

PASCHIMA BHARATHA YATHRA 2011

NASHIK – PANCHAVATI – TRIMBAKESHWAR –SHIRDI – SHANI
SHINGANAPUR SANEESWARA – ELLORA – AJANTA- MUMBAI

Tour Code	Duration	Tour Date	Tour Amount (with food)
11NI B	7 Days	April: 9,10,17,24,May : 1,15,22,29, Jun: 12, July :10, Aug:14,21,28,Sept:4,11,18,25 Oct: 2,9,16,23,30 Nov: 6,13,20,27 Dec:4,11,18,25	11000/-

Day 1: Pick up from Nashik Railway station and transfer to hotel.
Night rest in Nashik Hotel

Day 2: Holy Godavari river bath, Valmiki Ramayana *Bhawan*,
Panchavati, Tapovanam, Trimbakeswar Jyotirlinga. Night rest
in Shirdi hotel

Day 3: Shirdi Sai Baba Samadhi, Dwarkamai Masjid, Udi Theertham
and journey to Shani Shinganapur Saneeswara temple and
night rest in Aurangabad.

Day 4: Sightseeing in Aurangabad, Daulatabad, Ellora Caves and
Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga Temple and night rest in Aurangabad.

Day 5: Visit Ajanta caves and Night journey to Mumbai

Day 6: Boat journey to Elephanta Caves and local sightseeing there.
Mumbai sightseeing: Gate Way of India, Nariman Point,
Malabar Hill, and Chowpatty Beach etc. Night rest at Mumbai
Hotel.

Day 7 : In Mumbai. Visit Mahalakshmi temple, Haji Ali Dargah, Juhu
Beach and Hare Rama Hare Krishna Temple etc. And drop at
Mumbai Railway station

Terms & Condition

1. 50% Reduction in the charge for Children between the age of 5 and 11yrs
2. Cost of Entry Tickets wherever required for sightseeing does not come under the total charge
3. Cost of Vegetarian food is included in the tour charge
4. Accommodation Charge for A/C Double bed hotel rooms on twin sharing basis at all places of Night rest is included in the Tour Charge.
5. Charge for Road Transportation in good condition A/C vehicle (depending up on the number of passengers) is included in the Tour Charge.
6. Booking: - Advance of 50% of the total tour charge should be remitted 90 days prior to the date of journey. The balance amount is to be remitted 15 days before the Tour starting date. Remittances may be made through the Bank account of the company, details of which are given below.
7. Cancellation: - 50 % of the advance amount will be lost against cancellation *not received before 30 days of the tour starting dates*. Cancellation received thereafter will not be eligible for any refund.
8. If the journey is blocked /diverted/ cancelled for reasons beyond our control such as Road Bandh, Train Delay, Strike, Natural Calamities, (Earth Quake, Flood, Cyclone and Tsunami etc) the Company will not allow any refund.

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Nashik

Nashik is a city in [Maharashtra](#) State of the Indian Union. Nashik is located in the northwest of Maharashtra, [180 km](#) from [Mumbai](#) and 202 km from [Pune](#). Nashik is the administrative headquarters of [Nashik district](#) and [Nashik Division](#). Nashik, which has been referred to as the "Wine Capital of India", is located in the [Western Ghats](#), on the western edge of the [Deccan peninsula](#) on the banks of the [Godavari](#). It is claimed to be the fastest growing city in Maharashtra. Nashik has prospered during the last 20 years because of its rapid industrialization.

In addition to supplying the name to the famed [Nassak Diamond](#), the city is known for its picturesque surroundings and pleasant climate. The Godavari River flows through Nashik from its source in [Trimbakeshwar](#), which lies to the south west of the city. Nashik Urban Agglomeration (Nashik UA) is the fourth largest urban area in Maharashtra in terms of population. Nashik is the third most industrialized city in Maharashtra after [Mumbai](#) and [Pune](#)

Nashik is one of the world's holiest Hindu cities. Kumbhmela is held here once in 12 years along with four other cities in [India](#). [Lord Rama](#) along with [Lakshmana](#) and [Sita](#) spent 14 years of his exile at [Tapovan](#) near Nashik. The city came under the rule of [Mughal](#) in 16th century and was renamed *Gulshanabad*. It is also noted for its participation in freedom struggle. Freedom fighters like [Veer Savarkar](#) and Anant Kanhere were born in Nashik.

Known for its beautiful and picturesque surroundings, flourishing valleys, Nashik is home to many vineyards and orchards. Today, Nashik is rated as one of India's fastest growing cities. The city saw a fast uplift of development from 2002 with malls, , infrastructure, educational institutions etc. Nashik is known for its pleasant and cool climate, picturesque surroundings, high standard of living, greenery and well-developed infrastructure.

Shirdi Said Baba's temple is very near to Nashik City.

