



# VIRASAT-E ANDAMAN & NICOBAR

The beauty of nature



## HEADLINES TODAY

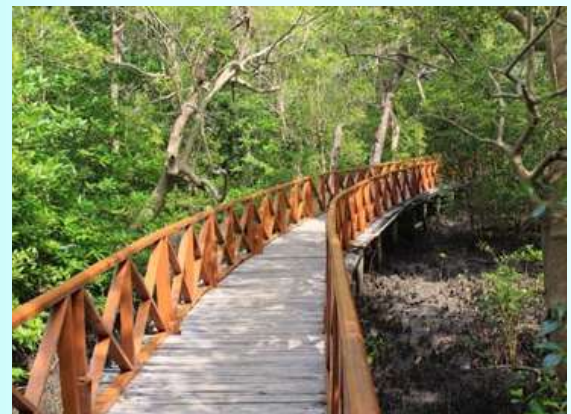
### THE MANGROVE STORY: DHANI NALLAH

Mangroves are trees and shrubs that have the ability to survive in brackish and sea water especially along quiet shorelines and in estuaries. They are part of forest ecosystems mainly in tropical and sub-tropical inter-tidal regions of the world. They exhibit remarkable capacity for salt water tolerance. Typically they produce tangled masses of arching roots that are exposed during low tides. These unique ecosystems play a crucial role in protecting coastlines from erosion, providing habitats for diverse marine and bird species, and serving as nurseries for fish and other marine life. Mangroves also help filter pollutants and improve water quality, making them essential for maintaining a healthy coastal environment.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands have approximately 966 square kilometers of mangroves, accounting for one-fifth of India's total mangrove area. This region is known for its dense and thriving mangrove forests.

To raise awareness and promote eco-tourism, the **Dhani Nallah Mangrove Nature Walk** in Andaman, situated roughly 20 km from Rangat on Middle Andaman Island, has been established. Dhani Nallah is named after a local filial of a mangrove called Dhanipatti. This nature walk features a wooden pathway, 713 metres long to be precise, that winds through the mangrove creek, allowing tourists to appreciate the diverse biodiversity of the area. The walk concludes at the picturesque Dhani Nallah Beach, renowned for turtle nesting, particularly by Olive Ridley turtles.

In efforts to educate the public about mangroves, the Department of Environment and Forests has inaugurated a Mangrove Interpretation Centre. This center showcases informative display panels highlighting the various mangrove species found on the islands. Additionally, a mangrove view watchtower has been erected to offer visitors a sweeping view of the surrounding landscape.



## THE GLORIOUS HISTORY

The Andaman Islands likely derive their name from the Hindu god, Hanuman, while Nicobar probably comes from the Tamil word 'nakkavaram', meaning "land of the naked." Situated on the historical trade route connecting India and Myanmar, the Andaman Islands were initially explored by the English East India Company's navy in 1789. Subsequently, in 1872, they were administratively merged by the British with the Nicobar Islands. By 1956, these island groups were established as a union territory within the Republic of India. The area is renowned for its indigenous communities, who have intentionally restricted their interactions with individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds.



## THE MAIN ISLANDS

The Andaman Islands consist of over 300 islands, with the primary ones being North, Middle, and South Andaman forming the Great Andaman group. Other islands include Landfall Island, Interview Island, the Sentinel Islands, Ritchie's Archipelago, and Rutland Island. Little Andaman in the south is separated from the Nicobar Islands by the Ten Degree Channel, spanning about 90 miles (145 km) wide. The Nicobar Islands are made up of 19 islands, with notable ones including Car Nicobar in the north, Camorta, Katchall, and Nancowry in the central region, and Great Nicobar in the south. Further southwest from Great Nicobar, approximately 90 miles away, lies the northwestern tip of Sumatra, Indonesia.

