

## Overview

The most sacred pilgrim center for Hindus in India, Puri also known as the Jagannath (the Lord of Universe) is credited with the famous Jagannath temple and is along the coast of Bay of Bengal in the state of Orissa in India. Hindu mythology indicates, as is given in Skanda Purana, Puri as the resting place of Lord Vishnu.

Puri is a large depository of art and architecture of India, especially that of Orissa. The historical and cultural edifices have silvery antiquity dating back to 3rd century B.C. to 17th century A.D. Konark, Bhuvaneshwar and Puri complete the golden triangle of Orissa, the three places with majestic history, heritage and many renowned worshipping shrines and of which Puri attract the maximum number of visitors.

Major attractions nearby Puri include the Chilka Lake, renowned as the biggest inland salt-water lagoon, Puri beach, Gundicha Ghar and the Chilika Wildlife Sanctuary. Many tourists make it a point to visit other attractions like Temple of Child Krishna at Indradyumna Tank, Markandeswar tank, the Museum and Sudarshan Workshop and Atharnala Bridge.

The famous Sun temple of Konark is in the close proximity of less than an hour journey. A major celebration in Puri is Rath Yathra (Car/ Chariot festival), conducted in every year. This Car festival, held during June – July period, is associated with the Jagannath temple and during this season many thousands of Hindu Pilgrims throng to Puri to witness the majestic festival. Another festival, which attracts many, is the Puri Beach Festival posting in November of every year.

Puri is an emerging industrial area with the major industries like rice milling, handicrafts and fish curing. Puri is a religious place and a most wanted holiday attraction. Puri engulfs all cultural heritages of ancient India and traditional Hindu beliefs.

With historical temples and sacred rituals, Puri draws all the enthusiast tourists to its lap for a lifetime experience.

## » Key Facts

### General Information

**City :** Puri

**State :** Orissa

**Region :** East India

**International Dialing Code :** 91(Country Code) 6752(City Code)

**Time Zone :** Time Zone is GMT + 5.5

### Local Language

Oriya, Bengali, Hindi and English

### Cue Words

**Dada/Didi** - Meaning elder brother/elder sister, this is the most common form of calling out to strangers. The words 'dada' and 'bhai' (meaning younger brother) in Kolkata are terms of endearment, quite unlike that in western India where they have a derogatory connotation. The elderly may also be called 'kaka/kakima', meaning uncle/aunt.

**Mama** - Actually means maternal uncle but it is not clear why the police personnel are so referred to by the people on the street.

**Hawker** - Though mostly stationary, the roadside vendors are usually called 'hawkers'.

**Rickshaw** - Refers to the hand-pulled two-wheeled riding carts; there is a cycle-drawn version too.

**Dokan** - shops

## Emergency Contact Numbers

- Police - 100
- Traffic or Accidents - 103
- Fire - 101

## » Best Season to visit

Best season to visit Puri is from June to March, with June to November as the peak season of the tourists.

## » Getting There

### Air

Biju Patnaik airport at Bhubaneswar is the nearest airport to Puri, which is nearly 56 km away from the heart of the Puri city. It costs about Rs 900 by taxi cab. The airport is connected to Delhi and Mumbai. International travelers need to get connections through Delhi or Kolkata.

### Road

Orissa road transport corporation buses connect Puri to many cities in Orissa. Frequent bus services are available from Bhubaneswar (56 km), Cuttack (32 km) and Konark. Orissa Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC) offer deluxe buses for sight seeing tours in Puri, which costs about Rs 250 per person.

### Rail

Puri is a major railway junction. Regular direct train services are available from Puri to many cities in India, including Bhubaneswar, New Delhi, Chennai and Kolkata.

## » Getting Around

You can use cycle or auto rickshaws but agree a price before you set off. There are places on C.T Road where you can hire an Enfield motorbike, good if you want to drive along the coast to Konark(Sun Temple). A cycle rickshaw is in the range of 20 rupees.

## » Shopping

When it comes to Puri, there is no dearth of shopping places. In every nook and corner of the city, you can find shopkeepers selling unique handcraft items. Infact, there is an array of shopping items that you can buy to give as souvenirs to friends and relatives. As far as the question of 'what to buy' in Puri is concerned, the beach city is very famous for distinctive kinds of shells. You'll be amazed to see the fabulous handicraft decorative items that make an extensive use of the colorful seashells.

