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TOURISM

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# C O N T E N T S

## Introduction

Maharashtra, a vibrant and culturally rich state in western India, offers a compelling blend of history, spirituality, and natural beauty. Its landscape is dotted with majestic ancient structures that stand as a testament to its storied past. These formidable edifices, scattered across the state, narrate tales of valor and strategic prowess, serving as popular destinations for history enthusiasts and adventure seekers alike. The state's spiritual essence is deeply embedded in its sacred structures, which draw pilgrims and tourists from across the globe. These architectural marvels not only provide a serene atmosphere for contemplation but also showcase the intricate artistry and craftsmanship of a bygone era. Adding to its cultural tapestry, Maharashtra is home to sites recognized globally for their cultural significance, offering a glimpse into

the rich heritage and traditions that have shaped the region.

The coastal stretch of Maharashtra is equally captivating, with pristine shores offering picturesque views and a tranquil escape from the bustling city life. These coastal gems are perfect for sunbathing, water sports, and simply soaking in the natural beauty. The state's culinary scene is a delightful exploration of flavors and textures, with a diverse range of dishes that reflect its multicultural influences. From spicy snacks to sumptuous meals, the cuisine provides a culinary journey that tantalizes the taste buds and leaves a lasting impression. Maharashtra's vibrant festivals, rich history, and stunning landscapes make it a destination that promises unforgettable experiences and memories.



The forts of Maharashtra are a testament to the region's rich history, cultural heritage, and strategic military importance. Dotted across the state, these majestic structures played a crucial role in the defense of ancient kingdoms and empires, especially during the rule of the Marathas under the legendary leader Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Maharashtra boasts over 350 forts, each with its unique architectural style, historical significance, and scenic surroundings. These forts, perched on hilltops, by the coastline, or amidst dense forests, offer stunning views of the surrounding landscapes and are a popular destination for history enthusiasts, trekkers, and tourists. They stand as enduring symbols of Maharashtra's valiant past, showcasing not just military might but also architectural brilliance and the spirit of resilience.

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# F O R T S



## Shivneri Fort



Shivneri Fort, a symbol of Maratha pride, is perched atop a hill near Junnar in Pune district of Maharashtra. Shivneri Fort holds the distinction of being the birthplace of Shivaji. A statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj as a child can be found here, commemorating the fact that he spent the first six years of his life at this fort.

### History and Architecture

Being the birthplace of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, gives the fort immense historical significance. Renowned for its impressive architecture, the fort provides visitors with a window into the area's rich heritage.

The fort has a distinctive triangular shape and features seven well-defended gates. Surrounded by steep cliffs on all sides, it is naturally fortified



and difficult to attack. Numerous water tanks and wells within the complex ensured a consistent water supply for its inhabitants.

Shivneri Fort's history dates back to the 6th century, initially under the rule of the Mauryas. It was subsequently controlled by the Chalukyas, Rashtrakutas, and Yadavas. In the 13th century, the fort fell under the Delhi Sultanate's control. In 1430, it was captured by the Adil Shahi

dynasty of Bijapur, and in 1630, the Mughal Empire took over. Finally, in 1674, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured the fort.

#### **How to Reach**

**By Road:** Pune –98 km; Mumbai –177 km; Junnar –3 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway station –Pune (98 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –93 km; Mumbai Airport –184 km

## Raigad Fort

Located about 25 km from Mahad town in Maharashtra's Raigad district, the historic Raigad Fort is perched atop a hill in the Sahyadri Mountains. At an elevation of 2,700 feet above sea level, the fort provides breathtaking panoramic views of the surrounding landscape. Its strategic location and robust

defenses make it one of the most significant forts in Indian history.

### History and Architecture

Raigad Fort served as the capital of the Maratha Empire from 1674 to 1818. The fort's design was strategically crafted to enhance its defensive strength, incorporating several



layers of fortifications, bastions, and gateways. When Shivaji ascended the Maratha throne in 1674 AD, Raigad Fort became the hub of his administrative and military activities. Under his rule, the Maratha Empire flourished and expanded significantly, encompassing a large part of western and central India.

#### **How to Reach**

**By Road:** Pune –132 km;  
Mumbai –167 km; Mahad –25 km.

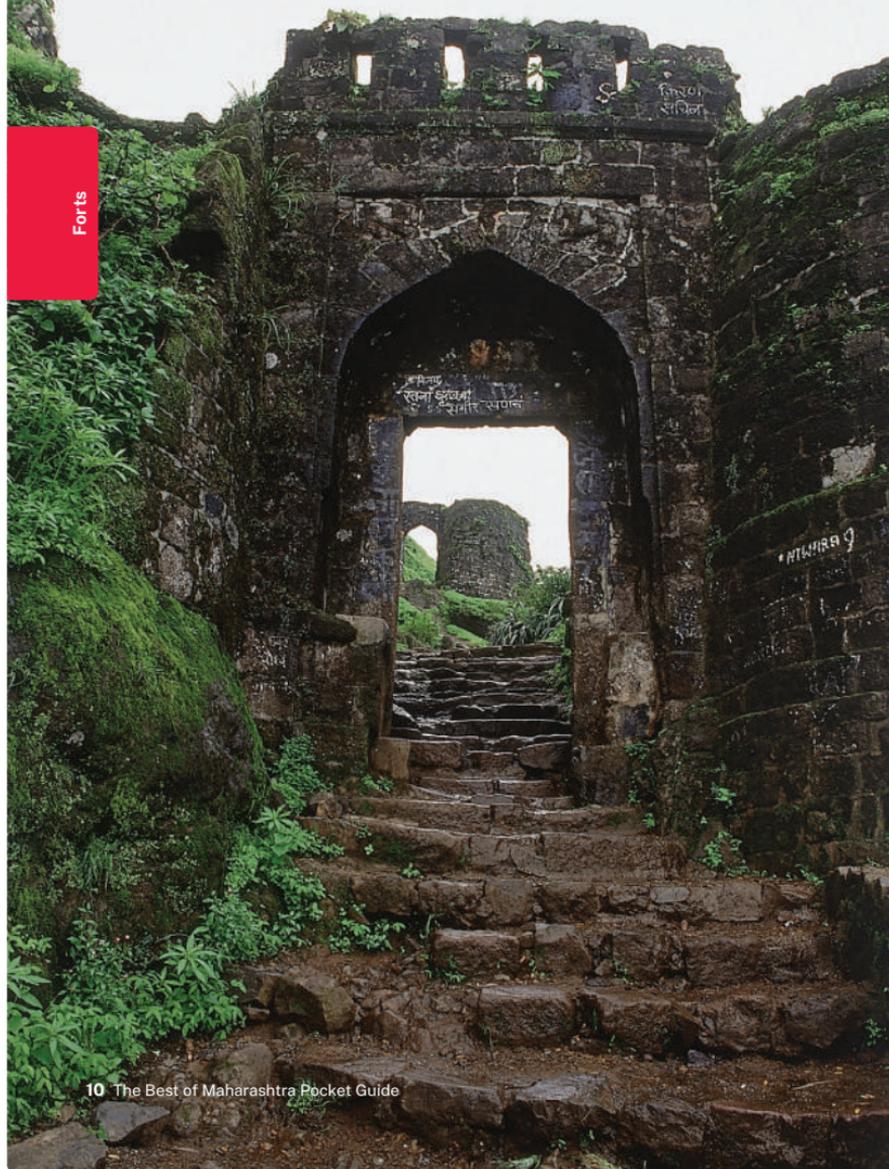
**By Train:** Nearest railway stations –Pune (134 km);  
Mangaon (29 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –140 km;  
Mumbai Airport –175 km



## Sinhagad Fort

Forts



**Sinhagad Fort, which translates to “Lion’s Fort,” is perched on a cliff in the Bhuleshwar range of the Sahyadri mountains in Pune district of Maharashtra, approximately 1,312 meters above sea level. Also known as Kondhana Fort, it was crucial to the Maratha Empire’s expansion and consolidation under Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The fort’s strategic position and robust defences made it an essential stronghold for the Marathas, allowing them to protect their lands and launch offensives against their adversaries.**

#### **History and Architecture**

The fort’s history can be traced back to the 2nd century BCE. This formidable fortress was considered nearly impenetrable due to its steep slopes, which made it difficult for enemies to approach. The architecture reflects its strategic importance and defensive capabilities, featuring massive stone walls, bastions, watchtowers, and gateways. The fort’s intricate layout includes narrow passageways and hidden chambers, posing significant challenges for intruders. Today, a motorable road provides access to the fort.

Sinhagad Fort boasts a rich history dating back to the 2nd

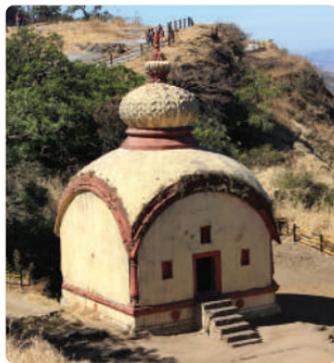
century BCE and has been the site of numerous battles and power struggles. The story of Yashwanti, the monitor lizard, is a well-known legend. It is said that Tanaji Malusare, a general in the Maratha empire, used Yashwanti to help scale the heights of Sinhagad Fort and reclaim it from the Mughals in 1670. Sadly, Tanaji lost his life in the battle. Upon hearing of his death, Chhatrapati Shivaji reportedly said, “Gad aala, pan Sinha gela,” which translates to, “The fort is captured, but the lion is lost.” This poignant statement is the reason why the fort came to be known as Sinhagad.

#### **How to Reach**

**By Road:** Pune – 30 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station – Pune (33 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport – 40 km



## Pratapgad Fort

Located in the Satara district of Maharashtra, on the outskirts of Mahabaleshwar, the Pratapgad Fort stands 1,100 meters above sea level, providing stunning vistas of the verdant valleys and the dramatic mountain range nearby. It has become a favoured spot for tourists.

### History and Architecture

The fort was commissioned by Chhatrapati Shivaji and built in 1656 by his prime minister, Moropant Trimbak Pingle. Its purpose was to monitor the Javali basin and protect the Nira and Koyna riverbanks, along with the Par Pass. Located on a ridge of the Sahyadri Mountains, the fort is encircled by thick forests and features several

bastions, making it a well-fortified structure.

The fort was notably the site of the Battle of Pratapgad in 1659, where Shivaji's troops defeated Afzal Khan, a general of the Bijapur Sultanate. Following this significant victory, Shivaji ordered the construction of the Afzal Buruj dargah at the fort. This battle marked a crucial moment in Shivaji's rise as a formidable military leader.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –140 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Pune (142 km), Satara (81 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –149 km



## Harishchandragad Fort



Forts

Located in the Sahyadri mountains in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, Harishchandragad is a stunning hill fort that rises to an elevation of 4,670 feet. Its impressive height and historical significance have long drawn the interest of both adventurers and history enthusiasts.

### History and Architecture

The origin of Harishchandragad dates back to the 6th century, when it was established under the Kalachuri dynasty. Its advantageous position, perched above Malshej Ghat, made it

an important fortification for overseeing local trade routes and defending against potential invaders. Throughout its history, the fort was the site of many conflicts and changed hands several times, including periods of control by the Mughals and the Marathas.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –202 km, Igatpuri –81 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations –Mumbai (217 km); Igatpuri Train Station (81 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –209 km, Nashik Airport (129 km)

## Murud-Janjira Fort

Located on an island near the coastal village of Murud, in Raigad district of Maharashtra, approximately 55 km from Alibaug, Murud Janjira Fort is situated on a massive rock in the middle of the Arabian Sea. This fort has withstood the test of time, establishing itself as one of India's most formidable coastal fortifications.



### History and Architecture

Janjira Fort's origins date back to the 14th century when it became a stronghold for the Siddi dynasty, a powerful naval force of African descent. Despite numerous sieges and battles over the centuries, the fort never succumbed to any invading power. This resilience is credited to its strategic location, intricate

defences, and the brave resistance of its defenders.

The fort is an architectural marvel, reflecting a blend of Indian and African influences. Its oval-shaped walls, made from laterite and basalt, rise to a height of 40 feet and are adorned with 19 rounded bastions. These bastions, once

armed with powerful cannons, provided a formidable defence against attackers.

#### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 149 km;  
Alibaug – 54 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Mumbai (142 km);  
Roha Station (40 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 156 km.

## Purandar Fort



Located in the Pune district, Purandar is a prominent mountain fort, rising to an elevation of 1,374 meters (4,508 feet) within the Sahyadri Mountains. It holds considerable historical significance, having played a key role in the rise and decline of the Maratha Empire.

### History and Architecture

Purandar Fort has a rich history that dates back to the 13th century. In the 14th century, the Bahamani Sultans added walls and bastions to the fort. Its strategic location made it a valuable asset for various rulers, including the Adilshahis, Mughals, and Marathas. In 1646, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the renowned Maratha leader, captured the fort and fortified it as a key stronghold of the Maratha Empire.

Purandar Fort also holds historical significance as the birthplace of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, Shivaji's son, who became the second Chhatrapati of the Maratha Empire, celebrated for his courage and strategic acumen.

Purandar Fort is also notable for its impressive architectural features. Its robust fortifications, detailed carvings, and thoughtfully designed layout highlight the engineering skill of its time.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune – 41 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway station – Pune (40 km).

**By Air:** Pune Airport – 47 km.

## Lohagad Fort

Lohagad Fort, aptly named the “iron fort,” stands out as a prominent destination in Pune district of Maharashtra. This majestic hill fort is situated in the Sahyadri hills near the hill station of Lonavala. It stands at an elevation of 1,033 meters (3,389 feet) above sea level and serves as a geographic divider between the Indrayani and Pavna basins.

