Railways And Tourism

RAIL TOURISM IN INDIA

India, the seventh largest country of the world is known for its varied and rich cultural and historical heritage around the globe. The huge and varied geography of the country is unique in itself and gives a chance not only to the international tourists but also to the domestic tourists to explore the true beauty of the country.

It is rightly said that if one wants to see the real India, one must explore the country by rail. The Indian Railways serves as the true kaleidoscope to witness the lives, culture, philosophy, religion and lifestyle of Indian people. The Indian Railways offers tourists one of the most convenient and popular modes of transport for travelling in India. The Indian Railways helps one to explore the length and breadth of India with its lively markets, crowded places, geographical variations, cuisines, dress styles, languages and so many other facets of India. From the Great Indian Plains, the Thar Desert, the Deccan Plateau, the coastal plains to the North Eastern states, a train tour of India provides the real glimpse of the Indian culture and lifestyle.

Bharat Gaurav Trains

Indian Railways have introduced theme-based Tourist Circuit trains under the Bharat Gaurav Trains (BGT) Policy with an objective to showcase India's rich cultural heritage and magnificent historical places through professionals of the tourism sector and other potential service providers. Under the said policy, the State Governments, State Tourist Development Corporations or any other potential service provider may run theme-based tourist circuit train covering destinations of their choice. The Service Provider offers a comprehensive package with facility of rail transportation, accommodation, meals, local road transport, sightseeing etc. The maiden Bharat Gaurav Train viz. Shirdi Yatra was launched on 14.06.2022 from Coimbatore to Mantralayam and Shirdi & back covering a total distance of 2880 km.

Ministry of Railways have decided to give a concerted thrust to efforts for promotion of domestic tourism through provision of better quality Linke Hofmann Busch (LHB) coaches under the Bharat Gaurav Train policy and give approximately 33% concession in the charges due to the Railway, for promotion of rail based tourism under Bharat Gaurav Train scheme.

The details of the Bharat Gaurav Train policy can be referred at https://bharatgauravtrains.indianrailways.gov.in/.









Luxury Tourist Trains

Maharajas' Express – World's Leading Luxury Train



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Maharajas' Express luxury train is owned and operated by Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd (IRCTC), a Govt. of India Enterprise under Ministry of Railways. Maharajas' Express is the flagship luxury train of IRCTC and is the newest luxury train in the country. The train which commenced operations in 2010 has been a frontrunner and is known for its enriching journey experiences coupled with exquisite facilities onboard.

The 23 carriage long train houses four different types of accommodation viz. Deluxe Cabin, Junior Suite Cabins, Suite and the Presidential Suite named after various precious gem stones. The train has two restaurants named Rang Mahal and Mayur Mahal serving a range of international and Indian delicacies. In addition to the restaurants, there are 02 Bar cum Lounges in the train. The Rajah Club and The Safari Bar serve a mix of House Pours and other international brands. The House Pours are included in the package and select international wines and spirits are on sale.

The train offers four exquisite journey options covering the various princely and culturally rich states of the country:

- **Indian Splendour** (6 Nights/7 Days) starting from Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore, Jaipur, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Udaipur and ending in Mumbai.
- **Heritage of India** (6 Nights/7 Days) starting from Mumbai covering Udaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaipur, Ranthambore, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra and ending in Delhi.
- **The Indian Panorama** (6 Nights/7 Days) starting from Delhi covering Jaipur, Ranthambore, Fatehpur Sikri, Agra, Orchha, Khajuraho, Varanasi and ending in Delhi.
- **Treasures of India** (3 Nights/4 Days) starting from Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore and Jaipur and ending in Delhi.

Owing to its exquisite services, the train has been voted as the **World's Leading Luxury Train** by **World Travel Awards** for eight years in a row since 2012 and also Asia's Leading Luxury Train Award in 2023 by World Travel Awards. The luxury tourist train operates its scheduled departures during the tourist season every year from September to April whereas interested clients can also book the train around the year on charter as per requirement.

Website: www.the-maharajas.com

Palace on Wheels





The Palace on Wheels is a luxury tourist train being operated by Indian Railways in association with Rajasthan Tourism Development Corporation. The train comprises of 14 fully air-conditioned saloons with rich décor that evoke the age of Rajput chivalry and are named after former Rajputana states such as Kota, Jaipur, Udaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Alwar, Sirohi, Kishangarh, Bundi, Dungarpur, Bharatpur, Jhalawar and Dholpur. The train also has two fine dining restaurants, a well stocked bar and a lounge car for relaxation.

