

Chhattisgarh



Chhattisgarh is a state carved out of the south-east corner of Madhya Pradesh. It abounds in natural beauty and tribal culture, and is now increasingly being recognized for its crafts, its treasures of natural resources and lively inhabitants. Among the lesser travelled parts of India, it offers a quality of wildlife and ethnicity that is generally not seen in other parts of the country.

BASTAR

The Land of Tribals and Natural Resources, Bastar is enriched with natural beauty – dense forests, hills, streams, waterfalls, natural caves, natural parks and much more. This is a tribal area where strikingly handsome people live in their beautiful natural habitats. Tourists are immediately attracted to Bastar which abounds in unique arts and crafts and has an ancient culture which is an important facet of the heritage of the Bastariyas. The district of Bastar is often referred to as the 'Kashmir of Chhattisgarh'.

JAGDALPUR

Jagdalpur, an important city in the district, was earlier the capital of the Bastar Kingdom. The Bastar Palace, built when the rulers moved their capital from Barsur to Jagdalpur, still stands as a historical memory of the ancient tribal rulers. Located beside Bastar palace and near the Gole Bazar, is the Danteshwari Temple – built by the kings of Bastar for their family goddess. Devi Danteshwari is considered the Goddess for the entire Bastar division and equally worshipped by Hindus and the tribals.

Excursions

Kanger Valley National Park: A paradise for nature lovers, this is where the Sal forests of the moist peninsular valley and Sal forests and the teak of the South Indian tropical deciduous forests are seen together.



Kanger Valley National Park

Tirath Garh Falls: These layered cascading waterfalls are a visual delight. For those who want to come up close, there are concrete steps leading to the falls and an ancient Shiv Temple perched along the side.

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Chitrakot Waterfalls: These gorgeous waterfalls that drop from a height of approximately 100 ft, are on the river Indravati, situated at a distance of 38 km west of Jagdalpur. The waterfalls are in a horse-shoe shape, leading to a comparison with the Niagara Falls and are often referred to as the 'Small Niagara Falls'. The



Chitrakot Waterfalls

rainbow colours created on the falling water, by the rays of the sun, are the region's prime attraction and worth seeing in the rainy season, between July and October.

Kutumsar Caves and Kailash Gufa: These caves are a big tourist attraction lying close to the Tirathgarh waterfalls. Both Kutumsar Caves and Kailash Gufa are located in the Kanger Valley National Park and situated at a distances of 38 km and 40 km from Jagdalpur respectively. The Kutumsar



Kailash Gufa

caves are pitch-dark caves, with stalactites in fantastic formations. A

forest guard equipped with a torchlight guides tourists. Kailash Gufa is also similar to the Kutumsar caves.

Mandawa Waterfalls: Located 12 kms away from Tokapal of Jagdalpur Tehsil, is another natural waterfall and a tourist attraction.

Chitradhara Waterfalls: Just 19 kms away from Jagdalpur, this is in Potanar village of Jagdalpur Tehsil.

Thamada Ghumar: This is a recently discovered waterfall with a height of more than 100 feet and is generally formed in the rainy season. There are green fields on either side of this waterfall.

Indravati National Park: Situated in Narainpur Tehsil, 200 km west of Jagdalpur, it is famous for tigers and wild buffaloes.

Anthropological Museum: This Museum is located in the office of the Anthropological Survey of India situated at Dharampura. It provides a perfect window-view of the life-styles of various Adivasi Tribes in Bastar for tourists hard-pressed for time.

Eating Out

It's best to eat in a hotel as there are hardly any eateries in Bastar. The region is reputed for its fresh fruit, among which gigantic custard apples and papayas are very popular in the post monsoon season. Buy these from roadside vendors who sell them really cheap.

Facts at a Glance

Access: By Air: The nearest airports are Raipur in the North and Vishakhapatnam in the East. Raipur Airport is 280 km from Jagdalpur, the

gateway town for Bastar. Indian Airlines/Alliance Air has daily services to Delhi/Nagpur. Vishakhapatnam Airport is 320 km from Jagdalpur. Indian Airlines/Alliance Air have daily services to Delhi, Kolkata and Chennai. **By Rail:** The Samta Express (Nizamuddin-Vishakhapatnam) is an excellent option from Delhi, despite the fact that it's almost a 24-hour trip to Raipur. Another option is the Delhi-Chhattisgarh Express. **By Road:** Forget about driving down to Bastar, unless you are planning a cross-country tour with plenty of time at your hands. It's best to catch a train to Raipur or Jagdalpur where you can base yourself for forays into different parts of the Bastar region. From Raipur, you can hire a cab or take one of the luxury buses plying between Raipur and Jagdalpur (6hrs). **Temperatures:** Summer: Min 28°C, Max 43°C; Winter: Min 22°C, Max 30°C. Monsoon runs from July to early November. The cold weather sets in from November to April. Summer is from April to July. It can become quite hot but rarely unbearable. Mean rainfall ranges 1,000 mm to 15,000 mm.

