

LIFESTYLE
HOLIDAYS

PLACES



A photograph of a white canvas glamping tent set up on a green lawn. The tent has a large open front with a mesh screen. Inside, two wooden lounge chairs and a small table are visible. The tent is supported by wooden poles and guy lines. A large tree with green leaves is in the background, and a paved area is in the foreground. A small lantern sits on the ground near the tent.

Roughin' It Out, In Style

*The word 'camping' usually conjures up images of canvas tents, sleeping bags, camp fires and well, lack of a decent toilet. Enter the concept of 'Glamping'. With luxurious, carpeted tents having every imaginable comfort, pristine white bathtubs and champagne, camping has become glamorous all the way, says **Neha Malude**.*

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Picture Courtesy: Taj Banjaar Tola, Madhya Pradesh



Banjaar Tola by Taj Madhya Pradesh

Part of the fun of camping comes from knowing that you are surrounded by wildlife, does it not? And so, Banjaar Tola, a Taj property that is located inside Madhya Pradesh's Kanha National Park definitely deserves a mention. Situated on the edge of the Banjaar River and overlooking the park, Banjaar Tola is the perfect combination of glamour and camping. As with all Taj properties, attention to detail is apparent here too. The tents, made with pressed bamboo wall panels and bamboo floors are designed to reflect a contemporary style. The use of raw timber, canvas wardrobes, leather detailing and handcrafted furniture made from fallen trees and driftwood lends the suites an earthy yet lavish feel. The rich heritage of M.P. is mirrored in the decor in hues of forest green and saffron with block prints. Wide glass doors open onto private decks overlooking the river, offering panoramic views of the wilderness beyond. To start your day, tuck into traditional Indian fare at lunch and a post a short siesta on your private deck, take an afternoon safari drive. Halt at sunset point where you will be handed a refreshing cocktail as you watch the sun dip. As twilight approaches, get back to the campsite and let the expert masseuse work on your tired muscles. Dinner is an entertaining affair with tribal dancers showing off their best moves, inviting you to join them! What with the music, merry-making and an adventurous day, it won't be long before you feel your eyes drooping and find yourself being lulled into sleep to the sounds of the jungle. Cost: Rs. 43,600

For more information, visit http://www.tajsafaris.com/our lodges/banjaar_tola/default.php



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Picture Courtesy: The Bison Kabini Resort, Karnataka



The Bison Kabini Wildlife Resort, Karnataka

Situated at the confluence of the Bandipur and Nagarhole National Park, on the shores of the Kabini river in Karnataka, The Bison Kabini Resort is the only resort in Kabini which overlooks the forest. Although it has attempted to stay close to nature, in no way does that mean that the resort has compromised on luxury. The tents, or *machans* as they are called, are a combination of wooden floors, artifacts, old cabin trunks and antiques to give it a rustic yet elegant feel. All the tents boast of a waterfront view, which means that you might be lucky enough to see a herd of elephants or a big cat (if you are really lucky) pass by as you sip tea from the comfort of your tent. Guests are invited to experience two types of activities – Common (fishing, coracle rides, treks, etc.) and Star (dining in the forest, backwater breakfast, sun downers, night boat rides, etc.) The safari will be in the Kakkankote Range which includes the backwaters of the Kabini, superb grasslands, lush bamboo, rose wood, sandal wood and teak forests with strategically placed water holes and salt licks. So, take your pick – enjoy a drink at sunset while gazing at majestic elephants, dine in the jungle under the stars, enjoy dinner cooked on firewood – or do it all. And if you want something truly unique, you can have a customized experience too. There is a tailor made itinerary for a romantic getaway, for those especially interested in wildlife and photography or for special occasions, like a birthday.

Cost: Rs.10,500 (approx) for double occupancy.

