**Visiting the amazing city of Kolhapur**

There are several places in Maharashtra where you could enjoy a vacation, but one of the must-visit places on your travel itinerary would be Kohlapur. It is an ancient city situated on the Panchganga river banks and mentioned in the holy scriptures and known for so many religious places as well places of entertainment and fun, not to forget the best shopping experience.

**Places to visit in Kohlapur**

*Panhala fort*

The fort had been fortified by three double-walled gates of huge size for protection against enemy attacks and still happens to be the largest fort in the Deccan region. The visitors will find this a great place for trekking. The fort has several parapets, ramparts as well as bastions adorned with motifs of various dynasties that happened to rule the area. It is an Indo-Islamic-style fort that happened to be the residences of some very prominent royalty such as Shivaji and the queen regent of Kohlapur, Tarabai.

*Dajipur Wildlife sanctuary*

This sanctuary once used to be the hunting grounds for the maharajahs. It is also known as a bison sanctuary, which has herds of Gaurs, also known as the Indian Bison. There are other animals you can spot as you take a safari through the sanctuary, such as the tigers, sloth bears, leopards in these thick forests.

*Shri Chatrapati Shahu Museum*

It is an amazing place to check out ancient items and articles of value that were once used by royalty. The ground floor of the palace has been converted into a museum to hold the artifacts for public viewing. Most of the possessions belong to the Maharaj Chatrapati Shahu. The place is a beautiful structure with polished black stone used to make the edifice which was different for any king to own in those times. The pieces kept for public viewing give you glimpses of the lifestyle maharajas led.

*Gaganbawada*

Ganganbawada is the name of the town that houses the Gagangad Fort, Karul Ghat and the Bhuibavda Ghat. The place also boasts several temples, with many worshippers coming from far and wide to fulfill their wishes by the presiding deity. There is adam dam nearby, known as Lakshmapur Dam, which you could visit, and finally the Pandav caves, which is a hotspot for shooting movies.

*Ramthirth waterfall*

This amazing waterfall is found on the banks of the river Hiranyakeshi. It’s a good place to pack some lunch and snacks and head down to this place. It’s a nice place with lots of greenery around with plenty of quiet surroundings wherein you can enjoy the beauty of the place without any disturbance. A little further down, you will find several temples. A few miles away, you could trek down to worship the local deities.

*Sagareshwar Deer sanctuary*

The public can have a beautiful view of the sprawling sanctuary of eleven square kilometers. It has a rich flora and fauna, which is a treat for sore eyes and people who live in the city. Sagareshwar dear sanctuary is one of the protected sanctuaries in the region because you will be able to find some rare species that are now verge of extinction. Hence safeguarding them would be of utmost importance. The sanctity of the place has to be maintained by the visitors.

*Sidhagiri Museum*

It is a rare wax museum depicting village life. The museum is housed within a temple of Lord Shiva and mutt. The statues are made with wax and cement and cover an area of seven acres. You could also enjoy the beautiful greenery around, which is part of the museum courtyard.

*Teen Darwaza*

It is a renowned entrance of the Panhala Fort. The double gateway welcomes you to an arched courtyard which again leads you to two gates. You can check out the outermost gate is elaborate, with a ceiling protruding and a chamber at the very top. At the same time, the inner gate is detailed with ornate carvings of Lord Ganesh. If you look closely, you will find intricate inscriptions carved on the walls bearing the gates.

*Botanical gardens*

The garden boasts of various varieties of flowering plants and lush greenery adorning every nook and corner. These gardens are located in the Panhala fort complex. Visitors and locals can pick out marked trails for cycling and walk. You will also spot rare birds and listen to their calls.

*Shalini palace*

This palace is built for princess Shalini Raje on the banks of Lake Rankala with the exorbitant cost going into building this magnificent structure which is surrounded by palm trees and overlooking lush gardens. It now has become a luxury heritage hotel.

**Temples of significance**

*Kopeshwar Temple*

The temple has been dedicated to Lord Shiva, located in Khidrapur. You will find the beautiful temple on the banks of the river Krishana. Adorned with beautiful craftmanship and detailing, which you find on every wall and pillar of the temple. With intricate carvings adding to the beauty of the temple, you definitely will fall in love with the serene atmosphere. The temple also has idols of other gods such ad Vishnu and Brahma. You will find the trinity in one temple itself: the creator, the sustainer and the destroyer in this famous temple of Kohalapur.