Itinerary

Delhi-Jaipur-Sawai Madhopur-Chittaurgarh-Udaipur-Jaisalmer-Jodhpur-Bharatpur-Agra-New Delhi

Website: www.palaceonwheels.rajasthan.gov.in

Golden Chariot



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The Golden Chariot is an attempt to connect some of the important dots which have shaped the history of South India through several centuries. Destinations on the Golden Chariot route have been chosen to showcase the architecture, culture and history of this region. The unique position of the southern peninsula, surrounded by Arabian Sea in West, the Indian Ocean in South and Bay of Bengal in the East saw several dynasties having trade and political linkages with both the West and the East. The land once ridden by formidable armies is now traversed by the world's unique luxury train. The Golden Chariot beckons you to discover worlds that are enriched with history and culture. Recline and relax as the magnificent scenery unfolds outside your window with luxury on the inside, thus far reserved for royalty. The Golden Chariot presents a fine balance between a glorious yesterday and an omnipresent tomorrow in the magical land of Karnataka, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry. The fully air-conditioned train comprising of 11 passenger saloons, 2 restaurant coaches, 1 spa and gym car and 1 bar cum lounge car began its operations in the year 2008. It is being operated by Indian Railways in association with Karnataka State Tourism Development Corporation (KSTDC).

Itineraries

- **Pride Of Karnataka** (5 Nights / 6 Days): Bengaluru - Nanjangud - Mysore - Halebidu - Chikamgaluru - Hospet - Goa – Bengaluru
- **Jewels of South** (5 Nights / 6 Days) : Bengaluru - Mysore - Kanchipuram - Mahabalipuram - Thanjavur and Chettinad - Cochin - Chertala – Bengaluru
- **Glimpses of Karnataka** (3 Nights / 4 Days) :Bengaluru - Nanjangud - Mysore - Hospet – Bengaluru

Website: www.goldenchariot.org

Deccan Odyssey

The Deccan Odyssey is also a luxury tourist train being operated by Indian Railways in association with Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC). Experience the finest and the best of train journeys of the world. The Deccan Odyssey is more than a mere luxury train cruise. A lavishly decorated train that transports its guests on an unforgettable sojourn on different itineraries covers different parts of the country. The Deccan Odyssey offers accommodation in 40 deluxe cabins in 10 suite coaches. It also has 4 presidential suites in 2 cars, 1 Conference car with business centre, 2 restaurants, a well-stocked bar and a spa with steam, massage, a mini gym and a parlour. Other facilities include channel music, intercom, wall-to-wall carpeting, money exchange / credit card facility, safety & security arrangements, spa, bar, conference equipments.





Itineraries

1. **Maharashtra Splendour** (07 Nights/ 08 Days): Mumbai - Nashik - Aurangabad - Ajanta Caves - Kolhapur - Goa - Sindhudurg – Mumbai.
2. **Indian Odyssey (**07 Nights/ 08 Days)**:** Delhi - Sawai Madhopur - Agra - Jaipur - Udaipur - Vadodara - Aurangabad – Mumbai.
3. **Indian Sojourn (**07 Nights/ 08 Days)**:** Mumbai - Vadodara - Udaipur - Jodhpur - Jaipur - Agra - Sawai Madhopur – Delhi.
4. **Heritage Odyssey (**07 Nights/ 08 Days)**:-** Delhi - Agra - Sawai Madopur - Udaipur - Jodhpur - Jaiselmer - Jaipur – Delhi.
5. **Cultural Odyssey (**07 Nights/ 08 Days): Delhi - Sawai Madhopur - Jaipur - Agra - Gwalior - Orchha - Khajuraho - Varanasi – Delhi.
6. **Maharashtra Wild Trails (**07 Nights/ 08 Days): Mumbai - Aurangabad - Ramtek - Tadoba - Ajanta Caves - Nashik – Mumbai.

Website: www.deccan-odyssey-india.com

Vistadome Coach (Glass Top Coaches)

In 2017, Indian Railways introduced indigenously designed glass top coaches with wider windows for boosting tourism. The features of Glass Top Coaches are:

- Electrically controlled opalescence
- 360 degree rotatable push back ergonomically designed chairs

- Automatic sliding doors
- Multiple television screens
- Wide side doors for Divyangs
- GPS based info system

The first Vistadome coach was introduced on 16.04.2017 in Train No. 58501/02 Vishakapatnam-Kirandul passenger between Vishakapatnam and Araku. At present 43 BG, 06 MG and 50 NG Vistadome coaches are available over various Zones of Indian Railways for operation in different sections/ routes with scenic beauty.

