

Goa, Daman & Diu



Goa is India's answer to Hawaii. An absolute fun destination, this tiny emerald state on the west coast of India, is really different. A tropical paradise, Goa is enchanting all year round, especially during the monsoon, when every palm leaf is washed anew, and ready to cast its magic spell. Its many starred and hid-in-a-corner seafood speciality restaurants, the magical whiff of feni, cashewnut and spice plantations, wildlife sanctuaries all backed by a humungous variety in beachside resorts and hotels, Goa is indeed every holiday maker's dream destination.

History

Goa has taken into its folds, dynasties and religions: Mauryas, Kadambas, Yadavas and Chalukyas, followed by the Sultans of Delhi, Arabs, Persians and Afghans, finally in 1510 AD a Portuguese explorer Alfonso de Albuquerque sailed up the Mandovi river and defeated the Bijapur army, and rode with the Portuguese standard in one hand and the Golden Crucifix in the other. They stayed till 1961. That set the shape of things to come. First and foremost is its omnipresent Portuguese influence, so different from the British stamp that is seen in many parts of India ticked with; its baroque churches; its over 40 astounding beaches; its famed Hindu temples; forts and ruins that are a reminder of an era gone by – memories of the past fuse with the present in a land where every Goan is proud of his heritage.

Churches

Churches are the most conspicuous symbols of religion and architecture in Goa. Stark white churches, visible from a distance, dot the villages and islands along the highway that leads to Panaji, often misleading a visitor that Goa is predominantly a Christian state. In Old Goa, almost all major churches are Catholic, located in the North. These include **Basilica of Bom Jesu, Chapel of St. Catherine, Chapel of St. Francis Xavier, Church of Our Lady of Mercy** and **Se Cathedral** among others.



Basilica of Bom Jesu

Temples

South Goa boasts the **Shri Mangueshi Temple**, dedicated to Lord Shiva, which is a blend of Hindu, Portuguese



Shri Mangueshi Temple

and Muslim influences and has a seven-tiered lamp tower in the courtyard. The **Shri Mahalsa Temple** is an ancient one and **Shri Shantadurga Temple** is worth a visit.



Shri Shantadurga Temple

City of Beaches

Beaches are the biggest attraction of Goa. The entire coastline is dotted with world-class beaches that are named after the nearby village or locality. Two continuous stretches of beaches on the northern and southern side mark the Goan coastline. Kissed by the azure sea, embraced by the land and shaded by swaying palms, these miles of golden sand sparkling in the sun, are the most desired places to rest and sunbathe in. Some of the most famous ones are:

Anjuna, 18 km from Panaji, is adjacent to Chapora fort. There is a magnificent Albuquerque mansion of early '20s, flanked by octagonal towers and an attractive Mangalore tiled-roof.



Anjuna Beach

Arambol, 50 km from Panaji, is unique for its rocky and sandy beachline. It has a sweet water pond right on the shore.



Arambol Beach

Baga, 18 km from Panaji, is at the northern tip of a wonderful 7 km stretch along coastal North Goa.

Benaulim and **Betul**, 4 and 22 km from Margao respectively, are the southern-most beaches.

Bogmallo, 5 km from Goa Airport, offers excellent water sports facilities.

Calangute, 16 km from Panaji, is most popular. **Cansaulim**, **Colva** and **Dona Paula** are some of the most popular



Dona Paula

ones. **Miramar**, a lovely golden beach of soft sand girdled with palm trees facing the blue Arabian Sea, is the nearest to Panaji. **Morjim**, in the mouth of the Chapora river and facing the famous Chapora fort, is another famous beach of northern Goa. **Palolem**, west of Chaudi, is relatively deserted, and is in the southern taluka of Canacona. **Sinquerim** is the southern-most beach on the Calangute stretch, while **Siridao**, near Goa Velha in Tiswadi taluka near the mouth of the river Zuari, offers picturesque scenery. **Vagator** is dominated by Chapora Fort to the north.

