

Deccan Dynasties

with ancient cave temples

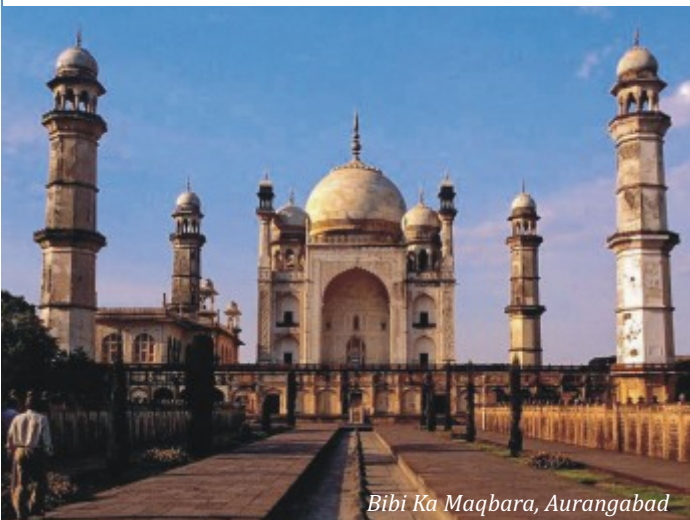


Bidar Fort



Ajanta Caves, near Aurangabad

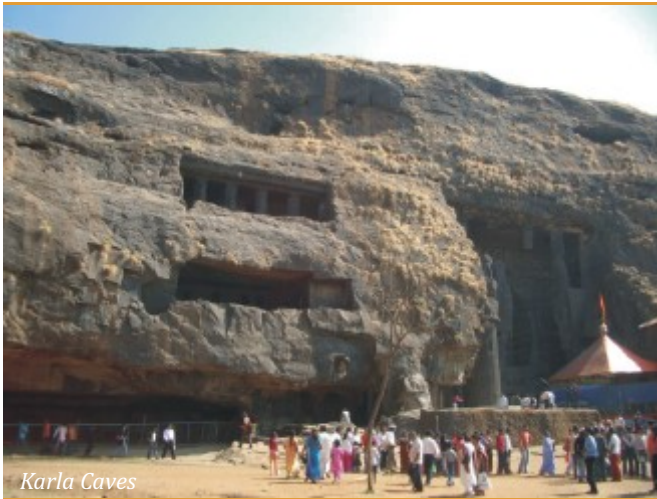
From south of Vindhya range in central India rises the Deccan Plateau where the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are home to some of the finest examples of Indian art and architecture. The area has given birth to some of India's most influential dynasties and each have left their own palaces, temples and memorials. Jain, Hindu and Muslim monuments are amongst the region's finest achievements, while remote and wonderful rock-carved cave temples have been places of pilgrimage for countless travellers over history - a vivid pageant of India's most colourful period.



Bibi Ka Maqbara, Aurangabad



Charminar, Hyderabad



Karla Caves

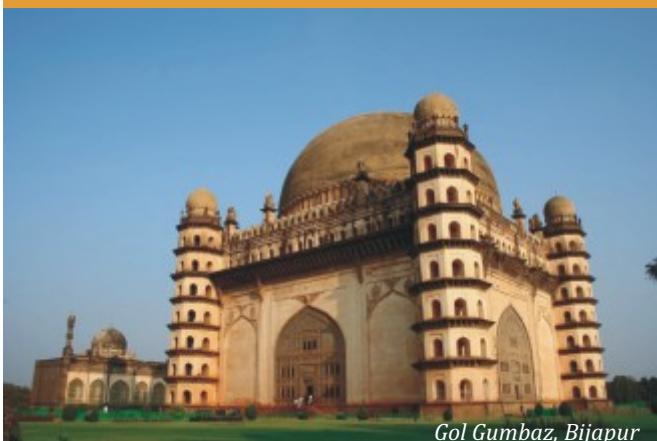
KARLA & BHAJA CAVES

A short distance from Pune, are several Buddhist rock-cut caves and forts worth visiting for those interested in ancient Indian history. The Karla Caves represent the best example of rock-cut architecture in this region, famous for the two rows of decorated pillars that line the main hall. Started by the Hinayana Buddhists in the 1st century BC, these caves were later taken over by the Mahayana sect.



