

# PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

Published by PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS (INDIA) LIMITED | [www.praveg.com](http://www.praveg.com)

June 2022

Year : 7 | Issue : 10 (Continue Issue : 68) | Pages : 64 | ₹ 200

RNI Regd. No. GUJENG/2015/70098

*A high-end monthly magazine*

## MUKTINATH

An experience in symbiosis

## TANZANIA

*A paradise with a turbulent history*

## BLACKHOUSE

*A brief sojourn into the past*



**ECO-TRAILS  
IN GUJARAT**

# TORAN HOTELS

AHMEDABAD | Mt. ABU | SAPUTARA | DWARKA | NARAYAN SAROVAR



## TORAN GANDHI ASHRAM - AHMEDABAD



### KEY ATTRACTIONS

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

**Hospitality with enhanced cleanliness  
and wellbeing measures**

### YOU'RE SAFE WITH US!

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



**Contact for Booking:**

**Phone: +91 79 2755 9342 Mobile: +91 95374 05555**

**Email: [hoteltorangagh@gujarattourism.com](mailto:hoteltorangagh@gujarattourism.com)**

**[booking.gujarattourism.com](http://booking.gujarattourism.com) 📞 1800 200 5080**



# Sojourn to the Past

**D**o monuments and mythical folklore fascinate you? Do you select your travel destinations based on the historical richness of the place? Then, historical vacations are the ideal for wanderlusts like you.

Historical vacation is a great way to immerse into the culture and the historical aspect of the destination as even the ruins hold a certain amount of fascination. And why just the monuments, if you observe people and their way of living, you will find living histories as most things from our day-to-day lives are inherited from the past like culture, traditions and even language and houses in case of communities.

So here we bring an exclusive article on Blackhouse, which narrates the story of the highlands of Scotland and Ireland from several centuries ago. As the village has been beautifully restored, one can relax in the ambience of former times, but with all the comforts of the present day.

Tanzania, on the east coast of Africa, has many fascinating attractions that are rich in history. The Stone Town of Zanzibar is a UNESCO heritage site. The Ngorongoro Crater, the extinct volcanic caldera in the Eastern Great Rift Valley, in northern Tanzania, was formed as a result of a gigantic volcanic explosion, three million years ago.

Read on for more interesting stories!





# PRAVEG'S TOURISM ONE

June 2022



**Praveg Communications (India) Limited**  
214 Athena Avenue, Sarkhej - Gandhinagar Highway,  
Behind Jaguar Showroom, Gota, Ahmedabad 382481  
Contact No.: 97129 84895  
e: [tourismone@praveg.com](mailto:tourismone@praveg.com)  
[www.praveg.com](http://www.praveg.com)

---

Download an e-copy of Tourism One from  
[www.praveg.com](http://www.praveg.com)

---

**Editorial Team**  
Priyanka Desai

**Design Team**  
Mahesh Patel  
Yagnesh Bhavsar  
Rakesh Bhavsar

---

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](mailto:tourismone@praveg.com)

**Printed, Published by** PARASKUMAR M. PATEL on Behalf of PRAVEG COMMUNICATIONS (INDIA) LIMITED and **Printed** LE GRIFFE OFFSET PVT.LTD 3, Lower Ground Floor, Popular House, Near Income Tax, Ashram Road, Ahmedabad and **Published** from 214 Athena Avenue, Sarkhej - Gandhinagar Highway, Behind Jaguar Showroom, Gota, Ahmedabad 382481  
**Editor:** PARASKUMAR M. PATEL.







# Contents

Gurudwara : An oasis of  
peace and tranquillity Pg. 04

---

Muktinath : An experience  
in symbiosis Pg. 10

---

Eco-Trails in Gujarat Pg. 20

---

Tent City Narmada -  
Where VVIPs gather... Pg. 32

---

Tanzania : A paradise with  
a turbulent history Pg. 34

---

Dairy tour of Gujarat Pg. 48

---

Blackhouse: A brief sojourn  
into the past Pg. 54



# **GURUDWARA**

## **An oasis of peace and tranquillity**





## HEMKUND SAHIB

**P**erched at an elevation of 4630 metres above sea level, at the edge of a glacial lake, Hemkund Sahib, one of the most revered shrines for the Sikhs, commands a panoramic view of the surrounding mountains. Built in 1960, the shrine soon emerged as one of the most important, must do, pilgrimage centres. What gives the place its unique aura?

The shrine can be reached after a 3 hour gruelling ascent from the Ghangaria village. Long before the Sikhs started coming to Hemkunt, the lake was known to the Bhotiya tribe of people who belonged to the regions in the Himalayan belt.

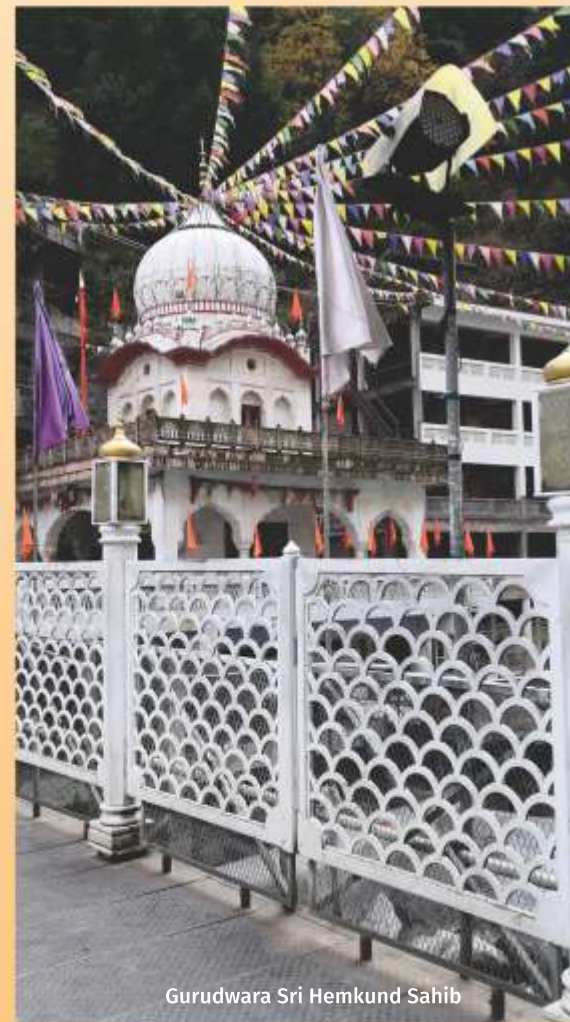
As I sit there on the banks of the lake, I can see rivulets of water streaming down into the lake, from the seven surrounding hills. The surface of the lake shimmers in the afternoon sun. It is pleasantly warm.

I can see quite a few people taking a dip in the gelid waters of the holy lake, oblivious of its freezing temperature. I am tempted to get up and walk towards the dining hall, where I know a steaming cup of delicious tea is awaiting

me. But I wait, absorbing the beauty around me.

This holy place has been a place of veneration for aeons. Generations of people have come and gone. The sanctity of this high-altitude place comes from multiple sources. It is believed that Guru Gobind Singh, who took on the mighty Mughals, spent 10 years in meditation here in his previous life. It is also believed that the place once used to be a meditation ground for Lord Rama's brother, Lakshmana. There is a temple nearby dedicated to Lakshmana. The Pandu King is said to have performed Yoga here.

Bhai Vir Singh, poet, scholar, and theologian of the Sikh revival movement, very eloquently states, "The traveller passes by leaving behind his footprints. These footprints vanish with the passage of time. But some footprints are so important that people worship them and make monuments there, which keep conveying their historical importance from generation to generation. These footprints become imperishable." Therein lays the purity and the sanctity of this place.



Gurudwara Sri Hemkund Sahib



# GURUDWARA PATHAR SAHIB, LEH



**O**n a barren, windswept landscape, 12000 ft above sea level and 25 km from Leh on the Leh - Kargil Road is the holy Gurudwara Pathar Sahib. It is probably the only shrine revered by Buddhists for the same reason. The people of Ladakh look up to this shrine with much reverence.

Gurudwara Pathar Sahib was built in 1517 to commemorate the visit of Guru Nanak to Ladakh. Perched on a hillock, it has a commanding view of the snow-capped mountains and the barren hills.

In 1970, when a road was being constructed, the workers came upon a boulder that was adorned with Buddhist prayer flags. The rock has a hollow profile of a person that reveals a head, shoulder and part of the body. The workers, reportedly, encountered unwonted difficulty in removing the boulder from the path, where the road was to be built. The news reached the ears of the Ladakhis who confronted them and asked them to desist from

moving the rock. They then informed them that it was their belief that, in the early 16th century, when Lama Nanak, a fond reference to Guru Nanak, was returning to Punjab after travelling through Tibet, he had rested at this place. Further it is the belief of the people that the imprint on the rock is that of Lama Nanak.

The rock is now a part of the shrine. The army officials along with the local people of Ladakh helped construct the Gurudwara. Reportedly, the Guru Pathar Sahib is maintained by the Indian Army.

Guru Nanak travelled extensively during his lifetime. He is highly regarded by Tibetan Buddhists who consider him a saint. The Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Buddhists in Tibet, has stated that the Tibetans revere Guru Nanak as a Buddhist saint under the name of Guru Gompka Maharaj.

The Gurudwara is a small oasis, spiritually and otherwise, for the weary traveller. Sitting there in the serene

windswept expanse of land, one can experience a sense of wellbeing. As the melodious sound of the kirtan wafts in the cool breeze, one is reminded of Guru Nanak's quote, "Alone let him constantly meditate in solitude on that which is salutary for his soul, for he who meditates in solitude attains supreme bliss."





# GURU NANAK DARBAR, DUBAI



Rising from the desert sands of Dubai, the Guru Nanak Darbar at Jebel Ali Village stands with all the magnificent flamboyance in perfect synchrony with one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. The beige-coloured Guru Nanak Darbar looks far different from the standard structure of a gurdwara. The fact that a gurdwara has been allowed to come up in a Muslim dominated country bespeaks volumes of the magnanimity of the host country and about the religion it had invited to its region.

The gurdwara has been constructed in the modern port town of Jebel Ali, which has the largest man-made harbour in the Middle East. Dubai was once a small fishing village in the Arabian Gulf. One of

the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, the ultra-modern city is home to more than 200 nationalities. The gurdwara is located within the premises of Jebel Ali Gardens which was formerly a small British-style garden city. The Guru Nanak Darbar gurdwara Dubai covers an area of 125,000 sq. ft. that is almost double the ground area of Nehru stadium.

In 2010, the foundations were laid and the shrine was opened for prayers on 17th January 2012. A total of AED 65 million or Rs 134 crores was spent on the construction of the Sikh temple. The flamboyant exterior notwithstanding, the temple has been built with all the essential elements of Sikh temple Architecture. There is the 'Parikrama', the pathway surrounding the temple; a

large pond for the ablution of the devotees; the beautifully adorned sanctum sanctorum which is the prayer hall, where Sikh and non-Sikhs congregate to hear kirtans; the langar, the community kitchen which serves meals to all free of charge, regardless of religion, caste, gender and economic status.

