

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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A high-end monthly magazine

Wander Women

Safe Indian destinations for

slo

women travellers

Winter Treks In the Indian Himalaya

The Practical Way to Book
Cheap Flights

8 destinations in **Sri Lanka**
to bring in the New Year

Revealing the Mystery of
Bermuda Triangle



Let's chase the wind







Tis the season!

The festive season is upon us. While kids are busy preparing a wish list for Santa Claus, elders are deciding on the ways to make the best of the holidays. So what are you up to? Did you just say Goa? No, the December crowd makes it a bit off-putting place for those looking to spend time with themselves analyzing the year that just said bye. By any chance, if the thought of chilling on Sri Lankan beach crossed your mind, we bet this is the time to turn it into reality. Don't worry, we have listed 8 destinations in Sri Lanka that will give you all the me-time, away from the crowd. Exciting, isn't it?

And if you're a wander (read: wonder) woman planning to travel alone (Ya, we love "Queen" too!), we bring you the best destinations within India that are both safe and thrilling (However, be careful is the significant advice we can give). So go on a shopping spree, explore the monuments or enjoy a lifestyle holiday as our list of "Best Indian destinations for solo women travellers" is tastefully designed menu to match all your requirements.

What's more? Embark upon the scenic snow-clad peaks of Himalayas or take a tour to the land of assorted colours, Nagaland to celebrate the "Festival of Festivals" - Hornbill. If winter blues is killing you, just sit back, grab a bag of popcorn and discover the mystery of Bermuda Triangle. Happy holidays!



PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

December 2017

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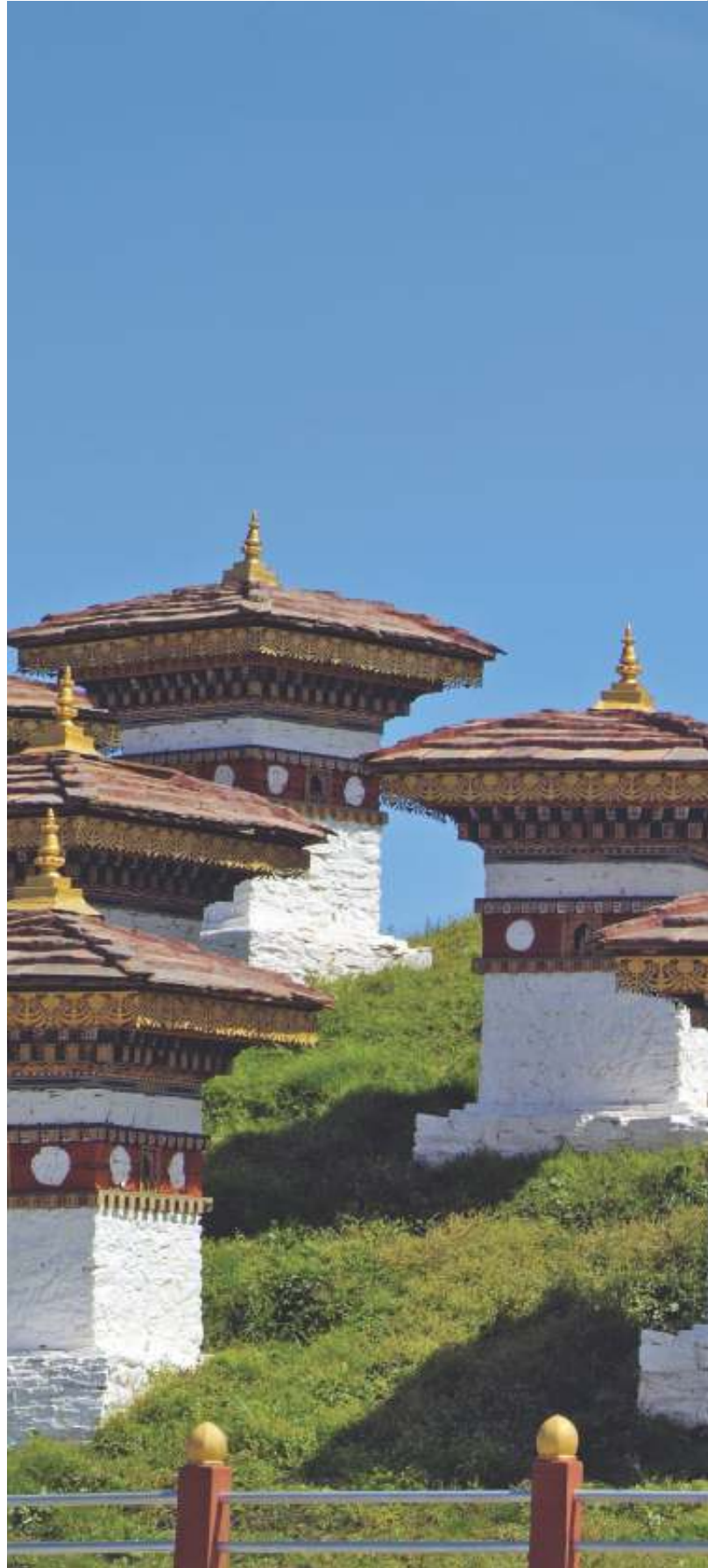
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Incredible India

Wander Women

Safe Indian destinations for solo women travellers

“

Solo travelling is, now, not an alien concept for women travellers in India. Understanding the importance of some me-time, many women prefer to embark upon a solo trip and enjoy the experience. However, safety has always been the major concern. While being alert when you travel alone is always important, here we present a list of safe destinations for the wander women who are ready to explore new places on their own.

”





aspect of Kutch for women travellers is its heritage homestay accommodations like Darbargadh at Devpur and Bhuj House in Bhuj, which are very safe and comfortable.

If you plan to visit Kutch during November-February, experience the cultural colours of Kutch at Rann Utsav Festival. From Bhuj, you can travel towards the White Rann Resort in the white desert of the Great Rann of Kutch. Besides cultural extravaganza, adventurous activities and geographical wonder of White Rann, there are a number of villages around the resort that are excellent for handicraft shopping.

Shop for Crafts in Kutch

Gujarat is generally considered one of the women-friendly states of India with the sight of girls and women in backless cholis roaming the streets of cities during the Navratri festival. As the safety standard of any city can be judged by safety of its women, Gujarat is an attractive destination for solo women travellers.

One of the most exciting destinations for women in Gujarat is Kutch district with its colourful people and exquisite handicrafts.

Arrive at Bhuj, where the market offers a wide array of handicrafts like embroidery, bandhani, block prints and silver ornaments. Near the market is the majestic palace complex. Visit the 18th century Aina Mahal, which is elaborately decorated with mirror work, murals, glassware and tiles. The 19th century Pragmahal in the same complex has an impressive façade and a grand durbar hall. The Kutch Museum is one of Gujarat's oldest museum, while Bharatiya Sanskriti Darshan is a folk museum to watch out for. Around Bhuj, you can visit handicraft villages like Bhujodi, Dhaneti, Ajrakhpur and Dhamadka. A special

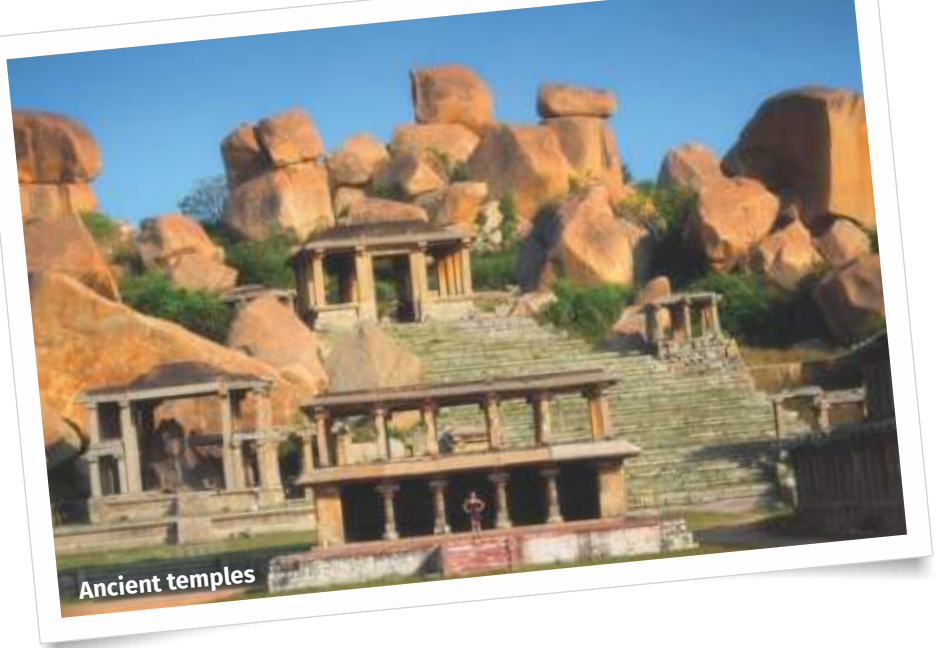


PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Explore the Monuments of Hampi

For women who love architecture, nature and trekking, this is the place to spend a few days rambling among ruins, gazing at majestic buildings and climbing rocks.

