



MY INDIAN TRAVELS

BY SAANVI KANSAL

4B

NATIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOL KORAMANGALA

About the Author



Saanvi Kansal is a nine year old girl living in Bangalore who loves to travel with her family. This novel is an account of various places she visited all around India in 2019.... Her parents' love for travel made her equally an inquisitive traveller. Avni is her 14 years older sister; Saanvi follows Avni wherever she goes ;)



Contents

Chapter 1	Amazing HAMPI!	Page 3
Chapter 2	Dilwali DELHI	Page 5
Chapter 3	A Long Weekend at HYDERABAD	Page 8
Chapter 4	A Fantastic trip to KERALA	Page 9



Amazing HAMPI !

Hampi! The lost city of India reading about it in my textbooks made me want to explore it. So over one of the long weekend holiday my parents took us to Hampi.

Early pleasant morning and we were traveling towards Hampi. We passed oxcart after oxcart, some transporting goods and groups of people working in the fields. A landscape that looked as though it had rained boulders, all perched on top of each other as far as the eye could see, glowing bright orange in the morning sun.

It took us four hours to reach our destination. We were staying in the hotel Royal Orchid. So we dropped our luggage, got ready and set off to explore the heritage city of Hampi.

The town of Hampi is located on the ruins of Vijayanagara, the capital of the former Vijayanagara Empire, and home to the significant Virupaksha temple, one of the holiest temples in all of India. Every Hindu must visit Hampi at least once in their lifetime....

First we went for a hike on the Hemkuta hills which from the top had a beautiful scene of the Sun. After I walked a few steps on the top of the Hemkuta hill I saw a huge Jain temple with many pillars surrounding it, when I stepped inside the Jain temple I saw a huge statue of Lord Mahavira.



The Chariot inside Vittala Temple... Hampi

Next we saw the Vittala Temple, the most well-known ruins of Hampi, which is famous for the iconic Stone Chariot and the Musical pillars. The temples in this holy city are spectacular, especially the Virupaksha temple in the center of town with all of its carved images and 49m high tower, and my personal favourite, the Vittala Temple, with its incredible stone chariot, elephant stables and the underground Shiva temple.

Though being the month of December ; it was hot in afternoon and the stone temples floor were heated by scorching rays of sun, making it unbearable to walk barefoot. Thankfully my mom insisted on caps and umbrellas to cover and of course lots of cool coconut water (nariyal paani) to sip at ;)

So many Gods in their dancing form were carved on pillars in the courtyards...my sister and I insisted on copying one and getting ourselves clicked with the pose.

About 1km ahead was the ruins of Hampi Bazar which was famous for trading of paintings, silk, cotton, jute, food etc...I could have spent days visiting all the ancient temples that are spread out over miles across the incredible terrain.

As we walked through the village, parts of the village that were still intact were charming with the smiling children playing in and around colourful houses out-numbered by cows. Women were sitting together sipping masala teas watching men play a game with bottle tops, girls did laundry and vendors of baskets and other goods shuffled up and down the streets.

Several restaurants have rooftop tables to enjoy the views, and these are the perfect spots to chill out after a morning of exploring the temples. We indulged on incredible food and great lime sodas. My favourite was the Bamboo restaurant.

Hampi reminded me of “The Flintstones” while I was there.



Dilwali Delhi

Yippee! The summer vacations of the school starts and we were traveling to Delhi. Every year we go to our maternal grandparent's house; who lives in the NCR (Northern Central Region) town called Ghaziabad. 2019... my mom promised to take me around some important historical monuments of Delhi.

The very first thing which we always cross on our way from Delhi to Ghaziabad is The INDIA GATE. I love to watch the Iconic landmark historical monument standing with the Amar Jawan Jyoti dedicated to the numerous brave soldiers who lost their lives in World War I and the Indo-Pak War of 1971. It's my personal favourite as we always buy ice-creams and balloons from there as far as I can remember.