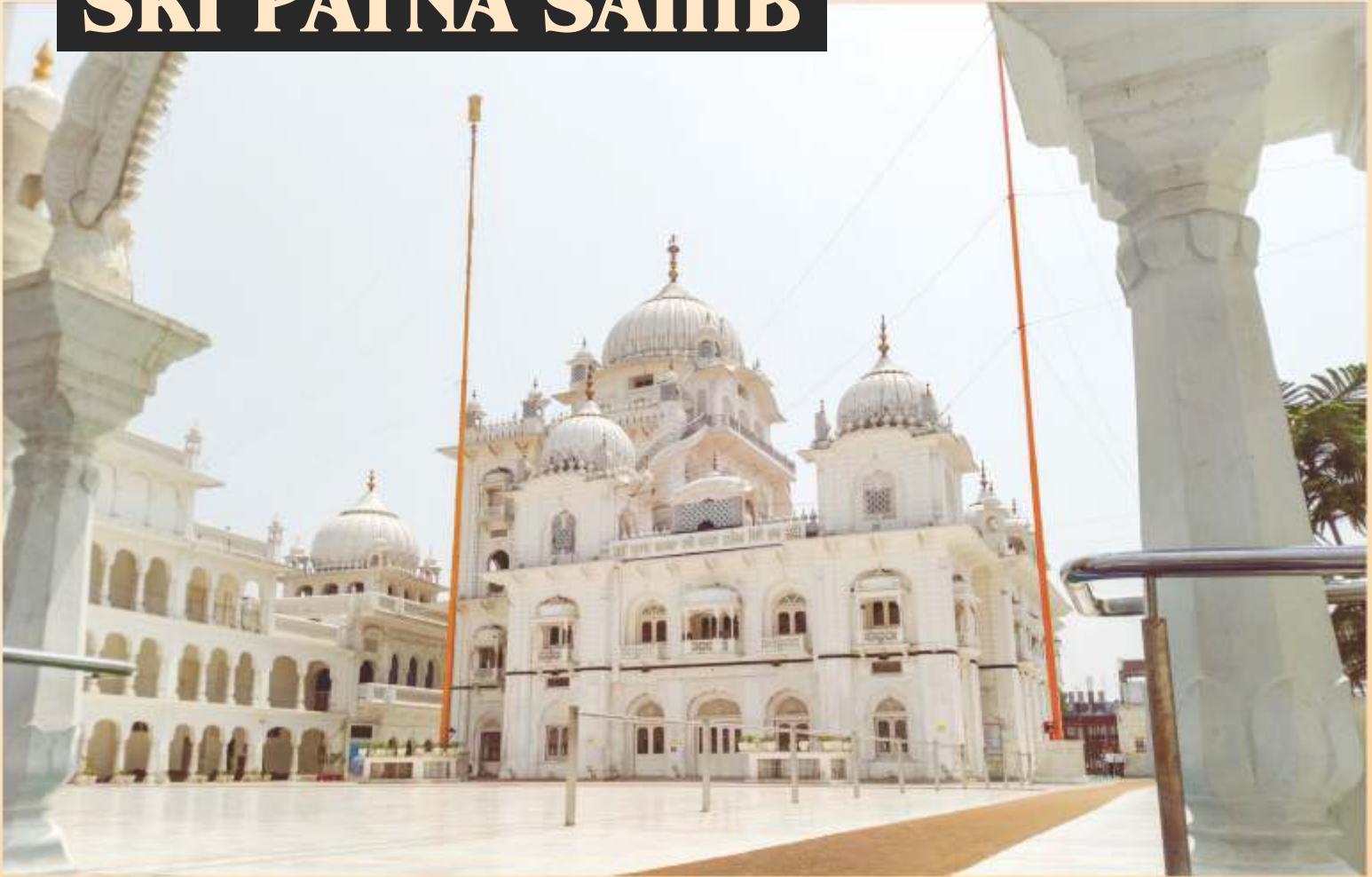
Sikhism is a monotheistic religion established by Guru Nanak, who developed a new religion by amalgamating certain principles which he thought were worth emulating, from the two dominant religions that were prevalent then - Hinduism and Islam. It stresses, among other things, the necessity of doing good actions rather than merely carrying out rituals. It is a religion that is down to earth and sans fanfare.



Source: Anay Pratap Singh/Shutterstock



# SRI PATNA SAHIB



**M**aharaja Ranjit Singh, the first Maharaja of the Sikh Empire, built Takht Sri Patna Sahib to commemorate the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Guru of the Sikhs.

The current shrine of Patna Sahib or Takht Sri Harmandirji Sahib was built in the 1950s.

Guru Gobind Singh was the tenth and the last preacher of the Sikh religion after which he had ordained that Guru Granth Sahib, the religious book of the Khalsas and the Sikhs, would be the next Guru.

Guru Gobind Singh was born in Patna, Bihar, on 22 December 1666. Guru Gobindh Singh was a precocious child. He was a polyglot, being adept in Sanskrit, Urdu, Hindi, Braj, Gurmukhi and Persian. He was also an ace martial

artist. It was he who coined the phrase that is heard in all the religious sikh gatherings - 'Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki fateh', a phrase that has been interpreted with multiple semantic distinctions. One of the interpretations is, "The Khalsa belongs to God; Victory belongs to God"

In 1934, a part of the gurdwara was destroyed by a massive earthquake. Subsequently in 1954, it was reconstructed into a resplendent shrine. It forms one of the five Takhts, meaning a throne or seat of authority and is a spiritual and temporal centre of Sikhism. It is considered the second holiest Takhat. There are five such Takhts in India.

Apart from being the birthplace of Guru Gobind Singh, the shrine houses invaluable treasures. Among them is

the holy book Guru Granth Sahib written and signed by Guru Gobind Singh. The book is put on display once a year on the occasion of Makar Sankranti. It also has a collection of 68 edicts or hukumnamas written in Gurmukhi and Persian by Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Further the shrine also has weapons used by Guru Gobind Singh. These include a small sword, four iron arrows, two different types of daggers, and other artefacts.

Guru Gobind Singh created and initiated the Khalsa as a warrior with a duty to protect the innocent from any form of religious persecution. He gave it a new thrust and vision, which the people willingly accepted. The Sri Patna Sahib is a fitting shrine to the ideals he espoused. <sup>10</sup>

# MUKTINATH

An experience in symbiosis



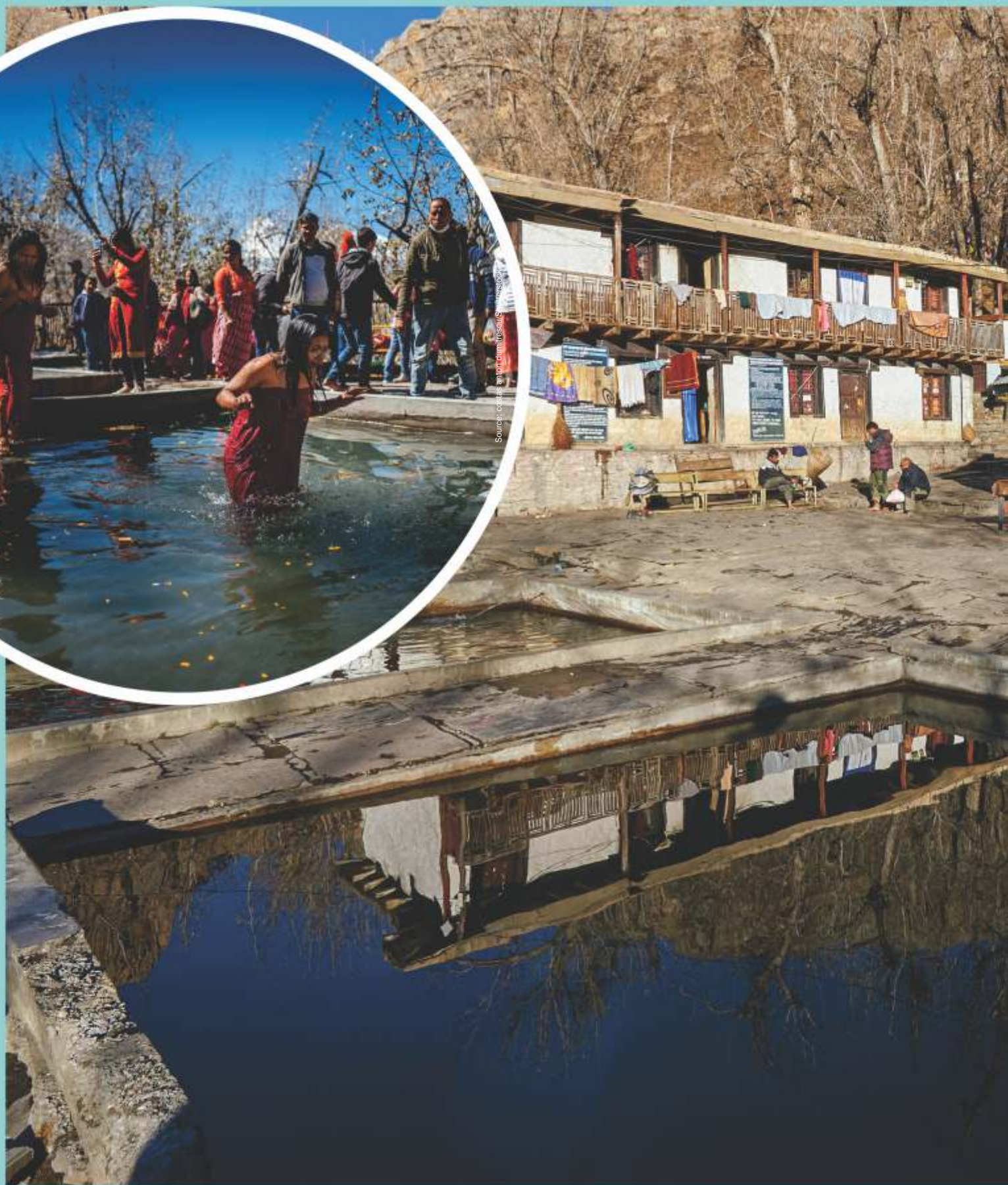








Source: <https://www.ancienttravels.com/india/uttarakhand/roopnagar-temple/>







Source: Vladimir Zhoga/Shutterstock

**T**he temple is situated in a remote region of Nepal, close to Tibet and is considered to be one of the world's highest temples. It is in the Lower Mustang region at about 12300 ft above sea level. The 3-tiered pagoda style temple is revered both by Hindus and Buddhists. For Hindus, the temple is known as Muktinath i.e., a place where one receives salvation; for Buddhists the temple is known as Chumig Gyatsa, meaning "The Hundred Springs". Among the twenty-four prominent Tantric places of worship, Chumig Gyatsa is one of them.

Like most hill temples it is small in size, completely in disproportion to its mass appeal among the people. The murti, a human-sized statue of Shri Mukti Narayana, is considered as one of the avatars of Vishnu. There are bronze images of Goddess Bhudevi (an avatar Lakshmi), the goddesses Saraswati and Janaki (Sita), Garuda (the mount of Vishnu), Lav-Kush (the sons of Rama and Sita) and the Sapta Rishis.

There are two ponds right in front of the temple, named Lakshmi Kunda and Saraswati Kund. It is a common belief that bathing in these water bodies cleanse one of all sins.



This shrine in Nepal forms one of the 108 Vishnu temples spread across India. It is also considered to be one of the eight major sacred temples known as Swayam Vyakta Kshetras. The other seven being the Srirangam Rangaswamy Temple at Srirangam in an island in Tamil Nadu, Tirumala temple in Andhra Pradesh, Badrinath temple in Uttarakhand, Srimushnam temple and Nanguneri temple in Tamil Nadu, Naimisharanya temple in Uttar Pradesh and Pushkar temple in Rajasthan.