Panchavati

Panchavati is located in the centre of Nashik City situated in the Nashik District of the State of Maharashtra of the Indian Union. Nashik is a famous pilgrimage place and also famous for Kumbh Mela and believed by many devout Hindus as the Western Kashi of India.

All religious activities in Nashik are centred around the banks of the majestic Godavari River and especially on its Northern Banks.

Considered as the most holy spot, Panchavati is believed to be a shelter to Lord Ram, Lakshman and Sita during their exile. There are also many Shiva shrines by the side of Godavari River.

This sacred spot, Panchvati, gets its name from the five banyan trees that stand by the riverside. Believed to be a part of the Dandakaranya Forest, Panchavati is the right option to begin the tour. Since Panchavati occupies a prominent place in the epic, Ramayana, people frequent here to take a holy dip so that they will be cleansed from all their sins.

The place is also considered to be sacred by Hindus for performing the rituals connected with the death anniversary of their dear ones.

There are also other holy places near Panchvati like Ramkund, Muktidham temple, Pandavleni caves and Trimbakeshwar, Sita Guha, Kapaleshwar Mandir etc.etc.

Trimbakeshwar Temple

Trimbakeshwar temple is a religious center having one of the twelve Jyotirlingas. The extraordinary feature of the Jyotirlinga located here is its three faces embodying Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Rudra. Due to excessive use of water, the linga has started to erode. It is said that this erosion symbolizes the eroding nature of human society. The Lingas at Trimbakeshwar are covered by a jeweled crown which is placed over the Gold Mask of Tridev (Brahma Vishnu Mahesh). The crown is said to be from the age of Pandavs and consists of diamonds, emeralds, and many precious stones. The crown is displayed every Monday from 4-5 pm (Shiva). All other Jyotirlingas have Shiva as the main deity. The entire black stone temple is known for its appealing architecture and sculpture and is at the foothills of a mountain called Brahmagiri. Three sources of the Godavari originate from the Brahmagiri mountain. Introduction of the holy place Shri Trimbakeshwar

500 years back a city was built which later on became famous as Trimbakeshwar. In the period of the Peshwas regime Nana Saheb Peshwa

had instructed to construct the Trimbakeshwar temple and developed and beautified the city of Trimbakeshwar.

There is a mountain named the Brihmagiri Mountain 18 K.M. from the city of Nasik in the Nasik district. This is one of the parts of the Sahayadri Vallies. The city of Trimbakeshwar is located in the bottom of this mountain. This is a beautiful natural place with the cold weather as it is situated 3000 ft. above sea level. Trimbakeshwar is 18 K.M from Nasik and 28 km from Igatpuri

Trimbakeshwar temple timings

Open 5.30 am - 9 pm

Sai Baba of Shirdi

Sai Baba of Shirdi also known as **Shirdi Sai Baba** was an [Indian guru](#), [yogi](#), and [fakir](#) who is regarded by his [Hindu](#) and [Muslim](#) devotees as a saint. Hindu devotees consider him an [incarnation](#) of Lord [Dattatreya](#). Many devotees believe that he was a [Sadguru](#), an enlightened saint and a well-known figure in many parts of the world, especially in India, where he is much revered.

"Baba" means "father; grandfather; old man; sir" in [Indo-Aryan](#) languages. Thus Sai Baba denotes "holy father" or "saintly father" His parentage, birth details, and life before the age of sixteen are obscure, which has led to speculation about his origins.

Sai Baba's sole concern was self-realization of humanity at large. He remains a very popular saint,^[2] and is worshipped by people around the world. He taught a moral code of love, forgiveness, helping others, charity, contentment, inner peace, and devotion to God and guru. Sai Baba's teaching combined elements of [Hinduism](#) and [Islam](#): he gave the Hindu name *Dwarakamayee* to the [mosque](#) he lived in,^[3] practiced [Hindu](#) and [Muslim](#) rituals, taught using words and figures drawn from both traditions, and was buried in a [Hindu temple](#) in [Shirdi](#). One of his well known epigrams, "*Sabka Malik Ek*" ("One God governs all"), is associated with both the [Bhagavad-Gita](#) and [Sufism](#). He always uttered "*Allah Malik*" ("God is King").

Though the debate over his Hindu or Muslim origins continues, many of his practices point more to his being a Muslim: believing in the unity of God, reciting [Al-Fatiha](#) and other [Qur'anic](#) readings at Muslim festival times,^[4] listening to [hamds](#) and [qawwali](#) twice daily,^[5] practicing [salah](#), wearing clothing reminiscent of a Sufi fakir, and abstaining from alcohol. A mosque still stands in Shirdi, a place in which he continued to visit regularly.