A good walk begins at the Hampi Bazaar, with the towering Virupaksha Temple, which is a much visited holy place. At the other end of the bazaar is the Nandi statue. A short walk from

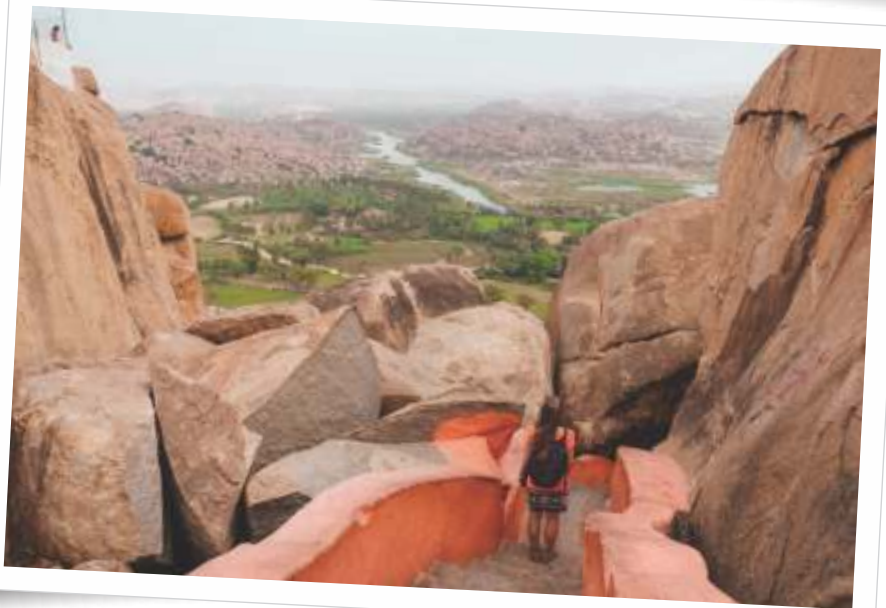


Ancient temples

Virupaksha Temple



the bazaar will bring you to the attractive Lakshmi Narasimha monolithic statue. Nearby is the 16th century Krishna temple with the Vishnu Avatars carved on the façade. Continue through the deserted structures of the Sule Bazaar to Hampi's most impressive monument, the Vittala Temple. Built in the 16th century, the temple has a richly ornate stone statue of a chariot that is Hampi's showpiece. Representing Lord Vishnu's chariot, it has detailed wheels and a Garuda statue. From here, climb Hemakuta Hill to see a cluster of ruins and monolithic sculptures.



Another must-visit is the Royal Centre, which comprises the Lotus Mahal, Queen's Bath, Hazarama Temple and other monuments. The Archaeological Museum here is also worth a visit.

The adventurous spirit can enjoy bouldering in Hampi, climbing craggy granite cliffs and rocks. A 2-km trek can bring you to the Hampi Waterfalls. Those interested in wildlife should visit the Daroji Sanctuary to watch sloth bear and dryland birds.

Hampi also makes a base to visit artisans. There are villages of Banjaras who do beautiful applique and embroidery.

For food, you can get many interesting options in the Hampi Bazaar or at Virupapur Gaddi across the river.



Lotus Mahal



Ancient ruins of temple on the mount



Waterfalls



Sunrise on hilltop

Island Getaway to Port Blair

The headquarters of the Andaman, Port Blair is known to be a safe holiday destination offering a variety of attractions like beaches, museums and adventure.

South from the airport, the road leads through fields and woods to the town centre. At the east end of the town, Aberdeen is a bustling market with facilities like banks, shops, restaurants and medical centres. The Aberdeen Market has a vibrant mix of people who are native speakers of Bengali, Odia, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi and Burmese, besides the indigenous languages, and you can find inexpensive places for tasty Bengali and South Indian food. Maulana Azad Road and Mahatma Gandhi Road lead west from the market district to more leafy areas with museums, parks and official buildings.

The most famous monument is the Cellular Jail, which has a museum to the days when Port Blair was called Kala Paani, used by the British to exile freedom fighters and other political prisoners. The Jail is one of most poignant reminders of the independence movement of India and is one of gloomiest landmarks of British colonial oppression. The museum exhibits names of convicts, photographs of Kala Paani and terrible torture equipment. The main building built between 1896 and 1905 is far worse than other colonial prison blocks. The badly-ventilated cells speak of the days when independence activists were imprisoned in the worst possible conditions. Cells were dirty and badly kept. Drinking water was limited to two glasses a day. The convicts used to overwork on clearing forests and construction, and could only bathe and wash in the rain. Many famous Indian independence activists were jailed here, including Diwan Singh Kalepani, Fazl-e-Haq Khairabadi, Yogendra Shukla, Batukeshwar Dutt, Maulana Ahmadullah,



Movli Abdul Rahim Sadiqpuri, Maulvi Liaquat Ali, Babarao Savarkar, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Bhai Parmanand, Shadan Chandra Chatterjee, Sohan Singh, Vaman Rao Joshi and Nand Gopal. Watch the sound-and-light show, which tells the story of the freedom struggle.

In the morning, visit Chatham Island where a saw mill was set up by the British in 1883 with the primary objective of meeting the local requirements of saw and timber for the constructional works. It was one of the largest wood processors in Asia. The mill is a good place to see local timber. Connected to the mill is the Forest Museum, which has scale models showing forest department's initiatives, facts about timber processing in the Andaman and a display of decorative pieces made of indigenous woods like Padauk, Marble, Gurjan and Satin wood.



Continue from here to the Samudrika Naval Maritime Museum, which has galleries dedicated to the history, geography, anthropology and natural history of the Andaman. Here, you can



see displays related to the islands' ecosystem, tribal groups, flora and fauna. The highlight here is the display regarding marine life and the attached aquarium. Nearby is the Science Centre with interactive exhibits.

From here, you can proceed to the Anthropological Museum, which exhibits hunting weapons, instruments, tribal ornaments, household items and 1960s photographs of the indigenous communities. Spend an hour here for a sympathetic understanding of the islands' native cultures.

From Port Blair, drive to Corbyns Cove, which has a fine beach. Proceed from here to Chiriya Tapu to enjoy evening birdwatching and a glorious sunset.

To explore the underwater world of the Andaman Sea, you can take the boat ride to North Bay, Rd Skin Island of Jolly Buoy. Snorkelling here can give you close views of marine life.



A Few Days in the French Enclave of Puducherry

Puducherry or Pondicherry is the place for a lifestyle holiday with some neat streets, chic boutiques, superb restaurants and French colonial period heritage hotels. This is where you can find Tamil tiffins and French food, the bustle of a typical Indian city with some quiet, clean, cobbled streets lined with white buildings and mustard-yellow French colonial bungalows reminiscent of some villages in France.

Leave behind the crowds, traffic snarls and honking vehicles of the city



Fishermen near beach

The Church of Our Lady of Angels



to explore the former French Quarters. The old town is laid out in a grid pattern, with streets cutting across at right angles. Start with a morning walk along the seafront promenade called Goubert Salai with its grand colonial buildings and elegant French townhouses, tree-lined lanes, parks, bars and cafes. From the French Consulate at the end of the promenade, you can walk into the old quarters tucked away behind the seafront with many attractive houses, churches and public buildings. Don't miss the museum,

which has a diverse collection ranging from Roman artifacts and Greek pottery excavated at a former port nearby and Chola and Nayaka bronzes from the Tamil hinterlands to French furniture (including the bed on which the Dupleix slept), European paintings and marble art, an early rickshaw called *pousse-pousse* and even some marine shells. The impressive classical style Raj Niwas stands in Bharathi Park.

Pondicherry has striking cathedrals. The sublime 1865 Church of Our Lady of

the Angels has a rare oil painting that was donated by the King of France, Napoleon-3. The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus has impressive arches and large stained glass panels. The 18th century Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception has rich interiors.

For more French colonial insights, visit the Ecole Francaise d' Extreme-Oriente, the prestigious French Institute of Indology and other institutions. The House of Ananda Rangapallai has diaries of life under Madame Dupleix. Pondicherry's best known landmark is the Aurobindo Ashram, with the highlight being the Samadhi dedicated to the Bengali poet, philosopher and freedom fighter Sri Aurobindo and the Parisian mystic, painter and musician Mirra Alfasa who is well-known as Mother.

