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The 11th century Sun Temple at Modhera is beautifully illuminated for the Modhera Dance Festival in January.





# ARCHITECTURAL MASTERPIECES





# INTRODUCTION

Situated at the extreme western boundary of India, Gujarat has from centuries attracted merchants, migrants and colonizers, lured by the rich trade prospects offered by its long coastline open to the sea. In consequence, the state's architectural diversity covers a variety of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Islamic and European styles. Today, a tour of Gujarat offers an architecture enthusiast or cultural heritage traveller an opportunity to explore a diversity of fascinating and distinctive architecture from 4500 year old citadels to early-20th century palaces, havelis and Art Deco mansions.

Between 2650 and 1900 BC, the Harappan Civilisation flourished at various sites scattered across Gujarat. Evidences found at sites like Lothal suggest that the Harappans established trade links with the middle-eastern and western world from the Gujarat coast. The archaeological excavations of Dholavira and Lothal in Gujarat are among the most substantial in India. These sites offer an unrivalled insight into the sophisticated urban planning, water management systems and technologically advanced culture that existed at these sites more than 4000 years ago.

In the third century BC, the powerful Mauryan emperor, Ashoka, inscribed edicts on a rock near Junagadh. These edicts suggest that Saurashtra was an important part of the Mauryan Empire. From the first century to the eighth century AD, a succession of rulers like the Western Kshatrapas, the Guptas and the Maitreka dynasty patronised Buddhism and Jainism together with Hinduism. During this period, Vallabhipur and Vadnagar are believed to have been important Buddhist centres of learning. Buddhist caves can be seen at various sites in Gujarat, including Kutch, Khambalida near Rajkot, Junagadh and Jhagadia. Some of the oldest free-standing Hindu temples lie in ruins at Gop near Jamnagar and Firangi Deval near Mahuva.

In the 11th century, the Solanki Rajputs emerged as the major power in Gujarat. Headquartered at Patan, the Solanki rulers commissioned architectural gems including some splendid forts with superbly carved gateways, a number of beautiful Hindu and Jain temples, and water-retaining structures like artificial lakes (talao), stepped tanks (kund) and stepwells (vav). The stepwells built on a majestic scale and richly ornamented with sculpture during the 11th and 12th centuries are among Gujarat's most distinctive architectural masterpieces.

During the 15th century, Gujarat Sultans drew from Islamic and Hindu architectural elements to produce majestic mosques and tombs. A large repository of these 15th and 16th century Indo-Saracenic monuments can be seen in the city of Ahmedabad and at the World Heritage Site of Champaner.

After the Mughal conquest of Gujarat in the 1570s, Surat was given much importance as a chief commercial city of India with a seaport that also served as an embarkation point for the Hajj pilgrimage. The Mughal Emperor Jehangir permitted the British, Dutch, French and other European powers to establish their trading base at Surat. The city still has a fairly good collection of European buildings, and the British, Dutch and Armenian cemeteries house interesting examples of European architecture. Following peace treaties with the British East India Company in the 19th century, the Maharajas, Nawabs and other rulers of Gujarat's princely states commissioned well-known European architects to design palaces and public buildings which are delightful examples of eclectic architecture. Some of these palatial buildings are now heritage hotels.



The spectacular Adalaj Vav was built between 1498 and 1502 by the Vaghela queen, Rani Ruda.

It served the purpose of conserving water and providing a cool retreat from the warm climate of Gujarat.

The stepwell has pillared pavilions, flooded with diffused light in the afternoon, which were once places for resting or social interaction.





# MODHERA



The 11th century Sun Temple at Modhera is one of the greatest monuments of the Solanki Rajput period. The carvings on the sandstone walls of this temple are exceptionally detailed. The forecourt of the temple is dominated by an impressive stepped tank (Surya Kund), surrounded by miniature temples crowned by shikharas (towers).

The stunningly beautiful Modhera Sun Temple is one of the finest examples of Solanki Rajput architecture. Built in 1026-7 during the reign of Raja Bhimdev, this temple was laid out with astronomical precision to ensure the flow of sunlight through its entrance and hallways into the sanctum. The forecourt is dominated by a large stepped tank, lined with carved shrines. The temple, both inside and on the exterior, is lavishly embellished with exquisite carvings.





Shrines with extraordinary carvings are set on the steps of the tank at the Modhera Sun Temple.



The Modhera Sun Temple is an architectural showpiece. Exquisite carvings cover the exterior walls of the Sabha Mandapa (assembly hall), the Nritya Mandapa (dance hall) and the Garbagriha (sanctum).







The entrance hall of the Modhera Sun Temple is a pillared portico with beautiful carvings and delectable cusped arches.





Two intricately carved columns that stand in front of the Modhera Sun Temple were once part of an arched gateway (torana) leading into the temple.



### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 99km

Mehsana Railway Station 25km

**Accommodations:**

Water World Resort is one of the nearest star-rated hotels (About 40km)

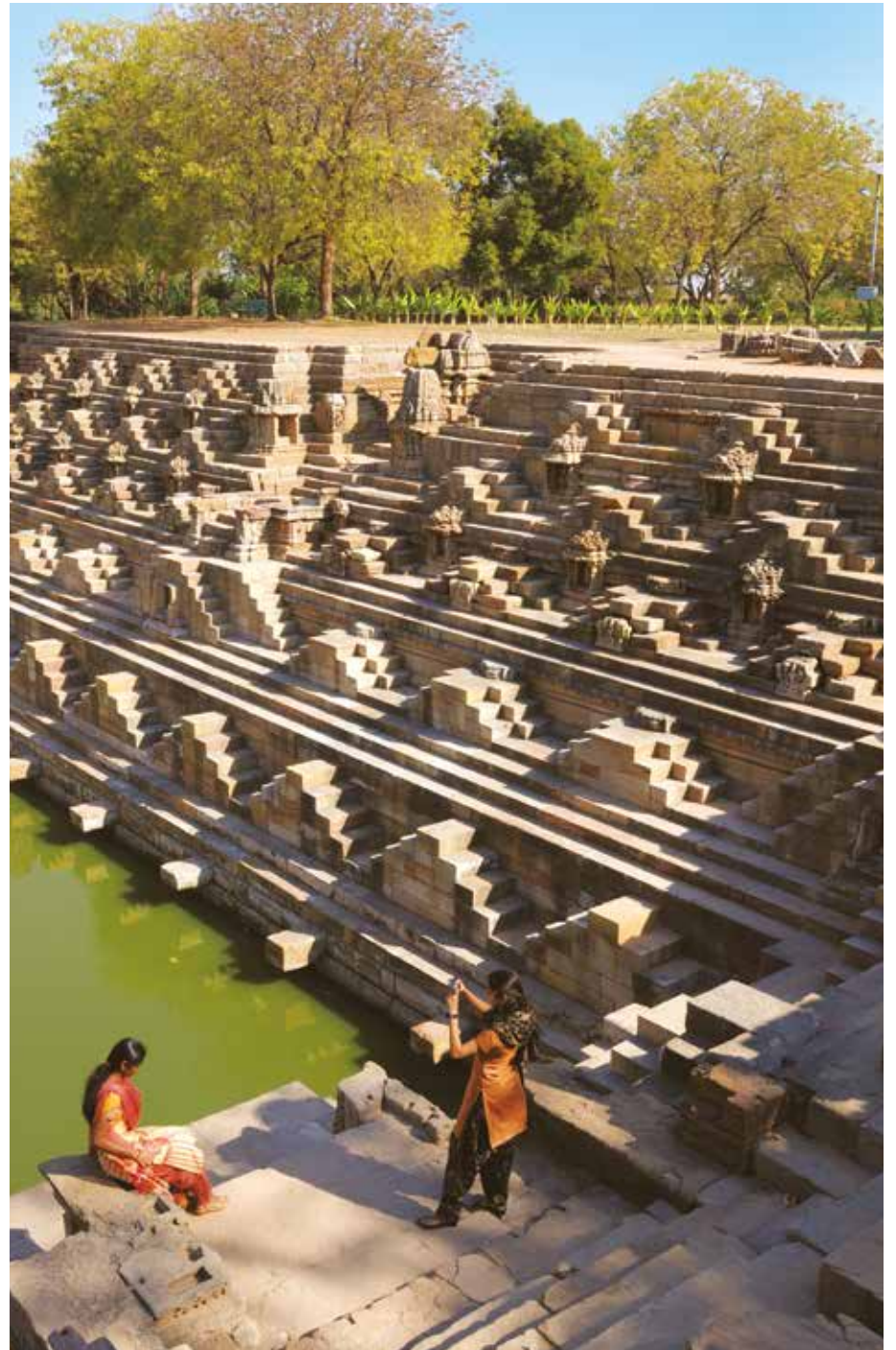
There are eco-resorts at Dasada, Zainabad and Bajana (About 45km)

**When to visit:**

Modhera is open daily throughout the year, from 9am-5pm. It is the venue for the Modhera Dance Festival in January when the beautifully illuminated monument is the backdrop for classical dances and other performing arts.



The Surya Kund has steps on all four sides leading down to the base of this huge stepped tank. Miniature shrines are set on the steps on every side of the tank. At the centre of each side is a cluster of shrines.





## PATAN



The Rani-ki-Vav is among Gujarat's greatest stepwells. A splendid work of 11th century Solanki Rajput architecture, this stepwell boasts hundreds of exquisitely carved sculptures.

Gujarat's capital from the 8th to the 15th century, Patan's monuments stand testimony to its medieval glory. The most extraordinary of Patan's monuments is the Rani-ki-Vav, one of the most impressive stepwells in India. Constructed by Rani Udaymati in the mid-11th century, this architectural jewel is replete with elaborately detailed sculptures. Patan's other medieval attractions include the Sahasra Linga Tank and a number of attractive Jain temple.

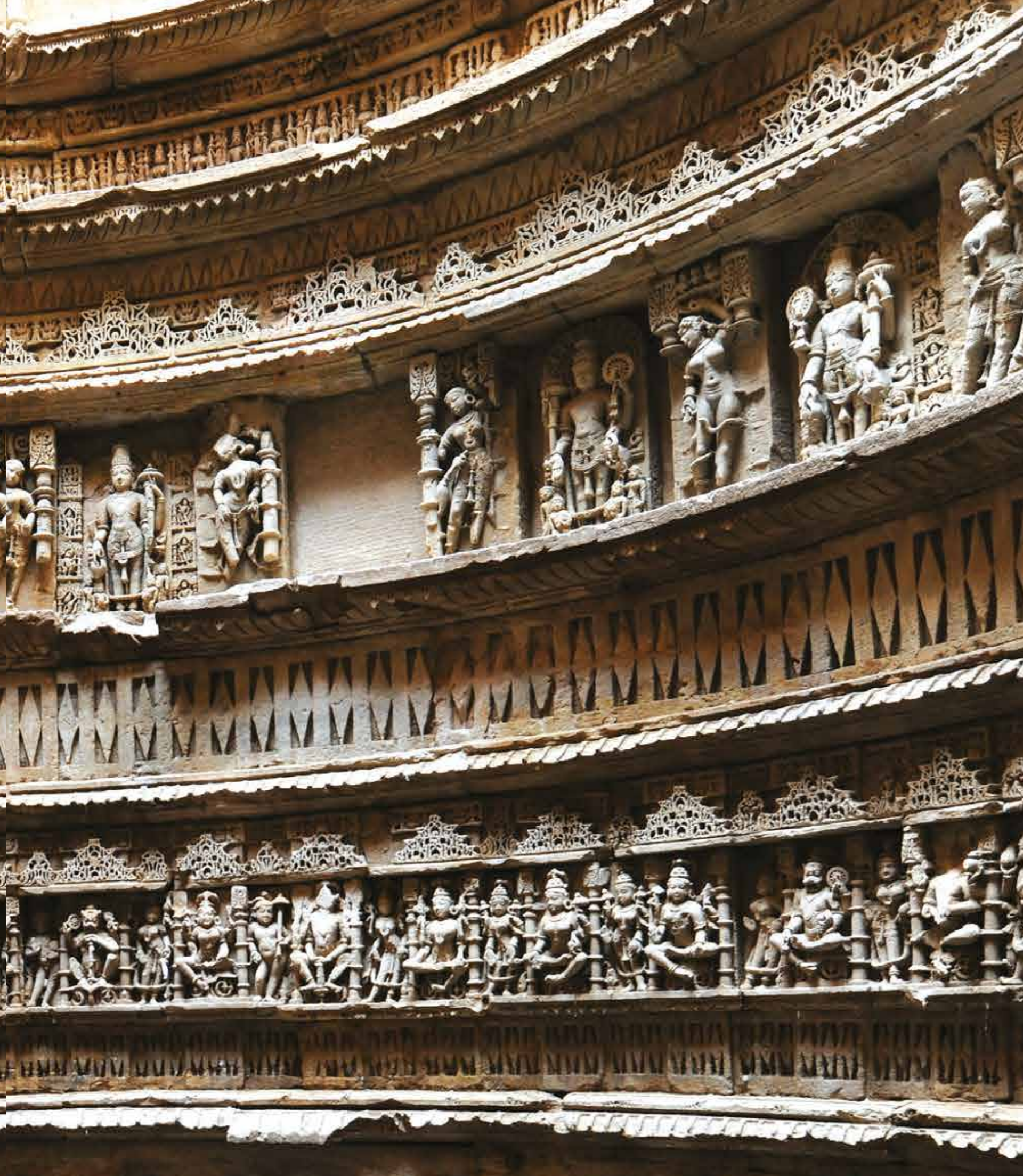


The pillars of the Rani-ki-Vav are well-sculpted.



Rani-ki-Vav's walls are ornamented with extraordinarily detailed sculpture. The beautiful reclining Vishnu near the well shaft is a stunning sculptural work.







A view of the Rani-ki-Vav shows covered pavilions along the stairway.





The walls of the Rani-ki-Vav are adorned with elaborately carved sculptures. Individual sculptures include extremely detailed images of dancing maidens and deities.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 125km

Mehsana Railway Station 52km

Palanpur Railway Station 58km

**Accommodations:**

There are hotels in Patan, Palanpur and Mehsana.

Balaram Palace Resort near Palanpur and Bhavani Villa at Danta are heritage hotels in 100km radius of Patan.

**When to visit:**

The stepwell is best visited between 9am and 5pm.



The pillars built to support the enormous structure of the Rani-ki-Vav are also finely carved.





## CHAMPANER



The 16th century Friday Mosque or Jami Masjid at Champaner is one of the greatest buildings of the Gujarat Sultanate. Its richly embellished exterior with a superbly proportioned dome, pillars, latticework and minarets, makes it one of finest Indo-Saracenic architectural works in India.

The Pavagadh-Champaner Archaeological Park, a UNESCO designated World Heritage Site, contains forts, mosques, temples, water bodies and other medieval buildings. The 16th century Jami Masjid, east of the Champaner citadel, is considered the high watermark of Indo-Saracenic architecture. It has a richly ornamented prayer hall, dissected by about two hundred pillars supporting a splendid carved roof raised in a series of domes. Ascend the Pavagadh hill to see the 11th century Laukulish temple which has some fine sculpture.



The magnificent entrance pavilion of the mosque at Champaner has fine latticework.



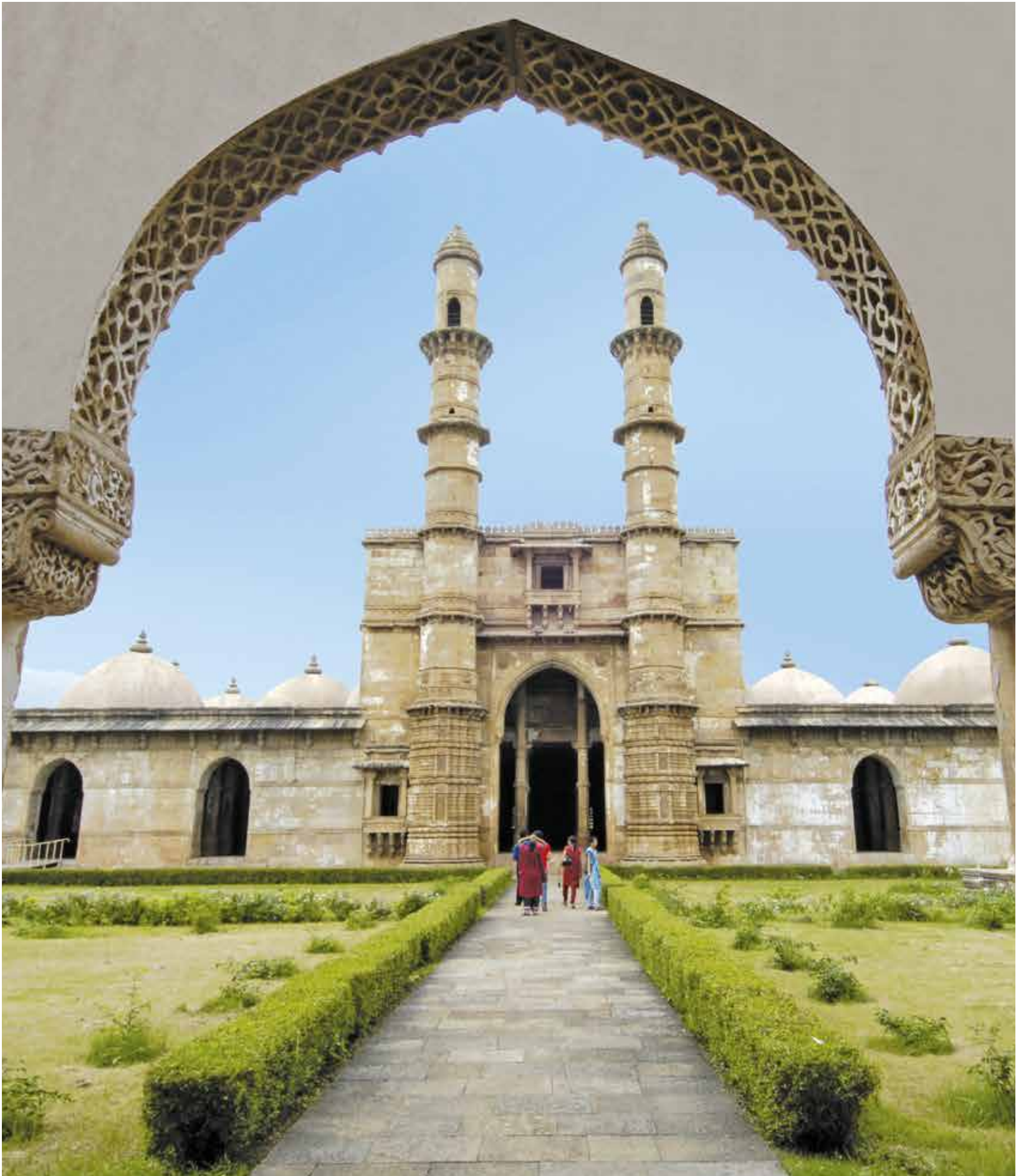
The span of arches called the Saat Kaman is an impressive part of the barracks of Champaner.







The superbly proportioned mosques of Champaner have slender minarets with ornate carvings.







Champaner's mosques have richly ornamented walls.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Vadodara Airport/Railway Station 47km

**Accommodations:**

Toran Hotel Champaner is located at the site.

Vadodara (47km) has a good choice of star-rated hotels

Jambughoda (25km) has a heritage hotel

**When to visit:**

Champaner and Pavagadh are open round the year. Pavagadh hill is scenically attractive during the July-September monsoon season. Pavagadh is the site for tribal fairs and Navratri festivities.



Champaner commands a view of the Pavagadh hills.





## AHMEDABAD



The medieval stepwell at Adalaj is an architectural showpiece. The pillars, beams and walls are adorned with fine carvings.

Ahmedabad, Gujarat's largest city, is known for its remarkable architecture. It has a fascinating walled city, founded in 1411 by Sultan Ahmed Shah, redolent with imposing mosques built in a provincial Indo-Saracenic style during the 15th and 16th century, old quarters called 'pols' which are superb examples of urban planning and exquisitely carved havelis. Just outside the old city are excellent examples of stepwell architecture at Asarva and Adalaj. Another noteworthy feature of Ahmedabad is the Sabarmati Ashram, one of the most moving memorials to Mahatma Gandhi. After independence, well-known architects like Le Corbusier, Luis Kahn, Charles Correa and B.V. Doshi have built some of their finest works in this city. The diversity of architecture in the city from medieval to modern works, together with the presence of the National Institute of Design and CEPT University, make Ahmedabad, India's Mecca for designers.



The stairway at Adalaj leads down to the cool depths of the stepwell, through a series of platforms raised on pillars.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs:**

Ahmedabad has an airport and a well-connected railway Station

**Accommodations:**

Ahmedabad offers a good choice of star-rated hotels. Ahmedabad also has heritage hotels like House of MG, Arts Reverie, Diwan's Bungalow and Corporate Suites.

**When to visit:**

Ahmedabad is an exciting destination during festivals like Navratri in August-September, Uttrayana in January and the Kankaria Carnival in December.



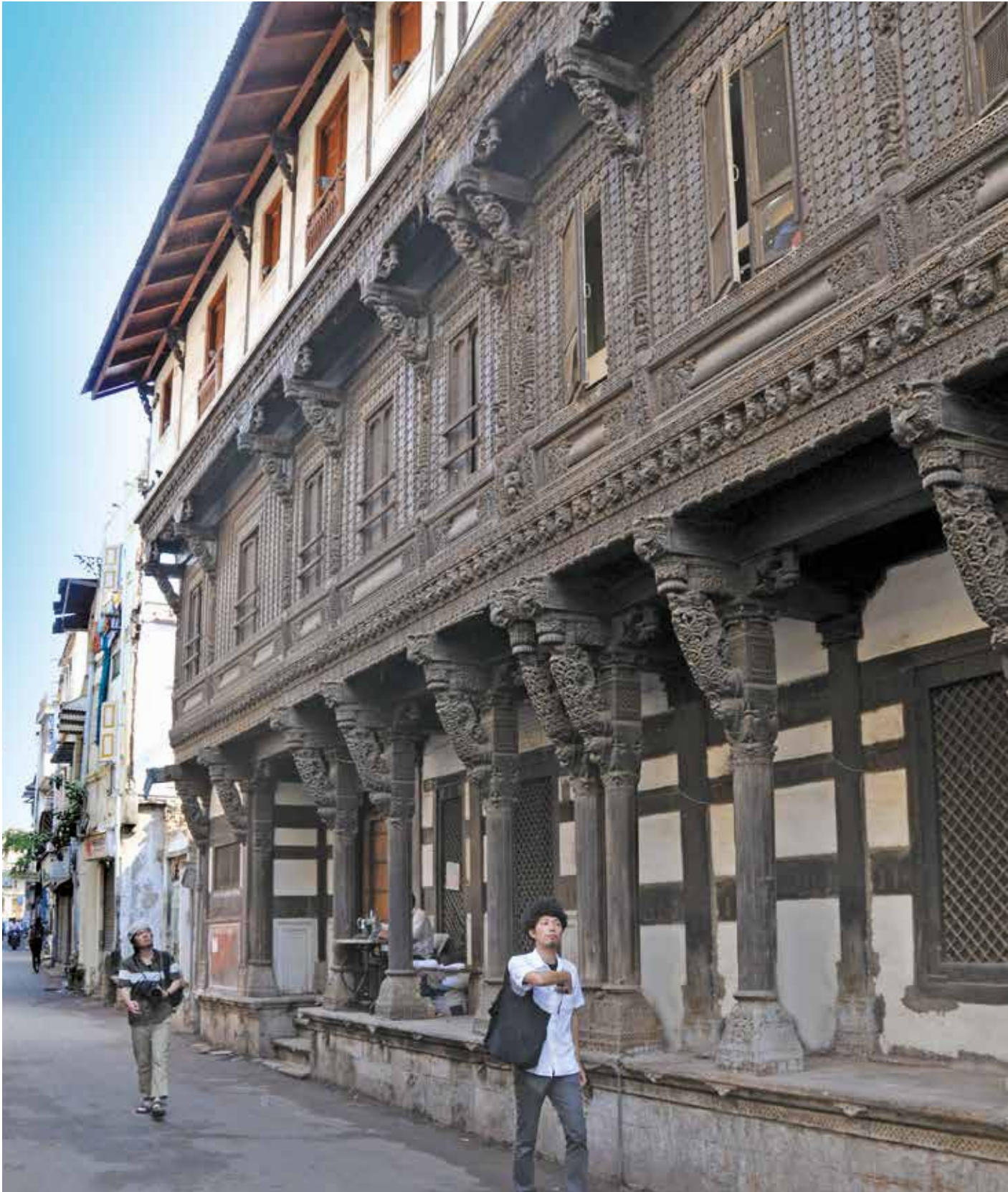
The 15th century Jama Masjid is one of Ahmedabad's largest mosques. The architectural beauty of this mosque is enhanced by the spacious marble paved courtyard in the forecourt, with a washing tank in the centre. The mosque has a superbly proportioned façade with three arches. The imposing central archway is flanked by pillars with bands of carvings.







Imposing residential houses called havelis can be seen along the narrow lanes of the old quarters called 'pols' in the walled city of Ahmedabad. The intricate wooden facades of these havelis are a unique architectural feature of Gujarat. The brackets, balconies and pillars of these wooden structures are exquisitely carved.

