

Splurge!

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Anchaviyo Resort, Wada, Maharashtra

RIVERSIDE SERENITY

It's hard to complain about anything when you're relaxing in a private outdoor jacuzzi, high up in the trees. Set amid the lush greenery of Wada, the charm of Anchaviyo Resort is undeniable. All the chalets on this rain-washed, verdant property overlook the Vaitarna River, and the veranda of the treehouse has a sweeping view of its serene depths and the forest beyond. This is one of the rivers that supplies water to Mumbai and you cannot help but feel relieved when you see the water swelling with the regular but not incessant rainfall.

Usually, mornings and evenings are the most magical times in a natural haven

like this but, thanks to the monsoons, the scenery remains swathed in a mellow glow, all day long. So, even though you'll arrive long after the skies have awakened from its slumber, you might never have to come face to face with harsh sunlight. Apart from the gentle rain, the one constant in the landscape is the fisher folk perched on the rocks dotting the riverbank on the opposite side. It would be lovely to row across the river and ask them about the day's catch but, alas, the boat rides are not operational during the monsoon months.

But there are other things to delight you here, like meal times.

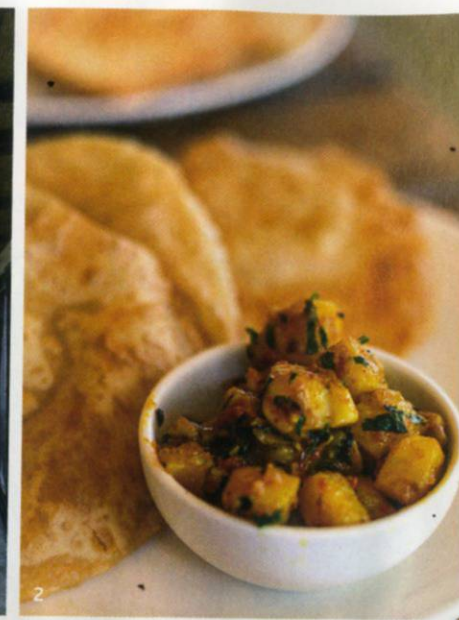
Above: Lie back in the cosy bed and watch the sunset drench the scenery in blue

Below: A Ganesha-inspired lamp sits pretty on the bedside drawer



However, eating at the restaurant can get a little monotonous, especially given its not-so-inspiring interiors, so it's a good idea to get your meals delivered to the room. The menu is limited and vegetarian (eggs are included), but most of the dishes are delicious. The Asian koels settling on your veranda are another reason you'll rarely want to leave the room. And if you don't want to wallow in the jacuzzi, unique to the treehouse, you can lie on the roof with your favourite music.

Steal some time during the day to make your way to the riverbank down a flight of narrow, brick-red steps and watch the ripples scatter over



GREAT FROM
Mumbai

GREAT FOR
Couples and large groups

GO NOW
To romance the rains.

the water and the birds swoop overhead. All the serenity around you might put you in the mood for a good massage, which is when you must head to the tiny Balinese-style spa gazebo. The treatments are a bit pricey, but you have the option of getting a relaxing

full-body massage in the comfort of your room (9am–1pm, 2pm–7pm; from ₹800). If you're here with a bunch of friends, a game of football on the grounds in the rains might be fun, if, that is, the waddling ducks leave you in peace.

Birdwatchers rejoice: Anchaviyo Resort is also home to winged beauties like red-vented bulbuls and cattle egrets, who come out to play even in the monsoon. On your second day here, cajole yourself into leaving the cosy confines of your room for an enchanting early-morning stroll around the property. The still river, the distant radiance of an imminent sunrise, the dewy flowers and flutters of avian movement

1 & 5. Watch the rain descend upon Vaitarna River from the veranda of your treehouse, which offers easy access to the deck

2. The chef excels at Indian delicacies like puri bhaji

3. Curious decor objects like this spider-shaped lamp add to the appeal of the rooms

4. Marathi music plays all day long at the dhaba-style restaurant

in the grass and trees leave you feeling truly fortunate to be here in the thick of the woodlands.

