



TEAM EASTBOUND
WISHES YOU A
MERRY CHRISTMAS
&
A HAPPY NEW YEAR



Itmenaan Kumaon Walks & Treks



The beautiful Kumaon region is also known as 'Dev-Bhumi' or the Abode of Gods. This is the land of rich cultural heritage, age-old temples, majestic Himalayan peaks, picture postcard terraced fields and tempting fruit orchards.

To experience this stunningly beautiful region on foot is truly inspiring and rewarding. Itmenaan Himalayan Walks and Treks take you through the unspoilt villages of Kumaon and help you to experience it from close quarters. The programme allows you to walk around freely and interact with the local

communities, exchange stories with the elderly people over a cup of 'chai' or help villagers working in the fields.

Charmingly, you also get to stay in restored traditional village houses which are stunningly located and have been touched up (and added on with attached bathrooms) and converted into cozy cottages to provide very comfortable lodging without compromising on the authenticity.

As interests and capabilities vary, the walks are customized according to your needs. You may choose to stay-put at one location and explore the surrounding area. Alternatively, walks can also be organized that take you from one village to another and each night is spent in a different village location.

Location

Our village walks are conducted in the Kumaon Himalayan region near the town of Almora.

By Road

From Delhi, the region is about 375 km / 10 hours.

By Rail

The nearest rail station is Kathgodam (about 4 hours drive), which has regular train service from Delhi:

Ranikhet Express: Overnight, Daily

Kathgodam Shatabdi: Daily except Thursdays

By Air

Pantnagar, near Kathgodam, is the closest airport (135 kms). However, currently there are no scheduled flights to Pantnagar.



After a great experience of the village walks your next destination can be Himalayan Glamping Retreat, Munsiyari



Himalayan Glamping Retreat, Munsiyari

Munsiyari is a “little Kashmir” nestled in the beautiful terrains of the Kumaon mountains. A little hamlet, which is the last connect with civilization before the discerning mountain lover turns toward the majestic Panchachuli peaks, Munsiyari is so close to the snow capped peaks, one could almost touch them. Only very basic inns and lodges dot this little piece of heaven; the Himalayan Glamping Retreat is the first offering of its kind that aims to provide understated luxury in such remoteness.

Munsiyari's rustic setting compels one to steer clear of high-rise concrete structures and instead, soak in its vast experience through glamping. Glamping or glamorous camping has come of age, globally, over the last few years. The Himalayan Glamping retreat offers elegantly appointed luxury tent style cottages, each with a stunning view of the Panchachuli range, equipped with every comfort and even luxury of city hotels, set in the silence of a verdant forest.

While Munsiyari's charms are unparalleled in the Kumaoni landscape, it is not a spot for the overnight hill reveller. The journey to Munsiyari is long, taking one through terraced farms, pine forests, majestic oak and cedar jungles and eventually, closer to the Panchachuli range. The mountain lover knows that such a place demands more than a night from him. Come and walk through the forests with us, gaze upon the timeless snow peaks, and allow us to welcome you to our retreat, where rusticity meets luxury, in a seamless blend. You will fall in love. We assure you.



The back road of Rajasthan explored by 'Eastbound'



Kesar Bagh

The second property built after the Rawla Jojawar in the true tradition of Rajput hospitality – Kesar Bagh

Though the word 'Bagh' literally means a Garden in Hindi, but here in rural Rajasthan it also denotes a huge Hacienda like property in the country of the once ruling feudal families. Kesar Bagh is one such oasis where time and weather had taken a huge toll on the old buildings and the orchards. The rainwater gushing down from the Aravallis Hills in the monsoons had breached the lake's earthen dam on the banks of which once stood the old and grand Kesar Bagh. The present Rao Sahib of Jojawar – Maharaj Singh ji eager to restore the old traditions of the land and his family, recreated the new Kesar Bagh right where the old buildings once stood, but incorporated a few changes seeing to the modern times. Forest is allowed to take over what was farm and orchard to give the visitor a feeling of harmony and fulfillment by being in nature.

