

INDO ASIA DIARIES

Issue 06 | Sept 2015



INDO ASIA TOURS

Since 1987



FRAMED

CROSSING
CULTURES

TOP
SPOT

NEWS
& VIEWS

IA SAYS



Derek Quaid

Derek Quaid from United States is an ardent traveller for the last decade, often shunning the regular itineraries for untreaded ones. His travels have taken him across many borders in South East Asia, Africa and Australia apart from his own backyard trips in United States. He admits, that by far, nothing has raised the bar more than India, where experiences on the road are concerned. In 2013, while on the temple trail of South India, he realised that there was certainly more fun in veering off the usual and taking a peek into the local life of coastal India instead of the enormous history laden temples, which he soon lost interest in. It was the mundane, usual and absolutely ordinary things that struck him as unique. ***Like the art of drinking coconut water with a straw – ingenuity at its best. So on the rest of his South India sojourn, Derek downed many a water filled coconuts.*** Besides, who could resist the bright red straws to slurp the water from? This picture summed up his love for coconut water, which pervaded more than just the palate – it is a love story that has overtaken his heart. It was a hot afternoon in Chennai, when Derek struck a conversation with a coconut seller, who told him to add Mamallapuram to his trip to Pondicherry – a suggestion he is ever thankful for.



NUDGE THE STORYTELLER IN YOU TO SUBMIT A PHOTOGRAPH FROM YOUR TRAVELS AND WIN A TRIP TO EXPLORE THE MARVELS OF INDIA.

[CLICK HERE TO SUBMIT](#)

FRAMED

SOUTH INDIA SPECIAL

Photo Location : Mylapore, Chennai

FRAMED

CROSSING CULTURES

TOP SPOT

NEWS & VIEWS

IA SAYS



The Elephant Rescue Centre at Wildlife SOS near Agra

Away from the urban sprawl of development in the cities, there is only one thing on many travel enthusiasts' mind – where do I head out to refresh and reclaim my peace of mind. Jaded by over treaded destinations or mundane itineraries, many like to drift into unknown lands. Here are some of our top (relatively) secret hideouts that we want to share with you.

Wildlife SOS, Agra

The one of its kind, bear and elephant rescue and rehabilitation centre is a thought provoking stop for animal lovers, where they can spend a day volunteering and understanding the travails of rescued animals. Understanding the nuances of working with orphaned injured, and displaced wildlife found in cities is an eye opening experience.

Khonoma, Nagaland

India's first 'Green Village' where cutting trees is prohibited, Khonoma's undulating hills are draped in robust plant life. 20km from the capital of Nagaland, Kohima, the village is a strapping example of preserving the natural heritage of a destination. Simple living and higher thinking sums up a couple of days in Khonoma.

Patan, Gujarat

The erstwhile fortified town of Patan has inherited Solanki Dynasty's rich architectural skill in the form of a grand step well called Rani ki Vav and numerous temples. *The relics are almost 1000 years old, transporting the traveller to an unimaginable place.* The remoteness of Patan is to a large extent a formidable charm.



Terraced fields of Khonoma. Pic Courtesy: Vaibhav Mehta

Mandu, Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh's sanguine beauty is celebrated with the rewarding view of the sweeping Nimar Plains from the Malwa Plateau. *Here lies the once largest fortified city on earth, and home to some of central India's most powerful rulers – Mandu.* A trip to the now 'ghost city' ensures a perfect place to revel in silence, fresh air, and wide-open spaces.

Kamshet, Maharashtra

Adventure lovers have a new pit stop in Maharashtra. *Fast becoming the Mecca for paragliders*, Kamshet is wedged in the thick of the Western Ghats Mountain Range, offering jaw dropping views and the enigma of ancient cave temples, medieval hill fortresses and colonial hill stations.

CROSSING CULTURES

THE ROAD LESS TRAVELLED

Destinations that are waiting to be explored

STORIES FROM THE SUB-CONTINENT

Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay Awaken Your Senses

**TOP
SPOT**

FRAMED

CROSSING
CULTURES

**TOP
SPOT**

NEWS
& VIEWS

IA SAYS

INDO ASIA TOURS



SUPRIYA SEHGAL

Footloose in

Mamallapuram

Journey into the heart of India.