City Code: 07782

Tourist Office: Though there's no tourist office as yet in Jagdalpur, you may contact the Collector (Tourism Cell) 226993.

E-mail: mbastar@rediffmail.com

Hospitals: Government District Hospital, also known as the Maharani Hospital (22281), Lagoo Nursing Home on Chitrakot Road: 25280

Chemists: Jyoti Medical Stores: 22796, Gopal Medical Stores: 22498, located on MH Road.

RAIPUR

City Lights

The city of Raipur lies in the centre of the state of Chhattisgarh, with the Mahanadi River to its east and thick forests to the south. Raipur has long been one of Madhya Pradesh's important cities, particularly as a centre for trade and commerce. The largest city of Chhattisgarh, it wears more than one hat, as the administrative capital as well as the main centre for all commerce and business. King Brahmdeo of the Kalchuri dynasty built the huge lake that lies in the city, called Budha Talab in 1402 AD.

Raipur is a city of lakes – the many lakes that dot the area have a historical connection and are credited to one local luminary or the other. The Kankali Talab near the Kankali Temple goes all the way back to the 1660s and was constructed under the supervision of Mahant Kripalgiri; Maharaja Roadani built the Maharajabandh Lake in 1770 and also gets credit for the Raja Talab. Dinanath built the Telibandha Lake in 1835. The ruins of a medieval fort lie to the north of the Maharajabandh Lake – the fortifications were built during the reign of King Ramachandra, the founder of Raipur. Budheshwar Temple, Virenchi Temple, Bramha Temple, Mahamaya Temple and Samlai Temple are all situated in the fort known as Bramhapuri.

Gourmet's Delights

Restaurants and cafes in Raipur offer a medley of dining choices – neither authentic nor cordon bleu cuisine but good enough to eat. The fare ranges

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from the ubiquitous Tandoori, Mughlai – Punjabi to South Indian with India's version of Chinese food thrown in for good measure. Raipur's elevation to the state capital has resulted in the opening of a number of eating establishments, as more people travel to the capital for business purposes. Recent additions feature Tex-Mex, American style fast food with pizzas and shakes on their menus. The Batra Palace Hotel has hearty Punjabi meals as well as Chinese and Continental offerings on its menu. At the Palace Kawardha Hotel you need to order food in advance.

Shopping

Shopping options abound in Chhattisgarh with its myriad handicrafts and textiles. Local craftsmen produce a mind-boggling variety of handcrafted items using natural materials like wood, bamboo, bone, horn, stone, feathers as well as bell metal, gold, silver and paper. Hand woven fabric, Pithora paintings, Dokra metal animals and figurines, carved woodwork, coloured beads and chunky jewellery are some special things available for visitors to buy.

Facts at a Glance

Access: **By Air:** Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh, is the only place in the state that is linked by air to New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Jabalpur, Bhubaneswar, Bhopal and Nagpur (Maharashtra) by regular Indian Airlines flights. **By Rail:** Raipur is one of the two main junctions in the state that are on the routes of express and passenger trains that either directly or indirectly connect the state to other

parts of India. The superfast Rajdhani Express connects Raipur to New Delhi, the Bilaspur-Nizamuddin Gondwana Express runs thrice a week and travels from New Delhi to Raipur via Bilaspur. Passenger and mail trains connect most big and small towns within the state to Raipur. **By Road:** Raipur has excellent connections to places in the neighbouring states of Andhra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Inter-state and national highways connect Raipur to Bhopal, Nagpur, Jhansi, Jabalpur and to cities further like Kolkata and Bhubaneswar.

Temperatures: Winters in Raipur are cool rather than cold, the summer months make up with hot days and nights. Summer begins by the middle of March and by May, temperatures have soared to a scorching 45°C. The rains can make travel fairly difficult.

Best time to visit: October to February/March.

City Code: 0771

Tourist Offices: Secretary Tourism's Office, Mantralya (221307; Fax: 0770-221306) for further information on bookings, etc.

