



Enveloped by towering hills on one side and scenic beaches on the other, this little-known destination is home to a diverse set of attractions that promise visitors a memorable holiday. Here's what the city of destiny has to offer you. Andhra is home to one of the most popular Hindu temples in Andhra - Simhachalam, several ancient Buddhist sites and Araku Valley – well known for its scenic beauty and coffee plantations. The city also hosts Visakha Utsav, a festival with food stalls on Ramakrishna Beach, exhibitions and cultural events annually. The city is a paradise for beach lovers as it is sprinkled with several beaches.

Ramakrishna Beach

You can step out for a stroll in the evening or the following morning during your stay at Palm Beach. Ramakrishna Beach gets its name from the Ramakrishna Mission ashram situated near the beach. The pedestrian promenade along Ramakrishna Beach is pleasant for a stroll, family outings, or to just sit back and enjoy the view. There are quite a few eateries along the beach side to keep your appetite full.

There are other attractions along this stretch, with INS Kursura Submarine Museum, an aquarium, the Kali temple, Visakha museum and VUDA park being the most popular ones.

Rushikonda Beach

With a backdrop of green hills, this beautiful beach is a quieter and cleaner alternative to Ramakrishna Beach. It's also a good stretch for swimming, and water sports such as wind surfing and jet skiing. There are pony rides on the beachfront in the morning and evening. The Yachting Association of Vizag organises sailing in the sea, and also conducts week-long courses on sailing for beginners. With a 30km enviable coastline, there are many options and they're not all for the mild-hearted. So get ready to feel that rush of adrenaline. Surrounded by seven hills, the 14th century Saptarusheswara Temple is also located in Rushikonda.

Yarada Beach

At a distance of 14 Kms from Vizag Railway Station, Yarada Beach is a calm and peaceful beach in the vicinity of Vizag. This beach offers a fabulous landscape with its exotic blend of golden sands and the lush green stretch of hills. Nestled between the hills on all the three sides and the Bay of Bengal on one side, this beach is an ideal spot for outing. Unlike RK Beach, this beach is not very commercialized.

Dolphin's Nose

One of Visakhapatnam's most beloved tourist spots, Dolphin's Nose, is truly a sight to behold. The name is derived from the shape of the large rock formation itself, which does resemble a dolphin's nose in profile when viewed from afar. A historic lighthouse sits atop the 'nose', which was once destroyed in 1876 due to a cyclone but has since been restored to full functionality, guiding ships at sea from distances as far as 65 kilometres. You should visit for the fantastic view!



Submarine Museum

You'll find the Submarine Museum standing prominently against the stunning backdrop of Ramakrishna beach. The first of its kind in all of South Asia, the INS (Indian Naval Service) Kursura Submarine was a Soviet built-I-641 class Submarine, which after 31 years of service was decommissioned and converted into a fascinating museum for the public. There are six guides and a curator to inform and educate visitors about the complex workings of the submarine, and the simple experience of being inside a sub is a thrilling novelty. Don't miss this one!

Timings: 1400hrs – 2100hrs (closed on Mondays)

Submarine Museum, RK Beach Rd, Panduranga Puram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh 530017

Tupolev Aircraft Museum

Among many tourist spots of Visakhapatnam, the TU-142M aircraft of Indian Navy which has been turned into a museum sees a throng of visitors, on a usual day. Located just opposite Submarine museum at RK Beach Road, the TU-142M Aircraft served the armed forces for 29 years before it was decommissioned and converted into a museum in 2017. Before entering the aircraft, one can see a display of various equipment and parts of aircraft placed inside one exhibition hall.

