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A high-end monthly magazine

March 2018

Mandu A Secret Treasure Trove of India

Uncovering the Secrets of Old Delhi's Delications

Arts and Crafts of KANGRA

BARDS IN The Valley Where The Wines Flow





March 2018

It's Hot!

With summer around the corner, what are your plans to escape the beaming rays? Well, summer trip, isn't it? Of course, the month of March continues to be the busiest month for most of us with the financial year-end calculations and other paper-work formalities. But what are we for? We are all here with the perfect destinations for you for the summer.

Do you think Jaipur is a not-so-summer destination? If your preference is to maintain safe distance from Sun, you're right. However, for those who believe in travelling pocket friendly, we suggest this is the time to explore the city. Every off season brings with it amazing perks for the budget conscious travellers. The rates at most hotels drop like a sack of potatoes. Moreover, we bring the trailer of the inimitable art of Jaipur with the photo-story on the doors and windows of the Pink City. So roam around the corners of the city during the morning and evening time, and enjoy the royal treatment during the afternoon (quite a plan, isn't it?).

But if the sun heat is your concern, we suggest you to embark upon a tour to South Australian valley, which is one of the world's great wine regions, renowned for its food and wine, cultural experiences and easy-going lifestyle. Yes, we are talking about Barossa. Still not sure? Just go through the wine and culinary experiments shared by us and find out what you want.

Read on!



March 2018

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In 1876, the Prince of Wales and Queen Victoria visited India on a tour. Since pink denotes the color of hospitality, Maharaja Ram Singh of Jaipur painted the whole city pink in color to welcome the guests. The city has been following this tradition since then and locals paint the exteriors of their residence in pink color only. oday, Jaipur, the capital of Rajasthan, invites travellers from every corner of the world to experience its architectural wonders. Exploring the beautiful pink city is like travelling through pages of a history book. Amer Fort, Hawa Mahal, City Palace and Albert Hall are just a few of the monuments where time seems to fly and you keep wishing for a bit more time.

Jaipur's architectural wonders were designed by people who had an eye for perfection. It is quite evident in their style of construction that not a single detail is missed or seems out of the place. The pillars stand in an identical symmetry and the jharokhas make the perfect shadow every morning.

There is something that stands out while walking through Hawa Mahal or basking in the glory of Amer Fort. The doors and windows in every corner of Pink City are gorgeous. The finesse is not limited to the structures of tourist interest but is also visible in the ordinary houses.

An early morning walk is the best way to experience the beauty of Pink City. The more you wander into its tiny lanes, the more you'll wish to explore and get the best out of it.







Fort is your first-hand introduction on how particular the kings of Rajputana were about the style of architecture. The panels and arches complete the beautification of windows. They are always designed as different set of pieces that come together to form a single entity.



PINK CITY'S WINDOWS OF PERFECTION





It is not only the famous monuments but also the old havelis that make sure that the doors and windows stand out and impress the visitor in a matter of moments.

These stylish archways create a striking contrast of colors and are a photographer's delight.

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66





While you are exploring Pink City, you should make sure that you take out a few hours to explore Albert Hall. The archways are filled with historical paintings, figurines and writings.







Hawa Mahal, in particular, has numerous windows, doors and ventilations with magnificent carvings and colourful glass panels.

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It is not surprising to stumble across something cool and stylish that no one saw or gave attention to before. It is from the visitor's perspective and ability to spot the beauty of Pink City out of random.

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If randomness is what you crave and sticking by the itinerary is not in your nature, then Jaipur is the place to be. Walk alone or join a heritage walk group, you will be always in for a treat.

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Incredible India

DISCOVER BEACHES BUDDHISM AND MORE AT VIZAG

Well-known as a beach holiday spot, Visakhapatnam (Vizag) has so much to offer to all kinds of tourists including those interested in historic sites, hill destinations, tribal villages and beautiful beaches. f you are an early riser, witness the sunrise on the Bay of Bengal from Beach Road with its parks, public art and beaches. There are many good hotels and eateries here for breakfast.

From Beach Road, drive on the Visakhapatnam - Bheemunipatnam Road, which runs almost continually along beaches for more than 25km offering breathtaking views of dunes and the Bay of Bengal at places. Along this highway, a Buddha statue and a modern gate mark the entrance to Buddhist archaeological site of Thotlakonda, where a Hinayana Buddhist monastery flourished about 2000 years ago. The Thotlakonda hilltop site has the remains of stupas, chaityagrihas, pillared halls, viharas, storeroom, refectory, a drainage system and the tank that once provided water to the site. Though the monuments are in ruins, the complex is impressive and a good place to enjoy sea views from the hilltop.

The highway brings you to Bheemunipatnam, which was a port and settlement of the Dutch East India Company along the Coromandel Coast between 1610 until the company's liquidation in 1798. After the Anglo-Dutch Wars, this port was controlled by the British East India Company. Visit the Dutch cemetery with its obelisk shaped tombs, and see other European colonial remains like the ruined fort, colonnaded houses and British clock tower. A lighthouse at Bhimili Port that used to guide passenger vessels between Madras (Chennai) and Calcutta (Kolkata) in the 1800s can be seen from the beach.

One of the best places on the road, Rushikonda (also called Rishikonda) is among the finest beaches on India's East Coast for a variety of beachside and water-based activities. Check for surfing, swimming and paddling conditions. There are some good places here for seafood and Andhra specialties.

In the afternoon, visit the Vishaka Museum managed by the Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation near the Ramkrishna Beach. The sprawling campus of the museum has outdoor exhibits like engines, anchor, torpedoes, ground mines, projectiles and missiles dedicated to the naval and other armed forces. The Maritime Museum building has a variety of archaeological finds including ancient seals, visuals and information about India's maritime and naval history from the Harappan dockyard of Lothal to the Maratha fleet, the British ship that was taken by Hyder Ali - the Muslim ruler of Mysore princely state and India's first indigenously built ship called Jal Usha, which was launched in 1948 by Jawaharlal Nehru at the Scindia Shipyard promoted by Walchand Hirachand, Narottam Morarjee and Tulsidas Kilachand.





DISCOVER BEACHES, BUDDHISM AND MORE AT VIZAG



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- 1 Buddhist monastery at Thotlakonda
- 2 Beach near Dolphin's Nose hill
- 3 INS Kursura Submarine Museum
- 4 Rishikonda Beach





- 5 Visakhapatnam Museum
- 6 A vintage engine at Visakhapatnam Museum
- 7 Araku Valley
- 8 Formations in Borra Cave
- 9 Borra Caves
- 10 Araku museum



The Heritage Museum is equally interesting with exhibitions of musical instruments, fibre sculptures showing life of tribals and other communities in the Eastern Ghats and coastal areas of Andhra, weapons and artifacts from various princely states and zamindari families of Eastern India, books, etc.

A little ahead of the museum, the popular Ram Krishna Beach named for the Ramkrishna Mission Ashram here has the Submarine Museum. This museum offers an opportunity to explore the interiors of INS Kursura, a naval submarine. The guides show you torpedo tubes, equipment, life saving systems, action stations. They talk about the life onboard a submarine, where officers and sailors shared limited



bunk space, two cooks prepared meals for the crew in a tiny kitchen.

The beach is happening in the evening when people come to eat, drink, stroll and enjoy the sea breeze. There is a good view of the rocky outcrop called Dolphin's Nose and the Bay of Bengal sunset from here.

