

HERITAGE SITES OF ODISHA

also promoting local handicrafts by supporting the artisans.

Aul Palace
Try to book at least a night or two at this beautifully located palace, now available partially as a



homestay option of five rooms. The charming Killa Aul Place Hotel is your ticket to going back in time to a more graceful period in this hectic world of the 21st century. Swoon over its serene gardens and exquisite riverfront location. The fortified palace dates back to the 16th century. The location of Aul Palace is unique as the River Kharasrota encircles and touches the western and northern walls of the palace, which is why it looks like a river side fort. The ebb and flow of the waters, from the adjoining tidal estuary, into the river is another distinctive feature of the palace site.

Dhenkanal Palace
The erstwhile palace of the ruler of Dhenkanal is the only fort-cum-palace in Odisha. It was built by Maharaja Bhagiratha Mahindra Bahadur during



the latter part of the 19th century. Now transformed into a beautiful, pleasant heritage hotel the tranquil environs of the palace invite you to relax and rejuvenate in the intimate confines of its luxurious rooms.

Hindol Palace
The palace was built in the 1860s by the erstwhile rulers of the princely State of Hindol. The two-storied palace is one of Odisha's largest buildings and once featured 99 rooms. The entrance facade resembles that of an Odia temple.

Barabati Fort
Dip into Odisha' ancient military might at the ruins of this 14th century fort near Cuttack. The structure was raised during the reign of the Gangas. A huge earthen mound here marks



the place where once a 9-storied palace stood. Close to the fort now lies the Barabati Sports Stadium.

Potagarh Fort
Set upon the banks of the Rushikulya River near Ganjam, the fort dates back to the 18th century. Over time, it was held by the Qutb Shahi, the French and finally the British. You'll notice that though the saline air has left its mark on Potagada Fort, it's still a very atmospheric spot for tourists to explore and indulge in a bit of time travel. You might enjoy a quick trip to the picturesque coast of the Bay of Bengal stretching between Chilika Lake and Tampara Lake. It is off limits during the nesting period of the Olive Ridley turtles.



Samaleswari Temple
The legendary Samaleswari Temple in Sambalpur is believed to have been built by King Balaram Dev in the 16th century CE. A special stone, even stronger than granite, was used in the temple's construction. Take time out to watch the beautifully mounted Sound & Light Show.

Belgadia Palace
You will love a sojourn at this heritage boutique hotel located in Baripada, Mayurbhanj. This magnificent 18th century Victorian brick-built double-storied palace is the home of the present generation of the Bhanj Deo family. Recently opened up for visitors to stay and enjoy its atmospheric, period accoutrements and hospitality, the palace has become a popular stay option for travellers. The junior members of the family are



examples of a purely Hindu Temple in India, it is remarkable also for its syncretic symbolism as a shrine, which lends voice to both the Shaiva and Vaishnav cults. The massive temple complex houses 150 subsidiary shrines. The Bindusagar Lake here is the site of many sacred rites and rituals and activities.

Rajarani Temple
Architectural buffs will love the exquisite features of this masterpiece of Odia architecture dating to the 11th century. The shrine, located in Bhubaneswar, is remarkable for its harmonious



blend of skilful planning, symmetry of form and superb craftsmanship. Do take note of the tower over the sanctum, which rises from the ground like a beehive with miniature towers. As opposed to this creative flair, the jagmohana (entrance hall) has no embellishments. Odisha Tourism's annual Rajarani Music Festival is a magnet for Indian classical music buffs.

Ratnagiri-Udaygiri-Lalitgiri
To unravel the splendour of Odisha's Buddhist heritage following the Diamond Triangle Circuit of Ratnagiri-Udaygiri-Lalitgiri is a highly rewarding experience. While Ratnagiri and Udaygiri lie in Jajpur District, Lalitgiri falls in Cuttack Dis-



trict. Ratnagiri is important for its monasteries, temples, shrines, stupas and sculptures. The Udaygiri monastery features a massive stupa, a prayer hall, votive stupas, meditation chambers and carved statues. The monastery at Lalitgiri was built in the 1st Century CE, and is the oldest known Buddhist monastery in Odisha.

Heritage Sites of Odisha

Seize this opportunity to delve deep into the annals of Odisha's vast historical and religious past through its fantastic temples, Buddhist and Jain sites and relics and forts. The experience is even more rewarding as you will get to peel back the layers of its inspirational cultural and architectural narratives as well



gious souvenirs, you will quickly understand why it is the repository of the mysticism of the Lord Jagannath cult, which has been intrinsic to Odisha's cultural heritage. This beautiful temple is another legendary example of Odia architectural finesse and artanship from ancient days. For example, the structure of the main temple is such, that no shadow of the temple falls on the ground at any time of the day. Another unique aspect of it is that the idols of the trinity are carved out of sanctified wood. One of the four primary Char Dhams of the Hindu faith this shrine is richly symbolic. Of great significance is the fantastic annual Rath Yatra and the Chappan Bhog, or sacred food offering to the deities which is available for devotees to also partake from.

Dhau, Bhubaneswar
During the Kalinga war, the killing fields of Dhau were witness to the conversion of 'Chand' Ashoka, to a peace-loving Buddhist monarch. You can gaze upon the edicts set up by Emperor Ashoka around 260 BCE, which are essentially public injunctions showing the change in administration of his subjects with a gentler, more just governance. Soak in the tranquil nuances of the Peace Pagoda or Shanti Stupa established in the 70s by the Kalinga Nippon Buddha Sangha. The Dhau Stupa commemorates the mission of peace that the Kalinga War achieved. In the vicinity lies the Saddharma Vihar Monastery, which also attracts Buddhist devotees.



