

BUDDHIST CIRCUIT



BIHAR

The birthplace of almost all major ancient faiths, the state of Bihar is rich in tradition and culture. Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism and Sikhism have their origin in the state and later spread across the country. Bihar is the bedrock of Buddhism, the fourth largest religion in India. This is where prince Siddhartha transformed into Lord Buddha.



WEST CHAMPARAN

An important location related to the Buddhist era, West Champaran is a major attraction of the Buddhist Circuit. According to Buddhist scriptures, when Gautama Buddha renounced his worldly life in search of knowledge with his companion Chandak, it is in this region that he had finally relinquished his royal robes, shaved off his hair and embraced the life of a bhikshu.

Ashokan Pillar, Rampurva

Situated very close to the Indo-Nepal border, the dilapidated Ashokan Pillars at Rampurva, in West Champaran district are believed to commemorate the Buddha's renunciation of his princely life. The Northern Pillar inscribed with Ashokan Brahmi inscription had the Lion Capital with a majestic lion seated on a bell-shaped inverted lotus. The Southern pillar without any inscription was surmounted by the Bull Capital. The Bull capital is currently kept at Rashtrapati Bhawan while the Lion capital is in Indian Museum, Kolkata.

Buddhist Stupa, Lauriya Nandangarh

The 26 metre high ancient Buddhist Stupa excavated at Nandangarh, spread across an area of 6000 square metres, is supposedly one of the biggest stupas in India. This sepulchral mound is supposed to have enshrined the ashes of Lord Buddha. Several rare artifacts since the Sunga dynasty have been excavated at this place.

Other Tourist Spots

- ✿ Ashokan Pillar, Lauriya Nandangarh
- ✿ Valmiki National Park
- ✿ Stone Cave of Hetukunwar
- ✿ Sahodra Sthan

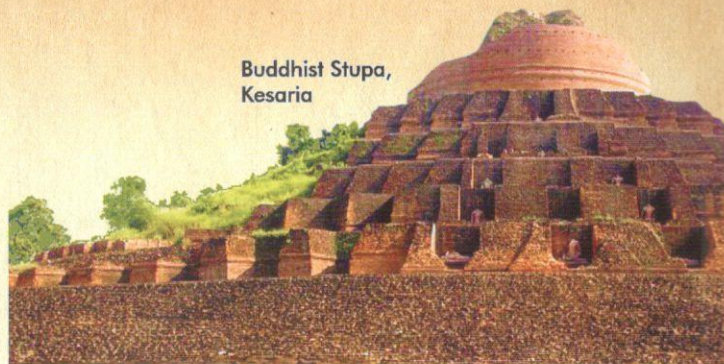
How to Reach

Air: Mahayogi Gorakhnath Airport (Gorakhpur) is the nearest airport (125 Km).

Rail: This district has one major railway junction called Narkatiaganj Junction, along with several other smaller junctions.

Road: West Champaran is connected by the NH 28B to major destinations.

Buddhist Stupa,
Kesaria



EAST CHAMPARAN

East Champaran, fondly called the land of Lord Buddha occupies a coveted position among international Buddhist destinations. According to Buddhist scriptures, when Prince Siddharta started off on his path to enlightenment, he stayed for a while at the ashram of Alara Kalama, who is said to have been his first teacher, at Lauria Areraj. It is here that the Buddha learnt to attain the dhyanic state known as the "sphere of nothingness". The world famous Kesaria Stupa, the tallest Buddhist Stupa, is situated here.

Buddhist Stupa, Kesaria

The 104 ft tall Kesaria Stupa located at Chakia-Sahebganj road, about 160 km away from Patna, has been declared as the largest stupa in the world by the Archaeological Survey of India. Presumed to be built during the Gupta dynasty, between 200 - 750 CE, it honours the place where Lord Buddha had met his disciples for the last time, before attaining Nirvana. A reminder of the last days of Lord Buddha and his compassionate and gentle approach towards people, the Stupa is a holy site for Buddhist pilgrims around the world.