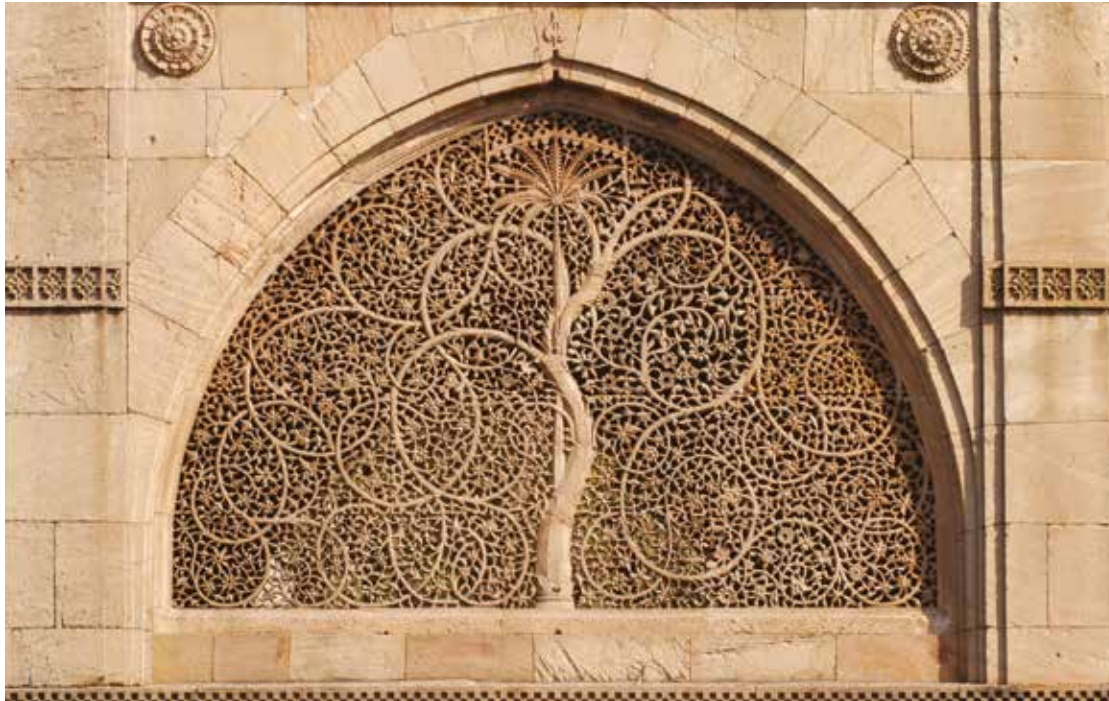




The Gandhi Ashram, also called Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati Ashram or Harijan Ashram, is one of Ahmedabad's most visited monuments. This is one of the most moving and poignant memorials of Mahatma Gandhi. From this ashram, he launched his movements for India's independence, self-reliance, self-governance and caste equality. The cottage called Hriday Kunj where he lived displays his worktable, spinning wheel and simple belongings. This complex has the Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya, a memorial museum designed by Charles Correa. This memorial museum is simple and uncluttered in keeping with the lifestyle of Mahatma Gandhi.



The Sidi Saiyed's Mosque is famous for its magnificent latticework screens. The screen (jali) depicting the Tree of Life is the most spectacular of the ten that line the walls of this 16th century mosque. Well-known as Sidi-Saiyed-ki-Jali, this screen is a symbol of Ahmedabad.





# STATUE OF UNITY



## A MONUMENT AS TALL AS ITS HERO

Architect of United India

World's Tallest Statue, 182 metres in Height.

The Statue of Unity, being the World's Tallest Statue, pays a fitting tribute to India's 'Iron Man', Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel who with his visionary statesmanship united 564 scattered and recalcitrant princely States to form a unified India. This inspirational colossus stands as a beacon to future generations and as the pride of India. The 182 metre Statue of Unity is situated at the Sadhu-Bet Island, approximately 3.5 km south of the Sardar Sarovar Dam at Kevadia between the Vindhya and Satpuda Ranges in the Narmada district of Gujarat.





**Zarvani Eco – Tourism Site:**  
 If you are looking for absolute tranquility and serenity in the midst of nature, then one of the best places to visit is Zaravani. The place offers all aspects of nature – from lush green trees to invigorating rivulets.



**Ekta Nursery:** This nursery serves dual purposes of serving as education cum demonstration centre for tourists and providing employment to local people. Ekta Nursery yields one million plants of Unity signifying the underlying theme of Unity pervading across Kevadia.



**Exceptional Attractions :**

Shrestha Bharat Bhavan | Museum & 3D Projection Mapping | Research Centre | Monument View Point | Tent City | Valley of Flowers | Zarvani Water Fall | Eco – Tourism Bus Tour | Ekta Nursery | River Rafting | Homestay at Kevadiya | Vishwa Van | Jungle Safari | Children Nutrition Park | Greening Of Kevadia | Cactus Garden | Butterfly Garden



## OTHER ATTRACTIONS

**Statue of Unity**

World's Tallest Statue, 182 ft. in Height.





**Cactus Garden: Home of Exotic Species of Cacti and Succulents Plants**  
The Cactus Garden is a unique botanical garden at the Statue of Unity site, created to exhibit a huge variety of Cacti, the true miracles of adaptation. The thought behind the development of the cactus garden is to provide an experience of the desert ecosystem in the midst of a landmass well entrenched in an aquatic surroundings.



**Butterfly Garden : Spreading the Joy of Butterflies to Everyone!**  
The Butterfly Garden at Valley of Flowers amidst the Vindhya and Satpura ranges, along the banks of Narmada, makes it an attractive spot to appreciate the assortment of these flying jewels. The garden harbours more than 80 species of butterflies.





Valley of Flower Spread  
across 230 hectares  
the valley of flowers is a treat  
to the eyes with flowers from  
around the world.



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distance)

Vadodara Airport/ Railway station - 90 kms.

Ahmedabad Airport/ Railway station - 200 Kms

Rajpipla Railway Station - 25 Kms

**Accommodation**

Tent City Narmada

There are Hotels in Rajpipla & Vadodara

**When to Visit:**

Tuesday to Sunday from 8:00 AM to 6:00 PM





# SEEMA DARSHAN



## SEEMA DARSHAN - NADABET

A Vision Beyond Boundaries

Seema Darshan was envisioned to be a firsthand experience for the tourists to witness the difficulties and challenges faced by every jawan, standing against all odds to protect his motherland. It was in December, 2016 when the Seema Darshan Programme was inaugurated at Nadabet in Sui village of Banaskantha district which shares international border with Pakistan. This became the grand launch of this unique initiative for tourism, taken up by Gujarat Tourism and PSE jointly. It was intended to be a platform, where the tourists (visitors) can experience closely the will to



The Camel show wherein the 'ship of the desert' are adorned with colourful attire combined with parades takes one through an experience never witnessed near the border.



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distance)  
Ahmedabad Airport/ Railway station - 203 kms  
Palanpur Railway station - 112 kms

**Accommodation:**

There are Hotels in Banaskatha

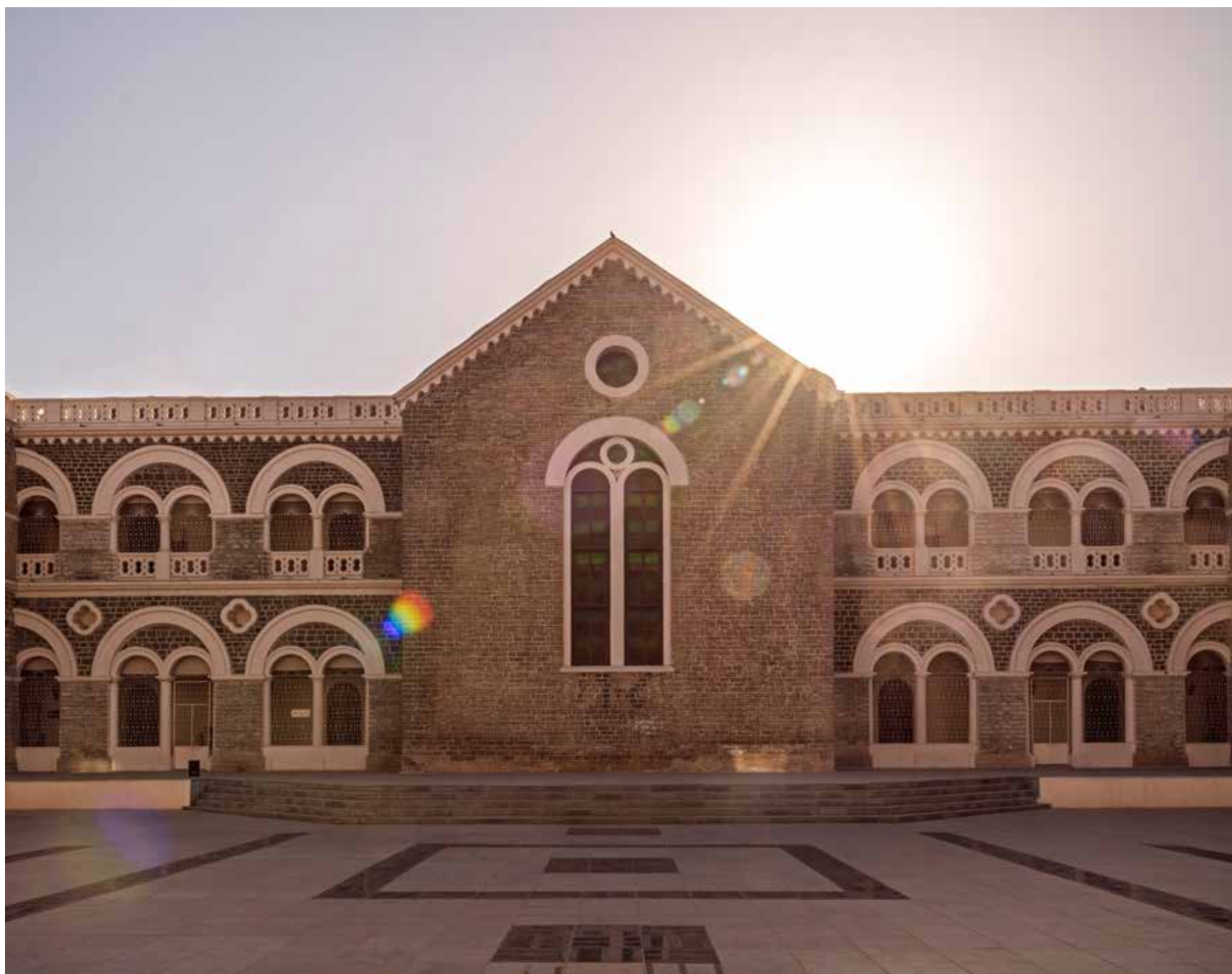
**When to Visit:**

Every Saturday & Sunday  
Zero Point at Morning 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM  
Retreat Ceremony at Evening 5:30 PM





# MAHATMA GANDHI MUSEUM



**GANDHI MUSEUM**  
Alfred High School

Mahatma Gandhi Museum, Rajkot was previously known as Mohandas Gandhi Vidhyalaya, Alfred High School and Kathiawar High School established on 17th October 1853 with 36 students. Gandhiji completed his graduation from Alfred High School (Kathiawar High School) in the year 1887. Out of 38 students who had passed the high school entrance examination, Gandhiji was one of only two students in his year of matriculate. Mahatma Gandhi Museum is a grand tribute to 'Father of The Nation' Mohandas "Mahatma" Gandhi.



# KABA GANDHI NO DELO



KABA GANDHI  
NO DELO

Originally the residence of Kaba or Karamachand Gandhi, Mahatma Gandhi's father, the museum displays and contains photographs, objects and the belongings of the letters. A Non-Government Organization runs classes in sewing and embroidery for young girls within the premises.



The whole memorial is designed with a vision to enable an experiential journey



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distance)  
Rajkot Airport/ Railway station-2.2 kms  
Ahmedabad Airport/ Railway station -206 kms

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Khirasara Palace  
There are Hotels in Rajkot

**When to Visit:**

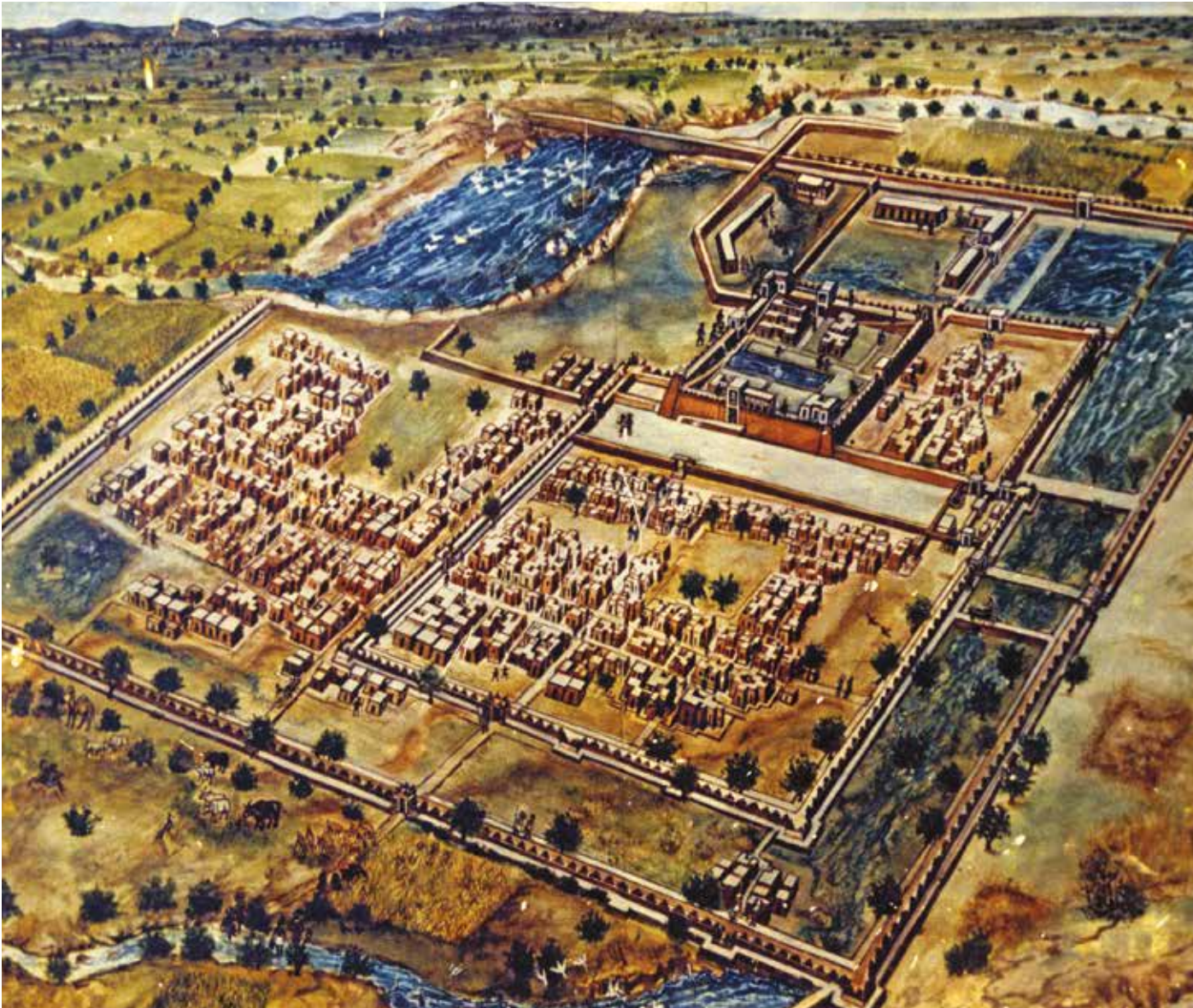
Everyday Between 9:00AM to 6:00 PM







# DHOLAVIRA



An illustration shows the layout of Dholavira, as envisaged by archaeologists. Thriving between 2500 and 1900BC, Dholavira contained a citadel, a middle town, a lower town, reservoirs, open spaces and stadia.

Dholavira, sited on Khadir Bet in the Great Rann of Kutch, has some of the most substantial remains of the Harappan Civilisation in India. The extensive remains reveal that this citadel was a remarkably well-planned city with wide roads, spacious dwellings, public spaces and sophisticated systems for harvesting and distributing water. The city was at its zenith from 2500 to 1900BC.



Dholavira has a number of circular structures. Some of them are believed to have been graves or memorials.



Most of the structures at Dholavira are  
built from stone.





The presence of reservoirs, drains and water distribution channels reflect that the Dholavira community had considerable knowledge of hydraulics.



Dholavira's citadel was constructed with smooth sun-dried brick and stone masonry.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Bhuj Airport 240km (via Rapar)

**Accommodations:**

Toran Hotel offers accommodation at Dholavira.

There is a good choice of hotels in Gandhidham and Bhuj.

**When to visit:**

Dholavira is best visited between October and March.

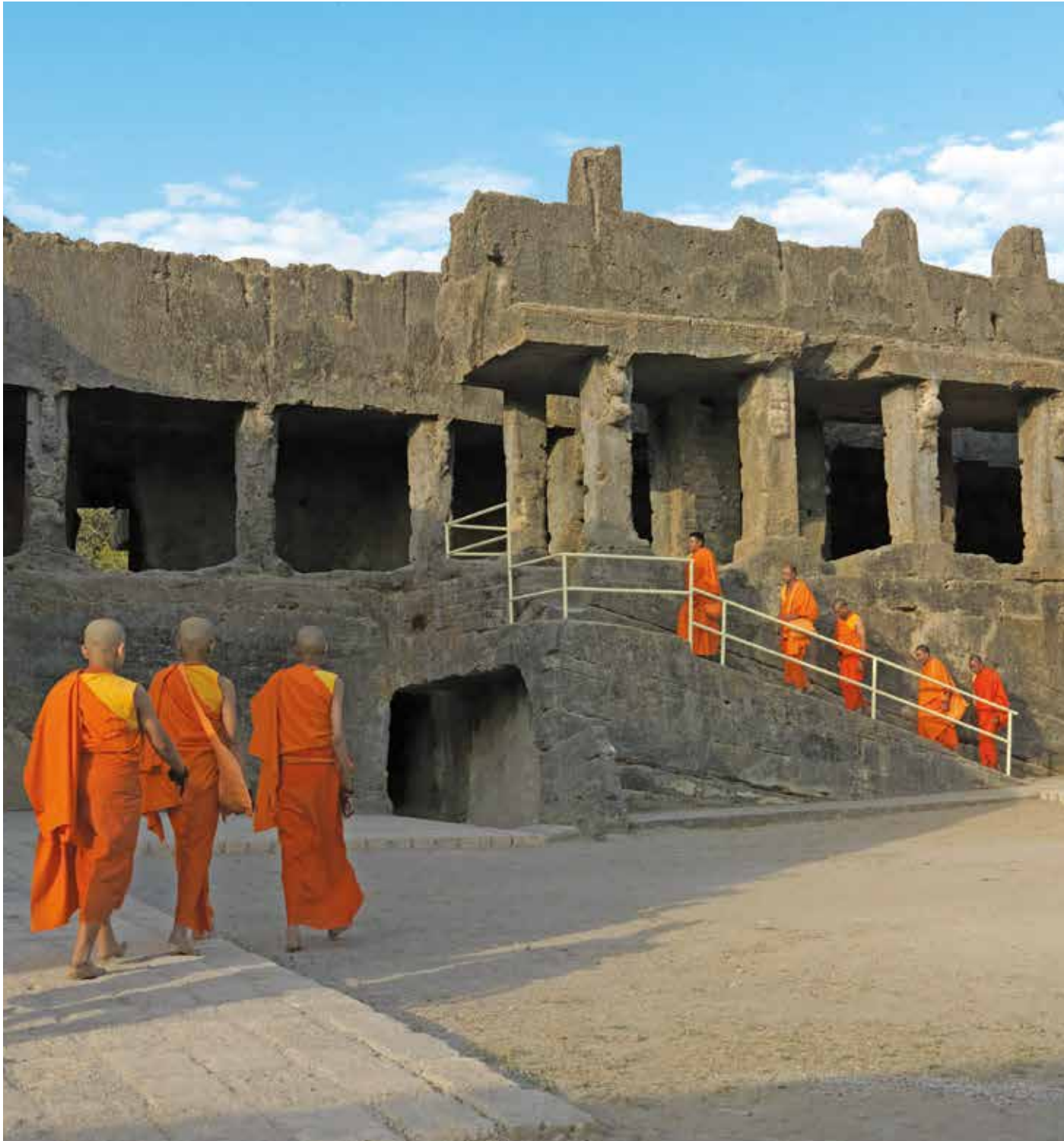


## JUNAGADH



The Maqbara at Junagadh is a complex of opulent 19th century mausoleums of the Nawabs (Islamic rulers) and their minister, Baha-ud-din. The mausoleums are fantastic structures with boldly embellished facades crowned by a multitude of bulbous domes.

Junagadh is one of the most historical living cities of Gujarat with representations of almost every period in the state's history from the third century BC Mauryan rock edicts to 20th century European-style buildings. Junagadh's main monumental complex, the Uparkot Fort contains ancient Buddhist monastic caves, 11th century stepwells and medieval buildings. After the fall of the Mughals in the 1700s, Junagadh became an independent state ruled by Nawabs. The Nawabs built flamboyant palaces, mausoleums and public buildings in eclectic architectural styles.



The Buddhist caves at Junagadh were monastic dwellings. Most of them were built in the 3rd-4th century AD.

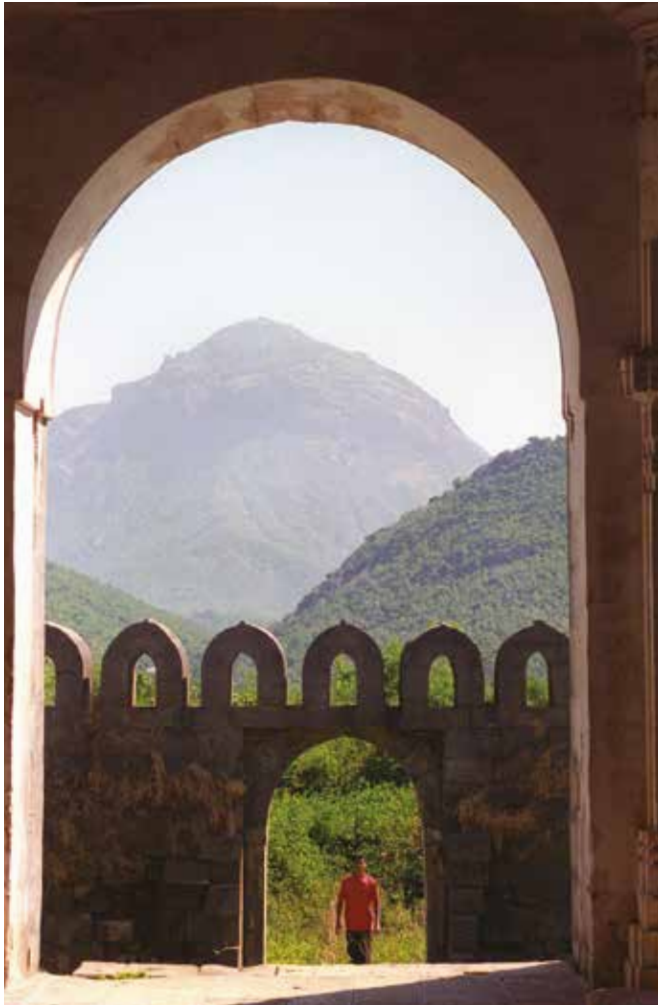


The mausoleum of Baha-ud-din is an outstanding tomb in Junagadh's Maqbara (Mausoleum complex). Built in a fusion of Indo-Islamic and Venetian-Gothic architectural styles, the mausoleum is flanked by tall minarets with spiral staircases.





View of Girnar hill from the historic Uparkot fort.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Junagadh has a railway station.

Rajkot Airport 108km

Porbandar Airport 117km

**Accommodations:**

Junagadh has a good choice of hotels.

Gondal (60km) has heritage hotels

Sasan Gir (60km) has deluxe wildlife resorts

**When to visit:**

Junagadh's monuments are open for visitors round the year but most of the museums are closed on Wednesdays, public holidays and second/fourth Saturday of every month. A fair is held during Shivratri (February-March) at nearby Bhavnath.



Medieval mosque in the Uparkot Fort of Junagadh.







## VADNAGAR



The medieval Hatkeshwar Temple at Vadnagar.

Vadnagar has a long history as a cultural centre. Archaeologists have unearthed extensive remains of a Buddhist complex that is believed to have been the huge learning centre mentioned by Chinese travellers in their seventh century AD writings. The most prominent landmark in Vadnagar is the Torana, a richly decorated 12th century gateway with an archway spanning two elaborate pillars. Vadnagar's Sharmista Talao is a Solanki-period water body that is still in use. Other architectural attractions include the carved Solanki-period gateways, medieval temples, stepwells and Naggar havelis.



Vadnagar has the Tana-Riri Samadhi, memorials to two sisters who were proficient singers. They are known for having cured Tansen from the burning effects of singing Raag Deepak in the Mughal Court. It is said that they immolated themselves in order to avoid refusing Emperor Akbar's invitation to join the Mughal court, which was against their tradition.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 104km

Mehsana Railway Station 30km

**Accommodations:**

There are hotels at Mehsana. Bhavani Villa is a heritage hotel at Danta, about 60km from Vadnagar.

**When to visit:**

The Tana Riti Folk Music Festival is held at Vadnagar in November.



During the Solanki Rajput period, toranas (gateways comprising a pair of pillars spanned by an arch) were built leading to temples. One of the finest and best preserved of these toranas stands at Vadnagar. The pillars of this torana bear beautiful carvings. The arch at the top has elaborate sculpture.





The walls of Vadnagar's Hatkeshwar temple are adorned with fine sculpture.



The Solanki Rajputs built water-retaining structures like Sharmista Talav and stepwells at Vadnagar in the 12th century as an answer to the water scarcity in this arid area.






## KUMBHARIA



The Kumbharia Jain complex was once an important Jain centre during the Solanki Rajput reign. Five Jain temples stand testimony to the cultural richness of this centre.

Situated near the temple town of Ambaji, Kumbharia's Jain temples are breathtaking in their sculptural ornamentation. Built between 1062 and 1134 AD, the five temples showcase the incredible craftsmanship and artistry of the marble carvers in the Solanki Rajput period. The marble carvings on the pillars and the ceilings are astounding.



 The mandapas of Kumbharia's Jain temples have a forest of carved columns leading to the main sanctum.



The domed ceilings of the Jain temples at Kumbharia feature some of the most intricate and artistic marble carvings in Gujarat.





