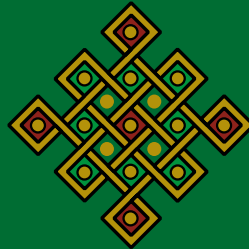


GUJARAT TRAILS™

The Trail Never Ends





THE SIDI SAIYYED MOSQUE

Built in 1573, is one of the most famous mosques of Ahmedabad. The mosque was built by Sidi Saiyyed, who was a slave of Sultan Ahmed Shah.

The mosque was built in the last year of the Sultanate of Gujarat. The mosque is entirely arcuated. The mosque has ten screen windows (Jalis) on the side and rear arches. The rear wall is filled with square stone pierced panels in geometrical designs. The two bays flanking the central aisle have reticulated stone slabs carved in designs of intertwined trees and foliage, a palm and parasite motif. This intricately carved stone window is called the Sidi Saiyyed Jali.



Introduction Welcome to Gujarat Trails

We are a registered travel management company that provides Gujarat Tour Packages, Hotel Reservations, Guide services and MICE segment Car / Coach Rentals in Gujarat for group tours as well as for independent travel. We organise holiday package tours to destinations all over Gujarat for cultural & historical introduction and exploration of the state to our guests. We offer tailor-made packages and special interest tours by being most sensitive to your needs and best match them to the travel products available. We also provide you with flexible options to suit your requirements, which include complete hotel bookings, confirmed air bookings and complete transportation services for the entire duration of your tour in the state of Gujarat.

Qualified travel consultants of our travel company offer the very best in the travel management process - i.e. minimising costs and offering the best value for money at every step of your journey.

The company has its Head Office in Ahmedabad. We have our branch offices across the length and breadth of the state to provide you with a personalised service at every step. Gujarat Trails is owned and managed by Rajendra Singh with his spirited and experienced team of the most committed and dedicated professionals. Gujarat Trails has been helping make tourists happy memories for the past fifteen years. Our team is always on the look-out for most unique and fresh experiences to add value to your travels. It would be a delight to collaborate with your organisation to offer the best travel services to your guests. We look forward to a strong and long-term business association.



EARLY HISTORY OF GUJARAT

The early history of Gujarat is full of imperial grandeur of Chandragupta Maurya who conquered a number of earlier States of Gujarat. Pushyagupta, a Vaishya, was appointed Governor of Saurashtra by the Mauryan regime. He ruled (322 BC to 294 BC) Giringer (present Junagadh) and built a dam on the Sudarshan Lake. Emperor Ashoka, the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya, not only ordered engraving of his famous edicts on the rock at Junagadh, but asked his Governor Tusherpha to take out canals from the lake where an Earlier Mauryan Governor had built a dam.

Between the decline of the Mauryan power and Saurashtra coming under the sway of Samprati Mauryas of Ujjain, there was a Greek incursion into Gujarat led by Demetrius.

The Kshatrapa dynasty was replaced by the Gupta reign with the conquest of Gujarat by Chandragupta Vikramaditya. Vikramaditya's successor Skandagupta has left an inscription (450 AD) on a rock at Junagadh which gives details of the repairs of the embankment, damaged by floods, of Sudarshan lake by his Governor. Anarta and Saurashtra regions were both part of the Gupta empire. Towards the middle of the 5th Century AD the Gupta Empire started to decline. Senapati Bhatarka, the Maitrak general of the Guptas, took advantage of the situation and in 470 AD he set up what came to be known as the Maitrak kingdom. He shifted his capital from Giringer to Valabhipur, near Bhavnagar, on Saurashtra's east coast. Maitrakas of Valabhi became very powerful and their writ prevailed over large parts of Gujarat and even over adjoining Malwa. Maitrakas set up a university which came to be known far and wide for its scholastic pursuits and was compared with the famous Nalanda university. It was during the rule of Dhruvasena Maitrak the Chinese philosopher-traveller HuanTang visited in 640AD.



CLIMATE

The climate of Gujarat is moist in the southern districts and dry in the northern region. The Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Cambay reduce the temperatures and render the climate more pleasant and healthy. The year can be divided into: the winter season from November to February, the hot season from March to May, the south-west monsoon season from June to September and the intervening month of October.



