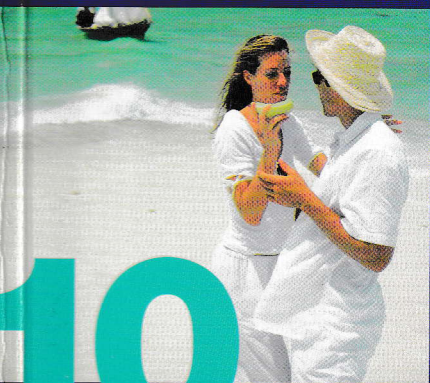


# FEMINA BOOK OF Travel

Rs 50



# 10

GREAT HOLIDAYS

ROMANCE SHOPPING ADVENTURE CULTURE

FAMILY SPA BEACH TREKKING DRIVING WILDLIFE

mental stimulation

I have got through the writings of this brilliant author, if I don't take a bit of this space and your time to mention those equally inspirational books.

Yes, 'The Alchemist' set the ball rolling, no doubt. But 'The Devil And Miss Prym', that followed, urged me to think deeper over real life situations.

I no longer saw the good and bad of life as part of life! I realised that at every juncture in life, my integrity as a human being undergoes appalling trials, and that I actually could choose to and thereby, struggle to keep to the right (good) path or allow myself to be tempted to take the devil's alternative (bad).

The book actually made me a lot more responsible for my thoughts.

Coelho, through this amazing tale, plots out the fight within every soul between light and darkness — and that's the relevance it draws to our everyday struggles.

It pushes the reader to follow dreams no matter what, to have the courage to be different and to conquer fears that act as hurdles to living.

I couldn't agree more with 'The Times' that quoted, "His books have had a life-enhancing impact on millions of people!"

Then there's 'Veronica Decides To Die'.

A lot of people I know discarded it as a depressing tale,

but really, the story guides us to believe that each day is a miracle. The tale also reiterates my favourite philosophy in life, 'happiness is held in a cup of sorrow! — It's amidst having no wish to live and a suicide attempt that lands her in a mental hospital, that Veronica finds love and acquires a will to live! "What's now difficult to digest is that the same author, who gave us books with such philosophical and spiritual undertones, came up with 'Eleven Minutes' and the shockingly boring 'The Zahir'! At the same time, I begin to wonder how many out there found inspiration in these very books, considering a depressingly bleak 'Veronica...' impressed me a great deal! We're all wired, differently, indeed!

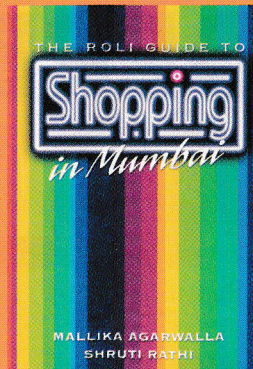
**USHA MUNSHI**

### Good versus evil

I like his books. I have read most of them, though I have not yet read his most recent book, 'The Zahir'. Following 'The Alchemist', Coelho's later books, 'The Devil & Miss Prym', and 'Veronica Decides to Die' are more complex than 'The Alchemist'. However they all essentially answer the same questions relating to the human condition — good versus evil, light and dark, joy and despair. I think that's why he's such a hit. **P**

**PRIYANKA RAM**

## FEMINA RECOMMENDS



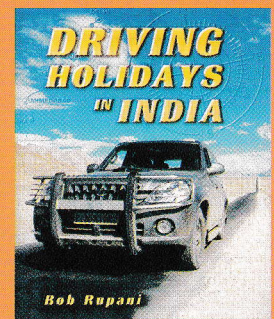
### The Roli Guide To Shopping In Mumbai

This book is a comprehensive guide to Mumbai's best shopping hot spots. It's extremely comprehensive, reads better than a boring address book and has details that are very useful. Rakhi Sharma, homemaker, says, "You know the part that made me smile? They've put in details about parking facilities! That's amazing! Because these days, when I want to shop, I always wonder whether I should take my car, because of such a shortage of parking space!" Nilima Shashtri, journalist, says, "They have a size conversion chart, American, Continental and British and Indian. I never knew what size an '8' or a '12' meant! There is a map at the end as well as an area wise and shop wise index. Here's one for the road, literally, for all you shoppers out there. Authors: Mallika Agarwalla and Shruti Rathi Lotus/ Roli. Price: Rs 195

### Driving Holidays in India

There are three reasons why you might enjoy this book.