The temple is enclosed by a two-metre wall on three sides. On these walls there are 108 spouts in the shapes of bulls, through which glacial waters flow out continuously into a culvert. These 108 stone spouts represent water from all 108 Vaishnava shrines. The temple is situated on a small hillock surrounded by barren and rugged hills, sparsely greened with vegetation. Beyond the sombre-mustard-coloured mountains, the massif of Dhaulagiri is visible. On a clear day 8 of the highest mountains in the world, i.e. mountains of more than 8,000 metres (26,247 ft) in height, are visible from this place.

Mukti Kshetra where the temple of Muktinath is situated has been referred to in the Ramayana. The temple however was constructed sometime in the 19th century. The idol of Vishnu is believed to date from the 16th century. It may have been from another temple that was constructed at this very place.











Shaligram

**B**ut what gives this place its sanctity? The temple is situated close to the Kali Gandaki River, a tributary of the river Gandaki. The riverbed is the source of the rare Shaligram stones. Stories abound regarding Shaligram stones' association with Vishnu. It is viewed as a natural manifestation of Vishnu.

Any Vishnu temple, built anywhere in the world, will mandatorily have Shaligram stones in it. The image of Vishnu at Badrinath is reported to be carved out of a Shaligram. The deity in Shri Padmanabhaswamy temple, in Thiruvananthapuram, is believed to be constructed from Shaligram stones. The presence of Shaligram stones is sine qua non for any Vishnu temple. It is present in some form or the other across all temples in India and abroad. There is a black Shaligram in the Muktinath temple too.



Muktinath Temple



## What is a Shaligram stone?

**S**haligram is a fossilised shell of a soft-bodied sea creature like a squid or a cuttlefish, which disappeared around 65 million years ago. But how are these found in Nepal, in a landlocked region?

Eighty million years ago, the Indian subcontinent was not part of the present-day Asian continent, but was part of a mammoth mass of land called Gondwanaland, that existed some 300 million years ago. Gondwanaland then consisted of continental blocks of South America, Africa, Arabia, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, India, Antarctica, and Australia. The Indian subcontinent broke away from this mass and moved northwards and crashed into the, what is currently called, the Asian landmass, trapping immeasurable amounts of sea creatures in its land mass. This mammoth geological collision created the Everest and the entire Himalayan ranges. At 27000 ft on Everest, the climbers have to climb through a patch of land called the 'yellow band' that is embedded with billions of fossilised sea creatures.





**T**he Buddhists revere this palace because they believe that this site was one of the 24 places where Guru Rinpoche practised in the 8th century, on his way to Tibet, from India. The Buddhists worship the idol inside the temple as Avalokiteshvara i.e., as a person who is on the path towards Buddha hood. Buddhist nuns and Brahmin priests' worship at the temple. Jwala Mai is another temple nearby which is located inside DholaMebar Gompa

monastery. It is also considered sacred by Hindus and Buddhists. Inside this temple there is a small blue flame that burns continuously; probably has been burning for thousands of years. The flame can be seen through a grid on the floor of the monastery. If you strain your ears, you can hear the sound of the water flowing underneath the monastery. The monastery has been built over a subterranean spring.

Hindus also worship here at the

monastery. They believe the idol represents Narasimha, an avatar of Lord Vishnu. This monastery is also known as Narsing Monastery and is believed to be more than 1000 years old.

Mustang is divided into two sub-regions, Lower and Upper Mustang. The temple is a gruelling 7-hour drive from the Pokhara airport, a distance of 178 km. Helicopter service is available. The temple is situated at the base of Thorong-La mountain pass in the Lower





Mustang District of Nepal. The Thorong-La Pass is considered to be the highest pass in the world. In summer the temperature during the day is around 32 degrees Celsius with night temperature hovering on a comfortable level of 20 degree Celsius. The best time to visit this place is from March to June when the temperatures are warm and pleasant. Since Mustang is in the rain shadow of the mighty mountains of the

Himalayas, very little rain falls in this region.

Mustang is famous for its Thakali cuisine which uses locally grown buckwheat, barley, millet and dal, as well as rice, maize and dal. Newari food, another popular dish, consists of varieties of beans, potato, mustard greens, grams, egg, and pickles along with Tibetan bread.

The Muktinath temple is yet

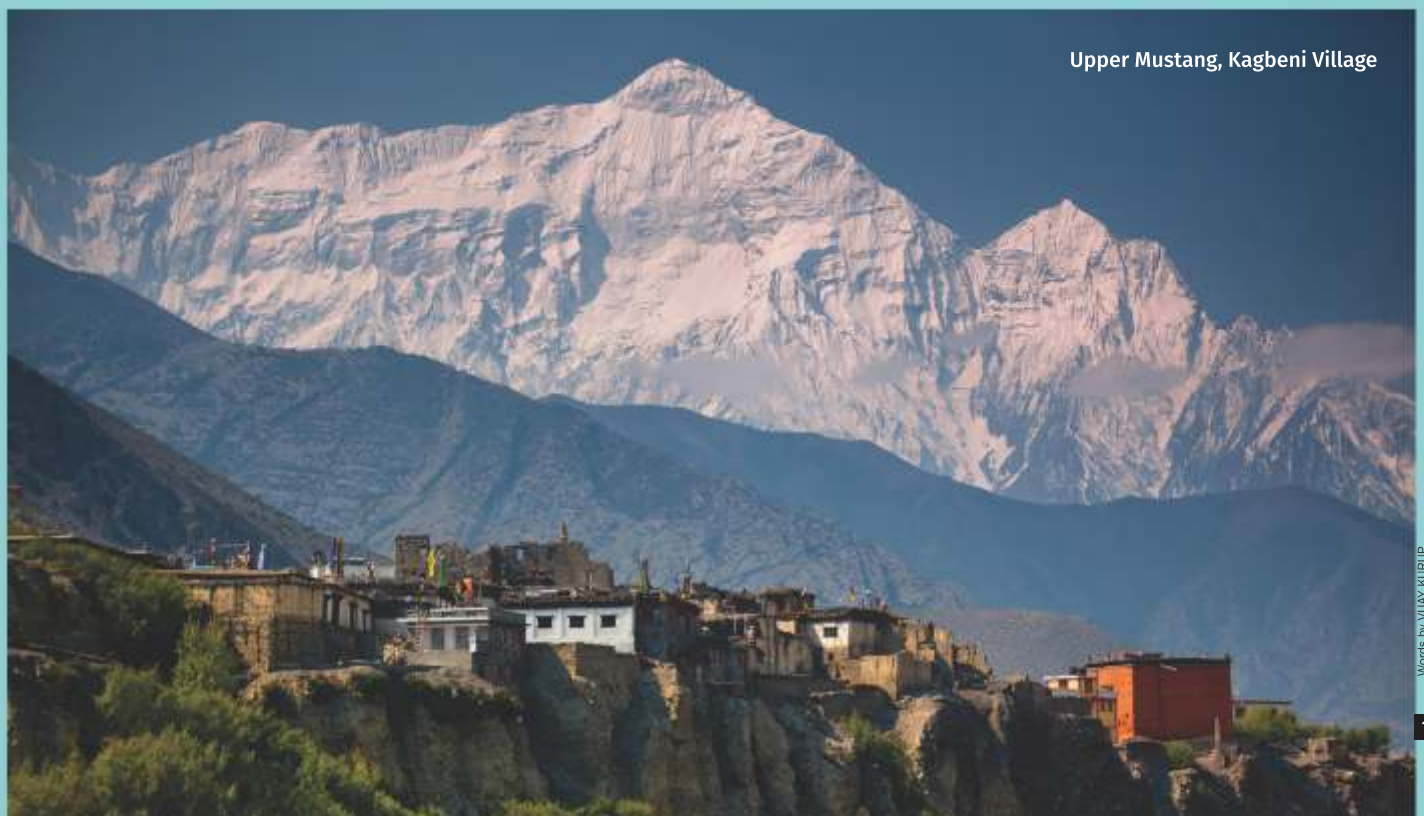
another manifestation where two religions come together in veneration of each other. Each respecting the beliefs of the other. Each religion has the breadth of dimension to respect their own religion, without in any way being disrespectful towards other religions.

“While there might be different paths, all paths led to the same truth...” It is an enchanting experience in symbiosis. ■



Jwala Mai Temple

Source: Vladimir Zhogal/Shutterstock



Upper Mustang, Kagbeni Village



# ECO-TRAILS IN GUJARAT

Toran Hotels make an ideal  
base to visit The Ecotourism Sites  
of Gujarat.



Dalmatian Pelican

BOAT SAFARI  
AT  
NALSAROVAR





A drive of about one or one-and-a-half hour from the Toran Hotel at Ahmedabad brings you to the Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary, especially significant for its spectacular congregations of wetland birds during the winter months. An elliptical lake sprawls across the 121 sq km sanctuary area and is dotted with about 360 tiny islets. Members of local communities like the Jaths and the Padhars operate country boats on the lake, using long poles to negotiate the aquatic

vegetation of the predominantly shallow lake. Start by scanning the margins of the lake which can be very good for viewing wading and waterside birds. As you progress over the water, you could see ibises and spoonbills feeding in the shallow waters of the lake, herons and storks spearing fish, and rafts of ducks floating over the water. Both greater and lesser flamingos could be seen during a boat trip at Nalsarovar. In winter, huge flocks of demoiselle and common cranes

gather at the lakes, while the sarus crane is usually seen round the year in surrounding fields. Rosy white and dalmatian pelicans fish in the open waters of the lake. Large flocks of greylag geese can be seen in winter. The lake is also an important raptor habitat with Palla's fish eagle and greater spotted eagle among the birds of prey that could be seen.

#### Where to stay:

Toran Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad





## MARINE ECO-TOURISM AROUND DWARKA

**D**warka lies on the seacoast, facing beaches, where you can hope to see a variety of shore birds. A short drive from Dwarka, Okha Madhi is a long and beautiful sandy beach. Along this beach is a Turtle Hatchery. The western coast of Kathiawad is an important breeding zone for endangered green sea turtles. The green sea turtles are among the largest of marine turtles with a gleaming olive carapace, unique in being herbivorous. They lay eggs on the beaches, and the hatchlings have a

perilous journey to the sea when they can fall prey to gulls and other birds, crabs, stray dogs and other predators. Eggs in potentially dangerous areas for the hatchlings are collected and kept in the hatchery.

Drive next to Charakhla, the salt pans, where you can expect to see thousands of flamingos, hundreds of pelicans, huge flocks of grebe, painted storks, spoonbill and other birds. Just near Charakhla, visit the Okhai centre set up by Tata Chemicals at Mithapur, where you can shop for appliqué and

eco-friendly products by local artisans. You can watch Bhopa Rabaris at work on mirror work, patchwork and embroidery at the Okhamandal villages.

Near Mithapur, Shivrajpur is one of the finest beaches in Gujarat with lovely white sands. Along the beach are tented camps with showers and changing rooms for those who come to enjoy water-based activities like scuba diving and jet skiing. Green Soldiers Scuba is operated by Nirav Parikh who is an internationally certified diver with a flag proudly flying over his tent. Operators here will set up a scuba-diving lesson for you and during your dive, you will see a variety of colourful fish, coral reefs and marine invertebrates.

From Shivrajpur, proceed to Okha. Rahemat Cruise Seva runs a sea safari here by boat. During the cruise, you can hope to spot dolphins. The cruise includes a stop at Bet Dwarka, an island with temples, a gurdwara and a dargah. Dunny Point at Bet Dwarka is an excellent place to walk in the intertidal zone to see marine life – sea hare, octopus and other marine invertebrates can be seen in the rock pools. To see beautiful coral formations, visit Positra.