THE PEOPLE

Gujarat boasts of a rich culture and heritage. The people of Gujarat are commonly referred as Gujaratis and the main language spoken by them is Gujarati. Gujarat is a flourishing state in all spheres and as a result, numerous people from different parts of India have settled here for various reasons.



THE ARCHITECTURE OF GUJARAT

Gujarat showcases a diverse blend of architectural styles, from ancient marvels to modern skyscrapers. Its rich tradition has gained acclaim nationally and internationally. The state boasts of Maru-Gurajara, Neo-classical, Colonial, Indo-Saracenic, Mughal, Jain, and even Gothic architecture in its various monuments and buildings. Hindu and Jain architecture peaked between the 11th and 13th centuries, evident in the exquisite specimens from the Solanki and Vaghela periods. Notable architects like Le Corbusier, Charles Correa, and Louis Khan have left their mark on Gujarat's architectural legacy.

LUKSHMI VILAS PALACE

It was built by Shri Maharaja SayajiRao III. The first stone was laid by P.S. Melvill Esquire, C.S.I. Agent to the Governor General at Baroda, on the 12th Jan-1880 and and completed in 1890. It was built in the Indo-saracenic tradition, with an eclectic mix of of Indian, Islamic, and European Elements. It's a residence of the royal family. Its, ornate Darbar Hall has an Italian mosaic floor and walls with mosaic decorations. The Palace houses a remarkable collection of old armoury and sculptures in bronze, marble and terracotta.



SOMNATH TEMPLE

The Somnath Temple located in the Prabhas Kshetra near Veraval in Saurashtra, on the western coast of Gujarat, India, is the most sacred of the twelve Jyotirlingas (lingas of light) of God Shiva. Somnath means "The Protector of Moon God". The Somnath Temple is known as 'the Shrine Eternal', as although the temple has been destroyed six times it has been rebuilt every single time.





CUISINE

Gujarat is known worldwide for its traditional food. Gujaratis are great gastronomers and enjoy food. The state provides immense variety in everything, be it tourism, shopping, or food.

The food served in the South of Gujarat is influenced by the cuisine of Maharashtra. There is considerably less use of sugar in the dishes. In south Gujarat, people usually consume Jowar, whereas in Saurashtra and North Gujarat, the diet comprises mainly of Bajra and Maize.



DANCE FORMS OF GUJARAT

The Gujarat folk dances are a celebration of colorful costumes and energetic music. The folk dances are a reflection of the vibrant culture of Gujarat. The people of the state love to celebrate every occasion with lots of pomp, grandeur, and show. The same element and spirit characterize the folk dances of Gujarat.

1. Garba Dance
2. Raas Dance
3. Tippani Dance
4. Dangi Nritya Dance
5. Hudo Dance
6. Siddi Dhamaal Dance
7. Bhavai
8. Padhar Dance
9. Mer Raas Dance



A photograph of the Sun Temple in Modhera, Gujarat, India, during sunset. The temple is a large, multi-tiered stone structure with a central dome and a wide staircase leading up to it. The sky is filled with warm, golden light, and the temple's reflection is visible in a pool of water in the foreground. The overall scene is serene and majestic.

TEMPLES OF GUJARAT

A visit to the magnificent and sacred temples in Gujarat, located in India, would enable a tourist to get valuable insights into the religion-oriented life in Gujarat. Temples, apart from serving as the religious barometers for a travel destination, also act as a podium and a platform where-in the tourists can come together and partake of their general social life, too. Temples in Gujarat are also architectural marvels apart from being the seat of sacredness in the province. Temples in Gujarat, are very many while some of them can be enumerated as Somnath Temple, Akshardham Temple, Parsi Fire Temples, Bhrgu Rishi Temples and last but not the least the Gangeshwar Temple, all located in the state of Gujarat, India.

SUN TEMPLE

Sun Temple is situated in Modhera, Gujarat, where Lord Rama performed a Yajna (sacrifice) to purify himself of the sin of having killed a Brahmin - Ravana, the king of Lanka. The temple was so designed that the rays of the Sun would fall on the image of Surya at the time of the Equinoxes.

