission. From its early days under the Diocese of Calcutta to its current place in the Diocese of Rajasthan, the church has adapted to the changing times while preserving

its essence. Under the leadership of Rev. Sandeep Samuel Hiskiel, the church today is more than a place of worship; it is a community hub. Programs for education, healthcare, and social welfare extend its reach beyond its congregation, embodying its commitment to service.

Christmas: A Festival of Unity and Light

Christmas at All Saints' Church is a celebration that transcends faith. The soft glow of candles, the resonant hymns, and the warmth of the community create an atmosphere of profound joy. For the Williams family, Christmas at the church is a tradition that has spanned three generations. Anna Williams, the family matriarch, describes it as "a time when we reconnect, with each other, with our faith, and

with the essence of what it means to belong." Inderjit Khanna, a former IAS officer and a member of the church says, "Every year on Christmas at the Holy Communion Service, the congregation numbers are two and half times more than the normal days. People from all over India as well as the world attend this service. After the service, it is a get-together of sorts over cups of coffee and cake."

A Grand Sesquicentennial Celebration

As the church approaches its 150th anniversary in 2026, preparations are underway to honour this monumental milestone. Events will include a Thanksgiving Service, a heritage exhibition, and a concert showcasing both classical hymns and contemporary gospel music.

Community outreach programs, such as medical camps and educational workshops, will continue the church's legacy of service. Activities for children and families, including art competitions and storytelling sessions, will ensure that the celebrations resonate with all generations.

A Legacy of Love and Faith

All Saints' Church is more than a historical landmark; it is a living narrative of devotion, unity, and resilience. It has stood as a silent witness to life's ebb and flow, offering solace and strength to those who seek its embrace. As the sesquicentennial approaches, the church invites everyone to celebrate its enduring legacy. It is a

legacy built not just on stone and glass but on the indomitable spirit of its congregation. Those stepping into the All-Saints' Church will find more than a building; they will find a sanctuary where faith, history, and artistry come alive. Here, the past and present converge, creating a timeless story of hope and belonging.



#CURTAIN RAISER JAIGARH HERITAGE FESTIVAL

The Jaigarh Heritage Festival, to be held at the historic Jaigarh Fort from December 27 to 29, will showcase an exquisite blend of music, art, heritage, and culinary delights. Featuring performances by iconic artists, thought-provoking discussions, craft workshops, and immersive experiences, this inaugural festival is set to honour the past while inspiring the future.



Malini Awasthi



Kailash Kher



Mir Mukhtyar Ali



Neelesh Misra



Kutle Khan



Tusharika Singh
Freelancer Writer and City Blogger

Stories Through Conversations

The festival delves deep into India's history and cultural identity through thought-provoking conversations. Renowned historian and writer, Rana Safvi, will explore the mystical traditions that have shaped India's spiritual fabric. Art historian, Parul Pandya Dhar, will discuss the grandeur

of India's temple architecture in a session with author Ashwitha Jayakumar. Other luminaries, such as Tripti Pandey, a celebrated travel writer, Rima Hojja, an expert on Rajasthan's history, and Neelesh Misra, India's beloved radio storyteller, will add their voices to these enriching dialogues.

Crafts That Inspire

The festival's Craft Courtyard offers a unique opportunity to connect with Jaipur's artisanal legacy. Visitors can witness traditional crafts like blue pottery and applique embroidery come to life.

Hands-on workshops will invite attendees to learn the intricate techniques and stories behind these timeless crafts, ensuring a deeper appreciation of India's artistic heritage.

A Sensory Experience

For culinary enthusiasts, the festival serves up a feast of flavours with a diverse spread of Rajasthani delicacies and other Indian specialties. Meanwhile, curated heritage walks and stunning art installations, inspired by India's visually rich traditions, promise to create an unforgettable sensory experience for all.

Speaking about the festival's vision, His Highness Maharaja Sawai Padmanabh Singh of Jaipur remarked, "Jaigarh Fort has witnessed centuries of history, and this festival continues to honour that legacy with a line-up that reflects the vibrancy of our culture and a glimpse into its future, the Jaigarh Heritage Festival will bring together audiences from around the world to experience the soul of Jaipur." Sanjoy K. Roy, Managing Director of Teamwork Arts, shared his enthusiasm, saying, "We are delighted to announce the first edition of the Jaigarh Heritage Festival. It is going to be a celebration of India's culture at the historic Jaigarh Fort, bringing together some of India's finest performers, thinkers, and artists. Through these offerings, we hope to showcase an array of musical genres, dance forms, and traditional crafts that India has nourished throughout centuries." With its perfect blend of history, art, and culture, the Jaigarh Heritage Festival is poised to become a cornerstone event for Jaipur.

Music That Resonates

A highlight of the festival is its stellar line-up of performers, which features some of the most celebrated names in Indian music. The magnetic Kailash Kher, along with his band Kailasa, will bring his signature energy to the stage. Sufi maestro Mukhtyar Ali, Mashak (baspape) player Shyogul Julia, and 13th-generation Nagada virtuoso, Nathoo Lal Solanki are also set to captivate audiences. The festival will showcase diverse musical traditions with performances by Taus player Sandeep Singh, acclaimed singer Padma Shri Malini Awasthi, and celebrated ensembles like The Kutle Khan Project, Tal Fry, and The Nimad Project. Morning and evening performances promise to envelop attendees in the rhythm and soul of India's musical heritage.

By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman