

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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A high-end monthly magazine



10 REASONS

WHY IT'S AMAZING TO
DATE PEOPLE WHO LOVE

Travelling!

MUST-VISIT IN 2019

TWIN TOWNS OF MOREH AND TAMU



IN LOVE WITH TRAVELLING

The idea of dating someone who loves going places seems intimidating yet interesting. Imagine listening to those crazy travel tales, thrilling adventure stories and funny encounter tittle-tattle that could offer you a new and different perspective on life. Still not sure? We give you "10 Reasons Why It's Amazing to Date People Who Love Travelling!"

With the New Year, we highlight "12 Must-Visit Destinations in 2019". Discover the art, science, craft, business and history of cinema at Los Angeles or swim in the pools of Litchfield National Park, our article gives you all the interesting insights about eccentric destinations around the world. Pick the destination of your choice and go travelling!

From water sports destinations in India to the best places to visit in Spain, this edition of Praveg's Tourism One has something for everyone.

Read on!



PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

January 2019

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Have some suggestions for us?

Go ahead and send us your ideas, valuable opinions or topics you would like to see more coverage on.

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Must Visit Destinations For Your Holiday in 2019

For those planning an unusual holiday in 2019, we look at places you must visit:

1. Celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the journey to the moon at Florida's Space Coast

The 50th anniversary of mankind's first walk on the moon will be July 20, 2019, and Central Florida's Atlantic shoreline called the Space Coast is celebrating the days Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins rocketed off the Earth and landed on the moon.

The Cape Canaveral Air Force Station (CCAFS) and the John F. Kennedy Space Center (KSC, originally known as the NASA Launch Operations Center) form part of the Space Coast of Florida – along the Atlantic Sea. This is the area from where many important rocket launches take place. If you are interested in the history of space research or want to take your children on an educational experience, this is a must-visit place in 2019.

The highlight of the area for tourists is the Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex, which exhibits a number of artifacts, displays attractions that offer an insight into the history and future of human and robotic spaceflight. The complex also includes separate Apollo/Saturn V Center, north of the VAB and the United States Astronaut Hall of Fame, six miles west near Titusville. From the Visitor Complex, a bus tour can take you on a tour of the space centre to see the sites for famous launches or landings.





2. Enjoy the 300th anniversary celebrations of Liechtenstein

Located between Switzerland and Austria, Liechtenstein is a mountainous country excellent for winter sports like alpine skiing, snowboarding, ice skating, sledging, skating and hiking. You can also watch a game of traditional ice hockey called Eisstockschiessen. Besides its natural beauty, there are some historical sites too in this little country - Gutenberg Castle, the Historical Eschnerberg Trail between Barend and Schellenberg along which you can see pre-historic settlements of Lutzengütli and Malanser, Schellenberg's heritage buildings like the new parish church, post office, municipal hall, school, Convent of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood and some of the oldest houses of Liechtenstein. The National Museum in Vaduz is also worth a visit. Liechtenstein is also a business destination as it has a prosperous, highly industrialized free-enterprise economy and has an enviably robust financial service sector.



In 2019, the principality of Liechtenstein celebrates its 300th anniversary throughout the year with a range of events. The most important day is August 15, 2019, which will mark the peak of the jubilee celebrations. Besides the annual eState act at Vaduz Castle, aperitif in the rose garden and traditional Party in the center of Vaduz, the big jubilee celebration in the Städtle of Vaduz will unite all guests on a large place in front of a big stage.

3. Visit the Grand Canyon National Park in its centenary year

The Grand Canyon National Park is one of the world's top-most natural attractions, attracting about five million visitors per year. The main draw is Lipan Point, a promontory on the South Rim that offers a spectacular view of the canyon.

On February 26, 2019, the Grand Canyon celebrates 100 years since its designation as a national park. The park's actual birthday on Feb. 26 will be celebrated at the South Rim, with other centennial events at other locations to encourage visitors beyond the South Rim to lesser-known sites.



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4. Discover the art, science, craft, business and history of cinema at Los Angeles

Los Angeles, the second most populous city in the United States, is known for its Mediterranean climate, ethnic diversity, Hollywood and the entertainment industry and sprawling metropolis.

This city abounds in attractions. There are 841 museums and art galleries in Los Angeles County like the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Getty Center, Petersen Automotive Museum, Huntington Library, Natural History Museum, Battleship Iowa and the Museum of Contemporary Art. If you love art, take the Downtown Art Walk in Los Angeles.

Performing arts is an important part of the city's cultural identity. Most of all, Los Angeles evokes the stories of film – the Hollywood neighborhood has become recognized as the center of the motion picture industry and the Los Angeles area is also associated as being the center of the television industry. The city is a home to the major film studios as well as major record labels.

In 2019, the city will get a major attraction for film buffs - the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures. The exhibitions will be influenced by the Academy collection of movie-related materials covering over 12 million photographs, 190,000 video assets, 80,000 screenplays, 61,000 posters and over 104,000 pieces of production. You will be able to see objects from classics like Dorothy's ruby red slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* (1939), Shirley Temple's tap shoes from *The Little Colonel* (1935), the typewriter used to write the screenplay for Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), the shark mould from *Jaws* (1975), tablets from *The Ten Commandments* (1956), the Aries 1B spaceship model from 2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968) and other exhibits.



5. Watch the Solar Eclipse from the Elqui Valley

The Elqui Valley is a wine region centered on Elqui River in northern Chile. This beautiful valley is a wine tourism destination where the Syrah and Carmenere are outstanding, and also has charming small towns. Vicuña is the birthplace of the poet and winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, Gabriela Mistral. For astronomy enthusiasts, this is a fine destination for sky gazing with an almost rain-free climate and remarkably clear skies. Towns of Paihuano, Montegrande, Pisco Elqui, Cochiguaz and Horcon are part of this area, and there are many observatories for star gazing.

6. Visit Plovdiv, one of two European capitals of culture for 2019

One of the oldest cities in the world and claiming to be the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Europe, the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv is a place of inspiration for artists. It has amazing diversity with Turkish, Roman, Armenian, Greek and Jewish population. The architectural heritage covers monuments from the Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman empires. About 350 events will celebrate its status as a European Capital of Culture 2019. Explore the romantic old town filled with 19th-century mansions some of which are now museums or guesthouses, attend music and art festivals, visit museums, and admire the fabulous frescoes, the colourful carved ceiling and religious art spanning the 15th to 18th centuries inside the Church of Sveti Konstantin & Elena.



7. Visit Tokyo as it prepares for the Summer Olympics

As Tokyo gears up for the 2020 Summer Olympics, cultural heritage sites like the Himeji Castle, Hiroshima Peace Museum and Toshogu in Nikko are renovated, and many landmarks are illuminated in the countdown to the Olympics. Combine a visit to Tokyo and Osaka with Fukuoka to see ruins of the 17th-century Fukuoka Castle, beautiful Kyushu National Museum and Dazaifu Tenmangu, a Shinto shrine full of plum trees.



8. Discover future trends in Dubai

Dubai has many attractions from malls and the Burj Kalifa to mosques and the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding. Natural attractions include bird rich marshes, the sea coast and the sand dunes. Dubai's new appeal is the Museum of the Future opening in 2019. A unique incubator for futuristic innovations and design, the Museum of the Future will become the world's largest and most exciting way to discover tomorrow's trends and opportunities.





Litchfield National Park



Litchfield National Park

9. Swim in the pools of Litchfield National Park

The Northern Territory of Australia draws tourists for barramundi fishing, outback adventures, aboriginal art, sunsets at Uluru and markets. One of the major attractions is Litchfield National Park, home to several stunning waterfalls that cascade into crystal clear pools, towering termite mounds and clusters of weathered sandstone pillars at the Lost City. Here you can glide under the impressive double cascades of Wangi and Florence falls that drop into sublime natural swimming holes, or soak in the tiered rock pools at Buley Rockhole.

The park has gone through extensive improvements to make it even more attractive to visitors seeking adventure. Five new swimming spots, some new campgrounds and new routes for both mountain biking and 4WD vehicles will open in March 2019.

10. Enjoy the view from Bangkok's Observation Tower, Thailand

Bangkok is known for its entertainment scene and night life, its historical buildings and Buddhist temples, the floating market and waterways, restaurants and parks. Bangkok's new attraction - the giant candle-shaped observation tower on the Chao Phraya River - King Power Mahanakhon the tallest building in Thailand with an observation deck 314 meters above ground. At the Mahanakhon Skywalk, visitors can start at the Observatory, located on the 74th and 75th floors, to get an indoor panoramic view of the city, as well as an augmented reality experience of Bangkok's various tourist attractions. Take the hydraulic glass elevator on the 75th floor to visit the outdoor observation deck, starting with the Glass Tray, an all-glass floor before climbing up another flight of stairs to the Peak for a 360-degree view of Bangkok's skyline. Kick back and relax with the 78th floor bar, one of the highest in South East Asia.



Bangkok's Observation Tower, Thailand

11. Take a rainforest walk in Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur is the cultural, financial and economic centre of Malaysia. It is a home to the tallest twin buildings in the world, the Petronas Twin Towers, a symbol of its rapid economic growth. Other city landmarks are the Bukit Bintang shopping district, Kuala Lumpur Tower, Petaling Street Chinatown, Merdeka Square, House of Parliament, National Palace, National Museum, Islamic Arts Museum, Central Market, KL Bird Park, Aquaria KLCC, National Monument and the Sultan Abdul Samad Jamek Mosque. This city has trendy nightclubs, bars and lounges, more than 65 malls and fashion stores. In the middle of the modern bustling city of Kuala Lumpur, you can get an experience of a Malaysian rainforest at Taman Tugu. Stroll along the naturally landscaped trails, and watch tropical birds and monkeys - even civet cats could be seen. An elevated jungle trail, a children's playground, new lakes and food-and-beverage facilities are expected to open in 2019.



New York

12. Explore New York

When 30 Hudson Yards opens in 2019, it will house the highest outdoor observation deck in the western hemisphere. At 1,100 feet above ground, the 7,500-square-foot outdoor viewing area will extend 65 feet from the 100th floor. This area will offer several restaurants and stores.

If you are a dog lover, visit the Museum of the Dog relocating from Saint Louis, Missouri to New York City. With paintings, sculptures and other works, as well educational exhibitions, the museum is opening in 2019. The Museum of Modern Art, one of the largest and most influential museums of modern art in the world offers an overview of modern and contemporary art, including works of architecture and design, drawing, painting, sculpture, photography, prints, illustrated books and artist's books, film and electronic media. This museum has also seen much improvement.

