

## Exploring Pune - Past, Present and Fascinating Trivia

Hey Aspirants! We're back with another blog on the blog series '**Know Your City**'. The city you're going to learn about is '**Pune**'. So, without a further delay, let's start exploring the city.

**Pune**, a vibrant city in western India, boasts a rich history and a promising future. Known as the "**Oxford of the East**," Pune is home to numerous educational institutions, with over 800 colleges and universities. Its population of around 3.1 million people enjoys a pleasant climate, with temperatures averaging 25°C (77°F).

The city is a bustling tech hub, housing the Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park and a thriving IT sector that contributes significantly to India's economy. With a diverse cultural landscape, Pune offers a blend of tradition and modernity, making it a compelling destination for both knowledge seekers and tech enthusiasts alike.

Before looking at the different aspects, one must know the City symbols of the particular city. The city symbols of Pune are:

Pune	
State	Maharashtra
Official Language	Marathi
City Bird	Rose-Ringed Parakeet
City Flower	Jarul or Tabebuia rosea
Municipal Commissioner	Vikram Kumar
Member of Parliament	Girish Bapat

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[Source: India TV News]

So now, let's move on to the first aspect of the blog i.e. **History of Pune**.

## History of Pune

Pune, with its origins dating back to ancient times, boasts a storied history that spans over a millennium. It has witnessed the rise and fall of empires, from its early days as a prominent seat of power for the Marathas to its role in the British colonial era. Today, the city stands as a testament to the confluence of cultures and a living legacy of its historical past, making it a captivating destination for history enthusiasts and curious travelers alike. So, let's start from the beginning.

- **Ancient Origins:** Pune's history traces back to the 9th century when it was known as Punnaka and was under the rule of the Rashtrakuta dynasty.
- **The Maratha Empire:** During the 17th-18th Century, Pune became a significant settlement under the Marathas, with Shivaji spending his early years in the Lal Mahal.
- **Peshwa Rule and Transformation:** Peshwa Bajirao I's arrival in 1728 marked a transformative phase for Pune. The iconic Shaniwar Wada was constructed during this period.
- **Temple Construction and Economic Prosperity:** Under Peshwa rule, Pune witnessed a flourishing period with the construction of numerous temples and infrastructure, contributing significantly to the city's economy.
- **British Rule and Modernization:** In 1818, British rule began after the Marathas' defeat, and the British established a military cantonment in Pune.
- **Poona Municipality and Railway:** During British rule, the Poona Municipality was established in 1858, and the city was connected by a railway line in the same year.
- **Centre of Social Reform and Nationalism:** Pune played a central role in the Indian independence struggle, with leaders like Gokhale, Tilak, and Gandhi advocating for social reform and equal rights.
- **Pune since Indian Independence:** After India gained independence in 1947, Pune witnessed rapid development, including the establishment of educational institutions and industries.



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[Source: Pune Cantonment Board]

Pune's history is a fascinating journey that begins with its ancient origins under the Rashtrakuta dynasty. By the 17th and 18th centuries, it emerged as a vital part of the Maratha Empire, with significant contributions from leaders like Shivaji and Bajirao I.

## Timeline for the major events that occurred in the History of Pune:

- **9th Century CE:** Pune, known as Punnaka, is ruled by the Rashtrakuta dynasty.
- **17th-18th Century:** Pune becomes a significant settlement under the Maratha Empire, with Shivaji spending his early years in the Lal Mahal.
- **1728:** Peshwa Bajirao I moved his base to Pune, marking the city's transformation.
- **1730:** The iconic Shaniwar Wada is completed.
- **Late 18th Century:** Pune witnesses significant temple construction, contributing to economic prosperity.
- **1818:** British rule begins in Pune after the defeat of the Marathas.
- **1858:** The Poona Municipality is established, and a railway line connects the city.
- **Late 19th-20th Century:** Pune plays a central role in the Indian independence struggle and social reform.
- **1947:** India gains independence from British rule, and Pune sees substantial post-independence growth.
- **2001:** The Mumbai-Pune expressway is completed, enhancing connectivity.
- **2008:** Pune hosts the Commonwealth Youth Games, encouraging development in the city.

This timeline highlights key events that shaped Pune's history, from its ancient origins to its modern development. Let's move on to the next aspect of this blog i.e **Geographical aspects**.