Drive towards Jamnagar, and turn off the highway for Narara, an island. Wading in the shallows, you could see a variety of marine invertebrate including species of octopus, sea hare and other mollusca, echinoderms like starfish, brittle star, feather star and sea urchin, sea anemone, crabs and other crustaceans, segmented and unsegmented worms, etc. as well as interesting fish like the puffer. In a landmark move in 1980, Gujarat set aside 458 sq km offshore waters of the Gulf including the islands as a marine nature reserve, which was further divided in 1982 into a 295 sq km Marine Sanctuary and 162 sq km Marine National Park. Narara is part of this marine nature reserve. There is a museum here too.

### Where to stay:

Toran Tourist Bungalow, Dwarka



Flamingo at Narara Marine National Park



Handheld Crab



Source: Osh/Shutterstock



Shivrajpur Beach



Okha and Beyt Dwarka



# BIRDWATCHING WALK AT THOL

**T**hol Bird Sanctuary is about 45 minutes to one hour drive from Ahmedabad. The shallow water reservoir and predominantly open water area was largely created in the early-1900s by the Gaekwad Princely State. The drive to the lake goes through fields, where you can often see the tall sarus cranes. The fields are feeding grounds

for many migratory birds like greylag and bar-headed geese, demoiselle and common eastern cranes, and ducks. The trees around the lake provide good roosting areas. You can expect to see about 80 species of birds during a winter day spent at Thol. Carry a good pair of binoculars and wear good shoes for walking on the embankments from

where you can watch the waterfowl. Flamingos, pelicans, storks, spoonbill and ducks abound, while waders are seen close to the margins. The bushes and trees can also yield good bird sightings.

**Where to stay:**

Toran Gandhi Ashram, Ahmedabad



Thol Lake



White Throated Kingfisher



Flamingo



Eurasian Spoonbill



Egret







Green Bee-Eater



Porbandar Bird Sanctuary



Madhavpur Beach

## ECO-TOUR AROUND PORBANDAR

**P**orbandar is a city where flamingos, pelicans, storks, ducks and other birds have become accustomed to human activity. Close views of flamingos are possible at the Khuchdi coastal marshes near Porbandar, the lakes and coastal creeks in Porbandar city, and the Porbandar

Bird Sanctuary. The offshore waters between Porbandar and Veraval are the breeding ground of the whale shark, the world's largest fish, and a world famous zone for fisheries. Green sea turtles breed at beaches along the Porbandar – Okha stretch. Mokarsagar is a great zone for bird spotting while Madhavpur Beach

is famous for its sea turtles.

From Porbandar, you can visit the Barda Hills, which have many places of scenic, ecological, architectural and historical importance.

### Where to stay:

Toran, Porbandar



**E**cological tourism or ecotourism, a growing global concept that encourages forms of tourism that generate considerable revenue for local communities and the upgradation of the destination. This form of tourism generally refers to, though is not limited to, areas of natural importance like wildlife sanctuaries and national parks.

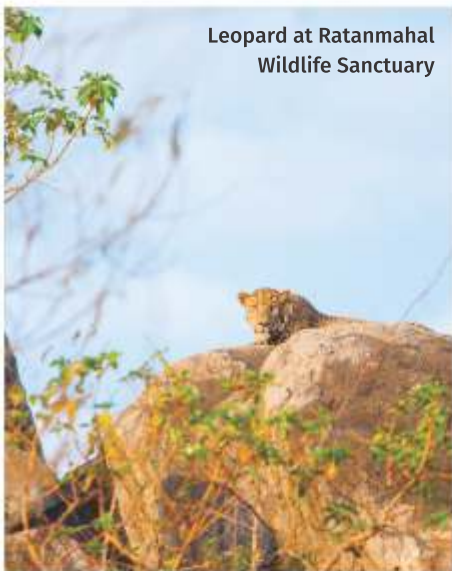
Gujarat has tremendous potential for ecotourism because of its sheer variety of wildlife reserves like the deciduous hill forests of Ratanmahal Sloth Bear Sanctuary, the Marine National Park, the dry forests of Sasan Gir, the hill forests of Purna Sanctuary, and the moist forests of Vansda National Park.

# FORESTS OF EASTERN GUJARAT

With village eco-development as an important aspect of its eco development project, many of the local communities have been involved in the ecotourism program through the eco-development committees formed for the purpose. The ecotourism initiatives include eco-

tourism camps and interpretation zones. The development of these tourism sites involves sharing income for the economic development of the local communities and employing them in maintenance of facilities.

Leopard at Ratanmahal  
Wildlife Sanctuary



Indian Pangolin



Golden Silk Orb  
at Purna Wildlife Sanctuary



Sasan Gir Forest





# EAST GUJARAT

An interesting tour begins in Vadodara and runs east to the hills of Pavagadh. Within these hills are situated forts, historical temples, ruined palaces, stepwells, mosques and pavilions that comprise the UNESCO-approved World Heritage Site of Champaner - Pavagadh. Scenically beautiful, the 800-plus metre high hill of Pavagadh offers remarkable panoramas from its slopes and summit. This is a good site for trekking, rock-climbing and practicing basic mountaineering skills, and has considerable potential for various mountain-based adventure tourism activities and ecotourism development.

Further east from Pavagadh is Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary, a beautiful forest with stands of teak, mixed vegetation and bamboo covering rolling hills. The sanctuary is beautified by Kada and Targol water bodies. Kada is a pretty reservoir with a rest house and camp site. Another scenically attractive site is Jhand Hanuman with water. As this sanctuary was part of Jambughoda feudal state, it also has a heritage hotel along its outskirts. The forests are inhabited by leopard, hyena, jackal, blue bull, wild boar, four-horned antelope, barking deer and porcupine among other mammals. It has a good birdlife and is interesting for reptiles. Ecotourism takes into account the Bhilala, Nayaka and other tribal groups that live in the settlements in the Jambughoda valleys.

Further east, the Ratanmahal Sloth Bear Sanctuary has the largest bear population in Gujarat and forms a sloth



Jambughoda Wildlife Sanctuary, Champaner

bear corridor with the neighbouring hills of Madhya Pradesh. Treks go through deciduous forests to the hilltops with panoramas of rugged topography and a hill station like atmosphere. The sunset view from the hills is simply breathtaking. The gathering of sloth bears when the mahuda trees in flower or ber trees in fruit is characteristic of the Ratanmahal hill habitat. The sanctuary is also inhabited by leopard, striped hyena, jackal, four-horned antelope, mongoose, porcupine, civet cat, jungle cat, hanuman langur, flying squirrel and other mammals. It is a good area to watch birds like grey jungle fowl and Alexandrine parakeets, which are not easily seen in Gujarat. Ratanmahal has ecological significance as the catchment area of rivers and it falls in the Dahod – Devgadhi Baria belt, which has a large tribal population. Between the Jambughoda and the Ratanmahal Sanctuaries is the Kevdi Forest, an

ecotourism site.

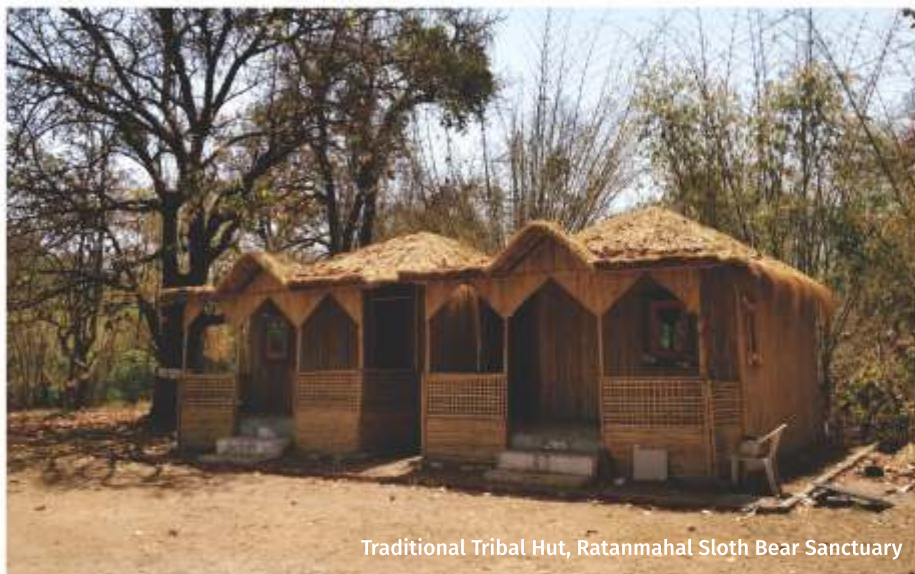
While returning to Vadodara, you can visit the Wadhvana Lake – an excellent site for watching water birds especially between November and March.

To the southeast of Vadodara, Narmada district has good sites around Rajpipla like Vishalkhadi forests on a hilltop, Karjan Dam, which attracts water birds, Kevadia by the crocodile-rich Sardar Sarovar Dam, Jarwani Ecotourism site, and the Sagai ecotourism site in the Shoolpaneshwar Wildlife Sanctuary inhabited by sloth bear, leopard, four-horned antelope, deer, rhesus macaque, jungle cat, civet, giant brown flying squirrel, etc. This sanctuary is a prime birding area specially for watching eagles.

## Where to stay:

Toran Champaner









Gira Waterfall - Waghai

## ECO-TOURISM SITES OF THE DANG DISTRICT

**S**outhern Gujarat has the Sahyadri Hills covered with moist deciduous forests, evergreen flora and some really fine bamboo jungles. These forests are good for orchid viewing and butterfly spotting. Many birds characteristic of the Western Ghats biotypes can be seen in these hills.

The Padamdungari Eco-Tourism Site, about 30 km from Vyara town, and 8 km from Unnai village, is situated amongst the Sahyadri ranges by the river Ambika with deep, dense, multi-layered forests

among undulating landscapes. This is the habitat of leopards, lesser cats, lesser canines, herbivores and reptiles. This is a good site for trekking, trails, sunset viewing, nature observation, relaxing, medical groves, nature bazaars, and visits to places like Chand-surya, Unnai Mataji and Ghusmaai temples, Waghai Botanical Gardens, timber workshop, Vansda National Park, Geermaadh Falls and the sacred Shabridham. Among the possibilities are river activities like tubing, rafting,

floating etc. on river Ambika, riverside dining and weekend breaks from Surat.

Along the same river, Kilad Camp is located just off Vansda-Waghai road. It is good for nature trails in the Vansda National Park during which multi storied forests, rich biodiversity, medicinal plant species, flowery shrubs, riverine woodlands and aquatic ecosystems can be explored.

### Where to stay:

Toran Hill Resort, Saputara



**K**utch supports a rich biodiversity including some rare animals and birds and rare flowering plants.

The sanctuary has all three species of bustards- Great Indian Bustard, Houbara Bustard and Lesser Florican found in India, the black francolin, about 19 species of raptors, spiny-tailed lizards, and more. Start with the Narayan Sarovar Sanctuary, which is one of the best places to see the chinkara or Indian gazelle. Travel to the Lala Bustard Sanctuary near Naliya, where the Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican are successfully breeding, and the Macqueen's Bustard visits in winter. Critically endangered vultures and vulnerable birds like black-naped tit, Stoliczka's bushchat and sarus crane are also seen at this sanctuary. This sanctuary is also an important habitat of the Indian wolf.

