

# Condé Nast Traveller

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FEB-MAR-APR 2025

PROMOTION

TRÈS CHIC  
WHERE  
TO STAY  
IN 2025







Samode Safari Lodge





## FOREWORD

It is no secret that the travel space has seen major changes in the last few years, the biggest shift being in the new definition of luxury. As something intimate, personalised, earth-friendly, and deeply rooted in local life. It is not just about thrilling experiences and delicious food, although they are certainly part of it. But many places can offer those things. What makes a hotel or holiday truly memorable, what sets it apart from other places, are the little details. The stories, the context, the sense of community. That is what we are celebrating in this special edition featuring more than 40 of the most exquisite boutique hotels, safari lodges, historic homestays and forts, and other unique stays from across India and the subcontinent.

That is also the ethos of **Très**, a superbly curated event showcasing the region's finest, most diverse travel experiences that are transforming our ideas of vacation, leisure, and meaningful memories. This year's edition will spotlight 70 exquisite hospitality and travel concepts that offer mindful service, sensitive and eco-friendly design, and activities that will deepen guests' relationship with different regions and the local communities that reside within. This exciting event has been crafted with the aim of highlighting the very best of traditional hospitality, contemporary elegance, and deeply nourishing travels.

Explore, Discover, Experience, Flourish. This is the Très philosophy, and this is what shines through in every hotel featured in this very special issue. Read. Make your bookings. And return with a deeper understanding of this stunning country, this diverse region, and your place in it.

Happy travels!



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**ON THE COVER**  
CGH EARTH SWASWARA,  
GOKARNA





## AMRIT BHAWAN, UTTARAKHAND

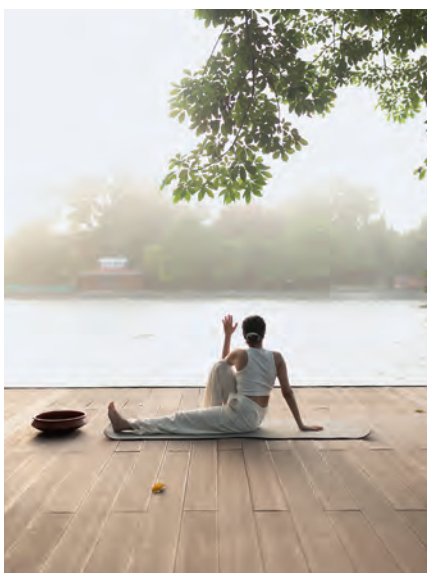
An Art Deco bungalow with a private Ganga ghat offers a serene, spiritual escape

**T**he thing about beloved, sacred sites like Haridwar is that they can get so crowded with visitors that you end up missing the peace you came for. Enter Amrit Bhawan. Set right by the banks of the Ganga, in the quiet neighbourhood of Kankhal, it is close enough to the busy parts of the town to be convenient, but secluded enough that you get your quiet time.

Originally built in the 1970s as a second home for the Bajaj family, the Art Deco-style bungalow fell into disuse about 20 years ago. The family restored it and reopened it as a boutique hotel in 2020. In its new avatar, its old-world charm meets contemporary touches of luxury such as a rooftop hot tub and a private yoga deck. Heirloom furniture was upcycled by local artisans who incorporated craft and textile into a modern design language.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Of the eight bright, airy guest rooms, four come with private balconies that look out to the river. In keeping with the original design aesthetic, all the bathrooms feature terrazzo interiors in calming hues like mint, peach, and ochre. If you can haul yourself out of the hot tub, you'll find a cosy library, a



riverside garden, a massage room, and a private ghat ideal for meditation or yoga. A highlight of the property is the interactive wall installation of khartals, traditional wooden instruments used in the Ganga Aarti.

The retreat does not serve meat, eggs, or alcohol, but you won't miss them, given the top-notch Garhwali fare on offer (don't miss the the Uttarakhand thali at the restaurant, starring millet and lentil-based dishes, and Haridwar's famous chaats),



which you can also learn how to cook. Outside the property, explore the city's architecture, mythology, and culinary heritage via curated walking tours and nature hikes. This is also a great base for adventure junkies, as the resort can organise white-water rafting in nearby Rishikesh.

### GETTING THERE

The property is an hour's drive from Jolly Grant Airport, Dehradun, and approximately four hours by road from Delhi.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 989 770 6899,

+91 989 767 6899

**Email:** [reservations@amritbhawan.in](mailto:reservations@amritbhawan.in)

**Website:** [www.amritbhawan.in](http://www.amritbhawan.in)



# ANOPURA JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN

This is a place that will remind you to stop and smell the flowers

Slow living. That's the vibe at this charming boutique escape just outside Jaipur. Set on vast swathes of farmland, Anopura was set up by Jaipur local Aditya Baheti, who was inspired by his grandfather's farmhouse that he grew up on. Here, modern luxuries like private pools coexist with a more rustic aesthetic (think thatched roofs, charpoys for poolside daybeds), providing an experience that is as simple and old-school as it is sophisticated and luxurious. While there are things to do outside, like guided tours of the village, nature trails, and birding, we wouldn't blame you if you just wanted to spend your day milking cows at the resort's dairy farm, enjoying the meditative rhythms of a pottery class, or gazing at the Aravali hills as you float in the infinity pool.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

With just 14 suites and villas set on 60 acres, you're guaranteed privacy and solitude. And it helps that the

rooms are beautifully designed, with earthy stone floors, intricately carved wooden furniture, and linens featuring traditional Indian motifs. Some of the keys feature private pools and patios, while others have their own garden. Each suite has two bedrooms, spacious bathrooms, and big windows. What's also great is that this is a pet-friendly stay, although you're encouraged to keep your pet on a leash in the common areas.

At Farmstead, the restaurant, the farm-to-table menu spotlights Rajasthani classics like laal maas and gatte ki sabzi, alongside some North Indian and European favourites. Ask for your lunches to be served picnic-style and dinner to be served under the stars; for a special occasion, you could even do a private barbecue by the pool. And when you need to relax after all that relaxation, spend a few hours at the Ayurvedic spa where you'll get detox drinks, dosha-balancing massages, and Himalayan body scrubs.



## GETTING THERE

The property is a 90-minute drive from Jaipur International Airport.

## For more information:

**Call:** +91 978 375 5555

**Email:** [info@anopura.com](mailto:info@anopura.com)

**Website:** [www.anopura.com](http://www.anopura.com)







# BAREFOOT AT HAVELOCK, ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

When beach and rainforest meet, you get a little slice of paradise

Located behind the idyllic Radhanagar Beach, Barefoot at Havelock sprawls across 25 acres of regenerated rainforest, making it a truly unique beachside jungle resort, where the ocean waves crash and froth seemingly in tandem with the jungle music courtesy birds, frogs, and insects. There are more than 50 species and subspecies of birds on site, including most of the 22 species endemic to the Andaman Islands. The resort is committed to a sustainable way of life and has undertaken many initiatives to this end. For example, there are no pathway lights so that resident endemic owls aren't disturbed, and there are no alien, exotic, or water-hungry plants on campus. Aside from rainwater harvesting, the team at Barefoot also composts organic and garden waste; food waste goes into the piggery, while organic compost, like refuse from livestock, is used in the garden. Barefoot also sponsors many sporting events in the village as well as the local primary school and community festival celebrations.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The resort's 31 cottages and villas are built using natural, renewable materials like cane, thatch, and wood, the last of which is sourced from plantations with a certified replanting programme. The all-wood Andaman Villas are especially popular for their glass-topped showers



that offer views of the thick rainforest canopy. Spend your days witnessing the magic of the marine world with a snorkelling or scuba diving session, trekking to the famed Elephant Beach, or taking a guided walk through shallow rock pools and exploring the marine life within. You could also try your hand at traditional line fishing – and then get your catch cooked the way you like for your next meal. Speaking of food, the on-site restaurant, The Swimming Elephant makes an excellent prawn curry served in a coconut shell, and the cosy bar Dugong Dugon is a great place to pregame before a night walk through the forest and across the shore.

## GETTING THERE

Fly to Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) from most major Indian cities. From there, take a high-speed catamaran ferry to Havelock Island.

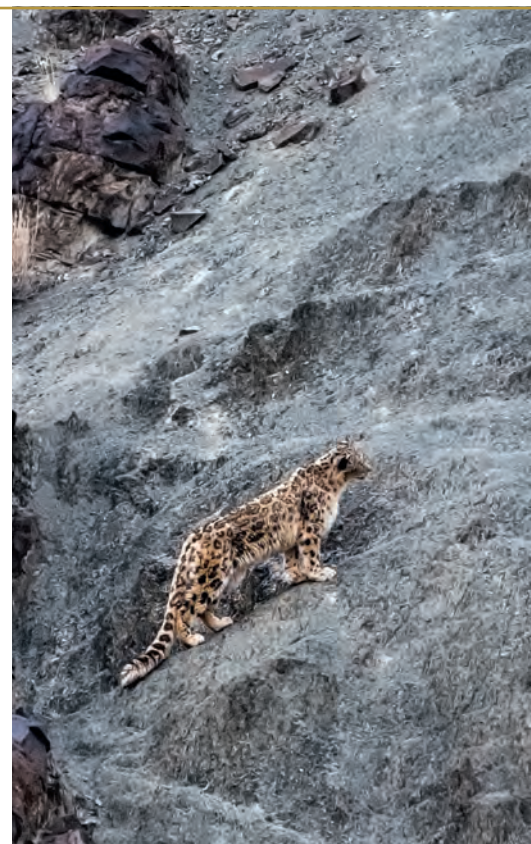
### For more information:

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**Website:** [www.barefoot-andaman.com](http://www.barefoot-andaman.com)





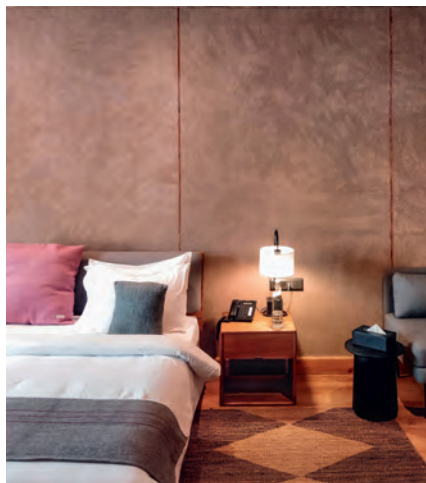
## CHOSPA HOTEL, LADAKH

Cultural explorations with the chance of spotting a snow leopard are on offer here

**T**he mountain region of Ladakh is known for its confluence not just of the Indus and Zaskar rivers, but of a variety of cultures. With Tibet to the east, Kashmir to the west, and Central Asian influences in its past, thanks to Leh having been a trading post on the Silk Route, this is a region that unites many communities and traditions. Leh is famous for its centuries-old Buddhist monasteries, jewel-toned lakes, surreally barren landscapes, and imposing mountain peaks, and is a favourite with biking enthusiasts. It is also home to rare wild cats like the snow leopard, the Eurasian lynx and the Pallas's cat. And a stay at Chospa Hotel in Leh is a great way to experience all of this.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The 17-key property offers an intimate exploration of Ladakhi culture, right from the get-go. The building, made using local materials of compressed earth, wood, and stone, features



architectural elements inspired by the old houses and palaces of the region. The use of compressed earth bricks in the walls keeps the rooms insulated from extreme temperatures, and the beds are made of locally sourced timber.

Spend your days exploring the old town of Leh, doing short hikes, or going on longer treks into different valleys. For the spiritually inclined, the hotel's travel desk can even arrange a session with a senior monk at one of Leh's famed monasteries. On your return, have a drink at the 0° North Bar and an al fresco meal at the Old Road Café, and enjoy a leisurely chat with Stanzin Gurmet, who runs the hotel as well as winter expeditions



to spot snow leopards and other local wildlife. The best part? It's a pet-friendly property, and offers special meals for your four-legged friends.

