

**OFFBEAT
DESTINATIONS
ACROSS INDIA
&
GLOBE
PART 1
(SHORT PREVIEW)**

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1) Experience Poppalwadi in Goa:

- An eco-camp called Poppalwadi in Goa, Maharashtra, India is a remote place.
- It has no electricity, phones or roads.
- It's beautiful and calm.
- The grid is a unique homestay experience in the Western Ghats run by white-water specialist John Pollard and his wife Sylvia Kerkar, a pottery artist.

Sight-Seeing:

- Eco-friendly, small, organic, rustic and ultra-low impact, the camp has adapted well to its remote environment.
- Located 600m above sea level on the Goa Karnataka border, it has a wonderful climate all year round.
- Solar powered LED lights provide lighting and the use of cool materials and maximized ventilation offsets the lack of fans.
- Water is tapped from a waterfall above the property.
- Stay in tents with attached bathrooms or airy rooftop rooms with sit-outs.
- In the absence of nearby shops, the camp grows as much food as they can.
- Oven-fired Pizzas, homemade breads, barbecues with a smattering of Japanese, Indian and Italian dishes provide enough culinary variety.
- Go on guided walks to a private waterfall, nature treks, night safaris and off-road drives to Dudhsagar waterfall.
- Being a remote property, guests are brought from the pick-up point at Castle Rock.

2) Beautiful Glimpses of Netarhat in the Latehar District of Jharkhand, India:

Netarhat is place of peculiar charm which has laid its spell on many casual visitors. The stillness of the jungle and the cool and refreshing air brings relief to the visitors.

- Netarhat in the Latehar district of Jharkhand to admire the exquisite beauty of nature.
- The dense forests, deep valleys, meandering roads, cool breeze, dancing peacocks, amazing weather moonlight nights.
- It is rightly called the "Queen of Chotanagpur" as this place is simply an out of the world experience.

Must watch sights are:

- **Magnolia Point**
 - Netarhat is famous for its fascinating sunrise and sunset and Magnolia point located at a distance of 10 km from Netarhat offers clear views of sunset.
 - This sunset point is located in proximity to the Vindhya hills.
- **Koel View Point**

- The koel view point is at a distance of 3 km from Netarhat and offers a clear view of the long stretched Koel river one of the longest in the state that flows through Jharkhand and Orrisa.
- It is also famous as a sunrise point.
- **Upper and Lower Ghagri Waterfall**
 - Upper Ghagri Falls is around four kilometers from Netarhat and the other point of the same waterfall called as lower Ghagri which is about 10km away with a height of 120 ft above the sea level.
 - The place is ideal for picnic and camping.
 - Boodha Ghaugh is the highest waterfall.

How to Reach Netarhat?

- **Air: Bisra Munda Airport at Ranchi is the nearest airport connected by flights from Mumbai, Bhubaneshwar, Kolkata, Delhi and Patna.**
- **Rail: Nearest Railway Station is Ranchi 154km on south east Railway.**
- **Road: There are daily bus services from Ranchi to Netarhat.**

3) Tuvalu Island : Paradise on Earth

Tuvalu is one of the smallest and most remote nations in the world. It is peaceful and is ideal place for relaxation.

- The spectacular marine environment consisting of a vast expanse of ocean interspersed with atolls, magnificent lagoons, coral reefs and small islands all provide a unique South Seas ambiance.
- In Tuvalu you will discover a distinctive Polynesian culture of atoll island people who vigorously maintain their unique social organization, art, crafts, architecture, music, dance and legends.
- The ancestors of Tuvaluan people are believed to have arrived on the islands about 2000 years ago.
- Under the leadership of chiefs, known as 'Alik'i', traditional Tuvaluan society continued for hundreds of years before it underwent significant changes with the arrival of European traders in the 1820's.
- Tuvalu is classified by the United Nations as one of the world's peaceful least developed countries.
- Near Maneapa there is a local town hall wherein throughout the year numerous traditional and cultural ceremonies are performed.
- However the national game te ano(the ball) ends with the losers performing a funny song.
- The most popular way to tour around the islands is by motorbike.
- So check out this wonderful place.

