

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

As soon as I landed at the Ahilya Bai Holkar Airport in Indore, I realized that my itinerary for MP Road Trip across Malwa takes me through the stories of some incredible queens.

MP Road Trip – Exploring Malwa, Queen’s Trail In Mandu, Maheshwar, Burhanpur

Every place I was visiting on this road trip is best known for a Queen who once lived there. In fact, they did not even live too far in the past, they all lived in medieval times, times we know something about.

Rani Ahilya Bai Holkar of Maheshwar

Rani Ahilya Bai Holkar is one of the most incredible women I have read about. Wherever I have traveled in India, I have seen her work in the temples she has restored. Be it the Vishnupad temple of Gaya or the Kashi Vishwanath Temple of Varanasi.

[Image: Ahilya Bai Holkar]

Ahilya Bai Holkar

I read her biography some time back, and I had this strong urge to go visit Maheshwar, the city she chose to be her capital. I wanted to walk down the steps that she took to reach the Narmada, which was not just the holy river but also a source of strength for her.

Read More – **Karmayogini – Life of Ahilya Bai Holkar**

It was a dream come true to not just visit Maheshwar but to live in the palace of Ahilya Bai. Her palace is austere compared to the palaces of her times, made in plain wood. To me, it was a place where had once seen the mighty queen live. Her Raj Gaadi which is now almost a pilgrimage place, humbles you with its simplicity.

[Image: Maheshwar Rajwada]

Maheshwar Rajwada

Her Chhatri or cenotaph is more like a temple dedicated to her deity – Shiva. The beautiful temple was built by her daughter for her. You see her dedication to Shiva when you walk the ghats of the Narmada in Maheshwar. They are lined with many big and small Shivalingas. Her

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

devotion to Shiva led her to start a practice of abhisheka of 125,000 Shivalingas every day by 108 Brahmins. The practice continues to date though to a lesser degree.

[Image: Weavers of Maheshwar]

Weavers of MaheshwarA legacy of Ma Saheb

The biggest legacy of Ma Saheb, as Rani Ahilya Bai is fondly known in Maheshwar is the weavers. For who does not want to wear the delicate & handwoven Maheshwari Saris? Wherever you walk around in town, you can hear the rhythm of handlooms. The sound of handlooms is the sound of Maheshwar town just like the sounds of Mahamrituanjay Mantras is everywhere on Narmada ghats. You can not visit Maheshwar and not buy a Maheshwari Sari.

What an incredible woman, who not just ruled well, but is still revered for the kind of work she did. Maheshwar was the high point of our MP Road Trip.

Watch the Video of Maheshwar – The City of Rani Ahilya Bai Holkar

During the trip, I managed to capture this video of Maheshwar. Watch it to get a glimpse of the ancient city.

Rani Roopmati of Mandu

Mandu was our first stop on the MP Road Trip, and all I knew about it was the love story of Rani Roopmati & Baz Bahadur. Rani Roopmati was the poetess & singer queen of Mandu. Well, she was a singer first and then a queen.

[Image: Jahaj Mahal - Mandu - MP Road Trip]

Jahaj Mahal – Where Rani Roopmati probably lived

We really do not have an authoritative account of who she was. Some accounts say that she was the daughter of a village chief of the neighboring Nimar region, while others say that she was a shepherdess. What we do know about her is that she was an excellent singer and that is what brought her and Baz Bahadur, the then-ruler of Mandu, together. We also know that she came from a region that was closer to the

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

Narmada, as her only condition to marry Baz Bahadur and move to Mandu was that she should be able to do Narmada Darshan every day.

[Image: Baz Bahadur Palace - Mandu, MP Road Trip]

Baz Bahadur Palace as seen from Rani Roopmati Pavilion – Mandu
Rani Roopmati's Poetry

Rani Roopmati's poetry used to be sung by the bards of Malwa till a few years back. Alas, there is no trace of the poetry and the singers now. I tried hard to find one singer who can sing her songs or even a book that has her poems. The only copy of her poems is the English Translation of the book *The Lady of the Lotus: Rupmati, Queen of Mandu*, translated about 100 years ago and that too is unavailable in India. Hope someone somewhere has the treasure of her legacy.

Did you know Baz Bahadur soaked himself in music after being defeated by Rani Durgavati – The queen of Gondwana?