In the evening, take a leisurely stroll in the Botanical Gardens, established in 1826, which has trees like the 25m high mahogany, exotic shrubs and plants that were brought here by the French colonial powers. Landscaped in the formal French style, it has neat gravel walks among flower beds and clipped hedges, and also a



French quarter where the buildings depict typical french architecture



Matrimandir in Auroville

marine aquarium.

Pondicherry has some superb places to enjoy French, Italian and other European foods - Satsanga, La Pasta, Le Club, La Terrasse and Le Rendezvous are some well-known ones but there are also many pizzerias and pasta places. There are many boutiques and shops selling designer clothing and leather goods, handmade paper products and stationery, arts, handicrafts, incense sticks and candles, antiques and curios. Hidesign is a good place for designer leather bags, purses and belts in various colours, with a nice café upstairs. Kasha ki Asha is known for its fabrics, garments and leather



Famous banyan tree in park near Matrimandir



The Promenade by the sea

sandals, sold in a colonial house, which also has a nice fusion food café. La Boutique d' Auroville has jewelry, clothes, slippers, wooden accessories and various crafts. There are many boutiques for designer clothing.

While in this city, you must also visit the Aurobindo Ashram and nearby Auroville, which is a French architect designed township and commune, where there are places to buy hand-made products and experience The Mother's spiritual beliefs. 10

Incredible India

Hornbill Festival

**A fascinating celebration of
NAGA CULTURE**



“

In the far east of the Indian subcontinent, every December, a fascinating celebration of winter, light and pristine Naga culture comes alive!

”



1 Traditional tribal game during the festival

2 Naga people outside a morung (traditional house)

The land of diverse multi-ethnicity sprung up by the several tribes that inhabit the state. Each community has its own special festival, making Nagaland the land of colourful festivals. Hornbill Festival is a collective celebration of vibrancy of different tribes. Organized by the State Tourism and Art & Culture Departments of Nagaland from 1st December to 10th December, the festival showcases the lifestyle, culture, dance, cuisines, handicrafts, paintings and other intricacies of the varied Naga tribes and sub-tribes.

The festival happens in a small village called Kisama, which is located at a distance of 10-km from the capital city of Kohima. The Naga heritage village, that aims to preserve culture, dialects and traditions of all the ethnic Naga tribes, serves as a stage during Hornbill Festival to organize different occasions

3 Traditional attire of Angami tribe

4 Song performance by the tribals

5 A Naga warrior in action

6 A tribe member from the audience

7 Dance performance

8 A Sema girl in her traditional attire



3



4





9

and functions for various societies and unions. Tribal Morungs are another attraction at Kisama. Each community is represented with their respective vernacular architecture. The place becomes very lively during the Hornbill Festival.

The weeklong festival hosts cultural performances, indigenous games, craft bazaar, music events, fashion, cycling, motor sporting, events, a kid's carnival, floral galleria, food courts, film festival and a series of competitions in various activities.

For culture-enthusiasts, foodies and experience-seekers, Hornbill Festival is a closer understanding of the people and culture of Nagaland, and an opportunity to experience the food, songs, dances and customs of Nagaland.



10



11



12

9 Another vibrant dance

10 Member of Angami tribes showing his skills

11 Angami tribe performing dance

12 A traditional meal

HOW TO GO

Fly to Dimapur Airport or Guwahati Airport. Or take a train to Guwahati. Hire a cab to reach Kohima. It takes 2 hours by car from Dimapur to Kohima.


WHEN TO GO

The best time of the year to go to most parts of Northeast is during December and January. The weather is great at this time. Also, the roads are in a better shape. You should avoid travelling to these areas during monsoon. The roads in hilly areas get washed out and there are frequent landslides.

WHERE TO STAY

You will find a lot of accommodations in Kohima, which is the nearest town. Book well in advance if you want to visit the Hornbill Festival. All the hotels are overbooked during this time. You can commute daily by a taxi. There are traffic jams to and fro roads. Basic homestay accommodations are also available in nearby villages.

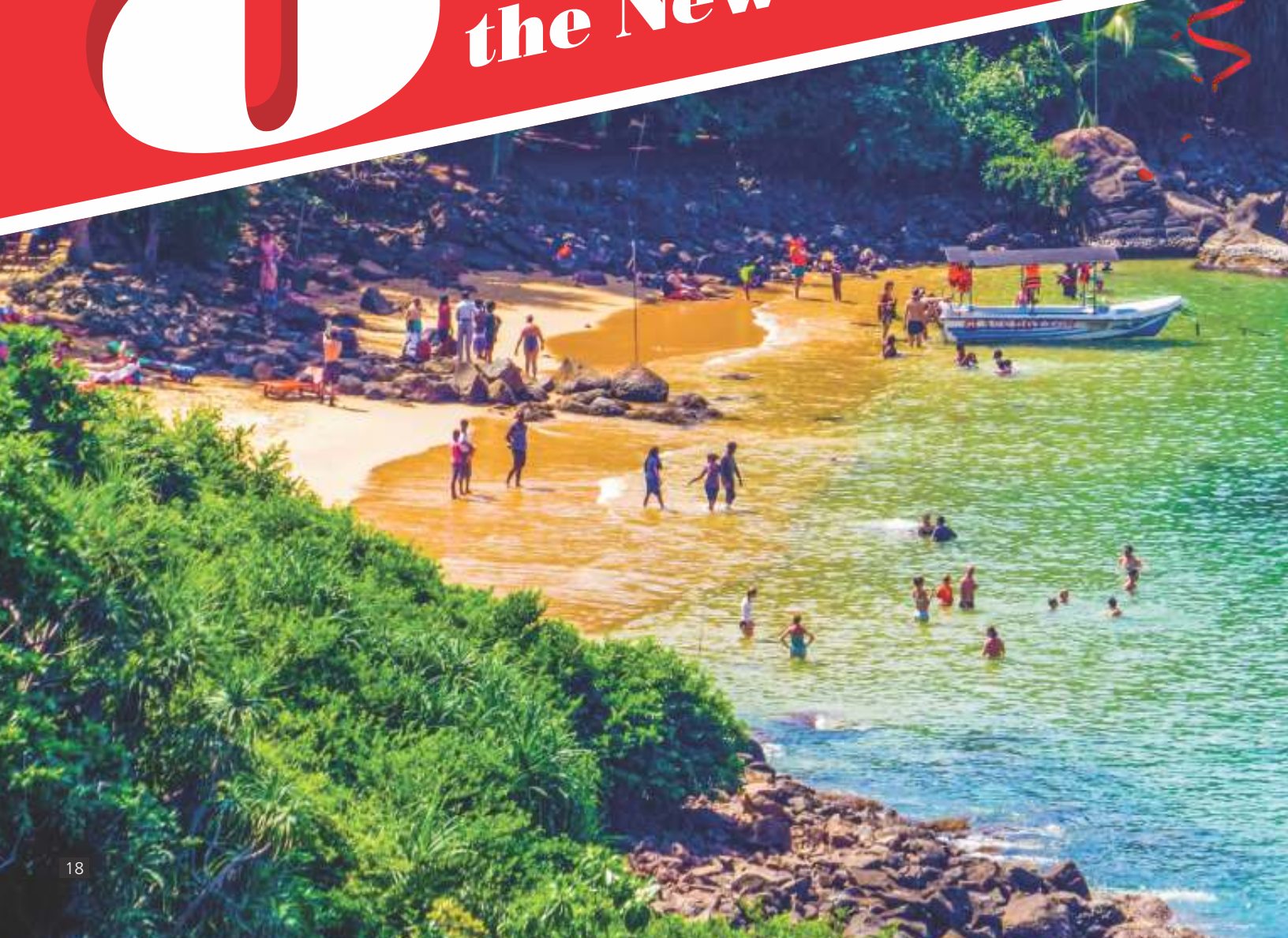
OTHER PLACES TO VISIT

If time permits, visit Dzukou Valley. There are a lot of villages that you can go to, and get an exposure of the lifestyle of the various Naga tribes. Some of them are Tuensang, Mokokchung, Longleng and Mon. 

