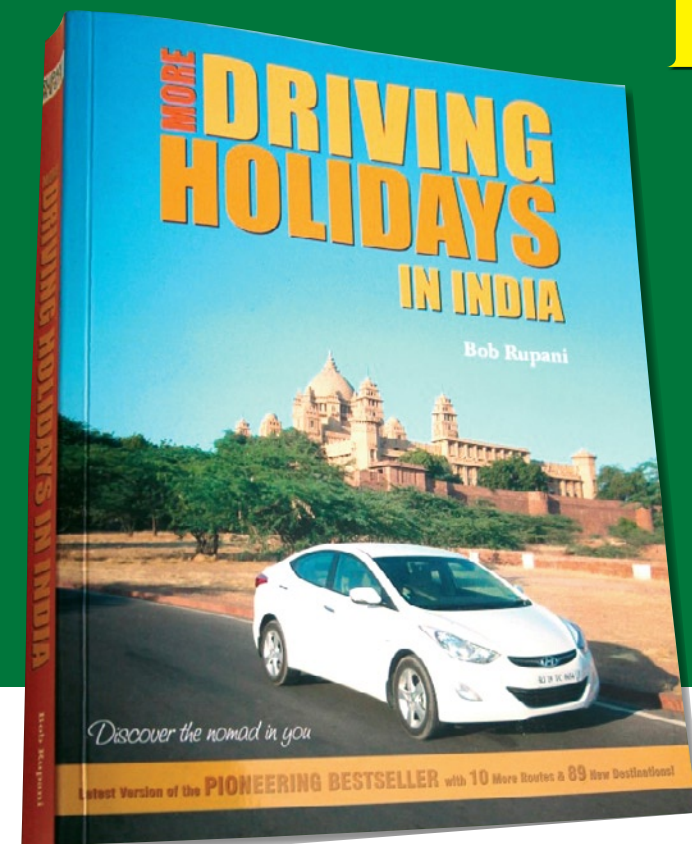


More Driving Holidays in India



I HAVE KNOWN BOB FOR OVER 30 YEARS AND HAVE SAT side by side in the front seat of various cars travelling all over India with him, sharing rooms in forest dak-bungalows. What I have not failed to notice is that Bob does not have feet – he has wheels for feet!

Bob's first book 'Driving Holidays in India' was a bible for motorists. As a bible we could call it the Old Testament. That was in 2005.

Bob has now come out with the New Testament, 'More Driving Holidays in India'. This latest book of Bob's was released on October 20 at the Khushwant Singh Litfest 2013, and I was there in Kasauli for the launch.

'More Driving Holidays in India' is the latest version of Bob Rupani's pioneering bestseller 'Driving Holidays in India' and it has 10 more routes and 89 new destinations. From East to West and North to South, Bob has traversed every millimetre of India. What is truly amazing is that Bob has observed, absorbed, weighed and measured every nuance of India. If he describes a fort, palace or monument, hotel or even the road you drive on, it

Is Bob Rupani's latest book

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is replete with historical background. From the builders, the rulers, the destroyers, their religious beliefs, the Hindus who were the original inhabitants of Hindustan and the Muslim invaders, to the French, Portuguese and British and the monuments they built and left behind – everything is carefully and chronologically covered.

There are little nuggets of information to be discovered like the legend of Baba Budan who went on a pilgrimage to Mecca, got a whiff of the fragrance of coffee flowers, and was so intoxicated that he smuggled seven seeds back to India from Yemen, and planted them in Chikmagalur. The seeds took root and spawned the coffee industry in South India. Are you interested in taking a course in cheese making? Coonoor is the place to go to! Did you know that the rampart walls of Kumbhalgarh Fort are 36km long and 26 feet wide - wide enough for eight horsemen to ride abreast? It is the longest wall in India and second only to the Great Wall of China. The Ranakpur Jain Temple is a marvel of design and architecture. It took 50 years to build, cost 99 lakhs of rupees and was completed in 1439. The roof and dome are supported on 1444 pillars. No two pillars are alike.

The descriptions of the monuments are short and crisp, whetting one's appetite. Photographs, most often taken by Bob himself, accompany each description. The photographs are superb and you are treated to images of wildlife, monuments, people, tea gardens and coffee plantations, deserts and dunes, the fabulous moonscape of Ladakh, etc. Not only will this very well put together and informative book serve as a bible for motorists and travellers in India, in addition it is a compendium of knowledge for children of any age. It will open their eyes and hearts to the magnificence that is India.



Data



Think of a destination and you will get driving instructions to get there, where to turn left or right, and the time taken for the drive. The simple to follow and detailed schematic maps have been drawn up by Bob himself and reflect ground realities. They will take you where Google Maps may not. Driving holidays need planning and preparation for safety and comfort and Bob's book helps you do this. Every page is informative, enjoyable and sometimes startling. Like the Magnetic Hill near Leh in Ladakh. You park your car in a box marked on the road, leave it in neutral, hand brake off, and lo and behold! The car will be pulled uphill, defying gravity! Eat your heart out, Newton! Open any page and the wanderlust bug bites you – you want to go there! And when

you go to the book shop, buy two copies; one to keep in the glove box, the second for the children, irrespective of age. It will be invaluable as a history-cum-geography-cum-natural history encyclopedia.

A collection of weird and wonderful road signs at the end of this 320-page book will keep the weary motorist amused and alert after a long journey. For example: 'Ram Ganga River is inhabited by crocodiles. Swimming is prohibited. Survivors will be prosecuted!'

Note - More Driving Holidays in India is priced at Rs 750 and available in most leading bookstores and on online shopping websites too.