As soon as we reach Ghaziabad to my Nana-Nain home we were welcomed by them and lots of pampering took over. My mom's parental home is in Kavinagar and is an old green bungalow covered with Bougenvallias. Me and my sister always fight over the swing in the garden and then settle down over taking turns to swing.

Two days later we set out to explore Delhi as promised by my mom. April is starting of summer and it becomes hot in afternoon. So we started early and through metro rail from my nana's office in Shadhra we reached The RED FORT. Adding charm to Delhi's skyline, the Red Fort was built by Shah Jahan and it took 10 years to construct this marvel. Built in red sandstone, this monument is known for its Mughal architecture and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Opposite to it is the Famous LAL MANDIR of Jains, which has a bird hospital of its kind. Being a Jain from my maternal side we visited the beautiful temple built inside in marble and Outside in red stone. Next we visited the famous Parathe wali galli in Chandni Chowk and had a yummy tummy brunch gulped down with big glasses of sweet lassi.

As it was getting hot we visited the famous SHANKAR'S DOLL MUSEUM. The International Dolls Museum is a large collection of dolls in Delhi, India. It was set up by K.Shankar Pillai, a political cartoonist.

Housed in the Children's Book Trust building on Margs; it's my mother's favourite childhood place and now it has become ours as well. The collections of dolls are classified into two parts. One part consists of the dolls collected from European countries such as UK, USA, Australia, New Zealand, Commonwealth of Independent States and the other section consists of dolls collected from other Asian countries, Middle East, Africa and India.



Besides, dolls representing various countries, there is also a special display of a representative collection of over 150 dolls in Indian costume dolls. There are dolls showing various Indian dances and cultures, regional costumes, pairs of bride and grooms of various states, a group of dolls showing how to wear a saree. The museum also runs a "clinic" for "sick" dolls, where rare deteriorating dolls are restore.

I went crazy to get myself clicked with the famous samurai dolls of Japan and Maypole dance dolls of Hungary but photography was strictly prohibited there, so my mom had to bribe our way out with another ice cream outside.



....The India Gate... New Delhi

As evening sets in; we met our cousins at India Gate and indulged in a boating spree. It was time to go home for today and we headed back to Nana's office through metro. I loved everything I saw today ;)

The next few days were spend meeting my mom's school friends and their children as it was a weekend and they came to meet us and we had a blast going down to her memory lane by eating Pani-puri from my mom's s favourite hangout with her friends and visiting her school the DPSG at the Meerut road Ghaziabad with her schoolmates. All the kids went drooling over the fighter MIG plane which is the centrepiece of the school gifted to school by Hindon Airforce.

On Tuesday we again set out towards Delhi and visited The RASTHRAPATI BHAVAN: the Official residence of the President of India, the Rashtrapati Bhavan was designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens first for the British Viceroy. It is famous for its Mughal Gardens that are open to public at times. It depicts the subtle blend of Indian and European architecture.

Next we visited JANTAR MANTAR: Constructed by Maharaja Jai Singh in 1724, the Jantar Mantar is an observatory that helped predict time and other astronomy related events. Even today, it is a popular tourist attraction especially for those who love astronomy. We were running all around.

Since we were in Janpath my mom; a shopping freak has to visit the Janpath roadside market and the famous Cottage Emporium. While we tagged along watching and learning the bargaining skills from her for small-small trinkets which she brought from street vendors ;visiting the famous Hanuman temple and emporiums on Janpath and having snacks at famous Coffee house It was a fun experience altogether.

Day after that , we planned the days outing towards south Delhi and saw QUTAB MINAR: Qutab Minar is a 73 m-high tower of victory, built in 1193 by Qutab-ud-din Aibak .The tower has five distinct storeys.The first three storeys are made of red sandstone; the fourth and fifth storeys are of marble and sandstone. A 7 m-high iron pillar stands in the courtyard of the mosque. It is said that if you can encircle it with your hands while standing with your back to it your wish will be fulfilled. We saw lot of people trying to but none of them were able to.

