

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Published by PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS LIMITED | www.praveg.com
(Formerly known as PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.)

April 2019

Vol. : 4 | Issue : 8 | Pages : 64 | ₹ 200 RNI Regd. No. GUJENG/2015/70098

A high-end monthly magazine

*Heritage Holidays
In India*

*Eco Friendly Destinations
Around The World*

*Treat your taste buds
in Lucknow*



TORAN HOTELS



Toran Gandhi Ashram - Ahmedabad



Key Attractions

Comfortable Stay Options | Warm Hospitality
Authentic Gujarati Food | Reasonable Rate

Contact for Booking:

Phone: +91 79 - 2755 9342 | Mobile: +91 94281 01742 | Email: hoteltorangagh@gujarattourism.com
www.booking.gujarattourism.com

Mt. Abu ■ Saputara ■ Dwarka ■ Junagadh ■ Porbandar ■ Pavagadh ■ Vadnagar
Palitana ■ Vanz (Surat) ■ Matwad (Navsari) ■ Narayan Sarovar ■ Dhordo (Kutch)

Let's look back...

Ours is a country where you can find huge tombs sprawling over the land, towers that reach the sky and sites so beautiful they leave you mesmerized. Heritage is the legacy of the past and is what we live with today. As April 18 is celebrated as the World Heritage Day, here is a list of prominent destinations of India that are a window to our glorious past.

With that, this edition of Praveg's Tourism One celebrates the World Earth Day by presenting eco-friendly places around the World. Hike in the National Park of Switzerland or go caving in Belize, choose destination of your choice from our list of hand-picked wonders.

If entertainment is what you're looking for, jump to our "Dance Destinations" to indulge in the cultural extravaganza and witness the aesthetic classical and folk dances.

Read on!

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

April 2019

Editor

Paraskumar M. Patel

Editorial Team

Prolina Barada
Priyanka Desai

Design Team

Mahesh Patel
Yagnesh Bhavsar
Vipul Gadhavi

Published & Printed By



Praveg Communications Limited

(Formerly known as PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.)

102, Shanti Arcade, 132ft Ring Road,
Naranpura, Ahmedabad 380013.

Tel.: +91-79-27496737

e: tourismone@praveg.com

www.praveg.com

DISCLAIMER: All information in Praveg's TOURISM ONE is derived from sources we consider reliable. It is passed on to our readers without any responsibility on our part. All images are copyrighted by their respective owners unless otherwise stated. Opinions/views expressed by third parties are not necessarily shared by us. Material appearing in the magazine cannot be reproduced, whether in part(s) or in whole, without prior permission.

Be a part of Praveg's Tourism One:

Share with us some enthusiastic inputs like photographs, essays or anything related to tourism.

Have some suggestions for us?

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

FOR SUBSCRIPTION QUERIES, CONTACT:

tourismone@praveg.com

Printed, Published and Owned by

Paraskumar M. Patel

On behalf of, Praveg Communications Limited

102, Shanti Arcade, 132ft Ring Road,
Naranpura, Ahmedabad 380013.

Tel.: +91-79-27496737, 99251 71538

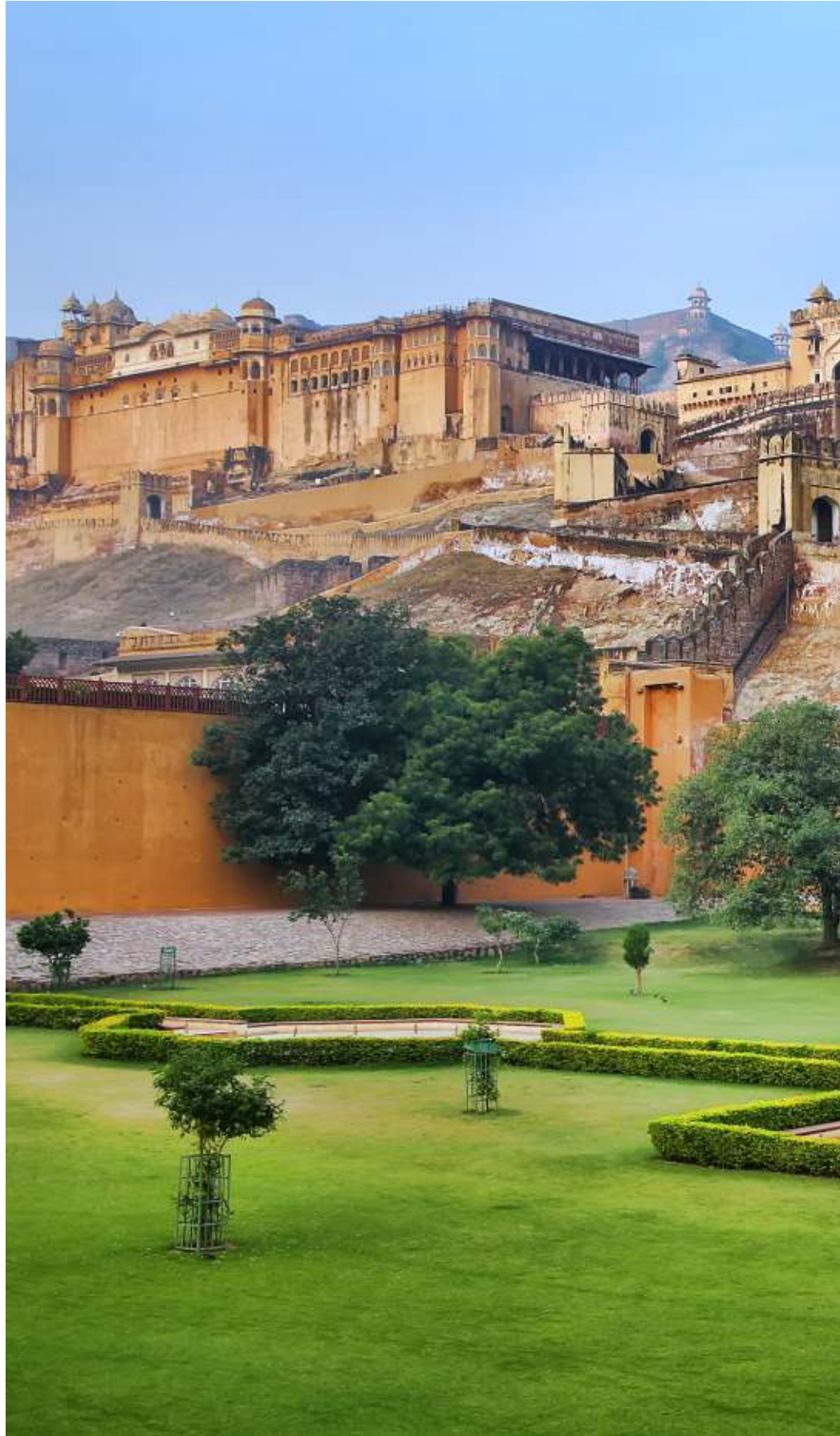
Email: tourismone@praveg.com

Printed At:

Le Griffe Offset Pvt. Ltd.

3, Lower Ground Floor, Popular House,
Ashram Road, Ahmedabad - 380009

Download an e-copy of Tourism One from
www.praveg.com



Contents



Amber Fort, Rajasthan

Incredible India

Dance Destinations
...pg 4

**Treat your taste buds
in Lucknow**
...pg 10

Heritage Holidays in India
...pg 12

Lens Magic - Comment & Win
...pg 34

Charming Charotar
...pg 44

Unakoti : A Forested Wonder
...pg 50

Magnificent Mahisagar
...pg 54

Far Far Away

**Eco Friendly Destinations
Around The World**
...pg 25

**Reminiscent of
French Era in Sri Lanka**
...pg 38



Dances are high on priority for travellers – not only are they entertaining, but they also offer an insight into the local culture. For those who love dances, we look at some must visit destinations during International Dance Day 2019, April 29.

WATCH CLASSICAL DANCES AND RITUAL THEATRE AT KOCHI

Cochin is one of the few places in India, where you are guaranteed an opportunity to watch a classical dance. Here, a number of theatres offer Kathakali performances daily. The Kathakali actor with elaborate make up and magnificent costume has become the symbol of Kerala. Musicians sing the dialogue and play music on a bronze gong, cymbals, chenda drum struck with curved sticks and a barrel shaped hand drum. The actors perform without speaking anything, except maybe a cry, and the story is told through elaborate hand gestures, facial expressions and movements. When a female character is being enacted, melodic drums may replace the chenda. Kathakali differs from other South Indian classical dances in using movements from ancient Indian martial arts and athletic traditions. The art form was developed in the courts and theatres of Hindu principalities, not in temples like some of the South Indian



classical dances.

At Cochin, you can choose from venues, where tourist-oriented Kathakali performances are held. The Greenix Village in Fort Kochi has two kinds of performance. One is a Kathakali recital and the other is a mixed cultural show, where you can see cameos of numerous ritual dance forms like Kathakali and Mohiniattam, Kalaripayattu martial arts and sometimes the Theyyam dance.

An interesting place for information about Kerala's ritual arts is the Kerala

Folklore Museum, which has exquisite woodwork, traditional tiles and murals. The collection of masks, costumes, musical instruments and ritual arts is outstanding. You can book the museum's theatre for a performance.

The Kerala Kathakali Centre has performances in an a/c theatre. Graduates of renowned dance academies perform Kathakali recitals with about three characters, and the music is live. There are also Kalaripayattu martial arts demonstrations here.

For a more authentic look at Kerala's

performing arts, drive to Cheruthuruthy on the banks of the Bharatpuzha River. Kerala Kalamandalam, deemed to be University of Art and Culture by the Government of India, is a major center for learning performing arts of Kerala and neighbouring states. The academy was started to revive an interest in three major classical dance performing arts of Kerala, Kathakali, Kudiyattam and Mohiniyattam. Thanks to the effort of Vallathol Narayana Menon and Mukunda Raja. The Maharaja of Cochin gave land and building for setting up of the academy in 1933. Here you can watch performances of Kathakali, Kutiyattam and Mohiniyattam, as well as Carnatic music and use of musical instruments in a theatre that recreates the architecture of the ritual theatres in temples of South India.

April and May are months when ritual theatre can be seen at various places in Kerala. Authentic performances can also be seen at the dance schools of Kerala – the Margi School is one of the foremost schools of Kathakali and other dance dramas. Thiruvananthapuram's dance festivals at the Nishagandhi open-air theatre in the palace compound are awe-inspiring.

ENJOY FOLK PERFORMANCES AT THEME RESTAURANTS IN AHMEDABAD

Gujarat is well-known for its colourful folk dances like the garba and the dandiya raas. Both men and women usually wear colourful dresses for garba and dandiya performances. The girls and the women wear chaniya choli, a three-piece dress with an embroidered and colorful blouse, teamed with skirt-like bottom and dupatta. Chaniya Cholis are decorated with beads, shells, mirrors, stars and embroidery work, mati, etc.



The women are bedecked in jewellery like jhumkas (large earrings), necklaces, bindi, bajubandh, chudas and kangans, kamarbandh, payal and mojiris. Boys

and men also transform into peacocks – they wear embroidered pyjamas, kurta, kada and mojiris.

SEE CLASSICAL DANCES IN CHENNAI

Chennai, as the capital of Tamil Nadu, is a major centre for classical dances like Bharatnatyam. It is a solo dance traditionally performed exclusively by women. The dances express religious themes and spiritual ideas, particularly of South India promoting Shaivism, Vaishnavism and Shaktism. Dancers go through much training to achieve perfection in footwork, gestures of hands, eye movements and facial expression. Many hotels hold tourist-oriented classical dance recitals in their restaurants. For a more authentic experience, visit Kalakshetra that was founded in 1936 by Rukmini Devi Arundale. Spread over almost 100 acres by the Chennai coastline, the Kalakshetra Foundation is now an institution of national importance and an autonomous body under Ministry of Culture, Government of India. Here, you can get permission to watch the classes and perhaps attend one of the concerts. The visitors can sit through the Morning Prayer at the Banyan tree, and then visit the Instruments Cottage, the Vishnu Statue, Tagore Hall, Padma Pushkarini, Dance, Music and Visual Arts Department, the Ayyanar Shrine (Village Shrine) and the Crafts Education and Research Centre (CERC). Handicrafts like Kalamkari sarees, bed sheets, cushion covers created by the Crafts Education and Research Center can be bought from here.

The best time to see classical dances in Chennai is from December to February when there are many festivals and events. You can combine a visit with the Mamallapuram Dance Festival.

The Natyanjali Festival at the temple towns of Chidambaram, Kumbakonam and Thanjavur are available.



VISIT A DANCE VILLAGE AT BANGALORE

About 30km from Bangalore, Nrityagram is one of the most aesthetically pleasing places to see and study classical dances. A model village built for the purpose of promoting classical dance and building a community of dancers, Nrityagram was conceptualized as India's first modern Gurukul (residential school) for Indian classical dances by Odissi dancer, the late Protima Gauri in 1990. Nrityagram is designed in the shape of a rural village by Gerard da Cunha. The residential school offers training in Indian classical dance forms, Odissi, Mohiniattam, Kathak, Bharatnatyam, Kuchipudi, Kathakali and Manipuri, eight hours a day, six days a week for seven years. You can ask for details of performances and thematic lectures.



SEE KALBELIYA DANCES IN JAIPUR

The capital of Rajasthan and one of the major tourist places of India, Jaipur is one of the places, where you can enjoy watching tourist-oriented folk performances. Rajasthan's Kalbelia dance and songs are now in UNESCO's representative list of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity from the year 2010. The Kalbelia people are traditionally nomads and as their occupation is catching snakes, their dance movements and costumes bear a resemblance to that of the serpents. In Kalbelia dance, males play various traditional instruments and females perform the dance. Kalbelia dance is one of the most sensuous Rajasthani dances and the movements are athletic and acrobatic. Many hotels have dance performances and you can see folk dances at village-themed restaurants.



TOUR THE CHHAU TRIANGLE

Chhau is a traditional dance from Eastern India that enacts episodes from epics. It can be seen at Seraikella in Jharkhand, Purulia in West Bengal and Mayurbhanj in Odisha. The best time to tour these towns is during Chaitra Parva when people can be seen practicing the dance steps and participating in shows or competitions. Originating from indigenous forms of dance and martial practices, it is a spectacular dance with mock combat techniques, stylized gaits of birds and animals and movements modelled on daily chores. Chhau is taught to male dancers from families of traditional artists or from local communities. The dance is performed at night in an open space to traditional and folk melodies played on the reed pipes mohuri and shehnai. The reverberating drumbeats of a variety of drums dominate the accompanying music ensemble.



SEE FOLK DANCES OF THE NORTHEAST

The states of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur are known for their graceful dances. Many resorts of Assam offer opportunities to see Bihu performances. The Bihu dancers are usually young men and women, and the dancing style is characterized by brisk steps and rapid hand movements. The traditional costume of dancers is colourful and centred round the red colour theme, signifying joy and vigour. Visit the northeast during the Hornbill Festival in Nagaland or Bihu in Assam.

WATCH KATHAK IN DELHI

Kathak is a classical dance from the Awadh princely state. Jaipur and other centres also gave much patronage to Kathak as a dance form. After the accession of the princely states, Kathak needed revival. Today, Delhi's National Institute of Kathak Dance, also known as Kathak Kendra, is the premier dance institution. Established in 1964, the institution is primarily dedicated to Kathak, though it also offers courses in Hindustani classical music (Vocal) and Pakhawaj. You could check for details of performances. 📺



Treat your taste buds in **Lucknow**

Travelling in Uttar Pradesh has a major advantage when it comes to finding delicious food in all variety. The city of Nawabs is probably the best example of this culture. Lucknow will never leave you disappointed during an impromptu food trail. The food culture is so legendary that visitors come here from different places just to taste delectable cuisines.

Lucknow's love for food goes back to era of Nawabs who were huge fans of different delicacies. This is a major reason why many of the eating joints in the city are 200-300 years old and have kept their original way of preparation, flavours and use of spices intact.

When you plan a food trail to Lucknow, there are certain outlets that you must not miss. A well-planned tour to explore food in the city takes an entire day and sometimes even two.



- 1 *Evenings are the best time to go on Aminabad's food trail as it is very interesting to see the visitors turning up outside their favourite food joints*
- 2 *The legendary tunday kababs with mughali paratha holds an iconic status in the city*
- 3 *Nimish, a favourite street food delicacy*
- 4 *Sharma's unique samosa and kulhad chai has won them a lot of fans over the years*
- 5 *Tunday's neighbour Wahid is equally busy during the evenings with guests filling up its small seating area*
- 6 *The aromatic flavours of Biryani instantly pull you inside Wahid's shop*
- 7 *In the end, don't forget to miss Prakash's Kulfi to miss upon the mouthwatering kulfi faluda*

Sharma's Tea Stall

Sharma's Tea Stall is one of the most popular breakfast spots in the city. Located near Hazratganj, they are known to prepare round samosa along with tea served in earthen pots. The visitors here are known to be coming here for ages who like having a quick bite with their friends before heading for work.

Wahid Biryani

The tiny lane of Aminabad has shops that are more than 100 years old. Wahid Biryani is one such place that is known for lip smacking Biryani. The seating space is small and congested with limited number of tables (5 or 6) and is always filled with patrons. Don't be surprised if you find yourself sitting with someone unknown as you lose yourself in the soft and tender meat and aromatic biryani rice.



Tunday Kababi

Lucknow's food is incomplete without the mentions of Tunday Kebabi. The founder of this eating joint is the pioneer of the city's food culture. It is said that when food loving Nawab of Awadh got older and started losing his teeth, his cravings for kebabs continued. So he organized a contest to find someone who could make kebabs without bones so that he wouldn't have to chew. The winner was a man who only had one working arm and hence was nicknamed Tunday. His kebabs won and since then the name has been synonymous to the city's food culture.

The eating joint is so well known that every evening, the outlet starts to get filled with visitors who stand outside in queue waiting patiently to carry a packet of kebabs home. The seating space is always crowded and one must be prepared to wait for minimum 15-20 minutes for their order to finally arrive.

Makkhan

Malai/Nimish

Makkhan Malai is a popular street delicacy that you can find on the streets of Hazratganj. It is only prepared during the winters as the authentic version

requires the finished product to be soaked under sky in the midnight.

Royal Café

Now that you are in Hazratganj, you will surely come across Royal Café. It's a popular eating joint that is known for a flavoursome Tokri Chat. This speciality is made by frying grated potatoes in the shape of a basket. This basket is then loaded with aloo tikkis, papdi, lentil fritters, chickpeas and sweetened yogurt topped with tamarind and green chilli chutneys. If you are on a solo food trail then a plate will fill your tummy for the rest of the day.

Prakash ki kulfi

Prakash ki Kulfi is the perfect showstopper to the food trail in Lucknow. Located in the end corner of Aminabad, Prakash kulfi has been serving its visitors for generations. Since Aminabad is a popular shopping spot and days can be really hot, its kulfi serves as an ideal way to relax and beat the heat.

Lucknow's food culture will make you fall in love with the city. The zeal to continue the same taste since generations takes effort and these experts are well versed in making sure that it happens.



Incredible India

HERITAGE

HOLIDAYS IN INDIA

The International Day for Monuments and Sites also known as World Heritage Day is held on 18th April each year around the world. During World Heritage Day, visit some of the unique monuments of India.

THE ROCK CUT CAVE TEMPLES OF MAHARASHTRA

Maharashtra's rock-cut cave temples and manmade caves are among India's most marvelous works of architecture. There are two types of Buddhist caves – Viharas or monastic caves, where monks lived together and the chaitya or religious caves distinguished by a stupa, where prayers are offered. Spectacular Hindu cave temples at Elephanta and Ellora are UNESCO World Heritage Sites – the Hindu cave temples are carved on rocks from the top so that they are three-dimensional temples that look like the masonry temples.

Mumbai has two clusters of cave temples – Kanheri in the forests of Sanjay Gandhi National Park and Elephanta on an island an hour by boat from the Gateway of India. The Shiva Cave Temple, built in the sixth century on Elephanta Island, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The massive statue of Shiva is the highlight of the Elephant Caves.

From Mumbai, travel to Lonavala that makes a base to explore the 1st century Buddhist caves at Beda, the Bhaja Caves and the Karli Cave, which is one of the finest examples of rock cave architecture in entire India. The Karli Cave is a chaitya with a stupa in the deep interior of the cave, which is curved at the back, two rows of pillars that meet behind the stupa and a front room covered with stone carvings.

From Lonavala, travel to Nashik, where there are some important cave temples.

From Nashik, continue to Aurangabad that has some caves in the city itself. A short drive from Aurangabad, Ellora has Hindu, Jain and Buddhist Caves. Here you can see an amazing wealth of sculpture. The colossal Kailasha Temple is an architectural masterpiece with halls, galleries and huge columns. Another day excursion is to Ajanta, where the caves not only have some superlative sculptures but an incredible range of paintings.



THE TOWERING TEMPLES OF TAMIL NADU



Tamil Nadu has some of India's most impressive temples. From Chennai, drive to Mamallapuram or Mahabalipuram, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Ruled by the Pallava dynasty from the 6th to the 9th century, architecture flowered here, and the many monuments like man-made caves, structural temples, bass reliefs and monolithic chariot like shrines called rathas. See the splendid shore temple here built by Rajasimha, who also built the impressive Kailashnatha temple of Kanchipuram.

From Mammalapuram, travel south to see the temples of Chidambaram, Kumbakonam, Gangaikondacholarapuram and Thanjavur. Built in the period when the Chola dynasty was at its peak, the power of the Chola rulers is reflected in the grand scale of the Brihadishwara temples of Gangaikondacholarapuram and Thanjavur. The temple of Thanjavur built around 1010AD is a UNESCO World Heritage Site with its huge tower dominating the cityscape. From Thanjavur, you can travel to the Pandya dynasty-built Minakshi temple of Madurai.



HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF NORTH INDIA



Delhi and Agra were the most important cities of the Mughal Empire. Not surprisingly, this is where you can see magnificent monuments like Delhi's Red Fort and Agra's Taj Mahal, India's wonder of the world. Before the Mughal conquest, Delhi was ruled by Sultans and then the Tuqlaq Dynasty, both of which also built impressive buildings in the city. The Qutb Minar, part of a complex built between the 12th and the 14th century is Delhi's signature monument. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Many forts, tombs and mosques stand testimony to the empires that ruled Delhi. The Lal Quila or Red Fort is the best known of the Mughal period buildings in Delhi.

From Delhi, travel to Agra, which also has a red fort that is World Heritage Site. But of course, the main reason for visiting Agra is to see the Taj Mahal.



MEDIEVAL MONUMENTS OF KARNATAKA

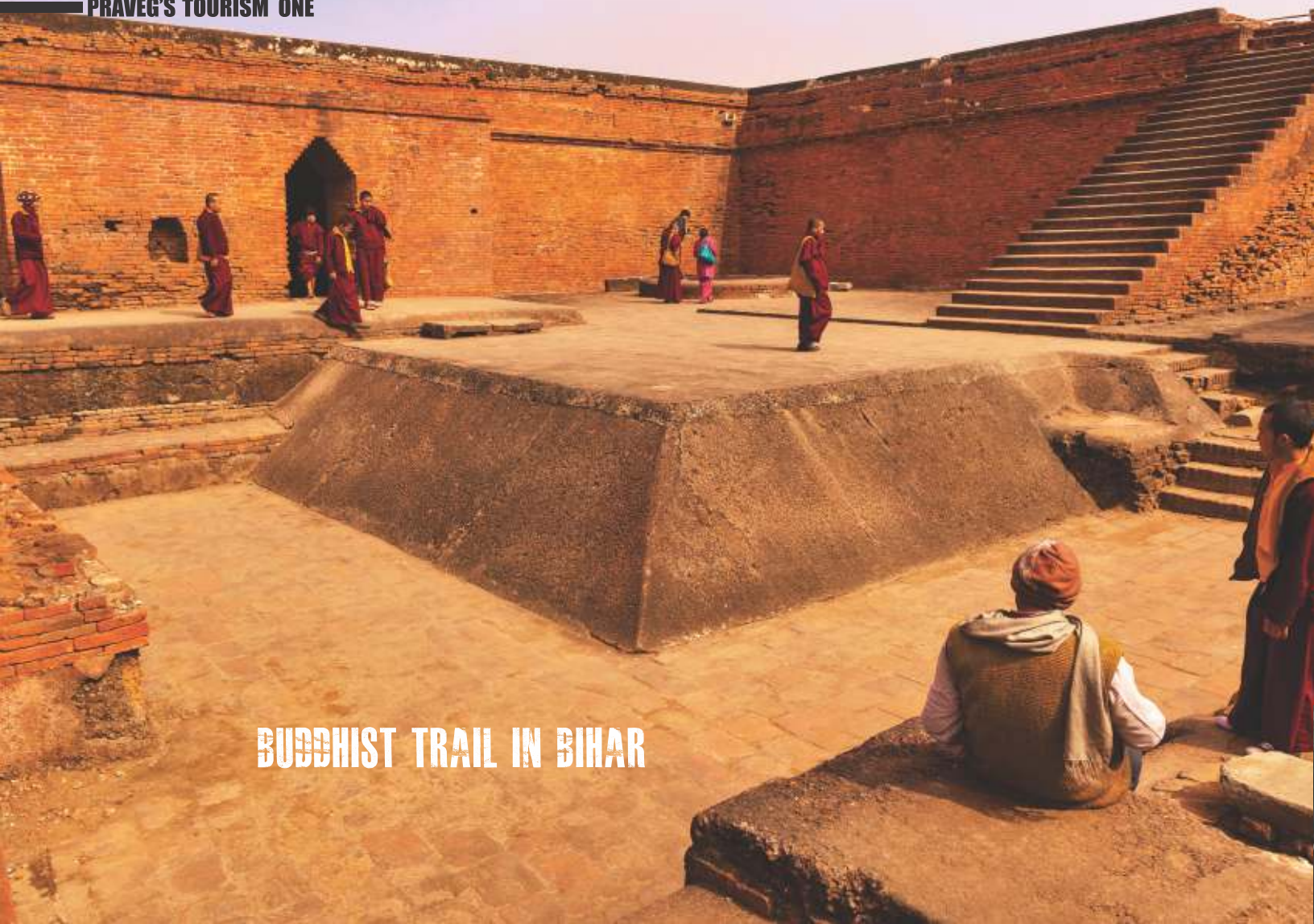
During the middle ages, Karnataka was the centre of construction activities that resulted in the building of awe-inspiring monuments by great kingdoms like those of the Vijayanagara, Chalukya and Hoysala Kings. Start at the Badami, which was the Chalukya capital in the 6th and 7th century. Ancient stone temples, including caves and structural temples are set on red sandstone cliffs with a lake at the centre – the place looks most picturesque in the evening. About 30km away, Pattadakal is a World Heritage Site selected for presenting a harmonious blend of architectural forms from northern and southern India. An impressive group of nine Hindu temples can be seen here, with the showpiece being the Temple of Virupaksha, built Lokamahadevi to commemorate her husband's victory over the kings from the South in the 8th century. 19km away is Aihole, which has many small temples of the 6th to 11th century.

Travel south from here to Hampi, which has the remains of many temples, palaces and public areas. Located in the Tungabhadra river basin in Central Karnataka, Hampi encompasses about 1600 surviving remains that include forts, riverside features, royal and sacred complexes, temples, shrines, pillared halls, Mandapas, memorial structures, gateways, defence check posts, stables, water structures and much more.

From Hampi, travel to Hassan, which makes the base to visit the splendid Hoysala temples at Halebidu and Belur.



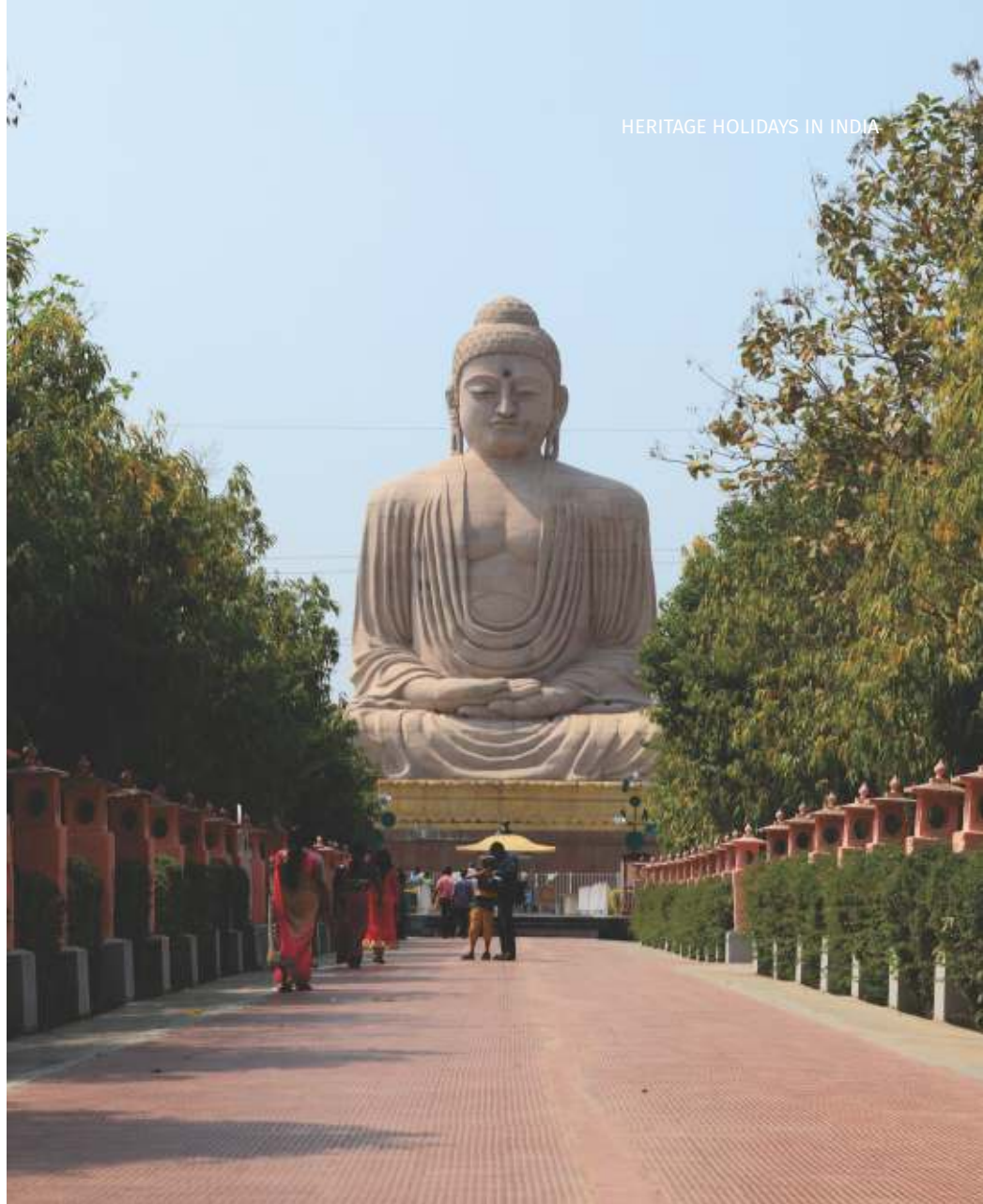




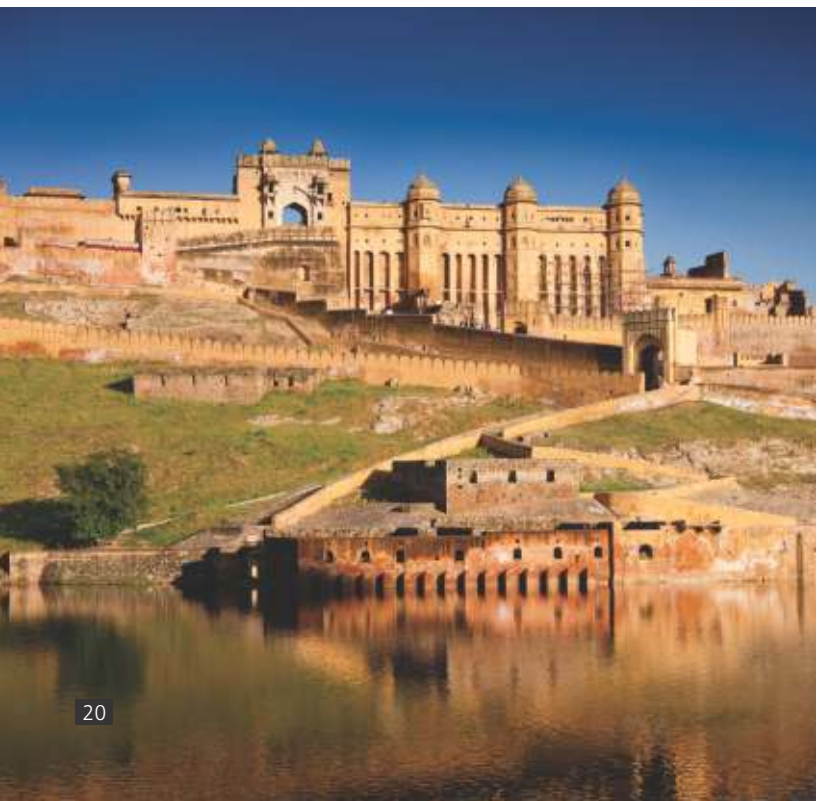
BUDDHIST TRAIL IN BIHAR



Bihar is called the Birthplace of Buddhism and its Buddhist sites attract pilgrims from the world over. The most sacred and outstanding is Bodh Gaya where the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Mahabodi temple marks the sacred ground where Buddha attained enlightenment. The ornate temple has a pyramidal spire, and inside is the 10th century gilded Buddha. Some of the Sunga period railings, about 2200 years old, are still standing. There are many other temples, monasteries and Buddha statues here. From here, travel to Rajgir. It has a multitude of historic sites in picturesque and green hilly countryside. A short drive from Rajgir, Nalanda has the remains of the ancient universities that were among the greatest in the 5th century. Well-known as a centre of Buddhist learning and academic excellence, Nalanda has extensive ruins of monasteries and stupas.

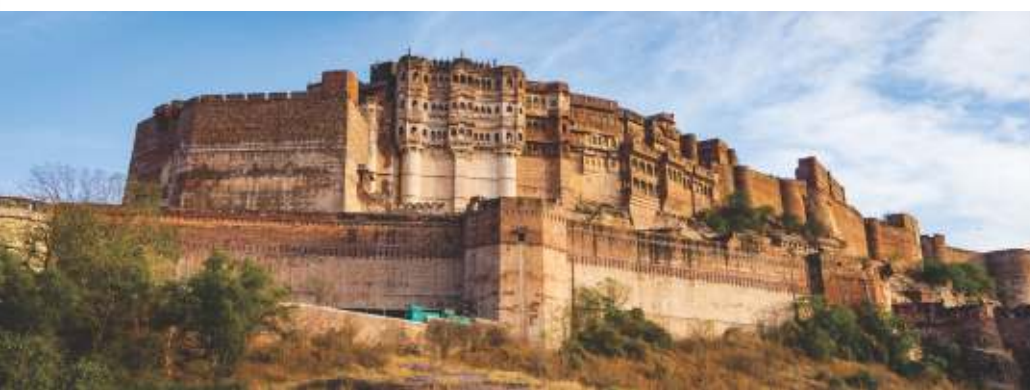


THE HILL FORTS OF RAJASTHAN

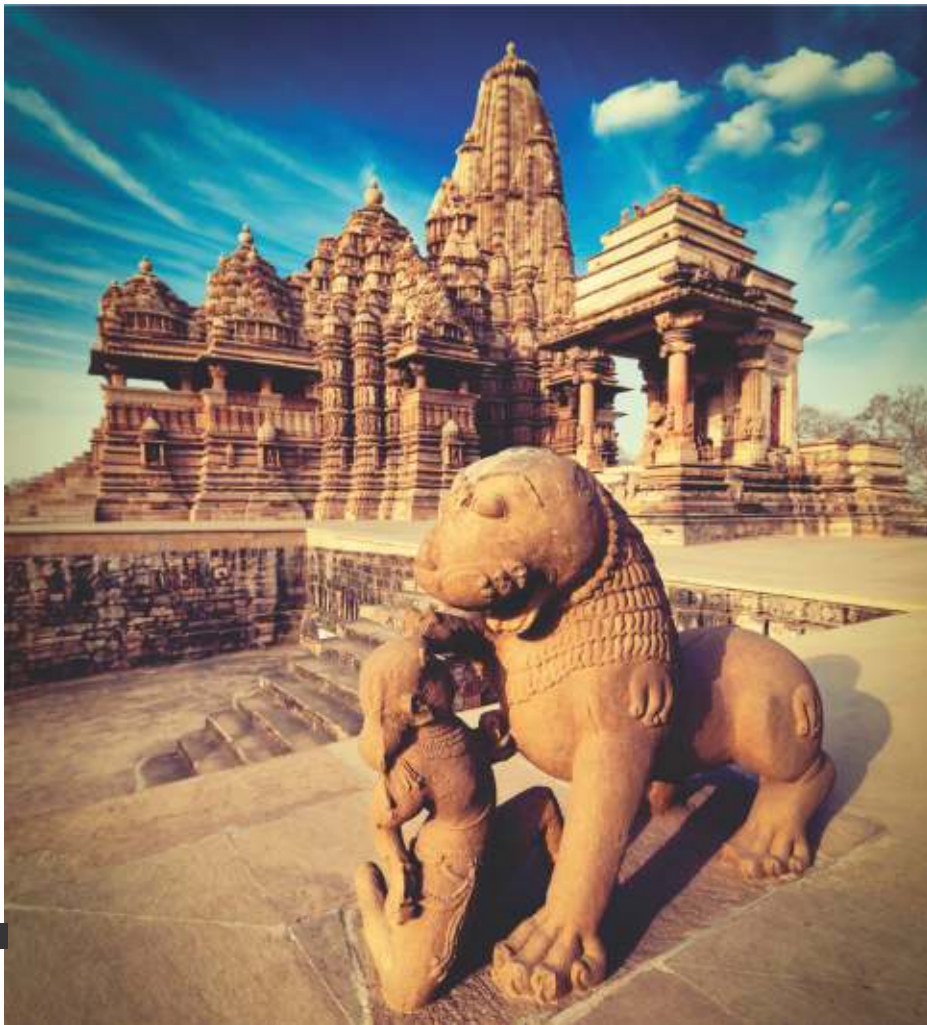


Rajasthan evokes visions of forts and palaces. The most imposing sights in the state are the majestic forts at Chittorgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Ranthambore, Jhalawar, Amber near Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Bundi. The first six of these are inscribed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage Site.

Chittorgarh is a symbol of Rajput pride. Inside the walls of this fort, you can see palaces, temples and towers. Travel to Kumbhalgarh adorned with some of the most impressive walls among all forts in India. Inside are old palaces and a group of Hindu and Jain temples. The 12th century golden sandstone fort of Jaisalmer is a good example of a desert citadel, rising up from a rocky outcrop with a panoramic view of the surrounding plains. Proceed to Amber Fort or Amer, a vast complex with fine palaces near Jaipur. East from Jaipur, the Ranthambore Fort near Sawai Madhopur looms up in a forest inhabited by tiger, leopard and sloth bear. Proceed from this mountain fort south to Jhalawar, a good example of a Jal Durg or water fort.



THE MAGNIFICENT MONUMENTS OF MADHYA PRADESH

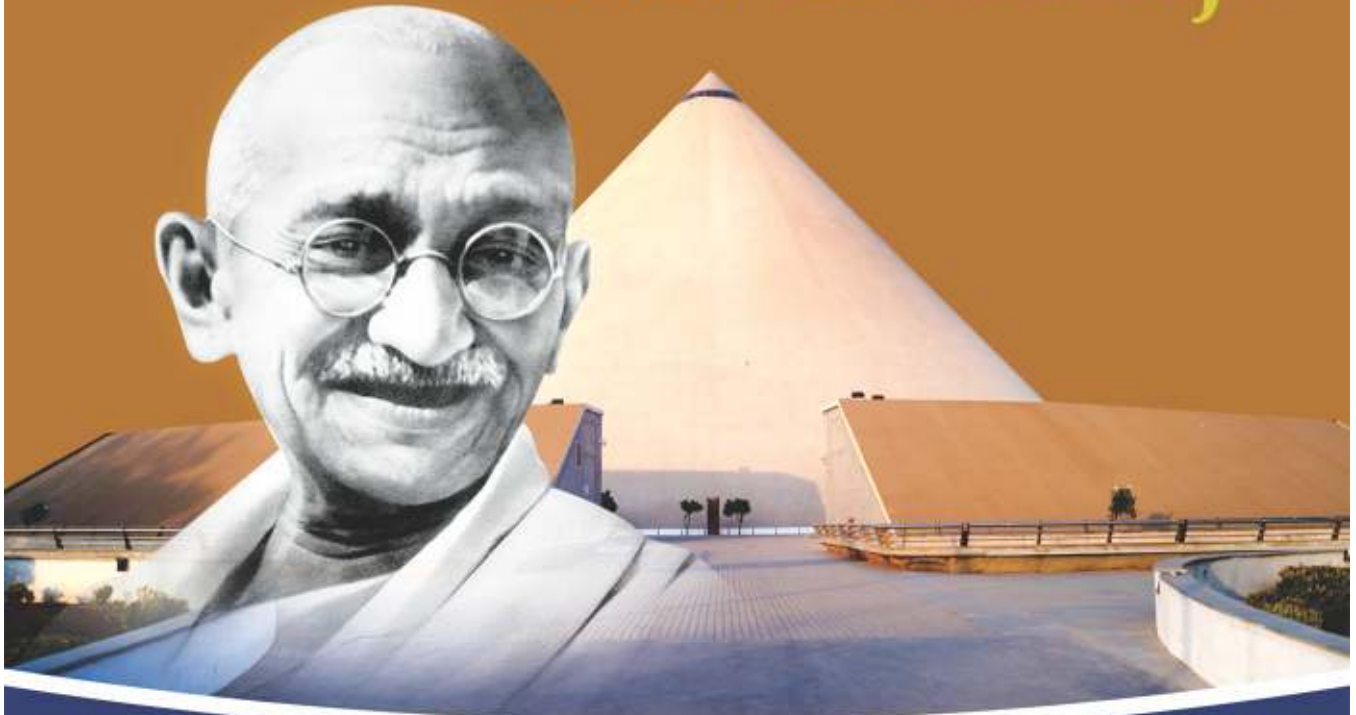


Madhya Pradesh has some of India's best known monuments. Near the capital city of Bhopal, Sanchi has some of India's finest Buddhist monuments. Toranas with exquisite carvings mark the entrance to Sanchi's stupa complex, which includes the magnificent Great Stupa. Ruins of temples and monasteries, some of them built between the 1st century BC and 1st century AD, can be seen. From Bhopal, you can travel north to the well-known tiger reserve of Bandhavgarh. Continue to Khajuraho, which is among the most famous Hindu temple complexes in India. The elegant temples are well-known for their superb carvings and detailed erotic panels.





'There is Something
about **Gandhiji**'



DANDI KUTIR
THE GANDHI MUSEUM



Sports, Youth & Cultural Activities Department
Archeology And Museums

**Gandhiji's vision and legacy is at
the core of the Dandi Kutir Museum**

A batch of 50 people leaves at an interval of 30 minutes, assisted by a tour guide.

Tuesday-Sunday : 10.30 am - 5.00 pm | Closed on Monday.

Dandi Kutir : The Gandhi Museum, Nr. Mahatma Mandir, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

079 232 55793 | info@dandi-kutir.com | www.dandi-kutir.com

Eco friendly destinations around the world

With World Earth Day being celebrated in April, we look at some of the world's eco-conscious destinations.

Hike in the National Park of Switzerland

Perhaps more so than any other people in the world, the Swiss have been sensitive about protecting their environment. Not surprisingly, Switzerland topped the 2018 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) produced by the Yale Center for Environmental Law & Policy ahead of France and Denmark. Within Environmental Health, Switzerland also stands out in Water & Sanitation. Switzerland even has volunteer "mountain cleaners," who sweep the landscape looking for garbage that careless tourists have left behind. City tourist offices are even issuing "greenie points."



Take a train to Zernez, a picturesque village with beautiful Engadine houses located at the historically important transport hub of the Lower and Upper Engadine and Ofen Pass. Take a bus to the Visitor Centre of the Parc Naziunal Svizzer, the Swiss National Park, which is among the oldest and wildest in Europe. The National Park House Zernez has a permanent exhibition offering an insight into the national park, explorable marmot burrow, vivarium with adders, terrain relief with touch screen and a shop with an extensive range of material. The park doesn't allow to leave

marked paths, light a fire or in the park, except in one mountain hut. It is also forbidden to disturb animals or plants, or to take home anything found in the park. Dogs are not allowed, even on a leash. Due to these strict rules, the Swiss National Park is the only park in the Alps, which has been categorized by the IUCN as a strict nature reserve, the highest protection level. The entire national park covers 66 square miles (170 square kilometers). It is part of the worldwide UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. From the road through the park, the way leads over the Fuorn Pass (or Ofenpass)

to South Tyrol in Italy. Biking is forbidden but a hiking network of 80 kilometres in total provides the perfect opportunity to explore the park.

On the way, you can enjoy views of lofty snow-covered peaks, blue lakes and towering trees. Wildlife abounds – you could see alpine species like ibexes, chamois, marmots, rabbits, lizards, and birds. The wild flowers here are delightful - edelweiss, bell flowers, gentians and many other flower varieties grow in this region.



Go caving in Belize

Belize is one of the most stunning ecotourism destination – its climate, the Belize Barrier Reef, over 450 offshore Cays (islands) for excellent fishing, safe waters for boating, scuba diving, snorkeling and free diving, numerous rivers for rafting, and kayaking, various jungle and wildlife reserves of fauna and flora for hiking, bird watching, and the largest cave system in Central America make it a must-visit for nature lovers.

Many privately run companies have cooperatives in Southern Belize that manage a rural and community-based tourism project, which allows otherwise marginalized minorities such as the Maya and the Garifuna people to receive new opportunities in alternative markets, harvest crops, preserve and involve foreigners in their culture and diversify their income. Visit cacao and cashew farms, learn about Maya, Kriol or Garifuna craftsmanship and explore villages with a community guide.

Some of the must-visits of Belize are the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Mountain Pine Ridge Forest Reserve, Swallow Caye Wildlife Sanctuary and the Community Baboon Sanctuary. The Belize Barrier Reef Reserve System is a World Heritage Site.

One of Belize's top attractions is exploring the caves. Many of the caves were ritual sites for the ancient Maya as they were considered to be close to the underworld. There are many caves, where you can enjoy adventure activities like cave tubing, cave canoeing, hiking, rappelling or spelunking. Nohoch Che'en Caves Branch Archaeological Reserve is good for river-rafting through an underground network of caves, and Barton Creek Cave Remote Barton Creek is where you can canoe through a cave.

For the experienced diver, the Blue Hole is one of the world's great dive sites to dive into a dark cave with spectacular formations. Here you can dive in crystal-clear water and meet several species of fish, including Midnight Parrotfish, Caribbean reef shark and so forth.

The Belize Government made major voluntary commitments at the UN Oceans Conference to secure Belize's fisheries as an engine for sustainable development. The Belize Fisheries Department declared the first Ray Sanctuary in the world, making Belize the first nation to protect all ray species in their waters.

Quaint Copenhagen

Denmark has perhaps the lowest CO2 per capita output in the world, making it one of the top countries for air quality. Its capital Copenhagen offers cobbled streets and fairytale enchantment. Explore Copenhagen to see the Tivoli Gardens, Freetown Christiania and the Little Mermaid statue. The Kronborg Castle in Helsingør is famous for its associations with Shakespeare's Hamlet. The Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, 30 km north of Copenhagen, is the most visited museum in Denmark. Copenhagen is the base to explore

Denmark, whose long stretches of sandy beaches attract many tourists. The most convenient to visit from the capital city is South of Sealand and the neighbouring islands. Møn, with its magnificent chalk cliffs, Liselund Park and its sandy beaches, is one of the main destinations. Falster has a number of sandy beaches, including those at Marielyst. The area also has several tourist attractions, including Knuthenborg Safari Park and Middelaldercentret both on Lolland, BonBon-Land near Næstved and the GeoCenter at Møns Klint.



Explore the picturesque coastal town of Piran

Slovenia, with its diverse landscapes, is perhaps the first country in the world that has been, as a whole, declared a 'green tourist destination'. No country on Earth, except perhaps Venezuela, safeguards more of its land than Slovenia. Almost 54 per cent of it is protected. Ranging from snow-capped peaks and turquoise-green rivers to a Venetian-style coastline, Slovenia is also worth visiting for its culture and cuisine. Those who like the outdoors can enjoy skiing, walking, mountain hiking, cycling and rafting rivers like the Soča, horse

riding, ballooning, caving and canyoning.

From the nation's capital, Ljubljana, you can head out to Julian Alps with picturesque Lake Bled, Soča Valley and Mount Triglav. Perhaps even better known is the Karst Plateau in the Slovenian Littoral.

Slovenia's most important historical site is the Venetian Gothic Mediterranean town of Piran. This beautiful town on the Slovenian coast grew with the help of salt. The Piran salt pans, where the world-class fleur de sel (flower of salt) is still produced today using age-

old methods, were the reason why the picturesque Mediterranean walled town with its church flourished. This worldly coastal town, which developed under the influence of Venice, is considered to be one of the most authentic and most photogenic towns on the Adriatic coast. In addition to architecture, the Maritime Museum, an aquarium and other attractions, visitors flock to this town to enjoy food, festivals and nearby natural landscapes.



Cruise the lakes of Finland

Finland is among the world's greenest countries. It is like a huge forest. From the coastal islands to the Saimaa Lake district, Finland is one vast world of water. The country is famous for its many lakes. There are some 187,888 lakes, larger than 500 square metres (5,400 sq ft). About 57,000 of

take in the natural surroundings. The steamships, still in operation in Finland, were built almost a hundred years ago offering a vintage touring experience with old world charm. The cities of Kuopio or Savonlinna are great places to start a steamboat trip. You can also cruise in the longest lake of Finland, the

visit destination. The ecotourism industry has had a trickle-down effect, bringing added revenues to rural and previously disadvantaged areas.

One of the top ecotourism draws, Tortuguero is an elaborate network of narrow canals that wind their way through pristine jungle and coastal wetlands. Parque Nacional Tortuguero is



them have an area larger than 10,000 square metres. Finland is also known to have excellent water quality and green deep woods and forests around the sea, rivers and the waterways.

The Finnish Lakeland is a forested territory with about 25% of its area covered with lakes. This largest of lake districts is a blue labyrinth of lakes, islands, rivers and canals, interspersed with forests and ridges, stretching for hundreds of kilometres.

These lakes are some of the cleanest in the world and the scenery is unparalleled. Cruising the inland waterways on cosy ships is a great way to relax and

Lake Päijänne. You can choose a cruise from Lahti to Jyväskylä, from one end to another, or a couple of hours' cruise. Tampere also offers lake cruises in the heart of the city.

Considered one of the most bio-diverse regions in the world, Costa Rica has protected roughly 26% of its territory as national parks and biological reserves. It is widely using renewable energy sources within the country, and is working to become a carbon-neutral country. With twelve main ecosystems, 5% of the world's biodiversity, a warm and inviting culture and a great selection of eco lodges, Costa Rica is a must-

a National Park within the Tortuguero Conservation Area of the northeastern part of the country. The park has a large variety of biological diversity with habitats that include rainforest, mangrove forests, swamps, beaches and lagoons. From the safety and comfort of a canoe, you can paddle along these shrouded waterways in search of hidden wildlife. This coastal area is best known for attracting hordes of sea turtles. Seven species of Land turtles, the manatee or sea cow, the crocodile and a variety of crustaceans are found here, as are 30 species of freshwater fish, gar, eel and bull shark.