### GETTING THERE

Fly direct to Leh from Delhi, Jammu, or Srinagar. From other major cities, there are flights with stopovers. The property is about 4km from the airport in Leh.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 849 401 3328,  
01982 258 903/258 904

**Email:** sales@chospahotel.com

**Website:** www.chospahotel.com





## MELA KOTHI – THE CHAMBAL SAFARI LODGE, UTTAR PRADESH

History, wildlife, and ecotourism in one gorgeous old-school mansion

**B**uilt in the 1860s as a camp office for the biannual cattle fair and a hunting lodge for visitors, the property fell into disrepair as farming became more mechanised and the fair lost its sheen. In 1999, the inheritors, IIT graduate Ram Pratap and his environment scientist wife, Anu, decided to restore the kothi and its surrounding land. The result is Mela Kothi – The Chambal Safari Lodge, an ecotourism project rooted in charming hospitality and sustainability. It is open from October to April every year; the rest of the time, the team focuses on conservation, protection, and anti-poaching patrolling.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

About 60km from Agra, in the heart of the Chambal-Yamuna Doab, the kothi is set on 35 acres of regenerated forest. Its 14 rooms and cottages feature colourful, spacious interiors and soothing views of the landscape and woodland. The verandahs and courtyards, combined with a cosy library and lounge area, give the property a homely yet luxurious



feel. The grounds, dotted with water bodies and olive and lemon orchards, are home to more than 198 species of birds and small mammals such as palm civets, jungle hares, foxes, hedgehogs, and the Indian striped hyena, all of which can be spotted on a guided nature walk. The region surrounding the property is equally fascinating. Don't miss a boat safari on the Chambal river, home to gharials and the Gangetic river dolphin, or a visit to the village of Rapri, home to many medieval-era tombs and other monuments. Another highlight



is Bhareh, at the confluence of the Chambal and Yamuna rivers. A guided drive of about seven hours (with a packed lunch) will take you through a wild, forbidding landscape, across ravines, into the deepest hinterland, and give you the history of the area. Explore the ruins of the fortress of Bhareh, and a Shiva Temple with stunning views of the confluence and countryside.

### GETTING THERE

The property is five hours by road from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport and three hours from Lucknow. From Agra, the drive is just under two hours.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 983 741 5512

**Email:** rpsjarar@chambalsafari.com

**Website:** www.chambalsafari.com





## KUMARAKOM LAKE RESORT, KERALA

This 25-acre idyll on the banks of Lake Vembanad will take away all your worries

Self care. That's what comes to mind when one enters Kumarakom Lake Resort. Those knots in your neck? You can feel them loosen as you take in the view of the quiet, green-framed backwaters that hug the resort. That tricky presentation that's at the top of your to-do list even when you're supposed to be on holiday? It will suddenly seem a lot less daunting when you walk around the exquisitely landscaped gardens or cruise down the backwaters in a houseboat or kayak. After all, this is the award-winning Kumarakom Lake Resort.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The Kottayam resort is home to 65 beautifully appointed villas and rooms, all built in the traditional Kerala style. While some have their own pools and Jacuzzis, others offer private courtyards and views of the canals or the lake. A 250m pool meanders



across one side of the resort, adding a serene touch to the villas that flank it. You could even stay in one of the houseboats, which come with all the mod cons and your own personal assistants and chef.

Speaking of food, don't miss a meal at the multicuisine restaurant Ettukettu, housed in what was once the home of a noble family. You could



try the freshest catch cooked in authentic Kerala styles at Vembanad, the Seafood Bar. You can even take a cooking class with one of the property's expert chefs and learn the intricacies of local cuisine. In between all the eating, though, don't forget to take some time out for a session at Ayurmana, the Ayurvedic centre, or for a sunset cruise on the backwaters or a pottery class that's so soothing that it feels like meditation.

### GETTING THERE

The resort is 70km (two hours) from Cochin International Airport and 171km (four and a half hours) from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 806 911 1111

**Email:** reservationklr@thepaul.in

**Website:** www.kumarakomlakeresort.in





## THE SERAI CHIKMAGALUR, KARNATAKA

A coffee-scented, lush green eye massage is what you'll get here

**D**eep in Karnataka's Western Ghats lies the thickly forested region of Malenadu, home to the birthplace of coffee in India, Chikmagalur. And at The Serai Chikmagalur, coffee is at the centre of the holiday experience. Here, coffee is not about staying awake through a meeting that could have been an email. Here, coffee is about quiet contemplation, relaxation, and letting go.



### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Set on coffee and pepper plantations, the 29 villas here range from Estate Villas with outdoor showers to two-storey Estate Terraces, and The Residence, a plush two-bedroom cottage with dining and living spaces and its own garden. No matter which room type you choose, you're guaranteed blissful views of the lush landscape and your own private gazebo and pool.

Spend your day hiking up Karnataka's highest peak, Mullayyanagiri, walking through the plantation and learning the coffee-making process, enjoying a body scrub made of coffee at the spa, loosening those tight city muscles with a spot of aqua yoga, or cycling through the countryside. And when you return, enjoy an outdoor meal of traditional Malenadu recipes made with locally grown ingredients. You could even cook with the chefs and then sit down for a traditional banana leaf meal.

### GETTING THERE

The property is 260km from Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, and 157km from Mangaluru International Airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 804 88 93964

**Email:** [enquiries@theserai.in](mailto:enquiries@theserai.in)

**Website:** [www.theserai.in](http://www.theserai.in)





## THE SERAI KABINI & THE SERAI BANDIPUR, KARNATAKA

A black panther, an elephant, and a tiger walk into a bar

No, they don't actually walk into a bar, but the beauty of a stay at **The Serai Kabini** or **The Serai Bandipur** is that you can spend your days checking out the animals' watering holes and in the evenings, enjoy a delicious, potent cocktail of your choice at your own outdoor watering hole. Set by the backwaters of the Kabini river that runs through the southern end of Nagarhole National Park, the former offers a paradisiacal combination of dense jungle and serene water outside and quiet luxury inside. And not too far away is the Bandipur Tiger Reserve, for which The Serai Bandipur is the ideal base.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Dotted across The Serai Kabini's lush 10-acre expanse are 20 cosy cottages and villas, which offer views of the river, the jungle, the hills, and beyond. Some of them feature outdoor sitting areas. If you really want to take your



quiet luxury up a notch, book The Residence, a more secluded stay option that has two private verandahs, a living room, and its own Jacuzzi. Over at The Serai Bandipur, 24 luxurious stays await, offering stunning views of the Nilgiris. The Residence here features a terrace gazebo made of log and thatch.

At both places, you could opt for a morning or evening jungle safari (we'd recommend both) in Nagarhole or Bandipur, both part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve. The area is home to elephants, tigers, deer, leopards, panthers, dholes, sloth bears, and a

multitude of birds. Back at the retreats, board games like carrom and chess are yours for the playing, or you could gather your loved ones around a bonfire or watch a wildlife movie.

### GETTING THERE

The properties are approximately 260km from Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, and 75km from Mysore Airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 804 889 3964

**Email:** enquiries@theserai.in

**Website:** www.theserai.in





## INDIAN SUMMER HOUSE, KERALA

Feel like a local at this beautiful five-room villa



In the town of Muvattupuzha, a commercial centre for tea being transported to Kochi, near the Muvattupuzha river, lies Indian Summer House, an intimate five-bedroom villa surrounded by coconut groves and tropical gardens. Owners Mini and Don van de Pol worked hard to transform Mini's ancestral home into an eco-friendly oasis for discerning travellers. Tranquil walkways and organic gardens embrace the villa, which is set on reclaimed and rewilded land. The estate is dotted with ponds and outdoor sculptures, and houses a beautiful pool surrounded by coconut palms. An exploration of the grounds will also allow sightings of peacocks and many other birds.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The villa spotlights the local colonial architecture of Kerala, with handcrafted timber ceilings and radiating rafters, and the space is designed keeping in mind the principles of Vastu. While all the rooms are beautifully designed and kitted out, with rainshowers, private patios, and garden views, the pièce de résistance is the Sita



Suite, with a private balcony, an open-to-sky shower, a second room with twin beds, and a study. Of the five rooms, four are on the ground floor, and are easy for wheelchair users to access, as is the outdoor dining space. Small ramps are also in place to access the pool. You can book as many of the rooms as you need or even the entire villa.

No Kerala holiday is complete without authentic local cuisine, and here, you can go a step further. Go with the team on a market tour to shop for ingredients and then return to spend some time cooking your own evening meal with the in-house chefs. If you don't want to do the work, just enjoy the food in an outdoor setting. The staff can also arrange a poolside dinner or barbecue upon request. Other experiences on offer here include toddy tapping and tasting, and visits to a forest temple, waterfall, and cave. With most of the staff being local, guests are invited to participate in cultural experiences like visiting a third-generation tea shop and even ceremonies at a family temple. There's also an Ayurvedic spa where you can get a guided consultation to help you choose your therapy.

### GETTING THERE

The property is 45 minutes by road from Cochin International Airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 964 565 7102

**Email:** don@indiansummerhouse.co

**Website:** www.indiansummerhouse.co





## THE ALAMPARA, TAMIL NADU

From watersports to historic forts, there's something for everyone at this glamping retreat

**S**alt pans dotted with flamingos, the ruins of a historic 18th-century fort, serene lagoons, the thrill of overwater adventures – all of this is on offer in the coastal town of Maranakkam. Combine this with a stay in a luxurious tent, with only the sound of the backwaters lapping against the shore right outside, and you've figured out how to spell paradise.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Hugged by water, The Alampara consists of four spacious tents, each designed to maximise those rustic vibes while also kitted out with every mod con you could want. A highlight is the freestanding bathtub with a view, so you can gaze at the green expanse outside your floor-to-ceiling glass doors. Pro tip: book the tent closest to the backwaters so you get not just a view but direct, private access to the waterfront. Among the common spaces, the lounge shack, an open-air spot overlooking the backwaters, is ideal for your morning coffee or evening drink. You could also book the waterfront dining shack for a private meal for yourself or for two. At Nila, the



dining space, delve into South India's foodscape with a farm-to-table menu that uses many ingredients from the retreat's own gardens, such as in the fresh lemongrass ice cream.

The retreat offers a number of activities that will allow you to get to know the local region. From wakeboarding, windsurfing, and kayaking to meeting the mussel pickers of Maranakkam and joining them as they cast their nets into the water, from learning the history of the Alamparai Fort to seeing how salt is harvested, there's a lot on offer. A

highlight, if you can time it right, is witnessing baby Olive Ridley turtles making their way into the sea during hatching season.

### GETTING THERE

Fly direct to Chennai from most Indian cities. The property is a two-hour drive from there along the coast.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 979 161 2036

**Email:** gm@thealampara.com, reservations@thealampara.com

**Website:** www.thealampara.com





Nakshathra Mana

## LUXUNLOCK PRIVATE VILLA EXPERIENCES

A collection of treasured private homes in Southern India brought to you by a sustainable luxury brand that promotes the cultural, culinary, and ecological heritage of the region

LuxUnlock is a luxury villa brand dedicated to providing not just private accommodation, but a comprehensive destination experience. At its heart, LuxUnlock is built on three core principles. One, the preservation of local heritage; two, the offering of immersive experiences by supporting local communities; and three, the creation of an enterprise that opens new destinations to the world and has a positive socio-economic impact on these regions. The five properties showcased here represent these core values.

An exemplar of the first tenet is **Maison Twenty-Six**, a 120-year-old garden villa in the French Quarter of **Puducherry**. The home's giant Franco-Tamil columns and teak pillars, and original Belgian floor tiles embody rustic charm, romance, and nostalgia, winning it the prestigious



Maison Twenty-Six

Vieilles Maisons Francaises (VMF) award for the preservation of French architectural heritage. The pet-friendly stay has four bedrooms that can be booked together or individually.

Located by the **backwaters of Kerala's Vembanad Lake**, **Nakshathra Mana** is a celebration of the community and culture it is surrounded by. And food is a key aspect of this celebration. At the four-bedroom villa, there is no fixed menu. Offerings change daily, based on what is locally available, in season, and fresh from local vendors. Guests are simply asked about choice of protein and any dietary restrictions; the rest is left to consultant chef Abraham Jacob's kitchen crew, who could serve exquisite duck mappas one day and biryani the next.

Another stay that embodies the brand's second tenet is **Haiwatha**





Ira Kabini



Haiwatha By The Brook



Sunny Woodlands Estate



Maison Twenty-Six

**By The Brook**, a 150-year-old six-bedroom bungalow **near Ooty** that's rooted in nostalgia, with markers of the house's storied past on its walls, including the deed from 1918 when an English doctor bought it from the Princess of Lovedale, pictures of St Stephen's Church in Ooty from 1830, and advertisements for Afghan Snow, the legendary beauty cream brand founded by the owner's family. The property is closely associated with experts in ecology, anthropology, and artisanal produce.

