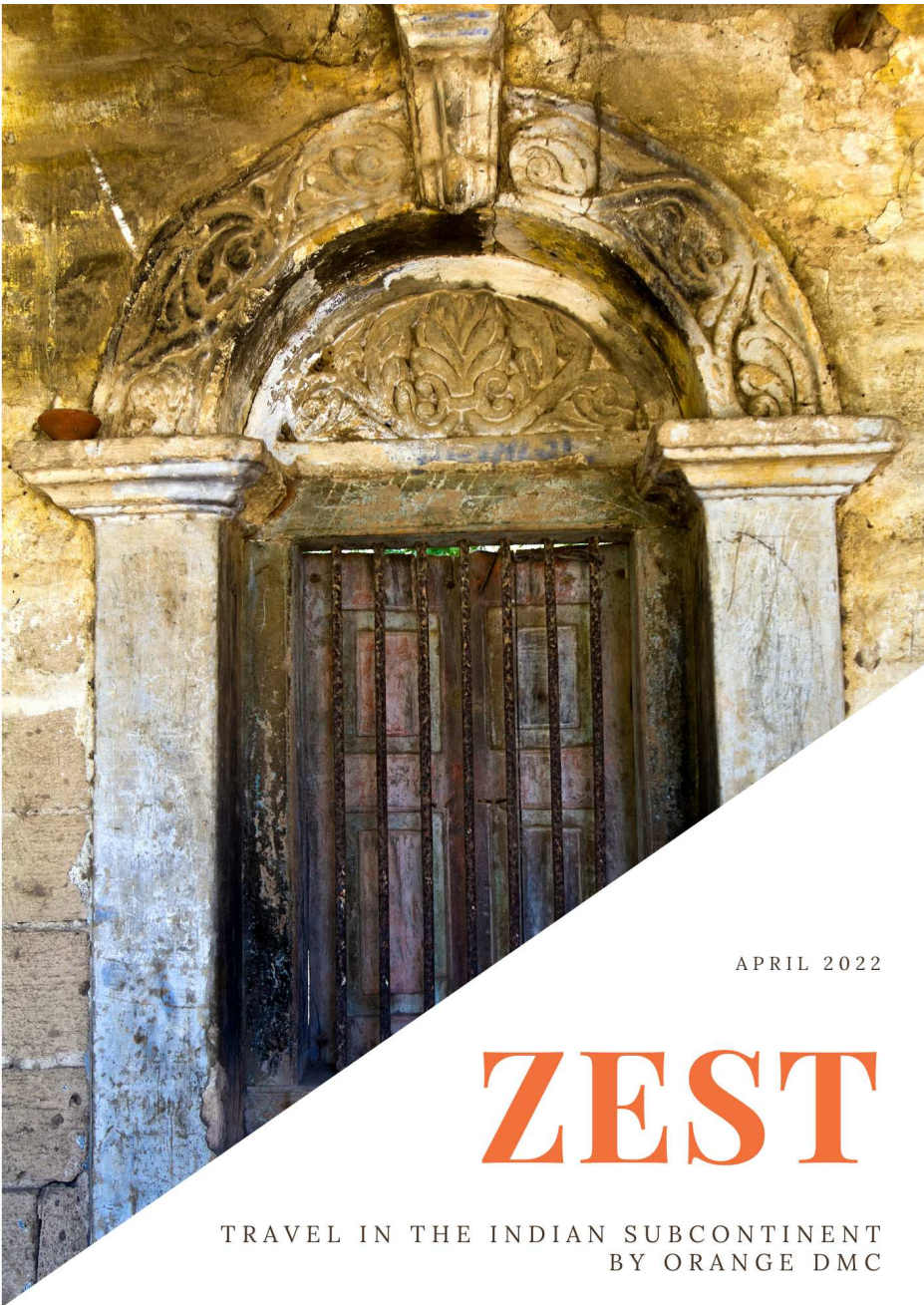


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APRIL 2022

# ZEST

TRAVEL IN THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT  
BY ORANGE DMC

## OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Dear Colleagues and Travel Partners,

As the summer heat sets in, India bursts into bloom! Bright colours dot the landscape, yet another reminder of how beautiful the country is. In this issue, we bring you a variety of unusual and unique destinations that we feel are some of India's best kept secrets.

From Gujarat, to the Central Himalayas, off beat Goa to erstwhile Awadh, we share incredible cultural and culinary curiosities, as well as some incredible biodiversity in India's most unusual natural habitats.

Take a walk on the wild side as you explore the stark yet beautiful landscapes in Gir, Kutch and Velavadar. Discover old Portuguese colonial heritage in Coa and Diu, spirituality and culture in Varanasi, and fantastic cuisine in Lucknow.

Hike through the mountains and mustard fields in the Himalayas amid rhododendron forests, and let the birdsong transport you to another world. Raft down the Indus and the Ganges, or camp in pristine nature, in some of the most beautiful far-flung corners of the country.

