

AURANGABAD

A Gateway to History





AURANGABAD 
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Incredible India 

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Aurangabad
Hotels & Restaurant
Association

AURANGABAD

Take a journey through history when you visit Aurangabad. Take a leisurely stroll through the city of 52 gates, which offers glimpses of majestic domes, minarets, chhatris and shikharas. Experience awe as you travel to the surrounding ancient cities of Daulatabad and Paithan. And reverence at the age-old carved cave temple complexes of Ajanta and Ellora.

Today, this erstwhile seat of architecture, culture and learning has grown into a bustling modern city and an important industrial centre. Known as the 'Tourism Capital of Maharashtra', Aurangabad attracts tourists from across the globe, attracted by the heritage and charm of an old world carved in stone.



HISTORY

Being a gateway for Northern invaders into the treasure-filled kingdoms of Central India, Aurangabad has been occupied by dynasties ranging from the Satavahanas, Vakatakas and Yadavas to the Nizamshahis and Mughals.

When the area was known as Khadki, Sultan Mohammed bin Tughlaq, enamoured by the riches of the old city of



Emperor Aurangzeb

Devgiri, rechristened it Daulatabad and moved his entire capital from Delhi to Daulatabad in the 14th Century. In 1490, when the city became part of the Nizamshahi state, Malik Amber, the Nizam's Prime Minister, shifted his base here and the city flourished. When Aurangzeb arrived, he named the town Aurangabad and made it his military base. He also

built many of the city's fortifications and gates, some of which, still stand strong today.

CULTURE

As you discover more about this glorious city, you'll find Aurangabad's culture to be as riveting as its history. With the influence of its former rulers reflected in its language, cuisine, poetry, music, textiles and handicrafts, this charming city captivates visitors with a myriad of experiences.

LANGUAGE

Marathi and Urdu are the primary spoken languages. The latter is spoken in the Dakhni-Hyderabadi Urdu dialect.



Maharashtrian thali

CUISINE

A gastronomical delight, the cuisine of Aurangabad is influenced by Mughlai, Hyderabad and Maratha traditions, as well as lingering influences of the Silk Route.

Unlike Mughlai cuisine, which is slow-cooked and rich, the complexity of Hyderabad cuisine is heightened by the additional use of South Indian ingredients like curry leaves, mustard seeds and different kinds of chillies.

Must Try: Kebabs, taheri, haleem (*crushed wheat cooked with mutton*), pulao and biryani and Naan Khaliya (*tender mutton slow-cooked in a variety of spices, eaten with Naan*).

Being a simple and sumptuous affair, Maratha cuisine focuses on preparations using fiery yet flavourful spices, especially its 'kaala masala'. Its authenticity lies in using a combination of several spices, coconut and sesame, ground together in the right proportions.

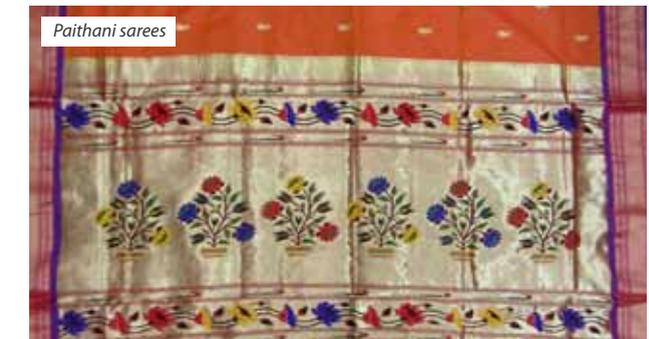
Must try: Traditional Maratha favourites like gavran kombdi (*spicy chicken curry*), bhakri (*millet flatbread*), pitla (*gram flour porridge*), thalipeeth (*savoury multi-grain pancake*), thecha (*chutney*) and mande gosht (curried lamb made with Aurangabad's famous 'chapta chili' eaten with a special large roti flavoured with milk and cumin). Also try popular Maharashtrian snacks like, sabudana wada, wada pav and moong bhajiyas and traditional sweetmeats like imarti and petha.

