

TODAY'S traveller

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE

JULY 2021 - ₹50

**HIGH ON
HOLIDAY**

**THRILLING
CAVE
ADVENTURES**

**RECHARGE
REJUVENATE AND
REVITALIZE IN
GUJARAT**

**TOP BIKING
TRAILS IN
INDIA**



**THE ART
OF WELLNESS**

TODAY'S
traveller



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Wellness Centers in Gujarat

- ✓ NIMBA Nature Cure Village (Mehsana)
- ✓ SHANKUS Natural Health Center (Mehsana)
- ✓ Indu Ayurveda Hospital (Vadodara)
- ✓ Lok Ayurved (Jamnagar)
- ✓ Navjivan Nature Cure Center (Mandvi, Kutch)
- ✓ Rejou-The Healing Spa (Anand)
- ✓ Amrut Ayurved (Saputara)
- ✓ Yogashram Nature Care Center (Junagadh)
- ✓ Bhavani Retreat (Sabarkantha)
- ✓ Khadi Veda (Ahmedabad)





MEDICAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN GUJARAT

- ✓ State of the art medical facilities
- ✓ Multi-speciality hospitals
- ✓ Advanced technologies
- ✓ Expert Professionals
- ✓ Affordable treatments
- ✓ Medical tourism insurance

An extensive network of Multi-Speciality and Super-Speciality hospitals spreads throughout Gujarat. Along with the hospitals, Gujarat has always been known for world-class diagnostic centers. Few of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies are based out of Gujarat.



Visitors from foreign countries avail treatments at affordable rates, experience world-class hospitality, and return with thoughtful ancillary services. Gujarat is well known for its advanced therapy and diagnostic reach in cardiology, Neurology, Nephrology, Oncology, Critical Care, Endocrinology, Pulmonology, Obstetrics & Gynecology, Ophthalmology, Urology, Orthopedics, Otorhinolaryngology, Dermatology and Odontology.



The multispecialty hospitals have advanced technologies, and upgrades to medical equipment and procedures relating to medical treatment are constantly being added to the treatment curriculums. The frontline workers from Gujarat's medical fraternity are expert professionals trained at the best institutes in India and across the world to take care of you on your healing tour.

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CON

06 RECHARGE REJUVENATE AND REVITALIZE IN GUJARAT

GUJARAT HAS EMERGED AS THE GO-
TO DESTINATION FOR WELLNESS AND
MEDICAL TOURISM

08 BLISSFUL BATHS

SPA BATHS ARE THE ULTIMATE MODE
OF RELAXATION

10 THE ART OF WELLNESS

WE TRAVEL FOR WELLNESS NOT TO
ESCAPE LIFE, BUT FOR LIFE NOT TO
ESCAPE US

16 HIGH ON HOLIDAY

HILL STATIONS FOR HOLIDAY
GETAWAYS OF ALMOST EVERY KIND

20 MUMBAI DIARIES

MUMBAI IS A POTPOURRI OF
HERITAGE, ENTERTAINMENT, AND
THE SEA

22 SCENIC AFFAIR WITH BANKURA

AN INCREDIBLY PICTURESQUE
DESTINATION IN WEST BENGAL

24 10 PLACES TO CHILL IN GOA

GET ENCHANTED BY
TIMELESS BEAUTY

29 MEGHALAYA - THRILLING CAVE ADVENTURES!

ADVENTURES OF A DIFFERENT KIND

34 WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES IN MAHARASHTRA

FIND THE BEST ELEMENTS OF
NATURE

38 DISCOVER AN ICONIC BUDDHIST CIRCUIT IN ODISHA

DESTINATION EXPLORERS
DISCOVER A NEW CIRCUIT



TENTS

CORPORATE, BUSINESS, AVIATION, MICE & LEISURE TRAVEL MAGAZINE | VOLUME 24 | No. 3 | JULY 2021

42 TOP 3 BIKING TRAILS IN INDIA

AWESOME BIKING TRAILS THAT INDIA HAS TO OFFER

46 GANGTOK: FROM MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS TO MEDITATIVE MONASTERIES

THE HOME OF MOUNTAINS AND MONASTERIES

51 A HEAVENLY MATCH - WINE AND CHEESE

TWO OF LIFE'S GREAT CULINARY PLEASURES

54 24 HOURS IN CAPITAL CITY

DELHI IS A SYMBOL OF OLD AND NEW

56 LUXURY GOLFING

INDIA HAS SOME OF THE OLDEST GOLF COURSES



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RECHARGE REJUVENATE AND REVITALIZE IN GUJARAT

Combining ancient healing practices of Yoga and Ayurveda along with modern scientific medicine, Gujarat has emerged as the go-to destination for medical tourists

TT BUREAU

When it comes to combining the best of age-old medical traditions and the scientific rigour of modern-day western medicine, no state in India can match up to Gujarat in terms of the available infrastructure and the sheer number of facilities offering treatments including traditional wellness and healing practices, including Ayurveda, Naturopathy and Siddha.

Whether you are seeking holistic wellness or relief from a chronic ailment, travelling to Gujarat can be a richly rewarding experience. The state is a leader in the healthcare sector with a strong presence of various pharmaceutical companies and both state and privately-run hospitals and healthcare centres. No wonder Gujarat remains the most sought-after destination when it comes to medical and wellness tourism.

AYURVEDIC TREATMENT CENTRES

Gujarat has some of the most well-known wellness centres, which offer ancient therapies based on the knowledge of Ayurveda and Siddha traditions. Customized herbal massages, sattvic meals and yoga and pranayama exercises are also offered to guests suffering from chronic ailments. Here are some of the best wellness centres in Gujarat. Nimba Nature Cure Village: Located in Mehsana, this wellness centre offers



a wide range of wellness services, involving naturopathy and Ayurveda. Yoga and meditation courses are also offered.

Shankus Natural Health Center: Situated 55 km away from Ahmedabad, Shankus Natural Health Centre in Mehsana offers holistic treatments, combining Naturopathy and Yoga.

Indu Ayurveda Hospital (Vadodara): This is a dedicated hospital offering a range of fabulous wellness treatments based on Ayurvedic knowledge.

Lok Ayurved (Jamnagar): Based on the theme of rural life in Gujarat, this ayurvedic resort offers, among other things, Panchakarma treatment and preventive health courses based on skill development.

Navjivan Nature Cure Centre (Mandvi, Kutch): Spread across 14 acres of lush green space, this wellness centre focuses on detoxification, achieving bodily balance and promoting general health and fitness.

Rejou-The Healing Spa & Naturopathy, Madhuban Resort & Spa, Vallabh Vidyanagar, Anand: This resort offers customised skincare and body therapies, combining ayurvedic knowledge and cutting-edge western practices.

Amrut Ayurveda (Saputara): Set in the picturesque locale of Saputara, this wellness centre specializes in Kerala-based Ayurvedic treatments for a range of chronic ailments, including pain, arthritis, asthma, joint pain and so on.

Yogashram Nature Cure Centre (Junagadh): Specializing in ayurvedic and naturopathic treatments, doctors and paramedics offer a range of therapies for the mind and the body.

Bhavani Retreat (Sabarkantha): Set amidst a rural backdrop, this retreat offers rejuvenation from the hectic pace of city life.

Khadi Veda: Using entirely natural ingredients, such as water, flowers and essential oils, Khadi Veda offers a range of cosmetic and wellness products for hair and body.

SUPER SPECIALTY HOSPITALS AND FACILITIES

Gujarat has a well-developed, modern medical infrastructure, combining home-grown pharma industries, corporate hospital chains, super specialty and multi-specialty hospitals, diagnostic clinics and government-run hospitals.

It is this combination of modern medical infrastructure and traditional wellness centres that have made Gujarat the go-to destination for patients from countries, such as Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Africa, Mauritius and Maldives.

Some of the most sought-after treatments include those related to cardiology, oncology, dermatology, critical care and others.

Some of the major government and semi-government hospitals include:

- » Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Institute of Medical Sciences and Research (SVPIMSR), Ahmedabad
- » Zydus Hospital, Ahmedabad
- » Kusum Dhirajlal Hospital(KDH), Ahmedabad
- » HCG, Rajkot
- » Shalby Multispeciality Hospital, Surat
- » Sterling Hospital, Vadodara

THE AYURVEDIC NERVE CENTRE OF INDIA

Ayurveda is a comprehensive medical system developed in India thousands of years ago. Unlike western bio-medicine, which focuses on just the body, Ayurveda takes into account the mind, body and soul and aims to find balance as a way to treat ailments. Gujarat is one of the very few states in India that has fully embraced this ancient healing practice. It has several wellness centres, resorts and retreats that offer wellness treatments based on the time-tested principles of Ayurveda and Yoga.

GUJARAT: EMBRACING NATUROPATHY

Naturopathy is a form of alternative medicine that focuses on natural therapies and the body's own internal capacity to heal. Gujarat has many well-established dedicated naturopathic clinics and wellness centres that offer treatment to several chronic ailments through therapies inspired by Naturopathy.



BLISSFUL BATHS



Introduced by the Romans, today Spa Baths have redefined the health and beauty benefits of this ultimate mode of relaxation

TT BUREAU

Spa baths, as we all know, are the epitome of ultimate relaxation, but what's often thought of as an indulgent and time consuming part of a beauty routine could also give us serious health benefits. Spas everywhere offer us a variety of baths that promise to do everything, from reducing cellulites to detoxing our skin, all while boosting our immunity, easing our achy muscles and draining our accumulated fatigue. We all go through this scripted motion where we have lots of pent up stress and accumulated fatigue – all that results in severe illness. Here are a few luxury Spa Bath therapies that could help make our lifestyles healthier.

WINE BATH

Wine therapies fall under the umbrella of Vinotherapy and are said to rejuvenate the skin with polyphenols while potentially reducing the appearance of cellulite. Meadowood Spa, located in California Wine Country, uses wine extract for bathing purposes, as its antioxidants remain undiluted since it doesn't have the alcohol content. It's basically a beauty therapy process where the residues of wine making (the pips and pulp) are rubbed into the skin. The pulp is said to have excellent exfoliating qualities and helps reduce the problems associated with ageing. If you can't make it to the Caudalie Spa in Bordeaux, where wine and honey treatments and merlot wraps are provided, book a trip to New York City to visit Aire Ancient Baths for a red wine ritual that includes a soak and four-handed massage.

CHOCOLATE BATH

We all know that dark chocolate lowers the levels of stress hormones and sugar stimulates the release of the mood-improving hormone serotonin. Cocoa's benefits are not just

limited to its consumption. A chocolate bath can relieve fatigue and tone your body and enhance the breakdown of fats in the deep layers of the skin while increasing the blood flow in the superficial layers of the skin, thereby helping to achieve the anti-cellulite effect. This therapy also helps strengthening your hair and giving it some shine. Various spas provide these therapies, but the Spa at Hotel Hershey is the mecca of chocolate bathing.

HOT AND COLD HYDROTHERAPY BATH

This relaxation and muscle-invigorating practice increases circulation and promotes muscle relief. When heated, it also relaxes stiff joints and is usually mixed with oils and salts that provide additional benefits. A mixture of varying water temperatures is a widely used technique at many spas.

Heat penetrates your skin and affects your underlying tissues: superficial and deep. Applying heat to your tissues increases blood circulation and causes your connective tissue to become more flexible. It also promotes a transient reduction in your joint stiffness, pain and muscle spasms and can help you reduce inflammation and congestion in your tissues.

On the other hand cold cools your skin's surface and underlying tissues and results in the narrowing of your blood vessels. This reduces blood volume at the site of your injury, resulting in reduced swelling, and also decreases the likelihood that your cells will die due to lack of oxygen.

When applied in successive fashion, heat and cold are believed to exert a physiological effect on your body's pain gate mechanism, which temporarily alters pain signals travelling to and from your brain. The ritual bath at the Spa Palazzo at the Boca Resort and Spa includes hydrotherapy tubs on top of a Swiss shower and a deluge – a warm-water massage.

