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# western madhya pradesh

A guide for thoughtful, immersive travel







# WESTERN MADHYA PRADESH

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A GUIDE FOR THOUGHTFUL, IMMERSIVE TRAVEL

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First Edition 2018

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# THE CENTRE OF ATTRACTION

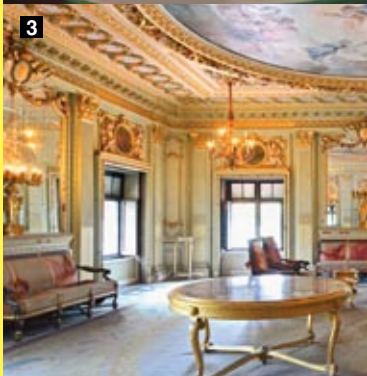
Khajuraho, Orchha, Ujjain, Indore, Bhopal, Sanchi, Omkareshwar, Mandu, Maheshwar, Pachmarhi, Jabalpur, Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench... There are plenty of reasons to visit Madhya Pradesh—there always were. As life gets busier, and holidays get shorter, travel is no longer about how much you see, but *how* you see it. And we suggest you see Madhya Pradesh well!

To make it easier for you, we've distilled the best and brightest experiences from this state in a series of pocketbooks. Curated into easy, doable itineraries that focus on a specific region, there's something for everyone here: Whether you have a day to spare, or a week; whether you're travelling solo or with your family; whether your pockets are deep or shallow... So take your pick and immerse yourself in the natural and cultural, historical and spiritual charms of this central Indian magnet.

Discover Madhya Pradesh. And let it discover *you!*



1



3



4



**1. Vegetarian 'lollipops' at Sarafa Bazaar; 2. Ujjain's Ram Ghat and its many shrines on a bright and sunny day; 3. The opulent interiors of Lal Baag Palace museum in Indore; 4. Asirgarh Fort perched on the Satpura Range, near Burhanpur; 5. Beautiful bas-relief at Indore's Central Museum; 6. A Maheshwari sari in the making at Rehwa Society's weaving unit in Maheshwar**





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*Boats moored at  
Gomukh Ghat,  
Omkareshwar*

# TRAVELLING WEST

■ BY ANURAG MALLICK AND PRIYA GANAPATHY

Madhya Pradesh is a land woven by the silken threads of royalty and romance, steeped and dyed in the vibrant hues of history, spirituality, and tradition. In the western part of Madhya Pradesh, fascinating stories and myths resound from its lofty forts and palaces. Prayers and music float along its mighty rivers, drawing visitors from all over the world to experience its rare cultural treasures.

In Indore, the regal city of the Holkars, the marvellous seven-storeyed Rajwada showcases the fusion of different architectural styles, while Lal Baag Palace museum is a walk into its historic past and grandeur. With dedicated food streets like Sarafa Bazaar and Chhappan



BODHISATTVA SEN ROY

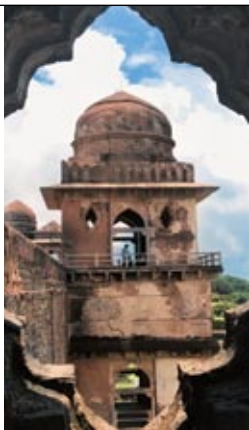


Dukkan, Indore has also earned a special reputation for its food and unusual local dishes.

Ujjain, regarded in Hindu traditions as the navel of the earth, is the Greenwich of India. Here, learn how to study time at the ancient observatory or visit the unique, revered shrines that dot the city. Chase the legacy of India's greatest Sanskrit poet and dramatist Kalidasa or go on a musical pilgrimage of sorts. Nearby is Dewas, the adopted home of legendary music maestro Kumar Gandharv. Thousands visit the town's hilltop shrine of goddess Chamunda.

Marvel at Mandu's architectural jewels: the mist-laden pavilion of Rani Roopmati, Jahaz Mahal and the medieval palaces of Baz Bahadur, Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Khilji's water-filled pleasure domain, and Hoshang Shah's tomb—India's first marble mausoleum. Linger by the ghats of the Narmada or stand on the ramparts of Ahilya Fort to take in the magnificent beauty of the mighty river flowing past the sacred town of Maheshwar, bastion of the Holkar dynasty and an important weaving centre.

A textile trail in Madhya Pradesh will reveal the living legacy of ancient techniques: the beauty of batik in Behrugarh, the handwoven



simple sophistication of Maheshwari weaves, and the gorgeous block prints of Bagh. Experience spirituality at Omkareshwar, located on Mandhata island in the Narmada, and join the throng of pilgrims who come to pray at the sacred *jiyotirlinga* shrine and the ancient temple of Mamleshwar. Enjoy heritage stays at Fort Amla near Barnagar, Ahilya Fort at Maheshwar, and Jhira Bagh Palace on the outskirts of Dhar.

As the erstwhile capital of Khandesh under the Farooqis, Burhanpur is steeped in history. It was once a cultural hub with a cache of 35 architectural gems including the holy Shia shrine of Dargah-e-Hakimi, and Badi Sangat Padshahi Dus counted among the ten holiest *gurudwaras*. Other hidden gems include Burhanpur's well-preserved wall frescoes in its ancient tombs, a subterranean bath for men, and the royal baths of Mumtaz Mahal in the Shahi Palace, which inspired the creation of the Taj Mahal in Agra. Note the scientific prowess and vision of yesteryear royalty who built water-channelling systems at Kundi Bhandara and multiple step wells for rainwater harvesting. Forgotten relics include majestic forts like Asirgarh. In this western region of Madhya Pradesh, unfolds some of the country's finest and rarest treasures.



# THE PITSTOPS







*A stepped tank at Jahaz Mahal, Mandu; Facing page: (top) Bas-relief at Ahilyeshwar Temple, Maheshwar; (bottom) A Maratha figure at Rajwada, Indore*

## Crowning Glory: Peerless Royal Capitals

This itinerary showcases the royal capitals of Indore, Mandu, and Maheshwar. Ideal for those who want to cover the top sights in the shortest possible time.

**Route & Distance:** Indore—Mandu (94 km/2 hr 15 min)—Maheshwar (38 km/1 hr 30 min)—Indore via Dhamnod (95 km/2 hr)

### DAY 1 INDORE-MANDU

Start the morning in Indore, royal city of the Holkars. Grab a quick bite at **Chhappan Dukan** and then visit **Rajwada**, the seven-storey palace of Ahilyabai Holkar, with a museum dedicated to her on the first floor. While driving out of Indore, stop off at **Lal Baag Palace**, an opulent mansion-turned-museum set in a 28-acre garden in the south of the city. Continue via NH-52 to the medieval capital of Mandu, grabbing lunch en route or at **Hotel Gurukripa** in town. Cover the two most

important clusters in a half-day tour: **Rewa Kund**, **Baz Bahadur's Palace**, and **Roopmati's Pavilion** to the south, as well as **Jahaz Mahal**, **Hindola Mahal** and other structures in the vast royal complex. Overnight at **Malwa Retreat** or **Malwa Resort**, located on Roopmati Road near the **Sagar Talab group of monuments**, which include the Mosque of Malik Mugith, the Caravanserai, and Dai ka Mahal.


## DAY 2 MANDU— MAHESHWAR

Visit Mandu's remaining sights like **Ashrafi Mahal**, **Jama Masjid**, and **Hoshang Shah's mausoleum**, the first marble tomb in India. As you begin your descent from Mandu, stop and savour the view of the valley from **Nilkanth Mahadev**, a dramatic Shiva temple in a *shikargah* (hunting lodge) built by Akbar. The drive to **Maheshwar** is fairly short. After paying your respects at Ahilyabai's statue and *gadi* (royal seat) inside **Ahilya Fort**, visit the **Ahilyeshwar Temple** with steps leading down to the ghats of the Narmada. If time permits, enjoy a short boat ride before returning to Indore.

