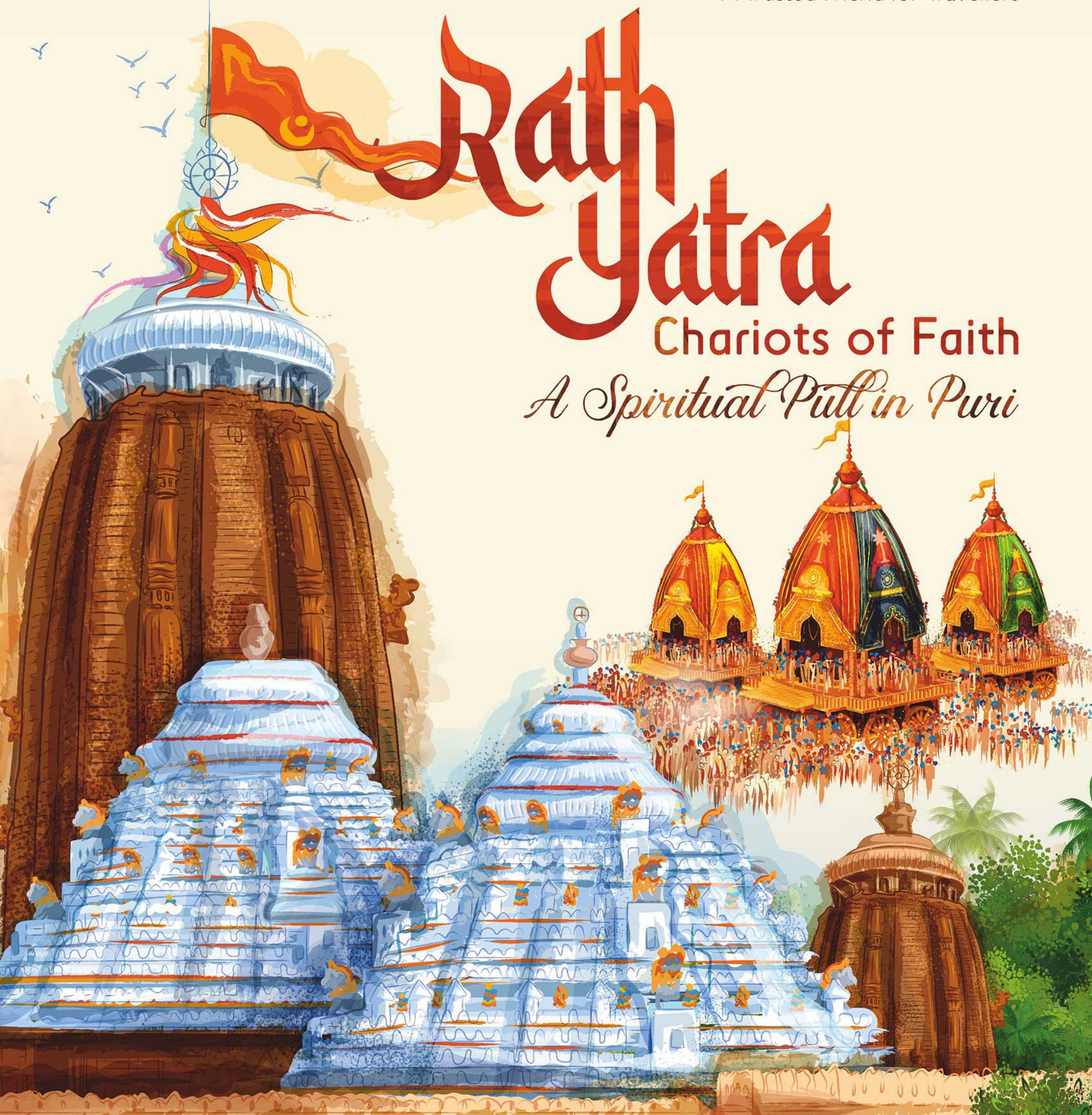


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Rath Yatra

Chariots of Faith

A Spiritual Pull in Puri

PRE MONSOON PEREGRINATION

It's pre-monsoon heat and humidity in the air. However, this unfriendly condition cannot prevent travellers from exploring known and little-known destinations. Besides enthusiasm, shoulder season is another reason passionate travellers like to venture out. A list of Shoulder Season getaways in India allows you to make the most of great discounts, less crowd, and minimum rush for ticket bookings.

Gentle showers herald trials & tribulations for car drivers. If you love to self-drive your vehicles this season, you should pay special attention to road safety. A few tips for car drivers might help you enjoy a trouble-free trip.

Along with this are some essential tips to stay healthy and safe during your monsoon travels. Not to forget what to wear during this showery weather. A list of monsoon wear for men and women is handy for those who constantly strive for their fashion quotient before leaving their homes.

Last but not least are monsoon accessories. Apart from your rainwear, many things can make your travels easy and comfortable. Read the list of products you must buy before planning a monsoon trip.

How was your last monsoon trip? Share your experiences at tourismone@praveg.com.



06

**RATH YATRA:
CHARIOTS OF FAITH
A SPIRITUAL PULL IN PURI**

**THE GREAT WALL OF
KUMBHALGARH:
INDIA'S ANSWER TO
THE GREAT WALL OF CHINA**

54



**DISCOVER
THE PERFECT
SHOULDER SEASON
GETAWAYS IN INDIA**

20



62

**A VISIT TO
HIMACHAL PRADESH**



44

**ESSENTIAL TIPS TO
STAY SAFE HEALTHY
DURING MONSOON TRAVEL**



**EXPLORE THE
WONDERS OF
ANGKOR WAT:
THE 8th WONDER OF
THE WORLD**

66



Shillong, Meghalaya

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Rath Yatra

Chariots of Faith

A Spiritual Pull in Puri

By JAYESH PUROHIT, Staff Writer

*A Journey to Discover
the Hidden Gems of Puri*



Puri, a coastal town nestled in the eastern state of Odisha, India, is a destination that seamlessly blends spirituality, history, and natural beauty. Revered as one of the Char Dham pilgrimages in Hinduism, Puri attracts millions of devotees and tourists each year. Its serene beaches, ancient temples, and rich cultural heritage offer an unparalleled experience to visitors. This article delves into the multifaceted allure of Puri, exploring its historical and spiritual significance, natural attractions, cultural richness, and practical travel tips for an enriching visit.

Historical and Spiritual Significance



Jagannath Temple

The Jagannath Temple, an architectural and spiritual marvel, stands as the cornerstone of Puri's religious significance. Built in the 12th century by King Anantavarman Chodaganga Deva of the Eastern Ganga dynasty, this majestic temple is dedicated to Lord Jagannath, an incarnation of Lord Vishnu. The temple complex, with its towering spire and intricate carvings, epitomizes the Kalinga style of architecture.

At the heart of the temple are the deities: Lord Jagannath, his brother Balabhadra, and sister Subhadra. Unlike typical Hindu idols, these deities are made of wood and are ceremoniously replaced every twelve years in a ritual known as Nabakalebara. The daily rituals and elaborate offerings, known as Mahaprasad, form a vital part of the temple's tradition. Mahaprasad, a sacred food prepared in the temple kitchens, is renowned for its taste and sanctity, attracting devotees who consider it a divine blessing.



Rath Yatra Festival

The Rath Yatra, or Chariot Festival, is Puri's most celebrated event, drawing millions of devotees from across the globe. This grand procession, held annually in June or July, marks the journey of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, and Subhadra from the Jagannath Temple to the Gundicha Temple, their aunt's home. The deities are placed on enormous, intricately decorated chariots and pulled through the streets by enthusiastic devotees.

The sight of the colossal chariots and the fervent devotion of the participants is a spectacle of immense cultural and spiritual significance. Participating in or witnessing the Rath Yatra is believed to be a profoundly purifying experience. For tourists, planning a visit during this festival requires early preparation, as accommodations and transport are in high demand. The vibrant atmosphere and the palpable spiritual energy make the Rath Yatra an unforgettable experience.

Natural Beauty and Attractions

Puri Beaches

Puri's coastline is adorned with beautiful beaches that offer a perfect retreat for relaxation and recreation. The Golden Beach, recently awarded the prestigious Blue Flag certification for its cleanliness and safety, is a favorite among tourists. Puri Beach, located near the Jagannath Temple, is known for its bustling atmosphere, with pilgrims performing rituals along the shore and vendors selling local delicacies. Bc, a quieter and less crowded spot, is ideal for those seeking tranquility and natural beauty.

Visitors can engage in various activities such as swimming, sunbathing, and participating in beach festivals that showcase local culture. The beaches of Puri are not only vital to the local economy through tourism but also hold cultural significance, often serving as venues for traditional ceremonies and festivals. Efforts to maintain the cleanliness and ecological balance of these beaches are ongoing, ensuring they remain pristine for future generations.

Chilika Lake

Chilika Lake, the largest coastal lagoon in India, is a haven for nature lovers and bird watchers. Spread over 1,100 square kilometers, this brackish water lagoon is home to a rich biodiversity, including over 160 species of migratory birds. During the winter months, Chilika becomes a bird-watching paradise, attracting species from as far as Siberia and the Caspian Sea.