Banks: State Bank of India: 425527, zonal branch located at Shankar Nagar, near Bottle House, Central Bank of India: 427364, has a branch.

ATM facility is available at IDBI Bank opposite the Museum on Raj Bhavan Road.

Hospitals: Modern Medical Institute on Dhamtari Road, Lalpur: 5380047. There are plenty of private nursing homes also.

Chemists: Laxmi Medical Store: 0771-636831 and Jaishree Medical Stores: 0771-536463, both on GI Road are popular chemists in Raipur.

Home Away From Home

Raipur has a couple of good hotels that can qualify as 3 star with air-conditioned suites, conference rooms and multicuisine restaurants. Government run tourist hotels, tourist bungalows, holiday homes and privately owned small hotels are the right choice for budget travellers as the accommodation is adequate and the prices reasonable. Dharamshalas – religious hostels catering primarily to pilgrims cost very little but offer the most basic of services. Hotel Batra Palace, GE Road, Post Ravigram: 426 329; Fax: 0771-426 329. If you have time to explore around Raipur, opt to spend at least a night at the tranquil Palace Kawardha Hotel: 491 995, Kawardha District. Tel: 07741-32 085; Fax: 07741-32088 (140 km). The royal family lets out 8 rooms. Located close to the famous Boramdeo Temple popularly known as Chhattisgarh's Khajuraho temple. Close to Kanha National Park (3 hours).

BILASPUR

Bilaspur district is famous due to its quality of rice, the Kosa (silk) industry and for its cultural background. The city of Bilaspur is approximately 400 years old and its name is said to have originated from a local fisher-woman named "Bilasa".



Bilaspur

Excursions

Ratanpur: The old capital of the Chhattisgarh state, Ratanpur is situated approximately 25 km away from Bilaspur on Katghora Road. According to local folklore, it is considered an important place for all four Yugs (Satyug, Dwapar, Treta, Kalyug). Of tourist importance is an old fort, which though a ruin, has attractive stone sculpture. A stone gate with a Ganesh image gate, also has images of Ganga-Jamuna. At the entrance there are images of dancing Shiva, Brahma and Vishnu.

Mallhar (Saravpur): Once the capital of ancient Chhattisgarh, it is approximately 14 km away from Bilaspur to Raigarh. Archaeological finds date this to approximately 1000 BC to the regime of Culturi. There are temples of 10th and 11th century AD amongst which is the Pataleswar Kedar Temple, with a Gomukhi Shiv Ling as the main point of attraction. The Didneswari temple is said to belong to the Culturi Dynasty, while the Deor temple has a number of images worth seeing. Worth visiting is the Government Museum with a good collection of old sculpture.

Talagram: It is famous for the "Deorani-Jethani" temple and is situated approximately 25 kms from Bilaspur on the Bhojpur-Dagori road. There is a wonderful statue in the temple which is approximately 7 ft in height, 4 ft in width and weighs 8 tons. People from all corners of the world come to see the statue – which has remained nameless.

Kuthaghat: It is basically a dam located approximately 10 kms from Ratanpur. It is surrounded with forests and hills. There is a rest house near the dam and a natural tourist point.

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Belpan situated approximately 11 kms from Takhatpur is famous for a large pond (kund) and a samadhi.

Khadia Dam is approximately 85 kms from Bilaspur and famous for natural resources.

Kabir Chabutra is approximately 41 kms from Bilaspur.

Facts at a Glance

By Rail: Delhi to Bilaspur (Via Mathura, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Bhopal, Itarsi, Nagpur and Raipur)

Delhi to Bilaspur (Via Mathura, Agra, Gwalior, Jhansi, Bina, Katni and Anuppur)

Mumbai to Bilaspur (Via Manmad, Jalgaon, Itarsi, Amla, Nagpur and Raipur)

Mumbai to Bilaspur (Via Manmad, Jalgaon, Itarsi, Jabalpur, Katni and Anuppur)

Chennai to Anuppur (Via Gudur, Tenali, Vijayawada, Warangal, Wardha, Nagpur and Raipur)

Kolkata to Anuppur (Via Howrah, Tatanagar, Rourkela, Raigarh and Champa). **Temperatures:** The northern part of Bilaspur has extremes of climate – quite cold in winter and getting hotter as one moves towards the southern part. The maximum temperature of Bilaspur district is 45°C and the average rain fall is 1,220 mm approximately.

City Code: 07752



Danteshwari Waterfalls