ANURAG MALLICK &amp; PRIYA GANAPATHY



ABHINANDITA MATHUR



*The Lal Baag Palace museum is set in a sprawling garden, just south of Indore*



ANURAG MALLICK & PRIYA GANAPATHY



*Harsiddhi Temple, Ujjain; Facing page: (left) Mangalnath Temple, Ujjain; (right) Jain Kanch Mandir, built by a local trader in Indore*

## Living Traditions: Batiks and Blessings

From the fascinating *bhasmarti* (showering a linga with ash) at Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar Temple to batik printing in Behrugarh, this short itinerary showcases centuries-old traditions that still exist.

**Route & Distance:** Ujjain & Behrugarh—Indore (56 km/1hr 15 min)

### DAY 1 UJJAIN

Start early to visit Ujjain's prominent shrines like **Harsiddhi**, **Mangalnath** and **Maharishi Sandipani Ashram** on the ghats of the Shipra River. Time permitting, run through Ujjain's other chief sights: **Vedshala**, **Gadhkalika temple**, **Bhartrihari cave** and **samadhi** of sage Matsyendranath.

Make time for Behrugarh, where the practice of offering alcohol continues at the **Kalbhairav Temple**. **Behrugarh** is also known for its **workshops**, where the 2,000-year-old craft of batik printing is practised. Adjacent to the jail, watch artists in dingy workshops make designs with molten wax before dyeing and creating vibrant bed sheets, dupattas, and other fabrics of beauty.

If you have just one night to spare, make it count by booking a slot for the *bhasmanti* at the Mahakaleshwar Temple online, well in advance. Stay overnight at a city hotel close to the temple.

## DAY 2 INDORE

After a relatively sleepless night attending the 4 a.m. *bhasmanti*, catch a few hours of rest before driving out to Indore. With a little over half a day in Indore, follow the Holkar legacy at **Rajwada** and **Lal Baag Palace**, and visit the **Jain Kanch Mandir**. This temple was built by pioneering trader Sir Seth Hukumchand Jain, and is located next to his mansion, Shish Mahal at Itwaria Bazar. The temple's stunning interior, of mirrors and multi-coloured glass, was executed by craftsmen from Jaipur and Iran.



Courtesy UJJAIN TOURISM



Photographs by ABHINANDITA MATHUR



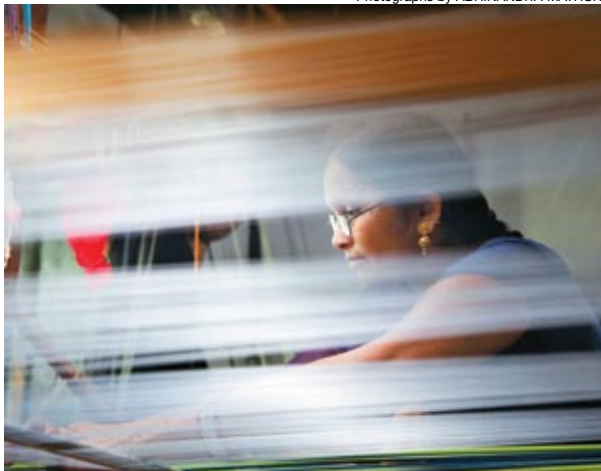






*Clockwise from top: Red-coloured offerings at Mangalnath Temple to propitiate Mangal (Mars); Kshipra arti in Ujjain; Aghori sadhu Baba Bam Bam Nath in Ujjain*





*Clockwise from top: At Rehwa Society, set up in 1978 to revive Maheshwar's weaving tradition; Block printing with natural dyes; and carved blocks at Bagh*

## The Textile Trail

For the lovers of rich textile traditions: batik and tie-dye prints from Behrugarh, block-prints from Bagh and Indore, and the intricate weaves of Maheshwari saris.

**Route & Distances:** Indore—Ujjain—Behrugarh (56 km/1 hr 15 min)—Bagh (177 km/4 hr—Bagh)—Maheshwar (100 km/2 hr 30 min)—Indore (95 km/2 hr)



**DAY 1** INDORE-UJJAIN

Explore Western MP's textile belt and interact with master weavers and craftsmen in Indore. The Chepa Marwari community from Rajasthan, once printers of the royal court of Ujjain, settled here in the 1960s. They specialize in resist printing techniques like dabu and batik. Drive to **Behrugarh** near Ujjain to watch this **centuries-old batik technique** brought from Gujarat and Rajasthan during Mughal rule. In a tiny back alley near Behrugarh Jail, artists create elaborate designs using molten wax. Visit these dye-stained workshops to watch them churn out bed sheets, saris, dupattas, and stoles in vivid colours. Overnight in Ujjain.

**DAY 2** BAGH

Leave early for the long drive to Bagh, where the Bhil and Bhilala tribal communities reside. The craft of *thappa chhapai* (block printing) arrived in Bagh with a group of Muslim Khatri families who migrated from Sindh. Their old craft came to be known by the name of the village they settled in: **Bagh print**. Visit the workshop of a family of expert printers to learn about this fascinating method of textile printing. Watch how they prepare the fabric, use natural dyes for the block printing, and engage in a laborious process to the finish. Most of them are national award-winning artists! Buy fabrics directly from them so they can benefit. Leave with enough daylight in hand for the 2.5-hour drive to Maheshwar, your overnight stop.

**DAY 3** MAHESHWAR

An ancient temple town on the banks of the Narmada, Maheshwar was revived in the 18th century by queen Ahilyabai Holkar. She brought in weavers from South India, and nurtured the area's old handloom weaving tradition, dating back to 5th century. However, this craft languished once again when royal patronage stopped after Indian independence. Until another Holkar, Richard, and his wife, founded the Rehwa society in 1979 to revive it. Drop in at **Rehwa** and other outlets like **Gudi Mudi** and **Tana Bana** to watch local weavers create masterpieces from silk, cotton, and a mix of both. Take a walk along the ghats before returning to Indore.









*Clockwise from top left: Vibrant silken skeins are used to weave the signature Maheshwari saris at Rehwa Society in Maheshwar; Each sari is hand-woven, and can take several days to complete; Yarn colour samples help weavers select the different shades they want to match together for their next sari; Maroon, black and white are the three typical colours used in traditional Bagh prints; Mohammed Iqbal flaunts the beauty of Behrugarh's bright batik-printed bed sheets as they dry in the town's narrow alleys*

ANURAG MALLICK & PRIYA GANAPATHY





*Musical devotees of Kumar Gandharva often visit his home in Dewas*

## The Maestro Trail: Following Musical Legends

Explore some of Madhya Pradesh's many connections to classical music and legendary musicians.

**Route & Distance:** Indore—Dewas (32 km/1 hr)—Khandwa (165 km/4 hr)—Indore (150 km/3 hr)

This short trail is perfect for music aficionados. Visit the birthplaces of singers Ustad Amir Khan and Lata Mangeshkar in Indore, Kishore Kumar in Khandwa, and Kumar Gandharva's home in Dewas.

### **DAY 1** DEWAS

Just an hour's drive from Indore is Dewas, where Kumar Gandharva chose to settle in 1948. **Bhanu Kul**, the house he built in 1962, and

where he stayed until his death in 1992, is almost a shrine, though his daughter still lives there. People from around the country come to pay their respects to the musical genius: to see where he lived, composed, and taught; and to pore over his photos and citations. Gokul Homestay in Indore is a good base for the day trip.

## DAY 2 KHANDWA

Drive down to Khandwa, where Abhas Kumar Kunjilal Ganguly, known to the world as Kishore Kumar, was born in 1929. While there isn't much in Khandwa for the average traveller, Kishore Kumar fans will feel enthused with a pilgrimage to the place where the maestro was born. Kishoreda took great pride in his roots, and often began his stage shows with the salutation "*Kishore Kumar Khandwe wale ka sabko*

*Kumar Gandharva's daughter Kalapini Komakali and nephew Bhuvanesh are the keepers of the flame at Bhanukul, Gandharva's home in Dewas*



*sadar pranam*" (Deepest respect to all from Kishore Kumar of Khandwa). After his sudden demise in Bombay in 1987, his last rites were conducted in Khandwa. His **samadhi** at Sanjay Nagar, off Khandwa-Indore Road, is lined with photos and replicas of musical instruments. **Ganguly House**, the ancestral home where the three brothers Ashok, Anoop and Kishore Kumar grew up, is dilapidated, but watched over by caretaker Sitaram. The MP government plans to repair and convert this into a museum. **Gauri Kunj**, an auditorium for hosting music programmes, was built in Kishore Kumar's memory in 1998.