Nestled in a 10-acre private forest in Kodaikanal, **Sunny Woodlands Estate** is a stunning 90-year-old villa. In its restored avatar, it features glass panelling, skylights, and large windows, which transformed this colonial **Kodaikanal** bungalow into a modern minimalist mansion that allows the wilderness outside to shine. The six bedrooms, across two connected units, can be booked individually or together. All rooms offer cantilevered outdoor decks so you can feast your eyes on the Palani Hills or the lush forest outside. In the overdeveloped, fragile



Nakshathra Mana

ecosystem of Kodaikanal, the estate is an attempt to preserve and rewild the forest around it through collaborations with local non-profits.

Set beside the Kabini Reservoir in **Nagarhole Tiger Reserve**, LuxUnlock's newest offering, **Ira Kabini**, is a four-bedroom safari villa just 90 minutes from Mysuru. It offers views of the tranquil backwaters, expansive lawns, and a heated infinity pool that merges with the lake. The fact that it's set slightly away from the cluster of resorts in the Karapur area eases the pressures on a major tourist hotspot in this area. Despite the obvious temptations of building a larger-scale wildlife lodge, LuxUnlock decided to convert an existing private home into a luxury wildlife experience with conservation at its heart.

The LuxUnlock experience goes beyond just a villa. It is about exploring a region in a way that will deepen one's understanding of it, and strengthen one's resolve to preserve what makes it special.

([www.luxunlock.com](http://www.luxunlock.com);  
+91 63695 55363)





## THE BLACKBUCK LODGE, GUJARAT

Rustic chic meets sleek modernity at this stunning property

About 15 years ago, Mickey Desai, the owner of more than 150 acres of family land adjacent to Velavadar National Park, decided to turn it into a thriving grassland ecosystem. He was keen to spotlight the region's unique wildlife, which includes blackbucks, hyenas, wolves, jackals, foxes, and more than 300 species of resident and migratory birds. With nearly 85 per cent of the land earmarked for wilderness, he planted indigenous trees, shrubs, and grasses that have since grown into a forest. Although the park is closed from mid-June to mid-October, the lodge is open all year round and this off season is, in fact, a great time to enjoy the monsoon lushness as well as spot the endangered lesser florican and the Sarus crane.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Each of the lodge's 14 villas includes a patio, indoor and outdoor bathrooms, and a deck looking out to the wild beauty of the bush. The interiors meld rustic charm and modern elegance – think stone walls adorned with stunning photos and illustrations of local wildlife, wooden logs as stands for bedside lamps, cushioned bay window seating, alongside high-speed wi-fi and top-of-the-line hairdryers in the bathrooms. Some of the villas also have a private plunge pool.

When you're done lazing, head out for a game drive in Velavadar National Park, explore the village and the pastoral settlements of the Bharvad community, known for their colourful clothes and chunky jewellery. You

could also enjoy sundowners by the river, or go birding in the bush. Back at the lodge, meals are experiences. For example, the bush dinner, which is your chance to enjoy local traditional dishes, expertly cooked, under the stars and surrounded by the grasslands and distant calls of jungle animals.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Bhavnagar from most major Indian cities. The property is 50km from the airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 794 002 0901/02/03, +91 997 897 9729

**Email:** reservations@theblackbucklodge.com

**Website:** www.theblackbucklodge.in





## DEV SHREE DEOGARH, RAJASTHAN

This home away from home celebrates local crafts and craftspeople

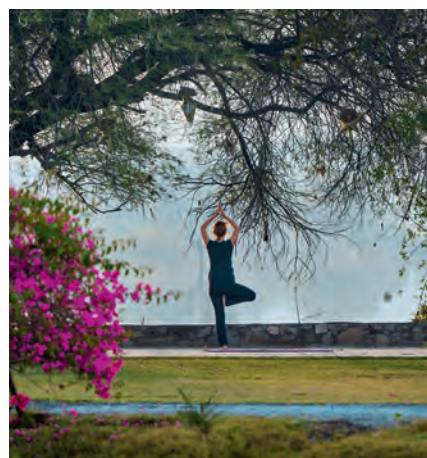
Inspired by the palaces and havelis of the Mewar region and Udaipur in particular, Shatrunjai Singh Chundawat, the scion of the Deogarh family, built this property that looks like a palace, but feels like home. He was also clear that the space should celebrate local craftsmanship, and should teach young people of the region about hospitality. The result is this boutique resort. Dev Shree is located on a plateau in the Aravali hills right by the Ragho Sagar lake, which plays host to a vast number of local and migratory birds. The property is dotted with intricately carved pillars, large gardens, and a gorgeous pool surrounded by palm trees. And the Deogarh family lives on the estate, so you'll have many opportunities to chat with them and hear their stories and the history of the region.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The 10 suites are bright and airy, with

old-school arches, many windows, and plenty of sitting and lounging space. Seven of the keys, plus the dining room and several common areas, are on the ground level and easy for wheelchair users to access. A major plus point is that pets are allowed and the hotel will provide food for them. There are four dogs already living on site, so make sure your furry companion is comfortable with that.

This is the kind of place where you could go for a solo trip or book out all the rooms for a holiday with the extended family or even for a small party for a day. Its central location also makes it ideal for a break during a road trip across Rajasthan. Spend your days on nature walks, cycling, hiking up a hill, enjoying picnic lunches at the estate farms or a packed high tea beside the lake. Back at the resort, dig into traditional Indian fare made using family recipes that have been passed down through generations.



### GETTING THERE

Fly to Udaipur, from where the property is about two hours away by road.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 852 954 885,

+91 702 379 5682

**Email:** [info@devshreedeogarh.com](mailto:info@devshreedeogarh.com)

**Website:** [www.devshreedeogarh.com](http://www.devshreedeogarh.com)





## ARAMNESS GIR, GUJARAT

Where cats and culture  
coexist in harmony

Situated right at the edge of Gir National Park, the last remaining natural habitat of the Asiatic lion, lies this exquisite resort, where Gujarati traditions have been lovingly reimagined to create a modern, luxe safari retreat. Between October and March is an excellent time to visit, when the weather is cool and dry, so you can make the most of being outdoors. Aside from lion sightings, this is a good base to visit iconic cultural sites such as Somnath Temple and Junagadh.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Inspired by traditional Gujarati pol houses, the property has 18 kothis set around a central haveli, which serves as the heart of the retreat. Each villa spans two levels, with the master bedroom above to capture forest views, incorporating distinctive elements like raised plinths, courtyards, and jharokhas. The interiors feature Kutchi lipan



plasterwork with delicate mirror work and geometric patterns, as well as hand-carved wooden furniture and accents, vintage appliqué cushions, and handwoven textiles. Common spaces include a library, pool, edible garden, and spa.

Freshly baked breads, granola, and Gujarati delicacies are on offer for breakfast, alongside, live stations for eggs, dosas, and traditional parathas. The farm-to-table ethos is seen in signature offerings like the house-blend botanical tea and the raw mango chutney made from fruit grown on site. Children can enjoy their own specially crafted menu, but even they shouldn't miss the chance to have a proper Kathiawadi-style dinner in the mango orchard.



The main draw, of course, is the big cat, which you can spot on safari drives guided by superb naturalists. Little ones might enjoy the Junior Naturalist Program, where they can engage in interactive learning about wildlife. Kids and adults can both participate in tree plantation drives.

### GETTING THERE

The lodge is a three-hour drive from Rajkot International Airport and two hours from Diu.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 285 350 2000,  
+91 901 650 1663

**Email:** reservation@aramness.com

**Website:** www.aramness.com





## JIM'S JUNGLE RETREAT, UTTARAKHAND

More than a luxury lodge, this exquisite retreat offers guests a chance to forge a relationship with the jungle

A conservation effort that also embodies luxury hospitality, the retreat is rooted in the idea that humans and nature can and must coexist, and that understanding one's relationship with the natural world is the key to enjoying it and saving it. Conservationist and co-founder Daleep Akoi has had a lifelong connection with Corbett Tiger Reserve, since he was first taken there as a two year old by his father, who himself first visited the wildlife haven when he was five. That deep connection with the forest honed his conservation instincts, and eventually, the family bought and rewilded the land on which the lodge rests, leading to a number of birds, insects, and small mammals visiting the estate. 'Seek the tiger, find the jungle' is not just the retreat's tagline, but its underlying ethos, because while you may arrive only to see the big cat, you will leave having discovered many more wonders of the jungle, as well as your own self and your place in the ecosystem. Here, a seemingly mundane



excursion to see termites at work can turn into as thrilling an adventure as spotting a tiger. And that is the magic of this retreat.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Set by the buffer zone of Corbett Tiger Reserve and 2km from the Dhela safari zone entry gate, the retreat has 18 residences, which feature wraparound verandahs, spacious bathrooms, and plush furnishings. The glass walls in the jungle bungalows offer panoramic forest views as well as a walk-in wardrobe and a sunroom. The family cottages are wheelchair-friendly and there are electric buggies to take guests around the property.

While safaris might be the main event, the retreat offers many other seasonal experiences. You could go on a guided walk across the property, where you'll spot scores of bird species, langurs, or even an enormous python near a pool of water. You could explore spider trails, visit Dhela village, explore



the region on two wheels, or settle in for a wildlife film screening. In the lazy hours of the afternoon, have a leisurely dip in the swimming pool or pick one of the many cosy nooks across the retreat as your reading spot for the day. You could even ask for your evening tea or meals to be set up in one of the machans so you get a bird's-eye view of the jungle at different times of day. And with 10 deeply knowledgeable resident naturalists, your evening conversation is bound to be an experience in itself.

### GETTING THERE

The retreat is five and a half hours from Delhi by road. You could also fly to Pantnagar, from where the property is a two-hour drive away.

### For more information:

**Call:** 91 11 4351 6376, +91 11 4753 7647, +91 971 178 9828

**Email:** info@jimsjungleretreat.com, reservations@jimsjungleretreat.com

**Website:** www.jimsjungleretreat.com





## GOGUNDA PALACE, RAJASTHAN

A slice of history with a side of luxury

Set in the Aravali hills, this former fort was built as a centre of war strategy in the 16th century. This was where Maharana Udai Singh II escaped to after his defeat in battle against Mughal emperor Akbar, where he died, and where his son, Maharana Pratap Singh's coronation took place. The new ruler of Mewar made Gogunda the capital of the kingdom, which it remained until the city of Udaipur was built.

Today, Gogunda Palace is a tranquil yet colourful oasis of Rajput customs and hospitality. You'll see many examples of classic Mewari architecture, such as chattris, cupolas, arched doors and windows, carved pillars, and jharokhas. The charbagh, a garden with a central marble fountain and four-course waterways, is lush with champa and neem trees, and pink bougainvillea.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The palace hotel's 40 rooms and suites are stunning examples of craft and history, down to the smallest details. Some rooms come with carved marble trays in the bathrooms and traditional handi lamps in the rooms,

others feature arched alcoves niched into the walls with coloured glass that lends a vibrant quality to the sunlight that streams in. One of the suites has a wall entirely decked out in mirrors, while others features original Rajput miniature paintings, Shekhawati murals, and marble latticework. The Raj Tilak suite, the site of Maharana Pratap's coronation, is embellished with gold-leaf painting on the walls and ceiling.

Outside the hotel, visit Myrah ki Gufah, a set of caves where Maharana Pratap used to hide his weapons. A two-hour drive away is the Jawai leopard sanctuary, where you can spend the afternoon and return in



time for dinner. At the on-site Heritage Quarter, enjoy traditional dishes like laal maas and dal Mewari. The poolside Bougainvillea Bar has an excellent selection of wines and spirits.

### GETTING THERE

The hotel is within an hour's drive from Udaipur's Maharana Pratap Airport and from the main city.

### For more information:

**Call:** + 91 992 063 4417,

+ 91 911 662 7373

**Email:** [reservations@gogundapalace.com](mailto:reservations@gogundapalace.com)

**Website:** [www.gogundapalace.com](http://www.gogundapalace.com)







# JAMTARA WILDERNESS CAMP, MADHYA PRADESH

Conservation is at the heart of this chic tented property

**W**arm hospitality and an old relationship with the region make this elegant camp a premier destination for wildlife lovers. Owned by Amit Sankhala, the grandson of legendary tiger conservationist Kailash Sankhala, the first director of Project Tiger, the estate is an embodiment of the family's decades-long commitment to the protection of India's wealth of flora and fauna, and to creating an ecosystem that benefits the local community. Situated right by the buffer zone of Pench Tiger Reserve, the retreat has been a source of employment for many locals, and supports schools in the area to educate children on the importance of earth-friendly living.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The property is home to 10 beautifully appointed tents designed to provide



unobstructed views. They also feature a lovely patio from where you can see the forest and the seasonal stream as you sip your morning coffee or tea. No trees were felled for the wooden floors or furniture; instead you'll see repurposed wood from ship decks and vintage furniture from the Supreme Court of India and embassies in Delhi. Guests can enjoy the plunge pool, the collection of wildlife books in the lounge, and sundowners or a bonfire by the huge banyan tree around which the property is centred. Pench, with its dry deciduous teak forests, is a stunning landscape to drive through, whether you see a big cat or not. You could even opt for a night safari, which will give you a completely different glimpse into the secrets of the jungle. You could also go on a guided walk in

the forest or visit the village and the schools supported by the camp to gain a deeper understanding of local life.