Far Far away

8

DESTINATIONS
in Sri Lanka
to bring in
the New Year



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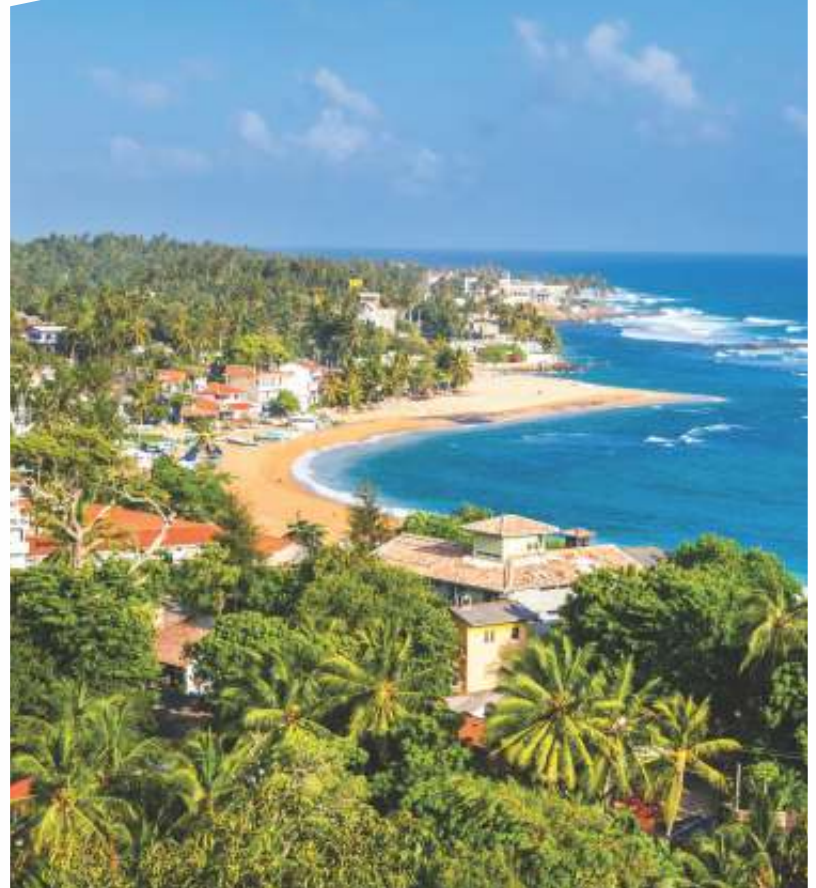
It is that time of the year when we start planning for the New Year celebrations. If you are planning to welcome 2018 away from the crowded and clichéd destinations, this article may help.

”



Despite its growing popularity, Sri Lanka still isn't over-run by tourists. And you know what? It won't nearly have half the crowd as Goa, Thailand or Ibiza, your regular New Year's Eve destinations. Well of course, if you are looking for the wildest parties on the planet, Sri Lanka isn't hosting them yet. But if you are looking for smaller gigs, a little relaxation, some introspection and good conversations, then the island country just might be what you need.

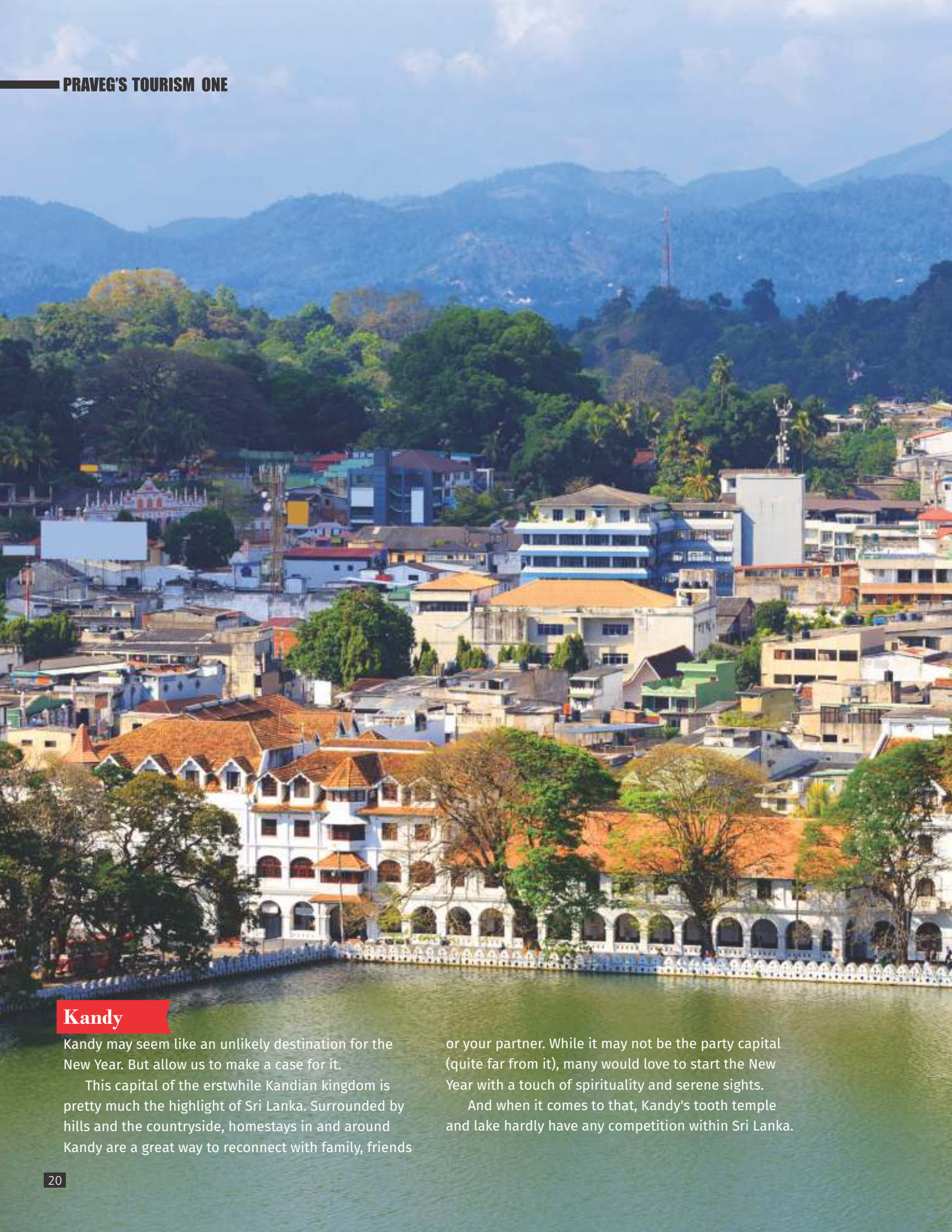
Even within the island country, some destinations are more popular than the others. Like Negombo, Hikkaduwa and Arugam Bay are on the list of most backpackers to the country. But staying true to our promise, we are going to focus on the lesser known destinations, which can make for a fab end to the year in Sri Lanka. So here we go...



Jungle Beach and Peace Pagoda, Unawatuna

The beach with an interesting name is the best of sand and sea. Off the main strip, Jungle Beach is a serene place. Right over the hillock is the Peace Pagoda. The Pagoda offers some of the best views the country has to offer.

The hillock has a couple of hostels and cottages, and is great for long walks amidst greenery. Though it attracts a lot of local crowd, it is still not as busy as Negombo or some other places close to the capital, Colombo.



Kandy

Kandy may seem like an unlikely destination for the New Year. But allow us to make a case for it.

This capital of the erstwhile Kandian kingdom is pretty much the highlight of Sri Lanka. Surrounded by hills and the countryside, homestays in and around Kandy are a great way to reconnect with family, friends

or your partner. While it may not be the party capital (quite far from it), many would love to start the New Year with a touch of spirituality and serene sights.

And when it comes to that, Kandy's tooth temple and lake hardly have any competition within Sri Lanka.





Ella

Not very far from Kandy is Ella at the southern edge of Sri Lanka's Hill Country. In fact, a few hours of a scenic train ride from Kandy will get you to this backpackers' haven. With treks, waterfalls and caves, it is the place for the young and the active. The town lives up to its reputation with a street that is lined with restaurants and cafes. It seems like travellers outnumber locals in this town.

If you are looking for some like-minded company, Ella is a good place to search for it. And evenings looking at the sloping farms with the local Lion beer in hand, is a nice way to spend time.

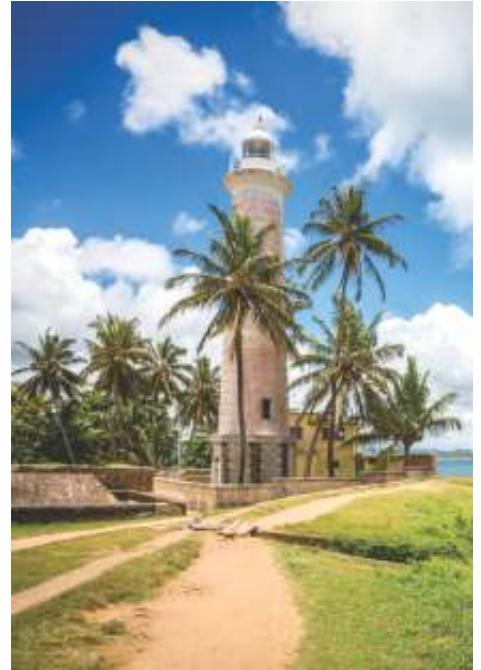




Mannar

Both Mannar mainland and its namesake island lie towards the northwest of Sri Lanka. Talaimannar on the island of Mannar is 30km away from India's Dhanushkodi. Beyond the geographical specialty, Mannar region has great natural sights to offer, a beautiful Dutch fort and an old, dilapidated pier.