Return to Indore by late evening and explore the food stalls at **Sarafa Bazaar** or **Chhappan Dukaan**.

### DAY 3 INDORE

In Indore, visit the historic **Christian College** where Kishore Kumar studied. The story goes that he often ate on credit at the college canteen. At one point when the manager refused to continue his tab until he cleared his debt, Kishore Kumar composed "*Panch rupayya bara anna*" on the spot. It later became a popular Hindi film song.

Another great musician Ustad Amir Khan was born in Indore in 1912. His father Shahmir Khan, a noted *sarangi* and *veena* player, served at the Holkar court while his grandfather Change Khan sang in

### Feeling Festive

Indore's classical music tradition is alive and thriving and the best way for the traveller to soak it in is to attend one of the many music festivals held in the city.

Raag Amir, a three-day music festival in Indore is organized in March in memory of Ustad Amir Khan, by the Ustad Alauddin Khan Sangeet Evam Kala Akademi. Numerous other festivals including the Late Sohanlal Sanghi Memorial Music Festival bring in classical musicians from around the country. Kishore Kumar's birthday Aug 4 is celebrated at his memorial; there are music programs, and competitions at Gauri Kunj; and a Kishore Night at the Police Grounds.



*As the jewellery market transforms into a massive food court, the residents of Indore gather to savour their favourites at Sarafa Bazaar*

the court of Bahadurshah Zafar. He sang for films like *Baiju Bawra* and *Goonj Uthi Shehnai*. Plans are afoot for a Sangeet Academy in his memory, and for his house to be preserved.

Another Bollywood legend Lata Mangeshkar was also born in Indore's Sikh Mohalla in 1929. Her father Dinanath Mangeshkar ran a *natak mandal* (drama company) in Indore and she started her singing career here in 1942. She often cycled to Naulakha Garden, where the Indore Zoo is now located. Even after she moved to Bombay, Lataji frequented Indore to meet her aunt and cousin Malti. A Raymond's showroom stands in place of her aunt's house. She loved the Malwa staple *dal-baphla*. Drop by **Hotel Rajhans** for a bite of the local speciality.

Photographs by ABHINANDITA MATHUR



Indore's Ghantaghar or iconic Gandhi Hall is an Indo-Gothic building constructed in 1904, and was originally called King Edward Hall

## Heritage Highlights: Making the Most of a Long Weekend

Bookended by Indore, with one night each in Ujjain, Dhar, and Mandu, this splendid heritage circuit is for those with limited time.

**Route & Distance:** Indore—Ujjain (56 km/1 hr 15 min)—Bagh (177 km/4 hrs) via Barnagar and Rajgarh—Dhar (90 km/2 hrs)—Mandu (36 km/1 hr)—Indore (94 km/2 hrs)

### DAY 1 UJJAIN

Depart Indore early and drive north to Ujjain, a city of ghats and temples, on the banks of the holy Kshipra River. The celebrated *dyotirlinga* at **Mahakaleshwar temple** is famous for its 4 a.m. *bhasmarti* (showering the linga with ash), and often has people queuing up hours earlier.

**Kalbhairav Mandir** is that curious place where alcohol is offered to the lord. **Mangalnath Temple** is considered the birthplace of the red planet *Mangal* (Mars), who is worshipped with red objects (red cloth, red grain).

Grab a typical Malwa lunch of *dal-baphla* at Sai Palace near the Mangalnath Temple.

Then, attend the evening **arti at the ghats** and marvel at the giant burning lamps of the Harsiddhi Temple nearby.

Overnight at a city hotel, or a homestay like **Trolet Inn**.

## DAY 2 BAGH

Depart Ujjain by 8 a.m. to get to the 5-7th century **Bagh Caves** by noon. Supported by gigantic pillars, the dimly lit Buddhist rock-cut caves have *chaityas* (prayer halls), a few Buddhist figures in dark recesses, and some frescoes. Much of the art has been moved to a museum nearby. At **Bagh Print workshop**, learn about local *alizari* block printing and the world-renowned Bagh print from master craftsmen. Leave Bagh with enough daylight for the two-hour drive to Dhar. Overnight at **Jhira Bagh Palace**, a renovated heritage hotel, with a museum and vintage car collection.

*Though Dhar Fort is practically a ruin, it is worth the climb for fantastic views from Kharbooja Mahal, named after its melon-shaped domes*



*Ram Ghat and its many shrines on a bright, sunny day in Ujjain*











Courtesy MP TOURISM



Courtesy MP TOURISM

Courtesy UJJAIN TOURISM



*Clockwise from left: The sacred complex of the Mahakaleswar Temple in Ujjain; the shivalinga in the garbhagriha of this well-known temple; and prayers being offered to another deity, also at Mahakaleswar Temple*







*Ruins of Jal Mahal built by Jahangir in Mandu; Facing page: A small museum near Bagh Caves outlines the restoration efforts undertaken at the site*

### DAY 3 DHAR

Drive up a narrow winding path to explore the lofty **Dhar Fort**, savouring fantastic views from Kharbooja Mahal, with its melon-shaped domes. In Dhar town, visit the royal **chhatris** (cenotaphs), the **Lat Masjid**, **Bhojshala** (a contested 11th-century site), and around it the Chishti dargah **Kamal Maula**.

Then drive to Mandu, ascending hill tracts and passing gateways before entering the medieval capital of Malwa. Overnight at Malwa Retreat or Malwa Resort.

### DAY 4 MANDU

Mandu's monuments are strewn across three broad clusters. Start at the furthest point—**Baz Bahadur's Palace** and the mist-laden Rani **Roopmati's Pavilion**. The magnificent **Jahaz Mahal** where Ghiyas-ud-din Khilji housed a harem of 15,000 women is a large royal complex of palaces, while **Ashrafi Mahal**, **Jama Masjid**, and the **tomb of Hoshang Shah** are at the main square.

Late evening, drive to Indore, and straight to **Chhappan Dukan** or **Sarafa Bazaar** to experience the city's famous street food.

## The Road to Temple Town: Best of Malwa in a Week

Ideal for those who don't like long drives, this itinerary showcases western Madhya Pradesh's cultural heritage in easy segments.

**Route & Distances:** Indore—Dewas (32 km/1 hr)—Ujjain (37 km/1 hr)—Fort Amla (58 km/1 hr 30 min)—Dhar (60 km/1 hr 45 min)—Mandu (36 km/1 hr)—Maheshwar (38 km/1 hr 20 min)—Omkareshwar (65 km/1 hr 45 min)—Indore (78 km/2 hr 15 min)

*In the monsoon, Mandu's 15th-century Jahaz Mahal, built between two lakes, lives up to its name "Ship Palace"*



ANURAG MALLICK & PRIYA GANAPATHY



Built in 1858, Ann's Church in Indore is one of the oldest churches in Central India; Bottom: A view of the city of Dewas from the Shvetambar Jain Mandir

## DAY 1 INDORE

Starting from the moment you land at Rani Ahilyabai Holkar Airport, it's hard to miss the imprint of the Holkars wherever you go in Indore. The seven-storeyed **Rajwada**, with a small museum on the first floor, has become the city's emblem. Set in a 26-acre garden, the opulent royal residence **Lal Baag Palace** currently houses a museum. Drop by at the popular **Khajrana Ganesh temple**, the **Jain Kanch Mandir** with interiors made up of colourful mirrors, and get a taste of Indore's legendary street food at the night market of **Sarafa**. Overnight at Gokul Homestay, or any other hotel in town.