Perhaps the most exciting new opening in New York is the Statue of Liberty Museum scheduled to open May 2019.

Best Places To Visit In **SPAIN** *The Land Of Flamenco And Fiesta*



Splendid beaches, stunning architecture, delicious cuisine, vibrant nightlife and lively fiestas, all these make Spain one of Europe's most popular travel destinations. Spain encompasses 17 autonomous regions and several islands and boasts one of the most widely diverse cultures and landscapes on the continent.

Here's what you can expect to see - Cities that are a beautiful blend of traditional and modern design. Buildings that are adorned by paintings and sculptures representing various periods. Spain offers so much to see and do that it would take a lifetime to explore. Out of all the beautiful places, here's a list of top 15 places that you just can't miss.

Barcelona's Sagrada Familia

One of the most visited buildings in the world, Sagrada Familia is a fine combination of Spanish Gothic and Art Nouveau. This Roman Catholic Church is still under construction and is a home to the tomb of its creator Antoni Gaudí. Regarded as his finest works, the building will have 18 towers when completed, representing the apostles, evangelists, Virgin Mary and the highest one in the middle, representing Jesus Christ.

The building attracts over 3 million visitors each year and is open to visit different parts of the



church including a museum, shop, nave, crypt and towers. Opening hours for public visits are between 9 am to 6 pm during the winter months and until 8 pm in the summer months. One can also get access to various guided tours.

The Prado and Paseo del Artes, Madrid

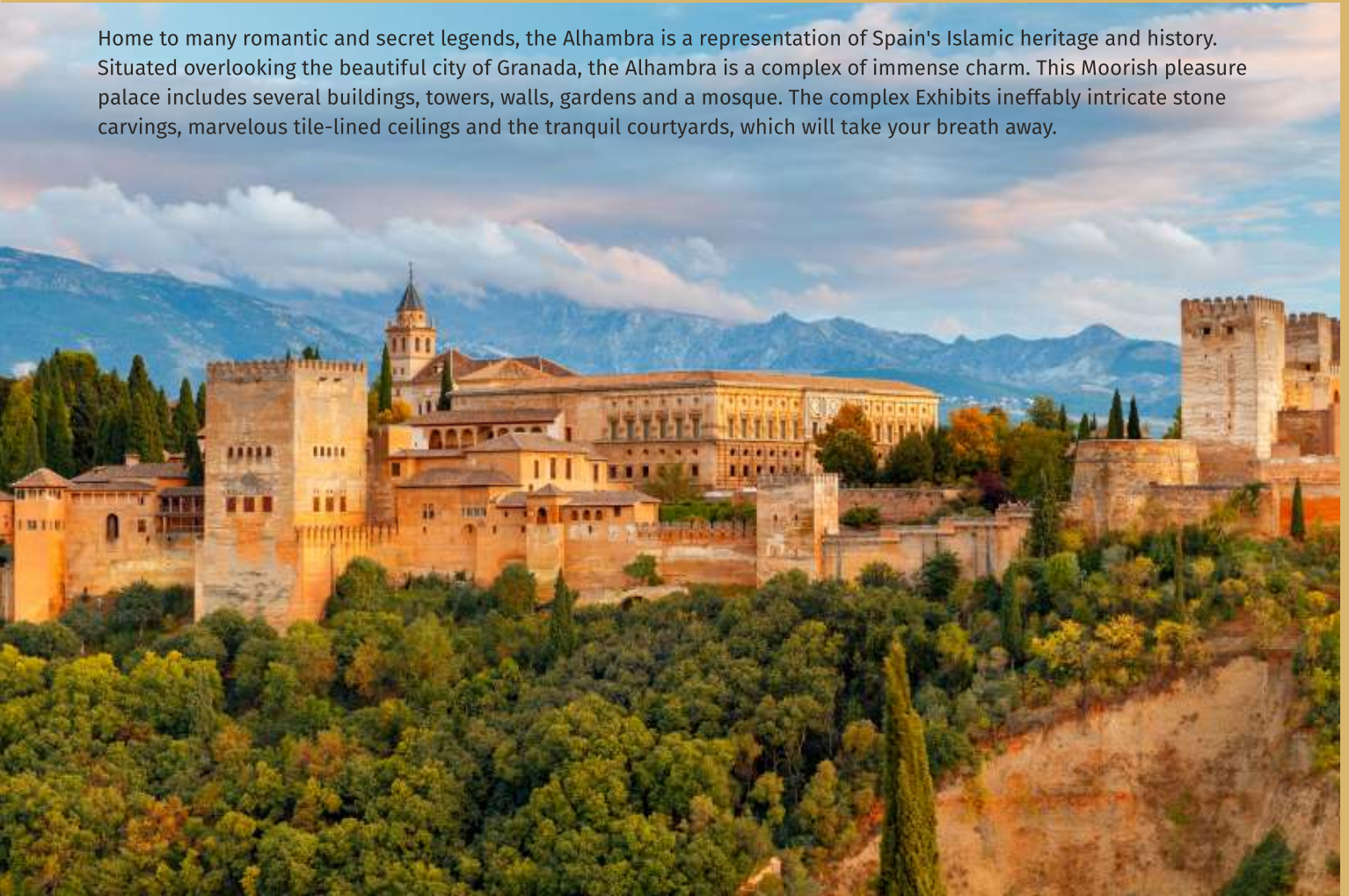
The Prado, Reina Sofia National Art Museum, the Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum and the CaixaForum, all along Madrid's mile-long boulevard are the most renowned art museums of the world. Known as El Paseo del Arte - Boulevard of the Arts, this must be the place with the highest concentration of the most acclaimed art pieces. You will be surprised by the impressions and examples to be found in these museums of every period that has graced the world of art.

The Prado has the world's largest collection of Spanish art - from the 12th-century medieval works to the Avante-Garde movement of the early 20th century. You won't regret having a guide with you to explore insiders and stories about these priceless gems by El Greco, Velazquez and Goya. Major artistic attractions of the Reina Sofia Museum are Picasso's Guernica and works by Miró, Dalí, Dubuffet, Braque, Serra, Calder and Magritte, to name a few. You can visit these Museums with minimal entrance fees on weekdays.



The Alhambra Granada

Home to many romantic and secret legends, the Alhambra is a representation of Spain's Islamic heritage and history. Situated overlooking the beautiful city of Granada, the Alhambra is a complex of immense charm. This Moorish pleasure palace includes several buildings, towers, walls, gardens and a mosque. The complex Exhibits ineffably intricate stone carvings, marvelous tile-lined ceilings and the tranquil courtyards, which will take your breath away.



Seville Cathedral Alcazar

La Giralda tower, Seville Cathedral and the Alcazar combine form a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Seville Cathedral is the largest Gothic cathedral in the world and occupies the site of the great Aljama mosque, built in the late 12th century by the ruling Moorish Dynasty. The opulent size and grandeur are the most fetching qualities of the church. Opposite to the Cathedral, The Alcazar palace is divided into sections dating from a succession of eras: Moorish, Gothic, Mudejar and Renaissance. Considered one of the most distinctive castles in Spain, Alcazar was originally built like a fortress. With a minimal entrance fee, one can enjoy the throne room, the John II tower and outer walls. The opening hours for the complex are Monday-Sunday during 9:30-19:00.

La Rambla, Barcelona

The most easily identified landmark in the city, La Rambla is a long tree-lined boulevard, which cuts through central Barcelona. It's the best and the most relaxing way to experience the vibe of the city. The boulevard is lined with many books and newspaper stands as well as restaurants and cafes with open-air tables. Walking over Joan Miró's circular tile work, or watching the human statues, there is no shortage of experiences on La Rambla. The boulevard starts near the Port Vell cruise ship terminal and ends at the famous Placa Catalunya and you can easily find it by a simple inquiry to any local. Walking tours are the best ways to uncover the hidden beauty that this place has to offer.

Costa del Sol

Having some of the most amazing beaches, the Costa del Sol is the southernmost coastline of mainland Spain. The name translates to 'the sunny coast', as the sun shines the brightest in this region and it is a great place for sunbathing and tanning at the beaches. Costa del Sol has natural landscape, clear beaches, pine-clad countryside, picturesque fishing villages and tranquil surroundings, which are not only an attraction for the tourist but is an escape for the locals as well.

The recent Revitalization of its hub city of Málaga has also made this coast even more attractive. You can find various activities to do in this coastal town. A few steps from the beach, in Marbella, is the old town of whitewashed houses and well-preserved remains of the Moorish Castillo, which is definitely worth a short trip.

The White Towns of Andalucía

These small and enchanting hilltop towns distinguished by their simple whitewashed houses are influenced by the Berber architecture of North Africa from where the moors originally came. The ancient land is home to amazing people, incredible landscapes, unrivalled gastronomy and some of the prettiest little towns you'll find in Europe. Some famous towns are Arcos de la Frontera, Grazalema and Vejer de la Frontera. Showcasing the region's long and fascinating history, the white towns are great for people looking for a quiet and relaxing holiday.

El Teide, Tenerife

The highest peak in Spain, El Teide is a living and breathing volcano located on the Canary Island of Tenerife. This impressive volcano shows how nature's violent side can also be a testament to the beauty of the landscape. The terrain that surrounds Teide National Park is equally beautiful and the fossilized lava on the sides of the volcano is a wonderful sight to the eyes. You can climb El Teide's cone, but an easier way to get to the top is by an 8-minute cable car ride. On a clear day, it offers a spectacular view of the entire archipelago and North Africa (the nearest land mass to the Canary Islands).



BEST PLACE TO VISIT IN SPAIN

La Rambla



Costa del Sol



The White Towns of Andalucía



El Teide, Tenerife

Bilbao's Guggenheim

An architectural masterpiece, the Guggenheim Museum will mesmerize you from the moment you lay your eyes on it. This curvy titanium-clad building has attracted and inspired many architects in the world. Build by the well-known architect Frank Gehry, the museum opened in 1997 and is a home to a large collection of prominent and contemporary artworks. Inside the museum, you will find traveling exhibitions and rotating displays of collections of modern art. Guggenheim Museum exhibits many modern artists, including Joseph Beuys, Louise Bourgeois, Jeff Koons and many more. You can visit Guggenheim on weekdays and weekends from 10 am to 6 pm.