From Ramkrishna Beach, drive to the town that has many hotels, restaurants and lively places for a drink. With its software companies and other offices, Siripuram in Visakhapatnam has many of the cities' well-known pubs, bars, cafes, coffee places and restaurants frequented by the city's young crowd.

If you are done with the beaches of Vizag, take a day's trip to the Eastern Ghats. The highway to Araku is a journey of about 114km through a scenic landscape with forests, fields and plantations. One of the attractive stops on the way is Tyda. Here Andhra Pradesh **Tourism Development** Corporation has set up Haritha Jungle Bells with wooden cottages surrounded by fine forests that are good for bird spotting. Travel on from Tyda to the Borra Caves, one of the top attractions in Northeastern Andhra Pradesh. Discovered in 1807 by William King of the Geological Survey of India, the caves have extensive natural subterranean chambers with superb limestone formations. Water trickles into the cave from streams, creating stalactites



and stalagmites. The fascinating formations are well-lit and at places, natural sunlight filters into the cave enhancing the visibility. Some of the stalagmites shaped like lingams are worshipped by the locals. The cave is among the largest and deepest in India and worth exploring.

After visiting the caves, continue on the journey to the coffee plantations of Ananthagiri. Coffee was first introduced in Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh in 1898 by British in Pamuleru Valley in East Godavari district. Subsequently, it spread over to Araku Valley. After independence, the Andhra Pradesh Forest Department developed coffee plantations in the valley. In 1956, Coffee Board appointed Andhra Pradesh Girijan Cooperative Corporation Limited (GCC) for promoting coffee plantations in the valley through local tribal farmers. In 1985, the





plantations were handed to A.P. Forest Development Corporation and Girijan Co.op. Plantation Development Corporation (GCPDC) exclusively to develop coffee plantations in tribal areas. All the plantations developed were handed over to the tribal farmers at two acres per family.

A short distance after the coffee plantations is located Araku, which has beautiful surroundings and valley views. One of the best places for lunch is Haritha Mayuri Resort run by Andhra Pradesh Tourism. The resort offers delicious local food. Near Haritha Mayuri Resort, the Museum of Habitat, though not very large, offers an insight into indigenous life – visuals, artifacts and folk arts of tribal groups in the eastern Ghats like Valmiki, Bagata, Khond, Kotia, Bonda, Maria and Muria. Ask about local markets called shante or haat in this Tribal woman in Araku
 Tribal crafts at Araku
 13-14 Coffee garden at vizag,
 Araku valley

region for a further look at tribal life. Tribal handicrafts and Ananthagiri coffee can be bought around the museum. Araku also has botanically interesting gardens. Visit Galikondalu for superb views from one of the highest points in Andhra and visit other scenic places overlooking peaks or waterfalls before driving back to Visakhapatnam.



The Jahaz Mahal is a two-storey structure between the Munj Talao and Kapur Talao, giving an impression of a floating ship, hence the name.

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A Secret Treasure ituated in Dhar district of **Trove of India**

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ALLE ALTER PREMARKS





- 1 Mandu is not just about monuments, it is also about colourful houses and equally colourful people.
- 2 The courtyard of the Jami Masjid. The mosque was built during the reign of Hoshang Shah and completed during the reign of Mahmud Khilji in 1454.
- 3-4 Around Mandu, you can witness the true Indian rural life.











- 5 The interiors at Rupmati Palace, Mandu. Rani Roopmati was a Hindu singer. After her marriage with Sultan Baz Bahadur, she became Queen of Malwa. The Sultan and Roopmati fell in love with each other and were married according to Muslim and Hindu rites.
- 6 Malik Mugith Tomb was built in 1432. This is one of the most important buildings near the Kapur Talab.
- 7 Reva Kund in front of the Baz Bahadur Palace
- 8 A viewpoint near Nilkanth Mahal



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(minining)

9 The corridor at the tomb of Hoshang Shah
10 One of the many structures at Mandu
11 The tomb of Hoshang Shah. The construction of this building was initiated by Hoshang Shah himself and completed by Mahmud Khilji during AD 1440. ■



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Far Far away



BAROSSA The Valley Where The Wines Flow

ine and food is an interesting pairing and one of the finest places to get both is South Australia. Within easy driving distance from Adelaide Airport are vineyards and farms with some superb produce. You can also take a wine tasting masterclass at Jacob's Creek in the Barossa Wine School and Artisans of Barossa.

s we awoke in the morning, we could see the huge number of couples and individuals who were entering the Central Market next door. This market started in about 1870 and got its two-storey redbrick facade with iron-and-glass arcaded shops over the decades. We joined the gastronomic market tour conducted by Mark Gleeson, who is a well-known name in the local food, beverage and restaurant service industry. Gleeson explained us, "Australian food is mainly based on various cuisines of the world with



that the people of Adelaide take their food very seriously – they like to know where the ingredient is from, how it is to be used, what is produced locally in South Australia, etc.

Like Lucia, another entrepreneur to set up shop in this foodie city was Adelaide-born Alfred Haigh, who after about a decade of running a sweets and ice-cream shop at Mt Gambier, returned home and founded a chocolate making unit. At the Visitor's Centre, the representative who showed us around explains, "agents source the best cocoa beans for us - from plantations in Ghana, Ecuador and Papua New Guinea as well as other locations, which are

the specialty being the high-quality fresh produce of the land. This market represents a link between the producers and the consumers. South Australia has a wide range of offerings. Kangaroo Island, the Adelaide Hills and Barossa Valley, all are known for their produce whether it is honey, stone fruits and berries, wines, sauces or oils. It is a region of fine livestock and fresh catches of river fish and seafood".

As we love cheeses, it was delightful to taste the variety at Say Cheese and Smelly Cheese, two shops next to each other. A Baillie Brie from Barossa Valley, a Pecorino from the Limestone Coast, cheddar from Alexandrina and La Petite Princesse goat cheese, Roquefort style Brebis Blue, buffalo milk bocconcini and sheep's milk haloumi from Kangaroo Island as well as imported cheeses from various parts of the world. After trying a few slivers of each, we walked down to the nearby shop called Taldy-Kurgan, a Russian café run by immigrants from Kazakhstan. While they had a list covering breakfast items to meals, we tried their meaty dumplings in a dough mixture called Piroshki - the popular street food item in that part of the world. At Sevenhill Fine Foods, there is a huge variety of Polish food - sausages,



ginger biscuits, sauerkraut, cheesecakes, poppy seed pastries, smoked speck and so forth, while there are some goodlooking lamb chops at O'Connell's Quality Meats. All this only whetted our appetite for brunch at Lucia's Pizzeria and Spaghetti Bar. Over antipasto, pizza and pasta, Mark mentioned



George whiting, prawns and calamari and Grant Burge Sparkling Pinot Chardonnay from the Adelaide Hills.

The next morning, we set off to explore the Adelaide Hills. There are villages that would not look out place in Germany. We drove to Hahndorf, a Prussian settlement with Lutheran churches, which has a huge



kept a close secret. The bitter cocoa is turned into deliciously sweet chocolate over a process of beans roasting, winnowing, grinding into liquor, pressing and mixing with sugar, cocoa butter and optional milk, rolling into paste and finally finishing and smoothening to required texture and taste". We tasted the sinfully sweet chocolates with a cup of tea before going around the store, which has superbly crafted chocolates in various shapes – the Australian bilby, frog, fish, besides a range of packaging options.

