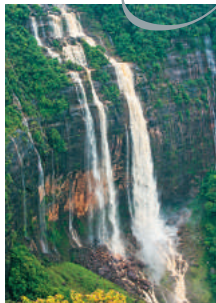


# Meghalaya top ten



# MEGHALAYA

With its swift flowing rivers, grand rapids and picturesque lakes. Meghalaya is a haven for adventure and water sports enthusiasts. Paddling down gushing rivers, with verdant hills and lush forests providing the idyllic backdrop, white water rafting and kayaking can be a thrilling experience in Meghalaya. Rivers like Rymben, Riwai, Umngot, Kynshi, Wah Blei, Umtrew and the serene Lake Umiam offer kayaking possibilities you would not want to forget. You will long to come back again, hit the waters and immerse yourself in excitement!



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# MEGHALAYA TOP TEN

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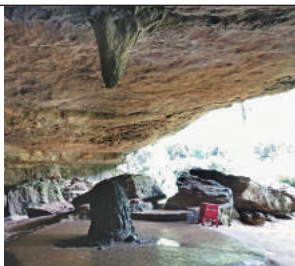
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# MEGHALAYA

With its swift flowing rivers, grand rapids and picturesque lakes, Meghalaya is a haven for adventure and water sports enthusiasts. Paddling down gushing rivers, with verdant hills and lush forests providing the idyllic backdrop, white water rafting and kayaking can be a thrilling experience in Meghalaya. Rivers like Rymben, Riawai, Umngot, Kynshi, Wah Blei, Umtrew and the serene Lake Umiam offer kayaking possibilities you would not want to forget. You will long to come back again, hit the waters and immerse yourself in excitement!

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Meghalaya  
TOURISM

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# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

This pocket guide to the top ten sights of Meghalaya has been divided into 10 chapters. The destinations have details of the main tourist attractions along with accommodation options. The end of the book has comprehensive hotel listings.

**MEGHALAYA TOP TEN**

**THINGS TO SEE AND DO**

Mawlanging can be covered as a day trip from Shillong but we always recommend at least a night or two here to take in the natural splendour of the village and the surrounding areas.

**FAST FACTS**

**When to go:** All year-round, but the rainy season lasts from May to September. June and July get the heaviest rainfall.

**Tourist offices**

- Information & Publicity Office
- Tourism Department
- Nivara Building, 3rd Secretariat, Laker Colledarim, Shillong - 786001
- Call: 03642-10214 | Email: [info@meghalatourism.in](mailto:info@meghalatourism.in)
- Tourist Office
- Directorate of Tourism
- Nivara Building, 3rd Secretariat, Laker Colledarim, Shillong - 786001
- Call: 03642-10201 | Email: [tourism@meghalatourism.in](mailto:tourism@meghalatourism.in)
- [www.meghalatourism.in](http://www.meghalatourism.in)
- STD code: 03642



The aspect view from Mawlanging Viewpoint

Home to the famous Living Root Bridge, the village of Itanagar is a short distance away from Mawlanging. You can follow the well-marked walking trail to Itanagar, from where it is a short hike to the lovely hamlet of Naharhat. The trek takes about two hours and ends through a thick forest.

**MEGHALAYA TOP TEN**

**WHERE TO STAY AND EAT**

**Where to stay:** Mawlanging is a remote location in itself. There are only a few guesthouses and homestays here. Many of them are modern, but basic, with western-style bathrooms. Cleanliness is a sign of life in this village and the houses are

## Where to Stay and Eat

This is a list of stay options in each destination, with phone numbers and tariffs. Also included are restaurants and the food served there.

## Fast Facts

Indicates the best time to visit a place, tourist offices in the area, their contact details and the STD code.

## Things to See and Do

Gives a detailed description of the main attractions you can visit at a particular destination. The prices and timings of the activities and sights are also included.

## Accommodation Listings

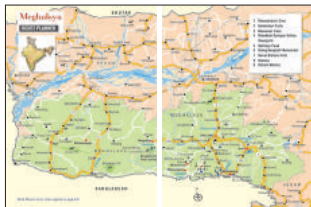
## Transport Directory

MEGHALAYA TOP TEN	MEGHALAYA TOP TEN	MEGHALAYA TOP TEN
<p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p> <p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p> <p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p>	<p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p> <p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p> <p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p>	<p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p> <p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p> <p><b>10-120000</b> Reservoir and surrounding hills, including the famous Shillong Peak. The reservoir is a beautiful sight, especially in the evening.</p>

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A listing of the stay options for all budgets in each place, with information on facilities, contact details and tariffs.

Details on highway numbers and routes across the state with important contact information of each destination.



## Route Planner

A handy map of the state, which highlights

- ◆ national highways, state highways and district roads.
- ◆ tourist spots such as waterfalls, wildlife reserves, viewpoints, caves, etc.

**SHILLONG – KHASI HILLS**

**S**hillong Hill stands tall above the Khasi plain, surrounded by dense and undisturbed forest. It is an excellent vantage point for observing the changing aspect of Meghalaya. Situated on an average height of 1,500 m, the hill is a natural fort. The air is so fresh and healthy that it is called the 'Shillong Hills'.

Shillong is the administrative headquarter of the district. It is situated in the Southern of the state. Shillong is known for its 12 English and 10 Indian schools. It is a beautiful city, known for its scenic view. The city is known as the 'Scotland of the East'. The Shillong is known for its scenic view. It is a beautiful city, known for its scenic view. It is a beautiful city, known for its scenic view.

## Around

Lists important tourist destinations that are a short distance away from the main city/town mentioned.

**AROUND SHILLONG**

There are many important sites in the geographical features of the Shillong. It is a beautiful city, known for its scenic view. It is a beautiful city, known for its scenic view. It is a beautiful city, known for its scenic view.

**Shillong Hill** is a natural fort. The air is so fresh and healthy that it is called the 'Shillong Hills'.

**Getting There**

This box provides details of air, rail and road connections, as well as taxi fares from nodal points.

**Shillong Hill** is a natural fort. The air is so fresh and healthy that it is called the 'Shillong Hills'.

## History

This section illustrates key historical events, as well as myths and legends associated with the site.

## → Route Planner Legend

- National Highway
- NH Number
- Road
- State Boundary
- International Boundary
- Train Route
- Destination
- Main Places

- Other Places
- Railway Station
- Airport
- Water Body
- Waterfall
- Peak
- Cave
- National Park/ WLS

# Meghalaya

## ROUTE PLANNER



Route Planner not to scale, Legends on page 8-9



- 1 Mawjymbuin Cave
- 2 Nohkalikai Falls
- 3 Mawsmai Cave
- 4 Mawdok Dympep Valley Viewpoint
- 5 Shillong Peak
- 6 Kiang Nongbah Monument
- 7 Seven Sisters Falls
- 8 Nohwet
- 9 Kshaid Weinia





# INTRODUCTION

---

**S**pread over an area of 22,429sq km, Meghalaya lies sandwiched between the valleys of Assam to the north and the northeast, and the lowlands of Bangladesh to the south. One amongst the Seven Sisters comprising the Northeast, this hill state is a land of great geographical diversity, with rolling hills, verdant valleys, roaring waterfalls, miles of grasslands and pristine forests.

Ethnically, Meghalaya is dominated by the indigenous communities of Khasis, Garos and Jaintias, each of which has its own distinct language and way of life. However, the element that binds this multi-cultural society is its deep reverence for nature, as is manifest in the state's colourful festivals celebrating the power and









*Blue notes over Shillong's Cathedral of Mary Help of Christians*

beauty of nature, and the traditional folklore that often describes nature as an exalted entity. Straddling the line between tradition and modernity is the capital city of Shillong, which attracts visitors with its interesting museums, impressive British-era architecture, stylish cafés and mesmerizing natural attractions. Beyond this bustling city lie pretty towns and villages, and a diverse landscape of cloud-kissed peaks, lakes, sacred groves and meandering rivers. This splendid mix of natural features and fascinating cultures makes a trip to Meghalaya an incredibly thrilling experience.

The name 'Meghalaya' is derived from the Sanskrit words, *Megh* and *Alay*, which literally means 'Abode of Clouds'. The state is spread over a mountainous plateau, with an altitude ranging from 150m to 1,961m. At the heart of the plateau are the Khasi Hills, with the highest elevation, followed by the Jaintia Hills, which forms the eastern and southeastern part of the state. Lording over the capital city, Shillong Peak is the highest point in Meghalaya, soaring to a height of 1,961m. The Garo Hills rise from the Brahmaputra River Valley to a maximum elevation of around 1,500m in the western



part, and then merge with the Khasi and Jaintia hills to the east. Overlooking the flood plains of Bangladesh, the southern part of the plateau features a steep cliff face and vertiginous drops to the valleys below. A number of rivers crisscross the vast tableland, notable among which are Uiam, Kynshi, Khri, Umngot, Myntdu and Mawpa rivers in the central and eastern region, and Simsang, Ganol, Daring, Sanda and Bugai in the western part. Largely rain-fed, the rivers create deep gorge, steep valleys and spectacular waterfalls.

Meghalaya records an average rainfall of 12,000mm every year, making it one of the wettest regions in India. In fact, two of the world's wettest places, Sohra and Mawsynram, are located here. They receive an average annual rainfall of 11,430mm and 17,800mm, respectively. Blessed with a mild climate for most part of the year, the state provides an ideal habitat to a rich variety of flora and fauna. As much as 70 per cent of the land area is forested, with temperate forests blanketing the northern reaches, and lowland tropical forests covering much of the southern parts. A unique feature of the state are



**Clockwise from top left:** A blue jay chills out; The endangered Hoolock Gibbon; Animal of Meghalaya state- the elusive clouded leopard;  
**Facing page:** One of the many beautiful waterfalls in the Khasi Hills

the sacred groves: pockets of ancient forests protected and preserved by the ethnic communities for hundreds of years, owing to their traditional beliefs. These biodiversity hotspots harbour a diversity of plant species, including many varieties of epiphytic flora, succulents and shrubs. The wildlife reserves of Meghalaya are home to a large variety of animal and bird species, including leopards, elephants, red pandas, civets, Hoolock gibbons, wild buffaloes, as well as hornbills, parakeets and blue jays.

Not much is known about Meghalaya from the ancient times, besides the references found in the accounts of the neighbouring Ahom and Kachari kingdoms. Before the British arrived here in the 18th century, the indigenous groups of Khasis, Jaintias and Garos ruled over these lands, and each of these communities had their own kingdoms. However, there was widespread unrest across the region following the British occupation in the early 19th century, and the British colonialists met this with

harsh military operations against the rebelling groups. By the mid-1830s, most of the local rulers had surrendered to the British forces. In 1874, Assam was carved out of Bengal as a separate Chief Commissionership, with Shillong as the seat of administration of this Provincial Government. Lieutenant Colonel Richard H. Keatinge served as the first Chief Commissioner of Assam. The British continued to exercise political control over this region, until Indian Independence in 1947.

After independence, Meghalaya continued to be a part

*The multi-purpose craft of basketry*



MEGHALAYA TOURISM

of Assam, and was given limited autonomy within the state. However, when Assamese was declared the official language of the state in 1960, a movement for a separate state began to simmer amongst the indigenous groups of the region. In 1969, the Assam Reorganisation (Meghalaya) Act was passed, which awarded an autonomous status to Meghalaya. The act came into effect in 1970, and Meghalaya was carved out of Assam the same year. In 1971, the North-Eastern Areas (Reorganisation) Act awarded full statehood to Meghalaya. The state was subsequently formed, on 21 January 1972, with Shillong as the capital.

Today, Meghalaya consists of 11 administrative divisions across the Khasi, Jaintia and Garo Hills, with a population of approximately 3,212,000 (as of 2016). Shillong is the largest town in the state, followed by the urban centres of Tura, Jowai, Nongthymmai and Mawlai. The Khasis form the largest majority, followed by the Jaintias and the Garos. The state also has a significant number of Hajongs, Bengalis, Assamese and Nepalis. English is the official and the most widely spoken language in the state;



*Eye-catching smiles and traditional attire*

Khasi, Pnar and Garo are the three other principal languages. All three communities follow the matrilineal system, in which the family lineage and inheritance is traced through the maternal, rather than the paternal line. The youngest daughter inherits the property, and takes on family responsibilities. Christianity is the dominant religion across the state, with a small percentage of people practising Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Agriculture still remains the main source of livelihood in the state. The countryside offers

stunning bucolic scenes of neatly fenced rice, potato, cauliflower and maize fields, framed against green hills. Dense groves of areca nut trees, bay leaf, bamboo, broom grass and banana plants are a common feature along the highways in the southern part of the state. Owing to the boom in tourism over recent years, several villages across the state, notably the hamlets of Mawlyngbna (see p87) and Mawlynnong (see p65), have taken on a host of green-tourism initiatives to preserve the region's ecosystems. ■



# SHILLONG – EAST KHASI HILLS

---

**S**erpentine hill roads flanked by Khasi pine, rhododendron and chestnut trees welcome visitors to Shillong, the charming capital of Meghalaya. Situated at an average elevation of 1,520m while peaking at the forested ridge to the south, the city sits on the Shillong Plateau, cradled in the Khasi Hills.

Popularly known as the ‘Scotland of the East, Shillong derives its name from U Shyllong, a revered Khasi deity believed to reside on Shillong Peak, overlooking the city. The city serves as the administrative headquarters of the East Khasi Hills District. The Khasis comprise the majority of the population, along with Assamese and Bengalis. Smaller communities of Biharis, Punjabis and Marwaris add to the city’s multi-cultural dimension.

In some of the older localities, houses featuring gabled roofs, bay windows, deep verandahs and colonnaded balconies adorned with multi-coloured orchids provide a throwback to Shillong’s colonial legacy. At the same time, Shillong’s modern

urban side also shows – a town of markets, cafes, and an increasing number of live music venues. A great way to discover the city is to set out on foot, which allows you to take in its sights and smells at leisure.

## HISTORY

---

Shillong came into prominence in 1864 when the British moved the headquarters of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills districts here from Sohra. A cool climate and a strategic location between the Surma Valley and the Brahmaputra River were the reason for this strategic move.

Shillong was declared the capital of the Provincial Government in 1874 when Assam was carved out of Bengal as a separate Chief Commissionership. The catastrophic Assam earthquake of 1897 razed most of the city’s fine stone masonry buildings. Extensive reconstruction projects were then carried out across Shillong. This introduced the new Assam-type architectural style, which went on to become the


defining character of the city's buildings. The style retained the aesthetics of the English-style cottage but replaced the stone masonry with timber frames and corrugated iron roofs. The Raj




### FAST FACTS


**When to go** All year-round. However, December to February can be very cold, and June to August very wet. The cherry blossom season lasts from late October to mid-November

#### Tourist offices

- Information & Publicity Officer 

Tourism Department  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,  
Lower Lachumiere,  
Shillong - 793001  
Cell 09436310374 Email  
phiraca417@gmail.com

- Tourist Officer 

Directorate of Tourism  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,  
Lower Lachumiere, Shillong -  
793001  
Cell 09862213891 Email carolina.  
khyriem@yahoo.com  
 meghalayaturism.in

**STD code** 0364

Bhawan, near Ward's Lake, is perhaps the best example of this style of architecture. Shillong continued to serve as the capital of undivided Assam until 1969 when the autonomous state of Meghalaya was formed. In 1972, Meghalaya became a full-fledged state and Shillong its capital.

### THINGS TO SEE AND DO

The timeless appeal of Shillong lies in its pleasant weather; its wealth of natural attractions; the traditional yet cosmopolitan lifestyle; and the warmth of Khasi hospitality. Scenic parks perfect for picnics and evening walks, trekking trails, dramatic viewpoints as well as boating, angling and birdwatching spots make Shillong an alluring place to explore at leisure.

The day's travels are best rounded off with a visit to Police Bazaar, which comes alive in the evening with locals and tourists thronging its narrow alleyways and street vendors jostling for space along the roadside to sell *aloo muri*, *gol gappas* and smoked meats. At the bazaar, you'll find everything from apparel, electronics, junk jewellery as well as bamboo and cane handi-





*The verdant environs of the serene Ward's Lake*

crafts to Khasi knick-knacks, fresh fruit and vegetables and orange honey. A short distance from here lies Laitumkhrah, where you can pop into one of the cafés.

Here are some of the tourist and cultural sites of the town.

### Ward's Lake

Locally known as Nan-Polok, this horseshoe-shaped lake is amongst the landmark sites of Shillong. Ward's Lake is located about a kilometre away from the centre of the city, near Raj Bhawan. Even in a place as scenic as Shillong, Ward's Lake makes for a spectacular sight,

complete with isles and bridges. The lake also offers boating facilities. Its shimmering waters ripple thanks to numerous paddle boats, irrespective of the season.

You can buy packets of puffed rice and popcorn, available on-site, to feed the colourful fish in the lake. However, you might have to jostle for space on the bridge, as it is as popular an activity as the boat rides. Alternatively, you can walk along the winding pathways surrounding the lake.

◆ **Entry** ₹10 **Timing** 8.00 am–5.00 pm **Photography** ₹20 **Videography** ₹500

## Phan Nonglait Park

If you fall in love with Ward's Lake and end up seeking a similar site, then head to Phan Nonglait Park, located just behind the Shillong Civil Hospital. Lady Hydari, the wife of the first governor of Assam, commissioned this park, which also houses a small zoo, aviary, deer park and a museum. There is no other zoo in the city. The park is remarkable for its well-manicured lawns. Stretching for over a kilometre, it is filled with rhododendrons, roses and an abundance of other col-

*Phan Nonglait Park*



ourful blossoms, as well as drooping willow trees.

Adjacent to the Phan Nonglait Park, but still tucked away in the woods, is the breathtaking 13-m-high Crinoline Falls. At the foot of the falls is a naturally forming swimming pool. The waterfall is quite popular amongst tourists and photography enthusiasts. A restaurant nearby offers a variety of delicious food items.

◆ **Entry ₹10 Timing 10.00 am–5.00 pm Photography Free Videography ₹500**

## Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Cultures (DBCIC)

Situated in the pretty neighbourhood of Mawlai, this museum will delight art and culture lovers for its rich repository of exhibits covering the diverse indigenous cultures of the Northeast. Spread over a sprawling 56,000sq ft, the museum has 17 galleries, across seven floors, containing cultural and archaeological artefacts from the Seven Sisters: Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Manipur and Nagaland. The building itself is a piece of art – it is constructed in a hexagonal shape with its floors rising to form a flame, signifying the unity of cultures.



*Don Bosco Centre for Indigenous Culture*

**TIP** Set aside at least half a day to explore the whole museum.

To explore the museum in chronological order, visitors need to descend the spiral staircase and begin with the galleries on the lower level first and then climb back up gradually. The **Introductory and Pre-History Gallery** offers a detailed insight into the demographics of the Northeast, with a wall-mounted map illustrating the various tribes of the region. There are also detailed models, sketches, miniatures and a small collection of fossils tracing the biological, as well as the socio-cultural evolu-

tion of mankind. Amongst the biggest sections here is the **Mission and Culture Gallery** that chronicles the role of the Church in shaping the culture of the Northeast. Divided into four subsections, it is crammed with informative displays, paintings, exhibits and dioramas detailing the Church's activities across the region. The centrepiece is an astounding scale model of the Church of the Divine Saviour, which was built by Salvatorian missionaries from Germany in Laitumkhrah, Shillong, in 1913. Sadly, it was destroyed in a fire in 1963.



## GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport (32km/ 1hr) is connected to Kolkata. Taxi to town is about ₹800–1,000, bus ₹100 per head. Convenient airport: Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport (128km/ 3hrs) has more connections. Taxi costs ₹2,000–2,500 approx (drop at Police Bazaar). Shared taxi to Shillong costs ₹200–500 per head

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Junction offers connections to all major cities of India. Meghalaya Transport Corporation (Tel: 0364-2222864, 2223129) runs bus services from 6.00 am to 5.00 pm and are coordinated with train arrivals and departures at Guwahati. Taxi fare: ₹1,700–2,200 approx to Shillong

**Road** From Guwahati, it's highway driving to Shillong down NH6 via Nongpoh and Umiam

**Bus** MTC buses are available from the Inter-State Bus Terminus, Beltola. Private buses are available from Machkhowa near Bharalumukh

See *Route Planner* on pp10–11.

Another highlight here is the **Basketry Gallery** that showcases the craft of basket weaving. The states of the Northeast are renowned for their basket weaving tradition. This is best demonstrated by the vast array of bamboo baskets for agricultural and fishing purposes, rain shields and traditional headgear. Don't miss the **Art Gallery** on the sixth floor that holds a dazzling collection of bamboo and cane works, stonework, metal art and even a section on the Naga art of tattooing! A short flight of steps from here leads to the **Skywalk**: a walkway on the windy rooftop that affords unparalleled views of the city.