4) A Trip to Karni Mata Temple, India

- The 600 year old Karni Mata temple is famous for it's resident population of rats which are respected in the temple.
- The temple, also known as Nari Mata Temple, is dedicated to Karni Mata, an incarnation of Goddess Durga.
- The temple is famous for it's rat population.
- The rats move freely about in the temple and appear from crevices in the marble covered walls and flooring.
- Many people offer sweets, milk and other edible offerings to the rats.
- The food nibbled by rats is also considered holy and consumed as Prasad.
- There are about 20,000 rats in the premises.
- Rats have free run of the place and if anyone is killed, then an idol of rodent made of solid gold has to be donated as penance for the crime.
- White rats are considered especially holy and are believed to be reincarnation of Karni Mata and her sons.
- Sighting of a white rat is considered to be very auspicious.
- Many devotees offer sweets and food to lure the white rats out of their hiding places.

5) Winged Invasion in California:

- Millions of Monarch butterflies make the journey from the east of the Rocky Mountains to the fir forests of Mexico each winter – although it's not actually the same butterflies who arrive.
- One generation will die during the journey, with the females leaving eggs for the next generation of butterflies flying south.
- Each October around 20,000 of the winged beauties descend on the town of Pacific Grove in California, attracted by the protected microclimate of eucalyptus trees and Monterey pines of the Monarch Grove Sanctuary.
 - ✓ **Getting There:** The nearest large international airport is San Francisco. From there, it's a two-hour drive to Pacific Grove
 - ✓ **Where:** Pacific Grove, California, USA
 - ✓ **When:** October – February

6) Where Serenity Rules.... Vagamon, Kerala, India

Lush green hills, breath-taking waterfalls and temples, Vagamon is a perfect tourist place situated 1200 meters above the sea level in the state of Kerala. One must surely visit this place.

- Located in Kottayam-Idukki border of Kerala, Vagamon is a quaint hill town that enjoys pleasant climate all year round.
- An ideal location for honeymooners, the verdant greens, meandering rivulets, cascading waterfalls and dense pine forests make it a picture perfect romantic backdrop.

- The drive up to this hill town is scenic with winding roads, fresh mountain air, the sound of gurgling streams and chirping birds.
- A chain of three lush green hills namely Thangal Hill, Murugan Hill and Kurismala Hill, adds to its natural beauty.
- This picturesque place offers many activities from spiritual to adventurous.

Places of Interest :

a) Kurisumala Ashram:

- It is a monastery for Christian ascetics – people who believe in Christianity, Indian spiritual beliefs.
- The place is most popular for its celebrations on Good Friday. This marks the holy week where devotees carry the holly wooden cross and climb the hill.
- It is an ideal place to ponder with oneself and meditate in its peaceful ambiance

b) Dairy Farm:

Located on the hill top of Kurisumala is the popular Indo-Swiss Project Dairy Farm, managed by the monks of Kurisumala, is well worth a visit.

c) Munadakayam Ghat:

- **It is just 8kms from Vagamon, a scenic locale known for its breath-taking sunset view.**
- **It is located 2km off the main road.**
- **Tourists can enjoy bird's eye view of the surrounding green blanket.**
- **This region is famed for the paragliding festival held here by ASSTA.**

d) Murugan Para:

- It is located 8km from the Vagamon town.
- It is a rock-cut temple on the east of Kurisumala dedicated to Lord Murugan that attracts a large number of devotees.

e) Thangal Para:

- A precariously perched huge rock with the dargah of Sheikh Fariduddin is located here.
- Famed for the Urs festival, it attracts a congregation of thousands of devotees each year.
- Legend has it that an Afghan Sufi Saint lived and died here 800 years ago and the small stone he used to grind with is what transformed into this spherical rock.

f) **Vagamon Falls:**

- The grassy hillocks stretching into the forest on one side and ending at the cliff on the other, through a natural tract of land originates the Vagamon Falls, a small stream which originates at the lake.
- The stream gurgling along the ravine serves as a rugged trekking route.

g) **Vagamon Lake**

- The backdrop of the verdant green hills and scenic views of the surroundings, make the Vagamon Lake picture perfect to enjoy a boat ride.
- Manicured lawns & colorful flowers add to the beauty of the location.

Getting there:

- **By Air:** Cochin International Airport is the nearest airport at the distance of 120kms. Thiruvananthapuram International Airport is at 267 kms while Madurai is at 210 kms.
- **By Rail:** Kottayam is the nearest railhead at the distance of 64kms while Madurai is at 149kms from Vagamon.
- **By Road:** Vagamon is easily accessible by road from Kottayam, Kochi, Thiruvananthapuram, Munnar and Madurai