City Culture

River Cruise: River cruises with cultural performances and music are a unique point of Goa. The one-hour tours are run by GTDC on three launches Santa Monika, Radhika and

Malvika. There are various categories in these tours, such as: Sunset Cruise, Full Moon Cruise, Delightful Dolphin Tours, Emerald Cruises and Sundown Cruise.

Water Sports: Goa is a paradise for lovers of water sports. The long coastal beachline offers wonderful opportunities to indulge in all sorts of water sports like scuba diving, windsurfing, parasailing, jetskiing and water scooters.

A number of government and private organisations including hotels and tour operators conduct regular water sport activities including training courses.



Water Sports

Casino-Hopping: The only state in India to offer casinos, there is quite a choice to pick from. Mostly located at five-star hotels and resorts, a visitor could go to Nuggets at the Renaissance Beach Resort, Hacienda at Holiday Inn, Chances at Cidade de Goa and Treasures at Majorda Beach Resort. Casino Caravela is the only live gaming casino, aboard a cruiseship.

Gourmet's Delights

Head for **Megson's**, on June Road (alongside Moti Mahal), for typical Goanese food. **Venite** is a local favourite for its laid-back ambience,

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good music and superb seafood. **Nandan** is for vegetarians while **Miramar Restaurant** at the Cidade de Goa Beach Resort, is an upmarket restaurant where food comes with a special helping of romance and entertainment. Dine on some delicious Indian, French or Portuguese cuisine in the candle light while listening to live Portuguese guitarists. **O Cozinheiro** is famous for its exquisite seafood preparations and **Martin's Beach Corner**, at Caranzalem, has mouthwatering mussel dishes. Other famous eateries: J&A's Little Italy: 2277719, After Eight, Le Restaurant Francais: 2279843, Quarterdeck: 2432905, The Promenade: 2432639.

Shopper's Paradise

From clothing to confectionary, electronic goods to second hand motorcycles, jewellery to handicrafts, Goa has a glut of them. Crocheted tablecloths, cushions, linen, belts, bags, purses, wall hangings made from sisal fibre and jute, cashewnuts, must all be browsed through for sheer variety, if not for buying. You may shop from **Anjuna** Wednesday Market, **Mapusa** Friday Market and New Market.

Facts at a Glance

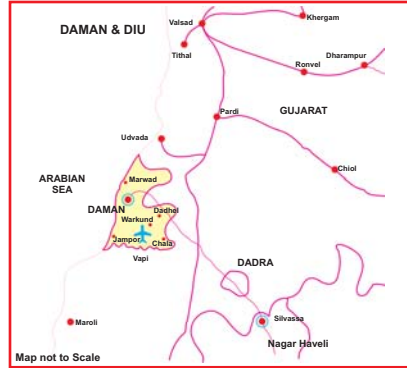
Access: By Air: Goa's Dabolim airport is some 30 km from Panaji, the capital city and all domestic airlines connect Goa to major cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Pune, Kochi and Agatti among others. **By Rail:** Margao and Vasco are the important railway stations in Goa. The new Konkan railway route cuts

through Goa to connect to Mumbai and Mangalore. **By Road:** The distances are Mumbai (nearly 600 km), Bangalore (632 km), Mangalore (370 km) and Pune (471 km). Metered cabs, autorickshaws, point-to-point taxis that operate on fixed rates, motorcycle taxis and the state-run Kadamba buses are all there for the visitor. One can also hire bicycles at the rate of Rs 40 a day. Combined passenger boats are available for crossing the many rivers of Goa. **Best time to visit:** Round the year.

