

#RANGREZ

There Is Hope For Dyeing In Jaipur

The Untold Story of Jaipur's Master Dyers: A Legacy in Every Thread



Have you ever heard the story of Jaipur's dyeing artisans? Not the ones featured in travel brochures or Instagram reels, but the quiet masters who, for generations, have turned fabric into poetry using nothing but their hands, natural dyes, and age-old wisdom.

Tucked away in the narrow lanes of Sanganer and Bagru, just outside Jaipur, lives a community whose artistry predates machines and mass production. These are the *Rangrez*, traditional fabric dyers, whose work has clothed kings, inspired designers, and painted the culture of Rajasthan with colour.

Their process is not just craft; it's ritual. Cotton cloth is first soaked in a solution of natural ingredients, often harad, multani mitti, and even cow dung, to cleanse and prepare the fabric. Then, using dyes derived from indigo, madder root, pomegranate peel, and turmeric, the fabric is dipped, beaten, sun-dried, and washed again and again. The result? Deep, vibrant colours that don't fade with time, only deepen.

What makes these artisans truly remarkable isn't just their skill, but their connection to nature. Unlike modern textile factories that pollute rivers, traditional dyers in Jaipur often use rainwater or filtered groundwater, and many are returning to eco-friendly, zero-waste techniques their ancestors practiced naturally.

But in a world racing towards fast fashion, these artisans struggle to keep up. Hand-dyed fabrics take days, sometimes weeks, to perfect. Synthetic dyes, screen print-



ing, and digital patterns have pushed the market away from slow, meaningful work. Many younger artisans have left the craft altogether, seeking more stable or modern jobs.

Yet, there is hope.

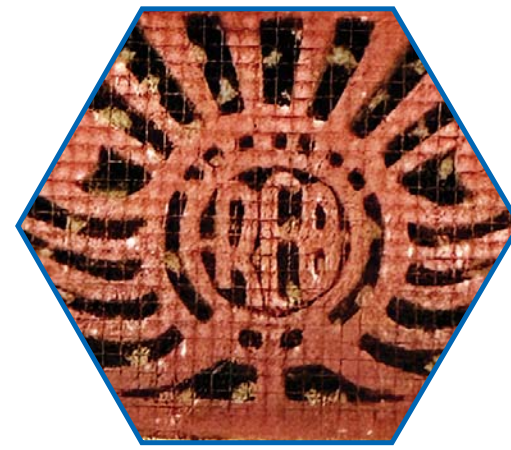
In recent years, there's been a quiet revival. Designers across the globe, from Tokyo to New York, are once again turning to Jaipur's master dyers for authentic, sustainable textiles. Organizations are helping train a new generation in traditional techniques. And tourists, too, are beginning to visit dyeing workshops not just to buy, but to learn.

Still, their story remains under-told. No museum wing honours them. Few books carry their names. But if you visit, if you pause and ask, you'll see history unfolding in real-time, in every swirl of colour, in every wrinkle of hand-dipped cloth into dye, in every rooftop where fabric flutters like prayer flags.

So, the next time you wear something hand-dyed, ask where it came from. It just might be from a small, sunlit workshop in Jaipur, where colour is still made with heart, not haste.



Sawan Ka Bazaar And The Perfect Ghewar



● Pushpendra Bhargava

As I bite into their crisp Mawa Ghewar, Rajendra Rawat ji explains the 14 or 16 items traditionally sent as 'Baine,' ritual gifts from a married woman to her nand (sister-in-law) during Teej. One of these gifts is ghewar, made only during sawan, with Datura, Aakera ka Phool and Belpatra, as testimony to the sacred monsoon month devoted to Lord Shiva.

It begins at Chaura Rasta, once named SMS Highway, built when Maharaja Sawai Man Singh II expanded Jaipur beyond its old city walls. The new gate that opened up this axis became a corridor not just for traffic, but for time. As I walk its length, art deco homes greet me

with jharokhas, etched with family initials and generations of detail. Teakwood slabs, old shaving mirrors, ticking clocks, and heirloom cupboards hide pickles and stories alike.

The grandfather's working typewriter like all things grandfather's. The atta chakkis, the weighing

scale, the wooden grinder, great grandfather's watchful eyes and tutelage!! The year 1941, Rs. 5 Tanjore Krishna gold paintings, with silver linings and in the endless seamless flow, a photograph with the grandfather and the interim Prime Minister Gulzari Lal Nanda...this is the Pink City's living



museum, where homes still whisper.

Down Sonthali Walo ka Rasta, Somilal's Sweets (Rawat Misthan Bhandar) becomes my first stop. For 140 years, the Rawat family has made Ghewar by hand, passing recipes from one generation to the next. As I bite into their crisp Mawa Ghewar, Rajendra Rawat ji explains the 14 or 16 items traditionally sent as 'Baine,' ritual gifts from a married woman to her nand (sister-in-law) during Teej. One of these gifts is ghewar, made only during sawan, with Datura, Aakera ka Phool and Belpatra, as testimony to the sacred monsoon month devoted to Lord Shiva.

