

PAUL McDOUGALL

wildlife photographer  photographic safaris

8N/9D Satpura Tiger Wildlife Photography Tour

Accommodation: Hotel / Home stay

Number of Guests: 4

Travel Dates: 18th – 25th March

Photo guide: Paul McDougall

Naturalist: Shantanu Prasad

Trip Duration: 8 nights 9 days.

Trip Cost: £6,350 per person (no single supplement)

ITINERARY AT GLANCE

Date	Location	Accommodation	Meal Plan	Activity
Day 1 18/3/2027	Arrival at Bhopal Airport and transfer to Satpura	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	TRSF
Day 2 19/3/2027	Satpura Tiger Reserve	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	MS, AS
Day 3 20/3/2026	Satpura Tiger Reserve	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	FD
Day 4 21/3/2026	Satpura Tiger Reserve	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	FD
Day 5 22/3/2026	Satpura Tiger Reserve	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	MS, AS
Day 6 23/3/2026	Satpura Tiger Reserve	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	FD
Day 7 24/3/2026	Satpura Tiger Reserve	Satpura – Denwa Backwater Escape	B L D	MS, BT
Day 8 25/3/2026	Transfer to Bhopal and flight to Delhi	Delhi Raddison Blue Plaza	B L D	BT, TRSF
Day 9 27/3/2026	Transfer To Airport - departure		B	TRSF

B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner, TRSF – Transfer, WW – Wildlife Walk, ND – Night Drive, MS – Morning Safari, FD – Full Day Safari, AS – Afternoon Safari, DD – Day Drive, DE – Day Excursions (Described below), BT – Boat Trip

Please note accommodation may be altered to an equivalent option dependent on availability.



Satpura Tiger Reserve is a vast tranquil protected area within the Satpura Mountain range of Central India. This pristine Jungle has still retained nature's magical charm and wilderness areas like this are hard to find these days. Centuries of weathering has shaped this elevated highland into a rugged landscape adorned with sandstone peaks with stunning views, gorges and ravines, rivulets; waterfalls and streams that have nurtured these dense jungles.

Satpura Tiger Reserve is a prime example of the central Indian highlands eco-system and with an area of 2133.307 square km, it is one of the major geographical plateaus in India and part of the Deccan bio-geographic zone of India. The reserve lies in the Narmadapuram district of Madhya Pradesh. It's a unique area of high natural and diverse land resource values and is gifted with rich bio-diversity, having many rare and endemic plants and animals. Another unique combination which can be seen only here in Satpura is that on Pachmarhi plateau - part Sal forests exist on Gondwana sandstone whereas on lower plain areas of the reserve teak forests grow on basaltic traps. It is also interesting to note that some species, which are not common elsewhere in Madhya Pradesh are found in this area.

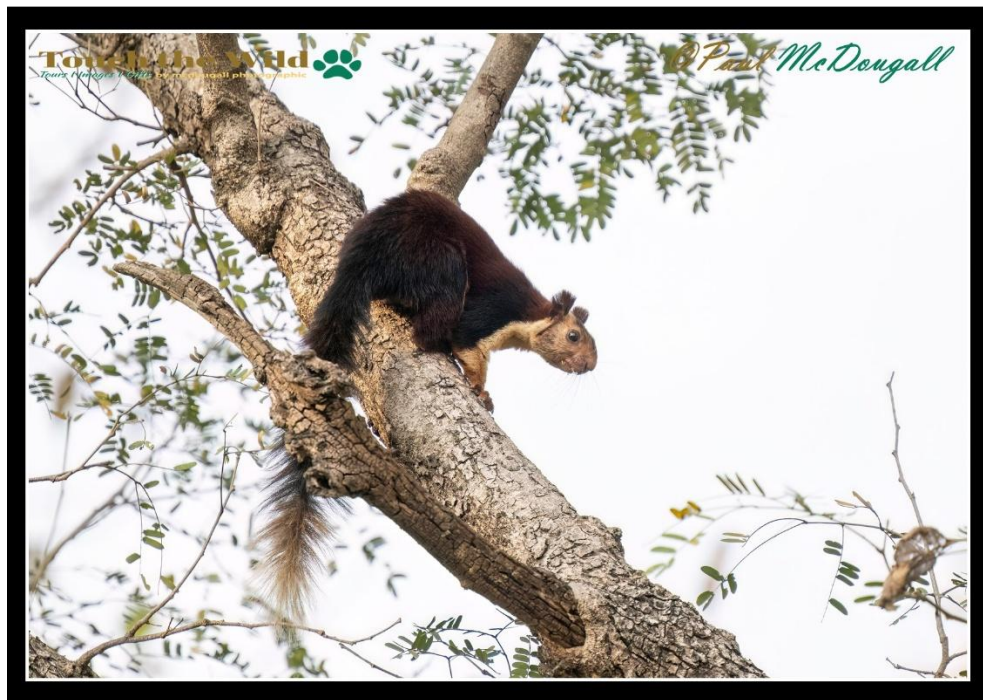
Satpura, is considered as the inspiration of the magical forest of the Jungle Book. The word Satpura is derived from Sanskrit which basically means "Seven Folds" or "Seven hills", it forms a watershed between the Narmada and Tapti Rivers from Central India which is triangular in shape. Comprising of Bori Sanctuary, Satpura is one of the oldest forest reserves with a well-established tradition of scientific management of forests.

