

PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

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

December 2020

Vol. : 6 | Issue : 4 | Pages : 64 | ₹ 200 RNI Regd. No. GUJENG/2015/70098

A high-end monthly magazine



Romantic Escapes

Hiding behind a Mask

Four Centuries of Japanese Kabuki Theatre

Get Adventurous In Gujarat

An Ideal Venue

- Luxurious Stay
- Conference
- Destination Wedding

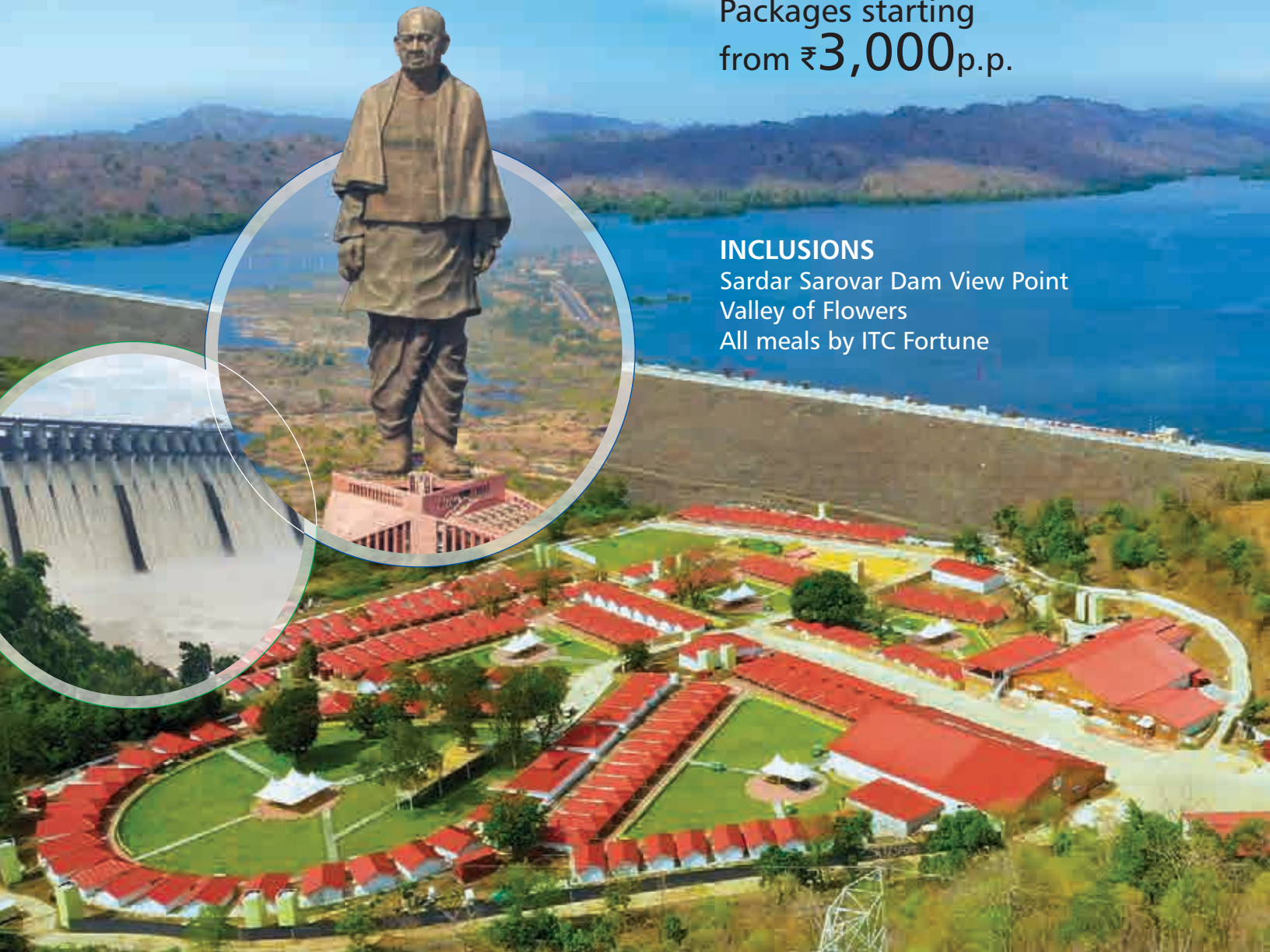
Safe and blissful journey
awaits you...

200
LUXURIOUS TENTS

Packages starting
from ₹3,000 p.p.

INCLUSIONS

Sardar Sarovar Dam View Point
Valley of Flowers
All meals by ITC Fortune



With enhanced hospitality and hygiene standards as per Government Norms



TENT CITY
NARMADA
THE LUXURIOUS NATURE RESORT



For Booking:
72 40 40 40 40
www.tentcitynarmada.com

For Trade Enquiry:
99 09 00 12 57
info@tentcitynarmada.com

RESORT: Dyke 3, Sardar Sarovar Dam Site, Kevadiya - 393151, Dist. Narmada, Gujarat, India

OPERATED BY



Countdown begins!

Every place has a different vibe. Some offer you tranquility, while some give butterflies in your stomach. As we are heading towards the end of the year, especially the year in which we all were deprived of travelling, we present you outstanding destinations from across India and the World to tickle your wanderlust for the better time to come.

Besides the festive charm, December is one of the best months to get married. It is the time when you don't have to worry about getting the perfect destination as all the places experience a pleasant and cool weather during this time. However, the present times call for a little less crowded place for safety reasons. So gear up and read our 'Romantic Escapes' to find the best place for your lovey dovey moments.

Spending time in nature is always a good idea to rejuvenate yourself. Surrounded by lush greenery and rustic charm, 'Refreshing Farm Stays' takes you to the exotic farm holidays in India where you can end your year on a peaceful note.

Read on!



PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

December 2020



Praveg Communications Limited

(Formerly known as PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS PVT. LTD.)

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

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

e: tourismone@praveg.com

www.praveg.com

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

Editorial Team

Priyanka Desai

Design Team

Mahesh Patel

Yagnesh Bhavsar

Vipul Gadhavi

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



Contents



Gardens by the Bay in Singapore

Incredible India

Romantic Escapes

Pg 4

Hiding behind a Mask: Four Centuries of Japanese Kabuki Theatre

Pg 18

Palatial Treasures

Pg 24

Refreshing Farm Stays

Pg 30

Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary

Pg 42

Get Adventurous in Gujarat

Pg 52

Far Far Away

Chills and Chillies: Eating your way Through Singapore

Pg 38

Romantic Escapes



With the pandemic situation, people are looking for secluded places away from the madding crowds. A look at some places for the couples who are on the hunt for an exotic honeymoon destinations:



Relax with a view of the Athirappilly Falls



The stunningly beautiful Athirappilly Falls enjoy a splendid location among lush rain forests. Just a couple of hours drive from Kochi Airport, Athirappilly has many good places to stay including Rainforest, a luxurious boutique resort. While staying at the resort, you can get close views of great hornbills and giant squirrels. Relax at the resort and gaze out at the 80 feet high waterfall. The Chalakudy River flows through the Vazhachal Forest and becomes more turbulent as it nears Athirappilly, where the water surges around big rocks and cascades down in three separate plumes, a superbly scenic sight. Films have been shot on location at this waterfall. You can opt to stay at the tree house if you want real isolation, from where you get a closer view of the

cascading plumes.

When you have had enough of relaxing at the resort, it is time for a short drive to the Vazhachal Falls. These falls are located at the edge of the Sholayar ranges, rich in rain forest. This area has a thriving population of elephant, leopard, lion-tailed macaque and other mammals, rich birdlife and plenty of reptiles. You can also visit the butterfly park near the Thumboormuzhi dam, a short drive from the falls.



Stroll on the beach of Tarkarli



One of the finest beaches of the Konkan coast, Tarkarli is still relatively off-the-beaten track for most travellers probably because of its location between popular beach destinations like Ganpatipule and Goa. The beach is located just a short drive from Malvan, which has a superb fort. A long stretch of white sand awaits visitors. Take off your shoes and walk together for miles on powdery sands of the beach. On a full moon night, the scene is most captivating when the sands gleam in the moonlight and jelly fish abound.

For a change from relaxing and romancing on the beach, take a boat ride on the backwaters, go dolphin spotting, enroll for scuba diving or snorkeling activities, or try some of the water sports. Malwan is famous for its cuisine, especially seafood. You can buy Konkani food products and in summer the famous alphonso mangoes.



Source: Tukaram/Shutterstock

Revel in fantastic views of Kudremukh



While Madikeri and to a lesser extent Chikmagalur have become popular destinations for holidays in the hills of Karnataka, some of the other scenic places like Kemmannugundi and Kudremukh remain little explored. Kudremukha literally means 'horse-face' and refers to a particular picturesque view of a side of the mountain that resembles a horse's face. The southern and western sides of the park form the steep slope of the Western Ghats ridgeline, with the altitude varying from 100 m - 1892 m with the horse-face like Kudremukha being the highest point. This is a great place for walking in Kudremukh National Park, which ranges

from the thick hilly forests to the landscape covered with grass. The evergreen woodlands are rich with mosses, orchids and attractive flowers, and the whole scenery of grassland interspersed with narrow strips of forests provides a scenically picturesque vista.

About three hours away, Kemmannugundi, 1434m above sea level, was the summer retreat of Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, Maharaja of Mysore. About 53km from Chikmagalur, it is located in the Baba Budan Giri Range, with some of Karnataka's highest peaks nearby. Wander

around to see waterfalls, streams and scenic viewpoints, and don't miss the spectacular sunset view from the Raj Bhavan.



Shilpa - Chaudhary Via Message/Shilpa's Stock

Getaway from the crowds to the Seraj, Sainj and Tirthan Valleys



Shoja in the Seraj Valley is a relatively less touristic region of Himachal Pradesh though it has some pretty sceneries, quaint houses and good birdlife. It is the base for good walks around Jalori Pass and Serolsar Lake. In summer, many of the trees and plants are in flower adding colour to the tree-lined drives.

Drive from here to Gushaini, a popular destination for trout fishing. From Gushaini, you can enter the Great Himalayan National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which is excellent for watching Himalayan birds. The Tirthan River makes a delightful vista as it flows through the forested valley. Explore Kurseong's tea plantations and lush greenery.

If you are looking for a tea plantation town less crowded than Darjeeling or Munnarm Kurseong, literally 'the land of the white orchid', is set among lush vegetation and some of India's finest tea estates in the Darjeeling district. This hill town is a quiet alternative to busier hill stations, offering spectacular snow peak views on clear days. It is a delightful place for walkers with lovely forest trails and trekking opportunities.

Take the train on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway to the hill resort of Darjeeling, which has some nice cafes and sights.



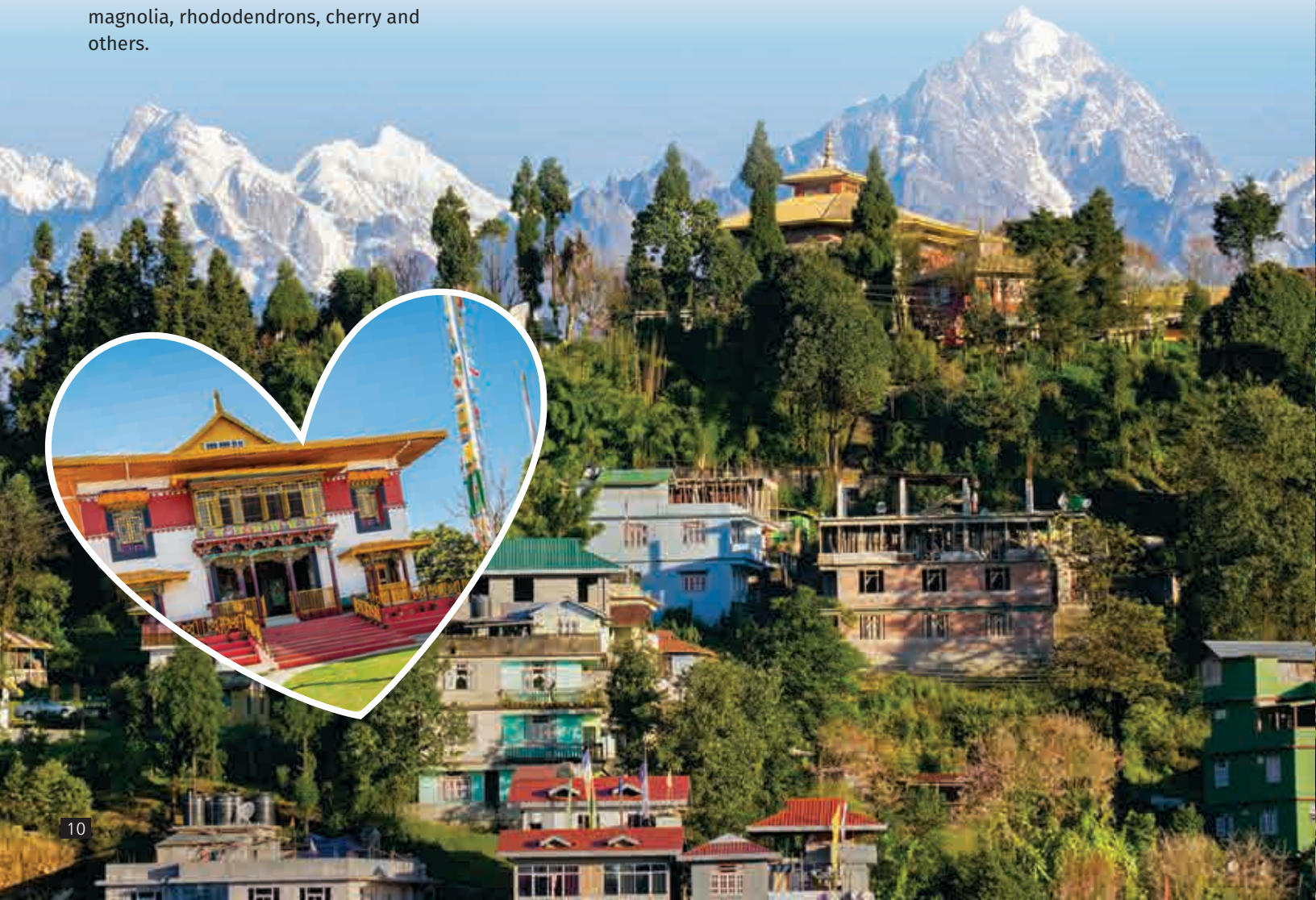


Explore the countryside around Rinchenpong



Situated about 5576 feet above sea level, Rinchenpong and the nearby village of Kaluk offer excellent views of the peaks and glaciers of the Kanchenjunga. It is known for its historical monasteries, including one with a rare Adi-Buddha statue in the Yab-Yum position. Make base at Rinchenpong to explore West Sikkim with its expanses of forests, lush river valleys, farms and plantations, the Varsey Rhododendron Sanctuary, the popular town of Pelling known for its snow peak views and the splendid monastic complex of Pemayangste, which holds a treasure trove of Buddhist art.

The Yangsum Heritage Farm is an attractive homestay in 44-acre mountain farm amid mixed forest of pine, Himalayan alder, schima, chestnut, magnolia, rhododendrons, cherry and others.



Find a peaceful spot in Pachmarhi



Pachmarhi in the Satpura hills was an old British summer retreat and cantonment set in a saucer shaped plateau, which retains its Raj-era ambience with golf greens, the 1875AD Christchurch, which has beautiful stained glass windows, the Army Music School and colonial bungalows. There is also a lake with boating facilities. From the town, there are drives to waterfalls, pools and caves all of them set in good habitat in the Satpura wildlife reserve for watching birds. In the evening, drive to Dhupgarh, which is one of the highest points in the Satpura Range for superb valley views, stay on for the sunset and you may see the lights of nearby towns at night when you start back. Rock End Manor, Welcomheritage Golf View, Evelyn's Own and Glen View offer good accommodations.



Take a trip to Araku Valley in the Eastern Ghats



The journey by train or car from Visakhapatnam to Araku is worthwhile for its own sake as the road climbs past fine valleys and forests with possible stops to see the spectacular limestone formations in the Borra Caves and the coffee plantations of Anantagiri, which produces some excellent coffee. The highlights of Araku are the Museum of Habitat, which offers an insight into the culture of the tribal groups of this part of the Eastern Ghats, waterfalls and gardens besides views of some of Andhra's highest peaks. Nearby Shimiliguda Railway Station, 3268 Ft above sea level, is one of the highest broad gauge stations in southern India.



Source: Creativesam/Shutterstock



Pristine Ponmudi



The journey to Ponmudi goes past spice and fruit plantations, crosses river Kallar from where there is a trek to a waterfall, and takes hairpin bends through black rock formations, bamboo jungle, teak forest and tea estates before reaching Ponmudi. While there is little to do here, it is worth the diversion to Neyyar Dam with a 9 sq km reservoir that is the centerpiece of the 128 sq km Neyyar sanctuary, which has evergreen forests covering the western slopes of the Western Ghats in the southeast corner of Kerala. Take a boat ride to enjoy views of the forested slopes, where there are chances of seeing elephant, deer, monkeys and other wildlife. If you are interested in yoga, the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Dhanwantari Ashram is a leading institution.



Source: Elamaran Elaaa/Shutterstock

Retreat to Jageshwar



It is a long drive to Jageshwar but once there, you are rewarded by the sight of beautiful temples with splendid woodcarvings, old houses and mountain vistas. On a clear day, you can get a spectacular view of snow peaks. This is a great place to enjoy an intimate holiday at Van Serai, which has just a few rooms.

When you are in the mood for more cultural experiences, head for Almora with its many historical temples, markets lined with old wooden façades of houses and shops and a rich tradition of handicrafts like local copperware and other metal crafts called Tamta, baskets, weaving and nettle fibre crafts. A great escape from Almora is Binsar, a hilltop site in a sanctuary. There are attractive estates on the Almora – Binsar stretch that offer scenic cottage accommodations.



Enjoy a nature break at Pangot



Just about 15km from Nainital, Pangot offers a superb setting among oak, pine and rhododendron forests. Lodged in one of the small resorts here, you can enjoy watching birds aplenty – jays, thrushes, minivets, flycatchers, sunbirds, etc can be seen among the shrubs and trees, or coming to drink water at pools. Lammergier or bearded vultures, which are among the largest flying birds, Himalayan griffon vultures and eagles hover over the forest. Take a trip to nearby places like Kilbury in search of pheasants. There are also chances of seeing Himalayan mammals.



Rejuvenate in the green hills of Yercaud



The name is derived from Yeri meaning lake and Kadu, which means forests, and the hill station of Yercaud discovered in the 1800s by the British centres has an artificial lake with the popular Anna park beside it and great views of the green Shevaroy Hills. From the lake, there are many attractive walks into the hills, which are attractive for orchid and butterfly viewing. The British planted coffee here and today Yercaud is thick with plantations of coffee, tea, spices, plantain and jackfruit.



Relax at Kotagiri



Kotagiri is a smaller and quieter hill destination than Ooty or Coonoor. Enjoy views of pine forests, the green slopes of the Nilgiris and valleys. One of the most popular points, Kodanad is about 22km from the town and looks out over the plains in Tamil Nadu and the plateau in Karnataka. Also visit the Sullivan Memorial, a 19th century British house filled with photos, artifacts and information about the tribal groups and the colonial period in the Nilgiris. 📍



Hiding behind a Mask: Four Centuries of Japanese Kabuki Theatre

Today in a pandemic-ridden world, the mask has become a necessary accessory. While in most parts of the world, people are struggling to get used to living, breathing and talking through a mask, there are some parts of Asia especially where the mask has been a common sight for a long time. Take a ride on the train or bus in Hong Kong or Japan and on any given day, you would see at least a dozen people hiding behind a mask. And this in a pre-Covid world.

Why do so many people wear a mask in Japan? I asked my colleagues in our Tokyo office and the answer was for health reasons. Seeing the scepticism on my face, he added: "We don't want to catch any germs. And we don't want to spread any either." Before 2020, I would have put this down as paranoia. Not anymore. Now I have gone over to the dark side. If needed, I would even get a mask for my dog. As I travelled through Japan, I developed another theory of the reason people might wear a mask. It followed from a visit one evening to a

Kabuki performance, a traditional Japanese art form, at the Kabukiza Theatre in Tokyo's Ginza district. I was mesmerised by the performance, but even more by the elaborate facial art, which was akin to a mask. There was no way to know the person behind all that makeup. No wonder Kabuki masks are so popular with tourists and even on Amazon.

Kabuki, which means song, dance and acting skill, goes back four centuries and evolved as popular theatre full of double entendre and ribald jokes that were topical and engaged the audience. Many of the women performers – Kabuki started as an all-women theatre form though today

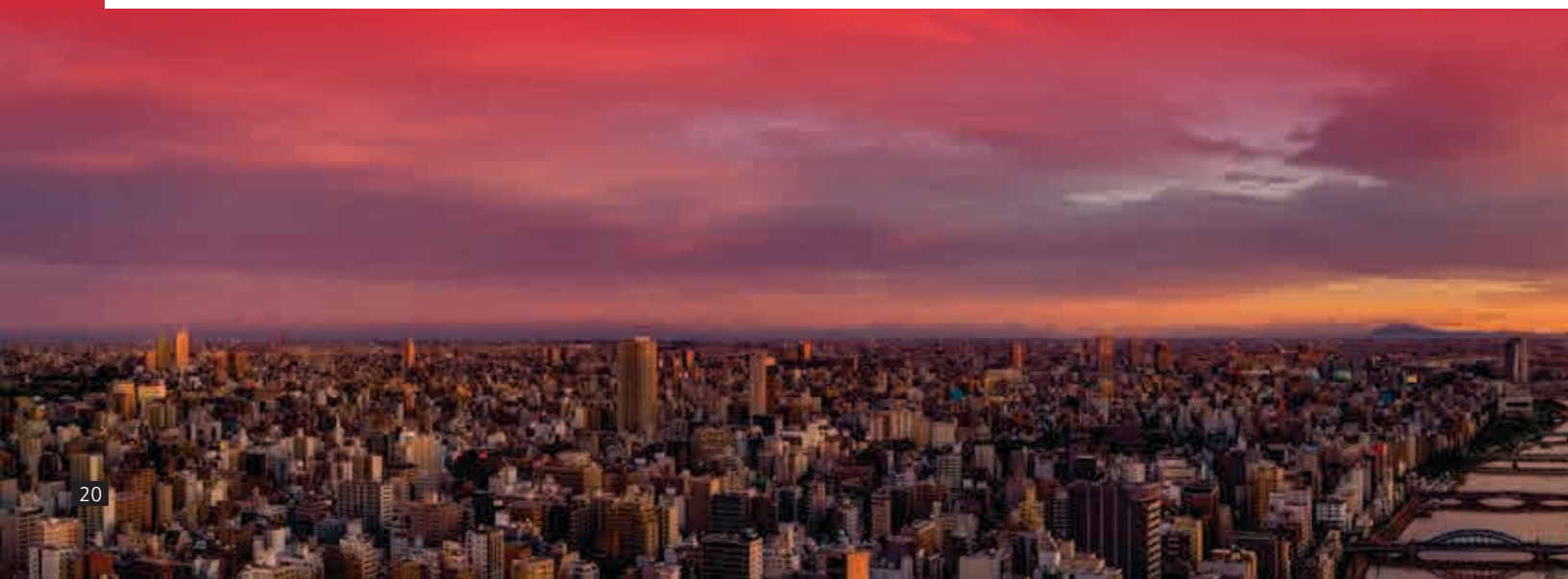


only men perform – were sex workers and there was a marked lack of prudishness. In the 17th century, a dancer called Okuni, an attendant at the shrine of Izumo, gathered a group of female dancers around her and they started performing in the dry river bed of Kyoto, offering entertainment for the common people. This was the first time that dramatic performance was designed especially for the entertainment of the masses. During the period of the Edo Shogunate, women were banned from performing and since then an all-male ensemble performs

Kabuki. Several male actors are specialists in performing women's roles. They are called the onnagata. Watching the Kabuki performance, I was fascinated by the elaborate movements, the rich costumes and the intricate makeup. It reminded me of the folk theatre of Kerala, the Kathakali, where the performers hide behind the mask of elaborate makeup. In the case of kabuki too, the story being told through the segment is often part of a bigger story. The actors are important, but the art form takes precedence. The art is more important than the artist.



Source: Manuel Ascanio/Shutterstock





歌舞伎 Kabuki!

Another conundrum that I found fascinating about the Kabuki performance is the mix of transparency and secrecy. The actors are behind the elaborate costumes and makeup, but the action is all out in the open. This is apparent in the presence of actors clad in black who appear on the stage to hand over props to the main actors and help them make the performance seamless. These are the kurogo and are supposed to be considered non-existent. The audience is to ignore the kurogo altogether.

Does this explain the popularity of the mask among the common people of Japan today? The masks are plain surgical ones or cute ones with Pokemon or Doraemon characters printed on them or even designer specials. Reading up about the love for the mask, I learnt that the mask became really popular in a big way when diaper and sanitary products manufacturer Unicharm Corp released a special mask in 2003 that protected people from hay fever and pollen allergies. Until then masks were made of cotton with a pouch into which a gauze patch was



inserted. The Unicharm mask was non-woven and disposable. Today Unicharm masks are exported to various countries and it even makes a 3-D mask to protect against the Covid-causing coronavirus. Now that I have got used to wearing a mask any time I leave the house, I feel a sense of privacy and freedom, akin to what a Japanese actress once said in an interview – that she wears a mask once she takes off her makeup so that no one can see her natural face. A friend's daughter said she wears the mask so that no one will disturb her on a Tokyo train and she can peacefully listen to her music.

As I left my friend's house and walked back to my hotel, The Palace Hotel, in Tokyo, I stopped at a chemist to buy some paracetamol and some masks.

Imagine my surprise when the chemist suggested I try the mask in a bottle. Seeing my confused expression, he explained that spraying it created an invisible bubble around my face, working as a mask to protect me from viruses and germs. An unseen mask to protect from unseen germs. I gladly bought it and walked on. Only in Japan. 🇯🇵



PALATIAL TREASURES



When Sardar Patel went about convincing the 562 or so princely states to merge with India, a few from Gujarat were among the first ones to join the accession like Baroda. We look at some of the palaces of Gujarat that are open to visitors.



VADODARA

Prior to independence, Baroda State was among the three premier princely states of India. Baroda was ruled by the Gaekwad dynasty of the Maratha Confederacy from its formation in 1721 until its accession in 1949. The state covered 3,239 km in area and was extremely wealthy. The ruler, Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad, was among the most progressive in the country and introduced wide-ranging reforms and civil works during the early-1900s.

Befitting the stature of the ruler, the Lakshmi Vilas Palace is one of the largest private residences spanning a large area of several hundred acres. The palace itself has a long façade. Designed in 1880 by Major Mant, it was completed around 1890 by Chisholm after Mant's death. The style is eclectic encompassing many styles like Mughal, Rajput and Gothic. Inside, the palace is equally impressive with a profusion of rich

woodwork, Italian marble and works of art. The courtyard with palms and urns is one of the highlights of the palace. Part of the palace has now been opened for visitors and was among the first palace museums in India to offer an audio tour. The piece-de-resistance is the Darbar hall, which has exquisitely carved cedar galleries and domed ceiling. The palace grounds include banqueting areas and a golf club.

The Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum is located in the palace complex. The museum, containing works of art collected by Maharaja Sir Sayajirao Gaekwad, is well-known for exhibiting the paintings of Raja Ravi Varma who was specially commissioned by the then Maharaja of Baroda. The collection includes portraits of the family. There are works of Hindu mythology for which Raja Ravi Varma was famous. There is a collection of sculptures in marble and bronze. These include copies of great masters in bronze commissioned by the

Maharaja and also originals by renowned artists. One of the artists commissioned by the Maharaja was an Italian artist Fellicci whose works can be seen in the Lakshmi Vilas Palace and its grounds, the museum, and also in the public. The museum has an oriental gallery, which houses Japanese and Chinese sculptures and other works collected by the Maharaja on his visits to these countries.

A number of other palaces can be seen, while driving around Vadodara. Some of them are now public buildings. The European-style Pratap Vilas Palace built in 1908 is now a railway academy. The Makarpura palace is now in the Airforce area.

Where to stay?

Stay at Madhav Bagh, a heritage homestay in Makarpura.





Nilambag Palace Hotel

BHAVNAGAR

When Sardar Patel went about integrating about 222 princely states of Kathiawad, Bhavnagar was one of the first to have agreed to the accession. It was ruled by the Gohil Rajputs from the 12th century. After moving capital several times, they settled at Bhavnagar that became a port. Bhavsinhji ensured that Bhavnagar benefited from the revenue that was brought in from maritime trade, which was monopolized by Surat and Cambay making arrangements first with the Nawabs and later

the British. Because of the maritime trade, the state prospered compared to other states. During the late 19th century, the Bhavnagar State Railway was constructed. This made Bhavnagar the first state that was able to construct its railway system without any aid from the Central Government, which was mentioned in the Imperial Gazetteer. Mr. Peile, a political agent, described the state as follows: "With flourishing finances and much good work in progress. Of financial matters I need say little; you have no debts, and your treasury is full." The ruling family

introduced reforms in administration, revenue collection, judiciary, the post and telegraph services and economic policy. The ports were also modernized. Bhav Sinh Gohil who ruled in the late-1800s and early-1900s also became known for his modernization of Bhavnagar. In 1911, his wife HH Maharani Nundkanvarba of Bhavnagar, was awarded the Order of the Crown of India, the highest Imperial award for women of the Empire. Maharaja Krishna Kumarsinhji continued the progressive reforms of his father and grandfather, reforming the method of tax-collection



in his state, introducing village councils and Bhavnagar's first legislature, the Dharasabha. Owing to his progressive reign, Kumarsinhji was knighted with the KCSI in 1938. He was also known to be a nationalist and among the early rulers to agree to accede to the Dominion of India in 1947. Bhavnagar was merged into the princely union of Saurashtra in 1948, which then became part of India.

The old palace of Bhavnagar, called Darbargadh, now houses banks and other public buildings. The huge

structure includes extensions in the 1800s designed by Sir William Emerson. Emerson worked extensively in India. His first big commission was for Mumbai's Gothic Crawford Market (1865-71) with a fountain executed by Rudyard Kipling's father, John Lockwood Kipling, who was also responsible for the bas-relief on the main entrance. He built the college and cathedral in Allahabad. His best-known work was the Victoria Memorial in Kolkata. At Bhavnagar, he designed the hospital that is a grand structure.

Where to stay?

The Nilambag Palace is now a heritage hotel. Once a garden palace, this building of the 1800s stands in sprawling grounds that includes the current residence of the family. The palace is entered by a portico. Some fine teakwood carvings adorn the entrance. The lobby has a finely decorated ceiling and woodwork, and exhibits family portraits. Inside the property you can see paintings, prints, crockery, elaborate textiles and other pieces from the family collection. The dining hall has European mirrors and chandeliers.



BHUJ

Kutch was a large princely state. During the merger, Vijayaraji was away for medical treatment at London. Upon his order Madansinhji, on behalf of his father, signed the Instrument of Accession of Kutch, on 16th August, 1947, in his capacity as attorney of Maharao of Kutch. Later, Madansinhji acceded the throne, upon death of his father Vijayaraji on 26th January, 1948 and became the last Maharao of Cutch, for a short period of time till 4th May, 1948, when the administration of the state was completely merged in to the Union of India.

The Darbargadh of Kutch contains two palaces that can be visited by tourists – the Pragmahal and the Aina



Prag Mahal

Prag Mahal





Aina Mahal

Mahal. The Prag Mahal is named after Rao Pragmalji II, who commissioned it and construction began in 1865. It was designed by Colonel Henry Saint Wilkins and completed in 1879 during the regency of Khengarji III following Pragmalji II's death in 1875. The clock tower is a dominating feature of the palace. Inside, you can see the Darbar Hall with Corinthian pillars and works of art.

The Aina Mahal is an 18th-century palace that is located next to the Prag Mahal. The palace was built by Rao Lakhpatji around 1750. Designed by Ram Singh Malam who had spent time in European learning different skills like glass-blowing, this palace of mirrors is decorated with European style glass, mirrors and tiles. The first floor has the Audience Hall, the Pleasure Hall, the Hall of Mirrors and the State Apartments, and the second floor has the ante-chamber, Darbar (Court) Hall and Marriage Hall. The building has been converted into a museum with clocks, wares, mechanical toys, paintings, textiles and historical pictures. 📷



Aina Mahal



Darbarqadh Palace



Darbarqadh Palace

Where to stay?

There are number of traditional homestays in Kutch.

Visit www.gujarattourism.com to book the homestays in advance.

Incredible India

Refreshing Farm Stays

Kisan Divas celebrates agriculture in India. In this article, we look at some of the exciting farm stays in India.



GLENBURN TEA ESTATE

Glenburn Valley, Dist. Darjeeling

From Siliguri, the road to Glenburn follows the course of the River Teesta, and as you start the climb towards Darjeeling, keep a watch for the turnoff for Glenburn Tea Estate – stay warned that some patches of the drive are





really bumpy. Glenburn Tea Estate offers classy home-stay style accommodations in a colonial-period bungalow with stunning views – on a clear day, you can enjoy a panorama of the snow-capped peaks including the massive Kanchenjunga.

The Glenburn Tea estate encompasses around 1600 acres of private estate with forests and tea plantations sloping down to two rivers, the Rungeet and the Rung Dung. In fact, Glenburn literally means River in Scotland. And sipping tea or scotch, 3,700 feet above sea level, in the Eastern Himalayas, with a view of the hills and rivers, the Scottish planters must surely have been reminded of home in the glens of Scotland!

In the tea estate, the Burra Bungalow is now open for guests. This is a typically British bungalow with tiled pitch-roofs, columns, large picture windows and

fireplaces. The interiors have been renovated with colonial-period style furniture, floral embroidered draperies and linen, flower vases and ornate fireplaces. The Planters Suite has an imposing mahogany four-poster bed, fireplace, colonial furniture on the patio and a long bathroom with an old fashioned free-standing bathtub fitted with a hand-held shower. Other rooms are named for their views like Rose Room facing the rose garden, Butterfly Room facing flowering bushes, the Simbong Garden Room has a view of the Simbong Tea division, the Kanchenjunga Suite has a view of Mt Kanchenjunga on a clear day, with motifs to match the names. The property is owned by the Prakash family that has been in the tea business for three generations. The homestay is the brainchild of Husna Tara Prakash, known for her horses. In

absence of the owners, it is the Glenburn Estate team that looks after guests, headed by Sanjay Sharma and Nielu who are usually around with their dogs, Uday Kumar, and Sabin, with the smiling bearers, cooks and drivers.

Meals are usually sit-down affairs, with much of the produce coming from the estate itself, and offer a variety that could range from Tibetan momos and Burmese Khao Seuy to European and Indian dishes.

From the bungalow, 4-wheel drive vehicles take you to the riverside Glenburn Lodge, which is surrounded by excellent trails for bird and butterfly spotting. Sanjay or his team members are usually around to help with species identification and treks. They also take you on a tour of the tea factory to watch tea processing activities.



HOLUMBA HAVEN

Kalimpong

Located in Kalimpong a few minutes' drive from the town centre, Holumba Haven is set in a nursery with about two acres of floriculture and horticulture. If you love gardens, this is where you can wander among orchids, bulbs, tubers and flowering plants, with their attendant birds and butterflies. You arrive at the reception that has a hotel-like feel but once inside it is a family-run place,

where you are likely to be welcomed by one of the family members. The 16 rooms are divided into six comfortable cottages named Bamboo Groove, Magnolia, Pine Woods, Spring Site, Tree Tops and Wood Cot, and meals are in the dining room called the Orchid, which is part of the Pempahishey residence. At this common dining room, home-style set meals featuring Chinese, Tibetan, western and Indian foods are served on

prior arrangements, and the owners are often around to share information about Kalimpong. They will provide with information about must see places and lists of the best shops to get various things.

Making base here, you can visit various nurseries known for cacti, foliage plants, Seed culture, Orchids and Plants.



YANGSUM FARM
P.O Rinchenpong, West Sikkim

Getting to Yangsum Farm near Rinchenpong, is a scenic experience. You drive from Bagdogra Airport/Siliguri/New Jalpaiguri Station through the Bengal Dooars and hills to the Sikkim border passing tea estates and driving along rivers, and after the border the road runs along the Rangeet river and through lush green slopes covered with pine, Himalayan alder, chestnut, magnolia, rhododendrons, cherry trees and terraced cultivation. The last stretch of drive is especially scenic, with streams and waterfalls. If you are here during or just after the monsoons, the spray will drench your car!

The homestay facility includes two rooms in the ancestral heritage home of Thendup Tashi, and a three-room wooden outhouse. The heritage house has Sikkimese character with local-style furniture, bright fabrics, silk canopies, old photos and a superb Buddhist altar room. The heritage rooms in the main house and its log house annex have wooden floors, attractive wooden beds, tables and cupboards, and traditional paintings with western-style baths attached. The windows look out to the mountains. When the clouds are clear, there is a striking view of Kanchenjunga. From the property, you can stroll into the 44-acre farm, where the brother-

sister duo grows cardamom, ginger, oranges, peaches and other produce. Some of the vegetables served at meal times in the dining room or a semi-open area are grown locally. Meals include Sikkimese fare like Thogba (the traditional Sikkimese millet beer served in a wooden pot with brass rings drunken using bamboo reed for the straw), thukpa (noodle soup), momos, ningro churpi (Fern curry with locally made cheese), phing (glass noodles) with mushrooms and green peas, sisnu dal (nettle curry), etc.



CHOWKIDINGHEE AND MANCOTTA CHANG BUNGALOW

Dibrugarh

Chang Bungalows in Assam tea estates are built on stilts because of their rainwater flooding-prone surroundings and the wildlife of the state. Two Chang Bungalows, each about 150 years old, in the tea plantations around Dibrugarh have been converted by the Jalan family into heritage home states. Chowkidinghee Chang Bungalow is situated 2km from Dibrugarh Railway Station and offers three rooms with attached baths. Located facing tea plantations, here you awaken to the invigorating smell of tea. Mancotta

Chang Bungalow, 4km from Dibrugarh Railway Station, has four double rooms in the main bungalow and two singles in the annex. All rooms are named for tributaries of the mighty Brahmaputra. Mancotta has nice gardens and is situated near woodlands rich in birds.

The properties are family run by Vinita and Manoj Jalan, tea plantation owners of Dibrugarh, and they are usually around to meet guests. Meals at these bungalows include Assamese favourites like fish thenga, baigana pilika, banana

dough and amita kheer, besides western and North Indian food. In the evening, they organize folk performances like the Jhumar dance of the tea plantation workers who have their origins in central and eastern India or Bihu, the Assamese folk dance.

Heritage Tea Tours cover the tea estates owned by the Jalan family. The Jalan family has a stable of horses for riding in the tea country. They can also arrange golfing at planter's clubs in Doomdooma, Margherita, Digboi, Tingri, Zaloni or Naharkatia, all in two to three hour radius of Dibrugarh.



TARPA

Post: Gholwad, Tal: Dahanu

Save Farm, run by a father-son duo, is one of the pioneers of agricultural tourism. The farmstay called Tarpa gets its name from the tribal musical instrument and Warli art has been used in profusion to decorate the structures. The farm tour is well-organised with the guide showing you through a nursery of fruit tree saplings, greenhouses, shaded houses for indoor plants, medicinal plants, apiary, fish farming, solar dehydration areas, and other areas of Save Farm.

You are introduced to the importance of organic farming, sustainable agriculture, aquaponics, rainwater harvesting, vermiculture, composting and other practices at the farm. About 300 plants have been documented and are labeled with scientific name tags. The accommodations also reflect the heritage of the farm like the Tulsi Vrindavan cottages take inspiration from Konkan houses.



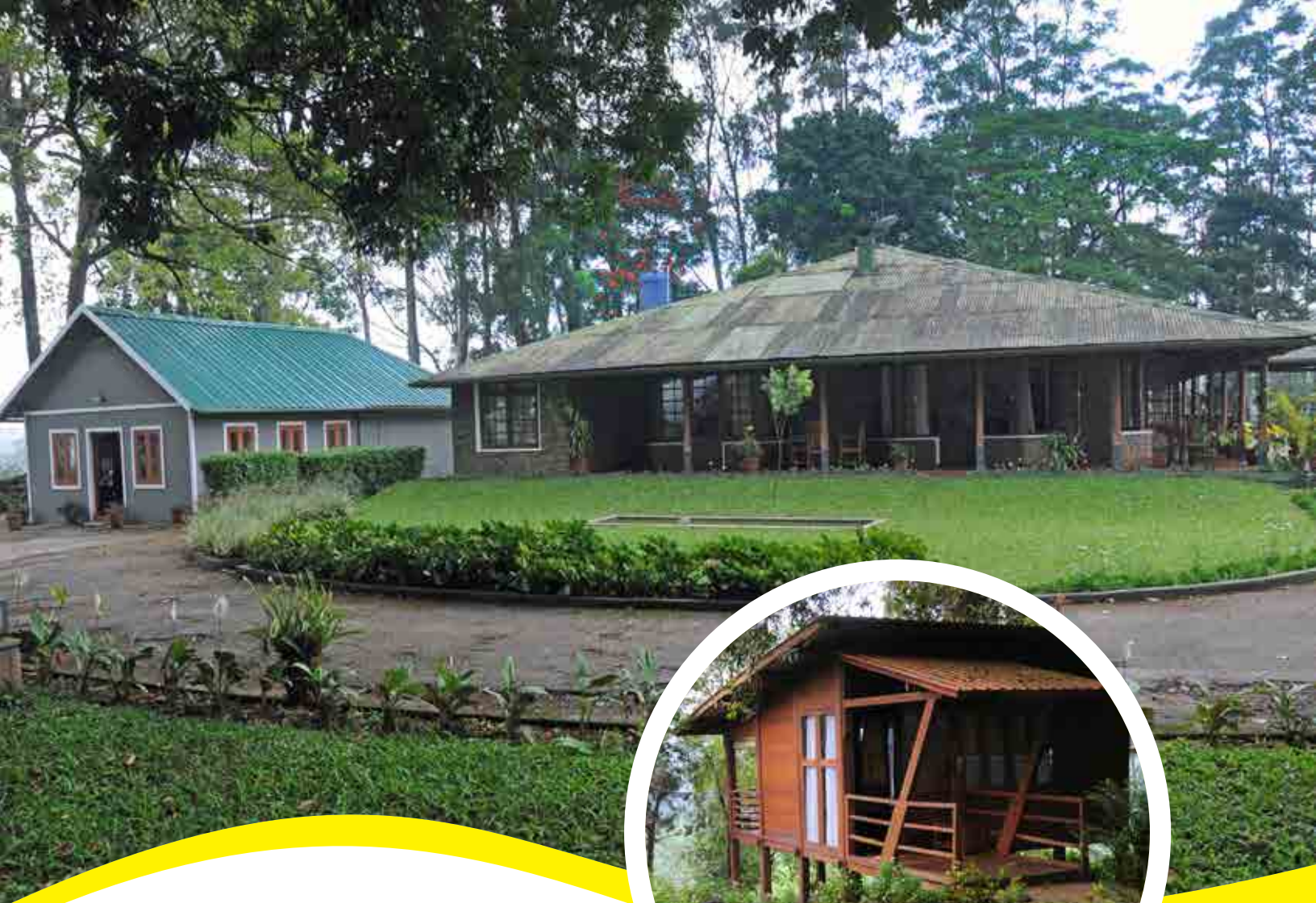
DUDHSAGAR PLANTATION

Karmane Village, Mollem National Park, Goa

Goa has a number of spice gardens that offer daily tours of the plantations with a traditional Goan Hindu lunch – Savoi, Tropical and Sahakari are among the most visited. If you want to stay on a plantation, Dudhsagar Plantation is one of the best, where you can experience tropical Goan farming techniques, and discover a number of spices, fruits and herbs. The tours take you through cinnamon, pepper, chillies and nutmeg growing areas, and you can walk among cashew, coconut, arecanut and teak trees. The guides tell you about various spices, medicinal plants and their uses. You will

also gain insights into sustainable agricultural practices that have been used to restore the once disused land into a vibrant ecosystem. You will see a bio gas digester and learn about cashew fenni distillation. At the end of the guided tour, you have the opportunity to pick up some local products before relishing our home-cooked food. The 50-acre plantation has five rooms for those who want to stay. The cottages are located in the midst of a tropical palm garden, surrounded by exotic plants, loads of birds and butterflies.

There's an in-house nature trail at the plantation, or you can stroll to the nearby river on a neighborhood walk; the area is great for birdwatching. The property is also a good base to explore the sights of the Dudhsagar Region: the popular Dudhsagar Waterfall, lesser known but equally exciting Tambdi Falls, an ancient Shiva temple in Bhagwan Mahaveer Wildlife Sanctuary, a prehistoric rock site, Portuguese era colonial mansions and the dam and botanical garden at Salaulim.



STANMORE TEA GARDENS

Valparai, Tamil Nadu

The tea plantation town of Valparai, located at an altitude of about 3500 ft above sea level, is an excellent alternative to the crowded hills stations of South India like Ooty, Kodai and Munnar. Situated on the Annamalai Hills, Valparai's mosaic of forests, plantations and rolling grasslands makes it a nature lovers' paradise with rich birdlife and many opportunities to spot mammals. The highlight of Valparai is staying in colonial bungalows amid the tea plantations.

One of the prettiest places to stay in Valparai is the Stanmore Garden Bungalow, which is situated on a hilltop. This bungalow has been converted into a heritage guesthouse, retaining its Raj-era furniture, memorabilia and large rooms with old fireplaces. Alternatively, new chalets overlook the tea planted slopes and offer more privacy. Wake up to the call of the whistling thrush and stroll around among the mature trees that trill with birdcalls. Enjoy the sumptuous meals and walk down to the riverside for great views. When you have had enough of relaxing in the bungalow environs, the staff can arrange for you to visit some of the tea

estates and scenic points in Valparai. The most exciting is a visit to Puthuthottam, which has some of the finest stands of forest in the region and a historical plantation bungalow. Around this bungalow, you can expect to see much wildlife. Over a morning cup of tea, you could be able to watch a troop of the endangered lion-tailed macaque, a monkey that gets its name from its lion like tail and appearance, which frequents the property. While walking or driving here you may get to see leopard, wild elephant, Indian bison, magnificent great hornbills and plenty of colourful birds. 📸

Far Far Away

Chills and Chillies: Eating your way through Singapore

“I thought Delhiites spent maximum time eating, till I went to Singapore. People seem to do nothing but eat in Singapore.”

This was my dad's comment after his first visit to the island nation. I think the sheer variety of food and the availability of great places to chill and eat makes it very easy to indulge in gourmet pleasures in Singapore.



My favourite restaurant in Singapore is tucked next to the Bukit Timah stables and is aptly named Riders Café. Housed in a black and white colonial building, the restaurant has a rustic charm that takes you back to an era when life was not so hectic. Sitting on the verandah, overlooking the verdant grounds and watching horses being put through their paces, this is the ideal place to enjoy a brunch of bangers, bacon, beans, mushrooms, tomatoes, artisanal bread and eggs, washed down with coffee or delicious milkshake. We also enjoyed the burgers and salad and the array of desserts including homemade scones, cakes and crepes suzette. My favourite is

Death by Chocolate, a rich, gooey chocolate cake smothered in chocolate syrup and served with a scoop of vanilla ice cream. For those who want a healthy alternative, I would recommend the Buddha Bowl, a mix of tofu scramble, kale, mushrooms, grains, avocado, nuts and seeds. Finally, no visit to Riders Café is complete without shoestring potato fries with parmesan cheese and shaved truffle.

Talking of truffle fries, another place that is a must visit is P.S Café at Ann Siang Hill. Located close to the Central Business District of Singapore, this particular branch of the P.S Café chain is unique in that no children are allowed

here. This makes it ideal for those who want to brunch at leisure without disturbance. Spend a Sunday on the terrace, sipping white bouquet sangria or PS mojito and indulge in a meal of Portobello mushroom soup with fresh watercress and truffle oil; pad thai salad of prawns, crushed peanuts and fresh lime dressing; and a steak sandwich or fish and chips.

You can enjoy a variety of fish and chips across the island. From Manhattan Fish Market – a chain with branches across the country – to Smith’s at Balmoral Plaza, Molly Malone’s Irish Pub on Circular Road and Greenwood Fish Market, there is no dearth of good ole



PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

fish and chips. For me, a plate of beer-battered fish and thick chips with tartar sauce or vinegar and salt is the ultimate comfort food.

Singapore also offers authentic local fare – though all the food I have already mentioned is also local by now as the island is the archetypal melting pot of cuisines. But the Hainanese Chicken Rice, which is available from the small stalls in hawker's centres to seafood eateries such as Jumbo and five star restaurants such as Town at the iconic Fullerton Hotel, converted from the old post office, or The Kitchen Table at W Hotel at Sentosa Cove. The dish comprises chicken that is delicately cooked with pandan leaves and seasoning, sliced and served with rice that is cooked in the chicken broth accompanied with a fiery chilli sauce that is freshly made every day. You can opt for the steamed chicken or fried chicken with a crispy skin that is sinfully delicious. This was my son's ultimate comfort food and he swore that the best Hainanese Chicken Rice was sold by the uncle at the hawker's centre in Boon Lay. No visit to the Jurong Bird Park was complete for us without first visiting the stall for a plate of chicken rice.

As popular as Hainanese Chicken Rice is the two signature crab dishes – Black Pepper Crab and Chilli Crab. Though chilli crab with its thick red sweet and spicy sauce is promoted by the Singapore Tourism Board as the country's national dish, my favourite is the black pepper crab with its rich flavour of black pepper, garlic and oyster sauce. These dishes



Buddha Bowl



Truffle Fries



Hainanese Chicken Rice

have to be eaten with your fingers for the truly authentic experience. And finish off with the traditional dessert ice kacang – shaved ice served on top of cooked adzuki beans and flavoured with coloured sugar syrup – as it will help cool down the spiciness of the crab.

Hawker centres also offer traditional Malay dishes such as spicy whole okra, asam pedas (fish cooked with tamarind), beef rendang (a spicy meat



Portobello Mushroom Soup



Chilli Crab



Black Pepper Crab



Pisang Goreng

dish) and delicate desserts such as sago and mango pudding and pisang goreng (bananas dipped in sweet flour batter and deep fried). My favourite, however, is laksa, a spicy noodle soup with seafood, meat and vegetables. A hot bowl of laksa is the ideal dish for a rainy afternoon. It rains almost every day in Singapore and laksa is available at every corner.

The three ethnic communities in Singapore are Chinese, Malay and Indian. And no adventure in Singapore

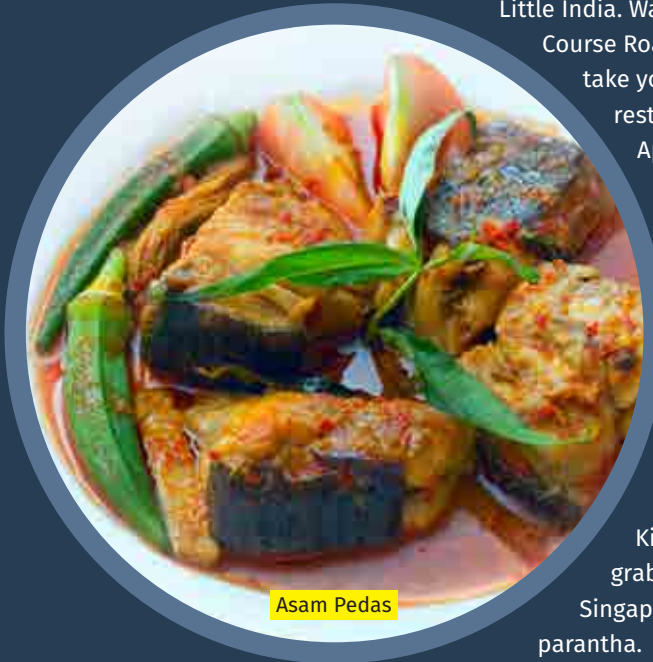
cuisine is complete without Indian food. Available across the island, but the largest number and widest variety is available in Little India. Walk down Race Course Road and you can take your pick of local Indian restaurants – Banana Leaf Apollo, Muthu’s Curry, Anjapaar, Mustard and Spice Junction. My favourite is Mustard, which serves Bengali and Punjabi cuisine. For fine dining, head to Rang Mahal at the Pan Pacific Hotel or Shahi Maharani at Raffles City. For simple South Indian food, there is Komala’s at the corner of Kitchener Road, where you can grab a dosa or roti prata, the Singaporean version of the lachcha parantha. 🍴



Dosa



Laksa



Asam Pedas



Paratha

BHITARKANIKA WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

It may come as a surprise to many that almost one third of the state of Orissa is covered by dense forest. Luckily for all of us wildlife watchers and enthusiasts, the forest department has demarcated 18 sanctuaries and two national parks in this state. The Bhitarkanika Sanctuary spreads over an area of 675 km and contains the second largest mangrove system in the world. This is where I could spot the endangered saltwater crocodiles, many rare birds and of course, the glittering expanse of the mangrove trees, which blend into the ebbing and rising tidal

waters of the hundreds of creeks and waterways. When the tide comes in, the trees appear to float on the water and when the tide ebbs, the roots stick out of the water and the mudflats are visible with the occasional monster crocodile snoozing in the mild sun! What a sight! My sister and I had hired a boat at Rajnagar to take us out to Bhitarkanika and Dangmal, the reserve. The motorboat had a little covered lookout. I sat on the top with one of the guides as I was trying out my new Canon 500D with its brand new telephoto lens. The ride through the creeks was smooth but

whenever the guide thought he spotted some wild animals, especially the crocs, he would knock on the side with his stick and the driver would cut the motor and we would silently glide into the area. It was obvious that the sound of the motor would disturb the animals. The guide also told us a fascinating account of how two huge crocs - one black and one white lived in these parts and how they had the occasional fights to establish their territories. Their fights, I was told, were almost unto death. The catch word here is 'almost' - there is a lot of blood and an occasional bloody



limb, till either one of them gave up and swam away. The black crocodile is rarely seen while the white one is often spotted resting on the mud banks.

Suddenly the guide shushed us and pointed at a distance - "you are very lucky, you can see the top fins of the black crocodile!" The fins did appear black and I guess that was the closest one could get to this ferocious beast. I could actually identify many spotted deer, the occasional barasingha, the water monitor lizard and many others. Young Babu, a tribal boy who has spent his entire life in these parts, was indeed

a good spotter and knew what was what. He had many tales of animals and people and kept us quite entertained. After about 2½ hrs, we approached the Dangmal Reserve forest and the Bhitarkanika National Park.

At the core of the sanctuary is the Bhitarkanika National Park, which has a crocodile breeding farm, where baby crocodiles are nurtured until they are old enough to go back to the wild and live on their own. The baby crocs look very cute and quite adorable, but don't get too close to them, the powerful jaws are strong enough to take off a chunk of

your fingers! A strong wire mesh surrounds the breeding pools. The babies come out and sit on the sides of the pool to sun themselves - exactly like their adult counterparts!

There are a number of spotted deer and adult crocs also in the Dangmal Reserve. The deer are very shy but the crocs make no bones about the fact that they are the kings here. A number of king cobras are also here with their own little enclosures.

If you are okay with deer nuzzling your hand or a king cobra sunning him on the exposed roots of a palm tree, do get in touch with the Forest department at

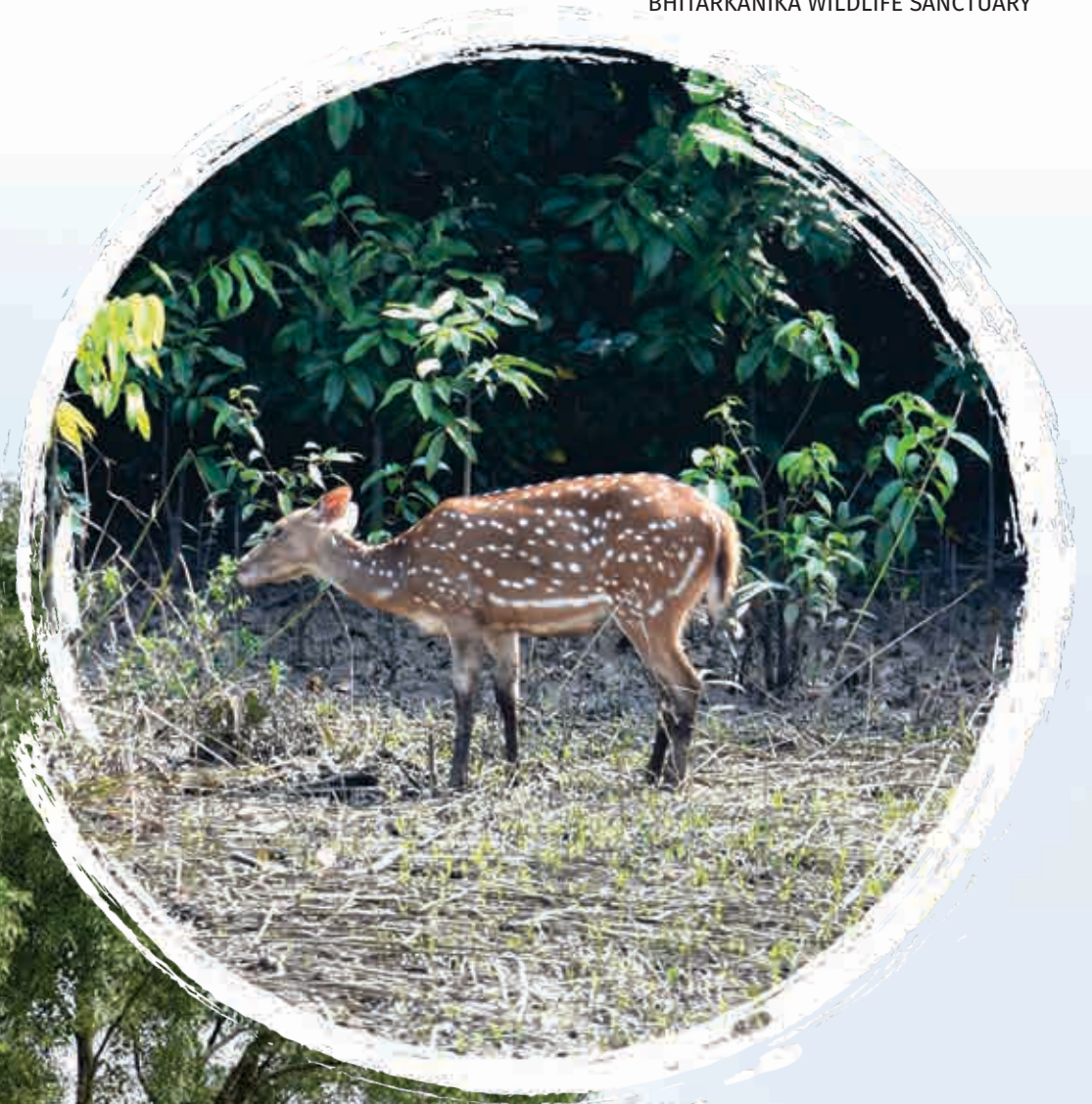
Rajnagar. They are the ones with the permission slips, which will allow you to stay inside the Dangmal Cottages. The cottages are really very charming, built in the traditional Tribal style, round huts with conical pointed roofs. Inside they have all the amenities one could ask for. The cottages are reasonably priced and fairly easily available. When you do get an opportunity to stay here, please do not litter as the rangers are very strict

about litter.

The area has no Internet and hardly any mobile service. So it is a great way to disconnect from the world and enjoy a peaceful respite, far from the "Madding Crowd".

The nearest airport is Bhubaneswar. Entry permits are required to visit the parks and sanctuaries and one need to apply in advance.





How to Reach



Permission to visit Bhitarkanika sanctuary can be obtained from



Divisional Forest Officer
Rajnagar



Assistant Conservator of Forests
Chandbali

Bhitarkanika can be approached only through water ways. Most convenient entry points being



Chandbali

50km from Bhadrak and 190 km from Bhubaneswar



Rajnagar

30km from Kendrapara and 130 km from Bhubaneswar



Gupti

25km from Rajnagar

Motor boats are also available on hire to reach Dangmal from various points. These are



Rajnagar to Dangmal - 3 hrs



Chandbali to Dangmal - 2.5 hrs



THE OTHER WILDLIFE ATTRACTIONS



The other major sanctuary in Orissa is the Satkosia Sanctuary. Although it was established in 1976, a further addition was done in 2007 when it was declared the Satkosia Tiger Reserve.

The Baisipalli sanctuary, where the tigers were protected, and the famous gorge of the Mahanadi River were included in the reserve forest area thus making it a humongous 964 sq.km with a core area of 524 sq.km. Incidentally, it is also a reserve area for the elephants.

Satkosia has some of the most stunning scenic beauty and most of it is still unexplored. Hence the biodiversity and the natural flora and fauna of the place are really quite mind boggling.

Of course, if you can make it to the Mahanadi gorge (if you are adventurous enough, you could maybe sail down it!), it is probably the only one of its kind in this side of the world! My head spun just looking at the heavy mist rising from the sheer drop - I really don't have a head for heights!



The third of the better known sanctuaries is the **Simlipal National Park**, which has a total reserve area of 2750 sq.km. and is situated in the Mayurbhanj district in Orissa. It gets its name from the Simul (the silk cotton) tree, which grows abundantly in this forest. Besides the place claims to have at least a 1000 species of flowering plants and 94 different types of orchids! Simlipal is also a home to the endangered Indian tiger and in the last count there were supposed to be 95 of them within the precincts of the National Park. You would have to be really lucky to spot a tiger here, unless you get yourself a guide who knows where to look for them! We had to come away without spotting one!

The Barehipani and Joranda waterfalls roll down from a height of 400 meters and 150 meters respectively, making a picturesque sight indeed especially for those of us landlubbers who come from inland areas!





Closer to Bhubhaneswar is the **Nandankanan zoo and National Park** spread across an area of 4.4 sq. km and situated along the banks of the Kanjia Lake. One can spot the famous white tiger, Nandankanan's most well known resident. At the last count, their numbers had grown to 24. Up close, the tiger looks more pink than a pure white! Spread over a vast area in the Chandaka forest this national park has a very attractive botanical garden with a butterfly park. Within the periphery also lies the aquarium, where a large number of fresh water fish are nurtured. The research centre has seen great success in the breeding of many an endangered species like the gharial, the Asiatic lion and others. The numbers have grown and this was the reason why a part of the zoo has been designated a sanctuary. After the monsters at Bhitarkanika, the gharial appears to be a baby with an extra long snout - but I am told that it houses some of the sharpest teeth -enough to take off an arm!



Nandankanan is a bird watcher's paradise with about 59 species of birds found here! Peafowl and White necked stork are the two birds that are likely to enchant you. Specially designed protected buses allow visitors a glimpse of the rare white tigers. The White Tiger Safari was established in 1991, and it has been very popular. A lion safari has also been recently launched. Entry permits are required to visit the parks and sanctuaries and one need to apply in advance. 📌



GET ADVENTUROUS IN GUJARAT



Gujarat offers a wide range of adventurous activities from horse riding and camel safaris to scuba diving. We look at a few destinations, where you can enjoy adventure activities and sports.

MOUNTAIN SPORTS IN THE DANG HILLS

The hilly area of Dang district and its neighbouring areas are called Dungar Vistar ("hilly expanse"), which ranges from 100 to more than 1000 metres with Don as the highest peak. If you are looking for adventure, the hill station of

Saputara offers the ideal base for trekking, rock climbing, aerial activities, aero-sports and gentle adventures. The Saputara adventure park offers an opportunity to travel using a zipline, a pulley suspended on a cable. Attached to this cable, you are propelled by gravity to travel over the wooded and mountainous landscape. Another adventurous way to enjoy views of the

mountains is by paragliding, the adventure sport of flying lightweight, free-flying and foot-launched glider aircraft. You are strapped into a harness right in front of a paragliding pilot during the paragliding flights. Once the paragliding pilot or instructor launches the glider, you get the adrenaline rush of flying over the forested canopies and hilly landscape of the Dang. The adventure park also offers Zorbing, the recreation or sport of rolling downhill inside. You are harnessed inside an orb, typically made of transparent plastic, which rolls down a gentle

slope. Saputara also offers many recreational activities like boating on the lake, riding and ropeway journeys. The Dang is also a trekker's paradise. You can trek from Saputara to Ahwa through some fine forests and tribal villages. Beyond Ahwa, the Mahal Bardipada Forests of Purna Sanctuary offer delightful jungle trails with tall trees, bamboos and diverse vegetation. You can visit spectacular waterfalls like Gira in this area. Together with the adventure of jungle trekking and hill walking, you can also experience the culture of various tribal groups like the Dangi Bhil, Gamit, Kunbi, Kukma and Warli. Tribal museums offer information about the groups that can be useful for an insight into their life before beginning the trek. For the more adventurous, there are treks to hill forts and also rocks for climbing.



Where to stay:

For local stay experience, explore the Homestay options:

1. **Adil Salimbhai Noorani**
Survey No.84, Sharmin Rose Bungalow, Plot No.21/B, Nr. Rose Garden, Po. Saputara, Ta. Ahwa
2. **Chandrakant Udaychandbhai Mehta**
Plot No-26-A, Tarang Bungalow, Opp. Rose Garden, Po. Saputara, Ta. Ahwa
3. **Bhikhabhai Kalubhai Khunt (Patel)**
Survey No.578 to 580, Plot No.7/A, Gopal Vihar, Po.Saputara, Ta. Ahwa



RIVER ADVENTURES IN THE NARMADA DISTRICT

The Narmada offers many options for the adventurous. You can trek the ravines and take boat trips on the river. The Narmada Parikrama is a long pilgrimage on both sides of the sacred river that goes through Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. Orsang has an adventure park and camp that offers wide-ranging activities. The Zipline here is among the longest. There is a high rope Adventure Zone, 50 feet high and facilities for go cart, commando net climbing, suspension bridges and kayaking.

Head for Kevadia to enjoy views of the Statue of Unity and the Sardar Sarovar Dam. During the monsoon, rafting can be enjoyed here.

You can go cycling on the waterfront by hiring solo adult cycles for Rs. 250 for 2 hours, tandem two-person cycles for Rs. 400 for 2 hours, and electric cycles for Rs. 400 for 2 hours. There are also adventure and recreational facilities to enjoy with the family near the Statue of Unity.

Continue from here to the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary, good for birdwatching, trekking and walks to the waterfalls.

Where to stay:

For local stay experience, explore the Homestay options:

- 1. Prafulbhai Bhatt**
"Bhatt Sheri" Near Eye Hospital,
Opp. Old Post office,
Darbar Road, Po. Rajpipla
- 2. Viral Bhatt**
"Aastha" B/H Saibaba
Mandir, Opp. Mudra Press,
Navapara, Rajpipla





Zarwani Waterfall



River Rafting



Zip Line



Cycling on the Waterfront

TREKKING IN PANCHMAHAL

The Panchmahal district is an excellent area for trekkers. Start from Pavagadh at the border of Vadodara and Panchmahal district. There are good boulders here for rock climbing. Take the cable car or trek to the summit of Pavagadh for panoramic views.

After exploring the World Heritage Site of Champaner, travel to Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary, where there are good forests and hills for trekking. Continue from here to Ratanmahal and other forests.



Where to stay:

For local stay experience, explore the Homestay options:

1. Jahanara Abdulsattar Shaikh

166, Charan Faliyu, Champaner Pavagadh, Ta. Halol

2. Mehul Kumar Patel

Survey No.7/7, Po. Galampura, Ta. Halol

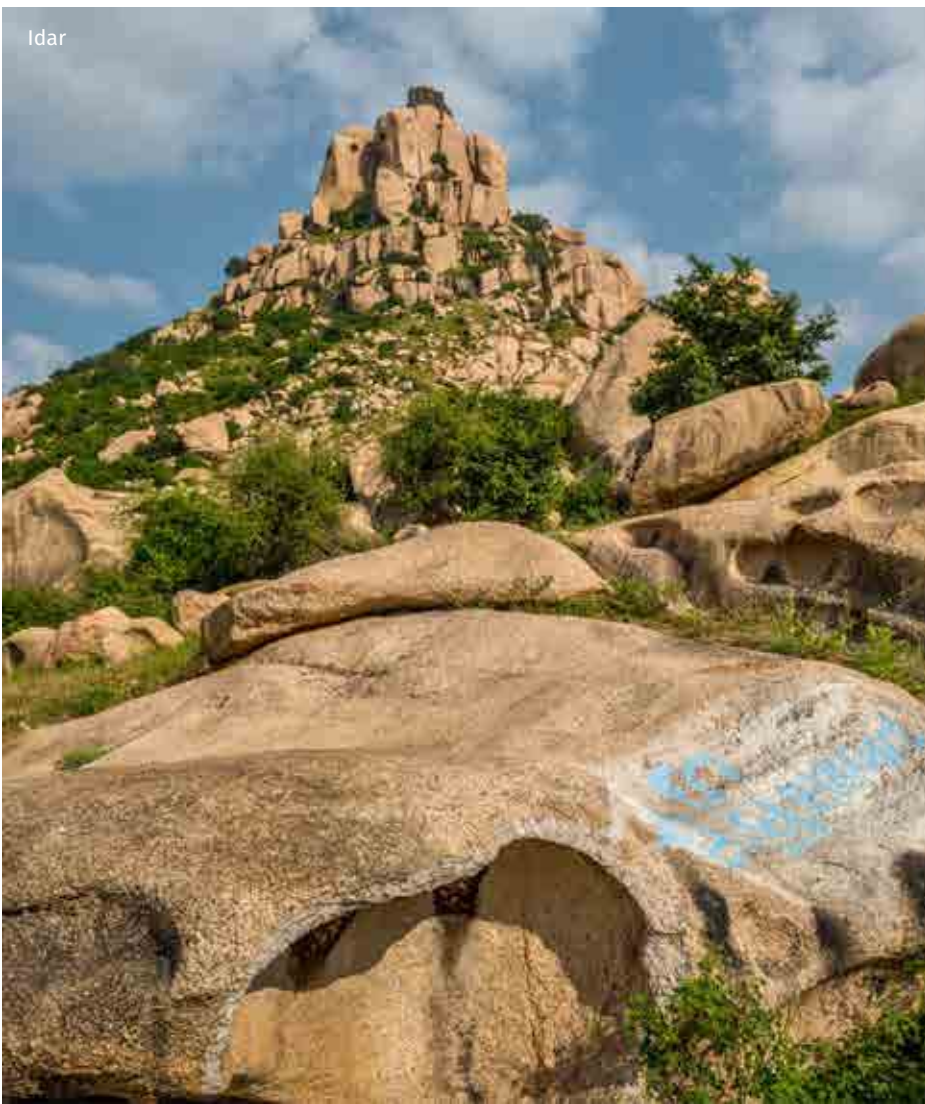


ADVENTURE IN THE ARAVALLI

The Aravalli Range runs approximately 692km starting from Delhi to Gujarat. In North Gujarat, the hills offer many good stretches for trekking and horse-back riding like the Polo forests, the Danta hills, the rocky terrain around Ambaji, Jessore Hill Sloth Bear Sanctuary and Balaram. Bhavani Villa at Danta has a farm with riding horses and good walking trails.



Taranga Hills



Idar



Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary



Source: Vickey Chauthan/Shutterstock

Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary



Jessore Sloth Bear Sanctuary

Where to stay:
Dowlat Villas Palace-The Heritage
Mahavirnagar, Himmatnagar



DESERT SAFARIS IN KUTCH

Kutch is one of India's largest districts with an interesting topography that includes the vast salt desert wilderness called the Great Rann of Kutch, the Kala Dungar Hills, the Banni Grasslands and a coastline with beautiful beaches. You can take a camel ride on the open desert around the Rann Utsav site. The pastoral villages of the area also have very good indigenous horses.

The homestays of Kutch offer jeep safaris in the Banni region. During these safaris you can see the huge water body of Chhari teeming in winter with birdlife, and the guide will help you spot a variety of birds, mammals and reptiles typical of the drylands.

Where to stay:

Gulabi Ismailbhai Pathan

Desert King, At Vadali-Hodka,
Po. Dumado Ta. Bhuj

Vikramsinh Mohansinh Sodha

Village Godhiyar, Po. Bhimsar
Than, Ta. Nakhatrana

Kanaji Devrajbhai Marvada

Rann Bhoomi, Po. Hodka,
(Bunny) Ta. Bhuj

Jehan Pestonji Bhujwala

The Bhuj House,
Opp. Camp Police Chowki,
Camp Area, Po. Bhuj

Narendra Veljibhai Dabhi

Plot No. C-161, "Akshar Brahma",
PramukhSwami Nagar, Opp. Sheri
No.-6, Mundra Relocation Site,
Bhuj

Bharatbhai Ajitbhai Kapadi

Epicenter Homestay,
Po. Lodai, Ta. Bhuj

Gayatri Ramkumar Jat

Jat House, 11 Sanskar Nagar,
Bhuj

Sau Ismailbhai Pathan

House No.68, Po. Vadali-Hodka,
Ta. Bhuj

Ramabhai Alabhai Marvada

House No.217,
Po. Gorewali, Ta. Bhuj

Suresh Dadubhai Yadav

Morden House,
Opp. Old KutchMitra press,
Camp Area, Bhuj

Dipakbhai Prabhulal Soni

301-2, Kalyan Complex,
Jain Dharmshala Road,
Dhawal Nagar-2, Po. Mandvi

Vimalaben Vrujalal Furiya

67/A, Vruj Villa, Bhanushali Nagar,
Nr. Karmabhumi Apt.,
Mundra Road, Po. Bhuj



DIVING IN DWARKA

Devbhumi Dwarka district has a coastline that is excellent for water-based activities. One of the best beaches is Shivrajpur, where Green Soldiers Scuba Network and other outfits run scuba diving lessons. The day before the open sea dive, the participants receive instructions in breathing, safety and hand signals. The instructors take you in a boat or dingy to the reef. Once the participants dive into the open sea, they are directly supervised by their scuba instructor who remains close enough or in physical contact to support the participant should the diver experience a problem. This is an excellent introduction to scuba diving and an opportunity to explore the beauty of a tropical coral reef in just a few hours.

You can also discover the wonders of marine life when walking in the inter-tidal zone of the Marine National Park & Wildlife Sanctuary, shared by Jamnagar and Devbhumi Dwarka districts. From Okha, charter a boat for the open sea trip during which you can spot humped-back dolphins and other marine species. Stop at Bet Dwarka, where you can visit the temples and other sights. Dunny Point is good for water-based activities.

Travel from Dwarka to Ahmedpur Mandvi beach bordering Diu for water-based activities. 📍

Where to stay:

Chhaganlal Veljibhai Chudasama
Aashirvad Bhavan, Opp. Shri Raam
Temple Shri Raam Bazar,
Purv Darwaja Bahar, Dwarka

Nitin Gordhandas Dhanak
Survey No.713 to 720, Gurukrupa Kharva
Sheri, Javahar Road, Opp. Sridarshan
Hotel, Dwarka

Kiranben Rameshbhai Mandora
Roodra Bhavan, Jiva Sutharni Gali,
Opp. Modi Building, Dwarka

Jayotiben Vinodbhai Chauhan
Shankrachary Nagar Upavan,
Siddhavatika Society,
Sahjanand Bunglow, Dwarka

Gujarat Homestays

Home Away from Home



- First-hand experience of Gujarat's culture and traditions
- A wide range of homestays at all tourist destinations across Gujarat
- Curated hygiene & hospitality practices
- Timely scrutiny and inspection to ensure comfort, hygiene and safety

 1800 200 5080

 info@gujarattourism.com

 www.gujarattourism.com

TORAN HOTELS



- AHMEDABAD
- MT. ABU
- JUNAGADH
- PORBANDAR
- SAPUTARA
- VADNAGAR
- VANZ (SURAT)
- MATWAD (NAVSARI)
- NARAYAN SAROVAR
- DHORDO (KUTCH)
- PAVAGADH
- PALITANA

KEY ATTRACTIONS

- Comfortable Stay Options
- Warm Hospitality
- Authentic Gujarati Food
- Reasonable Rates

TORAN TOURIST BUNGALOW - DWARKA



YOU'RE SAFE WITH US!

- Cleaning & Sanitization
- Temperature & Wellbeing Check
- Hand Hygiene & Social Distancing
- Masks & Gloves
- Food Safety Protocols

Hospitality with enhanced cleanliness
and wellbeing measures



Contact for Booking:

Phone : +91 02892-234013

Email : toranhoteldwarka@gujarattourism.com

 booking.gujarattourism.com  1800 200 5080

Rann is more fun now!

12th Nov. 2020 to 28th Feb. 2021

Nature, Hospitality and Hygiene at their best than ever

**BOOK THE PACKAGE
TODAY!!!**

Call

74 40 40 40 40

97 12 93 62 33

www.RannUtsav2020.com

Key Attractions

- Accommodation in Premium AC Tents / Rajwadi AC Bhunga
- Visit to wonderful "White Rann"
- Thrilling adventure park with outdoor fun - Para Motoring, ATV Rides, etc.
- Engaging indoor activities - Pool, Board Games, Reading Corner, etc.
- Shopping delight at Craft Village with Kutch's colorful handloom & handicraft
- Delectable Gujarati and Kutchi Cuisines
- Soul-stirring folk music of Kutch



rann utsav
White Rann Resort
www.whiterannresort.com | Dhordo, Kutch
Recognized as "The Deluxe Category Tents" by Ministry of Tourism

An Initiative of



Operated by