## DAY 2 DEWAS/UJJAIN

Leave early for the erstwhile royal principality of Dewas to visit the hilltop shrines of **Maa Chamunda** (Chhoti Mata) and **Tulja Bhawani** (Badi Mata). Near the base of the cable car terminal, don't miss the **World War II**



ABHINANDITA MATHUR



**memorial** that notes the sacrifice of the medical corps unit, Dewas Senior Medical Detachment.

Continue on to Ujjain, capital of legendary king Vikramaditya. Located on the banks of the holy Kshipra river, the temple town teems with tourists and pilgrims who come for a holy dip by the ghats, and to visit its temples. Its eight main sights are: the  *jyotirlinga*  at **Mahakaleshwar temple**; **Mangalnath temple** or the birthplace of *mangal* (Mars); **Kalbhairav Mandir** with the unique offering of alcohol; **Gadhkalika Temple** where Kalidasa received the blessings of goddess Kali; Sawai Jai Singh's observatory **Vedshala**; **Harsiddhi Temple** with its twin giant lamps; **Ram Mandir Ghat** and **Sandipani Ashram** where Krishna, Balram, and Sudama are said to have learnt archery. Grab a typical Malwa meal of *dal-baphla* at **Shahi Palace** near Mangalnath temple and witness the evening *arti* at the ghats in Ujjain. Overnight at the **Trolet Inn** homestay.



ABHINANDITA MATHUR

### DAY 3 FORT AMLA

In the morning, cover Ujjain's remaining sights, like **Durgadas ki Chhatri**, **Bhartrihari Cave** and the serene riverside **samadhi of Matsyendranath**, worshipped locally as a *pir*.

Drive past Barnagar to reach **Fort Amla**, originally a garrison outpost set up by descendants of the Mewar royal house, to protect Ujjain from Mughal armies returning from their Deccan conquest. Currently run as a small heritage hotel, it is the ideal midway stop between Ujjain and Dhar. At this 300-year-old fort, host Raghavendra Singh explains how Malwa's fertile black cotton soil



*The turrets of Kharbooja Mahal and bastions of Dhar Fort offer spectacular views of the town of Dhar; Facing page: The arched gateway of Fort Amla*

gave Egyptian cotton a run for its money, and how wealth from the cotton trade in Indore funded the Bombay Stock Exchange. As part of their agri-tours, go on a village walk, and visit nearby fields to see how maize, green pea, and soya are grown. Malwa is the largest pea-growing region in India, one of the largest onion growing regions, and also the largest producer of oil-grade soyabean.

#### DAY 4 DHAR

Wake up to the call of peacocks and set off for Dhar, another royal outpost. In 920 A.D. King Vairisimha transferred his headquarters from Ujjain to Dhar, which became the seat of the Parmar chiefs of Malwa.

**Dhar Fort**, located on a hillock, is reachable by a rock-paved road that ends at an old prison housing a small Archeological Museum. To the left, a path leads to the 16th-century palace **Kharbooja Mahal** with melon-shaped domes offering spectacular views over town. Visit the **royal chhatris** (cenotaphs) en route to the **temple of Kalika Mata**, patron deity of local kings. Continue to the beautiful **Lat Masjid** and the 11th-century **Bhojshala**, a contested site adjacent to the **dargah of Kamal Maula**. Stay overnight at **Jhira Bagh Palace**, built on the

town's quiet outskirts by the Puar royal family as an English guest-house, later remodeled in art deco and Bauhaus style and now a hotel.

### DAY 5 MANDU

Leave Jhira Bagh after breakfast for the short drive to Mandu, the medieval capital of Malwa. The monuments are located in three broad clusters—the **Rewa Kund group** in the south with Baz Bahadur's Palace and Roopmati's Pavilion; the **Village group** at the town square with Ashrafi Mahal, Jami Masjid inspired by the great mosque of Damascus, India's first marble mausoleum Hoshang Shah's tomb; and the vast **royal complex** housing a hamam, Tabeliya Mahal (the erstwhile stables), Hindola Mahal with its sloping side walls shaped like a *jhoola* or *hindola* (swing) and the pièce de résistance **Jahaz Mahal**. When the surrounding tanks Munj Talao and Kapur Talao are full in the monsoon, the palace literally looks like a ship afloat.

Everything in Mandu is larger than life, including local treats like **balam kakdi** (succulent cucumbers) and **Khorasani imli** or giant tamarind from the baobab tree. Try the local staple **dal-baphla** or **dal-paniya** at **Hotel Gurukripa** or Malwa fare like **bhatta bharta** (brinjal mash) and **ghuian ki sabzi** (colocasia) at your overnight halt **Malwa Retreat**.

*The haunting ruins of Jahaz Mahal in Mandu*



ABHIJIT BHATLEKAR



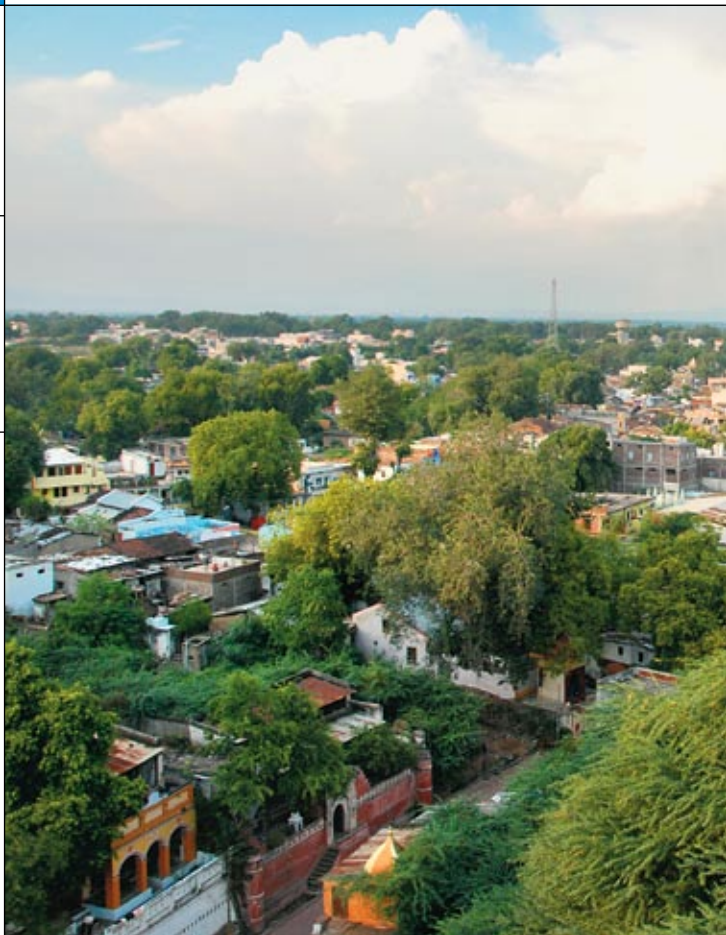
A sadhu lost in prayer in the temple town of Omkareshwar; and Ahilyeshwar Temple built by Ahilyabai in the Nagara style at Maheshwar's Ahilya Fort

## DAY 6 MAHESHWAR

On your way out of Mandu, stop by to catch the dramatic view of the valley below from **Nilkanth Mahadev**, a Shiva temple in a *shikargah* (hunting lodge) built by Akbar. It's a short descent to Maheshwar, capital of Malwa during Ahilyabai Holkar's reign. Visit the famous queen's gaddi (royal seat) at **Ahilya Fort**. Walk down the steps of **Ahilyeshwar Temple** to the **Narmada Ghat** lined with a string of temples: Tilkeshwar Mahadev, Kashi Vishwanath, and Narmada Mata, and the *chhatri* (samadhi) of Ahilyabai. End the day with a boat ride to **Baneshwar Mahadev temple** mid-river to enjoy the sunset and then a **Narmada arti**. If your budget permits, nothing beats the royal hospitality of **Ahilya Fort** overlooking the ghats and river, though humbler lodgings are available in the old guardhouse, run as **Labboo's Lodge**.