One thing you shouldn't miss is a night spent sleeping outdoors on a Star Bed. Set on a raised platform, it will give you the chance to see the forest under a blanket of stars, listening to the music of crickets, owls, frogs, and jackals, with the alarm calls of deer the only sign that a predator is on the move. This is the circle of life at its most primal, and it is a privilege to witness the magic unfold.

## GETTING THERE

Fly to Nagpur from most Indian cities. The camp is 150km (three hours by road) from the airport.

## For more information:

**Call:** +91 850 589 6657

**Email:** [info@jamtarawilderness.com](mailto:info@jamtarawilderness.com)

**Website:** [www.jamtarawilderness.com](http://www.jamtarawilderness.com)



# JEHAN NUMA GROUP OF HOTELS

From safari lodges to palace hotels, each stay offers an elegant immersive experience

A family-owned collection of exquisite retreats across Madhya Pradesh, the Jehan Numa Group of Hotels was founded by the Rashids, descended from Bhopal's royal family, in 1983. All four properties, including a palace hotel, a city retreat, and two safari lodges, embody the family's commitment to spotlighting history, local culture, and the environment.

More than a century old, **Jehan Numa Palace** is centred around a courtyard and offers a range of opulent rooms and suites fit for a royal. Set within 28 acres of lush greenery, the 28-key **Jehan Numa Retreat** is perfect for a serene staycation in the city. Both are located in Bhopal and offer guided tours to explore the former princely state's rich heritage. Also a must-see are two nearby UNESCO World Heritage sites: the Bhimbetka Rock

Shelters, featuring ancient cave art, and the Sanchi Stupa.

About three hours from Bhopal lies the Satpura Tiger Reserve. Once known only to wildlife experts, it is now a major safari destination where you can spot tigers, sloth bears, leopards, and wild dogs. And the Jehan Numa group has two idyllic properties where you can base yourself for your jungle adventures. The 12 cottages and 4 luxury tents of **Reni Pani Jungle Lodge** are all about intimate elegance. A USP is the variety of safaris on offer, including walking, boating, canoeing, camping, and horseback safaris, alongside standard jeep drives. And the 12-key **Bori Safari Lodge** exemplifies thoughtful design, visible in the way it is built on stilts to adapt to its low-lying, flood-prone location, and the use of local materials in its construction.

Both lodges are at opposite ends of the park, giving guests the chance to explore different zones and their landscapes, and there are full-day drives as well as boat transfers to get from one part to the other.

Food is a highlight across all four properties, given the group's commitment to immersive experiences. At the Palace, don't miss the General's Table, a recreation of the exquisite cuisine served at formal dinners by founder General Obaidullah Khan, while the Retreat spotlights royal recipes of Central India. The kitchens at the safari lodges make good use of produce and ingredients from the forest, such as mahua, Indian gooseberry, jamun, and wood apple. All four properties are wheelchair- and child-friendly. ([www.jehannuma.com](http://www.jehannuma.com))







## SARACA HOTELS & RESORTS

Whether you're after tiger safaris or historic monuments, this hospitality group has you covered

Embraced by the Himalayan foothills that are home to Corbett Tiger Reserve in Uttarakhand, **Saraca Resort & Spa** is a gateway to the best of India's wildlife in its natural habitat. The region plays host to 300 species of birds and the resort borders an elephant corridor, giving guests a truly enchanting experience. And for those who want to combine serene surroundings with history and architecture, check into **Saraca Hotel Lucknow**, a 1930s-era bungalow in the heart of UP's capital. Historic monuments like Bara Imambara and Rumi Darwaza, and the city's famed chikankari and attar shops, are close by. Both properties welcome pets. Another exquisite property is **Fort Tiracol Heritage Hotel**, a former Portuguese fortress in Goa that's perched on a cliff and offers spectacular views of the sea and the Tiracol river estuary.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Saraca Resort & Spa's 44 elegant keys come with forest-view balconies and cosy interiors inspired by local art. The Sanctuary Suite has its own plunge pool and a gorgeous sitout. Begin your day with a swim in the property's pool,



with views of the forest, followed by safari drives in the legendary national park. You could also visit Corbett Falls and explore local life in the village of Bhakra Kot. The resort offers horse riding and birding as well. Ideal for families, it houses a kids' play area and hosts magic shows and movie screenings. And don't miss high tea up in the machan, with a birds-eye view of the wilderness.

Over in Lucknow, you'll feel like you've stepped back in time, with old-school architectural elements like a 'wishing well' and a bougainvillea-lined brick courtyard, plus interiors that feature colonial furniture, antique zardozi cushions, and traditional Awadhi art. Even the door handles across the property are repurposed



chikankari block stamps. All the 41 rooms and suites, of which many are wheelchair-accessible, exude grandeur, but the Imperial Suite stands out for its antique paintings and rich furnishings. The hotel offers superb dining options, from a gin bar to a Middle Eastern restaurant in an Arabian-style tent. Don't miss food from the royal kitchens of Awadh and Hyderabad at Azrak. And the Moroccan-themed spa is yet another escape to another time and place.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Pantnagar and drive three hours to Saraca Resort & Spa, or enjoy a comfortable five-hour drive from Delhi-NCR. Saraca Hotel Lucknow is a 25-minute drive from Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 708 100 0342

**Email:** [revenue@saracahotels.com](mailto:revenue@saracahotels.com)

**Website:** [www.saracahotels.com](http://www.saracahotels.com)





## OUTPOST 12, KANHA, MADHYA PRADESH

Experience Kanha like you're part of nature at this forest-first safari bio-lodge

On the banks of the Banjar river, nestled in the jungles of Kanha, sits an idyllic, intimate safari bio-lodge that was envisioned as a natural extension of the renowned tiger reserve's wooded grasslands. The trio behind it includes Durgesh or DK, an ace naturalist who's spent decades interpreting wildlife; Sunny Saxena, who left his software engineering job to devote his time to Sinali; and Anand Sinha, who cut his naturalist teeth in South Africa and has conducted tours across India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and Bhutan.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

With just nine stone-clad, eco-friendly cottages across the 10-acre estate, exclusivity and privacy are a given. Every cottage features handcrafted accessories and artworks that highlight indigenous life, alongside luxuries like a private deck with jungle or river views, and an outdoor bathtub.

With safari drives available in the morning and afternoon, and at night, guests can experience the jungle in all its avatars. Also on offer are expertly



guided treks around the region, and visits to tribal hamlets. In between, laze in or by the lodge's infinity pool and enjoy drinks with a local twist at Brander's 12, the warm, cosy lounge

that's stocked with books and board games. The local touches continue at Ilika, the in-house spa, where ingredients sourced from the forest are used in the treatments.

The estate lives a circular philosophy through rainwater harvesting, water recycling, and the use of solar power and natural building materials, including retrieved mine-cast stones. Guests will love the dining experiences curated around hyperlocal produce (millets, mahua, pihri). Don't miss the chance to spend the night on a star bed, an outdoor area where you can eat and sleep under the starlit sky, and wake up with a bird's-eye view of the lush green jungle.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Jabalpur from major Indian cities. The property is 135km (about three and a half hours by road) from there.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 920 224 9129

**Email:** outpost12@sinali.in

**Website:** www.outpost12.in





# TAJ EXOTICA RESORT & SPA, ANDAMANS, ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

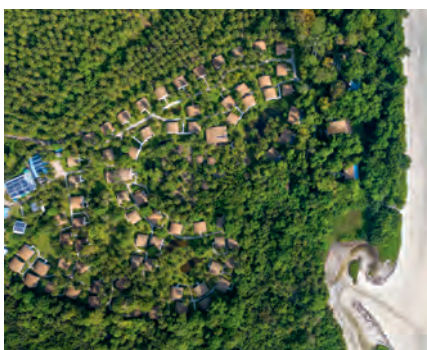
This all-villa resort has redefined luxury for the island territory

**R**ight by the pristine white sands of Radhanagar Beach on Havelock Island lies this serene 46-acre resort. Dense mangroves and a lush tropical canopy of coconut, mahua, banana, and gurban trees create such a verdant embrace that the only sound you hear is the lapping of the ocean waves and the whisper of tree leaves in the gentle breeze. The resort's commitment to an earth-friendly footprint is evident in its use of solar power, bio-gas, and local produce for meals, and the fact that it was built using sustainably sourced plantation timber without felling even a single tree.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Dotting the estate are 72 rustic chic stilt-raised villas topped with rounded thatched roofs in the style of local homes across the island. Inside are four-poster beds, capacious bathrooms, rainshowers, and walk-in closets; some villas also come with private pools.

Food is a highlight here, with three unique dining spaces offering exquisite



menus and memories that will last a long time. Settlers is a cosy, glamorous community dining experience that combines live storytelling with delicious food. An ode to the communities that migrated here from the mainland, it showcases Tamilian, Bangla, Bihari, and Keralan dishes as well as regional recipes. You'll find garden-fresh ingredients like arugula, chilli, mango, and jackfruit, as well as Andaman black pepper, taro root, and wild coriander. Shoreline is known for its coastal curries from countries across the subcontinent,

including Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia. And Turtle House, which sits beside the infinity pool, offers excellent grilled fare with a view of the beach.

Spend your days underwater, snorkelling or scuba diving alongside the wonders of the marine world. On land, you could go fishing, walk through the rainforest, or spot turtles. Or you could indulge in healing Ayurvedic therapies at the resort's sanctuary-like spa. Whatever you choose, you're guaranteed a slice of paradise.

## GETTING THERE

Fly to Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair) from most major Indian cities. From there, a ferry ride to Havelock Island will take just under two hours.

## For more information:

**Call:** +91 953 199 0002, +91 319 228 3333

**Email:** [exotica.andamans@tajhotels.com](mailto:exotica.andamans@tajhotels.com)

**Website:** [www.tajhotels.com/en-in/hotels/taj-exotica-andamans](http://www.tajhotels.com/en-in/hotels/taj-exotica-andamans)





# NIRAAMAYA RETREATS, KERALA

Five unique, luxe stays across Kerala offer the perfect blend of culture, nature, and wellness

Located in Kovalam, Kumarakom, Athirappilly, Thekkady, and Kannur, each resort offers unique experiences and landscapes, from walking on a private beach and cycling to dramatic waterfalls to spotting wildlife. But what is common to all is the traditional Kerala architecture, exquisite local cuisine, and warm hospitality that makes you feel right at home.

**Niraamaya Retreats Surya Samudra** offers cosy terracotta-roofed cottages, access to private beach area, an infinity pool with a spectacular sea view, and an Ayurvedic spa that is guaranteed to make all your troubles seem far away. At **Niraamaya Retreats Backwaters & Beyond** in Kumarakom, enjoy the soothing sight of the coconut palm-fringed Lake Vembanad from your private balcony. Take a boat ride through the backwaters, go fishing, or walk along nature trails through the lush foliage. When you return to the resort, you can opt for a private dining experience curated especially for you by chefs who make great use of local



ingredients. For a completely different vibe, book a mountain-view cottage at **Niraamaya Retreats Cardamom Club** in Thekkady. Cocooned in the rainforests near the Periyar Tiger Reserve, with misty peaks and valleys in the distance, this is where wilderness and quiet luxury meet. Spend your days walking through spice plantations or on bamboo rafts, or exploring the wonders of the dense forest, and return to enjoy those local spices in the regional cuisine on offer. Food is also a highlight at **Niraamaya Retreats Vaidekam**, Kannur, along the Kuttikkal River Beach, where delicious Malabar fish curry, appams, and Kerala-style biryani are served at the poolside restaurant, as well



as classic global fare. And don't miss a traditional Theyyam performance that is not just a dance, but a ritual in Kerala. Another USP is the resort's proximity to Muzhappilangad Beach, one of India's most loved driving beaches. And **Niraamaya Retreats Samroha** offers the perfect base from which to enjoy views of the famed Athirappilly waterfalls, which gush down rugged, densely green hills. Cycle through the beautiful Vazhachal forest and spot its wild denizens, enjoy local delicacies, and let Ayurveda work its magic.