Guggenheim Museum



La Rioja

La Rioja Wine District

Known to be the Tuscany of Spain, La Rioja Wine District is a wine growing region famed for its Rioja. The wine is known for its structure and tannins. The wine country is subdivided into three regions - Rioja Alta (where most of the oldest wineries are located), Rioja Alavesa and Rioja Baja. It is a hit amongst the tourists for its locally produced vintage wines and the scenic vineyards. One can explore the wine district with one of their luxury wine tours. You can also visit the wine museum, you heard it right. There's an entire museum dedicated to the red stuff! If you are in town in June, you can participate in the wine harvest festival, which involves people throwing buckets of wine at each other.

Toledo's Gothic cathedral

Begun in the 13th century, Toledo's Gothic Cathedral is one of the most impactful cathedrals in Spain. Located in the city of Toledo, this cathedral impersonates flamboyant gothic architecture and elements of mudéjar, renaissance and baroque in many of its chapels, choir stalls and sacristy. The site has been sacred for many centuries but has only existed as a cathedral from the 19th century. Inside, the cathedral contains important masterpieces, including a spectacular baroque high altar and two paintings by El Greco.

Gaudí Sites in Barcelona

It won't be overstating if one says that Barcelona is a home to world's most abstract and bizarre architecture and the reason is one and only, Antoni Gaudí. There are many examples in Barcelona of Gaudí's fascinating architecture, one of them being Parc Güell - a bright ceramic-chard mosaic garden mounted by fantastical creatures. Many other architectural marvels like Gaudí's Casa Milà (his last and most famous secular work), Casa Batlló and Palau Güell (the palace residence of the Güell family) are scattered across Barcelona



Gothic cathedral

and are impressive at the first look. It's best to walk around Barcelona and you will definitely come across some of Gaudi's finest works. It is not hard to spot the difference between Gaudi's creations and other architectural installations in the city. Anything which does not have a straight line is made by Gaudi!

Ibiza -The Party Island

Being in the forefront of Europe's music and clubbing scene, Ibiza has made its mark as the party capital of Spain. Its super-clubs and bars have now become legendary and are a magnet for party lovers. A heady combination of beaches and nightclubs, Ibiza is the best place for late-night partying and dancing till dawn. Ibiza has wonderful weather throughout the year and hosts renowned DJs from all over the globe. Few of the best places to hangout are Sankeys, Hi Ibiza, Amnesia, Ocean beach and Privilege. Boat parties are also becoming popular in the party scene of Ibiza.

Plaza Mayor, Madrid

An important part of the lifestyle of Madrid since the 16th century, the Plaza Mayor was designed by Juan de Herrera. The Plaza Mayor, a grand arcaded square in the center of Madrid, is very popular among tourists and locals. Built during the Habsburg Empire, it was Philip II who entrusted Juan for the construction of the plaza. It has been in the center stage for many historic ceremonial events like the proclamation of a new king and the canonization of saints. The Plaza has many alfresco restaurants and you will find many street artists performing there.

Monastery of Montserrat, Catalonia

50 km from Barcelona, Montserrat is much more than a place of pilgrimage. From art museum to incredibly talented choirs, this place has so much more to see than just the monastery. The surrounding landscape of the monastery is in itself a charmer and would leave you speechless with its beauty. For an adventure enthusiast, Montserrat has several footpaths and trails, ranging from easy to difficult. Monastery of Montserrat is a great option for a day trip from Barcelona. To reach Montserrat, you will have to take a train from Barcelona to the Espania station and take a cable car for reaching the monastery.



BEST PLACE TO VISIT IN SPAIN

Ibiza



Plaza Mayor, Madrid



Monastery of Montserrat, Catalonia

TWIN TOWNS OF MOREH & TAMU

As my shared car climbed high up the hill, I became restless. It was not the height but multiple check posts where we had to get through. One check post arrived and then another and then one more, the sign of my destination was nowhere to be seen.

I was going to Moreh, a small town on Indo-Myanmar border. The idea was to cross the border using the friendship pass and explore the neighbouring city on the opposite side of the border. The surreal views of the Himalayas were filling me with goose bumps and I could not wait to arrive in the town.

Making Manipur a part of my Northeast Trip was the best decision I could have ever come up with. I would have explored a lot in terms of sightseeing in any state, but the quaint aura and the serenity that I experienced in Manipur was one of its kinds.

Moreh is a small town that is mostly used as a trade town from beyond the border. Moreh is one of the few border towns in India from where you can cross to the other side of the neighbouring country. In this case, it was Myanmar.

Since the border crossing is only allowed

between 7 AM and 4 PM with the condition that you will have to return to Indian side by 4:30 PM on same day, it is a wise idea to spend a night in Moreh and relish a delicious Manipuri Thali, both veg (INR 100) and non-veg (INR 150) and then wake up early morning and walk to the neighbouring country.

Crossing the border from Moreh side is easy. Reach the immigration office near Burma Border, deposit your Aadhar Card

(they don't take any other ID proof for some reason) and get the pass to enjoy your trip to Burma.



From here, you come to the lively town of Tamu. Unlike Moreh, which is sleepy, Tamu is a lovely and colourful market. Take a small stroll and you'll find some auto rickshaws waiting for passengers. They charge INR 30 for the trip, yes Indian money works till Tamu. They'll drop you in this quaint Burmese Town, which looks nothing like its Indian counterpart.



How to reach MOREH

Moreh is easily accessible from Imphal. If you are travelling solo or on a budget, you'll find buses and shared taxis from Imphal. Those who plan to go to Loktak will have to reach Imphal in order to find a direct route. Travellers with a private car of their own will have ease in reaching Moreh from both Imphal and Moirang (Loktak).

You cannot take your vehicle inside Tamu unless you have proper permits. Many travellers use this route to go on a road trip to Burma and Thailand.

Where to stay – Moreh has a lot of small budget stays, many of which come with shared bathrooms.



WATER SPORTS TOURISM IN INDIA



Sports tourism is among the fast growing tourism sectors; and among them, water sports are the most popular recreational sporting activities that draw people to travel to a destination.

India is an excellent destination for water sports, whether it is rafting fast flowing rivers in the Himalaya or scuba diving the coral reefs of Lakshadweep and Andaman Islands. Tourists enjoy recreational boating, rowing, canoeing, kayaking, parasailing, white-water rafting, surfing, sport fishing, snorkeling and scuba diving in India, and also watching spectator sports like the boat races on the Kerala backwaters. With much of the Indian coast enjoying warm and sunny weather for most of the year, beachside sports are also very popular.

Water Sports In Andaman



Port Blair is the capital of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. It is the gateway to explore the Andaman's breathtakingly beautiful beaches, lush forested hills, serene islands, superb diving spots, mangroves and birdwatching sites. As the aircraft heads to the airport, you can see some of the islands set like gems on turquoise blue waters. There are many good hotels to choose from at Port Blair, and much to see like the historical Cellular Jail, ethnology museums, an aquarium and marine museum, and a zoo housing endangered and endemic species.

Once settled at your hotel, visit the Rajiv Gandhi Water Sports Complex, which has a fleet of speedboats and banana boats, as well as personal water crafts for Jet Skiing. From the water sports complex, you could hire a private boat for a trip to North Bay that has a pretty beach. The highlight of North Bay is the Undersea Walk. Don the helmet with a transparent visor on your head, which has a special apparatus that allows normal breathing under the water. Life Guards assist in taking you underwater and accompany you throughout the walk during which you can experience the undersea world from close and enjoy walking on the moon-like ocean floor. If you are not a swimmer, the lifeguards also accompany you for snorkeling in the clear waters where you can gaze at coral reefs and perhaps spot some marine life.

For snorkeling, take the boat ride to Wandoor, which is the entrance to the Mahatma Gandhi National Park. The park is made up of 17 islands and the open sea creeks running through the area, protecting corals, sea turtles and a wealth of marine life. Take the boat to Jolly Buoy or Red Skin, both islands excellent for marine life. The guides brief you on safety measures for snorkeling, and assist you with the mask and snorkel. As you snorkel, you can see the rich marine life.

If you are interested in scuba diving, one of the best places is Havelock Island. It is possible to take an introductory dive in the shallows or enroll for a course. Fully-equipped boats take you for diving to sites like Dixon's Pinnacle, Pilot Reef or South Button. Deeper dives bring you close to sharks, rays, sea turtles and schools of fish.

RIVER SPORTS IN UTTARAKHAND

White water rafting is an adventure sport, where you use an inflatable raft to navigate rough water. It is an activity that involves team work and provides quite an adrenaline rush as you navigate turbulent rivers. Rishikesh is one of the most popular places in India for white water rafting – its stunning Himalayan mountain sceneries, rushing river and range of rapids of different difficulty levels from 1 to 4 grades. There are a number of tented camps located along river beaches like the one at Shivpuri. From Shivpuri, the rafting trip begins with an introductory talk by the river guides. The popular stretch of 16km takes three to three-and-a-half hours during which you encounter rapids like Roller Coaster, Return to Sender, Double Trouble and Golf Course. A longer and more demanding stretch begins from Marine Drive. The Kaudiyala to Rishikesh is for experienced white water rafting enthusiasts as it includes The Wall, which is a grade-4 rapid, as well as Eddy Whirlpool and Daniel's Dip.

From Rishikesh, take the road to Corbett National Park known for its rich wildlife. The Ramganga and Kosi Rivers are home for some great game fish. Goonch is a giant catfish that can grow to a length of over six feet and can run to 250 lb. Continue to Pancheshwar, host of the International Angling Competition held in March every year, for fishing. This is one of the top sites for the mahseer, one of the sought after sport fish.



ADVENTURE SPORTS IN KARNATAKA

From mighty rivers to the breathtakingly beautiful Arabian Sea coastline, Karnataka has it all to attract the water sports tourist. Dandeli is a forest inhabited by tigers, leopards, black panthers, elephants, gaur, deer, antelopes, bears and also a good birdwatching area. This forest is now a tiger reserve. The Kali River, which rises near Digg with many dams built for power generation, is among Dandeli's top draws. The river here goes through forests and gorges, tumbles down rocks and foams and froths. This is ideal terrain for white water rafting. Kayaking is also possible on this river.

From here, continue along the Kali River to Devbagh Beach near Karwar. Devbagh is an excellent place for jet skiing, banana boat rides and Kali river kayaking. Take the boat ride to Lady's Island, where you can go snorkeling with a life guard.