◆ **Entry** Adult ₹100; Child ₹50  
**Timings** Feb–Nov: 9:00 am–5:30 pm; Dec–Jan: 9:00 am–4:30 pm  
 Closed Sunday **Photography** ₹100 **Videography** ₹100

## WHERE TO STAY

**Ri Kynjai Resort** (Cell: 098624 20300/ 01; Tariff: On request) is a beautiful boutique property near Umiam Lake, with a multi-cuisine restaurant, bar and a spa. **Hotel Pinewood** (Tel: 2223116/ 46, 2223263; Tariff: ₹4,256–11,800) was built in the 1920s on the pat-



*Basket weaving is an important revenue earner for villagers*

tern of an English country home. Run by Meghalaya Tourism, it is a few minutes' walk from Ward's Lake and the golf course. The hotel has a billiards room. **The Heritage Club -Tripura Castle** (Tel: 2501111/ 49, 2505703 Cell: 07085055635/36; Tariff: ₹7,000–12,500) was the private residence of the royal family of Tripura.

The veteran **Hotel Polo Towers** (Tel: 2222341-42; Tariff: ₹6,950–17,999), situated near the Polo Grounds, has 50 rooms, restaurants and a spa. **Centre Point**

(Tel: 2220480/ 272; Tariff: ₹5,800–7,450), situated in Police Bazaar, has 31 rooms and its restaurant and bar. **Hotel Alpine Continental** (Tel: 222 0991, 2223617; Tariff: ₹4,900–6,900) located near the Police Bazaar, has 42 rooms with room service, a restaurant and a bar. **Shillong Club** (Tel: 2225497; Tariff: ₹3,360–5,000) only takes in guests on prior notice. It has 21 rooms on offer and various indoor sports facilities. **Boulevard Hotel** (Tel: 2229044/ 9039; Tariff: On

request) in Police Bazaar has a pleasing decor. Its restaurant, Bistro, is one of the best places to savour great pure vegetarian Chinese, Mexican, Indian and Continental fare.

**Sha-Ri Loum** (Cell: 09051 415666; Tariff: ₹3,000–3,500) in Mawlai Umshing is a pleasant homestay. They have four rooms offering good views of the hills; the rooms on the first floor have a balcony. **Dew Drop Inn** (Cell: 09436384565; Tariff: ₹2,000–2,500) in Lumsophoh, offers five rooms and home-cooked meals. Other decent homestays include:

#### *Ri Kynjai Resort*



Courtesy RI KYNJAI RESORT

**Orange Homestay** (Cell: 07005208055; Tariff: On request) on Shillong-Jowai Road; **Pine Hill Homestay** (Cell: 09856698793, 07005101103; Tariff: ₹2,000–7,000) in Mawnianglah.

**Woodland Hill Stay** (Tel: 2228690, 2223991, Cell: 08794 048269, 09089675321; Tariff: ₹3,172–4,687) is a charming place in Upper Lachumiere with eight comfortable rooms and free Wi-Fi. Car rental services are available. Tariff includes breakfast, while lunch/ dinner is served on request. Ken & Twill Guest House (Cell: 09862221718, 09774587273; Tariff: ₹3,000–3,500) in Lumbatngen is clean, comfortable and well-maintained with welcoming hosts.

Eden Residency (Tel: 0364-2505358/ 60; Tariff: ₹1,500–2,500) and **Elgin Hotel** (Tel: 2504502, Cell: 09089063138; Tariff: ₹800–1,500), both in Police Bazaar are good options. **Xanadu – The Abode** (Cell: 09863063802, 08638272717; Tariff: ₹3,850–4,200) offers a studio apartment with a fully-equipped kitchenette. **Kaizun Bed and Breakfast** (Tel: 7960107, Cell: 08794664730; Tariff: ₹4,250–5,539) offers clean, spacious and nicely done-up rooms. **The Pear Tree** (Tel:



*Pork and chicken kebabs to go*

2504441, Cell: 0986 2181977; Tariff: ₹4,543–5,200) in Lower Lachumiere, is a cosy and luxurious B&B with a good location and courteous hosts.

## WHERE TO EAT

There is plenty to eat here in cafés, restaurants and roadside stalls. Ri Kynjai's **Sao Aiom** has a great setting – overlooking Umiam Lake – and serves delicious Khasi specialities. The Heritage Club -Tripura Castle's

**Cafe Shillong Heritage** has a good ambience and tasty food. **Cafe Shillong, Munchies, Living Roof, Swish Café, Zest, Little Chef Café** and **ML 05** are popular cafés here. **Dylan's Cafe** on Risa Colony Road is a tribute to the legendary musician Bob Dylan and **Roma** is known for its eclectic menu inspired by flavours from across the world. It has interesting decor, live music, books, board games, and of course, good food. **Bread Café** has yummy pastries. **Madras Cafe** is



a decent place to enjoy vegetarian south Indian food. **You & I – Arts Cafe** has tea in many flavours and good Khasi snacks. **Jadoh** at Don Bosco Square is popular for its smoky meat curries and combo meals. Moderately priced, it is frequented by students. **Dejavu** serves delicious Chinese. **City Hut Family Dhaba** offers north Indian fare. Shillong's Police Bazaar is the place for lip-smacking street food. Try the local delicacies at **Trattoria** here. **Qzine** serves mouthwatering

Indian, Chinese and Asian food. Also in Police Bazaar, is the **Delhi Mishthan Bhandar**, serving hot jalebis and other north Indian savouries since 1930.

## AROUND SHILLONG

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Shillong's outskirts are a visual treat. Head out of the town in all directions and you will be greeted with waterfalls, picturesque farmland and lofty viewpoints. Here are some top recommendations of places around the main town –





*The twinkling lights of Shillong under the night sky*

all within a few kilometres radius and easily accessed by road.

### Shillong Peak (10km)

The highest point in Shillong, this peak offers magnificent views of the city. Located within the Air Force Base in Laitkor, the drive to the peak is a visual treat in itself, with the road winding through a patchwork of potato and cauliflower fields. On sunny days post-monsoon, it is possible to see the

Eastern Himalayas from here.

**TIP** Arrive early to beat the long queue of cars waiting to gain access to the Air Force station.

◆ **Entry** ₹30 **Timing** 8.30 am-3.30 pm **Photography** Free **Videography** With permission

### Sweet Falls (10km)

Known as 'Kshaid Wetden' in Khasi, this spectacular waterfall is curiously devoid of tourist traffic compared to other attractions



in and around Shillong. Unlike most falls in Meghalaya that are multi-tiered, this 96-m-high waterfall crashes down with tremendous intensity into a natural pool – its speed and flow unhindered by rocks or even the cliff face. A stairway from the road leads down to the viewing area, from where you can take in the breathtaking sight of the cascade. Owing to the treacherous area around the waterfall, tourists are prohibited from trekking down to the pool. Hence, the falls can only be viewed from afar. The verdant hills surrounding Sweet Falls are covered with fragrant pines, cinnamon ferns, beech ferns and lantanas.

◆ **Entry** ₹20 (per vehicle), parking extra **Timing** 8.30 am–3.30 pm **Photography** Free **Videography** Free

### Elephant Falls (13km)

A few kilometres west of Shillong Peak, nestled in the wooded environs of Upper Shillong, lies the multi-tiered Elephant Falls. This stunning waterfall was originally known as 'Ka Kshaid Lai Pateng Khohsiew' (or the Three Steps Waterfall) in Khasi, as the water cascades down three steps. However, they were renamed

Elephant Falls by the British after a rock resembling an elephant next to the main section of the falls. The rock was, however, destroyed in the devastating Assam earthquake of 1897.

The area around the waterfall is beautifully landscaped, with flowerbeds full of huge pink and white roses, as well as pleasant walkways and steps leading to the three levels of the falls. The parking lot is dotted with stalls selling souvenirs, hot beverages and *momos*.

*Sweet Falls plunging into a pool*



photos by SHREYA SARKAR

Hidden behind a network of trees, the first level of the waterfall, which gushes down into a rocky pool, can be seen from a viewing platform. You may have to jostle for space on the platform during crowded days. Soak in the beauty (and cool spray) of the falls, before descending a flight of 80-odd steps to the second and third tier of the falls.

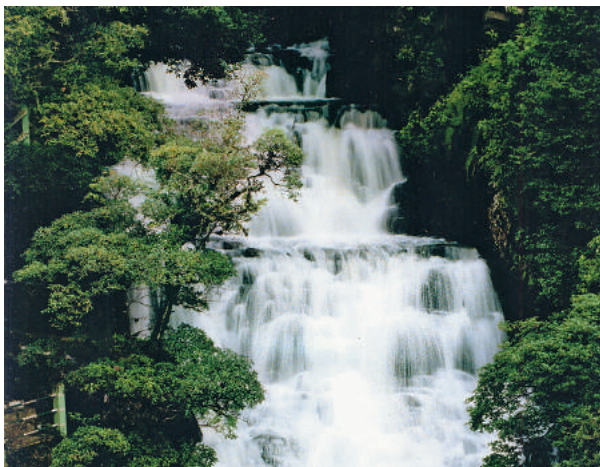
The second level is easily missed by visitors because the falls are gentler here, cascading over rocks amidst the foliage,

before dramatically plummeting down a wide rock face into a deep, cold pool. This awe-inspiring third level of the waterfall makes Elephant Falls a visual treat! The narrow platform running along the perimeter of the pool is a good place to take photographs.

**CAUTION** The steps leading to the second and third falls are rather steep and somewhat slippery for children and the elderly.

◆ **Entry** ₹20, parking extra **Timing** 7.30 am–5.30 pm **Photography** Free **Videography** Free

*The milky cascade of Elephant Falls, a picnic hotspot*





*The picturesque setting of Umiyam Lake*

### Umiyam Lake (15km)

This tranquil lake serves as a befitting introduction to the natural splendour of Shillong.

Located just north of the city along the Shillong- Guwahati Highway, it is the biggest artificial lake in the state, and is usually the first sight visitors come across when heading to Shillong from Guwahati. The principal catchment area of the lake and the dam is spread over 220sq km. The reservoir was created by damming the Umiyam River, as part of the first hydroelectric

power project in the Northeast, in 1965.

Surrounded by grassy knolls crested with clusters of Khasi pines, this picturesque lake is a favourite amongst locals as well as tourists for its calm waters and shady banks. Flanked by Gulmohar and jacaranda trees, the path leading to the lake makes for a lovely walk. Enroute is a small play area for kids, with swings, slides and other games. At the end of the path is a wooden viewing deck that affords sweeping vistas of the lake's



*Laitlum Canyon offers gorgeous panoramas all around*

waters framed against rolling hills. A dirt track leads down to the jetty, from where rowboats, water scooters, canoes and motorboats can be hired for a cruise.

At sunset, be sure to visit the Umiam Lake viewpoint along the highway for a bird's-eye view of the lake with the sky suffused in hues of orange, yellow and blue.

◆ **Entry** ₹50 **Boating** ₹400–700  
**Timing** 8.30 am–5.00 pm  
**Photography** ₹50 **Videography** ₹500

### Laitlum Canyon (24km)

Laitlum Canyon is a largely unexplored destination in Shillong, around 45-minutes from the city

by car. Needless to say, the beauty of this place is spellbinding. A walk to the edge of the canyon will reward you with a panoramic view of emerald hills and bamboo plantations. It is a long trek down to the valley and might not be suitable for everyone. You can stay on top and enjoy the idyllic scenery. Keep your camera handy, as every sight will inspire you to take a shot.

**TIP** If you have opted for the descent, wear comfortable clothes and sturdy shoes as this is a long trek.

◆ **Entry** ₹30 per vehicle **Timing** 6.00 am–4.30 pm **Photography** Free **Videography** Free n

# MEGHALAYA



With its swift flowing rivers, grand rapids and picturesque lakes. Meghalaya is a haven for adventure and water sports enthusiasts. Paddling down gushing rivers, with verdant hills and lush forests providing the idyllic backdrop, white water rafting and kayaking can be a thrilling experience in Meghalaya. Rivers like Rymben, Riwai, Umngot, Kynshi, Wah Blei, Umtrew and the serene Lake Umiam offer kayaking possibilities you would not want to forget. You will long to come back again, hit the waters and immerse yourself in excitement!







## SOHRA – EAST KHASI HILLS

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**S**ituated on a 1,484-m-high plateau on the southern edge of the Khasi Hills, Sohra – popularly known as Cherrapunjee – is a treasure-trove of natural wonders. The drive to this town takes visitors by surprise: the highway veers through rough-hewn hills and deep ravines, before opening out to undulating grasslands, with an occasional clump of shrubs. During the wet months, the road is shrouded with a thick mist that rises from the valley – a precursor to the region’s famed rains. Monsoons also mean the waterfalls are in their mightiest flourish – some of which even spill down the rock face onto roads.

Once known as the wettest place on earth – a distinction that is now held by the neighbouring village of Mawsynram – Sohra’s attractions include frothy waterfalls plunging from the heights, unique living root bridges in the valleys and an exciting caving scene. In contrast to the forested areas of the northern part of the Khasi Hills, the town’s rain-battered terrain is almost devoid of any flora. This is largely attributed to the area’s

weather phenomenon of heavy rainfall over long periods, which has washed off much of the top soil, and *jhum*, or shifting cultivation, which involves slashing and burning of forests. However, the lower reaches in the surrounding countryside are covered with verdant tropical rainforests.

Sohra enjoys pleasant weather during summer when there are warm sunshine and a cool breeze. During winter, the temperature drops quite low, and the vast green meadows turn brown. Winters are dry and therefore ideal for long hikes and picnics. Although Sohra is the historical name, the British pronounced it as “Churra” due to their inability to grasp local phonetics and over the years, the name evolved to ‘Cherrapunjee’.

### HISTORY

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Sohra was originally located in Sohra Rim, which lies 13km north of the town. The Syiems (chieftains) of Khyriem ruled the Khasi Hills between the 16th and the 18th centuries. Owing to strategic reasons and the cool cli-



## FAST FACTS

**When to go** All year round depending on what you are looking for. June and July get the heaviest rainfall so that is the time to experience the madness of the monsoons here while the dry winter season is best for hiking. If you are looking to admire the waterfalls, post-monsoon is ideal (during the monsoon visibility can be a problem because of fog/mist, so waterfall sighting from a distance becomes a game of luck).

### Tourist offices

- Information & Publicity Officer 

Tourism Department  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,  
Lower Lachumiere,  
Shillong - 793001

Cell 09436310374 Email  
phiraca417@gmail.com

- Tourist Officer 

Directorate of Tourism  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,  
Lower Lachumiere, Shillong -  
793001

Cell 09862213891 Email carolina.  
khyriem@yahoo.com

 meghalayaturism.in

**STD code** 03637



mate of the Khasi Hills, the British began to actively pursue their interests in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills in the early 19th century. The first landmark event in this regard was when the British were able to successfully negotiate with the Syiem of Cherra in 1829 for a sanatorium.

As the British consolidated their dominance over local chieftains, they decided to move their headquarters to present-day



*Veils of mists start descending on the hills around Cherrapunji*

Sohra. The high intensity of rainfall motivated the British to set up a meteorological office in this area. In 1861, the highest rainfall of 9,300m (in a month) was recorded here. Sohra served as the capital of undivided Assam from 1832 till 1866 when the headquarters was shifted to Shillong owing to its better weather conditions.

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

For nature lovers, this town is an excellent base to view some of Meghalaya's most breath-taking waterfalls, including the tallest waterfall in India. For caving enthusiasts, the region offers superb spelunking opportunities in its cave systems. You can also choose from several hiking and



trekking trails of varying levels of difficulty in the surrounding region. If walking across rickety rope bridges, cooling off in forest pools and negotiating mountain streams interest you, then you will love these picturesque trails.

For a change of pace, head to the town's market on a *lewbah* (Big Market Day); this unique market is held once in eight days, to experience local Khasi culture.

**TIP** Waterfalls in this area are at their gushing best during the rainy season. In winter, most are reduced to a trickle, very lacklustre in comparison to their summer avatars.

A three-hour drive from Shillong, Sohra can be easily covered as a day trip. In which case, it's best to hire a taxi for an entire day. Alternatively, visitors can spend a day or two here to soak in the area's scenic beauty over long walks. Much of the town can be covered on foot, and a taxi can be hired to visit nearby sights.

### Mawkdok Dympep Valley Viewpoint

En route to Sohra from Shillong lies the beautiful **Duwan Singh Syiem Bridge**, widely consid-



#### GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport (79km/ 2.5hrs) is serviced by Kolkata. Taxi to Shillong: ₹2,500. Convenient airport: LGB Airport, Guwahati (160km/ 4.5hrs) offers better connections. From Shillong, taxis Sohra available at local tourist taxi stand. Guwahati-Shillong Tourist taxi: ₹5,500 Shared private taxi-Shillong - Cherrapunjee (70km/2hrs): ₹700. Full fare: Rs 2000

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and other metros. MTC bus service to Shillong (3.5hrs), coordinated with train arrivals.

**Road** From Shillong, follow NH206 and SH5 via Myllem, Mawjrong and Laitryngew. The Tourist Taxi Association in Shillong offers taxis to Sohra for ₹3,000. Private A/C taxis and 4-wheel drive vehicles are more expensive

**Bus** MTC also has a bus service from Umroi up to Police Bazaar in Shillong, from where you can hire a local taxi for your onward journey to Sohra

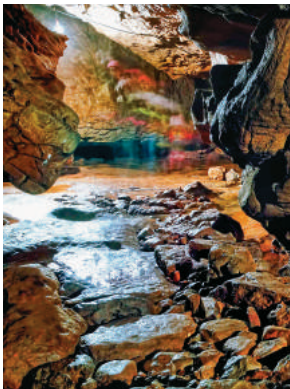
ered as the gateway to the Sohra tourist circuit. A couple of kilometres from here is the breathtaking **Mawkdok Dympep Valley**, stretching far into the horizon. It is almost customary for tourists to stop here. The valley is a dramatic sight, located amid a deep gorge, with lush hills rising on either side.

## CAVES OF SOHRA

### Arwah-Lumshyna Cave

A narrow diversion on the Sohra highway leads to the Arwah cave, surrounded by the dense

*The Arwah Cave system-A big lure for caving buffs*



Law Shynna Forest. Upon arrival, visitors are greeted with a signpost indicating the choice of two paths that lead to these caves. You can either take the 500-m-long walkway – consisting of several short flights of stairs – or the rough trail that is said to be a lot more picturesque, albeit physically taxing.

Irrespective of the path you choose, the hike to the caves is one of the highlights of a visit to Arwah-Lumshyna. Winding along the edge of cliffs, through a forested area, the walk is well-marked with signs indicating the distance to the caves. Bird calls, the roar of seasonal falls and the constant hum of insects fill the air as you make your way to the caves. Carved into limestone rocks, these caves are described as a 'huge natural cavity' that formed underneath the earth's surface as a result of chemical activity over millions of years. The caves contain well-preserved fossils on their walls and roof, most of which are molluscs.

At the entrance, steps descend underground into the caves. Even though the cave is dimly lit, it is a good idea to carry a flashlight, as certain stretches are still dark. A crystal-clear



*The grand location of the Arwah Cave*

stream runs along the entire span of the trail, at times giving way to gentle cascades. The trail goes deeper into tunnels, crevices and low-ceilinged walkways, all along which you will spot stunning formations of stalactites and stalagmites.

At some of the passageways, the low roof slopes perfectly in opposite directions. These stretches can be difficult for people with claustrophobia; nonetheless, they make a brilliant sight. At the end of the trail is a section

of cave formations, resembling different shapes.

**TIP** Although guides are optional, the place is best explored along with a guide who can help you discover some of the most interesting spots, as well as fossils, inside the cave.

◆ **Entry ₹50 Timings** 8.00am – 5.00pm **Videography** ₹5,000

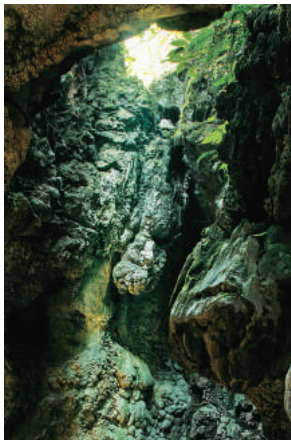
### Mawsmai Cave

A half-hour drive from Sohra, this famous cave lies in the tiny village of Mawsmai. After driving

through a long stretch of rolling meadows, you will arrive at the gates, from where it is a few metres to the cave complex, which has the ticket counter and several small eateries. Of all the cave systems in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, Mawsmai is not just the most popular, but also the most accessible. It is also recommended for beginners in caving, for the trail is well marked, relatively easier to navigate and fully lit – unlike most other caves in Meghalaya.

A concrete pathway from the

*Inner view of Mawsmai Cave*



SHREYA SARKAR

ticket counter leads to this network of caves, which lie hidden amidst a dense grove of bamboo trees. Mawsmai is famous for its fascinating limestone formations that can be seen along the cave trail. Although the cave system is quite extensive, only a part of it is open to visitors. A short flight of stone-hewed steps leads to the surprisingly wide cave entrance, however, this is no indication of what lies ahead! The trail is an exciting scramble, cutting through narrow passageways and chambers, where the cave ceiling drops so low that you have to squat or crawl through the section.

