

Pilgrims in India

SHIRDI

Shirdi is a small town located in the state of Maharashtra in western India. The place is around 296 km (around 6 hours drive) from Mumbai. Shirdi extends latitude 19°45' N and longitude 74°25' E. Shirdi is basically a religious tourist center. Thousands of pilgrims flock to Shirdi.

There are several places of tourist attractions in Shirdi, but it is the shrine of Sai Baba that is the hub of activity.

Samadhi Mandir of Shri Sai Baba was actually owned by a millionaire from Nagpur and a famous Sai devotee Shreemant Gopalrao. He wanted to keep an idol of Murlidhar here. However, according to the legends, Baba himself became Murlidhar and the temple became the Samadhi Mandir of Baba. The Samadhi of Baba is built with white marble stones. The railings around it are full of ornamental decorations. The idol of Baba is a marvelous statue made up of Italian marble built by Late Balaji Vasant in 1954. The temple has an assembly hall for about 600 devotees. The assembly hall also houses a showcase having various items used by the sage. The first floor of the temple has the pictures depicting the life of the saint. The temple opens on 5 am with morning prayers and close down at 10 pm with night prayers.

There are several places to see and visit near Shirdi too. Situated around 5 km from Shirdi is Sakori. The place is home to the Upasini Maharaj.

Shanisinghnapur is 70 km from Shirdi. A temple devoted to Shani is located here.

The Indian town of Shirdi is easily accessible through air, road and rail from the other major Indian cities and states. [touristplacesinindia](#) can arrange for you all types of transport for your comfortable journey to and in Shirdi and throughout the Indian state of Maharashtra.

AMRITSAR

The Golden Temple is the ultimate Sikh pilgrimage. The Harmandir Sahib, as it is traditionally known, actually means the temple of Hari or the Supreme God. Also known as the Darbar Sahib, the stupendous, architectural phenomena is located at the city of Amritsar. The temple's exterior is gold-plated and the structure stands in the middle of a square tank. There is a causeway across the Pool of Nectar to reach the Temple. The shrine is symbolical of the doctrines of Sikhism. It also represents the magnificent strength of all the Sikhs. The amazing thing about Harmandir Sahib is that it has doorways on all four sides, meant to be open for the people of the all four castes. All over the, the Sikhs always look forward to visit to the magnificent temple and offer prayers at the Harmandir Sahib.

The study of the art and architecture of the Golden Temple has, unfortunately, remained a subject of unconcern for art historians and critics. Even scholars of Indian temple architecture have bypassed it and references, whenever made, were mere courtesies. Fergusson considered the Golden Temple an example of the forms, which Hindu temple architecture assumed in the nineteenth century. According to the official list of buildings of interest, published by the Punjab Government in 1875, the design of the temple, as reconstructed by Ranjit Singh, was borrowed from the shrine of Saint Mian Mir, near Lahore. Louis Rousselet, writing in 1882, regarded it as a "handsome style of architecture". Major Cole described it as an adaptation of Mohammadan styles, flavoured with a good deal of Hindu tradition. Percy Brown considered it to be a product of the synthesis of Hindu and Muslim influences, combined with elaborations that imparted it an appearance of its own.

PUTTAPARTHY

Located in the south-western part of Andhra Pradesh, Puttaparthi is surrounded by the arid and rocky hills bordering Karnataka. Famous for its Sathya Sai Baba Mandir, it is one of the famous religious tourist destinations of the world. A number of domestic as well as foreign tourists visit this place every year just to have a glimpse of the legendary Sathya Sai Baba and also to see his most talked about ashram. It is believed that the present Sai Baba is the reincarnation of the former Sai Baba of Maharashtra popularly known as Sai Baba of Shirdi. The income of the ashram has been used for the establishment of a number of public utility services. Although there is not much to see in Puttaparthi, the ashram itself keeps the attention of the visitor with its varied attractions. Puttaparthi belongs to the Bangalore Circuit of South India. The other destinations that come under the circuit are Bangalore, Kolar, and Nellur. Being at Puttaparthi, the best thing one can do is to visit the ashram and pay reverence to Sai Baba. The nearby areas like Lepakshi are also worth visiting.

The Sai baba ashram itself is a huge complex with room for thousands, with canteens, shops, a museum and library, and a vast assembly hall where Sai Baba gives darshan twice daily (6.45-7.00 AM and 3.45-4.00 PM). Queues start more than an hour before the appointed time, and a lottery decides who gets to sit near the front.