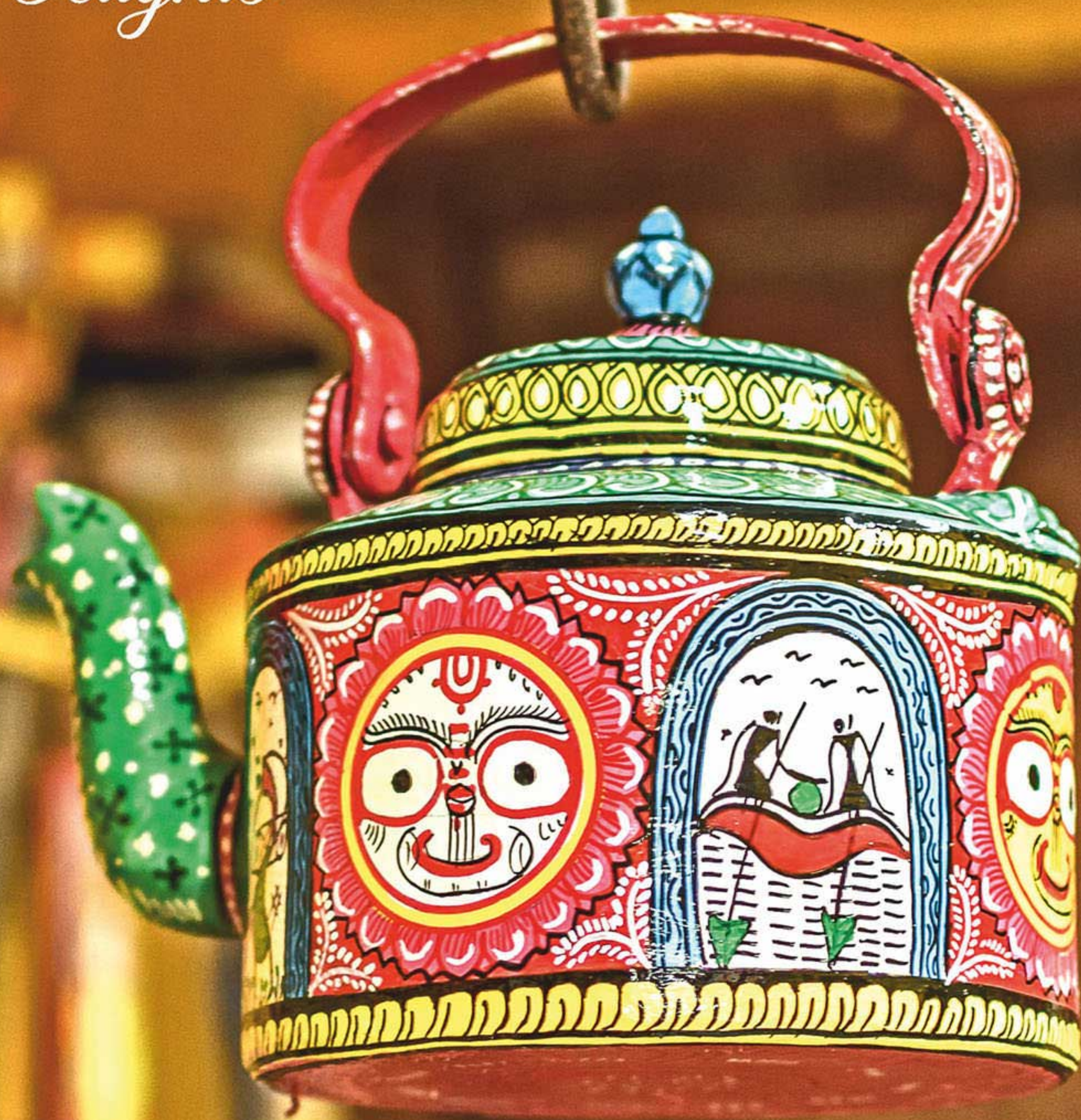
Tourists can embark on boat tours to explore the lake's myriad attractions, including the Nalabana Bird Sanctuary and the picturesque Kalijai Temple, situated on an island. The serene waters and the sight of flocks of birds in flight create a mesmerizing experience. Chilika Lake also supports local livelihoods through fishing and tourism, making it a crucial part of the regional economy.

Chilika Lake, Odisha

Puri Beach, Odisha

Cultural and Culinary Delights

Handicraft, Puri



Local Culture and Art

Puri's cultural heritage is rich and diverse, reflecting the traditions of Odisha. The city is renowned for its classical dance form, Odissi, one of the oldest surviving dance forms in India. Odissi dance, characterized by its graceful movements and expressive gestures, narrates stories from Hindu mythology and is performed during various festivals and cultural events in Puri.

Local markets in Puri are treasure troves of traditional handicrafts. Pattachitra paintings, intricate works of art depicting mythological scenes on cloth, and applique work, vibrant fabric art often used in festival decorations, are among the most sought-after souvenirs. These crafts not only provide a glimpse into the local artistry but also support the livelihoods of numerous artisans.

RATH YATRA: CHARIOTS OF FAITH

Puri Cuisine

Puri's culinary scene is a delightful exploration of traditional Odia cuisine. The Mahaprasad from the Jagannath Temple is a must-try, offering a variety of dishes cooked with devotion and served to the deities before being distributed to devotees. This sacred food, prepared without onions or garlic, is known for its unique flavors and is an integral part of the temple experience.

Local eateries and street food stalls offer an array of delicious options, from piping hot kachoris and ghugni (spicy chickpea curry) to the famous Puri khaja, a flaky sweet pastry. Traditional dishes like dalma (a lentil and vegetable stew), chhena poda (baked cottage cheese dessert), and rasgulla (syrupy cheese balls) reflect the region's culinary heritage. Exploring Puri's food scene is a gastronomic journey that leaves a lasting impression.



Street Food Ghugni And Puri

Tips for Travelers

Best Time to Visit

Puri experiences a tropical climate, making the months from October to February the best time to visit. During this period, the weather is pleasant, ideal for sightseeing and beach activities. The Rath Yatra festival, usually held in June or July, is another significant time to visit, offering a unique cultural experience despite the hot and humid weather.

Safety and Etiquette

Respecting local customs and traditions is crucial, especially around religious sites. Visitors should dress modestly, remove footwear before entering temples, and avoid taking photographs where prohibited. It is also important to be mindful of safety, particularly during crowded festivals like the Rath Yatra. Keeping valuables secure, staying hydrated, and following local advice can ensure a safe and enjoyable visit.

Environmental responsibility is another key aspect of travel to Puri. Tourists are encouraged to avoid littering, use eco-friendly products, and support local conservation efforts to preserve the town's natural beauty and heritage.

RATH YATRA: CHARIOTS OF FAITH

Accommodation and Transport

Puri caters to a wide range of travelers with its diverse accommodation options. From luxury resorts offering panoramic views of the sea to budget hotels and guest houses, there is something for everyone. Booking in advance is recommended, especially during peak seasons and festivals.

The town is well-connected by road and rail, with frequent trains and buses from major cities in India. For local travel, auto-rickshaws, cycle rickshaws, and taxis are readily available. Renting a bicycle or motorbike is also a popular option for exploring the town at a leisurely pace.

Conclusion

Puri, with its harmonious blend of spirituality, history, and natural allure, offers a unique and enriching experience to all who visit. From the divine presence of the Jagannath Temple and the vibrant celebration of Rath Yatra to the serene beauty of its beaches and Chilika Lake, Puri captivates the heart and soul. The town's rich cultural heritage, delectable cuisine, and welcoming hospitality make it a must-visit destination.

Whether you are a pilgrim seeking spiritual solace, a nature enthusiast eager to explore diverse ecosystems or a traveler looking to immerse in local culture, Puri has something for everyone. Embark on a journey to discover the hidden gems of Puri, and let its timeless charm leave an indelible mark on your memory.