**TIP** Locals often suggest the trail be completed barefoot, to get a better grip of the slippery rocks inside the cave.

As you proceed deeper into the cave, natural light fades and the walls of the cave begin to close in, forcing people to walk in a single file. The cave floor is riddled with depressions filled with ankle-deep water, which drips continuously from the ceiling. While cautiously negotiating your way around the moss-hewn rocks, you will see striking stalagmites and stalactites that have formed over a million years





*Interiors of the popular Mawsmai Caves*

as a result of the torrential rains in this region.

The highlight of the trail is the section that culminates in a narrow opening – only a few feet wide – through which you have to squeeze yourself, to make it to the next section. At the end of the cave is a section where there's an opening in the ceiling. A sliver of daylight dramatically pours in here, illuminating the dimly lit, dank interiors of the cave. Depending on your agility and level of stamina, the trail

can be completed within 30–40 minutes. Owing to the popularity of this cave system, the trail is almost always inundated with excited visitors, and in most places, the trail is not wide enough to support two people. However, if you wish to catch your breath or take photographs, there are a few spots where the track widens and you can step aside to rest awhile.

◆ **Entry** ₹30 **Timings** 9.30am – 5.30pm **Photography** ₹100 **Videography** ₹1,000/hr

## WATERFALLS OF SOHRA

### Dainthlen and Wei Sawdong Falls

On the way to Sohra, a road to the right leads to these spectacular 80–90-m-high falls, around 2km before the village begins. The waterfall derives its name from the legend of a *thlen* (Khasi word for snake). According to the myth, there was a *thlen*, an enormous demon python that used to live in a cave in this

*Cascading Wei Sawdong Waterfall en route to Sohra*

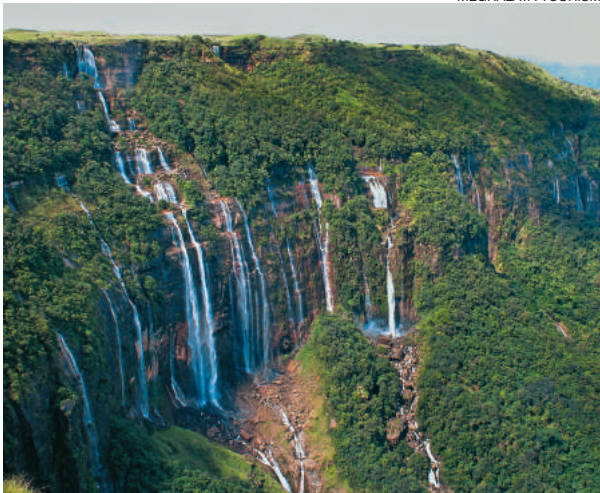


SHUTTERSTOCK

area. Tired of the snake's evil ways, the locals decided to slaughter it. Adjacent to the spot where the *thlen* was killed, lie these falls. Spread across in the shape of a semicircle, this myth-laden waterfall is frequented by crowds of tourists. During the monsoon, the falls appear akin to a smaller version of the roaring Niagara Falls. Downstream of the Dainthlen Falls is one of Meghalaya's prettiest cascades – the three-step Wei Sawdong Falls.

### Noh Sngithiang Falls

'Nohsngithiang Falls, locally known as Mawsmi Falls, this waterfall is located a kilometre south of the village of Mawsmi. The falls can be viewed from a deck located on the side of the road. This viewpoint overlooks a valley with the cluster of waterfalls – seven to be precise – plummeting from the cliff on the left. A limestone cliff segregates the falls into seven parts from where the Noh Sngithiang gets its name. The falls, with a drop of 315m, is one of the highest waterfalls in the country. During winter, the flow is depleted – we recommend you catch this sight during the post-monsoon months.



*The line-up crystal streams of Noh Sngithiang Falls, or Mawsmat Falls*

### Nohkalikai Falls

A short and scenic drive away from Sohra lies the awe-inspiring Nohkalikai Waterfall. The road curves through an elevated tableland, culminating at a cliff, from where the splendid Nohkalikai can be viewed. The viewing platform runs along the edge of a cliff.

The 340-m-high Nohkalikai Falls is the highest plunge waterfall in India. During the monsoon, the water gushes down an

escarpment with great intensity into a green rocky pool. Mist rises from the waters enveloping the picturesque surroundings, lending an ethereal quality to the environs. Depending on the season, the falls are at times accompanied by several minor waterfalls, leaping down into the gorge below. The chances of getting a clear view of the falls are, however, a matter of luck as clouds play spoilsport in these parts, often completely blanketing the

falls. It can take anywhere from a few minutes to an hour for the clouds to lift.

A few shops, eateries and tea stalls surround the parking lot and the viewing platform. Bottles of the locally-made orange honey and cinnamon sticks that Sohra is famous for are available here.

### Thangkarang Park

Another popular tourist destination in this region is Thangkarang Park. Perched on

*India's tallest plunge waterfall-  
Nohkalikai, near Sohra*



SHUTTERSTOCK

the edge of a rocky cliff, this park overlooks the lush floodplains of Bangladesh. A treat for nature lovers, it abounds in exotic orchids and other rare plants endemic to the area. The main attraction here, however, are the breathtaking views of the water-logged Bangladesh plains, as well as of the majestic 305-m-high **Kynrem Falls**. A deck, sitting at the edge of the cliff, affords spectacular views of the waterfalls.

The striking **Khoh Ramhah** rock formation, located here, also goes by the names of 'Shiva Rock', 'Pillar Rock' and 'Mothrop'. Perched precariously atop a small hill, this 60-m-high cone-shaped rock can be found on the other side of the park, right opposite the park entrance. A small bridge enables visitors to access the other section of the park. Owing to its shape and structure, Khoh Ramhah attracts a great number of curious tourists.

The history of the rock is steeped in local folklore, with different versions of it being circulated by tourist guides and locals. According to Khasi myth, the rock is a fossilised cone-shaped basket of an evil giant. It



*Ever present mist floating Magical mists roll past the Khoh Ramhah monolith*

is believed that the people of Sohra killed the terrorising giant by offering him food mixed with pieces of iron and nails. The giant died upon consuming it, and his basket fossilised to form the rock.

◆ **Entry ₹50 Timings 7.00am – 4.00pm Photography ₹20 Videography Free**

## WHERE TO STAY

Sohra has a fair share of accommodation options for all budgets. Most of the homestays in and around Sohra offer decent accommodation.

**Cherrapunjee Holiday Resort** (Cell: 087948 03833; Tariff: ₹5,000-6,500) lies in

Laitkynsew, 16km from the town. It is an excellent place to explore the area and sample local delicacies. Closer to the town is **Sa-I-Mika Resort** (Cell: 09862221718; Tariff: ₹2,800–5,000) with spacious rooms and great food. Their restaurant serves Indian and Chinese cuisines. There is also **Polo Orchid Resort** (Cell: 09362706946, 09836173332, 09856000222; Tariff: ₹7,999–19,999, with two meals) with rooms, cottages, villas and log huts that come equipped with a private plunge pool. The views of the Noh Sngithiang Falls from its restaurant are breathtaking.

*A local wearing a knup*



**Jiva Resort** (Cell: 0708517 7777; Tariff: ₹7,000–15,000) located in Saitsohpen; **The Crescent Hotel** (Cell: 070850 95060, 08258020444; Tariff: ₹2,000–2,800) in Sohra Market; **Pala Resort** (Cell: 08974010141; Tariff: ₹3,200–12,800), which is opposite Kutmadan; **Kutmadan Resort** (Cell: 08134966251, 08014859700; Tariff: ₹3,540–5,310) in Wahsgari; **La Kupar Inn** (Cell: 09615093898; Tariff: ₹2,492) on Sohra-Shella Road; **Coniferous Resort** (Cell: 09436178164; Tariff: ₹2,000–4,500) in Lower Sohra; **Four Seasons Eco Resort** (Cell: 07628071725, 09383306773; Tariff: ₹1,500–3,000) near Eco Park in Nongthymmai; are other good options in Sohra.

**D Cloud Guest House** (Cell: 09856181358, 07642834434; Tariff: ₹750–1,500) on Sohra-Shella Road offers five rooms with basic amenities. Khasi meals can be provided on request. The owner can also arrange trekking, camping and caving if desired. **Cherrapunjee Sunrise Guest House** (Cell: 08837048939, 09436308015; Tariff: ₹1,600), near Eco Park, is a great option with four rooms. The hosts are extremely helpful.



*Cherapunjee Holiday Resorts: Great views and a comfortable stay*

**Cordial Lodge** (Cell: 07085 312737; Tariff: ₹2,240–5,400), in Mawsmal, offers 20 rooms and a multi-cuisine restaurant. **Green Valley Lodge** (Cell: 09612193227, 08257035482; Tariff: ₹1,200–2,000) has basic accommodation only. **Sohra View Lodge** Cell: 07640930562, 09863104341; Tariff: ₹800) in Arwah-Lumshynna has four rooms with attached bathrooms, and offers meals on request.

### Homestays

Some good options for those not looking to stay in regular hotels

are: **Hiraba Homestay** (Cell: 09774911843, 08259 967944; Tariff: ₹1,300-1,800) in Mawkisyiem; **KorShongthait** (Cell: 09863546166, 08787454095; Tariff: ₹2,000–2,500) in MawpungKyrtiang; **R-Ki-Ni Homestay** (Cell: 08794499816; Tariff: ₹1,500–2,000) in PynshadKhurai; **MK Sevenstar** (Cell: 09856 024203, 07627952451; Tariff: ₹1,400–3,000) in Mawpungkyrtiang. Then there is picturesquely set **Pateng Homestay** (Cell: 09774 485910, 09612180235; Tariff: ₹1,200–1,800) in Khliehshnong.

Courtesy JIVA RESORT



*Beautifully landscaped lawns add to the ambience at Jiva Resort*

## WHERE TO EAT

Sohra offers a wide range of food options – North and South Indian, Bengali, Chinese and the unique Khasi cuisine. Pork *momos*, *jadoh*, Sohra *pulao* and rice beer are some of the common dishes eaten here. Eateries that sell pork and other red meat-based dishes can be found all around the town.

The in-house restaurant at Polo Orchid Resort, **Sky Grill** is an open-air place and offers a luxurious dining experience. Located on the premises, the **Rain Café** operates round the

clock and offers splendid views of the valley. Those looking for pure vegetarian usually stop at **Orange Roots**, popular for its unlimited *thalis*, combo meals, variety of *dosas* and other south Indian fares on offer. **Cafe Cherrapunjee** has a great menu variety and a heritage ambience. The reasonably priced Tibetan and Indian cuisine served at the no-frills **Halari** is extremely popular. **Sohtun** stall is a small, typical ‘Meghalaya restaurant’ serving authentic meals. Their *jadoh* with pork or chicken curry comes highly recommended.<sup>n</sup>





Meghalaya  
TOURISM

# MEGHALAYA



With its swift flowing rivers, grand rapids and picturesque lakes. Meghalaya is a haven for adventure and water sports enthusiasts. Paddling down gushing rivers, with verdant hills and lush forests providing the idyllic backdrop, white water rafting and kayaking can be a thrilling experience in Meghalaya. Rivers like Rymben, Riwai, Umngot, Kynshi, Wah Blei, Umtrew and the serene Lake Umiam offer kayaking possibilities you would not want to forget. You will long to come back again, hit the waters and immerse yourself in excitement!

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# MAWLYNNONG

**L**ocated in the Pynursla development block of the East Khasi Hills district, Mawlynnong stretches along the India-Bangladesh border. Declared the 'Cleanest Village in Asia' in 2003 by the travel magazine Discover India, and then again in 2005, this tropical paradise is still at the top of its game when it comes to cleanliness and green initiatives. Made up of a hundred households, this little village is a stellar example of a community-based eco-tourism initiative. Villagers take turns cleaning the roads, and there is zero tolerance towards littering. The use of plastic is strictly prohibited, and smoking has also been banned here.

The drive to this gorgeous village passes through what seems like a montage of landscapes: showcasing the topographical diversity of Meghalaya. Table-top mountain ranges and roadways threading the edge of gorges give way to broom grass plantations and a more tropical setting. Picture-perfect paths fringed with

hedges and flowers as well as ornamental plants welcome visitors to the magical village of Mawlynnong, which is aptly known as 'God's Own Garden'.

Upon arriving in the village, you will come across typical straw-roofed Khasi huts and a few brick-and-mortar houses, with their walls covered in leafy vines and patios full of multi-coloured orchids. Most households have their vegetable gardens, and some even have a barn, with hens and roosters clucking contentedly. Along the way, you might also notice rocks with basins carved in them – a clever innovation by the locals to harvest rainwater. Conical bamboo baskets to collect trash can be found every few steps.

During the rainy season, the village is a sight to behold, with cottony low-lying mist enveloping the viewpoints on treetops; exotic butterflies fluttering amidst flowers; beautiful gardens; and rain-washed pathways leading to secluded nooks, utterly perfect for soaking in the idyllic scenery.

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Mawlynnong can be covered as a day trip from Shillong but we always recommend at least a night or two here to take in the natural splendour of the village and the surrounding areas.



### FAST FACTS

**When to go** All year-round, but the rainy season lasts from May to September. June and July get the heaviest rainfall

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**STD code** 03653



A day's worth of exploration around the village will take you along serpentine pathways leading to various points of interest, including dramatic viewpoints and several waterfalls and streams. The car park has a detailed map of the village and is surrounded by eateries, serving simple but delicious rice thalis as well as bamboo shacks selling souvenirs and Khasi bric-a-brac.



*The superb views from Mawlynnong Viewpoint*

Home to the famous Living Root Bridge, the village of Riwai lies a short distance away from Mawlynnong. You can follow the well-marked trekking trail to Riwai, from where it is a short hike to the lovely hamlet of Nohwet. The trek takes about two hours and winds through a thick forest.

### Church of Epiphany

A short walk from the car park in Mawlynnong takes you to this landmark church, which was founded in 1902. A flagstone path flanked by bushes leads to its well-manicured lawns, lined with palm trees. At the centre of these grounds stands this elegant red-roofed edifice, with a

striking Gothic spire and stained-glass windows. Adjacent to the church is an observation deck on a treetop, from where you can enjoy panoramic views of the village.

◆ **Timings** 10.00am–12.00pm, 1.00pm–3.00pm, 4.00pm–6.00pm (Sunday), 7.00pm–8.00pm (Wednesday & Saturday)

### Living Root Bridge

A bio-engineering marvel, living root bridges are unique to the

*The serene Church of Epiphany at Mawlynnong Village*



SHUTTERSTOCK

state of Meghalaya. The one in Riwai is the most easily accessible of all these bridges. The village is a 15-minute drive from Mawlynnong and has found its way on the tourist trail because of this natural wonder. Once you reach Riwai, it is an exciting scramble through a forest to the root bridge. All along the way, you will see an array of dragonflies and butterflies, and crabs scuttling about in the dirt. At the end of the trail is a long flight of moss-slickened stone steps leading down to the bridge. The area around these steps gets slushy and somewhat treacherous during the rainy season, so be careful while negotiating this stretch.

**TIP** Wear shoes with good tread if you decide to trek to Riwai.

The single-decker root bridge in Riwai spans over a gushing stream. Irrespective of all the pictures of the root bridges you might have seen, nothing can beat the experience of seeing one at close quarters. The sight of the gnarled living roots of the rubber fig (*Ficus elastica*) expertly manipulated by the locals to create this bridge will remind you of JRR Tolkien's fictional world of Middle Earth. This technique of fashioning a bridge from the sec-



*Living Root Bridge Double Decker*

Secondary roots of the rubber fig (*Ficus Elastica*) were developed by Khasi villagers to cross rough terrains, valleys and rivers. It takes between 10 to 15 years for a root bridge to become fully functional. Each year, villagers remain on the lookout for fresh roots that can be meshed into the extant intricate network of roots holding the bridge. This is how the bridge becomes increasingly resilient over time. Volunteers are posted on either

side of the banks to regulate the movement of tourists across the bridge. During the dry season, you can even go down to the water for a dip.

◆ **Entry ₹50 Guide ₹600 Timing**  
8.00 am– 4.30 pm

### Skyview in Nohwet

A steep flight of precariously positioned stone steps flank the Living Root Bridge. Signposted as the 'Way to Skyview', these steps lead to the quaint hamlet of

Nohwet, where lies this unique viewing platform. Alternatively, visitors can take the concrete stairway, which also leads up to the village. It is a pleasant 15-minute walk through the picturesque village to the Skyview.



### GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport (124km/ 4–5hrs). Convenient airport: LGB Airport, Guwahati (190km/ 5–6 hrs). A taxi from the airport to Shillong costs ₹2,000–2,500. In Shillong, head to the local tourist taxi stand to arrange a taxi for your onward trip to Mawlynnong (see Road)

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and other metros. MTC runs bus services to Shillong (3.5hrs), coordinated with train arrivals. Taxi fare: ₹1,700–2,200 approx to Shillong

**Road** From Shillong, follow NH206 via Myllem, Laitlyngkot, Mawkajem, Langkyrdem and Riwai village. The Tourist Taxi Association at Shillong offers taxis for Mawlynnong for ₹18–25/km

Perched on the edge of a cliff, Skyview is an observation deck soaring to a height of around 70–80ft. Made of bamboo poles securely fastened with coir ropes, this seemingly fragile-looking structure can hold up to seven people at a time. On a clear day, the viewing deck affords dramatic views of the Bangladesh plains, framed by the thick upper canopy of the forests in the region.

The deck also has a few bamboo benches, where you can rest for a few minutes whilst admiring the spectacular scenery. To ensure the safety of visitors, the bamboo bridge and viewing platform are built anew every year, owing to the damage borne by the structure during the monsoon. You can also climb up to the **Tree House** – right next to the rickety bridge leading to the Skyview – for 360-degree views of the village and the surrounding hills and valleys.

On your way back from the Skyview, take a stroll around the village for a glimpse into the life of the locals. Round off the visit with a steaming cup of red tea at one of the roadside tea stalls.

◆ **Entry ₹30 Timing 9.30 am – 4.30 pm**





*Skyview observation deck at Nohwet*

## Mawkynrot

The road to Mawlynnong from Shillong is enchanting and filled with many possible detours. The Mawlynnong Living Root Bridge may be one of the most popular but there are quite a few more in the Pynursla region. If you want to see these bioengineering wonders in a completely primaevial setting amidst thick jungle, then stop at Mawkynrot village, a few kilometres south of Pynursla town.

A short hike downhill will introduce you to three main living

root bridges that span a small valley and waterfall. Apart from these main attractions, the descent itself will take you into the heart of these verdant ranges where the silence of the forest provides an incomparable calm.

## WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

Staying in Mawlynnong is an experience in itself. There are quite a few guesthouses and homestays here. Many of them are modern, but basic, with



*Tranquil Nohwet village offers views of neighbouring Bangladesh*

western-style bathrooms. Cleanliness is a way of life in this village and the houses are spotless. **Erbatemon Homestay** (Cell: 09612768010; Tariff: ₹2,000–2,500); **Harud Wahduid Brookside** (Cell: 08575440446; Tariff: ₹1,500–1,800); **Safi Tourist Cottage** (Cell: 08652225785; Tariff: ₹1,600); **Sah Pyngngad** (Cell: 09615724352; Tariff: ₹2,000); and **Ha La Tyngkong** (Cell: 08974535288; Tariff: ₹2,200–3,000) offers four rooms. Its restaurant is quite popular. **La Jong Guest House** (Cell: 09615043027, 08837088134; Tariff: ₹1,500–2,500,) is a well-maintained property and offers

standard rooms. They also have a treehouse view point; access is free for in-house guests, but a fee of ₹20 per person is charged from non-guests. **Meghalaya Village Mawlynnong Bamboo Cottage** (Cell: 08652225785; Tariff: ₹1,500)

Locals run many small eateries that serve simple home-cooked meals. Vegetarian, as well as non-vegetarian food, is available. Most meals are prepared using locally grown organic vegetables.

You can also visit Mawlynnong as a day trip from Shillong or Sohra, or as a part of package tours along with other destinations of the state. ■

# Meghalaya TOURISM



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## MAWSYNRAM – EAST KHASI HILLS

**W**hile Mawsynram offers many charming aspects as Shillong's wettest region travellers are highly recommended to spend time exploring Mawlyngbna (18km) which is the jump-off point for travellers to Mawsynram and its arounds. The drive to the village is a pleasant one, cutting through open grasslands, which intermittently give way to cultivations of areca nut trees, bay leaves and black pepper. Now and then your vehicle will have to cross rickety old timber bridges that span the breadth of wide streams. Also recommended are some quick detours en route to Mawsynram which can prove quite rewarding.

