

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2021 - ₹50

**THE BEST OF
ADVENTURE TRAVEL
IN GUJARAT**

**FERN HOTELS
ON A GROWTH
PATH**

**INDIAN FOOD
TRAIL**

**ISLAND
HOPPING IN
INDIA**

**7 BEST ROAD
TRIPS IN INDIA**

**DISCOVER YOUR
INDIA**



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TODAY'S TRAVELLER
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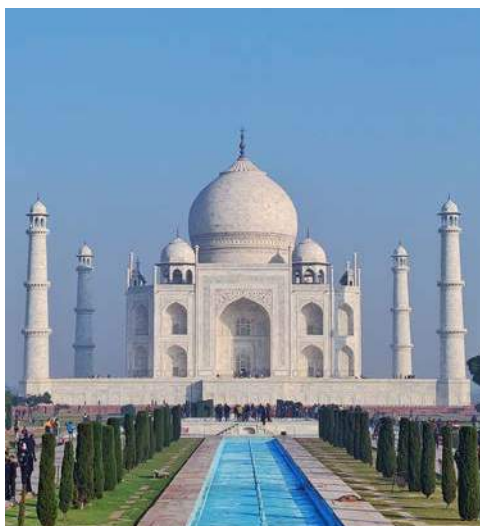
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Push Your Limits!

THE BEST OF ADVENTURE TRAVEL IN GUJARAT

TT BUREAU

Ever fantasized about visiting the land of rich heritage, Gujarat, as a part of your vacation? The good news is that Gujarat is the ideal destination to enjoy the great outdoors and the adventure activities it provides. Situated along the western coastline of India, Gujarat has an incredible geographical setting making it a hotspot for adventure activities.

AEROSPORTS

If thrill is what you look for in life then aero sports is your ideal choice. Look out for the variety of options in aero sports available in Gujarat.

PARAGLIDING AND PARASAILING

Paragliding is a great activity for adventure seekers. Spread your wings as you glide at a high altitude at locations in Saputara, Pavangarh, and Junagarh.

Here is a unique experience that requires professional guidance and gear but is the most sought after adventure activity. A 21 day paragliding festival conducted during the months of December and January at Saputara, Gujarat is an ideal time to try your hands at this sport.

Training sessions are offered by experts. Apart from paragliding, tourists can enjoy activities like go-karting, bike riding, parasailing, and zorbing ball.

Parasailing and paragliding activities are also available in Champaner - Panchmahal District; Mandvi - Kutch District; Palitana - Bhavnagar District; Ambaji - Banaskantha District and Kheda - Kheda District.

During this festival, you can also try **Paramotoring**, which runs with the help of an engine and has an altogether different

appeal. Waghai railway station is the nearest railhead to Satpura and the nearest airport is the Gandhidham Airport from where a local vehicle can be booked.

WATER SPORTS

Gujarat has enviable water resources, which are perfect for **Boating** and other aquatic sports. River Sabarmati, Kankaria Lake in Ahmedabad, Nal Sarovar (65.4 km from Ahmedabad) and Saputara Lake, in the Dang district of Gujarat are four water bodies which offer excellent boating. At Sabarmati Riverfront there are more than a score of boats, which cruise between Nehru Bridge and Gandhi Bridge from a number of boating stations.

Sabarmati Riverfront has introduced water sports activities like zorbing, jet ski, kids peddle boat, water scooter and more.

Water sports are a great option to try out. Go **Kayaking**, rent a kayak and paddle your way through a local lake or en route the rivers from Ahmedabad. Make your way through the waters as you enjoy this highly addictive and super fun activity.

Rafting is another great watersports activity. Plenty of River Rafting options are available in Vadodra and Ahmedabad, particularly near Statue of Unity, Sardar Sarovar Dam and along the Narmada river.

Want to head for a new water sports option? **River Cruising** is a new initiative. A twenty-minute ride is an ideal getaway for this new sport. At Sabarmati riverfront, you can go river cruising. The nearest railhead and airport is at Ahmedabad. Venture into the world of marvel and astounding underwater world with **Scuba Diving**, a highly sought after activity as it lets one explore into the world of corals and fishes.

Snorkelling is also a great option to try out when in Gujarat. The primary difference between Snorkelling and Scuba diving is that the former one allows you to dive and swim at the water surface level while the latter allows you to dive deep into the water body. The best time to try scuba diving and snorkelling in Gujarat is from September to February at the famous scuba diving spot of Dwarka or Ahmedabad or Surat or even Bhuj.

Located at a distance of 144 km from the town of Jamnagar, Bluebell Beach is a great **Kite Surfing** spot in Gujarat. The wind season here is from October to February. This place is frequented by experienced kite surfers.

Another adventure activity for outdoor enthusiasts in Gujarat is **River Rafting** which can be enjoyed in the blue water of the Narmada river. There are excellent spots in a 4.5 km. stretch with whirlpools, rapids and many turns Khalwani in Kevadia near Statue of Unity and Sardar Sarovar Dam on river Narmada.

Jet Skiing, a highly pleasurable water sport activity can be enjoyed at Mandvi Beach. The nearest bus stop and railhead to Mandvi Beach is at Bhuj, from where you can rent a vehicle to reach the beach. Hop on to your jet and gear up for fun skiing.



LAND BASED ADVENTURE SPORTS

CAMPING

No one has made camping as popular and memorable an experience as the state of Gujarat. A camping experience at Rann of Kutch is a lifetime experience where you open your luxurious and comfortable tent flap to the scenic white salt plains contrasting with a clear blue sky in the background.



During the 90-day Rann Utsav festival, from December to February, the well-structured campsites display a series of events that showcase the life, traditions, dance, and music of Gujarat.

The nearest airport to Kutch is in the city of Bhuj, which is around 80 km from the Rann desert. Bhuj airport is well connected to cities all over India.

Another interesting camping experience is to be found at The Mahal Eco Campsite amid rivers, forests, and bamboo glides and offers wonderful walking, trekking, and bird-watching options. The best time to visit the campsite is from October to March. Beautifully located on the banks of the Purna River, in the Purna Wildlife Sanctuary, the campsite offers a great experience in the midst of dense deciduous and bamboo forests with the Purna and Gira rivers flowing through them. A visit to the Girmal Falls nearby is a must.

The nearest airport and railhead is Surat from where it is 120 km drive to The Mahal Eco Campsite.

Rock Climbing and **Artificial Wall Climbing** is a great adventure as it tests your fitness level, stamina, focus and concentration. The small town of Idar, 100 km from Ahmedabad is famous for Rock Climbing on account of its topography which has enormous natural granite boulders which have sizeable holds for climbers. Mandavi beach, near Bhuj is another good spot for rock climbing.

Bungee run Basketball, a unique activity that is highly addictive makes one jump high for a basketball game wearing



a bungee rope and you will be ready for a good jump, a few laughs and a good ambitious goal to achieve.

Ever wanted to experience a very sporty activity? Then hop onto an **All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV)** and ride your way through the Kutch desert. All of these activities can be tried at the year-end Rann festival/ Kutch Rann Utsav and you can book these activities at the Rann Utsav online website.

Owing to the splendid beauty of Gujarat and its natural landscapes, you can go **Jungle Trekking** to experience the topography and picturesque landscape. Among the many famous spots to trek in Gujarat are Saputara, Girnar, Sahyadri hill, Polo Forest, Zanzari waterfalls among others.



RULES TO FOLLOW FOR ADVENTURE TOUR OPERATORS

1. All adventure tour operators have to be inspected by an inspection committee. It is mandatory for all representatives of tour operators to be present during the inspection
2. The inspection committee members will oversee all measures and suggest ways to improve them. They might also upgrade, exclude or include some of the activities
3. The district authority will decide on the maximum number of activities that can be permitted in a particular area. This is to avoid any clash of activities in that area
4. Water sports operators who have acquired licences and operational certificates from the Gujarat Maritime Board do not need a separate inspection from the committee.
5. Those who have failed to fulfill the basic eligibility criterion may continue to operate but shall not be granted registration or recognition.
6. Same rules apply for other operators as well. Aero sports operators having licences from competent authorities may be granted recognition without requiring a separate inspection.
7. Those who have failed to fulfill the criteria shall not be granted recognition or registration.
8. Land-based operators having licences and certificates may not require a separate inspection from the committee.
9. Land-based sports operators, who have failed to fulfill the eligibility criteria, will not be granted renewal or extension.

TODAY'S
traveller

EXPLORE



DIVINE DESTINATION

Explore new experiences in Srisailem temple in Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh, a religiously rich and diverse tourist destination

TT BUREAU

Located on the picturesque hills of Nallamala, Srisailem temple, the abode of Siva and Sakthi, stands on the right side of the river Krishna, in the Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh.

This celebrated mountain is also known as Siridhan, Srigiri, Sirigiri, Sripavatha and Srinagam. It has been a popular centre of Saivite pilgrimage for centuries.

The presiding deities of this area are god Mallikarjuna Swamy, one of the twelve Jyothirlingas, and goddess Bhramaramba, one of the eighteen Mahasakthis, and both are believed to be self-manifested. The unique feature of this Kshetram is the co-existing of Jyothirlingam and Mahasakthi in one Temple complex, which is rare and the only one of its kind.

The existing main temple is a huge complex consisting of separate temples of Mallikarjuna, Bhramaramba and several sub shrines, pillared halls, mandapas, springs etc. This entire complex is fortified by an impressive Prakaram wall of massive stones. The Prakaram wall contains four Dwaras (principal gates) at four cardinals surmounted by the Gopuras. The eastern entrance is the Mahadwaram.

The centre of the temple complex consists of an enclosure below the level of the principal gates of the cardinals. This enclosure has Salamandapas at the northern and southern sides. The space between the inner enclosure and outer Prakaras walls was maintained gardens in olden days.

In the inner courtyard, there are Nandimandapa, Veerasiromandapa, the temple of Mallikarjuna and the temple of

Bhramaramba. All of them are aligned in a row from east to west.

Some of the minor shrines such as the temple of Vriddha Mallikarjuna, Sahasra Lingeswara, Arthanariswara, Veerabhadra, Uma Maheswara and a group of five temples named as Pandava Prathista temples and a row of nine temples called as Navabrahma temples are also located in the inner courtyard.

Bounding in natural resources, the state of Andhra Pradesh having the longest eastern coastline, houses and holds many heritage sites adorned with pristine splendor, the forts, citadels and architectural masterpieces built by the past Royal hegemony and its noble Emperors.

The magnificent palaces and places, monuments, memorials, tombs and stately structures built by them reflect the art and artisanship, architecture and culture that originated on this land.

Beautiful dams, valleys, hills and ridges with the scenic dales, tranquil lake waters, swirling beach waves, meadows, resorts, hill stations, caves, virgin forests, sanctuaries and national parks which a visitor can enjoy to his heart's content.



THE FERN HOTELS' GROWING PRESENCE IN GUJARAT

TT BUREAU

The Fern Hotels & Resorts has a growing presence in Gujarat under The Fern, The Fern Residency and Beacon Hotels brands. Covering Saurashtra, Kutch, Central and South Gujarat, the group operates 20 hotels in 17 cities, including Ahmedabad, Anjar, Bhavnagar, Bhuj, Jamnagar, Madhavpur, Morbi, Mundra, Rajkot, Somnath, Surat and Vadodara. The Fern's Gujarat Golden Circle covers key resort and leisure destinations like Dwarka, Junagadh, Kevadia, Polo Forest and Sasan Gir. All Fern hotels offer upmarket accommodation and contemporary facilities, with minimal impact on the environment.



"Currently we have 3 resorts in Gujarat - Sasan Gir, Polo Forest and Dwarka, all managed by The Fern. Our resorts have

picked up well, thanks to the safety measures taken by The Fern, which has a strong presence in Gujarat. I strongly believe Gujarat can become a major attraction for out-of-state guests with its diverse settings."

- Kishan Kotecha, Director,
Kotecha Group



"The Fern Hotels & Resorts is a preferred hospitality partner in Gujarat with 20 hotels in 17 locations. We have

executed enhanced hygiene and safety measures across all our hotels. So while our smiles may be hidden behind our masks, you will still feel them, as we deliver environmentally sensitive services in our hotels."