Ashokan Pillar, Lauriya, Areraj

The lofty stone pillar, known as the "Stambh dharma lekha" is located at Motihari-Pratapour main road. As per popular belief, this pillar was constructed by emperor Ashoka to commemorate Lord Buddha's first steps towards enlightenment at the ashram of Saint Alara Kalama. This Ashokan Pillar is 37 feet tall with a base diameter of 11 feet, 2 inches. At the top the diameter measures 8 feet.

Other Tourist Spots

- ✿ Someshwar Shiv Mandir, Areraj
- ✿ Orwell's Birthplace
- ✿ School started by Gandhi and Gandhi Memorial

How to Reach

Air: The nearest airport is Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport (Patna), roughly 3 hour drive from Motihari (160 Km).

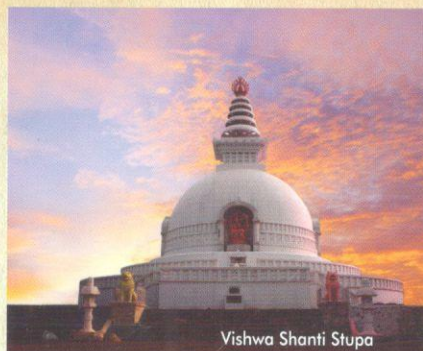
Rail: Motihari has its own railway station which is connected to all major cities of Bihar and other states.

Road: Motihari, the district headquarters of East Champaran is well connected to all the major places around by road.



VAISHALI

Deemed to be the seat of the first republic in the globe, Vaishali, is replete with several Buddhist spots. According to mythology, once the favourite resort of Gautama Buddha, Vaishali witnessed the last sermon and the announcement of Parinirvana. The Second Buddhist Council was also held in Vaishali, about 110 years later. Thus, Vaishali is rightfully a prominent destination for tourists following the Lord Buddha's trail.



Lord Buddha Relic Stupa (Lichhavi Stupa)

Lichhavi Stupa is located approximately 35 Km from Hajipur beside Abhishek Pushkarini tank. It is believed that the Lichhavis built the Lichhavi Stupa to enshrine the 8th part of holy remains of Lord Buddha in a stone casket. This stupa came to light in an archaeological excavation during 1958-1962.

Ashoka Stupa & Pillars (Kolhua)

One of the renowned destinations of Vaishali located in proximity to coronation tank or Abhishek Pushkarini, are the Ashoka Stupa & Lion Pillar. As per Buddhist literature, Emperor Ashoka in 543 B.C. built Stupas and Pillars on the Nirvana - path of Lord Buddha, from Lumbini to Kushinagar. These are believed to honour the site last sermon of Lord Buddha.

Other Tourist Spots

- Amrapali Stupa
- Vishwa Shanti Stupa
- Garh of Raja Vishal
- Abhishek Pushkarni
- Bawan Pokhar Temple
- Vaishali Museum

How to Reach

- Air:** The nearest airport is Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport Patna (39 Km).
- Rail:** Hajipur on the north eastern railway (35 Km) or Muzaffarpur Railway (40 Km).
- Road:** Vaishali is well connected by road to Patna (56 Km), Muzaffarpur (36 Km) and Hajipur (35 Km).

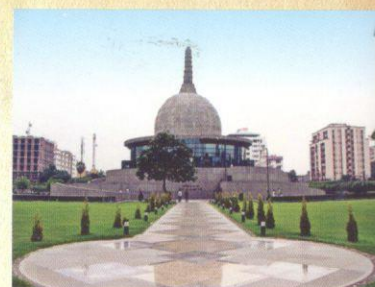
Where to Stay

Tourist Bungalow: Ambapali Vihar Vaishali-844128. Ph. 0622-285425. Non-A/C Room (Double), Non-A/C Room (Single) and Dormitory Beds. Youth Hostel: Non-A/C Room (Double), Dormitory Beds.