Appearing in record books for receiving the highest rainfall on the planet, the Mawsynram region is much more than just a piece of trivia. Caves, waterfalls and magical flora abound here, as one reaches the edge of Meghalaya's lofty heights. Attractions in the Mawsynram region are not restricted to one spot. Here are some of the best

places in Mawsynram where you can have the time of your life.

Reportedly the wettest place in the world, Mawsynram has displaced its neighbour, Sohra, to occupy the top spot in the Guinness World Records. With an average rainfall of 467 inches every year, this lovely hamlet conjures up an image of misty mountaintops, a verdant landscape, crisp air, waterfalls and plenty of mouth-watering Khasi food. Once relatively unknown outside of the state, Mawsynram shot to fame after its unique weather pattern piqued the interest of meteorologists. Following the international recognition it has received since then, the laidback village is gradually transforming into a tourist hotspot, with discerning travellers making an almost obligatory stopover here.

Situated at an elevation of 1,400m, Mawsynram sits atop a ridge on the southern slopes of the East Khasi Hills. The route to the village offers scenic views of waterfalls and a rain-washed countryside. As you head a few kilometres out of Shillong, along

the highway, a dense cover of mist begins to close in, rapidly reducing visibility – at times to barely 10 metres. The road then zigzags along a steep mountain-side to lead you to a signpost that says ‘Mawsynram Division’, a short distance beyond which you are greeted with light show-

ers or a heavy downpour, depending on season.

While travelling through the region, you will notice farmers wearing the traditional rain shield, known as knups, while tending to their fields. Made from bamboo and banana leaf, these turtle shell-shaped shields not only provide full-bodied protection, but are also able to withstand heavy rainfall accompanied by strong winds, characteristic of the region.

A semi-urban sprawl, Mawsynram does not immediately make an impression, as tourist taxis inch along the streets of its chaotic market area. However, as the road begins to climb uphill to the village proper, the area’s old-fashioned charm becomes apparent from its winding paths, flanked by weather-worn but pretty houses – often fronted by gardens – and gorgeous views of hills all around. The eastern edge of the village offers some of the most picturesque vistas, with the cliff dropping almost vertically into the valley below. Sunny days are usually rare here – especially during wet season – but when they do come, it’s a time of celebration across the village. Even schools remain closed to make the most of the dry spell!



### FAST FACTS

**When to go** June and July get the heaviest rainfall; but it rains more or less throughout the year

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*Church dominates the skyline of Mawsynram village*

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Mawsynram can be covered as a day trip from Shillong. However, it is recommended that you spend at least a night or two here, in order to experience and enjoy the local culture and the ambience. Besides the weather phenomenon, Mawsynram has a lot more to offer. Made up of 100 odd households, the tiny village itself calls for a day's worth of exploration.

A leisurely stroll around the area is the best way to get a glimpse of local life. A little off the village centre stands the elegant

façade of the **Church of God**, near which lies a football ground. Evenings in Mawsynram are usually a fun affair with the residents of the village gathering at the ground to watch football matches, irrespective of the weather! A short distance from the ground lies the **Presbyterian Church**, which has an austere yet stately exterior.

Market days are not to be missed here, for they offer a sensory experience, with rows of roadside stalls selling heaps of fruit and vegetables, fresh meat, exotic flowers and spices. While here, don't forget to try *pusaw*



## GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport (92km/ 3hrs) is connected to Kolkata. Private taxis charge around ₹4,000–5,000 to Mawsynram. Convenient airport: LGB Airport (Borjhar Airport), Guwahati (185km/ 5–6hrs). Private taxis charge around ₹5,000–7,000 to Mawsynram. A taxi from the airport to Shillong costs ₹2,000–2,500. In Shillong, head to the local tourist taxi stand to arrange a taxi for your trip to Mawsynram

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and many other metros. MTC runs bus services to Shillong (3.5hrs), which are coordinated with train arrivals. Taxi fare: ₹1,700–2,200 approx to Shillong

**Road** From Shillong take NH106 and SH4 to Mawsynram via Ladmawreng, Nonglwai, Tyrsad, Umlangmar and Weilo. In Shillong, the Tourist Taxi Association, at Police Bazaar, offers taxis to Mawsynram for ₹18–25 per km (minimum)

(steamed rice cake flavoured with orange rind), a typical Khasi snack accompanied by sha saw (red tea).

## AROUND MAWSYNRAM

There are more surprises in store in the geological treasure that is Mawsynram – provided you are ready to take some detours. Here are some enroute attractions worth the extra time.

### Mawjymbuin Cave

Located a short distance north of Mawsynram, Mawjymbuin is one of the best-known caves of Meghalaya due to its religious significance. Nestled in a jungle, it is accessible by a stairway that winds down two levels to the cave's massive entrance. There's a small viewing platform on the first level, from where there are superb views of the entrance, which is 4-m high, but an astonishing 50-m wide. Another flight of stairs from this viewpoint brings you to the mouth of the cave. The thick vegetative cover on the roof of the cave causes a steady trickle of water to drip down the opening.

Carved out of calcareous sandstone, the cave is 209-m





*Mawjymbuin Cave is significant for its huge stalagmite Shivalinga*

high and houses fascinating stalactites and stalagmites, which have been formed due to the continuous flow of mineral-rich water depositing calcium carbonate over the centuries. The highlight of the cavern, however, is an impressive pair of speleothems at the centre of the chamber: an enormous stalagmite resembling the Shivalinga, right above which hangs a magnificent stalactite. Hindus consider this stalagmite holy and can be commonly seen offering prayers at the spot. A

few steps from the Shivalinga formation is a small cluster of stalactites, and on the right-hand corner of the cave floor, you will see minor stalagmite formations.

### Lum Sympet Peak and Cave

North of the Mawjymbuin Cave, the road curves through a landscape of vast meadows, framed against gently undulating hills.

A few kilometres down this road, the craggy Lum Sympet Peak, dramatically rising in the distance, comes into sight. The



stretch of green at the base of the peak is a popular picnic spot amongst locals. It is an hour-long trek to the summit, which affords panoramic vistas of the countryside. The trail begins a few steps from the road. The first half of the trek is relatively simple: you can either take the steep path or the winding stairway to the grassy hillock, peppered with rocks. From here, the trail gets rough, with precarious rocky sections that must be

negotiated with due caution. However, the stunning views from the top make it well worth the effort. If the trek to the summit sounds too challenging, you can simply hike to the hillock and admire the views of the open grasslands all around.

Hidden in a thicket, off the Lum Sympur Road, is the little-known **Lum Sympur Cave**. The cave has an atmospheric setting, which brings to mind scenes straight from the videogame



*Panoramic view of the countryside en route to Lum Sympet Peak*

series Tomb Raider. The trail to the cave is an exciting scramble, cutting through woods, criss-crossed with streams, and even a minor cascade, strewn with moss-covered stones and diversity of fern species. A pathway made of stepping-stones leads to the mouth of the great cavern.

**TIP** Wear good hiking or trekking shoes, as the path to the trail tends to be slippery.

If you are visiting during the wet season, you will see crystal-clear natural pools, formed by the water continuously dripping from the surrounding foliage. Lum Sympet Cave has a deep chamber, littered with rocks and boulders. Although the cave doesn't boast limestone formations, it is the trail and the picturesque environs that are the high points of a visit to this place.

## Khreng Khreng Waterfall

A diversion on the highway to Mawsynram leads to these magnificent falls, located just off the road. Khreng Khreng is perhaps amongst the most easily accessible waterfalls in the East Khasi Hills district. Tourist vehicles can park a few metres away from the falls. From here, it is a short walk down a road flanked by sheer cliffs to the Khreng Khreng Viewpoint. A visual spectacle, the waterfall crashes down an almost-vertical rock face with tremendous force. A concrete wall has been constructed to fence off

*Khreng Khreng Waterfall*



the falls from spilling onto the road. The waters from the natural pool flow down the cliff into a deep ravine on the other side of the road.

**TIP** There is no signage on the highway indicating the existence of the falls. Your driver should be able to take you there.

On a clear day, the viewpoint offers panoramic vistas, all the way to the village of **Syntein**, locally known as the 'Crafts Village'. The inhabitants of the village are famous for their expertise in crafting bamboo and cane handicrafts. Be sure to make it to the viewpoint before sunset, when the sun's fading rays lend a golden glow to the forest-covered mountain

## Mawlyngbna (18km)

The rural idyll of Mawlyngbna is best experienced over a weekend when you can discover its natural treasures at leisure, and soak in the local culture. If time is a constraint, the village can also be covered as a day trip from Mawsynram or Shillong.

Away from the more frequent hubs of the East Khasi Hills district, Mawlyngbna exudes rustic charm – abundant greenery, mountain views, natural springs



*The many faces of beautiful Mawlyngbna*

and warm, friendly locals. Almost hidden from the traveller's eyes in the southern slopes of the Khasi Hills, this corner of Meghalaya's countryside boasts awe-inspiring views of jade-green ranges dropping into the plains of Bangladesh. Mawlyngbna features diverse topographical features that have started attracting

adventure seekers from all over. Trekking through lush forests, kayaking, bird watching and rock climbing are just some of the activities. Explorers can always find a waterfall or stream to cool off. Mawlyngbna can be best described as nature's playground.

The village is also home to the endangered tropical pitcher

plant (*nepenthes khasiana*), which is known as *tier-rakot* or demon-flower in Khasi. Although rarely found in the wild, nature enthusiasts will be happy to know that the pitcher plant can be easily spotted here. There have been concerted efforts lately to develop pitcher plant gardens and reserves to protect and preserve the species.

### Umkhakoi Lake

This picturesque artificial lake lies a short distance west of the village. Verged by fascinating rock formations along its northern

*Split Rock—a unique geological setting*



CHAITANYA AWASTHI

shore, this lake was formed as a result of the dam constructed on the Umkhakoi River. Surrounded by thickly forested hills, the reservoir is a popular picnic spot amongst locals and tourists alike. The rocky banks are peppered with depressions, which are usually filled with water. Bamboo bridges connect the opposite edges of some of the larger ones. There is a small viewing deck that offers sweeping vistas of the surrounding terrain. The lake's placid waters are ideal for kayaking beginners. You can hire rowboats or kayaks near the viewing platform. It is common to see angling enthusiasts milling about the banks, patiently waiting to catch fish. On sunny days, you might even see groups of tourists setting up their equipment along the banks to cook freshly caught fish. It is most rewarding to come here at sunset to admire some of the best views of the sun casting its final reflections across the lake's shimmering waters.

### Split Rock

Located along a deserted stretch in the fringes of the village, this unique geological formation is worth a short stopover. The walk to the rock weaves through a



*The grand vistas of Umkhakoi Lake, a picnic haven*

thicket of thorny scrub and clusters of jackfruit trees and pineapple plants. The trail is littered with huge rocks and boulders and needs to be negotiated carefully. It ends at a small clearing where a colossal rock stands, dramatically split down the middle. According to locals, the split was caused by the magnitude 8 Assam earthquake of 1897.

Sitting amidst a tangle of tropical vegetation, the rock has a flat top, with a clean fissure running

down the middle. A steep, slippery trail guides visitors up to a point from where a bamboo ladder leads down to the crevice between the two parts of the rock. This space is wide enough to accommodate one adult and many photo-ops.

**TIP** Negotiating this stretch requires extreme caution.

It is also possible to climb atop the rock, from where you will be treated to magnificent views of the Bangladesh plains.



*Krem Puri, in the Mawsyram area, is the world's longest sandstone cave*



### THE INFORMATION

One can visit Mawlyngbna all year round. December–February can be very cold. Winters allow easier access to places and hikes and picnics are the norm during this season. The Tourist Taxi Association at Shillong offers taxis to Mawlyngbna (80km) for ₹18–25 per km (minimum). Private taxis charge around ₹3,500–5,000

## Krem Puri

The longest sandstone cave in the world is a mountain labyrinth straight out of a storybook. Getting here is a steep descent and the innocuous entrance slowly reveals a maze that is as fascinating as it can be terrifying. Caving in Krem Puri is an experience that will take you out of your comfort zone and elevate your senses. Ensure that you go in with the proper equipment – including helmets and headlamps. Always go with a trusted local guide and do not stray around away from the crowd.

## WHERE TO STAY AND EAT IN MAWLYNGBNA AND MAWYSNRAM

### Mawlyngbna Traveller's Nest

(Tel 0364-2505248, Cell: 08415935101; Tariff: ₹2,000, tents ₹800 pp) sits atop a hillock in beautiful surroundings. There are two well-maintained cottages and ample space for erecting tents. It is run by Meghalaya Village Tourism Promotion Development Cooperative Society Ltd with the help of locals. Simple meals are provided. Traveller's Nest also arranges kayaking and trekking. ■



A person in a red kayak is navigating through a narrow channel of a waterfall. The water is white and turbulent, splashing around the kayak. The surrounding rocks are dark and jagged. The overall scene is dynamic and adventurous.

With its swift flowing rivers, grand rapids and picturesque lakes, Meghalaya is a haven for adventure and water sports enthusiasts. Paddling down gushing rivers, with verdant hills and lush forests providing the idyllic backdrop, white water rafting and kayaking can be a thrilling experience in Meghalaya. Rivers like Rymben, Riwai, Umngot, Kynshi, Wah Blei, Umtrew and the serene Lake Umiam offer kayaking possibilities you would not want to forget. You will long to come back again, hit the waters and immerse yourself in excitement!

# Meghalaya

## DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM

3rd Secretariat Nokrek Building, Lower Lachumiere, Shillong-793001, Meghalaya, India

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# MAWPHLANG SACRED FOREST

**K**nown as ‘Nature’s Own Museum’, this forest is one of the oldest and most famous sacred groves of Meghalaya, harbouring a diversity of flowering and medicinal plants, trees, mushrooms, birds and insects. The forest is located in the village of Mawphlang – meaning ‘moss-covered stone’ in Khasi – which is amongst the numerous settlements named after monoliths. Spanning a land area of 193 acres, the forest is protected by members of the Lyngdoh clan. It is believed to be the abode of the Khasi deity, Labasa, who is said to protect the clan and the village from all harm. As goes the local saying: “There cannot be a kingdom without a sacred forest, and no sacred forest without a kingdom.”

## SACRED SPACES

On arrival, visitors are left awe-struck by the scenic beauty of the area: beautiful green meadows stretching out far and wide, with the woods tucked away in a corner. The forest itself is divided

into three sections, of which only the first and the second section can be visited. Guides are compulsory; however, you can sign up for a 20- to 30-minute half trek or a 40- to 60-minute full trek.

## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

At the entrance to the Mawphlang Sacred Forest is the first group of monoliths: three standing stones and one seated stone. This is where village elders seek permission from the deity to carry out the sacrificial ritual inside the forest. It was believed that if a leopard appeared, it was an auspicious sign and the ritual could be conducted as planned. However, if a snake appeared, it was considered inauspicious and the ritual would be abandoned. The entrance to the forest resembles a ‘green tunnel’, all naturally formed by the branches of the trees. Inside the forest, the only audible sounds are the melodious calls of songbirds, the hum of crickets, the buzz of bees and dragonflies and occasionally the gurgling of forest streams. The

forest floor is carpeted with humus, which has accumulated here for centuries, so be cautious of your step, especially where the trail grows narrow.

**TIP** Wear good trekking shoes



### FAST FACTS

**When to go** All year round. However, December to February can be very cold, and June to August very wet. The cherry blossom season lasts from late October to mid- November

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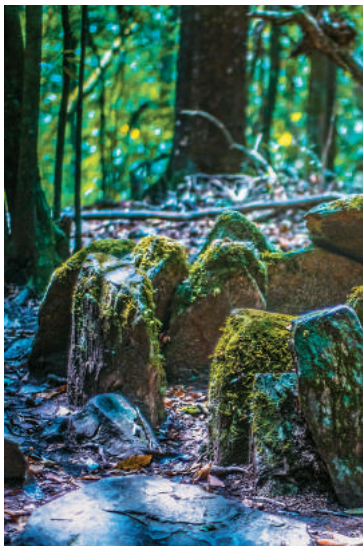
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and carry an umbrella.

As you continue the trek, you will see a stone shaped like a long table – this is where the preparations for the ritual were conducted. At a short distance from here is a cluster of smaller moss-covered stones, which served as a waiting area for young adults as the ritual was conducted. Besides the tales associated with the grove, there is an abundance of flora and fauna to be explored.



*Clockwise from top left* A stone structure in Mawphlang Sacred Grove where the tribal people use to offer gifts to the deities; Rhododendron flowers in bloom; Intriguing wood mushrooms

Mawphlang is home to over 400 species of plants, at least 25 types of orchids and numerous varieties of trees, many of which are said to have therapeutic properties. Considered holy by Hindus, Rudraksha trees (*Elaeocarpus ganitrus*) can also be found in great numbers here. Also, there are pines, rhododen-

drons and ka phal (*Myrica esculenta*) trees. One of the highlights here is the highly poisonous Lily Cobra plant, which appears to resemble the hood of a cobra! Wildlife sightings are rare, but the forest is said to be inhabited by toads, foxes, snakes, squirrels, wild cats and several bird species. The forest also provides the



## GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport (53km/ 1hr) is connected to Kolkata. Taxi to town is about ₹800–1,000, bus ₹100 per head. Convenient airport: Guwahati's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport (140km/ 3hrs) has more connections. Taxi costs ₹2,000–2,500 approx (drop at Police Bazaar). Shared taxi to Shillong costs ₹200–500 per head; Shillong to Mawphlang local taxi costs Rs 16,000

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Junction (117km/3 hrs) offers connections to all major cities of India. Meghalaya Transport Corporation (Tel: 0364-2222864, 2223129) runs bus services from 6.00am to 5.00pm and are coordinated with train arrivals and departures at Guwahati. Taxi fare: ₹1,700–2,200 approx to Shillong

**Road** From Guwahati, it's highway driving all the way to Shillong down NH6 via Nongpoh and Umiam

**Bus** MTC buses are available from the Inter State Bus Terminus, Beltola. Private buses from Machkhowa near Bharalumukh

ideal conditions for both poisonous and non-poisonous varieties of mushrooms to grow aplenty.

**CAUTION** Do not pluck any leaf or flower or take anything out of the forest, as it is considered very sacred by the locals.

The latter half of the trek involves negotiating a somewhat rugged terrain, climbing up and down rocky sections and crossing gushing streams and cascades. The moss-slickened stones around these areas can be quite slippery, so exercising due caution cannot be emphasized enough. Round off the trek with a cup of hot chai at the tea shack on the road across the pretty meadow.

◆ **Entry ₹20 Timings** 8.30am–5.30pm **Guide ₹300–500**

**Photography Free Videography ₹500–1,000**

## David Scott Trail

Mawphlang offers a fascinating lesson on local history. Skirting the edges of the sacred forest is a section of an old horse cart path known as the David Scott Trail. This trail is named after an agent of the East India Company who was one of the earliest colonists to make contact with the civilizations of present-day Meghalaya.



*A hanging bridge over the Mawphlang River*

The David Scott Trail takes just a few hours to complete – starting at Mawphlang and ending on the Sohra highway. On the way, you will come across stunning valley views, river crossings and a few charming old bridges along with other scenic surprises. You can also begin the trek at the southern side (Sohra highway) and come towards Mawphlang. For a completely immersive experience that also affords you some rejuvenation time, dedicate a day to

the trail and another day (or half) to the Sacred Forest.

In many ways, Mawphlang Sacred Forest represents the pre-colonial indigenous richness of the Khasis while the David Scott trail is a physical and symbolic representation of the dawn of colonialism and the modern era of the region. Do not miss these important and beautiful cultural sites of Meghalaya.

*Where to Stay and Eat see Shillong p26-30 ■*





## WEST KHASI HILLS

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The high tablelands of the West Khasi Hills often go unnoticed in the common itineraries and travel literature dedicated to Meghalaya. This region is at the very heart of Meghalaya – showcasing that lovely transition from the pine dotted terrain of the Khasi Hills and the lush verdant forested Garo Hills. The West Khasi Hills is a large region with many fascinating attractions so it can be conveniently dealt with as a cluster of experiences by the astute and smart-scheduling traveller.

The landscape is defined by the Kynshi and Khri rivers and several other smaller but raging streams and rivulets. If you observe, the West Khasi Hills also offer distinct cultural experiences as the dialects and cuisines of the Khasis here are quite different from the more urbanized hubs of Shillong and Sohra. West Khasi Hills has massive waterfalls that have not been documented much and is home to one of the largest river islands in the country – Nongkhnum. Tourist facilities are, however, limited in

this part of Meghalaya, hence many people also opt to visit the area over a day-long excursion from Shillong. The star attraction here is the famous Nongkhnum River Island, the second-largest river island in Asia. Here are some must-see spots of gorgeous West Khasi Hills.

### THINGS TO SEE AND DO

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#### Nongstoin

A three-hour drive from Shillong, this quiet hill town of Nongstoin offers a spot of calm in the unspoiled countryside. It serves as the headquarters of the West Khasi Hills district. Located at an average elevation of 1,409m, the pretty town of Nongstoin serves as an excellent base for discovering the great outdoors of the West Khasi Hills.