1. You are a passionate motorist and an equally passionate traveller. What could be better than to combine both these passions together? Driving Holidays in India, tells you how. It gives you a complete lowdown — from the route and route map, service centres to accommodation and shopping details along with helpful cues — such as whether the road is well surfaced or not and so on. What makes the book credible is that it is based on actual personal experience, hence most of the advice is worth listening to.
  2. I am not into driving. But I am an ardent tourist. Every couple of months, I need some place to go. And the book is just brimming with ideas on what vacation I can take.
  3. You could just treat it as a series of travelogues, especially if you are the kind that prefers armchair travel to actually getting out of the house.
- Author: Bob Rupani  
Publisher: Rupani Media  
Price: Rs 495

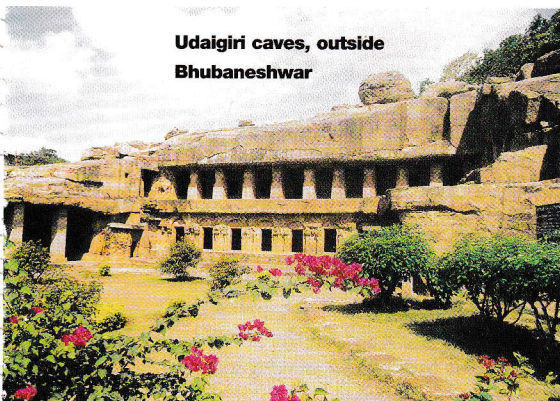




Let the journey begin: Konark — Puri highway

## DRIVING DELIGHTS

Bob Rupani drives off in four different directions around India and discovers the joys of road travel to which, he believes, nothing compares

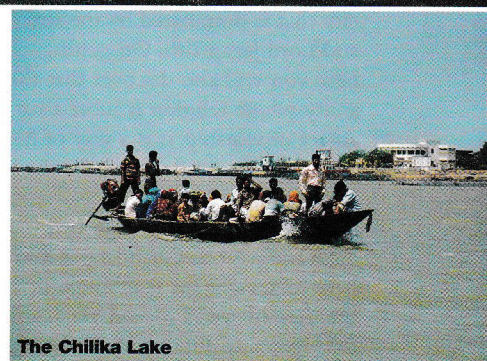


Udaigiri caves, outside Bhubaneswar

### RISING FROM THE EAST Bhubaneswar — Puri via Konark (98 km; Driving time: 2.5 hours)

Sunrise over the eastern sky and the first rays turning the sea into molten gold. An amazing temple built as a chariot to take the sun god 'Surya' for His daily celestial journey. The crashing surf of the Bay of Bengal streaming up the white sands and then receding. The swaying fringed shadow of the palms and the sound of silence. Distinctive temple architecture frozen on the shores of time. If you want to discover all this, and also experience the timeless spirit of India, let your quest lead you to Orissa, where Empires rose and fell, leaving behind memories, and monuments that are now the soul of India.

Start your discovery drive in Bhubaneswar and head to Pipili. On entering this town that is



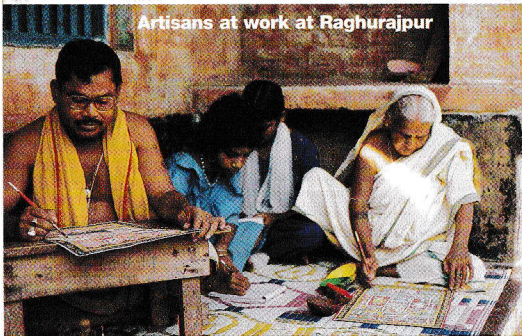
The Chilika Lake

famous for its appliqué work, you are greeted by a blaze of colours encompassing all the shades of rainbow. The streets are lined with shops offering a dazzling display of bags, wall hangings, lampshades, umbrellas and many more objects of daily use or decoration. Having shopped for your loved ones, take the road on your left going to Nimapara. The quiet road passes by green rice fields making it a pleasant drive to Konark, which Mark Twain described as "One of the most vivid architectural treasures of India".

After having visited the famous Sun Temple, drive down to the Konark Beach and join the coastal road also known as Marine Drive. For a while this road runs beside the Bay of Bengal and offers splendid views. It then moves slightly inland and goes past cultivated fields interspersed with cashew, casuarinas



The Sun Temple at Konark



Artisans at work at Raghurajpur



Purely Puri

and eucalyptus plantations. It's a very scenic and smooth road with very little traffic and it allows you to motor rapidly to Puri, a holy city that is dominated by the sea and Lord Jagannath. On getting here you will also discover that this a city where religion is more than an act of worship, it is a way of life.