Travel down from Karwar to the coastal village of Mulki, where you can stay at the Ashram Surf Retreat. This is one of India's top places for surfing in which the wave rider, referred to as a surfer, rides on the forward or deep face of a moving wave. When the waves are not suitable for surfing, the other sports on offer are stand-up paddle (SUP), kayaking, body boarding, Jet-ski and wakeboarding. You can also try these activities at Mantra Surf Club, which is among India's pioneers of surfing. Go inland from Udupi to the Sitanadi River for rafting – best in the monsoon.

A WATER SPORTS HOLIDAY IN GOA AND MAHARASHTRA

Goa is one of India's most popular holiday destinations. Start at Palolem, which is among Goa's southernmost beaches. This is where you can enjoy kayaking, and Palolem is a top spot for dolphin spotting. Head north to Arossim Beach, Mobor Beach and Utorda Beach for water skiing, and Colva for parasailing.

Continue to Bogmalo Beach and Dona Paula for wind surfing. Scuba diving trips are possible from centres to Suzy's Wreck, Bat Island and Navy Island.

The long beach stretch of Calangute and Candolim offers the places to head to for a wide variety of water sports – knee boarding, wakeboarding, wind surfing, jet skiing, banana boat rides and paddle boating. PADI centres here offer scuba diving trips.

If you have had enough of the sea, drive inland to Mayem Lake where you may get to do some recreational boat trips. White water rafting is possible in some seasons on the Mhadei River and Tilari River.

From Goa, go north to Malvan, where the beautiful Tarkarli Beach is located. This is one of the best sites in Maharashtra for scuba diving and snorkeling. Continue north to Dapoli, which is good place for beachside sports and water based activities.

RECREATIONAL SPORTS IN DIU AND GUJARAT

The island of Diu is a great place to getaway for a beach holiday – it has impressive forts and grandiose churches, attractive heritage mansions, pretty beaches and some isolated areas away from the crowd. Water crafts are often on offer at Nagoa Beach and Ghogla Beach of Diu, and the neighbouring Ahmedpur Mandvi Beach in Gujarat. Travel along the coast of Dwarka. This is an emerging destination for diving and marine life viewing.



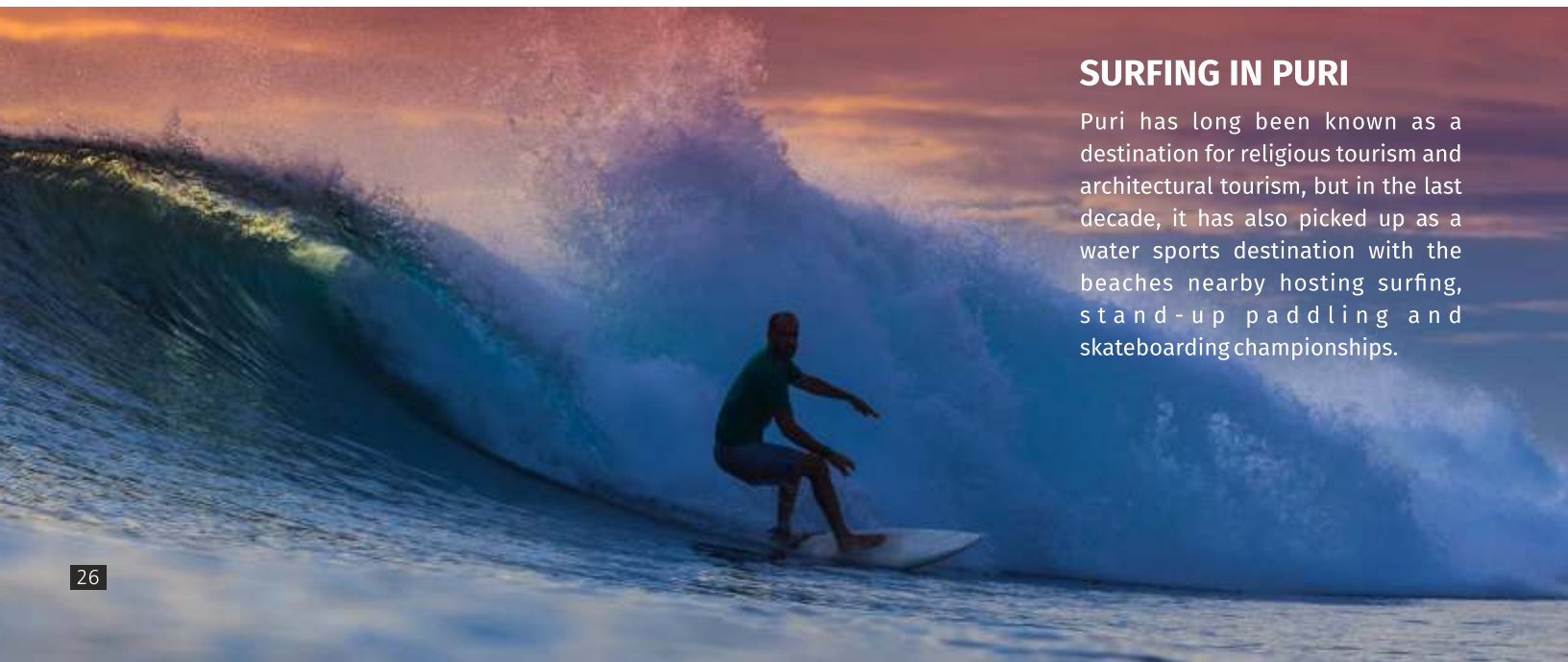
WATER SPORTS AT VISAKHAPATNAM

The Bay of Bengal is not as well-known as the west coast for water sports but Rushikonda near Visakhapatnam does offer some water sports. With the finding of a ship wreck off the shores, scuba diving has also become popular along this coastal area.



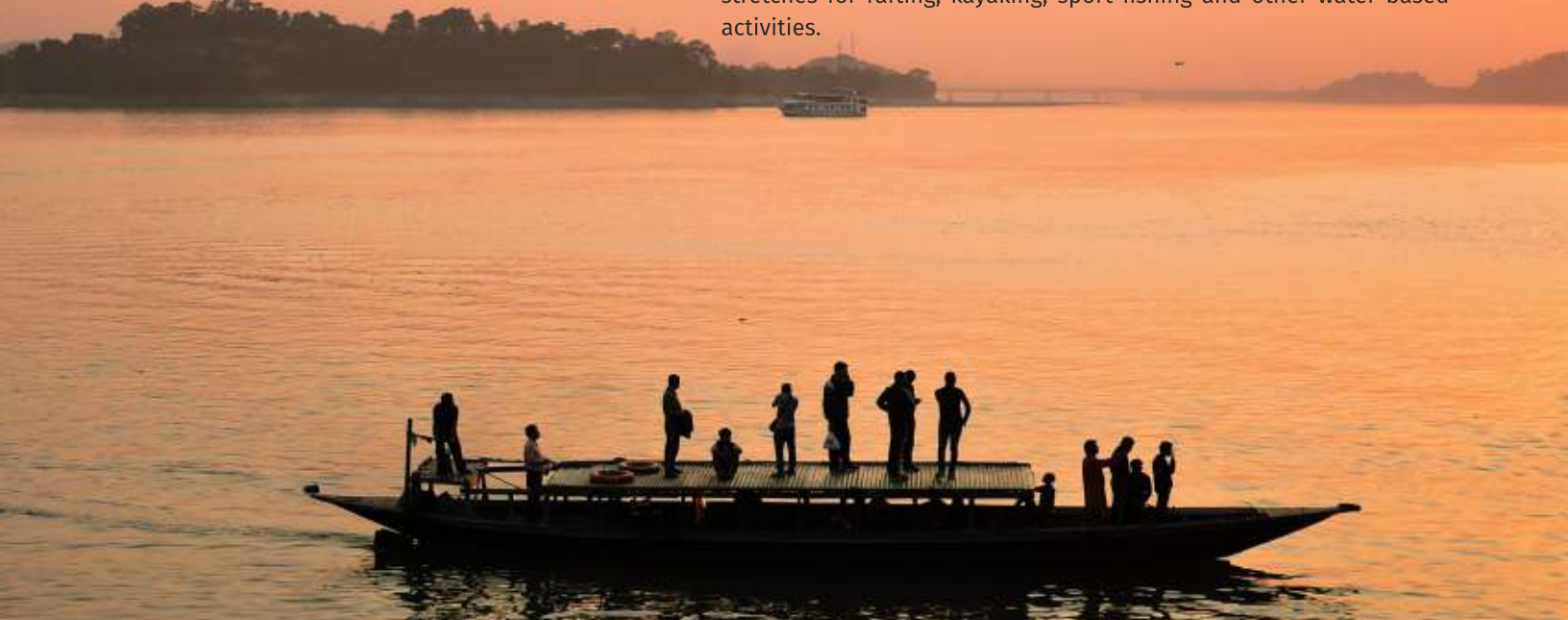
SURFING IN PURI

Puri has long been known as a destination for religious tourism and architectural tourism, but in the last decade, it has also picked up as a water sports destination with the beaches nearby hosting surfing, stand-up paddling and skateboarding championships.



BOATING ON THE BRAHMAPUTRA

The Brahmaputra is India's largest river with 3,848 km of length. It is an important river for transportation. A river cruise on the Brahmaputra is an experience in itself. One of its important tributaries is the Kameng River or Jia Bhoreli, which is about 264 km long. This river system has stretches for rafting, kayaking, sport fishing and other water based activities.



SCUBA DIVING THE LAKSHADWEEP

The Aminidivi subgroup of islands (consisting of Amini, Keltan, Chetlat, Kadamat, Bitra and Perumal Par) and the Laccadive sub group of islands (comprising mainly Androth, Kalpeni, Kavaratti, Pitti and Suheli Par), both subgroups have a submarine connection between them through Pitti Bank. Together with Minicoy Island, a lonely atoll, they form the Coral Islands of India in the Arabian Sea. All these islands have been built up by corals and have multi-coloured reefs very close to their shores. This makes the Lakshadweep Union Territory one of India's top scuba diving destinations. The dive sites at Lakshadweep are varied - there are sloping reefs, caves, coral gardens, overhangs, shipwrecks and some drift diving. Bangaram and Kavaratti are among the most popular scuba diving destinations, but you could also make base at Kadamat and Minicoy.





10 Reasons

Why It's Amazing to Date People

Who Love Travelling!