#### Mawphanlur

If you like romantic getaways straight out of poetry books then the crispy air and lake-dotted meadows of Mawphanlur will be an ideal place to let down your anchor. There are



## FAST FACTS

**When to go** – Since most of the activities here are nature-based, the West Khasi Hills are most conveniently explored during the post monsoons and dry seasons (winter, spring) although they are counted as an all-year destination. However, December to February can be very cold. June to August can be very wet.

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**STD code** 03654



cottages available here and you will probably be better off booking them in advance as there are limited numbers.

## AROUND NONGSTOIN

### Nongkhnum River Island (14 km)

Not far from Nongstoin, Nongkhnum River Island is the second-largest in Asia, after Majuli Island in Assam. Spread over an area of 25sq km, the island is formed by the bifurcation



*Beautiful natural lakes on top of the mountains in Mawphlanur, West Khasi Hills*

of the Kynshi River into the Phanliang and Namliang rivers. From the parking lot, it is a gentle hike across green meadows, which are surrounded by low hills. An old suspension bridge connects the mainland to the river island. The bridge does sway a little when there are people on it, but it's a good spot to spend some time admiring the riverine scenery.

**TIP** Wear a hat or carry an

umbrella for protection from the strong sun.

The island's topography is characterized by open grasslands dotted by copses of trees and a few shrubs. Locals often play football here. A 15-minute walk south of the bridge leads you to the famous Nongkhnun Island Beach, which is formed at the point where Kynshi diverges. As a low tourist footfall here, there is a fair chance you will have the beach



all to yourself! Adjacent to this pleasant 100-sq km stretch of sand is a beautiful lake, formed by the Phanliang River. Colourful lantanas flank the lake's shady banks. West of the sandy beach is a covered viewing deck that affords sweeping views of the Kynshi River, peppered with islets blanketed with dense vegetation. Steps lead down from the viewing area to the edge of the river. However, watch your step as the river, though calm, is quite deep. Visitors can hire a boat for a cruise down the river, and also see the breathtaking 60-m-high Kshaid Thum Falls, on the western course of the river. The pool at the base of the waterfall abounds with a variety of fish species.

◆ **Timing** 9.30 am–4.30 pm

### Langshiang Falls (17 km)

Also known as Kshaid Ur-Nar, these majestic falls are a 30-minute walk from the village of Sangriang, which lies 17 kms southwest of Nongstoin and are part of the Nongkhnum Island group of waterfalls. The Namliang River joins the Phanliang River on the western rocky shore, where it flows for a short distance from the river

island, before plunging into a deep gorge, where it forms the spectacular Langshiang Falls. The third-highest in India, the 335–340-m-tall waterfall can also be viewed from Mawpon village, located 8km west of Nongstoin. The area near the falls offers distant views of the countryside, featuring quaint hamlets spread across lush meadows.

◆ **Timing** 9.00am–4.30pm

### Kshaid Weinia (17 km)

Located in the northern part of the Nongkhnum River Island, Kshaid Weinia is counted amongst the most scenic waterfalls in the state. Notwithstanding the bumpy ride to this natural gem, it is the mesmerising beauty of these falls that attracts visitors here. If you're feeling energetic, you can do the hour-long trek to the waterfall from Nongkhnum River Island. The motorable road to the falls winds through a bucolic landscape of neatly fenced fields, punctuated by thatched-roof houses, and then it begins to curve along the banks of the Namliang River. A few metres down this dirt road, you will notice a wooden multi-arched footbridge in the distance. The road ends at the footbridge, with



## GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest Airport: Umroi Airport (119km/ 3hrs10min) is connected to Kolkata. Convenient airport: LGB Airport in Guwahati (131km/ 4hrs 15 mins) is connected to the rest of the country with regular flights. Taxi fare ₹5,000 to Nongstoin directly. From

Guwahati to Shillong ₹2,000-2,500 and Share taxi ₹300. From Shillong to Nongstoin Taxi fare ₹1,800 and share taxi ₹180. Taxi cost ₹2,000–2,200 approx (drop at Police Bazaar). Shared taxi to Shillong costs ₹200–500 per head

**Rail** Nearest Railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and other metropolitan cities. Meghalaya Transport Corporation runs bus services to Shillong (3.5hrs), coordinated with train arrivals. Taxi fare: ₹2,500 to Shillong

**Road** from Shillong (93 km/2hrs 30 mins) Take NH106 to Nongstoin via Ladmawreng, Nongpyndeng road. A private taxi costs about ₹2,000-2,500 from Shillong to Nongstoin and a share taxi costs around ₹180/head

its foundation plaque aptly inscribed with the famous line from John Keats' Endymion, "A thing of beauty is a joy forever". Built to resemble the shape of a wave, the footbridge connects the two banks of the river. Walk to the middle of the bridge at sunset for some of the most stunning views of the top tier of the falls.

The footbridge leads down to the viewpoint opposite the thunderous waterfall. The waters of Kshaid Weinia crash down a steep hunk of rock, filling the pool at its base, before flowing through a rocky stretch and down another level. A few hours before sunset, a perfect rainbow can be seen over the waterfall – a result of water vapour continuously rising from the bottom of the falls. Massive rocks in a unique step-like formation can be seen on the left side of the waterfall.

◆ **Timing** 9.00am–4.30pm

## Lum Kyllang (68 km)

The thousand-footer Lum Kyllang is a giant monolith that dominates the Nongkhlaw landscape of the West Khasi Hills region. Hikers will enjoy the climb up this huge rock, resembling a giant's bald head and having a grand legend befitting



*Poetic beauty of Nongstoin: popular for activities like kayaking and trekking*

its scale. It is believed that Lum Kyllang and the distant Lum Sympyer were two deities who were fighting – one threw mud at the other, and the other threw back rocks. Lum Kyllang is basically where the rock(s) landed.

Lum Kyllang is 64 kms from Nongstoin and 14 kms from Mairang town. We would advise strongly that you dedicate a minimum of a day here to truly enjoy the scenes and the climb – preferably as an enroute addition on your return from Nongstoin to Shillong. It can also be covered in a day trip from Shillong.

## WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

### **Mawphanlur Traveller's Nest**

(Cell: 08974318450; Tariff: ₹1,500) is run by the Meghalaya Village Tourism Promotion and Development Cooperative Society Ltd. It has three clean cottages with attached baths. Kayaking, trekking and fishing is arranged here. Enjoy simple home-cooked meals. Mawphanlur is 35 kms east of Nongstoin and around 70 kms from Shillong.

*For more, see West Khasi Hills Accommodation Listings on p138.■*





# WEST JAINTIA HILLS – KUDENGRIM

**K**udengrim is one of Meghalaya's newest tourist destinations – tucked in the Jaintia Hills. The journey to Kudengrim is a tapestry of farmland meadows and scenic valleys. The steep slopes begin as one descends into the village, a cosy settlement that is home to sights and experiences synonymous with Meghalaya. Choose a guide from the village to show you around and also hear folk tales and historical anecdotes about the region.

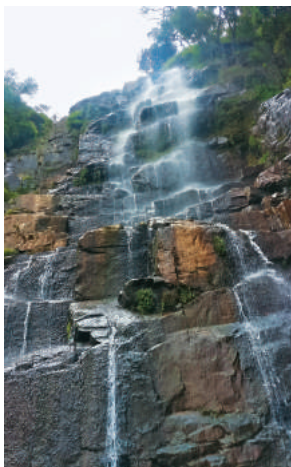
## THINGS TO SEE AND DO

### Waterfalls and Living Root Bridges

Kudengrim's first main attraction – a beautiful waterfall - is a twenty-minute hike from the main village. You will have to trek through a tranquil forest and find your way under a dense canopy before you reach the segmented cascade. Very close to the waterfall, visitors will come across the Kudengrim Living Root Bridge. The two-levelled bridge is a wonder of bio-engineering, created

by weaving the surface roots of the giant *Ficus Elastica* trees. To explore what Kudengrim has to offer, just follow the course of the main stream, punctuated by another waterfall as walk down from the living root bridge. Enjoy the cool spray and get your feet wet as you reach the last of the waterfall trilogy – the Mukhre Step Falls - after crossing through

### *Cascading crystal streams*



SHREYA SARKAR



## FAST FACTS

**When to go** All year round. However, December to February can be very cold, and June to August very wet

### Tourist offices

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bamboo walkways and stream crossings.

Kudengrim is defined by the riverine landscape – the Amlamar and Amshkar pass through these slopes. You can catch some nice views from the recently constructed bamboo skywalk and canopy hut. Kudengrim is best for those who can hike around a fair bit so we would recommend visitors to come with the appropriate footwear and apparel, and be ready to walk. Look for homestay options in the village itself so you



*Double decker living root bridge at Kudengrim, West Jaintia Hills*

can explore without worrying about rushing your schedule.

While travelling to Kudengrim, do not miss out on the other scenic and cultural spots of the Jaintia Hills. Expand your itinerary and add these enroute attractions for a wholesome trip.

### Jowai Town

The district headquarters is a busy town filled with bustling markets and quaint neighbour-

hoods. Find your way around the place and explore the local food stalls. Close to Jowai, you can visit two of its most iconic spots—Tyrshi Falls and Kiang Nongbah Monument.

### Tyrshi Falls

Widely known as Jowai's answer to Shillong's Elephant Falls, the beautiful Tyrshi Falls are situated quite close to the calm

**Thadlaskein Lake** (another spot



worth a short stop). It is a short hike through stunning scenery to these multi-tiered falls. A viewing platform offers jaw-dropping views of a network of rice fields, resembling a glass mosaic.

The first level of the falls has a small viewpoint. Skip this point and take the stairway winding down to the second tier of the falls. Five flights of steep steps bring you down to the rocky pool, where you can cool off by the waterside and admire the grandeur of the falls.

### Nartiang Village

Nartiang Village is a historical site known for the largest and tallest monoliths. The Durga Temple here is a few hundred years old. You can also visit the Thwai Laroit River, on way to Nartiang as it is a beautiful spot nestled in between lush green valleys.

### Kiang Nongbah Monument

South of Jowai lies the splendid valley of Syntu Ksiar, which translates to 'Golden Flower'. Stretching along the banks of the Myntdu River, this peaceful spot is a favourite amongst the locals for picnics and angling. The site is also famous for the monument dedicated to Kiang Nongbah, a



#### GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport near Shillong (71km/ 2 hrs) is connected to Kolkata, Delhi, Agartala. Local non-AC taxis charge ₹1,000. Convenient airport: LGB Airport, Guwahati (181km/ 4.5hrs) is better connected to the rest of India with regular flights. Shared taxi to Shillong costs ₹500 per head. In Shillong, head to the local tourist taxi stand for your trip to Jowai. Tourist Taxi: Guwahati -Shillong Rs 2,500- Share taxi Rs 500; Shillong-Jowai ₹1,000, share taxi ₹200 per head

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and other metros. MTC runs bus services to Shillong (3.5hrs), coordinated with train arrivals. Taxi fare: ₹1,500 approx to Shillong. Share Sumo ₹200, / taxi ₹300

**Road** From Shillong take NH6 to Jowai via Sohryngkham, Moodymmai, Ummulung, Mukhla and Thadlaskein Lake. The Tourist Taxi Association at Shillong offers taxis to Jowai; private taxi: 1,800 to Jowai (66km) from Shillong



Jaintia freedom fighter who, in 1862, laid down his life for the cause of India's independence from the oppressive rule of the British. He was publicly hanged at Lawmusiang in Jowai for leading an uprising against the colonial power. In 2001, the government issued a postage stamp to commemorate him.

Overlooking a vast swathe of green known as Madiah Kmal Blai, the monument is an elegant two-tiered tower, typical of Jaintia design, located within a fenced enclosure. A statue of Kiang

Nongbah, who is depicted holding his sword and shield, fronts the tower. Dirt paths from these grounds lead to a walkway that winds along the grassy banks of the Myntdu River. A stroll down this stretch is perhaps one of the highlights of a visit to this monument complex.

◆ **Entry Free** **Timing** 10.00am –5.00pm

## WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

While in Jowai, stay at **Orchid Inn** (Cell: 09856003662, 09863600078;



*The Kiang Nongbah Monument is surrounded by acres of greenery*

Tariff: ₹2,072-3,540). The hotel offers 10 comfortable rooms and a multi-cuisine restaurant.

**Highwinds Lakeside** (Cell: 08794714215; Tariff: ₹2,800-7,840, with breakfast) has spacious, well-decorated rooms with pleasant views. The hotel has both smoking as well as non-smoking rooms. The restaurant offers Indian as well as Chinese cuisine. **Tyrchi Inn** (Cell: 07629909655, 07629909755; Tariff: ₹2,000–3,350) is another decent option in Jowai. Their res-

taurant serves good Indian and Chinese fare. Try the local dishes here. The **GHM Guest House cum Park** (Cell: 08974558510; Tariff ₹2500-4000) on the old Jowai Bye Pass, serves Indian, Chinese and Tandoori cuisine.

**Havens Cove Resort** (Cell: 09612738872; Tariff ₹3000-4000.) at Jowai, Syntu Ksiar, serves Indian, Chinese and local food.

*For more, see Kudengrim Accommodation Listings on p113n*





## UMNGOT RIVERFRONT

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One of India's cleanest rivers, the Umngot drives down from the high ranges and tabletops of the Khasi Hills and builds up as a meandering beauty that flows into the plains of Sylhet (Bangladesh). During the winters, the river provides some of the best outdoor adventures in a unique setting – its clear waters flanked by green valleys, hillside villages and pristine nature.

Currently, most travellers explore three main destinations along the Umngot river, each special in their own way and not too distant from each other – Dawki, Shnongpdeng and Darrang.

### Dawki

A picturesque drive cutting through the ravines of the East Khasi Hills leads to the tiny town of Dawki, which sits on the India-Bangladesh border in the West Jaintia Hills district. While driving from Shillong, the landscape changes considerably from rolling meadows, terraced fields and cavernous gorges to a flatter landscape filled with plantations and groves of palm.

Overlooking the flood plains of Sylhet in northeastern Bangladesh, Dawki is the last town on the Indian side of the border. Although a laidback place, it forms a crucial part of the bilateral trade corridor (NH40) between India and Bangladesh, two of the world's major emerging economies. An average morning around these parts sees dozens of trucks loaded with tomatoes, pineapples, oranges, betel nuts and betel leaves trudging along the highway to cross over into Bangladesh. There is a border checkpoint in Tamabil village called Bharat-Bangladesh Maitri Dwar where one can take a step into the neighbouring country. The single suspension Dawki Bridge (constructed in 1932) is one of the most iconic structures of this historic region. The area where the hills on the Indian side end and the flood plains of Bangladesh begin denotes the International Radcliffe Line, which was drawn between India and Bangladesh (then East Pakistan). The Umngot drains

into these flood plains, where it takes on a different name, Goyain River.

## Shnongpdeng

Now dive into some adventure – literally. Shnongpdeng with its



### FAST FACTS

**When to go** February to March

#### Tourist offices

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river beaches and fishing culture is the hub for those who seek water-based fun. It's just 7km from Dawki. Freshwater scuba diving, ziplining across a river, and riverside camping are some of the many activities that one can enjoy here. There are campsites available throughout the tourist season (winter and spring) and locals love coming to the beaches to enjoy picnics under the sun.



*Picturesque setting of Dawki town*

A bunch of eco-friendly homestays have sprouted around the Umngot, particularly in Shnongpdeng and the larger region is still relatively untouched and maintains a distinct charm of its own. In season, the river's crystal-clear waters teem with boats carrying excited tourists, or anglers patiently waiting for a catch.

### Darrang

Similar to Shnongpdeng, Darrang, 6km from Dawki, is another village by the banks of the Umngot, famous for its serene river beaches and clear waters. Many outdoor enthusiasts choose this village for a weekend of camping and exploring – the nearby forests and hillsides are filled with trails and hidden water-



## GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Umroi Airport (114km/ 4–5 hrs) is connected to Kolkata. Convenient airport:

Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati (200km/ 5–6hrs). A taxi from the airport to Shillong costs ₹2,000–2,500. Shared taxi to Shillong costs ₹200–500 per head. In Shillong, hire a taxi to Dawki from the local tourist taxi stand.

Taxi from Guwahati to Dawki costs ₹5000/4 pax; Local taxi from Shillong to Dawki ₹2,500; Shared taxi ₹200/pax

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and other metros. Meghalaya Transport Corporation (MTC) bus services to Shillong (3.5hrs), coordinated with train arrivals. Taxi fare to Shillong: ₹1,700–2,200

**Road** From Shillong, follow NH206 via Myllem, Laitlyngkot, Mawkajem, Pynursla, Sohlong and Wahkdait. In Shillong, the Tourist Taxi Association, at Police Bazaar, offers taxis to Dawki for ₹18–25/km

falls which can be experienced best with a local guide.

Umngot River serves as the venue for an annual boat race, which is held in March or April. The race takes place at Umsyiem, about 4km northwest of Dawki.

◆ **Boating** fee ₹400–500 for 6 pax  
**Timing** 10.00am–5.00pm

◆ **Punhet Resort** (Cell: 09612282925, 07629905746; Tariff from ₹1000+) offers cottages and tented accommodations.

**TIP** From November to February – when the water level recedes, the river begins to look as transparent as glass; the water is so clear that the boats on the river appear to float in mid-air! There are numerous points along the highway leading into Dawki that offer a bird's-eye view of the riverbed, which looks like a beautiful mosaic of pebbles and stones. Umngot River is also popular amongst anglers.

## WHERE TO STAY AND EAT

Dawki offers limited places to stay. **Lamin Guest House** (Cell: 09366203552, 08787595539; Tariff: ₹2,000–5,000), on Dawki Internal Road, has 11 comforta-



photos by MEGHALAYA TOURISM

*Camping, river rafting and rock climbing; Some fun things to do at Dawki*

ble rooms. Meals are prepared on request. **Bri Kwei Guest House** (Cell: 07005337978; Tariff ₹3,000+), at Dawki is a good option.

Located around 7km from Dawki, the village of Shnongpdeng has decent accommodation options. **Bright Star Camps and Homestay** (Cell: 08974227204, 08787318215; Tariff: ₹1,500–2,000, tents ₹800); **Shnongpdeng Escapades** (Cell:

0878759 5539; Tariff: ₹1,000 pp, with vegetarian meals) offer rooms and tents, as well as organise adventure activities.

**Shatsngi Homestay** (Cell: 09612089521; Tariff: ₹1,500–2,500 pp, with meals) also has rooms and tents and arranges trekking and boating. **Betelnut Resort** (Cell: 06909368523, 07085871825; Tariff ₹3,000+) offers Indian and Chinese, cuisine. ■



## NOKREK NATIONAL PARK

Hosting one of India's most precious and unique ecosystems, Nokrek National Park is part of the Nokrek Biosphere Reserve and a natural treasure of Meghalaya. It is known for its endangered Hoolock Gibbon population and also for being home to one of the earliest citrus species on the planet. Nokrek is a haven for nature enthusiasts and is filled with trails for hikers and explorers. The highest peak in the Garo Hills – Nokrek Peak – is located here. At an elevation of more than 1400m, it is quite a climb – rewarding those who reach the summit with mesmerizing views. The Simsang River, which drains a major part of the lush Garo Hills finds its origin in the Nokrek range. To enjoy Nokrek at its fullest, travellers are recommended to set up their base at one of the village-run resorts set up on the fringes of the National Park.

**Chandigre and Daribokgre**  
Chandigre Village Resort is known for its orchards and vernacular architecture – a place

where you can immerse yourself in the culture of the Garo people. Daribokgre is another village located close to Nokrek National Park and featuring an Indigenous-inspired setting complete with the traditional Garo homes (*nok achik*) and dorms (*nok pante*).

There are quite a few interesting treks in the vast and pristine Nokrek area. One particular trek leads you to a WW II plane crash site while there are trails that are

*Traditional home interior at Chandigre*



MEGHALAYA TOURISM





built around the legend of the Mande Burung – the Garo Hills' very own Big Foot. If you want to experience some hardcore outdoor experiences, get in touch with local adventure and tour guides for information on campsites and angling (catch and release) trips which takes you into the deep jungle.

## TURA AND AROUND

### Tura Town (45km)

When in the Garo Hills, we recommend you spend some time in one of India's greenest towns – the leafy, tropical Tura – a town, 45 km west of Nokrek, where main roads and residential localities blend in with tropical foliage and wandering hoolock gibbons. One of the best hikes around Tura is the climb to Tura Peak, which overlooks the town like a guardian. Apart from this view-filled and exhilarating experience, there are scenic several spots around the town.