Timings: 1400hrs – 2100hrs (closed on Mondays)

Aircraft Museum, RK Beach Rd, Panduranga Puram, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh 530017

Bheemli / Bheemunipatnam

Located at the confluence of River Gosthani and the Bay of Bengal, this sleepy fishing town has a gorgeous beach. This sandy stretch is quiet and pristine, with a few restaurants and hotels. Also known as Bheemli, it is 32 kilometres away from Vishakhapatnam. It also has a rich cultural history. An important highlight is the 12th century Narasimha Swami temple, located on the Pavuralakonda hill, facing the sea. The temple is said to have been built around 14th century by Mindi Kings. Once a Dutch settlement, it is also dotted with the remains of a 17th century Dutch fort, beautiful old churches, a cemetery and a lighthouse. It is popularly known as Bheemli Beach. The views of the sea will surely mesmerise guests coming here, and sometimes the best thing one can do is to sit by it and listen to the sound of the rolling waves. There is a light house as well here, dating back to 1868. You will also find an old church that dates back to the 1850s, and is known as & the Red Church.

Thotlakonda (@Mangamaripeta Village)

Thotlakonda lies about 15 km. from Visakhapatnam in beach road located 128 meters high above sea level. Also known as 'the Hill of Eagles', the complex has a number of stupas, Chaityas, Viharas, a congregation hall and a refectory belonging to the Hinayana school, mostly excavated during 1982-92. These remains are classified as religious, secular and civil. Excavations at Thotlakonda comprise pottery, beads, bangle pieces, tiles, stuccos, iron objects, sculptural remains, moulded bricks, inscriptions, coins, etc. Mangamaripeta is a



village and has a beautiful water sport beach in Visakhapatnam, India. It is believed that the region was under the kingdom of Kalingas and later the beach was used to serve as the promotional centre of Buddhism.

Bavikonda is yet another Buddhist monastery complex situated on a hill, around 6km from Thotlakonda. Dated back to the third century, Bavikonda and Thotlakonda are marked as a heritage sites and efforts are being made to conserve this important piece of history. Stupas and brick architecture are prominent at these Buddhist sites.

Buddhist sites include Bojjannakonda, Bavikonda, Lingalakonda, Pavurallakonda, Salihundam, and Thotlakonda.

Erra Matti Dibbalu

On the Bay of Bengal coast, to the south of the Bheemunipatnam ridge, is an area comprising deeply gullied red sand dunes of around 4 km length and 2 km width. They are unique because of the rarity of such gullied red dunes formations of which only three remain in South East Asia. These were formed over thousands of years. This area is referred in Telugu as "Erra Matti Dibbalu" which translates to 'Red Sand Hills'. A notified National Geo-heritage Monument, it is situated at the outskirts of Visakhapatnam City.

The red colour of the dunes is due to the "ferrugination" of the "haematite" (the principal form of iron ore; consisting of ferric oxide in crystalline form). Ferrugination describes the action of iron coating the loose sand grains with iron rich material and getting oxidized over a period of time. By no means is this explanation of the process that caused the red hills definitive. There are other schools of thought by different geologists and the site still draws geological interest. That is why it is even more important that these dunes be preserved in its original form for future generations to admire and study.

Kailasagiri

Kailasagiri is a hill top park in the city of Vishakhapatnam. The hill is at 360 feet and it overlooks beaches, forests & the city of Vishakhapatnam. It is one of the best tourist spots in the city for a bird's eye view of the bay. The Kailasagiri Park is well known for its panoramic view, peaceful atmosphere and its scenic beauty, making it a beautiful tourist attraction in Vishakhapatnam. The place offers plenty of leisure activities which is also one of the reasons for people visiting the place. For small children, circular train is there for fun and enjoyment. Moreover, among adventure games, it gives visitors really good paragliding facilities. Apart from that there are huge idols of Lord Shiva and Parvathi which gives the place a religious flavour.

- Lord Shiva Parvathi statue is the major attraction of the park. The idol stands on top of the hill at an elevation of 40 ft. The floral clock one of the biggest of India with a diameter of 10 ft. The floral clock also play an important role in giving an artistic look with the lush green patches to the Shiva Parvathi statue. It works as a land mark for the tourists and attract huge crowd.



