

Places of Tourist attraction on the Division :

SOMNATH :

Holy place of the Aadi Jyotirling Shree Somnath Mahadev and the sacred soil from where Bhagvan Shri Krishna took his last journey to his neejdham.



Somnath Temple



Somnath Temple at night

Historic Back Ground :

Shree Somnath is **first among the twelve Aadi Jyotirlings** of India. It has a strategic location on the shore of the Arabian ocean on the western corner of Indian subcontinent in Gujarat State. This pilgrimage is one of the oldest and finds its reference in the ancient texts like Skandpuran, Shreemad Bhagavat, Shivpuran etc. The hymn from Rig-Veda quoted below mention the Bhagvan Someshwar along with the great pilgrimage like Gangaji, Yamunaji and Eastward Saraswati. This signifies the ancient value of this Tirthdham. In the Shiva Purana and Nandi Upapurana, Shiva said, *ōI am always present everywhere but specially in 12 forms and places as the Jyotirlingasō*. Somnath is one of these 12 holy places. This is the first among the twelve holy Shiva Jyotirlings.

Somnath is in Prabhas Patan very near to Veraval. Ancient Indian traditions maintain a close relationship of Somnath with release of **Chandra (Moon God)** from the curse of his father-in-law Daksha Prajapati. Moon was married to Twenty-Seven daughters of Daksha. However, he favoured Rohini and neglected other queens. The aggrieved Daksha cursed Moon and the Moon lost power of light. With the advice of Prajapita Brahma, Moon arrived at the Prabhas Teerth and worshipped Bhagvan Shiva. Pleased with the great penance and devotion of Moon, Bhagvan Shiva blessed him and relieved him from the curse of darkness. Pauranic traditions maintain that Moon had built a golden temple, followed by a silver temple by Ravana, Bhagvan Shree Krishna is believed to have built Somnath temple with Sandalwood

The shore temple of Somnath is believed to have been built in 4 phases-in gold by Lord Soma, in silver by Ravi, in wood by lord Krishna and in stone by King Bhimadeva. The later sources of history account for several desecrations by Muslims invaders during eleventh to eighteen century A.D. The temple was rebuilt every time with the reconstructive spirit of the people. The modern temple was reconstructed with the resolve of Sardar Patel who visited the ruins of Somnath temple on November 13 1947. Then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, did the Pran-Pratistha at the existing temple on 11 May 1951. The seventh existing temple is built in the Kailas Mahameru Prasad style.

The temple is consisting of Garbhgruh, Sabhamandap and Nrityamandap with a 150 feet high Shikhar. The Kalash at the top of the Shikhar weighs 10 tons and the Dhvajdand is 27 feet tall and 1 foot in circumference.



Inside Somnath Temple

Other spots in the temple are Shri Kapardi Vinayak and Shri Hanuman Temple in addition to Vallabhghat. Vallabhghat is a beautiful sunset point. The temple is illuminated every evening. Similarly, the Sound & Light Show òJay Somnathö is also displayed every night during 8.00 to 9.00, which allows the pilgrims an ethereal experience in the backdrop of grand Somnath temple and the holy wave sounds of the Ocean.

The Abadhut Samudra Marg Tirstambha (Arrow) indicates the unobstructed sea route to the south Pole. The nearest land towards South Pole is about 9936 km. away. This is a wonderful indicator of the ancient Indian wisdom of geography and strategic location of the Jyotirling.



Bhalka Tirtha & Dehotsarg :

Bhalka Tirtha, on the site where Krishna is said to have been mistakenly shot in the foot. Nearby is Dehotsarg, where he succumbed to his mortal wound. The temple at Bhalka Tirth is known as Mahaprabhuji's Bethak, and a tulsi tree has been planted in Lord Krishna's memory.

**Somnath Railway station**

JUNAGADH

Junagadh breathes history. These edicts, set up by Ashoka, the Great Indian emperor, date back 2200 years. Within this ancient fort of Uparkot, the architectural marvels of Hindu Chudasma rulers and Muslim MohmudBeghda coexist in perfect harmony. The majestic MohabatkhanMaqbara, a memorial to Junagadh'sBabi Ruler and the Veritable Darbar Hall Museum show that Junagadh continued to make history untill as recently as 100 years ago. Inscription of Samrat (King) Ashoka, site of Narsinh Mehta the great devotee of Krishna and historical fort, Adikadival. A large fair is also held at Junagadh during Mahashivratri, Parikrama festival, which attracts thousands of devotees of Lord Shiva. Sasangir, is the worth seeing site being abote of Asiatic lions, is little far from Junagadh, which attracts tourists from all over India as well as abroad.