### Pelga Falls (8km)






Located just 8km away northwest of Tura, this waterfall is tucked away in the pristine forests surrounding the town. A 10-minute hike from the car park leads to



#### FAST FACTS

**When to go** All year-round, but it's very wet in the rainy season (June–September)

#### Tourist offices

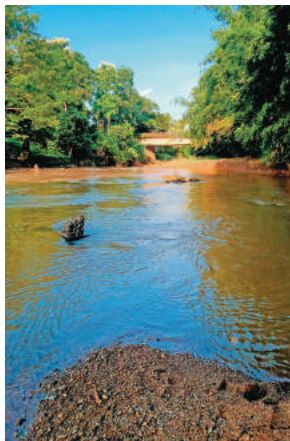
- Assistant Director   
Office of the DD of Tourism  
Dakopgre, West Garo Hills, Tura  
Cell 09612266199 Email bulbully-  
marak@gmail.com
- Tourist Officer   
Directorate of Tourism  
Office of the DD of Tourism  
Dakopgre, West Garo Hills, Tura  
Email ava\_sangma@yahoo.co.in
- Information & Publicity Officer   
Tourism Department  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,  
Lower Lachumiere,  
Shillong - 793001  
Cell 09436310374 Email phi-  
raca417@gmail.com
- Tourist Officer   
Directorate of Tourism  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,  
Lower Lachumiere, Shillong -  
793001  
Cell 09862213891 Email carolina.  
khyriem@yahoo.com  
 meghalayaturism.In  
**STD code 03651**

the waterfall. During the wet season, the dirt trail tends to be slushy, so caution must be exercised while walking this path. One of the attractions here is a hanging bamboo bridge over the turbulent Ganol River. Built by the locals, the bridge is an excellent example of the traditional Garo craft of bamboo weaving.

The viewpoint for the falls is reached by descending a short flight of stairs offering glorious views of the cascade. Pelga is also a popular angling site.

◆ **Timing** 9.30 am–4.30 pm

*Placid river setting in the Garo Hills*



SHUTTERSTOCK

## Selbalgre Gibbon Reserve (32km)

The tiny village of Selbalgre, 32km from Tura, is home to the unique Gibbon Reserve.

Protected by the village community, this wildlife reserve is the ideal habitat for the hoolock gibbon, the only tail-less ape species found in India. Locally known as huro, the villagers consider hoolock gibbons sacred and traditionally believe that if a gibbon is hunted or killed, a curse would fall on the village. The forest reserve lies deep within the recesses of the Selbalgre village, which stretches along the scenic banks of the Selbal stream.

A well-marked pathway, bordered by myriad ferns and wildflowers, leads into the reserve. There is no formal entry gate or a contact point for guides. Although there are no guided tours, locals sometimes volunteer to accompany visitors inside the forest.

**TIP** It is a good idea to carry a pair of binoculars and insect repellent for this trip.

Gibbon sightings are typically made early in the morning. Visitors need to hike deep inside the forest. The reserve is also home to a sacred grove – clusters of standing stones can



*The exuberant Pelga Falls*

be spotted at various points along the trail.

◆ **Timing** 9.30 am–4.30 pm

### Songkalwari Fish Sanctuary (37km)

A peaceful drive along Hill Road leads to the village of Rombagre, 37km east of Tura. Popularly known as Rombagre Sanctuary, the Songkalwari Fish Sanctuary lies on the Simsang River and is home to chocolate Mahaseer, as well as other Mahaseer species. The local community protects the sanctuary waters, and

angling is strictly prohibited around this area.

Head to the viewing platform after buying packets of puffed rice from the kiosk at the site (to feed the fish). Schools of fish can be seen swimming in perfect unison in the clear waters of the river. You can also take the steep, rocky trail going down to the banks of the river. Mind your step while descending -the rocks are slippery, especially during the rainy season.

◆ **Entry** ₹10–20 **Timing** 9.30 am–4.30 pm

## WHERE TO STAY AND EAT IN AND AROUND TURA

Tura has multiple stay options for travellers for all budgets.

**Hotel Polo Orchid** (Tel:



### GETTING THERE

**Air** Nearest airport: Guwahati's LGB Airport (200km/ 4.5hrs) has connections to other cities in India. Taxi to Tura from the airport costs ₹5,000.

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station is served by trains from Delhi and other metros. MTC runs bus services to Shillong (3.5hrs), coordinated with train arrivals. The Tourist Taxi Association at Shillong provides taxis for Tura for ₹18–25 per km

**Road** Tura is about 310km from Shillong. There is a direct taxi service along the Shillong-Tura highway, shared (₹700 per head) and reserved (₹12,000–15,000). In case you want to visit Tura directly from Guwahati then it's a shorter ride (200km). Taxis charge approx ₹4,500–5,000

03651-232082, Cell: 09319536891; Tariff: ₹3,999–6,999) opposite Central School in Araimile, offers comfortable rooms and suites, a multi-cuisine restaurant and Internet. **Hotel Rikman Continental** (Tel: 220744-45, Cell: 08256999788, 08257027095, 09856116711; Tariff: ₹2,500–5,600) on Tura Circular Road is close to the bazaar and bus stand and offers similar facilities. They also run **Tree House** (Tel: 220744-45, Cell: 08256999788, 08257027095, 09856116711; Tariff: ₹2,600) in Burney Hills, with eight rooms and a swimming pool. Its restaurant serves Indian, Chinese, Continental and Garo meals. Another decent place to stay here is **Hotel Rajkamal** (Tel: 222413, Cell: 09774861103; Tariff: ₹800–1,792) on Fancy Valley Road. They have 28 rooms, Wi-Fi services and meals are served from their kitchen.

Amongst the homestays, **Bliss Homestay** (Cell: 09862475197, 09436112508; Tariff: ₹1,500–3,500) in BonepaAtilla offers three rooms. They also have Wi-Fi. Balpakram Homestay (Cell: 09436114459; Tariff: ₹1,600–2,000) has four rooms; while **Daribokgre**



*A welcoming eco-tourism resort in Tura*

**Homestay** (Cell: 08974842249, 08837468997; Tariff: ₹800–1,500) in Nokrek, offers six traditional cottages. All serve fresh home-cooked meals.

The **Village Amingokgre Resort** (Cell: 09436114459, 08787334080; Tariff: ₹2,000–3,000) on Tura- Phulbari Road in Rongram, with six rooms. Meals are prepared as per order. Travel time from Tura to these properties is about an hour or so.

Apart from the restaurants in the hotels, Tura has many stand-alone eateries as well. The **Red**

**Door Café** is a popular eatery in Lower Babupara. It serves superb Chinese and Continental along with interesting mocktails.

**Foodie's World** in Sohra Complex serves good pizza, burger and chicken items. Another good place to hang out is **The Hope Café**, near Indoor Sports Hall, with delicious food and great views. In Ringre, **ML Restaurant** serves Chinese while Rendezvous has Chinese and Italian as well. **Brookview Restaurant** in Upper Chandmari is also a decent option.



## SOUTH GARO HILLS

The South Garo Hills are in many ways an untouched frontier on the growing Meghalaya tourism trail so if you are looking for bragging rights about discovering off-beat locations, then this forested district might be the answer you need. Nature is blessed in the South Garo Hills, diverse and lush - drained by the magnificent Siju while the forests are home to rare and unique species. The main town in South Garo Hills is Baghmara but travellers can choose to stay in Williamnagar (located in the adjoining East Garo Hills district) town if they wish so - because of the latter town's relative proximity to the Guwahati airport and Shillong town. However, we do recommend you set aside a few days for this hidden gem of Meghalaya since there is a lot to experience. Here are some of the best stops in the South Garo Hills

### Siju Cave (52km from Williamnagar)

Siju Cave is locally known as Dobakkol (bat cave) and lies on

the banks of the Simsang River. Currently the third-longest cave in India, Siju is believed to have some of the finest river passages in the world. Siju opens up like a tunnel and features a constant stream of water dripping from the ceiling. The cave is made up of several chambers and labyrinths and is particularly famous for its stalagmites and stalactites. The

*Siju cave*



MEGHALAYA TOURISM

cave has some magnificent limestone rock formations that can be seen deeper inside.



### FAST FACTS

**When to go** All year round but October–February is the best

#### **Tourist offices**

● Tourist Officer

Tourist Information Centre ⓘ

Tambo A Ding, Williamnagar

East Garo Hills,

Williamnagar - 794111

Cell 09774440322 Email marakmarley@gmail.com

● Information & Publicity Officer ⓘ

Tourism Department

Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,

Lower Lachumiere,

Shillong - 793001

Cell 09436310374 Email phiraca417@gmail.com

● Tourist Officer ⓘ

Directorate of Tourism

Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat,

Lower Lachumiere, Shillong -

793001

Cell 09862213891 Email carolina.

khyriem@yahoo.com

**W** meghalayaturism.in

**STD code** 03658



Across the river, is the Siju Bird Sanctuary offering enchanting riverine scenery and a treasure trove of birds for birdwatchers' to spot. A visit during the winter months will yield sightings of migratory birds, the most common of which is the Siberian duck. The lesser or grey hornbill is also seen around Siju. One rare bird sighted here is the peacock pheasant.

◆ **Guidefee** ₹500 (includes charg-





*Siju Cave: Popular for its limestone formations and many chambers*

es for adventure activities such as caving, rafting, trekking, and safety equipment)

If you wish to stay close to the Siju Caves, **Siju Wildlife Inspection Bungalow** (Cell: 07085448676; Tariff: ₹1,000 per bed) is your best bet. **Siju Tourist Lodge** (Contact: Plinder Dote: 07005887305; Christian: 08787408991) is another option.

There aren't too many eateries near Siju Caves. We recommend that you bring your provisions and get the meals cooked wherever you're staying. Cooks are available.

### Baghmara Reserve Forest (86km)

Located 86 km from Williamnagar on the banks of the Simsang,





*The carnivorous Pitcher-plant grows wild in the forests of Baghmara*

Baghmara is the headquarters of the South Garo Hills District. Travel another 4km ahead of this town, and you will reach the Baghmara Reserve Forest, right on the India-Bangladesh border.

Baghmara Reserve Forest is home to a great variety of carnivorous pitcher plants. The hills and valleys here are covered with dense foliage, with small rivers and streams cutting through most of the forest. Most wildlife enthusiasts visit this forest to catch sight of the elusive leopard, but if

you are lucky you will also spot a herd of elephants since this is an elephant corridor.

Winter is the ideal time for birdwatchers to visit the forest since many migratory birds also stop here. These environs are the ideal habitat for a huge population of langurs.

**Chitlang Guest House** (Cell: 07085448676) is run by the Forest/ Wildlife Department. Another option is the **Circuit House** (Cell: 08787658479; Tariff: ₹300). All are equipped



## GETTING THERE

**Air** Convenient airport: LGB Airport, Guwahati (176km/ 4–4.5hrs) to Williamnagar. Helicopter: Guwahati-Turaservice costs ₹1,500. Travel by road till Williamnagar. Contact Meghalaya Helicopter Service. From Guwahati to Williamnagar -sumo/ taxi 450-500/head, ₹7,000-8000; From Tura to Williamnagar (80km/1hr) - (₹180/head, 3,000/ taxi; [W megtransport.gov.in](http://www.megtransport.gov.in))

**Rail** Nearest railhead: Guwahati Railway Station. MTC runs bus services to Shillong. Taxi to Shillong costs ₹1,700–2,200 Mendipathar Railway Station-75km/1.5hrs/ Taxi ₹180/head; 3,000/taxi

**Road** From Guwahati via Boko on NH17 (turn for Garo Hills at Boko) and NH217. It takes about 4–4.5hrs from Guwahati (176km). From Shillong to Williamnagar (245km) by road takes approx 6hrs. Taxi from Shillong to Williamnagar costs approx ₹8,000. Contact: Khasi Hills Tourist Taxi Stand, Police Bazaar, Shillong.

with kitchens and have cooks available to prepare meals. Be mindfull that sometimes these may be booked already by officials. Do check in advance, when making plans to visit.

## Balpakram National Park (143km)

Balpakram National Park lies to the South East of William Nagar, headquarter of the East Garo Hills district and is located 143 kms away. The name Balpakram translates into the 'Land of Perpetual Winds', and appropriately so, as winds continuously sweep through this area, located at an elevation of 3,000m. Declared a national park in 1987, Balpakram is a tableland of dense forest, harbouring a rich diversity of exotic fauna and flora. The park's vegetation is made up of sub-tropical and deciduous plants and trees, which provide the ideal habitat for elephant, water buffalo, sambar, black bear, rare stump-tailed macaque, and various species of felines, including leopard and marbled cat. Birding enthusiasts are in luck, for the numerous and very beautiful water bodies here attract a variety of bird species,



*Clockwise from top left: Wild Siberian duck on a swim; Grey hornbill surveys his domain; gorgeous hues of the peacock pheasant*

including Indian roller and white cheek partridge.

Balpakram's mystical canyons and unchartered forests bear many legends. The Garos refer to it as the land of the spirits and there is a folklore that connects Balpakram to the great epic, the Ramayana too. Then there is the legend of the Mande Burung (a Garo version of Yeti/Big Foot), which finds its place here along with Nokrek National Park.

If you want to enjoy a truly immersive jungle experience, stay at the **Hatisia Inspection Bungalow** (Cell: 07085448676; Tariff: ₹1,000 per bed), close to the park gate. There are four rooms with attached bath. The **Hatisia Dormitory** (Tariff: ₹100 per person) here can accommodate about 50 persons. You have to bring your bedding. Cooks are available to rustle up your meals, but provisions have to be arranged. n

# TOURIST OFFICES

INFORMATION  INFORMATION & BOOKING  

Meghalaya Tourism  
 meghalayaturism.in

## KHASI HILLS

EAST KHASI HILLS

SHILLONG

### Information & Publicity Officer

Directorate of Tourism  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat  
Lower Lachumiere, Shillong-793001  
Tel 0364-2502580, Cell 09436310374  
Email phiraca417@gmail.com

### Tourist Officer

Directorate of Tourism  
Nokrek Building, 3rd Secretariat  
Lower Lachumiere, Shillong-793001  
Cell 09862213891  
Email carolina.khyriem@yahoo.com

MAWKDOK

### Tourist Officer

Office of Tourist Officer,  
Mawkdok Tourist Centre,  
Mawkdok, East Khasi Hills, Meghalaya  
Cell 09862213891  
Email carolina.khyriem@yahoo.com

SOUTH WEST KHASI HILLS

MAWKYRWAT

### Tourist Officer

Deputy Commissioner's Complex,  
Laitlawsang, Mawkyrwat-793114,

SW Khasi Hills Cell 09856057455  
Email lamborghrichard@gmail.com

NONGSTOIN

### Tourist officer

Wahriat, Nongstoin-793119  
Cell 09774815276  
Email marcdiengdoh@gmail.com

## JAINTIA HILLS

WEST JAINTIA HILLS

JOWAI

### Tourist Officer

Office of the Tourist Officer cum TIC  
Lalong, Jowai, West Jaintia Hills-  
793150 Cell 09436102544  
Email toffshy05@gmail.com

EAST JAINTIA HILLS

KHLIEHRIAT

### Tourist Officer

Tourist Information Centre  
Near Deputy Commissioner's Office,  
Khliehriat-793200 East Jaintia Hills,  
Cell 09612325695  
Email tickh.ejh-meg@gov.in

## GARO HILLS

WEST GARO HILLS

TURA

### Assistant Director

Office of the Deputy Director of  
Tourism, Dakopgre, West Garo Hills,

Tura **Cell** 09612266199  
**Email** bulbullymarak@gmail.com

### Tourist Officer

Office of the Deputy Director of  
 Tourism, Dakopgre, West Garo Hills,  
 Tura **Email** ava\_sangma@yahoo.co.in

#### SOUTH WEST GARO HILLS

##### AMPATI

### Tourist Officer

Office of the DC, SW Garo Hills,  
 Ampati-794115 **Cell** 09089621171  
**Email** garreymomin@gmail.com

#### EAST GARO HILLS

##### WILLIAMNAGAR

### Tourist Officer

Tourist Information Centre, Tambo  
 A'ding, Williamnagar, East Garo Hills-  
 794111 **Cell** 09774440322  
**Email** marakmarley@gmail.com.

#### SOUTH GARO HILLS

##### BAGHMARA

### Tourist Officer

Upper Kona Gittim near MPRO  
 Baghmara, South Garo Hills-794102  
**Cell** 09007016897  
**Email** chequeverabsangma@gmail.  
 com

#### NORTH GARO HILLS

##### RESUBELPARA

### Tourist Officer

Tourist Information Centre (TIC),

Near Social Welfare Office Building  
 Resubelpara  
 North Garo Hills 794108

### RI-BHOI

#### UMLYNGKDAIT

### Tourist Officer

Tourist Information Centre,  
 Umlyngkdait, P.O. Nongpoh-793102  
**Cell** 09863026858  
**Email** banznongkynrih@gmail.com

#### RI BHOI

### Tourist Officer

Umling Tourist Centre,  
 Umling, Ri Bhoi District,  
**Cell** 07005199957  
**Email** ranald.wahlang@gmail.com

### METRO OFFICES

#### GUWAHATI

### Tourist Officer

TIC Guwahati, Meghalaya House  
 Rehabari, Guwahati **Cell** 07005199957  
**Email** ranald.wahlang@gmail.com

#### KOLKATA

### Tourist Officer

Tourist Information Centre, Meghalaya  
 House, 9 Russell Street Kolkata-700071

#### NEW DELHI

### Tourist officer

Tourist information centre  
 Meghalaya House, 9 Dr APJ Abdul  
 Kalam Road, New Delhi-110011


## TRAVEL OPERATORS

### SHILLONG STD 0364

#### Camp Fire Trails

GS Road, Police Bazaar  
Cell 08415921719, 08974012012  
 campfiretrails.com

#### Cultural Pursuits

Maplepine Farm Bed and Breakfast  
Near Mawphlang Sacred Forest  
 culturalpursuits.com

#### Jais Travels

Raps Mansion, MG Road  
Tel 2224656 Cell 09436732356

#### Meghalaya Adventure Tours

Bara Bazaar  
Cell 09863060368

#### Meghalaya Tourism Development Corporation (MTDC)

Police Bazaar  
Tel 2226220  megtourism.gov.in

#### Nakliar Tourist Info Centre & Travels

C/o M/s DD Laloo & Co  
GS Road, Police Bazaar  
Cell 09436104844


#### New Horizon Travel & Tours

Salonsar Mansions  
Police Bazaar Tel 2223233  
Cell 09863026900, 09436117896

#### Nomad

Mawlai Nonglum Block 1  
Cell 07005355836, 09774655701

#### Pioneer Adventure Tours

Jarman Villa, Lower Lachumiere  
Hopkinson Road, Cell 09049442647  
 pioneeradventuretours.com

#### Quest Holidays

IPDE Building, Laitumkhrah Main Road  
Tel 09863300397, 08787407510


#### Sheba Travels

Auckland Road, near Bank of Baroda  
Police Bazaar Cell 09774168137

#### Shillong Travels


Zara Arcade Building, Keating Road  
Police Bazaar  
Cell 09863085145, 09436333197  
 shillongtravels.com

#### Van Rap Tours & Travels

Police Bazaar Tel 2220954  
Cell 0825800282, 09863222333  
 vanraptravels.com

### GUWAHATI STD 0361

#### Jungle Travels

3B, Dirang Arcade, GNB Road  
Chandmari Cell 09209200013  
 jungletravelsindia.com



## LEGEND

NA	Not accepted
NH	National Highway
NP	National Park
Opp	Opposite
TE	Taxes extra

## Accommodation type?

Spot these flags

HERITAGE TENTS

HOMESTAY

## Special Hotel needs?

Spot these flags

ADVENTURE

SPA TREKS

## HOTELS EASY ACCESS

SHILLONG	127	In Mawlyngbna	135
In Ri Bhoi	132	SOHRA	135
On Umiam Lake	133	WEST KHASI HILLS	138
KUDENGRIM - WEST		Nongstoin	
JAINTIA HILLLS	133	SOUTH GARO HILLS	135
Jowai		Williamnagar	135
UMNGOT RIVERFRONT	133	In Baghmara	
Dawki		In Balpakram	136
EAST KHASI HILLS	134	In Siju	136
MAWLYNNONG		NOKREK NATIONAL PARK	140
MAWSYNRAM	135	Tura	

## SHILLONG STD 0364

## Aerodene Cottage Homestay

**Location** Lower Cleve Colony, Stoneylands **Tel** 2224958 **Cell** 09774065366

**W** aerodene.in **Rooms** 8 **Tariff** ₹5,200-6,200 **Facilities** Dinner on order before 4.00pm, Internet, gym, library, parking

## Aesthetics Homestay

**Location** 46/ 1, Lachumiere, Near Horse Shoe Building, Temple Road **Tel** 2220341 **Cell** 09436104442, 08837092063 **Rooms** 7 **Tariff** ₹2,500-3,500; **TE** **Facilities** Meals on prior request, travel help

## Apsara Guest House

**Location** Cleve Colony, Tripura Castle Road **Cell** 09856721384, 09612728842 **W** shillongstay.com **Rooms** 18 **Tariff** ₹3,500-4,000; **TE** **Facilities** Meals on request, Internet