Sai Baba is revered by several notable Hindu and Sufi religious leaders. Some of his disciples became famous as spiritual figures and saints, such as Upasni Maharaj, Saint Bidkar Maharaj, Saint Gangagir, Saint Jankidas Maharaj, and Sati Godavari Mataji.^{[7][8]}

Historians and devotees agree that there is no reliable evidence for a particular birthplace or date of birth. Various communities have claimed that he belongs to them, but nothing has been substantiated. Recent studies reveal that this great saint was born in [Pathri](#),^[9] many historians support this finding. It is known that he spent considerable periods with [fakirs](#), and his attire resembled that of a [Muslim fakir](#). Baba reportedly arrived at the village of [Shirdi](#) in [Ahmednagar district](#) of [Maharashtra](#), when he was about 16 years old. It is generally accepted that Sai Baba stayed in Shirdi for three years, disappeared for a year, and returned permanently around 1858, which suggests a birth year of 1838.

Sai Baba led an ascetic life, sitting motionless under a [neem](#) tree and [meditating](#) while sitting in an [asana](#). The *Shri Sai Satcharita* recounts the reaction of the villagers:

The people of the village were wonder-struck to see such a young lad practicing hard penance, not minding heat or cold. By day he associated with no one, by night he was afraid of nobody.^[11]

His presence attracted the curiosity of the villagers, and he was regularly visited by the religiously inclined.. Some considered him mad and threw stones at him.^[12] Sai Baba left the village, and little is known about him after that. However, there are some indications that he met with many saints and fakirs, and worked as a weaver. He claimed to have fought with the army of [Rani Lakshmibai](#) of [Jhansi](#) during the [Indian Rebellion of 1857](#).^[13]

In 1858 Sai Baba returned to Shirdi. Around this time he adopted his famous style of dress consisting of a knee-length one-piece robe and a cloth cap. This attire contributed to Baba's identification as a Muslim [fakir](#), and was a reason for initial indifference and hostility against him in a predominantly Hindu village. According to B.V. Narasimhaswami, a posthumous follower who was widely praised as Sai Baba's "apostle", this

attitude was prevalent up to 1954 even among some of his devotees in Shirdi

For four to five years Baba lived under a [neem](#) tree, and often wandered for long periods in the jungle around Shirdi. His manner was said to be withdrawn and uncommunicative as he undertook long periods of meditation. He was eventually persuaded to take up residence in an old and dilapidated [mosque](#) and lived a solitary life there, surviving by begging for [alms](#), and receiving visitors. In the mosque he maintained a sacred fire which is referred to as a [dhuni](#), from which he gave sacred ashes ('Udhi') to his guests before they left. The ash was believed to have healing powers. He performed the function of a local [hakim](#), and treated the sick by application of ashes. Sai Baba also delivered spiritual teachings to his visitors, recommending the reading of sacred Hindu texts along with the [Qur'an](#). He insisted on the indispensability of the unbroken remembrance of God's name ([dhikr](#), [japa](#)), and often expressed himself in a cryptic manner with the use of [parables](#), [symbols](#) and [allegories](#).^[1]

Sai Baba participated in religious festivals and was also in the habit of preparing food for his visitors, which he distributed to them as [prasad](#). Sai Baba's entertainment was dancing and singing religious songs. His behavior was sometimes uncouth and violent. Over the time Sai Baba's fame began to spread in [Mumbai](#). Numerous people started visiting him, because they regarded him as a saint with the power of performing miracles, or even as an [avatar](#).^[21] They built his first temple at [Bhivpuri](#), [Karjat](#).^[22]

Sai Baba opposed all persecution based on [religion](#) or [caste](#). He was an opponent of religious orthodoxy - both Hindu and Muslim.^[23] Although Sai Baba himself led the life of an ascetic, he advised his followers to lead an ordinary family life.

Sai Baba encouraged his devotees to pray, chant God's name, and read holy scriptures. He told Muslims to study the Qur'an, and Hindus to study texts such as the [Ramayana](#), [Vishnu Sahasranam](#), [Bhagavad Gita](#), and [Yoga Vasistha](#).^[24] He advised his devotees and followers to lead a moral life, help others, love every living being without any discrimination, and develop two important features of character: faith (*Shraddha*) and patience (*Saburi*). Sai Baba interpreted the religious texts of both Islam and Hinduism. He explained the meaning of the Hindu scriptures. His philosophy also had numerous elements of [bhakti](#). The three main Hindu spiritual paths - [Bhakti Yoga](#), [Jnana Yoga](#), and [Karma Yoga](#) - influenced his teachings.^[26]

Sai Baba said that God penetrates every thing and every being. He emphasized the complete oneness of God which was very close to the

Islamic [tawhid](#) and the Hindu doctrine of the [Upanishads](#). Sai Baba said that the world is transient, and that only God and his gifts are eternal. He emphasized the importance of devotion to God - bhakti - and surrender to his will. Sai Baba left no written works. His teachings were typically short and meaningful sayings rather than elaborate discourses. Sai Baba would ask his followers for money ([dakshina](#)), some of which he would give to the poor and other devotees the same day, and the rest was used to buy wood to maintain Dhuni. According to his followers, this was done to rid them of greed and material attachment.