So much to explore...even a lifetime isn't enough.

Best Regards,  
Manan Mahajan







In many ways, Gujarat in the west of India, is one of the last frontiers on the planet. From miles of salt marsh filled with wild ass and migratory birds in Kutch, to grasslands full of Black Buck, Hyenas and Harriers in Velavadar, to the forests of Gir, the last surviving habitat of the Asiatic Lion — Gujarat is teeming with unusual biodiversity. Beyond the natural wonders, are remote tribes like the Siddis, stunning palaces in Junagadh and Wankaner, temples in Somnath, and Portuguese colonial architecture in Daman and Diu. If ancient history appeals to you, then a visit the archaeological ruins in Bhuj. If you're a foodie, then you'll be amazed by the exquisite and unusual flavours. From the freshest seafood in Veraval, to mouthwatering thali feasts, and ethnic food like Parsi, Portuguese, and even tribal cuisine, you'll be spoiled for choice. A little known fact is that southern Gujarat is the proud home of the Kesari Mango, known for its sweet taste. Intrigued? Head to Gujarat with us to discover these hidden gems.



HIMALAYAN HEIGHTS

GAHRWAL & KUMAON

The Himalayas are always magical, and the regions of Garhwal and Kumaon have a charm of their own. For those who love the outdoors, areas like Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary, Rudraprayag, and Dehradun are fantastic for hikes and walks through the mountainous terrain.

One of our favourite places to stay is Mary Budden's Estate in the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary. A stunning heritage bungalow with vast forested grounds and gorgeous views makes it ideal for nature lovers. Enjoy gorgeous hikes through the rhododendron forest, along village pathways, skirting fields of mustard in bloom.

if you want to rest and relax completely, the region is terrific for wellness. The Vana Malsi Estate and Ananda In The Himalayas are superb options for a holistic spa getaway. Whether its yoga, meditation, or Ayurvedic massage therapy, we guarantee that you will emerge feeling totally revitalized.

if you seek a touch of spirituality, then take a moment to visit some of the monasteries and ancient temples that dot the landscape.

Tranquil and serene, this is an escape you won't regret.





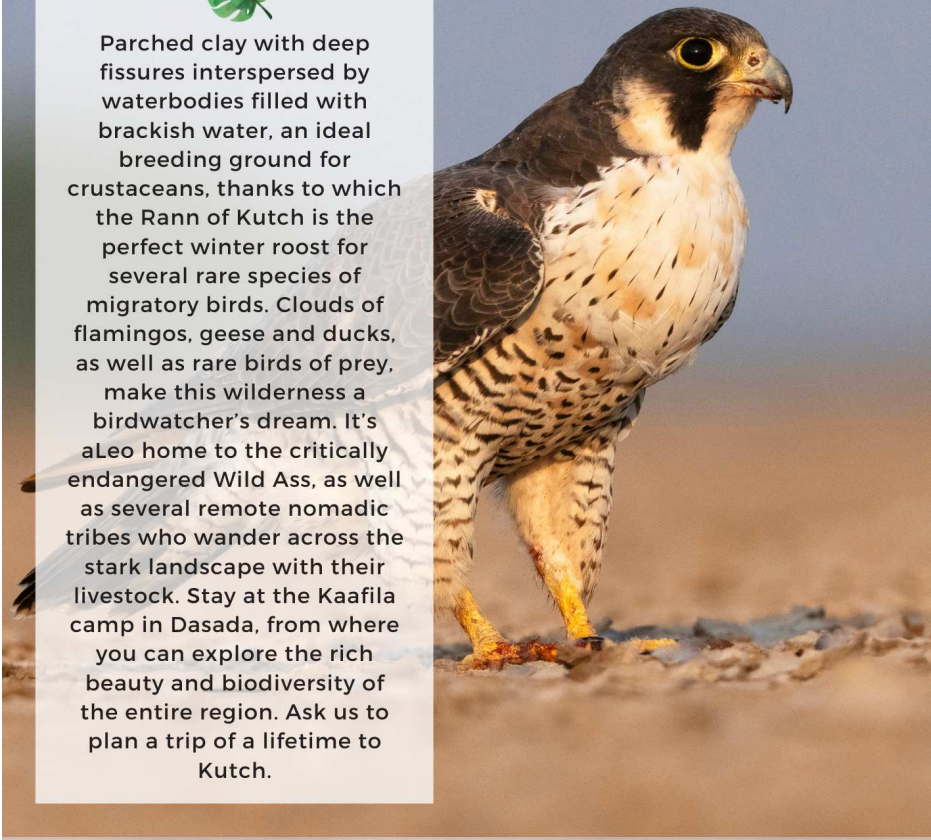
# THE RANN OF KUTCH

UNTAMED WILDERNESS

## SURREAL BEAUTY IN THE SALT MARSH



Parched clay with deep fissures interspersed by waterbodies filled with brackish water, an ideal breeding ground for crustaceans, thanks to which the Rann of Kutch is the perfect winter roost for several rare species of migratory birds. Clouds of flamingos, geese and ducks, as well as rare birds of prey, make this wilderness a birdwatcher's dream. It's a Leo home to the critically endangered Wild Ass, as well as several remote nomadic tribes who wander across the stark landscape with their livestock. Stay at the Kaafila camp in Dasada, from where you can explore the rich beauty and biodiversity of the entire region. Ask us to plan a trip of a lifetime to Kutch.



