TAMARIND GLOBAL

THE TAMARIND GLOBAL NEWSLETTER JUNE 2020

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IN TANG THIS MONTH

In slow stages, the country is begining to open up. That does not mean we are all ready to crowd the streets or hit the busiest beaches in the neighbourhood. At Tamarind, we are curating off the beaten track holidays for you - somewhere you can go and be away from crowds and the threat of infection. We have completely overhauled our standard operating procedures to ensure that your safety is our first priority.

We are working closely with hotel chains and individual properties to optimize their existing safety standards for our clients. Owning our fleet of transport vehicles allows us to ensure deep sanitization before and after each use, and monitor the health of our chauffeurs. At every step of the journey, the well being of our clients is being prioritized. Rest assured, you are in safe hands with us!

OFF THE BEATEN TRACK

KATHIAWADA RAJ MAHAL

Kathiwada is an erstwhile principality dating back to 1434. Kathiwada Raaj Mahal is the centrepiece of Kathiwada Estates and was formerly a royal hunting lodge commissioned by Rana Onkarsinhji in 1895. This fully renovated plush mansion sits on 110 acres of privately owned farm land which is surrounded by the Vindhya range of hills offering delightful visuals in every direction. Modern interiors are finely tuned to meet the aesthetic of forgone royalty with each room having its own unique identity. The 11 room property studded with ancient memorabilia, photographs and modern art is a treat for the discerning guest

GETTING THERE

Vadodara is the nearest and most accessible airport. It's a two and half hour comfortable drive on good roads to Kathiwada through very scenic routes. Ahmedabad (4 hours) and Indore (4.30 hours) are also nearby airports of choice that some of our guests have previously used.

RESIDENCIES

Kathiwada offers the perfect environment for writers, authors and artists who may choose to book the cottage/villa at subsidised rates on a mid to long term basis.

DINING

A large variety of traditional Indian cuisine and options of continental dishes as well. Most of the food is cooked using fresh local produce from the Kathiwada region and some organically grown vegetables from the kitchen garden. All meals are on a fixed pre-set menu basis (buffet) and at set timings and set locations on the property. Sunset bars are set-up at select venues on the property.

EXPERIENCES/ ACTIVITIES

- Accompanied excursions and picnics to the jungle near Ratanmal bear and leopard sanctuary through Jholia waterfall can be booked at a charge.
- Guided farm visits with the resident manager of farming.
- Short agricultural experience on the farms surrounding Raaj Mahal
- Guided tribal village walks to Mujhipura or Juna Kathiwada villages to explore some of India's oldest Bhil tribe settlements
- Pottery at the Adivasi hut on site
- Explore all the foundation activities at the erstwhile state polo grounds at any time during the day -
- Cycles are available for exploring the farms and Kathiwada town.
- A day long excursion to Bagh - a famous textile hub for award winning block printers and 5th century Buddhist caves are on offer just a 90-minute drive from the property on paid basis

SITES EN ROUTE

Enroute Kathiwada from/toVadodara/Ahmedabad is Champaner, a famous UNESCO world heritage site popular with history lovers, archeologists and explorers.

Enroute Kathiwada from/to Indore/Maheshwar is the town of Bagh, home to block printing and 5thcentury Buddhist caves. Popular with textile groups and handicraft lovers but also ideal for a day long excursion and picnic from the property.

