



**Vishni Destination Management**  
Re-defining Destination Management.

# Holidays In Maharashtra



Travels Along the Konkan "Riviera"



# Maharashtra: More than just bright lights and big cities!

We're big fans of Bombay! The liberal, cosmopolitan *chalta hai* attitude, the variety of cuisines on offer, the cultural scene (galleries and theatre), the shopping opportunities, and the mix of cultures make Bombay our favourite city in the...world! Alright, so we grew up in Bombay and, we're invariably biased but it really is one of the more dynamic cities on Earth, let alone in India.

But, even we find the hurly burly a bit enervating sometimes. We feel like hitting the expressway and heading south along the Konkan coast, just breathing in the blended salty scents of the Arabian Sea on one side and the lush Western Ghats on the other (P.C.H. ain't got nothin' on this!).

The "Riviera" stretches all the way down to Goa but Goa isn't our destination: the last thing we want to see is drunk, sun-burnt, obnoxious Brits (think 'Chelmsford-by-the-Sea!') or, worse, the Indian franchise of the Russian Mafia!

There are numerous little towns and villages, some with their own deserted forts, temples and food-shacks, up and down the coast that we could just flop down in. While Bombay's nouveau- riche make for Alibaug (the "unofficial" start of the "Riviera"), it's still too close to Bombay, and too busy (and a touch too ostentatious), for us.

Kashid, further down the coast, is a quieter option. If you're feeling energetic, you could trek up to Korlai Fort. If you want to experience the remnants of the Portuguese presence on the Konkan then wander in to Korlai village, where you might be within earshot of people conversing in Kristi, a uniquely Indo-Portuguese dialect.

The twin villages of Harnai-Murud are ideal for experiencing the day-to-day lives of Konkani fishing communities. The majority of Indians live in rural areas and, in a way, spending time in places such as Harnai-Murud will deepen and broaden your perspective and appreciation of the "other India".

Guhagar, more a small town with a fishing village than an actual fishing village, offers



yet more quiet beaches and relaxing and comfortable accommodation. For the curious, there's Gopalgarh Fort.

Fancy tucking in to juicy Alphonso mangoes? Ratnagiri is the place for you! But, there's more to Ratnagiri than just fruit; this sleepy little town is home to Ratnadurg Fort, the Thibaw Palace (where the last King of Burma was exiled to by – who else?- the Brits) and Lokmanya Tilak's (an Indian freedom fighter) birthplace.



The once very much off-the-beaten-track village of Ganpatipule is becoming increasingly prominent on the tourist radar. Luckily, it has yet to see some of the degeneracy usually associated with Goa. And, chances are that because it's home to Swayambhu Ganpati Temple (and, therefore, a pilgrimage site), Ganpatipule will never become another Goa.

But, somewhat incongruously, Ganpatipule offers a variety of water sports so if you're an adrenaline junkie, a stop here is a must!

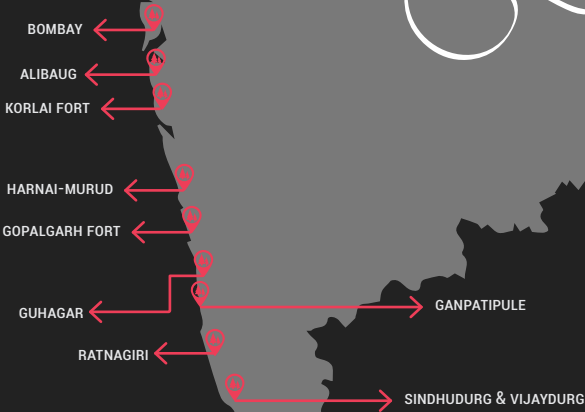
Maharashtra is rarely associated with forts the way Rajasthan is but spend enough time traversing Maharashtra and you'll come across numerous forts. Whereas Rajasthani forts' architecture is occasionally dainty and effete, and has an ornamental appearance (apart from Meherangarh, Chittorgarh and Jaisalmer- some of the few forts that actually witnessed combat), the Maratha forts were built for warfare and have a no-nonsense, muscular 'F\*\*k You' air about them. Two of the most famous Maratha forts – Sindhudurg and Vijaydurg- happen to be on the Konkan coast and are worth a visit. On a clear day, you can see miles out in to the Arabian Sea.

So there we have it, the delights of the Konkan Coast, from Alibag all the way down to Goa. There's something for culture buffs, water-sports enthusiasts, foodies (experience the variations of Konkani cuisine as you make your way down the coast) and especially for those who just want to do very little!



# सुनत महाराष्ट्र

ARABIAN SEA



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