If you want to, you can also go up to the second island with one of the fishermen from Adam's Beach. It is said that these islands are a part of Adam's bridge or Rama Sethu (Rama's bridge). A ride to the islands has the ability to bring together geography, history and mythology. Not a bad way to start the New Year, right?



Galle

Galle, the old fortified city in Southwestern Sri Lanka is probably the most popular destination for travellers. So it should come as no surprise that it is on this list. Just that most travellers do not think of it as a New Year's destination. But with its beautiful light house, quaint streets and relaxed atmosphere, it will make a great place to say good bye to the year.





Batticaloa

This magic region falls on the eastern coast of the country, and is embedded with beautiful lagoons and slow swaying palms. Spend couple of days cycling around Batti (as the locals call it). If slow travel, lagoons and beaches are your thing, Batti offers all of that. And since mass tourism still hasn't taken off, you will still feel like the first few people to have got here.

And if you are ready for the risk, park yourself on Kallady Bridge on New Year's night and pray that you hear them. We are referring to the 'Singing fish of Batticaloa'. Over the years, these sounds have diminished. However, if you are lucky on a starry night, you can still listen to the musical notes of fish that have guided fishermen in the lagoon for years. Not many can boast that they brought in the New Year with fish singing to them, right? May be you could.



Trincomalee

The shallow waters of Nilaveli and Uppuveli beaches make for a great setting. It doesn't matter if you are partying late night or waking up early for a swim on the New Year's first day. These beaches are perfect for families with kids, especially toddlers.

Trincomalee, a natural harbour with an old fort and beautiful temples, is sure to tempt you even more to make it your New Year destination.



Colombo for New Year's Eve? Yes!

Yes, Colombo. Sri Lanka's capital and the most urbanized region in the country is skipped by most travellers for other more touristic destinations. But our reason for including and concluding the list with Colombo is pretty personal. And that is Colombo City Hostel. Interesting people, happening parties, cool travellers and comforting environment make this an ideal destination.

So if you are in Sri Lanka for the New Year and cannot decide where to go, drop into Colombo City Hostel. There is bound to be one hell of a party. 🍷



Story by SACHIN BHANDARY



BHUTAN

GATEWAY TO

HAPPINESS



Apart from landscapes and dzongs, the aspect that really attracts travellers to Bhutan is country's concept of GNH - Gross National Happiness. Though most countries are concerned about their GNP, the Bhutanese, as the former king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck said are focused on achieving a better GNH.

Let's take a visual tour to the most visited places of Bhutan.



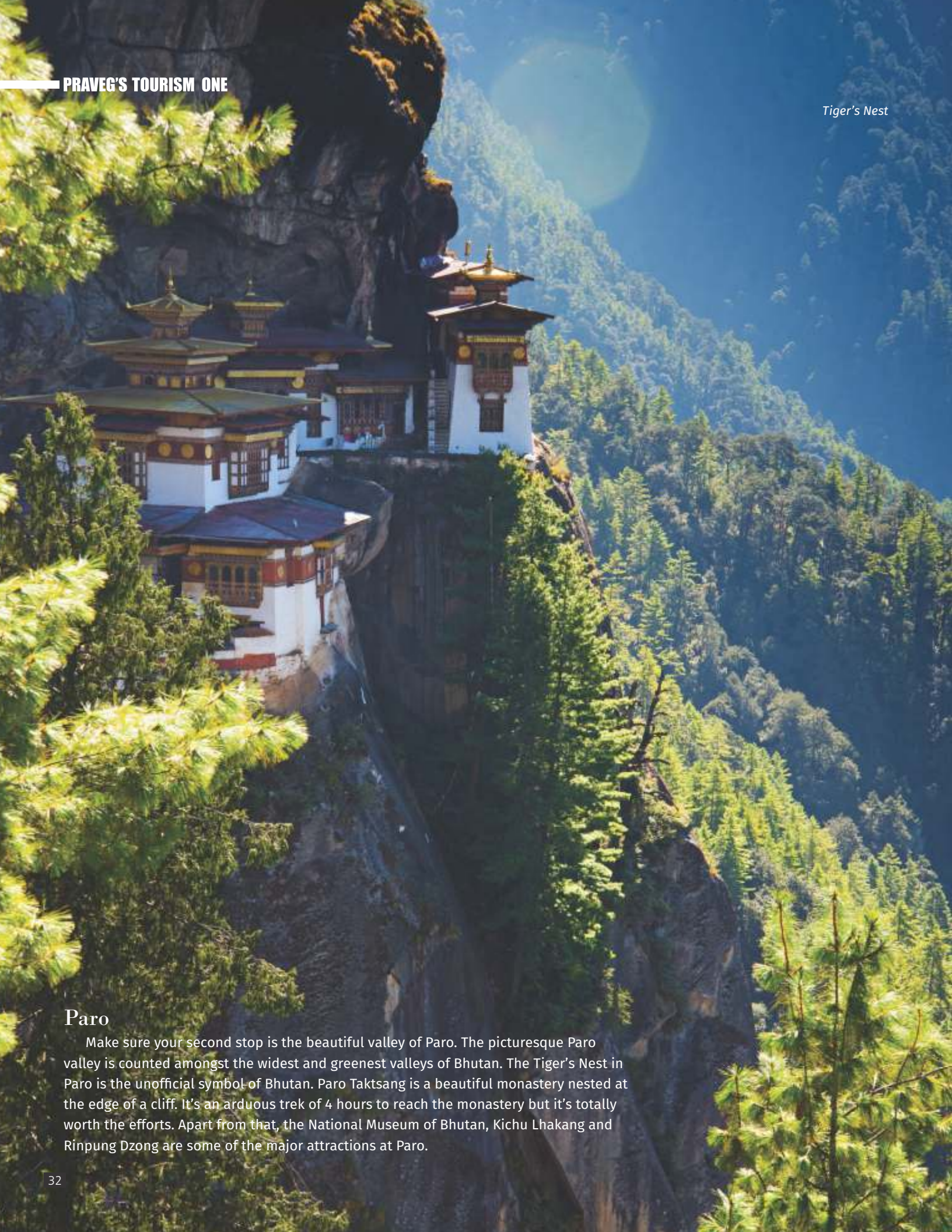
Phuentsholing

This is the financial capital and second largest town of Bhutan. As it is located at the border with India, the town acts as a point of entry for travellers arriving from Kolkata/Siliguri by bus. Like all Bhutanese cities, Phuentsholing has modern architecture and clean roads. Places to visit here are - Zangto Pelri Lhakhang - a temple located in the heart of Phuentsholing, Karbandi Monastery and Amo Chhu Crocodile Breeding Centre.





A scenic road from Phuentsholing to Thimpu



Paro

Make sure your second stop is the beautiful valley of Paro. The picturesque Paro valley is counted amongst the widest and greenest valleys of Bhutan. The Tiger's Nest in Paro is the unofficial symbol of Bhutan. Paro Taktsang is a beautiful monastery nestled at the edge of a cliff. It's an arduous trek of 4 hours to reach the monastery but it's totally worth the efforts. Apart from that, the National Museum of Bhutan, Kichu Lhakang and Rinpung Dzong are some of the major attractions at Paro.

*Dochu La pass*

Dochu La Pass

Dochu La is a pass that you need to cross to go to Punakha and other parts of Bhutan in the east. On clear days, it offers breathtaking views of the snow-capped Himalayan peaks. It has 108 Druk Wangyal Chortens - the stupas and Druk Wangyal Lhakhang – the temple. Plan your visit at Rhododendron garden in the Royal Botanical Park during April-June as you can view 38 out of Bhutan's 46 species of rhododendron or spot some of the 220 species of birds.

*Himalayan peaks*



Trashi Chhoe Dzong

Thimphu

Thimphu is the capital city of Bhutan. It is the only capital city in the world without any traffic signal. Buddha Dordenma statue, Tashichho Dzong or Thimpu Dzong – the monastery and National Memorial Chorten - the stupa are places of interest in Thimphu. Tashichho Dzong is a venue for the annual Thimphu Tsechu, the elaborate dance that is performed by the monks wearing colourful masks.