**For more information:**

**Call:** +91 804 510 4548

**Email:** [reservations@niraamaya.com](mailto:reservations@niraamaya.com)

**Website:** [www.niraamaya.com](http://www.niraamaya.com)





## UMED BHAWAN PALACE, KOTAH, RAJASTHAN

Holiday like the royals – literally

Step into the past at this stunning palace retreat that was built in 1902 by HH Maharao Umed Singh II of Kotah for his and his family's personal use, and was converted into a heritage hotel in 1995. The royal family still runs the place, which was renovated and relaunched in 2023. In fact, one of the USPs of a stay here is the chance to meet the scions of the dynasty and hear their stories of their ancestors as well as learn about the history of the region.

What sets the property apart is its representation of the regional heritage and culture of Hadoti, from the food to the wall art featuring the region's forts and palaces, festivals, landscapes, wildlife, and birds. Surrounded by more than 900 acres of greenery in the heart of Kota city, the pink-and-white kheemuch sandstone palace features a working clocktower, colonnaded corridors around large courtyards, and gardens. You might spot Sambar deer or Nilgai roaming the grounds, peacocks calling to each other, or parrots prattling away.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The 32 massive rooms and suites, one of which is wheelchair-friendly,



have retained the original design aesthetic of the space, to maximise those traditional regal vibes. That theme continues into the F&B offerings, with the in-house classical dining restaurant The Dahlia spotlighting Rajasthani Rajput recipes as well as dishes from

royal courts across India and select international cuisines. At The Swinton Bar (named after the architect of the palace, Sir Samuel Swinton Jacob), dig into laal maas kachori and paneer-stuffed mini kulchas. The property now also offers a tasting menu for guests to understand the culinary history and culture of the region as well as learn about local ingredients that go into each dish.

The property's varied banquet and conference spaces, from regally decorated indoor halls to lush sprawling lawns, make it ideal for celebrating life's milestones as well as company offsites and events.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Jaipur or Udaipur from most Indian cities. The property is a four-hour drive from both airports. Road trippers will enjoy the scenic seven-hour drive from Delhi.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 925 100 5618

**Email:** reservations@umedbhawankotah.com

**Website:** www.umedbhawankotah.com





## PREMKUNJ, RAJASTHAN

The perfect base from which to explore Udaipur beyond its lakes and palaces

**B**hupendra Singh Chundawat, the scion of the royal family of Bassi, near Chittorgarh, had always wanted to use his own extensive travel experiences to create a unique hospitality offering for others; something that combined nature with luxury and stunning colonial architecture with the vibe of a family home. The result is Premkunj. Just outside the main city of Udaipur, embraced by the Aravali hills and the Sajjangarh Wildlife Sanctuary, this picturesque, pet-friendly boutique resort is a true labour of love.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

With just eight large, bright rooms, the resort exemplifies quiet luxury. Each room is different, but all are beautifully kitted out, complete with walk-in closets, intricately carved wooden furniture, vibrant furnishings, and wide windows from which you can see the pool and gardens, the wildlife



reserve, or the mountains. Three Pool View rooms are on the ground floor, as well as the lounges and dining room, making these spaces easily accessible for guests who need assistance.

The surrounding wildlife reserve is home to scores of bird species, deer, jackals, and even leopards and panthers. Early risers will love the chance to go on a sunrise trek through the nature trails in the area. You could also walk or cycle through the village, or pack a picnic lunch and head to Badi Lake. Back at the resort, enjoy an al fresco dinner of local delicacies,



European or Asian fare, made as you like it. Bonfire barbecue nights can be arranged as well. And you can work it all off with a spot of yoga (make sure to book sessions in advance).

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Udaipur from most Indian cities. The property is 25km (45 minutes by road) from the airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 990 129 7736

**Email:** reserve@premkunj.in

**Website:** www.premkunj.in





## EVOLVE BACK CHIKKANA HALLI ESTATE, KARNATAKA

Coffee as far as the eye can see

Nestled on 300 acres of coffee and spice plantation in the tiny hamlet of Sidapur in Coorg, this slice of paradise is flanked by the Cauvery river and the Dubare Reserve Forest. The design aesthetic of the property blends two aspects of local architecture: one, a nod to the mud-walled, thatched homes typically seen on the coffee plantations and the second, features inspired by Ainmanés, the ancestral homes of the Kodavas of Coorg, which typically included wide verandahs, wooden pillars that taper upwards, and central courtyards.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The resort's 59 plush villas, cottages, and bungalows all come with their own private pool and chic sitout. One room is specially designed for differently abled guests, and comes



with complimentary in-room dining. The property also houses a reading lounge built on stilts, an infinity pool for adults, a family swimming pool with a special child-safe zone, and an Ayurveda centre. A highlight is the Sidapur Coffee and Culture Museum, where you can learn about the history of coffee cultivation in Coorg and its impact on local culture, and attend Coffeeology, a daily live session on the art and science of gourmet coffee, where visitors can observe, experience, and taste an assortment of coffee preparations from around the world.

There are multiple dining options at the property: The Granary, where you can choose between European or local dishes, The Plantain Leaf, which offers North and South Indian vegetarian delicacies, and The Peppercorn for kababs and grills. You can also opt for a private meal by the lake, by your own

pool or the infinity pool, or even at the treetop machan.

Spend your days exploring the plantations on foot or in a jeep, spotting the hundreds of bird species around, riding a coracle on the river, and exploring Bylakuppe, a famous Tibetan settlement. Unmissable, though, is a visit to the Dubare Elephant Camp, where you can spend time in the company of these gentle giants, watching them groom and eat and play.

### GETTING THERE

The resort is about a five-hour drive from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport, and two hours from Kannur and Mysuru.

### For more information:

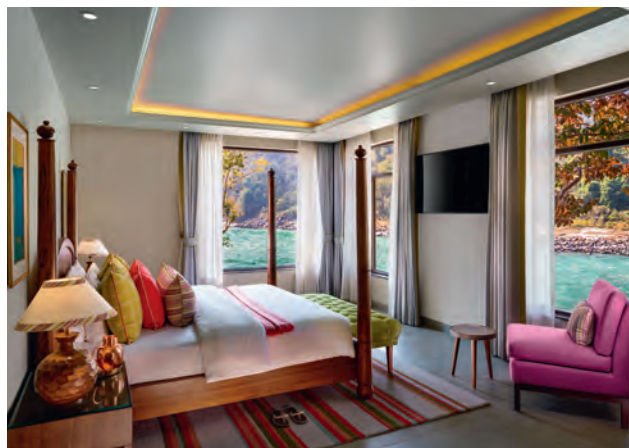
**Call:** +91 636 692 0434, +91 636 692 0339

**Email:** info@evolveback.com,  
coorg@evolveback.com

**Website:** www.evolveback.com







## ANAND KASHI BY THE GANGES, RISHIKESH – IHCL SELECTIONS, UTTARAKHAND

Come for the spiritual awakening, stay for that rested feeling

**T**he Ganga. The very name of the river evokes a certain quiet strength, a holiness, a sense that there's a higher power out there. And when you're staying at Anand Kashi, you can feel that power all around you. Located right by the river, with the mountains standing guard, this former summer residence of the Maharaja of Tehri Garhwal is an ideal place to soak up some sun, spirituality, and good vibes.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Set amid pretty fruit orchards, the resort's 24 rooms have been designed as per the Vedic Panchamahabhuta philosophy, with each set of rooms symbolising one sensory element – Sparsh (touch), Kesari (taste), Drishti (sight), Ujala (sound), and Mehek (scent). They feature traditional Garhwali architecture, earthy tones, and delicate floral designs, and some rooms have private balconies that look out onto the river.

There's no better way to begin your morning than with some yoga and meditation facing the river. Spend your day exploring the region's rich biodiversity and learning the stories of sages and gods on guided tours. And in the evening, sit back at the rooftop bar Amrit Tara for a superbly crafted cocktail or several, before heading to the cantilevered Ganga deck for dinner made of fresh produce from the hotel's orchards. In between, laze in the infinity pool that's shaped according to the curvature of the river, visit the on-site Shiva temple, and enjoy the Ganga Aarti performed by the resident priests on the hotel's own beach.

### GETTING THERE

The property is 40km (one hour by road) from Jolly Grant Airport in Dehradun and 25km (45 minutes) from Rishikesh city. Haridwar Railway station is 48km away (one and a half hours by road).



### For more information:

**Call:** +91 999 764 8992,  
+91 137 835 3000

**Email:** book.anandkashi@  
selectionshotels.com

**Website:** www.selectionshotels.com/  
en-in/anand-kashi-rishikesh/





## BAGH VILLAS, MADHYA PRADESH

Safari chic is reimagined at this gorgeous glamping lodge

Nestled at the edge of Kanha National Park, just 7km from the park's Mukki Gate, lies this thoughtfully designed lodge that offers a rich blend of nature and luxury. Surrounded by buffer forests, the lodge is set on a picturesque wooded estate centred around a tranquil lake.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Bagh Villas has eight well-appointed lakeside tented suites, a lakeside cottage, and two Shikar tents. The lodge offers a multicuisine farm-to-table dining experience using largely homegrown produce. Guests can enjoy a range of luxuries on site, including a spa, a library that screens wildlife documentaries, and a stunning 55m infinity pool with UV filtration. At night, make use of the telescope and indulge in some stargazing.

Kanha National Park is open from October to late June. It was one of India's original nine tiger reserves and has long been considered the jewel in Project Tiger's network. It is also home to leopards, Asiatic wild dogs, several species of deer, including the indigenous Barasingha, and jackals.



There are also hundreds of varieties of birds, not counting the migratory species that arrive in the winter.

Beyond its diverse fauna, Kanha has an eclectic mix of habitats and trees. In addition to the iconic sal canopy that it's known for, the terrain includes meadows, grasslands, streams and rivers, rocky outcrops, low hills, thick forests, and bamboo groves.

Apart from the wildlife safaris, you can also dive into the region's heritage with guided tours to the neighbouring villages that are home to the Gond and Baiga tribes, and sign up for a Gondi

art workshop. Private guided biking trails and nature walks along the park's periphery are also a great way to explore the gorgeous landscapes all around.

### GETTING THERE

Bagh Villas is a four-hour drive from Raipur and Jabalpur airports, while Nagpur is approximately six hours away. The lodge will arrange airport transfers.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 911 100 3371

**Email:** [info@baghvillas.com](mailto:info@baghvillas.com)

**Website:** [www.baghvillas.com](http://www.baghvillas.com)





Lockhart Bungalow



Résidence de l'Evêché

## CGH EARTH SAHA HANDPICKED ESCAPES

From a 236-year-old mansion in Goa to a tea bungalow in Kerala, enjoy intimate, exclusive stays and make joyful memories

CGH Earth Saha presents handpicked escapes, each an intimate haven showcasing India's diverse landscapes, cultures, and architecture. From verdant plantations to heritage towns, these elegant properties immerse travellers in local life. Every stay reflects the spirit of its destination, offering a deeply personal experience. Perfect for private family getaways or solo retreats, these spaces inspire togetherness, creativity, and rejuvenation, making them ideal to unwind, connect, and discover the captivating stories of India.

Set on a cliff in Tamil Nadu's Palani Hills, the two-bungalow **Isla's Ridge** offers jaw-dropping views of the misty hills, and a garden with a pool to maximise your time outdoors. Veggies from the on-site garden and farm-sourced dairy and eggs make their way to the menu, as do homemade breads, pickles, and preserves. **Marli Hill Bungalow** in Ooty is a charming

six-room residence with sloping ceilings and picturesque surroundings. Enjoy authentic Tamil cuisine, Raj-era favourites, and evening tea in the English Garden. Set amid misty hills, this bungalow blends colonial charm with contemporary art for a perfect hillside escape. For a different vibe, head to **Résidence de l'Evêché**, a historic two-storey townhouse in Puducherry's French Quarter, where pastel-hued walls adorned with bright bougainvillea blooms transport you to another era. It's great for families and friends, offering a private, immersive experience.