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EXPLORE



The Art of Wellness

We travel for Wellness not to escape life, but for life not to escape us

KAMAL GILL

To awaken with heightened senses to bird song and the wind rustling leaves is an altogether different dimension to experience living. What a delight to wake up to another world and re-centre yourself! I remember a heritage hotel reminiscent of a Mughal palace and a redolent lifestyle, which sported a large swing – jhula bed of yesteryears – in a verandah that had been converted into a sunroom with a glass ceiling and huge mesh floor-to-ceiling doors facing a wide garden. It was as good as sleeping outdoors – with the night sounds and sky above.

When I visited the resort, some years later, it had been demolished and was an expansive, fully enclosed Luxury Suite. I believe the pendulum has come full circle. Wellness is now a need that is being sought consciously or unconsciously, on every front.

NOTHING BETTER THAN NATURE

An immersion in Nature – be it a beach resort, a forest getaway, a hill station, outdoor activity – is the first preference when planning a short break, a holiday or a corporate incentive.

Taking the back-to-nature movement forward in full force, is the ancient practice of forest-bathing, which is an immersion-



Source: Prakritishakti Clinic of natural medicine

in-nature process involving walking at a slow pace through a woodland to 'absorb or bathe' in its peace and beauty.

Forest Therapy is a self-care movement, led by the abundance of benefits received in reconnecting with Nature. Research published in the Journal of Environmental Psychology states, "Natural environments turn out to be particularly rich in the characteristics necessary for restorative experiences. Being exposed to restorative environments such as a forest, lake or



Source: Prakritishakti Clinic of natural medicine

beach restores mental energy. Natural beauty inspires feelings of awe, which gives a secondary brain boost.” It is not surprising therefore, that virtually all resorts have come up in areas closer to Nature and outdoor camping, rock climbing, river rafting, bungee jumping or canopy trapezing are much sought-after holiday activities. Sport and outdoor activities are the wellspring of travel these days. Anything works, so long as it is close to Nature.

Similarly, a research by Frontiers in Psychology has a paper by Human Health Laboratory, University of Illinois, US, which reports: “Time spent in and around tree-lined streets, gardens, parks, forested and agricultural lands is consistently linked to long-term health outcomes. The less green a person’s surroundings, the higher their risk of morbidity and mortality.”

“The range of specific health outcomes tied to nature is startling, including depression and anxiety disorder, diabetes mellitus, attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), various infectious diseases, cancer, healing from surgery, obesity, birth outcomes, cardiovascular disease, musculoskeletal complaints, migraines, respiratory disease and others, reviewed below. Finally, neighbourhood greenness has been consistently tied to life expectancy and all-cause mortality.”

HOW NATURE WELLNESS WORKS

The Frontiers in Psychology research paper explains, “Many plants give off phytoncides – antimicrobial volatile organic compounds — which reduce blood pressure, alter autonomic



Source: Scorpion

activity and boost immune functioning. The air in forested and mountainous areas and near moving water, contains high concentrations of negative air ions, which reduce depression, among other effects. These environments also contain mycobacterium vaccae, a micro-organism that appears to boost immune functioning.”

Nature promotes relaxation and parasympathetic activity, which improves sleep, boosts immune function and counters the adverse effects of stress on energy metabolism, insulin secretion and inflammatory pathways. The Report stresses that



Source: Freepik.com

Source: Andrew Coelho

forest walks on consecutive days increased the number and activity of anti-cancer NK cells by 50 and 56%, respectively, and activity remained significantly boosted even a month after returning to urban life – 23% higher than before the walks. Moreover, extended time in a forest decreased inflammatory cytokines implicated in chronic disease by roughly one-half.

Similarly, researchers at the University of Essex found that just five minutes of physical exercise in a green space lifted spirits and self-confidence. Finally, as a society, we need to evolve and acknowledge that mental health and physical health are co-related.

WELLNESS CENTRES AND THERAPIES

With Wellness at the core of physical functionality and fitness, clarity of thinking and high productivity, not to speak of confidence boosting beauty and body profiling, a wealth of outstanding Health and Wellness retreats are available for individuals to re-centre and discover themselves. Retreats,

Wellness Centres, Spa and Salons offer treatments to relax, rejuvenate, detox and energise the body, mind and soul. India's finest Wellness offerings cover workplace wellness plans, specialty spas and therapies, hot thermal/mineral springs, fitness gyms and a variety of nutritional food.

From offering treatments based on the time-tested principles of Ayurveda and Yoga, Meditation, Acupuncture, Naturopathy and Panchakarmato therapies aimed at restoring inner balance through herbal massages, detoxification processes, Sattvic meals and holistic healing, Health and Wellness retreats are flourishing across India.

RESTORATIVE EXPERIENCES

Essentially, Wellness is an inside-outside effort, not an outside-inside effort, although one must admit the outside impacts the inside as much, if not more.

Hannah Bronfman, entrepreneur and a beauty, health and Wellness enthusiast in her book, 'Do What Feels Good' keeps



Source: CGH Earth

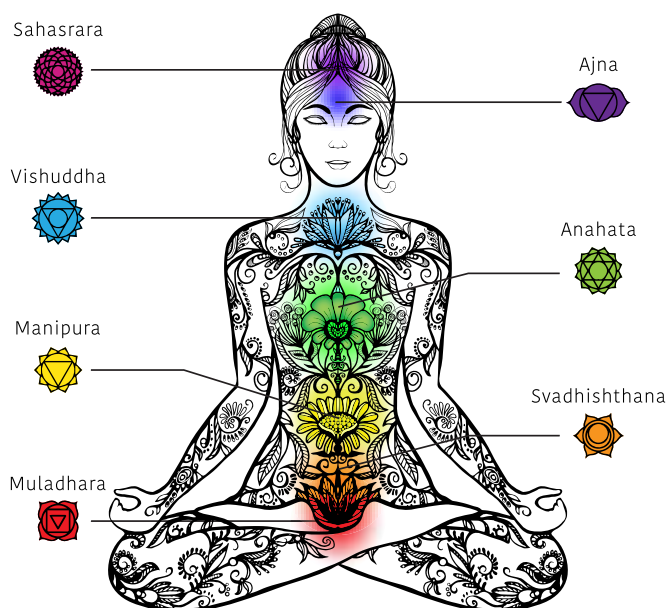


Source: NAGA



Source: lava

The 7 Chakras of the Human Body



Chakra Balancing for peace, happiness and health is an important part of Yoga practice.

Source: Freepik.com

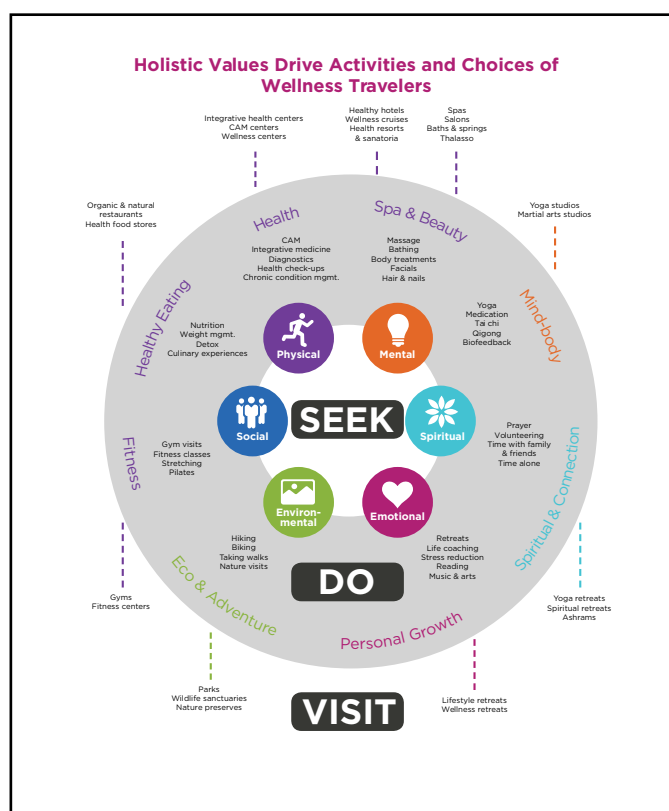
it easy: "It comes down to one simple equation: Do more of the things that feel good and less of the things that don't. From eating delicious foods to breaking a sweat to pampering your skin to taking a minute to unwind, self-care rituals should be designed with health and happiness in mind. Because everybody deserves to feel good." Energy levels, lifestyle and social amplification dictate each individual's perspective. What works for one doesn't apply to another in creating wellbeing.

Therefore, while restorative experiences recharge mind and body, for each individual the rejuvenation is different. Like a piano, each note is different and we should select our own path in Wellness from the opportunities around us. A swim, a bath, a

WELLNESS THROUGH THE AGES

Since ancient times, people have used travel as a means for rejuvenation and healing. Romans travelled to baths, hot springs, and seaside resorts for treatments, healthier climates, purification and spiritual rituals. For centuries, pilgrims from around the world have visited the Dead Sea for its therapeutic properties, while Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans have travelled to hot springs for relaxation and community. Russia's first resort spa was constructed in Karelia, nearly 300 years ago, in the era of Peter the Great.

Source: Global Wellness Institute



Source: Global Wellness Institute

Photo Courtesy: Carnoustie Marari



sauna, standing in the rain, singing in the bath shower: each is a water-driven restoration experience and they all work!

Similarly, outdoor or indoor exercise of any kind, including simple walking or household chores – all work. So, too, diet. In moderation all diets are useful, be it simple control over eating to being smart in cooking healthy food to fashionable fads. Regardless of what regime is on offer, intelligent selection to individual needs and adoption of what feels good for you, in moderation... all have the potential of creating Wellness for the individual.

STATISTICALLY SPEAKING

According to the Global Wellness Economy Monitor, 2017 saw India rank 7th in the very best 20 Wellness Tourism Markets, and 10th on the list of top 20 Spa Markets in the global world, while ranking 3rd in both top 10 Wellness Tourism Markets and top 10 Spa Markets in Asia Pacific.

Indians made 56 million Wellness-related trips, both international and domestic, in 2017 (a rise of 45% over 2015), including expenditures worth US\$16.3 billion.

Interestingly, India ranked 2nd with regard to leading growth markets for Wellness Tourism, depicting the average annual growth rate of 20.3% from 2015 to 2017, adding just a little over 17 million Wellness trips in exactly the same period. Furthermore, the Spa Market in India had a total of 5,990 facilities, which together generated a revenue of US\$2.1 billion in 2017.

GWI estimates Wellness Tourism as a \$639 billion global market in 2017, growing more than twice as fast as general tourism. GWI projects that Wellness Tourism will grow at an average annual rate of 7.5% through 2022, considerably faster than the 6.4% annual growth forecasted for overall global tourism. Global wellness tourism expenditures will reach over \$919 billion in 2022, representing 18% of the global tourism market. Correspondingly, Wellness Tourism trips will grow by 8.1% annually to 1.2 billion trips in 2022.



AUTHENTIC WELLNESS TOURISM DESTINATIONS

A small, but growing number of destinations are developing a truly authentic and place-based Wellness Tourism product and brand – from the state of Kerala, India, which branded itself as the “Land of Ayurveda” over two decades ago, to neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan, each promoting Wellness Tourism experiences that link Wellness with Yoga, Ayurveda, Meditation, Spirituality, Pilgrimage, indigenous medicine, faith healing, and happiness. Other examples include Costa Rica’s new “Wellness Pura Vida” tourism campaign and Beverly Hills’ (U.S.) “City of Wealth” tourism campaign to redefine luxury as less about materialism and more about health, purpose and happiness.

Source: Global Wellness Institute

Photo Courtesy: laris sabahr photography



Photo Courtesy: The Body Holiday - Carribean

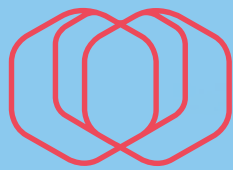


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HIGH ON HOLIDAY

Nothing beats the joy of vacationing in an enchanting mountain town with plenty of nature to explore

TT BUREAU

Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu

Often termed as an obvious choice for the avid traveller in India, especially in these days of social distancing, hill stations in the subcontinent are known to offer some of the best vacations ever. Mountain lovers enjoy the diverse landscape of mountainous regions, and the almost mystical ambiance that surrounds them.

India's topography primarily comprises the Himalayan mountain ranges in the north, the Satpura in the west and the Nilgiris in the south. So vivid is the country's hill segmentation that a traveller never runs out of options, be it an adventurous holiday in nature's toughest terrains, a leisure family vacation or just an escape from the city blues.