Junagadh is a Railway station on the Western Railway on Viramgam-Veraval line, 841 Kms. away from Mumbai via Viramgam- Rajkot and 87 kms. from Somnath.

On road it is 6	895 Kms. from Mumbai.	99.7 Kms. from Rajkot.
	83.7 Kms. from Veraval	355 Kms. from Ahmedabad via Rajkot

Places to visit in Junagadh

Uparkot Fort: This fort is famous in days bygone for its virtual inaccessibility, the Uparkot or Upper Fort is girdled by a wall that is, in some places, over 20m high. An ornate entrance gateway leads to the ruins. A mosque still stands in a state of preservation. A Nilamtope (canon) was acquired by the Nawab of Junagadh from a Turkish Sultan. There are also two step wells, Jami Masjid and Buddhist caves in the fort premises.



Uparkot fort & Nilamtope

Damodar Kund: A sacred tank marks the ascent to the Girnar temples.

Ashoka's Rock edict: On the way to Girnar, fourteen rock edicts of the Emperor Ashoka can be seen inscribed on a great boulder. The inscription carries Brahmi script in Pali language and dates back to 263 B.C. On the same rock are inscriptions in Sanskrit.



Ashoka's Rock edict

Maqbara : The mausoleum of the Nawabs, the traditional rulers of Junagadh.



Tulsi Shyam Hot Spring: In the heart of the Gir Forest 165 Kms. from Junagadh is the scenic spot of Tulsi Shyam with its hot spring.

Girnar :

Girnar is one of two hills most sacred to the Jain community of India. Girnar is an under 4000 feet high hill. It rises to a height of more than 600 meters, its five peaks crowned by 16 carved and sculptured marble shrines that adorn this famous hilltop temple city. The beautiful Jain temples of Neminath and Mallinath are a strong attraction. There are Hindu temples as well. It is an abode of Hindu ascetics. The annual Bhavnath fair dedicated to Hindu Lord Shiva draws thousands of people.



SASAN GIR FOREST & SANCTUARY

It is situated 65 Kms. from Junagadh via Keshod (where there is an airport). It is connected both by Rail as well as Road. Sasan Gir Sanctuary provides refuge to that rare species-the Asiatic Lion. The sanctuary covers an area of 500 sq. miles of dry, open scrubland where the lions roam freely. They can be seen on guided jeep tours through the jungles. The museum inside the sanctuary provides knowledge about environment and its relationship with human beings. Apart from the lions, the wild life includes antelope, hyena, fox, monkeys, leopard, the nilgai or black buck, chinkara, chousingha and other species of the deer family. The habitat varies from arid to semi-arid. Grasslands, scrub, savannah and dry deciduous forests are intersected by several hill and river systems.

There is a crocodile rearing centre at Kamleshwar dam. Sasan is an ideal spot for birdwatchers. 310 species of birds have been recorded here.

The forest is home to the Maldhari or pastoralists and sidi's. The pastoralists are a local tribe having a highly ethnic and colourful lifestyle. The sidi's are an African tribe settled here which has preserved its identity and physical features. Their 'Dhamal' dance is a treat to watch.



Diu :

Diu is a beautiful blend of sun, sand and sea. It is an island retreat gently rocked by the wind and the wave from the Arabian Sea. It offers you undisturbed peace and an unusual holiday.

Diu is about 90 kms. from Veraval by Road and Private Buses, GSRTC buses are available from Somnath and Veraval.

Diu, along with Goa and Daman, was a Portuguese colony until 1961, when India took it over. The Portuguese established their first fort here around 1539. There is still a Portuguese influence in the town, shown by the churches, old buildings, and the impressive fort. Diu and Daman are governed as a Union Territory by Delhi.

Sightseeing in Diu:

The old city is full of Portuguese buildings and villas, and this along with the winding streets makes it an interesting place to visit. The Portuguese Nagar Seth's Haveli is one of the most impressive houses.

There are three old churches in the town of Diu. St Paul's has excellent paintings and a high ceiling with arches. Mass is still held here. Within St Thomas's is the Diu Museum, which has Catholic statues and religious paintings. St Francis of Assisi Church is now a hospital.



Beaches

Nagoa Beach, 7km from town, is the longest and most beautiful beach in Diu. It forms a half circle and is surrounded by palm trees. It is a good place to relax.

Jallandhar Beach, conveniently located south of town, is small, as is Chakrakirth Beach, which is slightly further west.



PORBANDAR

Porbandar is the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi. Porbandar is a picturesque in seaside resort and a flourishing seaport on the South Coast of Gujarat about midway between Veraval and Dwarka.