Sai Baba encouraged charity, and stressed the importance of sharing. He said: "Unless there is some relationship or connection, nobody goes anywhere. If any men or creatures come to you, do not discourteously drive them away, but receive them well and treat them with due respect. Shri [Hari](#) (God) will certainly be pleased if you give water to the thirsty, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and your verandah to strangers for sitting and resting.

Shani Shingnapur

Shani Shingnapur^[1] or **Shani Shinganapur**^[2] or **Shingnapur**^[3] or **Sonai** is a village in the [Indian](#) state of [Maharashtra](#). Situated in [Nevasa taluka](#) in [Ahmednagar district](#), the village is known for its popular temple of [Shani](#), the [Hindu](#) god of the planet ([graha](#)) Saturn. Shingnapur is 35 km from [Ahmednagar](#) city.

Shingnapur is also famous for the fact that no house in the village has doors, only door frames. Despite this, no theft is reported in the village.^[4] Villagers never keep their valuables under lock and key. Villagers believe that the temple is a "jagrut devasthan" ("a live temple"), meaning that the god here is very powerful. They believe that God Shani punishes anyone attempting theft.^[4]

The village has a post office and a high school known as *Shri Shanishwar Vidya Mandir* besides the primary schools run by the [Zilla Parishad](#). The chief source of water supply in the villages is wells.^[4]

In January 2011, the United Commercial (UCO) Bank opened a 'lockless' branch in the village, the first of its kind in the country, taking note of the near-zero crime rate in the region. The local police were reported to be unhappy over this development and that it amounted to a breach of conditions, because the Central government of India has made it

mandatory for all banks to have high security. The bank has doors, but they will always remain open. However, it was reported by the local legislator and the bank officials that adequate precautions were being taken for the safety of lockers and important documents.

Shrine of Shani.

The shrine for Shani consists of a five and a half feet high black rock installed on an open-air platform, which symbolizes the God Shani. A [Trishula](#) (trident) is placed along the side of the image and a [Nandi](#) (bull) image is on the south side. In front are the small images of [Shiva](#) and [Hanuman](#).

Generally, the temple has 30-40,000 visitors a day, which swells to around three lakh (i.e. three hundred thousand) on *amavasya* (the [new moon](#) day), believed to be the most auspicious day to appease Lord Shani. The village holds a fair in honour of the deity on this day. A bigger phallic fair on new moon day that falls on Saturdays. Devotees bathe Lord Shani's image with water and oil and offer flowers, and *udid* to him. A palanquin procession of Shani is held on the day of the fair. Other festivals include the birthday

The shrine gained popularity with the decade-old film *Surya Putra Shanidev* made by the film producer [Gulshan Kumar](#). The place can also be accessed from SHIRIDI, another religious place in Maharashtra. It is about 65 km on road.

Shani Shingnapur is about 35 kilometres from [Ahmadnagar](#) city. About 160 kilometres northeast of [Pune](#) and 84 kilometres from [Aurangabad](#).

Grishneshwar

Grishneshwar, also known as **Ghushmeshwar**, is a famous [Hindu](#) temple dedicated to [Lord Shiva](#) and is one of the twelve [Jyotirlingas](#), the sacred abodes of Shiva. The temple is located eleven km from [Daulatabad](#), near [Aurangabad](#) in [Maharashtra](#) State of the Indian union. The temple is located near the famous [Ellora Caves](#).

The Grishneshwar temple was re-constructed by [Maloji Raje Bhosale](#) of [Verul](#), (grandfather of [Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj](#)) in the 16th century and later by [Ahilyabai Holkar](#) in 18th century, who also re-constructed the [Kashi Vishwanath](#) temple at [Benares](#), and the [Vishnupad Mandir](#) at [Gaya](#).

Grishneshwar is an ancient pilgrimage site revered as the abode of one of the 12 Jyotirlingas of Shiva. It is located at a distance of 11 km from Daulatabad near Aurangabad in Maharashtra. Daulatabad was once known as Devagiri. Located nearby are the popular tourist attractions Ellora - featuring ancient rock cut monuments from the 1st millennium CE, and Ajanta known for its exquisite cave paintings again from the 1st millennium CE.

The Grishneswar temple was constructed by Ahilyabhai Holkar who also re-constructed the Kashi Viswanatha temple at Benares and the Vishnu Paada temple at Gaya. Grishneshwar is also known as Ghushmeshwar.

Legend has it that a devout woman Kusuma offered worship to Shiva regularly by immersing a Shivalingam in a tank, as a part of her daily ritual worship. Her husband's first wife, envious of her piety and standing in society murdered Kusuma's son in cold blood. An aggrieved Kusuma continued her ritual worship, and when she immersed the Shivalingam again in the tank, her son was miraculously restored to life. Shiva is said to have appeared in front of her and the villagers, and then one is believed to have been worshipped in the form of a Jyotirlinga Ghushmeshwar.