Some of the things on which seashells have been efficiently sailing consist of the beautiful lampshades, mirrors and ashtrays etc. There are a large number of shopping places in Puri, ranging from Government run Utralika to private outlets. For small items, you can also check out the roadside vends, where you can get a wide range of reasonable items. Make sure to bargain a little before paying the amount.

For traditional fabrics, you can visit various outlets that specialize in textiles. If you want to buy a sari, then you must take a look at the Passapali, Bomkai and Ikat saris. For people who appreciate artwork, there are lots of options on what to shop for. For instance you can buy Patta paintings, the paintings drawn on the palm leaf. These paintings are apt for adorning your living room and bedroom. Other best buys include stone crafts and silverware.

## » Restaurant

- **Shyama** - pure vegetarian restaurant opposite the Jagannath temple on the Grand Road above the shops on the corner. There are many restaurants in Swargadwara, New Puri and C.T. Road.
- **Kakatua** - Near the Iskcon temple in Swargadwara there is a good sweet shop/restaurant with a cockatoo outside and the resto is named after it...
- **Krishna Resorts** - pure vegetarian restaurant with gujarati and marwari thali on chakratirth road.
- Rama chenapoda in front of jagannath temple after 8pm. Different types of rabidi and malpua in chandanpur, a few kilometres from puri. Bhang sharbat of puri is famous.

## » Key Attraction

### Swargadwar Beach

**Location:** 2 km from Jagannath Temple

**Significance:** It was the bathing place of Sri Chaitanyadev, a renowned Vaishnava prophet

Swargadwar Beach is one of the most popular tourist attractions of Puri, located at a distance of approximately two kilometers from the Jagannath Temple. This place holds great religious significance for people, as it used to be the bathing place of Sri Chaitanyadev, a renowned prophet of the Vaishnava sect. It is said that, as a reward for his devotion, the great saint was merged into Lord Brahma and went to heaven.

There are lots of myths and legends associated with the Swargadwar beach of Orissa. Devotees believe that taking a holy dip in its waters opens the gateway to heaven. This sacred site witnesses huge crowds of devotees, which go on increasing every year. They come from different parts of the country to offer prayers and take a holy dip. Along with being significant from religious point of view, this beach also draws tourists because of its magnificent locales and serene atmosphere.

### Puri Beach

**Location:** Puri

**Highlights:** A dip in the Puri beach is supposed to hold religious significance

The holy city of Puri is one of the most revered pilgrim destinations in India. It is situated on the shores of Bay of Bengal and is therefore, home to some of the finest beaches of Orissa. One of the most popular as well as most revered of these beaches is the Puri Beach, which is situated at a distance of approximately 60 km from Bhubaneswar. The holy waters, pristine surroundings and serene ambience of the beach draw tourists from far and wide. The golden sands of the beach stretch on for a long distance and are ideal for leisurely walks. Devotees come from far off places to take a dip in its holy waters.

The most visited stretch of Puri Beach is the one situated opposite the Marine Parade. It is quite clean as well as isolated. Just like the other beaches of Puri, this beach also provides magnificent views of sunrise and sunset. It also serves as the venue of the Puri Beach Festival. The festival is co-sponsored by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; the Department of Tourism, Government of Orissa; Development Commissioner of Handicrafts and the Eastern Zonal Cultural Center of Calcutta. It is conducted by the Hotel and Restaurant Association of Orissa.

### Chilka Lake

**Location:** Eastern coast of Orissa

**Area:** 1,100 sq km

Lying on the eastern coast of Orissa, Chilka Lake is one of the most sought after tourist attractions near the holy city of Puri. The source of the lake is the Mahanadi River, which drains into it. Chilika Lake is one of the largest lakes in not only India, but also Asia and stretches over an area of 1,100 sq km. It is a very popular picnic spot and provides ample opportunities for boating, fishing and bird watching. If you just want to relax and soak the sunrays, this is the perfect place for you.

