



Satpura: Hiking the Pachmarhi Trail & Safari

November 28 - December 2, 2018

Highlights:

- Explore Satpura National Park on foot, in a canoe, and by jeep
- Hike along the Pachmarhi Trail
- “Satpura under Canvas” - a unique mobile camp experience
- Track wildlife including tiger, leopard, wild boar, bear, fox, porcupine, the Indian giant squirrel, a variety of antelope, and much more

The Satpura Tiger Reserve is an extensive forest covering a broad array of unique Central Indian flora and fauna. This beautiful reserve is cradled in the Mahadeo Hills of the Satpura Range that is characterized by deep valleys, narrow gorges, cascading waterfalls and rich vegetation. All these facets of the forest make it ideal trekking country. During the British Raj, the state of Madhya Pradesh was known as the Central Provinces and the forest department of this province located its headquarters in Pachmarhi. Captain James Forsyth, the man largely responsible for establishing and operating the headquarters, ascended to Pachmarhi using the same route as what we walk on this trek.

This five day adventure includes a unique mobile camping and walking expedition through the pristine Satpura Forests as well as spending two days exploring the gorgeous Satpura National Park on foot, canoe and Jeeps. Experience local hospitality and interact with the local community. This is indeed a trip of a lifetime in a beautiful part of Central India.



Flight Information:

November 28, 2018 Arrive in Bhopal (BHO), Madhya Pradesh, India by 8:00am.

December 6, 2018: Depart Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India anytime or continue on a post-adventure.

DAY BY DAY ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrive Bhopal – Panchmarhi by road

28th November 2018 (Wednesday)

Upon arrival at Bhopal airport, you will be transferred to a hotel for breakfast and wash & change. Thereafter by 08:00 hours drive towards Satpura National Park.

On arrival, you will meet the Reni Pani team at Sita Dongri and eat a packed lunch.

Post lunch walk to Dehelia Camp. Arrival at 1700 hours, our exclusive mobile camp will be set up along a lovely sandy beach on the river. Look out for the Indian Giant Squirrel here.

Evening sundowners and dinner to follow. A special preparation of a potent cocktail made from the Mahua flower is demonstrated and available to taste.

**Accommodation: Tented
Mobile Camp**

Meals: Lunch and Dinner



Day 2: Trek to Manakachar

29th November 2018 (Thursday)

Hot Breakfast will be served at 0700 hours. Today we will depart at 0800 hours to embark on a 16 km (~10 mile) trek, partly along with banks of the Denwa, in some pristine woodland habitat. As we walk along the Denwa, we witness the variety of scenery that Satpura offers; high sandbanks, narrow waterways, and the confluence with the Bainganga River await.

One may need to wade through knee deep water at times to adventurously get to Jhela camp (9 km), our packed lunch stop. Crested Serpent Eagle, Kingfishers, Grey Wagtails, Tickel's Blue

Flycatcher and Indian Vultures are possible sightings. En-route there is a steep cliff that is used by the endangered Indian Vultures as a nesting site.

After Jhela we leave the Denwa river bed and walk 6 km through dry deciduous woodland towards Manakachar where Reni Pani's exclusive mobile camp will be set up. All these areas lie within the reserve and we are likely to encounter several species of birds like the Crested Serpent Eagle, Grey Hornbills, Common Kingfishers, Jungle Prinias, Black-hooded Orioles, Golden Fronted Leaf birds amongst others.

Evening sundowners and dinner to follow.

Accommodation: Tented Mobile Camp
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Distance: 16 Kms

Day 03: Drive from Manakachar to Satpura National Road

30th November 2018 (Friday)

Today we will wake up at leisure and have a hearty hot breakfast by 0800 hours before driving back at 0900 hours and arriving at Reni Pani Jungle Lodge by 1130 hours, enroute visiting a local school.



After lunch, we depart for a game park drive in open top Jeeps looking for Tigers, Sloth bears, and birdlife. The state forest department guides along with the naturalists deliver a truly exhilarating experience filled with insightful knowledge on the flora and fauna that is indigenous to the Satpura Tiger Reserve.

Satpura national park is one of the 10 critical bio-diverse regions of India. 17% of the Royal Bengal tigers have made this park their residence. It is home to 46 mammal and 250 avifauna species. This region is known as the Central Indian highlands.



Return to the lodge by 1830 hours and enjoy a presentation on the wildlife & habitat of Satpura, followed by dinner.

Accommodation: Reni Pani Lodge

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 04: Satpura National Park

1st December 2018 (Saturday)

Satpura's undulating terrain makes it ideal for trail biking. Parsapani, a pristine forest patch on the west side of the National Park is a picturesque forest with ample wildlife. You will enjoy a 12 to 15 KM early morning bicycle ride in this area and ride through patches of dry deciduous forests before you enter a sprawling meadow. The meadow is located near the backwater of Denwa River and the ample availability of succulent grasses and water attract several herbivores like Sambar Deer, Wild Pig and Spotted Deer. The occasional Sloth Bear, Leopard, Wild Dogs and Tiger also roam these forests. You will depart Reni Pani lodge in Jeeps and reach the entry gate of the Parsapani forest from where you will take bikes and explore this region to enjoy the landscape and maybe see some of the wildlife in this area. Mid-way through the bike ride you will stop to have breakfast in the bush.