- Noshir A Marfatia, Senior Vice President,
Sales & Marketing, The Fern Hotels & Resorts

For more information and bookings: www.fernhotels.com



The Fern Sattva Resort, Dwarka

is an upscale 81 room vegetarian hotel located near Dwarkadhish and other temples. Guests can also enjoy beach outings, boat trips, dolphin sighting and scuba diving. It offers large rooms and suites, Wi-Fi, multi cuisine restaurant, coffee lounge, pool, gaming zone, kids area and lawns for weddings and events.



The Fern Leo Resort & Club, Junagadh

at the foot of the Girnar Hills, offers 105 rooms with balconies (59 rooms currently operational), vegetarian restaurant, banqueting and lawns, pool, spa, salon, and fitness centre. The Leo Club has a 65-seater recliner theatre, amphitheater, games room, skating rink and bowling alley.



The Fern Sardar Sarovar Resort, Kevadia (Narmada-Statue of Unity)

spread over 14 acres, offers 250 rooms (96 initially open), a vegetarian restaurant, indoor activities, pool, health club, lawns, banquet and conference facilities. It is next to Ekta Dewar, the entry to the Statue of Unity.



The Fern Gir Forest Resort, Sasan Gir

is the best place to stay for the Asiatic lion safari in Gir. The resort has 40 air-conditioned cottages and villas, along with multi cuisine dining, a banquet hall, swimming pool, fitness room, etc.



The Fern Sattva Resort, Polo Forest

offers 30 cottages, villas and suites spread over 5 acres against the Aravalli mountains and the Polo Forest, home to Shiva and Jain temples. A 3-hour drive from both Ahmedabad and Udaipur, the resort offers a multi cuisine restaurant, Riverview grill, banquet hall, pool and spa.

ISLAND HOPPING IN INDIA

Take a trip to some of these islands and capture breathtaking moments and experiences that you will cherish for a lifetime

TT BUREAU

Islands are mysterious, enticing, and simply fun. It's not just their being encircled by a vast expanse of water, being isolated from the mainland, but their unfazed charm that endears them to a vast section of tourists. The lush cover of forests exuding an air of pleasant warmth and the soothing breeze playing a joyful dance on the senses, really makes every passing moment seem like an eternity. Many of these islands, embedded in vast layers of history, contain much that is left to be discovered, and much that remains to be seen. India has its own share of exciting islands which are frequented by discerning travellers, all of which possess an indelible charm that retains their freshness.

NEIL ISLAND, ANDAMAN

Located 37km south to the Andaman Islands, the tiny Neil Island is a delight. This place, otherwise known as the "vegetable bowl" of the Andamans, endears itself to visitors due to the pervading solitude and the serene environment,

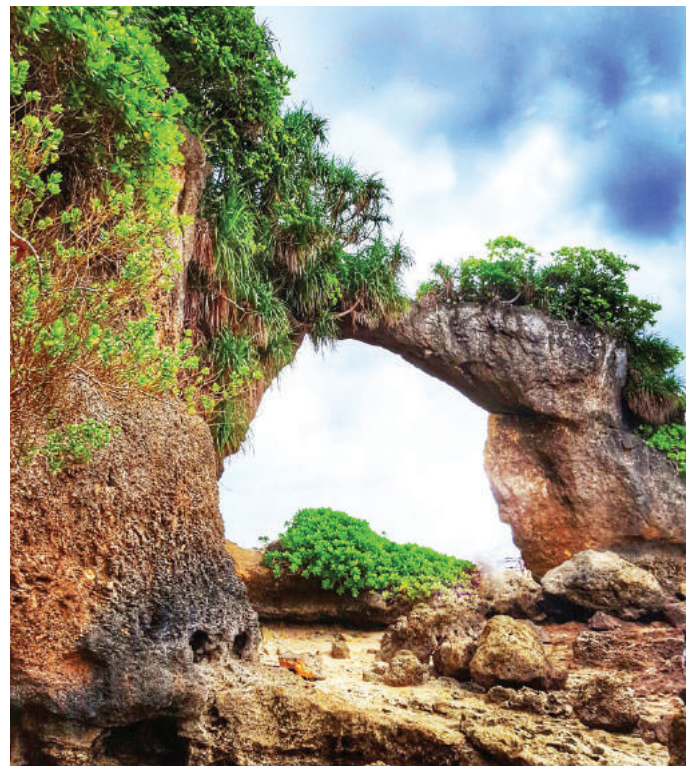


which offers the perfect setting to unwind and relax for hours on end. The island itself is characterised by thick tropical forests and vegetation, many unexplored coral reefs and the wide ranging bio-diversity that contributes to its all-round organic development. You could cover the entire island in two hours by foot, with the widest part of the island being 5km in length. Scuba diving, swimming, snorkelling and cycling, in particular, due to the flat terrain presented by the island, remains a favourite with tourists here.

VIPER ISLAND, ANDAMAN

The history of Viper Island is embedded in the Independence struggle, as it was here that the British detained various political prisoners and other convicts. However, today, the sight that greets you is one of picturesque beauty, replete with numerous picnic spots and other historical remnants of a bygone age.

It's widely believed that this island derives its land from the vessel "Viper," the same one in which Lt. Archibald Blair visited Andaman and Nicobar Islands, in the year 1789. This island, which is also an abode of solitude the year round, is





accessible through a harbour cruise which originates from Aberdeen Jetty, at Port Blair.

KADMAT ISLANDS, LAKSHADWEEP

Kadmat Island has earned its reputation from the treasure it contains in the form of its marine wealth. Its topography is defined by its long and sandy beaches, which stretch up to impressive distances, the massive lagoons which flank it on the eastern and western sides and the beautiful corals that are reflected clearly in the blue waters. This island holds the privilege of being one of the largest islands in the Lakshadweep, extending up to 8km in length and 1804ft in breadth.

The only inhabited island in the region, it has a rich reservoir of marine wildlife and marine plants. Besides, there are a host of other activities that tourists can engage in, ranging from snorkelling to kayaking.

DIVAR ISLAND, GOA

Divar Island is dotted with many beautiful churches, and boasts year-round festivities, delectable cuisines and numerous scattered villages, the origins of which are as old as the history of the village itself.

Seated on the Mandovi River in Goa, the place gives an impression of being an odd amalgamation of various cultures, with the Portuguese influence on it standing out prominently.

The famous festival of Bonderam is celebrated here amid great fanfare and enthusiasm and is attended in large numbers by the locals.

The village of Piedade is a typically beautiful village of this region, and on top of its hill stands the grand Church of Our Lady of Compassion church, believed to be the first Christian structure built here, dating back to the 1700s.



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HERITAGE REDUX – PALACE LE ROYALE STAYS

Once the exclusive domain of India's royal families, many palaces and royal homes have morphed into luxury heritage hotels, but retained their grandeur, artefacts and personalised hospitality

TT BUREAU

experience and is akin more like a journey through time and space into an era that redefined grandeur, luxury and royalty.

THE IMPERIAL, NEW DELHI

Built in the year 1931, this luxury hotel is one of the oldest hotels and the first luxury grand hotel in New Delhi. Earlier, known as Queensway, The Imperial has the largest collection of colonial and post-colonial artefacts anywhere in New Delhi, with an in-house museum and art gallery and is well-known for its heritage and legacy.

This heritage hotel, located in Central Delhi, close to Connaught Place, has several restaurants serving delectable delicacies from a by-gone era, a pool-side bar, a health club, spa and sauna. The restaurants and bars at The Imperial have a Victorian charm and ethos from the days of the Raj, infusing classic, colonial influences.

The 235 spacious rooms sport white marble flooring, sport rattan furniture, original period art and photographs. Illustrious personalities like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Mohammad Ali Jinnah and

*The Imperial,
New Delhi*

India has always been known for its rich history and imperial lifestyle. It's royal palaces were once the official residences of the royal family but over time have been converted into luxurious hotels that still retain their old-world charm, while providing modern amenities.

Part of the charm comes from the legends and folklore that are an intrinsic part of the palace ethos. Everyone loves a good story and India has its fair share of stories to narrate.

Visit any one of these heritage hotels and you will find that they have a story to tell. What separates these hotels from other luxury hotels is that they offer a sense of history and a unique. Legacy and tradition blend impeccably with state-of-the-art services albeit with a local flavour in the cuisine and cultural vignettes.

A section of these palaces has been converted into a museum and is open for guests. Staying in one of these palaces is a once-in-a-lifetime

Lord Mountbatten are believed to have held official meetings here.

TAJ UMAID BHAWAN, JODHPUR

Chittar Palace, built in 1943, is named after Maharaja Umaid Singh and is the last of the great palaces of India and one of the largest private residences in the world. The palace is divided into three functional parts – the residence of the royal family, a luxury Taj Palace Hotel, and a museum focussing on the 20th century history of the Jodhpur Royal Family.

The hotel wing of the palace, called 'Taj Umaid Bhawan Palace Jodhpur' and run by Taj Group of Hotels, has 70 rooms that include the luxurious Regal and Vice Regal Suites and the spectacular Maharaja and Maharani Suites. Fine restaurants, charming lounges and fine dining are not only romantic, but an experience in itself.

THE OBEROI CECIL, HIMACHAL PRADESH

This historic hotel, located in Shimla was built in 1884, and is located 7000 ft higher in the mighty Himalayan range. Guests can immediately feel the elegance and grace of the Colonial era.

The hotel reopened after restoration in 1997 to its original majesty with wooden floors and period furniture and spectacular views of the valley. The 79 centrally heated rooms have all the facilities that can make guests' stay memorable and comfortable.

The hotel has a heated swimming pool, billiards rooms and children's activity centre and a well-stocked library with many opportunities for nature walks. For



*The Oberoi Cecil,
Himachal Pradesh*

couples, the hotel provides a private dining room for a romantic dinner. Each room is furnished with Burmese teak floors, and colonial touches from the Ottoman Empire.

*Taj Umaid Bhawan,
Jodhpur*



WELCOMHOTEL THE SAVOY MUSSOORIE

If you seek a comfortable stay with luxury and heritage thrown in for good memories, Welcomhotel the Savoy is your one-stop destination. Located in Mussoorie, it is an ideal destination for a vacation. The hotel is ethnic in style and boasts style modern amenities, perfect for honeymooners, heritage and hill resort lovers.

This royal heritage hotel is a perfect place for honeymoon couple, heritage travellers or hill lovers. The 50 elegantly furnished rooms include 26 Savoy Chambers, 12 Fortune Exclusive Rooms and 12 Suites that provide an old-school charm and incredible view of the valley.

Guest can relax at the spa or workout at the state-of-the-art gymnasium. Picnics and excursions are also organised by the hotel. A fine dining restaurant, The Grand Dining Room, allows guests to indulge in delicacies or pamper their palates at Fortune Deli. The Writer's Bar is a place to spend a relaxed evening with premium drinks.

LALITHA MAHAL PALACE, MYSORE

Built in 1921 by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, this palace is located on top of a small hillock amidst terrace gardens. It is the second largest palace in Mysore and was built to exclusively accommodate the then Viceroy of India.

Designed in Renaissance-style, the palace, meant for special royal guests, has now been transformed into a heritage 5-Star. The palace has maintained its original grandeur. The 54 suites which include period furniture and gilt framed Belgium mirrors. The multi-cuisine restaurants have live instrumental music during Lunch and Dinner and traditional grandeur.

The royalty factor cannot be downplayed and it's something guests are accurately conscious of this majestic double-storey building. The Dining Room is the original ballroom of the palace and is in Baroque style. The palace

also has a well-stocked library that is open for all guests who enjoy reading.

BRUNTON BOATYARD, COCHIN

Standing proud at the historic Fort Cochin, this is an elegantly styled colonial hotel for the urban traveller. All 26 rooms are sea facing, overlooking working fishermen and huge boats that pass by.

A terrace restaurant, Terrace Grill serves authentic Portuguese, Dutch, Arabic, Kosher, British and local Kerala dishes made with local ingredients that will take guests back into the time of the Raj. Fresh and authentic seafood is available here. The hotel also has a well stocked bar, Armoury where guests can indulge in new cocktails every evening.



