

# PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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September 2018

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*A high-end monthly magazine*

**A fairytale journey  
to Barot Valley**

**Maritime Heritage Tourism  
in India**

**A 'Maple Leaf' holiday  
of a lifetime!**



**Virtual  
World Travel**





*Happy  
World  
Tourism  
Day!*

Yes, 27th September is celebrated as the World Tourism Day and we thought there is no better way to celebrate the day than to talk about the same with you folks. Are you wondering about the theme this year? Here are the hints – you heavily rely on it FOR EVERYTHING, from getting locations to booking film tickets and what not. Did someone say mobile phone? Yes, you are close. We are talking about the significance of digital technologies.

Our article on VIRTUAL WORLD TRAVEL will make you travel the world with the help of digital technology without loosening your purse strings. So get set for the exciting ride around the most amazing destinations of the world!

Since World Tourism Day shares its day with the World Maritime Day, we also celebrate the MARITIME RICHES OF INDIA by walking through the milestone destinations that tell the tales of its prosperous bygone era.

And if you're a believer of 'Wild is Wonderful', we bring the most distinctive festival from the Northeastern region of the country. The place, located in the middle of nowhere, transforms into Music-lover's Paradise during the Ziro Festival, which offers the rare combination of melodious music, scrumptious food and splendid nature.

Read on!



# PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

September 2018

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Accelerating ideas

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Niagara Falls

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Far Far away

# Virtual World TRAVEL



“The importance of digital technologies in tourism, providing opportunities for innovation and preparing the sector for the future of work”, is at the centre of World Tourism Day 2018, to be celebrated in Budapest, Hungary on 27th September, 2018. We look at some exciting digital tours that are good even for armchair travellers who do not want to travel.

Digital technologies are changing the way the world travels - from ticket and hotel bookings to finding places to see and food to eat, the travellers today are hooked to the net. One of the greatest transformations in tourism is Virtual Reality Technology - whether you are looking to experience a place before visiting or enjoy the travel experience from the couch at home, VR has it all.

## Tour the landmarks of *Philadelphia*

Philadelphia is a home to many historical sites and museums that relate to the founding of the United States of America. View the sights of the city on [visitphilly.com/virtual-tour](http://visitphilly.com/virtual-tour) before you even visit the city. The VISIT PHILADELPHIA's 360-degree photography and video with virtual-reality capabili-

ties has 25 panoramic, 360-degree photos and videos that can be viewed as an immersive tour on a VR headset or in full screen format from desktop, smartphone or tablet. Viewers can climb the 72 rocky steps at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, explore The Franklin Institute's Rotunda,

featuring the 20ft tall Benjamin Franklin National Memorial, skate along the Benjamin Franklin Bridge, look around Elfreth's Alley and experience the heart of Washington Square. It is like actually being there!







# Live among the horses of Lexington

Lexington, consolidated with Fayette County and often denoted as Lexington-Fayette, is the second-largest city in Kentucky and the 60th largest city in the United States. The name "Kentucky" means "meadow lands" in several different Indian languages. The European planters noticed that horses grazed in the Bluegrass Region of Kentucky were hardier than those from other regions; this is due to the high content of calcium in the soil. Thus, this grew to become a breeding area for thoroughbred horses.

Today, Lexington is advertised as the Horse Capital of the World with

some beautiful videos of horse farms on [www.visitlex.com](http://www.visitlex.com). One of the media advertisements here was shot by Vegas Trip and Barbie Mills on two of the ponies. And as the line in commercial says, "This commercial was filmed by a horse. Seriously".

You must also see the 360-degree video, "Horses", which will immerse you into the world of horse by providing a 360-degree view of race day, grooming of the horses and their roaming and grazing in the fields. This is a classic example of virtual reality advertisement to catch the eye of a niche audience.



VISITLEX Things to Do Hotels Restaurants Ideas Guide About Lexington KY

Wed! Come see us.   
 The emerald fields of Lexington's horse country   
 Start planning your getaway to the Horse Capital of the World.

### Kentucky's Showplace

Located in the heart of the Bluegrass Region, Lexington is known around the globe as the "Horse Capital of the World". The city is surrounded by green rolling hills and the perfectly maintained pastures of more than 400 horse farms. This is the region that gave birth to American, the United States, only native sport, and many charming traditions are only a short drive away. We invite you to discover our magnificent ordinary scenes, historic attractions, quiet neighborhood and abundant shopping opportunities.

AUGUST 2018						
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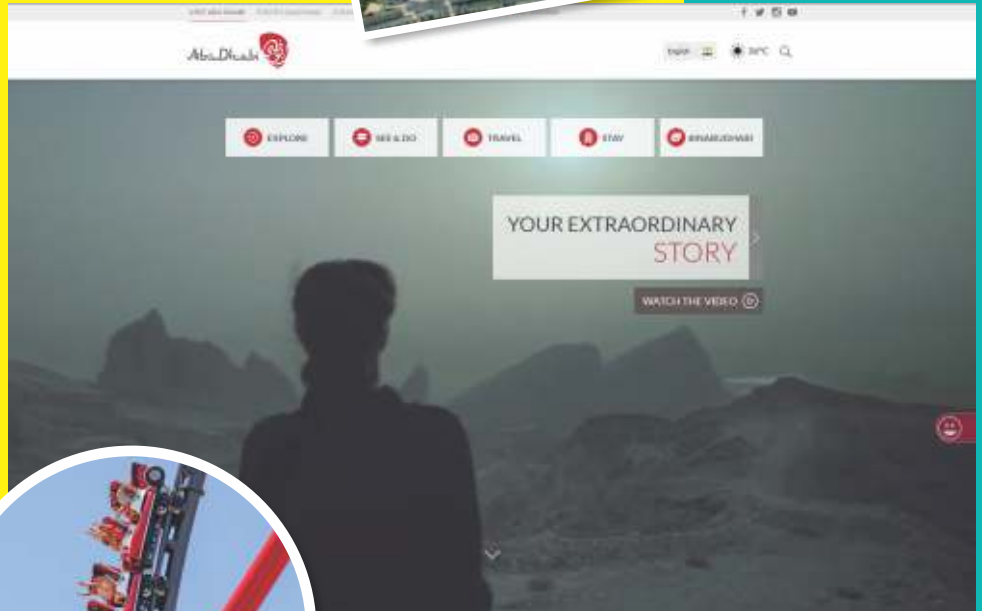
## Experience the winter sports of **British Columbia**

Adventure and sports videos can work up some adrenaline ahead of a trip. One such excellent video can be seen on [www.winterwithin.ca/home-ca#](http://www.winterwithin.ca/home-ca#). The Winter Within: Whistler Blackcomb 360 Ski Video shows you what it is like to be in the largest ski resort in North America with one of the greatest uphill lift capacities on the continent. From the gondola lift to the slopes and cedar forests, the video allows viewers more of a view that the skiers themselves can enjoy!

Other videos take you kayaking from Telegraph Cove on Vancouver Island to whale-watching and wildlife viewing or exploring ice-caves near Whistler.

## Get close to landmarks of Abu Dhabi

Abu Dhabi – Your Extraordinary Story on Abu Dhabi Tourism Authority's <https://visitabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx> website enables visitors to virtually visit Abu Dhabi in all its glory – natural landmarks, heritage, the speed of galloping horses on the race tracks, the fast cars of Ferrari World, the wildlife and adventure activities at Sir Bani Yas Island and the sea. You sure can't wait to go to this enchanting Arabian land once you see the video.



## Inspired by Iceland

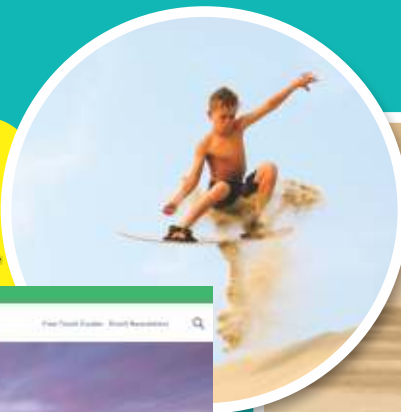
Iceland's video on [www.inspiredbyiceland.com/a-o/](http://www.inspiredbyiceland.com/a-o/) invites people of the world to sing the a-ö of Iceland in a musical journey across the country. It challenges you to sing along with Steindi and share the Hardest Karaoke Song in the World on social media. The video has enticing views of Iceland from its coastal waters to its snow mountains.



## Travel Oregon's Salmon Tour Guides

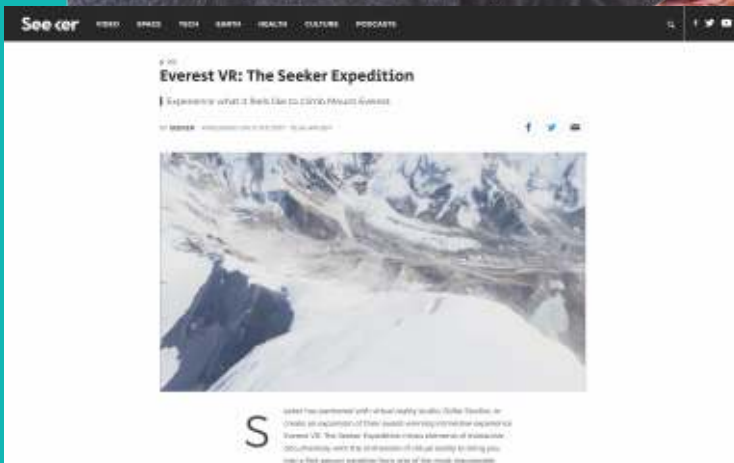


In a slightly eccentric campaign, Oregon has a salmon taking you on a tour of Oregon's many natural environments like sand dunes, vineyards and other beauty spots. See what it is like to ride a buggy up the dunes, enjoy stargazing, taste wines, go fly fishing or take one of the scenic biking trails by visiting [www.traveloregon.com](http://www.traveloregon.com)



## The Grand Canyon Experience

The Grand Canyon VR Experience [www.immersiveentertainment.com/the-grand-canyon-vr-experience/](http://www.immersiveentertainment.com/the-grand-canyon-vr-experience/) allows you to experience the journey in a virtual motorized kayak theme-park type ride through The Grand Canyon. You can even tailor the tour of your preferences by selecting either a sunlit or moonlit experience, and by controlling the speed of the ride. Along the way, you can enjoy the sights and sounds of wildlife, feed the virtual fish and can stop at various points to enjoy the scenery by exiting the kayak at scenic rest stops. It is available from Valve's Steam Store and at the Oculus Home app store.