Here are five best hill stations fit for holiday getaways of almost every kind.

KEYLONG, HIMACHAL PRADESH

A 100km from Manali lies Keylong, the remote yet enchanting environ of the true Himalayas. The scenic hill station is reputed as one of the major offbeat tourist destinations in Himachal Pradesh.

Situated at a height of around 3340m, Keylong documents itself as an unspoilt canvas that has mountains with white tops, rough pedestals covered in lush greenery and gurgling narrow



→ Solang Valley Paragliding, Himachal Pradesh



→ Ravangla monastery and Buddha Statue, Sikkim

streams. The place is also dotted with numerous Buddhist monasteries (Khardang, Shashur and Tyaul Gompa) that are renowned for their architectural excellence, and hence, one more reason to skip the rough Ladakh for Keylong.

Keylong is counted as being among Lahaul's prime centres for cultural exhibitions and its best visited in the months around July.

It is during this time that the town goes into celebratory mode with different fairs and extravaganzas.

The Pauri festival, Chaam Dance and burning of the devil are among the popular festivities at Keylong one can hope to be a part of in the summer months.

TAWANG, ARUNACHAL PRADESH

A true epitome of the mesmerizing Himalayas, Tawang, in the extreme east of India, is a perfect sojourn for urban travellers who long for peace and tranquility. The region is blessed with scenic marvels, known to cast a magical spell over its travellers. To begin with, it comprises the mighty Gudpi and Chong-Chugmi mountain ranges, the crystal blue Tawang Chu River and the glacial lakes, which allure migratory birds in large numbers during summer. Nestled in the eastern corner of the country, Tawang shares its borders with Tibet in the north and Bhutan in the southwest and has Buddhism as its prime influence. The hymns and chants from the monasteries are

melodious and like a breath of fresh air. Monasteries in Tawang are in abundance and can be seen at every nook and corner while strolling around the town.

They depict the religious history of Tawang, which primarily dates back to the 17th century. A notable example is the spectacular 'Tawang Monastery,' which is the largest of its kind in India and the second largest in the world.

While most hill stations are best visited during summer, Tawang gets its major share of tourism in winter. As the cold season approaches, the region gets completely covered in a milky white blanket, making it a hub for snow lovers and adventure sports.

MATHERAN, MAHARASHTRA

Away from the cacophony of Mumbai and Pune in Maharashtra, Matheran is a picturesque hill station that serves as a perfect weekend getaway for city dwellers. The hill station resides at an elevation of around 2,600 ft above sea level and is a declared eco-sensitive region. It is due to this fact that automobiles are completely banned in the vicinity of Matheran. And thus, commuting within Matheran is done only through the miniature train service.

Cruising uphill, the train ride offers panoramic views of deep gorges with roaring waterfalls. Once at the top, the view gets more enticing as lush greens of the Deccan Plains and Western Ghats contain the whole valley below. There are a total of around 38 tourist points, each having its trail backed by breathtaking surroundings. The most prominent of these are, One tree hill, Porcupine Point, Monkey Point and Louisa Point.

Getting to Matheran is no hassle at all as this tiny hill destination stays well connected through state highways. To experience the best of Matheran's natural beauty, tourists are advised to make their travel arrangements during the monsoon

KODAIKANAL, TAMIL NADU

Tamil Nadu's most suitable response to the Himalayas in the North as Kodaikanal in the Palani Hills – an absolute respite from the heat-soaked plains of the state. The topography of Kodaikanal, includes green meadows, dense forest cover and pristine lakes, all enveloped in a blanket of mist. The hill station's history dates back to the 19th century when British officers, in order to seek refuge from the tropical heat, made their habitat on the hills. This set off a popular precedent and the place was soon transformed into a popular tourist destination.

Today, Kodaikanal is an ideal sojourn, offering attractions like the Bear Shola Falls, Coakers Walk, Kodai Lake, Bryant Park and Dolphin's Nose to help urban travellers unwind far from the madding crowd. Travellers can also indulge in activities like boating, horse riding, cycling and trekking to make the best of their Kodaikanal experience.

GULMARG, JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Another refreshing discovery by the British, Gulmarg, in the Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, stands out as one of India's premier tourist destinations. Gulmarg, which translates to 'meadow of flowers,' offers the ultimate in 'nature mixed with adventure' for thousands of discerning travellers every year. The best part about Gulmarg is that it's an anytime destination and is not limited with the change of seasons.

Spring time cloaks the region with a lush green mantle, while winter brings its own milky white magic. The seasons bring a host of opportunities (summer and winter adventure) to explore the mystical terrains of Gulmarg.

The hill station is also renowned for its Gondola rides (cable car), which offer breathtaking views of the surrounding Himalayas and the pristine town of Gulmarg.



Gulmarg, Jammu and Kashmir



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MUMBAI DIARIES

Famously referred to as the City of Dreams or the City that Never Sleeps, Mumbai is a potpourri of heritage, entertainment, and the balmy sea

TT BUREAU

HERITAGE WALKS

Lose yourself in Mumbai's historic colonial landmarks and architectural marvels around Fort and Colaba, the city's famous precincts. Make sure not to miss the Gateway of India, Taj Mahal Hotel, Wellington Fountain, The Prince of Wales Museum, Elphinstone College, Bombay High Court, Crawford Market and more.



BOLLYWOOD

The birthplace of Bollywood is today the world's largest film making entity. With 1,000 films being produced annually, Bollywood has taken Mumbai to global standards and has created heroes of normal men. Take a behind-the-scenes tour, visit an old heritage cinema, peek inside a film star's makeup room and pose for souvenir snapshots with some of today's Bollywood stars.



HAJI ALI DARGAH

Floating like a sacred mirage off the coast, this Indo-Islamic shrine located on an offshore inlet, is a striking sight. Built in the 19th century, it contains the tomb of the Muslim saint Pir Haji Ali Shah Bukhari. Legend has it that Haji Ali died while on a pilgrimage to Mecca and his casket miraculously floated back to this spot.



CHUG ALONG

Quaint old buildings, dilapidated bungalows, isolated railway quarters line the stations from Churchgate, all the way to Andheri on the Western Line – enjoy this and much more on the notoriously crowded local trains and the BEST double-decker buses that the city of Mumbai is famous for. Travel during the non-peak hours so to avoid maximum rush.

HIGH ON FOOD

From finger licking pav bhaji to the must-have, vada pav, Mumbai is famous for its authentic street food, which is widely available on the streets of Mumbai. You can also shift from mainstream and try the Bombay Duck or the Shark Fry recipes close to the heart of Mumbai.

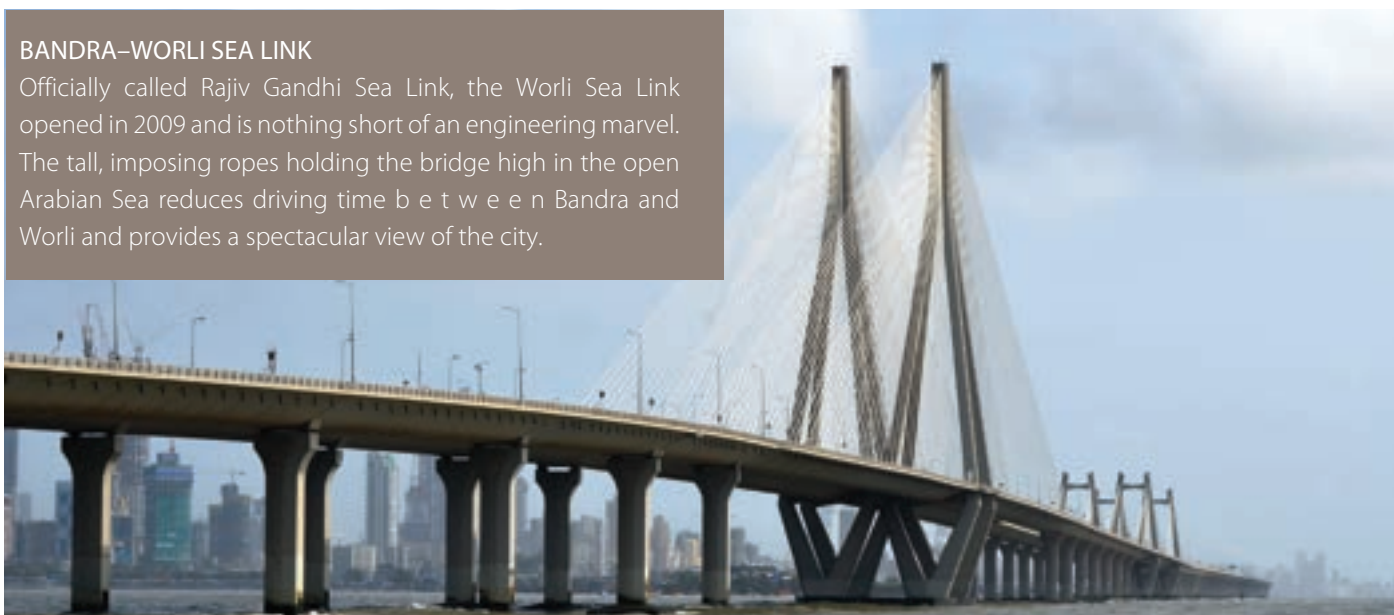


QUEEN'S NECKLACE – MARINE DRIVE

A 3km long boulevard in South Mumbai, it is a 'C'-shaped six-lane concrete road that links Nariman Point to Babulnath, and is situated at the foot of Malabar Hill. The promenade is lined with palm trees, and at the northern end of Marine Drive is Chowpatty Beach. Large crowds of people come to this place to stride along the beautiful walkway and to view the stunning sight of the setting sun at dusk.

BANDRA-WORLI SEA LINK

Officially called Rajiv Gandhi Sea Link, the Worli Sea Link opened in 2009 and is nothing short of an engineering marvel. The tall, imposing ropes holding the bridge high in the open Arabian Sea reduces driving time between Bandra and Worli and provides a spectacular view of the city.



SCENIC AFFAIR WITH BANKURA

Bankura in West Bengal beckons with some incredibly picturesque destinations and a glorious heritage

TT BUREAU

Bankura, which forms a part of the eastern Chhota Nagpur plateau, looks like a region that has been touched by Nature herself, and this is pretty much evident in the ancient brown hills dotting the landscape and the abundance of gurgling rivers and streams. Moreover, the ancient temples and monuments that Bankura houses make it a repository of rich culture and tradition. It is for these reasons that Bankura has gained wide popularity as a tourist destination.

A wide range of places to visit, from the cultural and architectural perspective, terracotta temples, dense virgin forests and some amazing scenery at Mukutmoipur, etc. attract visitors the year round. The panoramic landscape instills a sense of nostalgia, a yearning to drift back into a time long past.

BISHNUPUR

The paradise for terracotta crafts and a flourishing temple town, Bishnupur remains a tourist favourite as well as a matter of pride for the locals. Besides being the origin of "Baluchari" masterpieces and the renowned music of Seni Gharana, Bishnupur was also the capital of the 7th century Mallabhum kingdom.

The fame and glory of the kingdom rose to its peak under the rule of Bir Hambir, the 49th ruler of Mallabhum. Its rich, glorious past is reflected in its art and architecture, and music and handicrafts, such as pottery and weaving.

Besides showcasing a unique form of architecture, Bishnupur prides itself on its brilliant and detailed terracotta work, which has not lost its charm over the course of time. A visit to the various



→ Terracotta Temple, Bishnupur



➡ The Mukutmanipur–Jhilimili Circuit

temples in Bishnupur lets us into the exquisite craftsmanship of its artisans.

MUKUTMANIPUR

The Mukutmanipur–Jhilimili circuit has over the years, become a favourite with tourists visiting Bankura. The second biggest earthen dam in India, Mukutmanipur is just a two-hour drive from Bankura and is located at the confluence of the Rivers Kangsabati and Kumari.

This enormous tract of water is surrounded by lush green forests and hillocks. The undulating terrain along the southern edge of the Kangsabati Water Reservoir extends as a three-dimensional green, terracotta necklace.

