



## **Can you visit Tadoba during the Monsoon Season?**

As the monsoon season approaches, a question that many of us have in our minds is whether or not one can visit Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve during the monsoon. The fact that there are conflicting stories going around that the park is closed/partly closed during the monsoon only adds to the confusion, and can be a dampener for visitors as Tadoba offers an opportunity to visit in the monsoon season – this extraordinary active time for all manner of plants and animals.

To set the record straight, the complete park is open and number of vehicles is reduced as only 20 jeeps are allowed inside the parks. Self drive cars have also been prohibited. The monsoon breaks in June with rainfall of about 1,200 mm. and humidity at about 60 per cent.

Tadoba is also an entomologist's paradise. 74 species of butterflies have been recorded including the pansies, monarch, mormons and swordtails. Two endangered species include the Danaid Egg Fly and the Great Egg Fly. Dragonflies, stick insects, jewel beetles and the praying mantis are other insects in the reserve. The signature spider, giant wood and red wood spiders are often seen in the monsoon and soon after. Some hunting spiders like the wolf spiders, crab spiders and "lynx" spiders are also common in monsoon.

## **Advantage of visiting Tadoba during the monsoon**

The monsoon gives a new life to the park making it irresistibly beautiful. The trees of the park begin to take on new costumes, shedding their worn out ones, while the undergrowth turns lush green and there is an abundance of food for the herbivores of the park. Tadoba in rainy season has another effect, that on the lakes and ponds of the park, which now are full to the brim. Animals no longer go thirsty and they are in their playful best, swimming and showing their acrobatic skills in the water. If you are thinking that something is amiss, you are wrong, for the fierce interplay between the predators and the prey is very much there, if not more intense than ever. The abundance of food for the herbivores and the breeding season together help to increase their numbers, but the big cats of Tadoba closely followed by the smaller predators are quick to make a meal out of any straying animal. And the encounter taking place in the rain, and sometimes on wetlands, is a sight that will linger in your mind for a long time. This is a big reason why a tour to the park during the monsoon, despite all the challenges, is a dream vacation for nature lovers. One great benefit of visiting the park during the monsoon is that you don't have to face the rush which is normally seen during the peak season. As such you are guaranteed of an undisturbed sojourn among the serene forests of the park and its wildlife.

## **It is sometimes easy to sight animals during the rainy season!!**

With rain in its full swing, many areas of the park gets submerged and the animals come out to areas that are placed in higher altitudes, especially areas dominated by teak plantations, and often on the roads as they dry up faster. Another reason that causes the animals to leave the thick forest and come out to the open is the swarm of insects that attack them relentlessly. You will spot a number of deer, boars and antelopes, who are also busy preparing for the arrival of a new member of their family. The monsoon brings a lot of hope for the avifauna of the park as well, as it is their breeding



season. The abundance of ground vegetation and insects are just the perfect dinner for them to acquire the required energy and fortitude for this amazing natural process to march towards its natural conclusion. Some popular bird species of the park include quails, partridges, raptors, owls, parakeets, and barbets.

Considering how the monsoon season positively affects the wildlife of the park, there shouldn't be any doubt that monsoon season is a blessing for nature lovers to spend some incredible moments amidst the animals of the park!!

### **Apart from Jeep safaris try one of these activities inside the park during monsoon**

#### *Tailor-made Canoe Safaris*

The stream overflowing from the Tadoba Lake flows through the center of the TigerTrails Jungle Lodge and joins the Irai Lake, adjoining the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve on the south-west boundary. This beautiful water-body is about 30 sq. kms and has inlets, islands and bays within the jungle providing a mesmerizing vista, enhanced by the presence of the birds and wildlife coming to the edge of the water - a wonderful way of bird-watching and wildlife viewing. Oared boats, canoes and electric pontoons moving silently along the jungle's edge and enjoying the birdlife and wildlife as it emerges will greatly enhance the experience.

A combination of walking and canoeing safaris are naturally complementary. The safari involves dawn to dusk trekking and canoeing across some of the most luxuriant forest tracts of the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve. An added advantage of these safaris is the availability of vehicles and walking options where game activity invites a break from the river. Our operators and guides have impeccable safety records and their guiding standards are the best on offer.

Take a canoe operated from one of the two jetties located on either side of Irai Lake. Arrive at Pardhi Ambhora where we offer the opportunity to stay on two of the best photographic hides that Tadoba offers. This is also the entry point for walking safaris.