Dating a traveller is the best oddball idea. Consider yourself fortunate if you fall for a person who loves travelling, because being in relationship with such a free-spirit comes with some remarkable perks. Here are some of the reasons why travellers can be a good catch and be the perfect partner in crime.

1. They will let you see the world in a different perspective

It can be refreshing to date someone who sees beyond stereotypes to get to the individual. They can show you that travel is more than a mere hobby; it's another way of looking at life and the world. They are receptive to people and experiences, so the openness will rub you off in a good way.

2. Travel lovers embrace change

Any seasoned traveller would have survived at least one nightmare during the trip. They have had flights cancelled or food poisoning at a hotel or stuck at an airport. Life happens. If your partner is a traveller, you're in for a ride. That cancelled flight might lead to a night under the stars or at an international hostel, you never know. The point is they go with the flow and they welcome change. You will get to share experiences with them, which you never would otherwise.

3. They are self-sufficient and independent

As a matter of fact, they know how to take care of themselves. This goes to show you that they are hardly clingy. Don't you always complain about not having time for yourself? Well, they can give you that, space and time that you need.

4. They are good in finance

Because their priority is travelling, they have developed these financial management skills. They work their ass off to save, do sidelines and make extra income by blogging. With belts always tight and barely spending on whim, they are likely good in budgeting and finances.

5. Travel lovers are dreamers

It takes curiosity and the belief that the world has more to offer to get them out the door. Travellers are seekers by nature. Their thirst for the new drives them to continually explore. If you join them on their journeys, you can expect to benefit from their appetite for life.

6. You will never be short on friends

They are a unique breed, confident, tolerant and adaptable. They have navigated through unknown cities, communicated to strangers through body language and turned strangers into

friends before the day ends. They have a positive outlook on life that has attracted people to befriend them. Not to mention, they are the people who have friends with a couch in every city, in every country.

7. They are natural problem solvers

When the globe is turning into a hi-tech gadget, they are ones travelling the world – sometimes without Google, hot water and internet. They've had to turn to their common sense and intuition to get around new cities,

negotiate w i t h

locals, identify unsafe situations and even book a train ticket in another language.

8. They are smart, very smart

They have powerful insights and are very smart and sharp. Traveling teaches a wide variety of things – far

more than the books will ever be able to teach you. Dating a traveller can ensure you that you are dating someone smart,

someone you can talk to with brains and someone you can

actually get into a deep and

m e a n i n g f u l conversation with.

9. They are crazy and adventurous

They are people who believe in Carpe Diem. They love the thrill, the fun, the excitement – all the intense feelings that come with traveling. Don't be surprised if they tell you that their hobbies are not watching TV or surfing the Internet but bungee jumping and river rafting. There is no dull moment when you are with a crazy person.

10. You will grow as a person

There is endless excitement. They are the best examples of magnetism and fun package. If you choose to date a traveller – the word 'boredom' will no longer exist in your vocabulary. They become restless when confined to the comfort zones for too long. They believe in the quote "Life is for living". You will see yourself growing with them. Prepare to get exposed to new musical genres, to indulge in new cuisines, to learn how to dance Salsa and to know how to ask for a Beer in 5 different languages.



Live For The
Moments,
You Can't Put Into
Words.



LUSH GREEN GANDHINAGAR

Gandhinagar is one of the few state capital cities planned from scratch after independence. It is one of India's greenest capital cities with attractions ranging from medieval monuments to modern marvels.

Planned by Chief Architect H.K. Mewada and his assistant Prakash M Apte, Gandhinagar is a planned city with wide streets that are numbered and cross streets named for letters of the Gujarati alphabets. At each kilometer, there is a crossing of streets at a circle. The grid of streets creates thirty rectangular residential sectors. Each sector contains schools, shopping areas, playgrounds and parks. The Capital Complex and Government Offices, including the assembly called the Vidhan Sabha, the Secretariat called Sachivalaya and government office buildings like Udhog Bhavan are located in the centre. The main source of employment in the private sector is provided by two industrial estates dedicated to engineering, electronics, non-polluting light industries and Infocity.

A knowledge corridor linking Gandhinagar and Ahmedabad is an educational hub with such prestigious institutions as the Indian Institute of Technology - Gandhinagar, National Institute of Design (Gandhinagar campus), Dhirubhai Ambani Institute of Information and Communication Technology, National Institute of Fashion Technology, Gujarat National Law University, Bhaskaracharya Institute of Geo-Informatics, Pandit Deendayal Petroleum University, Unitedworld (a campus with a business school, design school and law school), Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India, Nirma University and Colleges for Engineering, Dentistry, Management, etc, located in and around Gandhinagar or on the highways from Gandhinagar to Ahmedabad.



ADALAJ STEPWELL

AN ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECE

One of Gujarat's most spectacular step-wells, Ruda Vav at Adalaj village was built by Ruda Vaghela, wife of a local Rajput chieftain. The 5-storey octagonal well has steps leading through a series of beautiful pillared platforms and galleries built into the side walls to the cool depths. The exquisite sculptures, impressive in both quality and quantity, enliven the walls, pillars, cornices and niches with portrayals of dancing maidens, musicians, animals, deities and Bhairava. The sides of main shaft are carved with elephants, horses and mythical beings. Parakeets and other birds can be seen resting in the shade around the well shaft.

AKSHARDHAM

A Modern Marvel

For most tourists, Gandhinagar's major attraction is Akshardham - a colossal complex with beautiful gardens, the impressive pink stone Swaminarayan temple, which contains gold-leaf coated statues of Lord Swaminarayan and a theme park with a Hall of Holy Relics containing possessions of Swaminarayan and state-of-the-art galleries with audio-visual shows. The first hall of exhibition traces the journey of Lord Swaminarayan or Sahajanand Swamy through a video show; a fiber-optics cosmos; a miniature recreation of Chhapiya village in Uttar Pradesh, where he was born, his travels from the northern hills through jungles to the southern coast of India, and 'sound-and-light' shows. Other halls use multi-media, audio-animatronics show, dioramas and fiberglass figures to depict messages from the scriptures.

It is worth spending time in the gardens called the Sahajanand Van, which has water features, statues, play-areas for children and a café called Premvati Refreshments. The complex is well-known for its spectacular water show.



Set along the west bank of the Sarbarmati, this park makes an enjoyable, educational and adventurous trip for a family with children. As you enter, one of the first sights is that of the Dinosaur and Fossil Park, which has an entrance fashioned like a Pterosaur, prehistoric flying reptiles. Walking trails take you past life-size models of dinosaurs with informative boards and models of other prehistoric animals. Deinonychus (a carnivore), Tyrannosaurus-Rex, Megalosaurus, a Triceratops and her baby, a giant Brontosaurus, an Iguanodon and other dinosaurs, and informative text about prehistoric life are some of the highpoints. Fossils of plants and dinosaurs unearthed in Gujarat are also exhibited. Near this is a botanical garden. You can see a green house with a number of plants under controlled humid conditions, a cactus house having 200 species of cacti and a medicinal plant garden with 250 medicinal plant species. Continue to see cages with domestic fowl and rescued wild birds. The skeletons of two blue whales, one dolphin and a dugong, and specimens of marine life have been exhibited. After this, the trail goes past a huge bird aviary where you can see storks. Many bird specimens are exhibited nearby in glass cases. A snake park has common venomous and non-venomous snakes. Proceed to the zoo which has leopard, spotted deer, sambar, bluebull, blackbuck, chinkara, jackal, four-horned antelope, crocodile, porcupine, monitor lizard and tortoise.

LUSH GREEN GANDHINAGAR

Indroda Nature Park An Educational Park



Wilderness Park

A Nature-lover's Paradise

On the east bank of the Sabarmati, the Wilderness Park has tree plantations, scrub and water features creating a natural habitat for wildlife – you could spot nilgai antelope, langur, blacknaped hare and star tortoise while walking in the woodlands besides birds like woodpeckers, flycatchers and peafowl. The star attraction is the Butterfly Garden, which has host plants and food plants of many butterfly species – stroll around to see brilliantly coloured butterflies. .

Pethapur, A Crafts Centre

Named for a 13th century chieftain named Pethasinh, Pethapur today is best known for its woodcarvers who specialize in making engraved blocks for printing. The artisans transfer the design to planed wooden blocks using pin-prick method, and then carve them out according to the required pattern with some fine and delicate work. The finished blocks with intricate relief carvings are then sold to block printers or dispatched to key centres of block printing.

Mahatma Mandir, A Memorial To Gandhiji

One of India's largest convention centres that can accommodate 15,000 people and seat more than 6000, Mahatma Gandhi also has a memorial with a bridge representing the Dandi march and a concrete dome structure is constructed representing a salt mound in memory of the Salt Satyagraha. This mound houses a museum, library and research center. A sculpture garden with stone murals depicting the life of Mahatma Gandhi and a pinning wheel are important installations.

GIFT CITY - The Smart Town

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) is designed to be a major hub for the financial and tech industry with towers that will house a number of offices and centres.



Mahatma Mandir

A Memorial To Gandhiji



HOMESTAY IN GANDHINAGAR

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TREKKING MADE EASY

Recently when I had gone on a high altitude trek, I realized that I had committed several mistakes. I was beset with a constant headache at high altitudes. My backpack was heavy and unwieldy. And my shoes pinched. After I returned I sought the views and opinions on the art of correct trekking from hard core trekkers and this was what I had gathered.

There are various levels of trekking. These are easy trekking, easy to moderate trekking, moderate to difficult trekking and difficult trekking. Most trekking companies would indicate the level of difficulty that you have chosen to undertake. An easy trek would be up to 13,000 to 14,000 feet. In many countries, the highest mountains would be as high as the base camp in the Himalayan regions. India has a very wide range of trekking mountains and passes.

Preparations for the trek: Which trek you choose would depend on your physical fitness. Know your own body. Doubtless you would never know how your body would react at high altitudes. Therefore, to minimize any risk to yourself, get yourself medically checked and if you any ailment such Diabetes or High Blood Pressure, seek the doctor's advice. They may advise you not to go beyond certain altitude. Heed their advice.

