

THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS SRP

ABOUT ANDAMAN ISLANDS

If you are stuck in the rut and a spirit sapping life, then the idyllic tropical archipelago of the Andaman Islands are the perfect getaway and escape from the daily humdrum of a fast-paced life. The Andaman Islands is a heavenly paradise – serene and untouched.

The Andaman Island tour packages are designed to 'let your hair down', unwind and chill out, and recharge your batteries. So whether it is a couples/honeymooners vacation, family vacation, holidaying with friends, or going solo – the Andaman Islands will overreach, in fulfilling your dreams of a great vacation.

The Andaman Islands are recognised globally, as one of the best honeymoon destinations in Asia. The Andaman tours offer exclusive packages for honeymooners and couples that include, serene and secluded virgin beaches, luxury hotels and resorts, cruise rides in the Bay of Bengal, candlelight dinner on the beach, and more.

There are many pearly white-sand beaches in the Andaman Islands, each more scenic than the other in its own unique and charming way. Quite a few of these beaches are ranked as amongst the best in Asia. These beaches with their scenic landscapes, peaceful ambience and chilled out atmosphere offer the ultimate out of the world experience.

Sea walkers, divers and snorkelers are drawn like a magnet, to the attractive colourful shallow coral reefs, teeming with exotic species of aquatic flora and fauna.

If you are an adrenaline junkie, then there are more exciting options for you, such as parasailing, jet-skiing, kayaking, banana and boat rides, swimming with elephants, game fishing, and camping.

The gorgeous vistas of Havelock (Swaraj Dweep) and Neill islands, make them two of the more frequented islands, on the Andaman Island tour package. Keep your camera ready, to capture some exquisite memories of silvery beaches, aqua-green waters, beautiful sunsets, and tropical forests.

The Andaman Islands are about 1400 kilometres (kms), off the eastern coastline of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, in the Bay of Bengal. Of the 572 Andaman and Nicobar Islands that constitute the Union Territory of India, only 38 are inhabited, of which, a few are open to tourists.

On the South Andaman Island is Port Blair, the gateway to the archipelago, and the capital city of the Andaman Islands.

The ball is now in your court. Book your Andaman Islands tour package and start packing your bags. Travel light though, because all you will need is beachwear, accessories, and other essentials!

BEST TIME TO VISIT ANDAMAN ISLANDS

Andaman Islands experience average to very heavy rainfall during the monsoon season – June to September, which can make the Andaman Islands a very wet place. Also, the waters will be quite choppy, due to the effects of the monsoon weather system.

The recommended and ideal time to visit the Andaman Islands is between October to May, when the weather is pleasant and the ambient temperature is between 25° and 29° Celsius.

If you coincide your visit with the Andaman Islands' Annual Tourism Festival, in January, you can join the vibrant cultural festivities that exhibit the varied talents of the local artists and performers.

The waters of Andaman Islands are refreshingly warm and rejuvenating from October to May, which is perfect for water sports, adventures and activities.

A typical Andaman Islands tour would take at least 5-6 days, anything less will leave you wanting for more. Your travel time will take another 2-3 days.

HOW TO REACH ANDAMAN ISLANDS?

Indians tourists do not need a passport for Andaman & Nicobar Islands, they need a permit. However, foreign tourists will need a passport and a permit, from the concerned immigration authorities, to enter the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Air

The most preferred and quickest way to reach the Andaman Islands is a direct 2.5 hours (approximately) flight, from Kolkata, Bengaluru, or Chennai.

Chartered planes fly directly to the Andaman Islands, adhering to all rules, regulations and laws, as per the Andaman Islands' authorities.

Sea

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands government website (<http://www.andaman.gov.in/>), provides information, about the sailing schedules that are announced 30 days in advance, of the passenger ships that depart from Chennai, Kolkata and Vishakapatnam, for the Andaman Islands.

Cruise liners and private boats can dock in, liaising with the concerned local Andaman Island authorities, after adhering to rules, regulations and laws.

WHERE TO GO IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS?

1. Port Blair

Port Blair, the capital of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, is the official overseer of the culture and heritage of the Andaman Islands. Some of the 'must-visit' sites in Port Blair are –

a. Cellular Jail: Also known as Kālā Pānī (Hindi for black waters), the Cellular Jail was a colonial prison, used by the British, to exile and silence political prisoners.

b. Corbyn's Cove: Corbyn's Cove is a scenic drive from Port Blair. One of the busier beaches of the Andaman Islands, it offers water activities, such as jet-skiing, diving, and semi-submarine rides.

c. Samudrika Naval Marine Museum: This museum represents a perfect amalgamation of historical and modern Andaman. The skeleton of a massive blue whale greets you, as you enter the museum. An aquarium displays a variety of fish species, from a parrotfish, to the rare and venomous species of stonefish, and corals.

d. Dinner cruise: 'TSG Bella Bay', which departs from Junglighat Jetty every evening, offers a luxurious dinner cruise, and dancing under the stars, to the beat of the live band and DJ Dance, with your loved ones.

