

In Hindu mythology, when Lord Shiva destroyed Tripura (the three mythical cities) by fire, some of the ashes accidentally spilt over Mythologically important **Jwaleshwar Temple** is situated 8 kms from Amarkantak. Apart from its religious importance, the Amarkantak plateau has great ecological significance. The entire plateau is carpeted with lush green forests and is home to numerous species of flora and fauna. The hills and forests around Amarkantak offer an ideal setting for trekking, climbing and adventure sports.



Jwaleshwar Temple

How to reach

By Air: The nearest airports are at Jabalpur (228 kms) and Raipur, in Chhattisgarh (230 kms). There is a permanent helipad at Amarkantak. Helicopters can be chartered from Jabalpur, Bhopal or Raipur.

By Rail: The nearest railway station is at Pendra Road (42 kms), in Chhattisgarh.

By Road: It is 71 kms from Anuppur, the district headquarters. Direct buses are available for Amarkantak from Rewa, Allahabad, Mandla, Seoni, Raipur, Bilaspur, Shahdol, Katni and Jabalpur.

Your Hosts: Holiday Homes (MPT)

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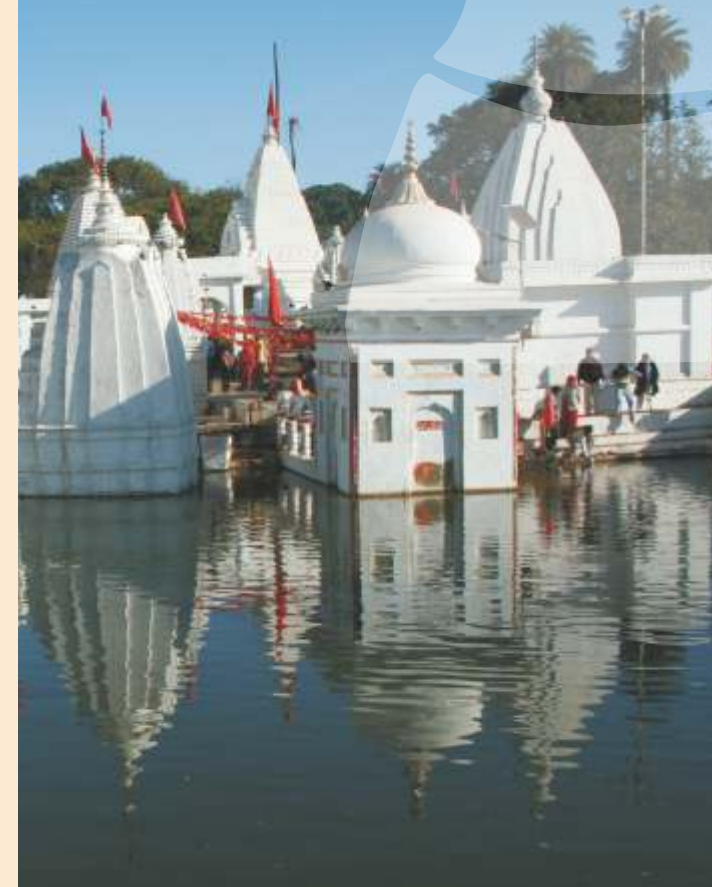
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The heart of
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AMARKANTAK

Source of the Holy Narmada



The town of Amarkantak is popularly known as teerathraj, or the 'king of pilgrimages'. Situated at an altitude of 1,000 m in Anuppur district of Madhya Pradesh, Amarkantak lies at the meeting point of the three central Indian hill ranges - Vindhyas, Satpuras and Maikal. This small town with its innumerable temples and holy ponds, and bordered with lofty hills and dense forests, is a sought-after destination both with the spiritually inclined as well as nature-lovers.

Two great rivers of India, the Narmada and the Sone, arise in Amarkantak. While the Narmada flows westwards, the Sone flows to the east. An interesting legend recounts how once Sone and Narmada were to be wed, but Sone repulsed Narmada and married another. The distraught Narmada changed course and turned westward!

Narmada is considered one of the most sacred rivers of India and pilgrims bathe in its waters to wash away their sins. It is believed that the mere sight of the river is enough to purify oneself! A charming folk tale speaks of the holy Ganga, dressed as a beautiful young woman, visiting Narmada to take a purifying dip in its waters!