Bhaja Caves

Exactly opposite the Karla ridge lie the Bhaja Caves. Bhaja Caves date back to the 2nd century BC. The rock-cut architecture here is beautiful and better preserved than Karla.



Gol Gumbaz, Bijapur

BIJAPUR

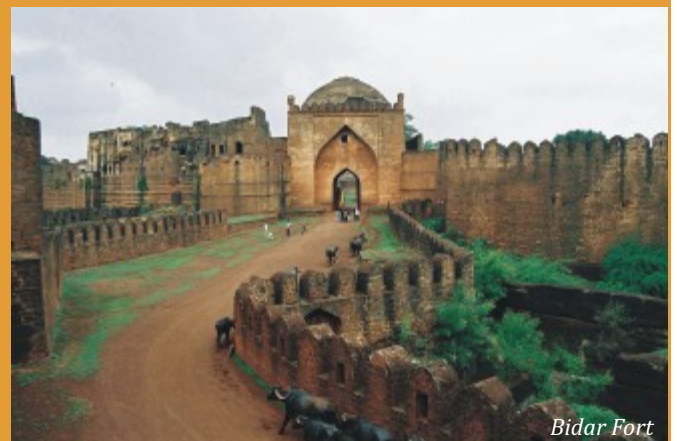
A provincial centre under the Bahamanis, Bijapur became the capital of an independent dynasty, the Adil Shahis for about 200 years. The period of greatest architectural and artistic achievement was late 16th and early 17th centuries, particularly under the rulers Ali I and Ibrahim II. While the most sophisticated buildings and miniatures were produced during Ibrahim II's reign, the most imposing monument, the Gol Gumbaz was built by his successor Muhammad I.



Gulbarga Mosque

GULBARGA

Gulbarga is 613 km north of Bangalore is the district headquarters of Gulbarga. When Bahman Shah ascended the throne of Daulatabad, it was this city that he chose as his capital. He filled it with beautiful palaces, mosques, stately buildings and bazaars. The later rulers added to Bahman Shah's vision and Gulbarga blossomed. Gulbarga still retains its historic charm.



Bidar Fort

BIDAR

Originally built in 8th century and strengthened and renovated in 1428 by Sultan Ahmad Shah Bahamani, the Bidar fort boasts of a dominating presence in the Bidar landscape. Nestled inside this moated fort is the royal town dotted with crumbling ruins of the bastions and gates, royal baths and kitchens, audience halls, and pleasure pavilions. Among the congregation of royal palaces, the Rangin Mahal stands out for its sheer elegance and exquisite carvings.



Chowmallah Palace, Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

Also known as ‘The City of Nizams’ and ‘The City of Pearls’, Hyderabad is today one of the most developed cities in the country and a modern hub of information technology, ITES, and biotechnology. Hyderabad has been governed by a succession of Muslim Nawabs, although the city's culture, cuisine and style reflects the mix of Muslim and Hindu. Many fine examples of Muslim architecture include the Mecca Masjid and the Lad Bazar. The Salar Jung museum houses a diverse collection including bronze statues, ivory furniture, paintings, temple fabrics and glasswork.