You'll lose count of the number of times you walk till the end of the deck to watch the rain drizzle over the Vaitarna but, one thing's for sure, the rains will never feel quite the same as they do back in the city. But, if you're looking for a more active getaway, this place might not be for you. Life at Anchaviyo is all about relaxing on your river-view balcony, watching the gentle rainfall and allowing time to flow in comforting waves.

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**FACT SHEET****GETTING THERE**

Closest metro: Mumbai (105km)

Closest city: Pune (240km)

Closest airport: Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (98km). You can easily drive down to the resort from here.

Closest railhead: Palghar (PLG; 40km).

From Mumbai, take the 19215 Saurashtra Express (leaves Mumbai Central [BCT] 8.20am, arrives PLG

10.11am; ₹ 490 Third AC) and return by the 19012 Gujarat Express (leaves PLG 2.23pm, arrives BCT 4.25pm; ₹ 260 AC Chair Car).

GETTING AROUND

You'll most likely stay within the resort premises, but, if you want to drive around, make sure you get your own vehicle.

The resort does not arrange for car hires.

WHERE TO STAY **Anchaviyo Resort:**

Nestled among orchards of mango, guava and chikoo trees, the 150-acre resort's chalets, tents, log cabins and mud houses offer luxury in the midst of nature. There are only eight rooms at present, but eight more are being built. You'll enjoy the quaint little stone birds, lamps and the tea and coffee sachets in a perfume box. The treehouse offers the best view and easy access to the deck, but, if you're with a group of more than three people, you might want to stay in the more spacious Bee Hive room. For a much lower cost, you can stay in one of the tents, but they don't offer the riverside views that are integral to the experience here (reservations: 00-91-9920003027; www.anchaviyo.com, bookings@anchaviyo.com; Kharivali Village, Palsaiphata-Khaniwali Rd, Wada; tents from ₹ 8,000, log cabins from ₹ 12,000, mud houses from ₹ 14,000, chalets from ₹ 16,000, rates include breakfast).

WHAT TO EAT
It's better to order Indian cuisine at the restaurant and ask the chef to go easy on the salt since it can be overpowering at times (breakfast: 8am–10am, lunch: 12pm–3pm, dinner: 7pm–10pm). The desserts come close to perfection and you have to try the choco lava cake (₹ 200) at least once. The masala chai (₹ 60) is a real mood lifter. Try the puri bhaji (₹ 165), masala omelette (₹ 150), paneer butter masala (₹ 310) and aloo stuffed tawa parantha (₹ 160).

WHAT TO PACK
Rain gear, although the resort lends you complimentary umbrellas and waterproof shoes

CLEAN LOO GUIDE
The drive from Mumbai to Anchaviyo Resort takes two hours, so you won't need a loo break on the way.

Above: A cheeky wall hanging outside the bathroom informs visitors about loo etiquette
Below: Battery-operated electric cars are available to ferry you around the property when you're feeling too lazy to walk

**Toilet Rules**

If you lift it up...Put it down

If it runs out...Replace it

If you miss it...Wipe it

If you're finished...Flush it

If it smells...Spray it

LADIES
Please maintain a neat and tidy appearance

GENTLEMEN
Stand close, it's shorter than you think

SHOPPING

You can purchase handmade bags (from ₹ 170) and the tarpa musical instrument made from bottle gourd (₹ 700) at the Reception.

SAFETY

There are snakes on the property, but they don't pose a threat. Flies and insects can be a bother, so keep the veranda or tent zip closed in the evenings and call Reception in case of trouble.

MEDICAL AID **Chanda Workers Hospital**

is about 5km away 00-91-9225896896; Kudus). There is a first-aid kit on the property for minor injuries and illnesses.

CHILD-FRIENDLINESS

There are board games and colouring books at the Reception to keep children engaged. There are also occasional hula-hooping and Frisbee workshops, which you will have to enquire about in advance. But be warned, more than a day at the resort and kids could get really restless.

GOOD TO KNOW

- * There is a small swimming pool at the resort, but it's only good for splashing around.
- * The Reception has a decent collection of books and, if you're really missing the idiot box, you can choose from their selection of films and book a slot at the mini theatre.

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