Nagendra Singh and Amitvikram Singh Jojawar - The Rawla Jojawar in the Jojawar town has been home since 1780. Our parents Rani and Rao sahib Maharaj Singh ji have been the inspiration in our venture. This family runs hotels are also our homes, Vedehi and Kirti, our wives are the 'Operation Heads' at both the places. We all hope that you would give us an opportunity to serve and show you our land and its people, and that you take back pleasant memories of Jojawar with you.



My favorite Train Ride at Jojawar!



The train route between the cities of Jodhpur and Udaipur goes up the scenic Kambli Ghat Pass. One of my favorite excursions is this daily train service from the station at the start of the hill section to the highest station in the Aravallis – the Kambli Ghat station, or the other way round. The engine laboriously and slowly pulls the train through the most beautiful forests and hills that you get to see in the state, this one hour ride is really unique as you even get to interact with the locals who'll readily share their seats with you and try their best to make conversation with you while trying to suppress their surprise and excitement of sitting next to a foreigner from far away lands!

The drive to and back from the stations in the resplendent vintage Chevy, taking a break for tea and cucumber sandwiches at a tiny Forest Rest House. The entire excursion is escorted by one of the staff guides who'll fill you in with all the stories and legends of the land, and if you are able to dig deep - even the latest gossip going around his village!



Fateh Safari Lodge



Fateh Safari Lodge is located in the most picturesque area of Rajasthan, amidst the natural surroundings, on the edge of the Aravalli Hills, at 1100 meters above sea level, same height as Kumbhalgarh Fort. It is an ideal base for exploring stunning views of the plains of Marwar and the Kumbhalgarh Fort. The property features a wide range of facilities to make your stay a pleasant experience. Discover all Kumbhalgarh has to offer by making Fateh Safari Lodge your base. Guests can enjoy wildlife safaris to the Kumbhalgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and soft adventure activities like bird watching, trekking, walking safaris, etc. Day excursions to Ranakpur and Haldighati are also an option.



Beatles Ashram opens in Rishikesh

Just to update that the Ashram where Beatles used to live during their time in Rishikesh is now open for public – read article below for more information.

<http://epaperbeta.timesofindia.com/Article.aspx?eid=31808&articlexml=Neednt-imagine-anymore-Beatles-ashram-now-open-09122015009022>



First hand review of a new beach property at Cherai Beach, Kochi, Kerala

36 Palms Boutique

Our South India Manager, Santhosh, personally visited this property a few days ago, here is his personal feedback:

The property is located at around 03 kms north of Cherai Beach, an hour from Kochin Airport. This is the only property located at Beach side of the beach, with 11 rooms (04 sea view rooms, 03 Garden view rooms, 02 Garden view and 02 Heritage garden view rooms) 09 rooms are air-conditioned and 02 Heritage rooms are Non A/C (Planning to convert to A/C) . The property is located on the beach with a sea barrier with rocks between the beach with a private entry. There are



no local crowd movement / gathering in front of the beach and is almost a private area. As per the information collected locally, though this area is not too deep, the sea may be rough or will have under currents, as the Munambam fishing harbor is only a few kilometers away. The property does have an Infinity swimming pool, a beautiful Poolside terrace, and sea view restaurant.

A charming little hotel loved by all our clients!

47, Jobner Bagh, Jaipur

Eastbound introduced this hotel last year and since then we have been getting positive reviews from all our clients!

A royal Rajput retreat. The owner family has a proud, aristocratic Rajput lineage. This is a family residence, located in the center of Jaipur, was once part of the Maharaja of Jobner's gardens. 47 Jobner Bagh, a charming small boutique hotel, stayed true to the history of the area by cultivating and maintaining a beautiful and historic garden. Every guest is welcomed warmly with a smile by the family members at the Jobner Bagh, you will get to experience a true royal hospitality here.