Ellora Caves

Ellora is an archaeological site, 30 kms from the city of [Aurangabad](#) in the [Indian state](#) of [Maharashtra](#) built by the [Rashtrakuta \(Kannada\)](#) rulers. Well-known for its monumental caves, Ellora is a [World Heritage Site](#). Ellora represents the [Indian rock-cut architecture](#). The 34 "caves" – actually structures excavated out of the vertical face of the Charanandri hills – being [Buddhist](#), [Hindu](#) and [Jain](#) rock-cut [temples](#) and [monasteries](#), were built between the 5th century and 10th century. The 12 Buddhist (caves 1–12), 17 Hindu (caves 13–29) and 5 Jain (caves 30–34) caves, built in proximity, demonstrate the religious harmony prevalent during this period of Indian history

The Buddhist caves

These structures consist mostly of [viharas](#) or monasteries: large, multi-storeyed buildings carved into the mountain face, including living quarters, sleeping quarters, kitchens, and other rooms. Some of these monastery caves have shrines including carvings of [Buddha](#), [bodhisattvas](#)

and saints. In many of these caves, sculptors have endeavoured to give the stone the look of wood.

Cave 1: Cave 1 is a *vihara* with eight cells, four in the back wall and four in the right wall. It had a portico in the front with a cell. Possibly served as a granary for other viharas.

The Vishvakarma: The *Vishvakarma* (Cave 10) is the only [chaitya griha](#) amongst the Buddhist group of caves. It is locally known as *Vishvakarma* or *Sutar ka jhopda* (carpenter's hut). It follows the pattern of construction of Caves 19 and 26 of [Ajanta](#). On either side are pillared porticos with chambers in their back walls. The corridor columns have massive squarish shafts and *ghata-pallava* (vase and foliage) capitals.

The Hindu caves

The Kailasanatha: A painted panel showing the dancing Shiva ([Nataraja](#)) from the [Kailash Temple](#) at Ellora (Cave 16). One can still see a lot of the paint that once covered the entire temple.

Wall carvings – A scene depicting the wedding of [Shiva](#) (four armed figure, right) and [Parvati](#) (two armed, left).

Shiva-Parvati seated on mount Kailash, while Ravana tries to lift it.

Cave 16, also known as the *Kailasa* or the [Kailasanatha](#), is the unrivaled centerpiece of Ellora. This is designed to recall [Mount Kailash](#), the abode of Lord [Shiva](#) – looks like a freestanding, multi-storeyed temple complex, but it was carved out of one single rock, and covers an area double the size of [Parthenon](#) in [Athens](#).^[8] Initially the temple was covered with white plaster thus even more increasing the similarity to snow covered Mount Kailash.

All the carvings are done in more than one level. A two-storeyed gateway resembling a South Indian *gopuram* opens to reveal a U-shaped courtyard. The courtyard is edged by columned galleries three storeys high. The galleries are punctuated by huge sculpted panels, and alcoves containing enormous sculptures of a variety of deities. Originally flying bridges of stone connected these galleries to central temple structures, but these have fallen.

Within the courtyard are three structures. As is traditional in Shiva temples, first is large image of the sacred bull [Nandi](#) in the front of the central temple. Central temple - Nandi Mandap - is housing the lingam. Nandi Mandap stands on 16 pillars and is 29.3 m high. The base of the

Nandi Mandap has been carved to suggest that life-sized elephants are holding the structure aloft. A living rock bridge connects the Nandi Mandap to the Shiva temple behind it. The temple itself is tall pyramidal structure reminiscent of a [South Indian](#) temple. The shrine – complete with pillars, windows, inner and outer rooms, gathering halls, and an enormous lingam at its heart – carved from living stone, is carved with niches, pilasters, windows as well as images of deities, *mithunas* (erotic male and female figures) and other figures. Most of the deities at the left of the entrance are [Shaivaites](#) (followers of Shiva) while on the right hand side the deities are [Vaishnavites](#) (followers of Vishnu). There are two Dhvajastambhas (pillars with the flagstaff) in the courtyard. The grand sculpture of [Ravana](#) attempting to lift Mount Kailasa, the abode of Lord Shiva, with his full might is a landmark in Indian art. The construction of this cave was a feat of human genius – it entailed removal of 200,000 tonnes of rock, and took 100 years to complete.

