

Bandhavgarh National Park



Further Links

- Excellent chance of seeing tigers
- Scenery dominated by Bandhavgarh fort
- Deciduous forest as well as sal forest and grasslands
- Chance to see leopards
- Sloth bears frequently seen
- 22 species of mammals
- 250 species of birds

Situation

Bandhavgarh is in the heart of central India set in the Vindhya Hills in Madhya Pradesh.

Activities

Jeep safaris. Elephant-back safaris.

Bandhavgarh National Park is one of India's hidden natural treasures. It is remote and difficult to get to, but definitely worth the long journey. Prior to becoming a national park, the forests of Bandhavgarh were maintained as a "Shikargah" (private hunting reserve) for the rulers of Rewa State. In 1968, the late Maharaja Venkatraman Singh of Rewa graciously gifted his private reserve to the people of India, as did many of his fellow rulers.

One of the striking features of Bandhavgarh is the natural topography. It is set around a table top hill that was once used as a fort and even today has an active temple on its summit. The oldest sign of habitation in Bandhavgarh are the caves dug into sandstone, to the north of the fort. Several contain 'Brahmi' inscriptions dating from the 1st century B.C. From that time onwards Bandhavgarh was ruled by a succession of dynasties including the Chandela kings of Bundelkhand who built the famous temples of Khajuraho.

Anyway, history aside, the fort at Bandhavgarh overlooks some great wildlife habitat. There are areas of sal forest, like those at Kanha only a bit less dense, and also areas of dry deciduous forest. There are also plenty of grassland plains and water sources adding to, and supporting, the diverse ecosystems.

There is a good chance of seeing tigers here and possibly in more open landscapes than the thick sal forests of Kanha. Bandhavgarh is justifiably famous for its tigers but it has a wide range of other mammalian species inhabiting the park. Sambar deer, chital (spotted deer) muntjac

- popularly known as the barking deer, and the four-horned antelope are seen in abundance. Nilgai or blue bull the largest Asian antelope, and chinkara (the Indian gazelle) can be sighted in the open grasslands. Leopard

though sighted rarely, coexists in abundance. I know they are there because I actually saw one on my first

visit to the park! Jungle cat, hyena, jackal, fox, wild dog or dhole, wild boar and Indian wolf are all sighted regularly. So too are the sloth bear, porcupine and the Indian pangolin. The primates seen all over the park are the rhesus macaque and the black faced langur.

Bandhavgarh is teeming with both migratory and resident bird species which include racket-tailed drongo, leaf birds, Tickells blue fly catcher, white-browed fantail, Malabar pied hornbill, grey-headed fishing eagle, crested serpent eagle and crested hawk eagle. The fast vanishing vultures in India - the white back, long billed, king and the Egyptian are surviving in abundance here. In short there are about 250 species of birds in Bandhavgarh!

Some people rate this park as the best over and above Kanha. Personally I think you need to see them both as they offer different habitats and some different species. If you put Bandhavgarh and Kanha together then you have the perfect wildlife trip - especially for tiger spotting.