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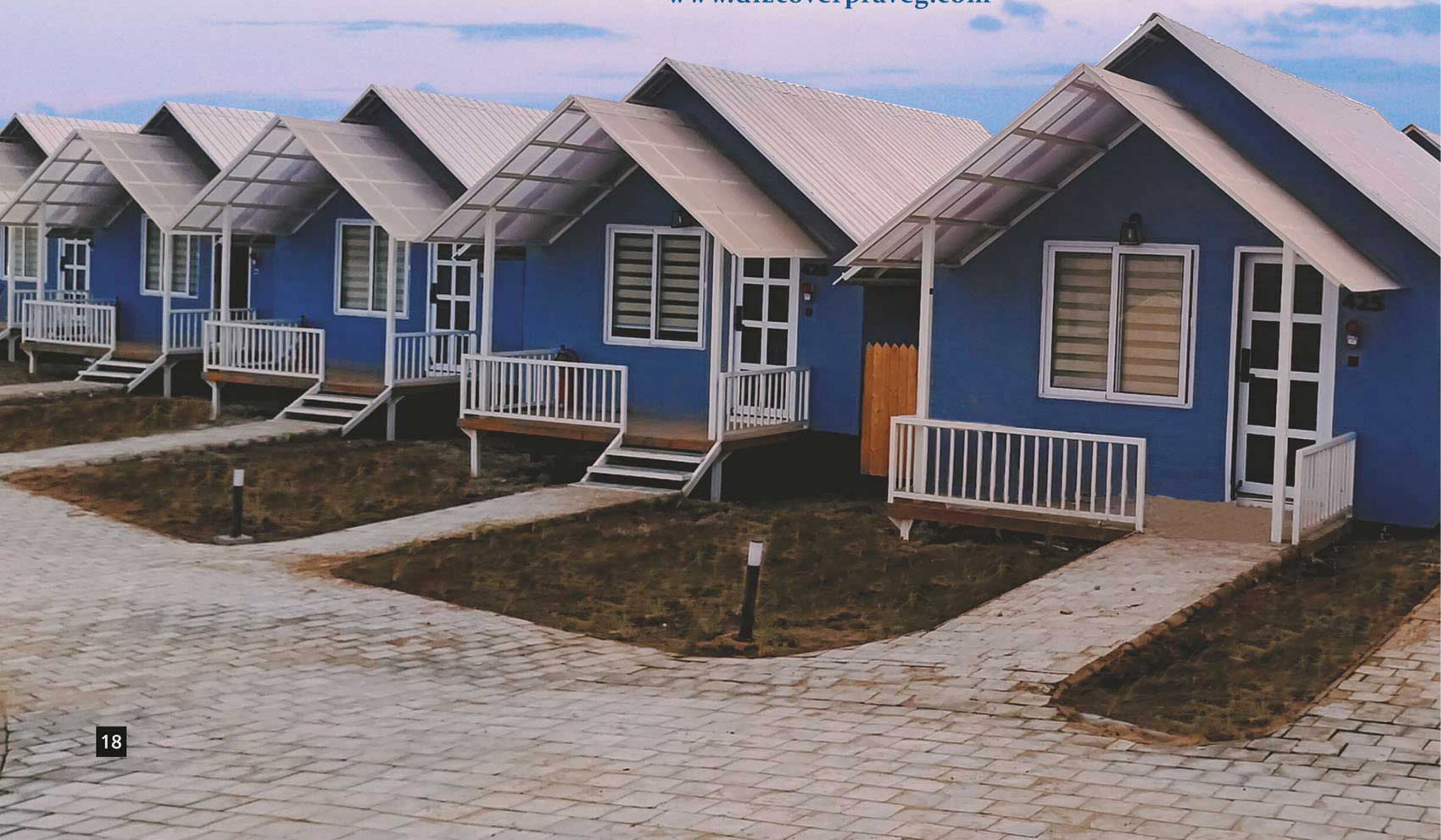


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DISCOVER THE PERFECT SHOULDER SEASON GETAWAYS IN INDIA

By UMANG SHARMA, Staff Writer

As the sun beats down relentlessly during the summer months, its intense rays pose a significant challenge for people to venture out during the day. Temperatures have soared above 50 degrees in some areas, prompting individuals to seek ways to stay cool and hydrated. Many people opt to escape the heat by traveling to destinations with a more pleasant climate, often choosing hill stations where the weather is either rainy or milder, reminiscent of the refreshing monsoon season. This shoulder season, which falls between peak and off-peak travel periods, offers a unique opportunity to save on travel costs. Let's explore some fantastic shoulder season destinations that can be visited during this window of opportunity.

Munnar, Kerala

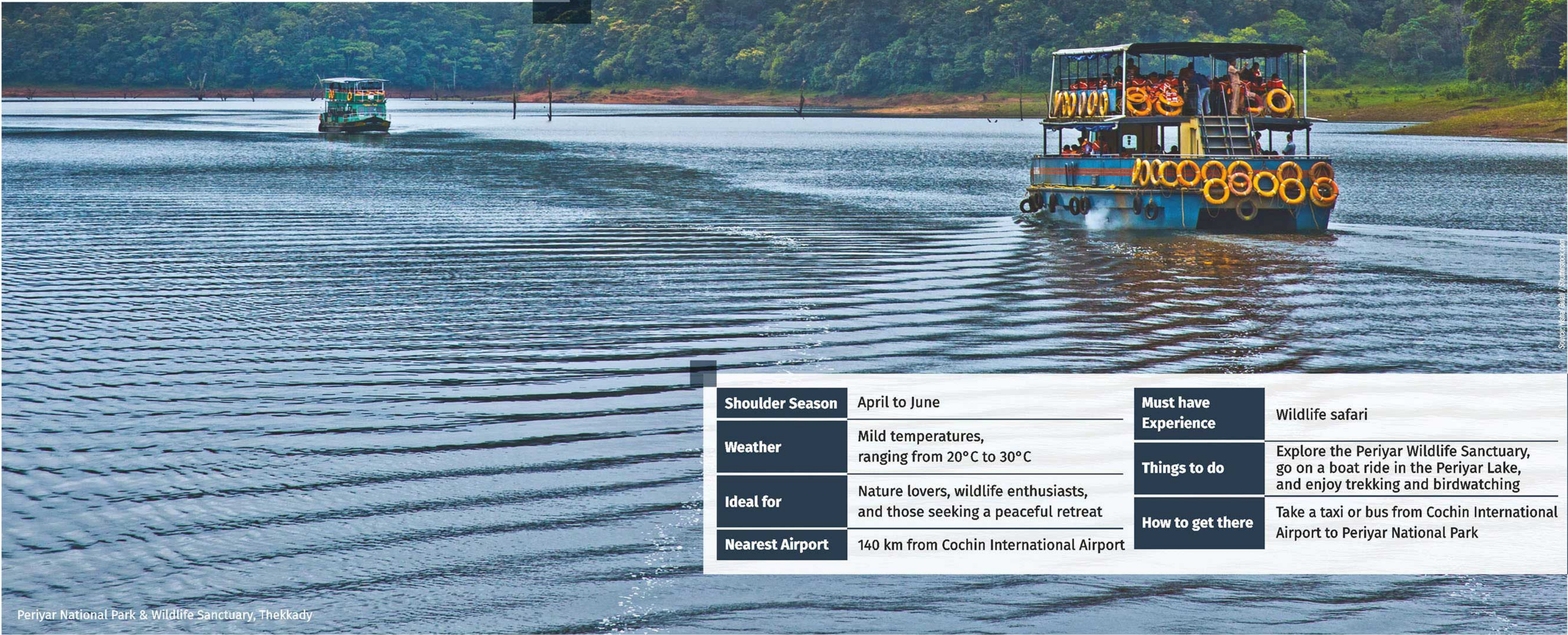
Periyar National Park

Kerala

Periyar National Park in Kerala is a prime destination during the shoulder season. The weather is pleasant, with moderate temperatures and minimal rainfall, making it ideal for wildlife safaris and nature walks. Visitors can spot elephants, tigers, and a variety of bird species in their natural habitat, while enjoying the serene beauty of the park's lakes and forests. The park offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of nature without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the park's many trails and enjoy the scenic views.



Periyar National Park, Thekkady



Periyar National Park & Wildlife Sanctuary, Thekkady

Shoulder Season	April to June	Must have Experience	Wildlife safari
Weather	Mild temperatures, ranging from 20°C to 30°C	Things to do	Explore the Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary, go on a boat ride in the Periyar Lake, and enjoy trekking and birdwatching
Ideal for	Nature lovers, wildlife enthusiasts, and those seeking a peaceful retreat	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Cochin International Airport to Periyar National Park
Nearest Airport	140 km from Cochin International Airport		

Khajuraho

Madhya Pradesh

Khajuraho, known for its stunning UNESCO World Heritage-listed temples, is a must-visit during the shoulder season. The weather is comfortable, with cool mornings and evenings, and warm afternoons. Visitors can explore the intricate carvings and sculptures on the temples, learn about the region's rich history, and attend cultural events and festivals. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of the temples without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the temples and enjoy the local culture.