Ashoka
Pillar,
Vaishali

PATNA

Earlier known as Pataliputra, present day Patna is among the world's oldest capital cities with unbroken history of many centuries as an imperial metropolis. The gateway of Buddhist and Jain circuits, Patna is a base point to explore the Buddhist footprints in the state. The state capital has prominent places where historic artifacts pertaining to Buddhism have been properly preserved.



Buddha Smriti Park

Buddha Smriti Park

Spread over 20 acres, with a theme that reflects the historical relationship between Buddhism and Bihar, Lord Buddha Smriti Park was built to commemorate the 2550th year of Lord Buddha's Mahaparinirvana. Located near Patna Railway Junction, apart from two saplings of sacred Bodhi tree from Bodhi Gaya and Anuradhapur, the park houses a relic Stupa, Bodhi Tree, and a meditation centre.

Kumhrar

Kumhrar Park, located about 5 Km away from the main city, is the epitome of the cultural brilliance of ancient Patna. Archaeological findings in this area establish Patna's claim to over a thousand years of political glory dating back to the great Mauryan civilization. Excavation at Kumhrar has unearthed rich collection of relics such as ornaments, terracotta beads, copper coins, utensils etc. Further excavations have unraveled A Buddhist monastery built of brick, an ancient medical clinic, and a Durakhi Devi Temple.

Other Tourist Places

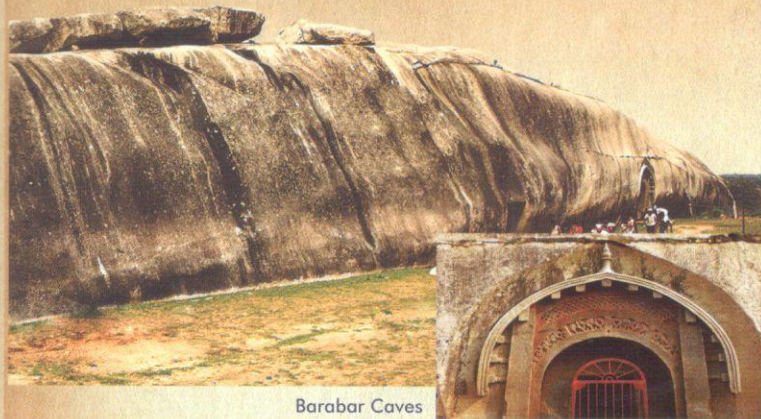
- Patna Museum
- Agam Kuan
- Bihar Museum
- Harmandar Sahib

How to Reach

- Air:** Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport connects to major Indian cities by regular flight services.
- Rail:** Patna is connected by rail to Mumbai, Kolkata, Guwahati, Ranchi, Varanasi.
- Road:** All weather roads connect Patna with the rest of Bihar. There are regular interstate bus services as well.
- Bus:** Regular direct bus services connect Patna to Kolkata, Rajgir, Nalanda, Pawapuri, Vaishali, Gaya-Bodhgaya, Ranchi, Raxaul, Muzzafarpur, Sasaram, etc.

Where to Stay

Tourist Bungalow: Kautilya Vihar, Beer Chand Patel Path, Patna-800001.
Phone: 91-0612-2225411, 2210219, 2210242. AC Room, Non-AC Deluxe, Economy and Dormitory Beds.



Barabar Caves

JEHANABAD

Located very close to Patna, the district of Jehanabad is another major tourist site related to the Buddhist. It houses five rock-cut, polished caves built by Emperor Ashoka for the Buddhist monks.

Barabar Caves

The Barabar Hill Caves are the oldest surviving rock-cut caves in India, dating from the Maurya Empire (322–185 BCE), some with Ashokan inscriptions, located in the Makhdumpur region of Jehanabad district. Situated in the twin hills of Barabar and Nagarjuni, these caves were carved by the Mauryan emperors, Ashoka and his grandson, Dasharatha Maurya, to serve as residence for Buddhist as well as Jain monks.