# TRIPS AROUND NARAYAN SAROVAR

East from here, the Chhari Dund is a lake set in the Banni grasslands. It attracts huge congregations of waterfowl and waterside birds. Drive around the Banni grasslands, where you can see grassland birds and raptors like eagles, falcons, buzzards and hawks. Nearby, Fulay village is one of the most likely

places to see the grey hypocolius.

Take the road to Kala Dungar. The hilltop Dattatraya temple here is unique in that jackals come to enjoy the temple offerings.

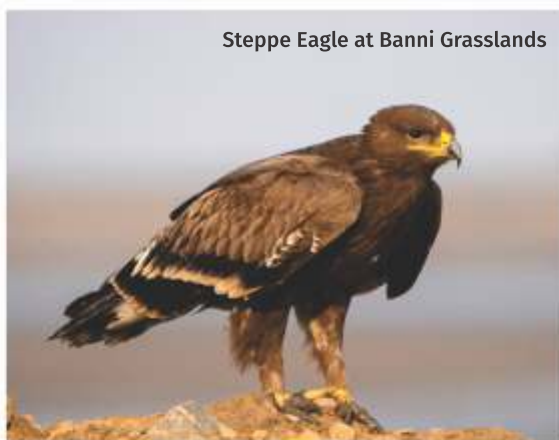
## Where to stay:

Toran Narayan Sarovar

Kalo Dungar



Steppe Eagle at Banni Grasslands



Courser



Grey Hypocolius



Narayan Sarovar







## Where VVIPs gather...

Gujarat has been witnessing many high profile conferences these days. Thanks to Tent City Narmada, a luxurious nature resort at Statue of Unity, Kevadia. With VVIP dignitaries like Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, State heads and senior government officials, Tent City Narmada has been a preferred destination for high profile government events and conferences.

Among the recently organized events, Summer Meet for Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Sector was organized on 19th April, 2022. The conference was attended by Shri Parshottam Rupala, Hon. Union Cabinet Minister, MoFAHD, GoI, Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, Hon. Minister of State, MoFAHD, GoI, Dr. L. Murugan, Hon. Minister of States, MoFAHD, GoI and senior delegates from Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries Dept., GoI.

14th Conference of Central Council

of Health & Family Welfare (CCHFW), organized during 5-7 May, 2022, was graced with the presence of Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Hon. Union Minister, MoHFW, GoI, Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel, Hon. Chief Minister of Gujarat, State Health Ministers, State Health Secretaries and State Mission Directors (NHM) among many other VVIP delegates.

On 20th May, 2022, Celebration of World Bee Day (WBD) was a conference attended by Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Hon. Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, GoI, Ms. Mateja Vodeb Ghosh, Ambassador, Embassy of Slovenia, dignitaries from NBHM, NBB and Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India. There were 35 exhibition stalls showcasing varieties of honey and related products. More than 1000 bee farmers from all over India attended the event, while the exhibition was participated by State Bee Boards, Agriculture Universities.





## About Tent City Narmada

A spectacular collection of 200 air-conditioned tents, Tent City Narmada sprawls across an area of 50,000 sq.m with a fascinating backdrop of hills, wooded areas and fresh air. Modern amenities like room décor and services, delectable cuisines, professional and humble staff, a wide array of entertainment and cultural programs and sightseeing tours add to the charm.

Redefining the concept of 'Business with Leisure', Tent City Narmada is an ideal conference venue well-equipped with modern amenities and 3 sophisticated conference halls that can host 100-1000 guests.





# Tanzania

*A paradise with a turbulent history*

*It is difficult to dwell on the attributes of Tanzania and its archipelago of semi-autonomous regions. They are many and varied. Its fabulous sweeping landscape teems with wildlife; it is home to one of the most beautiful mountains in the world. Mount Kilimanjaro with its summit looming over the clouds looks more like a fabled mountain. Three of the largest lakes on the continent are found here. Its beach islands are as enchantingly bewitching as any that abound the Indian Ocean.*











Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa and includes the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba and Mafia. But this sunny paradise has a dark history. Over several centuries, generations of East Africans were sold as slaves by Muslim Arabs to the outside world. In the greed for money, families - mother, children and father - were ruthlessly separated from each other, never to be united again; never to return to their homes again. They were the people without voice; they were people of the lesser gods. It was a period when life was cheap and terrible diseases ravaged the cities.

In 1840, Dr. David Livingstone, the world-famous British explorer, gave up his lucrative medical practice in London and travelled to Africa in search of the source of the river Nile. His motives however, were different. He had claimed

that if he found the source of the river Nile, it would give him fame which he could leverage to put an end to the scrooge of slavery, then rampant in Africa. After he landed on the shores of Zanzibar and went into the deep heartland of Africa, nothing was known of him to the outside world for several years, until Henry Morton Stanley, a Welsh-American explorer, journalist, embarked in search of him.

For Stanley searching out Dr Livingstone was like looking for a needle in a haystack. After several months of arduous trek that had moments of life-threatening situations, he finally thought he found Dr. Livingstone, in Ujiji, in western Tanzania. However, Stanley was still not sure if the person that his porters had pointed out to him was the man he had come looking for. He had no choice, but to step forward. Nervously

he walked up to him and uttered those famous words which had since become hallowed in the annals of English literature. He asked the ageing gentleman:

**"Dr Livingstone, I presume?"**

**"Yes." Dr Livingstone had replied. It was 10th November 1871.**

The location of the Livingstone Museum and Memorial in Ujiji, the place where the two had met. The museum is small and contains some artefacts. It also depicts the practice of slave trade that was in vogue then. Visit the Ujiji market, where pretty much the ambience has remained unchanged for centuries.





Stone Town of Zanzibar



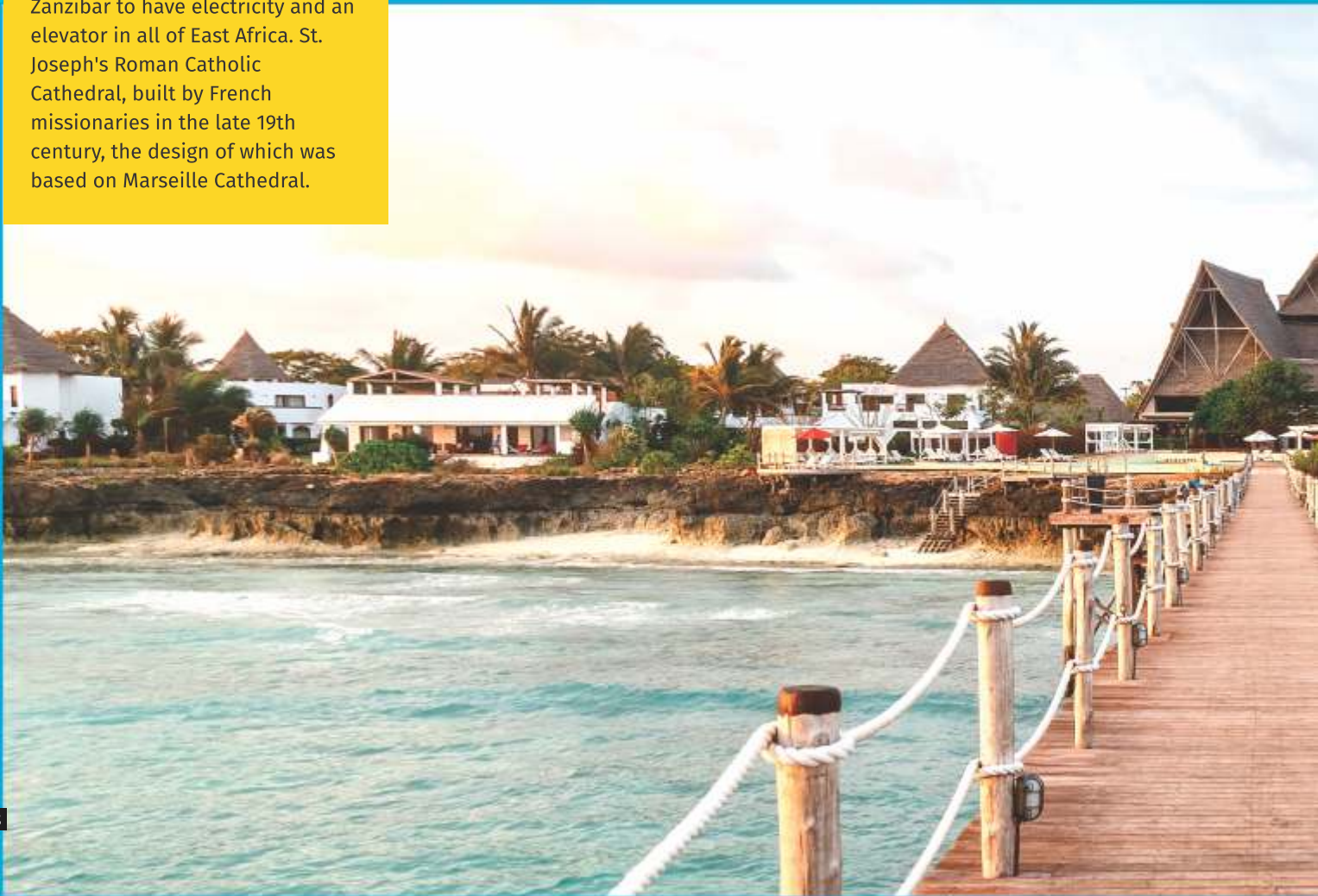
The Stone Town of Zanzibar is a UNESCO heritage site. It is the town where slave-trading was finally terminated. It is a quintessential coastal trading town of East Africa that still retains the aura of the multi ethnic trading town that it once was. It was a cauldron of Swahili (people of Zanzibar), Arabs, Indians, Europeans and far eastern tradesmen and workers, drawn to this town in search of fortune.



**T**he town still has many fine buildings of the 18th and 19th century. Its architecture and town planning are unique. The grand Arabian mansions along the narrow streets and winding alleys can still be seen. The houses have big brass studded wooden doors, a sight that is common in Kerala and Tamil Nadu homes. The double storey houses with long narrow rooms look down into an open courtyard, not very different from the Havelis of Rajasthan. It is a town rich in vibrant culture.

Many prominent buildings are still standing. The Old Fort, built by Omani Arabs after expelling the Portuguese in 1699. The fort was built over the site of an earlier Portuguese church; The House of Wonder, a large ceremonial palace built by Sultan Barghash. It was called the House of Wonder because it was the first building in Zanzibar to have electricity and an elevator in all of East Africa. St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Cathedral, built by French missionaries in the late 19th century, the design of which was based on Marseille Cathedral.

The House of Wonder





Mnemba Island



There are delightful beaches to suit your idiosyncratic tastes. The beach on the Mnemba Island, located off Zanzibar's northeast shore, is a private getaway. It is exclusive and luxurious. The island is less than half a kilometre in diameter, circumscribed with sugar white sands.

However, if you are of gregarious disposition, the Nungwi Beach located at the northern tip of Zanzibar is notorious for its energetic ambience. The tourists jostle with the locals beseeching to buy their wares. These wares, incidentally, are ingeniously made from palm trees.