HANDICRAFTS

Aurangabad is a treasure trove of local arts and textiles. Browse through the markets and find elegant **Himroo shawls** made from cotton and silk and luxurious Kimkhab fabric. Or the most reputed and treasured **Paithani sari**, considered an heirloom by most. Created using a style of weaving, which has flourished ever since 200 BC, a Paithani sari is entirely woven by hand, using threads of pure silk, gold and silver and depicts motifs of birds, flowers, leaves in a rich and bold colour palette.



Aurangabad is also well-known for its unique **Bidriware**. It involves gold and silver inlay-work on Bidri - an alloy of zinc and copper. Traditional Bidri items include plates, bowls, vases, ashtrays, trinket boxes, hookah bases and jewellery. Today, Bidriware also finds expression in modern cufflinks, nameplates and more.



Paithani sarees

Poetry & Folk Culture

Sufi and Bhakti traditions in this multi-religious destination have strongly influenced its poetry. Aurangabad is the birthplace of Wali - the father of modern Urdu poetry and Siraj - Sufi poet extraordinaire. Ellora partially inspired the 13th Century ode, Sangita-Ratnakara and Paithan is the resting place of the Bhakti poet-saint Eknath, whose work has impacted the lives of the common man.

A visit to Aurangabad is incomplete without discovering its folk culture. Spend a delightful evening at Kalagram listening to songs and melodies inspired by local daily routines. Be entertained by folk dancers performing popular favourites such as Lezim and Tamasha.



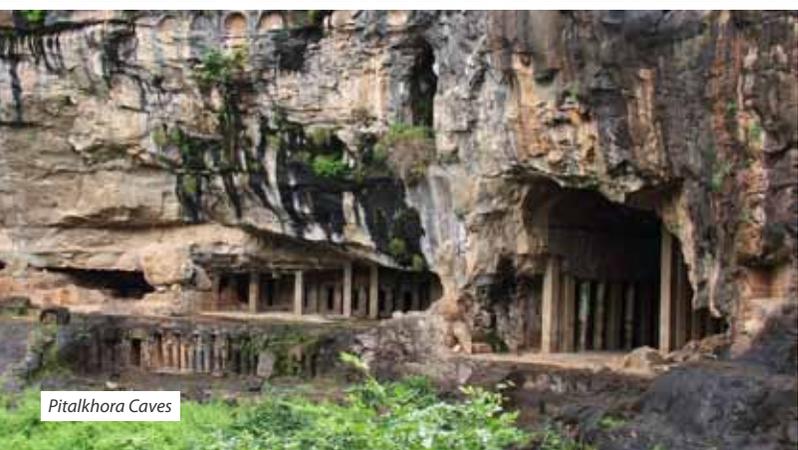
Aerial view of Ajanta caves



Reclining Buddha, Ajanta



Gauthala Wildlife Sanctuary



Pitalkhora Caves

EXCAVATED HERITAGE

AJANTA

*The Ajanta Cave Complex
Located 120kms from Aurangabad*

In a lush green, horseshoe-shaped ravine, overlooking the graceful curves of the Vaghora river, stands an ancient cave complex. Hand-hewn into the sides of this ravine by Buddhist monks, priests and artists over generations, Ajanta is an abode of tranquillity. The cave complex is a must see from Ajanta viewpoint. In the monsoon especially, watch a wall of water drop over the rim in a series of seven steps into a pool far below – the Saptakund.

Designed to be the monsoon retreat of erstwhile Buddhist monks, the 29 Ajanta Caves date back to the 2nd Century BC. The caves are famous for their wall paintings, inspired significantly by the Jataka Tales, which trace the life and previous lives of the Buddha until he attained Nirvana. Along with the divine sculptures, these are the oldest surviving example of classical Indian art and are a reflection of the times. No surprise then that the Ajanta Cave Complex was one of the first in the world to be proclaimed a 'World Heritage Site' by UNESCO in 1983. Cave Numbers 1, 2, 7, 9, 10, 16, 17, 19 and 26 are a must-see.

ViewPoint

Before you proceed towards Ajanta you should make it a point to visit the Ajanta's viewpoint (a detour of 16 kms), which offers a panoramic view and a prelude to the caves.