### History and Architecture

Lohagad Fort's construction is attributed to the Lohtamia dynasty, who ruled the region during the 10th century CE. Over the centuries, it has seen

numerous battles and changes in ownership, passing through the hands of various rulers, including the Mughals and the Marathas. In 1648, the legendary Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured the fort, turning it into a strategic stronghold for his kingdom. Lohagad Fort showcases the architectural prowess of its builders, with its sturdy walls and bastions designed to withstand attacks.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune–65 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations –Pune (64 km); Malavli (6 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –70 km.



## Sindhudurg Fort



Sindhudurg Fort is a formidable maritime fortress situated on an island in the Arabian Sea, near Malvan in Maharashtra's Konkan region. Constructed by the renowned Maratha leader Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the fort's strategic position and robust defenses contribute to its status as a notable tourist attraction and a symbol of Maratha strength.

### History and Architecture

Built between 1664 and 1667, the Sindhudurg Fort is an imposing fort surrounded by water and rocks on all sides, which made it virtually impossible for the enemy to approach it without being spotted from a distance. Historians say it was built to keep the invaders, such as

the Siddhis, Portuguese and British, at bay. The fort has witnessed fierce battles for its control, including one with the Portuguese in 1693. It also functioned as a base for Shivaji's naval campaigns against the Portuguese and Siddhi fleets. Its strategic role and historical importance have led to its designation as a protected monument. The fort is a stunning example of 17th-century Maratha military architecture.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 490 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Goa (140km); Kudal (32 km)

**By Air:** Goa (Mopa) Airport – 82 km; Sindhudurg Airport (23 km)

## Panhala Fort

Panhala Fort, also known as Panhalgad or Panhalla (“the home of serpents”), is a majestic hill fort located 20 kilometers northwest of Kolhapur. It is one of the largest forts in the Deccan region, perched at an elevation of 977 meters and surrounded by 7 kilometers of fortifications. Strategically positioned, it overlooks a crucial pass in the Sahyadri mountain range that connected Bijapur in Maharashtra’s interior to the coastal regions. This location made Panhala Fort a focal point for numerous skirmishes involving the Marathas, Mughals, and the British East India Company.

### History and Architecture

The construction of Panhala Fort dates back to the 12th century, specifically between 1178 and 1209 CE. It was one of 15 forts, including Bavda, Bhudargad,

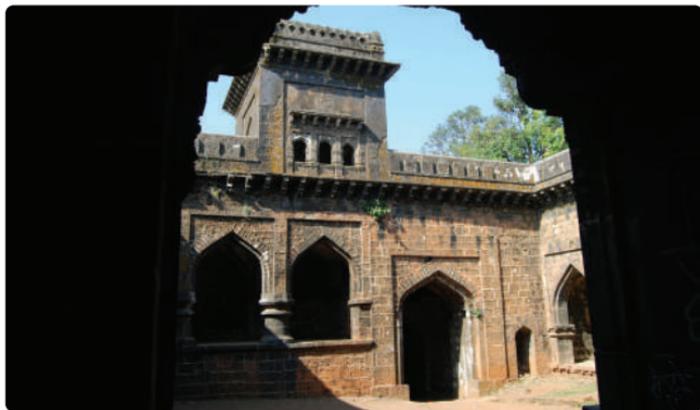
Satara, and Vishalgad, erected by the Shilahara ruler Bhoja II. The fort played a crucial role in the history of the Maratha Empire. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the empire’s founder, recognized its strategic importance and captured it in 1673. Panhala Fort served as the Maratha capital for a significant period, with Shivaji spending over 500 days there—longer than at any other fort except his childhood residences. Today, Panhala Fort is a prominent tourist attraction, drawing visitors from across India and beyond.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –233 km; Goa – 238 km; Kohlapur –23 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Pune (236 km); Goa (244 km); Kolhapur Railway Station (22km).

**By Air:** Pune Airport –242 km; Goa (Mopa) Airport –186 km; Kolhapur Airport –31 km



## Torna Fort

Torna Fort, also known as Prachandagad, is a magnificent hill fort situated in the Pune district of Maharashtra, India. At 1,403 meters (4,603 feet) above sea level, it is the tallest hill fort in the region and a notable feature of the Sahyadri mountain range. Its historical importance and strategic location attract trekkers, history enthusiasts, and nature lovers.

### History and Architecture

Torna Fort holds a significant place in Maratha history. In 1646, at just 16 years old, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj captured the fort, marking a significant

milestone in his quest for independence and establishing his military prowess, which laid the foundation for the rise of the Maratha Empire. The fort's well-preserved structure showcases the architectural brilliance of its time. Its fortifications, including robust walls, bastions, and gateways, demonstrate its formidable defensive capabilities.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –55 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station –Pune (58 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –64 km



Maharashtra is home to a remarkable array of UNESCO World Heritage Sites that showcase its rich cultural, historical, and architectural significance. Among the most renowned are the Elephanta Caves, a collection of stunning rock-cut temples dedicated to Lord Shiva, located on Elephanta Island near Mumbai. The Ajanta Caves, celebrated for their exquisite frescoes and sculptures dating back to the 2nd century BCE, offer a glimpse into ancient Buddhist art and monastic life. Another notable site is the Ellora Caves, where intricately carved Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain temples coexist, reflecting the region's religious harmony and artistic excellence. The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco ensemble in Mumbai stands as a testament to the city's colonial heritage, featuring iconic buildings that blend Western architectural styles with local influences. Each of these sites not only highlights Maharashtra's historical and cultural diversity but also serves as a testament to the artistic prowess and spiritual richness that have shaped the state over centuries. Visitors to these heritage sites can immerse themselves in the stories and legacies of a bygone era, making Maharashtra a treasure trove for history and culture enthusiasts.

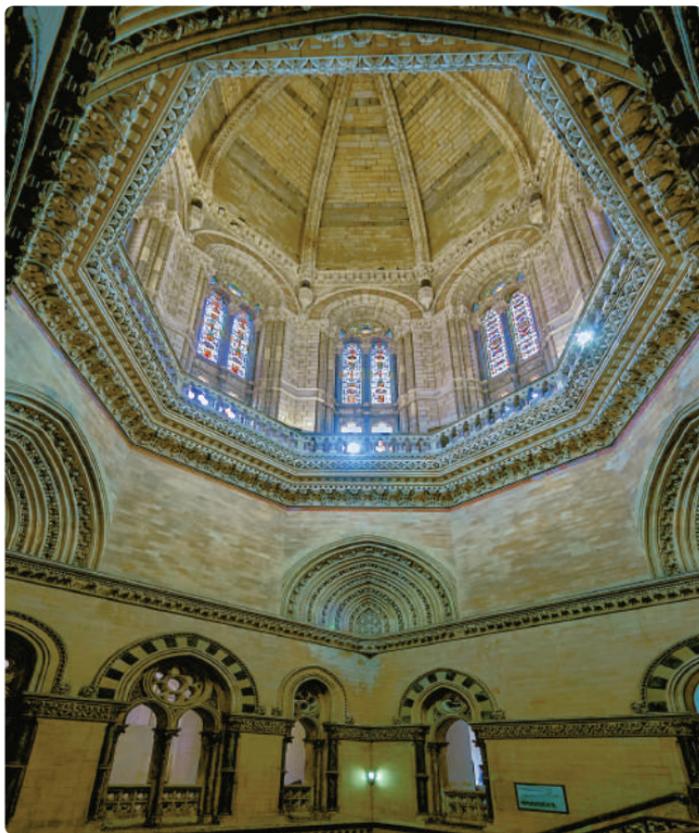
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# UNESCO World Heritage Sites

## Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) is located in Mumbai on the Western Part of India touching the shores of the Arabian Sea. Imposing, lively, and bustling with people, this grand train station stands as the city's most lavish Gothic structure and a symbol of colonial-era India. The railway

terminus was originally named Victoria Terminus in honor of Queen Victoria on Golden Jubilee Day in 1887, marking fifty years of her reign. In 1996, it was renamed Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus to honor the founder of the Maratha Empire, and since 2017, it has been known as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus.



### History and Architecture

Designed by F. W. Stevens, this building spans 2.85 hectares. Constructed over ten years starting in 1878, it is considered one of the finest functional railway stations globally, serving over three million commuters daily. This property showcases an exceptional blend of Victorian Gothic Revival architecture and Indian traditional themes. Its striking stone dome, turrets, pointed arches, and unique ground plan resemble traditional Indian palace architecture. The building is a prime example of cultural fusion, where British architects collaborated with Indian craftsmen to create a distinctive style unique to Mumbai. As the first terminus station in the subcontinent, it symbolized the nation's economic prosperity.

### What to See

This heritage structure is renowned for its magnificent stone dome, cantilevered staircase, ornamental turrets, elegant columns, pointed arches, high vaulted ceilings, and a variety of decorative sculptures and carvings. The grand frontage is adorned with numerous embellishments, including statuary, gargoyles,



allegorical grotesques holding standards and battle-axes, and relief busts representing various Indian castes and communities. Bas-reliefs of the ten directors of the old Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company (GIPR) are prominently displayed on the façade. The entrance gates to Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) feature two columns topped with a lion (symbolizing the United Kingdom) and a tiger (symbolizing India), along with tympana depicting peacocks.

Guided tours are available which will take you through the spectacular interiors and give you a glimpse into the history of this iconic building.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 20 km.

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 20 km.

## Western Ghats

UNESCO



The Western Ghats, a mountain range running parallel to India's western coast, is recognized as one of the world's eight most significant biodiversity hotspots. Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2012, the Western Ghats extend through Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, and Gujarat.

### What to See

The Western Ghats boast an extraordinary variety of plant and animal species, many of which are unique to this region. Beyond its ecological

importance, the Western Ghats hold cultural significance, housing numerous ancient temples and pilgrimage sites. Serving as a crucial natural resource, the Western Ghats play an essential role in sustaining the ecological balance of the area. The Western Ghats are renowned for their exceptional biodiversity and high level of endemism. Recognized as one of the world's eight most critical biodiversity hotspots, this mountain range hosts some of the finest examples of non-equatorial tropical evergreen

forests globally. The region is home to at least 325 species listed as globally threatened by the IUCN Red List. Among these, there are 229 plant species, 31 mammal species, 15 bird species, 43 amphibian species, 5 reptile species, and 1 fish species.

The Western Ghats are segmented into various hill ranges, including the Sahyadris, Nilgiris, Anaimalai Hills, and Cardamom Hills. The Sahyadri range in Maharashtra features numerous hill stations such as Matheran, Mahabaleshwar, and Panchgani. In Maharashtra, “ghats” refer to mountain passes, renowned for their winding roads, stunning scenery, and breathtaking vistas. These ghats are popular among road trippers, trekkers, and nature enthusiasts. They often traverse dense forests, meander past waterfalls, and provide panoramic views of valleys and the surrounding landscapes.

### **How to Reach**

**By Road:** Driving is one of the best ways to explore the Western Ghats from Mumbai or Pune, providing flexibility and the ability to stop at various scenic spots along the way.

### **Route options:**

- Bhor Ghat (Khandala Ghat) –Mumbai –76 km; Pune –74 km.
- Malshej Ghat: Mumbai –147km; Pune -129 km.
- Tamhini Ghat: Mumbai –161 km; Pune –53 km.
- Amboli Ghat: Mumbai –495 km; Pune –353 km; Goa –117 km.
- Varandha Ghat: Mumbai –199 km; Pune –101 km.
- Kasara Ghat: Mumbai –107 km; Pune –215 km; Igatpuri –18 km.
- Kumbharli Ghat: Mumbai -107 km; Pune –213 km; Satara –102 km, Ratnagiri –106 km.
- Kashedi Ghat: Mumbai –203 km; Pune –146 km.
- Amba Ghat: Mumbai –347 km; Pune –243 km; Ratnagiri –59 km.



## Elephanta Caves

The Elephanta Caves, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, are situated on Elephanta Island, also known as Gharapuri, just a short distance from Mumbai. This island is renowned for its collection of cave temples dedicated to the Hindu and Buddhist Gods. Elephanta Caves are a popular destination for day trips from Mumbai and are a must-visit for those who appreciate history and art.

### History and Architecture

The Elephanta Caves are situated on Elephanta Island,

which comprises two hillocks divided by a narrow valley. The Elephanta Caves, renowned for their ancient rock-cut architecture, feature elaborate wall carvings and sculptures. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage site in the early 1980s, these caves are perched on a hillock and showcase rock art that dates back to the mid-5th and 6th centuries. The most notable of these is Cave 1, which is 39 meters deep from the entrance to the back. Architecturally, this cave on the western hill bears similarities to



the Dumar Lena cave at Ellora in India.

Dominating the entrance of Cave 1 is the impressive 7-meter-high sculpture of “Sadashiva.” This piece depicts three aspects of Shiva: the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer. The left side represents Aghora or Bhairava, the central face depicts Taptapurusha or Mahadeva, and the right side shows Vamadeva or Uma. Other notable sculptures in the cave depicting different forms of Lord Shiva include representations of Nataraja,



Yogishvara, Andhakasuravadha, Ardhanarishwara, Kalyanasundaramurti, Gangadharamurti, and Ravanaanugrahamurti, each distinguished by their form, theme, and execution. The Elephanta caves are maintained as monolithic temples, featuring a sanctum (garbhagriha), a courtyard (mandapa), and various rock-cut architectural elements and sculptures.

#### Things to See/Do

In addition to the caves, Elephanta Island contains archaeological remnants dating back to the 2nd century BC, including stupas found on the eastern side of the hillock, and artifacts from the Portuguese era, such as a cannon situated at the island’s summit. Spanning 10 to 15 square kilometers, Elephanta island is covered with lush greenery, including mango, tamarind, and palm trees. It’s an ideal spot for a weekend getaway, offering both trekking and picnic opportunities.

#### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 25 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station – Mumbai (3 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 22 km.