#### *Walking Safaris*

Leave your vehicle behind and take a walking safari with one of our experienced and qualified naturalists for the true thrill of the bush. Down on the same level as the animals you will experience the untamed beauty of Tadoba. Walking safaris in Tadoba are completely different to game drives; being on foot brings about a totally new way of understanding your surroundings. Away from the comfort of the 4WD safari vehicle your senses suddenly awaken as the forest becomes more 'real'. Meeting animals on their terms as a participant in their world can be far more rewarding than just spectating. Your safari guide will usually identify tracks, highlight interesting insects, talk about fascinating plants and discuss the ecosystem in general as well as sometimes track some of the larger animals. It's a great way to appreciate the smaller wildlife which can't be so easily seen from a vehicle, as well as to experience the buzz of being out with the big game.

You will also be accompanied by one of our Gond Scouts who will provide a wealth of information on the traditional medicinal uses of plants and tribal folklore. You will track game, unsure what waits round the next corner: Nilgai, Gaur, a pack of Wild Dogs, Sambar or even a Tiger. You will catch the



scents and sounds of wild India and uncover a hidden, fascinating and interconnected world of plants, tracks and insects.

### *Bird Watching*

For the avid birdwatcher, Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is home to more than 260 species. There is a very healthy population of raptors to be seen including the Crested Hawk Eagles, breeding pairs of the majestic Crested Serpent Eagles and regular sightings of the Oriental Honey Buzzards and White Eyed Buzzards.

Interesting birds on the Reserve include the Paradise Flycatcher only seen in the early light of dawn. The Booted Eagle in the pale form breed well on the Reserve, while the Southern Grey Tit intrigues one with its 13 different calls. The Painted Sandgrouse travels up to long distances in search of water, collecting droplets in its breast feathers, flying back to the nest to give the moisture to its chicks. Black-winged Stilts can be viewed foraging in and around water areas. Due to the unobtrusiveness of Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve, the birds are at ease, affording one with good viewing. If you desire, you can spend the entire day in the park bird watching.

### *Photographic Forest Hides on Waterholes*

By spending time in these specially designed structures, it's possible to find a comfortable position and wait for the perfect moment to release the shutter. Many of our guests are avid photographers. Apart from the photographic advantage of hides, there is also a rather unique option to spend time out of a game viewing vehicle, soaking up the overall feel. With some hides positioned at eye-level on stretches of water, and others on busy game trails and river crossings, or perched up in trees for a bird's eye view of the action, the possibilities are unlimited. Sitting quietly and observing from these secluded vantage points gives us the purest possible experience, witnessing animal behavior as it unfolds naturally. Whatever the situation, if your timing is right, you can be sure that you'll appreciate a vastly different experience to complement the more traditional methods of game viewing. You may also be rewarded with that photograph of a lifetime.

### *Tribal Heritage*

Tadoba is much more than just a safari destination. The local culture and people of this region make for a wonderfully enriching experience. Village walks in the rural communities present the most rewarding experience of the everyday life of a local Gond since the tours are guided by people from these very villages.

Marvel at the people performing long ago practices like the housewife kneeling by flat stones grinding millet, the blacksmith curving out machetes from shapeless iron, as well as the traditional healer looking for medicinal plants he uses to treat the injured or sick.

You walk through the village at an easy-going pace which allows you to meet and interact with its residents and get a real feel of the heartbeat of an authentic tribal village. You will get an opportunity to visit one of the traditional homesteads, and get an insight into how people work, entertain themselves and cook, yet without electricity or even running water.



---

Perhaps you will visit a village school or alternatively a nursery established with funds from this tourism. You will also listen to the legendary tales narrated by the village elders of each village, which have been passed from one generation to another. Afterwards you will enjoy a flavorful local lunch prepared for you by a lady from the village – we have been working with this lady for years and she cooks a delicious Gond meal outside her home on a little fire.

Well-trained guides acquired from these villages lead tours across the neighboring forests, wetlands and hills, and they are well skilled at sighting reserved fauna hiding in the vegetation, as well as identifying the local medicinal plants in addition to recognizing the sounds made by the birds.

Regardless of whether you are searching for the elusive raptor or an unusual Wild Orchid within the forest cover, this is a great way to experience the local wildlife as well as interact with the resident people. There are many cultural experiences to choose from, and we strive to ensure that they are authentic and non-intrusive to the local people.

Tadoba is the only tiger centric park in India to offer nature visitors a wide range of wildlife viewing opportunities from full day jeep safaris and photographic hides to canoe and walking safaris. A range of activities for a full day safaris can be organized, from a full day jeep safari with packed breakfast a, freshly prepared hot lunch will be served to guests in the afternoon on the banks of the lake teaming with gaur, wild boar and Chital. A full day safaris can also be organized with canoe/walking safaris with packed breakfast and an exciting opportunity to spend an afternoon inside the park on a photographic hide with packed lunch.