The temple is a splendid achievement of Dravidian art. This project was started by Krishna I (757–773) of the [Rashtrakuta](#) dynasty that ruled from [Manyakheta](#) in present day [Karnataka](#) state. His rule had also spread to southern India, hence this temple was excavated in the prevailing style. Its builders modelled it on the lines of the Virupaksha Temple in [Pattadakal](#). Being a south Indian style temple, it does not have a shikhara common to north Indian temples. – *The Guide to the Architecture of the Indian Subcontinent*, 1996, Takeo Kamiya, *Japan Architects Academy* and *archaeological Survey of India*

The Dashavatara

The *Dashavatara* (Cave 15) was begun as a Buddhist monastery. It has an open court with a free-standing monolithic *mandapa* at the middle and a two-storeyed excavated temple at the rear. The layout of the temple is closely related to caves 11 and 12. Large sculptural panels between the wall columns on the upper floor illustrate a wide range of themes, which include the ten [avatars](#) of Vishnu. An inscription of grant of [Dantidurga](#) is found on the back wall of the front *mandapa*. According to Coomaraswamy, the finest relief of this cave is the one depicting the death of Hiranyakashipu, where Vishnu in man-lion ([Narasimha](#)) form, emerges from a pillar to lay a fatal hand upon the shoulder of Hiranyakashipu.^[9]

Other Hindu caves

Other notable Hindu caves are the *Rameshvara* (Cave 21), which has figurines of river goddesses [Ganga](#) and [Yamuna](#) at the entrance and the *Dhumar Lena* (Cave 29) whose design is similar to the cave temple on [Elephanta Island](#) near Mumbai. Two other caves, the *Ravan ki Khai* (Cave 14) and the *Nilkantha* (Cave 22) also have several sculptures. The rest of

the Hindu caves, which include the *Kumbharvada* (Cave 25) and the *Gopilena* (Cave 27) have no significant sculptures.

The Jain caves

A Jain cave in Ellora

The five Jain caves at Ellora belong to the ninth and tenth centuries. They all belong to the [Digambara](#) sect.^[10] Jain caves reveal specific dimensions of Jain philosophy and tradition. They reflect a strict sense of [asceticism](#) – they are not relatively large as compared to others, but they present exceptionally detailed art works. The most remarkable Jain shrines are the *Chhota Kailash* (cave 30), the *Indra Sabha* (cave 32) and the *Jagannath Sabha* (cave 33). Cave 31 is an unfinished four-pillared hall and a shrine.^[11] Cave 34 is a small cave, which can be approached through an opening on the left side of Cave 33.^[12]

The Indra Sabha

The *Indra Sabha* (Cave 32) is a two storeyed cave with one more monolithic shrine in its court. It has a very fine carving of the [lotus](#) flower on the ceiling. It got the appellation, *Indra Sabha* probably it is significantly ornate and also because of the sculpture of Yaksha Matanga on an elephant, which was wrongly identified as that of [Indra](#). On the upper level of the double-storied shrine excavated at the rear of the court, an imposing image of [Ambika](#), the Yakshi (dedicated attendant deity) of [Neminatha](#) is found seated on her lion under a mango tree, laden with fruits.

Other Jain caves

All other Jain caves are also characterized by intricate detailing. Many of the structures had rich paintings in the ceilings – fragments of which are still visible.

Ajanta Caves

The **Ajanta Caves**, located just outside the village of Ajinṭhā in Aurangabad District of the State of Maharashtra comprise 31 rock-cut

cave monuments which dates back to the 2nd century B.C.. The caves include paintings and sculptures considered to be masterpieces of both Buddhist religious art (which depict the Jataka tales) as well as frescos which are reminiscent of the Sigiriya paintings in Sri Lanka. The caves were built in two phases starting around 200 B. C., with the second group of caves built around 600 A. D.

Since 1983, the Ajanta Caves have been a UNESCO World Heritage Site..

Over a period of time Ajanta Caves became renowned for their exotic setting, impressive architecture, historic artwork, and long-forgotten history and today it is a favourite location for tourists from all over the world

Cave 1

The first cave was built on the eastern end of the horse-shoe shaped scarp. According to Spink, it is one of the latest caves to have begun on site and brought to near-completion during the time of Vatakata King Haisena, though there is no record to authenticate this view. However, it is largely believed that King Harisena may have been the benefactor of this better-preserved cave. A dominant reason for this is that Harisena was not involved initially in patronizing Ajanta.

This cave has one of the most elaborate carvings on its facade with relief sculptures on ridges. There are scenes carved from the life of the Buddha as well as a number of decorative motifs. A two pillared portico, visible in the 19th-century photographs, has since perished. The cave has a front-court with cells fronted by pillared vestibules on either side. These have a high plinth level. The cave has a porch with simple cells on both ends. The absence of pillared vestibules on the ends suggest that the porch was not excavated in the latest phase of Ajanta when pillared vestibules had become a necessity and norm. Most areas of the porch were once covered with murals, of which many fragments remain. There are three doorways: a central doorway and two side doorways. Two square windows were carved between the doorways to brighten the interiors.

