

## Asiatic Lion and Wild Ass Tour

Visit Gir Lion Reserve and the Little Rann of Kutch

**Duration:** 04 nights & 05 days

**Best season:** Mid-October to Mid-April

**Tour Dates:** This tour will operate from Oct 16 to June 15.

### ITINERARY

Day 01: Ahmedabad / Diu / Rajkot to Little Rann of Kutch

Day 02: Little Rann of Kutch to Gir National Park

Day 03: Gir National Park

Day 04: Gir National Park

Day 05: Gir National Park to Ahmedabad / Diu / Rajkot

### Highlights

- Wildlife-Asiatic Lion, Asiatic Wild Ass, Blackbuck, Chital or Spotted Deer, Sambhar, Blue Bull Antelope, Chinkara (Indian Gazelle), Chousingha (the world's only four-horned antelope), Wild Boar etc.
- Wide variety of birdlife like Flamingos, Pelicans, Demoiselle and Common Cranes, Sykes' Lark, Painted Sandgrouse, massive roost of Montagu, Pallid and Marsh harriers.
- Interesting and varied Gujarat flora and landscapes like the bleak salt marshes, deciduous forests of Gir etc.
- Glimpse of village life in rural India
- Unique handicrafts
- Experience traditional Indian hospitality, culture and local cuisine
- Stay at quaint lodges

### Description

India is the only country in the world that can claim both Lion and Tiger among its native fauna. While many tours take you to see tigers, this wildlife tour of Gujarat is unique in its focus on Asiatic Lions in the Gir Forest. The endangered Asiatic Wild Ass at Dasada Sanctuary is the other highlight of this trip.

This trip starts as we fly to Ahmedabad or Rajkot and drive 3 hours from the airport directly to Dasada. With the drive made as comfortable as possible by the well-trained driver, you will reach Dasada fresh enough to take the evening safari in the bleak salt marshy areas of Little Rann of Kutch. Though a bleak landscape, it is rich in biodiversity and is an ecologically important area for wildlife and many local and migratory water birds.

Dasada is a desert wildlife sanctuary, known for the last abode of the Asiatic wild ass in the Indian peninsula. During the exciting safari, you must watch out for other endangered wildlife like the Wolf, Indian and Desert Fox, Indian Gazelle, McQueen's Bustard, etc. which can be spotted there too.

Another treat in store is the sunset at Bajana Lake, where Flamingos, Pelicans, Demoiselle and Common Cranes, and other water birds gather in numbers beyond comprehension. The sight of these birds in the sunset light will be an unforgettable memory for sure.

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Back from the thrilling safari, you will enjoy your meal and overnight stay at Rann Riders or Royal Desert Safari Camp. We have specially chosen these imaginatively designed safari resorts with structures built from local materials to resemble a local village featuring long wicker beds, work table, dressing area and a tiled bath with hot-and-cold water. This will surely give you a feel of traditional Indian hospitality and comfort. Our next stop will be Gir, which is a 7 hour drive from Dasada.

The beautiful rural landscape and traditional villages en route give a good glimpse of rural Gujarat. Your trained driver cum guide will be only too happy to stop for photo opportunities at interesting locations. Feel free to ask him any questions you may have about Gujarat as you stop for refreshments, at a roadside dhabha, another uniquely traditional highway must do. Tune in to a local radio channel in the car to get a better feel of the journey or enjoy the silence of the air conditioned car. With windows down, when the weather is conducive, you can enjoy great sights, sounds, fragrances and fresh breeze.

At Gir, we stay at Gir Birding Lodge, a quaint lodge set amongst a mango orchard. With individual cottages sharing it's boundary with the Gir National Park, you can enjoy the calls of the wild all through the night as you look forward to the safari next morning. Be prepared to be greeted with different species of birds right outside your door in the morning as you sit out in the veranda enjoying your cup of tea.

