



Islamabad

Photo: Shahid Khan/shutterstock

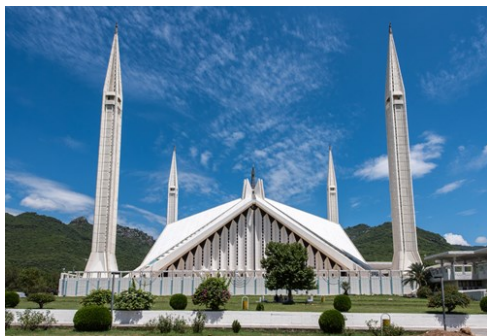


Shahid Khan/shutterstock

The majestic Faisal Mosque stands against the backdrop of the lush Margalla Hills as a symbol of a Pakistan placed firmly in the modern day, while holding on to its history and traditions. The capital city of Islamabad is a forward-thinking metropolis nestled in the green Himalayas. Usually regarded as a diplomatic city, it has become an important business and financial centre for the region, as well as an emerging travel destination. Together with its neighbouring sister city of Rawalpindi, Islamabad gives travellers in-the-know a taste of contemporary Pakistan.



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Featured



Saidpur Village

For a whirlwind tour of Pakistan's cultural history, a visit to Saidpur is a...



Excavations of Sirsukh

The archeological excavations in Taxila make for a great day-trip from Islam...



Army Museum

The Pakistan Army Museum in Rawalpindi offers a unique glimpse into the regi...

Top 5



Shah Faisal Mosque

The stunning national mosque of Pakistan, designed to look like a Bedouin te...



Pakistan Monument

This massive and breathtaking monument symbolises the country's cultural div...



Lok Virsa Heritage Museum

This fantastic ethnographic museum showcases a large collection of tradition...



Shakarparian National Park

This huge national park located just south of the city's main urban area is ...



Daman-e-Koh

The city is surrounded by the beautiful and lush Margalla Hills, a favourite...

THE CITY



Shahid Khan/shutterstock

Nowhere is the juxtaposition of the new and old of Pakistan better displayed than in Islamabad and its twin city of Rawalpindi — two distinct sides of the country as it is today. Islamabad is modern, sleek and classy, full of broad tree-lined avenues, square city blocks and suburban sprawl, expansive parks and green spaces, elegant government buildings and embassies, up-scale restaurants and of course the mighty Faisal Mosque overlooking it all. It has long been a popular travel destination among Pakistanis for its peaceful and quiet vibe and its beautiful greenery, and now international travellers are catching on.

In contrast, Rawalpindi (affectionately called 'Pindi') is much more a South Asian metropolis, with the exciting and sometimes hectic bustle of people, traffic, rickshaws and outdoor markets, what many would refer to as 'the real Pakistan'. It is a fascinating city in its own right, and though it may not boast as many famous attractions as its sister city, it has a special feel of intimacy that makes it unique in the eyes of visitors.

DO & SEE



Muhammad Kamran Akhlaq/shutterstock

The Faisal Mosque is, naturally, Islamabad's most iconic and instantly recognisable landmark, but this is a city rich in historical sites, impressive monuments, fascinating museums, tons of green spaces for outdoor activities, and even some great entertainment options for children and families. There are also enough nearby sights and places of interest to warrant a few day-trips, including some fantastic archeological excavations.

Shah Faisal Mosque



The stunning national mosque of Pakistan, designed to look like a Bedouin tent, is a beautiful mix of traditional and modern architecture that symbolises the aspirations of the country. It is one of the largest in the world, and can hold up to 100,000 in the hall and courtyard. Visitors are allowed, but non-Muslims should avoid prayer times.

Photo: K_Boonnitrod/Shutterstock.com

Address: Faisal Avenue, Islamabad

Pakistan Monument



This massive and breathtaking monument symbolises the country's cultural diversity and national unity. It is shaped like a blooming flower with four main petals, each representing the four major provinces, and three smaller ones, meant to represent smaller regions, such as Kashmir.