Go snorkeling in Jelly Fish Lake

The Republic of Palau is a series of more than 200 volcanic and coral islands in the Pacific Ocean. The islands have forests and beautiful beaches, while the waters surrounding the islands are crystal clear teeming with marine life. Palau promotes sustainable tourism practices and protects its coral reefs. The government aims to promote high-value growth instead of high-volume growth, curbing the number of tourists visiting but increasing the amount they spend during their stay. The Palau National Marine Sanctuary Act makes Palau the sixth-largest fully protected marine reserve in the world. Eighty percent of Palau's maritime territory is a no-take zone, with fishing open to locals only in just 20 percent of the country's waters.

In addition, visitors must sign the Palau Pledge to act responsibly to protect the island's natural and cultural heritage. Diving in Palau is a major reason to visit, but one of the most unusual experiences is snorkeling Jellyfish Lake. Jellyfish is a marine lake located on Eil Malk Island, one of the Rock Islands - a group of small, rocky, mostly uninhabited islands in Palau's Southern Lagoon between Koror and Peleliu. There are about 70 other marine lakes located throughout the Rock Islands. Millions of golden jellyfish migrate horizontally across the lake daily.



Watch whales and dolphins at Azores

The Azores are an archipelago of nine islands located 1,288 kilometers off the coast of Portugal in the Atlantic Ocean. Tourism here has been eco-conscious with no towering resorts and a focus on promotion of local food. Exploring the islands offers views of rugged coastline, lush mountains and valleys, volcanoes, crater lakes, thermal hot springs, caverns and waterfalls, and exceptional bird, whale and dolphin watching, among many other wondrous draws. The islands have maintained a laid-back and environmentally-conscious way of life. There are no towering resorts, most of the food is locally sourced and unique to the specific part of the Azores you are dining in. There are plenty of eco tours to embark on.

This is a destination for sailing, diving, canyoning, water sports and paragliding.

The unique feature of the islands is spotting whales and dolphins. A remarkable 26 different whales and dolphins have been recorded in these waters – one-third of all known species. Bottle-nose, spotted, striped, common and Risso's dolphins are often seen. Sperm whales too are abundant, and humpbacks, minke, pilots, fin and blue whales are seen here from time to time.



Watch wildlife in Ecuador

Ecuador has been awarded with the World's Leading Green Destinations on several occasions. The country is one of the most biodiverse countries in the world with habitats ranging from the Amazonian rainforests to the Andes, the Pacific coast and on to the Galapagos Islands.

This is where you can take up various activities to enjoy watching flora and fauna, while providing work to local tribes who need to protect their ancestral lands from oil extraction. Many of the eco-friendly hotels and lodges provide jobs to locals who may have limited resources to fight encroachment on their land.

The many nature reserves and national parks provide tourists with the ideal opportunity to spot mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and insects. In the Andes, you can look



for pudu, Andean fox, puma, Andean spectacled bear and mountain tapirs. The Tapir is one of the most unusual and biggest terrestrial mammals in Ecuador - this shy mammal can weigh up to 300kg.

Carnivores are always a favorite amongst tourists and Ecuador boasts 31 species, including magnificent jaguar and mountain lions. The hills are also good for spotting Andean condors and other birds. For colourful birds, visit the mist-covered cloud forest regions of Ecuador, where you could see tanagers, hummingbirds, long-wattled Umbrellabirds and plate-billed toucans. The Amazon rainforests abound with monkeys. There are also Spider monkeys, Squirrel monkeys and Woolly monkeys. You could also see river dolphins, jaguars, ocelots, monkeys, sloths and anteaters.

Travelling along the Pacific coast, you can watch pelicans and frigate birds. The renowned Galapagos Islands have fascinating species like Pacific green turtles, giant tortoises and iguanas. The seas are home to fur seals, dolphins, whales, sharks, crustaceans and rays. The Galapagos are also rich in bird life with frigates, boobies, albatrosses, cormorants and Galapagos penguins.



Enjoy art and culture at Reykjavik

Over the years, Iceland is known as one of the most environmentally-conscious countries in the world. Iceland has made it a top priority to utilize its natural geothermal resources for heat and electricity production, vigorously fight against ocean pollution, and instill sustainable fishing practices. Most of the country's energy comes from geothermal and hydroelectric plants; the tourism authorities promote environment-friendly hotels and guides focus on non-motorized excursions. Iceland is a breathtakingly beautiful island that is well known for its fjords, natural hot springs, volcanoes, Northern Lights, whale watching, and glacier hiking.

The capital of Reykjavik is the major destination of Iceland. Here you can enjoy a cosmopolitan lifestyle of art galleries, cool cafes and bars. The music scene is epic: excellent festivals, creative DJs gigging and any number of home-grown bands.



Netherlands

For the past twenty years, the Netherlands have had a National Environmental Policy Plan in place and have since met over 70% of their goals. The country is working hard to reduce carbon emissions, reduce air pollution, clean up the rivers and improve waste management.

Amsterdam was awarded the ranking of 5th most environmentally friendly city in Europe by the European Green City Index. One of the best ways to tour around the cities and smaller towns is via bicycle. The Netherlands has more than 15,000 kilometers (9,320 miles) of bike paths!



Take a farm tour in Taranaki

New Zealand is on a quest to be completely free from fossil fuels. The country is working to better utilize its abundant geothermal energy sources instead. New Zealand is made up of two islands that are both incredibly diverse in landscape, ecosystems and wildlife. Eco tourism is quite synonymous with New Zealand as there are an abundance of opportunities to experience the unique and awe-inspiring natural wonders of the islands, including glowworm caves, whale and dolphin watching, and exploring pristine beaches and ancient forests.

For ecotourism in New Zealand, enjoy staying at farms. One of the best places is Taranaki, which is a centre for Dairy farming. There are plenty of opportunities to watch sheep shearing, learn about deer and goat farming, experience sheep dogs working, milk a cow or a goat, feed lambs and taste the milk products.



Chumbe Island

Chumbe Island Coral Park Ltd. (CHICOP) is a private nature reserve that was developed from 1991 for the conservation and sustainable management of uninhabited Chumbe Island off Zanzibar, one of the last pristine coral islands in the region. The reserve includes a fully protected Coral Reef Sanctuary and Forest Reserve that protects rare wildlife, a Visitor and Education Centre, a small eco-lodge, nature walks and historical monuments. All buildings and operations are based on state-of-the-art eco-technology aiming at zero impact on the environment such as rainwater catchment, photovoltaic energy and solar water heating, composting toilets, vegetative greywater filtration and more.

It is one of the most inspiring examples of coral reef conservation and sustainable management of a protected area.



An initiative of
icait
INNOVATIVE COUNCIL OF
INDIAN TOURISM

LensMagic
The Photography Club

presents

COMMENT & WIN PHOTO CONTEST TRAVELLING

1st March, 2019 - 31st March, 2019

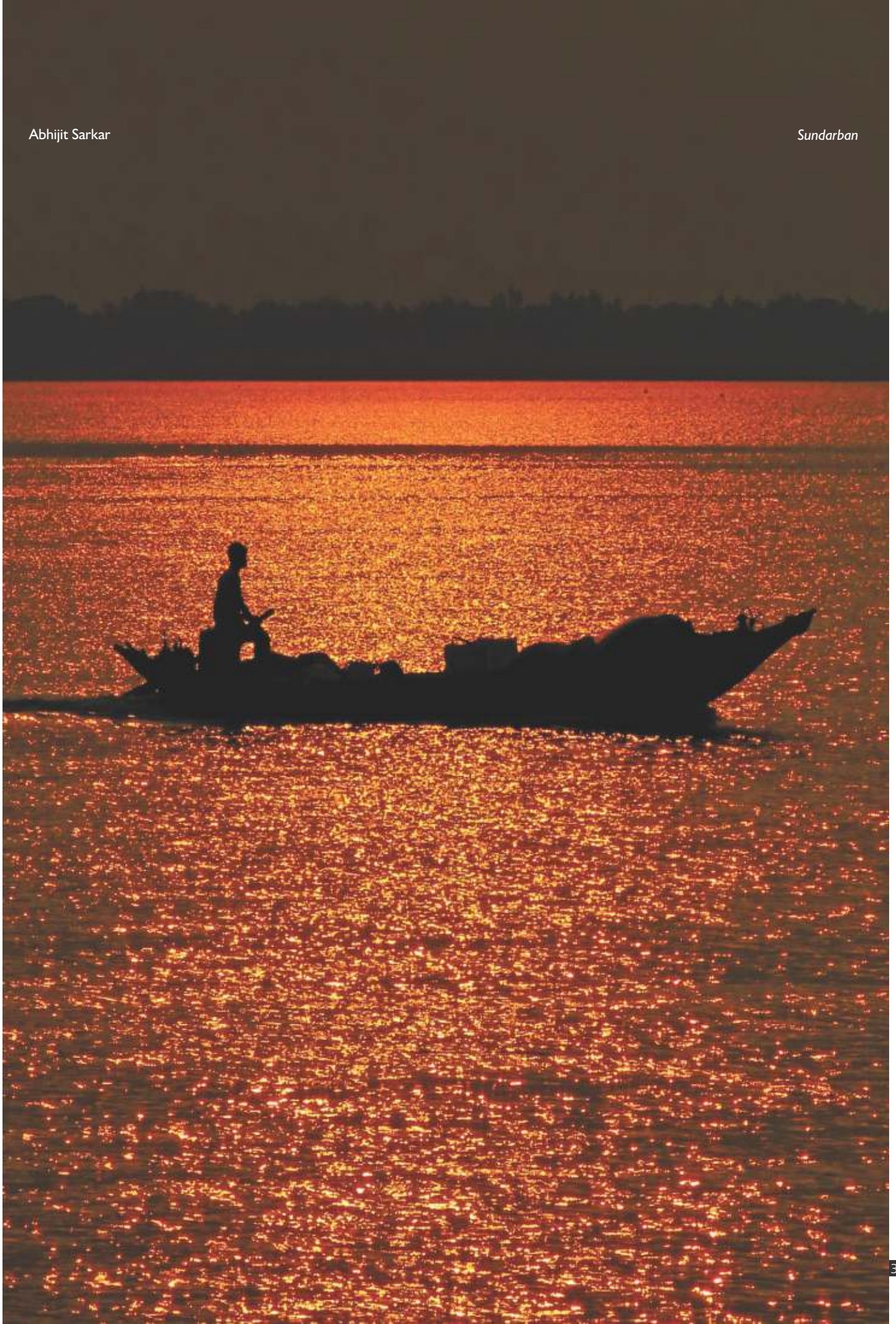
LensMagic, the Facebook group dedicated to providing networking platform to the photographers, organizes exciting PHOTO CONTESTS.
For more information, visit

 [/groups/LensMagicPhotographyClub/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/LensMagicPhotographyClub/)



Anirban Das

Arches National Park, USA



COMMENT & WIN



Dibyendu Chatterjee

Tamluk Rajbari, West Bengal



Pallab Pramanik

Gangapurna Glacier Lake, Manang,




Far Far away



Reminiscent of French Era in **Sri Lanka**

Travelling between Colombo and Galle is like walking into the past. The skyscrapers of Sri Lanka's capital offer a huge contrast against this lazy seaside town even when both places are just 2 hours away from each other.



Galle (pronounced Gaul) is the most serene seaside city that you'll come across during your visit to Sri Lanka. Yes, there are beaches like Hikkaduwa and Unawatuna with resorts and more activities but Galle is where you should go to seek peace and calmness.

Crystal blue waters and clear coastline is anything unlike the rest of the beach towns. But this is not just a stopover during your Sri Lanka trip. Galle Fort is a UNESCO world heritage site and the whole area is bedecked with rich history.

Galle is a perfect stopover after a tiring trip to Sri Lanka. This beautiful town with lovely beaches will relax and refresh your soul.

How to **Reach**

Galle is 2 hours away from Colombo. Regular AC buses leave from Maharagama Bus Station and the ticket is only 250 LKR. Two trains run between Colombo and Galle and take more time than bus but the journey is very pleasant.



Galle is filled with pebbled roads, the Dutch colonial buildings, many pretty shops, cosy restaurants, many massage and meditation centres, which will make you forget if you are still in Sri Lanka.