FACT FILE

Timings 9am to 5:30pm (Closed every Monday)

- Footwear, flash photography, eating and drinking are forbidden within the caves.
- Carry water, headgear, torches, binoculars and sun screen lotion.
- There is now a sprawling Ajanta tourist centre that houses five museum halls with actual replicas of the caves, amphitheatres, auditoriums, shops, restaurants and plenty of other amenities.

AROUND AJANTA

The Anwa Temple

Located 20kms south of Ajanta

Contemplate life in the tranquil surrounds of the Anwa Temple. The temple's stepped profile gives it a splendid, three dimensional façade. The gathering hall boasts a beautifully carved lotus on the ceiling and 50 heavily decorated columns. Niches with exquisite sculptures of Vishnu, interior doorways embellished with rows of Vaishnava divinities and columns line with celestial dancers make it the region's best surviving example of a Chalukya temple.

AROUND PITALKHORA

THE PITALKHORA CAVES

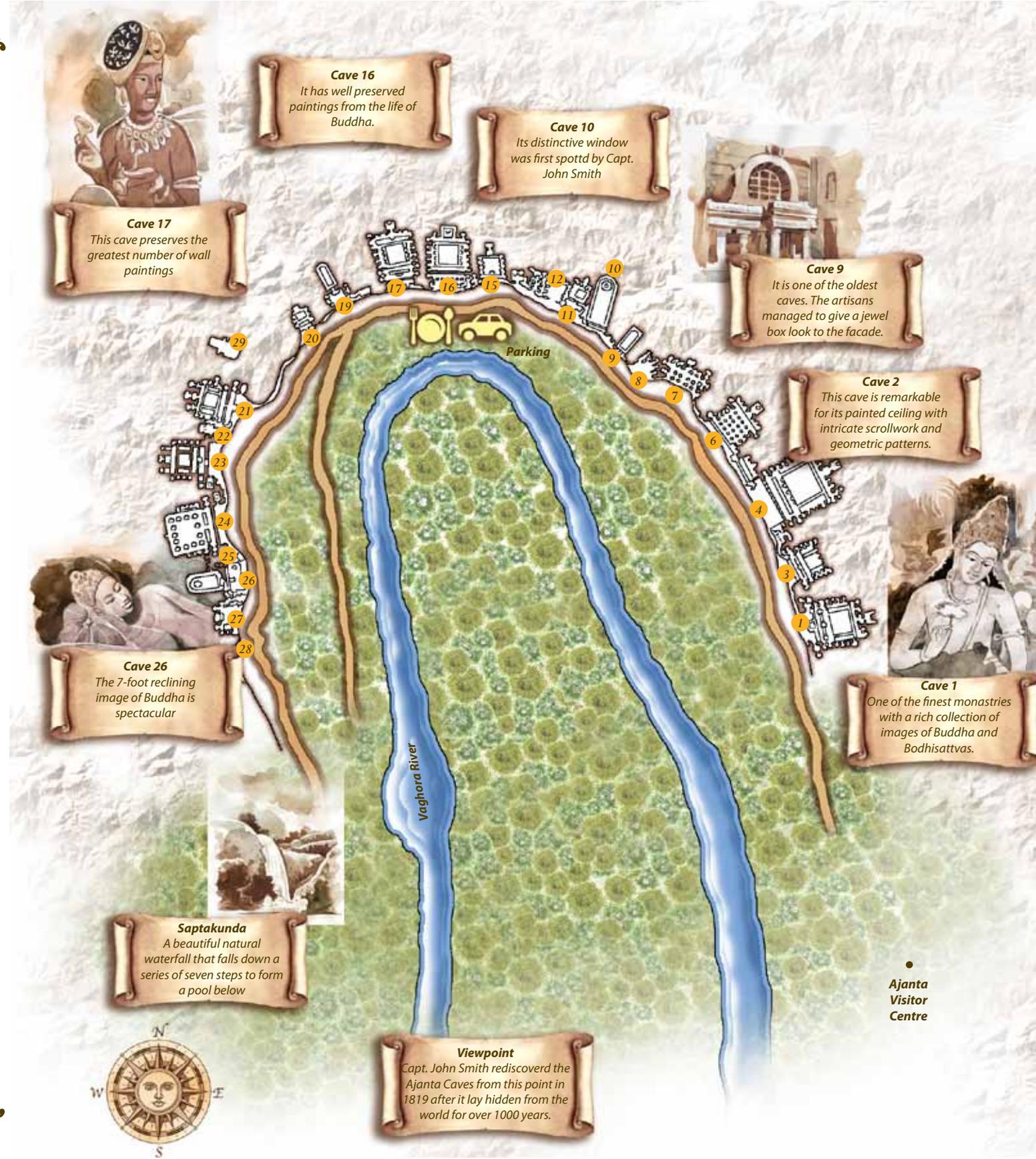
Located 65kms from Aurangabad

Explore the jagged ravines of the Indhyadri Mountains, within which, lie the ancient Buddhist caves of Pitalkhora. Dating all the way back to the 2nd Century BC, these once-exquisite rock-cut monastic caves served as viharas or monasteries for Buddhist monks. Belonging to the Hinayana and Mahayana Periods of Buddhism, the Pitalkhora Caves contain paintings of rare winged animals and large sculptures of yakshas (nature spirits). Paintings of The Buddha can be seen in the caves belonging to the Mahayana Period.

GAUTHALA - WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

Located 65kms from Aurangabad

The Autramghat Wildlife Sanctuary is spread over 260 sq kms of evergreen Gauthal forest. Wildlife enthusiasts can spot leopards, barking deer, sloth bears, foxes, neelgai and wolves. Over 225 species of resident and migratory birds, such as cranes, spoonbills, storks, ibis, quails, jungle fowl and partridges also make it a delight for avid birdwatchers. Within this sanctuary, you can also visit the Antur Fort and the nearby Patnadevi and Mahadeva temples. The other special attractions are the natural spring Kedarnath, the Sita Khori waterfall and the Gautala Talab.





Jain caves
were built during the Rashtrakuta period in the early 9th century.