Nungwi Beach, Zanzibar Island





Saadani National Park



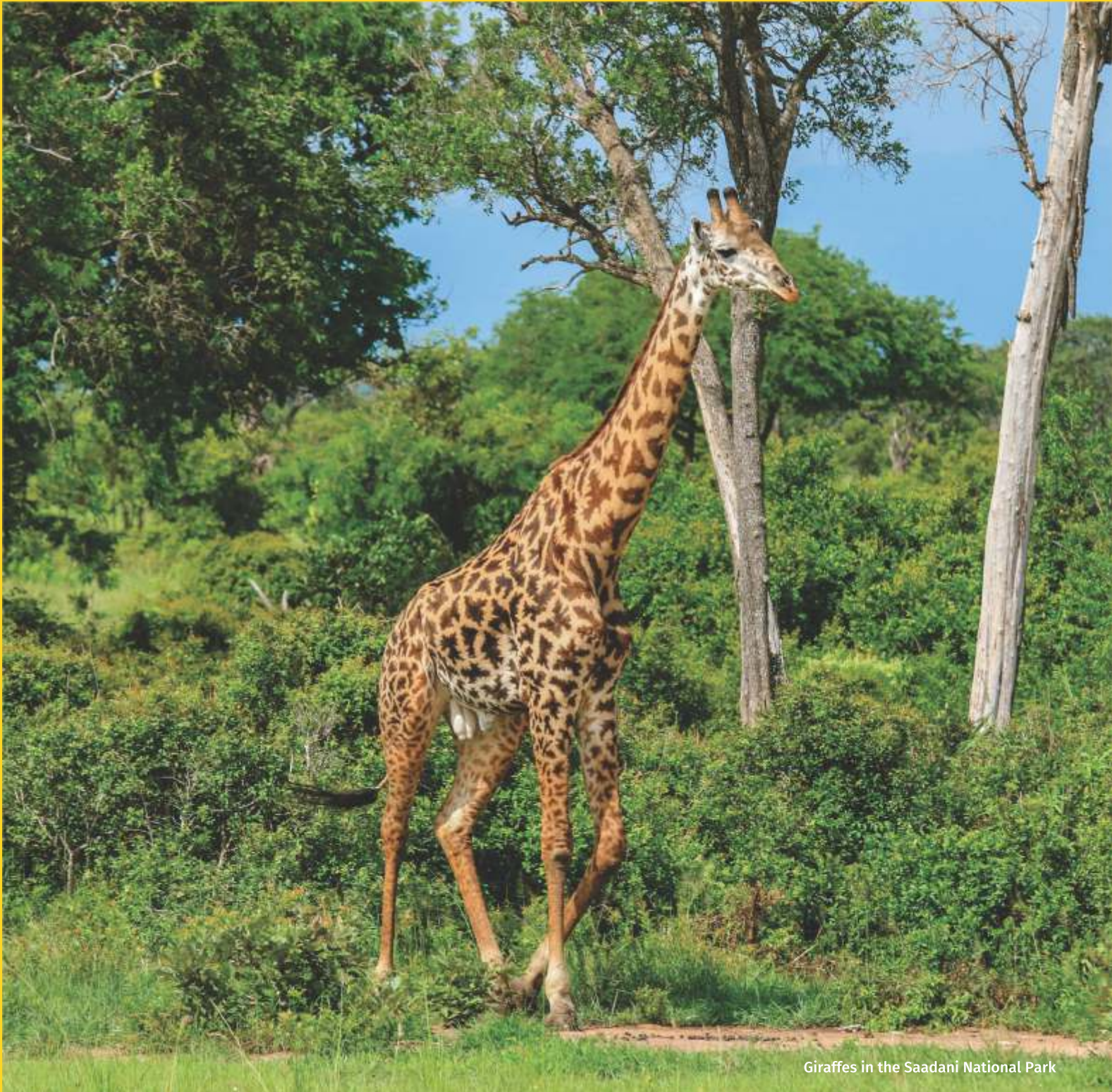
Salt with Red Algae



Saadani National Park







Giraffes in the Saadani National Park

Saadani National Park is about a hundred kilometres north of Dar es Salaam. The eastern edge of the park borders the Indian Ocean. Sometimes

you can see the animals venturing from the mangrove forests onto the beaches. There are many more waterfronts with sparkling white sands, turquoise blue

waters, fringed with palm trees. In the distance you can see the dhows calmly chugging along, which once were packed with slaves being forcibly taken away.



**M**ount Kilimanjaro in the Tanzania mainland can easily qualify as one of the most beautiful mountains in the world. What enhances its beauty is that owing to the flat terrain of the African landscape and

being the world's tallest free-standing mountain, the full height and the length of the mountain can be seen in all its glory from miles around. Many people are deluded into thinking that a mountain just 205 miles from the

equator, should be an easy climb. Mount Kilimanjaro in the heart of Africa lulls many people into that sense of complacency.

The death rate on Everest is 14 per 100 climbers, on K2 it is a staggering





figure of 25. On Mount Kilimanjaro it is 0.1 per 100 climbers. Mount Kilimanjaro is just 2950 metres short of Everest. It is not a technical peak that calls for a high level of skill. Yet about half of the people who attempt it, fail, due to scant

preparation and improper acclimatisation, inadequate preparation for their climb and improper gears. An ascent to Kilimanjaro can last 7 to 9 days. The slower you ascend, the easier it would be for the body to acclimatise

to the high altitude of the rarefied atmosphere. Do not be disheartened by these numbers. As someone said, "Kilimanjaro is known as "Everyman's Everest" because it is a challenge that is completely doable by laymen."



Mount Kilimanjaro



Big Five of Serengeti National Park





As national parks go, the Serengeti National Park is far different from the standard definition of a park. The park has three distinct regions in accordance with the habitats of the wild beasts. The Serengeti savannah is where the wildebeests roam on the grassy plains. In the second region, where the Mara River courses through the area, it is home to crocodiles and hippopotamuses.

The third region is the northern Serengeti, where the hills and woodlands

are an ideal habitat for elephants and giraffes. The predators are, of course, found everywhere.

The park is home of the Big Five - elephants, lions, buffalo, rhinoceros, and leopard. These five animals are prized for the parts of their body. The elephant for its tusks; leopard for its skin; rhinoceros for its horns; the lion and buffalo heads for display as trophies.

Selous is the largest game reserve in Africa, covering almost 5% of Tanzania's total area. Arusha National Park, among

the smaller parks, has a range of habitats. Black and white Colobus monkeys can be seen here. Mount Meru, the second highest mountain in Tanzania and Ngurdoto Crater are located in this park. The Ruaha National Park is famous for the work of Jane Goodall, on Chimpanzees. The British researcher was invited by the Tanzanian Government in 1960 to study the wild chimpanzees. Katavi National Park is located in a remote region. Few of the parks have not been developed and are prohibited for tourists.



Mount Meru



Serengeti National Park



Source: Rob Atterton/Shutterstock

Selous Game Reserve

Red-Headed Rock Lizard, Ruaha National Park







The Ngorongoro Crater



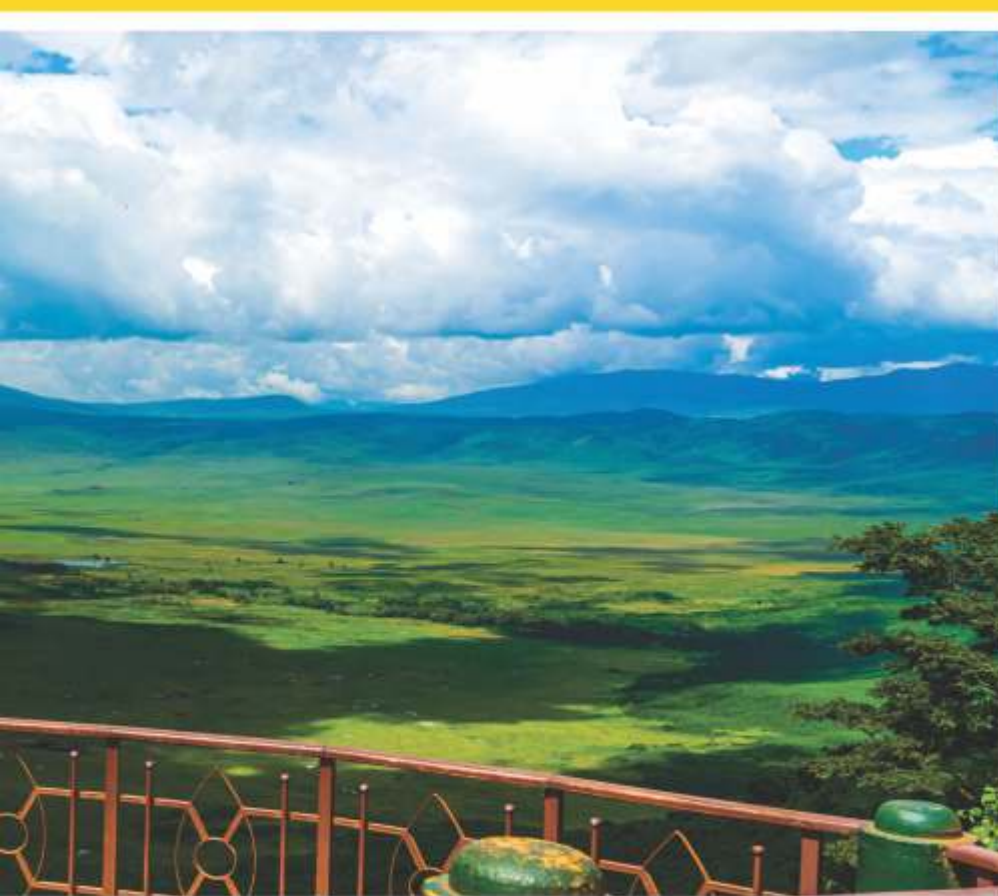




The Ngorongoro Crater, the extinct volcanic caldera in the Eastern Great Rift Valley, in northern Tanzania, was formed as a result of a gigantic volcanic explosion, three million years ago. The ground exploded and collapsed on itself, forming a caldera 600 feet deep and covering an area of about 250 sq. km. All that is visible now is this huge concave shaped land of serene wilderness. It is a classic location for game viewing, as wildlife events unfold.

The sheer variety and the number of animals residing here is bewildering. As I stand in the quietude of early hours of the morning, my eyes sweep across the vast bewitching landscape, a passage on the internet comes to my mind.

“Every morning in Africa, a gazelle wakes up, it knows it must outrun the fastest lion or it will be killed. Every morning in Africa, a lion wakes up. It knows it must run faster than the slowest gazelle, or it will starve. It doesn't matter whether you're the lion or a gazelle-when the sun comes up, you'd better be running.”





