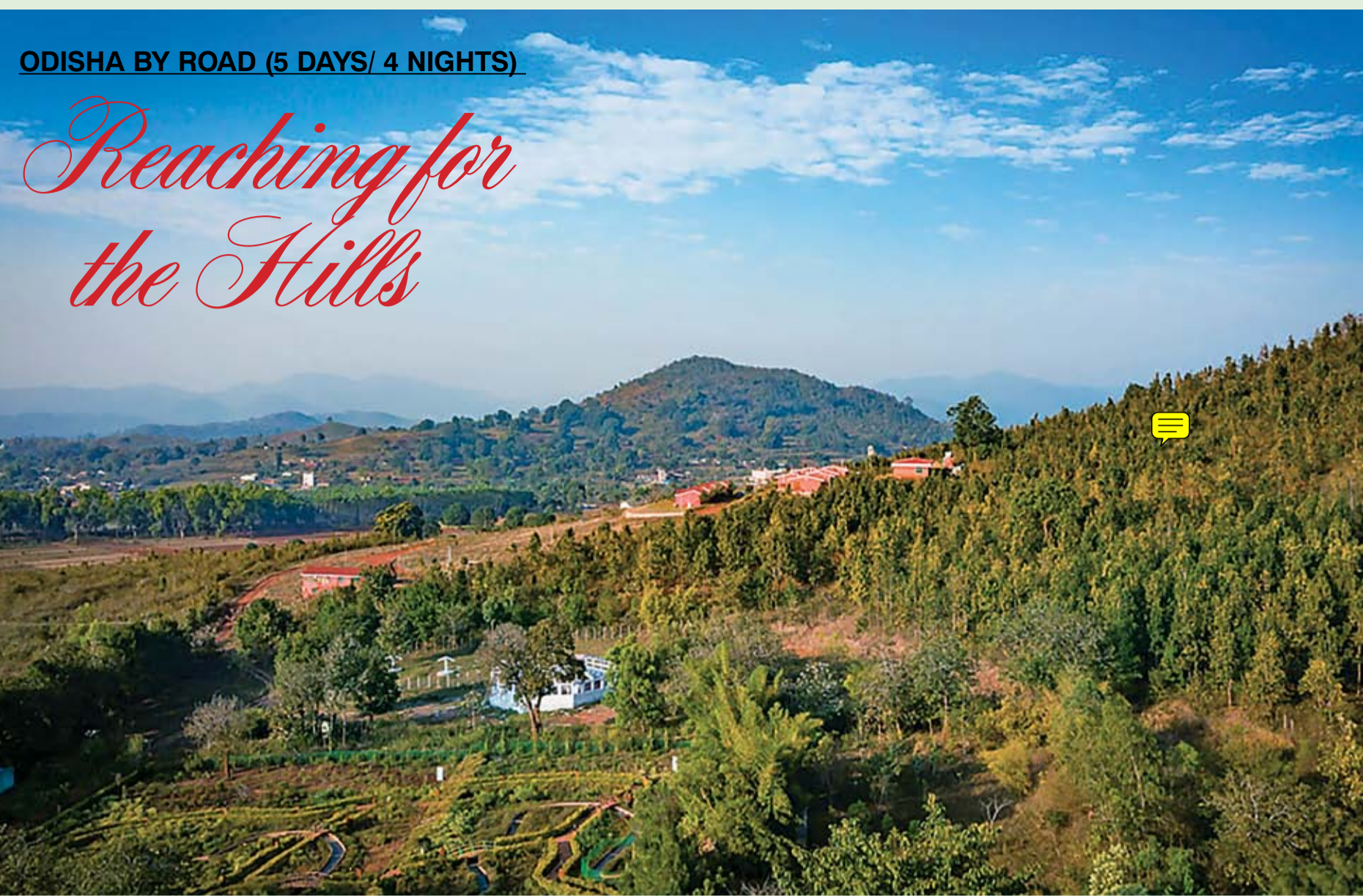


REACHING FOR THE HILLS

Odisha by Road (5 Days/ 4 Nights)