Cave 28 - Ganesh Lena
Possibly the earliest monument at the site



Cave 16 - Kailasha Temple
The crowning jewel of Ellora



Cave 10 - Vishnukarma Cave
A Chaitanya hall from 7th century dedicated to the mythical architect of the Gods



Jain caves
were built during the Rashtrakuta period in the early 9th century.

Dhumar Lena
An ancient temple that is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas. Closely related to the caves in Elephanta Island in Mumbai.



Cave 16 - Kailasha Temple
The crowning jewel of Ellora



MTDC Restaurant



Parking

Ellora Visitor Centre



Buddhist Caves
Cave 1-12

Hindu Caves
Cave 13-29

Jain Caves
Cave 30-34

Grishneshwara Temple
An ancient temple that is one of the 12 Jyotirlingas (a divine manifestation of Lord Shiva's energy)

ELLORA
The rock-cut monuments of Ellora took around 350 years to complete, from 6th-10th century AD.

To Grishneshwara

To Dhule

To Khuldabad

AROUND ELLORA

THE ELLORA CAVE COMPLEX

Located 30kms from Aurangabad

Experience peace and tranquillity as you browse through stories frozen in stone at the Ellora Cave Complex. Once a harmonious place of worship for Buddhist, Hindu and Jain worshippers, this stunning mélange of 33 architecturally marvellous cave temples were dextrously rock-cut over a 300-year period from 550 to 850 AD.

Whilst all the caves are beautifully embellished, one cannot leave without witnessing Ellora's unrivalled masterpiece, Cave 16, better known as The Kailasa Temple. This freestanding monolithic temple, dedicated to Lord Shiva was intricately carved out of a hill slope from top to bottom, starting with the ceiling, progressing to the walls and finally, the base.

The sheer magnitude and fine craftsmanship contained within the 1.5km long Ellora Cave Complex earned it the designation of a 'World Heritage Site' in 1983.

Do visit the sprawling Ellora tourist centre while you're here. It houses three museums, a replica of Kailasa, an amphitheatre and an auditorium, along with lots of parking.



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- There is now a sprawling Ellora tourist centre that houses three museums, a replica of the celebrated Cave 16, an amphitheatre and an auditorium, along with lots of parking space.

