

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 to the people of India and the world 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 trains covering any 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. 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., 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 front runner 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, 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, Fatehpur Sikri, Ranthambore, Agra, Orchha, Khajuraho, Varanasi and ending in Delhi.
- **Treasures of India** (3 Nights/4 Days) starting from Delhi covering Agra, Ranthambore and Jaipur.

Owing to its exquisite services, the train has been voted as the **World's Leading Luxury Train** by **World Travel Awards** for six years in a row since 2012. 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-Delhi

Website: www.rtdc.in

Golden Chariot





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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 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** (6 Nights / 7 Days):- Bengaluru – Bandipur – Mysore – Halebidu – Chikamgaluru – Hampi – Pattadakal & Aihole – Goa – Bengaluru
- **Jewels of South** (6 Nights / 7 Days):- Bengaluru – Mysore – Hampi – Mahabalipuram – Thanjavur and Chettinad – Cochin – Kumarakom – Bengaluru
- **Glimpses of Karnataka** (3 Nights / 7 Days):- Bengaluru – Bandipur – Mysore – Hampi – 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

- Mumbai-Nashik-Aurangabad-Jalgaon/Pachora-Kolhapur-Karmali/Madgaon-Sawantwadi-Mumbai
- Mumbai-Vishwamitri-Palitana-Veraval-Viramgam-Patan-Nashik-Mumbai
- Mumbai-Vishwamitri-Udaipur-Jodhpur-Sawai Madhopur-Agra-Jaipur-Delhi
- Delhi-Sawai Madhopur-Agra-Jaipur-Udaipur-Vadodara-Aurangabad-Mumbai
- Mumbai-Bijapur-Badami-Hospet/Hampi-Hyderabad-Aurangabad-Jalgaon/Pachora-Mumbai
- Mumbai-Aurangabad-Ramtek-Varora-Jalgaon/Pachora-Nashik-Mumbai

Website: www.maharashtratourism.gov.in

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 47 BG, 06 MG and 28 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.



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Railways have recently introduced a swanky new air-conditioned LHB rake for the tourist train with enhanced facilities such as sleeper cars with personal sitting gallery, 2 aesthetically designed restaurant cars which have been very well received by the 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, all 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, Vaishno Devi, Tirupati, Darjeeling, Chennai, Rameshwaram, Gangtok, Ooty, Goa, Puri, Kerala, etc. from various parts of India. The details and booking of these packages are available at tourism website "www.irctctourism.com" or visit nearest Tourism Facilitation Centres of IRCTC.



Buddhist Circuit Special Train

Started in the year 2007, the Buddhist Circuit Special Train operated by IRCTC completed 14 years of operation. This fully air-conditioned train runs on a 7 Night /8 Days itinerary 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.



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 2017 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, 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.





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Online Booking of Charter Trains and coaches

Customers can now book a charter train or coach on IRCTC's 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, E-mail charter@irctc.com or one can 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. 8595924302, Email id: brijesh.upadhyay@irctc.com
2	Ahmedabad	Platform No.1, Near Gate No. 1 & Gujarat Tourism Office, Musafirkhana, Ahmedabad 380002 Tel. No. 9016766811, Email id: tdroahmedabad@irctc.com
3	Bengaluru	Concourse area, Main Entrance Bengaluru City Railway Station, Bangalore – 560023, Karnataka Tel. No. 080–22960013, 8595931292, E-mail id: tifcsbc@irctc.com
4	Chennai	Gate No. 3, Main Entrance, (Opposite to SMR Room) Chennai Central Railway Station, Park Town, Chennai – 3, Tamil Nadu, Tel No. 8287932121, 044-25332548, Email id: tourismmas@irctc.com
5	Ernakulam	Ist Floor, Salih Arcade,40-8194, Convent Road, Kochi-682035 Contact: 8287932082 Email id: tourismkerala@irctc.com
6	Gaya	Platform No. 1, Near to SBI ATM, Opposite Bihar Tourism Office, Gaya, Bihar, Tel. No. +91-8595937723, Email id: tourismpatna@irctc.com
7	Hubli	IRCTC area office, Near booking office, Hubli Railway Station, Hubli-580023, Tel No. 8595931293 Email id: areaofficeubl@irctc.com
8	Indore	Platform No.1, Opp PRO office, Indore Railway Station, Indore, Madhya Pradesh – 452007, Tel. No. 8287931723, Email id: irctcindortfc@gmail.com, raunaq5619@irctc.com
9	Jabalpur	Near Railway Retiring Room, Platform No. 1, Jabalpur Railway Station, Madhya Pradesh – 482001, Tel. No. 0761-4010702, 9321901832, Email id:- deotourismjbp@irctc.com
10	Kolhapur	Platform No.1, Near to Ticket Counter, Shri C. Shahu Maharaj Terminus, Kolhapur Railway Station Kolhapur-416001, Contact No: 8888570475, Email id:- deotourism1@irctc.com
11	Kozhikode	Platform No. 1, Near Food Plaza Kozhikode Railway Station, Kozhikode 673001, Kerala. Tel No. 8287932098, E-mail: tifcclt@irctc.com
12	Madurai	First floor, New concourse, Madurai Railway junction – 625001, Karnataka, Tel. No. 0452-2345757, +919003140714, tourismmdu@irctc.com, r.rajesh@irctc.com
13	Mysuru	Near General Booking Office Mysuru Junction, Karnataka, Tel. No. 8595931294, 0821–2426001 E-mail id: tifcmys@irctc.com
14	Nagpur	Main Porch, Nagpur Railway Station, Nagpur-440001 Contact : 9321901846 tfcnagpur@irctc.com
15	New Delhi	Near Cloakroom, Opp to Executive Lounge, Platform No. 16 New Delhi Railway Station, Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi–110002, Tel. No. +91 9717648888, 9717641764, Email id: tourismnz@irctc.com
16	Puri	Opposite to second class waiting Hall, Besides RPF post Puri Railway station concourse, Odisha, Tel. No. 06752-223005, +91-8287932256, Email id: prabalparida@irctc.com
17	Pune	IRCTC Regional office, 1st Floor, Retiring Room No 1, Above Station Manager, Office, Pune Railway Station, Pune, Maharashtra – 411001, Tel. No. +918287931658
18	Secunderabad	Platform No.10, Besides SBI Credit Card Counter, Secunderabad Railway Station, Telangana Tel. No. 040-27800580, 9701360701, Email id: tourismscz@irctc.com
19	Tirupati	Platform No.1, Besides Main Entrance, Tirupati Railway Station, Andhra Pradesh, Tel. No. 827932117, 0877-2222010, E-mail id: Sukumar.Bandala@irctc.com; pavan.kumar@irctc.com
20	Thiruvananthapuram	Near Booking Office, 2nd Entry, Trivandrum Central Railway Station, Powerhouse Road, Thiruvananthapuram – 695036, Kerala. Phone: 8287932095, E-mail: tourismtrvc@irctc.com
21	Vijayawada	Platform No.1, Besides Main Entrance, Vijayawada Railway Station, Andhra Pradesh, Tel.No.–0866-2572280, 8287932312, E-mail id: ch.balaji@irctc.com
22	Vishakhapatnam	Visakhapatnam Railway Station, Platform No.1, Besides APTDC Counter, Visakhapatnam 530004, Contact: 8287932318, E-mail id: tourismassociate2scz@irctc.com