



MAHARASHTRA WILD TRAIL - MUMBAI TO MUMBAI 8 Days / 7 Nights

Mumbai – Ellora Caves – Aurangabad – Pench (Ramtek) – Tadoba – Ajanta – Nashik - Mumbai

Welcome aboard the Deccan Odyssey, on the Maharashtra Wild Trail, an 8 day ride through the hinterlands of Maharashtra, the majestic Western Ghats, into the Deccan region of the vast and diverse expanse of central India. This exciting journey includes the thrill of chasing tigers at two of the highest tiger density reserves of Maharashtra, the awe inspiring beauty of the art of Ajanta and exquisite sculptures in Ellora; the holy city of Nashik, now also India's wine capital. A railroad journey like none other, in a land like no other, we welcome you on board the Deccan Odyssey.

Day 1 Board the Deccan Odyssey at Mumbai – Ellora Caves

Saturday

Welcome aboard the Deccan Odyssey.

Early this evening assemble at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus at approximately 1530 hours to complete the registration process and check in formalities for your *Maharashtra Wild Trail* journey, as you receive a traditional Indian welcome and enjoy a refreshing welcome drink.

After completion of all formalities, you will be shown to your delightful cabins. As you settle in, the Deccan Odyssey shall depart Mumbai for Ellora Caves.

Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 2 Aurangabad – Ellora Caves

Sunday

As you enjoy breakfast, the Deccan Odyssey arrives at Aurangabad, named after the last Great Mughal Aurangzeb, an industrial town in Maharashtra and the stop from where to head out to visit the exceptional Ellora Caves, a World Heritage site. The city itself has deep Mughal influences and there are several monuments of note here: the Daulatabad Fort, Bibi-ka-Maqbara and the city's 52 gates, each with its own history, amongst them.

The morning is at leisure on board or you may choose the option of enjoying a relaxing massage at a hotel spa. Post an early lunch, disembark for a scenic drive that takes you to the Ellora Caves, carved into the side of a basaltic hill 30 km from the city. The finest specimen of cave-temple architecture in India, the site encompasses 34 rock-cut shrines representing Buddhist, Jain and Hindu art dating from the 4th to 5th century AD. The 12 caves to the south are Buddhist, the 17 in the centre Hindu, and the 5 caves to the north are Jain. The most remarkable is the Kailash temple, meant to be a replica of Shiva's celestial abode on Mt. Kailash. It is the best example of rock cut architecture and an engineering marvel.

Next climb up to explore the lofty Daulatabad fort, occupied since at least 100 BCE, and which houses the remains of Buddhist caves similar to those at Ajanta and Ellora.

You will then return to the **Deccan Odyssey** to freshen up before heading back to the city for dinner.

Breakfast & Lunch on board; Dinner at a city hotel

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 3 Aurangabad

Monday

This morning enjoy a leisurely breakfast before heading out to the Old City of Aurangabad.

Spend the morning visiting Bibi-ka-Maqbara, the mausoleum of Dilras Banu, Aurangzeb's wife, and a replica of the Taj Mahal at Agra. Built between 1651 and 1661 by her son, Prince Azam Shah, the monument is also called the 'Taj of the Deccan' and was intended to rival the splendor of the Taj Mahal, but unfortunately fell short.

Next visit a facility that specialises in the weaving of Himroo fabric. The fabric of choice for the royalty of that age, Himroo has been associated with Aurangabad since the 14th century, when Muhammad Tughlaq made it his capital. Himroo features Persian designs woven with gold and silver threads and takes its name from Hum-ruh, which means 'similar' in Persian, as it is a replica of the Kum Khwab fabric that was popular in royal courts before Himroo gained precedence.

Return to the Deccan Odyssey for lunch on board after which you can enjoy the rest of your afternoon indulging in the recreational activities on board as the hinterland of Maharashtra sweeps past, with its ever-changing colors and landscape making its way to Ramtek for Pench National Park.

In the evening, enjoy a sun downer at the Mumbai-Hi before dinner is served.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 4 Pench National Park (Ramtek)

Tuesday

Awaken before sunrise today as the Deccan Odyssey pulls into Ramtek, for your date with nature's beautiful creations at the Pench National Park. Named after the Pench River, which meanders through it like a mammoth python, splitting it into almost equal halves, the park is immensely rich in biodiversity, its terrain defined by hills, valleys and the occasional precipitous slope, an important ecosystem supporting an abundance of flora and fauna, including a rich variety of aquatic life.

