

Golden Goa

Unique beaches and rich multicultural history

Goa-Islamic Tourism



One of the many festivals in this amazing land.

واحد من مهرجانات هذا البلد العجيب.

Endowed with a 105 km coastline and dotted with golden and silvery sandy beaches Goa, is a dream holiday destination for tourists from all over the world. It's serenity and the hospitable Goan people make a visit to Goa the experience of a life-time. Often it is referred to as Golden Goa or 'Goa Daurada'. Indeed Goa is rightly called the pearl of the orient and has become the most preferred holiday destination in Asia. It is a unique blend of Portuguese and Indian culture that lends an aesthetic, old worldy charm to this coastal state of India, dotted with palm trees, breathtakingly beautiful countryside and serene villages.

Popularly known as the land of sun, surf and sand, Goa now offers tourists a variety of activities. Those who are looking for adventures and thrills may enjoy aqua sports – snorkeling, windsurfing, jet-skiing, parasailing etc. It has sprawling beaches with ample space for everyone to enjoy their sunbathing in peace. Goa has a lot to offer and caters to all tastes and preferences. After relaxing at the beach tourists can enjoy

the spa and ayurvedic massages at world class resorts. Go sightseeing, see the temples and Portuguese churches, visit the bazaars, and take an eco-tour to see the wildlife and waterfalls. Visit the weekly markets at Anjuna and Mapuca with their lush green paddy fields, picturesque landscape, and serene backwaters. It is one of the most well known eco-tourism holiday destinations in India.

Due to the growing popularity of holistic treatments, well qualified Ayurveda physicians have set up shop in hotels and rejuvenation holiday packages are available. Most therapies include massages with herbal extracts, herbal powders and oils, medicated steam baths and preferably followed by yoga routines, food and relaxation to help clients derive maximum benefit from the programme. ➔

City Tourism

Goa is being promoted as an all the year round destination. Although October to March is the best time to visit, selling "rain drops" has become very popular during the monsoon season. Because of the rains, the atmosphere remains dust free (between May-September) and the weather is a bit cool, opening the pores and making the body receptive to herbal oil therapy or massages. Many prefer the beauty care with herbal face packs, herbal oil massage, intakes of herbal tea etc to improve the complexion and beautify the body. Yoga and meditation for mental and physical well-being are also on the agenda.

Goa's heritage sites reflect the grandeur of Portuguese architecture. Situated 10 km from the capital city Panaji, Old Goa is a feast for the eyes of connoisseurs of art and architecture. It once rivaled the European cities in splendor and wealth. Today some of that grandeur can be seen in the imposing churches, convents and monasteries. The churches have high vaulted rooves and lavish baroque interiors with carved and gilded altar pieces and statues. The cathedral dedicated to St. Catherine da Se has some of the finest examples of religious art based on the majestic Tuscan style.

The little chapels off the main nave are beautifully ornamented in different styles. The Church of St. Francis of Assisi is also a 'must see'. The archaeological museum is housed in the adjacent convent. The Basilica of Bom Jesus enshrines the miraculously preserved remains of St. Francis Xavier displayed in an exquisitely crafted silver casket resting on a multi-hued Italian marble base. The imposing structure, supported externally by buttresses, has an elaborately

Exotic face.

وجه غريب.



The Boat Race.

سباق القوارب.

gilded altar. The St. Cajetan Church close by, modeled on St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, is topped by a dome. Half way up a near by hill is the massive Convent of St. Monica constructed in 1627 AD, and at the top are the majestic ruins of the St. Augustine's Church. Goa's many charming temples are built in a style that incorporates Hindu, Islamic and Christian architectural elements. Many are located in the vicinity of Ponda. In the 16th

century, when Portuguese persecution was at its height and temples were being destroyed, deities from ancient shrines were stealthily smuggled out across the border to the adjoining area of Antruz, now Ponda. In the 18th century these make shift shrines were converted into graceful temples and built in a style unique to Goa. These complexes have elaborate deepa stambhas which are crowned by kalasas, saracenic arches, traditional mandapas and temple tanks.

The carefully preserved Goan-style buildings are one of the major attractions. A number of festivals reflect the true spirit of Goans through their costumes and artistic talents and bring out their love of hospitality. Visitors are always welcome. The Christmas and New Year celebrations are unique in Goa and people from all over the world come to take part. The carnival of Goa is another major attraction celebrated in the four major cities: Panaji, Mapusa, Vasco De Gama and Madgoan with colourful floats. Hindu festivals, including Shigmo coinciding Holi Festival, are celebrated all over Goa. During this festival decorative floats depicting Hindu religious themes are taken out with lots of fun and gaiety. Ganesh Utsav and Deepawali are unique to Goa and celebrated with a local touch. At the time of Deepawali, awesome effigies of Narkasur are created. On the night of Deepawali, these effigies of Narkasur are taken round the city. They are finally burnt to emphasise the victory of truth over the evil. Visit Goa during festival time and see just how vibrant life can be amidst the festivities and carnivals.

Goa's waters are abundant with crabs, oysters, lobsters, prawns, other varied sea fish – a sea food aristocracy at an affordable price with a culinary culture which has a mix of Indo-Portuguese style that lingers in your mouth. Goan food is an experience of a life time. Goa is loved by all for its cuisine, especially the popular sea food. Holidaying in Goa any time of the year is fun for everyone under the Goan sun. ■