Visakhapatnam to Daringbadi via Rayagada Attractions—Daringbadi, Gopalpur, Chekaguda, Chatikona, Kotagad, Mandasuru, Rayagada

Before heading off to the tempting attractions on this trail, a quick stop en route at Chekaguda brings you to the 151 m suspension bridge hanging bridge over the river Nagavali, which is the second of its kind in the state. You will love tranquil Daringbadi, a designated hill station of Odisha. Meet up with Kutia Kondh tribes in the nearby Kotagad region at the village haat or in their villages. Explore Mandasuru, 'The Silent Valley' with its two perennial and four seasonal waterfalls. Soak up the magical nuances of Gopalpur-on Sea Beach and enjoy thrilling watersports. In Berhampur buy silk saris/ fabric and enjoy yummy seafood.



ODISHA BY ROAD (5 DAYS/ 4 NIGHTS)

Reaching for the Hills

Chekaguda

The 151 metre long suspension bridge, the second of its kind in the state, links the two banks of the river Nagavali, and offers connectivity to the poor rural tribal population, About 20,000-odd tribal villagers living in nine panchayats, on either sides of the Nagavali



river, at the outskirts of the town; the bridge has proved to be a real blessing as it has certainly brought them closer to Rayagada town, which is about 3km away. It is designed by Karnataka based Bharat Grama Sethu Pratishthan.

Daringbadi

Travellers looking for serene, uncrowded sojourn should head for Daringbadi hillstation in Kandhamal District. The seasonal eco-retreat glamping site, which comes up for three months in the winter is the perfect base to head off for picnics by the nearby Midhubandha Waterfall and the Putudi Waterfall. Being an offbeat place, only the avid traveller gets this far. The lack of tourist hordes makes for a quiet, contemplative holiday. Pick up a cycle or drive down to the village market, immerse yourself in the coffee, pepper, cinnamon, ginger, cardamom plantations in the countryside, and stroll through the pine forests or simply soak your feet in the innumerable waterfalls and hill streams that dot this evergreen forest gem of Odisha. You should try to make a trip to the Emu Farm, which could be quite an eye opener.



One of the most distinctive features of this region is its organic *haldi* (turmeric). An indigenous variety of haldi, the 'Kandhamal Haldi' has a GI (Geographical Indication) tag from Intellectual Property of India. *Haldi* farms can be seen everywhere along the valley floor around Daringbadi. For the immersive traveller chatting up farmers in their fields and asking them to show you around their turmeric farms would be a good idea. Pull out the root and smell the *haldi* to get a sense of its intrinsic aroma, and the visual impact of its colour. Kandhamal Apex Spices Association for Marketing (KASAM) has a store in town where travellers can pick authentic farm products of the district with an agriculture-based economy.

The delightful Daringbadi Eco-Retreat offers you an excellent opportunity to explore Odisha's lesser known gems. The hill town of Daringbadi should definitely be on your bucket-list when travelling around the state. Set amidst pine forests and coffee and pepper plantations, the luxurious Daringbadi Eco-Retreat runs from December to March. Savour the serene ambience of the camp; mingle with other guests at mealtimes and on-site activities like yoga the open-air film, cultural programs and star gazing. Enjoy quick trips to places like the Ushabati Valley where peacocks gather in great numbers; head out for fun-filled experiences at glorious Midubandha Waterfall and Putudi waterfall; soak in the scenic solitude of Mandasuru the 'Silent Valley' and enjoy interactions with its Kutia Kondh tribesmen.

cocks gather in great numbers; head out for fun-filled experiences at glorious Midubandha Waterfall and Putudi waterfall; soak in the scenic solitude of Mandasuru the 'Silent Valley' and enjoy interactions with its Kutia Kondh tribesmen.

Mandasuru

The tranquil vistas of Mandasuru, or the Silent Valley, offer a wonderful opportunity to explore Odisha wealth of pristine bio-diverse environs. It is truly one of Odisha's lesser known hidden gems.