*WelcomHotel
The Savoy Mussoorie*



Brunton Boatyard, Cochin



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THE INDIAN FOOD TRAIL – OOMPH FACTOR

Step into a world of cuisines with these extraordinary Indian cities

TT BUREAU

A diverse nation is a treasure trove of cultures and traditions, which also includes a vast spread of diverse cuisine. Whether it is the fiery chillies of north-eastern India, or the sweet savouries of Bengal, whether you want a bite of authentic coastal food or love the idea of mountain cuisine, the delicious Mahua of tribal areas to the delicious Goan feni, when talking about Indian food, you are probably referring to hundreds of cuisines.

SRINAGAR, JAMMU & KASHMIR

They say Kashmir's scenic beauty makes it a heaven on earth for travellers; we say it is also 'paradise found' for food lovers.

Kashmiris love Mutton and there are close to thirty Mutton recipes originating from the valley, the most popular being Rogan Josh. You also have Gushtaba – lamb meatballs in yoghurt curry; Tabak Maaz – lamb ribs with turmeric, cinnamon and saffron; Kashmiri haakh – a traditional Kashmiri collard green preparation; for dessert, you must try Khubani ka Halwa, a delightful apricot pudding mixed with dried fruits.

The high point of Kashmiri food experience comes in the form of Wazwan, a multi-course meal with almost all dishes made of chicken and lamb, its preparation is considered an art.

Side dish – Kawah, the traditional tea

Oomph factor – Boat ride on Dal Lake



AMRITSAR, PUNJAB

The haven of Punjabi cuisine, it's all about heavy eating and living life king size. Punjab is also home to the delicious tandoori foods, be it chicken or paneer!

Here in Amritsar one can find the flavours of authentic Punjab, the kasoori methi (dried fenugreek leaves) and butter laden delicacies.

When in Amritsar, do try the authentic and very famous Butter Chicken – chicken in creamy gravy; the ultimate Sarson ka Saag and Makki ki Roti – a traditional dish where spinach and mustard meet corn bread or roti; Fish Tikka – an oven cooked Amritsari delicacy; and Amritsari Lassi. Find your way to some tasty Amritsari Jalebi to end the food fest on a sweet note.

Side dish – Patiala Peg, pride of Punjab, basically an extra-large peg of liquor

Oomph Factor – The Golden Temple



LUCKNOW, UTTAR PRADESH

Reminiscent of the Nawab culture, Lucknow is every foodie's delight. What you get in Lucknow in terms of food is better known as Awadhi cuisine and you would be at a loss if you do not try them all.

The very first item in your list should be the famous and the delicious, Galouti Kebab; Lucknowi Biryani – the version of Biryani found this side of India comes straight out of the kitchens of the Nawabs; Kakori Kebabs – these amazing kebabs are made of minced mutton and is mixed with aromatic spices before grilled to get the beautiful colour.

Kakori is a city on the outskirts of Lucknow; should also try Pasandey – mutton cooked till tender in spices and gravy with cream and almonds. Finish your culinary journey at Lucknow with Shahi Tukda – a delicious bread pudding, and Malai Ki Gilori, which is an authentic sweet delight.

Side dish – The incredibly delicious dahi Jabeli

Oomph factor – The Mughal structure Bada Imambara

KANNUR, KERALA

The southern paradise of India has some of the most delicious foods you can ask for and it is not just idlis and dosas. Here you should try the local style of eating appams with curries, especially non vegetarian ones.

Then there is the out-of-the-world Malabar Biryani; Fist Mappas – a curry cooked in coconut milk, which is also eaten with appams; Pomfret Moilee or any other fish moilee – cooked with curry leaves, tomatoes, mustard seeds and turmeric; Cheera Thoran – is a fried dish of fresh vegetables which is mostly eaten as a side dish. Kerala is also widely famous for its very spicy beef fry, a must try for meat lovers.

Side dish – Toddy, palm wine indigenous to Kerala

Oomph fact – The gorgeous Kerala backwaters

KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL

Once the cosmopolitan capital of India, Kolkata was a cosmopolitan city with Jews, Armenians, Anglo-Indian settlers, paving way for some of the most sumptuous foods you can find in the country. Start your culinary journey here by heading to Toretta Bazaar early in the morning; home to the Chinese community here, you will be in for a treat which includes Chicken Momos, Pork Momos, Shu Mei, Sausages, Prawn wafers, Tai Paos, Fried dough sticks, and Chicken Rolls.

Move on to authentic Bengali dishes later in the day; try the Kosha Mangsho – an aromatic Bengali mutton curry; Sorse Ilish – a preparation of "ilish," (the king of fishes) with mustard seeds and green chillies; the quintessentially Bengali Alu Posto – potato with poppy seeds, and while you are at it, try the various green veggies

and roots and shoots, most of which are prepared with fish head or small fishes. Do not miss out on Kathi Rolls and other street food, and Flury's, the legendary Kolkata tearoom.

Side dish – The pitha, a sweet snack connected with the harvest festivals

Oomph Factor – The iconic Howrah Bridge above the holy Ganges





Located in central India, Madhya Pradesh is also known as the “Heart of India.” The remarkable land of Madhya Pradesh has been an active part of the history of India. The region was ruled by major Indian dynasties, such as Gurjar, Pratihara, Mauryans and Gupta Empire, Harshavardhana, the Rajput kings of Paramara, Chandelas,

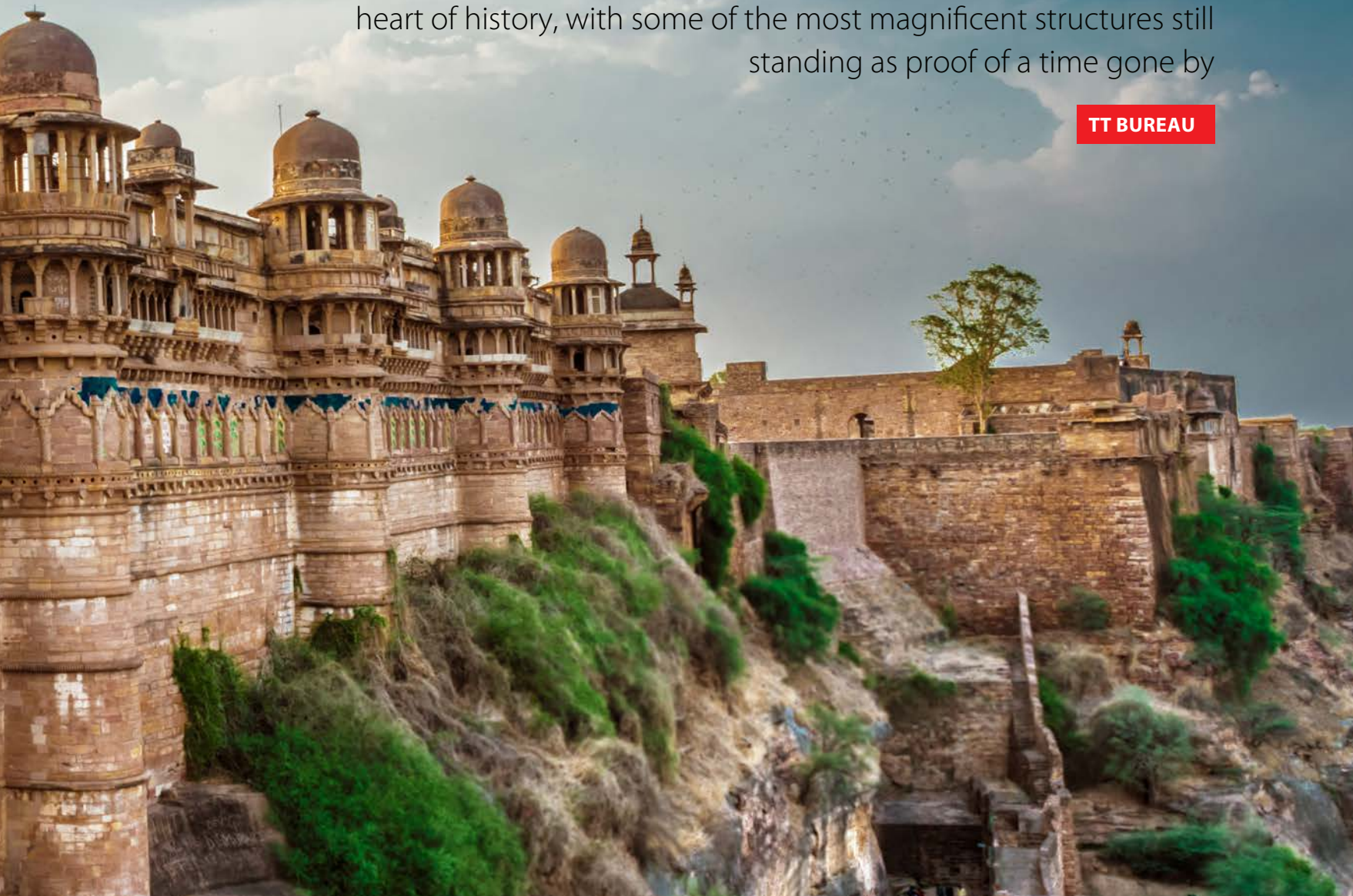
Bundela, Tomaras, and the Mughals and later by the Marathas.

Ujjain was the major commercial centre of the first century. Today the state is a hub for tourists, looking to understand and soak-in the country’s magnificent history. Its temples and forts display some of India’s finest stone sculptures and architectures, so let us take a look at some

HISTORIC MADHYA PRADESH - HEART OF INDIA

Known as the “heart of India,” Madhya Pradesh has been through the heart of history, with some of the most magnificent structures still standing as proof of a time gone by

TT BUREAU



Gwalior Fort

of the age old forts and palaces of the magnificent state of Madhya Pradesh.

GWALIOR FORT

The Gwalior Fort in Gwalior is a fantastic Vindhyan sandstone structure, built in the 8th century. It consists of two main

palaces, namely, Gujari Mahal and Man Mandir built by Man Singh Tomar. It is recorded that the Gujari Mahal was built for Queen Mrignayani.

A small river, the Swarnrekha flows close to the palace. The fort was ruled by numerous rulers, namely, the Pal Dynasty, Gurjara-Pratihara Dynasty, Tomar rulers, Qutubuddin Aibak,

Suri dynasty, Maratha Rulers, and Raizada Rulers. There are eleven Jain Temples inside the Gwalior Fort, which are dedicated to the Tirthankaras. There is also a temple of Garuda, dedicated to Lord Vishnu.

MOTI MAHAL

This beautiful old palace is situated by the museum near Chhatra of Rani Laxmi Bai. The Mahal or palace was built by Srimant Maharaja Jiwaji Rao Scindia in 1827. The palace housed an auditorium which was used as an assembly hall of Madhya Pradesh during the Scindia regime. Here one can find painting adorning the walls of the Ragmala Hall, most of these paintings depict Dusshera festival, which is celebrated by Scindia family, the paintings also include beautiful depiction of Radha-Krishna.

VIJAYRAGHAVGARH FORT

Located in Vijayraghavgarh in Katni district, the fort was built in the first half of the 19th century by King Prayag Das of Vijayraghavgarh Riyasat. Its walls and ceilings are beautifully decorated with colourful paintings. The architecture of the fort is plain and without decoration, but it consists of old square columns, door frame, and round column of ruined temples. Here one can find an inscription of 10th-11th century in the verandah of Kachahari Mahal, which belongs to the Kalchuri period.

JAHANGIR MAHAL

Located in Orchha, the Jahangir Mahal or Orchha Palace is the Citadel of Jahangir. One of the finest examples of Mughal architecture, the palace was established back in the 17th century A.D. It is said that the ruler of the region, Vir Singh Deo built the majestic structure in a warm gesture towards the Mughal Emperor Jahangir during his first visit to the city.

The palace domes were built in accordance to Timurid customs, while the brackets of the palace show the wavy style of Jain architecture. The main doors of the palace are located in the east-facing side, and are high and wide, that gives the feeling of a grand entrance.