Laxman Temple, Khajuraho

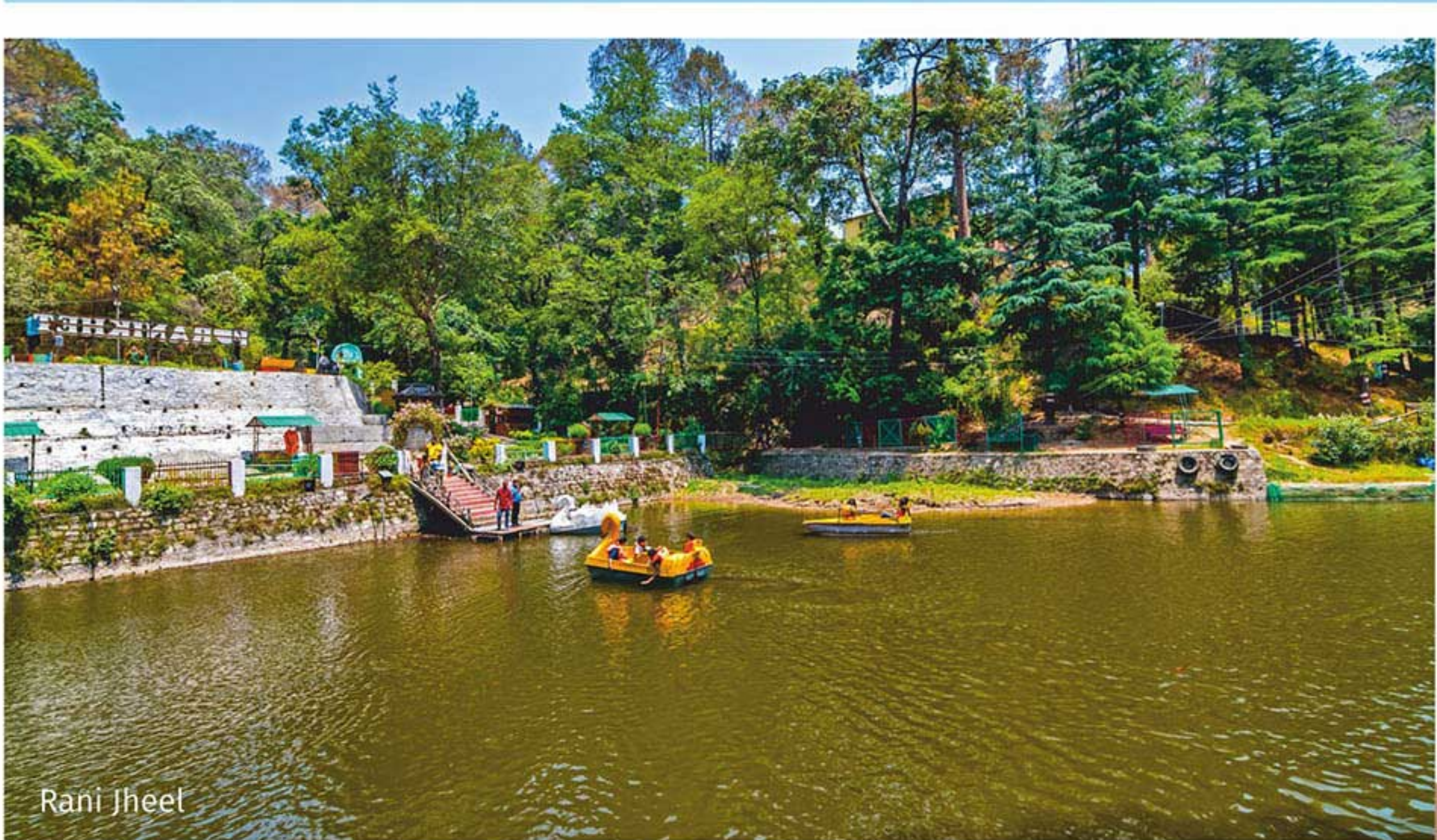
Jain Temples, Khajuraho Monuments

Shoulder Season	March to May	Must have Experience	Visiting the Khajuraho Group of Monuments
Weather	Warm temperatures, ranging from 25° C to 35° C	Things to do	Explore the ancient temples, watch a cultural performance, and visit the nearby Panna National Park
Ideal for	History buffs, architecture enthusiasts, and those interested in cultural heritage	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Khajuraho Airport to the city center
Nearest Airport	175 km from Khajuraho Airport		

Ranikhet

Uttarakhand

Ranikhet, nestled in the lush and picturesque landscapes of Uttarakhand, is a captivating destination that allures tourists with its unique experiences, especially during the serene monsoon season. This tranquil and unspoiled town offers a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of city life, making it an ideal retreat for those in search of peace and tranquillity. With its pleasant climate, Ranikhet boasts a myriad of attractions, including the breathtaking Chaubatia Orchards, the tranquil Bhalu Dam, the historically rich Dwarahat, and an array of other remarkable sites that significantly contribute to its allure.



Shoulder Season	September to November	Must have Experience	Leisurely walks among the beautiful landscapes, enjoying the fresh mountain air, and witnessing the stunning views of the Himalayas.
Weather	Warm temperatures, ranging from 22-29°C	Things to do	Explore the Chaubatia Orchards, stroll around Bhalu Dam, visit historical sites in Dwarahat.
Ideal for	Nature lovers, hikers	How to get there	Visitors can hire a taxi or use public transportation from nearby cities like Nainital or Kathgodam.
Nearest Airport	110 kilometres from Pantnagar Airport		

Coorg

Karnataka

Coorg, known as the "Scotland of India," is a picturesque destination during the shoulder season. The weather is cool and pleasant, with occasional light showers, making it ideal for outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, and coffee plantation tours. Visitors can also enjoy the local cuisine, which is known for its unique flavours and spices. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Coorg without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the region's many trails and enjoy the scenic views.



Shoulder Season	March to May	Must have Experience	Trekking and coffee plantation tours
Weather	Mild temperatures, ranging from 15°C to 25°C	Things to do	Explore the coffee plantations, go trekking, and visit the Abbey Falls
Ideal for	Nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those seeking a peaceful retreat	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Mysore Airport to Coorg
Nearest Airport	120 km from Mysore Airport		

Panaji

Goa

Panaji, known for its beautiful beaches and vibrant nightlife, is a popular destination during the shoulder season. The weather is warm and sunny, with low humidity and minimal rainfall, making it perfect for beach activities such as swimming, sunbathing, and water sports. Visitors can also explore the state's Portuguese-influenced architecture, visit historic churches and forts, and enjoy the local cuisine and music. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Goa without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to enjoy the beaches and local culture.



Anjadip, Goa

Vagator Beach, Goa

Shoulder Season	April to June	Must have Experience	Visiting the beaches
Weather	Warm temperatures, ranging from 25°C to 35°C	Things to do	Explore the beaches, visit the historic sites, and enjoy the local cuisine
Ideal for	Beach lovers, party enthusiasts, and those seeking a relaxing getaway	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Goa International Airport to the city centre
Nearest Airport	30 km from Goa International Airport		

Spiti Valley

Himachal Pradesh

Spiti Valley, a high-altitude desert in Himachal Pradesh, is a unique destination during the shoulder season. The weather is mild and dry, with clear skies and stunning mountain views. Visitors can explore the region's ancient monasteries, visit the world's highest post office, and participate in adventure activities such as trekking and mountain biking. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Spiti Valley without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the region's many trails and enjoy the scenic views.



Spiti Valley

Hampta Pass Trek, Hampta Valley

Shoulder Season	April to June	Must have Experience	Trekking and camping
Weather	Mild temperatures, ranging from 10°C to 20°C	Things to do	Explore the Spiti Valley, go trekking, and visit the Key Monastery
Ideal for	Adventure seekers, nature lovers, and those seeking a peaceful retreat	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Shimla Airport to Spiti Valley
Nearest Airport	240 km from Shimla Airport		

