



## CULTURAL HERITAGE

Photo: Kipling Camp

### WHY IT'S IMPORTANT

A country's unique cultural heritage is a key selling point for the travel sector in a world which has seen globalisation replacing cultural expressions rooted in the locality, climate and seasons with a homogenous culture and global chains. Chronic conditions such as cancer, heart disease and diabetes have accompanied the spread of unhealthy western diets across the globe. Low carbon materials and goods rooted in local culture have been replaced by high carbon alternatives.

Few countries offer such a diverse range of cultural sites and natural ecosystems combined as India. Whilst cultural tourism is often focused on iconic cultural landmarks, India and Nepal's rural areas also offer a fascinating window on local cultural life providing visitors with a unique travel experience.

India is home to the world's second largest tribal population with over 700 indigenous tribes making up a mosaic of rich and diverse customs, culture, heritage and lifestyles stretching back through the mists of time to the days of the Ramayana and Mahabharata. Nepal, too, has a wealth of cultural traditions with 126 castes and ethnic groups speaking as many as 123 languages and the government formally recognising 59 indigenous tribes.

Responsible tourism respects local traditions and ensures tourism brings benefits to local communities and avoids negative disruption to local lives. Well planned, as a force for good, it can help to protect and restore cultural heritage, provide livelihood opportunities for local communities, instil local pride in their cultural traditions and promote intercultural understanding and positive cultural exchange.

Playing a positive role in helping to revive, protect and celebrate local culture is good for business, adding to the uniqueness of your guests' experience and building good relationships with your local community.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### Easy Wins

- Consult with your local community and establish a cooperative structure for communication (See Community Liaison and Support profile).
- Clarify cultural sensitivities, privacy issues and off-limit sites and areas.
- Brief your community about tourism and facilitate two-way understanding.
- Research mutually beneficial opportunities and obtain permissions.
- Prepare a list of do's and don'ts for your guests.
- Brief staff and guests on cultural sensitivities, considerate behaviour and encourage respect for local traditions.
- Organise village walks, market visits and cultural outings for your guests.



*Photo: Svasara Jungle Lodge*

### Going for Gold

- Provide your guests with a written briefing on local tribes and customs.
- Reflect local art and culture in the building, interior design or furnishings.
- Arrange cultural performances or arts and crafts activities at your lodge.
- Include local cuisine on your menu using local ingredients.
- Promote visits to local shops and handicraft outlets.
- Sell local arts and handicrafts in your shop or showcase local work in your lodge.
- Catalyse new opportunities for restoring and promoting local culture.
- Support local projects such as temple restoration.



*Photo: Barahi Jungle Lodge*

See further tips in Resources.



*Red Earth Kabini used a traditional rammed earth technique for its buildings - low carbon materials, celebrating local traditions and employing local labour - a win, win situation.*

## EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

### INFORMATION AND INTERIOR DESIGN



A range of lodges provide an insight into local culture through briefings and weave local heritage into interior design. Svasara Lodge's in-room folder includes information on local tribes and their library includes cultural books. The lodge is decorated with different art forms which are also on sale in their shop. [Read case study.](#)

Local Bastar and Dogra artefacts and paintings are used throughout Banjar Tola – Taj Safaris to give a taste of local cultural traditions. Guests are also shown a documentary on Baiga culture to enhance their knowledge.

Singinawa Jungle Lodge is decorated with Gond art complementing a range of activities promoting local culture including a museum (see below). [Read case study.](#)



Paatlidun Safari Lodge's cottages are beautifully designed with colourful Garhwali art. The reception area is decorated with Kumaoni furniture and handicrafts. [Read case study.](#)



Reni Pani Jungle Lodge has employed local women for wall paintings to reflect local culture.



Rooms at Dhole's Den, a lodge built in contemporary style, incorporate traditional stonework using local materials and labour, a technique which was disappearing from the village.



Mahua Kothi - Taj Safaris combines luxury with design features reflecting local culture. [Read case study.](#)



Rooms at Tharu Lodge are decorated with locally available crafts, textiles and crafts.



Singinawa Lodge has transformed a building in its grounds into the Kanha Museum of Life & Art promoting a thriving school of contemporary art which has emerged from the region's traditional indigenous culture. The lodge also hosts performances of dance and music.