As afternoon approached, we headed for Glenelg. This is a child-friendly beach stretch with a lot of amusement areas. We set out for a cruise organised by Temptations Sailings but did

not get to see dolphins, though the crew informed us that many tourists have got to swim with them. After a beach walk, we headed for the long line of delightful

looking restaurants. Being seafood buffs, we selected Sammy's On The Marina where four of us tucked hungrily into a platter of grilled king prawns, scallops, octopus, grilled garfish & King George whiting, crumbed calamari, spicy calamari, smoked salmon, range of restaurants, cafes and confectionary shops. Here you can get a Scandinavian smorgasbord buffet, German-style sausages, German meals,



fresh king prawns, oysters natural, Greek salad and chips with a side order of pita bread, supplemented by chef's signature dips and Aussie-style crumbed King German breads and bread-rolls, delightful cakes and desserts of Europe's German-speaking countries. The cellar is a good place to get close to their handmade cheeses. We sampled Goat Feta, Goat Camembert, Goat Brie, Aged Ashed Goat Cheese, Adelaide Hills Camembert (fresian milk), Brie and their recently launched Heysen Blue Cheese.



They also have goat's milk curd and chevre. A few shops down, Chocolate@no5 was an equally hedonistic experience set in an 1850s cottage. It has a sitting arrangement facing the street where we sat sipping hot chocolate between bites of Chocolate Tiramisu, Mocha Walnut Gateaux and Belgian Sugar Waffles.

We left after the treats for beautiful vineyard countryside around Hahndorf in the heart of which is The Lane, a superbly located bistro with the tables BAROSSA: THE VALLEY WHERE THE WINES FLOW

set on an elevation for a view of the rolling countryside with neat rows of vines. At the vineyard's Cellar Door, we did a tasting of Cabernet and Shiraz, and then sat down for lunch – selecting from a menu that had a variety from zukini flowers tempura for vegetarians to kangaroo fillets for game meat lovers. I was very happy with my choice of duck breast in orange marmalade and... oooh... the pinot gris, the wine recommendation of Ben Tolstoshev who joined his mother Helen in the vineyard business in the 1990s, was to die for.



We drove up Mount Lofty, the highest point of the Adelaide Hills. On the way down from the summit, we stopped at the Cleland Wildlife Park to see native Australian birds and marsupials among





Burge, Torbreck, Orlando's Jacob's Creek, Kaesler, Peter Lehmann, Wolf Blass, Rockford, Elderton, Glaetzer, Saltram, Henschke, Yalumba and Seppelts, some of whom rank among the world's greatest wine producers. Driving through vineyard country, we came to Pensfold that produces the Pensfold Grange - one of Australia's top wine brands. The program we had come here for is something called Make Your Own Blend, which enables tourists to experience what it is like to be a winemaker. In a laboratory, we stood in front of a table with beakers, bottles and measurement tubes in front of us, a chart paper and



the bushes and Eucalyptus forest. This park has enclosures with a variety of wildlife and there are also free-ranging kangaroos, wallabies and emus.

Getting back to Adelaide, we took a tour of the Victorian buildings, museums and greenbelt in the evening before heading for a stroll by the Torrens River.

The next day, we embarked upon a wine tour of the Barossa Valley with internationallyreputed producers like Pensfold, Hardy, Grant





pencil. We had three trials in making the perfect blend of Grenache, Shiraz and Mourvedre, which is done by expert wine tasters who decide the proportions between the three grape extracts to make the perfect tasting wine on a regular basis as the grape tastes vary according to their ripening. For my first trial, I took an equal quantity of all three to try to judge what was required to give the perfect look, aroma and taste. Feeling that the blend need softening as the Grenache was too strong, I increased the Mourvedre to a larger percentage and came out with a wine that I loved sniffing, swirling and swallowing. I certainly was pleased with the 400ml bottle I took back from Pensfold, which was not too badly off from the Pensfold classics, and was given with my name on the label as the winemakers. After tastings of Pensfold's







premium range at their Cellar Door, we headed out for the 19th century winery of Saltram, where we tried their rich reds in their wine tasting bar before lunch at their Salter's Kitchen. We started with their wood-fired oven baked potato and rosemary bread and an entree of smoked salmon, but for the mains, we decided to go with something that would match their Shiraz – the neck fillet of lamb with rosemary polenta, feta, e anchovy and cep veloute and char-grilled Sotch fillet and ended with a cheese plate which also went down well with their Shiraz.

In search of something to take home from our gourmet tour, we headed for the shop of Maggie Beer amid her pheasant farm (there was even a free-ranging peacock with its full train of feathers that brought back memories of home!), farmlands and duck-filled pond. The farmshop, run by Maggie Beer who is a culinary celebrity seen in a program called The Cook and The Chef, offers a bewildering variety of jams, sauces, jellies, glazes, fruit pastes, olive oil, verjuice, vinegar, pickles, and other products from which we picked what we wanted to take home before heading back to Adelaide.

Incredible India



For a summer break that combines cool mountain weather with art and heritage, Kangra district of Himachal is an excellent destination. Here, a heritage of art and craft has thrived from centuries and the arrival of Tibetan Buddhists has added to the medley.



he town of Kangra has the remains of once a formidable fort damaged by an earthquake in 1905, which has Hindu and Jain temples inside its walls. Outside the fort is a museum that offers an insight into the life of Katoch dynastic rulers of Kangra. In the town, the much-revered Brajeshwari temple stands at the site of an older temple that was looted by invaders and finally devastated by the 1905 earthquake.

Continue on the highway to Palampur, which has a pretty setting among tea plantations, fields and picture-postcard sceneries including distant snow peaks seen on clear days. The town offers walks to waterfalls and picturesque valleys. A couple of kilometers off Palampur Road, Tashigang Gompa is an impressive monastery with painted interiors. Visit the craft centre here that produces Tibetan carpets, thangka Buddhist paintings and woodcarvings.

From Palampur, drive about 20 minutes to the village of Andretta, wellknown as an artist colony established in the 1920s by a theatre artist Norah Richards. Since then, it has been home to painters like Sobha Singh and Sanyal, theatre practitioner and the noted potter, Gurucharan Singh whose son still has his workshop here.

A traditional Kangra-style mud house was built here by Norah. Known as 'Chameli Niwas', the mud house was set
up employing local style and material mud, slate and bamboo. She played a pivotal role in establishing modern Punjabi theatre and staging plays with Punjabi themes. After death of her husband, she made Andretta her home. She built the makeshift proscenium, where Punjabi theatre amateurs and professionals were invited to perform plays.

In 1935, the District Commissioner of Kangra gave Richards 15 acres of land, called the Woodland Estate. She started a school of drama. Despite the long journey hours to Andretta from major cities, it started attracting artists. Painter B. C. Sanyal and professor Jai Dayal Singh, a pupil of Philip Richards from Lahore University settled here and started organizing painting exhibitions to fund the Norah Centre for Arts. Noted painter, Sobha Singh, most known for making Sikh religious painting moved in and stayed here till his death in 1986. Richards nurtured Punjabi theatre through the 1940s and 1960s and came



to be known as the 'grandmother of Punjabi theatre.'

Further on, Gurucharan Singh, a noted potter who started the Delhi Blue Pottery in the 1952, established base here. Active till the end, he died in 1995 at the age of 99. Freda Bedi, mother of actor Kabir Bedi, lived in the village. In 1983, Mansimran "Mini" Singh, son of noted potter Gurcharan Singh and his wife Mary Singh started Andretta Pottery and Craft Society with a production studio and a terracotta museum. They set up a Central Government Rural Marketing Centre to provide assistance to potters and run residency programs.

