**Aurangabad Travel Guide**

Home to ancient and spectacular Ajanta and Ellora Caves, Aurangabad is the perfect city to cherish the rich history of Maharashta. The city’s winsome land is also dotted with palaces, tombs, and parks, making it a must visit tourist spot for history and architecture buffs. Aurangabad also boasts an opulent collection of handicraft items and metal goods that make excellent souvenirs to carry back home.

## An Insight into Aurangabad Tourism

Aurangabad is a popular destination to visit during your Maharashtra tours. This tourism capital of Maharashtra was once known as the capital of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and that's how the city got its name 'Aurangabad.' Noted to be the largest city in Northern Maharashtra it was founded in the year 1610 by Malik Ambar who was the prime minister of the Nizam Shahi rulers of Ahmednagar. Some of the major tourist attractions this place offers are Kailash Temple, Bibi Ka Maqbara, Ajanta Caves, Panchakki and Shuli Bhanjan. The iconic names or attractions that play as a major crowd puller are the Ajanta and Ellora caves which are declared as a ‘World Heritage Sites’ by UNESCO. Aurangabad is one of the best travel destinations in Maharashtra and this place has many prime tourist places and must-see tourist attractions. There are about 30 Buddhist caves in Ajanta dating back to 2nd century BCE to 6th century CE. Dotted with superb sculpture and paintings along with narrative murals on Buddhist themes, Ajanta happens to be the prime tourist hotspot. The Ellora caves, on the other hand, are as old as 1,500 years.

Another tourist site amongst many more sightseeing places is Bibi ka Maqbara. Aurangabad is one of the fastest growing cities in Maharashtra, and also a major industrial hub. This city is well connected to the metropolitans by excellent rail, road, and airways. During Aurangabad tours, you can visit other excursion points like Khultabad, Pitalkhora, Paithan, Daulatabad and Shirdi. You can also catch a glimpse of the Grishneshwar Mandir, which is located about 30 kilometres from Aurangabad. With one of the 12 ‘jyotirlingas’ of Lord Shiva in India this temple’s restoration was done by Chhatrapati in early 17th century.Tourism in Aurangabad has seen good times ever since the city started to nourish its heritage, lifestyle, and ethics, thereby welcoming the tourists with a generous gamut of hospitality. You can also pay reverence at the shrines of many saints like Shaikh Burham-ud-din Gharib and Zain-ud-din Chishti. Aurangzeb Tomb stands upright at the southeast corner of the Zain-ud-din complex. Other places to visit in this city are Panchakki (17th-century water mill), Siddharth Garden and Zoo, Daulatabad Fort and Gateways.

## Popular Tourist Attractions in Aurangabad

A tour in Maharashtra is incomplete without a visit to Aurangabad. This major tourism place has many interesting sightseeing attractions like the replica of the famous Taj Mahal, Bibi ka Maqbara. Other landmarks you can visit are the Panchakki, a 17th-century water mill; Daulatabad Fort; Siddharth Garden; and Aurangabad Zoo. However, the two major highlights of Aurangabad tourism are the Ajanta and Ellora Caves, the famed rock-cut caves that are also recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Site.

# Bibi Ka Maqbara Aurangabad

# Bibi Ka Maqbara Aurangabad

5 kilometer off the roads of the Aurangabad city stands the colossal beauty, and the most impressive monument of Aurangabad - Bibi Ka Maqbara, which bears a strong resemblance to the iconic Taj Mahal in Agra. It is mainly a mausoleum marking the burial ground of Aurangzeb's wife, Rabia-Durrani. Aurangzeb started constructing the Bibi Ka Maqbara, but it was his son Prince Azam Shah who completed its construction. One of the most perfectly proportioned and captivating Mughal mausoleums, the structure of Bibi Ka Maqbara, which brings together Persian and Mughal elements, was designed and erected by Ata-ullah, an architect, and Hanspat Rai, an engineer respectively. Ata-ullah was the son of Ustad Ahmad Lahauri, the main designer of the Taj Mahal.