The lake is located far away from the hustle bustle of the city and serves as the perfect getaway from the daily tensions. During winters, Chilka Lake serves as a bird sanctuary, providing home to a wide variety of migratory

birds that come here from different parts of the world. For people who want to keep away from the maddening rush of city, there can be no better option than to enjoy sitting by the side of the lake or going on a long walk along its extensive stretch or indulging in bird watching

The dazzling view of the Chilika Lake, the melodious humming of birds and the rejuvenating calmness of the environs are bound to leave an ever-lasting impression in your mind. The scenic beauty of the lake has been a source of inspiration for numerous poets in the past. Going on a cruise is another one of the adventures you can undertake while visiting the Chilka Lake. So, pack your bags right now and get ready to lose yourself in this beautiful world.

### **Jagannath Temple**

**Location:** Puri

**Founded In:** 12th century

**Dedicated To:** Lord Jagannath (Lord Krishna)

Jagannath Temple is one of the most renowned as well as the biggest temples of Orissa. Established in the 12th century, the temple is dedicated to Lord Jagannath (Lord Krishna), Lord of the Universe. The credit for laying the foundation of the Jagannath temple of Puri goes to Raja Ananta Varman Chodaganga Dev. The temple is located at a distance of 60 km from Bhubaneswar, on the coast of Bay of Bengal, and is greatly revered by the devotees following the Vaishnava traditions.

There is an interesting legend associated with the Jagannatha temple of Puri. It is said that King Indradyumna, the ruler of the territory, saw Lord Jagannath in his dreams and following the Lord's wishes, as told to him in his dreams, he got the Jagannath Puri Temple constructed. Situated in the heart of the holy city, the temple is visited by devotees from farthest corners of India as well as the world. It exudes splendor and its tall spires lend it a magnificent aura. The walls are embellished with exquisite carvings.

The pillars that provide support to the temple are adorned with pictures depicting the life of Lord Krishna. In the list of the most splendid monuments of Orissa, Jagannath temple occupies a supreme position. One of the most popular attractions of the Jagannatha Temple of Puri comprises of its Rath Yatra that is organized every year. It is basically a chariot festival, where idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, the main deities of Srimandir, are taken to the Gundicha temple in bejeweled chariots and are brought back to the mandir in the same way.

### **Gundicha Temple**

**Location:** Northeastern side of the Jagannath temple

**Founded In:** 16th century

**Significance:**

Believed to be the dwelling place of Lord Krishna's aunt

Gundicha temple is one of the most renowned temples in Puri, located on the northeastern side of the Jagannath temple. The origin of the temple can be traced back to the sixteenth century. During the Rath Yatra, the idols of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra are seated on ornately decorated chariots and taken to the Gundicha Mandir only. The deities stay there for a period of seven days and thereafter, come back to the Srimandir in a similar procession.

The temple is thoroughly cleansed a day before the commencement of the Jagannath Rath Yatra. Gundicha Temple is considered to be the home of the aunt of Lord Krishna. However, the temple has been named after the King Indradyumna, who was also known by the name 'Gundicha'. This is because he was the one who laid the foundation for establishment of this temple. One of the highlights of the temple is a huge dome that is adorned with the wheel of Lord Vishnu.

### **» Key Events**

Puri Jagannath Car festival (Rath Yatra) is held during June to July. It is a marvelous extravaganza and highly important religious festival in Puri. Tourists throng this place during the Car festival period to experience the eye catching event.

Dusseera (Navaratri) celebrations lasts for nine days during October-November are highly attractive with religious rituals, fairs and processions.

#### » Climate

Season	Max Temp	Min Temp
Summer ( March to May )	32	20
Winter (December to February)	17	10

#### » Travel Tips

Stay safe from pandas of any temple. Ignore them as they are very dangerous. They will extract money from your pocket ruthlessly in the name of God. They are very influential and nothing can be done with the help of law. Avoid entering innermost sanctum of any living temple (even if you are Hindu/Indian). They will ask you to offer puja or pay respect to innumerable Gods here and there of same temple very politely/affectionately but will demand money in name of each God separately. No use arguing with them. If you are a bit religious/curious then carry enough change so that you can donate Rs 1, 2, 5, 10 to get rid of them without any commotion.

Stays away from monkeys. Don't lure them with food and other stuff.

#### » Important Getaway

Puri being a major tourist spot is well connected with rest of the country by train. In case of flight connectivity one has to go to Bhubaneswar to get onto one. From the main bus stand in Puri you can get buses to Bhubaneswar and Cuttack which are less than 60-70 km far. Bhubaneswar which is a major hub further increases connectivity.