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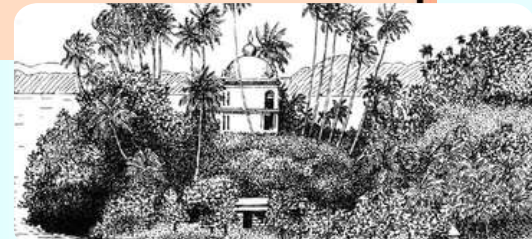


## FREEDOM STRUGGLE IN THE ISLANDS



**COME WITNESS THE FREEDOM STRUGGLE AND PLACES OF IMPORTANCE IN ANDAMANS**  
**OUR HERITAGE EXPERTS WILL TAKE YOU FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE TOUR OF THE ISLANDS TO RELIVE THE WAR OF INDIA'S INDEPENDENCE**

**VISIT CELLULAR JAIL, BALIDAN VEDI, VIPER ISLAND, ETC.**



## THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS

Although the Andaman and Nicobar Islands encompass numerous islands, only a few are inhabited. About twenty of the Andaman Islands have human settlements, while only 12 of the Nicobar Islands are populated. Few indigenous Andamanese people exist today, with many groups being decimated by diseases after contact with Europeans, Indians, and other outsiders. In the early 21st century, the only Andamanese groups that survived and maintained their ancestral practices were a small group of Great Andamanese on Strait Island, the Sentinelese on North Sentinel Island, the Jarawa in the interior regions of Middle and South Andaman, and the Onge on Little Andaman. The majority of the Andaman population comprises immigrants from South Asia and their descendants.

### ➤➤➤ JARAWAS

The Jarawas, residing in the Andaman Islands, have had friendly contact expeditions since 1974. They are a nomadic tribe, hunting and gathering using bows and arrows. Their population was recorded as 240 in 2001, and they rely on hunting, fishing, and gathering for sustenance.



### ONGES



The Onges tribe, one of the most primitive in India, resides on Little Andaman Island. This Hunting and Gathering tribe has also been settled by the Andaman & Nicobar Administration at Dugong Creek and South Bay on Little Andaman Island. With a population of 96 in 2001, they engage in hunting, fishing, and benefit from government support.



### ➤➤➤ SENTINELESE

The Sentinelese tribe on North Sentinel Island is hostile to outsiders like the Jarawas. They are hunters, fishers, and gatherers who use bows and arrows for fishing and hunt wild pigs. They have dug-out canoes for coastal travel, build temporary huts, and have a population of 39 as per the 2001 census.



# LESSER-KNOWN WORLD OF THE NICOBAR ISLANDS

Precious Rongmei

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The Nicobar islands have always remained far from the world of tourism. In fact, it was only in August 2018 that the Indian government decided to remove the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) requirement (for foreigners) from the Andaman Islands and a few parts of the Nicobar Islands. Visits to the tribal areas are still prohibited.

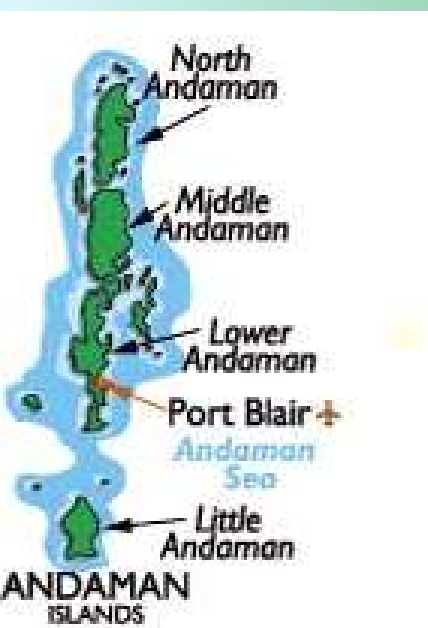
As per the official website of the Nicobar district, the district (except Campbell Bay in Great Nicobar) is a restricted area. A Landing Permit from the Office of the Deputy Commissioner, Andaman District, is required to visit the Nicobar district.

Did you know that the Great Nicobar Island is one of the most important biosphere reserves in the world. UNESCO has declared the island as one of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.

For all tourism purposes, the island of Great Nicobar is the safest bet as here you will find a number of things to do and you will also find places to stay. The most important attractions here are the Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve and Galathea National Park. Indira Point, the last point of India, used to be accessible by road earlier. The tsunami of December 2004 flooded the entire area.

However, for those wishing to visit the distant land of the Great Nicobar, here you can expect some of the most unique wildlife experiences ever. A lot of the plants, reptiles and birds in this region are endemic and rare.

To visit the biosphere reserve and the national park, you will need to obtain permission from the Forest Department. You will also need to speak to the Forest Department's Range Forest Officer for a guide for the nature trail.