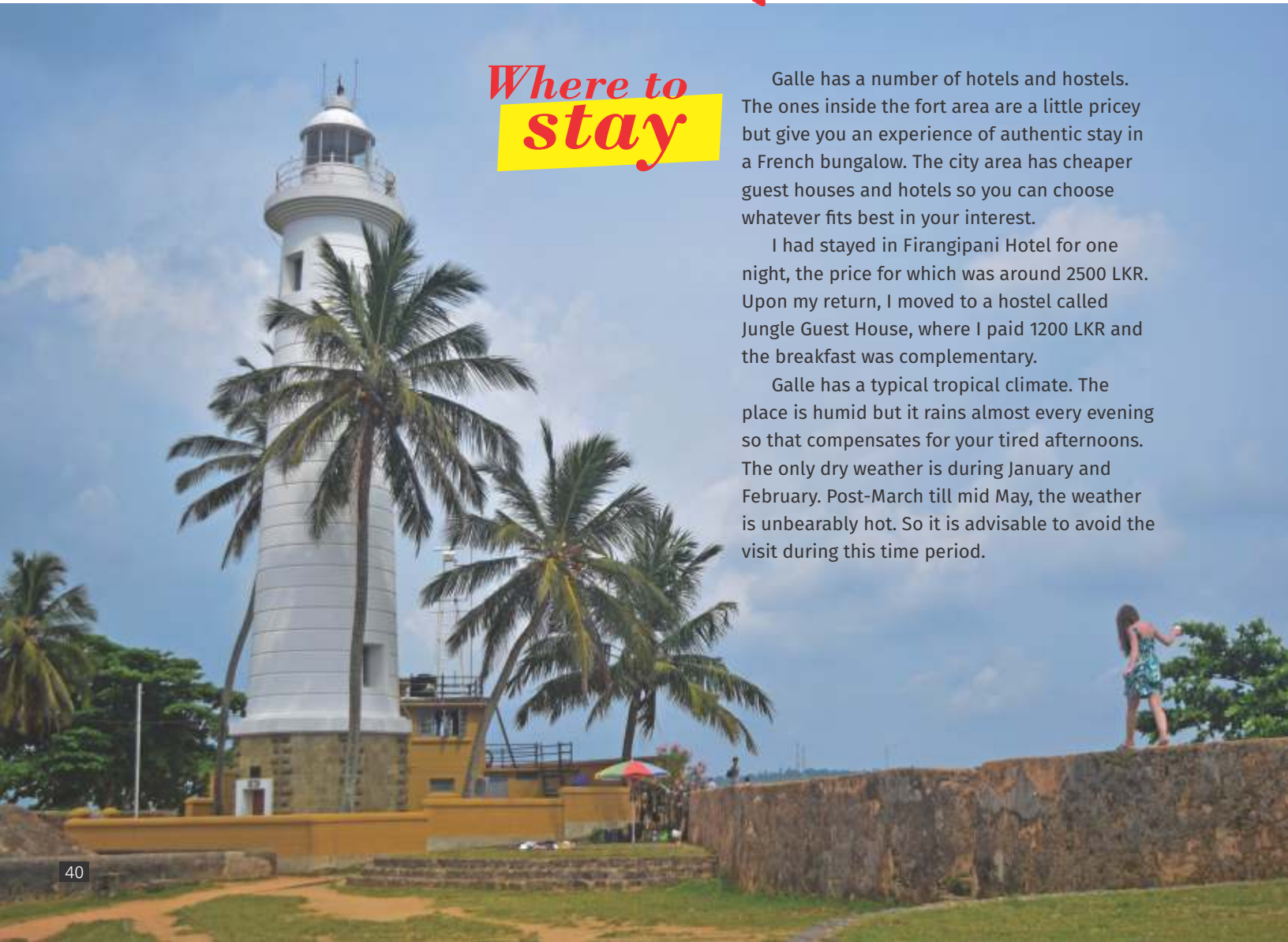
The historical significance has won Galle the status of UNESCO World Heritage site

Where to **stay**

Galle has a number of hotels and hostels. The ones inside the fort area are a little pricey but give you an experience of authentic stay in a French bungalow. The city area has cheaper guest houses and hotels so you can choose whatever fits best in your interest.

I had stayed in Firangipani Hotel for one night, the price for which was around 2500 LKR. Upon my return, I moved to a hostel called Jungle Guest House, where I paid 1200 LKR and the breakfast was complementary.

Galle has a typical tropical climate. The place is humid but it rains almost every evening so that compensates for your tired afternoons. The only dry weather is during January and February. Post-March till mid May, the weather is unbearably hot. So it is advisable to avoid the visit during this time period.



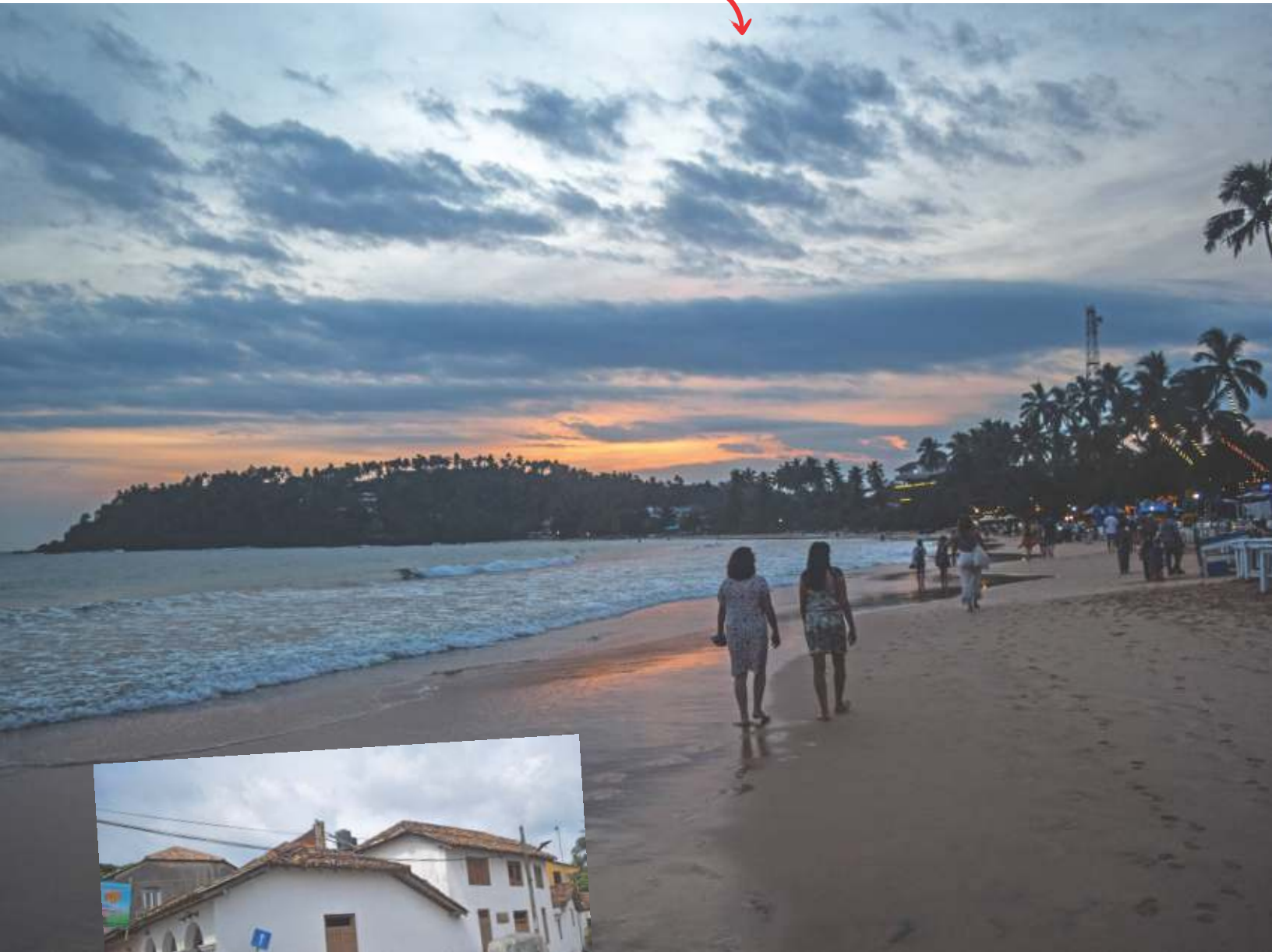
What to do

Galle has a long Colonial history. Its lifestyle has been influenced by the Dutch, French and Portuguese people who came here and made this place their headquarters. This has made Galle a popular historic town with a hint of modernity.

Walking around Galle is like stepping into a European town. Pebbled streets, beautiful white quarters and quaint cafes are spread all across this old French Colony.

Exploring Galle Fort is one experience you must not miss. The fort covers a huge area and offers incredible views of the Ocean.

During your free time in Galle, you must hire a scooty and head to Mirissa beach, you can also take some time out for Hikkaduwa beach.



In the XVI century, Galle gained strategic relevance when a Portuguese fleet, taking a wrong route, arrived on its coast, decided to settle here and built a fort.

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Galle cricket stadium is one of the most popular in the world. Often local teams compete against each other. Enjoying a tournament or even getting a glimpse of how Sri Lankans are passionate about this game is surely a treat to watch.

The white sandy beaches that span outside the fort walls create a spectacular view. Sunset is simply gorgeous and when it rains, the whole scenery becomes incredibly photogenic. 📷



The Dutch army rebuilt the fort in 1663 after capturing it from the Portuguese army. These walls are so strong that they are still standing.

The humid afternoons are compensated by the clouds that approach every evening for a sudden shower.



REMINISCENT OF FRENCH ERA IN SRI LANKA



Galle Fort, A UNESCO world heritage site is now home to many expats and digital nomads working during the afternoon and partying in the night

Galle Fort is divided with a clear contrast. The outer part is more chaotic and confusing, while the interiors simply take you into a world totally different.



Take out some time to catch a match of cricket. Sri Lankans are passionate about this sport to a level that if you are from India, they'll start a conversation about Sachin Tendulkar in moments.

Charming CHAROTAR



Misriote Farm Homestay, Vasad

This farm gets its name from a principality near Lahore named Misriote, which was granted to Sardar Nand Singh in about 1848. The farm is owned by Sardar Ishwar Singh of Misriote and his wife Rajkumari Gyaneshwari from Bilkha who also manage the Savli Taluka Rifle

- 1 *Misriote Farm at Vasad*
- 2 *Sportspersons at the Double Trap Shooting Range of Misriote Farm*
- 3 *Shooting medalist Sardar Ishwar Singh and his wife Sirdarni Gyaneshwari at Misriote Farm*
- 4 *Misriote Farm Homestay*

Association. This farm is located on the banks of Mahisaga River near Vasad, which is the gateway to Charotar. The farmhouse is now a Gujarat Tourism-approved homestay and is run as an agri-tourism retreat and a destination for those who love shooting sports. Ishwar Singh who has won national medals representing Gujarat state, specializes in double trap shooting. It is an Olympic sport. The shooting facility



2



3

includes a shooter's gallery set facing a house - a machine that releases two clay discs flying at high speed. Using a shotgun, the sports person gets minimum time to shoot the targets. The participant can take one shot at each target. The sport gained national popularity when Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore won India's first ever Silver medal in this sport at the Olympic Games in Athens in 2004.

Bhadran

Once called the Paris of Charotar, Bhadran prospered during the rule of Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda Princely State. During the reign of this visionary ruler, Bhadran enjoyed civil works like a water supply system, drainage system, narrow gauge railway station and hospital. See the huge Town Hall occupied by Gram Panchayat, set in gardens on the bank of a huge pond. Walk around town to see memorial statues of His Highness Sayajirao Gaekwad, Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallbhbhai Patel, freedom fighter Shivabhai Ashabhai Patel, Diwan Manubhai Mehta and Martyr Shri Ratilal Patel.

Tribhuvandas Foundation, Anand

This campus was founded by Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel, the father of the dairy cooperative movement. He



4

started the Kaira District Co-operative Milk Producers' Union in 1946, and later the Amul movement. He started working with farmers in Kheda district with the guidance of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, and hired Verghese Kurien in 1950 who guided the creation of the AMUL brand. Today, Tribhuvandas Foundation is among Asia's largest NGOs working in over 600 villages in the State in the field of maternal and infant care. Founded in July 1975, the Foundation came into existence when he learnt about the experiences of the afflictions of the rural population due to lack of health care services in the villages of Charotar. He strongly felt the need to have health care services for the rural populace. It was especially set up for women who

were on the margins of society. On his retirement, he donated the prize money of his "Ramon Magagsasy Award" and the fund he received from Kaira farmers for his life time service to the cause of women health and welfare.

Visit the handicrafts unit of Tribhuvandas Foundation where women learn and practice the art of appliqué - ornamental decorative sewing and textile arts in which pieces of fabric in different shapes and patterns are sewn onto a larger piece to form a patchwork picture or pattern. Here, you can buy bed linen, pillow or cushion covers, mobile phone covers, purses, shoulder bag, wall hangings, aprons, pouches, table linen, curtains, quilts and other products with ornamental needlework.



AMUL Dairy, Anand

An acronym for the Anand Milk Union Limited, AMUL is a brand managed by the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF), which today is jointly owned by 3.6 million milk producers in Gujarat. The torchbearer of the White Revolution and India's Cooperative Movement, AMUL has become among the largest food brands in India, a household name for dairy

products, and it has ventured into markets overseas. The Dairy Museum in the AMUL Campus was inaugurated by Mrs Molly Kurien on 26th November 2000 to mark the 80th birthday of Dr V. Kurien, the Father of the White Revolution in India. The Museum has a Photo Gallery and Auditorium. The Photo Gallery offers an insight into the genesis and growth of AMUL through pictures. You could see some of the activities at the dairy.