By the serene shores of Kerala's Vembanad Lake, **Hibiscus Villa** offers a sustainable retreat nestled amid the iconic backwaters and surrounded by natural beauty. This is the perfect place to unwind and enjoy a mindful holiday. The pool villa provides a unique opportunity to connect with the rhythm of the backwaters, offering both relaxation and a deep immersion in local life. **Chittoor Kottaram**, once the private residence of the Raja of Kochi, embodies regal hospitality. Seamlessly blending heritage with tranquil seclusion, it offers a window into timeless traditions and a royal yet intimate escape. Fort Kochi's **Beach**



Isla's Ridge



Marli Hill Bungalow

**Gate Bungalows** promise exclusivity in their bungalows with private pools, merging history, tranquillity, and privacy. For tea lovers, Munnar's **Lockhart Bungalow** offers a charming experience of an old English tea bungalow and awe-inspiring views, surrounded by 1,500 acres of verdant tea plantations.

In South Goa, the 236-year-old **Mansão Curtorim** captures the soul of authentic Goan heritage with its timeless Portuguese architecture and intimate charm. Tucked away from the touristy areas, it offers an immersive experience of serene paddy fields and the simplicity of authentic Goan village life. ([www.cghearth.com/saha](http://www.cghearth.com/saha))





Explore the diverse  
marine life

## EXTREME EXPLORATION WITH CGH EARTH

From the wilderness of Wayanad to the underwater adventures of the Andamans, here are two entirely distinct nature-based experiences

**W**ayanad Wild, a forest lodge cradled in the unspoilt embrace of the Lakkidi forest in Kerala's Western Ghats, invites travellers into an untamed realm of biodiversity. Here, the pristine ecosystem teems with life, showcasing endemic species that exist nowhere else on Earth. Wayanad Wild offers more than a stay – it's an intimate connection to nature's untouched grandeur.

The other end of the experience, at **Tilar Siro Andamans**, standing gracefully on the eastern shores of Havelock, along the pristine expanse of Vijaynagar Beach, immerses you in a breathtaking dual spectacle – ancient forests teeming with terrestrial wonders and vibrant underwater realms alive with colourful coral reefs, shimmering schools of fish, and marine life seen up close like never before. Imagine two kilometres of powdery white sands meeting crystal-clear waters, framed by lush island vistas. This is where the rhythm of the waves merges with unparalleled tranquillity.

([www.cghearth.com](http://www.cghearth.com))



Wayanad Wild



Tilar Siro Andamans



Nilgiri forest lizard





## JAVA RAIN RESORTS, KARNATAKA

This luxe stay in coffee country offers the perfect mix of cosy and outdoorsy

Surrounded by lush green hills, where mists laden with the scent of coffee waft by, this Chikmagalur property is equally ideal for indoor types who want to enjoy coffee and reading time and for outdoorsy types whose idea of a holiday is hiking. Located on the slopes of Mullayanagiri, the highest peak in Karnataka, the resort is blessed with stunning, soothing views of the Western Ghats and of the charming town of Chikmagalur.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

There are 25 opulent villas on offer, with amenities such as open-to-sky showers, private pools, Jacuzzis, and balconies from which the surrounding plantation stretches as far as the eye can see. The Fika Presidential Villa is ideal for a group of up to eight people,



since it comes with three bedrooms: one with a private pool, another with an outdoor Jacuzzi, and one with plantation views.

The all-day restaurant, Mirra, is where you can enjoy global and local cuisines made with seasonal produce as you look out to the infinity pool and the green slopes. You could also ask for a private barbecue by the pool. But a real draw is Crimson Peak, the resort's 50ft-high tree bar, where beautifully balanced cocktails come with panoramic views of Chikmagalur and Mullayanagiri. The rooms, restaurant, and spa are accessible

for wheelchair users, and a car can even be driven up to the rooms. Apart from trekking, this is a great base for trips to popular destinations such as Belur and Shravanabelagola.

### GETTING THERE

The property is 260km from Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru, and 163km from Mangaluru International Airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 990 266 6000,  
+91 900 866 6000

**Email:** [reservations@javarainresorts.com](mailto:reservations@javarainresorts.com)

**Website:** [www.javarainresorts.com](http://www.javarainresorts.com)





## MIHIR GARH, RAJASTHAN

A palatial labour of love  
that feels like a family home

A stunning sand fort set on Mali Nathji ka Dhora, a sacred dune deep in the Thar Desert, Mihir Garh was designed by Thakur Siddharth Singh and Thakurani Sahiba Rashmi Singh. Coming from a long ancestry of nobility, they wanted to offer a hospitality experience that combines tradition and history with contemporary style. The couple, who continue as active owners, not only conceptualised, but also personally designed the entire property, down to choosing the door knobs.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

At more than 1,700 sq ft, the nine suites are massive, and come with their own Jacuzzi or plunge pool. The ground-floor suite is ideal for wheelchair users, and there are ramps across the property. The estate is home to courtyards with fountains, lounges, a terrace, a spa, and an infinity pool. All the suites and



some of the common areas come with stunning fireplaces designed by the women from the nearby villages. The fireplaces were made using cow dung, clay, and small mirrors that add a glittering touch to the warm glow from the fire.

Food is a highlight here, with recipes having been passed down through the generations from Thakurani Sahiba Jayendra Kumari, who was herself an excellent cook and even authored two cookbooks on traditional Rajasthani cuisine. Mihir Garh's in-house cookbook was also authored by her. The menu here features classic Roher recipes as well as as modern takes on traditional Rajasthani cuisine. Experiential dining



includes meals out in the desert or by the one of the lakes in the countryside. Don't miss dishes like khad gosht, for which the meat is prepared for eight to nine hours underground, and baatis cooked over an open fire to be had with ghewar wali dal, also a family recipe. Work it all off with some horseback riding or a village safari.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Jodhpur from most Indian cities. The property is an hour's drive away.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 124 465 4330

**Email:** [reservations@houseofrohet.com](mailto:reservations@houseofrohet.com)

**Website:** [www.houseofrohet.com](http://www.houseofrohet.com)





## UTSAV CAMP, SARISKA, RAJASTHAN

Safari in style at this plush, elegant camp

Situated in the quiet village of Tehla, in the southern region of the Sariska Tiger Reserve, this eco-conscious retreat is framed by the Aravali range, prehistoric boulders, and forests. The camp's managing director, Luv Shekhawat, was inspired by his grandfather, who was an accomplished forest officer, to transform the barren land near the tiger reserve into a thriving sanctuary. He also founded the Sampat Wildlife Foundation, named for his grandfather. This foundation works on education, research, and conservation initiatives.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Choose between stone cabins, forest bungalows, and forest villas at this rustic yet sophisticated stay. All accommodations come with en-suite bathrooms, tasteful interiors, and private sitouts. There's a beautiful swimming pool, a library, a



spa, and many spots from where you can stargaze the night away. Mealtime at the camp sees a variety of regional and international fare, which can be enjoyed at a number of outdoor spots to maximise the vibes.

When you've had your fill of safari in the stunning Sariska Tiger Reserve for the day, you can go on guided nature walks or birdwatching tours, and for those with an equestrian inclination, horse riding is on offer as well. Come back and enjoy an



exquisite, delicious high tea at a spot of your choosing on the premises.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Jaipur, from where the property is 116km away (two and a half hours by road). It is about 233km (five and a half hours by road) from Delhi.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 11 4119 7100

**Email:** [info@utsavcampsariska.com](mailto:info@utsavcampsariska.com)

**Website:** [www.utsavcampsariska.com](http://www.utsavcampsariska.com)



# THE KUMAON, UTTARAKHAND

Love is in the details, and nowhere is this more true than at this hand-built mountain retreat

Above the town of Almora lies the Kasar Devi ridge, said to be named after an ancient Durga temple and made famous as 'Crank's Ridge' between the 1940s and 1970s by a host of travellers, including Bob Dylan and George Harrison. The hilly region is a popular tourist draw not just for its storied past, but also its stunning mountainscapes, rock temples, and local arts and culture.

A stay at The Kumaon will deepen your connection to the place's history and environment. For one, the property is built by hand. In 2013, when it was conceptualised, the area had no road access, electricity, water, or phone connectivity. So local stone workers and labour were needed to make something of the local stone, pine,

and slate that were envisioned for the property. The concrete was mixed and poured by hand, the steel sections were carried up and down dirt trails. Every detail here speaks of love for the region and imagination for how to give back to it.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The Kumaon's 10 suites sit in pairs, one above the other. The lower suites have an outdoor terrace while those on top have a sunken balcony-terrace and a bay window that makes for the perfect reading spot – that is, if you don't feel like using the on-site library that comes with a cosy stone fireplace. Food is central to the experience here, with a highlight being the Kumaoni thali. And you can even pick your own

herbs and veggies from the kitchen garden, plus get cooking lessons. Outside, hike across the ridge, plan a day trip to the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, or try a spot of angling in the Kosi or Kali rivers. And at night, enjoy stargazing with experts.

## GETTING THERE

The property is 120km from Pantnagar Airport and 90km from Kathgodam railway station. From Delhi, it is a 375km drive.

## For more information:

**Call:** +91 7579449997

**Email:** [reservations@thekumaon.com](mailto:reservations@thekumaon.com)

**Website:** [www.thekumaon.com](http://www.thekumaon.com)





The Lamp House, Goa



The Holland House, Nashik



Mount Pleasant Villa, Coonoor



Mangirish Farmhouse, Alur, Bangalore

## AMĀ STAYS & TRAILS

With over 120 luxurious villas across 40+ destinations, this hospitality brand brings immersive local experiences to the heart of your stay

Launched in 2019, amā Stays & Trails offers intimate travel experiences across India, with stay options in more than 40 destinations. From plantation bungalows to heritage havelis, from the tea estates of Darjeeling to the beaches of Goa, the properties are unique, but the ethos remains the same: to give guests the chance to witness local life in all its glory.

Each property is booked out as a whole, giving guests complete privacy. Some offer wheelchair accessibility and many are pet-friendly, with special meals for pets. Guests are advised to keep pets on a leash since many of the



Alpenhof, Coorg

properties are close to wildlife zones. Food is a highlight across stays, with

homestyle favourites made from locally sourced ingredients. Guests can also take cooking lessons to learn regional recipes. Across the properties, customised dining experiences can be created on request, including outdoor breakfasts, high tea, barbecues under the stars, picnics, and fireside evenings.

Depending on your locale, the property can arrange guided birdwatching tours with experts, wildlife safaris, nature walks, plantation tours, and cultural experiences like village tours. Every experience is designed to leave you feeling connected with your surroundings and their history. ([www.amastaysandtrails.com](http://www.amastaysandtrails.com))





## THE ULTIMATE TRAVELLING CAMP

From Nagaland to Bandhavgarh, camping has never looked this good

A collection of state-of-the-art, stylish holiday experiences, TUTC combines the romance of nomadic camp living with unparalleled luxury, offering a rustic chic experience across every property. Elegantly furnished tents come with signature curated furniture and outdoor decks from which to enjoy glorious panoramic views of the landscape, and butler service is available at all properties.

In the rugged landscape of Ladakh, **Chamba Camp, Thiksey** offers breathtaking views of Thiksey Monastery and the Stok Mountain Range. The camp's 28 acres are dotted with opulent, well-insulated tents that come with king-sized beds, stylish bathrooms, large windows, and private patios. Explore the village, do day treks or bike rides along scenic mountain roads, or immerse yourself in Buddhist traditions at nearby monasteries. The on-site restaurant serves excellent local and global fare made in the farm-to-table philosophy, but don't miss the chance to enjoy sundowners



by the Indus River. Not too far away, in Nubra Valley, lies **Chamba Camp, Diskit**, where safari chic is combined with British Raj vibes. Tents come with colonial-era furniture and plush interiors, private sitouts, and all modern luxuries. Walk or cycle through the nearby area, go rafting on the Shyok river, luxuriate in the hot springs at Panamik, or hike the meadows of Hunder and the stark dunes. For a truly unforgettable experience, opt for a mobile luxury camping experience at the iconic Pangong Lake.

In Nagaland's thickly forested hills, **Kohima Camp** has safari-themed tents kitted out with handcrafted furniture, offering a sophisticated glamping holiday where your every need is taken care of. The camp is timed to the annual Hornbill Festival so you can enjoy local dance, music, and rituals. Guests can also visit the historical WWII Kohima War Cemetery, a moving tribute to soldiers who fought in the Battle of Kohima. The spiritually inclined will appreciate **Sangam Nivas**



**Camp** in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh. Operational only during the Kumbh Mela, it offers a serene base to enjoy river rituals and spiritual discourses.