Right after that we visited the Delhi Haat showcasing various handloom and crafts of different states under one roof. Not to forget the different cuisines of different states and fruit beer. We visited Lajpat Nagar for another shopping spree and bargaining session by my mom; ate the famous ladoos(moong dal dumplings with radish and chutney), Chuski(ice-lollies) and lime soda. Once again I liked everything I saw and ate ;)

Each day of pampering by my grandparents adds up to the memories of my days spent in Ghaziabad and Delhi. The Ramlila ground near the house was having a cultural fest and a lifestyle fair. In which we saw lot of school children putting cultural shows and a flea market. We visited lot of our relatives and their families in and around Delhi and NCR and loved the love showered by them on us that's why they call it "Delhi Dilwalon Ki"!

It was indeed a memorable vacation.Our country's capital is perhaps one of the places with the most number of historical monuments. It has several tombs, forts and other architectural marvels spread across the city that lend a beautiful charm to it. From red brick buildings to stone ones and from pillars to ghats, Delhi is an amazing place to explore India's rich history. I love being there and everything I saw... ;)

HYDERABAD



Call it Hyderabad or City of Pearls, it's a known fact that Hyderabad is culturally a rich city. The city is famous for its royal architecture that proudly showcases the Nawabi atmosphere. Traditional yet urbane that's what best describes Hyderabad. My family has to attend a close family friend's son's wedding at Hyderabad; since we have never been there my parents thought it to be an opportunity to attend the wedding and sightsee Hyderabad together over the long weekend.

We landed there in time so as to attend the wedding functions. We checked in our hotel; ate and changed into vibrant attire. We attended the ceremonial sehra bandi and Baraat ,as we were from the groom's side and danced our way to ear deafening Dhol and bollywood music to the wedding venue. The women were dressed in their rich vibrant saris and jewellery and me and Avni in our gowns and lehenga choli.

It was a typical Marwari wedding with Nizami touch, the ambience, the food the décor .I loved being a part of it.

Next day we left hotel after breakfast and hired an OLA cab for sightseeing the Hyderabad city. At first we went to Birla temple, situated on a small sloppy hill. From the rear end of temple we saw Hussain Sagar lake with the standing Buddha statue in the centre and an aerial view of half of Hyderabad from top.

For lunch we visited the famous Paradise restaurant of Hyderabad for its Biryani and Kebabs. And there on visited Salar Jung museum. It is one of largest museums in asia...as it holds many ancient historical artifacts.. But it's too big to walk and tiring ... after that we came back to our hotel in Banjara hills, took some rest and Avni and I dozed off for a little while.

As evening sets in; we then moved on to see the Iconic Charminar lit up in the night. It is here where you will get to see the “Real Hyderabad”.my father told me and well, who doesn't know Charminar? It is the first thing that comes to my mind when I thinks of Hyderabad. The ride to Charminar itself is fascinating because driving from the urbanized, new and developed part of Hyderabad, one slowly comes closer to the old part of the city and slowly you get to see the change. . Old restaurants having haleem and Biryani on their menu boards, burqa-clad women bargaining with the street side shopkeepers selling bangles, attar and Hyderabad pearls is what you get to see as you reach the monument.

Charminar stole the show as it looked fascinating all lit up at night, it is indeed the centre of attraction. The Charminar is a square structure with each side 20 meters long with four arches facing the streets with minarets on top of each. It was built by Qutub Shah in 1859.We also brought bangles and attar as souvenir's to take back home.

Hyderabad is indeed a land of biryani, kebabs, ancient monuments and pearls...