## Everest VR

If you wondered what it was like to climb Everest, [www.seeker.com/vr/seeker-expedition](http://www.seeker.com/vr/seeker-expedition) is what you need to experience the interactive mountain climbing elements.



# A ‘Maple Leaf’ holiday of a lifetime!

**A**s I stood there on the edge of a lake, entranced by its sheer beauty and quietude, I was reminded of the Persian poet Amir Khusru's remark when he first saw Kashmir. He was reported to have said, "If there is heaven on earth, it is here, it is here, it is here!" The shimmering glacial waters stretched before me. The

tall coniferous trees came cascading down to the fringes of the lake. At the high reaches, the rocky mountains still had patches of melting snow. A seagull languidly flew over the lake in search of food. Yes indeed, yes indeed, yes indeed, what lay before me certainly looked like a slice of heaven! I was in Quebec province of Canada looking across a lake

in the Gaspesie National Park. I was on a Canadian road trip that was planned covering 5000 km across Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Quebec.

Just a month back, I was listening on the phone, with mounting excitement, to my friend in Belgium who invited me to accompany him on a 3-week Recce trip





Architecture of Old Quebec



Quebec City



Gaspésie National Park



Toronto



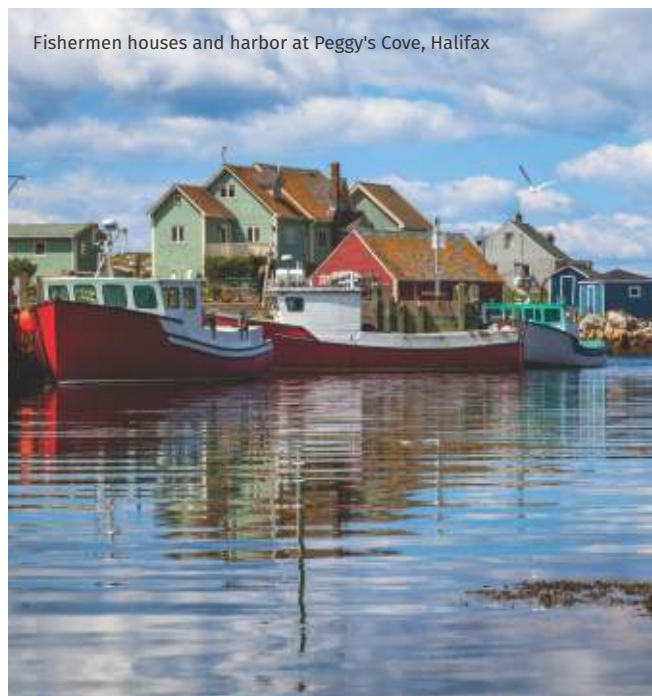
Niagara Falls



Rainbow Bridge

across Canada as a precursor to a vintage car rally. I had no hesitation in accepting his offer.

We flew into a very pleasantly cool Toronto where we spent the day exploring the city and then the following day took the bus to see Niagara Falls, one of the most recognizable landmarks in the world. It was all that it was purported to be - majestic, magnificent and utterly spectacular! And because we had our US visa, we were able to walk across the Rainbow Bridge into USA and see the falls from the US side! And we will attest to the fact that the best place to see Niagara Falls is definitely from



Fishermen houses and harbor at Peggy's Cove, Halifax

the Canadian side from where you can have a much wider view of the fall like looking through a wide angle lens.

The following day, we flew to Halifax, Nova Scotia, from where the road trip began. We picked up the car, a Grand Caravan Dodge, a roomy SUV with plenty of space for us and luggage.

Halifax has one of the largest natural harbours in the world and is now frequented by all the major shipping lines. It has all the charm of a historic city with beautiful tree-lined avenues and elegant 18th and 19th century buildings. And it is easy enough to explore on foot. The harbour-front is lively with

## PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

bustling cafes and restaurants. We visited the charming British colonial town of Lunenburg (a UNESCO heritage site). The town was one of the first British attempts to settle Protestants in Nova Scotia. It also houses one of Canada's most recognisable iconic landmarks - the Peggy's Cove Lighthouse, built sometime in the middle of the 19th century.

Leaving Halifax, our next stop was Cape Breton Island (434km/05.40h). We drove on the Cabot Trail, one of the most scenic drives in the country. We passed the Highlands National Park with views of the mighty river St. Lawrence that followed us almost the entire length of our travels. It was late afternoon by the



Lunenburg (a UNESCO heritage site)



Cape Breton Island

time we reached the charming little fishing village of Ingonish Beach.

Prince Edward Island was our next halt (391km/06h, if we had taken the Confederation Bridge). We took the ferry instead from Caribou to cross over to PEI, which took a little longer. Our halt for the night was at Spry Point. Here there were beautiful wooded areas to explore. The only fly in the ointment were the ravenous and so-very-focused swarms of mosquitoes. The sight of the many blue lakes with happy paddlers

and the picture postcard perfect villages we passed, all added to an enduring image.

We drove through the Cavendish sector of Prince Edward Island National Park and then along the Gulf of St. Lawrence, passing beautiful red sandstone cliffs, white sandy beaches and picturesque farm houses to reach Charlottetown (70km/1h). After quiet tranquillity of the earlier stops, we found Charlottetown buzzing with activities. The pubs and cafes were full





of summertime visitors and locals enjoying the vibrant cultural scene. It was here that a conclave held in 1864, led to the creation of Canada.

Next destination on our itinerary was Baie des Chaleurs (497km/05.30h), en route stopping at Shippagan for a peek at the Aquarium & Marine Centre and the lighthouse. Before entering Quebec province, we made a quick stop at Micou Island to climb to the top of Miscou Island Lighthouse. This is the oldest lighthouse in operation built in 1856. It stands 23 metres above sea level at high tide. The view across the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the countryside was stunning but the gale force wind made us beat a hasty retreat down!



Cabot Trail



## PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

We enter Quebec province, where the time zone went back an hour. Our halt was at Carleton-Sur-Mer Beach, where everything went French! Carleton-Sur-Mer or Carleton-on-the Beach is one of the few places, where you can swim comfortably in the ocean without getting too cold.

Sculpted by time and the sea, the iconic Perce Rock was next on the agenda (202km/02.46h). The impressive rock formation is 471m long, 85m high and has a hole measuring 10m in diameter! The village of Perce is pretty as a picture. A hike of 40 minutes to Mont St Anne (348m) provided wonderful views of Perce Rock and the surrounding villages. We came upon a busy but elegant restaurant on the beach that night where I sampled the most delicious Atlantic Salmon for dinner.



Carleton-Sur-Mer

Perce Rock





Bonaventure Island

The following day, we took a boat cruise around the rock and up to Bonaventure Island to see the thousands of migratory birds namely Northern Gannets, Razorbills and Seagulls. The very cute sight of bobbing heads of seal accompanied us all along the cruise!

From Perce, the road leads to Gaspésie National Park in the heart of Gaspé Peninsula (266km/03.30h), a region of high plateau, ridges and deep valleys. It is a paradise for hiking enthusiasts. The park was created to protect the endangered caribou, which survives amidst the coniferous forest. Here a short hike into the park gave us some magnificent views and a glimpse of a moose in the thick of the forest! We

even encountered a coyote running along the road, looking quite lost and scared.

Our next destination was Tadoussac, the oldest village in Canada (392km/06.12h, including the ferry time). In fact, the village celebrated its 400th anniversary in the year 2000. And it was the first trading post for furs established on Canadian territory. We drove to Matane from where we took a 2-hour ferry ride to cross the St. Lawrence River to Baie-Comeau and then onto Tadoussac, listed as one of the 50 most beautiful bays in the world. We walked through the very charming village with cheerful cafes and homes painted in bright colours. We saw the Little Chapel, the oldest wooden church existing in

America.

Tadoussac is one of the best internationally renowned whale-watching sites in the world. Here we took a Zodiac (inflatable boat) for an exciting whale-watching adventure. Even though we were appropriately dressed, it was extremely cold out in the waters. But what did warm us up was the awe-inspiring sight of the massive fin whale and the hump whale as they heaved up out of the surface before diving in. We were guided by an extremely friendly and very knowledgeable young lady who even had a name for the fin whale - Julie!

Next we headed to the spectacular Saguenay Fjord (146km/01.52h). A Fjord is defined as a glacial valley flooded by the sea. The Saguenay Fjord is one of the largest in the world filled with the majestic Saguenay River that empties into an estuary, which we were told was over 100 km from the ocean. We were treated to endless panoramic vistas of green and silver coniferous trees, around every bend and curve for miles.

Our long and winding road next took us to Charlevoix (157km/02h). Designated as a World Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, the landscape is dominated by steep cliffs, nature parks and pretty villages nestled at the base of hills or in peaceful coves.