## REFLECTING LOCAL ARCHITECTURE



Tiger Tops Tharu Lodge emulates the traditional longhouse style of Tharu architecture and is built from local materials. The structure is wooden, made from local Sal timber with a tile roof. The walls are made with reeds, mud and dung, serving as a natural antiseptic to keep the bugs out. This architectural style is slowly disappearing giving way to global materials such as concrete. The lodge receives many local visitors wanting to see the traditional design of a Tharu house.



Evolve Back Kabini's buildings and guest huts are created in the style of the local Kadu Kuruba tribe using local labour and materials. The resort's interpretation centre includes a Kuruba hut giving an insight into local culture. [Read case study.](#)



Mahua Kothi - Taj Safaris has created twelve standalone luxury cottages for its guests, Kutiyaas, built of mud in the local style of architecture.

## SELLING LOCAL ART AND HANDICRAFTS



Local handicrafts and artefacts are sold in a range of lodges - pictured here in the souvenir shop at Barahi Jungle Lodge, Nepal.



The shop at Singinawa Jungle Lodge stocks locally made handicrafts such as Gond paintings, Bastar artefacts, local pottery, Baiga jewellery and other handmade items. Local market visits are also encouraged.



Mahua Kothi – Taj Safaris sells items made by local tribal communities sourced with the help of NGO Last Wilderness Foundation and employs a Gond artist to showcase and sell his art.



Kipling Camp supports local Gond artists with materials and provides opportunities for them to show and sell their work to guests. [Read case study.](#)



Oberoi Vanyavilas organises a regular crafts mela at their premises providing local crafts NGO Dhonk with an outlet for selling its work. A regular platform is also given to local wildlife artists to display and sell their works and give guests an opportunity to try soot painting.



Banjaar Tola employs two local Gond artists and sells their work at the lodge. Gond art is displayed throughout the property.

## HOSTING LOCAL PERFORMANCES



Aahana The Corbett Wilderness is amongst a range of lodges inviting local artists to perform at the lodge. Cultural nights are also organised to facilitate the exchange of ideas between villagers and guests.



Oberoi Vanyavilas invites local musicians to play the saarangi and sing local folk songs on a daily basis.



Barahi Jungle Lodge organises evening performances of Tharu dance, a centuries old art form expressing the significance of festivals, farmland and the seasons. They have also introduced day long nature walks up to Madi village in Chitwan National Park, a village without electricity. Guests can stay at WWF sponsored village home stays or return after an authentic Tharu lunch.



A local Baiga tribal cooperative formed with the help of Belinda Wright, owner of Kipling Camp, performs tribal dances for guests at the lodge. Lunches for guests at village homes are also arranged.



Mohiniyattam, an indigenous art form of Kerala, is performed at Spice Village, Thekkady.



Red Earth Kabini is working with NGO Sambrana to help revive dying folk and tribal dance and music forms. Its building uses a traditional rammed earth technique. [Read case study.](#)

## VILLAGE VISITS AND INSIGHTS INTO LOCAL LIFE



A range of lodges facilitate visits to local markets and villages to give their guests a feel of local life. Pictured here, guests from Kipling Camp exploring a nearby market, part of their broader range of activities to give an insight into local life and farming whilst contributing to local livelihoods.



Singinawa Jungle Lodge facilitates visits to the neighbouring village and interactions with local people to promote an understanding of local Baiga culture.



Guests at Evolve Back Kabini can visit a local village house for a fee, an income opportunity for the householder and cultural insight for guests.

## LOCAL CUISINE



Svasara Jungle Lodge is documenting recipes from local villages and tribal hamlets and preparing them for guests from its organic farm and local suppliers. [Read case study.](#)

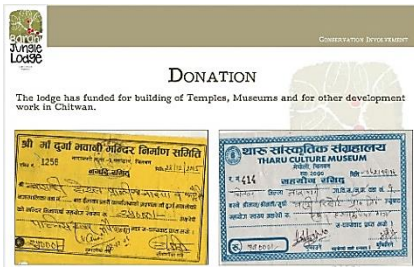


A village kitchen serves traditional cuisine at Forsyth Lodge, Satpura, a community enterprise run by women. The lodge is also helping to revive the art of macramé knotting. Photo credit: Vaibhav Mehta. [Read case study](#) in Local Economy section.