KERALA

Kerala the gods own country. We visited Kerala in our Dussera vacations. First we travelled to Cochin where we stayed at Taj-gateway hotel; our room was overlooking the India's first man-made lake. We took a boat trip around the lake and saw the sunset by the coast with majestic INS VIRAT (Naval fighter ship) circled by coast guard shipswhat a mesmerising sight it was to see the pride of the nation before it was leaving for Mumbai. Also we saw the goods carrier; loading and unloading containers at the Cochin port. We visited the Jewish fisherman village which is famous for its fishing net and the church

MUNNAR



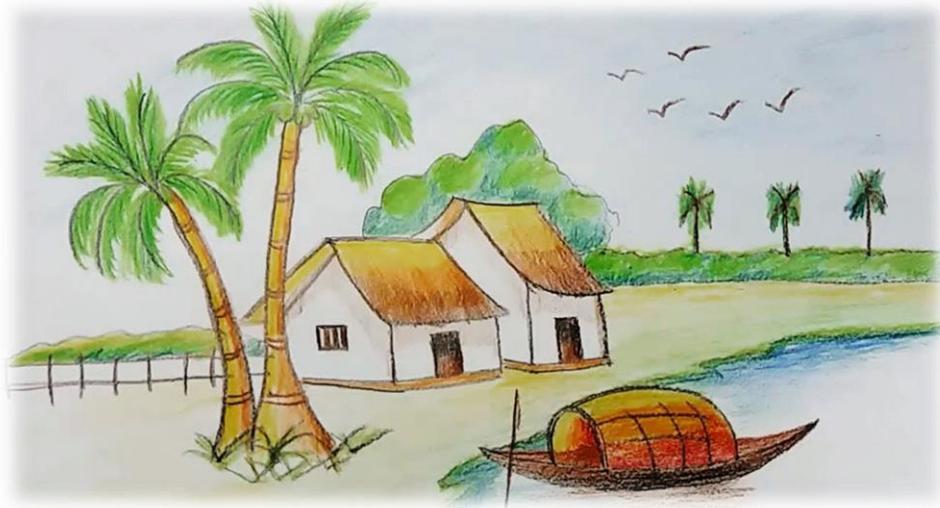
The very next day we hired an innova car and was soon zipping towards Munnar. Situated between the mountains covered with lush tea gardens as far as your eyes can see it's a heavenly place on earth. It started drizzling with sunlight in sky and for the first time I experienced a fully formed beautiful rainbow across the mountains. I have seen many in city but not as clear and felt delighted to be so close to the natural phenomena.

We stayed at Munnar county resort; which is famous for its sunset view of mountains. We stayed in the cottage fully furnished with a small kitchen and a living room. As it gets dark quickly on hills we made ourself busy with resorts recreational activities, played badminton and carom with my parents and late evening we had dinner facing the mountains and danced on to the bollywood tunes around the bonfire. It was an unforgettable experience and family bonding time.

The next day early morning we went for a 4km trek around the tea estate sponsored by the hotel .It felt so good inhaling the fresh hill air free of pollution away from city's noisy atmosphere. We were climbing up and down the hills. Thereafter we visited the famous lake of Munnar and did boating there and while coming back from hotel saw the famous garden of flowers; which consists of hundreds of variety of unique flowers ;orchids and lilies and roses. All were there.

We also visited spice gardens while coming back to our resort and saw various variety of spices as plants and how they are grown; used and packed. We brought several Black pepper, cardamom.green hibiscus tea and other spices for our home and to gift to our relatives as souvenir's .Munnar was a beautiful sight for sore eyes.

Alleppey



Our next stop in Kerala was Alleppey .It is famous for its backwaters. We reached there and hired a Houseboat for our stay in Alleppey for one day and night. The backwaters of Alleppey is a popular tourist destination where people spend their day on a houseboat and roam around the large stretch of backwaters spread as far as your eyes can see.

It's nice to live in houseboat which is equipped with all the facilities as if in home. Small bedrooms, living room with television, toilets and a roof deck with chairs so you can admire the beauty of lush green palm trees on the stretch along the backwater stretch with cool wind blowing. It was a once in a lifetime experience and once again I loved everything I saw.

Kerala indeed is a God's own country.

Blurb

During the pandemic when we cannot travel let me take you back to what travelling was like. Come join me through my Indian expedition. Exploring the glory and uniqueness of our country.