**By Ferry:** Take a ferry from the Gateway of India – 1 km.

## The Victorian Gothic And Art Deco

UNESCO



The Victorian Gothic and Art Deco ensembles of Mumbai, dating from the 19th and 20th centuries, were added to the UNESCO World Heritage Site list in 2018. Approximately 94 buildings, connected by the historic Oval Maidan, stand along the sea. Notable structures include the Old Secretariat (1857-74), Bombay High Court (1878), University Library and Convention Hall (1874-78), David Sassoon Library (1870), Public Works

Department Office (1872), Watson's Hotel (1869), and Elphinstone College (1888).

### History and Architecture

Two waves of urban development in Mumbai during the 19th and 20th centuries transformed the city from a fortified trading outpost to India's premier city. The first wave in the 1880s saw the construction of Victorian Gothic public buildings and the creation of the Oval Maidan.

The second wave, the Backbay Reclamation Scheme in the early 20th century, allowed Bombay to expand westward with Art Deco residential, commercial, and entertainment buildings, as well as the creation of the Marine Drive seafront.

The Victorian collection of grand public buildings in Mumbai developed an Indo-Gothic style, merging Gothic revival elements with Indian features and incorporating adaptations like balconies and verandas to suit the local climate. Mumbai's Art Deco structures, including iconic cinema halls and apartment buildings, combined Indian design with Art Deco motifs, creating a distinctive style known as Indo-Deco, which influenced the entire Indian subcontinent.

### What to See

The Oval Maidan presents a striking array of Victorian Gothic buildings on its eastern side and an equally impressive collection of Art Deco structures on its western side, reflecting Mumbai's evolution leading up to India's independence in 1947. This combination of Victorian Gothic and Art Deco architecture maintains a high level of visual, spatial, and planning integrity, with the Rajabai Clock

Tower as a prominent visual highlight and the Oval Maidan serving as a central unifying element. The area remains a well-preserved example of planned urban development, though the surrounding settings are susceptible to urban development pressures.

### How To Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 24 km.

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 21 km.

The best way to explore Mumbai's Victorian Gothic and Art Deco buildings is to start at CST (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus) and take a walking tour. Here's a suggested itinerary:

- CST (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus)
- Eros Cinema (2.3 km from CST)
- Empress Court (2.1 km from CST)
- High Court (2.2 km from CST)
- Rajabai Clock Tower (2.1 km from CST)
- David Sassoon Library (2.5 km from CST)
- Elphinstone College (2.4 km from CST)
- Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (formerly Prince of Wales Museum) – (1.8 km from CST)

## Ajanta & Ellora Caves

UNESCO



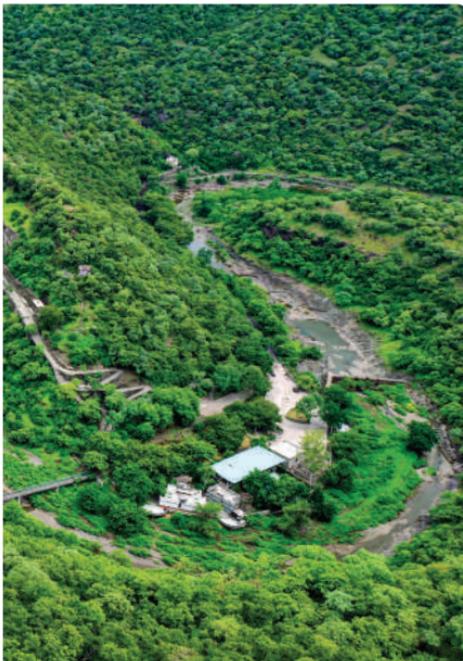
### Ajanta Caves

Located about 107 km from Aurangabad, the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ajanta Caves are a famous cluster of 29 rock-cut cave monuments dating from the 2nd century BCE to around 480 CE. These ancient Buddhist temples and monasteries are celebrated for their remarkable murals, regarded as some of the finest examples of Indian art. In 1983,

the caves were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### History and Architecture

The paintings and sculptures at Ajanta, regarded as masterpieces of Buddhist religious art, have significantly influenced the art world. The caves are carved into a vertical cliff overlooking the Waghora River and are accessible via rock-cut staircases.



The Ajanta Caves represent a remarkable achievement in ancient Buddhist rock-cut architecture. They offer a rare glimpse into the art, architecture, painting, and socio-cultural, religious, and political history of their time.

Carved from solid basalt rock, the caves feature intricately designed interiors with pillars, arches, and stupas. The chaitya

halls, intended for worship and ceremonies, are characterized by their horseshoe-shaped apses (arch) and high vaulted ceilings. The viharas, or monasteries, include a series of cells, courtyards, and meditation halls.

### What to See

The rock-hewn caves at Ajanta are either chaityyas (shrines), chapels or prayer halls, or viharas (monasteries) or residential cells. Caves 9 and 10 at Ajanta are chaityyas, featuring some of the earliest known paintings in India. Caves 19, 26, and 29 are also chaityyas from the Mahayana period, while the remaining caves are viharas. Ajanta's art includes styles from the Gandhara and Mathura schools of the Kushana period, the Sarnath school of the Gupta period, and the Amaravati school from the late Satavahana and Ikshvaku periods.

The paintings at Ajanta depict the life of Lord Buddha, including his past lives and the Jataka tales. The caves are categorized into two main phases: the early Buddhist caves (2nd century BCE to 1st century CE) and the Mahayana caves (5th century CE).

## Ellora Caves

Situated in the Deccan Plateau of Maharashtra, the Ellora Caves are a remarkable testament to ancient India's artistic brilliance and spiritual depth. Carved into a 2-kilometer-long basalt cliff, these 34 rock-cut caves date back to the 6th to 10th centuries CE and exemplify a harmonious convergence of three major religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism. The Ellora Caves were designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1983 and are currently maintained by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

### History and Architecture

Ellora vividly revives the ancient Indian civilization with its continuous sequence of monuments spanning from AD 600 to 1000. The site is a remarkable artistic achievement and a testament to human creative genius. The rock-cut architecture at Ellora unfolded in three distinct phases:

#### **Buddhist Caves (Caves 1–12):**

Excavated between the 5th and 8th centuries, these caves reflect the Mahayana Buddhist philosophy prevalent in the region.

#### **Hindu Caves (Caves 13–29):**

Including the renowned Kailasa temple (Cave 16), these were



created between the 7th and 10th centuries during the Brahmanical period.

**Jain Caves (Caves 30–34):**

The final phase of excavation, from the 9th to the 12th centuries, showcases the influence of Jain philosophy.

 **What to See**

Carved between the 6th and 7th centuries CE, the **Buddhist caves** at Ellora are mostly viharas (monasteries). **Cave 5** is known for its long hall and two central benches, likely used for group recitations of Buddhist sutras.

**Cave 10** (Vishvakarma) features a large Buddha image in front of the stupa and a rock-cut balcony.

**Caves 11 and 12** (Don Taal and Teen Taal) are three-story caves that showcase intricate Buddhist monastic architecture.

Excavated during the rule of the Kalachuri, Chalukya, and Rashtrakuta dynasties, the Hindu caves are rich in sculptures, some of which still bear traces of original paint. **Cave 14** is adorned with panels of Hindu deities. **Cave 16 (Kailasa)** is a monolithic structure resembling a multi-storeyed temple complex with life-size elephant statues, victory pillars, and sculpted side walls. **Cave 21 (Rameshwar)** is decorated with images of Ganga and Yamuna. **Cave 29 (Sita ki Nahani)** is unique in elevation and plan, reminiscent of the

great cave at Elephanta, with impressive statues. **Caves 30 to 34 are Jain caves**, with **Cave 32 (Indra Sabha)** being the most notable. Though unfinished, it features elaborate pillars, large sculptural panels, and ceiling paintings. The Jain caves at Ellora have the largest number of wall paintings on their extant ceilings.



UNESCO

 **How to Reach**

Since the Ajanta and Ellora caves are located (approximately 30km apart) it is best to visit both the caves in the same trip.

**By Air:** Aurangabad Airport - 99 km from Ajanta and 30 km from Ellora

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations - Aurangabad (115 km from Ajanta and 33 km from Ellora); Jalgaon (75 km from Ajanta)

The Caves of Maharashtra are a fascinating blend of history, art, and spirituality, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region. The **Elephanta Caves, Ajanta Caves, and Ellora Caves** are among the most renowned in Maharashtra, all three recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Other significant caves in Maharashtra include the **Karla and Bhaja Caves**, which are ancient Buddhist rock-cut complexes situated near Lonavala. These caves, with their artistic brilliance and historical significance, offer a captivating glimpse into the ancient civilizations that flourished in the region.

Bhaja Caves  
Karla Caves  
Patur Caves

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# C a v e s

## Bhaja Caves

The Bhaja Caves, a group of 22 rock-cut caves dating back to the 2nd century BCE, are located near Pune, India. These caves, safeguarded by the Archaeological Survey of India, stand as proud sentinels of the nation's history and cultural heritage.

### History and Architecture

Situated near Pune, just off the Mumbai-Pune highway, the Bhaja Caves are a remarkable example of rock-cut architecture, dating back to the 2nd century BCE. This historical site features 22 caves, each immortalizing the history of the eras they have witnessed over the centuries. Named after the nearby Bhaja village, which

lies 450 feet below, the caves include both Chaityas (prayer halls) and Viharas (monastic residences). Specifically, Caves 12-14 are designated as prayer halls, while the remaining caves served as monastic quarters for Buddhist monks. Located along an ancient trade route, these caves provided shelter and a place of rest for travelers journeying between the Arabian Sea and the Deccan Plateau.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –60 km; Mumbai –96 km; Lonavala –12 km.

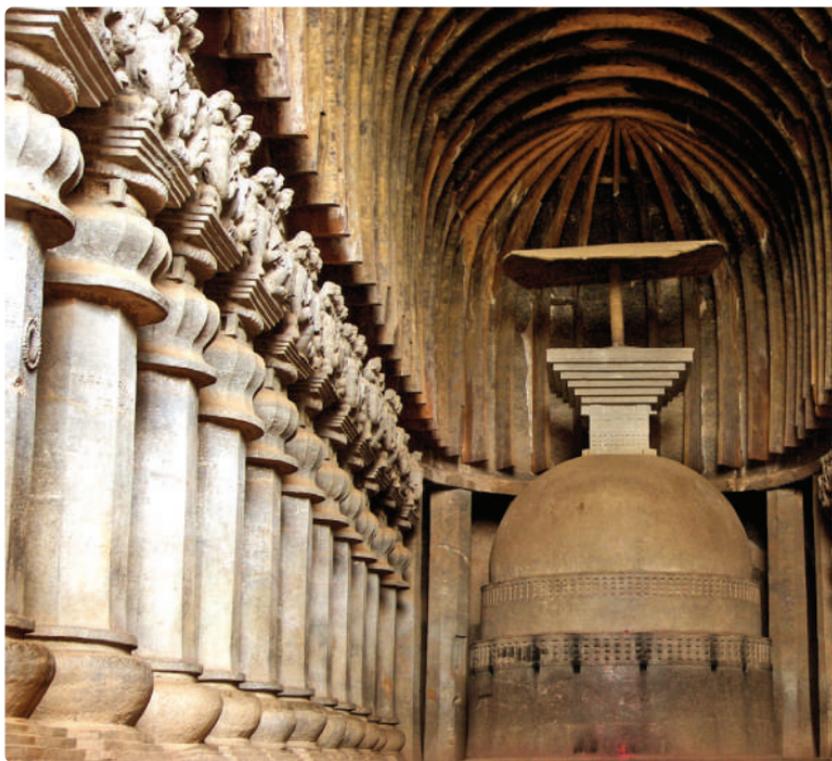
**By Train:** Nearest railway stations –Pune (60 km); Mumbai (102 km); Malavi (2 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –63 km; Mumbai Airport –103 km.



## Karla Caves

Caves



Karla Caves are one of Maharashtra's oldest and smaller rock-cut Buddhist sites. Their historic significance and exquisite Buddhist sculptures have earned them an excellent reputation among tourists.

### History and Architecture

Perched on a hill overlooking the Indrayani River, about 60 kilometers from Pune, the Karla Caves were excavated between the 2nd century BCE and the 5th century CE, making them some of the oldest and most significant Buddhist cave



shrines in India. At the heart of the Karla Caves is **Cave 8**, the largest and best-preserved **Chaitya Hall** of its time. This architectural wonder showcases exquisite examples of ancient **Buddhist sculpture**, highlighting the skill and creativity of the artisans of that era. The Karla

Caves are notable for their **multi-storeyed caves**, a rare feature in **rock-cut architecture**. Inside the Chaitya Cave, visitors can find a remarkable monolithic stupa dating back to the 1st century CE, adorned with intricate carvings of animals and riders, reflecting influences from Gandhara Art. These features add to the caves' allure and historical significance.

#### **How to Reach**

**By Road:** Pune –59 km; Mumbai –94 km; Lonavala –11 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations –Pune (59 km); Mumbai (100 km); Lonavala (12 km).

**By Air:** Pune Airport –62 km; Mumbai Airport –101 km.



## Patur Caves



Positioned near the Renuka Mata Temple and along State Highway 194 in Patur Taluka within the Ankola district, the caves not only serve as a significant archaeological site but also offer a glimpse into the religious and cultural dynamics of ancient Maharashtra.