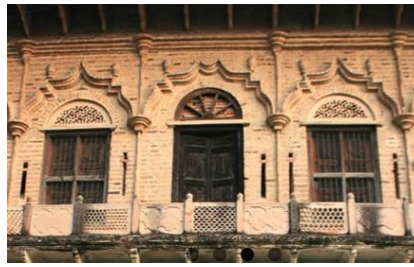


Guests at Spice Village Thekkady are offered an interactive cookery session every evening. The resort's naturalists give an overview of spices and their history. Ingredients for the resort's cuisine are sourced from within a 50-mile radius.

## HERITAGE SITES



A range of lodges support the restoration of local temples and heritage sites. Pictured here support by Barahi Jungle Lodge for local temples and museums in Chitwan, part of its CSR programme.



Holipura has been declared a heritage village with support from Mela Kothi - The Chambal Safari Lodge's Conservation Foundation and village tours by local residents catalysed to provide new livelihood opportunities. [Read case study.](#)



Mela Kothi's Chambal Conservation Foundation has submitted a Heritage Management Plan to encourage sustainable development of nearby Bateshwar, a historic site. New enterprises have been catalysed to enhance guest experiences and local livelihoods.



*The art of pottery is promoted by Woods at Sasan Gir, one of the oldest earning sources for the nearby local village. Classes are organised and products sold to help keep this tradition alive.*

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## Case Studies

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## Evolve Back Kabini, Nagarhole

### Keeping Cultural Heritage Thriving – Policy into Practice



*Building constructed in the style of the local Kuruba tribe.*

Guests are sensitised to local customs, culture and the environment and made aware of regulations and good practice through information and briefings. The lodge's exceptional Kabini Interpretation Centre includes a museum, lily pond, butterfly garden and a Kuruba hut to provide a deeper understanding of the region's beautiful, environmentally and culturally fragile destination and the need to protect it. Daily eco tours of the lodge share their good practice with guests and how they are working to minimise their footprint.



*Part of the Interpretation Centre promoting an understanding of the region's fragile culture and environment.*



*Cookery classes to familiarise guests with local food.*



*Visit to local house for a fee.*

Evolve Back Kabini has a responsible tourism policy setting out to make a positive contribution to Kabini's fragile natural and cultural heritage embracing diversity and instilling pride amongst the local community in their culture. The lodge's buildings and guest huts are created in the style of the local Kadu Kuruba tribe and are built using local materials and labour. Annual thatching by locals distributes the removed chatai among the villagers.



*Guest cottage built in keeping with local style.*

The lodge provides a platform for local performers and artists to display their artistic heritage helping to revive and keep cultural traditions thriving. Local performances are the only evening entertainment provided.



*Daily performances, the only evening entertainment for guests.*

Cookery classes are organised to familiarise guests with local cuisine made from local produce.

Village visits are arranged and guests can also visit a local village house for a fee, an opportunity for positive cultural exchange and insight into local life.

## Kipling Camp, Kanha

### Supporting Local Cultural Traditions and Livelihoods



*Dances about the seasons in the jungle performed by the local Baiga troupe.*

The lodge supports local Gond artists with materials and encourages them to come and show and sell their work to guests. Gond painting and other regional handicrafts are displayed throughout the lodge and are on sale in their shop. Demonstrations of their art technique are also arranged at the lodge.

Kipling Camp's cultural activities are rooted in their philosophy of supporting local communities whilst at the same time giving their guests an insight into the vibrant culture of local Gond and Baiga tribes. A local Baiga tribal cooperative formed with the help of lodge owner Belinda Wright performs traditional dances for lodge guests and has helped to revive and keep local cultural traditions alive whilst supporting their livelihoods.



*Local Gond artist demonstrating his work at Kipling Camp.*



*A visit to the local market to experience local life.*

Most recently over the summer of 2020, an online sale of this vibrant Gond tribal art was organised to provide much needed income to the artists during the Covid-19 lockdown. All proceeds go to the artists; no commission is taken.