Like Taj Mahal, Bibi Ka Maqbara too is located amidst a manicured garden with axial ponds, fountains, and water channels, and lined with broad pathways. The garden is further enclosed by high crenelated walls with fortress set at intervals, and open pavilions on three sides. The mausoleum is built in a Charbagh style on a raised platform to be reached by a fleet of stairs. Its distinctive interiors are also a class apart. To reach the main octagonal chamber containing the unadorned grave, one

needs to descend the flight of stairs. The grave is enclosed in a perforated marble screens. The chamber above is a high square structure presenting identical facades on four sides.

Each corner of the mausoleum, even the cusps, and doorways are finely carved. Like Taj Mahal, it too uses white marbles and stucco but there's no pietra dura work that distinguishes Shah Jahan's creation. But it does has four disproportionately large minarets at the end of the large platform. The gardens around are a delight to explore, with the Deccan hills providing a scenic backdrop. To the west of the tomb is a small mosque with finely worked cusped arches and corner minarets. To the north is the Sunheri Mahal, which is easily noticeable for its goldwork.

### HISTORY OF THE BIBI KA MAQBARA

Believed to be built between 1651 and 1661 C.E at a mere cost of Rs. 6,68,203-7, Bibi ka Maqbara is one of the finest examples of Mughal architecture. The mausoleum was built by Aurangzeb's son Azam Shah in the memory of his mother, Rabia. Somewhere like the other Mughal Era architecture, this one too has an exquisite architecture, which was built and designed by Ata-ullah, an architect, and Hanspat Rai, an engineer. Tavernier, a French gem merchant, and traveler, quoted it somewhere that to built the mausoleum the marble was brought from a mine near Jaipur. 100's of carts ladened with marble, drawn by at least 12 oxen, were seen by him during his journey from Surat to Golconda. Azam Shah.

### THINGS TO DO & SEE IN AND AROUND:

Around the Maqbara, tourists should visit Panchakki, which is barely 5-6 kilometers away. Other places that are worth visiting are Bhadkal Gate, Dr. Babasaheb Marathwada University, Mehmood Darwaza (Gate), P.E.S College or Engineering, Kham Nadi (Kham River) etc.

### HOW TO REACH

Tourists can take a city bus or hire a private taxi from anywhere in the Aurangabad to reach Bibi Ka Maqbara. Other possible means of transport that one can take is auto rickshaw that is fun, and even cheap.

### ENTRY FEES

Rs 10/person for Indians  
Rs 250/person for foreigners

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

One can visit Bibi Ka Maqbara throughout the year but a good time to visit will be winter as this is when the climate is salubrious and mild.

# Daulatabad Fort Maharashtra

# Daulatabad Fort

A luring tourist attraction of the city of Maharashtra is the Daulatabad Fort which is also known as the Devagiri Fort. It is said that the battles that were fought in this fort were always won. The fort stands on a conical hill and the lower slopes of the hill had been cut for the purpose of more defense. The way to reach the top of the fort is very challenging as one has to pass through a narrow bridge which can hold only two persons at a time. While going towards the summit you will notice huge cannons at almost every interval of the slope. In the middle of the way there is also cave which had been made to puzzle the enemies when they came to attack. Another special characteristic of the place is that it is believed that Lord Shiva had stayed on the hills around this region and thus this place had got its name Devagiri which means “Hills of God”. So the place also has a mythological connection. The beautiful architecture used in the construction of the fort makes it one of the best places to visit in Daulatabad. The fort has a very complex and intricate structure which makes it even more appealing to the visitors. Tourism to the Devagiri fort also includes exploring the surrounding areas among which the very well known one is the Kagzi Pura which is a very old paper making mill. Then a little distance away you have the Khuldabad which is mainly a place for the sufi saints.

### HISTORY OF THE ATTRACTION

This triangular fort of Devagiri was built in the year 1187 by King Bhilan who was the first king of the Yadav. During the Tughlaq dynasty, Muhammad bin Tughlaq was very much impressed by the fort and he shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and named it The City of Fortune. Since then it has adorned the heritage of our country.