Banvaria

Recently, a colossal image of Lord Buddha was excavated near village Banvaria, located on the banks of river Falgu, about 3 Km north-east of Nagarjuni Hills. The image of Lord Buddha here is larger than that present at the Kauva Dol hills.

Nagarjuna Caves

These caves made around 230 B.C. are located approximately 35 Km south of Jehanabad. Inscriptions in one of the caves known as Gopi Cave testify that Ashoka's son, Dasaratha, devoted these caves to Ajivika.

Other Tourist Spots

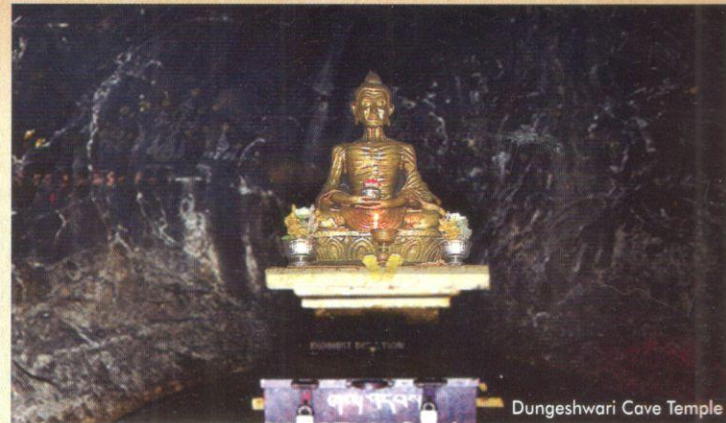
- ✿ Lat Pillar and Mounds, Lat Village
- ✿ Sidheshwar Nath Temple

How to Reach

Air: Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport, Patna is the nearest airport (43 Km).

Rail: Jehanabad railway station connects with many major cities in the country including Delhi.

Road: Jehanabad Bus Stand (16.9 Km) can be easily accessed by tourists through regular bus services.



Dungeshwari Cave Temple

GAYA

Situated on the banks of the Falgu River, Gaya is one of the ancient holy cities of Hinduism. According to Buddhist scriptures, Lord Buddha visited Gaya and practiced meditation with severe penance inside the Dungeshwari mountain caves. Kauadol is another place of prominence where the influence of Buddhism still prevails with remains of monastery, Lord Buddha sculptures, and rock-cut sculptures.

Brahmayoni Mountain

Situated 1 Km south of Vishnupada temple, this mountain has 424 steps to climb before one can reach the Brahmayoni Hill. It is believed that during the last stages of attaining enlightenment, Lord Buddha spent some days mediating on this mountain. Today, an Ashoka Stupa, a huge statue of Lord Buddha and holy footprints are found on the hill, believed to have been commissioned by 'Ashoka the Great'.

Ruins of Buddhist Monastery

6 km of south-west from Barabar Hill Circuit, on the Kauva Dol hills are the ruins of Buddhist Monastery and several stones pillars. A magnificent 8ft tall ancient statue of Lord Buddha has also been excavated at this place. It is believed that this place was 'training centre' of young Buddhist monks during the 4th century. Kauva Dol is believed to be the site of the ancient 'monastery of Sibhadra' where Hiuen Tsang visited in the 7th Century.

Dungeshwari Cave Temple

In the Pragbodhi Hills, the ancient Dungeshwari Cave Temple is located along river Falgu, at a distance of 15 Kms from Gaya. These three caves hold a significant spot in the history of Buddhism in the sense that before continuing his journey to Bodhgaya, Lord Buddha meditated here for six years. Apart from the scenic location of the caves, there is a golden statue of Lord Buddha in one of the caves which is 6 feet tall.