The base fare of AC Vistadome coaches is 1.1 times of Executive class (EC) base fare of Shatabdi trains, without catering charges. Reservation charges, GST and any other charges are levied in addition to the basic fare. All passengers are charged at full fare. The minimum chargeable distance is 50 Km. Catering is optional and may be provided by IRCTC to the level of Executive Class in Shatabdi, on payment basis.





Buddhist Circuit Special Train

IRCTC started the operation of The Buddhist Circuit Special Tourist Train since 2007 and successfully completed 17 years of its operation. This is a fully air-conditioned train offering a 7 Nights and 8 Days package covering all major Buddhist Pilgrim locations in India and Lumbini in Nepal. The major destinations covered follow the life of Lord Gautam Buddha. The itinerary covers destinations like Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Varanasi, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Lumbini (Nepal), Sravasti and Agra.





The new rake of Buddhist Circuit Train has international level features like two Dining Cars, Vacuum Bio-toilets, Air Suspension springs, Security lockers, modified 2AC coaches with side seating facility, On-board housekeeping and security, CCTV camera security, Foot massager and Mini library, etc. which have been very well received by tourists. The details and online booking facility of the train is available at IRCTC's Buddhist micro-site **"www.irctcbuddhisttrain.com".**

Rail Tour Packages

IRCTC under Ministry of Railways offers Rail Tour Packages with confirmed onward and return journey rail tickets apart from other elements of a package such as road transfers, accommodation, meals and sightseeing at reasonable rates on the basis of itinerary. Rail tour packages are specially designed on the basis of demand of customers as well as popularity of destination like Shirdi- Shani Shingnapur, Vaishno Devi, Tirupati, Karnataka, Coorg- Ooty, Ahmedabad, Jyotirlinga, Kanyakumari- Rameshwaram, Varanasi (Kashi Vishwanath), Madhya Pradesh, Gaya/ Bodhgaya, Hyderabad, etc. from various parts of India. The details and booking of these packages are available at tourism website **"www.irctctourism.com"** or one can visit nearest Tourism Facilitation Centres of IRCTC.

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Travel & Tourism Portal

Tourism portal **"www.irctctourism.com"** is a "One Stop Travel Shop" for all travel requirements of every tourists. The portal due to its user friendliness, had won the "National Tourism Award" in the year 2008, "Website of the Year" for consecutive three years i.e. 2014, 2015 & 2016 by "Leisure & Travel" by MatrixLab and "Indian e-retail award" for consecutive three years from 2015 to 2018 by Franchise India.

The Tourism portal of IRCTC is one of the most popular website among the travellers as it offers varied Travel and Tourism solutions such as on-line booking of Bharat Gaurav Trains, Luxury trains – Maharajas' Express and Golden Chariot (with micro-sites), Bus tickets, Air Tickets, Tour packages, Hotels, Cruise packages, Medical Tourism, Retiring Room, executive lounge, Heli Yatra etc. Some of the packages are also available on enquiry mode and packages are also customised on the basis of requirement of customers. IRCTC has been continuously improving the contents of the tourism website for the ease of customers to ensure seamless navigation.

Online Booking of Charter Trains and coaches

Customers can now book a charter train or coach on IRCTCs webpage **www.ftr.irctc.co.in**. The user friendly module includes options like viewing the list of trains on which chartered coach can be attached, search for availability of trains between preferred destinations without registration, placing a request for charter train or coach online, making online payment of deposit, provision to print the dossier which contains all mandatory documents to be carried while travelling, etc. While registration is not mandatory for searching availability, PAN Card verified user creation is required for placing a request for chartering. By introduction of this online module, now users can book charter trains/coaches from any part of the country. **For bookings, one can email at charter@irctc.com** or **visit www.ftr.irctc.co.in**.



Tourism Facilitation Centres

IRCTC has set up Tourism Facilitation Centres in and around various railway stations across the country that are serving as 'One Stop Shop' to assist railway passengers in availing various tourism products and services. Besides, providing detailed information about various rail and non-rail tourism products and services, these facilitation centres book tour packages, airline tickets as well as manage the departures of passengers availing the train tour packages.