## THE POSTCARD

### GIR WILDLIFE SANCTUARY

With just fifteen rooms set amid sixteen acres of mango orchards. The sleek and contemporary design is juxtaposed against the old world charm of Gir forest, the former hunting grounds of the Maharaja of Junagadh. The cuisine offers an array of unusual ethnic styles and recipes. The lodge is ideally situated a short drive away from the entrance to the forest. Enjoy game drives into the jungle with a naturalist as you spot lions, wolves and other unusual species. Get tribal with the incredible Siddhi's who originate in North Africa, or chill on the beach in Diu. Ask us about how you can include this little gem in your itinerary.



## THE POSTCARD HIDEAWAY

### NETRAVELI, GOA

In the midst of a lush jungle in Goa, lies a chic and contemporary hideaway. The Postcard Netravelli has twenty rooms situated on twenty acres of land, an ideal getaway for wellness, wildlife and to remove yourself from urban hustle and bustle. Each of the spacious rooms has a private sitout, ideal to hang out and soak up the beauty that surrounds you. The pool is perfect for a cooling dip, while the spa is just the place to unwind and detox. Relax in the open air jacuzzi or zen out with yoga sessions at the Pavilion. From panthers to birds, primates and more immerse yourself in incredible wildlife in Netraveli.





# A KEBAB QUEST

## LUCKNOW FOOD TRAILS

### FOODIE BLISS



The erstwhile kingdom of Awadh was renown for its delicious cuisine — particularly its succulent kebabs and delicately spiced meats. Slow-cooked to perfection, Awadhi dishes simply melt on your tongue, leaving you in a blissful food coma.

While the kingdom itself is no longer in existence, the treasured recipes have been preserved in the kitchens of Lucknow for many generations and even today, the city's chefs whip up mouthwatering dishes that hail from that era.

From fine dining to street food, master chef creations to wholesome home cooking, one can experience a variety of tastes and flavours that will leave you seeking another serving. Then end the meal with fresh mangos straight from the orchards nearby.



### COLONIAL ERA CHARM

## DAMAN & DIU

Western India



Tucked away in a south western corner of Gujarat, the sister cities of Daman and Diu have a fabled history. While most of the Portuguese dominion was in South India, the Sultan of Gujarat ceded Damaon and Diu to the Portuguese in the 1500s, along with Dadra and Nagar Haveli. Together with Bombay, Chaul and Vasai, this was known as the Northern Portuguese province. The Ottomans attacked Diu and Suleman Pasha held Diu under siege for 4 months, until Antonio de Silveira managed to defeat them in an epic battle, which has been recorded as a major military triumph in Portuguese history. In fact, it was only as late as 1974 that the Portuguese government finally conceded that Daman and Diu were a part of the Republic of India.

Today, Daman and Diu are extremely tranquil and idyllic. It's hard to imagine that once upon a time they were the epicentre of such a major conflict. Vestiges of the Portuguese period remain, particularly in Diu, where the old fortress still dominates the landscape. Sandy beaches, sleepy streets, and old world charm creates a quaint atmosphere. Besides the fort itself, several ornate churches dot the landscape. As you stroll through the market place, you will find that several buildings have a distinct Portuguese character.

Daman is divided into two enclaves, Moti Daman and Nani Daman. Moti Daman has a striking lighthouse and the Bom Jesus church is a terrific example of Portuguese heritage. Nani Daman has a laid-back charm and several homes in traditional Portuguese style. Daman and Diu are within easy reach of both Gir and Velavadar. Ask us today to learn more about how you can add these two charming cities into your journey in Gujarat.

# VARANASI

North India



Varanasi is a city as old as time itself. A city of poets, sages, scholars and philosophers, it is the oldest living city in the world. Its a crucible for many different world religions, including Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Art, architecture, literature and spirituality come together to flow endlessly, just like the River Ganges, which cuts through the city. From highlights like the Aarti (worship) on the world-famous Ghats, to a soul-stirring performance of Hindu classical music, a visit to Varanasi is an eye-opener, one that is both, intense and deep.

## The Tree of Life Resort, Varanasi

Tranquil, peaceful, serene – the Tree of Life Resort in Varanasi, offers a welcome retreat from the city's intensity. The all-suite resort is designed to soothe the soul, with lush greenery, a pond, and the Ekam Spa. The restaurant, AnnTripti, offers a blend of Indian, Continental and Benarasi favourites, prepared fresh each day using seasonal and local ingredients. Al fresco dining under a sprawling fruit tree and a herb garden add their own flavour to the experience.



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