Other Tourist Spots

- ✿ Kurhihar
- ✿ Tibetan Monastery
- ✿ Tapovan
- ✿ Gaya Museum
- ✿ Sarupa

BODHGAYA

It was here, under the holy Bodhi Tree, where Prince Siddhartha meditated for 49 days as bodhisattva (mentor) and attained enlightenment, starting his journey as Lord Buddha, the Enlightened One. Thereafter, he established the "Middle Path Pratipada" – the best way of life for the entire human race. Bodhgaya today is a vibrant and inspiring tourist attraction where devotees from many Buddhist countries have built temples around the complex in their characteristic architectural styles.

Mahabodhi Tree

Located on the west of the main Temple in the Mahabodhi Temple Complex, Bodh Gaya, this where the 35 year old, Sakya Prince Siddhartha meditated for 49 days, to attained the Supreme Enlightenment. Located under the Mahabodhi Tree, next is a platform built to commemorate the holy incidence where the Buddha is believed to have experienced the 'Silent State' before his enlightenment. The present tree, which is the 4th generation offspring of the original, is the most important historical and religious spot for tourists in the temple complex.

Temple of Burma

Situated on the old road to Gaya, north of the Mahabodhi temple, the Bodh Gaya Myanmar Buddhist Vihara Located on, is one of the oldest temples on the list of Lord Buddha Monasteries. The temple reflects the ancient and rich architecture and culture of Burma.

Muchalind Tank

Inside the Maha Bodhi Temple Complex, located towards the south is the tank named after the fabled snake king, Muchalind, who is said to have protected Lord Buddha from heavy storm and rain sent by the evil forces while he was meditating here during the '6th week' after his enlightenment.

Sujata Garh

Located 4 km east of Bodhgaya Temple Complex, Sujata Garh is believed to be the place where Lord Buddha learnt the importance of Middle Path in human life. Sujata Stupa was built in the honour of maiden Sujata who offered rice pudding to Lord Buddha seeing him emaciated after his six year long meditation at Dungeshwari. Gautama, on accepting the offer realised the futility of the self deprivation and completed his path of self awareness.

Other Tourist Spots

- ✿ World Heritage Site
- ✿ Temple of Thailand
- ✿ Temple of Tibet
- ✿ Temple of Bhutan
- ✿ Buddhist Monasteries
- ✿ Maya Sarovar
- ✿ Temple of China
- ✿ Bodh Gaya Archaeological Museum

How to Reach

Air: The nearest airport is Gaya Airport (5 Km).

Rail: The nearest railway station is Gaya (12 Km).

Road: Bodhgaya is well connected by road to Gaya (17 Km), Nalanda (101 Km), Rajgir (78 Km), Patna (135 Km), Varanasi (252 Km), Kolkata (495 Km).

Bus: Regular direct bus services are available from Gaya, Patna, Nalanda, Rajgir, Varanasi.

Where to Stay

Tourist Bungalows: Siddharth Vihar, Bodhgaya, Gaya-824231

Phone: 0631-2200445, 2200127. AC Rooms, Non-AC Rooms Sujata Vihar, Bodhgaya, Gaya-824231 Phone: 0631-2200445, 2200127. Dormitory Beds only Lord Buddha Vihar, Bodhgaya, Gaya-824231.

RAJGIR

Located approximately 70 Km from Bodh Gaya, Rajgir was the ancient capital of Magadha Empire. Lord Buddha would use Rajgir as his monsoon retreat for 12 years as he spread his doctrine. It was at the holy Gridh Koot Hill that he expounded the precepts of his Lotus Sutra and the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra. The First Buddhist Council, held after his parinirvana, to compile his teachings was held in Rajgir.

Vishwa Shanti Stupa

Built in 1969, the 129 feet high Vishwa Shanti Stupa located on Ratnagiri hill, is one of the 80 peace pagodas worldwide, built to spread Lord Buddha's message of peace and non-violence. It is situated in front of Gridhakuta Parvat, considered to be the favourite residing place of Lord Buddha.