- **The Rope Way** facility is also there for the tourists. The cable car route takes you to the top of the hill to have a bird eye view of the whole city. It is the first of its kind in Andhra Pradesh.
- Toy Train Amusement Ride at Kailasagiri Park
- The toy train ride at Kailasagiri Park is one of the newest attractions added. It is charged at Rs 40 for adults and Rs 30 for children. The toy train ride offers a good view of the Kailasagiri Park and of the whole Bay of Bengal at Vizag.

Timings: 0600hrs – 1930hrs (open on all days)

Ross hill

- With a Dargah and a temple near the foot of the hill and a church at the top Ross Hill is an example of communal harmony. While the Dargah is about 700 years old, the temple is more than two centuries old. The Church too is more than a century old. The north hill **Dargah Konda** has a mosque and a memoir of the Muslim saint, Baba Ishaq Madina, who was famous for his prophecies both among Muslims and Hindus. As per the local narrative, a Muslim Saint, Baba Ishaq Madina Walli from Mecca Madina along with his followers settled down on this hill about 700 years ago. He reportedly performed many miracles and helped his devotees. Once he appeared in Aurangzeb's dream and summoned him. Aurangzeb visited the Baba eventually and ordered the construction of the Dargah. He also granted many acres of lands for the maintenance of the Dargah and its staff. The local 'Pirs Festival' here attracts a large number of not only Muslim devotees but faithful Hindus too.
- The **temple of Lord Vishnu** welcomes you with a beautiful and impressive arch at the entrance. According to legend, a Dutch Ship headed by European Captain Blackmoor, was struck by a severe cyclonic storm, in the late 17th century. Thanks to the prayers of the workers on board, the ship safely reached the calm waters of the inner channel and was prevented from being pulled back into the choppy sea waters by, what was presumed to be a big rock. The next day, when the storm subsided, it was found that the 'rock' supporting the ship was an idol of Sri Lord Venkateshwara. The locals and the ship's sailors installed the idol on the stately Sringamani Hill overlooking the harbour. Since that day, the idol has been worshipped, and many devotees are faithful that the Lord grants them any boon they pray for. The temple attracts more than a lakh of people annually. The number of devotees of late is decreasing due to the dust pollution. Authorities need to take steps to restore the temple to its past glory.
- The central and the highest hill amongst the three is named after a local Judge, Monsieur Ross who built a house on it in 1864. In 1866, the then Bishop Msgr J.M. Tissot acquired the bungalow and on August 15, 1867, an altar was erected and blessed as a chapel, by the then Vicar General Fr. Richard. Cyclones in 1870 and 1876 wrought havoc and affected the chapel too. Consequently, on 1st May 1877, a new statue of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart was placed upon the altar. The Church underwent many renovations to accommodate the increasing number of devotees. After the Japanese raid over Visakhapatnam in April 1942, Bishop Roussillon made a vow to take his people in procession to the Ross Hill Chapel, for the town to be preserved from further enemy raids. And since then, there have been no further raids ever. The first 'Thanksgiving Procession' took place on Sunday, 10th February 1946. This annual feast of the Immaculate Conception and procession to the top of the Ross hill, from St. Aloysius School on the evening of every 8th December has become an integral part of Vizag Culture. Almost a century old, this legendary Roman Catholic Mother Mary's Church is a landmark shrine for people from all walks of life irrespective of caste, creed and colour.



Simhachalam Temple

Simhachalam has derived its name from two words, Simham meaning 'lion' and Achalam meaning 'hill', which is a town situated in Visakhapatnam. The edifice is perched atop a hill 800 metres above the sea level and is dedicated to Lord Narasimha, who is an incarnation of Vishnu himself. The temple is embellished with extremely detailed stone carvings and contains scriptures dating back to 1098-1099 AD belonging to the kingdom of Cholas. This is the only temple in the country where Shri Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swami- who is a combination of the third and fourth incarnation of Lord Vishnu- appears. Lord Narasimha appears here in a tribhanga posture and has two hands with the head of a lion on a human torso.