Each wall of the hall inside is nearly 40 feet (12 m) long and 20 feet (6.1 m) high. Twelve pillars make a square colonnade inside supporting the ceiling, and creating spacious aisles along the walls. There is a shrine carved on the rear wall to house an impressive seated image of the Buddha, his hands being in the *dharmachakrapravartana mudra*. There are four cells on each of the left, rear,

and the right walls. The walls are covered with paintings in a fair state of preservation. The scenes depicted are mostly didactic, devotional, and ornamental. The themes are from the Jataka stories (the stories of the

Buddha's former existences as Bodhisattva), the life of the Gautama Buddha, and those of his veneration.

Cave 2

Cave 2, adjacent to Cave 1, is known for the paintings that have been preserved on its walls, ceilings, and pillars. It looks similar to Cave 1 and is in a better state of preservation.

Cave 2 has a porch quite different from Cave one. Even the facade carvings seem to be different. The cave is supported by robust pillars, ornamented with designs. The size and ground plan have many things in common with the first cave.

The front porch consists of cells supported by pillared vestibules on both ends. The cells on the previously "wasted areas" were needed to meet the greater housing requirements in later years. Porch-end cells became a trend in all later Vakataka excavations. The simple single cells on porch-ends were converted into CPVs or were planned to provide more room, symmetry, and beauty.

The paintings on the ceilings and walls of this porch have been widely published. They depict the Jataka tales that are stories of the Buddha's life in former existences as Bodhisattva. The porch's rear wall has a doorway in the center, which allows entrance to the hall. On either side of the door is a square-shaped window to brighten the interior.

The hall has four colonnades which are supporting the ceiling and surrounding a square in the center of the hall. Each arm or colonnade of the square is parallel to the respective walls of the hall, making an aisle in between. The colonnades have rock-beams above and below them. The capitals are carved and painted with various decorative themes that include ornamental, human, animal, vegetative, and semi-divine forms.

Paintings appear on almost every surface of the cave except for the floor. At various places the art work has become eroded due to decay and human interference. Therefore, many areas of the painted walls, ceilings, and pillars are fragmentary. The painted narratives of the Jataka tales are depicted only on the walls, which demanded the special attention of the devotee. Their placement on the walls required the devotee to walk through the aisles and 'read' the narratives depicted in various episodes. The narrative episodes are depicted one after another although not in a linear order. Some believe that the art work has erroneously been alluded to as fresco, rather than mural and assert that the technique and process used to produce this kind of artwork is unlike any other artwork found in the art history of other civilizations, including within the history of South

Asian art. Differences are found in the ingredients and their proportions from cave to cave. While the plaster was still wet, the drawings were done and the colors applied. The wet plaster had the capacity to soak the color so that the color became a part of the surface and would not peel off or decay easily. Various kinds of stones, minerals, and plants were used in combinations to prepare different colors. Sculptures were often covered with stucco to give them a fine finish and lustrous polish. The stucco had the ingredients of lime and powdered seashell or conch. The latter afforded exceptional shine and smoothness. The smoothness resembles the surface of glass.

Mumbai

Mumbai, formerly known as Bombay, is the capital of the state of Maharashtra of the Indian Union. It is the most populous city in India, and the second most populous city in the world, with a population of approximately 14 million. Along with the neighbouring urban areas, including the cities of Navi Mumbai and Thane, it is one of the most populous urban regions in the world. Mumbai lies on the west coast of India and has a deep natural harbour. As of 2009, Mumbai was named an Alpha world city. Mumbai is also the richest city in India and has the highest GDP of any city in South, West or Central Asia.

The seven islands that came to constitute Mumbai were home to communities of fishing colonies. For centuries, the islands came under the control of successive indigenous empires before being ceded to the Portuguese and subsequently to the British East India Company. During the mid-18th century, Mumbai was reshaped by the British with large-scale civil engineering projects, and emerged as a significant trading town. Economic and educational development characterised the city during the 19th century. It became a strong base for the Indian independence movement during the early 20th century. When India became independent in 1947, the city was incorporated into Bombay State. In 1960, following the Samyukta Maharashtra movement, a new state of Maharashtra was created with Bombay as capital. It was renamed Mumbai in 1995.

Mumbai is the commercial and entertainment capital of India and is home to important financial institutions and a potpourri of many communities and cultures.

Sight seeing places in Mumbai City

Gateway Of India

Mumbai's most famous landmark, The Gateway of India, is situated at Apollo Bunder. It was designed by George Wicket. It was built to commemorate the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to India in 1911. Through this magnificent monument, numerous viceroys and governors were welcomed to India as they disembarked from their steamers, hence the name.

Flora Fountain (Hutatma Chowk)

This marvellous fountain was built in 1869, in honor of Sir Henry Bartle and Edward Frere. It is situated in the heart of the Mumbai city at a junction of five streets. The fountain has a figure of "Flora", the Roman Goddess of Flowers at the top.