### History and Architecture

The Patur Caves in Maharashtra are a testament to the architectural prowess and historical significance of the Vakataka dynasty. Constructed as one of the sixteen sites under the reign of King Harishan and his chief minister, Varahdev, these caves date back to the Vakataka period, showcasing the intricate craftsmanship

and artistic excellence of the era. Carved into the rocky landscapes of Patur Taluka in the Akola district, the caves feature detailed sculptures, elaborate carvings, and well-preserved frescoes that reflect the Buddhist architectural style prevalent during that time.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –454 km; Mumbai –535 km; Nagpur –287 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations –Pune (451 km); Mumbai (550 km); Nagpur (288 km), Akola (35 km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport –447 km; Mumbai Airport –542 km; Nagpur Airport –281 km, Jalgaon (186 km)

The temples of Maharashtra are a reflection of the state's deep spiritual heritage and architectural brilliance, attracting devotees and tourists alike. These sacred spaces, spread across the urban and rural landscapes, are devoted to various deities from Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, showcasing the region's rich religious diversity. From intricately carved ancient temples nestled in the hills to bustling sanctuaries in the heart of cities, each temple carries a unique blend of history, devotion, and artistry. Many temples are renowned for their distinctive architectural styles, ranging from rock-cut cave temples to grand stone structures, each telling stories of past dynasties and their devotion. These temples serve as important pilgrimage sites, hosting vibrant festivals and rituals throughout the year, making them not just places of worship, but also cultural hubs that preserve Maharashtra's long-standing traditions and values.

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# Temples

## Siddhivinayak Temple, Mumbai

The Siddhivinayak Temple in Prabhadevi, Mumbai, is a highly revered Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Ganesha, who is worshipped as the remover of obstacles and the God of success in Hinduism. The term 'Siddhivinayak' can be translated as 'Ganesha who fulfills desires.

### History and Architecture

Constructed in 1801, the temple features a small mandapam (hall) where the principal idol is enshrined. Notable for its intricate architecture, the sanctum sanctorum is adorned with intricately carved wooden doors depicting the Ashtavinayaka, the eight forms

of Lord Ganesha. Uniquely, the temple's idol is carved from a single black stone with its trunk extending to the right, in contrast to the more common left-side curl. This Chaturbhuj idol, which has four arms, holds a lotus in the upper right hand, a small axe in the upper left, and a bowl of modaks (an Indian sweet) along with holy beads. On either side of the Ganesha idol are statues of Goddesses Riddhi and Siddhi, representing sanctity, success, wealth, and prosperity.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –11 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station – Mumbai (12 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –11 km.





## Shirdi Sai Baba Temple, Shirdi

A renowned pilgrimage destination in India, Shirdi is where the revered saint Sai Baba resided and spread his teachings focussing on love, compassion, forgiveness, and selfless service for over fifty years. The Samadhi Temple, where he spent much of his life, features a room showcasing items used by Shri Sai Baba, making it a significant site for his followers who continue to honour and practice his teachings.

### History and Architecture

The temple stands on the ground where the revered saint and spiritual leader, Shirdi Sai Baba, spent a large part of his life. Sai Baba, worshiped by followers of all religions,

resided in Shirdi during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Established after his Mahasamadhi (passing) in 1918, the temple complex includes the main shrine, which houses Sai Baba's samadhi (tomb), as well as various other buildings such as prayer halls, meditation rooms, administrative offices, and accommodation facilities for devotees.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –240 km; Pune –186 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Mumbai (255 km); Pune (187 km); Shirdi Station (3 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –247 km; Pune Airport –182 km; Nashik Airport –93 km.



## Bhimashankar Temple, Pune



The Bhimashankar Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva, is the sixth among the 12 jyotirlingas (devotional shrines of Lord Shiva) in India. Located in the village of Bhorgiri, it is nestled in the Ghat region of the Sahyadri hills, approximately 50 km northwest of Pune city.

### History and Architecture

The Bhimashankar Temple boasts a rich history, believed to date back to the 13th century during the Yadava dynasty. Its architecture features the

Nagara (or Indo-Aryan) style, with clear Rajasthani and Gujarati influences evident in the sanctum sanctorum (garbha griha) and the tower (shikhara). Over the centuries, the temple has undergone various renovations and additions, enhancing its architectural grandeur.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune – 123 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway station - Pune (124 km);

**By Air:** Pune Airport – 119 km.

## Trimbakeshwar Temple, Nashik



Situated on the outskirts of Nashik, the historic Trimbakeshwar Temple is a significant Hindu shrine devoted to Lord Shiva. As one of the 12 Jyotirlingas, it symbolizes a key aspect of Lord Shiva and is deeply revered in Hindu mythology and pilgrimage traditions.

### History and Architecture

The Trimbakeshwar Temple, constructed by the third Peshwa Balaji Bajirao (1740-1760) on the site of an older temple, is a prominent Hindu pilgrimage center. Nestled at the base of Brahmagiri Hill and surrounded by the Nilagiri and Kalagiri hills, the temple is entirely built of black stone and dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is located near

Trimbak, the origin of the River Godavari, with Kusavarta, a pond within the temple grounds, symbolizing the river's source. The temple exemplifies traditional Hindu temple architecture with its intricate carvings, sculptures, and ornate decorations. The complex includes the main shrine with the lingam (a symbolic representation of Lord Shiva) and various smaller shrines dedicated to other deities.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –171 km; Nashik –30 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations -Mumbai (187 km); Nashik (40 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –179 km; Nashik Airport –57 km.

## Mahalakshmi Temple, Kolhapur

The Mahalakshmi Temple, dedicated to Goddess Mahalakshmi, the deity of wealth and prosperity, is located in the centre of Kolhapur city, on the sacred banks of the Panchganga River.

### History and Architecture

The Mahalakshmi Temple boasts a rich history spanning several centuries. It is believed to have been originally constructed in the 7th century by the Chalukya dynasty and later renovated and expanded by various rulers and patrons. Significant reconstruction took place during the reign of the Maratha king, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj.

The temple is an excellent example of traditional Hindu architecture, featuring a grand entrance (Mahadwara), towering spires (Shikharas), intricately carved pillars, and ornate decorations. The sanctum sanctorum houses the main idol of Goddess Mahalakshmi, with smaller shrines dedicated to other deities surrounding it.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune – 233 km; Goa – 218 km; Kolhapur – 5 km.

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Pune (234 km); Goa (223 km); Kolhapur (25 km).

**By Air:** Pune Airport – 244 km; Goa (Mopa) Airport – 165 km; Kolhapur Airport – 12 km.



## Vitthal Rukmini Temple, Pandharpur



The Pandharpur Vitthal Temple, often referred to as the Vitthal Rukmini Temple, is a significant Hindu shrine dedicated to Lord Vitthal, a manifestation of Lord Krishna. It is located on the banks of the Chandrabhaga River in Pandharpur, a town regarded as one of the most sacred pilgrimage destinations in Maharashtra.

### History and Architecture

The Pandharpur Vitthal Temple boasts a rich history that spans several centuries. It is believed to have been initially constructed in the 12th century during the Yadava dynasty, later expanded and renovated by various rulers

and patrons. Over the years, the temple has undergone significant reconstruction and restoration.

The temple exemplifies traditional Hindu architecture, featuring a simple yet elegant design, with a spire (Shikhar) rising above the sanctum sanctorum that houses the main idol of Lord Vitthal. The complex includes various other shrines dedicated to different deities, as well as courtyards, halls, and administrative buildings.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune – 209 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Pune (207 km); Pandharpur (3km)

**By Air:** Pune Airport – 209 km.

## Tulja Bhavani Temple, Tuljapur

The Tulja Bhavani Temple, also known as Tuljabhavani Mandir, is a highly revered Hindu shrine dedicated to Goddess Bhavani, a manifestation of Goddess Parvati. It is located in the town of Tuljapur, approximately 45 kilometers from Solapur city in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra.

### History and Architecture

The Tulja Bhavani Temple has a rich history dating back several centuries. It is believed to have been originally built in the 12th century during the Yadava dynasty and later renovated and expanded by various rulers and

patrons over time. The temple has undergone significant reconstruction and restoration efforts over the years.

The temple showcases traditional Hindu temple architecture, featuring a simple yet elegant design with a spire (Shikhar) towering over the sanctum sanctorum housing the main idol of Goddess Bhavani.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –292 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station –Pune (290 km); Solapur (47 km) and Osmanabad (30 km).

**By Air:** Pune Airport –292 km.



## Ashtavinayak Yatra

Maharashtra is renowned for its sacred Ashtavinayaka temples, which hold a special place in Hindu tradition. The term “Ashtavinayaka” is derived from Sanskrit, meaning “Eight Ganeshas.” These eight temples, each located in a different part of the state, are considered ‘Swayambhu,’ or self-originated, and are believed to be ‘jagrut,’ meaning they grant the wishes of their devotees. Each Ganapati deity at these temples has a unique name and an associated legend.

The **Ashtavinayak Yatra** is a sacred pilgrimage route

that leads devotees to eight renowned Ganesh temples located in Maharashtra. This spiritual journey provides not only a profound divine experience but also an opportunity for pilgrims to immerse themselves in the cultural heritage and scenic beauty of Maharashtra.

**The eight temples are located across three districts in Maharashtra: Pune, Raigad, and Ahmednagar. The typical sequence for the Ashtavinayaka Yatra (pilgrimage) is as follows:**



Chintamani, Theur

The traditional starting and ending point of the Ashtavinayak Yatra is the Mayureshwar temple in Morgaon. The suggested sequence for the pilgrimage is as follows:

- Mayureshwar, Morgaon
- Siddhivinayak, Siddhatek
- Ballaleshwar, Pali
- Varadvinayak, Mahad
- Chintamani, Theur
- Girijatmaj, Lenyadri
- Vighneshwar, Ozar
- Mahaganapati, Ranjangaon

By following this route, pilgrims can ensure a smooth and organized journey, visiting all the temples in an efficient and logical order.

### Mayureshwar Temple at Morgaon

Morgaon village, located 50 km from Pune, is renowned for its shrine dedicated to Mayureshwar Vinayak, one of the Ashtavinayak (eight Ganeshas) temples. The image of Lord Ganesha here faces east, flanked by brass images of his consorts Siddhi and Riddhi. The Mayureshwar Ganesh Mandir is situated on the banks of the River Karha and is associated with Morya Gosavi, a saint of the Ganpatya sect. This particular Ganesha idol is unique with six

arms and is white instead of the usual grey, with a peacock as his mount. According to legend, he was born to Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati to defeat the demon Sindhu.

### Siddhivinayak Temple at Siddhatek

The Siddhivinayak Temple, the second of the eight Ashtavinayak temples, is located in the village of Siddhatek, around 200 km from Pune in the Karjat district of Ahmednagar. This temple is named Siddhivinayak because it is believed that Lord Vishnu attained siddhi (spiritual power) on the Siddhatek mountain.

Perched on a hillock surrounded by lush babul trees, the temple is constructed from black stone and includes a sabha mandapa (assembly hall) and a small shrine with a demonic head sculpture. The temple celebrates two main festivals: Ganesh Chaturthi (celebrating the birth of Lord Ganesha), and Vijayadashami.

### Shri Ballaleshwar Ganpati Temple at Pali

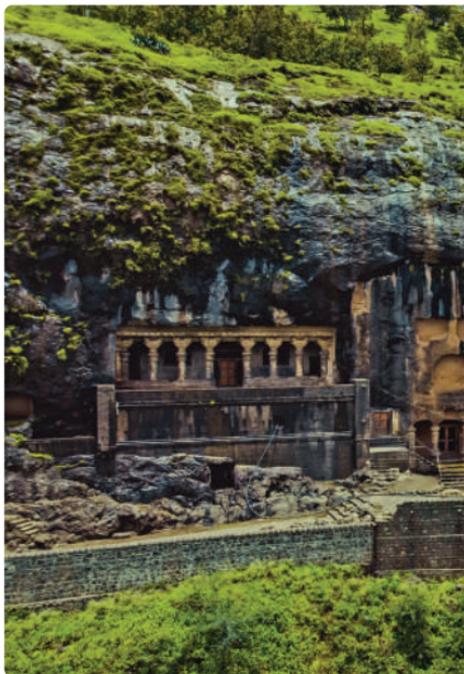
The Pali village, situated between Fort Sarasgarh and the River Amba in Raigad district, is home to one of the eight revered Ashtavinayak temples

dedicated to Lord Ganesha. This temple is notable for its unique idol of Ganesha, which sits on a stone throne facing east, with the trunk turned towards the left. The idol features three diamonds, two for the eyes and one on the navel. It is set against a silver backdrop with the consorts Riddhi and Siddhi depicted waving chamaras (a ceremonial fan).

The temple is also known for its giant metal bell, said to have been brought by Chimaji Appa, the military commander of the Maratha empire, after his victory over the Portuguese at Vasai. The temple's grandeur is further enhanced by a 15-foot-high sanctum. The current structure of the temple was reportedly constructed by Shri Phadnis of Moradabad.

### Varadvinayak Temple at Mahad

This village in Khalapur taluka is home to the Varadvinayak Temple, one of the Ashtavinayak (eight Ganeshas) temples. The temple was restored in 1725 AD by Ramji Mahadev Biwalkar, a general of the Peshwa. A picturesque pond lies adjacent to the temple. Notably, the idol of Varada Vinayak is believed to be swayambu (self-originated),



having been discovered in a nearby lake. The idol faces east, with its trunk turned to the left, and four elephant idols guard the corners of the temple.

The temple attracts large crowds during festivals like Magh Chaturthi. Another unique feature is an oil lamp that is said to have been burning continuously since 1892!



### Chintamani Temple at Theur

Located about 25 km from Pune, the Chintamani Mandir in Theur is one of the eight Ashtavinayak temples dedicated to Lord Ganesha. The temple is surrounded by the waters of the River Mula on three sides, with its entrance facing north. The spacious main hall is constructed of wood and

features a charming fountain, as well as a large bell suspended from the ceiling. Inside the temple, the idol of Lord Ganesha is depicted seated cross-legged, with its trunk turned to the left. A significant fair takes place during Ganesh Utsav, celebrated in the month of Bhadrapad (August or September) and in the month of Magh (January or February).