### GETTING THERE

This well known fort of Maharashtra has easy access to all the possible means of transportation. The nearest airport to the fort is the Aurangabad airport and from here you can hire a cab to reach the destination. Tourists also get ample taxis and buses from the Aurangabad railway station which helps them in reaching the fort.

### OPENING/CLOSING TIMINGS AND DAYS

The Devagiri Fort is open on all days of the week from 9am in the morning to 6pm in the evening.

### THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND

The Devagiri Fort contains several monuments inside it and the notable ones are the Chand Minar and the Chini Mahal. The Eleghant Tank, Bharat Mata Temple and Andheri are other attractions of the fort. A visit to this powerful fort will make your holidays in Maharashtra even more interesting.

### ENTRY FEES

The admission fee is rupees 10 for the Indian nationals and the foreign visitors rupees 100 is charged for entering the fort.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

Plan your Maharashtra tour during the months of October to February or between Junes to September when the weather is perfect for the local sightseeing of the place.

# Ellora Caves Maharashtra

# Ellora Caves Aurangabad Maharashtra

Ellora caves, known as Verul Leni by the local people are situated in Aurangabad-Chalisgaon, 30 km. from Aurangabad. This majestic rock-cut temple caves exhibit artwork and monuments of Jainism, Buddhism and Hinduism of the period of 600-1000C.E. The Kailasha Temple of this group of monastery cave temples is an exemplary artwork of monolithic single rock excavation located in cave 16. The temple even displays the mythologies, goddesses and gods of the Hindu epics and the Shaktism and Vaishnavism religions cults. The conglomeration of the Ellora caves has a total of 100 caves, out of which only 34 caves are for the public. This group comprises of 5 Jain caves, 17 Hindu caves and 12 Buddhist caves. These caves reflect the religious sentiments of the people of that era. The Rashtrakuta Dynasty built the Buddhist and the Hindu caves, whereas, the Yadav dynasty built the Jain caves. These caves served manifold purposes like abode for praying, resting place for the pilgrims and monasteries for the monks.

### HISTORY OF THE ATTRACTION

During the reign of the Rashtrakutas and the Chalukyas the architecture of rock-hewn reached the pinnacle and in the western part of India because the Western Ghats offered ideal site for carving and excavation. Moreover the rulers were tolerant to all the religions lie Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism and under their patronage excavation of these rock-cut temples reached new heights of success.

### OPENING/CLOSING TIMINGS AND DAYS

These caves can be visited on any day except Tuesday.

### ENTRY FEE

The entry fee tickets are Rs.10 (per person) for citizens of India, BIMSTEC and SAARC countries and it is Rs.250 (per person) for the foreigners.

### GETTING THERE

The Ellora caves can be reached by train, road or air. The closest airport to the Ellora Caves is located at a distance of 30kms in Aurangabad, which has good connectivity to the cities of Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. The Aurangabad Railway Station is the closest one to the caves. There are bus and car services from and to the railway station and the caves. There are many private tour operators from whom the private cars can be hired. He drive from Ellora to Aurangabad is 1-2hours.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

The best time of the year to visit these awe-inspiring caves is between June to September during the monsoon season and October to February during the winter season. The months of March, April and May should be avoided due to the searing summer heat.

# Ajanta Caves Maharashtra

The Ajanta Caves are a group of 29 Buddhist cave temples in Ajanta, India. Some of the caves even date back to the 2nd century BC. These caves display a fusion of both Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions and have some of the best masterpieces of Buddhist art in the country. Colourful murals and statues associated to the life of Buddha and various Bodhisattvas along with everyday scenes with meaningful inscriptions can be seen in these caves on the walls. Ajanta Caves and the nearby Ellora Caves are often explored by tourists together on a tour.

The ever so attractive beauty of the Ajanta caves is not limited to the caves and paintings but there lays some untold mystery about the place that has it flooded with tourist throughout the years. The mountains that interested the kings now interest every traveller who has a knack for an adventure and a desire to explore.