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S. No.	Name	Address and Contact Numbers
1	**Agra**	Platform No.1, Agra Cantt. Railway Station, AGRA-282003, Landline No.:- 0562-2420111. Tel No. – 8287930916, E-mail id:- amitupadhyay@irctc.com
2	**Bengaluru**	Concourse area, Main Entrance Bengaluru City Railway Station, Near enquiry office, Bengaluru – 560023, Karnataka, Tel. No. 080 – 22960013, 8595931292, E-mail id:- tifcsbc@irctc.com
3	**Chennai**	Gate No.3, Main Entrance, (Opp. SMR Room) Chennai Central Railway Station, Park Town, Chennai – 3, Tamil Nadu, Tel No. 8287932121, 044-25332548, E-mail id:- tourismmas@irctc.com
4	**Ernakulam**	Regional office, 1st Floor, Salih Arcade, 40-8194,Convent Road, Kochi-682035, Contact: 8287932082, 0484-2382991, E-mail id:-tourismkerala@irctc.com
5	**Gaya**	Platform No. 7, Near first class, Waiting Hall, First Floor, adjacent to Bihar Tourism Office, Gaya, Bihar. Tel. No. – 8595937723, Email Id: - gautam4985@irctc.com
6	**Hubballi**	IRCTC Area Office, Near Ticket Booking Counter Office, Hubballi Railway Station, Hubli-580023 Tel No. – 8595931293, 8287931953, Email Id: - areaofficeubl@irctc.com
7	**Indore**	Platform No. 1, Opposite PRO Office, Indore Railway Station, Indore, Madhya Pradesh – 452001 Tel. No.- 8287931723,0731-2522200, Email id: -irctcindoretfc@gmail.com, raunaq5619@irctc.com
8	**Jabalpur**	TIFC, Near Railway Retiring Room, Platform No 1, Jabalpur Railway Station, Madhya Pradesh – 482001, Tel. No. - 9321901832, 0761-2998807, Email id:- irctcjbp@gmail.com
9	**Kolhapur**	Platform No. 1, Near to Ticket Counter, Shri C. Shahu Maharaj Terminus, Kolhapur Railway Station, Kolhapur - 416001, Contact No: Vijay Kumbhar - 9321901847, E-mail id:- deotourism1@irctc.com
10	**Kozhikode**	Platform No. 1, Near Food Plaza, Kozhikode Railway Station, Kozhikode- 673001, Kerala. Tel No. + 0495 2701510, 8287932098, E- mail:- tifcclt@irctc.com
11	**Madurai**	IRCTC area office Platform No 1, Inside Executive Lounge, Madurai Railway junction – 625001, Karnataka, Tel. No. 8287931977, 8287932122, Email id:- tourismmdu@irctc.com
12	**Mysuru**	Near General Booking Office, Mysuru Junction, Karnataka, Tel. No. 8595931294, 0821 – 2426001, E-mail id:- tifcmys@irctc.com
13	**Nagpur**	Tourism Information and Facilitation Centre, Main Porch, Nagpur Railway Station, Near Enquiry Counter, Platform No-1 Nagpur – 440021, Shubham -9321901846, Email id: -tfcnagpur@irctc.com
14	**New Delhi**	Near Cloakroom, Opp. Executive Lounge, Platform No.16 New Delhi Railway Station, Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi – 110002, Tel. No. – 9717641764
15	**Pune**	IRCTC office,1st Floor, Above Station Director Office, Pune Railway Station, Pune, Maharashtra – 411001, Tel No: - 8287931707, Email id:- aloksparmar5615@irctc.com
16	**Secunderabad**	Platform No.10, Beside SBI Credit Card Counter, Secunderabad Railway Station, Telangana, Tel. No. - 040-27800580, Mob No: 9701360701,8287932228/29/30, Email id:- tourismscz@irctc.com
17	**Tirupati**	Platform No.1, Beside Main Entrance, Tirupati Railway Station, Andhra Pradesh, Tel. No. – 8287932313/ 8287932317, E-mail id:- Sukumar.Bandala@irctc.com; deotourismscz@irctc.com
18	**Thiruvananthapuram**	IRCTC Area Office, First Floor, S.K Tower, Near Indian Oil Petrol Pump, Karamana, Thiruvananthapuram-695002, Tel No: - 8287932095, 0471- 3521275, E-mail: tourismtvc@irctc.com
19	**Vadodara**	Tourist Facilitation Center Concourse Hall, Opp. Enquiry Counter, Vadodara Railway Station-390007, Prabhjyot Kaur- 8287931697, Email Id: -prabhjyotkaur@irctc.com
20	**Vijayawada**	Platform No.1, Beside Main Entrance, Vijayawada Railway Station, Andhra Pradesh, Tel.No.–0866-2572280,8287932312/675 E-mail id:- ch.balaji@irctc.com