## Geographical Aspects of Pune

Pune, located at approximately 18° 32" north latitude and 73° 51" east longitude, is situated on the western margin of the Deccan plateau, at an altitude of 560 m (1,840 ft) above sea level. The city is nestled on the leeward side of the Sahyadri mountain range, sheltered from the Arabian Sea. Pune is known for its hilly terrain, with Vetal Hill rising to 800 m (2,600 ft) above sea level, and the Sinhagad fort at 1,300 metres (4,300 feet).

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[Source: Tripadvisor]

### Physiographic Aspects:

- Pune is at the confluence of the Mula and Mutha rivers.
- The Pavana and Indrayani rivers, tributaries of larger rivers, traverse the city's northwest neighbourhoods.
- The Pune Metropolitan Region (PMR) encompasses 7,256 km<sup>2</sup>, comprising ten talukas of the Pune district.

### Demographic Snapshots:

- **Population:** As of the 2011 census, Pune's population stands at 3,124,458, while the Pune Urban Agglomeration houses 5,057,709 residents.
- A significant portion of the population lived in slums, with 40% residing in slum areas in 2001. Pune has experienced substantial migration, attracting people from various regions, with Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, and Rajasthan being the top source areas.
- **Literacy Rate:** Pune city had an average literacy rate of approximately 86.15%.

### Soil and Vegetation:

The city's geographical diversity supports a variety of soils and vegetation. The region's landscape ranges from hilly to fertile plains, enabling agricultural activities and urban development to coexist. Pune's changing demographic and geographic facets contribute to its unique character as a thriving Indian metropolis.

Pune boasts several iconic landmarks, including the Shaniwar Wada, a historic fort and palace. The Aga Khan Palace is known for its historical significance in the Indian freedom movement. The Sinhagad Fort offers stunning views and a glimpse into the city's heritage. The Osho International Meditation Resort is a renowned spiritual centre. The Raja Dinkar Kelkar Museum houses an extensive collection of Indian artefacts. These landmarks represent Pune's rich history, culture, and spirituality.

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[Source: The Indian Express]

Now, let's move on to the **political aspects of Pune**.

## Political Aspects of Pune

Pune is governed by two civic bodies, the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) and the Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC).

- The PMC has a General Body with 162 corporators elected every five years to represent multi-member wards.
- PMC's governance earned it the 8th rank among 21 Indian cities for best governance and administrative practices in 2014.
- The Pune City Police, under the Indian Police Service, maintains law and order. Pune also has a separate police commissionerate for Pimpri-Chinchwad.
- The Pune Metropolitan Region Development Authority (PMRDA), established in 2015, oversees integrated development over 7,256.46 km<sup>2</sup>.
- The city's water supply comes from the Khadakwasla Reservoir and other reservoirs, while sewage treatment and river restoration efforts are in progress.
- PMC handles solid waste management, dealing with around 1,600 tons daily.
- Electricity is supplied by the Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited, and telecommunications are served by various providers, including BSNL, Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, and Vodafone Idea.

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[Source: Hindustan Times]

Pune's political landscape combines traditional and modern governance systems to manage the dynamic urban centre.

So, let's discuss the **culture of Pune**.

## Culture of Pune

The culture of Pune reflects a harmonious blend of traditional Maharashtrian customs and a modern, cosmopolitan ethos, encompassing classical music, theater, literature, and a vibrant culinary scene.

- **Language:** Marathi is the primary language spoken in Pune, reflecting the city's Maharashtrian heritage. However, due to its cosmopolitan nature, you'll also hear other languages like Hindi and English widely spoken.
- **People:** Pune's population is diverse, with a mix of Maharashtrians, immigrants, and students from various parts of India. This diversity contributes to its vibrant culture.
- **Music:** Pune has a rich musical tradition. Classical music, especially Hindustani classical music, thrives here. The city also embraces contemporary music, with a burgeoning music scene.
- **Attire:** The attire in Pune is a blend of traditional and modern. Maharashtrian men wear dhoti and kurta, while women don sarees or salwar kameez. Western clothing is also popular among the youth.
- **Cuisine:** Pune offers a variety of Maharashtrian cuisine, including vada pav and bhakri. You can also savour diverse Indian and international cuisines at the city's numerous restaurants.
- **Handicrafts:** Pune is known for its vibrant street shopping and markets that sell traditional crafts, jewellery, and textiles.
- **Temples:** The city is dotted with temples, including the Kasba Ganpati Temple, known as the presiding deity of Pune.
- **Festivals:** Ganesh Chaturthi, Diwali, and Holi are celebrated with great enthusiasm. Pune's cultural calendar is filled with music and art festivals.