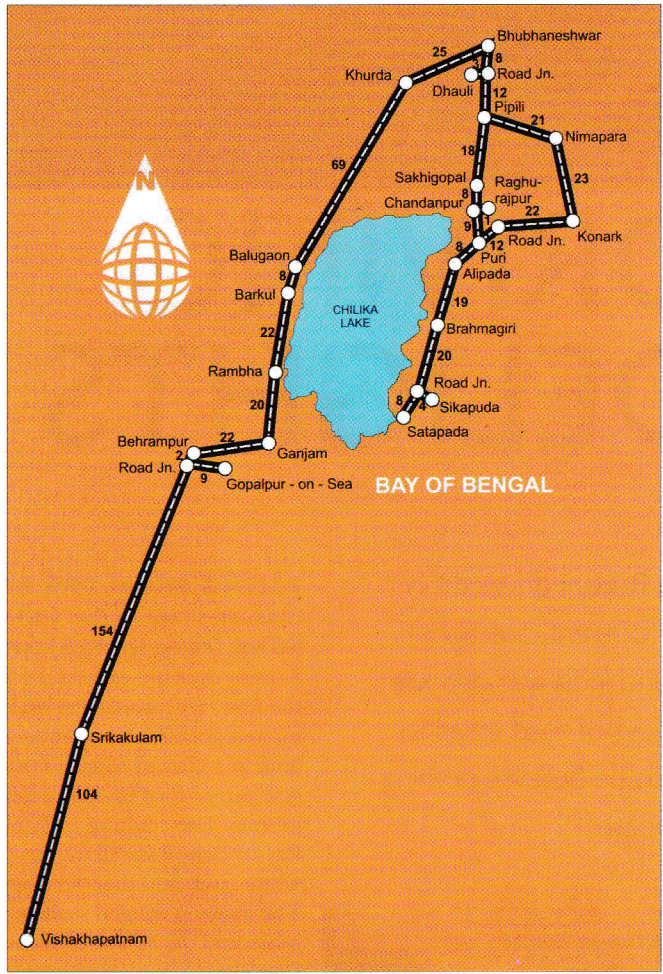
**Puri — Chilika Lake**  
(187 km; Driving time: 4 hours)

Take the road to Chandanpur and here turn right for Raghurajpur, the 'Art Village'. Proceed via Sakhigopal to Pipili and on the way back to Bhubaneswar, make an excursion to Dhauli, where the war that converted the Emperor Ashoka into an apostle of peace, was fought.

Proceed from Bhubaneswar and join NH 5, the highway that connects Calcutta to Chennai. It's a broad and smooth road that goes past rolling hills and through small villages to Barkul and Rambha, both of which are situated at the edge of the Chilika Lake.

**Chilika Lake — Gopalpur on Sea**  
(53 km; Driving time: 1 hour)

A short drive on NH 5 through a somewhat more populated region. The only significant town along this route is Behrampur, a trading centre for silk fabrics. After passing it, leave NH 5 and turn left on to a narrow road that takes you to Gopalpur on Sea, a simple seaside town that was once an important seaport.

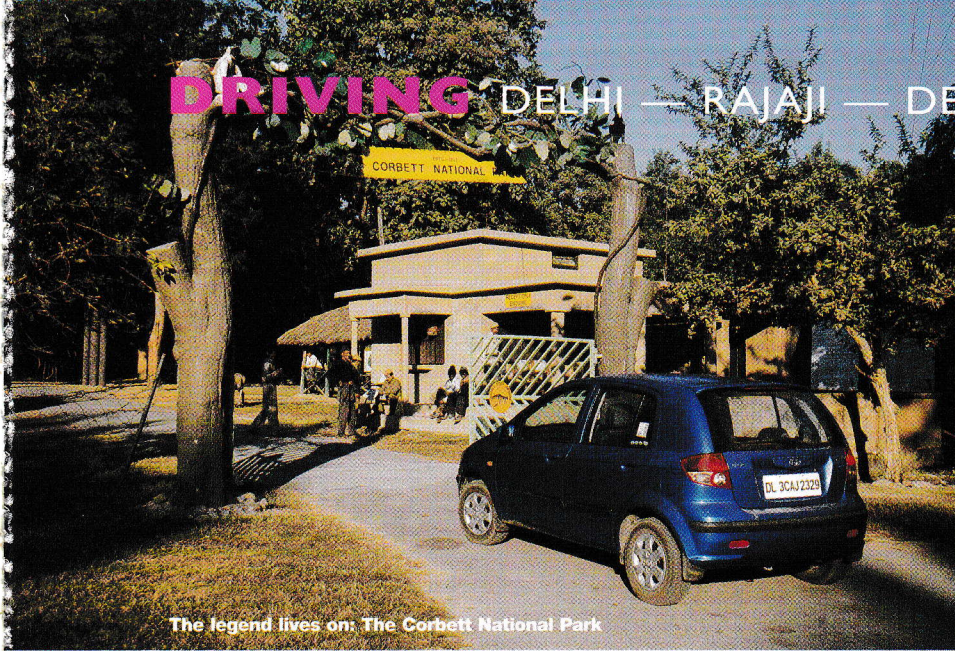


**Gopalpur on Sea — Vishakhapatnam**  
(267 km; Driving time: 6 hours)

Return to NH 5 and head south. The smooth highway runs inland of the coast and the blue waters of the Bay of Bengal are only visible from the higher points. Along the road you see trading towns, temples and mosques, coconut plantations

and rice fields. While driving through this part of rural India, you will notice that it is religion, faith, intoxicants, rice and fish that keep the poor masses going.

The drive to 'discover the 'Soul of India' ends in Vishakhapatnam, the largest seaport on the eastern coast of India and a developing centre for tourism.



The legend lives on: The Corbett National Park



Call of the wild

## CORBETT'S COUNTRY:

### Delhi — Kuchesar

(92 km; Driving time: 2 hours)

Follow in the footsteps of the legendary Jim Corbett, and pay a tribute to this great man who later turned into a conservationist and world famous author.

From Delhi head towards Hapur. Lush green fields fill the landscape in this extremely fertile land that is one of the richest agricultural belts in North India. At the road junction a little ahead of Hapur by-pass, leave NH 24 and turn right. This is a narrow and broken country road leading to the rural hamlet of Kuchesar.

### Kuchesar — Corbett

(208 km; Driving time: 4.5 hours)

Back to NH 24 and then onto Gajraula, Moradabad, an industrial city, known for its brassware also has some fine motels, but you should stick to the new by-pass and avoid the hassle of going into this congested town.

The road is broad and smooth until Kashipur. From here it becomes narrower and the surfacing also deteriorates. Fortunately the traffic also reduces and as you approach Ramnagar. Most of the wildlife resorts are clustered in and around Ramnagar and you need to go through Dhangarhi Gate. A statue of Jim Corbett at the Dhangarhi Gate welcomes you to his wild world.

### Corbett — Kaladunghi

(52 km; Driving time: 1.5 hours)

A short and a very enjoyable drive. Return to Ramnagar and then turn left for Kaladunghi, the summer home of Jim Corbett. Just short of Kaladunghi are the Corbett Falls. Surrounded by a forest that is rich in bird and plant life, this is a lovely spot for a picnic.

### Kaladunghi — Pangot

(47 km; Driving time: 1.5 hours)

The well designed road gradually twists its way up the hillsides through chir pine forests and the occasional mountain village. A little ahead of Khurpatal, you leave the Nainital road and turn left for Pangot. This road isn't in good shape but as it's free of traffic, it's an enjoyable ride to Pangot.

### Pangot — Sitla Via Nainital/Bhimal/Naukuchiatal/The Writer's Bungalow

(109 km; Driving time: 3 hours)

Return to the road junction and cruise into Nainital. You could park yourself here or carry on to Bhimal or Naukuchiatal. Jeolikot is another interesting hill retreat that is easily accessible from Nainital.

From here motor to Ramgarh. The hills around it abound with picnic possibilities and leopard pugmarks sometimes hint that you are not the only one appreciating nature's treasures.

At Ramgarh take the road on left going to Malla Ramgarh and check out the Writers Bungalow. Back to Ramgarh and then it's left down towards lower Ramgarh. The road descends into a valley full of

orchards and goes past a mountain stream. Just when you are beginning to wonder why you are going down instead of up, the road starts its dramatic ascent up to Natukhan and Sitla.

### Sitla — Mukteshwar

(10 km; Driving time: 45 minutes)

This is an extremely short drive, with the road being badly broken. But it's worth visiting Mukteshwar, where if it's a clear day you, will be rewarded by some of the most impressive views of the snow covered Himalayan Mountains.

### Mukteshwar — Kalmatia Sangam Via Jageshwar

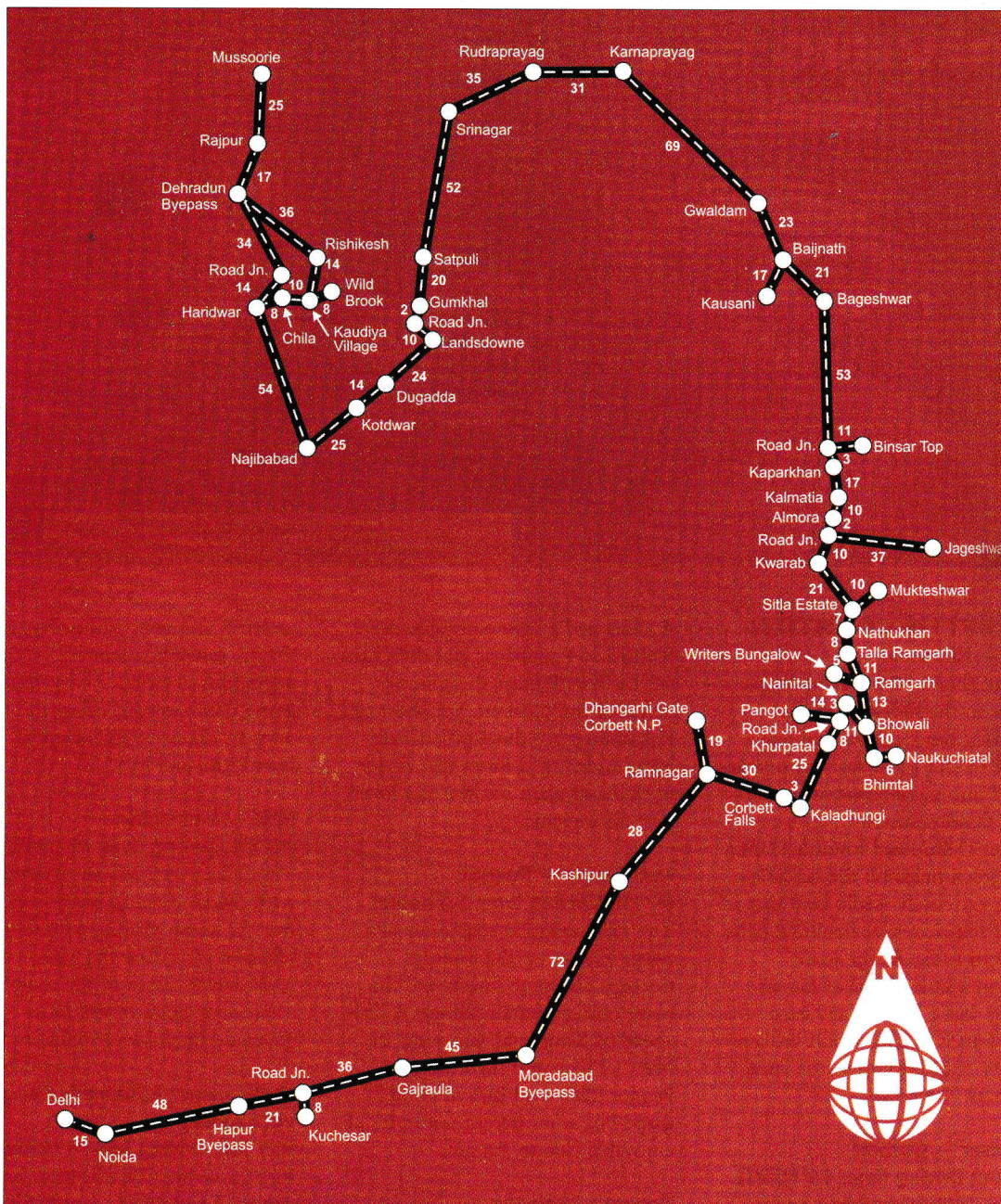
(127 km; Driving time: 4 hours)