## Ashutosh Inn

**Location** GS Road **Cell** 09436165135 **Rooms** 16 **Tariff** ₹2,400-4,100 **Facilities** Restaurant, travel help, Internet

## Best Holiday Inn

**Location** Upper Lachumiere **Tel** 2505593 **Cell** 07085057392 **Rooms** 18 **Tariff** ₹3,186-4,248 **Facilities** Dining hall, Internet

**Blueberry Inn**

**Location** Rita Road **Tel** 2500655-57  
**Cell** 08257092950 **Rooms** 15 **Tariff**  
 ₹3,584-7280 **Facilities** Restaurant,  
 bar, Internet, parking, TV

**Bonnie Guest House**

**Location** 45, Howell Road, Laban  
**Tel** 2229527/1389 **Cell** 08787812876  
**W** bonnieguesthouse.co.in **Rooms** 9  
**Tariff** ₹2,000-2,400; TE (CP)  
**Facilities** Restaurant

**Boulevard Hotel**

**Location** Thana Road, Police Bazaar  
**Tel** 2229044/ 9039 **Rooms** 14 **Tariff**  
 ₹3,200-4,700 **Facilities** Restaurant,  
 Internet

**Café Shillong Bed & Breakfast**

**Location** 31, Upper Lachumiere **Tel**  
 2501532 **Cell** 08974066089 **W**  
 cafeshillongbnb.com **Rooms** 7 **Tariff**  
 ₹2,900-5,700; TE (CP) **Facilities**  
 Meals on prior request, travel help,  
 Internet

**Dew Drop In**

**Location** Lumsohpoh, Upper  
 Lumparing **Tel** 2502292 **Cell**  
 09436384565 **Rooms** 5 **Tariff**  
 ₹2,000-2,500 **Facilities** Home-  
 cooked meals, attached bath, parking

**Eden Residency**

**Location** Modrina Bhavan, Police

Bazaar **Tel** 2505358/ 60 **W**  
 edenresidency.com **Rooms** 16  
**Tariff** ₹1,500-2,500; TE **Facilities**  
 Restaurant, Internet

**Eldorado Guest House**

**Location** Jowai Road, Dhankheti,  
 Police Point **Tel** 2500132 **Cell**  
 07085490515 **Rooms** 10 **Tariff**  
 ₹1,680-3,068 **Facilities** Restaurant,  
 Internet, parking

**Elgin Hotel**

**Location** MTC Bldg, Near Vishal  
 Megamart, Jail road, Near Police  
 Bazaar **Tel** 2504502, **Cell**  
 09089063138 **Rooms** 57, dorm 1  
**Tariff** ₹700-1,800, dorm ₹2,200 (7  
 beds) **Facilities** Restaurant

**Hill Top Chateau**

**Location** Riat Laban, Knyat  
 Phutbol, Lumparing **Cell**  
 09862201461, 06009804126  
**Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,600-2,000  
**Facilities** Meals on prior request,  
 parking

**Hotel Alpine Continental**

**Location** Near Police Bazaar,  
 Thana/ Quinton Road **Tel** 2220991,  
 2223617 **Cell** 09863064891  
**W** alpinecontinental.com  
**Rooms** 42 **Tariff** ₹4,900-6,900;  
 TE **Facilities** Restaurant,  
 bar, parking

### Hotel Blue Mount NX-1

**Location** Mawdiangdiang, Near Neigrihms Hospital **Cell** 08259062502, 08259072502, 08415080558 **Rooms** 27 **Tariff** ₹1,650-2,750; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, travel help, Internet, room service

### Hotel Gateway Shillong

**Location** Keating Road, Police Bazaar **Cell** 06009237471, 08876807490 **W** gatewayshillong.com **Rooms** 30 **Tariff** ₹4,500-7,490; TE (CP) **Facilities** Restaurant, spa

### Hotel Indiana

**Location** Police Bazaar **Tel** 2223268 **Cell** 08415900723 **Rooms** 23 **Tariff** ₹2,000-3,500; TE (CP) **Facilities** Restaurant, TV

### Hotel JK International

**Location** Jail Road, Police Bazaar **Tel** 2501588 **Cell** 09862457675 **Rooms** 17 **Tariff** ₹1,500-3,300; TE **Facilities** Internet, TV

### Hotel Knight Inn

**Location** KC Complex, Near SBI, Demseiniong **Tel** 2504289 **Cell** 09402594025 **Rooms** 25 **Tariff** ₹2,500-4,500 (CP) **Facilities** Restaurant, Internet, room service

### Hotel Lake View Inn

**Location** Opp SBI, MG Road **Tel** 2210128-30 **W** lakeviewinnshillong.com **Rooms** 14 **Tariff** ₹2,240-2,800 **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, Internet, room service, TV, parking

### Hotel Pine Borough

**Location** Khyndailad Road, Police Bazaar **Tel** 2220698, 2227523 **Cell** 09863063386 **W** hotelpineborough.com **Rooms** 25 **Tariff** ₹2,000-4,000 **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, room service **Note:** only 14 rooms operational out of 25

### Hotel Pinewood

**Location** Rita Road, European Ward **Tel** 2223116/ 46, 2223263 **W** meg tourism.gov.nic.in **Rooms** 40 **Tariff** ₹4,256-11,800 **Facilities** Restaurant, Bar, Coffee Shop, Gym, Parking

### Hotel Poinisuk

**Location** Laitumkhrah Main Road **Tel** 7100030 **Cell** 08794726831 **W** hotelpoinisuk.com **Rooms** 30 **Tariff** ₹4,928-7,840 **Facilities** Restaurant, parking

### Hotel Polo Towers

**Location** Auckland Road, Polo Grounds **Tel** 2222341-42 **Cell** 09856000555 **W** hotelpolotowers.com

**Rooms** 50 **Tariff** ₹6,950-17,999; **TE**  
**Facilities** Restaurants, bar, spa, gym, parking

### Hotel Sapphire

**Location** Police Bazaar, Keating Road **Tel** 2504933 (NIE), 2504949 **Cell** 08257008528

**Rooms** 27 **Tariff** ₹3,360-6,272+ breakfast **Facilities** Restaurant, Internet, parking

### Kaizun Bed and Breakfast

**Location** Lower Lachumiere **Tel** 7960107 **Cell** 08794664730,

[www.kaizun.co](http://www.kaizun.co) **Rooms** 7  
**Tariff** ₹4,250-5,539 **Facilities** Basic accommodation, parking

### Lachumiere House

**Location** Upper Lachumiere, Opp Kummrah Limestone Ltd **Cell** 098622 55980, 09535146234

**Rooms** 8 **Tariff** ₹3,500-5,000  
**Facilities** Meals on prior request, TV, parking

### Lady Bird Hotel

**Location** Umsohsun Road, Police Bazaar **Tel** 2505757 **Cell** 070850 61137 [www.ladybirdhotel.com](http://www.ladybirdhotel.com) **Rooms** 17 **Tariff** ₹3,776-6,490 **Facilities** Restaurant, TV

### Meera Holiday Villa

**Location** Mawiong Umjapung, Near

Mawiang Catholic Church **Cell** 08974508648, 08974509627 [www.meeraholidayvilla.in](http://www.meeraholidayvilla.in) **Rooms** 11 **Tariff** ₹1,300-2,200; **TE**

**Facilities** Restaurant, travel help, parking

### Orange Homestay

**Location** H No. 15, Laitkor Rngi, Shillong-Jowai Road **Cell** 070052 08055 **Rooms** 15 **Tariff** ₹3,300-4,000; **TE** **Facilities**

Meals on prior request, Internet, parking

### Pine Hill Homestay

**Location** Lovely Residence, Mawnianglah, 7th Mile, Upper Shillong **Cell** 09856698793, 07005101103 [www.pinehillhomestay.in](http://www.pinehillhomestay.in)

**Rooms** 12 **Tariff** ₹2,000-7,000  
**Facilities** Restaurant, parking

### Rock Cliff Homestay

**Location** Malki, Dhanketi 2504548 **Cell** 09089672393, 08787620984

**Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹4,130 **Facilities** Meals on prior request, dining area, Internet, parking

### Rosaville Guest House

**Location** Upper Nongthymmai **Tel** 2231248 **Cell** 09436110180 [www.rosaville.in](http://www.rosaville.in)

**Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹3,500-5,500; **TE** + breakfast **Facilities** Restaurant, Internet, parking

**Sha Ri Loum**

**Location** Mawlai Umshing, Near San-Ker Nursing Home **Cell** 09830466810, 090514 15666,

**Rooms 4 Tariff** ₹3,000-3,500

**Facilities** Home-cooked meals, Internet, airport/ rail transfers, arrange tours, TV, parking

**Shillong Club**

**Location** Kachari Road **Tel** 2225497, 2226938 **Rooms** 17, suite cottages 4 **Tariff** ₹3,360-5,000 **Facilities** Restaurant, Internet, room service, parking

**Silver Brook**

**Location** Myllem Marbaniang, Upper Shillong **Cell** 08413022368, 06009618977 **Rooms** 11, dorm 1 (8 beds), 1 hostel backpackers (13 beds) **Tariff** ₹2,500-3,000, dorms ₹750/person; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, parking

**Stay Inn Guest House**

**Location** Keating Road **Tel** 2223965, 2504396 **Rooms** 10 **Tariff** ₹1,500-4,000 **Facilities** Basic accommodation only, parking

**Sunrise Guest House**

**Location** Inverneil Road, Kench's Trace, Laban **Tel** 2503337 (invalid) **Cell** 08974828037 (SO), 09615563881 (SO), 09863062682 **W**

sunriseguesthouseshillong.com

**Rooms 7 Tariff** ₹2,576-3,540

**Facilities** Kitchen, Internet, room service

**The Centre Point**

**Location** Police Bazaar (Khyndailad) **Tel** 2220480/ 272, 2229839, 2225210, 2504006 **Cell** 08575016903 **W** shillongcentre point.com **Rooms** 31 **Tariff** ₹5,800-7,450; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, Internet, parking

**The Eee Cee Hotel**

**Location** Khyndailad **Tel** 2500188, 2500258 **Cell** 09206043888 **W** ecshillong.com **Rooms** 20 **Tariff** ₹2,240-4,720 **Facilities** Restaurant, TV

**The Habitat**

**Location** Lady Veronica Lane, Laitumkhrah **Tel** 2222892 **Cell** 08575024861, 07641805528 **W** asianconfluence.org **Rooms** 15 **Tariff** ₹4,500-9,500; TE **Facilities** Meals on request, library, Internet, parking

**The Heritage Club – Tripura Castle**

**Location** Clive Colony, Tripura Castle Road **Tel** 2505703, 2501111/49 **Cell** 07085055635/36 **W** tripuracastle.com **Rooms** 28 **Tariff** ₹7,000-12,500; TE **Facilities**

Restaurants, bar, coffee shop, snooker, travel help, room service, TV

### The Majestic Hotel

**Location** Me-ba-ai Plaza, Polo Market **Tel** 2506597-99 **W** majesticmonsoonshillong.com **Rooms** 14

**Tariff** ₹4,366-5,487 **Facilities** Restaurant, gym, Internet, parking, hot water, TV

### The Pear Tree

**Location** Lower Lachumiere, Near Village Khadi Board **Tel** 2504441 **Cell** 09862181977 **W** thepeartreeshillong.com **Rooms** 6 **Tariff** ₹4,543-5,200

**Facilities** Lounge, Meals on prior order, Internet, parking

### The Shillong Hills Guest House

**Location** Upper New Colony, Laitumkhrah **Cell** 09863274004, 08415076246 **Rooms** 8 **Tariff** ₹2,464-3,540 **Facilities** Meals on prior request, travel help, parking

### Home Away Home

**Location** Near The Fire Brigade, Backside Pantloon **Cell** 09612469604, 07005718893 **Rooms** 7 **Tariff** ₹1,500-3,500; TE +breakfast **Facilities** kitchen, room service, attached bath, parking

### Woodland Hill Stay

**Location** 15, Upper Lachumiere **Tel**

2228690, 2223991 **Cell** 08794048269, 09089675321 **W** woodlandhillstay.com **Rooms** 8 **Tariff** ₹3,172-4,687 **Facilities** Home-cooked meals, parking, travel help, Internet, room service, TV

### Xanadu – The Abode

**Location** Tripura Castle Road, Cleve Colony **Cell** 09863063802, 08638272717 **Rooms** 1 studio apartment, 2BHK **Tariff** ₹3,850-4,200 +breakfast **Facilities** Fully-equipped kitchenette, TV, parking

### IN RI BHOI

#### Ri Kanaan Guest House

**Location** Barapani, Umeit Village, Umroi Airport Road **Cell** 06009363181, 08794784094 **W** rikanaanresort.com **Rooms** 12 **Tariff** ₹2,500-5,000; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, travel help, room service, TV

#### Ri Kynjai – Serenity by the Lake

**Location** Umniuh Khwan, UCC Road, Ri Bhoi **Cell** 09862420300/ 01 **W** rikynjai.com **Rooms** 17 **Tariff** ₹9,500-14,500; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, spa, travel help, TV, parking

#### Star Valley Guest House

**Location** 13th Mile, Byenihat **Cell** 09856823338, 09774322598 **Rooms**

10 **Tariff** ₹1,540-2,530+breakfast  
**Facilities** Restaurant, bar, room service, parking

### Sunshine Farms & Resort

**Location** Nonglakhait, Near Bhoi Rymbong **Cell** 08787451099, 09856078903 **Rooms** 1 villa (3 rooms), 1 cottage (1 room), 4 tents **Tariff** ₹2,500-7,000, tents ₹1,000; TE **Facilities** Meals arranged on prior request, you can cook your own meals, swimming pool, arrange picnic, boating, fishing, travel help, parking

### Umden Traveller's Nest

**Location** Umiaphati, Umden Village, Ri Bhoi Dist **Cell** 09862630041 [W](#) villagegetaways.in **Rooms** 2 cottages **Tariff** ₹2,000 **Facilities** Meals provided, kayaking, heritage walks, silk tours Contact Meghalaya Village Tourism Promotion & Development Co-Op Soc Ltd (MVTDCS) **Tel** 0364-2505248 **Cell** 08415935101

### ON UMIAM LAKE

#### Orchid Lake Resort

**Location** Umiam, Ri Bhoi Dist **Tel** 2570258 [W](#) megtourism.gov.in **Rooms** 15 **Tariff** ₹3,000-4,500; TE +breakfast **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, water sports, parking

### KUDENGRIM - WEST JAINTIA HILLS

#### JOWAI STD 03652

#### Highwinds Lakeside Hotel

**Location** Thadlaskein, Mukla **Cell** 08794714215, [W](#) highwindslakeside.wtsg.in, vresorts.in **Rooms** 9 **Tariff** ₹2,800-7,840 +breakfast **Facilities** Restaurant, trekking, parking Noida Reservations **Tel** 0120-4004800

#### Orchid Inn

**Location** Thadlaskein **Cell** 09856003662, 09863600078 **Rooms** 10 **Tariff** ₹2,072-3,540 **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, parking

#### Tyrchi Inn

**Location** Near Orchid Inn, Thadlaskein, Khliehtyruchi **Cell** 07629909655, 07629909755 [W](#) mrk3tyrchiinn.wtsg.in **Rooms** 11 **Tariff** ₹2,000-3,350 **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, parking

### UMNGOT RIVERFRONT

#### DAWKI STD 03653

Bright Star Camps and Homestay **Location** Shnongpdeng Village **Cell** 08974227204, 08787318215 **Rooms** 4, tents 10 **Tariff** ₹1,500-2,000, tents ₹800 **Facilities** Meals on prior order, adventure activities, parking

#### Halatong Tourist Homestay

**Location** Shnongpdeng Village **Cell** 08731096536, 09366067043 **Rooms**

**3 Tariff ₹1,000-1,500 Facilities**

Basic accommodation

**Lamin Guest House****Location** Dawki Internal Road**Cell** 08787595539, 09366203552**Rooms** 11 **Tariff** ₹2,000-5,000**Facilities** Meals on order, parking**Pioneer Adventure Tour****Location** Shnongpdeng Village 

pioneeradventuretour.com

**Rooms** 20-25 tents **Tariff** ₹3,000 perperson, with meals **Facilities** Dining

area, scuba diving, ziplining,

kayaking, snorkelling, common

bath **Parking** Reservations**Cell** 09856006437, 09049442647,


08787840554

**Shatsngi Homestay & Adventure****Location** Shnongpdeng Village**Cell** 09612089521 **Rooms** 3, tents40 **Tariff** ₹1,500-2,500, tents

₹1,800/ person, with meals

**Facilities** Dining area,

trekking, boating

**Shnongpdeng Escapades****Location** Shnongpdeng Village**Cell** 08787595539  shnongpdengescapades.com **Rooms** 15 tents**Tariff** ₹1,000/person, with vegmeals **Facilities** Dining area,

kayaking, snorkelling, ziplining,

trekking, common bath

**EAST KHASI HILLS****MAWLYNNONG STD 0364****Er-Batemon Homestay****Location** Near Petrol

Pump, Pynursla

**Cell** 09612768010 **Tariff**₹2,000-2,500 **Rooms** 4**Facilities** Kitchen, room service,  
attached toilet, parking**Ha La Tyngkong****Location** Mawlynnong Village**Cell** 08974535288 **Rooms** 4**Tariff** ₹2,200-3,000 **Facilities**

Restaurant, attached bath

**Harud Wahduid Brookside****Location** Mawlynnong Village**Cell** 08575440446, 09383304565**Rooms** 2 **Tariff** ₹1,500-1,**Facilities** Kitchen, Internet,  
parking**Hill Side Cottage & Restaurant****Location** Siatvakon Village**Cell** 09612207005, 08787523443,08652225785 **Rooms** 4 **Tariff**₹1,000 **Facilities** Restaurant,  
attached bath, parking**I La Jong Guest House****Location** Mawlynnong Village**Cell** 09615043027, 08837088134**Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,500-2,500**Facilities** Room service, Village  
tour on request, parking



**Mawlynnong Guest House**

**Location** Behind the Church  
**Tel** 2502420 **Cell** 09366075185  
 (SO), 08014939642 **Rooms** 2  
**Tariff** ₹3,000 **Facilities** Basic  
 accommodation

**Meghalaya Village Mawlynnong  
Bamboo Cottage**

**Location** Mawlynnong Village  
**Cell** 08652225785 **Rooms** 2  
**Tariff** ₹1, **Facilities** Lodging only,  
 attached bath

**Nongroi Homestay**

**Location** Mawlynnong Village  
**Cell** 08652225785 **Rooms** 4  
**Tariff** ₹850 **Facilities** Lodging  
 only, common bath

**Sah Pyngngad**

**Location** Mawlynnong Village  
**Cell** 09615724352 **Rooms** 1 **Tariff**  
 ₹2,000 **Facilities** Lodging only

**Safi Tourist Cottage**

**Location** Mawlynnong Village  
**Cell** 08652225785 **Rooms** 2 **Tariff**  
 ₹1,600 **Facilities** Lodging

**MAWSYNRAM STD 03637**

Emily & Sankrita's Homestay  
**Location** Mawsynram **Cell** 087940  
 84303 **Rooms** 1 **Tariff** ₹1,500  
**Facilities** Meals on request,  
 guide, attached bath

**IN MAWLYNGBNA STD 03637****Mawlyngbna Traveller's Nest**

**Location** Lawbah **W**  
 villagegetaways.in **Rooms** 2  
 cottages, tents (about 30 pax) **Tariff**  
 ₹2,000, tents ₹800 per tent **Facilities**  
 Meals provided, trekking, kayaking,  
 camping, parking **Reservations**  
 Meghalaya Village Tourism Promotion  
 & Development Co-Op Society Ltd  
 (MVPDCS) **Tel** 0364-2505248 **Cell**  
 07005362102, 06033174818,  
 08837046925, 09615937271,  
 08258836484

**SOHRA STD 03637****7 Sisters Falls View Inn**

**Location** Mawblang-Mawsmal Gate,  
 Lower Sohra **Cell** 07085905227,  
 09862542945, 09971481213 **W**  
 7sistersfallsviewinn.com **Rooms** 14  
**Tariff** ₹1,600-6,000 **Facilities**  
 Restaurant, room service, parking

**Avron Restaurant & Lodging**

**Location** Opp Sohra Police Station,  
 Saitsohpen **Cell** 08794713223  
**Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,500-2,000  
**Facilities** Restaurant

**Breiancy Holiday Inn**

**Location** Malwmluh Village, Sohra  
 -Shella Road **Cell** 09615093898,  
 08731067474 **Rooms** 4 **Tariff**  
 ₹2,500-3,000 **Facilities** kitchen,  
 dining, bonfire, parking

