

THE

MID DAY'S GUIDE
TO WEEKEND BREAKS
EVERY THURSDAYINSIDE 17 HOW TO COME FACE TO
FACE WITH THE LEAD
ACTOR OF JAWS18 WHY YOU MUST
CARRY AN IPAD ON
YOUR NEXT VACATIONEDITED BY
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TRIP

RAINSWEPT WEEKEND IN CHIPLUN



A crocodile basking by the banks of the Vashishti River

GIVE ALIBAUG A BREAK; LEAVE BEHIND DONE-TO-DEATH 'ESCAPES' AT MATHERAN AND LONAVALA. INSTEAD, GET BEHIND THE WHEEL OR BOARD A TRAIN TO CHIPLUN IN SOUTH KONKAN, WITH MILES OF ZERO CELL NETWORK, LUSH LANDSCAPES, BIRD WATCHING AND EVEN THE ODD CROC, FOR WILDLIFE THRILLS

Chiplun — an industrial town that derives its name from the abode of Lord Parashurama wouldn't exactly get a thumbs up from holiday seekers. But with the picturesque Vashishti River for company, the Western Ghats to its east and pristine beaches to the west, it's fast earning brownie points as an inviting getaway for the tourist in search of that elusive slice of tranquility.

THE DRIVE IS HALF THE FUN

Located on the Mumbai-Goa Highway (NH-17), about 250 km to the south of Mumbai, hitting the road is a heady, refreshing way to slip into unwind mode. "This nearly five-and-a-half hour drive

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HOW TO REACH

➔ **BY ROAD:** Take a turn towards the Mumbai-Goa Highway (NH-17) at Panvel and it's a direct stretch via Kolad and Mangaon. It is about 250 kms away and the drive takes anything between four to six hours, depending on your stops and sightseeing options, en route.

➔ **BY RAIL:** Chiplun is an important station on the Konkan Railway route. Board any train on this railway. Hire an auto to get to the main township.

SIGN UP
IF YOU HAVE 1 DAY...



CLIMB UP TO THE DUKE'S NOSE
This prominent rock structure stands tall, flanking the right side of the Western Ghats as you approach Khandala from the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. The walk begins at the end of the road near the Tata Power facility, heading steeply upward to hit the plateau. The trek proceeds around the edge of the Sahyadris, leading to a point right below the Duke's Nose. A small temple is located at the top, providing for a beautiful view of the Sahyadris in the monsoon.
BY Freespirit
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TREK TO FORT TUNG
Fort Tung was built with an intention to keep an eye on transport from Borghat and to protect the region of Pavan Maval. The fort is strategically located, as other forts including Lohagad, Visapur, Tikona and Pavan Maval can be easily located from here.
BY Junglelore
ON July 11
CALL 9920792881
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Parashuram Temple

RAINSWEPT WEEKEND...

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is an interesting route that alternates between mountain and valley views, gushing waterfalls and green carpeted landscape," says Manish Sinha, aviation industry professional who drove down to Chiplun a month ago. Despite being a narrow, one-way road, it is well maintained, has a rollercoaster feel and is ideal for safe drivers. Manish has a word of caution: "Drivers might get carried away with the picture postcard-like scenery. It's so relaxing that there is the temptation to overtake; avoid this as it might get dangerous, particularly in the monsoons." Several dhabas line this route at gaps of 20-25 kms.
En route, destinations including Kolad and Mangaon make for ideal pit stops. In fact, Kolad has emerged as a popular stop for varied adventure sport activities like river rafting, rappelling and forest trails, with the Kundalika River flowing nearby.

DESTINATION: CHIPLUN
"Post 7 pm, the town shuts down so it's a great place to switch off. There's not much in terms of attractions here, though there are plenty beyond, for every kind of thrill seeker," adds Manish.

RIVER RUNS WILD
The Vashishti River is situated about 10 kms from The Riverside Hotel. A leisurely ride is a must, particularly at sunrise. Half-hour boat rides can be arranged at the jetty though you can request the boatman to extend it. A birdwatcher's delight, this river body is a haven for migratory and local species. You might even spot some of the river's crocodiles who make an appearance for their sunbathing sessions.

DIVINE DOSSIER
A must-see is the Parashuram Temple that dates back to 700 years. There's the 8th century Karanjeshwari Temple, at the footsteps of Govindghat, near the banks of the Vashishti River, dedicated to the goddess of Konkani people. Velneshwar, a Shiva temple is about 60 km away, at a diversion before Guhagar. "Most temples display architectural styles that are typical to the coastal belt," adds Manish.

Hedvi, about 65 kms south is dedicated to

Lord Ganesh. Another popular temple is the Vindhyavasini Temple at Ravatale. Ganpatipule, a two-hour-drive away is famous for its naturally formed idol of Ganesh. For the historically inclined, the Walawalkar Shivaji Museum, towards Derwan on the Mumbai-Goa Highway showcases the life of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji.

SAND SEEKERS
Guhagar, about 50 kms from Chiplun has an unspoiled beach with miles of sand and coconut trees for company. We suggest you check water levels and tides during the monsoon. Nearly 65 kms away at Veldoor, is where the Vashishti River meets the Arabian Sea, making for a breathtaking sight. Ganpatipule, further south is a popular spot on the Maharashtra beach map.

ADRENALINE RUSH
The Koyna Dam and reservoir makes for a spectacular, 45-minute drive. Mahad is famous for its 2nd century Buddhist caves, which includes a short hike of 80-100 steps leading to it. The 29 caves are cut in a perpendicular scarp of the hill. The waterfalls at Sawatsada, about 3 kms from Chiplun make for big thrills in the monsoon.

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ACCOMODATION
About seven-eight kms from the main township is Quality Resort's The Riverview — your best bet in Chiplun. Built on a hillock, it's structured like a tea garden, with terraces for each section of the hotel. This well maintained property with modern facilities, including a swimming pool, ayurvedic spa and wi-fi connectivity is ideal for a two-three day getaway. The hotel organises indoor and outdoor activities on request for adults and kids.
AT: Mumbai-Goa Highway, Dhamandivi, Khed, Ratnagiri.
Call: 02355-259081/84. **Web:** www.chiplunhotels.com



Quality Resort's The Riverview

SNAKE SANCTUM
Nearly 95 kms away is the Marleshwar Temple dedicated to Shiva, on the Devrukh Road. Naturally created in a cave, locals claim that the lucky few get to spot snakes living in the caves' crevices!



Wild Mushrooms like these can be spotted in the monsoon; (Bottom) Parasailing at one of south Konkan's pristine beaches

- MUST CARRY**
- ➔ Windcheaters or raincoats; umbrellas will not survive the monsoon fury in Chiplun
 - ➔ Camera and batteries
 - ➔ Floaters/flip flops or any waterproof footwear
 - ➔ Binoculars for flora and fauna spotting
 - ➔ Mp3 player/iPod with headphones