Gridhakuta Hill

The peak which is referred in various texts as one of the most favourite meditation place of the Buddha, accessible from the Vishwa Shanti Stupa is where the Lord Buddha spent several months meditating, and preaching to his disciples post attaining enlightenment. It is believed that the Buddha had lived in one of the caves on this hill and preached Saddharmapundarika Sutra.

Other Tourist Spots

- ✿ Pippala Cave
- ✿ Karanda Tank
- ✿ Maniyar Math
- ✿ Saptaparni Caves
- ✿ Venu Van
- ✿ Pandu Pokhar
- ✿ Cyclopean Wall
- ✿ Fort of Ajatshatru & Bimbisara's Prison
- ✿ Treasure of Bimbisara
- ✿ Amravan Vihar

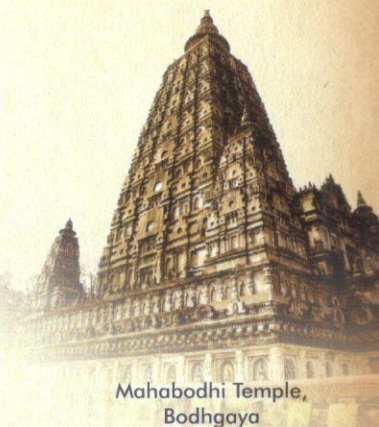
How to Reach

Air: The nearest airport is Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport, Patna (101 Km).

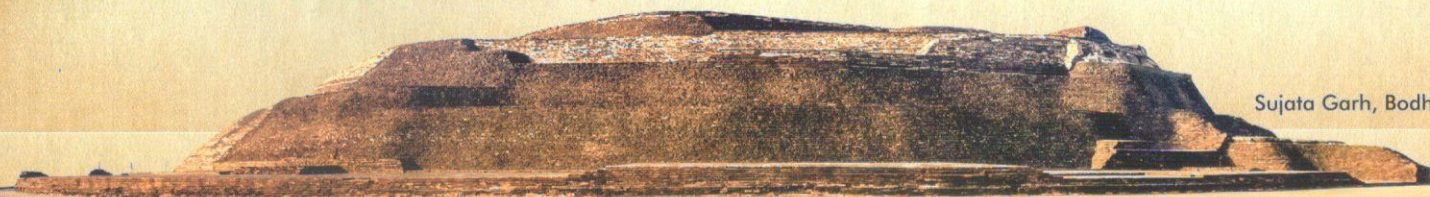
Rail: Though Rajgir itself has a railway station yet the nearest convenient railhead is at Gaya (78 Km).

Road: Rajgir is connected by road to Patna, Nalanda, Gaya, Pawapuri, Bihar Sharif, etc.

Bus: Regular buses are available from all the above mentioned points to Rajgir.



Mahabodhi Temple,
Bodhgaya

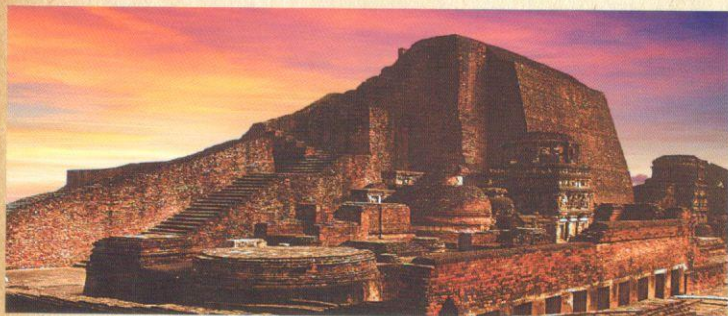


Sujata Garh, Bodhgaya

Where to Stay

Tourist can stay at any of three Tourist Bungalows maintained by the Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation.

Tourist Bungalows: Ajatshatru Vihar, Phone: 06112-255027.



NALANDA

Nalanda was the nurturing ground for the renowned international residential university in the era when most nations were in very nascent stages of development. It is said that Gautam Buddha visited this place frequently to benefit from the hot springs of Nalanda to get relief from joint pain. According to some religious texts, Nalanda is supposedly the birthplace of Lord Buddha's main follower – Sariputra. Nalanda University is considered to be the key place of Buddhist learning. This university was established during the rule of Emperor Gupta.