At Kumbharia's Jain temples, mandapas are supported by carved columns connected by delectably sculpted wavy arches. The exquisite marblework is a testimony to the skills of the artisans who built the Jain temples of Gujarat.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 180km  
Abu Road Railway Station 24km  
Palanpur railway Station 60km

#### **Accommodations:**

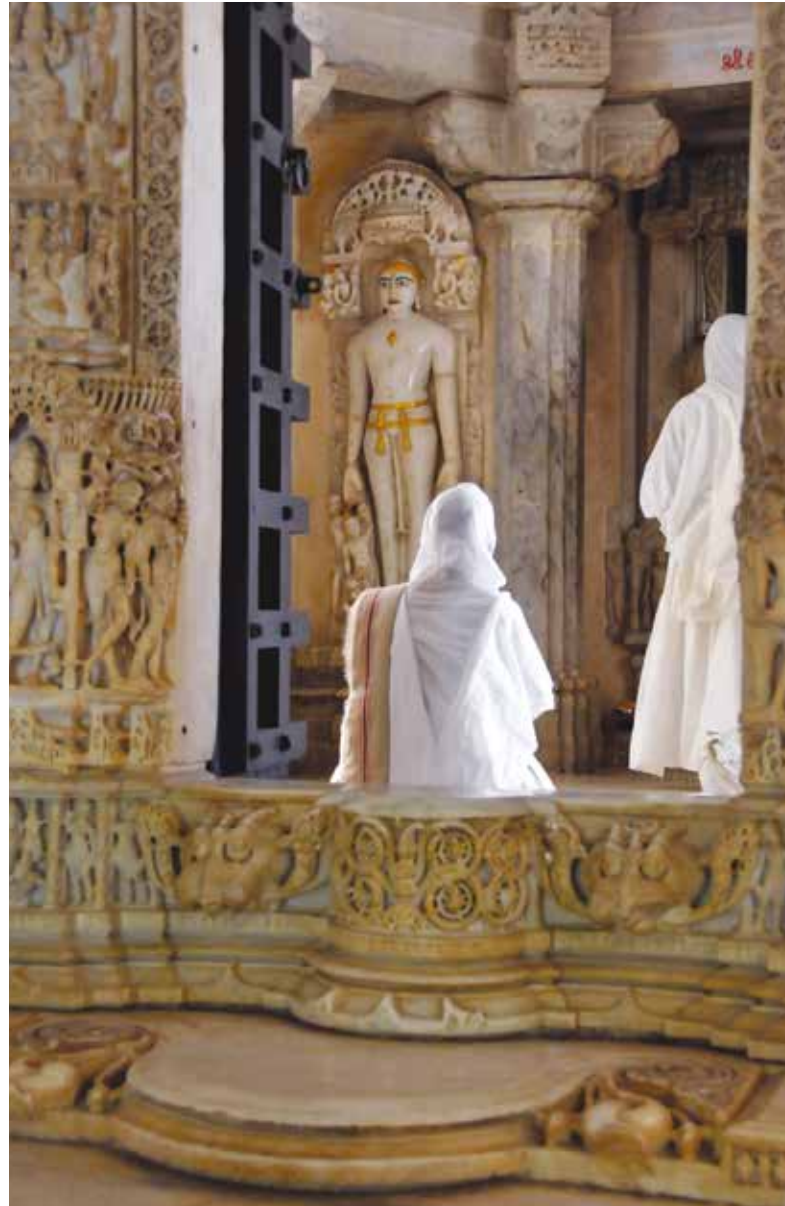
There are accommodations at Ambaji-Kumbharia. The heritage hotels of Balam, Poshina and Danta are located in 50km radius of Kumbharia.

#### **When to visit:**

Kumbharia can be visited round the year.



Jain nuns at Kumbharia.







# LOTHAL



The tank at Lothal is believed to have been a dry dockyard connected by channels to the Sabarmati River Estuary. Archaeological finds suggest that Lothal's community traded with distant lands like Egypt.

Lothal was a flourishing port near the confluence of the Bhugavo- Sabarmati River with the Gulf of Khambhat. Thriving between 2400 and 1900BC, Lothal was an extraordinarily well planned city with an upper town called acropolis, warehouses, a paved sanitary drainage network, wells, residential blocks, workshops and a large tank believed to have been a unique dry dock. The archaeological museum at Lothal has prize exhibits like microbead jewellery, copper figures, attractive pottery, weights and measures, navigation tools and sophisticated products. The museum exhibits are evidences of the scientifically advanced civilisation that thrived in Lothal more than 4000 years ago.



Excavations at Lothal have revealed the foundations of a well-planned city.



Blocks of houses and workshops in the lower town of Lothal.





Lothal is a superb example of town planning with paved drains and wide passages.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 82km

**Accommodations:**

Utelia offers heritage hotel accommodations near Lothal. Ahmedabad (82km) offers a large choice of star-rated hotels.

**When to visit:**

Lothal is open daily from dawn to dusk. The museum is closed on Friday.



The drainage and water distribution systems at Lothal reflect the maturity of urban planning achieved by the Harappans.





## SURAT



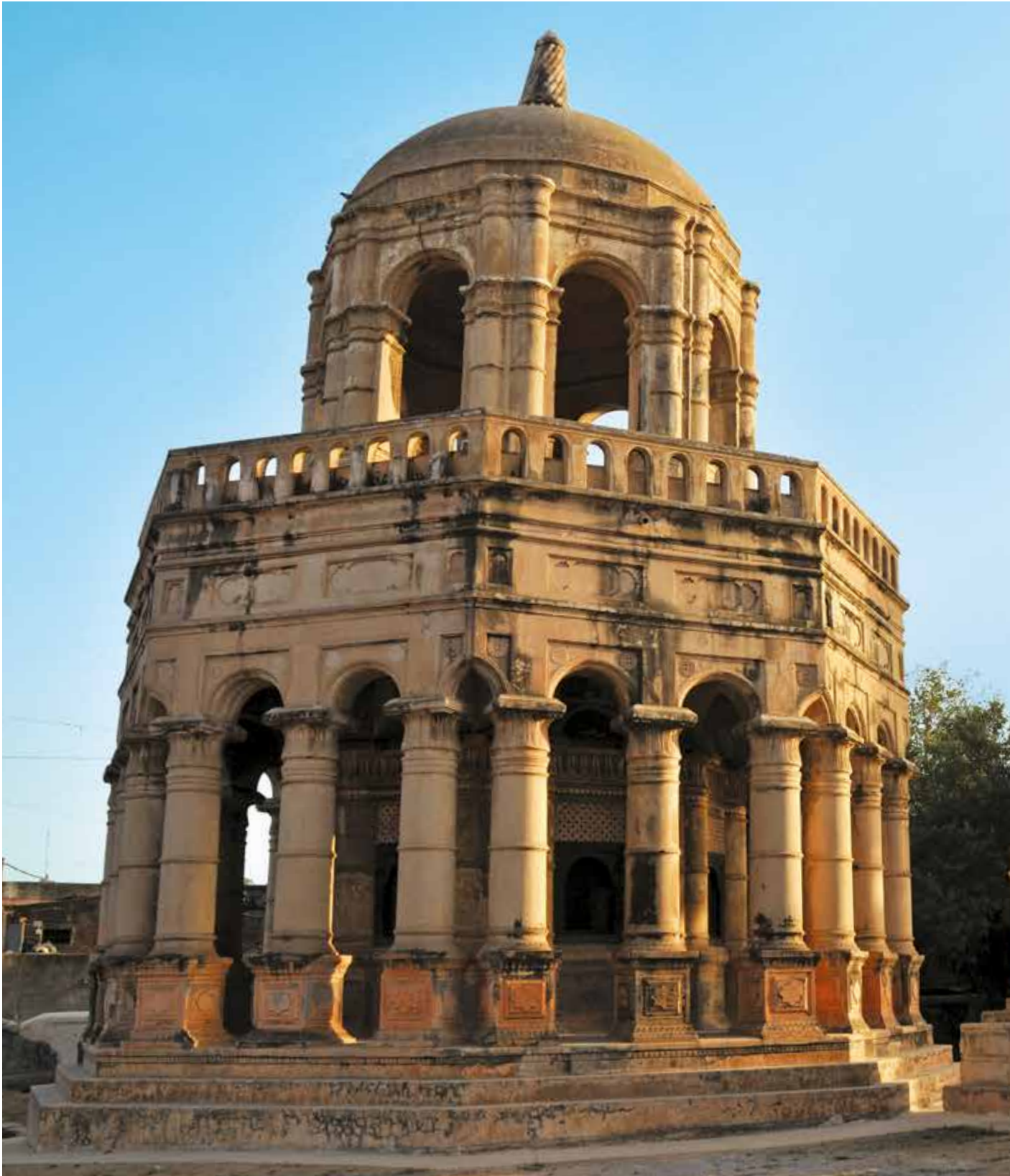
In 1608 Mughal Emperor Jehangir awarded the rights to the British to establish their factory in Surat. The English cemetery at Surat contains the ostentatious mausoleums of Gerald Aungier, Sir George Oxinden and other 17th century British officers.

Strategically situated on the Tapti River near its confluence with the Arabian Sea, Surat has a long history as a principal commercial centre of the Gujarat Sultanate in the 15th and 16th centuries, the Mughal Empire in the 16th and 17th century, and the British East India Company in the 17th and 18th centuries. As a result, Surat's British, Dutch and Armenian cemeteries hold some superb works of European architecture.



The Dutch cemetery contains impressive tombs like the mausoleum of Baron Adriaan van Reede.

  
An exquisite European  
mausoleum in Surat.





The Mughal Sarai at Surat now houses municipal offices. During the reign of the Mughal Emperors, Surat was an important port and an embarkation point for the Hajj pilgrimage.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs:**

Surat Airport/Railway station.

**Accommodation:**

Surat has star-rated hotels.

**When to visit:**

Most of Surat's monuments are open daily.



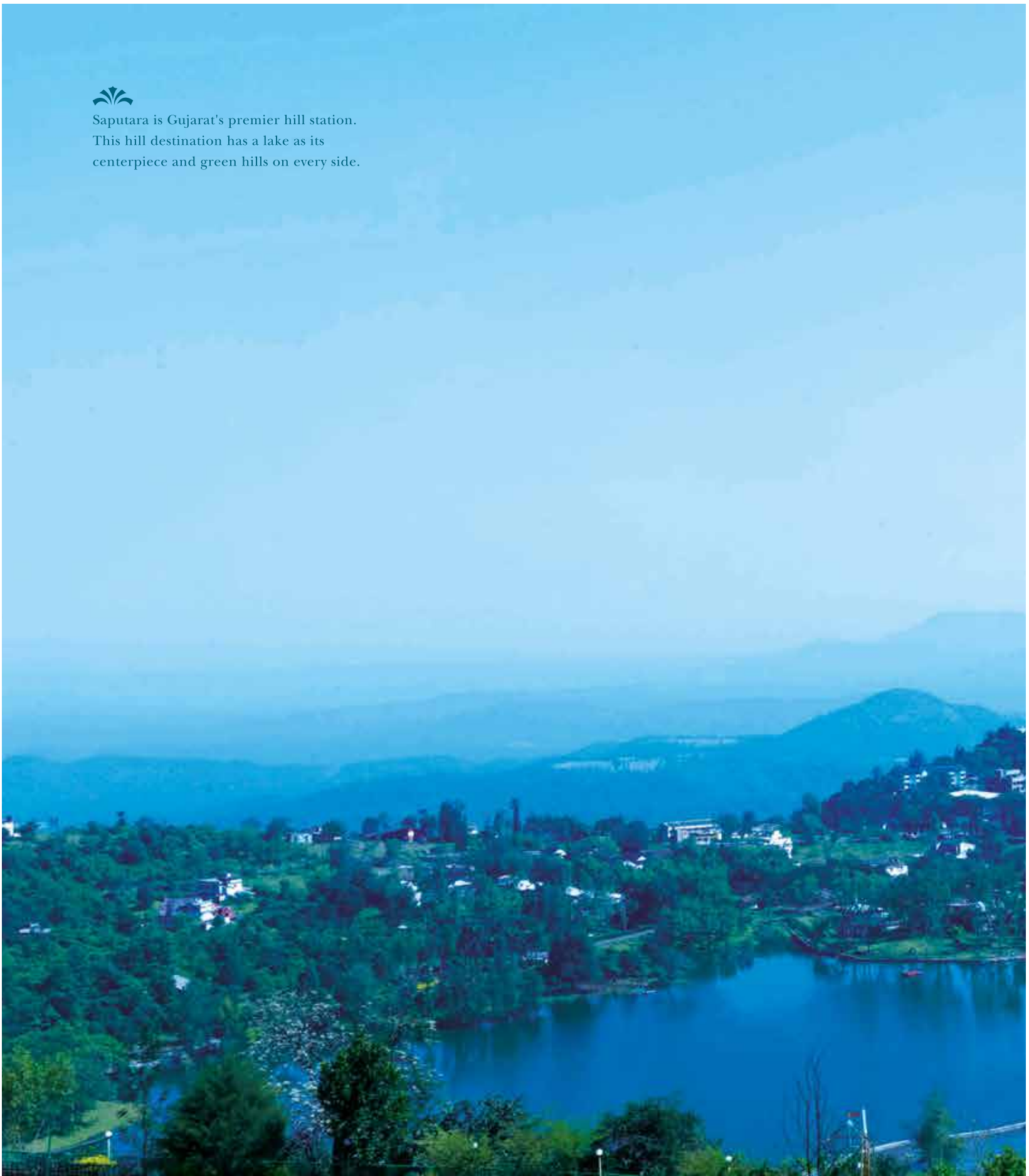
The interiors of a European tomb in Surat.





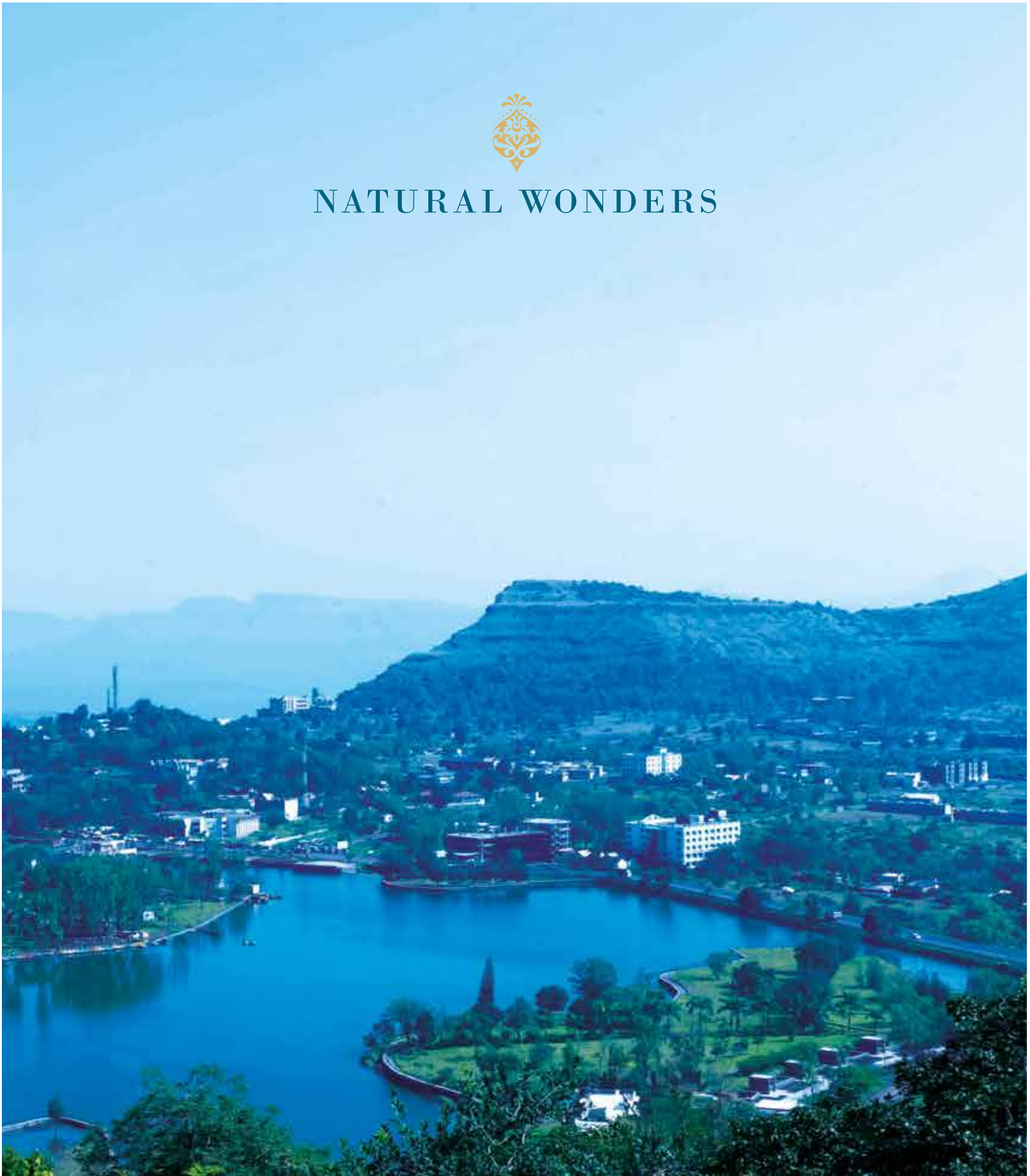


Saputara is Gujarat's premier hill station.  
This hill destination has a lake as its  
centerpiece and green hills on every side.





# NATURAL WONDERS





## INTRODUCTION

Nature has endowed Gujarat with an incredible diversity of ecosystems, from the stark desert of Kutch in the northwest to the moist forests of Dang in the southeast. This topographical diversity supports a rich variety of wildlife, including the Asiatic lion and Indian wild ass that are not seen elsewhere, globally-threatened birds and a rich marine life.

Along the northern boundary of Gujarat, the Great Rann of Kutch is a geologically distinctive saline desert wilderness, which was once an arm of the Arabian Sea and Indus delta. The Kutch Desert Sanctuary protects the wildlife in this salt desert, including the huge breeding colony of flamingos, called the Flamingo City and seasonal wetlands rich in birds. Adjacent to the Great Rann of Kutch, the scrubby grasslands of Banni, Naliya and Narayan Sarovar host many endangered mammals, birds and reptiles. The steppe-type ecosystem of Kutch provides habitat for species like Indian wolf, striped hyena, Asiatic wild cats, chinkara (Indian gazelle), endangered vultures and bustards, and vulnerable birds like white-naped tit, imperial eagle and greater spotted eagle. Kutch is also one of the few places in the world where specialty birdwatchers are likely to see grey hypocolius, a cryptically coloured and elusive bird. In years of good rain, the lakes of Kutch offer opportunities to get close views of waterfowl.

The Little Rann of Kutch has a similar geological history to the Great Rann. It has been declared a Wild Ass Sanctuary, protecting the remaining population of Indian wild ass which is now concentrated in Kutch, Surendranagar, Mehsana and other districts of Gujarat. The Little Rann is a promising area for birdwatchers looking to spot greater hoopoe lark and other Saharo-Sindian Desert specialties. The wetlands in and around the Wild Ass Sanctuary are gathering places for vast flocks of flamingos, cranes, pelicans, ducks and other waterfowl.

Kutch is separated from Kathiawad (Saurashtra), by the Gulf of Kutch. Along the southern coast of this gulf, a cluster of islands comprises India's first Marine Sanctuary and National Park. This marine nature reserve is rich in marine invertebrate, fish, dolphins, sea turtles and coastal birds. A visit to this marine reserve can be combined with important bird areas like Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary.

The Kathiawad Peninsula is an arid area rich in wildlife. Close to the heart of this peninsula, the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the last natural abode of the Asiatic lion. Along the eastern coast of the peninsula, Velavadar National Park is one of the few natural grasslands in India to be awarded national park status. Here, you can see one of India's largest concentrations of the blackbuck or Indian antelope. This is one of the top sites in India for wolf and hyena sightings, and also an important bird area. Velavadar has one of the world's largest winter populations of harrier. A visitor could be rewarded by the sight of a thousand of these light-bodied hawks roosting in the grasslands on a winter evening.

Along the eastern frontiers of Gujarat lie hilly wildernesses that are home to sloth bear, leopard and flying squirrel. Gujarat's main rivers, Narmada, Mahi, Tapi and Sabarmati flow from the hills towards the Gulf of Khambhat. The central and eastern districts of the state also enjoy considerable paleontological importance, with prehistoric rock art sites and fossil finds. The fossil park near Balasinor has yielded a rich cache of dinosaur fossils.

At the southeastern end of Gujarat, the hill station of Saputara makes an ideal base to explore scenic points, waterfalls, eco-camps, the Vansda National Park and the Purna Sanctuary in the Sahyadri hills of the Tapi and Dang districts.



The Velavadar National Park is one of the best reserves for blackbuck, an antelope native to the Indian subcontinent. This elegant antelope is one of the world's swiftest animals, capable of achieving high speeds in the open grasslands of Velavadar.





## GIR NATIONAL PARK



The Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the remaining protected habitat of the Asiatic lion. According to the 2010 census, there are over 411 lions in the Gir wildlife reserve and its environs.

The 1413 sq km Gir wildlife reserve is a tapestry of deciduous forests, evergreen flora, scrublands, grasslands and water bodies. The star attraction of the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is the Asiatic lion, which is endemic to this region. During pleasant drives in the hill tracts of Gir, tourists can also hope to see leopard, sambar, spotted deer, wild boar, blue bull, Indian gazelle and the chowsingha, the world's only four-horned antelope.



The Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary has a thriving population of the leopard. With a high density of both lion and leopard, Gir is one of the few wildlife reserves in India where visitors are extremely likely to see a big cat over a three or four day stay.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Veraval/Somnath Railway Station 40km

Rajkot Airport 164km

**Accommodations:**

Sasan has a good choice of hotels, resorts and wildlife camps.

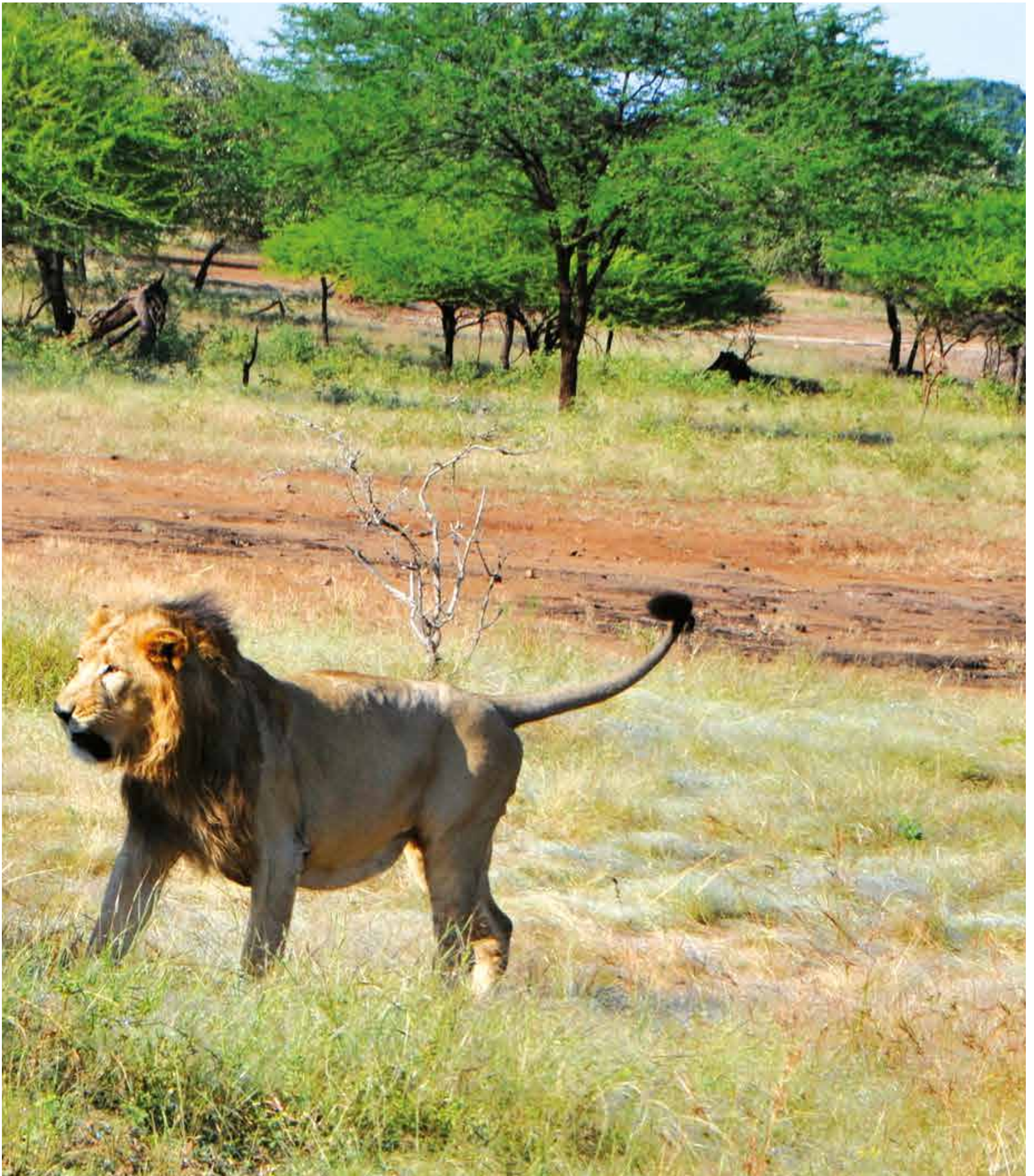
**When to visit:**

The Gir Wildlife Sanctuary is open for visitors from mid-October to mid-June.



The Gir Interpretation Zone offers opportunities for close views of lions.









The yellow-footed green pigeon frequents fruiting trees in Gujarat. It is often seen in the Gir forest, which is remarkably rich in birdlife.





While driving through the Gir Wildlife Sanctuary tourists often get glimpses of the social behavior of lionesses with their cubs.



The chital or spotted deer is commonly seen in the Gir wildlife sanctuary. The sizable population of deer and antelope supports the density of lion, leopard and other carnivores in the Gir wildlife reserve.