### Girijatmaj Temple at Lenyadri

This temple is unique as it is the only Ganesha shrine in India carved into a cave. Legend has it that the Pandavas from the Mahabharata created these caves in a single night during their 13th year of exile. Situated in the hills of Junnar near Pune, the Lenyadri caves feature the Girijatmaj Ganesh, whose idol is carved into the cave wall and can only be viewed from behind. The idol is adorned with red vermilion or sindoor and is one of the Ashtavinayaka, the eight Ganeshas of Maharashtra.

To reach Lenyadri, visitors must climb 338 steps leading to a rock-cut cave marked by eight intricately carved pillars, adorned with lions and elephants. At the entrance, there is a large hall, and the south-facing cave contains 18 niches to the right of the sanctum, where the Ganesha carving is located. The caves also feature several water tanks that remain full throughout the year, providing refreshing water for the weary pilgrims who visit.

### Vighnahar Temple at Ozar

The Vigneshwara Temple, also known as the Vighnahar Ganapati Temple, is a revered

Hindu temple located in Ozar, Maharashtra. The Ganesha idol worshipped here is known as Vigneshwara or Vignahar, meaning “Lord of obstacles” or “Remover of obstacles.” This name is tied to the legend of Ganesha triumphing over the demon Vignasura, who symbolizes obstacles.

Ozar is situated approximately 85 kilometers from Pune, off the Pune-Nashik highway, and about 9 kilometers north of Narayangaon. Although traditionally listed as the seventh temple to visit in the Ashtavinayak circuit, many pilgrims choose to visit Ozar fifth for convenience.



## Mahaganapati Temple at Ranjangaon

The Ranjangaon Ganpati, also known as the Shri Mahaganapati Temple, is a Hindu temple dedicated to Lord Ganesha, one of Hinduism's most revered deities. It is located in the village of Ranjangaon in the Shirur taluka of Pune district, Maharashtra. This temple is the last of the eight Ashtavinayak temples, holding significant religious importance in Hinduism.

The temple's Ganesha idol was unveiled and donated by the Kholam family, renowned goldsmiths from Ranjangaon. The construction of the main temple is believed to date back to the 9th and 10th centuries, with significant contributions made during the Peshwa era. The temple features a prominent shikhara above the sanctum and includes the Nagarkhana atop the entrance gate. The temple faces east and is known for its grand and magnificent entrance.

### How To Complete The Yatra - Recommended Duration (Three Days)

We suggest renting a cab or car from Pune for a full three days to comfortably complete

the yatra. While it is possible to finish the tour in two days, doing so would feel too rushed. Therefore, a three-day itinerary is recommended for a more relaxed and fulfilling experience.

#### Day 1

- **Morning:** Begin your journey from Pune and visit the Mayureshwar temple in Morgaon.
- **Afternoon:** Continue to the Siddhivinayak temple in Siddhatek.
- **Evening:** Travel to Pali and stay overnight at a hotel near the Ballaleshwar temple.

#### Day 2

- **Morning:** Visit the Ballaleshwar temple in Pali.
- **Afternoon:** Head to the Varadvinayak temple in Mahad, followed by the Chintamani temple in Theur.
- **Evening:** Return to Pune and stay overnight.

#### Day 3

- **Morning:** Visit the Girijatmaj temple in Lenyadri and the Vighneshwar temple in Ozar.
- **Afternoon:** Conclude the Yatra by visiting the Mahaganapati temple in Ranjangaon.
- **Evening:** Return to Pune.

Maharashtra's coastline stretches along the Arabian Sea, offering a diverse array of beautiful beaches that are perfect for a variety of activities. From serene, secluded spots ideal for relaxation and reflection to bustling shores where water sports and vibrant local culture thrive, the beaches of Maharashtra cater to every type of traveler. These coastal gems are not only renowned for their scenic beauty, characterized by golden sands, swaying palm trees, and clear blue waters, but also for their rich historical significance and culinary delights. Whether you are looking to bask in the sun, explore underwater life, or indulge in local seafood, Maharashtra's beaches provide an idyllic backdrop for a memorable seaside escape.

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# B E A C H E S

## Juhu Beach



Juhu Beach, Mumbai's most famous beach, is a popular spot for both locals and tourists looking for relaxation, entertainment, and a taste of the city's vibrant street food culture. Stretching along the Arabian Sea, this sandy beach offers plenty of activities, from leisurely strolls and camel or horse rides to enjoying beautiful sunsets that paint the sky with vivid colors. Today, visitors flock to Juhu not just for its beach, but also to catch a glimpse of the grand homes of numerous Bollywood stars who reside in the area.

### Things to do at Juhu Beach

- Take a **leisurely walk** along the shoreline and catch the **sun set** over the Arabian Sea.
- Enjoy **horse or camel rides** along the beach
- **Try** the famous **street foods** from vendors lining the beach

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 10 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station – Mumbai (28 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 5 km.

## Alibaug Beach

Alibaug Beach, located along the Konkan coast in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is one of the most popular and scenic beach destinations near Mumbai. Known for its clean shoreline, beautiful views, and tranquil atmosphere, Alibaug is an ideal getaway for those looking to escape the hustle and bustle of city

life. The beach, along with its surrounding attractions, offers a combination of nature, history, and local flavors, making it a perfect spot for weekend trips.

### Things to Do at Alibaug Beach:

- The beach is perfect for **leisurely walks**, especially



- during late evenings to get a stunning view of the **sunset**.
- Adventure seekers can enjoy a variety of **water sports** including jet skiing, banana boat rides, parasailing, and bumper rides.
  - Explore the **Kolaba Fort** built by Shivaji Maharaj in 1652
  - **Nearby attractions include:** Kihim Beach, Nagaon

Beach, and Varsoli Beach, Kanakeshwar Forest and Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **How To Reach**

**By Road:** Mumbai –96 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway station –Mumbai (89 km); Pen (30km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –103 km.



## Kashid Beach

Situated around 30 km from Alibaug, in the Konkan region of Maharashtra, this untouched beach provides visitors with stunning views of the horizon and the blue ocean, making it one of Alibaug's top spots. The scenery is a captivating blend of the blue sea, verdant fields, white sands, and winding silver streams. The 3 km stretch of coastline is flanked by rugged hills on either side and is bordered by casuarina groves, offering a peaceful retreat, particularly on weekends.

### Things to Do

- **Relax** on the Beach

- Indulge in thrilling **water sports** like jet skiing, parasailing, and banana boat rides.
- **Savor** traditional Konkan dishes while soaking in the beachside atmosphere.
- Explore nearby attractions like the Kanakeshwar Forest, the Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Murud-Janjira Fort.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 125 km

**By Train:** Nearest railway stations – Mumbai (118 km); Roha (47km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 132 km.



## Ganpatipule Beach



Ganpatipule Beach, located in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, is a stunning and tranquil stretch of coastline along the Arabian Sea. Known for its pristine sands, clear waters, and serene ambiance, this beach is a perfect getaway for those seeking relaxation and natural beauty. Ganpatipule Beach is named after the revered Swayambhu Ganapati Temple, dedicated to Lord Ganesha. It is also among the cleanest beaches in India.

### Things to Do

- The beach is an ideal spot for sunbathing and peaceful walks along the shore.
- Savor local delicacies at

nearby shacks and eateries, enriching their overall experience.

- Visit the **Swayambhu Ganapati Temple**, famous for its naturally formed idol
- Explore nearby sites like Jaigad Fort, Prachin Konkan Museum, and the Ganpatipule Wax Museum.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai -340 km; Pune -283 km; Kolhapur -158 km

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations – Ratnagiri (75 km); Mumbai (324 km); Pune (286 km).

**By Air:** Kolhapur Airport -167 km; Mumbai Airport –347 km; Pune Airport –292 km.

## Diveagar Beach



Diveagar Beach, situated in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is a serene and unspoiled stretch of coastline along the Arabian Sea. Known for its golden sands, lush greenery, and tranquil ambiance, this beach is an ideal destination for those seeking relaxation and natural beauty.

### Things to Do

- The beach is perfect for sunbathing and leisurely walks.
- Engage in various water sports such as jet skiing, banana boat rides, and parasailing.
- Immerse yourself in the

vibrant culture and observe the daily activities of the fishing community.

- Visit the **Suvarna Ganesh Temple**
- **Explore the Murud-Janjira Fort**
- Diveagar is also a great spot for bird watching
- Savor the local **Konkani cuisine** at the small eateries and shacks near the beach.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai - 190 km;  
Mangaon - 48 km

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (174 km);  
Mangaon (47 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport - 197 km.

## Dahanu Bordi Beach

Dahanu Bordi Beach, nestled in the Dahanu taluka of Palghar district, extends over a picturesque 17 km stretch. This beach is renowned not just for its pristine, lengthy shoreline, but also for the expansive chikoo orchards that thrive in the region.

### Things to Do

- Enjoy **leisurely walks** along the long stretch of sandy shore
- The beach is an ideal location for **picnics with family** and friends
- Enjoy water sports like **jet**

**skiing, banana boat rides, parasailing, and kayaking**

- Visit the **local markets** to shop for fresh produce, especially the famous Dahanu Chikoo
- Visit the **nearby attractions** like the historical **Bahrot Caves** and the **Mahalaxmi Temple**

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –150 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (166 km); Dahanu (3km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –142 km.



## Tarkarli Beach

Tarkarli Beach, situated in the Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra, is renowned for its crystal-clear waters, white sandy shores, and vibrant marine life.

This idyllic destination offers a perfect escape for those seeking both relaxation and adventure along the Konkan coast.

### Things to Do

- Explore the underwater world with **snorkeling and scuba diving**
- Engage in thrilling **water sports** like jet skiing, banana boat rides, and parasailing
- Take a boat ride to **spot playful dolphins** in their natural habitat

- Relax on the pristine sands, take long walks along the shoreline, or enjoy a **beach picnic**
- **Visit Sindhudurg Fort built** by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj
- Savor delicious Malvani cuisine at the local eateries and beach shacks

### How to Reach:

**By Road:** Mumbai -487 km; Pune -387 km; Goa -154 km

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (471 km); Goa (140 km); Kudal (30 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport -495 km; Goa (Mopa) Airport -81 km



## Shrivardhan Murud Beach



Shrivardhan Murud Beach, located in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is a pristine and picturesque destination that offers a perfect escape from the hustle and bustle of city life. Known for its golden sands, clear waters, and lush surroundings, this beach is an ideal spot for relaxation and recreation.

### Things to Do

- Enjoy **leisurely walks** along the expansive shore
- Indulge in various **water sports** like jet skiing, parasailing, and banana boat rides
- Relish the local **Konkani**

**cuisine** at the beachside shacks and restaurants

- Experience **boating** or join local fishermen for a **fishing trip**
- The area is rich in flora and fauna, making it a great spot for **nature enthusiasts** and **bird watchers**.
- A short distance away, visit the iconic **Murud Janjira Fort**

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –141 km; Pune –166 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations -Mumbai (135 km); Pune (168 km); Mangaon (51 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –210 km; Pune –180 km.

## Guhagar Beach



Guhagar Beach, located in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, is a pristine and unspoiled coastal paradise. Known for its long stretch of white sandy shores, clear blue waters, and serene ambiance, Guhagar Beach offers a perfect getaway for travelers seeking tranquility and natural beauty.

### Things to Do

- Take **long walks** along the shore, especially during sunrise and sunset
- Engage in water sports like jet skiing, parasailing, and banana boat rides

- Relish the local **Konkani cuisine** at the beachside shacks
- Explore the nearby attractions like the Vyadeshwar Temple, an ancient and revered Shiva temple and the historical Anjanvel Fort, also known as Gopalgad Fort

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –296 km; Pune –239 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (280 km); Pune (242 km), Chiplun (46 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –303 km; Pune –249 km.

## Harihareshwar Beach

Harihareshwar Beach, situated in the Raigad district of Maharashtra, is a tranquil coastal destination known for its clean sands, gentle waves, and picturesque surroundings. Often referred to as 'Dakshin Kashi' due to the ancient Harihareshwar Temple nearby, this beach offers a perfect blend of natural beauty and spiritual serenity. Surrounded by four hills named Harihareshwar, Harshinachal, Bramhadri and Pushpadri, Harihareshwar is also referred to as Dev-Ghar or "house of God".

### Things to Do

- Take a **leisurely walk** along the shore, especially during

sunrise and sunset

- Engage in **boating** activities or join local fishermen for a **fishing expedition**
- Visit nearby beaches like **Shrivardhan** and **Diveagar**
- The hills surrounding Harihareshwar Beach provide opportunities for **trekking and nature walks**
- Explore the historic **Harihareshwar Temple** dedicated to **Lord Shiva**

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 202 km; Pune – 171 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (200 km); Pune (174 km), Mangaon (59 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 210 km; Pune – 180 km.



## Vengurla Beach

Vengurla Beach, located in the Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra, is a serene and picturesque destination known for its unspoiled beauty and peaceful ambiance. Vengurla Beach offers a perfect retreat for those seeking relaxation and natural beauty.

### Things to Do

- Take **leisurely walks** along the extensive shoreline, especially during sunrise and sunset
- Adventure seekers can enjoy **water sports** like jet skiing, parasailing, and banana boat rides
- Visit the **Vengurla**

**Lighthouse** offering panoramic views of the Arabian Sea and the surrounding landscape

- Savor the delicious **Konkani cuisine** at the beachside shacks and restaurants
- Visit the nearby **Sargeshwar Shiva Temple**, an ancient temple dedicated to Lord Shiva

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –496 km; Goa –113 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (480 km); Goa (99 km); Kudal (23km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –503 km; Goa (Mopa) Airport –44 km.