GHRISHNESHWAR JYOTIRLINGA

Located 30kms west from Aurangabad

Travel half a kilometre from Ellora to visit this intricately-carved temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. Worshipped as the last amongst his twelve Jyotirlingas or manifestation of energies, the Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga is constructed out of red volcanic rock with a 5-tier shikhara or spire, crowned with monkeys and bulls. The bull near its summit contains a single head at the corner with bodies along two sides.



The temple also contains a tank, the Shivalaya Tirtha. Legend dictates, Lord Shiva pierced this spot of ground with his trident, to bring water from the underground Bhogwati River up to the surface for his thirsty wife, Uma.

THE HAMAM

The Hamam gives you a glimpse of the long-lost tradition of elaborate bathing. Introduced into the Deccan by the Muslim world, these structures were modelled after the Roman Baths, with some being reserved for nobility and other being used for ritual baths prior to burying the dead.

DAULATABAD FORT

Located 16 kms from Aurangabad, on the way to Ellora.

Discover the majesty of this 600-ft high impregnable bastion, which stands as an example of strategic defence techniques. Fortified by 7 walls complete with battlements, cannons, gateways, a 40-foot deep trench, bridges and dark passages and dead-end cave entrances, entry into the Daulatabad Fort was almost impossible for invaders.

Once inside, explore the area and monuments such the Bharatmata Mandir, Elephant Tank, Chand Minar and Chini Mahal. Complete your visit with a look at the gigantic ram's head cannon, the Mendha Toap.

AURANGABAD CITY

AURANGABAD CAVES

Nestled deep in the heart of the Sihyachil hills and excavated between the 6th and 7th Century AD, the Aurangabad caves contain elaborate depictions of The Buddha in human form. Admire the grandeur and quality of some of the richly ornamented friezes these caves are famous for, such as the dancing lady and other Buddhist deities and disciples, whose facial features, surprisingly suggest African descent.

PANCHAKKI

The Panchakki (water mill), built in the 17th Century, was a riverside garden of tranquillity, with beautifully laid out water tanks and a complex of tomb buildings. Its crowning glory, is the remarkable underground water channel, which draws water from the mountains that are over 8 kms away.

BIBI-KA-MAQBARA

This smaller archetype of Shah Jehan's magnificent ode to eternal love is impressive. Built between 1650 and 1657, the Bibi-ka-Maqbara is a memorial for Empress Rabia Durrani. Take a leisurely stroll around the sprawling charbaug or classical Mughal garden with fountains; gaze at the queen's tomb as the beams of light stream through the marble tracery, filling the space with a soft, warm golden glow.



Bibi-ka-Maqbara



Salim Ali Sarovar

SALIM ALI SAROVAR

Known as the Khiziri Talab in the Mughal Era, the Salim Ali Sarovar is located near the Delhi Gate, opposite Hinayat Bagh. Enjoy the wonderful bird sanctuary, garden and boating facility.

CHATRAPATI SHIVAJI MAHARAJ MUSEUM

Gain some insight into the life and history of the great Maratha ruler, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. The museum has 6 exhibition halls that highlight the military prowess of this great warrior. Discover some of the weapons, textiles, coins, a 500-year old chain mail suit, a copy of the Quran handwritten by Aurangzeb, a 400-year old Paithani sari and more.



Shirdi

AROUND AURANGABAD

SHIRDI

Located 119 kms from Aurangabad

Understand tolerance and universal brotherhood as preached and practiced by the venerable Sai Baba of Shirdi. The vast

temple complex has a life sized statue of Sai Baba. Visit on a Thursday and attend a special holy puja carried out in his honour. Also, see the dhuni or eternal flame at the Dwarkamai Mosque, where Baba used to meditate.

SHANI SHINGNAPUR

Located 81 kms from Aurangabad

On your visit to Paithan, discover the idiosyncratic little town of Shani Shingnapur. Famous for the temple dedicated to the Hindu God Shani (planet Saturn), the people of this town refuse to fix any locks on their houses, believing that the power of Shani himself prevents the act of thievery.

KACHNER

Located 37 kms from Aurangabad

The little town of Kachner found fame after the miraculous arrival of the divine figurine of Chintamani Parshvanath nearly 250 years ago. Since then, worshipping the idol has been believed to satisfy desires and free devotees of their troubles.