MARY BUDDEN ESTATE BINSAR

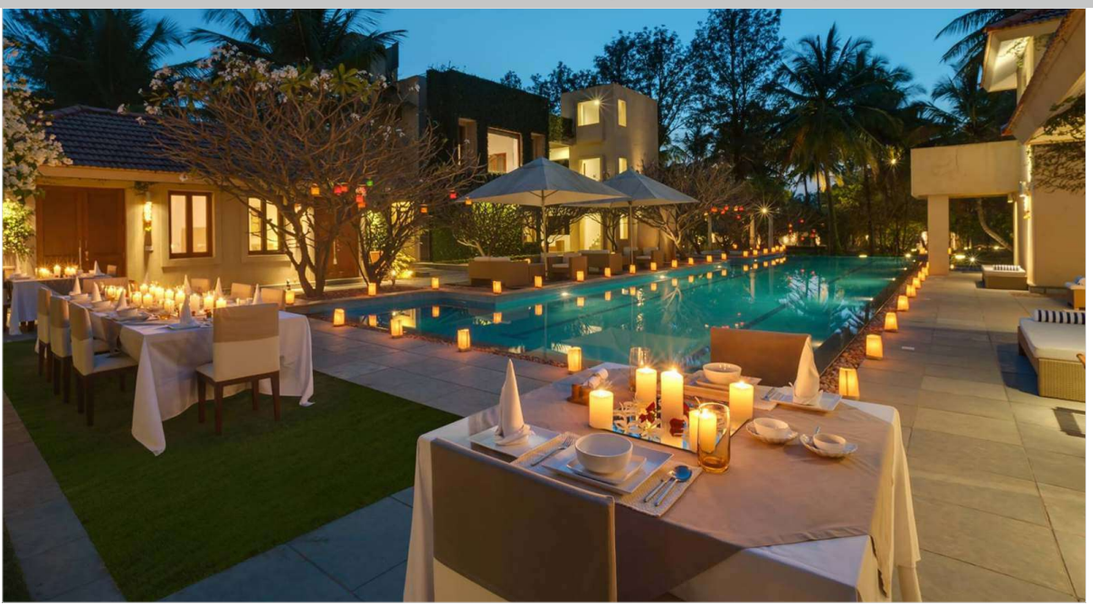
Mary Budden Estate in Binsar sits on five serene acres of land, perched at almost7,000 feet above sea level. It is one of only five privately owned estates in the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary. Lovingly restored for comfortable and elegant living, it still retains its original charm. There is a sprawling library for book worms. The entire estate is solar powdered and backed by generator as well.

ROOMS:
All rooms are of one category and non air-conditioned (the weather is nice throughout the year). The cottages are spacious, designed with high ceilings of pine wood and fitted with fireplaces. Some of the larger bathrooms have bukharis too. All rooms are non-smoking

ACTIVITIES:
Guided walks and day-long hikes, within Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary: The sanctuary is famous for more than 250 species of birds–a paradise for birdwatchers. For day-long hikes, the Estate can organize a picnic lunch at a lovely spot in the forest, where you can enjoy a beautiful view of the snow peaks.
Cooking lesson with the chefs at the Mary Budden cottage kitchen patio: Spend an afternoon or evening learning how to cook with chefs, Ganesh and Gobind, both experts on Indian cuisine.
Evening music performance by the MBE staff, around a bonfire: The staff at Mary Budden play the flute, and a make-shift drum and love to regale guests with local Kumaoni songs and traditional dances. The hostess will be happy to translate these songs for you.
Visit to Dalar village and tea/ lunch at the homestay: Walk down to Dalar village and visit the home of a villager to interact, learn their way of life. Also, visit the primary school at Dalar which has less than 10 students who love to meet and chat up guests. Spend some time interacting with the kids here, before heading to Dalar village homestay where you can enjoy some locally made tea/ lunch.
Sundowner at Leopard Hill, Mary Budden Estate: Enjoy an afternoon of indulgence at Mary Budden Estate's largest sit-out area, where they can organize a sundowner for you

Getting there:
Day train: New Delhi-Kathgodam Shatabdi: Timings-Depart 0600 hrs, Arrive1140 hrs. Drive 4 hours to reach Binsar.
Day train: Kathgodam-New Delhi Shatabdi: Timings-Depart 1530 hrs, Arrive 2100 hrs.
Drive from New Delhi to MBE takes approximately10hours.
Drive from Corbett to MBE takes approximately 05 hours.

SHREYAS YOGA RETREAT



The essence of Shreyas is the concept of wellness of body, mind and soul. The principal medium through which guests are exposed to this is Yoga, which is non-denominational and open to people of all faiths. At Shreyas, it is demonstrated through various customised programs that, contrary to popular belief, Yoga can be practiced by everyone–fit or unfit, old or young, supple or brittle. Yoga has an amazing effect on the body and mind energies allowing one to deal with life's ups and downs with sense of equanimity. Traditional Hatha and Ashtanga Yoga are practised–from simple posture classes for stress management to more advanced modules. Besides the asanas, Shreyas offers breathing exercises (Pranayama), visualization techniques (Sakshibhava), deep relaxation classes (YogaNidra), Yogic Kriyas (Jalaneti, Vaman Dhouti), candle & chakra meditation, etc. People are encouraged to work in the organically grown vegetable and herb gardens, getting their feet dirty!

EXPERIENCES:

Community Service Exercises:
All the guests are encouraged to participate in one Community Service Exercise during their stay. This includes picking vegetables, herbs and fruits from Shreyas' Organic Farm, cutting vegetables, assisting in preparing a meal, and serving the food to the children or elderly in the village school or the orphanage that Shreyas supports.