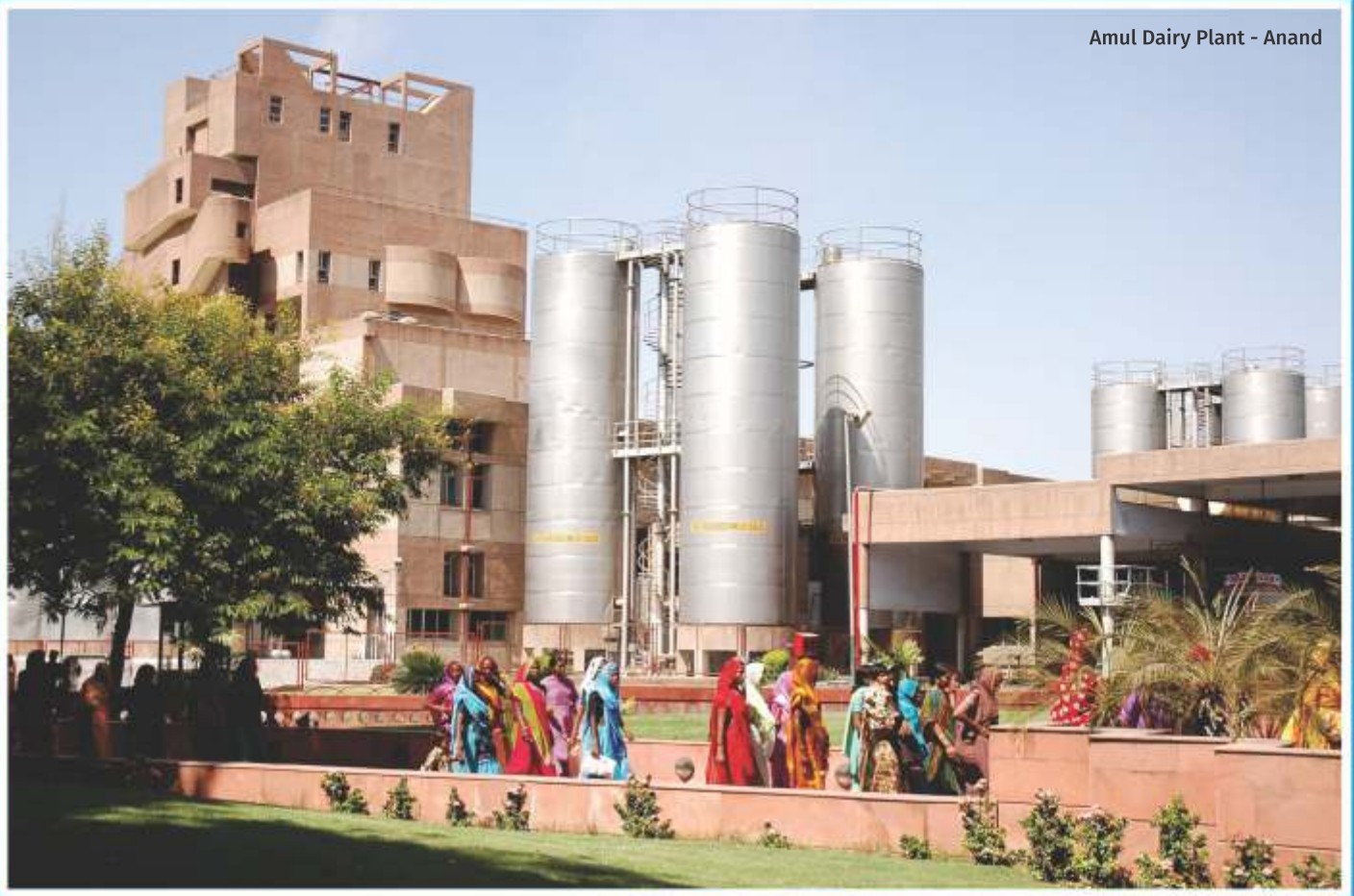
# Dairy Tour of GUJARAT

Gujarat is justly famous for its milk products. This is where the white revolution started and transformed the milk production industry of India. Visit some of the famous dairy towns of Gujarat.





Amul Dairy Plant - Anand



## GET AN INSIGHT INTO THE EPICENTRE OF THE WHITE REVOLUTION AT ANAND

From 1946, AMUL is a cooperative brand by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF), which spurred India's White Revolution. The success story of this cooperative movement led to it becoming the model that has made India the world's largest producer of milk and dairy products.

Once you get to Anand, take the AMUL Dairy Road to visit the dairy's museum, inaugurated on Dr V Kurien's 80th birthday, 26th November 2000, commemorating his work in revolutionising the dairy sector. He was the man behind Operation Flood and the billion-litre idea that shot India from a milk deficient nation to the world's largest dairy producer. Kurien pioneered the effort of replicating the Anand model to villages all over India.

The museum takes you through the milk revolution of Anand and the impact

on the freedom struggle, and the growth of the milk co-operative ever since it was formed. Walk through the gallery with its large images and attend the audiovisual show. The two-hour guided walk through Amul's butter and dry milk plant in Anand, takes you through the operations, technology and processes of the plant. You can see photographs of Indian and International luminaries of the sector.



Dudhsagar Dairy Plant - Mehsana



## SEE THE ARCHI- TECTURE OF THE DUDHSAGAR DAIRY IN MEHSANA

**D**udhsagar Dairy is an architectural masterpiece designed by Achyut Kanvinde, who worked in functionalist approaches

with elements of Brutalist architecture characterised by minimalist constructions that showcase the bare building materials and structural elements instead of decoration.

The architect used the slope of the site to create the multi-level building, where the pumping system was replaced by the use of gravity, resulting in energy and cost savings. The milk received via trucks is collected at the concrete decks at the highest level. Then milk is transferred to the pasteurisation level followed by the condensation and powder plants respectively at lower levels. The walls are built of bricks with machinery areas connected by bridges, walkways and stairs. Instead of exhaust fans to evacuate heat, the ventilation ducts are built around the milk reception building and the processing plants linking all spaces. The slit windows in the walls bring in natural

light and air while the spaces with machinery are artificially lighted to maintain hygiene. You will need special permission to visit the plant but you can see the impressive landmark complex from the main road.

Don't miss having the fresh ice-creams at retail outlets near the dairy plant.







## ENJOY MILK SWEETS IN PALANPUR

**P**alanpur is the headquarters of Banaskantha district which has large dairy plants like that of Banas Dairy. There is also a huge livestock research station that is working for scientific management of indigenous breeds like the Kankrej cow.

What is unique about Palanpur is that Madhvi Dairy here runs its own restaurant and retail outlets for its sweets made from fresh milk produced at its organic farm Gajeku, which follows

sustainable practises for low water use irrigation and the use of biodegradable materials, Galbiben Jethabhai Kuniya, from the family, was awarded by Mahindra Samriddhi Agri India Awards 2011. When visiting Palanpur, you must have the Madhvi Peda, Banarasi Ladoo, Kalajam and Lassi from Madhvi Dairy.

## RELAX AT THE FARM IN DANTA

**B**havani Villa is a homestay at Danta set in a heritage property

belonging to the erstwhile royal family. The owners have a sprawling farm that is delightful for walking, cycling or even cross-country rides. They also have their own Marwari horses. Carry a picnic lunch with you and relax at the farm with views of their horses and cattle. You can see the dairy activities on the farm.





Goat Milk Cheese



## BUY GOAT MILK CHEESE AT SAYLA

**S**ayla lies in Surendranagar district, the region called Zalavad or Jhalawad as it was largely ruled by the Jhala Rajput dynasties. This is a district known for its sheep and goats, including the Zalavadi breed. The breed grazes on herbs and this gives its milk a distinctive flavour and aroma. The climate of the region is very conducive for bacterial growth, which is ideal for

cheese production.

Visit the dairy farm here to buy goat cheese matured in brine. You can buy white cheese packed in dry form, goat milk mozzarella, and Say La Cheddar.

A visit to the dairy can be combined with visiting the pastoral villages where Bharwads keep their goats and sheep, heritage sites of Jhalawad, and the weavers who specialize in patola and tangaliya weaving.

## VISIT THE GIR COW GAUSHALA OF GONDAL

**G**ondal has a rich heritage that is reflected in its buildings and institutions. If you are staying at the heritage properties of Gondal one of the major attractions is visiting the gaushala of Bhuvaneshwari, which maintains cows of the indigenous Gir breed. You can also see the Kathiawadi horses. The farm is located near a lake which is good for birdwatching.

Don't miss visiting the Darbargadh of Gondal, which has an excellent collection of utensils, crockery, hand-painted toys, antique furniture and princely relics.

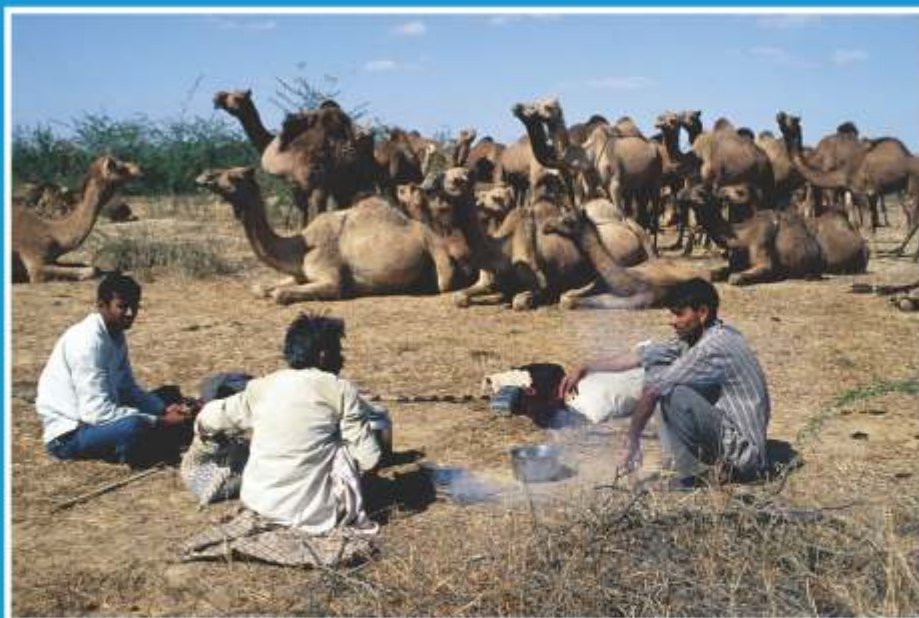


Camel Milk



## TRY CAMEL MILK IN KUTCH

**K**utch is a district that has a huge livestock population. This includes camels, including those from the local Kharai breed. When travelling in Kutch, you can try camel milk at various villages. If you want to be safe with bottled milk, check out camel milk from Sarhad Dairy. 📌