Vallabh Vidyanagar

An educational hub of central Gujarat, Vallabh Vidyanagar was founded by Shri Bhaikaka and Shri Bhikhabhai Saheb of Karamsad, inspired by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's vision of education for the rural population. With Sardar Patel University's own departments and affiliated colleges, this is a place that buzzes with students. You can enjoy the cafes and entertainment facilities in this area. The Anand Agricultural University also makes Anand district an educational hub.

Dharmaj

With a large Diaspora in western countries, Dharmaj is a delightful village where traditional Charotari houses can be seen together with modern developments like parks and gardens, schools, medical centers, infrastructure and public developments that are difficult to rival in a town with just 11000 population.

Karamsad

Karamsad was the home of Vithalbhai Patel (27 September 1873 – 22 October 1933) who was an Indian legislator and political leader and co-founder of the Swaraj Party.

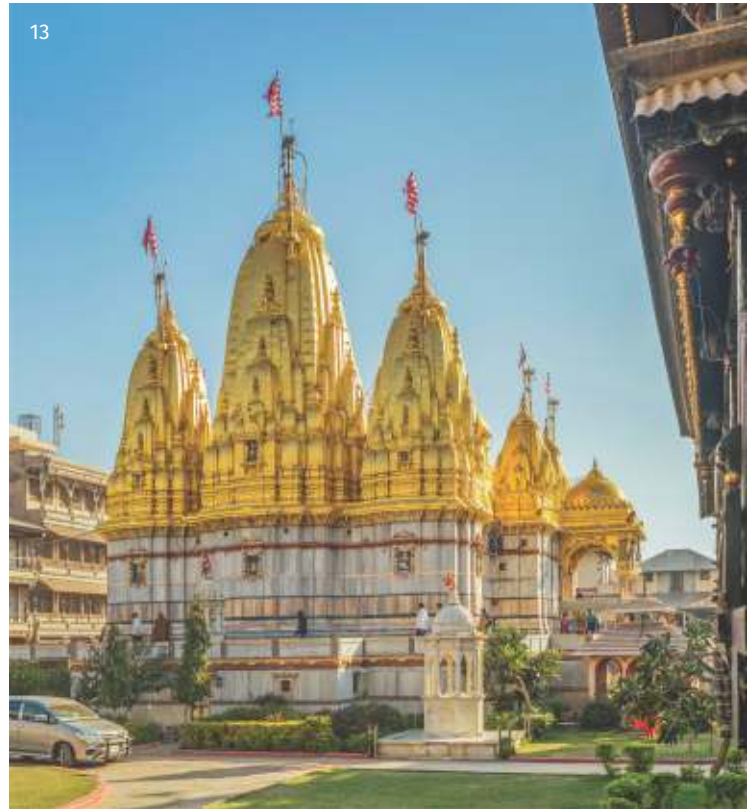


- 5 Tribhuvandas Kishibhai Patel, the father of the dairy cooperative movement.
- 6 Tribhuvandas Foundation, Anand
- 7 Applique work at Anand
- 8 Applique pieces at the Tribhuvandas Foundation's handicraft centre in Anand
- 9 Majestic mosque of Khambhat
- 10 Medieval Jamma Masjid at Khambhat
- 11 Roads through Charotar





12



13



14

His younger brother Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was one of the leaders of the Indian freedom struggle who played a leading role in the integration of India, making it a united and independent nation. As the first Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sardar Patel was known for his initiatives in rehabilitation of refugees, some of the policies of the Indian Constitution and the creation of the Indian Civil Services.

The memorial to Vithalbhai Patel and Vallabhbhai Patel is spread across seven acres adjoining the H.M. Patel Center for Medical Care and Education, Pramukh Swami Medical College and Shri Krishna Hospital. It exhibits busts of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Veer Vithalbhai Patel at the entrance. The monument

has a central hall with amphitheatre like seating arrangement, surrounded by verandahs all around. The photo gallery exhibits paintings, banners and photographs depicting events from the lives of Sardar Patel and Veer Vithalbhai Patel. The memorial museum has a collection of memorabilia from the life of Sardar Patel, including some of his belongings.

Vadtal

Vadtal is a pilgrim centre with the holy Gomati Lake and Swaminarayan's Temple. Shri Swaminarayan Mandir at Vadtal is the headquarters of the Shri LaxmiNarayan Dev Gadi with the central shrine dedicated to Lakshmi Narayan and Ranchod Raiji. On the right, there is an image of Radha Krishna with Swaminarayan in the form of Hari Krishna and the left has Vasudev, Dharma and Bhakti. The lotus shaped temple has beautifully carved wooden pillars and nice gardens. The temple is among the pilgrim centres notified by Gujarat's Pavitra Yatradham Vikas Board,

- 12 Dakor
- 13 Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Vadatal
- 14 A Charotari village
- 15 Saras crane
- 16 Roller

announced by Gujarat's Chief Minister Vijay Rupani.

Havelis of Vaso

Vaso is famous for its magnificent wooden havelis of the Desai Patidars. The havelis have exquisite wood carvings on the façade, balconies, pillars and interior walls. The central courtyard is surrounded by three storey living quarters.

Heritage of Nadiad

Nadiad is closely associated with Gujarati culture - many well-known poets and writers of the 19th and 20th century hailed from Nadiad. Nadiad Ni Haveli, also called Bhausahab Desai Ni Haveli, was built in 1783 by Rao Bhabudur Viharidas Desai, popularly known as Bhausahab, hereditary land owner and revenue collectors during Mughal and then British rule. His sons became ministers of the erstwhile Nawab of Junagadh state. This extensive house is an architectural wonder with wooden carvings, rain water harvesting, courtyards and balconies covered with bronze sheets. This historical house has been visited by Tatya Tope who took shelter here during the 1857 mutiny, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

Khambhat

Khambhat or Cambay was once a flourishing port city and the manufacturing centre for silk, indigo, buckram chintz and gold jewellery. Its importance has been recorded by visitors like Arab traveller al-Mas'udi who visited the city in 915 AD, Marco Polo who visited in the 1290s, the Moroccan traveller Ibn Battuta who came here in the 1340s, an Italian traveller Marino Sanudo, iccolò de' Conti who visited in the 1400s, and the Portuguese explorer Duarte Barbosa who visited the city in the 16th century. Following the silting of the port,

Khambhat declined in importance but it still prospered as the only Princely State in the Kaira Agency of the Gujarat division under the Nawabs of Cambay.

Among the reminders of the medieval history of Khambhat is the Jami Masjid. This mosque is said to have built by local merchant Umar bin Ahmad al-Kazaruni. This is one of the oldest examples of the Gujarat provincial Indo-Saracenic architecture style that later resulted in architectural marvels at Ahmedabad and Champaner. The interior part of the mosque has a colonnaded open courtyard, which is built with 100 columns supporting roofs. Domes are provided with latticed windows made in the architectural style of Gujarat. Khambhat is well-known for its agate craft.

Wetlands of Kheda

A must-visit for birdwatchers, Kheda district is watered by Mahisagar on the eastern side and Vatrak, a tributary of River Sabarmati on the western side with canal irrigation networks. This well-watered area has lakes like Pariaj,

Kanewal, Daloli, Gobrapura, Narda and Machhial that are gathering grounds for birds. Saras cranes breed in the flooded fields. In winter, you can see flocks of demoiselle and eastern cranes. Flamingos are abundant and pelicans can be seen in fish rich water. Gaily coloured birds like purple moorhen can be seen easily. ■



**The homestays of Vadodara make
an excellent base to visit the Anand and Kheda district.**

Miss. Dipalben Sureshbhai Patel

"Reva", Dabhoy Shinor Road, 3Km Before Shinor, Damapura, Ta. Sinor, Dist. Vadodara.
Mobile: 9879282986
Email: zenkruti@gmail.com

Mr. Ishwar Singh Shamsher Singh

Misriote Farm, Po. Parthampura, Ta. Savli, Dist. Vadodara
Mobile: 8141314141

Mr. Amit Channravadan Shah

303A, Vrundalay Flats, Opp.Tanvi Hospital, Ellora Park, Vadodara.
Mobile: 9909957785, 9687695580

Mr. Mafatlal Dharamray Pandya

"Confort Homestay", Opp.-SRP Ground, Nr. Makarpura Diagonostic Reserch Centre Lane, Makarpura Road, Vadodara
Mobile: 9624826100, 9099923746

Mr. Ranchhodbhai Taljabhai Maru

A/7-8 Savtrinagar Society, Samta Cross Road, Samta, Subhanpura, Vadodara
Mobile: 9825860756
Email: jayeshmaru@yahoo.co.in

Mr. Shital Vijaybhai Pawar

Arudh Mahal Piramittar Road, Corporation Bank Lane, Dandia Bazar, Vadodara
Mobile: 9998034545
Email: sp.outdoors@gmail.com

Mr. Shivrajsinh Bhupendrasinh Gaekwad

Survey No.2533, Mashav Bagh, Opp. ONGC Main Gate, Makarpura Road, Vadodara-390009.
Mobile: 9824063134
Email: gaekwadshivraj@yahoo.com

Unakoti

A Forested Wonder

The Hilly Terrain makes the ruins of Unakoti almost invisible but at the same time adds beauty to the destination.



The closer you come to Unakoti, you'll wonder if your auto-driver has brought you to the right place. A thin patch of road leading into a dense jungle takes you near a gate where some people are lazily sitting. You cross the gate, confirm if this is Unakoti and they tell you to walk straight.

Tucked away in the forests of Tripura, Unakoti is basically a pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Shiva, and is believed to be 11-13 centuries old. Unlike most Hindu sacred sites with temple constructions, Unakoti is famous for its collection of enormous bas-relief carvings on the side of a rocky hill. Numerous rock carving sculpture and stone idols of Hindu Gods and Goddess exposed in the open atmosphere are main attractions.

This location was covered in the 90's show "Surbhi" and later channels like NatGeo and Discovery included it in their features. Unakoti literally means "one less than a crore gods". This place has certain celestial significance that no one has been able to figure out yet. Even the history behind these rock carvings is unclear and is only based on local folklores.



- 1 The imposing figures almost feel as if they will come to life anytime now
- 2 In general, it is believed that these figures were erected in 6th or 7th century
- 3 The unique designs are one-of-its-kinds in India and it takes time to figure out the god or deity these figures represent
- 4 One of the stories suggests that these figures were made by a blacksmith who wanted to please Shiva
- 5 Another story says that a sage cursed some deities and turned them into these rocks with their faces etched as a warning
- 6 Unakoti carvings have also been a part of Tripura Tableau during Republic Day Parade



Reaching Unakoti

Unakoti is 3 hours away from Agartala, the capital of Tripura. Direct trains and buses take you to Dharamnagar, while you can also stop here on your way from Guwahati. From Dharamnagar, you can either hire an autorikshaw or go till Kailashaheer on a shared ride. Unakoti is closer to Kailashaheer and a private auto will only charge INR 300 to 500 depending on your bargaining skills.

Staying near Unakoti

Dharamnagar is a beautiful town and closest to Unakoti where you'll find decent stay. You can also plan a day trip from Agartala but the journey will be slow, long and tiring.

Unakoti should be the mandatory part of your visit to Tripura. The location is beautiful and worthy of spending an afternoon. 📷



Magnificent Mahisagar



Named for the Mahisagar River, the district has been carved out of the Panchmahal district and the Kheda district. There are many natural wonders here like the dinosaur site of Balasinor, the Kadana Eddy Marking Sedimentary Structures, forested hills, rivers and lakes. Home of much wildlife, the district came into limelight when a tiger was spotted here, the first confirmed tiger sighting in Gujarat from decades.

Raioli Fossil Site

About 75km from Toran Champaner, Raioli near Balasinor is the site for dinosaurian remains including bones, coprolites, eggs, eggshells and nests. This is considered one of the largest dinosaur sites in the world. In the early 1980s, palaeontologists stumbled upon dinosaur bones and fossils during a regular geological survey of Balasinor. The prime credit of discovery of dinosaurian skeletal fossils from this area with some of the subsequent scientific research go to the Palaeontologists of Geological Survey of India, Western Region. The larger spherical eggs were attributed to sauropods, while the smaller and more elongated or oval eggs to theropods. Since then this has become a palaeontological research area for the study of dinosaurs. A special feature of the dinosaur site is the *Rajasaurus narmadensis* (Latin for "princely lizard from the Narmada Valley", a dinosaur that seems to be endemic to this region).

Researchers now believe that this region is a home to one of the three largest dinosaur hatcheries in the world. At least 13 species of dinosaurs lived here. The soft soil made hatching and protecting eggs easier for the animals. The fossilized eggs found here are therefore better preserved than in many other regions.

A new museum and interpretation centre is likely to be opened soon, giving visitors an insight into the dinosaurs and other prehistoric fauna.



The dinosaur fossil site of Balasinor in Mahisagar district is among the world's largest.