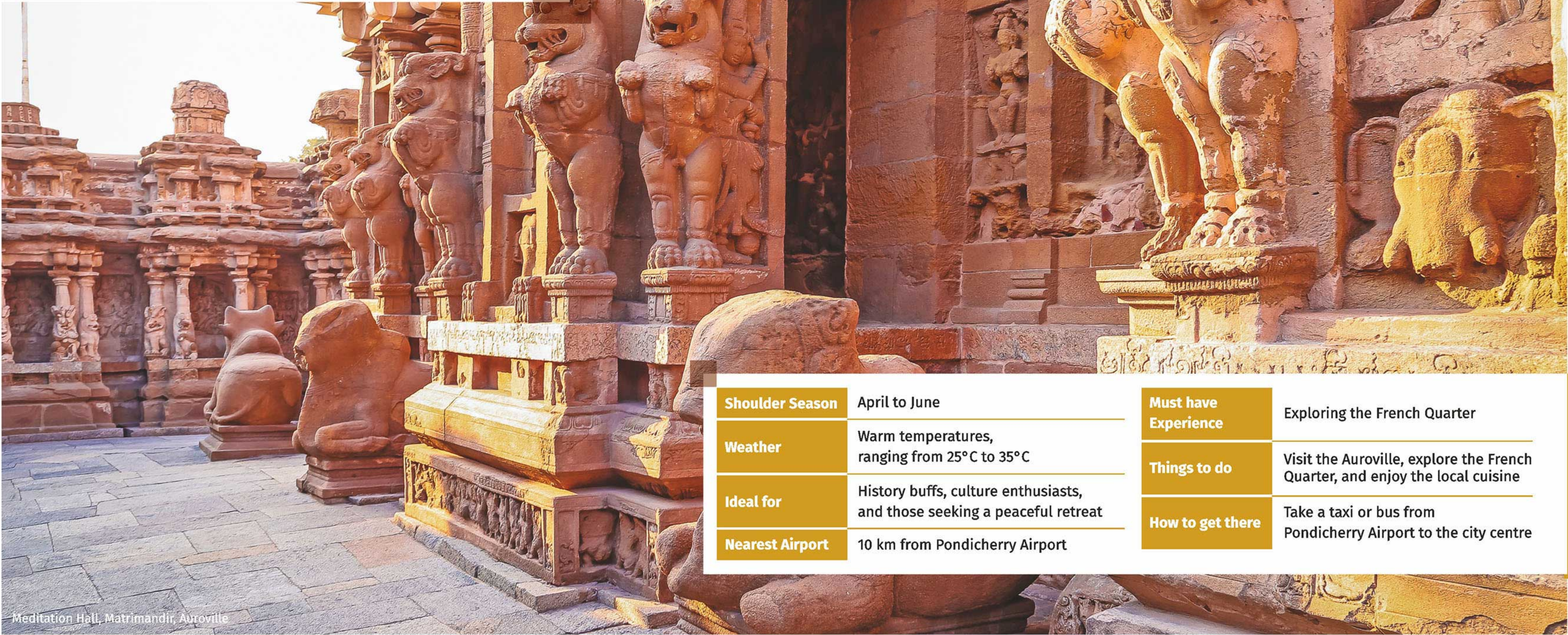
Pondicherry

Tamil Nadu

Pondicherry, a former French colony, is a charming destination during the shoulder season. The weather is pleasant, with low humidity and moderate temperatures, making it perfect for exploring the city's colourful streets, French-influenced architecture, and serene beaches. Visitors can also enjoy the local cuisine, which is a delightful blend of French and Indian flavours, offering a unique culinary experience. The city's spiritual side is evident in the Aurobindo Ashram, where visitors can participate in yoga and meditation classes, seeking inner peace and tranquillity amidst the bustling city life.



Consulat Général De France i.e. The French Consulate General



Meditation Hall, Matrimandir, Auroville

Shoulder Season	April to June	Must have Experience	Exploring the French Quarter
Weather	Warm temperatures, ranging from 25°C to 35°C	Things to do	Visit the Auroville, explore the French Quarter, and enjoy the local cuisine
Ideal for	History buffs, culture enthusiasts, and those seeking a peaceful retreat	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Pondicherry Airport to the city centre
Nearest Airport	10 km from Pondicherry Airport		

Shillong

Meghalaya

Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, is a picturesque destination during the shoulder season. The weather is cool and pleasant, with occasional light showers, making it ideal for outdoor activities such as hiking, picnicking, and visiting waterfalls. Visitors can also explore the city's colonial-era architecture, visit the Shillong Peak for panoramic views, and enjoy the local cuisine and music. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Shillong without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the city's many attractions.



Waterfall, Shillong

Cherrapunjee

Shoulder Season	April to June	Must have Experience	Visiting the waterfalls
Weather	Mild temperatures, ranging from 15°C to 25°C	Things to do	Explore the waterfalls, go trekking, and visit the local markets
Ideal for	Nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those seeking a peaceful retreat	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Shillong Airport to the city centre
Nearest Airport	30 km from Shillong Airport		

Darjeeling

West Bengal

Darjeeling, a hill station in West Bengal, is a popular destination during the shoulder season. The weather is cool and pleasant, with occasional light showers, making it ideal for outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, and visiting tea plantations. Visitors can also explore the city's colonial-era architecture, visit the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute, and enjoy the local cuisine and music. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Darjeeling without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the city's many trails and enjoy the scenic views.



Singalila Range, Darjeeling

Tea Plantation, Darjeeling

Shoulder Season	April to June	Must have Experience	Visiting the tea gardens
Weather	Mild temperatures, ranging from 15°C to 25°C	Things to do	Explore the tea gardens, visit the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, and enjoy the local cuisine
Ideal for	Nature enthusiasts, thrill-seekers, and individuals in search of a serene getaway	How to get there	Take a taxi or bus from Bagdogra Airport to Darjeeling
Nearest Airport	70 km from Bagdogra Airport		

Munnar

Kerala

Munnar, a hill station in Kerala, is a picturesque destination during the shoulder season. The weather is cool and pleasant, with occasional light showers, making it ideal for outdoor activities such as trekking, hiking, and visiting tea plantations. Visitors can also explore the region's unique wildlife, visit the Eravikulam National Park to spot the endangered Nilgiri Tahr, and enjoy the local cuisine and culture. The shoulder season offers a unique opportunity to experience the beauty of Munnar without the crowds and high prices of peak season. With comfortable temperatures and minimal rainfall, it is an ideal time to explore the region's many trails and enjoy the scenic views.

Shoulder Season

April to June

Weather

Mild temperatures, ranging from 15°C to 25°C

Ideal for

Nature lovers, adventure seekers, and those seeking a peaceful retreat

Nearest Airport

110 km from Cochin International Airport

Must have Experience

Trekking and tea plantation tours

Things to do

Explore the tea plantations, go trekking, and visit the local markets

How to get there

Take a taxi or bus from Cochin International Airport to Munnar

In the End

Each of these destinations offers a unique experience during the shoulder season. From the lush forests and wildlife of Periyar National Park to the stunning temples and rich history of Khajuraho, there is something for every traveller. The pleasant weather, minimal crowds, and lower prices make these destinations ideal for those who want to explore India without the peak season chaos. Whether you're looking for adventure, culture, or relaxation, these destinations are sure to provide an unforgettable experience. 📍



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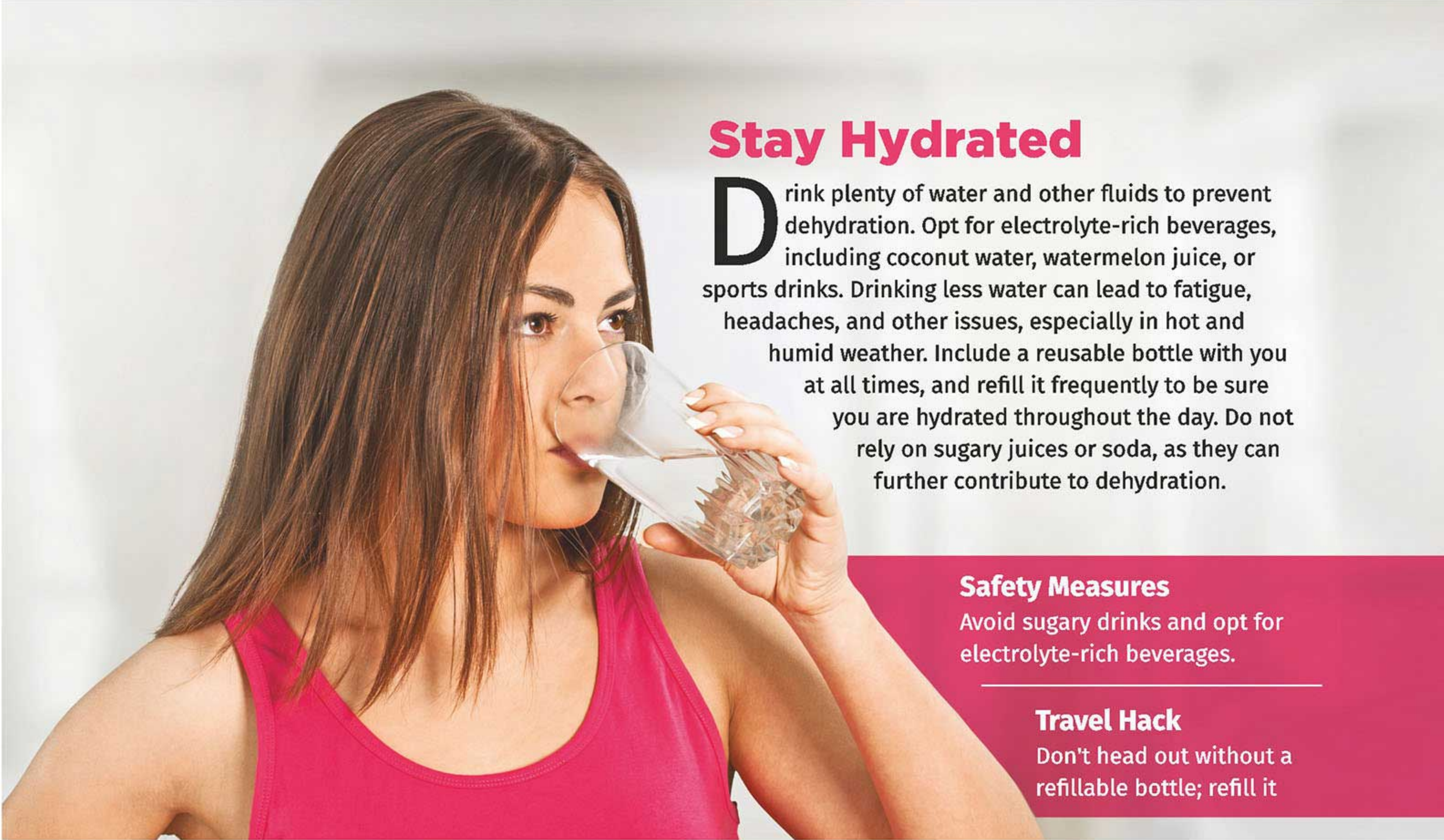


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Essential Tips to Stay Safe and Healthy During **MONSOON** *Travel*

By UMANG SHARMA, Staff Writer

The monsoon season in India brings much-needed relief from the scorching heat, but it also carries its own set of health challenges. When travelling at this time, it is important to take the necessary precautions to ensure a sound journey. This period is characterized by heavy rainfall, flooding, and increased humidity, which can cause various body issues, including respiratory problems, skin infections, and waterborne diseases. Additionally, the big risk of mosquito-borne illnesses such as dengue and chikungunya makes it crucial to prevent mosquito bites. Furthermore, the wet weather can also lead to light cuts, disrupting essential services like healthcare and communication. Therefore, it is advisable to be prepared and remain healthy while going on a trip during the rainy season.