For a safari glamping adventure, book one of the luxe tents at **The Untamed Wilderness Camp** in Bandhavgarh National Park. Apart from safari drives through the tiger-dense jungle, the camp also offers guided treks and birdwatching tours. Another camp that's great for spotting the big cat and more jungle dwellers is **Sawai Shivr Ranthambore**, an opulent tented property offering delicious local and global cuisines and an excellent spa. The property includes two swimming pools and a water body that fosters a diverse ecosystem. And it is a short drive (three to five hours) from Delhi, Jaipur, and Agra.

TUTC has many exciting properties coming up, including FHR Wilderness Lodge, Chandigarh, Kanha Camp, Madhya Pradesh, and Naldehra Camp, Himachal Pradesh. ([www.tutc.com](http://www.tutc.com))





## CHUNDA SHIKAR OUDI, RAJASTHAN

Of lakes, forests, and unparalleled luxury

**W**hen one thinks of Udaipur, one immediately thinks of lakes. But this stunning retreat goes a step further: although centred around a lake, it also, uniquely, is surrounded by 150 hectares of private woodland. Built of stone in the architectural style of the region, it is a place where you can immerse yourself in nature.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

There are eight suites, all with private lake-view sitouts and capacious bathrooms, and dotted with décor pieces that have been handpicked to spotlight the crafts

and culture of the region. The 5,000 sq ft villa, a plush haven, comes with balconies, a private dining space, and its own swimming pool, and can accommodate up to six people. Common areas include a lounge that overlooks the water, a well-stocked library, an infinity pool, and a recreation room. You can choose to dine indoors or outside, and meals feature fresh produce from local farms. Outside, enjoy walking trails, fishing expeditions, a birdwatching tour, and cycling or horse riding around the countryside. Don't miss a guided safari drive through the jungle, where you might

spot leopards, porcupines, Indian rock pythons, golden jackals, star tortoises, grey langurs, and Indian hares. And if you're looking for something quiet and meditative, take a pottery lesson with a local potter in the village.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Udaipur from most Indian cities. The property is a half-hour drive from the airport.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 812 877 5010

**Email:** ops.shikaroudi@gmail.com

**Website:** [www.chundahotels.com/shikar-oudi-udaipur/](http://www.chundahotels.com/shikar-oudi-udaipur/)



# SAMODE SAFARI LODGE, MADHYA PRADESH

Nature and nurture come together at this luxe jungle hideout

**T**he legendary hospitality group has long been a byword for understated luxury. Its venture into the wildlife haven of Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh is a celebration of India's natural heritage. Themed around the royal expeditions of yesteryear Rajputana, the lodge is located slightly apart from the more popular zones of the national park, in the village of Mardari, to reduce pressure on the delicate ecosystem of the jungle and to support the local community with employment and other opportunities. Right by the park's buffer zone, the lodge is flanked by dense forests and rugged hills, and because there are no other commercial properties in the vicinity, guests can enjoy complete solitude, punctuated only by the song of birds and the rustle of tree leaves.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

A dozen sophisticated villas, inspired by the homes seen in Mardari, occupy just three of the estate's 35 acres, blending seamlessly with the landscape.

The bathrooms in the villas feature stunning Gond wall murals, created specially for the lodge, that depict the wonders of the wilderness all around. Each residence comes with a private courtyard, a plush living space, indoor and outdoor shower, and a deck with shaded daybeds. Also on the property are a stunning infinity pool, a serene spa, a cosy lounge, a well-stocked library, and an interpretation centre where guests can learn more about the wildlife they see. All the villas and many of the common areas are wheelchair-friendly.

To witness the jungle in all its glory, opt for a full-day safari, in which you'll get to see all the zones of the park accompanied by superb naturalists who will help you spot big cats as well as the region's more than 250 species of birds. Other immersive experiences include a visit to Mardari village, a farm-to-table picnic, and guided nature walks. Back at the lodge, you can

choose to dine poolside or with forest views, and learn how to cook local dishes using ingredients from the organic garden.

## GETTING THERE

Fly to Jabalpur from most Indian cities. The lodge is about three and a half hours by road from the airport.

## For more information:

**Call:** +91 124 446 0920, +91 141 263 2370

**Email:** [reservations@samode.com](mailto:reservations@samode.com)

**Website:** [www.samode.com](http://www.samode.com)







## BRIJ HOTELS

Riverside spirituality or thrilling leopard safaris, you can have it all

Immerse yourself in local heritage, culture, and nature at Brij Hotels' diverse offerings across India. Be it a quiet reading holiday you seek or an anthropological exploration of local cultures and customs, it's all here.

On the banks of the Ganga in the holy city of Varanasi, **BrijRama Palace** was originally built as a fort, back in 1812, then acquired by the ruler of Darbhanga in 1915. The heritage hotel offers 32 well-appointed rooms decked out in rich Banarasi furnishings; in some, the ceilings feature silver and gold artwork. There are two in-house restaurants, Chota Angan, where you can relish Indian street food, and Darbhanga, which offers gourmet vegetarian fare from India and the world, all prepared using farm-fresh local ingredients. A stay in Varanasi is, by definition, a feast for the senses, but nowhere more so than at this historic property, where you can spend your time by the river watching and participating in the Ganga Aarti or exploring the region's rich craft heritage.

Nestled in the lake town of Bhowali in Uttarakhand, 5,000ft above sea level and embraced by lush green hills, is **Brij Atmanya**, a charming stay crafted from stone and wood. Rooms and suites here feature outdoor decks or gardens designed to bring the verdant outdoors closer to you. The on-site restaurant serves up delicious Indian, Asian, and European fare, which you can work off with a bit of cycling or a walk to explore the area's stunning flora and avian wonders. The hotel staff will be happy to organise a number of unique, personalised experiences for you, be it a waterside picnic, an outdoor yoga class, a hike, or a camping adventure.

High up in the mountains of Dharamsala, perched on acres of tea plantation, is **Brij Anayra**, a colonial-era estate that dates back more than 160 years. The property's 12 suites are spread across the Viceroy's Block, the Planters Cottage, and the Whitehaven Cottage, whose names are enough







to transport you to a bygone era. And if that wasn't enough, the on-site restaurant, The Duchess, serves exquisite Anglo-Indian cuisine as well as global favourites, and Tibetan flavours in a nod to the region. Explore Dharamsala's unique confluence of cultures and histories with visits to Tibetan monasteries, handicrafts markets, and the war memorial. Thrill seekers will love the chance to paraglide in Bir-Billing, a premier destination for the sport in India.

Built as a hunting lodge in the 19th century, **Brij Lakshman Sagar** in Rajasthan's Pali area offers city-weary travellers an escape from their concrete jungle and on-the-go lives. Here, on 32 pristine acres, sit 12 traditional-style cottages made of mud and other locally sourced materials, all kitted out with contemporary luxuries like private plunge pools. The rustic sophistication of the property is also seen in its stunning rock-cut swimming pool. Spend your days on farm visits, picking the produce that might go into your own meal later in the day. Or explore the region's flora and fauna on serene safari drives. Or just lie on your



back and float in the pool. No one could blame you.

In the heart of Rajasthan's premier leopard safari destination of Jawai, **Brij Pola** is an exquisite luxury camp with just four stunning tents, two of which come with their own plunge pools. Explore the region's stark, dramatically rocky landscapes and do a dawn safari to witness the magic of the national park that's home to hyenas, panthers, sloth bears, deer,

wolves, and crocodiles. Return to the property and relax in the beautiful infinity pool before sitting down to dinner under the starry night sky. Or you could do an evening safari after a delicious thali lunch starring the greatest of local hits. Either way, you're guaranteed experiences that will leave you feeling deeply connected to this wild piece of paradise.

([www.brijhotels.com](http://www.brijhotels.com))

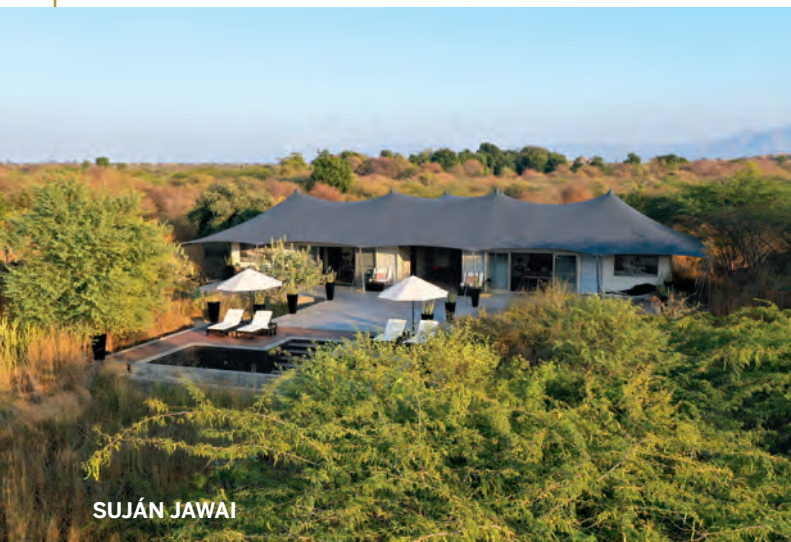




The Malabar House



Wild Coast Tented Lodge



SUJÁN JAWAI



Sitara Himalaya

## RELAIS & CHÂTEAUX

Established in 1954, the Relais & Châteaux Association unites an exceptional collection of 580 hotels and restaurants throughout the world, operated by independent owners.

In India and Sri Lanka, as elsewhere in the world, the Relais & Châteaux properties are deeply committed to sharing their local culture as well as their passion for what is good and beautiful.

**(www.relaischateaux.com)**

**Sitara Himalaya, Himachal Pradesh** Set 8,200 feet above sea level, close to the spot where sage Ved Vyas is believed to have meditated for 12 years before inscribing the eternal cosmic wisdom into the four Vedas, lies this 10-key retreat all done up in Tibetan rugs, sacred ornaments, and hand-painted murals. Spend your days walking with butterflies or in the spa and pool. Book the glass-roofed Skylight room so you can fall asleep while gazing at the Milky Way.

**(www.sitarahimalaya.com)**

With 12 tented suites under a canopy

of indigenous trees, **SUJÁN Sher Bagh** is the perfect base for tiger-spotting in Ranthambore National Park, and offers exquisite Anglo-Indian feasts made with organic produce from its gardens. Among the top leopard safari destinations in the world, the plush 10-tent **SUJÁN JAWAI** is a pioneering model for conservation tourism in India. Spend unforgettable days on safari in this wilderness, hiking, on horseback, and exploring local culture. With 21 tented suites set on 100 acres of desert scrub in Jaisalmer, **SUJÁN The Serai** is the perfect mix of Rajasthani culture, wellness, and wilderness. Enjoy craft workshops, desert safaris, and indulgent Ayurvedic treatments, and end your days under the starlit sky as the region's famed Manganiyar musicians serenade you.

**(www.thesujanlife.com)**

If you can't decide between tea, sea, and safari, Resplendent Ceylon offers a combination of all three that will give you the best of Sri Lanka.

Start at **Ceylon Tea Trails**, whose tea-planter bungalows offer panoramic views of plantations and the Castlereagh Lake. At **Wild Coast Tented Lodge**, the eco-friendly rooms and bamboo-clad bar and restaurant were built by local fishermen. Then move to **Cape Weligama** to spend your days surfing and spotting whales, and your evenings enjoying the freshest catch. Switch between resorts in luxe cars that come with water bottles, snacks, and wi-fi.

**(www.resplendentceylon.com)**

**The Malabar House, Kerala** This intimate art hotel in the heart of historic Fort Kochi has its roots in the 18th century. It houses a thoughtfully curated collection that highlights Kerala's history as a passage between east and west. Malabar Junction, the hotel's patio restaurant, makes innovative use of Kerala's spices with a focus on the freshest catch from the Arabian Sea. Relax with an Ayurvedic massage, enjoy an evening of Carnatic music, explore Fort Kochi, and cruise the backwaters on the hotel's own eco-friendly houseboat. **(www.malabarhouse.com)**





## JAAGIR MANOR, DUDHWA – IHCL SELEQTIONS, UTTAR PRADESH

Explore four diverse wildlife reserves from one idyllic base

Deep in the Terai region, in the Himalayan foothills, lies this stunning estate surrounded by sal canopy, sprawling grasslands, picturesque swamps, and fertile plains. The property itself is set on acres of guava and lychee orchards, as well as rugged forests. Located just a short distance from Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary, Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, Jaagir Manor offers a unique opportunity to explore diverse wildlife reserves. The pet-friendly stay is ideal for families, with a Safari Club that has a wildlife-themed kids' playroom, a library, and a pool table.