Balasinor

The princely state of Balasinor was ruled by the Babi dynasty, originally migrants from Afghanistan who served the Mughal Emperor in the 17th century. For assistance to the Mughal Empire, the Babi family was given a special status and became governors in Gujarat. After the decline of the Mughal Empire, the Babi dynasty declared itself independent, taking over the rule of Junagadh, Radhanpur, Balasinor and other princely states. Nawab Babi Muhammed Khanji was the first Nawab of Balasinor. Nawab Babi Jamiyat Khanji, who ruled from 1899 to 1945, was passionate about theatre and spent much time of dramatic arts. The present family runs the Garden Palace as a heritage hotel. The town is worth exploring for its lake and Islamic monuments.

A short distance from Balasinor, Galteshwar has a 12th century temple. It is built in central Indian Malwa style with influence of Gujarati Chaulukya architecture. With exquisite architecture and sculpture, the temple has a scenic location between Galti and Mahi rivers, which has made it a popular picnic spot. The Ranchodrai Temple of Dakor is nearby and the tank here is worth visiting to watch turtles.



Dinosaur museum at Balasinor



Dinosaur museum at Balasinor



An abundance of prehistoric fossils have been unearthed at Balasinor



Garden Palace at Balasinor



Lunawada palace 57

Lunawada

Lunawada is the administrative headquarters of the Mahisagar district. This historical town has medieval monuments that testify to its history, including temples like Luneshwar Mahadev. There is a Saint Kabir Ashram opposite to this Shiva temple engraved with the Dohas of Saint Kabir. Another temple of Bhairavnath Mahadev is situated near the Luneshwar Mahadev temple. This temple has a statue of Bhairav and of Lord Shiva.

During the British Raj, Lunavada State was one of the princely states under the Rewa Kantha Agency of Bombay Presidency. The palaces and public buildings erected by the rulers between the 1870s and 1940s are worth seeing. Near Lunawada, Kakachiya is a village on the bank of three rivers - Panam, Veri and Mahisagar.

Lavana

The Kaleshwari Group of Monuments at Lavana near the district headquarters Lunavada lie near a stream in Hidimba Van, said to have been the forest of Hidimba. This group of monuments has intricately-carved temple ruins, stepwells, a reservoir and ruins that show erotic sculptures. The ruins are located at



Lake at Santrampur



View from the Rajmahal palace of Santrampur.

the foothills and some of them on a hillock. They were built between the 10th and 16th century; some monuments were built or reconstructed after the 18th century. The Solanki Rajput ruler of Lunawada, Vakhat Singh built some of the temples. The 10th century Ghummatwalu Mandir was built in Anarta school of Maha-Gurjara style of North Indian temple architecture with Dravidian influences in sculptures. It has been restored. The almost square laterite reservoir called Hindimba Kund was built in the 11th - 12th century period. Each side has a short flight of five steps perpendicular to the edge and also facing each other leading down to the water level. Notable among the

images set into niches in the central flights of steps are images dedicated to Shiva and Vishnu reclining on Shesha and an image depicting a troupe of dancers.

There are two stepwells - Sasu ni Vav and Vahu ni Vav in the northwest of the Kund.

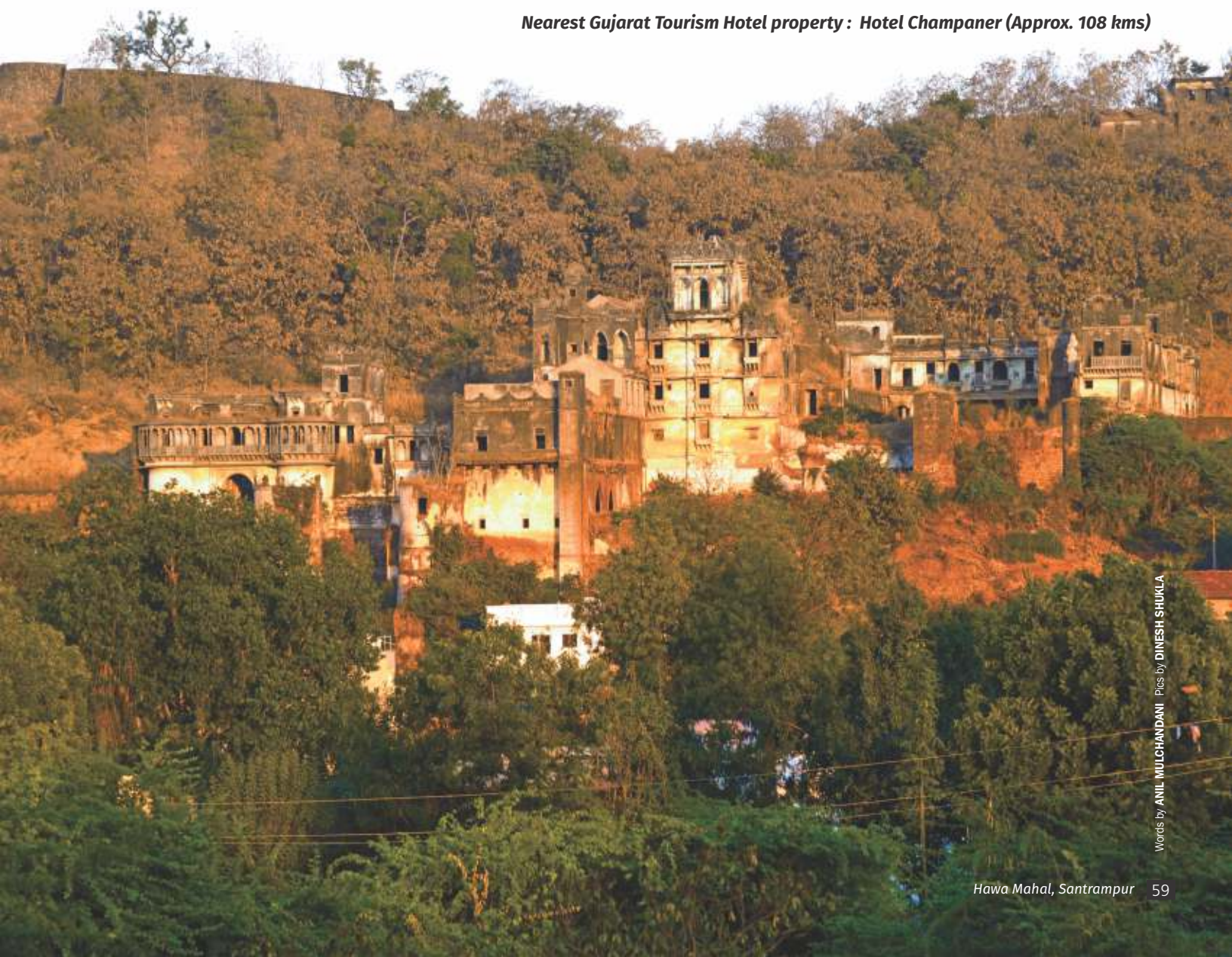
Kadana Dam

A beautiful place, Kadana is an earthen and masonry dam on the Mahi River built between 1979 and 1989. For those interested in geology, the Kadana Eddy Marking Sedimentary Structures nearby has been declared the National Geological Monuments of India by the Geological Survey of India (GSI).

Santrampur

Santrampur, which used to be known as Brahampuri, is a historical town with scenically beautiful water bodies, medieval temple ruins and the palaces of the Parmar dynasty. The ancestor of the dynasty was Rao Jalamsinhji I, from the ruling Parmar Dynasty of Ujjain, who in either the 10th-11th century founded the city of Jhalor and made it his capital. In the 13th century, Rao Sant founded the village of Sunth, which he named after himself. The erstwhile ruling family's palaces enjoy stunning locations in the hills or by a private lake, with views of deciduous forested valleys. Leopards and antelopes abound in the forests around Santrampur. 📍

Nearest Gujarat Tourism Hotel property : Hotel Champaner (Approx. 108 kms)



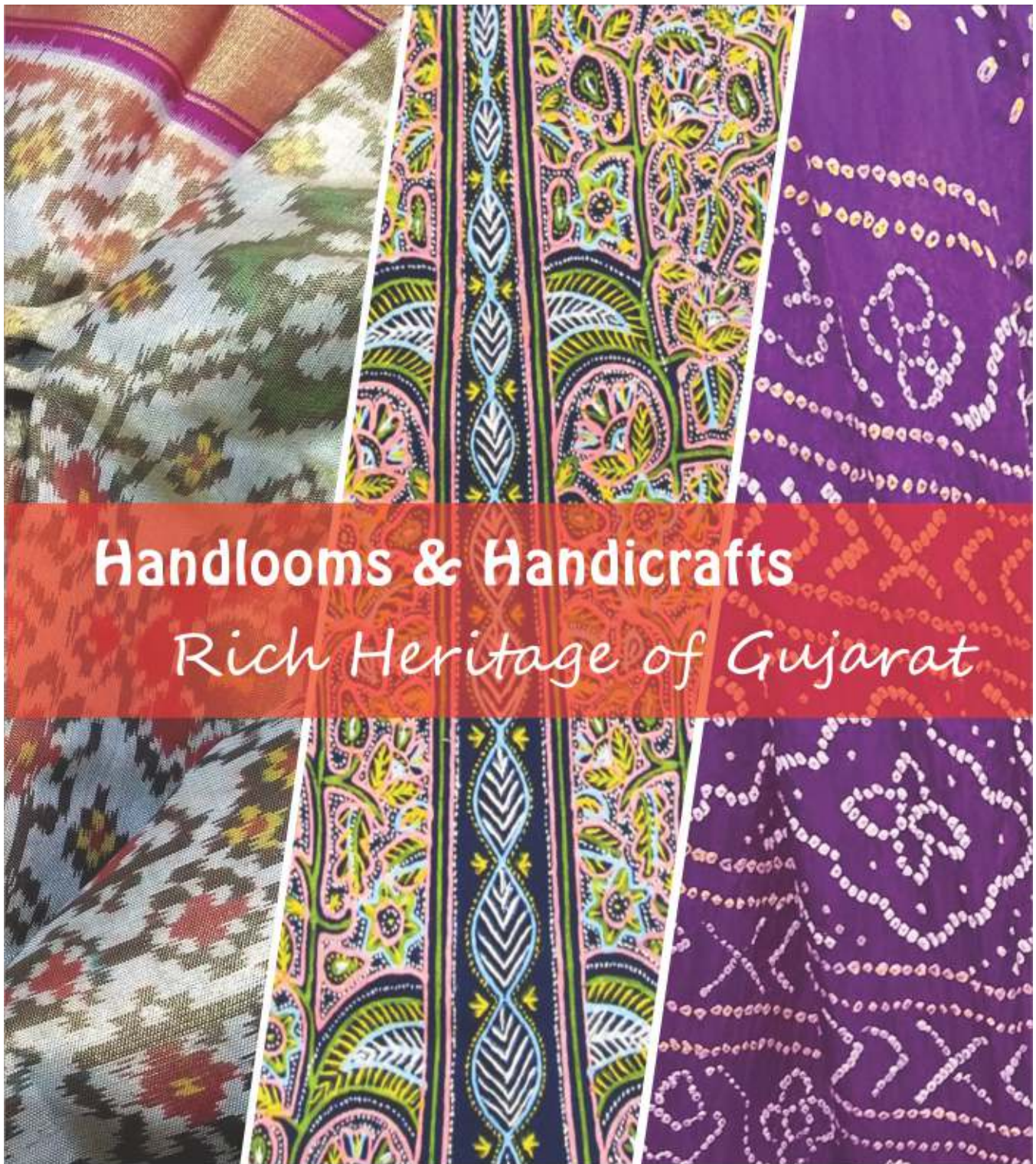
Gujarat Homestays

When in Gujarat, be a Gujarati



- Comfortable, world-class homestay facilities to the tourists
- Selection of homes based on thorough scrutiny and inspection
- Issue of certificate upon registration by Gujarat Tourism
- Categorization of the establishment as Silver or Gold category
- Additional income and enjoyable business activity for home owners
- Payment by tourists towards boarding and lodging services
- Timely and need-based inspection to ensure comfort, hygiene and safety





Handlooms & Handicrafts

Rich Heritage of Gujarat

Patola | Bandhani | Ajrakh | Rogan | Embroidery | Sujani | Patch Work | Tangalia | Applique & more...



garvi gurjari



Gujarat State Handloom & Handicrafts Development Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of Gujarat Undertaking)

Stores: Ahmedabad | Surat | Rajkot | Baroda | Gandhinagar | Bhuj | Anand | Bharuch | Bhavnagar | Surendranagar
New Delhi | Bangalore | Hyderabad | Kolkata |

Tel.: 079 23600552

Online Store: www.garvigurjari.in

Follow us:



MUST-SEE

THE WORLD'S TALLEST STATUE

MUST-STAY

TENT CITY NARMADA

Package
starts from ₹3,000*
per person



TENT CITY
NARMADA
THE LUXURIOUS NATURE RESORT

For booking:

+91 97 97 94 94 94, 96247 99166, 079-2745 4646

booking@tentcitynarmada.com; sales@tentcitynarmada.com

tentcitynarmada.com