### HISTORY OF THE ATTRACTION

The Ajanta caves have been the storage of history in India from the 2nd century onwards. The period of the south ruler’s Satavahanas and the later periods have specially made Ajanta a gallery of paintings, architecture, inscriptions and Buddhist religion and educational centres. The caves have served as a reservoir for many historical records from which we understand the culture of India.

### GETTING THERE

If a person is travelling by flight they would want to reach Aurangabad first as it is the closest airport to the caves and from there they can board a bus or a taxi to the historical destination. If a person is likely to travel by train, then they can board a train that drops them at the Bhusaval or Jalgaon stations from where on, the travellers can avail the state transport buses or taxi to reach the caves.

### THINGS TO DO IN AND AROUND

While a person is at Ajanta they can explore the rich heritage in each cave and also visit each of the 30 rock-cut Buddhist cave monuments. When in Maharashtra, people can always make their way to the city of Mumbai or Pune if they wish to get away for the weekend. They can also go to the Chikhaldara hill station and explore the wildlife. Ajanta has many other religious and historical centres around it, namely the Ellora caves that they can visit.

### OPENING/CLOSING TIMINGS AND DAYS

The Ajanta caves are open throughout the year but remain closed every Monday. The caves are open for the tourists to visit between 9.00 AM and 5:30 PM, Indian Standard Time.

### ENTRY FEE

The entry fee to Ajanta Caves differ based on nationality and age of the visitor:

* For Indian children below 15 years of age: No entry fee
* For Indian citizens above 15 years of age: Rs. 30/- per person.
* For SAARC Citizens (Bhutan/ Nepal/ Bangladesh/ Myanmar/ Srilanka/ Maldives/ Pakistan) - Rs. 30 per person
* For Citizens from Countries other than SAARC: Rs. 500 per person
* For each camera and video recorder: Rs. 5/-

A general instruction given by the managers is to use the camera without flash.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

The best time to visit the Ajanta Caves is during the month of November till February because the winter makes the place cool and easy to explore rather than in the heat during the summer that can reach up to 40 degrees or during monsoon when there is an abundance of rainfall.

# Himayat Bagh Aurangabad

# Himayat Bagh

Finely manicured, verdant, and extremely beautiful - Himayat Bagh is a masterpiece in Aurangabad tourist map. Sprawling across an area of 400 acres, the garden has been featuring unique flora since inception, and that is why it is home to the Fruit Research Station and Nursery. Different varieties of plants, trees, and herbs blooming around the garden are worth a watch. Do go for a long stroll on the crisis-crossed pathways to glance at the manicured garden, and rediscover the opulence of the bygone era. One can also buy plants and saplings from the gardens. Barra Darri in the Himayat Bagh is worth a visit too.

### HISTORY OF THE ATTRACTION

The construction of Himayat Baugh was ordered when the north wall of the Aurangzeb's castle was destroyed due to excess of moisture. And the same place was converted into a field. Later, it was developed into a Mughal Garden by the officials of Aurangzeb's court.

### THINGS TO DO & SEE IN AND AROUND:

At Himayat Bagh. one can go for a long walk; find a suitable space to read or relax on its smooth pastures. Photographers - don't forget to bring cameras.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

As such there's no fixed time to visit Himayat Bagh, the park remains open for tourists throughout the year. But a good time to go will be winters, and summers as the climate is cool, and mild.

### ADDRESS

Near Delhi Gate, Rauza Bagh, Aurangabad

### HOW TO REACH

To reach the Himayat Bagh, one can find buses, taxis, and auto-rickshaws from anywhere in the city.

# Panchakki & Baba Shah Musafir Dargah Aurangabad

# Panchakki & Baba Shah Musafir Dargah

An embodiment of medieval Indian architecture, Panchakki alias Nehar-e-Panchakki was built in 1744 in the memory of Hazrat Baba Shah Musafir, a Sufi saint and spiritual guide of Aurangzeb. Situated in the heart of the city, the amazing Panchakki, meaning the chakki or grinder run by water, was set up in the 17th century for the pilgrims and disciples of saints as well as for troops of the garrison. There is a pond on one side and on the other side is this grinding mill. It has an underground water channel too, which was used by to transport the water from a reservoir that is six kilometers away. In the northwest end, there's a watermill driven by hydropower, which was once used to obtain flour.

