

BEYOND THE BEACH

Exploring the wonders around
COX'S BAZAR



Salsa beach.

MOKAMMEL SHUVO

Cox's Bazar is not just about the world's longest sea beach. From its breathtaking Marine Drive to its historic Buddhist temples, wildlife parks, and hidden islands, the region offers a variety of unforgettable experiences.

For city dwellers yearning for an escape from their mechanical lives,

Cox's Bazar stands as a beacon of natural beauty and serenity. Famous for its sun-kissed beaches and rolling waves, this coastal gem captivates the hearts of travelers.

Yet, beyond the familiar shoreline and bustling markets lies a treasure trove of breathtaking destinations waiting to be explored. As the sun rises over the horizon, casting a golden hue across the expansive sea, visitors flock to the shores, eager to embrace the soothing embrace of the ocean.

Roza Islam, a tourist from Dhaka, couldn't hide her excitement as she gazed at the vastness of the Bay of Bengal. "The moment I stepped onto the beach, I felt an overwhelming sense of peace. The sound of the waves and the cool breeze instantly washed away my worries," she says.

The beach stretches endlessly, inviting visitors to sink their toes into the warm sand, while the rhythmic sound of waves crashing against the shore creates a serene soundtrack that calms the soul.

Many travelers limit their Cox's Bazar trip to hotels, restaurants, and the main beach, with stops at the Burmese market, the dried fish market, or aquarium. While these attractions hold their charm, the true essence of Cox's Bazar lies in its hidden gems waiting to be uncovered.

MARINE DRIVE: A SCENIC COASTAL JOURNEY

Beyond the beach, Marine Drive emerges as the first name that comes to mind when thinking of

tourist spot, an old and well-known attraction featuring a captivating waterfall and a viewpoint on a hill, providing a unique panoramic view of the sea.

"The view from the top is simply mesmerising," said Ahmed Sharif, a visitor from Chattogram.

Next on the journey is Salsa Beach, known for its crystal-clear blue water and views of the city skyline. Adventure seekers can enjoy parasailing here, adding an exhilarating twist to their beach experience.

"Parasailing at Salsa Beach was the highlight of my trip," says Fahmid Khan, a university student from Dhaka. "The thrill of soaring high above the water, with the wind in my hair and the sun shining down, was unlike anything I've ever experienced."

As travellers continue down

is unparalleled, featuring towering hills on one side and the vast sea on the other.

One of the most famous hills here is Hollywood Hill, which offers a panoramic view of the entire area.

Upon reaching Teknaf, visitors can explore Shah Porir Island Transit Point, as well as the Teknaf Transit Point, which offers stunning views of the Naf River and the hills of Myanmar.

A notable historical site in Teknaf is Mathin's Well, located inside the local police station. It is linked to the tragic love story of a Rakhine zamindar's daughter, Mathin, and a police officer, adding a touch of romance to the region's history.

HIDDEN ATTRACTIONS NEAR COX'S BAZAR CITY

While the beach and Marine Drive attract many visitors, Cox's Bazar offers a range of lesser-known

the sandy beaches, showcasing the region's diverse landscape.

BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN RAMU
The Bakkhali river flows through Ramu upazila, shaping its picturesque landscape with hills and water bodies.

Ramu is best known for its Buddhist temples, which attract visitors seeking peace and spirituality. The most famous is the Vipassana Meditation Center, which houses a stunning 100-foot reclining Buddha statue.

Another significant site is the Ushai Ching Rakhine Temple, a wooden temple over a hundred years old. The intricate carvings and peaceful surroundings

preservation.

SONADIA ISLAND: A HIDDEN GEM

Off the northwest coast of Cox's Bazar, Sonadia Island is a small but ecologically rich island. This 9-square-kilometre island combines sea and mangrove forests, making it a haven for diverse wildlife, including rare birds, sea turtles, and red crabs.