Rani Roopmati – Baz Bahadur's love story is one that is rooted in their common love for music and singing. A corner of Mandu near Rewa Kund is kind of reserved for their singing pleasure. It is a palace that is designed acoustically for the singers and musicians. One can only imagine the riot of sound as it reverberated with the waves of water in the middle of the palace.

Read More – **5 places in India that celebrate love**

Roopmati Pavillion

Roopmati Pavillion in Mandu sits at a vantage point, on top of a hill and an underground water tank. Towards one side is the palace of Baz Bahadur surrounded by lush green vegetation, where he used to sing. In the distance, she would have seen the Jahaj Mahal – the royal palace complex where the royal family lived surrounded by two beautiful ponds. On the other side behind the rolling hills, on a clear day, you can see the Narmada.

[Image: Rani Roopmati Pavilion at Mandu]

Rani Roopmati Pavilion at Mandu

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

People think of Roopmati Pavillion in Mandu as Roopmati's palace. It was just an outpost and a place from where the Narmada was visible. She potentially lived in the royal quarters of the Jahaj Mahal complex.

Rani Roopmati had to kill herself by poisoning when she feared an attack by Adham Khan on behalf of Akbar – who was the ruling Mughal emperor of the time.

Read More – **Adham Khan's Tomb in South Mehrauli**

Surrounded by the natural beauty of Mandu, when all its beautiful palaces were living spaces, it must have been a damn romantic place. No wonder, Mandu is one of the places in India that celebrate love.

Mumtaz Mahal of Burhanpur on MP Road Trip

Mumtaz Mahal – one of the queens of Mughal King Shahjahan is best known for her mausoleum – the Taj Mahal in Agra. The fact is she died in Burhanpur while giving birth to her 14th child. She was accompanying her husband on a military mission in Deccan. Burhanpur was our final stop on MP Road Trip.

[Image: Ahukhana at Jainabad - Burhanpur]

Ahukhana at Jainabad – Where Mumtaz Mahal was first buried

What is not common knowledge is the fact that she was buried in Burhanpur at a village called Jainabad on the opposite end of the Tapti River. Her tomb at Ahukhana or the hunting lodge can still be visited by travelers.

[Image: Painting of Taj Mahal at Shahi Qila - Burhanpur]

Painting of Taj Mahal at Shahi Qila – Burhanpur

As per our guide, Burhanpur was to be the original place for the Taj Mahal. The construction even started and an unfinished gate can still be seen. However, Shahjahan wanted the monument he builds to reflect on the waters of Tapti and that was not feasible due to technical reasons.

So, he decided to build the Taj Mahal in Agra – which was anyways his capital, on the banks of the Yamuna River. Mumtaz Mahal's body was

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

shifted to Agra after 6 months or so, where she was again put in a temporary place before finding her final resting place in the Taj Mahal.

Read More – **Taj Mahal – the most photogenic monument in the world**

Marble Hammam

What remains of Mumtaz Mahal in Burhanpur, besides her temporary grave is her lovely Hammam. It is a profusely painted marble Hammam in the Shahi Qila or the Royal Fort. In fact, our guide pointed to a painting that he says is the painting of the Taj Mahal or at least was the inspiration behind the Taj Mahal.

He pointed to another painting that resembles the crown of Mumtaz Mahal including the Kohinoor diamond.

Taj Mahal may be the most recognizable monument of India but Burhanpur has the memories of Mumtaz Mahal as a living queen. She is still the biggest tourist attraction of Burhanpur on the banks of the Tapti River.

[Image: Queens Trail - MP Road Trip]

Well, the Queen's trail on our trip was dominated by powerful and talented women.

Do you know of any other trail in India dominated by women?

- TAGS
- **Madhya Pradesh Travel**
- **Road Trips**

Share

Facebook

Twitter

Pinterest

WhatsApp

Linkedin

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

Telegram

Previous article [Top Kanyakumari Tourist Places To Visit](#)

Next article [Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple On Banks Of Narmada](#)
[Anuradha Goyal](#)

RELATED ARTICLES MORE FROM AUTHOR

[Udaigiri Caves, Heliodorus Pillar & Bijamandal in Vidhisha](#)

[Image: Scenic Road Trips in India]

Most Scenic Road Trips In India

[Image: Ganga at Patna]

Places To Visit In And Around Patna

11 COMMENTS

1. **The Untourists August 7, 2018 At 7:46 AM**

How nic. I can almost feel the echoes of Rani Rupmati's songs through these pavilions...