The azure waters of the reservoir, still and placid, could fool you into believing that the sky is immersed within. By night, the vast blue plate transforms into a shimmering silver sheet.

SUSUNIA HILL

Susunia Hill, located just 20km from Bankura, is a popular trekking destination. However, this place is also frequented by visitors who especially come to see the Susunia Dhara, a natural spring, as well as the Chandavaran inscriptions.

Excavations carried out in this area reveal these inscriptions dating back to the 4th century AD. Trees such as shal, segun, palash, amlaki etc, contribute to the floral treasure here. Autumn sees the entire hill appear as if it is on fire because of the red Palash blooms which cover it entirely.

NARA NARAYAN TEMPLE, JOYRAMBATI

Practical Vedanta was taught to the masses in a simplified manner by the patriot monk of India, Swami Vivekananda, who said that “Service to man is service to God.”

In pursuance of this concept, Swami Nityananda, Founder Secretary of the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission, Barrackpore, constructed a temple called Nara Narayan Temple, in the village of Joyrambati, in Bankura district. This temple witnesses



➡ Susunia Hill, Bankura



➡ The Ramakrishna Vivekananda Mission, Barrackpore

a unique method of worship. Every day, a male child, aged between four to five years, irrespective of his caste or religion, is worshipped as a deity in the temple. He is offered flowers, fruits, garments, etc.

This kind of worship is said to be the practical fulfillment of the ideal of practical Vedanta, with the core message being that civilization will reach its zenith when we respect each other as we respect God.

10 PLACES TO CHILL IN GOA

Get enchanted by the timeless beauty of Goa!

TT BUREAU



Goa is a beautiful blend of resort-lifestyle, sports, and vacationing but it also has all the pre-requisites of a global experiential destination with its exquisite beaches, exotic Goan cuisine, old Forts, and charming Portuguese-styled colonial buildings.

This destination casts a spell on anyone on the lookout for a refreshing and enlivening getaway that helps them to pause life and hit vacation mode for a perfect holiday. Here are our top ten places in Goa to chill!

Start off your relaxing holiday at this coastal paradise by unwinding at the beach and letting the waves kiss your feet!

White Sandy Beaches and More!

Agonda Beach

Giving an authentic Goan experience is the tranquil and less frequented Agonda Beach. Located in South Goa, this white, soft sandy beach with blue waters is a must-visit on account of its delightful and scenic setting with green groves, coconut and palm trees, local cafes, and hotels nearby.

When you are in Goa and you really want to relax and stay away from noisy and boisterous places, and Agonda beach provides this ideal option. The beach is extremely clean and is also famous for the nesting and hatching of the Ridley Turtle.



➔ *Calangute Beach*

Head off to this beach by the months of November to march to witness this Goan beauty at its best. There are excellent water sport activities like kayaking, parasailing jet skiing, and surfing available. For those with a yen for nightlife, there are a number of quality clubs, pubs, lounges, bistros, restaurants, and beach huts that serve good food and music in a relaxed ambiance. The nearest bus and railhead is the Canacona station and it is approximately 65 km away from the Goa International Airport from where you can take a taxi or a rickshaw.

Baga Beach

Baga beach, named after the Baga creek, is a popular beach

that tantalizes every tourist and visitor with its captivating beauty. Stretching from the Sinquerim village, it is surrounded by recreation and food outlets along with beach shacks and water sport activities.

Dolphins can be spotted deeper in the ocean waters and Dolphin-sighting trips are organized for visitors.

Try your hands at the water sports available here like kayaking, speed boat rides, parasailing, and jet skiing among others. Be sure to taste some tasty local food from the nearby cafes. For the party animal in you, this is a perfect spot to live your best nightlife memories. On offer in this 'happening' beach are late-night music festivals, pub or club-hopping at Hammerzz nightclub, and Hype as well as excellent local and international food at places like Britto's bar and restaurant or Fire and Ice among others, good shops, and watersports.

Located in the North of Goa, you can reach this hotspot by train, bus, or flight from Panaji or Goa International airport which is only 15 km away from Baga. The best months to visit Baga beach are October to March.

Family getaways' perfect hotspots!

Pascoal Farms

With an apt and beautiful Portuguese architecture, an elephant to walk you through the plantation and riverbanks as a part of the setting, be sure to visit the famous Pascoal farms for a perfect family getaway or to chill over the weekend.

Set in the thick green belt of the Western Ghats, this 50-acre lush spice farm with over 2500 species of plants that include medicinal herbs, offers an attractive landscape with the River Khandepar flowing nearby. Much loved by nature addicts as well as organic food lovers, the spice farm has several guided tours on offer, followed by an appetizing home-cooked lunch. Reach this farm by cab or scooter from Panaji which is just an hour away from this farm which is located at Khandepar.

Atreya Vedic Farm

Want to travel and relax responsibly? Then opt for the environmental activist Nirmala Sawant's take on eco-tourism at the 'Atreya Vedic Farm'. From orchards, an astrological plant park, Wildlife, and Birding to Presidica Butterfly House, this place has it all! Set amidst nature's abundance at the foothills of the Western Ghats at Molem is Atreya Vedic Farm, A truly unique eco-tourism venture, the Atreya Vedic Farm consists of a 36 – acre estate with rich, sylvan forests, wooded groves, amazing tropical gardens, an orchard, and hold your breath - an astrological plant park.

So you can visit the Charak Vatika – medicinal plantation, Coconut, and Areca Nut Plantation, Wildlife and Birding, a wonderful restaurant that offers typical Goan cuisine, and above all, the Presidica Butterfly House, filled with gardens of tropical plants and rows of colourful flowers with free-flying

butterflies around. Located at the foothills of the Western Ghats at Molem, reach the Atreya Farm by cab or rickshaw from Molem.

Historic castles and forts!

Aguada Fort

Just seven kilometers away from the town of Margao, this fort is located in the North of Goa. Fort Aguada is a remarkable citadel that dominates the scenic stretch of beach and defines the scenic beauty of Goa. This splendid fort is a shadow of itself today but has the magnificence of Laterite stone, with which it was built and is native to Goa. The Aguada Fort can hold 2,376,000 gallons of water, and due to this, it was one of the most important freshwater reservoirs of Asia.

The name Aguada means water and it served as a reservoir said to hold 2,376,000 gallons of water when it was built by the Portuguese rulers. You can still see a big reservoir and a huge bell there. The Aguada Fort also holds an old four-storied lighthouse, said to be built in 1864 as well as the imposing Aguada Jail. A view from the fort will surely serve as a retreat in your holiday for its enchanting and pleasant view!

Reach this classic fort by taxi or rent a scooter from the nearest bus and railhead at Margao.

Chapora Fort

Ever fantasized about a trip with your friends just like a trip from the movie Dil Chahta Hai? Well, the ideal shooting spot and historical place is the Chapora Fort. Standing tall in North Goa, this fort was built by the Portuguese but is better known today as the iconic location for the chart-busting movie Dil Chahta Hai.



→ Baga Beach



→ Aguada Beach



→ Aguada Fort



➡ Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary



➡ Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary

Get a dose of history and iconic beauty that not just sets your eyes for a treat but your soul too. It is a naturally picturesque location on account of its positioning on the Chapora River and overlooking the beaches of Chapora. At sunset, the Fort is a major attraction because of its magical views of the river and beaches.

Head off in the month of December for some splendid views and reach this place via taxi or rented scooter from Panjim or Goa International Airport.

Mesmerized by the wildlife in Goa!

Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary

The Sanctuary covers an area of about 211 sq. km along the Western Ghats and is dotted with lush valleys, high mountains, breath-taking waterfalls, green ghats, and clear spring-fed lakes. The Sanctuary is rich in natural herbs and spices, apart from other vegetation.

For the adventure buff and wildlife enthusiast in you, Netravali wildlife sanctuary in Southeastern Goa should definitely be a part of your vacation. Trekking and climbing are popular adventure sports on account of its excellent walking and hiking trails through valleys and mountains, not to speak of waterbodies.

The flora and the fauna are sure to be a treat for your eyes so be sure to pack your binoculars to spot some wildlife like Black Panther, Giant Squirrel, Slender Loris, Great Pied Hornbills when at the Netravali sanctuary.

Visit this beauty anytime from October to March. You can reach the sanctuary from Panji which is 65 km away by road or Margao railway station and from there take a taxi.

Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary

Set as a part of the Western Ghats and sharing its beauty, this sanctuary and park share a space of 240 sq km. The rich green belt consists of deciduous and tropical evergreen forests which are a wonderful habitat for endangered flora and fauna. The wildlife is also rich in sambar, deer, hog, spotted deer, barking deer, tigers, panthers, leopard cats, and jungle cats. Here is a perfect hotspot for bird watching including the ruby-throated yellow bulbul and several other rare birds like drongo, emerald dove, fairy bluebird, golden oriole, Indian black woodpecker, Malabar grey hornbill, and Malabar pied hornbill. From butterflies to mammals to rich and diverse flora, the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary stands tall amidst the country's best sanctuaries.

Interestingly, one of the tallest waterfalls - Dudhsagar waterfall, at a height of 107 feet is a popular attraction that has a fan following of its own. So too, Tambdi Falls and Devil's Canyon, which holds out a great attraction for adventure enthusiasts. Situated in the town of Mollem, this sanctuary can be reached from Panaji (approximately 67 km away) by cab or bus.

Plug in the party lights!

Hammerzz Nightclub

Located right on Calangute with a beautiful riverside location that offers visitors a stunning view of the river. Hammerzz nightclub defines the true flavor of the Goan holidays,

This nightclub in Goa lets you unleash your wild side with its state-of-the-art dance floor, exceptional DJ lighting, and top-notch sound system. This club brings the next level of entertainment experience in the city that will change your idea of Goa's club landscape forever. The city's biggest Disco lights come to life capturing the club's energy and sound.

It offers outstanding international cuisines and authentic Goan dishes, Hammerzz's riverside rooftop restaurant has something to tantalize everyone's taste buds and travel mood. Celebrate Your Goa Holidays in Style & Luxury

Club-LPK

Located on the banks of the River Nerul in Candolim, the Love Passion Karma Club nicknamed LPK Club is popular for its party scene! Go on a road trip with your loved ones and head straight off to Love Passion Karma to bring out the party animal in you!

The LPK club is a lively riverfront nightclub, surrounded by water on three sides with a rustic ambiance which is highlighted due to the terracotta statues that are sculpted skillfully around the floor and an old church in the backdrop. The club is open 24 hours a day and offers food and drinks to a live DJ.

The sunset views are raved over by regulars. Reach LPK by air with the Dabolim as the nearest airport; the nearest prominent bus stop is the Panaji bus station located almost 12 km away and from there hire a cab or scooter.



→ Hammerzz nightclub



→ Club-LPK



MEGHALAYA- THRILLING CAVE ADVENTURES!