## DAY 7 OMKARESHWAR

Drive to Omkareshwar, located on Mandhata Island in the Narmada. Visit the **Omkareshwar Temple** to pay your respects to the venerated  *jyotirlinga*  and cross the bridge or take a boat to the older shrine of **Mamleshwar** on the mainland. Those who have three hours on hand can do the six-kilometre-long *panch-kosi parikrama* (circumambulation) around Mandhata Island to shrines like Rin Mukteshwar, Lete hue Hanumanji and Siddhnath Mahadev. Or in half the time, do a half-parikrama to cover the Gauri Somnath Temple before driving back to Indore.



*A view of the city from  
the ramparts of the  
Maheshwar Fort*

**ITINERARY 6**

**6 NIGHTS/7 DAYS**



BODHISATVA SEN ROY







## From Malwa to Khandesh: A Crash Course on Heritage

A weeklong driving holiday that blends heritage, temples, textiles, and food.

**Route & Distances:** Indore—Dhar (75 km/2 hrs)—Bagh (87 km/2 hrs)—Mandu (123 km/2 hrs 45 min)—Maheshwar via Dhamnod (39 km/1 hr 15 min)—Asirgarh (149 km/3 hrs 30 min)—Burhanpur (22 km/45 min)—Omkareshwar (120 km/2 hrs 45 min)—Indore (78 km/2 hrs)

### DAY 1 INDORE

The old capital of the Holkars, Indore has a legendary street food scene and enough sites to keep you busy the whole day. Start off with a typical *poha-jalebi* breakfast at **Chhappan Dukan** before heading to the city's iconic seven-storeyed **Rajwada**. On the first floor of the palace is a small museum on the Holkar royal family. Their erstwhile residence **Lal Baag Palace**, set in a large garden, also houses an excellent museum. Also worth a visit are the **Khajrana Ganesh Temple** that

*Facing page: A window at the seven-storey Holkar Rajwada in Indore; Petha pan at Madhuram Sweets, at Indore's famous foodie street Chhappan Dukan*



Photographs by ABHINANDITA MATHUR

enjoyed Holkar patronage, the **Jain Kanch Mandir** with vibrant mirror-work interiors, and **Indore Museum** (there's a zoo nearby, if you have kids). Round it off with a street food feast at **Sarafa Bazaar**. Overnight in Indore; it has a choice of hotels like Sayaji, Country Inn, Lemon Tree, and Radisson Blu, or homestays like Gokul.

## DAY 2 DHAR

Drive to Dhar and take the rock-paved winding road up to lofty **Dhar Fort**. **Kharbooja Mahal**, a 16th-century Mughal palace named after its melon-shaped domes, presents a fantastic panorama of the citadel's ramparts and the cityscape below. The old prison inside the fort now houses a museum with statues and antiquities (under renovation). In Dhar town, visit the **royal cenotaphs (chhatris)**, the beautiful **Lat Masjid** and the contested 11th-century site of the **Bhojshala**, adjacent to the **dargah of Chishti saint Kamal Maula**. Overnight at the luxe **Jhira Bagh Palace**, built by the Puar royals as an English guesthouse.

*The chhatris or royal cenotaphs of the kings of Dhar lie in the heart of the city*



ANURAG MALLICK & PRIYA GANAPATHY



*Printing workshops in Bagh have a fabulous collection of carved wooden blocks with which to embellish textiles*

### DAY 3 BAGH-MANDU

Leave early for Bagh, on the banks of the Baghini River. This area is hilly with thick forest cover and a sizeable tribal population of Bhils and Bhilalas. The little town is famous for the 5-7th century **Bagh Caves** with Buddhist paintings, and a block printing tradition using natural dyes and processes, known as **Bagh prints**.

Drive to Mandu, the medieval capital of Malwa, via Dhar. Overnight at Malwa Retreat or Malwa Resort.

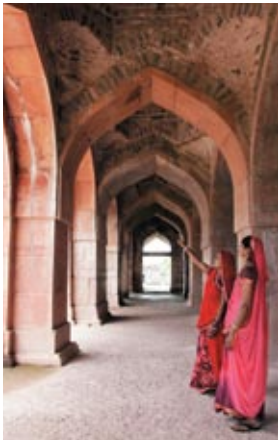
Tour the **Mosque of Malik Mugith**, the **Caravanserai** and **Dai ka Mahal**, where guides demonstrate acoustics at **Echo Point**, and test the old method of transmitting signals.

### DAY 4 MANDU-MAHESHWAR

Start from the furthest point of **Baz Bahadur's Palace**, **Roopmati Pavilion**, and **Rewa Kund** in the south, before heading to **Jahaz Mahal**, **Hindola Mahal**, the **hammam** and other structures in the vast **royal complex**. In the main square, cover **Ashrafi Mahal**, **Jama Masjid** and India's first marble mausoleum **Hoshang Shah's tomb**. Grab a thali of the local staple *dal-paniya* at **Hotel Gurukripa** for lunch.



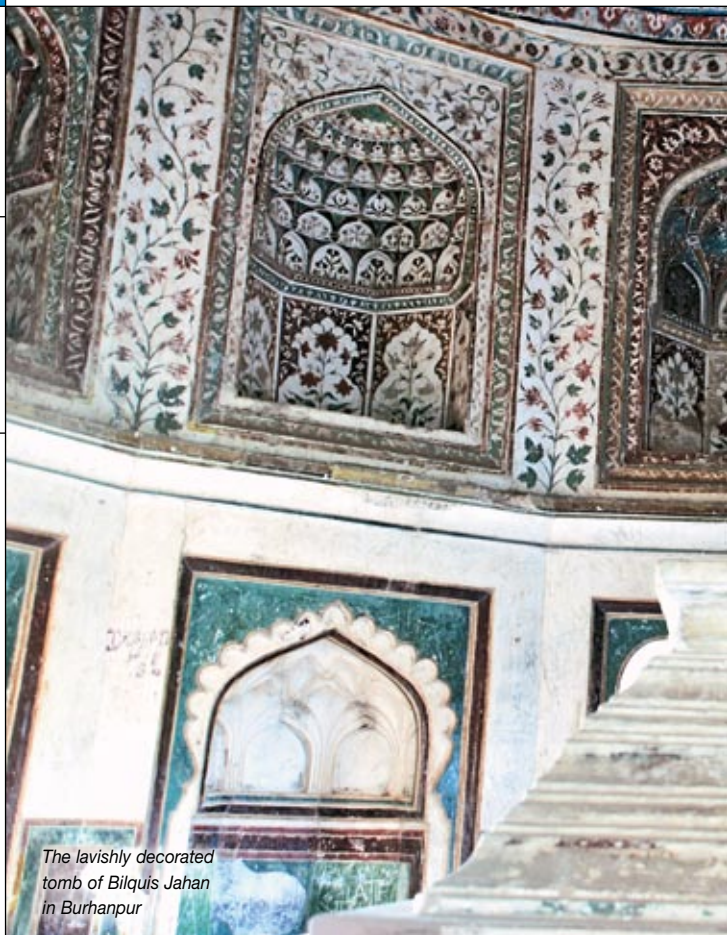
On your way out of Mandu, stop at **Nilkanth Mahadev**, a Shiva temple in a hunting lodge (*shikargah*), built by Akbar, and set against the dramatic backdrop of a waterfall. It's a short drive to Maheshwar, capital of Malwa during Ahilyabai Holkar's reign, until Malhar Rao Holkar III shifted his capital to Indore in 1818. Visit the famous queen's royal seat (*gaddi*) at **Ahilya Fort**, where visitors pay respects at her statue. Walk down the steps of **Ahilyeshwar Temple** to the **Narmada Ghat** and its temple clusters all along the riverbank—**Til Bhandeshwar**, **Kashi Vishwanath**, **Narmada Mata**, and the **chhatri (samadhi) of**



**Ahilyabai**. If time permits, take a boat ride to **Baneshwar Temple** mid-river to enjoy the sunset, before wrapping up the day with a **Narmada arti**. Depending on your wallet, stay overnight at **Labboo'z**, the lodge in the guardhouse, or in the cushy royal retreat, **Ahilya Fort**.