MAHESHWAR FORT

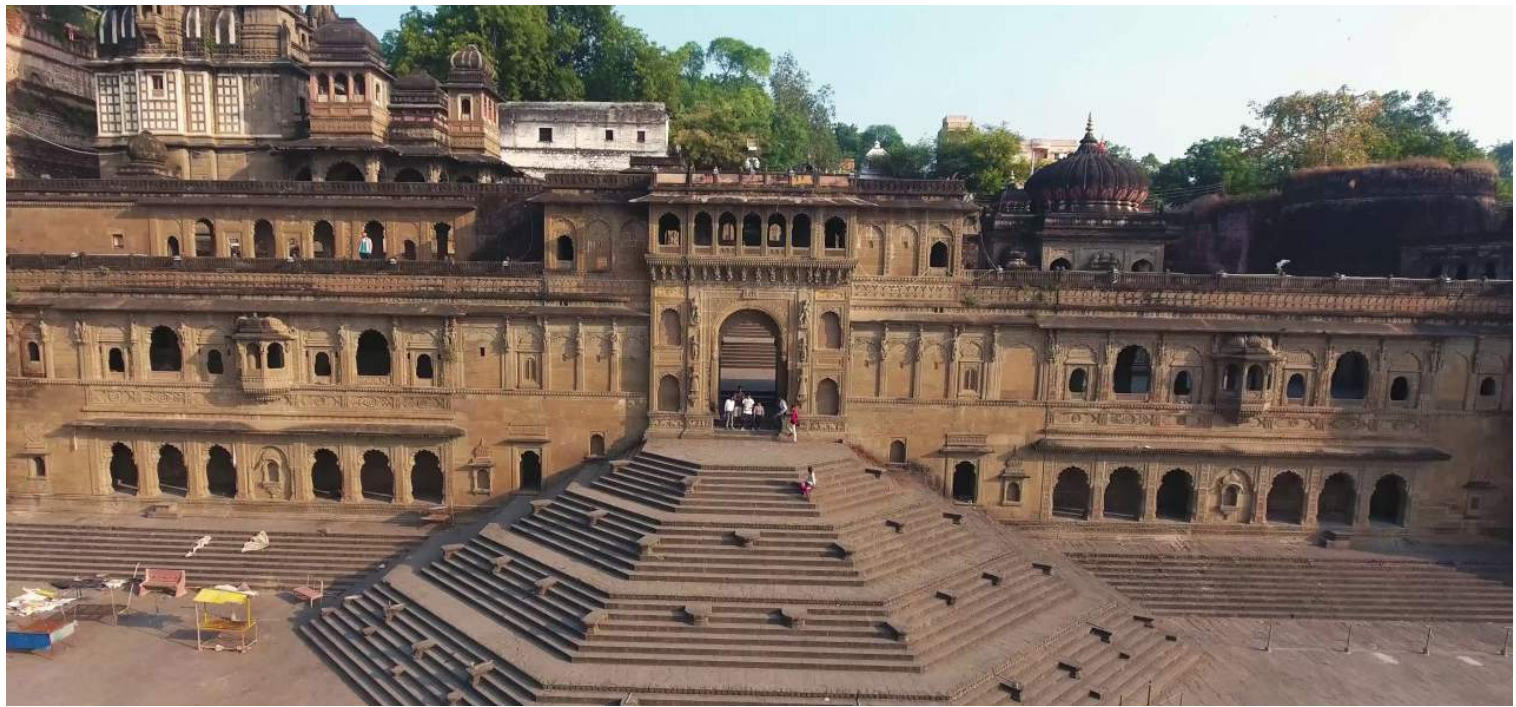
Maheshwar Fort is a heritage building embedded in history, and was constructed by a queen revered for her bravery and valour, Ahilya Bai Holkar. The fort served as the residence of the Queen throughout her rule, stretching through three decades, and its majestic architecture is a sight to behold.

Indeed, the fort itself serves as a reminder to the people of their Queen, blessing them and watching over them. The massive fort has now been converted into a four-star hotel, along with luxury rooms for tourists who visit Maheshwar and its adjoining destinations.



Moti Mahal





Maheshwar Fort



The Jahangir Mahal or Orchha Palace

A STATE WITH A SOUL

Plan your visit to famous temples in Himachal Pradesh to celebrate Chaitra Navratri in April this year, for its peaceful environs and rich cultural traditions

TT BUREAU



Himachal Pradesh is also known as the Devbhoomi and is famous for its temples. People from Himachal Pradesh celebrate the two Navratri that take place in April and October in the year with much devotion.

It is a time when people collectively pay their respect to the goddess Durga - the Goddess of cosmic powers. It is one of the major festivals celebrated in the state, including other parts of the country.

The Navratri melas are organised in almost every part of the state. It's an occasion to meet relatives and friends.

During the festival, the devotees from India and abroad visit different temples in Kangra, Una and Bilaspur districts of the state, to pay courtesy to goddess Durga. Thousands of devotees from all over India come every year to the Devi temples of

Himachal. Navratri means 'nine nights', symbolising the purity and power that fills every one with utmost 'shakti' to live their lives to the fullest.

People conduct ritualistic puja and fast for nine consecutive days and nights, while following the lunar calendar. Chanting of mantras, reciting of hymns and singing of bhajans and folk songs accompany the rituals for nine days.

Chaitra Navratri is also known as 'Vasanta Navratri' marking the start of summer or 'Rama Navratri' as the ninth day of the Navratri festival marks the birthday of Lord Rama. During the Chaitra Navratri the nine days are dedicated to the worship of the nine forms of Goddess Shakti and most of the rituals are similar to the 'Shardiya Navratri'.

One of the important rituals in Navratri is the veneration of little girls. They represent goddess Durga and are known as



'kanjaks.' It is mainly performed on the eighth day or Ashtami.

In Himachal Pradesh, the last day of the festival marks the start of the Navratra celebrations. This last day is believed to be the day when Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya after killing the demon King Ravana.

Processions along with the deities of various temples of Himachal Pradesh are organised during the festival, when devotees worship the Divine Mother or Devi Shakti, who is worshiped as Devi Durga, Devi Laxmi and Devi Saraswati. Nine



forms of the Divine Mother, Mookambika, Bhavani, Bhairavi, Sarvamangala, Jagadamba, Chandika, Bhadrakali, Annapurna and Durga, are worshiped during the Navratra festival.

People adorn colourful attires for the occasion and each day of this nine-day-long festival is denoted by a particular colour. Special arrangements are made by the government of the state to ensure that devotees and visitors have a hassle-free stay during this festive period.

The two Navratra also brings a multitude of devotees, from all over the country, to the state. It's the time for the Navratra Pilgrimage to famous temples or Shakti Peethas located in various parts of Himachal Pradesh, such as Sri Bajreshwari Devi Temple, Chintapurni Temple, Sri Naina Devi Temple, Chamunda Devi Temple and Jawalamukhi Temple.

SRI NAINA DEVI TEMPLE, BILASPUR

This is a famous temple dedicated to goddess Durga and is located in Bilaspur. During the Navratra festival, the nine-day long celebrations are held here. On the first 3 days, Devi Shakti is worshipped as Devi Durga, the symbol of power.

During the next 3 days, Devi Shakti is worshipped as Devi Laxmi, the goddess of wealth and the last 3 days Devi Shakti is worshipped as Devi Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge.

SRI JAWALAJI TEMPLE, KANGRA

This famous temple is located about 34km south, in the Kangra valley. During Navratra, huge numbers of devotees gather here and fairs are arranged on this occasion.

CHINTAPURNI MATA TEMPLE, UNA

Famous as one of the Shaktipeethas of the Hindus,



Chintapurni Mata Temple located at Una district is situated on the top of Sola Singhi Hills. The temple is also famously known as Devi Chinnamastika Temple. During Navratra, special celebrations and fairs are held at the temple premises, where devotees gather.

CHAMUNDA DEVI TEMPLE, KANGRA

Located about 10km away from Palampur, on the shores of Baner River, Chamunda Devi Temple is another Shaktipeetha of the Hindus. The Navratra festival rituals here are observed meticulously. The first 3 days of the festival are dedicated to the 3 forms of Durga, and she is worshipped as Kali, Parvati and Kumari, representing all woman kind. During this occasion, on the day of Mahanavami, also known as "Kumari Puja," nine young girls are given due importance.

BAJRESHWARI DEVI TEMPLE, KANGRA

One of the famous Shaktipeethas of the Hindus, Bajreshwari Devi Temple is located in Kangra Old Township. The temple that was destroyed in 1905 was reconstructed again in 1920. The Navratra festival is celebrated with great joy at this temple and thousands of devotees flock here to become part of the Navratra celebrations.

The tremendous faith and reverence towards the mother Goddess pervades the air. All the temples in Himachal Pradesh are beautifully decorated. The two Navratra celebrations have become a major treat for visitors, making this beautiful Himalayan state a prime tourist attraction.



LAND OF CULTURE, HERITAGE & WILD LIFE

A rich cultural heritage, incredible pilgrimage and eco-tourism sites, Tamil Nadu as a destination is distinctive in every way

TT BUREAU

Tamil Nadu's development is not linked with economic growth alone. The state's development is inseparable from its culture and heritage. Tamil Nadu is home to the world's oldest cultures, historical monuments and sites, some of the most outstanding temple architecture and has two clusters of World Heritage sites.

With its distinctive and ancient Dravidian culture, plus its myriad attractions, Tamil Nadu draws tourists, pilgrims and business travellers.



BEACHES, HILLS AND WILDLIFE

Tamil Nadu is home to some of South India's best beaches. Marina Beach is a 12-km long stretch of fine sandy shore and is known as the Pride of Chennai; Kovalam Beach offers solace while Elliot's Beach is the preferred destination for many; Mammallapuram Beach is famous for its stone sculpture, especially Arjuna's Penance and the Five Rathas.

For tourists with a yen for the hills, Tamil Nadu offers excellent hill stations in Ooty, Kodaikanal, Yercaud, Yelagiri, Javvadhur Hills, Kolli Hills, Sirumalai Hills, Valparai, Top Slip, Kalrayan Hills and Pachamalai Hills.

Ooty's most popular attractions include the 22-hectare Government Botanical Gardens, boating on Ooty Lake, and climbing Dodabetta Peak for an excellent view of the Nilgiri Hills.

Adding another feather in its cap owing to its diverse natural heritage, Tamil Nadu's wildlife tours and national parks are a rage among tourists.

A glimpse of Tamil Nadu's diverse wildlife can be obtained by a stopover at some of the following sanctuaries – The Indira Gandhi Wildlife Sanctuary and National Park houses a range of wild animals, including the macaque, tiger, panther, elephant, gaur, etc. Other sanctuaries include Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary, Mukkurthi National Park, amongst others.

There is a wonderful network of eco-tourism attractions with many integrated facilities at the hill stations, waterfalls, forests, bird sanctuaries, wildlife sanctuaries and national parks to woo tourists.

AWESOME HERITAGE

Tamil Nadu's rich cultural heritage is a major draw. The state is blessed with five World Heritage Sites, the highest for any state – The rock-cut monuments at Mamallapuram, the Big Temple at Thanjavur, the Iravadiswara Temple at Darasuram, the Brahadeeswarar Temple at Gangaikondacholapuram and the Nilgiris Mountain Railway.

Heritage building owners are encouraged by the Tourism department to convert heritage buildings into heritage hotels.



Kanadukathan, a Chettinad village, 15 km from Karaikudi, is a heritage village, with unique architecture, expansive courtyards, intricate woodwork and a peaceful ambience. Chettinad Mansion offers a variety of rural activities, including distinctive Chettinad cuisine, plus a cycle or bullock cart ride and to see the 170-odd mansions in the Chettinad area.

As many as 48 tourist places in Tamil Nadu are Heritage Places. Many of these are linked with temples in Trichy, Madurai, Chidambaram, Rameswaram, Tiruvanamalai, Thanjavur, Kumbakonam, Nagapattinam, Tirukadaiyur, Gunaseelam and six abodes of Lord Muruga.

Tiruvannamalai expends a profound spiritual energy, attracting both pilgrims and spiritual seekers. Rameshwaram is a peaceful little pilgrim town, where devotees pay obeisance at the Ramanathaswamy Temple.

Ancient Madurai in Tamil Nadu is home to the most impressive and important temple in South India – the Meenakshi Temple. Kanyakumari, located on the furthestmost tip of India, houses the Swami Vivekananda Memorial and the towering statue of Tamil poet Thiruvalluvar, located on a rocky island off the shore.