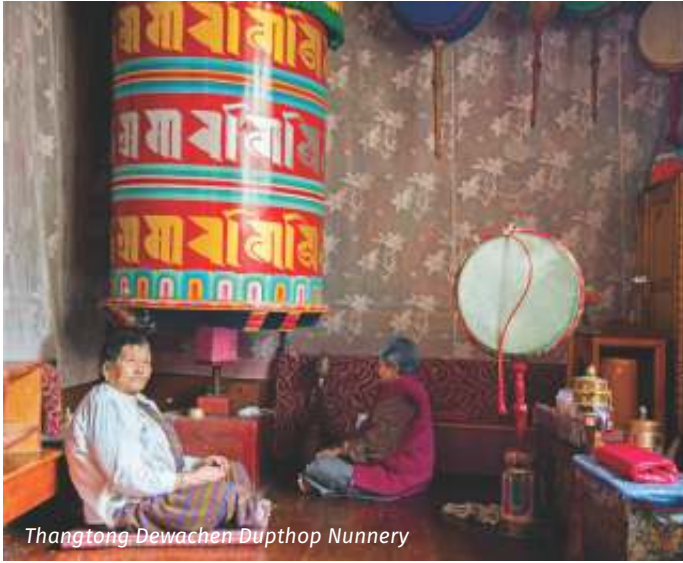
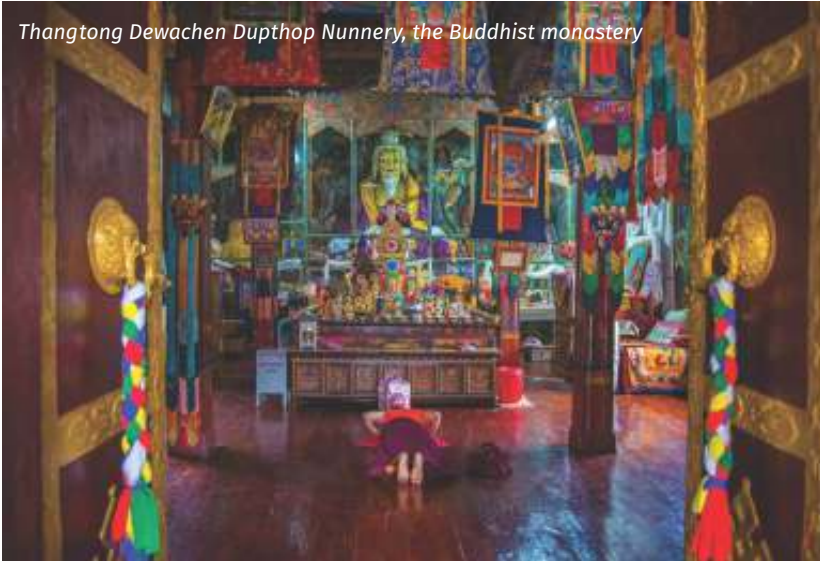


Thimphu Tsechu



Changangkha Lhakhang

Thangtong Dewachen Dupthop Nunnery, the Buddhist monastery



Thangtong Dewachen Dupthop Nunnery

National Memorial Chortem



National Institute of Zorig, Chusum



A Shop

Portrait of Bhutanese women





Punakha Dzong

Punakha

Situated at the confluence of Phochhu (father river) and the Mochhu (mother river), Punakha has many tourist places to visit. It is famous for the Punakha Dzong, arguably the most grand and beautiful Dzong of Bhutan. The ancient capital of Bhutan has witnessed all the important royal functions, including the present king's wedding.



The picturesque rice fields

HOW TO GO

There are two ways to go to Bhutan - you can either fly to Paro, which is the only airport in Bhutan or fly to Bagdogra in India and drive into Bhutan.

WHERE TO STAY

Bhutan has lots of hotel options in different budgets. It is definitely more expensive than accommodation in India though.

WHEN TO GO

The best time of the year to visit Bhutan is during September to November. During this time, the weather is better than other times. Due to Durga Puja vacations in India, Bhutan receives a lot of tourists from India during October, mostly people from West Bengal.

The ideal time to visit the temples is during morning or evening. Please check temple/dzong timings before your visit.

WHAT TO EAT

Though Indian food is available in Bhutan, you must try the local dishes. Ema Datshi is the most common dish and is recognized as the national dish of Bhutan. Ema means cheese and Datshi means chilly. It's really spicy and is best served with rice. They also have Kewa Datshi, which consists of potato and chillies with cheese.



Ema Datshi

A landscape in Punakha

BONUS TIPS

Don't litter. Bhutan is a very clean country and they put a lot of effort to keep it that way.

Bhutanese are friendly people. They don't mind to be clicked, but do ask. 📷

Far Far away

THE PRACTICAL
WAY TO BOOK

CHEAP FLIGHTS

By now you must have come across guides by many travel websites on how to book cheap flights. Suggestions range from accumulating air miles to booking last minute flight.

Here is a quick guide from someone who looks for cheap flights as if his life depends on it. We will call it the 'No-Bullshit' guide.



Go for It!

Right decision at the right time is equally important. Some people worry too much about visa, places to stay and as a result end up losing time.

Some articles suggest booking last minute flights, but that hasn't worked for me. Plus, most of us have to apply for visa in advance for which you need flight tickets. Hence, last minute tickets are impractical (at least for me).

And when you get a good deal, don't let it go. Because prices can start rising immediately after.

Be Flexible

Flexibility is a great leverage if you want to save money. And that is most important when you want to travel on budget.

Be flexible about dates and then destinations. For every factor that you are flexible with, the air fare will keep dropping.

This helped me in getting great deals for Thailand (125 USD/8000 INR), Sri Lanka (120 USD/7500 INR) and Brazil (690 USD/43,700 INR), among many others. Rather than flying from my home town Mumbai, I decided to fly from anywhere in India with the cheapest fares.

So I flew from Madurai to Colombo and similarly from Kolkata to Bangkok. This also helped me to explore these cities.

Time is Money

Nowhere is this adage more apt than while looking to save money on flight booking. The more time you spend researching, the cheaper your airfare turns out to be.

So if you are planning a trip 4-5 months from now, start your research from today. In a few weeks, you will actually know more about budget tickets.

Researching does take time. But if you enjoy travel, you will enjoy the research too. It will introduce you to many new exciting destinations. 🌍



Revealing the Mystery of Bermuda Triangle

Who doesn't know about the infamous Bermuda Triangle and the strange occurrences that supposedly happen when planes fly over it or ships pass through it.

This mysterious triangle stretches from the southern tip of Florida, the tiny island of Bermuda and the island of Puerto Rico, with a surface area of around 1 million square kilometers. Also known as "The Devil's Triangle", Bermuda Triangle has been under speculation for mysterious disappearances for a long time.

However, the reports of mysterious disappearances couldn't gather the public's attention until the 20th century. An infamous tragedy occurred in March 1918 when the USS Cyclops, a 542ft-long Navy cargo ship with over 300 men and 10,000 tons of manganese ore on board, sank somewhere between Barbados and the Chesapeake Bay. Adding to the disappearances list, 5 Navy airplanes vanished on a training session out of Fort Lauderdale, Florida in 1945.

Such incidents laid the foundation to the belief that something unusual was going on between the triangle-shaped stretch of the west side of North Atlantic Ocean.

At least 1000 lives have been claimed in the last 100 years. On an average, 4 aircrafts and 20 yachts go missing every year. That's why this area is called as "Isle of the Devils", which perfectly fits to the Bermuda Triangle mystery.

Here are some of the most popular theories to explain what is responsible for the disappearances of a large number of vessels:

Presence of Methane Gas

Methane gas trapped under the sea floor can erupt, thereby lowering the density of water. This results in decreasing the buoyancy of ships and hence, causing the ships to sink. As it is very flammable, there exists the possibilities of methane blowouts. Many scientists believe that the planes that are flying over it during this eruption can catch fire and cause mid-air explosion. That's quite scary!

Variation in Compass

This "Devil's Triangle" is one the rarest places on our planet where the north points towards the true north and not towards Magnetic North, create confusion and chaos in the



mind of the pilot. Hence, many ships and planes lost its course. Moreover, the first person to report about Bermuda Triangle was Christopher Columbus. He wrote in one of his journals that inside the triangle, the ship's compass stopped working and he also saw a fireball in the sky.

Tropical Storm Region

The "Isle of the Devils" is amongst the most hurricane-prone areas of the Atlantic Ocean. This is one of the most dominating reasons for the ships and planes to encounter strong tropical storms in this area than any other. Moreover, the Gulf Stream is one of the world's most known ocean currents in the world and flows right through this mysterious triangle.