It was the winter of 2014 when Supriya made her 8th trip along the East Coast Road from Chennai to Pondicherry, but stepped off the highway for the first time to step into the easy paced life of Mamallapuram. The detour was well deserved, as she planned to stay on for an extra day, discovering the unassuming coastal village, famous for its shore temples, sculpture making units, a lighthouse and excellent coastal fare. All this with no aplomb – just slowly ushering her into a simple way of living. It was a trip of many firsts. *A catamaran ride into the middle of the sea to bob on top of the submerged gopurams of temples, trying her hand at crafting a statue at a small stone unit and getting lost in history of the Mamallapuram temples.* The beach, embellished with a mass of multicolour dots, was nothing close to soothing. But what it did present was the opportunity to see local life at close quarters, have a quick chat with the fishermen and the ladies selling bric-a-bracs to tourists from around the world.

Shore Temple

The 8th century temple is the pinnacle of architectural elegance of the Pallava period in history. The twin tiered gopuram can be seen well before you actually reach the temple. Built by King Narasimhavarman II this temple is one of the earliest freestanding stone temples in Tamil Nadu. *Thousands of small and big sculptures of Shiva adorn the stone walls of the temple and its courtyard. The Dravidian styled temple is sheer poetry in stone.*



**The Shore Temple in the backdrop of a sculpture.*

Five Rathas

As the Shore Temple, the rock cut temples of Mamallapuram are sure to mesmerize the traveller. *This temple showcases five stone structures in the form of chariots, named after the Pandava brothers of the Mahabharatha and Draupadi.* They are also known as the Pancha Pandava Rathas. Four of these grand creations are chiseled out of a single rock.



**Five Rathas Temple*

Catamaran Ride

The most basic and ingenious transportation to maneuver the waves of the sea is something called a catamaran. *Made from binding logs together, this is a rudimentary boat that is used by fishermen.* Many of them hang around the beach long after their fishing hours in the morning are over, to see if they can transport adventurous travellers to see the submerged



The experience of riding in a catamaran is unparalleled

temples off the shore. Bobbing on top of the submerged temples, one can only imagine the extend of the spread of these structures. This is not for the faint-hearted, but an excellent way of seeing the tops of the temples and knowing how life is a fisherman can be in the middle of the sea.

Art in Stone

There is no better thrill in sitting in the cramped shed of local craftsmen, learning the art of sculpting exquisite pieces from the local stone. The whirring of the machine, constant clanking on the rocks and the mist of crushed stone consumes you. *Local craftsmen are happy to have travellers try their hand at the age-old art of sculpting.* The statues of Mamallapuram are famous enough to make their way into International markets – here, you are learning from the most arrived Guru.

Indo Asia's long term guest and friend, Yvonne from Holland, remembers her own trip to Mahabalipuram –

“Mahabalipuram left an incredible impression”, she wistfully drifts to a few days spend here. Choosing Mahabalipuram as a base was a good decision to cover the Thaipusam procession in Chennai (only 60 km from Mahabalipuram) and the Dance and Music festival of Mahabalipuram at night. The open air stage with the most magnificent background on earth - Arjuna's Penance from Pallavas times is one the most enduring memories for her. Amidst the temple tours, shopping in the narrow lanes or just sitting by the beach, it is the view of the lit up Shore Temple that has been etched as a fairy tale in Yvonne's mind.

TOP SPOT

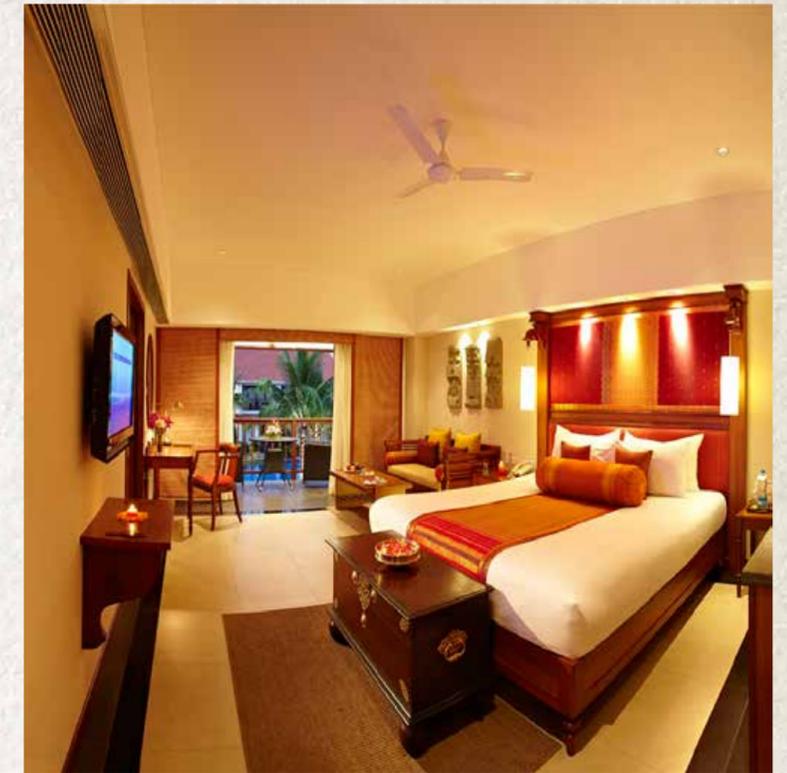
FRAMED CROSSING CULTURES TOP SPOT NEWS & VIEWS IA SAYS

