No matter which part of the world you are in, there always are places to explore. Sometimes you just need to get up and decide to surprise yourself. Here is a list of few places around Manipal, ideal for day-trips, and perfect for a college friends group to make some beautiful memories! It also includes experiences and thoughts of people who have already visited these places to give you a deeper perspective and a greater motivation to visit the places!

Jog Falls, Gerosoppa Falls or Joga Falls is the 2nd highest waterfall in India located near Sagara taluk, Shimoga district in the state of Karnataka. It is a segmented waterfall which, depending on rain and season, becomes a plunge waterfall. The falls are a major tourist attraction and is ranked 13th in the world by the waterfall database. They are also known as the Gersoppa Falls or Jogada Gundi. The falls are located on the Uttara Kannada and Sagara border. Rashi Wadhwa recently visited Jog falls with her friends and has to say that, “It is a nice place to click good pictures, but at the same time it is scary because of the height of the waterfall. The 4 hour journey from Manipal to the falls is just worth the view, and the fresh air with vibrant colors of environment is extremely pleasing to the eyes.”

St. Mary's Islands, also known as Coconut Island and Thonsepar, are a set of four small islands in the Arabian Sea off the coast of Malpe in Udupi. Vibhuti Sharma visited the island in her first year with her friends and recommends everybody in Manipal to surely visit the place once. “It was the first time I sat in a ferry. It was the 25 of us in the group and we reached the island within 20 minutes. There wasn’t anything to eat at the island, except channa and watermelon. But, it was beautiful. And I guess, when Vasco da Gama first came to India he landed there. Also, the water was quite saline and I got a bad tan, but the experience was worth all of it.” Well, she’s right, as according to folk legend, in the year 1498, Vasco da Gama landed at St. Mary's Islands on his journey from Portugal, fixed a cross on the island and named one of these islands, O Padrão de Santa Maria, as a dedication to Mother Mary, before proceeding to Kozhikode in Kerala. It is from this name that the islands got their current name.

Kaup (often pronounced as Kapu in the local Tulu language) is a town in Udupi. It lies on the way between Udupi and Mangalore beside National Highway 66. It is famous for its lighthouse and the three Mariamma temples and a fort built by Tippu Sultan. There is a beach on the shore of the Arabian Sea and a lighthouse. The sea is much rougher and intimidating compared to the gentler Malpe beach in Udupi. It is about 15 kms from Manipal and is a favorite hangout for students. The beach also sports a shack and a bar with seating in the open sky. Though the sea is mostly calm all year round, there have been isolated cases of drowning in this beach. The Kapu light house was built in 1901 and has for these many years stood on the rocks guiding thousands of sailors and warning the presence of dangerous rocks. The lighthouse is open for visitors between 4PM to 6PM and the panoramic view offered is magnificent. “I think it's a very special place, something I hold close to my heart, something I would rather share with a very few people”, says Rahul Menon as his experience at the Kapu beach.

Bekal Fort is the largest fort in Kerala, situated at Bakel village in Kasaragod district, North Kerala spreading over 40 acres (160,000 m2). The Fort appears to have been built up from the sea since almost three fourths of its exterior is drenched and the waves continually stroke the citadel. Unlike most other Indian forts, Bekal Fort was not a center of administration, for no remains of any palace, mansion or such buildings are found within the fort. Arguably the fort was built especially for fulfilling defence requirements. The holes on the outer walls of the fort are specially designed to defend the fort effectively. The holes at top were meant for aiming at the farthest points; the holes below for striking when the enemy was nearer and the holes underneath facilitated attacking when the enemy was very near to the fort. This is remarkable evidence of technology in defense strategy. Ankit Singh and his group of friends took a 128 kms ride through NH 66 to reach Bekal Fort, on bikes. “We were six people on three bikes, riding all the way to Kerala from Manipal to experience the beauty of the place. The fort and the beach is magnificent, but the sunset was mesmerising. It was one of my best experiences and I’d recommend all to visit the place if they get a chance to”, says Ankit Singh.

Panambur Beach is located 10 kms from the city of Mangalore. It is known for its cleanliness and safety, and is the city’s most visited beach. The aura of the beach warms up during the carnivals which are organized by the district authorities. The festivities include boat races, beach sports and sand sculpture contests, etc. Besides that, the kite festival is organized every year, which attracts participants from all across the country, and also abroad during the International Kite Festival. It is held every 2 years at the Panambur Beach, Mangalore. It is a first of its kind initiative in the country, where the beach is completely run and maintained by a private enterprise, the Panambur Beach Tourism Development Project to ensure that the beach is well maintained, clean and safe. This is being done in order to attract large number of visitors and create an awareness among the public about the need to keep our beaches clean. It has been awarded as one of the cleanest & best maintained Beaches in the country. Nishita Kini visited the beach with her street play group to perform a street play on ‘Beach Cleanliness’. Though, the beach has been well maintained and kept clean because of the privatised ownership, the street play was well appreciated by the crowd. “My experience at Mangalore beaches have been very different compared to others. People usually go to beaches to hang out but a group of us from KalaManch performed street plays in Kannada about cleanliness at Tannir Bhavi and (the other beach). I was surprised to see the cleanliness of the beaches despite the large number of people there. Tannir Bhavi is less crowded and is a nice place to visit while on a day trip to Mangalore”, says Nishita.

So these are a few places which can be easily travelled to on a student budget, without any issues to staying over or hostel permissions. Make your Sunday count, the weekend is almost here!