The next two days are spent with morning and afternoon drives in the Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary. The Asiatic Lions are usually inactive during the heat of the day, but if we are lucky, we can hope to see them out hunting their prey during our visit. With a rugged terrain of low hills and tracts of deciduous forest interspersed with areas of grassland, the national park supports a great diversity of mammals like Chital or Spotted Deer, Sambhar, Blue Bull Antelope, Chinkara Gazelle, Chousingha (the world's only four-horned antelope), Wild Boar etc. With such an abundance of prey, Gir also has a thriving Leopard population and Striped Hyenas who try to scavenge any leftovers from the lion's meals. A number of attractive birds can usually be seen on the trail too.

For those more culturally inclined, a local village visit or a visit to a house of a tribal family to get a glimpse of rural tribal life can also be arranged. Right with buffaloes tied outside their modest homes, small living areas with joint families staying together, seeing how they live can be quite a wonderful experience. For the more adventurous we can even suggest a place to try out fresh homemade traditional cuisine at a lovely roadside dhabha (simple eatery) run by Maldhari tribal women.

Next, we travel from Gir back to Ahmedabad or Diu or Rajkot airport for your return journey where once again you can enjoy the lovely varied sights and sounds of rural and modern Gujarat.

## ITINERARY

Gujarat is one of the most prolific areas for birds in India and has the last habitats of the Asiatic lion and the Indian wild ass. This itinerary features an array of habitats - the desert salt flats and scrub of the Little Rann of Kutch, the deciduous forests of Gir. Gujarat's highways are among the best in the country and while travelling the bird list keeps growing as the roads pass fields, wetlands and grasslands rich in birds.

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For those who want to mix cultural experiences with birding and mammal-viewing, this itinerary offers opportunities to visit colourful villages and pastoral settlements, visit historic cities known for their monuments and princely towns, shop for handicrafts.

**Day 01: AHMEDABAD - DASADA**

Meals: Lunch & Dinner

Fly to Ahmedabad in the morning. Arrive at Ahmedabad and travel 90 km (two hours north) to Dasada. Evening safari in the Little Rann of Kutch, a desert wildlife sanctuary, known as the last abode of the Asiatic Wild Ass in the Indian peninsula. During the drive, watch for other endangered wildlife like the Wolf, Indian and desert Foxes, Indian Gazelle, McQueen's Bustard, etc. Witness the sunset at Bajana Lake, where Flamingos, Pelicans, Demoiselle and Common Cranes and other magnificent birds gather in numbers beyond comprehension. Meals and overnight stay is at Rann Riders or Royal Desert Safari Camp, both imaginatively designed safari resorts with cottages built from local materials to resemble a local village featuring long wicker beds, work table, dressing area and a tiled bath with hot-and-cold water.

**Day 02: DASADA-GIR NP**

Meals: Breakfast & Dinner

Morning drive into the Little Rann for birding and animal viewing. Proceed to Gir (7 hours). Stay at Gir Birding Lodge.

**Day 03: GIR NATIONAL PARK**

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Morning and afternoon drives in Gir National Park & Wildlife Sanctuary. This deciduous forest is the last abode of the Asiatic lion and also has a thriving Panther (Leopard) population. It also has a large population of Chital or Spotted Deer, Sambhar, Blue Bull Antelope, Chinkara Gazelle, Chousingha (the world's only four-horned Antelope), Wild Boar and other wildlife. A number of attractive birds can be seen too. Dinner and overnight at Gir Birding Lodge.

**Day 04: GIR NATIONAL PARK**

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Morning and evening drives in the Gir forests to look for the two big cats and to watch other wildlife. Optional village visit. Dinner and overnight at Gir Birding Lodge.

**Day 05: GIR NATIONAL PARK TO DIU / RAJKOT / AHMEDABAD**

Meals: Breakfast, Packed Lunch, Dinner

After the final morning wildlife safari in Gir, we travel to the airport to head home. Tour Ends.

Please ask for Terms and Conditions

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