**COME EXPLORE THE UNTAPPED BEAUTY OF ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR**

**2N/3D. 3N/4D, 4N/5D TOURS  
STAY IN THE LAP OF NATURE AND EXPERIENCE  
CAMPING/GLAMPING**

**\*PACKAGES AVAILABLE FOR DIFFERENT GROUPS**



# HERITAGE PLACES OF ANDAMAN

## ➤➤➤ NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE ISLAND

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, previously known as Ross Island, has a rich history spanning 160 years. Initially surveyed by Lt. Archibald Blair, it became a colony named after Sir Daniel Ross. Used to exile Indian freedom fighters, it housed various government officials and buildings. Today, it is a popular tourist destination showcasing ruins and offering a Light and Sound show. Additionally, a museum named 'Smritika - The Ross Memorial' has been established by the Navy to preserve its historical significance.

## ➤➤➤ VIPER ISLAND

The island named after the survey ship 'Viper' was made habitable in 1858 by Superintendent J.P. Walker and Indian freedom fighters. A jail with gallows was built by 1867, but closed after the construction of the Cellular Jail. Japanese occupation led to the dismantling of buildings for fortifications. Historical buildings are now being restored by the Art & Culture Department.

## CELLULAR JAIL - NATIONAL MEMORIAL

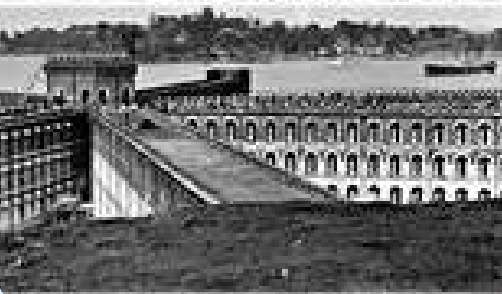
The Cellular Jail, built from 1896 to 1906, featured a unique layout with 693 solitary confinement cells. The design prevented communication among prisoners. A separate building served as the jail hospital, now housing the Martyr's Column. Gallows outside could execute three simultaneously, with a door for removing corpses.

Many charismatic freedom fighters were imprisoned in this Jail. Savarkar brothers, Hotilal Verma, Babu Ram Hari, Pandit Parmanand, Ladha Ram, Ullaskar Dutt, Pulin Das, Trailokyanath Chakravarthy, Gurumukh Singh, etc.

The National Memorial at the entrance block includes Freedom Fighters Photos and Exhibition Gallery, Art Gallery, Netaji Gallery, Library on freedom movement, and galleries on First War of Independence and old photographs. An eternal Flame "Freedom-Swatantrya Jyot" honors freedom fighters and martyrs. Additionally, a Sound and Light Show is a featured attraction.

## ➤➤➤ BALIDAN VEDI

The "Balidan Vedi" State Martyrs' Memorial near Wandoor commemorates the sacrifices of Andaman islanders during Japanese occupation in World War II. With the Japanese occupation, the unarmed India Penal Settlers / Islanders came under their control. Those patriots organised the Indian Independence League (IIL) and INA for participation in the freedom struggle movement. Seven islanders were shot dead on 30th March 1943 at Dugnabad sea shore. On 30th January 1944, Japanese took away 44 IIL members from the Cellular Jail and shot them. In commemoration of those martyrs' supreme sacrifice "Balidan Vedi" has been erected.



# THE UNIQUE FOOD OF ANDAMANS

The culinary scene of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands offers a refreshing experience with a focus on seafood. The local cuisine features a variety of fish, crabs, prawns, and lobsters, complemented by coconut milk, indigenous spices, and herbs. Popular seafood delicacies include fish curry, crab curry, prawn curry, and lobster masala. The island-born residents boast a distinctive cuisine incorporating locally sourced vegetables, fruits, and seafood. Meanwhile, the indigenous tribal communities have their unique dishes like bamboo curry, turtle and crocodile meat, steamed fish in banana leaves, and more. In Nicobar, tribes dwell deep within forests, relying on wild pig, honey, turtles, fish, as well as various roots and tubers for their diet.

## »»» SEA FOOD OF ANDAMANS

**Fish Curry:** Fish curry is a popular dish made with fish pieces cooked with coconut milk and a mix of spices such as salt, cumin, coriander, turmeric, and red chili powder and is usually served with rice.

**Crab Curry:** Crab curry is made with fresh crab meat cooked in a spicy coconut milk gravy and served with steamed rice.

**Lobster Masala:** Lobster masala is a spicy and flavorful dish made with tomato and onion gravy with a mix of local spices.

