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RAJEEV KHANDELWAL

...& Other Exciting
7-Day Vacation Plans

CELEBRITY
WEEKEND
GETAWAYS

Sridevi Chennai

Yami Gautam Manali

Shankar Mahadevan Kumarakom

Mohit Raina Pahalgam

Andaman & Nicobar

Port Blair-North Bay-Baratang-Jolly Buoy-Havelock

Hop from one exotic island to another in the Bay of Bengal with unspoilt bone white sandy beaches, marine diversity and water based activities to keep you riveted to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for a long time to come

Day 1: Port Blair

Get into town

Arrive in **Port Blair** and check into Sinclairs Bay View (www.sinclairshotels.com/portblair) not only for the comfortable rooms but also the spectacular view of the sea. Go trekking in **Madhuban** or after lunch, head into town to visit the **Cellular Jail** and **National Museum**. Later head to the zoo or fisheries museum, near the water sports complex, a showcase of the unique marine life of the area and **Samudrika** (Naval Marine Museum) in **Delanipur**.

Day 2: Island hopping

Distance: Three island hop cruise
Time: Day long trip

After breakfast, head out for the three island hop cruise available from the harbour. First stop is **North Bay** with crystal clear waters ideal for snorkelling, sea walking or just

EAT

Variety of seafood at **LIGHTHOUSE RESIDENCY**, the best place for seafood in Port Blair

lazing on the pebbly beach with soft, cool winds blowing. Then head to **Ross Island** and wander around the erstwhile capital of the British in the Andaman islands, which bears the distinct stamp of colonialism. Scattered all over the island are dilapidated buildings—government offices, church, hospital, bakery, press, even a ball room and swimming pool now in ruins and run over by thick roots and trees bring to mind the visions of Angkor temples. End with **Viper Island**, named after the vessel which brought the first Britishers.

Day 3: Baratang

Distance: 115 km
Time: 3 hours by road

Head out early for the long drive to **Baratang Island** in the north. Travelling through the South Andaman to Baratang is a bit like stepping into Joseph Conrad's darkly mysterious *Heart of Darkness*. Thick, dark forests and scattered rustic habitations line the roads and visitors can occasionally get a glimpse of the Jarawas, the indigenous tribals with their distinctive Negroid features. To add to Baratang's mystique, a long boat ride past dense mangroves and a narrow path leads to ancient limestone caves, while another part of the island contains the only known mud volcanoes in India. Head back to Port Blair.

Day 4: Marine Park

Distance: 15 km
Time: 1.5 hour-by road and boat

A short drive to **Wandoor** takes visitors to a jetty from where large boats leave for an hour-long ride into the **Mahatma Gandhi Marine Park**, a protected area with such diversity and richness of marine life that it is stunning. The park is a cluster of 15 islands and many islets with fascinating names. The boat winds its way past a labyrinth of mangroves filled with wildlife. But the ultimate destination is **Jolly Buoy Island** with a stunning range of marine life and coral reefs.

Day 5: Havelock

Distance: 70 km
Time: 3 hours by boat

After early breakfast, head to

the jetty for the three-hour transfer to the popular **Havelock Island**. Check into **Silver Sand Beach Resort** (www.silversandhavelock.com) on **Vijay Nagar beach**. Untouched, the island has a number of beautiful beaches. Relax for the afternoon against the backdrop of the beautiful ocean.

Day 6: Havelock

Indulge in watersports
Time: Entire day

Depending on the level of enthusiasm and ability, there are a variety of activities for visitors. Snorkellers and scuba divers are bound to have much of the fun. Among the most novel things is snorkelling with elephants, where you can swim along the gentle giants to enjoy their company and view the treasures of the sea. For the hardcore, there's surfing.