Guests are provided with opportunities for guided visits to local markets and villages. The lodge also pays villagers to host lunches and teas at local homes. Interactions with local farmers are arranged to give an insight into traditional farming. Demonstrations of jaggery-making, a concentrated juice made from sugar cane, are also arranged.

Diwali is celebrated with traditional decorations at the lodge, pictured here, made by local schoolchildren.



*Guests helping to make jaggery on a local farm.*



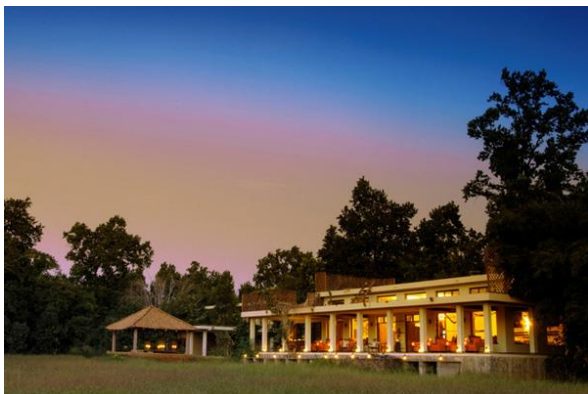
*Traditional Diwali decorations by local schoolchildren.*



*Guests visiting a village house.*

## Mahua Kothi - Taj Safaris, Bandhavgarh

### Luxury Combined with Rustic Charm



*Heritage homestead retaining period features.*

Retaining the features of the heritage homestead in which it is based, Mahua Kothi – Taj Safaris has seamlessly blended luxury with rustic charm. Twelve traditional mud huts, or kutiyas, have been created for guest accommodation using traditional local materials and labour. Richly coloured local textiles in shades of rust and burnt orange complement the natural hand finished lime and earth washed walls and handmade pottery roof tiles. Local handicrafts and textiles adorn the reception, dining areas and a courtyard reflecting local culture.



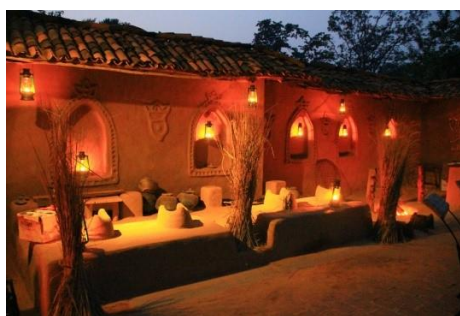
Guests are treated to the aroma of local dishes prepared on a chulha, a stone and mud mixed stove, prepared in the traditional way complementing their broader culinary offer.



*Guest cottages are modelled on traditional mud huts.*



*Local art is carried through the interior.*



*Traditional chulha used for preparing local dishes.*



*Guest room interior - reflecting local culture.*

A local Gond artist is employed on a daily basis to showcase his art. A broader range of paintings, Bastar handicrafts, Baiga jewellery and other items made by local tribal communities sourced with the help of NGO Last Wilderness Foundation are on sale in the lodge's shop.

Traditional flute music is played by a local musician on a daily basis. The lodge also showcases Baiga dance and music traditions.



*Local artist employed to showcase his art.*



*In-house shop selling local art and handicrafts.*



*Baiga dance and music performed at the lodge.*

## Mela Kothi – The Chambal Safari Lodge, National Chambal Sanctuary Putting Local Cultural Heritage on the Map



*19th heritage property sensitively restored.*



*Guest accommodation built in traditional style using local materials.*

Their conservation efforts have extended to the locality helping to put little known heritage sites onto the map bringing new livelihood opportunities to local communities. The local village of Holipura, with its exquisite havelis (grand houses), built by the prosperous Chaturvedi clan has been declared a heritage village with tours by local residents catalysed to unlock the village's rich heritage and colourful past.



*Heritage Management Plan submitted for nearby Bateashwar.*

Conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of the Chambal Valley lies at the heart of Mela Kothi - The Chambal Safari Lodge and its Foundation. Owners Ram Pratap Singh, a regional Convenor of INTACH (Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage) and his wife, Anu, have lovingly restored their 19<sup>th</sup> century heritage property. Guest accommodation is built in the traditional style with local materials and furnished to reflect local culture.