In addition to Biological, Satpura also has a huge Archaeological significance considering more than 50 rock shelters with painting that are 1500 to 10,000 years old are found within its boundaries. Satpura Tiger Reserve stands out by its magnificent natural beauty and the famous Pachmari town, the only designated hill station of Madhya Pradesh which is famous for its picturesque locations, also falls within the reserve. Its unique geographical formations, dense forests, waterfalls, distinguished flora and fauna, rock shelters depicting

ancient cultural heritage, pilgrim sites, colonial buildings and tribal culture make it one of the most unique wildlife destinations in India.

There are 52 species of mammals, 300 species of birds and 31 species of reptiles all found in the reserve.

The mammal highlights include Tiger, Leopard, Gaur, Sambar, Spotted Deer, Barking deer, Chausingha, Chinkara, Nilgai, Wild boar, Sloth bear, and Wild Dog (Dhole). The small carnivores include Jungle cat, Palm civet and small Indian civet. There are two important arboreal mammals: the Indian Giant squirrel and the large brown flying squirrel.



Satpura's history stretches far beyond the colonial era; scattered across the region are ancient caves that bear testimony to early human habitation. These caves, particularly those in the Pachmarhi hills, are adorned with rock paintings from the mesolithic and historic period. Archaeologists and historians believe they were created by hunter-gatherer communities who once thrived in the region.

The artwork depicts scenes of daily life like hunting and dancing, as well as animals like bison, tigers, and elephants. Made using natural pigments, these paintings offer a window into the lives of ancient people, showcasing their connection with the natural world around them.

These caves are historical and cultural treasures that link the present to the past. They highlight how humans have long been a part of Satpura's ecosystem, coexisting with its wildlife and drawing sustenance from its resources.

The Role of Indigenous Tribes and Community Engagement in Conservation

The Satpura Tiger Reserve is also home to various indigenous tribes like the Gond, Korku and Bharia communities, whose ancestors may have created some of the ancient rock paintings. These tribes have lived in harmony with the forest for generations, their lives deeply intertwined with its rhythms and cycles. They possess an intimate knowledge of the land, its flora and fauna, and its hidden treasures.

In the past, these tribes depended on the forest for food, medicine, and shelter. Their traditional practices and folklore offer valuable insights into how humans can coexist with nature. Tribal members are now employed as forest guards, trackers, and guides, allowing them to share their knowledge and skills with visitors while providing them with sustainable livelihoods. The integration of local communities into conservation efforts has been a key factor in Satpura's success.

A quote from *The Highlands of Central India* by J. Forsyth

“Few parts of India present so great a range of interesting natural objects for investigation as this. Situated in the very centre of the peninsula, the ethnical, zoological, botanical, and even geological features of north and south, and of east and west, here meet and contrast themselves.”

Satpura's landscape is as diverse as its wildlife. Rolling hills give way to vast grasslands, which transition into dense evergreen and dry deciduous forests. Serene streams turn into mighty rivers that have shaped undulating sandstone formations, cliffs and gorges over millennia.

The Satpura mountain range acts as a bridge and genetic corridor between the Western Ghats and the Himalayas. Since two major geographical boundaries end in this area, several unique species like the Malabar Giant Squirrel, partially albino Gaur and Malabar Whistling Thrush are found in this area.

This reserve harbors a total of 26 species indigenous to the Himalayan region, as well as 42 species endemic to the Nilgiri region, acting as a bridge between these diverse topographic habitats. It is the only region where there is an overlap in habitat between the grey junglefowl, which resides in the south, and the red junglefowl, found in the northern reaches of India.

What sets Satpura Tiger Reserve apart from other reserves in India is the immersive experiences it offers amidst untouched wilderness. Here, visitors don't just observe nature; they become a part of it. Unlike reserves that rely heavily on jeep safaris, Satpura encourages non-motorized activities like walking safaris, mobile camping, boat safaris and canoeing.

These eco-friendly activities allow people to experience the forest up close, fostering a deeper connection with the land and its inhabitants. The park's holistic approach has managed to strike a balance between conservation and eco-tourism. This ensures that wildlife thrives undisturbed and visitors leave with an experience that feels authentic, raw and transformative.