Return to Sitla on the same broken dirt road and drive towards Almora. Just short of it take a right for Jageshwar. Situated in a narrow valley covered by magnificent deodar trees, Jageshwar is famous for its complex of 124 ornamental temples and is also acknowledged as the 8th Jyotirlinga. Return to Almora and after refueling, proceed to Kalmatia Sangam.

### Kalmatia Sangam — Kausani via Binsar

(132 km; Driving time: 5 hours)

It's a fabulous drive on a smooth road that curves through the wooded hills. The air changes perceptibly as you approach Binsar. Turn right at the junction and drive to the top. This is an absolute must do, because the drive is an unparalleled experience with the



road climbing steeply and going past oak, deodar and pine trees. At Zero Point, a viewing tower offers glorious views of the Himalayas. Drive on to Baijnath, turn left and climb up to Kasauni.

**Kasauni – Lansdowne**  
(259 km; Driving time: 7-8 hours)

Return to Baijnath and proceed to Gwaldam. Here onwards, the road follows the Pindar River down to its confluence with the Alaknanda at Karnaprayag. Proceed to Rudraprayag from where carry on to Srinagar, turn left and gradually climb up to Lansdowne.

At an elevation of 1890 metres, Kasauni is a city eulogized by poets and philosophers. It gives you an

unobstructed view of the 350 kms long stretch of Himalayan peaks.

**Lansdowne – Mussorie Via Haridwar**  
(207 km; Driving time: 5-6 hours)

Drive past the Duggada forest to Kotdwar, proceed to Najibabad and here turn right for Haridwar. Here onwards motor on a crowded road that by passes Dehradun and goes to Mussorie via the Tibetan settlement of Rajpur. Then it's a straightforward uphill to Mussorie.

**Mussorie – Rajaji via Rishikesh**  
(100 km; Driving time: 3 hours)

Retrace your route till the Dehradun by-pass and carry on to Rishikesh 'the place of sages'. If a

wild adventure is more to your liking then carry on to Kaudiya Village. The owner of the Wild Brook Resort arranges for you to be received here and escorted to his retreat in the jungles of Rajaji National Park.

**Rajaji – Delhi**  
(230 km; Driving time: 5-6 hours)

Return to Kaudiya and then drive past the Chila National Park entry gate back to Haridwar. The road from Haridwar to Delhi is crowded and cuts across the plains of North India. It is painful drive through a very congested region and is sure to make you want to retreat into the peaceful hills again!

# DRIVING MUMBAI — GOA

## SONG OF THE SEA

### Mumbai – Murud Janjira

(159 km; Driving time: 4.5 hours)

Drive from Mumbai to Goa and witness the wonders of the thin and narrow strip of the Konkan coast, sandwiched between the

Arabian Sea and Western Ghats.

Leave Mumbai and after passing Panvel join NH17. At Vadkhak Naka, part ways with NH17 and carry on to straight to Alibag. At Kashid, the road meets up with a sandy white beach and the Arabian Sea. After a most enjoyable ride along the sea you reach your destination, the seaside town of Murud Janjira.

### Murud Janjira – Harihareshwar

(140 km; Driving time: 4 hours)

Leave the sea and climb into the wooded hills of the Western Ghats. The road goes past the Phansad Wildlife Sanctuary. At Kolad meet up with NH17 and leave it shortly after at Mangaon, where you turn right and head again for the coast and the town of Harihareshwar.