*Rooms decorated with locally sourced furnishings.*



*Haveli at nearby Holipura now a heritage village.*

New tourism-related enterprises have also been catalysed in nearby Bateashwar, an ancient settlement with a multitude of architectural styles. The lodge's foundation has developed a Heritage Management Plan aimed at helping to ensure the sustainable development, restoration and management of this historic site.

## Paatlidun Safari Lodge, Corbett

### Keeping Local Kumaoni Traditions Alive



*Buildings reflect local Kumaoni traditions using local materials and labour.*

The cottages are beautifully designed with colourful Garhwali art on entrance doors. The planting of a *tulsi* (*Ocimum tenuiflorum*) at the main entrance of every cottage reflects local practice.

The reception area has been decorated with Kumaoni furniture, handicrafts and showpieces. Beautiful framed paintings and handicrafts are displayed throughout the property. A museum in the grounds houses antiques found across Corbett and in other part of Kumaon. A tea shop named *Chahpani*, serves Kumaoni snacks with different varieties of herbal teas. The lodge's shop stocks local handicrafts sourced by NGOs SOS Care India, Umang, and Kilmora.

A philosophy of keeping local traditions alive lies at the heart of Paatlidun Safari Lodge's design and operations. Local craftsmen and labour have been used to construct a lodge which reflects local Kumaoni traditions using authentic, antique wooden frames and local tiles, mud, bricks and wood. Lodge walls have been finished with a local technique using raw eggs to give them a smooth finish and to enhance their natural cooling properties.



*Traditional wall paintings*



*Antique windows are incorporated into the design.*



*Kumaoni furniture and handicrafts are used for interiors.*



*Guest cottages reflect local traditions and craftsmanship.*

Guests are briefed about the surrounding area and local culture and can enjoy village visits and vibrant Kumaoni music and dance performances.



*Local Kumaoni dance and music are performed regularly at the lodge*



*Traditional Kumaoni snacks are served.*

## Red Earth Kabini, Nagarhole Reviving Local Culture



*Pooja Kunitha, a traditional devotional dance form.*

The lodge's commitment to reviving traditional performing arts complements the lodge architecture which is built using a traditional rammed earth technique. (See [Sustainable Building](#) profile case study).



*Cottage built with traditional rammed earth technique and elephant grass.*



*Island bar on one of the created waterbodies.*

Red Earth Kabini works with the NGO Sambrana to help revive dying folk and tribal dance and music forms within the Betta Kuruba communities and provide new livelihood opportunities for young people. The lodge provides a venue for village folk performances such as Pooja Kunitha, a dance form performed around Mandya and Bangalore worshipping the goddess Sakthi, and Kamsale, a form of traditional singing from the MM hills, Chamranjagar and Mysore. Budding local classical musicians are also given a platform to perform. The proceeds are shared with the artists and a portion is paid to Sambrana to support their work.



*Local classical musicians performing at the lodge.*



*Guests trying one of the local dances.*

## Singinawa Jungle Lodge, Kanha

### Promoting Contemporary and Traditional Local Culture



*Showcasing a thriving contemporary school of art which has emerged from local, indigenous culture.*



*Exterior of the 1,000 sq ft museum decorated with traditional Gond art.*

A vibrant programme of Baiga dance and songs is presented helping to keep ancient cultural traditions alive. For those wanting a further immersive cultural experience, the lodge plans day-long trips to an artisans' village near the park enabling guests to try their hand at the colourful art of the Baiga and Gond tribes and to buy paintings and sculpture from the artists directly.

Celebrating the rich culture of Gond and Baiga tribal communities and giving back to the people of Kanha lies at the heart of Singinawa's operations. An existing building was transformed by the present owner, Mrs Tulika Kedia, working alongside curator Dr Alka Pande into a solar powered Kanha Museum of Life and Art. On display are the works of innumerable gifted local artists from a contemporary school of art which has emerged from the region's ancient indigenous culture.



*Baiga dance and songs presented at the lodge.*

Colourful murals and Gond art adorn the walls of the lodge. Their shop stocks locally made handicrafts such as Gond paintings, Bastar artefacts, local pottery, Baiga jewellery and other handmade items. Local market visits are also encouraged to give an insight into local life.



