STAY IN A MACHAN

Some of the most picturesque and best wilderness experiences are to be had in Maharashtra. Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is Maharashtra’s oldest national park. Together with the Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary, it forms the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. Located near Nagpur in the district of Chandrapur, it is said to have one of the healthiest populations of tigers in India, not to mention elusive leopards and panthers, hyenas, jackals, sambar, wild boar, Indian bison, flying squirrel and sloth bears along with over 100 species of birds. Open all year round, with May being the best time to spot tigers, the reserve has a beautiful forest, expansive valley and the Tadoba Lake. Another exciting experience here is to spend a night on a machan, if you are brave enough to do so. Two machans are located at Tadoba Lake and there are several others around the reserve at Panchadhara waterhole, Vasant Bhandara waterhole and Jamunbadi. Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge can arrange for you to spend the night in one.

If it’s calm and quiet in the midst of nature that you crave, a stay at The Machan in Jambulne will do you good. Located around 17km south of Lonavala, this luxury eco-friendly resort set on 25 acres will have you blissfully cut off from the rest of the world. The lack of technology and connectivity is a boon here, giving you time to spend the day discovering the guided treks and nature trails as well as exploring the nearby Koraigad and Lohagarh Forts and the Karla and Bhaja Caves. At night, gaze up from your private deck in wonder at the sheer beauty of a brilliantly-lit starry sky.

WHERE TO STAY

Tiger Trails Jungle Lodge, Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve: The best accommodation option around, the lodge has basic rooms with some pampering touches (00-91-9822930703; tigertrails.in, info@tigertrails.in; 19, Dandige Layout, Shankar Nagar; from ₹9,500 per person, including all meals and jeep safaris, park entrance fees extra). The Machan, Jambulne: The Canopy, Forest and Heritage Machans are hoisted some 30ft to 45ft above the forest floor to give you panoramic views. The Afternoon Nature Trail and Lunar Nature Trail trails are must- dos (00-91-22-61280100; themachan.com, reservations@themachan.com; 10,000 per night, includes breakfast).

WHERE TO STAY

Empower Activity Camps: This sprawling campsite offers adventure activities and stay options (Ac. cottages, beach tents and dormitories (00-91-22-79842510; empowercamp.com; from ₹2,000 per person, dormitory; from ₹1,180 per person for campsite stay). Mercury Himalayan Explorations: Another activity operator for rafting on the Kundalika River stretch from July to December (00-91-11-23546203; himalayanadventure.com; from ₹8,800 per person, and ₹3,400 for physicals).

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