## Kunkeshwar Beach



Kunkeshwar Beach, located in the Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra, is a serene and unspoiled beach known for its picturesque landscape and tranquil environment. The beach is famous for its clean sands and clear waters, making it a perfect blend of natural beauty and cultural heritage.

### Things to Do

- Take long walks along the shoreline, especially during sunrise and sunset, to witness the stunning coastal views
- Visit the **Kunkeshwar Temple** dedicated to Lord Shiva

- For adventure seekers, there are water sports such as **jet skiing and banana boat rides**
- Visit nearby attractions like **Devgad Fort and Vijaydurg Fort**, which are rich in history and offer stunning views of the surrounding area.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –448 km; Goa –209 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (432 km); Goa (195 km); Nandgaon (45 Km); Kankavli (52 Km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –455 km; Goa (Mopa) Airport –136 km.

## Mithbav Beach



Mithbav Beach, located in the Sindhudurg district of Maharashtra, is a serene and relatively undiscovered destination. This pristine beach is known for its clean sands, clear waters, and tranquil ambiance, making it an ideal spot for a peaceful getaway.

### Things to Do

- Take **long walks along the shoreline**, especially during sunrise and sunset
- Savor the delicious **Konkani cuisine** at the beachside shacks and local eateries
- Adventure enthusiasts can enjoy water sports like **jet skiing and banana boat rides**

- Visit nearby historical attractions such as **Devgad Fort and Sindhudurg Fort**
- Engage with local fishermen and **experience traditional fishing methods**
- Enjoy **nature walks** through the lush greenery and coconut groves surrounding the beach

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –467 km; Goa –194 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (451 km); Goa (180 km); Kankavali (55 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –474 km; Goa (Mopa) Airport –121 km.

## Velneswar Beach

Velneswar Beach, located in the Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra, is a hidden gem on the Konkan coast. Velneswar Beach is an ideal destination for those seeking peace and natural beauty away from the crowds.

### Things to Do

- Take long walks along the shore, especially during sunrise and sunset
- Engage in various water sports like **jet skiing, banana boat rides, and kayaking** for a dose of adventure.
- Visit the nearby **Velneswar**

**Temple** dedicated to Lord Shiva

- Relish the delicious **Konkani cuisine** at the beachside shacks and restaurants
- Enjoy **nature walks** through the coconut and betel nut plantations surrounding the beach

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 300 km; Pune – 244 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (285 km); Pune (247 km), Chiplun (51 km)

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 308 km; Pune – 254 km.



Maharashtra is home to a rich variety of forests and wildlife sanctuaries that play a crucial role in preserving the state's biodiversity. The diverse landscape ranges from the dense, tropical forests of the Western Ghats to dry deciduous forests, offering a habitat for numerous plant and animal species. These forests support a wide array of wildlife, including mammals like tigers, leopards, deer, and wild boars, as well as a vibrant population of bird species, making them a paradise for nature enthusiasts and bird watchers. The sanctuaries are vital for the conservation of endangered species and provide a safe haven for a variety of flora and fauna. They also serve as important corridors for wildlife movement, ensuring ecological balance. These protected areas offer a unique glimpse into Maharashtra's natural beauty, with their lush greenery, scenic trails, and opportunities for wildlife sightings.

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# Wildlife

## Tadoba Forest

Located in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district, the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is one of India's leading wildlife sanctuaries. Covering around 1,727 square kilometers, it is one of the largest and oldest national parks in the state. Situated near Chandrapur and Nagpur, the Tadoba Forest offers a chance to experience the magnificence of its diverse wildlife and natural beauty.

### Flora and Fauna

The tropical dry deciduous forest of Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve is home to over 80 Royal Bengal Tigers, showcasing one of the fastest-growing tiger

populations in India. Beyond the tigers, the reserve hosts a wide variety of wildlife, including leopards, dholes, sambar, and chital. It is also a paradise for bird enthusiasts, with over 195 bird species documented. Among them are Indian pittas, crested serpent eagles, and the rare grey-headed fish eagle.

### How To Get There

**By Road:** Mumbai – 788 km; Pune – 778 km; Nagpur – 104 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (802 km); Pune (779 km); Nagpur (104 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 795 km; Pune Airport – 704 km; Nagpur Airport (108 km).



## Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary



Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Kolhapur district of Maharashtra and is one of the oldest wildlife sanctuaries in the state. Established in 1958, it is nestled in the Western Ghats (a UNESCO World Heritage Site), making it a significant biodiversity hotspot. The sanctuary is nestled within the Western Ghats, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Flora and Fauna

Radhanagari Wildlife Sanctuary, established in 1958, spans approximately 351.16 square kilometers. Originally created to protect the Indian bison (gaur), it has grown into an important hub for biodiversity conservation. The sanctuary features dense evergreen and semi-evergreen forests, with significant tree

species like **teak, blackwood**, and various others contributing to the unique ecosystem of the Western Ghats. It is home to a wide range of wildlife, with the **gaur** serving as the flagship species. Other notable animals include **Indian elephants, sloth bears, leopards, wild boars, sambar deer, barking deer**, and different primates. The sanctuary also boasts a rich diversity of bird species, including various **hornbills, eagles**, and other forest birds.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 475 km; Pune – 289 km; Kolhapur – 52 km.  
**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (439 km); Pune (292 km); Kolhapur (51 km).  
**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 440 km; Pune Airport – 299 km; Kolhapur Airport (58 km).

## Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary

Bhimashankar Wildlife Sanctuary, located in the Sahyadri mountain range of Maharashtra's Pune district, sits at an altitude of around 3,250 feet (1,050 meters). Established in 1984 to conserve the endangered Indian Giant Squirrel, the sanctuary is rich in biodiversity. The area is also well-known for the Bhimashankar Temple, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas dedicated to Lord Shiva, making it a popular destination for both pilgrims and tourists due to its spiritual significance.

### Flora and Fauna

As part of the Western Ghats, this sanctuary is one of the world's 12 biodiversity hotspots. The landscape is dominated by dense forests featuring

various tree species, including valuable timber trees such as **teak, rosewood, and silver oak**, which contribute significantly to the region's ecological health. It is home to many rare and endangered species of flora and fauna. Wildlife such as **barking deer, leopards, hyenas, and langurs** are commonly seen, while bird enthusiasts can spot **hornbills, pigeons, Malabar whistling thrushes, black eagles**, and numerous other bird species.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –179 km; Pune –112 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations -Mumbai (185 km); Pune (113 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –186 km; Pune Airport –108 km.



## Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary

Wildlife



Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Western Ghats of Maharashtra, spanning across parts of the Satara, Sangli, and Ratnagiri districts. It forms an important protected region within the Western Ghats, which is recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### Flora and Fauna

Established in 1985, Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary was created to conserve the region's diverse flora and fauna. It is part of the Koyna Dam catchment area, which serves as an important water reservoir. Shivasagar Lake, formed by the Koyna Dam, enhances the sanctuary's scenic landscape and serves as a vital water source for local wildlife. The sanctuary features

diverse vegetation, including **evergreen, semi-evergreen, and deciduous forests**, with notable tree species like **teak, shisham, and ain**, along with a variety of shrubs and herbs. Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary is home to numerous species, such as **Indian bison (gaur), elephants, leopards, sloth bears, sambar and barking deer, wild boars,** and many reptiles and birds. Birdwatchers can find a wide range of species here, including **hornbills, woodpeckers, and eagles.**

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Pune –146 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations -Pune (149 km); Satara (86 km).

**By Air:** Pune Airport –156 km.

## Sanjay Gandhi National Park

Sanjay Gandhi National Park, located in the northern part of Mumbai, Maharashtra, is one of the rare national parks situated within a city's limits. With its rich greenery, serene lakes, waterfalls, and beautiful landscapes, the park provides a tranquil escape from the city's hectic pace, making it popular among nature lovers and wildlife enthusiasts. It is also known for the **Kanheri Caves**, an ancient collection of rock-cut caves created by **Buddhist monks** between the 1st and 9th centuries, featuring sculptures, inscriptions, and water cisterns.

### Flora and Fauna

Sanjay Gandhi National Park spans an area of 103 square kilometers and supports a rich variety of flora and fauna, representing the biodiversity of

the Western Ghats. The park is home to over 1,300 plant species and diverse wildlife, including **mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, and butterflies**. Some notable animals found in the park include spotted deer, sambar deer, Indian mongoose, leopards, macaques, langurs, and a range of insects and butterflies. The park is especially known for its **leopard** population, with occasional sightings reported, and historical evidence of tigers as well. It is also a birdwatcher's paradise, with over **270 bird species** observed, including peafowl, kingfishers, sunbirds, and various waterbirds.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 24 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Station - Mumbai (40 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 17 km.



## Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary

Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the Bhandara district of Maharashtra, forming an essential part of the central Indian landscape. It serves as a crucial habitat for the region's wildlife. Within the sanctuary lies Nagzira Lake, a beautiful water body that enhances the scenic appeal of the area and provides an important water source for the resident wildlife.

### 🌿 Flora and Fauna

Nagzira Wildlife Sanctuary, with its stunning landscapes and rich biodiversity, is a favored spot for wildlife enthusiasts. Spanning about 152 square kilometers, the sanctuary features a combination of tropical moist **deciduous and dry deciduous forests**. Dominant tree species include teak, bamboo, airo, and

mahua, which together create a suitable environment for diverse wildlife. The sanctuary hosts a variety of species, including **Bengal tigers, leopards, gaur, sloth bears, sambar deer, spotted deer, barking deer, wild boars**, and other small mammals and reptiles. Birdwatchers can enjoy observing over 166 species of birds, such as **hornbills, peafowl, jungle fowl, eagles, vultures, and waterbirds**.

### 📍 How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai – 885 km; Pune – 876 km; Nagpur – 119 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations - Mumbai (900 km); Pune (876 km); Nagpur (118 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport – 892 km; Pune Airport – 798 km; Nagpur Airport (126 km).



## Chandoli National Park



Wildlife

Situated in the Sangli district of Maharashtra, Chandoli National Park invites visitors to explore its lush landscapes and peaceful wilderness. The park offers trekking trails through ancient forests, serene riverside retreats, and opportunities for wildlife sightings, providing an immersive experience of the natural beauty of the Sahyadri range. Adjacent to **Chandoli Dam**, built on the Bhogawati River, the park benefits from the scenic beauty of the dam and its reservoir, which also serve as a vital water source for the area's wildlife. The historic Vairatgad Fort is also within the park and adds a cultural and historical element to its natural charm.

### Flora and Fauna

Established in 2004, Chandoli National Park was created to conserve the biodiversity of the Western Ghats and spans about 317 square kilometers. The

park features a diverse range of vegetation, including tropical and subtropical evergreen, semi-evergreen, and deciduous forests, with tree species like **teak, bamboo, and numerous medicinal plants**. Chandoli is home to a variety of wildlife, including **Bengal tigers, Indian leopards, gaur, sambar** and barking deer, Indian giant squirrels, and several primate species. Birdwatchers can enjoy spotting over 123 recorded bird species, such as **hornbills, paradise flycatchers, crested serpent eagles, and various woodpeckers**.

### How to Reach

**By Road:** Mumbai –360 km; Pune –217 km; Kohlapur –83 km.

**By Train:** Nearest Railway Stations-Mumbai (366 km); Pune (220 km); Kohlapur (82 km).

**By Air:** Mumbai Airport –368 km; Pune Airport –226 km; Kohlapur Airport (97 km).

Maharashtrian cuisine is a vibrant and diverse culinary tradition from the state of Maharashtra, encompassing a wide range of flavors, ingredients, and cooking techniques. The food reflects the region's geography, from the coastal areas with their affinity for seafood to the rural heartland, where grains, legumes, and vegetables dominate the diet.

Maharashtrian cuisine is known for its balanced blend of spice, tanginess, and sweetness, making it both hearty and satisfying. Staples like rice, jowar (sorghum), bajra (millet), and lentils feature prominently in meals, while ingredients like tamarind, kokum, jaggery, and peanuts add depth and character. Maharashtrian food celebrates the local produce and the cultural diversity of the state, making it an integral part of daily life, religious festivals, and family gatherings.

**Maharashtrian street food** is an equally vital aspect of the state's culinary identity, especially in cities like Mumbai and Pune, where bustling street vendors offer a tantalizing variety of quick bites. The street food scene in Maharashtra is famous for its flavorful and affordable dishes, attracting food lovers from all walks of life. Maharashtrian street food is known for its creativity, combining flavors and textures in ways that are both comforting and exciting. From the coastal delicacies to the simpler, vegetarian delights there's something for everyone. The street food culture not only reflects the culinary expertise of the region but also embodies the fast-paced, multicultural vibe of Maharashtra's cities. Together, traditional Maharashtrian cuisine and its street food create a rich tapestry of flavors that celebrates both heritage and innovation.

# C u i s i n e

## Must-try Dishes



**Vada Pav:** Vada Pav, often referred to as the “Indian burger,” is an iconic street food from Maharashtra. It consists of a spicy, mashed potato fritter (vada) coated in gram flour batter and deep-fried to crispy perfection. This flavorful vada is sandwiched in a soft pav (bread roll) and served with a variety of chutneys — typically a spicy green chutney, tangy tamarind chutney, and a dry garlic chutney — for an explosion of flavors in every bite. Often accompanied by a fried green chili on the side, Vada Pav is loved for its simplicity, affordability, and bold taste. It’s not just a snack but a cultural symbol in Maharashtra, embodying the vibrant street food scene that fuels the fast-paced life of cities like Mumbai. Whether for a quick breakfast,

an afternoon snack, or a late-night bite, Vada Pav remains a favorite for locals and visitors alike.