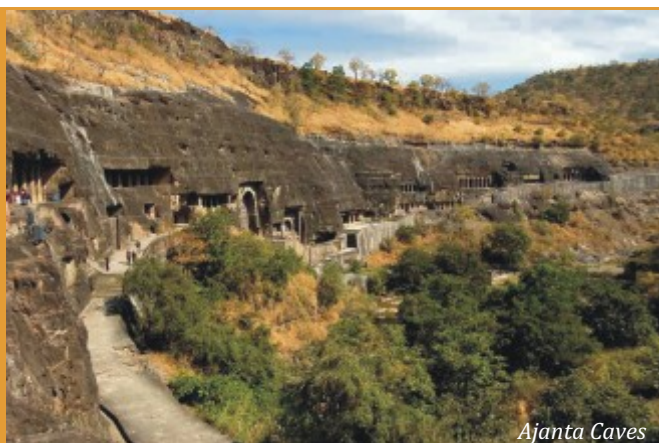


Golconda Fort, Hyderabad

Outside Hyderabad is the magnificent Golconda Fort, the original capital of the Muslim rulers, the Qutub Shahi kings. The Koh-i-Noor diamond was mined in this region and was once held in the vault. Today, you can still see the impressive walls, five kilometres long and studded with cannon, as well as the huge teak Victory Gate designed to protect against attack by elephants.

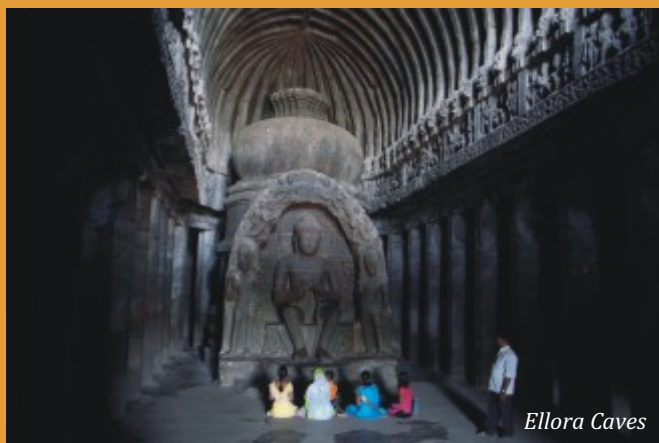
AJANTA & ELLORA

The city of Aurangabad is an ideal base to explore the fascinating cave temples at Ajanta and Ellora through day trips. Ajanta's caves date from 200BC but were covered by the jungle for centuries until a British hunting party stumbled across the site in 1819.



Ajanta Caves

The story of the Buddha's life are revealed by carved narratives in stone caves and murals on the plastered cave walls, painted by unknown artists and preserved through the aeons. The caves at Ellora are newer, dating from 600AD to 1100AD. Each of the 34 caves, carved from the solid rock, is a shrine, either of Buddhism, Hinduism or Jainism.



Ellora Caves

BASIC ITINERARY

- DAY 1 - Arrive Mumbai. Transfer to domestic airport to board flight for Pune. Overnight in Pune.
- DAY 2 - Day excursion to Karla & Bhaja Caves. Overnight in Pune.
- DAY 3 - Morning, long drive to Bijapur. Rest of the day at leisure. Overnight in Bijapur.
- DAY 4 - Full day guided tour of Bijapur. Later drive to Gulbarga. Overnight in Gulbarga.
- DAY 5 - Morning visit to view the Gulbarga Fort. Later drive to Hyderabad en route visiting Bidar. Overnight in Hyderabad.
- DAY 6 - Full day guide tour of Hyderabad. Overnight in Hyderabad.
- DAY 7 - Full day guide tour of Hyderabad. Evening, board train for Aurangabad. Overnight in Aurangabad.
- DAY 8 - Morning visit to Ellora Caves and Bibi ka Maqbara. Overnight in Aurangabad.
- DAY 9 - Morning guided excursion to Ajanta Caves. Late evening flight to Mumbai. Overnight in Mumbai.
- DAY 10 - Morning excursion to Elephanta Caves. Evening board flight for onward destination.

TAILOR MADE TRAVEL

Our private tailor made journeys offer complete freedom of choice. The itineraries shown are designed to give you a flavour of what is possible and can be tailored to suit your preferences. Prices vary according to selection of accommodation and season.