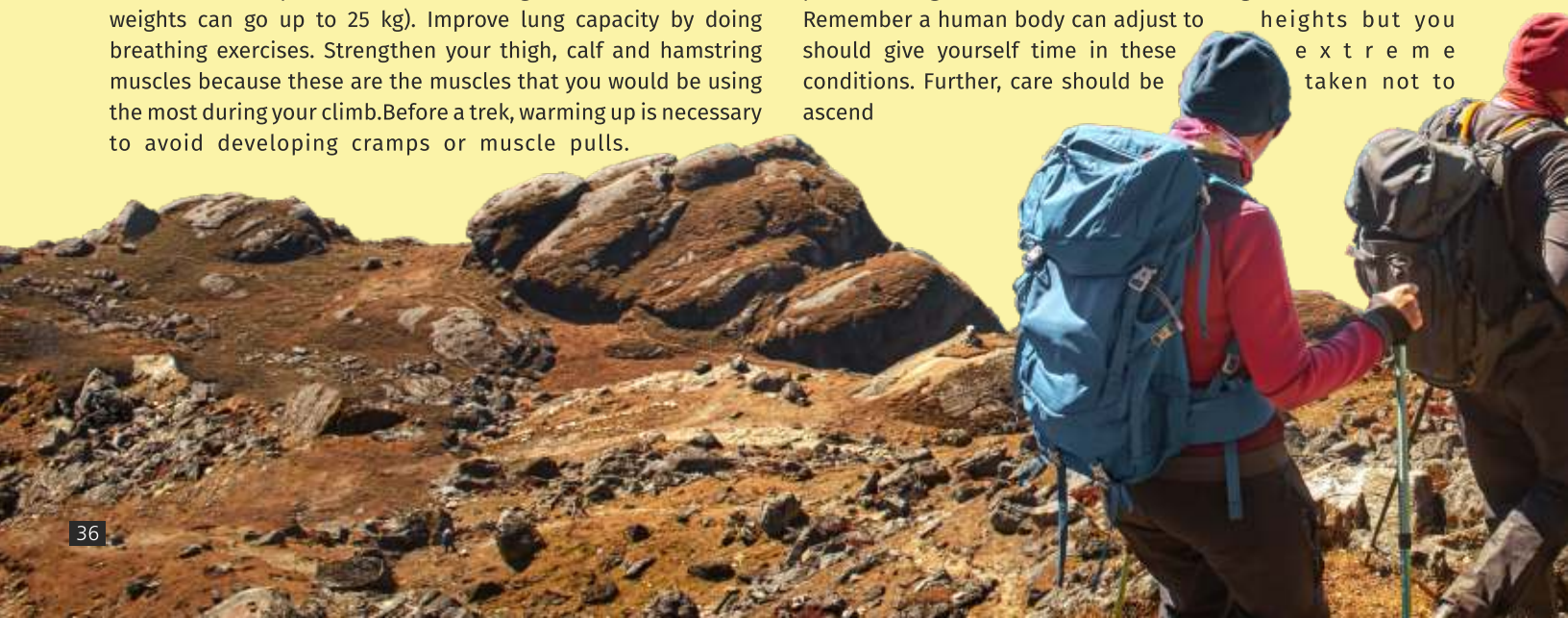
A month before your trek, undertake 3 to 5 km of jogging. Walk with your backpack weighing at least 10 kg. The recommended weight of a loaded backpack is about 10 to 15 kg (for difficult treks, the weights can go up to 25 kg). Improve lung capacity by doing breathing exercises. Strengthen your thigh, calf and hamstring muscles because these are the muscles that you would be using the most during your climb. Before a trek, warming up is necessary to avoid developing cramps or muscle pulls.

Elementary warm-up exercises would suffice.

While trekking, don't look at your destination and don't ask the people who are descending how far to go. Their responses could be very energy sapping. Enjoy nature as you go. Avoid haste. Don't be in competition with others. Enjoy your trek with your companions and take care for your belongings and each other.

Precautions during the trek: While climbing, one of the first bodily disorders that you may develop is headache, stomach cramps or pain and body ache. Inform your partner or the trek leader. Do not keep quiet about it. There is always a tendency among trekkers to keep quiet, especially when you see your companions climbing on jauntily. Inform promptly because rescue from high altitudes becomes more difficult and expensive. Immediately stop and assess yourself. A trek leader would normally have an Oximeter with him. If the oxygen level is below 80, you would need to descend to lower levels. You would then need to decide whether to proceed higher or return to the base camp.

AMS or Acute Mountain Sickness generally occurs above 8,000 feet because of rarefied atmosphere. The symptoms are headache, nausea, vomiting and loss of appetite. A headache by itself need not necessarily be AMS. It generally manifests in a combination of symptoms described here. If you have just a headache, take any pain relieving tablet. Drink water. It should go off within an hour. Remember a human body can adjust to heights but you should give yourself time in these extreme conditions. Further, care should be taken not to ascend



more than 2,000 feet per day.

Food and water etiquette: Drinking water at regular intervals during your trek is sine qua non. Cold conditions are not conducive for thirst and you may neglect drinking water. The recommended amount is about 4 litres a day. On an average, a dawn-to-dusk trek would cover about 7 km. The consumption of water should cover this span of time. If the color of your pee is dark, you could be heading for dehydration. Avoid aerated drinks. Fresh water has the advantage of acclimatizing the person faster. Alcohol is to be strictly avoided. It only tends to dehydrate you. Not a pleasant condition to be in while trekking. Whenever you feel a headache is coming on, drink water. Chances are that the pain would subside. Avoid drinking cold water as far as possible. Drink warm water. If warm water is not available, sip the cold water and roll it in your mouth. Once the temperature of the water is comfortable, swallow it. This way you can further reduce the risk of developing AMS.

Clothing and other accessories: Avoid wearing thermals during the day time. You will sweat. It is to be used only at night. Fleece and jacket is enough in daytime. Keep your hands, feet and head protected all the time. Sunglasses are essential. At high altitudes the Ultra Violet (UV) radiations are high and can affect your eyes. UV after reflection from snow is 6 times more potent. A neck warmer will keep your throat warm. Never wear jeans. They tend to be heavy and are not waterproof. Instead use trek pants.

Buy your trekking shoes well in advance of the trek and get used to it during your daily walks. It usually takes time to break in a new pair of shoes. You would not want to end up with sore feet and blisters, during your trek. Trekking shoes come with high collars which prevent twisting of ankles. Carry medicines specific to your needs. Don't entirely depend on your trek guide. Don't use plastic water bottles. In extreme temperatures, they tend to crack. Use metal water bottles instead. Better to trek with a single pole rather than two. The other hand can be kept free. Carry a rucksack, which is not more than 50 liters in volume. The heavy weight items should be around your shoulders and lighter items should be at the bottom of your backpack. While packing, there should be no ifs and buts - what if my clothes get wet, what if the weather is too warm. Consult your trek operator for the correct and optimum number of clothes to carry.

Carry a compass and a map of the trekking route. In a distress situation, if you do not have a compass, the mountain

side that has more snow will be the south facing because of less sunlight falling on it.

Size of trek group: This is important. Before registering with a company who would be organizing your trip, get to know the size of the trekking group. It should not exceed 10 members. A large group would tend to become unwieldy. Getting ready to start on time would be difficult. While on the trek, there would be laggards who would delay the entire group. Delays at every stage would be inevitable. Large groups would be profitable for the trek operator, but irksome for the participants.

While trekking, don't look at your destination and don't ask the people who are descending how far to go. Their responses could be very energy sapping. Enjoy nature as you go. Avoid haste. Don't be in competition with others. Enjoy your trek with your companions and take care for your belongings and each other.

On a lighter note:

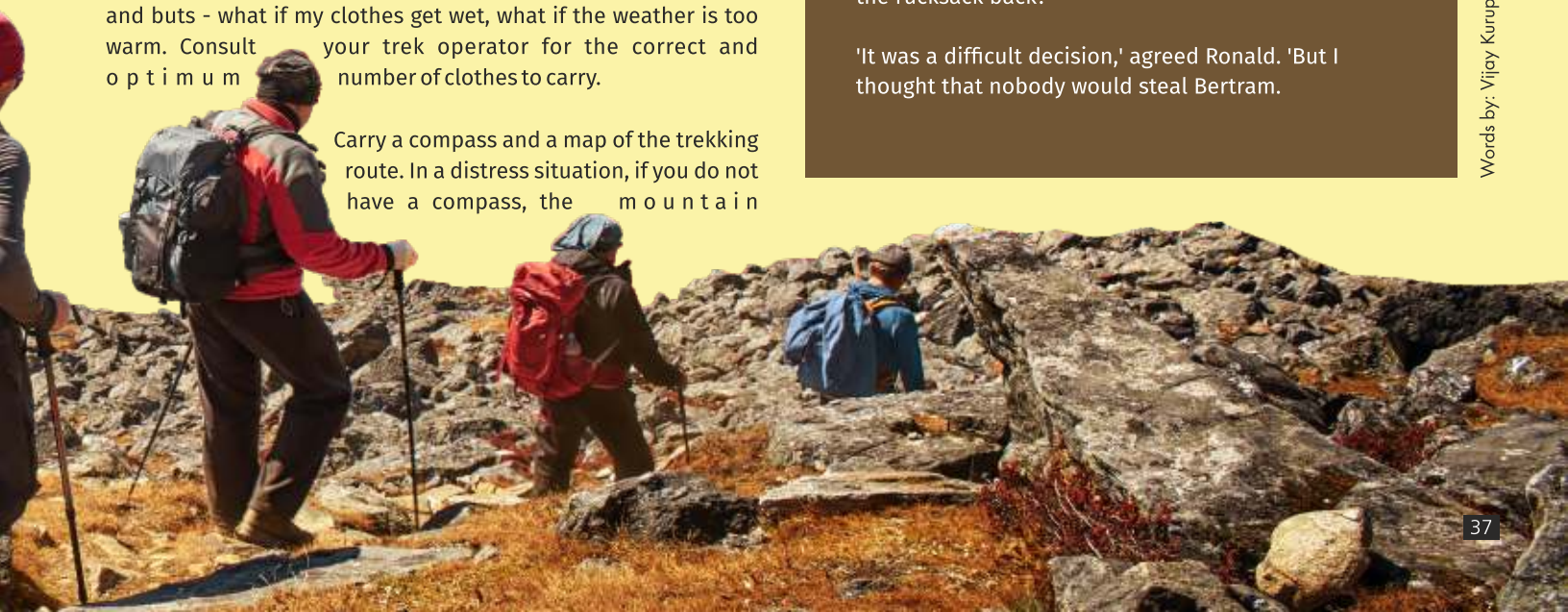
A group of friends went out on hike one day and decided to pair off in twos for the afternoon. That evening, one of them returned alone, staggering under the weight of a heavy rucksack.