Eastbound Festival "Panchang" 2016

A Panchang is a Hindu calendar and almanac, which follows traditional units of Indian timekeeping, and presents important dates and their calculations in a tabulated form

A reminder of the upcoming festivals of the first quarter

Jaipur Literature Festival: 21st to 25th January 2016

The world's largest free festival of its kind, the ZEE Jaipur Literature Festival has been described as the 'greatest literary show on Earth'. Celebrating writers from across the world, the Festival has hosted some of the best regarded and loved names ranging from Nobel Laureates and Man Booker Prize winners to star debuts including Amish Tripathi, Eleanor Catton, Hanif Kureishi, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Ian McEwan, JM Coetzee, Mohammed Hanif, Oprah Winfrey, Orhan Pamuk, Pico Iyer, Salman Rushdie, Vikram Seth and Wole Soyinka, as well as renowned Indian language writers such as Girish Karnad, Mahasweta Devi, MT Vasudevan Nair, Uday Prakash and UR Ananthamurthy.



Maha Kumbh:

04th January to 22nd April - Haridwar

22nd April to 21st May 2016 - Ujjain

Kumbh Mela is one of the most sacred and pious festival celebrated at four places in India: Nasik, Ujjain, Haridwar and Allahabad. This year Kumbh will be celebrated in Haridwar and Ujjain respectively.

It draws millions of devotees and tourists from all over the country and the world. According to historical records, Haridwar and Ujjain are two of the four places where the elixir of immortality, the 'amrit', fell to earth from a pitcher as gods and demons were engaged in the tussle to gain the ownership of the jar full of 'amrit'. The Kumbh Mela rotates among the four holy sites every

three years – Haridwar, Ujjain, Allahabad and Nasik. The Kumbh Mela is marked by millions of devotees' plunge into the holy river that is believed would cleanse their souls leading to salvation. A ritual bath at a predetermined time and place is the major event of the festival.



Main Bathing Dates at Haridwar:

4 January 2016	Makar Sankranti (First main bathing date)
12 February 2016	Vasant Panchami
22 February 2016	Magh Purnima
07 March 2016	Shree Maha Shivratri
07 April 2016	Chetra Aamavasya
08 April 2016	Navsamvat Aarambh/Chetra Shukl Pritpada Snan
14 April 2016	Mesha Sakranti
15 April 2016	Ram Navami
22 April 2016	Chaitra Purnima Snan

Main Bathing Dates for Ujjain

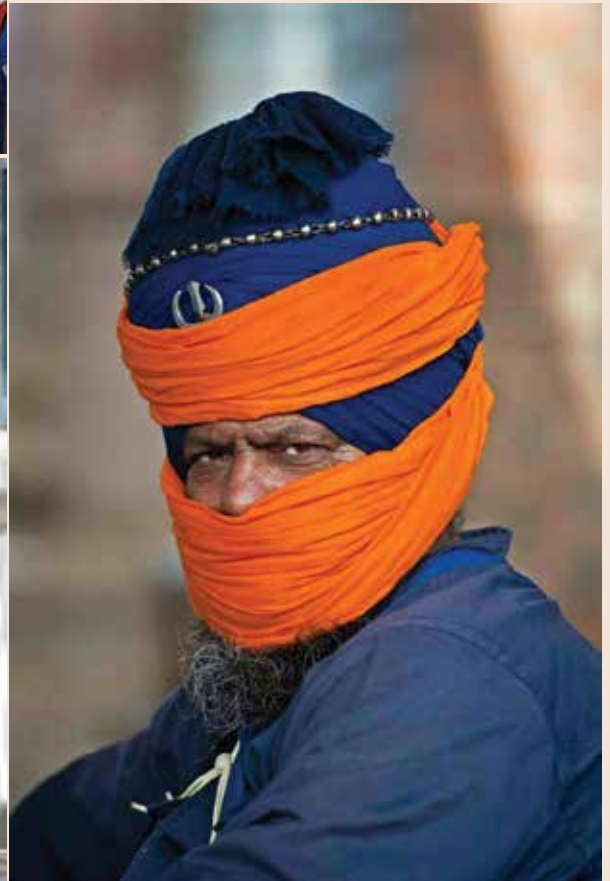
22 April 2016	Purnima First Sahi Snaan (Royal Holy Dip)
03 May 2016	Vratparv Vauthini Keadashi
06 May 2016	Vaishakh Krishna Amavasya (First Main Bathing Date)
09 May 2016	Shukla/Akshey Tritya (Second Main Bathing Date)
11 May 2016	Shukla Panchami
15 May 2016	Vrishabh Sankranti
17 May 2016	Ekadashi & Pradosh Snan
19 May 2016	Pradosh
20 May 2016	Nursingh Jayanti
21 May 2016	Purnima Main Shahi Snan (Main Bathing Date)

Holla Mohallah Anandpur Sahib 25th and 26th March 2015

The Holla Mohalla is an impressive traditional display of bravery and valour by the Nihang warriors that is a must see.