*Narsinwadi Datta Mandir*

This is a must-visit temple. The temple is dedicated to Narasimha Saraswati, which happens to be the reincarnation of Lord Dattatreya. Many people from neighboring states come all the way to pray to this deity which is renowned to be a powerhouse of all the gods. This temple also happens to be on the banks of the river Krishana.

*Mahalaxmi temple*

The Chalukya rulers built the temple, which happens to be one of the six abodes that the present deity resides. The deity is the goddess of power (Shakti) and one of the most revered goddesses by the Hindus. You will find that people from all walks of life visit this temple and considering it is also one of the prominent pilgrimage sites in India.

*Binakhambi Ganesh Temple*

It is the next most significant temple in Kolhapur that you have to visit and seek the blessing from Lord Ganesha. The structure is built without any pillars, making it a marvel for most people. The unique architecture is one of a kind and people flock here to see how this is possible even without using the latest technology.

*Gangagiri Maharaj Math Temple*

This temple is located on a hilltop and Dijapur forest surrounding Gangagiri Maharaj Math temple. The view is so beautiful, which allows you to take amazing pictures. Those who want to sign up for yoga and meditation classes can be availed of here.

**Shopping in Kohlapur**

Kohlapur is known for the special Kolhapur chappals made from pure leather with a distinct style that has been worn both by men and women for centuries. These go well with traditional garments and inexpensive footwear that looks great on every foot. The design is unique and the material is locally sourced. There are generations of makers who have sustained the craft over the years till this date. You, with the same dedication, sell these unique chappals buyers. It’s an excellent souvenir for visitors to take back home. You can buy the famous nine-yard saree and nose embellishment known as Nathh from the local bazaars. It gives you the authentic Maharashtrian look that the women sport there. The men can choose to get turbans worn in a traditional style with a trail from behind.

**Amazing cuisine of Kohlapur**

The Kolhapur cuisine is known to use strong and bold flavors in its cooking. You will find these influences of the Marathas, Mughals and Marwadi rulers who fought and settled in the region, bringing their flavor into the existing mix.

The Kolhapuri meal consists of chapatis, millet Bhakris, naan, parathas. There would be several types of daals, rice, meat dishes as accompaniments. The popular snack food around here consists of missal pav, Kanda bhaji (onion fritters), bata vadas (potato fritters) with amazing chutneys.

*Kolhapuri misal pav*

It’s a spicy combo of boiled beans, potatoes, farsan and sev and a soup-like gravy added on the top. Different spices such as garam masala, garlic, ginger, onions, coconut add punch to the dish. It is served with a bun is known as pav, or even bread can do.

*Tambra andpandra rassa*

As the name symbolizes, the tambra rassa is red in color and spicy, made with special chilies. The pandra means a spicy white curry made from yogurt. These are served as starters and happen to tingle the taste buds before the main course since they are made with various spices that enable wards of common colds and sore throat etc.

*Kolhapuri mutton dry*

It is one of the special dishes on the menu when there are celebrations in any household. It is made with lavish preparations. This one-dish has many versions, all having distinct and amazing tastes; one such variation is known as ghatti mutton. This dish is consumed along with jowar bhakri or chapati. It can be a part of whole meals served in restaurants in Kohlapur.

*Veg Kolhapuri*

It is a spicy mix of vegetables made with a special Kolhapuri masala. This dish goes well with chapati or bhakri. You could try it out with naan.

*Bharli vangi*

It is a stuffed brinjal dish filled with amazing spices and cooked on low heat till the brinjal is tender.

*Pitala bhakri*

The peasant’s meal is simple fare yet delicious to the core made from chickpea flour, its thick gravy-like dish that goes well with jowar bhakri and raw onions on the side. You could eat it with Kolhapur chutney as well. a dish found all over Maharashtra.

There are some special dishes prepared during festivals, such as Puran Poli, a stuffed flatbread. The stuffing is sweet made from chickpea dal and jaggery. It’s eaten with homemade clarified butter. It is made, especially during the first harvest of the year, also known as Gudi Padwa. And the local favorite is the shrikhand made from strained thick yogurt, which is flavored or plain. It is sweetened and garnished with dry fruits.

Kohlapur is one of the significant places with a rich history. There are several more places that you can visit once you come for a vacation or backpacking trip. The amazing sights away from the hustle and bustle of the city will allow you to soak into the local culture.