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11    <div class="info">
12      <div id="info1">Long known within India as the "go-to" destination for those seeking a great
13        beach holiday, Goa's beautiful western coastline, overlooking the Arabian Sea, has only
14        recently been discovered by tourists from overseas. Goa's more than 60 miles of coastline is
15        home to some of the world's loveliest beaches, each with their own particular appeal.
16      <br><br>
17      For those looking for peace and quiet, isolated Agonda Beach is a good choice, while
18      Calangute Beach is by far the most commercial and crowded. For those in search of posh
19      resorts, yoga gateways, and spa vacations, the beaches of Mandrem, Morjim, and Ashvem are
20      fashionable among wealthy Indians and Westerners alike. Palolem is another one of Goa's
21      popular beaches in a beautiful setting.
22    <br><br>
23    While in Goa, be sure to visit the Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary. This superb
24    attraction is home to thick forests and plenty of fauna, including deer, monkeys, elephants,
25    leopards, tigers, and black panthers, as well as India's famous king cobras, and some 200
26    species of birds.
27    <br><br>
28    Also worth a visit is Divar Island, accessed by ferry from Old Goa. Highlights include
29    Piedade, a typical Goan village and home to the Church of Our Lady of Compassion with its
30    interesting stucco work, Baroque plaster decorations, and altars, as well as stunning views
31    of the surrounding countryside.
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38 <div id="child5" class="ch1">
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41       <p>The Ellora Caves, Aurangabad</p>
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48     <div class="info">
49       <div id="info1">The famous monumental Ellora Caves were built between the 5th and 18th centuries
50         by Buddhist, Jain, and Hindu monks, and make for an excellent excursion from Mumbai, some
51         300 kilometers to the west.
52       <br><br>
53       Now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, this remarkable collection of 34 carved monasteries,
54       chapels, and temples - 12 of them Buddhist, 17 Hindu, and five belonging to the Jain faith -
55       were built in close proximity to each other, a reflection of the religious tolerance that
56       existed during this period of Indian history.
57     <br><br>
58     Of the Buddhist monastery caves, highlights include a number of shrines featuring carvings
59     of Buddha and saints dating from the 5th to 7th centuries, as well as the stunning
60     Carpenter's Cave, considered one of the finest in India.
61     <br><br>
62     The Hindu caves are much more complex and were carved from the top down, so scaffolding was
63     not necessary. Of these, the best is the Kailasa Temple, an enormous rock-cut temple
64     representing Mount Kailasa and requiring the removal of 200,000 tons of rock.
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71 <div id="child6" class="ch1">
72   <div class="title">
73     <div class="tl">
74       <p>Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur</p>
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78     <div class="img">
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81     <div class="info">
82       <div id="info1">Dominating the old city of Jodhpur, the massive Mehrangarh Fort, one of the
83         largest fortifications in India, was built in the 15th century to safeguard the people of
84         the famous "Blue City." Jodhpur is still known by this name, which is derived from its
85         indigo-colored houses, painted blue to deflect the heat.
86       <br><br>
87       Built on top of a towering outcrop, Mehrangarh is an amazing feat of construction, its
88       massive walls all but impenetrable. Access is via one of seven splendid gates, including
89       Jaya Pol and Fateh Pol (the latter still bears scars from cannon attacks).
90     <br><br>
91     Highlights of a visit include exploring the fort's fascinating network of courtyards and
92     palaces, as well as a museum housing a splendid collection of artifacts related to the
93     Maharajas. Be sure to spend time in the historic center of Jodhpur itself, famous for its
94     eight city gates, a lovely old clock tower, and numerous bazaars selling everything from
95     vegetables to sweets, spices, and handicrafts.
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101
102 <div id="child7" class="ch1">
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105       <p>The Ganges River</p>
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109     <div class="img">
110       <div id="17"></div>
111     </div>
112     <div class="info">
113       <div id="info1">The Ganges River, or "Ganga" after the Hindu goddess, has long been one of
114         India's most revered natural wonders. It's also one of the country's leading attractions,
115         drawing crowds of Indian nationals to partake in its religious ceremonies, as well as
116         tourists to enjoy the splendor of this mighty river.
117     <br><br>
118     While there are a number of cities dotted along the river, it's to the city of Varanasi that
119     most tourists will travel to experience the Ganges and the cultural attractions that have
120     sprung up along its banks. Although relatively small by Indian standards - its population is
121     around 1.2 million people - the city is chock-full of temples and other important religious
122     sites, many of them focused on worship of (or on) the Ganges.
123     <br><br>
124     Numerous "ghats" are set along the river banks, making it easy for worshippers and tourists
125     alike to get up close. Made up of sometimes steep steps leading directly into the water,
126     there are in fact 88 of these entry points to the Ganges. While most are many centuries old,
127     they were extensively reconstructed and improved in the 1700s, and with their often vibrant,
128     colorful ceremonies and celebrations are some of the most beautiful places to photograph in
129     India.
130     <br><br>
131     If you've time, opt for one of the Ganges river tours available in the city from any one of
132     the ghats. The most memorable are the early morning sunrise cruises. Top the experience by
133     purchasing one of the small, floating offerings available from a vendor and set it off down
134     the river (camera at the ready, of course).
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141 <div id="child8" class="ch1">
142   <div class="title">
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144       <p>The Mysore Palace</p>
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151     <div class="info">
152       <div id="info1">The sprawling city of Mysore is a delight to explore thanks to its eclectic mix
153         of fine old colonial architecture; regal Indian palaces; and lush, well-manicured gardens.
154         While those inclined towards shopping will enjoy spending time in the city's famous silk and
155         sandalwood bazaars, the main attraction is magnificent Mysore Palace.
156     <br><br>
157     Completely rebuilt in 1897 after a devastating fire, this beautiful three-storyed palace
158     features highlights such as its elegant square towers and domes; the many ornate ceilings
159     and pillars in Durbar Hall; and the splendid Marriage Pavilion, with its glazed floor tiles,
160     stunning stained glass, artworks, and displays of jewelry. It's also where, on special
161     occasions, the exquisite Golden Throne is exhibited.
162     <br><br>
163     For a real treat, be sure to catch one of the splendid light displays held each Sunday and
164     during holidays, when the palace is illuminated by more than 90,000 lights. A fun way to
165     explore the palace's massive grounds and gardens is as part of a cycle tour, available free
166     once inside.
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173 <div id="child9" class="ch1">
174   <div class="title">
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182     </div>
183     <div class="info">
184       <div id="info1">Bodhgaya, considered the world's holiest Buddhist site, attracts thousands of
185         visitors each year, all drawn to participate with the resident monks in meditation and
186         prayer.
187     <br><br>
188     The focal point of this place of pilgrimage is stunning Mahabodhi Temple, built next to the
189     very spot where Buddha came to Enlightenment and formulated his philosophy on life.
190     Constructed in the 6th century and restored numerous times since, the temple is topped with
191     a beautiful pyramidal spire and houses a large gilded statue of Buddha.
192     <br><br>
193     Also of interest is the site's pipal tree, a descendant of the original bodhi tree where
194     Buddha meditated for seven days after the Enlightenment, said to be among the oldest and
195     most venerated trees in the world (you'll know you've found it when you spot the red
196     sandstone slab marking the spot).
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## The Holy City of Varanasi