Satpura Tiger Reserve is not just a sanctuary for tigers; it is a haven for countless species that coexist in its diverse habitats. The reserve's success story is a testament to the power of collaboration between government bodies including the forest department, conservationists, the private sector and local communities.

Satpura Tiger Reserve is more than a protected area; it is a living, breathing example of what conservation can achieve. In a world grappling with climate change and biodiversity loss, Satpura stands as a beacon of hope, reminding us of the importance of protecting our natural heritage.

For travelers seeking an authentic wildlife experience, Satpura offers more than just tiger or leopard sightings. It presents a path into the heart of nature, a chance to reconnect with the wild more deeply, and an opportunity to be a part of a legacy that began with Forsyth's discovery and continues to inspire generations.

Will you see a tiger here? It is very likely. But unlike some parks where sightings are almost guaranteed, Satpura is vast, and tigers hold large territories. You're just as likely to come across a sloth bear, leopard, or even the elusive dhole (Indian wild dog). Satpura is about the all-round nature experience, not chasing a single species. And that's exactly why it's so special.

If you do see tigers here you are most likely to be the only vehicle or with a very low number of vehicles, in a lot of the more well known Indian Tiger Reserves it is not uncommon to have 20-30 vehicles around a tiger and it can be chaos. In Satpura there are a maximum of 12 vehicles allowed in to the core zone, and therefore the experience is much nicer and worthwhile.

The focus on this trip is very much about the experience and coming home with a full portfolio of images that showcase the environment and the wildlife that lives there. During the tour I will help you capture great behaviour shots, environmental portraits showing the best of the landscape, new species and I will help you learn new techniques including High Kwy, Loq Kwy, ICM, Panning, Zoom Bursts and so much more.

This is an Indian Tiger Safari like no other packed full of great photographic opportunities and one that you won't want to miss.

Satpura TR Tiger Safari Itinerary - 7 Nights & 8 Days



Full Itinerary

Day 1

Pick up from the Bhopal Airport around 02:00 pm and transfer to Satpura TR by 5 pm after having lunch at Bhopal.

- Check in to the [Denwa Backwater Escape](#) resort, have Dinner & Night Stay at the resort. This will be our home for the next 7 nights.

Day 2 Morning & Afternoon Satpura Tiger safari

Our first morning and afternoon in the park. Today will be spent in the core zone on 2 separate drives. We will look for Sloth Bear, Deer, Langurs and lots of other animals and of course tigers.

- Safari starts with a cup of Morning Tea/Coffee around 5:00am. This is the best time to spot Tigers & other wildlife in the park.
- Lunch will be served at the resort.
- Rest and relaxation during the day until around 2:30pm. You can use the pool facilities, relax or look at images. This is your time.
- Afternoon Safari again starts at 3 pm for another round of Tiger tracking.
- Dinner & Night Stay at the [Denwa Backwater Escape](#) Resort.

We use the first day as an orientation and spend the time trying different techniques and immersing ourselves in the environment and the photographic opportunities.



Day 3 and 4 Full Day Tiger safari

Full day permits are expensive but are included in the cost of your trip. They are invaluable when searching for tigers as we are not constrained by the core zone and can go anywhere. We are also able to stay in the reserve when all of the half day vehicles exit the park.

- Safari again starts with a cup of Morning Tea/Coffee around 5 am for the full day.
- Breakfast & Lunch will be served in one of the parks designated beautiful locations. Full days will maximize our opportunity to see tigers and with low vehicle numbers we will have great photographic opportunities.
- Dinner & Night Stay at the [Denwa Backwater Escape](#) Resort.

The full days we will focus on Tigers and will hope to find one of the tigresses with cubs. March is a great time of year to get Tigers with cubs in Satpura and using the local knowledge of our guides and drivers we will spend time looking for them



Day 5 Morning & Afternoon Satpura Tiger safari

We will review sightings so far for the week and then will make a plan as a group what the focus will be for the day.

- Safari starts with a cup of Morning Tea/Coffee around 5:00am. This is the best time to spot Tigers & other wildlife in the park.

- Lunch will be served at the resort.
- Rest and relaxation during the day until around 2:30pm. You can use the pool facilities, relax or look at images. This is your time.
- Afternoon Safari again starts at 3 pm for another round of Tiger tracking.
- Dinner & Night Stay at the Denwa Backwater Escape Resort.