2. Havelock Island (Swaraj Dweep)

Havelock Island is out to charm either a solo backpacker, a couple, a group of friends, or a family on vacation. Revel in the soft white sandy beaches, or dive into the aqua-green waters, with various options such as jet-skiing, snorkelling, and diving. Expect to see exotic fauna, such as emerald doves, long-tailed meerkats and hanging parrots on this island. Some of the places to visit on Havelock Island are –

a. Radhanagar Beach: Known for its white sand beach, clear waters and serene nature; you can laze on the beach, go swimming, or enjoy some beautiful sunsets.

b. Elephant Beach: Famous for its adventure sports and crystal clear waters, you can do scuba diving, snorkelling, kayaking, jet-skiing, and swimming with the elephants.

c. Kalapathar Beach: With amazing views and sunsets, it is an extremely relaxing location.

d. Vijaynagar Beach: This secluded and pristine beach is known for its serenity, calmness, and the natural scenic beauty.

3. Neill Island (Shaheed Dweep)

Neill Island is a short ferry ride from Havelock Island. For those who seek solitude, serenity and peace on their holidays, your Andaman Island tour package must include the Neill Island. Let's explore the 'must-do' activities on Neill Island.

a. Howrah Bridge: This is a unique phenomenon of mother nature, close to the Laxmanpur beach. It is formed by two corals, creating a naturally shaped bridge. It got its name from early Bengali settlers, on the Andaman Islands.

b. Neill Island 3 Point Tour: Explore the three beautiful beaches of Neill Island –

- *Laxmanpur Beach:* Experience spectacular sunsets, with the Howrah Bridge in the foreground. Be cautioned, it is not safe for beginners to get into the water, due to the strong currents and high waves.

- *Sitapur Beach:* With a lush green backdrop on its three sides, it opens up to a wonderful cobalt coloured seafront. One of the quietest beach on Neill Island, you could get lost in your own peaceful world.

- *Bharatpur Beach:* Also called the 'Sunrise Beach', for its amazing sunrises. It is one of the most tranquil and picturesque beaches of Andaman Islands.

c. Snorkelling and Scuba Diving: Snorkel or dive into small lagoons, around Ramnagar and Laxmanpur beaches, where you will find exquisite coral and marine life. You will be fortunate to spot a Dugong (Sea Cow), the state animal of Andaman Islands.

d. Glass Bottom Boat Ride: If you are not comfortable snorkelling or diving, you can enjoy the corals and marine life, through the transparent glass bottom boat rides.

e. Trekking: Hike through the rich flora and fauna of the dense tropical forest, on Neill Island. Hire a guide, so you do not get lost.

4. Bartang Island

If you are an adventure 'junkie', Bartang Island is your 'go-to' island, with its enchanting virgin beaches, limestone caves, tidal swamp forests, bird watching opportunities, and adventure mangrove boat rides. Bartang Island is 90 kms north of Port Blair, between the Middle and South Andaman Islands. Your 'To-Do' list for Bartang Island includes –

- a. *Limestone Caves*: Extremely popular for their shimmering structures, the caves are made up of limestone, and the rare stalactites and stalagmites structures.
- b. *Parrot Island*: Trek through dense mangrove forests to reach Parrot Island. Home to parrots and colourful parakeets, it is a treat for bird enthusiasts.
- c. *Baludera Beach*: Your escape from 'madding' crowd. A must for your Andaman Islands tour package, with its serene environment that gives you a sense of intense calm and peace.
- d. *Mud Volcanoes*: Accessible either by road or sea, the mud volcanoes are tiny muddy craters, formed by natural gases, emitted by organic matter.
- e. *Mangrove Creeks*: A boat safari is the best way to enjoy the mangrove creeks at leisure, and marvel at the natural beauty, and the flora and fauna of these creeks.

