



Narmada River Heritage Trail - Hike, Bike, Boat

November 29 - December 2, 2018

This journey takes us through central Madhya Pradesh, meandering along the Narmada River, a lifeline of Central India. Learn how the fates the historical towns of Indore, Maheshwar, and Mandu are intertwined with this river. Empires came and perished for control of this holy river, second only to the Ganges River in sanctity. Along the way, we bike through the jungle, hike to the top of a fort, and boat on the river. We stay in three different places where history, nature and modernity collide.

Starting in Indore, we travel to Sailani where we experience the rich biodiversity of the Narmada. From there we go to the historical town of Maheshwar, staying in a heritage fort. Last we go to Mandu, home to one of the largest forts in India and the Jahaz Mahal (Ship Palace), before ending up back in Indore. A final transfer brings us to Bhopal, the location of AdventureNEXT.

Trip Highlights

- Hike up to India's Madu fort and marvel at its architecture
- Bike through the jungle with an eye out for wildlife
- Boat across one of the holiest rivers, which sprang from the body of Shiva
- Interact with local artisans, Maheshwari Weavers and Bagh Printers
- Stay in a historic fort run by one of the erstwhile rulers of Central India
- Learn from naturalists and historians of the Narmada

Itinerary Difficulty Rating -2 Easy Active (Beginner level, physical activity; ~2 hours activity/day)

Flight Information:

November 29, 2018: Arrive to Indore (IDR), Madhya Pradesh by 10:00 am from Delhi or other connecting city.

December 6, 2018: Depart Bhopal (BHO) anytime, or proceed with post-adventure itinerary, or your own independent arrangements.



Itinerary

29th November- Delhi (or other connecting city) - Indore - Sailani.

Day Highlights

- Experience the rich biodiversity of the Narmada
- Interaction with a famous naturalist dedicated to rescuing wild animals
- Off-road biking through an Indian jungle

Arrive by flight to Indore in the morning by 10am and be greeted by your tour guide. After a short briefing we proceed towards Sailani. Situated in the backwaters of Indira Sagar Dam, Sailani Island is a 2 hr 30 min drive from the airport. This island resort is spread over 5-acres of land and is surrounded by the holy waters of the Narmada on three sides.



On arrival check into your rooms and explore this beautiful islet. Our naturalist here has dedicated his life to rescuing animals and reptiles of the Narmada basin.

In the evening explore the backwaters on a motorboat along with our naturalist and then take an off-road bike trip through the dense jungles as he narrates stories of the animals found in this area.(L,D)

Activities- 1 hour boating and 30 minutes of biking on unpaved road, mostly flat

Resort - Sailani Island Resort

Lunch & Dinner -Sailani Island Resort

Indore Airport 10 am transfer to Sailani (driving ~2.5 hours)

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30th November- Sailani to Maheshwar.

Day Highlights

- Stay in a heritage property where Princes, Mick Jagger, and Ralph Fiennes, and Hillary Clinton have stayed
- Scenic boat ride across the Narmada
- Gourmet menu personally curated and perfected by Prince Richard Holkar
- Interaction with Rehwa Society Maheshwari Weavers

This morning, we set off for Maheshwar (~1.5 hr drive). Maheshwar, situated on the banks of the holy river Narmada, possesses a treasure trove of beautiful temples that appeal to both pilgrims and travelers. A centre of handloom weaving since the 5th century, artisans here produce the exquisite Maheshwari saris and fabric. The town also holds the distinction of being the capital of Rajmata Ahilya Devi Holkar's empire during the 18th century.

Staying at the homely and beautifully restored Ahilya Fort in Maheshwar allows us wonderful access to an untouched corner of India as the guest of the erstwhile royal family of Indore. The majestic 400 year old Ahilya Fort sits on the edge of a cliff, high above the sacred Narmada River, surrounded by the beautiful and pristine town of Maheshwar. The views over the river and ghats are exceptional. Replete with myth and legend, Ahilya Fort offers guests a rare chance to get off the tourist trail and experience a cultural integrity unmatched in India.





In the afternoon we visit the Reva Society, a NGO setup by Richard Holkar, a descendant of Maharani Ahilyabai Holkar, the Holkar Queen of the Maratha Malwa kingdom, and his wife to promote the art of Maheshwari weaving and to empower women in the area.