On the way between Bangalore and Puttaparthi, one can find the Veerbhadra temple at Lepakshi. At the entrance of the town, there is a huge, monolithic Nandi, the sacred bull of Lord Shiva. The temple is about 500 meters away.

On November 23, the birthday of Sai Baba is celebrated in the ashram. On this day Sai Baba delivers a message to his devotees. The devotees of Sai Baba regard this day as a holy day.

The Indian city of Puttaparthi is easily accessible through air, road and rail from the other major Indian cities and states. [touristplacesinindia](#) can arrange for you all types of transport for your comfortable journey to and in Puttaparthi and throughout the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh.

VAISHNO DEVI

Indian Spiritual tradition has propounded four Purusharth (objectives) of a human life. These being Dharm (Righteousness), Arth (Material Pursuits), Kaam (Contentment) and Moksh (Enlightenment). Shri Mata Vaishno Devi is believed to grant all the four boons to those who visit Her Holy Shrine. She is considered to fulfill anything and everything that a person wishes for in life, in a righteous way. It is an experience of all, that no one goes empty handed from Her Great Pilgrimage.

The journey to the Holy Shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi is thus an enchanting journey of the places where Mata Vaishnavi had spent some time while observing various spiritual disciplines and penances. The culmination of this journey is at the Holy Cave where She merged Her Human form with the astral form of Her creators, the three Supreme Energies

A pilgrimage to the Holy Shrine of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji is considered to be one of the holiest pilgrimages of our times. Popular the world over as Moonh Maangi Muradein Poori Karne Wali Mata, which means, the Mother who fulfills whatever Her children wish for, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Ji resides in a Holy Cave located in the folds of the three peaked mountain named Trikuta (pronounced as Trikoot). The Holy Cave attracts lakhs of devotees every year. In fact, the number of Yatris visiting the Holy Shrine annually now exceeds 5 million. This is due to the unflinching faith of the devotees who throng the Shrine from all parts of India and abroad.

The Holy Cave of the Mother is situated at an altitude of 5200 ft. The Yatris have to undertake a trek of nearly 12 km from the base camp at Katra. At the culmination of their pilgrimage, the yatris are blessed with the Darshans of the Mother Goddess inside the Sanctum Sanctorum- the Holy Cave. These Darshans are in the shape of three natural rock formations called the Pindies. There are no statues or idols inside the Cave.

Darshans are open round the clock throughout the year.

Since the year 1986, when the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (commonly called Shrine

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Board) was formed (under “The Jammu & Kashmir Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Act, 1986’), the management of the Shrine and regulation of the Yatra has been vested in the Board. The Board has undertaken a number of developmental activities aimed at making the Yatra a comfortable and satisfying experience for the Yatris. So far, over 125 crores of rupees have been invested by the Board for providing various infrastructural and other facilities. The Board continues to reinvest the offerings and donations received in carrying out improvements in various kinds of Yatri facilities

TIRUPATI

Tirupati town is 67-km from Chittoor in Chittoor district, the southern portion of Andhra Pradesh. The most important place of interest at the place is the historic shrine of Sri Venkateswara, the Lord of Seven Hills, who is famous all over the country.

The shrine is located on a hill at Tirumala, a cluster of seven hills known as Seshachalam or Venkatachalam with an elevation of 853m (2,800ft.) above the sea level. Said to be the richest temple in the world, this temple is a vibrant cultural and philanthropic institution with a grand history spanning several centuries. It attracts pilgrims from all over the country who stand in line for hours together to obtain a glimpse of the presiding deity for a few fleeting seconds.

Tirupati - A Fine Example Of Dravidian Temple Architecture

The temple at Tirumala is believed to have existed from ancient times. The dynasties like the Pallavas of Kanchipuram, the Cholas of Tanjore, the Pandyas of Madurai and the Kings and chiefs of Vijayanagara, vied with one another in endowing the Shrine and offering worship of the presiding deity. The Tirupati temple with its 'gopuram' or tower is a fine example of Dravidian architecture.

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The elaborate rituals and mode of worship in the temple were prescribed by the saint Ramanujacharya and are being followed even today. Anointing the idol with camphor, and the offering by pilgrims of the hair on their heads by getting themselves shaved by licensed barbers are the important customs in vogue at Tirupati Temple.