## DAY 5 ASIRGARH

As you drive towards Burhanpur, the unmistakable **fortress of Asirgarh** beckons you from afar. Drive up the unmetalled road to the top, where steep steps lead to a vast plateau. Inside, you'll discover **British relics**, a **Shiva temple**, and a **Jama Masjid** with a rare inscription in Sanskrit and Arabic. It's a replica of the one in Burhanpur, 22 km away. Stay at **Hotel Ambar** in Burhanpur, where the friendly owner Hoshang Havaldar can set up the perfect tour for you. The historic city served as the capital of Khandesh under the Farooqis and was the cultural centre of the Mughals. Of its 35 notable monuments, five are extraordinary: the "roofless mosque" **Jama Masjid**; **Mumtaz Mahal's hammam** in Shahi Palace; the holy Shia shrine of **Dargah-e-Hakimi**;



*The lavishly decorated tomb of Bilquis Jahan in Burhanpur*





Courtesy MP TOURISM

one of the ten holiest gurudwaras **Badi Sangat Padshahi Dus**; and the water channelling system of **Kundi Bhandara** built by Abdul Rahim Khan-i-khana, governor of Burhanpur for 37 years. Finally, don't miss the tomb of his warrior son Shah Nawaz Khan called **Black Taj Mahal** for its uncanny resemblance to the Taj, but of black stone.

## DAY 6 BURHANPUR

Among Burhanpur's other treasures are **Begum Shah Shuja's Maqbara** with exquisite murals, the **mausoleum of** the silent saint **Chup Shah**, beside **Bibi ki Masjid**, the oldest mosque in town. Give the Akbari Sarai a miss, but peek into the fascinating underground **hammam** behind Zakvi Haveli.

In the narrow streets of this historic city you'll find rare shrines: **Balaji Maharaj ka mandir** with a throne donated by Shah Jahan, the first ever **Swaminarayan temple** in India, and the Nathdwara-inspired **Bahuji Maharaj ka Mandir**. The latter's two-inch golden idol of Lord Krishna is so small, devotees can see it only through a telescope. Try local **Burhanpur favourites**, *jalebis*, *chiwda*, *lasaniya sev*, *maand*

*The two minarets of the Jama Masjid crown a corner of Asirgarh Fort*





Pilgrims at the sacred Shia shrine Dargah-e-Hakimi in Burhanpur; (below) Offerings of flowers and bilva patra line the streets of Omkareshwar

(roomali roti), Mughlai cuisine, and the signature *daraba* (semolina, sugar and ghee whisked to a fluffy dessert). Leave post-lunch or early evening for Omkareshwar, site of one of the 12 jyotirlingas in India. Overnight at MPSTDC's **Narmada Resort**, overlooking the river and just a short walk from the main temple.

## DAY 7 **OMKARESHWAR**

Visit the **temples of Omkareshwar and Mamleshwar**, accessible by bridges or boat. Do the *panch-kosi parikrama* (6 km/2.5-3 hrs), taking the walking path around Mandhata Island to shrines like Rin Mukteshwar, Lete hue Hanumanji, Siddhnath Mahadev and Triveni Sangam (confluence of Kaveri with Narmada). Alternatively, do the half-parikrama and cover just the **Gauri Somnath Temple**. Drive to Indore and visit the **Bijasen Mata temple**, a Shakti *peetha* near the airport.



*Western Madhya Pradesh's*

# GLORIOUS EPOCHS

Delve deep into India's heartland to explore its unparalleled highlights—historic palaces, vast forts, religious destinations—and be amazed



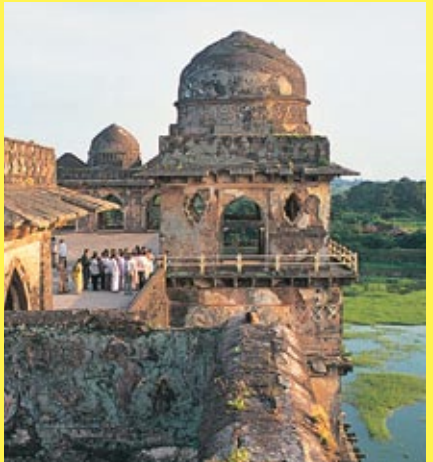
*Mandu's architectural gems like the Jal Mahal and Jahaz Mahal are best enjoyed in the monsoons when the adjacent waterbodies are brimming*







*Clockwise from top:  
Arches at Hindola Mahal,  
Mandu; Decorative pond  
at Baz Bahadur's Palace,  
Mandu; Visitors approach-  
ing a domed pavilion,  
Jahaz Mahal, Mandu*











*Clockwise from top left; Offerings of flowers and bilva patra line the streets of Omkareshwar; A sadhu beats the heat with a glass of nimbu paani; Morning scenes in Omkareshwar: A flower seller gets ready for the day; A group of tourists from Karnataka engineer a post-darshan selfie*

Clockwise from top right: Begum Shah Shuja ka maqbara, the tomb of Shah Shuja's wife Bilkis Jahan, is suffused with lovely frescoes; One can gaze at the intricate details of the domes, ceiling, and niches for hours; Vibrant reds, ochres and greens are offset by floral patterns in white; Every inch of space on the interior walls of the tomb bears delicate designs; Typical Mughal frescoes depict exquisite motifs inspired by flowers, guldaan (flower-pots), multi-pointed stars, jaali, arches, besides kaleidoscopic patterns, some of which find resonance in the Taj Mahal













*Clockwise from top: The street food market of Sarafa Bazaar wears a festive look at night; Round off your meal with a maghai pan; Jalebis being deep-fried; Besides traditional snacks, you can find Indo-Chinese fare like veg lollipops at Sarafa bazaar*



## Listings

### INDORE

#### STAY\*

#### Gokul Homestay

**Address:** Scheme 78, Slice 6, Sector-B

Plot 60, Vijay Nagar, Indore.

**Tel:** +91 98931 13762,  
94247 74982

**Tariff:** Double room ₹1,800  
(₹1,300 for the smaller room),  
breakfast included.

**Address:** 75/5, Bada Sarafa,  
Indore. **Tel:** 0731-65417,  
99039166677

**Address:** 9 Samrat, Ashok  
Nagar, Bhawanar Kuan Main  
Road, Indore.

**Tel:** 0731-4030202,  
90382 66677.

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

#### EAT

#### Hotel Rajhans

**Address:** 52, 3rd Floor, Sarafa  
Bazaar, Indore

**Tel:** 0731-2541671,  
+91 90092 93939

**Hours:** 11 a.m.–9 p.m.

#### Madhuram Sweets

**Address:** 56, Chhappan Dukan,  
New Palasia, Indore.

**Tel:** 0731-253 0555

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

#### EXPLORE

#### Jain Kanch Mandir

**Address:** Hukumchand  
Marg, Itwaria Bazaar,  
Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar  
Cloth Market, Indore.