We set course for the birthplace of French culture in the USA, the beautiful and historic Quebec city (139km/02hr). En route we stop at the Montmorency





Falls that dominates the landscape. Looming 83 metres high (30 metres taller than Niagara Falls!), the water flows at the rate of 35,000 litres per second! Quebec is perched on the cliffs of Cap Diamant and is the only fortified city in North America. Rambling along the cobbled streets of the old town was extremely enchanting, with its historic buildings and stone houses. We picked up little souvenirs as we ambled along (a variety of cookies and sauces all made of maple syrup!) and even came upon a massive wall painting of a village scenes from times gone by.

Leaving the excitement of the city, we headed out to Mauricie National Park (205km/02.25h). Once again, we were

enveloped by the serenity of the undulating terrain and variegated forests with its network of lakes and rivers, hills and valleys. Here, as someone mentioned, only the changing seasons marked the passage of time.

From Mauricie, our road reached Outaouais (252km/02.50h), yet another playground for outdoor activities that changed with the seasons. An added attraction here for us was our halt at Fairmont Le Chateau Montebello – the largest log cabin in the world! Here we were treated to great service and world-class cuisine.

The following day, we visited Parc Omega. This is a fascinating drive-in safari park along a 12-km route and is

dotted with small hills, valleys and lakes. The wildlife that can be seen here includes deer, elks, black bears, Arctic wolves, coyotes, bison, caribou etc. We purchased bags of carrot from the Visitors' Centre to feed the animals. As we drove in, we were met by friendly elks and wapitis that come up to the cars nosing

for carrots! It was totally an uplifting experience to see animals up so close in a park that had huge enclosures and yet seemed open and free - a very happy place for animals and humans to interact.

If you were wondering when I was going to talk of the famous maple syrup (a country that produces 75% of the world's supply), well your wait is over! We drove to Riguad looking for Pierre Faucher's sugar shack. Looking like Santa with a hoary beard and flowing hair, and a larger-than-life personality, Pierre Faucher is a nationally and internationally renowned personality associated with maple syrup. At Riguad, he started a sugar shack in 1978, where he taps over 3000 maple trees in the frost of March and April. He would cook a hearty meal for his half frozen tappers and today his food, hospitality and his maple syrup (all produced in the traditional way) are legendary. After a sumptuous lunch and an interesting meeting with his son Stefan, we continued our drive to the Eastern Townships. What greeted us were more idyllic villages, mountains, lakes and mature maple forests.

Before our final stop in Montreal, we stopped at the Bombardier Museum in Valcourt. It showcases the genius of the inventor Joseph-Armand Bombardier. His idea to build a snow vehicle came about after the death of his son who could not be taken to a medical facility on time due to a blizzard. And so the





first snowmobile was born, followed by aircrafts, trains, etc. A well-laid out and very interactive museum, it also uses multimedia to totally engross the young and old.

And then on to our final stop - Montreal, the second-largest Francophone city in the world after Paris. It is a pulsating cosmopolitan city with 120 distinct communities. The vast underground network of shops, boutiques and cafes offer to the people a comfortable environment in winter and summer to shop or eat in. We discovered the city on foot, trekking for over 6 hours as we went from one beautiful neighbourhood to another - delightful Old Montreal, vibrant Downtown, Latin Quarter and the colourful Gay Village. We sampled some fine French cuisine and happily and sinfully licked on maple taffy.

And then it was time to say “au revoir” to the land of lakes and rivers and beautiful pristine forests. There was so much that we discovered, experienced and sampled. Today, Canada for us means not just maple leaf and maple syrup but a whole new world of travel experience. A highly recommendable place to visit. 🇨🇦



An interesting trivia on Nova Scotia - As history will affirm, Nova Scotia flourished during the prohibition years in the US when enterprising Nova Scotians would send ship loads of liquor through clandestine routes into the US to satisfy the liquor starved Americans. One particular daring rum runner was Bill McCoy who was known for the high quality of his spirits that was never watered down. Hence, the designation of pure liquor as 'the real McCoy' was an expression used throughout the rum running era and then fell into common usage, as we know it, to mean genuine or authentic. Strange are the ways how certain expressions originate!



The road trip doubtless was a little expensive, but we saved some money by opting to have picnic lunches. We stopped at 'Depanneur' (French super markets) and picked up bread, cheese and some cold cuts, and lots of strawberries, raspberries and blueberries to complete the meal. We picked beautiful spots by the river or well maintained picnic spots and enjoyed the repast.

If travelling with children, it is a good idea to stop by the numerous lake-sides where recreational activities like canoeing, paddling and swimming are possible. Some places also offer water skiing. Always carry your swimwear - there are many opportunities to plunge in for a swim.

# Maritime Heritage Tourism in India

“

*As the world celebrates World Maritime Day 2018 in September 2018, we look at a few exciting maritime heritage destinations in India.*

”



## Enjoy maritime tourism in the Andaman

Start your tour at Port Blair, a city surrounded by tropical forest and rugged coastline. Visit Samudrika Naval Marine Museum run by the Indian Navy, which offers an insight into the history, geography and culture of the islands, flora, fauna and tribal groups. Don't miss the whale skeleton and the superb marine life display. For more information on the tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, proceed to the Anthropological Museum. A short boat ride from Port Blair takes you to Ross Island, which has remains of its British colonial glory.

For water-based activities, visit the Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex, where you can choose from an array of aqua-sports like banana boat rides, jet skiing, parasailing, speed boat rides or rowboat paddling. From the water sports complex, you can take a boat trip north to North Bay Beach. This is an ideal place for snorkeling and glass-bottom

boat rides as the clear waters are excellent for viewing the rich coral formations.

To see marine life, take the boat to the Jolly Buoy or Redskin Island in the Wandoor Marine National Park. The journey from Port Blair to the national park is delightful - you can see beautiful blue lagoons, brilliantly coloured coral reefs and lush tropical rain forested islands on the way. Once at the island, don the mask and snorkel to get close views of the kaleidoscopic sea beds rich in marine life like angel fish, sea urchins, crabs and starfish.

After a couple of days in Port Blair, book your ticket on the ferry to Havelock Island, which is a tropical paradise of sublime white sanded beaches, clear blue shallow waters and some of the best scuba diving possible. Here you can join a diving trip or enroll for a scuba diving course. The rich coral reefs with their colourful fish and interesting marine life await those who take a dive in the waters.

### GETTING THERE

Port Blair is well connected with regular flights from Chennai and Kolkata. For the adventurous and the patient, you can take a passenger ship that heads out to Port Blair from Chennai (60 hours), Kolkata (66 hours), and Visakhapatnam (56 hours).

### MUST EAT

Bengali food at Gagan, South Indian food at Annapurna, barbecued seafood at Lighthouse Residency, western food at Excel and fish at Bayview

### PLACES TO STAY

Fortune Resort Bay Island, Sea Shell, Sinclairs Bay View, Megapode Nest, etc.





*View of Bay of Bengal and Visakhapatnam coastline from the Dolphin hill lighthouse in the city*

## Explore the maritime heritage of Vizag

When it comes to the maritime history of India, few places are as evocative as Visakhapatnam or Vizag, home to the oldest shipyard and the only natural harbour on the east coast of India with one of the busiest ports in India and the headquarters of the Indian Navy's Eastern Command. In September 1804, British and French squadrons fought their naval battle near the harbour. Visakhapatnam Port was established in 1933 and about 10 years later, Japanese war planes attacked the harbour. After independence, the Eastern Naval Command established its base in Vizag and a couple of years later, the Scindia Shipyard was started. It was later nationalised and is now called the Hindustan Shipyard. The Boat Repair Shop was expanded into a Base Repair Organisation (BRO) and was shifted to

its location at the mouth of the northwest channel. The Eastern Naval Command played a key role in India's victory in the 1971 Indo-Pak War - Pakistan Navy submarine 'Ghazi' was sunk when it reached the city to bomb it during that war.

Today, Vizag offers the rare opportunity to see the interiors of a naval submarine, NS Kursura, which was actively used during the 1971 war test firing the NSTL 58 torpedo in 1975. After 31 years of service, it was decommissioned and has been converted into the submarine museum. Climb into the submarine, where retired naval personnel show you the various parts of the ship and narrate details of the challenges faced by naval personnel in a submarine. Another unique museum on the beach road, the TU 142 Aircraft Museum, has the maritime reconnaissance and anti-submarine warfare (ASW) aircraft used for operations in Sri Lanka and

Mauritius. Walk along the beach with a view of Dolphin's Nose. This is where you can see the aquarium called Matsyadarshini and the local park.

Continue from the beach to Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation Museum, which exhibits a treasure trove of archaeological finds and historical artifacts like arms and armory, crockery, coins, silk costumes, jewelry, portraits, manuscripts, letters, diaries, scrapbooks, periodicals and maps, besides models of ships, planes and submarines that is of interest to maritime enthusiasts. See the displays of a search light reflector and the route of Vasco-da-Gama's maiden voyage to India. In the words of Nehru, "To be secure on land, we must be supreme at sea."

Continue to see the Erra Matti Dibbalu (Red sand dunes), Buddhist sites and Dutch heritage monuments at Bheemunipatnam and the Rushikonda Beach.





Rushikonda Beach



*The INS Kursura Submarine Museum at Vizag has the distinction of being one of the very few submarine museums in the world to retain originality.*

**GETTING THERE**

Vishakhapatnam Airport is well networked with many major cities of India. The train track that connects Vishakhapatnam with other railheads lies on the Chennai to Delhi main route. There is good bus service in the city to reach railway station.