**Puran Poli:** Puranpoli is a traditional sweet flatbread that holds a special place in festive celebrations in Maharashtra. This delectable treat consists of a soft, thin dough made from wheat flour, filled with a rich mixture of chana dal (split Bengal gram), jaggery, cardamom, and sometimes nutmeg. The dough is carefully rolled out and cooked on a hot griddle until golden brown, producing a flatbread that is slightly crisp on the outside and soft and fragrant on the inside. Puran Poli is typically enjoyed with a generous dollop of ghee or served alongside milk, enhancing its delightful flavors.





**Misal Pav:** Misal Pav is a popular Maharashtrian street food that offers a flavorful and spicy experience. It consists of “misal,” a spicy sprouted lentil curry, topped with farsan (a crunchy snack mix), onions, tomatoes, and coriander, served alongside “pav,” a soft bread roll. Misal Pav is a quintessential dish that showcases the diverse culinary traditions within Maharashtra, with each region adding its unique twist. For instance, **Kolhapuri Misal** is known for its fiery, spicy curry that embodies the bold flavors of Kolhapur. **Nashik Misal** often features a milder spice level with a hint of sweetness and is accompanied by dahi (curd) to balance the heat. **Pune Misal**, on the other hand, emphasizes a balanced blend of spice and tanginess, making it a favorite for those who prefer a less intense kick. Each variant reflects the local palate and

ingredients, making Misal Pav a dynamic dish that delights food enthusiasts across Maharashtra and beyond.

**Sol Kadhi:** Sol Kadhi is a refreshing and tangy drink from Maharashtra, cherished for its cooling properties and digestive benefits. This unique beverage is made from kokum (a tangy fruit native to the Konkan region) and coconut milk, which blend together to create a beautiful pink-hued drink. The tanginess of kokum is balanced by the creamy smoothness of coconut milk, and the drink is often flavored with a hint of garlic, green chilies, and fresh coriander. Sol Kadhi is traditionally served as an accompaniment to spicy Maharashtrian meals, particularly seafood dishes, as it helps soothe the palate and aid digestion. Its unique flavor profile and health benefits make



it a popular choice, especially during the hot summer months, offering a delightful way to stay cool and hydrated.

**Sukha Mutton:** Sukha Mutton is a rich and flavorful dry mutton preparation that hails from Maharashtra, showcasing the region's bold culinary traditions. This dish features tender mutton pieces cooked slowly in a blend of spices until they are deeply infused with flavor and the gravy has thickened to a luscious coating. The marinade typically includes a mix of freshly ground masalas such as garam masala, red chili powder, and turmeric, along with aromatic ingredients like ginger, garlic, and onions. Coconut, either grated or in milk form, is often added to enhance the richness and lend a subtle sweetness to the dish. Often served with bhakri (a type of flatbread) or steamed rice, it is a staple at festive gatherings and family meals, celebrated for its depth of flavor and hearty appeal.

**Bhakri:** Bhakri is a traditional, rustic flatbread from Maharashtra, integral to the region's culinary heritage. Made from various flours such as jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet), or rice, Bhakri is a thick, unleavened bread that is both hearty and nutritious. The

dough is carefully kneaded and patted into discs by hand, then cooked on a hot griddle until it develops a slight char and crispy edges while remaining soft inside. Bhakri's earthy flavor and dense texture make it a perfect accompaniment to spicy curries, dals, and chutneys, soaking up the rich flavors and providing a satisfying, wholesome base for the meal. Often enjoyed with a dollop of ghee or butter, Bhakri is a staple in Maharashtrian households, especially in rural areas, where it is cherished for its simplicity, versatility, and ability to sustain energy throughout the day. Whether paired with Sukha Mutton, Pithla (a savory gram flour dish), or green chili thecha (a spicy condiment), Bhakri embodies the essence of traditional Maharashtrian cuisine, offering both comfort and nourishment.





**Thalipeeth:** Thalipeeth is a traditional multigrain flatbread from the state of Maharashtra, India, known for its rich flavors and nutritional benefits. It is made from a unique blend of flours, often including jowar (sorghum), bajra (pearl millet), wheat, and rice, mixed with spices and vegetables like onions, green chilies, and fresh herbs. The dough is typically patted into thin rounds and cooked on a griddle until crispy and golden brown.

Thalipeeth is often served with a side of yogurt, butter, or pickle, making it a wholesome and filling meal. It is a popular breakfast or snack dish, loved for its earthy, hearty taste, and is deeply rooted in Maharashtra's culinary tradition.

**Modak:** Modak is a traditional sweet dumpling that holds special significance in



Maharashtra, particularly during the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. It is believed to be Lord Ganesha's favorite delicacy, and devotees often prepare it as an offering to him. The outer layer of Modak is made from rice flour or wheat flour, while the filling typically consists of freshly grated coconut, jaggery (unrefined cane sugar), and aromatic spices like cardamom. The dumplings are either steamed (Ukadiche Modak) or fried, depending on preference. The soft, slightly chewy texture of the dough combined with the sweet, flavorful filling creates a delightful treat that embodies the warmth of home-cooked Indian sweets. Modak is not just a dessert but a symbol of devotion and celebration in Maharashtra's cultural and religious traditions.

**Shrikhand:** Shrikhand is a beloved traditional dessert from

Maharashtra that embodies the rich flavors and culinary heritage of the region. Made from thick, strained yogurt, known as “chakka,” Shrikhand is sweetened with sugar and flavored with aromatic ingredients such as cardamom and saffron. The yogurt is drained to achieve a creamy, smooth consistency, which is then blended with sweeteners and spices, creating a delectable treat that is both refreshing and indulgent. Often garnished with slivers of almonds and pistachios, Shrikhand can be enjoyed on its own or served alongside puris (fried bread) for a delightful combination of textures and flavors. This dessert is particularly popular during festivals and special occasions, where it brings a touch of sweetness to celebrations.

**Vangyach Bharit:** Vangyach Bharit also known as Baingan Bharta in other parts of India, is a traditional Maharashtrian dish that celebrates the smoky, earthy flavor of roasted eggplant. The eggplant is fire-roasted until its skin is charred and the flesh becomes soft and smoky, then mashed and mixed with aromatic ingredients like onions, tomatoes, garlic, green chilies, and fresh coriander. In the Maharashtrian version, a generous tempering of mustard seeds, curry leaves, and asafoetida (hing) adds a distinct regional touch. Served with bhakri (millet flatbread) or chapati, Vangyach Bharit is a rustic comfort food, often enjoyed with a dollop of curd or a side of spicy thecha (green chili chutney). Its simplicity and deep flavors make it a beloved dish, rooted in the agrarian traditions of Maharashtra.



**Varan Bhaat:** Varan Bhaat is a simple yet quintessential dish from Maharashtra, deeply rooted in the state's culinary traditions. This comforting meal consists of plain cooked rice (bhaat) served with a mild and flavorful lentil curry (varan). The varan is typically made from toor dal (split pigeon peas), which is cooked until soft and then seasoned with a gentle tempering of ghee, cumin seeds, turmeric, and asafoetida. Often, a hint of jaggery or a squeeze of lemon is added to enhance its subtle sweetness and tanginess. Varan Bhaat is usually garnished with fresh coriander leaves and served with a side of pickle, papad, or a dollop of homemade ghee, making it a wholesome and satisfying dish. This humble yet delicious combination is a staple in Maharashtrian households, especially during

festivals and auspicious occasions, symbolizing comfort, simplicity, and the essence of home-cooked goodness.

**Alu Vadi:** Alu Vadi, also known as Patra in some regions, is a popular Maharashtrian snack made from colocasia leaves (known as alu or arbi leaves) and gram flour (besan). The dish is prepared by spreading a spicy and tangy gram flour mixture seasoned with tamarind, jaggery, and spices like coriander and cumin, onto the large, glossy leaves. These leaves are then rolled up tightly, steamed, and sliced into pinwheel shapes. After steaming, the slices can be shallow-fried or enjoyed as they are, creating a dish with a perfect balance of sweet, sour, and spicy flavors. The crispy outer layer and the soft, flavorful interior make Alu Vadi



a beloved snack, often enjoyed with a side of chutney. It is a staple in Maharashtrian festivals and tea-time snacks, celebrated for its distinct flavor and satisfying texture.

**Amboli/Ghavne:** Amboli, also known as Ghavne, is a traditional pancake-like dish from the Konkan region of Maharashtra, often enjoyed as a breakfast item. Made primarily from fermented rice batter, this dish has a soft, fluffy texture and a mildly tangy flavor due to the fermentation process. Unlike dosas, which are thin and crispy, Amboli is thicker and spongier, making it perfect for soaking up curries or chutneys. It is typically paired with spicy coconut-based curries, a dollop of homemade butter, or jaggery for a sweet touch. Ghavne, a variation of Amboli, is often made without fermentation and has a lighter texture, ideal for quick preparation. Both versions showcase the use of local ingredients and highlight the comforting, homely flavors that define Maharashtrian cuisine.

**Poha:** Poha is a quintessential breakfast dish from Maharashtra, made from flattened rice that is light, flavorful, and easy to prepare. It is typically cooked with mustard seeds, cumin, curry leaves,



green chilies, and onions, which give it a mild yet aromatic flavor. Peanuts are often added for a crunchy texture, while turmeric gives the dish its vibrant yellow color. The dish is commonly garnished with fresh coriander, grated coconut, and a squeeze of lime juice for added freshness and zing. Poha is not only a comforting and wholesome meal but also a popular street food, often served with a side of sev (crunchy fried noodles made from chickpea flour) for an extra layer of texture. It's enjoyed across Maharashtra for its simplicity, nutrition, and satisfying taste, making it a favorite breakfast or snack option for people of all ages.

**Kombdi Vade:** Kombdi Vade is a classic dish from the coastal Konkan region of Maharashtra. It is a traditional combination of spicy chicken curry, called "kombdi," served with deep-fried bread called "vade." The

vade are made from a mix of flours, including rice, urad dal, and a touch of spices like cumin and coriander, giving them a crispy texture on the outside and a soft, chewy bite inside. The chicken curry is rich and full of flavors, made with freshly ground Malvani masala, which includes roasted spices, coconut, and red chilies, giving it a distinctive, fiery kick. Kombdi Vade is typically enjoyed during festivals, special occasions, or Sunday family meals, where its bold flavors bring a sense of warmth and celebration.

### **Sabudana Khichdi:**

Sabudana Khichdi is a popular Maharashtrian dish made from tapioca pearls, known as sabudana. This hearty dish is particularly favored during fasting periods, such as Navratri, and is a staple in many households. To prepare



Sabudana Khichdi, soaked tapioca pearls are sautéed with a blend of spices, including cumin seeds, green chilies, and crushed peanuts, which add a delightful crunch and nutty flavor. The dish is often garnished with fresh coriander and a squeeze of lemon juice, enhancing its freshness. Its combination of textures — from the chewy pearls to the crunchy peanuts — creates a satisfying and flavorful meal. Served warm, Sabudana Khichdi is not only nourishing but also comforting, making it a beloved choice for both special occasions and everyday meals in Maharashtra. Its simplicity and deliciousness exemplify the region's culinary prowess, showcasing how humble ingredients can be transformed into a delightful dish.

### **Tambda Rassa and Pandhra Rassa**

**Tambda Rassa** is a traditional spicy curry from the Kolhapur region of Maharashtra, celebrated for its bold and fiery flavors. The name “Tambda” means “red,” which aptly describes the deep red color of the curry, derived from a blend of red chilies and freshly ground spices. Made primarily with mutton, Tambda Rassa features a robust mutton broth cooked with an assortment of spices like coriander, cumin, garlic, and a

generous amount of Kolhapuri masala, which gives the dish its signature heat and depth of flavor. This curry is known for its richness and is typically served with bhakri (a type of flatbread made from jowar or rice flour), chapati, or steamed rice, making it a satisfying and hearty meal.

**Pandhra Rassa** is a beloved dish from the Kolhapur region of Maharashtra, known for its mild, flavorful, and aromatic qualities. The name “Pandhra” means “white,” referring to the creamy white appearance of the curry. Made using a base of mutton broth, Pandhra Rassa is infused with rich coconut milk, poppy seeds, and a gentle blend of spices, giving it a delicate yet savory flavor. It is often seasoned with garlic, ginger, and a touch of green chilies for subtle warmth. Usually enjoyed with bhakri, chapati, or steamed rice, Pandhra Rassa embodies the essence of comfort food, providing a comforting and subtle contrast to the spicier elements of Kolhapuri cuisine. It is an essential part of festive meals and family gatherings, offering a gentle and aromatic balance that perfectly complements the more robust flavors of regional dishes.

**Hurda Party:** A Hurda Party



is an annual celebration that coincides with the winter harvest of jowar (sorghum) in Maharashtra. This tradition is an important part of rural culture, highlighting the significance of the harvest season. The term ‘hurda’ refers to the tender, freshly roasted jowar grains that serve as the highlight of this event. Farmers often sun-dry any remaining harvested hurda and grind it into a pale green flour, which is then used to prepare local delicacies like bhakri or thalipeeth, a type of flatbread that can be either plain or spiced enjoyed with accompaniments like chutneys made from garlic, peanuts, or green chilies, along with jaggery and curd. This practice connects the community to the agricultural cycle, fostering a sense of togetherness and celebration.

**Kandi Pedha:** Kandi Pedha is a famous sweet delicacy from Satara, a city in Maharashtra,

known for its rich, creamy texture and delicate flavor. Made from fresh, high-quality milk that is slowly reduced and combined with sugar, cardamom, and ghee, Kandi Pedha has a melt-in-the-mouth consistency that makes it irresistible. The key to its unique taste lies in the traditional method of preparing it, where the milk is meticulously cooked to achieve the right consistency, giving it a distinctive grainy yet smooth texture. The final touch of cardamom and a hint of saffron enhances its aroma and flavor, making it a popular choice for festivals, celebrations, and special occasions.