Photo: Shahid Khan/Shutterstock.com
Address: Pakistan Monument Road, Islamabad
Opening hours: Daily 9am-10pm
Phone: +92 514345490

Lok Virsa Heritage Museum



This fantastic ethnographic museum showcases a large collection of traditional Pakistani handicrafts, including wood carvings, jewellery and textiles. It offers a unique glimpse into the artistic and artisanal past of the country. Be sure to visit the gift shop and pick up a souvenir.

Photo: M.Saqib Mamsa/shutterstock
Address: Garden Road, Islamabad
Opening hours: Tue-Sun 10am-4pm; Fri 10am-12:30pm / 2pm-4pm; Mon closed
Phone: +92 51 9249209
Internet: lokvirsa.org.pk

Shakarparian National Park



This huge national park located just south of the city's main urban area is a lush expanse of gardens and trees that provide a welcome escape from the

city streets for both locals and visitors. The area also houses many monuments and museums, and has hill lookouts just a 20-minute walk uphill.

Photo: AlexeiA/shutterstock
Address: Shakarparian Road, Islamabad

Daman-e-Koh



The city is surrounded by the beautiful and lush Margalla Hills, a favourite escape for the citizens of Islamabad. Daman-e-Koh, a splendid picnic spot about a 30-minute walk up the hills just north of the zoo, offers breathtaking views of the city, including a stunning vista of the Faisal Mosque.

Photo: Saqib Rizvi/shutterstock
Address: Daman-e-Koh Road, E-7, Islamabad

Excavations of Sirsukh



The archeological excavations in Taxila make for a great day-trip from Islamabad. The sites can be thoroughly explored in about 6 hours of walking, if the oppressive heat allows. The sites and museum display Buddhist sculptures, metal artifacts and coins, and other interesting finds from times gone by. Don't miss the Dharmarajika stupa the 3rd century BCE

Photo: Faisal Arshed/unsplash
Address: Excavations of Sirsukh, Taxila
Opening hours: Daily 8am-12:30pm / 2:30pm-5:30pm
Phone: +92 51 9314270
Internet: rezavisblastfromthepast.co.in/2022/10/08/bhir-sirka-p-sirsukh-a-note-on-taxila-its-sites-and-its-archaeology

Army Museum



The Pakistan Army Museum in Rawalpindi offers a unique glimpse into the region's military history. It features a comprehensive display of arms and weapons ranging from prehistoric axes to swords and rifles, all the way through to modern-day missile systems. This museum provides a fascinating tour through the evolution of military technology in the area.

Photo: Hassan Farooq Chaudhary/shutterstock

Address: Iftikhar Janjua Road, Rawalpindi

Opening hours: Daily 9am-3pm

Phone: +92 51 5147630

Saidpur Village



For a whirlwind tour of Pakistan's cultural history, a visit to Saidpur is a must. Located just one kilometre from Islamabad, this former Hindu village was once renowned for its pottery. Today, it features a Model Village showcasing handicrafts from various regions across the country.

Photo: AlexelA/shutterstock

Address: Saidpur Road, Islamabad

DINING



neil langan/shutterstock

Islamabad's restaurant scene has rapidly expanded to cater to the sophisticated palates of the international diplomats residing in the city. This burgeoning culinary landscape features an array of dining options, from upscale restaurants and local family-run eateries to trendy diners and cafes, offering both local and international cuisine to satisfy the tastes of travelling food enthusiasts.

The Monal



Offering what is beyond a doubt the best view of any restaurant in Islamabad, The Monal is nestled up among the lush Margalla Hills, away from the city noise, but providing a breathtaking panoramic view of its urban area. It is a bit out of the way, but the view and the mix of European and Asian specialties make it well worth a visit.

Photo: grey color/Shutterstock.com

Address: 9 km Pir Sohawa Road, Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily 9am-12:30am

Phone: +92 51 2898044

Internet: themonal.com

New Kabul Restaurant



This is more of a rugged, local restaurant than the fine dining that can be found in more expensive places, but locals keep coming back to Kabul for the fantastic Afghan specialties, particularly the barbecue and the dumplings. The place itself is simple and no-nonsense. They let the food do the talking.