*Gond murals and art adorn the lodge interior.*



*Lodge shop selling local handicrafts.*

## Svasara Jungle Lodge, Tadoba Safeguarding and Celebrating Local Culture and Cuisine

### A Note on Local Art



svasara jungle lodge

Art is central to many communities in India. For Svasara, we have hand picked the ones in which nature plays a dominant theme, often illustrated through decorative patterns, symbols and figures. If you wish to take these local crafts home please visit our nature shop.

- Arts & Crafts of India**
  - Gond Art at The Indoor Dining**  
 The most striking thing about Gond art, is that each artist has his/her own distinct "signature", in the form of a pattern that they use in their painting. We have featured Gond artist Rajendra Kumar Shyam's paintings in our indoor dining. This form of art originated from indigenous tribes of Central India.
  - Bhil Art at The Indoor Dining**  
 After Gonds, the second largest tribe of Central India is that of the Bhils. Traditionally their colourful paintings were done on the walls of their homes. Today, Bhil artists paint traditional nature and mythological themes but on modern mediums such as paper and canvas.
  - Mirmira Pottery at The Teakhouse**  
 The art of rural pottery is being kept alive with initiatives like the Gramodaya Sangh also known as Mirmira Pottery, located at Bhadravati, Chandrapur, Maharashtra. About 30 families in the village here pursue pottery as a means to livelihood. They specialize in techniques of glazed as well as terracotta pottery.
  - Madhubani Art at The Indoor Dining**  
 Madhubani paintings were traditionally done by women in villages belonging to the Mithila region of Bihar. Colours were derived from natural sources like plants and charcoal soot. These paintings are believed to have originated at the time of the Ramayana, when King Janak commissioned artists to do paintings at the time of marriage of his daughter, Sita, to Hindu god, Lord Ram. Hence, paintings mostly depict Hindu deities as well as natural objects like the sun, moon, flowers, animals and birds.
  - Sujani Embroidery in Our Rooms**  
 The stitching tradition of Bihar is called Sujani. This art has been preserved by women in remote villages. Using cotton thread and two types of chain stitch and the Sujani stitch (similar to running stitch), vibrant narratives are created each telling a distinctive tale. Our room folders have been created using this beautiful art.





Did you know? Svasara means a nest - a place of comfort and belonging that exists in harmony with nature.

### Briefing on local art in guest literature.

Visitors are encouraged to explore local villages on bicycles. Guided trips are also organised to local bamboo and pottery crafts centres and to local historical cultural sites such as the Markanda temples.



Providing opportunities to explore local village life.

Svasara Jungle Lodge offers an immersive learning experience for guests not only in nature but also local culture. The in-room folder includes a briefing on local tribes and their art in addition to a biodiversity checklist, jungle etiquette and the lodge's eco practices. The library includes a wide range of wildlife and cultural books. Art on display showcases local art forms – Gond, Madhubani and Bhil art in the dining room, Mirmira pottery in the Teakhouse, and Sujani embroidery in guest rooms – all profiled in briefing literature and on sale in their shop along with local bamboo handicrafts.

While regional recipes elsewhere are being lost, Svasara is documenting recipes from local villages and tribal hamlets and these form the core of their culinary experience for guests with produce sourced locally. Villagers are invited to the lodge on a weekly basis as part of the Vidharha Culinary Experience giving guests an opportunity to interact with them while the dishes are prepared. Dinner tables have a one-page description of the history and unique features of the cuisine served.



Regional recipes made with local ingredients.



Encouraging visits to local handicraft outlets.

## Tigergarh Wildlife Resort, Bandhavgarh

### Local Culture, Training and Enterprise Combined



*Workshop for local women outside rooms built in a traditional style.*

pottery and Gond art by local artists with opportunities to purchase work and artists paid for their time.

Baiga and Gond folk dances traditionally performed during festivals and ceremonies are performed at the resort providing a further income opportunity for the local community. The costumes are procured by the resort.

Tigergarh Wildlife Resort and its NGO CAT (Conservation, Art and Training) Foundation are helping to protect and celebrate the rural cultural traditions around Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve whilst opening up new opportunities for local livelihoods.