From there, I meander through Jadyon Ka Rasta and stop at Sodani Sweets. Each has its signature touch, some ghewars crisp and airy, others dense with rabdi or mawa. I reach Gopal Ji Ka Rasta,



where the 87-year-old gentleman from Sharda Bhawan swears by Poddar Misthan Bhandar's version.

The warm woman behind the counter smiles and selects a tiny ghewar for me, the only size I'll

allow myself as a diabetic.

My bag grows heavier. Bhatia Paneer Bhandar tempts me with milk cake and akhrot barfi, and they too now offer ghewar. As I walk, I sip Aloo bukhara juice (Plum) at Ganga Juice Centre near Ganga Mata Mandir, places rich with taste and memory.

Eventually, I turn down Haldiyan Ka Rasta to reach Ajit Mal Ji's Sambharwala Sweets, where the elderly motherly assistant greets me with laughter and stories. They swear that their Ghewar is better than the more famous Bhawar Ji's in Ghee Walo ka Rasta with the shop called Sambhar Phini Wale!! These rivalries, told with affection, add spice to the journey. And behind it all is Teej-celebrated on the third day after the new moon, following Hariyali Amavasya. On this day, women apply mehndi, prepare flour sweets, and adorn their doorways with



Healing Wholly!

Every year on July 26, Holistic Therapy Day shines a spotlight on a unique approach to health that considers the whole person: body, mind, and spirit. This day is not just a celebration but a reminder of the deep-rooted belief in the power of holistic healing practices that date back thousands of years, from ancient Ayurveda to traditional Chinese medicine. These practices include meditation, yoga, massage, and more, all aiming to harmonize the physical, mental, and spiritual aspects of our being. The importance of Holistic Therapy Day lies in its emphasis on self-healing and the interconnectedness of our mental, physical, and emotional health.



This journey is not just about taste. It's about scent, texture, memory. About fathers and grandfathers and the women who kept traditions alive. About shrines in side streets and friendships behind shop counters. Ghewar season is fleeting, like the rains themselves. But for a few short weeks each year, Jaipur breathes in sugar, ghee, and nostalgia, and I, like many others, follow the scent.

#NOSTALGIA

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turmeric paste, cow dung, and rice. They worship with 14 fruits, sweets, and symbols of Vishnu's chakra and Lakshmi's presence. Ghewar is not just dessert, it is devotion.

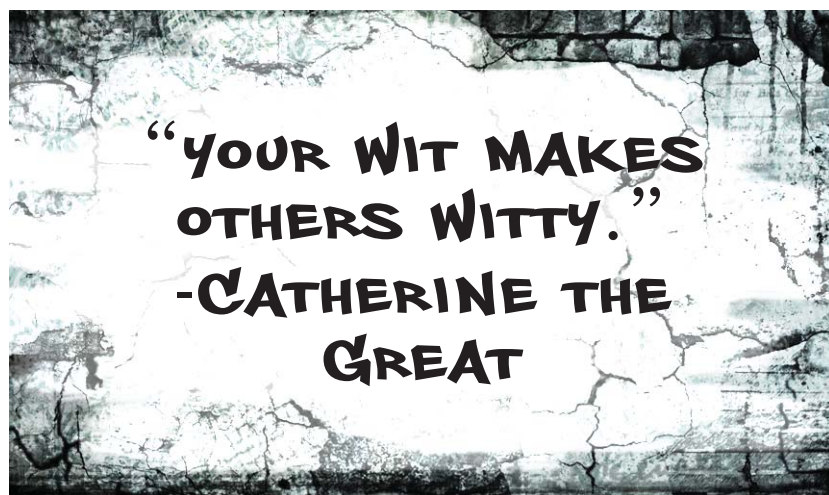
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From Ritual to Rakhi
Ghewar isn't just a dessert, it's a sacred gift. It is offered as *prasad* during Teej which is a precursor to many revered festivals to follow. Raksha Bandhan, Janmashtami, Ganesh Chaturthi.