Richards was made a fellow by the Punjabi University in Patiala, while in turn she willed her house and land around it to the university. Today, the estate of Norah Richards has been renovated and maintained by the





Wood Work at Norbulingka Institute



university. Each year on her birthday, 29 October, a Punjabi theatre festival is hosted by the students. Allow a couple of hours to visit Andretta Pottery and Craft Society, Norah Richard's Centre for the Arts and the Art Gallery with works of Sobha Singh, the artist who revived painting in Kangra and became known for his paintings with Sikh, Christian and Hindu religious images, romantic themes like Heer-Ranjha, Shah Jahan-Mumtaz, Sohni-Mahiwal and national figures. The Andretta Pottery is a charming complex run by Mansimran "Mini" Singh, son of famous potter Gurcharan Singh. It is promoting studio pottery, including earthen slipware.

You can stay at Taragarh Palace, a Welcomheritage hotel that is full of antiques and colonial period furniture. The palace is located near Kangra's tea estates.



From Palampur, head for the Museum of Kangra Art. Kangra district is well-known for historical Pahari miniatures. Stylized architecture and figures with large eyes, straight profiles, elaborate jewellery and fabulous clothing are typical of Pahari miniatures of the hill states. The paintings were evolved in the 18th century during the reign of Raja Chanda Sansar Chand and incorporated the lush landscape of Kangra to provide the backdrop of romantic scenes. Temple carvings and princely memorabilia of the Katoch rulers are other key exhibits of the museum.

Near the museum is Dharamshala, where you can visit the Norbulingka Institute founded to preserve Tibetan art and culture. The craftsmen here specialize in metalwork to make statues and relief panels usually with Buddhist and spiritual themes. Dharamshala's woodworkers make delightful cupboards, figures, picture frames, boxes and musical instruments. As you head up to Mcleodganj or Upper Dharamshala, see the picturesquely situated Church of St John-in-the-wilderness, which has superb stained glass windows and wooded surroundings. Continue to ascend to Mcleodganj to visit the Tsuglagkhang Complex, which has fine Buddhist monasteries and temples. Near the complex is a market where you can get thangka paintings on cloth, an art perfected in monasteries. Thangkas are commissioned and hung to increase good fortune and ward off negative energy. They are also used in meditation halls. The appliqué thangka is like a scroll. McLeodganj has Buddhist temples, monasteries, institutes, museums, façade of Dalai Lama's palace, Tibetan settlement and some good walks.

There are interesting places to stay like Chonor House, Norling Guest House and Glenmoor Cottages, while there are some small but attractive properties





outside the town. Country Cottage offers accommodation in a tea estate.

McLeodganj offers many activities like lessons in Tibetan and regional cooking, yoga and meditation and Buddhism.

Buddhist thangka paintings, appliqué Buddhist wall pieces and Dharamshala's woodwork can be bought at McLeodganj, while the Norbulingka Institute produces expensive but wellfinished metal crafts, dolls and home décor. You can buy Kangra silver jewellery and Kangra's tea at Palampur.

On the highway to Mandi, visit Baijnath, an architecturally impressive temple that is also a pilgrimage site.

While in the area, try Kangra cuisine that includes many dishes using rajmah beans, dals and curds tempered with mustard. You can get it in heritage properties and some hotels. **•** Story by ANIL MULCHANDAN

Incredible India

Uncovering the Secrets of Old Delhi's Delicacies

ndia is a foodies' paradise. With the country's rich food culture, there are many places that are worth exploring. And when it comes to foodies' delight, Old Delhi is where life unfolds and presents a unique history of culinary journey. If the winter season has Daulat ki Chaat, then the summers are for Faluda Kulfi and Lassi. If non-vegetarians can treat themselves on the famous fried chicken of Matia Mahal, then the vegetarians have Giani's Choley Bhature and Paranthewali Gali. Old Delhi has everything that a food enthusiast would desire in their life.

Old Delhi's street food trail is easy and yet complicated. While most of the eateries are located on either side of the road, stretching from Jama Masjid to Fatehpuri, one still needs to keep their eyes open as the establishments can be missed very easily.

Daulat ki Chaat

A winter delicacy, Daulat ki Chaat has gained popularity in Delhi. Known as Makkhan Malai and Mallaivo in Banaras and Lucknow. Daulat ki Chaat's traditional method of preparation has been replaced by modernized techniques, but the taste has remained the same. Daulat ki Chaat is not sold in a particular shop, but by the vendors on the street side who are not that hard to spot.



Mote Lala -

A few steps out of Chandni Chowk Metro Station will take you to Mote Lala's shop. A hot pan of milk boils at the entrance, while the counter lures visitors with various sweets. Most of the people come here for a glass of Mote Lala's *lassi*. Served in earthen pot, this is the perfect way to beat the heat after a hectic shopping day in Chandni Chowk.

Giani di Hatti

Giani is loved for its lassi in summers and *mung daal halva* in winters. Giani di Hatti has numerous branches in Delhi but it is the one next to Fatehpuri Masjid that is the real deal. The *choley bhature* brings the customers again and again because of the aromatic flavours used in the preparation.

Gole Hatti /

An establishment adjacent to Fathepuri Mosque, Gole Hatti is famous for its signature cholev rice served in a kulhad (earthen pot). While the pot adds to the flavour, it is the slice of radish pickle that literally acts as cherry on top. The mouth-watering combination is best enjoyed with a plate of qulab jamun. A small walk further will also introduce you to Old Delhi's famous spice market.



Fried Chicken

When you are done with Fatehpuri and Chandni Chowk, a small walk towards Jama Masjid or a quick metro ride to Chawri Bazaar will take you to Matia Mahal. This small street is known for its lip smacking food since the time of Bahadur Shah Zafar. You'll find small shops selling *fried chicken*, *biryani*, *nihari* and *butter chicken* prepared using recipes that have passed on from generations.

Karele ke Pakode -

If someone told you that a small unnamed outlet in Chandni Chowk sells *karele ke pakode* and its tastes heavenly, you would probably call them nuts. Who in their right mind will eat a *pakoda* made with *karela*. But in Chandni Chowk, everything is possible.

Bhikharam

Bhikharam has created its own legacy between the Delhi's food lovers with its assortment of snacks and sweets sourced from every part



of India. Their experimental specialities like *Manchurian Dhokla* will keep you craving for more.



Kebabs and Butter Chicken

Aslam's Chicken Corner is one of the most popular destinations among the foodies who love visiting here for the *kebabs* and *butter chicken*. For those who prefer a restaurant-like environment can also take a detour to Al Jawahar or Kareem.



Dahi Vada

Small establishments of Matia Mahal are filled with shops selling *Dahi Vada*. These spicy, tangy, tiny pieces have a number of spices infused within that creates a burst of flavours in the taste-buds with every bite.



Diamond Bakery

When you are done with the tummy full of choley bhature and fried chickens, the best way to indulge in some crunchy break is by getting a packet of biscuits from Diamond Bakery. Located on the lane opposite to Jama Masjid, Chitli Kabar is the home to this famous bakery that is operational since the British Era.

Vermicelli or Sevai

Vermicelli or Sevai is prepared fresh and brought to the Matia Mahal and Chitli Kabar's numerous shops on a daily basis. The month of Ramzan acts as the peak season when its demand is at its highest.



Milk Roohafza

Matia Mahal Lane is filled with culinary wonders. Here, you will find the best of Nihari and Biryani. If endless walking from a corner of the lane to another sounds too tiresome, then the famous *milk roohafza* will be there to revive the foodie's spirit in you.



Natraj

as its proof. 🖻

Chat and Chandni Chowk are synonymous to each other. Doesn't matter what your agenda is, if you are going there for wedding shopping or to purchase camera equipment on cheap rates, the visit will always end with a plate of *chat*.

foodies savouring on the plate full of tikki choley stand

AKHOURY Pics by ANSHUL



66 You can experience Old Delhi food walk on your own or with a food tour group based in Delhi. It is always recommended to visit the market in a group so that you can enjoy more without getting your tummy filled in moments.





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An initiative of

INNOVATIVE COUNCIL O



presents

PHOTO OF THE WEEK (03-09 March, 2018)

LensMagic, the Facebook group dedicated to providing networking platform to the photographers, organizes PHOTO OF THE WEEK CONTEST on weekly basis. For more information, visit

f /groups/LensMagicPhotographyClub/



The photograph was shot at Bowsher to Al-Amerat Road in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman. The road is also known as 'Mountain Road' or 'Snake Road' due to the many 360 degree curved roads. It is a shorter link between two villages (aka Wilayats in Arabic), commissioned just few years ago.

The location is perfect for the landscape photographers to take spectacular sunset pictures from above the city, with more than 50% view of the capital city of Muscat.



About the photographer

Michael D'souza Michael D'souza, an Indian who relocated to Oman, took up photography in the year 2012. Photography is his passion. He actively participates in various contests and initiatives related to photography.

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The 2-day Conference on **Photo Tourism in India** brought together influencers from across the country

Recognizing the importance of good travel pictures and travel blogs in promoting tourism, the first-ever Conference on Photo Tourism in India was organized on 21-22 February, 2018 in association with Gujarat Tourism at White Rann Resort, Dhordo, Kutch.

The 2-day Event was organized by Innovative Council of Indian Tourism (ICIT), a non-profit organization working aggressively towards tourism training & promotion in India. Praveg Communications Limited was the Event Partner for the Conference.

The Event was aimed at developing, encouraging, supporting and promoting the photographer and blogger communities in India who strive to promote Indian Tourism through their esoteric skills knowledge and dedication.



OTO TOURISM IN IND





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Conference on Photo Tourism in India Conference on Photo Tourism in India was organized amid the impressive participation of renowned travel photographers and travel bloggers. At the conference, many eminent photographers and bloggers spoke on diverse aspects of photo tourism including the role of photography and blogging in promoting tourism, social media impact and collaborative approaches for working in tandem with the tourism boards. The deliberations offered valuable insights into the domineering role that photographic and blogging activities would assume in future in promoting tourism.

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FEB 2018

ICIT Photography Awards 2018

The evening concluded with glittering award ceremony organized as a part of the event. On the occasion, ICIT Photography Awards 2018 were presented to Sudhir Shivaram, Praveen Siddannavar, Hari Mahidhar and Pranay Patel in various categories.

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CONFERENCE ON

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ICIT Blogging Awards 2018 ICIT Blogging Awards 2018 were conferred to Archana Singh, Sandeepa Chetan, Abhinav Singh and Ajay Sood in various categories for their excellence in the respective fields. Cultural programmes were organized to add the entertainment quotient to the Event.

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BLOGGERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS GATHERED TO PROMOTE RANN UTSAV



Photo Tour to Hodka Village

Photo Tour to Hodka Village was also organized to present the opportunity to the invited photographers and bloggers to witness the significant part of Kutch culture i.e. handicraft. Hodka Village is the face of Kutchi handicraft. The photo tour turned out to be a treat for the photographers and bloggers for capturing and exploring the vivid colors of traditional handicrafts by skilled artisans.

Conference on Photo Tourism in India paved the way for providing the right platform to promote tourism with the help of influencers like photographers, bloggers and media professionals, with a broader perspective of making them brand ambassadors of State tourism.

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All in all, the Event received wide scale appreciation from all the participants and opened up the new avenues for strategic association amongst photographers, bloggers and tourism board towards effectively promoting tourism.







Brief Profile of Awardees

PHOTOGRAPHERS



SUDHIR SHIVARAM

Sudhir Shivaram is one of India's most respected and renowned wildlife photographers. He is the recipient of Sanctuary Asia Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2012 Award. National Geographic Traveller India's September 2013 cover, featuring Sudhir's image, won the Yellow Border Award for the best cover across 14 language editions. Sudhir has been recognized as one of the top 10 most influential people in the Indian photography industry for four consecutive years since 2015. In January 2018, he was awarded the title of 'First Most Influential Person in the Indian Photography Industry' by the Asian Photography Magazine.





HARI MAHIDHAR

Hari Mahidhar is one of the foremost names in industrial photography in the country. While not on assignment, his graphic industrial aesthetic merges with his artistic roots and shows up in his personal work. Besides a book on aerial views of landscapes and pictures made in a circus, he has several other series. He has also created and photographed elaborate installations that look like people - only comprising paper clips!

comprising ICIT Lifetime Dedication Award in

Award in Photography



BLOGGERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS GATHERED TO PROMOTE RANN UTSAV





PRAVEEN SIDDANNAVAR

Praveen is an engineer by profession and a natural history photographer by choice. Praveen has won several accolades in wildlife photography. Few awards & recognitions include 'Finalist' for BBC Wildlife Photographer of the Year 2012, Karnataka Nature Category organized by Karnataka Tourism & Youth Photographic Society, Winner in Predators Contest organized by Saevus Wildlife Magazine, Viewers Pick Award during the NDTV's 'Save our Tigers' Campaign, Special mentions by BBC, Sanctuary Asia's Wildlife Photographer of the year 2013 and few national awards in India.





PRANAY PATEL

ICIT Young Achiever Award Pranay Patel is an avid wildlife photographer from Ahmedabad. He started his professional journey at the age of 13 in 2011. At a comparatively young age, the widelytravelled wildlife enthusiast has an enviable collection of photographs covering the exotic wildlife of India and other countries across the world like Australia, New Zealand, USA and Kenya. Pranay has beautifully documented his photography spree to Masai Mara in his memoir 'The Wild Earth of Africa' launched by Mr. Mukesh Ambani in 2015. Pranay is an official photographer of the Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd. Pranay's global exposure includes his participation in the USA Photography Exhibition.







AJAY SOOD

Travelure **Category: Photologue**

Ajay Sood has won several awards like 2016 winner of OSM (Outlook Social Media) Shutterbug of the Year, Cox & Kings' winner of #GrabYourDream Season 2, Grand Winner of National Geographic

Traveller's #GetOutThere - a nation-wide photo essay contest, etc. Besides being featured in multiple Indian publications, he has been internationally featured in The Jerusalem Post and in 'The Passion' - a Nation TV 22 (Thailand's leading TV channel) and Juan Martinez (Traveler's Buddy, Shanghai).



ARCHANA SINGH

Travel See Write **Category: Offbeat Destinations**

Archana Singh is a Communication Expert by profession and a Travel Writer by passion. She is considered as one of the top Travel Influencers of India and is often invited to speak at prestigious global

TRAVEL SEE WRITE

conferences like PATA, TBEX, Incredible India 2.0 etc. Besides documenting her experiences on her blog, she regularly writes for global publications in India, US, UK, South East Asia and Middle East. She has worked with hundreds of destinations, travel companies, PR agencies and brands around the world.







SANDEEPA CHETAN SandeepaChetan's Travel Blog **Category: Couple Travel**

Sandeepa and Chetan are living the life of their dreams from traveling in a truck to seeing places they still don't believe exist. As a trial run for their RTW trip, they

spent months traveling in the Himalayas. That's when they first realized that slow travel was really for them. On returning from the Himalayas, they started writing stories from their travels and sharing them across the internet. So far, they have been featured in India Times, Yahoo Travel, NDTV, Cosmopolitan, among many



other leading publications. They have been published in FirstPost, DNA, Maharashtra Times and have delivered talk at TEDxGSMC.

Brief Profile of Awardees

BLOGGERS

A Soul Window **Category: Adventurous** Backpacking

MUST READ

Abhinav Singh is a travel writer, photographer and v logger. He has travelled to 150 plus destinations in India since 2008. Internationally, he

has travelled to Nepal, Jordan and Bhutan. He has served as the main photographer of Outlook Traveler Getaway's guidebook Aamchi Mumbai. His articles and pictures were published in journals like Rail Bandhu, Go Air In flight Magazine, Lonely Planet Magazine India, National Geographic Traveller Magazine, Mint, Filmfare, Terrascape, Men's Health, etc. He has won many

photography awards. including the ones conducted by newspapers like DNA, Times Of India and I next (Dainik Jagaran) and CIDCO.







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mini-metropolis in the state of Gujarat, Ahmedabad provides travellers with a rejuvenating combination of the old and the new. From locating religious shrines and ancient monuments to relishing lip-smacking street food and exploring indigenous textiles, you can make the most of a 24 hourlong visit to the city. Not to miss, the place is also known for its best Bschools.

With merely a day in hand, a Heritage Walk is probably the best commencement to the city's tour. You have to decide between two options – (i) Ahmedabad's Municipal Corporation conducts a morning walk that starts at 8:00 am and takes you to numerous important Havelis, temples and heritage sites before concluding at the Jama Masjid in the city centre, and (ii) the House of MG provides an 80-minutelong walk, which you can undertake with a pre-recorded audio guide.

The next destination for the day can be the Calico Museum of Textiles in the Shahibaug area. It boasts of one of the world's supreme collections of archaic as well as contemporary Indian textiles, that are all handmade and 500 years old. There are some exceptionally beautiful pieces like Kashmiri shawls, which takes 3 years in its making and double-ikat cloths, 1,00,000 threads of which are dyed separately before weaving. The prime textile galleries can only be visited during the morning tour by a maximum of 20 people, which lasts for 2 hours. The afternoon tour, for a maximum of 10 people, is dedicated to Sarabhai Foundation's religious booking is required.

The next destination is best described by its name - Talli Ahmedabad, which means 'intoxicated Ahmedabad' in English. This Hrs in AHMEDABAD



PEN PROFILE

Ghoomophirosisters are travelling sisters, who have been exploring India and abroad from over 8 years now. While Prachi Garg is an author of bestseller Superwomen and organizes women solo trips, Himadri Garg works as a digital marketing consultant and amateur photographer. You may follow their travel musings at www.ghoomophiro.com. eatery claims to infuse their dishes with a degree of lusciousness that will leave you in a trance. In tandem with its bold and brazen name, the dishes are titled creatively. Worth every penny, this is an amazing option for some quick and delicious food.

Located in the close proximity to Ahmedabad's railway station, the Shaking Minarets of the Sidi Bashir Mosque can be the next place in the 24 hour-tour itinerary of Ahmedabad. The minarets got their name because of the fact that they literally shake when one of them is shaken. Each of them is about 70 metres high and has carved stone balconies. You can explore the rest of the Sidi Bashir Mosque also, while you are here.

The succeeding area of visit -The Law Garden Night Market - is an evening market, which remains jam-packed with kiosks selling glittery articles from Saurashtra and Kutch. Costume, jewellery, embroidered wall hangings, cholis and extravagantly decorated chaniyas sold here will leave you awestruck. Even if you end up buying nothing, this is an experience exclusive to Ahmedabad, which is definitely not to be missed.

Furnished to represent the culture and lifestyle of Indian villages, Rajwadu is the spot to go for genuine Gujarati cuisine and is thereby, the concluding place in our 1-day Ahmedabad itinerary. Established in 1998 with the aim providing natives with a flavour of their own culture, this restaurant has grown to become extremely famous since then. It is located in Ahmedabad's suburbs and you should go here for the outstanding food and captivating ambience. With this, your day will come to a perfect end!

The Taste of BHUTAN

visited a small village called Babesa during my trip to Bhutan in 2017 and found a local hometurned-restaurant in my quest to taste the local dishes. After climbing up a set of steep wooden steps, I entered an ancient room with floorseating. The waitress in the traditional Bhutanese kira (a long skirt) brought me some soup. I drank up the bowl of jaju (a soup of dried turnip leaves in a milk base) while pondering over what I could order for the mains. Even as I marveled over the subtle flavors of this local soup, I knew I was lucky to be lunching in a village for it is not easy to get turnip leaves in the nearby city (and also Bhutan's capital) of Thimphu. The city eateries often use spinach in their versions of jaju, that is, if you ever find a restaurant that serves this

I always prefer eating in villages as compared to cities as you are closer to where the grains and vegetables are grown, and you can ensure the stuff that's on the table is



PEN PROFILE

Oindrila De is a travel blogger who takes keen interest in exploring destinations through the medium of running marathons. She is the first Indian to run the Vilnius Half Marathon (Lithuania, 2015). Apart from 'runcationing', she delights in immersive experiences in the homes of warm locals and savours traditional flavours of locally grown produce. She blogs at 'Oindirla Goes Footloose' (oindrilade.com).

organic (farmers don't lie about the use of pesticides, et al). I settled for kakurukam paa (sun-dried pumpkin) to get something crispy as an appetizer with my soup. Then arrived an exotic dish of fiddlehead ferns nakey datshi, in appetizing creamy gravy of cottage cheese. The Bhutanese are big rice eaters, and the house speciality of mengay (a pancake of first-harvest rice with a coating of egg and butter, tempered with perilla seeds and garlic) was lipsmacking! I ordered a second set of mini-pancakes made of buckwheat to go with the second side dish of loam paa - fried turnip leaves with onion, black pepper, tomato and chillies.

Bhutan's cuisine is a rare one, hardly available outside of this landlocked country. And the dishes that are spoken of at all, are ema datshi (chillies and cheese - often used to welcome guests), kewa datshi (potato and cheese), shamu datshi (mushroom and cheese) and various others, which have meat as the central ingredient. Vegetarians like me have plenty of options in this nation that counts happiness as an important ingredient for the wellbeing of its people. It is often quoted that the country measures its progress in terms of GNH (Gross National Happiness) and not GDP (Gross Domestic Product). My meals in this country neighbouring India sure left my taste buds happy! 📼



GUJARAT The Land of Rich Parsi Heritage

Following the persecution in Persia, a Zoroastrian group called Parsees fled to Gujarat more than a 1000 years ago. The sea and land routes to Hind or India were well-known to the Zoroastrians because of trade between the Persian-speaking lands and the Indian coast. According to the medieval text called Kisse-i-Sanjan, the Zoroastrians landed and settled first in Diu Island and then set sail for Sanjan, which they are believed to have reached in the eighth century. During a storm en route, the Zoroastrian group promised to build an Atash Behram, a Parsee temple with the highest grade of ritual fire.

he Parsees approached the ruler named Jadi Rana to settle at Sanjan. According to the story, the Rana was reluctant to give permission and sent a bowl of milk to indicate that his kingdom had no place for new settlers. The Parsee priests added sugar to the milk and returned it with a message that they would not interfere with the culture of the area, but instead enrich it like sugar, which does not increase the quantity of milk but sweetens it. The Atash Behram was consecrated

using 16 fires, including Asfan – a fire by lightening.

While Parsees prospered at Sanjan and nearby towns along the Gujarat coast, the Islamic invasion of Sanjan led to their fleeing with the fire to the caves of Bahrot. After this, the fire was housed in Navsari for centuries, and for a short while in Surat, before it was moved to Udvada in 1742. The sacred fire was first housed in the residence of Mr. Bhathela and then was moved to a small house of Seth Minocher Bahman from Nargol. Another important Zoroastrian group is called Iranis who mostly came to India during the Mughal and British periods. Like the Parsees, the Iranis are predominantly found on the west-coast of India, in the states of Gujarat and Maharashtra.

During the 19th and 20th centuries, Zoroastrians played a notable role in Indian industry, the arts, theatre, cinema, entertainment, sports, the freedom struggle, and the post independence governance of India. Many of them



distinguished themselves in the Indian armed forces.

The Parsees became prominent citizens of Gujarat with their mansions and institutions coming up in many cities from Bhuj, Bhavnagar to Bharuch. The Parsee heritage village of Udvada is the most sacred place of Zoroastrian pilgrimage in India. The temple here is called sacred Iranshah Atashbehram and houses the highest grade of ritual fire holy to Parsees. There is an Atashbehram at Navsari, two Atashbehram in Surat, two in Mumbai and one in Iran.

As you enter Udvada, you see striking façade of the recently restored Seth Sohrabji Jamshedji Sodawaterwalla Dharamshala, an 80-year old building, which went through repairs, restoration and renovation before being re-opened in September 2011 as a guest house for Parsee religious tourists. This Dharamshala gets its name from Bai Aimai Sorabji Sodawaterwala, who handed over her residence to a trust when she passed away in 1945. This was given over to the Udwada Samast Anjuman in 1949. However, as there were few visitors then, this structure was sold to open a school and the sale proceeds were utilised to buy this present structure earlier known as 'Rezashah Hotel' at Udvada. Sohrabji Jamshedji Sodawaterwalla Dharamshala was inaugurated by the Udwada Samast Anjuman on 17th April 1956. Thanks to the interest taken by the priests and heritage architects Jamshid Bhiwandiwalla and Pankaj Joshi, this structure was restored with the financial support of philanthropists from the Parsee community. Besides restoring the structure, from August 2010, the rooms have also been upgraded with new facilities and the old furniture now gleams with fresh polishing. Interestingly, the high-ceilinged reception hall has a plan of Udvada showing key buildings, historical information about the village, and a 'Did You Know about Zoroastrianism and Parsees?'. Caricatures of Parsis by Mario Miranda decorate the lobby. The plan shows that the village of Udvada lies on a north-west axis between Jhanda Chowk and the Iranshah Temple at its core, with the Merivadi Street and Sea View Street running parallel to the main spine. Most of the heritage buildings and Parsee residences are in the core area.

Just outside the dharamshala, Jhanda Chowk is a road junction at the beginning of Udvada's heritage precinct. The Mirza memorial hall, Unwalla Library and other historic buildings can be seen on the way to the fire temple. The Sacred Iranshah Atashbehram Fire Temple has figures of winged bulls with human heads, considered auspicious for all Parsees. The temple was first constructed in the 18th century by Seth Edulji of Surat and expanded in 1812 by Seth Jamdhedji Guzder. In 1830, Seth Dadabhai and Mancherji Wadia built a new structure.

The present day Udvada fire temple was constructed by Lady Motlibhai Wadia in 1894, replacing the older buildings. The architect and builder of the temple was Dinshaw Dorabjee Mistry from Mumbai. The temple structure is spacious and well-

GUJARAT: THE LAND OF RICH PARSI HERITAGE





- 1 A fire temple at Surat
- 2 The Atashbehram, a holy place for Parsees at Navsari
- 3 The Jeejeebhoy museum at Navsari
- 4 Old weaving equipment at the Jeejeebhoy museum at Navsari







- 5-6 The Sacred Iranshah Atashbehram at Udvada
- 7 The high priest of Udvada
- 8 The Zoroastrian Information Centre at Udvada
- 9-10 The museum at Udvada



GUJARAT: THE LAND OF RICH PARSI HERITAGE





decorated. The façade of the temple is in the typical eclectic style of Parsee buildings with Iranian, European and Indian features.

On festive days like Behram Roj or the annual Navroz celebrations, you can see a flow of Parsees, some of them dressed in traditional clothing, coming and going through the entrance. The anniversary, known as sālgiri, corresponding to the date of establishing the Atash Behram in Udvada, is celebrated every year according to the Shenshai Zoroastrian calendar on the day called Ādur of the month (also called Ādur - the ninth Zoroastrian month and the ninth day of the month). Pilgrims visit the place throughout the Adur month. Shops and vendors sell sandalwood, ritual objects, religious artifacts, Parsee food products, handmade icecreams and souvenirs on weekends. festive days and auspicious days, when there is enough flow of pilgrims.

Around the temple are other historic buildings like the Dastur Baugh and the Petit Dar-e-Maher built by first Baronet Sir Dinshaw Manekji Petit in 1891. Some of the old hotels near the fire temple like Globe and Ashishvang also retain their old facades.

Since Udvada was a religious place, it was mainly the priestly families that lived here. The non-priestly families include those that have established hotels and shops to cater to Parsee pilgrims visiting Udvada. The typical Parsee homes here have high ceilings, ornamental skirted sloping roofs and double otlas (twin porticoes). Some of them. over a century old, are now under threat from the real estate boom in this part of Gujarat. Eminent Parsees, Udvada's Parsee residents and conservation organizations are now working to improve the infrastructure, restore and renovate heritage buildings and protect the environment of Udvada.

As the fire temple is not open for non-Zoroastrian, the Zoroastrian Information Centre nearby offers information about the Parsee rituals. This centre was conceptualized by Foundation for Development of Udvada with inputs from trustees like Homai Modi and Dr Homi Dhalla. The architects Pankaj Joshi and Jamshid Bhiwandiwalla restored a colonial-style building that was in a dilapidated condition for this centre. This is a museum set in grounds with a shop at one end selling Gara embroidery and Parsee objects. The centre has five rooms that offer an insight into various aspects of the Parsee legacy. Here you can see visuals depicting the intricate Navjote



Ceremony after which the child is viewed as a member of the Zoroastrian community, models and informative panels that show rituals in the sanctum, and a display of costumes like the Jabhla that is like a silk kurta and the Gara (embroidered saris).

In one of the rooms, there are panels depicting the history of ancient Persian dynasties. Another set of panels explain the contribution of Parsees like JRD Tata, Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, Homi Baba, Madam Cama, etc. to the development of India.

From Udvada, drive to Navsari, which has the Bhagarsath Desai Atash Behram built in 1765 AD surrounded by palms.



According to Parsees, their ancestors found the city's atmosphere similar to that of Sari region of Iran, and so the NAO SARI or New Sari came into being. Many prosperous Parsee families of today trace their origin to Navsari and Valsad. You can see the heritage house of the Tata family in Navsari, the birthplace of Jamsetji Nusserwanji Tata. Nearby is a house that has been converted into a museum dedicated to Sir Jamsetjee Jejeebhoy, 1st Baronet, merchant and philanthropist of the late-18th and early-20th century who made a huge fortune in the opium trade between India and China. He endowed hospitals, schools and charitable shelters in Mumbai, Navsari, Surat, Pune and other cities of India. First Dastoor Meherjirana Library in Navsari has a huge resource of information on the Parsees.

- 11 Garas in Ahmedabad's Medora family's heirloom collection
- 12 Gara Embroidery
- 13 Exquisite gara in the Medora collection

About an hour from Navsari, Surat has a number of schools, hospitals and other institutions built by Parsees. The fires of the Modi (Shenshai) Atash Behram and the Vakil Atash Behram in Surat were both consecrated in 1823. Surat was a prominent Parsee stronghold during the Mughal period. After the Mughal Emperors allowed the British and Dutch to establish their factories in Surat, Parsees were employed in the European trading bases. While in Surat, you can shop for bakery products from popular Parseeowned bakeries.

North of Surat, Bharuch, Ankleshwar and Vadodara have many old Parsee heritage relics.

Many Parsees made their mark on Ahmedabad's industry after the growth of the textile industry in the city. The city's oldest surviving star-rated hotel - Cama Hotel was built by the Parsee Cama family in 1960. Nearby is the Zoroastrian Ladies Industrial Cooperative Society. The Agiary is in Khamasa. Many Parsees have scripted success stories in textiles, chemicals, aviation, tourism, restaurants, insurance and other enterprises in Ahmedabad over the last 100 or so years.

The Parsee Influence on Gujarat's Handicrafts

The Gara embroidery dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries when Parsees became successful ship-builders and traders who traversed the Silk Route taking Indian commodities to China and bringing back silk for Surat's textile industry. The Parsee traders brought back porcelain and artifacts from China - that can still be seen in many Parsee homes, and embroidered textiles & robes from China, which inspired them to formulate two craft techniques that are essential to the Indian textile heritage - the Tanchoi weave and the Gara embroidery. Essentially inspired by the Chinese embroidery traditions, the Parsees also drew from various sources introducing Persian motifs, the mochi or aari embroidery popular in Gujarat and neighbouring Sindh, the zardosi that they learnt from other parts of India where they settled, and the European influences especially of the British, the Portuguese, the French and the Dutch in the chintz and curtains made in Gujarat for the British, Dutch and Portuguese markets.

Thus, evolved the Parsee embroidery tradition drawing from many stylistic influences to become the sought-after textiles of the Parsees. With the intricate work done by artisans on rich silk fabrics, the Gara saris are much sought after, and are heirlooms passed on from mothers to their daughters or daughters-in-law. A key feature of the Parsee Gara is the depiction of nature, including the animals using fine stitches that give the birds, butterflies and flowers a sense of fluidity and movement.

China Chini Garas are those with scenes from China like pagodas, shrines,

boatmen on the river, landscapes, soldiers and cranes. Kanda-Papeta Gara is with large pink and yellow polka dots or circular motifs, which is called by this funny name because the onion or kanda in Gujarat is pink and the papeta is a Gujarati name for potatoes represented by yellow. The karolia or spider design is actually a floral pattern and the chakla-chakli is a design of sparrows or other birds. The Zoroastrian reverence for nature has been celebrated in the motifs of their embroidery since time immemorial. created to carry forward the work initiated by the world body and the Craft Documentation programme. The programme is researching into the origin, history, development and technique of Gara or Parsi embroidery, documented through various field trips and exhibitions across the nation. As a Director of NIFT, Mirza guided NID student Priya Mani who took field trips for her research project on the Pari textile traditions. During the field trip, she met Parsi ladies who are among the few left with the skills and intricacy of the embroidery techniques. The Ministry

| Themes of traditional Garas are based on Chinese symbols | |
|--|--|
| Symbol | Stands for |
| Eight immortals of taoism | Longevity |
| Divine fungus | Immortality and protection |
| Pomegranate | Fertility and a desire for a child |
| • Bamboo | Strength and the resilient spirit |
| • Peach | Immortality |
| Flowers | Four seasons i.e. Plum or a rose stands for winter |
| Peony and orchids | Spring and good fortune |
| Chrysanthemum | Autumn and longevity |
| • Crane | Immortality |
| Horse | Speed and intelligence |
| Butterflies | Summer and joy |
| Peacock | Nobility |
| Ribbons fluttering from the beaks of birds | Marital bliss |

The embroidery techniques are usually satin stitch and a Chinese version of the French knot in which the preferred colours are red, black or purple. The embroidery was generally done with white or cream silk threads that stand out on the dark background, sometimes with coloured highlighting stitches, while the Kores or borders are often multicoloured. The fabric is usually Gajji, Ghat and Hojerum silk. At Khordad Creations in Ahmedabad, Chinoy sells saris, salvar kameez sets and duppatas with Gara embroidery. Villoo Mirza, Project Director of Ahmedabad-based Sewa Trade Facilitation Centre (STFC) has been involved for many years with the UNESCO Parzor Project, set up in 1999 by UNESCO for the preservation and promotion efforts of Zoroastrian culture and heritage. The Parzor foundation was

of Textiles, Government of India has recognised the heritage value of Parsi embroidery and supported the projects for its revival.

Saadeli is a form of Marquetry practiced by a few artisans in Surat. Surat's Sadeli bears much resemblance to Khatam, Persian marquetry that developed in Iran during the reign of Safavid dynasty from 1501 to 1722. The Zoroastrians or Parsees who came to Gujarat from Iran, brought the marquetry techniques to Surat about 150 years ago. After making the wooden object, which is to be ornamented, the artisans obtain the slices from composite sections of wood and then apply these slices to create a patchwork on the surface. 250 pieces could be applied in one square inch or cubic cm of a wooden surface.



A village with no front doors

Maharashtra's Shani Shingnapur is the village with no front doors. Even the commercial bank branch here doesn't have doors. It is believed that Lord Shani punishes the thieves, and hence they don't see the need of security.





Bajrangi boy

Arshid Ali Khan, a 13-year old boy from Punjab, is worshipped as the Lord Hanuman due to his 7-inch long tail. Khan has this tail since his birth. People visit him to resolve their problems and seek his blessings.

Gravity, what's that?

Magnetic Hill located near Leh in Ladakh is the phenomenon that defies gravity. Who could have imagined that a vehicle could move up a steep mountain, with its ignition off? Sounds quite unbelievable!





The world's biggest congregation of humans visible from space

A mass pilgrimage of faith, Kumbh Mela witnesses around 100 million people from across the world. According to a report, the 2011 Kumbh Mela was so big with gathering of over 75 million people that it was visible from the space.

The skeleto Located at an altitu in Uttarakhand, Roo beauty. The enigma hundreds of skeleto Legend has it that

The skeleton lake of India

Located at an altitude of over 5,000 metres in Uttarakhand, Roopkhand is known for its beauty. The enigma lies in the fact that hundreds of skeletons are found in the lake. Legend has it that mass death occurred because of hailstorm when ruler of Kanauj, Raja Jasdhval was travelling with Rani Balampa, his queen. Spooky, isn't it?



festival of art, crafts and dance, 9 saw spinning skirts with mirror KUTCH work that would make a goddess **Gularat** Touris jealous. The Aari embroidery done here was so intricate, even the vendors looked sad to part with a piece. The music hypnotised me, the food tempted me, the colours dazzled me. Set against the white desert, 9 felt as if the festival was our way of showing off to the heavens; almost saying look at what we can do! taday

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Q

SURAT TNS-02

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