Return to the lodge for independent activities.

OR

On a guided nature walk, searching for endemic bird and animal life, naturalists and the forest guides track Tigers, Leopards, Sloth Bear and other resident animals. The feeling of being in the jungle with no separation between wildlife and oneself is truly exhilarating and is an experience any wildlife enthusiast would cherish. Birdwatchers and butterfly enthusiasts enjoy viewing the ample bird and butterfly life in the reserve.

Return to the lodge for breakfast and independent activities.

Enjoy a yoga session in the lodge. Learn about various asanas such as *shavasana* (the dead body posture) and *sukhasana* (Easy sitting posture). The session will also include a guide to breathing and meditation. Duration – 45 minutes

Mid-afternoon, we canoe on the dam part of the river. The calmness of water, interrupted occasionally by the honking of Bar Headed Geese or the deafening screeches of a Black Ibis while drifting in narrow creaks observing hordes of grazing herbivores on the shores, is a treat in itself. And, where there are herbivores in an Indian forest, there will be carnivores!



Return to the lodge for dinner with a special culinary experience of a cooking demonstration where a secret dish will be prepared, that has come down centuries from the hunters of yore.

Accommodation: Reni Pani Lodge

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Day 05: Satpura National Park to Bhopal via Bhimbetka Caves

2nd December 2018 (Sunday)

After a leisurely breakfast, check out and drive back at 1000 hours to the city of Bhopal, visiting a village bazaar enroute and the UNESCO world heritage site of Bhimbetka caves for an hour.



The villages around Satpura are host to two of India's most famous ancient tribes:

Gond - The Gond is a very large tribe of Central India, numbering 12.7 million. Traditionally they have been cultivating land, producing crops, and raising livestock. They grow rice, wheat, and different types of lentils, sesame, millet and cotton. Families live as smaller unit with parents and children and also in extended families with other relatives. The Gond folk tradition is rich in art & craft and they are very fond of music and dance. Both men and women sing and dance to the energetic sound of instruments like the *dholak*, a double-sided drum. The Pardhan tribe is the official narrators of traditional folk stories for this community. They tattoo their bodies with stars, scorpions, flower, bird and animal patterns. The walls of their homes are painted with scenes inspired by nature – animals, birds, people and trees. These are drawn in red and black on a white background. They make colorful floor designs called rangoli and beautiful pottery, baskets and other crafts. Woodcarving is another talent.



Bhil - The Bhil tribe is a proud and ancient ethnic group inhabiting the Western part of Central India. The word bhil is derived from the word 'bil' which means bow. Reference to this tribe is found in our ancient epics such as The Ramayana. Well over 1.5 million of them live as marginal farmers in almost 2000 villages. The members of the Bhil tribe possess a vast array of rich customs and traditions. Their colourful festivals and ceremonies are outbursts of joy and foster their sense of community. Dance and music are integral part of their culture. Spread over a large area, they speak a smattering of languages endemic to the area they live.

Bhimbetka is where India's rich collection of prehistoric cave paintings was discovered in 1957.

The Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka are in the foothills of the Vindhyan Mountains on the southern edge of the central Indian plateau. Within massive sandstone outcrops, above comparatively dense forest, are five clusters of natural rock shelters, displaying paintings that appear to date from the Mesolithic Period right through to the historical period. The cultural



traditions of the inhabitants of the villages adjacent to the site bear a strong resemblance to those represented in the rock paintings. The over 600 rock shelters – the largest group in the



world –depict scenes of hunting, dancing, music, horse and elephant riders, animals, honey collection, household scenes, rituals and religious symbols. Awe inspiring indeed!

Meals: Breakfast

Itinerary Rating: 3 - Moderate - Good physical fitness required for hiking

Inclusions:

- Two nights in a mobile tented camp on full board basis as per “Satpura under Canvas” on twin share
- Two nights at Reni Pani Lodge on full board basis on twin share
- Services of a senior expert naturalist during the tour
- One game drive in open top vehicles in the national park
- One canoe ride experience on the river
- One culinary class in Reni Pani Lodge
- Visit a village bazaar (day 5)
- One Yoga session in the lodge
- Transportation from Bhopal and back by air conditioned coach

Exclusions:

- Items of personal nature such as drinks, Wi-Fi, laundry
- Tips to service providers
- Anything not mentioned in “inclusions”.

ACCOMMODATION

During this trip the group spends two nights in mobile tented camp during the trek and a two nights at a Forest Lodge in Satpura National Park. All accommodation is allocated on twin share basis

Day 1 – Mobile Camp

Day 2– Mobile Camp

Day 3– Reni Peni lodge – Satpura National Park Telephone +919407559770

Day 4– Reni Peni lodge – Satpura National Park

FOOD

The food will be predominantly home-style Indian cuisine for all meals; during the trail trek the meals will be simple.