City Code: 0832
Airport: 2540031, 2540829
Indian Airlines: 2513863
Jet Airways: 2510354
Air Sahara: 2230237
Railways: 131
Panaji: 2438524
Vasco: 2501223
India Tourism: 2223412
Banks: Thomas Cook: 2221312
Andhra Bank: 2223513
Central Bank of India: 2225389
Hospitals/Chemists: Goa Medical College & Hospital: 2224566,
Dr Bhadare Hospital: 2224966,
Waghle Medical Store: 2423772

Home Away From Home

Fort Aguada Beach Resort: 5645858, The Taj Exotica: 2771234, The Leela Palace: 28371234, Park Hyatt Goa Resort & Spa: 2721234, Majorda Beach Resort: 2754871-80, Radisson White Sands Resort Goa: 2727272, Cidade de Goa: 2454545, The Goa Marriott: 2463333, Ramada Caravela Beach Resort: 2745200.



Daman & Diu

DAMAN

Daman, the former Portuguese enclave, is a much sought-after getaway, thanks to its lovely beaches. It lies on the Gujarat coast, bound on the north and south by Bhagwan and the Kalem rivers respectively, on the east by the Gujarat State and on the west by the Arabian sea. It is ideal for sunbathers, sightseers, beachcombers, swimmers and history lovers. There are historic churches, majestic forts and coconut groves too. Some of the popular beaches are **Devka**, **Fisherman's** and **Jampore**. In Devka, there is a well developed amusement park for families.



Devka Beach

Daman and Diu have no subdivisions. The Daman region is under the charge of a Collector while Diu is under the charge of a Civil Administrator.

City Lights

Nariyal Poornima, the festival to mark the onset of the fishing season in September. The festivities include boat races, swimming competitions, cultural shows, etc.

Gourmet's Delights

Seafood obviously is an eminent feature. Even though it is surrounded by Gujarat, there is no prohibition on liquor consumption. **Jampore Beach Resort** and eateries on Devka beach are worth spending time at.

Facts at a Glance

Access: Vapi is the main access point, with a railway line as well as the turning point from the Delhi-Mumbai National highway. Located on the western railways' main lines, it is well linked through Mumbai and Ahmedabad. It is only 13 km from Daman. **Getting Around:** Unmetered taxis and autos are the common means of transportation. The rates are negotiable.

- **City Code:** 0260
- **Department of Tourism:** 2255104
- **Railway Station:** 2222357
- **Bus Station:** 2222850

Home Away From Home

Miramar: 2254471, Princess Park: 2254323, Hotel Ashoka Palace: 2254239, Hotel China Town: 2254920 Fortune Hotel Galaxy (at Vapi), 2424124.

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DIU

Diu lies in the Gulf of Cambay near Veraval Port and is separated from the southern extremity of the Saurashtra peninsula by a narrow channel running through a swamp. Daman has a mild and humid climate while Diu has a sultry climate. The Portuguese ruled over Diu for 400 years, leaving Diu Fort, wood-panelled churches like St. Paul's and St. Thomas. One church has been converted into a museum housing rare Portuguese artefacts. The secluded **Nagoa Beach**, 20 minutes drive from Diu, is one of the most beautiful beaches in India.

Gourmet's Delights

Apana serves excellent lobsters, but you must order in advance. For a Gujarati *thali*, head for **Aavkar**, near the main Town Square. **Samrat**, on the Collectorate Road, is one of the better restaurants, while pizzas and fish delicacies can be had at **Aarti**.

Facts at a Glance

Access: Diu Airport has a hour-long daily flight from Bombay. Nearest

railhead is Veraval, about 80 km. **Distances:** Ahmedabad 495 km, Rajkot 261 km, Bhavnagar 230 km, Keshod 150 km. There are daily bus services from Mumbai. **Getting Around:** Autorickshaws are available for travel in and around Diu. One can even hire bicycles (Rs 15 per day) and mopeds (Rs 100 per day) from the Kismet Cycle Store behind the Main Square (near the high school). **Best time to visit:** September to May.

City Code: 02875

Airport: 253542

Tourist Office: 252653

Banks: State Bank of Saurashtra: 252135; Bank of India: 252131.

Hospitals: Government Hospital and St Francis Hospitals are well-equipped.

Chemists: Hasmukh Medical Store: 252236

Home Away From Home

Hotel Kohinoor: 252209, Ankur: 252388.



Nagoa Beach