LONAR CRATER WITH DAITYA SUDAN TEMPLE

Located 136 kms from Aurangabad

The Lonar crater was naturally created over 50,000 years ago when a 2 million-ton meteorite created a depression 1.83 kms in diameter and 150m deep on impact. Today, this global wonder contains an alkaline lake, rimmed by thick forests, which act as a haven for a range of unique plant and animal life due to its different geological makeup. Rare herbs like Sanjivani can be found here. Several aquatic resident and migratory birds are found on the lake. One can also find peafowls, chinkara, gazelles and the feared monitor lizard here.



Lonar Crater

The Lake is surrounded by temples built in the Hemadpanthi style. The Daitya Sudan, which is said to contain a record of the mythological beginnings of the crater, is the most well-preserved.



Nanded Gurdwara

NaNDED GURDWARA

Located 270 kms from Aurangabad

The Sikhs revere Nanded as the city of steadfast devotion, scholarship and saintly sacrifice. The main attraction at Nanded is the Takhat Sachkhand Shri Hazur Abchalnagar Sahib, where Guru Gobind Singh spent his last moments and gave Gurta Gaddi to the Guru Granth Sahib.

HERITAGE TOWN OF PAITHAN

Located 51 kms from Aurangabad

An erstwhile centre of Vedic learning, the 2,500 year old town of Paithan acquired the title of Dharmapeeth or 'seat of ancient religion'. The shrine of the great Maharashtrian Saint Eknath is also found here.

Famous for its traditional Paithani weaves, this historic town exported beads and textiles through merchants on the Silk Route. It also boasts the Teerth Stambh (a freestanding stone column), with three sections denoting heaven, hell and earth. Paithan is also well-known for its unique residential architectural structures called Wadas. These dual-textured stone and well-fired, smooth red brick structures are beautified with motifs on the façade to provide visual relief, elaborate interior woodwork and characteristic 'jaali work' of the Janankhanas (special rooms for women).

JAYAKWADI BIRDING RESERVE

Near Paithan

Birding enthusiasts, make your way to the Jayakwadi Birding Reserve where the turquoise waters of the Jayakwadi Dam are girdled by dense forests that are home to a diverse resident and migratory avian population. Here, one can catch glimpses of cranes, flamingos, brahmany duck, pochards teals, pintails, widgeon, shovellar, god wit, shauces, glossy ibis and more.



Flamingos at Jayakwadi Bird Reserve

BANI BEGUM BAUG

Around 24 kms from Aurangabad

Picturesquely located between two lakes, this well-preserved garden is one of the rare examples of Mughal gardens on the Deccan plateau. It holds the tomb of Zahan Bani Begum, Aurangzeb's grand-daughter in-law. With many domes, fountains and fluted pillars constructed in various styles, this 'charbaug' visually depicts the Mughal expression and understanding of a garden being a place of recreation and eternal rest.



Bani Begum Bagh

PARIYON KA TALAB

Around 60 kms from Aurangabad

The beautiful 'Lake of the Fairies' was constructed in the 12th century. It is associated with Hazrat Jalal-ud-din-Ganj-I-Rawa a saint king who is believed to have captured and imprisoned a djinn below a stone, and prayed over it. The saint's tomb with the famed stone is at the lakeside. Renowned as a healer, during the annual festival held in his honour, a bath in the waters of the Talaab is considered to cure ailments and infertility.



The premiere dance gurukul of India, Mahagami

MAHAGAMI AND AURA AURANGABAD

Mahagami is one of the premiere dance gurukuls in India, that imparts training in Odissi and Kathak based on the traditional guru-shishya parampara. It includes training in allied disciplines like singing, yoga, music, dance theory, etc. Mahagami is also an important center for promotion, research and dissemination of Indian art and culture.

AURA AURANGABAD is a unique cultural tourism initiative to showcase and promote the rich and diverse heritage of Aurangabad via an artistic tribute by Mahagami artists through classical Indian dance. Aurangabad region resonates with legends of Shiva, Dashavatar, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Buddha and Mahaveer in the form of sculptures and paintings at Ellora and Ajanta. The Daulatabad (Devagiri) Fort, Bibi-ka-Maqbara, Ghrshneshwar Temple also have a rich history of arts and philosophy. Aura Aurangabad will bring to life this wide spectrum of legends, master-pieces and monuments through Indian classical dance forms like Kathak, Odissi, Bharatnatyam, Mohiniattam, Kuchipudi, etc. Held between October and January, dance performances are held between Thursday and Saturday in the late evenings at Sharangdev Sadan, Mahagami Gurukul. Details and passes are available online and at the venue.