One of the main attractions at the festival; the Nihang Warriors – are a prestigious armed sect of the Sikhs who wear a striking blend of blue and orange, with thick twisted moustaches and overwhelmingly large and embellished turbans.

The ultimate display of machismo - Holla Mohalla, an annual Sikh festival held a day after Holi, has the drama, the sweat and the incredible colours that Indian festivals are known for. With impressive displays of weaponry, archery and wrestling, there's also music, poetry and prayers, singing and chanting. An important part of the festival is the langar (community food) that is served to pilgrims irrespective of their religion or caste.



Holi:

22nd - 23rd March

16th – 17th March

Holi, the Festival of Colours has been celebrated in India since thousands of years.

Holi will be celebrated on 23rd of March, 2015 all over the world with Holika Dahan preceding the festival on the night of 22nd March.

Holi in Mathura: (near Agra)

Barsana on 16th March

Nandgaon on 17th March

While Holi is celebrated in almost every part of India, Holi in Braj is especially famous. Braj is a historical region, which covers the area of Mathura, Vrindavan and nearby villages.

Holi here attracts tourists and pilgrims from all over the world because of its special customs and traditions. Mathura is the birthplace of Lord Krishna and Vrindavan is the place where he grew up in his childhood.

Holi celebrations start in Barsana about a week before the actual date of Holi. Barsana is a village near Mathura and it was the village of Radha. **It is famous for its lathmar Holi in which women beat men (playfully) with sticks.** The celebrations in Barsana will happen on 16th of march. Barsana is the place where Radha used to live and Krishna used to visit this place to put color on Radha.



Celebration in Barsana is followed up by similar celebrations in Nandgaon (Krishna's village) on the very next day (17th of February). Nandgaon has found reference in religious texts as the place where Krishna spent most of his childhood days. According to legends, after Krishna went to Barsana to put color on Radha, Radha and her friends came to Nandgaon on the next day to put color on Krishna. And hence, Holi celebrations shift from Barsana to Nandgaon.

Holi celebrations in Banke Bihari Temple

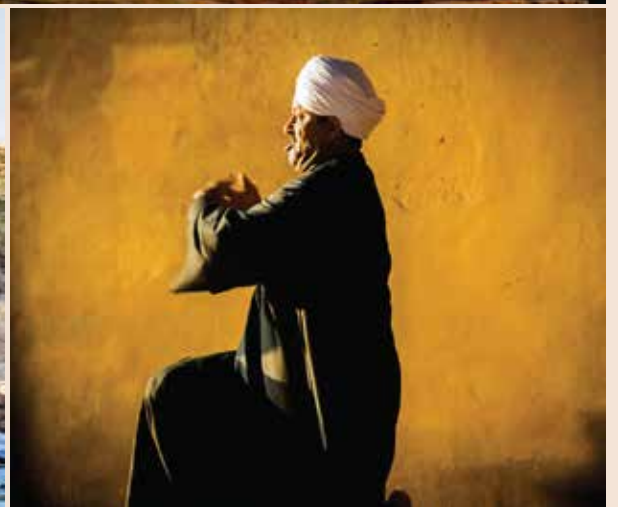
The Banke-Bihari Temple in Vrindavan is one such place to enjoy the festivities as it hosts weeklong Holi celebrations here. During these days, Bihariji (Krishna's another name) is dressed up in white coloured clothes and it is brought closer to his devotees to play holi. Holi is played here with coloured water and gulal, a form of colour made using organic substances like flowers and kesar. Goswamis (priests in the temple) sprinkle colors on everyone using buckets, water guns, etc. The whole atmosphere is made even livelier with music (bhajans) in the background and people dance to the tunes while enjoying the colors.