Dating back to the 8th century BC, Varanasi is one of the oldest still inhabited cities in the world. A major pilgrimage center for Hindus, this holy city has long been associated with the mighty Ganges River, one of the faith's most important religious symbols.

Varanasi offers many reasons to visit, not least of them the chance to explore the **Old Quarter** adjacent to the Ganges where you'll find the **Kashi Vishwanath Temple**, built in 1780. The New Vishwanath Temple with its seven separate temples is also of interest.

Bathing in the Ganges is of great importance to Hindus, and numerous locations known as "ghats" feature stairways leading to the water where the faithful bathe before prayers. The largest are **Dasashvamedh Ghat** and **Assi Ghat**. The latter, at the confluence of the Ganges and Asi rivers, is considered particularly holy.

## The Golden City: Jaisalmer



So named for the yellow sandstone used in most of its buildings, the Golden City of Jaisalmer is an oasis of splendid old architecture that rises from the sand dunes of the Thar Desert. Once a strategic outpost, today the city is filled with splendid old mansions; magnificent gateways; and the massive Jaisalmer Fort, also known as the Golden Fort, a daunting 12th-century structure that rises high above the town.

In addition to its palaces, temples, and fine old homes, the fortress boasts 99 bastions along with massive gates leading to its main courtyard where you'll find the seven-story-tall Maharaja's Palace. Started in the early 1500s and added to by successive rulers right up until the 19th century, the palace offers sections open to the public, including areas beautifully decorated with tiles from Italy and China, and intricately carved stone doors.

## Mumbai: The Gateway of India



Standing an impressive 26 meters tall and overlooking the Arabian Sea, the iconic Gateway of India is a must-see when in Mumbai. Built to commemorate the arrival of King George V and his wife Queen Mary in 1911, this stunning piece of architecture was opened with much pomp and ceremony in 1924 and was, for a while, the tallest structure in the city.

Constructed entirely of yellow basalt and concrete and notable for its Indo-Saracenic design, the Gateway of India was also the scene of a rather less jubilant procession of British soldiers in 1948 when India gained its independence. These days, the huge archway provides a stunning backdrop that is as popular among locals as it is tourists.

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## The Ellora Caves, Aurangabad



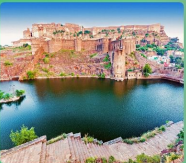
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\* Project 6 -

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