Khandagiri - Udayagiri Caves
A vigorous proponent of the Jain faith, King Kharavela of the Meghavahana dynasty developed these monastic caves around 2nd century BCE at Khandagiri and Udaygiri. The 15 sculpted caves at Khandagiri provide you an important window to the Jain faith in his life and times. Located just 7km from Bhubaneswar these caves feature beautifully carved Jain tirthankaras, yakshas and yakshini. The Barabhuji Gumph depicts the 12-armed Sasana Devis facing each other along with Tirthankar sculptures. At the Trushula Gumph look upon the 24 Jain Teerthankar's carved on the walls of the cave. Of note here is the sculpture of



Tirthankar Rishab Dev. At the Ambika Gumph, you will find carvings of the Yaksha and Yakshini's of each Tirthankar. Keep your eyes peeled for the poignant scenes from the Kalinga war. The painstakingly hand carved sculptures and carvings are just superb. Join the throngs of visitors at the Udaygiri cave site, which features 18 caves. Principles spots to visit in this ticketed ASI site are the Hathi Gumph where you see the inscriptions of King Kharavela which speak of his conquests and his governance. The Rani Gumph is a two-tiered structure illustrated with gorgeous carvings. It's reputed also for its excellent acoustics. At the Ganesh Gumph seek out the carvings of Jain tirthankars aside from the other sculptures. The carved Lord Ganesh and two elephants date from a later period. At the Vyaghara Gumph note how the entrance is shaped like the head of the tiger and the door formed like its throat.

Chausath Yogini Temple
When you are touring the many attractions of Bhubaneswar, do take time out to visit the unique 9th century Chausath Yogini temple in the nearby hamlet of Hirapur. Its architectural uniqueness lies in that it is an open-to-sky (hy-



paethral) shrine. Only four such shrines exist in India, and two of these are in Odisha. The second one in the state is at Ranipur Jharial in Balangir District. The chausath yogini cult flourished in India from the 8th to the 13th century CE. The temple is also an ancient centre for Tantric rites. The yoginis were considered a means of gaining direct supernatural powers for their devotees. The yoginis define and represent the ultimate feminine power. Kali is the primary deity.

Lingaraja Temple
You really need to lean far back to follow the journey of the colossal height of the temple which sears high into the Bhubaneswar skyline. This 180ft-tall 11th century temple is legend as the birthplace of the Kalinga School of Temple Architecture. Described as one of the finest



Sun Temple, Konark
Your first sighting of this colossal structure dedicated to the Sun God, and known as the Black Pagoda in ancient times, is a mind-blowing experience. Located on Konark Beach, the 12th century temple built by King Narasimhadeva 1, though now largely in ruins, still reveals its provenance as an epic example of the culmination of Kalingan temple architecture. As Poet



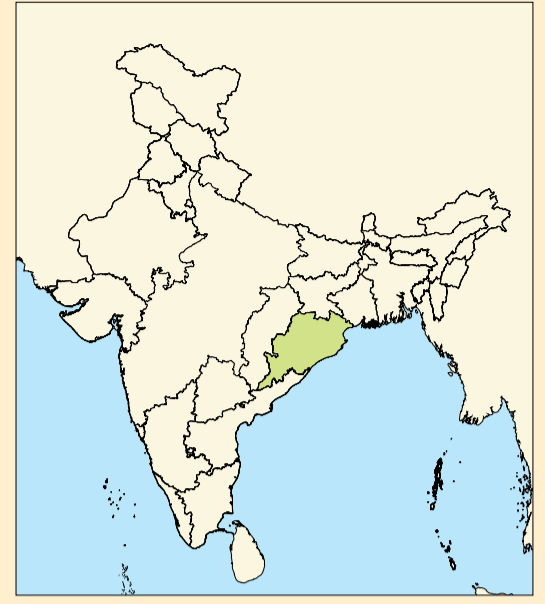
Rabindranath Tagore so succinctly put it: "Here the language of stone surpasses the language of man." Modelled like a chariot drawn by seven horses by the god Surya across the heavens, this UNESCO World Heritage Site is an engineering marvel. The shrine is awash with symbolic importance. Direct your gaze to the 24 massive, intricately carved wheels on which the chariot rests; they are said to symbolise the march of time. It was possible to check the time of the day by looking at the shadow cast on the spoke of the wheels by the sun! An unmissable event here is the annual Konark Dance Festival held from 1st December-5th December.

Jagannath Temple, Puri
The endless flow of devotees here is a vivid reminder of the depth of its spiritual significance from ancient times. Gazing upon Puri's iconic 12th century temple and the shops hawking reli-



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Odisha



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HERITAGE SITES OF ODISHA

- Konark Sun Temple
- Jagannath Temple
- Dhuli, Bhubaneswar
- Khandagiri - Udayagiri Caves
- Chausath Yogini Temple
- Lingaraja Temple
- Rajarani Temple
- Ratnagiri-Udaygiri-Lalitgiri
- Barabati Fort
- Potagarh Fort
- Samaleswari Temple
- Belgadia Palace
- Aul Palace
- Dhenkanal Palace
- Hindol Palace

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