## GREAT RANN OF KUTCH



The Great Rann of Kutch is one of the world's largest salt deserts. Colourfully dressed pastoral people breed camels as a means of transportation in the marshy desert wilderness of Kutch.

The Great Rann of Kutch is one of the world's largest salt deserts. Once an arm of the Arabian Sea, the Rann of Kutch is now a seasonal marsh during the monsoon months (when it plays host to the Flamingo City) and a salt desert for the rest of the year. This dazzling white desert is a unique spectacle in the winter months, especially on a full moon night when the salt covered plains shimmer in the white light.



The roundhouses called bhungas are the traditional dwellings of the people living in villages near the Great Rann of Kutch. With thick walls and a conical thatched roof, the bhunga is superbly designed for the hot, arid climate of Kutch.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Bhuj Airport/Railway Station 80km (via Dhordo)

**Accommodations:**  
Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Ltd's Toran resort at Dhordo.

**When to visit:**  
The Rann Utsav is organized in December-January, and includes moonlit events in the white desert.



Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited creates a tent city for tourists attending the Rann Utsav. From this tented site, tourists are taken on excursions to see the white desert in the moonlight.







Tourists can enjoy a camel ride in Kutch during the winter season.





The white desert of Kutch is becoming a key tourist attraction of Gujarat.



The hills of Kala Dungar offer panoramic views of the Great Rann of Kutch.







# SAPUTARA



Tourists enjoy the panoramic views from Saputara.

Saputara is Gujarat's premier hill station, with a lake as its centerpiece and wooded hills on all sides. This hill destination makes an ideal base to explore the scenic and cultural attractions of the Dang district, which has a number of waterfalls, forest tracts, wildlife reserves, religious places and picturesque tribal villages. During the monsoon, Saputara is extremely beautiful when the forests are lush, orchids bloom and the water falls are at their most impressive.



The spectacular waterfalls of the Dang district are most impressive during and immediately after the monsoon.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Surat Airport/Railway Station 173km

Valsad Railway Station 129km

Vapi Railway Station 142km

**Accommodation:**

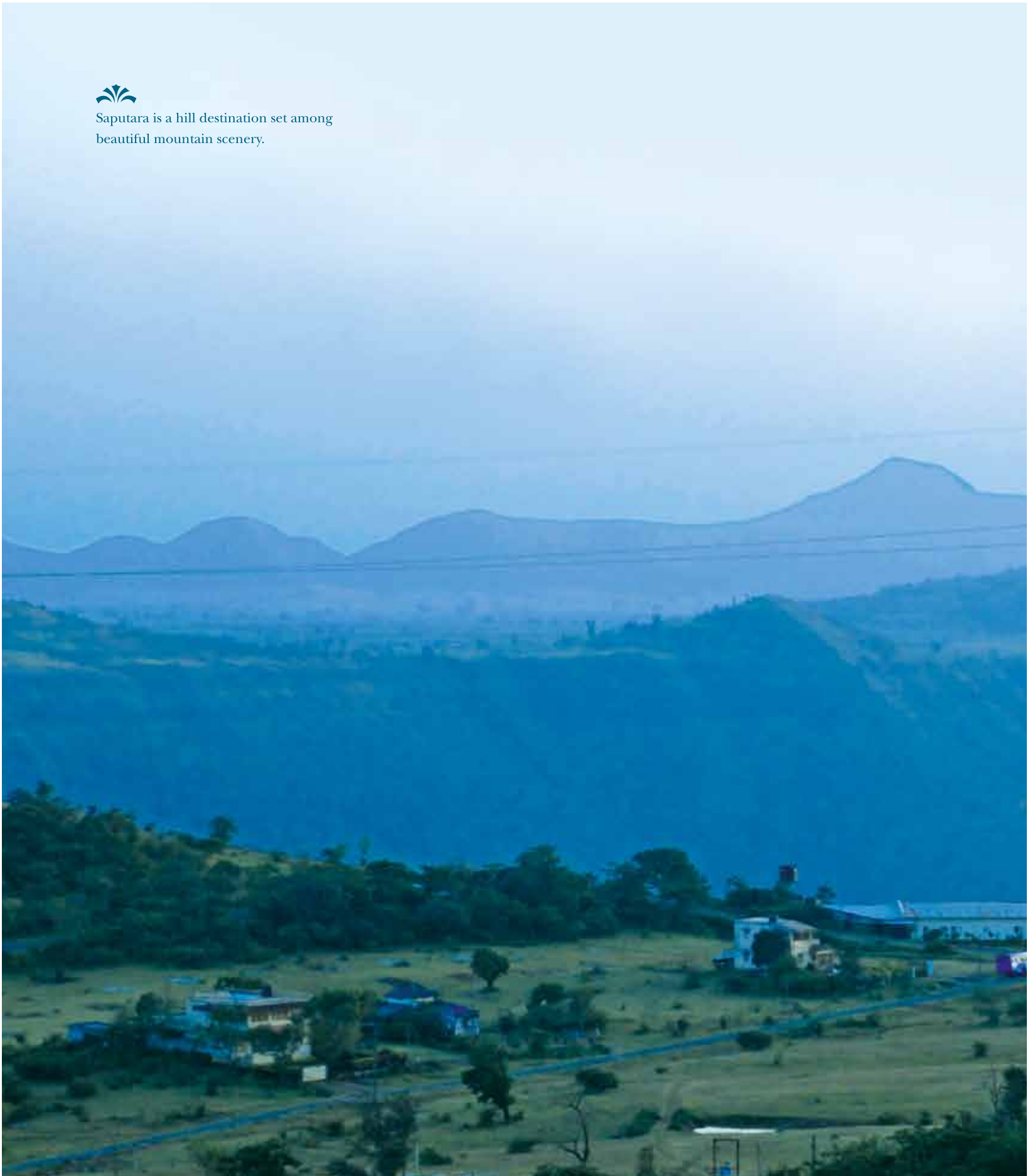
Saputara has a good choice of hotels including Toran Hotel.

**When to visit:**

Saputara is an excellent destination in almost any month of the year. The Dang Durbar is a tribal event in March.



Saputara is a hill destination set among beautiful mountain scenery.







Machaans offer a good view of life among the canopies of trees in and around Saputara.





Saputara is an ideal base to explore tribal villages of the Dang district.



Saputara's lake is a recreational hub for tourists.





## LITTLE RANN OF KUTCH



The Indian wild ass (*Equus hemionus khur*) was formerly widespread but its range is now limited to the Rann of Kutch and its surroundings. The Wild Ass Sanctuary has been notified to protect this endangered species in the Little Rann of Kutch.

The Little Rann of Kutch is the home of the Asiatic wild ass, an endangered species. Notified as an Asiatic Wild Ass Sanctuary, the Little Rann is an extensive tract of salt desert, marshland and dry scrub-and-grassland areas. Other interesting mammals seen here are the Indian gazelle, the Indian wolf, desert and Indian foxes, and lesser wild cats. The Little Rann has a rich birdlife that ranges from Indo-Saharan desert specialties to wetland birds. The magnificently coloured lesser flamingo breeds in the sanctuary during the monsoon period.



The Little Rann of Kutch is one of the few places in Asia where the lesser flamingo is breeding regularly. Graceful and majestic birds, the lesser and greater flamingo are seen in good numbers at the wetlands in and around the Wild Ass Sanctuary.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

##### **Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 112km (Bajana/Jhinjwada entrance)

Viramgam Railway Station 45km (Bajana/Jhinjwada entrance)

Dhrangadhra Railway Station (Dhrangadhra town is the Wild Ass Sanctuary headquarters)

##### **Accommodation:**

There are eco-resorts at Dasada, Bajana and Zainabad near the Wild Ass Sanctuary.

##### **When to visit:**

The Wild Ass Sanctuary is best visited between October and March when the climate is pleasant and large flocks of waterfowl can be seen at the sanctuary's wetlands.





The short-eared owl visits the open desert and grasslands of the Wild Ass Sanctuary during the winter months.





The sarus crane is one of the tallest flying birds in the world. In Gujarat where it is traditionally revered, this crane is often seen in proximity to villages. This pair was photographed at a lake near Dasada.



The white footed red fox, also called the desert fox, breeds in the Little Rann of Kutch.





## VELAVADAR NATIONAL PARK



The blackbuck is known for its speed. Visitors to Velavadar National Park can see blackbucks leaping, bounding and running across the open country of this wildlife reserve.

Velavadar National Park is a hidden gem. Covering a comparatively small area of about 34 sq km, Velavadar is one of the world's best places to watch the blackbuck, an elegant Indian antelope. This national park is also among the few places where the Indian wolf is proliferating in India and one of the top breeding sites for lesser florican. For birdwatchers, Velavadar is an excellent area to watch Stolzka's bushchat, saras crane and other grassland birds. In winter, Velavadar's grasslands play host to one of the world's largest harrier roosts. The sight of a thousand harrier hawks flying towards the Velavadar grasslands in the evening for their roost is one of the great spectacles of the natural world.



The striped hyena is a nocturnal animal but diurnal sightings are possible in the Velavadar National Park.







Eurasian cranes are winter visitors to the  
Velavadar National Park.





The Velavadar National Park rates among India's best blackbuck habitats.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Bhavnagar Airport/Railway Station 65km

**Accommodation:**

The Blackbuck Lodge is an upmarket resort at Velavadar.  
The forest department also has accommodation facilities in the national park.

**When to visit:**

The Velavadar National Park is open from mid-October to mid-June. The national park is closed during the rains but the surrounding areas can yield good birdlife including endangered species like the lesser florican that breed here in the monsoon months.



The nilgai or blue bull is India's largest antelope.







## NALSAROVAR BIRD SANCTUARY



The best way to observe birds at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary is to take a boat ride.

The Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary comprises one of Gujarat's largest freshwater lakes. This lake covers an area of over 100 sq km and is dotted with islands. The shallow lake with a profusion of aquatic vegetation that supports a variety of fish is one of India's Important Bird Areas. This lake attracts large congregations of water birds in winter. Country boats poled and rowed by local communities take tourists close to flocks of flamingos, pelicans, storks, cranes and other birds.

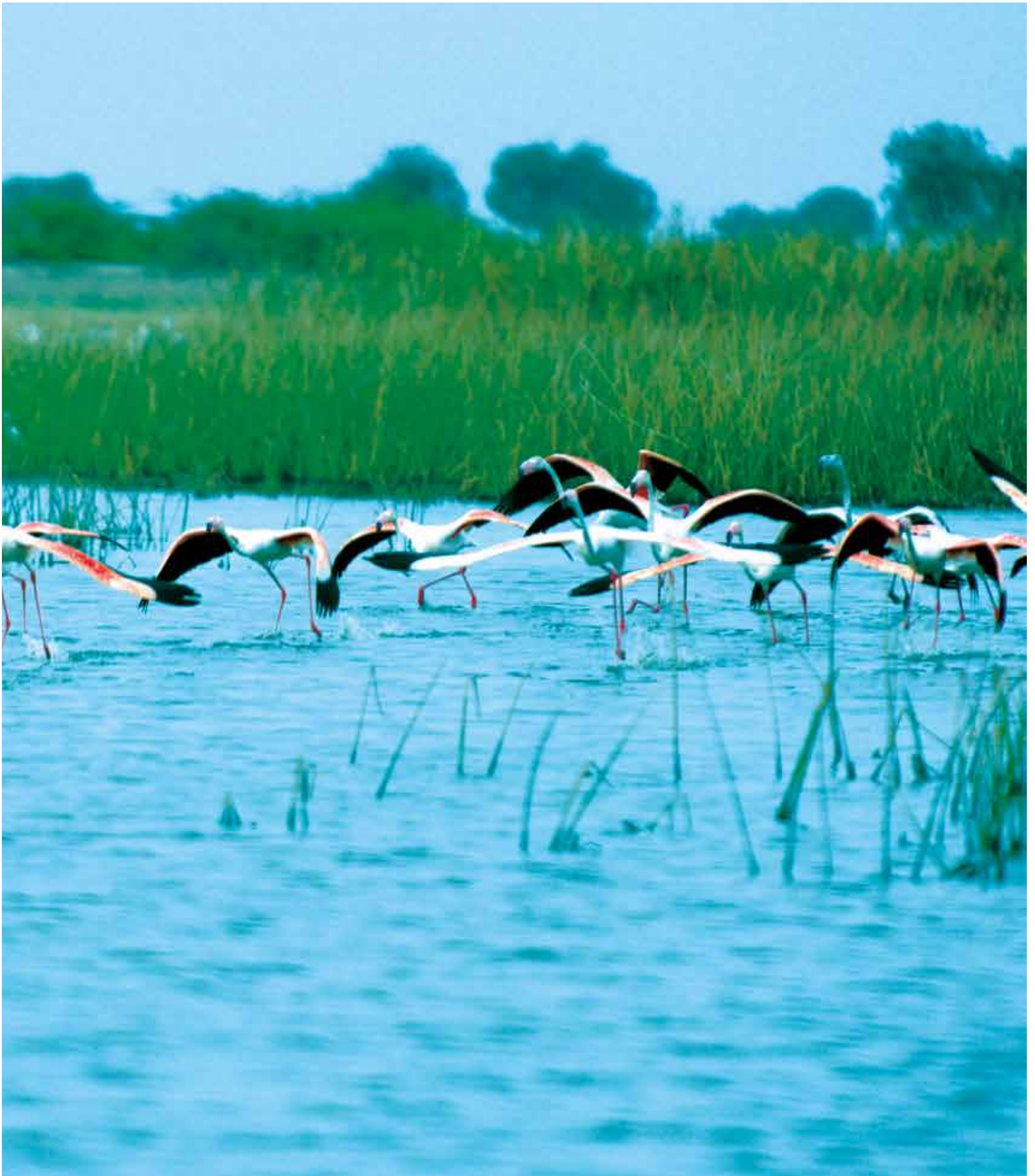


A flock of painted storks at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary.



Flocks of flamingos can be seen at the bird sanctuaries of Gujarat.







A boat ride at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary is a delightful experience.





A purple heron at Nalsarovar Bird Sanctuary



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 60km

**Accommodations:**  
Ahmedabad (60km) has an excellent choice of star-rated hotels.  
There are resorts and golf clubs in 40km radius of Nalsarovar.

**When to visit:**  
A large number of migratory birds gather at Nalsarovar lake in winter (October to March).



Flamingos are frequently seen at Gujarat's wetlands like the Nalsarovar and Thol Bird Sanctuaries near Ahmedabad.





## POLO FORESTS AND RUINS



The Polo forests are located near Vijaynagar in North Gujarat. Within these forests are ruins of medieval temples and other monuments of historic and architectural importance. Most of them were built in the 16th century.

The Polo forests near Vijaynagar are inhabited by sloth bear, leopard, flying squirrel and other wildlife. There are many ficus trees, where grey hornbill, barbet and other birds can be seen feeding on figs. While driving or trekking in Polo, a tourist can see the remains of architecturally-interesting 16th century Jain and Hindu temples.



Driving between Idar and Vijaynagar, a visitor can enjoy the serene landscapes of forested hills and rural scenes.





Deep in the Polo forests are remains of beautiful Hindu and Jain temples. Though the dome is broken, the open mandapa of the 16th century Lakhena Jain temple at Abhapur is architecturally interesting with delectable carvings.





The Polo forests contain many old banyan trees. After losing Udaipur to Akbar's forces, Maharana Pratap retreated to these hilly wildernesses from where he continued his struggle to free Mewar from the Mughal Empire.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 145km (via Idar)  
Himmatnagar Railway Station 60km

**Accommodations:**  
Vijay Villas is a heritage hotel in Vijaynagar.

**When to visit:**  
The Polo jungles are worth visiting at any time of the year.



The Polo temple ruins are in beautiful jungle settings.





## NARMADA



A spectacular view of the Sardar Sarovar Dam.

The Narmada, one of India's largest rivers, flows through Gujarat before draining into the Arabian Sea. A sacred river, it has many holy places along its course. Views of this river can be enjoyed when visiting the Sardar Sarovar Dam, where you can also spot crocodiles and waterfowl.



The Narmada in the monsoon.



The Narmada is one of the longest rivers that flow entirely through India.  
The ghats on the Narmada attract a large number of religious and recreational tourists, who take boat rides.





The Narmada is one of the five holiest rivers for Hindus. It is believed that a dip in any of these five rivers washes one's sins away. There are many temples and ashrams along the shores of the Narmada.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Vadodara Airport/Railway Station 55km (Chanod)

Bharuch Railway Station is near the Narmada River.

**Accommodations:**

There are accommodations near Kevadia site and at Bharuch.

Rajpipla has heritage hotels.

**When to visit:**

The forests and waterfalls are most impressive immediately after the July to September monsoon season.



The Narmada valley has huge banyans and other trees. One of the banyan groves at Kabirvad along the Narmada is associated with Sant Kabir.





## THE GRASSLANDS OF KUTCH



The open country of the Banni grasslands is a key habitat of the Indian wolf, providing broken scrub and grasslands in which suitable cover and denning sites are available for this threatened species.

The scrubby grasslands of Banni, Naliya and Narayan Sarovar comprise an important habitat for Indian wolf, Indian gazelle (chinkara), striped hyena, Asiatic wild cats, spiny-tailed lizard and endangered birds like the great Indian bustard, lesser florican, sociable lapwing, white-rumped vulture and long-billed vulture. Birdwatchers are likely to see specialities like the grey hypocolius and the white-naped tit in Kutch district, while the Chhari Dand and other wetlands in the Banni grassland area provide foraging and roosting grounds for large flocks of flamingos, pelicans, cranes and other birds.



The grasslands near Naliya are among the most important areas for the endangered great Indian bustard. The Lala Bustard Sanctuary, also called Kutch Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary, has been designated to protect endangered birds and mammals that frequent these grasslands.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Bhuj 80km (Fulay)

**Accommodations:**  
Centre for Desert and Ocean (CEDO) offers accommodation and tours of Banni. There are resorts near Nakhatrana and Bhuj.

**When to visit:**  
Large flocks of birds can be seen at Banni during the winter months between October and March.





During years of good rainfall, Chhari Dhand becomes the  
wintering ground for huge flocks of waterfowl.





The desert cat, also called Asiatic steppe wildcat, inhabits the Banni grasslands and Rann of Kutch.



The cream-coloured courser is a winter visitor to the Banni area.





## BALASINOR DINOSAUR SITE



Raioli near Balasinor is one of the most important dinosaur sites in Asia. The fossilized bones of the Rajasaurus Narmadensis, a dinosaur with an unusual head crest, were discovered here.

Raioli near Balasinor is notable for its cache of dinosaur fossil finds. It has a special status in the world's fossil history as the place where the bones of the Rajasaurus, a dinosaur with an unusual head crest, was found. Another reason for this site's paleontological significance is that it is believed to have been a dinosaur hatchery, based on the number of eggs found in this part of Gujarat.



The interpretation centre for the Dinosaur Fossil Park at Raioli, Balasnor.





Raioli has much potential for educational tourism. Gujarat Tourism has taken up the development of the fossil park and interpretation center on a priority basis.





The interpretation center near the Raioli Dinosaur Fossil Park has models of Dinosaurs.



Fossils of dinosaurs can be seen in the Rocks of Raioli.



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distances):  
Ahmedabad Airport / Railway Station 87 Km (Balasinor)  
Nadiad Railway Station- 64 Km (Balasinor)

**Accommodations:**

There are Hotels in Balasinor

**When to visit :**

The site is open daily except Mondays for visitors.  
Time : 10:00 AM to 6:30 PM





The shikara (spire) of  
Ambaji's temple is crowned with gold.





# SPIRITUAL TRAILS







## INTRODUCTION

Gujarat has for long attracted visitors from distant lands in search of trade, empire or refuge. Together with their trade the migrants and colonizers brought with them their cultural influences and religious beliefs so that Gujarat today has a diversity of places of worship. For Hindus, the Krishna temple of Dwarka, the Jyotirlingam of Somnath, the Shaktipith of Ambaji and the holy lake of Narayan Sarovar are among the most important pilgrimage sites. Buddhism thrived in Gujarat between the 3rd century BC and 8th century AD when many rock-cut caves and stupas were built in the state. Among these Devni Mori at Shamlaji has special importance because a Buddha relic casket was unearthed here. Jainism has thrived in Gujarat from ancient times and Jain temple building was given much patronage by the 12th century Solanki Rajput rulers. The temple covered sacred summits of Shatrunjaya hill and Girnar peak are among the major Jain pilgrimage destinations.

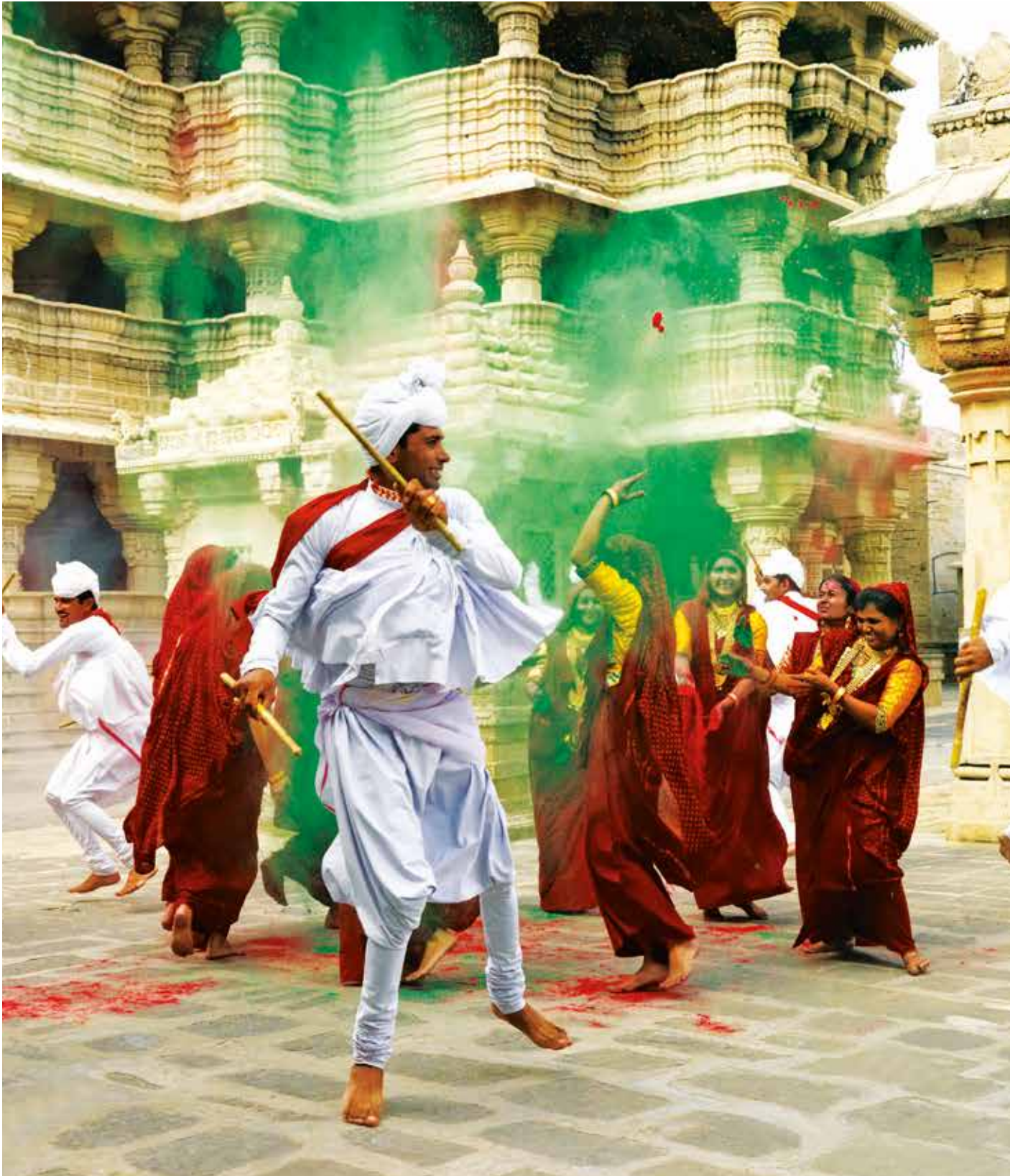
The Parsees, a group of Zoroastrians fleeing their native Iran about a millennium ago, settled in South Gujarat. Their most sacred fire temple is situated in Udvada. Apart from Udvada, Atashbehrams (the highest grade of ritual fire for Zoroastrians) are housed in one fire temple of Navsari and two at Surat. Gujarat also has a number of Sufi shrines like the beautiful dargahs of Shaikh Ahmed and Shah Alam in Ahmedabad, the much visited dargah of Mira Datar at Unava, and the pirs of Kutch.

Christianity grew in Gujarat during the British colonial period. Interestingly, though Jews are a micro-minority in Gujarat there is a synagogue in Ahmedabad where prayer services and feasts are held on Jewish holy days.

In addition to the religious places, Gujarat has sites associated with spiritual leaders like Sant Kabir, Jalaram Bapa, Dayanand Sarasvati, Vallabhacharya, Adi Sankracharya, mystic poet Narsinh Mehta, Aurobindo, etc.



The temples of Gujarat are the focus of festivals.





## DWARKA



The Dwarkadish temple has a five-storey shikhara tower and a dome-covered atrium. The temple is supported by 60 pillars.

Lord Krishna is believed to have built his kingdom around Dwarka, making it one of the holiest Hindu temple towns. The towering Dwarkadish temple is the focal point of pilgrimage in Dwarka. The Adi Sankracharya Math, the lingam at Nageshwar, the Gomti Talav Tirth and the island of Bet Dwarka are other attractions for religious visitors to Dwarka. The 12th century Rukmini Temple, with its delectable carvings and unusual shikhara, is Dwarka's architectural gem.



A pilgrimage tour of Dwarka and Bet Dwarka takes in sacred ghats on the Gomti and the Arabian Sea.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Dwarka Railway Station

Porbandar Airport 101km

Jamnagar Airport 141km

**Accommodations:**

Dwarka has a few hotels.

Jamnagar and Porbandar have star-rated hotels.

