

Think textile, think Gujarat. It's an old success story which rings true even today. The emergence of Ahmedabad as the 'Manchester of the East' is as much due to the industrial expertise of the Gujaratis as is it to the moral expertise of Mahatma Gandhi who shook the conscience of the nation with the Swadeshi movement and promoted the use of national made goods and textiles.



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## TEXTILE HUB GUJARAT

## To spin a fine yarn

IT HAS been famously said that the prosperity of Ahmedabad and in turn Gujarat has been knit with three threads—silk, gold and cotton. Like all great stories, the tale of Ahmedabad emerging as the ‘Manchester of the East’ comes from a humble spinning mill started in 1861 by Ranchhodlal Chhotalal. The country and the world needed cloth, and suddenly in the years to follow, Gujarat was supplying a lot of it.

After Ranchhodlal's Ahmedabad Spinning and Weaving Company Limited, a series of major mills like Calico, Bagicha and Arvind Mills sprouted up. The latter turning out to be the largest supplier of denim in the country.

But the story unfolded slowly. The industry expanded further during the World War II but it was with the emergence of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene that the textile industry really hit its stride. With Mahatma Gandhi's Swadeshi movement (which promoted Indian made goods) at its peak, Gujarat emerged as the textile capital of the country.

The proof of Gujarat's emergence lies in the fact that most major textile brands like Arvind Mills, Parag and Praful all have their headquarters in the state and more than 90 percent of the polyester used in India is produced in Surat. Little surprise then that Ahmedabad was the

obvious choice as the location for the premier National Institute of Design.

With unique fabrics like bandhej (tie and dye fabric also known as bandhani) made from superfine cotton mulmul to the famous patola silk from Patan, the textiles in the state stand out for their craftsmanship. Combination of skilled labor, vast variety of raw materials, blend of yarns and the use of traditional techniques ensures that Gujarat remains the textile king of India.

You can look for bandhej and patola silk in the state government emporium Gurjari. Popular places to shop in Ahmedabad are Teen Darwaja, Ratan Pole, Manek Chowk, C.G. Road and Sarkhej.



ANSHUMAN SEN



ANEESH BHASIN

### PLUS SAYS

**Stay:** House of Mangaldas Girhardas, Ahmedabad  
[www.houseofmg.com](http://www.houseofmg.com)  
**Cost:** Starts at 25,000  
**Must know:** There is prohibition in Gujarat, however visitors can get a temporary liquor permit



DILEEP PRAKASH

### GOOD TO KNOW

**Weather:** It is best to travel between October-February when the weather is pleasant. Unless of course your trip revolves around spotting wildlife, in which case summer is a good time to visit.

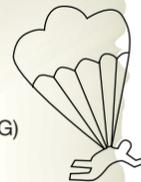
**Getting there:** Gujarat is well connected by both air and rail. The state has 10 domestic airports and an international airport at Ahmedabad. It also has an excellent network of roads; state and national highways connects Ahmedabad to

other major cities in the state and around the country.

**Food:** Try an authentic Gujarati thali at Sasuji Restaurant; Contact: CG Road, Ahmedabad; tel: (0) 99099 28685  
**Shopping:** Gujarat is famous for needlework tie-dyed fabrics, bead work, Patola and Zari work. A good option is to buy them directly from the artisans in villages like Sumrasar Sheikh, Bhirendiaro and Hodka in Bhuj.

