

SKIPPING THE B&B

Times are changing, and so are travellers! They want more than a clean room to kick back in after exploring a new city, giving experiential hotels big business. **Shirley Mistry** tells you what experiential hotels you can head to

For seasoned travellers, hotels have always been a place to catch a wink, before they head out to explore their destination. However, over the last few years, apart from just being clean and air conditioned, travellers expect a lot more from their hotel. Experiential hotels offer you much more than boarding and lodging and give you an authentic taste of the culture of the land that you are in. We spoke to VuniqueHotels.com, a website that lets you book a stay at experiential hotels across the country and they told us about the top five experiential hotels in the country that you can stay at, the next time you're on vacation.



CARMELIA HAVEN, THEKKADY

This 4-star plantation resort, nestled in the midst of lush greenery in Kerala, is a sight to behold. Sitting pretty in the vast expanse of the Periyar Tiger Reserve, the hotel gets our recommendation for a destination that combines luxury living with outdoorsy adventures. For a relaxing holiday experience, find out what it is to live in a cave, with a cave room that has been designed for guests who want to enjoy by themselves. It is an underground cellar where you can shut the outside world and get some quality me-time. You can also walk through their spice plantations, engage in bird watching or try your hand at a spot of fishing.

Where Carmelia Haven Resort, Vandanmedu, Thekkady
Contact 4868-270252 / 270272



FORT JADHAVGADH, PUNE

Pune is not a holiday destination, but when you consider staying at a hotel such as the Fort Jadhavgad, you will immediately see our point. A heritage hotel, the property is India's only museum hotel, and gives you the opportunity to enjoy a luxurious stay at a heritage property — an option that is not available to you unless you head to Rajasthan. Staying at this fort, which has been converted into a hotel, is going to be nothing short of a historic experience, as you soak in the heritage, ancient curios and artefacts, along with magnificent infrastructure.

Where Fort Jadhavgad — A Gadh Heritage Hotel, Jadhavwadi, Hadapsar Saswad Road, Pune
Contact 020-5305200 / 305220

THE SOFALA, GOA

What do you get when you mix equal parts Portuguese architecture, with modern, designer décor? The answer is The Sofala. Located in Bardez, away from the teeming crowds, but close enough to all major attractions, The Sofala is our pick for a hotel that will pamper you to no end and give you a feel of quaint Portuguese lifestyle at the same time. Best known for their authentic Goan cuisine, live Jazz performances and décor by designer Tarun Tahiliani, this is one experience that we're eager to sign up for.

Where Road opposite Bank of India, Bhatiwado, Nerul, Bardez, Goa
Contact 8326714141



THE TAMARA, COORG

Nestled in a forest-like environment, The Tamara, in Coorg, wins our vote for a relaxing retreat. Elevated wooden cottages overlook lush, green trees and the hotel is perfect if you are looking for a getaway from busy city life. Here, you can visit the spa, meditate, practice yoga, go on nature walks, take a stroll through the coffee and spice plantations, go on a rudraksha trail or spend lazy afternoons by engaging in bird watching. They also offer special yoga packages.

Where Kabbinakad Estate, Napoklu Nad, Yavakapadi Village, Madikeri Taluk, Kodagu District, Coorg
Contact 080-71077700