* image courtesy: Simply CVR, Pixabay



Embrace the luxury of nature and splendid hospitality at the Radisson Blu Resort Temple Bay, where expansive blues of the Bay of Bengal and brilliantly hued sunrises come together with exemplary service. At Mamallapuram, the experience is nothing short of spiritual.

- In the midst of a romantic countryside scape.
- Rich and varied regional and international cuisine.
- The Spa - a sanctuary to soothe your senses.
- Traditional hospitality at its best.
- Finessed nuances in the rooms.
- A synthesis of culture and fun with activities for all.
- Relax, rejuvenate and refresh with the lush surroundings.
- Practical conference facilities.
- Business centre for those who want to catch up on work.
- Superior banquet facilities.



**TOP
SPOT**



Fortune Park opens its 48th door

FORTUNE

Member ITC's hotel group

'Fortune Park' launches its 48th venture of the Fortune group of hotels by paving its way into Gujarat's major city, Ahmedabad. With the

rising popularity of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar as business hubs, this is an opportune time for the hotel. It is styled as a contemporary business hotel with easy access to the airport as well as the business hub of the city. Business travellers are sure to find the hotel a great pit stop with its excellent range of guest services and facilities. The hotel offers 77 guest rooms, including 36 Standard Rooms, 38 Fortune Club Rooms and 3 Suites. While business travellers will find great value in this, the hotel is also apt for leisure travellers to the city. Fortune, a leading member ITC group, is one of the fastest growing hotel chains of the industry. The group has left no stone unturned in its latest addition to the kitty, with high-end facilities like exquisite dining, business, banquets, conferences and health taken care of. Fortune has consistently upped the game of hospitality in India and continues to do so with latest additions like the hotel in Ahmedabad.

Shangri-La Hotel now in Bengaluru



Shangri-La hotel

BENGALURU

With Bengaluru retaining its charm for International businesses coming into the city, it is imperative that it continues to make space for high-end hotels. Come September and Shangri-La Hotel will enter

Bengaluru with a special introductory rate from Rs 9,500 per double room, per night. This will include a Rs 3,000 credit, which can be applied to any service in the hotel. Shangri-La Hotel has established itself as one of the superior hotels in India and will provide the same level of elevated service in the IT city as well. Located between the central business district and the residential suburbs of Bengaluru, Shangri-La Hotel will offer 397 rooms with a range of amenities and facilities suited both for the business and leisure traveller.

Over 900% growth in eTVs in the first half



Electronic visas have been stirring up a storm in the tourism industry. More heartening news concludes the first half of the year as India sees a rise of 900% in the

January-July, 2015 period. During these months a total of 1,47,690 tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 14,415 during January-July, 2014, registering a growth

of 924.6 per cent. July 2015 alone saw a total of 21,476 tourist arriving with the help of eTV, as compared to 2,462 during July 2014. This growth is expected to stay on an upswing as the list of countries that can avail eTV grows to 150 by the end of the year. A method to boost the economy, the eTV has been a welcome change for both Indian tourism businesses and countries that have always wanted easier access into India. 113 countries are part of the eTV scheme as of now. USA, Australia, France, Germany, UAE, Canada, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Japan and Russian Federation are top contributors.

36 countries join the eTV list since August



The buzz around eTV doesn't seem to be settling down. The Government has recently extended the service to 36 more countries since August 2015. The new countries being included in e-Tourist Visa scheme are United Kingdom, Ireland, Malaysia, Sweden, Spain, Belgium, Argentina, Netherlands, Seychelles, Andorra, Armenia, Aruba, Bolivia, Colombia, Cuba, East Timor, Guatemala, Hungary, Jamaica, Malta, Mongolia, Monaco, Mozambique, Panama, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, St Lucia, St Vincent & the Grenadines, Suriname, Taiwan, Tanzania, Turks & Caicos Island, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Now the total count of countries under the scheme will go upto 113. This addition doesn't come without support of 7 more Indian airports as designated airports for entry on eTV. New Airports being included in the scheme are Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Gaya, Jaipur, Lucknow, Trichy, and Varanasi, as they have been seen as nodal junctions for travellers. With this, the total number of designated airports will become 16.