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[Source: Quora]

Pune's culture reflects its rich history, embracing both tradition and modernity, making it a unique and dynamic city.

Now let's talk about the next aspect i.e. **Environment in Pune.**

## Environment in Pune

Pune, known for its pleasant climate and lush green surroundings, offers a balanced environment that combines urban development with an appreciation for nature. The city has made efforts to promote sustainability, with parks, gardens, and a growing awareness of environmental conservation, making it a relatively cleaner and greener urban center compared to many other metropolitan areas in India.

- **Urban Biodiversity:** Pune boasts diverse urban biodiversity with numerous parks and green spaces. Its ecological diversity supports various flora and fauna within the city limits.
- **Green Cover:** The city prides itself on a significant green cover, with over 40% of its land area under greenery. This green lung helps mitigate pollution and provides a healthy environment.
- **Flora:** Pune's flora comprises a variety of trees and plants, contributing to its pleasant climate. Some notable species include banyan, neem, and gulmohar trees.
- **Fauna:** The city is home to a range of urban wildlife, including birds like parrots, peafowls, and migratory species. Squirrels, mongooses, and butterflies are also part of the urban fauna.
- **Environmental Challenges:** Despite its greenery, Pune faces environmental challenges. Rapid urbanisation strains resources and leads to issues like sewage treatment, river pollution, and solid waste management. These challenges demand sustainable solutions to protect Pune's unique urban environment.

Let's talk about the **economy of the city Pune.**

## Economy of Pune



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Pune shines as a prominent manufacturing and industrial hub in India. With a staggering nominal GDP of ₹3,31,478 crores in 2019-20, it stands as Maharashtra's third-largest contributor to the economy, following Mumbai and Thane. Pune proudly claims the fifth-largest metropolitan economy in the country, showcasing the sixth-highest per capita income.

- **Manufacturing:** The city is a manufacturing powerhouse, with significant industrial zones like Chakan, Bhosari, and Hinjewadi. Major automobile companies such as Bajaj Auto, Tata Motors, and Mercedes Benz have manufacturing plants here. Pune is renowned as "Motor City," with prominent groups like Kirloskar and Kalyani Group headquartered within its boundaries.
- **Information Technology:** Pune's IT sector is robust, with the Rajiv Gandhi Infotech Park in Hinjewadi, home to over 800 IT companies. The city also nurtures tech startups, making it a hub for innovation. Infosys and Zensar Technologies are among the IT giants based in Pune.
- **Emerging Sectors:** Pune's economy extends to emerging sectors like VFX services and trade, with the Pune International Exhibition and Convention Centre boosting the MICE industry.



[Source: MyGate]

Pune's economic prowess is on the rise, with a focus on innovation, manufacturing, and technology, setting it on a trajectory of growth and development.

Now let's delve into a few **Interesting Facts about Pune**.

## Some Interesting Facts about Pune

- India's First Girls' School was started in Pune.
- Pune has some fantastic reading cafes. You can sit and spend your whole day there. The cafes provide a pleasant ambience, and they also serve snacks there.
- Making a turban or 'Pagri', as it's locally called, is anyway an exhausting task in itself. However, Mr. Shailesh Yadav, a fellow Punekar, has taken pagdi-making to another level altogether. He has set a new world record by making a pagdi measuring 10 feet in height and 30 feet in diameter, making it the largest in its existence.





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[Source: Posttoast]

In conclusion, **Pune**, the "**Oxford of the East**," is a city that seamlessly weaves its rich history with the promises of a vibrant future. Its journey from ancient origins under the Rashtrakuta dynasty to becoming a vital part of the Maratha Empire and a thriving tech hub is a testament to its resilience and dynamism. Pune's geographical, cultural, political, and environmental aspects, along with its robust economy, contribute to its unique character. This city, with its diverse population, thriving culture, and lush greenery, continues to inspire and captivate all who explore its many facets, making it a remarkable destination in India.