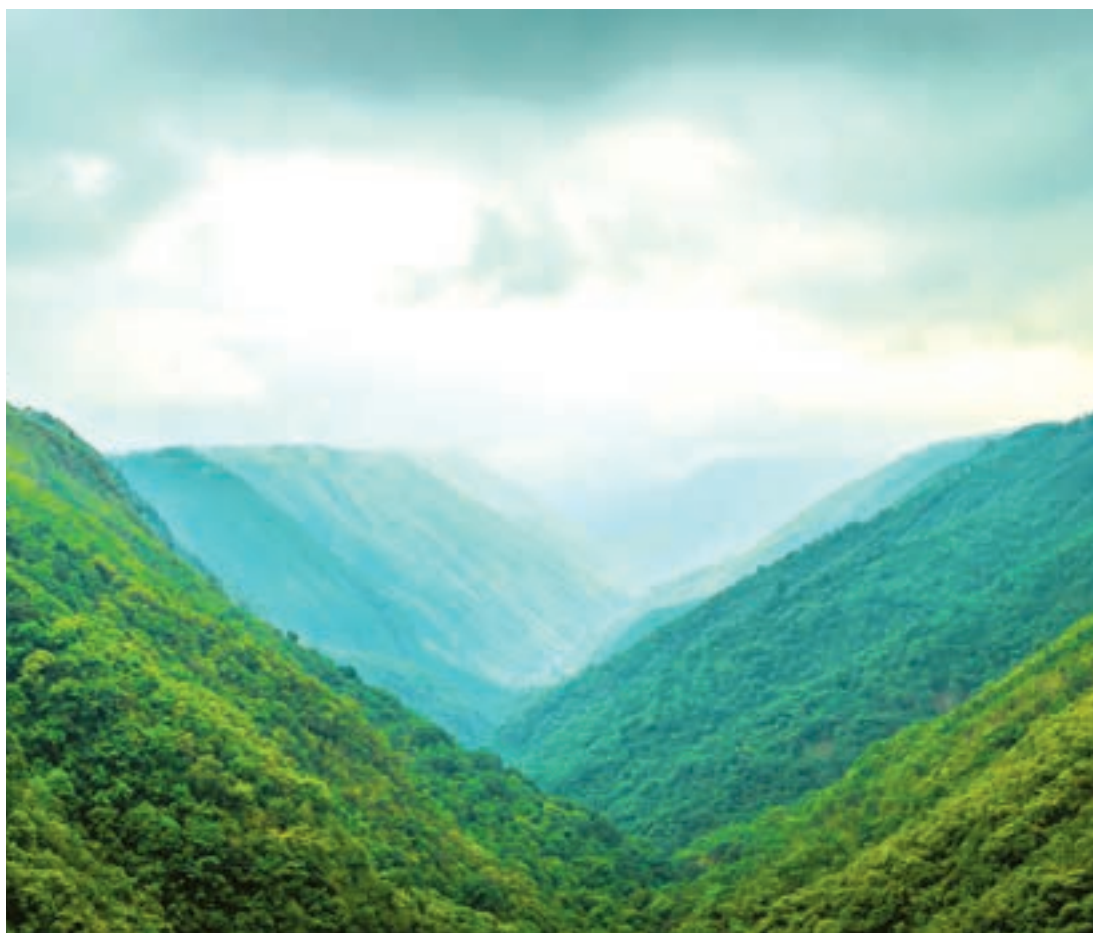
Choose from several mind-boggling cave adventures in Meghalaya that thrill and stay etched forever in your memory....

TT BUREAU

→ Laitlum, Meghalaya, India

Meghalaya meaning 'cloud dwelling' is a beautiful region in India's North East region with hills, valleys, and mountains. The topography presents endless opportunities for the adventure-seeking traveller and provides a unique experience with every visit to its specialty – caves, and treks. In the Northeastern state of Meghalaya, nature seems to lend itself to adventure. With its lush forests, cascading waterfalls, pristine rivers and mysterious caves, the state has emerged as a hotspot for adventure seekers and tourists of every kind.

Meghalaya possesses some gorgeous trekking trails that a trekker only dreams about; the remarkable caves, which are as unpredictable and fascinating as ever, are a super surprise, while the marvellous and unusual treks captivate both adventure lovers and visitors with their breath-taking sights and discoveries. You can use the age-old technique of trial and error to expand your knowledge about this pairing. Earlier it was a tradition to pair white wine with soft cheeses and red wine with hard cheeses. Currently, this rule has become passé. Triumph over the essentials, and there is no reason you cannot have a small wine and cheese party.



GO CAVING

The three hills of Meghalaya – Khasi, Jaintia, and Garo, contain some of the best caves that the state has to offer. In the Khasi hills, the numerous caves are scattered in the areas of Cherrapunjee, Shella, Pynursla, Nongjri, Mawsynram, and Langrin.

It is the natural combination of large limestone deposits in this region which when combined with the high rainfall received through the year that has led to extensive cave development in Meghalaya.

These caves are an adventure seekers' dream as they have all the real props of the unknown in their dark secret crevices, a labyrinth of underground passages, glistening dank interiors with calcite formations, and even green pools of cold water.

CHERRAPUNJEE'S KREM DAM AND MAWSMAI CAVE

If you are visiting Cherrapunjee don't miss a trip to Krem Dam- a famous old limestone cave that is hidden from the normal trekking routes. Located at Awsynram village, this 1297 m long cave is also recognised as the largest sandstone cave in the country.

CAVE





→ Krem Mawkhyrdop



→ Krem Mawkhyrdop



→ Krem Mawkhyrdop

The cave is at the foot of a large blind valley and has a 30m wide impressive entrance. As any explorer would wish for, there is a large stream that runs down the valley and enters the cave. When you explore, you will find a fascinating and complex labyrinth of side passages and oxbows to the side of the main passage.

The next good cave hunt is the Mawsmmai Cave. Find your way to the village of Mawsmmai near the border with Bangladesh and reach the remarkable Mawsmmai Cave – one of the oldest and better-known caves of Meghalaya. You can trek through grasslands and forests and find a clearing from where a path winds its way through thick trees to the main cave. The cave has large passages and chambers and is fully lit, which allows you to see more of its limestone and rock formation and dark shale-like surface. The well-lit, rough limestone cave, is a wonderful discovery, but be careful during heavy rains as the water often fills up.

KREM MAWKHYRDOP OR KREM MAWMLUH FOR THE HARD CORE EXPLORER

Now, here is a cave for the brave-hearted explorer on account of its rough terrain. The hard-core adventurer will seek out this fourth largest cave in the Indian subcontinent.

Krem Mawkhyrdop or Krem Mawmluh is a complete world in itself and is worth every minute of the difficult terrain to reach here. Getting past slippery surfaces, with tight, narrow openings, and sharp rock edges, you enter a vast cave with diamond-like shining rocks, amazing calcite formations, and deep green-grey pools of cold water.

KREM LYMPUT

Trek your way to the village of Nongjri and ask the locals. They will guide you for one kilometer to the Krem Lymput cave which totally hidden in heavy dense shrubbery that is a brilliant green.

Once you locate the cave, you will be surprised at the big bold boulders that define it. There is a long one-kilometer passage from the small entrance hole that leads through inclined walls and rounded ceilings to a difficult climb.

From here is a rough and slippery staircase that takes you to an inside passage of the cave. The staircase reads, “Way to Heaven” and surely builds up surprise and anticipation. You are led through a series of spacious galleries that contain rich calcite formations. The cave opens up to a 25 m wide and 25 m high calcite gallery named as ‘Mughal Room’. The cave has a length of 6641 m.

KREM MAWKHYRDOP

The main entrance of this famous cave is located at the bottom of the western flank of Lum Lawbah. The entrance is easily found by following the river behind the cement works of the Mawmluh Cherra Cements Limited, downstream for about 200m, to a point where the river disappears underground.

The best option to enter the cave is not from the main entrance to the sink which requires wading through water, but to take the way through a high-level bypass entrance that runs parallel to the main passage.

This cave is actually a part of a sinking river with the main passage leading to a 25 m diameter big chamber. There are a number of water streams that come into being from the bottom level of the cave and then take on the contours of a big river stream which is 10 m wide right inside the cave.

KREM LIAT PRAH

It is the longest natural cave in India. Liat Prah is one of approximately 150 known caves in the Shnongrim Ridge of the Jaintia Hills district, Meghalaya. Explored and surveyed as part of the ongoing Abode of the Clouds Expedition project, its current length of about 25km is likely to increase as nearby caves continue to be connected. Liat Prah's dominant feature is its enormous trunk passage, the Aircraft Hangar.

SIJU CAVE

Just 132 km from Tura, Siju is famous for Dobakkol, or the bat cave, with magnificent limestone formations - stalagmites and stalactites. One of the longest caves in India with river

passages, the 7-km cave often echoes with the sound of gushing water. It has a floor of various depths so wading is to be expected most of the time. One of the most stunning sights is a waterfall in the middle of the cave.

Some of the interior chambers can be home to thousands of bats which generally are not disturbed as these chambers are located in the deeper sections.

KREM LUBON

Now here is a cave that will warm the heart of any adventure seeker- with an entrance reminiscent of the iconic Phantom Cave. Located dramatically at the foot of a 30 m high waterfall in Sutnga / Sakhain region, the 687 m long Krem Lubon resurgence cave is hidden behind the waterfall.

Its entrance is rectangular with a large passage leading inward towards a tunnel that goes smaller in size till it becomes so small that you have to crawl through its wetness to chambers which have boulders that look unstable and give a feeling that they can crumble.





MUST HAVE

When visiting the caves or taking a trek, make sure you take the services of a guide. It is absolutely worth it.

- I. Take water bottles
- II. Take a Hat or head cover of some kind
- III. Wear Gumboots or waterproof shoes for water in caves and treks. To prevent leeches while wading through pools and heavy shrubbery, make sure you wear comfortable full jeans/pants.
- IV. Take a good head torch
- V. Waterproof bags


WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES IN MAHARASHTRA

Find all the best elements of nature as they come together to form the best Wildlife Sanctuaries in Maharashtra - biodiversity, varied climate, and vivid topography

TT BUREAU

Maharashtra State is rich in its flora and fauna count, and that's why it is home to some of the largest eco hotspots, wildlife sanctuaries, national parks, and bird sanctuaries, which have been attracting nature lovers and wildlife aficionados from different corners of India and abroad.





MAHARASHTRA IS HOME TO 49 WILD LIFE SANCTUARIES AND 6 NATIONAL PARKS

A few of the best but lesser-known sanctuaries and forest reserves are mentioned below

Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, Chandrapur

Popularly known as the 'The Jewel of Tadoba', it is one of the best-known tiger reserves in India.

Conserved under the Project Tiger Initiative by the Indian Government, this reserve has the highest number of tigers (69 tigers). Tadoba National Park is located in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra. This place is an ideal weekend getaway for wildlife and nature lovers. Take a Jeep Safari which gives an opportunity to explore the rich wildlife of the park, as you explore the three zones in the reserve that give access to the Jeep Safari, namely Moharli (Mohurli) Zone, Tadoba Zone, and Kolsa Zone.

The park is open for visitors from 15th October to 30th June every season and remains closed on Tuesdays.

The main attraction of the Tadoba National Park is Jungle or Tiger Safari in an open-top Gypsy jeep. There is a good chance to spot the shy Sloth Bear and Wild Dogs.

Timing: 10:00 AM- 6:00 PM

Melghat Tiger Reserve, Amravati

Here is another tiger tourism destination in Maharashtra. It was among the first nine tiger reserves notified in 1973-74 under Project Tiger, a wildlife conservation project initiated in India in 1972 to protect Bengal tigers.

The total area of the reserve is around 1500.49 sq. km. when on a wild life tour in Maharashtra, one can spot unusual avian species at every turn. In the Melghat Tiger Reserve, one can see the 'forest owlet,' which according to the researchers is critically endangered. Its discovery in Maharashtra has brought new hope for its existence.

Best time to visit this forest in undoubtedly between December and May.

Timing: 6:00 AM- 6:00 PM



Rehukari Sanctuary, Ahmednagar

Spread across an area of 2.17 sq. km, the Rehkuri Sanctuary is home to one of the rare animal species, Indian Black Buck.

Despite being only 2.17 sq. km in size, it has enough trails that one can explore. The Blackbuck, called 'Kalvit' in Maharashtra, is easily recognised by its magnificent spiral horns, colour, and long jump.

The Sanctuary is located at a distance of about 80 km away from Ahmednagar City in the Karjat Taluka.

The sanctuary was established in the 1980s and today it is home to 400 black bucks. One can go walking or trekking along with the guide or in a jeep safari from 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM to explore the beauty of the sanctuary. The best time to visit Rehekuri is August to September.

Timing: 8:00 AM-6:00 PM

Radhanagri Wildlife Sanctuary, Kolhapur

The Western Ghats region of Maharashtra also known as 'Sahyadri', although least explored, has an assemblage of unique habitats with a rich diversity of flora and fauna. There are four serially nominated natural world heritage sites in Maharashtra, one of which is Radhanagri Wildlife Sanctuary, a place worth exploring, not only in monsoon but in all seasons.

This pristine, lush green, undulating landscape with steep valleys is situated about 80 KM West of Kolhapur city in Maharashtra. One can even trek through the wildlife sanctuaries, which ultimately doubles the adventure quotient.

Radhanagri Sanctuary is one such forest reserve where tourists can immerse themselves in the thrill of walking on the pathways in the forest while anticipating the myriads of the area's flora and fauna.