Kanchipuram, the “City of a Thousand Temples,” is also famous for its silk saris. Kanchipuram, Mammallapuram and Chennai are often referred to as Tamil Nadu’s Golden Triangle for tourists.

ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

There are wonderful opportunities for adventure activities. Trekking in low altitude hill areas, paragliding in Yelagiri, water sports offered by Muttukadu and Mudaliarkuppam

Boat Houses are some of the excellent sports activities you can enjoy.

REFRESHINGLY RURAL

Go for the unknown, off-beat places that are in picturesque rural areas like Navabashanam, Theerthamalai, Vadanemmeli and Tirupudaimaruthur. These villages are ideal destinations to enjoy rural life, savour rural cuisine, see culture and tradition, explore nature, for trekking and visiting temples.



SEA SIDE SLUMBER

Take a break from all your troubles and enjoy a lazy holiday at some of the most obscure beaches of West Bengal

TT BUREAU



TAJPUR

Away from the din of city life, the crimson sun sets each evening, behind the vast ocean body, visited only by fleeting birds and the ineffable blue sky. It is here where nature comes together to play out its charming symphony, while holidaymakers come and go, as audiences in the most spectacular open theatre known to man.

This holiday, travel to some of the most beautiful beaches in West Bengal, to seek the blessings of nature, and to witness the profound oceanic hues. The long stretches of sandy beaches around which are the thick forests and mangroves, and the light oceanic breeze, come together to conjure a therapeutic experience like never before.

MANDARMANI

Mandarmani, is located in East Midnapore district of West Bengal, and is the northern end of the Bay of Bengal. The sleepy

seaside village which provides an opportunity to get a taste of nature is a rather obscure holiday destination.

The prime attraction of Mandarmani is of course its 15km stretch of serene beach, and most people choose to laze around this area, while fishermen go about their work regularly. Visitors often reach the end of the beach which has, what is known as, 'mohana' or river delta, a place where a river meets the sea.

Here on one side of the beach there are dense jhau trees, while on the other side lays the fishing village. Here at the beach tourists can enjoy riding ATV bikes, and experience Jet Ski. There is also Banana Boat, which is a ride on the sea with people sitting on a banana shaped boat, and Bungee Trampoline Jump on trampoline.

HOW TO REACH

By Rail: There are regular train services available from Kolkata to, the nearest railway station to Mandarmani.

By Road: Frequent bus services available from various parts of Kolkata to Chawlkholā. Take a taxi to Mandarmani from here.

By Air: The nearest airport is at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport or Dum Dum in northern Kolkata.

DIGHA

One of the most popular sea beach destinations of West Bengal, it just takes 4-5 hours to reach there by road from Kolkata. Here in Digha, the Digha Boardwalk is the main boardwalk along the sea-face of the beach.

It is here at the boardwalk where holidaymakers swarm to spend carefree days, enjoying the sea breeze. The walk stretches a long way and comes to join with what is known as New Digha, a rather lonely stretch.

The New Digha water is also the best place to swim because the water here is flat. Here in Digha, you can also visit the Aquarium of Zoological Survey of India, widely considered to be the most well equipped marine aquarium in the country. Do not forget to buy the ornaments and curios made from sea shells.

HOW TO REACH

By Rail: Regular train services are available from Howrah Railway Station to Digha

By Road: There are frequent bus services available from various parts of Kolkata to Digha.

By Air: The nearest airport is at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport or Dum-Dum Airport in northern Kolkata.

TAJPUR

Located between Mandarmani and Shankarpur, Tajpur is for those looking for a quiet time. An unspoiled beach town, Tajpur's beautiful golden sand making its way into the blue sea is always mesmerising.

The best part about Tajpur is that the beach does not have hawkers coaxing you to buy their items; instead you are all by yourself in the lap of nature. For the adventurous types, there is the option for adventure sports, such as paragliding, rafting, etc.

HOW TO REACH

By Rail: Regular train services are available from Howrah Railway Station to Digha.

By Road: Regular bus services are available from Dharamtala/Esplanade/ Garia (6 No Bus Stand), to Tajpur

By Air: The nearest airport is at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport or Dum Dum in northern Kolkata.

BAKKHALI

Located on one of the deltaic islands in southern Bengal, Bakkhali is a south facing crescent shaped beach which offers a splendid opportunity for holiday. The beach is 8km long, which stretches from Bakkhali to Frasergunj, and is mostly empty.



MANDARMANI



BAKKHALI

The watch tower here in Bakkhali presents stunning view of the Mangroves expanses on three sides, while on one side there is bird's eye view of the sea beach and the sea. There is also a Bishhalakshmi temple at the end of the main beach.

Here at Bakkhali, you can visit the Crocodile Park and Mangrove forest, and also the small island Jammu Deep, which is located amidst the sea where you have to reach with a boat.

HOW TO REACH

By Rail: There are regular trains leaving from Sealdah, to the nearest rail station, which is at Namkhana.

By Road: There are regular bus services by WBSTC, which starts from Dharmatala and goes all the way to Bakkhali.

By Air: The nearest airport is at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport or Dum Dum in northern Kolkata.

OFF BEAT DESTINATIONS

Take the road less travelled and visit some offbeat destinations in Kerala for a satisfying and meaningful travel experience

TT BUREAU



Popular destinations are enticing enough for a visit, however, what attracts the most is the tranquillity of a place. Kerala has earned its fame for its beautiful backwaters, soothing massages steeped in Ayurvedic traditions and natural beauty, which extends to every nook and corner of the land.

While many of these places witness and attract many visitors all year round, there are many off beat destinations that remain to be explored and will work wonders to uplift spirits and senses.

KUMBALANGI VILLAGE, COCHIN

Kumbalangi is a quiet little village seated on the outskirts of the city of Kochi, and is enveloped by the legendary Kerala backwaters. But, that is not what lends to its fascinating quality.

The village contains a treasure of rich aquatic life, made possible by an array of mangroves which separate the land from the water, thus providing a breeding ground for crabs, prawns, oysters, and small fishes.

Apart from tasting the delectable cuisine consumed in the village, it's a delight walking on village roads surrounded by greenery, going on a fishing trip, or simply marvelling at the gently-flowing waters.

KUTTANAD, ALAPPUZHA

Kuttanad is a village that has earned the distinction of being a rice granary, and one where farming is carried out below sea level. The place is known as the rice granary of Kerala, one where enormous

stretches of paddy fields interweave with the exciting backwaters to create a fabulous sight.

It's a privilege watching the typical village sights – men tilling the land and labouring and women carrying their lunch boxes to the fields. This village is also replete with a robust avian population, with flocks of parrots flying lazily above the paddy fields, creating a happy setting.

BANASURA SAGAR DAM, KALPETTA

The idea of Banasura Sagar Dam was conceived as part of the Indian Banasura Sagar Project, and it is now the largest dam in India and second largest in Asia. Located about 15km from Kalpetta, its spectacular beauty is derived from the chain of mountains standing majestically in the background.

Legend has it that King Banasura performed severe penance on these hills, and thus, they were named in honour of him. During the monsoons in particular, this place becomes a photographer's delight, as the small islands dotting the crystal clear water are visible during this time. Besides, the scenic background, it also serves as the starting point for trekking enthusiasts.

BEYPORE, KOZHIKODE

This place traces its history to ancient times, and as such, is a pilgrimage site for historians, who are quite enchanted by its defining beauty, and the history embedded in it.

Bey pore is greeted by the waters of the Chaliyar River, and served as a major port for trade and maritime centre in earlier times. Its historic value lies in its shipbuilding industry, which goes back to more than 1500 years.

The construction of Uru, or the Arabian trading vessel as it is called, is pursued with an undying enthusiasm here, and watching the men at work, deftly crafting the intricate woodwork into perfection, is such a delight.


PONMUDI HILL STATION, THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

About 61km away from Thiruvananthapuram is the beautiful hill

station of Ponmudi. It is characterised by the typical traits of a hill station, with its cool and quiet environs, undisturbed solitude and narrow winding roads disappearing into the distance.

The eminence which Kerala has earned for its tea gardens can also be witnessed at their best here, along with the dancing mountain flowers and the mist-covered valleys. Besides, the feeling of losing yourself in the environs of the hills, or simply going on a trek is simply indescribable.





EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE – THE JAMMU YOU DON'T KNOW

Add Jammu to your next vacation itinerary and immerse yourself in picture perfect beauty as you go golfing, riding, trekking, rafting and paragliding

TT BUREAU

It's spring, and the perfect time to travel and experience the scenic splendour of lofty mountain ranges, be immersed in the natural hues presented by nature's palette and savour the culture, history and art of a leisure destination.

Jammu is one such vibrant destination, where tourists visit typically to satiate their quest for pilgrimage, leisure, natural beauty and heritage.

Dating back to the time of the Mahabharata and the Indus Valley Civilization, Jammu's biggest USP is its geographical location. Jammu is well connected by all types of transport, be it rail, road or air, from all corners of India.

Moreover, its topography lends itself to adventure activities. It is thus also a top adventure destination in India, which is a lesser-known facet. Paragliding, white water rafting, skiing, mountain biking – Jammu offers everything.

Celebrate the saga of this glorious land as you visit its many places that offer relaxation and adventure.

TREKKING IN SAFFRON LAND - KISHTWAR

Visit, Kishtwar, the Land of Saffron, nestled among the picturesque folds of the great Himalayan range, with the River Chenab running through it, and be mesmerised by its exceptional beauty.

Pochall village, about six kilometres away, is known for its saffron cultivation and its spectacular purple saffron flowers. Dacchan, Marwah, Wadwan, Padder and Chatroo are major valleys and tourist spots of Kishtwar, through which the internationally renowned Trans-Himalayan Treks lead to Suru, Zaskar and Kashmir.

HORSE RIDING AND TREKS AT PATNITOP

One of Jammu's most popular hill resorts, Patnitop nestles on a beautiful plateau across which the Jammu –Srinagar highway passes and comprises several meadows surrounded by a dense forest of Deodar and Kail trees.



Saunter amidst pine groves as you take in breathtaking views of the Chenab basin and the Pir Panjal range beyond. Activities on offer include horse rides and short treks into the surrounding hills.

PHOTOGRAPHY AT 'CHHOTA KASHMIR' - BHADERWAH

Also called 'Chhota Kashmir', Bhaderwah is a valley with stunning panoramic vistas and is home to colourful local fairs, a warm ambience and heritage. In summer, the valley is a riot of colour with its flowers, while in winter it is carpeted with snow.

GOLF AT THE SCENIC JAMMU TAWI GOLF COURSE

Test your golfing skills on the landmark Jammu Tawi Golf Course, located in Sidhra, on the outskirts of the city. Situated on the banks of River Tawi and the foothills of the Shivaliks, this splendid 18-hole eco-friendly course is spread over 1385 kanals of lush green land.

The course showcases a breathtaking panorama of the River Tawi and spectacular views of the distant Amar Mahal Palace, Hari Niwas Palace and Mubarak Mandi Complex on one side and the Bahu Fort and Mahamaya Temple on the other.

WHITE WATER RAFTING, PARAGLIDING AND MORE

Get your adrenaline fix as you go in for Whitewater River Rafting in the gushing waters of the mighty Chenab. The Reasi- Dera Baba Banda Bahadur stretch of about 12km houses rapids up to 3rd grade and is ideal for amateurs and joy rides.

Enjoy a thrilling paragliding ride in Sanasar, 130km from Jammu. Khani Top and Thuba areas of Bhaderwah are ideal for advance level of paragliding skills, offering exhilarating descents into the Bhaderwah valley.

If camping is your thing, take off to any one of these scenic camping sites – Sanasar, Bani-Sarthal, Jai-Valley or Patnitop. For rock climbing, Patnitop, Sanasar and Bhaderwah offer varied rocks at different heights and challenging levels.

Jammu's topography offers many exciting trekking routes. Udhampur, Patnitop, Kishtwar, Bhaderwah, Bani-Basholi and Sarthal areas offer limitless possibilities for trekking enthusiasts.

Take off to the twin lakes of Mansar and Surinsar, an hour and a half away from Jammu, for some solace and joy in the lap of nature.