**When to visit:** Dwarka's temples are open round the year. Janmashtami (August-September) is one of Dwarka's biggest festivals and a fair is held here during this period.



Splendid views of the Dwarkadish temple can be enjoyed from the Gomti River and the sea beach.







Gujarat has a number of shore temples. The heritage of beachside temples is a unique feature of the state.





Dwarka witnesses spectacular celebrations during festivals.



Dwarka's 12th century Rukmini temple is lavishly carved with some really fine sculptures.







## RUKMINI TEMPLE, DWARKA



### Visitors' Guide:

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distance)

Jamnagar Airport - 137 kms.

Ahmedabad Airport / Railway station- 471 Kms

Jamnagar Railway Station- 137 Kms

**Accommodation:** There are Hotels in Jamnagar

The exterior of the Rukmini Temple is richly carved. It has a panel of sculpted naratharas (human figures) and a panel of sculpted gajatharas (elephants) at the base. The traditional spire of the main shrine contrasts with the hemispherical dome of the pavilion. The garbhagriha (inner sanctum) has a recessed seat on which the present image of Rukmini, wife of Lord Krishna, was consecrated. The usual sculptures of god and goddesses, along with male and female figures, are seen on the exterior of the shrine.



## SOMNATH



The Somnath temple is revered as one of the most important shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva.

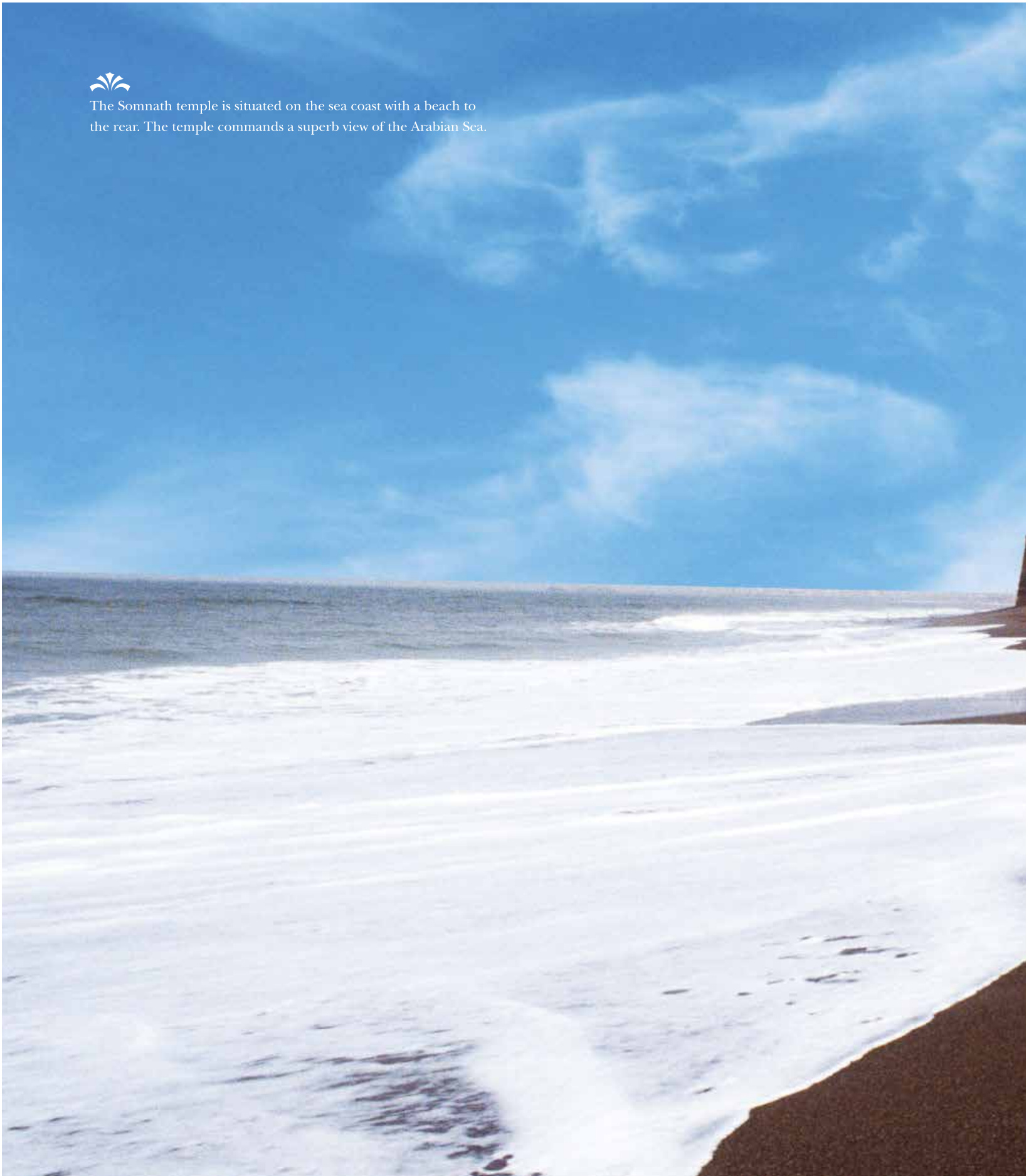
Somnath or Prabhas Patan is one of the most sacred places for the worship of Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna and Shakti, the principal female deity. The seaside temple enshrines one of the most important of the 12 Jyotirlingas mentioned in the Shiva Purana. According to tradition, Lord Krishna is said to have been hit on the foot by the arrow of a hunter who mistook him for a deer at Bhalka Tirth and to have left his mortal body at the end of his Avatar at Triveni Sangam, both at Prabhas Patan. Prabhas Patan is also considered one of the Shaktipiths – it is believed that this is where the stomach of Sati's body fell following Lord Shiva's Tandav. Somnath also has a historical Sun Temple and a cave dedicated to the Pandavas.



 The gilded interiors of Somnath's shrine.



The Somnath temple is situated on the sea coast with a beach to the rear. The temple commands a superb view of the Arabian Sea.







A landmark at Somnath explains the significance of the location of this sacred site.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Somnath and Veraval have railway stations

Diu Airport 80km

Porbandar Airport 134km

**Accommodations:**

Veraval has hotels

**When to visit:**

Festivals like Kartika Poomima are celebrated at Somnath.



Camel rides are often on offer at Somnath's beach.



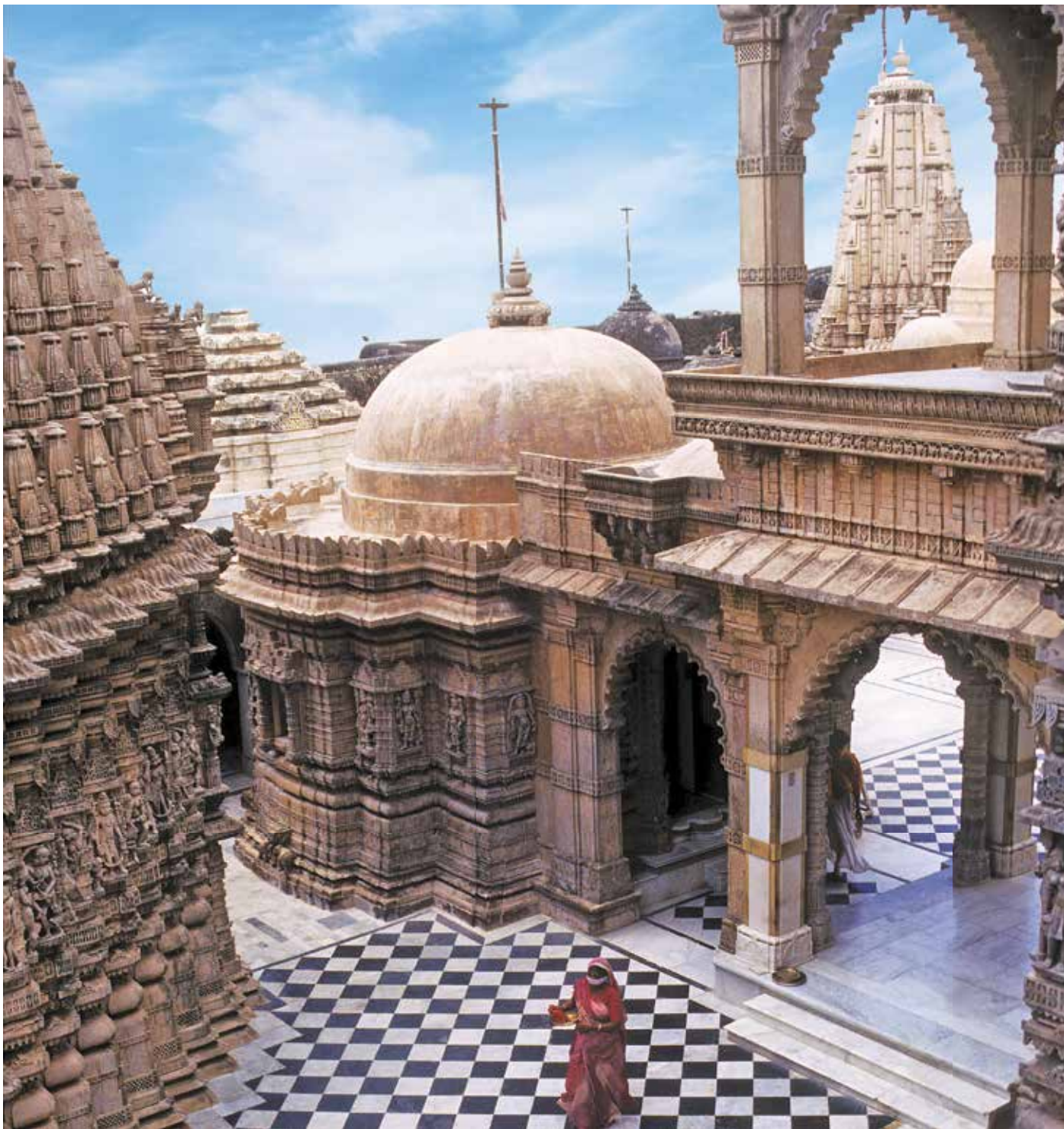


## PALITANA



The spectacular complex of Jain temples crowning Shatrunjaya Hill at Palitana is one of the most sacred Jain sites in India.

The Shatrunjaya Hill, looming up near Palitana town, is revered as a place visited by Tirthankar Adinath, whose chief disciple Pundarika is said to have attained enlightenment here. An extraordinary complex of several hundred Jain temples covers the two ridges of the hill and the saddle linking them. The walled temple city has groups of temples within enclosures called tuks. Some of the temples are architectural showpieces with superbly carved ceilings, walls, balconies and brackets.



The extraordinary hilltop Jain temple complex at Palitana is divided into enclosures called taks. Within each tuk are lavishly carved Jain temples.





Several hundred Jain temples crown the two ridges of Shatrunjaya hill and the saddle connecting them.







Palitana is one of the most important sites of Jain pilgrimage.





The Jain temples of Palitana are embellished with numerous individual sculptures.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Bhavnagar Airport/Railway Station 55km

**Accommodations:**

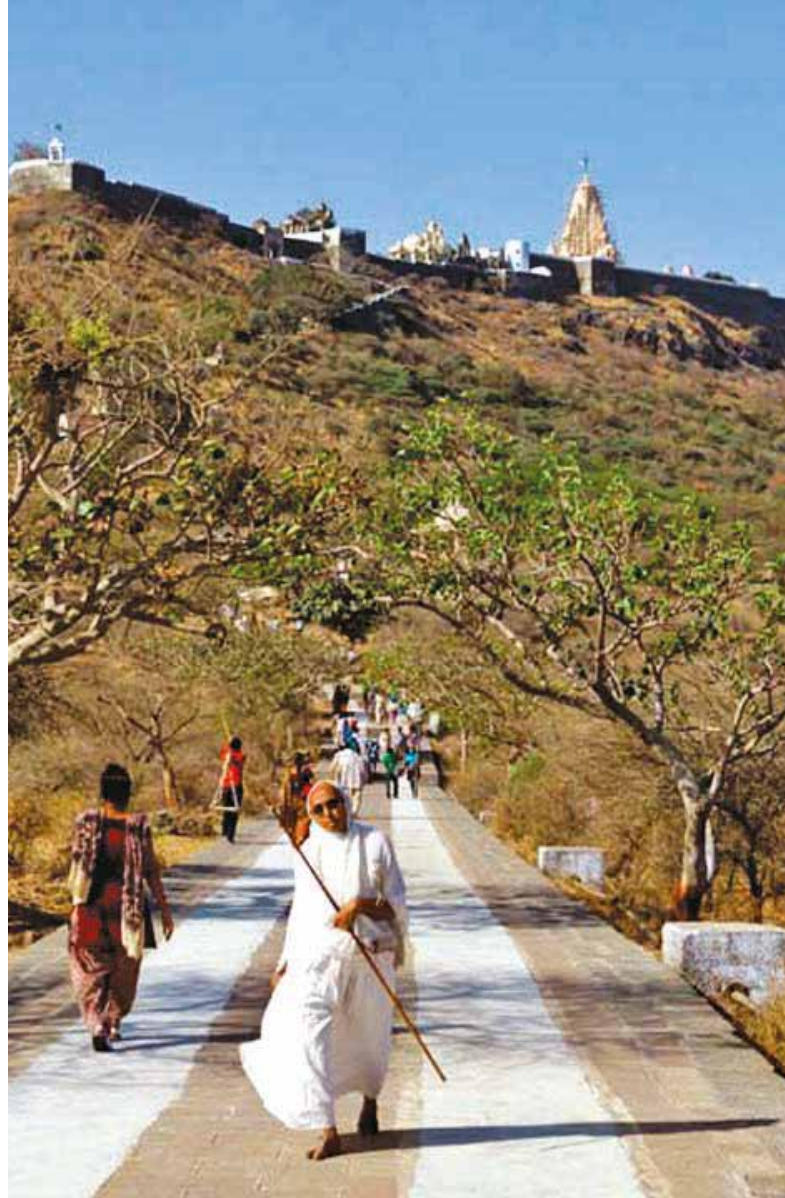
Palitana has a few hotels including Sumeru Toran.  
Vijay Vilas is a heritage house hotel at Adpur - Palitana.  
Nilambag Palace and its adjoining Narayani Heritage offer heritage hotel accommodations at Bhavnagar

**When to visit:**

Palitana is pleasant in winter. A large fair is held at Palitana in March.



The ascent to the Palitana Jain complex atop Shatrunjaya hill takes two hours. A spectacular view of hundreds of temple silhouettes and massed domes can be seen during the climb to the summit.





# AMBAJI



Ambaji is an important temple town, revered by Hindus as one of the 51 Shakti Pithas.

Ambaji is one of the 51 Shaktipiths, places of worship consecrated to the mother goddesses worshipped as Shakti. Millions visit the Ambaji temple town and the hilltop site called Gabbar which is believed to be the original seat of Mata Amba. This temple town is extremely lively on auspicious days like Bhadarvi Poonam, the summer and autumnal Navratri festivals, Diwali and Poshhi Poonam.



The Gabbar Hill at Ambaji is one of the most sacred sites for the worship of Mata Ambaji.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station (180km)

Abu Road Railway Station (24km)

Palanpur Railway Station (60km)

**Accommodations:**

Bhavani Villa at Danta, Darbargadh Poshina and the Baram Palace Resort are heritage hotels near Ambaji.

**When to visit:**

A huge fair is held at Ambaji during the full moon of Bhadrapad Sud in August.



Amitabh Bachchan at Ambaji's sacred temple.











The sacred temple at Ambaji has rich goldwork.



Navratri and Badra Poornima are among the important festivals celebrated at Ambaji.





## NARAYAN SAROVAR



Narayan Sarovar is one of the five sacred lakes for Hindus. It is one of the most visited pilgrimage sites in Kutch.

Narayan Sarovar is one of the five sacred lakes for Hindus, the others being Pushkar, Mansarovar, Pampa and Bhubaneshwar. The lake is also visited by followers of the Pushti sect of Vallabhacharya, who is believed to have spent time at Narayan Sarovar. Ashapura Matano Madh and the shore temple of Koteswar are other places of Hindu pilgrimage that can be visited together with Narayan Sarovar.



The shore temple at Koteswar near Narayan Sarovar commands a scenic location at the west end of India.



The coastal stretch from Mandvi to Koteswar has many significant Jain and Hindu temples.





Carved balconies called jarokhas are a feature of Kutch.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):  
Bhuj Airport/Railway Station 148km

**Accommodations:**  
Star-rated hotels at Bhuj

**When to visit:**  
Narayan Sarovar is most pleasant between November and February.



Lake views from a temple.





## SHAMLAJI



The Shamlaji temple is an important site for Vishnu worship. An important Buddhist site has been discovered nearby.

The Vishnu temple at Shamlaji has considerable religious significance for Hindus and the local tribal groups. A short distance from Shamlaji, Devni Mori is the site where Buddhist stupas once stood. This site has much spiritual importance for Buddhists because a casket unearthed here has an inscription suggesting it held the relics of Lord Buddha.



The black idol of Lord Vishnu as Shamlaji attracts a large following.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport 128km, Himmatnagar Railway Station 48km

**Accommodations:**

Heritage Hotels at Vijaynagar (approximately 51km)

**When to visit:**

There is a large fair at Shamlaji during the Kartika Poornima in November.





The casket unearthed at the Buddhist site of Devni Mori in Shamlaji revealed an inscription suggesting it held the relics of Lord Buddha. A replica of the casket and a model of the stupa of Devni Mori are housed in the Shamlaji Museum.





The black stone idol of Shamlaji in the temple.



Carved ceiling of Shamlaji's temple





## UDVADA



The Sacred Iranshaw Atashbehram at Udvada is the holiest place of worship for Parsees, descendants of Zoroastrians who came to Gujarat following the conquest of their native lands in Persia.

Udvada is the most sacred place for Parsees, a word used to denote the Persian believers in the ancient Zoroastrian religion who left their native Iran to seek religious freedom. Fire has been the focus of Zoroastrian devotion and rituals from ancient times, and this band of Zoroastrian followers promised to build a Fire Temple as an act of thanksgiving. Thus, the Atashbehram or high grade ritual fire was lit at Sanjan in South Gujarat where they landed. This sacred fire is now housed at Udvada.



Udvada is a valuable heritage site and religious place for Parsees.



The Zoroastrian Information Centre at Udvada offers much information about Zoroastrian rituals and the Parsee culture. Since the Atashbehram can only be entered by Zoroastrians, this centre depicts the interiors of this fire temple.





The Zoroastrian Information Centre at Udvada traces the history of Parsees from ancient Iran to contemporary India.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Surat Airport 93km

Vapi Railway Station 9km

**Accommodations:**

There are hotels and guesthouses at Udvada.

**When to visit:**

Behram Roj (the 20th day of the month in a Parsee calendar) is an auspicious day at Udvada. Pateti in August, Navroz or Nowruz in March and other Parsee festivals are celebrated at Udvada.



The high priest of the Sacred Iranshah Atashbehrum at Udvada, India's major centre of Parsee pilgrimage.





## SARKHEJ RAUZA



The beautiful complex of tombs, pavilions, mosque and other monuments that comprise the Sarkhej Rauza, also spelt Roja or Roza, is one of Ahmedabad's architectural marvels. It has the 15th century mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmed Khattu Ganj Baksh, the spiritual mentor of Sultan Ahmed Shah who founded Ahmedabad.

The Sarkhej Rauza, on the outskirts of Ahmedabad, has the 15th century mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmed Khattu Ganj Banksh, a Sufi mystic who was the spiritual mentor of Sultan Ahmed Shah. The large square tomb of this Sufi mystic has scores of pillars inside supporting the domed roof. This 15th century mausoleum is adorned with tracery work, inlaid marble and brass screens. Sarkhej is also an architectural masterpiece with an impressive mosque, royal tombs, pavilions, an artificial lake and lake view palaces.



The mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmed Khattu Ganh Baksh at Sarkhej is among Gujarat's most visited dargahs.



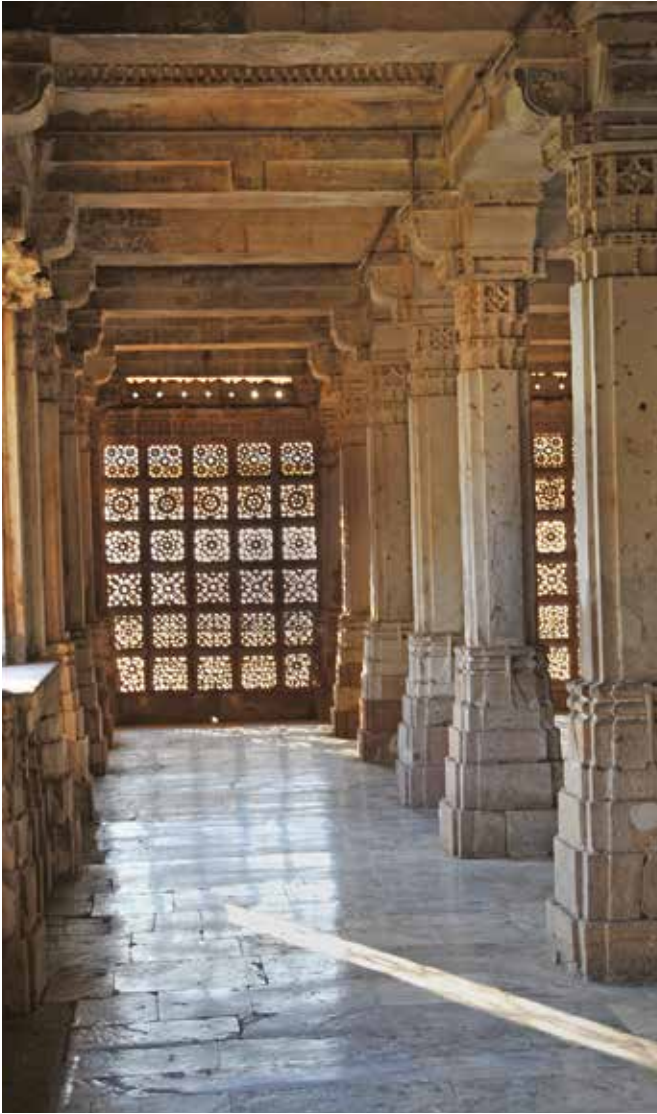


The palaces of Sultan Muhammad Begadha and his queens surround the lake at Sarkhej, which became a retreat of Gujarat's rulers in the 15th and 16th centuries.

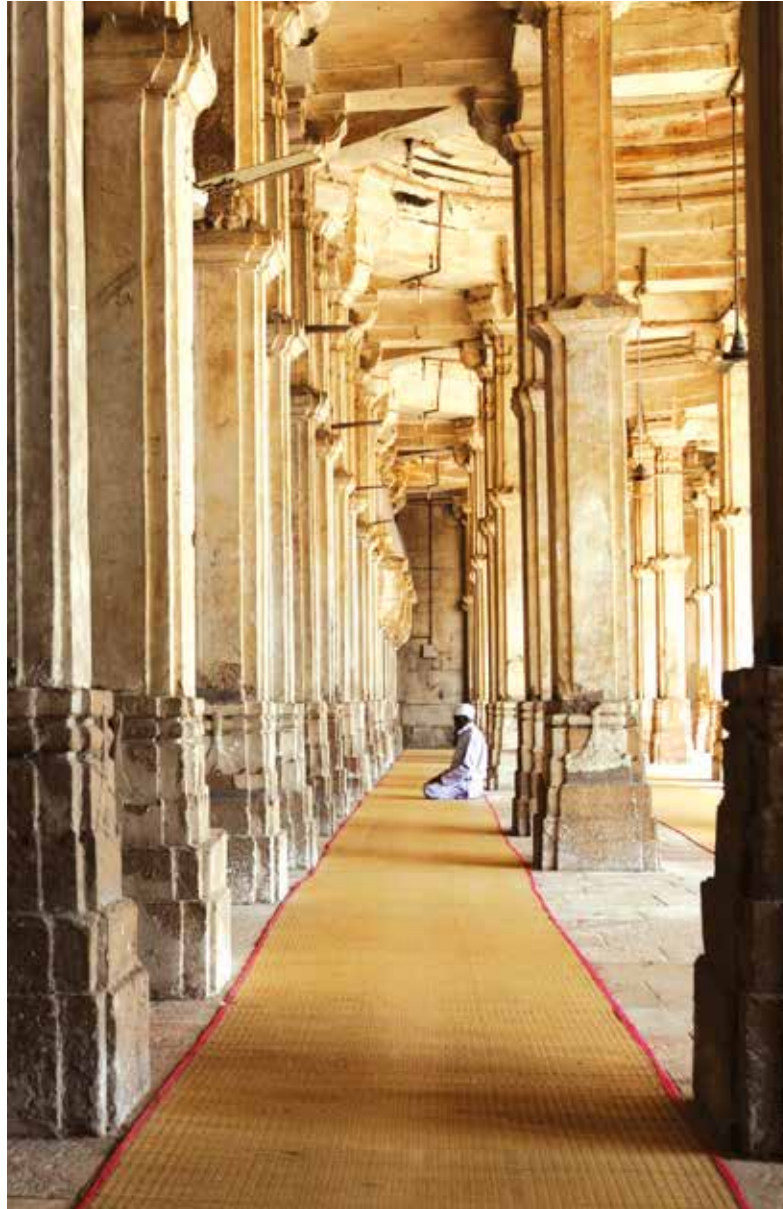




Finely carved latticework is a unique feature of Sarkhej Rauza.



The row of columns in the medieval mosque at Sarkhej.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

##### **Transport Hubs:**

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station

##### **Accommodations:**

Ahmedabad has a good choice of star-rated hotels.

##### **When to visit:**

Sarkhej is open daily. There are several festivals and events that occur in this monumental complex.



# SEEMA DARSHAN



**SEEMA DARSHAN - NADABET**  
A Vision Beyond Boundaries

Nadabet, which hosts the venue of the 'Seema Darshan', is a small hamlet in the Suigam Taluka of Banaskantha district. A mere visit through this quaint outpost is sure to elicit unique enjoyment. The Nadeshwari Mata Temple here is a serene sanctum of spiritual and surreal tranquillity. It is situated by the side of a beautiful lake. During the holy Festival of Ramnavami, millions of pilgrims throng the temple and the fair grounds.