### PLUS PICKS

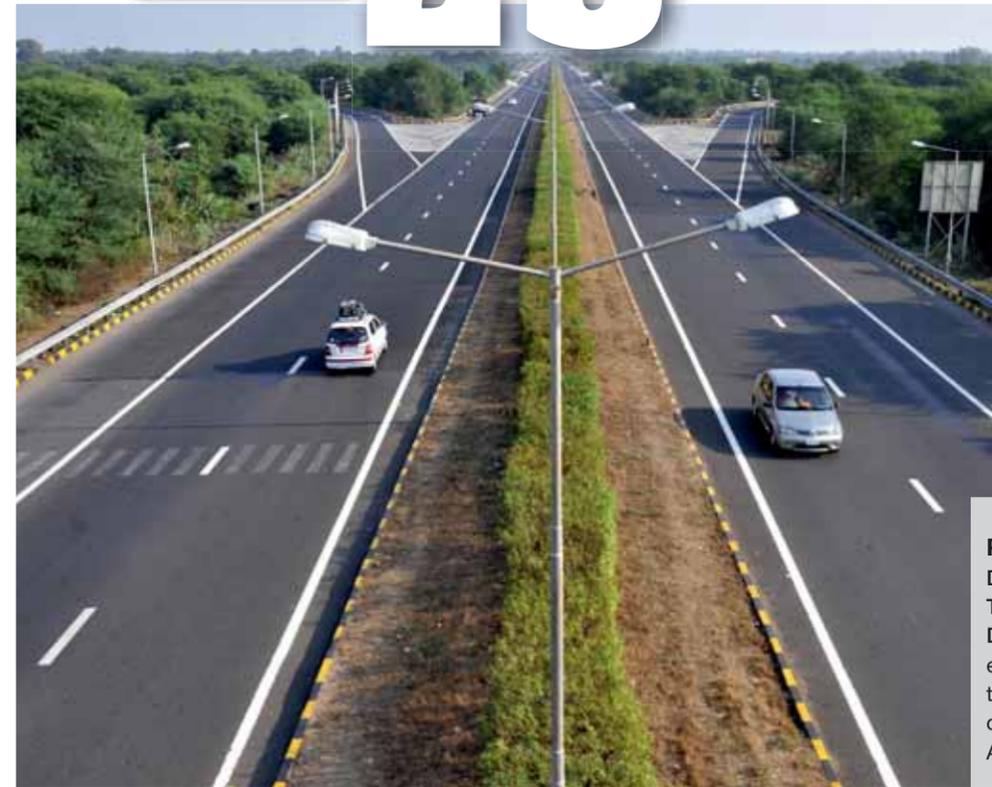
- 1. Dive from the sky:** If you are an adrenalin junkie head to Dessa in Banas Kantha district, one of India's first skydiving zones. The skydiving camps are organised by the Sports Authority of Gujarat (SAG) along with the Indian Parachuting Federation (IPF) [www.sycd.gov.in](http://www.sycd.gov.in)
- 2. Race alongside the Asian wild ass:** Contrary to perception, the Asian wild asses found in the Little Rann of Kutch are extremely elegant and can on a good day out run your jeep. It's quite an experience watching the creatures race against the backdrop of the salt flats.
- 3. Travel back in time at Lothal:** Dating back to the days of the Indus Valley Civilisation, is the largely unknown Lothal archaeological site, a short drive away from Ahmedabad. Explore the site with ancient wells and other relics that speak of an era gone by. Discovered in the 1960's, the site museum has well preserved artefacts. Timing: 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- 4. Take a hot air balloon ride over Kankaria lake:** Ahmedabad's biggest lake is no more a site for just paddle boating. It is also where you can embark on a journey that takes you high above in a hot air balloon. And all this comes for a nominal charge of 2100 for 15 minutes.
- 5. Enjoy the snow:** Want to get away from the summer heat—then just head to the snow park in Ahmedabad. There's artificial snowfall, you can ride on sleighs and even do rock climbing. Tickets are priced at 2220 for adults and 2180 for children for an hour. [www.maniarsnowpark.com](http://www.maniarsnowpark.com)



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AHEMEDABAD TO BARODA EXPRESSWAY  
GUJARAT



DINESH SHUKLA

Say zoom and you're half way from Ahmedabad to Baroda. The Ahmedabad Baroda Expressway, with two lanes on either side, also known as National Expressway 1 has cut down travel time between the two cities from 2.5 hours by at least an hour. Smooth roads and controlled traffic ensures that on this drive you feel as though you were on the German autobahns.

### PLUS SAYS

**Distance:** 95 km  
**Travel time:** Approx 60 min  
**Did you know:** The expressway has boosted trade. Baroda is a chemical, cotton textile hub and Ahmedabad a export centre

## GOLFING GREENS GUJARAT

Does golf rhyme with Gujarat? Ask a golfer, he would probably tell you that it does now. The state during the last few years has taken strides in golf tourism with as many as 10 golf courses scattered in and around Ahmedabad. Among the premier courses in the state are the Kensville Golf Club and the Kalhaar Blues and Greens in Ahmedabad and Cambay Club in Gandhinagar.

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DINESH SHUKLA



### PLUS SAYS

**Stay and play at:** Kensville Golf and Country Club  
[www.kensville.co.in](http://www.kensville.co.in)  
**Cost:** 26,000 a night  
**Green fees:** 2600 on weekdays and 2700 on weekends