Murud is popular for its alluring beach and ancient sea forts. The impregnable Janjira island is located three kms from Murud.

### Chiplun – Ganpatipule

(109 km; Driving time: 2.5 hours)

Motoring on NH 17 is a drive that most enthusiasts enjoy. At Nivli, leave NH 17 and turn right for Ganpatipule. At Chafe, 12 kms later, is a junction with the road on the right going to Jaigarh Fort. It is better to make this excursion before proceeding to Ganpatipule, your relaxing retreat by the sea.

### Ganpatipule – Tarkali Via Vijaydurga and Devgarh

(260 km; Driving time: 6 hours)

Rejoin NH 17 at Nivli and travel on it till Talera, turn right for Vijaydurg. To the south of Vijaydurg lies another of Maharashtra's ancient coastal forts, Devgarh.

From delicious Devgarh, for a while, the road runs parallel to the Arabian Sea and it's an extremely beautiful and memorable drive to Tarkali.

### Harihareshwar – Harnai

(126 km; Driving time: 3.5 hours)

You drive on a coastal country road that is narrow and not in good condition. But it's a very scenic drive along the Savitri River. At Mhparal drive across a long bridge on the river and proceed on to Dapoli. Here turn right for Harnai.

### Tarkali – Goa

(131 km; Driving time: 3 hours)

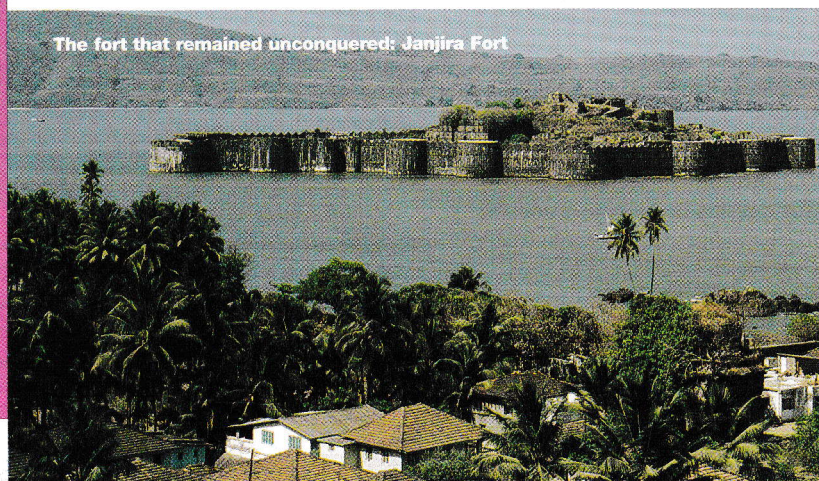
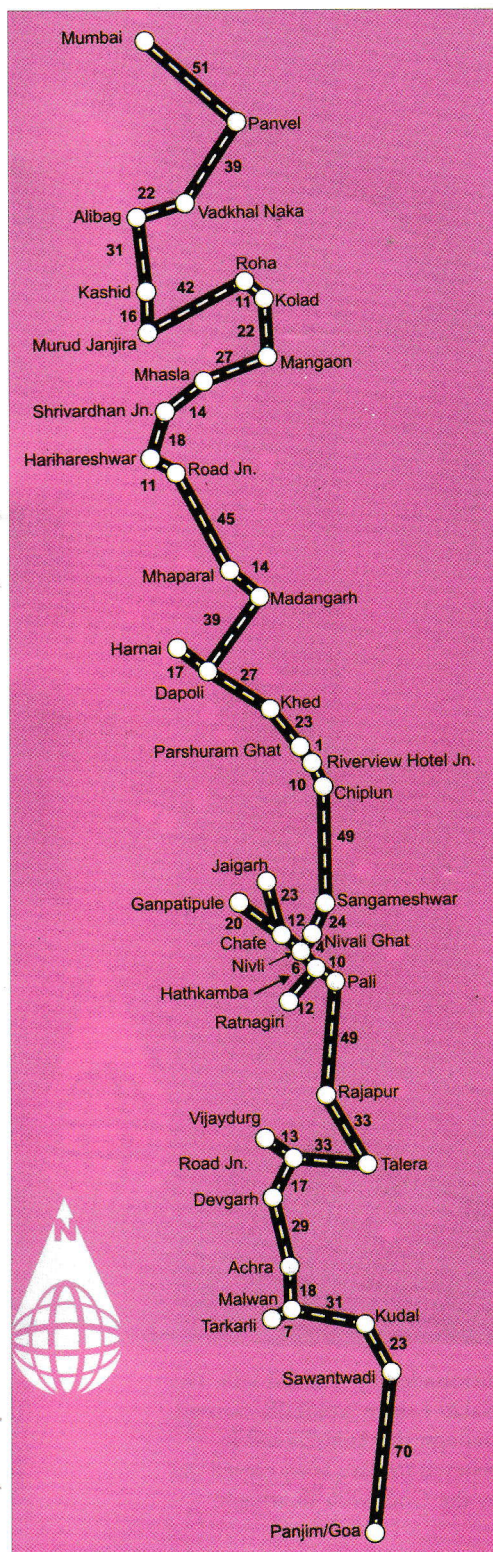
After a night by the sea, motor to Kudal where you meet up with NH 17 and motor on it all the way to Goa, enroute you pass Sawantwadi. Situated at the confluence of the Karliu River and the Arabian Sea, Tarkali is just seven kms to the south of Malwan which was once a trading port. The beach at Tarkali is relatively quiet, unfrequented and thus unspoilt.