Noteworthy features of the temple: This temple boasts of a beautiful stone chariot drawn by horses. The Kalyana Mandapa within the temple has 16 pillars with bas reliefs depicting the incarnations of Vishnu. Narasimha, the man lion incarnation of Vishnu is seen in several depictions throughout the temple. The artwork here has elements of similarity with that of Konark. Elephants, flowers and plants are portrayed in plenty. The outer walls of the sanctum depict images of a royal personality (said to be King Narasimha) in various postures.

Timings: 0700hrs – 1600hrs | 1800hrs – 2100hrs (open on all days)

For Souvenirs

Tribes India

A government initiative, Tribes India showcases the most exquisite authentic tribal art and crafted items sculpted by tribes across the entire length and breadth of the country. The products are all sourced directly from a tribal craftsman, or from a predominantly tribal group of artisans. Every piece is eco-friendly and made from naturally available raw materials; their reasonable prices make for great souvenirs or gifts, as well. It's a great place to purchase naturally made goods and garments. *Tribes India, RK Beach Rd, Near VUDA Park, Chinna Waltair, Pedda Waltair, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh 530003*

Lepakshi Handicrafts Emporium

An Andhra Pradesh government undertaking, Lepakshi is a repository of traditional arts and crafts of Andhra Pradesh. The objective of this endeavour was to promote the dying handicrafts of the State. Lepakshi is a treasure trove of ancient and modern handicrafts that range from Children's toys to Tribal paintings to Brassware to wood work and even carpets.

Timings: 1000hrs – 2000hrs (closed on Sundays)

Town Kotha Rd, Near Jagadamba Circle, Jagadamba Junction, Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh 530002



One day trips

Borra Caves

The Borra Caves are located around 90km north of Visakhapatnam, in the Ananthgiri Hill Ranges of Eastern Ghats of India. While the cave was discovered by British geologist William King in 1807, this is a naturally formed phenomenon of nature and is believed to be roughly 150 million years old. It is also considered to be one of the largest caves in India. Situated around 1,400m above sea level, the caves contain karstic limestone structures which extend to a depth of 80 metres. For the sake of intrepid explorers and visitors, the interiors of these caves are lit with 63 lamps of mercury, sodium vapour and halogen, which illuminate and amplify the stalagmite and stalactite formations. Some of the most striking formations are said to resemble a dinosaur, a serpent and a temple. See if you can spot them all.

A plaque deep inside the caves informed us that the Kottavasala-Kirandul railway line passes over the caves, exactly at that point. The thickness of the rock here is 100 feet. There is also a naturally formed Shivling inside the caves, which is worshipped by the tribals who inhabit the forests around. Anthropologists have discovered stone tools as old as 30,000 to 50,000 years from the caves. Except for the lighting and fencing in some parts, and a couple of long staircases connecting some of the uneven plains, the cave is maintained as it is. Because of the continuing chemical reaction, new shapes keep forming while the old ones change shape.

Opening hours: 10am-5.30pm

Araku Valley

Spread over an area of 36 km with an altitude ranging 600-900m above sea level, Araku Valley offers breath taking views of small waterfalls and streams running through its valley. Thanks to its pleasant climate and beautiful hills, this valley is home to several coffee plantations and over 17 different tribes. You can swing by the Araku Tribal Museum to gain some insight into the lifestyles of these local tribes. Also popular is the Coffee Museum, where you can sample some excellent brew and even buy some from the manufacturer directly. If you have the opportunity, make sure to check out a performance of 'Dhimsa' dance, a cultural event in the region full of expert movement and colourful costumes.

Kondakarla ava

At a distance of 49 Kms from Vizag Railway Station, Kondakarla village situated in Achyutapuram Mandal is famous for its biggest fresh water lakes in the state, Kondakarla Ava. The waters of the lake are surrounded by coconut trees on one side and green hills all around which provides great picturesque location like this. The Bird Sanctuary here, located in lush green surroundings has a rich variety of bird species.