In the evening, we take for a scenic boat ride across the Narmada. (B,L,D)

Breakfast-Sailani Resort
Heritage hotel-Ahilya Fort
Lunch and Dinner -Ahilya Fort
Activities- 1 Hour of boating.

1st December - Maheshwar-Mandu-Indore

Day Highlights

- Trek up India's largest fort
- Visit and lunch overlooking the Jahaz Mahal(Ship Palace)
- Interaction with the famous Bagh Printers
- Cultural walk through Indore

We begin the day with yoga (optional) as we watch the sunrise over the Narmada. Next, we head out to Mandu Fort, one of India's largest, adorned with spell-binding Afghan architecture and surrounded by baobab trees, native to Africa. After the 1 and half hour drive we get off at the base of the fort. We then trek up a trail to the old entrance of the fort. As you ascend, our guide takes us on a journey through time telling us about the various dynasties that ruled here. There are grand palaces that are still alive with royal romance and gateways (darwazas) that speak of a history of imperial conquests.

We then visit the famous Jahaz Mahal. Floating over it's own reflection, the Jahaz Mahal in Mandu looks like a ship that's about to sail. However, for centuries this ship made of stone and mortar never did.



We have a picnic spread for lunch overlooking the beautiful palace.

In the afternoon, we visit the famous Bagh printers from Dhar Village. Bagh prints are a traditional hand block print with natural eco friendly colours. These artisans hold a workshop teaching us about this ancient craft.

After this, we depart for Indore(2.5 hr drive) and check into the Radisson. Indore, a trading hub between the Deccan and Delhi in the 16th century, later became the capital of the Holkar Empire.



After an early dinner, we take historical walk through the old city of Indore and experience the hustle and bustle of the old city, ending in the Sarafa Bazaar. This market is famous for its jewellery by day and its street food by night. Taste some of India's most famous sweet meats and traditional ice creams.

Breakfast-Ahilya Fort
Activities- 1 hour hike
Indore Hotel-Radisson

Lunch -Mandu Fort
Dinner-Radisson Hotel
Ahilya Fort to Mandu.Mandu to Indore.

2nd December- In the morning we proceed towards Bhopal. Bhopal, is the capital of Indian state of Madhya Pradesh, and the location of AdventureNEXT India. The drive is around 3.5 hours.

[ROUTE MAP](#)

Group Size-minimum 4 -max 12
Accommodation- On single basis

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Weather- Generally clear skies. Temperature- 29 Celsius max (mid 80sF) and 5 Celsius minimum (low 40sF). Expect cool morning and evenings.

Things to Consider

India is relatively conservative so you should dress accordingly. As a general guideline, shoulders and knees should be covered. Shorts, short skirts, and tank tops are not acceptable.

It is suggested to bring a toilet kit: Toilet paper, Ziplock bags (at least one for clean TP, one for dirty TP - if no garbage can is available), wet wipes, hand sanitizer. Toilet paper is not always available at toilet stops and the plumbing is not always suitable for toilet paper so throw it in the garbage.

Packing List

<p>Luggage: Medium duffle or rolling soft-sided luggage Luggage lock Packing cubes/stuff sacks/dry sacks Day pack – 10-20 liters (water, camera, jacket etc)</p> <p>Clothing: Casual clothing/shoes for travel and city wear (lightweight, easily washable) Light rain/windproof jacket Mid-weight fleece/softshell T-shirts Long sleeve shirt with collar Lightweight hiking pants Underwear (quick drying) Sleepwear Warm hat, gloves (for chilly evenings/mornings)</p> <p>Footwear: Comfortable lightweight walking/hiking shoes Hiking socks, synthetic Sandals</p>	<p>Assorted Personal Items: Water bottles - 1 liter/1 quart x 2 (we encourage you to refill your bottles) Sunblock and lip balm with SPF Sun hat Sunglasses Personal hygiene items (toothpaste, toothbrush, hand sanitizer, small travel towel, etc.) Women: Tampons – difficult to obtain in rural areas Insect repellent Alarm Clock Camera/memory cards/battery</p> <p>Extra Cash/Credit Cards (please note, cash machines are limited, so please make sure you have enough cash. Some places may accept credit cards)</p> <p>Prescribed medication/personal first aid kit (including antihistamine) (please note, pharmacies may not be available in the remote locations of this itinerary.)</p>
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