For more information, visit <http://thebisonresort.com/>



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JAWAI Leopard Camp, Rajasthan

Amidst the high hills and arid lands of Rajasthan lies the JAWAI Leopard Camp, an offering from SUJÁN Luxury. It is a one-of-its-kind leopard camp not just in India but the entire world – that's right. With just the kind of topography that the big cats like to call their home, this is an experience you will never forget. The tents are an unabashed display of everything that is magnificent – the canvas tents are decorated with stainless steel and leather accents that lend them a touch of understated luxuriousness. Every tent has an attached deck that boasts of uninterrupted views of the wilderness in all its glory. Time at JAWAI can be spent hiking, bird-watching or cycling. But undoubtedly, the most interesting of these activities are the safari and what is known as The Shepherd's Stroll, a chance to take a walk with a Rabari herdsman to truly appreciate the beauty of rural Rajasthan. You can also visit the nearby UNESCO World Heritage Site, the 15th century Fort of Kumbhalgarh and explore the intricately carved temples of Ranakpur. Return to the campsite in the evening, take a quick dip in the open-air swimming pool or go for a spa session before night falls. Dine on a gourmet meal made from organically-grown produce and then sit around a campfire and watch the fire crackle as the stars shine down – sounds magical? It probably is.

Cost: Rs. 91,000 (Tented Suite)

For more details, visit <http://www.sujanluxury.com/jawaileopard-camp/index.html>





Picture Courtesy: JAWAI Leopard Camp, Rajasthan

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Picture Courtesy: Aman-i-Khaas, Rajasthan

Aman-i-Khaas, Rajasthan

Aman (peace) and Khaas (special), need we say more? This gorgeous wilderness camp is located in the north of Jaipur on the outskirts of Ranthambore National Park in Rajasthan. Aman-i-Khaas, with its abundant greenery and rolling plains, is quite literally an oasis in the midst of a desert. Ten luxury tents, each set on a raised concrete plinth, reflect the magnificence of the Mughal travelling tents of the days gone by, when rooms were separated by not doors, but cotton drapes. The bedroom area is fitted with a king-size bed flanked by twin writing desks and the bathing area includes a shower, soaking tub and separate toilet. One of the best features of the camp is the outdoor fireplace, where you can spend time gazing at stars after dinner. Or on a particularly hot day, you could immerse yourself in the Bawadi or step well, a series of squared, concentric steps that converge deeper into the pool. Set out on a morning excursion trip to sight wildlife that Ranthambore National Park is famous for and you can return to a lavish breakfast served within the privacy of your Dining Tent. Food is a high point here, thanks to the produce from the camp's very own organic garden. If you like, you can experience a relaxing spa session or even a Reiki or Yoga session. Evenings are a jolly affair as guests join other camp visitors around the communal fireplace. With all this and more, Aman-i-Khaas indeed makes for a special, peaceful experience.

Cost: Rs. 66,110

For more information, visit <http://www.amanresorts.com/amanikhas/home.aspx>



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Picture Courtesy: TUTC, Chamba Camp, Ladakh



Chamba Camp, Ladakh

An initiative of The Ultimate Travelling Camp (TUTC), the Chamba Camp in Thiksey, Ladakh, is a revelation. As if the stark beauty of Ladakh wasn't enough to mesmerize travellers, this super-luxurious camp will wow the discerning traveller even more. The 15-day camp is set up close to Thiksey Monastery, which also acts as the host. The first day is just for acclimatization so you can sit around and soak in the beauty of the surrounding alfa-alfa pastures all day. The next few days are spent exploring the old city coupled with several activities like bird-watching, cycling trip, rafting, polo and even a séance with the Oracle. The days are punctuated with picnics along the banks of the Indus River where a personal, liveried butler will cater to your every wish. As night falls, retreat into your grand tent designed in soft brown hues and colonial furniture with en-suite bathrooms, private decks and crisp linen. Don't believe us? Then we will just let the pictures do the talking.

Cost: Rs. 2,45,355 (Luxury Tent)

For more details, visit <http://www.chambacampthiksey.com/>