Electronic Fog

It is claimed that strange fog appears in Bermuda Triangle from nowhere and completely engulfs a ship or an aircraft passing through this area. In the book "The Fog" by Bruce Gernon, Pilot Bruce Gernon claimed

that he was lost for 28 minutes during his flying journey through the unusual, electronic fog. The plane went missing from radars, only to re-emerge in Miami Beach later.

US Undersea Test and Evaluation Center

Located on Andros Island of Bahamas, US Government has AUTECE - Atlantic Undersea Test and Evaluation Center where US Navy tests their sonar, submarines and other weapons. However many are of the view that it is more than just the testing center.

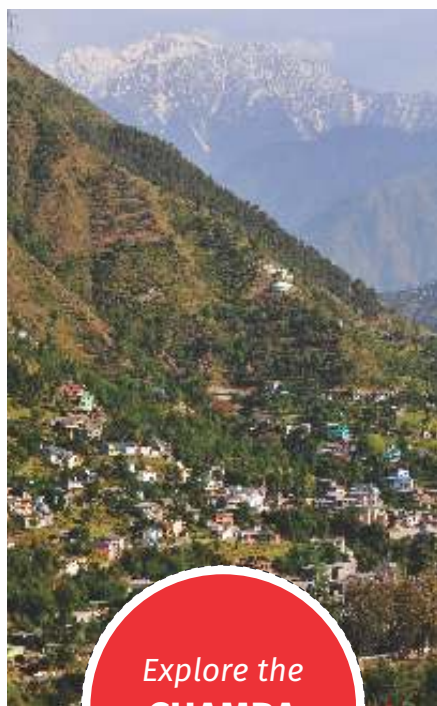
Extraterrestrial Involvement

The Bermuda Triangle is believed to be an extraterrestrial base by some sci-fi experts. From strange lights suddenly appearing in the sky, blinking like a secret signal and then disappearing after some time to strange noises with unknown words and spooky chants have been reported by many people.

At the end of the day, it is totally up to you to believe it or keep expecting for a better reasoning behind all the mysteries! 📖

Winter Treks in the Indian Himalaya

For the adventure-junkies, winter is the best time to embark upon a trekking trip to enjoy the scenic snow-clad peaks of Himalaya and gushing rivers. Let's explore some of the most exciting destinations to get lost in the narrow pathways, relish the panoramic views, witness the mesmerizing sunset and sunrise that you will cherish for a lifetime.



Explore the
**CHAMBA
VALLEY**



Take a
Walk in the
**KULLU
VALLEY**



Snow
Walk at
**CHANGU
LAKE**



1

Chamba Valley

Chamba offers an excellent introduction to Himachal Pradesh - it is rich in history, architecture, arts and handi-crafts, and has one of Himachal's best museums. The town is set on the banks of the Ravi with a scenic location among mountains. In winter, it is a pleasant place to visit because of its moderate altitude of about 3200 feet above sea level.

As you approach Chamba from Pathankot Railway Station, look forward to a view of the fast flowing river and snow clad peaks from the bridge crossing the Ravi to the town. Once across the bridge, the road ascends to Chaughan, the meadow that is the centre for recreational, sports and market activities in Chamba town. The townscape around the meadow is dominated by the Akhand Chandi Palace and the old palace called Rang Mahal,



2

1. Ravi River

2. Panoramic view of Chamba

the 18th-19th century residences of the Rajput clan that ruled Chamba for over 1000 years that currently house educational institutions and other public facilities. Opposite the palace



3



4

complex, the Lakshmi Narayan Temple is one of the finest temple complexes in the Western Himalaya. The complex comprises towering stone temples built between 10th and the 19th century, with intricate stone shikaras and sedge-hat style wooden roofs of six temples visible in sequence from the entrance. Walk around the temples to see the panels carved with scenes from Hindu epics and mythological stories along the wall surfaces. On another side of the meadow is the Bhuri Singh Museum, originally founded by Raja Bhuri Singh of Chamba who ruled during 1904-19. It is now administered by the government and has an excellent collection of miniature paintings, including those of the Chamba School, Chamba Rumals (exquisitely embroidered fabric pieces used as gift wrappings and coverlets), copper-plate inscriptions, masks, jewellery and the ornately carved stone slabs typical of Chamba district.

Drive from here to Brahmour, which has dramatic temples of the Chamba style and is surrounded by settlements of the Gaddi shepherds. Brahmour makes a starting point for superb treks to Lahaul valley. The famous Manimahesh Lake Yatra is a good short trek.

One of the exciting treks from Chamba to McLeodganj can begin at Machetar near Chamba. The walk from Machetar to Kuarsi goes through stunning scenery. The next day, plan to spend six or seven hours trekking to Chatru Parao. From here, on the third day, trek to Indrahar Pass, 4425 meters high, with views of Pir Panjal Range in the north and Mani Mahesh Kailash (5656 M) peak in the east. Descend from the pass to Lahesh Cave. From Lahesh Cave on the fourth day, trek to Trihund. On the fifth day, head for McLeodganj.



3. Himalayan views

4. Spectacular mountains-cape of Pir-Panjal

5. Laxmi Narayan Temple

6. Houses at McLeodganj, Dharamshala



Take a Walk in the Kullu Valley

With superb views of snow-covered mountains from Manali that lies in its heart, the Kullu Valley has become Himachal's main tourist draw competing with the much older British summer seat of Shimla. From Mandi, which has many historical temples and palaces, the national highway runs along the Beas River. The town of Kullu has many historical sites like the massive pyramidal Bajaura Temple decorated with beautifully composed stone images just off the highway. Raghunathji Temple, Jagannathji Temple and Bijli Mahadev are also interesting. After Kullu, Naggar and Jagatsukh are historical places that can be visited off the highway.

Leave behind the tourist rush to visit the village of Old Manali on the other side of Manalsu Nala. Wander around to see old houses of wood and stone, the Manu Maharshi Temple and the backpacker's enclave, which has cafes and tourist-oriented facilities, and





9

you can still get a feel of the psychedelic hippie cult popular in the 1960s and 70s.

From Manali, walk to Vashist where you can see ornate wood-carved houses and stone temples typical of Himachal. Take a dip in one of the hot water baths. If you like fish, have the roasted trout and chips in the restaurants near the Beas River. About 10km from here is Solang Nullah, which is the big winter draw because of its snow-covered slopes. This is also a destination for adventure sports like skiing.

From here, trek to Marhi, which if weather permits can be good for paragliding. The Gulaba Meadows is also a nice trek off the road.

End your trek at the Rohtang Pass.

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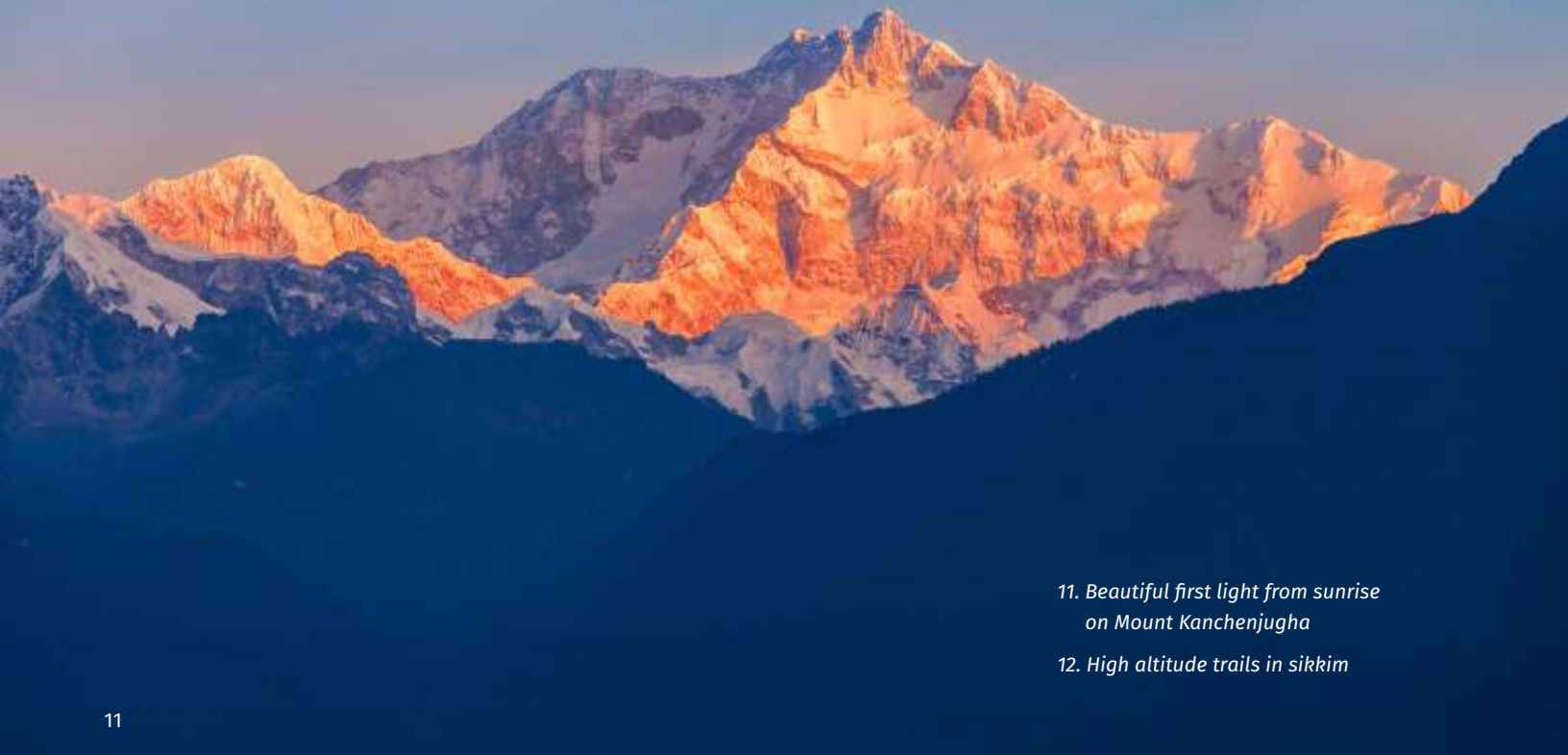