Also here one can see nesting and hatching Oriental Turtle Dove (Rufous turtles). This forest is an abode to the rarely found, Bison. The sanctuary is home to threatened Nilgiri wood-pigeon and some prominent species such as Ceylon frogmouth, yellow-browed bulbul, and dusky eagle-owllet.

Radhanagri is at the peak of its tourist season between August and February.

Timing: 6:00 AM – 2:00 PM



Pench National Park and Tiger Reserve, Nagpur

The beauty of the Pench National Park has been mentioned in the classic “The Jungle Book” by the great Rudyard Kipling.

This reserve in Nagpur district spans over 257 sq km. Pench is home to an abundance of flora and fauna, including 33 species of mammals, 162 species of birds, 50 species of fishes, 10 species of amphibians, 30 species of reptiles, and a wide variety of insects. Pench is home to a large number of tigers as it was established as a tiger reserve in 1992.

Pench with its exotic wildlife is most welcoming between July and February.

Timings: 5:30 Am – 9:30 AM, 3:00 PM- 7:00 PM

Timings may differ as per the season.

Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, Pune

Created originally to safeguard the natural habitat of the endemic species, the Indian Giant Squirrel which is also the state animal of Maharashtra, Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary has now become a major tourist attraction of Pune and Maharashtra.

Bhimashankar is located about 100 km from Pune and 223 km from Mumbai. The dense forest is spread over an area of 120 sq. km. on the Western Ghats, also known as the Sahyadri Ranges. The place is mainly famous for being home to many endemic and pandemic animal and bird species, including leopards, barking deer, wild boars, Malabar grey hornbills, black eagles, and many more.

It is so rich in flora and fauna that it is considered to be one of the biodiversity hotspots of the world. One can enjoy trekking

through the well-marked and safe routes within the dense forests, taking in the sheer beauty of nature and experiencing it from close quarters. If walking is not one's forte, one can always opt for the safari car rides and have a glance at the wilderness in its true form from within the safety of the car. One of the 12 Jyotirlingas (major shrines of Lord Shiva) is situated within a large stretch of the jungle.

Preferred by trekkers all around the year, tourists can check this place between October and March for the best tourism experience.

Timing: 6:00 AM- 6:00 PM

Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary, Chandrapur

The Sanctuary is home to various animal species like leopards, the blue bull, peacock, flying squirrel, wild boar, etc. The Bhamragarh Wildlife Sanctuary because of its close proximity to major cities in Maharashtra enjoys several tourists from different places coming to soak in the natural beauty.

Spread over an area of about 104.38 sq km the sanctuary is vibrantly green and is covered by various species from the plant kingdom including Mango, Jamun, Kusum, Bamboo trees along with shrubs of Neel, Tarota, Kuda, etc.

The Pamalgautam and Parkota rivers flow through the sanctuary providing water to the flora and fauna and as well as to the tribes living nearby namely Gonda and Madia tribes which depend on the Forest for their habitation. Bhamragarh is most scenic from October to May.

Timing: 9:00 AM-6:00 PM



DISCOVER AN ICONIC BUDDHIST CIRCUIT IN ODISHA

The Buddhist Circuit in Odisha, comprising Dhauligiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri, provide a rich concentration of Buddhist heritage and culture for destination explorers to discover their mysterious charm

TT BUREAU

Buddhism, with its unique message of egalitarianism and constant emphasis of humanity, influenced numerous civilizations while giving birth to several newer ones. In Odisha, Buddhism is known to have existed since its inception, even though Lord Buddha never actually visited it during his lifetime. Buddhist chronicles refer to Buddha's Kesa Asthi (hair relic) brought to Odisha, then known as "Odra," by two rich traders – Tapassu and Bhalika.

The Chinese monk, scholar and traveller, Hiuen Tsang, visited Odisha in the 7th century, and he vividly described the flourishing state of Buddhism in Odra. The influence and impact of Buddhism in Odisha continued until the 15th century.

Indeed, the numerous stupas, images and viharas (monasteries) scattered across the land stand as a testimony to this glorious heritage.

Buddhist tourism in Odisha has always been popular; however, with recent findings from several excavations, the entire sector has received a tremendous boost. The Buddhist Circuit, comprising Dhauligiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri, showcases some of the most notable Buddhist sites, and boasts a rich concentration of Buddhism heritage.



The vagaries of time have not snatched their glories in any way, nor has the mysterious enchantment surrounding them faded away.

DHAULIGIRI

The rock outcropping on Dhauli Hill on the banks of the River Daya, is the site of a set of rock edicts left by the Indian Emperor Ashoka, around 260 BC.



Colossal Buddha head in monastery at Ratnagiri with a lasting ethereal smile, which is very peculiar to sculptures found in Ratnagiri Odisha

The Odishan edicts that are found here, including two special edicts, are essentially public injunctions to the empire's administrators in the area, enjoining them to rule with justice and gentleness.

The elephant which emerges from the rock above the inscriptions was probably meant to draw attention to the edict, besides serving as a symbol. The serenity enveloping this place, combined with the legacy of Buddhism, motivated the Kalinga

Nippon Buddha Sangha, under the guidance of Guruji Fujii, Founder President of Nipponzan Myohoji of Japan, to erect a Peace Pagoda, also called Shanti Stupa, besides the construction of a monastery called Saddharma Vihar, in the early part of the 19th century.

HOW TO REACH DHAULIGIRI

Air: Bhubaneswar is the nearest airport, well connected to the major cities of India.

Rail: Bhubaneswar is a major station near Dhauli and well connected on the railway network of India.

Road: Dhauli can be reached by either by bus or rented taxi.

RATNAGIRI

Ratnagiri, located in the Birupa river valley, in Jaipur district, is another famous Buddhist centre. A small hill situated near the village bearing the same name consists of rich Buddhist antiquities.

A large excavation led to the discovery of two large monasteries, a big stupa, Buddhist shrines, various sculptures and a large number of votive stupas.

The excavation also revealed the establishment of a Buddhist centre dating back to the time of the Gupta king, Baladitya (first half of the 6th century AD). The Mahayana form of Buddhism is said to have flourished here since ancient times, and in the 8th-9th century AD, it became a great centre of Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana art and philosophy.



➡ Ratnagiri, Odisha

Today, this university of Buddhist learning, lies in ruins, though it still reflects its former glory, and attracts a huge number of visitors the year around. Lovers of art and architecture will find much to marvel at here as Ratnagiri offers in its magnificent ruins – a large brick monastery with beautiful doorways and sanctum with a colossal Buddha figure, and a large number of Buddhist sculptures.

HOW TO REACH RATNAGIRI

- Air:** Bhubaneswar is the nearest airport, connected to most major cities in India.
- Rail:** Cuttack is the best railway station within easy reach, at a distance of 70 km from Ratnagiri and well connected with major stations across India.
- Road:** There are good roads from Cuttack, and direct buses run between the two places.

LALITGIRI

Lalitgiri is the earliest Buddhist complex dating back to the 1st century AD. Recent excavations carried out here have unearthed several archaeological material that makes Lalitgiri a great centre of Buddhist attraction.

The rural landscape is surrounded by the ruins of a huge brick monastery, the remains of the Chaitya hall, a number of votive stupas and a renovated stone stupa – the apex of a small rugged sandstone hill.

The museum displays a large number of Mahayana sculptures consisting of enormous Buddha figures, huge Bodhisattva statues, amongst others.

The Standing Buddha figures, with knee-length draperies and over the shoulders remind one of the influence of the Mathura and Gandhara school of art.

What enhances the sacredness of the stupa as well as the entire region of Lalitgiri is the discovery of caskets containing sacred relics that some attribute to Tathagata, from the stone



→ Lalitgiri, Odisha

stupa at the top of the hill. Famous Chinese pilgrim Huien Tsang, who visited Odisha in 639 CE, found more than hundred Buddhist monasteries which he elaborately mentioned in his travelogue Sie-yu-kie.

HOW TO REACH LALITGIRI

- Air:** Bhubaneswar is the nearest airport. Well connected to Lalitgiri by road.
- Rail:** Bhubaneswar is the nearest railhead, well connected to major cities through broad gauge network.
- Road:** Lalitgiri is well connected with Bhubaneswar, and other cities through a good road-network.



→ Lalitgiri Stupa, Odisha



→ Dhauli Shanti Stupa, Bhubaneswar

WHY? TO GET A STEP AHEAD OF DISEASE.

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TOP 3 BIKING TRAILS IN INDIA

There's nothing more exhilarating than taking these awesome biking trails to explore some of the most scenic mountain routes that India has on offer

TT BUREAU



The Himalayan bulbul is a species of songbird that resides in the great Himalayan regions of India. One can hear its mating call on a particularly bright and cold day, sitting amorously atop vibrantly coloured rhododendrons. Now, imagine biking past its sweet call, against the backdrop of the majestic Himalayas that have stood since the beginning of time.

Our relentless work-oriented life especially during these days of Covid, whether it is WFH or in office gives us scant time to observe the changing shades of nature, as we are lost amidst the urban legends of concrete and glass city scapes or closed homes where flowers come with a price tag.

But, on the mountains and hills of India, flowers of every hue await you. All you have to do is to get your bicycling gear ready and get set for a biking trip to some of the most exotic hill stations of India. Take a look at some of your best options

GANGTOK TO DARJEELING

On the eastern part of India lie two hill stations which are unexplored gems. While Gangtok is a treasure of the state of Sikkim, Darjeeling is the jewel in the crown of West Bengal.

A trip from Gangtok to Darjeeling will unfold with tea gardens, waterfalls, toy trains, and a plethora of rare flora and fauna, with the majestic Kanchenjunga range in sight.

While Sikkim has a rich monarchical history attached with the Namgyal dynasty, Darjeeling is a custodian of the British Raj. Together, they present a cultural and traditional diversity which is unparalleled.

A fun way to explore the countryside, you can always stop to treat yourself with a steaming plate of momos, found all across the two hill stations.

ROUTE: You could ride through Martam, Temi, Tashidang, Yuksam, and Pemayangtse from Gangtok to finally reach Darjeeling

MANALI TO LEH

A difficult route to take, but it can be one of the best experiences of your life. Manali, located in Kullu valley, in Himachal Pradesh, is a great tourist destination, while Leh in the Ladakh valley, is every biker's dream.

Preparation is needed for this cycling route because of the need to acclimatise yourself to the high altitudes. Apart from the altitude, the road goes through unpredictable and rough terrain with hair pin bends and difficult climbs. You will ride through the famous Rohtang and Tanglang La passes, pass by snow-capped mountains and even ride through Rumtse, a scenic little village tucked away in the Ladakh Valley.

You will pass through lush green meadows and sparkling rivers, through the majestic Rohtang and Tanglang La passes to reach the enormous cold deserts of Lahaul, Spiti and Ladakh, which are decorated with colourful Tibetan prayer flags.

Situated between the Karakoram Range and the Himalayas, Leh is a treat to the senses. Remember to stop by the tiny villages dotted across the hills (perhaps pass through the tiny village of



➔ Gangtok to Darjeeling

Rumtse) in the Ladakh Valley for a closer understanding of the people and the spirit of the hills.

Stop awhile in the midst of all natural splendour and listen to the sounds of silence seeping through acres and acres of wondrous land.

ROUTE: You will cross four very high passes to enter Leh; these are Rohtang Pass (3,900m); Baralacha La Pass (4,800m); Nakee La Pass (4,850m); Lachung La Pass (4,800m); and the Tanglang La Paa (5,200m).

THE WESTERN GHATS

Going down to south of India from the Himalayas, the mystic Western Ghats that run for 1,600 km, are a hotbed of biodiversity and an absolute treat for nature enthusiasts. The Western Ghats run through the states of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, and are a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

You have mountain ranges, forests, lakes and rivers – a complete rider's delight. The Western Ghats are particularly sensitive to development, so nature is at its very best here. While riding through bumpy roads be sure to take in the mysticism of your surroundings. Nature here is at its pristine best, and resonates with a certain charm of its own. Also, it should be every visitor's responsibility to make sure that the Ghats remain untouched and unscarred.



➔ Western Ghat Malshej Ghat in Maharashtra

ROUTE: Pick the state of Karnataka for your cycling adventure. Start your trip from Bhagamandala in Coorg, then move to Bekal Fort, and reach Jalsor. You will cover about 145km in two days.