**MUST EAT**

Try the cuisines of Andhra at Visakhapatnam. Hotel Daspalla and Hotel Dolphin are good places for passarattu and Andhra meals. Sea Inn - Raju Gaari Dhaba at Rushikonda is a good eatery for local style seafood. Hotel Vihar also offers Andhra food at the Rushikonda Beach. My Restaurant, Godavari Spice, Satyam, Soma Restobar, The Spicy Venue, Godavari, Rasapurna and other restaurants also offer various Andhra dishes.

**PLACES TO STAY**

Welcomhotel Grand Bay, The Gateway Hotel Beach Road, The Park and other good hotels are located near the museum.

## Visit the maritime museum of Kochi

Kochi is a cluster of islands and peninsulas, connected by bridges and ferries across the backwaters. Ranging from historic Fort Kochi to the modern malls of Ernakulam, Kochi offers superb views of the waterfront.

Called the Queen of the Arabian Sea, Kochi was an important spice trading centre on the west coast of India from the 14th century onward, and maintained a trade network with Arab merchants. Kochi flourished in the 16th century when the flooding of the banks of the River Periyar created the natural harbour while simultaneously destroying the port of Craganore that had until then controlled trade from Central Kerala. Another stroke of luck for Kochi was the arrival of the Portuguese who could not strike an alliance with the Zamorin, the ruler of Calicut who controlled trade between Kerala and the middle-east, and turned their attention to Kochi. The Portuguese drew up an agreement with the Raja that helped Kochi grow in importance and at the same

time allowed them to exploit its potential as a trading base. By 1663, the Portuguese lost their hold on international spice market and the control of trade from Kochi passed on to the Dutch.

In 1814 according to the Anglo-Dutch Treaty, the islands of Kochi, including Fort Kochi and its territory, were ceded to the United Kingdom in exchange for the island of Banca. The British harbour engineer Robert Bristow transformed Kochi into the safest harbour in South India. The Maharajah of Kochi initiated local administration in 1896 by forming town councils in Mattancherry and Ernakulam. In 1925, a Kochi legislative assembly was constituted - Thottakkattu Madhaviamma was the first woman to be a member of any legislature in India. In 1947, Kochi Princely State was among the first to agree to the accession to the Republic of India.

The Cochin Port lies on two islands, Willingdon Island and Vallarpadam, and its activities can be seen at Fort Kochi, which has most of Kochi's tourist attractions. Walk around the quaint quarters of Fort Kochi that has European colonial period houses, buildings and warehouses.

The Maritime Museum is housed in INS Dronacharya, the Gunnery School of the Indian Navy at Fort

*The Alappuzha Lighthouse, south of Kochi, was built in 1862 and is a major tourist attraction*

Kochi. In a pair of former bomb shelters, this museum traces the history of maritime trade dating back to the Portuguese and Dutch and the Indian navy. See the naval memorabilia and model battleships. Wander around Fort Kochi to see many monuments of the European colonial period. The St. Francis Church, one of the oldest European churches in India, is where Vasco do Gama was buried when he died in 1524. His remains were shipped to Lisbon 14 years later. Over the years, the church experienced conversions from the time it was built by the Portuguese, the Dutch takeover in 1663 with huge renovations in 1779, and then it became an Anglican church following the British rule under CSI (Church of South India). Continue to Mattacherry to see the Dutch-built Palace of the Maharaja of Kochi full of art, artifacts and heirlooms and the Pardesi Synagogue of the Jews. You can get ferries from here to the many islands.



The lighthouse museum attached to Alappuzha Lighthouse, south of Kochi

Pic by DINESH SHUKLA



Brunton Boatyard, Fort Kochi

#### GETTING THERE

Kochi has its own airport, named the Cochin International Airport. An excellent network of roads connects Kochi to all major towns and cities.

#### MUST EAT

Frys Village Restaurant is a good place to try authentic Kerala food. Kochi has an excellent choice of restaurants and cafes serving international cuisines.

#### PLACES TO STAY

Taj Malabar, Brunton Boatyard, Casino Hotel and Malabar House are some of the top properties near the port.



Chinese fishing nets of Fort Kochi



*Artist Impression of Lothal*

## See the ancient dockyard of Lothal

Lothal lies at the northeastern tip of the Kathiawad peninsula, just 82km south of Ahmedabad. This site was one of the southernmost outposts of the Harappan or Indus Valley Civilisation, and is believed to have been a port on the Gulf of Khambhatta coastline.

The site has a museum with exhibits that show the scientific progress of the Harappans, including their use of standard size bricks, their uniform weights and measures and the high degree of maturity attained by their bead factories and copper workshops. Among the superlative exhibits in the museum are micro-beads of steatite. A necklace made from gold beads, each a mere 25mm in diameter, delicately carved seals and pottery show the levels of skill that existed at this site, and the accurate weights and compasses testify to the Harappans' knowledge of geometry and astronomy. The plans and models made here give an idea of their town planning and the working of their dockyard.

Foundations, platforms, crumbling walls and paved floors are all that remain of the prosperous sea-trading community that dwelt here between 2400 and 1900 BC, when a flood destroyed the settlement. The main site has a huge tank, believed to be a dry dock. Channels enabled ships to sluice to the dock where gates would lock so that the rising water level would float the vessel to be off-loaded. Near the dockyard are remains of warehouses. The remains of the town are grouped into an upper town and a lower town. Both the upper and lower town had drainage channels.

### GETTING THERE

*Lothal is about 82km by road from Ahmedabad, Gujarat.*

### MUST EAT

*There are dhabas serving Kathiawadi food on the highway near Lothal.*

### PLACES TO STAY

*There is a heritage hotel at Utelia, about 7km from Lothal.*



*Archeological remains of Lothal*

## Watch the boat builders of Mandvi

Along the Gulf of Kutch, Mandvi was developed as a port town by Maharao Khengarji-I in 1580, and became a gateway to West Asia and Africa, buzzing with trade as it was at the intersection of the spice route and the camel caravan route. In the 18th century, the Mandvi merchants collectively owned a fleet of 400 vessels trading with East Africa, Malabar coast and the Persian Gulf. In the early 19th century, it was a major port of entry for the hinterlands of Northwest India. Mandvi was a rich and prosperous town, earning four times more revenue from export than import. It was a profit-making center of the Kutch state, surpassing the capital city Bhuj in terms of wealth. As most of the top ports of India were controlled by Europeans, especially the Portuguese, even the Mughals held the Maharao of Kutch in high esteem, as they needed

the port of Mandvi for exports, imports and also for pilgrimages to Mecca.

The major reminder of Mandvi's maritime heritage is the living legacy of boat-building along the banks of the Rukmavati River that flows into the Gulf of Kutch at Mandvi. The ocean-worthy vessels built at Mandvi are the dhows, traditional sailing ships used in the Red Sea and Indian Ocean region. Historians are divided as to whether the dhow was invented by Arabs or Indians, but these vessels are primarily used for trade in the Arab World and South Asia. Traditionally, dhows are sewn boats with planks sewn, stitched, tied, or bound together with flexible wood, such as roots and branches but now metal fasteners like nails are used. Standing by the river, you can watch artisans expertly bending, curving and twisting the planks. Starting with the single beam that will form the base of the ship's hull, the artisans make the

skeletal frame to give shape to the boat, and then complete the boat with planks. Once the planks are fitted together with hundreds of nuts and bolts, the gaps in between are filled with sealant made of cotton dipped in fish oil to make the vessel watertight. The structure is glued together and sealed again and again before finally being treated to several coats of paint to create a robust vessel that is safe to sail through the roughest seas and storms.

The process is almost entirely handmade, except for recent interventions of hand-held drills, and the result is three-storey high vessels ready to travel overseas.

For ship enthusiasts, Sagar Ship Model is located near the dhow building yards of Mandvi. Here you can see and buy a variety of models and prototypes of ships and boats.

While in Mandvi, you must visit the Vijay Vilas Palace and the market, good for handicraft shopping. 📍

### GETTING THERE

Mandvi is about 60km from Bhuj, Gujarat.

### MUST EAT

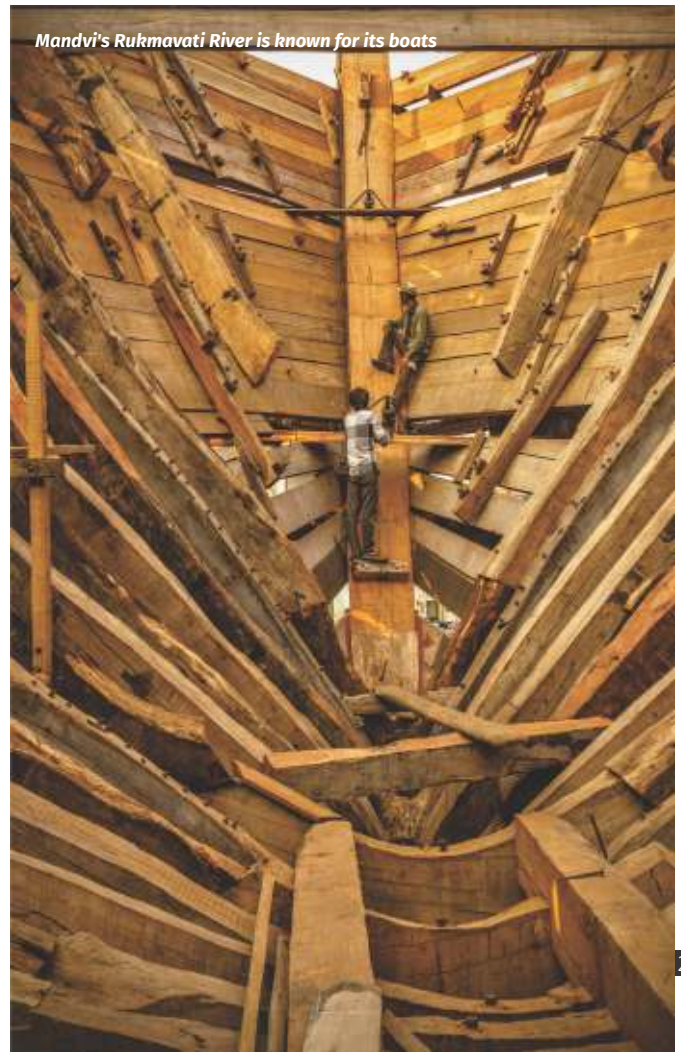
Mandvi is known for its baked goods like buns and cones. The Dabeli is said to have been invented by Keshavji Gabha Chudasama in the 1960s, and Gabha's dabeli is still iconic. Zoraba the Buddha (OSHO) Restaurant is one of the best places in Mandvi to enjoy a Kutchi thali.