SASANGIR WILDLIFE

The Gir Forest National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary is a forest and wildlife sanctuary in Gujarat, India. Established in 1965, with a total area of 1412 km² (about 258 km² for the fully protected area (the National Park) and 1153 kms for the Sanctuary), the park is located 65 km to the south-east of Junagadh.

It is the sole home of the pure Asiatic lions (*Panthera leo persica*) and is considered to be one of the most important protected areas in Asia due to its supported species. The ecosystem of Gir, with its diverse flora and fauna, is protected as a result of the efforts of the Government forest department, wildlife activists and NGOs. The forest area of Gir and its lions were declared as "protected" in the early 1900s by the then Nawab of the princely state of Junagadh. This initiative assisted in the conservation of the lions whose population had plummeted to only 15 through slaughter for trophy hunting.





STEP WELLS

A typical well is made up of the Mandapa (the entrance pavilion), which forms the main approach at the ground level; the Kuta (the flight of steps) leads down to the water or Kund (tank) at the bottom. Most of the wells are decorated with sculptures on all available surfaces. While appreciating these works of art we often forget to appreciate the science and engineering skills with which so many pillars and lintels are made to support the five or seven storeys and that too everything under the surface of the earth.



GUJARAT RELIGIOUS SITES

Gujarat, a beautiful traditional state in west India is also called as "Jewel of West". The marvelous state lies on the bank of vigorous Arabian Sea. A visit to the state unfurls a cultural, historical and religious vista. Gujarat is well known for its architectural chattels. The place is also a great retreat for religious populace. Some of the religious Tours of Gujarat include places like Somnath, Dwarka, Ambaji, Pawagadh, Shamlaji, Bhadreshwar and many more. Girnar, Taranga and Palitana is one of the most famous Jain Temples in the state. The sanctified Shetrunjaya Mountain with almost 800 fire shrines is among the most ancient temples of Gujarat. The hill is the holy place of Parsees at Udwada.



FAIRS & FESTIVALS

Gujarat boasts over 1000 festivals, earning its reputation as the land of fairs and festivals. Some notable ones include:

Bhavnath Mahadev Mela: Held at Bhavnath Mahadev temple in Junagadh. Celebrated during Shivratri in February/March.

Dang Darbar: An annual fair preceding Holi, celebrated in Ahwa, Dang.

Makar Sankranti and Kite Flying Festival: Mid-January marks the Kite Flying Festival, symbolizing the Sun's journey to the Tropic of Capricorn.

Rannutsav: Experience the enchanting Rann Utsav in Gujarat, India—a carnival of music and dance set amidst the stunning landscape of the White Rann.

Navratri: Navratri is the longest and largest dance festival of the World.

Saptak Music Festival: An annual musical extravaganza from January 1st to 13th, featuring emerging talents and renowned classical performers. With over 125 artists across 50 performances, it's a global attraction.

Modhera Dance Festival: A three-day celebration post-Uttarayan, showcasing India's rich performing arts heritage.

Bhagoria Fair: A unique tribal festival on the MP-Gujarat border, where couples elope after selecting partners, coinciding with harvest's end.

Kavant Fair: Colorful festivities in Gujarat's Chota Udaipur, marked by five days of celebration, defying sleep and prohibition laws.

Chitra Vichitra Fair: An annual tribal gathering in northern Gujarat for mourning, festivities, and matchmaking.

Tarnetar Fair: A vibrant celebration of folk culture in Gujarat, attracting visitors with its lively atmosphere and traditional rituals.

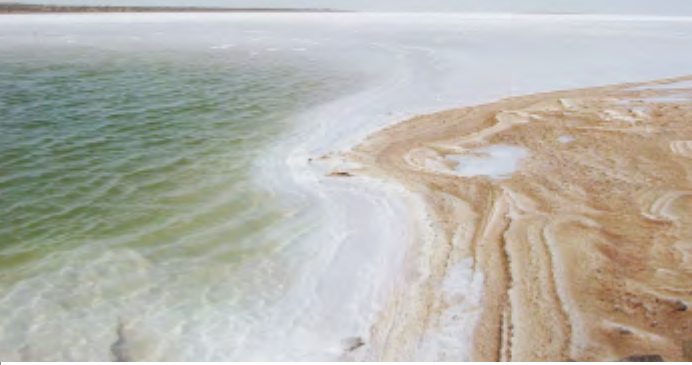
Ravechi Fair: A September event uniting communities in Gujarat, featuring cultural performances and local handicrafts.