5 BEST GOLF COURSES TO PLAY IN INDIA

Golf is no longer only about perfecting your putt, but an inclusive family getaway amidst incredible courses and their off-the-green offerings

TT BUREAU

It's a languid misty morning. All's well with the world as your club comes down with a deft stroke and strips a patch of turf off the grass.

Life's a cinch as you unhurriedly make your way to the 19th hole and a refreshing beverage and snacks, with the satisfying conviction that your partner is enjoying her time out at the nearby hotel spa, where you are staying, while the kids are doing their own thing at the kids' club.

Golf has come a long way from days of old. Today, the game is synonymous with sun-kissed walks and tranquil skies and

allows for travel, family holidays, luxe destinations and plenty of togetherness. What's exciting about golf in India is the diversity of its courses. Not only does it boast the oldest golf club outside Britain, but also the highest, at Gulmarg – 2,700m – in Kashmir. There are courses in the mountains, plains, deserts and beach resorts, and the ambience of each is unique.

International golfers are blown away by the presence of ancient domes and Mughal structures in the vicinity of golf courses, most notably the iconic Delhi Golf Club, which nurtures some of the best holes.



In another dimension are courses like DLF Golf Club in Gurgaon, Royal Springs in Kashmir or the undulating short-course in Kodaikanal or even the very pristine but challenging course at Aamby Valley, Pune.

India now can confidently and conclusively offer some great golf holidays. Golf enthusiasts who journeyed to Scotland, the mecca of golf, now head to India, which not only has some incredible courses, but can most decisively offer some great golf holidays. Take a look at some of them.

PRESTIGE GOLFSHIRE CLUB, BENGALURU

Bordered by an expansive lake at the foothills of an ancient hill fortress, and hidden from the outside world, sits 275 acres of lush greenery – the Prestige Golfshire, a classic golf resort in Bengaluru.

Located at the foot of the Nandi Hills, on the edge of Lake Karehalli, Prestige Golfshire is designed by PGA Design Consulting and managed by leading golf course management company, Troon Golf.

The 250-acre course features undulating greens, several of which are two-tiered and deep, with shapely bunkers to challenge any professional golfer. The course is part of a part-residential, part-commercial luxury development with its own spa, swimming pool, squash courts, restaurants, and crèche, making it ideal for a family day out.

Prestige Golfshire Club offers a complete Stay & Play Golf experience, with eight exquisite villas nestled amidst the 18-hole championship golf course, which are equipped with four luxurious bedrooms, located within walking distance from the Prestige Golfshire Clubhouse.

THE ROYAL CALCUTTA GOLF CLUB, KOLKATA

Affectionately known as the "Royal," the Royal Calcutta Golf Club is synonymous with the game of golf in India. Founded in 1829, Royal is the oldest golf club outside Britain.

Boasting an awesome heritage, it was originally located near the Calcutta airport, but moved to the Maidan and finally to its present location at Tollygunge, in 1910.



Since the Royal Calcutta course was originally paddy fields, the course is therefore undulating. Its conspicuous features are its strategically located water tanks and natural water hazards.

The greens at Royal are large by modern standards and their undulations make them tricky. Designed similar to Scotland's famous St Andrew's fairway, its spectacular par-72, 18-hole course is challenging and tests the skills of all golfers. Lift your spirits at the 19th Bar after a long golfing day and enjoy a beautiful view of the first tee.

Stay at The Park, Kolkata, which has a number of great dining and nightlife options, or The Oberoi Grand, Kolkata, which has all the modern amenities you may require.

THE DELHI GOLF CLUB, NEW DELHI

Tee off on the historic trail of a glorious past at the iconic Delhi Golf Club, where peacocks and the ruins of lost empires dot the

landscape. One of India's most celebrated golf clubs, the Delhi Golf Club occupies 180 acres of pristine, verdant turf in the heart of the city.

The present Delhi Golf Club came into being in 1951 and comprises the 18-hole Lodhi Course, which is also a stop along the Asia PGA Tour, plus the shorter 9-hole Peacock Course. Facilities include an attractive outdoor pool, surrounded by an attractive patio with a seating capacity of 100.

There is also a Pro Shop, with one of the best equipped golf shops in the area, which is fully stocked with a wide range of clothing and golf equipment; a beautifully located fitness centre in the Annexe building, which provides a breathtaking view of the 18th fairway and a well-appointed room for indulging in congenial card games. Adjoining the fitness centre is a state-of-the-art Steam Room and Changing Room.



ROYAL SPRINGS GOLF COURSE, SRINAGAR

One of the most scenic golf courses in the world, the Royal Springs Golf Course in Srinagar could put a seasoned golfer's attention to the test. Set against the dramatic backdrop of the fir-covered peaks of the Zabarwan Mountains, the championship golf course also boasts panoramic views of Dal Lake.

The 18-hole golf course, spread over 100 hectares, has practice fairways of approximately 225m in length, with three lakes, two marshes and an underground sprinkler irrigation system. There are comfort stations, rain shelters, a full-fledged maintenance complex, a club house, and about an eight-and-a-half-long cart path. If you want to challenge yourself further, head to the Pahalgam Golf Club, just two hours away, for an invigorating game in the shadows of the Himalayas.

Royal Springs offers unique stay and play experiences in their unique Royal Springs cottages, and exclusive Royal Cottages with rooms that look out over the stunning golf course. The setting is great for family outings, out of town tournaments and business trips.

OXFORD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB, PUNE

Located just 22km from Pune Airport, the championship Oxford Golf & Country Club is bordered on three sides by the Sahyadri Hills. Voted as one of the Top Golf & Leisure Destinations in India, it boasts Pune's only 18-hole private golf course, Leadbetter Golf Academy, an all-suite hotel, and leisure sports facility set amidst 136 acres.

The 18-hole horseshoe-shaped course is perfect for professional golfers and its world-class appeal stems from its many vantage point tee boxes, which provide splendid views of the silver sand bunkers as you drive your ball down the hill sand over 40 practice bays. The 1,100-acre course houses villas, apartments, a hotel and a country club.

Some of the offerings at the Leadbetter Golf Academy include Head Pro Golf Lessons, Assistant Pro Golf Lessons, Golf Beginner Programmes, Golf Professional Satellite Programmes, and Corporate Golf Clinics & Corporate Golf Days.

The Pro Shop offers tailor-made Foot joy rental shoes, balls, gloves, accessories, as well as resort and branded souvenirs and merchandise

rental clubs, caps academy memorabilia.



DISCOVER YOUR INDIA

Discover India through its ancient heritage- its temples, monuments and caves which have seen empires rise and fall and witnessed the march of civilizations. These ancient monuments reflect eons of history, culture, heritage, spiritual healing, folklore and the arts

TT BUREAU

The country has seen numerous emperors and dynasties rise and fall and has thus become a rare repository, a treasure trove of rich cultures and customs.

In this vast land, one can find historical relics, scattered across its length and breadth, standing as testimonies to

various eras in history, each with their own artistry and fluidity of thoughts and ideas.

AJANTA AND ELLORA CAVES

Significant discoveries in the history of India, the Ajanta and Ellora Caves have been inducted in the UNESCO's list of World



Heritage Sites. The caves depict paintings beginning with the 2nd century and continuing to the 6th century AD, inspired by Buddhism. The Ajanta caves are located 107km from Aurangabad and 60km from Jalgaon. Comprising 32 caves, it is a protected site under the aegis of the Archaeological Survey of India. Ellora Caves consist of 34 caves, which are Buddhist, Hindu and Jain religious monuments carved in rock.

The caves consist of Chaitya shrines which are dedicated to Lord Buddha and Viharas (monasteries) used by Buddhist monks for meditation and the study of Buddhist teachings. Also, Cave 16 in Ellora houses the famous Kailasa temple, the abode of Lord Shiva.

KONARK SUN TEMPLE

Located in Puri district, Odisha, The Sun Temple of Konark is a fascinating old structure, which is a culmination of Oriya architecture. Built in 13th century by King Narasimhadeva, the temple is designed in the shape of a colossal chariot with seven horses and twelve wheels, carrying the sun god



Surya, across the heavens. The name Konark comes from the amalgamation of two Sanskrit works, 'Kona' meaning 'corner' and 'Arka' meaning 'sun.'

The Sun temple comprises a sanctum with a lofty (over 68m high) sikhara, a jagamohana (30sq.m. and 30m high) and a detached nata-mandira (hall of dance) in the same axis, besides numerous subsidiary shrines. The temple used to be referred to as the Black Pagoda in earlier days, by the Europeans.

KHAJURAO GROUP OF TEMPLES

Located in the state of Madhya Pradesh, Khajurao is a fascinating temple complex that is visited by tourists from across the world. Built by the Chandella rulers, between AD 900 and 1130, during the golden period of the Chandela dynasty, it is believed that every Chandela ruler built at least one temple here.

The intricately carved erotic designs are much revered and considered to be one of the finest examples of temple carvings. The images sculpted on the temple walls actually represent the divine Shakti and Shiva, the male and female principles.



The temple is scattered over an area of 9sq.m and some are dedicated to the Jain pantheon and the rest to Hindu deities – to the holy trilogy of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and various Devi forms, such as the Devi Jagadambi. The temple complex is under the UNESCO World Heritage's protected sites.

HUMAYUN'S TOMB

Built in the year 1770, Humayun's Tomb, located in New Delhi's

Nizamuddin East, is of great cultural and historical significance and is considered to be the first garden-tomb in the Indian subcontinent.

The incredible architecture of the tomb has inspired many others, including the famous Taj Mahal. The tomb stands at the centre of the square garden and is divided into four main parterres, known as 'charbaghs,' in the centre of which ran shallow water-channels.

The intricately carved erotic designs are much revered and considered to be one of the finest examples of temple carvings.



The high rubble-built enclosure is entered through two lofty double-storeyed gateways on the west and south.

A baradari (pavilion) occupies the centre of the eastern wall and a hammam (bath chamber) in the centre of the northern wall.

The tomb has many rulers of the Mughal dynasty buried here, including Humayun, for



whom it was built. The tomb has now been restored and is open to visitors.

TAJ MAHAL

Located on the banks of the River Yamuna, in Agra, the Taj Mahal is widely revered in India and abroad. The ivory-white marble mausoleum was commissioned by the then Mughal emperor, Shah Jahan, in 1632 AD, to house the tomb of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal.

Initially, the mosque, the guest house and the main gateway on the south were completed in 1648 AD; later, the outer courtyard and its cloisters were added to complete it in 1653 AD. Considered to be the epitome of love, the Taj Mahal is a hot favourite among couples coming to visit India. In terms of architecture, the structure is in perfect balance of composition, the octagonal tomb chamber in the centre, encompassed by the portal halls and the four corner rooms.

GOLDEN TEMPLE

Also known as Sri Harminder Sahib, the Golden Temple is the spiritual abode of the Sikhs and is located in Amritsar, Punjab. The central focus of the Temple is the tank around which the shrine stands.

The tank, known as Amrit Sarovar, from which Amritsar takes its name, was excavated by guru Ram Das, the fourth guru of the Sikhs, in the year 1577.

The holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, is installed every morning inside the temple and is later returned to the Akal Takhat at night. The Golden Temple has an elegantly carved marble section at the lower level, above which is the shimmering second level in gold panels.

The tip of the temple is a golden dome of 750kg of gold. Inside, one could lose oneself in the exceptionally soothing music and chanting from the Guru Granth Sahib, as performed by priests and musicians throughout the day.





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7 BEST ROAD TRIPS IN INDIA

Take the wheel and hit the road as you discover new places in arcadian settings of the Western Ghats, or in the eternal beauty of the North East or the legendary Old Silk Road

TT BUREAU

For an innate traveller, travelling is a besetting vice. Like all other vices, it is imperious, demanding its victim's time, money, energy and the sacrifice of comfort. Complete the pages of your wanderlust diaries as you saunter through these amazing landscapes of India, until you find something by chance that truly tugs at your heart.