Around the mill, one can visit the Baba Shah Musafir Dargah, a sprawling garden that features beautiful vestiges. It is primarily known for the fact that from here one can see the view Kham River and the cenotaph of Baba Shah Musafir.

### THINGS TO DO & SEE IN AND AROUND

Around Panchakki, one can find many good places to visit like Shahi Eidgah and Navkhanda Palace.

### HOW TO REACH

Tourists can hire a private car, an auto rickshaw or use the public transportation like city buses to reach there. The drive is an approximate 4-5 km from Central Bus Stand and 8-10 km from Railway Station.

# Bani Begam Bagh Aurangabad

# Bani Begam Bagh

25 kilometers off the roads of Aurangabad nestles the charismatic and extremely impressive Bani Begum Gardens. Amidst the manicured garden, one can find the group of tombs, which are the mausoleum of Bani Begum, the consort of one of Aurangzeb's son. And that's perhaps the reason why it is called Bani Begum Garden. With big fountains and cisterns sprinkled in the garden, Bani Begum Gardens looks quite similar to the typical Mughal garden.

### THINGS TO DO & SEE IN AND AROUND

Bani Begum Garden is located in the Khuldabad, which quite renowned for its gardens, and tombs like Zainuddin Shirzai Maqbara Khuldabad, Nagarkhana Gate, Aurangzeb's Tomb, Tombs of Azam Shah and his wife, Malik Ambar's Tomb, Zar Zari Zar Baksh and Ganj Rawan Ganj Baksh Dargah. So make a point to visit all these places when a tour to Bani Begum Garden.

### ADDRESS

25 kilometers from Aurangabad City, Khuldabad, Aurangabad

### HOW TO REACH

Bani Begum Garden is part of Khuldabad city, which is approximately 25 kilometers from Aurangabad. To reach here, one can hire a bus or taxi from anywhere in the Aurangabad city.

# Zainuddin Shirazi Maqbara Aurangabad

# Zainuddin Shirazi Maqbara Aurangabad

In Aurangabad, everything is classic and magnificent; even the mausoleums. Zainuddin Shirzai's Maqbara, the mausoleum of the Sufi saint - Zainuddin Shirazi, is an example of Mughal architecture, and a must visit for tourists. Zain uddin died in H. 771, and a handsome mausoleum was erected over his tomb at Roza. Along with Zainuddin Shirazi, here lies the Mughal king Aurangzeb, in a manner he wished, simple and bare. While Aurangzeb chose Khuldabad for himself because it was religiously important, he chose Aurangabad for his wife since it was the royal city. Along with the architecture, what makes this vestige look apart from others is that it features "parahan" (the robe of the prophet) and "taj" given to Burhanu-d din on succeeding to the kaliphat, carefully preserved in the wooden box.

### HOW TO REACH

A good time to visit the dargah can be the 12th Rabi-ul-awal, the third month of Islamic Lunar Calendar, for the Urus of the saint.

### BEST TIME TO VISIT

A good time to visit the dargah can be the 12th Rabi-ul-awal, the third month of Islamic Lunar Calendar, for the Urus of the saint. The sacred hair of the prophet is first shown to visitors, and then the parahan (the robe of the prophet), taj, and many other sacred personages are exhibited too.

# Gates Aurangabad

# Darwazas Aurangabad

Aurangabad has 52 gates in its vicinity, some ruined while others in full glory, and that's perhaps the reason why it is called the city of gates. Each gate is finely carved and has a story. Amongst all these gates, the oldest and biggest one is Bhadkal Gate near the Naukhanda Palace of Nizams; it is the only gate that wasn't built during the reign of Aurangzeb. Also, there are gates that define the cardinal points - Delhi Gate on the north, the Jalna Gate on the east, the Paithan Gate on the south and the Mecca Gate on the west. These gates were made by around the walls of the Aurangzeb to protect the city from the invaders.