The Camel show wherein the 'ship of the desert' are adorned with colourful attire combined with parades takes one through an experience never witnessed near the border.



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distance)

**Ahmedabad**

Airport/ Railway station - 203 kms

Palanpur Railway station - 112 kms

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Toran at Palanpur Highway,  
Jagana, Sunrise Palace Hotel in Suigam  
and other Hotels in Banaskatha

**When to Visit:**

Every Saturday & Sunday  
at 12 Noon.






## THE SWAMINARAYAN TRAIL



The 1822AD Swaminarayan Mandir in Ahmedabad is the oldest temple of the Swaminarayan Sampraday.

Lord Swaminarayan or Sahajanand Swami settled in Gujarat around 1799 after a seven year journey. The first Swaminarayan temple was built in Ahmedabad around 1822. It is richly ornamented with teakwood carvings. Following this temple, more temples were built at sites like Bhuj, Vadtal, Dholera, Junagadh, Gadhada, Muli, Dholka and Jetalpur. Temple building has continued with some stunning Swaminarayan temples at Sarangpur and Gondal. The Akshardham at Gandhinagar is one of the most impressive contemporary temples, with state-of-the-art shows and aesthetically appealing memorabilia displays.



 The Shri Swaminarayan Mandir at Kalupur in Ahmedabad is dedicated to the Narnarayan Dev Gadi. The deities are attired in lavishly embellished clothing.



The three-storey haveli in the Swaminarayan temple complex in Ahmedabad is supported by octagonal and square wooden pillars engraved with carvings.





Exquisite carvings adorn the wooden brackets of the havelis in the Swaminarayan temple complex.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs:**

Ahmedabad has an airport and railway station.

**Accommodations:**

Ahmedabad has a good choice of star rated hotels.

There are hotels and heritage properties near other Swaminarayan temples.

**When to visit:**

A number of festivals like Hindola Utsav, Janmashtami, Annakut, Phooldhol Utsav, Holi and Ramnavmi are celebrated at Swaminarayan temples like those in Ahmedabad and Vadtal. The BAPS group has spectacular celebrations and events at Akshardham and other temples.



The façades in the temple complex of Ahmedabad's Swaminarayan Mandir are brightly painted. Each arch and bracket has distinctive colours.








## JEW SYNAGOGUE, AHMEDABAD



  
The Magen Abraham Synagogue  
was built in 1934.

The Bagdadhi Jews fleeing religious persecution in Iraq landed in Surat from where they dispersed to Kolkata, Mumbai and other cities. The Bene Israel Jews came to Ahmedabad and other cities of Gujarat during the mid-1800s. The Erulkar family donated land near Khamasa Police Station in Ahmedabad for the construction of the present Magen Abraham Synagogue. The Synagogue building was founded in 1933 and consecrated on September 02nd, 1934. Built with donations from Bene Israel residents of Gujarat, the architecture of this Synagogue is very much in keeping with the Art Deco and Art Nouveau styles that were popular in the early-20th century. This synagogue is noteworthy for its collection of Torahs or Jewish scriptures.



 The Magen Abraham Synagogue has marble floors and a large ark. The furniture consists of movable pews.



A depiction of the menorah ( seven-branch lamp) at  
the Magen Abraham Synagogue.





The façade of the Magen Abraham Synagogue is in the Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles that were popular in the early-20th century.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs:**

Ahmedabad has an airport and a well-connected railway station

**Accommodations:**

Ahmedabad has a good choice of star-rated hotels.

**When to visit:**

The Synagogue has services on Thursday.



The interiors of the Magen Abraham Synagogue, Ahmedabad.



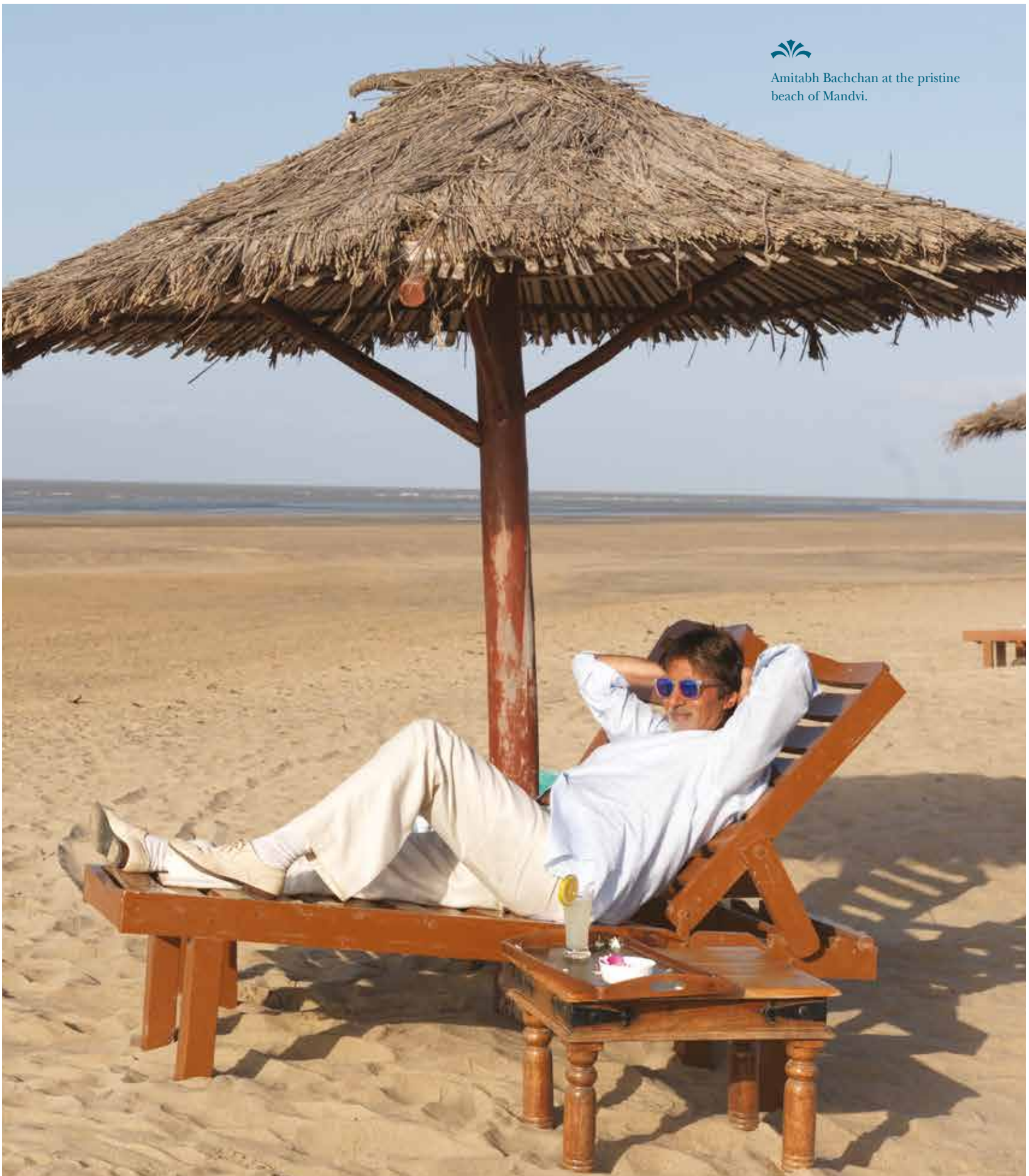


# COASTAL ATTRACTIONS





Amitabh Bachchan at the pristine beach of Mandvi.





## INTRODUCTION

Gujarat is bounded to its west by India's longest coastline, measuring about 1666 km. Travelling along this long coastline, travellers will find a wealth of natural attractions like beaches, birdwatching sites and India's first marine nature reserve. Enjoying a strategic location for trade, Gujarat's coastline has cultural heritage sites like

historical port towns and shore temples, sea forts and the palaces where Maharajas and Nawabs would retreat in the summer months. The coast has many vivid associations. Guru Nanak is believed to have stayed at Lakhpat. Mahatma Gandhi's Salt Satyagraha at Dandi shook the British Raj in India.



The beaches of Mandvi are a haven for gulls, terns and waders.







## MANDVI



The huge estate of Vijay Vilas Palace at Mandvi is fringed by a virgin beach. The terrace pavilion of the palace looks out over the estate to the Arabian Sea.

Mandvi, along the northern coast of the Gulf of Kutch, is one of the finest among Gujarat's beaches. The popular beach is located near the Wind Farms and has been developed for recreational tourism with food stalls, rides and water-based activities. Not far from the beach, you can watch dhows being built along the river and creeks, visit handicraft shops and see historic buildings that reflect Mandvi's maritime links with distant lands. A short drive from the town brings you to the Vijay Vilas Palace, where the Maharao of Kutch spent his summer months in the 1940s. Climb to the palace's rooftop pavilion for a view over the estate to the sea. You will recognize parts of the palace from Bollywood blockbusters, Lagaan and Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam that were filmed in Mandvi. The palace estate has a secluded beach with accommodations and other facilities.



The serene beach along Mandvi's palace estate  
offers unending views of the sea.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distance):

Bhuj Airport 52km

**Accommodations:**

Beach at Mandvi Palace is a beach resort

**When to visit:**

Mandvi is most pleasant between October and March



Kutch has some pristine beaches.







Camel rides and other facilities are on offer at the family-friendly Mandvi beach.





Watersports at  
Mandvi.



Mandvi is a great place  
to kick back and relax.



Coastal Attractions: Mandvi

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## AHMEDPUR MANDVI



Ahmedpur Mandvi beach has a good view of the historic monuments on Diu island.

One of the finest beaches in Gujarat, Ahmedpur Mandvi has a long stretch of sand which is ideal for swimming, walks and relaxation. Water-based sports are often on offer along this beach. This beach has rich vegetation including the unusual branching palm called Hoka. Another attraction of Ahmedpur Mandvi is the good views it offers over a strip of sea to the island of Diu with its medieval Portuguese monuments.



Beaches like Ahmedpur Mandvi and its nearby sites have been developed for water-based activities.





Ahmedpur Mandvi offers a glimpse of rural culture and superb views of Diu's monuments.





Beachside activities can be enjoyed at Ahmedpur Mandvi and nearby sites in Gujarat and Diu.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Diu Airport 10km

Somnath-Veraval Railway Station 80km

**Accommodations:**

There are resorts at Ahmedpur Mandvi.

**When to visit:**

Ahmedpur Mandvi is most pleasant in winter.



The African branching palm, called the Hoka tree, is common in Ahmedpur Mandvi.





# MADHAVPUR BEACH



## Visitors' Guide:

Transport Hubs (Approximate Distance)

Keshod Airport - 32.0 KM | Keshod Railway Station - 20 Km

Ahmedabad Airport/ Railway station - 327 Kms

Porbandar Railway Station - 60 Kms

**Accommodation:** Hotel Toran Tourist Bungalow and

A scenic town, Madhavpur is situated on a sandy coastline and is endowed with coconut trees and fertile agriculture land. It hosts the beautiful Madhavrajji Haveli Temple in addition to the Rukmini no choro. An annual fair held by the Mer community is celebrated with great fervour here. Nearby are the ruins of a Shiva Temple. It is an ideal location for beach lovers.



## PORBANDAR



Amitabh Bachchan at  
Porbandar's picturesque harbours.

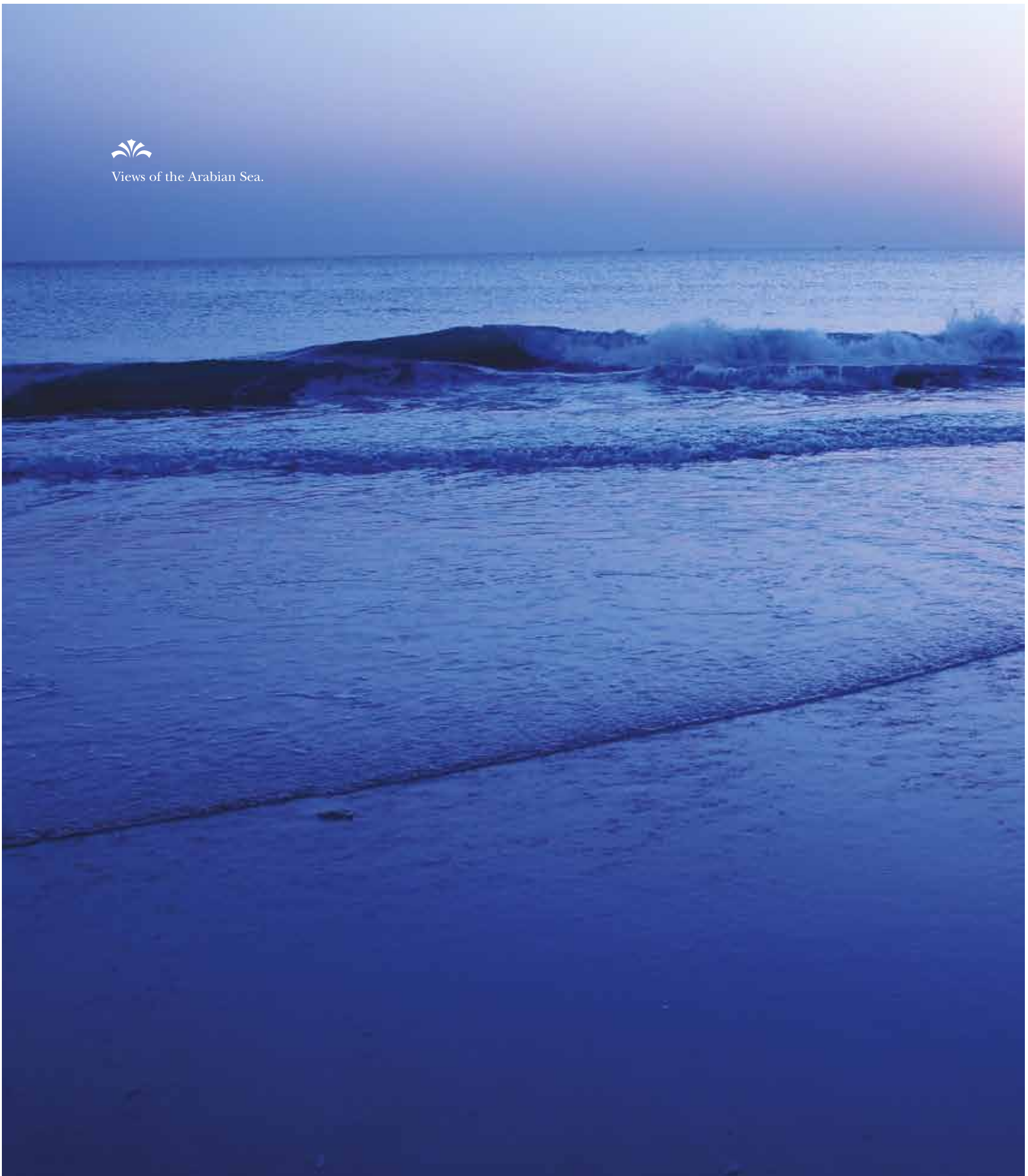
Porbandar by the Arabian Sea was once the seat of an affluent princely state, and even today you can see palaces and impressive old buildings fronting the sea. The sea face is a popular gathering place for enjoying the sea views, while you can get out of town to lesser-known beaches like Khuchdi, Miyani and Madhavpur Ghed. The coastal areas of Porbandar are excellent for bird viewing and photography as also to catch a glimpse of coastal activities along the harbours like boat building. Mahatma Gandhi was born at Porbandar, and his birthplace and the Kirti Mandir memorial are Porbandar's top tourist draws.



The Huzoor Palace is an architectural landmark of the Porbandar seacoast.



Views of the Arabian Sea.







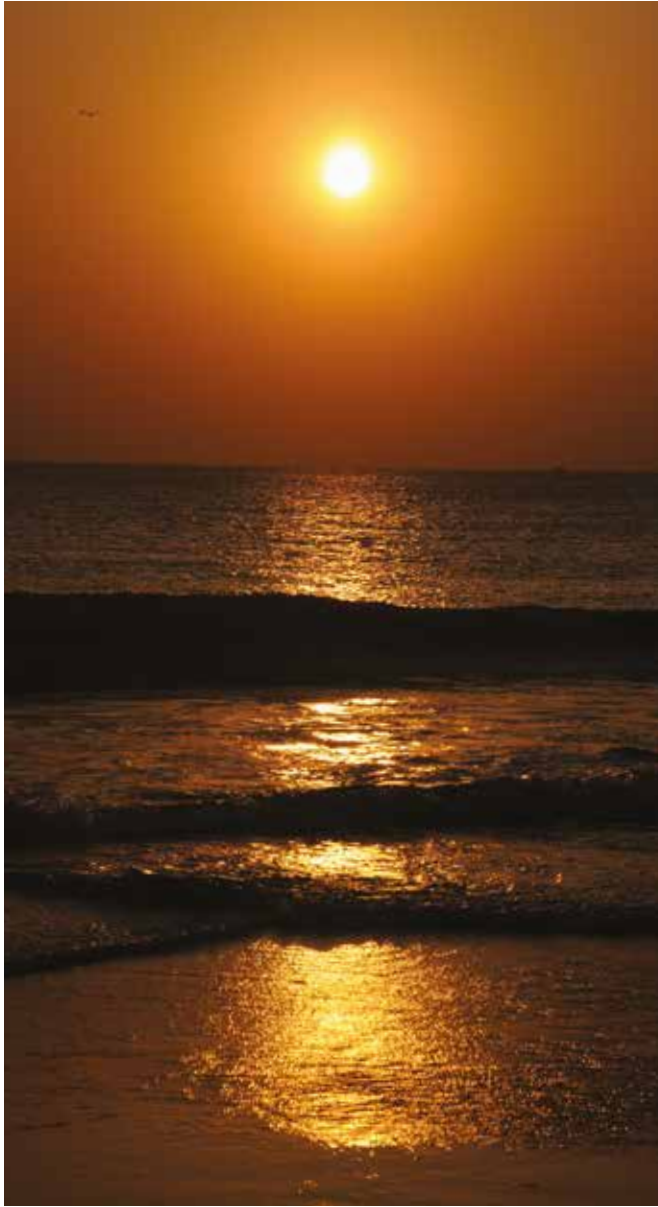
Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869. The house where he was born in Porbandar is open for visitors and adjoins the Kirti Mandir built in his memory.







Sunset along the Porbandar coast



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs:**

Porbandar Airport/Railway Station

**Accommodations:**

There are hotels in Porbandar.

**When to visit:**

Porbandar is most pleasant between October and March.



Rural architecture near Porbandar.





## OKHAMANDAL BEACHES



The stunningly beautiful  
Shivrajpur beach near Dwarka.

Dwarka makes an excellent base for a holiday of sightseeing, pilgrimage, beach activities and even watching birds and marine life. From Dwarka, head for the beaches of Shivrajpur just 15 minutes north of the Rukmani temple. This long, pristine beach stretches near the Shivrajpur village, between a lighthouse and a rocky shoreline. It is ideal for a long walk. Other must-visit coastal sites near Dwarka are Okha Madhi for its fine sands and Poshitara for its coral reefs and marine life. The Charakhla salt pans near Mithapur attract thousands of flamingoes, hundreds of pelicans, flocks of painted storks and a variety of other birds. From Okha, you can take the ferry to the island of Bet Dwarka which has temples, fine beaches and a profusion of marine life.



The beaches in and around Dwarka are excellent for a combination of pilgrimage and promenade.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs:** (Approximate distances):  
Dwarka Railway Station 12km (Shivrajpur).  
Porbandar Airport 112km (Shivrajpur)

**Accommodations:**

There are hotels at Dwarka.

**When to visit:**

Okhamandal is most pleasant between October and March.



The temple town of Bet Dwarka, an island offshore from Okha.





  
Sunset on the sea  
coast.

  
Bet Dwarka has a  
tranquil beach.





# GOPNATH



From 1942 to the accession of the princely states in 1948, Maharaja Krishnakumar Sinh Gohil of Bhavnagar would spend the summer months from April to September at the Gopnath Bungalow, his country estate by the sea. Set on an elevation, Gopnath Bungalow has a scenic location flanked by rocks with a lighthouse on one side and an unending view of the sea from the grounds. A short distance from the bungalow, the medieval Gopnath temple looks out to the sea. It is believed that Gopnath was the place where Lord Shiva appeared before Narsinh Mehta and showed him the Ras-lila of Lord Krishna.



 Gopnath temple.







Lighthouse at Gopnath.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distance):  
Bhavnagar Airport/Railway Station 86km

**Accommodations:**

Gopnath Bungalow is a heritage property

**When to visit:**

Gopnath is pleasant for much of the year.



Gopnath Bungalow.





## MARINE NATIONAL PARK



Sunset in the marine nature reserve.

Offshore from the southern coast of the Gulf of Kutch lie about 42 islands, most of them fringed by coral reefs and mangrove swamps that support a rich cache of marine life. In 1980, Gujarat became the first state with a marine nature reserve spanning 458 sq km, of which 163 sq km forms the Marine National Park and the rest is the Marine Sanctuary. With permission from the authorities, it is possible for visitors to walk in the intertidal zone of one of these islands for close views of an astounding variety of marine life including octopus, starfish, brittle star, sea cucumber, sea anemone, sponge, crab, fish, etc. The Marine National Park is also rich in marine mammals, sea turtles and birdlife.



The mangroves of the Marine National Park support a variety of life forms.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

##### **Transport Hubs:**

The headquarters of the Marine National Park is at Jamnagar, which has an airport and railway stations.

##### **Accommodations:**

There are star-rated hotels at Jamnagar.

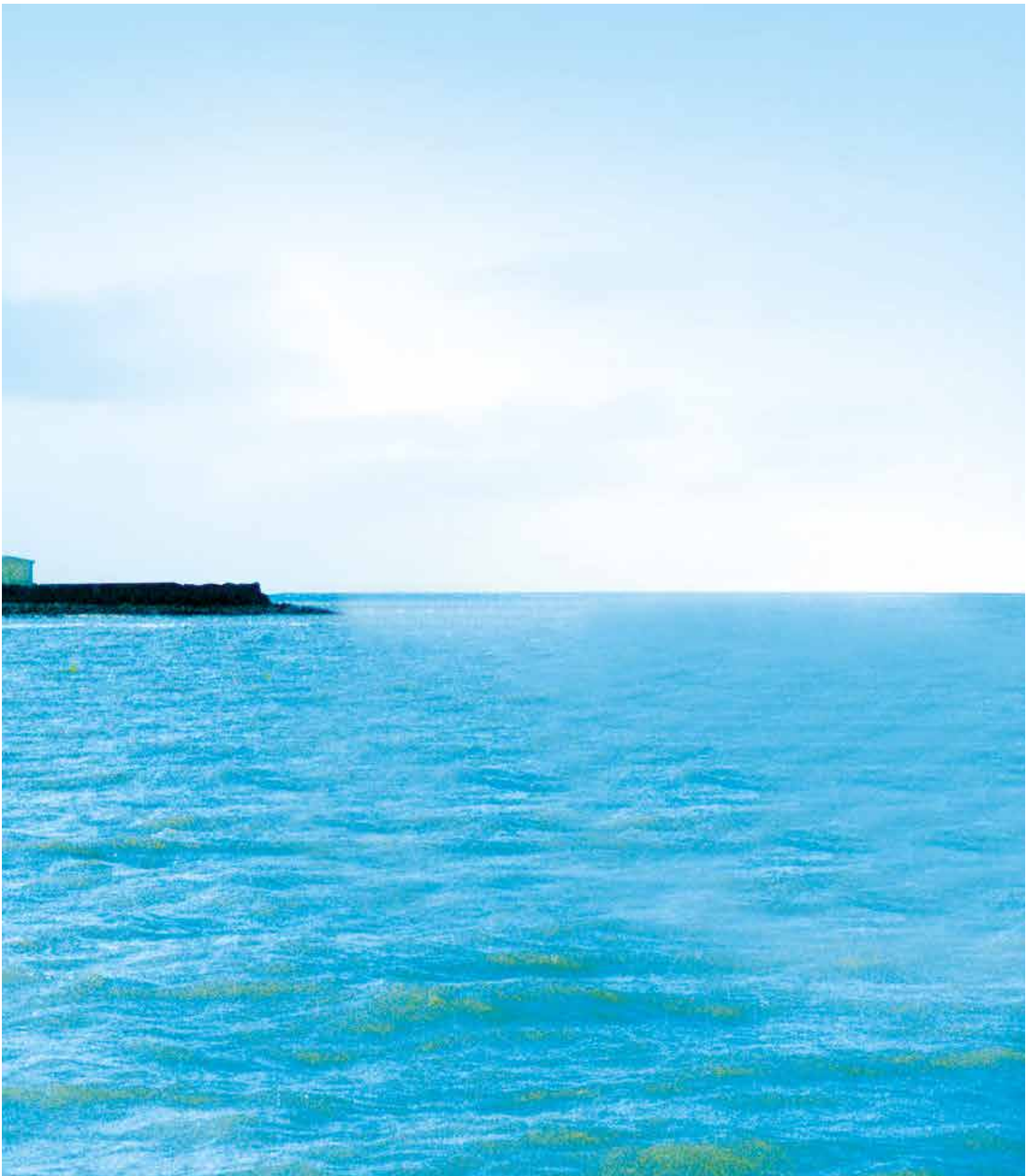
##### **When to visit:**

October to March is the best period for birdwatching and marine life viewing in the Gulf of Kutch.



Pirotan Island lies at the core of the Marine National Park.





  
Lichen, sponge and coral create colourful worlds in the shallow waters of the Gulf of Kutch.





Brittle star, sea cucumber and other marine invertebrate can be seen at Narara Bet.



Sea Anemone thrive in the Marine National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary, along the Jamnagar coast.