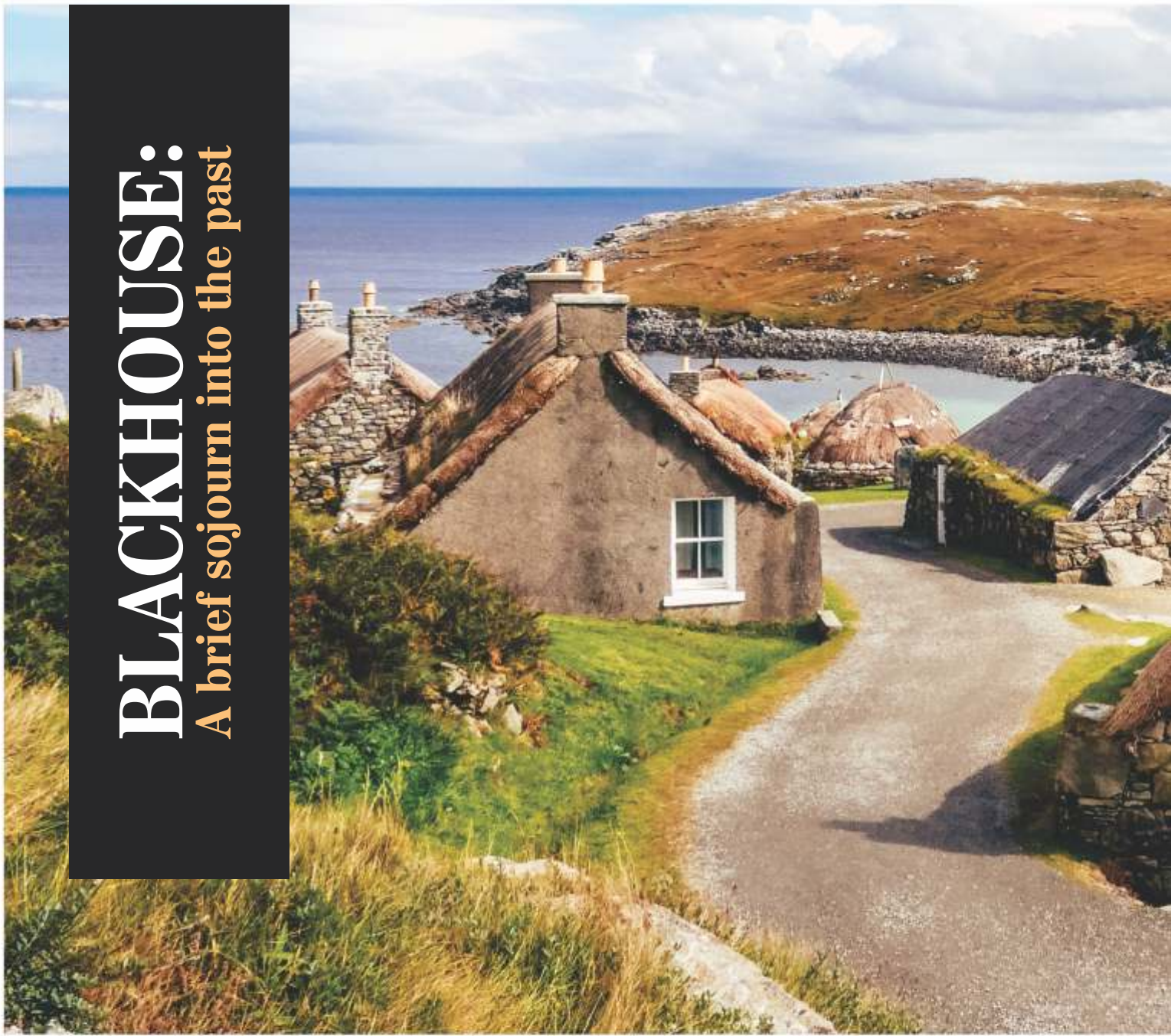


Pic by DINESH SHUKLA



# BLACKHOUSE:

A brief sojourn into the past



They are commonly known as Blackhouses. Built sometime in the 19th century on the cold blustery coast of northern Scotland, these shack-like structures depict a way of life that has since faded.

These are houses that dot the rolling hills of the Hebrides or the Scottish archipelago. Once, these were

dwelling units where people lived and earned their livelihood, today they are resorts that allow tourists to vicariously experience the life people lived two centuries ago - a brief sojourn into the past.

A typical Blackhouse would be an inexpensive eco-friendly dwelling unit, built with materials found locally. The

walls of these cottages are made up of rocks, painstakingly stacked so as to snugly fit into each other. The crevices are then filled with peat and straw to keep out the icy winds bearing down from the Atlantic Ocean. The thatched heathery roofs are covered with fishing nets and weighed down with rocks and secured with ropes. The floor of the





Blackhouse Village, Isle of Lewis

cottages is made up of flagstones. There is a central hearth for the fire. There is no chimney for the smoke to exit, but the smoke is allowed to permeate through the roof and out into the atmosphere, in the process blackening the interiors with soot, thereby giving it its moniker. The roof was frequently re-thatched each year as the soot covered

thatch served as an excellent fertiliser. The architectural style of houses is suitable for the Hebridean weather.

These cottages have a low profile shielding itself from the bitter Atlantic wind. The cottages were rather comfortable for the occupants. These Blackhouses had multiple functions. It was also used not only as pens to accomm-

odate livestock, but also used as a barn for storage purposes. People lived at one end of the house, and the animals lived at the other end, with partitions between them.

Each house has meticulously maintained stone fences around it and with wooden gates, marking off its private area.





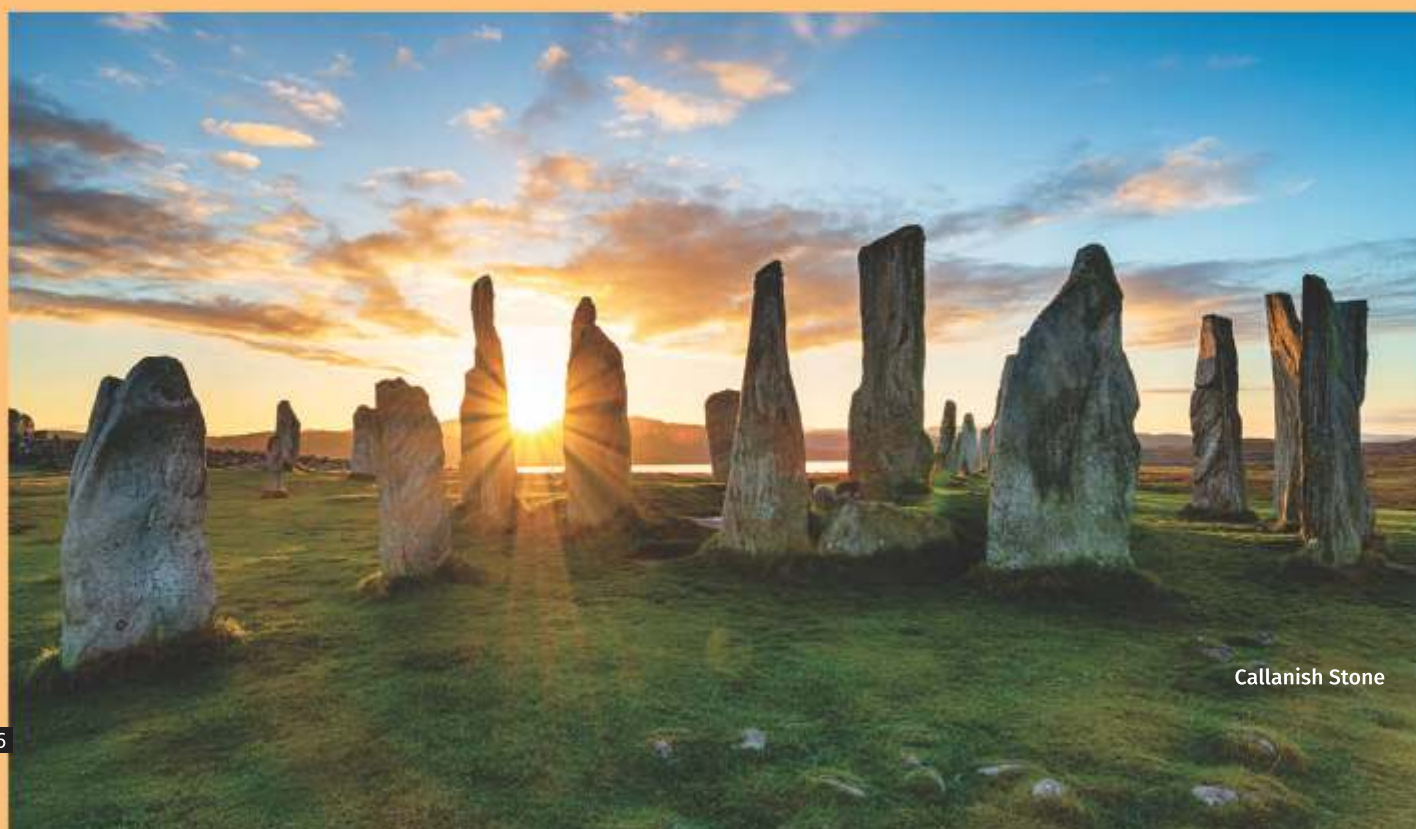
Dun Carloway, Isle of Lewis

One of the best places to see Blackhouses is in the Isle of Lewis, in the village of Gearrannan. Several abandoned Blackhouses have been restored. Gearrannan is a crofting township meaning that the town has a number of small rented farms. Each farm comprises a plot of arable land connected to a house. The tenant holds the right of pasturage that is held in common with other farms.

Habitation in the Gearrannan Blackhouse Village started sometime in the late 1800s. Only a handful of families had moved to this coastal region of Hebrides. It is not known why the people had moved to this remote part of Scotland. However, there has been habitation here since the Iron Age. The nearby Dun Carloway is a testament of people occupying this part of land from ancient times. Dun Carloway is a

broch. Broch is a circular stone tower having an inner and an outer wall. Perched on a hilltop, it probably served as a defensible residence.

The Callanish Stones, nearby, is yet another evidence of people inhabiting this part of the island, dating back to almost 5000 years. These standing stones were erected in the late Neolithic era, and were probably used for some ritual.



Callanish Stone





Interior of Blackhouse





Source: Marion Carmel/Shutterstock

Several Blackhouses are huddled together, insulating each other from the harsh inclement weather. The summers here are short, cool, and windy; the winters are long and very cold. It is wet and cloudy and extremely windy.

You can walk along the coast or the moorland. The Scottish historical novelist, poet, and playwright Sir Walter Scott, author of popular classics like *Ivanhoe*, *The Bride of Lammermoor* and

many more, had based many of his works on this bleak landscape. Robert Louis Stevenson's most famous book *Kidnapped* is based on the moorlands of Scotland. The peculiar landscape has inspired many thriller TV serials.

Many of these Blackhouses are constructed on a hillock that overlooks the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean. They have now been beautifully restored with all the fittings that the original occupants lived with. Each house is

named after its last owner. A brief recorded history of the house can also be obtained. To know more about the history, you can browse in the village museum.

The renovated Blackhouses are now available for holiday accommodations as hostels and family rooms. For the tourists, there's a full range of accommodations; from hostel dorms to multi star rated Blackhouses.

One can enjoy the ambience of





Gearrannan, Scotland

Words by VIJAY KURUP

yesteryears, with all the appurtenances of modern luxury comforts. Each house has a kitchen, fitted with modern amenities, central heating and snug sleeping quarters. As the village road winds down to the shore, it passes along the refurbished houses that abut the road. The houses now have chimneys with neat little windows, looking very much like the quintessential British cottages.

Incidentally, it is in this location

that the world-renowned Harris Tweed is made. It is made out of Cheviot (sheep) wool.

The archaeological sites of Carloway and Callanish Standing Stones are also within walking distance. The Isle of Lewis has one airport, Stornoway. Flights are available from Inverness, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Time comes almost to a halt at the Isle of Lewis. Life in the northern apex of Scotland is enchantingly slow. There is

none of the maelstrom that you are beset with when in a city. The day belongs to you and you only. All that you see is the rolling expanse of the verdant hills and the vast blue ocean.

There are a number of lakes or sea inlets or lochs as they are locally called, abounding in marine and feathered creatures. After the walk in the stiff breeze, one can return to the warm comfort of the Black-houses, just as folks of yesteryears did.<sup>10</sup>



# Gujarat Homestays

*When in Gujarat, be a Gujarati*



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



Toll Free Number: 1800 200 5080 | E-Mail: [info@gujarattourism.com](mailto:info@gujarattourism.com) | [www.gujarattourism.com](http://www.gujarattourism.com)



Explore!





# AN IDEAL VENUE LUXURIOUS STAY CONFERENCE DESTINATION WEDDING

*Safe and Blissful Journey  
Awaits You...*



**200 LUXURIOUS TENTS | ALL MEALS | PACKAGES STARTING FROM ₹ 3,000 P.P.**

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](http://www.tentcitynarmada.com)

For Trade Enquiry:  
**97 12 90 11 41**  
[info@tentcitynarmada.com](mailto:info@tentcitynarmada.com)

OPERATED BY



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