



Narmada River Heritage Trail

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 roam through the jungle, discover a amazing 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.

Trip Highlights

- Explore India's Madu fort and marvel at its architecture
- Explore the jungle and backwaters of the Narmada 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
- Learn from naturalists and historians of the Narmada

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

Flight Information:

Day 1 : Arrive to Indore (IDR), Madhya Pradesh by 10:00 am from Delhi or other connecting city.

Day 4 : Depart to your respective city as per the arrangements.



Itinerary

Day 1- 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

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.

(L,D)

Activities- 1 hour boating and exploration of the Sailani forest.

Lunch & Dinner -Sailani Island Resort

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

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Day 2- Sailani to Maheshwar.

Day Highlights

- Stay in the historictown of Maheshwar.
- Scenic boat ride across the Narmada
- Interaction with 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.



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In the afternoon we visit an 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.

Day 3- Maheshwar-Mandu-Indore Day

Highlights

- Explore India's largest fort
- Visit and lunch overlooking the Jahaz Mahal(Ship Palace)
- 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 its 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.

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

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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.

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