Mustafapur

A recent addition to the archaeological places of prominence is Mustafapur. The village is situated about 2.5 Km away from Nalanda University. Statue of Lord Buddha seated in a majestic pose has been found here making it an important tourist destination.

Sarilchak

The village of Sarilchak is of huge archaeological significance to Buddhists. Located 1.5 km away from the ruins of Nalanda University, it was in Sarilchak that statues of two disciples of Lord Buddha were found in a recent excavation. It is believed that this is the birthplace of one of Lord Buddha's dearest disciple Sariputra, whose remains are also believed to have been found in the excavations.

Other Tourist Spots

- ✿ Jagdishpur (Mahamaya Place)
- ✿ Nalanda Museum
- ✿ Sariputra Stupa
- ✿ Ruins of Nalanda University
- ✿ Hieun-Tsang Memorial Hall
- ✿ Nalanda Mahavihar

How to Reach

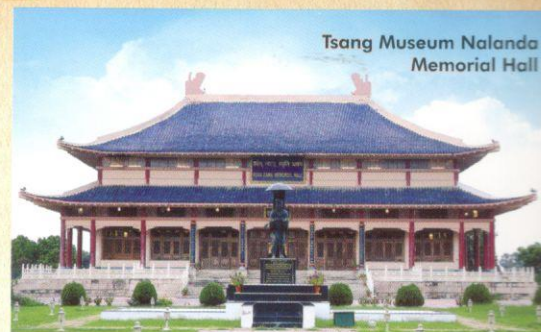
Air: The nearest airport is Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport, Patna (89 Km).

Rail: Though Rajgir (12 Km) is the nearest railway station to Nalanda, the nearest convenient rail head is at Gaya (95 Km).

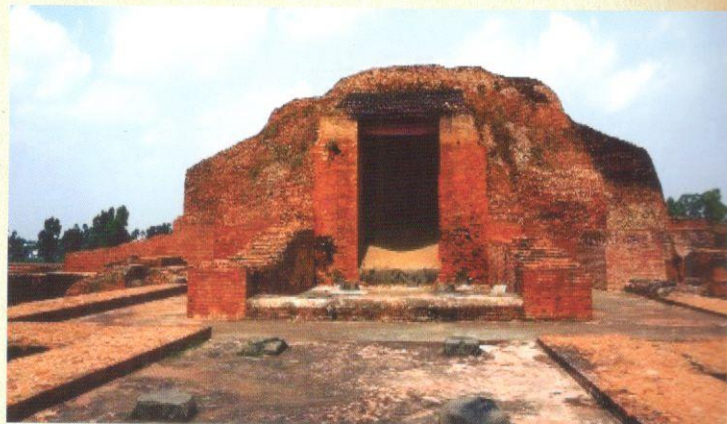
Road: Nalanda is connected by good road with Rajgir, Bodh Gaya, Gaya, Patna, Pawapuri, Bihar Sharif, etc.

Where to Stay

There are a number of moderately priced hotels available in Nalanda. Tourists can stay at any of the three Tourists Bungalows of Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation, Tathagat Vihar, Ajatshatru Vihar and Gautam Vihar.



BHAGALPUR



Located at the Southern part of Bihar, Bhagalpur is one of the oldest districts of Bihar known for its superior quality silk fabric. It was also the seat of one of the most important centres of learning in India along with the Nalanda University in the bygone era, Vikramshila. The Vikramshila University, whose ruins can be seen at Bhagalpur was established by King Dharmapala from Pala dynasty. This Buddhist University had more than hundred teachers and above thousand students learning subjects like theology, philosophy, grammar, metaphysics, logic etc. The ruins of this ancient university are a sight of marvel – it's a stupa in the centre, library building along with a Tibetan and a Hindu temple have also been excavated.