After an exhilarating game drive, return to the **Deccan Odyssey** for a leisurely brunch on board.

Disembark again in the afternoon for your second adventure into the wild. The Pench National Park is four different forest regions in one, an extravagance of trees, shrubs, grasses, climbers, weeds and herbs, with teak being the most prominent of the tree species. Birdlife here is equally bountiful, the feathered denizens of Pench including both resident and migratory birds like Malabar pied hornbills, Indian pittas, ospreys, grey-headed fishing eagles, white-eyed buzzards, storks, waterfowls, four endangered vulture species, and the green pigeon, which is the State Bird of Maharashtra.

After an exciting day at Pench drive back to Ramtek station to board the Deccan Odyssey. Enjoy a sumptuous dinner as the **Deccan Odyssey** departs for Tadoba, the land of the mighty tigers.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 5 Tadoba

Wednesday

Wake up before the sun this morning as the **Deccan Odyssey** rolls back into Chandrapur station, for your early morning safari into the Tadoba Tiger Reserve, also called the Land of Tigers, for its high tiger density. It is not uncommon to spot tigers and wild dogs here, with plenty of opportunities for close encounters with leopards, sloth bears, gaurs (the Indian bison), the rusty spotted cat, ratels, various species of deer, wild pigs and more.

After an exciting morning, a late breakfast will be served at the Tiger Trails lodge, following which you can relax, view a documentary on wildlife or interact with our naturalist.

Enjoy lunch at the lodge before you drive back to Chandrapur station to board the Deccan Odyssey.

Sit back, unwind and enjoy cocktails fixed by our bartender onboard, followed by a sumptuous dinner and a well deserved rest as the **Deccan Odyssey** proceeds towards Jalgaon to visit the exquisite Ellora Caves.

Breakfast and Lunch at the Tiger Trails lodge; Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 6 Jalgaon – Ajanta Caves

Thursday

The Deccan Odyssey arrives at the Jalgaon station this morning from where, after breakfast on board, you will disembark and drive to the Ajanta Caves, a World Heritage site and an architectural marvel of its time. The 30 rock-hewn Buddhist caves at Ajanta have been masterfully carved and are adorned with sculptures and paintings of Buddhist religious art, depicting universal pictorial art as well as the fusion of Buddhist and Hindu faith.

After exploring Ajanta, return to the **Deccan Odyssey** for lunch as it takes you towards Nashik.

The rest of the day is at leisure for you to relax and enjoy some of the activities available on board. Watch a movie, learn the rules of 'carrom', a popular Indian board game, from a Deccan Odyssey team member or book yourself a relaxing massage in our spa on board.

Relax and watch the tapestry of rural India unfold as you sip a sun downer before dinner.

Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner on board.

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 7 Nashik

Friday

This morning the Deccan Odyssey brings you to the holy city of Nashik, which is rapidly gaining the status of being the wine capital of the country.

After breakfast, disembark and spend the morning walking along the Godavari Ghats observing several important Hindu rituals being performed. Continue on through the lively Wednesday market which sells everything from cow dung cakes to freshly caught catfish and many things in between.

Thereafter drive to the Grover Zampa vineyards for an exclusive tour of one of the finest Indian wine producing facilities. Walk through vines laden with Chenin, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes. Be taken through the age old '*méthode traditionnelle*' used to make one of the best known brands of sparkling wines in India. Allow the sommelier to acquaint your taste buds with their finest creations of white, red, rose and sparkling wines and experiment pairing them with your meal at the vineyards.

After a sumptuous lunch, return to the Deccan Odyssey and set forth for Mumbai, the last leg of the journey.

The rest of the day is at leisure on board.

Breakfast on board; Lunch at the vineyard; Dinner on board

Overnight on Deccan Odyssey

Day 8 Disembark in Mumbai

Saturday

Early this morning, after breakfast, you will disembark at Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus Railway Station, Mumbai.

Bid farewell to the Deccan Odyssey as your royal passage through the grand vistas of India comes to an end.

Breakfast on board