The resort is built using local materials and labour. Four of the eleven cottages are 'rural rooms' reflecting indigenous architecture. The courtyard adjacent is used for a host of workshops for guests and for CAT's training programmes for local women to learn new crafts skills. Guests can enjoy demonstrations of



*Local Gond artist Gariba Tekam demonstrating his work.*



*Outdoor dining reflecting local style.*

An outdoor dining area where guests can learn about local dishes, reflects the local vernacular style. Its floor, walls and traditional motifs made from mud and cow-dung are replastered on a regular basis by three women from the local village Ranchha.



*Sampling local cuisine.*

Local cultural references are displayed throughout the property from Gond paintings and masks made by the local Baiga tribe to the creative re-use of traditional local bamboo hats worn by villagers while farming as lampshades. Ceilings are made from bamboo woven by local artisans from the community living in the local village Tala.

Guided tours and personal interactions with local villagers are offered to give guests an insight into local life. Villagers receive a fee for home visits.



*Insights into village life.*



*Main dining area with ceiling from locally woven bamboo.*



## TIPS FOR GOOD PRACTICE

### Consultation

- Consult with your local community and establish a cooperative structure for communication (See Community Liaison and Support profile).
- Brief your community about tourism, the likely number, profile and frequency of your visitors.
- Review sensitivities, privacy issues and off-limit areas for visitors and obtain permissions.
- Facilitate two-way communication to enable grievances to be reported and resolved promptly.
- Ensure your activities bring positive benefits for local communities and avoid negative impacts.



Photo: Dhonk, a social enterprise.

### Research and development

- Research local history, cultural heritage sites and cultural traditions such as music, dance, local festivals, rituals, handicrafts, cuisine and building techniques.
- Hear your community's voice on their culture and retain the integrity of their traditions.
- Explore mutually advantageous opportunities and avoid exploiting local cultural traditions.

### Celebrate local cultural traditions

- Incorporate authentic elements of local culture into your operations instilling pride in local cultural traditions, and catalysing employment and livelihood opportunities.



Photo: Mahua Kothi - Taj Safaris.

Examples:

- Reflect local architecture, art and handicrafts in building, design and furnishings using local skills and labour.
  - Present cultural performances such as traditional music and dance.
  - Serve local cuisine using locally sourced ingredients and organise cookery demonstrations, talks or workshops.
  - Organise visits to markets, handicraft centres and other local outlets.
  - Stock locally made handicrafts in your shop or provide opportunities to showcase and sell local work at your accommodation.
  - Organise guided village walks and open up meaningful interaction to give an insight into local traditions and way of life.
  - Encourage support for local projects.
- Revive local cultural traditions and catalyse new opportunities such as homestays, village eateries, crafts enterprises, guided walks and visits to nearby heritage sites through support and training.

### Equitable engagement and fair wages

- Ensure fair and equitable business relationships and wages.
- Provide skills training opportunities.
- Respect local rights and avoid commercial exploitation.

### Briefing your guests and staff

- Prepare a briefing for your guests on local tribes and culture, encourage respect for cultural traditions and provide interpretative context.
- Include books on local culture in your library if available.
- Prepare a list of do's and don'ts for your guests and brief them on dress code, cultural sensitivities, considerate behaviour, off-limit areas, giving gifts, photography etc.
- Encourage your staff to respect local culture.



Photo: Kipling Camp - artist showing his work at the lodge.

### Restore and protect cultural heritage

- Contribute to protecting and restoring local properties, sites and traditions of historical, archaeological, cultural and spiritual significance.
- Record monetary or in kind support.
- Avoid disrupting access to sites by the local community and respect the right for privacy.

### Safeguarding cultural property

- Obtain permission for the use of cultural material, photography and recordings etc.
- Ensure historical and archaeological artefacts are not sold, traded or displayed unless permitted by local and international law.
- Brief and prevent visitors from damaging local sites or removing artefacts.



*Photo: Mela Kothi – The Chambal Safari Lodge; Bateshwar temples.*

***Information included may not be appropriate to every situation, destination and country and is intended for general guidance only and may be subject to change.***



*Photo: Kipling Camp.*

## USEFUL ORGANISATIONS AND LINKS

### India

- **Government of India Ministry of Tribal Affairs**

The Ministry was set up in 1999 to provide a focused approach to the integrated socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes who are amongst the poorest people in India.