Photo: Alexslim/shutterstock

Address: Plot No. 17, College Road, F-7 Markaz, Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily noon-midnight

Phone: +92 51 2650953

Internet: kabulrestaurant.pk

More Info: Located next to the Hill View Hotel

Ox & Grill Steakhouse



Ox & Grill Steakhouse serves premium steak sizzlers, burgers, and a variety of Mexican, Italian, and Chinese dishes. The restaurant offers a delightful dining experience with attentive service, delicious desserts and authentic Italian coffee.

Photo: vm2002/shutterstock

Address: College Road, Markaz F-7, Islamabad

Opening hours: Sun-Thu noon-midnight, Fri & Sat noon-1am

Phone: +92 51 2650792

Internet: www.oxandgrillsteakhouse.com

CAFES



joannawnuk/shutterstock

There is an abundance of fantastic Western-style cafes in Islamabad at the moment, all offering high-quality coffee and a surprising range of snacks, meals and freshly made desserts and pastries. They are a great way to take a break from sightseeing and escape the afternoon heat, and some offer truly unique experiences either for their inventive decor or the views from their terraces.

Rakaposhi



Located in the Serena Hotel, this luxurious cafe is elegant and sleek and very welcoming with its subdued lighting. Guests can enjoy hot coffee or tea and sample some of the delicious snacks, like samosas or sandwiches, and pastries made from scratch.

Photo: Sam Thomas A/shutterstock

Address: Islamabad Serena Hotel, Khayaban-e-Suhrwardy Road, G-5 Markaz, Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily 9am-11pm

Phone: +92 51 111 133 133

Internet: www.serenahotels.com/islamabad/dining/rakaposhi

1969



As the name suggests, this groovy cafe transports guests back to the 1960s with its brightly-coloured decoration and furniture

and the appropriately anachronistic newspaper pieces visible throughout. The offer of food is simple, but the flavours are authentic.

Photo: Satvic Life/shutterstock

Address: Garden Avenue, Shakarparian National Park Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily 11am-midnight

Phone: +92 323 9691969

Internet: 1969restaurant.com

Atrio Cafe & Grill



Atrio specialises in two things: coffee and barbecue. The meat dishes range from Mexican to Italian specialties and never

disappoint. If you're not that hungry, then sit back and enjoy a hot cup of coffee from the outdoor rooftop terrace, and marvel at the view of the Margalla Hills in the background.

Photo: Tanawat Chantradiokra/shutterstock

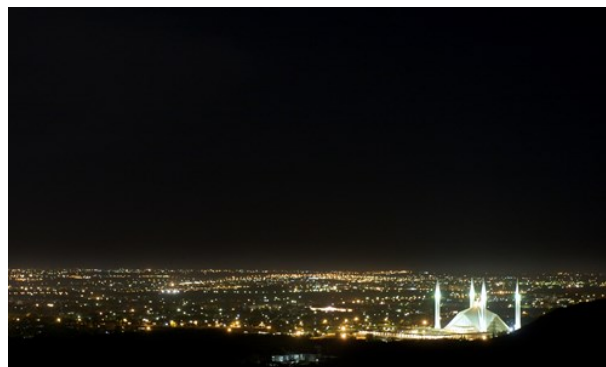
Address: Jinnah Super Market F-7, College Road, F-7 Markaz, Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily noon-midnight

Phone: +92 51 8319999

Internet: www.instagram.com/atriocafegrill

BARS & NIGHTLIFE



Lichtmeister/shutterstock

Alcoholic beverages are officially forbidden for Muslims, who make up roughly 97% of the population in Pakistan. Consequently, there are no places that could really be called 'bars'. Nevertheless, visiting foreigners are allowed to order and consume alcohol at restaurants and hotels, so travellers hoping to have a drink in the evening in Islamabad will do best by visiting the restaurant in one of the luxury hotels in town. For other forms of entertainment, the city offers cinemas and various cultural activities.

Nadia Coffee Shop



Located in the Islamabad Marriott Hotel, Nadia offers a good selection of international dishes as well as a buffet. It is a popular place for

business meetings and casual evening meals for its relaxed vibe and the live music that can be heard almost every night of the week.