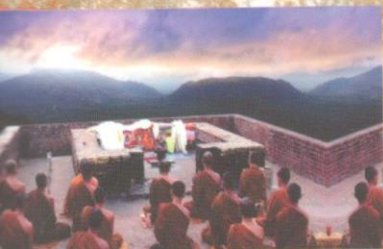
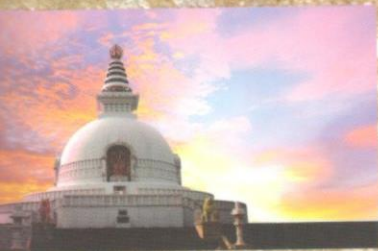
How to Reach

Air: Bhagalpur is 183 Km away from Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport, Patna and 217 Km away from Bagdogra Airport, West Bengal.

Rail: Bhagalpur Railway Junction is well connected to Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Ajmer, Kanpur, Patna, Guwahati, Surat, Gaya and many other cities.

Road: Bhagalpur is well connected by NH 80 and NH 31, which is connected by the Vikramshila Setu.

For more information regarding transportation and hospitality services, contact Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC).
For more information, visit: www.bstdc.bih.nic.in



PATNA

Nearest Airport: Patna/3Kms
Nearest Railway Station: Patna/11Kms
Name: Kautilya Vihar, Beer Chand Patel Path, Patna-1.
Phone: 0612-2225411, 2210219, 2210242
Fax: 0612-2236218.

RAJGIR

Nearest Airport: Patna/114 Kms
Nearest Railway Station: Rajgir/3Kms
Name: Tathagat Vihar, Rajgir.
Telephone: 06112-255176.
Name: Ajatshatru Vihar, Rajgir-803 152.
Telephone: 06112-255027.
Name: Gautam Vihar, Rajgir-803 152.
Telephone: 06112-255273

BODHGAYA

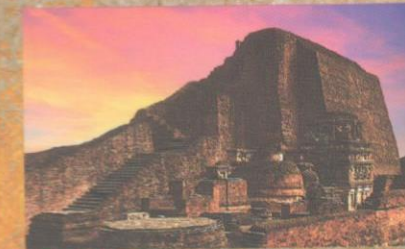
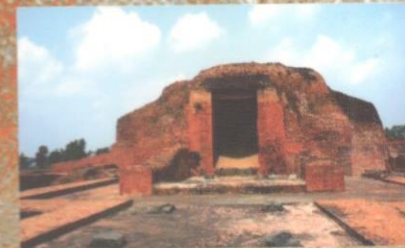
Nearest Airport: Bodhgaya/ 7 Kms/Patna/90km
Nearest Railway Station: Gaya/17Kms
Name: Siddharth Vihar, Bodhgaya, Gaya-824 231.
Telephone: 0631-2200445, 2200127
Name: Buddha Vihar, Bodhgaya, Gaya-824 231.

WEST CHAMPARAN (VALMIKI NAGAR)

Nearest Railway Station: Valmiki Nagar Road/10Km
Nearest Airport: Patna/260Km
Name: Hotel Valmiki Vihar, Valmiki Nagar,
West Champaran.
Telephone: 06251-256504.
Telephone: 0631-2200445, 2200127

VAISHALI

Nearest Airport: Patna/70Km
Nearest Railway Station: Muzaffarpur/40Kms/Hajipur/5km
Name: Ambapali Vihar, Vaishali - 844128.
Phone 06225-285415.
Name : Youth Hotel



**BIHAR
TOURISM**
Blissful Bihar

Directorate of Tourism, Government of Bihar
Extension Bhawan, Old Secretariat, Patna – 800015, Bihar (India)
Tel: +91 612-2217045, Fax: +91 612-2217042
Email: directoroftourismbihar@gmail.com
Website: www.bihartourism.gov.in

For more information regarding transportation and hospitality services, contact Bihar State Tourism Development Corporation (BSTDC).
For more information, visit: www.bstdc.bih.nic.in