➔ Sikkim Mountain Trip



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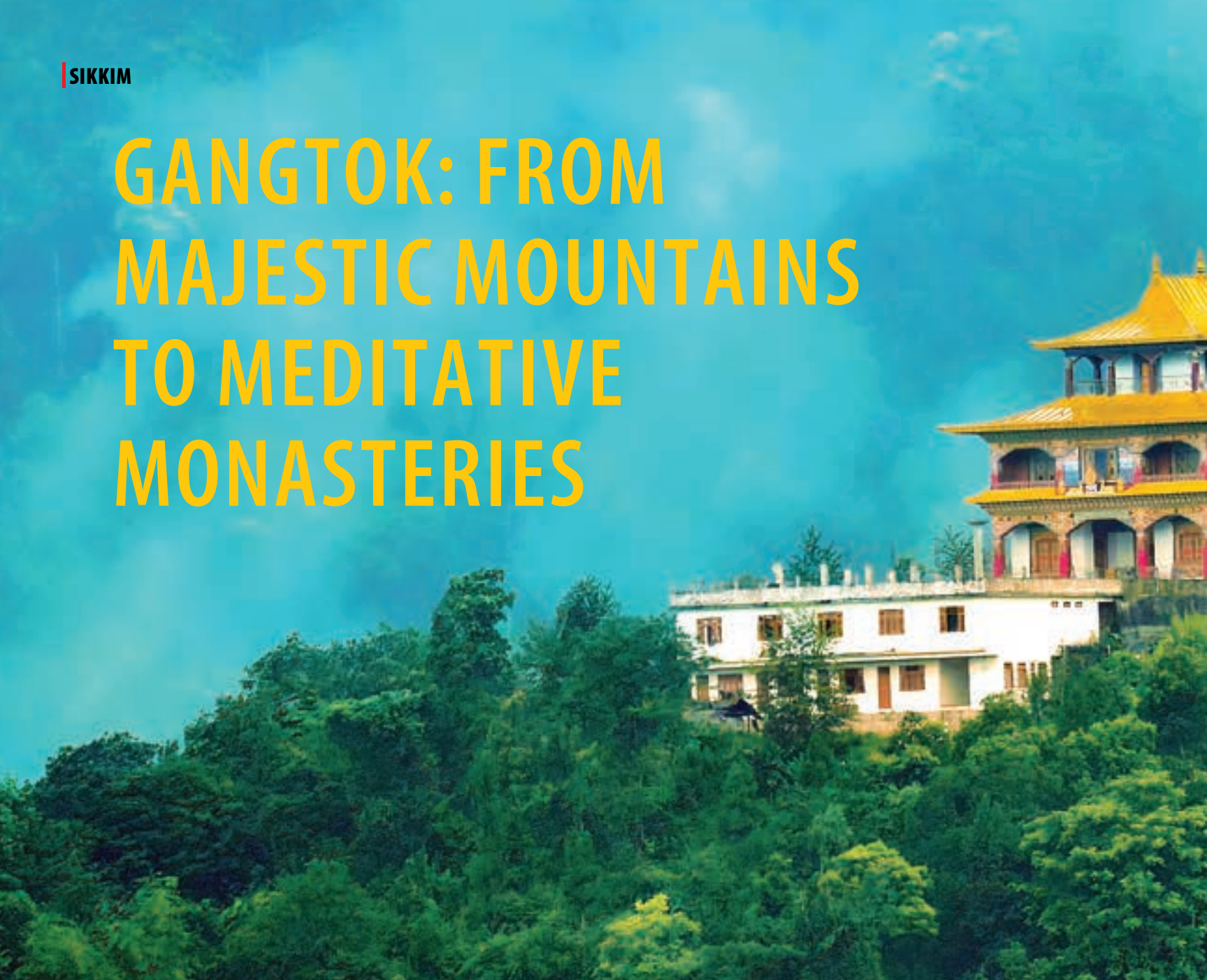
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GANGTOK: FROM MAJESTIC MOUNTAINS TO MEDITATIVE MONASTERIES



You are in Gangtok - the home of mountains and monasteries, Momos and Masauyra curry!

TT BUREAU

What a perfect getaway during the difficult days of Corona. Prepare yourself for the mystic call of the mountains and the peaceful chants of Buddhist monks as bells ring in ancient monasteries and Zen-like peace envelopes you. Gangtok, the alluring capital of Sikkim is the old center of Tibetan Buddhist pilgrimage, and its many shrines, temples, and prayer flags dot a peaceful and green countryside.

Situated amidst the mighty mountainous terrain of the Eastern Himalayas and surrounded by sylvan hills and waterfalls, Gangtok is a perfect destination for a vacation with your family and friends this summer.

VISIT THESE 7 DIVERSE PLACES, EACH OF WHICH WILL CREATE A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE ...

Ban Jhakri Falls Park - Gangtok

The Ban Jhakri Falls meaning 'Jungle Priest' or 'Jungle Magician', is a major tourist attraction and also an energy park. Named after Ban Jhakri, a mythical healer in the Nepali communities' folklore, the Park has ethnic sculptures and figurines depicting the Jhakri community and their rituals.

The stunning Falls drop from a height of 100 feet from the mountains and are a captivating experience on its own. Set in a 2 acre landscaped park with pathways, gazebos and footbridges,



➔ Rumtek Monastery - Gangtok

streams, forests, and flowering plants, the Park is not just an eye candy but an energy bar too.

The play equipment generates energy as the children play in the swings and slides. There is a lake with paddleboats and there is a viewing platform in the forest landscape for visitors to take in the peace and mountain views around.

Don't miss to click pictures in their traditional dress that are provided in the stalls near the falls.

Rumtek Monastery - Gangtok

Located on a hill, and at a distance of 24 km from Gangtok is the awe-inspiring Rumtek monastery - the largest monastery in Sikkim.

It is not only a beautiful site but also of religious significance as the Rumtek Monastery is the holy seat of XVIth Gyawla Karmapa, the head of the Karma Kagyu order of Tibetan Buddhism.

Reflecting the best of Tibetan architecture, the shrine and monastery are set amidst a backdrop of majestic hills and beautiful waterfalls.

A close replica of the Kagyu headquarters in Tibet, the monastery compound comprises a temple, several stupas, a retreat for monks to meditate and other buildings, a school, and an aviary. The main temple is a four-storey building dominated by a golden sculpture and decorated by Tibetan-style murals. The huge sanctum or the prayer hall has a beautiful 10 feet high statue of Sakyamuni Buddha, is decorated with splendid murals, statues, silk banners, and 'Tangkhas' and holds a very large number of ancient religious texts.

To get a real experience, visit during auspicious events as the monastery celebrates various festivals throughout the year.

During Gutor, at the end of the Tibetan year (February or March), the monks chant hymns and prayers and perform 'chaam' or ritual dances in the main courtyard for the public.

Ranka Monastery - Gangtok

Fenced by lush mountains, the Ranka or Lingdum Monastery built in 1998 CE is one of the most popular monasteries in Sikkim. Welcomed by a huge line of prayer bells, this place represents tranquillity. The colourful monastery stands opposite to the prayer bells and the green hills and the mist providing it with a picturesque setting.

The seat of Zurmang Charwang Rinpoche, the present Rinpoche being the 12th successive incarnation, the monastery has attracted a lot of filmmakers on account of its Tibetan architecture and scenic setting.

The monastery itself is beautiful with an impressive gold plated Buddha statue inside the sanctum, stunning wall hanging and paintings decorating the walls, and lamas reading their prayer books on low tables in long rows. The main prayer hall is surrounded by the classrooms of the young lamas. Note to take permissions before you click pictures with them.

If you are visiting during the evening hours, you will be captivated by the melodious sounds of the evening prayer



➔ Tibetan Yak - Gangtok



time when monks sing Buddhist hymns in rhythm to traditional musical instruments.

If you are fortunate to visit the monastery during the Tibetan New Year you can experience the exotic Lama dance performed by the Buddhist monks.

The monastery is a must-visit also because of the fact that its location commands a captivating view of the sun setting upon the snowcapped Kanchenjunga mountain range.



➔ Tsomgo Lake - Gangtok

Tsomgo Lake - Gangtok

Located at a height of nearly 12,500 feet amidst the snowcapped Himalayan Mountains, the Tsomgo Lake, or the Changu Lake takes your breath away on account of its stunning location. The crystal clear waters with the reflection of the mountains surrounding it make the 40 km (two-hour journey) from Gangtok memorable. Silver firs and green pine trees reach for glorious blue skies and are reflected in the kilometer-long glacial lake. With every day and every season, new colours add to the palette of the lake waters from a sparkling blue in springtime to a dark shining green as winter approaches. Mists and rains lend a grey sheen to the waters while summers reflect the variety of warm vibrant colours of summer flowers in bloom.

No wonder then that the lake is revered as a sacred place by locals who come here during Gurupurnima to offer prayers. According to folklore, ancient priests could foretell the future by simply looking at the changing colours of the waters of the lake as they reflected nature around it.

The region around the lake is rich in flora and fauna. In particular, it is a bird-watchers paradise. You can sight migratory birds such as tufted pochards, brown-headed gulls, and brahminy ducks not to mention rose finches, fantail flycatchers, and golden eagles.

Animal spotting is possible too and sighting of musk deer, gorals, or red pandas in the higher range of Tsomgo and even leopard and Himalayan black bear have been possible.

It is interesting to know that the lake is open all year-round,



➡ Ranka Monastery - Gangtok

even during winter when it is frozen with snow-laden cliffs all around. There is a rare out-of-this-world picturesque beauty to the lake which becomes softly radiant as the snow melts and all kind of wildflowers, rhododendrons, irises, and poppies bloom around the lake.

A rope car near the lake takes the tourists from the lake to the hilltop to give a more vivid view of the lake. The line to the rope car is beaten by the number of people wanting to go on a yak ride.

Namgyal Institute of Tibetology - Gangtok

The Namgyal Institute of Tibetology is based in Deorali, 5 km south of Gangtok. This iconic Tibetan museum which is one of its kind in India and the third in the world houses the largest collection of Tibetan works outside of Tibet.

This two-storeyed building, beautified by the Tibetan architecture, has a museum on the ground floor with over 200 Buddhist icons and artifacts, a library on the first floor, and a Research and Reference Centre with access to literature on Tibetan practices and on the Himalayas.

The museum on the ground floor has a collection of statues and coins and historic relics like ancient manuscripts like Prajna Paramita and Astasahasra written in Tibetan golden script, as well as an 11th-century palm-leaf manuscript of the Saratama Prajnaparamita by Ratnakara Shanti, among others. A prized possession of the museum is an ancient casket which holds the relics of two legendary Asokan missionaries, Madhyama and Kasyapagotra.

The library has a collection of many books, articles, and research works related to Tibet. There is also a store next to the main building, where gifts and books are sold.

The Institute has encouraged and promoted research on the study of Mahamayan Buddhism and its philosophy, and Tibetan culture, religion, history, language, and art and holds in its repository a remarkable collection of Lepcha, Tibetan, and Sanskrit manuscripts and statues, along with some rare 'thankas' (tapestries used in Buddhist worship).



➡ Namgyal Institute of Tibetology - Gangtok

Nathu La pass - Gangtok

Who would not like to experience one of the highest motorable roads in the world at an altitude of 4302 m, and feel a part of history while traversing a section of the old Silk Route? Welcome to Nathu La, a high altitude pass at the Indo-China border.

Nathu La hold magic in its location as it opens up a scenic trek along winding roads to the valley, passing through stunning waterfalls, taking in awesome views of the snow-covered mountains as the cold pure air brushes past you and the sky sparkle a clear bright blue.

'Nathu' and 'la' are separate Tibetan words which mean 'Listening ear' and 'pass' and its extreme altitude allows it a panoramic view of majestic mountains along with mesmerizing views of the Chumbi Valley of Tibet.

Indian tourists can visit the Watershed War Memorial, the Army Exhibition Centre and the canteen near to it.