DIETARY RESTRICTIONS

We do our best to accommodate dietary requirements due to allergies or personal preferences. However, if you are on a specific strict diet (e.g. gluten free or vegan), we advise you to bring some snacks along with you.

FIRST AID KIT

A medical kit accompanies each group. You should also bring your own personal first aid kit.

KIT LIST

- Good comfortable walking/hiking shoes
- Hiking pants
- T-shirts / shirts / tops
- Wide brim sun hat
- Fleece jacket
- Rain jacket
- Sleepwear
- Sun glasses
- Comfortable warm socks
- Personal hygiene items and toilet kit
- Insect repellent
- Sunblock products
- Head torch / head lamp with spare bulbs and batteries
- Personal drinking water bottles

MEDICAL CONDITIONS

In case you have any medical conditions that could affect you while on the trip (current injuries, diabetes, allergies, other chronic conditions, any recent surgeries, etc) please make sure you consult your physician regarding your participation in this trip.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We suggest that before embarking on this trip you are insured against medical, travel and personal accident risks including repatriation costs, air ambulance and helicoptering rescue services). We also strongly recommend that you take out holiday cancellation insurance. Please ensure that your insurer is aware of your itinerary and can agree to cover the activities being undertaken.

ALTITUDE

This trip does not involve any destination which is high altitude.

BAGGAGE ALLOWANCE

During this trip your baggage is carried in buses and 4WD vehicles, hence there is no baggage restriction for this trip.

The only baggage limit is that which is imposed by the domestic airlines which in most cases are 15 Kgs for check-in baggage and 7 Kgs for the cabin baggage.

CLIMATE

Days will be sunny and warm & nights get cooler. The average maximum temperature would be around 32 Celsius and in the evenings would dip to around 10c or even lower. Keep in mind that nights in the forest are colder than we typically expect due to wind chill factor, so make sure you have suitable warm night apparel and a good protective jacket for the camping nights.

INDIAN TOURIST VISA

Please note a Tourist Visa is required to enter India. The same can be obtained from your nearest embassy/consulate or E-visa route. Please visit the concerned website for more information on how the application for e-visa works and other details:

<https://indianvisaonline.gov.in/visa/tvoa.html>

TRIP LEADER AND SUPPORT STAFF

The trip will be led by Mr. Mandip Singh Soin, Explorer & Managing Director of Ibex Expeditions Pvt Ltd and a senior expert naturalist. Plus support staff would be hand during the camping & trekking portion.

CURRENCY

The local currency is the Indian Rupee. Currently 1 USD = INR 67 as of now, with difference of 1 or 2 Rupees due to currency fluctuations on a daily basis.

ATM AVAILABILITY

Visa, Master Card 24 hour ATM's are located in all the metro and major cities such as Bhopal and Delhi and the instructions are displayed in English and some ATM's accept debit / credit cards banks like HSBC, Bank of America, Standard Chartered, ABN AMRO and Citibank have offices and ATM's in Delhi, Chennai, Calcutta, Bombay and some of the big cities. It is advised to get a list of branches in India from your home bank, always carry your home branch phone, e-mail and contact information. Not all ATM's will be compatible with your ATM's. The closest ATM or bank (State Bank of India) to the National Park is in Sohagpur, which is around 15 kilometers away from the lodge.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLY AND PLUG

The electrical current in India is 220 –240 volts, 50 Hz.

There is normally a lot of fluctuations and low voltage occurs, adapters and transformers are best advised to be used. Power surge cable for your laptop should be carried. Triple pin round sockets are the standard in use in India. To recharge batteries when on a trek or in areas where they is no electricity / power cuts a portable solar battery charger is best got with you and not readily available in India. Please note there will be no electricity during the trek on the trail.

CELL PHONE AND INTERNET COVERAGE

International cell phones will only work in India if the roaming facility is activated from the country of issue. If roaming is activated the cell phones will work wherever they is the network / partner network signals which now have connectivity in all cities, big towns, major hill stations and towns. Major cell phone companies in India are Vodafone, Airtel and Idea. However due to remoteness of the location, there is no cell phone or internet (Wi-Fi) coverage around the national park and during the trekking trail.

BOOKS

J. Corbett. The Man Eaters of Kumaon, et seq.

Mahatma Gandhi. My Experiments with Truth.

Jawaharlal Nehru. Discovery of India

Rabindranath Tagore. Poetry, and Prose. (The great man of Indian arts and letters.) Tom Stoppard. India Ink.

Captain James Forsyth, Highlands of Central India.

LANGUAGE

The national language is Hindi with English widely spoken throughout the country.

INDIAN HOSPITALITY

Indians are renowned the world over for their warm hospitality, generosity and welcoming

attitude toward guests especially in the rural areas It is quite normal for Indians to invite foreigners in to drink tea, chit chat or have a meal.

Notes:

- The trek is conducted in remote locations and therefore the facilities and amenities will be simple yet comfortable.
- An exclusive mobile campsite will be set up for guests at each location
- Since a major part of this hike is within the Tiger Reserve, the route and campsites may vary marginally because of the forest department's policy

