

COVER STORY

VACATIONS



The popular Venna Lake goes back 177 years

MAHABALESHWAR

Located in the Sahyadri mountain range in the Western Ghats, Mahabaleshwar is a hill station surrounded by evergreen and bracing forests that make it a perfect summer getaway. The hill town is home to the famed Pratapgarrh Fort that towers 3,450 feet above sea level. This fort is the pride of the Marathas and was used by Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj to strategize his military expeditions. A huge statue of Shivaji is seen atop the fort. Once you climb to the top you will be rewarded with magnificent views of the mountain ranges all around. Another must-see destination in Mahabaleshwar is the Venna Lake. The lake was built by Appasaheb Maharaj in 1842 and is surrounded by greenery. Boat rides are a common way to enjoy the lake and you can also hop on to a horse for a ride around its perimeter. There are several restaurants that dot the lake which makes it a popular pit stop with

both locals and tourists alike. Close by is the famed Mapro Garden that hosts an annual strawberry festival. A food processing company, you can actually visit the factory and see the entire process of making candies. The older part of Mahabaleshwar has some fantastic view points as well as architecture that is admirable. For a spiritual fix, check out the Krishnabai temple where the Krishna river that is believed to originate here is worshiped. Do stop by at the 3 Monkey Point, a natural sculpture of stones that resemble three monkeys and Arthur Seat Point, a vantage view point.

Best known for: Strawberries

When established: 1829

What to shop for: Fresh strawberries in season; goodies from Mapro, especially the Falero fruit-based candies, jams, squashes and preserves.

Must-try food dishes: Strawberry ice cream and Corn Pattice.

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