### PLACES TO STAY

Serena Beach Resort and Vijay Vilas Heritage Resort are up market beach resorts of Mandvi, while Rukmavati Guest House is a good place for a view of the dhow building yards.



The ship modelling studio at Mandvi



Mandvi's Rukmavati River is known for its boats

# GIR

## Monsoon Festival

*With the Monsoon Festival being celebrated in Bhalchhel village near Sasan Gir from 1st September, 2018 to 16th September 2018, we look at some of the many delights of Gir Forest and the festival.*





**G**ir is the remaining habitat of the Asiatic lion, which once roamed a vast area of Eurasia. Covering about 1412 sq.km., the Gir wildlife reserve encompasses a variety of habitats, including deciduous forests, grasslands, scrub-jungle, water bodies and riverside evergreen flora. With its scenic hill tracts, forests and grasslands, Gir's star attraction is the Asiatic lion followed by the leopard. However, you can hope to see other wildlife too. The chital (spotted deer), the sambar, which is the world's largest deer and the nilgai, the world's largest antelope, are plentiful. The langur, jackal and small mammals, like black-naped hare and mongoose, are also commonly seen. Gir has substantial populations of chousingha, the world's only four-horned antelope, and the chinkara - the graceful Indian gazelle. But these relative diminutive species are hard to spot in the foliage of this wildlife sanctuary. It is the habitat of striped

hyena, jungle cat, rusty spotted cat, pangolin (scaly anteater), ratel or honey badger and porcupine. The rivers here harbor many crocodiles.

Though the national park and sanctuary is closed during the monsoon, you can see many animals in the buffer zone.

### **SASAN GIR**

Come the rains, and the forests of Gir turn lush green and beautiful. Streams and small waterfalls abound, and the rivers are full of water.

This is the time to enjoy birdwatching and butterfly spotting. There are few sights as beautiful as the dance of the peacock, as its tail feathers open up to form a long spectacular train spread-out like a fan that touches the ground on either side showing off his tail coverts adorned with a colorful "eye" at the tip. Many other attractive birds like flycatchers, minivets, avadavats, woodpeckers, painted

francolin, painted sandgrouse, blue jays and orioles are abundant, and you could see some of them in full breeding plumage.

One of the prettiest birds that can be seen in Gir during the monsoon is the Indian pitta, called Navrang in Gujarat because it has an orange beak, dark bluish-green wing, right cobalt blue patch in the wing coverts, and other colours on the back like emerald, white and black. Another monsoon specialty of Gir is the Lesser Florican. In the rainy season, the male floricans leap suddenly from the grass, arch their necks, flutter their wings and fall back with slightly open wings. Besides bird watching, visit the gardens to see a variety of butterflies and watch the dragonflies.

### **LION SAFARI PARK**

Even when the Gir Sanctuary is closed, the safari park at Devaliya is open for visitors. Board the bus at the Gir Interpretation Zone, and enjoy

## PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

through the windows the views of the cross-section of Gir habitat represented in this zone – deciduous forests, open grasslands, thorn scrub and water holes. This zone is very good for wildlife spotting. Nilgai or blue bull, the largest Indian antelope, is usually seen, and also herds of spotted deer or chital. There are also chances of seeing endangered birds like vultures. The driver and guide keep a look in the wilderness for lions – there is a good chance of getting close to them in this landscape. There is also an enclosure with leopards.

### GIR MONSOON FESTIVAL

Gujarat Tourism's Gir Monsoon Festival is yet another reason to visit Sasan Gir in September. This festival offers wide-ranging entertainment like the music of the jungle dwellers, folk dances of the pastoral groups, Siddhi Dhamaal, quizzes, competitions, games and adventure sports. The setting is beautiful with lush green forests on all sides. Wander around the festival grounds to look for dancing peacocks and colourful pittas.





## CULTURAL ATTRACTIONS

The Gir area is also culturally interesting. Here, you can see settlements of pastoral groups like the Maldhars and the Sorathi Rabaris. This is also one of the strongholds of the Siddis, a group comprising people of African descent settled from centuries in Gujarat. Most Siddis are descended from the Bantu people of the African Great Lakes region who came to India as merchants, sailors, miners, indentured servants, slaves and warriors. Some of them were mercenary warriors and some achieved great fame and status under the Gujarat Sultanate. Although Gujarati Siddis have adopted the Gujarati language and customs, they still practice the Goma music and dance form called Siddi Dhamaal, inspired by traditional Bantu dances and drumming. These dances also have spiritual significance. The dohas of the Maldhars and the dhaamal dance of the Siddis are major attractions of the Gir Monsoon Festival.

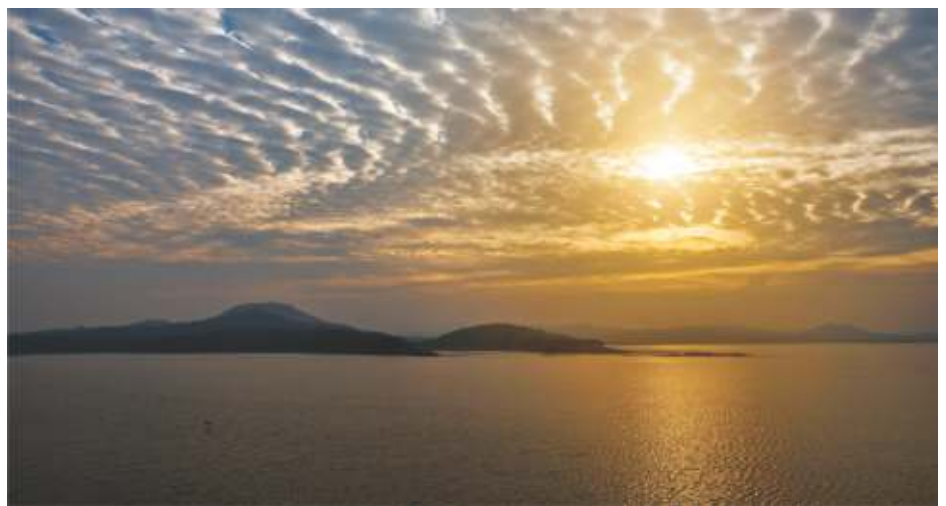


## RIVERS

Another highlight of visiting Gir during the monsoon is enjoying a view of more than seven rivers that flow through the forests. The Shingoda River has some safe spots for bathing. Follow the river to the Jamjir Waterfalls also known as Zamzeer Waterfalls. This waterfall with 2 distinct levels is among the most beautiful in Saurashtra. Jamjir Retreat by the river Shingoda is a certified home stay.

## KANKAI

While in Gir, don't miss an opportunity to drive to Kankai. This holy place is right in the middle of forests – lions and leopards are often seen on the way. Associated with the Mahabharata, Kankai also has Shri Kankeshwari Mataji Mandir, set by the Shingavada River. The drive is beautiful in the monsoon. 📍



## HOMESTAY TOURISM IN GIR

Homestay is the best way to explore the local culture. Sasan has homestays, which are approved by Gujarat Tourism.