- State/Union Territory-wise list of Scheduled Tribes in India
- Tribal Research Institutes
- Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd (TRIFED)  
<https://trifed.tribal.gov.in/>
- Acts and Rules
- Key Statistics  
<https://tribal.nic.in/>

- **Indian Tribal Images**

An initiative started by Shrikrishna Paranjpe, a photojournalist and founder of Balmudra Development & Research Centre, an NGO in Pune which aims to preserve a record of tribal culture and history in the face of modernisation and integration. Shrikrishna has photographed more than 200 tribes across India.

<https://indiantribalimages.com/>

### NGOs mentioned in the profile:

- **Dhonk**

Dhonk is a social enterprise providing skills training in handicrafts to empower village women living around Ranthambhore Tiger Reserve to benefit from sustainable livelihoods linked to tiger tourism and through this, to help protect tigers and avoid man-animal conflict. Other benefits given to the participants and their families include female child education, healthcare, loans, micro-finance for buying livestock and machinery, counselling on issues such as education and domestic violence and raising awareness of conservation.

<https://dhonk.com/>



*Photo: Dhonk*

- **Last Wilderness Foundation**

A foundation increasing awareness about India's wildlife, its forests and the plight of its tribal populations working to conserve natural heritage and contribute to the sustainable development of the villages and tribal settlements on the peripheries of its forests.

<http://thelastwilderness.org/>

- **SOS Care India**

An ISO 9001 certified organisation working across India to empower women through education, training and healthcare. Activities include entrepreneurship and skill development in specific sectors such as leather craft, woodwork, matting and basket weaving, pottery, handicrafts and eco-friendly products.

<http://soscareindia.org/>

- **Umang**

Umang (Mahila Umang Producers company) is a producer-owned women's cooperative in the Kumaon region of Uttarakhand in India. The women are organised into self help groups producing a range of organic artisan products including fruit preserves, pickles and woollens which provide new income and a sense of empowerment and confidence to these hill women. Members are able to get loans. Profits are distributed amongst the group in proportion to work done.

<https://umang-himalaya.com/>

## Nepal

- **Indigenous Voices**

An organisation run by journalists seeking to give a voice to the indigenous communities of Nepal and provide a web portal of resources including profiles on the different indigenous peoples.

[www.indigenousvoice.com/en/](http://www.indigenousvoice.com/en/)

## USEFUL PUBLICATIONS

**Indigenous People and The Travel Industry: Global Good Practice Guidelines**, George Washington University International Institute of Tourism Studies, G Adventures and the Planeterra Foundation



*Cultural heritage and enterprise combined - Satpura women learning the lost local traditional craft skill of macramé knotting to make plant hangers and handbags at Forsyth Lodge. Read case study in Local Economy profile.*

# HELP US DRIVE THE CHANGE

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to sustainability



TOFTigers is a global business-to-business nature travel charity with a mission to improve the ecological and economic sustainability of wildlands and wildlife across Asia. Well-planned and well-managed responsible tourism is a force for good bringing economic benefits to rural areas, restoring habitat, supporting conservation and local communities, changing poachers into protectors and giving visitors inspiring experiences of nature. We work with the travel trade, destinations, accommodation providers, governmental and conservation organisations to make this happen through training, advocacy, certification, promoting best practice and partnership working.

Our **certification programmes** place local communities, nature and environmental sustainability at the heart of business operations. They are a symbol of assurance for travellers and the travel trade that the places they select to stay at have been reviewed by environmental experts and exceed a minimum standard on a journey towards best practice. The PUG certification is recognised by the United Nation's Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC) and is aimed solely at nature focused accommodation. The Footprint certification has a broader client base that is not wholly nature focused and encompasses accommodation providers in rural, natural or more urban landscapes.

[Sign up for certification](#), [get involved in our campaign](#) or view sustainable travel options [on our website](#) and download the [Great Wildlife Travel Guide](#).

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- [Cultural Heritage](#)
- [Health, Safety and Pollution](#)

***Correct at time of press. Information included may not be appropriate to every situation, destination and country and is intended for general guidance only and may be subject to change.***

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