

Colours of
Culture,
Brotherhood
and
Love : INDIA

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Travelling is my Passion! So following my love for travelling and discovering the Unknown, I set out on the Maharashtra - Orissa Tour. For those who haven't been to India, must know that these Cities are the true Jewels of the beautiful, and breath-taking Country of India or should I say 'The land of Wonders'!

So, in 2018, in the month of June (the ideal month for comfortable travelling), I landed in 'Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport', Mumbai, Maharashtra; henceforth my 4 days in 'The City of Dreams' began...

Maharashtra.

Mumbai, the Capital City of India (is what the locals say), is actually the Capital City of the State 'Maharashtra'.

It was a spectacular paradox of chaos and hope, glamour and squalor, modernity and tradition; but sadly I got to see only a little of this truly lively City, because I had to visit my next stop - Aurangabad.

Aurangabad, is the tourism capital of Maharashtra, and greets everyone with a Richly woven tapestry of sights and sounds and its ethereal history. The City gets its name from the 'Mughal Emperor' of the 17th Century - Aurangzeb.

Located around 99 km from Aurangabad, lie the - **Ajanta Caves**, now included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites; as soon as I entered these caves, I understood why. Ajanta Caves depict the Buddhist Culture and their stories through various sculptures and paintings; but they were so much more than caves set of 3 rock-cut Buddhist Caves, dating back to the period of 2nd Century BC - 650 CE. Next, I made it to the - **Ellora Caves**, another World Heritage Site; beautifully depicting sculptures, representing the elements of the 3 religions.

Believe it or not, but by now 2 of my 4 precious days were gone.

On the 3rd day, my curiosity for wildlife took me to -

Perched at a height of 200m, this national park in Maharashtra is the oldest and is considered to be one of the largest tiger reserves of the State - **Tadoba - Andhari Tiger Reserve**, is situated in the Chandrapur District. Ah! the calm and homely feeling that one gets amongst, the messengers of God or nature and animals; took to me to Cloud Nine! A must visit for all the Nature-lovers out there! Other than Noble Bengal Tigers themselves, one will come across a flock of different-shaded birds, Wild boars, Spotted deers, Vicious snakes and crocodiles, and a stunning, picturesque flora itself. Its rather hopeful and inspiring to see how this sanctuary is indeed a safe haven for the creatures in it, protected from poachers and hunters. That day went by like a dreamy flurry. On the 4th day, to make this trip unforgettable; I decided to do the best thing in itself - spend time and learn about one of the

indigenous tribes of Maharashtra — the Wardis.
These 'Adivasis' live in the areas of Maharashtra
— Gujarat border. They speak the unwritten,
Wardi language; and have their own animistic
beliefs, life, customs and traditions, as a
result of Acculturation they have adopted many
Hindu beliefs. Their major contribution to
the society is by their — Wardi painting.
These paintings use a graphic vocabulary:
circle, triangle and square. This unique
art is famous across the world today.
Living amongst this tribe, seeing their
hardwork and brotherhood, eating their food —
was an eye-opener towards the true spirit of
Maharashtra.

My experience of Maharashtra ended on a
note of mixed feelings when I watched the
city of Mumbai, come to life all over again at
night — on my way to the airport. Maharashtra
is a place for history lovers, Culture lovers,
Nature lovers, foodies (Vada Pav), and those
who love 'life' itself.

Orissa

From Mumbai I flew to the Capital City of **Orissa - Bhubaneswar**.

The Land of Temples took away my breath at first sight! The paddy fields and palm-fringed silver beaches, exquisite Temples, rivers, waterfalls and the Tribal people. Humans and Nature living in perfect harmony.

Bhubaneswar is an ancient city replete with beautiful historic temples which attracted me to this state in the first place. The 7th Century built - Lingaraj Temple, dedicated to Lord Shiv; and the 650 A.D. constructed Parasurameshwara Temple with its One thousand Lingas! and adorned with beautiful Carvings of Lord Ganesh, Lord Shiv and Goddess Parvati; took me to some another utopian-like World...

As the small hours of the day began, I found myself watching the panoramic sunset at the famous Chilika Lake.

It is the largest salt water lake in Asia! The lake offers a sea of diverse hues and colours, ranging from the White-bellied sea eagles to baby pink Flamingos, and from Golden Plovers to Sandpipers. I had the most delightful evening, sleeping in the lap of mother Nature. Next day, as planned, I made my way to the beach city of **Puri**. My first stop was the famous Jagannath Temple, built in the 11th Century and devoted to Lord Jagannath - an avatar of Lord Vishnu; the splendid Orissa architecture and the delicious Mahaprasad, made me stay there half of the day. Lucky for me, it was 23 June a.k.a the day of 'The Rath Yatra'! The richly decorated Chariots, the beautiful idols of Lord Krishna, his sister 'Goddess Subhadra', and his brother 'Lord Balaram'; 7

the divine music coming from ~~4~~ mridangas and ~~tambourines~~, the vibrant processions, made as active and enthusiastic as the locals themselves! The crowd was unbelievable; but a win-win for me because I managed to catch a glimpse of the idols; and now the locals say I have a lucky and successful year ahead! That day felt too good to be real! Next day was for the - **Tibarpada Wildlife Sanctuary**. The lush green, the overwhelming beauty, the rambling Mahanadi River, were all so fascinating. But, the tigers, leopards, bawrs, Simbal, spotted deer, four horned Antelopes, sloths, gharials and numerous other creatures, were the icing on the cake. The biodiversity there was so refreshing... I decided to spend my whole day in there, and it was so serene. Next day I woke-up with the exciting thought of meeting the -

Kondo! They are a native tribe of Orissa, living in the hills and jungles; and speaking the Kui language. They follow the animistic religion, but the 3% population claims to have Christian faith, hospitality of guests is like their second religion. They live in mud huts, along with their livestock and farms in the nearby field. Their staple diet is rice, along with Non-Veg, but they don't use milk. Their lively Culture of Dance, music and song - sung at marriages, Meriah sacrifice, love songs, was very entertaining and knowledgeable! Especially, the War Dance.

Uh! It was a day I would never forget, it was a trip I will never let me forget. I felt sad that night, making my way to the airport; but these 8 days and all the beautiful things I saw, or the kind Indians I met, had been etched in my mind forever. I came to India with dreams and left with beautiful memories.

My Blog



Ajanta Caves



Chilika Lake



The Warli Art



The Konds Tribal Dance