STAY

At **SEASHELL RESORT** on Havelock in one of the timber Nicobari huts
099332 39625

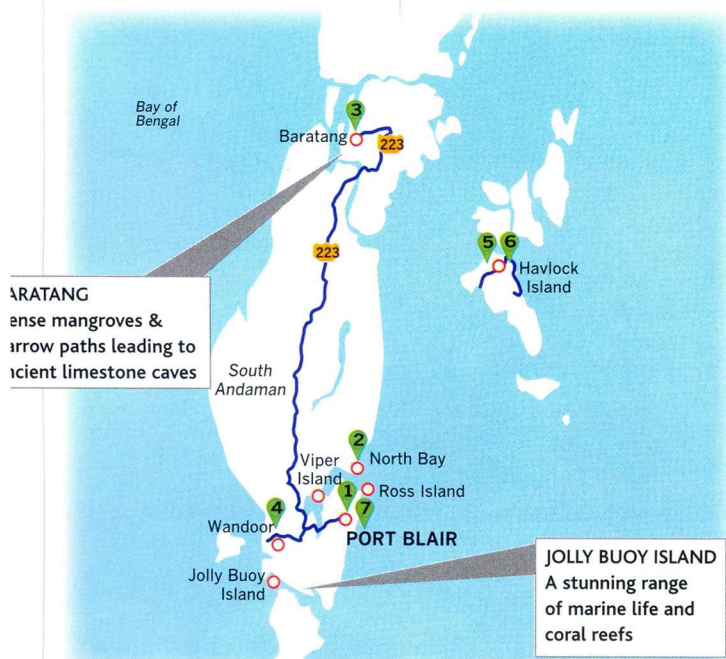
Day 7: Port Blair

Distance: 70 km
Time: 3 hours by boat and road

Have an early breakfast ahead of the boat ride. If you are lucky you might catch some dolphins. Stop at **Aberdeen bazaar** for some last minute souvenir shopping; shops such as **Queen Sea Shell Craft**, **Ratna Shell Gallery** offer interesting keepsakes, before heading to the airport for the flight back home.

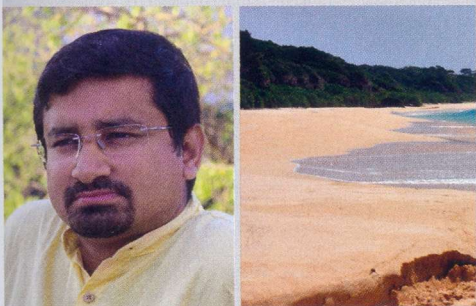
BUY

Artefacts made locally with sea shells, jute and wood at **SAGARIKA**



WEEKEND GETAWAY

RUTLAND ISLAND



‘For an island which is 100 sq km with 60 km of coastline, Rutland has amazing diversity,’

AKSHAY RAWAT
THE BAREFOOT GROUP

WHAT

Rutland Island, one of the Andaman islands, located deep in the South, separated by the Duncan Passage from Little Andaman.

WHY

For an island which is a little more than 100 sq km with 60 km of coastline, Rutland has amazing diversity and yet, it is not on the tourist map. It has fantastic beaches, perennial fresh water sources and a reserve forest. There is a settlement but it is tucked away in a corner; there are no hotels or resorts, but just one functional backpacker facility. However, it is the sheer range of activities possible that makes it attractive—river, beach, sea and forest activities.

MUST DO

The island can be visited as a day break or visitors can also camp out on the beach and I strongly recommend the experience of camping out under the stars!

Plus says

WHEN TO GO

November to April is the ideal time to visit, though cyclones during November to December could sometimes suspend water-based activities. Summers (April to June) could get very hot and humid. Monsoons (June to August) see a lot of rains but are enjoyable for those who revel in them.

GOOD TO KNOW

● Across the islands, Monday is a holiday; however, there are some places which are closed on Tuesdays, so check ahead and schedule your visits accordingly.

● There is hardly any indigenous cuisine, but is a mix of cuisines brought in by settlers. So prepare to feast on an amalgamation of dishes that owe their origin in Tamil, Bengali and North Indian cuisines.

TIPS

- If you want to visit some of the main islands by yourself, use the local ferries available from the Port Blair Harbour.
- Walking around is a good option, but some roads are very steep and many of them look alike, so get a map.
- Local buses are a cheap means of transport within Port Blair and other nearby towns, but check for routes.

Top picks

🎯 Cellular Jail: Established by the British to imprison freedom fighters, Cellular Jail a three-storeyed massive structure. An integral part of India's freedom struggle, it is currently a museum and provides a poignant look at the country's road to freedom.

🎯 Sea walking: Is a fascinating experience where you get to walk on the sea floor, about 25 feet below water, watching fascinating marine life and even feed the fish.

🎯 Hiking in Madhuban: Trek in Madhuban, about 75 km northeast of Port Blair; in addition to scenic trekking routes, there's beautiful flora, rare birds and butterflies and rare wildlife.