### HOTEL ESSENTIALS

The 13 elegant suites and villas exude vintage vibes with contemporary luxuries. Think William Morris wallpapers inspired by British palaces, four-poster beds, verandahs that look out to soothing gardens. The thatch-



roofed Brick Villas, complete with antique Victorian furniture, come with a floating machan canopy bed and two suspended four-poster beds, while the SeleQtions Villas are perched on stilts and connected by sky walks.

The region's unique sightings include the rare one-horned rhino, and the chance to spot Asiatic elephants migrating from Nepal makes it unforgettable. On day or night safaris, you can also spot tigers, leopards, sloth bears, fishing cats, Indian otters, Gangetic river dolphins, and gharials.



The area is also home to 525 bird species, including great hornbills and swamp francolins. You could even engage in conservation efforts under the guidance of forest rangers and mahouts. Back at the resort, enjoy Terai cuisine as well as international dishes, all made using organic ingredients from the surrounding orchards and nearby farms.

### GETTING THERE

Fly to Lucknow from most Indian cities. The property is 200km away. There are also 40-minute flights between Lucknow and Dudhwa.

### For more information:

**Call:** +91 987 155 5141

**Email:** [book.jaagirmanor@seleqtionshotels.com](mailto:book.jaagirmanor@seleqtionshotels.com)

**Website:** [www.seleqtionshotels.com](http://www.seleqtionshotels.com)





## SVATMA, TAMIL NADU

Discover yourself through art, wellness, and spirituality

The name Svatma refers to the journey of self-discovery, and the hospitality brand takes this journey seriously, with unique properties centred around personal enrichment and artistic expression.

**Svatma Thanjavur**, the brand's 34-key retreat, is not just a tribute to the city's rich history as a centre of arts, culture, and architecture, but also an attempt to revive ancient Tamil culture. The heritage hotel features classic Tamil architectural elements with every contemporary convenience, including a spa, pool with a Jacuzzi, gym, and banquet space.

Immerse yourself in local culture with a range of experiences, from learning the intricacies of bronze casting and Thanjavur painting to watching Bharatnatyam performances to cooking lessons at SVASA, the fine-dining restaurant. The library houses the founder's personal collection of literature on art, culture, and spirituality, while the on-site boutique store is where you can pick up some lovely antiques.

The brand's new resort opening, **Svatma Mayavaram**, is a unique wellness destination, designed as a transformative programme for

personal growth and health. Set amid 3,000 acres of lush greenery, it offers a number of well-being programmes and packages all focused on self-healing, fitness, detoxification, curative nutrition, and other aspects key to well-being. Doctors and wellness experts from India and abroad have created the wellness offerings here, which include personalised consultations and therapies. Guests are encouraged to check in with minimal baggage, bringing only essential personal items. A third property, in picturesque Puducherry, is set to open soon. ([www.svatma.in](http://www.svatma.in))





## AHILYA FORT, MADHYA PRADESH, & AHILYA BY THE SEA, GOA

Two homes that teach you to appreciate the slow life, to redefine luxury as intimacy and history



Set on a hill looking out to the Narmada river is the historic 250-year-old **Ahilya Fort** in Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh, a 90-minute drive from the airport at Indore. Originally the residence of the Holkar royal family, the fort features courtyards, stone sculptures, fountains, and lush gardens. The 19 rooms and suites are all unique, some with arched bay windows and some with private sitouts. The Martand Niwas room has its own balcony with views of Badam Chowk and the Narmada river. There's a beautiful pool, a library with a collection on Indian history and culture, and numerous spots to just sit and read or enjoy the view.

With no traditional restaurant, guests can enjoy a variety of unique dining experiences, such as breakfast at a sitout with river views and a thali dinner starring regional delicacies by the pool. A fixed menu is designed daily by the owner, Prince Richard Holkar, drawing from his cookbook *Cooking of the Maharajas*. Outside the heritage property, explore Maheshwar's temples, ghats, and gorgeous saris or, take a boat ride on the river. ([www.ahilyafort.com](http://www.ahilyafort.com))

In the quiet village of Goa's Nerul, a one-hour drive from Dabolim International Airport, lies the brand's second property, **Ahilya by the Sea**, a 10-room boutique property that

consists of three Portuguese-style villas made of hand-hewn local red laterite rock. The rooms feature a variety of artworks and antiques, and each room comes with private outdoor spaces from which to enjoy views of palm trees and the sound of the waves lapping at the shores of Coco Beach.

Have your meals outdoors, by the sea-view infinity pool or on the lawn, browse the library to pick the perfect reading material for your stay, enjoy Goan flavours and ingredients. Outside, take a boat ride out on the sea where you might spot dolphins and explore the Old Goa's heritage precincts. ([www.ahilyabythesea.com](http://www.ahilyabythesea.com))





# KAHANI PARADISE, KARNATAKA

A secret seaside escape  
where your only job is to relax

**H**idden on 20 acres of butterfly-filled gardens, on the cliffs above the vast Arabian Sea, is this exquisite bit of magic. The region of Gokarna, said to be Shiva's birthplace, was an integral part of the hippie trail in the 1970s, thanks to the idyllic coves south of the main town. The remotest of these is Paradise Beach, right behind which is the resort. Visit in the monsoon to enjoy the drama of the rain lashing the sea from your cosy perch on the cliff. Or you could time your trip to the Shiva Yatri festival in February, which brings a pulsating energy to this otherwise serene spot.

## HOTEL ESSENTIALS

Of the resort's eight keys, four are housed in the main villa, each looking out across the infinity pool and gardens to the sea beyond. The King Suite, on the first floor, comes with a 20m glass wall that opens out to a private balcony, offering jaw-dropping views



of the Aghanashini river delta and the sea. Situated a little away from the main villa and accessed by a private path through the gardens is the Queen Suite, which features striking columns, Mughal-esque vaulted ceiling, and an in-room bathtub carved from a single piece of white marble. Two of the rooms are wheelchair-accessible, and there are golf buggies to explore the estate that's home to peacocks and langurs, a full-size tennis court, and a state-of-the-art home cinema that houses a library of classics.



The food is a highlight, with the freshest tiger prawns, mud crabs, king fish, snapper, pomfret, squid, and more making their way to the kitchen. Green-lipped mussels and wild oysters from the Aghanashini estuary also find place on the day's menu frequently. In addition, the on-site gardens provide fruit, veggies, herbs, and spices. Make sure you book a candlelit stepwell dinner one night, so you can enjoy the freshest grilled seafood under the stars, surrounded by a thousand candles, with local musicians playing the flute and tabla just for you.

## GETTING THERE

Fly to Goa's Dabolim International Airport and drive south for three hours.

## For more information:

**Call:** +91 960 603 4404

**Email:** [reservations@kahaniparadise.com](mailto:reservations@kahaniparadise.com)

**Website:** [www.kahaniparadise.com](http://www.kahaniparadise.com)



# The TRÈS Wanderlist

Bookmark this exclusive curation of travel destinations for 2025!

## Heritage & Urban Design

**Samode Haveli** Jaipur, Rajasthan  
**Samode Palace & Bagh** Samode, Rajasthan  
**Anopura** Jaipur, Rajasthan  
**Dev Shree** Deogarh, Rajasthan  
**Mihir Garh (House of Rohet)** Jodhpur, Rajasthan  
**Chunda Haveli & Palace** Udaipur, Rajasthan  
**Gogunda Palace** Udaipur, Rajasthan  
**Suryagarh** Jaisalmer, Rajasthan  
**Narendra Bhawan** Bikaner, Rajasthan  
**Khas Bagh** Jaipur, Rajasthan  
**PremKunj** Udaipur, Rajasthan  
**Brij Hotels** across India  
**Ahilya Fort** Maheshwar, Madhya Pradesh  
**Ahilya by the Sea** Nerul, Goa  
**Jehan Numa Palace & Retreat** Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh  
**Colonel's Retreat** New Delhi  
**Saraca Hotels** Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh  
**Daspan House** Jodhpur, Rajasthan  
**Rawla Bisalpur** Jawai, Rajasthan  
**Niravi** Jaipur, Rajasthan

## Himalayas & Wellness

**CGH Earth Wellness** Karnataka & Kerala  
**Postcard Hotels** across India  
**ekaanta:** Haridwar, Uttarakhand  
**Somatheeram Ayurveda Resort** Kottukal, Kerala  
**Raga Svara: Ayurveda & Wellness Retreats** Rajkot, Gujarat  
**The Kumaon** Almora, Uttarakhand  
**The Lodge at Wah** Dohal, Himachal Pradesh  
**The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC)** Ladakh  
**Virsa Baltistan** Turtuk, Ladakh  
**Mary Budden Estate** Binsar, Uttarakhand

## Travel Concepts

**Mantra Himalaya** Ladakh  
**Travel Plan Experiences** across Rajasthan  
**Ekaa Villa & Kitchen** Agra, Uttar Pradesh  
**Baisa's Adventures** Rajasthan & Ladakh  
**Rajasthan Studio** across Rajasthan  
**Kaner Experiences** Jodhpur, Rajasthan

## The Taj Studio

**Anand Kashi by the Ganges Rishikesh – IHCL SeleQtions** Uttarakhand  
**Taj Exotica Resort & Spa** Andamans  
**Taj Chia Kutir Resort & Spa** Darjeeling, West Bengal  
**Taj Guras Kutir Resort & Spa** Gangtok, Sikkim  
**Taj Rishikesh Resort & Spa** Uttarakhand  
**Taj Malabar Resort & Spa** Cochin, Kerala  
**Taj Safaris** India & Nepal  
**Taj Usha Kiran Palace** Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh  
**Pilibhit House, Haridwar – IHCL SeleQtions** Uttarakhand  
**Tree of Life Resorts and Hotels**, India

## Sri Lanka, Bhutan & Nepal

**Pemako** Thimphu, Bhutan  
**Manor House Concepts** across Sri Lanka  
**The One Group of Hotels** across Sri Lanka  
**Mosvold Hotels** across Sri Lanka  
**The Dwarika's Hotels & Resorts** Nepal  
**&Beyond Punakha River Lodge** Punakha, Bhutan  
**Mountain Boutique Luxury Collection** Sri Lanka

## Wildlife & Wilderness

**Samode Safari Lodge** Bandhavgarh, Madhya Pradesh  
**Aramnesh** Gir, Gujarat  
**SUJÁN** Jawai, Ranthambore & Jaisalmer, Rajasthan  
**The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC)** Madhya Pradesh, Nagaland & Rajasthan  
**Jamtara Wilderness Camp** Pench, Madhya Pradesh  
**Mela Kothi Chambal Safari Lodge** Bah, Uttar Pradesh  
**Tipai - Wildlife Luxuries** Tipeswar, Maharashtra  
**Pugdundee Safaris** Madhya Pradesh & Maharashtra  
**Reni Pani Jungle Lodge & Bori Safari Lodge** Satpura, Madhya Pradesh  
**Bagh Villas** Kanha, Madhya Pradesh  
**Jim's Jungle Retreat** Corbett, Uttarakhand  
**Waxpol Hotels and Resorts** West Bengal & Madhya Pradesh  
**Jaagir Manor, Dudhwa – IHCL SeleQtions** Uttar Pradesh  
**The Blackbuck Lodge** Velavadar, Gujarat  
**The Bamboo Forest Experience** Tadoba, Maharashtra  
**Chunda Shikar Oudi** Udaipur, Rajasthan  
**Sariska Safari Lodge** Sariska, Rajasthan  
**Utsav Camp** Sariska, Rajasthan  
**Outpost 12** Kanha, Madhya Pradesh

## South, Islands & Waterways

**CGH Earth** Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Pondicherry & Andaman & Nicobar Islands  
**Evolve Back Resorts** Karnataka & Madhya Pradesh  
**Paul John Resorts and Hotels** Karnataka & Kerala  
**Niraamaya Wellness Retreats** across India  
**The Alampara** Kottaiyadu, Tamil Nadu  
**Rainforest Athirapally**, Kerala  
**Spicetree Resorts** Munnar, Kerala  
**The Serai** Bandipur, Chikmagalur & Coorg, Karnataka  
**Barefoot at Havelock** Andaman & Nicobar Islands  
**Wada 1** Aihole, Karnataka  
**Java Rain Resort** Chikmagalur, Karnataka  
**LuxUnlock Private Villa Collection** across India & Sri Lanka  
**Spice Routes** Kerala  
**Vythiri Resort** Wayanad, Kerala  
**Kahani Paradise** Gokarna, Karnataka  
**Jalakara** Havelock, Andaman & Nicobar Islands

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