7. A house in Old Manali

8. Beas River

9. A beautiful Solong Valley

10. Paragliding in Kullu



11. Beautiful first light from sunrise on Mount Kanchenjunga

12. High altitude trails in sikkim

11

Snow Walk at Changu Lake

The state capital of Sikkim, Gangtok is a crowded city but prettily set in tiers on the hillsides with a superb view of Kanchenjunga on a clear morning. It is also known for its gardens housing superb collections of orchids and other flora. As the main city of Sikkim, Gangtok is also a good place to get an insight into the art and culture of the state – the Namgyal Institute has a large Tibetology collection of Buddhist books, manuscripts, art and ritual objects and

the Do-drul Chorten - a fine Tibetan pagoda. The Enchey Gompa is a good example of a regional Buddhist monastery with murals and Tantric statues, and the Cottage Industries Institute is a good place to see the weaving techniques, thangka painting styles, pottery, woodcarvings and other handiwork of Sikkim. You can also visit the monastery complex at Rumtek, which is a centre for religious activities, spiritual discourses, education and Buddhist art. Also at Rumtek is the older Rumtek Gompa and

the painted Lingdum Gompa.

A popular excursion from Gangtok is to Tsomo or Changu Lake, about 12,500ft above sea level, with snow views around it, and you could apply for permits to go across 14,140ft high Nathula Pass to the Indo-China border. The road along the lake is lined with little snack places and tourist amenities, including rentals for boots for snow-walking. Yak rides are on offer at the lakefront. 📍

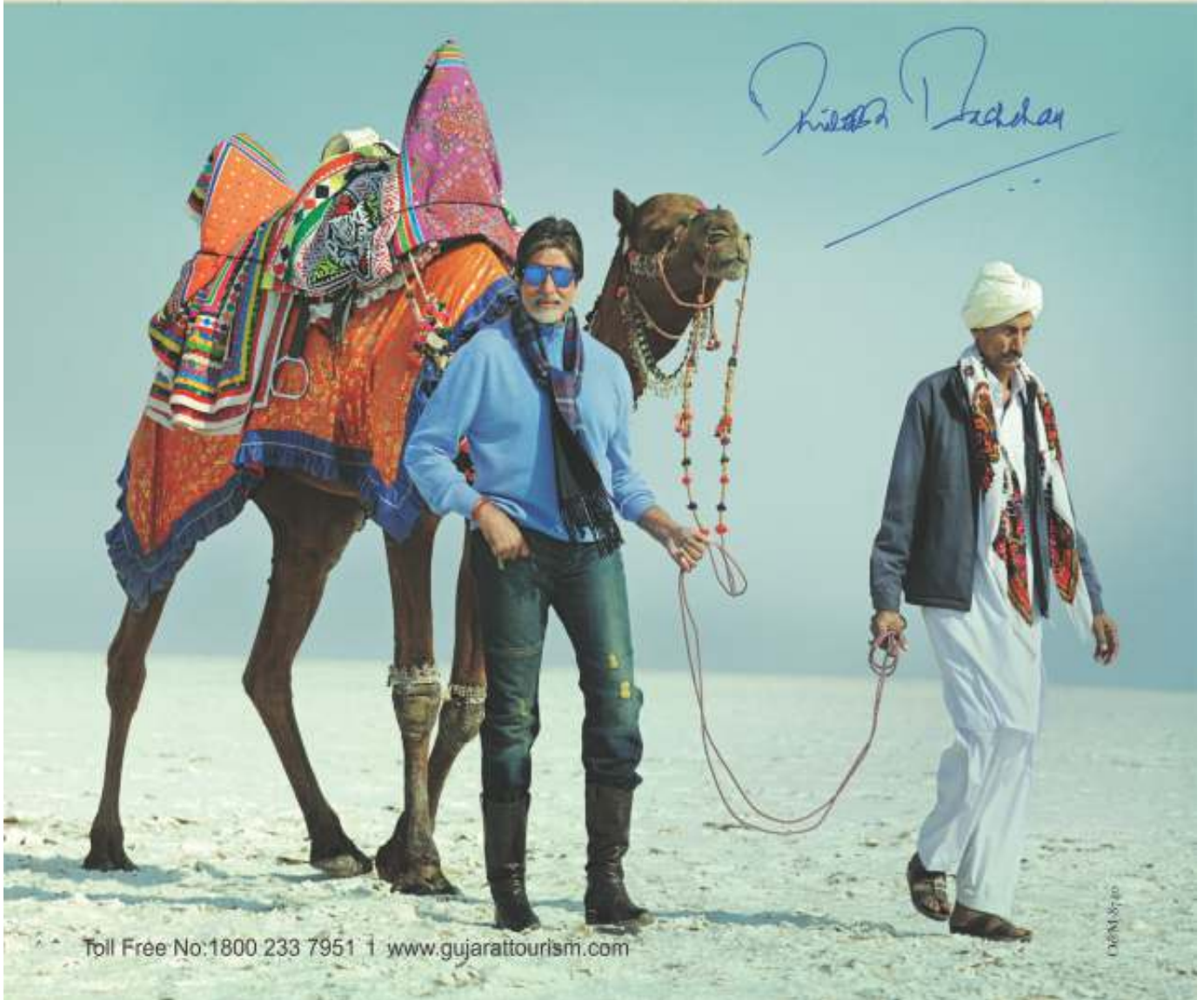
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During the Rann Utsav, Gujarat's festival of art, crafts and dance, I saw spinning skirts with mirror work that would make a goddess jealous. The Aari embroidery done here was so intricate, even the vendors looked sad to part with a piece. The music hypnotised me, the food tempted me, the colours dazzled me. Set against the white desert, I felt as if the festival was our way of showing off to the heavens; almost saying 'look at what we can do!'



Richard Branson



Rekindle The Spark of Patriotism

@Vande Mataram Memorial
India's First 4D Museum
at Bhujodi



India's journey to independence and the sacrifices of our countrymen to attain it cannot simply be relegated to the pages of history; they need to be experienced and to be re-lived - that is what the Vande Mataram Memorial has set out to achieve.





Vande Mataram Memorial is a unique national Monument seeking to immortalize the most momentous episodes in India's freedom struggle from British Rule. The museum uses a combination of art, architecture and technology to create an immersive experience, which helps the tourists to relive the journey to independence first-hand.



For those who are keen to reconnect with their roots and seek to renew and restore their sense of national pride and belonging, a visit to the Memorial will be a great idea. Witness the significant events from India's freedom struggle, including the British landing in the court of Emperor Jehangir, the Durban episode in South Africa where Bapuji was unceremoniously offloaded onto the platform in South Africa, the Dandi March, the Quit India Movement, the martyrdom of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and the transfer of power by the British to the Constituent Assembly of India, among the many of the events. The memorial immortalizes 17 crucial episodes of India's freedom struggle.



So the next time you plan to explore Gujarat or Kutch, make sure to get a dose of our proud history stored at Vande Mataram Memorial. [TM](#)



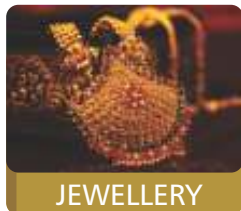
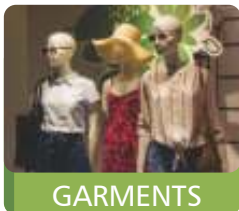


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