### **Kamla Nehru Prani Sangrahalay**

**Address:** Municipal Corporation,  
Indore, Navlakha A.B.  
Road, Indore.

**Tel:** 0731-2700972

**Email:** indorezoo@gmail.com

**Website:** www.indorezoo.com

#### SHOP

### **Mrignayani**

**Address:** 165, Mahatma Gandhi  
Rd, Kishnapura Bridge, Nagar  
Nigam, Indore.

**Timings:** 11a.m.–8p.m.

**Tel:** 0731-2541945

**Website:** mrignayani.com

## DEWAS

#### STAY\*

### **TGI Hotel Nandan Kanan**

**Address:** Indore Dewas Road,  
AB Road, Dewas.

**Tel:** 07272-234555, 9655889898

**Email:** nandankanan@  
tjihotels.com

**Website:** www.tjihotels.com

**Tariff:** Double room ₹2,400.

#### EAT

### **Amrit Sweets**

**Address:** AB Road, Bawadiya,  
Dewas.

**Tel:** 07272-258580

### **Indian Coffee House**

**Address:** Chamunda Complex,  
AB Road, Dewas.

**Tel:** 07272-251880, 9425123004

#### EXPLORE

### **Kumar Gandharva Sangeet Akademi & Pratishthan**

**Address:** Bhanukul, 14/1, Mataji  
ki Raasta, Dewas.

**Contact:** Bhuvanesh & Kalapini  
Kumkali

**Tel:** +91 98262 10629

**Email:** ganewala@gmail.com

## UJJAIN

## STAY\*

**Trolet Inn**

**Address:** 7/64, University Road, Ingle Compound, Ujjain.

**Tel:** +91 98265 93004, 98931 17817

**Tariff:** Double room ₹1,249

**Fort Amla**

**Address:** Heritage Village Amla, Tehsil Barnagar, Dist Ujjain.

**Tel:** +91 99778 33323.

**Website:** www.fortamla.com

**Tariff:** Double room ₹6,000-7,500; includes breakfast; 0 plus taxes.

**Buffet Meals:** Breakfast ₹175;

*Trolet Inn*



ABHINANDITA MATHUR

lunch ₹400; dinner ₹450, taxes extra.

## EAT

**Hotel Sai Palace**

**Address:** Sunder Van Dhani, Mangalnath Road, Ujjain.

**Tel:** 09009293944

**Address:** Near Rajkumar Hotel, Freeganj, Ujjain.

**Tel:** 0734-4061888, 09009004830

## EXPLORE

**Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga**

**Address:** Jaisinghpura, Ujjain.

**Website:** www.mahakaleshwar.nic.in

**Bhairavgarh Prints**

**Address:** Sana Enterprises, Off Kaliadeh Palace Marg, Near Behrugarh Jail, Ujjain.

**Tel:** +91 81204 76700, 98272 14700

**Govt. Jiwaji Observatory**

**Address:** Chintaman Road, Jabsinghpura, Ujjain.

**Tel:** 0734-2557351

**Email:** segjivobsujj@mp.gov.in

**Website:** www.jiwajiobservatory.org

**Hours:** Open sunrise to sunset

**Entry fee:** Adults ₹10; students ₹5; foreigners ₹100; children



*The large, arched gateway of Fort Amla, and its courtyard at dusk*

under 6 years free; guide free with admission.

**Planetarium shows:** 11 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. every 30 minutes (minimum 10 people per show).  
Fee: Adults ₹20; children ₹10; foreigners ₹100.

### **Kalidasa Sanskrit Akademi**

**Address:** Kothi Road, University Road, Ujjain.  
**Tel:** 0734 2515404  
**Email:** kalidasaakademi@gmail.com  
**Website:** kalidasacademy.com  
**Hours:** 11 a.m.–5 p.m.

### **Gadhkalika Mandir**

**Address:** 118 Garh Kalika Marg,

Janki Nagar, Urdupura, Ujjain.  
**Hours:** 6 a.m.–9 p.m.

### **Singhasan Batteesi**

**Address:** Harsiddhi Marg, Jaisinghpura, Ujjain.  
**Hours:** 9 a.m.–9 p.m.

#### **SHOP**

### **Behrugarh Prints**

**Artists:** Haji Sh & Haroon Gutti  
**Address:** 119, Main Road, Behrugarh, Ujjain.  
**Tel:** +91 98276 41290, 98276 37337

### **Sana Enterprises**

**Artists:** Mehmood Hasan & Mohd Iqbal Badawala

**Address:** 18/1, Kalalpura Road,  
Kuwe ke Paas, Behrugarh, Ujjain.  
**Tel:** +91 99075 16622, 98272  
14700

## DHAR-BAGH

### STAY\*

#### Jhira Bagh Palace

**Address:** Mandu Road, Dhar.  
Madhya Pradesh 454001  
**Tel:** +91 73125 56183, 98260  
33801

**Email:** [jhiraplc@gmail.com](mailto:jhiraplc@gmail.com)

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

*Jhira Bagh Palace*



Photos: ABHINANDITA MATHUR

### EXPLORE

#### Bagh Caves

**Address:** Bagh Cave Road,  
Naingaon.

**Tel:** +91 78282 28507

**Entry:** Indians ₹15; foreigners  
₹200; children under 15 free;  
video camera ₹25.

**Hours:** 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

### SHOP

#### Bagh Prints

**Artist:** Mohammed Yusuf

**Address:** Village Bagh,  
Dist. Dhar.

**Tel:** +91 94254 86307,  
90098 15786

**Email:** [yusufbaghprint@gmail.com](mailto:yusufbaghprint@gmail.com)

**Artist:** Abdul Kadar Khatri

**Address:** Village Bagh,  
Dist. Dhar.

**Tel:** +91 94240 75965,  
78692 35037

**Email:** [baghprinter@gmail.com](mailto:baghprinter@gmail.com)

**Artist:** Mohammed Rafik

**Address:** Village Bagh,  
Dist. Dhar.

**Tel:** +91 94259 48227

## MANDU

### STAY\*

#### Malwa Retreat

**Address:** Main Road, Mandu.





*On the far banks of the Baghini river lie the Bagh Caves*

**Tel:** 07292-263221,  
+91 094247 96793

**Email:** mretreatm@  
mptourism.com

**Tariff:** Double room with AC  
₹2,490; AC tent ₹2,990; non-AC  
room ₹1,590; plus taxes; includes  
buffet breakfast.

### Malwa Resort

**Address:** Roopmati Road,  
Near Lake, Mandav/Mandu.

**Tel:** 07292-263235

**Tariff:** Double room  
with AC ₹3,290-4,290;  
plus taxes

**Website for both:**  
[www.mpstdc.com](http://www.mpstdc.com)

### EAT

#### Hotel Gurukripa

**Address:** Main Road,  
Mandav/Mandu.

**Tel:** 098930 43496, 094250  
34837

### MAHESHWAR

### STAY\*

#### Ahilya Fort

**Address:** Ahilya Wada,  
Maheshwar.

**Tel:** 011-41551575

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

**Tariff:** Double room ₹26,000 per  
night upwards; min stay  
2 nights

**Labboo'z Café & Lodge**

**Address:** The Gatehouse,  
Outside Ahilya Fort, Maheshwar.

**Tel:** +91 77710 04818, 77710  
04811

**Tariff:** Double room ₹1,900; single  
room from ₹1,680

**EAT****Labboo'z Café**

**Address:** The Gatehouse,  
Outside Ahilya Fort, Maheshwar.

**Tel:** +91 77710 04818,  
77710 04811

**Café hours:** 10 a.m.-7 p.m.

*Labboo'z Café*



ABHINANDITA MATHUR

**EXPLORE****Rehwa Society**

**Address:** Ahilya Fort,  
Maheshwar.

**Tel:** +91 81200 01388

**Website:** rehwasociety.org

**SHOP****Tana Bana Maheshwari  
Handloom**

**Address:** Mahatma Gandhi Marg,  
Bazaar Chowk, Maheshwar.

**Tel:** +91 86026 27811

**Women Weave Gudi Mudi**

**Address:** Mandleshwar Road,  
Gadi Khana, Maheshwar.

**Tel:** +91 95895 42217

**Website:** www.womenweave.org

**Hansa Handloom**

**Address:** Kalidas Marg, Kila  
Road, Maheshwar.

**Tel:** 07283-273296

**Website:** www.hansaheritage.in

**OMKARESHWAR-  
KHANDWA****STAY\*****Narmada Resort**

**Address:** Mortakka Omkareshwar  
Road, Khandwa Dist.

Omkareshwar.

