

Jungle Etiquette

- ▶ Do not disturb or feed wildlife or ask your guiding staff, mahout or driver to get you closer than necessary or advisable to wild animals. Off road driving is illegal.
- ▶ Make as little noise as possible, especially when watching wildlife.
- ▶ Avoid litter at all times. Stop and pick it up if you see it.
- ▶ Your park guide and driver are local and knowledgeable. Learn from them, ask questions, but also obey them. They are also there to enforce park laws.
- ▶ Do not smoke. Jungle fires are really serious.

Your help to conserve

Your visit is important to the park, but your choices, behaviour and actions can help, or hinder wildlife conservation. Local communities need to see the benefits of your visit, through livelihoods, markets and opportunities, so they continue to support wildlife in and around their farms and villages, just as you would want in your own town or city. Don't waste precious water. Buy local produce. Give money to a local NGO or the park's own Bandhavgarh Foundation to support protection efforts.

Want further information? Contact the organisations below or:

Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve Headquarters

Umariya, Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh | Tel: 07653-222214

TOFTigers
Sustaining the wild



This booklet is written and funded by TOFT. We believe that well planned, responsible and sustainable nature tourism with great nature experiences for all visitors, young and old, will ensure a future for wilderness and wildlife. We campaign, advocate and support best practices in the nature travel industry, undertake training, workshops, community support projects and lodge eco audits, as part of our commitment to ensure you have a great time in the park and the park has a sustainable future for wildlife and its local communities.

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YOUR NATURE GUIDE TO Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve



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Keep this leaflet as a souvenir of your visit, or recycle by passing it onto a friend or fellow traveller when you have finished with it.

A Touch of History

It is hard to imagine that this area was originally home to powerful kings and maharajas residing in the large hilltop fort; its meadows were rich agricultural lands tended by farmers, and an extensive cave system was occupied by Buddhist monks and sadus. Brahmi inscriptions date back to 100BC.

The name 'bandhav-garh' means 'fort of the brother', and was gifted by Lord Ram to his brother Lakshman. In the 12th century the fort was given in dowry to the Baghela clan of which the present Maharaja of Rewa is a direct descendent. After almost continuous occupation the capital of the Baghelas was moved to Rewa by the 19th century and the forests became the hunting reserve of the Maharaja and his guests. Gulab Singh of Rewa shot 480 tigers across his kingdom at this time. The present Maharaja's late father in 1968 stopped hunting and gifted it to the State, before it was declared a National Park and later a Tiger Reserve. The park was extended in 1986 and today it covers 1161 square kms, including both core tiger habitats and the buffer areas, in which villages and their agricultural communities exist.

A visit is not complete without a trip to the hilltop fortress. Stop by at some of the remarkable hand-carved caves, and visit an imposing 10 metre long statue of Lord Vishnu, carved in the 10th century, the source of pilgrimage for many Hindus each year.



The Bandhavgarh Experience

Welcome. You are about to enter one of India's great reserves, full of nature's mystery, its unending suspense, and its countless daily life and death dramas.

There is so much just waiting for you to explore; much that we do know, but still lots that we do not understand. From the Long-billed vultures that circle around the hillfort, to the great forests of Sal hardwood trees and ever changing greens, browns and yellows of the deciduous Crocodile bark and Tendu trees or clumps of bamboo; the sheer sandstone cliffs of the ancient Vindhya range; the dragonflies that swarm around the watery meadows; the spotted deer that herd around the pools; the sloth bears that forage and dig up the great underground termite cities; the Malabar Pied Hornbills, whose shriek is so instantly recognisable. Here, for millennia, ancient communities and their rulers have lived and thrived, fought and died, built kingdoms and left behind testaments to human endeavour and ingenuity.

This is not simply a reserve with tigers, but an extraordinary and magical landscape, vibrant with culture and history, yet completely restored to wildlife.

Now you are about to have the privilege to enter and enjoy it.



Common Kingfisher

What to look for

There is so much here for all your senses. Stay alert, scan the forests and listen to the many new sounds; the chorus of birds and the alarm calls of animals. Your naturalist guide will point things out to you but spend time just listening. Ask to stop the vehicle when you want to see something and use silence to hear exactly what is going on. You really can learn to read the wild – much like your ancestors once did.

Though tigers are many people's 'target' species, they exist in a whole ecosystem of wondrous life forms and beautiful creatures. Here is just a snapshot of what you might see.

Tigers (Panthera Tigris)

There are as many as 30 adult tigers (and lots of cubs) in the visitor zones with many habituated to visitors. It's the world's biggest cat and hunts and moves mostly as night and rests by day. However, dawn and dusk are good times to see them. Lots of water, protection and plenty of food, including wild pig, sambar deer and spotted deer, ensure the park's healthy tiger population. Dominant male tigers often protect three or more tigresses in their territory while they bring up their cubs.

You only have a chance of seeing them, but they will definitely see you.



Shashi on a territorial stroll



Leopard (Panthera pardus)

A very adaptable big cat, with beautiful black rosettes on a clear yellow coat. It's a real treat to see, because it's the eternal,

but far smaller, enemy of the tiger. Mostly nocturnal, it hides during the day. Its rasping mating call – like the sound of wood being sawed – is unmistakable at night. They hunt smaller prey and haul it up trees away from other carnivores.