Stay Hydrated

Drink plenty of water and other fluids to prevent dehydration. Opt for electrolyte-rich beverages, including coconut water, watermelon juice, or sports drinks. Drinking less water can lead to fatigue, headaches, and other issues, especially in hot and humid weather. Include a reusable bottle with you at all times, and refill it frequently to be sure you are hydrated throughout the day. Do not rely on sugary juices or soda, as they can further contribute to dehydration.

Safety Measures
Avoid sugary drinks and opt for electrolyte-rich beverages.

Travel Hack
Don't head out without a refillable bottle; refill it



Protect Yourself from Mosquitoes

Mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and chikungunya are prevalent during the rainy season. To protect yourself, use insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, or lemon eucalyptus oil. Wear lightweight, long-sleeved shirts and pants to cover your skin. Avoid going out at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.

Safety Measures
Apply insect repellents regularly and wear protective outfits.

Travel Hack
Do not forget to bring insect repellents with higher concentrations of active ingredients for longer protection.



Carry a First-Aid Kit

Pack a small first-aid kit that must have bandages, antiseptic wipes, pain relievers, and antihistamines. This will help you handle minor injuries or allergic reactions. Add the required medications, prescription, or over-the-counter medicines for common ailments to provide some relief from headaches or stomach upset. You must check that your medicine kit is up-to-date for your destination, and don't forget to bring the needed medicines you may need while voyaging.

Safety Measures
Use a small pill organizer to store daily medication doses.

Travel Hack
Always have a first-aid kit that includes vital medications.



Maintain Personal Hygiene

Wash your hands regularly, particularly when using public facilities or before meals. Utilize soap and water to clean your body, especially following activities in untreated water. Keep hand sanitizer and moist towelettes for times if soap and water are inaccessible. Pack additional cleaning supplies, such as shampoo and other hygiene items, for your journey, and refrain from sharing personal belongings like towels, razors, or toothbrushes with others.

Safety Measures
Wash your hands regularly and use hand sanitizer.

Travel Hack
Always have spare personal hygiene items.

Be Cautious with Food and Water

Do not consume food from street vendors or places with poor hygiene. Stick to well-cooked, hot food, and stay away from raw fruits and vegetables unless you can peel them yourself. Drink only bottled or filtered water, and do not use ice cubes, as they may be made from contaminated water. Carry a reusable bottle to confirm you have access to clean drinking water throughout your trip.

Safety Measures

Eat well-cooked, hot food, and only consume raw fruits and vegetables if you can peel them yourself.

Travel Hack

Don't leave without a reusable bottle with a built-in filter or purifier.

Avoid Unnecessary Exposure

Do not expose yourself to rain if you have open wounds or cuts. This can increase the risk of infection. If you walk in the rain, wear waterproof shoes and take an umbrella. Add more pairs of socks and a change of clothes to prevent the possibility of getting ill.

Safety Measures

If you have open wounds or cuts, be sure to cover them when it's raining.

Travel Hack

Take a pair of socks and clothes.

Stay Informed

Before setting off on your journey, it's crucial to arm yourself with knowledge. Research the specific risks and necessary care for your destination. Consult your healthcare provider for advice on critical vaccinations or preventive actions. Stay updated on disease outbreaks or advisories in the area you plan to visit. Remember, being informed is the first step to staying safe and healthy.

Safety Measures

Learn more risks and necessary care specific to your destination and check with your healthcare provider.

Travel Hack

Sign up for advisories and be updated on any changes in the situation.

Monitor Your Health

Always watch for signs of fever, cough, or body aches. Be aware of common wet weather-related infections such as leptospirosis, malaria, and typhoid, and seek prompt treatment if you feel anything unusual. Research the usual diseases in your destination and their symptoms, and don't assume that the sickness is just a minor one without seeking proper medical advice.

Safety Measures

Seek medical attention if you experience some slightly unusual symptoms.

Travel Hack

Know more about common illnesses in your destination and their symptoms.

Plan for Power Outages

Frequent heavy rainfall can result in power outages, causing disruptions to vital services such as healthcare and communication. Planning for such situations is crucial to ensure your access to these assistances. Carry a portable power bank and a backup battery for your phone and other devices. Keep a flashlight and spare batteries handy for navigating in the dark. Store important contact numbers and documents in an easily accessible place in case of a power cut.

Safety Measures

Plan for electricity outages by carrying a backup battery.

Travel Hack

Always grab a flashlight and additional batteries.



Stay Calm and Patient

Travelling in rainy weather can be challenging, but it is crucial to be calm and patient. Try not to panic in unexpected situations, and prioritize your health above all else. Be informed about the local conditions and take necessary actions to verify a good and safe journey.

Safety Measures

Remain calm and prioritize your health.

Travel Hack

Never be without vital things, including clothes and non-perishable food, for unexpected situations in the fall of rains.



Protect Your Electronics

Protect your electronic gadgets from moisture and rain using waterproof cases. Do not use electronics in wet conditions and dry them thoroughly. Consider getting a portable, rainproof power bank to charge devices in case of electricity failure.

Safety Measures

Use waterproof cases or bags to protect your electronic devices.

Travel Hack

Invest in a portable, waterproof portable battery.



Respect Local Customs and Traditions

When traveling, always know the local customs, traditions, and cultural norms. While facing challenges, it's important to dress in a manner that is respectful of their traditions, particularly in conservative or religious areas. Seek guidance from native authorities or tour guides to ensure that you value and adhere to the customs of their community.



Safety Measures

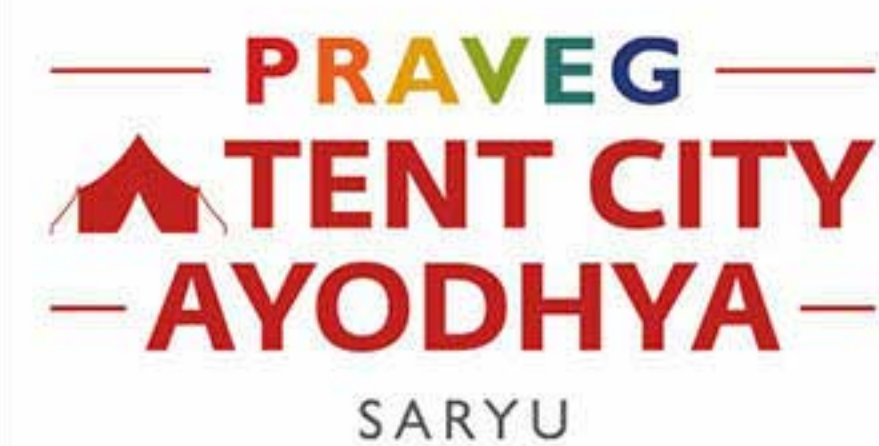
Dress appropriately and be mindful of your behaviour.

Travel Hack

Seek guidance from local authorities to learn more about cultural sensitivity.

Final Thoughts

Follow these tips to enjoy a healthy and safe monsoon travel experience. Remember to seek medical attention promptly if you have any concerns. With some preparation and caution, you can make the most of your trips while maintaining yourself and your loved ones well. 📸



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The GREAT WALL of KUMBHALGARH

India's Answer to the Great Wall of China

By Shyamola Khanna

You have only heard of the Great Wall of China, right? Everyone who visits China comes back with great clicks of this phenomenal architectural marvel which is touted to be visible from space also!

I cannot verify that but I can tell you that we have something equally spectacular at home, in Rajasthan. About 80 odd kilometres outside the city of Udaipur lies this phenomenal structure stretching around the fort for a total of 38 kms.

KUMBHALGARH

There is a huge wall surrounding the fort of Kumbhalgarh. This wall is also known as the Great Wall of India. It is built on the Aravalli Hills in Rajsamand District of Rajasthan. It was built in the 15th century by Rana Kumbha who was the Rana of Mewar from the Sisodia Rajput clan.

Rana Kumbha's Mewar stretched from Ranthambore to Gwalior including large tracts of present day Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Rana Kumbha built 32 of the 84 forts in his empire, of which Kumbhalgarh is the most elaborate and spread over the largest area.

It is also the birthplace of Maharana Pratap the great king and military leader of Mewar, the legendary stalwart who stood up to Akbar and the entire might of the Mughal Empire.

There is very little evidence of the early origins and history of the fort. We should not forget that this land was always facing battles; if there were no invaders like the Afghans and the Ghoris, there were battles between the various Rajput clans.

Kumbhalgarh separated Mewar and Marwar (present day Jodhpur) from each other. It was used as a place of refuge for the rulers of Mewar at times of danger. When Chittor was under siege, Prince Udai, the infant king of Mewar, was smuggled here in 1535. Prince Udai later succeeded to the throne and was crowned the king of Udaipur.