Photo: Rawpixel.com/shutterstock

Address: Islamabad Marriott Hotel, Aga Khan Road, Shalimar 5, Islamabad

Opening hours: 24/7

Phone: +92 51 2826121

Internet: www.marriott.com/hotels/hotel-information/restaurant/isbpk-islamabad-marriott-hotel

Best Western Premier Islamabad



The wonderfully located Best Western in Islamabad, right on the edge of the Shakarparian Park, offers two options in terms of nighttime entertainment. The hotel restaurant is open 24 hours a day and offers great ala-carte dining.

Photo: JerHetrick/shutterstock

Address: 6 Islamabad Club Road, Islamabad

Opening hours: 24/7

Phone: +92 51 2277460

Internet: www.bestwesternisb.com

Email: mail@bestwesternisb.com

Centaurus Cineplex



The Centaurus Mall is not only a great place for shopping and eating, with its wide selection of shops and restaurants, but it can also be a nice place to spend an evening at the cinema. The Centaurus Cineplex shows all the latest Hollywood blockbusters and local productions on four screens.

Photo: little star/shutterstock

Address: Centaurus Mall, 1 Jinnah Avenue, 4th Floor, F-8 Markaz, Islamabad

Phone: +92 51 111 626 384

Internet: www.mecinemas.com

Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium



More national obsession than national sport, cricket is huge in Pakistan. And there's no better way to have an authentic Pakistani

experience than to join the crowd at the cricket

stadium and cheer for the local team. You can catch international matches at the Rawalpindi Stadium for an entertaining day out.

Photo: Mike Flippo/shutterstock

Address: Stadium Road, Rawalpindi

Phone: +92 321 2410410

Internet: www.pcb.com.pk

SHOPPING



shaziafolio/shutterstock

Shopping in Islamabad-Rawalpindi can be as varied as the cities themselves. Spend the afternoon browsing, shopping and eating at one of the many large modern shopping malls, which contain everything a shopper could need, or head to one of the more traditional open-air markets to pick up some local handicrafts or traditional garments. Some real unique finds await the patient shopper who takes the time to explore the city's many shopping possibilities.

Raja Bazar



For an authentic, albeit chaotic, shopping experience, Rawalpindi's Raja Bazar is hard to beat. Spreading out from Fawara Chowk, this

bustling market features vendors, shops, and stalls in every direction, selling everything from clothing to daily necessities. The area also retains towers from old Hindu temples, adding a

touch of historical intrigue.

Photo: M Selcuk Oner/shutterstock

Address: Raja Bazar, Rawalpindi

Centaurus Mall



Massive, modern, sleek and imposing, the Centaurus Mall is truly impressive. This multifaceted complex combines a shopping

centre, hotel, and residential housing, making it a beacon of modernity for which Islamabad is renowned. The mall offers everything you need in terms of shopping, entertainment, and dining, allowing visitors to easily spend a whole day exploring its many floors.

Photo: Rawpixel.com/shutterstock

Address: Jinnah Avenue, Markaz F-8, Islamabad

Opening hours: Mon-Sat 11am-11pm, Sun 11am-midnight

Phone: +92 51 8483040

Internet: thecentaurusmall.com

Email: info@thecentaurus.com

Jinnah Super Market



Jinnah Super Market is the shopping destination for Islamabad's affluent residents. The stores offer the latest fashion from international

designer brands, as well as traditional Pakistani garments for men and women. Additionally, you'll find a variety of household items, furnishings, and decorations.

Photo: ChameleonsEye/shutterstock

Address: College Road, Markaz F-7, Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily 11am-1am

Phone: +92 317 5666179

Beverly Center



Beverly Center is another modern shopping centre where local families and groups of friends often go to shop for essentials, or spend an afternoon

browsing the many designer shops, sampling some delicacies at the numerous restaurants and cafes and enjoying an afternoon out.

Photo: Raw Pixel/shutterstock

Address: Jinnah Avenue, Blue Area, Islamabad

Opening hours: Daily 10am-10pm

Phone: +92 331 1111118

Al-Janat Mall



For some shopping in the Rawalpindi area, try Al-Janat Mall. In operation since 1974, this large shopping centre specialises in clothing,

cosmetics, bags, perfumes, jewellery, shoes and any type of accessory you can think of, all at quite competitive prices.