ACCOMODATION:
Accommodation comprises tents and cottages spread across the expansive gardens. There are 8 twin/double Garden Cottages, 3 double Poolside Cottages and 13 Suite Cottages. The Garden Tented Cottages have fixed bases, multi-layered canvas roofs and bathrooms with private open-air courtyards. Each tent has its own verandah and they are well spread out to ensure privacy. The 3 bedroom cottage in the gardens accommodates 5 persons. All the rooms and tents are done up in calm, earthy colours and in a minimalist style. The linen and furnishings are of the highest quality and the 'finish' of almost every aspect is second to none–immensely stylish & comfortable.
Water at Shreyas is purified on site and is provided in all bedrooms and is safe to drink.

Dining
Shreyas serves gourmet vegetarian cuisine that comprises Indian, Continental, Mexican and Oriental. There are set times for breakfast, lunch and dinner at Shreyas. There is one dining room where guests are encouraged to dine together. On warm nights dinner is often served alfresco in the garden, and guests have a choice of joining a larger group or dining on their own. As much as possible is grown or produced on the premises. The menus are carefully planned to fit in with the overall wellness programs. All meals are included in the nightly room rate (excluding room services meals). Special dietary requests such as wheat-free, dairy free, low-calorie, vegan etc. are accommodated on request

Alcohol Policy: Alcohol is neither served nor permitted at Shreyas, and guests are requested not bring their own for private consumption.

Anaha Spa: Designed as a 'Retreat within a Retreat', the sprawling spa covers 16,000 square feet. The spa has dedicated Ayurveda, Naturopathy and wetern massage rooms, and 3 rooms for hydrotherapy, acupressure and acupuncture. Panchakarma treatment has now been introduced at Shreyas. Shreyas has in-house Ayurveda and Naturopath doctors to guide guests for treatments based on the body type or dosha. Separate spa facilities for men and women include steam rooms, and experiential showers. Outside, the spa includes meditation areas, salon, gymnasium, and a juice bar offering fresh juices, smoothies and light organic meals, and a herb garden that provides fresh ingredients used in our scrubs and masks. There is also a 2000 sq.ft Meditation and Yoga pavilion & a series of private Yoga and Meditation Spaces offering beautiful varied settings.

Getting There:
Accessibility By Air: Regular flights to Bangalore
Bengaluru International Airport is 45 minutes away from Shreyas and is a beautiful drive through the country-side. The new route completely bypasses Bangalore city and the busy traffic junctions. Shreyas is 35 kms northwest of Bangalore city (about 1½ hours drive)
By Road: From Mysore, Belur, Halebid, Hampi, Bangalore.
By Train: To Bangalore, followed by a 1-hour drive.

WATCH THE PEACOCKS DANCE

Come monsoons, and we immediately think about the beautiful peacock, dancing in the rain, with its resplendent tail spread out behind it. Undoubtedly one of the most beautiful birds in the world and a native of the Indian sub-continent, it is not surprising that the Peacock was anointed as the national bird of India in 1963. Hailing from the pheasant family, these exotic birds are cherished for their colourful plumes and eggs. The peacocks, more appropriately called peafowls, (peacock refers to the male) are found in lowland forests and hills usually in small groups consisting of one male and several females.

Morachi Chincholi, Maharashtra Morachi Chincholi is a village located 55 km from Pune, and the name literally means "the town of tamarind trees and dancing peacocks". Although the place isn't a reserve or a government apporved sanctuary, the village is filled with peafowls all across the place. These peacocks are used to living with the locals but are shy with tourists. However you can still sight a peacock casually moving around within the village. The beautiful village is a perfect getway since it gives you the feel of a countryside, culture and tradition of the villagers amidst the beauty of nature, and of course, peacocks!

Bankapura Peacock Sanctuary, Karnataka Being one of the less explored places of Karnataka, Bankapura is one of the very few sanctuaries in India, that is exclusively reserved for the preservation of peacocks. When the Government of India noticed the massive presence of peacocks in this area, it declared Bankapura as a peacock reserve in 2006. Over 1000 peacocks are speculated to be found in this area! The sanctuary is situated in the Bankapura Fort, which can be reached just 2.5 km from the Bangalore-Pune Highway. The sanctuary remains open from 9 am to 5pm on all days of the week

Viralimalai Peacock Sanctuary, Tamil Nadu The small town of Viralimalai in Tamil Nadu is located about 30 km from Trichy. It is famous for two reasons - one is the peacock sanctuary and two, the Lord Shanmuganathar Temple. Peacocks of beautiful feathers can be found roaming in their natural habitat in the sanctuary. The temple is located on a hilltop with 210 steps to climb. It is popularly known as the ancient place where the dance form of Bharatnatyam flourished. Beautiful woodlands surround the entire region making it a great place to spend some time in nature.

Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, Karnataka Located near the border of Karnataka and Goa, Dandeli is a beautiful place that is famous for adventure activities. This is because of the abundance of nature's blessings found in the region. The forest thickets of Dandeli are home to many animals and birds. But the sanctuary is particularly a haven for birdwatchers since birds of about 200 species can be found here. India peafowls or peacocks and Indian elephants are the common sightings. Apart from this, Malabar pied hornbills, orange-headed thrush, black-napped monarchs are some of the other birds that can be seen at the sanctuary.

Choolanur Peacock Sanctuary, Kerala Choolanur Peacock Sanctuary is made of thickets of forests that spread over 500 hectares. It is found 30 km from the town of Palakkad in Kerala. This beautiful sanctuary is home to over 200 vibrant peacocks. It is often called as Mayiladumpara Peacock Sanctuary as well. If you love watching birds, a visit to Choolanur is a must while at Kerala!

MONSOON TREATS!

What else can you enjoy in India during the rains? Hot, fresh bhutta (roasted corn) on the seafront, pipng hot tea with pakoras and spicy chutney, trekking near the rain fed waterfalls and of course, a good book to curl up with! Our recommendations:

The Blue Umbrella, Ruskin Bond

Everyone's favourite author, Ruskin Bond, set this well-known novel in the hills of Garhwal. Protagonist Binya's story possesses the power to transport you back to your childhood and the story leaves you with a deep sense of fulfillment once you complete it. Just don't blame us if you feel a strong urge to travel to the hills soon after!

Chasing The Monsoon, Alexander Frater

This underrated travelogue by Alexander Frater traces the monsoon from Kerala to Cherrapunji in Mehgalaya (aka The Wettest Place on Earth). Frater also travels to Burma (now Myanmar) and Thailand in his quest to, well, chase the monsoon. Frater's sardonic writing and his process of discovering himself as he chases the rains add another layer to the narrative. If you love monsoons, you'll love this book. Guaranteed.

DGCA advisory: Airlines told to keep middle seat vacant

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday asked airlines to keep middle seats vacant to the extent possible in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak. However, if a flyer has been allotted the middle seat due to a high passenger load "then additional protective equipment like wrap-around gown of the ministry of textile approved standards" must be provided to him or her in addition to a three-layered face mask and face shield, it said. While hearing a petition on whether to keep middle seats in flights vacant or not, the Supreme Court had on May 25 said that the DGCA is free to alter its norms in the interest of public health and safety of passengers "rather than of commercial considerations".

COVID-19: Singapore in talks with several countries to establish 'green lanes' for travel

Singapore is in talks with several countries, including Australia and South Korea, to establish "green lanes" for travel during the COVID-19 environment, officials said. China on Friday became the first country to establish a green lane with Singapore. Such arrangements allow for the restoration of connectivity and facilitation of short-term essential business and official travel between countries, subject to safeguards against the coronavirus, The Straits Times said in a report. Trade and Industry Minister Chan Chun Sing said Singapore is in simultaneous discussions with as many countries as possible on forming green lanes, and that such discussions are taking place at a bilateral level, not a multilateral one. According to officials, the countries include Australia, South Korea, New Zealand and Malaysia.

No Eiffel Tower, Louvre Museum or Versailles: France's three most iconic sites stay closed

Hold that smile, Mona Lisa. The Eiffel Tower and the Palace of Versailles will remain off-limits for the immediate future, too. None of France's three most iconic tourist sites will reopen when the country lifts most of its remaining coronavirus lockdown restrictions next week. Some of Europe's other major cultural sites are also taking their time to reopen. The Eiffel Tower likely won't be able to reopen before the second half of June, according to Stephane Dieu, a labour representative for the monument's staff. He said they still need to fine tune with the site's management how to protect employees and visitors and to maintain social distancing.

'The worst is behind us': With suitcase and bikini emojis, Spain urges tourists back from July post coronavirus lockdown

Ithe world's second-most visited nation closed its doors and beaches in March to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, later imposing a two-week quarantine on overseas visitors. But that requirement will be lifted from July 1, a government statement said. Spain revised down its coronavirus death toll on Monday and urged foreign holidaymakers to return from July as it eases one of Europe's strictest lockdowns, though tourism businesses were sceptical about salvaging the summer season. The world's second-most visited nation closed its doors and beaches in March to handle the COVID-19 pandemic, later imposing a two-week quarantine on overseas visitors. But that requirement will be lifted from July 1, a government statement said. "The worst is behind us," Foreign Minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya tweeted with emojis of a bikini, sunglasses and a suitcase. "In July we will gradually open Spain to international tourists, lift the quarantine, ensure the highest standards of health safety. We look forward 2 welcoming you!"

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