Rajendra Singh, a fervent loyalist of the fort, has many

interesting tales to tell. Raiders like Ahmad Shah II of Gujarat, Mahmud Khalji and Shahbaz Khan, Akbar's general attacked the fort repeatedly, over a period of 10 years, but found their efforts futile.

In an act of vengeance Ahmed Shah destroyed some of the beautiful temples. There were more futile attacks by Mahmud Khalji. 1576 was the only time Kumbhalgarh Fort went into the hands of enemies that too because of water shortage.

One of the more interesting bits he spoke of and which can be verified by visitors is that the fort is not visible from the ground level and that is true!

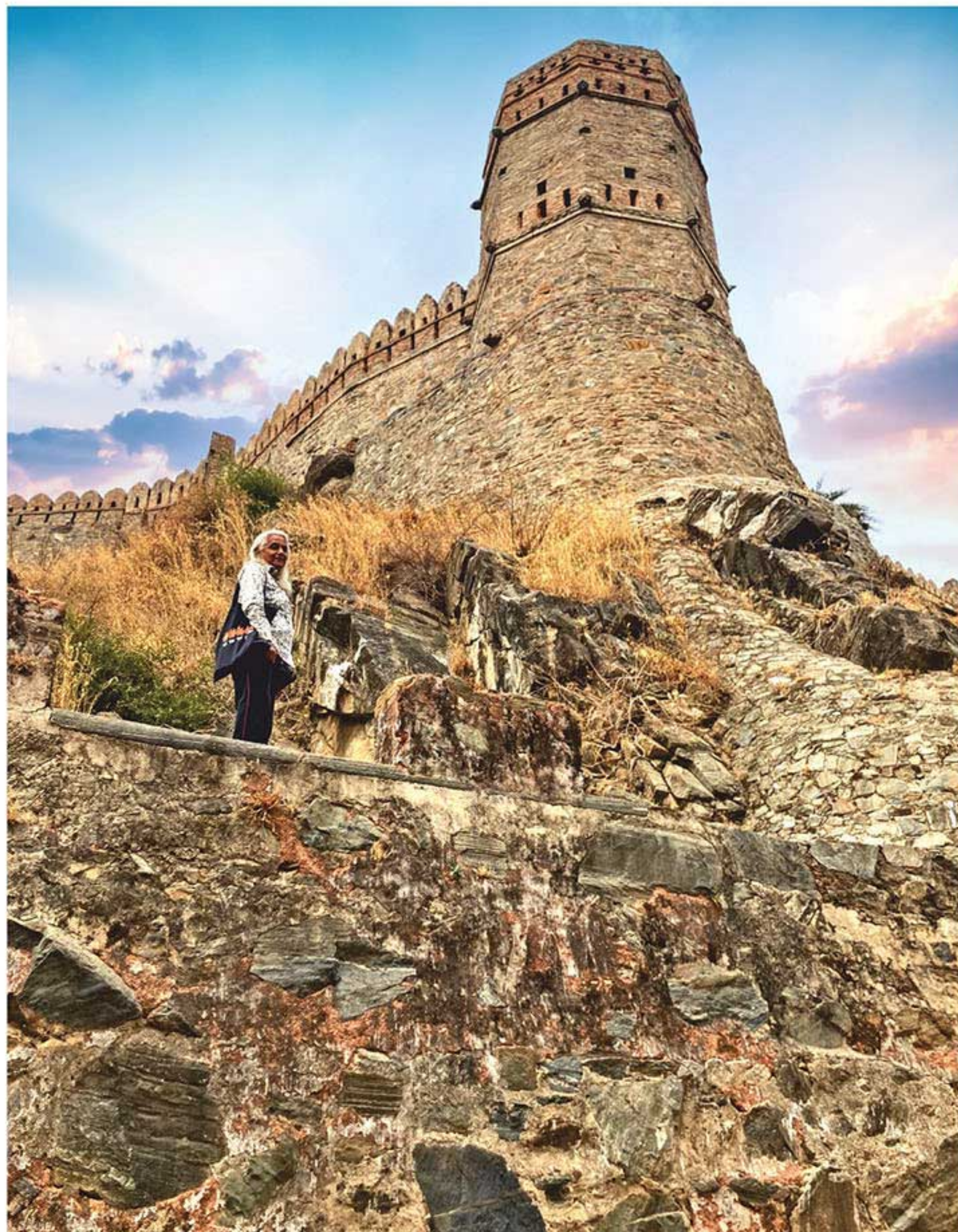
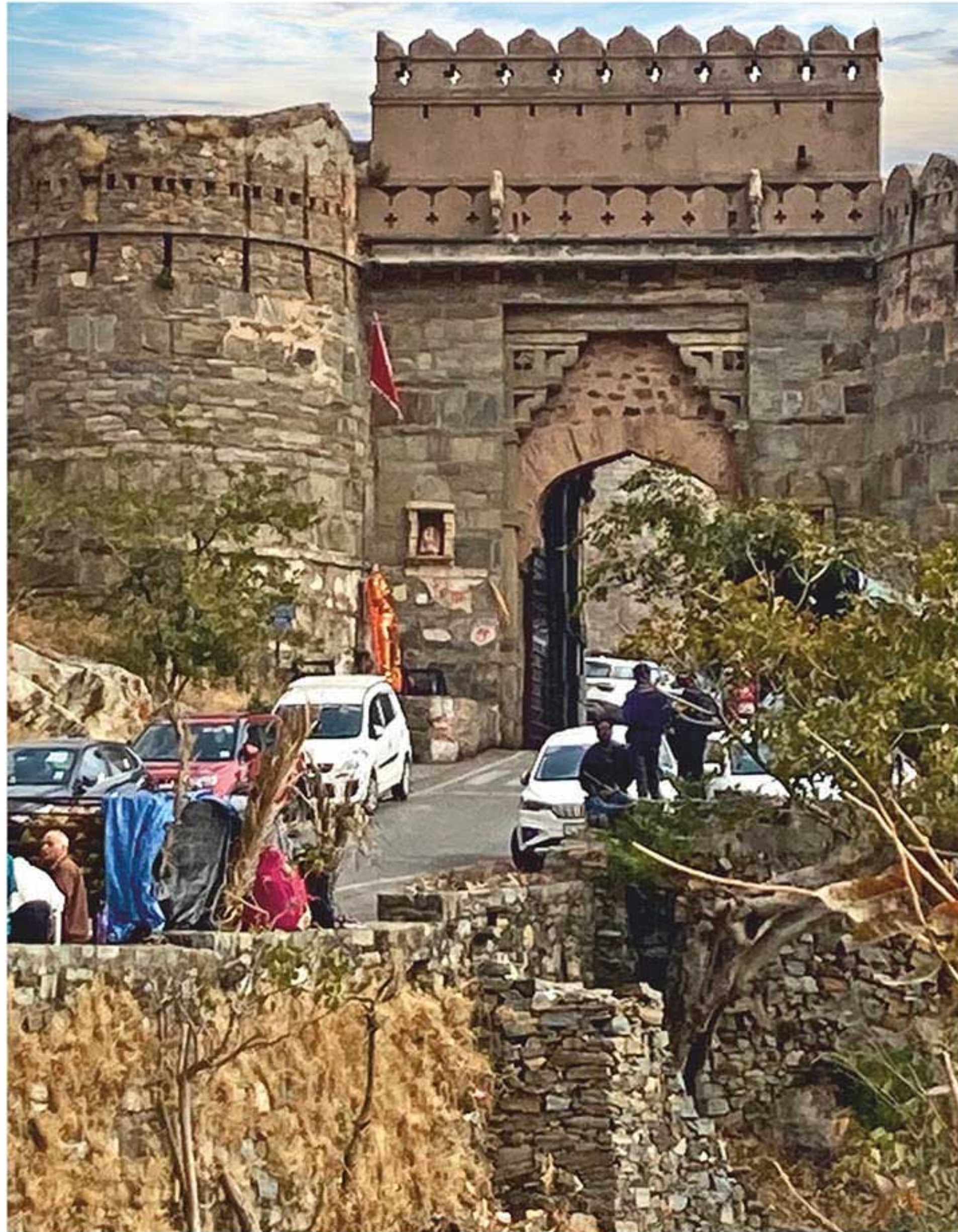
After the battle of Haldighati where the Mughals lost to the Rajputs, Shahbaz Khan, who was Akbar's newly appointed general, was asked to lay siege to the fort to capture Maharana Pratap. I am told that Shahbaz Khan did succeed although

locals say that Maharana Pratap escaped into the Aravalli Hills to fight another day. His horse Chetak is supposed to have jumped from the highest ramparts of the fort to take his master to safety.

There were additions made to the Kumbhalgarh fort by the Maharanas of Mewar, but the original structure built by Maharana Kumbha remains. The residential buildings and temples are well-preserved. The residential areas are small compared to Chittorgarh, as the royal families lived in this fort only for short spells.

