

THE SETTING



The villages of Verlem, Tudou and Salgini are part of the Village Panchayat Netravali in Sanguem taluka in South Goa. Also referred to as Netorlim or Neturlim, it is one of the largest panchayats in the State of Goa. Nestled in the lap of the Western Ghats, the area has excellent forest cover and is home to the Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary. The village of Netravali has a few points of heritage importance especially the Budbudyachi Tali or the Bubble Pond, Datta Gumpha (Datta Temple), the Gopinath Temple. A drive uphill for 13kms brings one to the villages of Verlem, Tudou and Salgini which laze on the border of this Sanctuary and an altitude of around 550m above msl.

The villages, where the Aangan home-stays are hosted are strategically located on the hilltop while being overlooked by the larger mountains of the Sanhyadris. These mountains give rise to various streams and rivulets some entering the catchment of the Zuari River within the boundary of the State of Goa and some emptying into the Kali river basin in Karnataka. These streams also give rise to some beautiful waterfall and cascades such as the famous Savri and Mainapi Waterfall and some not so famous but equally captivating waterfalls like the Don nhaicho vozor, Pukkuna and Sonal. The road from Verlem village to Salgini turns into a spectacle of tiny cascades during the monsoons. The majestic mountain called the Ravon Dongor gives rise to the Savri waterfall and also provides drinking water to the entire village of Verlem through a rural drinking water scheme. The mountain itself is unique in having huge grassland stretching to around 2kms on the top at an altitude of more than 800m above msl. This unique habitat supports a lot of herbivore population especially Gaurs and is considered by Botanists to be the starting point of the typical Shola forests in the Southern section of the Western Ghats. Always clouded by mist in the monsoons and post-monsoon season, a trip to the mountain top is a must during a visit to these villages.



"Travel is a passage through other people's lives and other people's places"



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THE COMMUNITY



The community of 620 within 134 households, is largely from the Velip tribe. The Velips are one of the Schedules Tribes in the State and are predominantly forest and hill dwellers. Though they practice the settled agricultural life-style they have not given up on their strong hunter-gatherer instinct. Their knowledge of the forests is unrivalled and a walk in the forest with the Velips is practically a crash course in natural history.

The Velip community has a strong tradition of ecological knowledge which has been transmitted from generation to generation. Though urban influences have touched them they still live a very sustainable and eco-friendly lifestyle. The tools that they use, the food that they eat and their daily life reflects the rich natural heritage that surrounds them and reflects in the form of various festivals, folk-songs and folk-dances.

The worship of the Spirit of the Forest, in the form of sacred groves or Deva Pann is a unique phenomenon and conservation tool practiced by these humble folk of the hills.



"Prepared to accept cultures and practices that are different from your own"



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BEING A RESPONSIBLE TOURIST



1. Be curious about the place you visit find out more about your host community, how they live, their idea of fun, what they eat
2. Respect local customs, dress appropriately and follow a no-alcohol policy
3. Please use water as efficiently as possible. Do not leave your towels in your room to be washed if they have only been used once.
4. Ask if you can refill your drinking water bottle at a safe source rather than buying water in plastic bottles each time.
5. Dispose of matches and cigarette butts in the bins provided to avoid starting fires in ecologically sensitive areas.
6. Please use electricity as efficiently as possible. Switch off the lights, electric fan, air conditioner and television when you are not in your room.
7. Support the local economy hire local guides, buy locally grown produce, try their snacks, taste the food.
8. Buy souvenirs directly from community markets and craftspersons so that the money goes directly to local businesses.
9. Bargaining for goods may not be appropriate behaviour but if the price is negotiable, pay a price that is fair for the seller and maker.
10. Carry back as much plastic waste as possible and all the batteries you want to discard. It is only our metros that have the systems to handles such waste.
11. Do not let language be a barrier. Learning some words of the local language will see you embraced as a guest and not just a visitor.
12. Respect the dignity and privacy of the community please ask permission before you take a photo.
13. Do not take natural keepsakes such as indigenous flowers when spending time outdoors.
15. Take only photographs, leave only footprints

AANGAN

"The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page."



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