### Harnai – Chiplun

(78 km; Driving time: 2 hours)

Take the the well-surfaced road to Khed and meet up with NH 17 again. Drive towards Parshuram Ghats and after a delightful drive you are in Chiplun, where the Vashisti river meanders through the mountains.

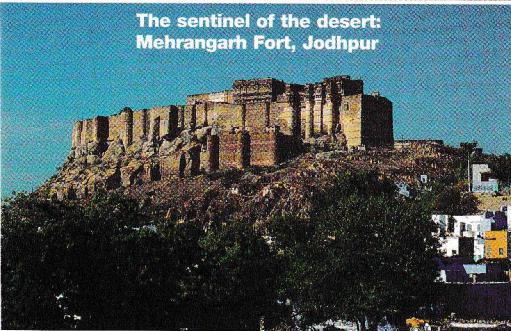
You have traveled along the stunning Konkan coast that is decorated with defiant forts and beaches that romance the waters of the Arabian Sea, and the grand finale to this coastal cruise is Goa!



# DRIVING AHMEDABAD — JODHPUR



The sentinel of the desert:  
Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur



## ACROSS THE ARAVALLIS

### Ahmedabad – Balaram

(164 km; Driving time: 4 hours)

The Aravallis are possibly the oldest mountain range in the world and driving across them allows you to visit some known and some lesser known destinations, each with a charm and a character of its own.

Situated on the banks of the Sabarmati River, Ahmedabad was founded in 1411, by Sultan Ahmad Shah. Leave Ahmedabad and head to Mahesana on a well-surfaced and reasonably broad road. The highway is lined with fancy water parks and open-air restaurants. Further down the road is Sidhapur with many grand houses constructed in the 19th century by Bohras, Gujrat's prosperous mercantile Muslim community. Palanpur, the next major town on this route, is known the world over for its community of diamond traders.

From Palanpur motor on the Abu Road, till you see prominent signboards directing you to the most modern heritage hotel in Gujrat, Balaram.

### Balaram – Poshina

(56 km; Driving time: 1.5 hours)

A short and enjoyable drive up to the wooded Aravallis. The religious minded could stop to offer prayers in Ambaji, a popular pilgrimage place that draws many devotees to its 'Temple of the Goddess'. Then take the narrow road leading to Poshina, your rural retreat in the hills.

### Poshina – Mount Abu

(66 km; Driving time: 1.5 hours)

Return to Ambaji and drive down a smooth road twisting and turning steeply through the hills. This traffic free road runs along the river for a while and starts to flatten out as it approaches Abu Road, which is a major junction town with lots of eating places and other facilities. It starts to climb again after the left turn for Mount Abu, Rajasthan's only hill station. It is a wide and smooth road but keep a sharp lookout for oncoming local taxis that tend to stray on to your side of the road. And on entering Mount Abu, watch out for the touts who will swarm over you offering rooms and guided tours.

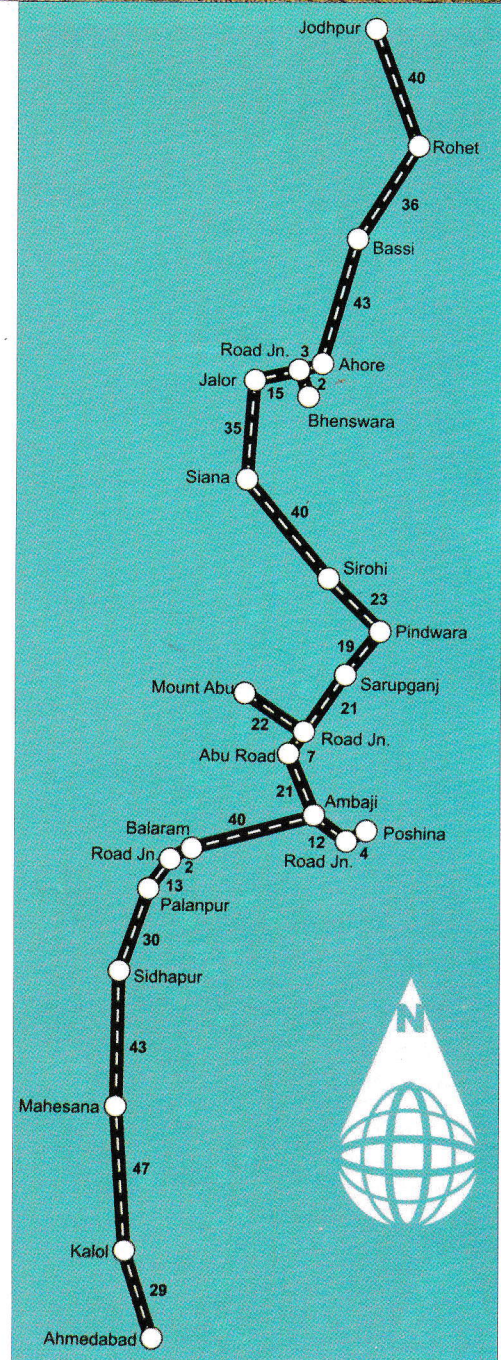
The rivers Sai and Panhari merge at the foothills of the Aravallis, and Poshina is set amidst this pleasing landscape. Tribes like the Bhils and the Garasias have lived in this area for centuries and Poshina was the capital of the Waghela Rajputs who ruled this jagir or fiefdom. Even today Poshina is known for its tribal culture and traditions.

