**PANAJI- A TREAT FOR THE SOUL**

The tiny state of Goa boasts many blissful beaches and varied cultures from around the world. Its capital Panaji stands as a traditional and modern symbol of mixed traditions, with Unity in diversity appearing at every step. After the Portuguese invasion of India in the year 1961, it was annexed with Goa. Panaji is situated on the left bank of the Mandovi river. Panaji or Panjim was a Portuguese name, meaning 'the land that never beheld flooded'.

## ****Brief history:****

There have been many rulers in the history of Panaji who has made a remarkable impact on the region. Known as Pahajani in ancient times, it has been modified as Panaji in recent times. For many years since the 16th century, it had been under Portuguese rule. Out of many prominent rulers were the Satavahanas, Kadambas and Chalukyas and some Muslim rulers like Adil Shahi of Bijapur, who gave the city some of the most beautiful architectural monuments and buildings. The earlier name Pahajani Khali was aptly named because of the city's stunning backwaters and creeks.

## ****Demographics:****

Panaji, a small village till 1843, had been developed as a city with vast roads. These long promenades were almost seven kilometres and advanced infrastructure, railway lines, and good connectivity to various cities. The population of Panaji as of 2020 was 2, 89,792. It is a home for many religions like Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Out of these, Hinduism stands as the leading religion, with almost 64 per cent of the population following it. Then, second, comes Christianity, with nearly 26 per cent of the people following the religion. Then comes Islam, with about 9% followers. Goa has been known for its literacy rate for many years. The literacy rate of Panaji is 90 per cent which is one of the highest in India.

## ****Population density:****

With 1900 people per square kilometre, the density of the population is not very high. Still, statistics show that there has been a considerable increase in population year after year.

## Connectivity, (how can you visit panaji?):

* **By Train:** Margaon Railway Station is the nearest station. And it is 39 kms from Panjim city. Panjim trains accessible from all major railway stations and analysis of timetable train timings and other travel details, Rajdhani Express, Sampark Kranti, Bikaner Express and Gandhidham Express form an important part of important trains.
* **Via Road:** Bus services are available to Panjim from all parts of India. From here, all the related transport networks are close to Kadamba Bus Station, one of the busiest transport stations in the city. Precisely by Transport at the Register Effectively accessible through India AG Trip, private Transport to and from the city every day. Travellers can also take private taxis or cabs for their journey.

## ****Best time to visit:****

The ideal time to visit Panaji is from October to February. At this time of the year, the temperatures come down, and the climate turns pleasant. The beaches offer beautiful scenery, and cool breezes provide a peaceful experience. As the city comes under a tropical climate, most of the year is hot and humid.

## S****eason of rush:****

New Year and Christmas are celebrated grandly by the people of Goa, and the celebration is worth a watch. Streets are well lit with decorative lamps, Christmas trees enthral the colonies, shops offer great deals, and eateries would be full of food lovers.

## ****Eateries:****

Panaji does not disappoint its food lovers. With a wide variety of world cuisine available on the offer, streets are hit by foodies at any time of the day. Some of the very bests are Viva Panjim, Kokni canteen Goa, Black sheep Bistro, Peep kitchen and others. Sea food is very famous in Goa and has a myriad of restaurants offering the same. AS there is a sign of various cultures, it is seen in food too with different English food courts, French eateries appeasing the food enthusiasts.

## ****Famous places to visit:****

There are many scenic beauties and historical monuments which will lure your senses. Such is the pride taken by the city with renowned beaches such as Miramar. However, it will be wrong if we think that the city is known only for its beaches. Apart from the scenic shorelines, the town boasts many heritage buildings, worshipping places, casinos, parties, nightlife and several English bistros. There are also many famous eateries for travellers to appease.

# Places to visit in Panaji

## ****Aguada fort****:

Aguada Fort is one of the main tourist places in Goa, which attracts a lot of tourists. The Portuguese built the Aguada Fort in the 17th century. This is called the Lighthouse of Panaji. Now only a few remains are seen, but it has a notable structure and has a lot to say about the two cultures of Portuguese and Marathas. The fort's architecture clearly states this. During various kings' rule, prisoners were kept in this fort, and sailors were provided freshwater, which later became a tourist place. This fort is close to Aguada Beach, which serves to add to its charm. This fort is located at a distance of about 18 km from Panaji, the capital of Goa. The view of Aguada Fort is very attractive; it seems to be overlooking the confluence of the Arabian Sea and the Mandvi River.

If you are going to visit Aguada Fort, you can visit any day of the week from 9:30 am to 6:00 pm.

## Reis Magos Fort:

This fort was built in 1551, and now only its ruins remain. It is a great and magnificent tourist destination. Situated on the north side of the river Mandovi, this fort was built by Sultan Adil Shah. For many years this fort acted as a formidable check post for the Portuguese rulers to ensure the security of their territory from the neighbouring states. It is one of the three places in Goa where a festival called 'Epiphany - Fest of the Three Kings' is celebrated.

The fort offers splendid views of the surrounding areas, which is a good option for places to visit in Goa apart from the beaches. Reis Magos Fort is open daily from 9.30 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. While every Monday it is closed for tourists to visit.