Gopalpur

Located in Ganjam District, Gopalpur Sea Beach offers the uncrowded vistas and gorgeous sunsets. Take a leisurely stroll down the beautiful promenade. You can plunge into the pleasures of several aqua activities from cruises to water sports, like surfing, windsurfing, water scooter rides, paddle boat rides.. Dig into delicious preparations of prawns and crab and other fish, cooked Odia-style. The Gopalpur Beach Festival was first held in 1996 and which is held annually to promote the city's history and culture. Around 16km by road from Brahmapur (or Berhampore) town, Gopalpur was an important port for maritime Kalinga. It was an important military port during World War I and was used by soldiers to embark on a journey to Burma, what is now known as



Myanmar. Later, it was transformed into a beach resort, and populated mostly by retired Anglo-Indians—former employees of the Bengal Nagpur Railway. Excursions to other destinations such as Taptapani, Mahuri Kalua, Pati Sonapur Beach, Tara Tarini Temple, Jaugada, Chilika Lake, Ansupa Lake, Hirakud Reservoir and Chandragiri are also frequently organised from Gopalpur.



Berhampur

You will love your explorations of this old maritime hub where wonderful culinary experiences await the visitor. Dig deep into its textile heritage in the well-stocked shops in the bazaar and craft centres. Odisha's weavers have long been renowned for their exceptional skills and the rich sericulture activities support its excellent production of tassar silk. Be sure to pick up some gorgeous tassar saris or fabric in the Berhampur's markets. And don't forget its reputation for lovely handlooms as well. About 30km away from Berhampur, the Tara Tarini Temple is one of India's four ancient Adi Shakti Pithas. Legend has it that the breast of the goddess Sati fell here. The temple, though, is dedicated to the twin goddesses, Tara and Tarini—and their shrine is located atop Purnagiri Hill.

Kotagadh Wildlife Sanctuary

For naturalists and wildlife enthusiasts, a visit to Kotagadh Wildlife Sanctuary is worth going the extra mile. While Bhitarkanika and Simlipal are the big



draws in Odisha's wildlife tourism circuit, Kotagadh is increasingly gaining prominence as a key elephant habitat. Around 125 km from Daringbadi lies this pristine forest, which was declared a sanctuary in 1981. In this remote belt, inhabited by the Kutia Kondh and Desia Kondh, tribal life intertwines seamlessly with the elephant corridor that runs from Daspalla and Karlapat through to Lakhari valley. The habitat also includes tiger, leopard, gaur, sloth bear, chital and a wide variety of antelopes, across 400 sq km of dense jungles. Additionally, it is a birder's paradise. There are watchtowers built at strategic places. November to February are the best months to visit this sanctuary, located on a high plateau. One can spend time on other pursuits as well, such as visiting a Kutia Kondh village, trek to Dimbili Hill to spend time by a perennial stream and hang about the watch tower nearby for sightings. The majestic Ludu waterfall is another key attraction.



Rayagada

Rayagada District is home to several Kondh tribal communities, like the Kutiga Kondh, Desia Kondh, and Dongria Kondh. The Niyamgiri hill range, 40km from Rayagada, is home to the famous Dongria Kondh who worship the mountain god Niyam Raja. Wrapped in handwoven cloth, the women of the Dongria Kondh community can be distinguished by their facial tattoos, distinctive jewellery, multiple earrings and a trio of nose rings besides silver neck bands, bangles and beads. Another distinction is their hair, styled with many attractive hair clips. Dongria Kondh men are no less fashionable, sporting hair buns, hair clips and two nose rings, though they are less colourful than the ladies. They carry hunting tools like bows and axes.