'Where's Bertram?' the other ramblers asked.

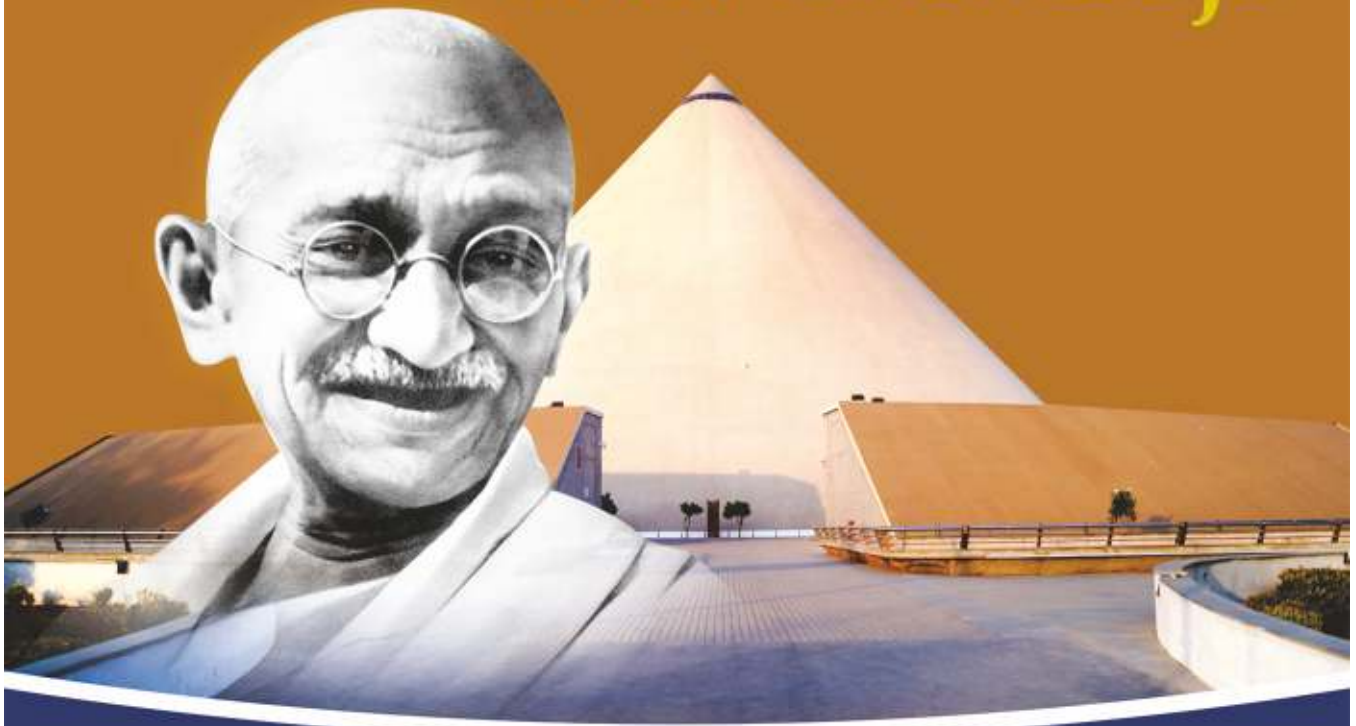
Bertram's mate, Ronald, replied, 'Bertram must have had a heart attack. He just keeled over and died a couple of miles back up the path.'

The other ramblers gasped and then one of them asked, 'You left Bertram lying out there and carried the rucksack back?'

'It was a difficult decision,' agreed Ronald. 'But I thought that nobody would steal Bertram.'



'There is Something
about **Gandhiji**'



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THE GANDHI MUSEUM



Sports, Youth & Cultural Activities Department
Archeology And Museums

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BHAVNAGAR

LAND OF MAHARAJAS



The history of Bhavnagar is much older than the city itself. The Suryavanshi Gehlot Rajputs traveled from Vallabhi, near Bhavnagar, to the hills of Southern Rajasthan and founded the kingdom of Mewar, better known as the princely state of Udaipur, one of the longest ruling dynasties in the world. The 13th century saw the return of the Gohils, when a Gohil chieftain, Sejak Sinh, left his principality on the shores of river Luni in Marwar, Rajasthan, and established his kingdom in present day Bhavnagar district. Being an important coastal stretch, with enormous trading potential, the Gohil kingdom was often under siege and the capital changed according to circumstances. In the 17th century the granite hills of Sihore were selected to be the capital of the Gohil state, with the fort palace on the hilltop, and a century later the new city of Bhavnagar was set up in the mid-1700s by His highness Bhav Sinhji 27 km east of Sihore, with a trade port on the Gulf of Cambay.

late-19th and early-20th century, when rulers introduced wide ranging reforms and public services. The last official ruler, Maharajah Krishnakumar Sinhji was one of the first to unconditionally give up his state to the Indian union.

BHAVNAGAR CITY

Nilambag Palace

Now largely a hotel, the Nilambag Palace was built as a country house of the Bhavnagar royals in 1859. The designer was a German architect Simms. The palace is set in gardens with a portico marking the entrance. The interior of the hall has exquisite teakwood carving, gold work and royal portraits. In the center of the palace is an open courtyard with a marble tiled pleasure pool, fed by a fountain. Around the pool are colonnaded tiled galleries, which display bird paintings by Somalal Shah including illustrations done for the famous book *Birds of Saurashtra* by Bhavnagar prince Dharamkumar Sinhji.

Bhavnagar was at

its zenith in



Nilambag Palace

Barton Museum & Gandhi Smriti

The Barton Museum was built in 1895 AD and housed the collections of col. Barton, a British resident of Saurashtra. Since then the collection has been enhanced with exhibits donated by the Oza family and other prominent personalities of Bhavnagar, as well as various departments. Prominent among the exhibits are the coins and currency, including koris of Kutch and other royal minted coins, the old guns and other arms and armour, and farming implements. Surprisingly, it is weak on the local Kathiawadi handicrafts, with only a few examples of beadwork, embroidery, wood carving, etc, considering this region is so well known for its folk arts and crafts. Other exhibits are postal stamps, fossils, stuffed animals and archaeological finds, especially sculptures. The first floor of the museum is the Gandhi Smriti with a picture gallery portraying the life of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhiji went to college in Bhavnagar and his marksheets are exhibited in the museum. The top floor is dedicated to Indian craftsmanship.

Around the museum are khadi shops selling handloom woven fabrics, handicrafts like the local brass-and-wood patara chests and boxes, and homemade pickles and snacks. A clock tower stands at the intersection called Crescent after the curving façade of the building.



The Takth Sinhji hospital was built in 1879 AD by Sir William Emerson, whose other works include Calcutta's Victoria memorial and Mumbai's Crawford market, and is a splendid example of European architecture.

Shamaldas Arts College and Sir PP Science Institute were built in 1885 AD, as the first arts college of Saurashtra, and count Mahatma Gandhi among the alumni.

In the center of Bhavnagar is the Darbargadh, built in the 18th century as the fort palace of the Maharajahs. In 1895-96, a new wing was designed by Sir William Emerson. The darbargadh is now a bank but retains some old architecture.

Architectural masterpieces of **Bhavnagar**

Takhteshwar Temple

One of Bhavnagar's principal sightseeing spots is the Takhteshwar Temple, which rises serenely from an incline, seemingly ignorant of the bustle of the city's major thoroughfare Waghawadi Road, just a few minutes away! The temple site is one of Bhavnagar's highest points and offers a good view over the cityscape to the Gulf of Cambay marshes.

Victoria Park & Gaurishankar Lake

Victoria Park is a scrub jungle that once provided the royal family with game. It is now a preserve and offers pleasant walks during which a variety of birds like the paradise and fantail flycatcher, tree pie, drongo, golden backed woodpecker, golden oriel, iora, quails, francolins, shikra hawk, etc. can be seen. Blue bull and jackal are seen in good numbers, and some visitors have even seen hyena, jungle cat and hare. Monitor lizards are prolific as are snakes like the cobra, krait, saw scaled viper, checkered keelback, rat snake, etc. There is marsh



Takhteshwar Temple

here as well, attracting ducks, ibises and storks in good numbers, especially during the winter months.

Near Victoria park is Gaurishankar Lake, created as a reservoir in the 1800s and named for Gaurishankar Oza, which is a birding paradise during the cold months when winter migrants gather here in good numbers. Pelicans, cranes and ducks are interesting winter visitors. During other months, the lakeshore is the nesting ground for plovers, river terns and herons.

Palitana

Palitana's Shatrunjaya Hill is covered with hundreds of Jain shrines (estimates

range from 863 to over 1000); most of them marble temples, covering two ridges and the saddle linking them. This imposing temple complex is the highlight of a trip to Gujarat for many visitors. The hill is one of the holiest sites for Jains who believe the first tirthankara - Adinath, and his chief disciple gained enlightenment here. Most of the existing temples date from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, but the temple complex is said to have existed from the 5th century or earlier, losing most of its structures to Islamic incursions of the 14th and 15th centuries.

The town of Palitana was once the headquarters of a princely state ruled by

Gohil Rajputs. It has impressive palaces (which are closed for visitors) and a few European style structures in the old market area but is otherwise quite nondescript. Between the town and the foot of the Shatrunjaya Hill, where the climb begins for the temple complex are some new but interesting temples like the 108 Samvasaran Mandir.

From the foot, the 4-km ascent to the summit of the hill takes about two hours and involves climbing about 3750 steps. The ascent is best done in the morning before it gets too hot to climb. Bearers can take you up in dholis if you are unsure of making it on your own – charges depend on your weight and weather



Palitana

conditions. As you ascend, you can see the mighty fortified wall around the complex and the view from the hilltop of the masses of domes and spires against the backdrop of the blue sky and hilly countryside is spectacular.

The temples are divided into enclosures called tuks (named for the merchants who patronised them), set within thick fortified walls. The tuks contain large temples and several smaller shrines separated from each other by checkered courtyards floored in black-and-white marble. Many of the temples are two or three storey high with perfectly proportioned jarokhas (carved balconies crowned by pavilions), exquisite carvings along the walls depicting Jain religious figures, birds, animals, maidens, musicians and dancers and towering shikaras (spires). The conical ceilings inside are covered with carved figures in concentric circles set around a central lotus blossom. One of the most impressive of the main shrines and the largest temple, the Adinath Temple in the Khartaravasi tuk on the northern ridge has ceilings, walls and supporting brackets covered with carvings and images of Adinath. The 16th-century Adishvara Temple, with its spectacular shikara, dominates the southern shrines. The main image within portrays Rishabhdev adorned with necklaces and a magnificent gold crown.