Kochi bags WTCF membership



Kochi has become the first Indian city to be granted membership of Beijing-headquartered World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) Council with Kerala's Tourism Department accepting the invitation to join its league of leading tourism cities across the world. A leading destination for India, Kochi well deserves the entry. This will be an opportunity for the two regions to partner in activities related to culture, sports and tourism, as there are many similarities between China and Kerala - especially in the cuisine, martial arts and snake boat races. End with - An enduring example of exemplary tourism promotion, Kochi has always created a worthy benchmark for other destinations in India. The entry into this esteemed list is yet another example of Kochi, and Kerala's, fine display of tourism acumen.

NEWS&VIEWS

FRAMED CROSSING CULTURES TOP SPOT NEWS & VIEWS IA SAYS



MEET US AT

Indo Asia Tours is participating in the below mentioned upcoming trade fairs in 2015. You can schedule an appointment at marketing@indoasiatours.com to meet us in person at these fairs :

- **Maharashtra International Travel Mart, Mumbai : 28 – 30 Sept 2015**
- **IFTM Top Resa, Paris : 29 Sep -02**
- **International Golf Tourism Market (IGTM), Tenerife, Spain: 5-8 Oct 2015**
- **Madhya Pradesh Travel Mart, Bhopal: 16-18 Oct**
- **SITE, Delhi: 23-25 Oct**
- **WTM, London: 2-5 Nov**

INDIA TOURISM ROAD SHOW

Western Europe: 20-28 October, 2015:

- **Frankfurt – 20th October, 2015 (Tuesday)**
- **Zurich – 21st October, 2015 (Wednesday)**
- **Vienna – 23rd October, 2015 (Friday)**

IA SAYS



Struck by the beauty of Burma, Rudyard Kipling penned down a fabulous poem called, 'Mandalay'. Many other authors and filmmakers celebrated the destination after that and one such example is the movie, 'The Road to Mandalay'. But here I am, thrilled to talk about not just one road to Mandalay, but two. As I write this, one of the roads to Mandalay is now open from India. In an announcement made by the two state heads, travellers can now hop from Manipur in India to the border town of Morey in Mandalay or Bagan. And from Mandalay on to Thailand via Laos. This is the Asian Highway #1. The second road, which is known as the Stilwell Road, connects Upper Assam, through Arunachal Pradesh of India to the

northern districts of Myanmar, and further onto Yunanan (Kumming) in China. The road transit treaty that binds this change in the policy between India, Myanmar and Thailand is to be signed in November. What does this mean to our partners? Well, the answer is simple - colossal business potential, which is now easy to be tapped and explored.

What does this mean to our partners? Well, the answer is simple - huge business potential, which is now easy to be tapped and explored. A whole new world opens up to the inbound traveller, with the seven North Eastern States of India more accessible. Rich in tribal culture, performing arts, birdwatching and wildlife along with beautiful sceneries, this is a part of India that is relatively unvisited. The opening of the borders will elevate the interest of travellers who can connect to different countries, but not before experiencing the variety of culture and natural beauty of the North East. From bio diversity hotspots like Namdapha and the Eagle's Nest to the great Buddhist monasteries in Tawang and Dhirang, the traveller will be privy to a host of fresh insights of the country. The serene banks of the Manipuri lake Loktak will warm up the traveller for the beautiful Inley lake in Myanmar, as will the rich tribal heritage of Nagaland, East Assam, Arunachal, Mizoram or Meghalaya prepare one for the vibrant cultures across the borders.

We are excited to present one of the most unique regions of India to our partners. Here, we will be able to implement the fundamentals of sustainable tourism by working with the local community. With plenty of surprises and a strong novelty factor, this region is destined to shine. For the travellers, this only means more to explore.

Sunirmol Ghosh

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH!



Deepak Sadotra | Asst. Manager - Operations

Deepak Sadotra's passion for soft music and writing on social issues gets translated to creating an equally zealous work environment for himself and others around him, as an Assistant Manager for the Indo Asia Leisure Services Ltd. Driving and reading non-fiction literature are the other things that work as food for the soul.