The Dongria Kondh community deeply respects nature and its bountiful resources. Even though modern amenities have slowly made their way into the villages, they try to consciously stay away from people they deem to be outsiders and avoid the rampant



Chatikona

Located in the Rayagada district, Chatikona occupies a special place of pride. The small village, one of the identified Tourist Centres in the state, is a melting pot (of sorts) for different tribal cultures which have made their homes in the bauxite-rich Niyamgiri Hills, located close to Chatikona. Dongria Kondh, Dom and Desia are some of the tribal groups one encounters in the region. The best time and place to witness these tribes is the *haats* (local markets), held twice a week, which are very colourful affairs. The haats, held near the Bissam-Cuttack railway station, is a site of trade and commerce. Local tribal people turn up in Chatikona from the hills near and far, all decked up in their beautiful, traditional attire, after walking for miles. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays usually, Chatikona is dotted with makeshift stalls propped up by bamboo poles topped with bright tarp roofs. Organic tomatoes, grains, vegetables, fish, salt are some items that are always in demand, while villagers also sell large woven baskets to store grains, textiles, clothing, spices, tobacco and home needs. Other more artistic offerings include handcrafted *dhokra* artefacts, jewellery, and hair accessories.

modernisation. Many of their beliefs and customs are based on ensuring a harmonious coexistence between humans and nature. To have the best experience in Chatikona, it is recommended one engage a registered, government- approved tour guide as a companion and act responsibly as a tourist.

Stays Arranged

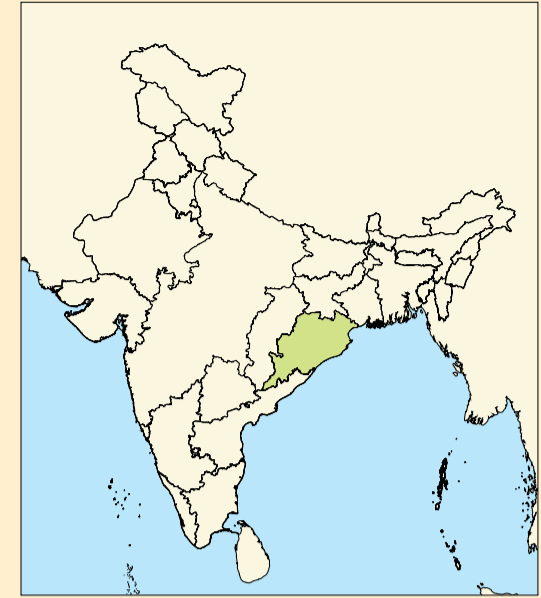
Daringbadi Nature Camp, Panacea Eco Resort, Hotel Utopia, The Snow Creek, Nature Valley Eco Resort, Deers Eco Home; Mayfair Palm Beach Resort, Swosti Palm Resort, PNS Gopalpur.



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Odisha



PANTHANIVAS HOTELS

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W bookodisha.com Mobile app: bookodisha</p> | <p>Location Near Circuit House, Paradeep
Tel 06722-222275
Cell 0907888529, 09861180573
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| <p>KEONJHAR</p> <p>Panthasala Chandaneswar
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Panthanivas Barkul BOATING
Location A/P Balugaon, Khurda Cell 0907888514
W bookodisha.com Mobile app: bookodisha</p> |
| <p>IN CHANDABALI</p> <p>Aranya Nivas
Chandabali (53 kms from Bhadrak, 35 kms from Bhitarkanika by boat)
Location At/Post Chandibali, Bhadrak
Tel 06786-220397 Cell 0907888517
W bookodisha.com Mobile app: bookodisha</p> | <p>PURI</p> <p>Panthanivas Puri
Location Chakratirtha Road, Puri
Tel 06752-222562 Cell 0907888530, 08763995298
W bookodisha.com Mobile app: bookodisha</p> |
| <p>BHUBANESWAR</p> <p>Panthanivas Bhubaneswar
Location Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar Tel 0674-2432515
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Location At/Post Konark, Puri
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| <p>IN PARADEEP</p> <p>Panthanivas Paradeep</p> | <p>JAGATSINGPUR</p> |

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- Chekaguda
- Daringbadi
- Mandasuru
- Berhampur
- Kotagarh Wildlife Sanctuary
- Rayagada
- Chatikona