Run by Shri Vishal Jain Kala Sansthan, this museum displays a collection of Jain art and artefacts like miniatures, illustrated palm leaf manuscripts and book covers, exquisite ivory carvings and paintings, tirthankara images in sandalwood and various

stones, and figures and paintings showing the life of Lord Mahavir. Unfortunately, some of the exhibits are not dated or lack labels.

On the road from Bhavnagar to Palitana or Rajkot, Sihore is a historical town with the 12th century stepped tank called Brahma Kund, symbolising its importance during the reign of Solanki dynastic ruler Sidhraj over Gujarat. The town has many Shiva Temples, comprising the Navnatha Mahadev pilgrimage, said to date from the medieval period.

The walled town centre with the old palace called Darbargadh dates from the 17th century when Sihore was the capital of the Gohil Rajputs before the founding of Bhavnagar. Darbargadh has wood carvings on its facade. Request the caretaker to open out the rooms inside which have some colourful murals mostly showing battle scenes – Eastern Saurashtra was fiercely contested between the Gohil Rajputs and the Kathi Darbars.

According to the diary of Kalyanji Mehta, brother of Harshram and a couple of letters, Nana Sahib retired in Sihor with his colleagues, and passed away in 1903 in Dave Sheri, Kalyanji's house in Sihor. Sihor today is a centre for small-and-medium scale industries, including metal working, steel rolling (using steel salvaged from the nearby Alang ship breaking yard), pottery and ceramics, tobacco and snuff. It is a good place to buy bronze vessels and other metal utensils. Sihor is also known for its pedas and other sweets.

Palitana





ALANG

ALANG

Alang is one of the world's major centres for breaking or dismantling ships to obtain metal sheets, pipes, angles, scrap, and other materials, for recycling. The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB)-managed yards at Alang-Sisoya comprise the largest ship recycling zone in the world. Tankers, container ships and occasionally cruise liners are brought to Alang, which has the natural advantage being located in the Gulf of Cambay that has a high tidal range and high velocity entering tides. These high tides allow ships to simply ram their hulls into the sloping beaches at high tide, where workers can break down the ship during the low tide without being hampered by the water. The yard is divided into 167 plots spread over 10km with the capacity to recycle about 450 ships per year. It produces 4.5 million ton per annum of steel that feeds the rolling mills. Running machines like diesel generator sets,

motors, welding equipment, turbo chargers, oil purifier, heat exchangers, cooling towers, navigational safety equipment are bought by dealers and industries.

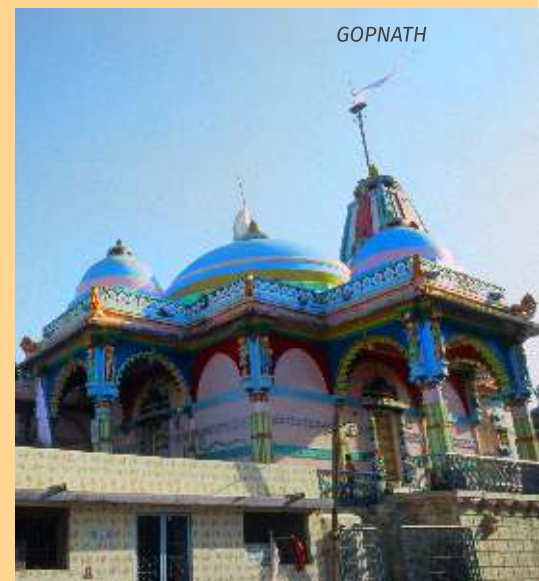
TALAJA

From the Bhavnagar-Somnath Highway, you can see the conical hill of Talaja crowned by fine Jain temples. This hill is marked by Buddhist caves. The most impressive of the Buddhist caves is Ebhala Mandapa, about 75 by 68 feet with a 17ft high ceiling. It has a large hall fronted by four octagonal pillars. The other important cave is the ruined chaitya-griha with a stupa that has a primitive version of the vedika and chaitya-window (horse-shoe shaped window).

GOPNATH

From Talaja, the road runs down to the coast that has some pretty beaches which are not suitable for swimming because of high velocity waves. The

most popular beach is at Gopnath, a strip of white sand hemmed in by rugged rock cliffs. The beach has a few shacks and coconut vendors, which are welcome as there is no shady vegetation here. Overlooking the beach from an elevation, the Gopnath temple is said to date to the 17th century. This area is associated with Narsinh Mehta, a 15th century



GOPNATH

exponent of Vaishnava poetry who is highly respected in Gujarati literary circles and most famous for "Vaishnava Jana To", which was one of the favourite bhajans of Mahatma Gandhi. It is said that Narsinh Mehta was born in Talaja and came to the serene woods near Gopnath where he fasted and meditated for seven days till Shiva appeared before him in person and showed him the eternal raas leela of krishna and the gopis.

During the reign of Maharaja Krishnakumarsinhji of Bhavnagar, Gopnath was the summer capital of the princely state, where he would spend summer months with his entire retinue of staff in a mansion sited on a bluff where he could enjoy the sea breeze. Part of the mansion estate, scenically located with a lighthouse on one side

and an unending sea view, is now a heritage hotel. Practicalities: Gopnath is 89km from Bhavnagar.

FIRANGI DEVAL

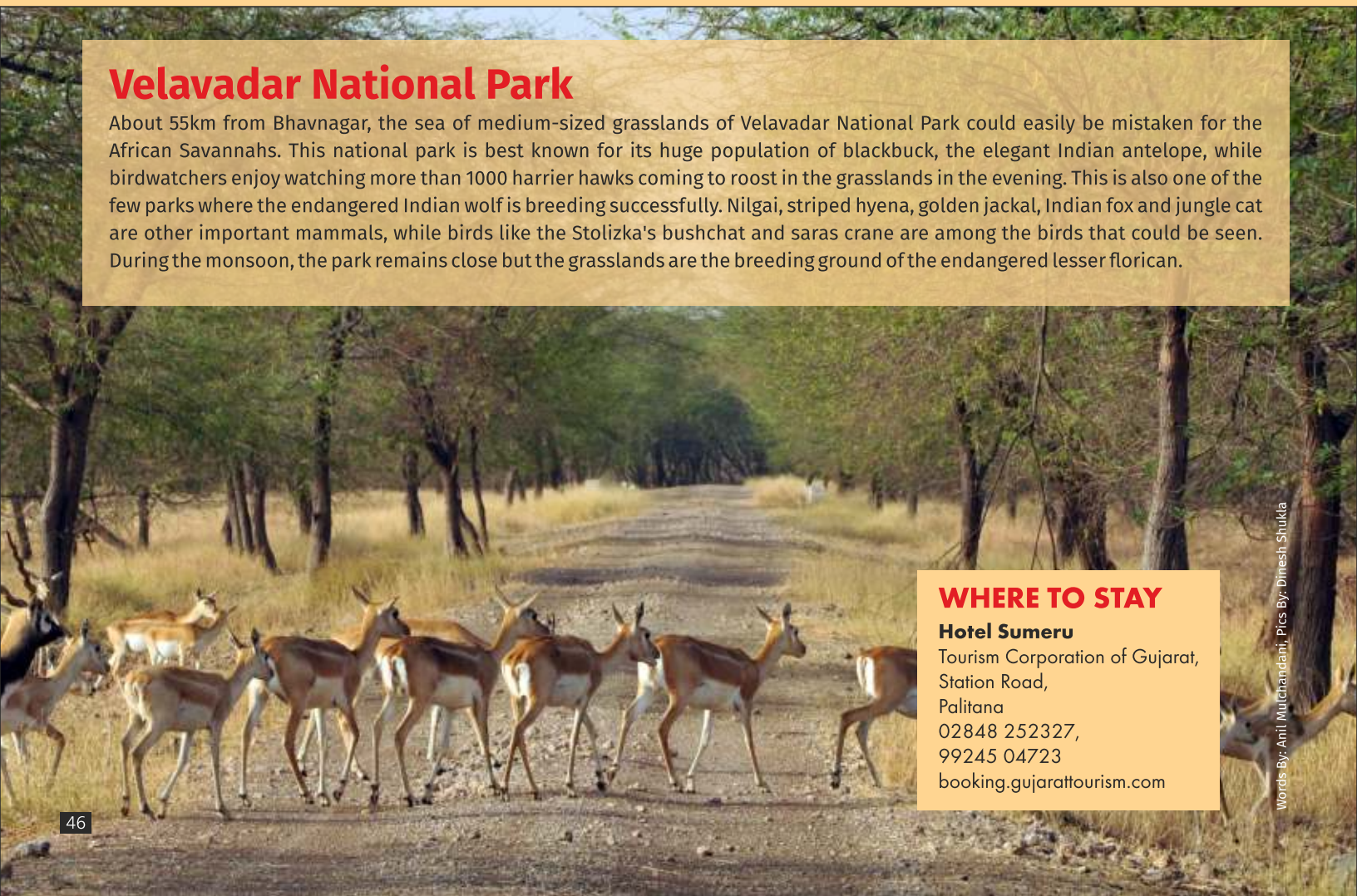
Mistaken to be a church, Firangi Deval is actually a seventh century temple built during the Maitreka rule over Gujarat. This east facing shrine is largely plain with a carved band of stylized rafter. The super structure above the temple is built in three tiers



with some carvings. The crowning stone has large Surpa with prominent Chandrasala in front of it.

Velavadar National Park

About 55km from Bhavnagar, the sea of medium-sized grasslands of Velavadar National Park could easily be mistaken for the African Savannas. This national park is best known for its huge population of blackbuck, the elegant Indian antelope, while birdwatchers enjoy watching more than 1000 harrier hawks coming to roost in the grasslands in the evening. This is also one of the few parks where the endangered Indian wolf is breeding successfully. Nilgai, striped hyena, golden jackal, Indian fox and jungle cat are other important mammals, while birds like the Stoliczka's bushchat and saras crane are among the birds that could be seen. During the monsoon, the park remains close but the grasslands are the breeding ground of the endangered lesser florican.



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