**Mande:** Mande, also known as “Mande roti” or simply “Mande,” is a traditional festive sweet bread from Maharashtra. It is typically prepared during special occasions like weddings or festivals such as Diwali and Bhaubeej. Mande is made using a dough of refined flour (maida), ghee, and milk, rolled out very thin and cooked on an inverted earthen pot over an open flame. The thin bread is then brushed generously with ghee and sugar syrup, creating a delicate, crispy layer with a sweet flavor. This labor-intensive preparation requires skill and patience, which adds to its special nature during celebrations. The crisp,

wafer-like layers of Mande have a unique texture, offering a delightful crunch along with the sweetness of the syrup.

**Patwadi Rassa:** Patwadi Rassa is a traditional Maharashtrian dish consisting of two components: “patwadi,” which are soft, bite-sized pieces made from chickpea flour (besan), and “rassa,” a spicy curry or gravy that complements the patwadi perfectly. The patwadi is made by cooking besan with spices like turmeric, cumin, and garlic, then spreading it out to cool before cutting it into diamond-shaped pieces. The “rassa” is a rich, spicy gravy made with a blend of onions, tomatoes, coconut, and ground spices that provides a flavorful base. The patwadi pieces are added to the rassa just before serving, soaking in the spicy, tangy flavors of the curry. This dish is often enjoyed with steamed rice, chapati, or bhakri, and is loved for its combination of textures — the soft, almost crumbly patwadi and the robust, flavorful gravy.

**Tarri Pohe:** Tarri Pohe is a beloved street food dish from Nagpur, Maharashtra, known for its vibrant flavors and satisfying combination of textures. Pohe, or flattened rice, is lightly cooked with onions, mustard seeds, turmeric, and green chilies, giving it a soft and fluffy base with a

mild and aromatic flavor. What sets Tarri Pohe apart from the typical pohe is the addition of “tarri,” a spicy and tangy gravy made from a mix of chickpeas or sprouts, onions, tomatoes, and an array of traditional spices. The tarri, with its bold and spicy notes, is poured generously over the pohe, adding a rich depth to the dish. It’s typically garnished with fresh coriander, chopped onions, sev (crispy chickpea noodles), and a squeeze of lemon, providing a burst of flavors and crunch. Tarri Pohe is often enjoyed as a breakfast or evening snack.

**Orange Barfi:** Orange Barfi is a unique and delicious, sweet treat that hails from Nagpur, Maharashtra, a city renowned for its juicy and flavorful oranges. This barfi beautifully showcases the essence of Nagpur’s famous citrus fruit, incorporating its tangy zest and juice into a traditional milk-based confection. The preparation involves simmering fresh milk with sugar until it thickens, after which orange pulp, zest, and a touch of cardamom are added to give it a bright, citrusy aroma and flavor. The resulting barfi has a soft, slightly chewy texture with a perfect balance of sweetness and tanginess, making it a refreshing variation of the classic milk-based barfi.



Cuisine

Often garnished with slivers of almonds or pistachios, it not only delights the palate but also adds a touch of regional authenticity.

**Popti:** Popti is a traditional one-pot dish from Maharashtra, especially enjoyed during the harvest season. This special meal features a mix of seasonal vegetables, tubers, beans, and occasionally chicken and eggs, all seasoned with local spices. The key ingredient is field beans, known as val beans in western India, which are plentiful in the region. In the Raigad district, the arrival of winter and the harvest season prompts locals to gather and celebrate with a popti party, highlighting their fresh produce in this unique and communal cooking tradition.

**Shirolya Ras:** Shirolya Ras is a beloved breakfast dish from the coastal Konkan region of Maharashtra. This traditional recipe features steamed rice noodles accompanied by sweetened coconut milk. Known locally as Shirvale, this classic dessert is crafted from rice or ragi (finger millet) flour and is typically enjoyed with a fragrant, cardamom-flavored coconut milk. The dish embodies the rich culinary heritage of the Konkan region, offering a delightful blend of textures and flavors that highlight the area's use of local ingredients.

**Kokum Sherbet:** Kokum Sherbet is a tangy, refreshing drink from Maharashtra, made from the fruit of the kokum tree, which is native to the Western Ghats. Kokum, known for its cooling properties, is soaked and blended with sugar, cumin, black salt, and sometimes mint to create a sweet and sour sherbet that is both hydrating and energizing. The deep purple color of the kokum fruit gives the sherbet its striking appearance, while the unique flavor balances sweet, sour, and salty notes. Popular during the hot summer months, Kokum Sherbet is not only a thirst quencher but also aids in digestion, making it a staple in many Maharashtrian households.



The drink is often served at gatherings and festivals, celebrated for its health benefits and unique taste.

### **Kala Masala Mutton:**

Kala Masala Mutton is a rich and aromatic dish that hails from the culinary traditions of Maharashtra, particularly popular in the Kolhapur region. This flavorful preparation features tender pieces of mutton cooked in a robust black masala made from a blend of spices, including roasted coriander seeds, black pepper, cinnamon, and dried red chilies, which are ground to perfection. Onions, tomatoes, and garlic are sautéed to create a savory base before the marinated mutton

is added and slow-cooked until it becomes melt-in-your-mouth tender. Kala Masala Mutton is typically served with steamed rice, bhakri (a type of flatbread), or naan, and is often accompanied by a side of spicy pickle or raita, enhancing its robust flavors.

**Shengole:** Shengole is a traditional dish originating from the Marathwada region of Maharashtra. This one-pot meal consists of dumplings that are gently simmered in a mildly spiced gravy, which is flavored with garlic, green chilies, and goda masala. It is typically enjoyed with hand-pounded rice or bhakri, accompanied by a generous dollop of ghee for added richness. Some people

even compare these dumplings to an Indian version of hand-rolled pasta, showcasing their unique texture and comforting nature. Shengole is a perfect representation of the region's culinary heritage, combining simple ingredients with traditional flavors to create a satisfying and wholesome dish.

**Maharashtrian Thali:** A traditional Maharashtrian thali is a vibrant and wholesome meal that beautifully showcases the diverse flavors of the region, available in both vegetarian and non-vegetarian versions. The vegetarian thali typically includes an array of dishes like puran poli (sweet stuffed flatbread), bhakri or chapati, varan (lentil curry), amti (tangy



dal), and a variety of sabzis (vegetable dishes) such as bharli vangi (stuffed brinjal) or zunka (spiced gram flour). It is often accompanied by rice, pickles, papad, curd, and sweets like shrikhand or basundi. The non-vegetarian thali, on the other hand, features flavorful meat or fish dishes such as mutton rassa (spicy mutton curry), chicken sukka (dry chicken curry), or fish fry, along with rice, bhakri, and side dishes like thecha (spicy chili chutney). Each thali offers a balance of tastes — spicy, sweet, tangy, and savory — highlighting the richness of Maharashtrian cuisine.

**Sea Food:** With a long coastline along the Arabian Sea, Maharashtra is known for its abundance of fresh fish and seafood, including **pomfret, surmai (kingfish), bombil (bombay duck), and prawns.** The state's coastal cuisine is

characterized by its vibrant use of spices, coconut, and local ingredients, resulting in flavorful dishes like Malvani fish curry, prawn koliwada, and bombil fry. Maharashtrian seafood is often prepared using traditional methods, such as frying, grilling, or slow-cooking in rich coconut milk-based gravies, which enhances the natural flavors of the seafood. The use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients adds to the authenticity of the dishes, making them a must-try for seafood lovers.

**Shev Bhaji:** Shev Bhaji is a quintessential Maharashtrian dish that combines the crunchiness of shev (crispy fried gram flour noodles) with a robust, spicy curry. This dish is a testament to the resourcefulness of Maharashtrian cuisine, turning simple pantry staples into a hearty and flavorful meal. The curry is typically prepared with a base of onions, tomatoes, and aromatic spices like goda masala, red chili powder, and turmeric, which lend it a rich and earthy flavor. Just before serving, a generous amount of crispy shev is added to the curry, allowing it to absorb the flavors while retaining some of its texture. Shev Bhaji is often paired with bhakri, chapati, or steamed rice, making it a



comforting and satisfying dish that reflects the vibrant and diverse culinary traditions of Maharashtra.

### Diwali's Gastronomic Extravaganza:

Diwali, the festival of lights, is celebrated with great fervor in Maharashtra, and the gastronomic extravaganza during this time showcases an array of traditional dishes that bring families and communities together. Among the savory options, **Chakli** stands out as a beloved crunchy spiral snack made from rice flour and lentil flour, perfectly spiced to satisfy the palate. **Chivda**, a tasty mixture of flattened rice, nuts, and spices, provides a savory crunch that complements

the sweets. The **Tikhat Sev**, a spicy variation of the popular snack, adds a fiery kick to the assortment, making it a favorite among those who enjoy bold flavors. On the sweet side, Maharashtrian delights such as **Besan Ladoo**, made from roasted gram flour and jaggery, and **Karanji**, a crispy pastry filled with a sweet coconut and nut mixture, are must-haves. Additionally, rava ladoo, made from semolina, sugar, and ghee, offers a rich, melt-in-your-mouth experience. Together, these dishes not only reflect the region's culinary heritage but also bring families and friends together, creating a joyous and indulgent celebration during the festival of lights.



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1	<b>Elephanta</b>	Elephanta caves Elephanta Island vai GPO Mumbai 400001	8422822109/ 8097209168
2	<b>Kharghar</b>	Plot no.10, near Shilp chowk, sector 12, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai-410210	9987996882/ 8788018850/ 7304367150
3	<b>Titwala</b>	Holiday Resort, Titwala, East Side of Ganesh Temple, Dist -Thane-421605	8422822028/ 8983491491
4	<b>Raigad</b>	Raigad Fort, Raigad	9324317616/ 9130906006
<b>R.O AURANGABAD</b>			
<b>MTDC Regional Office</b> , Holiday Resort Compound, Station Road, Aurangabad -431 001.			
5	<b>Aurangabad</b>	Near Station Road Aurangabad Dist Aurangaba	9168807547/ 7840951656
6	<b>Fardapur</b>	Holiday Resort, Fardapur At /post-Fardapur, Dist Aurangabad-431118	9021844465
7	<b>Ajanta</b>	Holiday Resort Ajanta T Junction Near Shopping Plaza Fardapur Tal-Soyagaon dist -Aurangabad -431118	8237846666
8	<b>MTDC Lonar</b>	Maharashtra State highway 171, Patel Nagar, Mantha road, Lonar, Dist. Buldhana-443302	9823357053

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11	<b>Ajanta Foothill Restaurant</b>	Near Ajanta Caves, Fardapur Tq- Soegaon, Dist- Aurangabad Pin -431118	7709777701
12	<b>Ajanta Caves</b>		8459050923
<b>R.O RATNAGIRI</b>			
<b>MTDC Regional Office</b> , Collector Office Compound, Near Jaystambh, Ratnagiri- 415612. Tel (02351)-221508/227977.			
13	<b>Ganpatipule</b>	Holiday Resort, Ganpatipule, Post- Ganpatipule, Dist- Ratnagiri- 415615	8308762182/ 9067720249
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15	<b>Tarkarli</b>	IISDA At post Tarkarli, Tal- Malvan, Dist Sindhudurg	8422822043/ 9420050765
16	<b>Velneswar</b>	Holiday Resort, Velneswar , At post -velneswar Tal. -Guhagar, Dist - Ratnagiri -415729	8379898383
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20	<b>Karla</b>	Holiday Resort karla Tal Maval vai kamshet, Dist pune 410407	8208456018
21	<b>Panshet</b>	Holiday Resorts, Panshet At post -panshet Tal-velha Dist Pune	9422455830
22	<b>Malshej Ghat</b>	Holiday Resort, Malshej Ghat, Post -Khubi, Via Otur, Tal -Murbad Dist -Thane	9511725791/ 9373808151
23	<b>Matheran</b>	Holiday Resort, Matheran, Post -Dasturi Naka, Tal -Karjat, Dist -Raigad -410102	9765064877/ 9689253202
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26	<b>Sinhgad</b>	At Sinhgad Fort Post Ghera Taluka Haveli, Pune PMC & Rural, 411025.	8624035649/ 6386433732
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<b>MTDC Regional Office</b> , West High Court Road, Near Tahsil (Gramin) office, Civil Line, Nagpur -440001. Tele-(STD-0712)-2533325			
28	<b>Nagpur</b>	West high Court Road Near Tahsil, (Gramin) Office Civil Lines Nagpur 440001	8422822095
29	<b>Tadoba</b>	Holiday Resort Tadoba (Jungle Resort) Post Moharli Tal Bhadravati Dist Chandrapur	9226831294
30	<b>Wardha</b>	Holiday Resort Wardha Bajaj Chowk, Near Wardha Bus Stand, Tal / Dist Wardha -442001	9371638937/ 8600078680
31	<b>Bodhalkasa</b>	At Post Pindkepar, Tal -Tiroda, Dist -Gondia -441911	9371638937
32	<b>Sillari</b>	Tal Ramdek Dist Nagpur-441401	9096447832
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33	<b>MTDC Bhandradara</b>	Holiday Resort, Bhandardara, Post -Shendi Tal Akole, Dist Ahmadnagar 422601	8657518404/ 880669610/ 7066323930
34	<b>MTDC Shirdi</b>	Pimpalwadi road, near Sair complex, Shirdi, Tal-Rahata, Dist Ahmednagar-423109	7499497979/ 8422822088/ 8390416242
35	<b>MTDC Grape Park</b>	Grape Park Resort, Opp. Favshi International School, near Gangapur dam, Nashik-422203	8149998870/ 8180003379
36	<b>Boat club, Nashik</b>	Near Gangapur dam, Nashik-422203	9405815570
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37	<b>MTDC Chikhaldara</b>	Holiday Resort Chikhaldara, Convention Complex dist Amravti -444807	9763064178

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