Photo: gpointstudio/shutterstock

Address: Trunk Bazar, Saddar, Rawalpindi

Opening hours: Daily 10am-11pm

Phone: +92 347 5666669

Internet: aljanat.com.pk

Email: commercial_market@aljanatmall.com

TOURIST INFORMATION



willmetts/shutterstock

Islamabad International Airport (ISB)



The Islamabad International Airport commenced operations in 2018 and replaced the defunct Benazir Bhutto International Airport.

Taxis are readily available outside the airport, but be sure to agree on a price before stepping into a cab, as they are seldom metered. There are also a number of local buses which can transport visitors to and from the airport, but the number of routes can be overwhelming and confusing. Unless you know exactly which bus to take to get to your destination, it might be best to stick to taxis.

Photo: Sardar Kamran Khan/unsplash

Address: Airport Road, Rawalpindi

Phone: +92 51 95551000

Internet: islamabadairport.com.pk

Public Transport



The Rawalpindi-Islamabad Metrobus system employs modern, air-conditioned and WiFi-enabled buses with dedicated lanes to help commuters skip traffic jams, and they connect the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Probably the best way to get around the city is by a combination of the MRT and taxis. Other options for getting around include pedal- and motor-rickshaws.

Photo: Shaheer Amaid/unsplash

Internet: cmta.com.pk

Taxi



Taxis are a cheap and efficient way to get around the city. You can usually find them hanging around busy areas, like the airport or train station, or at busy intersections. Be sure to agree on a price before hopping in, as they are seldom metered. One reputable company in the city is Metro Radio Cab.

Photo: Rasor/pixabay

Phone: +92 300 5557806

Internet: metrocab.com.pk

Post Office

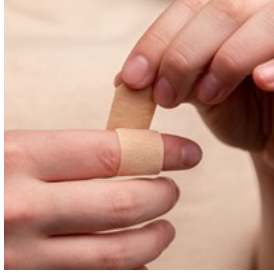


Pakistan Post, the state enterprise and largest postal operator in the country offers a broad array of services, from traditional mail delivery to more modern logistical solutions, ensuring reliable connections across both urban and

remote areas. Their head office is located close to the Pakistan Monument.

Photo: Diana Light/unsplash
Address: G-8/4, Islamabad
Phone: +92 51 9261571
Internet: www.pakpost.gov.pk

Pharmacy



In Pakistan, pharmacies are readily accessible, offering a wide range of medicines and health products. Most are staffed by knowledgeable pharmacists who can provide basic health consultations and guidance on medication use. D.Watson Chemist is a popular chain of pharmacies.

Photo: Diana Polekhina/unsplash
Address: Hassan Arcade, Ground floor, F-11 Markaz, Islamabad
Opening hours: Daily 8am-2am
Phone: +92 51 2228011
Internet: www.instagram.com/shaheenchemistgrocers.online

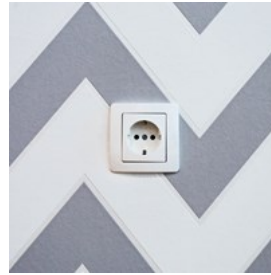
Telephone



Country code: +92 Area code: 51

Photo: Miryam León/unsplash

Electricity



In Pakistan, you will encounter two plug types. Type C comes with two round pins and is common in continental Europe. Type D has three round pins in a triangular pattern. Expect 230V at 50Hz.

Photo: Neven Krcmarek/unsplash

Population

The city: 1.1 million
Metro area: 2.4 million

Currency

1 Pakistani rupee (PKR or Rs) = 100 paisa

Opening hours

Generally speaking, the workweek is Monday to Friday, with Friday being a half-day. Sometimes Saturday is also a half-day, but Sunday is always off. Government offices operate from 8/9 am to 5/6 pm, while private businesses tend to start operations at about 10 am. Restaurants and cafes tend to stay open later, until about 9/10 pm.

Internet

ictadministration.gov.pk
tourism.gov.pk

Newspapers

The Express Tribune: tribune.com.pk
Daily Pakistan: dailypakistan.com.pk

Emergency numbers

Ambulance: 115
Police: 15
Fire brigade: 16

Tourist information

Tourist Information Centre
Agha Khan Road, Markaz F-6, Islamabad
+92 51 920276

Information is subject to change. Please contact your Lifestyle Consultant for the most up-to-date recommendations.