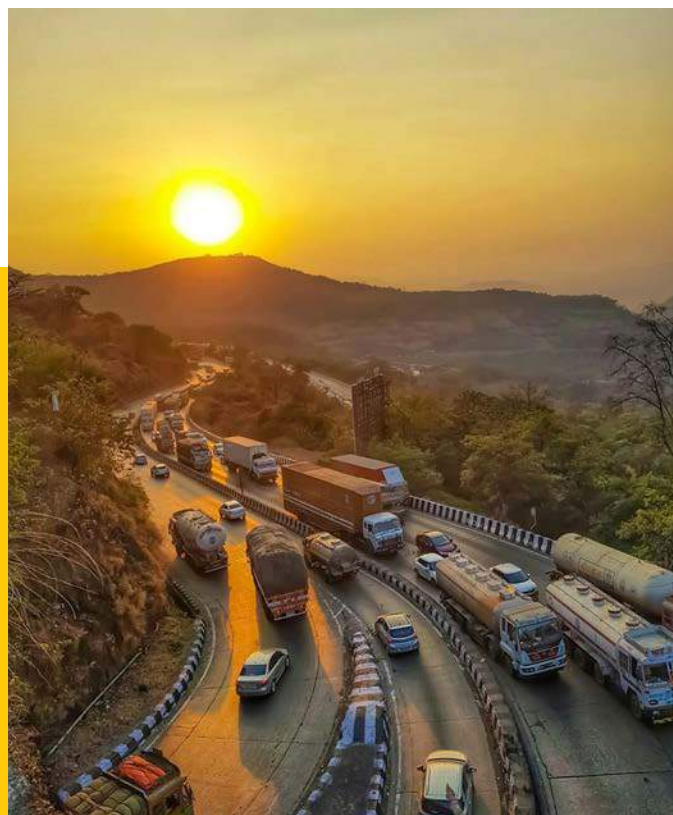
NH4, MUMBAI-PUNE EXPRESSWAY

Nestled in the picturesque surroundings of Western Ghats amidst the captivating background of high mountain ranges, lush green fields, waterfalls streaming down from great heights and the railway cars chugging on the other side of the higher peaks, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway provides for a thrilling driving experience.

It is a 93-km-long six-lane highway, passing through the idyllic towns of Lonavala, Khandala and Kamshet before ending up in the suburbs of Navi Mumbai.

After starting your journey from Pune, stop at Lonavala for some photo-worthy moments, savour the delicious "chikki," or if your stomach starts growling then try some delectable food options at Sunny Da Dhaba or The Kinara Village Dhaba.

Lastly, zoom your way to Mumbai through the four ultra long tunnels to make your ride an unforgettable experience. So, what are you waiting for?



BENGALURU TO BANDIPUR FOREST

Escape the humdrum of city life as you hit the pedal on this route, which passes through Bandipur National Park – recognised as one of the most well-preserved national parks of India.

As you pass through the forest ranges, enjoy the coolness in air, the windswept roads, the mild chorus of birds and a sublime quietness that's invigorating and necessary for a healthy body and soul.

Here, the journey itself becomes the destination, where you would want to stop for a while and lie down under the cool shade of trees, enjoy the faint cuckooing of birds amidst sun-dappled forests. What can be more rewarding than this sort of out-of-this-world experience?



OLD SILK ROUTE, KALIMPONG TO ZULUK

Visiting North East is always on the Bucket List of every travelholic. The lush valleys, white snowy mountain tops and rich tea gardens seem so inviting that it never fails to catch the fancy of a long-drive addict.

Catching these fantasies since generations is the Old Silk Route, connecting Kalimpong, West Bengal, to Zuluk, Sikkim, which once connected India to Tibet.

Travel to this Far East corner of India to witness mesmerising sunrise views over the Kanchenjunga range, zigzagging your way through 32 hairpin bends to reach to the top.

There are many vantage points on the way up from where you can see the valley in its iridescent hues. Thambi Viewpoint, at an altitude of 11,200ft, is considered as the best sunrise viewpoint along the Silk Route, where sun, nature and mountain peaks play a kaleidoscopic game of hide and seek. Isn't this nature's play a good enough reason to visit Zuluk? Engage the hodophile (lover of roads) in you and take to the roads to experience life in all its colours.





GUWAHATI TO TAWANG

It is said that the spirituality and peace one experiences at a monastery is an incomparable feeling. Explore the pristine beauty of the North East as you embark on this route to Tawang – home to stunning monasteries of India.

The snow-clad mountains, mist-laden roads, clear skies make for an ultimate, unhurried adventure, where you can just drive without worrying to reach anywhere. It's advisable to be careful while driving on this route, as it's a high altitude zone.

It's extremely beautiful and, yes, the ride is challenging. Interested? Then set off for the trip and engage yourself in the eternal beauty of this monastery town.



CHALAKUDY TO VALPARAI, WESTERN GHATS

Looking for a nascent route to do a trip? Take the drive along the border route of Chalakudy in Kerala and Valparai in Tamil Nadu.

Situated amidst the green belt cover of the border areas of both the states, the route passes through beautiful rain forests of the Western Ghats, waterfalls, umpteen curves, verdant tea estates, wildlife and oodles of greenery.

Swathes of green-carpeted expanse will leave you contented and in sync with nature. Since this route comes under forest reserves, it is only open from sunrise to sunset. It has the highest populations of elephants and tigers.

The scenic spots include Sholayar dam, the Vazhachal falls and the 'Niagara of Kerala – the Athirapally Falls' are icing on the cake. Driving on these meandering roads, with only greenery in sight, one experiences an overwhelming sense of awe that is hard to put down in words. So, go ahead and take the wheel.



SRINAGAR TO LEH

The Srinagar – Leh Highway is one of the most revered biking/driving destinations in India and even the world. Driving on this highway is like a dream come true. It's said that one should definitely drive through the treacherous terrains of this route for an experience of a lifetime.

It's also called the "the Indian Grand Canyon." The highway runs alongside Indus River and passes through three high mountain passes. It is situated at an extremely high altitude of more than 12,000 ft.

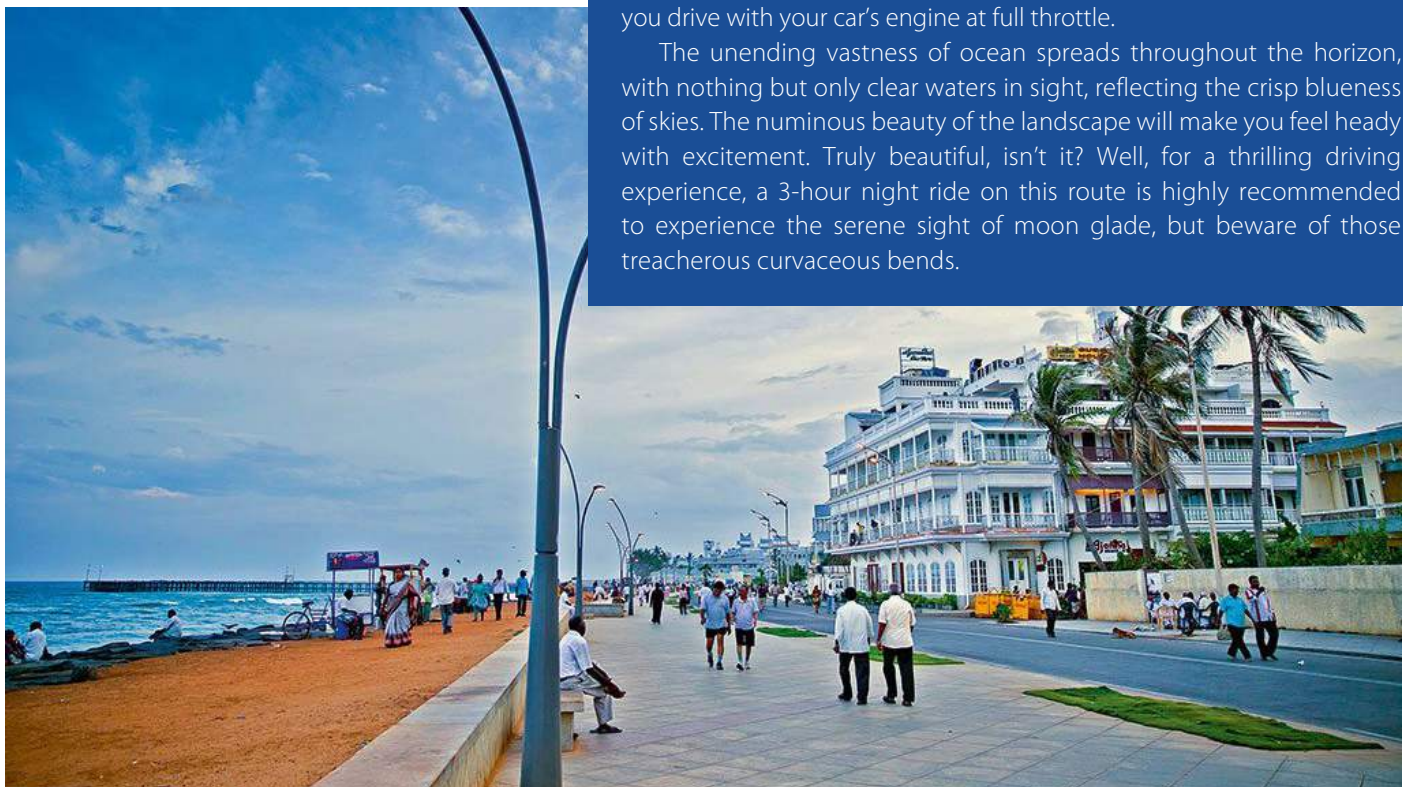
Experience the rugged landscape of this region, in its brown rolling mountains, bright green oasis of rivers surrounding villages, century-old monasteries perched atop rocky cliffs, as you swerve your way through narrow steep ascents, badly broken stretches, water streams, and handle slush and pass through the high passes, finally arriving in Leh.

Think you can brave up this challenge? Well go ahead and plan a trip, who knows it might become one of your most cherished memories of life.

CHENNAI TO PONDICHERRY, EAST COAST ROAD

If you're a adventure seeker, then you should coast from Chennai to Pondicherry along the East Coast Road, which overlooks the Bay of Bengal for the entire stretch of your journey. Sounds interesting? Yes, indeed it is. Imagine your entire journey would pass coasting along the beautiful azure waters, with rugged brown mountains surmounting you from the other side of the road. Experience this contrast of life, with panoramic views as you drive with your car's engine at full throttle.

The unending vastness of ocean spreads throughout the horizon, with nothing but only clear waters in sight, reflecting the crisp blueness of skies. The numinous beauty of the landscape will make you feel heady with excitement. Truly beautiful, isn't it? Well, for a thrilling driving experience, a 3-hour night ride on this route is highly recommended to experience the serene sight of moon glade, but beware of those treacherous curvaceous bends.



CLOCKING TIME

Clock towers are landmarks that were designed to stand the test of time – today, they still manage to get a substantial footfall

TT BUREAU

The old, traditional clock towers were built during ancient times, and have seen the world change dramatically. Built for a variety of reasons, from telling time to serving as a safe place – clock towers today serve as a distinct memory of a bygone era. Some of the clock towers featured here are no longer working, but nonetheless, Today's Traveller will take you down memory lane to view some magnificent structures of extraordinary significance.

RAJABAI CLOCK TOWER, MUMBAI, INDIA

Designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott and inspired by London's Big Ben, the Rajabai Clock Tower stands tall at 280ft and is located in the Fort campus, Mumbai University. The construction of this magnificent clock tower began in 1869, was completed in 1878 and is named after the mother of a prosperous stock broker. This iconic landmark is built with a blend of Venetian and Gothic architecture. The tower is now closed for public viewing, but passersby can definitely listen to harmonious tunes at fixed intervals.





BIG BEN, LONDON

The Elizabeth Tower, better known as the iconic Big Ben, is located at Westminster Palace and is one of the most prominent landmarks in London. Completed in 1858, it is the 3rd largest free-standing clock tower in the world. 'Big Ben' is the nickname for the great bell of the clock tower. It is the only clock tower that still tells time. Parts of the tower are slated for renovation during which time the Big Ben will cease to function for four years.

THE ZYTGLOGGE TOWER, BERN, SWITZERLAND

A designated World Heritage Site by UNESCO, this clock tower is Bern's most iconic landmark of Bern and holds a significant place in the history of science and the universe. This clock tower was built as a watchtower and initially, used as a prison. The Zytglogge's most impressive feature is its 3,000-pound bronze bell, as also its two main clock faces and a smaller astronomical clock that tells the day of the week, time of day, date, lunar phases and even the current zodiac sign.