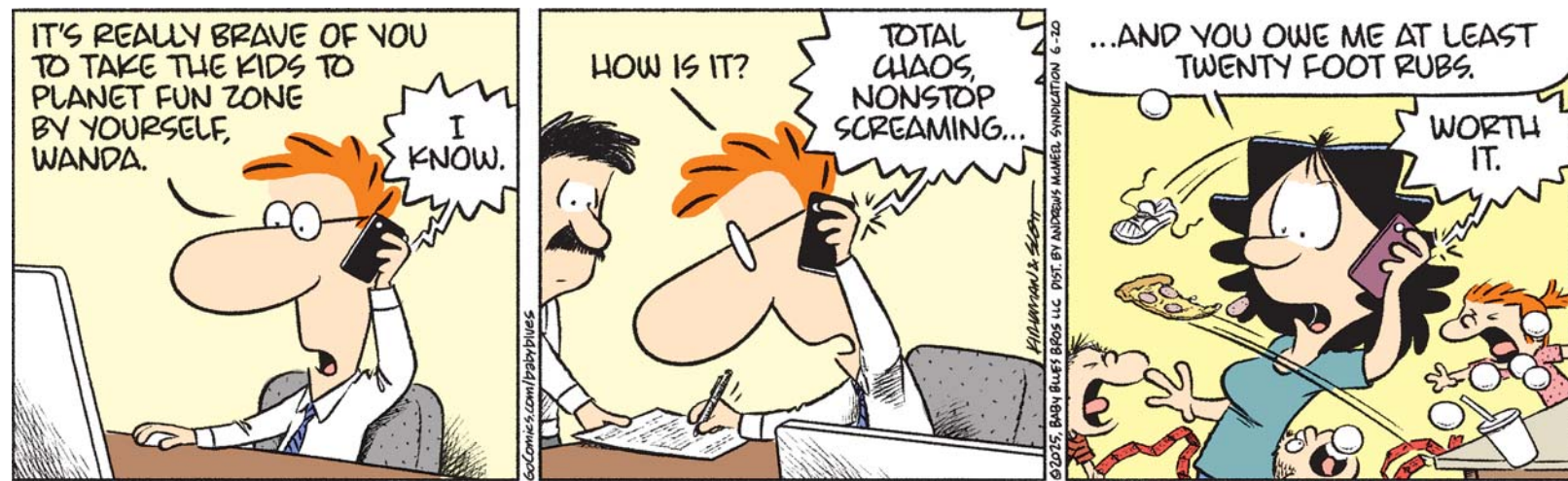
Jaipur vs. Bikaner vs. Udaipur
Jaipur's ghewar leans airy and crisp; Bikaner's is slightly thicker and intensely sweet; Udaipur prefers a rabdi topping. Today, fusion ghewars also include rose, pistachio, chocolate, and even gold varq variations.

rajeshsharma1049@gmail.com

THE WALL

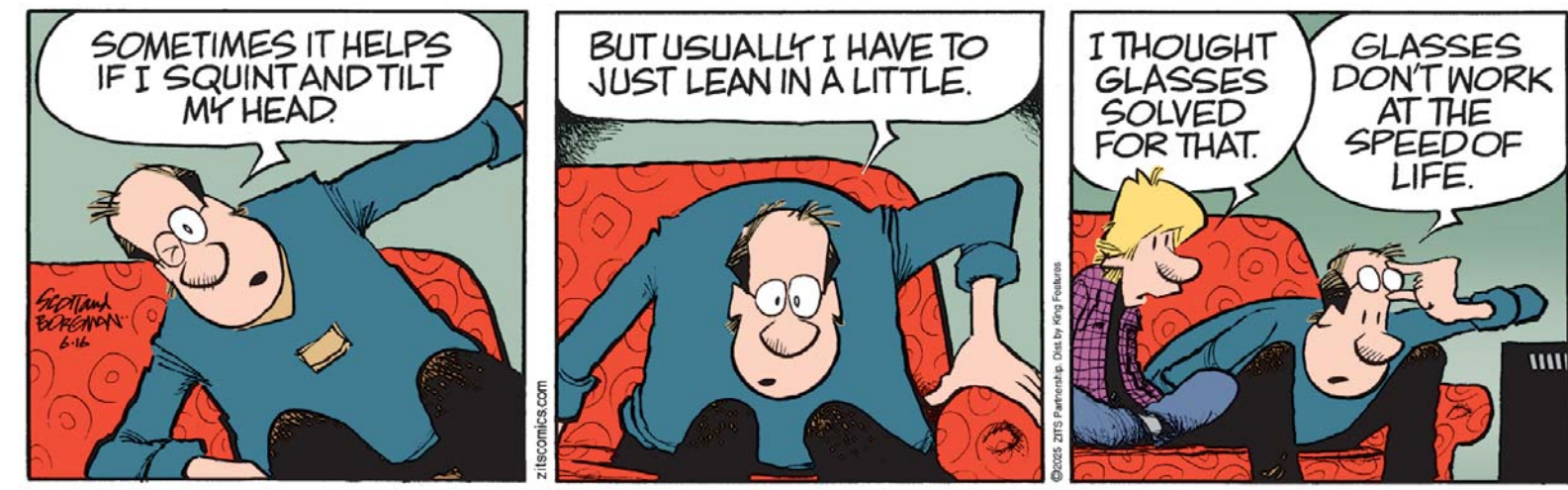


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman