



Mystic Majuli



How to reach

Majuli is a river island on the Brahmaputra and is accessible by ferry via Nimatighat near Jorhat town, which is 310 km east of Guwahati. Though Majuli is just 12 km north of Jorhat, the journey takes about three hours, involving a half hour bus ride to Nimatighat, and thence a ferry ride to Majuli. Though Jorhat remains the main entry point to the island, there are other entries through Lakhimpur.

BY AIR: The nearest airport is Jorhat at Rowrah. There are regular flights to Jorhat from Guwahati and Kolkata.

BY RAIL: Mariani in Jorhat is Majuli's nearest railhead.

BY ROAD: Buses and shared taxis ply regularly between Jorhat town and Nimatighat, the main point of boarding the ferry for crossing the river to reach Majuli on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra. The drive from Jorhat to the ferry point is about an hour.

THE FERRY RIDE: To get to Majuli one has to take a ferry ride from Nimatighat which lasts about 1-30 hrs. The ferry ride is one of a kind with humans jostling for space with vehicles, gunny bags, bicycles, and motorcycles. There are regular government ferry services to Majuli every morning and afternoon. The ferries leave every hour starting from 8.00 am to 4 pm, depending on availability of passengers. Two-wheelers and cars can also be ferried across on payment of a fee. Motorised private boats are also available for hire for about R4,000.00. Once you arrive in Majuli local taxis can be hired for moving around in the island. Touring the island on a hired bicycle is a unique experience.

Best time to visit: October to March is the best season. Most of the dance, music and drama performances are organized during this period.

For information: Contact Director of Tourism, Guwahati, Phone : 0361—2547102, Fax: 0361-2542748

PLACES TO STAY: Majuli has a circuit house, a guesthouse and a tourist lodge for the accommodation of tourists.

1. Prashanti Ecotourism Resort, Kamalabari Satra, Phone: +91-9508098339
2. Mepo Lum (Haren Nath), Phone: + 91-94352-03165
3. The Satras also have their own guest accommodation with friendly housekeepers and strictly vegetarian food where devotees and visitors can experience the life in the monasteries and partake in the worship of Vishnu and Krishna or watch the traditional bhaona performances.

Uttar Kamalabari Satra Guest House, Phone:+ 91-97071-82768

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Directorate of Tourism, Govt. of Assam Station Road, Guwahati 781001, Assam, India
Phone: +91-361- 2547102 / 2542748, Fax: +91-361-2547102
Email: directortourism1@gmail.com, Website: www.assamtourism.gov.in



The People and Culture

A walk through the villages of Majuli is highly recommended to savour the warmth of the people and their simple way of life. The island is home to the Mishing tribe who migrated from Arunachal Pradesh. They are Assam's only riverine tribal community and make astoundingly beautiful shawls and blankets. The majority of the people practice agriculture, fishing and weaving. Boat-making, dairy-farming, pottery and handloom are some other important activities. The village population is gifted with the art of pottery making and a great deal of pain is taken to shape the pots by hand. According to archaeologists, Majuli appears to be a missing link between the Mohenjodaro and Harappan civilizations. The potter's wheel reigns supreme and Majuli still retains its link with the long dead past. Thus, Majuli may be considered as a living archaeological museum in its own right.

Biodiversity

Majuli is a hot spot for bio-diversity having a rich ecology with rare breeds of flora and fauna. Majuli's endless greenery with numerous streams, lakes and patches of tree forest covered with beautiful cane break, makes it enticingly lush on all sides. Millions of fireflies sparking right up to the skies makes one feel like entering the garden of Eden. Majuli is a part of a major migratory path for ducks, geese and other birds and if the visit is timed rightly one can spot many rare and endangered avifauna species such as the greater adjutant stork, pelican and the whistling teal.



Festivals celebrated

Rasleela, a three-day festival usually held in mid-November, to celebrate the legendary love of Radha and Krishna as well as the gopis love for Krishna.

Ali-Aye-Ligang—held in February-march . It is the annual festival of the Mising community marking the start of the sowing season.

Majuli Festival : is a four day state run programme normally held in the last week of November. A large fair is organized where traditional bamboo and cane craft, pottery and garments are showcased.





Majuli

Majuli nestles in the lap of the river Brahmaputra in its upper reaches. This great river island is formed by the Kherkatia channel of the Brahmaputra flowing on its north and the main stream of the great river on the south. Acclaimed by UNESCO as one of the wonders of the world, Majuli is a “unique geographical occurrence” with “abodes of rich flora and fauna unique to this

region.” The Government of India has recently recommended to UNESCO that Majuli be considered a World Heritage site. Once the world’s largest river island, comprising of 1256 sq. km in 1991, the island has been subjected to the fury of recurring floods of the mighty Brahmaputra. Unfortunately, consequent to the erosions, the total area of the island has considerably decreased and at present its area is estimated to be not more than 880 sq. km.



History- The Vaishnavite culture

The satras are undoubtedly the treasures of Majuli.

Majuli has a very rich heritage and has been the abode of Assamese Vaishnavite culture, which it has not only preserved but also continues to practice. The sublime and serene atmosphere of the island provided the backdrop for the historic meeting of the two pioneer Vaishnavite saints of Assam, Sankardeva and Madhavdeva, at Beloguri in west Majuli in the 15th century. Ever since this meeting of the two great minds and the establishment of satras that followed, Majuli emerged as the crowning glory of the Vaishnavite culture in Assam.

The young bhakats or the celibates, are also wonderful artisans, each satra specializing in making an assortment of Assamese artefacts. Six kilometres beyond Bengena-ati is a centre for making clay and bamboo mask-sculptures. These masks were used for traditional performances during festivals. The Vaishnava satras of the island are still the main centres for the preservation and promotion of Assamese classical dance and music. Sankardeva not only ushered in Assamese literature’s golden age through unique prose, poetry, songs and plays, but he also initiated the inmates of the satras into deeply beloved forms of music, dance and theatrical performances.