## KHIJADIYA BIRD SANCTUARY



Flamingos are seen at Khijadiya  
Bird Sanctuary

Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary, near the city of Jamnagar, is one of the top coastal bird sites. This sanctuary has freshwater lakes and coastal marshes in a relatively small area of about six sq km, making it an excellent place for watching a diversity of birds. Birdwatchers are likely to see Indian skimmer, black-necked stork, saras crane, greater spotted eagle and other interesting birds at Khijadiya.





Black-necked stork is one of Khijadiya's key species.

Coastal Attractions: Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary

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The demoiselle crane breeds in Central Eurasia and  
winters at sites like Khijadiya in Gujarat.





A well-paved pathway offers an opportunity to explore different sides of the Khijadiya Bird Sanctuary.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distance):

Jamnagar Airport 12Km

**Accommodations:**

There are star-rated hotels in Jamnagar

**When to visit:**

November to February is the peak period for watching migratory birds that gather at Khijadiya in winter.



White-throated kingfisher.





## TITHAL



Being close to major cities, the beaches of South Gujarat attract many visitors.

Tithal is a casuarinas-lined dark sand beach with sea-facing temples and recreational activities. This beach is popular with day trippers and weekend visitors from Valsad, Vapi, Nagsari and Surat. Tithal is near Valsad, known for its orchards of alphonso mango and sapodilla (chikoo). Ubhrat and Nargol are other popular beaches of southern Gujarat.



Families enjoy the beaches of South Gujarat.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Surat Airport/Railway Station 90km

Valsad Railway Station 4km

**Accommodations:**

Toran Hotel at Tithal

**When to visit:**

Tithal is most pleasant between October and March.

Coastal Attractions: Tithal



The casuarinas-lined beach at Tithal is very popular with day trippers and weekenders from Valsad, Vapi, Navsari, Surat and other cities of South Gujarat. Temples and ashrams are set at scenic locations around Tithal.

This is one of the many scenic seaside spots in South Gujarat.





The Tithal beach is a popular destination for recreational tourists.



Casuarinas provide shade in Tithal.





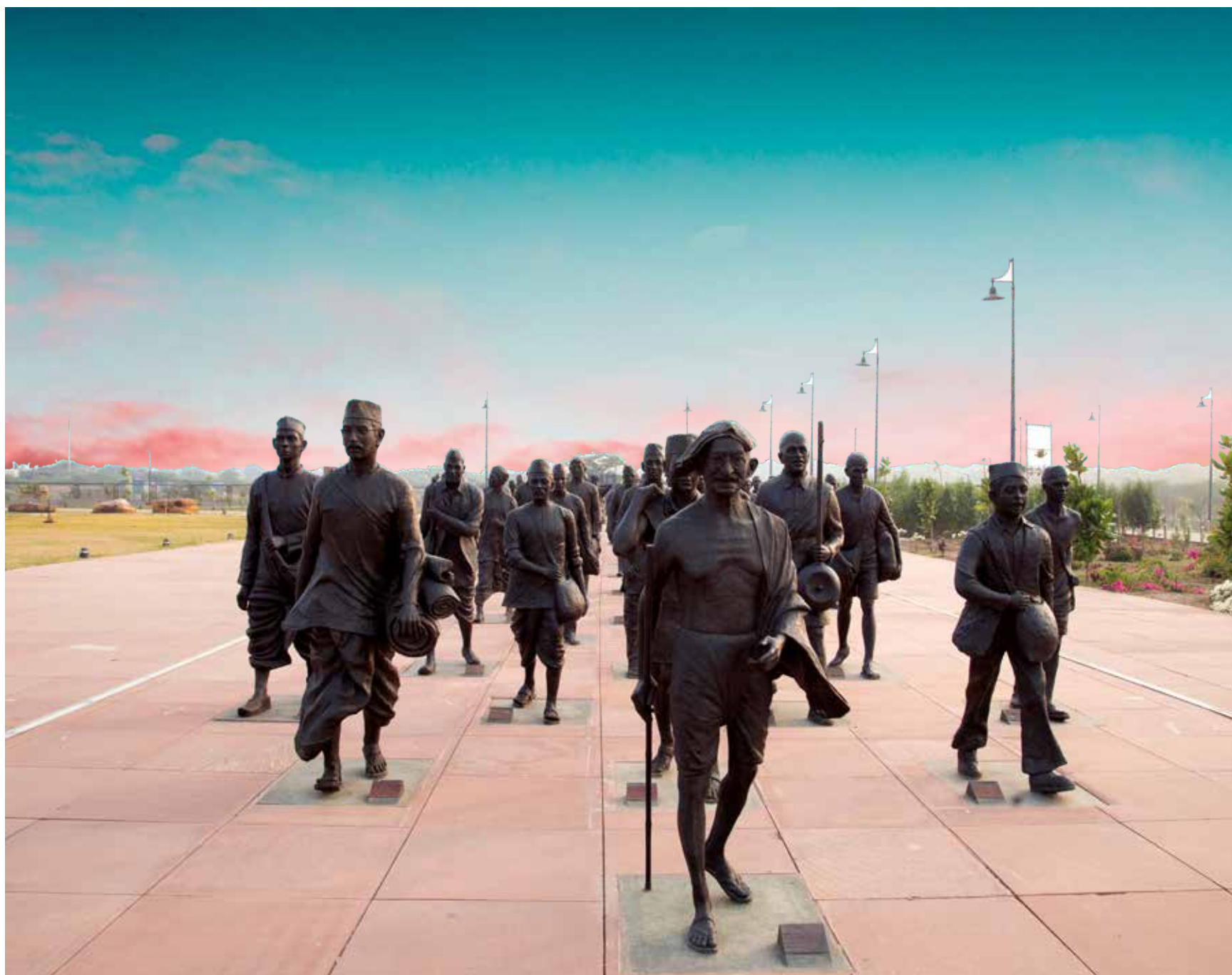
Dandi is a popular recreational spot.

Coastal Attractions: Dandi





# NATIONAL SALT SATYAGRAHA MEMORIAL



The 80 men marched ahead for 24 days, covering 241 miles. Then, their leader Mahatma Gandhi, scooped up sea water to make some salt. He was also making history. Breaking the Salt Law. And writing an inspiring new chapter in the freedom struggle. Welcome to National Salt Satyagraha Memorial. Don't miss this opportunity to witness the



The whole memorial is designed with a vision to enable an experiential journey



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate distance)

**Surat**

Airport/ Railway station – 60 kms.

**Ahmedabad**

Airport/ Railway station – 293 Kms

**Navsari**

Railway Station – 20 Kms

**Accommodation:** King's Heritage,  
Courtyard by Marriot and Toran Hotel,  
Vanz in Surat

**When to Visit:**

Every day except Tuesdays.

11:00 AM – 6:30 PM





## LAKHPAT



The Lakhpat Fort by the  
Arabian Sea.

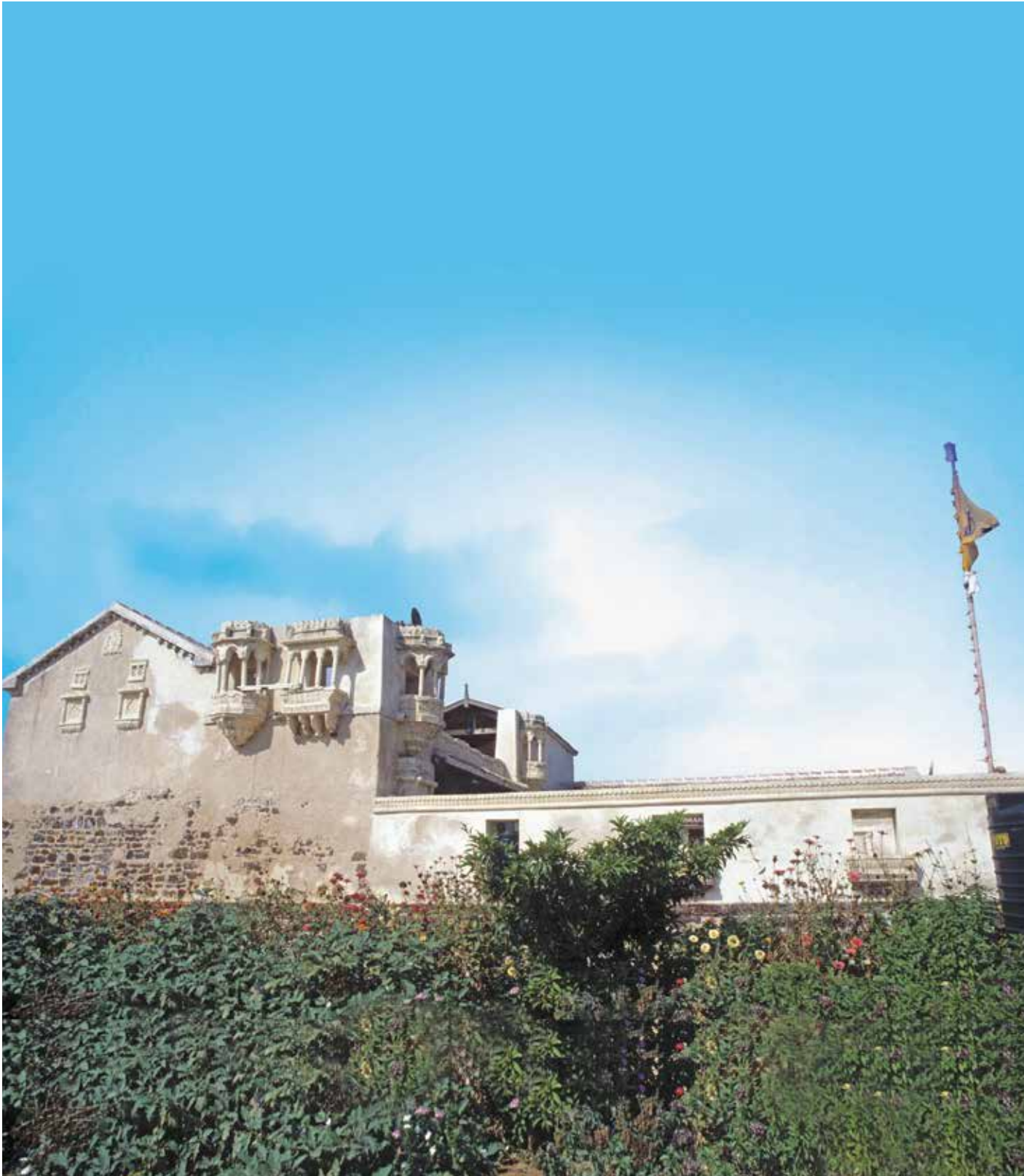
Once an important maritime centre, Lakhpat today is dominated by the walls of its seaside fortress. Being a scenic place with a fort and Islamic monuments, this was where scenes from the film Refugee were shot on location. The Lakhpat Gurudwara Sahib is a religious place for the Sikhs, specially those who belong to the Udassi Sect. The Gurudwara has the paduka (footwear) of Guru Nanakji, who is believed to have visited Lakhpat. This Gurudwara has won the UNESCO award for restoration.



Exquisite stonework on a monument at Lakhpat.



The Lakhpat Gurudwara is a protected monument  
and has won the UNESCO award for restoration





Guru Nanak's footwear at the Gurdwara Shri Lakhpat Sahib.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distance):

Bhuj Airport/Railway Station 151km

**Accommodations:**

Bhuj has a good choice of hotels and resorts.

**When to visit:**

Lakhpat is most pleasant between October and March.

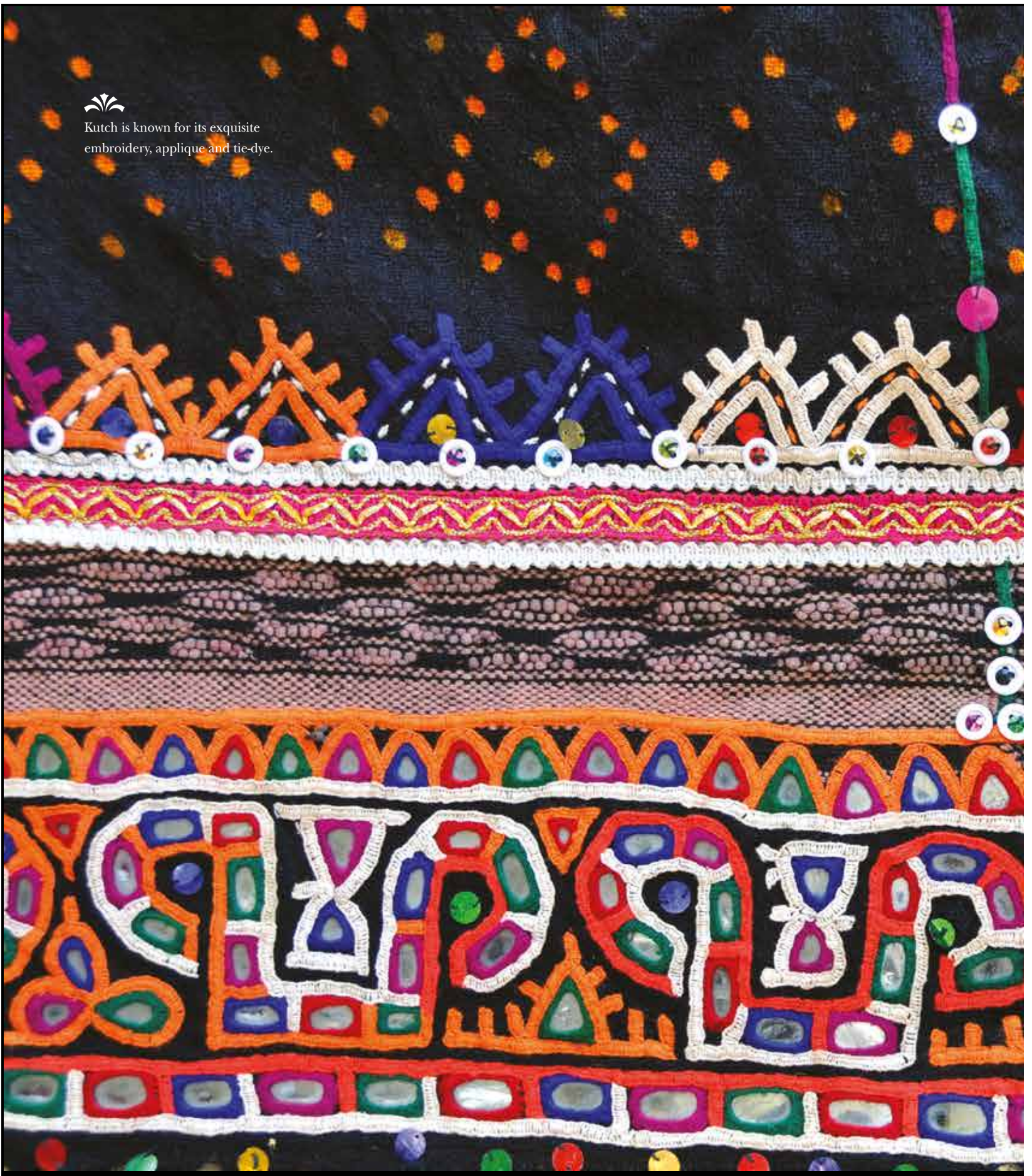


The Lakhpat Gurudwara is a religious place for Sikhs.



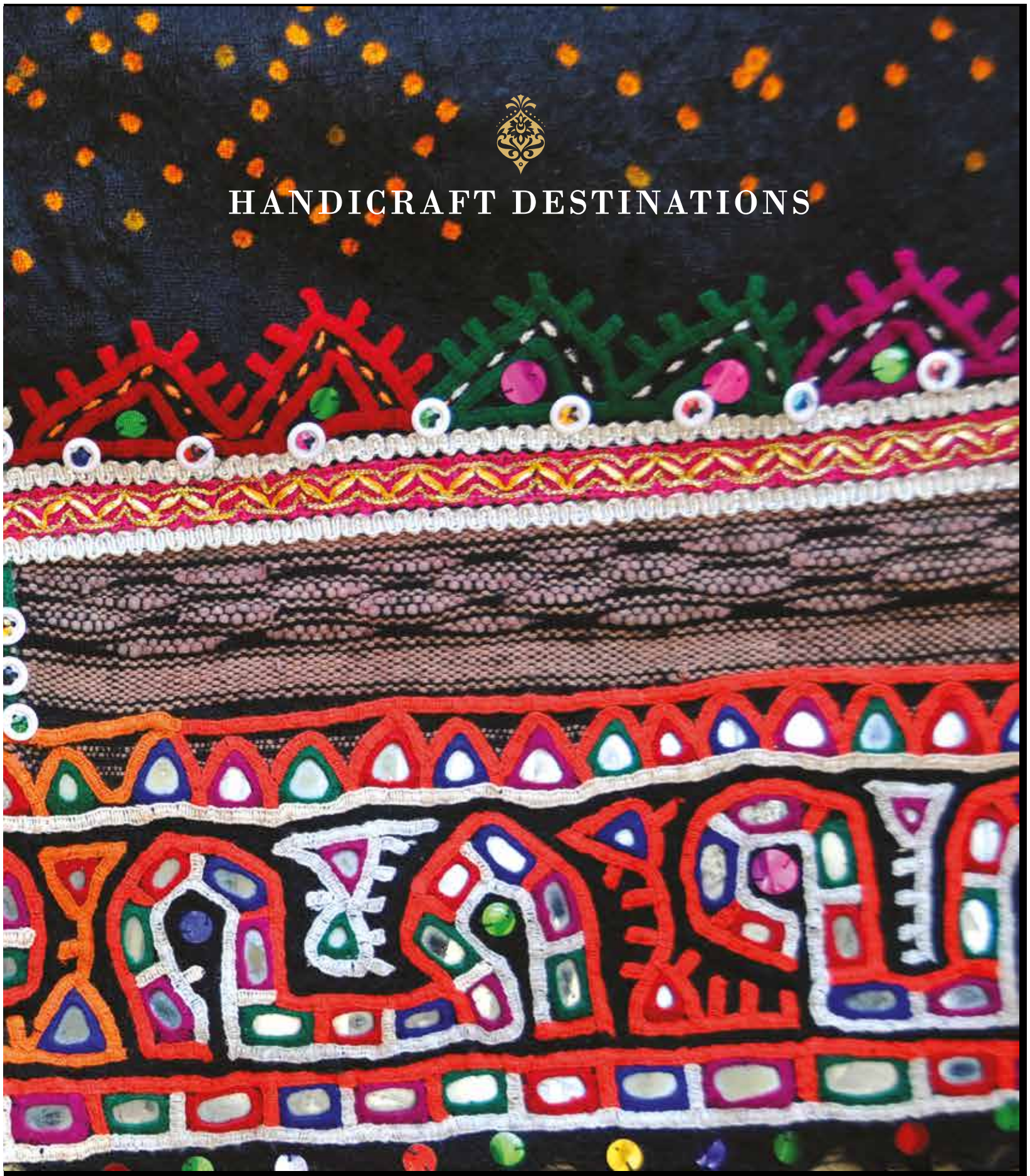


Kutch is known for its exquisite embroidery, applique and tie-dye.





# HANDICRAFT DESTINATIONS







## INTRODUCTION

Gujarat's deep-rooted tradition of textiles and handicrafts makes shopping in this state an exciting and rewarding experience. The range of handicrafts is diverse, from ritualistic arts, tribal artifacts and vibrant folk crafts to sophisticated metalware, rich silks and kundan jewellery.

The superb heritage of handicrafts goes back thousands of years. Agate stone cutting is said to be an ancient craft of Khambat. Archaeological excavations have shown that metallurgy, pottery, seal cutting, jewellery making and bead crafting reached high standards of maturity at Harappan sites of Gujarat more than 4000 years ago. Fine examples of these crafts have stood the test of time at Lothal.

The handicraft repertoire of Gujarat has been enriched by centuries of contacts with different lands. The ports of Gujarat facilitated trade with the Middle-east, the African ports, South East Asia and China since ancient times. The Portuguese, the Dutch and the British established trading bases along the Gujarat coast in the medieval period. From the Mughal courts to the British East India Company, the Parsees who landed in Gujarat fleeing religious persecution more than a millennium ago to the post-partition exodus from Sindh to Kutch, various cultural influences have left their mark on the range and quality of crafts for which Gujarat is justly famous. Today, the state is known for its intricate handloom woven cotton, wool and silk textiles, traditional durries and shawls, bandhani tie-dye fabrics, textile and leather embroidery, block prints, appliqué, beadwork, jewellery, metal crafts, woodcarving, lacquered woodcrafts, terracotta crafts, bamboo products, agate stonework, namda (felt-making), ritualistic paintings and other handmade products. NGOs, self-help groups and social responsibility initiatives of corporate houses have helped bring many lesser known and remotely located artisans into the spotlight of tourism in Gujarat.

The Bandhani (a form of tie-dye) is one of Gujarat's most famous textiles, with the 'panetar' and 'gharcholu' tie-dyed

patterns often considered symbolic of the state. Garments made from tie-dyed fabrics are worn by Gujarat's brides for important rituals and marriage. The artisans of Jamnagar, Kutch, Surendranagar and other districts of Gujarat are well-known for their wool, cotton and silk tie-dye.

Embroidery is one of Gujarat's most popular handicrafts. The girls and young women start doing embroidery at a young age to supplement family income, embellish personal clothing and family linen, or to ornament their own trousseau. One of the most striking and popular features of Gujarat's embroidery has been the use of mirrors secured onto the fabric. In the Kutch and Banaskantha districts, a visitor will find an incredible diversity of embroidery styles depending on the community they visit – Rabaris, Ahirs, Jaths, Mutwas, Meghwals, Sodhas and other communities have their own distinctive styles of embroidery. Saurashtra is also known for its embroidery and appliqué. Beadwork is another popular craft of women in Saurashtra. This is largely done by Kathi women who attach beads to each other to create shapes and forms similar to the embroidery and appliqué handwork of the area. The beadwork products include ornamental hangings, decorations for bullocks, horses and carts, and everyday objects such as fans and pads used to support heavy water jars.

While the Kutch and Kathiawad peninsulas are known for their handwork, the tribal communities of northern, eastern and southern Gujarat are known for the highly ritualistic arts like votive terracotta figures and pithoro paintings, which have importance in rites and festivals. Warli painting and bamboo crafts are specialties of southern Gujarat.

Apart from popular crafts, a number of sophisticated arts, crafts and weaves developed in Gujarat for the Mughal emperors, the numerous princely states of Gujarat and the European colonial powers, some of which continue to thrive even today.



The pastoral groups of Kutch are specially acclaimed for their mirrorwork, a type of embroidery where mirrors are attached to the fabric.





## PATOLA OF PATAN



The Patola of Patan is woven using the double ikat process. Created by tying and resist dyeing both the warp and the weft thread, the double ikat is considered a premiere form of weaving.

Patan's patola is supreme among all hand-woven textiles. The patola weavers use the double ikat technique which involves resist dyeing the warp and weft threads, and then drawing them on the looms prior to weaving. The precision, skill and labour required for drafting, tying, dyeing and weaving gives the patola its commercial value and elevated status in society. As only a few weavers in Gujarat, Indonesia and Japan are adept at double ikat, and production is restricted by the painstaking process, the patola has much collectible value. Patan is also one of the few places for mashru weaving in India.



The double ikat weaving requires considerable skill and labour for precise patterns to be woven.



The skill and labour that goes into creating a Patola makes it a highly valued silk fabric.





The rich and precise patterns of the Patola are the result of the time consuming process, skill and labour of the weavers.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station 125km, Mehsana Railway Station 52km,  
Palanpur Railway Station 58km

**Accommodations:**

Patan, Palanpur and Mehsana offer accommodations. Balam Palace Resort (73km) and Danta (96km) are the nearest heritage hotels.

**When to visit:**

Patan's monuments are open daily throughout the year, from 9am-5pm.



The Patola was an important trade textile when the spice trade was at its peak. Today, it has collectible value because only a few weavers in India, Indonesia and Japan practise double ikat techniques.





## EMBROIDERY TRAIL IN KUTCH



Embroidery is one of the key crafts of Gujarat's women. Women of various communities do embroidery for their livelihood or to embellish their personal belongings.

Kutch district has one of the largest concentrations of women embroiderers in the world. The range and quality is diverse, with women of different communities using distinct embroidery styles and motifs. Some of the finest mirrorwork is done by Hindu pastoral groups, like the Rabaris and the Ahirs. Ahir and Debaria Rabari villages can be visited near Bhuj and Anjar, while some of the best Kacchi Rabari work is seen in villages near Mundara and the Vaghadia Rabari is dominant in eastern Kutch. The Sodha Rajputs and Meghwals specialise in the exquisite Sindh-Kutch regional styles of suf, khaarek and paako. The Banni grasslands are inhabited by Islamic pastoral groups like the Jath, the Rashipotra, the Halepotra and the Muthwa, known for beautiful geometric embroidery.



The Banni region of Kutch is known for its high concentration of embroiderers and diversity of embroidery styles. Different communities have their own distinctive techniques and motifs.





An embroidery panel from the Kala Raksha Museum at Sumrasar Sheikh in the Banni region shows the intricate detailing of the embroidery from the Sindh-Kutch region. The craftswomen do painstaking work to embellish the fabric with exquisite motifs. The women use intricate stitches to fill squares or triangles in the forms of embroidery typical of this region.







Rabari girls start embroidery from a very early age. The young Rabaris do special embroidery to pieces of cloth that will comprise their trousseau at the time of their marriage.





A traditionally dressed  
Banni doll at Hodka.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

##### **Transport Hubs:**

The craft villages are accessible from Bhuj Airport/Railway Station and Gandhidham Railway Station.

##### **Accommodations:**

Shaam-e-Sarhad at Hodka and resorts at Dhordo offer accommodations in the craft villages.

##### **When to visit:**

The weather in Kutch is most pleasant between October and March. The Rann Utsav is held in December-January at Dhordo. There are fairs like Ravechi Mela in August-September.



Meghwal women are adept at embroidery, using techniques passed down through generations. While travelling through Kutch it is possible to visit the homes of various communities and see their distinctive styles of embroidery.





## BANDHANI OF JAMNAGAR & KUTCH



Bandhani patterns are created by tying areas of cloth with thread to block the absorption of colour at the time of dyeing. The continuous process of tying and dyeing results in the distinctive designs typical of bandhani.