DR BABASAHEB AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY HISTORY MUSEUM

Located on the University Campus, the museum houses over 5000 rare antiques. Some of its treasured collection includes 60 rare Maratha and Mughal paintings, artifacts dating back to the 7th to 12th century, rare coins from the Satavahana

dynasty, cannons, arms and armour from the Mughal period, and sculpture from Daulatabad dating back to the year 2BC. Other remarkable antiques are artifacts from Pathan excavations, semi-precious stones, textiles, centuries old utensils, lithographs, inscriptions, etc.

PATNA DEVI TEMPLE

Located at the base of the Pithalkora hills, the ancient shrine of Patnadevi dates back to the 11th century. Dedicated to Goddess Parvati, it is built in black basalt, and showcases the fine stonework of the period, in particular the columns and ceilings. Of the Hemadpanti style, the temple has a high plinth, stepped shikhara above the garbagriha, and column design. It is thronged by the faithful during Navratri.

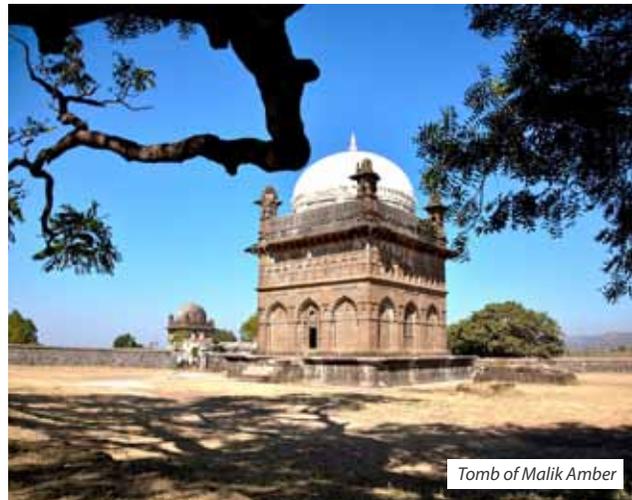
KHULDABAD AND AURANGZEB'S TOMB

Khuldabad is known as the "Valley of Saints" due to the many Sufi saints who made it their home in the 14th century; the dargahs and mausoleums of some of these saints are still in existence. Khuldabad has the distinctive identity of being a town of 20 tombs and nearly 1400 graves of saints, royalty and other important people of the period.

Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb probably ruled the largest Indian empire ever. However, the stark simplicity of his tomb conforms to his austere lifestyle as per orthodox Islamic tenets. A devout Muslim, his open to sky grave within a court is covered with earth and holds a flower bed. The simplicity of



Aurangzeb's Tomb



Tomb of Malik Ambar

the tomb is a reflection of Aurangzeb's beliefs - he is said to have asked that the expenses to build the tomb be recovered from the money he collected by sewing and selling caps.

TOMB OF MALIK AMBAR

Founder of Aurangabad city, Malik Ambar's tomb is built at Khuldabad in the Pathan style, alongside the tomb of his wife Bibi Karima. They are set amidst open plains with the hills in the background. Beautiful stone monuments with elaborately carved facades, the highlights are the decorative stone jalis. A distinctive design element of the chain and bell, and chain and flowers, is seen on both sides of the arched doorway. Some historians claim that Malik Ambar had his tomb built to his own design during his lifetime. Close by are the tombs of other nobles such as King Tana Shah and Sufi Saint Zar Zari Baksha.

URS FAIR

The Urs Fair is celebrated with traditional pomp at the revered pilgrimage site of Khuldabad. Local Muslims assemble in large numbers to pay their respects to their saints. Khuldabad takes on a festive atmosphere as it is decorated with lights, flowers and other elaborate embellishments. People step out in their best clothes and after their prayers, enjoy the accompanying special food stalls, games, shops and other entertainment available that combine to make a distinctive and celebratory event.

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