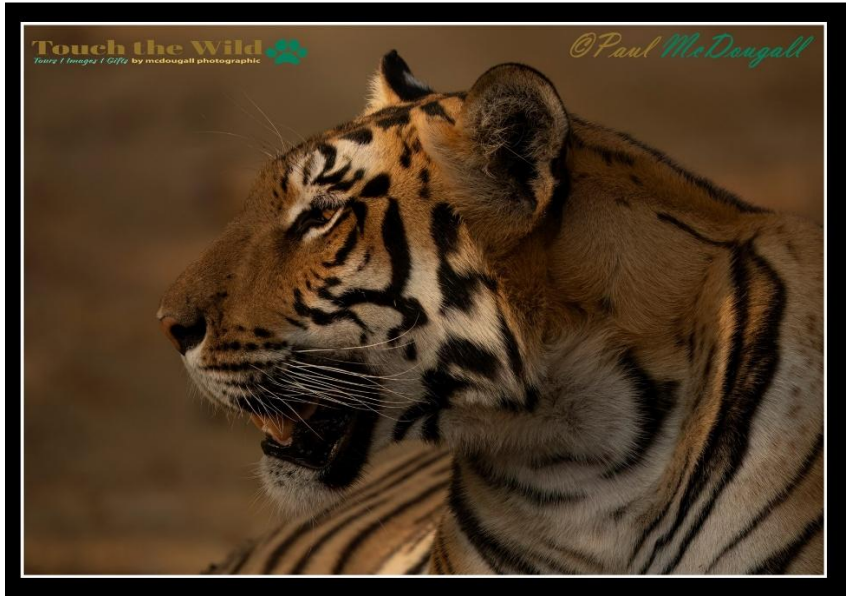


Day 6 Full Day Tiger safari

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- Boat Safari starts with a cup of morning Tea/Coffee around 5 am. This is the best time to spot Tigers, Dhole, Leopards, Marsh Crocodile & other wildlife around the Denwa river surrounding the park.
- Breakfast & Check out from the Resort around 08:00 and Transfer to the Bhopal Airport around 11:00am to catch the Indigo flight 6E-2587 at 13:45 which reaches Delhi at 15:10
- Transfer to the [Radisson Blu Plaza](#) Airport hotel for overnight stay.

Day 7 Morning Satpura Tiger safari and Afternoon Boat Trip

Today we will spend the morning in the park and then we will do a boat trip later on in the afternoon, this will give us a unique opportunity to photograph tigers and other wildlife from the river.

- Safari starts with a cup of Morning Tea/Coffee around 5:00am. This is the best time to spot Tigers & other wildlife in the park.
- Lunch will be served at the resort.
- Boat Trip along the Denwa River. We will of course be looking for tigers and other animals but it is also an amazing opportunity to photograph birds and the breathtaking landscape from a different perspective.



Day 7 Morning Boat Trip and Transfer to Delhi

- We will repeat last night's boat trip activity and spend the time on the river searching for various birds and mammals.
- We will then check out after breakfast and transfer to Bhopal Airport. We will then fly to Delhi and will overnight in Delhi ready for your flight home the next day. (Please note as long as we know in advance it can be possible to get an evening flight home from Delhi or to fly out of Mumbai)
- Overnight at Rddison Blue Hotel at Delhi Airport



Day 8 Departure

Today you will be transferred to the airport for your scheduled flight home. If you have arranged an evening flight then we can plan a day time Delhi City Tour for you at an additional cost.

INCLUSIONS:

- Pick up and drop off from Bhopal Airport
- Bhopal to Delhi Flight
- Airport Pick up and Drop off from Delhi Airport
- 7 Nights accommodation at Denwa Backwater Escape, Satpura
- 1 Nights accommodation in Delhi
- All accommodation booked on Double/Single basis
- All meals throughout the tour
- 2 Safari Vehicles for Satpura
- 3 Full day Satpura Safaris
- 5 Half Day Satpura Safaris
- 2 x Boat Trip in Satpura
- All park entry fees and permit charges.
- All government formalities.
- Wildlife Permit costs.
- Restricted Area Permits.
- All Camera Permits.
- Professional Wildlife Photographic Guide Services
- Professional Local English Speaking Naturalist and Guide throughout the whole trip
- Local Driver Guides

EXCLUSIONS

- International Flights.
- Does not include any tips & gratuities for the driver, guides and for the resort staff.
- Does not include any kind of alcoholic or soft beverage.
- Change in itinerary will be charged etc. once booked.
- Cost for personal expenses such as laundry, soft drinks, incidentals etc.
- Any extra cost due to any unforeseen condition, such as delay/cancellation of flight, natural calamity, political unrest etc.
- India Visa.
- Travel Insurance – Compulsory for this trip

***When considering this trip and comparing with other Tiger Safaris. Please consider that 3 Full Day Permits are included and there will be a maximum of 2 photographers per vehicle.

Touch the Wild 
Tours | Images | Gifts by mcdougall photographic

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