**Tel:** +91 72802 71455



**Website:** [www.mpstdc.com](http://www.mpstdc.com)  
**Tariff:** Double room ₹3,528 (AC) includes taxes.

## EAT

**Brahmin Bhojanalaya**

**Address:** Near Mamleshwar Temple, Mamleshwar Road, Omkareshwar

**Timings:** 9.30 a.m.-10 p.m.

## EXPLORE

**Shri Omkareshwar Mandir Trust**

**Address:** Mandhata Island, Omkareshwar, Dist. Khandwa.

**Tel:** 07280-271228

**Email:** [shriomkareshwar@gmail.com](mailto:shriomkareshwar@gmail.com)

**Website:** [www.shriomkareshwar.org](http://www.shriomkareshwar.org)

**Ganguly House**

**Address:** Behind Gandhi Bhavan, Bombay Bazaar, Khandwa.

**Contact:** Sitaram (caretaker)

**Gauri Kunj Auditorium** (Kishore Kumar Auditorium)

**Address:** Opposite S.N. College, Chhirwel, Khandwa.

**Contact:** Nathalalji Parvate (watchman)

*A jalebi ready to be devoured*



ABHINANDITA MATHUR



Burhanpur's Kala Taj Mahal, tomb of 17th-century warrior Shah Nawaz Khan

## BURHANPUR

### STAY\*

#### Hotel Ambar & Holiday Resort

**Address:** NH27, Rastipura Colony, Opp. Bus Stand, Burhanpur.

**Tel:** 07325-251197, 94240 24949

**Website:** hotelambarburhanpur.com

**Tariff:** Double room AC ₹2,100, includes taxes.

**Tel:** 07325-252315, +91 94066 77600

#### Burhanpur Jalebi Centre

**Address:** Subhash Chowk, Burhanpur.

**Tel:** +91 98262 72490

#### Rahmania Restaurant

**Address:** Jaistambh Chauraha, Burhanpur.

**Tel:** +91 98262 72490

### EAT

#### Milan Mithai

**Address:** Main Branch, Gandhi Chowk, Burhanpur.

### EXPLORE

#### Shahi Qila

**Address:** Rajpura Road, Moninpura, Burhanpur.

**Timings:** 6 a.m.–6.30 p.m.

# 6 WAYS TO BE A RESPONSIBLE TRAVELLER

When travelling to MP, take a pledge to respect local culture, community and the environment

■ BY GARIMA PURA

**Access to travel has expanded over the past few years, and the advent of social media** has changed the ethics of travel in ways unimaginable. Tourist destinations worldwide received 369 million international tourists in the first four months of 2017 alone, according to the UNWTO World Tourism Barometer. It is estimated that tourism will continue to grow at an average of 3.3% annually until 2030. That is why it's important for travellers to contribute to making travel more ethical and sustainable, and to plan their holidays in a way that leaves a lasting positive impression on them and the people they visit.

## Ditch the Tried and the Tasted

Try the local cuisine. Enjoy the way different combinations of indigenous crops may be tossed in locally procured herbs and spices to produce exciting and unfamiliar flavours. While you're on a holiday, it might be a good idea to take your taste buds for a ride too.

## Find Yourself a Home

There are several community-run and individually-owned homestays that are hosted by locals and their families, which you can patronise. With humble means, limited resources, and plenty of warmth, such accommodations find innovative and eco-friendly measures to ensure their guests have an authentic homely experience. Take pride in your reduced carbon footprint when you realise the water for your bath was heated by solar panels.

## Cycle or Stroll

Try not to hop from one prescribed destination to another in a motor



vehicle. You may lose out on the opportunity to see what a day in the life of a local resident looks like. Take a walking tour of the place you are visiting, or rent a bicycle. Allow yourself to pause along the way. See what they sell at the bazaars, what colour flowers blossom on trees, what they decorate their homes with, what games the children play.

### Live Like a Local or with One

Get a local talking and be prepared to be hear lots of local legends. Ask about the folklore shared with children, the secret ingredient that makes their curry taste distinctly delicious, or the hacks that keep their cattle content. In case you're lucky, they might also teach you the beat to a local song on a home-made percussion instrument. There are quite a few villagers who routinely host travellers. You only have to ask.

### Hand-Pick the Hand-made

Nothing expresses the socio-cultural heritage of a place more than its handicrafts. Local artisans source materials and motifs from their immediate environment to produce a stunning range of aesthetically designed artefacts. Each can be traced to its region by identifying the technique and the motifs depicted. Gond art, for instance, reflects the landscape and jungles of Madhya Pradesh. Buying local handicrafts supports local artisans and saves age-old art forms from dying out. As a responsible tourist you would do well to put some money into the local economy. And finally, what better way to remind you of the land you once visited than its portrayal by a local artisan?

### Let the Animals Be

Humans and animals were meant to co-exist. We have towns and cities to ourselves so the least we can do is to let the animals roam free in their homes, without disturbing or destroying their habitat. Take safaris, but watch the animals from afar. Don't break the rules by going into prohibited areas, or outside permitted timings, just so you can get a better view of a predator.

Gift yourself a more fulfilling holiday, a lasting experience. Be a thinking, responsible traveller.

# PHOTO CREDITS

## Covers

Front: **ABIJIT BHATLEKAR**

View from a pavilion overlooking the expansive Nimar plains, Mandu

Front Inside: **ABHINANDITA MATHUR**

Nandi being worshipped at the Omkareshwar Mahadev Temple

Back Inside: Pavilion, Jahaj Mahal

## Inside the Book

**ABHINANDITA MATHUR**

Page 5, Bottom right: A Maheshwari Sari in the making at Rehwa Society

Page 10, Left: A Sadhu beats the heat with a glass of nimbu paani

Page 10, Right: Frescoes at Begum Shah Shuja ka maqbara

Page 11 Left: Batik artist draw a free-hand with hot wax

Page 20, With lotus flowers crowning his head, aghori sadhu Baba Bam Bam

Nath makes his daily visit to Ujjain's Mahakaleshwar and Harsiddhi temples

Page 22, Traditional wooden Batik printing blocks

Page 38, A small museum near Bagh Caves outlines the restoration efforts undertaken at the site

Page 48, Ornamental window at the seven-storey Holkar Rajwada in Indore

Page 52, At Maheshwar, in the golden light of dawn, locals go for walks or bathe and pray by the ghats along the Narmada River

Page 53, Visitors marvel at the symmetry of arches in Mandu's Jahaz Mahal  
58-59, Mandu's architectural gems like the Jal Mahal and Jahaz Mahal are best enjoyed in the monsoons when the adjacent waterbodies are full

Page 75, The intricately carved arched doorway from Ahilyeshwar Temple leads to the famous Narmada ghats of Maheshwar

**ANURAG MALLICK & PRIYA GANAPATHY**

Page 25, A craftsman draws freehand patterns in wax at a workshop in Behrugarh

Page 10, Middle: The archs at Asirgarh's Jama Masjid

Page 11, Middle: Sultan Ghiyas-ud- din Khilji's former harem in Mandu, the Jahaz Mahal

Page 11, Right: *the Ahilyeshwar Temple at Maheshwar is the bulbous domed chhatri of Vithoji, the younger brother of Yashwant Rao Holkar, the ruler of Indore*

**BODHISATTVA SEN ROY**

Page 68, Middle: The Ahilya Fort Hotel, tucked away amid green sorrounds

Page 69, Right: Floral offering at a stall selling puja paraphernalia

**JITENDER GUPTA**

Page 4, Top: A chaat vendor at Chhappan Dukaan

Page 69, Middle: Kadhai Milk

## Courtesy Images

**MP Tourism**

Page 4, Middle: The opulent interior of Lalbagh Palace

Page 4, Bottom: View of Asirgarh Fort

Page 5, Top: The Ram Ghat and its many shrines on a bright and sunny day

Page 5, Left: Central Museum



# western madhya pradesh

A guide for thoughtful, immersive travel

You think you know Madhya Pradesh? Flip through the pages of this handy pocketbook to discover new experiences, even in the most popular cities and destinations.

As life gets busier, and holidays get shorter, travel is no longer about how much you see, but *what* you see and *how* you see it. Discover Madhya Pradesh, and more importantly, let it discover YOU!

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