### Meeraben Girdharlal Buha

Phone: 02876-220662 M.: 9427740262

### Krishnaba Ghanshyamsinh Raijada

Mobile: 9998585003

### Rameshbhai Hirabhai Khunt

Mobile: 9998018236, 9998889848

### Chanabhai Raghavbhai Chavda

Mobile: 9427229187

### Rajendrasinh Ranjitsinh Chudasama

Mobile: 9033799303

### Yogeshbhai Jagajivandas Raichura

Mobile: 9925152954

### Falgunsinh Dharmendrasinh Jhala

Mobile: 8511567739, 8511576816

### Narendrasinh Virbhanbhai Jhala

Mobile: +91 9537657670

### Ushaben Tansukhbhai Thakrar

Mobile: 9769197781, 840197726

### Narasinhbhai Ramajibhai Manavar

Mobile: 9726502974

### Mohamadkhan Abdulhamidkhan Bloch

Mobile: 9824298352

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Lava, West Bengal



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Afia Farzana Proma

*Padma T Badh, Bangladesh*

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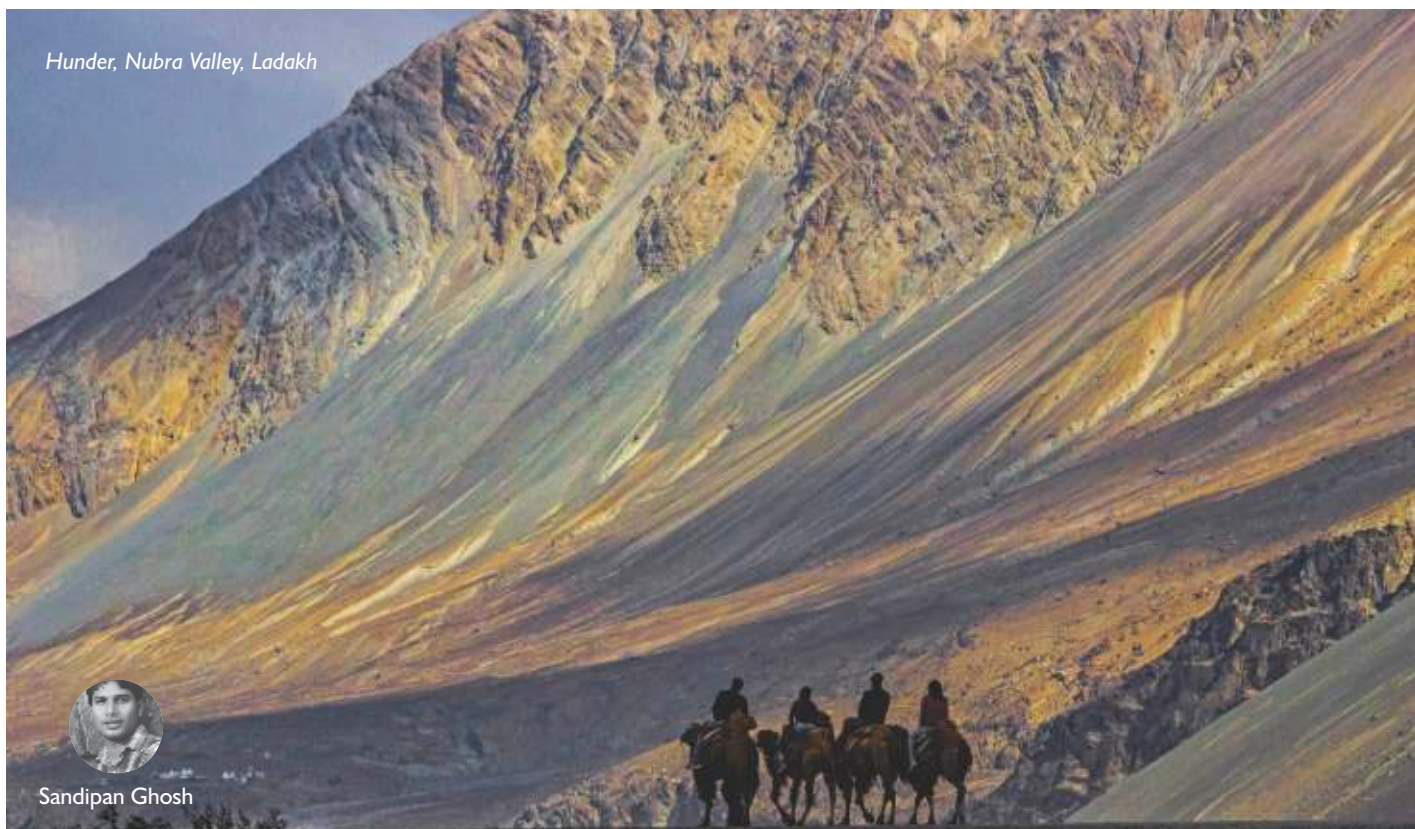
Nangsei Kharbuki

Sohra ,Cherrapunjee



Raajan Dutta

Hunder, Nubra Valley, Ladakh



Sandipan Ghosh



*Kjosfossen Waterfall, Norway*



Rumku Chowdhury



*Gurudongmar Lake, Sikkim*



Tanmoy Dey

# Ziro Festival

## *Celebrating Life*





“  
*The trend of Music Festivals in India is not very old. Goa started it with Sunburn Festival and then the festivals slowly moved to Pune and Mumbai. When this was happening, the locales of Northeast regions, especially Meghalaya and Arunachal were having small festival with local bands.*  
 ”

**Z**iro Festival was among the first outdoor events, which was started with the aim of bringing music lovers and Indie artists on one platform. The festival organizers were probably looking for a venue in Arunachal Pradesh and when they saw Ziro, they didn't go any further.

Ziro is a home to indigenous Apatani Tribe. The tribal community is known for the women who tattoo their faces and keep huge nose piercings. Apart from the locals, the setting of Ziro Festival of Music is also like floating on a dream.





Surrounded by vast fields of paddy and mountains on all four sides, the festival venue mesmerizes everyone who comes here. The location is in the middle of nowhere. For four days, Ziro Festival becomes host for hundreds of strangers who come here from various corners of India.

### **Camping Experience of Ziro**

Other festivals are often organized in the city where finding a hotel or resort is very easy. But in Ziro, there is no option but to live at a campsite, next to green farm watching clouds hovering on top of the mountains.

The scenic drive to Ziro takes you across raging river-streams, random waterfalls and occasional sightings of wild elephants. The journey is tiring but the moment you enter Ziro and see the beauty of the region, your energy comes back.

### **Inner Line Permit to Enter Arunachal**

Arunachal Pradesh requires ILP for Indian nationals for the entry. It is a

simple process available online that takes 10 minutes to fill-up a form. Normally, the ILP is approved in 15 days but if delayed, you can get your paper-work done at Naharlagun station or at the entry checkpoint on Assam-Arunachal border. This 15-minute procedure is often delayed during the music festival because the number of applicants increases.

### **Ziro Festival – A Foodies Delight**

If music is not your thing, then it doesn't mean that Ziro is not the place for you. The gorgeous Arunachali food and the homemade rice beer can be the best of the reasons to visit Ziro Festival. The local folks of Ziro churn out rice beer at their home, which is known as Apong. This alcoholic drink is the perfect companion that you can carry around during the festival.

If you are a non-alcoholic, you can try from the delicious food, including barbecued fish, pork, vegetables and soup. If you wish to get into the experimental zone, try the amazing fried silkworms.







### Not just music festival

Ziro is a year-round place. Visit the local homes, explore the nature and its beauty, meet the kind and hospitable locals in the villages of Ziro Valley. Take a walk around the farms and see how they grow rice and fish on the same land.

Ziro is a place that is very close to nature and once you have your introduction, your level of respect for the ecosystem will surely increase. 🌿

### How to reach

Travelling to Ziro is not an easy task. The nearest railway station is in Naharlagun and the airport is in Guwahati. It takes a drive of almost 12 hours to reach Ziro from Guwahati. You can reach Guwahati and then catch an overnight train to Naharlagun, which cuts down the road journey by 6 hours.

# Gujarat's art & crafts gets global attention

**Garvi Gurjari-2018 marked the new beginning for art and crafts of Gujarat**





Gujarat has a rich and colorful legacy of handicrafts and handloom. In the times of industrialization, the weavers and artisans of Gujarat still craft the artistic creations adhering to the norms set by tradition and using their imagination and simple tools. From Ajarakh and Batik Prints of Kutch to Patola of Patan, the State of Gujarat has created a niche for itself in handloom and handicrafts arena.

With the Government of Gujarat's support, the handloom and handicrafts sector is attaining new horizons in the global market. One such event – Garvi Gurjari 2018 was organized on 3-4-5-6 August, 2018 at Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar by Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited to promote the State's handloom & handicrafts sector.

Over 100 international buyers from across the world and 200 national buyers representing various states of India attended this 4-day mega promotional event, which was aimed at facilitating B2B meetings between the buyers and artisans of Gujarat. International buyers from over 25 countries including USA, UK, Germany, New Zealand, Kenya, Sri Lanka and Bhutan arrived for the Garvi Gurjari-2018 Meet.





More than 30 art & crafts of Gujarat were on display in a special exhibition showcasing the exquisite creativity and vibrant handloom & handicraft designs of the State.

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Gujarat, Shri Vijaybhai Rupani graced the Inaugural Session of the Event with his august presence. During the Inaugural Session, MoUs were signed by Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited with four international organizations towards promotion and sale of Garvi Gurjari products. Bhutan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, The Craft Safari-Dubai, Ian Snow Limited-UK and Yiwu Pradip Shetty Fashion Trading Co. Ltd.-China signed MoUs expressing their keen interest for selling the State's handloom & handicraft products. On the occasion, a special mobile application was launched by the Hon'ble Chief Minister to facilitate online sale of Garvi Gurjari Products.



Among other dignitaries present at the Event were Shri Jayeshbhai Radadiya, Minister of Cottage Industries and Shri Sandeep Kumar, IAS, Secretary (Cottage & Rural Industries). Shri Shankarbhai Dalwadi, Chairman of Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Limited welcomed all the buyers.

A Seminar on Handloom & Handicraft products of Gujarat witnessed presence of international speakers including Dr. Surapee, Ex-President of World Craft Council, Ms. Shirley Jayawardane, Sr. Vice President from Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka and Mr. Chorten Dorji, Executive Director of Handicraft Association of Bhutan. The speakers discussed the global outlook of the





handloom & handicrafts sector, their international experiences, market trends and strategies towards effective marketing of the products.

A special Garvi Gurjari-2018 Fashion Show displayed a wide range of Gujarat's handloom & handcrafted apparels amidst the splendid audio-visual arrangements. The designer fabrics reinforced the eternity of Gujarat's traditional art and crafts, and impressed the large audience at the show.

The exhibition area at Garvi Gurjari-2018 brimmed with appreciation towards wide array of colorful art and crafts on display amidst enthusiastic participation of buyers and sellers in the B2B meetings.

While the first two days i.e. 3rd and 4th August were reserved exclusively for B2B meetings between buyers and sellers, the next two days, 5th and 6th August witnessed tens of thousands of general visitors showing their keen interest in exploring and buying assorted handcrafted Garvi Gurjari products.

All in all, Garvi Gurjari-2018 International Buyer Seller Meet received overwhelming response from the buyers and sellers alike, and opened new opportunities for strategic associations and business development in handloom & handicraft items.