### Mount Abu – Siana

(125 km; Driving time: 3 hours)

Back down the same delightful road till the road junction where you turn left and drive in the shadow of the Aravallis toward Sirohi. This historic town is protected on three sides by the Aravallis. The road from Sirohi to Siana is narrow and broken in places. But it is largely free of traffic and passes through a very picturesque region inhabited by simple shepherds.

Mount Abu is situated at a height of 1220 metres. But before it was recognized as a hill station, it was a pilgrimage center for many centuries. Mount Abu has a salubrious climate and is



surrounded by wooded hills. The Nakki Lake is scenically situated amongst the Aravallis and is believed to have been carved out by the Gods with their nails!



**Siana – Rohet Via Bhenswara  
(172 km; Driving time: 4.5 hours)**

Drive to Jalor, where a historic 12th century fort that has witnessed bloody battles is located atop a steep almost perpendicular hill. Jalor also has some famous Jain temples and its bazaar is a good place to shop for local handicrafts, as the prices are more reasonable than at other more popular tourist destinations.

If you are not pressed for time, visit Bhenswara that is en route to Ahore, where you turn left onto the road going to Jodhpur. On this deserted road you can let your right foot awaken the horses. But keep a sharp lookout for the deer and nilgai (blue bull) that sometimes wander on to the road from neighbouring hills.

On reaching Rohet leave the highway and turn left onto the narrow street that leads to Rohet Garh, where you will once again

have the opportunity to experience the flavours of rural life and the luxuries of a royal retreat.

Siana is a small hamlet situated at the confluence of the Thar Desert and Aravalli Mountains. Sand dunes and rocky hills merge dramatically to create a very graphic and contrasting landscape. The sylvan hamlet of Bhenswara is situated in an area where the Aravalli mountains meet the Thar Desert.

**Rohet – Jodhpur  
(40 km; Driving time: 1 hour)**

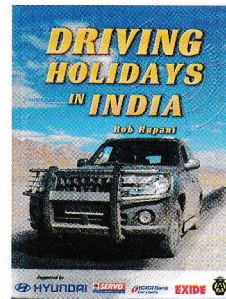
Join the highway again and hit the flat and wide road to Jodhpur. You drive across the Aravallis ends in Jodhpur, which acts as a window to the charms of this bewitching desert land.

Rohet would have been just another small and obscure town if it were not for Rohet Garh. Years breeze by, and past centuries come alive at the historic boundary walls

of Rohet Garh. Situated at the edge of the sun scorched Thar Desert, Jodhpur echoes with tales of antiquity. Crowning a sheer rocky hill, the massive and majestic Mehrangarh Fort rises 125 metres above the plains. It stands sentinel to the city below and within this huge and historical fort are some magnificent palaces. Facing the fort on the other side of the city is the Umaid Bhawan Palace, one of the best planned palaces in India and one of the largest residences in the world. Located close to the fort is the Jaswant Thada, a beautiful white

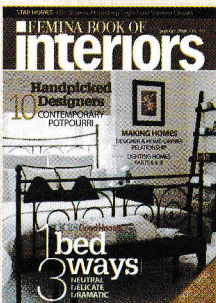
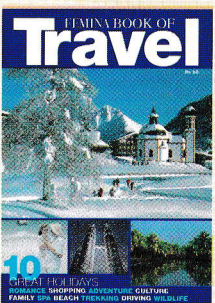
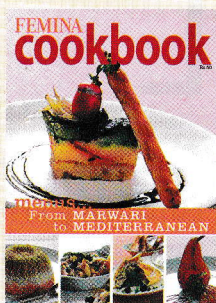
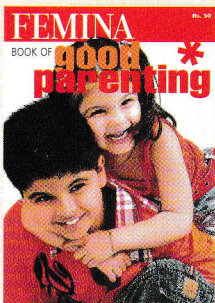
marble memorial dedicated to the Maharaja Jaswant Singh. ■

EXCERPTED FROM "DRIVING HOLIDAYS IN INDIA" BY BOB RUPANI



# CONTEST

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