

tourist info



MUST VISIT

An unexplored heritage site, **Pattadakal** is ideal for a family getaway...

The Valley of Coronations

In a fertile valley along the River Malaprabha in Karnataka lies an ancient land. One, where kings once came to be coronated; and kingdoms were bestowed upon the favored heirs apparent. This was a land of wisdom, where North met South and a unique cultural conjugation of sorts came to be. Standing testimony to that cultural confluence of the North and South Indian styles today are the villages of Pattadakal, Aihole and Badami. Though the cave temples of Badami are quite well known, Pattadakal which is mere minutes away is often overlooked and unexplored, making it the perfect destination for a family getaway during the summer holidays.

In Pattadakal, these ancient temples have now been bounded off in a sprawling landscape that has been declared UNESCO World Heritage Site. This entire group of monuments at Pattadakal date back to the seventh and eight centuries – an era when art and architecture flourished under the Chalukyas.

In this temple complex that is predominantly dedicated to Lord Shiva, while there are many temples that are in ruins, there are also those that continue to function even today and draw people from the nearby areas. Incidentally, Pattadakal gets its name from the words *Pattada* and *Kallu*, which literally mean coronation stone. ■

GETTING THERE

Pattadakal is 390 kms from Hyderabad and getting there takes around eight hours by road. Take the NH44 from Hyderabad till Kandoor and then the NH167 via Raichur to reach Pattadakal.

DETOUR

Badami: The Badami cave temples are like no other. Sitting serenely on the banks of the River Agastya, Badami will leave you awestruck not just because of its incredible architecture but also because of how beautiful the surroundings are. Badami is 25 kms from Pattadakal.

EXTEND YOUR ITINERARY

Over a long weekend, one can also visit Hampi - Badami - Aihole along with Pattadakal. Hospet, Hampi or Badami serve well as a base with their interesting selection of homestays and resorts. There is also a nice government guest house in Kudala Sangama, which is at an hour's distance from Pattadakal.

TEXT & PHOTOS: NEEHARIKA SATYAVADA