There is no direct transportation to the island; visitors must rely on tidal schedules and travel via Maheshkhali. Alternatively, private boats or speedboats can be hired directly from Cox's Bazar, though this option can be costly.

A cruise company recently introduced tour packages covering Maheshkhali, Sonadia, and other areas, but these services are not yet regular.



Ramu Boro Kyang.

MAHESHKHALI AND ADINATH TEMPLE

Maheshkhali, Bangladesh's only hilly island, is accessible via speedboats or large wooden boats from Cox's Bazar's No. 6 Jetty. The boat ride itself, with waves crashing against the hull, is an exhilarating experience that sets the tone for the adventure ahead.

Most visitors come here to see the Adinath Temple, a revered Hindu pilgrimage site perched on a hill. The temple's historical significance and stunning architecture attract countless visitors each year. The island is also known for its salt production and betel leaf farming, with its betel leaves being highly regarded across the country.

KUTUBDIA ISLAND: A QUIET RETREAT

Kutubdia is another offshore island of Cox's Bazar, located beyond Maheshkhali. To reach it, travelers must cross the sea by boat.

The island's main attractions include the wind power center and the lighthouse. Although the wind power centre is now defunct, it remains a notable landmark. Kutubdia's untouched beauty and quiet surroundings offer a peaceful retreat for those looking to explore beyond the usual tourist spots.

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Whether you are looking for adventure, culture, or relaxation, there's much more to explore beyond the usual tourist trail.



Shahporir Dwip jetty on the bank of Naf River in Teknaf.

PHOTO: MOKAMMEL SHUVO



Wind power plant at Chawfaldandi village.

Marine Drive, they arrive at Reju Khal, a scenic spot where tourists can go kayaking.

"The calm waters provide an ideal setting for paddling. It's peaceful and invigorating," says Kausar Ahmed Sojol, who came to Cox's Bazar with his wife Shima Rahman.

One of the highlights of Marine Drive is that every section of the coastline possesses its own unique charm. Another must-visit location is Inani Beach, famous for its stunning coral formations, which give the shoreline a distinctive beauty.

"Inani Beach is absolutely breathtaking," Shima says. "The coral reefs add a touch of magic to the landscape, and I felt like I was in a postcard."

As travelers drive along Marine Drive, they also witness fishermen returning with fresh catches, adding a sense of authenticity to the coastal experience. The beauty of Teknaf's section of Marine Drive

attractions that showcase the region's natural beauty and cultural heritage.

To the extreme south of the city lies Nazirartek Beach, known for its crystal-clear blue waters. Visitors can spot red crabs and seagulls here, creating a picturesque scene.

This beach is also a hub for fishermen who bring in fresh catches, allowing tourists to witness the traditional drying process of fish. "Seeing the fishermen at work was a highlight of my visit," Roza said. "It felt so genuine and connected to the local culture."

Not far from the city, Chawfaldandi village is home to large wind power mills that contribute to Cox's Bazar's electricity supply. This area has become a unique tourist attraction, offering visitors a chance to see both wind energy production and traditional salt farming. The sight of these windmills against the backdrop of rolling hills is a striking contrast to

create a calming atmosphere for visitors.

Other notable attractions include Ramkut Tirthadham, Rangkut Buddhist Temple, Lamarpara Buddhist Temple, Ramu Scema Vihara, and Ramu Jadi Hills.

DULAHAZARA SAFARI PARK

Located in Chakaria Upazila, Dulahazara Safari Park is about a 1.5-hour drive from Cox's Bazar. This expansive wildlife park spans 600 hectares and is home to deer, tigers, lions, bears, gaurs, crocodiles, and many other species. One of its standout features is its dense Gorjun trees, which are characteristic of the local forests.

Visitors can take guided tours through the park, learning about the diverse flora and fauna that call this area home. The park also emphasises conservation efforts, making it an educational experience for those who wish to connect with nature while supporting wildlife



Adinath temple jetty in Maheshkhali.