Chowpatty Beach & Juhu Beach

Chowpatty beach is situated on Marine Drive. This beach is well-known for its stalls selling "Bhel-Puri and Pani -Puri chat" a favourite fast food among the Mumbaites and visitors to the city.

Juhu Beach is the most popular beach in Mumbai which is 30 kms away from the heart of Mumbai. It is a long stretch of sandy beach from Santacruz to Vile-Parle. This is a very popular beach for picnic.

Both these beaches are crowded on week-ends.

Haji Ali

Haji Ali mosque, and the tomb of a Muslim saint, is located off shore, in the Arabian sea opposite Mahalaxmi temple. During high tide the walkway to the mosque is submerged in the sea and it can be visited only during low tide.

Kamala Nehru Park & Hanging Gardens

The giant Old woman's shoe in the Kamala Nehru Park is very popular with children to play in. One gets a panoramic view of parts of the city from these parks situated at the height of Malabar Hill. When seen at night, the view of street lights of Marine Drive resemble a dazzling jewelled "Queen's Necklace". At sunset, the waterfall and fountains in the park are lit with colorful lights which are worth seeing. The Hanging Gardens surrounded by beautiful flower beds and lush green lawns are very popular as picnic spots.

Mahalaxmi Temple

This temple is situated very close to the sea off Mahalaxmi. This temple has three beautiful images of Hindu goddesses, Mahalaksmi, Mahasaraswati and Mahakali which are made of gold. During Navaratri festival, devoted Hindus throng this temple in great numbers to offer coconut, flowers and sweets to the goddesses.

Mount Mary Church

This is one of most prominent and splendid churches in Mumbai, situated in Bandra (West). During the month of September a week long fair is held which is attended by the people of all relegions.

Mahalaxmi Race Course

Situated in Mahalaxmi, this racecourse is one of the best in the world. The racing season is for six months from October to April. It attracts huge crowds for heavy betting.

Nehru Planetarium and Science Centre

This Sience Centre is named after Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, India's first Prime-Minister. It is situated in Worli. It has a computer laboratory, mobile science exhibition units, a heritage hall, an auditorium, inflatable dome planetarium, science library and a children's science park.

The sky-show at the planetarium is very interesting with it's narration, sound effects and slide projections which combines entertainment with education. It has a library containing a large collection of books on astronomy, astrophysics and space sciences.

The Prince of Wales Museum

This museum stands not too far from the Gateway of India. It has a priceless collection of art, sculpture, china and other antics. Carefully presereved, this mid-Victorian Gothic style building built in 1904 with beautiful gardens surrounding it, is worth visiting in Mumbai.

Taraporewala Aquarium

Situated on the Marine Drive, this aquarium has fish in varying shapes, sizes and colour. It's a delight for children as well as grown-ups.

Victoria Gardens (Veer mata Jeejabai Bhonsle Udyan)

These botanical and zoological gardens have an interesting collection of flora and fauna. Apart from these, it also has a beautiful gateway, an arched architectural screen and a museum building in the Greco-Roman Style. A large stone elephant at the entrance is also worth seeing. These gardens are situated in Byculla.

Essel World- Amusement Park

Essel World is located on Gorai Island. It offers over 40 exciting rides, games, and attractions. The Water Kingdom is said to be the largest of its kind in Asia. This international-style theme park and amusement centre situated close to Gorai Beach is perfect for a one-day holiday. Special ferries get you across to the park and the entrance fee normally takes care of a fixed number of rides, which include the standard roller coaster and adventure themes, plus a water world section where kids can literally run amok. Summer is usually crowded, but the place also offers low budget monsoon packages and special deals on weekends.

Fantasy Land

Located at Jogeshwari, Fantasy Land provides many entertainment rides for those with appetite for adventurous rides. It is another amusement park made up of modern mechanism games for children and adults like Essel World. It is also a venue for fun and games for visitors of all ages. Fantasy Land, a fun park within the city limits of Mumbai, is enveloped in lush green landscape, spread on an area of 30 acres.

Sightseeing Outside Mumbai City

Elephanta Caves

The Elephanta Caves are located on an island about 10 Kms. away from the Gateway of India. These caves consist of temples carved from rock which date back to the 7th century.

The chief attraction is the three headed bust of Lord Shiva, popularly known as "Trimurti".

One can reach there by taking a ferry from Gateway of India.

Lonavala, Khandala, Karla Caves

Situated atop Western Ghats (Mountain range) on Mumbai-Pune highway are the twin Hill resorts of Khandala and Lonavala. During monsoon the beauty of Khandala is enhanced when the clouds envelope them and several gushing waterfalls can be seen from the lush green hills. At

Lonavala the Valvan and Bushy dams are worth visiting. When you drive a little further towards Pune from Lonavala, you reach Karla, where the famous Karla, Bhaja and Bedsa Caves are