The sanctum in Narmada Udgam Temple

There are several stories regarding the origin of the Narmada; and the river has been bestowed various names, among them, Rewa, Shankari and Maikalsuta.

Amarkantak is a place of worship for all the three worlds of Hindu

mythology - the heavens, the earth and the netherworld. Gods, gandharvas (celestial beings), asuras (demons), saints and common people are all said to have achieved great spiritual powers here. According to the Puranas, the region was known as Ayodhya and had ashrams of Kapil Muni and Rishi Markand. It is believed that whoever dies at Amarkantak is assured a place in heaven.

What to See

The small town of Amarkantak has as many as 24 temples. **Narmada Udgam**, a temple built to mark the source of the Narmada, is considered the holiest place in the town. Facing the Narmada Udgam Temple is the **Mata Narmada Temple**, a shaktipeeth. Just in front of Narmada Udgam is an open pool called the Narmadakund. South of this kund are ancient temples which were built by the Kalachuri king, Karnadeva (1042-1072 AD). **Trimukhi Temple** dedicated to Shiva, is the oldest temple in the city, constructed between 1042-1122 AD. There is also an 18th century temple, **Keshav Narayan Temple**, which was built here by the Bhonsle ruler of Nagpur.



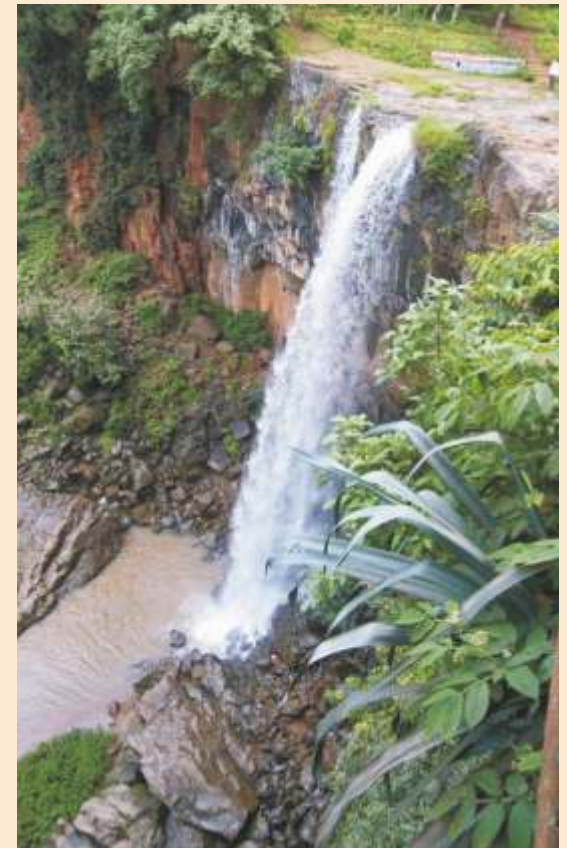
Ancient Temples of Kalachuri period

Situated 1.5 kms from Narmadakund is **Sonmuda**, the source of the river Sone. From here it flows on to join the Ganga near Patna.

Around a kilometre from Narmadakund is **Mai ki Bagiya**, an orchard, where it is believed, goddess Narmada came to pluck fruits. It is believed to nurture flowers that refuse to blossom elsewhere.

Six kilometres from the source of the Narmada, is **Kapildhara**. It is a spectacular sight as the small stream of the Narmada plunges down a 24 m high vertical cliff-face into a gorge, transforming into a large river. It is believed that in ancient times, the sage Kapil performed severe austerities here. Legend has it that he had ordered Narmada to stop flowing but the river defied him and plunged itself down the cliff. The sacred **Kapileshwar Temple** is situated nearby.

A little downstream from Kapildhara, the Narmada creates another waterfall, Dugdhadhara. Literally, 'the milky stream' the fall gets its name from the frothing waters of the river.



The beautiful Kapildhara falls

One of the greatest sages of ancient India, Bhrgu, chose Amarkantak as his place of meditation. Bhrgu ka Mandal, as the spot is now known, can be reached after a difficult, three-hour long trek that passes through dense forests.

A small tank near which the saint Kabir (1440-1518 AD) is said to have meditated, known as **Kabir Chabutra**, is now a sacred site for the Kabirpanthis.



A mural at Kabir Chabutara