Reply

2. **Madhu August 11, 2018 At 3:09 PM**

I visited Mandu long back as a kid..faintly remember Rani roopmati palace. After reading the post. I think I should visit Mandu and maheshwar soon

Reply

○ **Anuradha Goyal August 11, 2018 At 3:14 PM**

You should visit Mandu and Maheshwar – am a bit more inclined towards Maheshwar but Mandu is an engineering genius for me. Stay tuned for a detailed post on both the cities.

Reply

3. **Neha Parti August 11, 2018 At 10:25 PM**

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

Madhya Pradesh somehow never made it to my list idk why. But this makes me realize how enriching and vast India's history is no matter where you go. AMAZING article 😊

Reply

- **Anuradha Goyal August 12, 2018 At 8:58 AM**

Neha – happy that we managed to put MP in your wish list. It is my favorite state to explore, do visit it to discover its diversity and rich heritage.

Reply

4. *Sudhir* **August 18, 2018 At 2:13 PM**

Kindly inform about Gwalior of MP, as we r planning to visit it in near future. I love your vivid descriptions.

Reply

- **Anuradha Goyal August 18, 2018 At 2:52 PM**

Sudhir ji – I visited Gwalior a long time ago, much before I started blogging. I will have to visit it again to write about it. Hopefully soon.

Reply

5. *Aarti Gupta* **August 21, 2018 At 4:31 PM**

Great thoughts with good writing...nice info on Marble hanuman Keep it up!!!

Reply

6. *Semon Sehgal* **September 7, 2018 At 5:24 PM**

Great Article, I have not visited this place but I like this place as I saw some beautiful stills through your blog.

Reply

7. *shruti patni* **August 9, 2019 At 2:50 PM**

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

great information with such a nice phrase

Reply

8. *Bharati* **November 27, 2019 At 9:39 AM**

Wonderful post. This blog has an amazing information about the destination places beautiful visiting spots and captures very impressive photos.

Reply

LEAVE A REPLY **Cancel reply**

Please enter your comment!

Please enter your name here

You have entered an incorrect email address!

Please enter your email address here

Save my name, email, and website in this browser for the next time I comment.

Δ

149,899Fans**Like**

7,136Followers**Follow**

962Followers**Follow**

29,162Followers**Follow**

17,500Subscribers**Subscribe**

Subscribe

Popular Posts

[Image: How to Avoid Travelling - George Mikes]

How To Avoid Travelling By George Mikes – An Update

June 5, 2017

[Image: Landscape view from the Raja's seat, Coorg]

Best Places To Visit In Coorg For The Tourists To Explore

April 28, 2022

[Image: Jhunjhunu]

Things to do in Madhya Pradesh

Places To See In Jhunjhunu Shekhawati, Rajasthan

February 24, 2020

Bonderam Festival, Divar Island, Goa Monsoon Festival

August 1, 2016

[Image: Outdoor Bamboo Gazebo]

Baiguney Sikkim Trip With Club Mahindra

May 19, 2016

Anuradha Goyal BooksTags

Ancient India Arts of India Birding Trails Birds of

India Buddhism Caves Delhi Travel Devi Europe Travel Festivals of

India Food Forts of India Goa Travel Guest Post Gujarat

Travel Heritage Monuments Himachal Travel Himalayas Hyderabad

Travel Karnataka Travel Luxury Travel Madhya Pradesh

Travel Maharashtra Travel Medieval India Modern India Museums

of India National Parks of India Odisha Travel Rajasthan

Travel Review Road Trips Rural

India Saptapuri Shiva Shopping Souvenirs Telangana

Travel Temple Architecture Temples of India Temple Towns Travel

Listicles Travel Tales Uttar Pradesh Travel Walking World Heritage

Other Blogs

IndiTales – an award-winning travel blog from India covering Indian & International tourism destinations. We love admiring the art, history, culture and art history of the tourism destinations and bring back to you the must-see things in India and the world. We love to walk around cities and bring them to you as walking tours. We visit the museums and tell you what not to miss there. We go on jungle safaris and bring back nature trails for you. We travel the offbeat roads and bring you the road trips. We share our travel tips and of course, the travel stories we met on the road.

© Copyright 2004-2021 | Anuradha Goyal