Garvi Gurjari-2018 National Buyer Seller Meet is scheduled on 5-6-7 October, 2018 at Kolkata. The event will witness participation of 50 artisans & weavers From Gujarat and 100 National Buyers. ■

# A fairytale journey to Barot Valley



A small broken patch of road diverges from the highway leading to Mandi. Dense thick deodar trees, foggy route and views of tiny, beautiful villages easily take your attention away. This road bifurcates towards the beautiful Barot Valley, an untouched and unexplored part of Himachal Pradesh. Barot is bestowed with gorgeous meadows, spectacular views of cloudy mountains and beautiful Uhl and Lamba dug rivers flowing by.

The scenic Barot Valley is accessible through a narrow road with several hairpin bends. While the casual crowd





ends their trip at Bir, the highest paragliding site of India, the ones looking for some time-off drive further towards Joginder Nagar and Ghatasani to reach Barot.

Barot Valley has something for everyone. Some visit Barot Valley for a relaxed weekend, while others explore the local trekking routes to Rajgundha and Bada Bhargal. Its many surprises will make you ditch your regular destinations and surprise yourself with something more exciting.



### Abundance of homestays for a local experience

Unlike the regular touristy destinations of Manali, Dharamshala and Shimla, Barot doesn't have a big hotel or resort. The local guest houses, forest rest houses and stay homes are present in plenty and are perfect for those who don't have a lot of expectations but a warm bed and room with scenic views.

### Trout fish farms

Barot is one of the prime destinations for angling in Himachal Pradesh. Apart from Tirthan Valley, the major population of Trout Fish is found in the fisheries of Barot. The villages of Multhan and Lohardi have a number of Trout fishing farms. The confluence of Uhl and Lambadug rivers serve as the perfect spot for better quality breeding. Most of the local dhabas and stay homes offer trout fish in their menu and is a treat to try it at least once.

### How to reach Barot Valley

Barot Valley is accessible from both Mandi and Kangra districts. It is 65km from Mandi and takes almost 2 and a half hour to reach there. One can also take a bus from Joginder Nagar (if coming from Bir or Dharamshala) and then take another bus to Lohardi.

Barot Valley is a serene destination perfect to break the monotony. While Barot is accessible all around the year, the monsoons are not ideal for treks. 10



### Rajgundha - Billing Trek

Rajgundha - Billing trek has been one of the many trails used by the Gaddi Nomads to folk their sheeps. The more you move towards its base, the view becomes more pleasant. Unexpected rainfalls are common in Barot Valley, so you need to prepare your trek keeping the weather in mind.

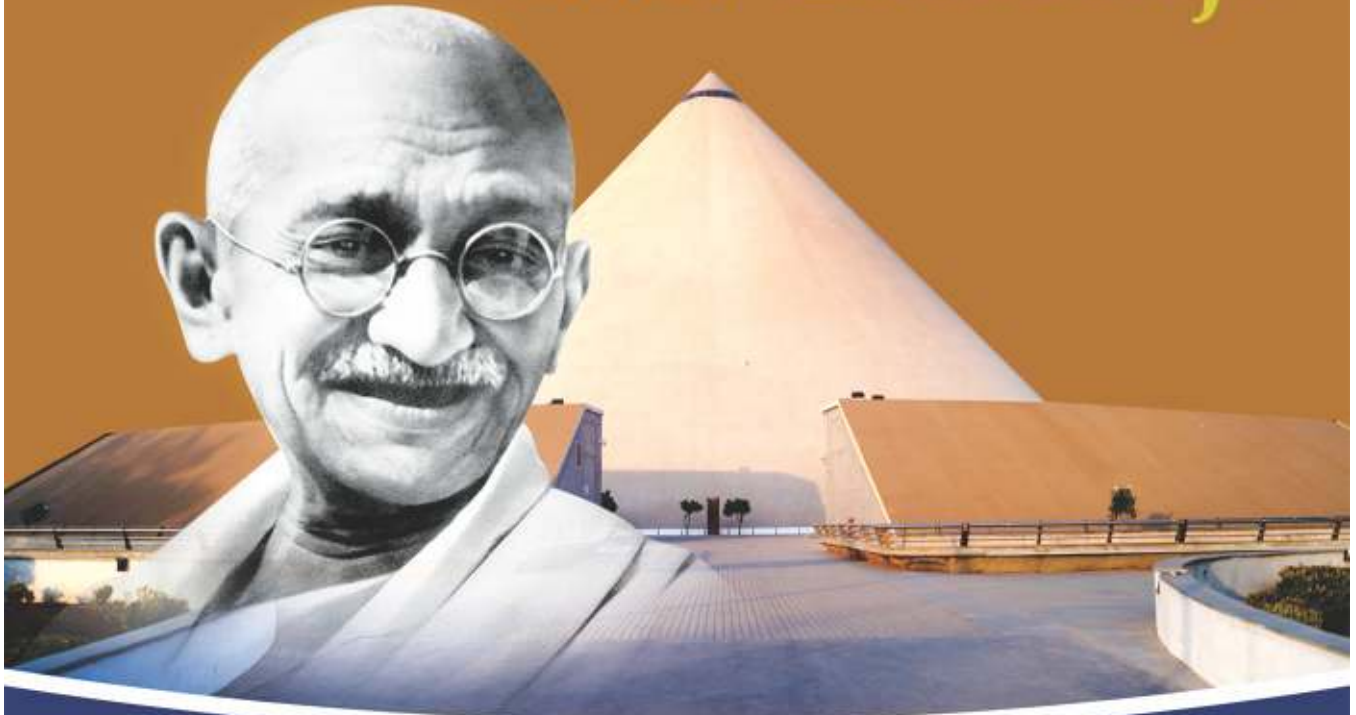
Rajgundha trek takes you across lovely, tranquil meadows running parallel to Uhl River. Apart from the Gaddi shepherds, you'll hardly see anyone on this route. This makes the chances of getting lost on the trail a little higher.

Rajgundha has new stay homes coming up, thanks to the newly developed road leading all the way to Billing.

The views from the top of the hill offer uninterrupted views of beautiful snow-clad mountains. The forest rest house is the only stay option with some basic amenities provided for a mere sum of INR 320 per night.

- 1 With some small hikes in this area, the natural beauty of this valley is breathtaking
- 2 A setting like this makes me want to go back to school
- 3 The valley that takes you between Mandi and Kangra valley on foot is a way to experience simple joys of life
- 4 One of the notable points of interest in Barot Valley. This British era track that was built to transport luggage and people from Joginder Nagar

'There is Something  
about **Gandhiji**'



**DANDI KUTIR**  
THE GANDHI MUSEUM



Sports, Youth & Cultural Activities Department  
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# Gujarat Homestays

*When in Gujarat, be a Gujarati*



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- Additional income and enjoyable business activity for home owners
- Payment by tourists towards boarding and lodging services
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## The Cultural Heritage of **VADNAGAR**

“  
*Archaeological excavations indicate that Vadnagar was an important city in the second century. The excavated township has revealed 1900-year-old Buddhist sculpture, coins and pottery sherds.*  
”

**T**oday, the symbol of Vadnagar is its torans, archways spanning huge columns sculpted with beautiful carvings. These torans, according to many scholars and architects, were probably kirti stambhas or pillars of fame built for rituals like hanging the ceremonial swings for the

gods on auspicious days or for weighing the ruler against gold for distribution among the deserving. They were built during the reign of the Solanki Rajputs who were in power in Gujarat during the 11th and 12th centuries.

Entering through huge carved gateways erected by Solanki ruler Kumarapal, and passing Nagar havelis, you can reach to the 17th century Hatkeshwar Temple, an important pilgrimage for the Nagar Brahmin Community. In the town is the Sharmishta Talav, which is a good example of the magnificent scale of the water bodies built by these rulers. It is a proof of excellent hydraulic engineering of the period. The main lake is fed by a smaller water body that has examples of the sculpture that must have decorated its every niche in the 12th century.

Most of all, Vadnagar is associated with tale of the famous musician, Tansen, who sang the Deepak Raag so fervently in the court of Akbar that lamps began to burn and he was affected with a burning fever. This virtuoso was called one of the nine gems of Mughal India of the 16th century. Knowing that only hearing the pure rendering of the Megh Malhaar Raag could cure him, goes the tale, he headed for Vadnagar where Tana and Riri, two Nagar girls, sang for him and brought him back to health. Inspired by the quality of singing of these girls, Akbar summoned them to his court. But they refused to obey the order and immolated themselves at Vadnagar. Today, the Samadhi created in Vadnagar to commemorate these sisters is the site for an annual Tana Riri Music Festival.

A memorial has been erected in Vadnagar to honour Tana-Riri, called Tana Riri Samadhi.

### **VADNAGAR NO TORAN**

As you enter the town of Vadnagar, one of the most striking sites you see is the Kirti Stambh or Toran, a pair of stone



pillars carved from top to bottom, connected at the top by transverse stone beams that are also richly ornamented with carvings. The top bears an image of God Kartikeya.

### **HATKESHWAR TEMPLE**

Continuing from the Toran, you come to the the 17th century Hatkeshwar Temple that has historic and religious significance. The temple has beautiful carvings adorning its exterior walls and

inside is a shrine to Lord Shiva. It is an important place of pilgrimage as Hateshwar Mahadev is the family deity of the Nagar Brahmins whose stronghold is Vadnagar. Facing the east, it is enclosed by a high wall surmounted by three circular domes. From the roof of the sanctum rises a massive pinnacle, which soars high above in the sky. A massive congregation hall leads to the sanctum, which houses a shivlinga that is said to have self-emerged (one of the





Buddhist antiquity

'swayambhu' lingas of India). The exterior of the temple is exquisitely and profusely ornamented with figures of the nine planets, regent deities, the chief gods of the Hindu pantheon, scenes from the life of Krishna and Pandava princes, besides the varied animal and floral motifs.