Other dishes include, prawn curry, fish fry and grilled fish



## »»» VEGETARIAN CUISINE

Vegetarian cuisine in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands features local ingredients like jackfruit and papaya. Dishes include Jackfruit Curry, Papaya Curry with coconut milk and spices, and various chutneys & pickles made from local fruits and vegetables.



## INDIGENOUS FOODS <<<

The indigenous people have a unique cuisine and they always mix some locally made spices into the dishes.

- **Banana leaf-wrapped fish fry:** Fresh fish marinated with spices, wrapped in a banana leaf for flavour.
- **Banana curry:** Ripe bananas cooked in coconut milk-based curry with spices, potatoes, and fish fry pieces, served with rice.
- **Wild pig roast:** Wild pig roasted with local herbs and spices, served with rice.



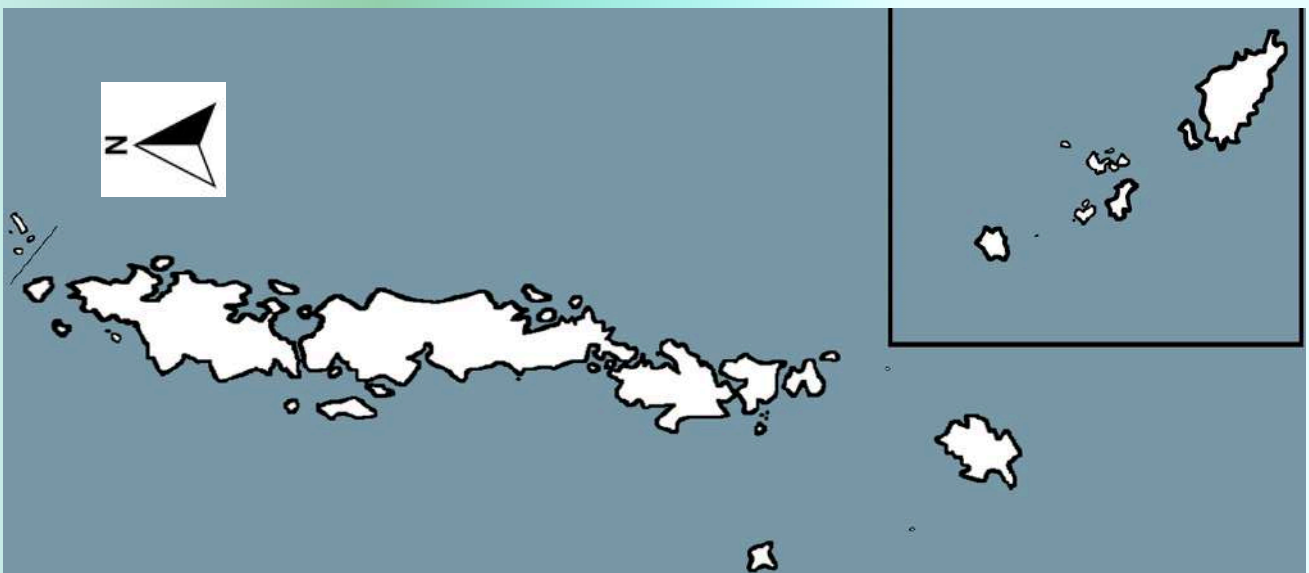
## TIPS ON SUSTAINABILITY

Starting with understanding the importance of sustainable tourism is crucial. Tourism often leads to environmental damage and strains local resources. Choosing sustainable travel not only reduces our carbon footprint but also supports local economies, protects indigenous cultures, and preserves natural ecosystems.

- Many Andaman resorts are adopting green initiatives such as rainwater harvesting and solar energy. By choosing these accommodations, you are encouraging more businesses to embrace eco-friendly practices.
- By enjoying locally-sourced food, you experience authentic island flavors and reduce the carbon footprint associated with food transport.
- Minimize your environmental impact by traveling light, reducing fuel consumption whether by air or sea. Remember to pack reusable items like water bottles, shopping bags, and cutlery for a more sustainable journey.
- Adhere to the principle of “Take only pictures, leave only footprints.” Avoid littering, and show respect for the local flora and fauna.
- When snorkeling, choose certified groups that prioritize coral preservation. Avoid touching or stepping on corals, as they are fragile and can take years to regenerate.
- Opt for treks with minimal environmental impact.
- Explore local markets and purchase handmade crafts to promote indigenous art and directly support artisans.

## ACTIVITY CORNER

Mark as many places as you can on this map.



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