## ****Cansalium church:****

Churches are one of the most worth visit places of Panaji. With nearly 26 per cent of the population being Christians, it flaunts many beautiful churches with unique designs and architectural styles. Cansalium church, which was built in the 1500s, is a wonderful reminder of the golden past. Its white paint expresses the sanity and purity of the place. It is located near Cansalium beach and has the credit of pulling a major crowd every year.

## ****Statue of Abbe Faria:****

History has many stories to unfold. Out of many such interesting stories, a statue of Abbe Faria is a notable storyteller. He was considered the first-ever hypnotizer. Before that, he was also considered a conspirator who worked as a secret agent to the Tipu Sultan and was against Portuguese and British rule in India. This statue shows him hypnotizing a woman.

Apart from these, sites like Azad Maidan, a garden, Bishop's palace, Augustine church, etc.

## ****Fontainhas:****

Fontainhas is a district for its Portuguese feel and has many buildings and stellar structures. It is an old Latin quarter in Panjim. The picturesque landscape buildings, narrow streets with old European designs, roofs with reddish tiles, old villas with a tint of traditional yellow, green and blue shades give a vintage feel and carry back to a different world. It is located near Altino hills.

## ****Casino crazy club:****

Panaji is one of the best Casino hubs in India. People are crazy for casinos and crowd them now and then. Casino pride, Deltin Royale, Big daddy casino, Casino pride, Casino carnival, Deltin caravels are only a few of the most entertaining casinos. As Casino gambling is legal in Goa, there is a big craze for these games. Most of them are located on the Mandovi riverbank.

## Dona Paula beach:

## Dona Paula Beach, also known as "Lover's Paradise", is one of the beautiful beaches in Goa. This beach is very special for couples going on honeymoon. Dona Paula Beach is also known as a sign of love. There are statues of a man and a woman on Dona Paula Beach, which are the centre of attraction.

## Dona Paula Beach is surrounded by palm and casuarina trees, and the viewpoint of this beach attracts tourists from all over the country and abroad. Whenever you go to this beach viewpoint, reach at least 30 minutes before because only 50 people can get a place in it at a time. The Dona Paula Beach View Point is open 24 hours, seven days a week.

## Miramar Beach:

Miramar Beach is located at a distance of only three kilometres from the city of Panaji, which is known to be one of the most crowded beaches of Goa. The golden sands of Miramar Beach are an ideal destination for locals and tourists alike, which attracts many tourists. This beach of Panaji is also a famous place for celebrating local festivals. Apart from water sports, this beach is also a popular destination for morning and evening walks. If you want to enjoy a beach in Goa away from the regular crowd, you must visit Miramar Beach.

Miramar Beach is open 24 hours a day; you can visit this place at any time.

## Sri Shantadurga Temple

This temple is situated about 30 km from Panaji in a village called Kavalam in Ponda Taluka. This temple is dedicated to Shri Shantadurga. Apart from Shantadurga, idols of Lord Shiva Shankar and Lord Vishnu are also installed in the temple. Shri Shantadurga Mandir is a private temple belonging to the Gaur Saraswat Brahmin community and the Devjana Brahmin community. Shantadurga Temple is one of the biggest and important temples of Goa. Informally, the deity here is also called 'Santeri'.

Shantadurga Temple opening hours are from 5:00 AM to 10:00 PM. During this time, you can take advantage of the darshan of Mother Goddess by visiting here.

## Basilica of Bom Jesus:

Basilica of Bom Jesus is a Roman Catholic church located in Old Goa. This church is known as the oldest church in Goa. It is included in the World Heritage Sites recognized by UNESCO.

The construction work of the church was completed in the year 1604. This church is also known as a symbol of Portuguese colonial architecture and Baroque architecture.

Located in Benguinim, about 10 km from Panjim, this church attracts tourists worldwide. The relics of St. Francis Xavier are kept in this church. These relics were known for their extraordinary insight and therapeutic healing powers.

## Casino Royale Goa

This is a wonderful place. Every traveller who comes here is surprised because it is a floating casino on the water. This casino is spread over an area of 40,000 square feet. There are 123 gaming tables here. Here you can play all kinds of gambling games, such as Teen Patti, Poker, Black Jack, and many more.

This casino is open all the time, and the entry fee is

Monday to Thursday-Rs 2500/-,

Friday to Sunday- Rs 3500/-

## ****Best cafes:****

Few must mention in this list are Café Mojo, an English bar, Caravela coffee and Bistro Blue Takoi coffee. Most of these cafes serve youngsters, and the best part is there would be an LCD screen and beer tap at each table. You need to buy your card and swipe it. There will be the unlimited pouring of the drink. You can even try cocktails and other tasty which are equally good.

## ****Booking:****

As mentioned earlier, October to February is peak time, and ticket bookings are highly difficult. Particularly, New Year is a very busy time, and if you want to visit during this time, it is advisable to make the advance prior booking. Also, hotels are very expensive during this time. So make a proper plan and have a pleasant stay.

## Bottom Line:

Overall, Panaji offers a great travel experience. Moreover, amidst global advancement and historical legacies, it is the epitome of cross-cultural diversity. Therefore, this is the best place to visit in Goa for family and as a solo traveller. So add these places to your visiting list right now!