The highest point in the fort is the Badal Mahal and the terrace there. At the highest point it is 3700 feet above sea level. Behind the Badal Mahal is a reserve forest where tourists can go on jungle safari and spot leopards, jackals and hyenas besides wild boar.





NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Neelkanth Mahadev Temple is a famous Shiva temple located inside the Kumbhalgarh Fort next to Vedi Temple Complex. It is an ancient temple and has a six feet high Shivling which is made of stone. Shiva is the reigning deity of the fort and is very popular with the locals also. King Rana Kumbha used to worship this deity too.

Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary is famous for, that is rarely found elsewhere. Apart from the wolf, it also houses various varieties of endangered and rare animal species and almost 200 different species of birds.

Ranakpur Jain temple is a must-visit location for Architecture buffs.

Safari is closed for three months in the rainy season.

Best Time to Visit: October and March

Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary Entry Fees: Rs 100/- for the weekday and Rs 75/- on weekends. (Likely to be revised)

How to get there: Indigo and Spice Jet have direct flights from various cities to Udaipur. Book a taxi for Kumbhalgarh and enjoy the sights.

In 2013, at the 37th session of the World Heritage Committee held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Kumbhalgarh Fort, along with five other forts of Rajasthan, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site under the group Hill Forts of Rajasthan.

Kumbhalgarh attracts tourists because of its famous temples, unusual architecture and the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary 📍



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A Visit to Himachal Pradesh

The long wait (at the air port) was tiring
But Dalhousie would be inspiring
A taxi drive, serpentine roads
Took away our mental loads

Dalhousie is just Heaven
A fact need not be proven
Moving around was just nice
But your feet could pay the price!

Visiting Golden Temple was a joy
Before Divinity every one is a toy
Hotel staff was never slack
Dressed very well, dressed in black

One should run away from city glare
Alas! We have no time "to stand and stare"


- Dr. Kirit Trivedi

Mountains always fascinate. Little wonder that I, along with my family, visit them off and on. Last month we decided to go to Dalhousie.

The place is charming, neat and clean. Dalhousie has beautiful temples and serene lakes. We also visited Khajjiar, a few hours' drive from Dalhousie.

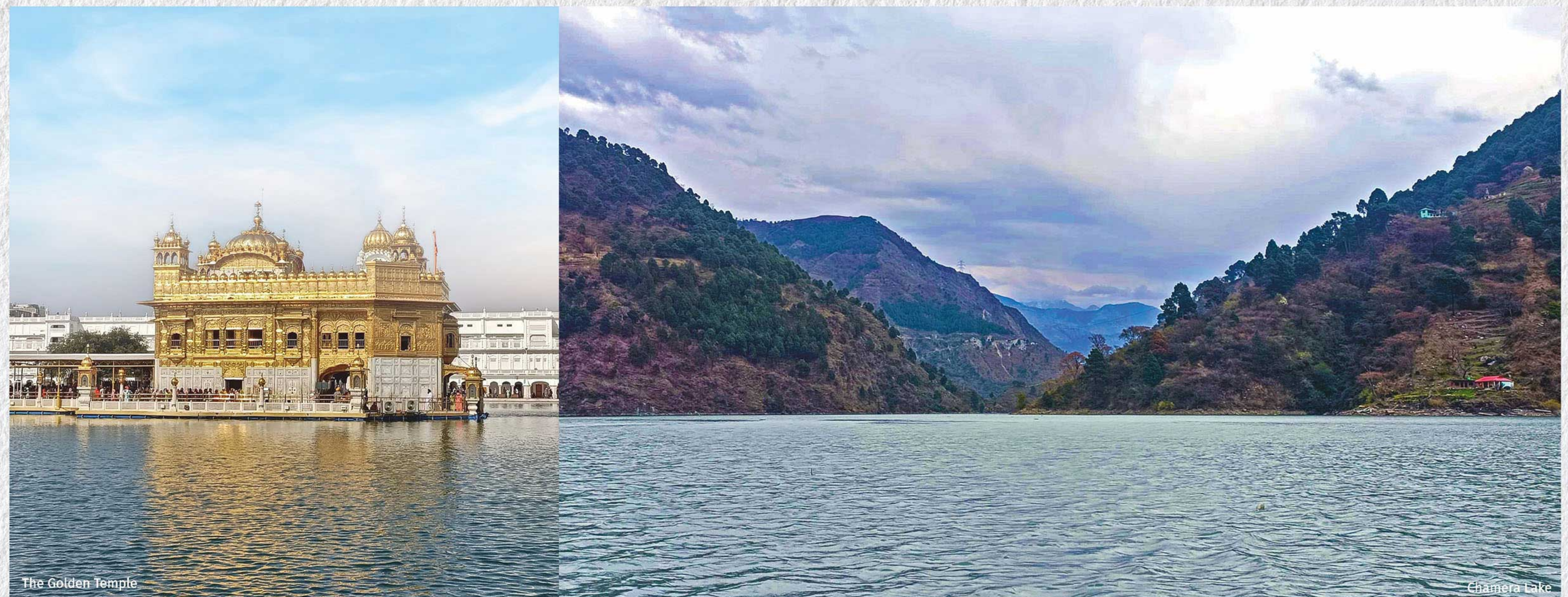
The mountains there were covered with snow (It had snowfall a few days earlier). The snow-clad mountains would surely remind you of Switzerland! On our way home, we were in Amritsar for a few days. Golden Temple is a must for all who go to Amritsar. The temple is huge, calm and divine. The constant chant of "Wahe Guru" fills you with divine ecstasy. In sum, it was a memorable visit.

Dr Kirit Trivedi is a retired professor of English Literature. His passion for poetry is manifested in the sonnets he regularly writes and uploads on social media. A Visit to HP (Himachal Pradesh) is a first-hand account delineating the natural beauty of Dalhousie and the divine aura of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. In the last two lines, Dr Trivedi ruefully complains about his inability to spend more time in the company of nature and the divine.

How frequently do you travel to such spectacular locations? Do you have any travel stories to share with our readers? Send us your travel experiences at tourismone@praveg.com, and we will publish them here. 



Pir Panjal Range



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explore the wonders of ANGKOR WAT

The 8th Wonder of the World

By UMANG SHARMA, Staff Writer

Angkor Wat is a true marvel of the ancient world, a sprawling heritage site that has captivated travellers for centuries. In 2023, this temple was named the 8th Wonder of the World (unofficially) by UNESCO, beating Italy's Pompeii. As the largest religious monument on Earth, it is a must-visit destination for anyone exploring the rich cultural heritage of Cambodia. The temple was originally constructed in the 12th century as a Hindu temple, before later being converted to a Buddhist temple. The sheer scale of the complex is awe-inspiring - it covers an area of over 500 acres and was once the centre of the powerful Khmer Empire. Archaeologists believe the city of Angkor itself may have had a population of up to one million people at its peak, making it one of the largest pre-industrial cities in the world.

At present, in Bihar's East Champaran district, a monumental masterpiece is being constructed- the Viraat Ramayan Temple. Begun in June 2023, this three-storey temple is taking shape by drawing inspiration from three renowned temples: the Angkor Wat temple in Cambodia, the Ramanathaswami temple in Rameshwaram, and the Meenakshi Sundareshwarar temple in Madurai.

Getting There

The iconic spiralled towers and intricate stone carvings of Angkor Wat are a sight to behold. The best time to visit is during the dry season from November to February, when the weather is cooler and less humid. Arriving at sunrise is highly recommended, as you can witness the monument bathed in the soft, golden light of dawn. Be prepared for crowds, as this temple is a popular tourist destination in Southeast Asia. When visiting, it's important to dress appropriately by covering your shoulders and knees. Comfortable walking shoes are a must, as you'll be doing a lot of exploring on foot. It's also a good idea to bring a light raincoat, as the weather can be unpredictable.

Exploring the Temple Complex

While Angkor Wat is the main draw, its Archaeological Park contains many other impressive heritage site that are worth visiting, such as Bayon, Ta Prohm, and Preah Khan. To fully experience the park, it's recommended to purchase a multi-day pass, which allows you to spread out your visits over several days. Hiring a local guide can greatly enhance your understanding and appreciation of the site's rich history and cultural significance. Alternatively, you can explore the destination at your own pace, taking the time to soak in the atmosphere and marvel at the intricate details of the architecture.

Cambodia offers a 30-day visa upon arrival for Indian citizens, which makes it one of the most convenient destinations for Indian travel enthusiasts. Pack your bags and let's go!

Final Thoughts

Angkor Wat is a true wonder of the world, a testament to the ingenuity and artistry of the Khmer people. Whether you're a history buff, a photography enthusiast, or simply someone in awe of the grandeur of ancient civilizations, a visit to this

remarkable location is sure to leave a lasting impression. The sheer scale and complexity of the temple, combined with its rich history and cultural significance, make it a truly unforgettable experience. From the iconic silhouette of the spiralled towers at sunrise to the intricate stone carvings that adorn the walls, every

aspect of Angkor Wat is a masterpiece of human creativity and engineering. A visit to this remarkable site is not just a trip to a famous tourist destination, but a journey through the heart of Cambodia's cultural heritage and a testament to the enduring power of human ingenuity and artistry. 📸





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