5. Diglipur

Diglipur Island located in North Andaman Islands abounds in rich flora, fauna, natural parks and vibrant marine life. Diglipur has some amazing places to visit, such as –

- a. *Saddle Peak*: At 732 metres, Saddle Peak is the highest point of the Andaman Islands, in the Bay of Bengal. It is part of a National Park, a rich bio-diverse tropical jungle that is home to over 13 indigenous bird species, 36 indigenous insect species, and 6 indigenous trees species. Kalpong, the only river of Andaman Islands, flows through the forest and offers a refreshing drinkable freshwater stream.
- b. *Ross and Smith Islands*: Connecting these magnificent islands is a slim fifty metres long sand bar. It boasts of 'picture-perfect' warm crystal clear waters and untamed virgin beaches.
- c. *Turtle Nesting/hatching at Kalipur Beach*: Olive Ridley, Leather Back, Hawksbill and Green Turtles nest on Kalipur Beach, typically between October and March. The Andaman & Nicobar government hatchery facilitates and aids in the nesting. You will enjoy swimming and snorkelling in its crystal clear waters.
- d. *Active Mud Volcanoes*: Much like the ones at Bartang Island, these are small muddy craters that are surrounded by some amazing natural flora and fauna.

6. Little Andaman Island

One of the largest Andaman Islands, Little Andaman Island is the furthest inhabited island, lying 120 kms south of Port Blair. Little Andaman Island is replete with stretches of uninhabited pristine beaches, azure waters, breathtaking waterfalls, dense evergreen rainforest, red oil palm plantations and the best surf in India. Some of the places to visit are –

- a. *Butler Bay*: This is one of the more frequented places, where you can soak in the sun, snorkel, dive or surf.
- b. *White Surf Waterfall*: Aptly named as White Surf Waterfall, because of the white foamy water descending from the hillock.
- c. *Whisper Wave Waterfall*: Similar to the White Surf Waterfall, you will find this waterfall, in the middle of the forest.

7. Barren Island

The craggy Barren Island is home to South Asia and India's only active volcano. It is 135 kms south of Port Blair. Half a kilometre from the shore, the crater often emits smoke and spurts of light. You can view the island via –

- a. *Sea Plane*: One can view the volcano and its crater from a seaplane, but it will not land on the water.
- b. *Ferry Ride*: The ferry will take three rides around the Barren Island. You can see the volcano from afar. No one is allowed to disembark on the island.

THINGS TO DO IN THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS

1. Andaman Cuisine

The Andaman Islands cuisine is an aromatic and flavourful blend of the Indian culture that is embedded in these islands. It is influenced by the cuisines of the Hindus, Christians, Muslims and Sikhs settlers, on the Andaman Islands.

For the Andaman Islands, seafood is on the top of the food pyramid, with dishes like fish curry, macher jhol, coconut prawn curry, and such.

2. Seakart Adventures

The Seakart is a unique watercraft, with a capacity of three people. Anybody can drive a Seakart, as it does not require any swimming or driving skills; but only under the supervision of a licensed instructor.

Unlike jet-skis and speed boards, you can drive the Seakart deeper into the sea. The 20 minutes, 5-6 kms ride starts from the Corbyn's Cove Beach, at Port Blair, through to the Flag Point, near Ross Island, and back.

3. Bioluminescence

The Andaman Islands offer an amazing and magical night kayaking adventure, off the Havelock Island, after sunset.

Every swish of your paddle will awaken the phytoplankton in the sea, with their glowing 'Bioluminescence' light.

Ideal months for the 'Bioluminescence' phenomenon in the Andaman Islands, are between November and February. 'Bioluminescence' lasts for just about 3 hours every night.

4. Swim with Elephants

Elephant Beach is a 20 minutes ride, via boat from Havelock Island's, Swaraj Dweep Dock. Rajan, a 63 years old elephant and his family, are world renown, as the elephant swimming family in the Andaman Islands.

You can swim, bathe, dive or snorkel with Rajan and his family, while professional photographers capture memories of these lovely moments.

5. Limestone Caves Excursion

Hidden from the world till recently, the Limestone Caves are on the Baratang Island, in the Andaman Islands archipelago.

Limestone is a sedimentary rock that is formed under the sea that evolves over time into stalactites and stalagmites, i.e., from the floor to the ceiling and vice versa.

The Limestone Caves excursion starts from Port Blair, through 100 kms of a lush rainforest reserve. A vehicle ferry will take you from Middle Strait to Baratang Island. You will then take a speedboat ride through the mangroves, to the Nayadera jetty. And then a final trek of 10 minutes, to the Limestone Caves.

6. Semi Submarine Ride

The Coral Safari Semi Submarine Ride is ideal, for those who want to explore the awesome marine life, off the coasts of Andaman Islands, without getting their 'beaks' wet.

There are no constraints to the depths that the submarine can dive to. As you dive into the waters of the Andaman Islands, you will find colourful coral, hordes of different fish species, large tunas, and manta rays.