MANDVI PALACE

Mandvi is a city and a Municipality in Kachchh district in the Indian state of Gujarat. It was once a major port of the region and summer retreat for Maharao (king) of the Kachchh. The old city had a surrounding fort, and remains of the fort wall can still be seen to this day. The city has a more than four hundred year old ship building industry that still manufactures small ships.



RANN OF KUTCH

Rann of Kutch is an unusual marshland spanning an area of approximately 10,000 sq. km and separating Gujarat from the Sind region in Pakistan. The dry season is extreme as it dries out the marshland leaving isolated salt islands on a vast plain. The monsoon is no different in extremity, as it floods the marshland and the whole area is transformed into a vast inland sea. The salt plains seen here are caused by flooding of the Rann by sea, river and rainwater. It is punctuated by highlands called bets, which have scrub flora and grassland vegetation offering refuge to wildlife. It is located northwest of Gujarat in the Thar Desert. The Rann of Kutch is divided into the Greater Rann Of Kutch and the Little Rann Of Kutch.

The Greater Rann Of Kutch

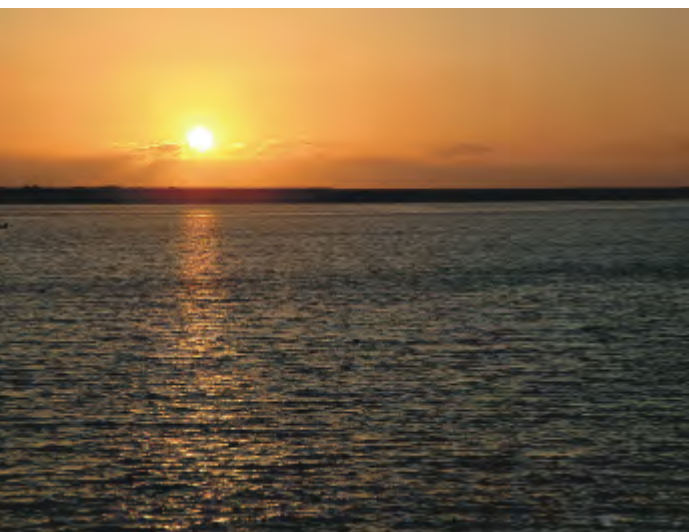
As the name suggests the Greater Rann Of Kutch spans an area of 7505.22 Sq. km and is comparatively larger than the Little Rann Of Kutch. The greater Rann Of Kutch is home to a wide array of flora and fauna. Migratory birds deem it an abode during diverse weather conditions.

The Little Rann Of Kutch

The Little Rann Of Kutch occupies 4,953 sq. kms and is spread out in the districts of Surendranagar, Banasakantha, Patan, Kutch and Rajkot in Gujarat. It is well known as The Wild Ass Sanctuary, named after endangered Ghurdhur (Equus hemionus khur), that is seen here in large numbers.

Kutch Mahotsav

The Kutch Mahotsav or the great Kutch festival offers access to the interior and beautiful recesses of the desert district of Gujarat. The Kutch Festival is celebrated in Kutch, near the days when Shivratri is celebrated in Gujarat, India. During the celebration of Kutch Desert Festival, colourfully attired dancers, music concerts, Sindhi Bhajan performances, Langa Desert Music and shops selling traditional Kutchhi embroideries and jewellery are too, the hallmarks of the Kutch Desert Festival, being celebrated in Gujarat, India.



GUJARAT BEACHES

A visit to Beaches in Gujarat offers the inclined tourist with a golden opportunity to unearth the beauty and translucence of Beaches in Gujarat, India. Beaches in Gujarat, India are a curious mixture of well known beachfronts with a generous sprinkling of tourists in the climatically favorable seasons and the existence, too, of the lesser known and yet to be fully explored and exploited beaches which do not figure so prominently in the calendar of the tourists from all across the country.