Try not to miss the Yak ride, which is a popular attraction for the visitors here. Places around it are equally picturesque and rich with rare species of flora and fauna like the Menmecho Lake fed by snow-covered mountains, Baba Mandir, better known as the Baba Harbhajan Singh Memorial Temple, Tsomgo Lake, the Jelep La pass, the Kyongnosla Alpine Sanctuary and Zuluk Wildlife Sanctuary

The best time to visit Nathu La is summer, between the months of May to October. Indian visitors need to obtain the Protected Area Permit (PAP) issued by Tourism and Civil Aviation at Gangtok, or through a registered travel agency and few hotels.



➔ Nathu La Pass - Gangtok

A HEAVENLY MATCH – WINE AND CHEESE

A century-old tradition, a match made in heaven - wine and cheese are two of life's great culinary pleasures. Whether a romantic date or a family celebration just raise a toast...

TT BUREAU

Peanut butter and jelly, salt and pepper, Mac and cheese the list to perfect culinary combinations is endless. But there is one combination that stands apart from the rest – wine and cheese.

Wine, cheese and bread form the Divine Trinity

Luxury for many food-lovers means having a glass of great wine matched with perfectly aged cheese. In French cuisine, wine, cheese and bread form the Divine Trinity. Wine and cheese have a lot in common apart from the fact that they perfectly complement each other.

They both reach their maturity and peak flavour through ageing requiring specific locations and climatic conditions. The age-old tradition of making wines and cheese exist today, the exact same way it was produced centuries ago now by the family members of the original makers.

Power and acidity are the only rules to be followed when pairing them together. The flavour of the wine should not be so strong that it overpowers the cheese and vice-versa. Another rule when pairing wine and cheese is to ensure that products are from the same region as they share the same properties.

Pairing is a culinary science

Pairing both wines and cheese is not only an art but also a culinary science that has a scientific reason when consumed together. The wine feels dry but it matches perfectly with the fatty consistency of the cheese. The coupling of wine and cheese requires attention to detail by the finest artisans with precision.

You can use the age-old technique of trial and error to expand your knowledge about this pairing. Earlier it was a tradition to pair white wine with soft cheeses and red wine with hard cheeses.

Currently, this rule has become passé. Triumph over the essentials, and there is no reason you cannot have a small wine and cheese party.



2014 Mayu Pedro Ximénez with Geit-in-Stad

This wine comes from old vineyards in Chile on decomposed granite, quartz-rich soils. This wine is much more communicative as compared to standard Pedro Ximénez with aromas from white flowers, fennel and spices with high acidity thanks to the altitude as well as pressure and minerals; it blends perfectly with Geit-in-Stad that translates to 'goat-in-the-city' is a piece of delicious goat cheese.

The cheese has a firm yet smooth texture that just melts in your mouth. If you like the fresh, sober style, this is a real deal.

2013 Badet Clement Beau Chêne with Terraluna

France is the most romantic place on the globe is also the 'wine capital of the world'. This wine is much more generous than a Burgundy with flavours from raspberry, cherry fruit and black current.

This wine is very much French coupled with Terraluna that comes from the cheddar family that has a deep flavour. This award-winning cheese of superior quality owes its flavour and texture to the mineral-rich soil where cows are grazed and also to the producers who are no less than artistic maestros.

2014 Casa Vinicola Botter Gran Passione Rosso with Pecorino Sardo

Straight from the Veneto region of Italy, this wine is a blend of 60% Merlot and 40% Corvina and is said to be one of the best values from the region.

Here is great day wine that is dark purple in colour amalgamated with bright vibrant fruits paired with Pecorino Sardo which is a sweet sheep's milk.

The flavour of the cheese is delicate and mild reflecting the native herbs and grasses the sheep graze on. Flavours of lemon and thyme accolade the smooth creamy texture and sweet flavour.

This cheese is produced to be consumed as a young cheese as it is cured only for 30 to 40 days. Incorporate this cheese in baked pasta, vegetable soup, frittatas, quiches, and salads and there shall be a blast of diverse flavours on your palate.





→ calvin-shelwell-it-VGwoQ6XQ-unsplash

2013 JAM Cabernet Sauvignon with Gouda 4-year aged

Based on the names of the owners John and Michelle, this wine is a blend of Merlot, Petite Verdot, Petite Sirah and Zinfandel. Once you take in the aromas, the fragrance of sweet berries will bombard you.

The flavour will mesmerise you with its distinguished aromas of faint spice and vanilla and will make you fall in love with this Californian wine.

Pair the wine with the perfect balance of salt and sweet Gouda that has a deep caramel colour which is crunchy, crystalline, and meltingly smooth on the tongue. This aged cow milk is full of flavour. The hint of butterscotch at the end is a signature mark of this Dutch treat.

N.V. Quinta do Noval Porto Black Reserve Ruby Port with North Country Blue

Quinta do Noval in Portugal is quintessentially famous for producing a diminutive quantity and the most expensive Port. There are ripe blackberries, tar, smoked and orange liqueur on the nose that takes time to open. The palate is medium-bodied, very sleek on the entry, fleshy black fruits, sloe, spice and just a hint of white pepper leading to a much focused finish. North Country Blue is a raw milk cheese that is cave-aged for 3 months. It develops a strong and pungent taste but not with the soapiness that is found in other American Blue cheeses. It's a limited production cheese and the producers are proud to offer it after ageing it for several weeks in their caves.

Semelé Sancerre Rosé with Garrotxa

This wine is derived from the Loire Valley and features red berries and minerals that lend a deep salmon pink colour and brings aromas of fresh red fruits.

This wine goes perfect with Garrotxa, a Spanish pasteurized goat's milk cheese that has an ash-grey, suede-like coat and an inside texture that's firm but smooth. This cheese is slightly acidic and slightly sweet in flavour.





“Delhi is the symbol of old India and new, even the stones here whisper to our ears of the ages of long ago and the air we breathe is full of the dust and fragrances of the past, as also of the fresh and piercing winds of the present”
- Jawaharlal Nehru

TT BUREAU

A kaleidoscope of ancient heritage, colonial charm and metropolitan suburbs, Delhi, the national capital of India is a blend of many worlds. The city is an amazing paradox of tradition and modernity. In its essence, Delhi cannot be stereotyped. It is at once cosmopolitan, bold and resilient. Everywhere, whether it is in the meandering alleys and nooks of Old Delhi or broad avenues of Lutyen’s Delhi, there is a sense of the city’s vibrant past. With a history that dates back many centuries, Delhi showcases an ancient culture that is evident in its many monuments, tombs and forts.

Relive Delhi’s rich heritage as you check out these iconic marvels from the past.

RED FORT

A fine example of Mughal architectural brilliance, Red Fort is a 17th century creation that has been the prime facia of the capital since historic times. The fort was built by the great Mughal ruler Shah Jahan and today it stands as a UNESCO approved World Heritage Site.

Located in Old Delhi, the red sandstone marvel is a hub for hundreds of tourists who flock in the capital every day. It is best to visit the fort in the evening when the specially arranged ‘Light and Sound show’ depicting the fort’s historic events, takes place inside the complex.



→ Red Fort, Old Delhi

HUMAYUN’S TOMB

Completed in 1572, Humayun’s tomb is reputed among the very first of the grand Mughal mausoleums in India. As the name suggests, the tomb was built in memory of the great Mughal emperor Humayun by his loving wife Bega Begum. The tomb reflects a beautiful amalgamation of Persian, Indian and Turkish style of architecture in its design, which when blended with the sprawling green lawns around it, creates a picture perfect impression. Important buildings to be explored in the complex are Arab Sarai, Bu Halima and Nila Guba. All these, when clubbed with the other 150 tombs, earned the complex the title of the ‘Dormitory of the Mughals’.



Humayun's tomb is located in the vibrant vicinity of the Nizamuddin Dargah and like several other Mughal structures in Delhi, is counted among UNESCO's list of World Heritage Sites.

INDIA GATE

India Gate is an iconic war memorial that was built in commemoration of 82,000 Indian soldiers who sacrificed their lives fighting for the British in the First World War. The National war memorial stands 42m high and resembles the famous Arc-de-Triomphe in Paris. Designed by the renowned British architect Sir Edwin Lutyens, India

Gate has its walls decorated with names of martyred British and Indian soldiers. The magnificent structure is located in the centre of Delhi, astride the prominent Rajpath road, making it an integral part of the National Republic Day parade in the capital. Opened at all hours of the day, the war memorial gets completely floodlit with coloured lights at night, making the visit a delightful affair.



JAMA MASJID

Jama Masjid, in the heart of Old Delhi, is another enchanting creation by the art connoisseur and Mughal ruler Shah Jahan. The mosque, which is also known to be the largest in India, towers over the whole of Old Delhi, yet stands apart from its buzzing surroundings.

The magnificent mosque stands on a massive rocky platform and has flights of stairs from three directions, leading to three entrance gates. Its sanctum sanctorium is in the centre, facing

the west (in the direction of the holy Mecca). Built sometime in the mid 17th century, the mosque holds great significance for the Islamic world and is inundated by a large number of Muslims during auspicious occasions. Considered one of the most impressive of Mughal monuments and the very last to have been built by Shah Jahan, Jama Masjid reflects the true architectural charm of the mighty Mughals.



QUTAB MINAR

An epic example of the glorious Sultanate era in Delhi, Outab Minar stands as the tallest brick minaret in the world. It has its history dating back to the 12th century when the Turk ruler Qutb ud-Din Aibak laid its foundation to celebrate the beginning of Muslim rule in the country. Elegantly built of red sandstone and marble, the Minar represents Indo-Islamic architecture at its finest.

Besides the tower, the complex houses other historically significant monuments as well. This includes the Iron Pillar of Delhi, Quwwat-ul-Islam Mosque, Tomb of Iltutmish and Tomb of Imam Zamina. Counted among the prominent tourist attractions of the country, this UNESCO World Heritage Site resides in the Mehrauli region of Delhi.



LUXURY GOLFING

For a country with the oldest golf course outside the British Isles, India doesn't exactly spoil golfers for choice. But what it lacks in numbers, it makes up in quality

TT BUREAU

→ *Kensville Golf Living, Ahmedabad*

From the iconic Delhi Golf Club in the Capital to the remarkable Royal Springs Golf Club overlooking the Dal Lake in Srinagar, the country beckons wandering golfers with a fascinating cross-section of layouts, ranging from ultra-modern parklands to downright one-of-a-kind oddities.

ROYAL SPRINGS GOLF COURSE, SRINAGAR

Experience the splendour and beauty of the Royal Springs Golf Course, with one of their specially designed Royal Springs vacation packages. Whether it's a romance or sports getaway, Royal Springs leave no stone unturned to allow guests to make the most out of it and enjoy the beauty of Kashmir amidst golf shots. Royal Spring Golf Course is dedicated to providing its members with superlative experience with outstanding amenities and unmatched service. It is easily one of the most stunning and breathtaking golf courses in India with the Zabarwan Hills in the background and the Dal Lake around the corner. The course is spread over 300 acres of rolling hills, native deciduous forest, lakes, wilderness with the occasional marsh.

KENSVILLE GOLF LIVING, AHMEDABAD

Surrounded by places of historical, cultural and environmental significance, such as Lothal, the seat of one of the most ancient civilizations; the home of the Tarnetar Mela, an event attended by folks from all over; sanctuaries like Nalsarovar, Zainabad and Varavedar, Kensville's 18-hole PGA-standard course is a verdant oasis just outside Gujarat's bustling commercial capital and is designed by golfing great Jeev Milkha Singh. Golfer Shiv Kapur trained Sachin Tendulkar at this course, and Kensville has hosted multiple European Challenge Tour events.

OXFORD GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB, PUNE

With facilities ranging from a picturesque golf course, a 42-bay world-class equipped golf academy, a dedicated sporting retail shop, tennis courts, squash courts and a wide range of



→ *Royal Springs Golf Course, Srinagar*

racquet sports on offer, an infinity swimming pool, a variety of restaurants, chalets and tents to stay overnight, and open air venues for banquet and entertainment events, Oxford Golf & Country Club provides a truly world-class country club experience.

The Club is just 22km from Pune airport and is bordered on three sides by the Sahyadri hills. The 18-hole horseshoe-shaped course is ideal for seasoned golfers. Several vantage point tee boxes provide you with great views of the silver sand bunkers as you drive your ball down the hills, and over 40 practice bays give it its world-class appeal.



→ *Oxford Golf & Country Club, Pune*

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