THE PRAGUE ASTRONOMICAL CLOCK, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Installed in 1410 and located in the capital of Czech Republic, it is the oldest astronomical clock that is still in operation. The astronomical dial is composed of four moving components and a 24-hour system of telling time and also shows the place of the sun and moon on the ecliptic. Clockmaker Hanuš, perfected the clock on the town hall fascia in 1490. The clock is known for its 12 marching apostles; a skeleton on the right, depicting death, starts the show by pulling on a string.

THE PEACE TOWER, OTTAWA, CANADA

The Peace Tower, in the Centre Block of Parliament Hill, is one of Ottawa's most recognisable structures. Formerly known as the 'Tower of Victory and Peace,' this impressive tower is situated in the middle of Ottawa city. The Tower was designed by architect John A. Pearson to stand as an architectural feature and landmark, as well as a commemorative to Canadians who lost their lives during the Great War.



WILD & WONDERFUL ODISHA!

Wildlife sanctuaries in Odisha showcase an incredible eco-system of mangroves, pristine lakes and wildlife

TT BUREAU

This winter, treat your family and yourself to a 'green holiday,' with the wildlife sanctuaries in Odisha which invigorates mind, body and soul.

Odisha is a visual feast and an ideal choice for a holiday sojourn, with its stunning mix of spectacular coastal villages, wildlife habitats, beaches and some of the most popular pilgrim spots in India.

Nestled between the shimmering waters of the Bay of Bengal and the lush, blue hills of the Eastern Ghats, the wildlife sanctuaries of Odisha bedazzles all visitors.

The Tourism Department of Odisha has spared no effort in promoting and spreading awareness about eco-tourism in the state. Whether it is the varied flora and fauna, trekking or camping at Eco-Resorts or the wildlife sanctuaries in Odisha, visitors are assured of adventure and activities in the state's majestic natural landscapes.

BHITARKANIKA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

One of the best wildlife sanctuaries in Odisha is the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary. Located in the estuarial region of Brahmini, Baitarani and Patsal, the sanctuary is known as the mini Amazon of Odisha, because of the abundance of mangroves, creeks, rivers, and estuaries found here. It is home to the largest saltwater crocodiles as well as reptiles.

GAHIRMATHA MARINE WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

One of the most distinct wildlife sanctuaries in Odisha is the Gahirmatha Marine Wildlife Sanctuary. The lone marine sanctuary of the state, is the nesting location for millions of Olive Ridley turtles that visit Sanctuary annually, from October to May. Gahirmatha is also the second largest Mangrove eco-system in the country after Sundarbans. Visitors will find salt water crocodiles, wild boars chital, mudskippers, Bibron's soft-shelled



turtle, hawksbill and leatherback turtles, and can marvel at the more than 170 vibrant species of resident and migratory birds, including six species of kingfishers, darters and many others, that live here.

HABALIKHATI'S MANGROVE FORESTS

Located within Bhitarkanika and boasting an incredible mix of beaches, unique mangrove forests and remarkable flora and fauna, Habalikhati lures researchers and visitors alike and is counted among the top wildlife sanctuaries in Odisha.

Sporadic nesting of sea turtles can be spotted on the beaches of Habalikhati, where several species of dolphins, finless porpoise reside, and monitor lizards, wild pig, spotted deer and king cobra have also made it their habitat.

SIMILIPAL NATIONAL PARK

Located in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha, Similipal National Park includes a wildlife sanctuary and a tiger reserve. Similipal, a hill range, translates from 'Simil,' meaning Silky Cotton Tree.

Wildlife enthusiasts can visit Similipal Wildlife Sanctuary, which is home to leopard, elephant, tiger, sambar and chital,



along with 304 species of birds. Nature lovers will find the region's lush green forests and its surrounding landscapes a veritable paradise.



CHILIKA NATURE CAMP

Sprawling over an area of about 1100sq.km, Chilika Lake is India's largest coastal lagoon. Located in Puri, Khordha and Ganjam districts, it attracts tourists for being the largest winter base for migratory birds on the Indian sub-continent. It is also an important habitat for endangered species of flora and fauna.

This wildlife sanctuary is a bird lovers paradise where you can spot Flamingo, Openbilled Stork, White Bellied Sea Eagle, Brahminy Kite, Spoonbill, Spot-billed Pelican, and Bar-headed Goose. With its distinctive and extraordinary family of marine, migratory and wildlife population, Chilika became the first Indian wetland to be declared "Wetland of International Importance" in 1981, under the IUCN-sponsored Ramsar Convention.

Moreover, United Nation's World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) declared Chilika Lake as 'Destination Flyway,' because of its exceptional bio-diversity.

DEBRIGARH SANCTUARY

Among the most famous wildlife sanctuaries of Odisha is Debrigarh Sanctuary, situated 40 km from Sambalpur. Located in Sambalpur district and spread across an area of 353 square kilometers it is home to 234 bird species, 40 mammal species, 12 amphibian species and diverse flora.

Bhetnoi, in Ganjam district, is home to blackbucks, which co-exist with human habitat as locals consider them to be harbingers of good luck.

Few destinations can take pride in offering a complete package for visitors. Odisha has it all – a rich bio-diversity that includes pristine nature, incredible flora and fauna, beaches, plus a rich culture and tradition mirrored in its many temples and pilgrim spots.

24 HOURS IN JAIPUR



TT BUREAU

Enthralling, historical Jaipur, Rajasthan's capital, is the gateway to India's most flamboyant state

The city's colourful, chaotic streets ebb and flow with a heady brew of old and new. Careering buses dodge dawdling camels, leisurely cycle-rickshaws frustrate swarms of motorbikes, and everywhere buzzing auto rickshaws watch for easy prey. In the midst of this mayhem, the splendours of Jaipur's majestic past are islands of relative calm evoking a different pace and another world.

AMER FORT ON ELEPHANT

One of the most fun things to do in Jaipur is to go on an elephant ride exploring the cobbled paths and large gateways of Amer Fort. Blending Rajput and Hindu artistic elements, Amer Fort was built in the 16th century by Raja Shri Maan Singh Ji Saheb. Some of the key highlights of this fort are the Diwaan-e-Aam and Diwaan-e-Khaas, the Sheesh Mahal and the Sukh Niwaas (Sukh Mandir). Enjoy the light show held there every evening.



PEDAL TO NAHARGARH FORT

Go on a cycle expedition in Jaipur and witness the unique combination of Indian and European architectural styles at the grand Nahargarh fort. A stunning feature of this palace is the Madhavendra Bhawan that has 12 identical suites for the queens, constructed in such a way that the Maharaja could visit any of the queen's rooms without the others finding out. One of the best things to do in Jaipur is to explore this fort and then enjoy a quick bite at the Padao Open Bar/Restaurant on the terrace of this palace whilst enjoying the views of the city.

SATISFY YOUR PALATE

If you are looking for the perfect Rajasthani culinary experience, then head over to Chokhi Dhani. Enjoy the electrifying ambience of this village resort where you can enjoy puppet shows, magic shows, Rajasthani folk performances, acrobatics, camel rides, elephant rides, boating and much more. One of the best things to do in Jaipur is to enjoy the mouth-watering Rajasthani cuisines at the open-air restaurants here. This provides a perfect break from city life, where you enjoy the natural surroundings and rustic rural life.



FLY OVER THE PINK CITY

Drift over the Pink City in a hot air balloon and experience the mesmerising views of the forts and palaces nestled among the Aravalli ranges. Enjoy the plethora of colours and sounds of this city from up above. These rides are popular things to do in Jaipur in one day and are mostly held two hours before sunrise and two hours before sunset. Most of the hot air balloon rides accommodate up to 8 people and start from Amber Fort.



SHOP TILL YOU DROP

Go crazy shopping at Jaipur, for traditional Rajasthani jewellery and clothes. Look for precious gemstones at Johari Bazaar, pick up Lac jewellery at Tripolia Bazaar, shop for marble sculptures at Chandpol Bazaar and get some amazing deals on wooden souvenirs and colourful handicrafts at Mirza Ismail Road (MI. Road). You can also pick up Rajasthani 'jootis' and blue pottery at Nehru Bazaar, and 'mojari' shoes and leather products at Bapu Bazaar.



GO ON A JEEP SAFARI

Go on a jeep safari throughout the city and explore the various forts and jungles here. If you only have a day to explore the city, these jeep safaris are one of the best adventure activities in Jaipur. Ride on a military jeep and see various flora and fauna while crossing the jungles, farms and villages. This is a good way to experience the rich history of Rajasthan. Most of these safaris start from the major forts and gateways of the city.

HAND ME THOSE CUFFS

Time to make a style statement with this power fashion accessory conveying style, personality, taste and poise

TT BUREAU

Many people believe that the whole notion of cufflinks is a little absurd as they are so tiny that they are easy to lose. The plain old buttons are so much more practical, attached directly to the shirt that prevents them from falling off or getting lost.

Nonetheless, to a great many others, cufflinks are the final piece in a polished male wardrobe. Like any other fashion accessory, cufflinks help one make a statement.

CUT CANARY DIAMOND OCTAGON BY JACOB & CO EMERALD



Sometimes, a personal statement transcends beyond form, functionality and economy, and speaks of refinements, elegance and heritage.

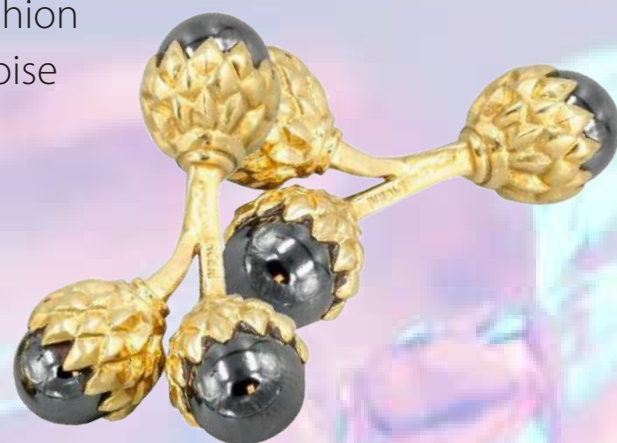


In the world of cufflinks, nothing can rival the statement made by Jacob & Co.'s emerald cut canary diamond octagon cufflink. The central 10.76 carat, Asscher cut diamonds with wide facets and sharp, clipped corners, breath fire into already gloriously magnificent, yellow Cape diamonds.

The entire piece consists of approximately 21.29 carats of diamonds in total, embedded on a polished 18-carat white gold structure with a whale flip-back latch. This truly is fit for kings and merchant princes.

ACORN CUFF LINKS BY TIFFANY & CO SCHLUMBERGER®

Apart from the touch of class, these rare and unusual hematite and 18K yellow gold double acorn cufflinks by Tiffany & Co. Schlumberger make a very eloquent fashion statement.



These are much harder to find than the single acorn cufflinks. It's a piece that is beautifully made and strikingly handsome. First of all, yes it's a piece by Tiffany & Co, a brand who's hallmark is enough to make a fashion statement but it being one of the rarest piece to be found, just puts these cufflinks on a different class.

CUFFLINKS "VRUBEL'S SKETCHES"

The image of a pair of interlaced horseshoes is one of the greatest riddles in the world of arts and at the same time is recognized as the sign of fortune that brings good luck.

Cufflinks "Vrubel's Sketches" are the cue of two horseshoes brooch. After a sensational find by some of the historians, the artisans of Lobortas Jewellery House started making a reality of not only Vrubel's basic idea, but also saw the oriental sign of "Yin & Yang" in that two-horseshoes combination.

However, it was not so easy. Only with the help of volume-modelling, jewellers managed to accomplish this interesting task. In 2007 the masterpiece brooch "Double Horseshoe" saw the daylight and in 2014 this surpassing beauty became an adornment of one of the halls of the State Hermitage Museum, Carl Faberge's Hall.

Men's cufflinks "Vrubel's Sketches" are already recognizable Vrubel's forms and colours. The horseshoe of sapphires and the horseshoe of diamonds make the sign of fortune and a true piece of art!



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