Some of the beaches which are worth visiting in Gujarat, India, are namely the Ahmedpur Mandvi Beach, Chorwad Beach, Gopnath Beach, Veraval Beach and last but not the least Beyt Dwarka Beach, all in Gujarat, India. Ahmedpur Mandvi Beach, amongst these beaches is well known for the facilities of water sports within its seafront with water sports like skiing, parasailing, and surfing being prominent draws amongst the tourists who come and visit these popular and immensely picturesque and pleasurable beaches of Gujarat, India. Porbandar is another landmark in Gujarat, India, which is endowed with a picturesque beach and that beach can be an ideal place to relax and laze around for world weary travelers.

Ahmedpur Mandvi Beach

Ahmedpur Mandvi is located in the western Indian state of Gujarat at around 415 km from Ahmedabad. The place is a part of Junagarh district lying between Latitude 21 0 31' in the North to Longitude 70 0 36' in the East.

Chorwad Beach

66-km from Junagadh and 23-km from the fishing centre of Veraval, Chorwad is a small fishing village and a delightful beach with its resort on the sunny coast of Gujarat. Chorwad is perfect for long beach walks and a quiet holiday.

Shivrajpur Beach

A blue-flagged beach in Gujarat, Shivrajpur is quiet, calm and flourishing with rich marine and aquatic life. The crystal clear water allows the visitors a clear vision of the seabed around the beach. A distant lighthouse is an added attraction.



MUSEUMS IN GUJARAT

Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery : Located in the popular Sayaji Bagh, the museum houses a collection which belonged to the former maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad. Indian rulers during the Raj often collected all kinds of European art and other knickknacks.

Calico Museum of Textiles : Established in 1948, the Calico Museum of Textiles is undoubtedly one of India's leading museums. Its superb collection of textiles is further enhanced by a line collection of pichhwais and patachitras (paintings on cloth).

Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya : The Sangrahalaya is run by a public trust established in 1951. The museum's new premises were built in 1963. The museum's main objective was to house the personal memorabilia of Mahatma Gandhi.

Gandhi Museum: A collection of rare photographs relating to the life of Mahatma Gandhi are on view at the Gandhi Museum. These recreate the significant events of Gandhiji's life. Also displayed are documents, letters and his personal relics.

Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum : The impressive Laxmi Vilas Palace, in the Indo Saracenic style of architecture, was once the residence of the Gaekwad family. The Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum, located in the sprawling grounds of the palace complex, is a multipurpose museum and houses the Gaekwad family's rich collection of art treasures.

Utensils Museum : Surendra Patel, an interior designer by profession, has initiated a unique culinary experience. He has set up a quaint rural experience on the outskirts of Ahmedabad where visitors can savour authentic Gujarati village cuisine before wandering through the grounds to see a museum devoted to Indian utensils.

Shreyas Folk and Art Museum: Established in 1974, embodies a unique approach to learning, viewing museums as dynamic classrooms. Each object within tells a story, connected to history, mythology, and our individual perceptions.

Vision in the Dark Museum: offers an unconventional experience, where visitors explore exhibitions like the city market and village in complete darkness. Named for its emphasis on sensory experience, blind guides lead visitors through, aided by night vision cameras.

Vaacha: Nestled in the Rathwa tribe heartland, Vaacha is a part of the Adivasi Academy, founded in 1998. It symbolizes the unheard Adivasi voice, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Rathwa tribe. With open walls blending into the landscape, it integrates seamlessly with the surrounding environment and resources of the Adivasi Academy, serving as a contextual space for learning from Adivasi culture.



GONDAL VINTAGE CARS

The Jadeja Rajput clan, till the independence of India ruled Model State of Saurashtra during British Raj Gondal, the capital of the former princely state of Gonda!. It is a fortified town located on the river Gondali. Presentday Gondal is a testimony to the great visionary ruler Sir Bhagwatsinhji, who introduced social reforms, planned the development of Gondal town and created a model state of Saurashtra in late 19th and early 20th century. Sir Bhagwatsinhji's high education and extensive tours to Europe enhanced his aesthetic tastes, which can be seen in the architecture and planning of public buildings, parks, bazaars and palaces built during his regime.

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