The ride is open for all age groups. It is an adventure of a lifetime, especially for kids. How often does a kid dream of diving deep underwater in a submarine, and see sea creatures in their natural state!

Equipped with large windows, the submarine is fully air-conditioned, with a capacity of 100 people. The 1-hour submarine trip starts from and returns to the North Bay Island, which is north of Port Blair.

7. Volcano Tour

There are more than one volcanoes in the Andaman Islands! Surprised? Let's delve in!

a. The Barren Island Volcano

The only confirmed 'active' volcano in South Asia, is on Barren Islands, of the Andaman Islands archipelago. While one cannot set foot on the island, one can dive into the waters around the island, which are considered to be the best scuba diving destination in the world, due to the crystal clear visibility, an abundance of Manta Rays and interesting basalt formations.

b. The Dormant Volcano of Narcondam Island

256 kms north-east of Port Blair is the dormant volcano of the Narcondam Island. 'Narcondam' is coined from the word of the Tamil language - 'Naraka Kundam', or the pit of hell. As per the Andaman Island authorities, it is a wildlife sanctuary and a protected reserve. The Narcondam Hornbill is endemic to the island, along with Narcondam small flying fox and other species of birds and animals. Divers can explore the massive barrel sponges, huge gorgonian fans and lush soft corals.

c. The Active Mud Volcanoes of Andaman Islands

A mud volcano is caused by the eruption of hot mud, slurries, gases and water from the ground, forming a dome-like mud structure.

In the Andaman Islands, you will find mud volcanoes at Diglipur and Baratang. Both are accessed, via passages through lush green rainforests.

8. Turtle Nesting

Close to Diglipur town is the Kalipur beach, which is world-famous, as the nesting site for four highly endangered species of turtles, viz. – Olive Ridley, Leather Back, Hawk Bill and Green Turtles.

The nesting season is October to March. The nesting happens after sunset. Do not make any noise or disturbance, as you will distract the turtles, who could be laying their eggs.

ANDAMAN TRAVEL ADVISORY – COVID 19

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have reopened for tourists from 27 September 2020. The re-opening comes with many rules and regulations, which need to be strictly followed by all tourists.

You can check this URL link for more information.

<https://www.go2andaman.com/covid-19-reopening-andaman-tourism-updates/>

THE TOP 5 DISHES OF THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS

1. Chilli Curry

Prepared with lots of onions, tomatoes, a variety of spices and hot chillies, Chilli Curry is a typical Andaman Island hot/spicy dish that is the favourite of the locals and foreign tourists.

2. Fish Curry

The Andaman Islands are a natural haven for seafood. Pick your choice of fish, cooked with exotic and aromatic spices that will keep your coming back for more.

3. Amritsari Kulcha

The Sikhs brought this dish to the Andaman Islands. While the dimension and taste may differ from restaurant to restaurant, the basic stuffing is onion, coriander leaves, spices and other seasonings.

4. Macher Jhol

Introduced by early Bengalis settlers, to the Andaman Islands, its ingredients include fish, chillies, coriander seeds, turmeric powder, mustard seeds, and some other active ingredients.

5. Coconut Prawn Curry

This is prawns, cooked in delicious aromatic spices, with coconut milk. It tastes great, with some steamed rice.

HONEYMOON IN ANDAMAN

The Andaman Islands tour packages are a popular choice amongst honeymooners, for its pristine, quiet and secluded sparkling beaches, aqua-green waters, gorgeous and picturesque natural vistas, lush green tropical forests, luxury dinner cruise rides, candlelight dinner on the beach, and pocket-friendly stays/accommodations.

It is best to visit the Andaman Islands during its mild winters, between November and March. This is the best time to enjoy the Andaman islands, as the beaches are not too hot, and the water is clearer, calmer and perfect for all kinds of water sports and activities.

Some of the most frequented beaches for honeymooners, include the beaches on Havelock Island, Ross Island, Neill Island, Baratang Island, and Diglipur Island. Each of these beaches is unique and a treat to the senses. Whether you want to relax and sunbathe on the beach, or swim, dive or snorkel in the crystal clear waters – you are sure to take back some amazing romantic memories, to last you a lifetime.

TOUR PACKAGES FROM CITY

The Andaman Islands tour packages offer a host of options for you that range from scenic beaches and aqua-green waters, to active, dormant and mud volcanoes, from lush green tropical forests to the mangroves, from Cellular Jail and Anthropological Museums to all kinds of water sports, rides and activities, from pocket-friendly stays to luxurious hotels and resorts. Take your pick of the Andaman Islands tour packages, and have a 'whale' of a time!