It is on Western Railway line, 959 Kms. away from Churchgate, Mumbai via Viramgam and 448 Kms. away from Ahmedabad.

Road – it is about 990 Kms. from Mumbai, 214 Kms. from Rajkot, 124 Kms. from Dwarka and 115 Kms. from Junagadh.

In ancient times, the city was called Sudamapuri which was built up by Vishwakarma after Sudama, a compatriot of Lord Krishna.

On October 2, 1869, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born in a 3-storey blue haveli in the city of Porbandar, where his father, uncle and grandfather had all been prime ministers to the Jethwa Rajput rulers of the princely state.

Porbandar has several large cement and chemical factories.

Places of Interest

KirtiMandir

The site of Gandhi's birth, now called KirtiMandir, has been converted into a small museum about him, with an exhibit of old photographs, some of his very few possessions and a nice library of books either by him or relating to Gandhian philosophy and practice.

Planetarium

Across the muddy creek, which is spanned by the Jynbeeli (once Jubilee) Bridge, are the Nehru Planetarium and the Bharat Mandir. Flocks of flamingoes are an unexpected sight along the creek.

Bharat Mandir

The large Bharat Mandir hall is in a charming irrigated garden opposite the planetarium. On the floor inside is a huge relief map of India and the building's pillars are brilliantly painted with bas-reliefs of over 100 religious figures and legendary persons from Hindu epics. The verandah's six distorting mirrors are popular with children.



PALITANA

Palitana is connected on Rail network and direct train services between Bhavnagar and Palitana is available.

Mode of connecting transport :

Air: Nearest airport at Bhavnagar is 62 kms away.

Rail: Palitana is on Western Railway on the Sihor – Palitana broad gauge section, which is connected to Ahmedabad, 305 kms. via Surendranagar.

Road: From Ahmedabad 215 kms. by road and State Transport & luxury buses ply regularly.

Palitana located south west of Bhavnagar is known for being the largest cluster of Jain temples.

It is said all the Jain Tirthankars, excepting Neminath, had attained nirvan on Shatrunjay Hill. This fact adds to the veneration the devout have for the place. The place is therefore called Siddhakshetra where one attains moksh. The mountain is associated with Rishabhdev, the first Tirthankar who is also known as Adinath.

The main temple at the top contains his idol in padmasan. He belonged to the Ikshvaku Dynasty of Ayodhya.

The pilgrims have to ascend 3745 steps to reach the 1800 feet hill. It takes between one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half hours to reach the summit. Those who cannot climb can use sling chairs. The steps were hewn out of the rock in the 13th century CE during the time of Jain minister Vastupal. Every shrine has idols of Tirthankars adorned with jeweled eyes.

Pilgrims make their offerings at the main temple containing the Adinath idol. The temple has been renovated and rebuilt several times since its inception. A Jain merchant Javad Shah renovated the shrine in VikramSamvat 1018 for the 13th time.

Originally the temple was built of wood and SiddhrajJaisimha's minister Uday Mehta got it built in marble. Siddhraj's descendant Kumarpal extended the temple. The present temple was constructed in 1618 CE. The Adinath temple is situated on DadaniTuk. There are nine tuks all along the route containing shrines.

The most famous temples are those of Adinath, Kumarpal, Vimalshah, Samprati Raja and the Chomukh which is the highest. Besides there are temples dedicated to Hindu gods and goddesses like Saraswati, Shivji, Hanumanji, etc. The Saraswati temple is near the foot of the hill. AngarPir's shrine is situated at the top of the hill.



Nearest places of tourist interest :

Velavadar Black Buck Sanctuary

On the way towards Ahmedabad, 35 k.m. east from Bhavnagar, Velavadar is very well known place for “Kaliar-Haran “. With their long feet, jumping all around 1800 hector wide jungle, makes a worth experience. They are attractive with their charming body and are not available outside India. The forest dept. is taking care of the animals, and provides permission and facilities to visitors.

Khodiyar Temple

Khodiyar temple, named after the principle deity, venerated by the royal family and the natives around, was built in the year 1911. The temple visited by thousands of pilgrims is located on the banks of the Khodiyar Lake, which attracts tourists from all the surrounding areas. Quite often followers of the goddess walk long distances to revere the goddess.

GopnathMahadev Temple and Beach :

Located on the shore of the seaside on the Gulf of Khambat, this Shiva temple is where the devotional poet Narsinh Mehta supposedly had his spiritual experience almost 500 years ago. Set on the seashore, the temple is an ideal spot for all wanting a spiritual and natural trip. The coast in this area is full of tiny islands and offers a picturesque delight to the onlooker.