**Cherrapunjee Holiday Resort****Location** Village Laitkynsew  
**Cell** 08794803833, 09615338500**W** cherrapunjee.com **Rooms** 12**Tariff** ₹5,000-6,500 breakfast n dinner **Facilities** Restaurant, adventure caving, trekking, river canyon, cycle on hire, live music concert, morning walk, natural pool, parking**Coniferous Resort****Location** Lower Sohra, East Khasi Hills **Cell** 08787886787, 09436178164, 07005868234 **W** coniferousresort.com**Rooms** 17 **Tariff** ₹2,000-4,500; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, room service, parking**Cordial Lodge****Location** Near Seven Sisters Falls, Mawsmat **Cell** 07085312737**W** cordiallodge.com **Rooms** 20**Tariff** ₹2,240-5,400 **Facilities** Restaurant, swimming pool, parking**D Cloud Guest House****Location** Sohra Shella Road **Cell** 09856181358, 07642834434 **W** cherrapunjee.in**Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹750-1,500 **Facilities** Kitchen, Khasi meals on request, trekking, adventure camping on request, caving, travel help, parking**Four Seasons Eco Resort****Location** Near Eco Park, Nongthymmai, Lower Sohra **Cell** 07628071725, 08575937759, **Rooms** 10 **Tariff** ₹1,500-2,500 **Facilities** Meals on prior request, parking**Green Valley Lodge****Location** Near Petrol Pump, Lower Sohra **Cell** 08257035482  
**Rooms** 4 **Tariff** ₹1,200-2,000  
**Facilities** Basic accommodation**Hiraba Homestay****Location** Mawkisyiem, Lower Sohra **Cell** 08259967944, 09774911843  
**Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹1,300-1,800  
**Facilities** Meals on prior request, travel help, parking**Jiva Resort****Location** Saitsohpen, Near Kutmadan **Cell** 07005641210, 07085177777 **W** jiva resortcherrapunjee.com **Rooms** 10  
**Tariff** ₹7,000-15,000; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, gym, indoor games, parking**Kor Shongthait Homestay****Location** Mawpun Kyrting, Lower Sohra **Cell** 09863546166, 08787454095, 08014147302 **W** korshongthait.com **Rooms** 5, dorm 1(15 beds) **Tariff** ₹2,000-2,500, dorm ₹500/bed **Facilities**

Basic accommodation,  
room service, parking

### Kutmadan Resort

**Location** Wahsgari, Khliehshnong  
**Cell** 08134966251, 07308565245,  
08014859700, 08730945471 f  
facebook.com/kutmadanresort  
**Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹3,540-5,310  
**Facilities** Restaurant, travel help,  
parking

### La Kupar Inn

**Location** Saitsohpen Village, Sohra  
Shella Road, Lower Sohra **Cell**  
09615093898, 08731067474 W  
lakuparinn.com **Rooms** 8 **Tariff**  
₹2,492 **Facilities** Kitchen, recreation  
area, trekking arranged, bonfire,  
Internet, parking

### Mawsmi Nongthymmai Eco Park

**Location** Mawsmi Eco Park **Cell**  
08974189130 W villagegetaways.in  
**Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹2,000-3,000  
**Facilities** Meals provided,  
sightseeing, parking  
Reservations MVTPDCS **Tel** 0364-  
2505248

### MK Sevenstar

**Location** Mawpunkyrtiang, Sohra  
Shella Road, Lower Sohra **Cell**  
09856024203, 07627952451 **Rooms**  
9 (Standard) **Tariff** ₹1,400-3,000  
**Facilities** Restaurant, parking

### Pala Resort

**Location** Opp Kutmadan **Cell**  
08974010141, 07085266231 W  
palaresort.co.in **Rooms** 9 cottages, 2  
family **rooms**, 4 dorms **Tariff** ₹5,841-  
12,800, dorm ₹3,200-6,500 **Facilities**  
Restaurant, trekking, ziplining,  
fishing, parking

### Pateng Homestay

**Location** Khliehshnong **Cell**  
09774485910, 09612180235 **Rooms**  
4 **Tariff** ₹1,200-1,800 **Facilities**  
Meals on prior request, parking

### Polo Orchid Resort

**Location** Mawsmi-Nongthymmai  
**Cell** 09836173332, 09856000222,  
09362706946, 08794701636/ 37 W  
polocherra punjee.com **Rooms** 5,  
cottages 12, log huts 4, villas 2 **Tariff**  
₹7,999-19,999, with two meals  
**Facilities** Restaurant, café, trekking,  
heritage walks, parking

### R-Ki-Ni Homestay

**Location** Pynshad Khurai **Cell**  
08794499816 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff**  
₹1,500-2,000 **Facilities** Meals on  
request, can cook your own meals

### Sa-I-Mika Resort

**Location** PO Wahshari, Khlieh-  
shnong **Cell** 09862221718 W  
saimika.in **Rooms** 22 (cottages), 4  
tents **Tariff** ₹2,800-5,000, tents

₹1,500 **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, swimming pool, childrens park, stream/valley view  
 Note: camping with own tents allowed (₹500-sgl/₹1,000-dbl for pitching) parking

### Sohra View Lodge

**Location** Arwah-Lumshynna Tourist Hub **Cell** 07640930562, 09863104341 f facebook.com/sohraviewlodge **Rooms** 4 **Tariff** ₹800 **Facilities** Meals on request, attached bath, parking

### The Crescent Hotel

**Location** Sohra Market, Khliehshnong **Cell** 07085095060, 08258020444

**W** crescenthotelcherrapunji.com

**Rooms** 11 **Tariff** ₹2,000-2,800; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, room service, parking

## WEST KHASI HILLS

### NONGSTOIN STD 03654

### Nongstoin Guest House

**Location** Nongstoin **Cell** 09436307399, 08119095679 **Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹1,000-2,000 **Facilities** Food on request, attached bath, parking

### Nongknum River Island Guest House

**Location** Nongknum Island (15 km from Nongstoin) **Rooms** 4 cottages

**Tariff** ₹2,500/per cottage (4-8 pax)  
**Facilities** Kitchen, food on request, dining hall, trekking, attached bath

## SOUTH GARO HILLS

### WILLIAMNAGAR STD 03658

### Williamnagar Tourist Lodge

**Location** Williamnagar **Cell** 08414932985, 09366419750 **Rooms** 7 **Tariff** ₹1,800-2,800; TE **Facilities** Meals on request, TV, Parking

### IN BAGHMARA STD 03639

### Baghmara Guest House

**Location** Baghmara **Cell** 09436998841 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,000 per bed **Facilities** Cook, provisions to be provided

### Baghmara Tourist Lodge

**Location** RC Compound, Disla Abri Baghmara, South Garo hills **Cell** 08131869166/08787625756 **Rooms** 5 **Tariff** ₹900-2,000, dorm ₹300/person

**Facilities** Lodging, attached bath, room service, parking

### Bakdil Training Centre - Guest House

**Location** Near Baghmara Bazar **Cell** 06909240223 **Cell** 06909240223, 09402393326 **Rooms** 3, dorms 2 (8 pax) **Tariff** ₹800, dorm ₹250-300 /person **Facilities** Kitchen, local food

prepared, dining hall, Water/fan available, small inverters for emergency charging, parking

### Circuit House

**Location** City Centre, Near Simsang Bridge **Cell** 08787658479 **Rooms** 4 **Tariff** ₹300 **Facilities** Cook, provisions to be provided, attached bath, parking

### Krima Guest House Baghmara

**Location** Near Rompha Bridge, Baghmara **Cell** 07005764063, 06909056847 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹200/person **Facilities** Lodging only, No attached bathroom, parking

### Karawani Homestay

**Location** Reswerve Gittim, Baghmara **Cell** 08414866682, 08787641250, 08415099951 (Karawani Eco-Tourism) **Rooms** 2 **Tariff** ₹750/bed **Facilities** Food arranged, no attached bathroom, dining room/room service

### Mondoli Guest House

**Location** Near Petrol Pump **Cell** 09436986210, 09089819950 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹250-500 **Facilities** lodging

### Sarangdu Home Stay

**Location** Balsri Gittim, Baghmara **Cell** 08414061746, 07005663122 **Rooms** 1 **Tariff** ₹800 **Facilities** Food

arranged, room service/dining hall, parking, no attached bathrooms

### IN BALPAKRAM NP STD 03639

#### Hatisia Inspection Bungalow

**Location** Near NP Gate **Cell** 07085448676 **Rooms** 4 **Tariff** ₹1,000 per bed **Facilities** Kitchen, cook, provisions to be provided

#### Hatisia Dormitory

**Location** Near NP Gate **Cell** 07085448676 **Rooms** 2 dorms (for 50 people with own beddings) **Tariff** ₹100 per person **Facilities** Cook, provisions/ beddings to be arranged

#### Rompa Inspection Bungalow

**Location** Near NP Gate **Cell** 07085448676 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,000 per bed **Facilities** Kitchen, cook, provisions to be provided

### IN SIJU

#### Siju Wildlife Inspection Bungalow

**Location** Near Siju Caves **Cell** 07085448676 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,000 per bed **Facilities** Kitchen, cook, provisions to be provided n

#### Siju Tourist Lodge

**Location** Near Siju Cave, South Garo Hills **Cell** 08837233566, 07005887305 **Rooms** 7 **Tariff** ₹750-1,000, dorm ₹200/person **Facilities** Restaurant

**NOKREK NATIONAL PARK****TURA STD 0365 I****Balpakram Homestay**

**Location** Dakkopgre-Danakgre Road  
**Cell** 09436114459 **Rooms** 4 **Tariff** ₹1,600-2,000 **Facilities** Kitchen, room service, TV

**Bliss Homestay**

**Location** Bonepa Atilla **Cell** 09862475197, 09436112508 **Rooms** 3 **Tariff** ₹1,500-3,500 **Facilities** Kitchen, meals on request, Internet, travel help, TV

**Daribokgre Homestay**

**Location** Daribokgre, Nokrek **Cell** 08974842249, 08837468997, 09334674652 **Rooms** 6 traditional cottages **Tariff** ₹800-1,500 **Facilities** Kitchen, attached bath

**Hotel Polo Orchid**

**Location** Opp Central School, Araimile **Tel** 232082 **Cell** 09319536891 **W** hotelpolotowers.com **Rooms** 11, suites 3 **Tariff** ₹3,999-6,999; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, Internet, TV, parking  
 Kolkata Reservation **Cell** 09123613804

**Hotel Rajkamal**

**Location** Fancy Valley Road **Tel** 222413 **Cell** 09774861103 **Rooms** 28 **Tariff** ₹800- 1,792 **Facilities** Kitchen, Internet, laundry, room service, TV, parking

**Hotel Rikman Continental**

**Location** Tura Circular Road **Tel** 220744-45 **Cell** 08256999788, 08257027095, 09856116711 **W** hotelrikman.com **Rooms** 36 **Tariff** ₹2,500-5,600; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, bar, Internet, TV

**The Village Amingokgre Resort**

**Location** Tura-Phulbari Road, Rong-ram **Cell** 09436114459, 087873 34080 **Rooms** 6 **Tariff** ₹2,000-3,000 **Facilities** Kitchen (local food), swimming pool, parking

**Tree House (Hotel Rikman Continental)**

**Location** Burney Hills **Tel** 220744-45 **Cell** 08256999788, 08257027095, 09856116711 **W** treehousetura.com **Rooms** 8 **Tariff** ₹2,600; TE **Facilities** Restaurant, swimming pool, room service, hot & cold water, parking

**Disclaimer** Only a representative listing of hotels in each area has been given. Tariff indicates the approx range (lowest to highest) of the rates prevailing at the time of going to press. Some hotels offer day rates only. The listings given here should not be construed as recommendations by the publisher

## TRANSPORT DIRECTORY

### AIR

Since Umroi Airport in Shillong (the only airport in the state) is basically connected to Kolkata only, visitors to Meghalaya would be well served by using Assam's Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati, which has a better network of airlines connecting the metros and many big cities in India

#### SHILLONG AIRPORT

Airports Authority of India  
Umroi, Barapani

**Cell** 09436332580 (Director)

**Email** apdshillong@aai.aero

**W** aai.aero

Presently, Indigo Airlines operate flights from Kolkata, Silchar, Agartala and Imphal

#### AIRLINE OFFICE

### INDIGO AIRLINES

Customer Care **Tel** 0124-6173838,  
4973838

**W** goindigo.in

#### AIRPORT TRANSFERS

The airport is 35km from Shillong city. Taxis, though few in number, are available at the airport. You could also request your hotel for a pick up. Sheba Travels (Cell: 09774168137) arranges transfers

from Umroi as well as Guwahati airport. They also organise sightseeing tours. You can get a Meghalaya Transport Corporation (MTC) bus up to the MTC Station, Police Bazaar, Shillong

#### GUWAHATI AIRPORT

Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi  
International Airport

**Tel** 0361-2841909 **W** aai.aero

LGB International Airport is connected with New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Agartala, Aizawl, Dimapur, Imphal, Bagdogra, as well as 'in-state' airports at Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Silchar and Lilabari. It is serviced by Air India, Air Asia, Go First, Vistara and SpiceJet. Prepaid taxi services available

#### AIRLINE OFFICES

### AIR ASIA

Customer Care

**Tel:** 080-46662222, 67662222

**W** airasia.com

### AIR INDIA

Customer Care

**Tel:** 0124-2641407, 020-26231407

**W** airindia.in

### GO FIRST

Toll free No. 18602100999

**Tel** 022-68968300

**W** flygofirst.com

**INDIGO**

Customer Care

**Tel:** 0124-6613838, 4973838**W** goindigo.in**SPICE JET**

Customer Care

**Tel:** 0124-4983410, 7101600**W** spicejet.com**VISTARA**

Customer Care

**Cell:** 09289228888 **W** airvistara.com**AIRPORT TRANSFERS**

Prepaid and private taxi services are available to get to Shillong Police Bazaar - ₹3,000 (Non-AC), ₹3,500 (AC), minimum 80km

**HELICOPTER SERVICES**

Helicopter Services are available from Guwahati to Shillong and Tura. It takes 20 minutes to reach Tura from Shillong (Fare ₹1,900) and one hour from Guwahati to Tura (Fare ₹1,700). This makes it the most economical and convenient way to get to Tura (Fares are correct **Cell** 09859021473 - but they are not operating now)

For Bookings:

IMeghalaya Helicopter Service  
MTC Bus Stand  
Police Bazaar  
Shillong

IMeghalaya Helicopter Service  
Guwahati International

Airport, Guwahati

**W** megtransport.gov.in**RAIL**

Enquiry 139

Online information and reservations

**W** indianrail.gov.in, irctc.co.in

Nearest railhead Guwahati Junction is connected to major cities in the northeast such as Dibrugarh and Dimapur. It has good connections to major metros and cities in India including Bengaluru, Chennai, New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Patna, Thiruvananthapuram and Allahabad

**ROAD**

Shillong, the state capital, is well connected by a network of national highways and state roads with all important cities within the state and the neighbouring states and major cities in the country  
Unmetered yellow taxis and city buses are the best means to travel within the city. Tourist taxis/ Sumos are available for local as well as for long distance trips

**BUS**

Meghalaya Transport Corporation (MTC) and private transport operators offer deluxe and ordinary bus services to various cities in Meghalaya and to the neighbouring state capitals and



important towns. Assam State Transport Corporation also operates bus services from Guwahati to Shillong and back

#### MTC BUS SERVICE

Police Bazaar, Shillong

**Tel:** 0364-2222864 (unable to connect - couldn't verify)

Online Bus Bookings

[W mtc.nic.in](http://mtc.nic.in)

#### SHILLONG RADIO CABS/ CAR RENTALS

##### Auto Rides

**Location** 109, Hill Crest, Madan Laban, Laban **Cell** 08729949548; 08588068965

Services Car and bikes on rent Destination Meghalaya

##### Hiring Tourist Taxi

**Location** Khasi Hills Tourist Taxi Stand, Police Bazaar  
**Cell** 09863023694

##### NE Taxi

**Cell** 07872929029 [W ne.cab](http://ne.cab)

##### Purple Cab Tourist Taxi Service

**Location** Nongmensong  
**Cell** 08974593104 Destinations Shillong, Sohra, Dawki,

Mawlynnong, Mawsynram

##### Shillong Travel Taxi

**Location** 88-B, Quinton Road, Police Bazaar Area **Cell** 09863072266, 07005488522

[W shillongtraveltaxi.in](http://shillongtraveltaxi.in)

#### GUWAHATI- RADIO CABS/ CAR RENTALS

##### Awe Rides

**Cell** 09854005002 [W awerides.com](http://awerides.com)

##### Services Self drive cars & bikes

##### Guwahati Tours & Travels

**Cell** 09435016833, 09207102217

[W iguwahati.com](http://iguwahati.com) Services Car rentals Destinations Northeast (except Sikkim)

##### Mytaxi

**Tel** 0361-2228888 [W mytaxitrip.com](http://mytaxitrip.com)

##### Panda Rides

**Cell** 07896616309 Services Cars and bikes on rent Destinations Northeast

#### NATIONAL HIGHWAYS

Meghalaya has a good network of national and state highways. Major national highways in the state include:

NH6 Assam border - Jorabat - Nongpoh - Shillong - Sohryngkham - Moodymmai - Ummulong - Thadlaskein Lake - New Lawmusiang - Jowai - Lumshnong - Umkiang - Assam border  
NH106 Nongstoin - Mairang - Shillong  
NH206 Shillong - Myllem - Laitlyngkot - Langkyrdem - Pynursta - Pontung - Wakhdait - Dawki - Jowai  
NH217 Assam border - Rangram - Tura - Dalu - Domdoma - Baghmara - Siju - Rongjeng - Damra - NH17 near Dudhnai

# Photo Credits

## Front Cover

### **SHUTTERSTOCK**

A centuries-old double-decker living root bridge near Nongriat village

## Inside the Book

### **AHTUSHI DESHPANDE**

Page 38. One of Sohra's many mesmerising waterfalls in full glory

### **SANDIPAN CHATTERJEE**

Page 116. View of West Garo Hills from Siju

Page 120. Entrance to Siju eco-camp at South Garo Hills

### **SHUTTERSTOCK**

Page 12-13. Come home to 'Mistical', Magical Meghalaya

Page 14. Highway from Guwahati to Shillong passing by the lovely Umiam Lake

Page 20. Shillong- once served as garrison town and a summer retreat for the British

Page 42. The gorgeous vistas of Mawkdok Dympep Valley between Shillong and Sohra

Page 94. You will enjoy spectacular scenic views like these everywhere near Jowai

Page 98. The mesmerising beauty of Tyrshi Waterfall near Thadlaskein Lake

Page 102. Crystal-clear waters and pebble mosaic of the Umngot River

Page 108. Found only in the north-east, the endangered Hoolock Gibbon is India's only wild ape

### **SHREYA SARKAR**

Page 32. The climb up to Shillong Peak is a rewarding one for the stunning views

Page 56. Mawlynnong Village

Page 66. Khreng Khreng Falls viewpoint near Mawsynram

Page 86. Top tier of Kshaid Weinia Falls, Nongstoin

Page 90. The grand spectacle of Kshaid Weinia Falls

Page 110. Tura : An excellent base to find waterfalls, Hoolock gibbons and serene waterways

### **Courtesy: Meghalaya Tourism**

Page 80. Mawphlang Sacred Forest Nature's precious museum

# MEGHALAYA



With its swift flowing rivers, grand rapids and picturesque lakes. Meghalaya is a haven for adventure and water sports enthusiasts. Paddling down gushing rivers, with verdant hills and lush forests providing the idyllic backdrop, white water rafting and kayaking can be a thrilling experience in Meghalaya. Rivers like Rymben, Riwai, Umngot, Kynshi, Wah Blei, Umtrew and the serene Lake Umiam offer kayaking possibilities you would not want to forget. You will long to come back again, hit the waters and immerse yourself in excitement!

## DIRECTORATE OF TOURISM

3rd Secretariat Nokrek Building, Lower Lachumiere, Shillong-793001, Meghalaya, India

● Helpline no: +917640003050 ● Email: [meghtourism@gmail.com](mailto:meghtourism@gmail.com) ● Website: [www.meghalayatourism.in/](http://www.meghalayatourism.in/)

# meghalaya top ten

Your handy, user-friendly guide to Meghalaya's stunning topography, inspiring local traditions and unique living root bridges

Covering:

■ Shillong – Khasi Hills ■ Sohra – East Khasi Hills ■ Mawlynnong  
■ Mawsynram – East Khasi Hills ■ Mawphlang Sacred Forest  
■ West Khasi Hills ■ Kudengrim – West Jaintia Hills ■ Umngot  
Riverfront ■ Nokrek National Park ■ South Garo Hills

■ Discover spectacular waterfalls, fascinating cave systems and the forested hills of the state

■ Tourist attractions – their location, entry timings, ticket costs, contact details and other details

■ Information on hotels – including telephone numbers, tariff range and facilities (supplemented by a hotel listings section)

■ Recommendations on where to eat

■ Relevant STD codes, distances, tourist offices and more



*Cover Design*  
**Deepak Suri**