World Sacred Spirit Festival
22 – 24 February – Nagaur
26 – 28 February – Jodhpur

An amazing spiritual and musical journey in the splendor of the historical forts of Jodhpur and Nagaur”

The prestigious sites of the Mehrangarh Fort in Jodhpur and the historical Fort in Nagaur open their doors to an extraordinary sacred and historical musical journey.

Lit by the sparkling incandescence of a thousand candles, magnificent, inherited and spiritual arts will carry you to the very origin of a tradition linked to those pilgrims of the past, travellers of the spirit, who brought to civilization a sense of inspiration and meaning.

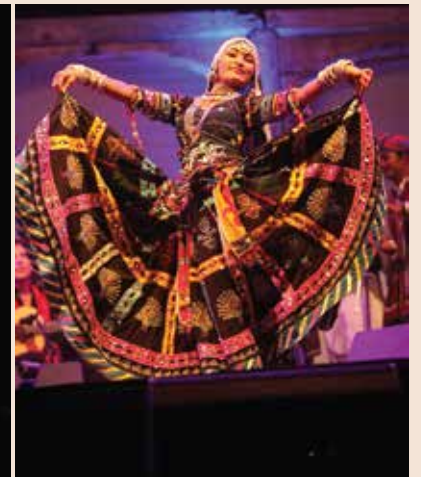


Jodhpur Flamenco and Gypsy festival 18th to 20th March 2016

The festival's main objective is to promote the link between the Rajasthani folk musicians and the legendary Flamenco and gypsy artists that live around the world. JFG Festival will provide a meeting place for these musicians and dancers, and create a platform for their creative energy, which can be shared with the world. It will highlight the rich heritage of Rajasthan and the importance of keeping folk music alive, as well as presenting a more contemporary view of desert music and dance. JFG would like to trace the routes that the



nomadic gypsies of Rajasthan and Northern India took thousands of years ago, find artists with a gypsy background and bring them back to their ancestral roots.



Upcoming Taj Hotels

Vivanta by Taj – Guwahati, Assam is an urban oasis - tranquil and calming, minimalist contemporary with splashes of local Assamese colors. Spread over five acres of shaded courtyard gardens, verdant lawns and forest trees, the hotel is a refuge for sophisticated business travelers offering intelligent business environs and vibrant leisure options in one hot spot. Soft Opening 2nd December 2015

The Gateway Resort Pushkar Bypass Ajmer is situated in the heart of the Rajasthan desert, in Ajmer, also known as Ajaymeru. Ajmer is famous for the shrine of the venerated Khwaja Mu'in-ud-din Chisti who lived between 1142 and 1236 A.D and also for its proximity to Pushkar City which houses the only temple for Lord Brahma in the world. Nestled in the lap of the serene bosom of the Aravalli hills, the hotel offers a harmonious confluence of Sufi and Hindu culture. Soft Opening on 30th November 2015.

The following hotels are scheduled to open in the next quarter: -

Meghauli Serai, Taj Safaris Lodge, Chitwan National Park

Taj Safaris Lodge is set near Chitwan which means “heart of the jungle” in Hindi and became Nepal’s first national park in 1973. The Lodge is located in the Terai lowlands of Nepal, surrounded by 3 rivers — the Narayani, Rapti, and Reu, offering a diversity of habitats from Sal forests to floodplains, oxbow lakes and stunning savannahs with more than fifty types of grasses. Chitwan is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The Gateway Hotel Corbett

Welcomes you to a nature inspired sanctuary with deeply memorable experiences inspired by the stunning Corbet National Park in Uttarakhand, The resort is inspired by the beautiful culture of Kumaon, and is an excellent choice for both adventure lovers seeking an adrenaline rush and city dwellers looking to rejuvenate themselves in the nature’s lap.

Vivanta by Taj – Amritsar

Promising to be the defining center of gravity for the city, the hotel represents the vibrancy of the land of 5 rivers. Contemporary by design, housing flourishes of local arts and crafts, with a sprawling all day diner, a roof top specialty restaurant, lush banqueting lawns and a Jiva spa the hotel, promises to be an urban sanctuary for the residents and visitors to Amritsar. Amritsar literally a pool of Nectar, derives its name from Amrit Sarovar, the holy tank that surrounds the resplendent Golden Temple.