Remains of Buddhist Monastery

### THE WALLED TOWN

Proceed to the carved gateways that pierce the walls built during the regime of Solanki ruler Kumarpal, which is recorded in the Arjanbari Gate inscription. Inside the town, you can see the Sarmista Talav, which is still in use, tanks, a step-well and many temples. Vadnagar is closely associated with



Kshatrapa Coins

Nagar Brahmins, and some of their fine havelis can be seen here.

### BUDDHIST SITES

Vadnagar also has substantial remains of its ancient Buddhist heritage. Excavations around the Ghaskol Darwaja area of Vadnagar have revealed an enormous Buddhist site that was probably the town of Anantpur described by Hieun-Tsang as a wealthy place with 1,000 Buddhist monks and 10 Buddhist monasteries. The archaeological survey has unearthed Buddhist sculpture, toys and utensils, a plaque depicting scenes from Buddha's life, which is about 1,900 years old, and a clay artifact similar to what is found in Sri Lankan and Afghan Buddhist sites. Some of the oldest artifacts found at the site date back to the 2nd century BCE, going back 2,200 years.

### MODERN VADNAGAR

Vadnagar, the birthplace of the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, is also developing many modern facilities. GMERS Medical College is Vadnagar's contemporary pride. 🏢

### GETTING THERE

**BY AIR** Nearest international airport is Ahmedabad (104 km)

**BY RAIL** Nearest major railway station is Mahesana (30 km)

**BY ROAD** Vadnagar is surrounded by Unjha, Mahesana, Sidhpur which are 15.96 km, 19.59 km, 19.86 km away respectively.

### ACCOMMODATION

Toran Vadnagar

Phone: 02761 222051

[toranhotelvadnagar@gujarattourism.com](mailto:toranhotelvadnagar@gujarattourism.com)



# TORAN HOTELS



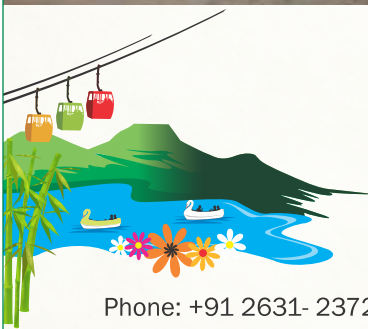
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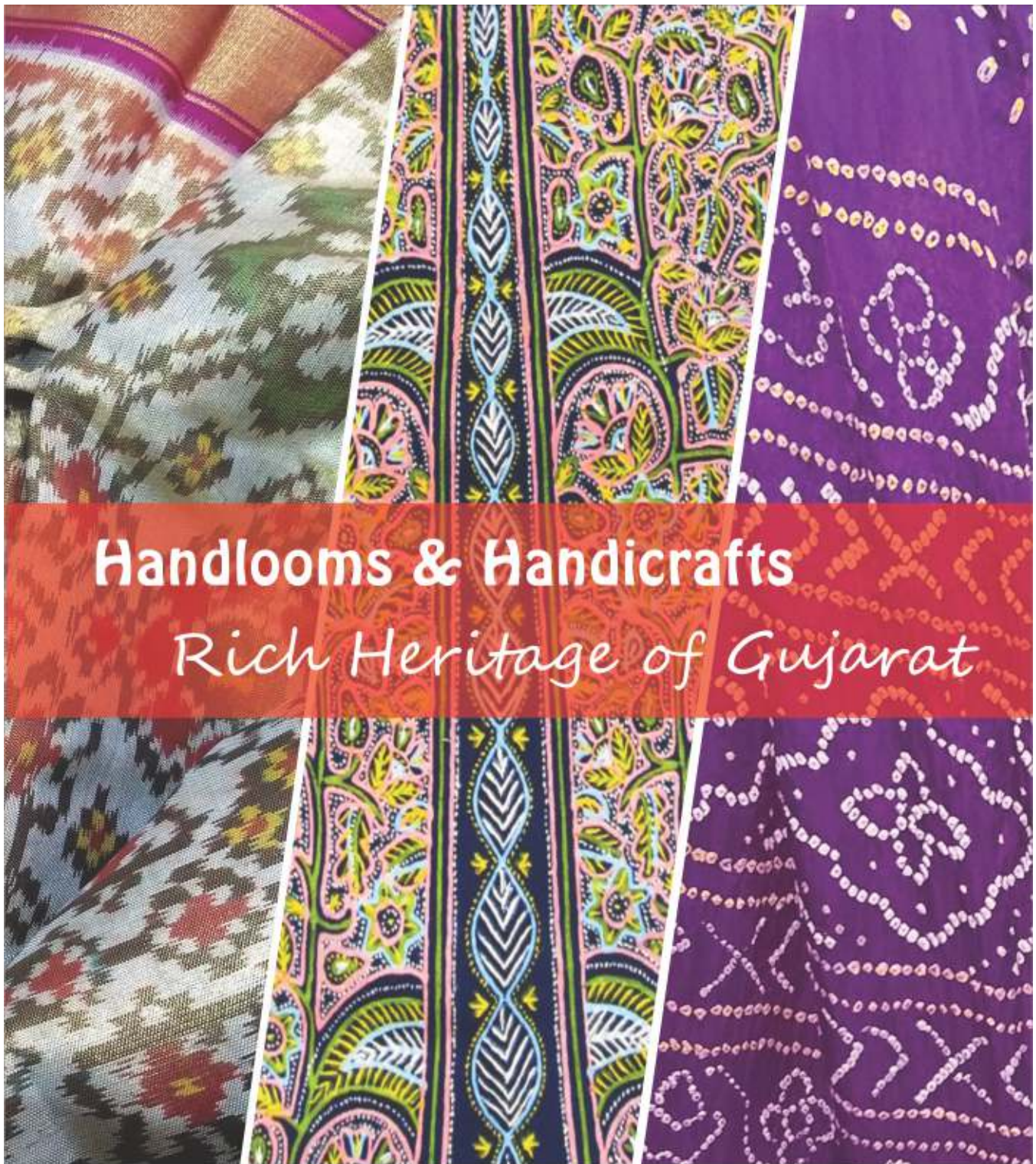
### Contact for Booking:

Phone: +91 2631- 237226 | Email: [managersaputara@gmail.com](mailto:managersaputara@gmail.com) | [www.booking.gujarattourism.com](http://www.booking.gujarattourism.com)



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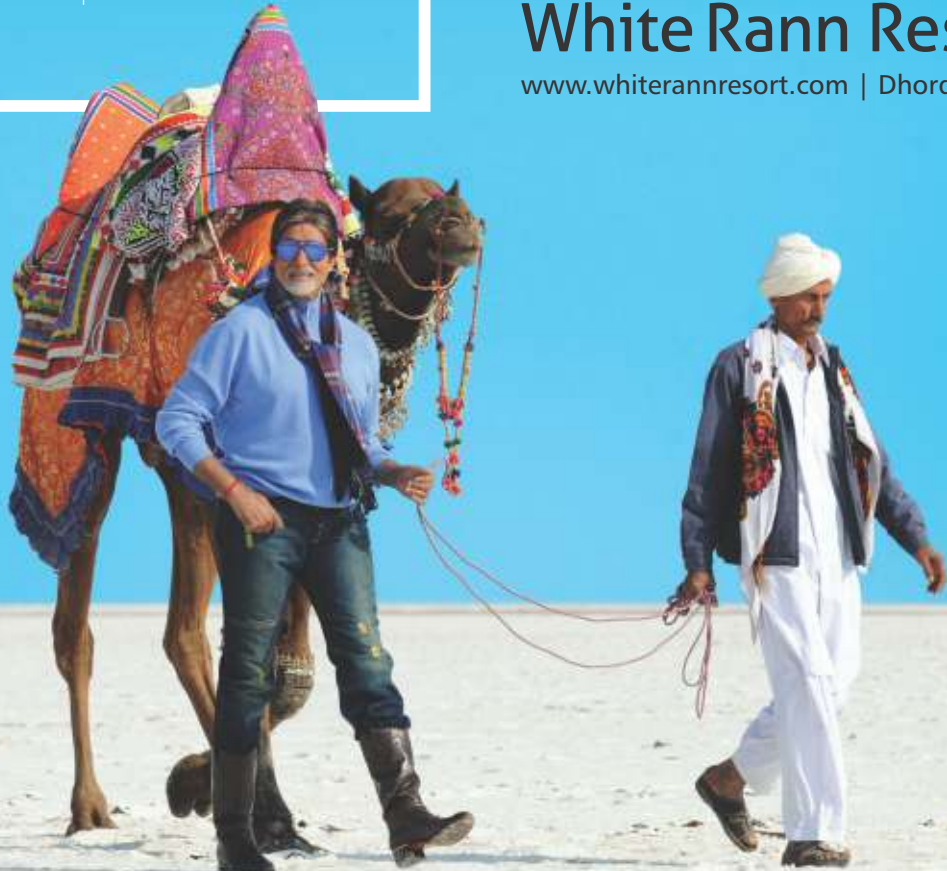
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#### MUMBAI TNS-03

DATE  
24-25 September, 2018

TIME  
11: 00am to 06:00pm

VENUE  
Nehru Centre, Worli

#### NASHIK TNS-04

DATE  
26-27 September, 2018

TIME  
11: 00am to 06:00pm

VENUE  
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**Destination Management Companies**  
**Tour Operators | Transport Companies**  
**Government Tourism Boards**



#### FOR PARTICIPATION, CONTACT

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