Jamnagar and Kutch are important centres for bandhani or tie-dye, the process of tying and dyeing a length of cloth. The bandhani fabrics tie-dyed by artisans, called Khattris or Vanzas, are known for their fine dots and the contours of the patterns. Using the tie-dye process, the artisans create saris, turbans, scarves, stoles, veil and cloth pieces for dress items. The bandhani is a wedding dress among many communities in Gujarat. Gharcholu, Panetar and Chandrakhani are some of the famous bandhani patterns from Gujarat.



A woman artisan at Badli village in Kutch knots an area of cloth. The fabric is re-immersed in a dye bath. The continuous tie and dye process creates the bandhani or bandhej fabric.

Handicraft Destinations: Bandhani of Jamnagar & Kutch

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Bandhani is a form of resist dyeing that involves much skill and labour.  
Women usually do the tying while dyeing is undertaken by men.





The bandhani artisans are creating trendy silk products to address the contemporary market.



The traditional patterns of a Jamnagar bandhani.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

##### Transport Hubs:

Jamnagar Airport for the bandhani centres in and around Jamnagar, Bhuj Airport for the Kutch bandhani centres

##### Accommodations:

Jamnagar, Bhuj and Gandhidam offer a good choice of hotels near the bandhani centres. Darbargadh Devpur Homestay is a heritage property near the bandhani centre of Badli. Beach at Mandvi Palace is a beach resort near bandhani and batik centres.

##### When to visit:

The weather in Jamnagar and Kutch is pleasant between October and March.





## THE WEAVERS OF SURENDRANAGAR DISTRICT



SurenDRanagar district has some of Gujarat's major handloom clusters. Rare weaves like ikat and tangaliya also thrive in this district.

SurenDRanagar district is one of Gujarat's major handloom producing regions. Towns and villages, like Wadhwan, Sayla, Vasatvadi and Ambala, are known for their weavers. One of the unique weaves of SurenDRanagar district is the Tangaliya or Tangaliyo, which literally means knot. The weaver uses the weft and extra threads to create motifs and figures in a dotted pattern on the woven fabric. The single ikat done at various places in this district, including Somasar and Sayla, creates a less expensive version of the ultra-rich double ikat Patolas of Patan. Other interesting handicrafts of the district include stonecarving, metalwork, embroidery and beadwork.



Tangaliya weaves produce knotted patterns on the surface of woollen shawls and clothing.



Beadwork is the forte of the Mirs. At villages like Dasada in Surendranagar district, Mir women make beaded bangles for tourists.





The beautiful geometrical patterns created by a tangaliya weaver in Surendranagar district.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

##### Transport Hubs:

Ahmedabad and Rajkot are the nearest major airports to handicraft destinations in Surendranagar district. Surendranagar and Dhrangadhra are well-connected railway stations in the district.

##### Accommodations:

There are heritage properties at Sayla, Wadhwan and Muli in Surendranagar district. Surendranagar also has hotels. Rann Riders, Royal Safari Camp, Desert Coursers Camp Zainabad and Devjibhai's Kooba are eco-resorts in the district.

##### When to visit:

The Tarnetar Fair in August/September is one of the cultural highlights of Surendranagar district.



## THE COTTAGE INDUSTRIES OF SURAT



Saadeli is a version of marquetry, the art of decorating wooden surfaces with slices and pieces of other materials. Popularly known as Khatam in Persian countries, this handicraft is said to have been brought to Surat by the Parsee population of South Gujarat. Only a few artisans specialise in Saadeli today.

Surat has for long been known for its woodcrafts and textiles. Women work at home or in units to produce handmade braids called zari, traditionally made from gold but now usually with metallic thread for sari borders. Aari work or khaatla kaam is another widespread craft in Surat where artisans use a long needle called aari to embellish fabrics with zari and sequins. A rare craft of Surat is Saadeli, a form of marquetry where the surface of wooden articles is decorated with a veneer of delicate slices of wood and other materials. Saadeli is said to have its origins in the Iranian style of marquetry called Khatam which was brought to Surat by Parsees. The artisan cuts out precise geometric shapes from materials like wood or even acrylic and then applies it in artistic patterns.



Aari or needlework is a popular craft of Surat, Ahmedabad and other textile centres.



An artisan embellishes fabric using  
the aari needle.





The intricate work of marquetry or Saadeli in Surat.



**VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs:**

Surat Airport/Railway Station

**Accommodations:**

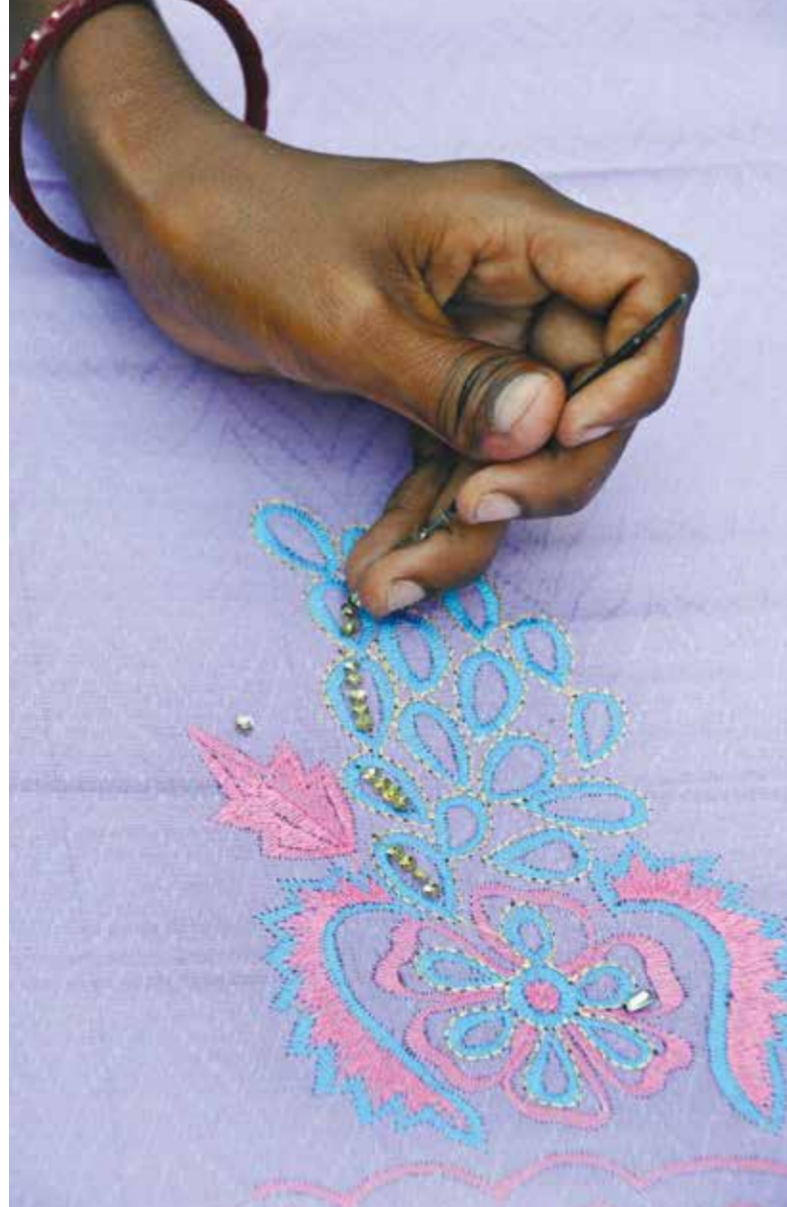
Surat offers a good choice of star-rated hotels.

**When to visit:**

The crafts of Surat continue throughout the year.



Needle work in Surat.







## THE RARE ARTS OF NIRONA



Rogan, done only by artisans from one extended family at Nirona village in Kutch, is the unique technique of painting cloth with embossed lacquer work or enamel work like patterns.

Nirona and Zura near Nakhatrana are known for interesting crafts like melodic bells, lacquered woodwork and rogan painting. Rogan is the art of decorating fabrics with colours that use a castor oil base, now only practiced by one family in Nirona. The artisan painstakingly makes the outline on half the cloth and then folds the piece to repeat the pattern in the other half. After that, the outlines are filled with colour. The entire process is freehand work.

Muslim Lohar families involve all their members in the processes of making the bells, with the head craftsman of the family being finally responsible for shaping the bell and setting the sound. The sound of the bell depends on the shape and size of the body, the wooden strip attached to the bell and the bottom rim. The woodworkers of Nirona and Nakhatrana also undertake wood and lac turnery. After turning the wood on a rudimentary lathe made from two iron rods with chisels, the surface is smoothed on this lathe using an oil-soaked cloth before applying the mix of natural colours and lac till it gets a unique pattern of marbled colours.



The use of goeey castor oil based paint for decorating fabrics creates an embossed effect on the surface.



In rogan art, the artisan uses an iron rod as his brush to decorate the fabric with a gooey castor-oil based paint.





Metalwork artisans of Nirona and Zura cast copper-plated iron bells capable of producing melodic sounds.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distance):

Bhuj Airport/Railway Station 40km

**Accommodations:**

Bhuj has a good choice of hotels.

Infinity Rann of Kutch is a resort near Nakhatrana

**When to visit:**

Kutch is most pleasant between October and March.



The Nirona woodworkers, called `vaadas', specialise in lacquered wooden crafts.





## AJRAKH CENTRES IN KUTCH



Ajrakh prints are transferred from geometric shapes etched on the wooden blocks by pressing them hard and precisely on the fabric.

Dhamadka, Ajrakhpur and Khavda are centres for the intricate craft of Ajrakh, which involves different stages of resist printing and mordant dyeing. As many as 20 or even more carved blocks can be used in the process of printing a length of Ajrakh cloth which can take weeks to complete. Typically the printing is done on both sides of the cloth and the craftsman has to use his mastery to ensure the exact alignment of the design on the reverse side. The blue hues that are characteristic of Ajrakh are drawn from indigo and the reds come from madder. The cooling blue and warm red hues of Ajrakh are believed to be an answer to the extreme climate of the desert zone of Sindh, Kutch and Marwar.



Blocks are etched with patterns to be transferred during the printing process.



The artisan precisely places the block  
to print the fabric.





The exquisite Ajrakh work creates beautifully patterned fabric.



#### **VISITORS' GUIDE:**

##### **Transport Hubs:**

The Bhuj Airport/Railway Station, Gandhidham Railway Station and Kandla Airport make good hubs to explore the craft villages.

##### **Accommodations:**

There are star-rated hotels at Gandhidham and Bhuj, from where it is possible to make day excursions to Ajrakhpur and Dhamadka. Shaam-e-Sarhad at Hodka, Gateway to Rann Resort at Dhordo and the Toran Rann Resort offer accommodations near Khavda and other craft centres.

##### **When to visit:**

Rann Utsav is a tourism festival held in winter at Dhordo.



The carved patterns on the wooden block are filled with natural colours for Ajrakh printing.







## TRIBAL ART OF CHHOTA UDEPUR



Pithora or pithoro is a highly ritualistic art of the Rathwa tribal group.

Chhota Udepur district is known for the highly ritualistic paintings called pithoras or pithoros. Traditionally done with natural colours on the walls of Rathwa tribal homes, the pithoro is coming into the mainstream as the tribal groups now do their traditional paintings on cloth or paper for sale.



The artistic ornaments of a Rathwa woman.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distance):

Vadodara Airport/Railway Station 100km

**Accommodations:**

Kali Niketan is a heritage hotel in Chhota Udepur

Jambughoda has a heritage hotel and private resorts

**When to visit:**

The best time to see freshly painted pithoras is during festivals like Dushera (September/October) and Holi (March). There are fairs and haats (markets) in these festive periods at various villages of Chhota Udepur district during which it may be possible to buy tribal paintings and wooden sculpture.

Handicraft Destinations: Chhota Udepur

251



Pithoros are auspicious for the Rathwa tribal group.





A pithoro depicts daily life among the tribal communities.



Tribal ornaments of Chhota Udepur



Handicraft Destinations: Chhota Udepur 253



The votive  
horses p  
Poshina  
for tribal  
now also  
house an



## VOTIVE TERRACOTTA OF POSHINA



ve terracotta figures of  
roduced in villages like  
have ritualistic importance  
groups. The potters are  
making such figures for  
d garden decoration.

Poshina is well-known for votive terracotta figures that are very much part of the rituals of tribal communities like the Garasia Adivasis. The terracotta horse, called Ghoda Dev, has special place for rituals, and is considered a messenger for the gods in many cultures. The potters, called Kumhars, make the various hollow parts of the terracotta horse on their wheels and then join them together, with some parts moulded by hand and added in grooves.



Poshina is an important centre for the production of votive terracotta figures. The terracotta horses have considerable ritualistic significance for Garasia Adivasis.

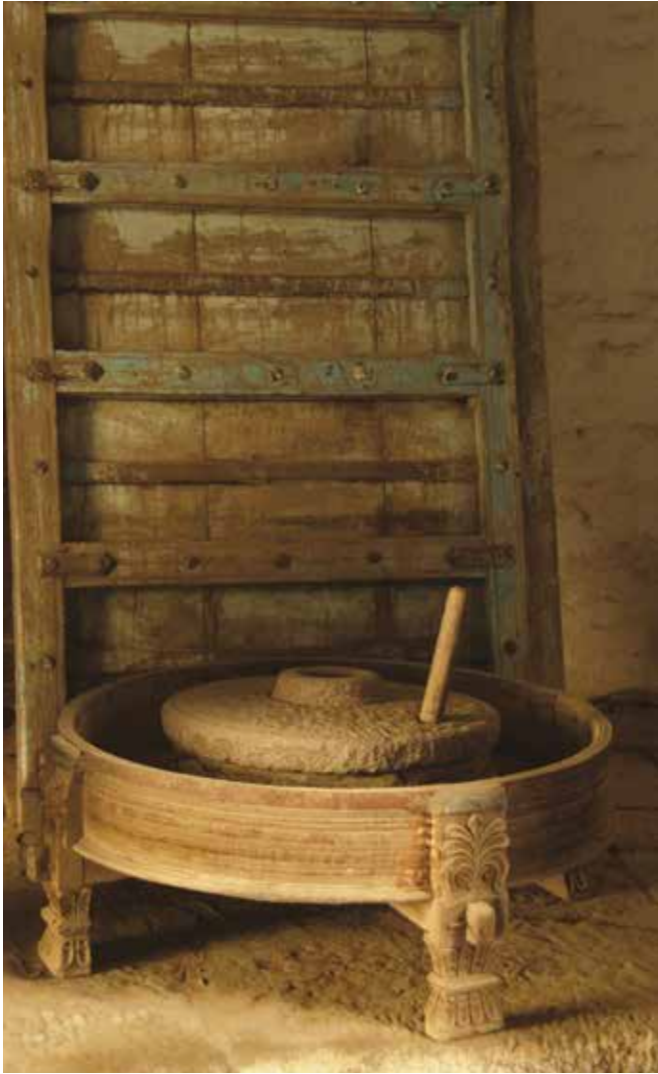


The Garasia tribal women of Poshina and its surrounding villages wear artistic jewellery. Silversmiths of Poshina make these ornaments for the tribal market.





The potter's wheel is used for the shaping of terracotta utensils.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs** (Approximate distances):

Ahmedabad Airport 180km, Abu Road Station 51km

**Accommodations:**

Darbargadh Poshina is a heritage hotel

**When to visit:**

A large number of terracotta horses are made in October-November for the Diwali festive period. Tribal fairs occur at Chitra Vichitra and other locations around Poshina in March-April.



Scores of votive terracotta figures can be seen at tribal shrines. The Garasias offer these terracotta horses as part of their rituals.







## KABA GANDHI NO DELO





The whole memorial is designed with a vision to enable an experiential journey



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs  
(Approximate distance)

**Rajkot**

Airport/ Railway station-2.2 kms

**Ahmedabad**

Airport/ Railway station -206 kms

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Khirasara Palace in Rajkot,

Hotel Pearl in Rajkot and other

Hotels in Rajkot

**When to Visit:**

Everyday Between  
9:00AM to 6:00 PM





# MAHATMA GANDHI MUSEUM



Mahatma Gandhi Museum, Rajkot was previously known as Mohandas Gandhi Vidhyalaya, Alfred High School and Kathiawar High School established on 17th October 1853 with 36 students. Gandhiji completed his graduation from Alfred High School (Kathiawar High School) in 1887. Over 600 students had been enrolled in the school during Gandhiji's time.



The museum consists of 39 galleries enriched with information about Gandhi and his ideologies. It also houses a souvenir shop, food court, garden etc. and other facilities useful for tourists.



**Visitors' Guide:**

Transport Hubs (Approximate distance)

**Rajkot**

Airport/ Railway station -2.2 kms

**Ahmedabad**

Airport/ Railway station -206 kms

**Accommodation:**

Hotel Khirasara Palace in Rajkot,

Hotel Pearl in Rajkot

and other Hotels in Rajkot

**When to Visit:**

Tuesday to Sunday

Between 10:00AM to 7:00 PM





## RITUAL CLOTHS OF AHMEDABAD

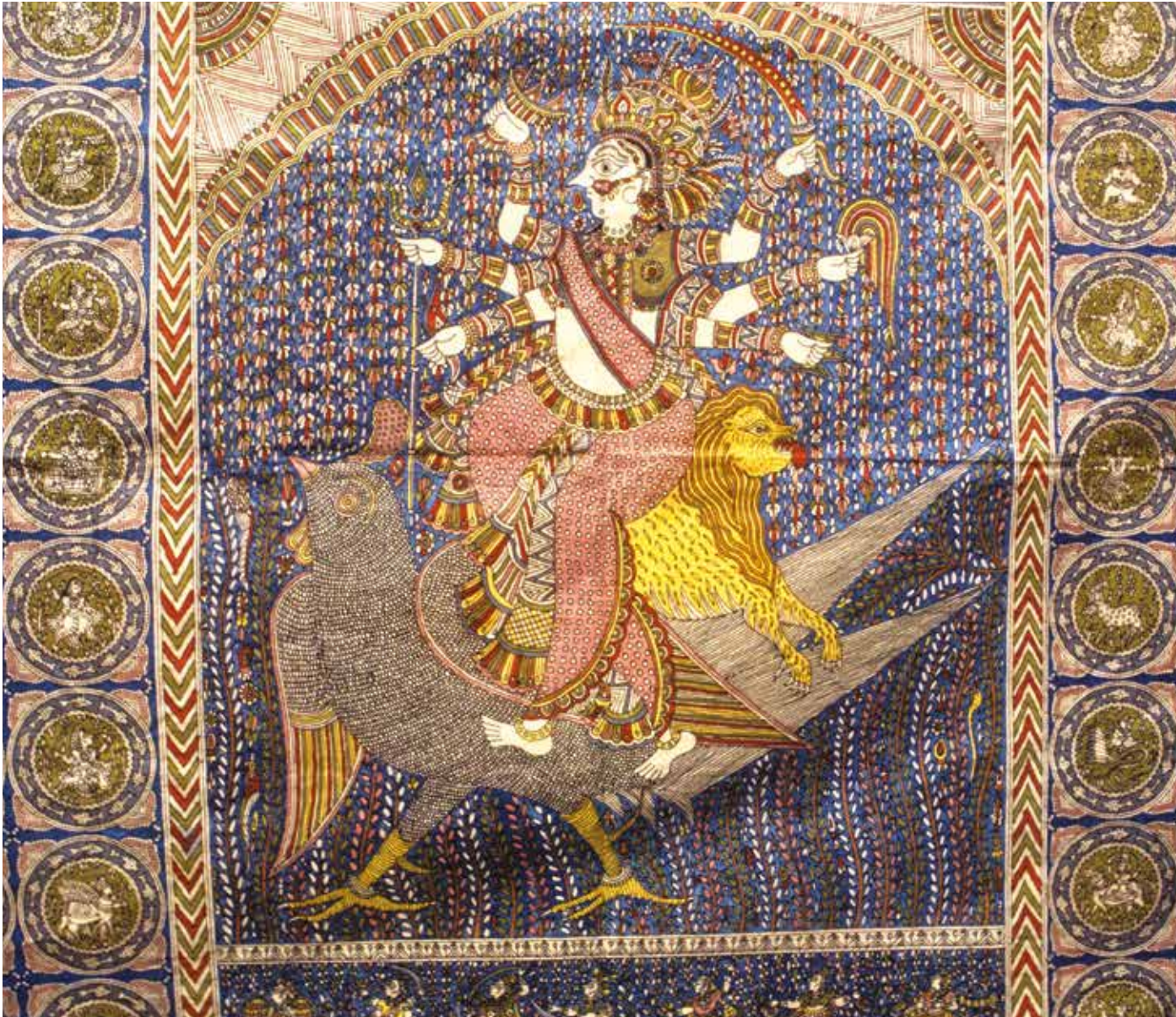


The kalamkari artisan called the Chitara creates freehand outlines before filling in the motifs with colour.

Matani Pacchedi and Matani Chadarvo are hand-painted or block-printed cloths. The Kalamkari artisan, called the Chitara, works with a pen called 'kalam' to free hand draw the figures, before filling them with natural dyes. The Mata ni Pachhedi has a strong religious identity and depicts the Mother Goddess as the centerpiece, with columns showing deities, processions and other subjects.



The shrine cloths called Matani Pacchedi depict the mother goddess. National award winning artisans like Manubhai, Manjuben, Sanjay and Vasant Chitara, have created many masterpieces with bold forms and colours for the contemporary market.



#### VISITORS' GUIDE:

**Transport Hubs:**(Approximate distance):  
Ahmedabad Airport/Railway Station

**Accommodations:**

Ahmedabad has a good choice of star-rated hotels.

**When to visit:**

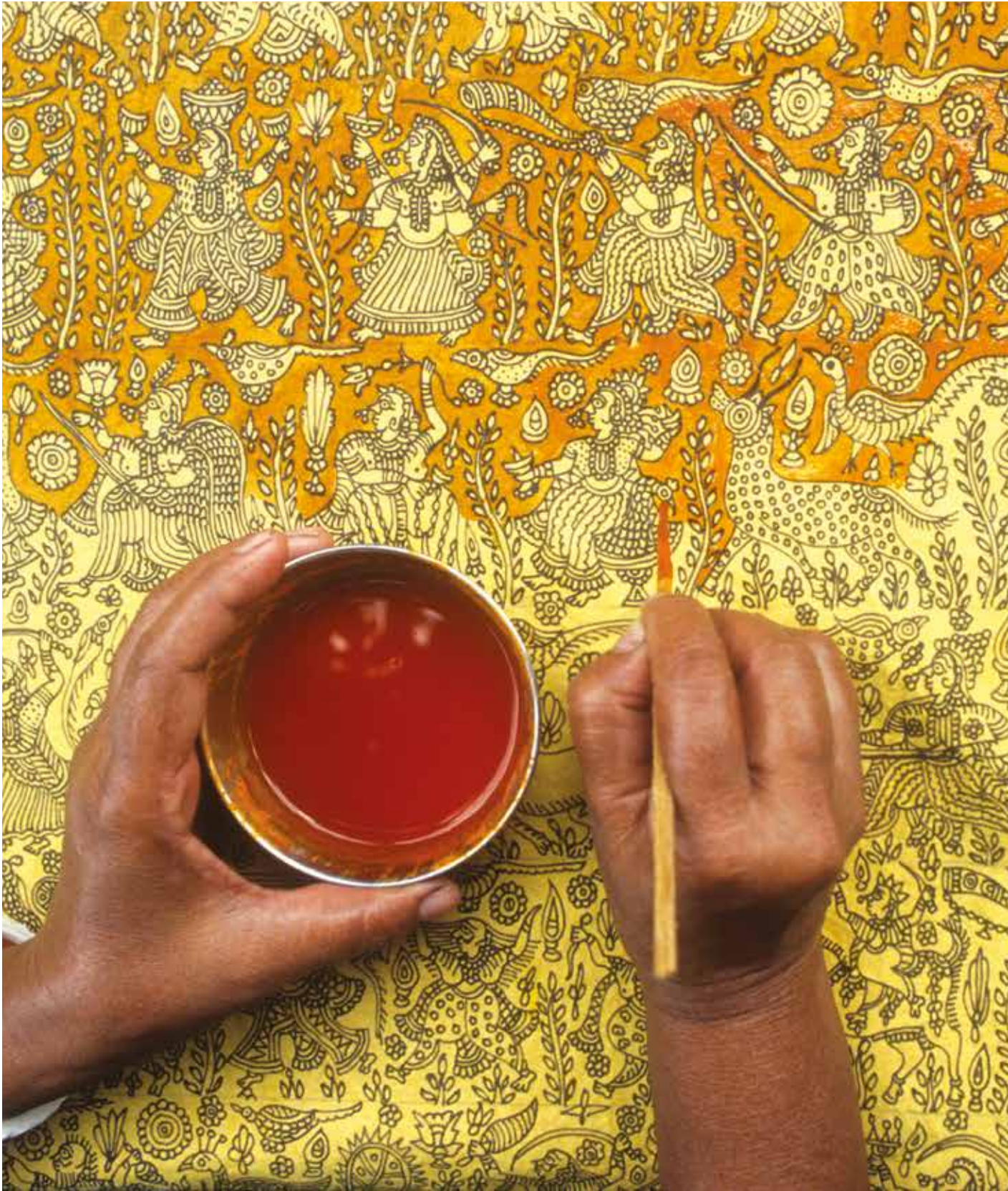
Ritualistic kalamkari paintings are done before the Chaitra Navratri in April and the Sharad Navratri in August/September.

Handicraft Destinations: Matani Pacchedi

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A woman painting areas of the Matani Pachedi.





The Matani Pachedi is painted with natural dyes derived from minerals and plant sources.



A kalamkari masterpiece from one of the few families that is continuing the historical tradition of hand-painting Matani Pachedi cloths.










Gujarat  
Tourism

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E-mail : [info@gujarattourism.com](mailto:info@gujarattourism.com)



-  HANDICRAFTS
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-  FAIRS & FESTIVALS
-  MODERN WONDERS

-  NATIONAL HIGHWAY
-  STATE HIGHWAY

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