Gaur (Bos Gaurus)

The largest ox in the world, often called the 'Indian Bison'. A huge muscular frame of 800 to 1200 kgs, mature males are jet black,

while females and young are coffee brown. Reintroduced to the park in 2010, they are now in good health and breeding well. Often tiger food, but can be big and dangerous when in small herds.



Wild Dog (Cuon Alpinus)

The 'dhole' is a reddish brown forest dog. They live and hunt in collaborative large or small packs depending on the season and

available food like deer and pig. Elusive, but often the most exciting animals to watch, as sociable and playful when relaxed, yet exciting and dramatic when out hunting. Every animal and ground bird in the forest is scared of wild dog.



Spotted Deer (Axis Axis)

The most common deer in India, it's also a tiger's most frequent meal. In small or larger herds of females, with baby fawns and other

youngsters, see if you can spot the large male with his large antlers who is in charge of each herd. Often seen with Langur monkeys to help spot danger or seen rutting – fighting over females. Their alarm call, a sharp 'ack ack' or 'wow' is an important alarm call to listen out for on your drive.



Sloth Bear (Melursus Ursinus)

The shaggy black long haired 'Bhalu' of Jungle book fame is a great bear to see wandering the forest, digging up

termites or pulling bark off trees to get at tasty ants. Their sharp claws are very dangerous and they like to stand on their hind legs to get a better view, as their sight is not very good. See a mother with her cubs riding on her back and you will have just witnessed a 'once in a lifetime' treat.



Sambar Deer (Cervus Unicolor)

Look out for Asia's largest deer. It's 1.5 metres tall, with shaggy brown coat and huge spreading antlers

on the males. Common in thick bamboo groves and forests where they take shelter and eats mostly leaves. Found in small family or young bachelor groups of three to five individuals, they are a tiger's favourite food. Listen out for their loud 'dhonk' alarm call – a carnivore is nearby.



Porcupine (Hystrix indica)

The nibblings of porcupines are likely to be the only thing you see of this amazing giant rodent because it sleeps underground

during the day. Its dorsal hairs have evolved into spiky black and white quills, and are a danger to any creature that threatens them. Beware, it attacks by running backwards.



Jackal (Canis Aureus)

You may have seen them before near villages, but they are handsome canids, with golden and black haired coats and black

tipped tails. They are always busy in the park, hunting and scavenging, singularly, in pairs or small packs for small mammals, insects and birds. You can often hear them yelping or barking like dogs.

These Central Indian woodlands are alive with beautiful birds, over 250 species, so don't forget to scan the trees and skies for the extraordinary birdlife that exists here. In the skies around the hillfort plateau look for huge vultures leaving or coming back to their cliff top roosts. Turn off your vehicle and listen out for noisy woodland birds when in a mixed forest, look at old trees with hollows for parakeets, owlets and hornbills, around waterholes for ducks, waders and cormorants, meadows for storks and peacocks and riverbanks for bee-eaters and kingfishers. Just make sure you have binoculars and a bird book.

Top ten birds to try and spot



Black-hooded Oriole



Coppersmith Barbet



Paradise Fly-catcher



Malabar Pied Hornbill



Long-billed Vulture



Crested Serpent Eagle



Spotted Owlet



Brown Fish Owl

Also look out for;

- Racket-tailed Drongo
- Glossy Ibis
- Indian Roller
- White-necked Stork
- Grey Hornbill
- Yellow Wagtail
- Rose-ringed Parakeets
- Little Cormorant
- Treepie
- Little Grebe
- Keol
- Shikra
- Green bee-eater
- Butterflys
- Common Rose
- Baronet



Yellow-footed Green Pigeon



Lesser-adjutant Stork



Green Bee-eater

Can you identify your tiger?

JOIN TODAY



Right Flank

Left Flank

Shashi (Bamera) With a name meaning 'Moon'his huge territory means a lots of nocturnal travel. Open, relaxed and comfortable with visitors, he is the father to three sets of cubs including Wakeeta's, Vijaya's and Jaya's. Son of the famous B2/Sundar.



Right Flank

Left Flank

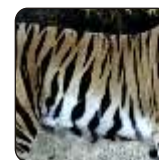
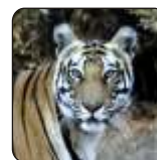
Vijaya (Kankati) Bringing up three youngsters in her prey rich Tala territory, she is a one-eyed and feisty mother, who killed her aunt and stole her prey rich territory. Injuries resulted in a blind left eye during the fighting. A careful mother with three boisterous teenagers.



Right Flank

Left Flank

Jaya (Ragbehra) Brought up with her sister Vijaya and brother Sahat in the Rajbehra area she is now bring up cubs in the same meadows and Badhaini hills she grew up in. She is shy and elusive, preferring to keep herself and her growing family well hidden.



Right Flank

Left Flank

Yoshila (Sukki Patia) Now with young cubs in the Magdhi zone, she had tragic luck with her first litter, when all three were eventually killed by male challengers. She has recovered and has settled in the Sukki Patia region.



Right Flank

Left Flank

Wakeeta (Banbehi) She has just brought up three cubs to adulthood, and will again be ready for her second litter in the Banbehi region, under Shashi's protection. She often has to go out the park and eating cattle as prey is in short supply here.



WHICH TIGER WILL YOU FOLLOW? REGISTER TODAY

Take your experiences home with you, read more about all of Bandhavgarh's tigers, follow your favourite, share your photos with us and support the park's long term future.

Go to www.tigernation.org

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